

CITY OF PARKER

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT





OVERVIEW

Developing sustainable stormwater management and green space strategies to improve resilience and support community long-term recovery.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The project team worked closely with city staff and the community to respond to specific community goals and challenges with a set of sustainable design options that foster a strong sense of place. The project team provided the following range of virtual and socially-distanced options for community input in context of Covid-19 safety concerns.

- City Council and Planning Commission workshop on July 16, 2020.
- Posters on display at City Hall accompanied by a paper survey.
- Virtual open house via the project web page with video presentations and online survey.
- Stakeholder meetings via conference call.

Overall the participants expressed support and enthusiasm for the proposed designs. The concepts on the following pages reflect the community input provided.

INTRODUCTION

The city of Parker (the City) is challenged with the daunting task of recovering from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Michael, a Category 5 hurricane that made landfall in October 2018. To support physical and economic recovery in Parker, the Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project (R2P2) provided technical assistance by developing strategies and design concepts that bolster resiliency to stormwater impacts, improve quality of life and support sustainable redevelopment. The design process was guided by the following technical assistance goals:

- Integrate long-term sustainability and resilience into rebuilding.
- Develop a vibrant walkable commercial area that supports local businesses.
- Develop a gateway with welcoming mixed-use redevelopment to support a commercial district along Business 98.
- Create an inviting commercial gateway with community character.
- Increase waterfront access to 12 miles of coastline and provide paddle trail connections to other community recreation assets.
- Provide connections to businesses and community amenities.
- Create connections to regional recreation opportunities.

ABOUT

The Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project (R2P2) is a technical assistance initiative to support the recovery of Florida Panhandle cities provided by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Integrated Recovery Coordination field operations and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 4.

FOCUS

For the technical assistance, the City identified four areas where innovative conceptual designs can support revitalization, storm resilience and long-term economic recovery. The technical assistance team worked with the City to develop designs for each of the project sites, as well as a citywide connectivity plan that proposes safe pedestrian and bicycle options. Each design is informed by a set of sustainability principles and strategies described on pages 2-3.

Design Projects include:

Business 98 Downtown Corridor	4-5
East End Gateway	6-7
Citywide Connections	8-9
West Park Street Waterfront	10-11
West End Gateway	12-13



SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE

Integrate long-term sustainability and resilience into rebuilding.



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PRINCIPLES

The design options in this report address the City's specific goals and challenges by integrating the principles of resilience, alternative transportation, health and wellness, and vibrant public spaces into stormwater management. This approach increases resilience of the stormwater management while improving public spaces and opportunities to bike and walk.



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Design tools and strategies to support economic recovery and build resilience for future storm events are highlighted within each design concept. Designs include strategies to increase economic resilience by creating new greenways and green spaces that attract visitors and boost commercial opportunities and local employment. Sustainability features also increase resilience of the built environment during storm events by capturing stormwater and reducing flooding.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Increasing opportunities for health and wellness can strengthen a community's resilience by increasing wellbeing and community ties through exercise and social interactions. In addition, recreation amenities can bolster economic recovery as recreational tourism grows in popularity. Providing opportunities to connect with the natural environment is linked to improved physical, social and mental health.



ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Improving infrastructure for safe travel by foot and bicycle can help reduce vehicular traffic. Improvements to paddle sport access points can support a recreational economy that links biking, hiking and waterways that encourage healthier lifestyles.



VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES

Creating attractive and welcoming public spaces can bring people into downtown areas, increase resident and visitor spending, boost local employment and drive local investment. Placemaking strategies such as signage, public art, and plantings help create vibrant spaces that build local pride and attract visitors to the area.

STRATEGIES

The design options on the following pages address specific challenges by integrating best practices to address stormwater while providing amenities to improve public spaces and biking and walking safety.

Each design option integrates one or more of the tools described on this page to help manage the volume, flow and/or treatment of stormwater and support natural ecosystems.

The icons are included on the concept design plans to indicate the tools used.



WETLAND RETENTION

Enhancing existing wetlands can provide stormwater detention, improved water quality, increased habitat and new recreational amenities.



WATERWAY RESTORATION

Vegetated buffers on either side of a waterway enhance watershed health by moderating water runoff quantities and improving water quality. The vegetation can intercept, absorb and infiltrate surface runoff to help moderate the peak runoff rates during rain events, which reduces erosion and sedimentation of the channel, keeps water cool and supports aquatic habitat.



POLLINATOR GARDENS

Many types of plants, including fruit and vegetable crops, depend on animals (such as butterflies, bees and birds) for pollination. Using pollinator-friendly plants can also help support these important species.



PERVIOUS PAVEMENT

Pervious concrete and asphalt surfaces have proven to be effective and viable alternatives to traditional paving systems. The surface allows stormwater runoff volumes to decrease, infiltration rates to increase, and pollutant loads to be reduced before reaching local water bodies.



NATIVE PLANTINGS

Incorporating vegetation into the landscape is a stormwater management technique that mimics natural drainage. Vegetated areas intercept and infiltrate rainfall to decrease stormwater volumes and can also remove pollutants.



WATER REUSE

Water reuse reclaims water from a variety of sources then treats and reuses it for beneficial purposes such as irrigation, groundwater replenishment and industrial processes. Water reuse can provide alternatives to existing water supplies and be used to enhance water security, sustainability and resilience.



PLANTED SWALES

Vegetated swales, sometimes referred to as bioswales, are broad, shallow channels designed to convey and infiltrate stormwater runoff. Swales reduce stormwater volume and improve water quality through infiltration and vegetative filtering. Swales can be planted with grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees to increase aesthetic and habitat value.



RAINWATER STORAGE

Capture systems collect and store stormwater for specific purposes, such as irrigation, and often can hold water for a significant period of time.

BUSINESS 98 DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR

Develop a vibrant walkable commercial area that supports local businesses.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Key issues that limit commercial potential include vacancy, high speed truck traffic and a lack of sidewalks and bike lanes.

The lack of sidewalks and designated commercial driveway access creates safety issues.

Sidewalks and bike lanes are needed to connect community assets such as the Parker Sports Complex, City Hall and the library.



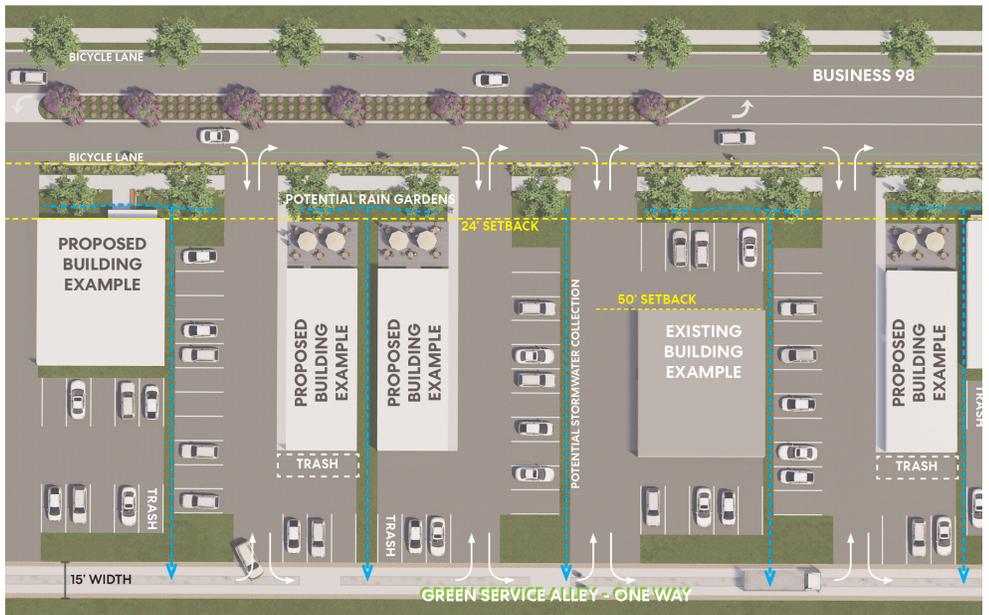
Existing Business 98 street conditions

DESIGN CONCEPTS

A Local Business District

The concept proposes streetscape and commercial building designs to create a walkable local business district with welcoming storefronts. Proposed road improvements include a turn lane that alternates as a planted median and a dedicated, clearly marked bicycle lane.

Safe, attractive pedestrian and bicycle paths with natural drainage features can support local businesses and improve access to community amenities.



Business district concept plan



Green alleys use sustainable materials such as pervious pavements and plantings to create an inviting public space for people to walk, play, and interact.

BUSINESS DISTRICT

The streetscape design includes sidewalks and plantings to improve safety, visibility and access to businesses.

Other recommendations include dedicated on-street bicycle lanes. Additionally, a center turn lane that alternates as a planted median can slow traffic while providing access to businesses. The median plantings complement the streetscape planting identity for the corridor.



Illustration of streetscape features

The diagram to the right shows potential options for setbacks, parking and building footprints that can guide development of the corridor at a scale suitable for local businesses along Business 98.

Reduced building setbacks help to activate the street experience by prioritizing entries for pedestrians. Parking can shift to the back or side of the parcel. Patios and outdoor seating area are located in the front to bring activity and life to the streetscape.



Diagram showing potential setbacks, parking and building footprints

STORMWATER DISTRICT

This concept proposes a district-wide stormwater system that can slow and capture stormwater across multiple properties. Stormwater capture offers re-use opportunities, such as water that can be used for irrigation.

The blue lines in this diagram illustrate how runoff from building rooftops and parking lots flows into rain gardens and other planted features that capture and infiltrate stormwater across the properties.



Diagram showing how stormwater can be captured for infiltration or re-use in a district-wide approach

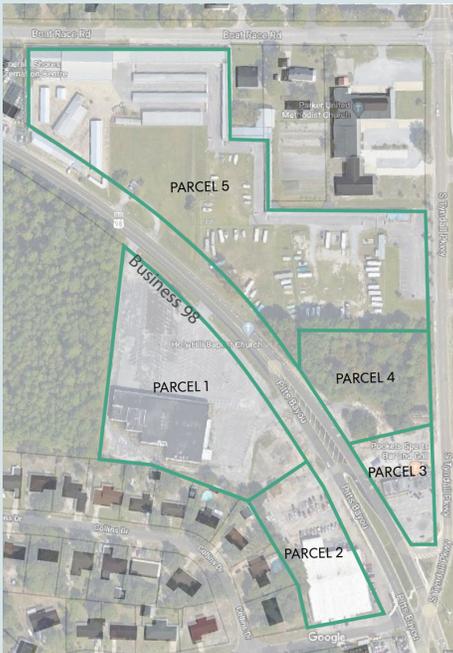
EAST END GATEWAY

Develop a gateway with welcoming mixed-use redevelopment to support a commercial district along Business 98.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Destruction following Hurricane Michael and ongoing vacancy make this key entry corridor into Parker feel disconnected. The corridor has the potential to support local businesses, residences and recreation amenities.

Plans to rebuild Tyndall Air Force Base are underway, which will bring more people into Parker and surrounding cities to live, shop and eat. Projected growth over the next two to five years positions this corridor between Business 98 and U.S. 98/Tyndall Parkway as an important growth area.



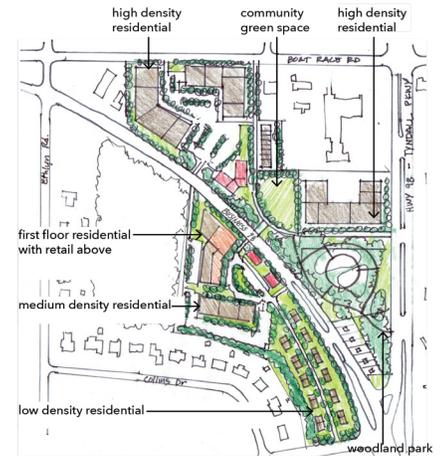
Parcels located along entry corridor

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Three initial design concepts focused on mixed-use redevelopment propose different levels of residential density and mix of uses and amenities.

Key development principles include:

- Create appropriately-scaled mixed-use developments.
- Develop an on-site approach to stormwater management.
- Anchor retail along Business 98.
- Create pedestrian-scaled streets and improve connections to green spaces.
- Create multi-function open spaces that provide recreational amenities and increase habitat.
- Provide a mix of housing types and densities appropriate to the local context.
- Provide visual vegetative buffers to adjacent residential areas.
- Balance development potential with existing open space and natural amenities.
- Improve access and intersection improvements along Highway 98.
- Enhance connections to neighborhood and regional amenities and services.
- Help to establish the character of Parker as a family- and business-friendly community.



MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

The refined design concept proposes a commercial area facing Business 98 at this gateway location, enhanced by community greenspace and supported by mixed-density residential.

The area on the north side of Business 98 focuses on retail and commercial opportunities. There is potential for a variety of residential uses including a hybrid, which has first floor commercial with residential above, as well as medium-density multi-family residential use. Behind the featured commercial opportunity at the intersection of Tyndall Parkway and Business 98 is an expanded woodland park and retail area linked by trails.

On the south side of Business 98, a mix of retail and residential uses is located around a small green space. Low-density residential is proposed along Business 98 adjacent to similar existing neighborhoods to the west.



Examples of mixed-use and residential density



CITYWIDE CONNECTIONS

Provide connections to businesses and community amenities.



CITYWIDE CONNECTIVITY

Safe bike and pedestrian networks can increase quality of life, property value and economic development for cities of all sizes.

There are many simple, cost-effective ways to integrate pedestrian and bike connections as part of road improvement and construction projects.

The city can benefit from a plan that identifies where designated paths, lanes, sidewalks, street crossings and safety features are needed. The plans can inform future projects to integrate pedestrian and bike infrastructure.

Safe bike and pedestrian connections can be created by using existing infrastructure such as sidewalks, which can be expanded to accommodate multimodal users, or roadways, which can be designated for shared bike lanes or expanded for on-shoulder bike lanes.

SAFE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

The map on page nine shows a proposed network for improved bike and pedestrian connectivity in Parker. Following are several options for integrating designated bike/pedestrian connections based on road type and safety considerations.

- 1 Corridors and Highways** (example: Business 98)
Visually- or physically-separated paths that buffer traffic, including:
 - Separated bike lanes and sidewalk
 - Separated multi-use path
- 2 Local Roads** (example: Lake Drive)
Well-marked shared conditions or separated paths including:
 - Separated bike lane and sidewalk
 - Shared bike lane and sidewalk
- 3 Neighborhood Streets** (example: East Third Street)
Yield street conditions including signage and pavement markings



Separated bike lanes

On-street or on-shoulder marked bike lanes designate space for bicyclists (5 feet to 6 feet wide).



Separated multi-use paths

A wide paved path for a bicyclists, pedestrians, runners, scooters and others traveling for recreation or transportation (8 feet to 12 feet wide).



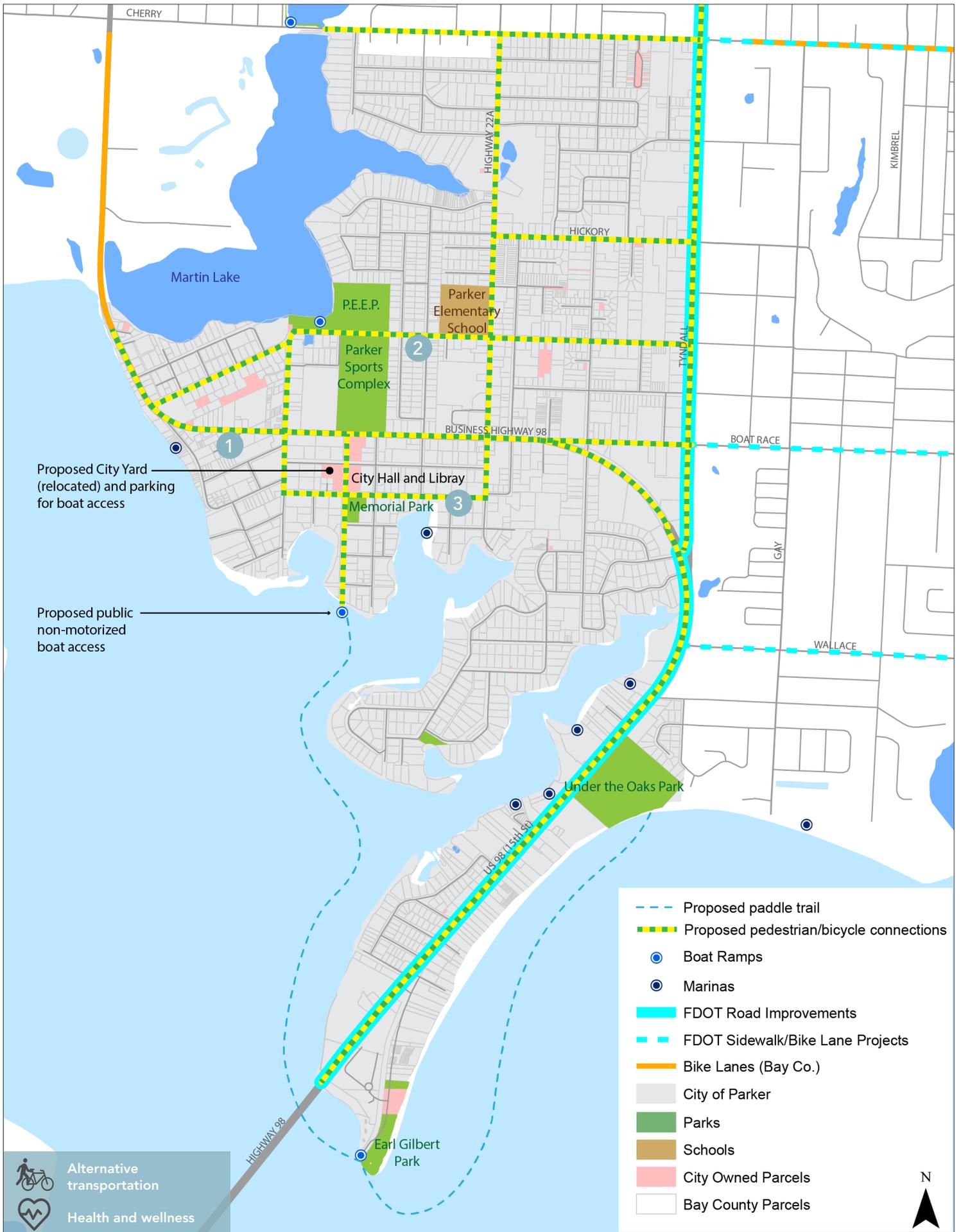
Shared bike lanes

Bicycles and vehicles share the roadway marked with signs.



Yield streets

Pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists share narrow neighborhood streets. Pavement markings and signs can improve awareness and safety.



Proposed City Yard
(relocated) and parking
for boat access

Proposed public
non-motorized
boat access

- - - Proposed paddle trail
- - - Proposed pedestrian/bicycle connections
- Boat Ramps
- ⊙ Marinas
- FDOT Road Improvements
- - - FDOT Sidewalk/Bike Lane Projects
- Bike Lanes (Bay Co.)
- City of Parker
- Parks
- Schools
- City Owned Parcels
- Bay County Parcels

 Alternative transportation

 Health and wellness



WEST PARK STREET WATERFRONT

Increase waterfront access to 12 miles of coastline and provide paddle trail connections to other community recreation assets.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Parker offers 12 miles of coastline, but there are few public areas to view the waterfront or launch a boat into the bay from the mainland. City property and right-of-way on West Park Street and Sixth Street create an opportunity for community waterfront access to the bay close to other community facilities including the Parker Sports Complex, Parker Environmental Exploratorium Park (P.E.E.P.), library and Memorial Park.

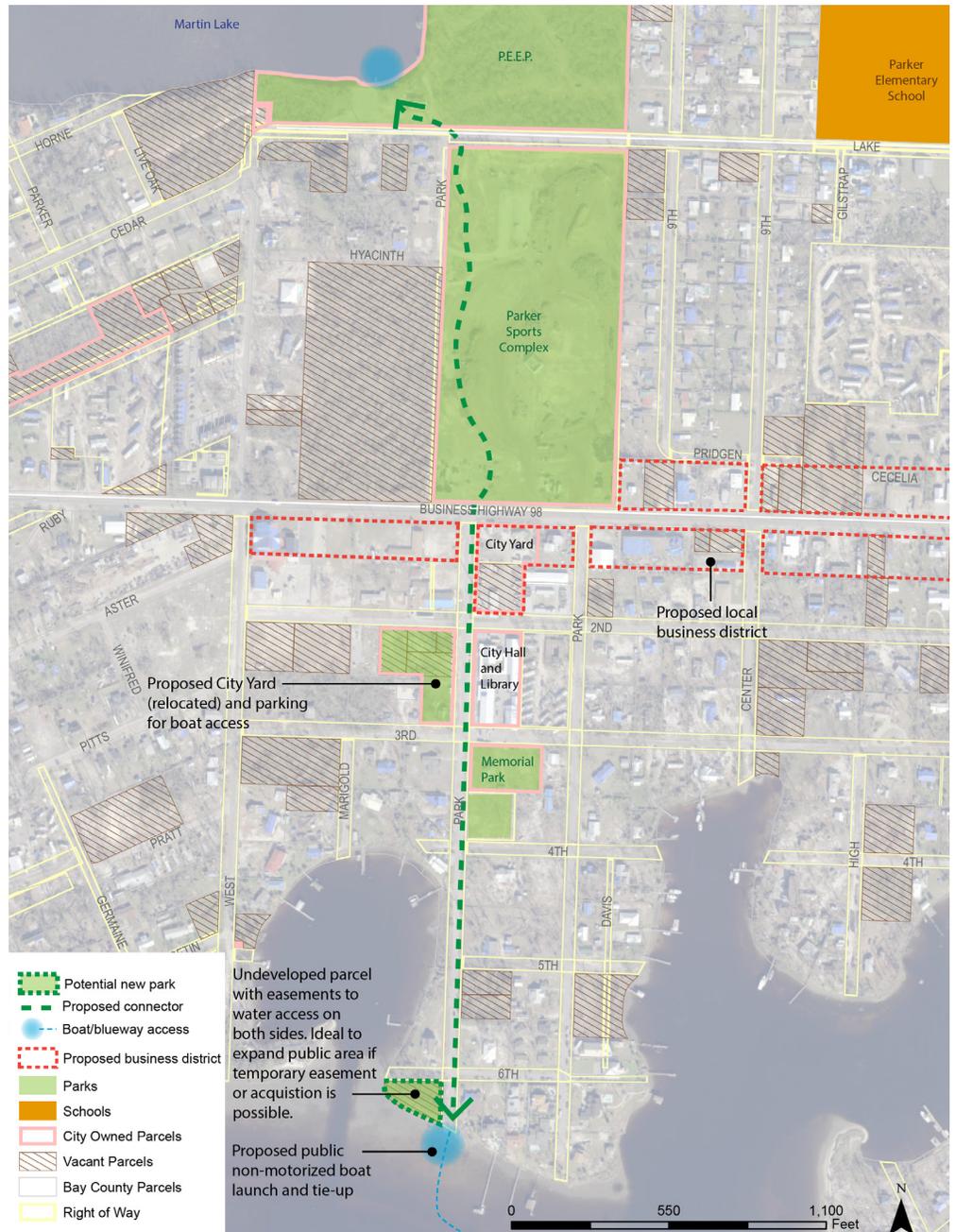


A view of the bay from the end of West Park Street



A view at the end of West Park Street

LAKE-TO-BAY TRAIL AND PADDLEWAY ACCESS



This map illustrates a potential for a waterfront connection from Martin Lake to St. Andrews Bay along West Park Street.

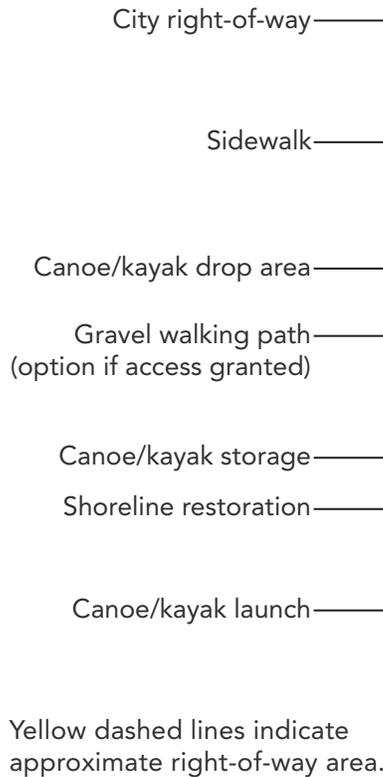
POTENTIAL WATERFRONT ACCESS AND PARK

This concept proposes several features to create a small waterfront access area within the public right of way that offers bay views and a small sandy shoreline at the south end of West Park Street.

Option: Potential use of an adjacent vacant parcel through a temporary easement agreement or acquisition can expand the access to create a quiet waterfront park without limiting future development.

A sidewalk, kayak/canoe launch and tie-up area, gathering space and close parking across from City Hall offer residents a convenient place to view the water, picnic or launch a paddleboard, canoe or kayak to fish or explore the bay.

The location also links to state paddle trails, including the St. Andrews Bay and Intra Coastal Waterway Corridors.



- Vibrant public spaces
- Native plantings
- Community resilience
- Alternative transportation

Concept plan, top right

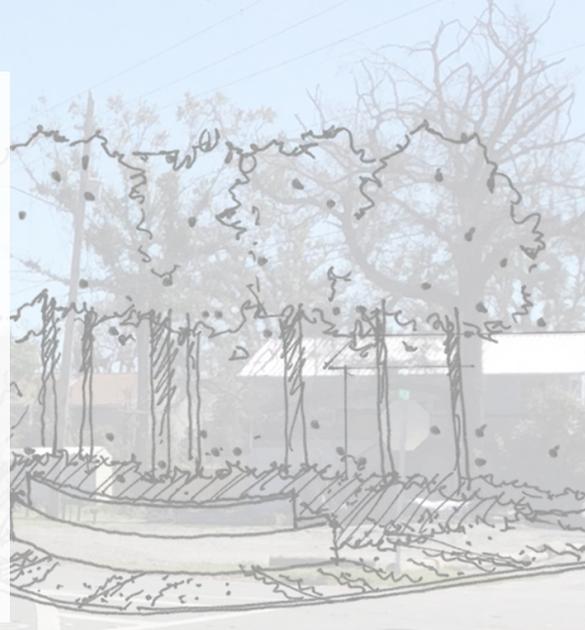
Illustration of proposed boat drop area, left

Illustration of canoe/kayak launch and storage area, below



WEST END GATEWAY

Create an inviting commercial gateway with distinct community character.

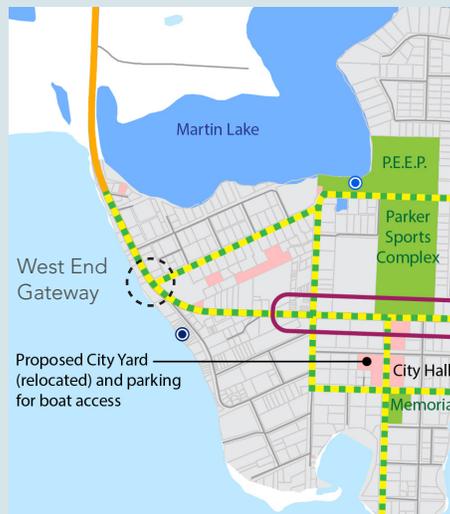


EXISTING CONDITIONS

The entrance into Parker from Panama City and Springfield on Highway 98 lacks features that welcome visitors and celebrate Parker's identity.



Existing entry into Parker on Highway 98 eastbound from Panama City and Springfield.



Location of proposed West End Gateway

DESIGN CONCEPT

Plantings and signage can position the Business 98 corridor as an inviting commercial gateway and express a more distinct community character. The design concepts illustrate several different approaches for signage, structure and plantings that identify Parker.



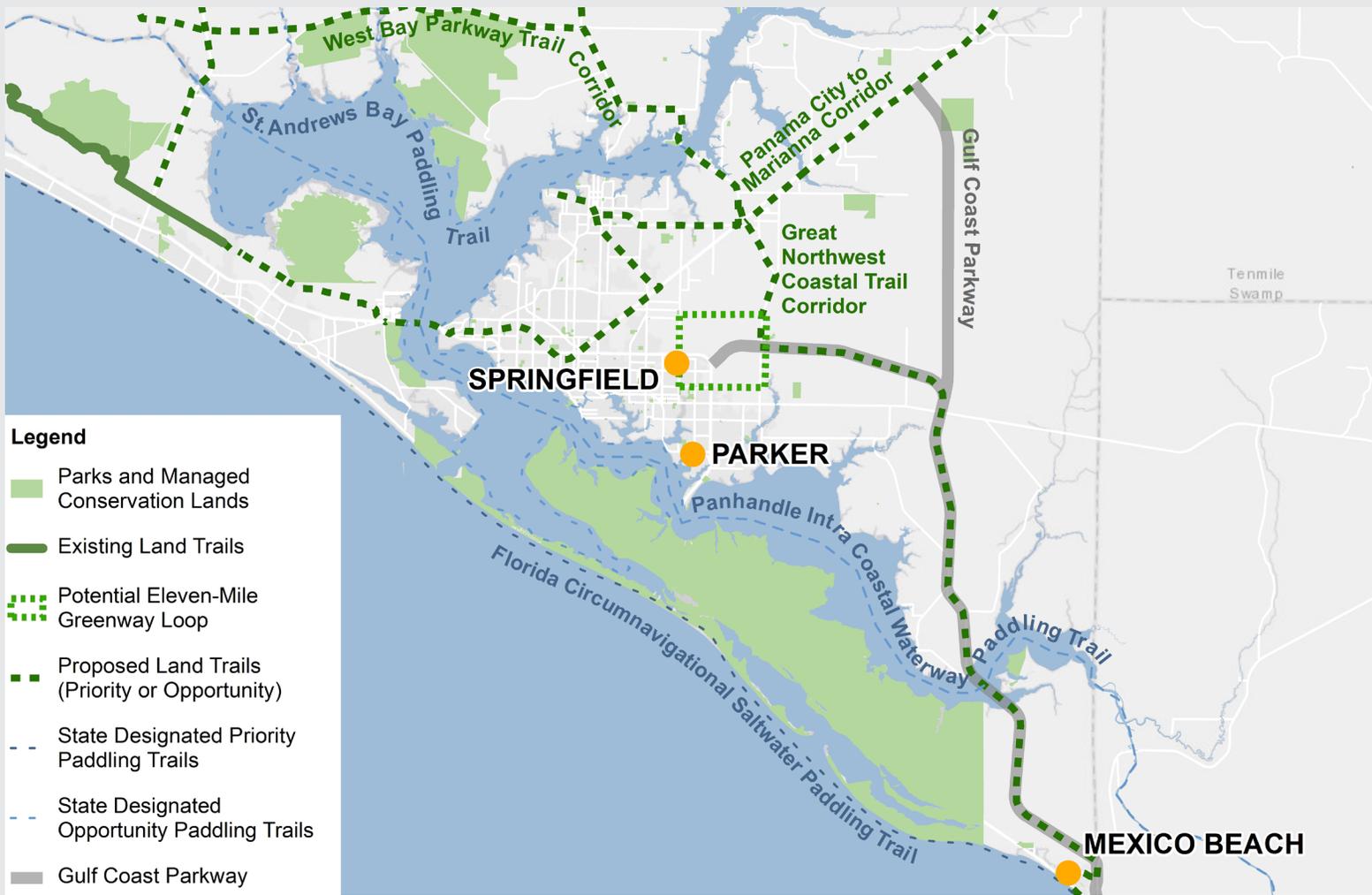
OPTION 1: The low wall option proposes a simple structure that creates a sense of place and encloses the open parcel where the road divides.



OPTION 2 (PREFERRED): The planter option proposes a slightly higher structure that integrates a planting bed as part of the signage.

REGIONAL ASSETS & CONNECTIVITY

A network of regional trails link Parker to many natural and recreational assets. Regional paddling trails pass along Parker's coastline and connect to statewide recreation opportunities. Proposed regional land trails connect Parker to inland amenities. Connecting to these recreation opportunities can support economic and ecological resilience.



Water Trails

Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail is an existing sea kayaking trail that traces the coast around the state and connects Parker to a statewide recreation opportunity that could support greater tourism.

St. Andrews Bay Paddling Trail is a proposed trail that traces the outline of the bay and passes through Parker.

Panhandle Intra Coastal Water Paddling Trail is a proposed trail that branches off from the Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail to travel across St. Andrews Bay, passing through Parker until it meets the Apalachicola River.

Land Trails

Great Northwest Coastal Trail Corridor is a planned regional priority trail that traces U.S. 98 from Pensacola and upon completion, will travel north of Parker, through Springfield and connect to Mexico Beach. Segments of the planned Gulf Coast Parkway will run parallel to the Great Northwest Coastal Trail Corridor.

Panama City to Marianna Corridor is a proposed regional priority trail along State Route 231 that would connect coastal and inland communities.

West Bay Parkway Trail Corridor is a proposed regional opportunity trail that begins near Point Washington State Forest and follows West Highway 388 (Don Johnson Memorial Highway).

MOVING FORWARD

KEY NEXT STEPS

The Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project technical assistance provides a robust vision to implement sustainable design strategies that support the City's recovery and improve resilience.

Implementation of the proposed design strategies will require a combination of actions to help move the projects forward. Key actions include:

- Continue to evaluate and prioritize which projects to initiate first.
- Identify project lead(s) and partners needed to implement and maintain the project.
- Continue to engage the public on timing, design development and design decisions.
- Conduct engineering studies and site plan designs to advance projects.
- Assemble funding, which may come from a variety of sources.
- Remain flexible and creative to respond to new opportunities as they arise.



R2P2 Partners



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City staff and leadership provided guidance and direction throughout the project and the community offered valuable feedback to inform the design concepts. Staff from a range of regional, state and federal agencies and organizations offered their technical assistance and expertise in helping the City connect their vision to implementation opportunities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

An appendix of additional information and resources to support the implementation of these design concepts is available at www.r2p2.skeo.com/parker.

For more information about R2P2, please contact Rick Durbrow, U.S. EPA Region 4 at Durbrow.Rick@epa.gov or call 404-562-8286.