



EAST WINTER GARDEN PLAN

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EAST WINTER GARDEN PLAN

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... and Hundreds of Winter Garden Citizens

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Big Ideas	1
Background	2
Process	3
The Plan	4
Implementation	5



big ideas **1**

AN OPTIMISTIC MOMENT

This report will help city leaders, the business community, non-profit organizations, and residents, ensure that change in East Winter Garden diversifies the neighborhood's economy, increases employment opportunities, improves the health of residents, improves homeownership and housing conditions, and upgrades the quality of life.

Five "Big Ideas" form the key recommendations of this plan. The five ideas (and many others) came from conversations held in East Winter Garden. Although specific details may change as the plan is implemented, the "Big Ideas" should remain intact.

This section provides short summaries of the Big Ideas. The report then describes the public process that generated the goals of the plan, the opportunities and threats the community faces, and a detailed implementation strategy for making the plan a reality.

The ideas began as notes presented to the public as part a public workshop. The notes are included below and the ideas are described in more detail on the following pages.

BIG IDEAS

Here's a quick overview of the five big ideas that the plan describes.

One Winter Garden

Increase connections between the Historic Downtown District and East Winter Garden while adding destinations along Plant Street that could provide outdoor dining, new businesses, and more local jobs.

Increase Homeownership & Housing Options

Increase homeownership and improve housing quality while respecting the scale of the existing community.

Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security

Encourage more healthy food options in the area. Help provide activities and training for kids, teens, young adults, and the elderly. Annex enclaves of County land to provide a continuity of safety and services.

Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance

Add sidewalks, streetlights, street trees, and improve drainage at critical areas. Consider trail extensions along Center Street and through the neighborhoods.

Continue Support for Initiatives Underway

Continue to support the existing programs that bring the community together. Churches, church missions, non-profits, and local non-governmental organizations should work together with the City on common goals.



ONE WINTER GARDEN

East Winter Garden is less than one mile from the Historic Downtown District. Geographically, it is one of Winter Garden's downtown neighborhoods, yet residents report a disconnect that is both physical and social. The plan recommends ways to reconnect the two.

New physical connections for pedestrians could include making existing streets more accommodating to people on foot with wide shaded sidewalks and fewer curb cuts. Cycling facilities could connect Center Street in East Winter Garden to the West Orange Trail and ultimately to the Downtown Historic District. A prioritized program for complete streets, that are streets that accommodate all users, is included in the plan. New cul-de-sacs (dead-ends) should be avoided and existing cul-de-sacs reconnected to other streets whenever possible.

Land use changes are recommended to redevelop Plant Street between East Winter Garden and the Historic Downtown District into a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use corridor with street-oriented buildings and wide sidewalks. Design is key. More development along Plant Street could improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience or make it worse depending on the design. Plant Street could be filled with walkable destinations that could host the jobs that residents are currently driving to.

The social disconnect is harder to bridge, but city programs, non-profit organizations, and local church organizations are hard at work. The creation of neighborhood associations, neighborhood watches, and business associations to reinforce a sense of ownership could help. Additional events in the parks and at the community centers can facilitate communication and build pride. East Winter Garden has a unique history and identity that shouldn't disappear. The plan shows additions to the existing neighborhood that build upon its identity and reinforces, not replaces, the community.



INCREASE HOMEOWNERSHIP & HOUSING OPTIONS

The City of Winter Garden, local churches, and non-profit organizations own or control numerous properties throughout the neighborhood and should facilitate the development of these properties to attract new investment and increase the neighborhood's stock of affordable homes. At present, the neighborhood is predominately single-family, however, a greater range of housing options including townhomes, duplexes, homes-above-retail, "tiny homes," and accessory dwelling units could make more effective use of land and decrease the cost of homeownership.

Local non-profit housing providers have successfully partnered with the City in the past. Deed-restricted, income-targeted units are the best way to provide new housing that stays affordable. Federal, state, and local resources can also be used to rehabilitate existing homes and may allow residents to remain in the community. The plan recommends successfully integrating affordable housing into the neighborhood by:

1. Identifying places where housing can be built within close distance to jobs, schools, and open spaces;
2. Recommending that affordable units look like middle-class housing to avoid stigmatization; and
3. Encouraging the siting of homes in a way that ensures housing units are not too densely aggregated.



IMPROVE HEALTH & RECREATION, SAFETY & SECURITY

East Winter Garden faces the same challenges as many of Florida's historic communities including high poverty rates, high unemployment, blight, and a lack of access to healthy food and safe recreational opportunities. While poverty, unemployment, and blight are caused by regional macroeconomic forces, they can also exacerbate or ameliorate (at least in part) by local land use and taxation policies.

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) works to improve the commercial and residential viability and livability of the commercial districts and neighborhoods within the CRA area including East Winter Garden. The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program is one way that wealth generated near the 429 intersection or within the Historic Downtown District (for example) can be used to improve Center Street (for example) or other places in East Winter Garden. This is an important partnership and the plan discusses ways of enhancing it. The CRA sunsets in 2023.

Grocery stores with healthy food and pharmacies with prescription medications are a long drive away from East Winter Garden. The neighborhood is considered to be a food desert, an area with low-income residents that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food. Community gardens and farmer's markets can bring fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthy foods into communities that major retailers ignore.

Fragments of unincorporated land that are part of Orange County, and not the City of Winter Garden, lack the police, code enforcement, and sanitation services the City provides. Construction requirements set a lower standard and road maintenance is less frequent. This can create pockets of crime and dereliction side-by-side with the homes of East Winter Garden's residents. Increased lighting would provide a means of natural surveillance. At the same time, East Winter Garden is home to numerous parks and public facilities, however, the full utilization of those facilities is inhibited by crime and drug activity. Police involvement in the community involves working with young adults and at-risk children. A greater commitment to reconciling the municipal fragmentation by annexing enclaves and making the neighborhood safe would help revitalization.



NEW DESTINATIONS WITHIN WALKING & BIKING DISTANCE

Updated land use planning could unlock economic opportunity in the neighborhood. New destinations are needed, but they must also be accessible by biking and walking. For many in East Winter Garden, biking and walking are the primary modes of transportation. Nighttime events at the Maxey Community Center or Boys & Girls Club involve a drive because of inadequate sidewalks and street lighting. Where drainage swales are prevalent, pedestrians are forced into the roadway to walk. As development occurs the plan advises against giving away right-of-way; an interconnected network of walkable streets is vital to the health of neighborhoods and cities.

With just a couple of strategically located businesses, Center Street could again provide a compact, pedestrian-friendly center that is vibrant, dynamic, and includes a mix of uses. Center Street could also be an attractive residential living environment with compatible uses and neighborhood-oriented commercial services. The key may be to connect development expected on Plant Street to Center Street and the plan depicts how that would be possible.



CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

Communities only move forward at the speed of trust. There are many City, County, and non-profit initiatives working to build trust in East Winter Garden. Coordination between the City and non-profit organizations is essential to build support for each other's initiatives.

Vision is important, and the plan provides vision based on the future that residents want to see, but commitment may be of greater importance. The various groups working in East Winter Garden, working alongside the City, working with citizens, provide the commitment.

The purpose of the plan is to bring people together to work on consensus issues. The public process that generated the plan was designed to identify the items that everyone could agree on. Coordination between the City and other altruistically-motivated groups must be supportive and involve courtesy, tolerance, politeness, and the principle of mutual concession, the principle that all government, all society, is built upon.





background **2**

INTRODUCTION

The *East Winter Garden Plan* reflects the City of Winter Garden's desire to revitalize this historic neighborhood and restore its community fabric through good design and strategic redevelopment and infill projects.

Located on Lake Apopka about 20 minutes west of Orlando, Winter Garden is a former citrus town established in 1903 that is home to over 40,000 residents. The historic downtown, listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, is a favorite destination for West Orange residents and users of the award-winning West Orange Trail.

Winter Garden's proximity to Orlando and the theme parks has made it an ideal spot to live and work. The city is the commercial and cultural capital of West Orange County with one of the top Farmers Markets in the region and over 2,000 businesses. While Winter Garden has become a desirable place to live and a local gathering place for residents within Central Florida, not all neighborhoods have shared equally in the city's prosperity.

In the past several decades, the residents of East Winter Garden have witnessed the decline of their once thriving neighborhood. Not only is there an opportunity to revitalize this historically African American neighborhood, but there is also an obligation to help preserve the unique character of the community as development pressure from adjacent neighborhoods continues to build.

In addition to city initiatives, there are numerous civic and non-profit organizations operating in and around the neighborhood. This Neighborhood Plan builds upon their work and looks to assist them in the coordination of their efforts

A Vision for a Vibrant Neighborhood

The *East Winter Garden Plan* will play a role in shaping the future of East Winter Garden's streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces. This Plan sets policies and identifies specific actions to create a vibrant neighborhood following the vision defined during a Public Design Charrette.

The City of Winter Garden and the Community Redevelopment Agency teamed with town planning firm Dover, Kohl & Partners to work with the community and develop a vision for the future of East Winter Garden.

What is a neighborhood plan?

A neighborhood plan is the guiding document to direct capital improvements, evaluate development projects, guide public policy and ensure that East Winter Garden is the place its residents want it to be.



Maxey Community Center is at the heart of the East Winter Garden neighborhood.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

East Winter Garden is located between Winter Garden’s Historic Downtown District and State Road 429. Plant Street passes through the northern portion of the study area and is the major east-west connection between SR 429 and the Historic Downtown District. Plant Street through East Winter Garden is an auto-oriented commercial corridor lined with commercial uses, empty lots, cement plants, and old warehouses. East Plant Street was recently widened from two lanes to four lanes to address traffic concerns, but the wider, faster road adds to the challenge of creating a pedestrian-oriented corridor.

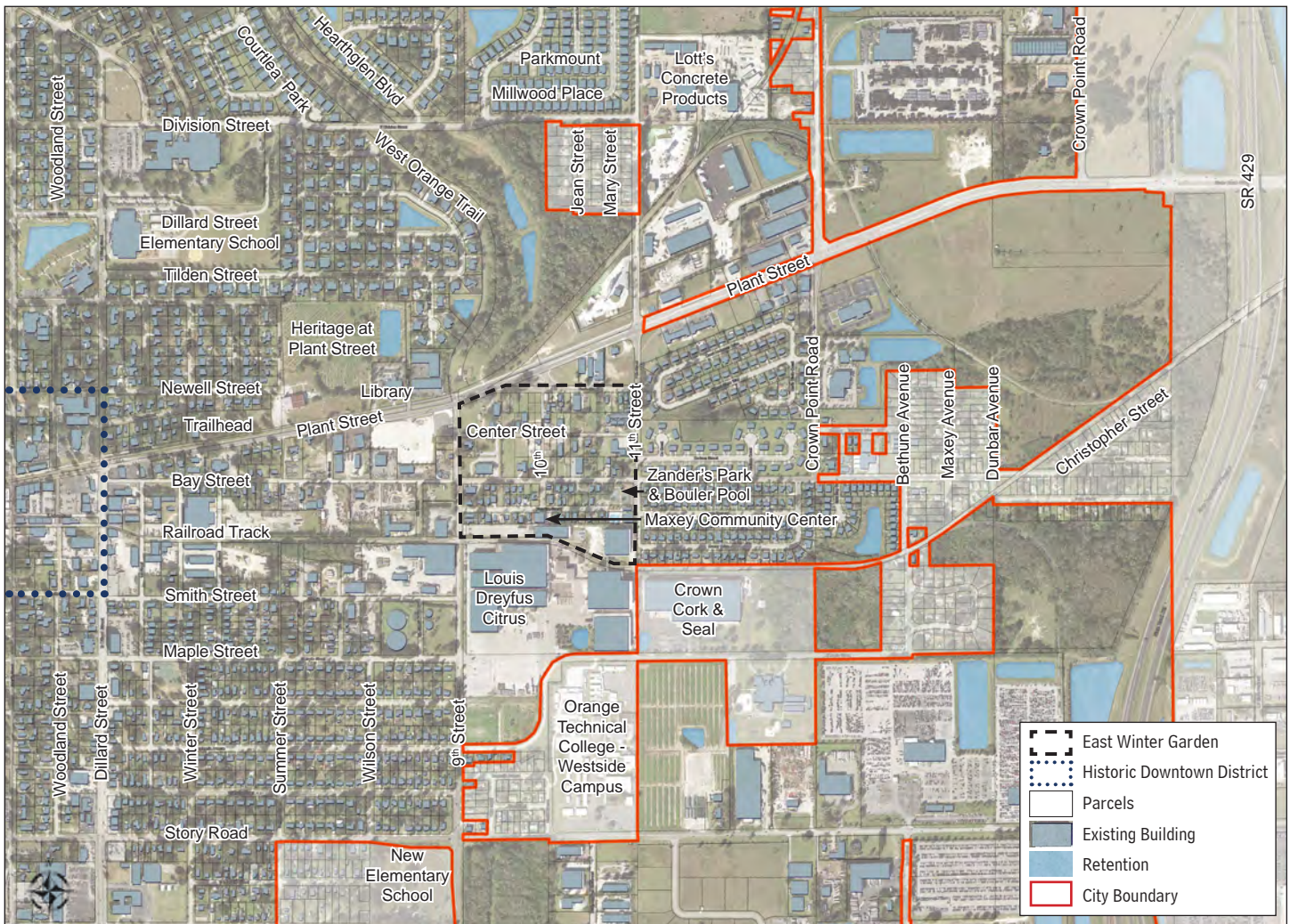
The West Orange Trail, an award winning 22-mile mixed-use rail trail, runs alongside Plant Street through Winter Garden’s Historic Downtown District, but turns to the north just before reaching 9th Street and the heart of East Winter Garden. The trail, soon to be part of the 250 mile Coast to Coast Connector Trail, provides local, regional, and statewide connectivity and draws a large number of tourists to the City.

The heart of East Winter Garden is Center Street, which was historically the commercial center for Winter Garden’s African American community. While the area originally developed in the early 20th Century, few structures remain from those early

decades. Over the years, the neighborhood has lost many of its local businesses and today there are numerous abandoned homes and vacant lots. However, the small blocks and pedestrian-scaled streets are intact, and with the addition of sidewalks, street trees, and lighting, can be the framework for supporting new infill homes and businesses.

East Winter Garden is home to a wide variety of community gathering places ranging from formal spaces to more informal spaces, such as neighborhood barbecues and outdoor picnic areas. The community is rich with an array of recreational centers and amenities. Some examples include Zander’s Park, Boulter Pool and the Maxey Community Center. The community is also home to many churches and congregations and the neighborhood is served by numerous nonprofit and community organizations.

East Winter Garden borders single family and multi-family residential neighborhoods to the north and east. There are also pockets of unincorporated areas that identify with Winter Garden but are not serviced with City services. Some of these unincorporated areas have issues with flooding and inadequate street infrastructure.



East Winter Garden Existing Aerial

Along 9th Street and to the south are citrus packing warehouses and other industrial uses. The historic downtown, just one mile to the west, has undergone a major revitalization and development pressure has been pushing eastward. Heritage at Plant Street is under construction on Plant Street just west of 9th Street and a new mixed-use business park is planned at the interchange of SR 429 and Plant Street. As development pressure mounts, changes within East Winter Garden are inevitable. This plan intends to shape these changes to the community's vision.



View looking east on Center Street



Bouler Pool



Boys & Girls Club at the Orlando Magic Recreation Center and the Mildred Dixon Activity Center.



One of many churches in East Winter Garden



Stores on Center Street surrounded by vacant lots

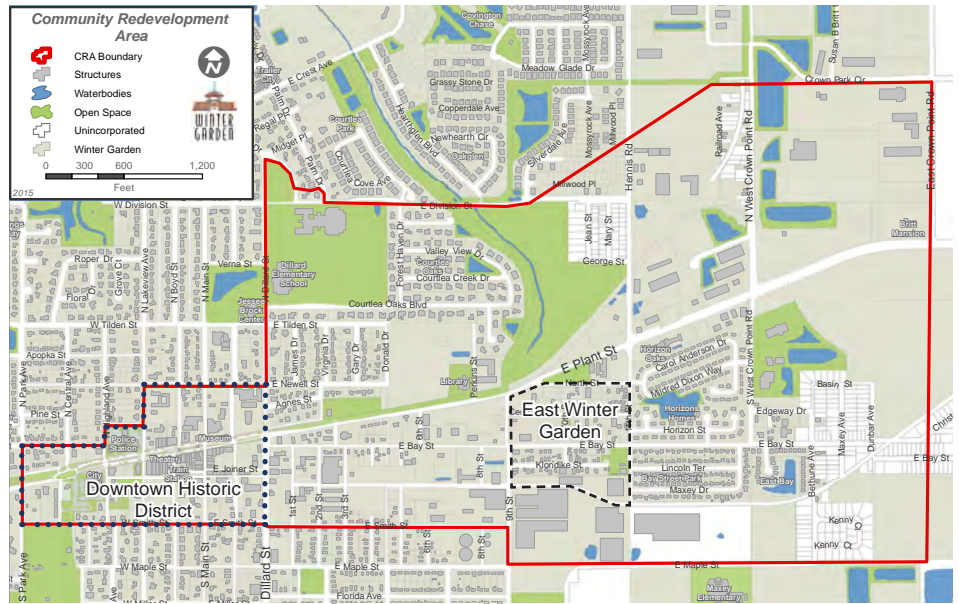
SITE ANALYSIS

Using the city's existing maps and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, the team created a series of analysis maps to better understand the dynamics of the study area.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

East Winter Garden is located within the boundary of the Winter Garden Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), which was created in June of 1992. The mission of the CRA is to improve the commercial and residential viability and livability of the commercial district and neighborhoods within the CRA area.

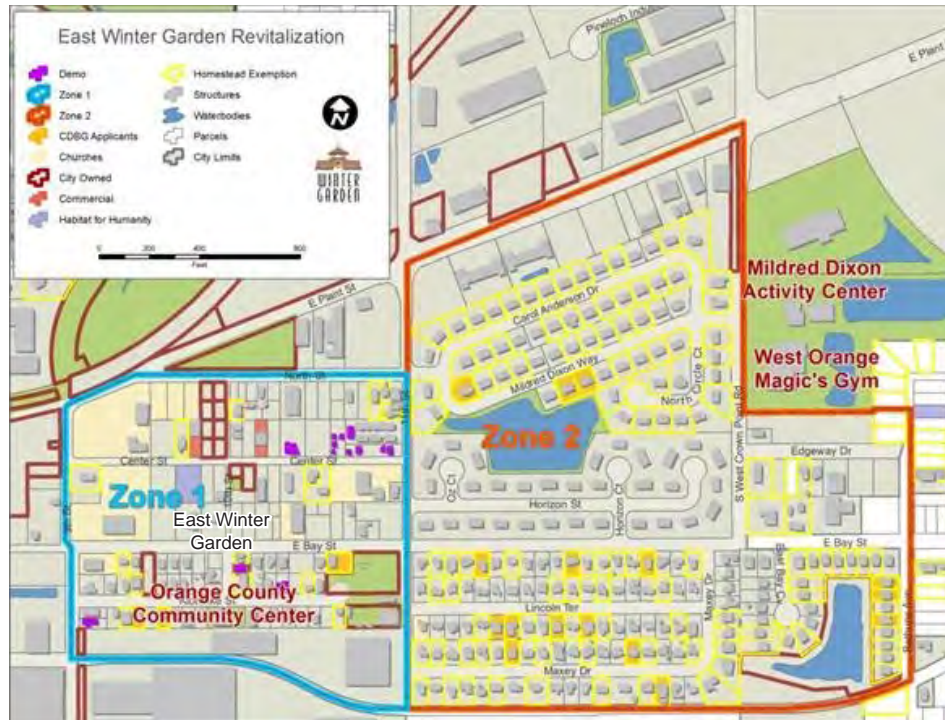
The Winter Garden CRA is funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Tax increment funds are derived from ad valorem property taxes. When the CRA was created in 1992 the assessed value of the area was set as the base year tax base. Thereafter, the taxes from additional increases in property values are dedicated to the redevelopment agency. This is referred to as the "increment".



Winter Garden CRA Boundary

EAST WINTER GARDEN REVITALIZATION

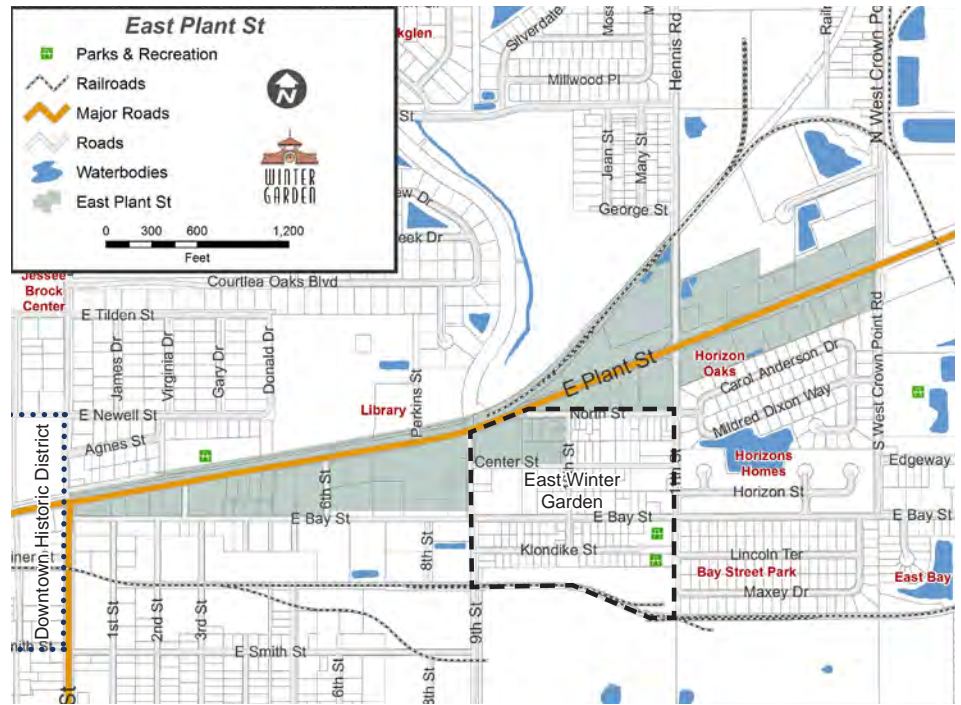
The CRA is actively involved in the revitalization of East Winter Garden. The East Winter Garden Revitalization map identifies sites for homestead exemption, city owned parcels, churches, community development block grant applicants, commercial parcels, and buildings marked for demolition due to hazardous conditions.



East Winter Garden - CRA Revitalization Map

EAST PLANT STREET OVERLAY

The East Plant Street Overlay District and Plant Street Character Area Design Plan are applicable to the study area and govern the design of new development and the redevelopment of parcels of land within the overlay district. The overlay and design guidelines require pedestrian oriented buildings and permit a mix of uses.



East Plant Street Overlay District Map

BLOCK & STREET NETWORK

The network of streets and blocks in Winter Garden ranges from a consistent grid in and around the Historic Downtown District to a more fish bone pattern with East Plant Street acting as the spine with single roads fanning out from the spine east of 9th Street.

The street network is broken by industrial uses typically with very large parcels. In addition, the railroad tracks and SR 429 act as barriers where very few connections are available. The lack of connectivity makes it hard to circulate in and around the area’s neighborhoods.

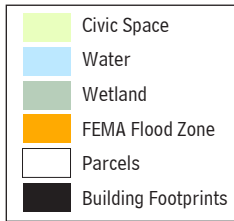


Block and Street Network Map

FEMA FLOOD ZONE & WETLANDS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone Map indicates in orange those areas that are within a flood zone. These lower lying lands can suffer from drainage and flooding problems. Much of the larger areas within the flood zone are outside the City boundary within unincorporated areas of the County.

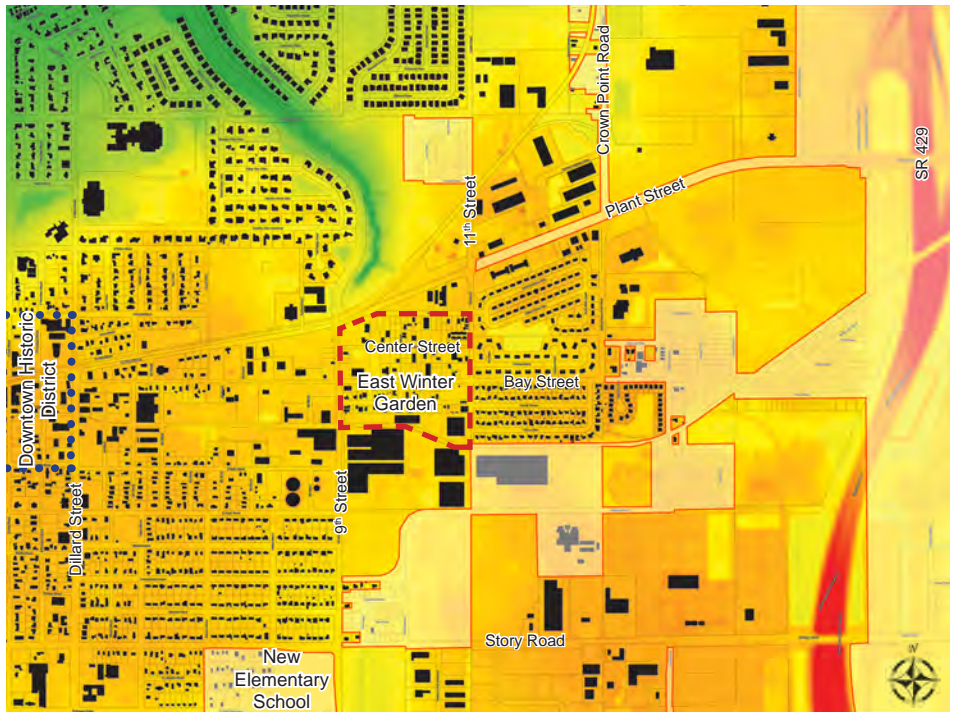
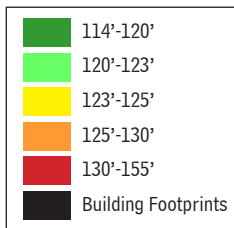
There are several wetlands around the Winter Garden area. They typically are located outside of the City boundary or around areas that have been reserved for drainage areas.



FEMA Flood Zone Map

TOPOGRAPHY & LAND FORM

Analysis of the topography and land forms shows that East Winter Garden is generally lower in elevation than the historic downtown to the west. North of Plant Street the elevation decreases through a natural area with portions of land within a flood zone.

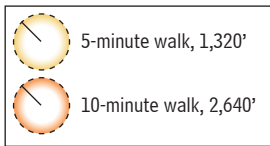


Topography and Land Form Map

5 MINUTE WALK

Five minute walk circles have been superimposed on the main intersections in East Winter Garden with a ten minute walk circles placed at the location for the new elementary school.

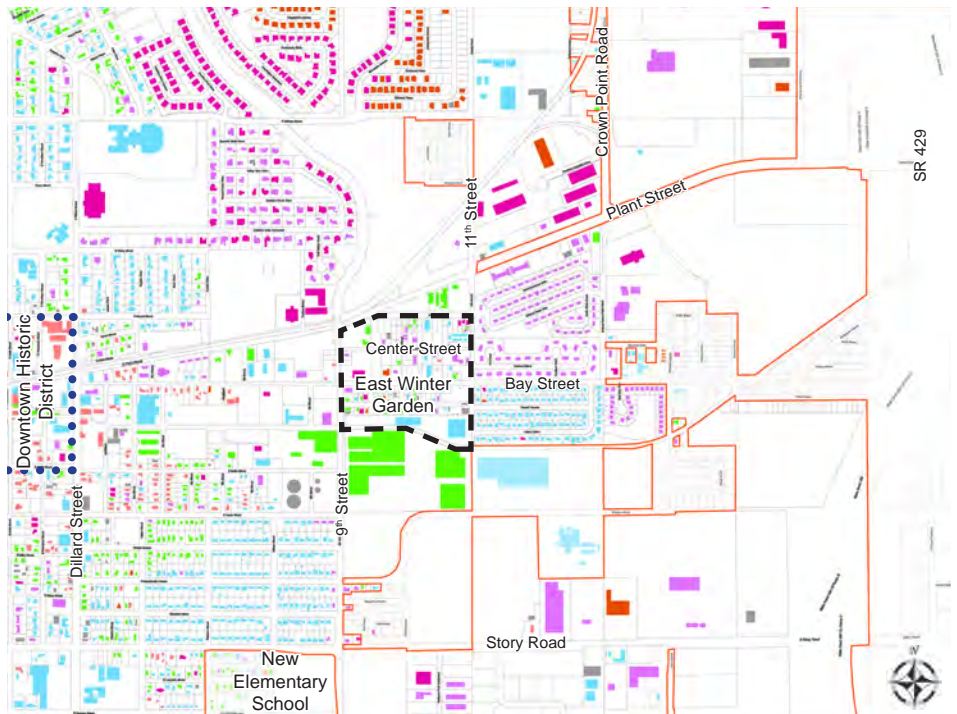
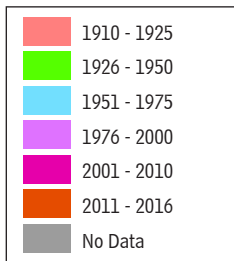
As a general rule, most people are willing to walk five minutes or approximately 1320' or 1/4 of a mile before turning back or opting to drive or ride a bike rather than walk. In a good pedestrian environment and with a destination at the end of the walk that distance can typically be lengthened to ten minutes.



Five Minute Walk Map

BUILDING AGE

Buildings in East Winter Garden have been built over a number of years. This map shows that although some neighborhoods were developed all at once, the heart of East Winter Garden has developed overtime. Varied ages of building can be good for a community as it shows that the community can change over time.



Building Age Map

CURRENT ZONING

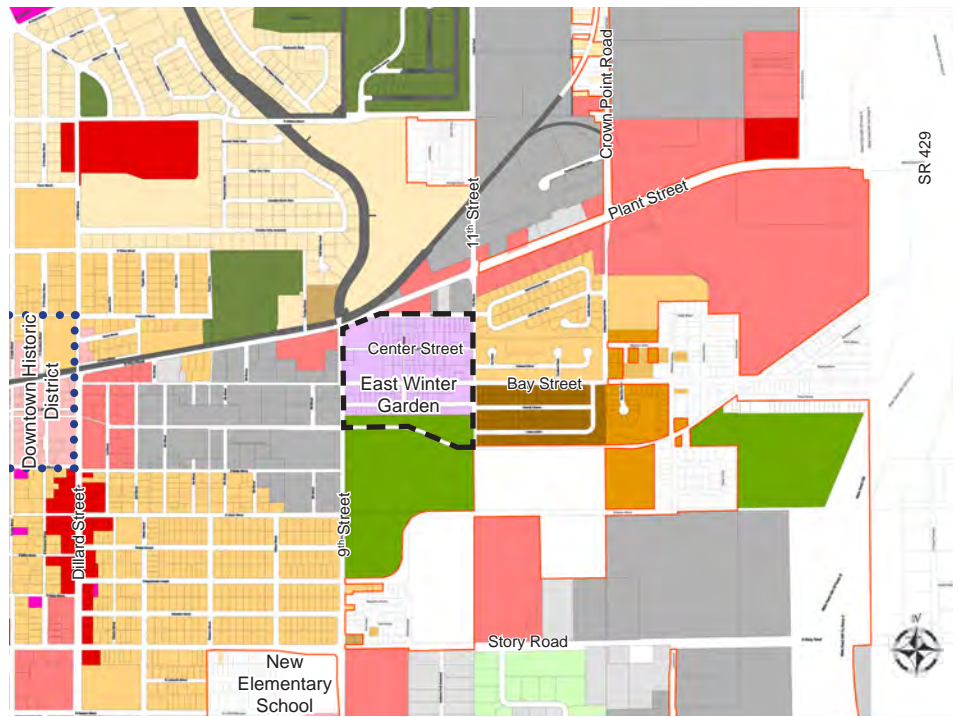
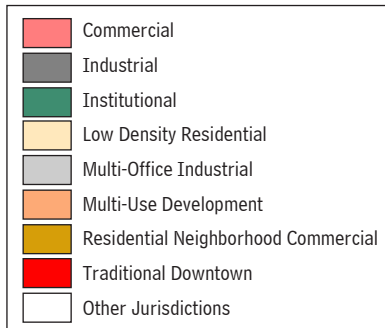
The current zoning for this area consists of both conventional, Euclidian zoning and an overlay district. The portion of East Winter Garden surrounding Center Street is zoned as RNC-2 (Residential/Neighborhood Commercial-2).

The intent of RNC-2 is to provide for a quality residential neighborhood with a limited amount of neighborhood oriented commercial in an urban setting. This neighborhood should contain predominantly single-family residential with some multifamily and accessory housing. Churches, day cares, and limited neighborhood commercial in the historical business area are also permitted. The zoning district allows for an overall residential density of between two to six dwelling units per acre. A fundamental goal of this district is to foster and protect the existing residential character of the district.

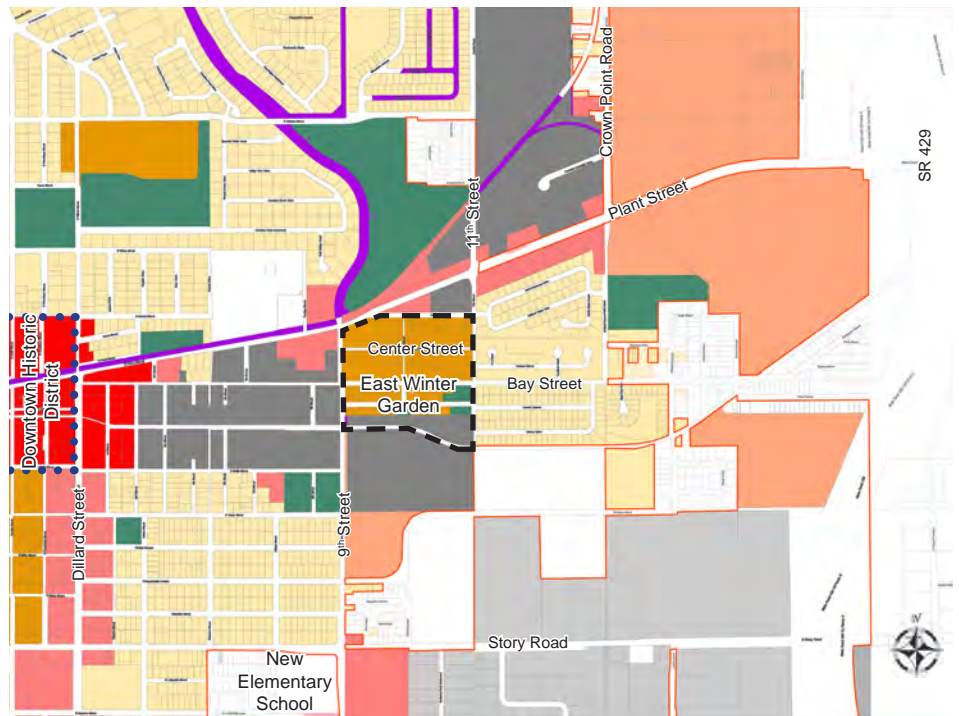
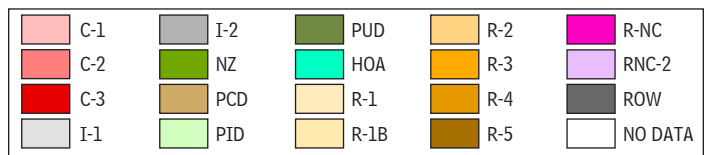
The surrounding zoning districts include R-1, R-2, R-4, and R-5 residential districts, C-2 (Arterial Commercial District), I-1 and I-2 industrial districts, and PUD (Planned Unit Developments).

FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use map follows closely with the zoning map but is simplified. East Winter Garden is to retain much of the existing industrial areas with commercial uses flanking Plant Street and Dillard Street. The large vacant parcels by the 429, although zoned for C-2 are intended to be multi-use development.



Current Zoning Map



Future Land Use Map

HISTORY

East Winter Garden developed as the African American community of Winter Garden in the first decades of the 20th century. African Americans were sold land in the present Center Street area, which was considered the lowlands. At the time Center Street was nothing more than a bumpy dirt road connecting to Plant Street, but would eventually evolve into the heart of the community. Many of the first residents moved to the area to take advantage of the pine forests, harvesting pine tree gum and turpentine. The citrus industry was also prominent in attracting residents with several packing houses providing employment.

Two larger developments also helped to shape East Winter Garden. In 1910 the area between 9th, 11th, Bay, and Plant Streets was platted by J.S. Loveless, as the Loveless Addition to Winter Garden. In the early 1940s, Big Quarters was developed as an area to house African American farm and packinghouse laborers.

Places of worship have played an important role in community life since the early days of East Winter Garden. Several churches were built early on, including the Baptist Church, the Free Will Baptist Church, and the Methodist Church. Schools were founded soon after the area was settled, utilizing space at the churches until the Winter Garden Colored School opened in 1923 on Center Street.

Many community institutions and streets now bear the names of early East Winter Garden figures. Juanita C. Maxey was a prominent resident and educator in the community, and in the 1930s became the first African American woman to vote in Winter Garden. Her husband was a long time principal of the Winter Garden Colored School where she taught. A more recent prominent resident was Mildred Dixon, the first elected woman and first elected African-American to the Winter Garden City Commission in 1985. She served on and off from 1985 to 1992 and again from 2001 to 2006 when she passed away.



Historic view looking down Center Street (Winter Garden Heritage Foundation)



Juanita Coney Maxey and her students (Winter Garden Heritage Foundation)



Early pioneer of East Winter Garden (Winter Garden Heritage Foundation)



Church in East Winter Garden (Winter Garden Heritage Foundation)



process **3**

PRE-CHARRETTE ACTIVITIES

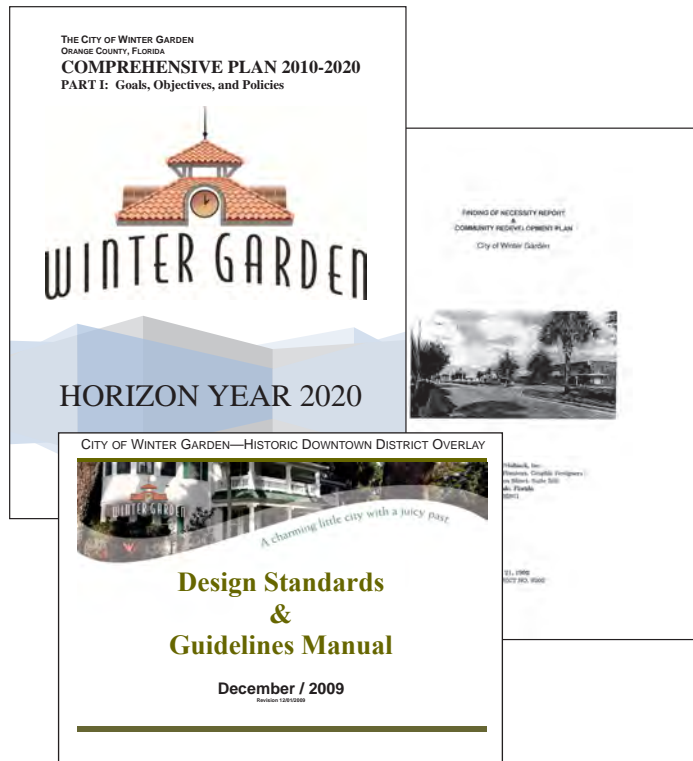
Participation from the community is critical to shaping the vision of any plan. The charrette process provided the residents of East Winter Garden numerous opportunities to participate and provide input during the week long event July 10 - 14, 2017. Meetings included hands-on community meetings and workshops, a three-day open planning studio, small group stakeholder discussions, and a final work-in-progress presentation at the end of the week.

A website was created to supplement in-person meetings, providing the community with additional background information, project updates, and another way to share their thoughts and concerns. This plan is a direct result of all the information and feedback gathered during the charrette and from the online sources.

Base Information

Prior to the charrette, Dover-Kohl gathered base information and studied the existing physical and economic conditions of the area. The team used this information to create several “x-ray” maps. These maps show different layers of information about the site such as zoning, home-ownership, flooding, and topography, to name a few.

In addition to analyzing the physical, social, and economic characteristics of the area, the team also studied existing city ordinances and land-use regulations, as well as any previous plans for the surrounding area. Some of the most relevant plans and studies include the Winter Garden Comprehensive Plan 2020, the 1992 Finding of Necessity Report and Community Redevelopment Plan, and the Winter Garden Zoning Regulations from the City of Winter Garden Code of Ordinances.



Previous plans



East Winter Garden Master Plan

Public Design Charrette | July 10-14, 2017

Charrette Kick-Off Event & Hands-On Design Session
Monday, July 10 | 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Maxey Community Center | 830 Klondike Ave

Join us for an informative presentation on town planning & community revitalization. Following the presentation, work alongside your neighbors to draw your vision for the future of East Winter Garden. This is a family-friendly event - bring your children! Refreshments will be provided.

Open Design Studio
Tuesday, July 11 - Thursday, July 13 | 10:00 am - 4:30 pm
Maxey Community Center | 830 Klondike Ave

Stop by the studio to talk with the design team and provide input as the plan evolves. This will be a unique opportunity to provide feedback as the initial plan ideas are being developed.

Work-in-Progress Presentation
Friday, July 14 | 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Maxey Community Center | 830 Klondike Ave

See all of the work completed during the Charrette week at the "wrap-up" presentation. Neighborhood BBQ will be provided.




COME HELP PLAN YOUR COMMUNITY !!

What is a Public Design Charrette?

Public Design Charrettes bring all stakeholders to the table over a short, focused period of time to work intensively with the design team to reach consensus over the future evolution of a place. The Charrette is rapid, intensive, and includes a series of creative work sessions between the public and the design team to produce a draft plan for the future. The Charrette is product-oriented.


Why should you participate?

Participating in the Charrette will give you a chance to express your vision for the future of East Winter Garden. Your participation will make the difference between a good plan, and a great plan.

Project Website: PlanEastWinterGarden.com
For More Information Contact:
Tanya Gerhartz 407.656.4111 EXT. 2308
Economic Development Director tgerhartz@wintergarden-fl.gov



Charrette Flyer



A Vision for a Vibrant Neighborhood

Plan East Winter Garden will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of East Winter Garden's streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces. The Plan will set policies and identify specific actions to create a vibrant neighborhood for East Winter Garden following a vision defined during the Public Design Charrette held July 10th to July 14th, 2017.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION WILL BE CRITICAL TO SHAPING THE VISION.

The process to create the plan will provide many opportunities for input, including hands-on community meetings and workshops, a three day open planning studio, and multiple small group conversations with stakeholders and community participants. This website will supplement in-person meetings, providing background information, project updates, and an additional way to interact with your neighbors and share your thoughts. The resulting plan will integrate all of the feedback and information gathered to achieve the vision for East Winter Garden.

PARTICIPATE AND SHARE YOUR IDEAS!

CHARRETTE RESULTS & VISION

WEST ORANGE TIMES & OBSERVER ARTICLE ON THE CHARRETTE

planeastwintergarden.com



SITE TOUR

Site Tour

To further understand the planning area and surrounding context, the team toured the site on the first day of the charrette, July 10, 2017. The Dover-Kohl team was joined by members of the City Planning Department. The tour was guided by the City's Director of Economic Development, Tanja Gerhartz, who described previous and current initiatives in the area. After the guided tour, the team proceeded to explore the neighborhood on foot, taking time to photograph the site, speak to residents along the way, and note key characteristics of the built environment such as building form, building placement, street design, and street connections.

Some of the key findings from the walking tour included:

- The importance of community gathering spaces, both formal and informal, like the Maxey Community Center and the neighborhood barbecue and picnic areas found in empty lots and front yards throughout the area,
- The desire for more accessible parks and recreational spaces like Zander's Park and Boulter Pool,
- The care that many people have for their property and community, as was evidenced by the homes that had been upgraded and landscaped,
- The presence of a range of housing types, from single family homes to duplexes and even small two-story apartment buildings,
- The large role that local churches play not only in the built environment and character of the neighborhood, but also in advocating for and organizing the community, and
- The mixed-use nature of the neighborhood which not only features homes, but also local businesses along Center Street like Dyson's Plaza and the Red Barn Market and light industrial workplaces like the citrus packing warehouses on 9th Street.

The tour enhanced the team's understanding of current issues, concerns, and redevelopment prospects along the corridor and throughout the surrounding neighborhoods.



Dover-Kohl team talking with local residents



Informal picnic and dining area in a resident's front yard



Dover-Kohl team walking the narrow path to the middle school



Resident sitting on his front porch in one of the few apartment buildings

KICK-OFF PRESENTATION & HANDS-ON DESIGN SESSION

After the site tour, the Dover-Kohl team set-up shop at the Maxey Community Center, where they would remain for the week and prepared for the Kick-off Presentation and Hands-on Design Session that evening.

Over 120 residents, City leaders, elected officials, and local stakeholders gathered at the Maxey Center's auditorium for the event. The evening began with an introduction and welcome by City Manager Mike Bollhoefer and Commissioner for District 3, Mark Maciel. Jason King, principal and charrette leader from Dover, Kohl & Partners, outlined the unique characteristics and areas for improvement in East Winter Garden while providing background information on traditional town building, national development trends, and New Urbanism design principles.

Throughout the kick-off presentation the audience was asked questions using keypad polling about their primary interest in East Winter Garden and their visual preference for different kinds of spaces. The majority of the attendants preferred active and mixed-use areas with walkable streets. Most people did not want to see national chains and fast-food restaurants and most loved the small single family traditional cottage.

Working in small groups of approximately eight people per table, participants gathered around 15 tables to draw and share their varied ideas for the future of East Winter Garden. Each table was equipped with a base map, markers, a sheet to record their top ideas, and a table facilitator from the Dover-Kohl team or City planning department. Citizens drew on the base maps to illustrate how they might like to see the neighborhood evolve over time and described the uses, open spaces, building design, landscaping, street design, transportation, parking, and services they hoped to see in the area one day.



City Manager Mike Bollhoefer, addressing the crowd at the Kick-Off



Commissioner Mark Maciel, working with a table.



Tables discussing ideas and issues at the Hand-On Session



Dover-Kohl's Jason King presenting to a crowd of over 120 people

At the end of the session, a spokesperson from each table presented their table’s map and ideas. Of the many comments that came from the exercises, the five BIG ideas were:

- One Winter Garden - more and better connections between East Winter Garden and downtown,
- Increase affordable housing options,
- Encourage health & recreation and improve safety,
- Create new destinations within walking and biking distance from East Winter Garden, and
- Continue to support existing initiatives.



Members of the public presented their ideas for the community back to the rest of the participants.

THE WORD CLOUD

In addition to the table maps and group presentations, participants were also asked to complete an exit survey and “one word” card.

The Word Cloud creates guidance for the plan and was generated from the results of the “one word” card exercise conducted at the Hands-on Session, involving over 120 people. Participants simply wrote down one word that came to mind about East Winter Garden “Now” and “In the Future.” The larger the word appeared the more respondents used that word.

In one word, respondents described East Winter Garden *Now* as *potential*, *improvement*, *community*, *forgotten*, *neglected*, and *history*. In one word, respondents described East Winter Garden *In the Future* as *community*, *updated*, *connected*, *affordable*, *businesses*, and *housing*. Other words were used and they are all important but one can imagine a vision statement based on the words used the most often.

If we put those words together, we can say:

“East Winter Garden today is a place with *potential*. It is a *historic* area with a *community* that is committed to the neighborhood, and to each other, however, too many feel *forgotten* and *neglected* in a variety of ways, both socially and physically.

In the future, the plan shall endeavor to create an East Winter Garden that is vibrant and *updated*, that is better *connected* to the rest of the town, and participates better in the prosperity of the larger *community*. The plan shall help the city work to both reconnect and provide even greater opportunities and *inclusiveness*, to all residents, *business* owners, and stakeholders.”

now:



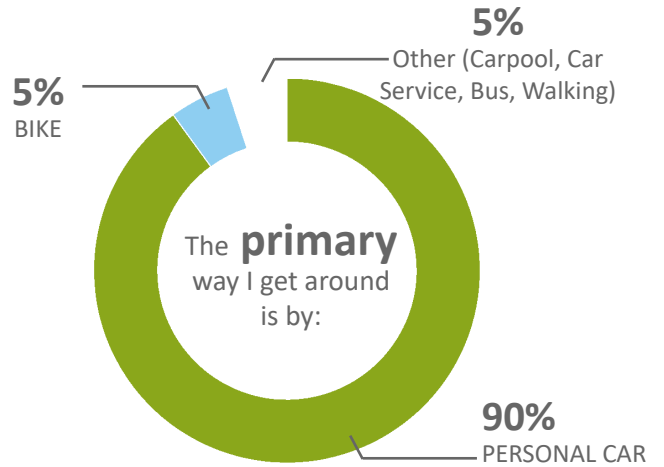
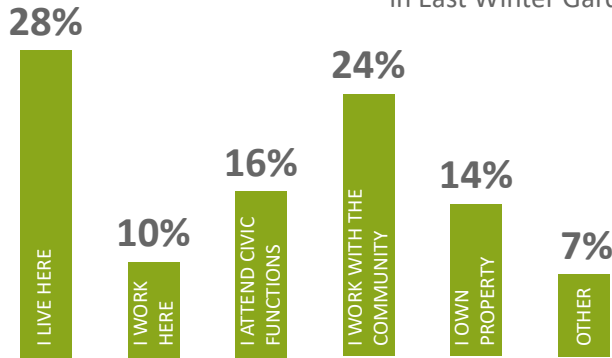
in the future:



POLLING RESULTS

During the Hands-On Session, a series of questions were asked and images polled of the 120+ people attending.

What is your main **INTEREST** in East Winter Garden?



Do you **LIKE** this?

Commercial Streets

Love it
No Opinion
Hate it



Hate it
No Opinion
Love it

Commercial Buildings

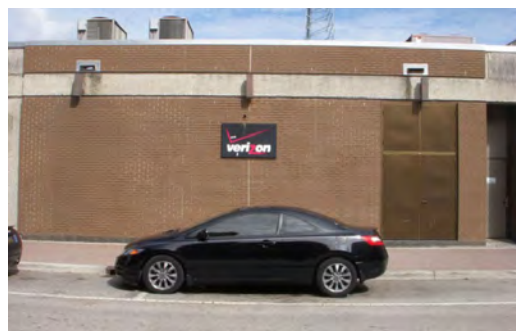
Love it
No Opinion
Hate it



Hate it
No Opinion
Love it

How Buildings Relate to the Street

Love it
No Opinion
Hate it

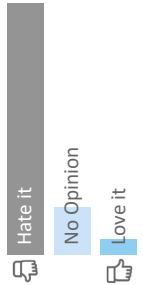
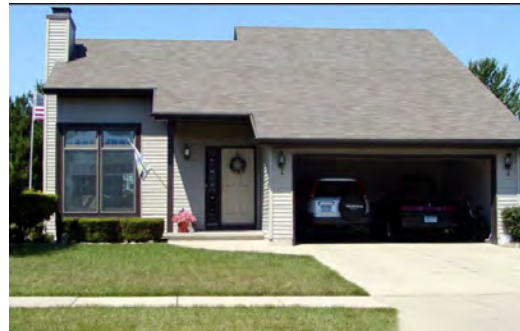
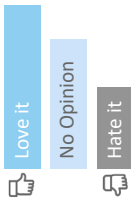


Hate it
No Opinion
Love it

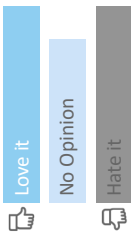
POLLING RESULTS

Do you **LIKE** this?

Housing Design



Car-Only Urban Design



People-First Urban Design



OPEN DESIGN STUDIO

From Tuesday, July 11 through Friday, July 14 the design team continued to work with the community in an open design studio at the Maxey Community Center. The community generously shared their space in the community center. While the design team worked and met with members of the community in the auditorium, play rehearsals, the knitting circle, Kids Café, and other activities continued around the team. Residents and local leaders were encouraged to stop by the studio throughout the week to check the status of the plan, provide further input, and to make sure the plan was on the right track.

The convenient location of the studio within the study area, as well as the immense community interest, led over 50 people to “drop-in” throughout the week. The table drawings and plans from the Monday night’s hands-on design session were placed around the room for continual review. While community members visited the studio, the design team continued to analyze the information gathered from the community to formulate the concepts for the plan.

Starting Tuesday morning, the team began combining the many ideas heard from the community at the hands-on design session into a single synthesis plan. The synthesis plan included physical design elements, such as adding sidewalks and identifying opportunities for infill development, as well as placing desired uses along the main streets like Plant, 9th, and Center Street. The planners and designers created lists, diagrams, drawings, and plans, working to combine and refine the ideas provided by the community.

Victor Dover, principal of Dover, Kohl & Partners joined the team on Tuesday to weigh in on the technical aspects of the plan as they developed. Per the community’s request at the Kick-Off, an informal evening “pin-up” of the plan was held on Thursday evening for all those who could not drop in during Open Studio hours.

Plans, renderings, and initial concepts developed during the day were pinned-up to the walls and discussed. Technical aspects such as economics, land ownership, and first steps were discussed. Members of the public listened in and added their comments and observations of the plan as it was developing at this early stage to include their input as the plan was refined.



Jason King speaks with community members at the Open Design Studio while Kenneth Garcia works on developing the plan ideas.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB HANDS-ON SESSION

On Wednesday, July 12 the Dover-Kohl team went over to the East Winter Garden Boys & Girls Club to give the kids of the community, between the ages of eight and eighteen, an opportunity to weigh in on the plan. The team explained what the planning profession is all about and asked the kids to answer key pad polling questions about what kinds of places they prefer. Their answers were spot-on with most of the adults responses! After the presentation, the younger kids were asked to draw their favorite places, while the teenagers worked with base maps to identify problems and solutions in East Winter Garden, which they then presented at the end of the session.



Kids from the Boys & Girls Club envision the future of their neighborhood.



Rob Piatkowski works with a table of children.



Students present their ideas for the East Winter Garden community.



The children drew their ideal home or park.

TECHNICAL MEETINGS

In addition to the public design studio, members of the design team met with public safety officials, pastors, property owners, realtors, local restaurateurs, educators, non-profit organizations, elected officials, city departments, parks and recreation, Boys and Girls Club, Mildred Dixon Activity Center staff, Maxey Community Center staff, and local developers in scheduled technical meetings open to the public.

During the meetings the team answered design questions and discussed the draft plan to gain input and ensure that the ideas being developed were balanced by many viewpoints. Meetings were held at both the Maxey Community Center and the Mildred Dixon Activity Center.

OPEN HOUSE

In order to accommodate community members who were unable to stop by during Open Studio hours, the Dover-Kohl team held an informal Open House on Thursday, July 13 at the Maxey Community Center auditorium. Draft work was printed out and pinned up on boards. Interested residents were invited to look around at the team's progress, ask questions, and provide comments in advance of the Work-In-Progress Presentation being held the following evening.



The Open Design studio allowed for one-on-one conversations with plan authors and designers.



Residents provide feedback on boards showing plans and graphics at the Open House.

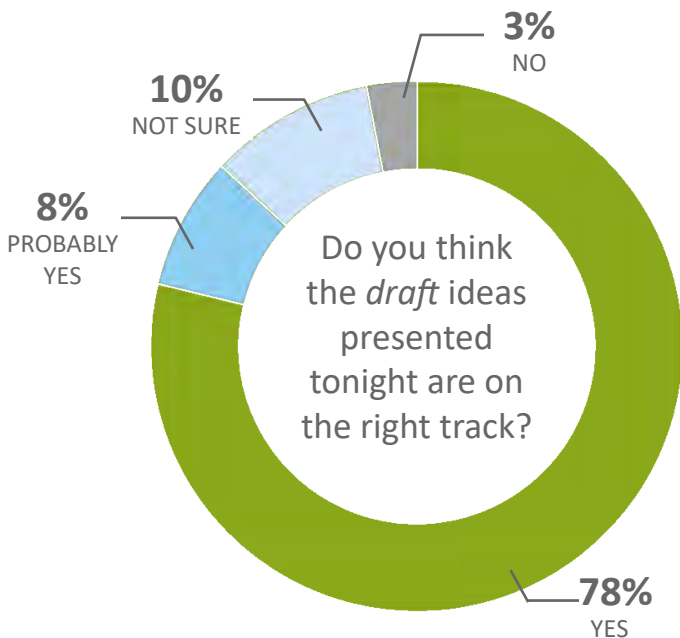
WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATION

The charrette week ended with an evening “Work-in-Progress” presentation on Friday, July 14. Roughly 100 citizens gathered at the auditorium in the Maxey Community Center for food provided by a local barbecue and the presentation. After introductions by the District 3 Commissioner, Mark Maciel, Dover-Kohl principal Jason King began the presentation with a summary of the week’s events.

Jason walked through the concepts and vision gathered from the public at the hands-on design session and developed throughout the week. Jason pointed out concepts found within the proposed plan that came directly from feedback from the local residents. The plan was discussed in a series of phases. Change would not happen overnight, he emphasized, but progress could be expected one step at a time.

A series of renderings illustrated how Center, Plant, and 11th Streets could be revitalized, while aerial illustrations showed how targeted and context-sensitive development could fill out the neighborhood over time without compromising its warm and inviting character. A variety of housing types was discussed as well as ways to continue leveraging existing non-profit initiatives, housing grants, and church groups in order to reach the neighborhood’s housing goals.

At the end of the presentation, attendants were surveyed using keypad polling to assess if the design team had properly translated their ideas into the vision for East Winter Garden. Survey results showed that 86% of the audience believed the plan was on, or probably on, the right track. Following the survey, participants discussed the plan with the team during a question and answer period.



Commissioner for District 3, Mark Maciel, addressing the community



Work-in-Progress Presentation



Members of the community take a break from their discussing to pose for a photo after the Work-In-Progress Presentation



the plan **4**

AN ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN COMPILATION

Several illustrative plans from multiple planning projects are shown below. The compilation of plans from Dillard Street to 429 depict a changed East Winter Garden. Change is coming, and thoughtful, deliberative, and inclusive planning improves outcomes. The Illustrative Plan depicts new street improvements; additional street, bike, and pedestrian connections; new buildings; additional parking locations; and upgraded open spaces.

The Illustrative Plan shows projects that are in the works (there is a plan that has been fully detailed and filed with the City or is under construction), longer term projects (these include projects that have been discussed but no set plan or funding currently exists) and new private-sector projects focused on the historic East Winter Garden neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods.

Change will not happen overnight, the plan illustrates both short-term and long-term projects that are designed to be implemented one piece at a time, as opportunities arise.



East Winter Garden Illustrative Plan

PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

Projects in the works are ones that have been planned and submitted to the City and have been approved. Projects range from being under construction to seeking additional funding for construction. Some of these upcoming projects include:

(A) Plant Street Overlay Code

An overlay for Plant Street was recently approved that requires street oriented building for all new development.

(B) Dillard Street Redesign

The City has a plan to extend the success of the Historic Downtown District along Dillard Street by redoing the street with brick pavers, roundabouts at key intersections, on-street parking and a bike path connection to the West Orange Trail with a two-way cycle track on the east side of the street. As part of this effort, a future phase would create new zoning, or a zoning overlay to require new buildings to be brought up to within 12' of the street and have parking located behind the buildings.

(C) Traffic Light at 11th Street

A new traffic light at the intersection of 11th Street and Plant Street was installed over the summer.

(D) Green Oaks Row

On July 29 Habitat for Humanity broke ground on three new homes at the intersection of 10th Street and Bay Streets.

(E) Heritage at Plant Street

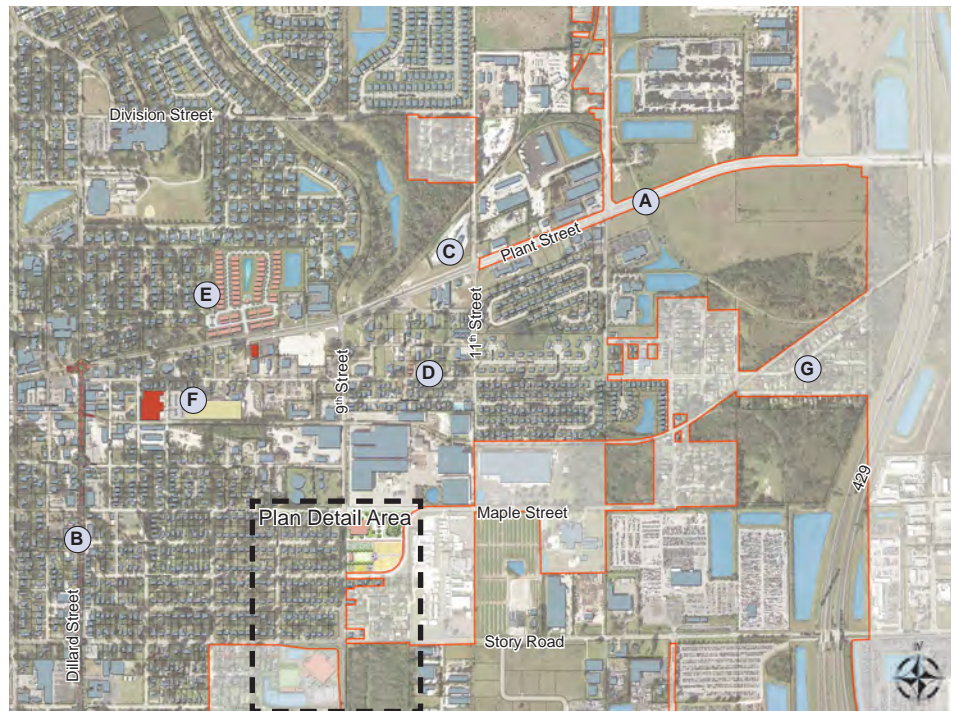
Heritage at Plant Street is a new residential development on Plant Street that includes 43 townhouses, 41 single family homes, and a community center.

(F) Florida Paints New Headquarters (local jobs)

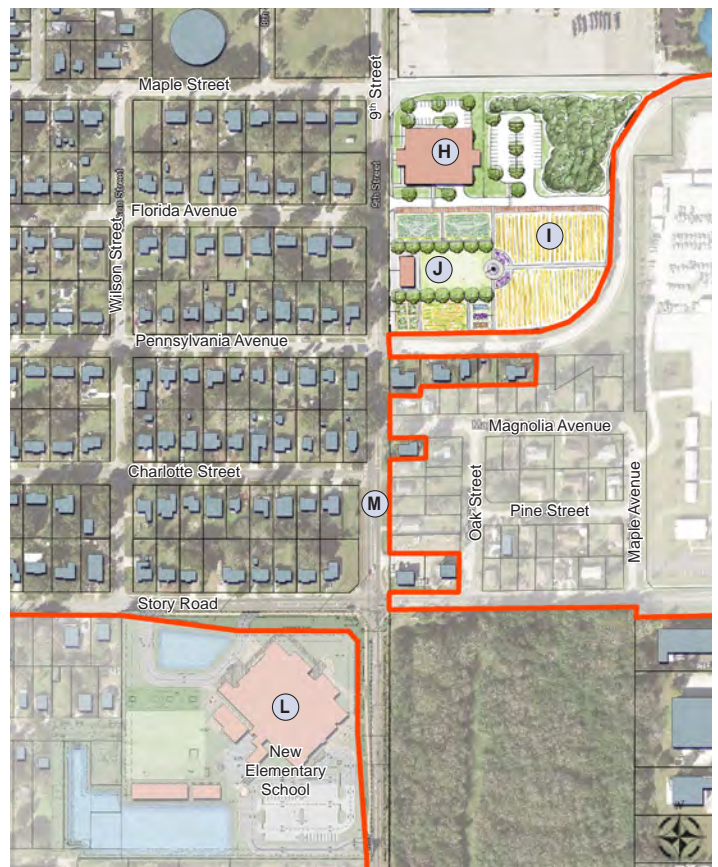
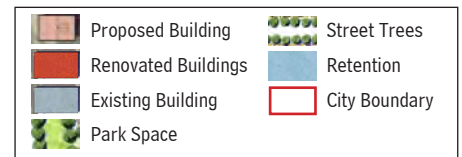
Florida Paints is renovating an existing industrial building to manufacture new paints. The plan includes a parking lot, large yard to test the paints, and a commitment to hiring locally.

(G) Annex Unincorporated Areas

There are islands of unincorporated areas with in the East Winter Garden area. These areas often have issues the City cannot address because they are outside their jurisdiction. Although referendums for incorporation have failed in the past, the City is committed to exploring options to incorporate these areas in order to create one Winter Garden. Avenues being explored range from working with community liaisons to educate the community on the benefits of annexing to other legal options.



Projects in the Works



Plan Detail: Projects in the Works Option A

H Shepherd's Hope

Shepherd's Hope is a non-profit, faith-based organization of volunteers that provides access to health care for the uninsured. The clinic in Winter Garden will be their first facility wholly dedicated to the cause.

I Community Gardens (access to healthy foods)

There is a community garden just off of Maple Street. As part of a larger redevelopment of this area, the City intends to redesign the gardens and make them even more accessible to the community.

J Farmer's Market Pavilion

Adjacent to the community garden, the idea of a Farmer's Market Pavilion is being explored as a location to sell produce and make access to healthy food choices available to the community. An alternative location for the market pavilion could be just up the road at the intersection of 10th and Plant Streets.

K New Playfields

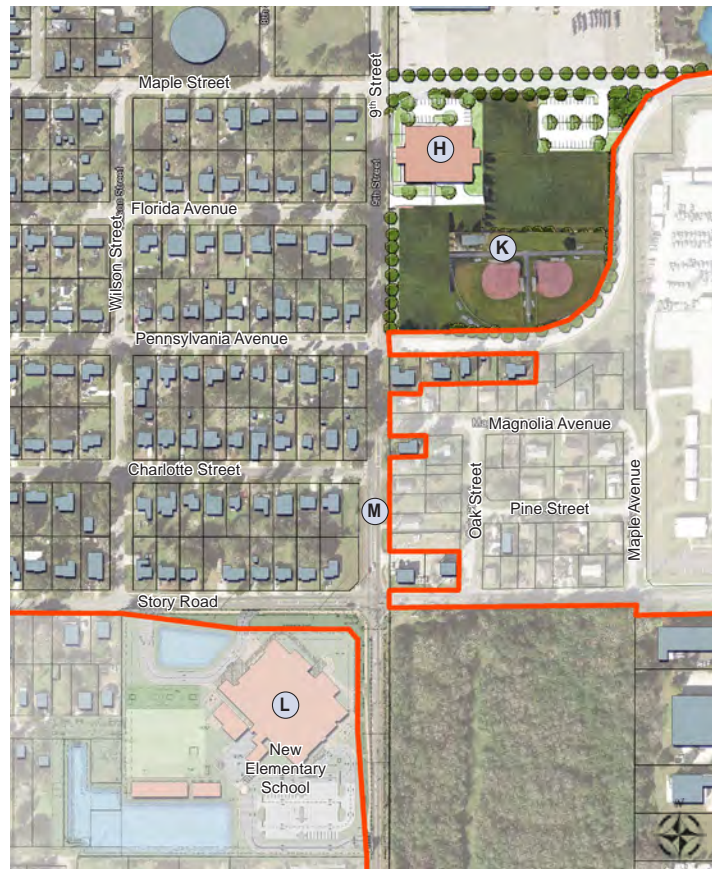
The City is seeking to both improve existing and create additional recreational opportunities. An alternative use for the City owned property by 9th and Maple streets could be to add a new park with ball fields, and/or open play fields.

L New Maxey Elementary School

Orange County Public Schools is building a new elementary school for the community at the intersection of 9th Street and Story Road.

M Sidewalks & Crosswalks on 9th Street

With the elementary school relocating, it is imperative that kids have the ability to walk or ride their bikes safely to and from school. Sidewalks should be installed along both sides of 9th Street as well as highly visible crosswalks at all intersections.



Plan Detail: Projects in the Works Option B

LONGER TERM PROJECTS

Longer term projects are ones that have been discussed, but the details of the plans have not yet been worked out. Some of these upcoming projects along with suggested revisions include:

(N) Mixed Use Development at 9th Street & Plant Street

The City owns property at the corner of 9th and Plant Streets and intends to initiate a request for developer proposals for the site that will include mixed use development.

(O) Bike Path along 9th Street

A bike path down 9th Street was discussed during the charrette as a way to both connect to the West Orange Trail as well as better connect the East Winter Garden neighborhood to the new elementary school.

(P) Development by the 429

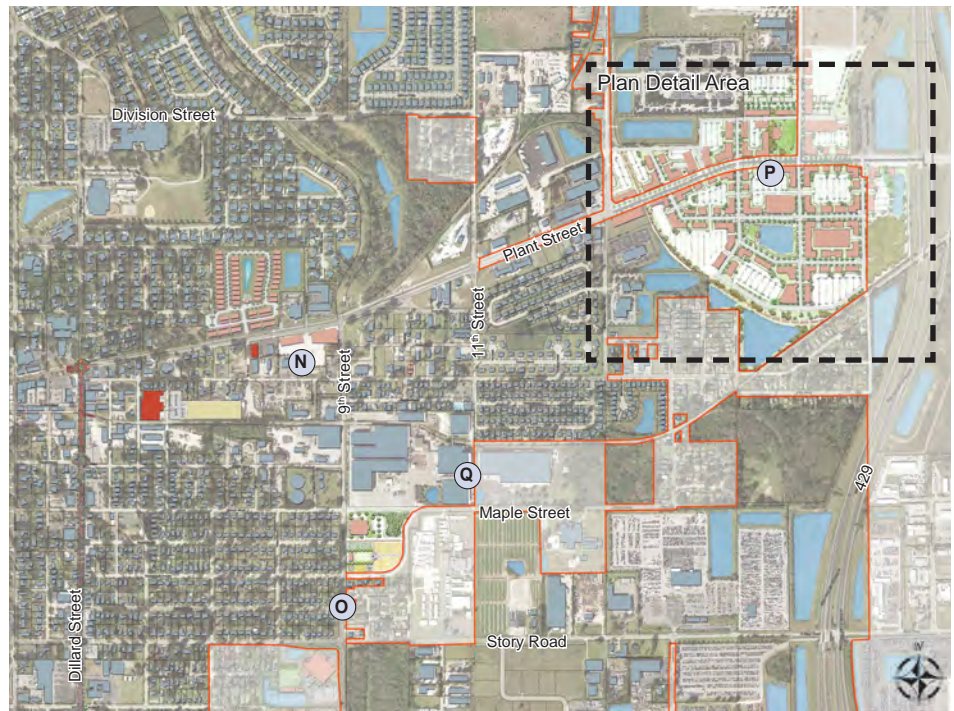
The existing plan for new development along Plant Street by the 429 creates a series of interconnected walkable streets. Some streets were realigned to prevent them from being dead-ends.

(1) Realigned Streets

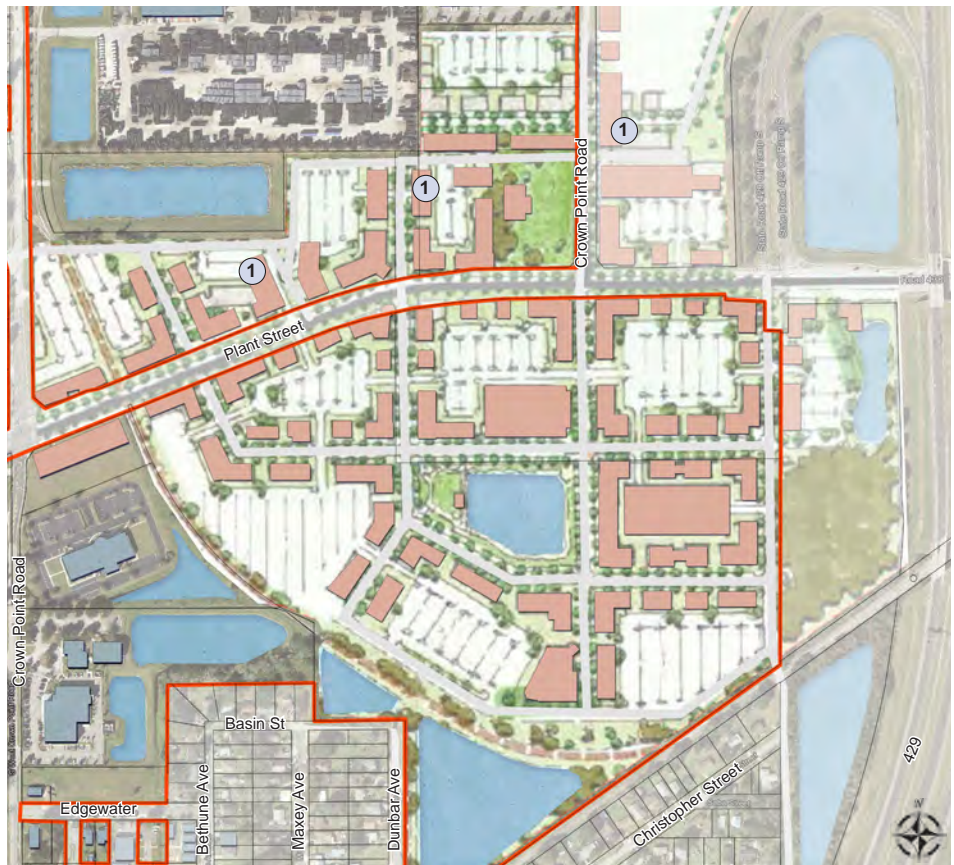
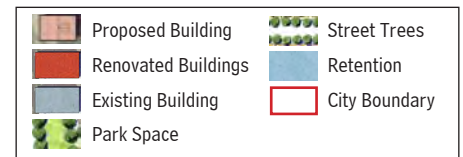
Note: As part of the existing plan, area is being reserved for the preservation of the American Bald Eagle nest and its surrounding habitat.

(Q) Pedestrian Connection between Maxey Drive & Maple Street

There has always been a small sidewalk squeezed between the industrial yards extending 11th Street from Maxey Drive to Maple Street that school children have used to get from the neighborhood to the elementary school. Even though the school is moving, this is still a path that children will use. The City is working with the property owners to formalize this path and to make it safer, well-lit, and maintained appropriately.



Longer Term Projects



Plan Detail: Longer Term Projects

NEW PROJECTS

(R) Façade Repair Matching Grants

Explore funding mechanisms to assist home and business owners to repair and cleanup the exterior of homes and yards to give the neighborhood a fresher, cared about look with matching façade repair grants.

(S) Focus on Center Street & 10th Street

Center Street was the historic commercial core of the East Winter Garden neighborhood. Some businesses remain here. A focus on upgrading the intersection of Center Street and 10th Street will help to unify the neighborhood.

(T) Central Green

Connections into the neighborhood should be repaired and give the neighborhood a new front door with a civic green space surrounded by viable commercial uses.

(U) Mix of Infill housing

Different types and sizes of housing should be considered for use in the East Winter Garden neighborhood. Creating special areas with cottage courts or townhouses could create additional options and vitality to the neighborhood.

(V) New Habitat for Humanity Homes

Habitat for Humanity owns additional property in the core of the East Winter Garden neighborhood. These lots will eventually be used to create additional housing and homeownership in the community.

(W) Pedestrian Connection from Maple Street to Story Road

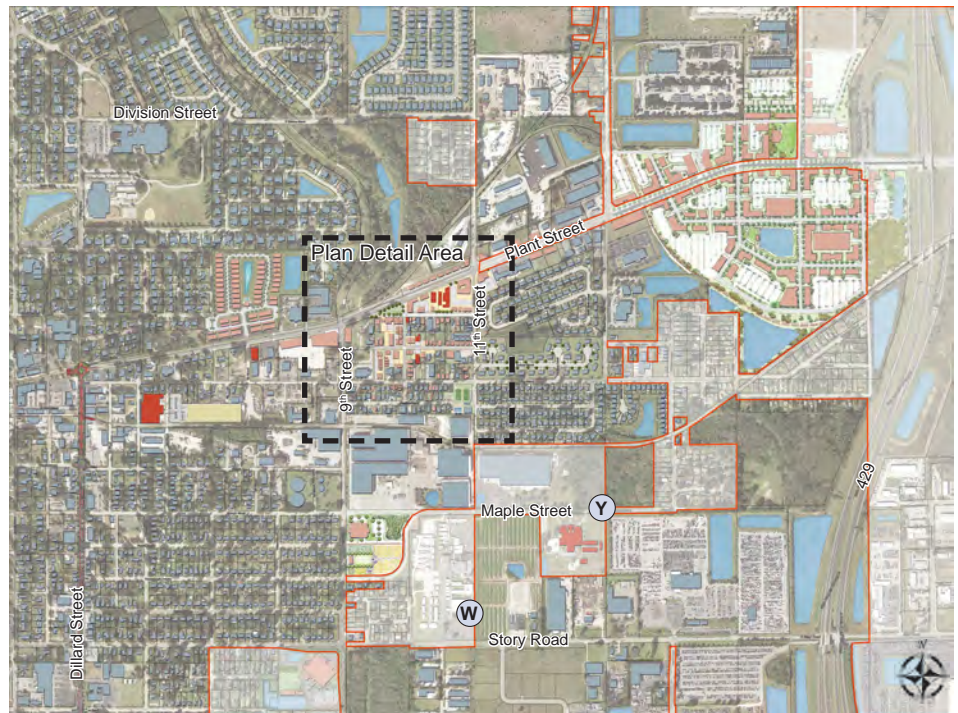
An extension of the pedestrian path along 11th Street all the way to Story Road will provide both an additional route for children to get to the elementary school, and will better connect residents to the bus stop on Story Road and therefore the larger community. Bringing kids by the technical college can also help to broaden their horizons and options for development and careers.

(X) Additional Bike Path Connections

Additional bike facilities would help children and members of the community connect to the assets both within their immediate area as well as the larger bike trail network.

(Y) Repurpose old Maxey Elementary

With the elementary school moving, a lot of suggestions were given for the use of the existing school and grounds. Although the school board owns the building and property and will be the ones who decide what the property will become, the community would like to see it reused as a local Winter Garden museum.



New Projects

	Proposed Building		Street Trees
	Renovated Buildings		Retention
	Existing Building		City Boundary
	Park Space		



Plan Detail: New Projects



CONNECTIVITY - BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

West Orange Trail

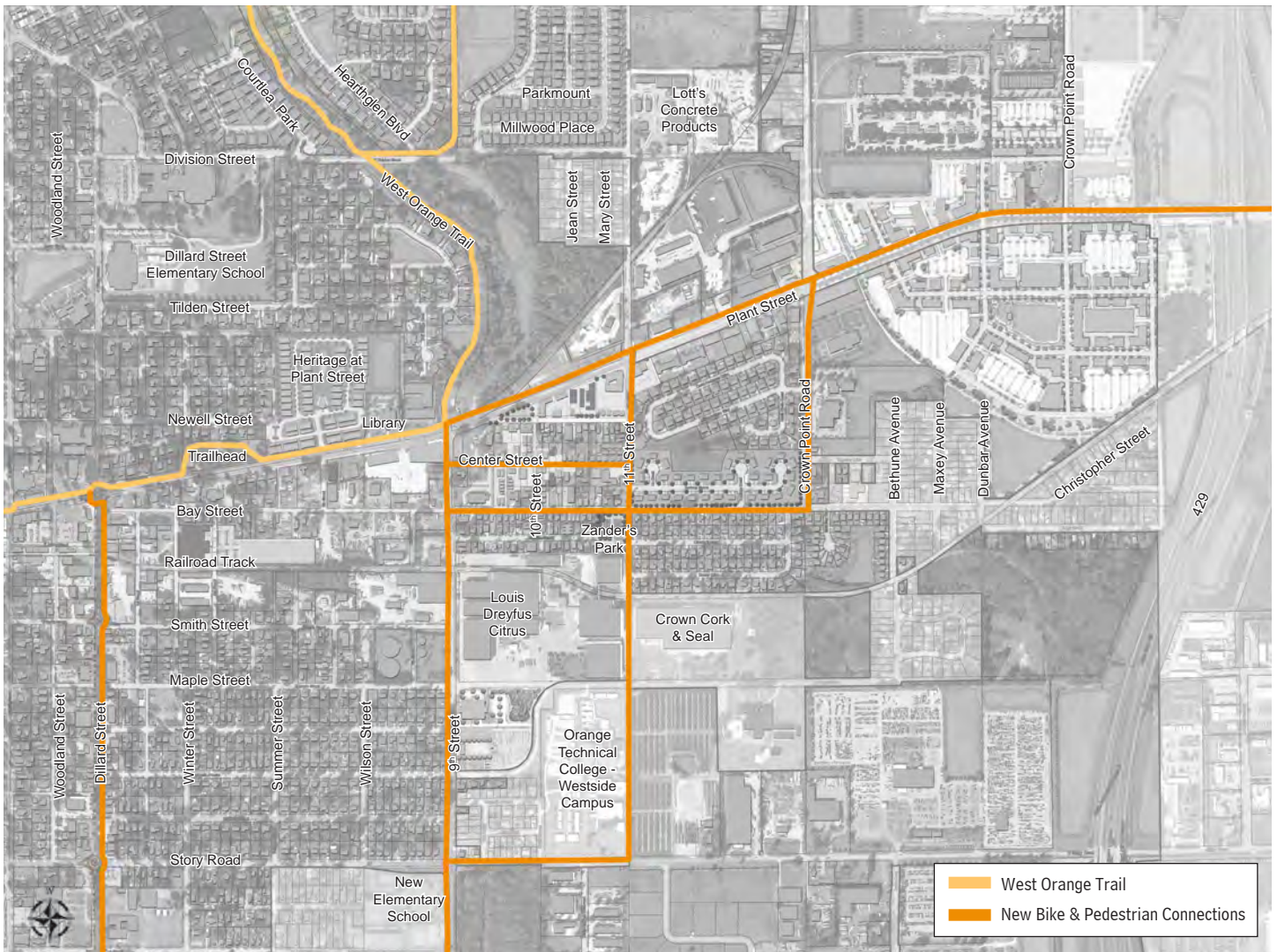
The West Orange Trail is a huge asset to the City. In Winter Garden it runs down the center of Plant Street through the Historic Downtown District to the trailhead and then takes a turn to the north just past the library at 9th Street.

Trail Extensions

The bike and pedestrian network is composed of both the streets and existing trail system. This system can be greatly enhanced by ensuring there are adequate facilities for people to safely ride their bikes and walk throughout more of the community.

There is a desire from the local community to create linkages to the West Orange Trail to make it more accessible and user friendly to the residents. Dillard Street already has a proposal to have a protected trail down the east side when it is redone. A branch is also being considered to continue down Plant Street to connect to the City of Ocoee.

Residents expressed the need for a dedicated bike facility down 9th Street to better connect neighborhood kids to the new elementary school. Dedicated bike facilities should also be considered for Bay and 11th Streets to reach a larger portion of the neighborhood as well as connect community assets such as the Maxey Community Center, Zander's Park, Boulter Pool, Orlando Magic Recreation Center, and the Mildred Dixon Activity Center.



In addition to these bike connections, a very important connection was identified that connects 11th Street through to Maple Street, or even better, all the way to Story Road. This connection could be a bike connection, but at the very least it should be an improved pedestrian connection.

For generations the meager, overgrown pedestrian path that is squeezed between the fences of two industrial yards has been the main access kids have used to get to school. Even though the elementary school is relocating, this path will still be used by neighborhood kids to get to school. The path should be widened, if possible, and at minimum properly lit and maintained to make it a safe connection.

This trail could be extended past the Westside Campus of the Orange Technical College through to Story Road. Currently there are few public transit options off of Plant Street, but there are bus stops on Story Road. Extending this connection will help connect members of the community to transit options, making access to the larger community and to more jobs possible.



2. A crosswalk marks the end of the narrow sidewalk at Maple Street.



3. The sidewalk disappears next to the vocational school.



4. The power line easement could be repurposed with the addition of a sidewalk that connects Maple Street to Story Road.



1. Sidewalk between industrial parcels extending 11th Street from Maxey Drive to Maple Street.



5. The bus stop on Story Road will bring access to transit to the neighborhood.

SIDEWALKS

Why Doesn't Every Street Have a Sidewalk?

Sidewalks make pedestrians safe, and in a neighborhood like East Winter Garden where people are likely to walk, it seems to make sense that every street should have a sidewalk. However, sidewalk installation can be costly. They often require the acquisition of land from homeowners, and quite often homeowners do not want to sell or give up a part of their yard. The City must create a Sidewalk Action Plan to prioritize routes and spend limited funding judiciously.

How Do Sidewalks Get Built?

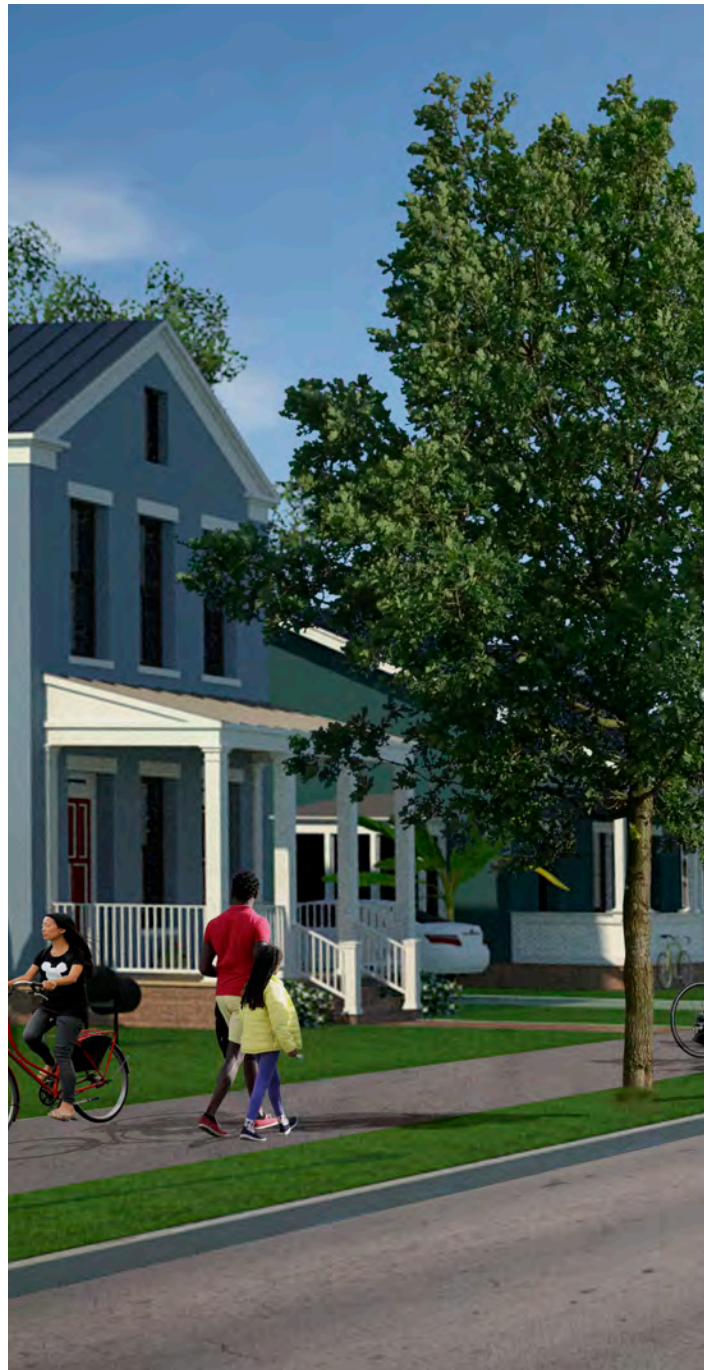
Ideally, sidewalks should be installed at the time of land development. When they aren't, sometimes there's enough public right-of-way in place to create a sidewalk without infringing on a property owner's land. In other situations, right-of-way must be acquired, or easements secured, through purchase agreements or condemnation. Home owners are often reluctant to sell because they see no benefit to people walking across what was once their front yards. Condemnation is rarely used in Florida for obvious reasons. Sometimes the addition of a sidewalk may mean the loss of a valued street tree. A new sidewalk along one block face of 400' may require permissions from dozens of owners.

Who Pays For New Sidewalks?

Municipalities, Community Redevelopment Agencies, and individual homeowners pay. Typically, individual homeowners are assessed for the portion of new sidewalk in front of their homes and, of course, assessments can be unpopular. Sometimes communities create a new local sales tax that is wholly used for street maintenance and pavement management. Municipalities can also generate funds for sidewalks through voter-approved bond monies.

How Does a Municipality Prioritize Where to Locate New Sidewalks?

Municipalities must prioritize high-use areas and connectivity. One way is to focus on a quarter mile circle around schools, parks, transit stops, and key commercial destinations. Everything within that circle should be a priority for sidewalk construction. State or federal grants for safe routes to school or other sources of money could offset some of the cost of assessments.

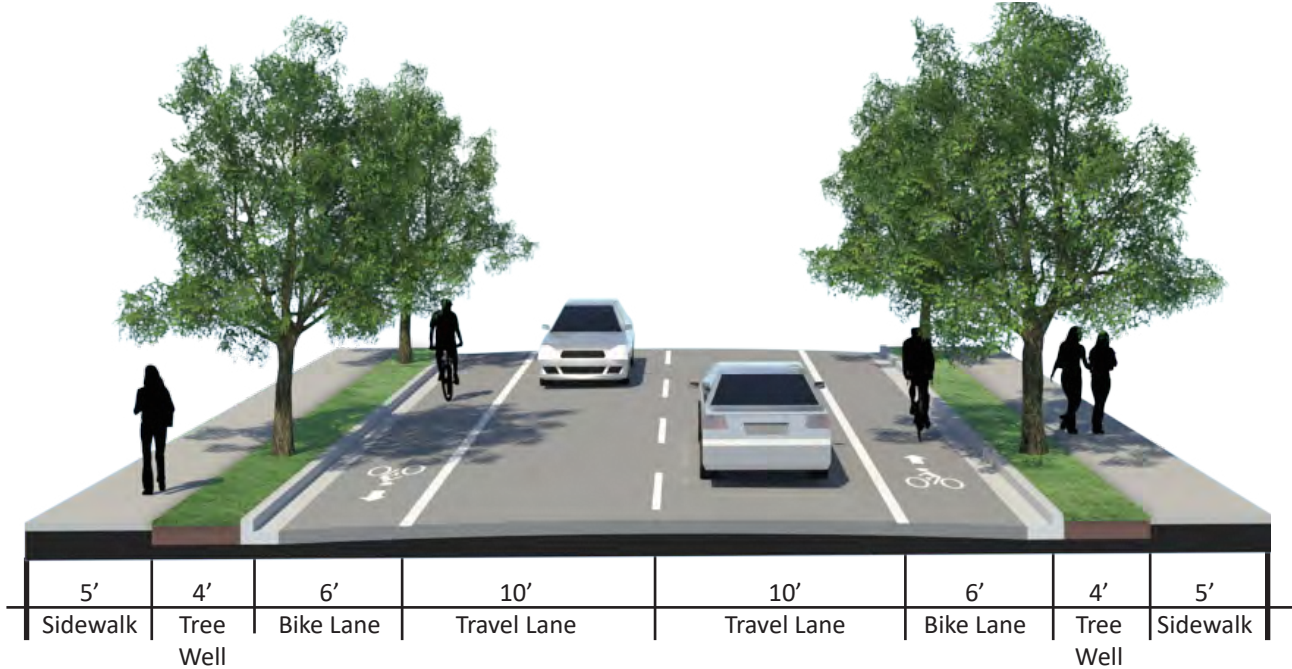


9TH STREET SECTIONS

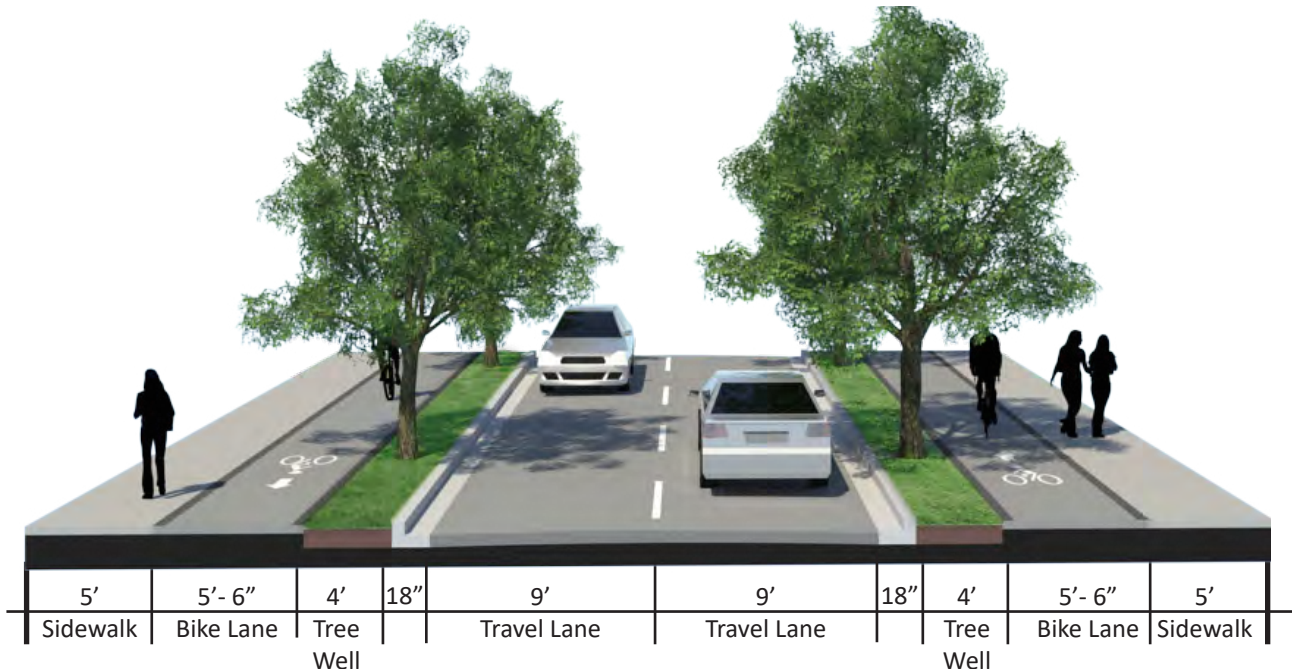
9th Street connects the new Maxey Elementary School, Shepherd's Hope, Community Gardens, and workplaces, to the neighborhoods and Plant Street. There is a small sidewalk on the west side of the street but it is not considered adequate for connecting students to the new school, especially with the lack of crosswalks crossing 9th Street. An improved street section that includes continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street, shade trees, and either a conventional or protected bike lanes will improve 9th Street and make it safer for members of the community using this connection.



Existing Conditions on 9th Street



Conventional Bike Lanes Potential 9th Street Improvements

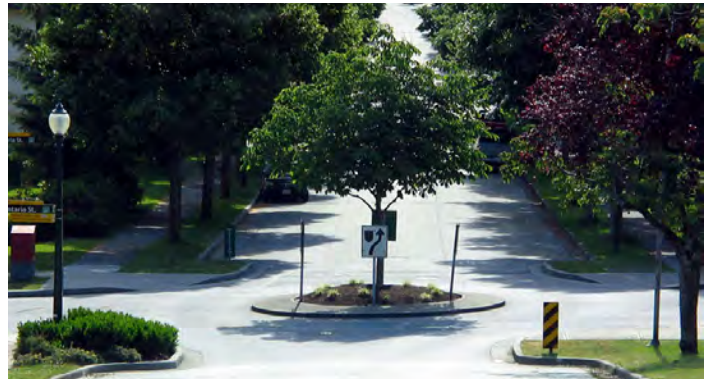


Protected Bike Lanes Potential 9th Street Improvements

SMALL INTERSECTION ROUNDABOUTS

Several connecting streets throughout the East Winter Garden neighborhoods were identified as being dangerous with speeding vehicles. Bay Street in particular was noted as a concern for speeding. Speed humps are often used as a measure on streets like Bay Street to slow drivers, but they can be hard to navigate by cyclists, drivers often speed over them, and they can be an obstacle for emergency vehicles.

Another potential solution to slow traffic is to add small intersection roundabouts. These allow movement to continue but at a more manageable speed. Vehicles do not have to stop, but they must slow down in order to navigate the intersection. Small intersection roundabouts are easily navigable by cyclists. The center of the roundabouts can be planted with trees or can be a location to exhibit local art.



Examples of small intersection roundabouts.

NEIGHBORHOOD STREET TREE PROGRAM

Trees are a vital part of every community. In addition to street trees providing shade to pedestrians and cooling asphalt, trees conserve energy and make oxygen for us to breathe. Trees are a community asset and can help to give neighborhoods a new identity and encourage civic pride. Studies have shown that green, leafy neighborhoods have both less incidence of violence, as well as higher property values. Although some neighborhoods in the East Winter Garden area have significant tree cover, other areas are barren or have large gaps in their tree cover.

It is said that the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago; the second best time is today. The City of Winter Garden can work to identify neighborhoods and areas that have a lack of tree cover such as the Bay Pointe Apartments. These areas can be targeted for a tree planting campaign where the City can plant new street trees within the right-of way or work with property owners to place trees on the private property near the street edge.



New street trees could help improve existing neighborhoods.



Street trees are great community amenities.

10 STEPS FOR MAKING WALKABLE AND BIKEABLE STREETS IN WINTER GARDEN

1. DESIGN FOR PEDESTRIANS FIRST.

East Winter Garden is a neighborhood. With the exception of major arterials like East Plant Street, thoroughfares should be designed for the pedestrian first, then the car. Great neighborhood streets are designed to provide a high-caliber experience for pedestrians foremost; once this is accomplished, great streets generally accommodate a wide range of other modes of travel.

2. PROPORTIONS MATTER.

Major arterials like East Plant Street, especially, must move a lot of cars. But that doesn't mean it can't be a great street as well. West Plant Street in the Historic Downtown District functions as an outdoor room, surrounding its occupants in a space that is welcoming and usable. That same level of enclosure may not be possible on East Plant Street but there is still room for improvement.

A 1:6 ratio for building height to street width is often cited as a minimum section for a sense of enclosure. Creating this sense of enclosure involves more than just narrow street width, however. There are well-defined eight-lane roads just as there are two-lane roads that seem to be impassable. Streets must be sized properly for their use and should be defined with appropriate building sizes. Street trees and features such as lighting also play a critical role in defining the space of the street.

3. DESIGN THE STREET AS A UNIFIED WHOLE.

An essential distinction of great streets is that the entire space is designed as an ensemble, from the travel lanes, trees and sidewalks, to the very buildings that line the roadway. Building form and character is particularly important in shaping a sense of place.

The best streets invariably have buildings fronting them, with a particular height and massing that creates an appropriate sense of enclosure. The random setbacks generated by conventional zoning rarely produce this effect; form-based regulations must be put in place to control building form and placement. Furthermore, urban buildings must front the street with features such as doors, windows, balconies, and porches. These features promote a lively streetscape, and ultimately provide passive security for pedestrians by focusing "eyes on the street."

4. INCLUDE SIDEWALKS.

Appropriately designed sidewalks are essential for active pedestrian life in East Winter Garden. Pedestrians will be more willing to utilize sidewalks if they are protected from automobile traffic. One of the simplest ways to buffer the pedestrian is to place street trees between the street and the sidewalk. Other street furniture such as streetlights, bus shelters, and benches occupy wider sidewalks and provide additional separation between pedestrians and automobile traffic.

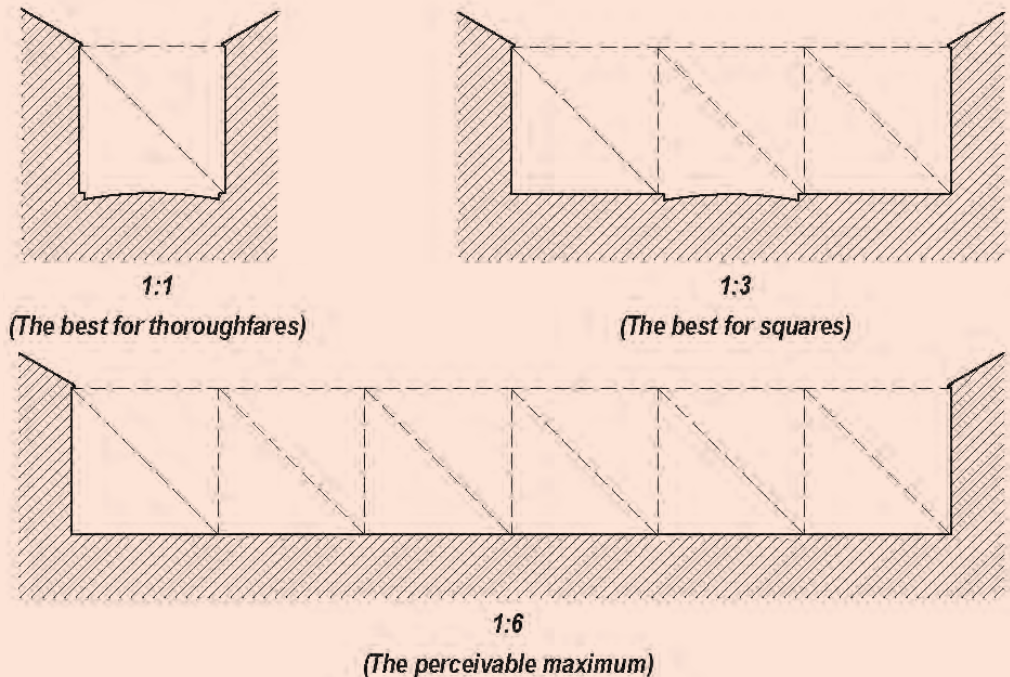
The width of the sidewalk will vary according to the location. On most single-family residential streets, five or six feet is an appropriate width, but streets with townhouses and multi-family buildings require a more generous sidewalk. On Main Streets, fourteen feet is an ideal minimum sidewalk width, which must never fall below an absolute minimum of eight feet.

All new streets in East Winter Garden should include sidewalks. Retrofitting existing streets, which is to say adding sidewalks where there aren't currently sidewalks, is often an expensive, and time-consuming process. Choose streets for new sidewalks with care based on which streets are most likely to see pedestrians.

SCALE STREETS COMFORTABLY FOR USERS

The height-to-width ratio is the proportion of spatial enclosure. If the width of space is such that the cone of vision encompasses less street wall than open sky, the degree of spatial enclosure is slight. As a general rule, the tighter the ratio, the stronger the sense of place. The ratio of 1:6 is the perceivable maximum. The ratio of 1:3 is best for public spaces. The ratio of 1:1 creates pedestrian paseos. Note that the ratio is not based merely on the curb to curb measurement but instead on the entire right-of-way and including building frontages, from building face to building face. In the absence of spatial definition by facades, disciplined tree planting is an alternative. Trees aligned for spatial enclosure are necessary on thoroughfares that have substantial front yards.

Excerpted from
The Lexicon of New Urbanism



5. PROVIDE SHADE.

Central Florida is hot. Pedestrians and cyclists need shady streets. Shade provides protection from heat and sun and contributes to the spatial definition of a street. Shade can be provided with canopy trees or architectural encroachments over the sidewalk. Canopy trees should be planted in a planting zone between the sidewalk and the street in order to provide continuous definition and shade for both the street and the sidewalk. Architectural encroachments over the sidewalk such as awnings, arcades, and cantilevered balconies are another way to protect pedestrians from the elements and shield storefronts from glare.

6. MAKE MEDIANS SUFFICIENTLY WIDE.

Where divided thoroughfares are unavoidable, medians must be generous enough to serve as a pedestrian amenity. A minimum median width of 8' will accommodate a row of street trees and will provide adequate refuge for pedestrians crossing a wide roadway. Quite often an 8' median isn't possible. That's okay, the right species can grow in even a 3' median. East Winter Garden provides plenty of examples. The tree may never reach its growth potential but it isn't necessary that it does to provide shade and beauty.

7. PLANT THE STREET TREES IN AN ORDERLY MANNER.

Great streets are typically planted with rows of regularly-spaced trees, using consistent species. This formal tree alignment has a powerful effect; it at once shapes the space and reflects conscious design. More importantly, the shade produced by the trees will be continuous enough to make walking viable. Furthermore,



Savannah, GA



Alexandria, VA

the spatial impression of aligned trees also has a traffic calming effect. At the same time, some species like elm and dogwood are susceptible to disease. When using these trees variety is key to providing a long-lasting urban canopy.

Central Florida can host all variety of street trees like towering oaks, flowering crepe myrtles, delicate acacias, spreading poincianas, and quick-growing palms. Winter Garden hosts some of the region's finest crepe myrtles and stately Live Oaks. Every tree has its positive attributes. In general, though, the wider the spread of limbs and greater the provision of leaves, the more shade. And providing shade is the central reason for street trees.

8. USE SMART LIGHTING.

Streets should be appropriately lit for automobile and pedestrian safety. Pedestrians naturally avoid streets where they feel unsafe. Widely-spaced, highway-scaled "cobra head" light fixtures do not provide appropriate light intensity and consistency for pedestrian well-being. More frequently-spaced, shorter fixtures are more appropriate, and provide light beneath the tree canopy as street trees mature.

9. ALLOW ON-STREET PARKING IN SUITABLE LOCATIONS.

On-street parking buffers pedestrians from moving cars and calms traffic by forcing drivers to stay alert. Parallel parking is the ideal arrangement, because it keeps streets as narrow as possible. Diagonal parking is acceptable on some shopping streets, as long as the extra curb-to-curb width is not achieved at the expense of sidewalk width. Parking located in front of a street-front business encourages people to get out of their cars and walk, and is essential to leasing street-oriented retail space.

10. AVOID PARKING LOTS IN FRONT OF BUILDINGS.

The bulk of a building's parking supply should occur behind the building. The conventional practice of placing surface parking lots in front of buildings results in a disconnected pedestrian environment. If current zoning regulations are reformed to provide "build-to" lines rather than mandatory front setbacks for commercial buildings, parking can be accommodated in the interior of the block. As a result, the pedestrian realm of the sidewalk will be defined by shop fronts and building entrances rather than parking lots.

It is not surprising that, given their multiple roles in urban life, streets require and use vast amounts of land. In the United States, from 25 to 35 percent of a city's developed land is likely to be in public right-of-way, mostly streets. If we can develop and design streets so that they are wonderful, fulfilling places to be, community building places, attractive public places for all people of cities and neighborhoods, then we will have successfully designed about 1/3 of the city directly and will have an immense impact on the rest.

- Allan Jacobs, Great Streets

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL INFILL

Historically, Center Street was home to several local stores and served as a thriving main street for the African American community of East Winter Garden. Like many similar African American neighborhoods, desegregation brought with it the unintended consequence of closing down many local businesses as people began to shop in other areas of town.

While today Center Street has only a couple of functioning commercial buildings left, including Dyson’s Plaza and the Red Barn Market, many members of the community expressed a desire to restore the neighborhood commercial character of the

street and encourage more African American-owned businesses to set up shop there. There are also residents who would like to see a trail linkage from the West Orange Trail to Center Street into the neighborhood.

Because there will likely be larger commercial and mixed-use developments coming along Plant Street, commercial uses in the neighborhood should be concentrated at the intersection of 10th Street and Center Street, as well as being more intimately scaled and home-grown in character.



Empty lots are filled with new single-family houses, town homes, and small apartments buildings.

Empty lots near the intersection are filled with small-scale neighborhood commercial.

Existing commercial buildings are renovated or rebuilt to attract new tenants and shoppers.



Existing Conditions: Looking West

Currently, most of the lots along Center Street near 10th Street are vacant. The only two functioning commercial buildings are Dyson’s Plaza and the Red Barn Market. There are no sidewalks and few trees to provide shade.



Step 1: Street Improvements

The first step to breathe life back into Center Street is to rebuild the curbs and add sidewalks and a planting strip to improve drainage. Adding stop signs and crosswalks at the intersection of 10th and Center will also help improve pedestrian safety.



Step 2: Renovated & New Neighborhood Commercial Buildings
 The next phase includes renovating and repairing Dyson’s Plaza, as well as building new one- and two-story commercial buildings.

Step 3: Residential Infill & Additional Street Improvements
 Phase 3 improvements include filling in the remaining empty lots with new residential and potentially live/work units. This phase also includes a new set of street improvements such as burying power lines, planting street trees, and adding street lights.



Step 4: Fill in the Northeast Corner of the Intersection & Create a Linkage to the West Orange Trail along Center Street
 The final phase of improvements for Center Street includes replacing the informal gathering area at the northeast corner of the intersection known as the “Hole in the Wall” with a new commercial building, incorporating public art on any blank walls, and potentially a bike path along the north side of the street.

11TH STREET & PLANT STREET

Existing Conditions

Today, as one moves east along Plant Street from downtown Winter Garden toward the 429, the built environment becomes less walkable. For example, the intersection of Plant Street and 11th Street is just north of the East Winter Garden neighborhood with a number of churches and other important institutions. While this portion of Plant Street has sidewalks, virtually all other details of the physical environment are currently optimized for travel by automobile. Cars whiz by at high rates of speed. The street is lined with parking lots and low buildings set far back from the street. There are very few trees providing shade.

An overlay code was recently adopted by the City to change the type of development that can occur along this stretch of Plant Street.

In the Future

With the code overlay in place and good design, the intersection of Plant Street and 11th Street could become an attractive, walkable front door to the adjacent neighborhood. As a start, a traffic signal is being installed at this intersection to facilitate movement in and out of the neighborhood.

Good visibility makes it a promising location for supporting a small amount of neighborhood-serving uses. These shops, restaurants, and services mixed with residential building types would be a very convenient walk from the rest of the neighborhood if connected with streets optimized for pedestrians.

An uninterrupted network of interconnected sidewalks must be completed where there are currently gaps. Sidewalks can also be widened to generous dimensions where uses such as cafes with outdoor dining are desired.

Pedestrian-scaled street lights provide a comfortable and continuous level of illumination – not too bright and not too dim.

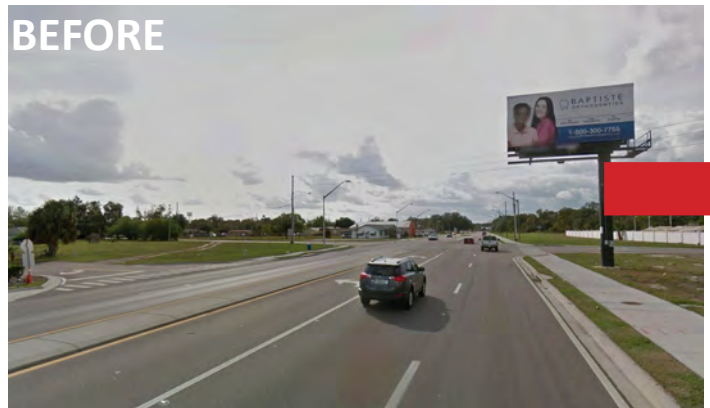
Regularly-spaced street trees should be placed at the outer edges of sidewalks, for a continuous shade canopy and to provide a feeling of protection from nearby vehicular travel lanes.

Buildings should be placed close to the sidewalk. This will help provide pedestrians with visual interest and “eyes on the street” and will help transform the street from a spatially vague area into a unified, well-formed public space.

Details such as café seating, and accent landscaping and human-scaled signage complete the transformation of the street into a pedestrian-friendly environment.

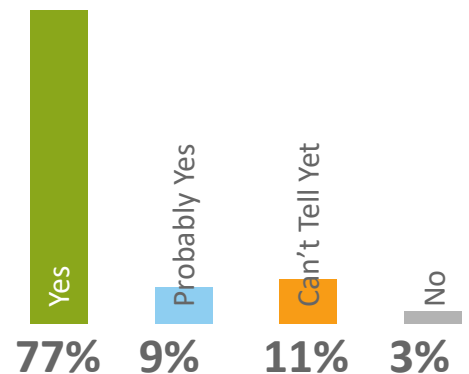


Existing conditions - aerial view



Existing conditions - street view

At the work-in-progress presentation attendees were asked if they liked this idea for the intersection of Plant Street and 11th Street.



AFTER



Proposed conditions - aerial view

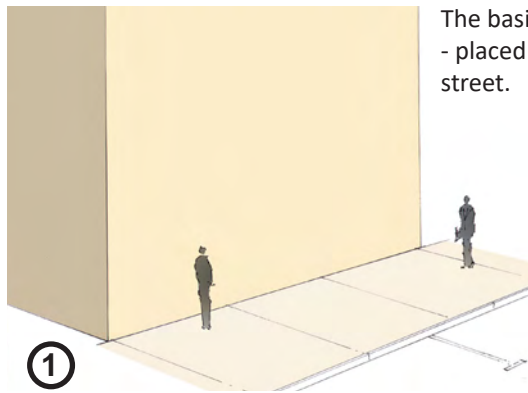
AFTER



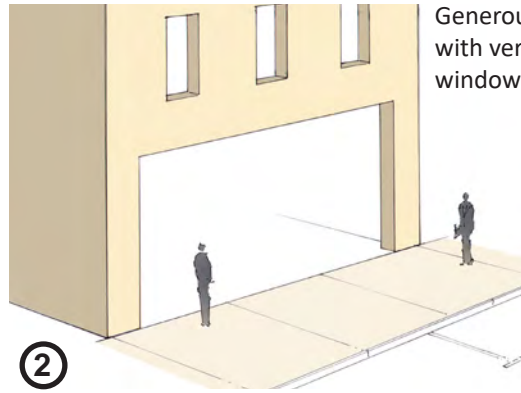
Proposed conditions - street view

THE ANATOMY OF A STOREFRONT

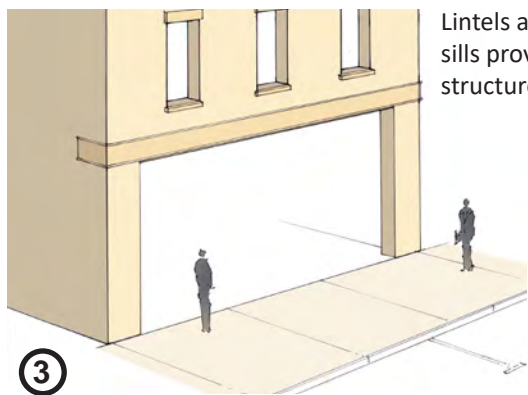
There is an economic advantage to creating unique one-of-a-kind environments such as main streets. Plant Street and Center Street will need storefronts to customers on foot or by bike. Despite the fact that



1 The basic building mass - placed close to the street.



2 Generous shopfront with vertically-oriented windows above.



3 Lintels and window sills provide a sense of structure.



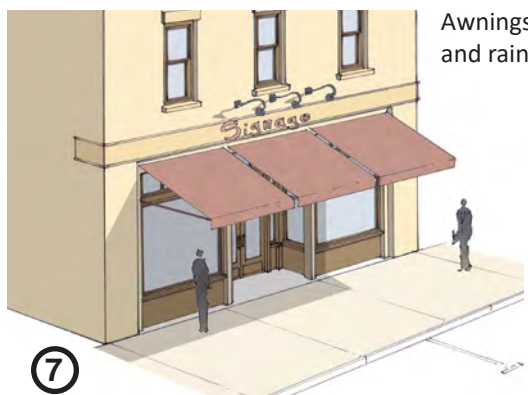
4 Columns sub-divide the shopfront opening and transoms help achieve well-proportioned shopfront windows.



5 Cased windows sit atop knee-height bulkheads.



6 Pedestrian-oriented entrance, signage and lighting



7 Awnings provide shade and rain protection.



8 A gallery provides a second floor terrace

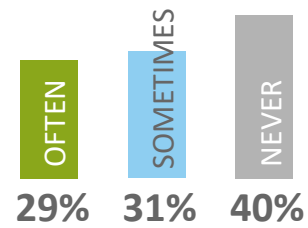


The City of Winter Garden has many great examples of storefront buildings. Though most were built in a different era it is not beyond today's developers, architects, and builders provided they receive instruction and, where necessary, incentives.

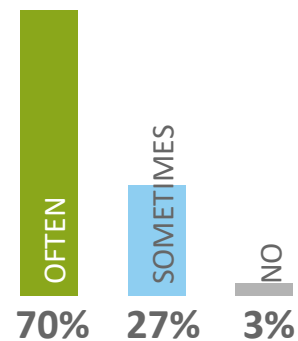
TALKING TO THE COMMUNITY

After the plans and images in this chapter were shown to charrette participants, the Planning Team asked a variety of questions using real-time keypad polling and this generated some encouraging responses.

Do you dine or shop in East Winter Garden?



Would you dine or shop in East Winter Garden with the proposed improvements?



ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

60% of people dine or shop in East Winter Garden “often” or “sometimes.”

At present, despite the limited number of dining and shopping opportunities East Winter Garden still has a loyal customer base. For many, Colonial Drive is too far for routine dining and shopping and this provides an opportunity for new businesses in the area.

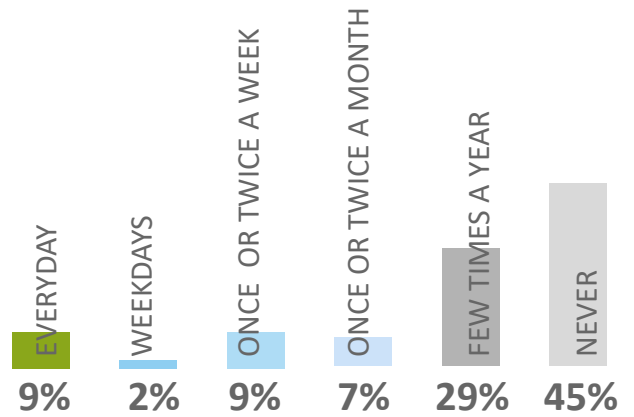


97% of people would dine or shop in East Winter Garden.

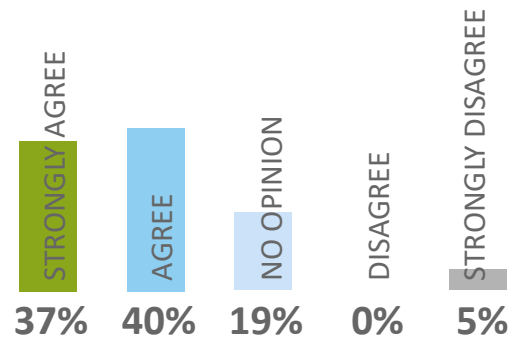
If the places envisioned by the plans and renderings were made real many more people would be interested in dining, shopping, or biking in the area.



How often do you ride a bike?



I would walk and bike more often if conditions were improved.



Only 27% of people in the area ride a bike.

Even though the West Orange Trail is at the doorstep of the community very few people use a bike.

95% of people would walk or bike.

Presumably, if streets were safe, comfortable, and interesting, and lined with destinations (as the renderings and plans show) the number of people using bikes would increase.



FARMER'S MARKET

Winter Garden has a very active and popular Farmer's Market every Saturday on Lakeview Avenue, in the Historic Downtown District. The Farmer's Market hosts a range of vendors, fresh produce, plants, flowers, herbs, baked goods, artisan crafts, and local food and beverages. The urban farm planned at Tucker Ranch will provide additional fresh produce for the Farmer's Market. The City has discussed hosting the market in a second location.

An additional marketplace in the East Winter Garden area could make access to fresh food and vegetables easier for local residents. Depending on the season and availability of produce, the market could have different offerings than the Historic Downtown District market and provide easy access to local residents.

A second Farmer's Market is not intended to take away from the existing downtown market and activities, but to add convenience and options for the locals and passersby. The market can be accompanied by a mobile food vendor or other local vendor to encourage more people to stop and stay for a short while.

There are numerous potential locations for this market, but an initial location could be at the intersection of 10th and North Street. This location could activate the neighborhood and incubate other local businesses. Ideally, North Street will be reconnected to make access to the farm stand easier from Plant Street and make the triangular area a park rather than leftover space.



In the short-term the Farmer's Market can set up on city-owned lots until 10th street is reconnected to Plant Street. Once that connection is established the market can move to the new triangular park created as a result of the reconfigured street network.

Bringing more people to this location more often will make adjacent lots more desirable for development and other businesses. As the neighborhood improves the market could also be relocated off of the main green but to an equally accessible location elsewhere.

Local agriculture can play a key role in improving East Winter Garden's economic, environmental, and nutritional state of affairs. Local agriculture can improve the area economy by keeping food dollars close to home, and improves household economies for residents who choose to keep a garden. Organic, small-scale agriculture, in particular, can improve the environment by protecting watersheds from the chemical run-off that is typical of large-scale, conventional industrial farming. And producing food close to home ensures that the produce will be fresh and retain more of its nutrients, improving the health of the local community.



Existing Conditions



Short-Term: Farmer's Market on city-owned lots



Long-Term: The Farmer's Market moves to a reconfigured public space as adjacent lots redevelop.

RESIDENTIAL INFILL

While many historic buildings have been lost over the years, East Winter Garden still retains the structure of a great traditional neighborhood. The small block sizes make walking an easy and viable means of getting around, the mix of lot sizes allows for a natural mix in housing types and prices, and the streets are sized to comfortably accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and

motorists. Efforts should be taken to preserve and refurbish the remaining homes in the neighborhood. New structures should be added as infill buildings to repair the urban fabric and neighborhood. New infill structures should take their design cues from the historic buildings found throughout the area.



Neglected and abandoned homes are renovated and rehabilitated.

Empty lots are infilled with new houses in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

BAY STREET

Recently, some of the vacant lots in East Winter Garden have been repopulated with homes through the efforts of the City and numerous community and not-for-profit organizations. The design of these new homes places an emphasis on the area's traditional architecture to provide dignified and affordable housing.

The plan for East Winter Garden proposes to expand upon these efforts to add to and improve what is already existing. However, additional housing will only go so far in enhancing the neighborhood without improvements to the public spaces and streets. Similarly, the revitalization of homes won't reach its full potential without corresponding enhancements to the public realm.

The following series of images show how Bay Street can incrementally change over time to help the community achieve its vision for a safe and vibrant neighborhood.



Existing Conditions - Looking East

A new home has already been constructed, but there remains large numbers of vacant lots. The existing sidewalk is minimal and there are few public amenities.



Step 1: Sidewalks, Street Trees, and Lights are Added

The sidewalk on the south side of East Bay Street is replaced and a new sidewalk is added on the north side. Both sidewalks are set back from the street to allow room for street trees and lighting for a safer, more comfortable environment. Utility lines can be buried to allow for fuller tree growth and a more pleasing aesthetic, but this is not critical for the betterment of this residential street.



Step 2: New Homes Fill in Empty Lots

With these improvements to the public space, the stage is set for new homes to reoccupy lots in this historic community. Existing homes remain as new ones fill in the gaps to provide more housing options at a variety of price points. The new infill structures take their design cues from historic buildings found throughout the area with upright proportions, graceful rooflines and elegant porches within conversation distance of the sidewalk.



Step 3: East Bay Street with New Homes and a Bike Path

A bike path that can connect to the West Orange Trail may one day run along East Bay Street, providing connections within the neighborhood, throughout the City, and to the rest of Central Florida.

10TH STREET & PLANT STREET

CHANGE OVER-TIME

Existing Conditions: 10th Street in East Winter Garden historically led directly to the heart of the neighborhood at Center Street. As part of the recently completed widening of Plant Street, however, North Street was realigned to disconnect from 10th street, and limit access to this culturally important street. One of the consequences of this realignment is a perception that people traveling along Plant Street should refrain from venturing into the neighborhood.

Also evident from this vantage point is the result of years of neglect. The remaining housing stock in the neighborhood stands next to empty lots and abandoned properties. The lack of continuous sidewalks and a consistent street tree canopy also contributes to a sense of disinvestment.

Step 1: The intersections of Plant Street with 10th Street and North Street can be fixed by reconnecting the streets. The corner of 10th and North becomes a normal neighborhood intersection with a four-way stop. The western end of North Street can be converted to a one-way street heading east with parallel on-street parking. The resulting space from this new alignment creates a formal public green lined by street trees which can be framed with new multi-story mixed-use buildings.

City-owned property to the south and east of the new public green can be carefully redeveloped to include both public uses and locally owned businesses on ground floors. Small, affordable and market rate residential units are included in the upper floors.

Step 2: Moving further south along 10th street, a diverse mix of attached and detached housing types provides for a range of housing options. Sidewalks and street trees are added along the west side of 10th street where new housing units are built. Businesses at the intersection of 10th Street and Center Street are revived.



Existing Conditions



Step 1: Reconfigured intersection with a public space framed by new buildings.



Step 2: Additional Development along 10th Street creates a variety of housing types.

Long-Term Prospects: Over time, vacant lots are filled in with new housing units, and Center Street is restored as the center of community life. Sidewalks and street trees are extended throughout the neighborhood. Larger parcels can be subdivided to create additional housing, and provide smaller, more affordable housing units.

Infill housing reinforces the value of existing assets, and reinforces the sense of community. New infill will raise valuations and over time allow financing for renovation and new units. Filling in the gaps in the neighborhood brings more safety by having more eyes on the street and more people who are likely to be engaged with the appearance, quality and safety of the neighborhood.



Courtyard Housing

A few key properties are big enough to create a pedestrian passageway fronted by small cottages. These small cottages provide a key link in the housing strategy: affordable, well-designed units that offer a diversity of models collected together around a common garden area.



Long-Term Prospects: vacant lots are filled in over time to restore a complete neighborhood.

CREATE A LIFECYCLE OF HOUSING AT A RANGE OF INCOME LEVELS IN EAST WINTER GARDEN

The *East Winter Garden Plan* proposes a variety of housing types for infill in the neighborhood. The opportunity for accomplishing this can be seen on the map of area values. Property values in and around the East Winter Garden area are relatively low in comparison to other areas of the city. Many properties are at or below a \$5 per square foot of assessed value, including both land and improvements. Given the low values, those in the area who wish to renovate properties or build new properties will have difficulty achieving financing because the comparable properties are lower in value than the cost of renovation. This is a self-reinforcing situation in which poor properties are unable to be renovated and continue to exert downward pressure on pricing and valuation, thus reducing the value of good properties over time.

There is a need for housing attractive to first-time buyers, young families, single young people, families at mid-life, households whose children have become independent, and for seniors who need to downsize or need assistance. Given the above, the life cycle of housing is not serving the community. New opportunities need to be created that will keep residents here and attract new residents.

The availability of land to accomplish this is not in question. To address this issue, a variety of housing types to address affordability and housing preference has been proposed. Renovation of existing units should be a first priority as many of these units are fine but in need of maintenance. The housing

types suggested throughout within the Plan include mixed-use housing along Plant Street and 10th Street, townhomes, small lot infill housing, and courtyard housing as well as some larger housing in the mix.

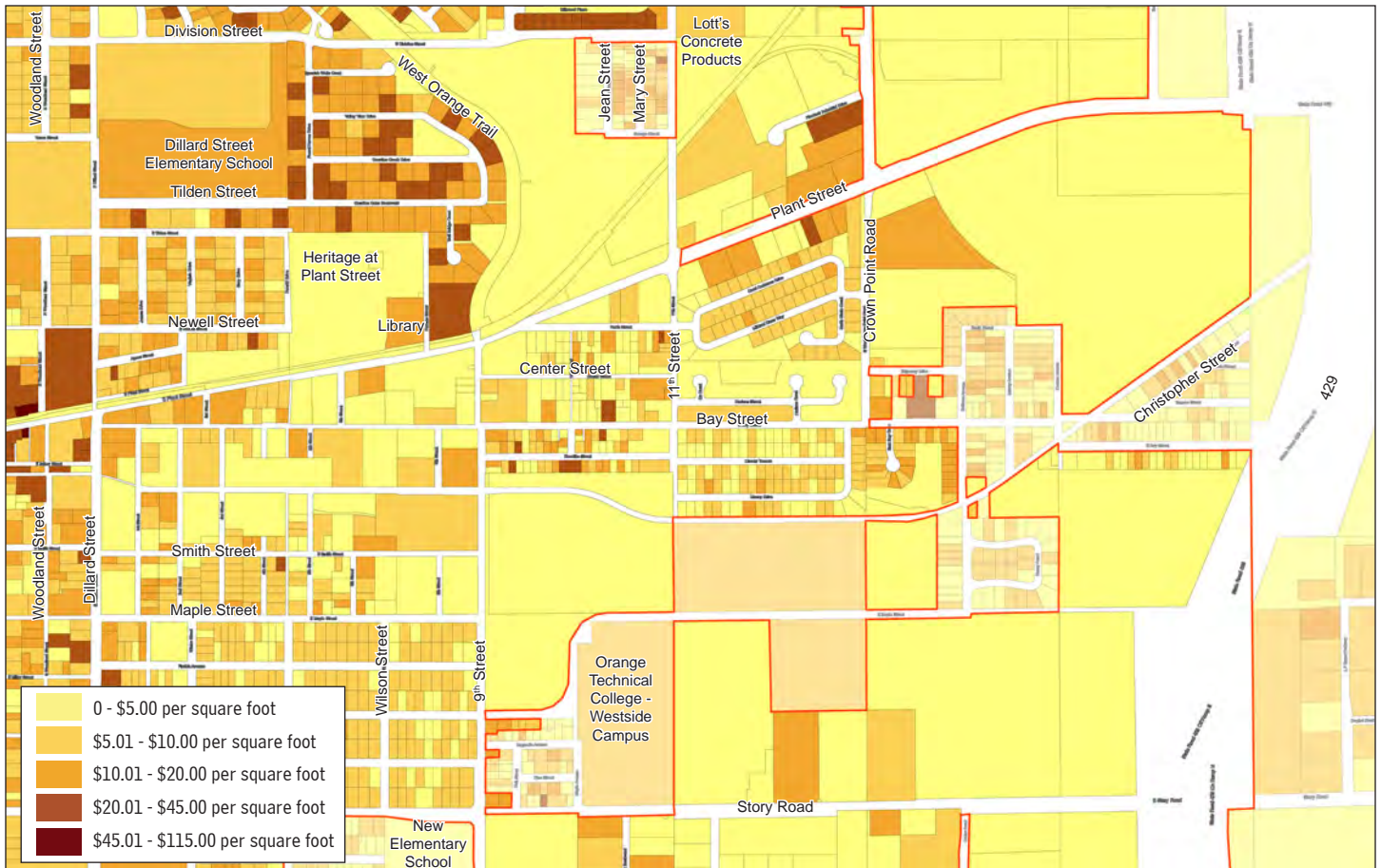
Mixed-Use Housing Along Plant Street & 10th Street

This would include apartments and eventually loft-type units of three stories. Three story construction allows a lower construction cost while retaining the neighborhood scale. Placing residential units above retail or restaurants provides multiple sources of income for the building owner.

Infill Housing

One potential solution for housing in the neighborhood is infill housing on under-used land. Currently such projects may require alternate financing to overcome the issue of valuation, but there is already a plan by Habitat for Humanity Homes to install three new infill homes similar with front porches and parking in the rear on 10th Street.

Infill does several things: it reinforces the value of existing assets, and it reinforces the sense of community. New infill will raise valuations and over time allow financing for renovation and additional new units. Filling in the gaps in the neighborhood brings more safety by having more eyes on the street and more people who are likely to be engaged with the appearance, quality and safety of the neighborhood.



Value per Square Foot in the East Winter Garden Area

Courtyard Housing

Another way to assist the neighborhood is with courtyard housing. A courtyard housing model consists of a diversity of small house models collected together and placed on one large lot. The design and placement of the homes fits in with the neighborhood but is of a density that approaches apartment densities. This is a solution that can bridge the gap between ownership and rental pricing and allow low-income residents an ownership opportunity.

Small Model Homes

For both small infill homes and courtyard housing options, costs can potentially be reduced by looking at models that exist for small lot housing that would match existing neighborhood traditional styles and remain affordable to neighborhood residents. A number of architects have collaborated on the production of traditional housing that would be affordable and that would offer a diversity of size and cost to assist with immediate housing needs.

Homes can range from one bedroom home at 308 square feet to a five bedroom home at 1,807 square feet. Although construction costs and materials vary, the homes were designed to meet a relatively low cost point.

There are a number of advantages of this kind of project:

- Re-uses undervalued properties;
- Preserves neighborhood values;
- Improves neighborhood property values and meets community needs;
- The designs correspond to housing types that are familiar and fit the neighborhood;
- Small projects can be easier to fund than larger developments;
- Plans and kits exist now;
- Matches single family neighborhood;
- Density replaces apartments; and
- Maintenance reserve included in payment.

One major advantage is the unit cost for a prototype project. For a non-profit, assisted project, costs can be held to a minimum. For such a project, land cost is very low, there is no cost for developer profit that would be necessary for market-rate financing, and if administered by the non-profit, no brokerage costs and minimal closing costs. The pricing of such a project at a level that matches local incomes means that it would serve community need without promoting gentrification.



KC 308: 308 SF Unit
1 bedroom / 1 Bath
Building Footprint: 14' X 30'
Estimated construction cost*:
\$38,000 - \$46,000

KC 544: 544 SF Unit
2 bedroom / 1 Bath
Building Footprint: 16' X 42'
Estimated construction cost*:
\$65,280 - \$76,000



KC 936: 936 SF Unit
2 bedroom / 1 Bath
Building Footprint: 26' X 46'
Estimated construction cost*:
\$110,000 - \$126,000

KC 1200: 1200 SF Unit
3 bedroom / 2 Bath
Building Footprint: 26' X 41'
Estimated construction cost*:
\$138,000 - \$162,000



Plan NEH 1.0: 1771 SF Unit
4 bedroom / 3.5 Bath
Building Footprint: 26' X 52'
Estimated construction cost*:
\$200,000 - \$230,000

KC 1807: 1807 SF Unit
5 bedroom / 3 Bath
Building Footprint: 26' X 55.5'
Estimated construction cost*:
\$198,000 - \$225,875

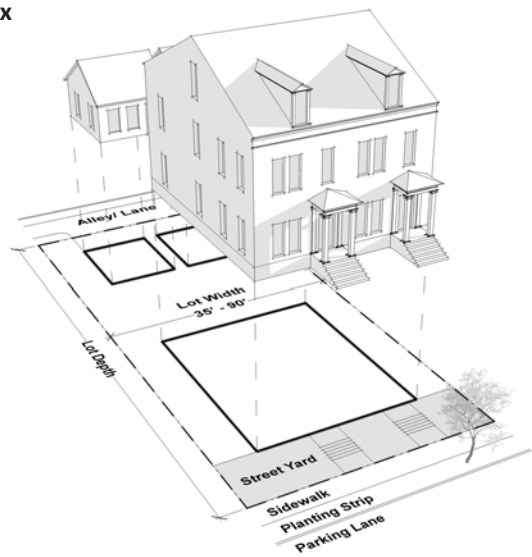
Source: www.marianneusato.com

A MIX OF HOUSING TYPES

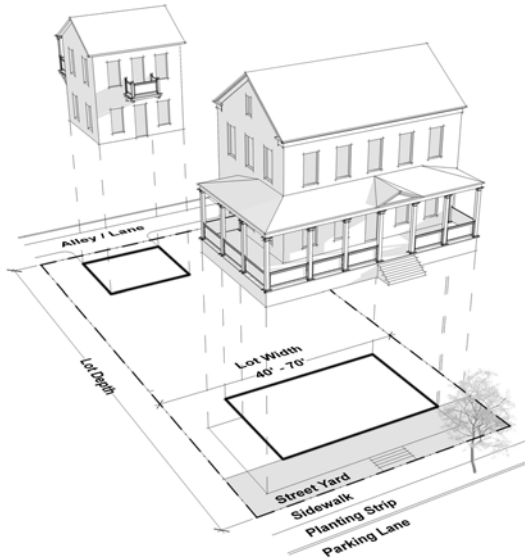
A mix of residential unit types creates neighborhoods which allow a diversity of ages and incomes, and permit residents to trade up or downsize their homes without having to move away. Multi-generational neighborhoods and life-cycle neighborhoods create strong social networks, avoid concentrations of poverty or wealth, and lead to safer communities. There is a wide array of unit and building types that are appropriate for the East Winter Garden area in addition to the single-family homes.

If you look closely at the renderings in this plan you will see the following building types. When communities have many building types they have many kinds of people.

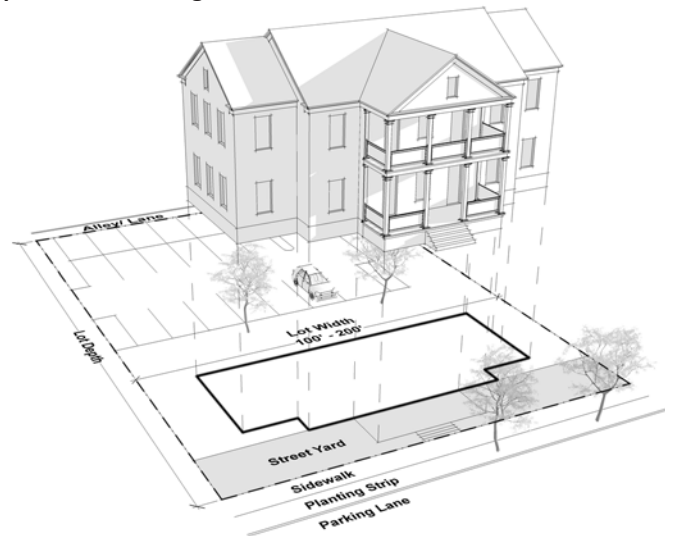
Duplex



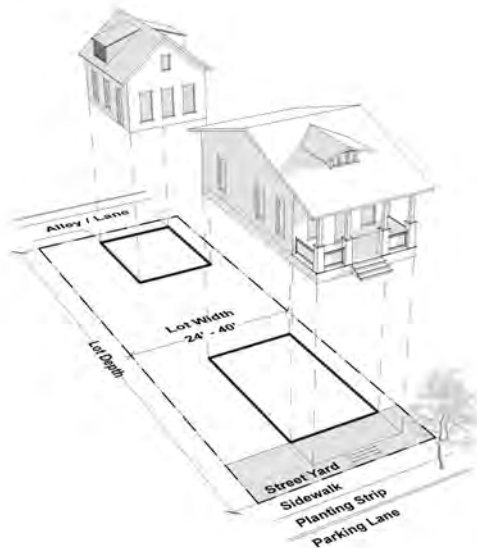
House & Accessory Dwelling Unit



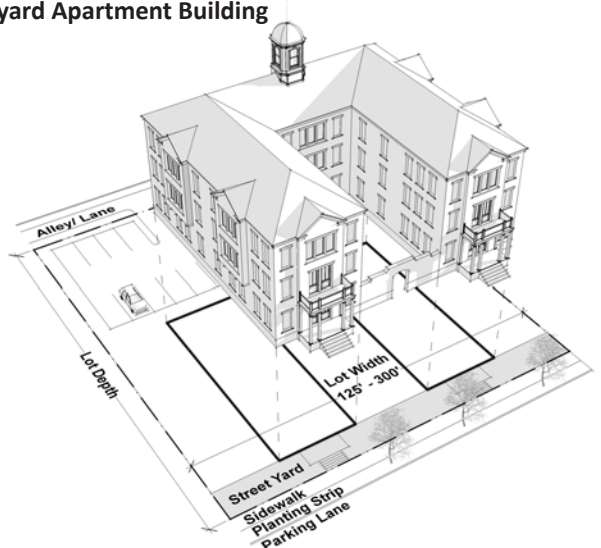
Apartment Building



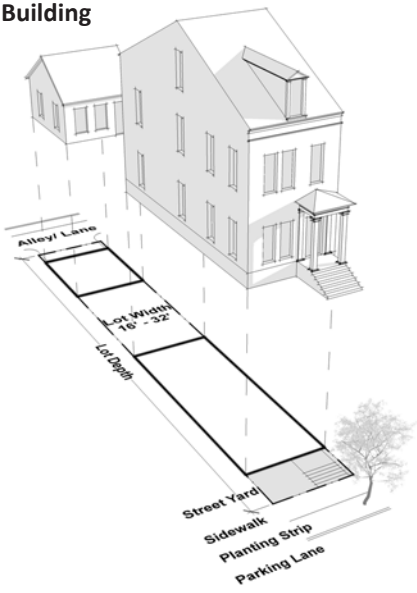
Cottage



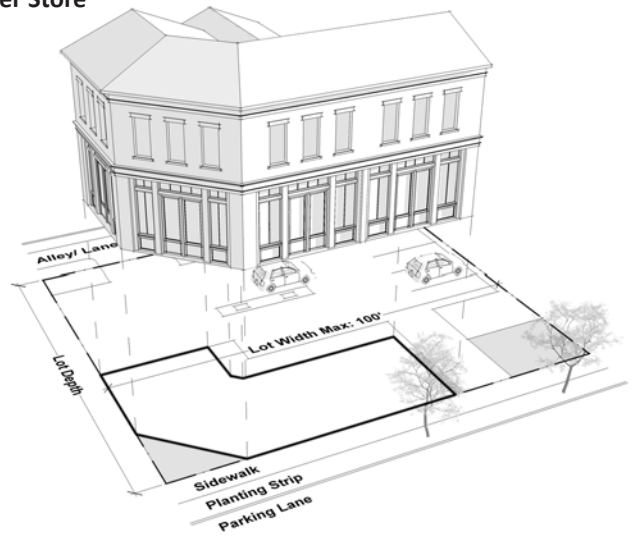
Courtyard Apartment Building



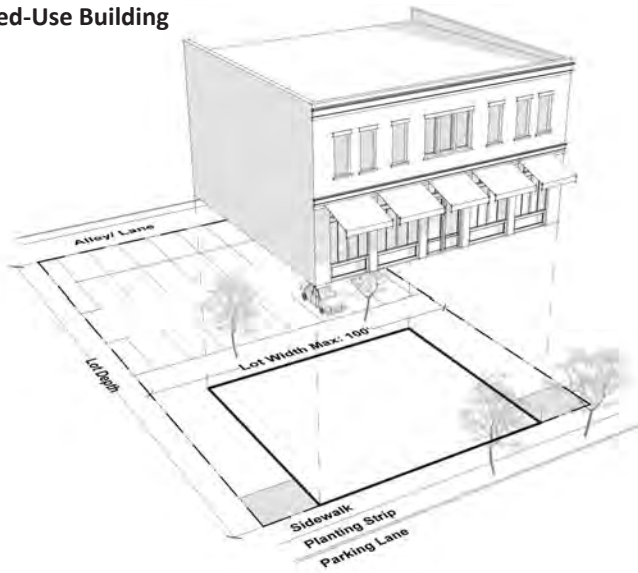
Townhouse Building



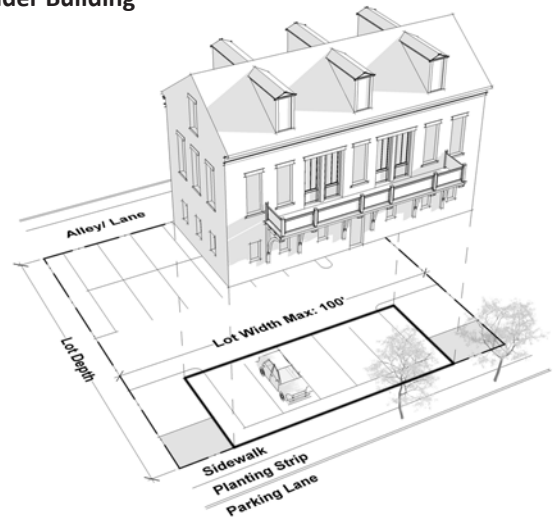
Corner Store



Mixed-Use Building



Park-Under Building



Live/Work Building



Civic Building with Attached Residence



FOCUS ON OWNERSHIP

The City of Winter Garden has successfully worked with non-profit housing providers to build affordable units which can be rented or purchased by local residents. Partnering with non-profit providers is the surest way to build affordable housing. However, the creation of public housing is costly. A wider range of approaches is needed.

Large residential and commercial development projects often require zoning changes, special permissions, and public-private partnerships. In those instances, the City can work with community organizations to facilitate a discussion with developers about the special context of East Winter Garden. Those conversations could lead to solutions which further community goals related to housing affordability.

At the same time there is a risk: asking too much from a Community Redevelopment Agency or private developers can impede new housing and worsen the affordability problem by stopping the market's natural supply-demand mechanism. Care must be taken. However, the following approaches may be helpful in the right instances.

Assist Retail for Locally-Owned Businesses

Locally-owned businesses are more likely to reflect East Winter Garden's unique culture, and are more likely to keep investment in the community.

A Community Redevelopment Authority's traditional role is the provision of streetscapes, roadway improvements, neighborhood parks, water and sewer improvements, and the addition of sidewalks and street tree plantings. However, CRAs can also construct new buildings and rent them for the advancement of business and economic development. A CRA building could provide space to incubate locally-owned businesses at below-market rates. Similarly, private-sector projects could offer lower rent space as part of the approvals process for large projects.

Affordable Housing Trust Funds & Displaced Renter's Funds

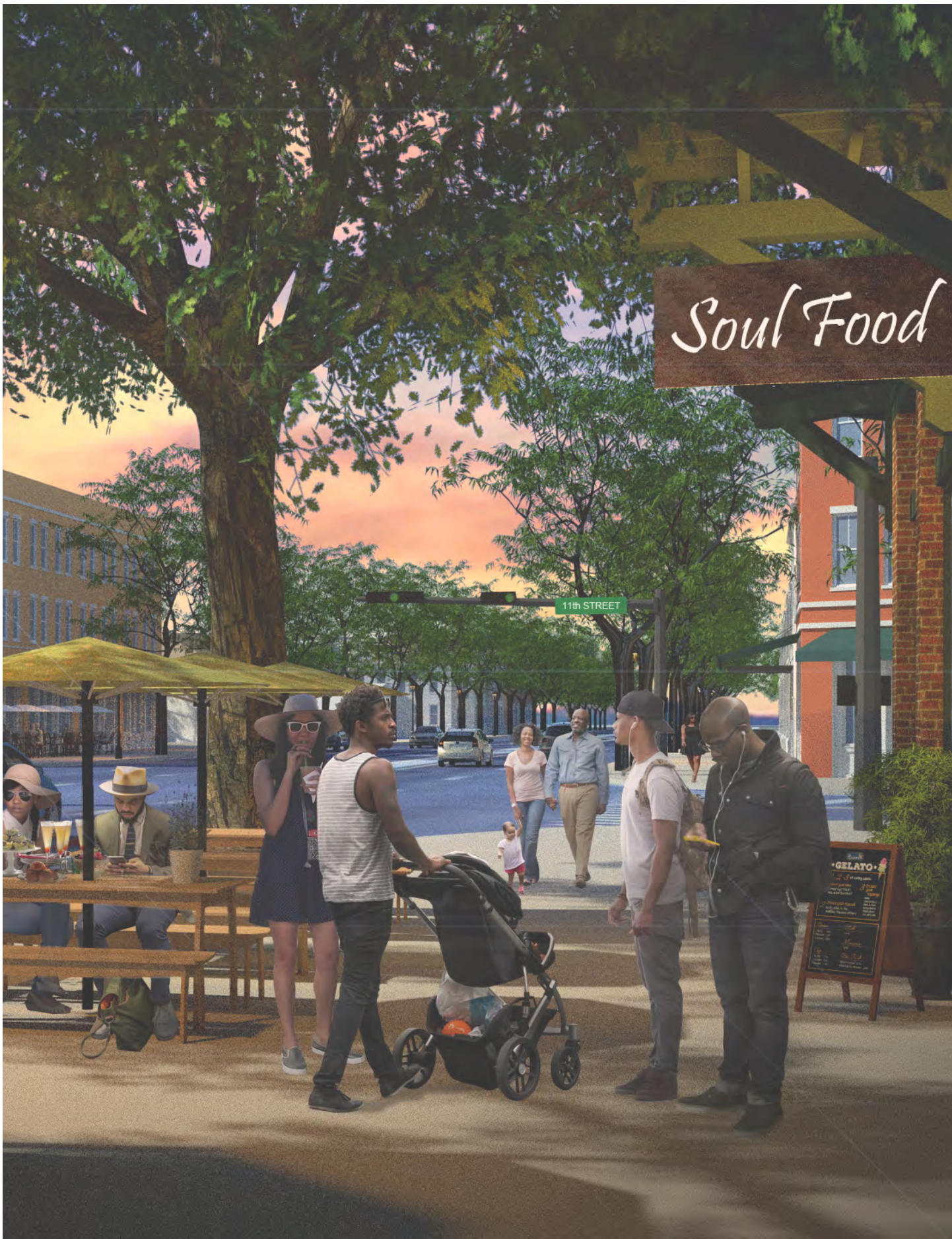
Large-scale development projects which will foreseeably change the demographics of a CRA area often pay into trust funds which help non-profit providers or the City build affordable homes for either sale or rent. Funding can even be set aside for transition assistance for renters expected to be displaced by new development.

Encouraging Family-Friendly Housing Units

Housing units with two or three bedrooms are more likely to be purchased by first-time buyers who expect to have families. Allowing accessory dwelling units above garages as-of-right instead of by variance or special permit process can encourage multi-generational homes.

Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning Ordinances & Density Bonuses

Municipalities can require developers of large new apartment buildings or new subdivisions to deed-restrict a percentage of the new units for affordable housing. This process works best when a municipality "trades" higher densities and more units in exchange for increased development rights as part of development agreements.





implementation **5**

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

This chapter identifies the steps necessary to realize the plan vision. Talking to East Winter Garden residents about the vision, three questions arise again-and-again:

Who is going to do this?

When is it going to happen?

Is it really going to happen?

It is useful to begin the conversation about plan implementation by answering those questions.

Who is Going to Build This?

Local residents, the City, community-oriented non-profit organizations, and private developers will all have a role in reviving the neighborhood. This area is part of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the CRA will play an important role in advancing public improvements and private development.

When is it Going to Happen?

Change is already happening. It is not a question of how to make it happen, but rather: What will East Winter Garden be when it grows up? New developments are either under construction or planned throughout East Winter Garden and the surrounding areas. Cleared land, visible throughout the area, will not stay empty for long.

The City, CRA, and numerous community-oriented non-profit organizations are already working to implement elements of the vision outlined in this plan. However, master plans take time to be fully realized. The revitalization of the historic Downtown took twenty years and is not yet complete.

It is important to set realistic goals and time frames, as well as to complete short-term and smaller improvements as soon as possible. Small achievements build confidence in the larger plan. The Implementation Matrix in this Chapter outlines actions and policy changes and the potential time frame in which they may occur. Some actions may be feasibly completed within a year. Others may take many years to complete.

Is it Really Going to Happen?

The success of this plan will depend on the continued support, cooperation, and effort of all parties involved. The following steps address policy recommendations, regulatory changes, public-private partnerships, neighborhood revitalization mechanisms, economic development goals, and funding options.



View of the Historic Downtown District at the intersection of Plant Street and Lakeside in 1990. Downtown Winter Garden wasn't always as inspiring as it is today.



View of Plant Street and the Historic Downtown District today. Positive change takes time, but time is not all that it takes. Commitment over a long period to plan principals is required.

Next Steps for Citizen-Planners:

Continue Community Building Activities Through the Churches, Schools, and Community-Oriented Non-profits

Stay Loyal to Area Businesses

Keep the Plan Moving

(Attend meetings, get a copy of the plan, get the word out)

Partner for Change with Like-Minded Residents and Organizations

Stay Positive

POLICY & PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS & CHANGES

1. Adopt the East Winter Garden Plan

The City of Winter Garden should adopt the East Winter Garden Plan, giving the plan official standing. Adopting the plan sends an important message to property owners and residents that the political decision makers support the plan.

2. Update the Code for East Winter Garden

The City's Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include new zoning districts and regulations that will guide the appropriate redevelopment of the area. Amendments could take the form of a Form-Based Code for the neighborhood. The existing network of streets, small and mid-size lot sizes, and historic structures should be preserved as change comes to the neighborhood.

3. Streamline Development Procedures & Approvals Process

Part of attracting quality development consists of making the process of approvals transparent, responsible, and reasonably expeditious. The City has already done an excellent job of making the approvals process clear and simple.

4. Develop an Infill Development Strategy

A strategy should be developed to target vacant, under-utilized or "soft" properties that detract from the quality of neighborhood. Vacant land and derelict buildings offer opportunities for change and redevelopment. In order to seize these opportunities it is necessary to inventory and map the locations of vacant land and derelict buildings and then target new users and promote the inventoried opportunities to new investors. The City can use its extensive GIS system to begin to identify a list of properties that might benefit from infill development; this can be done as a part of the annual inventory of land use.

5. Continue the Parcel Assembly Program

The City has the ability to consolidate parcels of land for the purposes of redevelopment and economic development. One strategy for encouraging new development is the identification of opportunity sites and the consolidation of parcels to allow development at a scale that offers feasibility to the type of use desired.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The primary strategy for East Winter Garden to recover is to play to its strengths. East Winter Garden has attributes that are not available in many places in the greater Orlando metropolitan region. East Winter Garden has:

- Authenticity and diversity;
- Adjacency to the Winter Garden Historic Downtown District and West Orange Trail;
- Unique cultural assets; and
- Excellent visibility along Plant Street.

The current assets of East Winter Garden can be enhanced by providing a walkable environment, by managing parking, by reviving a local retail area both on Center Street and Plant Street, by assisting the private sector in obtaining funding.

East Winter Garden must fill gaps. Gaps between the needs and costs of owners and tenants, gaps in the urban fabric, gaps in perception of crime and the reality, difficulties in enjoying and experiencing East Winter Garden's assets, the scattered presentation of history and culture, and gaps in funding for preservation and stabilization of surrounding neighborhoods. Addressing these gaps is the goal of the economic development strategy for East Winter Garden.

7. The Retail Strategy

The retail strategy for East Winter Garden relies upon capturing a sliver of the large amount of consumer spending in the region by first creating destinations on Plant Street. After that, the original retail heart of the neighborhood, a revitalized Center Street, need only to include three or four new restaurants or uses that stay open at night, offer excellent pedestrian amenities, rehabilitated building façades, pedestrian lighting, and safe and convenient parking both on and off the street.

A good retail destination requires over 70,000 square feet of retail combined with public amenities to be commercially viable. The two existing businesses on Center Street are in the range of 20,000 square feet. For this reason the plan recommends identifying a way to potentially bring a new Farmer's Market to Plant Street, within walking distance to Center Street.

A new Farmer's Market venue could jump-start a local retail destination. While a new Farmer's Market has been discussed for 9th Street, near the site of the proposed Shepherd's Hope facility, the City may want to consider an area with visibility on Plant Street near enough to Center Street to begin to activate it. The corner of Plant Street and 10th Street could be a good candidate. This could help jump start a cottage industry in East Winter Garden.

ORGANIZATIONS & PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

8. Parking

The parking systems within East Winter Garden can be optimized with a combination of management and partnerships. Regarding the type of parking to be provided, on-street, parallel parking is the most pedestrian-friendly form of parking. It provides direct access to the adjacent commercial establishments and provides a traffic calming effect on urban streets. Surface parking lots, while they provide low cost vehicle storage, are detrimental to the walkability of streets.

The City should identify sites for shared parking and meet with property owners and businesses to set the terms of use. Demand management agreements can be negotiated to determine the end cost to employers for employee spaces. The plan identifies multiple locations where large parking facilities could be located mid-block, and hidden from view.

9. Code Enforcement

Because of the nature of property law it is difficult to change the practices of property owners through the enforcement of code violations. Local organizations should be recruited to work closely with the City to identify and report code violations. This effort should be paired with providing relevant information to code violations where help can be found such as information on facade repair grants. This effort should also be coordinated with housing rehabilitation for the elderly who may need assistance or the potential for land bank acquisition.

10. Partner to Achieve Success

The City, Community Development Corporation, faith-based organizations, community representatives, Winter Garden Chamber of Commerce, funding agencies, and others should partner to form a detailed Action Plan for East Winter Garden.

Local churches are more than structures—they are critical in communicating with, and activating the East Winter Garden community, and are one of the most effective groups for leading positive change. East Winter Garden churches have a long history of providing community services and many have expressed a willing interest in assisting in the renovation of existing housing and the creation of new housing. With City assistance in design, construction, and code compliance, the local churches could organize several initiatives to aid in the renovation of neighborhoods.

One example to consider is the Service Over Self program in Memphis, Tennessee, a faith based initiative that renovates close to 40 units per year while teaching young community members construction techniques. Service Over Self is funded through Community Development Block Grants.

Another means is to assist local churches and CDCs to partner with banks which may need to meet Community Reinvestment Act obligations in forming a local Community Development Financial Institution that could provide funding outside of the usual market rate appraisal process. The goal is to create access to quality affordable housing for current community residents and at the same time eventually provide enough upgraded housing units to provide comparables that will allow the market to work without assistance.

11. Educate New Homeowners

There is a need for education for new homeowners. Programs exist that can assist residents in area neighborhoods and can be made available to potential buyers. Fannie Mae can assist with such efforts and has programs for education. Workshops could be publicized and hosted through the local churches for interested residents. The relatively inexpensive housing in this area makes it affordable for less affluent first-time homeowners. Providing these potential buyers with education and resources can assist them in making the leap from renter to owner.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

To achieve the goals of the East Winter Garden Plan, funding will be necessary. Public funding mechanisms for redevelopment include grants from public and private sources, general obligation bonds approved by the public, donations, and general fund expenditures. Funding assistance for private development and economic development includes New Market Tax Credits, Historic Tax Credits, federal matching funds for Small Business Investment Corporations, federal funding to assist local Community Development Corporations, revolving loan funds set up by local financing institutions for redevelopment and business creation (to help satisfy Community Reinvestment Act obligations), and, last but by no means least, standard financing for market rate development.

12. Façade Improvement Programs

Matching façade improvement programs can be funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Typical façade improvement programs offer design assistance coupled with grants or low interest loans for construction that are matched by the building owner.

13. Tax Credits

Tax credits can be very powerful funding incentives for private development. There are three basic credits available that have application in redevelopment: New Market Tax Credits; Federal Historic Rehabilitation tax credit; and Low-Income Housing Tax credits. The rules for tax credit investment are laid out in the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Tax credits allow a dollar for dollar reduction in tax (not income) and thus are of use to anyone with a need for tax reduction. Tax credits are often sold (securitized) to investors, allowing non-profits and project owners unable to use them to gain funding for construction and other allowable project costs.

New Market Tax Credits

These tax credits assist small developers and building owners because they can be sold (or syndicated) to investors who can use them. They also assist larger developers who can use the credits directly. These tax credits can bridge the current gap between the cost of construction and the lease rates available to support construction.

New market tax credits can also be used for housing in the study area. When combined with HUD loan guarantees, new market tax credits can assist developers while HUD guarantees can lower the risk of local banks in issuing permanent loans.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs) can be used for providing housing to households at or below 60% of median income and provide either 4% or 8% credits. The median household income by household size is calculated every year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is not necessary for all units in a building or project to be affordable to receive the tax credit; the credit applies only to those units that are eligible. To receive the credit, the units must be kept affordable for fifteen years to receive ten years of tax credits.

14. Community Redevelopment Agency Funding

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) funding is available in East Winter Garden. The Winter Garden CRA is a public agency that was created by the City Commission in June of 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Florida Statutes. The CRA is charged with undertaking redevelopment functions in the specified community redevelopment district.

The Winter Garden CRA is funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Tax increment funds are derived from ad valorem property taxes. The CRA is not a taxing authority nor does it set millage rates or assess property. Tax increment funds come through existing taxing entities including the City of Winter Garden and Orange County.

When the CRA was created in 1992 the assessed value of the area was set as the base year tax base. Thereafter, the taxes from additional increases in property values are dedicated to the redevelopment agency. In each subsequent year, the Orange County Property Appraiser determines the taxable value of the area. The difference between the taxable value of the base year and the current year is calculated. This is referred to as the "increment". The increment is multiplied by the millage rate of each contributing taxing entity. Specifically, the City of Winter Garden and Orange County. The taxing entity remits 95 percent of increment to the CRA Trust Fund, however, the CRA sunsets in 2023.

15. Grants

Private grants from foundations are available through application by the City, community development corporations and other community oriented non-profit organizations. Finding grants can be daunting as there are literally thousands of foundations and grant givers; most organizations that rely upon such funding hire what is termed a "development specialist" to research grants and write proposals. Foundation grants are more commonly available for purposes such as greenspace preservation and parks development than for infrastructure development.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is one of the longest-running programs of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. CDBG funds can be used for local community development activities such as affordable housing, anti-poverty programs, and infrastructure development. CDBG funds are awarded annually. These funds should be sought to help make improvements in the East Winter Garden neighborhood.

PROMOTE EAST WINTER GARDEN

16. Promote the East Winter Garden Plan

Continuing to spread the word about this plan and successful initial projects is vital for implementation. A variety of media should be used: brochures, social media, websites, or television are some common methods. Promote the plan so that it will take on a life of its own and continue to work for East Winter Garden for years to come.

17. Celebrate East Winter Garden

It is important to celebrate Winter Garden's uniqueness and discover ways to promote East Winter Garden's strengths. With a high degree of community input in the charrette process, the message is clear that Winter Garden citizens are proud of their community. The East Winter Garden Plan should serve to fit all the pieces together to continue to make Winter Garden a first-rate town.

18. Tell the Community's History

East Winter Garden has a history of its own that should be told. From historic figures to local pioneers people should become away of their community's unique history and help to keep it alive. One example of this type of dedication is the Jack Hadley Black History Museum in Thomasville Georgia that highlights both local and broader historic events.

19. Continue the Community Feedback Loop

The local community should continue to have an on-going role in the renovation of East Winter Garden and its neighborhoods. The City has done an excellent job involving the community in the past. Typical community involvement measures such as newspaper articles and informational meetings sometimes, however, fail to involve enough people. Regular updates should be given to community church leaders and discussion groups should be created at each local church. The discussion groups would help guide City actions and would help spread the commitment to revitalization through direct participation. Often specific City Planners are assigned to neighborhoods in order to provide a reliable contact and staff champion.

20. Involve Local Kids

City programs for local schools to involve children and their parents can also be effective. A program for school children to explain East Winter Garden and its historical importance can be integrated with civics courses. By giving the children a voice the City also gives their busy parents a voice.

The local Boys & Girls Club is also a place where outreach can engage committed people who otherwise might not be involved. Presentations to Boys & Girls Clubs would reach a group of community activists who are usually too busy for public meetings but have often demonstrated their commitment through their involvement in helping children.



PLANS TAKE TIME

Let's not overpromise.

The plan isn't a promise, it is a framework for action. If one were to tally the total cost of every recommendation, rendering, and illustrative plan in this report it would far exceed the city's budget for many years. The plan is primarily concerned with inspiration. The field of Urban Planning has always recognized that funding follows inspiration.

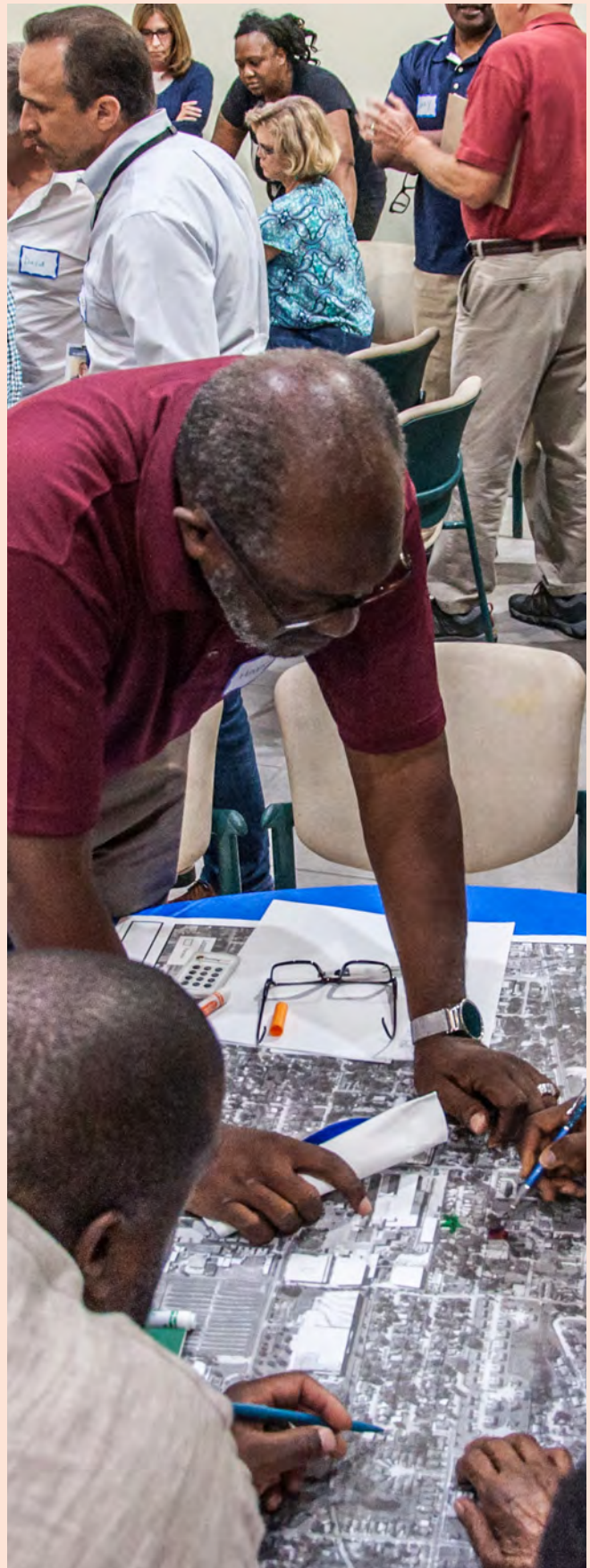
Downtown Winter Garden was a success story that took 30 years to tell. East Winter Garden has seen many years of neglect and it will take many years to restore the community. The decline was caused by macroeconomic and social forces at the regional, national, and global level. From the movement of economic activity away from historic Main Streets and to the Super Targets at the exurban fringes, to the racial conflict of recent American history, East Winter Garden faces challenges and restoration will only come slowly.

“Trees that are slow to grow bear the best fruit.”

~ Molière

Achieving community consensus may be the hardest challenge. The American political system, at every level, is based on competition, and competition is not possible without opposing sides. Common sense recommendations are turned into points of contention simply to help one candidate differentiate themselves from another. That said, every side wants to see progress and improvement is achieved, again, slowly.

Urban planning is an ambitious and optimistic endeavor. **Planning achievements often look modest compared to planning goals. At the same time, every great community has a plan.**



FLEXIBILITY IS KEY

Community plans, like one's own life plan, must be continually reevaluated as circumstances change.

The plan will not be implemented exactly as it is drawn. The world is complex. Urban planners routinely say "planning is a verb". Planning for the future involves an ongoing conversation as new officials are elected, new City staff are hired, new residents join the community, and the goals for the community evolves.

In the study of communities, we find that two types of actions have been crucial to achieving desirable outcomes: long-term planning and a willingness to reconsider one's values. Communities work to identify values and then let those values guide action. When a community's energies are guided by a plan, every new public and private investment is more likely add to quality of life and not detract from it. Always have a plan, but recognize that the conversation, the act of planning itself, is the most important part.

Let us not become weary in doing good, at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

~ Galatians 6:9



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The matrix below outlines many of the actions proposed by this plan. For each action, a brief description is provided along with the potential time frame, in which they may occur, and the potential partners for implementation.

Recommended Phasing:

Short-term = 1 - 5 years;

Mid-term = 6 - 12 years;

Long-term = 13 - 20+ years.

Actions	5 Big Idea	Description	Partners
Short-Term			
Adopt the East Winter Garden Plan	Support Initiatives Underway	Adopting the plan sends an important message to property owners and residents that the political decision makers support the plan.	City
Promote the East Winter Garden Plan	One Winter Garden	Continue to spread the word about this plan and successful initial projects. A variety of media should be used: brochures, social media, websites, or television are some common methods.	City, CRA, Community-Oriented Organizations
Extend the life of the CRA from an expiration date of 2023 to 2033	Support Initiatives Underway	The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) manages facade grants, micro-loan programs, and Brownfield Programs. The CRA is the main champion of this plan and will need more time to implement the plan.	City, CRA
Install Traffic Light at Intersection of Plant Street & 11th Street	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Add a new traffic light at the intersection of 11 th Street and Plant Street.	City, FDOT
Improve the Pedestrian Connection Between Maxey Drive & Maple Street	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Formalize and improve the pathways that school children use to get from the neighborhood to the elementary school.	City, Local Property Owners
Assist in Re-energizing and Revamping of the Community Gardens	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Support the improvement of an existing community garden near Maple Street.	City
Issue RFP for Mixed-Use Development at 9th Street & Plant Street	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Issue an request for Proposals from private developers to develop assembled land at the intersection or 9 th Street and Plant Street in a mixed-use, street-oriented manner.	City, Private Developers
Create Code Enforcement Strategy	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Identify and report code violations paired with providing relevant information on where help can be found to address the violation.	City, Local Property Owners, Community-Oriented Organizations
Continue annexation activities	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Disconnected fragments of County lands throughout the City create pockets of disuse, disrepair, neglect, and, sometimes, crime. Continue to annex in order to provide a continuity of safety and services.	County, City, CRA
Begin Streetscape Improvements: Infrastructure	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Assess areas that may need improved drainage.	County, City, CRA

Actions	5 Big Idea	Description	Partners
Mid-Term			
Begin Streetscape Improvements: Street Trees	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	A targeted tree planting campaign to plant new street trees within the right-of way or work with property owners to place trees on private property near the street edge.	City, CRA
Install a Complete Sidewalks & Crosswalks on 9th Street	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Install a sidewalk along one side of 9 th Street between Plant Street and Story Road as well as highly visible crosswalks at key intersections.	City
Investigate the extension of a Pedestrian Connection from Maple Street to Story Road	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	An extension of the pedestrian path along 11 th Street to Story Road would provide both with connections to the transit corridor.	City
Begin Streetscape Improvements: Sidewalks	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Create a plan to repair existing sidewalks.	County, City, CRA, DOT
Begin Streetscape Improvements: Infrastructure	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Begin to make drainage improvements as possible.	County, City, CRA, DOT
Implement Small Intersection Roundabout Pilot Program	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Select one location, potentially along Bay Street, to pilot/demonstrate this traffic calming device.	City, CRA, DOT
Redesign Plant Street & 10th Street Intersection with a Central Green	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	The intersections of Plant Street with 10 th Street and North Street can be fixed by reconnecting the streets. The resulting triangle could become a proud public space that encourages new development.	City, FDOT
Construct Mixed-Use Development at 9th Street & Plant Street	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Select a developer for the site that agrees to meet the City's high standards and work through the development of the site.	City, Private Developers
Update the Code for East Winter Garden	One Winter Garden	Amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to include new zoning districts and regulations that will guide the appropriate redevelopment of the area.	City
Further Develop the Existing Plan for Development Adjacent to Highway 429	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Amend the plan to eliminate dead-end streets and increase buildings on the fronting the streets.	City, Local Property Owners, Private Developers
Develop an Infill Development Strategy	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Target vacant, under-utilized or "soft" properties that detract from the quality of neighborhood. Inventory and map the locations of vacant land and derelict buildings and then target new users and promote the inventoried opportunities to new investors.	City, CRA, Local Property Owners, Community-Oriented Organizations
Renovate existing buildings on Center Street & 10th Street	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Begin the revitalization of the historic commercial core of East Winter Garden by renovating existing commercial and residential structures.	Private Developers, Local Property Owners, Community-Oriented Organizations
Develop a Parking Strategy	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Identify sites for shared parking and provide parking facilities located mid-block, hidden from view.	City, CRA, Local Property Owners
Plan One Courtyard Project	Increase Affordable Housing Options	Identify a location for a courtyard housing project and work with community partners to advance it through planning, design, and construction.	City, Local Property Owners, Community-Oriented Organizations
Begin Residential Infill	Increase Affordable Housing Options	Construct affordable single and multifamily homes.	City, Community-Oriented Organizations

Actions	5 Big Idea	Description	Partners
Long-Term			
Streetscape Improvements: Sidewalks	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Identify key streets to target new sidewalks. Begin process of identifying ROW or acquiring new ROW to allow installation of Sidewalks on at least one side of the street.	City, CRA
Install Sidewalks & Crosswalks on 9th Street	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Install sidewalks along both sides of 9 th Street between Plant Street and Story Road as well as highly visible crosswalks at all intersections.	City
Establish Bike Path along 9th Street	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Add a new link to the West Orange Trail through the City and a connection between the East Winter Garden neighborhood and new elementary school.	City
Establish Additional Bike Path Connections	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Extend bike paths and trails into the neighborhood along Center and/or Bay Streets to better connect the neighborhood to the West Orange Trail, Historic Downtown District, and the rest of the City.	City
Streetscape Improvements: Sidewalks	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Once sufficient ROW is acquired, begin implementation of adding new sidewalks to key streets.	City, CRA
Establish Additional Bike Path Connections	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Extend bike paths and trails into the neighborhood along Center and/or Bay Streets to better connect the neighborhood to the West Orange Trail, Downtown, and the rest of the City.	City
Redevelop Around New Central Green	One Winter Garden	City-owned property to the south and east of the new public green can be redeveloped to include locally owned businesses and affordable housing.	City, CRA, Local Property Owners, Private Developers
Expand Small Intersection Roundabout Program	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	If the pilot program is successful, expand the use of small intersection roundabouts throughout the neighborhood where needed.	City, CRA
Construct New Playfields	Improve Health & Recreation, Safety & Security	Construct new public playfields and parking, on City owned land as identified by the plan.	City
Incentivise new Mixed Use & Commercial Buildings on Center Street at 10th Street	Add New Destinations within Walking & Biking Distance	Revise regulations and streamline approvals to provide new one and two-story commercial buildings on Center Street.	Local Property Owners, Private Developers
Continue Residential Infill for a Mix of Housing Types	Increase Affordable Housing Options	Expand upon the residential infill projects by not-for-profits by also encouraging local property owners and private developers to develop parcels.	City, Private Developers, Local Property Owners, Community-Oriented Organizations