



Downtown Streetscape Visioning

Improving our downtown streetscapes in preparation for the 450th Commemoration

Project Booklet 02.11.10



Executive Summary & Overview

Introduction

The upcoming 450th Commemoration will give the City a prime opportunity to redefine the visitor's "first impression" and to improve the beauty and understanding of the Nation's Oldest City.

For over a decade, there has been a substantial effort in the City of St. Augustine to improve the streets in downtown. These design efforts have focused on efficient traffic movement, on-street parking, separating sightseeing vehicles (i.e. trams and carriages) to a designated lane, improving walkability, and improving aesthetics.

Concept Overviews

The enclosed concepts are designed to build upon the previous work completed in the St. Augustine Entrance Corridor Guidelines (HHI, 2000), the Circulation and Transit Plan (RS&H, 2000), and the St. Augustine Historic District Strategic Plan (UF and RS&H, 2009).

Many of these focus on Avenida Menendez and the bayfront, but the following design work instead focuses on the visitor's "first impressions" of St. Augustine, namely **King Street** (around US-1 to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue), **San Marco Avenue** (at the intersections with US-1 and West Castillo Drive) and **St. George Street** (from Orange Street to Cathedral Place). The work also focuses on the "forgotten" streets of downtown, namely **Spanish Street** and **Charlotte Street**. Lastly, **Hypolita Street** is also considered as it is a connector between these two streets, St. George Street, and the bayfront.

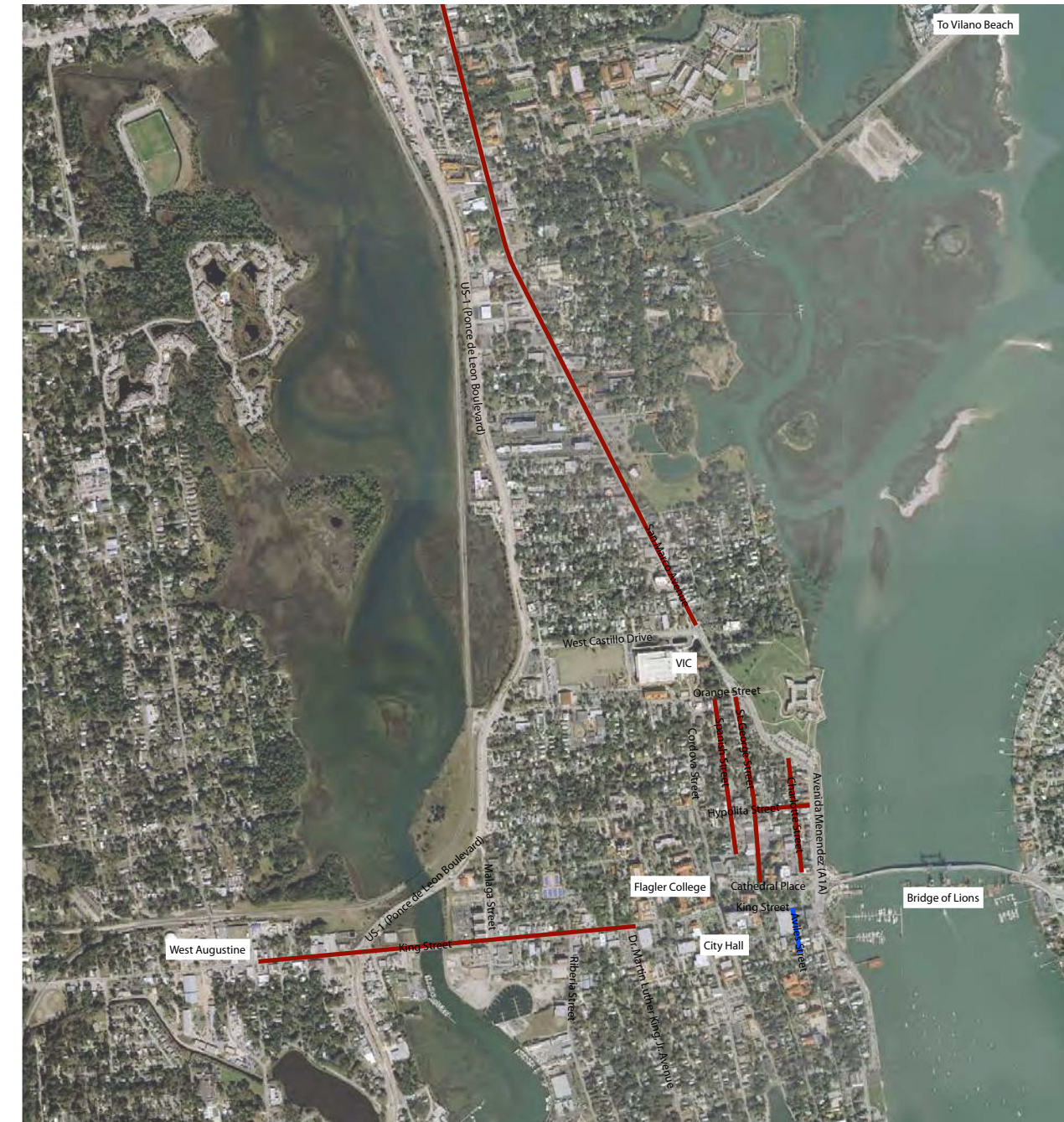
Where appropriate, historic precedents are used to inform and inspire the design.

CONTINUED on the next page.



ABOVE San Marco Avenue entrance.
RIGHT King Street entrance.

Project Map



ABOVE Map of downtown St. Augustine, Florida. The streets highlighted in red are included in these conceptual visions.

Program Elements

The program elements for this project range from new asphalt and bricks to new trees and site furniture. The matrix below gives an overview of the improvements, which are detailed on the following pages:

	New Asphalt	Brick Street	Special Paving	New/Repaired Sidewalks	Bike Lanes	Brick Crosswalks	Street Trees: Oaks	Street Trees: Palms	Landscaping	Lighting: VIC Inspired	Lighting: Victorian	450 th Banners	Benches, Trash Cans	Directory Signage	Special
King Street: West Augustine															On-Street Parking
King Street: US-1 to Malaga															"City Gate" Entrance Sign, Traffic Reconfiguration
King Street: Malaga to MLK															Raised Medians, Brick Plazas at Intersections
St. George St.: Orange to Hypolita															Tram Drop-Off, Rectangular Pavers
St. George St.: Hypolita to Cathedral															Introduction of 450th Banners, Hexagonal Pavers
Hypolita Street															Retractable Bollards
Spanish Street															
Charlotte Street															

Some of these items are discussed in further detail below.

Focus: Pavement & Hardscape

There is an enormous impact that new paving can have on a streetscape. Not only does pavement and hardscape take up the largest percentage of area, it has visual, textural, and even auditory impacts on visitors and residents. For instance, new asphalt that is proposed on King Street with new, bright striping will look and sound better and will convey the care and stewardship that the City shows to its history and infrastructure.

On St. George Street, two different paving patterns are utilized to compliment the adjacent architecture and the eras of the City they represent. From Orange Street to Hypolita Street, the buildings were largely built (or interpret) from the First Spanish Period through the British Period and back into the Second Spanish Period. A simple rectangular coquina concrete pattern is chosen for this section to add color and visual interest to the existing plain coquina concrete expanse. From Hypolita Street south to Cathedral Place, a hexagonal paver is used that is reminiscent of a historic paving pattern once used on St. George Street at the turn of the century. This compliments the more recent commercial buildings along this section.



TOP King Street improvements.
BOTTOM Spanish Street as a brick street.

On Spanish and Charlotte Streets, the existing asphalt creates a major disconnect for the visitor from the history and charm of downtown. In keeping with recent precedent, these concepts propose returning North-South oriented streets, including Spanish and Charlotte, to brick. This

corresponds with recent improvements on Charlotte Street behind the Hilton hotel. East-West corridors are proposed as coquina concrete, extending Hypolita Street's recent improvement. Making these streets brick can reintegrate them and will help to extend the visitor experience from St. George Street.

Focus: Underground Infrastructure

Another important infrastructure improvement includes undergrounding of power lines and the updating of stormwater systems (such as the improvements under design for Treasury and Cordova Streets). Traffic signals and signage should also be updated. These infrastructure improvements will result in lasting benefits long after the 450th Commemoration is complete, but the visual clutter and poor infrastructure that these improvements can remedy will be a benefit to creating the best visitor experience.

Focus: Lighting

One of the other major improvements considered is lighting. Modern street lighting along King Street does not communicate the history and rich culture of downtown St. Augustine, and these can be changed to historically appropriate fixtures. Rather than using the standard Victorian fixture that holds little historic precedent in the photos of St. Augustine, a four-sided, colonial style fixture is proposed that is similar to the fixtures on St. George Street and the Visitor Information Center (VIC).

Where Victorian fixtures are already heavily used (i.e. Spanish and Charlotte Streets), these concepts extend the use. The main objective in both scenarios is to improve lighting for nighttime safety and appearances in addition to replacing the modern cobra head lights that can be found in any town in the United States.

Focus: 450th Anniversary

A colorful and visually-based method to extend the experience of the 450th Commemoration to side streets and the King Street / San Marco entrances is through a concerted branding effort. The entrance sign on King Street is based on the City Gates that grace St. George Street and the northern US-1 entrance to the City. The City Seal, "St. Augustine," and "First America" are displayed to immediately introduce visitors to the history. An informational panel displays cultural events to improve communication with visitors of the many sites to visit in downtown. At the intersection of San Marco and US-1, a similar entrance is proposed.

A series of colorful banners are proposed to add a festive atmosphere to downtown. These banners can be attached to lighting or palm trees and have a gold band at the top and bottom, displaying the City Seal and "First America". The banners then display the many flags that have flown over St. Augustine, from the Seminole to American flags. These should be considered along St. George, Spanish, Charlotte, and Hypolita Streets.



TOP Examples of 450th Banners.
BOTTOM 450th Gateway on King Street.



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List of Illustrations

Downtown District

King Street

Entrance to Downtown (from US-1 to Malaga) 5
 At Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue 6

St. George Street

Northern Entrance at City Gates 7
 Cathedral Place to Hypolita Street 8

Hypolita Street

Entrance at Bayfront 9

Spanish Street

Orange Street Entrance (VIC) 10
 At Hypolita Street 11

Charlotte Street

Entrance from Bayfront 12
 At Anderson Circle 13

San Marco District

San Marco Avenue

Entrance from US-1 14
 North of West Castillo Drive 15

West Augustine District

King Street

West Augustine Entrance (from US-1 to Davis) 16



King Street: Entrance to Downtown (from US-1 to Malaga)

A Fresh Welcome to Visitors on King Street

King Street is arguably one of the most important entrances to the historic downtown. As such, the visual clutter of the space is cleaned up in this concept by undergrounding utilities, installing new asphalt, and extending palms along the streets from Flagler College to the US-1 intersection.

The most striking component of the entrance is a new gateway adjacent to the intersection, complete with an info board to notify visitors of special events and unique destinations. Essentially, the City has the opportunity to orient visitors while they are still in their vehicles. This board can help notify visitors of special and seasonal events, such as Castillo reenactments, the Nights of Lights, Romanza, etc. These messages would need to be changed manually (versus automatic), which can occur a maximum of once every three hours. Ideally, the messages would change every week or month to give exposure to different groups and destinations in the City.

Traffic flow is also considered, especially in regards to right east-bound lane from downtown. Left turns are now permitted from this lane, which should help to improve this traffic bottleneck.



Scale 1"=100'-0" ➤



BEFORE Looking east towards the King Street intersection with US-1, the existing car wash in the background.



AFTER A new gateway with an information board provides visitor information to welcome guests to downtown. Colorful plantings, new lighting, new asphalt, and underground utilities transforms this important gateway.



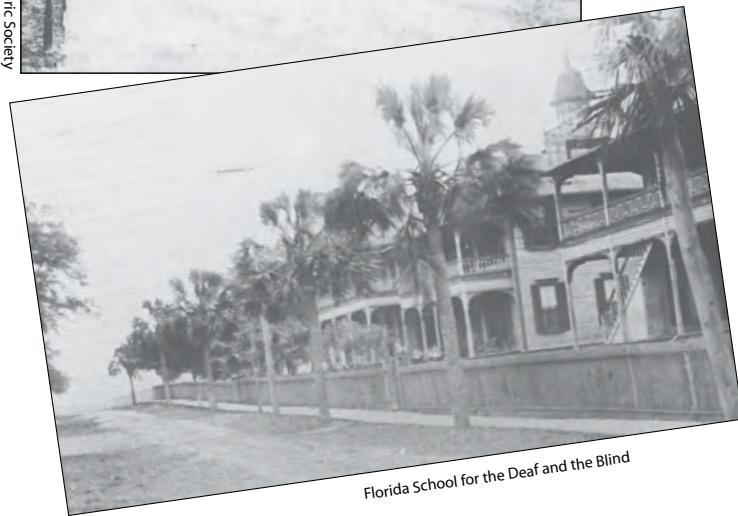
King Street at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue

Improved Pedestrian Environment for Flagler and USPS

The intersection of King Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue is an important linkage for Flagler College students and patrons of the Post Office. Raised medians and brick crosswalks create a physical and visual barrier to help designate safe zones for pedestrians. Native plantings in the median and under the row of Cabbage Palm trees provide interest and color with low maintenance plantings.



St. Augustine Historic Society



Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

Palm Lined Streets

Palms have traditionally been used to line important streets in St. Augustine. Above, Avenida Menendez (left) and San Marco Avenue (right) ca 1900.



BEFORE Looking east on King Street, with the Post Office on the left.



AFTER A raised median, low maintenance plantings, new lighting, new asphalt, and underground utilities transforms this important corridor.



St. George Street: Northern Entrance at City Gate

Reinvigorating St. George Street

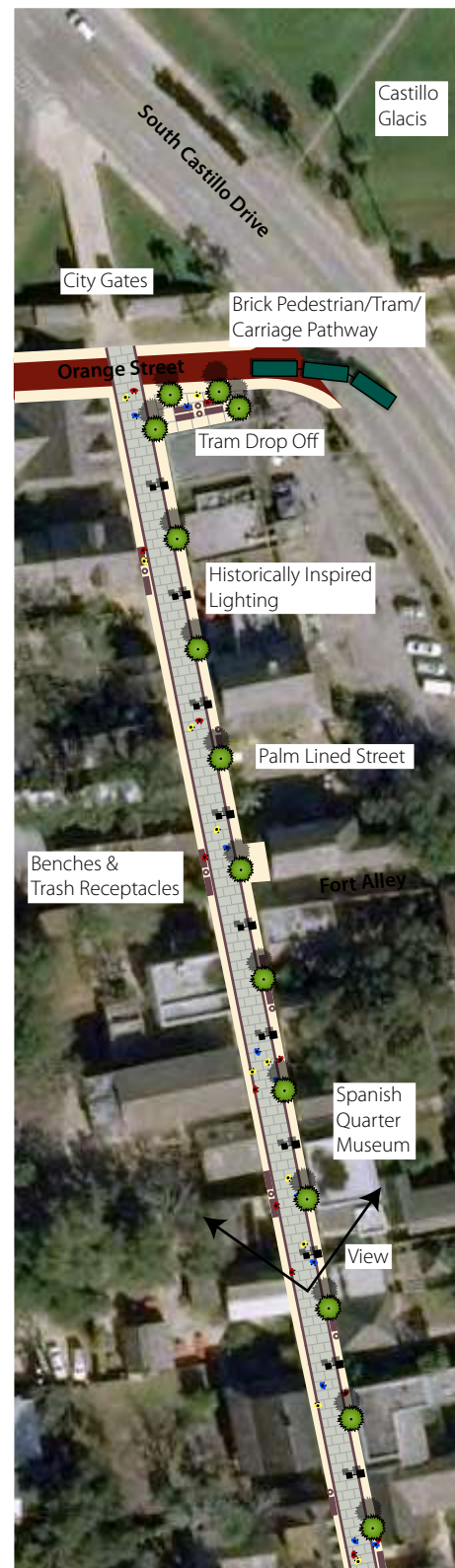
For many, St. George Street currently feels like a large, outdoor mall. The expansive concrete walkway is absent of shade and other cool refuges from the Florida sun. This concept uses colored coquina concrete and flush granite curbs to emphasize the street while breaking up the stale concrete appearance. A 12-foot pathway is maintained for emergency vehicle access.

Cabbage palms and other native plants provide shade and color, while benches and trash receptacles create a more pedestrian-friendly experience. Finally, street lighting similar to the historically inspired fixtures at the Visitor Information Center (VIC) and St. George Street line the street.



Historic Lighting Fixture

Photographs from ca 1900 show a more traditional lighting fixture than the current Victorian fixtures. Existing VIC and St. George Street standards reflect this model of lighting, which has been multiplied along St. George.



BEFORE Looking north on St. George Street, towards the City Gate.



AFTER Colored coquina concrete, cut into large rectangles, along with a flush granite curb creates visual interest for the expansive hardscape. Cabbage palms and historic lighting complete the renewed streetscape.



St. George Street: Cathedral Place to Hypolita Street

Celebrating the Eras of St. George Street

While the northern portion of St. George Street is marked by simpler paving patterns, the portion from Hypolita Street to Cathedral Place has turn-of-the-century hexagonal paver to reflect the circa 1880-1900 commercial buildings on this portion of the street. Banners and colorful plantings reflect both the Spanish heritage and the many flags that have flown over St. Augustine. Historically appropriate benches and trash receptacles are also added to the street.

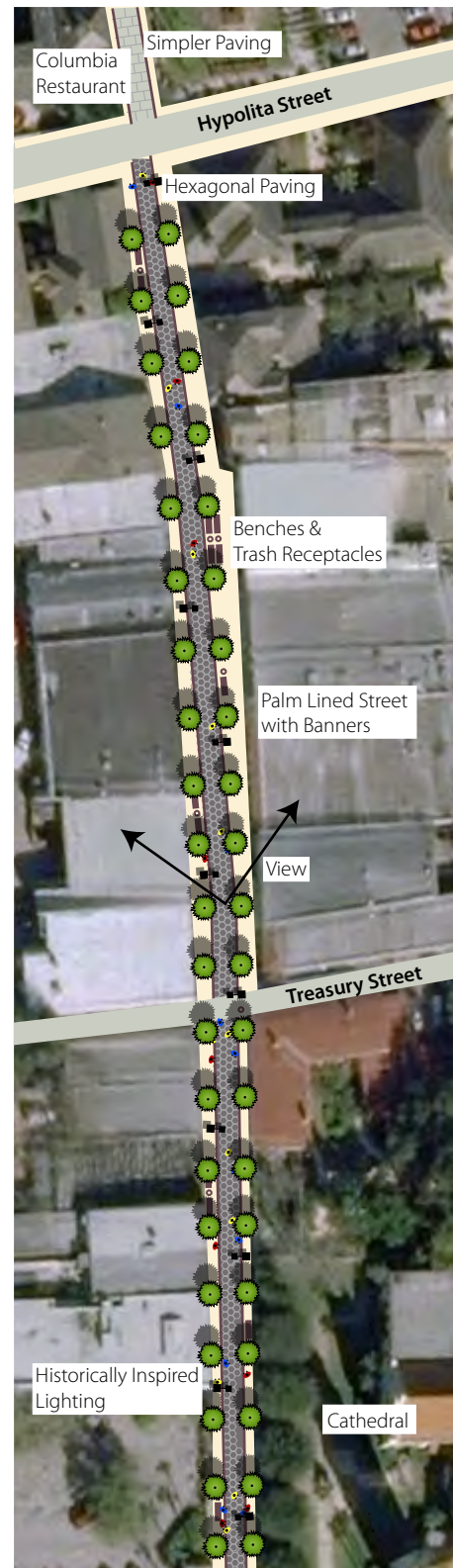
See a selection of the banners, beginning on page 13.



St. Augustine Historical Society

Hexagonal Pavers

Looking north to the Magnolia Hotel (located on the corner of St. George and Hypolita), hexagonal pavers line the street. Photo ca. 1880.



BEFORE Looking north on St. George Street, towards Hypolita Street.



AFTER Hexagonal pavers and a flush granite curb reflects the historic paving pattern ca. 1880. Colorful banners with the flags that flew over St. Augustine are attached to the palm trees.



Hypolita Street: Entrance from the Bayfront

A Pedestrian-Only Downtown

Downtown St. Augustine, with the exception of St. George Street, is frequently marked by the conflicting needs of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In preparation for the City's 450th Commemoration, it may be time to rethink the focus of the downtown street network.

In this concept, retractable bollards extend each morning after a designated time for deliveries, and they remain extended until the evening hours. This closes off Hypolita Street and other downtown corridors to vehicular traffic and makes a safer, more pleasant urban experience for the visitors and local citizens alike.

The street is also shown with a brick crosswalk, 450th banners on the light posts, and historically appropriate signage. Coquina concrete should be continued from Charlotte Street to Cordova Street.



BEFORE Looking west from the bayfront, along the entrance of Hypolita Street.



AFTER Hypolita Street now serves as a main pedestrian corridor to downtown. Retractable bollards are extended during specified times to improve the downtown experience.



Retractable Bollards

Frequently used in urban areas, these can help to provide more safety and a better visitor experience to those walking downtown. The examples above are from Columbia University (left) and a section of the Pacific Coast Highway in California (right).



Spanish Street: Orange Street Entrance (VIC)

Making Spanish Street an Entrance

Spanish and Charlotte Streets are often regarded as the “back” of businesses and attractions along St. George Street, but many charming shops, homes, and buildings can be found on these streets. The existing intersection with Orange Street, directly adjacent to the VIC, is a plain asphalt roadway that provides little visual interest. This concept replaces the asphalt with bricks (similar to Charlotte street, behind the Hilton), creates a sidewalk to lead visitors down Spanish, and provides other visual cues to spark the interest of guests to St. Augustine.

A directory sign provides a listing of shops along Spanish Street. The current sign ordinance allows such a “directory sign” be installed in the historic district:

From City of St. Augustine Code, as of December 4, 2009: “Directory sign means a sign listing only the names and/or use, or location of more than one (1) business, activity or professional office conducted within a building, group of buildings or commercial center.”



An Important Street

The street immediately west (up) from St. George Street is Spanish Street. This is seen even in this map, ca. 1760-1780.



Example Banner

Banners can be used on street lighting and palm trees around the city to celebrate the many flags that have flown over its 450 year history. This example uses the colors of the Spanish Flag from the 2nd Spanish Period, while the red cross flag in the photo is from the 1st Spanish Period.



BEFORE Spanish Street, looking south from Orange Street.



AFTER The new entrance from Orange Street is more appealing for visitors walking from the Visitor Information Center. Colorful banners, along with a directory sign and new sidewalk, invite pedestrians.



Spanish Street at Hypolita Street

Extending the Downtown Experience

At the intersection with Hypolita Street, Spanish Street appears to be little more than the access point to the parking for Colombia Restaurant. This cramped street, which provides two-way access, leaves little to no room for pedestrians.

By replacing the asphalt with bricks (similar to Charlotte Street), making the street one-way (southbound), expanding the sidewalk, and repainting the curbs, a new face is given to the street. A directory sign (see note, page 13) also notifies visitors of shops and businesses along the street, while colorful banners and new landscaping provide visual interest.



Example Banner
Banners can be used on street lighting and palm trees around the city to celebrate the many flags that have flown over its 450 year history. This example denotes the British period, while the red and yellow banner in the photo represents the Second Spanish Period.



BEFORE Spanish Street, looking north at Hypolita Street.



AFTER The asphalt has been replaced with historic bricks, which helps to integrate Spanish Street into the fabric of downtown. Converting the street to one-way traffic allows an expanded sidewalk to be installed.



Charlotte Street: Entrance from Bayfront

Simple Improvements with Noticeable Results

Charlotte Street has many good attributes already: brick streets, sidewalks, historic street lighting, etc. However, many portions of Charlotte feel like the loading areas of businesses on the Bayfront or on St. George Street.

While future buildings should provide entrances directly off of Spanish, such as the new Hilton's entrance, a simple hedge and landscaping can help to hide the pipes and back-of-house infrastructure that is an eyesore until the work is completed. Colorful banners can also help extend the downtown "brand" by tying into St. George and Spanish Streets.

The northern portion of Charlotte Street can become an inviting entrance from the bayfront and the Castillo de San Marcos, which is one of the main draws of visitors in downtown. The City should consider eliminating parking and restricting times when traffic is permitted, as described on page 12 (Hypolita Street). This would open up the historic street to pedestrians.



Example Banner
Banners can be used on street lighting and palm trees around the city to celebrate the many flags that have flown over its 450 year history. This example denotes the First Spanish Period in St. Augustine.



BEFORE Looking south, adjacent to the Monterey Inn hotel.



AFTER Simple improvements, including colorful banners, shrubs to hide the pipes, and restricting vehicles, help improve the appearance of the street.



Charlotte Street at Anderson Circle

More than a Parking Lot Entrance...

The existing intersection with Anderson Circle is fairly bland and does not reflect the historic nature of downtown. It appears to be nothing more than an access point to the adjacent parking lot.

The modern signage and asphalt paving are replaced with bricks and historically appropriate signage. An expanded sidewalk, colorful plantings, banners, and a directory sign help to invite visitors down Charlotte Street.

Although not shown in this concept, the City may want to consider removing on-street parking along Charlotte Street, especially at the northern end of the street (see page 15).



Example Banner
Banners can be used on street lighting and palm trees around the city to celebrate the many flags that have flown over its 450 year history. This example denotes the Seminole tribe that used to live across the state of Florida. Europeans pushed these Native Americans from their homeland.



BEFORE Charlotte Street at Anderson Circle.



AFTER The asphalt has been replaced with historic bricks, extending the existing brick area around Anderson Circle. An expanded sidewalk, colorful banners, plants, and a directory sign create an inviting entrance.



09.6.0 Downtown Streetscape Visioning

San Marco Avenue: Entrance from US-1

Guiding Visitors to San Marco and Downtown

San Marco Avenue is often bypassed by tourists and locals alike as they travel south on US-1. This concept creates a colorful, inviting entrance for the San Marco business community. Improved landscaping, historic lighting, and a new City entrance sign all help to create visual cues to draw tourists. Visitors are also immediately introduced to the “First America” theme that will define the 450th Commemoration.



BEFORE Looking south along US-1, towards the intersection with San Marco Avenue and the City’s welcome sign.



AFTER The new entrance to San Marco Avenue, and the City in general, showcases a City Gate tower connecting to a coquina block pedestal with large, black letters announcing “St. Augustine” and “First America.”



San Marco Avenue: North of West Castillo Drive

Improving the Aesthetics & Walkability of San Marco

Largely a turn of the century business district, San Marco already has ample sidewalks, on street parking, and businesses fronting the street. By placing the utilities underground, adding palms along both sides of the street, and reinforcing alternative modes of transportation (i.e. pedestrians), the avenue can improve its appearance and walkability. Pedestrian crossings are given the most attention by using colored pavers to notify drivers, and by extending curbed islands on either side of the street to decrease the length of the mid-block crossing.



Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

San Marco Avenue, ca. 1900

Palms have traditionally been used to line important streets in St. Augustine. This concept reintroduces palms along both sides of the street.



BEFORE Looking south, towards West Castillo Drive.



AFTER Reintroducing palms to both sides of the street, undergrounding the utilities, and adding historically appropriate street lighting integrates San Marco into the rest of downtown.



King Street: West Augustine Entrance (from US-1 to Davis)

Extending the Downtown Experience Across US-1

West King Street has a vastly different feel from East King Street, but extending the landscape material and lighting across US-1 will help to unite the two sides. Visually connecting the two sides is of paramount importance to improving the overall King Street entrance.

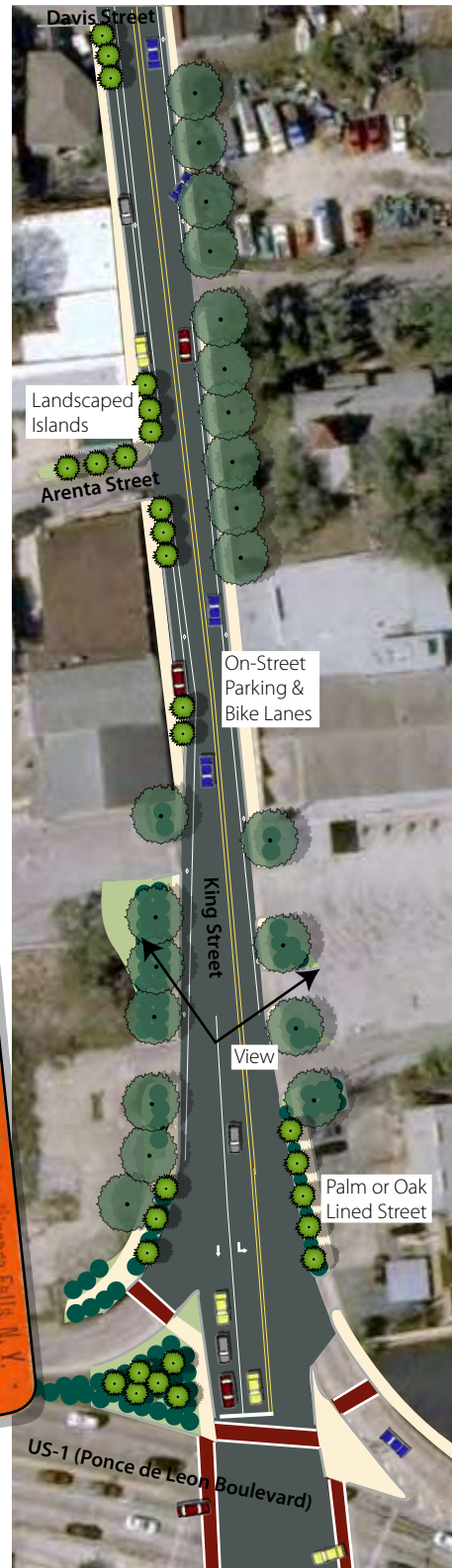
The current plans (under construction) eliminate on-street parking and do not include bike lanes. However, on-street parking and bike lanes help to preserve and reinforce the community-oriented commercial corridor of West King Street while making it more welcoming to visitors. The County and City should consider reintroducing these elements to this important community entrance.

Note that these plans also suggest landscaping improvements that will benefit the streetscape but are not necessarily within the public right-of-way. An important aspect of these concepts is community support, buy-in, and even investment.



Stereoscopic view of King Street, ca. 1895.

The design for the West Augustine entrance reintroduces Live Oak trees, which will one day provide a grand canopy like this one.



Scale 1"=100'-0"



BEFORE Looking west on King Street, towards West Augustine.



AFTER Pedestrian and bike transportation is improved with the addition of shade trees and bike lanes. New asphalt, underground utilities, and new lighting help to create a welcoming area that mirrors East King.