

**EAST LAKE PARKER / WEST NORTH COMBEE
AREAWIDE PLAN**



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all of the project partners including the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Combee Area Revitalization Effort (CARE), Polk County, the City of Lakeland, the catalyst site property owners John A. Causey Revocable Trust and Leon Sikes Jr., residents, business community members, and stakeholders that contributed to the preparation of this document.

Project Partners



Central Florida Regional Planning Council

John A. Causey Revocable Trust and Leon Sikes, Jr.



City of Lakeland



Polk County



Combee Area Revitalization Effort (C.A.R.E., Inc.)

Community Residents and Business Owners

Prepared by:



Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Project funding provided by:



United States Environmental Protection Agency

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Introduction



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Introduction

Purpose of the Areawide Plan

The purpose of this Brownfields Areawide Plan is to develop a vision, integrate community ideas and priorities, and identify infrastructure needs. It recognizes the development limitations due in part to properties considered to be brownfields while creating specific strategies to make revitalization a reality. This Plan sets out the goals and policy statements to address issues and concerns raised by the East Lake Parker/West North Combee community.

The East Lake Parker/West North Combee Areawide Plan (Plan) was made possible by a Brownfields Areawide Planning Grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This plan provides a foundation for future assessment, cleanup and reuse of brownfields properties to promote areawide revitalization and economic development. Areawide planning encourages community-based involvement in overall neighborhood revitalization.

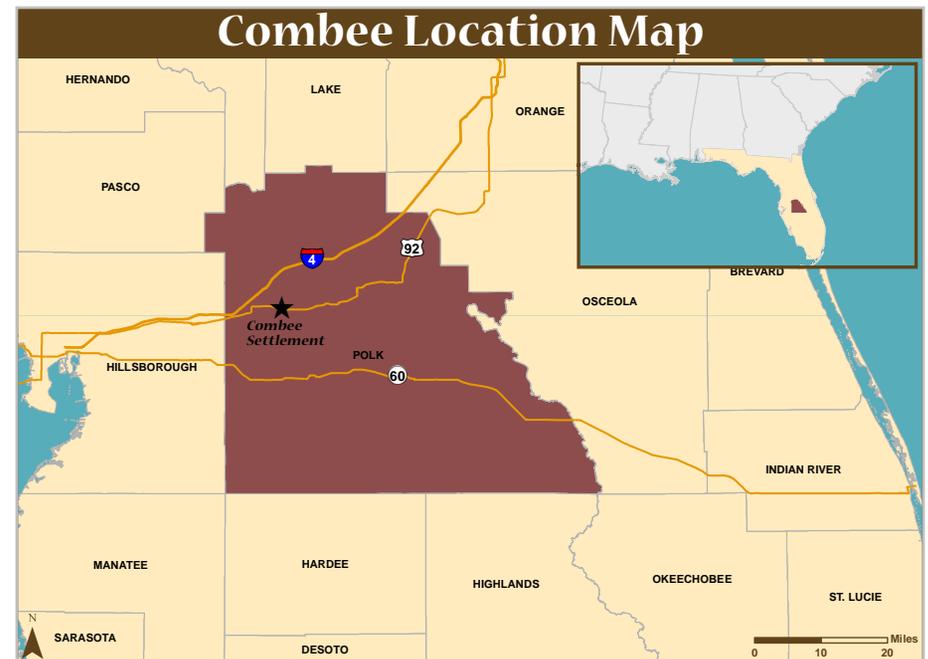
Project Partners

The Plan was developed through extensive coordination and collaboration with the community, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Polk County, the City of Lakeland, the Combee Area Revitalization Effort (CARE), the John A. Causey Revocable Trust and Leon Sikes, Jr., and residents, business owners and stakeholders.

East Lake Parker/West North Combee Area

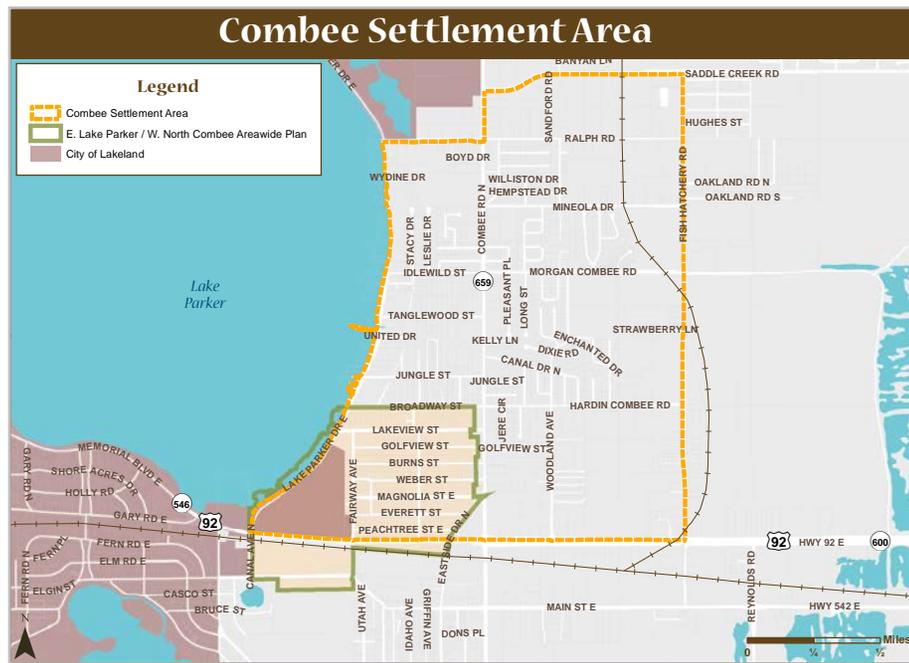
Location and History

The project study area is located in central Florida on the southeast side of Lake Parker, partially within the corporate limits of the City of Lakeland and within unincorporated Polk County. This area of Florida is located between Tampa and Orlando and is south of the Interstate-4 east/west corridor.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Shortly after Polk County, Florida was established on February 8, 1861, Elbert Combee settled the land east of Lake Parker, to later be known as the Combee Settlement. The area, just over two square miles East of Lakeland is home to 5,577 residents according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. The Combee Settlement, a Census-Designated Place in Polk County, Florida, is an area bounded by Lake Parker, Saddle Creek Road, Saddle Creek Park, and U.S. Highway 92 East.



The East Lake Parker/West North Combee neighborhood (Plan Area) is located in the southwest area of the Combee Settlement.

Plan Area

The East Lake Parker/West North Combee neighborhood is the basis of this Plan and is referred to as the Plan Area. The Plan Area includes approximately 272 acres and has a population of approximately 1,262 persons. The Plan Area is blighted with light and heavy industrial past and present uses along its southern boundary which is the Memorial Boulevard (US 92) corridor.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Community Input: “It takes a Community”

This Plan has been developed through a series of community workshops, community and neighborhood meetings, and public input received at several public gatherings and events during a 24-month period. Each community workshop progressively built upon and confirmed information expressed by community members. In addition, project partners were consulted throughout the development of the Plan.



Community input during a breakout section at the Summer 2014 workshop

Community Workshop: Summer 2014

During this workshop, a presentation of the overall areawide planning process was shared and workshop participants provided input on the

following topics:

- What the community likes about the area.
- Existing Conditions and Needs in the Area.
- Ideas for the Catalyst Site.
- An area motto to identify a positive message for the Area.

Community Workshop: Fall 2014

During this workshop a presentation summarizing input from the Summer 2014 Community Workshop was provided including concepts for the 57 acre catalyst site. “Brownfields” were also defined and discussed.



Community input during a breakout section at the Fall 2014 workshop

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

During breakout group sessions, workshop attendees:

- Identified infrastructure priorities for the area.
- Discussed roadway concepts to accommodate sidewalks, street lighting and traffic calming.
- Further refined concepts for the catalyst site.
- Voted on the motto for the community:
“Roots from Yesterday, Branches for Tomorrow”
- The logo below was also approved by the community.



Logo and motto for the East Lake Parker/West North Combee Area

Neighborhood Meeting: Spring 2015

A neighborhood meeting was held in the Spring of 2015 in which both representatives from Polk County Code Enforcement and the Polk County Sheriff's Office addressed concerns the community shared.

Code Enforcement

A Polk County Code Enforcement Officer spoke to the community about property maintenance and the relationship to crime prevention. Topics also included code enforcement violations related to animals, junk, trash, vehicles, and overgrown properties.

Polk County Code Enforcement

Report Code Violations Online!
www.polk-county.net/boccsite/Departments/Code-Enforcement

Code Enforcement enforces Polk County's Land Development Code and other land use-related ordinances and codes.

This section provides a comprehensive inspection system to handle nuisances that include inoperable vehicles, rat infestations, trash on lots, high weeds on vacant lands and unsanitary conditions. Code Enforcement also oversees the enforcement of Polk County's sign code.

Code violation cases that are not resolved are scheduled to appear before the special magistrate. Appeals of the special magistrate's decisions are heard before the appellate special magistrate.

Contact the Code Enforcement Department

Autumn Fenton, Administrator
Phone: (863) 534-6054
Toll Free: (800) 780-5346
AutumnFenton@polk-county.net

Street Address
330 W. Church St., Bartow, FL 33830

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 9005, Drawer CS03, Bartow, FL 33831-9005

Office Hours of Operation
Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Polk County Code Enforcement information



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Law Enforcement

Representatives of the Polk County Sheriff's Office spoke to the community about crime in the area and crime prevention. Information was provided regarding two crime prevention programs facilitated through the Sheriff's Office including:

- Neighborhood Watch
- Citizen's Assisted Patrol

A Sheriff's Officer was also available to discuss specific concerns residents had relating to crime in the area. The attendees were encouraged to be vigilant about crime prevention by being observant and getting to know their neighbors.



An officer from the Polk County Sheriff's Office discusses crime prevention

Community Workshop: June 2015

During this workshop, the emerging concept plan for the catalyst site was presented in addition to key concepts that may take the community's vision to reality. During breakout groups, workshop attendees discussed changes to the catalyst concept plan and action strategies to:

- Improve property maintenance.
- Reduce crime.
- Improve pedestrian safety.
- Enhance roadway beautification efforts.
- Work toward a better overall future for the area.

Workshop attendees also voted on infrastructure priorities.



Community engagement during the June 2015 workshop

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Combee Area Revitalization Effort (CARE)

Meetings: Met throughout project – monthly

The Combee Area Revitalization Effort (C.A.R.E.) is a community group comprised of several neighborhoods in the Combee Settlement Area that meet monthly. C.A.R.E. is dedicated to making the Combee Settlement a safer, cleaner place to live while working in conjunction with the Polk County Sheriff's Department and other county government offices. The group speaks on behalf of the wishes and needs of the residents of the Combee Settlement on matters affecting its residents.

As a 501(c)4 organization, C.A.R.E. has participated in many activities to better the community in the last 12 years including Adopt-A-Road, Adopt-A-Lake, Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Trail, Keep Polk County Beautiful, The Great American Clean-up, and Paint Your Heart Out. Through the efforts of C.A.R.E. a pavilion in a local park was built, street lights and sidewalks were installed, and grant funding was received to purchase a trailer for FEMA Community Emergency Response Team activities.

The staff of the Central Florida Regional Planning Council attended the group's monthly meetings during the course of the project to provide updates and receive feedback on Plan concepts and priorities. C.A.R.E. served as a vital steering group in the development of the Plan.

Information on the activities of C.A.R.E. may be found at <https://www.facebook.com/CombeeCARE>.



Appreciation during a C.A.R.E. meeting

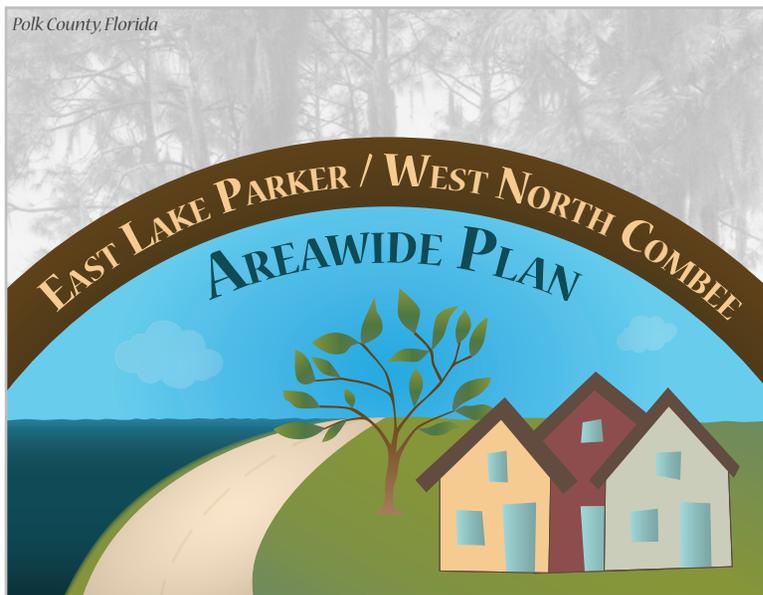


C.A.R.E. Meeting April 11, 2015

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Community Open House and Workshop: September 2015

This workshop was the final community meeting to develop the Plan. The draft plan was brought forward for community input. During the workshop an overview was given which showed how community input was incorporated into the Plan. Based on input received, edits were made before the final publication of the Plan.



Cover page of the East Lake Parker/West North Combee Areawide Plan that was presented at the September workshop

At this workshop, the community was asked the following questions for further Plan implementation.

- Do you think the community would benefit from a workshop on **Property Maintenance** and resources that are available to residents and business owners?
- Do you think the community would benefit from a workshop on **Area Beautification** and resources that are available to residents and business owners?
- Do you think the community would benefit from a workshop on **Crime Prevention** and resources that are available to residents and business owners?

For each question, the majority of respondents (90 percent or greater) voted "Yes". The community plans to hold workshops on these topics in the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2016.



Community Meeting September 24, 2015

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Identified Needs and Assets

Through the community workshops and meetings, input received included identification of what people like best about the East Lake Parker/West North Combee neighborhood and what they would like to see in the future to address community needs.

The Community likes this area because:

- The people are great neighbors.
- Country-like, small community atmosphere.
- Churches.
- Diversity of population.
- No homeowner association restrictions.
- Shopping within walking distance.
- Location: I-4/ Tampa / Orlando.

The Community describes the area as:

- Lots of history.
- Neighborhood cohesiveness.
- There used to be pride of ownership.
- In need of revitalization, deteriorating area.
- Need to restore former glory to Combee.
- Isolated residential from the craziness of SR 659 (Combee Road).

The East Lake Parker/West North Combee area needs:

- Greater walkability and pedestrian safety through sidewalks, bikeways, street lighting, traffic calming.
- Sidewalk development and improvement.
- Street lighting.
- Traffic calming.
- Crime reduction.
- Develop part of the catalyst site with a place for the community – community center, park.
- Roadway and business beautification.
- Property maintenance to be enforced.



Bicyclist crosses US 92, August 2015

Existing Conditions



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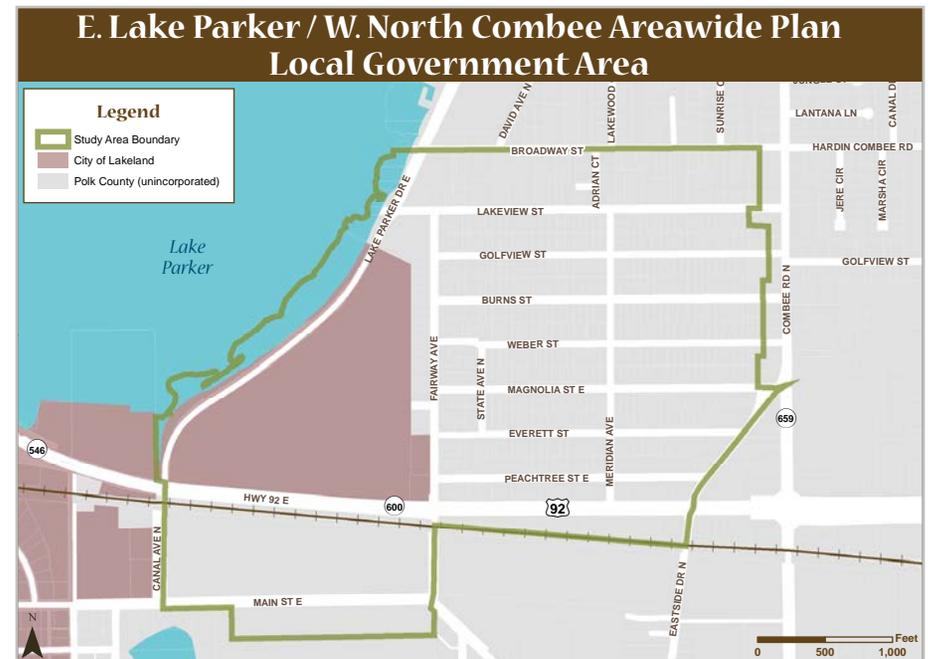
Existing Conditions

Location

The East Lake Parker/West North Combee area is an approximately 272 acre neighborhood located on the southeast shore of Lake Parker in Polk County, Florida. The area is bound to the north by Broadway Street and to the south mainly by the Memorial Boulevard (US 92) corridor and the railroad tracks.

The area extends west to the east shore of Lake Parker and to the east to Eastside Drive as well as just west of SR 659 (Combee Road). Most of the area is developed and in need of redevelopment.

A 57-acre property referred to as the catalyst site, is located within the corporate limits of the City of Lakeland. The majority of the Plan area is located in unincorporated Polk County.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan



View of Lake Parker from East Lake Parker Drive

The East Lake Parker/West North Combee neighborhood is a blighted area with light and heavy industrial past and present uses along its southern boundary, the US 92 corridor. The majority of the Plan area is located within the Combee Settlement which is an economically depressed community with higher unemployment, lower income, and lower educational attainment than Polk County, the State of Florida, or the nation. According to the US Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey estimates, the unemployment rate is 30.6 percent. Over 25 percent of the population is living in poverty. Of residents aged 25 or older, only 26.8 percent hold a high school diploma and only 8.8 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. Unemployment, low income, low educational attainment, and pervasive poverty combine to make the Plan area an area of critical economic concern.

	Combee*	Polk County	Florida	United States
Unemployment Rate	30.6%	12.6%	11.8%	9.7%
Poverty Rate	25.9%	18.2%	16.3%	15.4%
Percent Minority	18.3%	21.1%	23.7%	26.0%
Per Capita Income (2009-2013)	\$14,801	\$21,285	\$26,236	\$28,155
Median Household Income (2009-2013)	\$30,000	\$43,946	\$46,956	\$53,046
Housing Vacancy Rate	13.9%	21.8%	20.5%	12.5%
Households without a vehicle	13.6%	6.7%	7.0%	9.1%
Adults age 25+ with a BA degree or higher	8.8%	18.1%	26.4%	28.8%
Adults age 25+ with no high school diploma	26.8%	17.6%	12.9%	14.0%
Speak English "less than very well"	1.8%	7.8%	11.7%	8.6%
Households receiving food stamps	41.0%	14.6%	13.3%	12.4%

*Combee Settlement/E. Lake Parker & W. North Combee Neighborhood

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, County Business Patterns, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Census of Governments, US Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey



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The housing stock in the Plan area was mostly constructed prior to 1970. An estimated 13.9 percent of the housing units in the area are vacant. Many vacant properties have fallen into disrepair.



An abandoned, overgrown property in the Plan area

Between 2009 and 2013, the homeownership rate was 61.6 percent leaving nearly 40 percent of the residential properties as rental properties. Many of the resident homeowners expressed concerns about the poor condition of the rental properties as many are not maintained and have overgrown lawns, junk in yards and other property maintenance issues. During the community workshops, residents consistently discussed the negative impacts of the abandoned and neglected rental properties in the area.



An abandoned home in the Plan area

Many of the open Polk County Code Enforcement cases are located in the Plan area and specific to junk, debris and overgrown lot violations. The majority of cases have been open for more than 12 months.



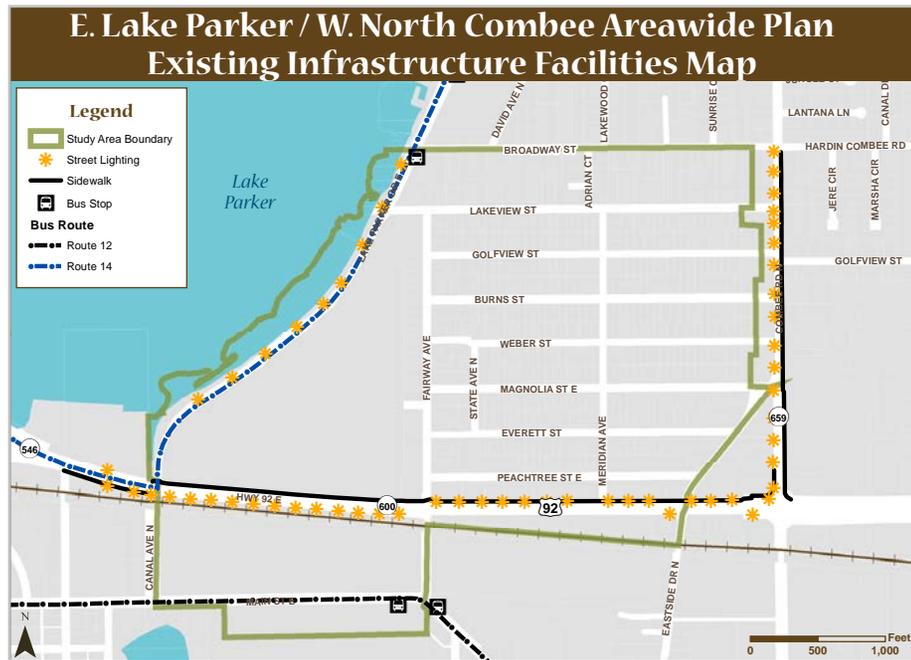
A deteriorating property in the Plan area

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Infrastructure Conditions

Transportation and Pedestrian Conditions

Approximately 13.6 percent of the households in the Plan area do not have access to an automobile and are left to other means including walking, riding a bicycle and using available public transit. There are limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Plan area. The Existing Infrastructure Facilities Map indicates there are sidewalks on the east side of Combee Road and on the north side of US 92. The majority of roads in the Plan area do not have sidewalks. On many streets there is only a roadway shoulder or ditches on which to walk or ride a bike.



Sidewalk conditions on the south side of US 92 are shown in the following photos. Although a striped bike lane is provided, there is not an area for pedestrians.



Pedestrian facility conditions on the south side of US 92

The conditions cause difficulties for the residents, and become inaccessible to individuals with disabilities.

In addition to a lack of sidewalks, the residents are concerned with traffic traveling at high speeds, especially on residential streets including Broadway Avenue and Fairway Avenue.



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Walking or riding a bicycle at night presents additional challenges as most streets, with the exception of Combee Road and US 92, lack street lighting.

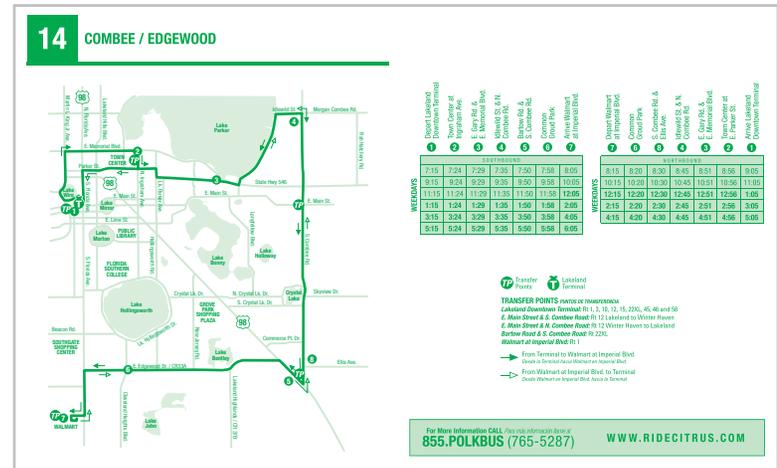
One of the challenges on Combee Road and other local roads in the Plan area is that there is limited right of way in which improvements can be made.



Mobility conditions on Combee Road (SR 659)

Transit Services

There is limited transit service to the project area. The East Lake Parker/ West North Combee area is served by the #14 Citrus Connection bus. There is one bus stop located north of the Plan area at Combee Road and Idlewild Road/Morgan Combee Road and a second bus stop located just south of the Plan area at US 92 and Main Street. Two (2) hour headways (very low service) is provided. There are no longer transit stops on East Lake Parker Drive and therefore residents must walk a significant distance to use the transit system.



Citrus Connection – Route #14 Map

There are no bus shelters at either of the two stops located in proximity to the Plan area. Riders are left to wait leaning against a bus stop sign or on a bench near the roadway pavement; many months in rainy conditions.



Bus stops on Combee Road (SR 659)

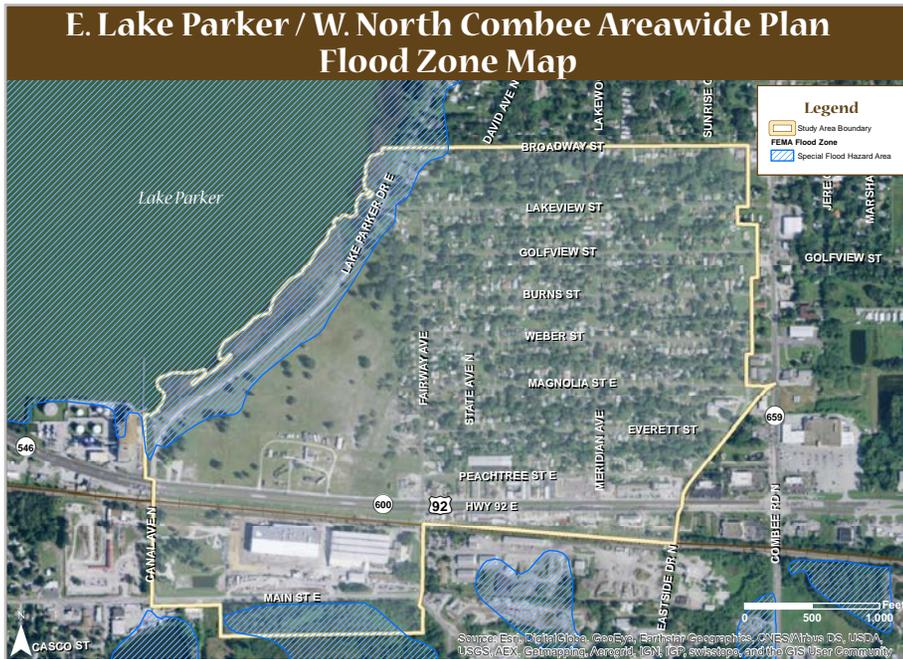
Photos provided by the Polk Transportation Planning Organization



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Drainage

The Flood Zone Map reflects the current floodplain conditions on and near the East Lake Parker/West North Combee area, per the effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Polk County, Florida. The floodplain information is based on FEMA 2000 data, prepared by the Polk County GIS/IT Division and Polk County Office of Planning and Development.



As shown by the blue-hatched area on the Flood Zone Map, the eastern shoreline of Lake Parker (also being the western perimeter of the study area) is within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA); the area of highest flooding concern for flood insurance and safety purposes. The extent of the encroachment of the SFHA is between approximately 40-feet and 150-feet along the western edge of the study area. There is also a portion of SFHA identified on the southern perimeter of the study area, south of East Main Street on the JBT Corporation property south of US 92.

Although not delineated within a SFHA, some flooding conditions have been identified in adjacent areas of the community and throughout the study area. It's anticipated that these flooding conditions are a result of old, substandard stormwater infrastructure facilities. Efforts have been made to improve the stormwater drainage conditions in the area as the past drainage system was at or above capacity resulting in annual flooding.

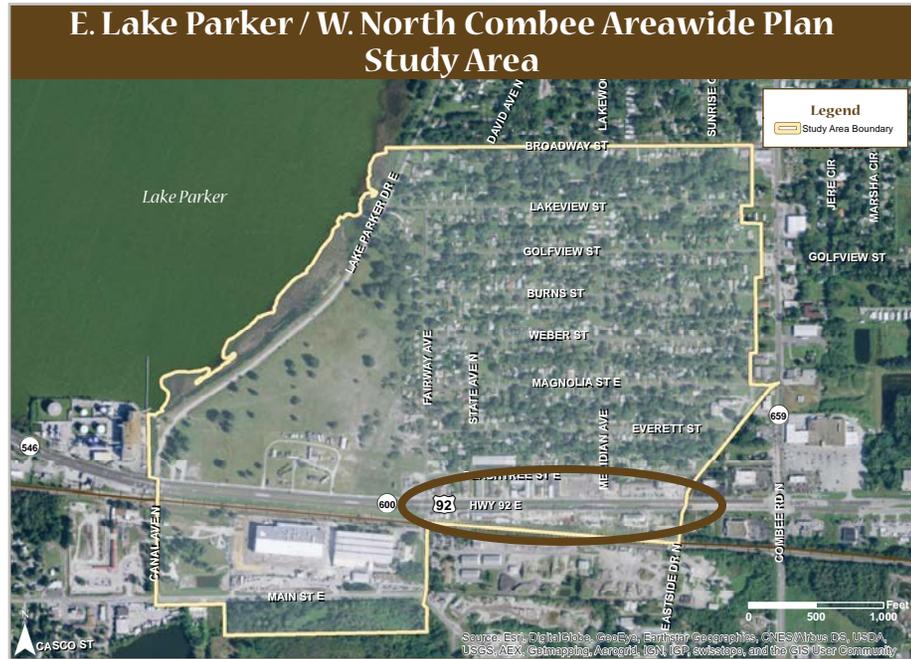
While the information included here is the most current and up-to-date available, it is important to note that Polk County is undergoing an update of its FIRMs. The updated FIRMs are expected to be adopted in 2016. As local government works to adopt the updated FIRMs and future development occurs within the community, potential floodplain changes and flooding conditions should be further reviewed.



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US 92 (Memorial Boulevard) Corridor

The US 92 corridor forms the southern Plan area and has several sites in which the recorded uses are associated with severe localized pollution including a gas station and three auto repair shops. There are also several vacant properties including a former auto body shop. The US 92 corridor is outlined in red on the Study Area map.



Existing uses are further outlined on the Existing Land Uses and Property Ownership map indicating commercial and industrial uses in the corridor.



The photos below are of an abandoned commercial/industrial site and a repair facility located between US 92 and Peachtree Street.



Uses between US 92 and Peachtree Street



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Catalyst Site

The goal of the catalyst site is to foster development that will be an economic stimulus to the community. Much of the dialog in the workshops centered around the future of the catalyst site.

The site selected as the catalyst is an approximately 57 acre property located on the southeast shore of Lake Parker, directly north of US 92 and east of the Larsen Power Plant. The catalyst site is located in the City of Lakeland. The potential brownfields sites located to the east in the planning area are within unincorporated Polk County.



Circa 1920s: Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Lakeland Public Library

The catalyst site, currently a pasture, was home to the Lakeland Country Club and Golf Course established in the early 1920's as one of Lakeland's

first Golf Courses. The area was a popular spot for recreation, boating, and fishing. In 1924, the course hosted a golf tournament that featured some of the world's best known professional and amateur golfers of the time, including Bobby Jones, Gene Sarazen, Tommy Armour, and Cyril Walker.



Looking east into the catalyst site

The south portion of the catalyst site along US 92 is occupied by a mobile home and storage shed business. Two advertising billboards are located in the southwest corner and a liquor store is located at the southeast corner of the property at US 92 and Fairway Avenue. The property is surrounded by a mix of industrial and power plant uses to the west, some commercial uses to the southeast and the East Lake Parker/West North Combee neighborhood to the east.

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Brownfields

The term “brownfield site” means real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Contaminants can include oil or gas placed there through a leaking underground storage tank or a historical use which dumped contaminant material on-site. The presence of hazardous materials can require additional costs to clean and remediate the site prior to development or redevelopment of the property that serves as a detriment to development.

A search of national environmental records indicates several properties along the US 92 corridor are brownfields.

Opportunities, Challenges and Assets

In the community’s review of existing conditions, the following opportunities, challenges and assets were identified.

Opportunities include:

- Proximity to major transportation corridors.
- The catalyst site.
- Recent improvements to the JBT Corporation facilities.
- Brownfield properties along the US 92 corridor offer redevelopment potential.

Challenges include:

- Disinvestment in the area.
- Continued decline of homeownership in the area.
- Deficient and nonexistent infrastructure including sidewalks, bike lanes, and streetlights to support an automobile deficient community.
- Lack of opportunities for the community’s youth including a community center.

Assets include:

- The community residents and business owners.
- The JBT Corporation’s reinvestment in the area as they provide a multi-million dollar renovation and expansion to their existing facility.
- US 92 corridor.
- Catalyst site.
- Community organizations including C.A.R.E. and neighborhood churches.



Community Vision



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Community Vision

The East Lake Parker/West North Combee Areawide Plan is a document that:

- Provides a vision by integrating community ideas and priorities, and identifying infrastructure needs.
- Recognizes development limitations due partially to properties considered brownfields while creating specific strategies to make revitalization a reality.
- Provides a foundation for future assessment, cleanup and reuse of brownfields properties to promote areawide revitalization and economic development.



Existing Conditions near Combee Neighborhood

Overview

The Plan brings the improvements to the area through a viable concept for the catalyst site on the west side of the community. The Plan also brings forth redevelopment priorities through priority brownfield sites along the US 92 corridor from Fairway Avenue to Combee Road. Infrastructure improvements and priorities are provided and include proposed “complete street” treatments to greatly improve the pedestrian and bicycle safety in the area.

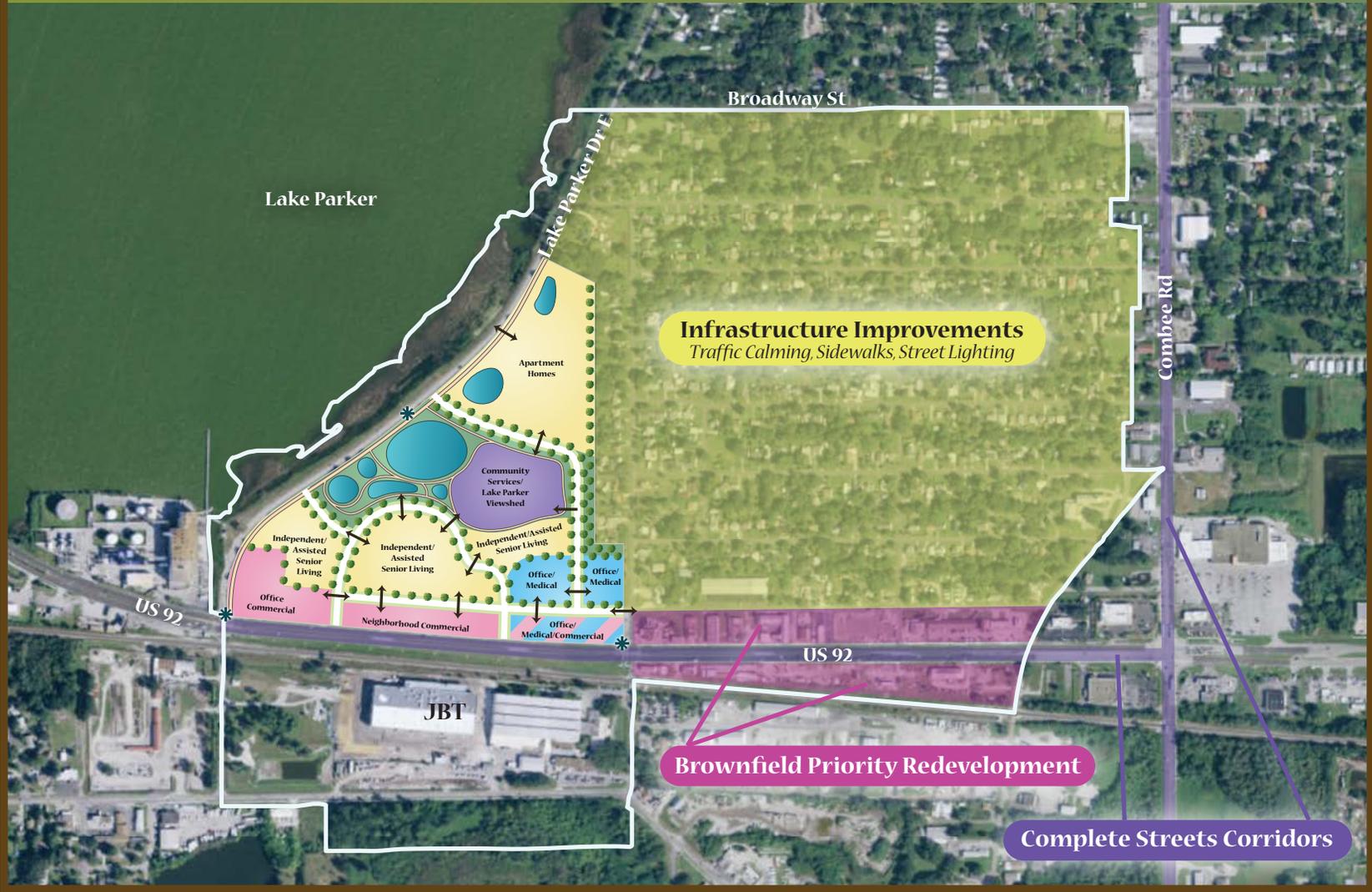
Four main components for area improvements and revitalization are provided:

1. Infrastructure Improvements and Priorities.
2. Complete Street Corridors (Combee Road and US 92).
3. Brownfields Priority Redevelopment along the north side of the US 92 Corridor.
4. Catalyst Site Concept Plan.

The East Lake Parker/West North Combee Areawide Plan map is shown and highlights these four components. The four components are discussed in detail in the following sections.

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E. LAKE PARKER / W. NORTH COMBEE AREAWIDE PLAN



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Infrastructure Improvements and Priorities

Through community workshops, participants first identified their greatest concerns regarding infrastructure and then prioritized the areas in greatest need of the improvements. Infrastructure priorities include:

- Traffic Calming
- Sidewalks
- Street Lighting

Traffic Calming

The Traffic Calming Priorities map reflects the community's priorities for slowing traffic down on residential streets.

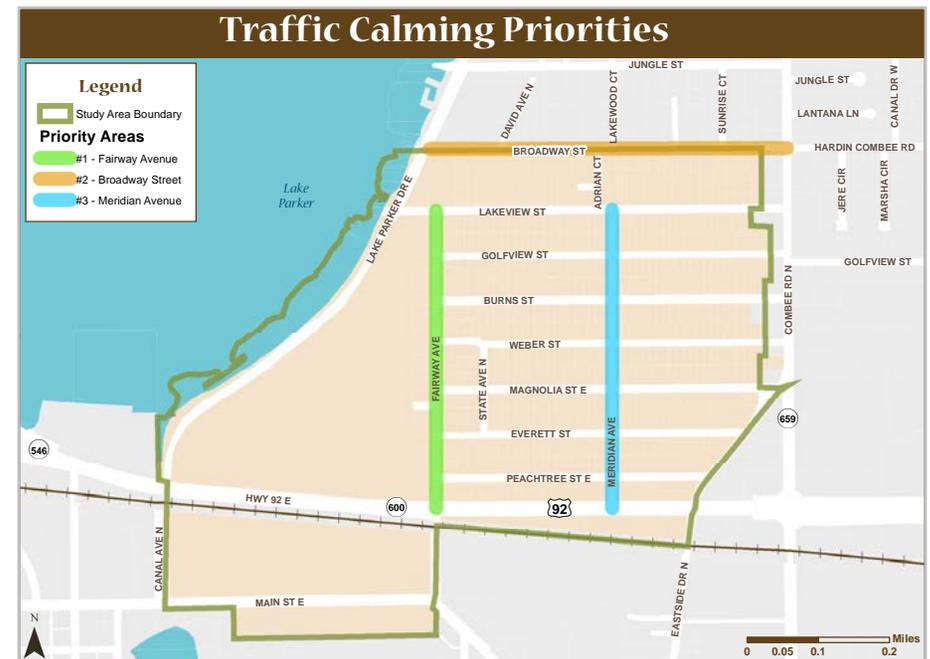


Neighborhood speed bump example for traffic calming

The community's traffic calming priorities include:

1. Fairway Avenue
2. Broadway Street
3. Meridian Avenue

The Polk County Transportation Department has been working with the residents on Fairway Avenue as part of the development of the Plan. Because there is limited right-of-way on the local residential streets in the Plan area, speed bumps are the most cost effective and immediate option for traffic calming. However, through an official petition of property owners for approval of speed bumps, the property owners on Fairway Avenue voted against this traffic calming measure.

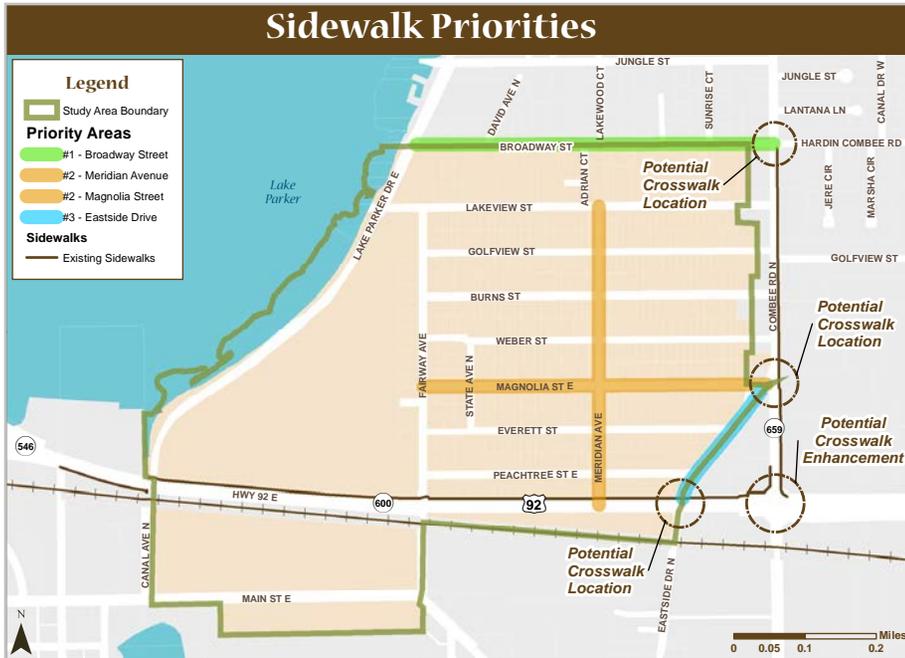


During the community workshops, the option of converting some of the streets to one-way was proposed. The community members were divided in their support for such a concept.

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Sidewalks

The Sidewalk Priorities map below reflects the community's priorities for sidewalk installation on local residential streets.



The community's sidewalk priorities include:

1. Broadway Street
2. Magnolia Avenue
2. Meridian Avenue
3. Eastside Drive

The community determined that Magnolia Street and Meridian Avenue are equally important and both should be the #2 priority. School children traverse both roads to reach their school bus stops on Meridian Avenue. The community also identified areas in need of crosswalks or improved crosswalks. These crosswalk locations include:

- Combee Road at Broadway Street
- Combee Road at Magnolia Street
- Combee Road at US 92
- US 92 at Eastside Drive



Neighborhood sidewalk example

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Street Lights

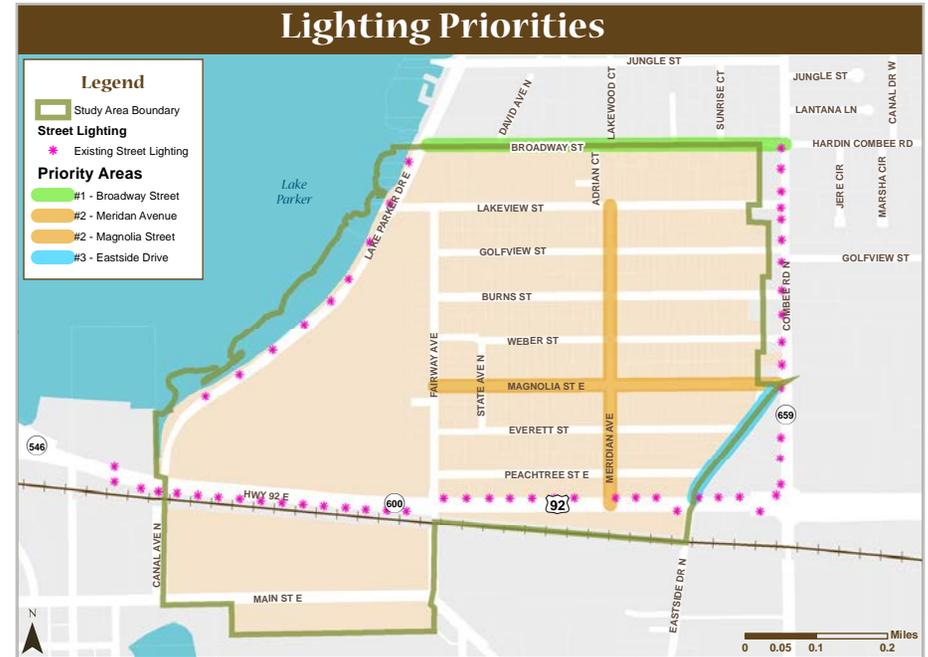
Street lights are provided on East Lake Parker Drive, Combee Road, and US 92. There are not street lights on the local residential streets in the area. The Street Lighting map reflects the community's priorities for street lighting installation.

The community's street light priorities include:

1. Broadway Street
2. Magnolia Avenue
2. Meridian Avenue
3. Eastside Drive



Residential Street Light Example



The street light priorities are consistent with the sidewalk priorities.

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Complete Street Concepts – Combee Road, US 92

Both Combee Road and US 92 are challenged as major roadways that carry significant amounts of traffic including trucks while also serving a pedestrian and bicycle dependent neighborhood population. One way to address this challenge is looking at a design program referred to as “Complete Streets”. A main goal of the community is to have residential areas connected and well-served by sidewalks and trails for use by people of all ages and mobility levels.

Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access and mobility for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets may look different and contain different elements depending on the location. Complete Streets policies require all road construction and improvement projects to begin by evaluating how the right-of-way serves all who use it.

In the Plan area, the concept of Complete Streets goes beyond safety, tying in with issues of public health, equity, aesthetics, economic development, environmental protection, and livability, all within a specific community context.

A complete street may include:

- Sidewalks
- Bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders)
- Special bus lanes
- Comfortable and accessible public transportation stops
- Frequent and safe crossing opportunities
- Median islands
- Accessible pedestrian signals
- Curb extensions
- Narrower travel lanes
- Roundabouts

Combee Road

A “before” (photograph) and an “after” (rendering) of the intersection of Combee Road and Golfview Street, looking south are provided. The photograph reveals some of the typical existing conditions that are found throughout the Combee Road corridor, including lack of full-facility sidewalks and designated bicycle lanes, presence of stormwater drainage infrastructure within shoulder areas (impeding safe bicycle travel), and lack of clear area for pedestrian movement and roadway crossings. Essentially, most of the Combee Road corridor was developed with the automobile as the priority and thereby limiting transportation choices. This made walking, bicycling, and taking public transit inconvenient, unattractive, and too often, dangerous.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

The rendering illustrates several of the development features and conditions that are conducive of a Complete Street including:

- Intersection improvements for improved safety for all users, facilitating predictable movement by all modes;
- A pedestrian-oriented design which minimizes conflict with other modes and vehicle traffic;
- A facility which provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curbs and ramps;
- Visually appealing buffers (i.e., the wall and landscaping surrounding the power substation); and
- Well-designed crosswalks which provide a safe, pedestrian-friendly walking environment.

Changing roadway policies to routinely include the needs of people on foot, public transportation, and bicycles can make walking, riding bicycles, and accessing and using public transit safer and easier. People of all ages and abilities are able to have more options when traveling to work, to school, to the grocery store, and for other travel purposes. Making these travel choices more convenient, attractive, and safe means people do not need to rely solely on automobiles.



Combee Road at Golfview Street (Before)



Combee Road at Golfview Street (After)

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

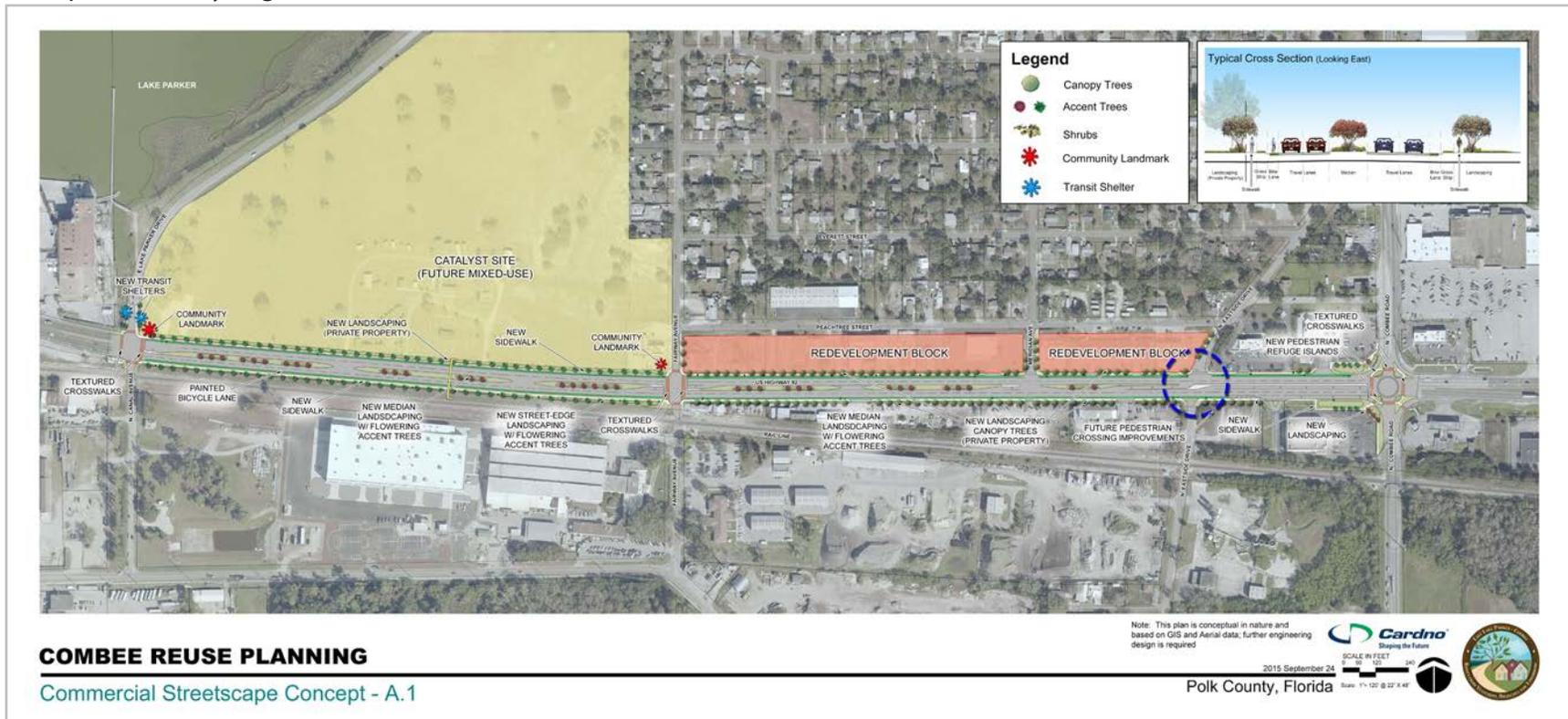
US 92

The Complete Streets concept was also applied to the US 92 corridor from East Lake Parker Drive to Combee Road. Two concept options for US 92 are provided. Concepts A.1 and B.1 provide the following.

Concept A.1

- Landscape Medians with flowering accent trees and low ground cover planting beds.
- Landscaped Roadway Edges.

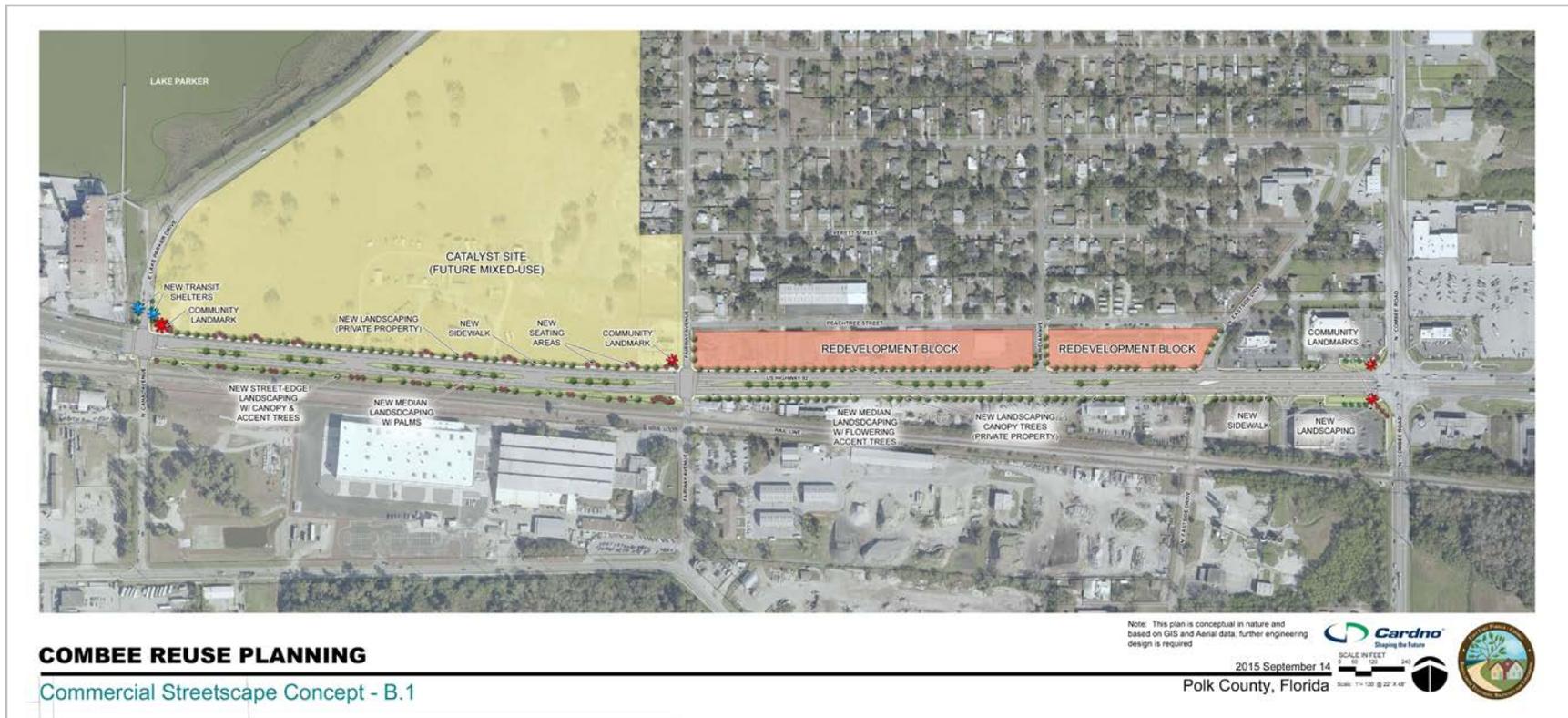
- New transit stops and shelters on E. Lake Parker Drive at US 92.
- New community landmark at E. Lake Parker Drive and Fairway Avenue.
- New sidewalk segments where missing on north side of US 92.
- New 5 foot wide sidewalk along south side of US 92.
- Textured roadway crossings.
- New pedestrian refuse islands at US 92 and Combee Road (shorten crossing distance for pedestrians due to large turning radii).



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Concept B.1

- Landscape medians with palms having low ground cover planting beds (similar to existing design on US 92 to the west).
- Landscaped roadway edges.
- New transit stops and shelters on E. Lake Parker Drive at US 92.
- New community landmark at E. Lake Parker Drive, Fairway Avenue, and Combee Road.
- New sidewalk segments where missing on north side of US 92.
- New 5 foot wide sidewalk along south side of US 92 only from Fairway Avenue to Combee Road (none proposed between US 92 and the railroad tracks in order to allow for more landscaping buffering).

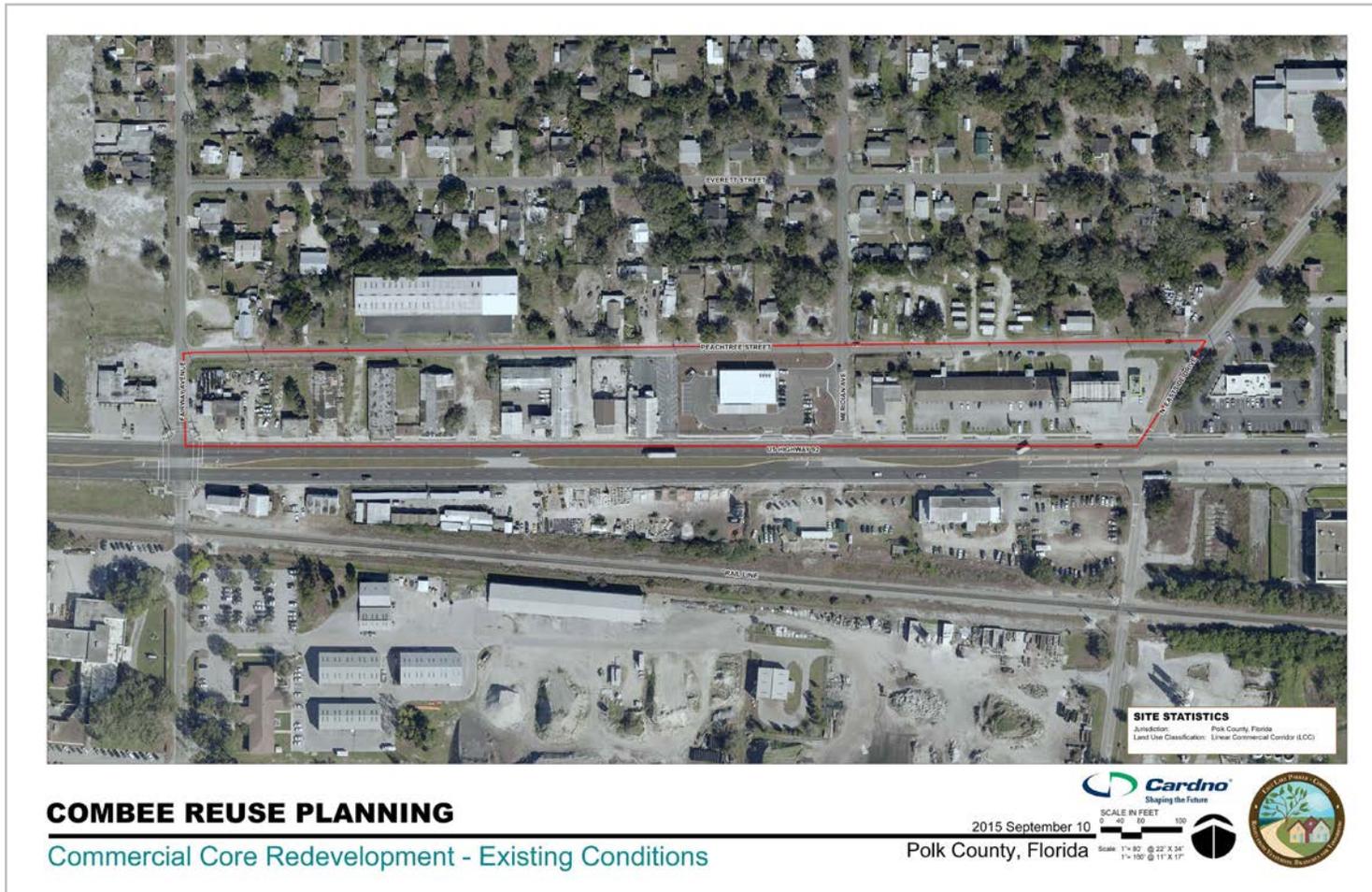


East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

US 92 Redevelopment Concepts

The US 92 corridor has several sites in which past uses are associated with localized pollution, including a gas station, and three auto repair shops. There are also several vacant land parcels. Two redevelopment concepts are proposed. The first concept, A.1 is consistent with current

design standards for Polk County. The second concept, B.1 provides a more innovative design to allow for greater use of the site while offering innovative stormwater design and overall low impact design. An aerial photo of existing conditions is provided below.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Concept A.1 – Standard Redevelopment / Code Compliant

Concept A.1 is consistent with current design standards for Polk County. This concept uses standard stormwater design and individual use parking standards. The building setback standards required by Polk County result in less area for development.

Some characteristics of the concept include the following:

- A 10 foot landscape buffer on private property to create a shaded streetscape along US 92.
- The Mobile Store, gas station, and retail center are retained and show as existing structures to remain.
- The existing service station and former church building are preserved for adaptive reuse of structures and property.
- New buildings are proposed to comply with existing Linear Commercial Corridor land use and zoning standards (65 foot front setback along US 92, 30 foot setback from all other roads, 15 foot side setbacks).
- Plans for undergrounding the existing overhead utilities/wires on Peachtree Street.
- Removal of existing dumpsters along Peachtree Street behind the in-line retail building. New dumpster pads would be provided.
- Driveway access points on US 92 would be limited to provide safer and more efficient site access.
- Locations for open retention ponds for stormwater management (new structures).



Looking north at US 92 corridor at existing use

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan



COMBEE REUSE PLANNING

Commercial Core Redevelopment Scenario Concept - A.1

2015 September 10
Polk County, Florida

SCALE IN FEET
0 50 100
Scale: 1" = 80' @ 22" X 34"
1" = 160' @ 11" X 17"



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

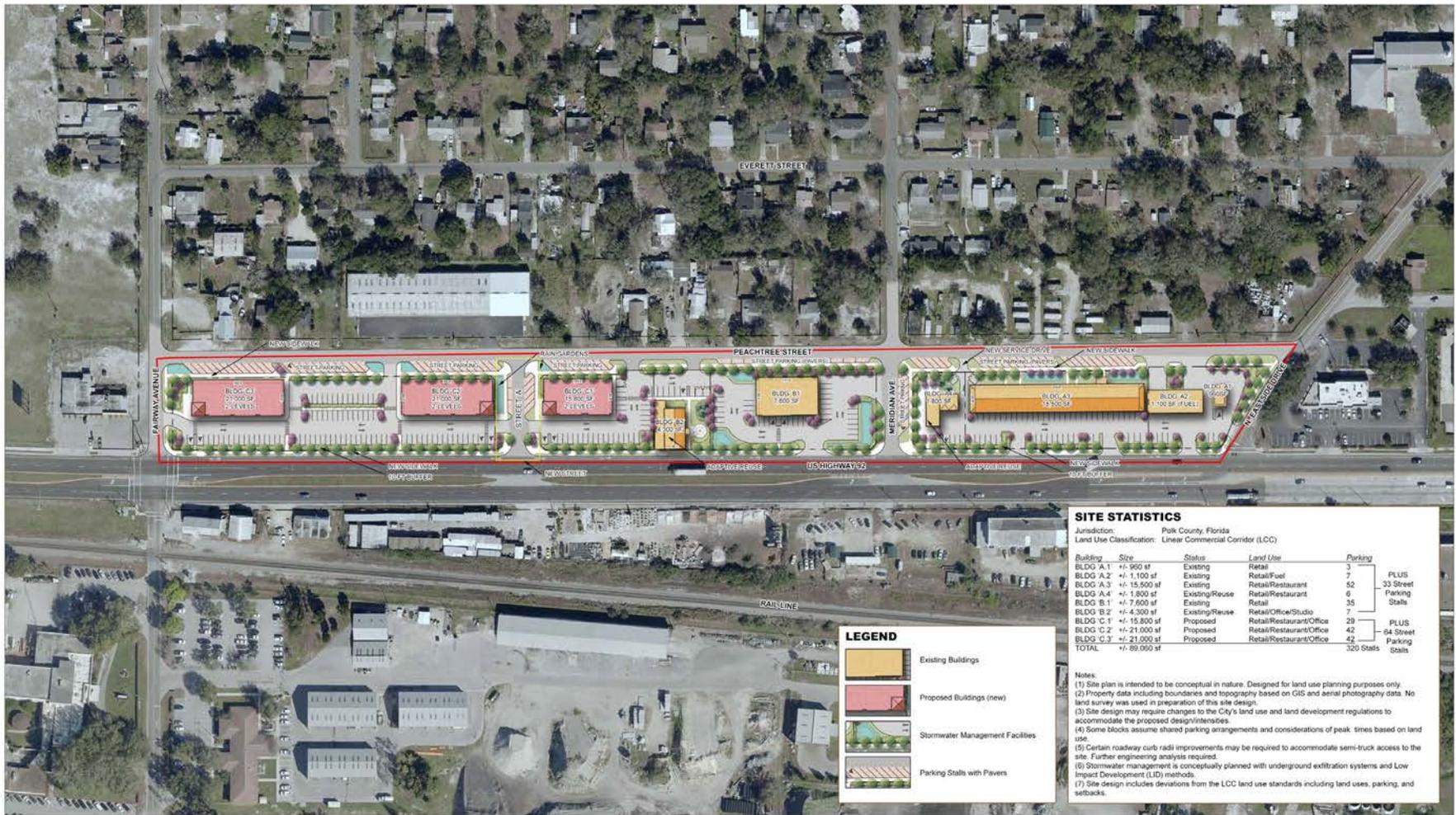
Concept B.1 – Comprehensive Redevelopment / Code Adjustment

Concept B.1 provides a low impact design which optimizes the area for redevelopment of buildings coming to the end of their useful life. In many cases it is not feasible to rehabilitate the structures depicted in the concepts. Hence, redevelopment concepts are brought forward for consideration. Concept B.1 provides the following design features.

- A 10 foot landscaping buffer on private property to create shaded streetscape along US 92.
- The Mobile Store, Gas Station, and In-Line Retail Center remain. The Service Station and Old Church Building remain and are assumed to be able to be reused for redevelopment purposes. The design assumes the Linear Commercial Corridor land use and zoning district will be amended to allow for small setbacks.
- Plans for undergrounding the existing overhead utilities/wires on Peachtree Street.
- Plans for on-street parking on all secondary roadways (creating a town center effect, urban streetscape, additional shared district parking).
- Plans for Low Impact Development (LID) and exfiltration (underground) stormwater techniques.
- Limits new driveway cuts to secondary roadways.
- Provides interconnectedness for all internal parking lots.
- Creates new street between Fairway Avenue and Meridian Avenue (creating a more urban street grid and mobility choices / designed as a green-street).
- New buildings may be 2-levels with ground floor retail/service and flex space on upper floors.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan



SITE STATISTICS

Jurisdiction: Polk County, Florida
 Land Use Classification: Linear Commercial Corridor (LCC)

Building	Size	Status	Land Use	Parking
BLDG A.1	+/- 960 sf	Existing	Retail	3
BLDG A.2	+/- 1,100 sf	Existing	Retail/Fuel	7
BLDG A.3	+/- 15,500 sf	Existing	Retail/Restaurant	52
BLDG A.4	+/- 1,800 sf	Existing/Reuse	Retail/Restaurant	6
BLDG B.1	+/- 7,600 sf	Existing	Retail	35
BLDG B.2	+/- 4,300 sf	Existing/Reuse	Retail/Office/Studio	7
BLDG C.1	+/- 15,800 sf	Proposed	Retail/Restaurant/Office	29
BLDG C.2	+/- 21,000 sf	Proposed	Retail/Restaurant/Office	42
BLDG C.3	+/- 21,000 sf	Proposed	Retail/Restaurant/Office	42
TOTAL	+/- 80,000 sf			320 Stalls

Notes:

- (1) Site plan is intended to be conceptual in nature. Designed for land use planning purposes only.
- (2) Property data including boundaries and topography based on GIS and aerial photography data. No land survey was used in preparation of this site design.
- (3) Site design may require changes to the City's land use and land development regulations to accommodate the proposed design/intensities.
- (4) Some blocks assume shared parking arrangements and considerations of peak times based on land use.
- (5) Certain roadway curb radii improvements may be required to accommodate semi-truck access to the site. Further engineering analysis required.
- (6) Stormwater management is conceptually planned with underground exfiltration systems and Low Impact Development (LID) methods.
- (7) Site design includes deviations from the LCC land use standards including land uses, parking, and setbacks.

COMBEE REUSE PLANNING

Commercial Core Redevelopment Scenario Concept - B.1

2015 September 10

Polk County, Florida



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Concepts for the Catalyst Site

The Catalyst Site is a 57-acre parcel of land located at the northeast corner of the intersection of US Highway 92 (E. Memorial Blvd.) and Lake Parker Drive East, situated on the southwest portion of the AWP study area. The site is identified as an area of opportunity that can provide economic, social, and environmental benefits for the community. Initiating certain key development activities at this location will serve to provide opportunities for additional growth and investment throughout the community over time.

To achieve and implement a meaningful plan for the catalyst site it was important to understand the needs of the community. Through public workshops, open houses, and conversations with residents and the catalyst site property owner, the facilities and services most desired **were a community center, senior care living, and additional neighborhood businesses** that would serve the local community. The concept plan is provided.

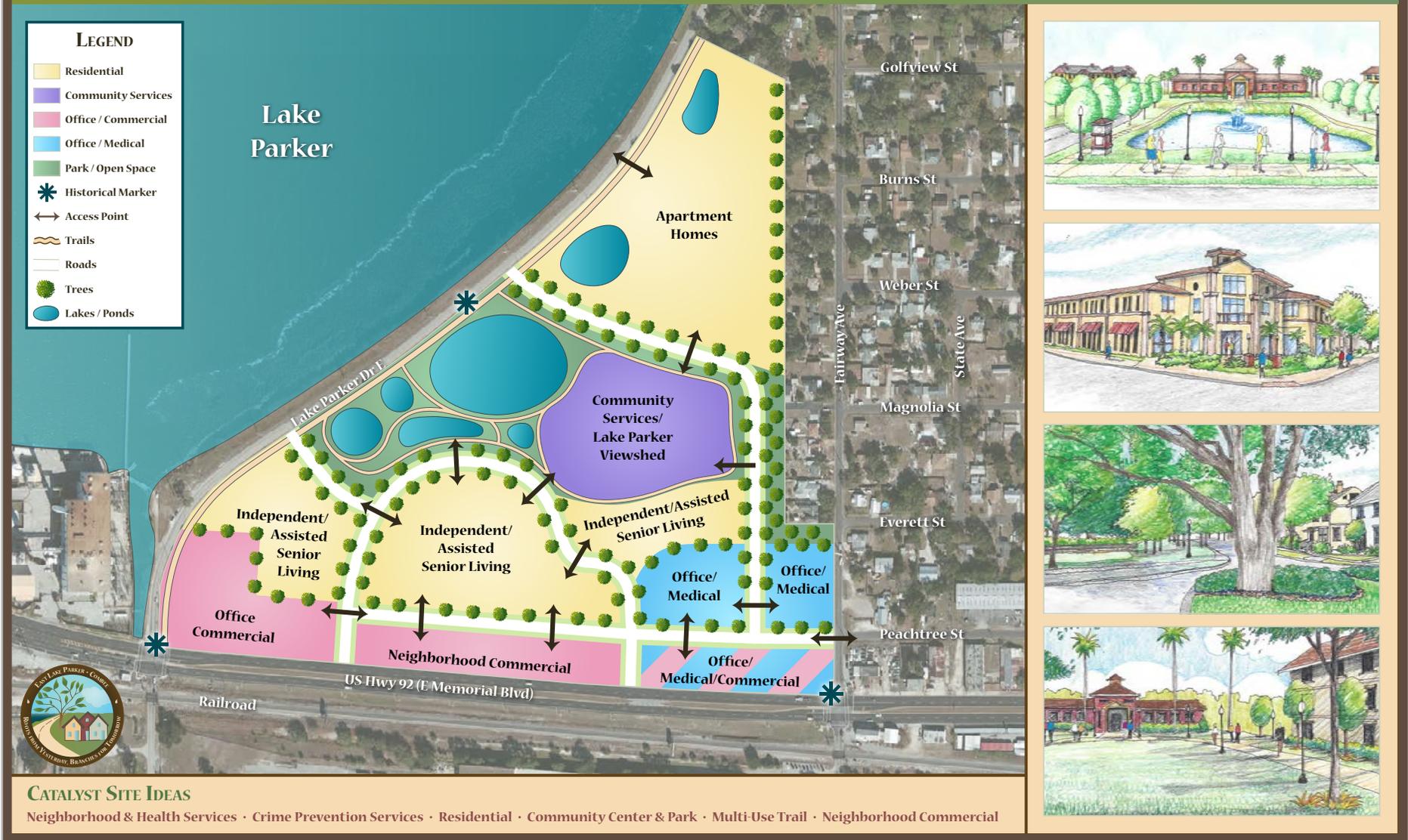
Considering the community's voice, ideas were brought to paper, and a conceptual plan was developed. The conceptual plan illustrates the community's desired mix of uses, configured with the more intensive use-types (e.g., commercial retail, medical, and office) located along the US Highway 92 corridor and the less intensive use-types (e.g., community services, residential, and park/open space) located within the interior of the site. The intent of directing the higher-impact uses to the periphery along US Highway 92 and the lower-impact uses towards the interior of the site is two-fold. Exposure of commercial uses along major thoroughfares helps ensure high visibility and attractiveness of businesses for passersby.

Shifting the lower-impact uses to the interior ensures a reduced impact on these uses themselves as well as helping reduce any negative impacts that potential development on the site might have on the nearby, established residential community adjacent to the catalyst site.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

E. LAKE PARKER / W. NORTH COMBEE AREA • CATALYST SITE CONCEPTUAL PLAN



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Community Area

A goal of the concept plan is to maintain the natural quality of the site and to take advantage of the views of Lake Parker. As shown on the conceptual plan, the park/open space and community services areas (as depicted in green and purple on the plan) are central to the development site. These areas are intended to be the heart of the catalyst site, serving residents and users living both inside and adjacent to the area. Uses might include a community center, where members of the community could gather for group activities, social support, public information, and other purposes, as well as recreation spaces and playgrounds. Ideally, development in this area would be positioned so as to respect the natural topography of the site, whereby the natural grade of the land, as it slopes towards Lake Parker, might be used to facilitate a master stormwater system. Buildings and development features would be situated to capture views of the park below and the lake in the distance.



Energy Efficient Design

The use of energy-efficient building designs and low impact development practices are encouraged to be implemented on the site. As mentioned above, one opportunity may be to implement a master stormwater system. This opportunity may help incentivize these types of development practices. Utilizing a master stormwater system will provide economic benefits for developers looking to maximize their developable footprint, while at the same time providing a functional, aesthetic, and environmental purpose. The stormwater ponds, as depicted in the conceptual plan are collocated as part of the park/open space area. Functionally, the ponds would be engineered with bio-filtering systems which would control direct stormwater run-off into Lake Parker, while also capturing water for use on-site for purposes of irrigation. Aesthetically, the ponds would be designed to encourage growth of native aquatic vegetation, helping attract wildlife and serving as a natural design feature for users enjoying the park.

Proper implementation of development activities on the catalyst site and meeting the needs and desires of residents will assist the community in overcoming many of the challenges it faces today. The conceptual plan is designed to assist the community in creating a strong sense of place, where opportunities for additional business growth and social interaction will help foster positive growth and connectedness throughout the community well into the future.

Vision to Reality - Implementation Strategies



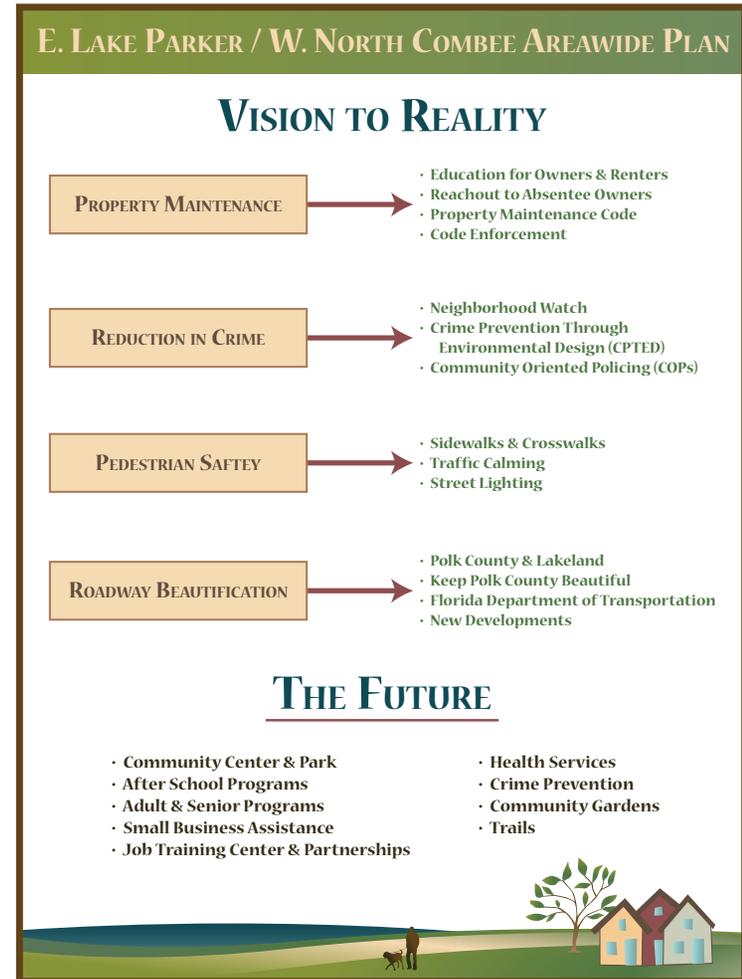
East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Vision to Reality - Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategies are provided to address the community's goals for infrastructure and neighborhood improvement, roadway improvements for greater walkability, as well as for redevelopment along the US 92 corridor and on the catalyst site.

Community concerns and issues to address include:

- Property Maintenance
- Reduction in Crime
- Pedestrian Safety
- Roadway Beautification
- The Future



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Short Term Projects (5 years or less)

Projects that can potentially move forward in the short term time frame (5 years or less) include:

- Begin development of the catalyst site.
- Begin US 92 redevelopment.
- Begin Complete Streets implementation.
- Crosswalk improvement.
- Street lighting districts.
- Streetscape projects.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- Community gardens.
- Business beautification.
- East Lakeland Sector Plan.

Long Term Projects (Greater than 5 years)

Projects identified that can potentially be moved forward in the long term time frame (more than 5 years) include:

- Development of the catalyst site.
- US 92 redevelopment.
- Infrastructure improvements including traffic calming, sidewalk installation and street lighting.

Implementation Tools and Funding Opportunities

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

- Brownfields Assessment Grants.
- Neighborhood Improvement Districts.
- Core Improvement Area.
- Community Redevelopment Agency.
- Impact Fees.
- Brownfields Revolving Loan Funds.
- Federal and State Grants.
- Florida's PACE Program.
- New Private Development.
- Reuse and Maintenance of Existing Private Development.
- Donors.
- Foundations and Private Organizations.
- Incentives.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Neighborhood Implementation Strategies

As the community continues to look for ways to improve conditions, the following may be considered:

“CPTED” (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)

The practice of “CPTED” (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through design of the built environment. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts. Altering the physical design of the communities in which people reside and congregate, to deter criminal activity, is the primary purpose of CPTED.

CPTED Principles



The four central principles of CPTED include the following:

- 1. Natural Access Control** provides physical guidance of people coming and going from a space by the judicious placement of entrances, exits, signs, fencing, landscaping and lighting.
- 2. Natural Surveillance** includes the organization of physical features, activities and people in a way to maximize visibility.
- 3. Territorial Reinforcement** is the use of physical attributes that express ownership, such as fences, pavement treatments, art, signage, and landscaping.
- 4. Maintenance and Management** is related to the neighborhood’s sense of ‘pride and place’ and territorial reinforcement. The more dilapidated an area, the more likely it is to attract unwanted activities. The maintenance and the image of an area have a major impact on whether it will become a targeted area for crime.

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Community Gardens

A community garden is a space where people can come together to grow fresh produce and plants, while at the same time creating a sense of community and connection with the residents around them. Community gardens are publicly functioning in terms of their ownership, access, and management. Although many are owned and managed by the residents of the community, in some cases community gardens are owned in trust by local governments or not-for-profit associations. In many major cities non-for-profit groups offer assistance to low-income families, children's groups, and community organizations by helping them develop and grow their own gardens.



Community gardens can range from small, vacant urban infill properties where residents grow small plots of vegetables for several members of the neighborhood, to large-scale, multi-lot projects which provide for an entire community.



Below is a list of some of the many benefits of community gardening. This list was compiled by Gardeners in Community Development, a not-for-profit, community based gardening group based out of Dallas, Texas and includes:

- Community Organizing
- Crime Prevention
- Cultural Opportunities
- Youth Development
- Food Production
- Health
- Green Space

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

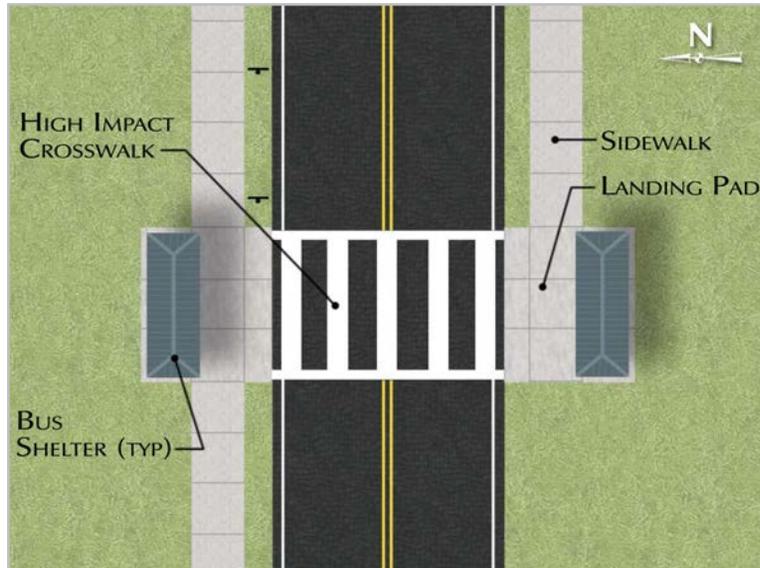
Complete Streets

The community's vision is to see Combee Road and US 92 transformed from high traffic volume roadways to Complete Streets that safely accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and others. The Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) has adopted a Complete Streets Program in Polk County and currently has plans to implement Complete Streets just south of the Plan area. Through this visioning effort, the community will work with the TPO to prioritize Combee Road from US 92 to Broadway as a Complete Street project in upcoming years.

The Florida Department of Transportation is also looking at options to make State roads safer and is exploring Complete Streets. Streetscaping and landscaping have been installed on US 92 just west of the Plan area.



View of Combee Road at Golfview Street as a Complete Street



Typical multimodal node (plan view) –
Increased visibility of transit and awareness for drivers



A rendering of Combee Road at Golfview Street as a Complete Street

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan



No continuous sidewalk, bicycle lanes, bus shelters or benches for public transit users, large driveway cuts, and extensive drainage facilities all prohibit pedestrian movement



No continuous sidewalk, bicycle lanes, bus shelters or benches for public transit users, large driveway cuts, and extensive drainage facilities all prohibit pedestrian movement



Reconfigured intersection, reduced driveway cut, sidewalk facilities with ADA accessibility, high-emphasis crosswalks, bus shelters for public transit users, designated bicycle lanes, rectangular (rapid flashing) beacons for enhanced pedestrian safety



Sidewalk facilities (boardwalk bridge can facilitate movement across existing and future drainage facilities), designated bicycle lanes, bus shelters for public transit users

East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Climate Change

The Polk County LMS is a mechanism for Polk County, its jurisdictions and other partners to address issues that will help reduce or eliminate exposure to impacts of hazards. With updated analysis, the LMS identifies, justifies, and prioritizes specific proposals for projects and programs that will avoid or minimize vulnerabilities in the future, resulting in a Mitigation Action Plan for the County.

Due to the location of the East Lake Parker/West North Combee area on the east bank of Lake Parker, the potential also exists for lake-level rise to impact the Plan area. Rising lake-level elevations can result from increases in average temperature, which are predicted to have subsequent impacts on severity and frequency of severe storms, including hurricanes.

This Plan aims to address these concerns by encouraging sound planning and development practices. One of several strategies, which offers both economic and environmental benefits, are methods for incentivizing on-site stormwater capture, including the use of soft-engineering and Low Impact Development (LID) standards. These practices offer an alternative approach to stormwater management and can be used to address a wide range of Wet Weather Flow (WWF) issues, including Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Phase II permits, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) permits, Nonpoint Source Program goals, and other water quality standards. The intent is to reduce impacts on current infrastructure facilities and eliminate direct run-off and environmental effects on nearby lakes. However, much of the effort will be dependent upon the efforts of local government to update Comprehensive Plans and zoning regulations, adopt policy changes, utilize advancements in technology, capitalize on infrastructure improvements, and encourage

other innovative and best practice methods to ensure the protection of resources in the future.

US 92 Redevelopment

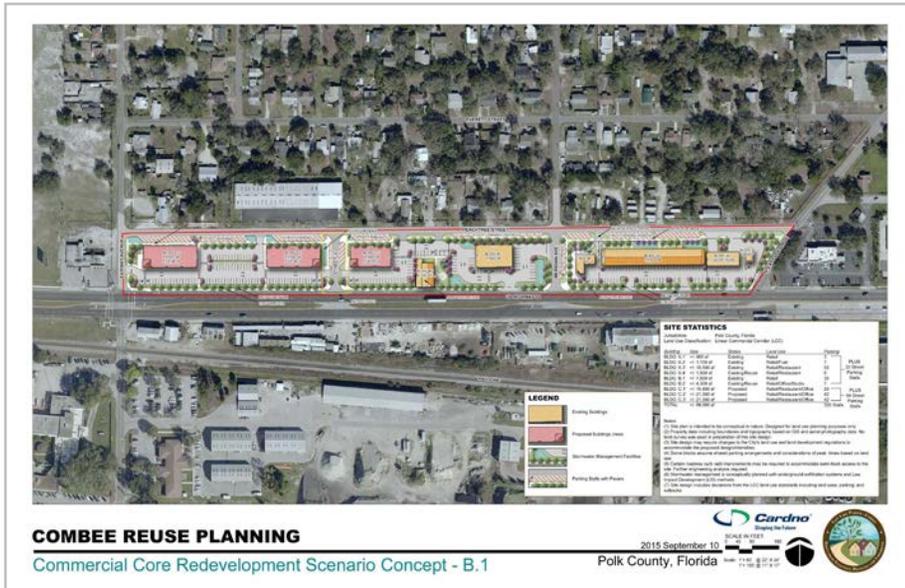
A key component to facilitating redevelopment along the US 92 corridor are environmental assessment (Phase I and Phase II) to determine if there is contamination and if there is, what is needed to provide cleanup to allow for viable reuse. The Brownfields Assessment grant provides funds for Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments. The Revolving Loan Fund provides low interest loans for cleanup. There also many incentives for developing brownfield sites as explained in Appendix A.

In addition, as shown in Concept B.1 for the corridor, the implementation of Low Impact Design (LID) will increase the developable area of the site by decreasing the size of traditional stormwater retention and detention areas. Concept A.1 is based on traditional retention and detention areas for stormwater which uses significantly more area of the corridor for this use, thereby limiting development potential.

Coordination with the US Environmental Protection Agency, Polk County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District are important to making redevelopment of this corridor a success.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan



Catalyst Site

At the time of this Plan, a rezoning was approved on the north 10 acres of the catalyst site for Multi-family up to 12 dwelling units per acre. There were also preliminary discussions of redeveloping the liquor store in the southeast corner of the catalyst site to an eatery. The property owners continue to work with the City of Lakeland and potential developers to make as much of the conceptual site plan become a reality as feasible.

An application for Low Income Tax Credit Housing is being filed to allow for potential development on the north 10 acres. Such housing will address the housing needs of a portion of the low income population in the Plan and greater area.

The conceptual plan of the catalyst site includes trail planned by the

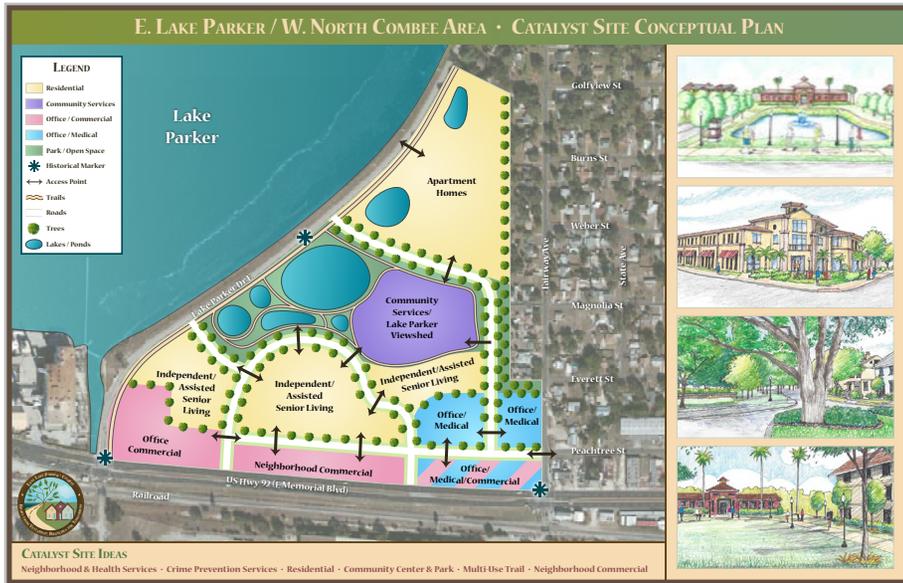
Polk Transportation Planning Organization. The City of Lakeland will coordinate with development proposals on the site to achieve the trail. The trail is part of the greater County and regional trail network. At this time, the Fort Frasier Trail which extends north from the City of Bartow along the US 98 corridor through railroad right-of-way will now extend to the south end of Combee Road. There are future plans to extend the trail north through the Combee area. The catalyst site will be integrated into the trails network providing greater mobility options for the community.

As development is proposed on the site the Brownfields Assessment Grant and Revolving Loan Fund may be used as tools to assist in facilitating development.

One the most exciting features of the catalyst site is also one of the most challenging with regard to turning it from a vision to reality. That is the community area of the plan. The community envisions a community center housing programs for children and the elderly. The site is designed with the community area as the focal point providing a view of Lake Parker, internal trails and open spaces and opportunities for uses and programs to serve this underserved community. Grants and public/private partnerships are critical to making the community area happen.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan



If the Phase I Environmental Assessment indicates the property's past use may have RECs, then a Phase II Environmental Assessment needs to be conducted.

- **Phase II Environmental Assessment:** On-site tests of the soil and groundwater for contaminants.

The Phase II Environmental Assessment helps to determine the level of cleanup and remediation needed.

Why designate a site a brownfield?

There are several advantages and incentives to designating a site as a brownfield. The State Brownfields Program provides significant incentives to the property owner or development as assistance is provided to help market the property to the new owner.

- Knowing a property has been assessed and remediated offers a buyer confidence in making the purchase.
- Developer and lender liability protection is provided.
- Sales Tax refund/Loan is offered to provide guarantees for Affordable Housing.
- The State program provides significant incentives to the property owner or developer.
- Marketable Credits for 50% of Clean Up Costs are provided.
- There is a Job Bonus Refund to attract jobs.

Brownfields

Brownfields grants including the Brownfields Assessment Grant are available to assist in propelling redevelopment of the US 92 corridor and the catalyst site. In addition, an outreach program should be facilitated to inform property owners of the Brownfields programs. Brownfields focused revitalization programs including property owner acquisition, demolition and clean up should be initiated.

As part of redevelopment, environmental assessments need to be conducted. There are two types of environmental assessments:

- **Phase I Environmental Assessment:** Research the history of the property's use and surrounding uses for potential Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC).

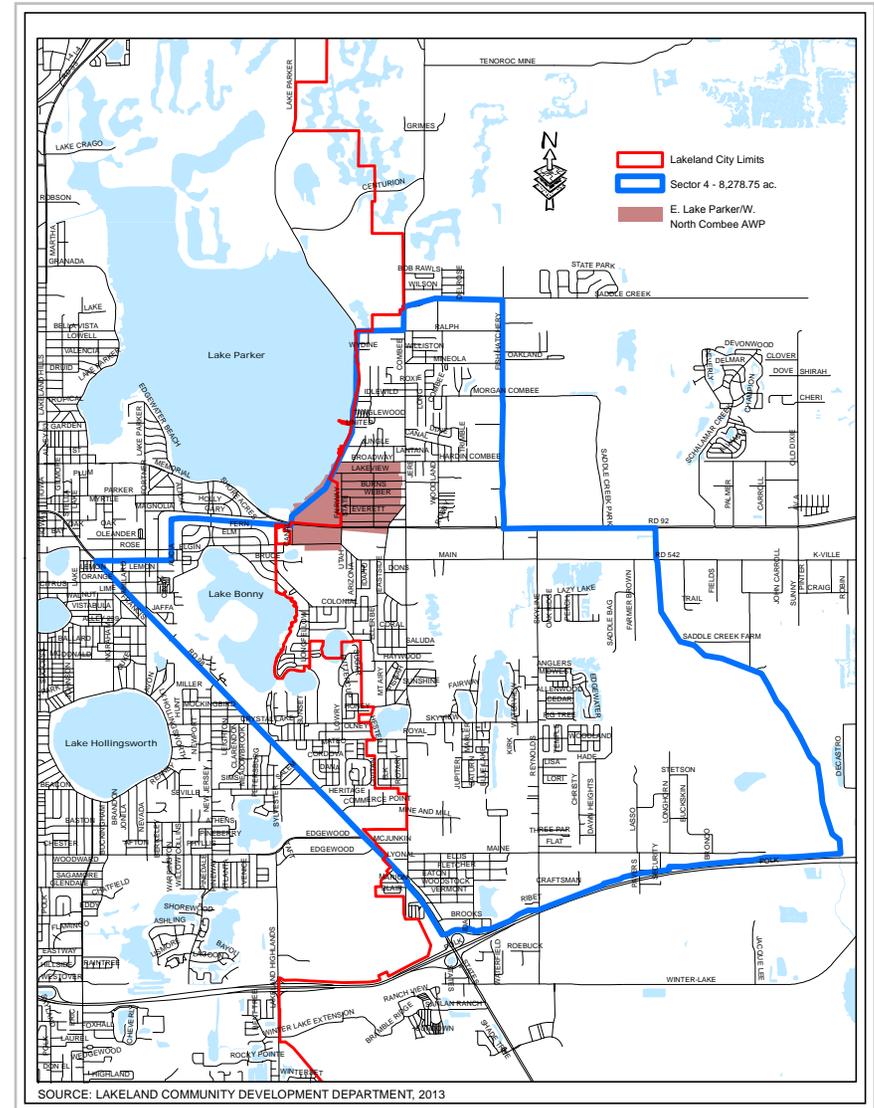
East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

East Lakeland Sector Plan

The City of Lakeland and Polk County worked together to develop the East Lakeland Sector Plan which includes 8,699 acres east of Lake Parker and US 98 to south of Saddle Creek Road and north of Winter Lake Road. The goal of the Sector Plan is to help guide land use decisions, identify capital improvement needs, formulate redevelopment strategies, and identify the need for additional studies and plans. The East Lake Parker/West North Combee neighborhood is included in the Sector Plan. City of Lakeland staff and Polk County staff participated in this Areawide Plan and brought forward capital improvement needs identified into the Sector Plan. The East Lake Parker/West North Combee community members also participated in the Sector Plan public engagement process.

The goal of Sector Plans is to provide a basis for:

- Making short-term and long-term land use decisions.
- Forming redevelopment and improvement strategies.
- Identifying Capital Improvement needs.
- Updating the Comprehensive Plan.
- Developing “carrots and sticks” to implement the plan.
- Identifying the need for additional studies and plans.



Map of the East Lakeland Sector Plan area including the East Lake Parker/West North Combee area



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

It takes a community

It is clear that in the East Lake Parker/West North Combee area, the statement “It takes a community” is true and many members continue to put forward efforts to continue to improve the area. Such community efforts include:

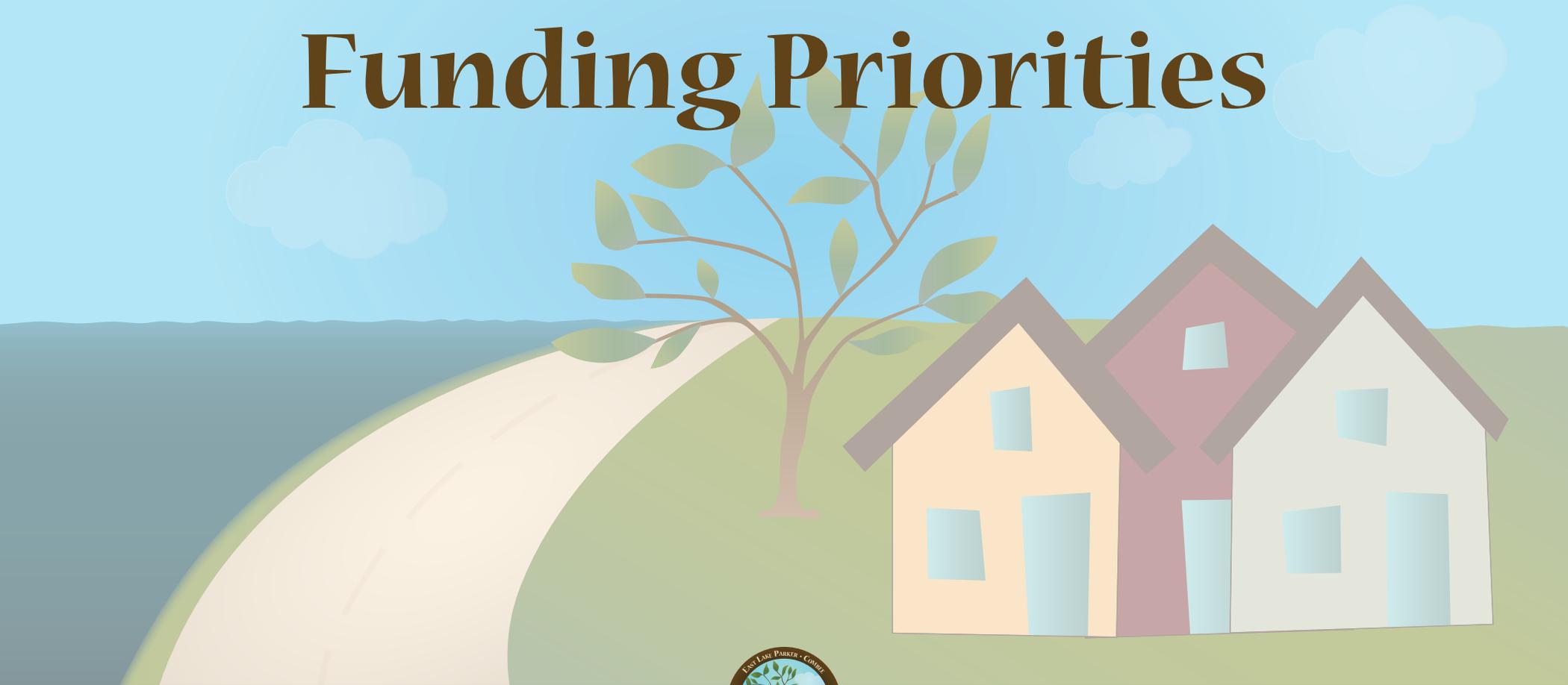
- **Combee Area Revitalization Effort (CARE)** that meets monthly and facilitates many activities in the community including:
 - o Roadway cleanup efforts through Keep Polk County Beautiful.
 - o Neighborhood block parties to facilitate neighborhood watch and community awareness.
 - o Participation in National Night Out, an event to increase awareness about police programs in communities, such as drug prevention, neighborhood watch, and other anti-crime efforts.
- **The North Combee Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** is a group of community volunteers that, through the CERT program, is educated about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area. The volunteers are trained in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. The CERT Program empowers people to assist others in their neighborhood following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. The North Combee CERT was invaluable in 2004 when the Combee area including the Plan area experienced significant damage from Hurricanes Charlie, Jean and Frances.

- In addition to CERT, the community participates in the **Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP)**. The purpose NEPP is to organize and educate neighborhoods to increase their level of preparedness to handle all types of health-related emergency incidents. The program is designed to engage and mobilize small neighborhood teams to help foster self-sufficiency at the neighborhood residential level.
- Many of the churches in the East Lake Parker/West North Combee area provide food pantries and continuously work to help community members in need.



Appendix A

Finance Toolkit and Funding Priorities



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Appendix A Finance Toolkit and Funding Priorities

The projects identified to implement the short term and long term priorities of the East Lake Parker/West North Combee Areawide Plan are provided in the following tables.

For each project listed, information is provided including:

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

An annotated list of potential funding sources follows these tables.



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Short Term Priorities (5 years or less)

Catalyst Site Redevelopment

Project Name:	Catalyst Site Redevelopment
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Work with property owners to effectively redevelop the property while respecting the Catalyst Site Concept Plan as much as possible and maintaining market feasibility.
Stakeholders:	Property owners, Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Polk County, City of Lakeland, Central Florida Development Council.
Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highest Priority <input type="checkbox"/> High Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Priority
Estimated Cost:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Cost (over \$500,000) <input type="checkbox"/> Mid Cost <input type="checkbox"/> Low Cost

Action Steps	Timeline
Continue to work with the property owners.	Immediate
Complete due diligence on the properties if owners/purchasers decide to proceed.	Short term
Work with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council for Brownfields funding opportunities. Work with the City of Lakeland, Polk County, and the Central Florida Development Council for development opportunities.	Short term, Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Brownfields Assessment Grant
- Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund
- Brownfields Incentives
- Private/Public Partnership



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

US 92 Corridor Redevelopment

Project Name:	US 92 Corridor Redevelopment
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Work with property owners along the US 92 corridor that hold Brownfields sites to effectively redevelop the properties.
Stakeholders:	Property owners, Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Polk County, City of Lakeland.
Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highest Priority <input type="checkbox"/> High Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Priority
Estimated Cost:	<input type="checkbox"/> High Cost (over \$500,000) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mid Cost <input type="checkbox"/> Low Cost

Action Steps

Action Steps	Timeline
Continue to contact and coordinate with property owners regarding Brownfields redevelopment opportunities.	Immediate
Complete due diligence on the properties if owners/purchasers decide to proceed. This will include Phase I and II Environmental reviews to determine levels of contamination if any.	Short term
Work with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council for Brownfields funding opportunities.	Short term, Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Brownfields Assessment Grant
- Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund
- Brownfields Incentives
- Private/Public Partnership



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Complete Streets

Project Name:	Complete Streets
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Implement complete streets concepts and designs along Combee Road and the US 92 corridor.
Stakeholders:	Polk County, Polk Transportation Planning Organization, City of Lakeland, Florida Department of Transportation.
Priority:	Highest Priority ✓ High Priority Lower Priority
Estimated Cost:	✓ High Cost (over \$500,000) Mid Cost Low Cost

Action Steps	Timeline
Intergovernmental coordination.	Immediate
Complete Street design for Combee Road and the US 92 corridor.	Short term
Implementation of Complete Streets on Combee Road and the US 92 corridor.	Short term, Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Capital Improvement Funds
- Public/Private Partnership
- Grants



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Crosswalk Improvements

Project Name:	Crosswalk Improvements
Project Type:	Short term
Objective:	Begin implementing crosswalk improvement priorities identified.
Stakeholders:	Polk County, Polk Transportation Planning Organization, City of Lakeland, Florida Department of Transportation.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Lower Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>✓ Mid Cost</p> <p>Low Cost</p>

Action Steps	Timeline
Coordinate with Polk County, the Polk Transportation Planning Organization, and the Florida Department of Transportation regarding crosswalk safety priorities.	Immediate
Work toward detailed crosswalk improvement plan.	Short term
Implement crosswalk improvement plan.	Short term

Potential Funding Sources

- Projects undertaken by other governmental entities
- Capital Improvement Program
- Complete Streets Program



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Street Lighting

Project Name:	Street Lighting
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Develop a street lighting district to provide street lights on all of the local residential roads.
Stakeholders:	Property owners, Polk County, Lakeland Electric.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Lower Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>✓ Mid Cost</p> <p>Low Cost</p>

Action Steps	Timeline
Work with Polk County to establish street lighting district.	Immediate
Coordinate with the property owners, Polk County and Lakeland Electric.	Short term
Installation of street lights.	Short term, Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Street Lighting District
- Grants



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Streetscaping Projects

Project Name:	Streetscaping Projects
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Begin implementing streetscaping priorities identified on Combee Road and along the US 92 corridor.
Stakeholders:	Florida Department of Transportation, Polk County, City of Lakeland, Business Community.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Lower Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>✓ Mid Cost</p> <p>Low Cost</p>

Action Steps

Action Steps	Timeline
Establish a streetscaping committee to coordinate with business owners on types of plantings and design.	Short term
Develop detailed landscaping plan for streetscaping and other improvements.	Short term, Long term
Begin improvements.	Short term, Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Capital Improvement Funds
- Grants
- Private/Public Partnership



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Project Name:	Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
Project Type:	Short term
Objective:	Educate the residential and business community on the principles of CPTED.
Stakeholders:	CARE, Residents, Business Community, Polk County Sheriff's Office.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Lower Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>Mid Cost</p> <p>✓ Low Cost</p>

Action Steps	Timeline
Develop a CPTED committee.	Immediate
Schedule and notify residents and business owners of workshops regarding CPTED.	Short term
Work with community to implement CPTED.	Short term

Potential Funding Sources

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



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Community Garden

Project Name:	Community Garden
Project Type:	Short term
Objective:	Identify a common area available for use as a community garden. Engage the community in gardening.
Stakeholders:	Community members, churches, property owners including Polk County.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>High Priority</p> <p>✓ Lower Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>✓ Mid Cost</p> <p>✓ Low Cost</p>

Action Steps	Timeline
Develop a community garden committee.	Immediate
Work with local government, churches, private property owners to identify a location for the garden.	Short term
Work to engage community in gardening.	Short term

Potential Funding Sources

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



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Business Beautification Program

Project Name:	Business Beautification Program
Project Type:	Short term
Objective:	Develop a business beautification program to encourage businesses along Combee Road and the US 92 corridor to enhance their facilities through updated maintenance, landscaping and streetscaping.
Stakeholders:	Business Community.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Lower Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>Mid Cost</p> <p>✓ Low Cost</p>

Action Steps

Action Steps	Timeline
Develop a business beautification committee.	Immediate
Work with business owners to identify opportunities for beautification and enhancement.	Short term
Work with business owners to take action toward beautification.	Short term

Potential Funding Sources

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



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Long Term Priorities (greater than 5 years)

Catalyst Site Redevelopment

Project Name:	Catalyst Site Redevelopment
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Work with property owners to effectively redevelop the property while respecting the Catalyst Site Concept Plan as much as possible and maintaining market feasibility.
Stakeholders:	Property owners, Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Polk County, City of Lakeland, Central Florida Development Council.
Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highest Priority <input type="checkbox"/> High Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Priority
Estimated Cost:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High Cost (over \$500,000) <input type="checkbox"/> Mid Cost <input type="checkbox"/> Low Cost

Action Steps	Timeline
Continue to work with the property owners. Immediate	Immediate
Complete due diligence on the properties if owners/purchasers decide to proceed.	Short term
Work with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council for Brownfields funding opportunities. Work with the City of Lakeland, Polk County, and the Central Florida Development Council for development opportunities.	Short term, Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Brownfields Assessment Grant
- Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund
- Brownfields Incentives
- Private/Public Partnership



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

US 92 Corridor Redevelopment

Project Name:	US 92 Corridor Redevelopment
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Work with property owners along the US 92 corridor that hold Brownfields sites to effectively redevelop the properties.
Stakeholders:	Property owners, Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Polk County, City of Lakeland, Central Florida Development Council.
Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highest Priority <input type="checkbox"/> High Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Priority
Estimated Cost:	<input type="checkbox"/> High Cost (over \$500,000) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mid Cost <input type="checkbox"/> Low Cost

Action Steps	Timeline
Continue to contact and coordinate with property owners regarding Brownfields redevelopment opportunities.	Immediate
Complete due diligence on the properties if owners/purchasers decide to proceed. This will include Phase I and II Environmental reviews to determine levels fo contamination if any.	Short term
Work with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council for Brownfields funding opportunities.	Short term, Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Brownfields Assessment Grant
- Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund
- Brownfields Incentives
- Private/Public Partnership



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Infrastructure Improvements: Traffic Calming, Sidewalks, and Street Lighting

Project Name:	Infrastructure Improvements: Traffic Calming, Sidewalks, and Street Lighting
Project Type:	Short term, Long term
Objective:	Installation of these improvements, especially on residential streets in the East Lake Parker/West North Combee area.
Stakeholders:	Polk County, City of Lakeland, Lakeland Electric.
Priority:	<p>Highest Priority</p> <p>✓ High Priority</p> <p>Lower Priority</p>
Estimated Cost:	<p>✓ High Cost (over \$500,000)</p> <p>Mid Cost</p> <p>Low Cost</p>

Action Steps

Work with Polk County and City of Lakeland for scheduling of capital improvements.

Installation of improvements

Timeline

Short term

Long term

Potential Funding Sources

- Capital Improvement Funds
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Federal and State Grants (including Community Development Block Grants)



East Lake Parker / West North Combee Areawide Plan

Implementation Tools and Funding Opportunities

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

In order to address the ambitious list of projects and action steps that make up this plan, the community will need to draw from a wide range of resources. Because resources will always be in short supply, allocation of scarce resources (money and man power) requires a strategic, yet flexible approach to ensure that all resources are used to the best advantage of the community.

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

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

Some projects identified in this plan closely align to the roles and

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

The following are potential sources of funding to be used to carry out the goals of the East Lake Parker/West North Combee Areawide Plan.

Brownfields Funding

The Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) administers a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant which is used to enable the CFRPC to issue loan(s) and grants to address and reduce the threat of hazardous substances, contaminants or pollutants through the remediation and rehabilitation of contaminated properties within the Region. The goals of the fund are to cleanup and improve environmental quality, redevelopment and the creation of new jobs and enhancing economic activity in the borrowers' or sub grantees' communities. The CFRPC was also awarded a Community-wide Assessment grant. These funds are being used to conduct assessment and related activities in Polk County, but primarily for the Combee Settlement Census Designated Place (CDP) and to implement the assessment needs identified in the Area-wide Plan (AWP) developed in cooperation with community residents, business owners, Polk County, and the City of Lakeland. Extension of the assessment activities to the larger Combee Settlement area supports the goals established in the AWP and brings the benefits of the planning effort to the larger community.



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Neighborhood Improvement Districts

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

Core Improvement Areas (CIAs)

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

Community Redevelopment Agencies

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

Local Government General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues

The City of Lakeland and Polk County exercise discretion in the budgeting of local government monies for a wide range of services and activities. However, these funds are primarily committed to paying for City-wide and County-wide services or recurring capital projects. Consequently, they may not be available for new purposes without impacting an existing service.

City Enterprise Funds

Many local governments carry out functions which operate in a manner similar to private businesses, in that a user fee is charged for a service and the fees are used to provide the service. These are typically services offered City-wide, for which it is possible to clearly identify the service user and how much of the service they are using (such as water or sewer). Occasionally the mission and purposes associated with these enterprise funds may overlap with downtown strategies and actions. Upsizing



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of water, sewer, or electrical lines to serve new office and residential buildings downtown (the costs of which would ultimately be borne by the developers of these buildings or their eventual utility-using tenants) would fall into this category, especially to the extent that improvements would also benefit the flow, efficiency, peak period capacity, etc., of citywide systems.

Impact Fees

Impact fees are one-time fees charged to new developments ensuring it's charged its fair share of the additional capital facilities required for the growth that is occurring. Impact fees are based on a proportionate share analysis that relates the fee charged to the benefit received by the development. Impact fees are not seen as having a significant role in funding projects for the downtown area because most of the area is already built out. Therefore, most activity in the Plan area is redevelopment or rehabilitation, rather than new construction. However, if the City and County initiate a development incentive program, the waiving of impact fees for redevelopment or new development in the Plan area, will negate the role impact fees will play in funding improvement projects in the area.

Projects Undertaken by Other Governmental Entities

To the extent that the State of Florida, Polk County, the Polk County School District, and other levels of government have responsibility for certain services and facilities, their interests will sometimes be aligned with downtown priorities. Two major road in the Plan area, US 92 and Combee Road, are State highways, and therefore also a State

responsibility. Consequently, in situations where the State of Florida is making decisions regarding the future of these roads it is vitally important for the community to state its interests clearly.

Federal and State Grants

There may be opportunities to obtain assistance from other levels of government for specific plan actions.

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



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PACE Program

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

New Private Development

Private investment from local businesses will assist in energizing the Plan area. For example, the redevelopment of existing buildings, updating of existing facades, or new building construction can improve the Plan area. The manner in which this new investment is deployed will be critically important for the development of the area. High-quality and well-maintained landscaping, well-designed new outdoor gathering places, and building designs on the catalyst site and along the US 92 corridor are among the implementation projects where new private-sector development will likely be a key partnership in the success and revitalization of this area.

Re-Use and Maintenance of Existing Private Development

Government does not have all the resources necessary to fulfill all plan objectives (nor would that be desirable). Just as new private development is crucial to redevelopment success, so is investment in the maintenance and imaginative re-use of existing buildings by their private-sector owners and tenants.

Donors

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

Foundations and Private Organizations

A variety of private foundations exist that seek projects to fund that help to carry out their particular priorities. Multiple private organizations and charities provide funding for urban renewal and development in Florida. Grants vary in their size and requirements.

Incentives

The City of Lakeland and Polk County can provide incentives in the form of waived review fees and shortened review timeframes to properties within the Plan area if they are developing in conformance with the design guidelines.



Appendix B

Brownfields Site Priorities



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E. Lake Parker / W. North Combee Areawide Plan Brownfield Priority Redevelopment Map

