



City of St. Augustine Exhibition Space Assessment

Executive Summary | July 8, 2011 | FINAL



Introduction

In preparation for the City of St. Augustine's 450th anniversary celebration, the city engaged the team of Dixon Design Group, DJdesign Architects and Planners, and Halback Design Group to inventory, assess and program exhibition and event spaces throughout the City. It is anticipated that traveling art and cultural exhibitions as well as permanent, curated exhibits could be accommodated that demonstrate and celebrate the wide cultural diversity of historic St. Augustine. It is also anticipated that the City will need quality spaces for special events, visitor orientation, and other flexible uses.

The goal of this "Exhibition and Event Space" assessment is to help the City of St. Augustine create successful destinations that provoke **remarkable educational and cultural experiences**, are **appreciated by their communities** and **attract visitors** again and again. The Dixon Design Group team has envisioned compelling facilities that maintain architectural relevance and context while maintaining flexibility and future growth.

This is designed as only the first step, as it inventories and assesses the existing properties in St. Augustine. A non-exhaustive list of **34 buildings and properties were evaluated** throughout downtown and the city, including a sampling of City-owned, State-owned, and private facilities. These include 27 sites first presented to the Commission at the May 23, 2011 workshop and an additional 7 sites identified in this workshop. This executive summary and the associated appendix are designed to function as a framework for continued planning.



Potential Exhibits & Events

A variety of exhibits and events have been identified by the City Commission, the City Manager's Office, and a number of community groups. Below are a small sampling:

Art Exhibitions

- Picasso sketch exhibit - a small exhibit of some of Picasso's lesser-known sketches
- South American art exhibit - featuring work of master artisans
- Florida Highwaymen exhibit

Museum Exhibits

- "Unearthing First America" - featuring the City's archaeological finds
- "Old World Meets New World" - the story of Native Americans told through dioramas and interactive stations
- "St. Augustine: The First Settlement" - exhibition of the Nation's Oldest City, recently approved for design by the Florida legislature with an expected opening around 2014-2015 in Government House
- "Cadiz 2012" - museum exhibits from Cadiz, Spain, celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Spanish Constitution
- "First America: Genesis of a Nation" - exhibit from the National Museum of the American Latino
- "Let Freedom Ring: Civil Rights in St. Augustine" - a potential "anchor point" for the proposed Civil Rights Museum in Lincolnville

Events

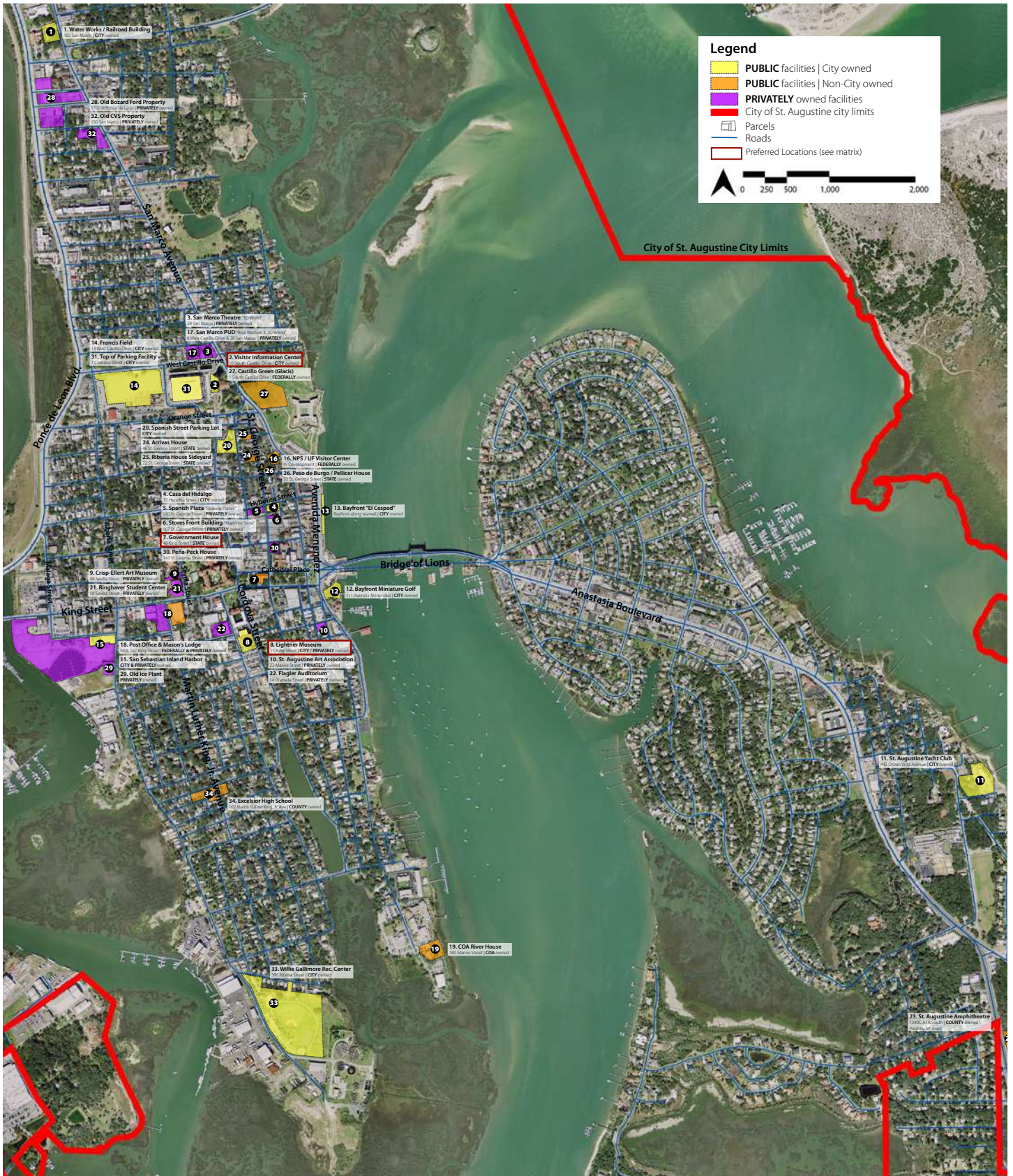
- Romanza festival - arts and theatre festival
- Fashion of the Americas - cultural fashion show in the Plaza
- 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act (2014)
- 450th Birthday Celebration (2015)
- Spanish Culinary Festival
- Gamble Rogers Festival - folk music festival (ongoing)
- Fireworks over the Matanzas - July 4th celebrations (ongoing)

TOP AND MIDDLE | The Visitor Information Center is identified as the #2 location with potential for exhibits and events. It can function as "Celebration Central" for the 450th Commemoration.

BOTTOM | Fireworks Over the Matanzas on the 4th of July draws an estimated 100,000 visitors. Outdoor event space is important to consider for the 450th.



City of St. Augustine Exhibition Space Assessment Potential Locations Map



Evaluating the Sites

In evaluating the 34 sites, a number of factors are important to consider for exhibition and event spaces.

Exhibition Space Requirements

High profile art and museum exhibits have a variety of requirements, which include the following:

Temperature and Humidity Control: Although this varies based on the type of exhibit, some of the most stringent climate control is needed for paper art exhibits, such as the Picasso sketches that have been discussed. Humidity needs to be kept around 55%, and the temperature around 65 degrees, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Sculptures, on the other hand, do not necessarily need a specific climate controlled atmosphere. Museum climate control is also typically not as stringent.

Security: Depending on the exhibit, it is possible that either (a) only the room will need to be secure or (b) both the room and the individual piece(s) will need to be secure. This may include passive security, such as cameras or sensors, and/or active security, such as guards.

Lighting: One of the more critical aspects for the correct display of artwork, lighting will need to be specific to each exhibit. Type of bulbs (incandescent, fluorescent, etc.), fixture quantity, fixture mounting, and lighting control will all need to be considered. Point source lighting is especially important for certain paintings and sculpture. Museum lighting is also important for creating moods and appropriate themeing. However, museums can also have exhibits appropriate for daylight.

Movement and Circulation: The movement of people through the exhibit and the ability to obtain a comfortable viewing distance from different pieces is important to consider and will require planning for each separate exhibit.

It is important to note that, currently, none of the facilities in St. Augustine satisfy all of the needs listed above. However, some facilities are more readily adaptable than others. Four main options lend themselves to art and museum exhibits:

The Lightner Museum (see right) already functions as an art gallery, and the main modification that is needed is better humidity control (dehumidification). The Lightner is especially ideal for small exhibits. For example, the newly renovated “board room” on the second floor has fairly good security, climate control, and new finishes.

The Visitor Information Center can also be modified to host small exhibits. The southern “film” room has one main entrance and exit, which is good for security. This room can be modified to have additional lighting and dehumidification.

Government House is easily adaptable. With plenty of secured storage area, an elevator, loading dock, and lighting, it can be modified to meet the requirements of art or museum exhibits. Given the new exhibit that the Florida Museum of Natural History (UF) is currently designing, any exhibits would likely need to be temporary.

Finally, the **Crisp Ellert Art Museum**, part of Flagler College, has the best exhibit space for artwork. Appropriate climate control, lighting, and security is present. The City should consider a partnership with Flagler College to utilize this facility for small events.



Event Space Requirements

Event space for welcome centers, parties, and special commemorations also have a number of requirements:

Parking and Access: Plentiful parking options and the ability to easily enter and exit the site are important.

Appropriate Utility Capacity: The ability to provide restroom facilities for large events is a critical reality in any event space. Appropriate utility connections are needed for sewer and water to ensure that a facility does not overwhelm the existing utility infrastructure.

Minimal Neighborhood Impacts: As a living city, it is important to consider the impacts that events can have on neighborhoods by considering neighborhood parking, adjacent zoning, and the distance of a location from main roadways (King Street, Avenida Menendez, etc) resulting in increased traffic.

High ranking exhibit & event space

High ranking outdoor event space

City of St. Augustine Exhibition Space Assessment Comparison Matrix

Property No. (Arbitrary)	Ranking No. (* indicates tie)	Property Name	Distance from VIC (feet)	On-Street Parking	Off-Street Parking	Tour Bus	Train/Tram	Loading Dock	Residential Zoning Adjacent	Res. Neighborhood Parking	On-Street Parking Distance from main roadways	Sidewalks to Downtown	Max. Site Delivery Vehicle	ADA Accessible	ADA Toilets	HVAC Type	Storage	Security	Water (Mainline Size)	Sewer Mainline	Hydrant Distance	
1	10*	Water Works / Railroad Bldg.	4,400	12	28 (+83, Library)	N	N	N	N	N	Y	30'+	N	N	Heat	0	N	10" CI	FM	290		
2	2*	Visitor Info. Center	0	0	1,200	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	50'+	Y	Y	DX	230	N	10" PVC	8" PVC	175		
3	5*	San Marco Theater	450	0	21	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	30'+	Y	Y	DX	0	Y	10" PVC	8" PVC	80		
4	7*	Casa del Hidalgo	1,550	0	0	N	Y	N	N	Y (Private Lots)	-	700	Y	30'+	Y	Y	DX	528	N	12" CI	12" CL	10
5	8*	Spanish Plaza	1,550	0	0	N	N	N	N	Y (Private Lots)	-	700	Y	30'+	Y	Y	DX	0	Y	12" PVC	8" PVC	160
6	12*	Stores Front Bldg.	1,700	0	0	N	N	N	N	Y (Private Lots)	-	700	Y	20'+	N	N	N/A	0	N	12" PVC	8" PVC	290
7	1	Government House	2,450	116	47	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	0	Y	30'+	Y	Y	DX	760	Y	16" CI	12" CI	50
8	2*	Lightner Museum	2,750	28	62	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	0	Y	30'+	Y	Y	DX	0	Y	8" CI	8" CL SL	10
9	3	Crisp-Ellert Art Museum	2,270	0	0	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	420	Y	30'+	Y	Y	DX	0	Y	8" PVC	8" CL SL	155
10	8*	St. Aug. Art Assoc.	3,070	8	0	N	N	Y	N	Y (Ave. Menen.)	Y	450	Y	30'+	Y	Y	DX	0	Y	6" CI	8" CL SL	25
11	14	St. Aug. Yacht Club	8,440	0	47	N	N	N	Y	N	-	2,100	N	30'+	N	N	DX	0	N	2" PVC	8" PVC	640
12	10*	Bayfront Mini Golf	2,870	8	0	Y	Y	Y	N	Y (Ave. Menen.)	Y	0	Y	30'+	N	N	DX	0	N	6" PVC	FM?	220
13	8*	Bayfront "El Cesped"	2,050	39	0	N	N	N	N	N	Y	0	Y	50'+	-	-	-	0	N	6" PVC	8" CL	0
14	6*	Francis Field	600	0	20 (+125 @ School)	Y	N	N	Y	N	-	0	Y	50'+	-	Y	-	0	N	6" PVC	8" PVC	100
15	13	San Seb. Inland Harbor	3,480	0	70 (+18 @ Winery)	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	0	N	50'+	-	-	-	0	N	6" CI	8" CL	200
16	5*	NPS/UF Visitor Center	1,220	0	116 (NPS)	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	0	Y	50'+	Y	Y	-	0	Y	2" CI	8" CL	260
17	6*	San Marco PUD	450	0	20(3D W) 36(Hotel)	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	0	Y	50'+	-	-	-	0	-	10" PVC	8" PVC	80
18	10*	Post Office / Mason's	2,600	0	31	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	0	Y	30'+	Y	Y	-	0	N	8" CI	8" CL	50
19	12*	COA River House	7,100	0	41	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	2,820	N	50'+	Y	Y	-	0	N	6" CI	6" CL	270
20	12*	Spanish Street Lot	750	0	78	N	N	Y	Y	Y (Sara-gossa St.)	-	0	N	30'+	-	-	-	0	N	4" PVC	8" PVC	230
21	4	Ringhaver Student Ctr.	2,400	0	0	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	0	Y	30'+	Y	Y	-	0	Y	16" CI	8" CL SL	25
22	6*	Flagler Auditorium	2,850	28	62	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	0	Y	30'+	Y	Y	-	0	Y	6" PVC	8" CL	50
23	6*	St. Augustine Amphitheatre	15,100	0	300	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	0	Y	50'+	Y	Y	-	0	N	-	12" PVC	360
24	9*	Arrivas House	1,230	0	0	N	N	N	N	Y (Private Lots)	-	440	Y	20'+	N	N	-	0	N	12" PVC	8" PVC	170
25	9*	Riberia Sideyard	890	0	0	N	N	N	N	Y (Private Lots)	-	220	Y	20'+	-	-	-	0	N	12" PVC	8" PVC	110
26	9*	Peso de Burgo (Pellicer)	1,300	0	0	N	N	N	N	Y (Private Lots)	-	620	Y	20'+	Y	N	-	0	N	12" PVC	8" PVC	90
27	8*	Fort Green (Glacis)	650	0	116 (NPS)	N	N	N	Y	N	-	0	Y	50'+	-	-	-	0	N	10" PVC	8" CL	350
28	7*	Old Bozard Ford Property	4,200	0	69	N	Y	Y	N	N	-	0	Y	50'+	Y	-	-	0	N	2" CI	8" CL	220
29	11*	Old Ice Plant	4,500	0	11	N	N	Y	Y	N	-	0	Y	50'+	Y	-	-	0	N	8" CI	10" CL	250
30	9*	Pena-Peck House	2,100	116	2	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	0	Y	20'+	-	-	-	0	N	12" PVC	8" PVC	60
31	5*	Top Floor of Parking Facility	0	0	900	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	0	Y	50'+	Y	Y	-	0	N	10" PVC	8" PVC	175
32	10*	Old CVS Property	3,400	11	46	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	0	Y	50'+	Y	-	-	0	Y	10" CI	8" CL	300
33	11*	Willie Gallimore Rec. Center	9,500	0	84	N	N	N	Y	N	N	0	N	50'+	Y	-	-	0	Y	6" PVC	8" CL	150
34	12*	Excelsior High School	5,900	5	60	N	N	N	Y	N	N	2,300	Y	30'+	-	-	-	0	Y	6" CI	8" CL	200

*tied

Note: The full comparison chart, which leads to the rankings, is provided in the appendix.

Leveraging Investments & Partnerships

The ability to fund improvements for the 450th are key. There are two main opportunities that have been identified through this planning effort to maximize previous investments and existing partnerships:



ABOVE | Areas in yellow have been discussed for expansion and enclosure.

Modifying existing buildings to meet current needs: Government House (#1), the Lightner Museum (#2, tie), and the Visitor Information Center (#2, tie) can all be modified to meet the requirements for art and/or museum exhibits. The VIC (#2) is an especially interesting opportunity, as it has space that can be readily enclosed for exhibits.

Supporting the existing City-UF Partnership: The partnership with the University of Florida is already showing dividends. UF recently received planning money for a new exhibit in Government House, which could be further supported through City efforts.

Thinking Out of the Box

Given the short time frame and budgetary constraints, it is critical that the City think "outside of the box". While a new permanent facility (or expansion) may be of interest to the Community, two other ideas are recommended for consideration.

Thinking Out of the Box

The 16th Century meets the Wireless Age...Smartphone Applications

St. Augustine as a nearly 450 year old city is itself an exhibit. Rather than museum recreations, visitors can experience the oldest masonry fort at the Castillo de San Marcos, everyday living at the Oldest House, and the opulence of the Gilded Age at Flagler's hotels...all within walking distance of one another. In many ways, St. Augustine can benefit equally from a "brick and mortar" exhibit space or a "virtual" exhibit space, now made possible with smartphone applications ("apps"). While applications for downtown St. Augustine do exist, the City has the possibility to work with business owners and community stakeholders to create an official tour.

This "virtual museum" app has three distinct advantages. First, the investment for the application development when compared with a new exhibition space is extremely low. Second, the tour can be accessed by visitors during their vacation planning stage in the comfort of their own home. Finally, the tour can be completely customized to the interests of the specific visitor. Three example tours are provided below for discussion:

Spanish Roots: Castillo de San Marcos, Government House, the Plaza de la Constitucion, the City Gate, and the Colonial Spanish Quarter museum, among others

Flagler Era Opulence: Ponce de Leon Hotel (Flagler College), the Cordova (Casa Monica), the Alcazar / Lightner Museum (City Hall), and Markland Place, among others

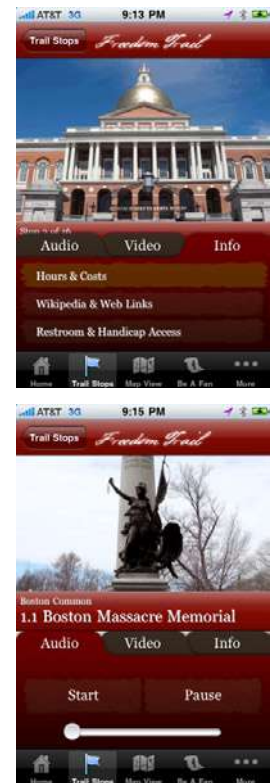
Civil Rights Movement: Monson Motor Lodge (Hilton), Footsoldiers Monument, Andrew Young Crossing, Fort Mose, Lincolnville, and the ACCORD Freedom Trail, among others

Example Application: Boston Freedom Trail

The Boston Freedom Trail, which connects historic locations such as the Old North Church, Paul Revere's House, the Benjamin Franklin Statue, and the USS Constitution with a continuous red line (brick or painted) has multiple ways to **digitally** experience the trail. The Freedom Trail Foundation has its own podcast / audio tour that can be downloaded for \$15. The more interactive option has recently been unveiled by "Know It All Tours", a private company that developed an interactive app complete with audio, video, and text for each location on the Trail. The app also has restroom information, handicap access information, hours of operation, and more pertinent information.

St. Augustine Apps Today

Two applications exist today. The "St. Augustine iPhone App" (iphone.oldcity.com) is hosted by the Old City Web Services and St. Augustine GPS Tours. This includes restaurants, lodging, shopping, and attractions, and it is geared more towards advertising. A newer application, also developed by Old City and GPS Tours, includes a virtual "Shivers and Awe" ghost tour. Both applications are free.



ABOVE | The Boston Freedom Trail application, screenshots from Apple iTunes App store. (c) Know It All Tours

Thinking Out of the Box

“Permanent” Tent Structures

Rather than building a traditional event space that is often underutilized following the celebration, the City may want to consider temporary tent structures.

In many ways, these “tents” feel like permanent structures, as they are complete with storefront windows, glass doors, air conditioning, and insulation. Rentals of the structures range from 1 to 5+ years. They have been used for auto shows, art exhibits (in Miami), the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, and Democratic / Republican National Convention.

Estimate pricing is provided below. It is important to note that these are prices for a 36 month rental, with installation, site preparation, and exhibits being additional costs:

59 ft x 79 ft (~5,000 sf)	\$ 750,000 - \$1.5 million
96 ft x 108 ft (~10,000 sf)	\$1.2 million - \$3.0 million
98 ft x 157 ft (~15,000 sf)	\$1.7 million - \$4.9 million

For discussion purposes, an example site plan that incorporates the largest tent (98'x157') is shown below in the Francis Field events lawn.

Generally, the price for a basic structure, 3 year rental is about 70% (\$140/sf) of the cost for traditional brick and mortar construction. This can meet or exceed conventional construction costs (\$300/sf) for extremely elaborate structures. Their main advantages include their temporary nature, their quick installation, and the cost.

Disadvantages include noise infiltration into the tent and emanating from the tent (which could affect neighbors) and the temporary capital cost. While a large, unused building may be undesirable to the City, this tent will not create a lasting legacy building for the community.

TOP RIGHT | BMW British Autoshow tent structure.

MIDDLE RIGHT | Windows Vista launch structure.

BOTTOM RIGHT | Interior of Miami International Art Fair
All of the photographs above are provided by Pavilion Event Services.

BELOW | Potential layout of a 96'x144' (approximately 15,000 sf) temporary tent structure. The structure is placed on the existing tennis courts.



Study Recommendations

There are three main recommendations that have been developed through this planning process:

1 Explore digital venues

As discussed on page 6, **smartphone applications should be a first step** in developing signature event space for the 450th Commemoration. In addition to the relative low cost of such an application, it can also be easily modified, customized, and quickly launched. This is recommended whether a new facility is built or not.

This “app” can be marketed and made available to visitors once arriving at the city (at the Visitor Information Center, for instance) and/or during the vacation planning stage (on the Visitor and Convention Bureau website, for example). It can even be marketed on I-95 billboards, welcoming visitors to Florida, site of the Nation’s Oldest City. Potential visitors to St. Augustine can begin to plan their visits from the comfort of their car. Data from the sales and downloads of these applications can also help guide future exhibit development.

2 Decide what will be hosted...start with exhibits than can be hosted today

Each and every exhibit has specific design criteria. It is critical that the City select the exhibits that will be featured during the Commemoration very soon. It often takes 12 to 18 months from the time an exhibit is selected before it will open to the public. It is important to note that many of the larger, more visible exhibits have more stringent climate control and security requirements. Many of these exhibits also need substantially more space than is currently available in downtown St. Augustine. It is recommended that the City first pursue smaller exhibitions, such as the Picasso sketches, which can be hosted in existing facilities with minor facility modifications.

Successful exhibitions are usually targeted to specific demographics. It is suggested that the City of St. Augustine first identify at least three existing and/or emerging interest groups, develop programs targeted to those groups and incentivize existing organizations through grants or scholarships to service those programs. Two examples include:

Maritime: Transient sailors might be attracted to an exhibit on the history of the maritime trade in and around St. Augustine. An exhibition of model ships, photographs, charts and historic hardware could be collected and displayed at the Yacht Club and for the duration of the “sailing season” complimentary water-taxi or a jitney service could be provided to-and-from the anchorage.

Archaeology: A new or existing archeological “dig” could be expanded to allow visitors close, physical access to the exposed historical strata via sidewalk and a simple, temporary shelter or roof could be erected overhead to protect the excavators and visitors from sun and rain.

3 Begin design work for a welcome center and/or exhibit hall

Currently, there is not a facility that is immediately ready to host a large scale welcome center, event space, and/or exhibit hall for the 450th. With the Commemoration barely 12 to 18 months away, there is a large amount of work to be done if the community desires such a building. There are two recommended tracks.

The first is to look at **maximizing current facilities**. Government House, the highest rated facility, will have new exhibits from the University of Florida. The next highest ranking is for the Visitor Information Center, primarily due to the close proximity to parking, the ADA accessibility, and the highly visible nature of the facility. This is where people start their visit, and expansions / enclosures of the VIC can provide prime gallery and exhibit space.

Creative uses of existing facilities can also be explored, such as using the top floor of the Historic Downtown Parking Facility for signature nighttime events such as a culinary competition or fireworks viewing parties.

The second is to utilize **temporary tent structures**. Francis Field could be a good location for such a tent for many of the reasons that a VIC expansion could be beneficial. A smaller facility (or multiple facilities) could be installed around the Bridge of Lions / Mini Golf complex. This would have good synergy with Government House and will help draw visitors to the center of town. This exercise might also suggest that a series of small, “way-finding” outdoor kiosks could be located on small but significant sites that would address different themes while linked visually and architecturally.



ABOVE | Potential VIC expansion. (c) Les Thomas Architect, Inc.