



THE CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH

COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK



Fort Walton Beach

Commerce and Technology Park Master Plan



Final | May 2019

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INTRODUCTION



01

1.1 Introduction

The Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park (CTP) is a ±360 acre office/industrial park with a mix of tenants representing a variety of local/national companies (**Figure 1-1**). The CTP is an important employment center and economic generator with the City of Fort Walton Beach (City) and the region, though it has begun to show its age as more modern buildings and business parks (i.e., Crestview Business Park) have been developed. As a result of this competition, and the recognition of the area's importance to long term economic success, the City is focused on improving existing conditions, and setting a course for new development and redevelopment through the creation and implementation of this Master Plan.

Today the CTP is a location primed for development and redevelopment as the region continues to grow. The locational advantages, the mix of existing tenants, and the economic generators nearby make it a prime site for employers. This Master Plan provides the framework for the City to make strategic investments which repositions the CTP to be more attractive for private investment (**Map 1-1**).

1.2 Regional Location

Fort Walton Beach's location in the Florida panhandle puts it in closer proximity to many large regional cities outside of the State of Florida (**Map 1-2**). As a result of this unique location, when assessing economic opportunities, it is important to note the proximity of these regional cities as they have influence over employment potential, marketability and research and development opportunities that may be available for the park.

The two largest urban centers in the panhandle, Tallahassee (164 miles) and Pensacola (41 miles) are within easy reach of the CTP (**Map 1-3**), and the park represents an opportunity for industries to locate in the western portion of Florida within reach of markets potentially underserved by firms located in other major cities such as Tampa, Miami and Orlando. Within Okaloosa County the CTP is located in the southern portion of the county, about a 30-35 minute drive from Interstate 10 which bisects the County (**Map 1-4**).

The purpose of this Master Plan is to help the City build upon existing assets to improve the competitiveness of the CTP and ensure its continued success.



Boeing Office —Anchors St



Hsu Property —Ready Ave



Atlas Van Lines—Anchors St

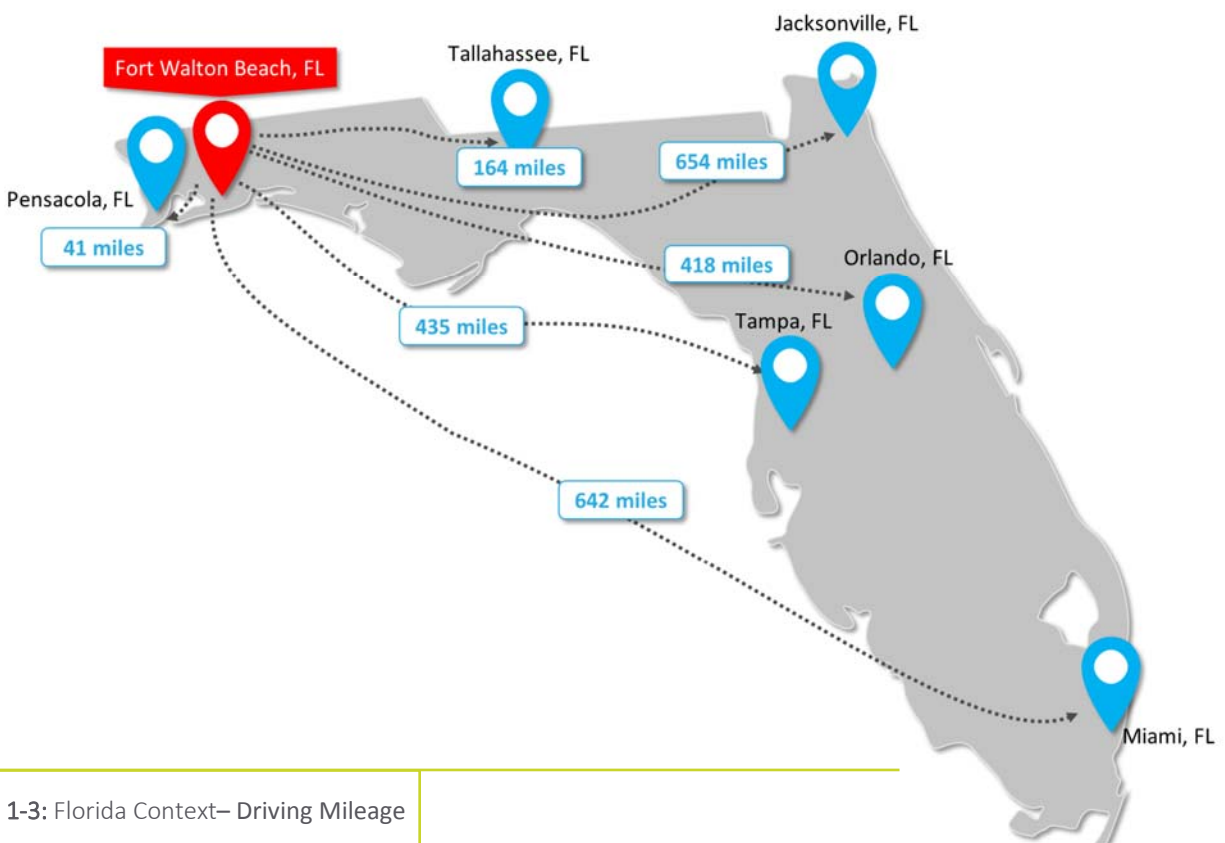


The Flooring Authority—Ready Ave

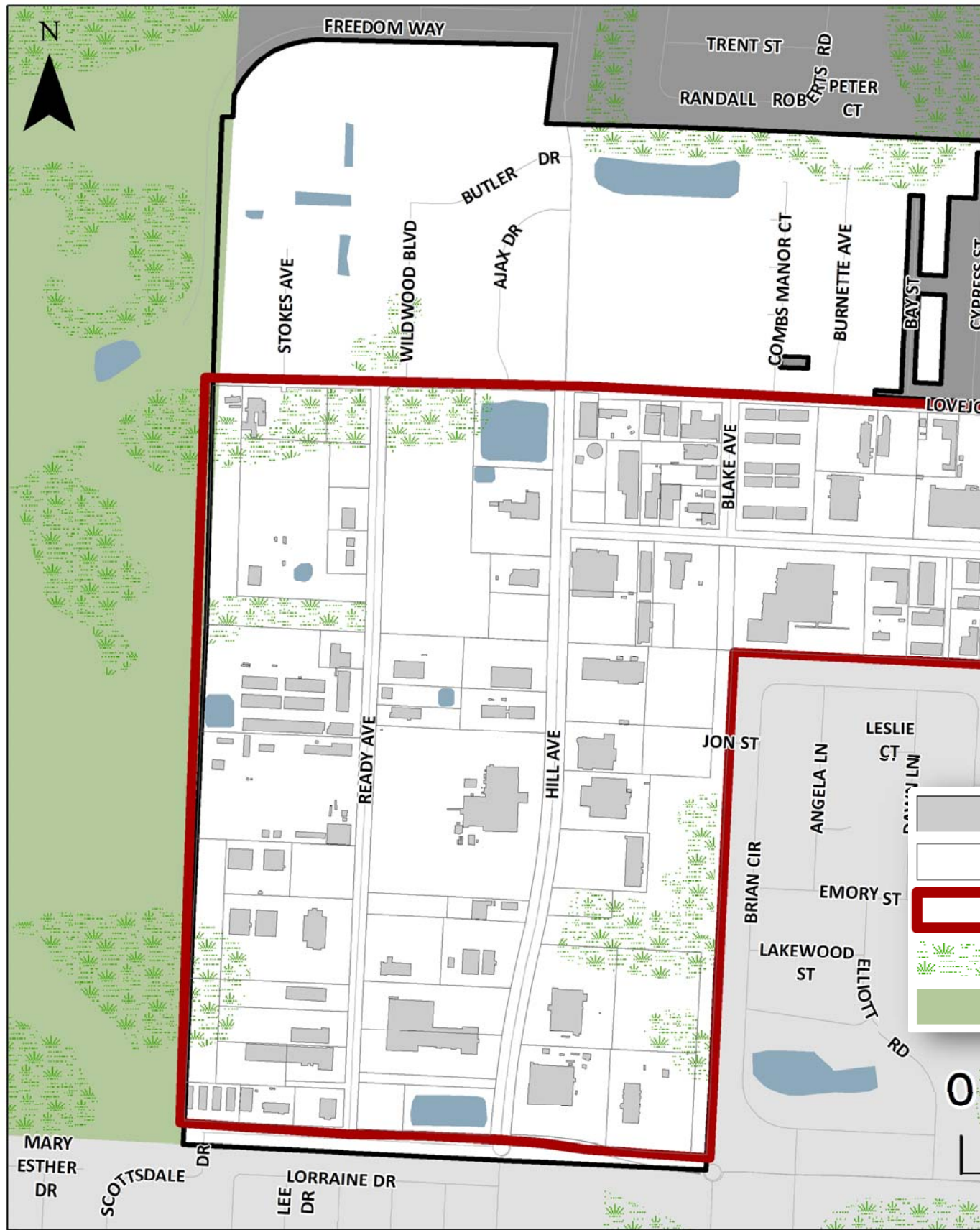
Figure 1-1: Photos of the CTP



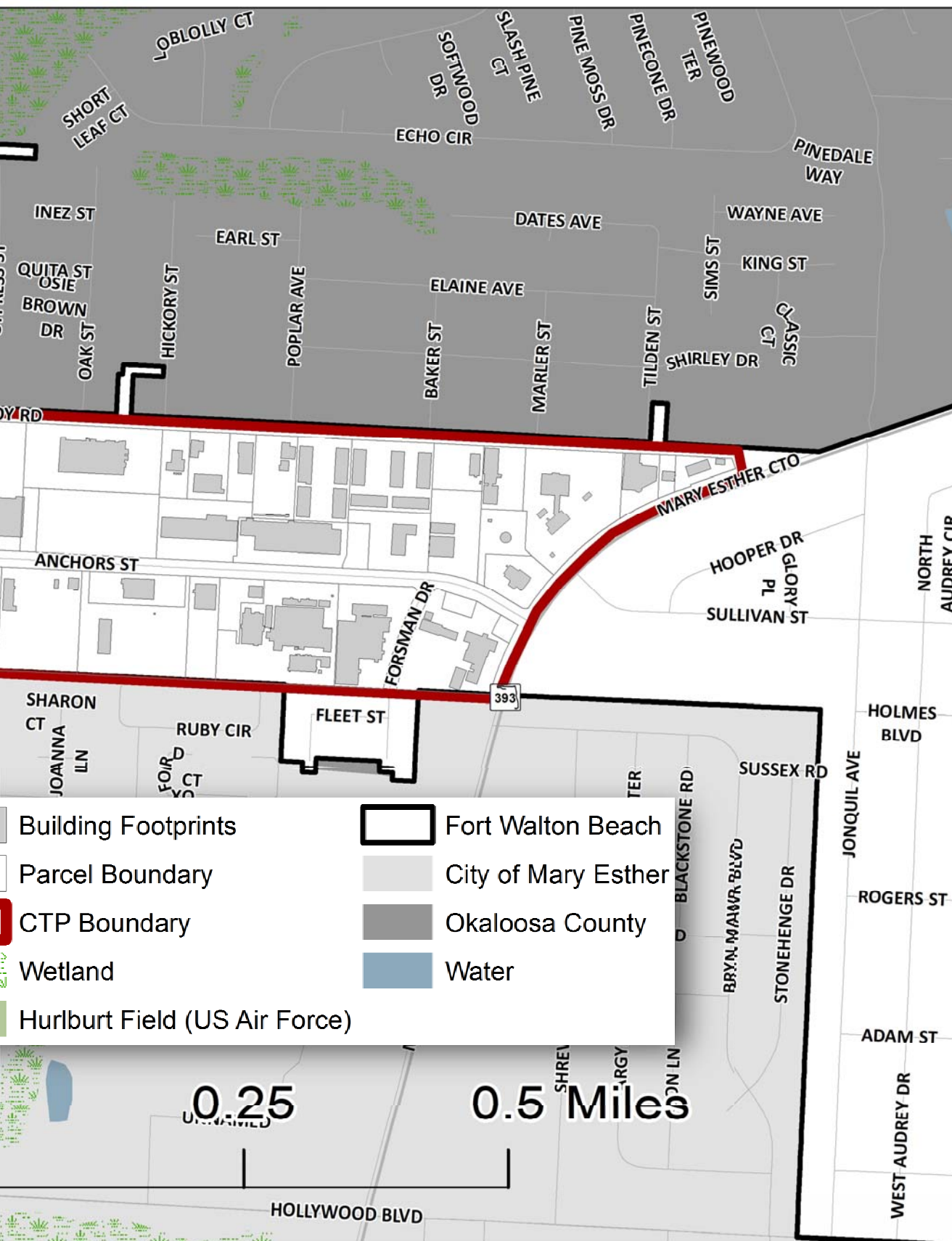
Map 1-2: Regional Context—Driving Mileage



Map 1-3: Florida Context—Driving Mileage



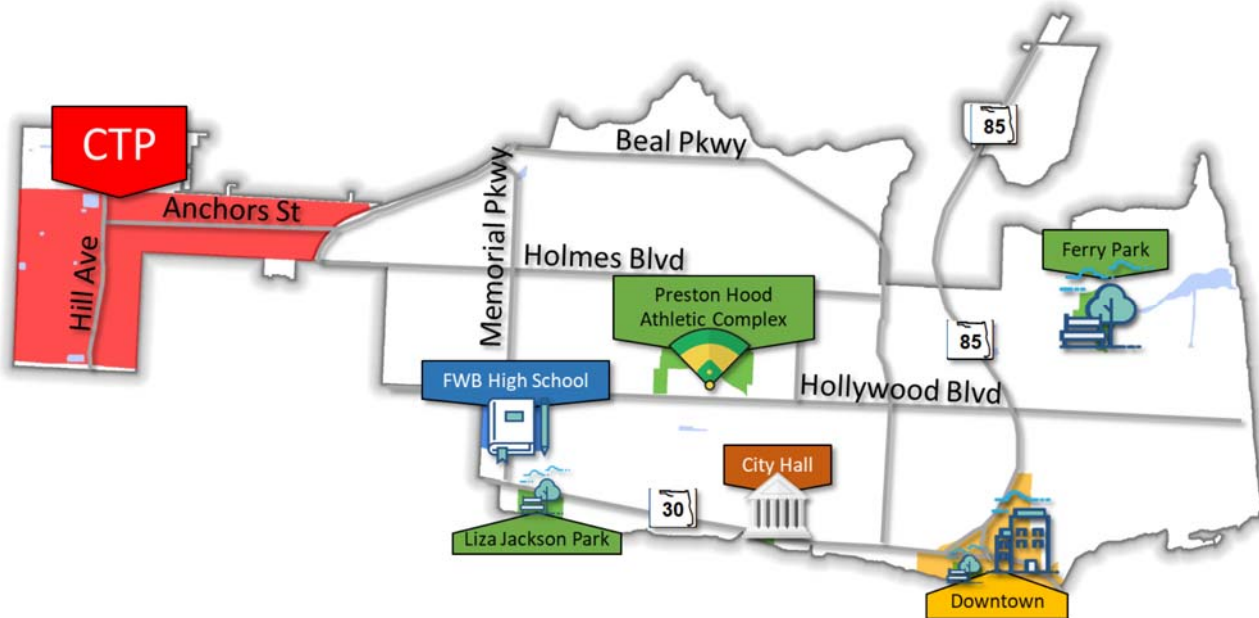
Map 1-1: Study Area Map



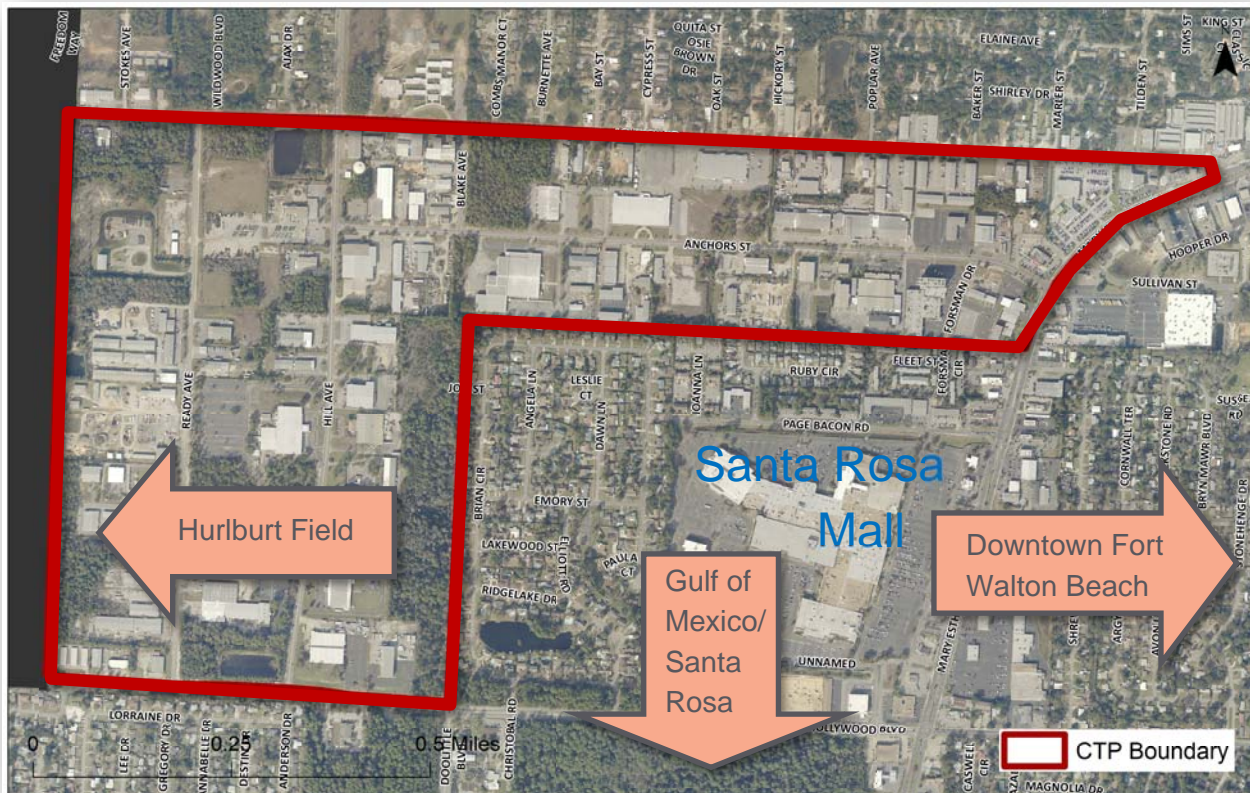


Map 1-4: Commerce and Technology Park Location within Okaloosa County

The CTP consists of unique mix of office/industrial uses in the western part of the City, which complements the City's commercial portfolio in terms of general diversification (Map 1-5). Even more locally (Map 1-6), the CTP abuts Hurlburt Field Air Force Base, the City of Mary Esther and unincorporated Okaloosa County. Prior to the 1970's, the area was primarily a City owned landfill with little in the way of vertical construction.



Map 1-5: CTP Location within the City (Map does not show the entire City limits)



Map 1-6: Commerce and Technology Park—Local Context

1.3 Historical Overview and Need for Redevelopment

In recent years, the City has actively pursued investment in the CTP, and in 2016 it hired a consultant team, Barber Business Advisors, LLC and Hamman Consulting Group, to complete a Competitive Analysis Report. The analysis found that in comparison to competitor sites around the region, the CTP was lacking in amenities, aesthetic appeal, transportation accessibility, and that maintenance was below what would be considered appropriate by modern standards (Figure 1-2).

The study did also note some of the advantages of the park as well, including its adjacency to Hurlburt Field and Eglin Air Force Base, which offer significant economic opportunity, and are primary draw for some of the park's "blue chip" tenants such as Boeing, DRS, BAE Systems, and Lockheed Martin. Additionally there are several established local firms as well including Total Parts Plus, Suncoast Converters, and Fort Walton Machining, all of which contribute significantly to the local economy. Collectively, companies like these and others in the park make the CTP the location for with the highest wage jobs in the City (more information in **Section 2.2**).

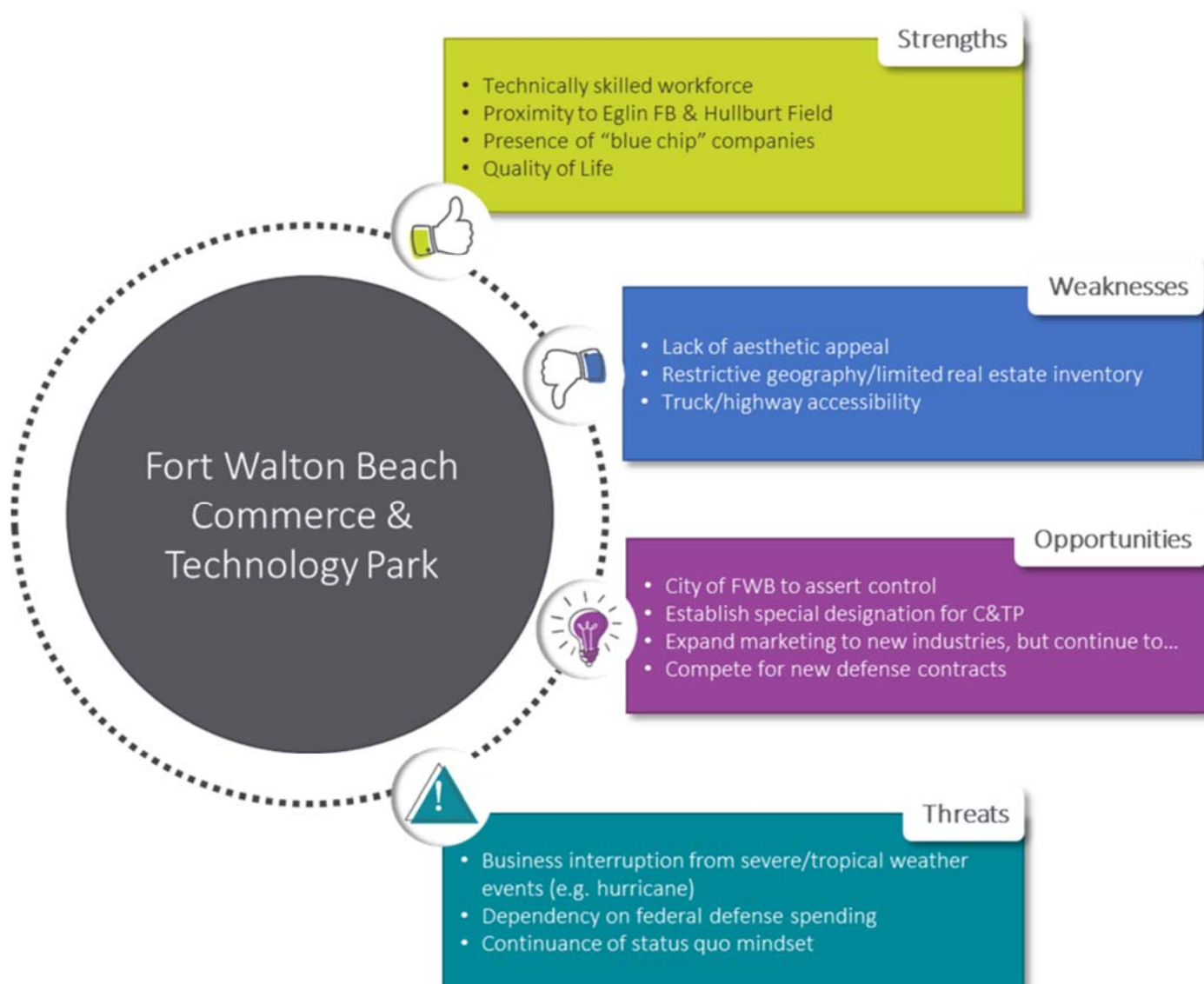


Figure 1-2: 2016 Competitive Analysis Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

1.4 Overview of the Planning Process and Public Engagement

The planning process for the Master Plan began in November 2017 with a multifaceted data collection effort including available online sources, fieldwork, and data analysis. Following this initial data collection, a number of meetings were conducted to gain insight from local stakeholders and city officials including the following:

- **Ongoing Staff Coordination** – City staff and the administration were engaged throughout the process through email correspondence, conference calls and department head meetings. This coordination allowed for the consultant team to be engaged on a regular basis to address specific challenges faced during the master planning process.
- **Stakeholder Group Meetings** – During these meetings, presentations were given to a Stakeholder Group of tenants and property owners organized by the City Manager. These meetings were led by the consultant team and included a presentation followed by a facilitated discussion focused on identifying issues and opportunities for the CTP. Two meetings were held during the project. The first included a discussion of existing conditions and preliminary analysis, and the second included initial recommendations. These meetings, which were attended by major property owners and companies located within the CTP, were important for ensuring support for the development and implementation of the Master Plan (Figure 1-3).
- **Focus Group Interviews** – Both in person and phone interviews were conducted with individuals and small groups to discuss issues and opportunities related to the revitalization of the CTP. These interviews included representatives from the City, local businesses (located both inside and outside the CTP), property owners, and local training/education institutions (Northwest Florida State College, University of West Florida and CareerSource).
- **Online Survey** – To gain a better understanding of existing employment patterns and market potential that could drive development within the CTP, an online survey was published and distributed to the community. This survey collected a total of 905 responses each of which provided detailed demographic and economic information (Figure 1-3).
- **City Council Presentation** – Following the completion of the Master Plan, a presentation was given to City Council which allowed the opportunity for the City Council to gain a more holistic understanding of the plan and to ask questions regarding specific recommendations.



Fort Walton Beach Area Resident Survey

Commerce & Tech Park

The following survey is being conducted by the City of Fort Walton Beach and will help guide the development of the plan for the Commerce & Technology Park. Your input is extremely valuable to us. The City and neighboring area residents who have an interest in the future of Fort Walton Beach are encouraged to complete the survey.

The survey is strictly confidential. You are not asked to provide nor do we have any way of identifying your name, address, or other specific information for the person or resident responding to the questionnaire.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire. If you do not want to answer any question, feel free to leave it unanswered and move on to the next one.

Thank you in advance for helping in this effort.

SHOPPING, PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL RELATED SPENDING

1. What is the name of the store at which you most often shop for groceries?

2. What is the name of the store at which you purchase most of your clothes?

3. Which of the following best describes how frequently you eat lunch outside the home or place of employment at any type of food establishment?
☐ A few times/week ☐ About once/week ☐ A few times or twice/month ☐ Once a month ☐ 4 to 9 times/year
☐ Once or twice/year ☐ Less often than once/year

4. When eating lunch out, which of the following best describes the RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND LUNCH?
☐ Most trips for lunch are related to or for work ☐ Rarely or never are the lunch trips related to work
☐ Few of the lunch trips are related to work ☐ Not certain

Figure 1-3: Pubic Engagement Efforts

The comprehensive public involvement process described provided a number of opportunities for key staff and stakeholders to provide insight into the planning process. It helped ensure that this Master Plan addresses those items currently inhibiting operations within the CTP while also articulating a growth vision of the future development potential.

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PLANNING CONTEXT



02

2.1 Local Site Description

The Commerce and Technology Park (CTP) is physically bounded by Lovejoy Road to the north, Mary Esther Boulevard to the east, Hurlburt Field to the west, Hollywood Boulevard, and the City of Mary Esther to the south. Ready Avenue and Hill Avenue are the major north-south corridors that run through the CTP with Lovejoy Road and Anchors Street being the primary east-west connections. There are two smaller streets within the CTP, Blake Avenue that connects Anchors Street and Lovejoy Road and Forsman Drive which travels south from Anchors Street to the boundary of the CTP (**Map 1-6**).

2.2 Commuting Trends and Surrounding Community Interaction

The CTP is a major employment center within Fort Walton Beach and does not have any residential uses within its boundaries. As seen in **Figure 2-1**, the commuting patterns reinforce this as approximately 2,500 employees commute into the CTP daily for work from the communities listed/shown in **Figure 2-2**. Of these approximately 2,500 workers, the majority are employed within the manufacturing sector, while professional, scientific and technical services and construction sectors are the second and third most respectively. Additionally, over 60% of workers within the CTP earn more than \$40,000 annually, which is a higher proportion than Fort Walton Beach and other neighboring communities meaning that the park is a significant hub of higher wage employment for the City (**Table 2-1**). The income distributions are further explained by the existing zoning within the CTP discussed in **Section 2.5**, as lower income service sector jobs are not currently allowed within the CTP, the resulting jobs are directly related to the currently allowed uses which produce higher income wages. A majority of employees within the CTP commute from outside Fort Walton Beach from the surrounding communities of Wright, Navarre, Crestview, and Mary Esther (**Figure 2-2**). This data, provided the US Census Bureau's OnTheMap tool, illustrates two realities that are important for the Master Plan. First, the CTP is a significant regional employment center with higher average wages than the overall community, so maintaining the existing tenant base is important to the City. Secondly, the lack of employees living within Fort Walton Beach could reflect a potential need for more quality housing attractive to those individuals and families who are commuting on a daily basis.

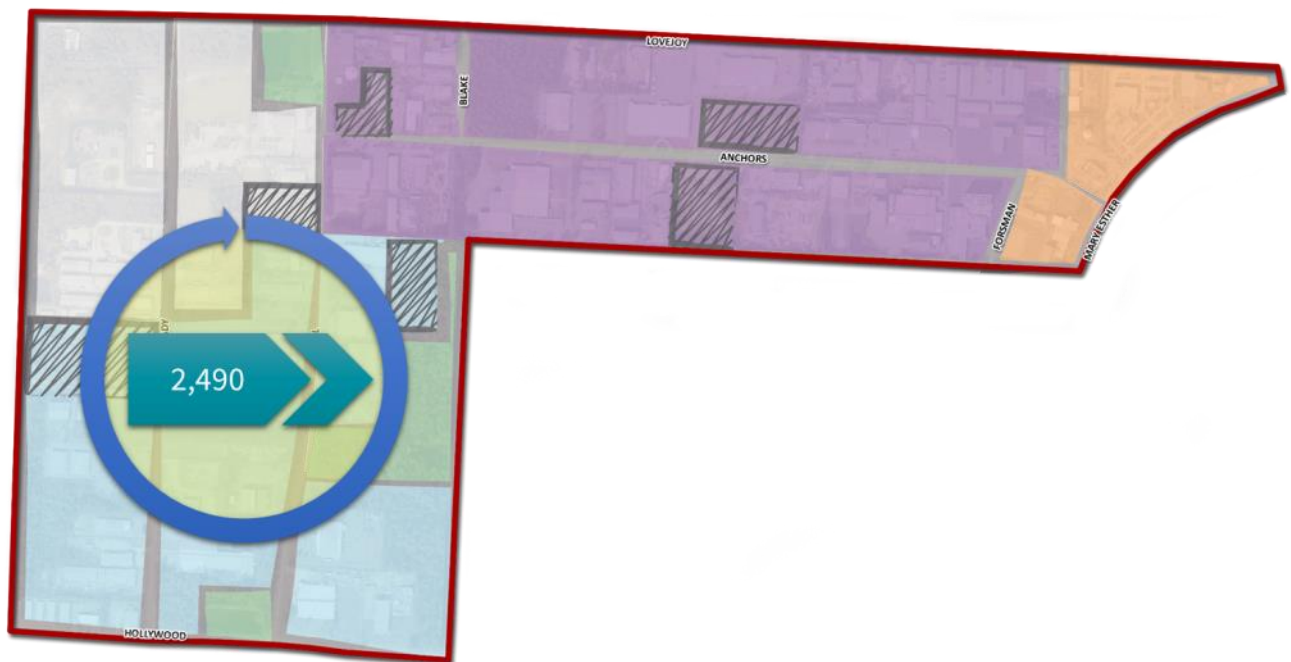


Figure 2-1: On The Map Commuter Trends Analysis

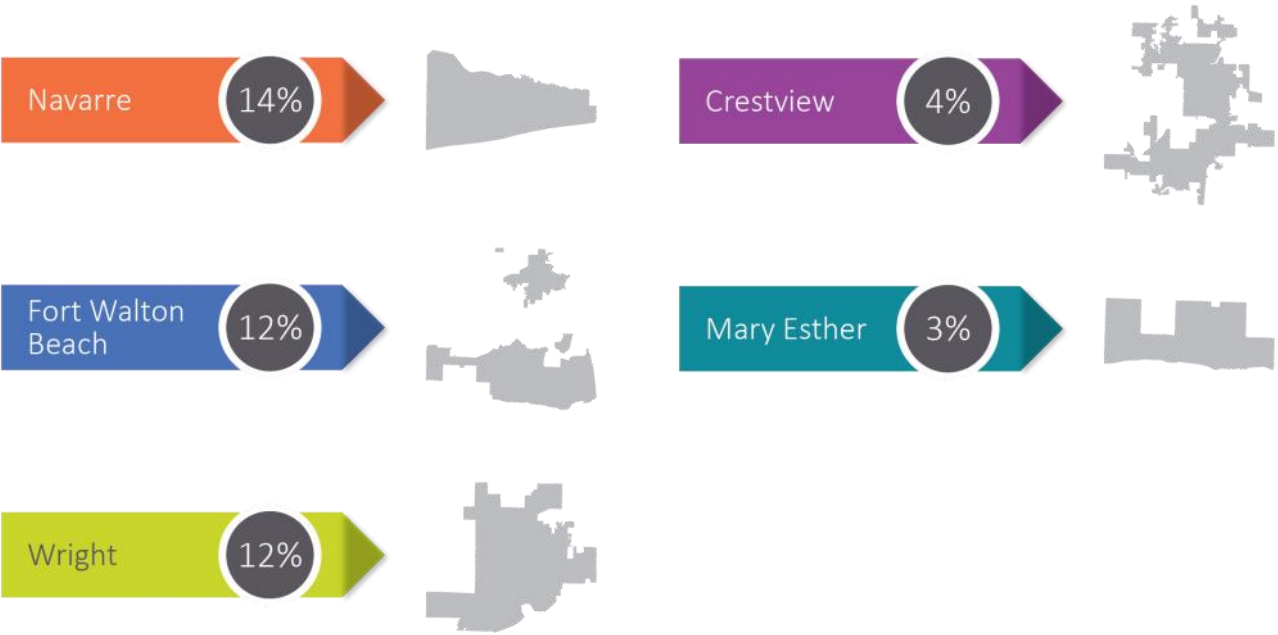


Figure 2-2: Top Commuting Origins for the CTP

Jobs by Earnings	CTP		Fort Walton Beach	
	Jobs	Percent of Jobs	Jobs	Percent of Jobs
\$1,250 per month or less (<\$15,000 annually)	177	7%	3,440	20%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month (\$15,000 to \$40,000 annually)	737	30%	6,697	39%
More than \$3,333 per month (>\$40,000 annually)	1,577	63%	7,048	41%

Table 2-1: Earnings Distribution Comparison between CTP and City of Fort Walton Beach

2.3 Existing Land Use

Maps 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3 illustrate the distribution of existing land uses within the CTP, citywide distribution of commercial and industrial land uses and the distribution of vacant land within the CTP.

Map 2-1 shows that the CTP primarily consists of industrial land with scattered vacant sites within the boundaries. There are small pockets of commercial, public uses and mixed-use/parking/office spaces which make up the remainder of the land use acreage. The CTP consists of 81% of all of the industrial development and a quarter of the vacant land within the City (Table 2-2). These statistics further illustrate the importance of the CTP to the current employment base and future economic development. As a land constrained city, Fort Walton Beach’s opportunities for expansion/growth come in the form of annexation, development of vacant land or redevelopment of existing parcels, making the approximately 45 acres of vacant land within the CTP vital for future economic growth.

As stated previously, the vacant acreage within the CTP represents a quarter of the total vacant land within the City, which presents significant opportunities for future growth. The 44.95 total acres of vacant land within the CTP is further broken down by factoring in wetlands and parcel sizes, as seen in Table 2-3 and Figure 2-3. Although accounting for wetlands reduces developable land within the CTP, it still represents a significant amount of potential.

Existing Land Use	Acres	% of CTP	% of City Distribution
Industrial	217.7	67.9%	81.3%
Vacant	44.95	14.1%	25%
Commercial	20.4	6.3%	5.5%
Public	19.4	6.0%	8.2%
Mixed Use	2.6	0.8%	12.9%
Parking	14.3	4.5%	58.6%
Office	1	0.3%	2.0%
Total	320.4	100%	8%

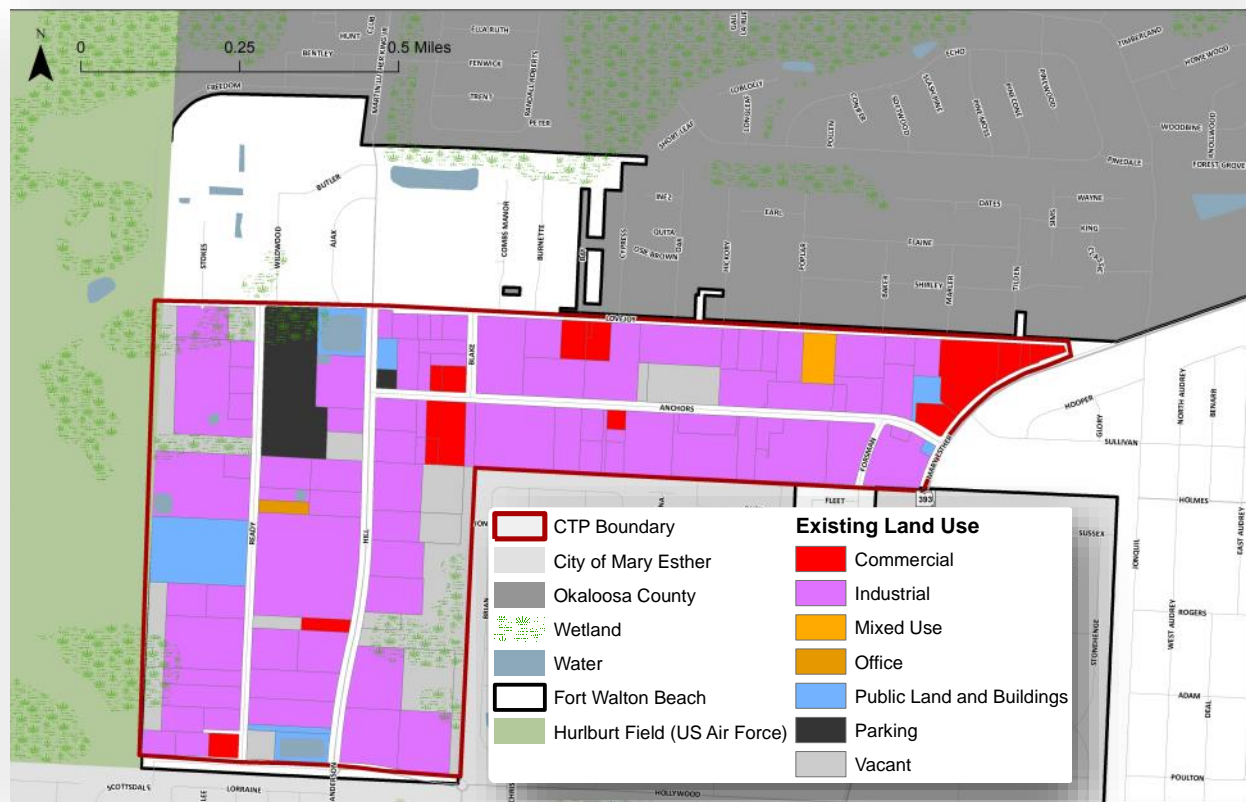
Table 2-2: Existing Land Use

Vacant Parcel Size	Parcels	Parcels with Wetlands removed
Less than .5 Acre	0	3
Between .5 and 1 Acre	2	4
Greater than 1 Acre	12	9
Total	14	

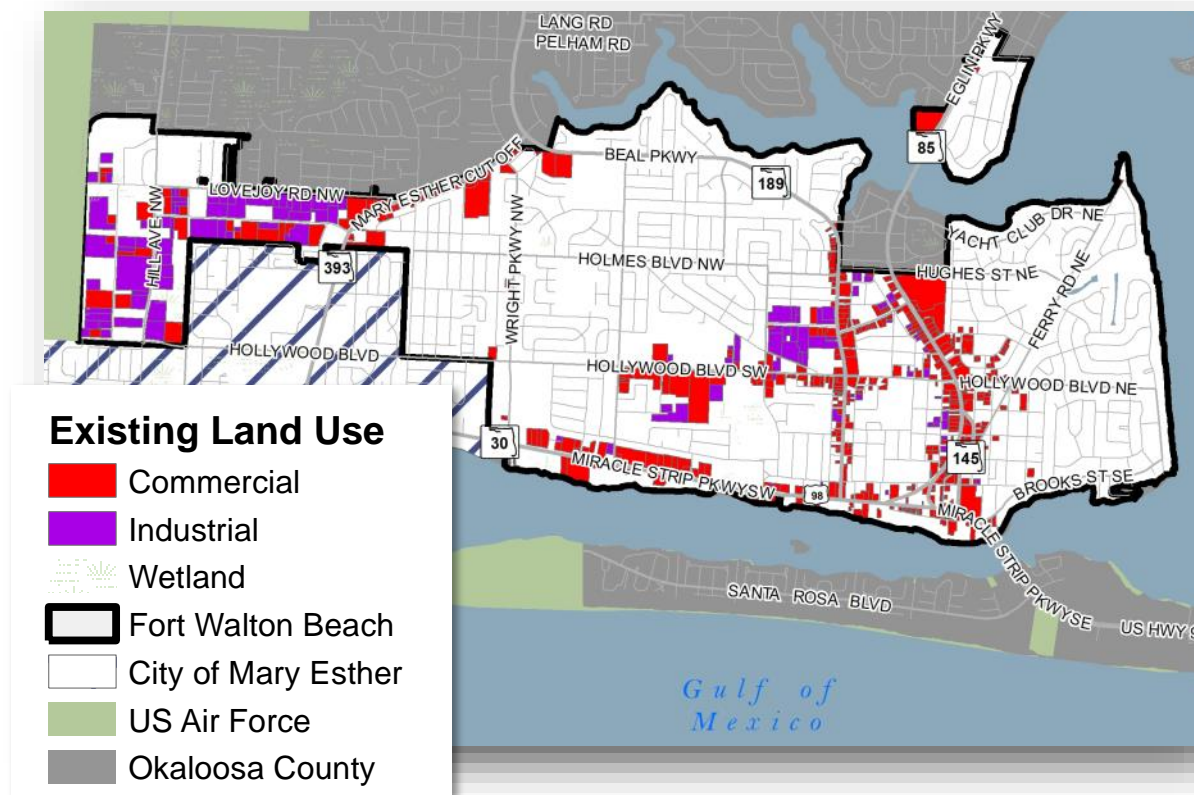
Table 2-3: Vacant Parcel Size Distribution



Figure 2-3: Total Vacant Land



Map 2-1: Existing Land Use



Map 2-2: Commercial and Industrial Land Uses Citywide

Map 2-3 and Figure 2-4 show developable vacant sites that can contribute to the commercial and industrial growth of the CTP.



Map 2-3: Vacant, Developable Land



North Stormwater Retention Area



Vacant Lot—Anchors St

Figure 2-4: Vacant and Recently Developed Land

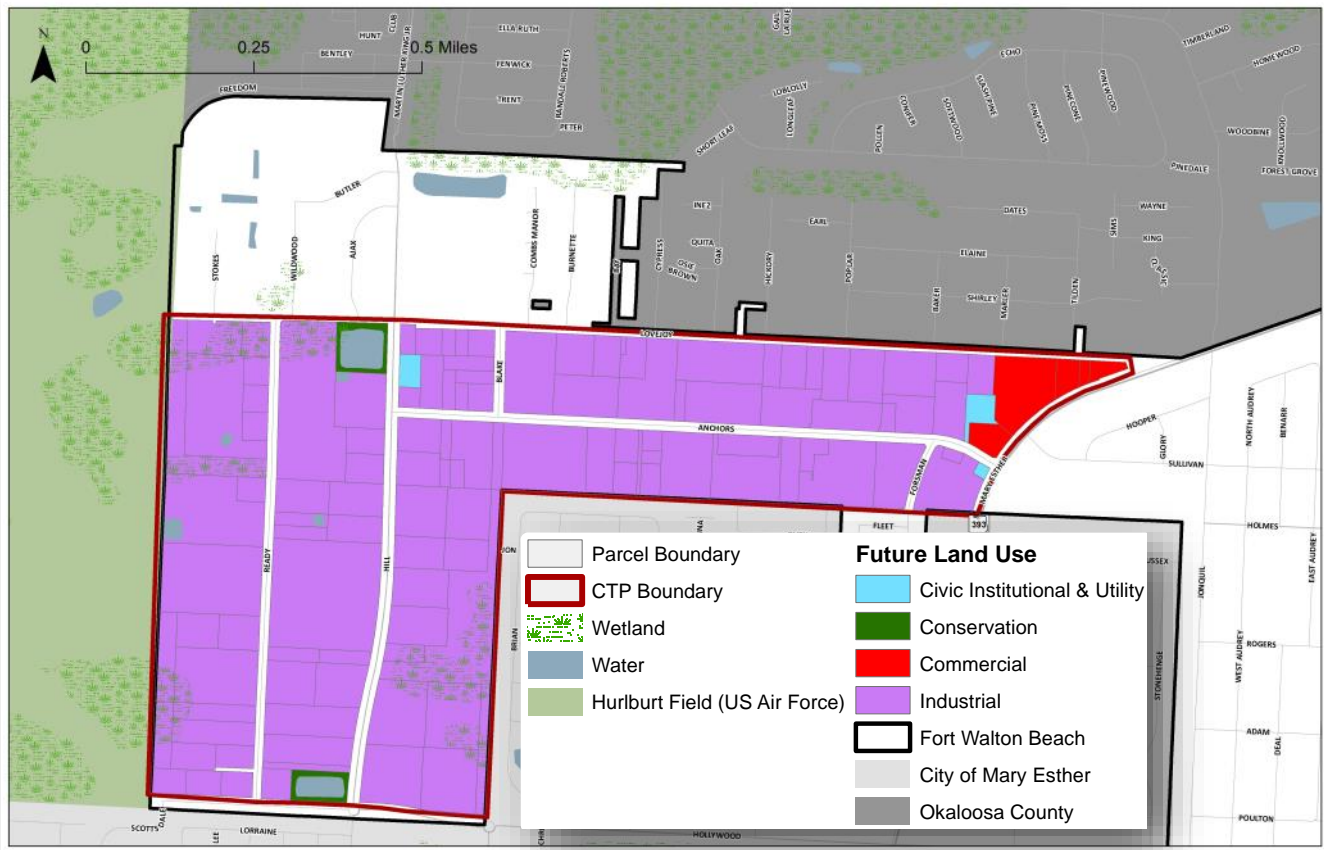
2.4 Future Land Use

The future land uses summarized in **Map 2-4** and **Table 2-4** largely reflect the existing land use patterns in the CTP. In addition to the Industrial and Commercial future land use categories, there are a number of sites identified as Civic Institutional and Utility which are primarily for infrastructure.

As noted in Table 2-4 the two most common categories within the CTP are Industrial and Commercial, which both allow a maximum development intensity of a 1.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Primary allowable uses in Commercial include retail, hospitality, and office, while in Industrial, the primary uses are industrial (including manufacturing), open storage, but only ancillary office.

Future Land Use	Acres	% of CTP	% of City Distribution
Industrial	302.57	94%	94.0%
Commercial	9.21	3%	3.0%
Conservation	6.1	2%	14.4%
Civic, Institutional and Utility	2.54	1%	0.7%
Total	320.4	100%	8%

Table 2-4: Future Land Use



Map 2-4: Future Land Use

2.5 Zoning

The CTP has a mix of zoning designations, including Community Facilities, Recreation, Commercial, and Commerce and Technology Park (**Map 2-5**). The CTP designation is the most common zoning designation, and allows a wide range of industrial and tech-related activities with accessory uses and administrative buildings allowed on site as well. Examples of permissible uses within the CTP consist of, but are not limited to: laboratories, warehousing, manufacturing, freight moving, building materials and

distribution centers.

The existing building intensity found within the CTP is well below what is currently allowed, which means there are opportunities for some intensification. As shown in **Table 2-5**, the existing floor area ratio (FAR) found within the CTP is generally under 15% of what is allowed. The existing FAR reflects a number of factors including site design constraints (need for parking, stormwater, etc.), the types of uses found in the park (including industrial which typically does not utilize multi-story buildings), and a lack demand for space within the park.

Zoning	Acres	% of CTP	% of City Distribution	Existing FAR	Allowable FAR
Commerce Technology Park (CTP)	292.57	91%	93.9%	0.19	1.5
Community Facilities (CF)	12.55	4%	2.9%	0.08	2.0
Commercial (CG)	9.21	3%	2.8%	0.18	1.5
Recreation	6.1	2%	1.4%	N/A	N/A
Total	320.4	100%	8%	N/A	N/A

Table 2-5: Zoning Summary Table

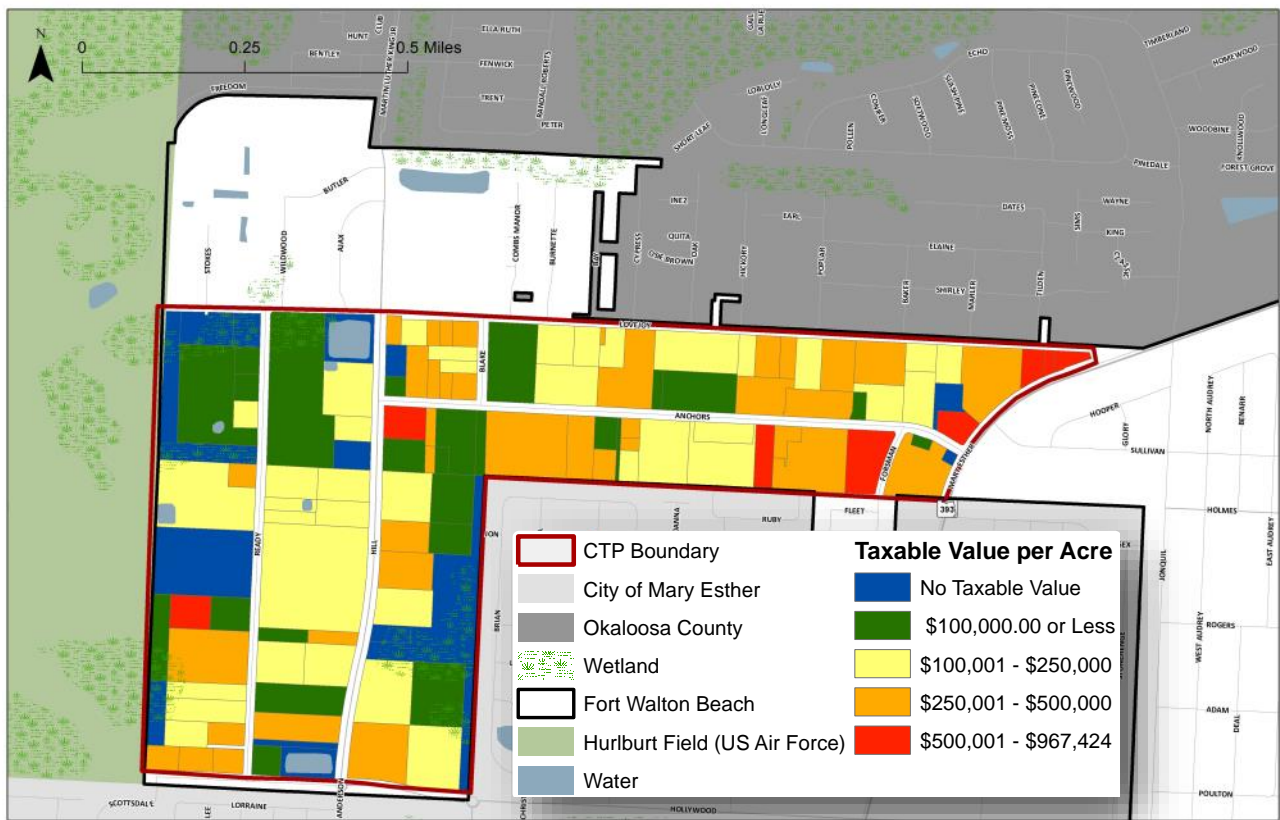


Map 2-5: Zoning Map

2.6 Taxable Values

The current taxable value by acre, presented in **Map 2-6**, shows that the park contains a wide range of values. Generally the Anchors Street corridor contains more of the higher value parcels than the remainder of the CTP with a concentration near the Mary Esther Boulevard corridor. The non-taxable parcels are primarily City owned, with the County-owned parcel showing up along Ready Avenue.

In **Table 2-6**, it is seen that the CTP has a dramatically lower median taxable value per acre than the city as a whole does. The value per acre can be tied to a number of factors, including the low intensity nature of the uses found in the CTP, the age of the buildings, and the lack of market demand. Property values are important as they generate revenue for the City. Raising the values over time through strategic investments identified in this Master Plan will increase the taxable value per acre within this area, generating potential revenues for the City.



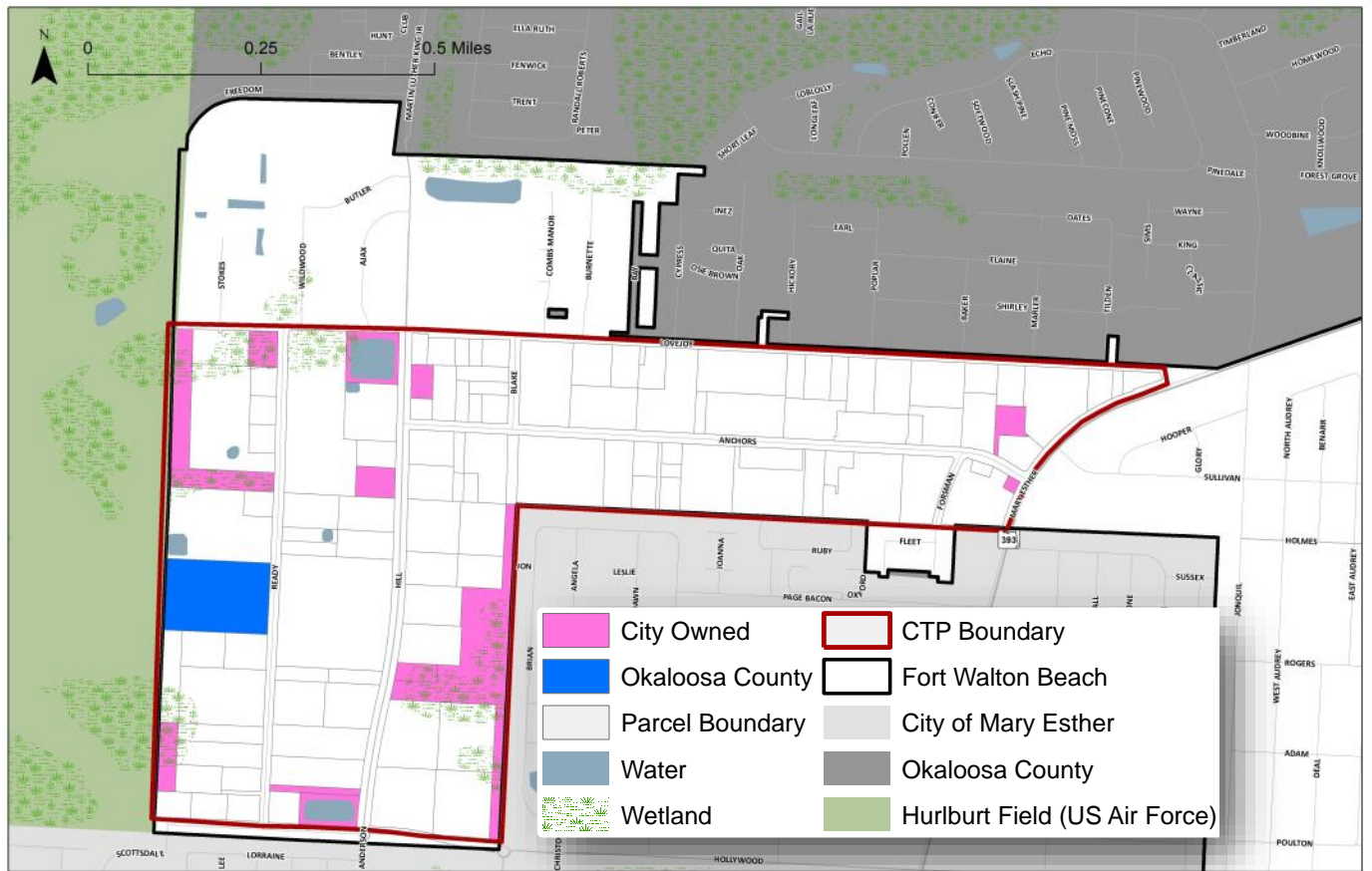
Map 2-6: Taxable Value per Acre

Area	Total Taxable Value	Median Taxable Value per Acre	% Taxable	Parcel Count	Non-Taxable Parcels	% of City-wide Taxable Value
CTP	\$60,408,000	\$163,972	93%	123	9	4.8%
City-wide	\$1,226,531,428	\$516,741	94%	9590	551	N/A

Table 2-6: Taxable Value per Acre

2.7 Government Ownership

Map 2-7 shows that the City owns 34.5 acres of land on multiple sites while Okaloosa County owns one 10 acre parcel along Ready Avenue. A portion of the City owned land is considered wetlands and is not readily developable, however, there are potential opportunities for development elsewhere within the CTP on vacant City owned land. Discussions with Okaloosa County would need to take place in order to determine if there was any interest in redeveloping the 10 acre parcel currently occupied by the County's Public Works yard along Ready Avenue.



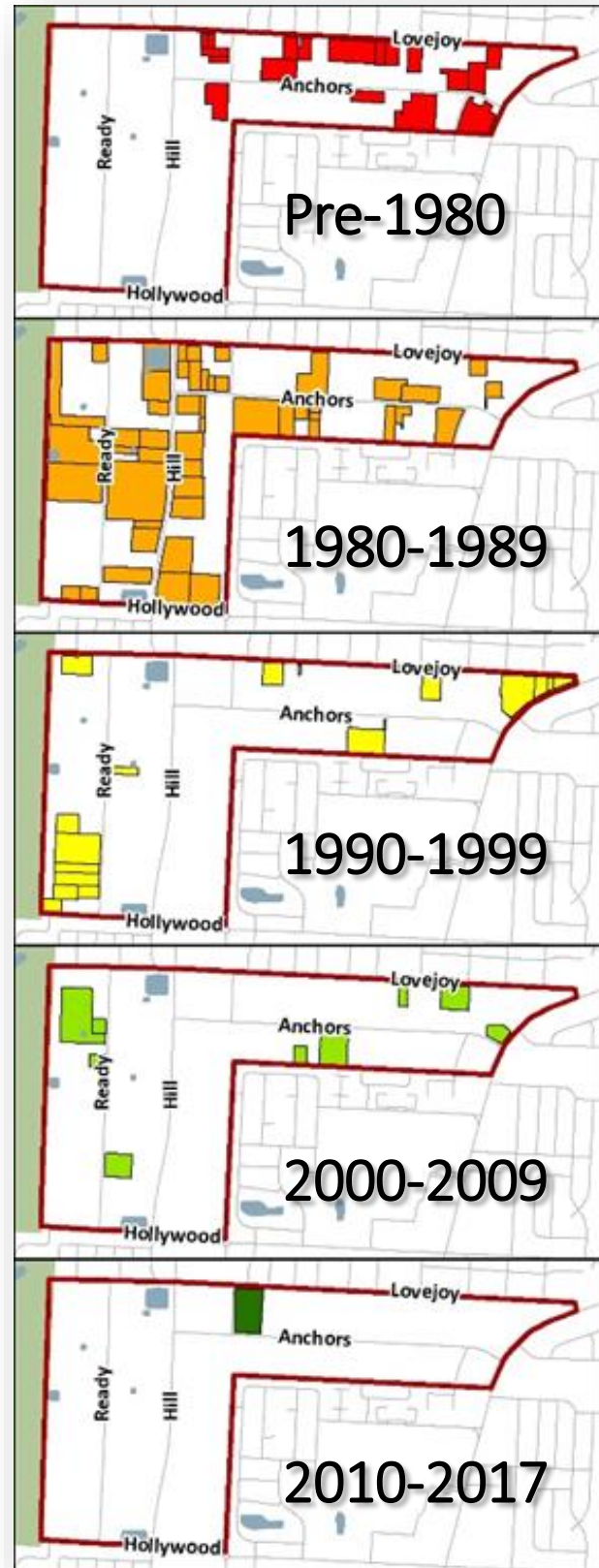
Map 2-7: Government Ownership

2.8 Development Trends

The CTP developed primarily in the 1980's, as seen in **Map 2-8** and **Table 2-7**, accounting for a quarter of all development within the City during that time. Since then, development has slowed as easily developed properties are no longer vacant and focus on redevelopment has occurred primarily downtown and elsewhere within the city. In the future, redevelopment of existing sites will be required in most cases, with fewer developments taking place on vacant land containing wetlands. The majority of structures within the CTP are 20 years or older as a result of the lack of redevelopment in recent years.

Decade	CTP SF Built	% of CTP SF Built	City SF Built	% of City SF Built
Prior to 1980	410,391	18%	14,869,172	8%
1980 to 1989	1,414,711	61%	5,991,222	25%
1990 to 1999	331,754	14%	2,710,880	12%
2000 to 2009	143,072	6%	2,073,710	7%
2010 to Present	13,000	1%	1,157,211	1%
Total	2,312,928	100%	26,802,195	9%

Table 2-7: Taxable Square Footage Built by Decade



Map 2-8: Parcel Development by Decade

2.9 Aesthetics, Form, and Identity

As described earlier, the existing building density within the CTP is significantly lower than what could potentially be built, which is reflected in the urban form and aesthetics seen today. **Figure 2-5** shows some examples of the types of buildings and other existing conditions typically seen within the CTP. Common characteristics include large surface parking lots, little to no landscaping, sheet metal or concrete façades and large building setbacks. Being a primarily industrial area, buildings often include freight docks for loading and unloading large trucks and ample space within

the parking lots to maneuver trucks with trailers. Buildings are typically one to two stories with a few exceptions rising higher.

As most of the development was constructed during the 1980s, thirty years of wear and tear have taken their toll, a fact that is seen both in the data and building façades. The parcel data in **Map 2-9** shows that of the parcels with an improvement, more than half are considered “below average” in terms of improvement quality with only 10% of the property considered “average”. Although the improvement quality doesn’t speak to the design attributes of the CTP, it does provide some context to help understand the quality of the built environment.



Vacant Office Building—Anchors St



Total Parts Plus—Anchors St



Fort Walton Machining—Ready Ave



Natural Stones Wholesaler—Anchors St

Figure 2-5: Existing Character Images



Hsu Building—Ready Ave



Boeing Office—Anchors St

Figure 2-5: Existing Character (continued)



Map 2-9: Improvement Quality

NOTE: The “average” grade for improvement quality is determined based on a reference source used by the Okaloosa County property appraiser and attempts to grade the general overall quality of the predominate structures on the property. The Florida Department of Revenue (FDOR) compiles this data as part of their countywide property parcel assessment and was used for this analysis.

During the public outreach process, it was noted that CTP lacks a cohesive identity and sense of place. There are no internal signs directing traffic towards specific locations and there is no existing design palette or theme designating the CTP as visually independent from other areas within the city. The right of way was often described as unkempt and varying in design from property to property, leading individual property owners to take it upon themselves to maintain, design and construct their own streetscapes.

The images in **Figure 2–5** illustrate the generally poor aesthetic conditions in and around the CTP. The Master Plan will need to take into account these issues in order to create a district identity distinguishable to the community and attractive to potential tenants.



Existing Bicycle Facilities



Existing Streetscape



Existing Transition Between Land Uses



Existing Curb Ramp—Mary Esther Blvd



Existing Round-A-Bouts on the CTP Boundary—Hollywood Blvd

Figure 2-5: Existing Character Images

2.10 Transit, Connectivity and Walkability

Transit

The CTP is served by the EC Rider Transit System, via three fixed-routes—2, 3 and 5. Route 3 is the only fixed-route service which enters the CTP, as seen in **Map 2-10**, and operates on one hour and twenty minute headways. Routes 2 and 5 have stops at Santa Rosa Mall with additional stops along the periphery of the CTP, and run at hour and four hour headways respectively. The transit stops within the CTP are sub-standard in terms of amenities and



Map 2-10: Existing Transit and Pedestrian Facilities

safety (**Figure 2-6**). Stops consist of small signage with no concrete pad, seating or coverage, often times being a few feet from travel lanes frequented by large tractor trailers. With these factors, it does not appear that the transit stops meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. As shown in **Figure 2-7** overall ridership is low, with Route 3 falling in the middle of the three that serve the area. Overall, the CTP would benefit from enhanced transit stops, leading to safer and more comfortable transit usage, which also has the potential to increase overall transit usage.



Figure 2-6: Existing Transit Facility

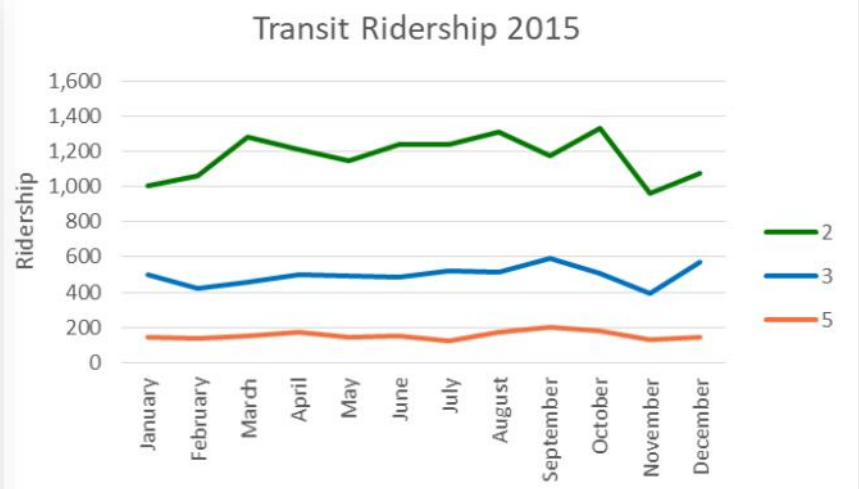


Figure 2-7: Transit Ridership 2015

Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are lacking within the CTP as seen in **Map 2-10** and **Figure 2-8**. The sidewalks are sporadic and inconsistent along several roadways. Where sidewalks are present, they are five feet wide and often unkempt. Individual property owners are responsible for sidewalk construction whenever a property is developed or redeveloped per Section 6.02.03 in the Land Development Code. The developer may pay an in lieu fee at the cost of the design and construction of a sidewalk, in which case the City shall build the sidewalk. By completing sidewalk segments only as development or redevelopment occurs, this practice results in varying sidewalk conditions and segmented sections between parcels. There is more sidewalk coverage immediately outside of the CTP along Lovejoy Road, Mary Esther Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard.

There are two three foot bike lanes along Hill Avenue which abruptly end at Hollywood Boulevard and at Lovejoy Road and contain minimum signage, offering little in the way of bicycle mobility and safety. In order to create a more well connected, safer and complete bicycle and pedestrian network, it is important to address these issues through the Master Plan.



Figure 2-8: Existing Sidewalk along Anchors Street

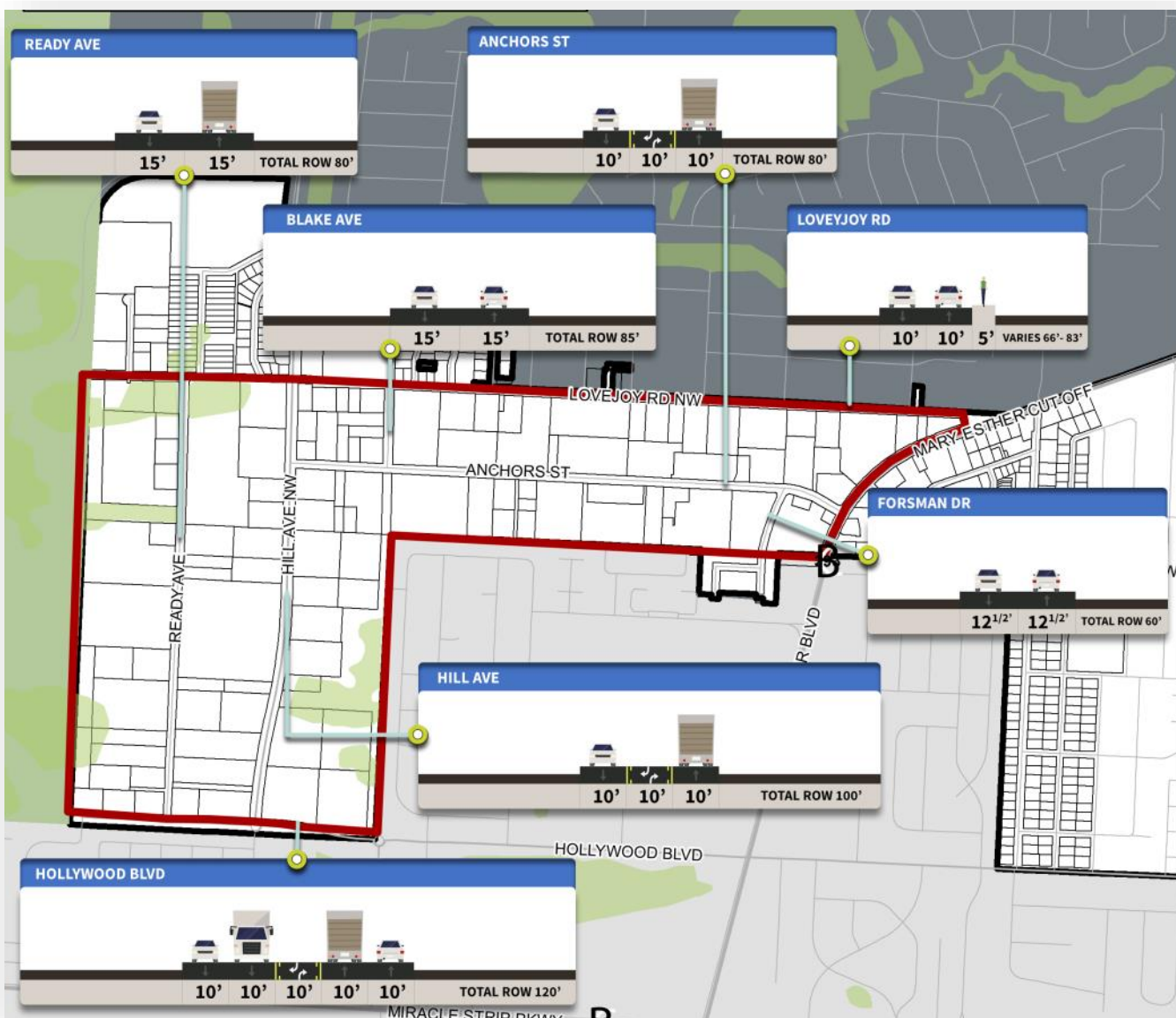
2.11 Public Right of way

There are seven roadway corridors integral to the function of the CTP. The description of each of these rights of way is below and illustrated in **Map 2-11**. Measurements were estimated via GIS utilizing parcel boundary lines provided by the Okaloosa Property Appraiser and pavement markings via aerial imagery.

- Anchors Street – 80' Right of way with intermittent sidewalks on the south side and containing two 10' travel lanes with a middle 10' continuous turn lane. It connects Mary Esther Boulevard and Hill Avenue and serves as one of the major thoroughways within the CTP.
- Hill Avenue – 100' Right of way with 3' bicycle lanes, 11' travel lanes and a middle 11' continuous turn lane. It runs north to south and connects Lovejoy Road to Hollywood Boulevard. Hill Avenue serves as one of the main thoroughfares for the CTP.
- Ready Avenue – Right of way varies between 70'-80' with two 15' travel lanes and intermittent sidewalks on either side of the roadway. A parallel road to Hill Avenue, this north-south road connects Lovejoy Road and Hollywood Boulevard, and acts as a third major thoroughfare for the CTP.
- Lovejoy Road – 65' Right of way that varies towards the western terminus at Hurlburt Field, increasing in size up to 85' west of Ready Avenue. Lovejoy Road is an east-west dead end road that acts as the northern boundary to the CTP. Two 11' travel lanes and a 5' sidewalk meanders along most of the right of way, with the sidewalk stopping at about Blake Avenue.
- Hollywood Boulevard – The southern boundary of the CTP is a 120' right of way which dead ends at Hurlburt Field and continues east into Downtown Fort Walton Beach. Two 10' travel lanes in the middle with two 11' travel lanes on the outside, and a central 11' continuous turn lane from Hurlburt Field to Hill Avenue, from there the road reduces to four 11' travel lanes with the adjacent pavement marked as non-travel lanes.

- Blake Avenue – An 85' wide right of way connects Lovejoy Road to Anchors Street and contains approximately 30' of pavement with no lane markings.
- Forsman Drive—25' of pavement with no markings runs through this 65' right of way which connects Anchors Street to the multi-family residential development to the south of the CTP boundary.

What **Map 2-11** illustrates is that there is a significant amount of right of way that is currently not being utilized. This presents an opportunity to greatly improve the bicycle/pedestrian experience without having to be concerned with property acquisition, which can become very costly.



Map 2-11: Typical Right of way

2.12 Stormwater

Two publicly maintained stormwater retention areas exist within the limits of the CTP, however, several other smaller retention areas exist around the perimeter which serve the CTP as well (Figure 2-9 and Map 2-12). The north retention area, which is on the corner of Lovejoy Road and Hill Avenue, was recently expanded by 1 acre in 2017 to increase capacity for future demand. It is gently sloped with a newly replaced fence around the perimeter, but is otherwise unimproved, save the recent construction which cleared some of the brush surrounding the water. The south retention area, located along Hill Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard, is not as deep as the northern retention area, and does not have as much capacity. The surrounding property has thicker brush than the north site, and is maintained at most, once a month.

Flooding within the CTP has been documented as an issue during periods of heavy rainfall, though recent system improvements at the north retention area have helped increase capacity. One

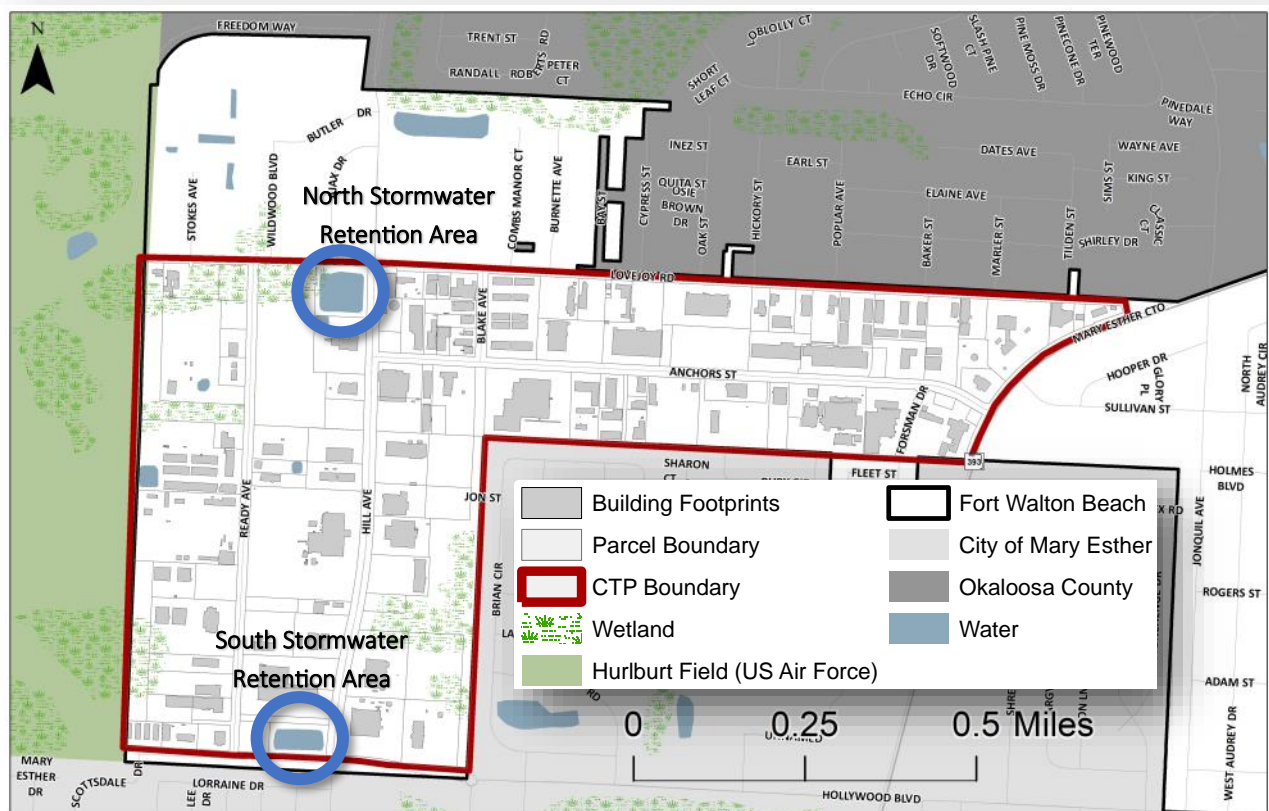


North Stormwater Retention Area



Culvert along Lovejoy Rd

Figure 2-9: South Stormwater Retention Area and Culvert



Map 2-12: Stormwater Retention Areas Locations

specific location of future needs, noted during public input is the western edge of the CTP, which abuts up against Hurlburt Field and is more heavily forested than the rest of the CTP.

2.13 Utilities and Technology

The existing utility and technology infrastructure suits the needs of businesses within the CTP per comments received at public workshops and during individual interviews with stakeholders and City staff. This does not mean however, consistent upkeep and potentially upgrading to better facilities in the future would not be beneficial.

The existing water/wastewater systems have the capacity for increased development intensity within the CTP for the foreseeable future. It was also noted that the CTP tends to be dark at night time and is a deterrent for walking and bicycling at night time and that street lighting would benefit those working after daylight hours.

2.14 Environmental & Brownfield Designation Review

The Commerce and Technology Park was designated a brownfield in October of 2008 by the City in Resolution 2008-38. A brownfield itself is defined in the Florida State Legislature Sections 376.77-376.85 and provides opportunities for municipalities, individuals and other organizations to redevelop environmentally contaminated sites. The City determined the CTP to be a brownfield based on the history of the area. The CTP originally contained a City owned landfill from 1963 to the mid-1970s between Ready Avenue and Hill Avenue which allegedly contained yard and construction waste. The landfill also received an unknown amount of unidentified industrial waste from nearby facilities within the CTP and was buried using local soils, mainly sand, at a depth of approximately five feet or less.

These factors contribute to the brownfield designation at the specific site, however due to the improper management of the soil and waste processing, contaminate leaching may have occurred which would affect nearby sites. An additional factor is the ongoing industrial land uses within the CTP which would by nature produce some amount of industrial waste which, over time, could further contaminate the area. The current site of the old Ready

Avenue landfill is occupied by a Waste Management transfer station built in 2015.

- A brownfield area offers several incentives through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and US Environmental Protection Agency, which eases the cost burden of cleaning the area and also offers tax refunds, grants and loan guarantees. A few of the specific incentive programs are listed below, and may be taken advantage of by businesses and potential property owners within the CTP: \$2,500 tax refund per job created
- Building materials sales tax refund
- Loan guarantees, 50% of primary lender's loan and 75% for affordable housing and health care facilities
- Voluntary cleanup tax credit (VCTC)
 - ◇ 50% of site rehabilitation cost with a \$500,000 maximum annual, per site.
 - ◇ Solid waste removal costs
- Streamlined development review processes
- EPA assessment grants
 - ◇ Up to \$400,000 annually for local governments
- EPA cleanup grants
 - ◇ Up to \$600,000 annually for local governments or non-profits.

2.13 Takeaways for the Master Plan

As described throughout this section, there are several planning and infrastructure issues that are affecting the development potential of the CTP. In order to ensure that these issues are addressed focus areas have been identified and summarized below. These focus areas represent general guidance on the primary issues that are addressed in the Master Plan and associated recommendations as described in Section 4.0.

- **Establish a Vision**—A vision statement should be established that unifies the existing business, and establishes a direction for the continued evolution of the CTP.
- **Branding and Identity**—Refresh the existing branding and logo and expand its use throughout the district. Create visual cues that create a sense of entry and arrival. The CTP should be more than just a park, it is an employment district, and the branding will help create an identity to this part of the city.
- **Regulatory Flexibility**—Both the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning designations will be addressed to ensure that the regulatory environment is supportive of new development and creative site planning solutions.
- **Streetscape and Right of way Improvement**—The CTP has an abundance of right of way available to improve each of the existing corridors. While maintaining usefulness to trucks and other industrial-related traffic, the right of way should be redesigned to improve aesthetics, bike/pedestrian safety and usability, and reinforce identity.
- **Open Space and Parks**—Enhance the existing stormwater ponds and other available property to create passive park spaces for use by employees in the CTP.
- **Market Viability**—As discussed in more detail in Section 3.0, the Master Plan should reflect a market viable vision of the future growth and development. This will require aligning the potential plan build out with market demand.

MARKET ANALYSIS



03

3.1 Market Analysis Overview

The Fort Walton Beach CTP operates in a local economy historically dominated by military activity and tourism. Several broader, non-local patterns (external factors) and local factors unique to the city and CTP (internal factors) affect the marketable opportunities of the CTP. The market analysis included in this section analyzes these factors to better guide investment and recruitment effort in the CTP. The analysis was based on:

- Individual and small group interviews with a number of stakeholders, including property and business owners (who do and do not own/operate in the park), departmental staff, and local workforce/educational institutions
- A survey of more than 900 households in the Fort Walton Beach area, generating a detailed database of employment/income data and spending habits
- A cluster analysis that identified local strengths and weaknesses given existing industry concentrations
- Research related to the potential for Research & Development users
- A review of secondary information and previous studies to gain a better understanding of the existing economic context
- Forecasting of demand based on proprietary computer modeling

This chapter summarizes the key findings from the analysis, including external and internal factors influencing industry activity potential in the CTP area, followed by a forecast of potential activity and space needs for the area and methods to capture this activity. More detailed information provided in **Appendix A**.

3.2 External Factors Influencing CTP Opportunities

A number of trends at the national level are affecting how office/industrial space is used more generally and are important contextual considerations for analyzing use of this space at the local level. These trends include:

- **Millennial Mobility:** Reduced length of time that households stay in one area to maintain a job, particularly among Millennials (age 22-35)
- **Customized Manufacturing:** Increased custom and small-batch manufacturing, allowing for more consumer choice and flexibility in the types of development that can house manufacturing since not as much space is necessarily required
- **Reduced Office Space Needs:** Reduced space provided per employee and increased use of open office plans
- **Delivery of Medical Services:** Reduced space needs for delivery of medical services linked to a diminished number of independent practitioners, a shift in focus from treatment to wellness, and growth in services provided through virtual activity and spaces where customers work and go to school.

The following sections focus on research and analysis highlighting internal factors impacting opportunities for Fort Walton Beach.

3.3 Industry Opportunities

Potential industries to target with investment and recruitment efforts include industries that are underrepresented in the local economy and industries with research and development (R&D) opportunities that are suited to the local context.

A cluster analysis was completed at the zip code and county level to identify underrepresented industries when compared to other similar zip codes and counties in the US. These underrepresented industries signal “gap” areas that may be targeted for marketing and recruitment efforts if they are appropriate for the specific context of Fort Walton Beach. Industries in which gaps were identified include:



Manufacturing



Wholesaling



Trucking & Logistics



Retail



Professional and Business Services

Three areas with potential for local R&D opportunities are:

- Natural Resources: key resources of the area include freshwater lakes, Gulf Coast salt marshes, as well as plants, fish, scallops, birds, and other organisms.
- Agriculture: the major crops in the region are cotton and wheat.
- Military Technology Transfer: focus areas might include autonomous vehicles, robotics, artificial intelligence, swarming and drones.

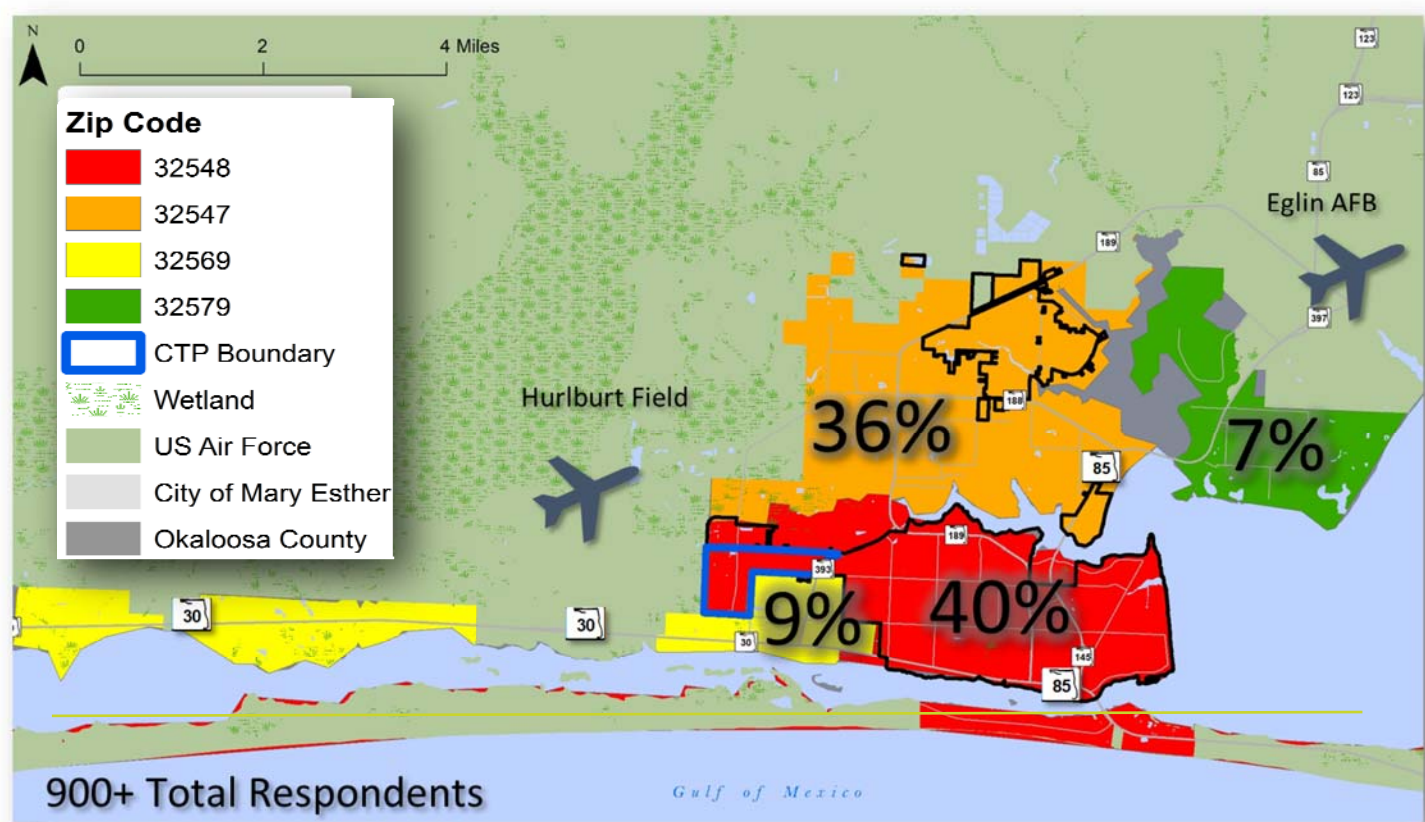
3.4 Survey Summary

The survey of households helped identify current economic conditions of the area’s residents, their buying power, and potential new business opportunities. **Map 3-1** and **Table 3-1** show the top four zip codes in terms of number of survey respondents. with a corresponding percentage break-down.

As mentioned previously, military activity is an important local industry. **Figure 3-1** and **Table 3-2** show that nearly 40% of responding households had an active military member and nearly 25% had a retired military member. This is likely to have little impact on retail opportunities in the CTP, as opportunities are based on future CTP employment, but it is expected to have a significant effect on retail opportunities in

ZIP Code	Percent	ZIP Code Name/Communities
32547	36%	Fort Walton Beach
32548	40%	Fort Walton B., West Destin, Okaloosa Island
32569	9%	Mary Esther
32579	7%	Shalimar

Table 3-1: Survey Responses by ZIP code



Map 3-1: Survey Responses by ZIP code

Military Status	Percent
Active	39%
Retired	25%
Not sure	1%
No	66%

Table 3-2: Military Family Members

other parts of Fort Walton Beach. Those not working in the military were spread among a variety of other industries, with other primary industries including Health Care; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Retail.

Table 3-3 indicates the general education levels of respondents working full-time, indicating that a high proportion (more than 80%) had a least some college or an associate's degree or more. Likewise, there are high rates of bachelor's and advanced degrees among the active and retired military respondents (**Table 3-4**). Retired military tended to have a greater educational attainment overall and proportion of advanced degrees, a difference likely impacted by educational benefits that accrue to military personnel while serving. Note that there is also a high rate of active military that have less than a high school education because many complete their education during military service.

Education Level	Percent
Less than high school	0%
High school or GED	10%
Technical	4%
Some college or Associate's degree	33%
Bachelor's degree	30%
Advanced degree	21%
Not applicable	2%

Table 3-3: General Education Lev-

Education Level	% Active	% Retired
Bachelor's degree	47%	27%
Advanced degree	0%	75%
High school or GED	7%	20%
Some college or Associate's degree	14%	23%
Technical	0%	33%
Less than high school	50.0%*	0%

Table 3-3: Military Respondents Education Level



of households that responded had a family member in active military service



of households that responded had a family member retired from military service

Figure 3-1 Military Family Members

The trend of residents increasingly moving from one community or one area of the US to another is reinforced at the local level in Fort Walton Beach with the military activity. This movement is common in military communities as a result of reassignment and other factors. About 4 in 10 households surveyed are likely to move in the next five years (Figure 3-2). Of this, approximately 40% did not expect to stay in this general area of Florida, which will result in a transitioning in the labor force.

Regarding business incubator space and small office activity at the CTP, home-based work and businesses can be an important client base if affordable and reasonable options are available. Approximately 18% of respondents operated a home business (Table 3-5).

Operate Home Business?	Percent
Yes	18%
No	81%
Not sure	1%

Table 3-5: Respondents Operating Home Businesses

Regarding the more localized retail uses that the CTP could attract such as coffee shops and cafes, it is important to understand the consumer habits of households that might go to these retail establishments. Typically in business parks, the higher the concentration of employment, the more significant the demand for certain retail goods and services. The proximity and desire of the City of Fort Walton Beach to have both a viable Downtown and CTP simultaneously is undoubtedly a significant factor in how much retail goods and services activity will be found in the CTP in the future. Approximately 75% of households went out for lunch about once a week or more frequently (Figure 3-3). Assuming a higher concentration of employment in the CTP in the future, such trips could provide the potential for revenues for food service establishments.

Likely to Move Within 5 Years

Yes No Maybe

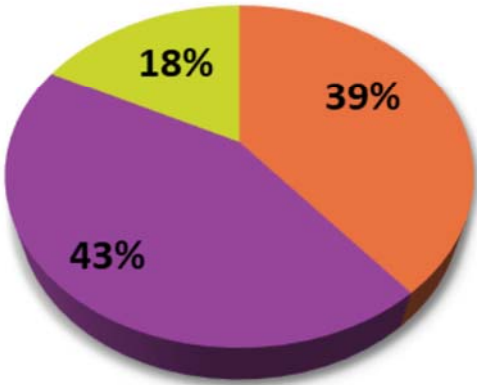
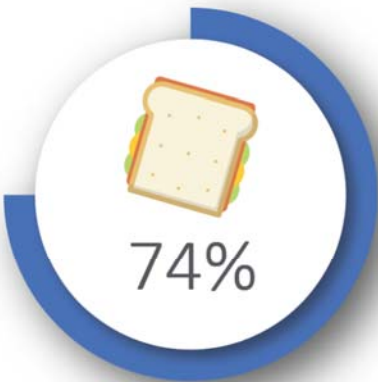


Figure 3-2: Respondents likely to move within 5 years



of respondents eat out for lunch at least once a week



of respondents eat out for dinner at least once a week

Figure 3-3: Respondents who eat out at least once a week

Survey Key Takeaways:

- Household employment or former employment reflected the prevalence of military activity in the area: nearly 40% of responding households had an active military member and nearly 25% had a retired military member.
- Survey responses indicated a high level of educational attainment: More than 80% of respondents working full-time had at least some college or an Associate's degree. There were also significant percentages of households with active military members with bachelor's degrees and/or retired military members with advanced degrees.
- The survey indicates that the workforce in the area might suffer a degree of instability due to household migration to other places: approximately 40% of responding households are likely to relocate in the next five years, of which 40% do not expect to stay in Florida.
- 18% of the surveyed households operated a home-based business, indicating the potential existing customer base for incubator and small office activity space.
- Approximately 75% of households eat lunch outside the house once a week, which, assuming a higher concentration of employment in the CTP in the future, could provide potential revenues for food service establishments.

3.5 Demand Forecasting

The estimation of future space demand and needs for the CTP was based on the following factors (for more information on the modeling assumptions and details, see **Appendix A**:

- External and internal factors previously noted
- Area-wide gaps that are best accommodated in a business park
- Employment conditions as defined by the survey
- Likelihood that the labor pool will continue to stay in the area.
- Ability to get to and from work in a cost-effective and in a timely manor.
- Small business activity operating from homes.
- Demographics of the community, including population, households, incomes, educational attainment, and trends
- Visitation by those coming from outside the region

Demand forecasting indicates that between 1.15 million and 2.25 million square feet of additional space are marketable in the CTP based on information in **Table 3-6**. The composition of space regarding the size of individual units for the "top range" is shown in **Table 3-7**.

Space	Top Range (sf)	Low Range (sf)
Meet FWB population needs	695,000	350,000
Incubation activity	60,000	50,000
Market share of county growth	1,390,000	700,000
Sub-total	2,145,000	1,100,000
R&D space	100,000	150,000
Total	2,245,000	1,150,000

Table 3-6: Additional marketable space within the CTP

Additional activity that can be pursued if activities expand or once primary activities defined above are attained include:

- Retail/food services space of 40,000 sf
- Business-oriented chain transient accommodations (hotel)

Space	10,000 sf or less	10,001–24,999 sf	25,000–34,999 sf	> 35,000 sf
Meet FWB population needs	50–60,000	50,000–100,000	250,000	285,000
Incubation activity	60–50,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Market share of county growth	70–100,000	50-100,000	540,000	650,000
R&D space	25,000	75,000	50,000	N/A
Total	195–235,000	175–275,000	840,000	935,000

Figure 3-7: Composition of additional marketable space

3.6 Capitalizing on Opportunities

A combination of physical improvements to the CTP setting and marketing and recruitment efforts are required to capture the potential activity for the CTP area. The following summarizes key approaches that can be used to attract the potential CTP industry activity identified in Section 3.5.

Research & Development

Recruitment of R&D activity can be most effectively done through a partnership or consortium. In the case of the CTP, such a partnership may take the form of a “blue ribbon” committee composed of representatives from national or international businesses from the CTP, agriculture, natural resources, local higher education institutions, and other interests involved with defined areas of research. Such a committee:

- Can help form and solidify a partnership between the federal and state levels of government, with more significant contact than now occurs and expanded relationships.
- May help expand local higher education opportunities that may contribute to retain and potentially increase the proportion of residents seeking higher education within the community.
- Potentially brings in more significant interests and dollars.
- Has “staying power” – research, if and when it turns into product “development,” often takes 15+ years.
- Is likely to yield high levels of employment for highly-skilled individuals in the future, increasing the potential to expand a “permanent younger resident” base and use the skills of an educated workforce that exists in the area or nearby.
- Has proven to be successful elsewhere.

The “blue ribbon” committee might also be involved with the following:

- Licensing of high-potential technologies
- Forming companies around technologies
- Building management teams with executives that possess necessary experience
- Assisting with market acceleration using specialized tools, people, and infrastructure

Developer Recruitment

Recruiting developers to accomplish development objectives for CTP sites will be more cost-effective and less time-consuming than individual tenant recruitment. A key consideration in recruiting developers is effectively screening them, a process which can begin by creating a list of developers who have done projects similar to the CTP redevelopment and have appropriate fiscal capacity. This effort can be accomplished through:

- Contact with professional organizations that track creative development.
- Tapping libraries associated with professional organizations that deal with unique situations such as the American Planning Association (APA).
- Review of focused development publications.
- Internet research based on articles about desired types of efforts from around the US and world.

Non-Government Funding for Marketing or Recruitment Effort & Investment

At present, there is vacant space in the CTP as well as vacant or underutilized land. However, no real surplus inventory of small spaces or space in one area of the CTP exists. This lack of inventory is particularly true for flex and incubator spaces in concentrated areas of the CTP. Such space is difficult to finance through traditional means at present. Several non-government funding sources could be fostered but controlled by the private sector that would likely be successful in the CTP. One would be an “economic development capital fund” with shared risk by a composite of investors; the other would be “crowdfunding” at the local level. Both would be expected to earn returns to the contributors.

Individual Business Recruitment

Although developer recruitment is the most cost-effective method, it may be necessary to recruit individual operations in limited cases. Success will be dependent upon increased cooperation among the City, Mary Esther, the County, the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Council (EDC), and other regional and local CTP interests. In developing a recruitment process, the following are essential:

- Define who will be involved in the effort (organizations and people).
- Define who will coordinate efforts.
- Define individual and groups functions within the process.
- Develop a time frame for the process.
- Identify what can be offered.
- Propose measures to evaluate success.

Marketing Materials

All marketing materials for any of the selected activities should be prepared for online dissemination, as it is the most cost-effective method. Success with any and all marketing is in preparation before solicitation and follow-up. Defining prospects, developers, and others in advance of solicitation is essential. Once initial contact is made, follow-up should be done with any interest that does not respond negatively to or opts out of the initial contact. It is also suggested that a website be developed that is focused on the recruitment effort.

3.7 Takeaways for the Master Plan

The list of items below identified in the Market Analysis will be considered in the development of the Master Plan.

- **Develop Flexible Spaces**—As noted in the summary **Table 3-7**, there is existing market demand for a variety of spaces in the CTP. Efforts should be made to provide a variety of building types, sizes, etc. to ensure that the park is flexible to respond to a variety of users.
- **Formalize Organization**—There is a need for a more formal organization to help represent park interests in the future. The current stakeholder group is a start, but more formal structures should be considered. This structure could take the form of a business organization (to act as a single voice representing the park), or a Business Improvement District (with a revenue source to lead minor improvements and upkeep).
- **Educational Partnerships**—Focus should be given to providing opportunities for high school, technical college, university collaboration. These could take a variety of forms including formalized internship programs and/or partnering with a local educational organization to build training/education facilities within the park.
- **Recruit and Incentivize**—Focus on targeted recruitment should be augmented through development/financial incentives. These could include development flexibility, expedited permitting, fee buy-downs, etc.

THE PLAN



04

4.1 Master Plan Vision

The Vision for the Fort Walton Beach CTP is based on the results of the existing conditions analysis, City staff coordination, and the public involvement process, which included stakeholder group meetings, focus group interviews, and an online survey. The Vision will act as the long-term planning framework for identifying projects and initiatives to build upon existing assets, improve competitiveness, and ensure continued success of the CTP (**Figure 4-1**).

The Vision for the CTP developed through the planning process is as follows:

A primary employment center and economic generator for Fort Walton Beach and the region that provides flexible incubator, research and development spaces; mixed land uses; a safe, effective, and efficient system of complete streets; and attractive parks and open spaces needed to meet future market demands.

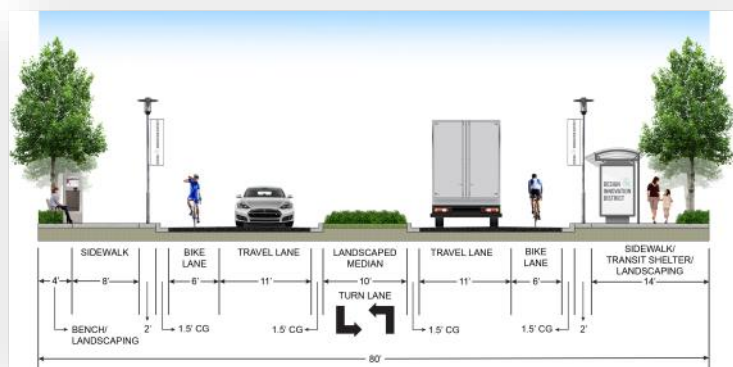
The representation of the Vision statement and major concepts that make up the Master Plan are described in the project goals and address the following topic areas:

- Character Areas
- Building Use, Land Use, and Urban Design
- Transportation, Connectivity, and Walkability
- Infrastructure and Technology
- Branding and Identity
- Master Plan Framework

Each of these topic areas represents an important element of the overall Master Plan. On the following pages, overall goals and specific projects, programs, and strategies are described in greater detail.



Mixed Uses (Winter Park, FL) (Source: ApartmentFinder)



Complete Streets



Conceptual Branding/Wayfinding

Figure 4-1: CTP Vision Elements

4.2 Project Goals

Project goals have been identified to address the common issues, opportunities, and themes for the CTP and to accomplish the Vision as a primary employment center and economic generator for the city and the region. The project goals are categorized into the following:

1) Land Use, 2) Transportation and Infrastructure, 3) Business Environment and Growth, and 4) Image (Figure 4-2).

Goal 1: Land Use

- Promote a greater mix of uses and flexible spaces to allow for mixed office spaces, retail and restaurant/food service opportunities, and recreation uses.
- Improve land use transitions between the CTP and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Encourage higher quality design throughout the park.
- Create a more “park-like” setting by integrating parks and open space.

Goal 2: Transportation and Infrastructure

- Provide an effective and efficient roadway system.
- Improve the traffic flow through utilization of traffic calming, intersection improvements and pavement maintenance.
- Provide complete streets for safe pedestrian and bicyclist accessibility.
- Enhance public transit stops to improve safety and amenities.
- Develop a stormwater master plan to design stormwater facilities as open space amenities.

Goal 3: Business Environment and Growth

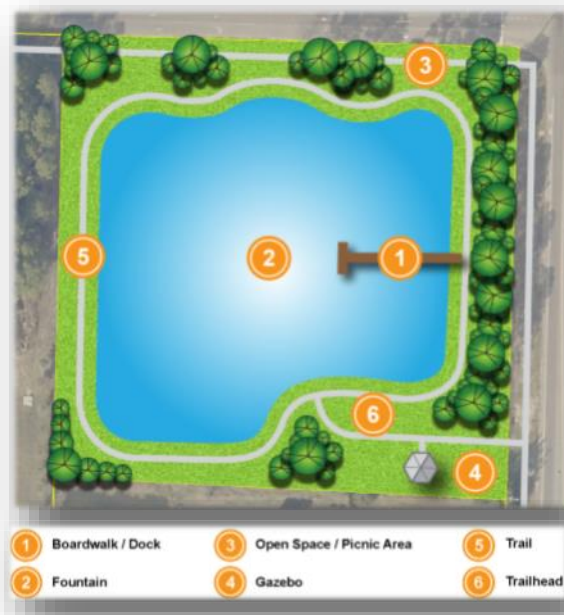
- Create a vacant property/space list to market the CTP for new investors.
- Offer incentive packages to recruit businesses and maintain businesses.
- Create a business association or Business Improvement District (BID) within the CTP or BID
- Encourage recruitment of research and development activity through a partnership or consortium.
- Provide opportunities for high school, technical college, and university collaboration

Goal 4: Image

- Create a new brand identity for the CTP, including common standards for signage, streetscape, and landscape.
- Rename the CTP to present a more modern image,
- Provide façade and landscape improvement grant programs ,



Parks and Open Space



North Stormwater Pond Improvements



Rename CTP/Gateway

Figure 4-2: CTP Goal Illustrative Elements



Map 4-1: Character Districts



4.3 Character Areas

Four main character areas were identified based on an evaluation of existing conditions, land uses, and tenant mix. Each of these areas is described in the following pages. Identifying character areas helps reinforce desired design/use outcomes throughout the CTP (Map 4-1).

4.3.1 Gateway District

The Gateway District is the easternmost edge of the CTP bounded by Mary Esther Cut Off along the east, Forsman Drive to the southwest, the City limits to the south, and Lovejoy Road to the north, with the northwest bounded by the western property line of the City-owned water tower parcel. The small area consists of the eastern entrance to the CTP with a ground-level sign along Mary Esther Cut Off and a water tower to the north of Anchors Street. The district receives more pass-by traffic than any other portion of the CTP; therefore, it is important that the area act as an attractive entrance into the park. Improved signage is important, and commercial uses (including restaurants) should continue to be encouraged (Figure 4-3).



Existing Gateway Signage



Mary Ester Cut Off and Anchors Street Intersection

Figure 4-3: Gateway Character District

4.3.2 Anchors Street District

This Anchors Street District is located on both sides of the Anchors Street Corridor, bounded by the City limits to the south, the Gateway District to the east, Hill Avenue to the west, and Lovejoy Road to the north. Currently, the district contains a variety of users housed in some of the oldest buildings in the CTP. The district's location along the primary east/west corridor within the CTP offers an opportunity to encourage a more urban frontage with reduced setbacks, improved streetscape, and more office- and research-oriented uses (Figure 4-4).



Existing Warehousing along Anchors Street

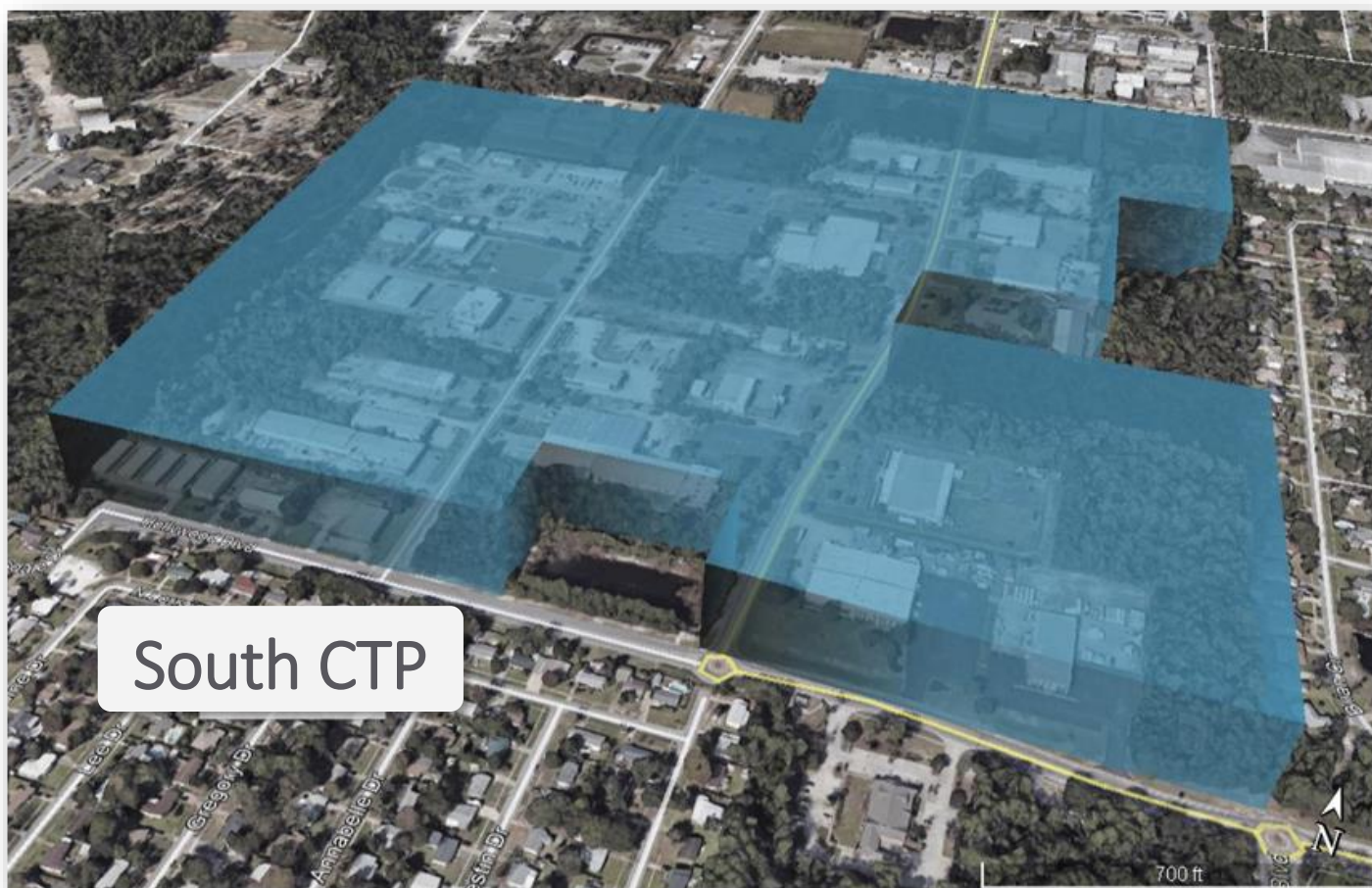


Vacant Building along Anchors Street

Figure 4-4: Anchors Street Character District

4.3.3 South CTP District

The South CTP District is bounded by Hollywood Boulevard to the south and the City limits to the east and west. Along the boundary are parcels located along Anchors Street and sites south of some of the heavier industrial users to the north. This district contains two primary entrances into the CTP, which provide opportunities for improved entry signage. The area also includes a large amount (20.9 acres) of privately-held vacant property, which is the most among the character areas, as well as two City-owned parcels. This area also includes the Okaloosa County Public Works facility, which could offer a future redevelopment public/private partnership opportunity (**Figure 4-5**). A wide range of land uses would suit this area due to the availability of readily available vacant land and the diversity of land uses within the District currently.



HSU Building along Ready Avenue



Ready Avenue Streetscape

Figure 4-5: South CTP Character District

4.3.4 Northwest Industrial District

Situated in the northwest corner of the CTP, the Northwest Industrial District is bounded by Lovejoy Road to the north, Hill Avenue to the east, the South CTP District boundary to the south, and the City limits to the west. This area contains some of the heavier industrial activity within the park, including Waste Management and Republic Services. Maintaining use compatibility will be an important focus for this area (Figure 4-6).



Existing Warehousing along Ready Avenue



Existing Building along Ready Avenue

Figure 4-6: Northwest Industrial Character District

4.3.5 Parks & Open Space

Within the CTP are three primary opportunities for development of passive parks and open spaces. The first is the north stormwater pond along Hill Avenue and Lovejoy Road. A second stormwater pond along Hill Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard offers another opportunity for a passive park or greenspace, and an existing City-owned plot of land exits along the eastern edge of the CTP and is adjacent to Hill Avenue. This area has the potential to be transformed into a passive park with educational space, a stormwater park, or other recreational use that integrates commercial, conservation, or other utility-based uses (Figure 4-7).



North Stormwater Pond



South Stormwater Pond

Figure 4-7: Parks and Open Space

4.3.6 Catalyst Sites

Catalyst sites within the CTP are spread across two primary character districts: Anchors Street and South CTP. These sites are characterized as being underused, vacant, or otherwise valuable for redevelopment and represent some of the best opportunities for catalytic development/redevelopment that could serve to boost development activity throughout the CTP (Figure 4-8).



Okaloosa County Public Works



Potential Redevelopment Site

Figure 4-8: Northwest Industrial Character District

4.3.7 Key Development Considerations

Gateway

- High traffic counts that can encourage commercial uses.
- Main entrance to the park should focus on brand identity (updated signage, new logo on City water tower, etc.) and sense of entry. Landscaped median at entry point will offer opportunity for lighted feature and/or public art.
- Uses along Mary Esther Cut Off should have a similar landscaping palette as the internal streetscape.
- Opportunity exists for iconic office/research building at southwest corner of Anchors Street and Mary Esther Cut Off.

Anchors Street

- Main thoroughfare through the park with complete street redesign will provide multimodal connectivity into the CTP.
- Roundabout at western edge of district will improve traffic flow and provide an opportunity for integration of public art.
- Opportunity exists to create a more defined street wall with reduced setbacks and improved landscaping.
- Future vision includes the addition of more office/research uses.
- Being the most built out of the character areas can lead to more redevelopment/renovation opportunities rather than new development.

South CTP

- Contains the most vacant land within the CTP.
- Primarily office and industrial land uses.
- Interaction south of Hollywood Boulevard with residential land uses.
- Proposed parks and recreation facilities will provide easily-accessible amenities for current/future employees.

Northwest Industrial

- Heavy industrial and increased truck traffic.
- Larger parcels than elsewhere within the park.
- Borders vacant land to the north of the CTP.
- Need to focus on internal/external transitions to minimize impact of operations.

Parks and Open Space

- Opportunities for blending utilities with parks and recreation.
- Potential to increase stormwater retention capabilities while providing passive recreation facilities.
- Provides an attraction during non-working hours to keep people within the area.

Catalyst Sites

- Sites that may spur additional development or be the catalyst for larger redevelopment.
- May contain existing structures or require negotiations with private parties to obtain.
- Distributed throughout the park and contain both redevelopment and renovation opportunities.



Anchors Street



Catalyst Redevelopment Site—Anchors Street

4.4 Building Use, Land Use & Urban Design

Although the future land use within the CTP remains consistent with what is seen today (see Section 2.4), looking forward, it is important to ensure that future land use and zoning reflect the desired mix of uses to create a diversified park. Some of the desired uses that are currently limited include retail and food commercial opportunities, recreation, and mixed office spaces. To create a more “park-like” setting, the two existing City stormwater ponds offer the opportunity to create small passive parks, which will provide an aesthetic improvement and amenity for businesses and their employees (**Figure 4-9**). Other opportunities, as summarized below, include allowing for new development on City-owned parcels and improving land use transitions and buffering between the CTP and adjacent uses.

Key Land Use and Urban Design Elements include the following and are shown on Map 4-2:

1. Consider reducing minimum building setbacks within the CTP zoning district to create a more defined street wall along key corridors.
2. Allow additional commercial uses within the CTP zoning to allow for freestanding, small-scale retail/restaurant uses to develop. Zoning regulations should limit the size of any freestanding retail/restaurant development to ensure that the primary uses in the CTP are employment-based.
3. Expand the allowable uses under the Industrial future land use category to include freestanding office/research and development.
4. Explore the feasibility of constructing a “food truck park” within the CTP to allow for on-site dining options.
5. Design and construct passive recreation features around both existing stormwater retention areas within the CTP
6. Improve land use transitions and promote the use of physical barriers between the heavier industrial uses and other uses in and adjacent to the CTP.
7. Develop streetscape design standards to improve the public realm and unify the district. Streetscapes will reflect those shown in Section 4.5. Standards should address lighting design, street furniture, and any special paving materials, as exemplified in **Figure 4-17**.

2



Example of Commercial Uses within the CTP
(Source: inhabitat)

4



Example of Food Truck Park (Source: The Treasure Coast Observer)

6



Example of Physical Barrier (Source: Precast Wall Systems, Inc.)

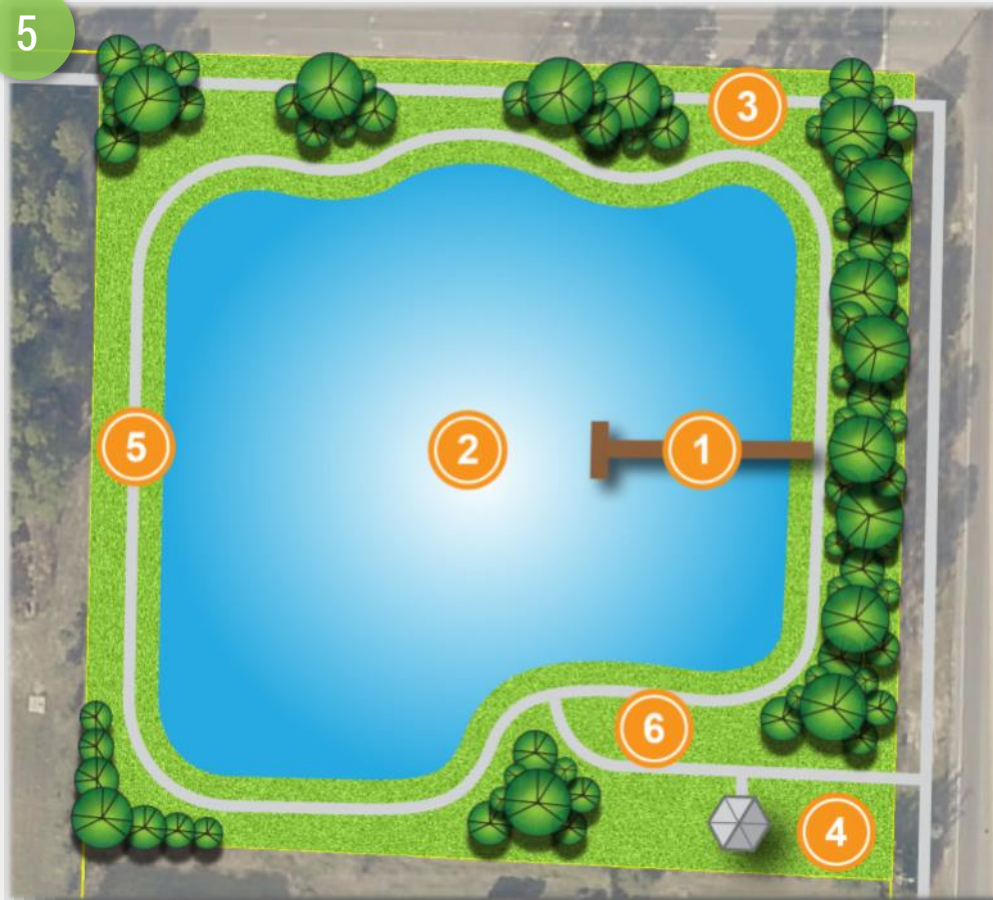
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Example Streetscape (Source: Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.)

5

North Pond



- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| ① Boardwalk / Dock | ③ Open Space / Picnic Area | ⑤ Trail |
| ② Fountain | ④ Gazebo | ⑥ Trailhead |

South Pond



Figure 4-9: Conceptual Passive Stormwater Parks



Map 4-2: Building Use, Land Use, and Urban Design



4.5 Transportation, Connectivity & Walkability

Although the majority of the CTP lacks a cohesive collection of sidewalks and bicycle facilities, creating a well-connected and holistic network is an important element of the park's future success. With sporadic sidewalks and bike lanes, it is difficult for those who work within the CTP to travel without a car to destinations within or outside the CTP. Creating a well-connected bicycle and pedestrian network will provide an improved landscape for businesses to invest in the future and create a work environment that is safer and more enjoyable. When bicycle and pedestrian networks are improved, it is important to also improve the vehicle network to allow the heavy truck-dependent tenants in the CTP to continue to flourish.

Key physical transportation and bicycle and pedestrian improvements to create complete streets and enhance the multi-modal system include the following and are shown on Map 4-3 and Figures 4-10, 4-11 and 4-12:

1. Construct complete street improvements throughout the CTP to ensure that all modes of transportation are considered.
2. Provide enhanced pedestrian crossings where deemed appropriate.
3. Support the redesign of the Hollywood Boulevard roundabouts to improve safety.
4. Design and construct a roundabout at the intersection of Hill Avenue and Anchors Street, which will allow for improved turning movements while continuing to allow for efficient freight traffic.
5. Construct continuous sidewalks throughout the CTP and wider sidewalks where appropriate.
6. Support the extension of the Hill Avenue bike lane north to the Northwest Florida State College campus.
7. Identify and promote a bikeway corridor that connects the Downtown Core to the CTP.
8. Enhance transit stops to improve safety, meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, and improve the appearance of the CTP (i.e., bus shelters, benches and signs).
9. Support a safe bicycle and pedestrian route to connect to Santa Rosa Mall site via Forsman Road.

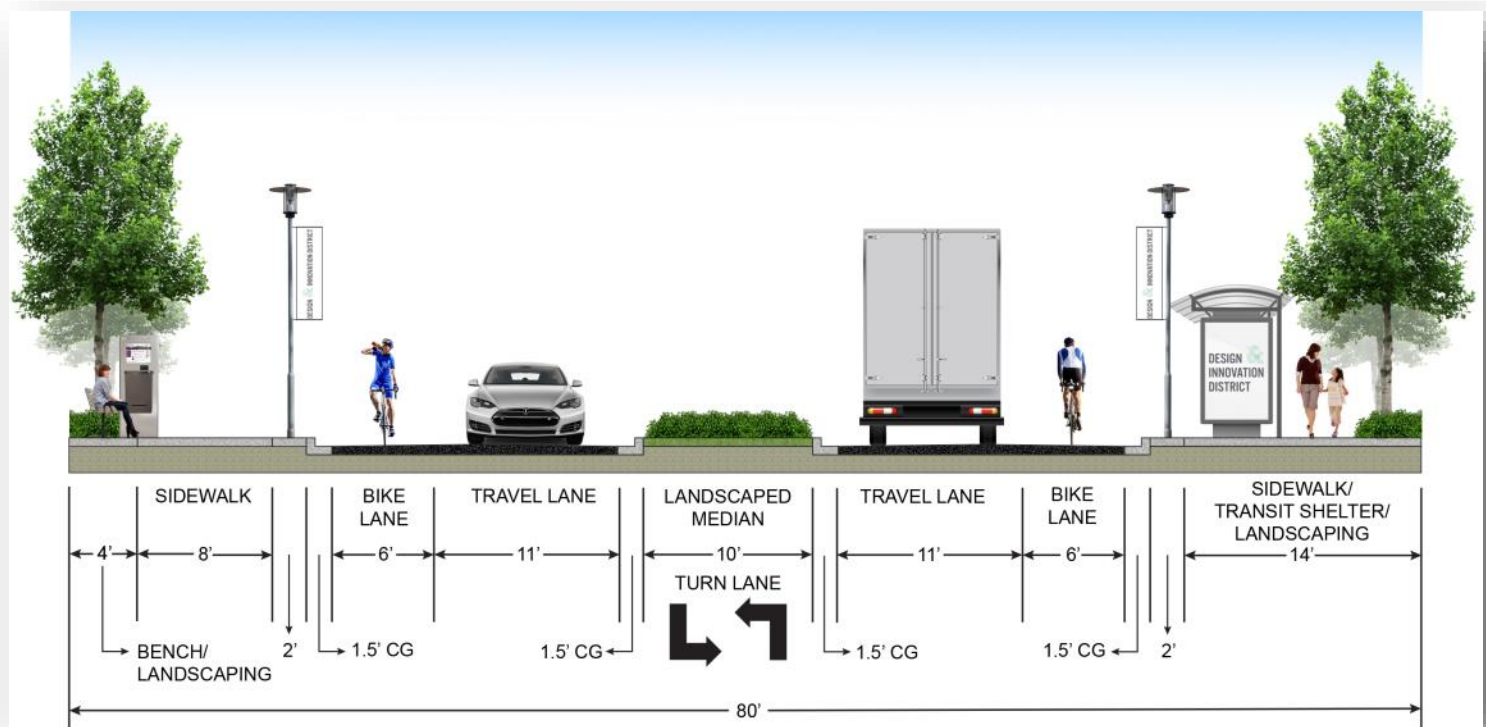


Figure 4-10: Conceptual Streetscape—Anchors Street

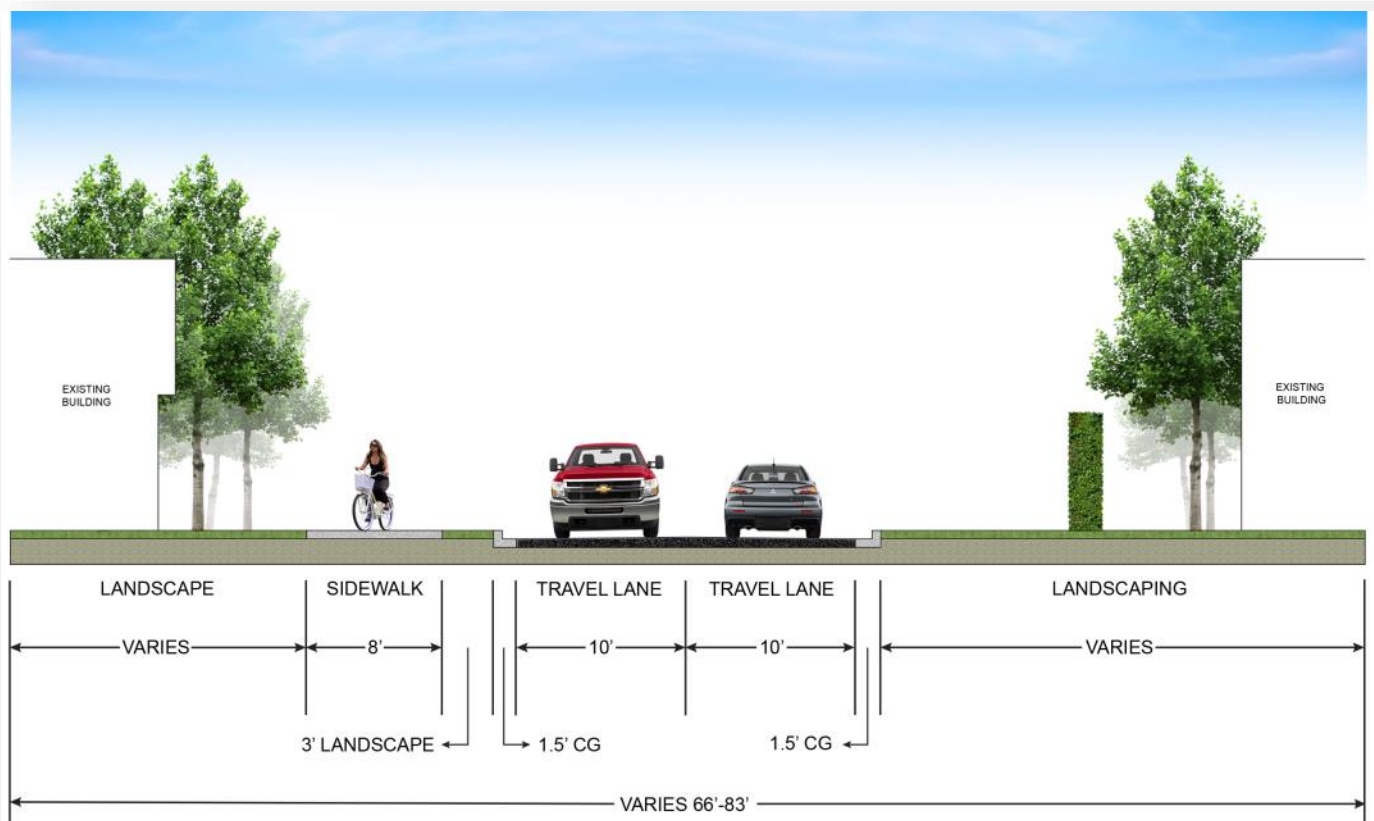


Figure 4-11: Conceptual Streetscape—Lovejoy Road

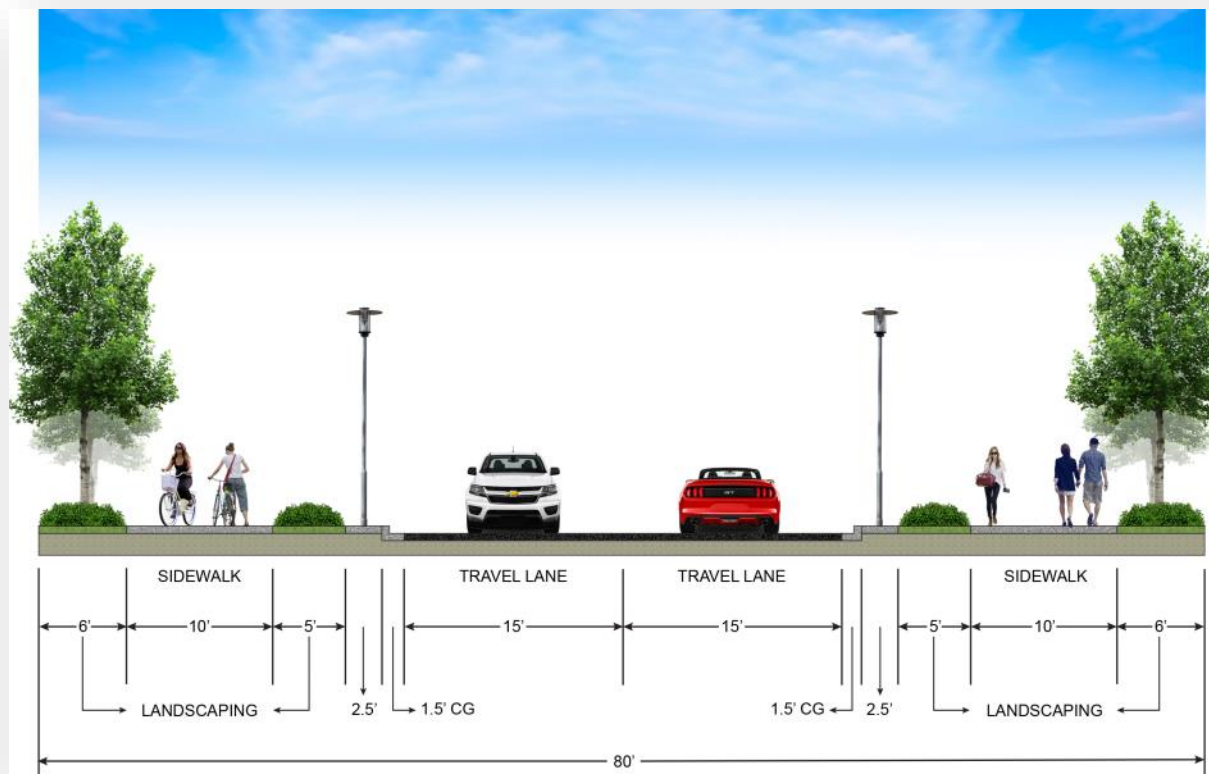
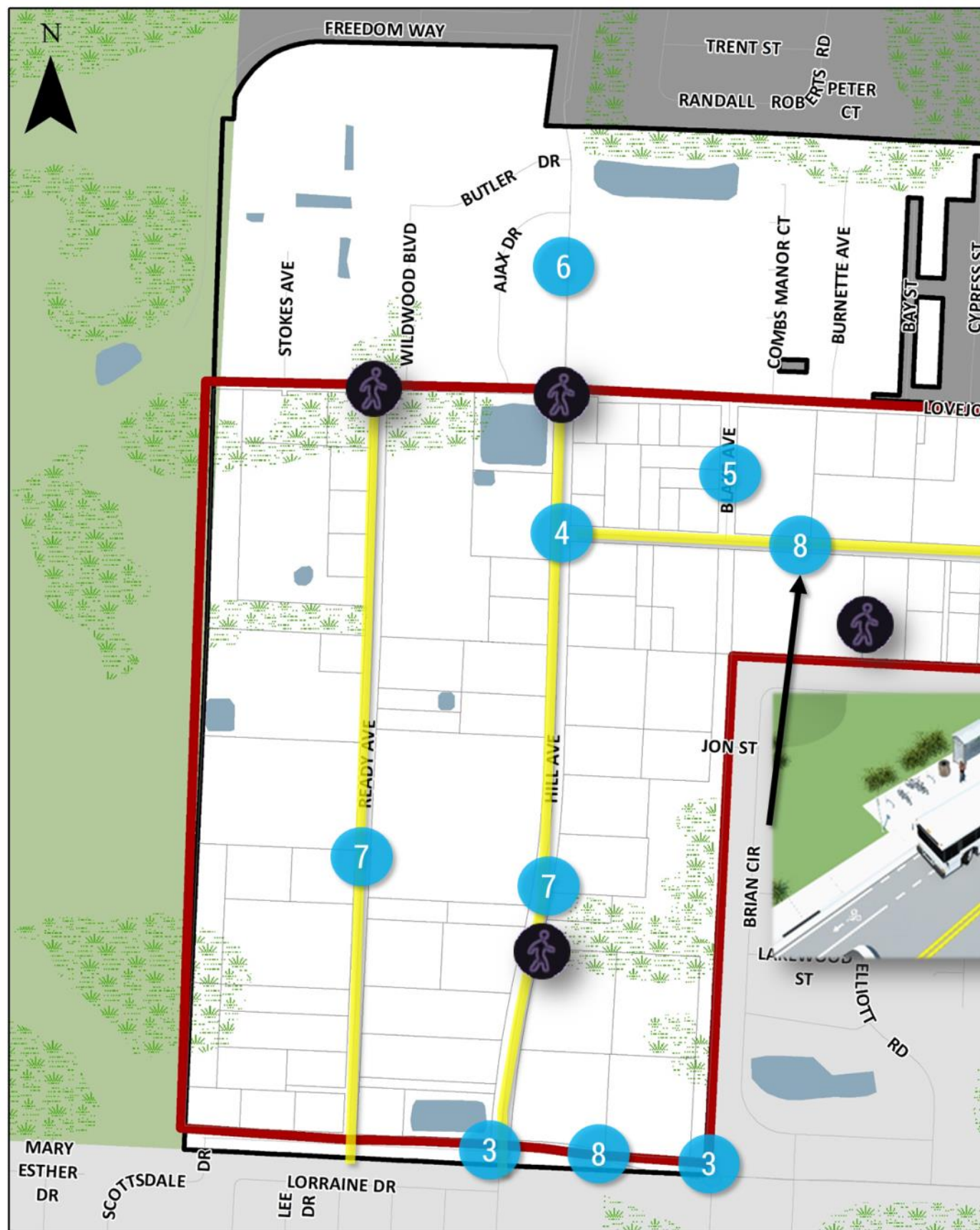


Figure 4-12: Conceptual Streetscape—Ready Avenue and Hill Avenue



Map 4-3: Transportation, Connectivity, and Walkability



4.6 Infrastructure & Technology

Providing quality infrastructure within the CTP is important for both existing and future redevelopment opportunities. The existing stormwater facilities are adequate for the current tenants and the foreseeable future; however, should more intense redevelopment occur, it could warrant the need for upgrades and expansion beyond the localized issues seen today. Telecommunications play a large role within the CTP today, as most contractors need to use secure lines to communicate with nearby military bases, making areawide upgrades a low priority at this time. With future growth in non-military-based activities, it would be beneficial to have amenities such as areawide Wi-Fi, enhanced fiber optic cables, and other advanced communications to attract and enhance the area as a whole.

Key physical infrastructure and technology improvements within the CTP are listed below and are shown on Map 4-4 and Figures 4-13, 4-14 and 4-15:

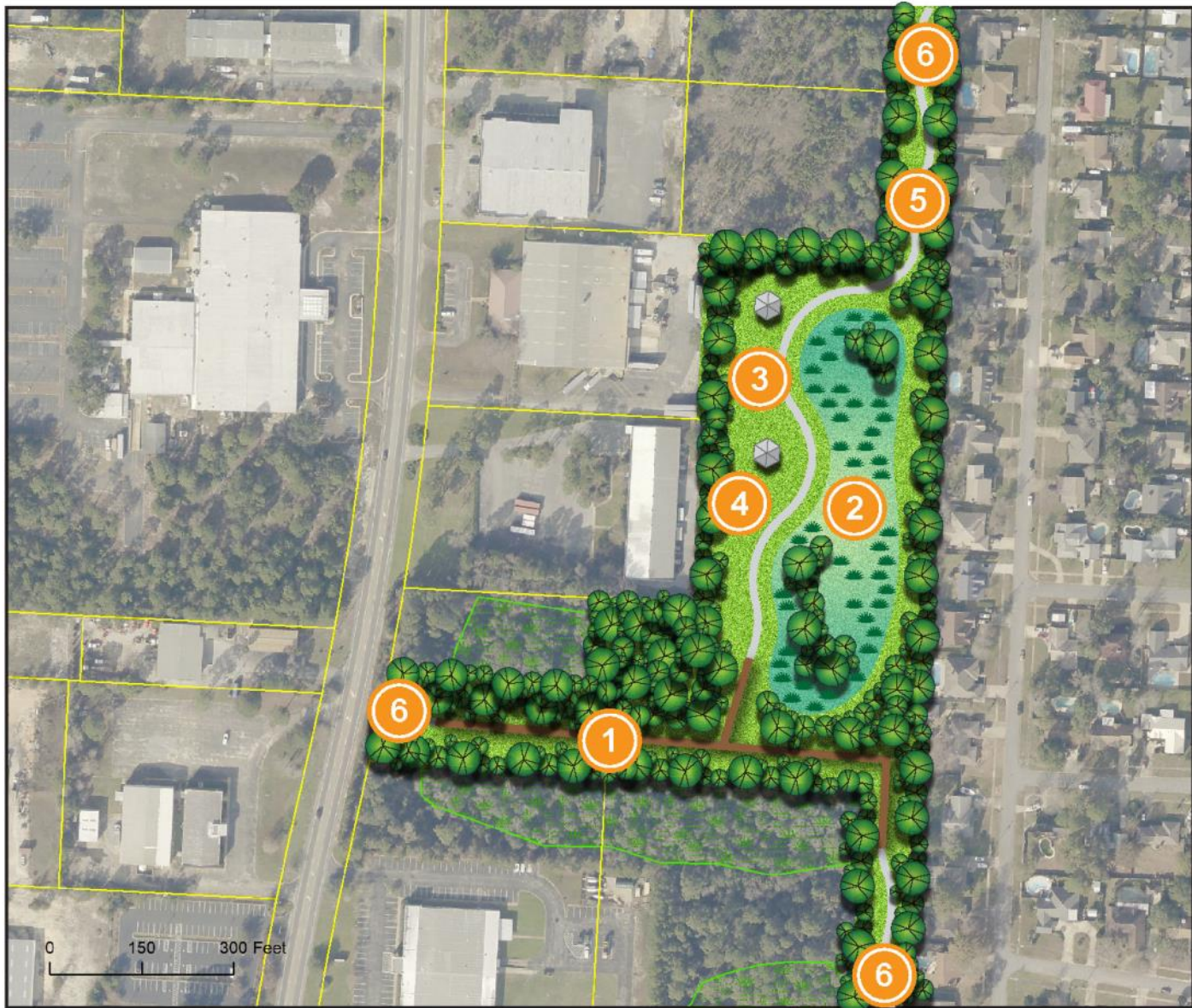
1. Support constructing curb and gutter along both Lovejoy Road and Hollywood Boulevard.
2. Design and build a third stormwater pond in conjunction with other improvements at the City-owned parcel adjacent to Hill Avenue.
3. Provide for additional regional stormwater opportunities, possibly as public-private partnerships.
4. Enhance communications to allow for areawide Wi-Fi in parks and other key locations.
5. Coordinate with property owners along the west side of the CTP to mitigate flooding and provide opportunities for public-private partnerships.



Figure 4-13: Support Curb & Gutter along Lovejoy Road



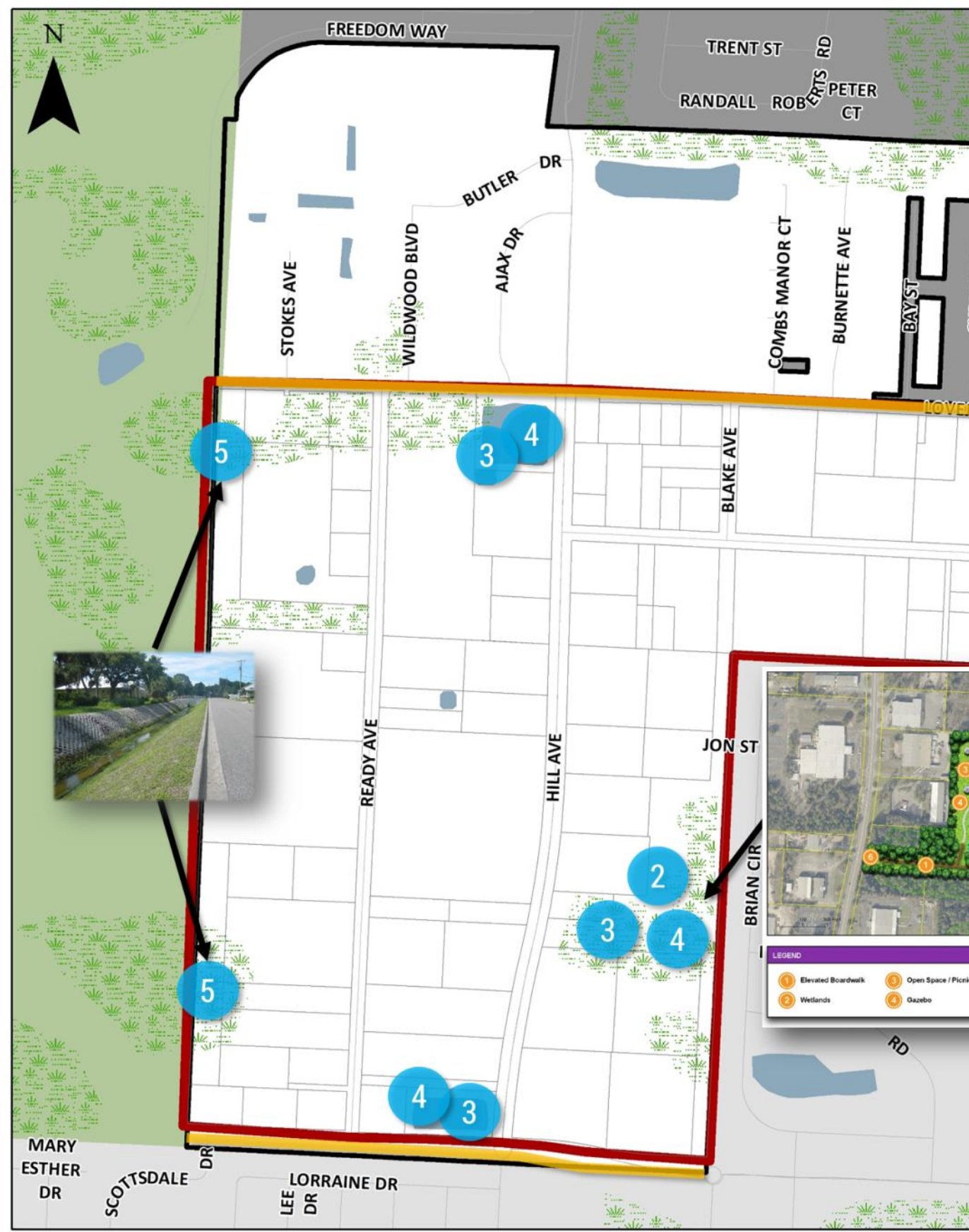
Figure 4-14: Free Wi-Fi in Parks



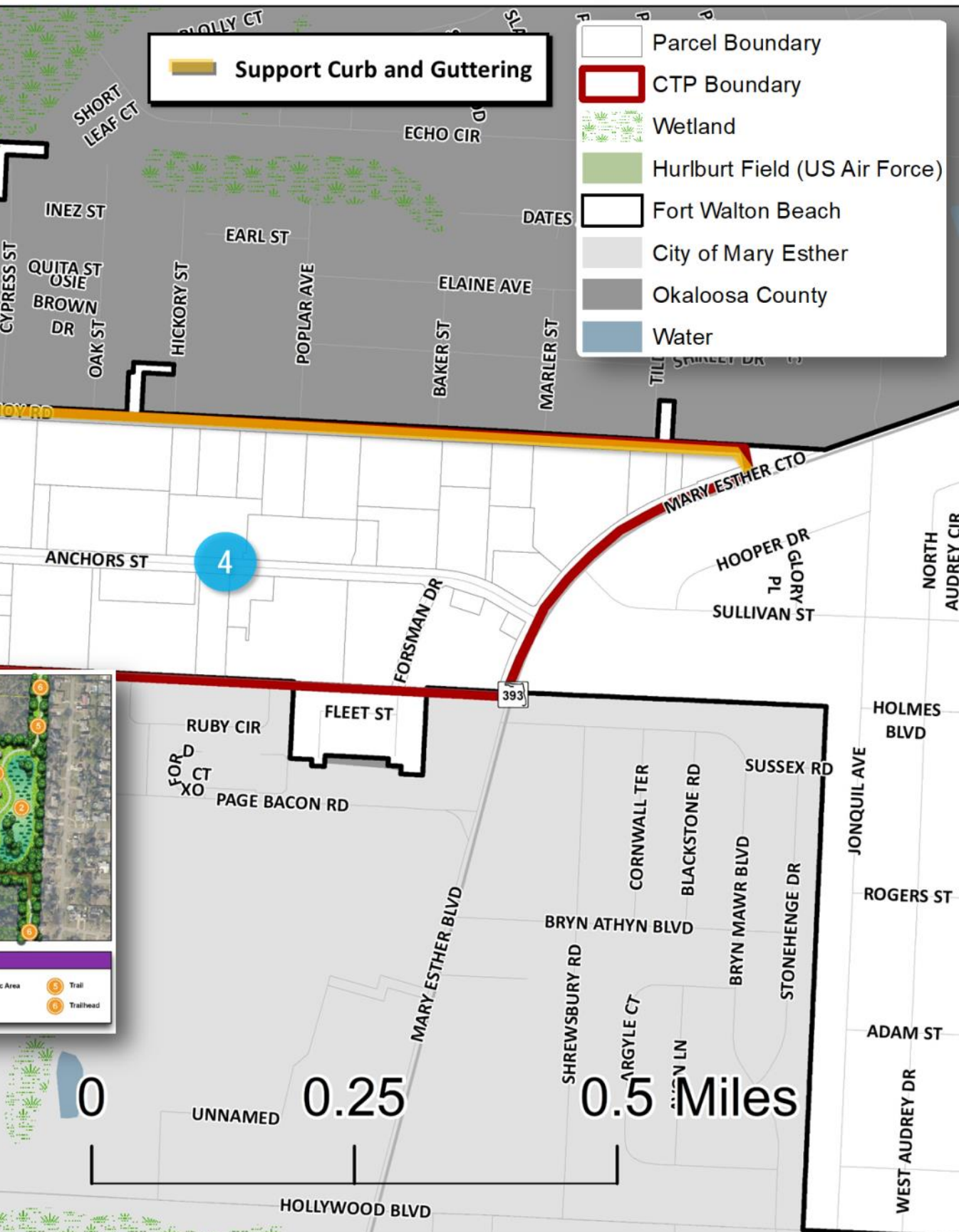
LEGEND

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Elevated Boardwalk | 3 Open Space / Picnic Area | 5 Trail |
| 2 Wetlands | 4 Gazebo | 6 Trailhead |

Figure 4-15: Conceptual Stormwater Pond



Map 4-4: Infrastructure & Technology Improvements



4.7 Branding & Identity

the existing brand and identity of the CTP into a modern employment center and economic generator to compete regionally and implementing the following strategies (Figures 4-16 and 4-17):

1. Rebrand the Fort Walton Beach Commerce and Technology Park to Design & Innovation District.
2. Create a new logo, identity package, and website.
3. Establish a uniform theme for public signs, lighting, furniture, and other elements that are part of a streetscape (Section 4-4), including design, materials, and colors, as exemplified in Figure 4-17. A uniform theme creates a clean and modern look and feel for the park adding to the draw of the reimagined area.
4. Redesign and construct gateway elements and/or signage at the following key locations:
 - Mary Esther Cut Off and Anchors Street
 - Southeast corner of the CTP along Hollywood Boulevard
 - Hill Avenue and Lovejoy Road
 - Hill Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard
 - Hill Avenue and Anchors Street
 - Existing water tower
5. Develop a business directory wayfinding signage system at strategic locations along major arterial roadways, such as:
 - Lovejoy Road
 - Anchor Street
 - Hollywood Boulevard
 - Ready Avenue
 - Hill Avenue



Figure 4-16: New Logo and Identity Package



(Source: Landscape Forms)

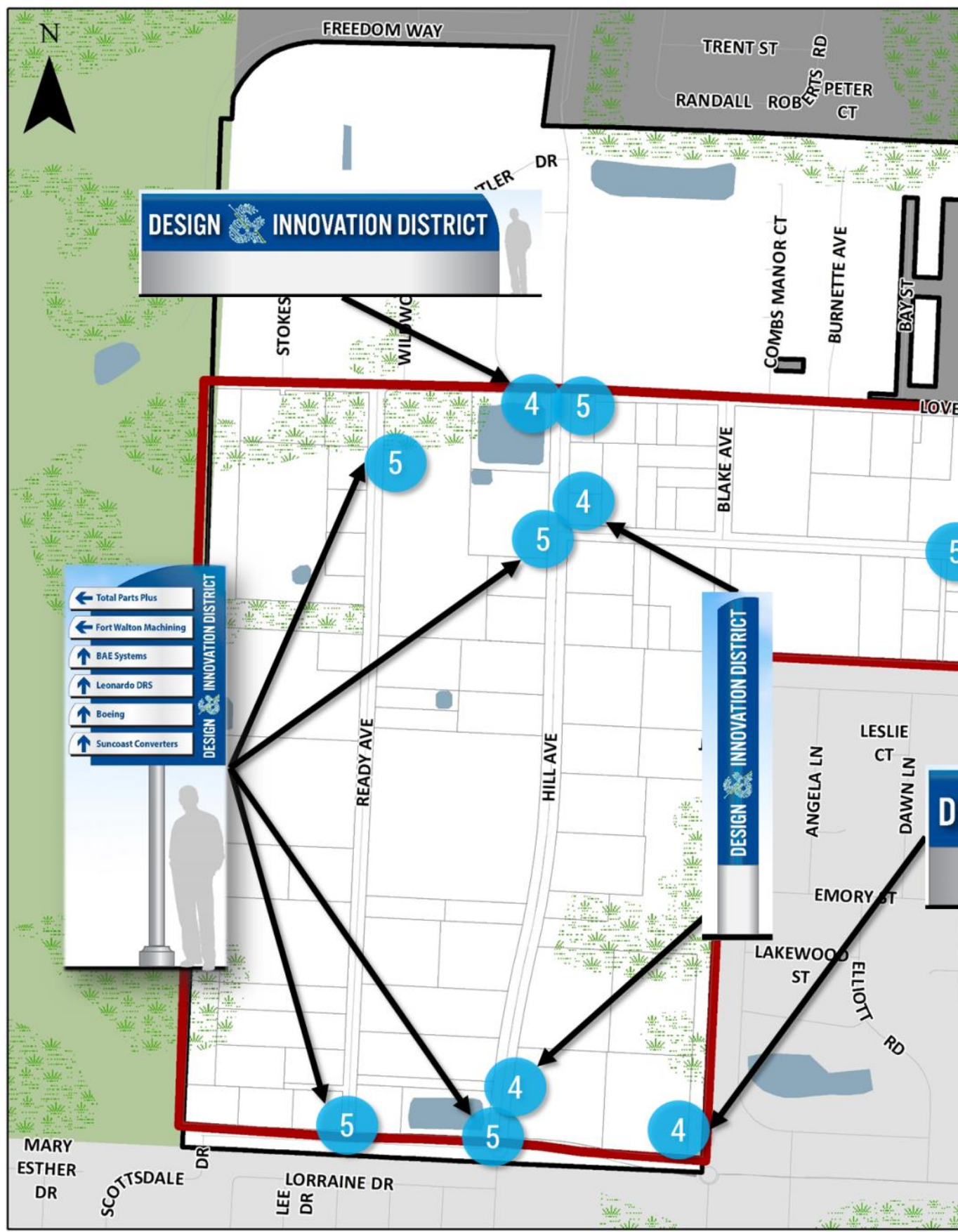


(Source: Integrated Paving Concepts)

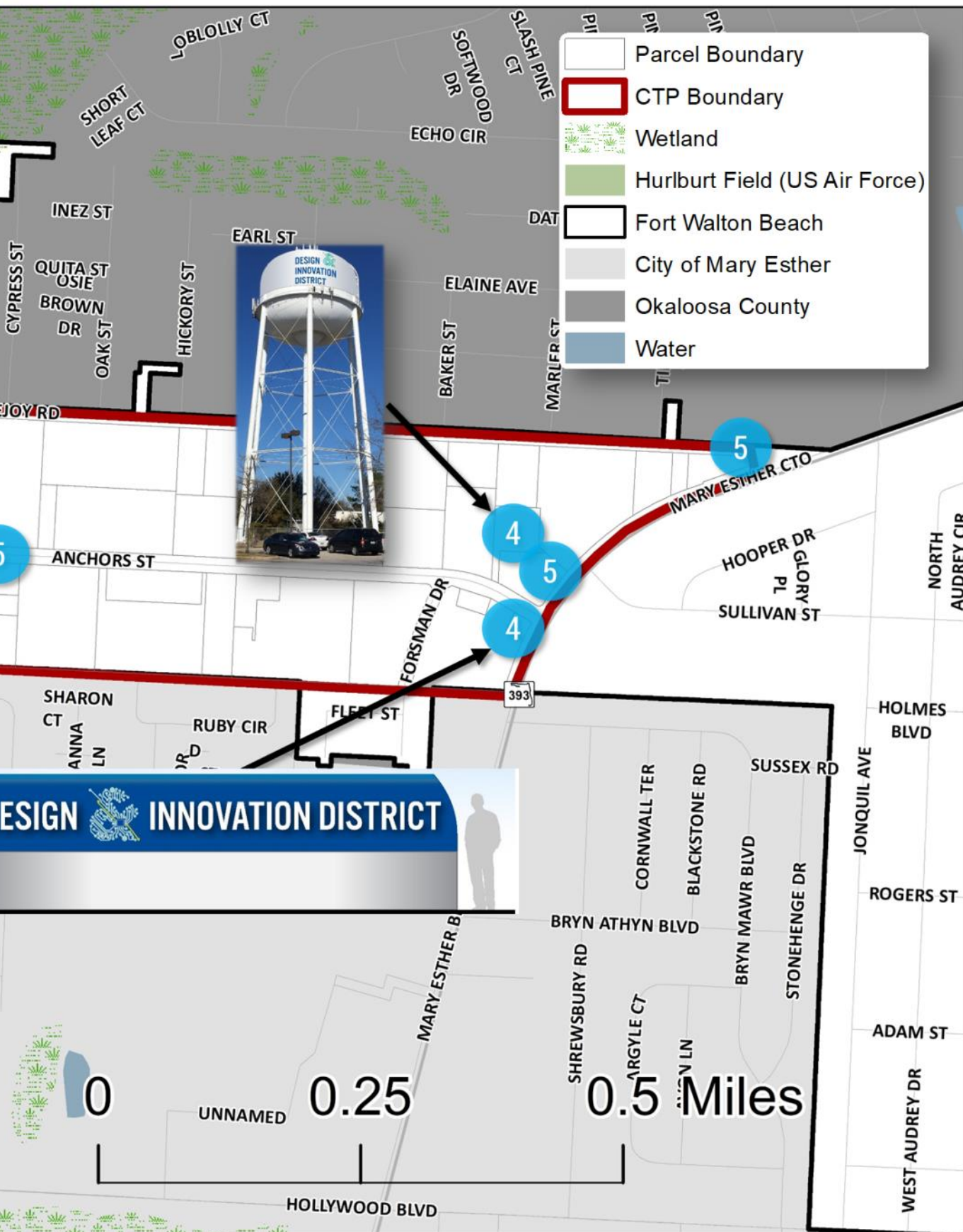


(Source: Bomanite)

Figure 4-17: Examples of Streetscape Ele-



Map 4-5: Branding & Identity



4.8 Master Plan Concept

The Master Plan Concept is an graphic depicting the potential mid-term and long-term growth and development envisioned as a result of implementing the CTP Master Plan. Although illustrative in nature, the Master Plan Concept depicts development of the type and scale identified in the Market Analysis (Chapter 3). This plan provides a visual representation of the new development potential that exists through new construction on vacant properties or redevelopment of underused sites.

4.8.1 Development Program

The development program including the Master Plan Concept is listed in **Table 4-1**, and each site is identified in **Map 4-6**. The specific program includes a mix of light commercial, industrial, and office/flex uses consistent with existing uses and identified market demand. The specific mix of uses for planning purposes only, and, ultimately, the market will drive which uses develop first.

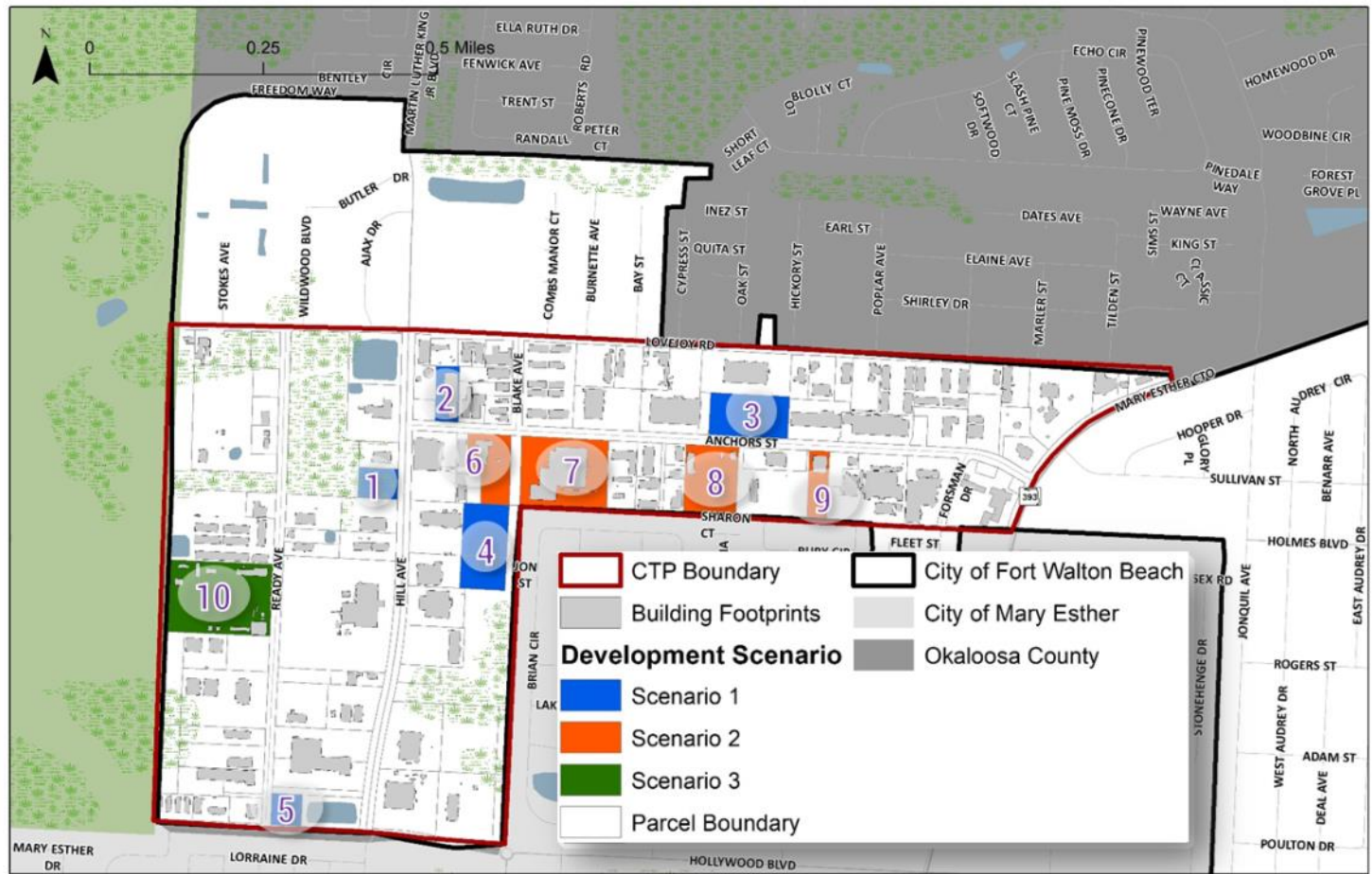
As shown in **Table 4-1**, the conceptual development program includes 670,930 square feet of new and renovated spaces. If this program comes to fruition as summarized, it would represent a 9% increase in overall new square feet (non-renovation), which would represent significant new growth and employment activity potential.

The full Master Plan Concept is **Figure 4-18**.

For each site with new private development, parking was provided utilizing the current zoning standards.

Site #	Development Type	Square Footage	Uses
1	New	10,000	Light Commercial
2	Renovation	28,484	Office - Flex Space
3	New	100,000	Office – Flex Space
4	New	90,000	General Industrial
5	New	10,000	Light Commercial
6	Redevelopment	90,000	General Industrial
7	Renovation	111,869	General Industrial
8	Redevelopment	126,000	Office – Flex Space
9	Renovation	24,941	Office – Flex Space
10	Redevelopment	79,636	Office – Flex Space
Total	-	670,930	-

Table: 4-1: Development Program Sites



Map 4-6: Development Scenario Sites

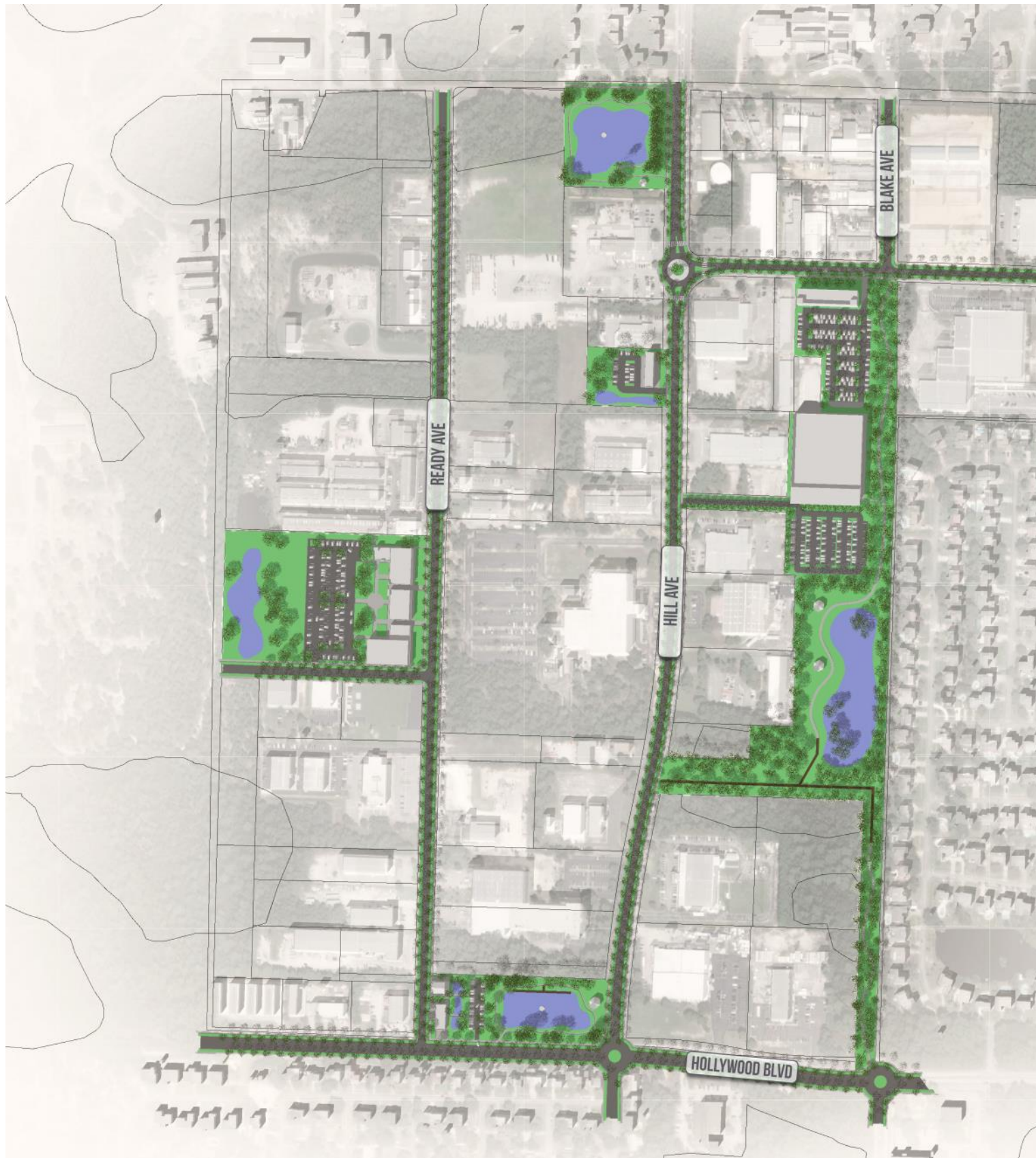


Figure: 4-18: Master Plan Concept



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IMPLEMENTATION



05

5.0 Implementation Plan

This section of the report includes a comprehensive list of plan recommendations and potential costs associated with implementing the CTP Master Plan (Master Plan). Specifically, the following topic areas are covered:

- 5.1 Projects and Programs** includes a prioritized summary of capital projects identified in the Master Plan and their potential costs. In addition to capital costs, planning efforts and other non-capital expenditures (e.g., incentive programs) are summarized.
- 5.2 Organization and Administration** includes a summary of recommended organizational development to ensure adequate capacity to focus on implementation and address day-to-day challenges related to CTP operations.
- 5.3 Funding & Financing Sources and Opportunities** includes a listing of potential funding and financing sources that could be tapped for advancing implementation of the Master Plan. These include federal, state, and local sources.
- 5.4 Conclusion – Getting Started** includes a brief summary of recommended first steps to getting the implementation process underway.

5.1 Projects and Programs

As discussed in more detail throughout this document, several recommended projects, programs, and initiatives have been identified through the planning process. This section includes a cost summary of both capital and non-capital projects and programs that together form the Master Plan framework.

The first summary table, Capital Plan (Table 5-1), is organized by the major plan elements (Building Use, Land Use & Urban Design, Transportation Connectivity and Walkability, Infrastructure and Technology, and Branding and Identity) and includes potential costs in the short (1–5 years), mid (6–15 years), and long terms (16+ years). The second summary, Non-Capital Plan (Table 5-2), is organized into Operations & Studies and Grants & Programs. Similar to how the Capital Plan is structured, the Non-Capital Plan includes short-, mid-, and long-term timeframes.

5.1.1 Plan Summary Tables

Considering the available funding and prioritization of projects, the following represents the phasing for recommended projects and programs with brief descriptions. Tables 5-1 and 5-2 summarize the prioritization and estimated costs.

Short Term (1–5 Years)

Capital Projects

- **North Stormwater Park** – Intended to create functional passive recreation space surrounding the north stormwater retention area along Ready Avenue and Lovejoy Road. The park will include a walking trail, boardwalk, gazebo structure, and open space.
- **Decorative Fencing along CTP Boundaries** – Incorporating a decorative fence along the boundaries of the CTP to define the area as separate from surrounding uses and enhance the aesthetics of the area.
- **Anchors Street Improvements** – Includes transformation of Anchors Street into a complete street, including enhanced sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping, and pedestrian crossings.
- **Improvement of Existing Intersections** – Update to existing intersections with enhanced pedestrian crossings and, if appropriate, signal optimization, which will help reduce travel times.
- **Complete Sidewalks along Blake Avenue and Forsman Drive** – Connect and finish sidewalk network along Blake Avenue and Forsman Drive, providing for increased pedestrian mobility and safety.
- **Enhanced Transit Stops** – Upgrade existing transit stops for ADA compliance, feature shelters with seating and Wi-Fi access.
- **Rebranding of CTP** – Create a refreshed name for the park and a new logo that can then be deployed in multiple locations, including existing water tower and newly-designed gateway elements and on directional signage at strategic points within the CTP.

Non-Capital Projects

- **Staff and Operating Expenses**
- **Land Development Code Update** – Per recommendations in Chapter 4
- **Marketing, Branding, and Communication** – Update website, create e-blast templates and other marketing materials
- **Santa Rosa Mall Connection Study** – Complete a feasibility study that creates a pedestrian connection to the Santa Rosa Mall redevelopment site
- **Commercial Signage and Façade Programs** – For areas that are not a major focus for commercial redevelopment but that can be enhanced with exterior signage, façade and structural improvements
- **Public Art** – Provide funding for public art pieces and events
- **Economic Development** – Provide funding for economic development incentives
- **Demolition and Cleanup Program**

Mid Term (6–15 Years)

Capital Projects

- **North Stormwater Park** – Continued phased design and construction of improvements at the North Stormwater Park.
- **South Stormwater Park** – Intended to create functional passive recreation space surrounding the south stormwater retention area along Ready Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard; includes walking trail, boardwalk, gazebo, open space.
- **Decorative Fencing along CTP Boundaries** – Incorporating a decorative fence along the boundaries of the CTP will define the area as separate from surrounding uses and enhance the aesthetics of the area.
- **Hill Avenue Improvements** – Transform Hill Avenue into a complete street, including enhanced sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping, and pedestrian crossings.
- **Improvement of Existing Intersections** – Update existing intersections to include enhanced pedestrian crossings and improved signal timing and synchronization which reduces travel times.
- **Support Redesign of Hollywood Boulevard Roundabouts**
- **Support Curb and Gutter along Hollywood Boulevard**
- **Area-wide Wi-Fi** – In both the North and South Stormwater Parks.
- **Rebranding of CTP** – Includes redesigning and constructing new gateway elements and placement of directional signage at strategic points within the CTP.

Non-Capital Projects

- **Staff and Operating Expenses**
- **Update Land Development Code** – Per recommendations stated in Chapter 4.
- **Commercial Signage and Façade Programs** – for areas that are not a major focus for commercial redevelopment but that can be enhanced with exterior signage, façade and structural improvements.
- **Bikeway Study** – Produce a report that studies the feasibility of creating a bikeway that connects the CTP to Downtown Fort Walton Beach.
- **Stormwater Master Plan Update**
- **Public Art** – Provide funding for public art pieces and events.
- **Economic Development** – Provide funding for economic development incentives.
- **Demolition and Cleanup Program**

Long Term (16+ Years)

Capital Projects

- **South Stormwater Park** – Continued phased design and construction of improvements at South Stormwater Park.
- **Central Stormwater Park** – Intended to create functional passive recreation space and a stormwater retention area along Ready Avenue; will include a walking trail, boardwalk, gazebo structure, stormwater retention pond, and open space.

- **Ready Avenue Improvements** – Transform Ready Avenue into a complete street, including enhanced sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping, and pedestrian crossings.
- **Construct a Roundabout** – At the existing intersection of Hill Avenue and Anchors Street.
- **Support Upgrading Curb and Gutter along Lovejoy Road.**
- **Area-wide Wi-Fi** – Within Central Stormwater Park.

Non-Capital Projects

- **Staff and Operating Expenses**
- **Commercial Signage and Façade Programs** – For areas that are not a major focus for commercial redevelopment but that can be enhanced with exterior signage, façade and structural improvements.
- **Public Art** – Provide funding for public art pieces and events.
- **Economic Development** – Provide funding for economic development incentives.
- **Demolition and Cleanup Program**

Figures 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3 represent a breakdown of capital and non-capital projects for the short-, mid-, and long-term time frames and show the overall cost of the projects within the time period. Tables 5-1 and 5-2 break down each project individually based on phasing and prioritization; capital and non-capital funding tables are broken down by project type, which is detailed in Chapter 4.

5.2 Organization and Partnerships

5.2.1 Government Agencies

Many of the items listed in the Chapter 4 framework will require coordination among multiple city departments and outside agencies. Examples of interagency coordination include working with Okaloosa County on potential improvements within its right-of-way (e.g., Hollywood Boulevard, Lovejoy Road) and the City of Mary Esther for proposed changes to the development pattern in the area, including redevelopment of the Santa Rosa Mall. Other agencies with which to coordinate with include EC Rider for improved transit stops and service and the Florida Department of Transportation for improvements along State facilities, including Mary Esther Boulevard (SR 393).

5.2.2 Local Agencies

In addition to government agencies, the City may have opportunities to partner with local entities such as private firms and non-profit organizations to realize some of its objectives. Examples include partnering with Northwest Florida State College, the University of West Florida, and/or the HSU Educational Foundation for training and educational initiatives that can help better position the CTP for future growth and development. Other partner agencies include the Okaloosa Economic Development Council (EDC), which will be integral to business recruiting and marketing.

5.2.3 Internal Organization

In addition to the coordination and collaboration noted above, it will be important for tenants and property owners within the park to become better organized to coordinate efforts to attract new investment and/or maintain and enhance the aesthetics of the CTP.

Beginning in 2016, the City organized an *ad hoc* Stakeholder Committee of property owners, tenants, and other interested parties to help identify opportunities to improve the park. It is recommended that this organization be more formally organized as either a business association or a Business Improvement District, which, if formed, would allow for a special assessment to be levied to fund capital improvements and marketing and special events and to provide ongoing clean/safe services to the area. The formation of a Business Improvement District would improve visibility of the park while providing many of the services and amenities that more- modern commerce parks provide through a master developer or on-site management.

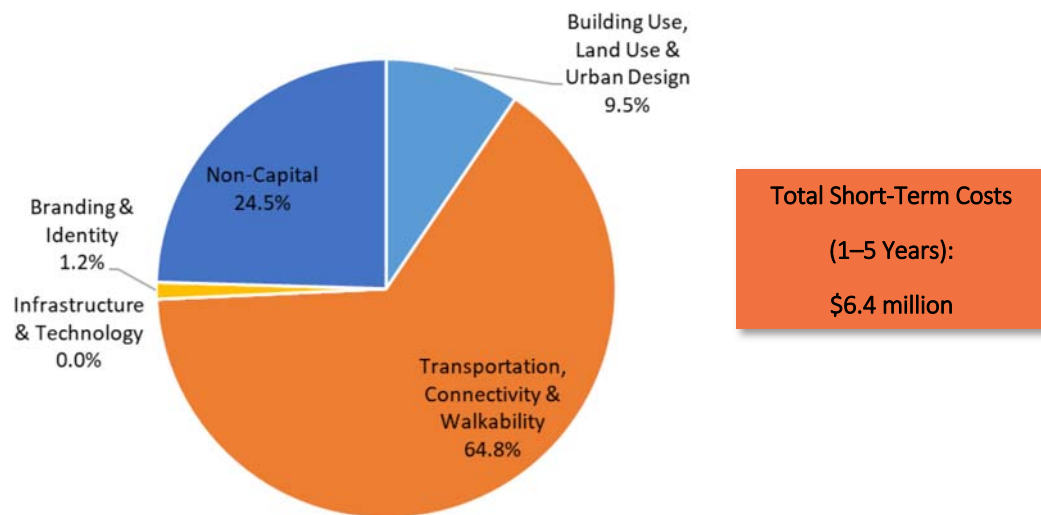


Figure 5-1: Short-term Costs by Project Type

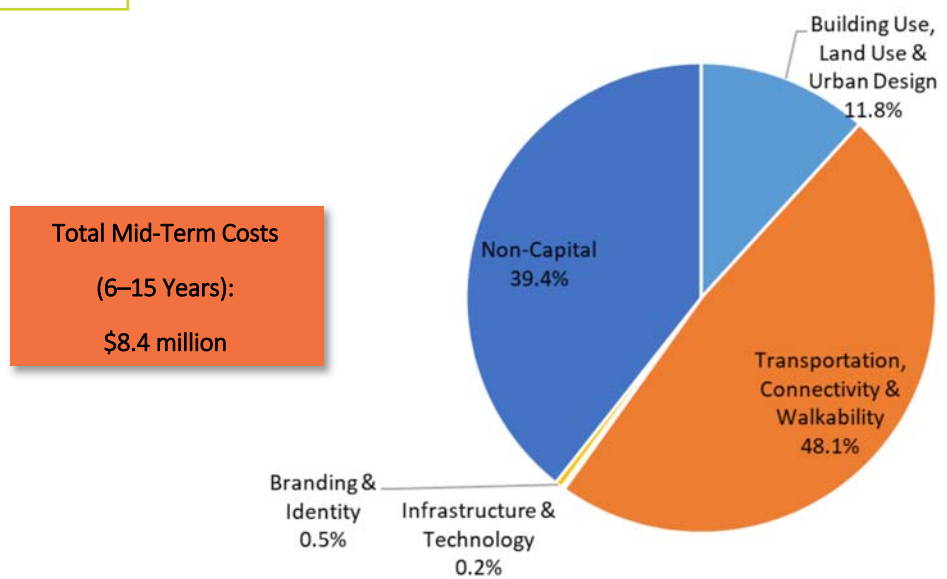


Figure 5-2: Mid-term Costs by Project Type

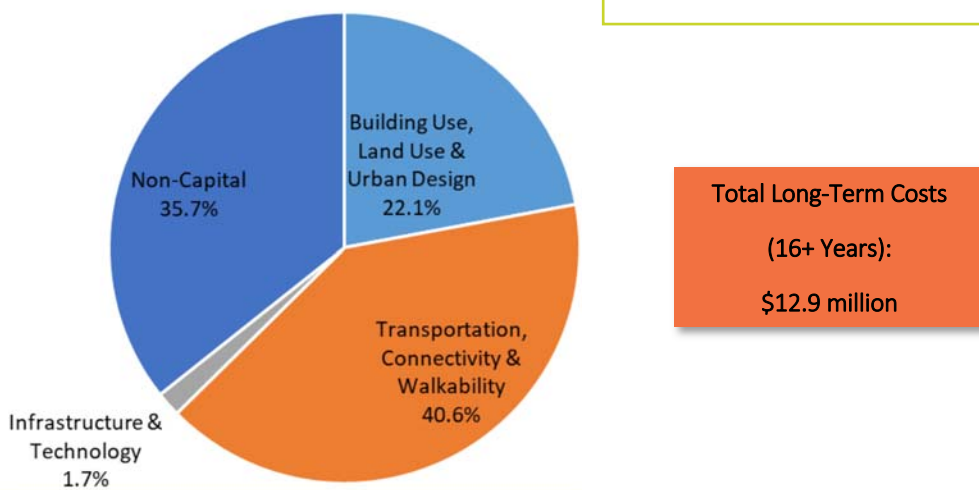


Figure 5-3: Long-term Costs by Project Type

Table 5-1: Capital Expenditures

Building Use, Land Use & Urban Design				
Project	Total	Short-Term (1–5 Years)	Mid-Term (6–15 Years)	Long-Term (16+ Years)
North Stormwater Park	\$573,776	\$266,873	\$306,904	\$0
South Stormwater Park	\$893,055	\$0	\$288,893	\$604,162
Central Stormwater Park/Conservation Area	\$2,247,168	\$0	\$0	\$2,247,168
Decorative Fencing along CTP Boundaries	\$736,702	\$342,652	\$394,050	\$0
Total	\$4,450,701.97	\$609,525.03	\$989,846.44	\$2,851,330.50
Transportation, Connectivity & Walkability				
Project	Total	Short-Term (1–5 Years)	Mid-Term (6–15 Years)	Long-Term (16+ Years)
Complete Street on Anchors St	\$3,634,091	\$3,634,091	\$0	\$0
Complete Street on Hill Ave	\$3,362,879	\$0	\$3,362,879	\$0
Complete Street on Ready Ave	\$3,746,364	\$0	\$0	\$3,746,364
Improve Existing Intersections	\$959,670	\$446,358	\$513,312	\$0
Support Redesign of Hollywood Blvd Roundabouts	\$367,500	\$0	\$172,500	\$195,000
Roundabout on Hill Ave and Anchors St	\$1,300,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,300,000
Complete Sidewalks along Blake Ave	\$32,202	\$32,202	\$0	\$0
Complete Sidewalks along Forsman Dr	\$28,261	\$28,261	\$0	\$0
Enhance Transit Stops	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$0	\$0
Total	\$13,446,967	\$4,156,912	\$4,048,691	\$5,241,364
Infrastructure & Technology				
Project	Total	Short-Term (1–5 Years)	Mid-Term (6–15 Years)	Long-Term (16+ Years)
Support Curb and Gutter along Lovejoy Rd	\$199,409	\$0	\$0	\$199,409
Support Curb and Gutter along Hollywood Blvd	\$13,650	\$0	\$13,650	\$0
Area-wide Wi-Fi at Parks and Bus Shelters	\$26,059	\$100	\$4,901	\$21,059
Total	\$239,117	\$100	\$18,550	\$220,467
Branding & Identity				
Project	Total	Short-Term (1–5 Years)	Mid-Term (6–15 Years)	Long-Term (16+ Years)
Repaint Existing Water Tower	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
Redesign and Construct Gateway Elements	\$79,500	\$45,000	\$34,500	\$0
Place Directional Signage at Key Locations	\$29,050	\$21,000	\$8,050	\$0
Total	\$118,550	\$76,000	\$42,550	\$0
Overall Capital Cost Total	\$18,255,336	\$4,842,537	\$5,099,637	\$8,313,161
Overall Non-Capital Cost Total	\$9,500,000	\$1,575,000	\$3,312,500	\$4,612,500
Grand Total	\$27,755,336	\$6,417,537	\$8,412,137	\$12,925,661

Table 5-2: Non-Capital Expenditures

Non-Capital Expenditures (Studies, Plans, Other)				
Operations & Studies				
Project	Total	Short-Term (1–5 Years)	Mid-Term (6–15 Years)	Long-Term (16+ Years)
Staff and Operating (salaries, benefits, rent, etc.)	\$4,500,000	\$625,000	\$1,437,500	\$2,437,500
Land Development Code Updates	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$0
Bikeway Study	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$0
Stormwater Master Plan Update	\$200,000	\$0	\$200,000	\$0
Marketing, Branding and Communication Strategies	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$0
Santa Rosa Mall Connection Study	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0
Grants & Programs				
Project	Total	Short Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-15 Years)	Long Term (16+ Years)
Commercial Signage Program	\$450,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	\$225,000
Commercial Façade Program	\$1,500,000	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$750,000
Public Art	\$450,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	\$225,000
Economic Development	\$750,000	\$125,000	\$250,000	\$375,000
Demolition and Cleanup Program	\$1,350,000	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$600,000
Totals	\$9,500,000	\$1,575,000	\$3,312,500	\$4,612,500

5.3 Funding & Financing Sources & Opportunities

Whereas many possible funding and financing sources and opportunities are available, below is a summarized list of those most pertinent to the CTP. The funding sources and opportunities may range from federally-available national programs to statewide programs specific to Florida and local options that rely on the County or City for funding and financing opportunities. Given the population densities, character of surrounding counties, and the non-military and non-tourism-based activity in the county and surrounding counties, as well as the focus of some activity for the CTP, it may be possible that application can be made for resources available for both rural and urban economic development initiatives at the federal and State levels. Also, the recent impact of Hurricane Michael could open additional funding related to recovery. More information about each source listed is in **Appendix B**.

5.3.1 Federal Resources

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** – FEMA has established the National Disaster Recover Framework (NDRF) to facilitate coordination among various agencies and, as such, established six Recovery Support Functions (RSF). Of these, three directly relate to existing industries and targeted industries within the CTP (Economic, Infrastructure Systems, and Natural and Cultural Resources).

- **Economic Development Administration (EDA)** – The EDA’s Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) programs provide communities and regions with resources to address a variety of economic concerns. Example projects include the creation and retention of jobs, increased private investment, advancement of innovation, increased manufacturing capabilities, workforce development, and support of economic growth and resiliency.
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** - USDA’S Rural Development mission area provides financial resources and support for rural communities, residents, and businesses. Some programs offered include Infrastructure Investment, Rural Development Loan and Grant Assistance, Rural Development Broadband Program, and Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Program. Fort Walton Beach is located in an eligible USDA-designated rural area, allowing the use of Rural Development programs.
- **Small Business Administration (SBA)** - The SBA provides technical assistance with business plans, marketing, training, and other components necessary to enhance economic activity. In addition to technical support, it also provides a wide range of loan programs, including providing working capital through microloans under \$50,000 up to \$5 million.

5.3.2 State Resources

- **Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. (TGC)** – Formed as a result of the 2010 Horizon Deep Water oil spill, TGC is a non-profit corporation set up to disperse 75% of all funds recovered as a result of the incident to the eight northwest Florida counties affected—Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla. To receive funding through TGC, an applicant must submit a proposal for either existing or proposed projects, and awardees may include a person, organization, or local government.
- **Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund (QTI)** – This program allows companies that create high-wage jobs in targeted high-value-added industries to receive an incentive based on the amount of full-time equivalent jobs created. The incentive includes refunds on corporate income, sales, ad valorem, intangible personal property, insurance premium, and certain other taxes. The refund varies based on geography, wages paid, and designated industry.
- **Capital Investment Tax Credit (CITC)** – The CITC attracts and grows capital-intensive industries in Florida and provides an annual credit for up to 20 years against the corporate income tax, with a requirement of creating a minimum of 100 jobs and investing at least \$25 million in eligible capital costs. These costs include all expenses incurred in the acquisition, construction, installation, and equipping of a project from the beginning of construction to the commencement of operations.
- **Quick Response Training (QRT)** – QRT is an employer-driven training program designed to assist new value-added businesses and provide existing businesses with the necessary training for any expansion. The program is reimbursable and includes items such as instructor and trainer wages, curriculum development, and textbooks and materials.
- **Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWT)** – IWT provides the opportunity for currently-employed workers to be trained to keep the workforce competitive. The program is available to all Florida businesses in operation for at least one year prior to application and requires that existing employees acquire skills training and upgrades.
- **Brownfields** - Florida’s Brownfields program offers incentives to businesses located within a brownfield site that is a State- designated area of environmental contamination from previous uses and activities. Businesses that clean up and redevelop on an existing brownfield may receive financial incentives, regulatory benefits, technical assistance, and liability protection. Other bonuses exist within the program that provide \$2,500 per job created, voluntary cleanup tax credits, low-interest loans for assessment and cleanup, expedited permitting, and cleanup liability protection, among others.
- **Special Opportunity Incentives** – The Rural Community Development Revolving Loan and Rural Infrastructure Fund is available to meet special needs that may exist in rural areas by providing increased incentive awards and lower wage qualification thresholds. The State also offers similar incentives to businesses locating in urban cores that are experiencing conditions that affect the economic viability of the community and hamper the self-sufficiency of residents.

- **Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)** – The DEO combines economic development initiatives, workforce support, and training and community development efforts to boost job creation statewide. Several State and federal programs administered by the DEO help support local businesses, engage job seekers, and enhance communities. Examples of programs administered by the DEO include the Weatherization Assistance Program, Community Development Block Grants, Small Cities Community Development Block Grants, and the Disaster Recovery Initiative.
- **University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (UF/IFAS)** – This Federal/State/County partnership provides research and development for Florida’s agriculture, natural resources, and related food industries and develops knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences.

5.3.3 Local Resources

- **Research & Development Resource Pooling** – By creating a collaboration among national/international business interests within the CTP, a “blue-ribbon” committee can pool resources in a cost-efficient manner, further incentivizing local businesses.
- **Creative Non-government Funding for Marketing or Recruitment Effort and Invest in the CTP** – Two examples of non-governmental funding mechanisms are creating an economic development capital fund that shares risk by a composite of investors and using crowdfunding for various projects and programs.
- **Miscellaneous Local Incentives** – Several alternative funding mechanisms are available to the City, including but not limited to tax abatement, privately-funded infrastructure, privately-funded amenities, creation of a revolving loan based on local resources, Community Development Block Grant funds, assistance with property acquisition, and incentivized zoning to increase density while enhancing design.

5.4 Conclusion – Getting Started

As described throughout this plan document, the effort and investment needed to ensure successful implementation of the CTP Master Plan is substantial, and, given the City’s commitment to other major initiatives (e.g., implementation of the Downtown Master Plan) and the limited amount of resources (financial and human capital) available, it may be daunting to identify the most appropriate place to start. This section provides suggested steps to begin Plan implementation.

- **Adopt the plan as guidance** – By adopting the Plan, the City Council will be setting a vision through which staff can begin to act. The approved Plan will become a framework for City decision making on topics such as transportation/infrastructure improvements, land development code updates, and development of incentive programs.
- **Formalize as an organization** – It is recommended that the City use the existing *ad hoc* Stakeholder Committee to share information about the Plan once adopted and to coordinate capital investment plans moving forward. Additionally, the City should encourage this committee to more formally organize to allow for a single point of contact between the City and CTP tenants and property owners.
- **Seek small victories** – Several small projects/initiatives in the Plan can be undertaken in the short term that will help create momentum for development/redevelopment in the CTP. These may include branding updates, new signage (or a freshly-painted water tower), or litter cleanup in and around stormwater ponds, roads, and private property.
- **Develop marketing materials** – Because it is not operated by a single developer/operator, the CTP struggles to speak with a single voice to potential tenants from around the region and country. An effort should be made to create branded marketing materials that highlight existing tenants, growth opportunities, and the results/recommendations of the Master Plan.
- **Designate staff** – The City should hire a full-time Redevelopment Manager to coordinate economic development initiatives in the CRA and CTP. This person would be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the CRA Master Plan and the CTP Master Plan and coordinating with the necessary agencies and entities as needed.
- **Pursue a Triumph grant** – The Triumph Fund offers an important opportunity for the City to acquire resources to accelerate economic activity in the CTP. Working closely with partner agencies (Okaloosa County, Okaloosa EDC, and others), the City should begin to identify key projects for inclusion in a grant application.



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