

# NORTH PORT ST. JOE

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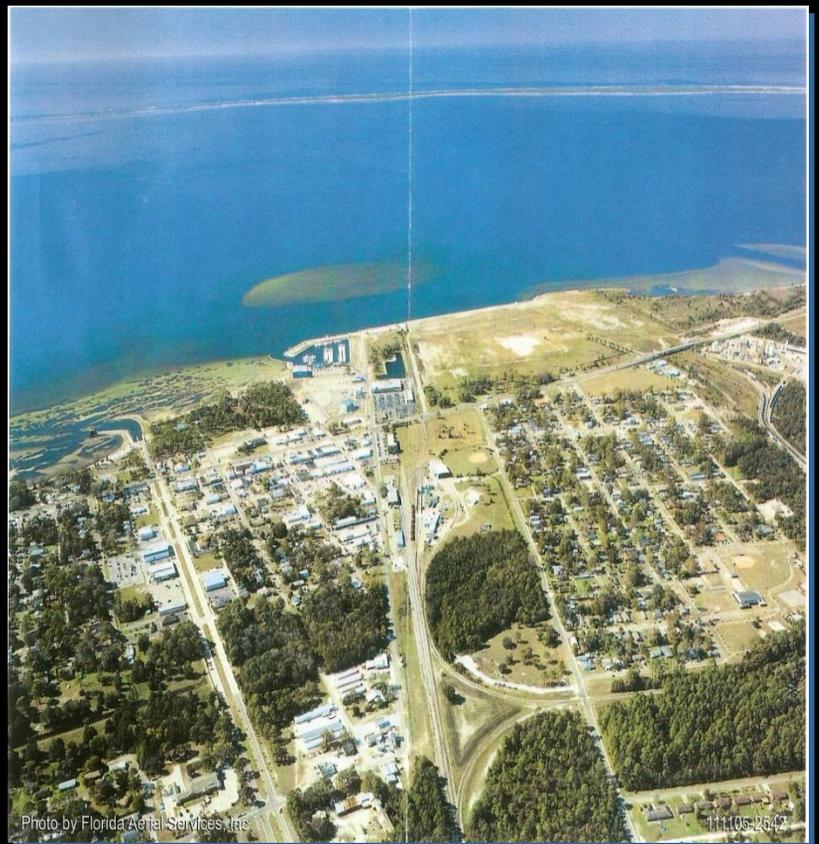
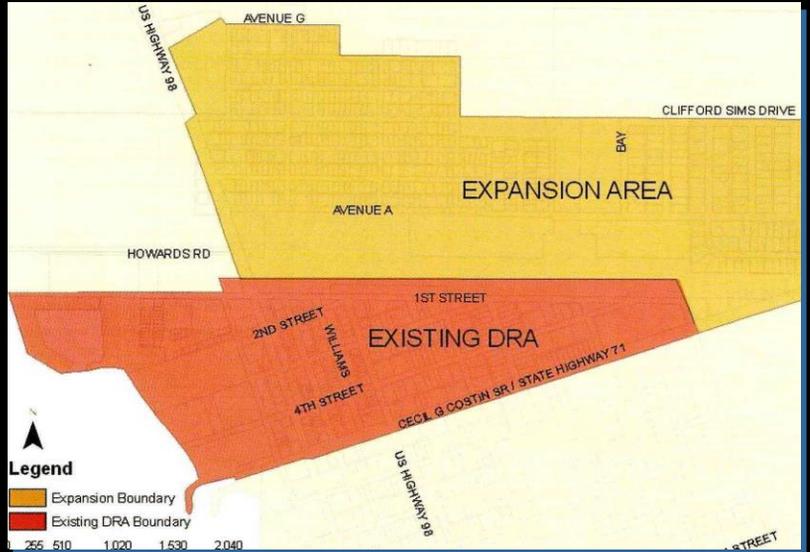
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Prepared For: PORT ST. JOE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
Prepared By: W.I.M. ASSOCIATES, INC.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **North Port St. Joe Master Plan** represents the articulation of the vision and dreams of the community. It is the culmination of a detailed planning effort with a public outreach component involving stakeholders from the City of Port St. Joe, in general and the North Port St. Joe community, in particular. The Master Plan is divided into four sections and is designed to facilitate specific development scenarios available to the North St. Joe community.

A successful redevelopment effort by the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency must incorporate all planning efforts and studies completed and/or underway. They include the *Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency Plan*, the *Waterfront Strategic Plan*, the *Finding of Necessity Study Report for 2006 Expansion Area*, *The Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan* and this effort - *The North Port St. Joe Master Plan*.

The Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan is the “envelope” which contains the North Port St. Joe Master Plan. The Master Plan is one of the devices used by the Redevelopment Agency to refine implementation strategies and identify how best to employ resources. The Redevelopment Plan is the instrument which gives the Redevelopment Agency its authority to focus public resources on eradicating blight and blighting conditions.

The designated redevelopment areas overlap the Waterfront Strategic Planning Area. The Redevelopment Agency has the legal jurisdictional authority, to employ public resources which impact all major development and redevelopment planning efforts in the Existing DRA, the Expansion Area (North Port St. Joe) and the Waterfront Partnership Area. *It encompasses the “Oneness” of an effective implementation strategy, involving various redevelopment project activities, in the City of Port St. Joe.*

The North Port St. Joe Master Plan will focus on the following:

- Developing alternatives for underutilized or vacant property by encouraging a diversity of medium to high-density development, including residential, shopping and recreation choices within the study area.
- Encouraging focused infill and redevelopment with a stakeholder consensus built design theme.
- Developing “Smart Growth” streetscape, and pedestrian/bicycle access to provide linkages and access to a range of travel modes including

roadways, walking and biking which enable residents and visitors access to all uses within the study area, in particular and through the planned redevelopment area, in general.

- Creating civic space and focal points that improve and brand the community's identity.
- Increasing employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Increasing the desirability of redeveloping land served by existing infrastructure at activity centers utilizing Smart Growth and New Urbanism themes.
- Creating a land use framework which encourages private capital investment and creates opportunities for public/private partnering within the study area.

The plan will be divided into the following four sections:

### **Section I - Inventory and Analysis**

This section summarizes the initial phase of the North Port St. Joe Master Plan. The process will include the documentation of existing conditions within the project area such as study area context, demographics, existing land use, zoning, historic resources, existing transportation and study area issues/opportunities and market conditions.

### **Section II - Master Planning**

This section outlines the vision established by the North Port St. Joe community through the public outreach process, which will analyze future land uses, circulation and potential development opportunities for the North Port St. Joe Redevelopment Area. Included in this section are "area specific" design concepts and a prioritization of catalyst projects.

This section reflects the community's vision, derived from a series of workshops and analysis of current and archival planning documents; including Friend of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan, Waterfront Strategic Plan and Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan. The Master Plan will explore potential phased development opportunities which will emanate from the expanded redevelopment project area.

### **Section III - Implementation Plan**

The Action Plan describes mechanisms for implementing the land uses described in the Master Plan and the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Area Expansion Plan. Elements of this section include:

- Recommendations for implementing the plan
- Zoning classification changes
- Projections of project costs
- Identified funding resources to enhance employment and business opportunities

This section will analyze economic and demographic data to be incorporated into a workable strategy for achieving a development without displacement objective. A “stakeholder designed” Community Transformation model will be introduced which utilizes a comprehensive tool box of resources and best practices for a practical and creative implementation strategy. Included in this section would be the establishment of specific strategic planning options and a Community Benefits Agreement, which will include provisions for achieving the following:

- Affordable and Workforce Housing
- Living Wages
- First Source Hiring
- Targeted Job Opportunities For Low-Income Residents
- Minority Business Development and Utilization

#### **Section IV - Appendix**

The final section of the Master Plan provides documentation of the public involvement component of the planning process and detailed market and planning data included or summarized in the body of the Master Plan.

# INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

Many of the issues necessary for review and analysis in the redevelopment effort addressed in the recent studies will be incorporated in the North Port St. Joe Master Plan. It is important that some issues be re-examined and critical issues be brought to the table, so that the North Port St. Joe community better understands what the existing conditions are in order to develop a Master Plan that will not only address the physical and esthetic conditions, but the socio-economic conditions as well. The approach is to meet the needs of the community by creating and implementing a **sustainable redevelopment plan** that will identify the type of resources necessary to support and maintain long term community and economic development.

Notwithstanding the findings in various studies recently completed, it is important to analyze the economic conditions of the entire redevelopment area. However, for purposes of this document, the socio-economic analysis must be specific to the CRA expansion area that includes North Port St. Joe. This will be useful in determining what the needs are in the area and assist in developing a sustainable and viable community redevelopment plan, while at the same time developing a plan consistent with the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency Plan.

## Existing Conditions

This section of the Master Plan incorporates findings and analysis of recent planning documents and studies germane to understanding the North Port St. Joe Study Area's connectivity to overlapping planning districts. Further, a Master Plan, by nature, seeks to qualify and quantify the development opportunities for the subject area. The information contained in the recent studies clearly illustrates how intricately connected the North Port St. Joe Study Area is to the design, sequencing and overall marketing of the City of Port St. Joe to visitors, consumers and business interests throughout its ever expanding market area.

The findings include an assessment of the condition of the residential housing stock, land uses, utilities, public transportation and the visual character of buildings that could influence development or utilization of the community's land-based resources. The following reports, along with community workshops

and planning sessions have been used in examining and evaluating the existing conditions:

- Finding of Necessity Report for the 2006 Expansion Area, prepared by Land Design Innovations (LDI)
- Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan, prepared by Florida State University (FSU), department of Urban/Regional Planning, in association with the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund
- PORT ST. JOE WATERFRONT PARTNERSHIP "WATERFRONT STRATEGIC PLAN" , prepared by LDI
- Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency Plan, prepared by LDI

### Study Area Boundaries

The analysis in the LDI's Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency Plan is confined to a specific geographic area of approximately 24 acres. The Master Plan Area expands these boundaries to include vacant property north of the proposed boundaries, which is inclusive of 45 acres parcel, earmarked for affordable housing. The original "Study Area" is roughly bordered by 1st Street on the south, Royal Street on the east; Clifford Sims and Avenue G to the north and Hodrick Road and US-98 to the west. <sup>1</sup> Added to these boundaries is an area bordered by US Highway 98 to the west, the Royal Street to the west, Ave "G" and the railroad tracks to the north and Royal St. to the east. The new area boundaries encompasses, the northern most part of the North Port St. Joe community.

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<sup>1</sup> Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan, Finding of Necessity Report for the 2006 Expansion Area, prepared by Land Design Innovations (LDI)

# MAP I ORIGINAL BOUNDARIES – PORT ST. JOE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA



The entire redevelopment Study Area encompasses the community known as North Port St. Joe. The Port St. Joe community is within the Study Area and is primarily composed of residential homes on relatively small lots. There were a total of approximately 588 parcels within the Study Area, according to the findings in the Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan.

MAP 2  
NEW BOUNDARIES  
A. PORT ST. JOE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT  
B. NORTH PORT ST. JOE EXPANDED AREA



**B. North Port St. Joe Expanded Area**

**A. Port St. Joe Downtown Redevelopment**

The main roads that service the Study Area are US Highway 98, State Highway 71, Royal Street and Avenue A. Map I, graphically illustrates the interdependence of the proposed PSJ Redevelopment Plan Expansion Area boundaries and the former existing boundaries of the Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA).

### MAP 3 MAJOR ROADS



**HYW 98**

**HYW 71**

**AVENUE "A"**

Included in the Master Plan are findings and reports which document the existing conditions within North Port St. Joe, including the residential housing; commercial and public facilities; land-use patterns; utilities access; public transportation and the visual character of buildings. The Master Plan will

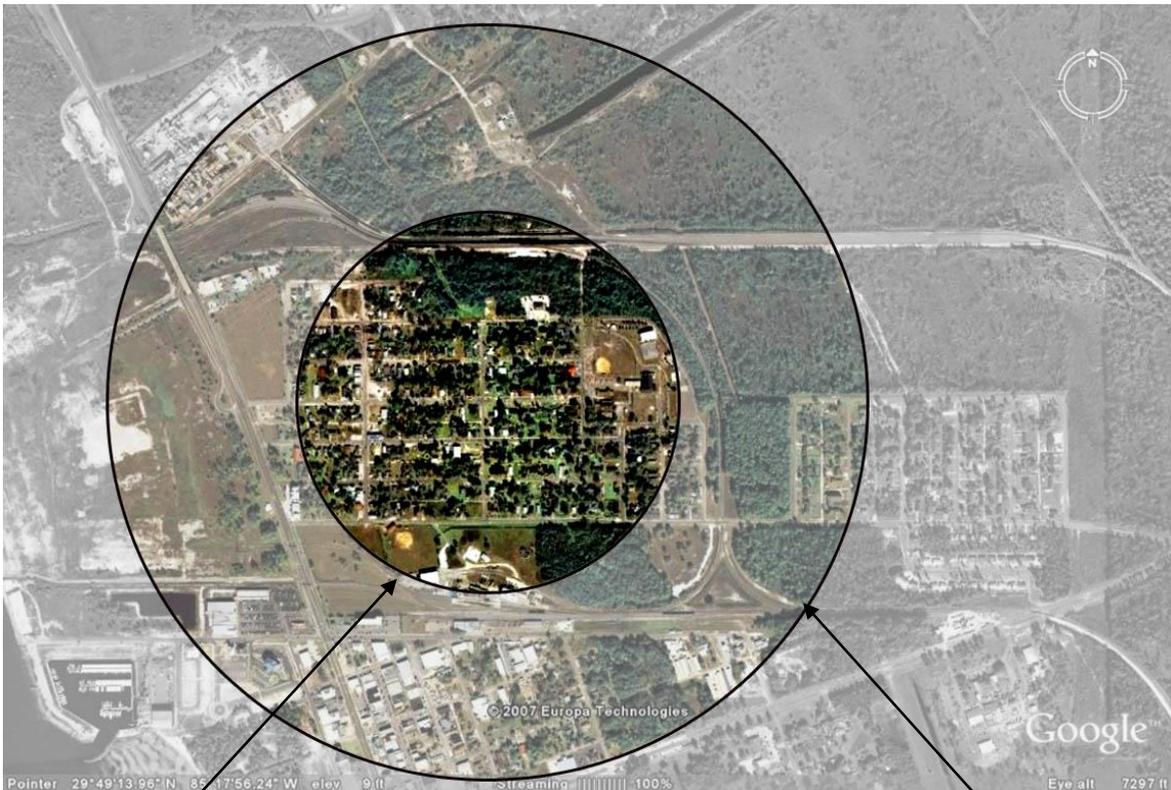
evaluate and determine how best to utilize community land-based resources to enhance the quality of life and encourage private capital investments, essential to implement the Master Plan.

The development of the North Point St. Joe Master Plan uses a holistic and comprehensive, community-driven, planning process that safeguards community stakeholders' interest while maximizing opportunities for complementary redevelopment. There are seven "Opportunity Zones" which could conceivably accommodate catalyst project opportunities. A catalyst project may encompass the entire Opportunity Zone or be a subset of an entire development effort. Opportunity Zones are those sectors which are strategically positioned within North Port St. Joe Study Area, and have the greatest potential of influencing development patterns in the future. The Opportunity Zones include:

- Martin Luther King Blvd Commercial Corridor
- US Highway 98 Commercial Corridor
- Washington High School Center Area
- Avenue "A" Commercial Corridor
- Proposed Joe Town Center Area
- Railway Corridor
- Vacant and Underutilize parcels

Most of the Study Area is within a half mile radius. The core of the North Port St. Joe Study Area is defined by a stable single-family residential community, with a large number of vacant lots and deteriorated housing units. Two barriers are the principal physical impediments to pedestrian access between the Study Area and downtown conveniences. One is the Joe Building, an imposing visual element of the Study Area, serving as a historical reminder of the demarcation of racial divide between the predominantly African American community and broader Port St. Joe community.

## MAP 4 RADIUS MAP



**1/2 MILE RADIUS**

**1 MILE RADIUS**

Another barrier, separating the primary central business district and the North Port St. Joe community is the rail yard. Commercial activity for the North Port St. Joe community has been historically limited to the Martin Luther King Blvd corridor. While the entire downtown is within approximately 1/4 mile (five minute walk) radius of North Port St. Joe, the circulation network is uninviting to pedestrian travel.

The redevelopment of Port St. Joe is an important step in enhancing the quality of life in an older, established neighborhood. Creating and maintaining lively and attractive streets and buildings stimulate investment in the commercial core

and historic neighborhoods, which could provide a physical framework for a cultural tourism strategy. There is a sufficient amount of social and physical urban fabric that remains intact to serve as a basis and guide for a tourist-oriented economic revitalization effort.

### Comprehensive Community Planning

While (regional) benefits of urban redevelopment have been well documented, these projects must be balanced with upgraded local infrastructure; an understanding of historical context, a careful examination of existing conditions, an adherence to sound urban planning and design principles and citizen input through a series of public meeting and stakeholder workshops.

Several workshops and public meetings were held to define a community vision for land use, urban design, economic development, transportation, and other issues. The Master Plan provides goals to guide immediate and future improvements in the City. The plan is intended for four audiences:

- The residents and businesses of North Port St. Joe, who, at the end of the day who will be affected the most, must embrace the recommendations and guide its implementation through a creative process of community engagement.
- The consultants and public agency staff designing and administering the actual improvements must understand how components of the plan and implementation strategy fit together.
- The regional Bay and Gulf County marketplace that can benefit from a collaborative branding and economic impact of the overall City of Port St. Joe renaissance.
- Public/Private financial and human resource networks that can provide the resources for the plan's implementation.

### Project Area Expansion

The purpose of the Master Plan is to define the context of the area, design intent, program, and projects necessary to promote certain street enhancements, transportation improvements, and redevelopment ideas. As a part of the redevelopment plan expansion, a land use and infrastructure assessment is done, which includes information on current and future land use and population projections.

## Goals of the Plan

The goal of the Master Plan is to establish criterion for community involvement which orients projects toward improving the livability and connectivity of neighborhoods. A community-supported strategy for guiding growth and capital improvements, in a predictable and desirable way, for the commercial and residential neighborhoods is essential to good planning. The urban design and land-use planning is intended to establish a vision that ensures that revitalization efforts are innovative, inclusive and consistent with City of Port St. Joe policies. The marketing component is intended to guide future development as it relates to the type and mix of commercial and residential uses. These components are vital in influencing the nature and extent of public/private capital investment and its impact on the quality of life for residents, property owners, and merchants.

As stated in the Finding of Necessity Study Report, most of the Study Area is residential, with little or no commercial activity along the corridors designated as "commercial" for the redevelopment plan. This provides for a market opportunity for locally owned commercial development but must be carefully studied. This however, assumes that market conditions will change once the Master Plan becomes a reality.

Since the Study Area is primarily residential, it offers opportunities for new affordable housing, housing rehab, upgrades and remodeling. It is significant to note that the Study Area may be expanded to include adjacent developable property due North of the established residential core of the Study Area. The community requested this property be included in the Expansion Area and the Redevelopment planning meeting on April 12, 2007. This acreage could be a major catalyst for future economic development.

Under Title XI, Chapter 163, Section 163.360 of Florida Statutes, the inclusion of the vacant parcel(s) to the north of the primary study area is allowable under certain conditions. Sub-section (8) of Section 163.360 states the following:

*If the community redevelopment area consists of an area of open land to be acquired by the county or the municipality, such area may not be so acquired unless:*

*(a) In the event the area is to be developed in whole or in part for residential uses, the governing body determines:*

1. *That a shortage of housing of sound standards and design which is decent, safe, affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, and sanitary exists in the county or municipality;*
  2. *That the need for housing accommodations has increased in the area;*
  3. *That the conditions of blight in the area or the shortage of decent, safe, affordable, and sanitary housing cause or contribute to an increase in and spread of disease and crime or constitute a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare; and*
  4. *That the acquisition of the area for residential uses is an integral part of and is essential to the program of the county or municipality.*
- (b) In the event the area is to be developed in whole or in part for nonresidential uses, the governing body determines that:*

1. *Such nonresidential uses are necessary and appropriate to facilitate the proper growth and development of the community in accordance with sound planning standards and local community objectives...*

## Market Conditions

The various studies referenced above have provided a compilation of demographic data and economic characteristics of the community, useful in assessing market conditions. The formulation of a Master Plan requires knowledge of the market area. This data along with community and stakeholders input will aid in the determining the potential new opportunities and the resources necessary to meet the needs of the community. While the Master Plan provides the framework for the use of entitlements and public resources to facilitate development, further detailed study and analysis of the uses of the proposed Master Plan must be performed as specific projects come on line. This process will review and analyze historical trends and future trends in the market area that will support the new uses embodied in the North Port St. Joe Master Plan. Again, the Master Plan must be sustainable and compatible with the over-all master planning of the City of St. Joe Redevelopment Agency.

### Primary Market Area

The primary market area for North Port St. Joe includes the entire Expansion Area and the key commercial corridors and vacant land in the Study Areas. The focus on this market area must be the residents of the community who are providing input to the planning process. The North Port St. Joe Master Plan will focus on social and economic elements such as affordable housing, housing rehabilitation, housing upgrading or remodeling, and senior housing and assisted

care. The primary area will also identify local business development opportunities, and industrial development opportunities to create much needed jobs in the community. Jobs create wealth and in turn provide an increase tax base to help establish a viable and healthy North Port St. Joe community.

### Secondary Market Area

Because of linkage between the downtown business district and Waterfront Partnership Area, we will consider these redevelopment areas as the Secondary Market Areas. Usually, the Secondary Market area is significant to the Primary Market in terms of economic benefit. These three areas are very significant to the over-all Master Plan not only due to their location but all three areas must support each other in order to generate a successful economic model and create a self-sustaining successful Master Plan.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Drawing from the data published by the afore-mention studies and a review of the 2000 Census, it is fairly easy to draw certain conclusions about the Expansion Area. In summary, the North Port St. Joe (NPSJ) yields a more elderly community, lower household income, and a declining workforce. However, even though in comparison to the City of Port St. Joe (PSJ), where conditions are much better, **the economic needs are the same.** This in effect, is strong justification for the redevelopment effort for the entire area.

Table A.  
Demographic Comparison 2000 Census

Area	NPSJ	PSJ
Number of Residents	1010	3644
Median Household Income	\$20,417	\$33,800
Unemployment	15%	3%
Workforce Population	45%	50%
% Age 65 or Older	55%	36%
Vacant Commercial Property	63%	42%*
Vacant Residential Property	22%	11%
Estimated Population Decline (1990 – 2000)	28%	3%

\*Vacant Commercial Property for Gulf County. Vacant Parcels Map can be found on page 41 of the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency Plan.

## Population Trends

The population of the City of Port St. Joe and North Port St. Joe, particularly, has experienced drastic shifts over its storied history caused by natural disasters and economic realignment. St. Joseph, Florida, founded in 1835, was once a boomtown, credited with hosting the first Constitutional Convention for Florida, leading to statehood and having one of the finest natural harbors on the Gulf Coast of the United States. The port and railroads access connected St. Joseph with the Apalachicola River which facilitated trade in cotton and lumber goods being shipped down the river to the port of Apalachicola. By 1837 St. Joseph had become the most populous place in the Territory of Florida, with approximately 6,000 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

The first population shift occurred in 1841 when a ship brought yellow fever to St. Joseph, killing many of the town's inhabitants and causing a mass exodus. A second shift occurred when a hurricane in 1843 created a large storm surge, destroying the abandoned town. The area remained uninhabited for the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The third shift in population occurred in 1938, when the St. Joe Paper Company pulp and paper mill was opened. An industry leader in the manufacture of corrugated cardboard boxes, the St. Joe Paper Company and mill profited from the industrial and war effort needs of World War II. By 1954 it was the major employer in the area, producing 1,200 tons of product daily; making it one of the largest mills in the world at that time.

Between 1971 and 1993 the St. Joe Paper Company grappled with labor strikes, civil rights challenges and a plunge in the linerboard prices, resulting in a loss of almost \$20 million in 1993. In 1996 St. Joe Company sold the mill and the container plants to Florida Coastal Paper. Florida Coastal Paper operated the plant intermittently through 1997, declaring bankruptcy in 1999. The closing of the mill had a significant impact upon the City of Port St. Joe and its residents. The North Port St. Joe community was significantly impacted through the loss of jobs at the mill, mill facilities and associated industries which were the largest employers of residents of North Port St. Joe.

## Demographic and Social Environment

The North Port St. Joe Study Area is in Census Block Group 3, which contained 1,010 people in 2007. The population within Census Block Group 3 declined from

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<sup>2</sup> Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan, Finding of Necessity Report for the 2006 Expansion Area, prepared by Land Design Innovations (LDI)

1990 to 2000 by 27.8% or 342 people. Younger adults are moving out of the area rapidly. Block Group 3 had 265 residents in 1990 between the ages of 20-34, but in 2000 that number was down to 110 residents. Block Group 3 has a lower income level than the county or city. The 2000 median income level for Block Group 3 was \$20,417.00. The Median Income level for the City was \$33,800.00 and for the County was \$30,276.008. Unemployment in Block Group 3 is high. The unemployment rate in 2000 was 15%, approximately five (5) times the rate of the City and County. <sup>3</sup>

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

The demographic and social environmental factors reveal a community with a substantial elderly population, low-income households, high levels of unemployment and a declining younger population. Consequently, the aforementioned conditions are systemic of a community in decline that gradually loses its population with younger people moving out of the community and through the mortality of its elderly residents.

A principal reason for the economic decline was the closing of the St. Joe Company Paper Mill in 1998. The closing caused significant job loss and greatly reduced household income of the residents North Port St. Joe. Additionally, the population decreased 28% due to out-migration of younger residents who left the area in search of new jobs. This also caused an increase in the median age of the population. The Finding of Necessity Report City – 2006 Expansion Area stated that 55% of the residents were 65 or older. This may indicate a socioeconomic need and an opportunity for senior housing and assisted care.

Typically, Master Plans call for mixed-housing concepts. This may even hold true for North Port St. Joe. However, due to the economic decline in the community, the sustainable plan will need special programs such as “First Home Buyers” or “Down Payment Assistance Plans” as an example, and other local, state and federal programs as resources for the redevelopment effort.

As shown in Table A., unemployment in the target area was 15%. If this rate holds true, the redevelopment plan has to find ways to create jobs through local business development in retail and services and the recruitment of light clean industry in the areas identified by the land use maps. It may also prove beneficial to expand the available land use to include additional acreage for industrial use. Access to the Gulf and the Port of St. Joe may indicate a need to

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<sup>3</sup> Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan, prepared by Florida State University(FSU), department of Urban/Regional Planning, in association with the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund

review the types of industry that require deep water-access and those oriented towards boating. This will more than likely require job training programs that will facilitate training and at the same time retain the younger population and those who may be moving into the area as a result of new job opportunities.

An important element of the North St. Joe Redevelopment Plan is the need to work with the existing business base and Economic Development Organizations listed in the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency Plan. Working closely with these organizations can deliver the type of resources (programs and incentives) necessary to formulate an effective redevelopment plan. In addition, resources listed in the Waterfront Strategic Plan, along with resources of various Foundations should be brought to the table since the Waterfront Strategic Plan overlaps with the North Port St. Joe target area. A review of the resources in the community appears to be more than adequate but will require a commitment that is effectual and functional.

### Income and Employment Levels

The income levels for the North Port St. Joe area according to findings in the Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan are lower than the city, county or state. The study found that the median household incomes in 2000 for the city and county were \$33,800, and \$30,276, respectfully. The government and service sector has replace manufacturing, as the dominate employment sector. Unemployment in the Study Area is at a rate of 15%, which is higher than the city and the county.

### Housing Trends

The housing mix within the Port St. Joe Study Area is primarily comprised of single-family detached homes. Most of the residents live in their own home. There are 461 houses in the Study Area.<sup>4</sup> Two hundred seventy-four (274) of these households are homeowners and 113 are renters. Most of the Block Group 3 homeowners are elderly citizens. One hundred twenty-nine (129) owner occupied household are head by persons over the age of 65. The Friends of North Port St. Strategic Plan concluded that future projections indicate North Port St. Joe will primarily be made up of single family detached homes.

### Existing Land Use

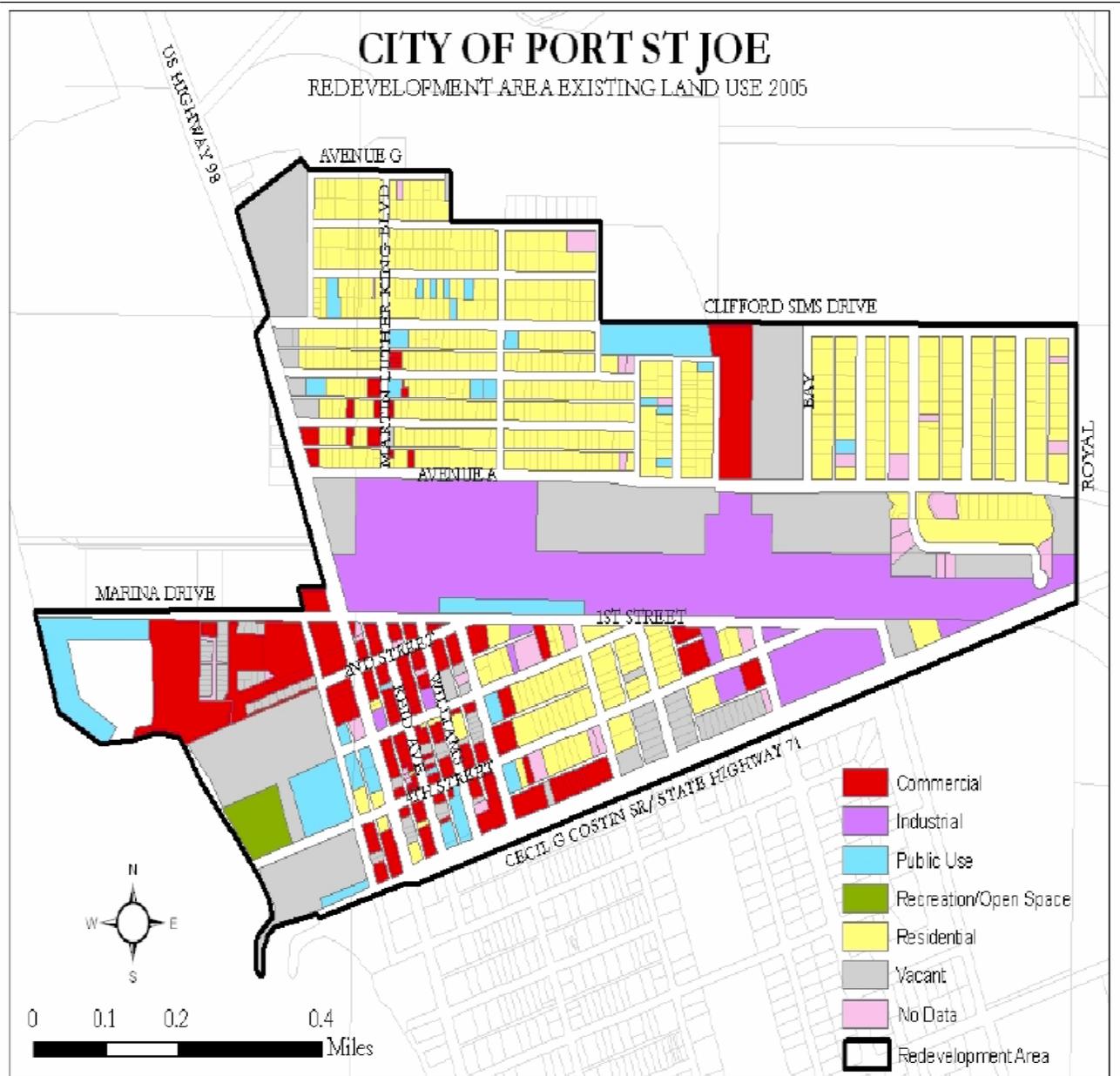
The Existing Land Use analysis defines what the current conditions are for the area. This analysis helps the community establish appropriate development patterns for the future which are complementary to existing and planned

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

development patterns. Given the proposed town center, downtown and waterfront redevelopment programs, an examination of existing enhancements and impediment would significantly impact the timeliness and scale of future development opportunities. This section will document current land uses. The primary existing land use for the Study Area is residential, with limited commercial and public uses interspersed.

## MAP 5



Source: Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency Redevelopment Plan, page 3, prepared by LDI

## Land Use and Zoning Findings

The existing densities and intensities, when viewed with the existing construction within the Study Area, do not approach the maximum allowable density or intensity. No building in the R-2 area is over 35 feet in height. Numerous lots do not satisfy the minimum setbacks or front and side yard requirements for their respective zoning districts. It appears that several lots have been subdivided, and the resulting lots are not in conformance with the existing land development codes.<sup>5</sup>

## Lot Sizes and Parcel Value

The lot sizes in the Study Area are disproportionately small compared to the rest of the State. Of the 588 parcels in the Study Area, a minimum of 357, or 61%, of the parcels are less than a total of 2,000 square feet. This is compared to 26% for the County as a whole.<sup>6</sup> The higher percentage of inadequate lots sizes in Study Area as compared to the County validates the additional need for assistance to this area. The faulty lot layout is not adequate in size or usefulness for today's market demands. These faulty lot layouts are predominant in the Study Area adjacent to Martin Luther King Boulevard, east of the former Washington school and along the connection roads between Martin Luther King Boulevard and US 98.<sup>7</sup>

## Lot Deterioration

Many of the homes and commercial structures are not well maintained in the Study Area. Many of the deteriorated structures have inadequate lot sizes that result in abandoned vehicles and other unused objects getting placed in yards and, with no strict code enforcement, it is obvious that the vehicles and objects have been present for a long period of time from the overgrowth of the yards surrounding them.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan, Finding of Necessity Report for the 2006 Expansion Area, prepared by Land Design Innovations (LDI)

<sup>6</sup> Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan, prepared by Florida State University(FSU), department of Urban/Regional Planning, in association with the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund

<sup>7</sup> Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan, Finding of Necessity Report for the 2006 Expansion Area, prepared by Land Design Innovations (LDI)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

## Existing Zoning

Zoning is the way governments control the physical development of land and the kinds of uses each individual property may put on the land. The city's zoning indicates what uses are allowed on the property without requesting special permission to place another use on the site.

Table B: Zoning Classifications within the North Port St. Joe Study Area

Zoning Classification	Definition
R-1	Zoning is for single-family dwellings primarily. Other uses allowed in this zoning classification include parks, churches, and public facilities. Every lot shall be not less than 10,000 square feet, with minimum 75mfeet frontage. The height limit is 35 feet with maximum allowed lot coverage of 40 percent. The density for this classification is less than 5 units per acre. Home occupations are not allowed.
R-2	Zoning expands the flexibility of the R-1 classification and allows for smaller yards and setbacks. There are two R-2 classifications, R-2A and R-2B.
R-2A	The same uses are allowed as in R-1. For R-2A, the height limit is 35 feet. The density for this classification is less than 7 units per acre with 60% lot coverage maximum. Other uses allowed in these zoning classifications include hospitals, medical clinics, board and lodging houses and multi-family. Home occupations are not allowed.
R-2B	The same uses are allowed as in R-1 and 2-B. For the R-2B, the density for this classification is also less than 7 units per acre with a 60% lot coverage maximum. The height limit is 60 feet. Home occupations are allowed. Other uses allowed in these zoning classifications include hospitals, medical clinics, board and lodging houses and multi-family.
R-3	The R-3 classification expands the flexibility of the R-1 and R-2 classifications and allows for the same uses found in the R-1 and R-2 zoning classification. The density for this classification is more than 7 units per acre with 80% lot coverage maximum. Home occupations are not allowed
CD	Commercial district has a C-1 and C-1A classification. Lot coverage not more than 90%. Parking lots are allowed. Allowable uses include retail commercial, service business, professional office, financial institutions, restaurant and hotels. Maximum building heights is 60 feet, with no front and side-yard set backs. Minimum rear-yard set back is 10 feet and minimum frontage is 18 feet.
I	The industrial district permits manufacturing, and any uses allowable in C-1A and C-1 districts. Other uses include cleaning & dyeing, lumber yards, wholesale distribution, gasoline storage and marina related facilities. Minimum lot coverage is 90% with no set backs.

Port St. Joe's industrial past has had a major affect on the current zoning classifications. The North Port St. Joe Study Area zoning classifications and their

intent are specified in Table B. Within the Study Area, the principal zoning classifications are single-family residential, light industrial, retail commercial, recreational and public use. The primary zoning classification within the broader Study Area, north of the area generally identified for the JOE Town Center project, is residential, with Interspersed commercial and public uses. The primary zoning of this area has a R-1, R-2 and R-3 zoning classification with sporadic commercial zoning limited to the MLK corridor on select parcels and along the railway, between Avenue "A" and the Washington High School site.

## Zoning Ordinance

Zoning ordinances are local communities regulatory provision that safeguards their ability to regulate policies to ensure the goals and objectives of the community are met. Certain districts under Port St. Joe's current zoning ordinance accomplish these goals. There are direct correlations between the local community goals and the strategies set forth under the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan. These districts assure the character of the downtown, waterfront and redevelopment planning areas are kept in tact throughout the revitalization, rehabilitation, and redevelopment process.

These districts overlay one another, requiring coordination and collaboration in establishing design standards which enhance opportunities for complementary development activities. Three districts impacting the revitalization, rehabilitation, and redevelopment efforts of Port St. Joe are the Downtown Redevelopment Area, the Waterfront Development Area and the proposed expanded Port St. Joe Redevelopment District.

## Character and Building Conditions

### Image and Character

The Study Area is a predominantly residential area with limited commercial uses located along Martin Luther King Boulevard and US Highway 98. The Study Area is an established neighborhood built primarily during the 1950's and 1960's.<sup>9</sup> Most of the units are single story situated on relatively small lots. A visual inspection of the Study Area revealed clear signs of decline and deterioration in the residential and non-residential structures.

Many of the housing units are older and deteriorating. There are a significant number of existing houses on non-conforming lots. A disproportionately higher number of homes are lacking in complete plumbing and kitchen facilities when

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<sup>9</sup> Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan, prepared by Florida State University(FSU), department of Urban/Regional Planning, in association with the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund

compared to the rest of the County.<sup>10</sup> Based upon the 2006 Strategic Plan, the majority of the homes within the North Port St. Joe communities were built before 1970. The average house was built in 1958. Over 360 of the 461 houses analyzed in the Strategic Plan, or 78%, of the housing units were built before 1970.<sup>11</sup>

Only 32 of the parcels are nonresidential uses, including office, restaurant, and hotel, industrial, mining and retail uses. According to the Gulf County Property Appraisers office, 20 of the 32 uses are currently vacant or over 63%. This is compared to only 42% of the commercial parcels in the County are vacant.<sup>12</sup> The commercial structures in the Study Area are predominantly either inadequate in size or too deteriorated to obtain current asking prices for rental rates.

The planning focus of the Master Plan is driven by the desire to encourage a “development without displacement” strategy. Consequently, planning activities will be guided by the locational advantages and predominant uses within the sphere of influence of an “opportunity zones”: An Opportunity Zone is characterize as an area of specific concentration of land resources or uses which has the greatest utility under current uses for redevelopment and/or is in the path of eminent development opportunities. The follow Opportunity Zones will be considered in this study:

- **Martin Luther King Boulevard Commercial Corridor**

The MLK commercial corridor lacks a cohesive image and a continuous building edge to the street and defined blocks. While there are few retail establishments engaging the public for retail trade, the activity level is relatively low. Many of the buildings need façade improvements and maintenance.<sup>13</sup> The Boulevard should have a streetscape with a design theme that attracts investors, tenants, customers, and tourists. There is limited parking for the commercial uses along Martin Luther King Boulevard and some of the churches in the community. There is a need for creating a focal point - space with a consistent theme and character to enhance the image and provide a cohesive character along the corridor, which defines the ‘heart’ of district.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan, Finding of Necessity Report for the 2006 Expansion Area, prepared by Land Design Innovations (LDI)

- **US Highway 98 Commercial Corridor**

The Highway 98 commercial corridor unlike MLK Blvd, while lacking continuity from along the North Port St. Joe frontage area, the commercial activity is fairly active continuing through the business district. This highway should serve as the gateway to Port St. Joe and be developed with a design theme that reflects it's uniqueness as a traffic artery which provides a linkage to Port St. Joe's historical residential and commercial areas.

- **Washington High School Center Area**

Washington High School is an important symbol of community pride and is being utilized as the hub of stakeholder and community empowerment activities. Upgrading this historical site, serving as a hub to the community, provides development opportunities for community facilities. Projects dealing with historical preservation, a business incubator, education enhancement services, cultural arts programming, and health initiatives could be housed at Washington High School "campus" site. The site also offers a wonderful opportunity for a Family Life Center with workout equipment, basketball, racket-ball, swimming pool and other programs not only for the youth but for seniors as well.

- **Avenue "A" Commercial Corridor**

The Avenue "A" corridor redevelopment is an area critical to redefining land uses that are compatible with and create appropriate transitioning between the rail yard redevelopment and residential uses. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns within North Port St. Joe are significantly influenced by the rail spur, traversing the community. Consequently, the community is physically divided at this crossroad, creating a northwest section and a northeast section.

The Avenue "A" corridor is the primary roadway used in traveling between the two sections of North Port St. Joe. There may be opportunities for higher density and creative re-uses of existing facilities to capitalize on the traffic currently generated as well as increases in uses derived from the proposed new "JOE Town Center Area".

- **Proposed JOE Town Center Area**

The single most important element of the expanded redevelopment area is the Town Center complex centrally located and proposed to serve as the nexus between the Downtown Redevelopment Area and the North Port St. Joe expansion area. Projected uses and design include a mix of residential, retail, office, open space, and civic facilities. Proposed as the hub, this area should reconnect the Port St. Joe community as "the heart" of a transformed city.

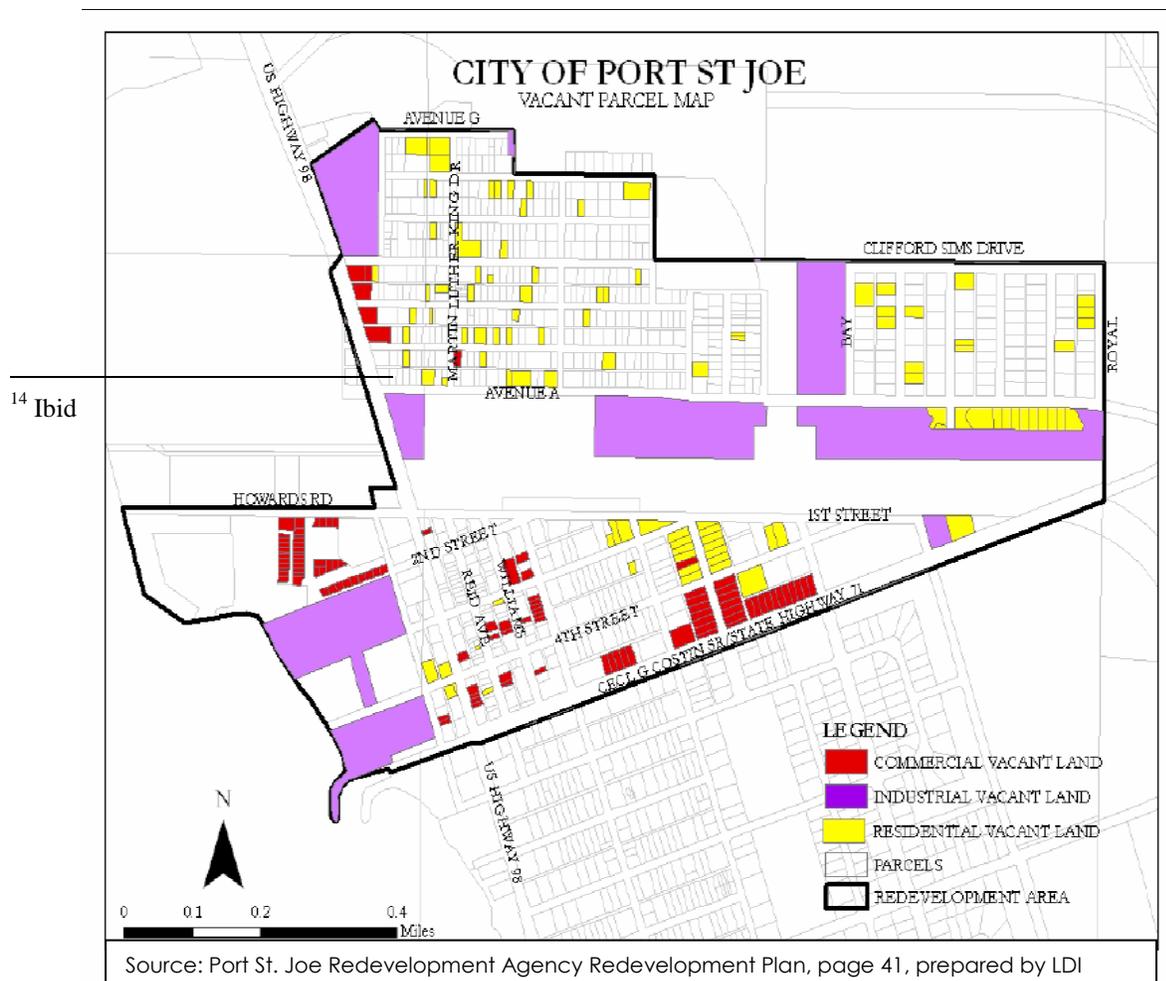
- **Railway Corridor**

The rail corridor transversing North Port St. Joe is a grossly underutilized facility, scheduled for re-use, including the abandonment of the rail-yard located within the Town Center area. The remaining rail system may provide an opportunity for green space buffers to be utilized for pedestrian oriented uses along its eastern border and a mix of uses, along its north boarder, including multifamily and commercial.

- **Vacant and Underutilized Parcels**

North Port St. Joe has several vacant and under-utilized properties. It also has low-rise development and small building footprints. It contains many under-utilized buildings, set back from the street, with surface parking, interspersed with several vacant properties.<sup>14</sup> These properties create an opportunity for

## MAP 6



## Existing Transportation and Circulation Network

### Traffic Data and Road Characteristics

While divided in east and west quadrants, the community's roadways are in grid-like pattern and provide easy flow within each quadrant. The roadways themselves are in generally good condition but lack curb and gutter. The location of sidewalks is sporadic, with gaps throughout the neighborhood. The roadways and sidewalks also tend to over-lap and "blend" together due to the lack of curb and gutter and cars frequently park on the sidewalk. The entire neighborhood is generally cut off from the rest of the downtown to the south by the former rail yard.

The extension and connection of Martin Luther King Boulevard to Reid Avenue, as proposed in the town center development project, will provide direct access to the new and historic town centers. Traffic capacity is not an issue in the Study Area under current conditions. The major thoroughfares, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and US Highway 98 appear to have adequate capacity for the existing level of development in the general area. However in light of the proposed town center development, a traffic study to evaluate the impact that the new development would have on the North Port St. Joe community may be warranted.<sup>15</sup>

### Traffic and Roadway Findings:

Many of the roadways within the Study Area lack sidewalks or curb and gutter facilities. There is limited parking for the commercial uses along Martin Luther King Boulevard and some of the churches in the community. A parking study needs to be conducted to determine the best approach to remedy the parking conditions in the Study Area. <sup>16</sup> While there is adequate traffic capacity for the existing development with a good grid system network within the Study Area, the railroad track separation of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Reid Avenue has resulted in North Port St. Joe's isolation and separation from the rest of the town. The current removal of the railroad tracks in this area along with the ensuing development of the town center project has provided an opportunity to reconnect these two areas and combine them into one Community Redevelopment Area.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

## Transit

Many of the elderly homeowners in Block Group 3 do not own transportation. There is no public transportation system. This could obviously be an opportunity for a small transportation company to serve not only Port St. Joe, but the surrounding area.

## Master Planning

The Master Plan is designed to outline the vision established by the North Port St. Joe community to analyze future land uses, circulation and potential development opportunities in developing specific design concepts and a prioritization of catalyst projects. The central theme of the plan development process is to reflect the community's vision. This vision derives from a series of workshops and an analysis of current and archival planning documents and explores potential phasing of development opportunities

A review of relevant documents, analysis of statistical data and a series of planning workshops assisted our planning team in identifying challenges and issues that helped to frame the discussion and subsequent analyses of how best to design a realizable Master Plan for the North Port St. Joe community. These efforts resulted in the conclusion that the Study Area has several key improvement areas, which are referred to in this document as "Opportunity Zones." These areas have been selected because of their strategic location. These Opportunity Zones are:

- Martin Luther King Blvd Commercial Corridor
- US Highway 98 Commercial Corridor
- Washington High School Center Area
- Avenue "A" Commercial Corridor
- Proposed Joe Town Center Area
- Railway Corridor
- Vacant and Underutilized parcels

We have defined an Opportunity Zone as being an area of sufficient size and character, in close proximity to other planned development or redevelopment projects, with the potential of influencing development patterns within the Study Area. An assessment of primary and secondary market determinants were also considered in the selection of these areas. The primary market considers uses related to key commercial areas, vacant Land, housing, industrial and recreational uses within the service area. The secondary market considers the economic benefit the primary market derives from the Downtown Business District and Waterfront Partnership Area.

Specific requirements and variables factored into our evaluation and selection of areas to be designated an Opportunity Zone are whether or not the area if redeveloped would:

- create an opportunity to retain historically significant structures/areas,

- create economic opportunities for transitional re-uses that improve the local economy,
- create an opportunity for improving the quality and character of the housing stock, and/or
- create business and employment opportunities for local residents

## Community Design Process

The preceding section of this study highlights the existing conditions of the North Port St. Joe community, including its area context, demographics, existing land use, zoning, historic resources, existing transportation, study area issues/opportunities and market conditions.

Our master planning activities, while evaluating challenges and opportunities within the entire Study Area, gives particular consideration to the creative re-use and development potential of the selected special impact areas. This master planning document is the culmination of a tireless effort of planning and visioning workshops designed to maximize community input in the plan development and implementation process.

The community, through the planning and visioning workshops, would develop a ranking of the aforementioned Opportunity Zones. Within this ranking would emerge a prioritization of the most significance areas because of the criticality of needed improvements and/or its impact as a catalyst project. Catalyst projects are essential to jump-starting the plan-implementation process and signaling to the private investment community that North Port St. Joe is open for business. Each workshop discussion was supported by a team of experts including architects, land-use planners and economic development planners.

### Community Planning Workshops

#### April 16<sup>th</sup> Community Meeting

At the initial community meeting, held at the Washington Gym, the participants were introduced to the community redevelopment process and the need for strategic planning to minimize displacement of North Port St Joe residents. Participants were informed about the importance of comprehensive planning and explored ideas about how the plan could empower the community through collective engagement, public/private partnering, a prioritization and phasing of public/private improvements, and value of a Community Benefits Agreement.

The comprehensive planning associated with developing a Master Plan for North Port St. Joe requires a holistic redevelopment planning approach that

builds consensus among community service providers, including but not limited to, churches, civic associations, community organization, public/government agencies and businesses to address community needs/opportunities. This approach empowers the community and facilitates opportunities for community controlled co-development partnering, which would significantly improve personal net worth and create opportunities for achieving financial self sufficiency.

The strategic planning involved in this project would explore opportunities for land assemblage to accommodate the development of senior housing, multi-family housing, affordable (Low Income) ownership housing, businesses and community facilities. The plan would also evaluate implementation strategies for the comprehensive community plan, to achieve economic diversity which supports the development of mixed income communities, complementing the projects currently planned for the Town Center and waterfront.

#### May 7<sup>th</sup> Workshop

The community was given copies of the first section of the Master Plan (Inventory and Analysis and Executive Summary) at the May 7<sup>th</sup> planning workshop held at the Washington Gym. Contrasting images showing North Port St. Joe's existing conditions and architectural rendering of the proposed redevelopment of waterfront and Town Center projects were presented. The development of the North Port St. Joe Master Plan articulates the vision and dreams of the community and facilitates detailed community planning with public outreach and stakeholder involvement. This is a community driven process, designed to facilitate the evolution of specific development scenarios which are inclusive and preserve the historical character of the community.

After reviewing the findings in the Inventory and Analysis report, participants were organized in work groups to begin the community visioning and planning process. Each group was provided an aerial of the redevelopment areas and waterfront area, with each of the Opportunity Zones clearly identified. Participants completed a community preference survey form Appendix (B), with consultants facilitating discussions about the type of physical improvement(s) most important to the community, considering land uses and proximity to key improvement areas.

The data was tabulated with the community selection three areas (Opportunity Zone Areas) as priority areas. The three areas identified were MLK Corridor, Avenue "A" and the Washington High School Site.

### May 24<sup>th</sup> Workshop

A workshop involving special interest focus groups (community based organization, local churches and representatives of the chamber of Commerce, downtown district and waterfront district) was held on May 24<sup>th</sup> at the fire station. A second workshop scheduled for July 9<sup>th</sup> at the library of Gulf County Commission Senior Citizens' and Community Center continued this process. These workshops were designed to build community consensus among the leadership of the community, through the collaborative efforts of agencies who are actively involved in community empowerment and business development activities. Additionally, the roles of Community Based and Faith Based Organizations in the community redevelopment planning and implementation process were discussed.

These organizations using their 501(c) (3) non-profit status provide opportunities for securing grant and/or discounted debt capital proceeds from local, state, or federal agencies, along with other foundation and philanthropic resources to finance consensus projects. They also would play key roles in empowering the community, ensuring that redevelopment protects a "needs-based constituency." Inherent benefits of building strategic alliances are the development of allegiances that:

- Creates opportunities to serve as a clearinghouse for proposals and grants, local matches for grants, and financing for projects.
- Facilitates opportunities for developing partnerships for projects, advocacy for projects and input into re-development plans.
- Creates opportunities for developing inclusionary business/housing models
- Establishes strategic partnership relationships with PSJ Redevelopment Agency, City & County Government, PSJ Land Owners & Residents

These strategic alliances are essential to community cohesion and critical to obtaining the results of redeveloping NPSJ into a better community with sustainable projects. Such collaboration would provide the leadership necessary to facilitate the development of affordable/mixed-use/senior housing, mandate public policies which support living wages, create employment and business opportunities for NPSJ and local residents and improving access to convenience shopping.

During the workshop, the community articulated the goals, issues and needs of the Study Area and commented on the finding in the Inventory and Analysis section of this study. Community issues, concerns and desires related to housing,

land use, transportation, open space, community facilities and connectivity were addressed.

Participants were given a brief description and aerials showing the location of the Opportunity Zone Areas. Participants also received a map showing the Conceptual Master Plan for the Town Center and waterfront developments. Visual illustrations and architectural rendering for the downtown and waterfront development plans were shown, illustrating contextually how North Port St. Joe is connected and related to perspectives on the visioning for the Port St. Joe future. Participants were given individual sheets for each of the Opportunity Zones and were asked to prioritize how the Opportunity Zones should be redeveloped, using the following criteria.

- Improved sidewalks
- More street lights and traffic controls
- Better Parks and Public Facilities
- Utility Upgrades
- Affordable / Mixed Income Housing
- Senior Living
- Business Opportunities
- Shopping Convenience
- Employment Opportunities

Participants were also asked to recommend uses and orientations for these areas considering the following:

- What should we Preserve in North PSJ?
- What should we Change in North PSJ?
- What should we Create in North PSJ?
- How do we Connect North PSJ to the FUTURE?

These recommendations were being made in consideration of how the areas could be redeveloped to exploit opportunities derived from the proposed Town Center, Waterfront and Downtown District developments.

### June 18<sup>th</sup> Workshop

As a follow-up to the initial visioning session at the May 7<sup>th</sup> workshop and input from the special interest focus groups workshops on May 24<sup>th</sup>, a second visioning session was held on June 18<sup>th</sup> where the community preference survey was synthesized through the community visioning process. The workshop was convened in the library of Gulf County Commission Senior Citizens' and Community Center. Questions regarding scale and type of uses were discussed

with participants completing a survey to reflect their preference for redeveloping the three areas identified in the earlier survey. The results of this survey are reflected in Exhibit A.

## EXHIBIT A COMMUNITY VISION PLANNING SURVEY

### Avenue “A” Question #1

What should be the **FIRST PHASE** of development along the Avenue “A” corridor?

○ 1 and/or 2 story homes (to buy, for rental assistance and for elderly living)	17
○ 1 and/or 2 story retail stores (will provide services and job opportunities)	7
○ 3 and 4 story elderly living complex	4
○ Other	13
○ Retail ground level/residential above	1
○ Preserve historic homes and retain current ownership – mixed use (business/residential)	2
○ Mixed use with retail and health care	1
○ Low income multi-family housing for young and elderly	2
○ Restore ball park	4
○ Large scale (90+) unit multi-family housing	1
○ Keep it small	1
○ Multi-story retail	1

### Avenue “A” Question #2

What should be the **SECOND PHASE** of development along the Avenue “A” corridor?

○ 1 and/or 2 story homes (to buy, for rental assistance and for elderly living)	15
○ 1 and/or 2 story retail stores (will provide services and job opportunities)	14
○ 3 and 4 story elderly living complex	1
○ Other	5
○ Elevator for elderly – multi story	2
○ Elderly living – wheelchair accessible	1
○ Multi-story retail	2

## MLK

What should be developed along MLK?

○ 1 and/or 2 story homes (to buy, for rental assistance and for elderly living)	5
○ 1 and/or 2 story retail stores (will provide services and job opportunities)	22
○ 3 and 4 story elderly living complex	
○ Other	11
○ Retail ground level/residential above	1
○ Mixed use retail and residential	1
○ Retail with housing above restaurant/café	1
○ Park for outdoor community events (Music/concerts/festivals)	3
○ Multi-story retail	1
○ Restore historic buildings/homes	1
○ Put some homes on Ave “G”	1
○ Current owners keep home/fix-up property	2
○ Businesses	
○	

## Washington High School Question #1

What should be developed along the **NEIGHBORHOOD EDGE**?

○ 1 and/or 2 story homes (to buy, for rental assistance and for elderly living)	19
○ 1 and/or 2 story retail stores (will provide services and job opportunities)	6
○ Other	12
○ Recreation center/youth or events center/education	3
○ Leave it alone/leave for recreation area	4
○ Single family housing 1 & 2 stories	2
○ Elderly housing –separate from children	2
○ Retail and keep playground and track	1

## Washington High School Question #2

What should be the **FIRST PHASE** of development on the School Site?

○ 1 and/or 2 story homes (to buy, for rental assistance and for elderly living)	16
○ 1 and/or 2 story retail stores (will provide services and job opportunities)	14
○ Other	9
○ Leave it alone	2
○ Provide access for elderly	1
○ Low income housing and elderly housing	1
○ Restore/expand as community center	1

## Washington High School Question #3

What should be the **SECOND PHASE** of development on the School Site?

○ 1 and/or 2 story homes (to buy, for rental assistance and for elderly living)	9
○ 1 and/or 2 story retail stores (will provide services and job opportunities)	8
○ Other	8
○ Boys and Girls Club	2
○ Leave it alone	2
○ Single story elderly housing	1
○ School site and community center	1
○ Upgrade landscaping	1
○ Create more effective mentoring and tutoring programs	1
○	

### July 9<sup>th</sup> Workshop

This workshop was held at the Washington High School Gym designed to continue the planning and design process and familiarize the participants with the framework how the previous processes are being employed to the development and implementation of the Master Plan. A planning process modeled from the business planning framework of S.P.A.R.S.E., developed by the Amos Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College was introduced. SPARSE, is an acronym for **S**trategy, **P**rocesses, **A**rchitecture, **R**esources, **S**ystems, and **E**mpowerment. It provides a mechanism that churns out results year in, year out so that committed stakeholders will ensure that the various components of the framework are aligned and in balance for successful implementation of the plan.

The intent of the design process was to solicit community input in the design of Port St. Joe Master Plan. Most noteworthy, is that SPARSE is a wheel-like circle of project-based factors encircling the most important element at the center, branded as **“relationships”**. Relationships in Port St. Joe and any other community are vital in achieving strategic consensus. The challenge is to obtain an immediate “buy in”, by the majority of the residents of the City of Port St. Joe, followed closely by the support of Gulf County, Bay County, and the region for the Implementation Strategy.

Central to significant stakeholder engagement for the successful achievement of the Implementation Strategy is to generate a sense of ownership by all the stakeholders. The entire community consensus building process contains mechanisms for implementing the land uses and development recommendations for the North Port St. Joe Redevelopment Expansion Plan.

By adopting this critical approach we are including an aggressive solicitation for input from as diverse a population as possible. Local and regional residents are more likely to go the extra mile to ensure the plan's implementation when they feel a sense of ownership of the plan and its strategy. Thus, the consensus building process, during the planning workshops, are organized to ensure the voice of the residents provide direction for the project's implementation strategy.

The format of this session was a continuation of the May 24<sup>th</sup> planning session where participants were organized in groups and with each group being represented by a designated community member, serving as the group leader. The participants agreed to reconvene at a follow-up session where each group would be presented with design elements relative to a specific project area and be asked to follow the design process in generating a plan addressing the issues and challenges concerning the results of the community vision planning survey.

#### Public Comment/Community Participation

Community input is a key component to the development of this document. Appendix (C) contains written comments from participants involved in the planning process.

## EXHIBIT B SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY COMMENT FORMS

The following comments were obtained from the Community Comment Forms available at each workshop and at the Development Agency. See Appendix (B) for original comments.

#### Comment Forms

- All of this sounds good but talk is cheap and until something is done I don't have a comment
- To buy the house I'm living in right now. Have a place for my kids
- Affordable housing, Better jobs
- I think the redevelopment plan is wonderful. I would like to see M.L.K. redeveloped. Those houses are 80 years old and they need to be renovated as historic houses. We need more stores in North Port St. Joe. We need affordable housing.
- Homes and jobs
- Thank you for the comments near the end that invited and welcomed participation from us. It helped us feel that we did indeed have something to add

- Need better “advertising” about the meetings so we can get more people involved
- There will never be pedestrian traffic on Reid if 98 is an eyesore
- During Black History Month, create a festival so we can invite visitors to the historic part of town
- Aging population. How do you inject youth and vitality so community is constantly “living” (sustainable)
- Are FCAT scores in NPSJ still lower than PSJ collectively? If so, can we secure educational funds if programs are developed? (Art/culture programs to improve education of children)
- Would a specialty market or farmer’s market work in NPSJ because of proximity to Town Center? (foot traffic)
- Has Joe determined businesses that will occupy Town Center? (even types of businesses) Businesses in NPSJ commercial district should complement Town Center.
- Has the school system been active in this process? Given lower test scores in NPSJ and prospect of magnet school approach, should be engaged.
- Is Norris D. Langston Center an additional opportunity?
- With culturally/architecturally significant structures preserved, could a “trolley” be instituted for historic town? Additionally, public transportation can be offered.
- Does the local EDC offer economic incentives or education about Minority Women Owned Businesses?
- Will an “ice cream social” work as an enticement for participation?

## EXHIBIT C

### SUMMARY OF PLANNING WORKSHOP HANDOUTS

The following comments were obtained from the planning workshop handouts and have been incorporated into this study. See Appendix (B) for original comments.

#### Workshop Comments

- MLK Corridor
  - Preserve historic architectural style building
  - Keep architecturally significant houses –preserve – national register
  - Retain rich and historical significance - maintain historical look and charm
  - Aesthetically connected to Town Center – use landscaping
  - Rebuild to reflect past as inspiration for future
  - Specialty shops that attract visitors, via pedestrian traffic
  - Rebuild History

- Change buildings
  - New Police sub-station for public safety
  - Make area conducive for window shopping and walking
  - Upgrade utilities
  - Better Lighting
  - Sidewalk improvements -Wider sidewalks – Connect to Town Center
  - Change zoning – Mixed-use availability
  - Offer cultural opportunities – museum – art gallery
  - Recruit more businesses and entrepreneurs - restaurants
  - Low-income housing
  - Housing built over businesses
  - Safe area for shopping
  - Better parking – pocket parking
  - More shopping – art gallery, antiques, boutiques, gift, clothing, shoes, handbags
  - More businesses – meat market, daycare, grocery store
  - Need mechanism for financing existing businesses
  - Access to other areas
  - To be a link with Downtown PSJ
  - Affordable housing
  - Affordable housing for young workers just starting out
  - Public transportation
- Highway 98 Corridor
    - Keep the street entrances along Hwy 98
    - Remove/Lower the bridge – drop to ground level - to see business as you enter into town
    - Enforce code
    - Add sidewalks
    - Sequence red lights/traffic lights
    - Remove rails at the entrance
    - Entrance to community – accessible at all streets
    - Add new entrance from Box Plant Rd – different from First Street and Marina Dr.
    - Create beauty – landscaped areas – Farmers market
  - Washington High School
    - Preserve historic building with major improvements
    - Change the zoning so you can have low income housing around areas of the center – Residential Zoning R-2B – multifamily housing
    - Technology training and training center
    - Connect Robinson Ave to Garrison Ave
    - Build housing for seniors
    - Health Care Facilities
    - Satellite for GCHD

- Avenue “A” Corridor
  - Keep the baseball field
  - Enhance the baseball park so it can be used for entertainment and out door events
  - A little park and sitting area
  - Red brick building to use as museum and public meetings
  - Walkway to enhance and make businesses more accessible
  - Create public use areas for entertainment opportunities to help generate jobs
  - Farmers Market – Community Grocery Store
  - Walkways from Town Center
- Town Center Area
  - Economic development that will attract diverse social backgrounds and people from all walks of life
  - Include government and commercial shops
  - Public use areas and restrooms
  - Police protection
  - Banks
  - Connect with all the surrounding areas
  - Sidewalks, parking, lighting, sitting areas
  - Connecting with MLK and the Waterfront
  -
- Railway corridor
  - Make a walking trail with the tracks that are taken up
  - Change rails to trails with walking bike paths
  - Look at other areas –Savannah Downtown Area - Preserve what's left
  - Continue landscaping
  - A Welcome Center with the history of importance and significance of rail system to area- Historic Display – Economic Engine
  - Utilize walkways –access to other areas
- Vacant and Underutilized Parcels
  - Some could be used for parking downtown
  - Some for greenspace –Community garden
  - Clean-up – Youth involvement activity
  - Parks for socializing - Small parcels with tables and sitting area
  - Vendors who have lunch, breakfast and dinner
  - Musician performing outside

#### Study Area Wide

- Use Faith Based organizations to rehab houses

#### Conceptual Planning Framework

The principle task in master planning the North Port St. Joe Study Area is the development of a framework for evaluating the efficacy of a physical design,

relative to the findings in the Inventory and Analysis section of the study and community input from a series of planning workshops. Incorporated in the structure of the master planning process is the visioning process derived from community workshops, involving a cross-section of stakeholder; public officials, residents, business owners and representative of associated major project areas.

A preliminary analysis of market determinants were examined, using census data, to assess residential and retail commercial real estate market segments and market trends in and around the City of Port St. Joe. For each component contained in this plan, it is recommended that a more comprehensive market study be performed to determine the extent of demand for the various uses contemplated in the Study Area. A critical component in the determination of scale and orientation will be the demand for products by market segments.

For purposes of this study, the framework for the model was developed by critiquing “livability” issues with respect to the interdependency, or lack thereof, of the Port St. Joe neighborhoods. The study examines the interconnectivity of key development areas (contiguous to North Port St. Joe) and the physical context of the city relative to its geography and regional significance. This analysis is centered around establishing a basis for examining the impact that proposed future development will have on the character of the neighborhoods. This study examines the redevelopment potential of key improvement areas relative to the availability of developable sites, the ownership patterns of the land resources and the availability of public/private financial resources.

### Goals and Objectives

The basic goals and objectives of the North Port St. Joe Development Framework are to:

- Provide maximum opportunities for owner preference participation in the redevelopment process through the establishment of a Land Bank Authority.
- Enhance connectivity within and among Port St. Joe neighborhoods through the design, extension and general improvement of walking, bicycling and multi-use trails.
- Provide desirable residential product types, with a preference toward ownership.
- Provide additional retail, dining, entertainment and other commercial amenities such as a viable grocery outlet within North Port St. Joe community.
- Create a critical mass of people in the commercial corridors sufficient enough to attract a destination retail market.
- Maximize land-use advantages through the development of mixed-use projects, allowing for live-work convenience and retail in close proximity to housing.

- Facilitate the provision of sidewalks and trails to serve as connectors to open spaces, parks and associated venues with amenities that contribute to an enhancement of the “quality of Life” quotient.
- Increase the tax base from which to fund public services and infrastructure improvements.
- Create a better image throughout Gulf/Bay County Metro areas to attract newcomers seeking unique, convenient, safe, community-oriented housing and business opportunities.

The Framework provides the City of Port St. Joe with several opportunities and a methodology for achieving its commercial and residential development potential. Additionally, it establishes directives to encourage a more appropriate geographical balance in the type of development it would like to attract. Considering the specific goals of the Master Plan, the Framework is designed to achieve the fundamental aspirations of a healthy, functional and livable community, which includes:

- Connecting residential, shopping and offices uses that are accessible along pedestrian-friendly facilities
- Improving streetscape and sidewalks design, quality and functionality
- Reducing vehicular and pedestrian conflicts by emphasizing the pedestrian-oriented circulation patterns
- Improving access to transit and other transportation options
- Expanding affordable housing options that encourages diversity in type and quality of the housing mix

## Open Space

Throughout this study we have made reference to the criticality of accommodating open access and pedestrian friendly design to facilitate consumer, retailer and resident interaction within the various opportunity zones. There are enormous benefits associated with designing for accessibility to functional private and common open space. By employing concepts of good urban design and sound stewardship, and by strategically integrating a sufficient quantity of vital open spaces - including community parks and natural areas - in the built environment, communities can:<sup>17</sup>

- Improve the health of the natural environment;
- Spur neighborhood reinvestment;
- Improve flood control and water quality, and enhance their ability to address storm water issues;

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<sup>17</sup> Urban Open Space Foundation, “Linking Neighborhoods with Nature”

- Offer families real, affordable alternatives to ex-urban growth;
- Provide youth with recreational alternatives to crime and drugs; Promote multigenerational experiences;
- Provide educational opportunities to make nature relevant to city residents;
- Address issues of environmental justice; and
- Celebrate cultural heritage and diversity

## Redevelopment Opportunities

### Catalyst Projects

There are many projects that can be undertaken that when developed would change the character of a particular area and serves as a spark or “catalyst” to improving the assets of the Study Area. These projects are particularly important and useful for redevelopment efforts that are in their infancy. As the Master Plan evolves, including the provision for greater density and higher and better uses for some areas, there must be an assessment of the impact on the public facilities. The Redevelopment Agency’s ability to facilitate the installation of essential public facilities is an effective marketing tool and major development incentive.

The proposed redevelopment of North Port St. Joe could significantly impact the capacity of the public utilities (sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water services). Hence, a commitment to improving public utilities to accommodate the higher demand, as development ensues is an affirmative, proactive response to inevitable inquiries of the development community. While the private market is assessing the development potential, many public/private catalyst projects have been the foundation for successful redevelopment projects in project areas. Public resources used to leverage private investments are what make redevelopment a useful tool in eradicating blighting conditions and improving the livability of older communities. Catalyst projects are essential in jump-starting the plan implementation process and signaling to the private investment community that North Port St. Joe is open for business.

This study will recommend opportunities for catalysts projects. Unlike many other planning documents, whose utility is generally relegated to a life on the planning authorities’ bookshelf, the North Port St. Joe Master Plan is being prepared in a fertile development environment. Successful redevelopment projects require the political will of the local governing authority to commit public resources for planning and infrastructure improvements in blighted areas. The City of Port St. Joe and Redevelopment Agency have the political will and motivation to stay the course. The Town Center and waterfront projects, being developed by the JOE Company, are the key motivating factors influencing public sentiment toward prioritizing the redevelopment of the study area.

The North Port St. Joe Master Plan, as a part of the Redevelopment plan, with specific design standards, is more akin to a Specific Plan instrument, containing entitlements and standards that facilitate development opportunities which are complementary to ongoing development activities. North Port St. Joe redevelopment efforts are an essential part of marketing the City of Port St. Joe. The study area which is contiguous to the Town Center and waterfront projects is uniquely situated and has a realistic chance of having some provisions implemented fairly quickly.

The historical relationship between the St. Joe Company and the North Port St. Joe community may be challenging in some areas, but because of market demands, these challenges could be mitigated, thus, opening opportunities for co-development planning, which safeguards the integrity of the residential community and support developments that create value and benefits for the entire community. If packaged and implemented correctly, this unique history could be captured and exploited as a marketing tool, which highlights the city's protracted journey in its transformation from an industrial "company town" to a destination venue for international consumers, interested in experiencing the "flavor" and unique environment being created in Port St. Joe.

## Opportunity Zones

It is important to recognize that assets must be marketed and the visions for these areas must be identified before development begins. It is equally important to recognize the opportunity cost associated with investments which are made prematurely, irrespective of the future potential of a particular property.

There isn't a shortage of redevelopment plans and master plans being marketed daily to the private capital market. The specific planning for North Port St. Joe is timely because of its locational advantage, being nestled within the sphere of influence of the Town Center and waterfront development, which are currently being marketed by a development entity capable of attracting a diverse pool of investment and end user interests.

We have identified several key improvement areas as Opportunity Zones, which should be priorities for the development of catalyst projects. These projects have the ability to impact the development potential of the study area by defining its character and helping it to become a destination. Thus, continuing the positive economic trends that would inevitably culminate as a derived benefit that is spun-off from the waterfront and Town Center developments.

These Opportunity Zone are strategically located and could potentially accelerate the timing of major redevelopment activities. There are a multitude of projects and programs that can help to move the Study Area forward. The catalyst project(s) and prioritization of the key improvement areas have been selected based on market conditions, stakeholders preferences, potential to spur continued development, and leveraging of strategic public investments.

The planning focus of the Master Plan is driven by the desire to encourage a “development without displacement” strategy. Consequently, planning activities were guided by the locational advantages and predominant uses within the “opportunity zones” sphere of influence.



## MAP 7 OPPORTUNIY ZONE AREAS

An Opportunity Zone is an area embodying a particular concentration of land resources or uses that are strategically positioned in the path of eminent development activities and whose redevelopment would galvanize allied development of associated areas. The following Opportunity Zones have been selected for this study:

## Martin Luther King Boulevard Commercial Corridor

### Development Challenges

Historically, the Martin Luther King Blvd. Corridor has been the center of commerce for the North Port St. Joe community. Today it is a mix of vacant lots, abandoned buildings, shotgun houses and marginal retail outlets, providing a limited selection of grocer goods and cooked foods. In its present condition, the corridor is dysfunctional as a commercial district and the abandoned and vacant properties are systemic of an environment that could potentially harbor socially undesirable elements, engaged in less than desirable activities. The MLK commercial corridor lacks a cohesive image. While there are few retail establishments engaging the public for retail trade, the activity level is relatively low.

Still serving as a central corridor for vehicular circulation and community interaction in the zone, it is in dire need of essential retail ventures. Many of the buildings need façade improvements and maintenance. There is limited parking for the commercial uses along Martin Luther King Boulevard and some of the churches in the community.

There is also a need to introduce a different housing product type to the zone. The current selection of housing is comprised of single family and mixed-use (residential above commercial) in converted commercial buildings. These conversions which seem to be proficient in a subsistence economy, dominated by subsidies, entitlements and the absence of new development for decades, are arbitrarily scattered along the corridor and serve as disincentive to new development and/or creative reuses that would attract private capital. There is also a need for a different housing product type throughout North Port St. Joe.

### Development Opportunities

The findings of associated studies clearly document that there is a disproportionately large number of vacant, undeveloped or underdeveloped properties in the Study Area. The core of the corridor is a stark contrast to the vitality of the Central Business District anchored by Reid Ave. The corridor lacks a true economic destination and sense of place which would attract consumers. An infill mixed-use development with specialty retail, housing and open space could be a substantial catalyst, to change perceptions. It could also help to accelerate the development schedule for other planned developments activities.

The MLK Boulevard Corridor should have a streetscape with a design theme that attracts investors, tenants, customers, and tourists. There is a need to create a

focal point – a space with a consistent theme and character to enhance and provide a cohesive image, which creates a special identity that defines a unique shopping experience along the MLK corridor, which is inviting and captures the imagination of those frequenting the district. A destination has a 'heart' or 'soul' that transcends space and time.

### Residential Opportunities

Residential development should also be a part of the district. A housing product that could successfully respond to the desire to attract mixed-income residents for both the MLK and Avenue "A" Corridors is townhomes. This product could provide, purchase and leasing opportunities for transient (vacationing) and primary residents. A configuration, which upgrades the current converted commercial uses that allows live/work space and street level retail, would be appropriate for these areas.

Townhomes are a nationally accepted and known product commonly used in redevelopment areas to provide affordable housing, while avoiding the trapping associated with many high-density multi-family housing developments. The design could also be used to establish a graduated increase in scale and help to transition higher density developments, built close to surrounding single-family neighborhoods.

### Quality Mixed-Income Housing in a Friendly Neighborhood

Crawford Square is quality mixed-income housing in a friendly, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood to residents with a wide range of incomes. The project's street grid is an extension of the Hill District's streets that are stitched into the fabric of the existing community.



Crawford Square includes 426 units of rental as well as for-sale housing. Approximately half of the rental units are subsidized and are indistinguishable from the market-rate units. The development is designed to reflect the character and scale of a traditional Pittsburgh residential neighborhood and does not include retail or other commercial development.

Higher density multi-use developments (residential and office/retail commercial) may appear imposing and out of character with older established residential communities. Townhomes could serve to lessen the impaction and mitigate perceptions that the new improvements are out of character. This medium density product can be deigned to create a gradation of scale and function that don't overshadow the unique character of older single-family residential communities.

Additionally, having housing in commercially oriented transitional districts, contributes to the creating a more active environment and improves the attractiveness of the area for residents and consumers, while inviting developers and retailers to the areas. Providing townhomes on the edge of the high-end commercial and office development proposed by the Town Center provides an opportunity for residents and vacationers to take full advantage of public and private amenities at a more affordable price.

### Business Development Opportunities

Given the development potential of North Port St. Joe and the character of the retail business community, it is recommended that a local business development strategy be developed that provides training and assistants to the entrepreneurial community. Employing entrepreneurial training programs would increase local business owners' knowledge base and help to acclimate operators to modern business practices that would enhance their competitiveness and overall success ratio. Further, there also has to be a system in place to serve existing businesses and enhances their opportunity to be successfully within a synergetic market place offering a diversification of tenant mix, which is competition friendly.

In order for a small retail district to thrive and expand, there has to be a focused business development plan. The planned expansion of the redevelopment area provides an excellent opportunity for the downtown merchants to assist in the planning and providing support for identifying and encouraging uses and improvements for North Port St. Joe's commercial core. A plan for the zone should include the following considerations:

- The kind of businesses desired;
- The specific tenants that would meet those parameters;
- Quality marketing materials oriented towards attracting new businesses;
- A recruitment team that deals with inquiries as well as pursuing targets;
- Benchmarks to guide the process.

A blend of local entrepreneurial and newly recruited business interests would best serve this zone, in particular, and the broader study area, in general. Depending on the tenant mix in the Town Center development, this area could conceivably accommodate a retail mix of operators, including music (CD, record) store, book store, bicycle shop, ice cream/sweet treats shop, beauty/body shop and possibly a regional/national chain clothing store that has small-scale prototype stores. If jointly marketed, with the impending Town Center development, the area has the potential of having a solid foundation for retail success, but there is still work to be done to make it a true destination within the primary market area and the larger market area. A more detailed

and focused market feasibility is recommend to arrive at the best mix of businesses for the study area.

## US Highway 98 Commercial Corridor

### Existing Conditions

The Highway 98 commercial corridor unlike MLK Blvd, while lacking continuity along the North Port St. Joe frontage area, is fairly active as it continues along the periphery of the water front and through the business district. The grade separation at railroad overpass, at Port St. Joe's northern boundary, is a disincentive for commercial trade, because it impedes the line of views of motorists seeking goods and services. The business activity for those business located adjacent to the overpass would be greatly improved if the street grade was lowered to a grade level more consistent with current grades traveling through the remainder of the city.

### Development Opportunities

The removal of the railroad overpass would improve tourist and consumers perceptions, as Port St. Joe transforms from its industrial past to a new theme which captures the essence of its waterfront, cultural, village and community appeal. Improving the visual appearance and attractiveness is essential to encouraging complementary retail, residential and office uses along this corridor. This stretch of highway 98 should serve as the gateway to Port St. Joe and be developed with a design theme that reflects it's uniqueness as a traffic artery, designed to focus on linkages to North Port St. Joe's historic residential community, with specialty retail shopping and the easy access to other commercial and waterfront development areas.

Connecting the North Port St. Joe community to the waterfront requires the provision of traffic control devices, including signaling, marked crosswalks, traffic barriers, etc. that enhances access and opens the study area to the new retail commercial and residential leasing opportunities being generated.

## Washington High School Center Area

### Existing Conditions

Washington High School is an important symbol of community pride and is being utilized as the hub of stakeholder and community empowerment activities. The site is current underutilized. With the exception of the gym and play areas, the other improvements are marginally used and are in need of improvements to be marketed to eventual civic and/or commercial end-users.

### Development Opportunities

Upgrading this historical site, enables continued services as a hub to the community and provides development opportunities for community facilities. Projects directed at embellishing historical preservation, a business incubator, education enhancement services, cultural arts programming, and health initiatives could be housed at Washington High School “campus” site. The site also offers a wonderful opportunity for a multi-purpose center with workout equipment, basketball, racket-ball, swimming pool and other programs not only for the youth but for seniors as well.

Depending on the scale of development within other commercial areas, a phasing in of a mixed-use development that incorporates retail, office and residential uses may be appropriate for this zone. Again, recreational space, educational and senior housing is the quickest redevelopment possibility. Once that has been done, adding in retail and office space in small clusters of integrated development could be considered.

## Avenue “A” Commercial Corridor

### Existing Conditions

The Avenue “A” corridor is the primary roadway used in traveling between the two sections of North Port St. Joe. The dominant use that has defined the functionality of this corridor has been the rail yard operation and associated industries. Sparse mixes of industrial, residential and commercial uses align the corridor. There are large tracts of vacant properties.

Bridgeport a residential community of 31 single family homes is the newest development along the corridor. A successful multi-ethnic, affordable development, this project serves as evidence of the dismantling perceived social barriers, dominating the development patterns of a community divide along racial lines.

### Development Opportunities

Along with the MLK Corridor, this area is the most promising for mixed-use development within the study area. There may be opportunities for higher density and creative re-uses of existing facilities to capitalize on the traffic currently generated as well as increases in uses derived from the proposed Town Center Area.

Many of the uses identified for MLK Corridor are appropriate for this area as well. The difference in terms of scale and intensity for these two areas is mostly associated with each site’s proximity to the Town Center and the nature of the

vehicular and pedestrian traffic interaction. The Avenue "A" Corridor, because of its importance as a major thoroughfare would have different traffic volume than the MLK Corridor. While the Avenue "A" zone would want to provide for vehicular access to residential neighborhood and goods and services along the way, the MLK corridor may have a more restrictive vehicular access and circulation pattern to encourage pedestrian travel along the corridor to enhance retail business opportunities.

The planned development of the state of arts Norris D. Langston Center on Avenue "A", strategically positioned in close proximity to the Railway Zone, Town Center Zone and Washington High School Zone, would be a major contributor to the stabilizing the community. The center which is designed to provide educational enrichment, support services and scholarship opportunities to local students could be used as a catalyst project, anchoring the Avenue "A" Zone and creating interconnectivity and linkages between the aforementioned zones. This project could provide an incentive for public/private investment to target allied improvements, which would articulate how the Town Center, rail yard, railway and community facilities fit together.

## Proposed Town Center Area

### Existing Conditions

Currently, there are three active uses accounting for the majority of the proposed Town Center site – the rail yard, the Railroad Building and the Ball Park. These three uses are situated at the crossroads of the communities of North Port St. Joe and South Port St. Joe. These facilities serve as a historical reminder of the dichotomy and demarcation of racial divide between the African American community and broader Port St. Joe community. Additionally, and equally important is their point of reference.

The historical development pattern in Port St. Joe has been greatly influence by the "company town" perspectives of the St. Joe Company, who defined the fabric and character of the respective neighborhoods. The rail yard, railroad building and ball field were centered on uses which benefited the company's desires for efficiency and worker camaraderie. Likewise, similar influence was exacted on business and residential development activities, culminating in a disparity in the nature and extent of investments favoring one area over another.

The rail yard, an essential facility in the maintenance of rail transport to the region, has been underutilized since the closing of the St. Joe Company Mill operations. The Rail Road Building which currently houses the JOE Company

staff, who manages the proposed development efforts for Port St. Joe., is an imposing visual element, obstructing views and impairing both vehicular and pedestrian travel between the North Port St. Joe neighborhoods and the central business district. The baseball field has historically provides recreational and interactive activities, serving as a central meeting place for fun and relaxation.

### Development Opportunities

The single most important element of the expanded redevelopment area is the Town Center complex centrally located and proposed to serve as the nexus between the Downtown Redevelopment Area and the North Port St. Joe expansion area. Projected uses and design include a mix of residential, retail, office, open space, and civic facilities. Proposed as the hub, this area should reconnect the Port St. Joe community as “the heart” of a transformed city.

The unique “company town” influence and the special circumstances of southern experience provide an opportunity for creating a destination and branding as a tourist attraction, luring vacationers to experience a Pot St. Joe that can’t be replicated.

With the MLK corridor being targeted as a destination with unique assets, the orientation of the circulation and signage could be used to direct visitors toward the African American oriented district along MLK Blvd to share the “Company Town” experience of the African American workforce. All communities struggle with defining who they are, where the “there” is that defines the community, and establishing a reason for people to visit an area they do not live in. Very few people have experienced the uniqueness of life in a “Company Town” environment.

The ball park development, with the possibility of an amphitheatre, could help to generate trips that could benefit retail locations in the area. There could be a mix of neighborhood and community serving retail uses, depending upon the scale and amenity level of the park as a destination.

Recreational sports are becoming more accepted and understood as an economic tool. These venues have spurred spin-off development, ranging from residential uses to specialty venues, such as the connecting walking and nature trails that cite these trails as specific amenities to newly generated commercial uses. There is such potential to turn this into a real economic engine for the area. Ultimately connecting to a true destination greenspace with the possibility of redevelopment of the MLK and Avenue “A” districts could essentially program a day of activities in Port St. Joe for the average family. Increasing the vitality and use of the ball field would also positively impact the property values.

# Railway Corridor

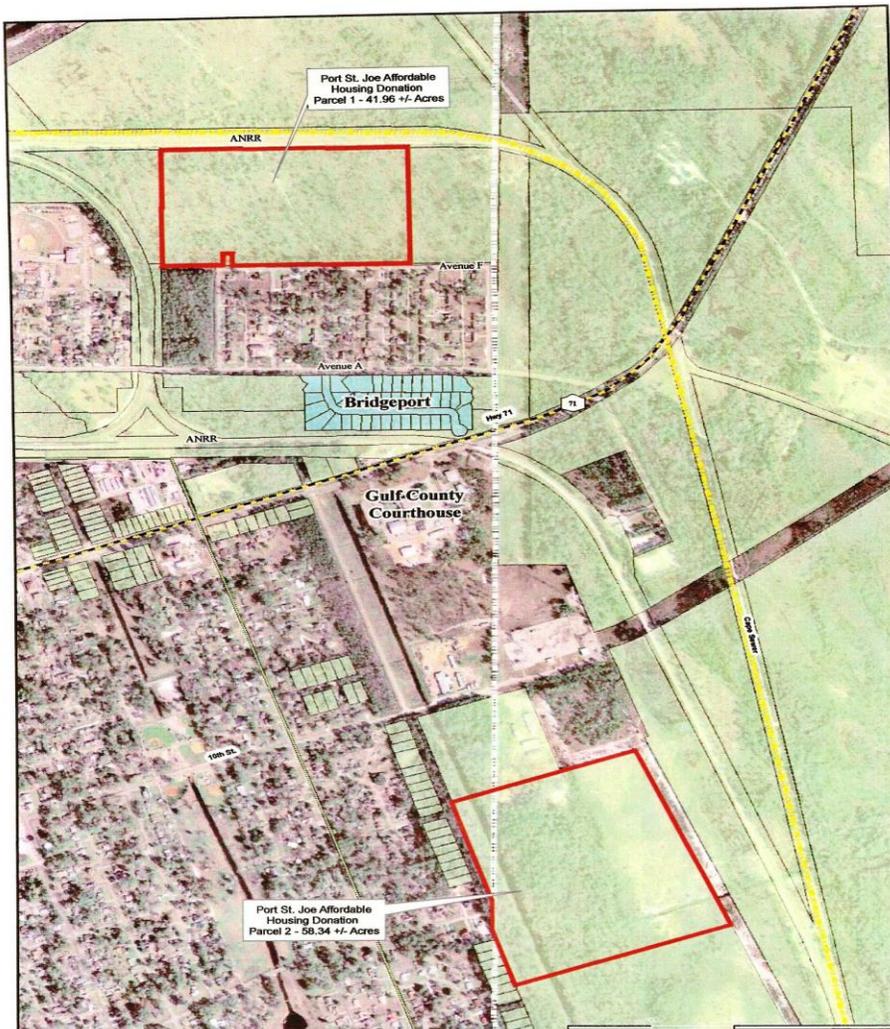
## Existing Conditions

The railway is an area critical to redefining land uses that are compatible with and create appropriate transitioning between the rail yard redevelopment and residential uses. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns within North Port St. Joe are significantly influenced by the rail spur, traversing the community. Consequently, the community is physically divided at this crossroad, creating a northwest section and a northeast section.

Additionally, the railway corridor impedes pedestrian and vehicular access to the central business district of Port St. Joe. The rail corridor transversing North Port St. Joe is a grossly underutilized facility.

## Development Opportunities

The rail-yard is scheduled for relocation as a part of the Town Center development. This relocation would eliminate the need for the service tract, which runs parallel to Avenue "A". The Town Center development contemplates the removal of the Rail Road Building and reconnecting MKL Blvd and Reid Ave.



The remaining rail system may provide an opportunity for green space buffers to be utilized for pedestrian oriented uses along its eastern border and a mix of uses, along its north boarder, including multifamily, commercial and light industrial uses.

## Vacant and Underutilized Parcels

### MAP 8

There are 45+/- acre being donated to the city by JOE Company,

by W.I.M. Associates, Inc.

which is located in this area and is earmarked for affordable residential uses. This site could be used for developing a senior living and /or temporary relocation housing while it and other properties are being readied for planned unit developments of affordable permanent multi-family housing.

North Port St. Joe has several vacant and under-utilized properties. It also has low-rise development and small building footprints. It contains many under-utilized buildings, set back from the street, with surface parking, interspersed with several vacant properties.

### Development Opportunities

In the Friends of North port St. Joe study it was recommended the redevelopment boundaries include the large tracts of vacant properties north of Clifford Simms northeast of the railway and Ave G and F northwest of the railway.

Contiguous to other vacant and underutilized parcels that creates an excellent opportunity for assemblages; development of these properties would enhance property values and improve the financial feasibility of both residential and commercial developable sites.

If any of the properties are contaminated they may be eligible as a Brownsfield redevelopment site and could receive funding from such sources as Environmental Protection Agency and Florida Environmental Protection Division. In particular, there are several grants targeted at funding environmental remediation to expand greenspace in communities, which would be especially appropriate here.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The North Port St. Joe Master Planning process involved a number of methodologies and public outreach mechanisms to involve a diverse group of constituents to get an accurate picture of existing conditions and prevailing attitudes for developing an action plan for future development.

The Implementation Plan contains mechanisms for implementing the land uses and development recommendations for the North Port St. Joe Redevelopment Expansion Plan. The plan is an actionable tool that identifies resources and strategies for achieving the community redevelopment goals. The central most important objective of this plan is to develop a strategic planning process from which programs that prioritizes the use of public resources would evolve. These programs should be designed to achieve the development objectives of the Port St. Joe Redevelopment Plan.

The plan embraces a business planning framework called **SPARSE**. SPARSE, which is an acronym for **S**trategy, **P**rocesses, **A**rchitecture, **R**esources, **S**ystems, and **E**mpowerment was developed by the Amos Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. It provides a mechanism that churns out results year in, year out so that committed stakeholders will ensure that the various components of the framework are aligned and in balance. Most noteworthy, is that SPARSE is a wheel-like circle of project-based factors encircling the most important element at the center, branded as “relationships”. Relationships are vital in achieving strategic consensus. The process encourages interaction and “buy in” on behalf of residents, staff and business in implementing the plan.

Central to significant stakeholder engagement for the successful achievement of the Strategy is to generate a sense of ownership by all the stakeholders. The entire-community consensus building process, for the Master Plan, has included an aggressive solicitation of input from as diverse a population as possible. Citizens are more likely to go the extra mile in ensuring the plan’s implementation when they feel a sense of ownership of the plan and its strategy. Thus, the consensus building process, during the planning workshops, are organized to ensure that the voice of the residents provide direction for the project’s implementation strategy.

Along with providing entitlements that enhance development opportunities, this action plan incorporates a framework for ensuring that the local community benefits from the physical improvements. The plan is designed to achieve a “development without displacement” objective. Programs must be developed to effectively improve the socio-economic condition of the North Port St. Joe community. Using a stakeholder designed community transformation model the

action plan would utilize a comprehensive tool box of resources and best practices for eradicating blight and blighting conditions.

It is recommended that a Community Benefits Agreement be developed, with recommend provisions that address issues such as affordable and workforce housing, living wages, first source hiring, targeted job opportunities for low-income residents, and local and/or minority business development and utilization. The Community Benefits Agreement shall be used to accomplish the following goals:

### **Potential Elements of the Port St Joe Redevelopment Plan Community Benefits Agreement**

- Implement a hiring program that utilizes a “good faith effort” to provide local residents with the first opportunity for construction and permanent jobs with local and/or minority residents at an established percentage of the total workforce.
- Assist in the advocacy for and the institution of workforce development programs for local workers.
- Provide for a livable wage consistent with the market standard.
- Implement a “good faith effort” to provide local and/or minority-owned firms with the first opportunity for construction contracts and commercial tenant opportunities at an established percentage of the total for both.
- Assist in the advocacy for and the institution of local and/or minority business incubation and development programs.
- Provide an incentive for local and/or minority prime contractors, sub-contractors, and joint ventures in Request for Proposals (RFP) by public and private entities.
- Provide a strategy to achieve a percentage of affordable and workforce housing in any Request for Proposal (RFP) targeting residential or mixed-use development.
- Engage academic institutions, such as Florida State University, Florida A&M University, and the University of West Florida to provide educational opportunities during non-traditional classroom hours (nights and weekends).

- Ensure a minimum percentage of the local and/or minority participation on the North Port St Joe. Redevelopment Plan decision-making.
- Ensure a MLK Blvd and Reid Ave corridor connector from Downtown through the Town Center to the Washington High School as a Florida Main St. Project.
- Establish an African American performing and visual arts program to generate business and job opportunities in cultural tourism, and local entertainment, which utilizes the baseball park, common areas, and other strategic venues creating civic space and focal points that enhance the community's identity as a destination place.
- Establish an ongoing commitment with the local, regional, state and federal resources to assist in leveraging the impact of the North Port St Joe Strategic Redevelopment Plan with other public and private rural development investment programs that impact cultural tourism, the performing arts, education, technology, workforce preparation, business incubation, contractor training, and attainable/affordable housing.
- Establish a bonding program and an investment fund for local developers, contractors, and entrepreneurs.
- Develop and coordinate existing programs for underutilized or vacant property by encouraging a diversity of medium to high-density development, including residential, employment, and shopping and recreation choices for the study area.
- Encourage focused infill and redevelopment.
- Develop streetscape and pedestrian/bicycle linkages and provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking and enable access to all uses within the study area.
- Connect the study area to the broader community uses, especially the water front, Town Center and central business district with design that eliminates physical barriers and negative images, which are economic impediments.
- Increase employment opportunities.
- Create a land use framework for guiding the growing development investment that is occurring and will occur in the study area.

## Development Program

### Destination – Port St. Joe

The North Port St. Joe community could potentially be turned into an economic engine for the City of Port St. Joe, if special tourist and recreational venues created around Opportunity Zones were elevated within the City of Port St. Joe to destination status. A marketing strategy could be developed around a Heritage Square Marketplace concept. Special tourism and recreational venues created in and around Opportunity Zones will elevate them to destination status.

Capitalizing on North Port St. Joe's architectural assets, unique history, cultural heritage and water front connectivity, a theme, such as a "Harlem Renaissance Village" could be established which creates a branding or identity for the North Port St. Joe redevelopment. Communities throughout the region, especially those dependent on tourism, struggles with how best to position itself with an identity of who they are and where the "there" is that defines the community. North Port St. Joe has the competitive advantage of being contiguous to developing areas that could mutually benefit from a planned transitioning zone, which is inviting to tourist in search of a unique experience being captured in a specialty shopping village-like environment.

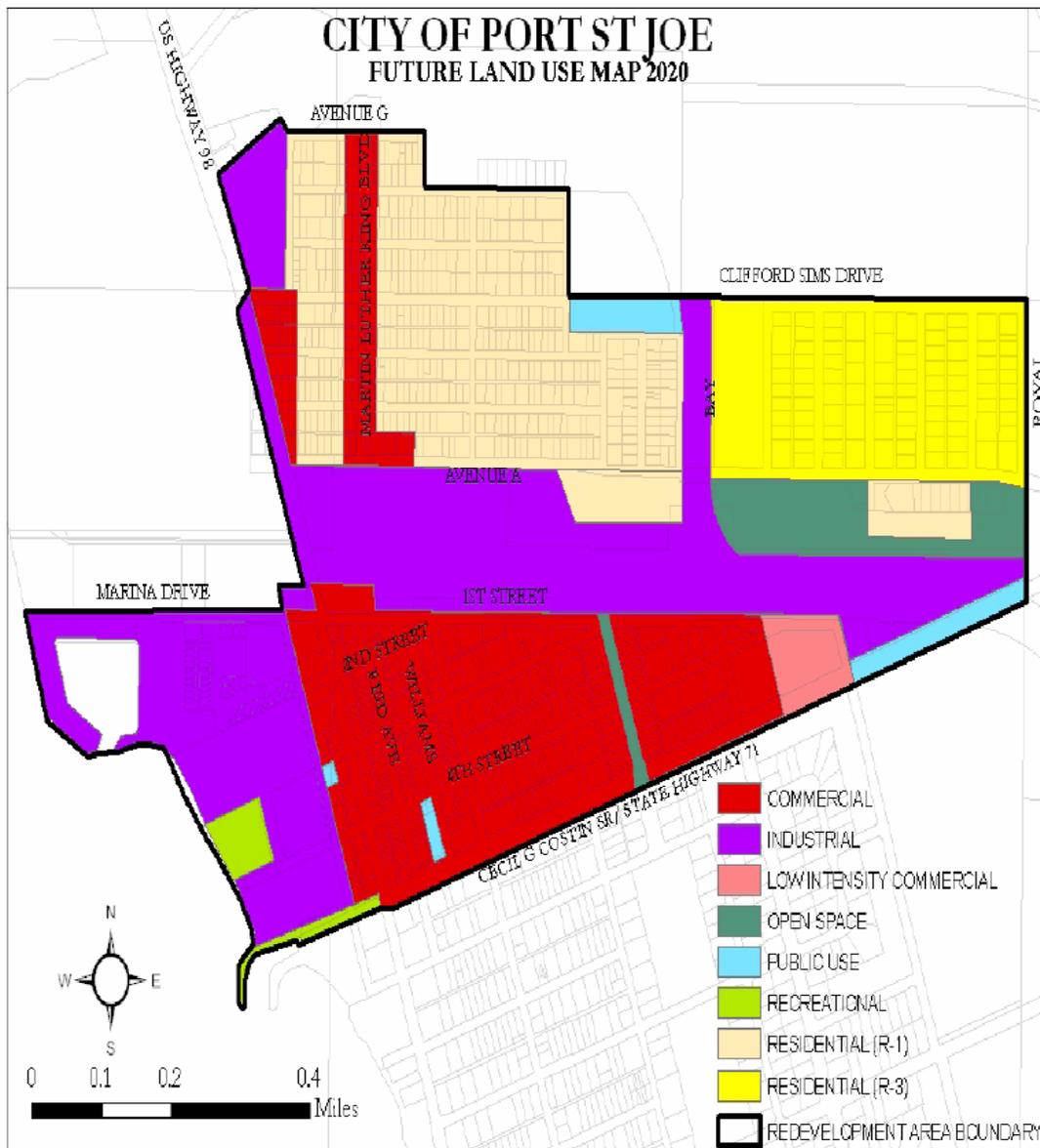
Another area of interest to be highlighted could be the history of how the residential communities were developed from imported residential structures, from other abandoned settlements impacted by the realignment of industries, when the area was initially being settled. Unlike traditional neighborhood development, which follows a general architectural theme and pattern, the Port St. Joe worker housing community has pockets of architectural significance that could be featured.

An assessment of the community asset base and the economic viability of establishing centers of concentrated redevelopment activities have revealed the presence of several key improvement areas, referred to as Opportunity Zones. As a part of the master planning process, current zoning classification and the future land uses were compared to determine its compatibility with the proposed uses under the redevelopment plan. In most cases, the future land uses and current zoning classification were not compatible to the recommendations of this study. We have proposed recommendations for zoning changes where appropriate to create compatibility.

It is important to again state that Opportunity Zone projects were selected based on maximizing the potential for leveraging public investments to further private development. Redevelopment Agency's assistance and incentives

should be used to provide evidence to the private capital market that the City of Port St. Joe will aggressively pursue public/private leveraging arrangements to improve the economic viability of associated development projects. While North Port St. Joe is bordered by well-traveled roads, it is still at a location that serves as a “back door” to the City. The redevelopment of the “Village” image of North Port St. Joe will certainly change that circumstance.

## MAP IV



### Martin Luther King Blvd Commercial Corridor

The future land use map shows this area is zoned for general commercial usage. This is in keeping with the recommendations for this area that suggest the land uses be heavy commercial. The commercial district along the MLK Blvd Corridor represents North Port St. Joes's greatest opportunity for extending the commercial influences emanating from the Town Center and water front developments.

Currently, the corridor lacks a true economic destination and sense of place, which would attract consumers. An infill mixed-use development with specialty retail, housing and open space could be a substantial catalyst, in changing perceptions and would help accelerate the development schedule for other planned developments. Residential development should also be a part of the district. A configuration, which upgrades the current converted commercial uses that allows live/work space and street level retail, would be appropriate for this area.

The Heritage Square Marketplace concept (*Example used for illustration purposes only*) provides a vision of an urban shopping, business, and entertainment district. This type of development strategy provides an opportunity for the residents to design creative approaches to the plan's implementation. With culture, heritage, unique architecture, and a beautiful waterfront as assets, the North Port St. Joe community could potentially create a new model of community engaged economic revitalization that could impact the entire city and Gulf County. This Opportunity Zone has potential for special tourism, multiple housing products (rental & ownership), entertainment and recreational venues created in and around complementary developments that will strengthen and elevate them to regional destination status.

The MLK Boulevard Corridor should have a streetscape with a design theme that attracts investors, tenants, customers, and tourists. There is a need to create a focal point – a space with a consistent theme and character to enhance the image and provide a cohesive image, which defines a special identity in experiencing shopping along the MLK corridor that is inviting and captures the imagination of those frequenting the district. A destination has a 'heart' or 'soul' that transcends space and time.

The establishment of venues that are programmed and advertised, as such, throughout the entire Southeastern could generate interest in the unique culture and life-style of a company-town, within the context of the social dynamics impacting the African American experience. This area could benefit from a mix of local consumer goods and a smaller upscale market of specialty retail,

entertainment and locally serving convenience shopping outlets. This scale and mix of development should create a local flavor that's attractive to residents and tourist, alike.

The development pattern should allow a mix of low-medium density mixed use opportunities, driven by the new infill and redevelopment of residential above commercial uses, nestled around open venues of common area spaces, which encourages pedestrian friendly orientations to create connections between retailers and the consuming public – whether residences, tourist or transients.

North Port St. Joe has the potential of becoming a place where old-world architecture, beautiful fountains, and sidewalk cafés create an atmosphere strikingly reminiscent of a European town center and transition into the African-American cultural heritage experience of the Harlem Renaissance---Southern Style. These are unique fun destinations for young and old, for families and children. A place where you'll find celebrated shops, exciting restaurants, a magnificent multi-purpose ball park, showcasing and exceptional live performances. This could be a focal point in the region for stunning residential and office spaces near the water front. And a place you'll immediately know has a style all its own.



**Seattle, Washington - Fairhaven Village Green is part of a revitalized 'Main Street' south of downtown Bellingham. The redevelopment has attracted new shops and condos.**

In order to effectively enhance opportunities for local and/or minority businesses it is recommended that a local business development strategy include the provision of training and assistance to the local entrepreneurial community, to become more acclimated to modern business practices that would enhance their competitiveness and overall success ratio. In order for a small retail district to thrive and expand, there has to be a focused business development plan. A blend of local and newly recruited business interests would best serve this zone, in particular, and the broader study area, in general.

A critical component of redevelopment in retail areas is for the Agency to provide incentives, improvements and support to enhance opportunities for existing and newly established retailers to be successful and sustainable. The proximity of the MLK District to the mixed-use Town Center Project and water front developments makes the feasibility of the cultural tourism strategy ideally suited for North Port St. Joe's contribution to the overall city-wide development plan. Key, in the remaking of the commercial corridor is a tenant recruitment

plan that seeks to achieve a tenant mix that is diverse, offering an upgraded assortment of goods and services, rather than having an over concentration of discount, low-quality or underperforming retailers.

In the near-term, the MLK District should seek to diversify its tenant mix and improve its existing façade. Since retail structures have short lifecycles, and often require significant investments to just stay competitive, it is highly likely that some existing building footprint be realigned. Redevelopment of the area to mirror a specialty shopping district that integrates reconfigured existing structures and newer retail trends would be ideal. Public access investments with connected sidewalks and significant landscaping improvements, with shade trees and public benches, trash receptacles and themed lighting fixture would transform the area's image.

Generally there is a lack of pedestrian facilities near all of the streets in North Port St. Joe. The City should seek to add additional pedestrian sidewalks along all streets in the study area and enhance those that are in need of repair. In particular, sidewalks should be widened. The pedestrian corridor along MLK Blvd is in need of improvements and/or enhancements such as brick crosswalks, intersection improvements, new sidewalks and historical street lighting.

Recommendation:

- Improve pedestrian movements by enhancing/adding sidewalks on study area streets.
- Modify zoning to allow for mixed-use residential/commercial and or live/work uses.
- Improve street lighting and establish standards to complement adjacent key improvement areas.
- Establish design theme standards for designated areas to enhance destination identity.
- Establish strong design theme standards that create strengthened regional marketing images that attract investors, tourists, and new residents enhancing the destination identity.
- Develop and support a "knowledge development system" of best practices in community transformation that encourages a renewed interest in trained human resources being engaged in community economic development and the plan's implementation.
- Explore opportunities for technology applications (wi-fi, video conferencing centers, neighborhood tech centers, business support programs) throughout the MLK Blvd area.

### US Highway 98 Commercial Corridor

The future land use map shows this area is zoned for commercial and industrial usage. While commercial is in keeping with the recommendations for this area,

the industrial land use is incompatible with Conceptual Master Plan in the Redevelopment Plan, which recommends that the area be zoned commercial and office. This stretch of highway 98 should serve as the gateway to Port St. Joe and could be developed with a design theme that reflects its uniqueness as a traffic artery, designed to focus on linkages to North Port St. Joe's historic residential community, with specialty retail shopping and the easy access to other commercial and waterfront development areas. The commercial district along Highway 98 has the greatest opportunity for creating linkages and extending the commercial influences emanating from the Town Center and water front developments. An issue impacting the redevelopment of the MLK Blvd Corridor and the Central Business District is the lack of visibility from the area's more heavily traveled arterial streets.

Installing markers, signage and traffic control devices enhances the gateway image, celebrating Port St. Joe's business and civic history while providing a visible element to orient visitors, link the commercial core to the surrounding areas and neighborhoods and establish a sense of place and vitality. The overall design should incorporate lighting and imagery to create focal points that mark the arrival of people into the city. A comprehensive signage program, enhancing the visibility of the key retail commercial areas and special venues would improve the commercial viability of these areas. Visual elements alerting drivers along main traffic corridors and within the special districts of a change in the environment, along with appropriate traffic calmer devices would improve the commercial viability of the Highway 98 Corridor. A strategy for directional, identity and special event signage should be developed as a part of developing the District as a destination.

The removal of the railroad overpass would improve tourist and consumers perceptions, as Port St. Joe transforms from its industrial past to a new theme, which captures the essence of its waterfront, cultural, village-like and community appeal. Improving the visual appearance and attractiveness is essential to encouraging complementary retail, residential and office uses along the corridor

Recommendation:

- Develop new identity markers
- Change future land use plan to commercial and office
- Develop traffic control program that reduces speed and encourage travel to North Port St. Joe
- Create way-finding signage that provides an aesthetic appeal and visitor curiosity to visit North Port St. Joe.
- Design and adopt façade standards for the businesses on Hwy 98
- Lower the railroad overpass at the north entrance to Port St. Joe

- Install signage and pavers to delineate pedestrian access to connect North Port St. Joe and water front

### Washington High School Center Area

The future land use map shows this area is zoned for educational and open space usage. It is recommended that the comprehensive plan be amended and zoning expanded to support mixed-use development opportunities. The Washington High School Center Area is a publicly owned property, which is the old high school site for the North Port St. Joe predominantly African American community. It is an important symbol of community pride and is being utilized as the hub of stakeholder and community empowerment activities.

A phase redevelopment of the site would serve to preserve its identity and enhance opportunities for expanding its utility. Upgrading this historical site, enables continued services as a hub to the community and provides development opportunities for community facilities. Projects directed at embellishing historical preservation, a business incubator, education enhancement services, cultural arts programming, and health initiatives could be housed at Washington High School "campus" site. The site also offers a wonderful opportunity for a multi-purpose center with workout equipment, basketball, racket-ball, swimming pool and other programs not only for the youth but for seniors as well

This property creates an excellent opportunity for developing senior and affordable mixed-income housing. Any housing developed along established single family residential areas should be focused on fee simple ownership housing and not rental housing. On the other hand, because of it is contiguous to the railway, which should be abandoned and made available for pedestrian oriented open space uses; the area could facilitate the development of higher density residential and other uses.



The Emeryville Redevelopment Agency executed a Disposition and Development Agreement with Avalon Senior Housing L.P. (a joint development of Catellus Residential Group and East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) to build a permanently affordable development for very low income seniors. The Avalon provides 66 units of affordable rental units at. The Avalon provides housing above ground floor retail space, an innovative model that EBALDC has successfully implemented in a number of projects.

Rezoning this area for a PUD with an architectural overlay district would heighten the probability of attracting private capital and developer interest in redeveloping the site in such a manner as to create a unified look and character for this site.

Recommendation:

- Create a major tourist destination of this site for its appeal as the “entrepreneurial development village” within the larger entrepreneurial community.
- Establish Washington as the Center for managing the hub of civic engagement, entrepreneurial training activities, including Business incubation, Community Transformation Leadership, Contractor Development, Workforce Development, and Community Technology which should provide a mechanism to achieve the projects goals.
- Modify the zoning to allow for mixed-use development opportunities. It may be advisable for the area, including contiguous unimproved and under-improved property, to be a planned unit development (PUD) to have a comprehensive and consistent redevelopment project.
- Designate Washington High as a Wi-Fi site and the Community Technology Training Center which should provide a mechanism to bridge the digital divide.

### Avenue “A” Commercial Corridor

The future land use map shows this area is zoned for a mix if usage including commercial, industrial and R-1 residential. The future land use map could either target this area as a mixed-use redevelopment area focusing on retail and office development between Highway 98 and the railway. Along with the MLK

Corridor, this area, because of its proximity to the Town Center development has great promise for attracting private development of mixed-use projects within the study area. There may also be opportunities for higher density commercial and/or residential uses and the creative re-uses of existing facilities to capitalize on the traffic currently generated as well as increases in uses derived from the proposed Town Center Area.



The Emeryville Redevelopment Agency executed an Owner Participation Agreement with Wareham Development Corporation to create a mixed use office and retail center adjacent to the Emeryville Amtrak Station. The EmeryStation project consists of a three building complex on a 10.64 acre site. The first building, EmeryStation I, includes a 250,000 square foot office building and some retail. The second building, EmeryStation North, is a 180,000 square foot office building. Parking is accommodated in a parking structure under the Terraces at EmeryStation project.

The area east of the railway should be focused on residential development, including fee simple ownership housing as well as rental housing, with careful planning to mitigate any negative impact on the established surrounding established single family neighborhood. When redeveloped as open space, the railway would create a natural transitioning between commercial and residential uses.

#### Recommendations:

- Modify zoning to accommodate PUD and overlay designation for commercial and office usage
- Encourage higher density development between Highway 98 and the railway and residential development east of the railway
- Incorporated design standards that complement development theme emanate from the MLK Corridor, Town Center and Railway Zones

#### Proposed JOE Town Center Area

The future land use map shows this area is zoned for industrial and R-1 residential usage. A PUD has recently been approved for this area. The future land use is planned for office, commercial and public/institutional usage. This project is the central most important economic development initiative directly impacting the North Pot St. Joe community. The unique “company town” influence and the special circumstances of southern experience provide an opportunity for creating a destination and branding as a tourist attraction, luring vacationers to

experience a Pot St. Joe that can't be replicated. Very few people have experienced the uniqueness of life in a "company Town" environment.

A "Life Style Center" design concept is proposed for this site. The North Port St. Joe community should be redeveloped to capitalize on the commercial influence generated from this development. The orientation of pedestrian corridors that opens the development to historic Port St. Joe neighborhoods, waterfront and Downtown Pot St. Joe would enhance the complementary revitalization of North Port St. Joe. Additionally, the ball park can serve as a multi-use facility hosting Gospel fests, Blues and Jazz concerts, Country Music events, and all types of activities to attract tourists to the area.

The ball park development, with the possibility of an amphitheatre, could help to generate trips that could benefit retail locations in the area. There could be a mix of neighborhood and community serving retail uses, depending upon the scale and amenity level of the park as a destination.

Recreational sports are becoming more accepted and understood as an economic tool. These venues have spurred spin-off development, ranging from residential uses to specialty venues, such as the connecting walking and nature trails that cite these trails as specific amenities to newly generated commercial uses. There is a potential to turn nature trail and allied developments into a real economic engine for the area. Ultimately connecting to a true destination greenspace with the possibility of redevelopment of the MLK and Avenue "A" districts could essentially program a day of activities in Port St. Joe for the average family. Increasing the vitality and use of the ball field would also positively impact the property values.

#### Recommendation:

- Modify zoning to accommodate PUD and overlay designation for commercial and office usage.
- Create a "Life Style Center" design concept for the Town Center site.
- Develop the ball park as a multi-use facility hosting Gospel fests, Blues and Jazz concerts, Country Music events, and all types of activities to attract tourists to the area.
- Plan the utilization of recreational sports as an economic tool.
- Research the possibility of spin-off development projects, ranging from upscale residential uses to specialty venues.
- Incorporate Wi-Fi technology as an amenity of the Town Center.
- Build on the market attraction of music and entertainment to increase the potential for regional destination status.

### Vacant and Underutilized parcels

The future land use map shows this area is zoned for open space usage. There are large tracts of unimproved properties within the study area that are contiguous to the railway and owned by the JOE Company. These parcels create an excellent opportunity for the development of housing, retail commercial and office projects.



Located on the western bank of the Allegheny River, Washington's Landing is a 42-acre island approximately two miles from Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle. This once blighted island was transformed into a high-quality, multi-use development, including market-rate housing, office/research and development, and light industrial uses. It also features a marina, a rowing center, and a public park.

Far too often communities are of the opinion that they cannot afford to "grow smart" by conserving open space. But accumulating evidence indicates that open space conservation is not an expense but an investment that produces important economic benefits. Some of this evidence comes from academic studies and economic analysis. Other evidence is from the firsthand experience of community leaders and government officials who have found that open space protection does not "cost" but "pays."

Other priorities for the community were the access to gathering spaces and a community hall providing rental space for small social events.

Different types of recreational spaces were identified including:

- Community gathering and Civic Space – Baseball Park
- Nature Preserve/Open Space – Redeveloped Railway
- Provide connectivity to all parks via walking and bike trails

Recommendation:

- Use vacant land to create open spaces for leisure and recreation.
- Establish walking and bike trails.
- Develop commercial and residential uses complementary to the nearest real estate development

### Railway Corridor

The potential for linkage of the various development districts in North Port St. Joe is greatly enhance if the unused railway that transverse the community, was

redeveloped and preserve as open-space to serve as a natural connector, facilitation pedestrian/bike paths access to both the residential community and commercial districts within North Port St. Joe, in particular, and the broader Port St. Joe community, in general.

There is a high probability that recreational cyclists, biking within the coast communities, would be interested in biking along a nature train featuring a cultural and waterfront experience unique to Port St. Joe. The trail could ultimately serve as a connection to a true destination greenspace with the possibility of essentially programming a day of activities in Port St. Joe for the average family. Increasing the vitality and use of the railway would also positively impact the property values in the surrounding neighborhoods, and create market pressure for nearby commercial and retail uses, to spearhead redevelopment to meet the demands and consumer preferences of residents and visitors alike.

Greenway trails promote walking and bicycling and encourage the city's active community residents to use forms of transportation other than automobiles. The North Port St. Joe "Greenway Trail" links important downtown facilities and historic neighborhoods. Typically, the greenway should be eight to twelve feet in width, with adequate signing and marking to alert users to potential hazards and to convey regulatory messages to bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists at intersections. In addition, signage is used to dictate directions, destinations, distances, route numbers, and names of crossing streets in the same manner as they are used on highways.

Recommendations:

- Abandon the railway as a railroad spur and rededicate the property for open space and complementary commercial use
- Develop trail program

#### [Transportation and Circulation Initiatives](#)

Highway 98, Martin Luther King Blvd and Avenue "A" are the most direct entry points into the North Port St. Joe community. While it is the most direct route, it is not well signed and travelers rarely stop in the area. Additionally, the development and landscape pattern of the streets are not consistent and not visually appealing. To enhance the entry point into the area and take advantage of development opportunities, infrastructural improvements should be undertaken to improve landscaping.

Recommendations:

- Enhance the entry into North Port St. Joe
- Construct a gateway.

## ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is derived from community input. It prioritizes what type of development projects the community would like to see for the North Port St. Joe study area. The selection of projects should be diverse in nature with a goal to increase access, connectivity, mobility and livability in the City of Port St. Joe.

The Port St. Joe Master Plan should support a diverse mix of land uses including residential, retail, mixed use, institutional and open space. The plan focuses on generating several economic development opportunities within North Port St. Joe. The plan has identified several areas referenced as Opportunity Zone.

The Action Plan identifies key improvement areas that provide the greatest opportunity for the development of catalyst projects to facilitate redevelopment activities. The community has recommended that the initial expenditure of public resource should occur within the following three zones:

- Martin Luther King Corridor
- Avenue "A" Corridor
- Washington High School Site

The Agency with a concentrated focus on redevelopment within these zones, consisting of new and enhanced retail and housing opportunities and the redevelopment of the public open space and nature/bike trail would create a fertile investment climate to attract private capital investments.

The improvements include new and widened sidewalks, crosswalk improvements and wider sidewalks. It is recommended that future development of streetscapes on Port St. Joe Street be developed to further enhance the safety and pedestrian circulation downtown. These streetscape improvements will tie directly into the redevelopment efforts of the above reference Opportunity Zones.

The community recommends a mix of housing types and options be developed, including townhomes, residential lofts above retail, single-family rehabilitation and apartments. The need for these housing types effectively responds to the critical housing need of the resident population. The immediate demand for housing is to provide decent, safe and secure housing for the senior population living in substandard housing. As indicated by the Friends of North Port St. Joe Strategic Plan, there are 461 houses of which 129 are owned and occupied by persons over the age of 65, in the study area.

If housing is to reach a critical mass of the targeted population and attract market rate housing development, the residential communities must be mixed-income developments. City and Agency funds should be leveraged with private financing, in some fashion, on a catalyst project to defray cost without depressing values. Providing a range of housing options creates an inviting community setting planned and segregated in a manner attractive to families, empty nesters, couples with no children and singles at an affordable price point. Rehabilitation programs for the existing housing stock will contribute to the stability of the owner occupied community.

## NORTH PORT ST. JOE ACTION PLAN

The subsequent table reflects the community's preferences for redeveloping the project area and their prioritization of the type and scale of development most desirable. Several potential funding sources including public and private entities have been identified as part of the implementation of the North Port St. Joe Master Plan.

Description/Activity	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	FUNDING SOURCE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COST
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					
<b>MLK Corridor</b>					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story homes	<b>2</b>				
o Rental					
o Ownership					
o Elderly					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story retail	<b>1</b>				
Develop park for community events	<b>3</b>				
Pedestrian/vehicular access to Central Business District					
Establish cultural festival/event)/museum /art gallery					
Create venue for farmers/specialty market					

Preservation of architecture of historic structures					
Design standard to connect MLK to Town Center					
Police sub-station					
Upgrade utilities					
Change zoning for mixed use development					
Improve façade and pedestrian access/sidewalks					
Establish business recruitment/retention plan					
Provide minority/women business assistance					
Provide parking accommodations					
Provide affordable housing					
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					
<b>US Highway 98</b>					
Better street access to NPSJ					
Remove/lower RR bridge					
Add sidewalks					
Improve traffic light sequencing					
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					
<b>Washington High School</b> <i>(Along Neighborhood Edge)</i>					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story homes	<b>1</b>				
○ Rental					
○ Ownership					
○ Elderly					

○					
○					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story retail	<b>2</b>				
Preserve historic building					
Provide technical training center					
<b>Description/Activity</b>	<b>PHASE 1</b>	<b>PHASE 2</b>	<b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>COST</b>
Leave as is – Don't change use	<b>4</b>				
Recreational and educational	<b>3</b>				
○					
○					
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					
<b>Washington High School</b> <i>(Phase 1 &amp; Phase 2)</i>					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story homes	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			
○ Rental					
○ Ownership					
○ Elderly					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story retail	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>			
Provide elderly housing	<b>3</b>				
Leave as is – Don't change use	<b>3</b>				
Recreational, community center and educational		<b>3</b>			
Preserve historic building					
Change zoning to allow low income housing/senior housing/health care					

Description/Activity	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	FUNDING SOURCE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COST
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					
<b>Avenue "A" Corridor</b> <i>(Phase 1 &amp; Phase 2)</i>					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story homes	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			
o Rental					
o Ownership					
o Elderly					
Develop 1 and/or 2 story retail	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>			
Develop 3 and/or 4 story elderly	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>			
Restore/enhance ballpark	<b>4</b>				
Program/Infrastructure support for Norris D. Langston Center					
Covert RR Building to museum/public meeting area					
Improve public access					
Create public use and entertainment opportunities					
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					
<b>JOE Town Center</b>					
Create diversity in patronage and tenancy					
Include government uses and commercial shops					
Connect with surrounding districts (MLK/waterfront/CBD)					
Provide for sidewalks/parks/siding area					
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					

Description/Activity	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	FUNDING SOURCE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COST
<b>Railway Corridor</b>					
Create walking/bike trail					
Improve landscaping and lighting					
Create welcome center-history of PSJ					
Develop access to other areas					
<b>OPPORTUNITY ZONE</b>					
<b>Vacant &amp; Underutilized Land</b>					
Use for parking for adjacent districts					
Greenspace - community gardens – youth clean-up campaign					
Local community parks w/table/benches					
Outdoor/Musical events					

# Appendix

## Public Participation

The Port St. Joe Master Plan focused heavily on public participation and involvement. To facilitate input from a diverse group of stakeholders' particular consideration and attention was given to workshop locations and format to determine how their attendance in the meetings would affect the outcome of the study, what the outcomes meant to them, and their role in the decision-making process.

Equally important to the planning effort was the dissemination of information and promotion of the various planning sessions. To advertise and encourage participation in this meeting, over 250 flyers were distributed to downtown businesses, neighborhood associations, neighbor churches and the general public. Each meeting was published in the local paper and the Redevelopment Agency would regularly prepare editorials, highlighting the planning activities and encouraging community participation. The information from the meeting was sent to the city for posting on the community informational listings. The local television station recorded and aired the meeting to further promote and educate the local citizens of the process.

A major component of this study was to assure that this plan included a "shared vision" derived from the collective input of the community. The focus was to ensure that key stakeholders were contacted and informed of the meetings. In order to fulfill this focus, the following input opportunities were developed:

- Project Team Meetings
- Public Workshops and Presentations - Meetings were held on the following dates:
  - Consultant Team/Agency Meeting (April 9, 2007)
  - Community/Consultant Team Introduction (April 12, 2007)
  - Community Planning Kick-off Meeting (April 16, 2007)
  - Community Planning Workshop (May 7, 2007)
  - Community Planning Stakeholder Workshop (May 24, 2007)
  - NAACP Cook Out - Community Outreach Forum (June 2, 2007)
  - Community Visioning Design Standards Workshop (June 18, 2007)
  - NAACP Community Forum – Expansion Area Rescinded (June 28, 2007)
  - Strategic Planning Workshop – S.P.A.R.S.E Model – (July 9, 2007)
  - Consultant Team/Agency Meetings (July 30, 2007)
  - Master Plan Review (August 20, 2007)

## Project Team Meeting

The project team consisted of City of Port St. Joe/Redevelopment Agency staff and the consulting team. These meetings focused on the general direction for the planning process. Specific presentation materials, plan development materials, and recommendation issues were addressed during these in depth sessions.

## Community Visioning and Workshop Surveys

A community visioning and workshop survey documents were prepared and distributed at the May 7<sup>th</sup>, May 24<sup>th</sup>, June 18<sup>th</sup>, and July 9<sup>th</sup> planning and visioning workshops. At this meeting, the planning team presented the following:

- Overview of the Master Plan Process and Timeline
- Port St. Joe Master Plan Area Boundaries
- Port St. Joe Redevelopment Goals and Challenges
- Existing Land Use Components
- Preliminary Market Determinants
- Traffic and Transportation Consideration

Visioning Workshops examined the following categories:

- Parks and gathering places,
- Greenways and trails
- Sidewalks/streetscape-Urban
- Sidewalks/streetscape-Suburban/residential
- Storefronts/Design Character – Single-Use
- Storefronts/Design Character – Mixed-Use,
- Residential
- Parking
- Signage/Furniture/Art Work/Lighting
- Traffic Calming

The purpose of the surveys was to develop a comprehensive view of the community to establish a contextual framework from which future development planning would evolve. The surveys provided the team with the general characteristics and community desires for the future development of “key improvement areas”.

The workshop allowed the public to work with architects, planners and economic development professionals in focusing on redevelopment, civic amenities and the connectivity issues affecting the North Port St. Joe area and its impact to the broader Port St. Joe community. The planning workshops focused on the issues related to preservation, change, creative re-use, new development and connectivity.

The community based organization, neighborhood associations, civic organizations and faith-based institutions within the Master Plan area were specifically focused on to facilitate participation in the planning process.

**APPENDIX – A**  
**ATTENDANCE**  
**SHETTS**

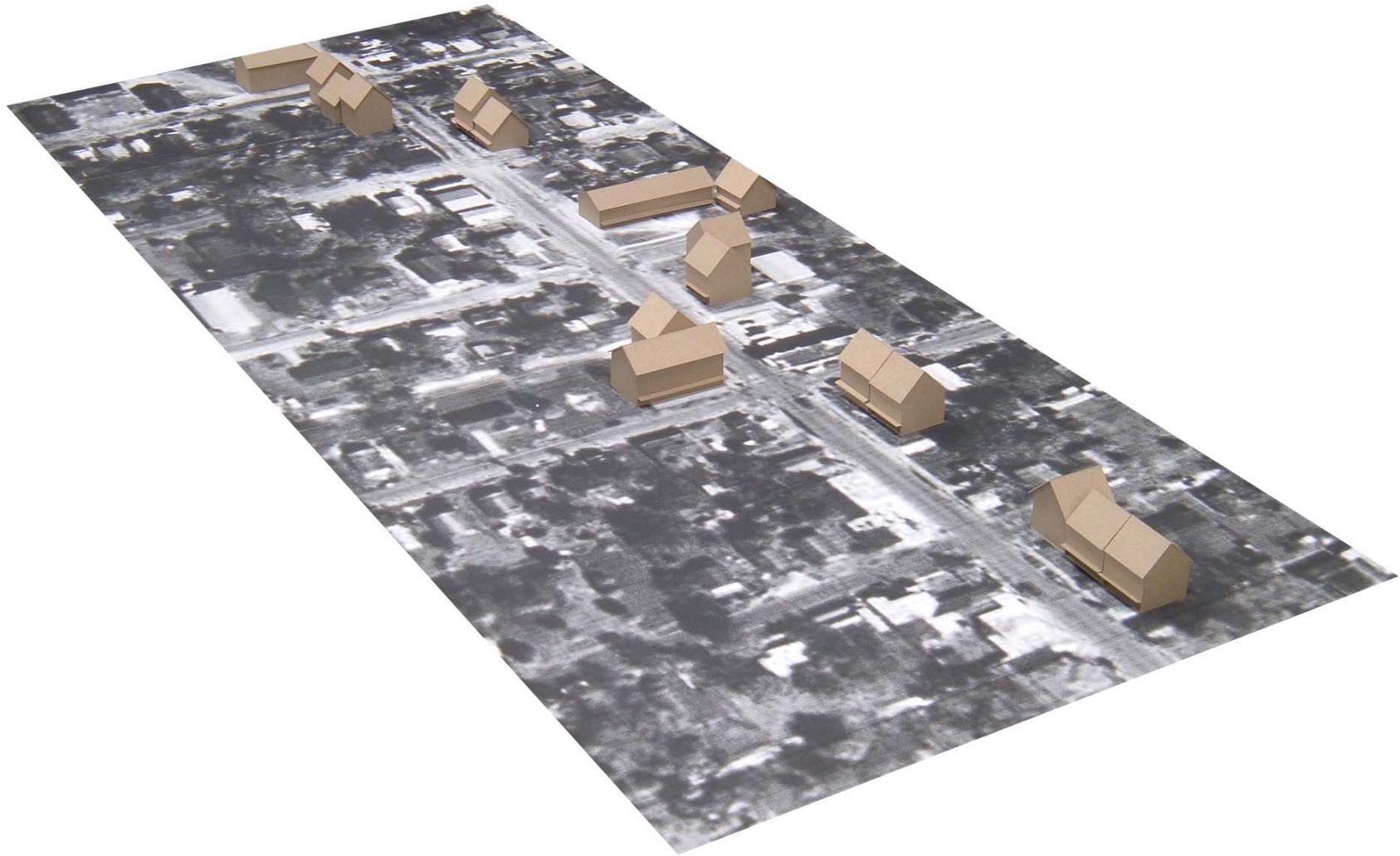
# APPENDIX – B SURVEY FORMS

# APPENDIX – C COMMENT FORMS

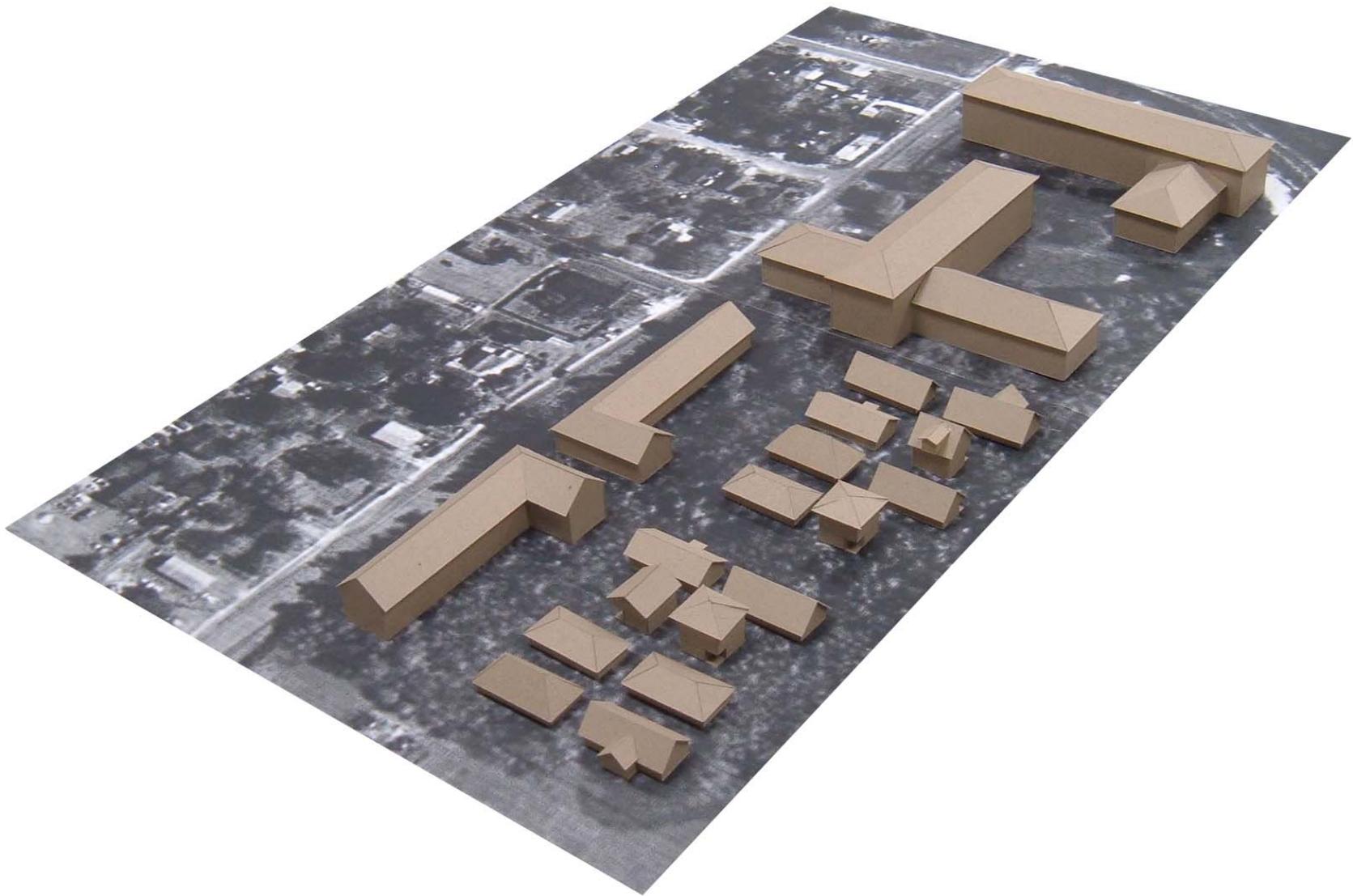
# APPENDIX – D

## *OPPORTUNITY ZONE MODELING*

**MLK Corridor  
Avenue “A” Corridor  
Washington High Center Area**



MLK BLVD MODELING



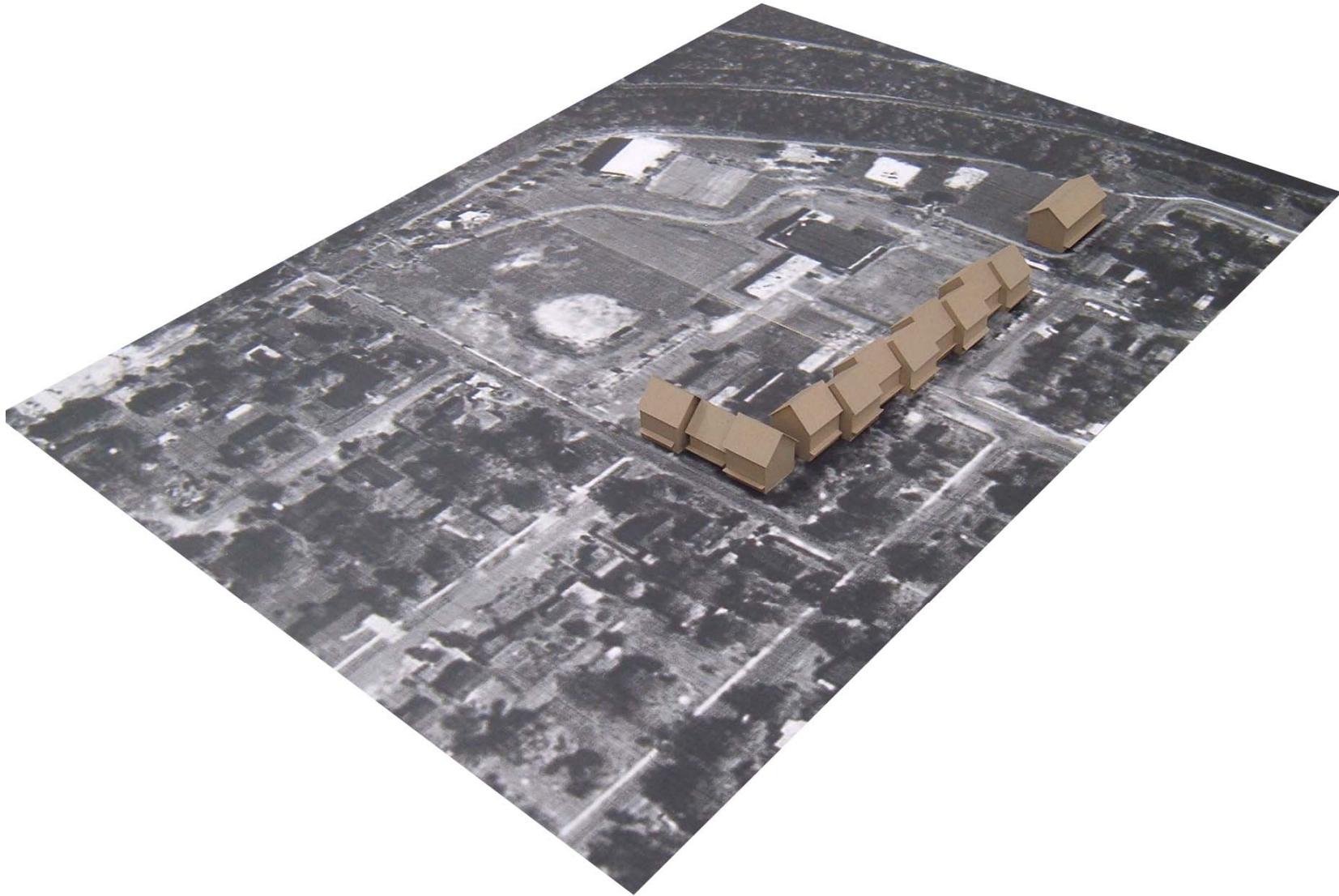
AVENUE "A" MODELING



Existing Structure Proposed Infill

AVENUE "A" CONCEPT PLAN





WASHINGTON HS MODELING

WASHINGTON HS CONCEPT PLAN

