

DRAFT



Zolfo Springs



Downtown Vision Plan

Public Review and Comment

Draft Zolfo Springs Downtown Vision Plan

The Draft Zolfo Springs Downtown Vision Plan will be available for public review online at www.cfrpc.org/ZolfoSpringsVisioning/Community_Vision.html and at the Zolfo Springs Town Hall from **May 19, 2014** through **June 27, 2014**. Please review the document and provide comments.

At the end of the comment period, all comments will be reviewed, considered, and recorded. The Town Commission will receive the Downtown Vision Plan with any changes for final review and approval.

DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

PREPARED FOR

THE TOWN OF ZOLFO SPRINGS, FLORIDA



MAY 15, 2014

Prepared by the
Central Florida Regional Planning Council



A Portion of Funding for this Project Provided by the
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity



The Town thanks the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for the award of the 2012-2014 Community Planning Technical Assistance Planning Grant, which assisted in funding the Zolfo Springs Downtown Vision Plan.

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Introduction

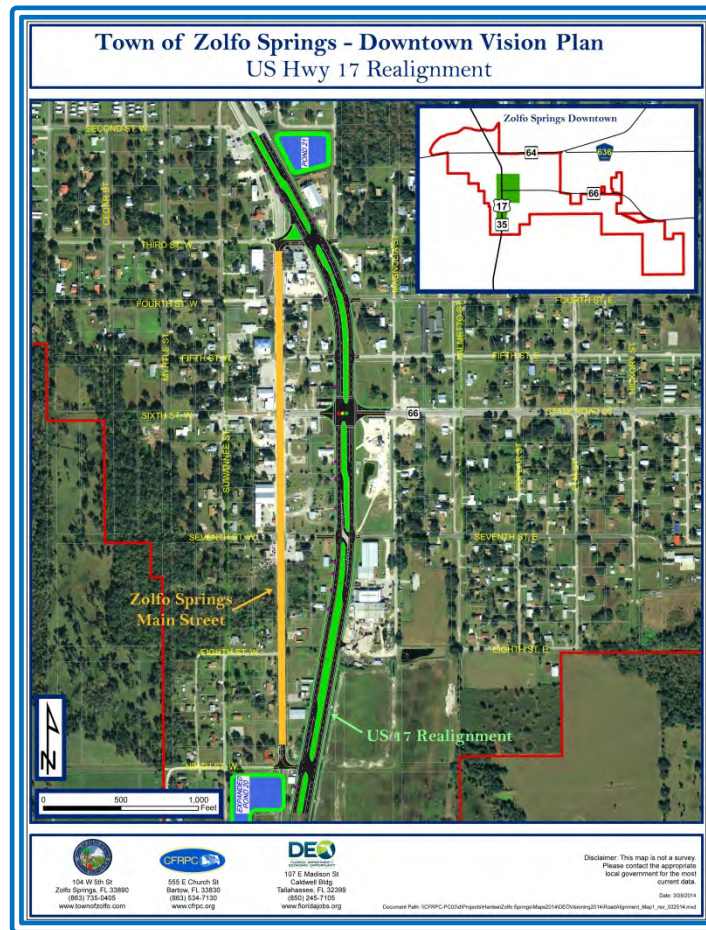
The Town of Zolfo Springs is a town of 1,818 people (BEBR, 2013) located south of the Peace River at the crossroads of three major roads, US Highway 17, State Road 66 (Florida Cracker Trail), and State Road 64 in central Hardee County. The State of Florida designated Zolfo Springs as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC). A RACEC is a rural community adversely affected by extraordinary economic events or natural disasters.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is in the process of realigning US 17 through Zolfo Springs. Upon completion of the realignment, FDOT will dedicate the existing portion of US 17 to the Town, which the Town will designate as Main Street.

The realignment of US 17, which FDOT has scheduled for right-of-way acquisition in 2014-2016, will provide for an expansion of commercial opportunities in the downtown area, otherwise not available to the Town. The realignment will also route traffic away from the businesses located along Main Street.

To address both the opportunity for expansion of downtown businesses and the future loss of traffic along Main Street, the Town has developed the Downtown Vision Plan. The Downtown Vision Plan works to address the Town’s vision for how the new US 17 and Main Street

corridors will develop and how the Town’s economic vitality can be increased.

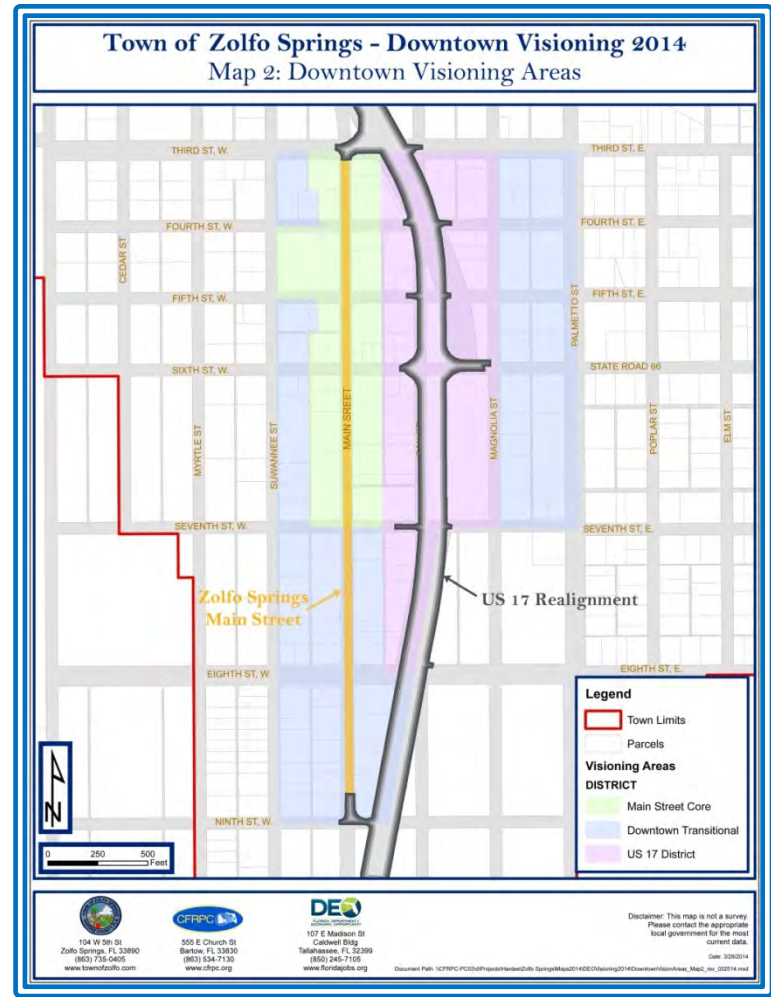


Vision Statement and Area Defined

“Zolfo Spring’s Downtown will be a place where residents, business owners, and visitors can work, live, shop, and play in a pedestrian-friendly and safe environment while promoting the economic development of the Town and preserving the Town’s small town charm.”

The Vision Plan defines the Downtown Area as bounded by Third Street on the north, Ninth Street on the south, Suwannee Street on the west, and Palmetto Street and US 17 on the east. The three zones of the Downtown Area include:

- **Main Street Core:** Heart of the Downtown Area serving as the “living room” of the downtown, where residents and visitors can relax, shop, eat, and play. The Main Street Core includes Civic and governmental uses, retail, service, professional, and office businesses, existing infrastructure, and facilities oriented to drivers, walkers, and bicyclists.
- **US-17 Zone:** Area that parallels the US-17 realignment, primarily serving automobile or large truck oriented land uses that benefit from a location on a major highway.
- **Downtown Transitional Zone:** Area of complementary uses to the Main Street Core and US-17 zones comprised of established residential neighborhoods on the periphery of the Main Street Core and US-17 zones, characterized by a mix of existing single-family residential and commercial-business uses.



Vision Plan Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the Downtown Vision Plan is to address the potential positive and negative impacts of the realignment of US 17 and the improvement of the economic vitality of the Town. The Visioning Process is a participatory process designed and facilitated to establish dialogue and collaboration between community members. The intent of the Vision Plan is to be a reflection of the wants and needs of the Town. To ensure opportunities for the public’s voice to be included and to obtain public input and comments, the Town held two public workshops and an open house, which the Town advertised through a variety of methods (Appendix D). The result of the community coming together is a shared vision for the future of the Downtown Area that acts as the foundation to guide action.

Role

The Vision Plan provides documentation regarding the visioning process and itemizes specific goals, strategies, and action steps that the Town of Zolfo Springs should undertake to implement the Vision Statement. The goals further define the special attributes of the Vision Statement, while the strategies, action steps, and specific project sheets in Appendix B include a variety of recommendations to implement the Vision Statement. The Vision Plan promotes shared public values and a vision for the future of the

Downtown Area that should serve as a resource for Town staff, and elected and appointed officials in making important decisions that will affect the future of Downtown Zolfo Springs.

Objectives

This Vision Plan outlines the steps to address impacts of the realignment of US 17 and the improvement of the economic vitality of the Downtown. The general objectives of this Vision Plan are:

1. *To create a vibrant, economically healthy downtown that is walkable, livable, and promotes interaction among residents and visitors,*
2. *To encourage commercial development in the US 17 zone,*
3. *To promote economic improvement in the Town,*
4. *To improve opportunities for recreation, and*
5. *To enhance Downtown with a mix of uses.*



Existing Conditions

Historical Context

Like many jurisdictions, Zolfo Springs got its start from the railroad, when Florida Southern Railroad opened a depot in Zolfo (name at the time) in 1886. In that same year, a post office was established. The Town incorporated in 1904 and changed its name to Zolfo Springs on September 13, 1904.

According to an article by Spessard Stone from *The Tampa Morning Tribune* in December 13, 1914, by 1913, the Town was experiencing rapid growth. The Town had its own water works, electric lights, sewers, cement sidewalks, and brick buildings. The Town had new residences and subdivisions and a

local weekly paper known as the *Zolfo Springs Truth*. The article describes banks, a mercantile company, and general store in the Town as well as “an up-to-date lumber yard, a saw and planing mill, a millinery store, a hardware and furniture store, a model grocery store, a cement block works, and a large garage and automobile sales room, from which nearly 100 new automobiles have been sold.”

One of the reasons for Zolfo Spring’s prosperity during that time may be attributed to the Florida Cracker Trail. From 1850 until the last major cattle drive along the route in 1937, ranchers utilized the Florida Cracker Trail to drive cattle from Florida's heartland to the coastal ports for shipment mainly to Key West and Cuba. The Florida Cracker Trail was designated by the State of Florida in 1987 and became a designated Community Millennium Trail in 2000. The Florida Cracker Trail Association, Inc. puts on the ride/wagon train each year to emphasize Florida's horse and cattle heritage and to promote, maintain, and enhance the Florida Cracker Trail that stops in Zolfo Springs and the Cracker Trail Museum in Pioneer Park.



A CRACKER COWBOY.

Image of a Cracker Cowboy State Archives of Florida, *Florida Memory*, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/25891>
 Photographer: Frederic Remington



Transportation System

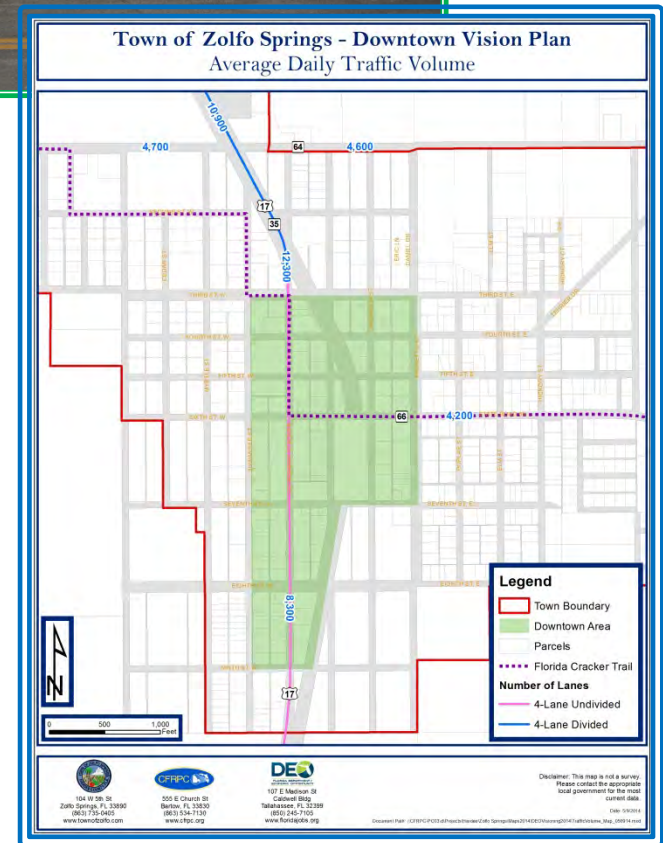
The existing roadway network through downtown Zolfo Springs is centered around the automobile. US 17, as it runs through the Downtown area of Zolfo Springs, is a four lane undivided road and SR 66 (Florida Cracker Trail) is a two lane undivided road. Both of these roads serve large tractor-trailer trucks. Bike lanes and transit service facilities do not exist at this time, but the realignment of US 17 will include bike lanes.

FDOT US 17 Road Realignment

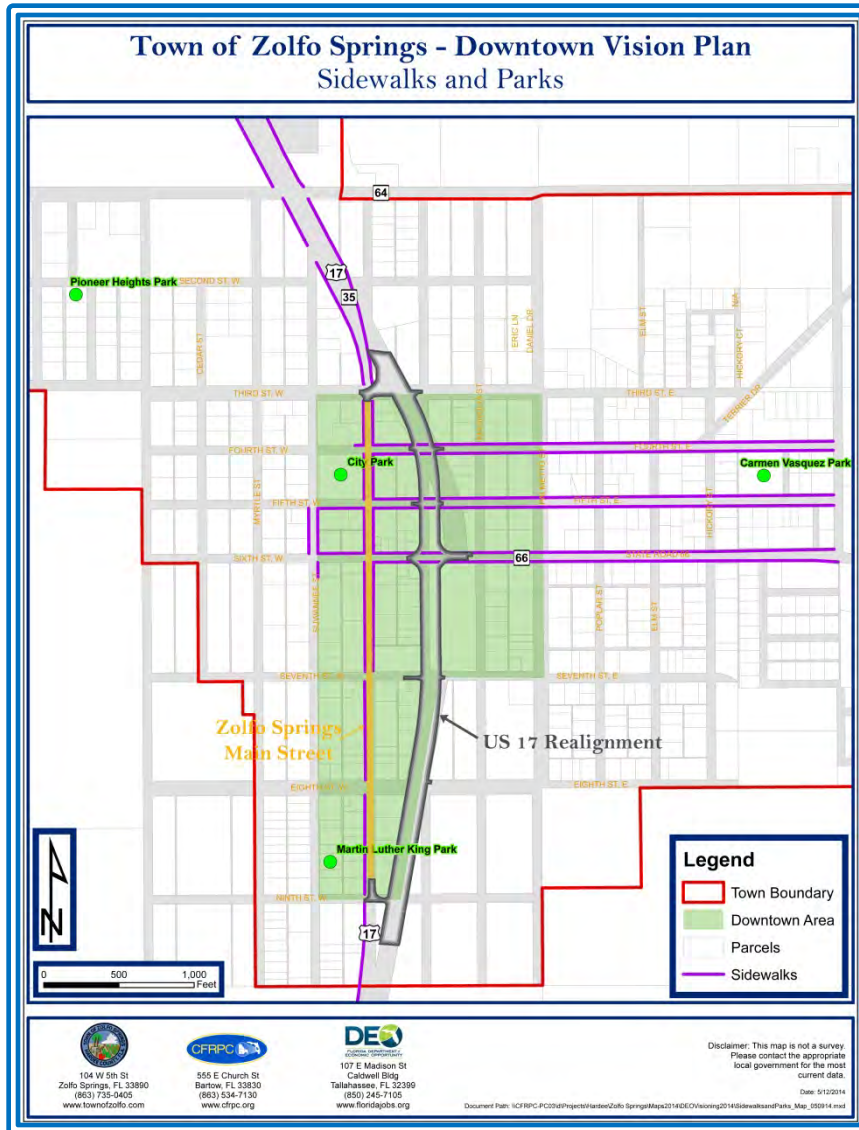
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is realigning a one-mile segment of US 17 from south of Ninth Street, East to north of Third Street, East along the abandoned railroad corridor and Oak Street through Zolfo Springs. The construction of the realigned segment of US 17 will include 4-foot bike lanes, sidewalks, and a raised median that will separate two northbound and two southbound traffic lanes. The FDOT will turn over the existing US 17 alignment to the Town of Zolfo Springs, which will become Main Street for the Town.

The FDOT is currently in the design phase of the project. Complete plans are anticipated by July 2014. Right-of-way acquisition is planned for 2013 and 2014. The attached map titled FDOT US 17 Road Realignment Project Map provides a general location for the road realignment. Information for this project is available at FDOT’s project website:

<http://www.fdotus17projects.com/overview.php?p=1>.



Pedestrian Conditions and Parks



Sidewalks and Streetscapes

Sidewalks exist along US 17 on both sides of the street from Third Street West to Seventh Street West and on the western side of the road from Seventh Street West to Ninth Street West. Sidewalks exist on both sides of the road along Fourth Street East, Fifth Street East, and SR 66 (Florida Cracker Trail). Suwanee Street between Fifth Street West and Sixth Street West also has sidewalks on both sides of the road. Fifth Street West and Sixth Street West between Suwanee Street and US 17 have a sidewalk on one side of the street. The remainder of the streets do not have sidewalks. US 17 includes very little landscaping with no trees to provide shade. Buildings abutting US 17 do not include awnings or other provisions for protection from the elements. There are currently no opportunities for pedestrians to sit and interact. Some of the side streets include shade from trees on neighboring properties.

Parks

The Town maintains four parks, two of which are located within the Downtown Area. City Park, located at the Town Government Complex in the Main Street Core, includes basketball and tennis courts, a site for a playground, and a civic center available for public use. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, located on Suwanee Avenue, south of 8th Street in the Transitional Zone, includes a basketball court and a site for a playground. Both parks had playground equipment recently removed by the Town due to safety issues. The two parks located outside of the Downtown Area include Carmen



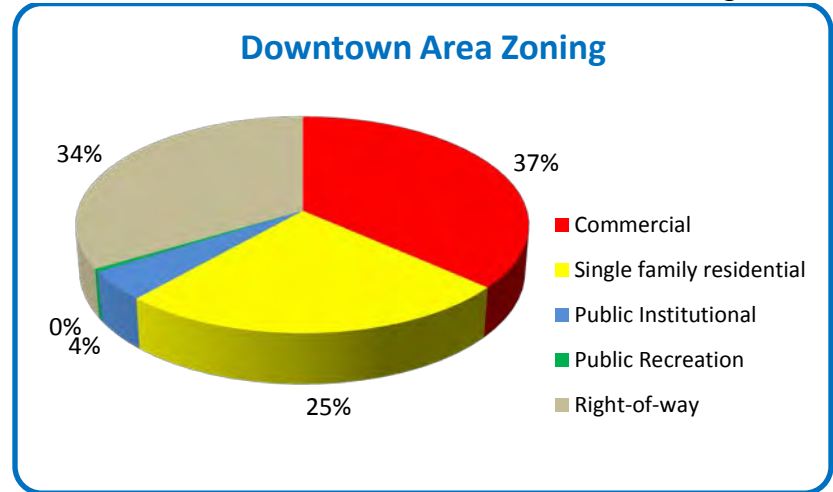
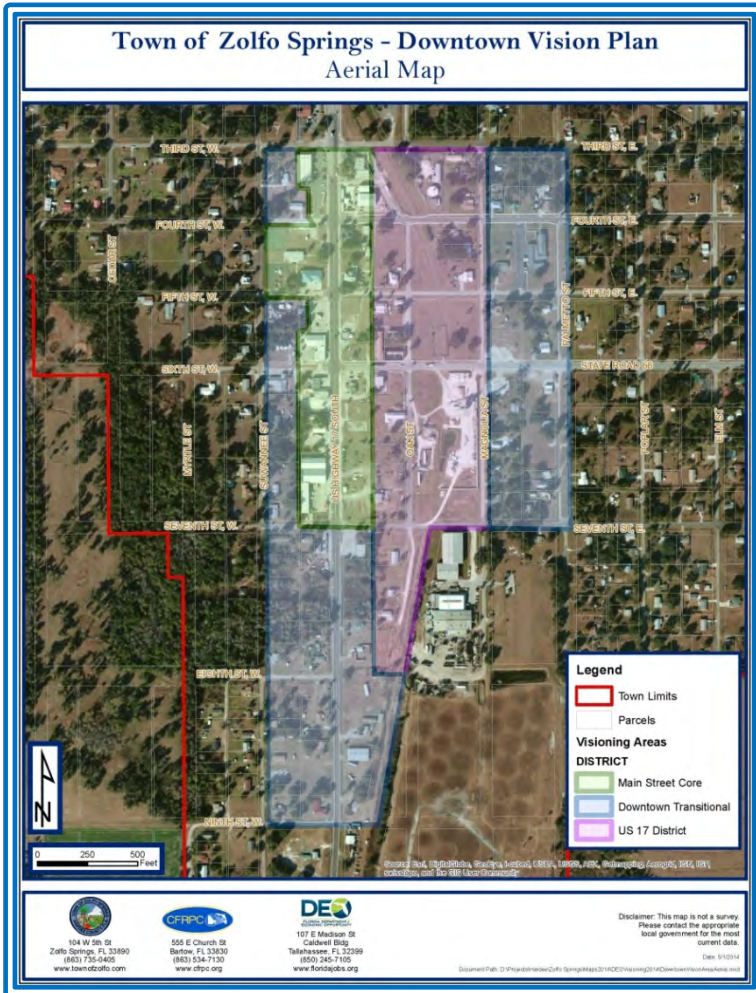
Vasquez Park and Pioneer Heights Park, which provide basketball, tennis, soccer, shuffleboard, and picnicking opportunities. Pioneer Park, a 105-acre County regional park, is located in the Town limits north of SR 64 and west of US 17. Carmen Vasquez Park and Pioneer Park are connected to the Downtown Area by sidewalks.

Infrastructure and Utility Conditions

The Town of Zolfo Springs provides water and wastewater within the Town limits. All areas of the downtown have water and wastewater utilities available for new development.

Future Land Use, Zoning, and Existing Uses

The Downtown Area includes 88.6 acres of land, of which approximately 30 acres are in right-of-way. The Future Land Use and Zoning breakdowns are very similar. The majority of the Downtown Area has either a commercial designation or a residential designation. Other designations include property that has a Public Institutional or Public Recreation designation.



Development in the Main Street Core and US 17 zones are predominantly commercial while the Transitional zone is predominantly residential. Most of the downtown area is developed, but there are several vacant/underutilized lots that will provide for future infill development.



Vision Concept Plans

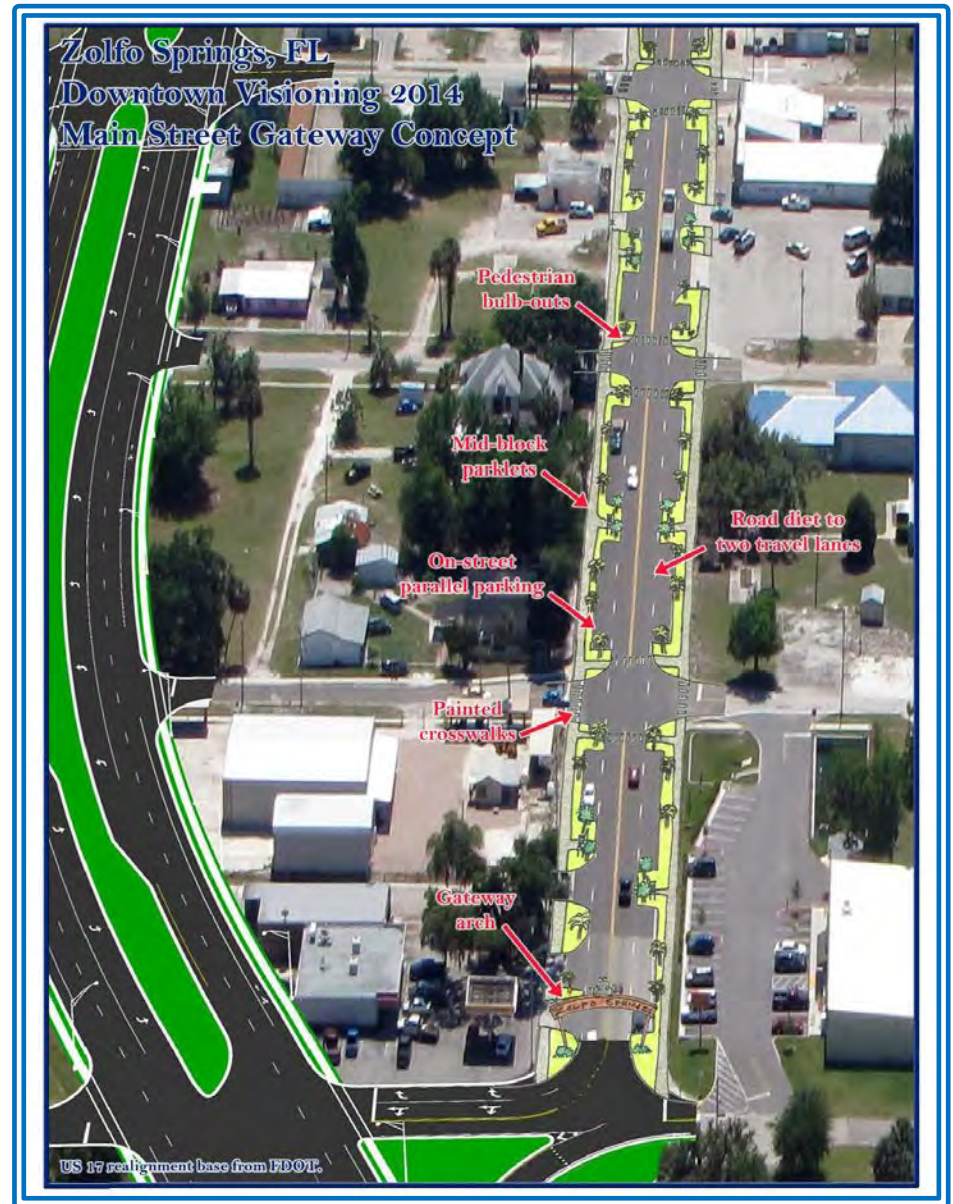
The Vision Concept Plans outline the concepts for the implementation of the vision as explained in the Goal and Strategies Section of the Vision Plan.

Main Street

The vision for the Main Street Core includes the development of a walkable, pedestrian friendly area that provides opportunities for economic growth if businesses and activities and areas of interest for residents and visitors. It includes:

- A Gateway Arch
- Road diet to 2-lanes of traffic
- On-street parallel parking
- Bulbouts for landscaping or art
- Mid-block Parklets
- Painted crosswalks
- Public art
- More representation for the Florida Cracker Trail

Studies have found that making the parking and walking experience positive heightens the appeal of the place and, in many cases, increases repeat visits by as much as 30% to primary and secondary destinations. *Source: Wayfinding: The Value of Knowing How to Get There by Martin Flores, ASLA, and Michael Young, 2011.*



Cross-Sections

The cross-sections on this page are included to provide further understanding of the Vision for Main Street. The cross-section on the right illustrates the street-level view of Main Street, as it exists today. Four drive lanes are utilized both by local and pass-thru traffic, including a large number of tractor-trailer trucks. Sidewalks exist but there is little shade or opportunities to sit. The images below show the street view of Main Street through the Vision Plan. They include parallel parking, landscaping, and places to sit.



Present Day Main Street (US 17): 4-lanes of traffic with little to no shade or seating



Main Street: Travel lanes with on-street parking and landscaping



Main Street: Travel lanes with mid-block parklets



Arch

The installation on an arch over Main Street at Third Street will provide visibility of the Main Street Corridor to the traffic travelling south on US 17. It will signal an area of increased interest. The Town can install the arch within the Town’s right-of-way as part of the Main Street road diet, which will limit the impact on adjacent property owners. Location of the footers of the arch in the right-of-way promotes the provision of on-street parking through the narrowing of the road.

For traffic traveling north on US 17, visibility of the Main Street Corridor will be generated through the installation of a monument sign on either side of US 17.



Parklets



Zolfo Springs, FL
Downtown Vision Plan
Main Street Parklet Concept

Parklets increase the walkability of the Main Street Core by providing mid-block areas of shade and rest for pedestrians and other uses of the street, while offering opportunities for areas of interest. The intent of a Main Street parklet is to be a dynamic, multi-use space that supports community stewardship and prioritizes the pedestrian experience. Parklets can include a place to sit, a place to interact with people, a place to display art, or any other combination that provides for the users of the street.

The location of parklets in the right-of-way necessitates the Town’s involvement for location and other requirements, but private or public/private partnerships can be the source for the generation of a specific parklet.



Examples of Parklets
Providing Shade and
Seating.



Public Art

The inclusion of public or private art into the Downtown Area provides interest for both residents and visitors. Parklets, street frontages, building frontages, and road rights-of-way can include public art as a permanent fixture or as a rotating installation. Public Art is also a useful tool for raising funds for projects.



Public Art Installed in a Parklet



Art Installation in Median



Art in Public Space



Mural



Street Frontage or Building Frontage Art



Public Art as a Fund Raising Tool



Art can also provide interest to vacant storefronts, lots, or uses. It also serves as a way to build interest in the Main Street Core – such as searching for cat pictures in Miami or hunting mice sculptures in the Mice on Main program in Greenville, South Carolina.



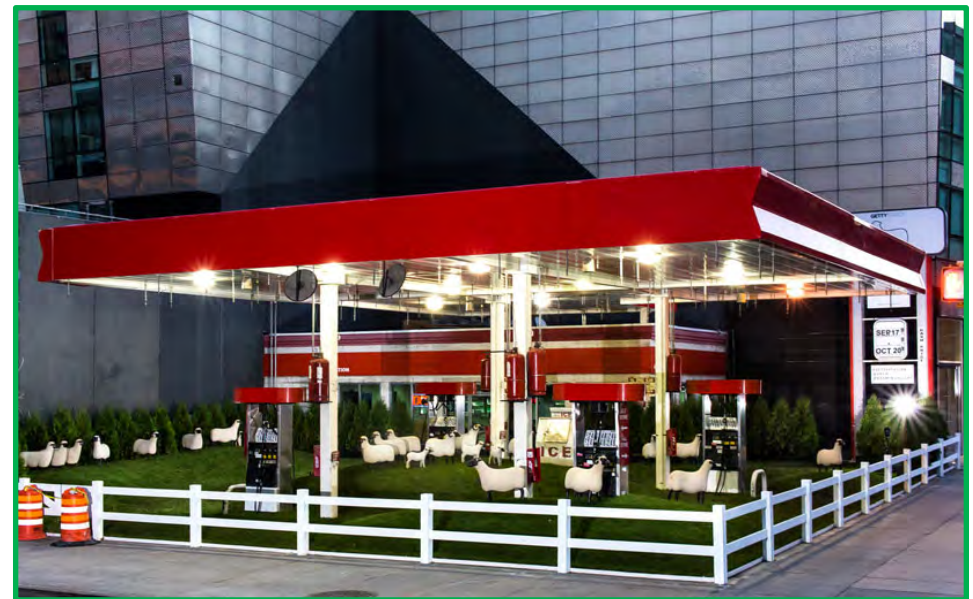
Art in Vacant Store Front to Provide Interest



Participation Art in Miami (left) and Greenville, South Carolina (right)



Art on Vacant Lot

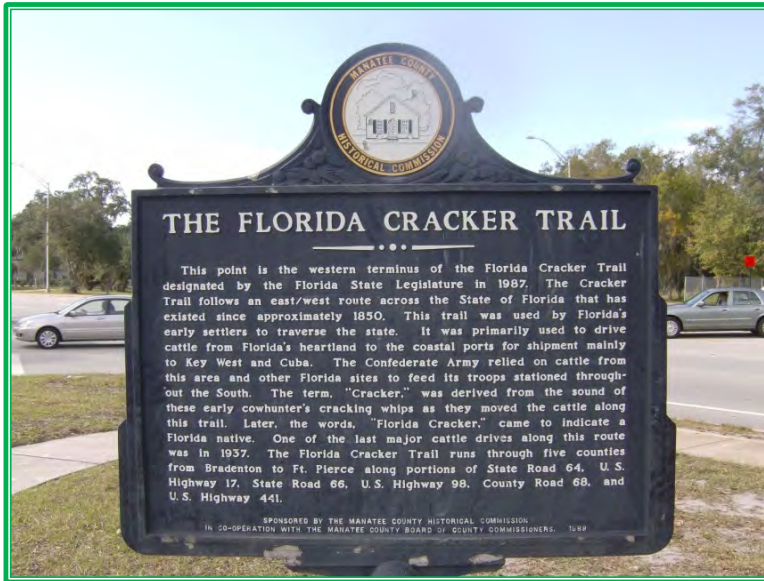


Art in Vacant Use to Provide Interest (Getty Art Installation, New York City)

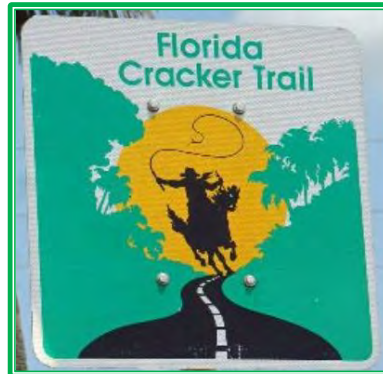


Promotion of Connection to Florida Cracker Trail

The Florida Cracker Trail is a trail used by Florida’s pioneers during the early 1800s to move cattle to ports along the Gulf Coast and the Atlantic Coast. The Commemorative Florida Cracker Trail runs 120 miles from Fort Pierce to Bradenton following portions of State Road 66, State Road 64, and U.S. Highway 98. The eastern and western portions of the Florida Cracker Trail come together in Zolfo Springs.



Florida Cracker Trail Monument in Manatee County



Possum Monument in Wausau, Florida (photo credit: Deep Fried Kudzu)

Currently, the Town marks the road with highway marker signs like the one pictured above.

Promotion of the Trail through interesting, informative methods, brings visitors to the area to experience the history and possibly to stay in the downtown to experience everything else that the Downtown has to offer. Examples include:

- Monuments such as the Possum Monument in Wausau, Florida, or
- Teaming up with the Florida Cracker Trail Association to hold an event to tie in with their annual ride; such as the parade held in Fort Pierce at the end of the ride.



Park Improvements and Connections

The Town’s parks are an important resource for the residents and visitors to the Town. Connecting the parks together through a Park-to-Park designated connector system for runners and/or bicyclists will provide an added level of recreation and fitness opportunities for the Town’s residents and visitors.

Providing signage or pavement markings identify the designated path and could provide information such as distance. Pavement markings could be done to match the Town’s branding or some other theme.



Sign for Lake to Lake Bikeway Connector System in Lakeland, FL



Pavement Markings for Trail

City Park, Martin Luther King Park, and Carmen Vasquez Park in the Downtown Area, are in need of repairs. The following information summarizes the needs for these parks.

City Park

- Construction of Playground Equipment
- Renovation of Tennis Court
- Renovation of Basketball Court
- Construction of Bicycle Trail
- Construction of Picnic Facility
- Renovation of Existing Picnic Facility
- Construction of a gazebo, pavilion, or band shell to provide for covered, outdoor event space

Martin Luther King Park

- Construction of Playground Equipment
- Renovation of Picnic Facility

Carmen Vasquez Park

- New Playground Equipment
- Bike Path
- Renovations to the Basketball Courts
- Renovations to the Soccer Field
- Renovations to Picnic Equipment
- Renovation of Existing Playground Equipment



Landscaping

Landscaping adds a human element, while providing for comfort through shade, cooling, and pleasing sounds. Landscaping in the right-of-way or adjacent to the right-of-way on private property can provide shade. Landscaped areas provide natural filters for urban pollutants and places for urban wildlife including birds and squirrels. The spaces help keep streets and neighborhoods from overheating. The landscaping of properties in the Downtown Area also provides for a pleasant aesthetic element.

The Main Street Concept includes landscaping along the road and in bulbouts to provide areas for landscaping and to help define on-street parking areas.

Utilizing plants that meets the “right plant, right place” test will ensure the Town’s landscaping will be functional and attractive while also requiring low maintenance from Town staff.



Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines include both streetscaping guidelines for the right-of-way and recommendations or requirements for the properties located in the Downtown Area. Examples include landscaping, building setbacks, architectural treatments, awnings, and requirements for bicycle facilities.

The intent of design guidelines is to help the Town, business owners, and developers in the Downtown Area provide for an improved Downtown environment that is cohesive.

The image to the left illustrates example design guidelines for the Main Street Core, the US 17 Zone and the Downtown Transitional Zone.

Zolfo Springs: Main Street Visioning 2014
Downtown Visioning Areas

Main Street Core is...

- The living room of the town; where visitors and residents relax, shop, eat, and play.
- Lined with business that rely more on walk-up traffic than drive-by traffic.
- A place where people interact; downtown is a place for people.

Downtown Transitional is...

- Supports the Main Street Core and US 17 District, and in the distant future, may transform to support the same types of uses as the central business district expands.
- Allows increased residential density such as apartments and multi-family housing, to support the businesses on Main Street.
- Live-work arrangements area also possible, with day offices being a primary use.

US 17 District is...

- Follows U.S. Highway 17 and is ideal for businesses that rely heavily on highway traffic or access to freight shipping routes.
- Provides easy access for semi-tractors, and is an auto-centric business district.
- The realignment of U.S. 17 will provide opportunities in some areas, as previously un-desirable parcels get highway frontage.

Example Design Guidelines via Overlay Districts

Building Setbacks

- Front Yard Setback:**
 - No minimum requirement.
 - Maximum 15-foot. Front yards shall respect the front yards of existing development on adjacent lots.

Façade Articulation

- Facade Articulation:** Physical changes in the depth of the surface of a building, demonstrated thru things such as attached columns, recessed windows or window bays and recessed entranceways, and other forms of architectural expression including applied architectural treatments.

Connections and Cross-Access

- Pedestrian Pathway
- Public Use Cross-Access Connectivity
- Vehicle Cross-Access Connectivity

Screening

- SUMMITER ENCLOSURE
- GROUND-LEVEL UTILITIES SCREENING
- ROOFTOP UTILITIES SCREENING

Pedestrian Walkway Enhancements

- AWNINGS AND CANOPIES
- CANTILEVERED ROOF, BEACONS, AND ORNAMENTS

Furnishing Zone Enhancements

- Urban and Village Street Furniture



Goals and Strategies – Path to Implementation

Implementation of the following goals and strategies will help achieve the vision and will require cooperation from residents, businesses, Town staff, and elected officials. Since there is no one way to accomplish a vision, additional strategies may emerge through continued community dialogue and experience working on projects.

Vision Plan Goals and Strategies

GOAL 1: ENSURE PASS THRU TRAFFIC ON US-17 SEES MAIN STREET AND IS ENTICED TO TURN ON TO MAIN STREET.

Strategies:

- Install an arch over Main Street at the northern entrance to Main Street. An arch will be visible to southbound traffic on US 17 and will serve as notice that Main Street is a destination of interest.
- Install a monument sign at the turn to the southern entrance to Main Street. The placement of a monument sign on either side of US 17 will provide notice to northbound traffic that Main Street is open for business.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ALONG US 17

Strategies:

- Evaluate the Town’s Future Land Use Element, Land Development Regulations, Future Land Use Map, and Zoning Map to ensure adequate provisions exist for non-residential development to occur along the realigned US 17 corridor.
- Develop design standards within the Land Development Regulations to promote development in a fashion that lets people know they have arrived in the Town.



GOAL 3: MAKE MAIN STREET A DESTINATION FOR TOWN RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND VISITORS

Strategies:

- Complete a road diet on Main Street to change it from a 4-lane road to a 2-lane road with on-street parking.
- Consider reducing the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph to facilitate the development of a more pedestrian friendly area and for the development of parklets.
- Promote the development of parklets on every block on both sides of Main Street in the Main Street Core. Parklets are extensions of the sidewalk area into one or more adjacent parking spaces that provide amenities such as shade, seating, and/or entertainment for people using the street.
- Promote the inclusion of elements such as landscaping or awnings to provide shade and protection from elements for pedestrians and other users of the street.
- Develop areas of interest along Main Street through the inclusion of public art, parks, and parklets, and other opportunities for activities.
- Provide increased support for bicyclists including parking opportunities.
- Evaluate the Town’s Future Land Use Element, Land Development Regulations, Future Land Use Map, and Zoning Map to ensure adequate provisions exist for appropriate development in the Main Street Core.
- Develop design standards within the Land Development Regulations to promote development in a fashion that lets people know they have arrived in the Town.



GOAL 4: IMPROVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN AND IN PROXIMITY TO THE DOWNTOWN AREA

Strategies:

- Continue work towards making improvements at the Town’s Parks.
- Coordinate with Pioneer Park for increased connection to the Downtown Area
- Develop a Park-to-Park Connector, including signage and/or pavement markings, to provide for connectivity between the Town’s parks and a designated trail for runners and/or bicyclists.
- Encourage development of some parklets in the Main Street Core with a passive recreational component.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE DOWNTOWN

Strategies:

- Encourage commercial development within the US 17 Zone.
- Encourage a mix of uses including commercial and residential for development in the Main Street Core.
- Enhance the Town’s connection to the Florida Cracker Trail to generate Florida historical tourism interest.
- Enhance the Town’s connection to the Peace River to enhance visitor trips.
- Develop branding for the Town.
- Investigate opportunities for partnerships with the other jurisdictions and/or the County to promote the individual jurisdictions and the region to both visitors and potential business opportunities.



GOAL 6: REVIVE AND PROMOTE THE TRADITIONAL CHARACTER AND HISTORIC ASPECTS OF THE DOWNTOWN

Strategies:

- Create interesting and visually appealing displays of local history in highly visible and accessible locations such as parklets, parks, vacant land, or buildings, or as murals on prominent building walls.
- Enhance the Town’s connection to the Florida Cracker Trail by working with the Florida Cracker Trail Association to facilitate an event during their annual cross-Florida ride.
- Identify structures important to the Town’s history for dedication and preservation.
- Adopt requirements or recommendations for development along Main Street to reflect the historic feel of Main Street.
- Encourage a mix of uses, including residential and commercial, in the Main Street Core.

GOAL 7: ENCOURAGE INVOLVEMENT AMONG INDIVIDUALS OF ALL AGES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING AND GROWTH OF DOWNTOWN ZOLFO SPRINGS

Strategies:

- Establish regular communication and coordination among civic and municipal organizations in the community to facilitate the combination of resources and efforts, when necessary, to achieve shared goals.
- Enlist people to be champions of the Vision Plan to engage other residents and business owners in supporting the efforts of the Vision Plan.
- Maintain the presence of the Vision Plan on the Town’s website and at Town Hall for easy access so people can support its adoption and become involved in its implementation.



Appendices

Appendix A – Public Participation

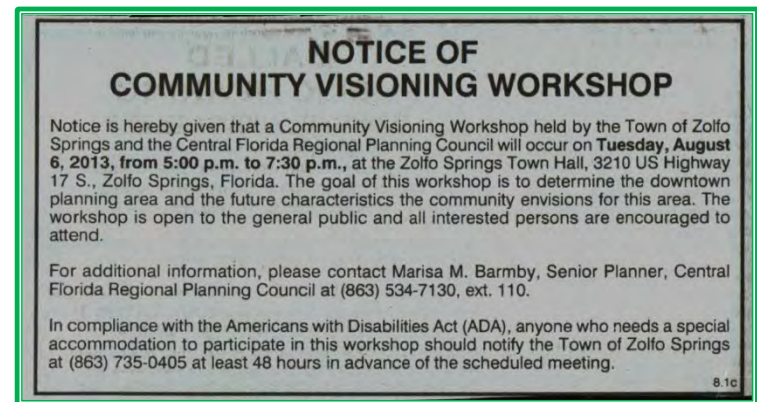
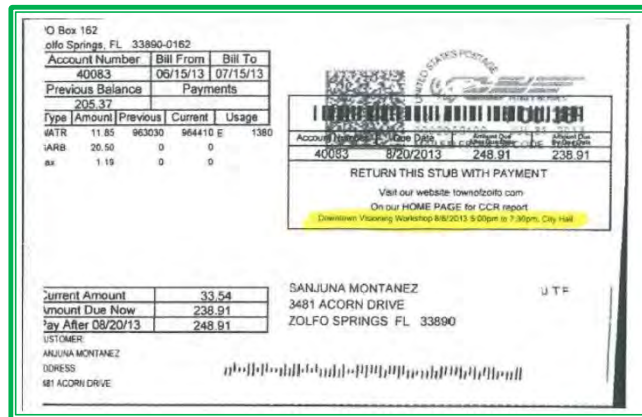
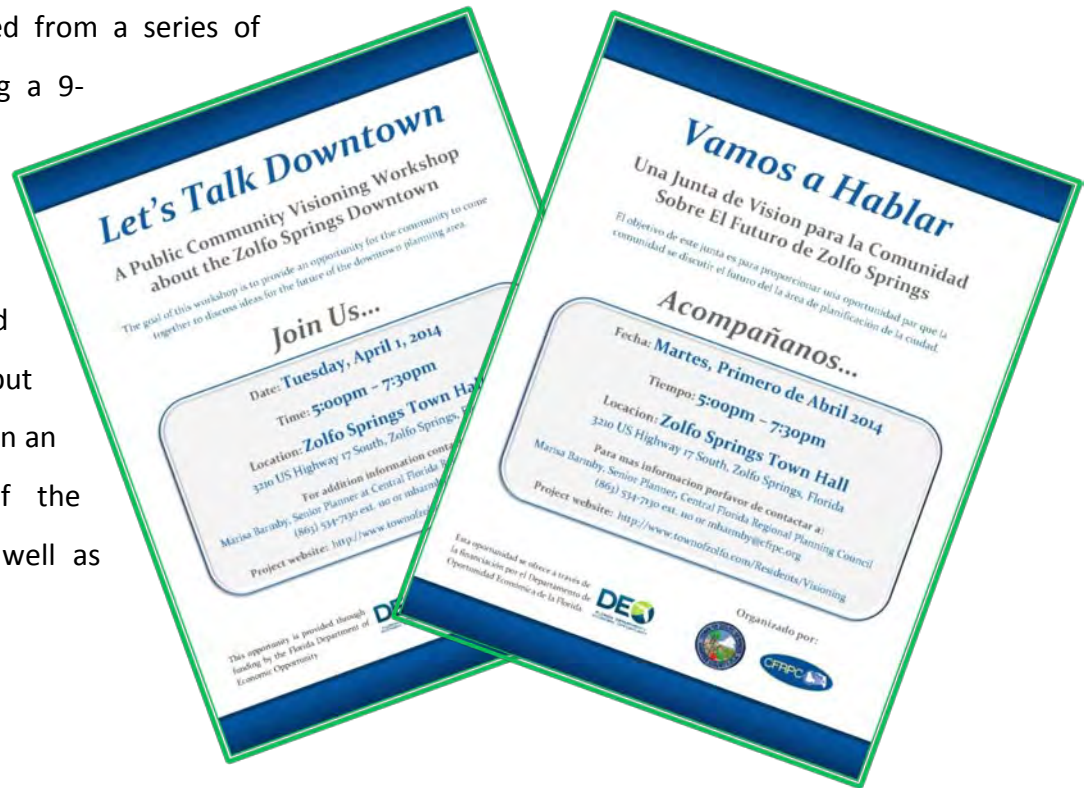
Appendix B – Project Sheets

Appendix C – Potential Implementation Tools and Funding Opportunities



Appendix A – Public Participation


The development of this Downtown Vision Plan resulted from a series of community workshops and public input received during a 9-month visioning period. The Visioning Process included two public workshops, an open house to review the vision plan, and in person discussions during a door-to-door awareness campaign. The Town posted and distributed flyers, placed ads in the local newspaper, and put notices on water bills to raise awareness with the public. In an effort to include the Spanish-speaking members of the community, advertisements were made in Spanish as well as English and an interpreter was available at all events.



Appendix B – Project Sheets

The project sheets on the following pages outline projects the Town can implement to achieve the goals of the Downtown Vision Plan. The project sheets include the following information:

- *Project Name*
- *Description of the Project*
- *Vision Goals the Project Addresses*
- *Logical Implementation Steps*
- *Potential funding sources*

PROJECT: MAIN STREET ARCH OVER MAIN STREET AT THIRD STREET WEST			
DESCRIPTION: Arch over northern entrance to Main Street to promote Main Street to pass by traffic on US 17 and to provide interest to Main Street.			
VISION GOAL(S): Goals 2 and 4			
FUNDING: Town, Private Donations			
STEPS		TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1.	Coordinate with FDOT regarding potential conflicts with future placement of arch.	Short-term	Complete
2.	Coordinate with neighboring Property owners regarding placement of the arch.	Short-term	
3.	Develop arch design and engineering plans	Mid-term	
4.	Install arch: Goal of installation with completion of US 17 realignment	Mid-term	

Sample Project Sheet



PROJECT: MAIN STREET ARCH OVER MAIN STREET AT THIRD STREET WEST

DESCRIPTION: Arch over northern entrance to Main Street to promote Main Street to pass by traffic on US 17 and to provide interest to Main Street.

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 2 and 4

	STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1.	Coordinate with FDOT regarding potential conflicts with future placement of arch.	Short-term	Complete
2.	Coordinate with neighboring Property owners regarding placement of the arch.	Short-term	
3.	Develop arch design and engineering plans	Mid-term	
4.	Install arch: Goal of installation with completion of US 17 realignment	Mid-term	

FUNDING: Town, Private Donations



PROJECT: MAIN STREET DIRECTIONAL MONUMENT SIGN AT SOUTHERN END OF MAIN STREET/US 17 REALIGNMENT

DESCRIPTION: Monument sign placed at the southern end of the Main Street District to alert pass by traffic of Zolfo Springs' Main Street

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 2 and 4

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Coordinate with property owners to determine potential options for sign location	Short-term	
2. Develop monument sign design and engineering plans	Short-term	
3. Install monument sign: Goal of installation with completion of US 17 realignment	Mid-term	

FUNDING: Town, Private Donations



PROJECT: MAIN STREET ROAD DIET

DESCRIPTION: Reduction from 4-lanes to 2-lanes with the inclusion of parallel parking

VISION GOAL(S): Goal 1

	STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1.	Receive Main Street from FDOT	Short-term	In progress
2.	Consider lowering the speed to 30 or 25 mph	Short-term	
3.	Coordinate with adjacent property owners regarding on-street parking and parklets	Mid-term	
4.	Determine preferred parklet locations	Mid-term	
5.	Engineer restriping plan	Mid-term	
6.	Install restriping and signage for on-street parking	Mid-term	

FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development



PROJECT: PARKLETS ON MAIN STREET

DESCRIPTION: Parklets provide areas for seating, shade, and/or art for users of the street.

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 3 and 4

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Receive Main Street from FDOT	Short-term	In progress
2. Develop requirements for parklets	Short-term	
3. Coordinate with adjacent property owners regarding potential locations for parklets	Mid-term	
4. Determine preferred parklet locations	Mid-term	
5. Implement parklet installation	Mid-term and Long-term	

FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: PROVIDE SHADE AND PROTECTION FROM ELEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIANS

DESCRIPTION: Provide for opportunities for protection for pedestrians

VISION GOAL(S): Goal 3

	STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1.	Development of provisions for inclusion of shade and element protection through the Land Development Regulations	Short-term	In progress
2.	Installation of canopies along Main Street	Long-term	
3.	Promotion of installation of landscaping on properties adjacent to US 17	Mid-term and Long-term	
4.	Installation of parklets along Main Street	Mid-term and long-term	

FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: ADD PUBLIC ART IN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

DESCRIPTION: Provide for the inclusion of public art by the businesses, residents, or other groups

VISION GOAL(S): Goal 3

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Review and update the Land Development Regulations to provide for the inclusion of public art.	Short-term	In progress
2. Provide encouragement for the inclusion of public art along Main Street and US 17	Short-term	In progress
3. Install a mural on the Civic Center, the Fire Department, or other Town facility on Main Street	Mid-term	
4. Coordinate with the Florida Cracker Association or other group to establish a Florida Cracker Trail monument and/or art in a parklet	Mid-term and Long-term	

FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: IMPROVE FACILITIES AND INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BICYCLISTS

DESCRIPTION: Bicycling is an important mode of transportation for many people in Hardee County. The Downtown Area needs to incorporate more facilities and opportunities to support bicycle riders.

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 2 and 3

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Review and update the Land Development Code to provide for bicycle facilities.	Short-term	In progress
2. Provide encouragement for the inclusion of bicycle related facilities in the Downtown area.		
3. Develop Park-to-Park connector trail to support safe routes for bicyclists		

FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: PROVIDE IMPROVEMENTS TO AREA PARKS

DESCRIPTION: The four Town maintained parks within the Downtown Area provide a valuable resource to the Downtown Area. They parks are in need of improvement,

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 3, 4, and 5

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Continue applying for grants for the parks	Short-term through Long-term	On going
2. City Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovation of Existing Picnic Facility Renovation of Tennis and Basketball Courts Construction of Bicycle Trail, Picnic Facility, and Playground Equipment Construction of a gazebo, pavilion, or band shell 		
3. Martin Luther King Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of Playground Equipment Renovation of Picnic Facility 		
4. Carmen Vasquez Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Playground Equipment Bike Path Renovations to the existing playground equipment, picnic equipment, Basketball Courts, and Soccer Field 		

FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: DEVELOP A PARK-TO-PARK CONNECTOR TRAIL


DESCRIPTION: Develop a connection system between the area parks to provide for increased recreation opportunities and an additional asset for the Town.

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 3, 4, and 5

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Work with stakeholders to determine the preferred connection route.	Short-term	
2. Designate trail route in Comprehensive Plan	Short-term	
3. Establish the intent of the connector trail – walkers, bicyclists, walk for fitness, etc.	Short-term	
4. Determine preferred method of identification – signage, painting on ground, etc.	Short-term	
5. Engineer missing connection components	Mid-term to Long-term	
6. Construct missing connection components and method of identification	Mid-term to Long-term	

FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: EVALUATION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE			
DESCRIPTION: Evaluate the Codes to determine if changes are necessary to implement the vision plan.			
VISION GOAL(S): All Goals			
FUNDING: Town, Grants			
STEPS		TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1.	Develop Overlay Districts for the Land Development Code	Short-term	In-progress
2.	Review the Comprehensive Plan for any inconsistencies with the Vision	Short-term	
3.	Review the Land Development Code for any inconsistencies with the Vision	Short-term	



PROJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN AREA TO STAND OUT AS A DESTINATION

DESCRIPTION: Provide for required and encouraged standards and guidelines to generate a sense of place throughout the Downtown District

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7

	STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1.	Review and amend Land Development Code for inclusion of design guidelines and standards	Short-term	In progress
2.	Develop opportunities to assist existing business owners with implementation of guidelines and requirements	Short-term and Mid-term	

FUNDING: Town, Grants



PROJECT:	ENHANCE CONNECTION TO FLORIDA CRACKER TRAIL AND PEACE RIVER		
DESCRIPTION:	Provide for connections to these resources to provide opportunities for increased economic development.		
VISION GOAL(S):	Goals 1, 2, 4, and 5		
STEPS		TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1.	Work with the Florida Cracker Trail Association to promote an improved connection with the Town and the Trail	Short-term	
2.	As US 17 is realigned, request travel sites and other sources to update their information to state that the Florida Cracker Trail follows Main Street, Not US 17.	Short-term and Mid-term	
3.	Develop a monument, interactive exhibit, or some other component in the Main Street Core to provide information to people and to provide another reason for people to visit Main Street.	Short-term and Mid-term	
4.	Coordinate with the Florida Cracker Trail Association to develop an event for the time they stay in Town.	Short-term	
5.	Look for opportunities to tie the Downtown to the Peace River.	Short-term and Mid-term	
FUNDING:	Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships		



PROJECT: COORDINATE WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DESCRIPTION: The jurisdictions in Hardee County could work together to promote themselves as a region, increasing the economic opportunities for all.

VISION GOAL(S): Goal 4

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
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1. Work with stakeholders to determine the preferred connection route.	Short-term	
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FUNDING: Town, Grants, private development, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: DEVELOP TOWN AND/OR DOWNTOWN AREA BRANDING

DESCRIPTION: Development of branding for the Town can serve as another form of advertising

VISION GOAL(S): Goals 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Work with stakeholders to determine branding option.	Short-term	
2. Adopt new branding	Short-term and Mid-term	
3. Incorporate new branding into Town website and other Town materials.	Mid-term	
4. Utilize branding for advertising purposes	Mid-term	

FUNDING: Town, public/private partnerships



PROJECT: DEVELOP A DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN AND DOWNTOWN AREA SUPPORT SYSTEM

DESCRIPTION: Town Government, businesses, residents, civic groups, and other stakeholders are all needed to implement components of the Vision Plan

VISION GOAL(S): All Goals

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
1. Find people, business, Town Staff, elected officials, or other people who can be Champions of the Vision Plan to promote its continuation.	Short-term	
2. Facilitate the work of the Champions of the Vision Plan through a provision of meeting space or allotted time on the Council agenda for updates.	Short-term	
3. Utilize the Downtown Vision Plan in project review and matters related to the Downtown Area to ensure the Town’s Vision is considered.	Short-term	

FUNDING: Town



Appendix C – Potential Implementation Tools and Funding Opportunities

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

Implementation of this Vision Plan does not rest solely with the Town government. Developers, business owners, property owners, and residents all need to play a part in the projects. The success of this plan will rely on having a group of champions to organize the work on individual projects. People skilled in organizing and leading groups, in overcoming obstacles, and in some cases raising funds will bring about change and measurable progress towards implementing this plan.

Some projects identified in this plan closely align to the roles and responsibilities of certain governmental services, but others go

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

The following sources of funding are potential sources to be used to carry out the goals and strategies of the Zolfo Springs Downtown Vision Plan.

Neighborhood Improvement Districts

Neighborhood Improvement Districts are geographical areas within a municipality that are designated by the governing body to which assessments are made for the purpose of making improvements (FS 163.511). These districts are generally formed to finance infrastructure improvements. The powers of the Neighborhood Improvement Districts are defined in Florida Statutes 163.514 and include powers related to (as established in its creation): purchase



or management of property; applying for and accepting grants; controlling funds; promotion and advertisement; improvement of lighting, parks streets, drainage, and utilizes; undertaking innovative approaches to secure neighborhood from crime; privatize, close, vacate, plan, or replan streets with the concurrence of the local government and FDOT, if necessary; eminent domain. The neighborhood improvement district is established through referendum approval and any special assessment (up to 2 mils) is also approved through referendum.

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.

Enterprise Zones

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

Town General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund Revenues

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

On a limited basis, certain Downtown Vision Plan actions may be able to utilize the time and talents of Town staff on special projects without requiring a major, permanent reallocation of Town resources to a new mission. Some Vision Plan actions may even fit within the normal scope of work of some Town departments.



City Enterprise Funds

Many towns 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 Town-wide, for which it is possible to clearly identify the service user and how much of the service they are using (such as water or sewer). Occasionally the mission and purposes associated with these enterprise funds may overlap with downtown strategies and actions. Upsizing of water, sewer, or electrical lines to serve new office and residential buildings downtown (the costs of which would ultimately be borne by the developers of these buildings or their eventual utility-using tenants) would fall into this category, especially to the extent that improvements would also benefit the flow, efficiency, peak period capacity, etc., of citywide systems.

User Fees

Some Town operations which are not enterprise funds may nonetheless charge individual users for services they provide. This happens commonly with the use of some parks and recreation facilities and attendance at some Town-sponsored cultural events. User fees may be employed to offset the costs of events called for in the Plan. User fees offer several benefits. When properly applied,

user fees provide a fair and equitable method for assessing service charges between users, while generating necessary revenues to support operations and maintenance.

Impact Fees

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

Partnerships with Other Jurisdictions

Zolfo Springs can collaborate with other jurisdictions to develop activities, promote regional economic development, and share resources. For example, Zolfo Springs could collaborate with



another jurisdiction on Community Development Block Grant funds by pooling them so that each jurisdiction has more funds at the time they are implementing projects. Instead of each jurisdiction using a small amount each year, they take turns loaning each other their CDBG funds, which allows both municipalities to do larger projects with CDBG money than they would have been able to do on their own.

Projects Undertaken by Other Governmental Entities

To the extent that the State of Florida, Hardee County, the Hardee County School District, and other levels of government have responsibility for certain services and facilities, their interests will sometimes be aligned with downtown priorities. Two major downtown streets, US 17 and SR 64 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 Town to state its interests clearly.

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

Federal and State Grants

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

- *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. 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.
- *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.

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

Zolfo Spring’s initiative to revitalize the Downtown area will be bolstered by private investment from local businesses. For example, the redevelopment of existing buildings, updating of existing facades, or new building construction can improve downtown activity and variety. The manner in which this new investment is deployed will be critically important for the development of Downtown. High-quality and well-maintained landscaping, well-designed new parklets serving as outdoor gathering places, and building designs which are both sustainable and complementary of the traditional Zolfo Springs 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

Downtown Zolfo Springs includes many decades-old buildings that should be recognized as resources to be marshaled in fulfilling this vision. Private investment will be needed to enhance their quality. Government does not have all the resources necessary to fulfill all plan objectives (nor would that be desirable). Just as new private development is crucial to downtown success, so also is investment in the maintenance and imaginative re-use of existing buildings by their private-sector owners and tenants the key to achieving the downtown vision.

Donors

Certain actions identified in this plan lend themselves particularly well to funding by private donors, either large or small. Parklets, and public art can be difficult for local government to fund, but are great rallying opportunities for donors. Sponsoring items such as memorial trees, benches, or a paving brick which memorializes a person’s name in a new plaza or walkway has become a popular way to attract many small donors to participate in a large project



and can help to build community interest and ownership in changes taking place in a downtown. Zolfo Springs and the Hardee County community are home to many companies that would be ideal community partners.

Foundations and Private Organizations

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

As fundraising proceeds for projects in downtown Zolfo Springs, the Project Champions should systematically survey foundations and private organizations to identify those that may be oriented to the vision objectives of Downtown Zolfo Springs.

Incentives

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

