



A Strategic Vision for Panama City's Historic
DOWNTOWN
and its **WATERFRONT**

10.08.19

City of Panama City Long Term Recovery Planning Project

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**Created for the
City of Panama City**

The Strategic Vision was created with the contributions and input of hundreds of participants from the Panama City community!

Downtown Strategic Vision

Dover, Kohl & Partners
town planning & urban design

Hall Planning & Engineering
multi-modal transportation planning

Horsley Witten Group
resilient infrastructure

Partners for Economic Solutions
market analysis & implementation

Long Term Recovery Plan

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communications

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Vision for Historic Downtown and its Waterfront provides a vision to direct future growth while also preserving the city's history, its connection to the waterfront, and its strong sense of community. The vision and implementation actions lay the foundation for Panama City to become the premier city in the Panhandle.

Rebuilding Downtown

In 2018, Panama City's leaders and community began discussing the need to create a *Strategic Master Plan*, a common vision to lead the way in directing future growth while also preserving the city's history, culture, natural and built assets. Panama City is unique in the region because it is not a "beach town" but rather a traditional town with a centralized main street, an urban grid of streets, public spaces, historic street-oriented buildings, and a more structured connection to the water's edge. The relationship to the water is integral to the daily lives of its citizens and to the identity of the city; a frequently-heard motto is "a boat in every garage." These are the assets that are uniquely intrinsic to Panama City's sense of place and integral in forging a path to prosperity.

On October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael arrived in the Panhandle, leaving historic levels of damage in its trail. Instead of despairing, the people of Panama City are determined to make this an opportunity for revitalization. From record breaking destruction the City can regroup and redirect recovery and growth, following a community-led vision of what Panama City could be.

The City of Panama City contracted a team of consultants to help outline and implement a Long Term Recovery Planning project focusing on:

- **Recovery Planning** - Providing strategic guidance for long-term recovery and redevelopment from Hurricane Michael.
- **Economic Development** - Growing the City's economy through key partners and building on existing strengths.
- **Master Planning** - Envisioning and planning for the City's historic Downtown and its waterfront.
- **Communications** - Providing pathways for sharing the future vision of the City.

Lines of Effort:



Safety & Security



Economy



Quality of Life



Infrastructure

The Four Lines of Effort, established by the City of Panama City as the values and priorities for recovery, will be evident throughout the Recovery Planning process. Each deliverable will utilize community engagement and feedback to strengthen the City's resilience in these four areas. For more information, see rebuildpc.org.

The Long Term Recovery Planning project supports Panama City's values and vision by focusing on recovery and resiliency in four areas: Safety & Security, Economy, Quality of Life, and Infrastructure.

Recovery Charrette

In April 2019, a six-month planning process was initiated that included workshops, focus groups, town hall meetings, and a two week charrette process. The City of Panama City charrette held in June 2019 invited all stakeholders to the table to work intensively with the recovery and Downtown planning team to reach consensus over the future of the City.

Through this engagement, a series of common themes emerged as priorities for the City and Downtown. The priorities for Downtown comprise the Ten Cornerstone Ideas that are featured in this plan.

This summary report documents and illustrates the community vision and outlines an implementation action plan to realize that vision. *The Strategic Vision for Historic Downtown and its Waterfront* will inform and be used in coordination with other Recovery Plan documents, including the City-wide Recovery Action Plan, which describes immediate recovery actions and identifies funding sources. The result of this process will be an actionable plan to guide public improvements and shape private development in Downtown Panama City.



Ten Cornerstone Ideas to Rebuild Downtown Panama City:

- 1 WATERFRONT ACCESS
- 2 DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY
- 3 DOWNTOWN LIVING
- 4 SAFETY & SECURITY
- 5 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING
- 6 RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE
- 7 CONNECTED
- 8 PLACEMAKING
- 9 GATHERING SPACES
- 10 UPDATED STANDARDS

BACKGROUND

Historic Downtown

Historic Downtown Panama City began to take shape in the late 1800s; centered around McKenzie Park, a new settlement called “Park Resort” was conceived. The City was renamed Panama City in 1906, and incorporated in 1909. The first commercial buildings faced Harrison Avenue, with residences on surrounding blocks, including homes fronting McKenzie Park. A pier extended from Harrison Avenue connecting the town to its waterfront.

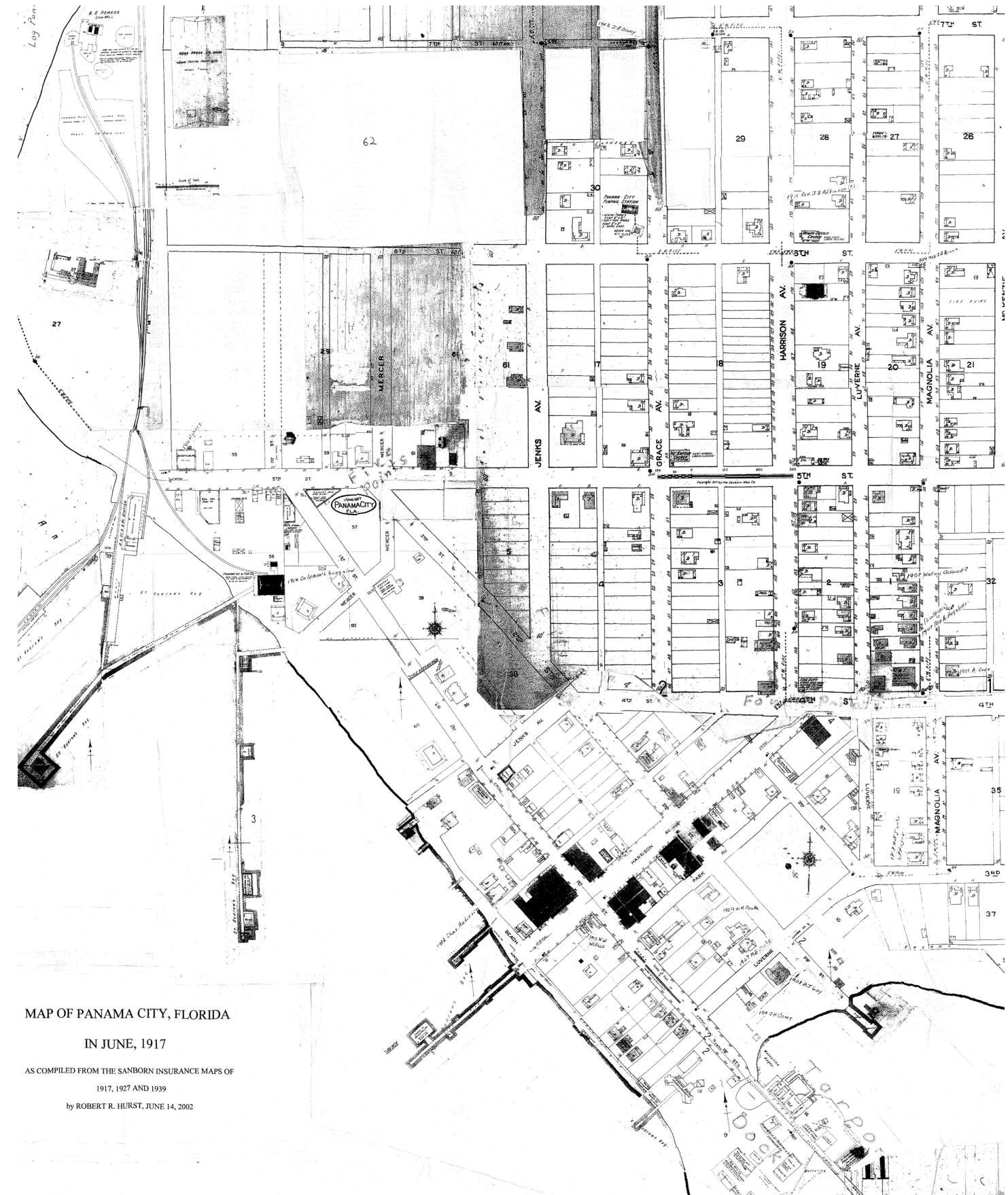
The intelligence of the plan established by the City founders quickly became evident. Downtown Panama City was a proud town with public spaces that reflected its community. Harrison Avenue and the waterfront formed the center of civic life, serving as the sight of gatherings such as parades and Fourth of July celebrations. Buildings met the streets with dignified public facades including shopfronts, signage, awnings, and brick cornices. Trees lined Harrison Avenue; civic buildings, including city hall, courthouses, churches, and schools, were part of the Downtown fabric. These buildings and public spaces are the City’s inheritance.

Over the years, new development marched outward to other areas of the City and County. As seen in communities across the country, activity sprawled with the population from the Downtown to the suburbs. Even before the storm, it was difficult for Downtown businesses to generate a critical mass of activity. After the storm, the problem has become more pronounced. The challenge now is to go back and fill the Downtown back in; fill the empty storefronts, build new homes, plant the trees, and re-shape the gathering places, to fulfill the potential of Downtown as a vibrant center of community life.



Above: Historic photos of Downtown Panama City

Right: Map of Downtown Panama City in 1917 shows the block-and-street “bones” of Downtown



Downtown Panama City: Physical Conditions

Existing Conditions Aerial

Downtown Panama City is surrounded by water, including St. Andrew Bay, Johnson Bayou and Massalina Bayou. The Downtown has a connected block-and-street network with alleys, which is an opportunity for continuous building frontages that are not interrupted by curb cuts.

The aerial photo reveals large amounts of impervious cover that does not allow water to be absorbed, including surface parking lots and building footprints. McKenzie Park is Downtown's main public green space. This photo from before the storm reveals many streets did not have adequate tree coverage; the tree canopy is less today.



Existing Conditions Map

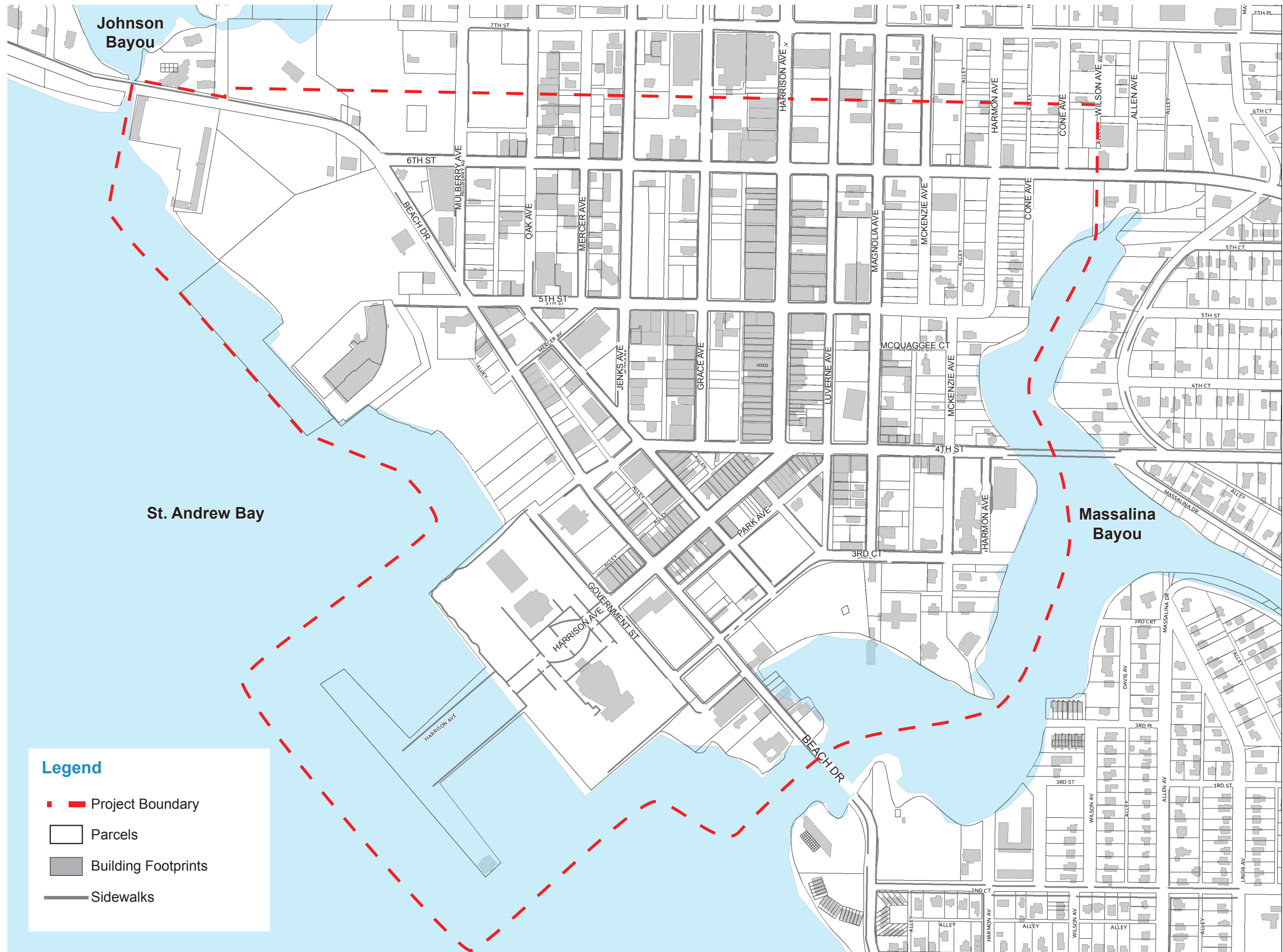
The existing conditions for Downtown Panama City are translated from the aerial photograph in a diagrammatic way in the map to the right. The map reveals the amount of undeveloped/vacant lots or surface parking (cream color) and lack of tree canopy that makes walking unpleasant, especially during warmer months.

This map can be compared to the proposed Illustrative Plan, shown with the Ten Cornerstone Ideas.



Building Footprints

A study of building footprints reveals the urban fabric of Downtown. Buildings are closest together along Harrison Avenue, Downtown's Main Street. Downtown's block-and-street network accommodates a variety of building types and sizes. A number of vacant lots are seen in surrounding blocks; many of these are used as surface parking lots today, but could become future building sites.

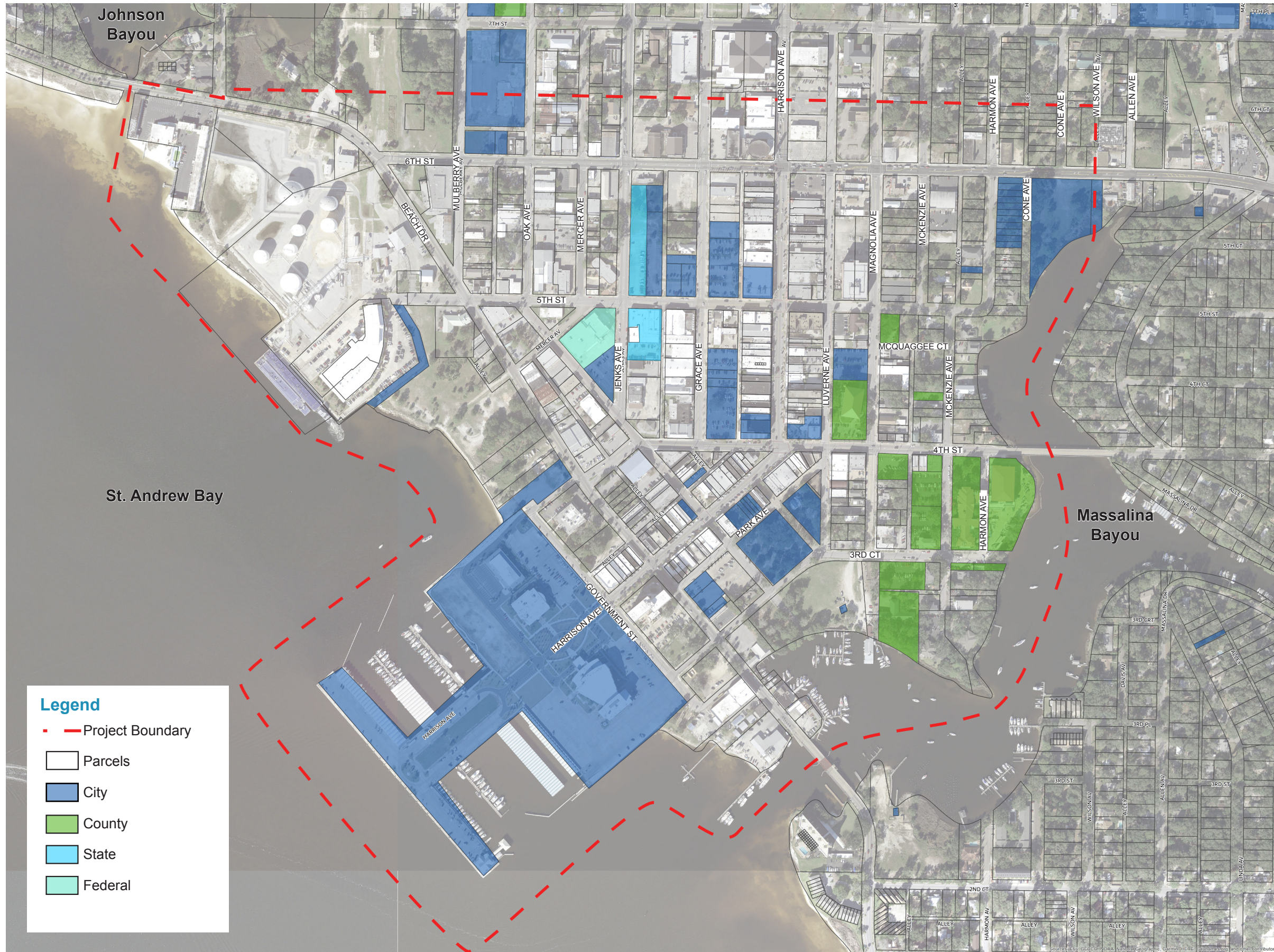


Public Ownership

Within Downtown the City, County, State and Federal entities each own portions of land.

The parcels in dark blue are properties owned by the City of Panama City. The Marina site is one large opportunity site that is City-owned, but there are several other sites throughout the Downtown. Portions of the City-owned land are vacant, or underutilized currently, used as surface parking lots. Some parcels could become opportunities for future public facilities or development as part of a public/private partnership.

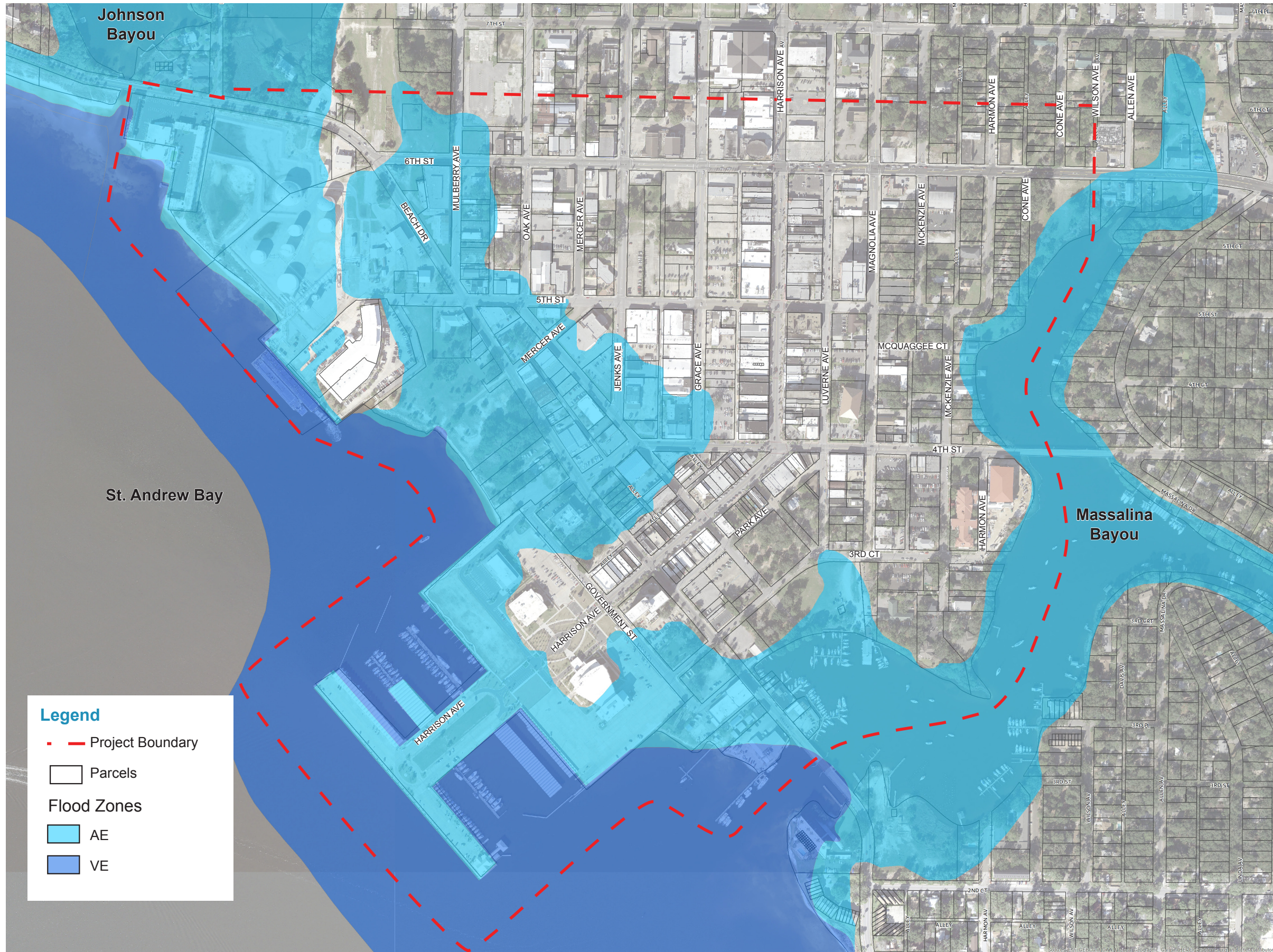
At a glance, it is apparent that an unusually large percentage of the buildable land mass is in government hands; still more property is controlled by religious institutions and nonprofit organizations and also therefore off the tax rolls.



Downtown Flood Zones

The FEMA flood zones show where flooding occurs at different intensities. The dark blue shows where water would rise the most and the aqua blue shows the areas that would be at risk for flooding based on topography and existing wetlands. The majority of Downtown remains above flood zone levels and is not affected by flooding based on the FEMA zones. Based on the National Flood Insurance Program flood zones AE and VE are in the 100-year floodplain. (Note: This map is based on 2009 mapping; an updated map for 2019 is in progress).

The flood zones near the waterfront mean any new waterfront development should be built to meet all FEMA building requirements of raised Finished Floor Elevations or other structural requirements.



Flood Zones:

AE: Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding (100-year flood); base flood elevations and flood hazard factors determined.

VE: Coastal areas with a 1% or greater annual chance of flooding (100-year flood); and additional hazard associated with storm waves.

Legend

- - - Project Boundary
- ▭ Parcels

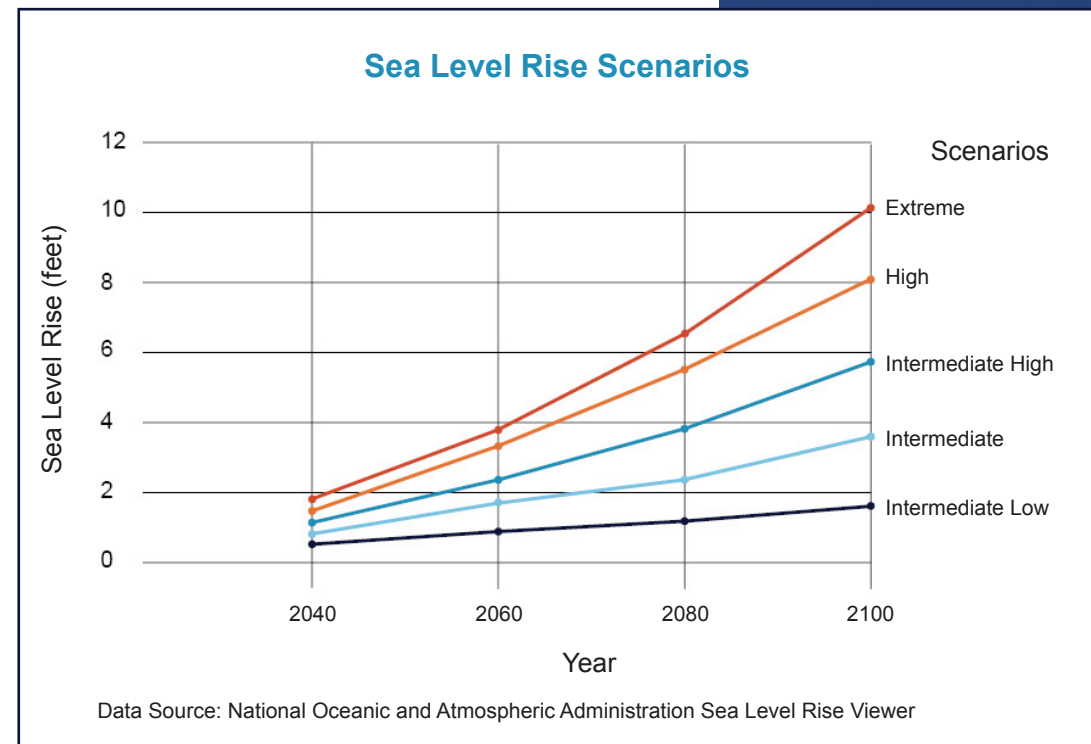
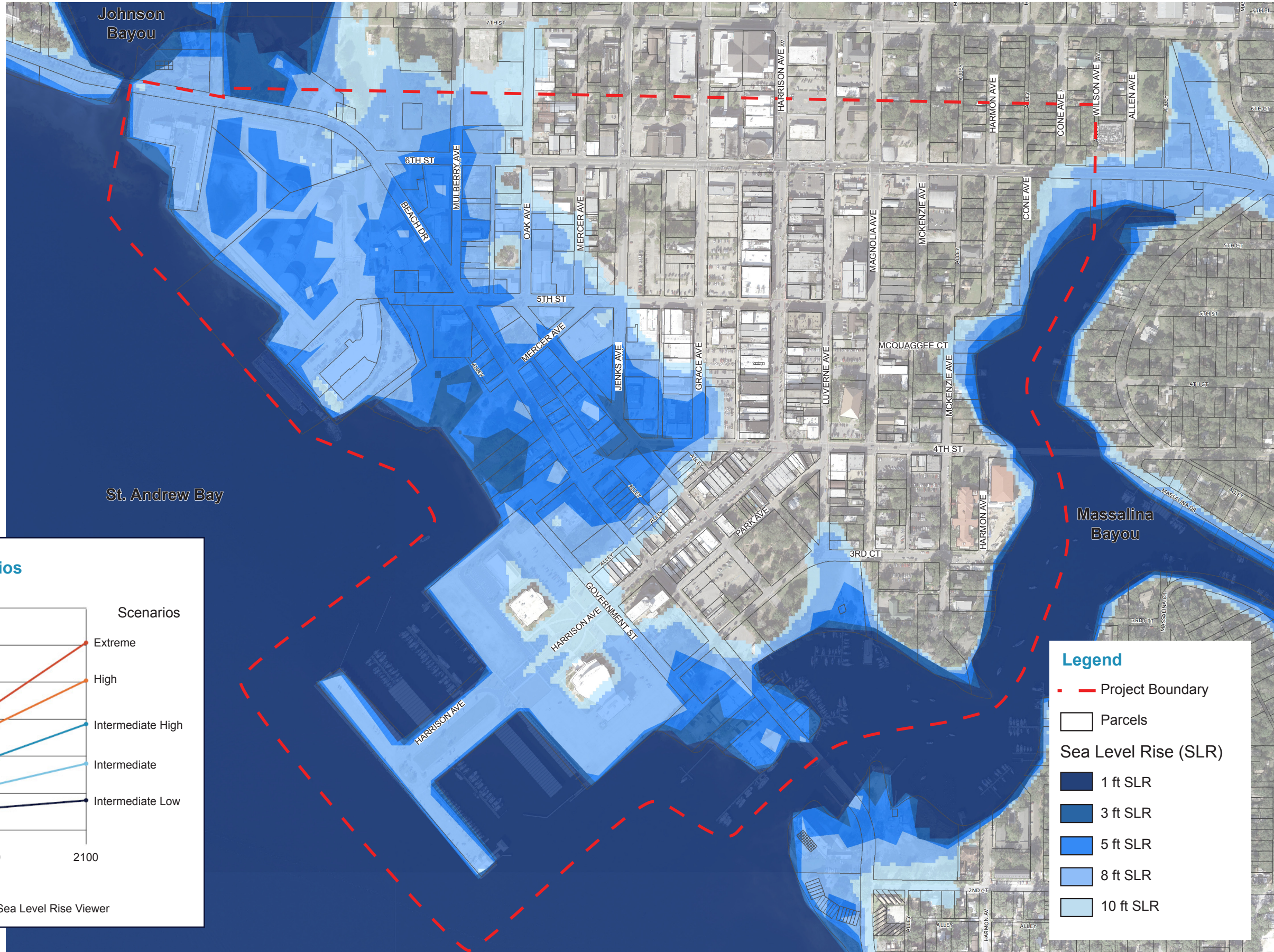
Flood Zones

- AE
- VE

Sea Level Rise

Based on data provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) this map shows what areas in Downtown could be impacted by sea level rise over time. Tools and strategies for planning for and adapting to changing sea level conditions area described in the Resilient Infrastructure Cornerstone.

NOAA has projected multiple possible scenarios for sea level rise in Panama City, ranging from an Intermediate Low scenario (with less than 2 feet of water level rise by 2100) to an Extreme scenario (with up to 10 feet of water level rise by 2100). The chart below shows potential increases in water levels projected by the year 2040, 2060, 2080, and 2100 under each scenario.



Legend

- - - Project Boundary
- ▭ Parcels

Sea Level Rise (SLR)

- 1 ft SLR
- 3 ft SLR
- 5 ft SLR
- 8 ft SLR
- 10 ft SLR

Downtown Panama City: Demographics

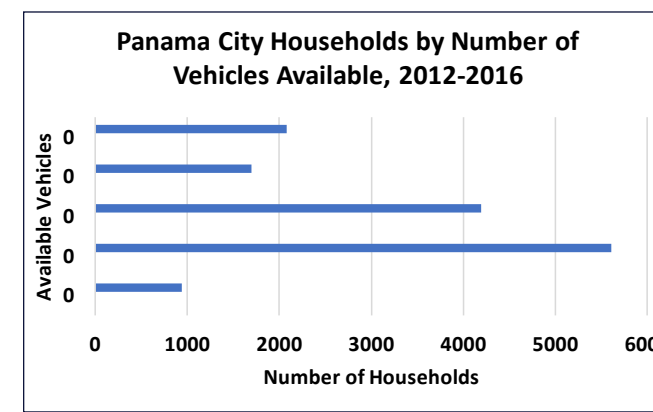
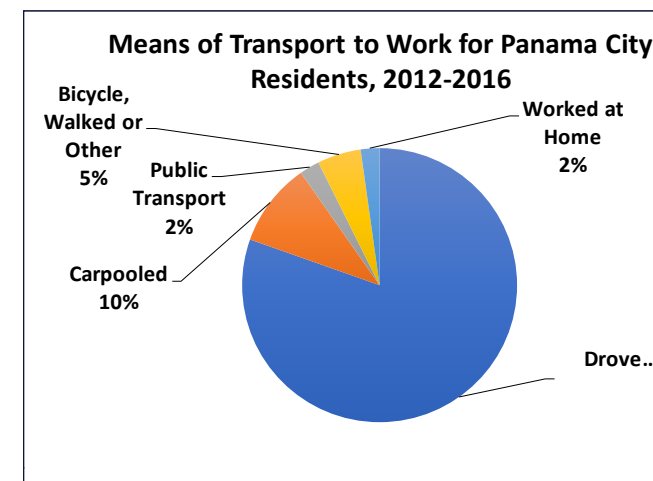
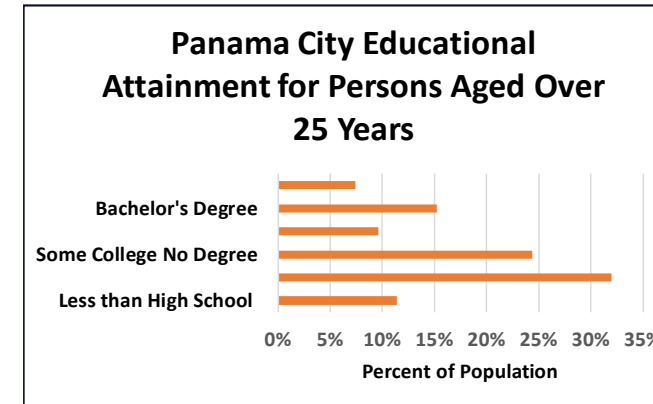
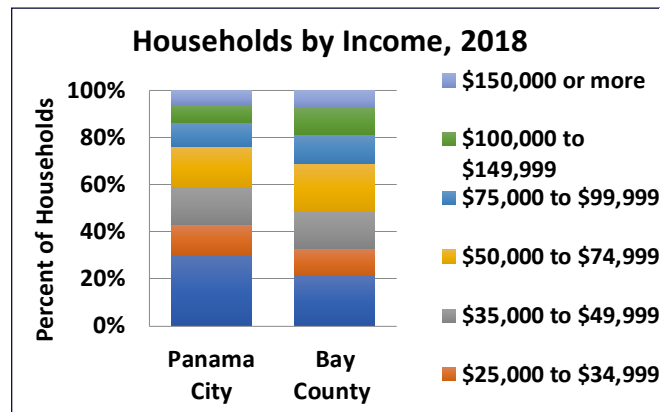
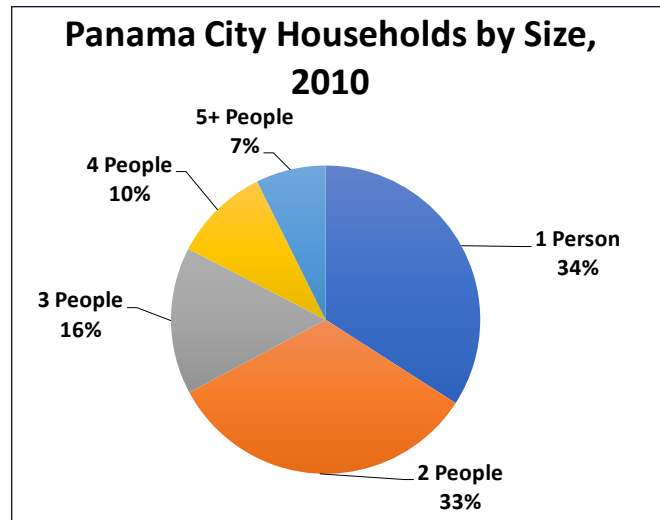
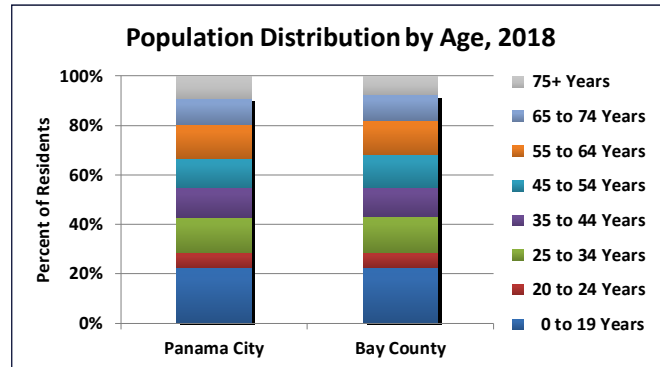
Even before Hurricane Michael, the Downtown Panama City study area was sparsely populated with only 260 residents in 2018, almost all of whom lived in St. Andrews Tower, a HUD-assisted seniors housing development at the foot of Harrison Avenue. Downtown residents had a median age of 60.4 years and an average household size of 1.1 persons per household. Just over 80 percent were renters. Reflecting the concentration of low-income households, the median household income was \$18,745.

More relevant to the question of market potential are the demographics of the citywide and countywide populations. In 2018 before the hurricane, the City of Panama City had a population of 37,841 in 15,190 households, as estimated by ESRI, a national provider of demographic data.¹ The city gained 1,340 residents and 389 households from 2010 to 2018. The annual population growth rate of 0.46 percent was a little more than half the 0.86-percent annual rate of growth in Bay County as a whole.

Though the city and county median ages were 40.7 and 40.5 years, respectively, both jurisdictions had a diverse age mix across the age groups. Seniors aged 65 and over represented 19.7 percent of city residents and 17.8 percent of county residents.²

City households are relatively small with one-third each having one or two persons.³ The average household size of 2.28 people reflects the fact that only 7 percent of city households have five or more people.

The city's median household income of \$40,362 was 74 percent of the Florida median and 67 percent of the U.S. median.⁴ More than three of every 10 Panama City households had incomes below \$25,000, as compared with 19.4 percent of county households outside the city boundaries. Twenty percent of city households were officially below the poverty line, almost 29 percent of the county total.



The lower household incomes relate to employment and educational achievement. While over half of city residents were employed in white-collar occupations in 2018, 21.6 percent had blue-collar jobs and 24 percent had service jobs, which tend to pay lower wages.⁵ Forty-one percent of city residents have no more than a high school diploma.⁶

Eighty-one percent of employed residents drove to work alone while another 10 percent carpooled.⁷ Only 2 percent used public transportation, while 5 percent bike, walked or used another mode to get to work. Two percent worked at home.

Almost 1,000 households (6.5 percent) had no access to a vehicle.⁸ Another 38.6 percent had only one vehicle.

⁵ Appendix Table A-5.
⁶ Appendix Table A-6.
⁷ Appendix Table A-7.
⁸ Appendix Table A-8.

¹ Appendix Table A-1.
² Appendix Table A-2.
³ Appendix Table A-3.
⁴ Appendix Table A-4.

Downtown Panama City: Market Conditions

Housing Market

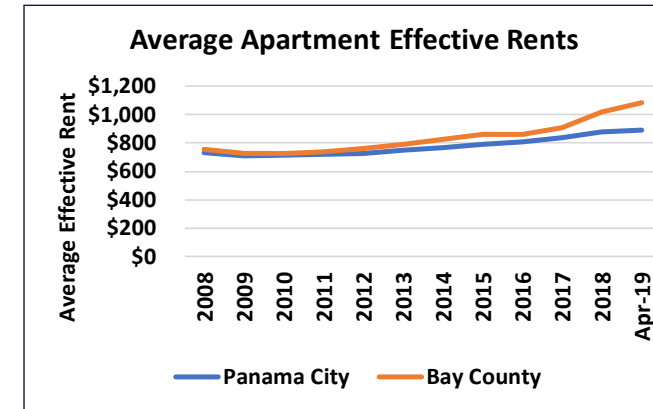
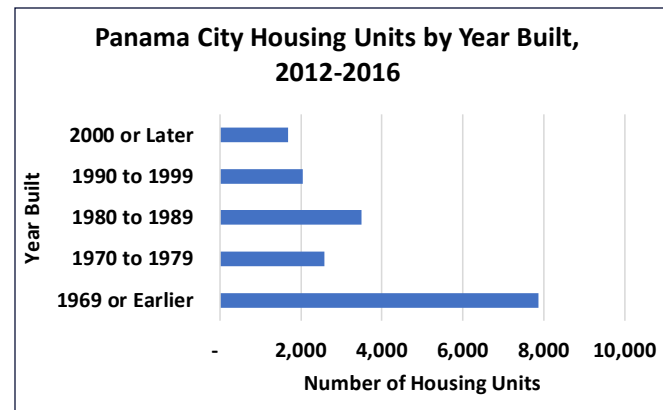
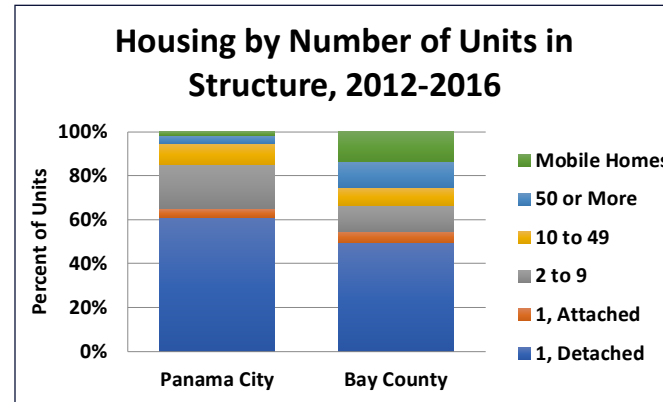
Downtown had an estimated 246 housing units in 2018. Of those, 216 were in St. Andrews Tower. ESRI estimates that 11 units were vacant (4.5 percent). St. Andrews Towers was damaged in Hurricane Michael and is currently under renovation.

Citywide, the housing inventory included an estimated 17,298 units, of which 15.3 percent were vacant before the hurricane.⁹ The Census Bureau designates a unit as vacant if the owner or tenant does not live there more than six months annually. In 2010, the last available data, Panama City had 313 units being held for seasonal use – less than two percent of all units. By contrast, Bay County had 13,878 units or 13.9 percent of all units held for occasional use.

The tenure split of Panama City households is relatively balanced with 52.4 percent owner-occupied and 47.6 percent renter-occupied.¹⁰ The share of homeowners has fallen somewhat from the 53.3-percent level in 2000 and 2010. Sixty-two percent of Bay County households own their homes, down from 68.6 percent in 2000 and 63.2 percent in 2010.

Single-family detached houses dominated the citywide housing inventory with 60.8 percent of all units, supplemented by another 4.0 percent single-family townhouses.¹¹ Apartment or condominium buildings with 10 or more units per structure accounted for 2,339 units or 13.3 percent of the total inventory. Larger multi-family structures contained 19.8 percent of the county's housing stock. Mobile homes represented 1.7 and 13.5 percent of total units in the city and county, respectively.

The Panama City housing stock had a median year built of 1974 with less than one percent of units built since 2010.¹² The newer housing has generally been built in other parts of the county. Countywide, one-quarter of units were built since 2010 for a median year built of 1987.



Multifamily Housing Trends

CoStar, a national provider of real estate information, tracks multi-family housing in Bay County. Though the data have not captured fully the impact of Hurricane Michael, the trend data to 2018 provide useful information. Panama City's inventory of multi-family housing totaled 7,752 units from 2012 through 2017 after adding a 92-unit development in 2012.¹³ Another 596 units were delivered from 2008 through 2010. Occupancy levels improved steadily from a low of 91.2 percent in 2008 during the Great Recession in spite of the increased inventory as households who lost their homes to foreclosures moved into rental units. By 2017, occupancy averaged 95.7 percent citywide. That indicated a tight market with slightly fewer vacancies than a healthy market requires for ease of movement between units.

Apartment development has been more active in other parts of Bay County in recent years. A total of 1,588 apartments have been delivered since 2012 while the city did not have any new construction.¹⁴

Apartment rents are reported to average \$889 per month as of April 2019, equivalent to \$0.95 per square foot. Rents have increased 6.0 percent from \$839 in 2017. The 25.7-percent increase in rents from \$707 in 2008 compares with the 16.6-percent overall inflation rate. Bay County rents average \$1,085 per unit or \$1.12 per square foot. Countywide rents increased 19.9 percent from \$905 in 2017 and 43.7 percent from \$755 in 2008.

Hurricane Michael Impacts

No comprehensive estimate of the housing lost to Hurricane Michael exists yet, but the best information collected from direct survey of Bay County apartment complexes showed that 4,544 rental apartments – 54.7 percent of the total inventory – were damaged and still uninhabitable in April 2019. In Panama City, 66 percent of multi-family apartments were damaged and 64 percent were still uninhabitable as of April 2019.¹⁵ Losses were severe among units designated for low-income tenants. Of the 1,786 units for low-income households, 1,252 units or 70 percent were uninhabitable in April 2019.

⁹ Appendix Table A-9.

¹⁰ Appendix Table A-10.

¹¹ Appendix Table A-11.

¹² Appendix Table A-12.

¹³ Appendix Table A-13.

¹⁴ Appendix Table A-14.

¹⁵ EPCI Housing Inspections

The reconstruction process is mixed – some units are being rebuilt while others are awaiting insurance settlements and others are a complete loss. Most developments with habitable units have waiting lists of six months or more. Labor shortages are limiting the pace of reconstruction; lack of housing for construction workers is exacerbating those shortages.

Disaster aid that will help fund reconstruction and new housing will likely not be available for another 18 to 24 months, delaying economic recovery.

Office Market Conditions

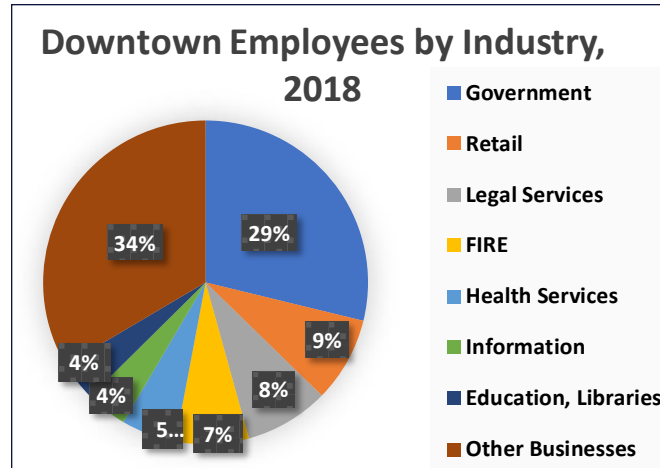
The CoStar inventory of office space in Downtown, Panama City and Bay County indicates an exceedingly tight market with occupancy rates of 99.0 to 99.7 percent. Typically, 92- to 95-percent occupancy would indicate a healthy market with good balance between demand and supply.

The Bay County market includes 7.7 million square feet of space, down from 7.74 million square feet in 2013.¹⁶ No new space has been delivered since 2017 but two buildings with 6,137 square feet are currently under construction. Panama City is home to just over three-quarters of the county’s office space with a total of 5.9 million square feet.¹⁷ Deliveries of new office space totaled only 161,900 square feet from 2008 through 2017 with no new space in 2018. Of the citywide total, 884,000 square feet or 15 percent is located in the Downtown.¹⁸ CoStar does not report any newly built space delivered Downtown over the last 12 years.

Infogroup, Inc. and ESRI estimated that Downtown had 335 businesses with 3,304 employees in 2018. Largest among the employment categories was government with 952 employees. Traditional office-based businesses prevail Downtown – 43 legal services firms with 277 employees as well as 42 finance, insurance and real estate companies with 240 employees. Seventeen health service firms employed 181 workers. A total of 136 workers were employed by information companies, which include technology and communication businesses.

The presence of the Federal and County Courthouses have been an important factor in attracting law firms. Faced with a plan to move the Federal Courthouse, the Bay County Board of County Commissioners agreed to

¹⁶ Appendix Table A-15.
¹⁷ Appendix Table A-16.
¹⁸ Appendix Table A-17.



lease the Bay County Juvenile Justice Courthouse on 11th Street as the new Federal courthouse. Hurricane Michael heavily damaged the courthouse, forcing the Federal courts to relocate. They are expected to return in 2021.

Hurricane Michael also damaged other office buildings, leaving some uninhabitable. Repairs are proceeding on some buildings, but others stand vacant waiting for insurance payouts and/or demolition.

Typically, office demand is generated by employment growth in industries that tend to locate in office space. As the economy recovers, professional services firms and other companies that may have closed or relocated will return Downtown and generate demand for additional office space to replace what was lost in the storm.

In these days of low unemployment, there is a national trend toward businesses choosing locations to which it will be easier to attract and retain workers, particularly tech workers. Younger workers have shown a greater tendency to seek out mixed-use environments where they can live, work and play within easy walking distance. Enhancing the Downtown environment to create better people places would improve Downtown’s ability to compete for new office investment, especially in concert with developing additional Downtown housing.

Retail Market Conditions

Downtown’s retailers are focused along Harrison Avenue and adjacent blocks. CoStar estimated the Downtown retail inventory at 518,059 square feet in 2018 with 95.5 percent of the space occupied; however, that inventory

was not complete.¹⁹ The amount of occupied space declined almost seven percent from 2008 to 2018 as stores closed or relocated.

Several stores were damaged in the hurricane, but the inventory has not yet been updated. Field inventory identified 10 vacant first-floor spaces along Harrison Avenue and at least three storefronts occupied by construction companies and other short-term non-retail users in June 2019.

The occupied retail spaces host a mix of retail types, including restaurants, bars, antique/second-hand stores, salons, specialty boutiques, gift store, home furnishings store, appliance store, skate supplies, a dollar store, an art gallery and other eclectic retail shops. Many have been attracted to the Downtown by the availability of low-rent spaces. Missing from the mix are stores that could support a residential base, such as a drugstore or a grocery store.

Downtown retailing is largely constrained by the limited supply of nearby residents. As discussed earlier, Downtown Panama City has only 260 residents, many of whom are low- and moderate-income seniors living in St. Andrews Towers. The larger market area that could be served by Downtown retailers extends north to 17th Street, west to Frankford Avenue and east to East Avenue. It included 16,342 residents in 2018, which is still relatively small to support a significant retail expansion.

The retail continuity – clusters of contiguous retail storefronts that encourage shoppers to continue down the street – is relatively limited. Major portions of the Harrison Avenue frontage are occupied by offices and other non-retail businesses. There is no clear concentration of retailers, which hurts their appeal. The synergy value of multiple retailers located in close proximity results from opportunities for cross-shopping. The shopper attracted by one store is then drawn to check out another store before leaving. Without that cross-shopping, each store must attract its own customers, reducing the value of locating in a business district. Retail storefronts offer lower-cost space for attorneys and other office-based companies, but the presence of these offices does not contribute to Downtown’s retail health.

The continuity is further disrupted by the presence of vacant, dilapidated buildings. Hurricane Michael damaged several buildings, some of which are now being renovated and reopened. Others have been sitting empty

¹⁹ Appendix Table A-18.

for years as owners hold out for future development opportunities or other uses. The blighting impact of these vacant buildings, particularly those in ruins, is substantial and should not be underestimated. In addition to breaking up the potential retail synergy, they communicate a feeling of disrepair and undermine shoppers’ feelings of safety.

Market Conclusions

Expansion of Downtown retail offerings will depend on actions to re-populate and re-activate the Downtown. New residents living nearby would be more likely to frequent Downtown restaurants and retailers. Downtown has a particular opportunity to create and grow its residential base, creating additional support for Downtown businesses.

Events and other activities that draw visitors and other Panama City area residents to the waterfront and Downtown will be important in generating potential customers for Downtown establishments. This would include small weekly and monthly events, such as the Arts Center activities and a farmers market, to help reactivate Downtown. Replacing the Civic Center with a more flexible multi-use center, coupled with a more aggressive programming effort, will be important in returning this important source of market support. Every effort should be made to ensure that the new center is located Downtown. Activating the City Pier and marina also will bring new visitors Downtown on a regular basis.

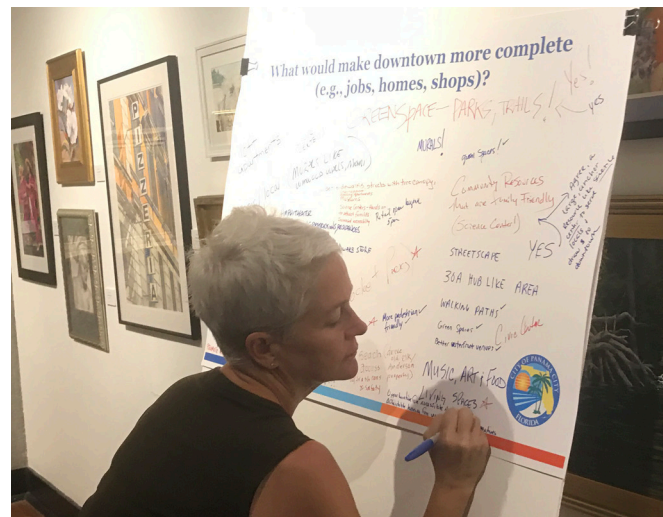
Also critical will be placemaking – the creation of public spaces that draw folks to an area for the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and to interact with friends and other community members. High-quality urban design can create unique settings and an environment that encourages people to spend time in the Downtown. Harrison Avenue and the waterfront have many of the basic elements – St. Andrew Bay and historic buildings lining the sidewalks and a grid of streets that encourages walking. What is lacking are the fine details of streetscape and public art, taming the speed of auto traffic and creating special moments of activity and civic interaction.

PLANNING PROCESS

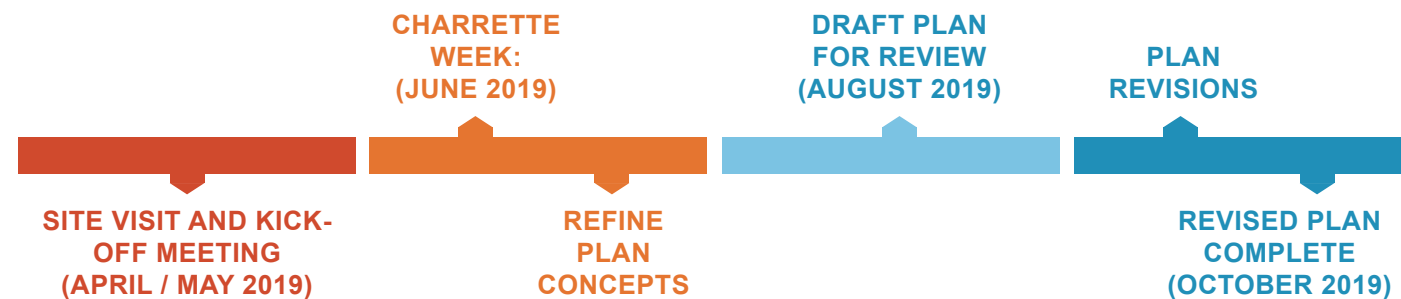
Citizens Shaped this Vision

A public design charrette was the centerpiece of the planning process; community meetings and workshops provided opportunities for group brainstorming and input. However, the planning process began months before. Recovery Plan team members conducted site visits in April and May to meet with City staff, interview community stakeholders, and analyze the City's existing conditions. A stakeholder list was developed, and strategy for engagement defined. The rebuildpc.org website was launched in May 2019 to disseminate project information.

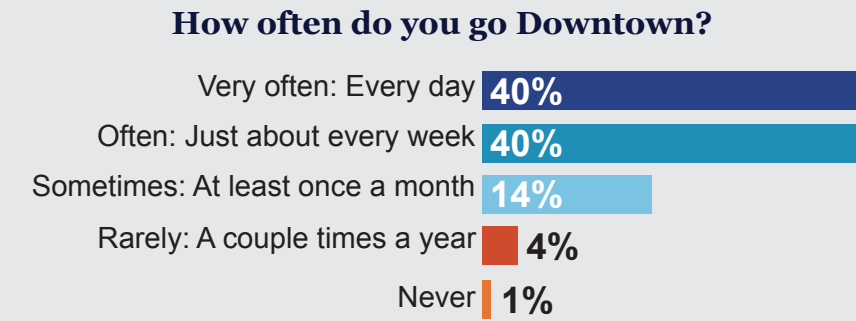
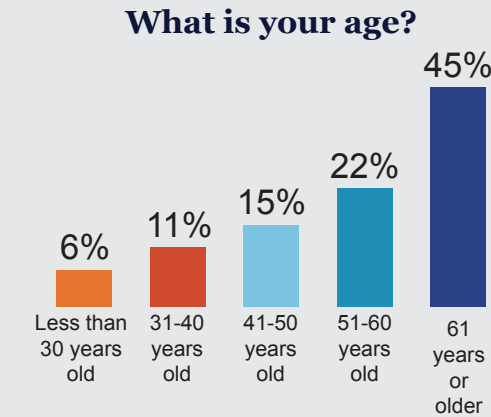
On Monday, May 6th, a Community Kick-off Meeting launched the public input portion of the project. Over 200 community members filled the Panama City Center for the Arts. Representatives from Hagerty Consulting and Dover, Kohl & Partners led a short presentation about project schedule, goals and objectives; keypad polling was used to gather insights about priorities and interests. Then, an open microphone session allowed community members to express their hopes and aspirations for the project. Following the formal meeting, participants continued talking with members of the planning team, filled out survey cards, and wrote their ideas on display boards.



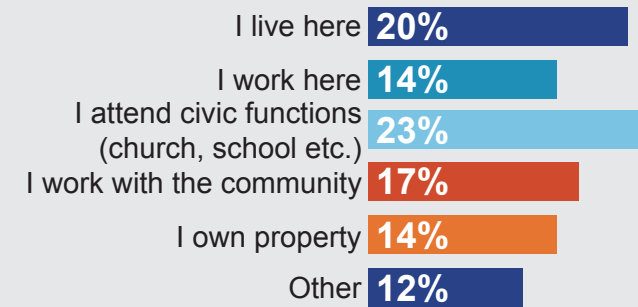
Project Timeline



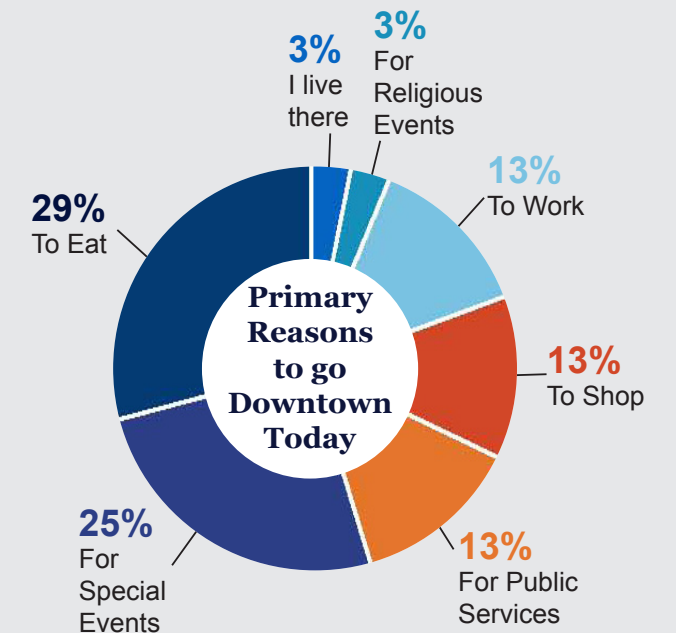
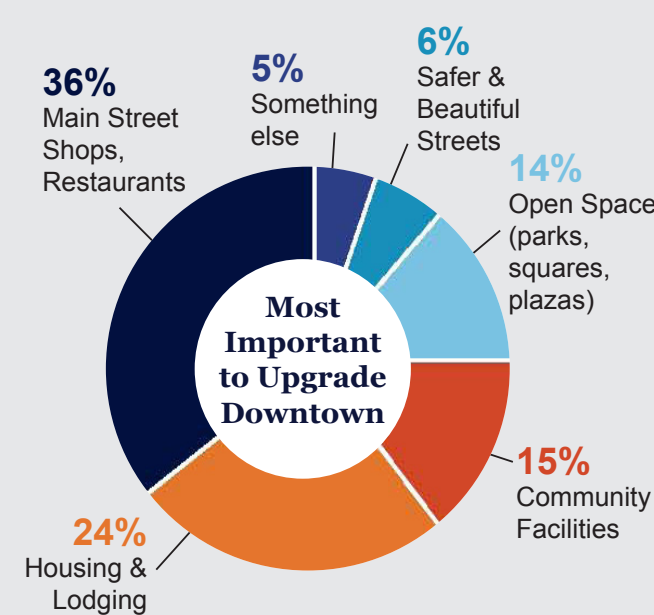
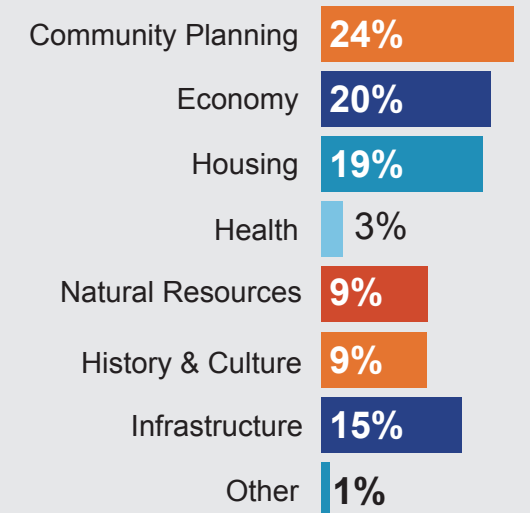
Project Kick-off Meeting: Keypad Polling Input



What are your main interests in Downtown?



What are your main interests in recovery?



“One Word” that describes Downtown Panama City

At the kick-off meetings, participants were asked to write down one word that came to mind about Downtown Panama City “Today” and “In the Future.”

A word cloud was created from the responses. This icebreaker activity graphically reveals how participants see Downtown evolving in the future. The more respondents that used a word, the larger that word appears.

TODAY:



IN THE FUTURE (in my vision):



Charrette Week

Downtown Walk/Bus Tour

The Charrette week started with a walk/bus tour, where the citizens, stakeholders, City staff and planning team toured Downtown Panama City and shared ideas.

There were 8 pre-selected stops where the citizens could show and tell the consultants, in real time, their ideas and concerns. The planners in turn could then discuss some immediate reactions and thoughts about what they saw and how they could possibly design a helpful solution.

Close to 100 participants filled 4 buses. There was a free flow of communications as everyone was encouraged to share their histories and hopes. Comment cards were gathered and catalogued, note pages were filled and photos were taken. All of this information helped inform the planning process that followed in the development of the first draft of the Strategic Vision.



Downtown Walk / Bus Tour
Monday, June 17 10AM to 1PM

Join for the entire tour or meet up along the way! Walk, bike, or ride and discuss your vision for key downtown sites with the planning team.

1 10AM: Meet behind City Hall (parking lot behind 501 Harrison Ave)	5 11:25AM: McKenzie Park (Park St between Oak Ave & Laverne Ave)
2 10:10AM: Beach Drive (6th St & Beach Drive)	6 11:50AM: Panama City Marina (Harrison Ave & Government St)
3 10:35AM: 6th Street (McKenzie Ave & 6th St)	7 12:15PM: Harrison Avenue (4th St & Harrison Ave)
4 11AM: Magnolia Avenue (Magnolia Ave between 4th St and 3rd Ct)	8 12:40PM: Grace Avenue (4th St & Grace Ave)

(return to City Hall at 1pm)

Bus transportation provided with RSVP (seats limited).
Please RSVP by June 12 to: Barbara Lamb, info@dovertkohl.com or 305-666-0446 (ext 18)
www.RebuildPC.org

Above: Participants on the Downtown Walk/Bus Tour

Left: Flyer showing the tour route through Downtown.

Charrette Week: Downtown Plan Events

- 1 **DOWNTOWN WALK / BUS TOUR**
MONDAY, JUNE 17, 10AM TO 1PM
- 2 **HANDS-ON DESIGN SESSION**
MONDAY, JUNE 17, 6PM TO 9PM
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PANAMA CITY
- 3 **ON-SITE DESIGN STUDIO (& FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS)**
TUES JUNE 18 TO THURS JUNE 20, 10AM – 6PM (EXTENDED JUNE 19, TO 9PM)
PANAMA CITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS
- 4 **CHARRETTE CLOSING PRESENTATION**
FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 6PM TO 9PM
BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
- 5 **CHARRETTE CLOSING RECAP**
SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 10AM TO 12PM
CITY HALL

Hands-on Design Session

On Monday, June 17, 2019, an evening Hands-on Design Session was held. Following a brief introductory presentation, participants gathered around maps of existing conditions in Panama City and discussed their vision for future land uses, housing, street design, and public space improvements. Over 170 people attended the session, providing their ideas for the future form and character of Downtown.

At the end of the event, one person from each table presented their “big ideas” to the assembly.



Right: The Hands-on Design Session

Top, Middle: Participants working together in groups to define their ideas and priorities for Downtown.

Bottom: At the end of the event, one person from each table presented the table ideas to the larger group.

Facing Page: Summary of “Big Ideas” from each table.

“Big Ideas” presented by Community Participants

Table 1:

1. Walkability to connect water
2. Tiered height
3. Accurate historic representation of architecture
4. Grocery and gas near residential

Table 2:

1. Verdant spaces
2. Marina redevelopment
3. Environmental sustainability

Table 3:

1. Working waterfront/access
2. Bay walk connection
3. Mixed-use Downtown

Table 4:

1. Overall charm, walkability, trees, art, wide sidewalks
2. Centralized parking garage with mixed-use
3. Reuse of existing structures
4. Amphitheater

Table 5:

1. Connect all water areas
2. Housing, shopping, amenities, services
3. Attractions to bring people Downtown; events

Table 6:

1. Waterfront promenade
2. Downtown dining
3. Outdoor food courts and food trucks
4. Extended hours and less restrictive regulations
5. Improve streetscapes

Table 7:

1. Changing code to be historic building friendly
2. Mixed-use with public-private partnership opportunities
3. Revitalization beyond Harrison Avenue

Table 8:

1. Art and galleries
2. Restaurants and bars
3. Housing and mixed-use

Table 9:

1. Walking trail, linear park
2. Marina programming redevelopment
3. Amphitheater
4. Downtown placemaking

Table 10:

1. Park Space on the marina
2. Close Harrison Avenue to vehicles
3. Commodore Jim’s Amphitheater

Table 11:

1. Open waterfront to public
2. Amphitheater
3. Mixed-use businesses
4. Tiered heights to water
5. Update code to implement master plan

Table 12:

1. Culture center; Arts and music
2. Infrastructure
3. Mixed-use plots
4. Walkability

Table 13:

1. Homeless; safety
2. Mixed-use
3. Green spaces
4. Multi-use paths

Table 14:

1. Waterfront recreation, redevelopment
2. Mixed-use near Harrison and waterfront
3. Walkable environment

Table 15:

1. Enforce and relax existing codes/ordinances
2. Acquire all waterfront
3. Harrison Avenue redesign

Table 16:

1. Community pool
2. Water taxi
3. Amphitheater and boardwalk

Table 17:

1. Open waterfront
2. Two distinct districts; Music, art, and food, Housing
3. Walkable housing and parking

Focus Group Meetings, Ward Meetings, & On-Site Studio

From June 18 - 20, 2019, the planning team set up an on-site design studio at the Panama City Center for the Arts. The studio was open from 10am to 6pm on Tuesday and Thursday, and from 10am to 9pm on Wednesday. The ideas from the Hands-on Session were on display so that new participants could quickly get up to speed. The planning team began to sketch ideas for public improvements and opportunity sites, based on feedback at the hands-on session.

During the week, the Recovery Plan team conducted a series of Focus Group discussions. Focus Groups provided a forum for smaller groups to gather and discuss specific topics. Meetings at the On-Site Studio discussed both Downtown and city-wide priorities around the topics of housing, transportation, economic development, stormwater, and arts. Two sessions for local business and property owners were held (a morning coffee and evening discussion). Members of the community that stopped by the studio could sit in on the ongoing discussions and talk with members of the planning team to give feedback on draft concepts in progress.

Additional Recovery Plan Focus Group topical discussions were held at City Hall, and a meeting was held in each City Ward neighborhood, providing multiple opportunities for participation throughout the week.



Top: Reviewing maps at the On-Site Studio

Below: Focus Group meeting participants

Facing Page: The Housing Focus Group discussion at the On-Site Studio.



Charrette Participation Summary



Charrette Participant Feedback Cards

Throughout the charrette week, participants expressed their opinions through written *Downtown Vision & Plan Feedback* cards. The cards asked “Of the many ideas you have heard or seen so far, which are most exciting to you?” and “What additional ideas do you have?” This page provides a sampling of the responses received, and summary of the most often voiced ideas and concerns:

The Panama City community wants more life in the Downtown Area.

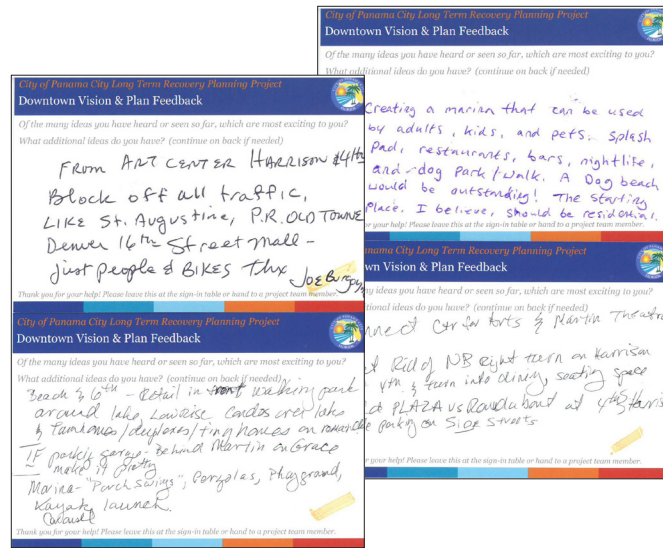
Panama City was once the region’s proud working marina town. The Downtown was already fading before bearing the brunt of Hurricane Michael, which hit in October of 2018; there is a strong resident drive to bring life back. The community recognizes this as a unique opportunity to strategically plan and implement what is needed for the Downtown to not only recover but to thrive in a potential growing economy, bolstered by the opportunity to refresh the demographic draws needed to bring the residents back to this much loved town.

Panama City residents want waterfront access.

Panama City is a water town, a unique location on the panhandle where the urban meets water. The marina pad is the terminus to the main street, Harrison Avenue. This is a unique juxtaposition in an urban setting and allows for some very unique and special moments to not only maintain the current connection to the water but to also create some special moments on the waterfront that can help bolster Panama City’s uniqueness.

Many residents want to preserve historic elements and the history of Panama City.

Downtown’s historic character was hard-won, and the citizens are very interested in preserving what remains. This concern for historic preservation does not only apply to individual buildings that are still standing, many in need of refurbishments, but also to the area streetscapes and public spaces. Community members have expressed the desire to reinstate as well as to create events that have historic meaning as well as creating new events that acknowledge the past while building the tapestry of the new story that will redefine Panama City.



Many residents are excited about creating a pedestrian friendly, tree rich atmosphere and bike-ped paths along the water’s edge, including a connection to St. Andrews.

Everyone seems to understand that the more shade trees there are lining the streets, the more pedestrian friendly the streets will become. After setting national records in post hurricane tree debris removal tonnage, the residents of Panama City want their trees back. There is an opportunity to rebuild even better than before, and the citizens of Panama City are all in.

In conjunction with better pedestrian connections is the adding of better bicycle access not only in the city proper but also along the waterfront to connect to St. Andrews. The residents see not only the practical daily applications of this but also see how it forms a unique activity that connects them to the water’s edge and also has potential of bolstering benefits from increased day tourism.

There is an opportunity to recreate a more useful Civic Center.

A potential opportunity for change has presented itself with the hurricane-damaged Civic Center on the marina pad. Once the damage assessment is complete, a decision will need to be made, if the Civic Center should be repaired or rebuilt on-site, or elsewhere. There is a desire to keep an event space for weddings, recitals, and other special events near the water; there are also ideas for a multi-purpose events space within the Downtown, but perhaps not located on the most valuable waterfront land. As a next step, an analysis can be undertaken to evaluate program and sites to inform the decision.

Sample of community responses from charrette feedback forms:

Of the many ideas you have heard or seen so far, which ones seem the most exciting to YOU?

“As a lifelong resident (multi generational). I had to relocate after Hurricane Michael, fortunately I found a little house in the North Downtown. I see so much damage (abandoned properties). I would love to see “pocket Neighborhoods”. The area where I currently live would be perfect. I am 60 and semi-retired, these neighborhoods attract my demographic, I am very social and have a group of friends and we love to live in this type of neighborhood.”

“My favorite ideas are the redesigned streetscapes and the emphasis on ‘greenness’ and walkability. I wish there was discussion for a city-wide transit network. Public transit is managed by the county, but it’s very Unreliable, and underfunded, and burns fossil fuel”

“Creating a Marina that can be used by adults, kids, and pets. The starting place, I believe, should be residential...”

“The key to our rebounding is Quality of Life... This should be priority #1.”

“Trees planted along Harrison Avenue and other roads. Moving the tank farm. Bike paths and multiuse paths. You are on the right path to revitalize my much-loved hometown. Thank you to all of you... Love the plaza at the intersection of Harrison & 4th. Shade trees on the streets...”

“I am most excited about the esplanade and green spaces. I feel that if we work on the greening of Downtown businesses and restaurants will follow as well as Downtown living. A longtime dream of many including myself is (walk-bike) connectivity to St. Andrews via Beach Drive.”

“Love the Eco-Park and the storm water operation – needs more funkiness ...”

Charrette Closing Presentations

On Friday, June 21st, a Charrette Closing Presentation was held where the planning team presented the draft concepts produced during the week. This meeting was an opportunity to assess all of the information gathered to date and new drawings produced during the week, and ask if the work was on the right track. Keypad polling questions gathered reactions to the ideas from those in attendance; the team also distributed written feedback forms.

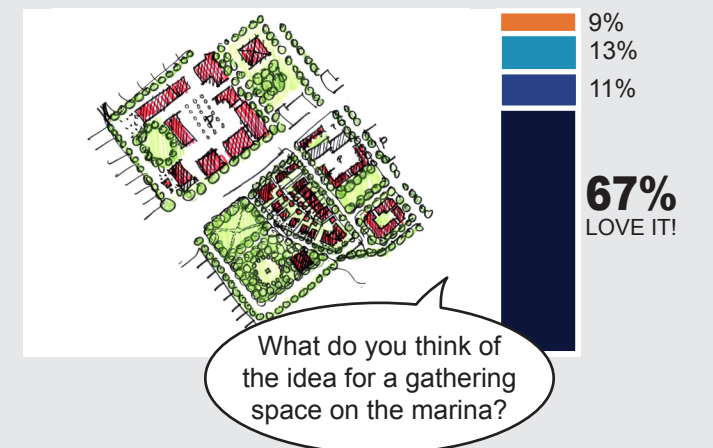
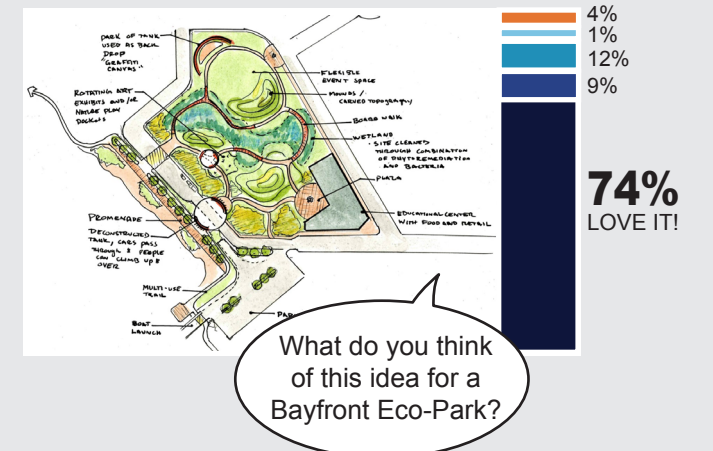
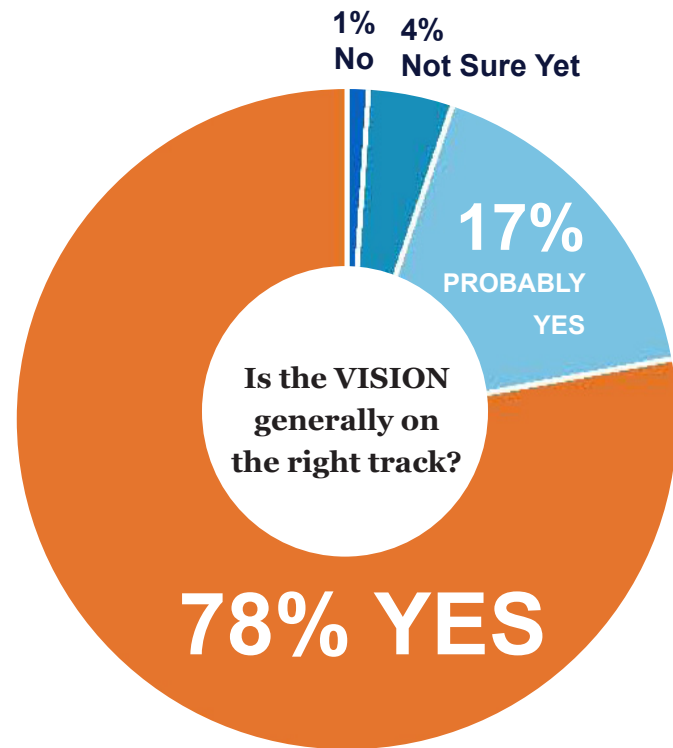
On Saturday, June 22nd, a Charrette Closing Recap meeting was held at City Hall, for any community members unable to attend the Friday night event. Following the charrette, the presentation was posted to the rebuildpc.org website, and an online survey was used to gather additional feedback. Input from these meetings and the online survey was used to refine the plan ideas presented in this report.



Top: The Charrette Closing Presentation at Bay County Government Center

Bottom: The Charrette Closing Recap at City Hall

Left: Keypad polling result at the Charrette Closing Presentation



Charrette Closing: Keypad Polling Results

Following the Closing Presentation, participants were asked to rank some of draft ideas on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "I love it" and 5 meaning "try again". The most favorable ideas included the waterfront promenade and Downtown streetscape improvements.



TEN CORNERSTONE IDEAS

During the charrette week, the planning team worked with the community to envision future improvements and development in Downtown Panama City. Participants challenged the team and each other with questions such as: “How can we make Harrison Avenue a place people really want to be? Can the waterfront be designed as a place for people, with views and open spaces for everyone to enjoy? What if we replace some of the asphalt with green and re-plant the tree canopy to improve the quality of the water that goes into the bay?”

The many ideas heard at the hands-on design session and stakeholder interviews, during the community bus tour and focus group conversations were distilled into most-often heard themes or “Cornerstone Ideas”. These ideas define a common vision for the future of Downtown, and are described in this section of the report. The Illustrative Plan on this page provides a high-level overview of the physical improvements envisioned for Downtown. Additional illustrations and text describe ideas in more detail, identifying what would need to change about the design of Downtown’s public spaces and buildings, or what changes would be needed to City regulations, policies or procedures, to realize the vision.

Ten Cornerstone Ideas to Rebuild Downtown Panama City:

- 1 WATERFRONT ACCESS
- 2 DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY
- 3 DOWNTOWN LIVING
- 4 SAFETY & SECURITY
- 5 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING
- 6 RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE
- 7 CONNECTED
- 8 PLACEMAKING
- 9 GATHERING SPACES
- 10 UPDATED STANDARDS



CORNERSTONE 1: Waterfront Access

The first cornerstone idea for Downtown Panama City is that in the future there should be continuous, connected public access to the waterfront. Panama City is first and foremost a waterfront town; water is an important part of community identity. Over time, portions of the waterfront have been dedicated to “back of house” industrial or private uses. In the future, as much of the waterfront as possible should become public, available for everyone to enjoy.

A tree-lined waterfront promenade can provide this waterfront access. The promenade will be a continuous, connected trail where people can walk, bike, and run at the water’s edge. It can be a continuation of the existing trail in the Cove neighborhood, built in segments over time. There are several key segments in the marina area and the County Courthouse that are under public ownership; these can be the first segments of the promenade realized. Additional segments on private property can be implemented using easements, or as part of future development agreements on waterfront sites. Where waterfront access is not possible, the trail can follow improved sidewalks and protected bikeways on existing city streets, creating a connected walk/bike route through Downtown.

The marina itself is another opportunity for the community to engage with the water. Restoration of the harbor could lead to a reopening of the marina on the City Pier. Boaters drawn to the marina could help to activate Downtown and support local restaurants and retailers. Activity in the marina area, such as a fish/farmers market, fishing tournaments, regattas, and sailing clubs, should be supported to bring the community Downtown to enjoy its waterfront. Local artists suggested a sunset celebration on the pier a la Mallory Square in Key West. Others have suggested that “food boats” could help enliven the pier.

The existing boat ramp located in the marina area, adjacent to the Civic Center, provides water access for area boaters. Its convenient location, and ample parking shared with the adjacent Civic Center, is valued. However, the design of the ramp itself is not ideal; and damage to the Civic Center structure has raised larger questions about the best possible future use of that site. City stakeholders have clearly expressed a need for a convenient boat ramp on the City’s waterfront for access to the water, with parking for boat trailers.

Waterfront Access Concepts:

- *A continuous promenade provides public views and access to the waterfront.*
- *The promenade links open spaces and includes recreation opportunities (walk/bike/run trail, swings, kayak launch).*
- *The marina area can be a working waterfront (fishing boats, fish/farmers market, sailing clubs).*

The boat ramp could remain in its existing marina-area location; or it could be moved if a proper replacement site can be secured. Consideration for appropriately-placed boat ramps should be one of the priorities when evaluating future use of waterfront sites. There is also a desire for additional launching points for kayaks, paddle boards and canoes as well.



Above: The Waterfront Promenade is a continuous walk/bike, tree-lined trail that provides public access to the waterfront in the marina area.

Below: Potential alignment of the promenade along Downtown’s streets and waterfront. The alignment in dark blue is along existing streets and publicly-owned land. Segments in lighter blue indicate areas under private ownership, where additional pieces of promenade could be added to increase waterfront access.



Rebuilding in the Marina Area

The Panama City marina is the hub of this waterfront community, and a key economic driver for the City. It is a local treasure, unique for its deep water access and views of the bay. Reuse and rebuilding of the marina area is an important opportunity for the City; reuse of the site can significantly increase public access to and use of the waterfront, and bring much needed activity to Downtown.

Prior to the storm, change was already slated for the area, as the City relocated its facilities from buildings on the northern side of the site. The site experienced significant damage during Hurricane Michael. The St. Joe Company has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City to explore the prospect of building a hotel on the northern side of the site. New development here can produce income and help offset needed infrastructure maintenance costs. In addition, hotel visitors will help make cash registers ring in the Downtown.

The design of the site is early in the planning stages, and there is an opportunity to inform that future development effort through this community visioning process. As shown in conceptual renderings, new buildings can be pushed back from the water's edge to have space for a Waterfront Promenade, which includes a public walkway, trees in a planting strip, and dedicated cycle track (see diagram at right). Adjacent uses that complement the hotel can also benefit the greater community. A significant public waterfront green space can face the southwest; this can be a space for outdoor gatherings and concerts with the backdrop of the water. A new restaurant can be sited near the pier, offering an opportunity for dining with views of the water.

The marina site is sizable; in addition to these initial planned uses and their needed parking, there will be additional area remaining. The vision for Downtown proposes that the block-and-street network be extended over the site, providing pedestrians tree-lined streets where they can walk from the waterfront to destinations on Harrison Avenue. The streets can be lined with sites reserved for future infill buildings, which can accommodate a mix of uses, including shops, homes, offices, a tourism center, and other functions.

The design of the hotel building itself will be the subject of a separate public process; the conceptual illustrations in this report show an old Florida architectural expression that was supported by some community members. Building height was an area of interest for charrette

participants. The MOU states the hotel building will be 5 stories or less; the renderings depict a 5 story structure. If the building were shorter, its footprint would need to grow longer to accommodate the necessary number of rooms. (See Cornerstone 10, Updated Standards, for more discussion of building height.)

The Civic Center

The Civic Center, on the south side of the City-owned marina site, has remained closed as storm damage has been assessed. If it is found to be damaged beyond repair, than it could be demolished and replaced by a new facility (or facilities) on the site or elsewhere in the City. Preliminary engineering reports indicate that replacement is likely to be necessary.

The Civic Center is an important part of Downtown's arts and culture infrastructure, and a key destination that draws patrons that also frequent Downtown shops and restaurants. If the existing building must be replaced, community stakeholders have resoundingly expressed that it is important for this use to remain in the historic Downtown. A new facility can be designed as a multi-purpose center, with flexibility to accommodate a variety of types and sizes of events, and should be aggressively promoted to encourage a steady stream of activities and visitors. A site near, but not directly on, the waterfront could be ideal for this new facility. This would retain activity in the Downtown and draw people in, but reserve prime waterfront lots for public spaces and/or uses that take advantage of the tremendous views such sites offer.

There is potential for a rebuilt Civic Center and Convention Center within the City. A pre-application has been submitted to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., seeking funding support for a Convention Center. These uses could be co-located within the same complex or in nearby buildings; or a new Convention Center could be located in another part of the City. An economic study should evaluate options and potential sites, considering the synergies of co-location as well as site demands such as parking and access.



Waterfront Promenade

The promenade can be a place for exercise and relaxation. It should connect other waterfront uses, such as the kayak launch and new waterfront parks and open spaces. The promenade will need to vary in design along its route due to available area, but it should be shaded and provide a quality facility for both walking and biking.

Where space permits, the promenade should be between 32' to 50' in width, with areas for walking, trees, and a separate bikeway. It can also include amenities such as swings, benches, and pedestrian-scaled lights.



Above: Existing conditions on the City-owned marina site include vacant land, vacant/damaged former City buildings, and parking.

Right: Future development in the marina area is set behind the waterfront promenade; the site can accommodate a mix of uses to draw residents and visitors to Downtown.



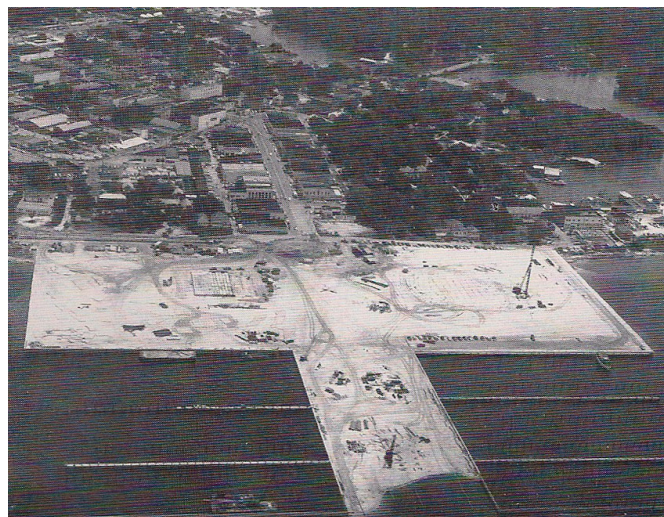
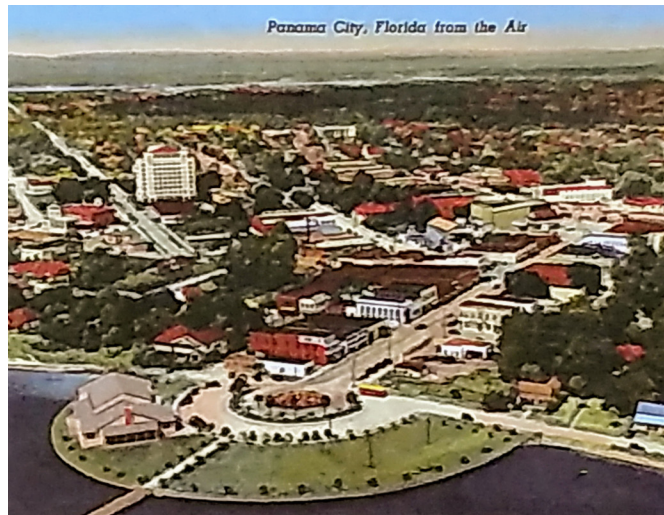
Marina Area Concepts:

- A** A continuous tree-lined promenade provides public access to walk, jog, and bike along the waterfront.
- B** A new waterfront hotel is set behind the promenade.
- C** A waterfront open space/amphitheater provides areas for community gathering.
- D** A new waterfront restaurant is a community destination.
- E** Tree-lined streets connect the marina area destinations to Harrison Avenue and the heart of Downtown.
- F** A building site near, but not on, the waterfront can be reserved for a new multi-purpose events center.
- G** New buildings can surround needed parking, to provide a public face for pedestrians on area sidewalks. Buildings can accommodate a mix of uses, including shops, homes, offices, a tourism center, and other functions.

Potential for change over time in the Marina Area

The marina area has been changing through the City's history. In the City's earliest days, Harrison Avenue terminated on a simple pier. Recognizing the value of waterfront views, a cafe on the pier is seen in early photos. Postcards show a circular land form that contained public space and development sites in later years. The current configuration of land area at the marina site was constructed in the 1950s. The next iteration of change to Panama City's marina area, prompted by Hurricane Michael's damage, will likely happen in steps, over time. Illustrations on the following page depict a potential sequencing of improvements.

The envisioned hotel, waterfront green, and restaurant will likely be the first step. The long-term block-and-street network framework should also be put into place. In the near term, small, temporary structures such as stick built shops, trailers, and food trucks can be used to fill future development sites. Not intended to be there for the long term, the temporary uses in low-cost structures can help make a better connection and experience to walk from the hotel/waterfront to Harrison Avenue. In the long term, these sites can be filled with permanent buildings that better frame streets and public spaces, and screen views to parking. (See Cornerstone 9 for additional ideas about future marina area improvements.)



Right: Change over time in the marina area.

Top: First City pier at the end of Harrison Avenue, early 1900s.

Middle: Postcard view of Downtown from over the marina area, pre-1950.

Bottom: Construction of the current configuration of the Downtown Panama City Marina, 1950s.



Potential phasing of improvements in the marina area:

- 1: Existing Conditions
- 2: Waterfront Promenade, hotel, restaurant, and public gathering space. Tree-lined streets connect initial development to Downtown.
- 3: Temporary commercial buildings and/or food trucks can line needed parking, providing a better pedestrian experience and producing additional activity in the area.
- 4: New mixed-use buildings help to frame the waterfront amphitheater site.
- 5: Over time, temporary structures are replaced with permanent buildings.

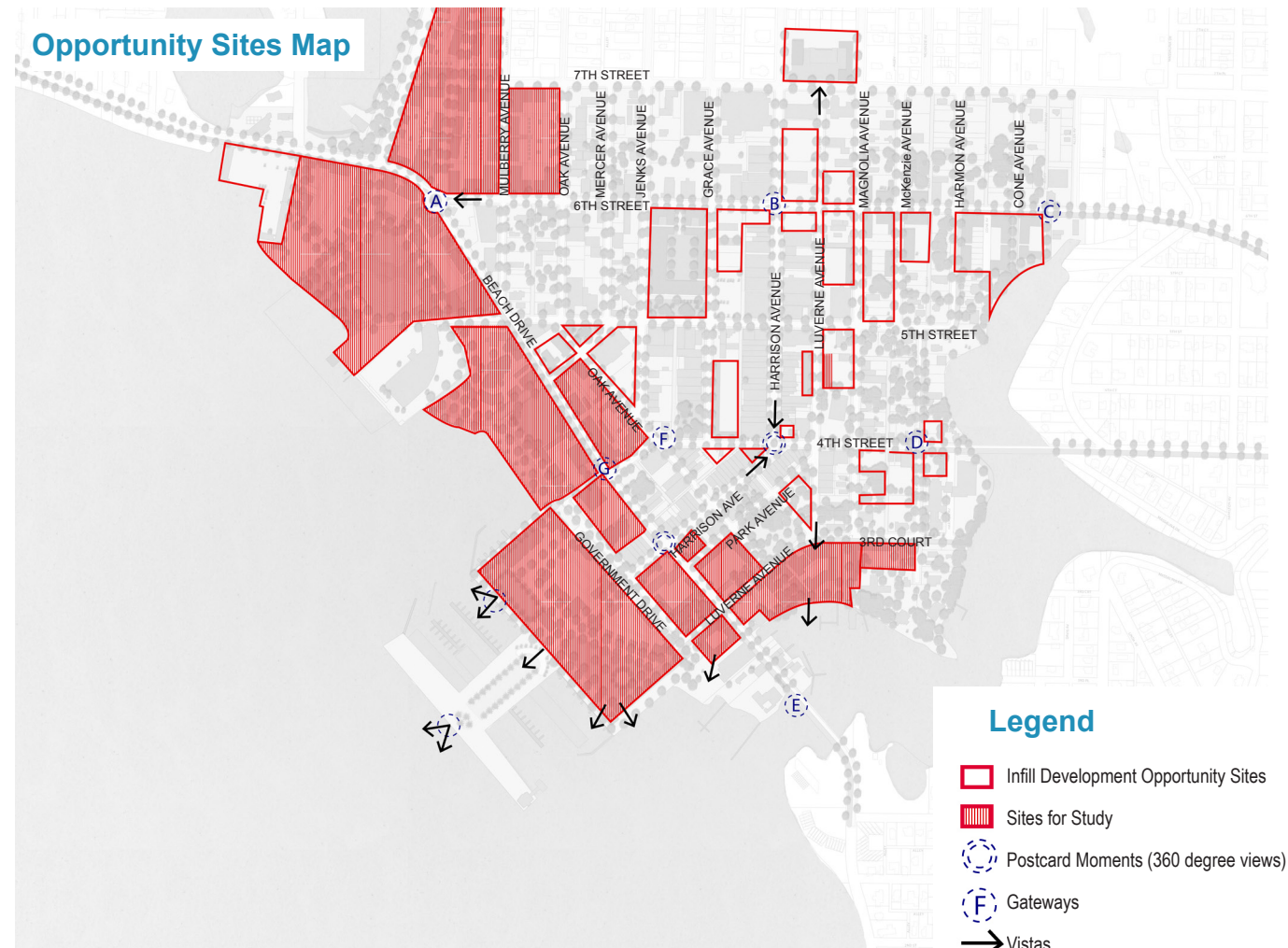
Waterfront Opportunity Sites

In addition to the marina area, a number of Downtown sites hold opportunity for future improvements and development. During the charrette, the planning team worked to identify Opportunity Sites based on an assessment of existing conditions and feedback from community participants. Sites include those that are currently vacant, underutilized (including surface parking lots) and those with buildings significantly damaged from the Hurricane.

The map below outlines opportunity sites and identifies those studied in more detail through plans or renderings in this report. This is not an exhaustive list of all sites where future change will occur, as that will be the result of decisions made by private investors; the map captures a range of potential opportunities in the area, including large sites and small infill lots. A number of Opportunity Sites are on St. Andrews Bay and the Massalina Bayou waterfront; future development on these sites can be part of the public waterfront access strategy.

One such site is the vacant waterfront parcel adjacent to the marina site. The current property owner owns both the waterfront land as well as property on both sides of Beach Drive. Hypothetical illustrations on the following pages show concepts for future development that fit with the community vision identified during the charrette.

Future waterfront development sites could include segments of the new waterfront promenade; they could also include public waterfront gathering places. The alignment of Downtown streets can be extended over larger parcels, connecting pedestrians with the waterfront. The public face of new buildings (porches, doors and windows) can frame streets and public spaces, with parking and other utilities located in mid-block locations, out of view from pedestrians. Stepped building heights, with shorter buildings on the water's edge and taller buildings toward town, follow community preferences expressed during the charrette.



Above: Redevelopment of waterfront opportunity sites can include easements/access for continuation of the waterfront promenade.

There is nothing in the current zoning that requires the property owners to build in this way. Current zoning allows buildings up to 150' in height, and there are no requirements for providing public access to the waterfront. New public spaces (such as the waterfront promenade or a public green) would benefit both new residents as well as the general community, but without incentives, they are less likely to materialize.

The City will need to work with waterfront property owners to implement elements of the vision as part of future development. Incentives could include City funding for infrastructure or public spaces (such as design and construction of the promenade); reduced or eliminated minimum parking requirements for buildings less than 6 stories in height; or a streamlining of the approvals process (saving property owners time and money) for new development that follows the community vision. In addition, the City could explore a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) policy whereby waterfront property owners could transfer some of their development potential to other areas of Downtown or the City, in return for shorter buildings and/or open spaces on the waterfront. The City would need to identify "receiving" sites that could utilize the additional development potential.

Waterfront Redevelopment Concepts:

- A** A tree-lined Waterfront Promenade could continue from the marina and connect to the northwest of Downtown. Implementation could be through land acquisition, easements or incentivized as part of a future development agreement.
- B** A Town Square could provide a gathering space that has a view to St. Andrew Bay and serve as an amenity for new residents as well as the general public.
- C** Future development could include a mix of unit types, such as rowhouses and apartments. Stepping up building height away from the waterfront could provide better views to interior street/units, and meet community preferences.
- D** A new tree-lined street extends Downtown's streets across the site, providing access to new units and connecting pedestrians to the water.
- E** Parking and utilities for new buildings are provided to the rear, out of sight from pedestrians on streets and public spaces.

Right: Potential future development of a waterfront opportunity site.

Below: Existing conditions



CORNERSTONE 2: Downtown Activity

Critical to the success of the Downtown revitalization effort will be bringing in new residents and visitors to frequent Downtown restaurants, retailers and other businesses. In the short-term, that will involve marketing, branding and promotion. In the mid- and longer-term future, the emphasis should expand to include housing development.

Public improvement can be a catalyst for Downtown activity. The bright center of activity should be Harrison Avenue and the waterfront marina. The design of these critical public spaces should support a mix of uses that includes retail, restaurants, offices/jobs, and arts and culture destinations.

Some concerns were voiced by community participants about the current retail mix on Harrison Avenue, with non-retail uses occupying ground floor areas. Currently, limited demand could leave shopfront vacant if professional services were banned from first-floor occupancy, which would be worse. The first order of business is to create a great street that can support and attract retail activity. CRA grants for tenant improvements for retail, restaurant or arts-related tenants could incentivize those types of uses to locate on Harrison.

As part of plan implementation, the City should work with local higher education institutions to locate facilities within the Downtown. Gulf Coast State College has expressed interest in moving its arts programs, which would allow students to interact more freely with other local artists while further enlivening Downtown. Community participants recommended a partnership with the GCSC Culinary Program to open a community bakery downtown to give culinary students experience while providing downtown residents with amenities and a new gathering place. The City should continue to work with Gulf Coast State College and Florida State University to identify programs that could have particular synergies with the Panama City waterfront. As an example, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts takes advantage of a waterfront location to pursue private and non-profit research in marine science and engineering. Through the years, it has grown to a complement of about 1,000 staff and students.

Downtown Activity Concepts:

- *Create an active and livable Downtown.*
- *Focus on Harrison Avenue and the marina/waterfront as the active center.*
- *Reinforce the unique “brand” of the historic Downtown waterfront.*
- *A mix of uses throughout Downtown includes: retail; restaurants; offices/jobs; arts and culture destinations; university/higher learning sites.*

Heart of Downtown

Illustrative Plan Concepts:

- A** A redesign of Harrison Avenue that includes wider sidewalks, shade trees, pedestrian lighting, and other amenities supports businesses and activity.
- B** Vacant buildings are restored/reused; vacant sites and damaged buildings are replaced with infill buildings along Harrison Avenue.
- C** The intersection of Harrison Avenue and 4th Street is designed as a shared space plaza.
- D** Opportunity sites can be used for parking garages lined by shops and other active uses.
- E** New housing on infill sites supports businesses and 24-hour activity.
- F** The former Dixie Sherman site could one day be reused for a hotel/convention center.
- G** McKenzie Park is faced by the fronts of new infill buildings.
- H** New “water smart” parks provide gathering places and retain stormwater.



Market, Brand and Promote Downtown

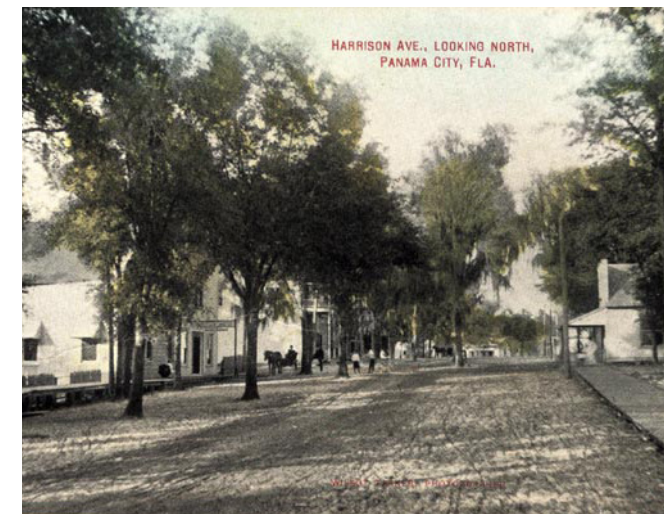
In anticipation of the beneficial effects of the major public investments, the Downtown business community and the City should proceed with near-term strategies to better promote Downtown. As a beginning, small beautification improvements, such as planters, should be pursued to communicate that Downtown is open for business and moving ahead. The recent improvements to Gateway Park are a good example of what can be achieved at low cost with a focused effort.

Organized events can provide a kick-start for Downtown businesses, bringing area residents and visitors Downtown. Something as simple as a street-long garage sale with food trucks and entertainment gives people a positive reason to come Downtown. This year's 4th of July celebration on the Downtown waterfront was successful in attracting many participants. Community members expressed the desire to reinstate and create events that have historic meaning, such as the Christmas Parade, Fish Frys in the Park, and fireworks over the bay. Similar themed events should be pursued to boost Downtown visitation, including celebrations of art, music, wine, boats, antique cars, crafts, other holidays and/or other themes. At least one major regional event should be planned for Downtown for 2020. Smaller quarterly events, such as the garage sale, should be organized and promoted.

As, or more, important will be weekly and monthly events that bring folks out for a charity race or walk, bicycle races, and possibly a farmers market with the Downtown providing an amenable setting for area community groups and institutions to use for their events. The approval process should be streamlined, and set-up support provided for a modest fee. Special emphasis should be given to child- and family-oriented events, such as outdoor movies, to help build a tradition of bringing your family Downtown. Each new public space and private investment should be celebrated with ground-breaking and ribbon-cutting events.

The limited daytime hours of most Downtown businesses impede their potential appeal to customers who work during those hours. Downtown merchants should organize themselves to offer evening hours once a week to help test and demonstrate the market for later hours.

Coordinated marketing should support all of these efforts, alerting residents and visitors to Downtown's offerings and encouraging them to come partake. As the physical improvements proceed, a new brand for Downtown would be appropriate, an image and identity that could be reinforced in all marketing, particularly on social media.



Reimagine Harrison Avenue

This plan envisions the bright center of activity in Downtown will center around Harrison Avenue. This was always the idea, established by the early City founders. Historic photos show shopfronts with awnings and signage facing the street, which once included a row of shade trees. Over time, the road was widened to move people in cars through the Downtown faster. Even then, awnings, marquees and signage presented active facades that framed the public streetspace.

Over time, the priority of automotive design elements detracted from the pedestrian realm on Panama City's main street. Recognizing the value of improving the pedestrian experience (and the impact that could have on area businesses), the City initiated streetscape improvement plans in 2017. Plans proposed to widen sidewalks by switching angled parking to parallel, and suggested a roundabout for the intersection of Harrison and 4th Street.

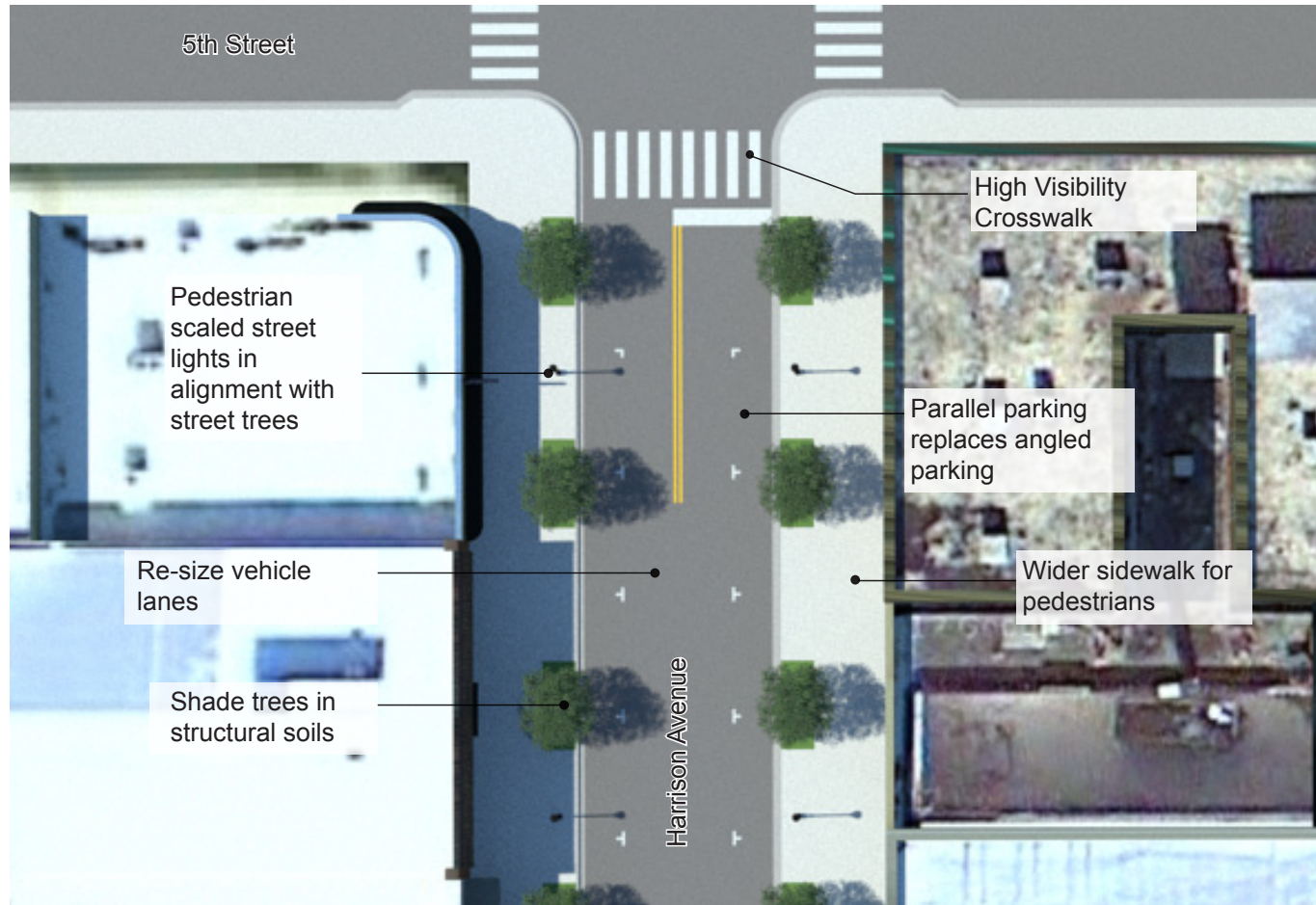
Hurricane Michael and subsequent recovery efforts stalled those previous design plans; there is now a chance to update them, to tweak some of the dimensions and placemaking features, to reflect charrette input and to maximize the effect of that public investment. Illustrations on the following pages recommend shade trees, planted in structural soils and to ensure their long-term health, and re-sizing of the vehicular lanes to slow automobile speed and enhance safety as well as sidewalk width. The critical intersection with 4th Street is envisioned as a signature public plaza called "Four Points Plaza", following the intersection's historic name.

Right: Photos of Harrison Avenue over time

Top: From the earliest settlement, Harrison Avenue was a place for shops and services.

Middle: In the early 1900s, Harrison Avenue was a tree-lined street.

Bottom: As automobiles became the primary mode of travel in surrounding neighborhoods, vehicular lanes were widened and sidewalks narrowed.

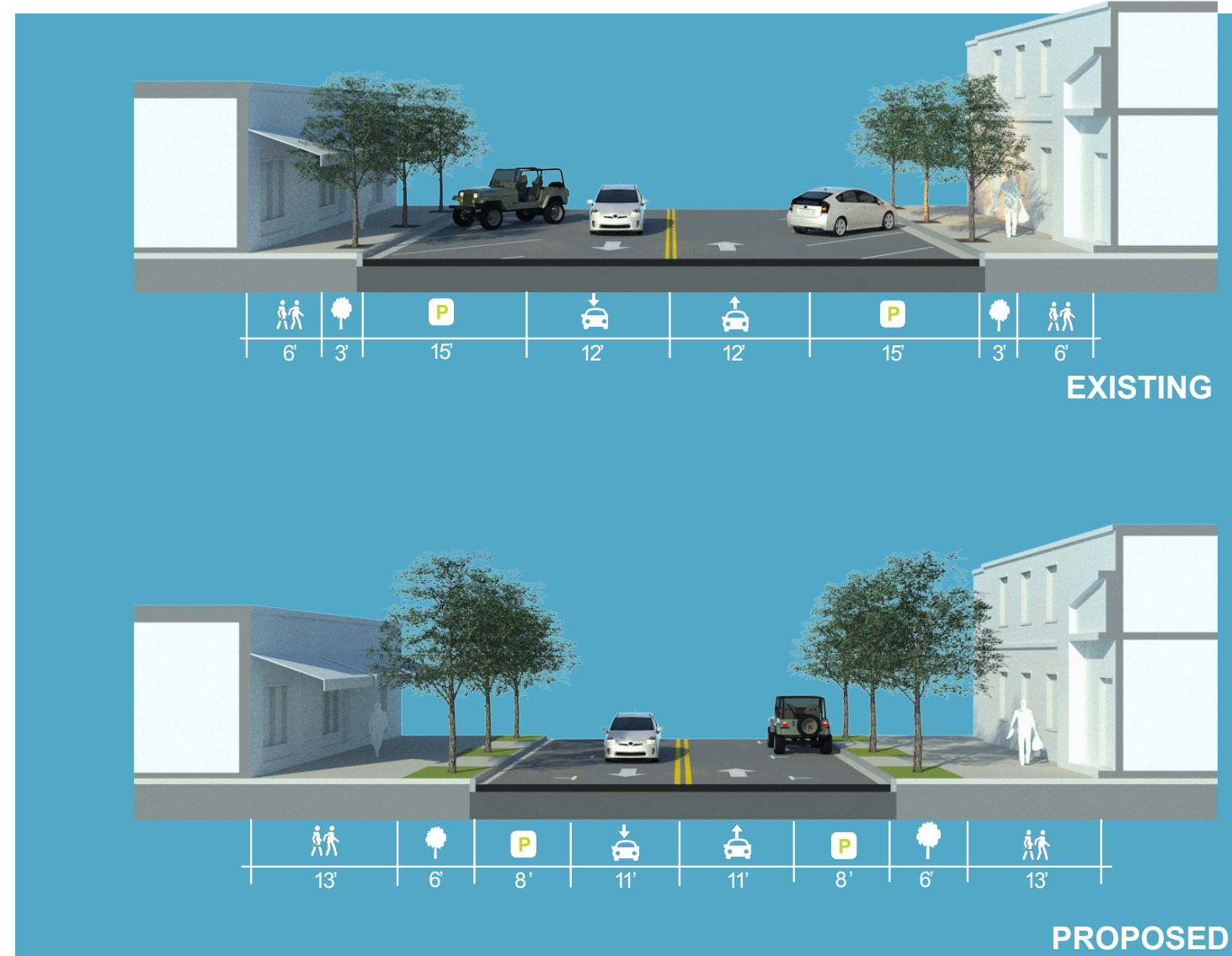


Plan Detail for Harrison Avenue



Above: Plan detail for Harrison Avenue.

Left: Soil cells under construction for street trees in Thomasville, GA; structural soils support tree health and longevity, stormwater retention, treatment and cleaning.



Harrison Avenue (south of 6th)

Existing: Harrison Avenue is a two-lane road that serves as the Main Street of Downtown Panama City. Its auto-oriented streetscape results in faster moving traffic, which decreases pedestrian activity.

Proposed: Harrison Avenue will shift its focus to the pedestrian. Shade trees, wider sidewalks, parallel parking, and narrowed lanes will increase overall safety. These changes will re-shape the street as a community gathering place, supporting local businesses and Downtown activity.



Left: Existing conditions

Below: Sidewalk view of Harrison Avenue with wider sidewalks and shade trees, as shown in plans on the previous page.



Right: Existing conditions

Below: Potential redesign of Harrison Avenue with parallel parking instead of angled, wider sidewalks, and shade trees.



Harrison Avenue & 4th Street Improvements

The intersection of Harrison Avenue and 4th Street is the heart of Downtown Panama City. The kink in the road produces irregularities in the street grid that yields an opportunity to create a street and intersection that is truly special, to fulfill its potential as a central community gathering space and hub of activity.

Previous plans proposed a modern roundabout to resolve the unique geometries and reduce the amount of space required for turn lanes. While an improvement to safety, a roundabout is still primarily an automobile space. This plan proposes the intersection become “people” space, where cars and trucks are allowed but must act differently. (See the following pages for conceptual design drawings.)

Existing Conditions

The current traffic signal control arrangement was designed to favor motor vehicle mobility. In fact, it does not provide the best service to motor vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians. Vehicles are often delayed at a red signal when no traffic is moving in the crossing direction, especially in the many off-peak hours of each day.

Pedestrians are required to wait at the corners until a walk signal appears. The signal cycles are long, thus, many people walk when they feel comfortable, without waiting for the signal to change. The walk for pedestrians along existing crosswalks are longer than comfortable. The 4th Street crossings are approximately 44 feet long and Harrison crossings are 65 and 90 feet on the north and south, respectively. These distances are longer than necessary for pedestrian exposure to potential errant vehicle drivers.

Speed is a critical element of intersection safety. When the signal phase is green, drivers can drive through the intersection at 25, 30 or 40 miles per hour. When crashes happen due to someone’s failure to follow traffic rules, vehicles can hit other vehicles or bikes and pedestrians, with deadly force. Thus, safety is lower and delay is higher in many instances with the current intersection.



How Does the Plaza Design Work?

The proposed plaza design improves many aspects of this vital intersection. First, traffic is controlled by Stop signs on all four legs. When drivers see that the intersection is clear, they enter without further delay. Also, with one vehicle entering at a time, only one entry lane is necessary. The two lanes of traffic enter each side of the plaza, requiring pedestrians to cross only 20 feet of traffic at the crosswalk. This obviously increases pedestrian safety. Vehicular speed is also reduced, further increasing pedestrian safety.

The plaza operates with drivers cautiously maneuvering around the center, looking for other vehicles, bikes and pedestrians. The lower speeds make it easier for drivers to see others. Rarely, when longer vehicles such as semi-trailers arrive and want to turn left, they can turn left in front of the central island. This is infrequent and happens very slowly, therefore safely.

Aesthetically, the plaza provides a very traditional town center feature. Pedestrians will be very comfortable there. Property owners and tenants will be encouraged to develop higher value buildings at this central feature. There exists great potential for special buildings, placed on axis with northbound and southbound Harrison Avenue, to create a terminated vista as drivers and pedestrians approach the plaza.

In summary, the plaza offers increased safety, reduced delay and better urban design for the central space of Downtown Panama City.



Built Example: Court Square Plaza, Montgomery, AL

Court Street, Dexter Avenue, Montgomery Street, and Commerce Street in Montgomery, Alabama historically formed a “five points” intersection; these types of intersections can create opportunities for terminated vistas and unique civic spaces. However, in the mid-twentieth century, Court Street was closed off south of Dexter Avenue and its fountain was enclosed in a pedestrian mall. Dexter Avenue was rerouted for a higher-speed, higher-volume automobile connection, using modern traffic signals. Some of the pedestrian-scale historic buildings around the intersection were torn down and replaced with office buildings. Many existing businesses, deprived of automobile and pedestrian traffic, became empty storefronts.

The Court Square Plaza project involved the transformation of the Court Square intersection into an urban plaza. Early plans for the reconstruction of the intersection included a roundabout; however, that was decided to be too casual for this grand setting in the heart of Alabama’s capital city. Completed in April of 2007, Court Square Plaza spans over 44,000 square feet and features flush pavement at the edges, traffic circulating around the historic 1885 Court Square Fountain, bollards at key locations, and formed cobblestone pavers. Court Square has once again become a memorable, usable civic space and has helped to spark the economic revitalization of Downtown Montgomery. City celebrations, community events, and day to day social and business activities originate at the plaza. The urban space is considered by many to be the first new plaza of its kind on a major U.S. city street in over fifty years.



Above: Court Square in Montgomery, Alabama

Top: Court Square Plaza after improvements in 2007. Today, traffic once again circulates around the fountain, which is contained within the larger plaza area that is flush with surrounding sidewalks, creating a shared community space. Conceptual design provided by Rick Hall, HPE Inc.

Bottom: Before improvements, an auto-oriented configuration diverted activity from the plaza and adjacent shopfronts.

Four Points Plaza Concepts:

- A** The plaza is raised to the level of area sidewalks, slowing vehicle speeds, and reinforcing that this intersection is a space for pedestrians.
- B** This rendering shows a tree in center of the plaza, located where a tree was once planted, as an homage to the City's history. Alternatively, the center of the plaza could be a fountain, statue, or other artwork.
- C** Multiple turn lanes are no longer needed; shorter crosswalks are safer for pedestrians to cross.
- D** Harrison Avenue is lined with shade trees to make walking more pleasant.
- E** Bollards help delineate where cars should not travel and where pedestrians are out of vehicular paths.
- F** An existing parking lot adjacent to the Center for the Arts could become an extension of the new plaza, a space for outdoor events such as small concerts or a farmers market. The space could be framed by a new addition to the Arts Center building (the historic City Hall) that terminates the view down Harrison Avenue.



Above: Potential future redesign of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and 4th Street as a shared space for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Right: Existing conditions





Above: Existing Conditions, Harrison Avenue and 4th Street

Visualizing Improvements at Four Points Plaza

Right: Four Points Plaza replaces the signal at Harrison Avenue and 4th Street. An addition and bell tower at the Center for the Arts (former City Hall building) could terminate the view down Harrison. A new Main Street building could be built in front of the blank wall seen in the existing image, to frame this public space.

Bottom: There are many options for the design of the plaza and tower to create an icon for the center of town. Options illustrated here include:

- 1: A smaller addition to the Center for the Arts (and larger front plaza space).
- 2: One of Downtown's historic clocks could be the centerpiece of the plaza (See Placemaking Cornerstone for more about this idea.)
- 3: A statue could be designed for the center of the plaza; the historic clock could be mounted on the bell tower
- 4: Alternative designs can be explored for the tower as well; a clock tower is illustrated here.



CORNERSTONE 3: Downtown Living

Panama City is facing a critical shortage of housing following Hurricane Michael. As of April 2019, an estimated 2,713 multi-family apartments were uninhabitable – 64 percent of the total inventory. Efforts are underway to repair and renovate many of those units, but others were damaged beyond repair. The lack of housing is impacting the ability of local workers to find suitable and affordable housing and the ability of local employers to recruit and retain workers in the face of those housing shortages. New housing construction is a critical element in the region’s overall recovery effort. With appropriate zoning changes, and utilization of opportunity sites, Downtown can provide suitable sites for new construction.

A larger Downtown residential population is needed to support area businesses and provide 24-hour activity. Planned public improvements and safety/security upgrades will give people the confidence to live Downtown; the return of more people Downtown can then make viable the return of businesses that can support them (a small grocery, pharmacy, etc.).

Beyond the active Harrison/marina area core, there are many opportunity sites that can support future development; a primary focus of these sites should be housing. There is capacity to add a lot of development to the Downtown, in a variety of building and unit types, that support students, seniors, and all lifestyles. Sketches in this section illustrate the possibilities on sample sites.

Given the costs of new construction, most of the new Downtown housing will need to be focused on market-rate development. Waterfront sites and properties with waterfront views are most likely to be competitive for new market-rate construction. The City and Downtown also need replacement housing for the local workforce. This could be best accomplished through targeting of available hurricane recovery funds for community development on writing down the cost of land and improvements for appropriate developments off the waterfront.

City-owned sites on 6th Street at the Massalina Bayou and at Mulberry Avenue and 6th Street could be the basis for public/private partnerships for new development with commitment of the City’s land.

The City should explore potentials for providing financial incentives to property owners that want to convert second-story spaces to residential units above storefronts. This can accompany building code reforms described later (Cornerstone 10).

Downtown Living Concepts:

- *The active Downtown has a mix of uses that draws and supports a residential community.*
- *Many types of housing (apartments, accessory units, cottages, townhouses) for students, seniors, all ages.*
- *Investigate potential for uses that support residents: grocery; pharmacy; etc.*

Gateway Neighborhood Concepts:

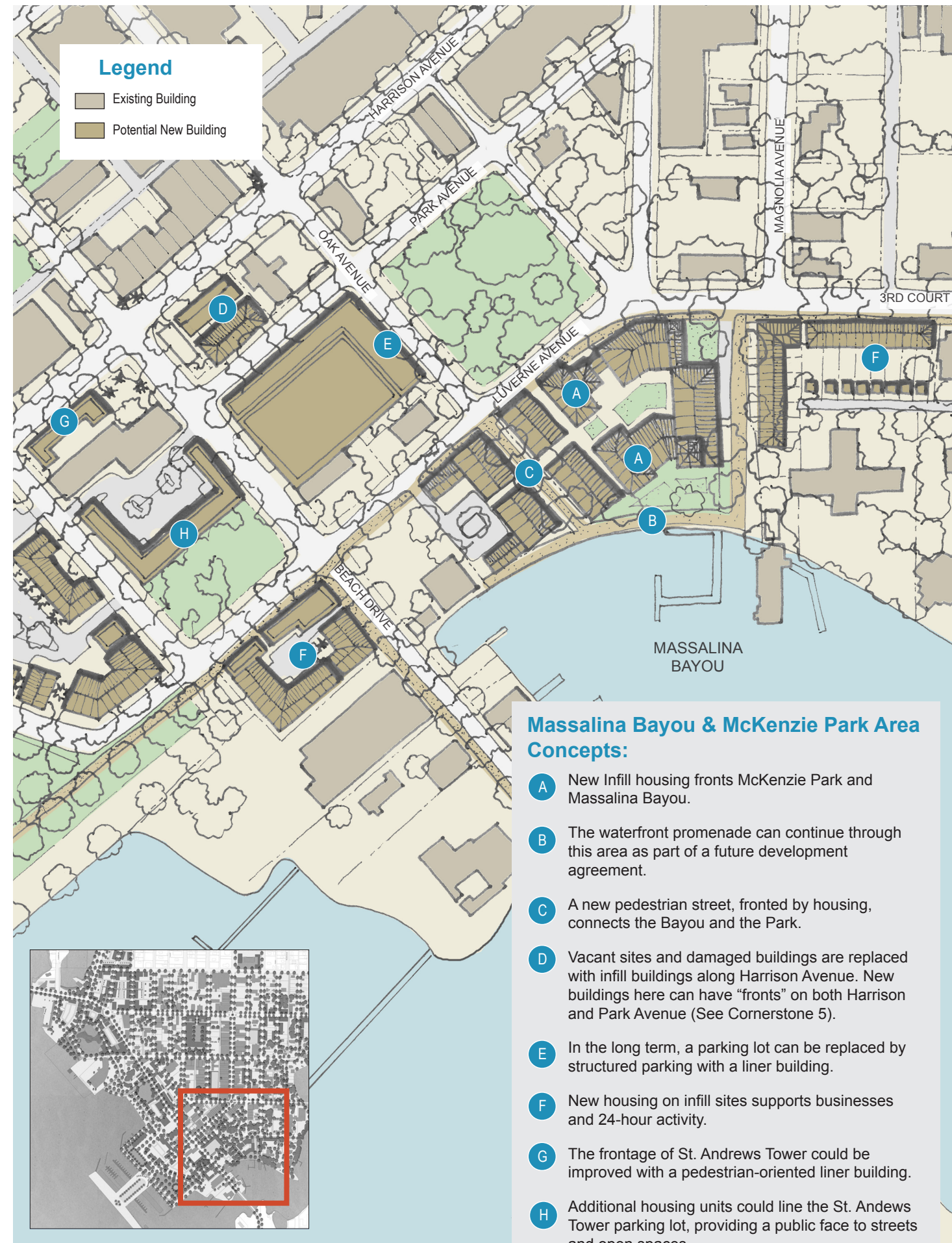
- A** A new neighborhood could fill vacant parcels at the northwest gateway to Downtown (near Beach Drive and 6th Street). A range of building types and units could include apartments, rowhouses, duplexes, and detached single family homes, and house residents that support nearby businesses.
- B** A site for a new corner store at the gateway could anchor the new neighborhood.
- C** The fronts of new buildings define streets. Alleys provide access to parking and reduce needed curb cuts.
- D** A public-private partnership could be established to develop a City-owned block as an extension of the new gateway neighborhood.
- E** New public green spaces should be designed as part of the neighborhood.
- F** A roundabout slows vehicular traffic. (See detail in Cornerstone 7.)
- G** If the Tank Farm is relocated, a mix of new development and public spaces could fill the site. An Eco-Park could provide a public open space for residents that also functions as a stormwater filter as water makes its way to the Bay. (See detail in Cornerstone 6.) Residential, office, or flex use buildings could enclose parking. A new boat ramp could provide additional access to the water.
- H** A boardwalk could extend from the south along the living shorelines and connect to a multi-use trail to St. Andrews on Beach Drive.





Massalina Bayou Area Concepts:

- A** New infill housing fronts McKenzie Park and Massalina Bayou. New units could be a mix of rental or for-sale rowhouses and/or apartments. The two illustrations above show the same urban design layout, with varying unit types (the top primarily rowhouses, and the below with more apartments).
- B** A new pedestrian street, fronted by housing, connects the Bayou and the Park.
- C** Parking is located to the rear of buildings; natural topography can allow for one level of parking to be tucked into the slope, hidden from view of pedestrians on the street.



CORNERSTONE 4: Safety & Security

Enhance Downtown Safety

Personal safety and security was a primary concern of charrette focus group participants; increasing safety and security is a top priority for the City. Employees and visitors reported being concerned about better lighting, particularly between their places of work or destinations and the available parking lots.

Increased activity in the Downtown, as described in the preceding Cornerstones for Downtown Activity and Downtown Living, will naturally provide increased safety, with more eyes on the street, and lighting and activity from ground floor shopfronts or residential stoops replacing vacant buildings and empty lots. The streetscape designs recommended for Harrison Avenue and other Downtown streets also address these concerns, through enhanced pedestrian lighting, and improved pedestrian accommodations. Design standards for new buildings that require doors and windows to face streets and public spaces (and prohibit blank walls) similarly reinforce safety in the public realm.

Also mentioned frequently was concerns about loitering and panhandling. Efforts to better document the location and impact of loitering could encourage more pro-active responses. The City should work with dispatchers to record the number of calls by address and adjust needed resources directed to priority locations. CRA resource officers can be assigned to the historic Downtown and other CRA areas. These officers will be trained to de-escalate problems, and to direct people toward available resources and organizations where they can get assistance.

Enforce the Code and Remove Blight

The City has building codes designed to ensure that buildings are sound and maintained to protect public health and safety. Enforcement has not been a high priority in recent years with repeated extensions of time to remedy the code violations before the City imposes fines or proceeds to demolish the building. As a result, multiple Downtown buildings are in poor condition, blighting other surrounding properties. Some of the deterioration can be attributed to Hurricane Michael, but several other instances involve conscious efforts to avoid the costs of code compliance.

Safety & Security Concepts:

- *More activity and enhanced lighting promotes feelings of safety and security.*
- *Secure and clean up buildings in disrepair, enforce codes.*

The responsibility for code enforcement has been moved from the Police Department to the Development Services Department, which understands the importance of blight elimination. Recognizing the real problems with insurance settlements and financing building improvements following the storm, the City has allowed some leniency in enforcing the code. But a commitment has been made that following the one-year anniversary of the hurricane, there will be no more leniency or deferrals. This will be an important action step to bring those structures into compliance with basic health and safety standards. The City should move to establish, advertise and inform property owners about its clear standards for code enforcement and the resulting City actions and fines.

Immediate demolition of eyesore buildings not suitable for renovation should be a priority with the property owner bearing the full cost of demolition as well as penalties so as to encourage private action before the deadlines. Where the buildings are historic and suitable for reuse, the City should consider cleaning them and billing the owners or applying liens to the properties to recoup its investment. The City should prioritize properties along Harrison Avenue and the waterfront.

CORNERSTONE 5: Sustainable Building

The rebuilding of Downtown offers an important opportunity to rebuild sustainably, using the best new techniques and green building practices. Following a “green” paradigm can improve life cycle costs, lower costs to operate, lower energy footprint, and save money. Requirements or incentives to utilize LEED or other sustainability standards can be a part of code updates for the Downtown.

Sustainable design does not necessarily mean technology; sustainable design techniques are also embedded in historic coastal design traditions with stoops/porches, generous floor-to-ceiling heights, and building door/window patterns that support cross ventilation; and awnings/balconies that provide shade over sidewalks. The building-to-street relationship established by the historic pattern is inherently sustainable, with the public fronts of buildings that frame streets, and utilities/parking to the rear. In this way, each new building will improve walkability; every new addition, change and improvement will make the area more complete.

A Mix of Building Types

A livable and successful Downtown has a mix of buildings and land uses. During the charrette, a series of building studies for infill lots across the Downtown were completed. Conceptual designs illustrate the types of buildings that can fit on small, narrow sites, with architecture that complements the historic setting. The examples include housing, live/work units, and mixed-use buildings. These prototypical sketches could inform a pattern book or design guidelines that shape future development. A few atypical sites were also studied:

- St. Andrews Tower is the tallest existing building in Downtown and gets a lot of scrutiny. Sketches explore ideas to improve it: a new small addition along Harrison Avenue could heal the relationship to the street; a green roof and greenery on the facade could be a short term change. Small infill buildings at the street level could produce income and heal the building-to-street relationship, improving conditions for pedestrians.
- Dixie Sherman block: during the Hands-on Session, one citizen group proclaimed “bring back the Dixie Sherman.” Historically a tower and hotel site, this underutilized (primarily surface parking) block could once again accommodate a large footprint use. Sketches show a hotel with ballrooms/meeting rooms, parking, and residential outbuildings as well as green public space. Green space could be used for stormwater management, a skate park, and other community open space uses.

Sustainable Building Concepts:

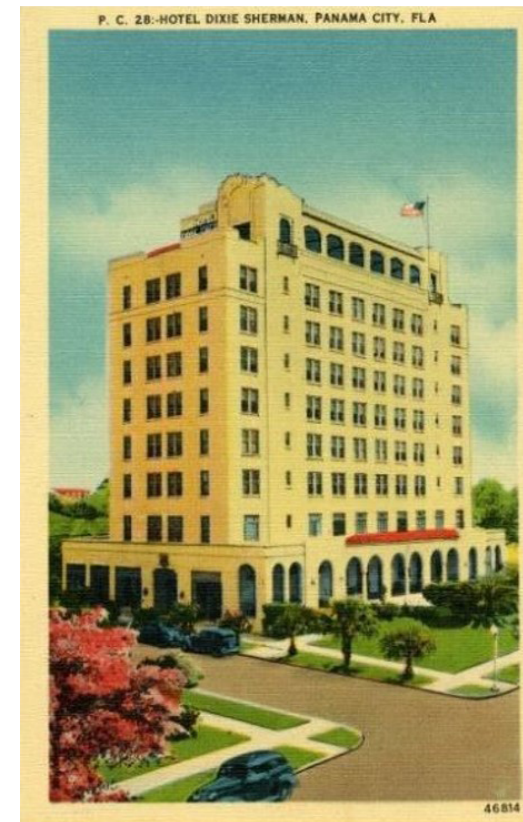
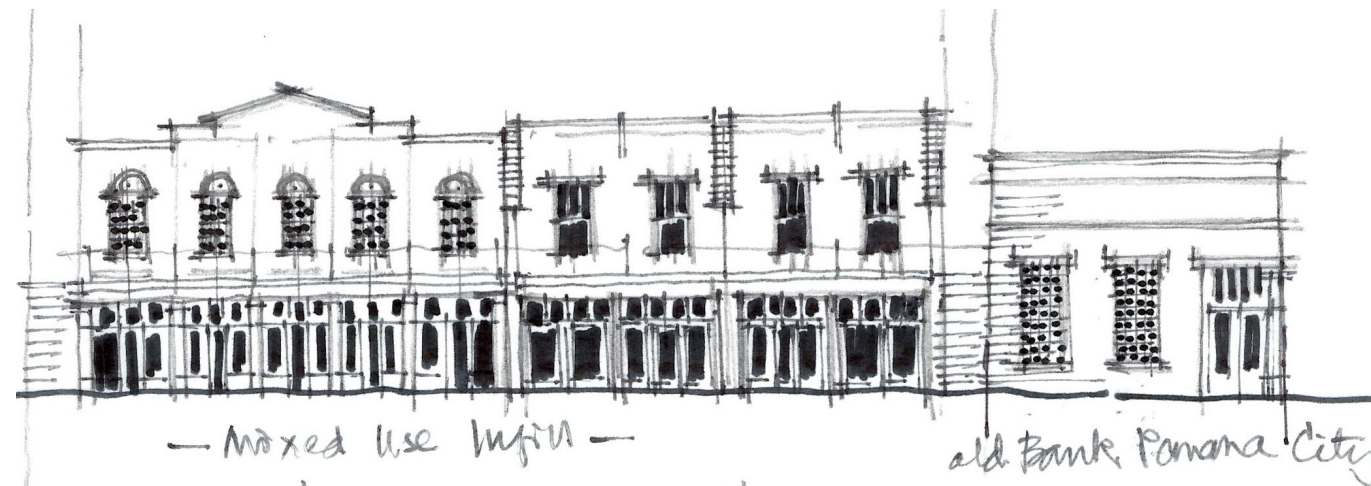
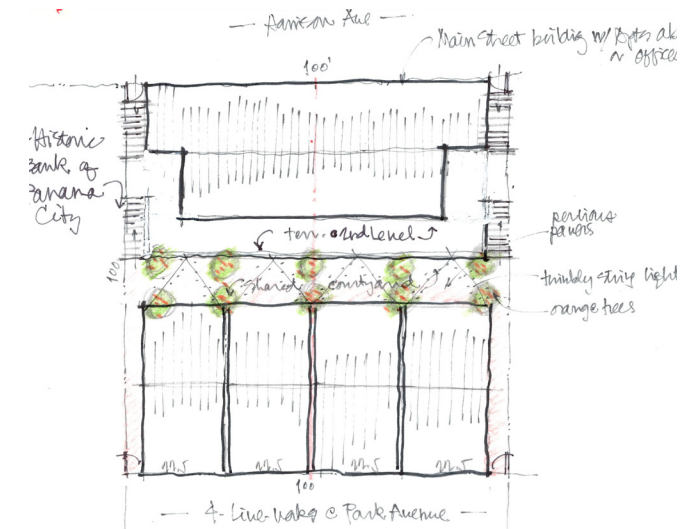
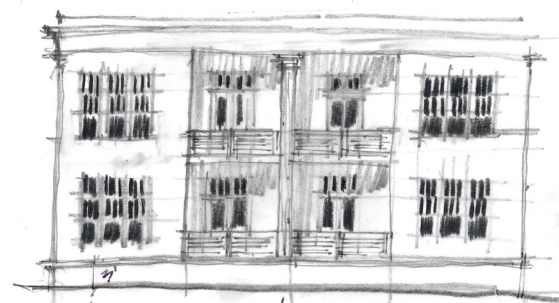
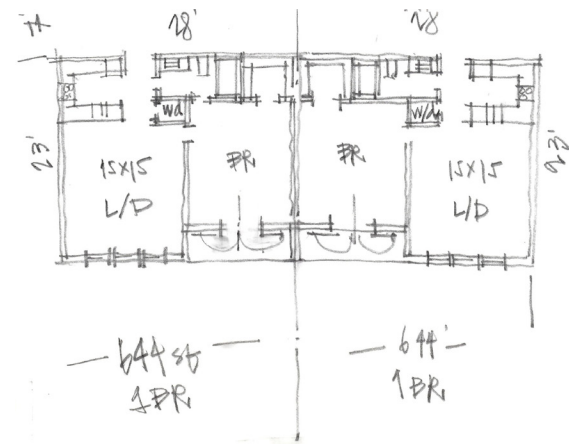
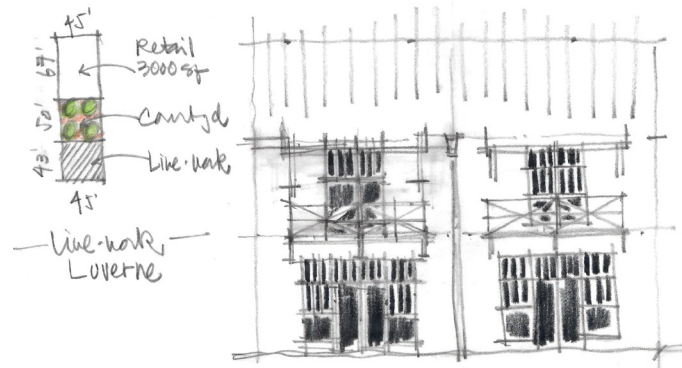
- *New development should be comprised of a mix of building types, including many types of housing.*
- *Architecture and development follows green building best practices and coastal design traditions.*

Infill on Small Downtown Lots

Right top and middle: Residential and live/work infill building studies sized to fit the small, shallow lots on Luverne Avenue.

Below: Plan view of Harrison Avenue infill demonstrates how the small lots can accommodate a new courtyard building that has front facades on both Harrison Avenue (top of image) and Park Avenue (bottom of image). Located in the center of Downtown, parking can be accommodated on surrounding blocks.

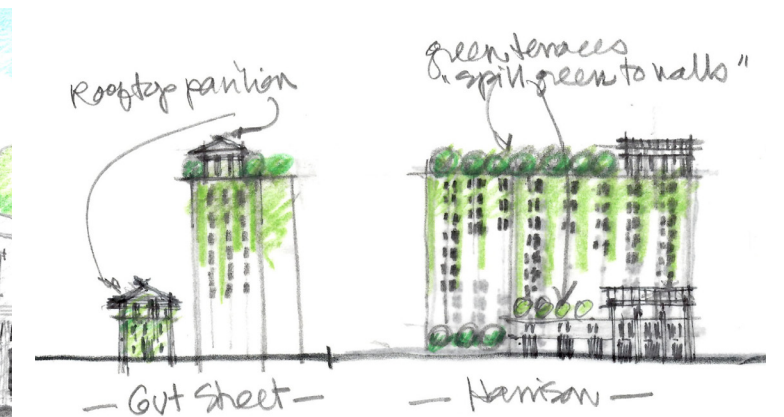
Bottom: Elevation for new mixed-use infill building on Harrison Avenue near Beach Drive. Buildings on this block were badly damaged in the storm and were recently removed; only the historic Bank of Panama City building remains.



Dixie Sherman Site

Above: Historic postcard of the Hotel Dixie Sherman.

Right: A modern hotel tower with ballrooms/meeting rooms could fill a portion of the site. Structured parking can be lined with habitable space and capped with a courtyard garden. A new community green can line 5th Street; infill residential and mixed-use buildings front 6th Street.



St. Andrews Tower

Above: Thumbnail sketch of rooftop pavilion and greening of the tower.

Left: A pedestrian-oriented infill building could repair the street frontage along Harrison Avenue.

CORNERSTONE 6: Resilient Infrastructure

The City of Panama City faces critical infrastructure needs; upgrades to below-grade utilities (such as City water and sewer lines) were needed before the storm and have since become more urgent. Utilities need to be repaired and upgraded to support rebuilding and development. In addition, power lines may be placed underground to improve resiliency to storms. Priority should be to areas where near-term projects (Downtown streetscape retrofits, marina area rebuilding) are contemplated, so the new infrastructure can be integrated with planned improvements and provide multiple benefits.

Stormwater was identified as a critical issue to many charrette participants. Concerns ranged from regulations for on-site retention that prohibit development on Downtown lots to desires to improve the quality of water that flows into the Bay. Other challenges include a high/variable water table, changing sea level conditions, and funding—new infrastructure will require a stable and equitable funding stream to be maintained over time. The team explored potential solutions to address these challenges, envisioning stormwater management improvements as opportunities for economic development, placemaking, and a healthier Downtown.

In Downtown areas, a toolbox of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) appropriate for the Downtown's scale and character is proposed. Today in Downtown Panama City, there is a lot of hot pavement, building roofs, and other impervious areas. When it rains, the majority of runoff is piped straight to the bay and bayou, bringing with it any surface contaminants it picks up along the way. There is an opportunity to peel back some of the pavement and plant trees and other vegetation to help absorb rainfall and provide a host of other benefits related to health, happiness, and security. Stormwater can be designed to run into streetscape infrastructure, using plants and roots to filter and infiltrate runoff. Potential shared solutions are identified in the map at right:

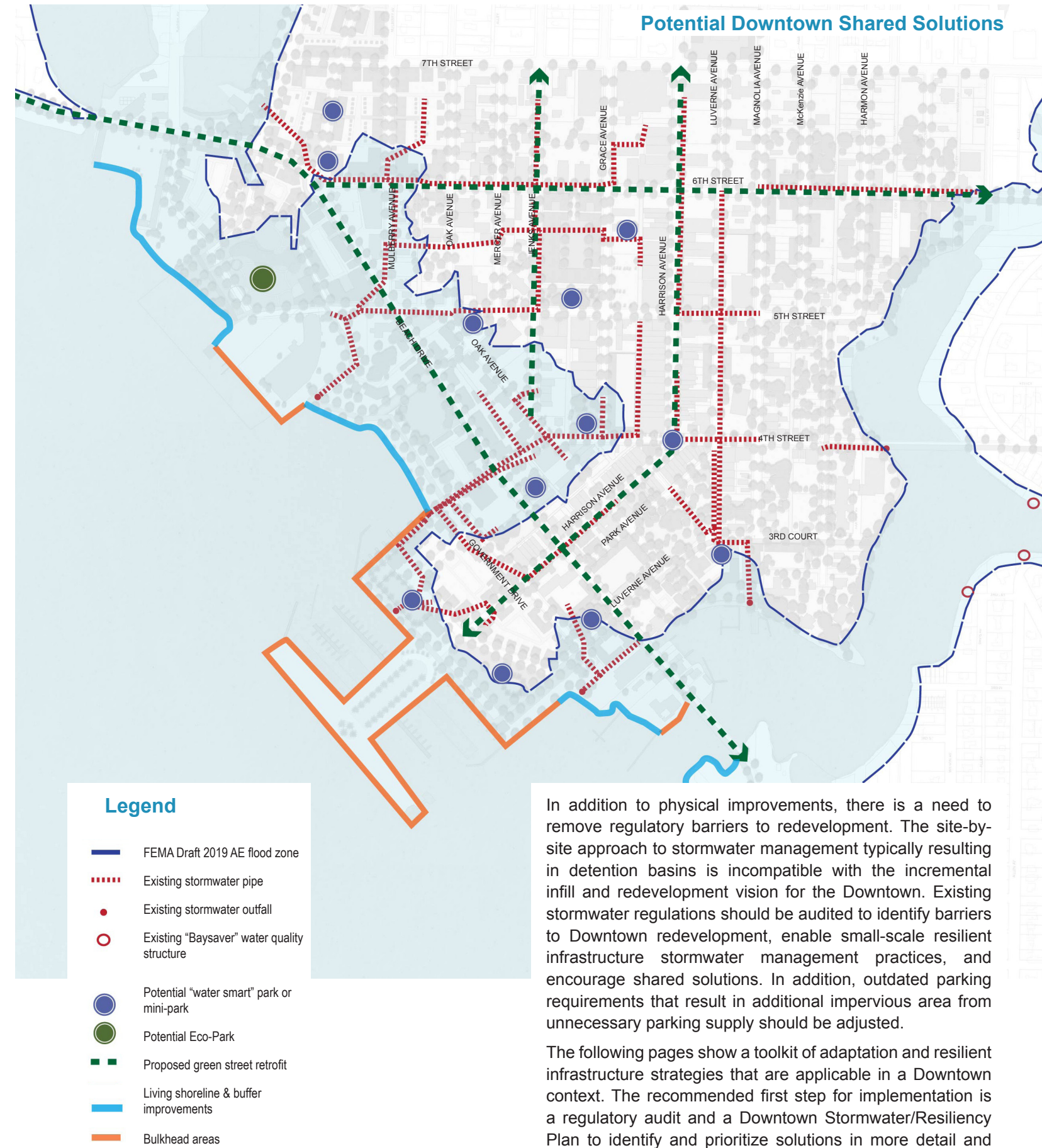
- Green street retrofits incorporate elements such as tree trenches, bioretention systems and bioswales, and stormwater planters into plans for rebuilding streets. Tree trenches are designed to provide appropriate soil volume to grow trees; structural cells keep soils from compacting so roots have a place to go. These systems can be designed to accept runoff and filter it before it reaches the bay.
- Water Smart Parks and mini-parks are small public spaces designed to detain and infiltrate stormwater

Resilient Infrastructure Concepts:

- *Upgrades were needed before the storm, and now are more urgent.*
- *Pursue Downtown stormwater solutions: green infrastructure for small and large lots, places for stormwater parks, and street trees.*
- *Harden overhead utilities as part of improvements to help withstand storms.*
- *Create a Downtown Stormwater Master Plan as a first step to outline specific resiliency priorities consistent with and calibrated to the overall vision.*

runoff from the surrounding several blocks while also serving as a valued part of the public realm. Potential park sites were located based on study of topography and alignment with existing infrastructure, as well as their fit into the overall Downtown placemaking vision. Funding opportunities may align to build these spaces combining open space and stormwater funds (dual purpose).

- The waterfront promenade should be coordinated with a tailored shoreline design strategy to protect and respect existing wetlands and buffers, create planted "living shorelines" and enhance buffers wherever possible to stabilize and reinforce the coastline, and reinforce existing bulkhead areas where necessary. "Living shoreline" strategies can heal the shoreline and help anchor the beach in place with plantings/root systems, providing for biodiversity and habitat.
- Retrofit of the existing tank farm as an Eco-Park is proposed, weaving together community open space, community facilities, and development. Funding will be necessary to relocate the existing operations and to remediate the soil.



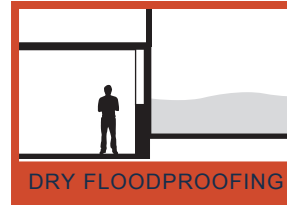
In addition to physical improvements, there is a need to remove regulatory barriers to redevelopment. The site-by-site approach to stormwater management typically resulting in detention basins is incompatible with the incremental infill and redevelopment vision for the Downtown. Existing stormwater regulations should be audited to identify barriers to Downtown redevelopment, enable small-scale resilient infrastructure stormwater management practices, and encourage shared solutions. In addition, outdated parking requirements that result in additional impervious area from unnecessary parking supply should be adjusted.

The following pages show a toolkit of adaptation and resilient infrastructure strategies that are applicable in a Downtown context. The recommended first step for implementation is a regulatory audit and a Downtown Stormwater/Resiliency Plan to identify and prioritize solutions in more detail and align them with potential implementation funding.

Adaptation Toolkit

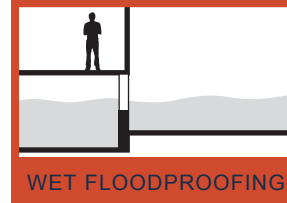
Dry Floodproofing

Water tighting structures using external coating or internal membranes can prevent flood waters from entering. On-going maintenance is required and dry floodproofing may not always be the most aesthetically pleasing. As a first step, flood shields for windows and doors may protect vulnerable openings.



Wet Floodproofing

Building modifications such as breakaway walls designed to break free when subjected to flood forces can safely allow flood waters to enter and leave the lower level. Elevating utilities above the base flood elevation is critical. Often requires repair costs by the owner after flood events.



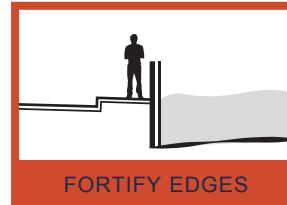
Raise Finish Floor Elevation

The most common form of adaptation is to elevate the entire first floor elevation above the base flood elevation. This can be accomplished on piles or earth fill. This technique can create accessibility issues depending on the site's surroundings, and can sometimes be difficult to retrofit into historic neighborhoods.



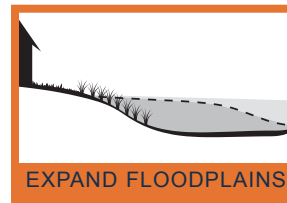
Fortify Edges

Seawalls, bulkheads, berms, and levees are common techniques to repel flood waters at the edges of sites or neighborhoods. An important role for the hard edge is to dissipate the velocity of flood forces from direct storm surge. Over time, scouring from constant wave energy can undermine the structural integrity of the structure from underneath. Requires periodic inspections to ensure stability.



Expand Floodplains

Development often hugs the coastline, infringing upon the riparian buffer/edge. Development along the coastal bank replaces a natural healthy riparian edge with manicured lawns, roads, and docks. Healing the riparian edge in balance with reasonable human uses and access to the water will expand floodplains by recreating a natural living shoreline.



Reforestation

Transforming forests into pavement results in more runoff, higher pollutant loads, and erosive concentrated flows. The marina area is a prime examples of a highly impervious area with tremendous opportunity for tree canopy cover improvements - also adding to land value and public health.



Restore Wetlands

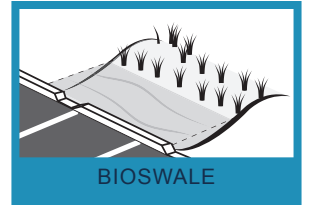
Wetlands are extremely productive living ecosystems, and also attenuate wave velocity, provide water quality treatment, and act as a natural buffer between the built environment and water resources. Restoring degraded wetland systems by enforcing and regulating buffer protection zones is critical to sustain a healthy relationship with water.



Resilient Infrastructure Toolkit

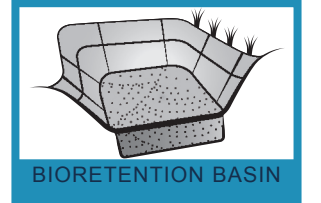
Bioswales

Bioswales are linear landscape elements designed to convey runoff. Typically bioswales are vegetated and provide water quality treatment. Bioswales designed with pretreatment facilities will perform higher filtering function and will require less maintenance over time.



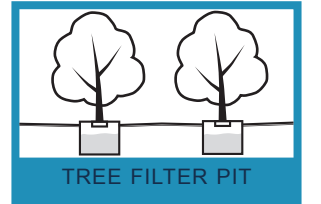
Bioretention Basins

Bioretention basins are depressions in the landscape designed to collect and filter stormwater. A more highly engineered rain garden, bioretention basins typically have pretreatment forebays, perforated pipe underdrains, and special soils that help filter and enhance infiltration.



Tree Filter Pits

Tree filter pits use stormwater runoff for irrigation. Primarily a water quality practice, runoff enters the systems from a deep sump inlet structure as a form of pretreatment. Stormwater is stored in the gravel reservoir below ground which allows the tree roots to soak up runoff.



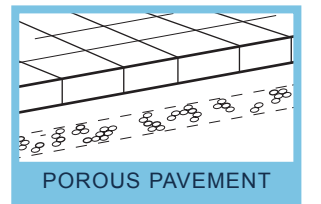
Stormwater Planters

Raised planters are ideal stormwater solutions for projects with space constraints adjacent to buildings. Roof runoff is diverted via downspouts into above-ground planters where microbes in the soil and around plant roots help to filter runoff before overflow into the storm system.



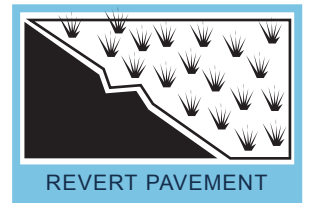
Porous Pavement

A range of free-draining alternatives to typical impervious bituminous pavement and concrete are available, such as pervious concrete, porous asphalt, pervious pavers, and structured grass. Proper design of the system base and review of the existing subbase for infiltration capacity is required.



Revert Pavement to Green Space

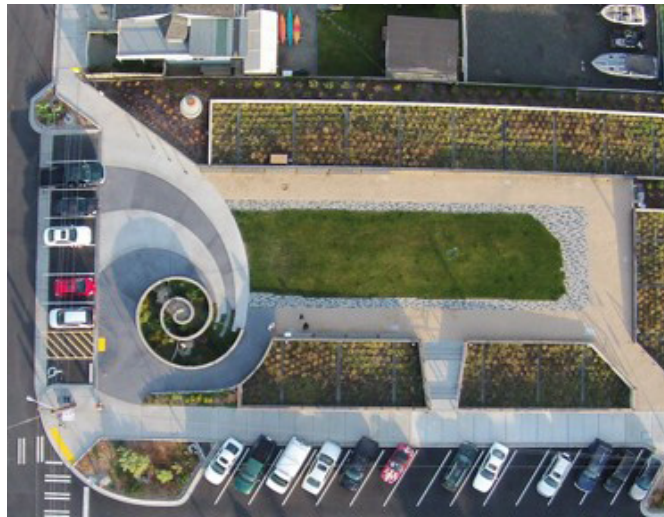
Often the simplest and most cost-effective green infrastructure retrofit, "grey to green" interventions replace extraneous pavement with planted landscape, including tree planting if possible.



Constructed Wetlands

Constructed wetlands mimic natural wetland function. Systems are designed for water at all times, either in saturated soil or as standing water. They are often designed with engineered soils and can include small islands and pools. Typically they are constructed as part of larger projects or systems.





What is a Water Smart Park?

Water Smart Parks provide for community enjoyment and recreation in addition to stormwater control. These spaces can be designed to filter, absorb, and store on-site and off-site runoff to help address neighborhood-scale flooding. Park spaces can transform the community perception of rainwater and stormwater runoff, viewing it as a resource rather than a waste product.

- Water Smart Parks can be a shared stormwater solutions in vulnerable low-lying areas.
- Stormwater control and treatment must be complimentary to other active and passive uses of the park. The recreational value and lovability of the park is critical to success of the space as a park and a stormwater practice.
- Water Smart Parks require an enhanced commitment to operation and maintenance.

Left: Examples of small Water Smart Parks; these small parks on infill lots can be designed to hold stormwater, and serve as part of the Downtown stormwater management.



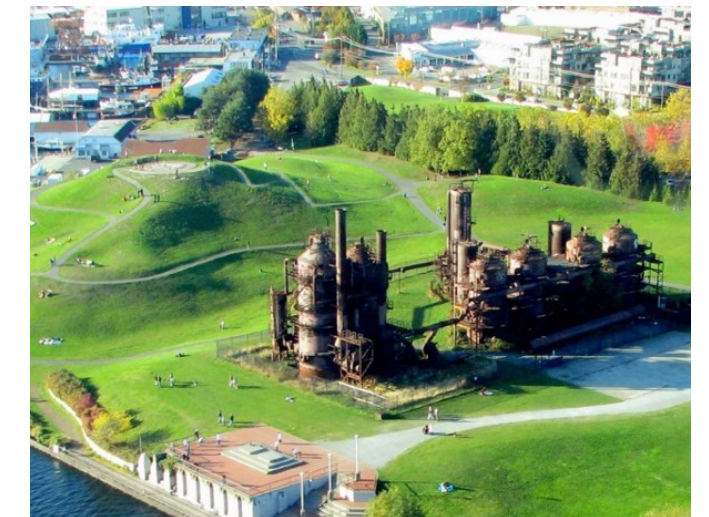
Eco-Park at the Tank Farm Site

The above sketch details potential features that could be part of the Eco-Park envisioned for the site of the existing tank farm. Should a new site in an industrial area of the City be identified and funding to move the existing facility available, the tank farm site could be reused and the soil remediated to support a mix of waterfront open space and development that is more compatible with the vision for the surrounding Downtown area. The open space should be designed to serve a stormwater management function, filtering runoff from adjacent development before it flows into the Bay.

The proposed plan extends the grid of Downtown streets in this area to support opportunities for new development to help activate and bring energy to the park. The waterfront promenade should continue through this area, and the potential to locate a boat launch to bring additional activity to this location could also be explored. Portions of the tanks could remain as public art, creating landforms in the park that could also reduce construction cost by serving as "capped" areas for contaminated soil volume to remain in place.

above: Eco-Park Concept at the Tank Farm site

Below: Example of a Brownfield Park



Responding to Sea Level Rise

As a coastal community, Panama City will be challenged to adapt to changing sea level conditions over time. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates a potential for Sea Level Rise (SLR) of 5.77 feet by 2100 under its Intermediate/High scenario (see the range of potential scenarios, page 20). As described in the toolkits, there are a variety of methods the City can use to adapt to changing conditions and shape development that is more resilient to future storms. Potential strategies for areas of Downtown within the floodplain are illustrated on these pages; these approaches can be evaluated in detail as part of the Downtown Stormwater /Resiliency Plan.

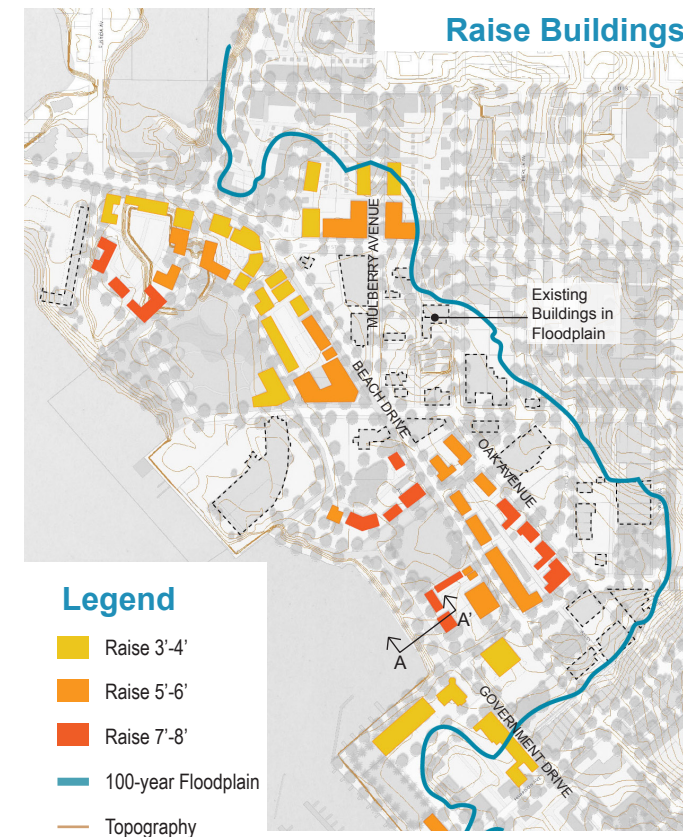
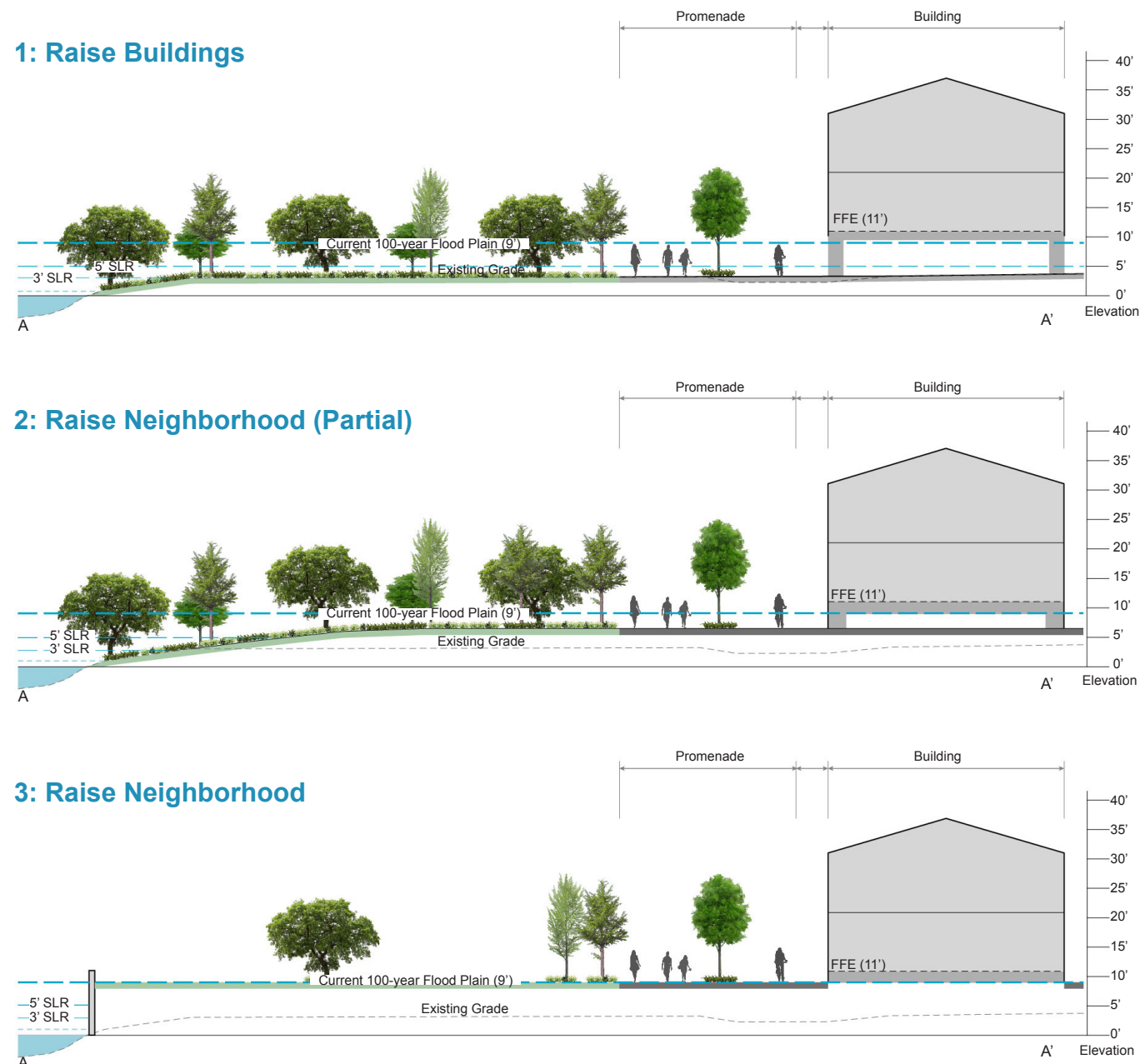
1. *Raise Buildings*. In any and all scenarios, the first floor elevation for new buildings along with critical infrastructure should be raised at least 2 feet above the current 100-year floodplain elevation. This approach provides additional freeboard and allows flood waters to pass through during larger storm events. This scenario is immediately feasible for individual property owners that may want to move forward with new development in the floodplain, as coordination with surrounding properties is typically not required. Over time, streets and surrounding infrastructure can also be raised as neighborhood improvements are undertaken and as needed to address flooding concerns.

2. *Raise Neighborhood (Partial)*. Development sites can be regraded to raise adjacent streets/sidewalks to a higher elevation to help protect investment from flooding from projected sea level rise. This approach brings surrounding grade closer to the raised first floor elevations of new buildings, producing better building-to-street relationships. This approach may be challenging on smaller sites, and will benefit from a larger, coordinated effort.

3. *Raise neighborhood out of flood plain*. A more comprehensive version of the above scenario, portions of the neighborhood can be entirely elevated above the current floodplain (see diagram below). Balance of cut and fill

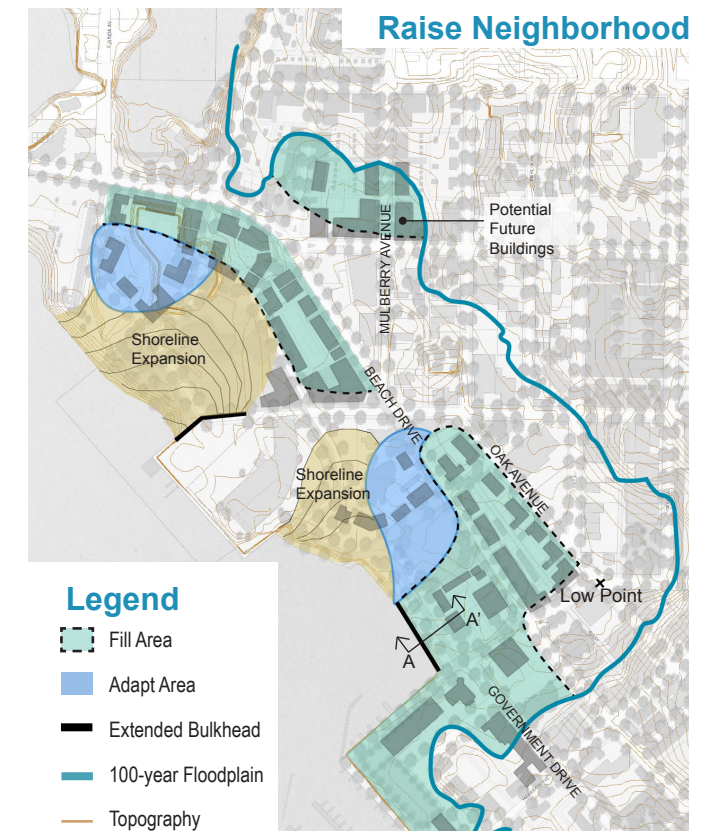
volumes may be required, resulting in “adaptation” areas at lower elevations (with or without development) that restore natural buffers, expand the flood plain, and provide for floodable park areas. This approach requires coordination between the City and multiple property owners, and could be undertaken as part of a comprehensive Stormwater/Resiliency Plan.

4. *Retreat and shoreline restoration*. Opportunities to return waterfront areas to a natural state can also be pursued as part of the resiliency strategy – restoring natural buffers, expanding floodplain, and minimizing investment in areas most at risk from sea level rise.



Above: If new building first floor elevations are raised to 2' above the 100-year floodplain (elevation = 9'), the first finished floor would need to be raised between 3' to 8' above existing grade. The above diagram shows this range of potential future building elevation for buildings proposed on the Illustrative Plan.

Left: Cross sections (location marked by A-A in diagram above) illustrate potential approaches for waterfront development, as described above.



Above: Alternatively, portions of the neighborhood could be raised out of the floodplain. The above diagram is one of several possible approaches to neighborhood scale adaptation. This diagram shows conceptual areas of cut and fill, with elevated “fill” areas raising streets and sites above the flood plain, “adapt” zones where streets/sites might be partially filled with buildings raised above the surrounding grade, and “shoreline expansion” areas designed to restore natural buffers, expand the flood plain, and provide for floodable park areas. Potential for this concept, including alternative approaches coordinated with topography, stormwater management, and development buildout, should be examined in greater detail as part of a future Stormwater/Resiliency Plan.

CORNERSTONE 7: Connected

One of the many themes that emerged during charrette week was a desire to be better connected. Mobility is handled in the Downtown area on a fine grained street grid that was established by the City founders. Parallel streets allow for many routes to and from your destination. However, many of the existing streets have been redesigned over time to prioritize the needs of vehicles, to the detriment of pedestrians and cyclists. The vision for Downtown is to realize a network of streets, sidewalks and trails that are designed to increase pedestrian and bike comfort and safety.

As a first step, accessibility / ADA upgrades will be made where needed throughout Downtown. The waterfront promenade will provide public access to the water's edge; in some areas of Downtown, the promenade will need to connect along a multi-use trail added to existing Downtown streets.

A loop of protected bikeways is proposed to provide space for novice cyclists away from moving traffic, closer to the sidewalk where they will feel more comfortable. Facilities that accommodate the needs of cyclists, such as bike racks and tune up stations, should also be added to Downtown sidewalks and open spaces.

Located on key streets and avenues that circulate people in/out of Downtown, the proposed bikeways could be extended to connect destinations City-wide. For example, a multi-use trail within the Beach Drive right-of-way could be extended west to St. Andrews, providing alternatives to driving for people to move between these two popular destinations. Other bikeways can extend north along Harrison Avenue, and to the east on 4th and 6th Streets. As a next step, the City can work with community groups to design and extend these important walk/bike connections.

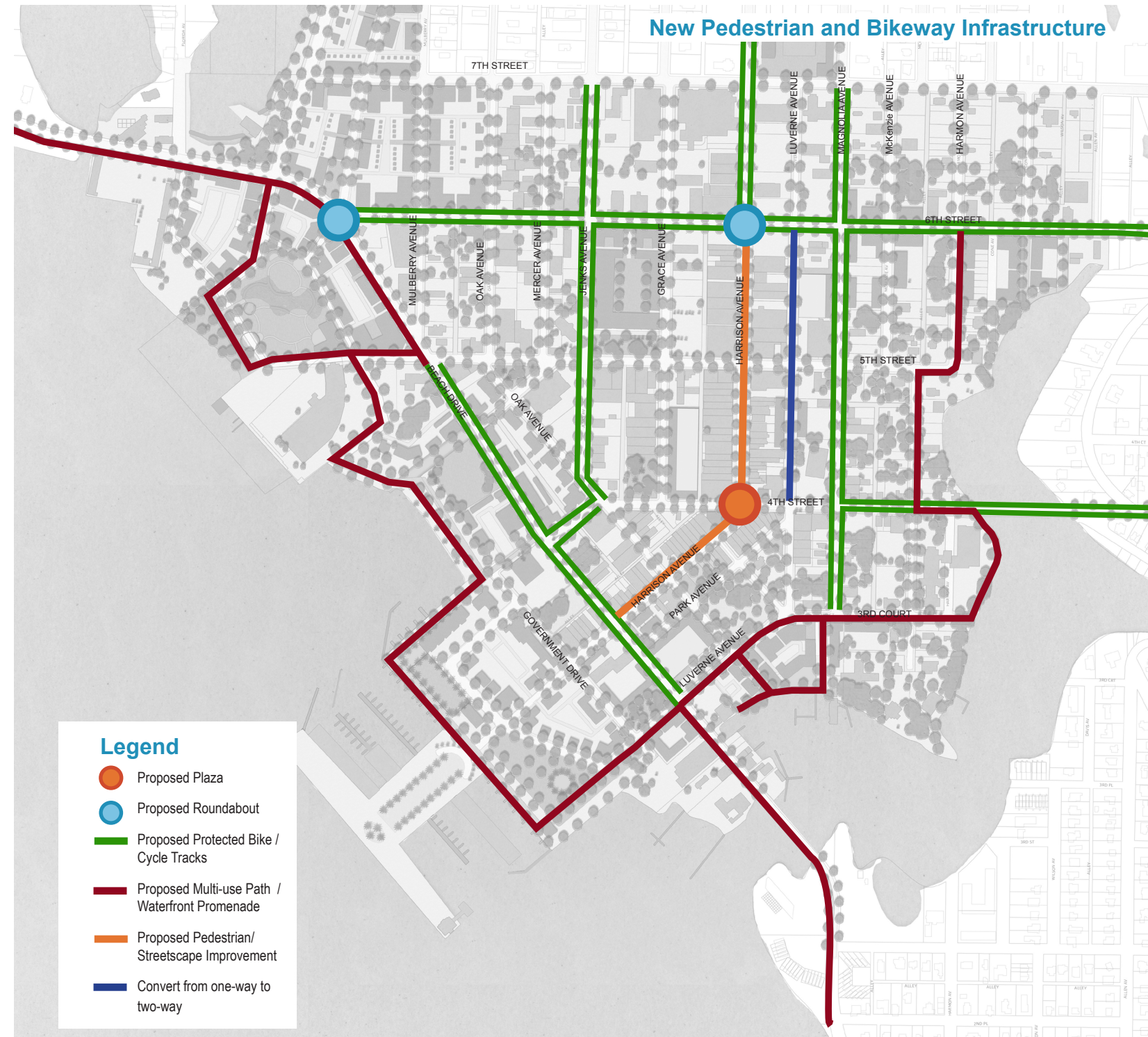
Proposed street design changes (described for key streets on the following pages) can be realized by re-allocating excess width from vehicular lanes to space for bikeways, trees, and/or sidewalks; this design change will also reduce vehicle speeds, creating a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

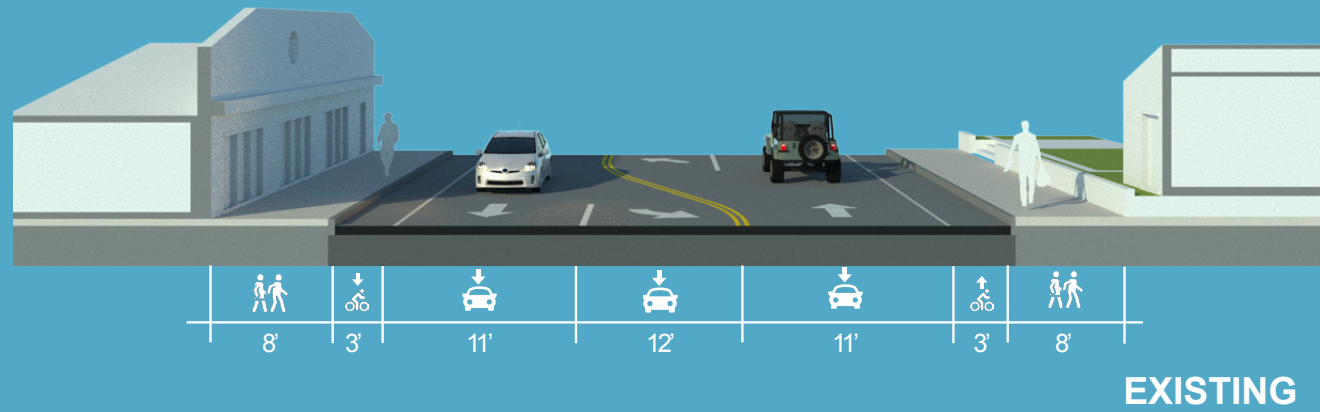
Connectivity Concepts:

- *A network of streets, sidewalks, and trails are located and designed to increase pedestrian and bike comfort and safety.*
- *Implement accessible/ADA design upgrades.*
- *Explore other ways to get Downtown: water taxi; circulator shuttles.*
- *Extend multi-use trails from Downtown to other City destinations (St. Andrews, Millville, Uptown, etc.)*
- *Include sustainable infrastructure as part of street improvements.*

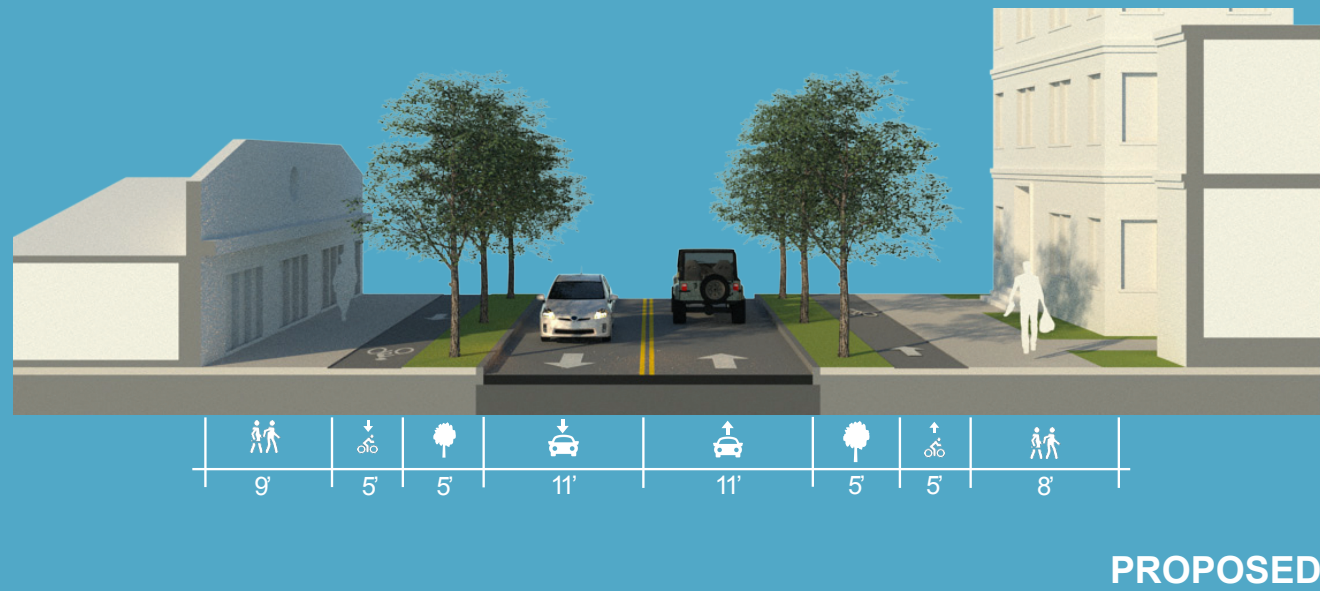
A customized design has been proposed for Four Points Plaza at the heart of Downtown (See Cornerstone 2). Roundabouts have been proposed for gateway locations on 6th Street. Roundabouts create a civic design feature, but also dramatically improve safety for pedestrians by slowing vehicular traffic, appropriate for the entry to the Downtown area.

In addition to street design changes, the City should explore adding to the menu of ways to get to Downtown. For example, circulator shuttles to/from other City destinations can be added; feasibility for a water taxi to/from St. Andrews should be explored. As activity in the Downtown increases, viable alternatives to driving will need to be in place to increase access and reduce demand for parking infrastructure.





EXISTING



PROPOSED

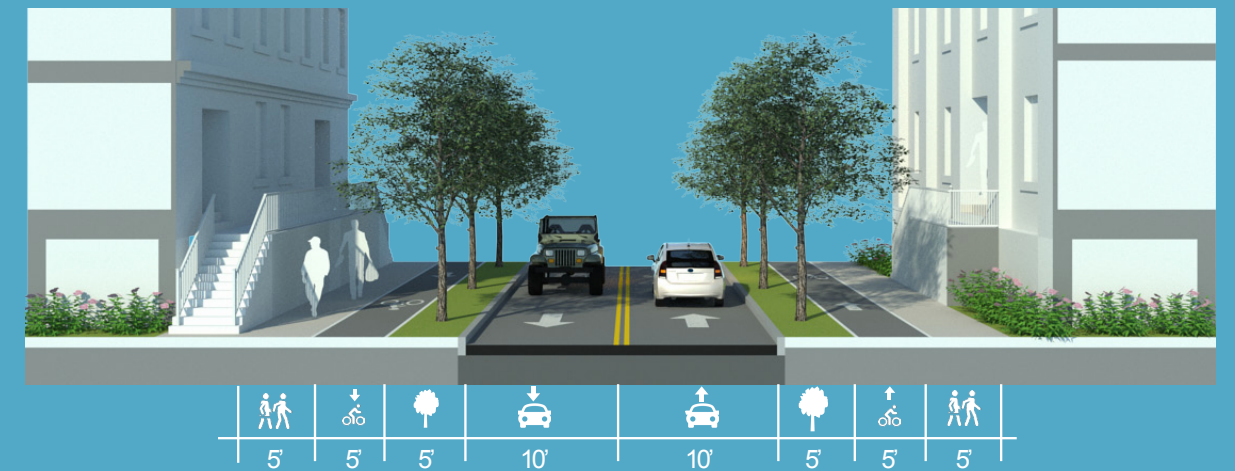
Jenks Avenue

Existing: Jenks Avenue is a north-south connector through Panama City. It is a three lane road with a center turning lane, designed to move cars quickly. It has no plantings or separation for pedestrians from moving vehicles. Sidewalks are encumbered with intermittent utility poles, hindering mobility and access. Bikes are only allocated a three foot lane.

Proposed: The proposal for Jenks Avenue removes the middle turning lane and adds street trees and a protected bikeway next to the sidewalk. This is a prime corridor for undergrounding of utilities as part of streetscape improvements, to improve sidewalk continuity. These changes will improve the bike and pedestrian experience and support new mixed-use development in the Downtown area.



EXISTING

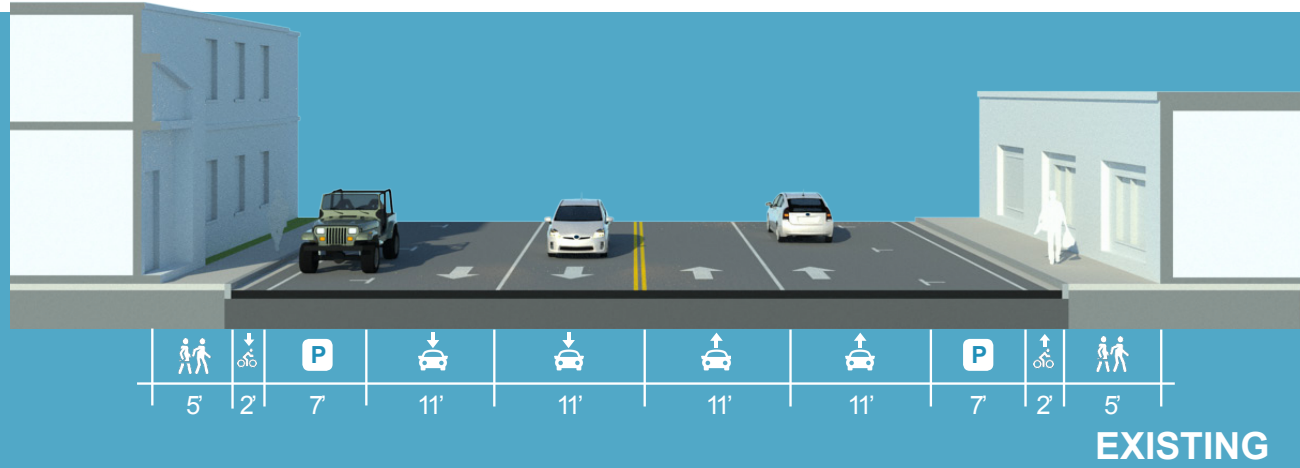


PROPOSED

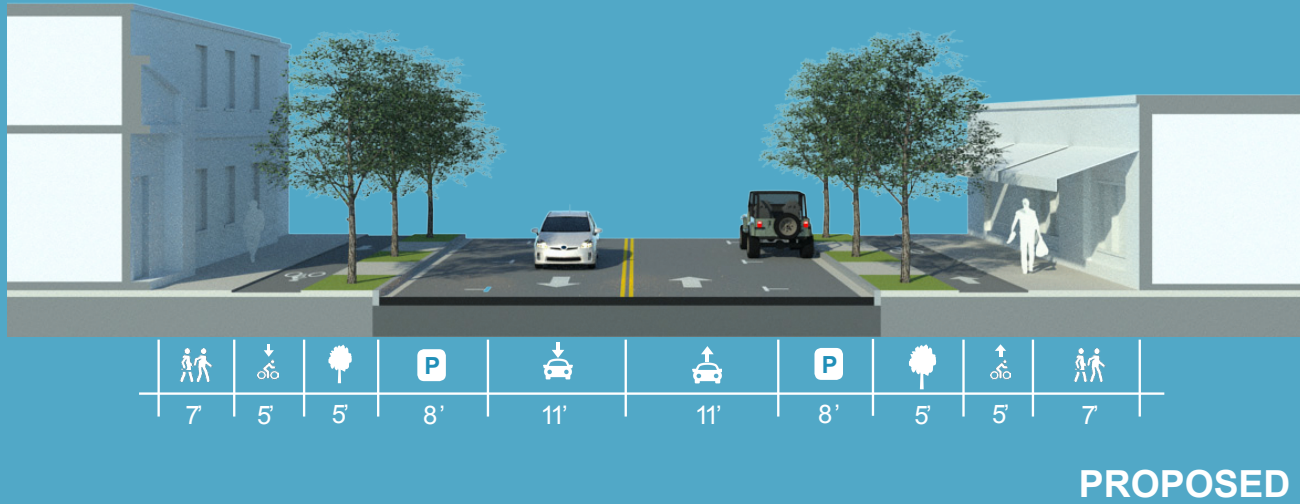
Beach Drive (south of 6th)

Existing: Beach Drive runs parallel to St. Andrews Bay. South of 6th Street, it is a two-way street with parking on one side. Enhancing bike safety, as well as upgrades to infrastructure and undergrounding of power lines, are priorities.

Proposed: The proposed section for Downtown Beach Drive re-allocates the existing width to introduce protected bikeways and street trees. This street redesign will support circulation to/from the nearby waterfront promenade, as well as new mixed-use development along the street. Needed utilities upgrades should be included as part of the improvement. Segments of this street are within the 100-year floodplain; strategies to address flooding and sea level rise (such as raising portions of the street) can be examined as part of the Downtown Stormwater/Resiliency Plan and included as part of improvements.



EXISTING

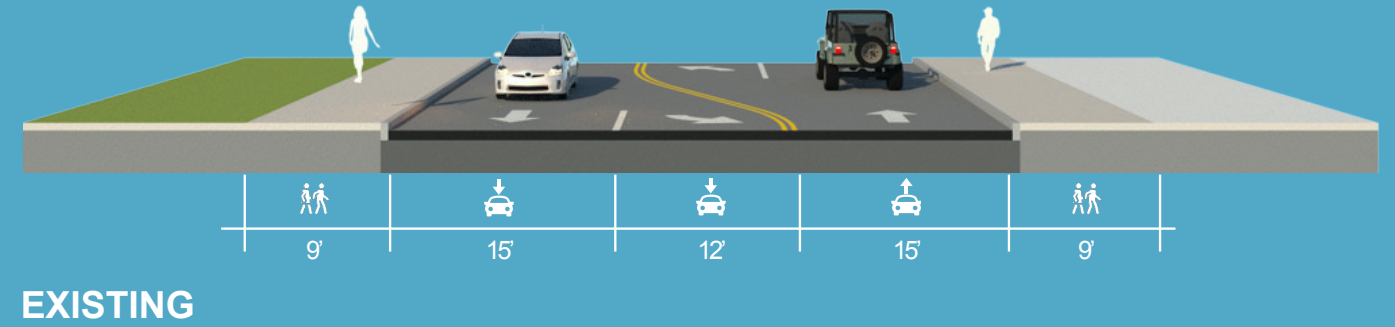


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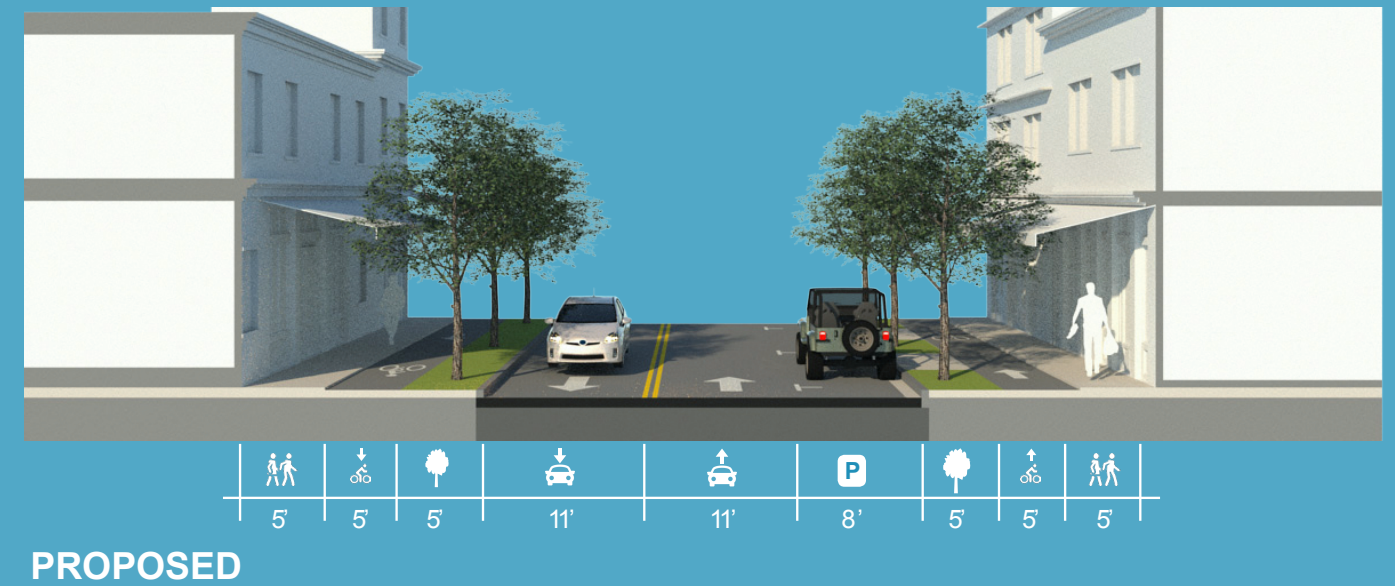
Harrison Avenue (north of 6th)

Existing: Harrison Avenue north of 6th Street is a four-lane street that serves as a central connector through Panama City. Its auto-oriented streetscape has excess vehicular capacity and results in high-speed movements, with little to no pedestrian and bike activity due to poor conditions.

Proposed: Harrison Avenue will remain an important corridor for Panama City, but will be usable by all modes of travel. Street trees, protected bike paths, and a reduction in travel lanes will increase overall safety.



EXISTING

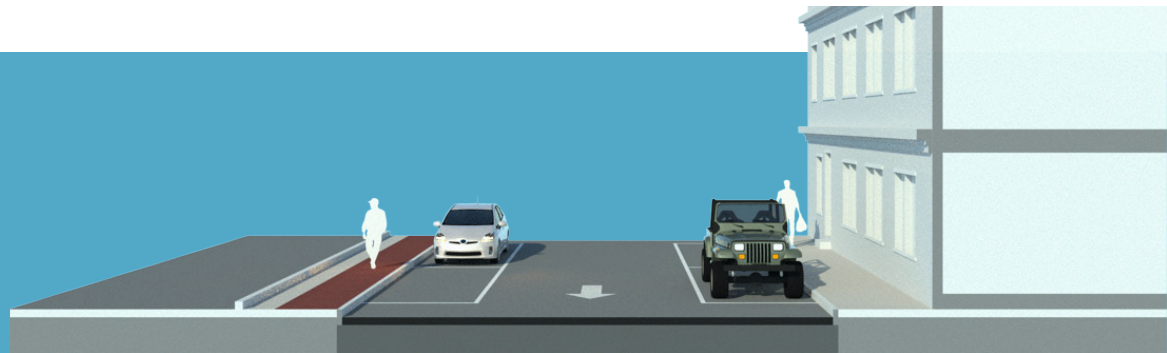


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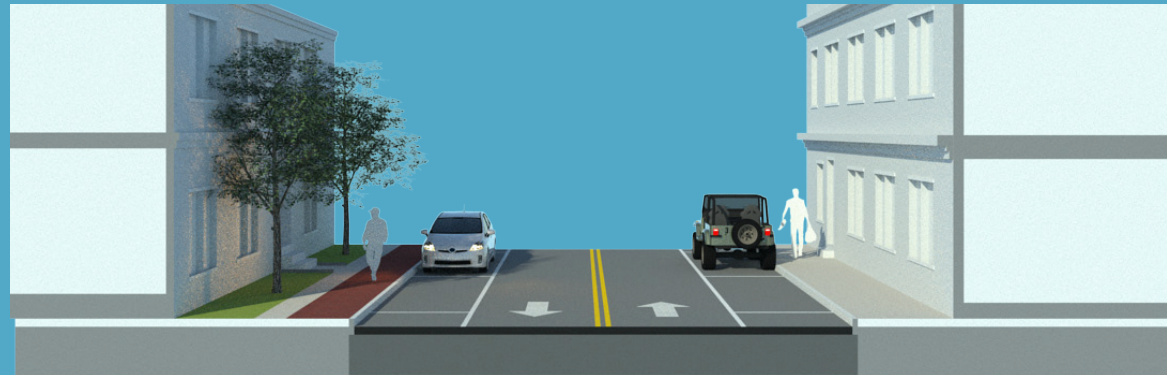
6th Street

Existing: 6th Street is an FDOT-owned corridor, currently designed as a three-lane street with a center turning lane; the priority is on moving vehicles quickly through the area. Although sidewalks are present, the speed of traffic and lack of shade and separation from moving vehicles make walking and biking unpleasant.

Proposed: Removing the turn lanes opens up opportunity for trees, a protected bikeway, and even on-street parking – a design more appropriate for the Downtown context.



EXISTING



PROPOSED

Luverne Avenue

Existing: Luverne Avenue is an oversized, one-lane, one-way road that connects from 7th Street to 4th Street. Luverne Avenue has parking on both sides of the street.

Proposed: Luverne Avenue can easily be converted into a two-lane road by re-stripping the existing pavement area into two 9' wide lanes, with 7' parking lanes. Two-way traffic flow has a number of benefits, including improved public safety (lower speeds) as well as improved access, circulation and wayfinding.

Demonstration Projects

It is possible to test the Downtown vision's ideas for improvements to streets and public spaces in a low-cost, temporary way. For example, the proposed two-way configuration for Luverne Avenue can be implemented on a temporary trial basis simply by re-painting the road; if the community approves, this change can be made permanent. The sketch below shows a concept for a plaza at Park Avenue and Luverne Avenue that could be similarly tested. Demonstration projects such as these are often called "Tactical Urbanism".

Tactical Urbanism uses temporary, lower-cost interventions to test ideas and gather community input about potential improvements to the public realm. Examples include formal installations that are in place for months or years; or smaller-scale, short-term projects that last from 1 to 7 days. Tactical Urbanism projects can be led by governments, non-profits, grassroots groups, or residents. Examples from other municipalities

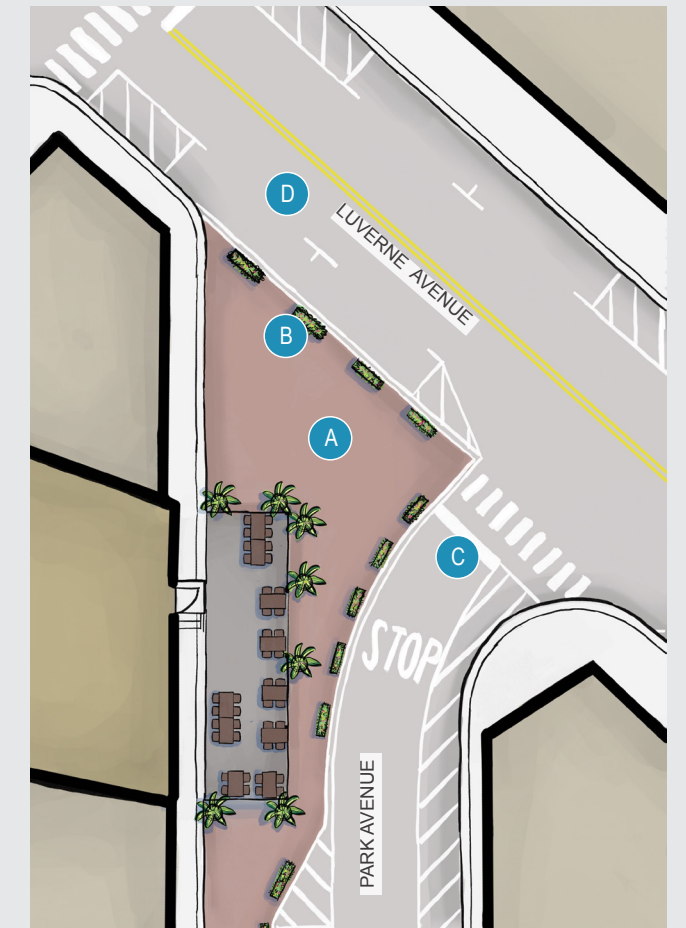
include street redesigns, better block initiatives, pop-up parks, pavement to plazas, and temporary retail such as pop-up shops or food truck rallies. By utilizing short-term, inexpensive projects or events to test ideas, a community can adjust the fine details of their goals. Sometimes an installation can spark new ideas and encourage community enthusiasm, generating support for permanent improvements. With grass-roots support, implementing enhancements can become easier and be fine-tuned to the needs of the community on a project by project basis.

Often times, permanent changes can be difficult and/or costly to implement. Using a tactical approach can gauge reactions, verify that the idea works, and provide time to make adjustments if needed. This process can lead to a result that responds most appropriately to the existing conditions and what the community wants.

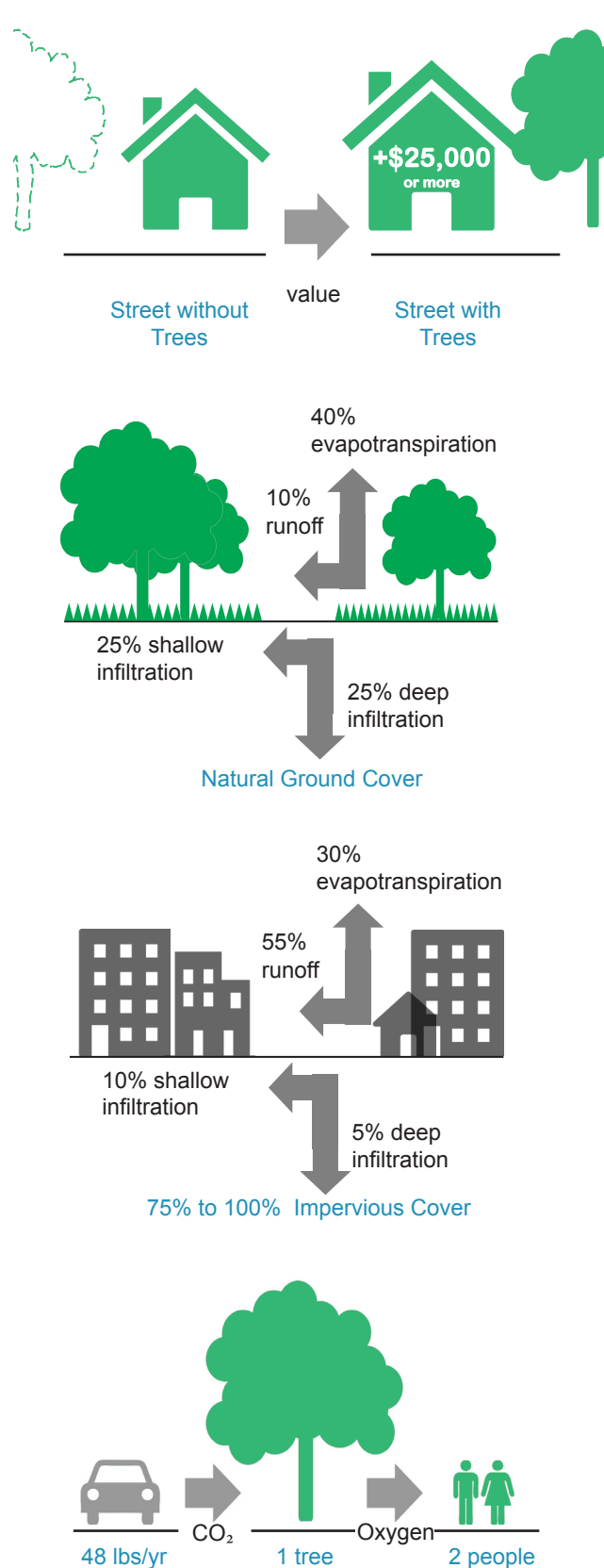
Park Avenue Plaza

In this example, the two-lane, one-way Park Avenue can be re-sized to a single lane, with excess pavement used for an outdoor plaza. This project can be done on a trial basis with paint and planters, maintaining the existing curbs. If met with support, a permanent change to Park Avenue could be designed. This site is a good candidate for such a trial project because of its proximity to the center of town, and the reuse of the right-of-way does not reduce vehicular circulation (as the street is already one-way). Parking and loading zones for businesses, and consolidated dumpster locations need to be considered; the project must be done in such a way as to not interfere with the fair use of the Park Avenue alley by all of the businesses along the street. Ideas in this sketch include:

- A** Defined by paint, the plaza can be an area for pop up shops and live music; outdoor dining can fill a portion of the space
- B** Movable planters provide a temporary barrier between the pedestrian plaza and vehicular traffic
- C** To address any sight limitations from the on-street parking, a convex mirror can be installed opposite the Park Avenue stop sign.
- D** Luverne Avenue is reconfigured as a two-way street with on-street parking (as shown in the proposed section on the facing page)



The Value of Street Trees



A primary focus of this plan is to restore the street tree canopy lost during Hurricane Michael. Beyond design aesthetics, urban trees have numerous economic and environmental benefits.

Economic Value

Research has shown that trees positively affect both property values and office occupancy rates. National studies show that trees increase property values by 5 to 15 percent.

Human Health

Trees remove harmful pollutants from the air and soil and generate oxygen. Research has linked the presence of urban trees to reduced rates of cardiovascular disease, strokes and asthma due to improved air quality. Simply taking a walk down a tree-lined street, even in an urban setting can significantly reduce stress level by helping interrupt thought patterns that lead to anxiety and depression. Increased tree canopy can be directly correlated with wellness and social equity.

Reduce Stormwater Runoff and Pollution

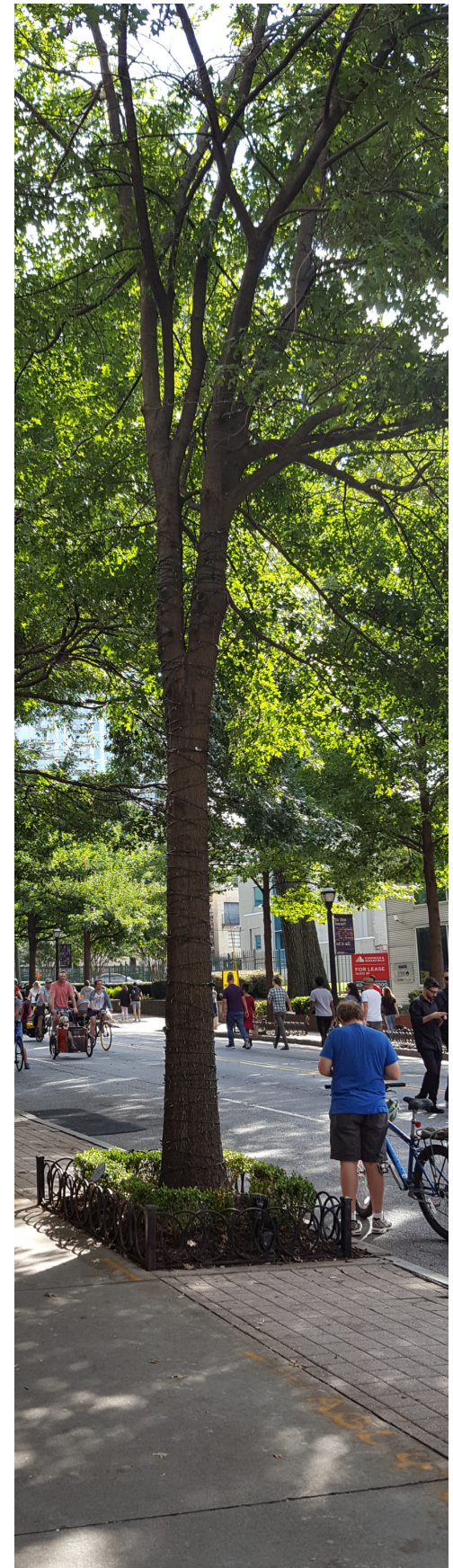
Trees decrease the amount of stormwater runoff and pollutants that eventually reach local waterways. Trees perform this important service through evapotranspiration and retention. The leaves and branches of trees intercept rain and prevent a portion of it from reaching the ground. The root structure of trees improves conditions for the infiltration of stormwater into the soil, further reducing the amount of runoff. Trees are also capable of absorbing certain pollutants.

Carbon Storage and Sequestration

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is commonly known as a type of greenhouse gas associated with climate change. The photosynthesis process of trees helps to reduce concentrations of CO₂ in the air by sequestering and storing carbon. Carbon sequestration varies based on tree species and age. Mature large trees store the most carbon.

The Seven Roles of the Urban Street Tree

- 1 Define the space of the street**
This particularly applies to streets that are too wide for the height of the buildings, streets with holes in the street wall, or suburban streets with buildings too far apart to contain the space of the street. Mature trees provide a canopy.
- 2 Define the pedestrian space**
A mature canopy hides the tops of tall buildings, giving the sidewalk a consistent human scale.
- 3 Calm traffic and protect pedestrians**
The tree is aided in this by on-street parking.
- 4 Filter the sunlight**
Deciduous trees, unlike evergreen or palm, serve different functions in the summer and winter. Trees also lower city temperatures in the summer and change carbon dioxide into oxygen through photosynthesis.
- 5 Bring order to street**
Trees should be laid out with regular geometries, repetition, consistent sizes, and alignment. On long, straight streets, trees that form canopies over the street limit the visual length of the street.
- 6 Visually soften streetscape**
At some times of the day, the shadows are as beautiful as the trees.
- 7 Introduce the beauty of nature**
Living plants contrast with the buildings and in many parts of the world introduce seasonal change, color, and fragrance.



Dover, V. and Massengale, J. (2014) The Seven Roles of The Urban Street Tree, *Street Design The Secret to Great Cities and Towns*.

Roundabouts

A modern roundabout accommodates traffic flow and capacity while creating a greater sense of place and allowing safer conditions for pedestrians. Roundabouts also require zero electric power beyond standard lighting to function safely. Walkability at a roundabout is increased because traffic speeds are lower as vehicles approach and exit the roundabout, and pedestrians have fewer lanes of traffic to cross at one time. Roundabouts provide a greater sense of place because of their distinctive design and greater opportunities for placemaking.

The below sketches illustrate design elements of potential roundabouts at key intersections that serve as gateways to Downtown (6th Street and Harrison Avenue; and 6th Street and Beach Drive). Roundabouts at these locations will slow traffic as it enters areas of higher pedestrian activity.



Design Details: Pedestrians

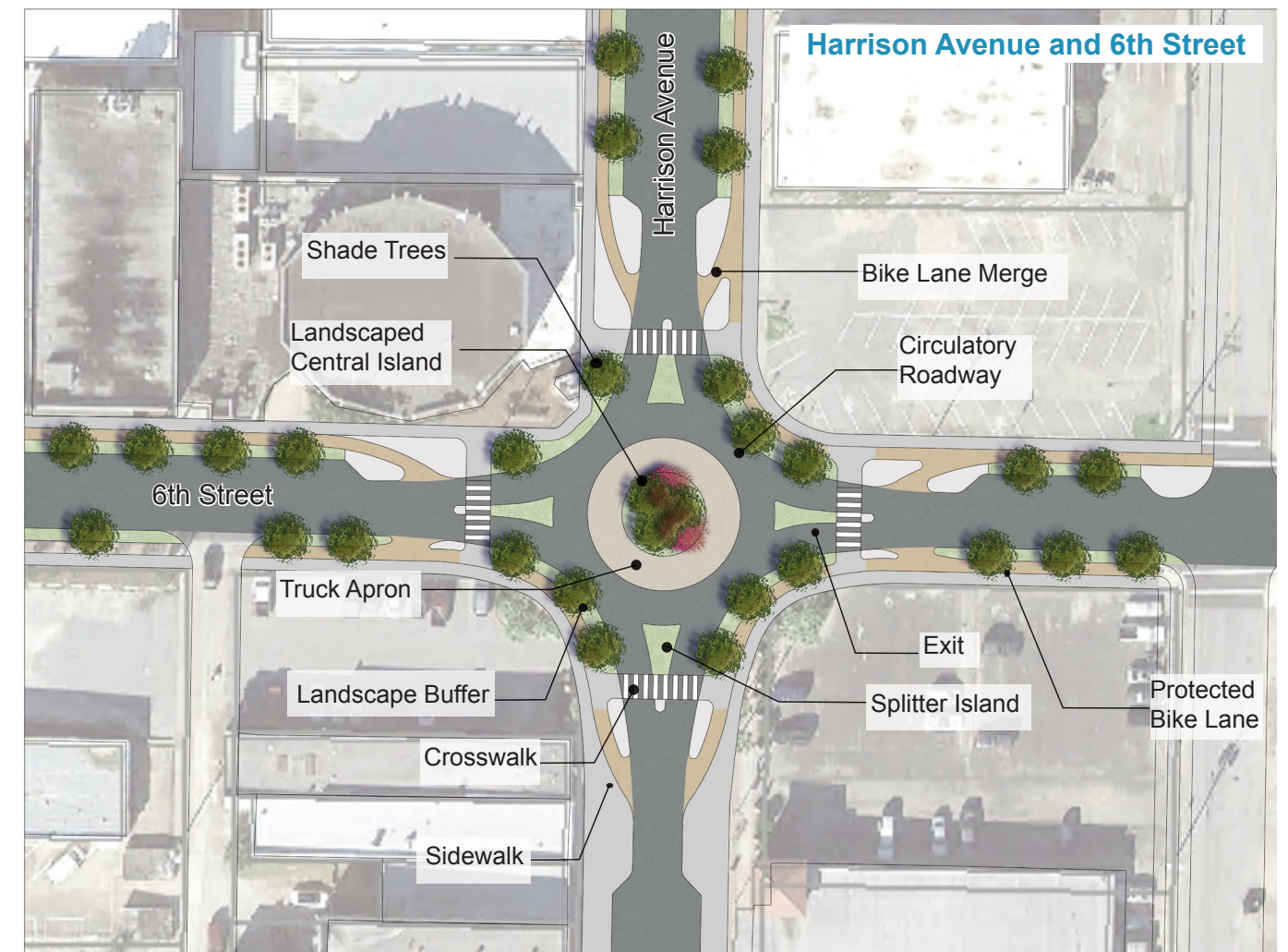
An appropriately low speed is the key pedestrian safety element of roundabout design; roundabouts are designed to achieve a consistent, 15 to 25 mph vehicle speed to minimize crash potential. When traffic volumes are light, many gaps are available for pedestrian crossing. When vehicle volumes are high, more vehicles pause at the yield line, allowing pedestrians to cross safely behind the first vehicle. The pedestrian crosswalk should occur one car length back (approximately 20 feet) from the yield line to place the pedestrian safely in view of the second waiting vehicle's driver.

Design Details: Larger Vehicles

The use of truck aprons in these conceptual designs allows the roundabouts to accommodate the turning movements of large trucks.

Design Details: Cyclists

Modern roundabout intersections are safer for cyclists than traffic signals, due to the slower traffic speeds found in a roundabout. Entering and circulating at 25 mph or less, automobiles can easily share space with bicycles traveling through a roundabout. To traverse the roundabout, the cyclist simply travels through in the vehicle lane just like an automobile. Cyclists who are uncomfortable sharing the road with automobiles may, alternatively, go around the roundabout using the sidewalk system as if a pedestrian.



Context-Based Street Design

Context describes the physical form and characteristics of a place. What happens within the bounds of the street right-of-way should largely be determined by the setting of private development lying outside of the right-of-way lines. Context is one of those fundamental solutions regarding development planning, infrastructure design and engineering. When places are well understood, treasured context can be preserved. Also, undesirable places can be programmed for future change — change based on a better balance between public and private interests.

Context-based street design is critical to balance the multiple and sometimes competing demands placed on streets to create a transportation system that provides mobility and also functions as vibrant places of commerce and community. Context helps determine where streets should prioritize commerce and community and where mobility should be prioritized. In all cases, streets should be designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all modes of travel, although some modes are given more prioritization than others depending on the context.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has adopted a context classification system to plan and design state facilities in greater harmony with the surrounding land use characteristics and intended uses of the roadway. The context classification assigned to a roadway segment determines the key design criteria elements, including the **design speed**, which informs lane width, street tree placement, on-street parking, and other elements necessary for good street design.

FDOT's context classification system incorporates eight context zones, or character areas, for the purpose of street design, ranging from natural to urban core. While the FDOT Context Classification guide and Design Manual were developed for state facilities, the same classifications can be applied to local streets across the City, to guide future street design elements. Context classifications of Urban Center (C5) and Urban General (C4) are appropriate within the Downtown study area, to reinforce the community vision developed through the charrette. These context classifications allow for and support street designs, such as the ones illustrated in this report, that prioritize the pedestrian and a walkable environment in the core of Downtown.

FDOT Context Classifications



Downtown Parking

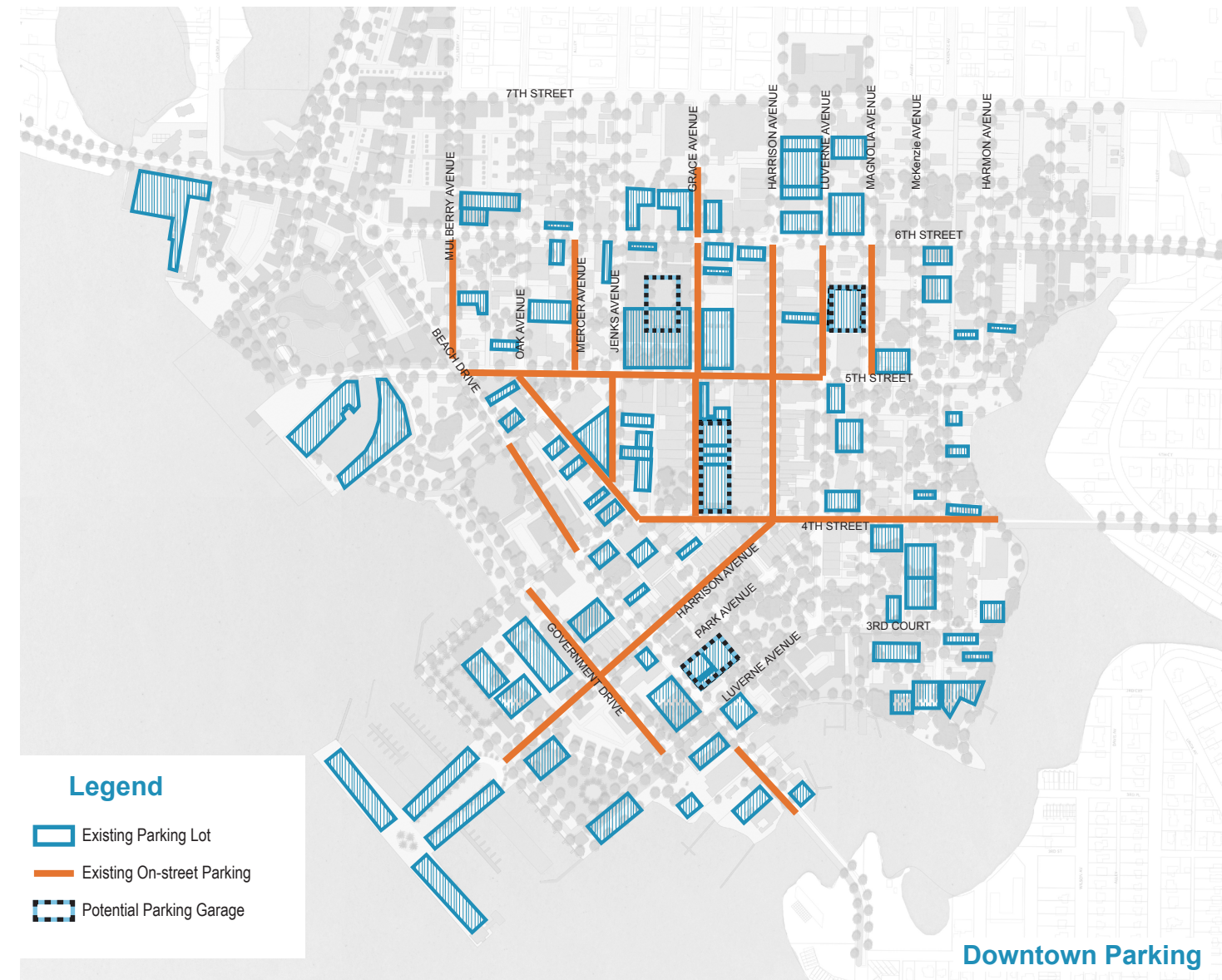
Currently, there are approximately 4,307 parking spaces on-street parking and off-street lots in Downtown. The diagram below shows the locations of existing parking.

Over time, as Downtown activity increases and as new infill buildings fill some surface lots, there may be increased demand for parking Downtown. Changes in mobility patterns, such as increased walking, biking, and transit, as well as ride shares, scooters or other emerging technologies, will also impact demand for parking.

The illustrative plans identify locations for potential parking garages on Magnolia Avenue south of 6th Street, on Grace Avenue at 4th Street, on Park Avenue facing McKenzie Park, and as part of new development

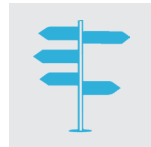
of the former Dixie Sherman block. These sites can accommodate structured parking, when/if future demand requires. Multi-use parking structures on publicly-owned surface parking lots can be built as a public-private partnership. Any parking garage built within the Downtown should include habitable building liners to face streets and public spaces. The liners could include retail, office or residential uses. Parking garages are great assets to Downtowns when designed correctly and at the right scale to the surrounding context and development.

The following pages include a toolkit of best practices and strategies that could be used to manage parking in the Downtown area.



Parking Management Toolkit

Better Utilize Existing Parking



Improve Parking and Mobility Wayfinding

Consistent and clear signage and wayfinding, consistent with Downtown's branding, can help direct visitors to areas where parking is available and to the important destinations within Downtown. This simple strategy can help make more efficient use of existing parking facilities. Clear signage should also be placed to differentiate public parking from private parking to avoid a potential source of confusion and conflict as to where one can park.



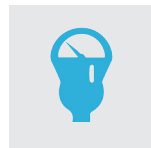
Institute Time Limits

Instituting time limits can promote higher turnover in an effort to maintain one to two open parking spaces per block.



Increase Enforcement

In coordination with time limits, increasing enforcement can ensure that on-street parking spaces are not used for longer-term or all day parking. Maintaining frequent turnover of the most desirable parking spaces benefits businesses by helping to ensure that visitors to an area can quickly and easily find convenient parking without the need to circle blocks in search of an open space.



Implement Metered Parking

On-street paid parking can be an effective tool to address high parking demands and low turnover. However, the implementation of paid parking should only occur after the enhanced enforcement and time limits have been applied first and still are not producing the desired results.



Implement a Comprehensive and Dynamic Curb Lane Management Program

The curb zone has taken on an increased importance in recent years. Demand for curb space is increasing as cities work to balance transit demand, on-street parking, rideshare passenger loading/unloading, truck loading/unloading, personal deliveries, on-demand mobility devices such as bikes and scooters, emergency services, pedestrian streetscape amenities and other users. This program will need to prioritize and manage often competing curb uses by location, day of week, type of user, and time of day compared to the relative value each of them brings.



Establish Employee Parking Locations

Parking spaces nearest Downtown destinations can more likely benefit businesses when they are available to visitors and patrons. Employees of these businesses also need a place to park while at work, but by occupying the most proximate spaces, turnover rates are low during the day and spaces are not as available for customers. Policies and programs to provide designated parking for employees can ensure that there is adequate parking for both patrons and employees. Certain off-site public parking lots could have designated permit spaces for employees to park in during normal business hours. Business and property owners can enter into covenants with the City whereby it is agreed that employees would not park in the on-street spaces in Downtown.

Modify Parking Rules



Reduce or Eliminate Parking Requirements

Downtown Panama City is different from the rest of the City and should have correspondingly different parking requirements. Minimum parking requirements for lots equal to or less than 10,000 sf should be eliminated to remove the prohibitive burden on redeveloping smaller lots with new buildings and uses. Small businesses should be exempt for parking requirements and the minimum requirement for multi-family dwelling units reduced to 1 space per dwelling unit. Additional reductions to required ratios should be studied in coordination with code updates (Cornerstone 10).



Adopt a Shared Parking Ordinance

A shared parking ordinance can take advantage of this pooling of resources by recognizing that various land uses have different peak periods of parking demand and allowing complementary land uses to share spaces, rather than producing separate spaces for each separate use.



Change the Location of Parking

In Downtown, off-street parking should be hidden from view from the streets and public spaces. Off-street spaces should ideally be located behind buildings or otherwise shielded from view by landscaping or garden walls.

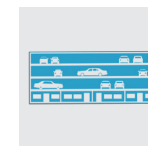
Reduce Demand



Create a "Park Once" Environment / Mobility Hub

One of the best ways to manage parking is to reduce the demand. The goal of creating a vibrant mixed-use center supports the creation of a "park once" environment. In such a place, many trips require only one parking space. Scattered surface parking lots are consolidated into several strategically located parking lots or garages where visitors can park and then walk to all of the destinations in Downtown. These locations should also function as mobility hubs, served with multiple options for traveling the Downtown, such as bikeshare, bus, or perhaps water taxi.

Consolidate Supply



Build a Parking Garage

As Downtown's surface parking lots are replaced with buildings and the other parking strategies in this toolkit have been implemented, addressing the remaining parking needs can include building a parking garage. The plan identifies possible parking garage locations that will fit a standard parking structure as well as liner buildings to face the street. Multi-use parking structures on public land could be built through public-private partnerships.

CORNERSTONE 8: Placemaking

Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets and strengths, creating public spaces that promote health, happiness, and improved quality of life. Downtown's proximity to the waterfront, unique historic building fabric, and cluster of arts and artists are the assets that make it unique. Supporting arts and culture, providing space for arts/artists as well as including arts in public spaces, and preserving the buildings and structures that comprise the city's historic identity, are keys to placemaking in Panama City.

Support Arts and Culture

Downtown has a history of successful arts and culture organizations making unique contributions to Downtown's environment and attracting audiences on a regular basis. Murals and other public art help to define and enrich public places, giving them a sense of authenticity lacking in the homogeneous, mass-produced suburban shopping centers. Prior to Hurricane Michael, a critical mass of artists and musicians had developed that worked together and enlivened Downtown. The storm destroyed many of the low-cost facilities these individuals and organizations used. The City should work with the organizations to identify alternative facilities and/or arrangements that might accommodate their return to the Downtown.

The cluster of arts and cultural facilities and activities Downtown helps to define its character and broaden its appeal to wider audiences. Arts and culture should infuse the Downtown plan, and the arts community should be involved to bring their creative spark to the redevelopment process. A monthly or weekly gathering of local musicians to jam together on the waterfront could have appeal. One particular opportunity could involve multimedia treatment of the Chevron tank farm, possibly projecting art onto the tanks to reduce their negative visual impacts.

As described in Cornerstone 1, if the Civic Center is found to be damaged beyond repair, it should be rebuilt or replaced by a new Downtown facility with flexibility to accommodate a variety of types and sizes of events. Efforts also should be made to expand the range and frequency of events in Martin Theatre and possibly the McKenzie House.

Placemaking Concepts:

- *Support art and artists in streets and public spaces (murals, music, festivals).*
- *Provide space for arts/artists throughout Downtown.*
- *Preserve Downtown's historic character, which is critical to its sense of place.*

Tactical Urbanism demonstration projects, described in Cornerstone 7, can also contribute to placemaking. These (often temporary) projects re-purpose portions of the public realm and create space for pedestrians, outdoor seating and dining, artists, musicians, and more. Often, artists are involved in the design of the space, providing unique opportunities for creative expression in streets and public spaces.



Top: Mural painted by Jane Perry; each bird was commissioned by a supporter and the funds are to be used to maintain the mural and park.

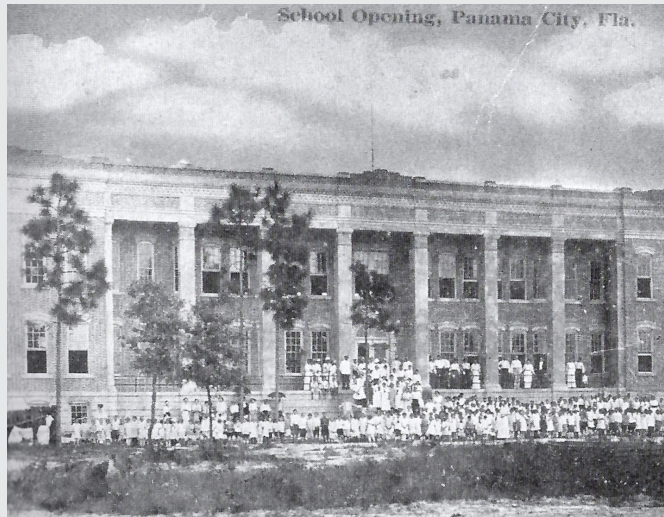
Below: Backstage Pass concert series, held in the parking of the Panama City Center for the Arts in the Spring and Fall. (photo credit: bayarts.org)

Right: Examples of Tactical Urbanism

Top: Outdoor cafes are added with temporary paint and planters, creating a slower, safer intersection within an extra-wide right-of-way and also contributing to sense of place.

Below: Temporary public spaces can be used for games, art, and other family-friendly activities.





Historic Preservation Tools

Panama City's historic buildings provide a connection to the past. Plus, they (mostly) look good—and how things look is no small thing in revitalization. These buildings can easily look great, however, with a little effort. While dilapidated historic properties drag down property values and send a message of neglect, on the other hand, restored and well-maintained historic properties reinforce a city's unique brand. Preserving this inheritance for future generations will have innumerable economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Although Downtown Panama City has a wealth of historic buildings and the Historical Society has completed inventories and education, there are few standards or regulations in place to ensure buildings remain into the future. A number of tools exist that should be explored to either incentivize or require preservation, including:

- **Tax incentives** (for example, abatement for ten years) for reinvestment in rehabbing / adaptive reuse of and making additions to historic properties.
- **Financial incentives** (for example, grants or micro-loans) for reinvestment in rehabbing / adaptive reuse of and making additions to historic properties.
- Zoning that permits **transfer of unused development rights** (severable use rights) from locally listed historic properties. Receiving sites would need to be dedicated elsewhere in the City as part of a TDR program.
- Updated **inventory** of historic resources, pursue historic designation for eligible structures.
- Participation in the **Florida Certified Local Government Program (CLG)** to identify, evaluate and protect historic properties. Implementing ordinances could include a delay-of-demolition ordinance and standards for the rehabilitation of historic structures. Participation in the CLG provides access to state funding resources and technical assistance.
- A **demolition-by-neglect ordinance** to discourage property owners from allowing long-term deterioration.
- Adoption of the **International Existing Building Code** to facilitate renovation at a lower cost.
- **Parking requirements exemption** for historic properties.

Restoring the Historic Downtown Clocks

Providing authentic links to the past reinforce community identity and sense of place. Downtown Panama City's rich history provides great material for placemaking; recently, a new opportunity has arisen for restoring one of the historic downtown clocks.

Since the 1920s, the corner of Beach Drive and Harrison Avenue has been marked by an iconic clock. Over the years, as businesses moved and repairs were needed, various replicas were made. Today, the Historical Society has come into possession of one of the early clocks, and hopes to raise funds for restoration.

As the Downtown is being rebuilt and upgraded, incorporating landmarks like the historic clock provides important connections to the past. A prominent location for the restored clock within the historic Downtown should be found. Renderings for Four Points Plaza show a few options, either mounted to a focal building or sited in the center of the plaza itself.

Right: Photos of the historic Downtown clocks.

Below: Rendering of the historic clock restored as the new centerpiece of Four Points Plaza, or mounted to the new focal tower.



CORNERSTONE 9: Gathering Spaces

To support activity, Downtown will need a variety of gathering places for community gatherings and events. It should have destinations and facilities for all ages, including kid-friendly destinations. Some ideas that were proposed during the charrette week include more community parks and open spaces, a waterfront amphitheater, maritime and science museums, a splash pad, pool, and YMCA.

The City is beginning to act on the charrette input, even as the plan ideas are being finalized. For the 2019 Fourth of July celebration, temporary sod was brought in to the marina area, producing a waterfront gathering place for holiday festivities. Fountain upgrades are being pursued for McKenzie Park; a skate park is planned for empty parking lots west of Grace Avenue.

In the long term, the City can set policies and take actions to continue to support quality gathering places as part of the Downtown urban realm. For example, zoning requirements or design guidelines can stipulate that McKenzie Park be fronted by buildings and balconies, not parking lots. Family-oriented destinations such as a science museum and/or aquarium could be attracted to locate Downtown. A community garden can be used as a gathering place, and also teach children about sustainability. Satellite facilities for GCSC and FSU can bring more students to Downtown, attracting the types of activities that are oriented to students and youth (such as areas for frisbee, outdoor chess, etc.).

In the City-owned marina area, some of the pavement can be peeled back and new public green spaces provided. In the near term, a new public space should be designed and built in coordination with the planned hotel development. Depending on decisions for reuse of the Civic Center and boat ramp on the south end, there is opportunity for other public uses on that portion of the site as well. Sketches in this section illustrate urban design goals for any potential future reuse of the site and demonstrate potential for a waterfront park and new development that could include housing as well as a science museum and other public/private facilities. The City owns this land and should work with the community to decide how it should be used to best serve community needs.

Gathering Spaces Concepts:

- *Locate spaces for community gatherings and events, and kid-friendly destinations at the waterfront and Downtown.*
- *Community desires include parks and open spaces, amphitheater, maritime and science museums, bike/kayak rental, splash pad, pool.*



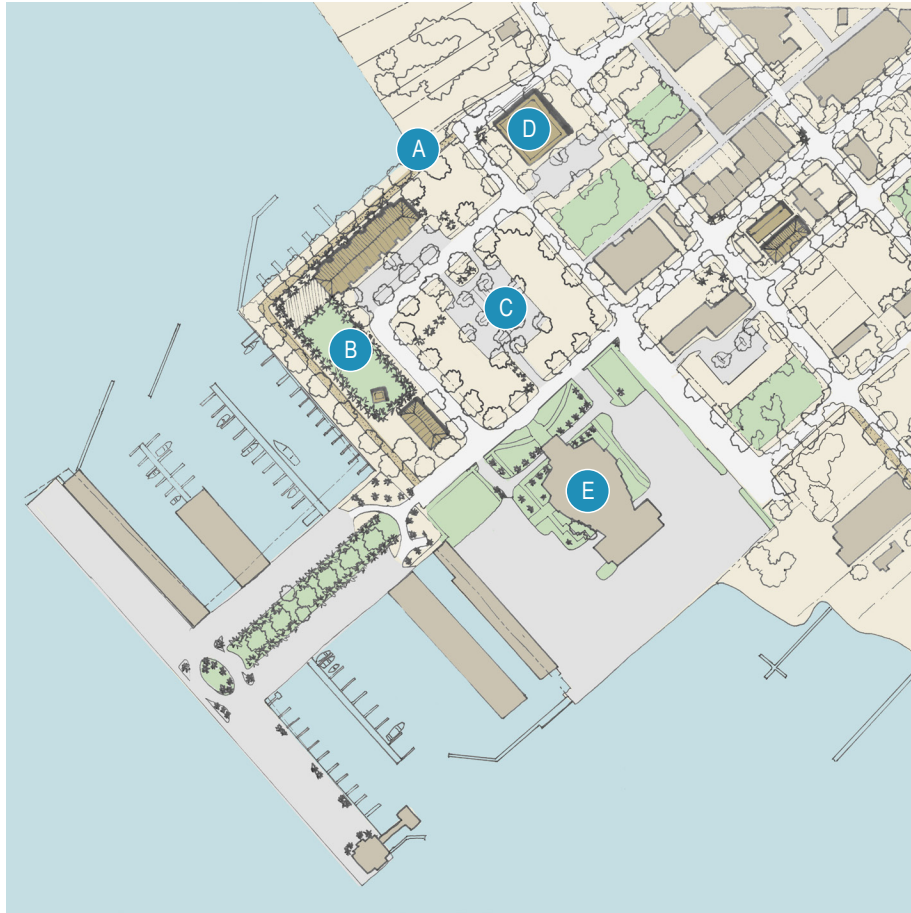
Marina Area Concepts:

- A** A hotel and other mixed-use buildings line the waterfront promenade (See Cornerstone 1).
- B** New Waterfront Square
- C** If the south side of the marina is ever re-purposed, there is potential to include a large waterfront green as well as a layer of income-producing development, putting a new face on Downtown as seen from the waterfront.
- D** New tree-lined streets connect pedestrians in the marina area with Downtown businesses and activities.
- E** Shaded streets and trails connect gathering places (Palm Preserve/McKenzie Park/waterfront greens, etc.).
- F** In the future, parking should be placed behind buildings, shielded from view of pedestrians on streets and in waterfront public spaces.
- G** McKenzie Park is faced by the fronts of new infill buildings, not parking lots.
- H** Fountain upgrade (McKenzie Park)

Potential change over time in the Marina Area

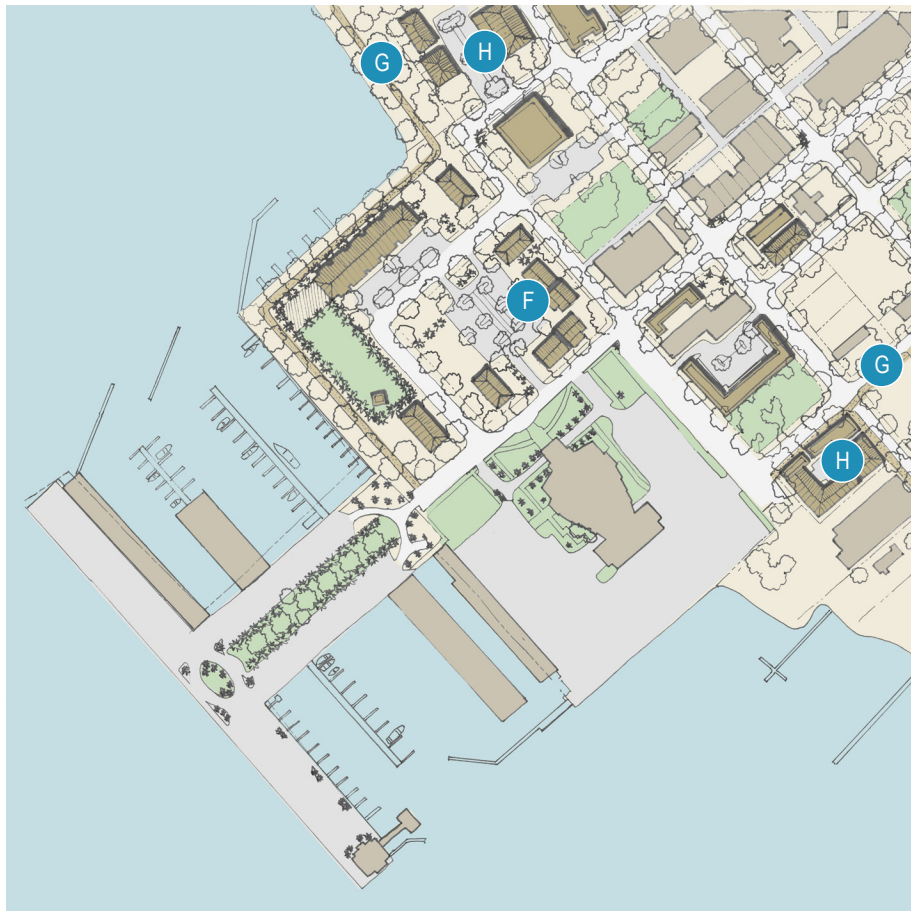
Step 1:

- A** A first segment of the waterfront promenade is built with the hotel and restaurant.
- B** New green spaces for the community to enjoy for events and festivals and every day use.
- C** Parking will be built to support hotel and restaurant.
- D** Former Federal Courthouse replaced with new civic building (possible Multi-Purpose Events Center, TBD).
- E** Former Civic Center (demolition or repair TBD)



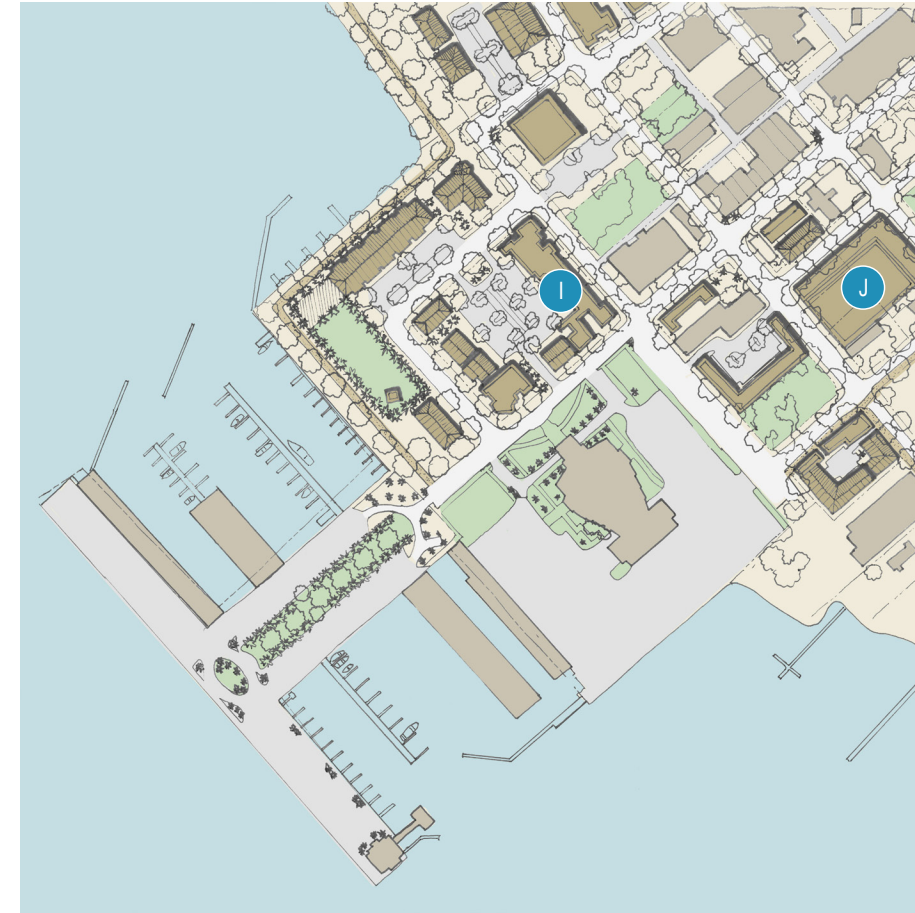
Step 2:

- F** Small retail temporary structures can be located on empty lots and serve community needs such as a farmers market or pop-up shops, and provide a better walking experience between the waterfront and Downtown.
- G** Other segments of the multi-use trail can be added.
- H** Additional Downtown infill proceeds with reinvestment in the area.



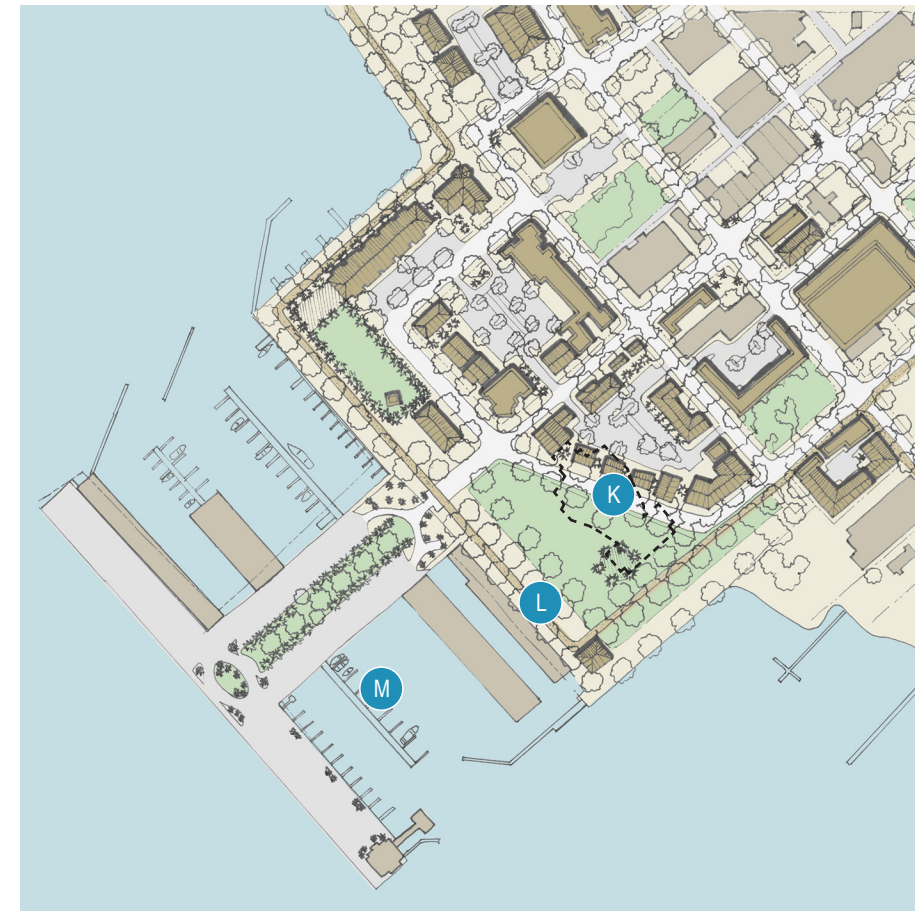
Step 3:

- I** Small shops can be replaced with more permanent structures with a mix of land uses.
- J** Additional Downtown infill could include a parking garage with a liner building that faces McKenzie Park, and supports visitors, residents and business owners.



Step 4:

- K** If the Civic Center and boat ramp/boat trailer parking are relocated, the south portion of the marina area could host a mix of uses as well as a large waterfront open space. A useful precedent to study could be the Battery / White Point Garden in Charleston, SC.
- L** The waterfront promenade can continue across the south side of the marina area, connecting to the Cove neighborhood and points east.
- M** With reuse of the land area, the marina remains an active waterfront.



CORNERSTONE 10: Updated Standards

Fix the Codes

Currently, Panama City's zoning and building codes inhibit the City's ability to approve mixed-use development and some of the plan elements designed to better enliven Downtown. The zoning code needs greater flexibility to accommodate new uses and development types. For example, the residential zones do not allow Airbnb-type short-term rentals. The current regulations are too restrictive on uses and too onerous in their requirements for on-site parking and stormwater detention. The predominantly small Downtown lots need a code flexible enough to recognize that such requirements cannot be accomplished on site and/or impose costs well beyond that which the market can support. Minimum parking requirements are inappropriate Downtown and should be eliminated for parcels less than 10,000 sf; additional incentives could be introduced on larger sites (for example, reduction or elimination of required parking in exchange for shorter buildings along the waterfront, for historic preservation, for affordable housing, or for other community benefits).

As discussed in the stormwater infrastructure recommendations, area-wide, shared solutions for stormwater mitigation are much more efficient and effective than the site-by-site approaches required in the zoning code. Shared stormwater facilities that double as public open space can better meet the needs while also enhancing the Downtown environment. An area-wide solution and financing strategy should replace the current zoning requirements for stormwater retention.

Though it would require more extensive re-working of the zoning code, a form-based code that regulates development based on its form and relationship to public spaces and nearby development would be much more effective in clarifying the plan's intent and how new development could meet that intent. In the short term, parking and stormwater waivers for small projects would be appropriate as the City seeks to jump start Downtown redevelopment.

The design ideas included in the plan will provide valuable guidance to ensure that new development furthers the plan's placemaking goals and is compatible with existing structures. Plan concepts will need an effective mechanism for implementation and enforcement. Most effective would be hiring dedicated staff or consultant services to help applicants understand the goals and vision of the plan and to encourage them to incorporate good design into their projects.

Updated Standard Concepts:

- *Update regulations and codes to implement the vision.*
- *Make historic building reuse easy; create a style/pattern book of Panhandle architecture for historic rehab.*
- *Address zoning and building codes, specifically heights, parking, and stormwater.*
- *Provide pre-approved designs for infill buildings, including ADUs.*
- *Streamline events permitting.*

The building code includes older provisions that have been overtaken by new technologies. For example, recently the City has been struggling with rules regarding fats, oils and greases. The code should be brought up to date, and staff should be empowered to work with developers to find alternative ways of meeting the same goals. The International Existing Building Code recognizes the importance of flexibility when adapting historic buildings for reuse. It allows alternative approaches to meet fire safety and other code provisions. This is particularly important in meeting the fire separation and egress requirements for buildings that provide housing above retail storefronts. The City should consider adopting the Existing Building Code to supplement its use of the Florida Building Code.

As discussed in the transportation recommendations, the City should work with the Florida Department of Transportation to designate City streets with specific context codes that will guide design of future improvements (e.g., design speeds, lane widths, etc.) to be compatible with the local context.

Rebuilding Panama City will come with a flurry of improvement projects. Community stakeholders expressed a desire to keep money in the local economy, when possible. City contracting for public works and improvements could include a local hiring provision that requires or incentivizes a minimum percentage of local residents.

Streamline Approvals

Many of the City's policies require extensive involvement by the City Council, which lengthens the process and reduces its predictability. Private developers and investors seek as much certainty as possible as to the likely results of a zoning or development approval request. To the extent possible, development guidelines should be clear enough to be applied administratively without City Council involvement. Form-based codes are particularly good at specifying development requirements and removing the uncertainty from the development approvals process. The City should review its development approval process to identify opportunities to streamline the process and improve predictability.

Other approval processes inhibit important Downtown activities. In particular, the events guide and permitting process involves lengthy review times and excessive fees. Downtown would benefit from a continuous series of small events, such as evening movies in McKenzie Park. The events policies should be designed to encourage and facilitate such events, rather than imposing high fees for police service and requiring City Council approval.

Developers report that the building plan approvals process is unpredictable and subject to conflicting requirements from different reviewing departments. Many cities have helped to streamline the plans review process and improve predictability by providing the applicant with early feedback on the plans and then having a coordinated review involving all the relevant departments in a single meeting to avoid conflicts. In Panama City, new staff or consulting support can be added in the role of "City Architect", to expedite the review of plans and guide applicants through necessary approvals and potential solutions. Where possible, Panama City's land development regulations and policies should be clearly formulated, and mechanisms provided for considering alternatives when those policies impose adverse burdens that inhibit favorable investment. All City employees should be instilled with a "Customer Service" perspective of helping an applicant through the process rather than leaving the applicant to navigate multiple requirements and levels of approval unassisted. City employees should be empowered to go beyond the letter of the law to consider the goals and intent of regulations.

A near-term problem relates to the City's requirement that applicants for Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) development grants provide three bids for the proposed improvements. Given the state of the local construction market, soliciting three bids is nearly impossible. To meet the imperative of protecting the public interest in not providing funding that exceeds the actual cost of the improvements, the City should consider hiring an inspector/cost estimator on a permanent or contractual basis to review the development costs in lieu of requiring three bids.

Building Height

During the charrette week, community members expressed preferences for controlling future building heights, with shorter buildings along the waterfront, and taller heights closer to town. The stepping of height could create view corridors to/from interior buildings, and reduce the perceived scale of development on the water.

Plan illustrations explore this concept of stepped height, with the shortest buildings along the waterfront promenade, and taller buildings closer to town. On City-owned sites such as the marina area, the City could choose to institute a tiered approach to building heights as part of future development programs. There are trade-offs that should be considered, such as the impact to overall building footprint and massing (the footprint must be larger to achieve the same program, impacting site area available for open space and other uses).

There is nothing in the current zoning that requires private property owners to limit the height of building along the waterfront. The Downtown District, the current zoning in the study area allows buildings up to 150' in height. Market constraints (such as construction costs for taller buildings), density limits of 30 units per acre (base) to 60 units per acre (with bonus), a floor area ratio (FAR) of 3 (base) to 5 (with bonus), and on-site parking requirements are key factors that currently control the height of waterfront buildings.

New standards for waterfront building heights could be implemented through incentives or changes to zoning. For example, reduced or eliminated parking requirements or a streamlining of the approvals process could be instituted as an incentive in exchange for buildings 6 stories or less along the waterfront. Density and FAR limits could be eliminated and replaced with requirements for the height and envelope of buildings that stipulate the specific height of future buildings on the waterfront, but potentially allow greater lot coverage or density. A common tool to institute this type of prescriptive zoning is a form-based code.

Another alternate is a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) policy whereby waterfront property owners could transfer some of their development potential to other areas of Downtown or the City, in return for shorter buildings and/or open spaces on the waterfront. The City would need to identify "receiving" sites that could utilize the development potential. The feasibility of this approach should be evaluated with a market study, to determine if there is demand for the additional density elsewhere.



Above: Illustrating options for future building height on the marina site

Right, Above: A 5-story hotel building on the marina site

Right, Bottom: An alternative that shows a 2-3 story portion of the building closest to the water/marina, with a 5-story portion of the building closer to town. In this alternative, the hotel footprint must be longer (and take up more of the waterfront promenade frontage) to accommodate the same amount of habitable space.

Form-Based Codes

In order to implement the plan, a form-based code could be drafted and adopted to apply to new development Downtown. Form-based codes focus primarily on the physical form of development and can be used to realize a desired community vision. The community vision and form-based recommendations in this plan provide a solid foundation for a new code.

Form-based codes differ from traditional zoning in that they prescribe specific urban design standards and place fewer restrictions of the specific use of land. For example, a traditional zoning code may designate a property be used specifically for commercial purposes, but be silent about its urban characteristics. Conversely, a form-based code provides detailed regulation about elements of design that impact the quality of public streets and spaces. Form-based codes specify where a building should be placed on its site to define the street space, that the building not have blank walls to face public spaces, and that it provide shade over the sidewalk with awnings or canopies. Some codes include detailed architectural standards that specify materials and configurations of design details that are harmonious with local and regional precedents. The code may allow for a wider range of uses than traditional zoning, which is particularly relevant in historic buildings that often require flexibility for change in use over time.

A form-based code approach to Downtown zoning would help to ensure that future infill buildings and improvements conform with the plan vision, getting the basic form and massing right while controlling for the key elements that affect how well buildings respect and contribute to the public space.

Another potential benefit of form-based codes is a streamlining of the review process, which encourages new development by providing clarity and certainty. Form-based codes allow by-right development in congruence with the standards set forth; since the community has already given approval to the development forms specified by the code, the overall review and approval process can be shortened. In addition, the "guessing game" of what will be approved that can be associated with the approvals process is eliminated. By establishing clear standards that support the community's vision and provide a visual guide to design criteria, community members can also be assured that infill development will be desirable and contributive to the character and function of the town.



SECTION 213-586
FACADE COMPOSITION

A. Centerlines

1. Facades shall feature alternating structural centerlines and fenestration centerlines.
2. These centerlines shall extend from the top of a mass to the bottom of a mass.
3. Multiple windows and/or doors may be grouped symmetrically around a single fenestration centerline.
4. The spacing of centerlines may be identical across a facade, or may vary.

B. Cornices

1. The top of each primary and secondary mass shall be emphasized with a projecting cornice. This cornice shall feature a deeper projection, and therefore stronger shadow line, than any other Expression Line on a facade.
2. A cornice may be used to visually roof.
3. A wall plane may extend above a parapet.

C. Expression Lines

1. Expression Lines are formed by which project minor shadow lines.
2. Facades may feature a change of textures at an Expression Line.
3. A building mass may feature on subdivisions by Expression Line layers:
 - Single layer
 - Two layers
 - Three layers
4. An Expression Line shall always be storefronts. This Expression Line band for signage.

Figure 5-5: Structural and Fenestration Centerlines

1. Form

2. Height

Key

- Property Line
- Build-to-Zone (BTZ)
- Potential Building Area (in addition to Build to Zone)
- Build-to-Zone (BTZ)
- Building

Building Placement

Front Build-to-Zone	0' minimum to 6' maximum
Frontage Occupancy	80% minimum
Side Setback (mid-block)	0' minimum
Side Build-to-Zone (corner)	0' minimum to 10' maximum
Rear Setback (lot or Alley)	5' minimum

Building Heights

Building Height	2 Stories minimum 4 Stories maximum
First Floor Height (Floor to Floor)	14' minimum
Ground Finished Floor (above sidewalk or finished grade)	0' min. (commercial) 24" minimum (residential)

Lot and Block Standards

Maximum Block Perimeter	1800 linear feet maximum
Lot Width	18' minimum, 120' maximum
Lot Depth	no minimum, 180' maximum
Lot Coverage (%)	no maximum

NOTES:

- Basements, uninhabitable Attics, and underground parking shall not count as a Story.
- Stories may not exceed 14 feet in height from finished floor to finished floor, except for a First Floor commercial function which may be a maximum of 25 feet.
- Building Heights shall be measured to the eave of the roof or roof deck (if flat).
- Small footprint towers, cupolas, and other rooftop features may above the designated height limit as described in Part 5, Architecture Standards.
- Blocks shall be configured as shown in the Regulating Plan. Modification to Blocks may be approved by the FBCA/FBCS if determined to be consistent with the intent of this article and the above lot and Block standards.
- Blocks may be defined by streets or pedestrian walkways.

Above: Components of a Form-Based Code:

- The *Regulating Plan* is a map that applies the code standards, such as transect zones or building types, build-to lines, mandatory shopfronts, and street types to specific lots and parcels.
- *Building Form Standards* describe the required relationships between buildings and public spaces, incorporating build-to zones, setbacks, building heights, permitted encroachments, and parking location.
- *Architectural Standards* specify architectural elements, configurations, and materials. The level of detail included in a code varies. Some codes go to a great level of detail to specify desired architectural style and design elements; others limit instruction to just those key elements that are vital to walkability, such as prohibiting blank walls, and providing shelter for pedestrians at the ground floor level.

IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

The Strategic Vision for Downtown and its Waterfront is driven by the imperative to make Panama City the premier city in the Florida Panhandle.

Achieving that goal will depend on a series of concerted actions to rebuild Downtown Panama City in a new way that creates great places that will draw people Downtown to live, work and play. The plan emphasizes physical improvements to enhance the City's waterfront, improve the public realm and set the stage for private reinvestment in Downtown buildings and sites. The implementation actions are designed to realize the 10 Cornerstone Ideas, driven by the following strategies:

- Invest in the public realm to create a better sense of place, revitalize Downtown, and support private investment;
- Remove barriers to private investment, and incentivize new development according to the vision;
- Attract more residents, businesses and visitors; and
- Build on existing assets and strengths.

Ten Cornerstone Ideas to Rebuild Downtown Panama City:

- 1 WATERFRONT ACCESS
- 2 DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY
- 3 DOWNTOWN LIVING
- 4 SAFETY & SECURITY
- 5 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING
- 6 RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE
- 7 CONNECTED
- 8 PLACEMAKING
- 9 GATHERING SPACES
- 10 UPDATED STANDARDS

Invest in Priority Improvements

The key public improvements in the Implementation Action Plan were identified based on their potential to revitalize Downtown and support private investment. Foremost among these are:

- **Upgrade Infrastructure:** Repair/upgrade existing below-grade utilities (stormwater, sewer) to 21st century technologies to support rebuilding/development. Harden power lines as streetscapes are redesigned.

Related Cornerstone Ideas: 6, 7

- **Waterfront Promenade:** Build a continuous walk/bike tree-lined trail that provides public access to the waterfront.

Related Cornerstone Idea: 1

- **Marina Area Development:** In the near term, remove vacant/damaged buildings and excess pavement in the marina area and investigate options for the Civic Center (repair/rebuild or relocate elsewhere in the Downtown). Partner with St. Joe to build a waterfront hotel, public open space, and restaurant in place of the vacant former City buildings on the north side of the marina area. Longer term, consider relocation of the boat ramp and redevelopment of the south end of the marina area to include additional waterfront gathering/public open space areas and a mix of uses that could include City facilities and housing.

Related Cornerstone Ideas: 1, 2, 3, 9

- **Harrison Avenue Streetscape and Plaza:** Execute an enhanced version of the previously-designed Harrison Avenue streetscape that provides wider sidewalks, shade trees, pedestrian lighting, and other amenities to support businesses and activity along Harrison. Four Points Plaza is a redesign of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and 4th Street as a shared space for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Related Cornerstone Ideas: 2, 6, 7, 9

- **Street and Intersection Improvements:** Following Harrison Avenue improvements, continue to upgrade Downtown streets to accommodate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles. Improvements include needed ADA/access improvements; re-sizing of vehicular lanes to accommodate sidewalks, street trees, and buffered bike lanes on Jenks and Magnolia Avenues, 6th Street and Beach Drive; and roundabouts to improve the intersections of Harrison Avenue/6th Street and Beach Drive/6th Street.

Related Cornerstone Idea: 7

- **Downtown Connectivity:** Provide multiple mobility options to arrive to/from downtown, alleviate parking demand and increase foot traffic. This includes a connected bikeway along Harrison Avenue to the north; pedestrian/bike connections to other City destinations such as St. Andrews, Millville and Uptown; potential for a water taxi system; and a circulator shuttle to other city destinations.

Related Cornerstone Idea: 7

- **Resilient Infrastructure:** Implement shared solutions for downtown, including "water smart" parks or mini parks, green streets, and shoreline restoration and resiliency improvements. The first step is a Downtown Stormwater/Resiliency Plan to properly identify and prioritize solutions.

Related Cornerstone Idea: 6

- **Community Facilities:** Rebuild community amenities that will draw people to Downtown (for example, multi-purpose events center, amphitheater). Locate sites for desired recreational facilities such as splash pad, skateboard park, and dog parks. Partner with private entities to construct other facilities such as a science museum/discovery center and a community pool.

Related Cornerstone Ideas: 2, 9

- **Tank Farm:** Explore opportunities for tank farm relocation and redevelopment that includes a major waterfront Eco-Park, potential for a new boat ramp and boat trailer parking, and additional land area reclaimed as future development sites.

Related Cornerstone Idea: 6, 9

Recovery Planning Documents

The Strategic Vision for Downtown and its Waterfront is one part of a larger citywide effort to guide recovery and redevelopment in Panama City. The Implementation Actions identified in this draft report are synchronized with and will be referenced within the City's suite of recovery planning documents, including the Economic Development Strategy, Recovery Action Plan, and Redevelopment Plan. (Note references to City-wide Recovery/Redevelopment Plan Actions in the Implementation Matrix). Together, these documents will help the City implement recovery in an organized manner while making efficient use of available resources. The Recovery Action Plan provides a roadmap to rebuild after Hurricane Michael, while the Downtown Plan, Redevelopment Plan, and Economic Development Strategy identify strategies and projects to expand, improve, and make the City resilient.

Remove Barriers to Investment & Incentivize Desired Development

The creation of great public places will help rejuvenate Downtown but only if it is accompanied by a series of changed policies and practices that currently inhibit private investment. The primary issues range across the board, including basic zoning and building codes and approval processes, Downtown clean-up, and safety and security measures. New development, building restoration, and other private sector actions that implement the community vision should be facilitated.

Related Cornerstone Ideas: 4, 5, 10

Attract More Residents, Businesses and Visitors

Critical to the success of the Downtown revitalization effort will be bringing in new residents and visitors to frequent Downtown restaurants, retailers and other businesses. In the short-term, that will involve marketing, branding and promotion as well as hotel development. In the mid- and longer-term future, the emphasis should expand to include housing development. Potential public/private partnerships for infill development that implements the vision should be explored.

Related Cornerstone Ideas: 2, 3

Build on Existing Assets & Strengths

Downtown's waterfront proximity, unique historic building fabric, and cluster of arts, cultural facilities, small businesses and activities set it apart and provide an advantage that could not easily be replicated in other places. Downtown revitalization can build upon these assets by increasing public access to the waterfront, supporting the needs of arts/artists, supporting small businesses, and promoting new development that complements the historic fabric.

Downtown's historic structures and setting are a key asset and provide a foundation for the future vision. Existing inventories should be updated, if needed, and National Register status considered for eligible buildings. A demolition-by-neglect ordinance would discourage property owners from allowing long-term deterioration. Adoption of the International Existing Building Code would facilitate renovation at a lower cost. Restoration of historic buildings should be incentivized through 10-year tax abatement and improvement grants.

Related Cornerstone Ideas: 1, 5, 8, 10

Pursue Funding Opportunities

Plan implementation will take place, over time, as funding sources are available. Potential funding sources are identified in the Implementation Action Plan and described briefly here:

- The Recovery Action Plan includes an extensive discussion of the potential for hurricane recovery funding and how to target those resources. Several of the major public improvements involve restoration of facilities damaged in the hurricane and will be eligible for reconstruction monies.
- Another resource is the Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., funding for economic development following the BP oil spill. The City and the County are eligible to submit projects to compete for Triumph monies. The City has been authorized to submit an application for a convention center.
- The stormwater ideas (Cornerstone 6) proposed an area-wide solution of common facilities and infrastructure investments that might be funded through a stormwater tax collected from property owners in the served area. The recommended Downtown stormwater plan should address this and other potential funding tools. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection provides Resilience Planning Grants for coastal communities preparing for current and future effects of rising sea levels.
- Focused marketing and promotional efforts to support Downtown potentially could be funded through establishment of an Entertainment District and imposition of a special sales tax on food and drink sold within the District. The details of such a District need to be worked out.
- Philanthropy could play a role in supporting some of the Downtown improvements, particularly those associated with the waterfront promenade, new parks and public art. Plans for each improvement should be reviewed to identify opportunities for plaques, engraved bricks or other recognition of individual, local organization and foundation sponsorship. Trees, benches, murals and fountains lend themselves to individual pledges.

Implementation Action Plan

Action / Description		Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)
		Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)			
Invest in Priority Improvements							
Upgrade Infrastructure							
1	Repair / upgrade existing below-grade utilities (stormwater, sewer) to current technology/standards, to support rebuilding. Underground utility upgrades should occur at the same time or before street design improvements.	X	X		City	Recovery funds, Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, City budget	I.2.3 I.2.6
2	Harden power lines, add pedestrian lighting (prioritize streets identified for street improvements)	X	X		City	Recovery funds, City budget	SS.1.2 I.2.2 I.2.6
Waterfront Promenade							
3	Pursue land acquisition or easements for Waterfront Promenade, as needed	X			City	Parks and Open Space Florida Forever Grant, Land and Water Conservation Fund, City budget	I.1.2
4	Design & construction of Promenade, including amenities (lighting, trees, swings, etc)		X		City	Surface Transportation Block Grant, City budget	I.1.2 I.1.3
Marina Area Development							
5	Proceed with marina area building, pavement demolition	X			City	Recovery funds, City budget	E.1.2 E.1.3
6	Partner with St. Joe to build a waterfront hotel, public open space, and restaurant in place of the vacant former City buildings on the north side of the marina area.	X	X		City	Community Redevelopment Agency	E.1.2 I.1.4
7	Explore options for Civic Center (repair/rebuild, or relocate to another site in the historic Downtown) and Convention Center. An economic study should evaluate options and potential sites.	X	X		City	Recovery funds, City budget	E.1.2 E.2.2
8	If Civic Center and boat ramp uses are relocated, investigate potential for redevelopment of the south end of the marina area to include additional waterfront gathering/public open space areas and a mix of uses that could include City facilities and housing.			X	City	Recovery funds, Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Florida Forever, Community Redevelopment Agency	E.1.2

Action / Description	Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)	
	Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)				
Harrison Avenue Streetscape & Plaza							
9	Update construction drawings per Downtown Plan recommendations	X			City	City budget	I.1.1
10	Implement streetscape redesign, including Four Points Plaza. This should occur at the same time or following the repair/upgrade of below-grade utilities (See action item #1).		X		City	City budget	I.1.1 I.1.2 I.2.1
11	Install street trees & sustainable infrastructure on Harrison Avenue (structural soil cells) as part of streetscape redesign		X		City	Recovery funds, Arbor Day Foundation, One Tree Planted, City budget	I.1.1 I.2.1 QL.3.1
Street and Intersection Improvements							
12	Undertake accessibility/ADA improvements throughout Downtown, where needed	X	X	X	City	Recovery funds, Surface Transportation Block Grant, City budget	SS.3.3
13	<p>After Harrison Avenue, retrofit additional Downtown streets as Complete Streets that re-size vehicular lanes to provide space for sidewalks/trees and protected bike facilities. Priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jenks Ave (south of 7th; may connect north) Magnolia Ave (south of 7th; may connect north) 6th Street (from Beach Drive to Allen Avenue) Beach Drive (south of 6th; may connect west) <p>Proposed bikeways can be extended to connect destinations City-wide. As a next step, the City can work with community groups to design and extend these important walk/bike connections.</p> <p>Street retrofit / improvements should occur at the same time or following any needed repair/upgrade of below-grade utilities (See action item #1).</p>		X	X	City	Recovery funds, Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development Grant, Surface Transportation Block Grant, Community Redevelopment Agency, City budget	I.1.1 I.1.2 E.1.2 QL.3.1
14	<p>Construct roundabouts to improve intersection safety and mark gateways to the historic Downtown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6th Street / Beach Drive 6th Street / Harrison Avenue 		X	X	City, Florida Department of Transportation	Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development Grant, Surface Transportation Block Grant, City budget	I.1.1

Action / Description	Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)	
	Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)				
Downtown Connectivity							
15	Pursue a water taxi from Downtown to St. Andrews		X	X	City	City budget	I.1.6
16	Explore and implement options for enhanced transit, such as circulator shuttles to Downtown		X	X	City	City budget	I.1.6
17	Pursue multi-use parking structures (including retail or other uses in liner buildings that front sidewalks) on public land through public-private partnerships.		X	X	City, Downtown Improvement Board, Private Sector	City budget, Private sector	E.1.2
Resilient Infrastructure							
18	Replace/add Downtown street tree canopy. Prioritize streets identified for street retrofits.	X	X	X	City	Recovery funds, Arbor Day Foundation, One Tree Planted, City budget	I.1.2 QL.3.1
19	Implement shared solutions for Downtown, including "water-smart" parks or mini parks, green streets, and shoreline restoration and resiliency improvements. The first step is a Downtown Stormwater / Resiliency Plan to properly identify and prioritize solutions.	X	X		City, Private Sector	Recovery funds, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Clean Water State Revolving Fund, State Water-Quality Assistance Grant, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, City budget	I.1.3 I.2.1 I.2.5 E.1.2 QL.3.3
Community Facilities							
20	Locate sites and construct desired recreational facilities such as splash pad, skateboard park, and dog parks.	X	X		City	Outdoor Recreation Legacy Project, Community Development Block Grant, City budget	I.1.3
21	Rebuild community amenities that will draw people to Downtown, such as a Multi-Purpose Events Center and/or Amphitheater.		X	X	City	Recovery funds, Triumph Gulf Coast Inc., City budget	E.2.2

Action / Description		Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)
		Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)			
22	Partner with private entities to construct facilities such as a science museum/discovery center and community pool.		X	X	City, Philanthropic Sector, Private Sector	City, Philanthropic Sector, Private Sector	E.2.2
Tank Farm							
23	Explore opportunities for tank farm relocation and redevelopment that includes a major waterfront Eco-Park, potential for a new boat ramp, and additional land area reclaimed as future development sites.		X	X	City, Private Sector	Parks and Open Space Florida Forever, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Florida Forever, City budget, Public / Private partnership	E.1.2 I.2.4
Remove Barriers to Investment & Incentivize Desired Development							
Revise City Codes and Development Approvals Processes							
24	Jump start redevelopment with waivers of parking and stormwater retention requirements for small projects	X			City	City budget	E.1.2
25	Revise Zoning / Produce Design Guidelines. Consider use of a Form-Based Code or Pattern Books to shape development according to the vision.	X	X		City	Community Development Block Grant, City budget	E.1.2 I.1.1 QL.1.3 QL.3.2 QL.3.3 QL.4.1
26	Initiate a Downtown Stormwater / Resiliency Plan to identify and prioritize solutions. Revise Stormwater Manual.	X	X		City	Clean Water State Revolving Fund, State Water-Quality Assistance Grant, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, City budget, Recovery Funds	I.2.1 I.1.3 I.2.5
27	Work with Florida Department of Transportation to adopt context codes for Panama City streets		X		City, FDOT	City budget	I.1.1
28	Streamline events permitting process and reduce fee, redo event guides	X			City	City budget	QL.4.2

Action / Description		Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)
		Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)			
29	Streamline building permit process with coordinated review, one-stop shop	X			City	City budget	E.1.2
30	Review limits on Airbnb in R-1 zone	X			City	City budget	QL.1.5
31	Consider adopting a pop-up business license	X			City	City budget	E.1.1 QL.4.1
32	Review the City's development approval process; adopt steps to shorten the process and reduce uncertainty	X			City	City budget	E.1.2
33	Instill a "customer service" orientation among City staff	X			City	City budget	E.1.2
34	Hire City Planner/Town Architect (plans/code review, focus on downtown plan implementation) or consider the development of a local design studio	X			City	City budget, Recovery Funds	E.1.2
35	Adopt the International Existing Building Code to encourage building rehabilitation and development of second-story housing above retail spaces		X		City	City budget	QL.1.3 QL.3.2
36	Reestablish Design Board to enforce design guidelines		X		City	City budget	E.1.2
Enforce Building Codes							
37	Inventory non-compliant buildings and notify owners	X			City	City budget	E.1.3
38	Establish fee guidelines for building demolition, including escalating costs for unpaid fees	X			City	City budget	E.1.3
39	Expedite demolition of private dilapidated buildings that cannot be rehabilitated and charge property owners.	X	X		City	Recovery funds, City budget	E.1.3 SS.1.1
40	Clean and lien blighted properties	X	X		City	City budget, Recovery Funds	E.1.3 SS.1.1
41	Consider adopting tax abatement for rehabilitated properties	X	X		City	City budget	E.1.2 QL.3.2
Improve Usability of CRA Grants							
42	Explore the potential to replace the requirement for three bids with a cost estimate provided by the City	X			City	n/a	
43	Hire City Inspector/Estimator to facilitate grant applications	X			City	Recovery funds, City budget	E.1.2
Enhance Safety and Security							
44	Prioritize better lighting and debris clearance	X			City	City budget, Recovery Funds	SS.1.1 SS.1.2
45	Work with dispatchers to record the number of calls for police service by address and adjust needed resources directed to priority locations		X		City	City budget	SS.1.4
46	Assign CRA resource officers to the historic Downtown and other CRA areas.	X			City	City budget	SS.1.4

Action / Description	Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)
	Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)			
Attract More Residents, Visitors, and Businesses						
Market, Brand, and Promote Downtown						
47	Develop a new brand for Downtown	X	X		Downtown Improvement Board, City, Destination Panama City	E.2.4
48	Invest in small beautification improvements (e.g., planters)	X			Downtown Improvement Board, City	E.2.4
49	Organize merchants for evening hours once per week	X			Downtown Improvement Board, City	E.2.4
50	Offer CRA grants for tenant improvements for retail, restaurant or arts-related tenants to incentivize those types of uses to locate on Harrison.	X	X		Community Redevelopment Agency, City	E.1.2
51	Organize a series of smaller events (e.g., races, movies)	X			Downtown Improvement Board, City	E.2.4 I.1.3 QL.4.2
52	Stage at least one new major family-oriented event for 2020	X			Downtown Improvement Board, City, Destination Panama City	E.2.4 QL.4.2
53	Organize at least one larger event per quarter	X			Downtown Improvement Board, Destination Panama City, City budget	E.2.4 QL.4.2
54	Expand marketing once physical improvements have been made		X		Downtown Improvement Board, City, Destination Panama City, City budget	E.2.4 QL.4.2
55	Pop-up music (jamming on the water)		X		Downtown Improvement Board, City, Bay Arts Alliance	QL.4.2
Work with Local Higher Education Institutions						
56	Establish Gulf Coast State College arts campus Downtown	X			Gulf Coast State College, Chamber of Commerce, City	GCSU and City budgets QL.4.1

Action / Description	Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)
	Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)			
57	Attract Florida State University programs to Downtown locations		X	X	Florida State University, City, Economic Development	Recovery funds FSU. City and County budgets E.2.3 QL.2.1
Support Workforce and Affordable Housing						
58	Purchase available lots for new workforce homeownership units	X	X		City Community Development	Recovery funds, Community Development Block Grant, State Housing Initiatives Partnership, Florida Community Loan Fund, City budget QL.1.3
59	Support development of new workforce housing	X	X	X	City Community Development	Recovery funds, Community Development Block Grant, State Housing Initiatives Partnership, Florida Community Loan Fund, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits; City budget QL.1.3
60	Develop replacement public housing, particularly for seniors	X			Panama City Housing Authority	Recovery Funds, Community Development Block Grant, HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration Program QL.1.4
61	Provide training for clearing title for heirs properties	X	X		City Community Development	Community Development Block Grant QL.1.3
62	Provide financial literacy training and homebuyer counseling		X		City	Community Development Block Grant QL.1.1 QL.1.3
63	Provide incentives for second-floor housing above storefronts		X		City	Community Redevelopment Agency, City budget QL.1.3
64	Develop a set of approved drawings for small infill development		X		City	City budget QL.1.3

Action / Description		Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)
		Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)			
Explore Public / Private Partnership Opportunities							
65	Partner with St. Joe to build a waterfront hotel, public open space, and restaurant in place of the vacant former City buildings on the north side of the marina area.	X	X		City, Private sector	Community Redevelopment Agency, City budget, Private sector	E.1.2 I.1.4
66	Work with private property owners to construct waterfront promenade		X		City Private sector	Surface Transportation Block Grant, City budget, Private sector	E.1.2 I.1.2 I.1.4
67	Explore partnerships to develop housing and public spaces on City-owned land; potential sites include parcels on Massalina Bayou, and parcels north of 6th Street / west of Oak Avenue			X	City, Private sector	Community Redevelopment Agency, City budget, Private sector	E.1.2 QL.1.3
Build on Existing Assets and Strengths							
Activate the Waterfront							
68	Support sailing school, kayaking, working boats		X		City	City budget	I.1.3
69	Promote regattas, fishing tournaments		X		City, Visit Panama City	Destination Panama City	I.1.3
Support Arts and Culture							
70	Support bringing back the arts organizations and artists		X		Downtown Improvement Board, Bay Arts Alliance, City	City budget	QL.4.1
71	Invest in murals, public art and possibly arts treatment of Chevron tank farm		X		Downtown Improvement Board, Bay Arts Alliance, City	Division of Historical Resources Cultural and Historical Grant Programs, National Endowment for the Arts, City budget	QL.4.1
72	Increase usage of Martin Theater and McKenzie House		X		Downtown Improvement Board, Martin Theatre Bay Arts Alliance, City	Downtown Improvement Board, Destination Panama City	QL.4.1

Action / Description		Timeframe			Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	City-wide Recovery/ Redevelopment Plan Action (s)
		Immediate (first year)	Mid Term (years 1 to 5)	Long Term (5+ years)			
73	Incorporate an arts & culture theme into the Downtown revitalization		X		Downtown Improvement Board, Bay Arts Alliance, City	City budget	QL.4.1
Assist Small Businesses and Local Workforce							
74	Help provide small business assistance, training, shared spaces, mentoring		X		Downtown Improvement Board, Small Business Development Center	US Small Business Administration, City budget	E.1.1
75	Include a local hire provision in contracting for public works and improvements projects	X			City	n/a	E.2.3
Protect Historic Character							
76	Explore tools to increase protections on historic structures and incentivize preservation/reuse of buildings; provide education about these tools to the Historical Society, property owners and others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing inventories should be updated, if needed, and National Register status considered for eligible buildings. A demolition-by-neglect ordinance would discourage property owners from allowing long-term deterioration. Adoption of the International Existing Building Code would facilitate renovation at a lower cost. Restoration of historic buildings should be incentivized through 10-year tax abatement and improvement grants. 	X			City	Florida Department of State Historic Preservation Grants, City budget	QL.3.2
Explore Funding Strategies							
77	Pursue recovery funds		X	X	City, County	City and County budgets	
78	Evaluate potentials for a Stormwater District and estimate likely required fees			X	City	Clean Water State Revolving Fund, State Water-Quality Assistance Grant, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, City budget	I.2.1
79	Consider an entertainment district sales tax to support programming and marketing			X	Downtown Improvement Board, Destination Panama City, City	City budget	QL.4.2

Getting Started

The community-based charrette planning process that was used to establish the cornerstones for the Downtown Vision and Plan was just a first step. Continued community and stakeholder input and coordination will be needed as implementation actions are pursued. Following are key steps and milestones moving forward:

- Adopt the Vision.** This document establishes a vision to guide future infill, redevelopment, and preservation. The next logical step would be for the main ideas of the vision to be adopted, in concept, by the City of Panama City. This will send an important message to residents, property owners, and investors that the City and community support the vision and intend to implement the main concepts. As implementation commences (particularly in the near term as codes and regulations are in the process of being updated), this report can be used as a tool to evaluate proposed public improvements and new development proposals for consistency with the community vision.
- Market the Vision and Progress.** An important part of implementation will be disseminating information about the vision and informing stakeholders how to be part of its success. Outreach to property owners and developers will help ensure they know about the Vision and Plan for Downtown. Regular announcements about public improvements underway, or changes to codes/standards, can encourage private investment and participation. Many citizens and business owners want to help but are not sure how; providing small steps and frequent updates can encourage all to participate in the success of Downtown.
- Focus on the Near Term, with an Eye to the Long Term.** Accomplishing initial improvements, however small, in the near term will be critical to the Plan's success. Once completed, these initial improvements can demonstrate best practices and showcase potential, and help build momentum for additional public and private investment.
- Prioritize Actions.** The City and community face many issues in recovery and redevelopment, but staff and resource limitations demand that priorities be set and resources focused on the key elements of the Plan that will spark economic recovery.
- Continue Engagement.** The City should continue to engage its community around locally important planning questions and urban design issues. Successful methods used during this process (Town Halls, Focus Group Discussions) as well as regular meetings such as Mondays with the Manager can be utilized.
- Evaluate Progress.** At regular intervals, implementation progress should be evaluated by the City with participation from other key stakeholders. The immediate and mid-term strategies should be evaluated for effectiveness and re-prioritized for the next term. New strategies can be developed, informed by experience and progress to date. *The Strategic Vision for Downtown and its Waterfront* should be a "living" plan that is updated and used to guide future growth and improvements for years to come.



APPENDIX A: MARKET TABLES

Table A-1. Population and Household Trends, 2000-2018						
	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population						
2000	401		36,380		148,217	
2010	262		36,501		168,852	
2018	260		37,841		180,782	
2000-2018 Change	(141)	-35.2%	1,461	4.0%	32,565	22.0%
2000-2010 Change	(139)	-34.7%	121	0.3%	20,635	13.9%
2010-2018 Change	(2)	-0.8%	1,340	3.7%	11,930	7.1%
Households						
2000	242		14,785		59,597	
2010	238		14,801		68,438	
2018	235		15,190		72,811	
2000-2018 Change	(7)	-2.9%	405	2.7%	13,214	22.2%
2000-2010 Change	(4)	-1.7%	16	0.1%	8,841	14.8%
2010-2018 Change	(3)	-1.3%	389	2.6%	4,373	6.4%

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: ESRI, Community Profile, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-2. Population by Age, 2018						
	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population by Age						
0 to 19 Years	28	10.7%	8,516	22.5%	40,748	22.5%
20 to 24 Years	15	5.7%	2,239	5.9%	11,173	6.2%
25 to 34 Years	25	9.6%	5,494	14.5%	25,906	14.3%
35 to 44 Years	24	9.2%	4,445	11.7%	21,898	12.1%
45 to 54 Years	27	10.3%	4,503	11.9%	23,408	12.9%
55 to 64 Years	28	10.7%	5,188	13.7%	25,511	14.1%
65 to 74 Years	53	20.3%	3,987	10.5%	18,902	10.5%
75 to 84 Years	43	16.5%	2,236	5.9%	9,486	5.2%
85 Years and over	18	6.9%	1,233	3.3%	3,750	2.1%
Total	261	100.0%	37,841	100.0%	180,782	100.0%
Median Age	60.4		40.7		40.5	

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: ESRI, Demographic and Income Profile, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-3. Households by Size, 2010						
	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Households by Size						
1 Person	166	69.7%	5,047	34.1%	18,808	27.5%
2 People	42	17.6%	4,895	33.1%	24,646	36.0%
3 People	15	6.3%	2,284	15.4%	11,459	16.7%
4 People	9	3.8%	1,493	10.1%	8,015	11.7%
5 People	3	1.3%	684	4.6%	3,633	5.3%
6 People	2	0.8%	250	1.7%	1,218	1.8%
7+ People	1	0.4%	148	1.0%	659	1.0%
Total Households	238	100.0%	14,801	100.0%	68,438	100.0%
Average Household Size	1.10		2.28		2.41	

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: 2010 U.S. Census; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-4. Households by Income, 2018						
	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Household Income						
Less than \$25,000	143	60.9%	4,664	30.7%	15,843	21.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	27	11.5%	1,852	12.2%	8,177	11.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	27	11.5%	2,453	16.1%	11,341	15.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15	6.4%	2,584	17.0%	14,978	20.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7	3.0%	1,546	10.2%	8,959	12.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16	6.8%	1,240	8.2%	8,293	11.4%
\$150,000 or more	-	0.0%	851	5.6%	5,220	7.2%
Total	235	100.0%	15,190	100.0%	72,811	100.0%
Median Household Income	\$18,745		\$40,362		\$51,136	

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: ESRI, Housing Income Profile, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-5. Employed Population Aged 16 and Over by Occupation, 2018

Industry/ Occupation	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employed Residents by Occupation						
White Collar	38	57.6%	9,035	54.4%	48,260	56.8%
Management, Business, Financial	9	13.6%	1,761	10.6%	10,111	11.9%
Professional Services	18	27.3%	3,355	20.2%	17,248	20.3%
Sales	4	6.1%	2,060	12.4%	10,026	11.8%
Administrative Support	7	10.6%	1,877	11.3%	10,875	12.8%
Services	9	13.6%	3,986	24.0%	19,117	22.5%
Blue Collar	19	28.8%	3,588	21.6%	17,588	20.7%
Farming, Forestry, Fishing	-	0.0%	116	0.7%	340	0.4%
Construction, Extraction	5	7.6%	897	5.4%	4,928	5.8%
Installation, Maintenance, Repair	4	6.1%	698	4.2%	3,653	4.3%
Production	10	15.2%	747	4.5%	3,823	4.5%
Transportation, Material Moving	-	0.0%	1,129	6.8%	4,843	5.7%
Total	66	100.1%	16,609	100.0%	84,964	100.0%

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: ESRI, Community Profile, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-6. Educational Attainment, Persons Over 25 Years, 2018

Educational Attainment	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than High School	52	23.7%	3,088	11.4%	14,304	11.1%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	59	27.0%	8,668	32.0%	38,787	30.1%
Some College, No Degree	51	23.3%	6,609	24.4%	31,442	24.4%
Associate Degree	20	9.1%	2,600	9.6%	13,917	10.8%
Bachelor's Degree	27	12.3%	4,117	15.2%	19,845	15.4%
Graduate/Professional Degree	10	4.6%	2,004	7.4%	10,567	8.2%
Total	219	100.0%	27,086	100.0%	128,861	100.0%

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: ESRI, Community Profile, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-7. Means of Transportation to Work, 2016

Workers 16 and Over	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Employed Residents	Percent	Employed Residents	Percent	Employed Residents	Percent
Means of Transportation						
Car, Truck, or Van	53	81.5%	13,846	90.3%	74,211	92.1%
Drove alone	41	63.1%	12,329	80.4%	65,994	81.9%
Carpooled	12	18.5%	1,517	9.9%	8,217	10.2%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	-	0.0%	361	2.4%	933	1.2%
Walked	1	1.5%	267	1.7%	1,313	1.6%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, Bicycle, Other	7	10.8%	520	3.4%	1,679	2.1%
Worked from Home	4	6.2%	339	2.2%	2,468	3.1%
Total	65	100.0%	15,333	100.0%	80,604	100.0%

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS); Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

A-8. Panama City Households by Vehicle Availability, 2012-2016

Vehicles Available	Owner Households		Renter Households		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No vehicle available	142	2.0%	800	10.9%	942	6.5%
1 vehicle available	996	13.8%	4,608	63.1%	5,604	38.6%
2 vehicles available	2,634	36.5%	1,561	21.4%	4,195	28.9%
3 vehicles available	1,445	20.0%	256	3.5%	1,701	11.7%
4 vehicles available	782	10.8%	46	0.6%	828	5.7%
5 or more vehicles available	1,214	16.8%	35	0.5%	1,249	8.6%
Total Households	7,213	100.0%	7,306	100.0%	14,519	100.0%

Source: ESRI ACS Housing, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-9. Housing by Tenure and Vacancy Status, 2018

	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied Units						
Owner-Occupied Units	46	18.7%	7,961	44.4%	45,167	42.4%
Renter-Occupied Units	189	76.8%	7,230	40.3%	27,644	26.0%
Vacant Units	11	4.5%	2,737	15.3%	33,599	31.6%
Total Units	246	100.0%	17,928	100.0%	106,410	100.0%

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
The number of Downtown homeowners is likely over-estimated given the 216 units in the St. Andrews Tower rental building.
Source: ESRI Housing Profile, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-10. Households by Tenure, 2000-2018

	Downtown		Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Tenure, 2000						
Owner	62	25.6%	7,886	53.3%	40,865	68.6%
Renter	180	74.4%	6,899	46.7%	18,732	31.4%
Tenure, 2010						
Owner	48	20.2%	7,886	53.3%	43,248	63.2%
Renter	190	79.8%	6,915	46.7%	25,190	36.8%
Tenure, 2018						
Owner	46	19.6%	7,960	52.4%	45,118	62.0%
Renter	189	80.4%	7,230	47.6%	27,693	38.0%

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
The number of Downtown homeowners is likely over-estimated given the 216 units in the St. Andrews Tower rental building.
Source: ESRI, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-11. Housing Units by Number of Units in Structure, 2016				
	Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Units in Structure				
1, Detached	10,738	60.8%	49,743	49.5%
1, Attached	699	4.0%	5,203	5.2%
2	800	4.5%	2,694	2.7%
3 to 4	1,169	6.6%	4,288	4.3%
5 to 9	1,566	8.9%	4,862	4.8%
10 to 19	1,121	6.4%	4,579	4.6%
20 to 49	577	3.3%	3,256	3.2%
50 or more	641	3.6%	12,007	12.0%
Mobile Home	297	1.7%	13,590	13.5%
Other	40	0.2%	183	0.2%
Total	17,648	100.0%	100,405	100.0%

Source: ESRI American Community Survey (ACS), 2012-2016; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-12. Housing Units by Year Built, 2016				
	Panama City		Bay County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Year Built				
2010 or later	148	0.8%	1,946	1.9%
2000 to 2009	1,528	8.7%	23,043	23.0%
1990 to 1999	2,039	11.6%	18,405	18.3%
1980 to 1989	3,490	19.8%	26,065	26.0%
1970 to 1979	2,575	14.6%	13,105	13.1%
1960 to 1969	1,794	10.2%	6,169	6.1%
1950 to 1959	2,660	15.1%	6,195	6.2%
1940 to 1949	2,556	14.5%	3,664	3.6%
1939 or Earlier	858	4.9%	1,813	1.8%
Total	17,648	100.0%	100,405	100.0%
Median Year Built	1974		1987	

Note: Downtown is bounded by 6th Street/W. Beach Drive (SR 30), St. Andrews Bay and Massalina Bayou.
Source: ESRI American Community Survey (ACS), 2012-2016; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-13. Panama City Multi-Family Trends, 2000-April 2019								
Year	Inventory		Occupancy		Net Absorption in Units	Deliveries in Units	Effective Rent	
	Buildings	Units	Units	Percent			Per Unit	Per Square Foot
2000	164	6,509	6,171.0	94.0%	16	25	\$661	\$0.75
2001	165	6,514	6,184.0	94.1%	13	5	\$674	\$0.77
2002	165	6,514	6,173.0	93.9%	-10	-	\$661	\$0.73
2003	167	6,984	6,375.0	90.0%	204	473	\$644	\$0.71
2004	168	6,996	6,606.0	93.6%	233	12	\$647	\$0.72
2005	168	6,996	6,657	94.5%	51	-	\$655	\$0.73
2006	168	6,996	6,617	93.8%	-40	-	\$701	\$0.77
2007	169	7,064	6,564	91.9%	-54	68	\$744	\$0.80
2008	171	7,288	6,724	91.2%	160	224	\$732	\$0.79
2009	172	7,552	7,006	91.8%	282	264	\$707	\$0.76
2010	173	7,660	7,183	93.0%	178	108	\$712	\$0.76
2011	173	7,660	7,185	93.0%	2	-	\$719	\$0.77
2012	174	7,752	7,267	92.9%	83	92	\$729	\$0.78
2013	174	7,752	7,351	94.2%	84	-	\$747	\$0.80
2014	174	7,752	7,422	95.2%	72	-	\$769	\$0.82
2015	174	7,752	7,446	95.5%	24	-	\$789	\$0.84
2016	174	7,752	7,407	95.0%	-39	-	\$809	\$0.87
2017	174	7,752	7,454	95.7%	48	-	\$839	\$0.90
2018	174	7,752	7,064	90.0%	-391	-	\$878	\$0.94
Apr-19	174	7,752	7,067	90.0%	3	-	\$889	\$0.95
2009-2018 Change								
Number	2	200	58	-1.8%	61	200	\$171	\$0.18
Percent	1.2%	2.6%	0.8%	-2.0%			24.2%	23.7%

Source: CoStar, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Year	Inventory		Occupancy		Net Absorption in Units	Deliveries in Units	Effective Rent	
	Buildings	Units	Units	Percent			Per Unit	Per Square Foot
2000	228	8,371	7,876	93.3%	273	285	\$665	\$0.75
2001	230	8,379	7,890	93.4%	14	8	\$679	\$0.76
2002	232	8,396	7,890	93.2%	0	17	\$666	\$0.74
2003	235	9,082	8,300	90.4%	411	689	\$650	\$0.72
2004	236	9,094	8,532	93.1%	233	12	\$652	\$0.72
2005	237	9,226	8,728	94.0%	196	132	\$689	\$0.75
2006	237	9,226	8,677	93.4%	-52	-	\$737	\$0.79
2007	244	11,298	10,284	89.5%	907	2,072	\$764	\$0.82
2008	246	11,522	10,596	90.6%	313	224	\$755	\$0.81
2009	247	11,786	10,908	91.4%	312	264	\$727	\$0.77
2010	248	11,894	11,123	92.5%	216	108	\$729	\$0.77
2011	249	11,994	11,227	92.6%	104	100	\$737	\$0.78
2012	250	12,086	11,321	92.7%	94	92	\$764	\$0.80
2013	250	12,086	11,418	93.6%	98	-	\$793	\$0.83
2014	251	12,352	11,596	92.9%	177	266	\$823	\$0.87
2015	251	12,352	11,764	94.5%	168	-	\$860	\$0.89
2016	252	12,688	12,014	93.9%	250	336	\$863	\$0.89
2017	252	12,688	12,048	94.2%	34	-	\$905	\$0.94
2018	256	13,434	12,270	90.1%	221	746	\$1,020	\$1.05
Apr-19	257	13,674	12,521	90.4%	251	240	\$1,085	\$1.12
2009-2018 Change								
Number	6	1,166	1,452	3.6%	1,453	1,166	\$150	\$0.13
Percent	2.4%	10.1%	13.7%	4.0%			19.9%	16.0%

Source: CoStar, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Year	Inventory		Occupied Space		Net Absorption in Square Feet	Deliveries in Square Feet	Square Feet Under Construction
	Buildings	Square Feet	Square Feet	Percent			
2007	1,390	7,456,510	7,339,398	98.4%	0	0	155,572
2008	1,400	7,654,942	7,328,148	95.7%	-11,250	198,432	59,757
2009	1,398	7,704,447	7,266,377	94.3%	-61,771	87,980	10,501
2010	1,402	7,717,124	7,226,047	93.6%	-40,330	12,677	12,378
2011	1,403	7,729,502	7,136,691	92.3%	-89,356	12,378	12,500
2012	1,404	7,742,002	7,084,894	91.5%	-51,797	12,500	3,017
2013	1,405	7,745,019	7,181,856	92.7%	96,962	3,017	3,414
2014	1,401	7,671,595	7,159,903	93.3%	-21,953	3,414	16,960
2015	1,404	7,689,875	7,171,389	93.3%	11,486	18,280	11,625
2016	1,407	7,701,500	7,258,389	94.2%	87,000	11,625	19,278
2017	1,408	7,716,310	7,323,533	94.9%	65,144	19,278	0
2018	1,406	7,713,247	7,547,915	97.9%	224,382	0	2,137
Apr-19	1,402	7,702,488	7,629,267	99.0%	81,352	0	6,137
2009-2018 Change							
Number	8	8,800	281,538	3.6%	281,538	93,169	-8,364
Percent	0.6%	0.1%	3.9%	3.8%			-79.6%

Source: CoStar, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Year	Inventory		Occupied Space		Net Absorption in Square Feet	Deliveries in Square Feet	Square Feet Under Construction
	Buildings	Square Feet	Square Feet	Percent			
2007	1,117	5,856,994	5,773,553	98.6%	0	0	60,877
2008	1,120	5,917,871	5,724,871	96.7%	-48,682	60,877	59,757
2009	1,118	5,940,653	5,674,368	95.5%	-50,503	59,757	10,501
2010	1,122	5,953,330	5,599,764	94.1%	-74,604	12,677	12,378
2011	1,123	5,965,708	5,621,942	94.2%	22,178	12,378	0
2012	1,123	5,965,708	5,548,461	93.0%	-73,481	0	3,017
2013	1,124	5,968,725	5,549,136	93.0%	675	3,017	3,414
2014	1,121	5,898,106	5,505,242	93.3%	-43,894	3,414	6,264
2015	1,122	5,904,370	5,526,066	93.6%	20,824	6,264	0
2016	1,122	5,904,370	5,607,956	95.0%	81,890	0	3,520
2017	1,120	5,903,422	5,640,504	95.5%	32,548	3,520	0
2018	1,118	5,900,359	5,788,558	98.1%	148,054	0	2,137
Apr-19	1,117	5,896,254	5,844,943	99.1%	56,385	0	2,137
2009-2018 Change							
Number	-	-40,294	114,190	2.6%	114,190	41,270	-8,364
Percent	0.0%	-0.7%	2.0%	2.7%			-79.6%

Source: CoStar, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Year	Inventory		Occupied Space		Net Absorption in Square Feet	Deliveries in Square Feet
	Buildings	Square Feet	Square Feet	Percent		
2007	144	953,591	940,980	98.7%	0	-
2008	144	953,591	924,062	96.9%	-16,918	-
2009	142	943,986	885,882	93.8%	-38,180	\$12.91
2010	142	943,986	886,978	94.0%	1,096	\$12.35
2011	142	943,986	881,305	93.4%	-5,673	\$12.07
2012	142	943,986	892,126	94.5%	10,821	\$9.15
2013	142	943,986	857,198	90.8%	-34,928	\$10.42
2014	141	883,938	841,302	95.2%	-15,896	\$10.41
2015	141	883,938	840,026	95.0%	-1,276	\$8.76
2016	141	883,938	855,949	96.8%	15,923	\$9.26
2017	141	883,938	861,638	97.5%	5,689	\$9.70
2018	141	883,938	880,413	99.6%	18,775	\$10.60
Apr-19	141	883,938	881,658	99.7%	1,245	\$11.70
2009-2018 Change						
Number	(1)	-60,048	-5,469	5.8%	-5,469	93
Percent	-0.7%	-6.4%	-0.6%	6.2%		

Source: CoStar, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.

Table A-18. Downtown Panama City Retail Trends, 2007-April 2019					
	Inventory		Occupied Space		Net Absorption in Square Feet
Year	Buildings	Square Feet	Square Feet	Percent	
2007	80	530,838	527,438	99.4%	0
2008	80	530,838	530,838	100.0%	3,400
2009	78	518,059	503,634	97.2%	-27,204
2010	78	518,059	491,142	94.8%	-12,492
2011	78	518,059	478,072	92.3%	-13,070
2012	78	518,059	496,142	95.8%	18,070
2013	78	518,059	491,142	94.8%	-5,000
2014	78	518,059	490,083	94.6%	-1,059
2015	78	518,059	485,736	93.8%	-4,347
2016	78	518,059	507,345	97.9%	21,609
2017	78	518,059	491,159	94.8%	-16,186
2018	78	518,059	494,797	95.5%	3,638
Apr-19	78	518,059	494,797	95.5%	0
2009-2018 Change					
Number	0	0	-8,837	-1.7%	-8,837
Percent	0.0%	0.0%	-1.8%	-1.7%	

Source: CoStar, 2019; Partners for Economic Solutions, 2019.