



# CRA Master Plan Update

SEBRING • FLORIDA



# CRA Master Plan Update for the City of Sebring, Florida

Prepared for:

*The City of Sebring  
Community Redevelopment Agency*

Prepared by:

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February, 2004

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Community and Regional Planning  
Environmental Planning  
Landscape Architecture  
Land Planning  
Urban Design

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## *Section I. Introduction*

### *INTRODUCTION*

The City of Sebring established a Community Redevelopment District for the Historic Downtown in 1981. Since that time tremendous strides have been made toward improving the appearance and economic vitality of the Downtown. Now more than twenty years later, community leaders have had the foresight to undertake an effort to update the previous Redevelopment Plan. The objective now is to devise a Plan that will provide a recommended course of action for the City to position itself favorably in the competitive market of the regional economy. As part of the process the City addressed the needs of areas in economic decline outside the boundaries of the original redevelopment area. Building on successes of the past the Redevelopment Agency encouraged the City Council to initiate a course of action to similarly transform the condition of surrounding areas using tools provided to local governments through Chapter 163 Part III of the Florida Statutes: “The Community Redevelopment Act”. Having expanded the boundaries of the CRA, the next step was preparing this document containing the CRA Master Plan Update.

## *Section II. Inventory*

The Inventory Summary Report is intended to document the existing conditions in the Sebring Community Redevelopment Area and new expansion areas. The report also establishes the foundation for recommendations to be made in the forthcoming Plan document. This inventory pertains to both physical conditions and programs that will affect the future of Sebring's downtown and the surrounding community.

### ***PROJECT LOCATION***

The project study area is the Sebring Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) which contains the downtown commercial area and immediately adjacent neighborhoods. This report will focus on the CRA, but will also mention regional assets.

Sebring is located in the middle of the Florida peninsula at a latitude south of Tampa Bay and north of Lake Okeechobee. Downtown Sebring is situated on a hilltop overlooking Lake Jackson, a 3,000 acre lake formed as a sinkhole when the underlying limestone eroded and collapsed. Lake Jackson is one of many similar lakes in peninsular Florida which run in a narrow north-south band through the county. This is part of the Lake Wales Ridge ecosystem which is essentially an enormous ancient sand dune rising up to 300 feet above sea level which bisects Highlands County and extends north through eastern Polk County to parts of Orange and Lake Counties.



Scientists at the Archbold Experimental Station estimate that up to 85 percent of this habitat has been converted to agricultural use or urban development.

Highlands County falls into USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 9a and 9b with average annual low temperatures ranging between 20 and 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Sebring, situated in the northern half of the county, is susceptible to the lower temperature range which restricts the growth of tropical plant species common in coastal cities at this latitude. Despite periodic freezes, the citrus industry thrives in Highlands County and bitterly cold winter days are rare – giving way to mild, sunny days during the winter months making the region attractive to northern “snowbirds” and retirees seeking an affordable lifestyle. The success of Orlando, also a central Florida city, proves that development potential is not necessarily dependant upon proximity to the beach.

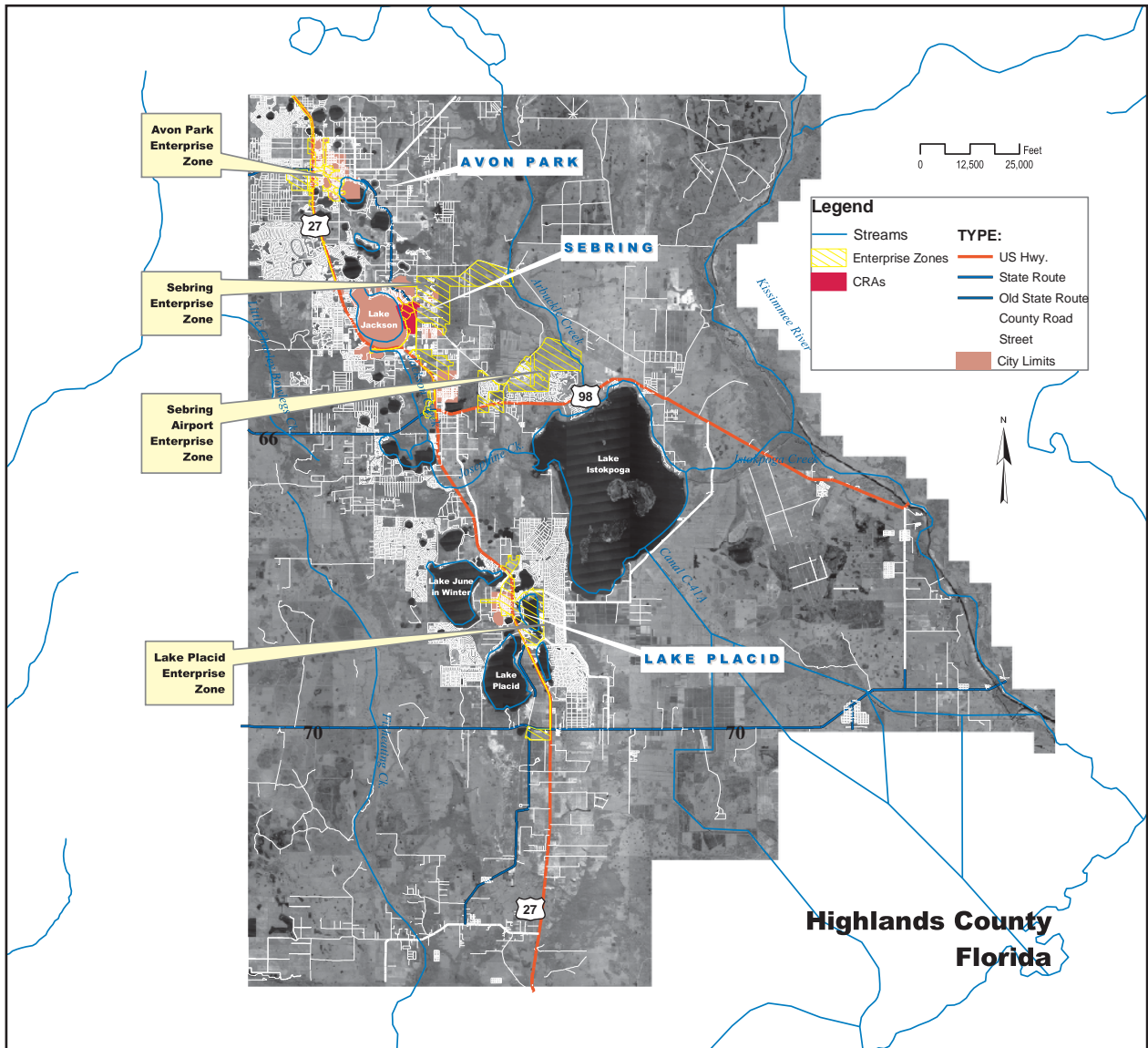
## THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The original CRA district was defined and adopted in 1983. It encompasses the downtown circle extending to the lake front; includes the blocks on either side of South Commerce Street to Highlands Ave.; extends north to Eucalyptus Street encompassing Park, Maple, Pomegranate, N. Ridgewood, Grapefruit and Lemon



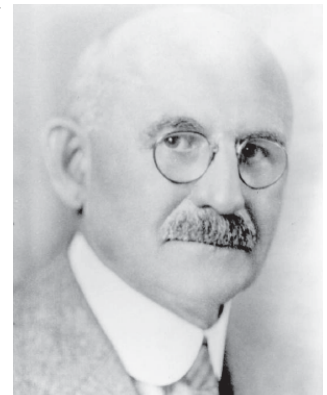
*An early panoramic view of Sebring's Circle Park.*

Avenues; and jumps across the rail line to include much of the Washington Heights neighborhood. As part of the current planning process, this CRA boundary was expanded in three areas with the intent of “squaring off” the boundary and to include nearby industrial uses and deteriorated residential areas in need of redevelopment. These areas are identified on the following map. The total size of the newly expanded CRA is approximately 650 acres which includes streets and rights-of-way.

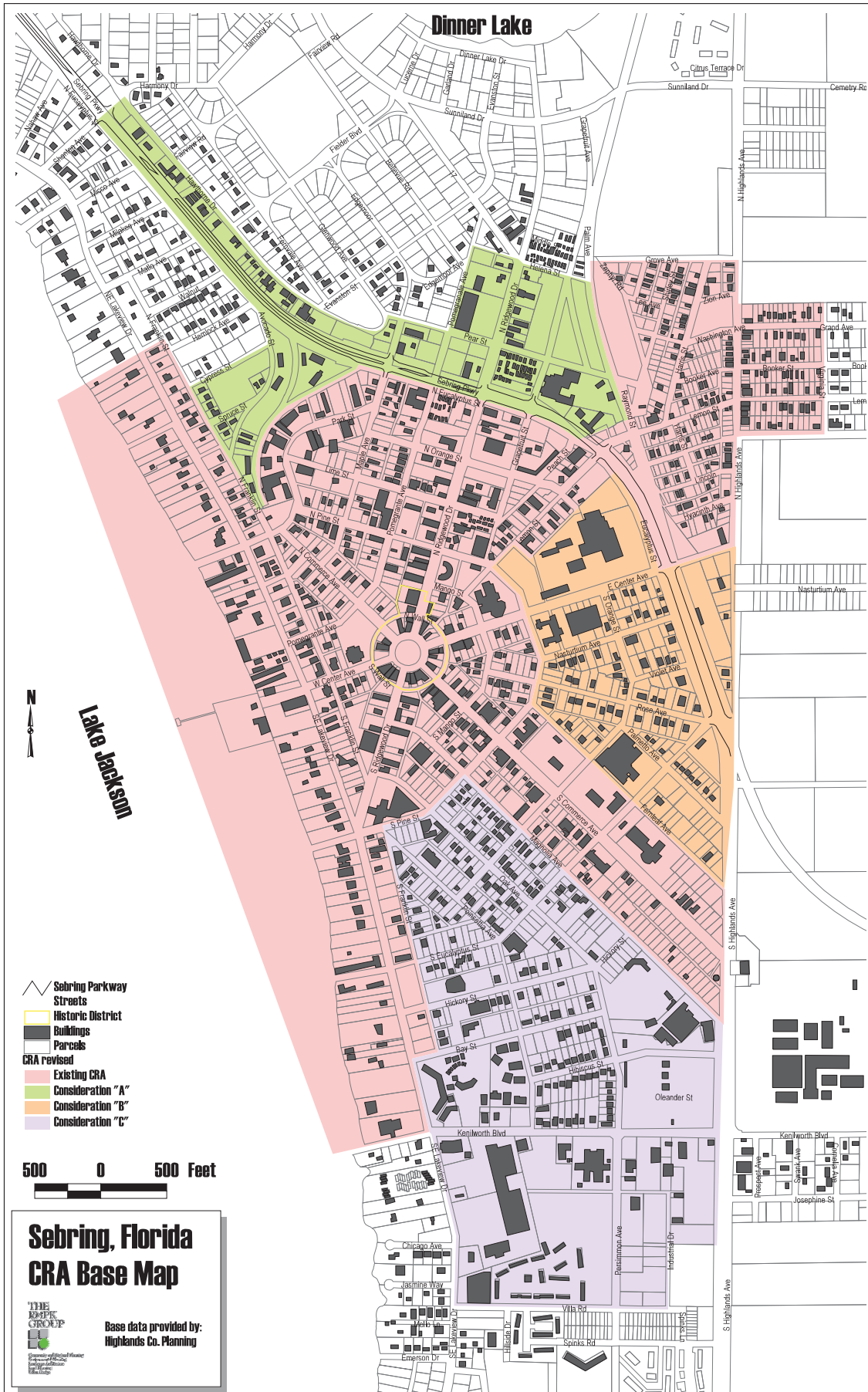


## CONTEXT

The City of Sebring Florida was founded in 1911 by George E. Sebring with assistance from his son Orval. This is the second town by that name which Mr. Sebring founded – the first being Sebring, Ohio located approximately eighty miles west of Pittsburgh and founded in 1898 by George and his brothers Oliver, Ellsworth, Frederick, and William as a town specializing in the manufacture of pottery.



*G. E. Sebring*





## POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

### POPULATION GROWTH

The table below summarizes U.S. Census Bureau information. It shows that since 2000, the City of Sebring has grown in population at a rate greater than Highlands County and the state as a whole.

	1990	Growth from 1990 to 2000(%)	2000	2002	Growth from 2000 to 2002(%)
City of Sebring	8,900	8.6	9,667	10,200	5.5
Highlands County	68,432	27.7	87,366	89,952	3.0
State of Florida	12,937,926	23.5	15,982,378	16,713,149	4.6

The median age in Highlands County is the fifth highest in the State of Florida. Highlands County has a median age of 50, while that of the State is only 38.7 years of age.

Highlands County ranked 53rd (out of 67) in the State with a median household income of \$26,006. This is \$6,871 lower than the median household income of the State which is \$32,877. Highlands County ranked 26th in the State with a per capita income of \$23,734. The value for the State was \$27,781.

The table below shows that the largest segment of Sebring's population is the 65 years and older group. The same is true for Highlands County, but these are atypical of the State as a whole where the largest age group is the 25 to 44 years age group.

#### Age Distribution for the Year 2000

	Total	less than 18	18-24	25-44	45-64	65 yrs and over
City of Sebring	9,667	22.1	7.9	22.8	19.4	27.7
Highland County	87,366	19.2	6.3	19.3	22.2	33
State of Florida	15,982,378	22.8	8.3	28.6	22.7	17.6

This shows that, at least up until the present decade, the cities and suburbs of Highlands County have grown as a retirement destination. According to interviews with local realtors, this trend may now be changing as they note an increase in younger, working-age families with children moving to the region.

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Household Income by age of householder, 2002

Household Income in 2002	Total	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Total Households	100.0	3.1	8.4	12.4	13.1	15.8	23.2	24.0
Under \$ 5,000	4.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.9	1.1
\$ 5,000 - \$24,999	35.4	1.3	2.5	2.9	2.8	5.4	9.0	11.5
\$25,000 - \$49,999	38.8	1.2	3.6	4.9	4.8	6.0	9.5	8.8
\$50,000 - \$74,999	13.2	0.2	1.3	2.5	2.7	2.2	2.4	1.9
\$75,000 - \$99,999	4.3	0.0	0.4	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.4
\$100,000 or More	4.2	0.0	0.3	1.0	1.3	0.6	0.7	0.3

The table above indicates that, in general, the population of Highlands County is not wealthy.

Nearly one quarter of retirees age 65 and older are likely to earn less than \$25,000 per year. Another eighteen percent of this group have a total annual income under \$50,000. Of persons in their prime working years (ages 25 to 54), only about eleven percent of them have a household income greater than \$50,000 per year. Nearly eighty percent of the total population has an annual household income of less than \$50,000.



*An Early View of Downtown Sebring*

### PRIZM Analysis

The PRIZM market analysis is a demographic analysis tool devised by the Claritas Company of Ithica, New York. PRIZM considers both U.S. Census data and also other consumer data in its analysis. It assigns the U.S. consumer to one of sixty-two classifications or “nicknames”. These nicknames add social, cultural, geographic and economic definition to the demographic data. This analysis helps to identify consumer spending habits through social definition. The following table lists the nine market groups or “nicknames” identified in the Highlands County area by the PRIZM analysis.

Three of the top four PRIZM classifications in the following chart are elderly populations. The excep-

tion is “Grain Belts” which is probably construed in this case to refer to white-collar managers or owners in the citrus industry. The data also reveals that another significant component of the population, identified as “Norma Rae-Ville” and “Hard Scrabble” are of limited financial means. “New Homesteaders” represent the smallest component of the Highlands County population according to PRIZM data, however interviews with local realtors would indicate that this market segment is growing because young professional families with children are increasingly purchasing homes in the Sebring vicinity.

PRIZM Nickname	Population	%	Index
Golden Ponds	20,151	21.8	1,400
Rustic Elders	20,288	21.9	978
Grain Belt	14,607	15.8	648
Gray Power	11,596	12.5	604
Agribusiness	7,630	8.2	567
Mines & Mills	10,505	11.3	560
Norma Rae-Ville	6,026	6.5	423
Hard Scrabble	1,081	1.2	47
New Homesteaders	697	0.8	41



*N. Ridgewood Drive Shopping District*

### PRIZM “nickname” definitions

The following are Claritas’ descriptions of the PRIZM nicknames.

*Golden Ponds* - The scenic rustic towns and villages near coastal, mountain, valley, and lake areas coast to coast are where Cluster 52 neighborhoods can be found. Golden Ponds seniors have retired here to live in cottages among their country neighbors. They are not as urban or as affluent as other retirees.

*Rustic Elders* - Cluster 59 ranks as the third-oldest cluster in the United States with the lowest incidence of children in social group R3. It covers the nation, but is concentrated in the Great Plains and along the West Coast. Although the life here is pure country, there is a surprisingly high index for health walks, golf, boating, and volleyball.

*Grain Belt* - Feeding the U.S., and sometimes the world, Cluster 57 is our bread basket. Centered in the Great Plains and South Central regions, life is tied to the land and ruled by the weather. Mostly self-suf-

ficient, family- and home-centered, these families are poor only in money.

*Gray Power* - As the population ages, this cluster's numbers are increasing. Found in retirement communities across the U.S., these affluent retirees are playing golf, monitoring their health, and tending their hefty investment portfolios. They are married couples or singles with high school and college education levels.

*Agribusiness* - Famous for very large families with lots of kids, countless animals, apple pie, and going fishing, Cluster 56 is in the greater Northwest from Lake Michigan to the Pacific. Occupations include farming, forestry, fishing, ranching, mining, and other blue-collar employment. Most cluster members are high school graduates or have attended some college.

*Mines & Mills* - As its name implies, Cluster 55 folks live in scenic splendor and work in America's mines and mills across the United States. Mines & Mills neighborhoods are in the Appalachians, across the Ozarks to Arizona, and up the Missouri River to the Montana coal fields. The population is older, mostly single with few children.

*Norma Rae-Ville* - Centered in the South, the Mississippi delta, and the Gulf coast and Atlantic states, Cluster 54 is the blue-collar labor pool for the nation's clothing and home furnishings industries. With grade school and high school education levels, many families in this bi-racial cluster live below the poverty level.

*Hard Scrabble* - Scratching a living from hard soil describes those who live in our poorest rural areas. Reaching from Appalachia to the Colorado Rockies, and from the Texas border to the Dakota badlands, life is hard for Cluster 62 folks. Mining occupations and chewing tobacco show the highest indices in Hard Scrabble.

*New Homesteaders* - More highly educated than the other clusters in T2, the New Homesteaders professionals and executives work in local service fields of administration, communications, health, and retail. The younger married couples have children. Life is homespun with a focus on crafts, camping, and sports.

### Consumer Spending Patterns

The table on the following page describes the consumer spending pattern of the Highlands County population. The left column lists various consumer expense categories. The right column labeled "market index" provides a comparison of Highlands County residents to the country as a whole. The U.S.A. average is given an index value of "1", so categories in which the Highlands County population spent more than the national average have values greater than "1". For this population, the categories "Prescription Drugs" and "Health Care" indicate an expenditure greater than the national average. This coincides with the previous demographic analysis which revealed a large percentage of elderly persons in the population — presumably retirees — who would be expected to spend more on health care services and products. This analysis is derived from data provided by Claritas.

Annual Expenditures During 2002, Highlands County Population

	Annual Average Household	Aggregate	Per Capita	Weekly Average Household	Market Index
Prescription Drugs	\$1,851	\$73,492	\$805	\$35.60	1.46
Health Care	\$2,998	\$119,047	\$1304	\$57.67	1.05
Home Computer software/access	\$428	\$16,974	\$186	\$8.22	0.89
Gasoline	\$954	\$37,884	\$415	\$18.35	0.86
Pet Expenses	\$239	\$9,476	\$104	\$4.59	0.85
Misc. Personal Items	\$1,279	\$50,792	\$556	\$24.60	0.82
Telephone Service	\$551	\$21,875	\$240	\$10.60	0.8
Reading Materials	\$342	\$13,593	\$149	\$6.58	0.66
Transportation Expenses	\$4,580	\$181,890	\$19,992	\$88.11	0.65
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$1,869	\$74,168	\$813	\$35.94	0.63
Shelter And Related Expenses	\$1,779	\$70,609	\$774	\$34.22	0.63
Household Equipment	\$1,947	\$77,288	\$847	\$37.44	0.62
Entertainment	\$2,685	\$106,609	\$1,168	\$51.64	0.58
Apparel	\$2,212	\$87,768	\$961	\$42.51	0.55

## Employment Analysis of Highlands County

The following table ranks employment of the Highlands County workforce by industry. The data was obtained from the “Highlands County Profile 2002” by the University of Florida Bureau of business and Economic Research. Although we find the data precision questionable because the percentages do not total to 100 percent, we recognize that the values indicate a concentration on Services, Retail and Wholesale Trade. The listing of Major Private Sector Employers identifies two hospitals (Service) and WalMart (Retail) as the largest employers. According to this data, the local economy appears to have a weakness in a lack of manufacturing and construction industries. The building permit analysis (following page) indicates a strengthening of the construction component of the economy in the years since 2000.



*Local Restaurateurs*

### Employment by Industry, 2000:

Wholesale Trade	28.60%
Services	28.30%
Retail Trade	20.20%
Government	17.30%
Agriculture	15.80%
Manufacturing	5.40%
Construction	4.10%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	2.90%
Total Employment	23,056 (persons)



*The New Family Life Center of First Methodist Church*

### Major Private Sector Employers:

Florida Hospitals, Heartland	1,076
Wal Mart	480
Highlands Regional Medical Center	428

## Building Permits Analysis for New Construction

Building permit records for new construction were tabulated for the City of Sebring (by the City’s Building Department) and for Highlands County minus the City of Sebring and the City of Avon Park (by the County Planning Department). The table below displays these results. It shows that residential construction is enjoying an upswing from a slump during 2000. New commercial construction, however, is down considerably from pre-2000 levels. These numbers do not include permits for renovations or additions, which are likely to be more common within the city limits as it represents redevelopment efforts.

Building Permits for New Construction:

		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Highlands County	commercial	31	35	43	42	26	49
	residential	483	488	410	505	463	659
City of Sebring	commercial	11	26	15	8	10	9
	residential	9	14	13	15	38	45

**TRENDS**

**U.S. HIGHWAY 27**

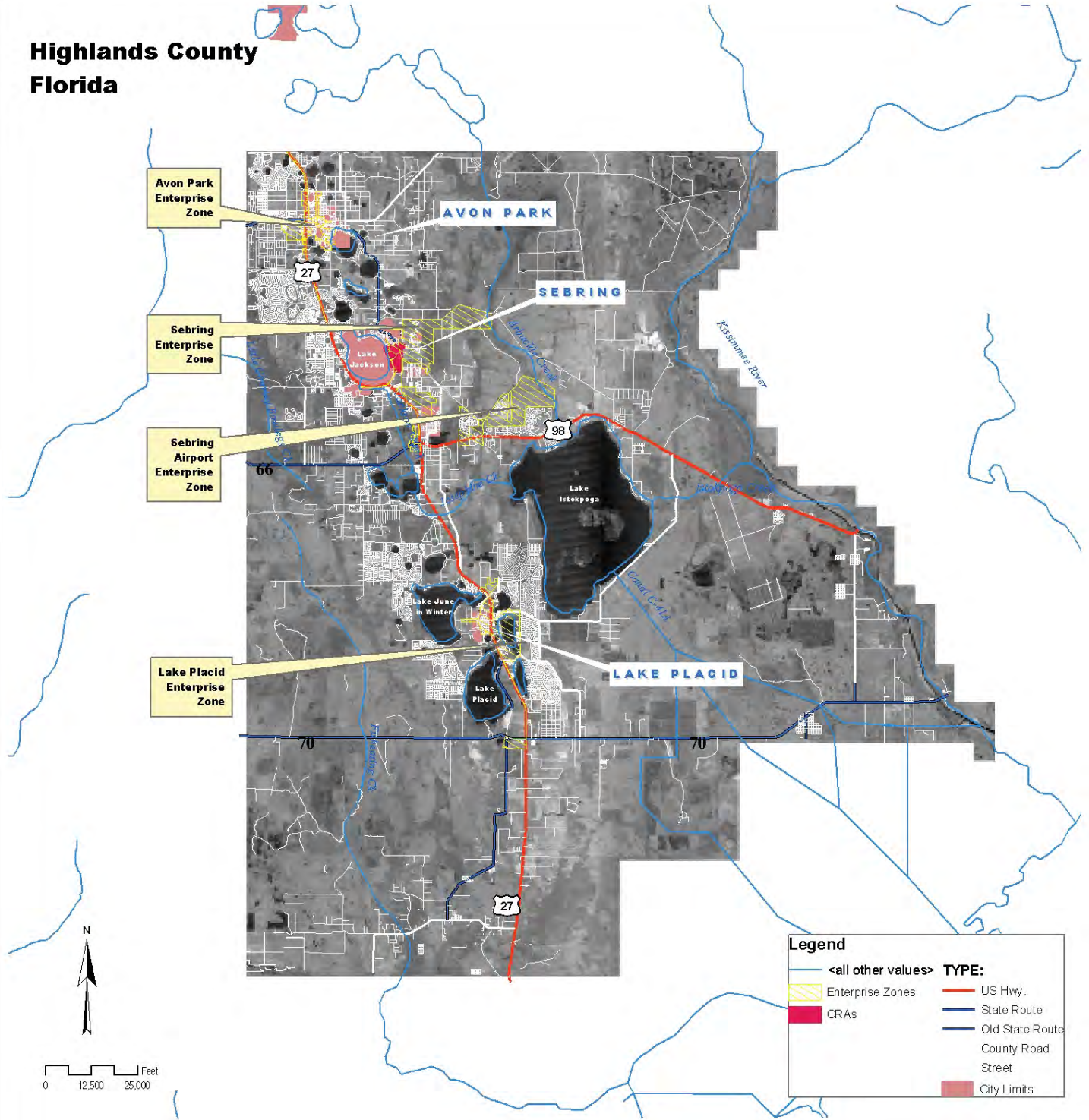
U.S. Highway 27 is the key transportation spine running the length of Highlands County from north to south.



It was upgraded to a six-lane divided highway in the 1990s, making it a popular alternative for truckers to Interstates 95 and 75. The highway bypasses the City of Sebring by skirting the southwestern shore of Lake Jackson, whereas the older Highway 17 route ran right through the downtown along Ridgewood Drive and other local streets. This bypass arrangement serves to both insulate and isolate the downtown from the bulk of highway traffic. In fact, unless the casual driver notices one of two brown highway signs labeled “Downtown Sebring”, he is likely to miss the city alto

*Aerial Photo of the U.S. Highway 27 Corridor near Sebring*

# Highlands County Florida





gether or to assume that “Sebring” is the strip commercial development along the highway rather than the quaint, attractive, and interesting circular downtown on the lake’s eastern shore.

### ***ENTERPRISE ZONES***

According to GIS data provided by the County Planning Department, over 290 acres within the Sebring city limits are designated as a State Enterprise Zone. Additionally, over fourteen square miles have been designated as Enterprise Zones just outside the city limits. These areas are illustrated on the preceding map. A portion of the newly expanded CRA is not included in the current Enterprise Zone boundaries and this represents a missed opportunity for creating redevelopment incentives. This situation could be remedied by giving up some of the current EZ lands which are located in rural and apparently flood-prone areas east of downtown Sebring and transferring this Enterprise Zone status to the balance of the CRA.

## LAND USE INVENTORY

### CURRENT LAND USE/BUILDING INVENTORY

The Center City Redevelopment Plan of 1983 included a detailed inventory of land uses within the original CRA and presented this information as a series of maps. Buildings were classified according to their SIC (US Department of Commerce Standard Industrial Code) and the number of establishments of each type were tabulated. The Plan then made recommendations as to the types of businesses to be encouraged in downtown Sebring including medium sized general merchandise stores, apparel stores, home furnishing stores, building materials stores, miscellaneous retail stores and eating places.

The land use configuration in the redevelopment area is generally consistent with typical urban development patterns. Commercial land uses are located along the main transportation routes with historically significant retail and trade businesses concentrated around the traffic circle downtown extending outward along the primary corridors that constitute the spokes of the transportation system. The mature tree canopy, physical layout and quaint historic character of the downtown and most of the surrounding neighborhoods are extremely desirable attributes that should be replicated and capitalized on for future development. While the majority of the community is composed of desirable land use patterns and physical amenities, the City is also faced with areas of structural deterioration and incompatible land use patterns that should continue to be addressed through the redevelopment process.

Usually at this point in the inventory report a quantitative description of existing land use is provided including key information such as property ownership, taxable values, building age and use. However, Highlands County presently does not have a complete Geographic Information System (GIS) data base. Therefore there is no parcel attribute data available in computer format at this time. As the County completes the development of their GIS system, this information will benefit the CRA as it tracks future land development and the tax base for budgeting and other analyses.

### FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Plan for the City of Sebring is a component of the Comprehensive Plan of 1979. This document being more than twenty years old, the plan is in need of an update. Recommendations will be made in future components of this redevelopment plan update process, specifically, in the Concept Plan and Urban Framework Plan documents.



*The rear of a shopping center facing N. Ridgewood abuts a residential neighborhood.*



*Industrial uses conflict with residential on Hawthorne Street.*



*The new county jail facility, while an expansion of the government complex, is also an encroachment into the surrounding neighborhood.*



## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

### Vehicular Circulation

#### UNIQUE CIRCULAR LAYOUT

Sebring is the only Florida city that utilizes a circle as its primary business district. This is attributable to the founding father's desire to create an idealized resort community based on Italianate/French Renaissance city design. Picturesque circle park, surrounded by a hexagonal arrangement of historic commercial buildings, is analogous to spokes radiating from a wheel hub. This design is in contrast to typical Spanish or English colonial cities including St. Augustine, Pensacola, and Savannah where the uniform grid pattern is employed. Even Sebring, Ohio – the Sebring brother's earlier city-building project – is a simple grid layout.



*A birds-eye view of the circle. Circa 1918.*

While pleasing to the eye, nonresident drivers attempting to negotiate Sebring during their first visit may become somewhat confused. The City has addressed this issue through the judicious use of directional signage around the circle and at other key intersections. The arrangement of streets soon becomes second nature to drivers and pedestrians alike and does not impede orientation. Great North American cities with a similar layout include Detroit, which is built around a central hexagon, and New Orleans – the Crescent City, which follows a bend in the Mississippi River. Lots and Blocks certainly do not have to be square to be functional; rather, most cities are so because it is simpler and therefore less expensive to survey straight lines than curves.

#### SEBRING PARKWAY

The Sebring Parkway is a new roadway project under construction which will provide access to downtown Sebring from the eastern side of town. It follows the course of an abandoned railroad right-of-way. The first two of three phases have been completed, allowing access from U.S. Highway 27 north of the city and around the north shore of Lake Jackson. Phase 2 of the Parkway is scheduled for completion in 2006.



*Sebring Parkway*

It will connect the downtown to Highlands Avenue and will complete the Parkway loop to Highway 27 south of the city.

A portion of the Parkway (generally to the east of downtown) parallels the still-in-use rail line serving the Amtrak station. Chain-link fencing has been used extensively along phases 1 and 2 of the Parkway, allegedly to ensure the safety of school-aged children, forcing them to cross at designated intersections. Some feel the four-lane parkway with its fencing and the adjacent rail line will further isolate the Washington

Heights neighborhood (a minority-occupied neighborhood) from downtown Sebring.

A key benefit of the Parkway will be the alleviation of through traffic from South Lakeview Drive. This will encourage revitalization of this residential street and renovation of homes along it. The new Parkway also creates the opportunity to establish significant gateway features at the north and south ends of town, symbolically emphasizing the entry into downtown Sebring.

#### STATE ROAD 17

Closely related to the above discussion, South Lakeview Dr. and South Ridgewood Ave. are currently S.R. 17 which passes right through the circle. There are suggestions that this State Route should be vacated, returning Ridgewood Ave. to local government control and creating the opportunity to reconfigure the lanes, parking and streetscape treatments. is employed. Even Sebring, Ohio – the Sebring brother’s earlier city-building project – is a simple grid layout.

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## Parking

Parking is frequently cited as a concern in urban environments and downtown Sebring is no exception. Prior to the creation of the CRA, there existed no off-street public parking within walking distance of the circle. The 1983 Redevelopment plan recommended the acquisition of three parcels and the construction of parking lots for public use. The CRA has been progressive in obtaining these properties and has constructed these parking lots.

## Pedestrian Circulation

Sebring's downtown shopping district on the circle is adequately pedestrian friendly, although some improvements including signage and pavement markings could make street crossings safer. Along the commercial streets radiating from the circle, Ridgewood, Center, and Commerce all have sidewalks. Some areas have already received streetscape improvements including trees and a restoration of the historic light standards. Areas along North Ridgewood in particular would benefit from sidewalk repair/replacement and other streetscape treatments. Many streets within the adjoining residential neighborhoods lack sidewalks.



*Buildings around the circle downtown.*

Sidewalks exist along portions of Lakeview Drive providing safe pedestrian access to the lake front park. However, most properties surrounding Lake Jackson are privately owned and extend from the street right of way to the water's edge. This precludes the construction of a lake front bike path or similar pedestrian trail.

## Railroad

The Amtrak depot on the rail line just east of downtown is newly restored and serves 6,000 passengers annually. Six trains of Amtrak's Silver Service/Palmetto line stop in Sebring daily, three northbound and three southbound. This line runs the eastern seaboard from Miami to New York City and points in between. Sebring is also served by the CSX Transport rail line. A spur extends to the regional airport/industrial park.

## **HISTORIC ⊕ CULTURAL RESOURCES**

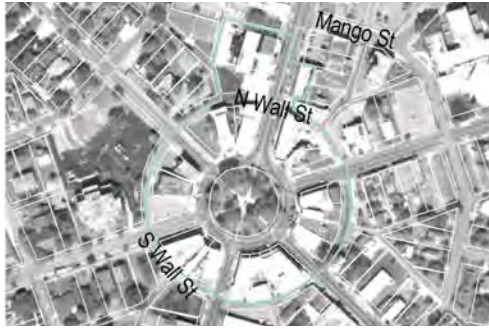
### Historic District and Buildings

The City of Sebring was envisioned to be a resort community from its beginning. The 1983 Center City Redevelopment Plan states that "by 1920 there were nine major resort hotels" in the immediate area and that the Kenilworth Lodge (in the expanded CRA) and Harder Hall (a redevelopment candidate site west of Hwy. 27) are "survivors" of



*Stacking of rail freight cars behind the middle school.*

that era. In these early years, marketing was geared to a northern clientele through newspaper advertisements and pamphlets extolling the virtues of central Florida – particularly its mild winters.



*The circle is a designated historic district.*



*Historic hotel Nan-Ces-O-Wee*

The buildings fronting the circle itself and extending up N. Ridgewood to include the Nan-Ces-O-Wee Hotel building is a designated historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many of these buildings exhibit remarkable architectural style, detail and craftsmanship which enhances the ambience of the circle shopping district.

### *Public Facilities and Sites*

As county seat, Sebring hosts a number of governmental offices in buildings concentrated on South Commerce Avenue.

#### GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE

- City Hall – possibly to be relocated to the former Wachovia Bank building on N. Ridgewood Ave.
- County Courthouse – planned expansion in the near future
- County Jail – currently completion an expansion project
- County Administration and Annex Buildings
- Sebring Middle School

#### RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

- Circle Park
- Lakefront park/City Pier
- Cultural Center including:
  - Highlands Civic Center
  - Highlands Library
  - Highlands Little Theatre
  - Highlands Art League & Museum
  - Sebring Historical Society
- Fireman’s Field park/Fairgrounds
- Park Street park
- City tennis courts



*The Court House*

## SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Chamber of Commerce – still in its original location on the circle

Churches – churches of various faiths offer services to their members and to the community at large



*The Chamber of Commerce*

## Regional Amenities

### SEBRING RACEWAY

The first endurance-type auto race in the United States was held in Sebring in 1950. The Sebring Raceway is located next to the regional airport, approximately seven miles from downtown. In 2001 Sebring celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of racing and automotive testing. Sebring embraces this unique and important part of the local economy.

Chateau Elan is a new hotel and spa catering to racing enthusiasts and located at the raceway overlooking the “famous” hairpin turn.

Sebring’s association with the automobile is fascinating in that the city’s predecessor – Sebring, Ohio – produced its first automobile in 1912 named the “Sebring Six”. Sebring Airport



*An early postcard illustrating four of Sebring's houses of worship.*



*The Sebring Raceway remains an important economic stimulus for the Sebring vicinity.*



*An early view of the Sebring raceway.*



## SEBRING AIRPORT

The Sebring Regional Airport has recently been improved with the addition of the new Airside Center in 2001 and a new state of the art control tower making this a world-class small aviation facility.

The Sebring airport has been identified in Florida's State Aviation System Plan as the growth airport for South Central Florida. According to the website of the Sebring Airport Authority, the industrial park contains a total of 1,770 acres, 1,200 of which are still available for new tenants. It is a multi-modal facility with easy access to the highway system via Hwy. 98 and U.S. 27. The industrial park also has private rail spur service from CSX Transportation.



*The new Airside Center at Sebring's airport.*



*Map of the Sebring Regional Airport, adjacent Raceway, and industrial park.*

## Highlands Hammock State Park

Highlands Hammock is a unique environmental amenity to the county and its location, just three miles west of Lake Jackson, makes Sebring the closest point of departure and a source of provisions for park visitors. Constructed in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps, Highlands Hammock is Florida's very first State Park. It protects and showcases several unique plant and animal ecosystems including an oak-palm hammock, pine flatwoods, a cypress swamp, and a fern bog. The park offers hiking trails, horse trails, camping (primitive, family and youth facilities), birding and general wildlife viewing.



*Highlands Hammock State Park showcases a unique Florida ecosystem.*



*The park offers a number of walking trails and boardwalks into various habitat types.*

## REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

### Comprehensive Plan of 1979

The City's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1979. It designates future land use, guides the timing of future growth based on infrastructure concurrency, and defines future vision through Goals, Objectives, and Policies (GOPs). The Comprehensive Plan contains the Future Land Use Element (FLUE), which is the overriding policy document that forms the basis for land use decisions. The following table describes the relationship between Future Land Use Classifications contained in the FLUE and the Zoning Districts contained in the City Code. The Code indicates that the land use designations in these documents are consistent, however that may be more of an outcome from reactionary zoning policies rather than invoking sound planning principles. An example of this is the fact that the downtown is surrounded by land that is both zoned for and currently contains industrial land uses that are negatively effecting the investment image of the City.

### Zoning Code

All development and redevelopment in the City is regulated by the "Official Zoning Plan Ordinance", adopted in 1994. The Ordinance establishes land use criteria and development standards associated with 11 zoning districts. These 11 zoning districts pertain only to 4 general land use classifications; residential, mixed use, commercial and environmental. The zoning ordinance incorporates what is considered to be a cumulative zoning strategy that allows uses contained in the less intensive zoning districts to be considered, with some stipulation, in the more intense zoning districts. While this enables a flexible standard for zoning approval, it has likely led to the conflicting land use patterns witnessed in the downtown area.

As seen on the following zoning map, the Sebring Redevelopment Area contains seven of the eleven zoning districts; C-1 (Commercial), C-2 (Industrial Commercial), MUQD (Mixed Use Quality Development), R-1 (Single Family), R-2 (One & Two Family), R-3 and R-4, (Multiple Family). The Zoning ordinance provides information pertaining to permitted uses within each district, and specific development requirements such as minimum lot size, set back requirements and maximum height and building coverage ratios. The general intent of these districts is summarized briefly below.

#### C1 — COMMERCIAL

The C1-Commercial zoning classification is intended to provide a broad range of office and retail uses and is similar to the R3 category excluding any single-family homes. Examples include financial institution, clinics, beauty shops, hand laundries, vocational schools, theatres, restaurants etc. This category does not include commercial uses such as lumberyards, junk dealers, auto-wrecking yards, recycling centers, or auto paint and body shops. A large part of the CRA is zoned as commercial, with parcels in and around Circle Park to the ones existing along N Ridgewood Dr. falling under this category. The area south of Kenilworth Blvd. is also zoned as commercial.

#### C2 — INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL

This category is intended to permit all heavy commercial uses including the ones that fall under category C1. However, shops where the materials that are for sale, to be worked on or stored are not housed within a building shall have such materials completely screened from the view of adjacent properties and streets by fences that are in conformance with the fence code of the City. The parcels along Sebring Parkway

and Avocado St. are zoned as C2 and also the parcels north east of Sebring parkway and Raymond Street. Currently, parcels zoned as C2 in the CRA such as the Sebring Packing Plant are the ones causing negative investment to the area.

#### MUQD — MIXED USE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

The MUQD zoning classification is intended to allow all uses permitted in the R3 district, excluding construction of independent single-family dwellings. Single-family uses shall be allowed when located in the same building as nonresidential uses, for example on the second floor of two story buildings. The other restriction under this category is that all merchandise must be housed within the building. Other examples include professional offices, including clinics, restaurants, cafes, retail stores etc. The area that is zoned as mixed use in the CRA district lies north and south of W. Center Ave and west of the Circle Park. The parcel south of Kenilworth Blvd. and east of Persimmon is zoned MUQD and also part of the parcel currently occupied by the Kenilworth Lodge and restaurant.

#### R1 — SINGLE FAMILY

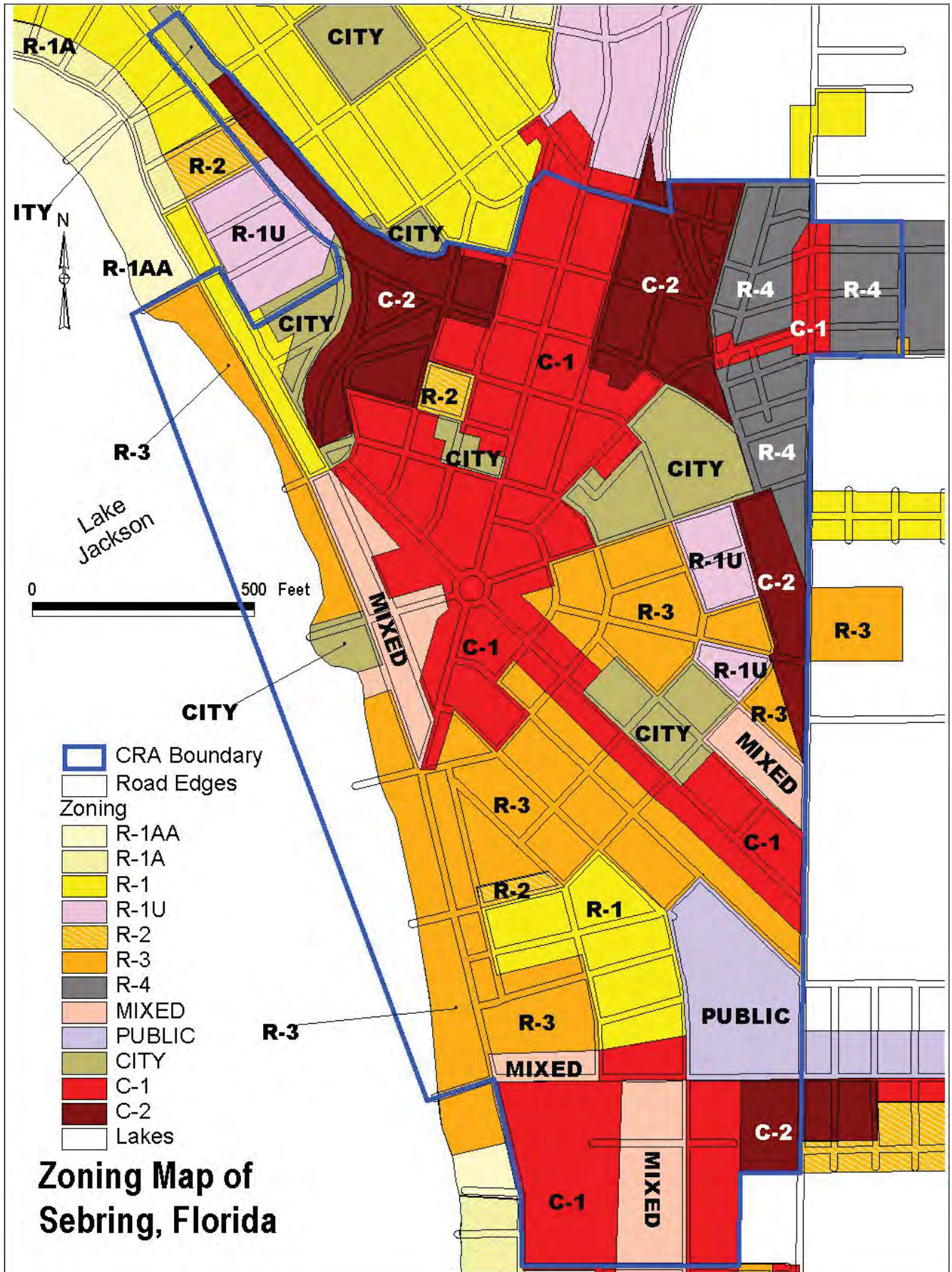
The R1 Single-family district permits all single-family homes including accessory buildings that are used for residential purposes. The one restriction that applies to this category is that any use shall have accommodations for not more than two automobiles. Examples include elementary, high and private schools, churches and other places of worship, libraries, community centers and professional offices, when situated within the dwelling provided not more than 25 percent of the ground floor of such dwelling shall be occupied. Only a small part of the Redevelopment area is zoned as Single Family with the area outside the CRA boundary primarily zoned as R1.

#### R2 — ONE & TWO FAMILY

This classification is intended to allow all uses that are permitted by the R1 category and also includes a two-family dwelling containing not more than two kitchens. Uses such as elderly, group, foster care and other special needs housing is also permitted under the R2 zoning classification. Only two small blocks fall under this category in the CRA, one lies at the corner of Poinsettia and S. Eucalyptus and the other at the corner of Lime St. and Maple Avenue.

#### R3 AND R4 — MULTIPLE FAMILY

Both the R3 and R4 districts essentially allow for multi-family dwelling units with the two main differences being that the R4 category allows for mobile homes in the district but the minimum building area per family is much lower than the allowed building areas in the R3 category. Examples include multiple-family dwellings, hotels, boarding houses, hospital and clinics, except animal hospitals and clinics, tourist homes etc. A large number of properties fall under both these categories in the CRA.



## *Land Development Regulations*

The Zoning Code provides minimum site plan submittal requirements in order to assure that proposed development and redevelopment is consistent with the minimum development standards defined for each zoning district. The code also contains supplemental regulations pertaining to the following aspects of proposed development:

- Right of way standards,
- Access management requirements
- Sale of alcoholic beverages
- Home occupation standards
- Building renovation standards
- Maximum floor area requirements
- Special considerations for sidewalk cafes
- Procedures for amendments to site plans and appeals of decisions

The City's Land development Regulations also contains a sign ordinance that provides specifications for sign construction including site related requirements (Number of signs allowed per parcel and required set backs) as well as standards for height, materials and size of signs. During public workshops the Zoning Board, CRA Board and Historic Preservation Board expressed a desire to revisit the sign ordinance to provide continuity between sign standards within the downtown, the historic district and the City.

While the City's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Supplementary Regulations have served their purpose, our review of these documents coupled with public comment have revealed that these documents are antiquated, (Comprehensive Plan 1979, Zoning 1994), and do not address other development standards such as architectural guidelines and landscaping requirements. Therefore it is recommended that the City and the CRA work together to update the Comprehensive Plan and revise the land development code.

## PREVIOUS REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

### 1982 Center City Redevelopment Plan

*By The University of Florida*

This is the initial redevelopment plan for the Sebring CRA. It contains an in-depth inventory of all non-residential buildings and a series of recommendations for redevelopment. The majority of these recommendations have been accomplished by the CRA.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Goods handling firms should be relocated outside of the CRA (p. 28)
2. General merchandise stores are typically too large to fit into a downtown redevelopment site, but medium-sized stores can be accommodated (p. 34)
3. Eating establishments are needed (p. 34)
4. Amusement, museums, and membership organizations would enhance downtown (p. 34)
5. The Plan noted that 69 percent of the housing demand in the downtown could be met by studio and one-bedroom dwelling units (p. 41) To this end, the Plan recommended the renovation/conversion of single-family homes to duplex or multi-family dwellings, stating that “there is a demand for rental as well as owner occupied units” (p. 42).
6. The Plan recommends the continued pursuit of tax exempt elderly housing projects and runs through a cost analysis explaining why the tax exempt status is not a drain on the City (p. 44).
7. In the Washington Heights neighborhood, home ownership was determined to be 60 percent, yet the plan suggested an inadequate supply of rental housing – primarily for seasonal citrus workers (p. 62).
8. The Plan recommended the creation of a nonprofit restoration corporation to undertake building renovation and construction projects throughout the CRA and to give preferential employment consideration to residents of the Washington Heights neighborhood (p. 66).
9. The Plan proposes the creation of three parking lots near the circle for public off-street parking (p. 72). This has been accomplished.



*A historic view of the Lake Jackson Pier.*



*Current view from the lake front park.*



*Sebring's historic band shell (now removed)*

### *Waterfront District Development Plan*

This plan, developed in 1991, focused on the redevelopment of a triangular area extending from the circle park and expanding out to the lake front. The plan calls for:

- Residential in-fill, including high-density lake front condominium towers
- Refurbished waterfront park with a new band shell
- Possible hotel
- Expanded retail along Center Avenue from Circle Park to Lakeview Drive
- Marina with approximately 120 wetslips

Elements of this plan will be reviewed and approved or amended based on the updated CRA Redevelopment Plan.

## Section III. Concept Plan

### A. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The descriptive narrative of the Concept Plan summarizes the general intent of the Redevelopment Program. It has been developed as a guideline for promoting the sound development and redevelopment of the properties in the redevelopment area. Opportunities for public improvements, redevelopment activities and proposed future land use composition are identified and graphically included on the Concept Plan. The Plan was developed after analyzing the existing conditions in the redevelopment area relative to the community objectives expressed during the public involvement process.

It must be understood that the plan will not happen all at once and it is likely that the elements of the Plan will not occur within the time sequence described herein. The Redevelopment Plan is intended to be a guiding document for local government actions designed to overcome deterrents to desired future growth and development in order to stimulate private investment. The plan is not intended to be static. Over time, this plan should be updated and revised based upon changes in the economy, relevant public concerns and opportunities associated with private development proposals. The Plan illustrates how the economic development strategies, and redevelopment program directives can be translated into a physical land use plan that accents natural and cultural amenities while promoting quality growth and development. The Concept Plan graphically and in general terms describes the required elements of a Community Redevelopment Plan as provided in Section 163.362 F.S.

The most important aspects of the Plan are the following:



*Circle Park*



*Historic Kenilworth Lodge*



1. The Plan identifies where primary land uses (commercial/office/ residential) should be located in order to best attract prospective businesses and residents, while at the same time be well integrated into the desired future transportation and land use patterns.
2. The Plan provides a tool for the City to promote economic development by showing prospective corporate entities locations of parcels that have been designated for their purpose, thereby reducing the developer's risk and permitting hurdles when coming to the community.
3. The Plan provides a holistic means for the City to provide the approvals of new developments based upon an agreed-upon strategy.
4. The Plan allows the City to make capital improvements projections based upon known future, public project needs, demands and proposed locations.
5. The Plan locates commercial sites based upon expected market demands and reasonable residential service areas.
6. The Plan supports desired economic development strategies, including:
  - The strategic location of county government facilities to stimulate economic activity while avoiding negative impacts to surrounding residential areas;
  - The relocation of obtrusive industrial uses to areas more appropriately suited for industrial activities;
  - Consolidation of retail, office, entertainment and residential uses in the historic downtown;
  - Revitalization of the City's lake front area and the improved connection between this asset and the historic downtown;
  - Development of the multi-modal transit and regional trail systems; and
  - The introduction of new uses and activity centers for education, culture and art.

The Plan allocates areas of residential densities, which:

- Support infill, renovation and enhancement of residential areas and the prevention of commercial encroachment;
- Support historic preservation efforts;
- Support downtown retail activities;
- Provide opportunities for private sector housing development;
- Work with the loading of future roadway networks;
- Are compatible with the existing community structures of each area ;
- Are respectful of and compatible with adjacent land uses; and
- Minimize commuting distances and reinforce future public transportation options.

The Concept Plan contains descriptions of several types of projects and programs, including capital projects, public/private projects, and government programs. Capital projects are those that are funded solely by the public sector to address specific infrastructure needs such as roads, streetscapes, parks and other municipal facilities.

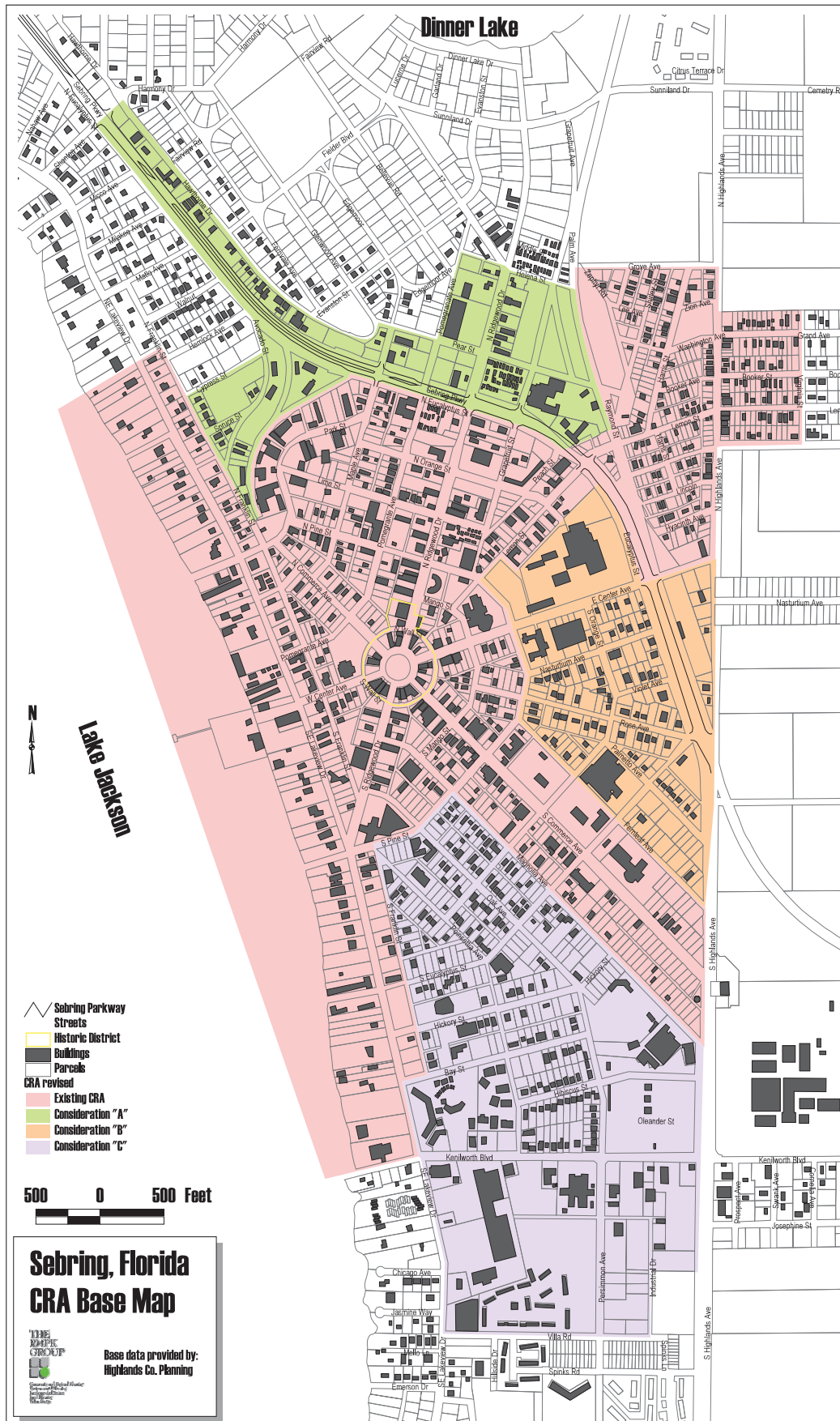
While it is assumed that some future development will occur with no Agency involvement, the Plan also contains projects that provide opportunities for the public and private sector to work together toward mutually beneficial development activities. The public and private sectors can bring different resources and capabilities to bear on projects that fulfill the objectives of the Redevelopment Plan but otherwise might be unsuccessful for various reasons. Public costs are undetermined at this time because the Agency’s role in each will be defined through negotiation at the time of the project. In attempting to attract initial investment from private developers the Agency will target a programmed development for the project, solicit a developer, and then negotiate a public/private development agreement. The agreement sets forth terms and conditions involving the disposition of land, the nature of the prospective development, City contributions and other conditions pertaining to the project.

Finally the Plan anticipates government actions to be undertaken by the City and/or the Redevelopment Agency for a variety of purposes. Regulatory actions may include revisions to the City’s Comprehensive plan, land development regulations, and building codes. Land acquisition programs, such as land banking and property swapping, may be incorporated in the redevelopment process to control prime development sites, thereby ensuring future development in a manner consistent with redevelopment objectives. Economic development and business improvement incentives will also be components of the redevelopment program.

## B. STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

The area of study is downtown Sebring, Florida. Specifically, the area includes the downtown Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) adopted in 1983 plus three contiguous areas that have been added to the CRA as a result of a Finding of Necessity for Redevelopment study in August of 2003. Collectively, these four areas form the new or current City of Sebring CRA. The following map identifies these newly added CRA areas as they relate to the original boundary.





## A. THE CONCEPT PLAN

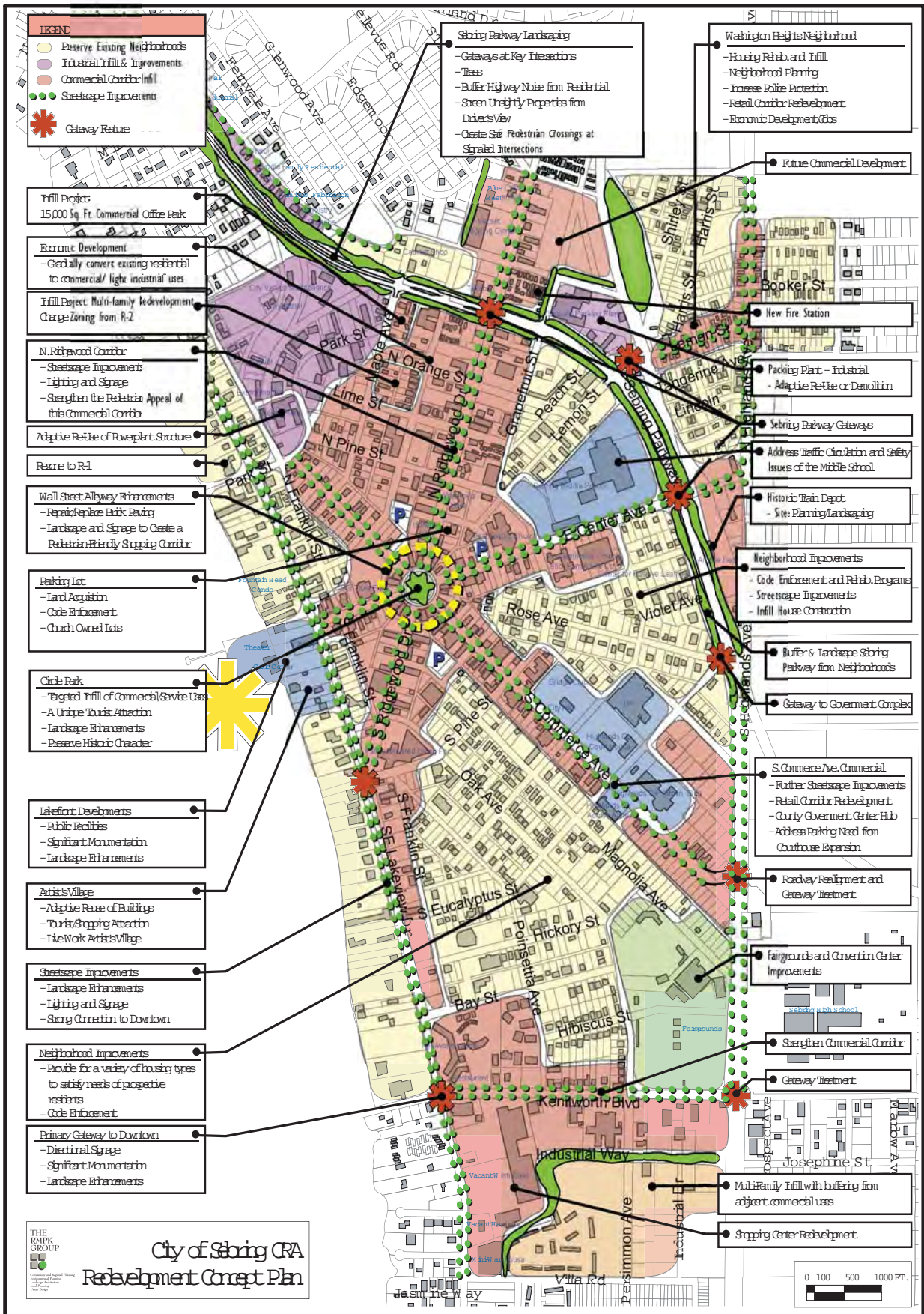
The Concept Plan contains over thirty proposals for future land use, private sector development opportunities and recommended public investment in capital improvements. This plan is presented graphically on page six of this report. When possible, information concerning the plan elements is consolidated for areas that contain similar recommendations such as residential areas that are in several locations.

Key points of focus for the plan include:

- Commercial Corridors along SE. Lakeview Drive, Ridgewood Drive (North and South), the Sebring Circle, Commerce Avenue (North and South), Center Avenue (West and East), Lemon Street, N. Highlands Avenue, and Kenilworth Boulevard.
- The new Sebring Parkway extending from the Shontee Street cross-street at the north to its joining with Highlands Avenue at the south.
- S. Highlands Avenue which will be widened as part of the Sebring Parkway project.
- The Sebring Lakefront on Lake Jackson including the pier, community center, theater, and artist's village.
- Downtown neighborhoods centered around Rose Avenue, Palmetto Avenue, Magnolia Avenue, Oak Avenue, Poinsettia Avenue, Hickory Street and NE Lakeview Drive.
- The Washington Heights Neighborhood located northeast of downtown, across Sebring Parkway.
- An industrial area at the north side of town centered around Park Street.
- A heavy commercial/industrial area south of downtown including the old Winn Dixie Shopping Center and parcels behind it.



*Sebring Lake front Park*



## B. CONCEPT PLAN OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The Concept Plan graphic depicts the locations of street corridors, intersections, neighborhoods or specific sites within the Sebring CRA that are addressed through recommendations for improvement. To simplify the presentation of the information contained in the plan, we have condensed the recommendations into the following eight categories listed below:

- Downtown Commercial Area
- Residential Neighborhoods
- Industrial Re-Use
- Sebring Parkway Beautification
- Gateways
- Waterfront Development:
- Fairgrounds & Convention Center:



Sebring Circle

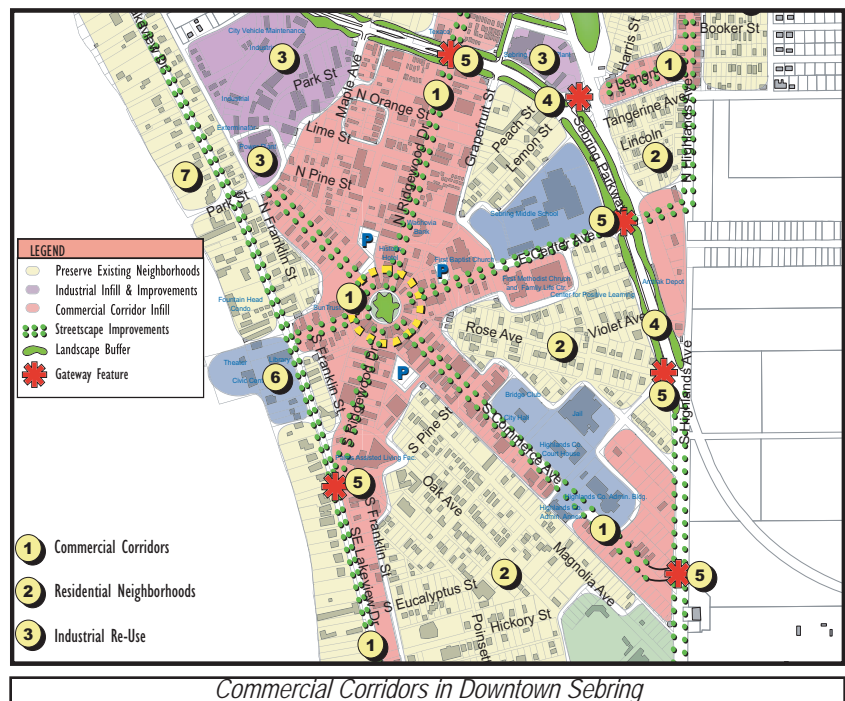
### 1. Downtown Commercial Area

*Objective I* – Re-establish downtown Sebring as a regional destination for commercial activity and entertainment by concentrating redevelopment on key commercial corridors.

- Ridgewood Drive
- South Commerce Avenue
- Center Avenue
- Wall Street Alleyway
- Lemon Street east of Sebring Parkway

#### *Action Strategies:*

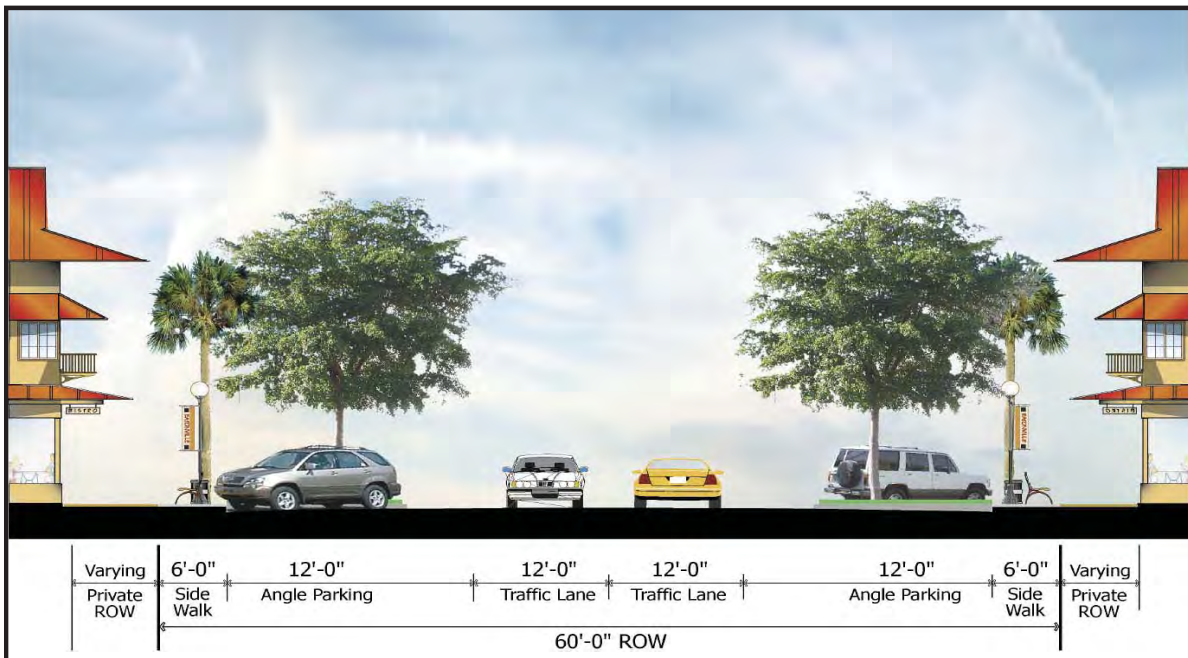
- Ensure that new development in the downtown consists of appropriate land uses that will stabilize and enhance the area while representing the desires and interests of area residents and property owners.
- Prepare for the expansion of the County Courthouse to ensure that adequate parking is provided and to attract patrons to existing and





new businesses.

- Stimulate local business by attracting an appropriate mix of uses including residential, office, and commercial – particularly restaurants and evening entertainment.
- Devise strategies including land assembly and other means of participating in land development to partner with the private sector in initiating development activity at appropriate locations in the downtown area.
- Work closely with the Chamber of Commerce and local merchants' association to develop or strengthen the redevelopment process.
- Support on-going Main Street efforts for downtown business recruitment, retention and expansion.
- Develop or strengthen existing programs for business development including marketing and promotion, small business loans, and other financial incentives.
- Revise development codes to enable a desired mix of uses and to ensure appropriate design for future development within the downtown.
- Evaluate the potential for angled parking on W. Center Avenue.



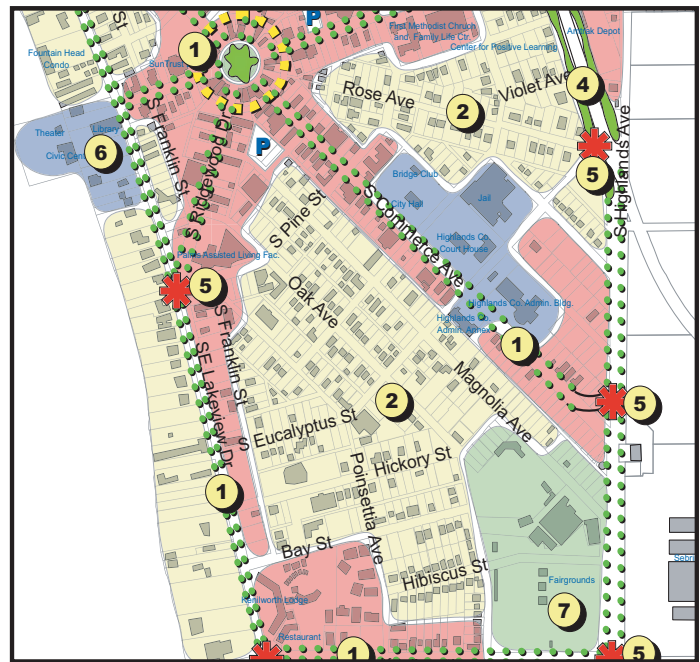
*Objective II* – Improve the physical appearance of the downtown to stimulate private investment.

*Action Strategies:*

- Work with existing property owners and tenants to replace dilapidated, nonconforming structures through property assembly to enable the development of higher and better uses at appropriate locations.
- Continue and expand existing streetscape projects along the primary commercial corridors through downtown.



- When undertaking streetscape improvements, new private construction projects, and extensive building renovations, place utility lines underground where it is feasible to improve the visual quality and to remove impediments to safe pedestrian circulation.
- Continue the successful efforts of the façade improvement program providing design assistance and financial incentives to encourage building renovations that will provide compatible design and strengthen existing architectural features.
- Ensure that future development in the redevelopment area is consistent with the existing architectural character of Downtown Sebring.
- Ensure architectural integrity of future development through design standards and the establishment of an architectural review board for downtown development and renovation projects.
- Enforce City codes to ensure proper maintenance of vacant lots and buildings.



*Downtown Neighborhoods South and West of the Circle*

*Objective III* – Improve access and visibility for the downtown.

*Action Strategies:*

- The completion of the Sebring Parkway will dramatically improve access to downtown from the east side of town. Capitalize on this roadway project to strengthen the connections to downtown.
- Conduct additional planning studies to determine appropriate improvements for S.E. Lakeview Drive extending south of downtown and outside of the CRA boundary. This roadway joins Highway 27 and will continue to serve as an important access-way from north-bound traffic even after the completion of the Sebring Parkway.
- Erect aesthetically appealing gateway signage on Highway 27 informing travelers of Historic Downtown Sebring and the amenities and services available.
- Focus on creation of an identity for downtown Sebring and implement this identity in the various gateway treatments and directional signage described in previous recommendations.



*Sebring Parkway*

## 2. Residential Neighborhoods

*Objective* - Strengthen downtown neighborhoods through redevelopment and revitalization of the housing stock; establishing a safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing community environment.

- Lemon Street west of Sebring Parkway
- Rose Avenue
- Magnolia Ave./Oak Ave./S. Eucalyptus St./Hickory St.



*Houses on Nasturtium Avenue*

### *Action Strategies:*

- Systematically conduct neighborhood planning studies to determine issues and concerns of the area residents.
- Act upon issues identified by residents and invest in infrastructure improvements such as drainage, sidewalks, street lighting and neighborhood entrance signage that support the stabilization of residential areas.
- Plan for neighborhood parks and strategically utilize tax increment financing and grant sources for proposed parks and/or other multi-purpose neighborhood facilities.
- Work with local real estate professionals, identify and market areas where private interests can develop housing and necessary support facilities in the City.
- Encourage private efforts toward building quality housing throughout the city.
- Evaluate zoning and develop codes in residential areas. Where possible, remove restrictions to market-wise housing development such as inappropriate minimum lot size requirements or similar standards that may constrain or inhibit private investment in housing development.
- Discourage the intrusion of inappropriate businesses, office, commercial, and industrial uses into neighborhoods.
- Devise land acquisition, demolition, and housing rehabilitation strategies to remove or refurbish unsafe or dilapidated structures.
- Initiate infill housing development projects using tax increment revenues onto existing and newly vacated parcels.
- Work with community and/or city volunteers to clean-up vacant or unattended properties.
- Where possible, identify and restore historic housing that may be in a state of deterioration, but is otherwise structurally sound.
- To increase owner-occupancy of housing in the Washington Heights Neighborhood,



*Infill Design Type A*



*Infill Design Type B*



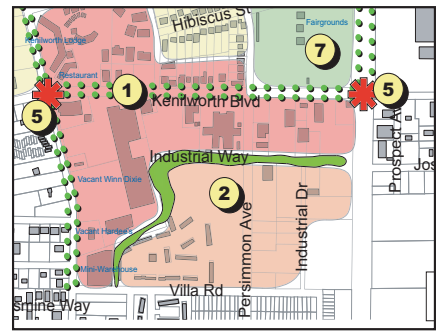
*Infill Design Type C*



*Infill Design Type D*

consider being a catalyst in the establishment of a non-profit housing corporation or Community Development Corporation to increase owner occupancy through home ownership programs. These may feature low interest loans or housing bonds for down-payment assistance.

- Address issues related to public safety and the provision of public services. For example: Washington Heights area stormwater improvements, CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principals for safe community design, etc.
- Consider multi-family as an appropriate land use for currently vacant properties on Persimmon Avenue.
- Consider small multi-family infill projects in downtown neighborhoods as a means of developing under utilized properties and increasing residential density in these neighborhoods which will help to support downtown businesses.



*Proposed Multi-Family Housing*

### 3. Industrial Re-Use

*Objective* - Devise and implement appropriate strategies for the adaptive re-use of industrial sites including the Power Plant Facility and the Citrus Packing Plant.

*Action Strategies:*

- Work with the current owner/tenant of the Sebring Citrus Packing Plant to stabilize the continued use and economic viability of the business.
- Work with the current owner and tenant of the Sebring Citrus Packing Plant to devise methods of screening undesirable views of the plant from adjacent properties and from Sebring Parkway.
- Investigate opportunities for adaptive re-use of the historic and architecturally appealing Sebring Power Plant building.



*Sebring Packing Plant*



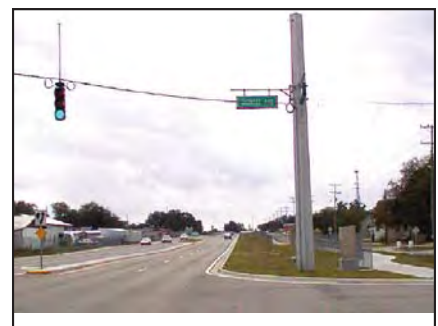
*Public Works' Powerhouse*

### 4. Sebring Parkway Beautification

*Objective* - Take steps to beautify the driver's approach to the downtown on Sebring Parkway to create an aesthetically appealing experience and to downplay the currently negative impact of the chain link fencing.

*Action Strategies:*

- Work in conjunction with FDOT to implement landscape beautification projects along the right-of-way of Sebring Parkway.



*Sebring Parkway*

- Intensify landscaping, signage, and monumentation at key intersections designated as gateways to the downtown to emphasize their importance to drivers.
- Identify methods to downplay the negative visual impact of the chain link fencing.

## 5. Gateways

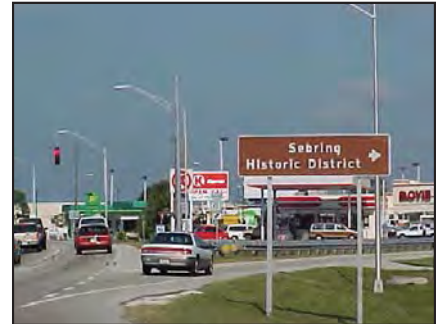
*Objective* - Gateway features strengthen the sense of identity for the community signifying the arrival to, and distinguishing the difference between, the various commercial centers and residential areas in the community. Projects involving directional signage, monumentation, lighting and landscaping are typical elements of gateway features.

### *Action Strategies:*

- Create attractive, intuitive gateway features at key roadway intersections throughout the CRA to visually emphasize the importance of the intersection, provide directional signage to the downtown and other activity centers.

It is recommended that gateways be established at the following primary intersections:

- SE Lakeview Drive at Kenilworth Boulevard
- N. Ridgewood Drive at Sebring Parkway
- East Center Avenue at Sebring Parkway
- S. Commerce Avenue at S. Highlands Avenue (Sebring Parkway)
- Sebring Parkway exit at Eucalyptus Street will require directional signage
- S. Highlands Avenue (Sebring Parkway extension) at Kenilworth Boulevard



*The Existing Marker on Hwy. 27*

## 6. Waterfront Development

*Objective* - Intensify the variety of activities and uses at Sebring's Lake Jackson waterfront to enhance the economic and cultural vitality of the downtown and improve the quality of life of residents and visitors alike.

### *Action Strategies:*

- Identify and install additional amenities at the Lakefront Park
- Determine if improvements or additions are appropriate for the pier and install them.
- Pursue the creation of an Artist's Live-Work Village in the historic houses adjacent to the Lakefront Park.
- Review and revise as appropriate the Sebring Waterfront District Plan completed in 1993.



*Views of Lakefront Park on Lake Jackson*





## *Section IV*

# *Implementation Strategies*

Implementation of the Redevelopment Plan will require the coordinated efforts of the City, the Redevelopment Agency, other government agencies, local business organizations, property owners, and residents. These efforts will be coupled with the employment of various organizational, legal, funding and promotional techniques to successfully implement the program. This section of the Redevelopment Plan sets forth a process to realize the planning and design objectives that have been developed for the redevelopment area.

### ***A. LEADERSHIP***

While leadership is a highly intangible quality, it is the single most important factor for successful implementation of the Redevelopment Plan. This leadership must come from both the public and private sectors. Some projects will require considerably more leadership, effort and collaboration because of their difficulty and/or importance to the overall revitalization program. Participation in a particular project will depend upon necessary powers and resources, which must be brought to bear on the project for its successful implementation.

### ***B. ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS***

To have a strong redevelopment program, you must first establish lines of communication between all sectors and facets of the community. The redevelopment agency and staff should continue to strengthen relationships between key players in the redevelopment effort. Organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Merchants Association, Highlands County and other civic leaders must develop the organizational framework and institutional relationships to facilitate effective redevelopment activities in cooperation with the City and the CRA.

The City must support the program's activities and provide a well-devised management system to carry out the Redevelopment Plan. Conflicting agendas between organizations will not assist in the redevelopment process to positively effect change in Sebring. The key is communication and working together.

### *i. City Council · CRA Board · CRA Staff*

The City Council, Agency Board, and their staffs are the leaders of the redevelopment program and must assume this role with vitality and enthusiasm. They should concentrate on the following actions throughout the redevelopment process.

- Provide commitment of public policy and resources for the redevelopment effort.
- Buy into the redevelopment mission and insure implementation of scheduled projects
- Provide necessary staffing and support from other City Departments for administrative purposes and program implementation.
- Commit to making the necessary public improvements identified in the Plan.
- Provide leadership and support for administering public development controls and incentives to promote high-quality private development; this may include streamlining the development review process to minimize the time involved in the approval process, zoning requirements and incentives, corridor plans, site and architectural design guidelines, provision of additional public facilities and coordinated capital improvement programs.
- Work cooperatively with other jurisdictions, including, but not limited to the State, Highlands County, MPO, FDOT, SFWMD, Regional Planning Council, Convention and Visitor's Bureau and others.

### *ii. Civic Leaders*

Civic leaders must also be ambassadors of the redevelopment program. Their support and active involvement in the effort is essential for success. They should:

- Embrace the Redevelopment Plan and be educated about the program;
- Be involved in the implementation of the Plan and involve the community through outreach.

### *iii. Private Sector*

- Essential private-sector leadership must come from local banks and real estate development entrepreneurs within the community.
- The leadership role of local banks will involve providing financing for private developments and establishing a consortium to provide a revolving loan pool at below market interest rate.
- Private real estate and development leadership must provide necessary entrepreneurial vision and initiative that will create profitable enterprises and attractive redevelopment projects.

### *iv. Planning Actions*

The Redevelopment Agency staff will be charged with the execution of the Plan. The staffs will need to be the liaison between the Agency and City Council. They will need to coordinate and manage the actions called for in the Plan including:

- Prepare grants for public projects: roads, utilities, streetscapes, parks, etc.
- Seek cooperative relationship with FDOT for construction activities, access management, parking and streetscaping proposals on state roadways.
- Research bond feasibility for financing major public facilities.
- Work with area financial institutions to develop favorable loan programs for private sector property rehabilitation projects.
- Contact affected property owners to determine their level of interest in participating in proposed redevelopment activities.
- Form basic public/private development agreements to be used for developer solicitation on selected projects
- Further detail the implementation strategies contained in the Redevelopment Plan including project scheduling, finance, developer solicitation practices, land acquisition and disposition strategies, etc.

### ***C. URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES***

The following urban design strategies are meant to provide both design recommendations and activities to promote a quality urban environment and implement the Plan.

- Expand planned streetscape improvements, city and neighborhood gateway treatments, and the current directional signage system to encompass the recently enlarged CRA area.
- The City has already developed a uniform directional signage system.
- The City's Tree Board should be tasked to prepare a horticulture master plan for the redevelopment area and initiate a tree planting program.
- Update the existing waterfront master plan. Seek grants for park construction and pursue public improvements as inducement for private sector investment.
- Create peripheral City entrance treatments with signage and a graphic theme as one approaches from all directions.
- Establish and implement performance criteria to assure high site design standards, environmental quality and other design elements that provide unity and integrity of design to the entire redevelopment area.
- Continue the facade improvement program.
- Update Comprehensive Plan: Future Land Use Element and Capital Improvements Element and any LDR revisions to ensure consistency between planning documents
- Make code enforcement a priority for the City; review the existing code to ensure that it comprehensively addresses all aspects of neighborhood conditions including:
  - abandoned and derelict vehicles,
  - deteriorated and dilapidated structural conditions,
  - nonconforming signage and land use issues,
  - inappropriate storage, and
  - minimum maintenance standards.
- Review the existing Code to ensure that policies and procedures facilitate more proactive enforcement activities; and that procedures, penalties, and statute of limitations



issues are addressed to strengthen the code. Make provisions for adequate staff to implement and aggressively enforce the code.

- The City must lead by example in cleaning up its derelict properties, maintenance facilities, and open storage areas which are having a negative visual impact upon surrounding properties and the rest of the city in general.
- Screen and buffer conflicting industrial uses close to commercial and residential areas.
- Based on input from the Zoning Board, CRA Board, and Historic Preservation Board, review and revise the City's Sign Ordinance to ensure continuity between sign standards within the downtown, the historic district, and the city.
- Work with Highlands County, the City and FDOT to control future development and address conditions on roadways such as Highway 27 providing access to the redevelopment area.
- Revise zoning districts as needed to include permitted uses in locations that are consistent with the long term economic goals and design standards contained in this Plan.

### *i. Neighborhood Preservation and Redevelopment*

In order to accomplish the goal of neighborhood preservation the Redevelopment Agency must work closely with the City to pursue the following strategies.

Initiate neighborhood planning efforts to obtain in-put from residents concerning issues of importance to them. This process also provides a forum for conveying on-going City and Agency activities to generate community support for these efforts and to glean insight into possible program implementation alternatives.

- Work with neighborhood organizations to devise incentives and funding strategies for proposed neighborhood improvements. This could come in the form of local matching grants for homeowner contributions toward specified projects, neighborhood special assessment districts or in-kind matches for public services such as increased code enforcement or short term reductions in utility fees.
- Develop strategies to create new housing opportunities in the redevelopment area. Utilize housing programs that encourage owner occupancy. Infill housing development and renovations consistent with historical guidelines should be supported in order to continue to strengthen the housing market.
- Residential uses that abut commercial uses need buffers to protect them from noise and view. Several residential areas have been well maintained and exhibit quality architectural features that should be referenced as examples for guidelines in future infill housing and property renovations.
- Pedestrian connection between the neighborhoods, the downtown, and the waterfront should be provided through an improved network of sidewalks, alleyways, and access roads, which will improve pedestrian access to primary focal points in the City.
- Improvements to the pedestrian environment are needed through landscape buffering from vehicular areas with widened sidewalks, streetlights, and other design elements.

- Clean-up efforts should be organized to address the need for beautification while generating support and cooperation of various civic and homeowner groups.
- Increased support, coordination, and communication between residents and police will benefit the neighborhoods and provide local law enforcement with the means to increase their effectiveness in serving the neighborhood.
- The Agency should work with the private sector to identify a targeted infill housing pilot project. The Agency will participate in the project by assembling the properties and reselling them through a developer solicitation process. When acquiring property the Agency should spend as little as possible in up front money. One way of doing this is by taking 1 year options on the properties, selecting a developer closing on the property then “flipping” the land over. Front funding will be regained through the tax increment revenues generated on the project. When successful, the agency can actually increase revenues in future projects through the resale of the land based on a strengthened residential market.

#### ***D. PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES***

The primary purpose of the redevelopment effort is to promote economic development and revitalization by increasing the quality of life in the community. The City and CRA will need to continue to promote economic development and redevelopment in concert with the public improvements that this Plan proposes. The following are some suggested means to encourage investment in the community. Many of these suggestions can be further developed and codified as part of the strategies contained in the redevelopment district zoning classification.

##### ***Redevelopment Incentives***

- Periodically review the City’s parking requirements contained in the development code to assess their impact on redevelopment initiatives.
- In the CRA, redevelopment does not place as many financial burdens on taxpayers to build new infrastructure and services as new development does. For this reason, there can be a policy that enables a reduction in taxes, permitting fees and licenses for redevelopment projects.
- Common citywide storm drainage treatment and collection systems should be planned and a master storm water permit should be obtained from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) for the redevelopment district. There are numerous grants available for collection and treatment of urban runoff. First-come redevelopers in the CRA should be exempted from constructing storm water facilities or contributing cash-in-lieu monies for storm drainage improvements, except as required to meet minimum standards.
- The CRA should continue the low interest loan pool program from local banks previously established through the Community Reinvestment Act. Terms of the program should be periodically renegotiated based on market conditions and interest rates, and lending policies and procedures. These loan pools can be utilized to entice redevelopment investors into the community.
- The CRA can purchase properties and assemble them for resale. The resale prices and loan payment terms can be designed to make the cost of redeveloping a site market-

wise.

- The CRA can offer free services or planning and design fee rebates for the redevelopers whose projects are compatible with the Plan objectives.
- The CRA can offer landscape packages similar to façade programs.
- Working with local realtors the CRA can offer tenant location finder services for developers looking for tenant leases.
- The Redevelopment Agency should continue efforts associated with its ongoing sidewalk improvement program.

## *Section V*

# *Capital Projects*

This section shows how the Concept Plan translates to a phased series of capital improvements and breaks down anticipated costs for further plans and regulatory activities. The community should understand that the Redevelopment Agency, working closely with the City and other government entities, will be pursuing multiple elements of the Plan at all times. It is important to note that the following summary of capital projects and programs is flexible in nature. It is the best estimate of project costs based on a measure of the order of magnitude of the project in relation to anticipated revenues. As a matter of practice the Agency should prepare annual budgets as well as establishing one, three and five-year work programs for budgetary and administrative purposes. Ultimately project costs will be refined during the design and construction phase of any given project.

The proposed Sebring Redevelopment Plan contains several major projects consisting of public, private, and joint public/private efforts that will take at least twenty years for completion. It is critical that the Agency incorporates a sound project implementation strategy when identifying priorities. This will ensure the most effective results in terms of addressing the community's needs while stimulating private sector activity to obtain a favorable return on the public sector's financial investment. The following phasing plan sets forth recommendations concerning project priorities and funding sources. To streamline the process and simplify the presentation, project priorities have been reduced to the following three phases:

- Short-Term Projects - Those that should be implemented immediately and completed within one to five years.
- Mid-Term Projects – Projects should be implemented and completed within six to ten years.
- Long-Term Projects - Projects that will likely be implemented and completed in more than ten years.

<b>PHASE I CAPITAL BUDGET (FY 2004 - FY 2008)</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost (\$M)</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Year</b>
Sebring Parkway	15.5	City	2004-2005
- Gateways 4 @ 50k	.2	TIF	2004-2007
- Trees buffering	.25	TIF/KAB/SBA*	2004-2008
Development Code Revisions	.1	City	2004-2005
Washington Heights Neighborhood Plan	.05	TIF	2004
Washington Heights Improvements	1	CDBG	2004-2008
In-fill Housing Pilot Project	.1	TIF	2004-2005
Facade Grants (Annual \$50k)	.2	TIF	2004-2008
Code Enforcement (Annual \$50k)	.2	City	2004-2008
Sign Ordinance	.05	City	2004-2005
Gateways on U.S. Hwy 27 2@\$75k	.15	FDOT	2004-2005
Industrial Park Improvements	1	FDA Grant	
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$18.8M</b>		
<b>TIF Costs</b>	<b>\$675k</b>		
<b>Other Sources</b>	<b>\$18.125</b>		
* KAB Keep America Beautiful Grant/SBA Small Business Administration Grant			
Economic Development Administration Grant			

<b>PHASE II CAPITAL BUDGET (FY 2009 - FY 2014)</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost (\$M)</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Year</b>
Lakefront PD&E	.15	TIF	2009
Lakefront Construction	1.5	TIF	2009-2010
W. Center Ave. Streetscape/Parking	.250	TIF/City	2010
In-fill Housing Project II	.100	TIF	2009
Neighborhood Plan II	.05	TIF	2009
Neighborhood Improvements II	.25	TIF	2010
Annual Streetscaping @\$200k	1	TIF	2009-2014
Power Plant Adaptive Reuse	Land	City	2009
Train Depot Site Improvements	.1	AMTRAC/TIF	2010
Annual Façade Grants	.25	TIF	2009-2014
In-fill Housing Project III	.1	TIF	2011
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$3.75 M</b>		
<b>TIF Costs</b>	<b>\$3.575 M</b>		
<b>Other Sources</b>	<b>\$175k</b>		

<i>PHASE III CAPITAL BUDGET (2015 - 2024)</i>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost (\$M)</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Year</b>
Wall Street Alley Improvements PD&F	.25	TIF	2015
Wall Street Alley Construction	2.5	TIF	2015-2016
Infill Housing IV	.1	TIF	2015
Neighborhood Plan III	.05	TIF	2015
Neighborhood Plan III Improvements	.25	TIF	2016
Neighborhood Plan IV	.05	TIF	2017
Neighborhood Plan IV Improvements	.25	TIF	2018
Neighborhood Plan V	.05	TIF	2019
Neighborhood Plan V Improvements	.25	TIF	2020
Neighborhood Plan VI	.05	TIF	2021
Neighborhood Plan VI Improvements	.25	TIF	2022
Neighborhood Plan VII	.05	TIF	2023
Neighborhood Plan VII Improvements	.25	TIF	2024
Annual Streetscaping	2	TIF	2015-2024
Annual Façade Grants	.5	TIF	2015-2024
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$6.85M</b>		
<b>TIF Costs</b>	<b>\$6.85M</b>		
<b>Other Sources</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>Total 20 Year Budget</b>	<b>\$29.4M</b>		
<b>Total 20 Year TIF Costs</b>	<b>\$11.095M</b>		
<b>Total Other Sources</b>	<b>\$18.3M</b>		

# Appendix A

## Statutory Requirements

This section of the Redevelopment Plan is meant to address the requirements of Chapter 163 Part III of the Florida Statutes. It specifically discusses those elements contained in Sections 163.360 and 163.362 not previously addressed in the content of the Plan.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT ELEMENT**

The implementation of the Redevelopment Plan will foster many positive impacts to the quality of life for the downtown area and surrounding communities. Neighborhoods will benefit from the program through increased levels of amenity, improved community facilities, improved environment, physical and social quality, and an expanded tax base that will proportionally lessen the property tax burden on all citizens of Sebring and Highlands County. While all impacts cannot be determined without site-specific proposals for which to evaluate impacts, the following section presents the range of impacts that can be expected in each category required by statute.

### **RELOCATION**

The City has a relocation policy, which provides equitable payment for all property, owners and tenants in the event of displacement from property acquisition by the Redevelopment Agency. As a matter of policy, the Redevelopment Agency will strive to avoid displacement of households and businesses. The proposed land use, zoning, housing, and economic development elements of this Redevelopment Plan specifically seek to promote the reuse of existing structures when appropriate, provide assistance for neighborhood revitalization, and allow the current residents to revive their neighborhoods.

It is anticipated that property acquisitions within the Redevelopment area will occur through private enterprise. Private sector land acquisition and redevelopment projects are not subject to the same provisions. If a voluntary sale is made, relocation of occupants, whether tenants or owners, is the responsibility of the parties to that sale. In the case of tenants displaced as a consequence of a voluntary sale, the Redevelopment Agency, if requested, will assist by providing technical assistance and by referring the displaced parties to known local private and public housing providers to assure that replacement housing is available to them.

If the Redevelopment Agency is compelled to undertake a project, at some future point in time, which would require involuntary relocation, the City's relocation policy would be followed. Displaced parties would be treated fairly and courteously. Efforts would be made to avoid any undue hardship on the displaced occupant. Relocation benefits would be provided consistent with adopted City policy. If any project requiring relocation involves federal funding, then, as required the regulations under the Uniform Relocation Act would be followed.

## ***RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT***

There are residential uses of various types and character, including, single-family, multi-family, rental units, owner occupied units, and detached units in existence in the Redevelopment area at the time of this writing. The efforts undertaken by the Agency, as described in this Redevelopment Plan, are intended to retain and enhance a high quality of residential use, particularly with regard to developing and maintaining sustainable neighborhoods. Redevelopment program activities will strive to cultivate the positive neighborhood characteristics cited by the community during public workshops and reduce or eliminate any negative characteristics.

The establishment of a revitalized and expanded residential base within the downtown core and adjacent neighborhoods is essential to achieve a successful economic redevelopment program. Residents living within the redevelopment area will comprise components of the work force and the market, which will generate economic activity.

## ***AFFORDABLE HOUSING***

The Redevelopment Plan makes provisions for affordable housing for existing moderate income markets, through rehabilitation and new construction. The Plan also provides exceptional opportunities for new market responsive housing to accommodate growing market segments in an economically integrated redevelopment area. Any shortage of affordable housing will be addressed by using housing programs for new construction of homes on lots, which are undeveloped. Programs that enhance the buying power of the low and moderate-income homebuyers will also be used.

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY***

### ***Drainage:***

Improvements to the curb and gutter and storm drainage infrastructure is proposed throughout the redevelopment area to be provided concurrently with other redevelopment efforts. Incrementally, storm water drainage and street drainage control will be improved throughout the redevelopment area.

### ***Vegetation***

No loss of vegetation is expected due to the implementation of the Redevelopment Plan. Area-wide tree planting programs are to be established for residential neighborhoods. A high priority will also be to secure grant funding for improvements along primary road corridors. The corridors will include planted medians and other landscaping where possible. The commercial districts will benefit by an overall increase in maintained vegetation.



### Noise:

Construction activities will cause a temporary increase in local noise levels, however, these activities will occur during normal working hours and should not create a hardship for local residents.

### Water Quality:

Improvements to the potable water delivery infrastructure are proposed throughout the redevelopment area to be programmed in conjunction with specific redevelopment projects. As development and redevelopment occurs, new and upgraded transmissions system will be constructed, thereby improving potable water supply and quality. Upgrading deficient sanitary sewer systems and water systems during the course of redevelopment activities will also improve the water supply system. Individual projects will be analyzed by the Redevelopment Agency and the City Utilities Department to determine their impacts on water flow. Improvements to the stormwater drainage system through the redevelopment process will also have a positive affect on surface water throughout the region.

### Air Quality:

The implementation of the Redevelopment Plan does not involve the addition of any anticipated point sources of air pollution that would require State or Federal permits. Construction activities that occur as a part of project development will be a source of airborne dirt and dust especially during windy conditions. Dust control measures may be employed during these activities. Traffic circulation and pedestrian mobility improvements should provide long-term benefits for the air quality in the downtown by increasing the efficiency of traffic flow and decreasing dependency on the automobile for short trips in town.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The Redevelopment Plan supports the 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of Sebring Parkway and Wall Street Alley improvements. Projects that maintain or improve downtown traffic circulation and parking as well as the flow of regional through traffic while enhancing the pedestrian character of the district.

Annual streetscaping projects will emphasize the provision of enhanced pedestrian facilities and bicycle facilities. While regional traffic is maintained, the pedestrian environment will be enhanced and bicycle facilities expanded.

Neighborhood revitalization incorporating new local employment is expected to provide some relief to traffic congestion in the community by fostering the development of traditional neighborhood characteristics. The closer proximity between various land uses encourages pedestrian, rather than automobile, trips.

### Police and Fire Services

The Sebring Police and Fire Departments currently provide high quality police and fire service. The Plan endorses the use of CPTED planning and design principles during neighborhood planning and when considering new private sector development.

Improved street lighting and sidewalks in residential areas will increase public safety by reducing the opportunities for crime abetting situations to exist. Additionally, increased employment and greater ownership in neighborhood homes and businesses can reduce crime. Together, improved physical conditions will lead to increased safety, which will have a beneficial impact reducing the workload of the Police Department and effectively increase the Department's ability to provide valuable community services.

Similarly, by reducing the number of unsafe, vacant, or poorly maintained structures the potential for fires is decreased maintaining the City's capacity for the provision of Fire Department services. As new construction occurs, especially multi-story construction, the City, Redevelopment Agency, Utilities and Fire Departments must plan for increased demand on the water system and ensure sufficient flow for fire suppression systems.

### ***SCHOOL POPULATION***

The majority of new housing in the downtown area targets existing demand in a market with population demographics that should not significantly increase the amount of school age children. Although significant increases in the population of school age children are not anticipated, area wide population figures, and demographics should be monitored for any changing trends.

### ***EMPLOYMENT***

The implementation of the Redevelopment Plan will increase employment opportunities for the residents of the redevelopment area through the establishment of new businesses in the downtown core and new opportunities for community-based entrepreneurship in the Industrial Park and Washington Heights Neighborhood.

Small-scale community business development is a key factor to providing a stronger, more diverse employment base that is more resistant to temporary economic cycles and decisions regarding capital mobility. The Redevelopment Plan supports the establishment and revitalization of neighborhood commercial uses in appropriate locations throughout the area. Secondary sector employment opportunities are then further enhanced by the wider dispersion of money into local ownership.

### ***PLAN APPROVAL***

In accordance with Chapter 163.360, Florida Statutes, the Community Redevelopment Agency shall submit any Redevelopment Plan it recommends for approval together with its written recommendations, to the governing body. The governing body shall hold a public hearing on the Redevelopment Plan after public notice thereof by publication in a newspaper having a general circulation in the area of operation of the county or municipality. The notice shall describe the time, date, place, and purpose of the hearing, identify generally the Redevelopment area covered by the Plan, and outline the general scope of the Redevelopment Plan under consideration. Following such a hearing, the governing body may approve the Redevelopment Plan therefore if it finds that:

1. A feasible method exists for the location of families who will be displaced from the Redevelopment area in decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations within their means and without undue hardship to such families;
2. The Redevelopment Plan conforms to the general or comprehensive plan of the county or municipality as a whole;

3. The Redevelopment Plan gives due consideration to the provision of adequate park and recreational areas and facilities that may be desirable for neighborhood improvement, with special consideration for the health, safety, and welfare of children residing in the general vicinity of the site covered by the Plan; and
4. The Redevelopment Plan will afford maximum opportunity consistent with the sound needs of the county or municipality as a whole, for the rehabilitation or Redevelopment of the Redevelopment area by private enterprise.

Upon approval by the City Council the Redevelopment Plan shall be considered in full force and effect for the respective Redevelopment area and the City may then cause the Community Redevelopment Agency to carry out the implementation of such Plan

### ***DURATION OF PLAN***

The provisions of this Plan shall remain in effect, and serve as a guide for the future Redevelopment activities in the designated Downtown Sebring Redevelopment area through 2024.

### ***AMENDMENT OF PLAN***

The Redevelopment Plan may be modified, changed, or amended at any time by the Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency and City Council provided that; if modified, changed, or amended after the lease or sale of property by the Redevelopment Agency, the modification must be consented to by the developer or redevelopers of such property or his successors or their successors in interest affected by the proposed modification. Where the proposed modification will substantially change the plan as previously approved by the governing body, the Sebring City Council will similarly approve the modification. This means that if a developer acquired title, lease rights, or other form of development agreement, from the Redevelopment Agency to a piece of property within the Redevelopment area with the intention of developing it in conformance with the Redevelopment Plan, any amendment, which might substantially affect his ability to proceed with that development would require his consent

When considering modifications, changes, or amendments in the Redevelopment Plan, the Redevelopment Agency will take into consideration the recommendations of interested area property owners, residents, and business operators. Proposed minor changes in the Plan will be communicated by the agency responsible to the affected property owner(s).

### ***SAFEGUARDS AND RETENTION OF CONTROL***

This Redevelopment Plan is the guiding document for future development, redevelopment and ancillary programs, projects and activities in and for the redevelopment area. In order to assure that redevelopment will take place in conformance with the projects, goals and policies expressed in this plan, the Redevelopment Agency will utilize the regulatory devices, instruments and systems used by the City of Sebring to permit development and redevelopment within its jurisdiction. These regulatory devices, etc., include but are not limited to the Comprehensive Plan, the Land Development Code, the Zoning Code, adopted design guidelines, performance standards and City authorized development review, permitting and approval processes. Per Florida Statute, the Sebring City Council retains the vested authority and responsibility for:

1. The power to grant final approval to Redevelopment Plans and modifications.

2. The power to authorize issuance of revenue bonds as set forth in Section 163.385, F.S.
3. The power to approve the acquisition, demolition, removal or disposal of property as provided in Section 163.370(3), F.S. and the power to assume the responsibility to bear loss as provided in Section 163.370(3), F.S.

The Redevelopment Board shall be fully subject to the Florida Sunshine Law and will convene, at a publicly noticed meeting, at least on a monthly basis in a public forum.

The Redevelopment Agency shall file an Annual Report with the State's Auditor General's Office and with the City of Sebring. This report shall contain a programmatic overview of the activities of the Agency as allowed by the Redevelopment Plan.

The Sebring CRA is audited annually as part of the City of Sebring Audit, to meet the requirements of Florida law that the agency file an audit with the City and the State Auditor General. The findings of the audit shall be presented at a meeting of the Redevelopment Board and such findings shall be forwarded to the State Auditor General's Office by March 31 of each year for the preceding year, which shall run from October 1 through September 30.

The annual Audit Report shall be accompanied by the Redevelopment Agency's Annual Report and shall be provided to the City of Sebring for public review and availability. Legal notice in a newspaper of general circulation shall be provided to inform the public of the availability for review of the Annual Audit Report and the Annual Report.

The Redevelopment Agency shall provide adequate safeguards to ensure that all leases, deeds, contracts, agreements, and declarations of restrictions relative to any real property conveyed shall contain restrictions and/or covenants to run with the land and its uses, or other provisions necessary to carry out the goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Plan.

### ***SEVERABILITY***

Should any provision, section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Plan be declared by the courts to be invalid or unconstitutional such declaration shall not affect validity of the remaining portion or portions of this Plan.



## *Appendix B Claritas Demographic Data*

Attached below is the marketing study conducted by Claritas in May of 2001.

# Appendix C

## Public Workshop Summary Report

### INTRODUCTION

Following is a summary report outlining the information obtained during work sessions conducted June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2003 in the City of Sebring, Florida. At each meeting a brief overview of the planning process was provided along with a summary of the boundary expansion and economic positioning strategy already completed as well as the Redevelopment Agency's projects and current programs. The information contained in this summary includes a list of the attendees, and a brief summary of the comments provided by the participants. This information is used during the inventory and analysis phase of the redevelopment planning process and will be incorporated when formulating the goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Plan.

### WASHINGTON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVES JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2003

#### Attendees:

- Mary Toney
- Barbara Y. Walker
- Robert C. Saffold
- Synella West
- Louis Bates
- Andrea Fennell
- Pete Pollard, CRA Director
- Robin Catarelli, CRA Administrative Assistant
- Kurt Easton, The RMPK Group, Inc.
- James Taylor, The RMPK Group, Inc.

## Issues

### PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

- Participants expressed their concern over the physical conditions in the community.
- They want to live in a better environment yet maintain historic character.
- Very concerned about the deteriorating conditions on the main business corridor, vacant and dilapidated buildings, no streetlights and lack of infrastructure.
- Local businesses should provide basic services for the community such as, groceries, hair salon, laundromat and other service oriented stores.
- Expressed concern over the age (60 to 80 years) and condition of houses in the neighborhood causing them to be very costly to rehabilitate effectively.
- Flooding occurs in areas mostly around the rail lines as well as Lemon Street near the Church, Grant Street and Hyacinth.

### PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- While the residents realize the Plan is a long-term Plan they feel it should also contain short-term initiatives.
- To be successful the program should show residents short-term results with visible improvements.
- Short-term projects should address infrastructure needs such as area-wide street lighting, curbs and sidewalks. These improvements could then set the stage for other improvements for housing and the business corridor to follow.
- Representatives supported the continued use of CRA funds for painting and façade improvements and expressed a desire to have on-going community clean-up efforts.
- They are also looking for City support through basic services such as waste management and code enforcement.
- Participants expressed their desire for economic development opportunities, jobs, technical training and access to programs that provide these services.
- It was acknowledged that these programs do exist locally and that although the redevelopment program is not responsible for providing these services they could be a resource for providing information about these programs to the general public.

### ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- Concerned that most young people who improve their economic standing in life choose to leave the neighborhood rather than stay and help it grow.

## *MERCHANTS AND BUSINESSES – JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2003*

### Attendees:

- Barbara Andrews, Sugar Free Shoppe
- Doug Sebal, Wilson's Shoes
- Sophie MacMitchell, Jr.

- M. Wayne McFarland, Diversified Financial Concepts
- Debby Hirsh, Unwrap the Party
- Diana Hirsh, Unwrap the Party
- Andrea Bruza, Sebring Jaycees
- Tony Morrison, The Insurancemart
- Juanita Jolson, J&J Cuts
- John Sbiegay, Humane Society
- Gene Brenner, Pottery Shop
- Sam Corson, Hainz Building
- Jeff Robinson
- Mary Maine, Lyberger, Keith & McLean
- Annette Daff, City Council
- Doug McLean, Lyberger, Keith & McLean
- Toni Kopp, Sebring Chamber of Commerce
- Paul E. GiRoux Snob Hollow Designs
- Paula DeCosta, Pieces of the Past
- Denise Ratterre, D's Dlights
- Sandia Wehenkel, Highlands Today
- Peter Coughlin, Cohan Radio Group
- Janalee Spiegel, The Plum Tree
- Allan Fish, Sebring Chamber of Commerce
- Bob Clogston, Hoarse Whisperer Antiques
- Carol Clogston, Hoarse Whisperer Antiques
- Pete Pollard, CRA Director
- Robin Catarelli, CRA Administrative Assistant
- Kurt Easton, The RMPK Group, Inc.
- James Taylor, The RMPK Group, Inc.

## Issues

### DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

- What is code enforcement doing about current problems?
- There is concern that there are too few code enforcement officers and that code enforcement is reactive rather than proactive when dealing with violations.
- Discussion was held concerning the economic positioning strategy with participants curious about demographic trends and the recent increase in building permits.
- The infamous Sebring rider was discussed concerning the sale of the electric utility by the City to FPL resulting in a 25% premium paid by City residents and that there is 5 years remaining on the 15 year rider. There is concern that this impacts the City's ability to compete for new housing and business in a competitive market.



- There is concern that businesses are leaving the downtown and a perception that local realtors are encouraging new businesses to locate on Hwy 27.
- How do we attract viable businesses?
- Can Sebring become a weekend festival market place like Mount Dora?
- Need restaurants /café's to stay open late
- Sebring needs an internet based marketing plan to attract outside investment.
- We need even more festivals and events downtown.
- Capitalize on potential charity events such as walk-a-thons and bike-a-thons

#### LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

- How will this Plan affect the future land use plan? (It will essentially supercede it as an implementing tool, the future land use element of the comprehensive plan will need to be amended if there are inconsistencies)
- Will the Plan promote expansion of the historic district? (Not likely)
- Who makes decisions concerning renovations? (The CRA Board)
- What architectural guidelines are appropriate? (Presently there are no architectural design guidelines)
- Façade grants are available through the CRA.
- Building renovations are an important component of the redevelopment effort because they elevate property values, increase tax increment revenues and improve the investment image of the community.
- Would like Sebring to have amenities that make other cities great.
- How do we make better use of the waterfront and tie it together with the downtown?
- There was an expressed desire to upgrade the waterfront area and improve visibility from the circle in town. This view existed historically.
- Would like to see a marina possibly and a band shell.
- The City should work with FDOT to obtain control of Ridgewood. This would enable more flexibility in design criteria for streetscaping and future angled parking.
- People love the Wall Street Alley. Would like to see it improved and restored with original brick surface.
- Codes should be developed to help guide the quality of future development and protect existing buildings

#### NEIGHBORHOODS

- What strategies can be employed to strengthen and enhance our neighborhoods?
  - Home rehabilitation grants
  - Develop architectural standards to ensure future integrity
  - Down payment assistance
  - Home buyer education programs
- We should encourage infill multi-family housing.

### Additional Issues

- Can we establish better bike paths and trails
- Magnolia Village Arts Community will be a valuable new addition to the downtown
- More parking will be needed downtown as businesses continue to grow.
- Would it be possible to put a parking garage with the proposed expansion of the County facilities?

### **CRA BOARD, PLANNING BOARD, HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD – JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2003**

#### Attendees:

- Robert C. Safford, Planning Board
- Tom Nunnallee,
- Mark Stewart,
- Angela Delgado,
- Scott Stanley,
- Anneth Daff, City Council
- Mike Carter, CRA Board
- Charlie Cullens, CRA Board
- Jim Rimer, CRA Board
- Dave Scholl, CRA Board
- Greg Stupinski, CRA Board
- Gene Brenner, CRA Board, Chair
- Lorrie Smith, CRA Board
- Gary Puckett,
- John Griffin, City Council
- Pete Pollard, CRA Director
- Robin Catarelli, CRA Administrative Assistant
- Kurt Easton, The RMPK Group, Inc.
- James Taylor, The RMPK Group, Inc.
- Other members of the general public and press

#### Comments:

##### LAND DEVELOPMENT & REGULATIONS

- Sebring needs a stronger zoning ordinance.
- There is a concern over the lack of sufficient zoning and land development regulations.
- Sebring has two land use categories – Single family and everything else.
- This lack of land use control has caused the conflicting land use patterns we have today.

- Tighter zoning control will protect property values and investment made on adjacent land.
- We should identify buildings with historic architecture and use them as examples for replication in new development.
- The City needs a Plan to guide development of newly annexed land.
- The County has site layout and design standards for development but the City doesn't. The City must become more adept and proactive in enforcing design control.
- Can we unify design requirements for signage downtown to meet historic preservation, CRA City and other jurisdictional code requirements.
- There should be a planning committee to review architectural standards for proposed development, redevelopment and renovations.
- Supports strong architectural guidelines for new development, redevelopment and building renovations.
- The CRA should devise incentives to assist landlords in improving their buildings.
- Stronger more proactive code enforcement will be important to the success of the program.
- The City should review its code enforcement policies and strengthen them where possible.

#### HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- There is concern over the deteriorating condition of the downtown housing stock.
- There is general support for strategies to strengthen and improve the residential areas as well as the commercial district.
- It is difficult for the downtown to compete with newer subdivisions being built in Highlands County.
- Can we develop programs to address obstacles that inhibit in-fill housing development in the downtown.
- Property assembly increases the cost of development.
- The CRA, through the City, has the power of eminent domain for redevelopment purposes, however this is normally used as the avenue of last resort because of costs and being an unpopular way of doing business.
- All agreed that Washington Heights needs specific strategies to effect a positive change in that neighborhood.
- There was concern that future construction of the Parkway could further isolate the Washington Heights community.
- On the contrary some felt that the railroad has caused isolation and that the Parkway will not have that substantial of an impact.

#### *Additional Issues*

- Concern over the image that all of the chain link fencing created along the Parkway and in other areas of town.
- The fencing was used to protect children who might otherwise cross the Parkway to attend public schools.

- We should encourage additional office uses that will increase demand for lunch in the downtown.
- General support for continuing a systematic streetscaping program that includes the side streets.
- Landscaping is crucial to create a positive image.
- Fort Pierce was cited as an example of successful revitalization.
- Participants were encouraged that City officials now share a common vision of what Sebring can become.
- They were also encouraged that various department heads and staff are doing a better job of working together.
- We now need community support and participation.

## Appendix D Request for Proposals(RFP) Example

*The following request for proposals provides an example of the process the Agency can expect to undertake when pursuing the neighborhood in-fill projects and the reuse of the old power plant building. The Agency can anticipate doing project proforma analysis to determine the economic feasibility of the project and then preparing an RFP to solicit development interest. The RFP then serves as the basis for a development agreement that sets forth the roles and relationships of the developer and the redevelopment agency relating to land disposition and the sharing of development costs.*

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### MAINSTREET LANDING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

### CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY

(RFP 99\_\_\_\_)

Prepared by The RMPK Group Inc., Planners, Architects, Landscape Architects

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of New Port Richey, Florida (City) invites interested qualified parties to submit Letters of Interest for the acquisition and development of property generally known as the “Mainstreet Landing Property”, including portions of lots 5, 6, 7, and 8 block 208, which fronts on the Pithlachascotee River and is located on the south side of Main Street west of the Pithlachascotee Bridge in Downtown New Port Richey, Pasco County, Florida.

The City will undertake a two step process for the submission of responses to this Request for Proposals. The initial solicitation is for Letters of Interest by qualified developers describing their experience with projects of this nature, the project approach, general financial background information and a description of the developer’s conceptual plan for the development and use of the property. Following review and recommendations from City Staff, the City Council will request selected developers to submit a formal Proposal for the acquisition and development of the property. Letters of Interest and subsequent Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals. Requests for additional information in regard to the RFP for this Property must be submitted in writing

to:

Mr. Gerald J. Seeber, City Manager  
City of New Port Richey  
5919 Main Street  
New Port Richey, FL 34652  
Phone (727) 841-4500 ext. 257

The deadline for submittal of Letters of Interest is on or before October 21, 1999. Written responses to requests for additional information shall be distributed at the pre-submission conference described below and mailed to all parties to whom the original RFP was distributed as well as any parties which have requested in writing that the City include their name on the master distribution list for the Main Street Landing Request for Proposals. This RFP sets forth relevant information regarding the property being offered for development, the City of New Port Richey and its Community Redevelopment Agency’s goals with respect to the development of this site, and the process for developer selection.

The City of New Port Richey will hold a mandatory pre-submission conference at the New Port Richey City Council Chambers on October 7, 1999. Interested parties will be given the opportunity to ask questions of City representatives concerning the Mainstreet Landing Property, the City’s goals with respect to the development of the project, submission requirements and the selection procedure.

The Letter of Interest submittal is due October 21, 1999. A signed original and seven (7) copies in an 8 1/2” x 11” format must be sealed, properly identified and delivered prior to the deadline to:

Mr. Gerald J. Seeber, City Manager  
City of New Port Richey  
5919 Main Street  
New Port Richey, FL 34652  
Phone (727) 841-4500 ext. 257

Each submittal shall be marked on the outside in bold letters as follows: CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY, REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, MAINSTREET LANDING PROPERTY. No facsimile copies will be accepted. All of the Letters of Interest received will be forwarded for review and evaluation by the selection committee.

The City reserves the right to accept any proposals deemed to be in the best interest of the City, to waive any irregularities in any proposals, or to reject any and/or all proposals and to re-advertise for new proposals. In evaluating each proposal, City Staff will consider, but not be limited to, the proposer's experience, and capabilities, the proposer's financial strength, the terms and conditions offered for acquisition of the property, the market and economic viability of the proposed project concept and the appropriateness of the proposed uses and design relative to the immediate area and the City of New Port Richey. Following review by City Staff, the Letters of Interest will be forwarded with recommendations. A short list of three (3) or more qualified teams will be selected by the City Council of New Port Richey and asked to submit a full acquisition and development proposal.

### ***PROJECT SCOPE AND INTENT***

In recent years, there have been significant investments in the downtown and neighboring areas of the City of New Port Richey. The City's authorization to issue this Request for Proposals reflects its commitment to encourage the continuation of such investments in the downtown in a structured and dynamic way. The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to select a real estate developer to lease or purchase, develop, market and manage a mixed-use development project. The project should contain, but will not be limited to, a combination of such uses as:

- (1) Ecotourism Outpost;
- (2) Outfitter retail;
- (3) River Boat tours;
- (4) Overnight lodging;
- (5) Restaurant;
- (6) Associated recreational amenities;
- (7) Parking.

### **Redevelopment Goals:**

In addition to the general list of uses for the development of Mainstreet Landing, a series of goals for the redevelopment of the property were established through a public planning process. Those goals include:

- Public Access and Recreational Opportunities. Development of an ecotourism outpost with canoe rentals and river tours will ensure access and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors taking advantage of the proximity to the James E. Grey Preserve and the Gulf of Mexico.
- Catalyst for Revitalization of the Downtown: The development of the Mainstreet Landing site shall serve as an initial catalyst for development and redevelopment of the entire Downtown.



- **Linkages and Connections.** The site should be designed so that the development forms physical and visual linkages and connections with the Downtown and public use of the water.
- **Design Quality.** The development of the Mainstreet Landing Property should be designed with “landmark” visual qualities befitting the strategic location of the site. The architecture should follow local historic examples and redevelopment guidelines.
- **Fiscal Benefit to the City.** The development of the site should be fiscally beneficial to the City of New Port Richey by enhancing economic growth in the City, increasing the tax base, attracting new businesses and promoting job growth

## ***DISPOSITION PROGRAM***

The City of New Port Richey hereby extends an invitation to qualified developers to submit proposals for the acquisition and development of a publicly-owned parcel known as the Mainstreet Landing Property. The disposition of the property will be accomplished by way of a two-step selection process involving this request for Letters of Interest and subsequent Development Proposals. Based on the information provided in the letters of interest, the City intends to select a limited number of qualified parties to submit formal development proposals that must contain the information prescribed in the subsequent section of this Requests for Proposals.

**The Property:** The Mainstreet Landing Property includes portions of lots 5, 6, 7, and 8, block 208 located on the Pithlachascotee River on the south side of Main Street west of the Pithlachascotee Bridge in Downtown New Port Richey. The property is the centerpiece of an area targeted for redevelopment in Downtown; is currently owned by the City of New Port Richey, and is being made available for disposition for redevelopment purposes. The property is governed by the Downtown Land Use Zoning classification. This zoning category permits the proposed uses for the site, which would provide a focal point for the community as reflected in the City’s conceptual plan for the property.

The City intends to dispose of the property in “as is condition”, with the developer responsible for any environmental remediation and other site preparation costs.

**Disposition Terms:** The City owns the land and will consider proposals to acquire the property through fee simple sale or any other appropriate form of conveyance. The City is also interested in the possibility of a negotiated long-term lease if this serves the interest of the City and furthers the objectives of this redevelopment project. Terms and conditions of property disposition will be negotiated with the successful developer upon selection by the City.

**Disposition Process:** In order to limit the cost and effort on the part of candidate respondents, the disposition process will be conducted in two stages:

- 1) Letters of Interest
- 2) Formal Proposals

Based on an evaluation of the information contained in the Letters of Interest received, the City will select qualified developers (most likely three (3)) and invite them to respond with a formal proposal to develop the property. Selected developers must attend a mandatory pre-proposal conference December 16, 1999. Submission of a Letter of Interest in response to the RFP will not require a fee or deposit. Selected respondents for the proposal phase will be required, within five (5) days, to submit written notice

that they intend to proceed with the submission of a proposal, which notice must be accompanied by a cashier's check payable to the City of New Port Richey in the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). The deposit shall be refunded to unsuccessful respondents. After receipt of proposal responses, the City will conduct a round of respondent presentations (interviews) and then rank the respondents. The City will then enter into negotiations with the first-ranked respondent for a period of ninety (90) days. The first ranked respondent will be required to immediately deposit with the City an additional five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00). The total of six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) will be applied toward the development if the agreement is ultimately closed. If an agreement cannot be reached with the first-ranked respondent within ninety (90) days, the deposit will be returned and the City will commence negotiations with the next ranked respondent, and so on, until an acceptable agreement has been reached with a qualified respondent.

### ***REQUIRED PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND FORMAT***

The selected developers will be asked to submit a formal acquisition and development proposal for the property. The proposal will be evaluated solely on the basis of the written information provided by the developer. The proposal package should include, at a minimum, the following components:

1. Letter of transmittal. A generalized statement identifying the party seeking to purchase and/or lease as well as develop the site.
2. An acknowledgment letter in the form attached, signed by the Proposer.
3. Firm Information: Please include:
  - Firm name, address, telephone and fax numbers;
  - Ownership/organization structure;
  - Parent company (if applicable);
  - Officers and principals;
  - Firm size;
  - The name of the representatives authorized to negotiate with the City or its representative;
  - In-house capabilities and services; and
  - If this assignment is to be performed by joint venture participation, include the percentage breakdown of each firm's participation.
4. Team Organization: Provide an organizational chart identifying all individuals who would participate in the proposed project. Provide resumes and references for all proposed/ development team members. Provide a statement of the relationship between the Proposer and any parent company or subsidiary that might also take part in the project. Please also provide the names and descriptions of any other persons, firms, or organizations that will be included by the Proposer as team member participants in the development of the project.

5. Felony Indictments/Convictions: Provide a statement relative to whether any of the “principals” referred to above have ever been indicted for, or convicted of, a felony.
6. Litigation History: List any litigation matter in the past five (5) years.
7. Previous Relevant Development Experience: Provide information on projects of similar scope and complexity. This should include specific experience with:
  - public sector projects;
  - public/private joint venture projects;
  - mixed-use projects;
  - the various uses proposed for this project;
8. The City will require that the selected developer present a “Letter of Intent” from a lender as to its interest in financing the development prior to final negotiations. The City considers a reputable lender as an institution which has, in the opinion of the City, the financial capacity and experience to commit, fund and monitor the funding of loans necessary to complete this specific project.
9. Additional Considerations: Identify any additional or unique resources, capabilities or assets which the developer would bring to this project.

Proposals will consist of one (1) bound and signed original and seven (7) complete copies of the required information. One (1) of which shall be unbound and six (6) of which shall be bound including any additional supporting materials. All proposals will be presented as 8 1/2 inch x 11 inch documents.

The information will be tabbed according to each requested section. Each page will be numbered consecutively including the Letter of Transmittal, brochures, licenses, resumes, supplemental information, etc. Please package the work product samples separately from the proposal, labeling each sample clearly. If Proposers are submitting as a joint venture, the information requested herein shall be submitted for all firms.

## ***EVALUATION CRITERIA***

Each proposal will be evaluated individually and in the context of all other proposals. Proposals must be fully responsive to the requirements described in this RFP, and to any subsequent requests for clarification or additional information made by the City through written addenda to this RFP. Proposals failing to comply with the submission requirements, or those unresponsive to any part of this RFP, may be disqualified.

A selection will be made by the City upon a careful evaluation of the proposals submitted by the prospective developers. The evaluation of proposals will be based on: (1) the team capabilities of the proposed team assembled by the developer; and (2) the developer’s ability to meet or exceed the threshold Proposal requirements established for the project. The City may, at its sole discretion, elect to waive requirements either for all proposals or for a specific proposal, which the City, in its sole discretion, deems non-material. The Selection process will start immediately after the deadline for proposal submission.

The City has identified evaluative criteria against which each Proposal will be considered, including:

- 1) Project approach including property acquisition
- 2) Proposed development process and land use components
- 3) Proposed role of the City and extent of public investment
- 4) Financial capability to complete the project
- 5) Managerial capability;
- 6) Technical expertise in similar projects;
- 7) Performance record of past development projects;
- 8) Market experience;
- 9) Staff, organization and industry reputation;
- 10) Compatibility with, and responsiveness to, the City objectives and goals:

### ***REJECTION OR DISQUALIFICATION OF PROPOSALS***

The City may reject or disqualify a proposal under any of the following circumstances:

- The Proposer misstates or conceals any material fact in the proposal
- The proposal does not strictly conform to applicable laws or any requirements of this RFP.
- The proposal does not include documents, certificates, affidavits, acknowledgments or other information required by this RFP.
- The Proposer fails to acknowledge receipt of any formal addenda.
- The Proposal has not been executed by the Proposer through, or by an authorized officer or representative of the Proposer or Proposer team.
- The Proposer fails to comply with all provisions, requirements and prohibitions binding on all Proposers as herein set forth or fails to comply with applicable law.
- The City reserves the right to reject all proposals and/or re-advertise all or any part of this RFP when it is deemed in the best interest of the City to do so.

## *SCHEDULE*

1. Release of RFP September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1999
2. Mandatory Pre-Submission Conference  
Council Chambers  
New Port Richey City Hall  
5919 Main Street  
New Port Richey, Fl 34652 October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1999
3. Letter of Interest submission deadline October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1999
4. Notify Selected Proposers (3) November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1999
5. Mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference  
Information Session  
Council Chambers  
New Port Richey City Hall December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1999
6. Final Proposal Submission Deadline January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000
7. Presentations (Interviews) to Staff  
Council Chambers  
New Port Richey City Hall January 2000
8. Recommendations to City February 2000

## ***ADDITIONAL INFORMATION***

All questions or requests for additional information must be submitted in writing no later than ten (10) days prior to the submission deadline and must be addressed to:

Mr. Gerald J. Seeber, City Manager  
City of New Port Richey  
5919 Main Street  
New Port Richey, FL 34652  
Phone (727) 841-4500 ext. 257

All questions or requests for additional information which are deemed appropriate by the City Manager will be answered in writing and will be forwarded to all Proposers. Where provided, such written response may, at the City's option, constitute a written addendum to this RFP. Neither the City or the City Staff, will be responsible for any explanation, clarification or interpretation of this RFP not issued in writing by the City via written addenda.

## ***DISCLOSURE AND DISCLAIMER***

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being issued by the City of New Port Richey (hereinafter known as the "City") As set forth in the RFP, the City will appoint City Staff to make a recommendation to the City concerning qualified Proposals. Any action taken by the City, or the City Staff in response to proposals made pursuant to this RFP, or in making any award or failure or refusal to make any award pursuant to such proposals, or in any cancellation of award or in any withdrawal or cancellation of this RFP, either before or after issuance of an award, shall be without any liability or obligation on the part of the City or the City Staff.

In its sole discretion, the City may withdraw this RFP either before or after receiving proposals, may accept or reject proposals, and may accept proposals which deviate from the RFP. In its sole discretion, the City may determine the acceptability of proposals and of any party or parties submitting proposals in response to this RFP.

Following submission of a proposal, the Proposer agrees to promptly deliver such further details, information and assurances, including, but not limited to, financial and disclosure data relating to the proposal and/or the Proposer, including the Proposer's affiliates, officers, Directors, shareholders, partners and employees, as requested by the City.

The information contained herein is provided solely for the convenience of Proposers. It is the responsibility of a Proposer to assure itself that information contained herein is accurate and complete and to obtain and verify the accuracy of any other information necessary for purposes of the proposal. The City does not provide any assurances as to the accuracy of any information in this proposal. Any reliance on the contents of the RFP, or on any communications with City representatives shall be at each Proposer's own risk. Proposers should rely exclusively on their own investigations, interpretations and analyses in connection with this matter. The RFP is being provided by the City without any warranty or representation, express or implied, as to its content, accuracy or completeness and no proposer or other party shall have recourse to the City if any information herein contained shall be inaccurate or incomplete. No warranty or representation is made by the City that any proposal conforming with these requirements will be

selected for consideration, negotiation or approval.

The City shall have no obligation or liability with respect to this RFP, or the selection and award process contemplated hereunder. The City does not warrant or represent that any award or recommendation will be made as a result of the issuance of this RFP. All costs incurred by a Proposer in preparing and responding to this RFP are the sole responsibility of the Proposer. Any recipient of this RFP who responds hereto fully acknowledges all the provisions of this disclosure and disclaimer and agrees to be bound by the terms hereof. Any proposal submitted pursuant to this RFP is at the sole risk and responsibility of the party submitting such proposal.

This RFP is made subject to correction or errors, omissions, or withdrawal without notice. Information contained in the RFP is for guidance only and each recipient hereof is cautioned and advised to independently verify all of such information. In the event of any differences between this Disclosure and Disclaimer and the balance of the RFP, the provisions of this Disclosure and Disclaimer shall govern.

Presentations by the Proposer may be required to be made before the City Staff or City Council, which will make a recommendation that may include one or more Proposers. Contract negotiations will take place with the first choice of the City and if a suitable contractual arrangement cannot be made, negotiations will commence with the second choice, and so on or the City may, at its sole option, withdraw this RFP.

The City reserves the right to select the proposal which in the opinion and sole discretion of the City will be in the best interest of and/or most advantageous to the City. The City reserves the right to waive any irregularities and technicalities and may at its discretion request re-submittal of proposals. All expenses in preparing the proposal and any re-submittals shall be borne by the Proposer.

The City and the Proposer will be bound only if and when a proposal, as it may be modified, is approved and accepted by the City, and the applicable written agreements pertaining thereto, are approved, executed and delivered by the Proposer and the City and then only pursuant to the terms of written agreements executed by the Proposer and the City. All or any responses to this RFP may be accepted or rejected by the City for any reason, or for no reason, without any resultant liability to the City or the City Staff.

The City and the City Staff are governed by the Sunshine Law and the Public Records Law of the State of Florida and all proposals and supporting data shall be subject to disclosure as required by such laws. All proposals shall be submitted in sealed bid form and shall remain confidential to the extent permitted by the Public Records Law.

## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER***

Proposers shall incorporate in their proposal the following letter and disclosure and disclaimer attachment on the Proposer's letterhead.

RE: City of New Port Richey Redevelopment Proposal RFP for Real Estate Developer

To Whom It May Concern:

The undersigned has read the City of New Port Richey Request for Proposals for its Downtown Redevelopment Project. On behalf of our proposal team, we agree to and accept the terms, specific limitations, and conditions expressed therein.

**WE HAVE READ, RELY UPON, ACKNOWLEDGE, AND ACCEPT THE DISCLOSURE AND DISCLAIMER, WHICH IS FULLY INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE INTO THIS LETTER.**

Sincerely,

(Name and Title)

(Organization)

(Proposer Name)