

CITY OF St. AUGUSTINE

**HISTORIC AREA TRANSPORTATION and PARKING
COMMUNITY RE-DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Based on actions of the Commission of the City of St. Augustine, specified areas of the historic area have been declared a transportation and parking blight as defined under Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. The area is depicted in the attached Exhibit "B."

The statute requires a re-development plan which addresses actions anticipated to correct the noted blight. Specifically, this is a plan to address transportation and parking blight and will not displace any residents within the defined area. Therefore affordable housing need not be addressed in the re-development plan.

One goal of the plan is to reduce traffic in the downtown area. The best objective is to provide ample parking at strategic locations within the area that will minimize vehicular movement on the congested downtown streets. By allowing visitors to park at convenient locations, it will provide a more desirable environment for pedestrian, bicycle and transit travel, which in turn should encourage visitors to carry out their daily life without congesting the road network.

To correctly and efficiently direct motorists to these parking facilities and then onward to their activity areas, we will need to implement signage programs, similar if not exactly as identified in the previously approved heritage signage program.

A successful, walkable downtown shall consider the street orientation and placement of buildings and parking so as to encourage pedestrian and other non-motorized movements. Other features which help create such a walkable environment are safe sidewalks, an ample supply of specialized open space, such spaces being designed to be inviting for day and evening use.

Connecting various parking structures and other locales can be accomplished by a transit system (or various combinations of transit) and should be periodically evaluated for possible implementation as conditions warrant.

The plan shall include efforts directed towards specific projects which implement, enhance, promote or otherwise accomplish the following:

- ✓ **Construct and maintain parking garages at strategic locations.** Size and locations shall be determined on a case by case basis as conditions require. Identified locations where the City of St. Augustine currently owns the land are the Lightner Lot, Visitor Information Center and the San Sebastian Project. Other locations may be utilized as opportunities arise.
- ✓ **Maintain and improve existing sidewalks.** Efforts should be made to inventory existing sidewalks and conditions. A priority schedule should be developed that provides for an orderly repair or replacement of such walks as funding and needs allow. Replacement sidewalks should be evaluated for possibility of widening as building setbacks and rights-of-way may allow. Handicap accessibility shall be incorporated. The concrete mix shall include an appropriate standard color, texture and aggregate throughout the historic area.
- ✓ **Enhance pedestrian areas and streetscapes.** Public areas should include greenspace and pedestrian-friendly features such as benches, trash receptacles, appropriate lighting and scenic vistas where practical. City approved streetscape furnishings should be standardized throughout the area. Existing parks and open spaces should be considered as first priority upgrades when this phase of the plan is implemented.
- ✓ **Study changes to traffic patterns and implement as appropriate.** Periodically conduct a review of traffic patterns and traffic counts to confirm whether such patterns are remaining constant or not. Annual traffic counts conducted as part of our Comprehensive Plan may be the benchmark for review after each count. As parking structures are completed and appropriate signage implemented, certain potentially impacted streets should be scheduled for a traffic review. A competent traffic engineering study may be required from time to time to confirm the data collected and probable remedies.
- ✓ **Implement Heritage Tourism signage.** The previously approved signage program, if not entirely implemented prior to this plan, should be phased in based on the implementation of parking structures. Directional signage to such parking structures obviously cannot be implemented prior to such construction, however, signage denoting districts and generalized points of interest could commence as funding allows.
- ✓ **Encourage and enhance bicycle usage.** To the extent possible, work with the Florida Department of Transportation to encourage development of bicycle areas within the state roadway system. Due to the constraints on their roadway system and minimal rights of way, it may prove impractical to develop a continuous bike lane and/or path through any significant portions

of the area. However, the City should provide bike paths/lanes where possible on City streets and install appropriate bicycle racks as part of its standardized streetscape.

- ✓ **Periodically evaluate transit needs.** As traffic patterns change due to the implementation of parking structures, signage, walkability of downtown and the volumes and demographics of visitors, we should be prepared to evaluate such transit needs. At approximate five (5) year intervals the Planning & Building Department should conduct a complete review and, if warranted, obtain the services of a traffic/transit group (engineers and/or planners) to conduct a more intense review.
- ✓ **Implement transit system(s) when practical.** Based upon the results of the above periodic transit evaluation, at a time that such a review indicates a transit system shall be practical and feasible, the City shall devise an implementation plan including funding sources and construction schedule. Such plan may include types of vehicles, routes, frequency of operation and ridership fees required.

It is possible that a less intense circulatory system could be indicated after one or more parking garages are constructed. The nature of this circulatory system could be a dedicated loop route around the historic area which simply returns visitors to the parking structures.

The City's Parking and Transit Circulation Plan contains numerous alternatives that may be considered during any phase of this development.

Each of the above listed items can contribute to the improvement of the downtown traffic and parking blight. As funds accumulate, the CRA authority shall periodically review these items and assign a priority for each.