

THE **PORT DISTRICT**

MASTER PLAN

PORT ST. LUCIE, FL

JULY 2021



LandDesign



× × ×

Intentionally Left Blank

× × ×

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY OF PORT ST. LUCIE

JENNIFER DAVIS
KELLY BOATWRIGHT

CONSULTANT TEAM

LANDDESIGN

CHAD KOVALESKI
BETH POOVEY
NICHOLAS LEE
LEE STEVENS

505 DESIGN

JOHN WARD
HARRY WORSHAM
MAC BERNHARDT

APPLIED TECHNOLOGY & MANAGEMENT, INC.

ESTEBAN BIONDI

LUCIDO & ASSOCIATES

STEVE GARRETT





TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
CHAPTER ONE: PLANNING PROCESS	9
CHAPTER TWO: MASTER PLAN	17
DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS.....	19
REGIONAL CONTEXT	20
MASTER PLAN: OVERALL	22
MASTER PLAN: NORTH SECTION	24
MASTER PLAN: CENTER SECTION.....	34
MASTER PLAN: SOUTH SECTION.....	42
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	52
NORTH SECTION PROJECTS	66
CENTER SECTION PROJECTS	72
SOUTH SECTION PROJECTS	74
POTENTIAL PROJECTS SURVEY SUMMARY	76
CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXT + KEY FINDINGS	79
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	81
DOCUMENT REVIEW	81
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS + SITE OBSERVATIONS	96
PLANNING + LAND USE.....	93
DOCUMENT REVIEW	93
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS + SITE OBSERVATIONS	95
PROGRAMMING.....	99
DOCUMENT REVIEW	99
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS + SITE OBSERVATIONS	101
COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY	102



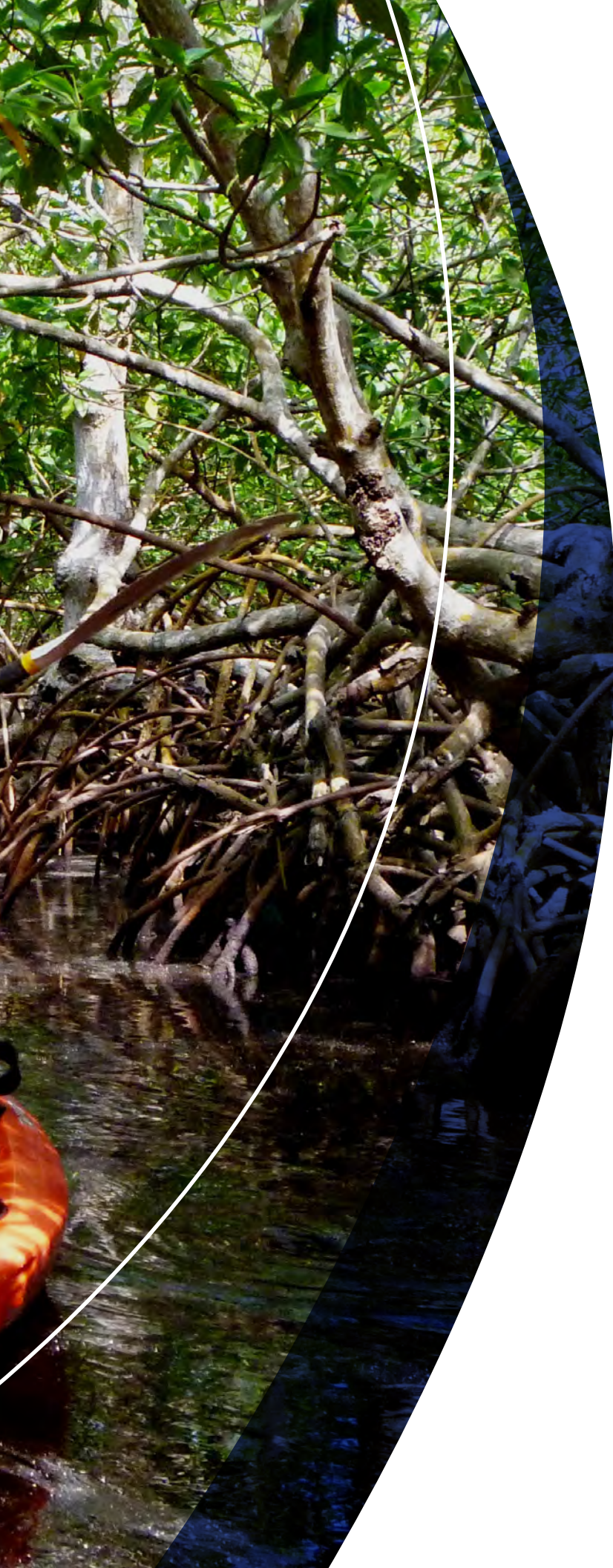
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Port District is a 1.5-mile-long area of Port St Lucie, hugging the shoreline of the St Lucie River. 85 acres of the Port District, which is 30% of the district's total area, is comprised of protected forests and conservation land. An additional 35% of land area is dedicated to parks, open space, and non-protected forested area. With so much access to natural abundance, the Port District has an immeasurable capacity to support greater recreation and beautiful spaces for people to gather. Added programming and development could infuse the area with the energy of new restaurants, entertainment, and public events, making the Port District the anchor of Port St Lucie.

This plan offers recommendations to reinvigorate the Port District, making it the heart of the Port St Lucie community. Fostering a symbiotic relationship between exploration, gathering spaces, and improved connections to district destinations and the surrounding context can amplify the viability of the district and make it a stronger feature of the region. Increased recreational offerings that leverage the natural landscape and vast conservation area will draw people to the district, inviting them to explore the landscape and experience discovery within the remoteness of nature. With ample park programming, the district could attract more activity and events, provide space for public art to take root, and provide much needed gathering places to foster the feeling of community. Introducing dining experiences that capitalize on river views through the development of signature restaurant spaces will make the Port a more exciting destination. Changing how people enter and move around the Port District will increase the capacity of the district to become an unmissable destination. Providing greater support to a multi-modal transportation network will make walking and biking a more enjoyable and safe experience. Creating a cohesive brand that identifies and welcomes people to the Port will improve the visitor experience by making wayfinding legible and consistent and providing opportunities for environmental education to connect people to the district's ecosystem.

Celebrating the river and the beautiful natural landscape that already makes the Port District a beloved fixture of the community has been the key focus of this planning effort. Enhancing the district's natural offerings through engaging experiences and attractive destinations will bring people closer to their friends and neighbors and closer to nature. This plan brings life to meet the river.





CHAPTER ONE
**PLANNING
PROCESS**



PLANNING PROCESS

***THE PORT DISTRICT IS WHERE LIFE MEETS THE RIVER...
WHERE ONE CAN EXPLORE NATURE, GATHER WITH A DIVERSE
COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE, AND CONNECT WITH THE RIVER IN
A COLLECTION OF AUTHENTIC ENCOUNTERS.***

EXPLORE, GATHER, CONNECT

At the heart of this planning effort lies the river. As it winds through miles of largely protected landscape, it tethers Port St Lucie to nature and brings the community to life. The study and recommendations that follow encompass the desire of the community to see greater vibrancy brought to the Port District by capitalizing on the rich resources naturally present, keeping the river at the core.

Port St Lucie is a beautiful place deserving of a plan that can enhance what already makes it special while expanding its appeal by curating an enriched, dynamic experience in the district. The goals of this Master Plan have been inspired by public input from stakeholders, site observation, and the passionate vision of the City Council for Port St Lucie. Preserving the natural resources and abundant recreation opportunities available in the district is vital, but residents want to see more opportunities for Port St Lucie to bring people together. By emphasizing the reach of the river, the area can enhance dining experiences, commercial corridors, and winding boardwalks to draw people to Port St Lucie and make the Port District an essential part of the community for people to gather. Using nature as the catalyst, programming and activity will draw more people to the district, while a re-imagined streetscape and cohesive branding will improve how people arrive in the district and move between destinations. This plan identifies how a refined focus on recreation and community can set Port St Lucie apart.

Three guiding concepts have directed the planning process and inspired the recommendations for this Master Plan: **explore**, **gather**, and **connect**. These three themes draw upon the specific experience of the Port District and bring into clearer focus what residents hope their community can become. This plan enhances the dynamic experience of exploring

nature through discovery within the core of a vibrant and active community center. Enhancing access to recreation will be the impetus for making Port St Lucie a destination for residents and visitors alike to come together for events, activities, dinner, or hiking and kayaking, all set against the beautiful natural backdrop of the District.

The plan curates more experiences of the river by improving access while intentionally leaving the wildness of the natural landscape. Creating a range of accessibility throughout the area ensures that more people will get to experience the recreational opportunities of the Port District while the ample conservation land will still provide an invitation for discovery that asks people to slow down and observe the world on foot. The tranquility of remoteness and the spirit of adventure can exist within the heart of an engaging and activated district. Port St Lucie should be a place where people can create connection through the myriad things to do and reinforce their relationship to the natural environment.

How people are greeted upon arrival and the ease with which they can circulate through the district defines much of their experience of a place. By improving connectivity not just for cars, but for walking, biking, and boating, the Port District can connect people to all the area's destinations while integrating active transportation and sustainability into its fabric.

The river stitches it all together. The physical presence of the river is a linear tether, a consistent rhythm through the site. It provides visual amenity and defining character to the district while serving as the basis for exploration and interaction with the landscape. The river carries people through the district. It is the visual, physical, and thematic connector of Port St Lucie.

EXPLORE:

As Port St Lucie’s natural landscape is among its most prominent, enticing, and beloved features, it should be celebrated. Bringing life to meet the river resonates throughout the plan, but exploring the river-front district through recreation and the joy of discovery deserves a place at the forefront. The recommendations for the Port District blend the familiar with the exciting. The enhanced district will inspire exploration of the natural environment at the heart of this community destination.



Enhancing the Port District’s relationship to nature starts at the water’s edge with increased opportunities to interact with the river through recreation.



Miles of boardwalk will traverse the protected forest landscape and meet the river.

GATHER:

The Port District has the potential to be the flagship destination for the Port St Lucie community. With increased articulation of the public realm, stronger infrastructure for events and programs, and a greater number of retail and restaurant opportunities to support the district as a diverse destination, Port St Lucie can attract and retain people to create a thriving center.

The Port District should create the template for social interaction through welcoming public space and an exciting blend of recreation, commercial options, and entertainment. Providing enough structure within community spaces with the flexibility for people to bring their own experiences and perspectives to it to allow activity to take shape transforms a place into a destination.



Increased retail, restaurants, and commercial uses in the district will provide more attractions, and an improved streetscape can serve as a gathering point for increased cultural programming and activities.

CONNECT:

How people arrive in the Port District provides an immediate moment to frame their experience. Access should be clear and simple and should tell a story about the area. Creating a cohesive brand for the district that introduces Port St Lucie as a one-of-a-kind blend of community connection and natural exploration is essential to curate the experience. Improving access throughout the site means increasing alternative forms of transportation, improving walkable and bikable infrastructure, increasing public transportation, and examining key corridors that carry people through the district. Greater landscaping and shade provision can make walking and biking more appealing throughout the year. Better signage and branding can guide people through the area and establish a cohesive experience that reinforces Port St Lucie’s values.

Parking availability was cited frequently by stakeholders as a concern needing to be addressed as Port St Lucie develops. Many felt parking access was a barrier to the success of the district as a destination. Adding more parking in strategic locations to increase capacity while slowing down traffic and minimizing the environmental footprint is an aim of this planning effort.



More opportunities for multi-modal transit options and better infrastructure to support active transportation will increase the permeability of the Port District.



Stakeholder preference for preserved natural environment and increased recreation opportunities amidst a thriving, central destination were at the heart of the planning process.

Stakeholder Input and Process:

Understanding the dynamics of the site and the relationship of the built and natural environment framed the process and served as a guide throughout the creation of this report. A thorough analysis of previous studies and planning documents for the area and region provided an essential understanding of existing conditions, the natural environment, and the vision for Port St Lucie’s future.

Stakeholder meetings took place both in-person and through virtual platforms during the study to both accommodate health and safety, and to ensure equitable access to meeting events for a larger portion of the community. A survey cataloged community sentiment about Port St Lucie’s assets and identified what residents would like to see more of as the district develops.

Survey responses and community input were used to identify existing strengths in the Port District which could serve as the guide for building community and increasing the district’s capacity. Community members also expressed improvement they wanted to see, including an increase in restaurant and retail options, and support for more community events.

EXPLORE



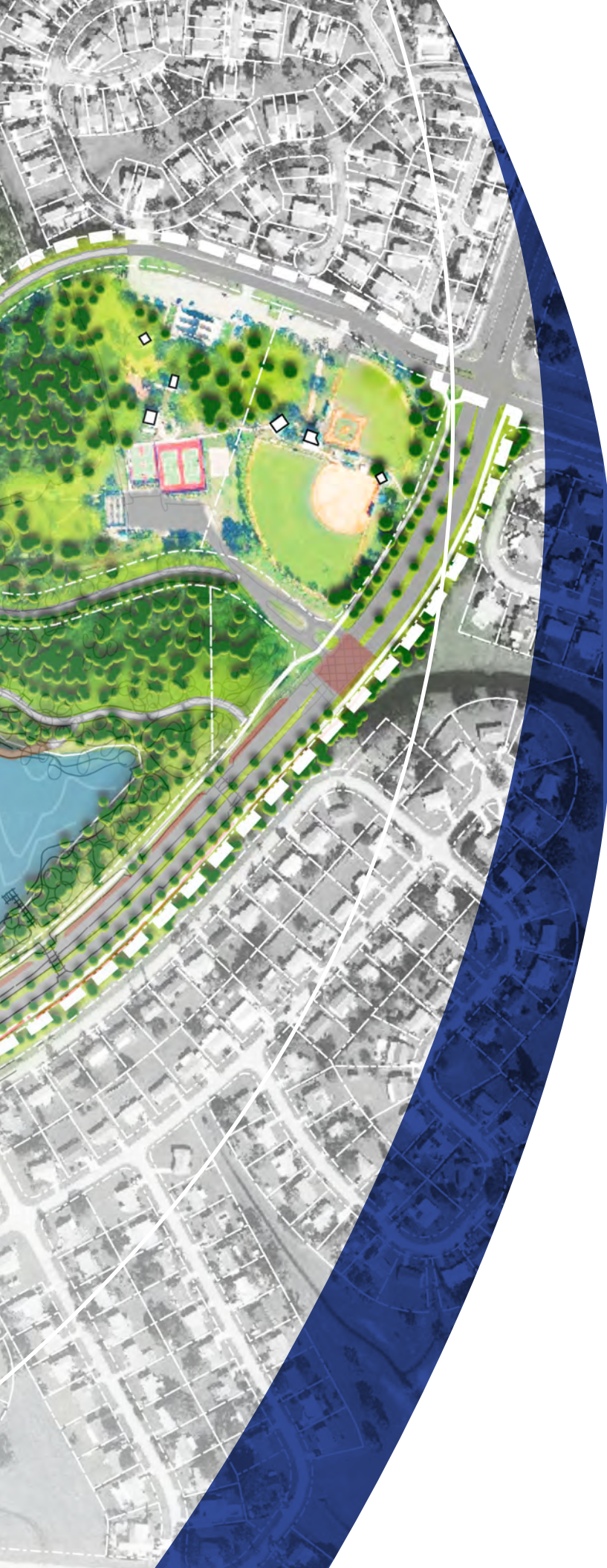


GATHER

CONNECT



NORTH RIVER STATE
WATER TREATMENT PLANT



CHAPTER TWO

MASTER PLAN

" LET'S PUT THE

'PORT'

BACK INTO

'PORT ST. LUCIE'"

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PORT DISTRICT

The following characteristics represent the essence and the potential of the Port District, guiding the development of the mater plan ideas and recommendations.

THE BEAUTY OF THE RIVER

The North Fork is a beautiful piece of the St Lucie River. It offers a multitude of ways to intersect with nature and the serene beauty of the river.

RECONNECT WITH NATURE

Port St Lucie has the opportunity to connect to nature at many levels. Beyond recreation, nature is ever-present throughout the district and adds valuable to the character of place.

STEWARDS OF NATURE

Improving the water quality of the river should be a primary objective, as the river is the heart of the community.

Embed environmental education into the district. Make nature a living classroom with the opportunity to learn about the river, mangroves, and many protected species native to Florida.

Port St Lucie should place sustainability at the forefront; sustainability of the river, of place and of self.

ARTS AND CULTURE

The Port has an opportunity to integrate art into the landscape, using it as a tool to enhance the public realm and create a template for community gathering.

Art that can be eaten, viewed or interacted with should be promoted throughout the district.

ACCESS TO THE RIVER

Visual and physical access to the river should be an essential part of the Port. Proximity to the water's edge provides moments of connection to nature, opportunities to walk along the banks, and stunning visual amenity to the whole district. Create more opportunity to launch both motorized and non-motorized water craft.

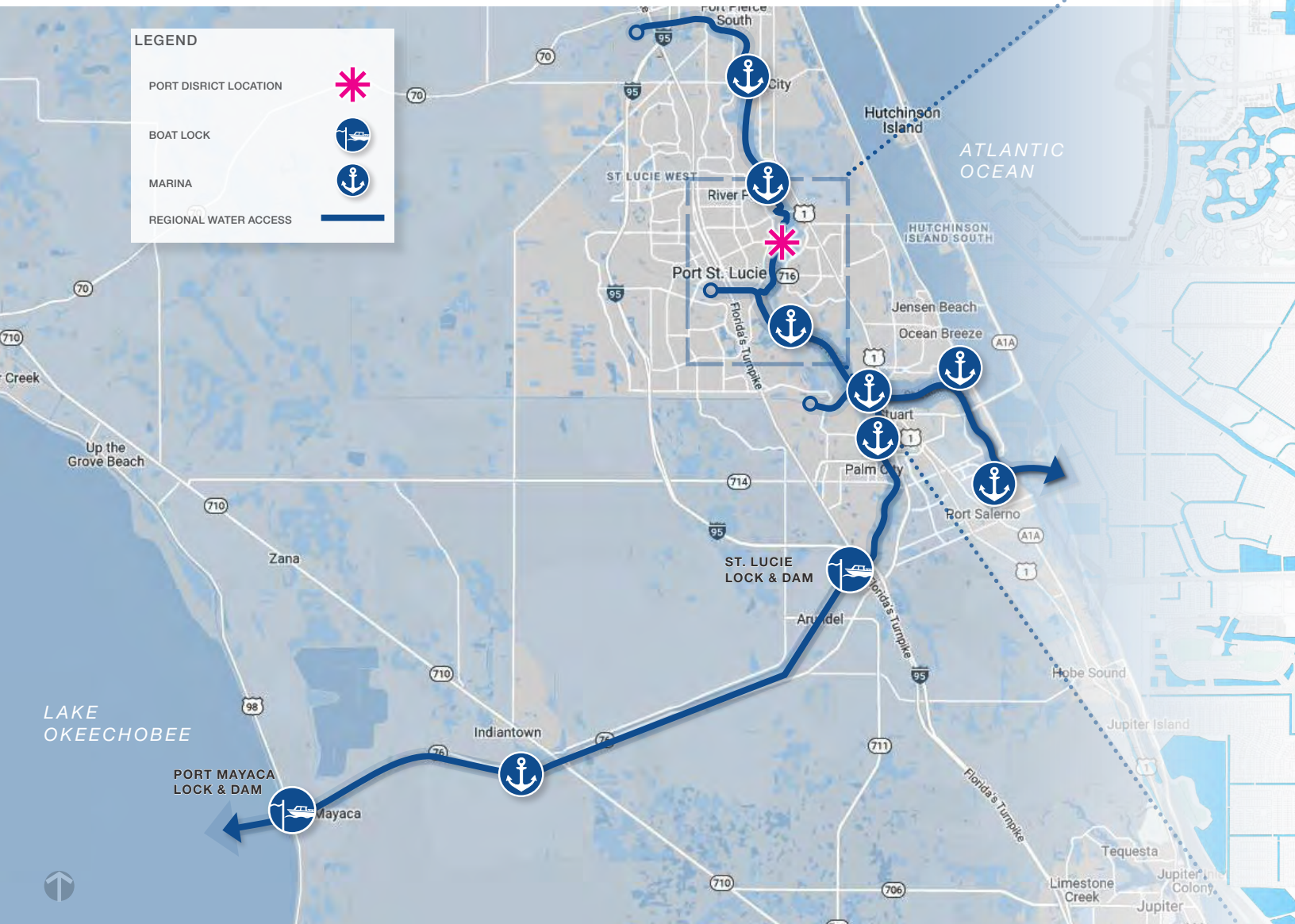
HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Use the natural beauty of the Port and an expanded array of recreational opportunities to foster greater activity in the district. With more curated public space and opportunities for commercial spaces, Port St Lucie will be able to draw in more people to experience the Port.

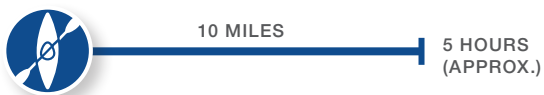
*“ Port St. Lucie has **Great Neighborhoods**; excellent **Educational Opportunities** for lifelong learning; a Diverse **Local Economy and Employment options**; **Convenient Transportation**; unique **Natural Resources** including the St. Lucie River; and Leisure Opportunities for an **Active Lifestyle**. Port St. Lucie is a Safe, Beautiful, and Prosperous City for **All People** - Your Hometown. ”*

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The following maps contextualize The Port District in terms of water access. It is approximately 40 miles from Port Mayaca at Lake Okeechobee to The Port District, and approximately 16 miles from the St. Lucie Inlet to The Port District.



NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL



MOTORIZED TRAVEL










This district has the potential to be a regional destination for boaters and a local destination for casual kayakers and canoers.

Illustrated on the left are primary and secondary access routes in the vicinity of The Port District. There are many points of access for private docks and residential areas, but accessibility to the site can be improved by adding non-motorized access points on the northern portion.

VICINITY MAP

LEGEND

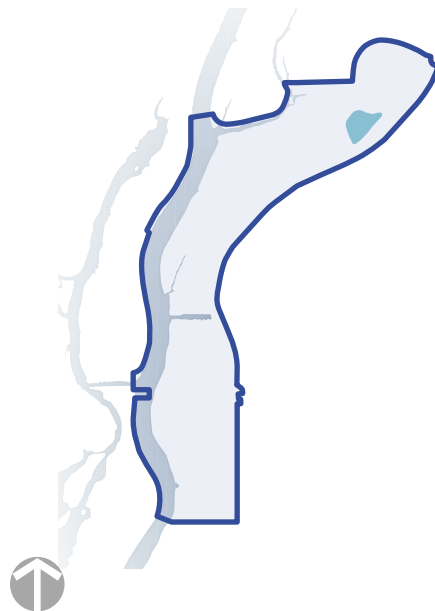
- KAYAK LAUNCH 
- BOAT RAMP/MARINA 
- PRIMARY ROUTE 
- SECONDARY ROUTE 
- PORT DISTRICT BOUNDARY 
- ST. LUCIE RIVER 
- LAKES, PONDS, CANALS 



MASTER PLAN

OVERALL

The project recommendations for the Port are described in the following sections, divided by geography to better examine their place within the district and surrounding context. Starting with the northern third of the site, featured projects are identified on the map and corresponding pages as N.1. – N.10. The following section features the central portion of the site, identifying projects as C.1. – C.10., and the final section describing the southern portion of the Port uses the naming convention for projects of S.1 – S.6.





ST. LUCIE RIVER

VETERANS MEMORIAL PKWY

PORT ST. LUCIE BLVD

NORTH

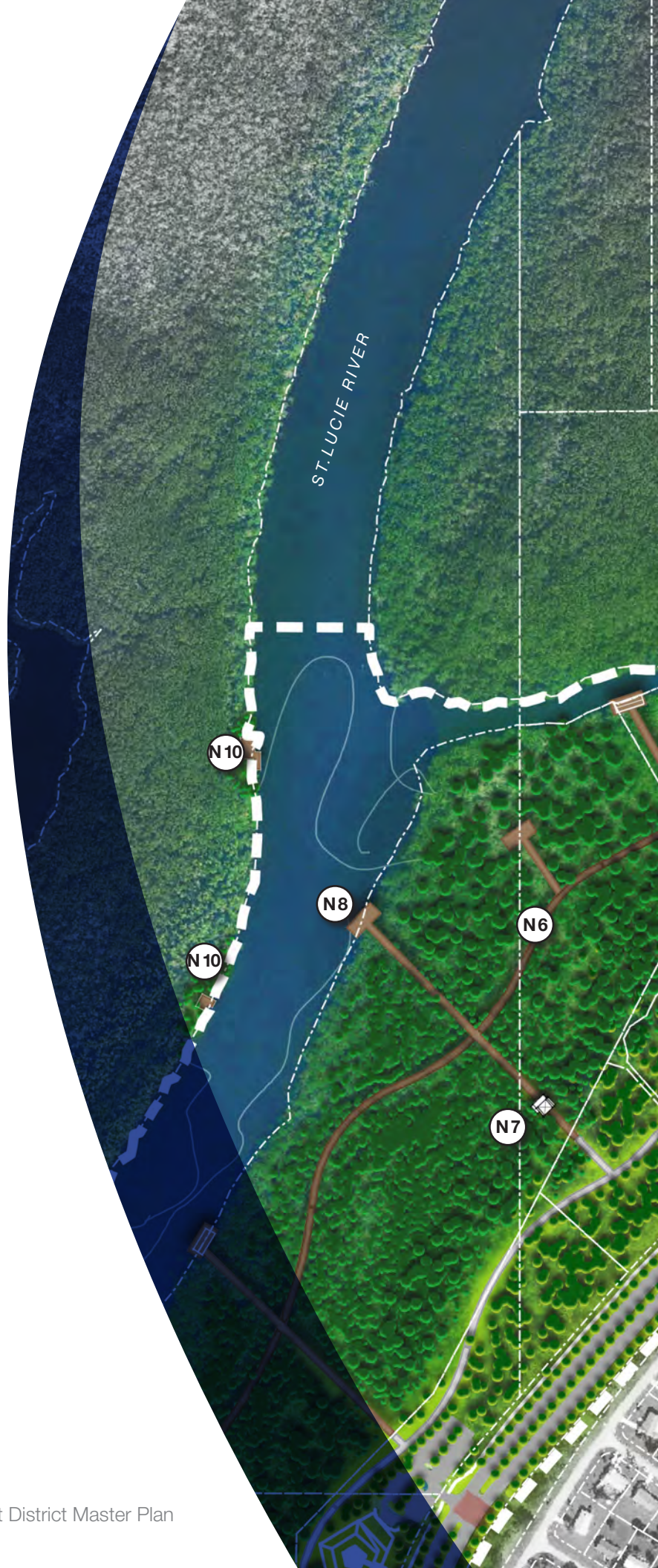
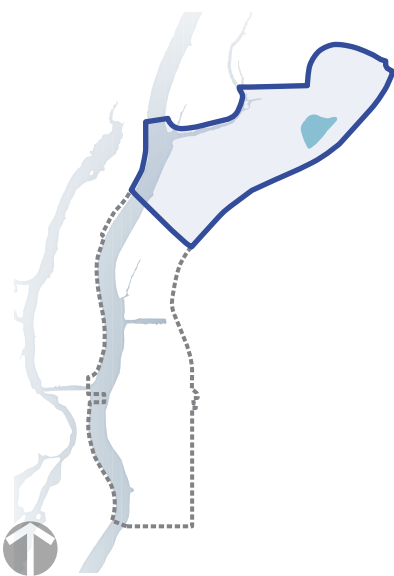
CENTER

SOUTH

MASTER PLAN

NORTH SECTION

- N1** District Gateway Signage
- N2** Streetscape Improvements
- N3** Nature Park and Boardwalk at Midport Lake
- N4** Pedestrian Trail Network
- N5** Picnic Area/Pavilions with Parking
- N6** Expanded Inland Boardwalk Network
- N7** Iconic Overlook Tower
- N8** Boardwalk Overlook and Kayak Launch
- N9** Kayak Launch and Outpost
- N10** Remote Camping Pad





N9

N1

LYNGATE
PARK

N2

WALDEN
WOODS

N3

MIDPORT
LAKE

N4

VETERANS MEMORIAL PKWY

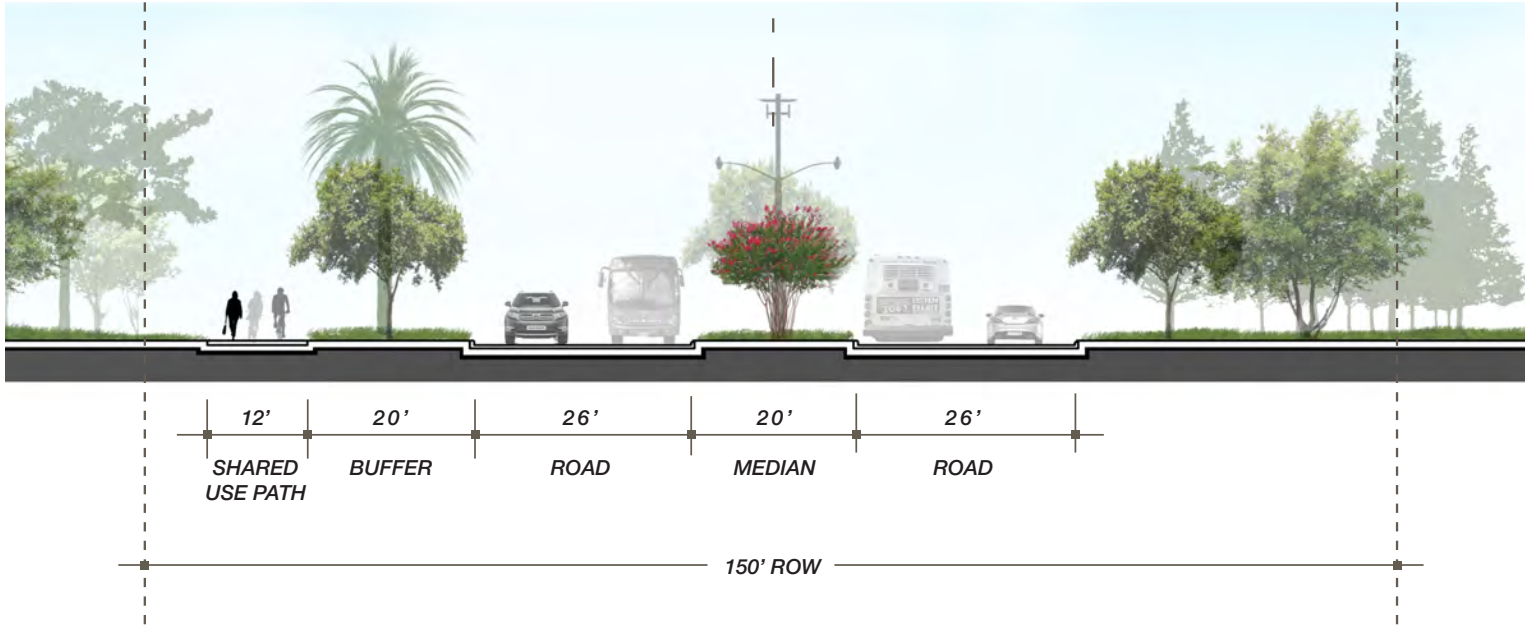
N5

NATURE PARK AT MIDPORT LAKE
OPTION AS "FIRST RESPONDERS PARK" LOCATION



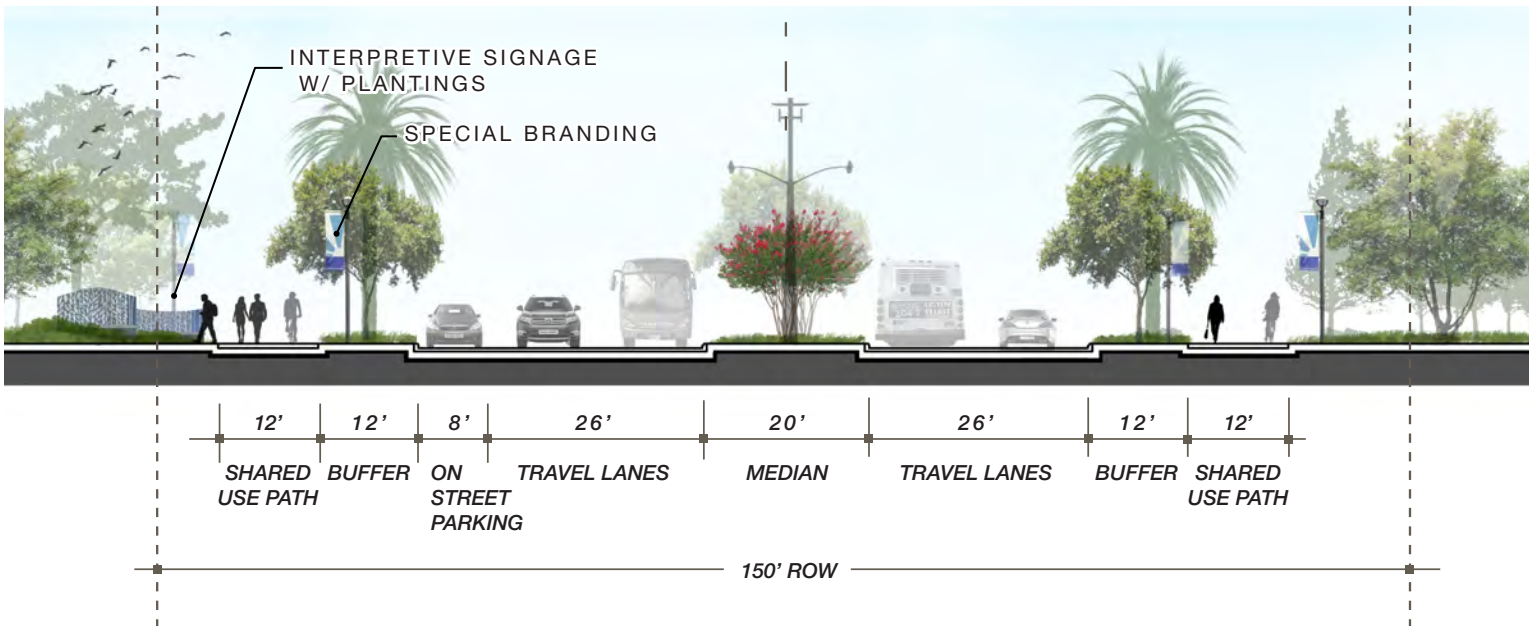
EXISTING

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARKWAY, 150' ROW



PROPOSED

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARKWAY, 150' ROW





**ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION**

**NON-MOTORIZED
WATER SPORTS**

**VETERANS
MEMORIAL PKWY**

REVEGETATED EDGE

STORMWATER
INFRASTRUCTURE





GRAVEL TRAIL

HEAD TO
VETERANS
MEMORIAL
PARK

THE
PORT DISTRICT

ICONIC
OVERLOOK TOWER

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE/
SEATING FEATURES



TRAIL NETWORK + SIGNAGE
THROUGH THE PINE FLATWOODS

BOARDWALKS THROUGH THE MANGROVES



TRAILS THROUGH THE PINE FLATWOODS



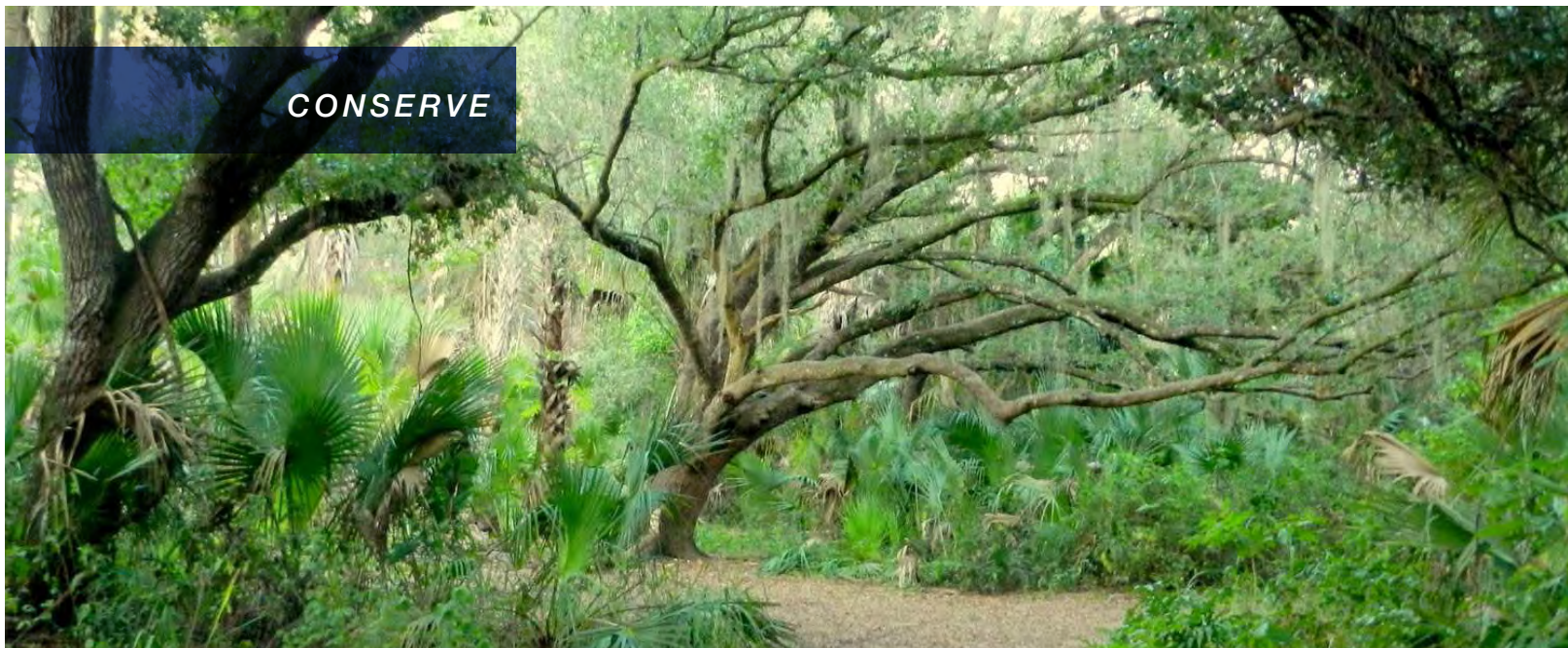
OBSERVE



KAYAK THROUGH THE MANGROVES



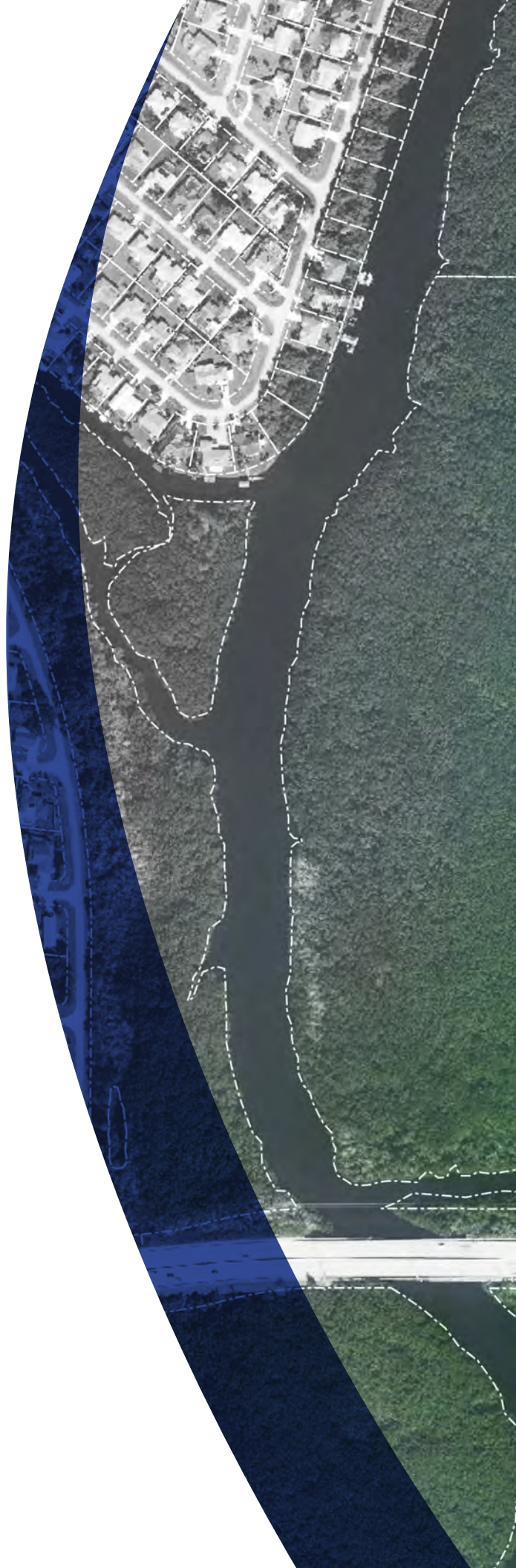
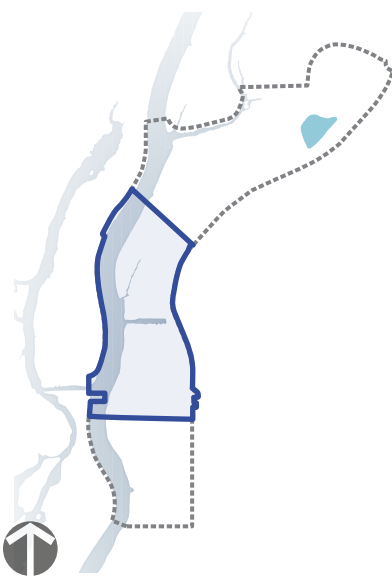
CONSERVE



MASTER PLAN

CENTER SECTION

- C1** *Pedestrian Connections and Expanded Parking at Veterans Memorial Park*
- C2** *Streetscape Improvements*
- C3** *Inland Boardwalk Network with Overlooks*
- C4** *Kayak Outpost and Potential 1961 Building Relocation Site*
- C5** *Kayak Launch*
- C6** *Kayak Purveyor + Bait Shop (option)*
- C7** *Reconfigured Boat Parking at Boat Ramp*
- C8** *Potential Tom Hooper Park Expansion and Improvements*
- C9** *Day-use Camping Pad*
- C10** *Convert Gas Station with New Boardwalk Connection*





ST. LUCIE RIVER

C3

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

C1

C2

VETERANS MEMORIAL PKWY

C4

C5

VETERANS PARK AT RIVERGATE

C6

C7

EXISTING BOARDWALK

C8

TOM HOOPER PARK

C9

C10

PORT ST. LUCIE BLVD

BRIDGE PLAZA

PORT ST. LUCIE BOTANICAL GARDENS



BOARDWALK NETWORK
THROUGH THE MANGROVES

REMOTE
NATURAL AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION



DAY-USE CAMPING PADS
VIA THE ST. LUCIE RIVER

RECREATIONAL
DIVERSITY

RECREATIONAL LOOPS



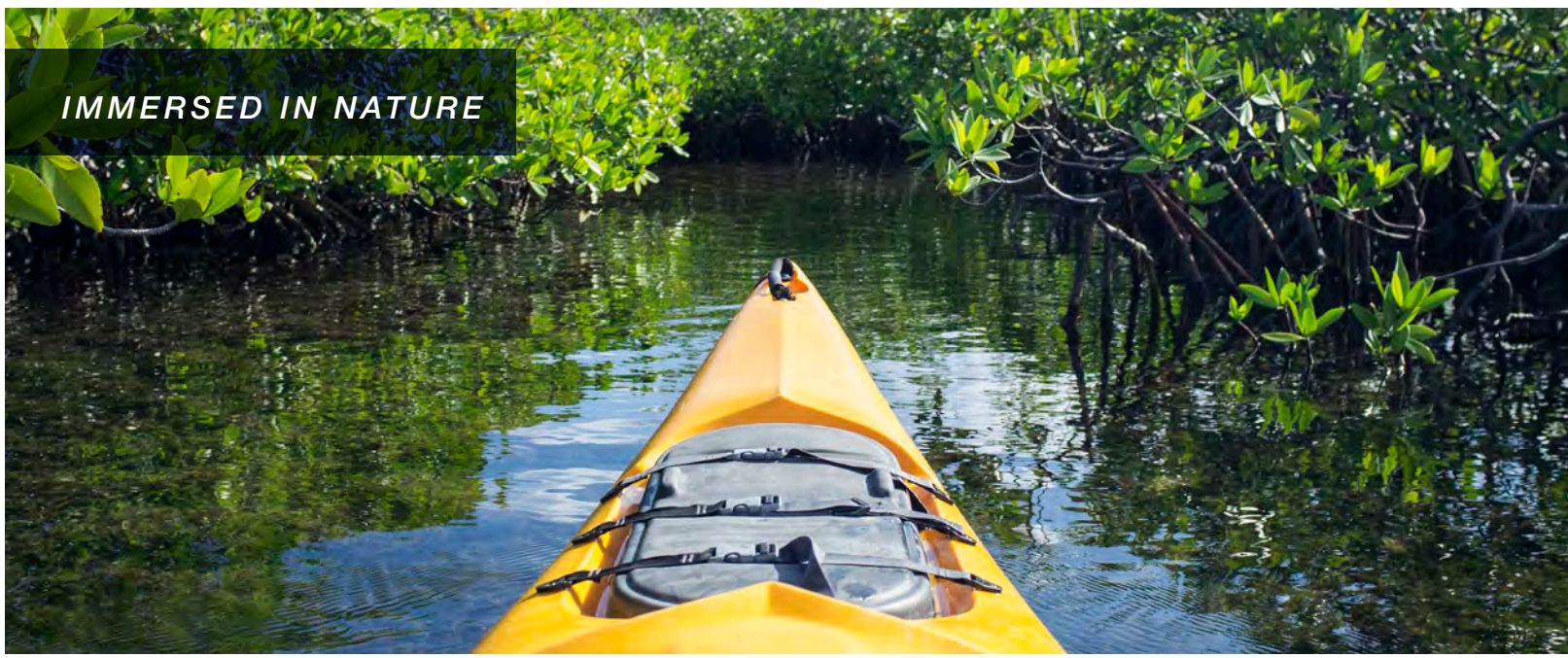
PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS



WATERSIDE DINING



LAUNCH ONTO THE RIVER

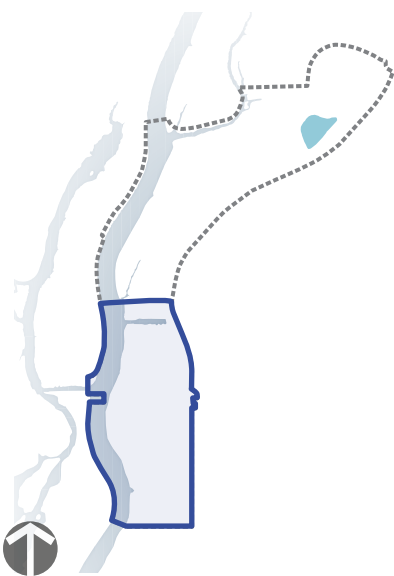


IMMERSED IN NATURE

MASTER PLAN

SOUTH SECTION

- S1** *Bridge Plaza Signature Building*
- S2** *Dining Docks at Pioneer Park*
- S3** *Port District Gateway with Special Signage*
- S4** *Day Use Docks*
- S5** *Pedestrian Connection South*
- S6** *Boardwalk Connection
Beneath PSL Blvd.*





ST. LUCIE RIVER

VETERANS MEMORIAL PKWY

PORT ST. LUCIE BLVD

EXISTING BOARDWALK

BRIDGE PLAZA

PORT ST. LUCIE BOTANICAL GARDENS

PIONEER PARK

CONSERVATION TRACT

S3

S6

S1

S3

S5

S4

S2

S3

An architectural rendering of a modern, multi-story building at dusk. The building features a prominent rooftop terrace with a glass railing, where several people are seated at tables. The ground floor has large glass windows and an entrance area with people walking. In the foreground, there is a parking lot with a silver sports car and a dark SUV. A woman in a teal dress is walking across the parking area. The sky is a mix of purple and orange, and there are trees in the background. White lines and text are overlaid on the image to highlight specific features.

TERRACED
ROOFTOP ACTIVITY

RECONFIGURED
PARKING



IN-LINE GRILL

NATIVE PLANTS



BRIDGE PLAZA
SIGNATURE BUILDING - LOOKING NORTH



PORT
ST. LUCIE BLVD

S1

BRIDGE PLAZA
SIGNATURE BUILDING - LOOKING EAST

VIEWS TO THE RIVER

TERRACED
DINING



S2

DINING DOCKS
RESTAURANT + FOOD HALL



RIVERFRONT PUBLIC
TERRACED LAWN

OPEN-AIR DINING





CULTURAL EVENTS



DINING OPTIONS





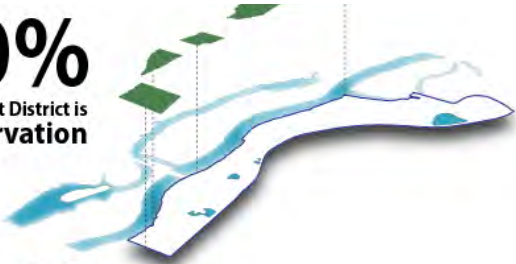
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Port St Lucie (PSL) has tremendous opportunity to combine an exquisite natural landscape with a burgeoning community destination. The recommendations presented here enrich the existing beauty by expanding the recreational reach in the area while adding new destinations and gathering points within the public realm. Enhancing the connection to the natural environment will create space for people to make meaningful connections with the river and with one another. The Port District will secure its place as the heart of the community.

Public engagement and studious observation of the area revealed a need for more activation to establish PSL as a destination. To become the community's hub for connection with nature, events and activities, and fellow residents.

EXPLORE:

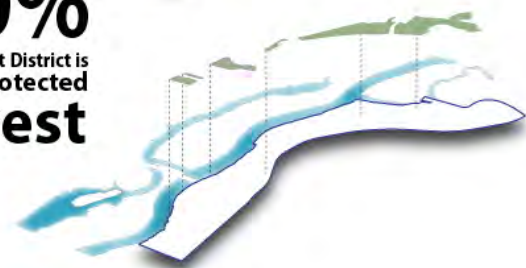
30%
of the Port District is
conservation



20%
of the Port District is
water



20%
of the Port District is
non-protected
forest

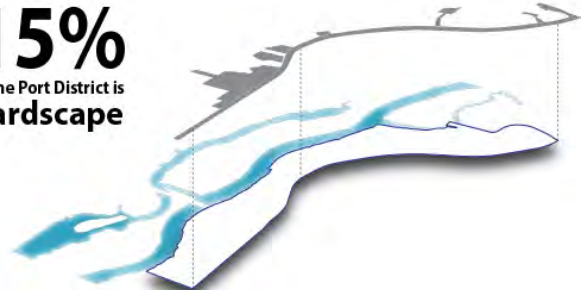


Conservation Lands

The 85 acres of preserved forest and conservation land within the study area present an invaluable asset to the district. Nature gives the area the feeling of abundance. There is ample ground for hiking and camping, and the river provides not only boating and recreation opportunities, but is a visual amenity around the site. The natural landscape brings the opportunity for exploration and discovery, connecting visitors to wildlife and adventure. The conservation land sets the stage for creating sustainable development and preserving the natural ecosystem throughout the district.



15%
of the Port District is
hardscape



15%
of the Port District is
park land
& open space



70% of the Port District is made up of water resources, forests, and conservation land, making the Port the perfect destination for exploration. Open space constitutes 15%, with only 10% of that dedicated to usable parks. The Port needs more landscape designed to support community gathering space so the district can become the heart of the community. Programmed parks provide the template for people to interact and create community, finding deeper connections to each other and the place itself. More opportunities for people to gather should be identified and programmed.

Identity

The river should be brought to the road through branding, signage, and art. With consistent symbols and colors, the district can brand itself to not only direct people towards recreation opportunities, but to bring the river's presence as a defining feature throughout the district. Raised platforms and uninterrupted views from restaurants and streetscapes will integrate the river into the district visually as well. The intersection of Veterans Memorial Parkway and Lyngate Drive is an ideal place for a large-scale work of art that can welcome people to the Port while reinforcing brand and serving as a landmark.



Stewards of the Port District

Recognizable information staff should permeate the area and serve as guides and greeters. These staff members can identify the best birdwatching areas, recommend hiking trails or boat launches, or take reports of manatee sightings and are there to create a welcoming and enjoyable experience. Identifiable by brightly colored T-shirts, these are the Stewards of the Port District-- happy and helpful, ready to guide you in your visit to the Port.



Recreation

Provide a variety of recreation opportunities for a diverse population with varying abilities. Greater access to and branding around recreation in the district presents commercial opportunities and partnerships. Supporting outfitters, retailers, restaurants, and programming can spring up around the vast recreation destinations across the site. This symbiotic relationship can benefit both, reinforce the Port District's brand, and make PSL stand out as a recreation destination.



GATHER:

Place Names

The Port District should examine park names and consider renaming areas to better reflect the spirit of the site. With an improved site-wide naming convention, site navigation would be more intuitive. Names can also support an overall brand and help the Port stand out within the region. Long names and repetition of similar names or concepts to identify different locations leads to confusion. If the Port is to become the heart of the community, names must carry more place-specific meaning and be a tool to quickly identify a destination.



Clear place-naming coincided with consistent branding tie the places within the district as one cohesive experience.

Retail and Restaurants

Adding density and diversity of restaurant, retail, and commercial options will increase the popularity of the Port District as a destination. Food and beverage can connect to place and history in the district and further develop an overall sense of place.

Co-locate restaurants, retail, and equipment rentals with parks and recreation activity. The activation each brings to the district can create a symbiotic relationship between commercial opportunities, nature, and community gathering. All three can be strengthened through a network of activation.

Create policy and preserve space to allow pop up vendors to activate streetscapes and parks for events and programming.



Create opportunities for riverfront dining.



Boat access to commercial and restaurant locations will better integrate the river and stimulate activity.

Open Public Space

While recreation opportunities and preserved landscape are abundant across the site, park space is not. Open public space is critical for building a community center, as people need space that has no barrier to entry for gathering freely. These spaces are important both for hosting greater programming and activity and for allowing flexibility of space for users to define for themselves to best suit their needs. Increasing open park space is important for maintaining ecosystem function and natural cycles through the district, better preserving PSL's greatest asset. Integrating public art into parks can help make them district landmarks and improve how they welcome people and draw them in.

Facilities to support activity in parks are essential, including access to restrooms, shelters, and kiosk food vendors or recreation rentals.



Place public art in open spaces to help activate and add visual amenity to them.



Facilities in park spaces will add programming and improve usability.

Botanical Gardens

Another gateway and pedestrian entrance should be added to the back side of the botanical gardens. Port branding should be integrated into the park entrance to better connect it to the overall experience.



The Botanical Gardens is already a local favorite. Adding signage and an improved pedestrian entrance will better incorporate it with the rest of the Port.

CONNECT:

A Bikable District

To make biking a more robust and attractive option in Port St Lucie, loops should be created through the district that connect to key locations and provide safe, comfortable passage. Protected bike lanes that are lined with landscaping and shade elements for year-round comfort should be added at a scale that can adequately connect the district.



Improved biking facilities will increase access across the district.

Port District Design Guidelines

Design guidelines should be implemented to tie the elements of the built and natural environment together, and bridge public and private space visually and physically.

Expand the current branding efforts to improve the cohesion of the District, including wayfinding, educational and regulatory signage designed to be welcoming and informative.

Healthy Connections

Currently, driving is the most common method to access the Port. But with added infrastructure to improve safety, efficiency, and comfort for cyclists and pedestrians and with more kayak launch points, getting across the district will get easier, healthier, and more enjoyable. To get from the Lyngate Park to the Dining Docks after these recommendations have been implemented will take an estimated 45 minutes by kayak, 10 minutes by bike, and 35 minutes on foot.

Parking

In surveying community members, the need for more parking became apparent. This plan works to thoughtfully integrate additional spaces where they are most needed and where they can serve to slow down traffic and minimize disruption.

Parking should be relocated from the park (to preserve green infrastructure) to the road ROW (gray infrastructure).

Parking can be strategically used to create buffers between traffic lanes and multi-use paths or sidewalks. Parallel parking along roadways also slow down traffic, which can improve safety.



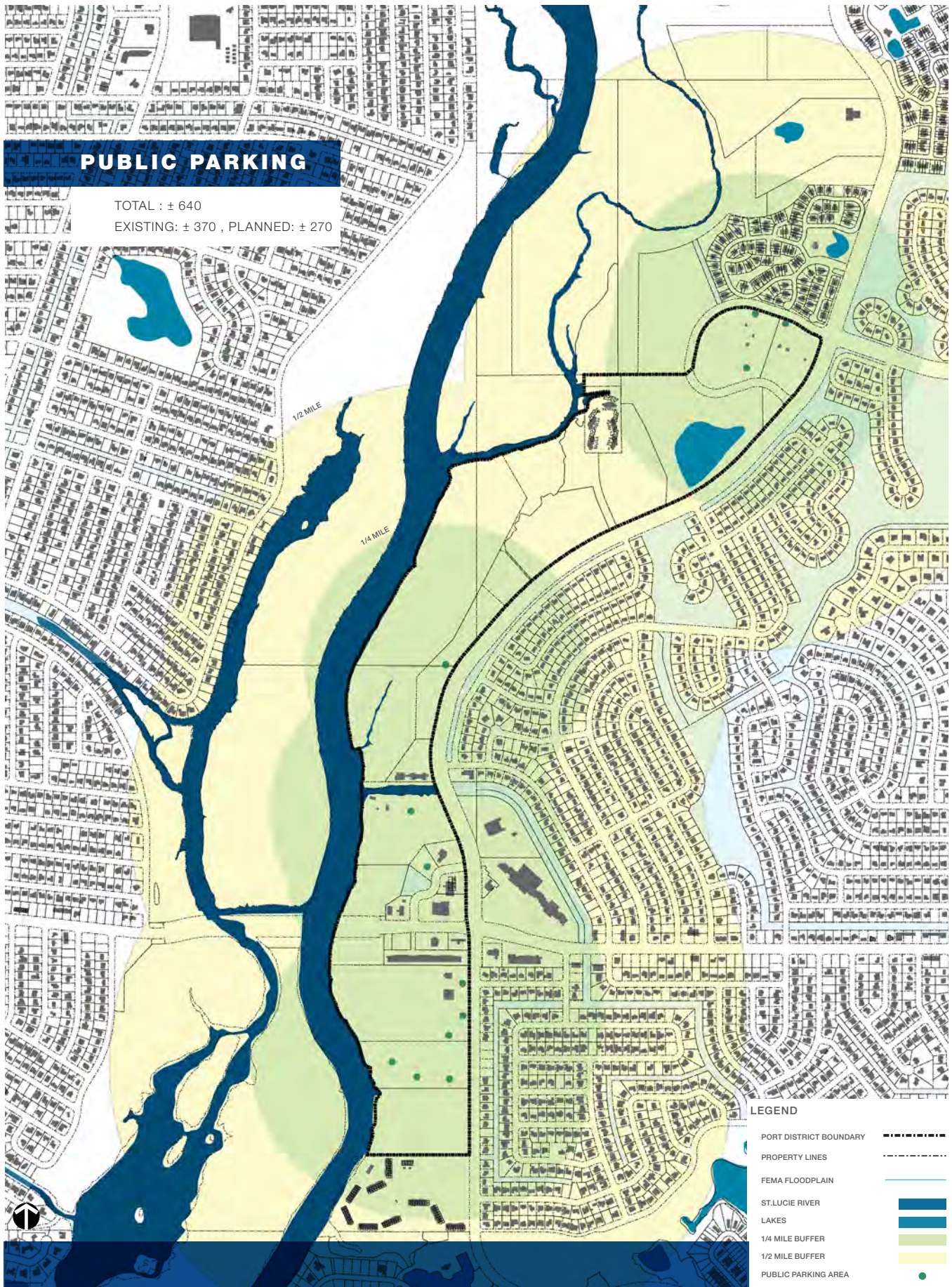
Parallel parking can buffer pedestrian and cyclist spaces to improve safety.

The existing and planned parking, illustrated on the left, show nearly complete coverage (within 1/2 mile) of the Port District site area.

The majority of the parking in the site area is on private property and is concentrated at the intersection of Port St Lucie Blvd and Veterans Memorial Pkwy.

The public parking has the greatest coverage, but is divided across the site into smaller lots.

In order to limit encroachment into protected and green areas while providing ample parking across the site for future use, on-street parking and extensions to existing lots are recommended.



Public Art

Reflect nature, the people of the district, and the river through public art to integrate the values of the district into a tangible, visible element of the public realm. As the river is not visible through much of the site, art can allow the river to permeate the district through representation.

Nature-based art and interactive public art installations can be an opportunity to visually display Port St Lucie's values and connection to the natural environment. Parks across the district, the promenade, and Bridge Plaza are ideal public gathering places that could be enhanced through art. Playscapes can be sculptural, sidewalks could be canvases, and paths could support an art trail traversing the Port.

Celebrations and events centered on the arts can support the local arts community, activate the district, and bring sought-after programming to the district.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Use the Port as an opportunity to implement the Public Art Master Plan

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Large-scale art located at key intersections
- Interactive art and playscapes to draw more visitors into parks
- Temporary installations
- Pop-up art events and art-based public programming

BUDGETARY LEVEL



Art that can visually reference the river can allow the natural identity of the site to take hold.



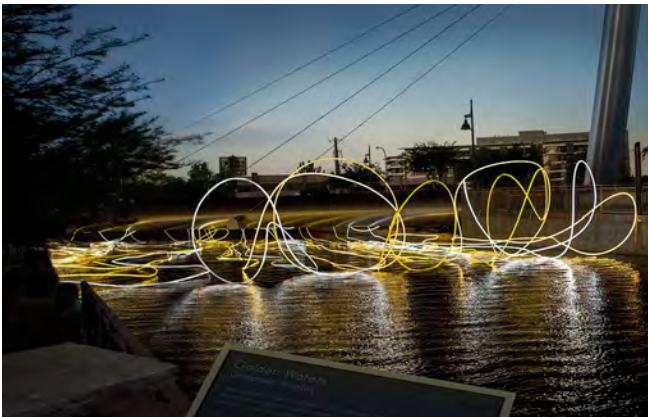
Markets and pop-up events can support local artists, add to the commercial viability of the area, and introduce more cultural events and activation.



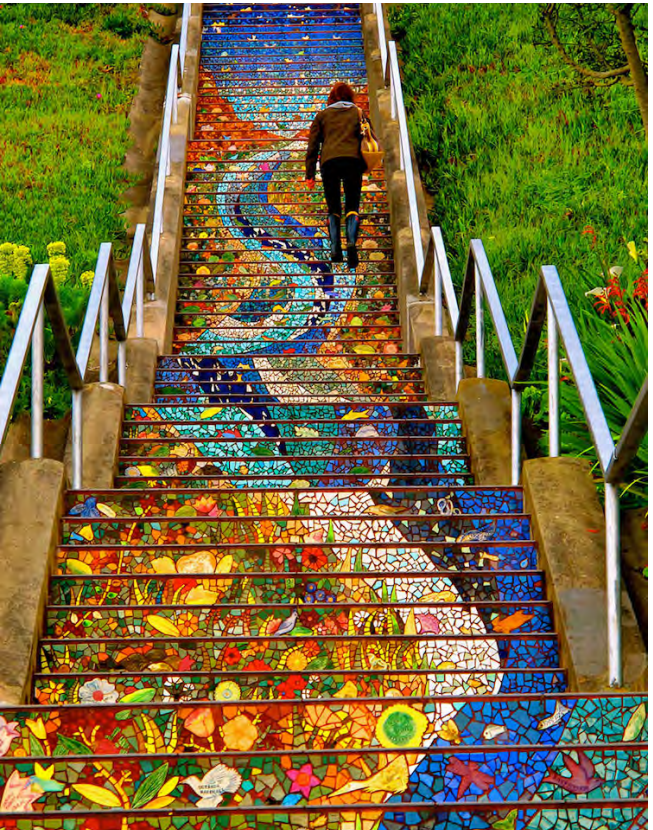
Art installations can spark community events, enhance the natural environment, or serve as a backdrop for gathering in public space.



Implement an art trail through the district.



Use art to enhance parks and open space.



Infrastructure can be a palette for artistic expression.

Community Events

Support for more public events was a common theme of survey responses during the public engagement process. Events and festivals are an important means of area activation that can boost long-term benefit on a short-term timeline.

The capacity for PSL to host community events will increase greatly in conjunction with other recommendations in this section to expand park acreage, improve streetscapes and circulation, increase parking capacity, and create more art and landmarks.

Further study of how to incorporate festival streets into the Port District is recommended so the streetscape may serve not only as a way to connect people throughout the district, but as a platform for gathering and event hosting. Festival streets are a hybrid design that blend public space and safe connection for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists with the ability to use temporary block closures to redefine streets as gathering space. Designing pavement patterns and street crossings to delineate space and create moments for rest and gathering within the streetscape is essential. Using benches, lighting and art as a means of defining space, and signage to brand the district will permanently set the stage for community events to take root in the district.

A Community Events Planning Guide is recommended to create policy, design guidance, incentives, and programming to support events.



Experiential events that can incorporate all ages.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Infrastructure improvements to accommodate pop up events, concerts, festivals that occupy the public right of way
- Funding preserved for supporting public events
- Policy guidelines to ease restrictions on vendors, alcohol consumption
- Additional parking, sidewalk and trail connectivity, and bike network to accommodate event crowds

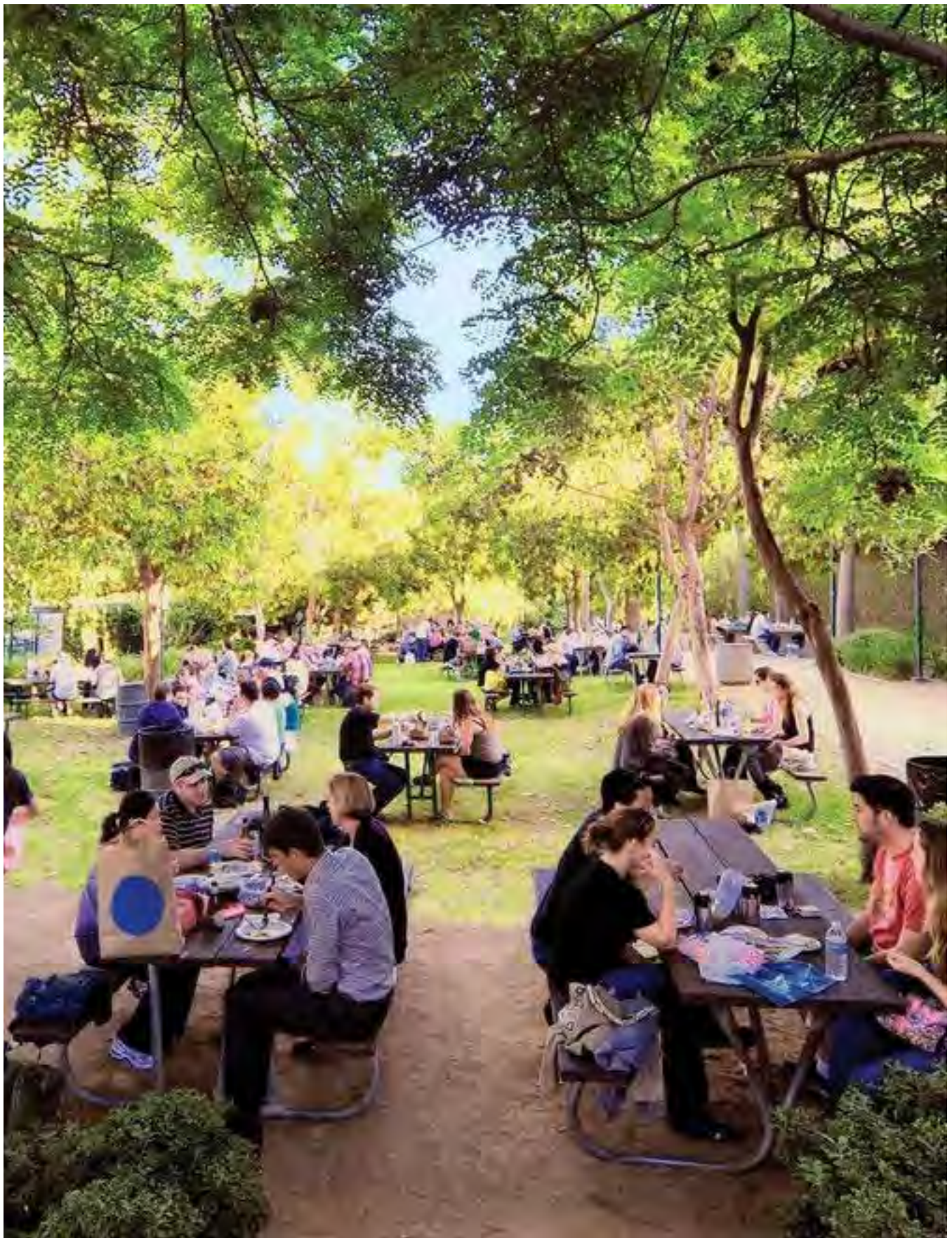
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Streetscape plan
- Designed gathering points
- Future study for integrating *festival streets*
- Create a *Community Event Planning Guide*

BUDGETARY LEVEL



Use art as a catalyst for community events.



Create moments within the district for events to occur, where the community can gather and strengthen their ties to one another amidst the backdrop of nature and entertainment.

The Discovery Zone

The Port District should create a hierarchy of access throughout the natural landscape. Views to the river should be unimpeded to visually connect people to nature wherever possible to allow the river and the natural preserves to permeate the district. Easy access to some recreational activities is essential to ensure equity in offering people close proximity to the rich natural resources the area has to offer. But some of the natural space should remain wild to maintain the beauty, excitement, and tranquility of discovery. An important part of experiencing the port and conservation lands is the appeal that it is remote. The area provides a sense of respite and solitude that is diluted if it is too easy to access. The opportunity to individually commune with nature is lost if the area becomes crowded. The Port District can provide the opportunity to authentically connect with nature.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Increase views of the river
- Improve access to park land while maintaining the wilderness of the conservation land

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build camping pads along northwestern river edge
- Construct new boardwalks to connect to more of the site
- Non-motorized launches
- Fishing piers and overlooks

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



The following zones correspond with the adjacent map. The areas offer tiered experiences of nature that improve accessibility while preserving wilderness.

Zone A- Easy access, community gathering spaces, event spaces;

Zone B – Controlled access / medium intensity - River south of Bridge Plaza;

Zone C – River north of bridge plaza, conservation lands, west end of Lyngate Park, access by foot, bike or slow water craft, this is the zone of Discovery



Camping pads that are only accessible by boat will enhance the recreation opportunities and add to the spirit of exploration.



Maintaining remoteness within the district will preserve natural habitat and ecosystem function while making the Port more of a destination.

Kayak Access Points

Create more non-motorized launch locations that connect to trails and boardwalks for an integrated waterway that can extend the conservation land's hiking resources to the river. More docks, rental kiosks, and kayak storage facilities will also make the river a more viable option for getting around the district, including accessing hiking and dining experiences throughout the Port.

By selectively clearing space to create more views and visual connections to the water throughout the site, the river can become more accessible as an amenity and character defining element. Development should include adding more lookout points and pedestrian-only bridge crossings.



Increase the number of kayak launches, supported by outdoor equipment rentals, food and beverage kiosks, and recreation opportunities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Create more opportunities to interact with the river, including kayak launches, view corridors, and boardwalk connections

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Kayak storage
- Kayak launches throughout the site
- Food and beverage kiosks
- Connections to boardwalks and trails
- Signage and branding

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



Camping pads that are only accessible by boat will enhance the recreation opportunities and add to the spirit of exploration.



Launches for kayaks and canoes will make the river more accessible throughout the district.

Branding

Consider creating design guidelines to establish a cohesive streetscape experience throughout the district. Wide sidewalks with plantings, shade, and protective dividers between pedestrian and bike paths and car lanes can encourage more active transportation. Public art, seating, and ample shade transform sidewalks into usable public space for gathering, and can create the base environment for festivals and farmer's markets. Sidewalk paving patterns can identify zones for cafe seating, for gathering, safe crossing points, and multi-modal transit integration.

Signage, art, and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) in the right of way can visually reflect the values of the Port and reinforce the destination's tether to nature and community building. Using GSI in medians or as the divider between traffic lanes and the pedestrian environment can make interstitial spaces useful, beautiful, and district defining.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Patterned pavers to enhance brand, identify use, and direct seating and gathering
- Enhanced landscaping to create more shade and visual amenity
- Create moments for gathering
- Use signage for wayfinding and to reinforce the Port brand

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Streetscape Plan
- Landscaping Plan
- GSI
- Public art
- Benches and seatwalls
- Branded signage

BUDGETARY LEVEL



Branding will beautify the district and create a more cohesive experience.



Reflect elements of nature and the river in the design of streetscape elements and public art.



NORTH SECTION PROJECTS

District Gateway Signage

(N1) (S3)

The park functions as an important gateway to the Port. It is a popular community park, providing amenities for residents to meet up for recreation and play. Parking should be added on SE Lyngate Drive and Veterans Memorial Parkway along this property to provide more access, which will draw more people into the space, and ultimately, into the district.

The streetscape along the park at Veterans Memorial Parkway should provide on street parking, enhanced tree planting and branding with a relocated multi-use path. A nature walk to link the park to the river could make the park a conduit between the site and the conservation land and capitalize on existing trails. Provide canoe and kayak carriers within the park, and perhaps storage and rental opportunities.



Add welcoming signage that doubles as branding and wayfinding. The above map identifies locations for signage and placemaking opportunities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Gateway signage and placemaking to welcome people to the district
- Improved connectivity to bring the park to the river
- Outdoor equipment rental facility
- On-street parking

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create gateway element with placemaking
- On-street parking
- Boardwalk connection
- Tree plantings
- Storage and rental kiosks

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)





Create a gateway experience at the intersection of Port St. Lucie Boulevard and Veterans Memorial Parkway.



Create a gateway experience at Lyngate Park and at the intersection of Veterans Memorial Parkway and Port St. Lucie Boulevard to welcome people to the district.

Veterans Memorial Parkway Streetscape (N2) (C2)

The parkway is currently a barrier to the site, impeding pedestrian comfort and safety and visually hemming in the district. Enhanced landscaping is needed to augment existing plantings, along with shade elements and wayfinding signage to make the roadway more palatable for walking and biking. Adding a vertical separation between cars and the shared-use path would improve safety and increase the usable potential of the roadway as an active corridor. Adding parallel parking in strategic locations along the parkway will slow down traffic, making it more accessible for bikes and pedestrians and allow moments of rest for crossings. As parking need was cited by the majority of survey respondents as a key consideration for district improvements, additional parking along the corridor will improve the capacity and accessibility of the Port as a whole. Incorporate Green Stormwater Infrastructure into landscaping.

Visually brand the roadway to connect it to the feeling and character of the River. Promote signage that is welcoming and informative not only for wayfinding but for creating an overall brand and experience along the corridor. At the intersection with Lyngate Drive, a larger gateway should be added to the park corner to designate the Port District and welcome visitors.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Make SE Veterans Memorial Parkway accessible and safe to more modes of transportation
- Use branded signage, public art, and GSI to reflect the values and image of the Port

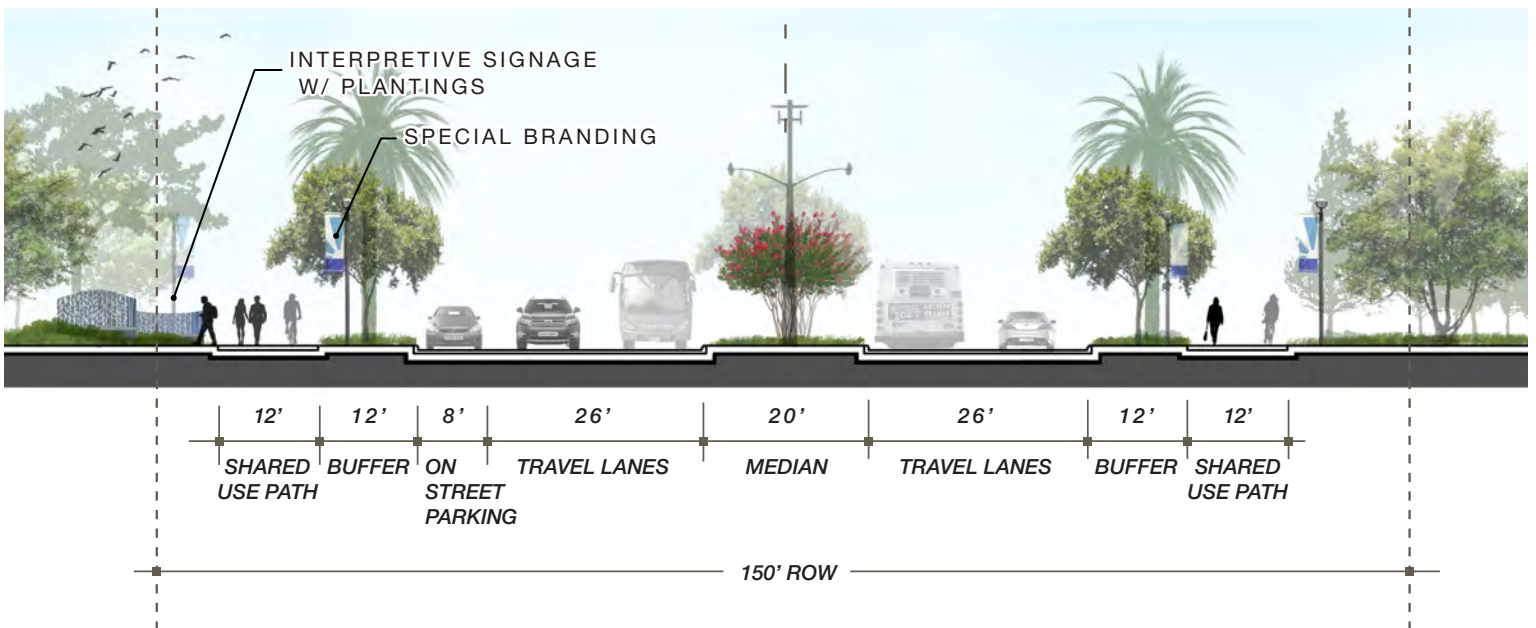
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Entrance gateway
- Enhanced shared-use path
- Signage and branding along the streetscape
- Add lighting and street furniture
- Public art
- Paving patterns to delineate use across space
- Parallel parking
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI)
- Streetscape Plan
- Landscaping Plan

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



Reconfigure Veterans Memorial Parkway with a planted buffer to integrate a multi-use trail, parallel parking, branding, and landscaping to improve safety and access, and beautify the corridor. Existing tree cover should be preserved.

Park at Midport Lake N3
(option as First Responders Park location)

Enhance environmental stormwater management to improve drainage with Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) in the park. Swales that can provide filtration to stormwater runoff before entering the lake can improve water quality and increase natural drainage.

Improve the park’s relationship to nature by returning the lake edges to their natural banks, introducing alligator sunning habitats, replenishing vegetation, and creating walkways through the landscape edges that are ornamental and native. Cleaning the water to restore ecological health should be a priority for natural restoration.

There is a great opportunity for environmental education with branded signage and QR codes for links to more detailed information. Add water quality monitoring live stations to make the ecosystem more visible in the district.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Use GSI to improve environmental quality and add visual amenity to the park
- Create ecological education opportunities
- Restore natural habitat

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI)
- Signage
- Alligator sunning habitat
- Return the lake edges to natural banks
- Walkways and trail connections

BUDGETARY LEVEL

low ————— med ————— high

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)

low ————— med ————— high



Adding boardwalks through Midport Lake Park will offer views of the lake and help celebrate the Port District’s relationship to nature and to its water features.

Picnic Area/Pavilions with Parking N5

Create more usable park space within the Port to increase the draw of the district and the surrounding area. Adding picnic structures here can help define space through programming and increase the potential of the site. The Port needs an influx of programmed, welcoming space that provides enough structure to support activity while balancing flexible elements that users can fit to their individual needs.

Picnic pavilions provide the activation needed and present a flexible, sheltered space that can augment the environment. Protecting from inclement weather and excessive sun, the recommended shelters can provide amenity through multiple seasons and make this a permanently inviting space. Add a parking area to support the space and add to the overall capacity of the district.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Create a new destination in the district
- Use a picnic pavilion to activate the area through multiple seasons

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Signage and branding
- Parking area
- Picnic Pavilion
- Picnic lawn and landscaping

BUDGETARY LEVEL



A picnic pavilion can help define open space with activated elements, while still serving as a flexible space that users can shape to their specific or changing needs.

Iconic Observation Tower (N7)

Constructing an observation tower in the conservation lands can create a destination within the remoteness of the natural landscape. Drawing people towards a lookout point connected by new trails would expound upon the sense of exploration and adventure within the district. Providing expansive views of the river from the interior of the site would accentuate the connection to the river and help provide additional access to the natural amenity.

The observation tower should be visible and well designed to serve as a beacon within the landscape. An iconic design will help brand the adventure experience within the Port.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Add an observation tower within the conservation land to create a remote destination and provide river views
- Connect the area with trails and directional signage

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Observation tower
- Trail connections
- Signage

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



A public observation tower can capitalize on the natural abundance and connect visitors to the river. The tower would also add to the spirit of adventure in the conservation land and invite further exploration.

CENTER SECTION PROJECTS

Veterans Memorial Park Improvements C1

The park prohibits skating, bikes, and animals, which isolates it from the rest of the Port and inhibits accessibility. Loosening restrictions on access while maintaining the park as a space for reverie and reflection can increase the utility of the space as a public gathering point. Allowing the space to be flexible for small gatherings and events, such as an outdoor classroom, yoga classes, movie nights, or intimate concerts.

The 1961 historical house currently located at Pioneer Park could be moved to Veteran’s Park, as it relates well and can enhance the multi-use capacity. The house can be retrofitted for canoe and kayak rentals, picnic food sales, and as a trailhead.

The park area should be expanded to allow for more acreage dedicated to true park space. Additional boat parking should be added for utility.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Make the park bigger to improve usability
- Create more moments for reflection within the park
- Add capacity with more parking

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use public art to establish the mood and reverential spirit of the park
- Expand the park area
- Add boat parking
- Increase landscaping

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



Consider moving the 1961 house to the park to use for rentals or food sales.



Use art to reinforce nature, reverence, and moments of rest in the park.



Create more opportunities for creating a community hub

Tom Hooper Park Extention and Improvements (option as First Responders Park location) C8

The site layout needs to be reconfigured to more logically orient the boat ramp, VMP, PSL Boulevard, and the river. Add on-street angled parking here to increase accessibility and capacity. Increase the commercial uses in the area to create a more cohesive attraction and a more robust amenity.

Turn Rivergate Parkway into a walkable main street with benches, lights, and landscaping. Redirect commercial activity here to free up the intersection of Port St Lucie Boulevard and SE Veterans Memorial Parkway for an iconic entrance gateway.

Boat parking at Rivergate Park should be expanded to increase the accessibility to the river. More parking could increase the park's capacity as a recreation destination, especially if park space is expanded.

The vacant Bank of America building is an opportunity to reinvigorate the site. A study should be initiated to examine options for how best to leverage the building to promote access and activity. The space could be used adaptively to increase programming and provide commercial or restaurant space. Alternatively, given the great need across the site for more usable park space, the building could be razed to create opportunity for additional programmed park area.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Make the park space more legible
- Increase the capacity of the park either through adaptive reuse of adjacent properties or expanded park space

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reconfigure the park components
- Add angled parking
- Streetscape updates, including benches, lighting, and landscaping
- Initiate study for how to leverage adjacent properties to activate the park

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



SOUTH SECTION PROJECTS

Bridge Plaza

S1

A signature building that blends indoor and outdoor dining experiences while providing visual connection to the river should be encouraged along Bridge Plaza. The restaurant could serve as a destination to activate the plaza and channel energy into the district. The design should prioritize opportunities for patrons to gather in a beautiful space and use materiality, height, and openness to echo the surrounding environment.

Build a boardwalk connection west of the plaza to improve circulation and allow for better service access. Add an elevated area overhead to maximize views to the river.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Restaurant space
- Patio space
- Connecting paths and boardwalk
- Reconfigured parking area to better use the available space
- Provides an anchor as a center of reinvigoration for The Port

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage development of a restaurant with patio space and ample views to the river
- Connect boardwalk to the Plaza

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



Restaurant space that provides outdoor seating and excellent views of the river can anchor the Bridge Plaza area and energize the district.

Dining Docks at Pioneer Park **S2**

The park needs to enhance programming to become more of a destination. Adding a signature building that could activate the area with a restaurant and outdoor seating would make this a significant draw for the district. Upper floors could provide views to the river while a flexible outdoor space can allow friends and family to gather and arrange the space to fit their needs. Locating a restaurant near the park will add a point of attraction, creating a symbiotic destination to draw people to the district.

The park should employ signage and design elements to reinforce the overall brand and better connect the area to the Port. Including educational signage about local ecology and history can add more interactive elements to the park and serve to reinforce the Port brand.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Add a restaurant experience to the park edge that incorporates outdoor patios and upper floor views of the river
- Add programming to activate the park
- Use signage to integrate the park to the broader Port experience and nature

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage development of a restaurant space
- Incorporate rental kiosks
- Add environmental education signage

BUDGETARY LEVEL



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION (PER PUBLIC SURVEY)



Incorporate environmental education in the parks through signage, discovery trails, and outdoor classrooms.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS SURVEY SUMMARY

676 
RESPONSES

An online public input survey was administered to identify which of the proposed projects were most important through the lens of the public.

With 676 responses, five clear outlier projects out of ten were identified. The projects listed below speak of an enormous excitement for dockside dining, connections to the river, recreation, and environmental education/ appreciation.

The Dining Docks project has proven to be considered as the keystone of the Port District, having generated the most enthusiasm. Supporting this keystone is all of the various nature-based activities that bring the district life, remoteness, and sustained interest.

*“ Protect and save as much **natural land** as possible for people to **learn** about the **environment**. ”*

*“ Looking forward to seeing the **evolution** of the **Port District!** ”*

*“ The more **activities** for **families**, the better. ”*

*“ Places to **dock** the boat and grab a **bite and drink** would be so nice! ”*

WHICH PROJECTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE DEVELOPED?

TOP 5 PROJECTS



- 6. VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK
- 7. BRIDGE PLAZA
- 8. VETERANS MEMORIAL PARKWAY
- 9. TOM HOOPER PARK EXTENSION
- 10. GATEWAY SIGNAGE

HIGHEST PRIORITY NOT A PRIORITY

x x x

Intentionally Left Blank

x x x





CHAPTER THREE

**CONTEXT +
KEY FINDINGS**



This chapter summarizes initial findings and observations of the study area gathered through document review, site observations, staff and stakeholder interviews and community meeting and survey responses. These observations help inform the planning and recommendations of the master plan for the study area.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

DOCUMENT REVIEW SUMMARY

- St Lucie County Manatee Protection Plan
- North Fork St Lucie Aquatic Preserve Management Plan, August 2009-July 2019
- North Fork-St Lucie River Aquatic Preserve Management Plan - 1984

To better understand the importance of the North Fork it has to be understood in its larger environmental context. The North Fork is part of a larger natural drainage system of the St Lucie River (SLR) composed of four sections: the North and South Fork, the Middle Estuary (part fresh and salt) and the Lower Estuary (where it enters the Atlantic and meets the Indian River). The study area falls within the almost 3000 AC North Fork St. Aquatic Preserve, established in 1972. The NFSLR is a freshwater stream system that becomes brackish near the St Lucie Estuary.

An Altered River

The natural environment of the SLR has been altered since the 1880's to make way for boating, fishing, development and other recreational activities. There are many unintended consequences of these alterations.

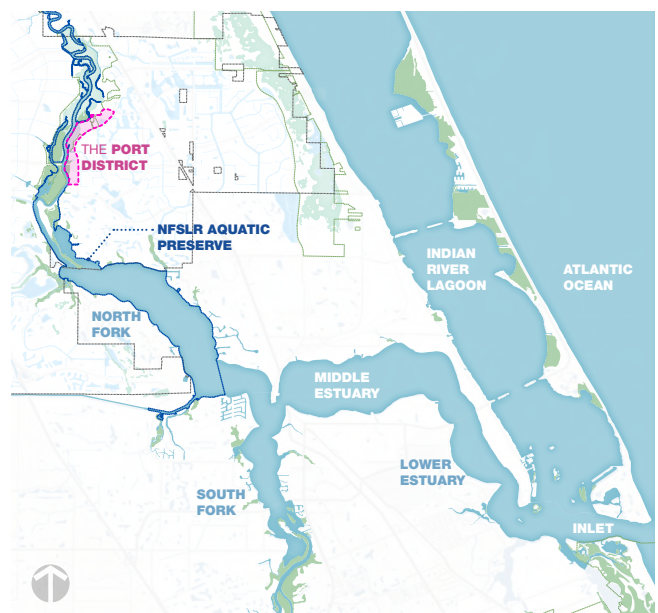
Before 1880, fresh waters from the SLR drained into the Indian River Lagoon. In 1892 an inlet was dug to allow direct access to the Atlantic Ocean from the SLR, which created an estuary. The PSL Estuary is now a permanent environmental feature that provides recreation, environmental, and economic value to the region.

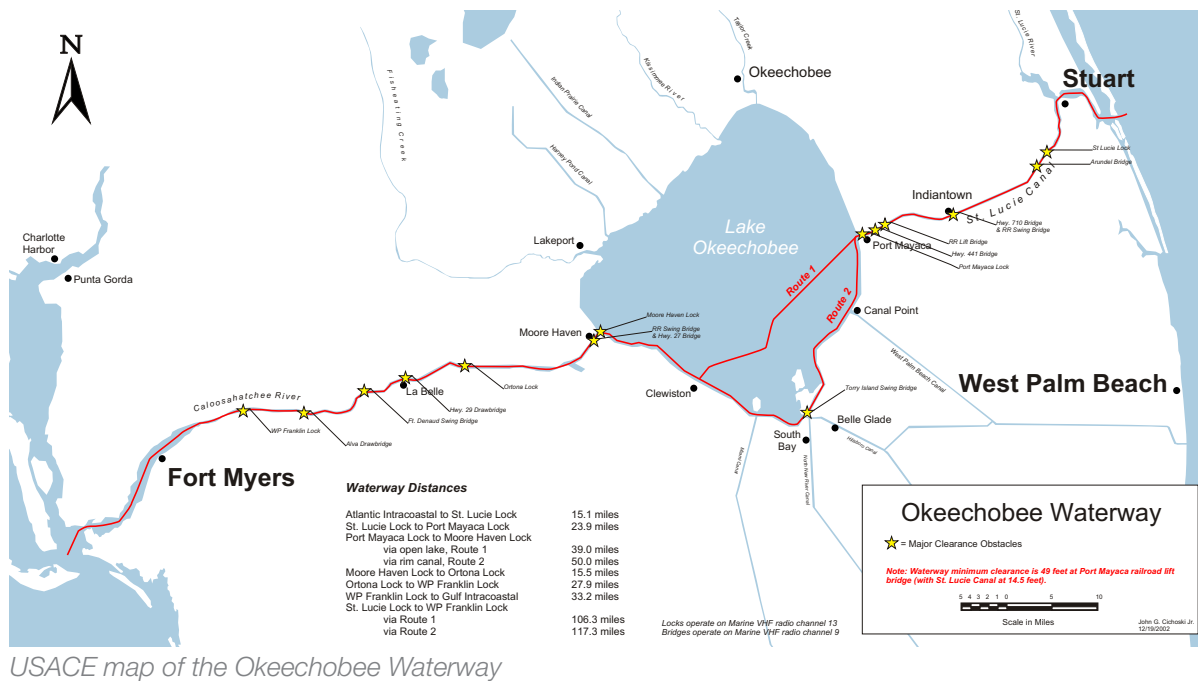
Beginning in 1996, the South Fork of the SLR was dredged and lengthened to connect Lake Okeechobee and became the St Lucie Canal. The

Okeechobee Waterway is a 154 mile navigable canal that cuts through the Florida Everglads, connecting the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico with (5) five lock and dams.

The North Fork was dredged in the 1920's and the dredged sand was deposited on the banks of the river, cutting off floodplains, wetlands and tributaries that previously fed into the river.

Recent efforts have focused on restoring the river's edge by opening up holes in the banks to reconnect channels, oxbows and wetlands to the river and improve water quality downstream.





USACE map of the Okeechobee Waterway

Salinity and Sediment

Upstream activities within the study area negatively affect the downstream estuary through changes in salinity and nutrients. As development has taken hold in the SLR floodplain, the natural function of the floodplain to store rainwater and slowly release it into the SLR has been lost. Freshwater, sediment, and nutrients carried in stormwater run-off now inundate the estuary.

Conservation Easements

The study area falls within the *North Fork, SLR Aquatic Preserve*, which provides protection and restoration efforts along the North Fork as a component of the federal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP). CERP was identified in the Indian River Lagoon - South Plan and adopted by Congress in 2000. Most of the lands surrounding SLR are protected from development and disturbance, although environmental education and recreation are both recognized to be important community resources for residents and the economy.

Waterlevels and Floodplain

The NFSLR is 200 to 400 feet wide, with an associated ½ mile wide floodplain. There are many landforms and associated vegetation and wildlife that provide immense value and are under protection in the study area, including: wetlands, shorelines, estuarine beaches, mangroves and upland areas. The 100-year flood elevation is 5 feet higher than base flow.

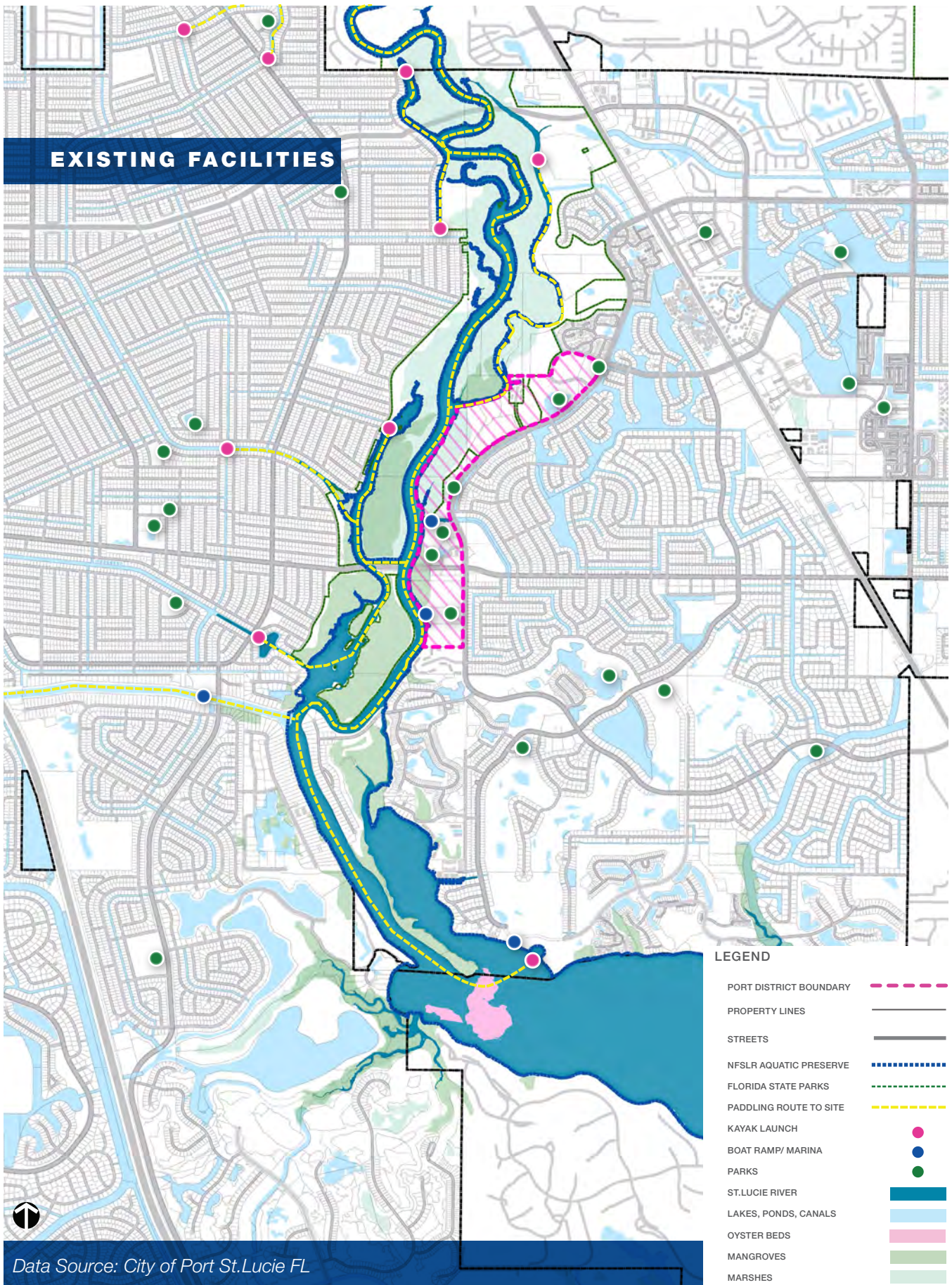
Seasonal Weather

In PSL, summer is often wet, hot and muggy with an average daily temperature of 86F and a 40% chance of rain. It is typically drier October through June (17% chance of rain) and more comfortable in temperature with lower humidity.

To enhance year-round activities, the Port District needs shade, more frequent opportunities to sit down and enjoy natural breezes, and covered spaces to find relief from heat or rain.

“ The North Fork lands are extremely important in linking the **estuary** to the watershed. **Preservation** will provide such water quality and environmental benefits as removing nutrients, maintaining valuable wading bird **habitat**, and serving as a nursery for many of the recreationally and commercially important fish species that spend certain life stages in this area. ”

(Conservation Element, 2010).



Natural Communities

The study area is home to a diversity of plant and animal species, many of which are highly sensitive and under protection.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) identifies three main natural communities in the Study Area, differentiated by their individual vegetation structure and composition, hydrology, fire regime, topography, and soil type:

- Scrubby Flatwoods
- Hydric Hammock
- Estuarine Tidal Swamp

Shorelines and estuarine beaches are other key landforms tied to environmental health that must be considered in the planning process.

Shorelines

Protection Sec 157.24 PSL Code of Ordinances prioritizes land use along the shoreline:

1. Water-dependent uses such as production or protection of



fish, shellfish and wildlife; protection or conservation of coastal and natural resources; recreation, public access, and navigation, provided they have no significant adverse impact upon the land, water or adjacent land uses.

2. Water-related or water-enhanced uses such as recreation.
3. Scenic waterfront communities.
4. Uses which are not water-dependent or water-related which do not result in a diminution of coastal resources, and which are compatible with existing or committed uses in the city.

It is important to note that public access and environmental protection are the highest priorities for shoreline use.

Estuarine Beaches

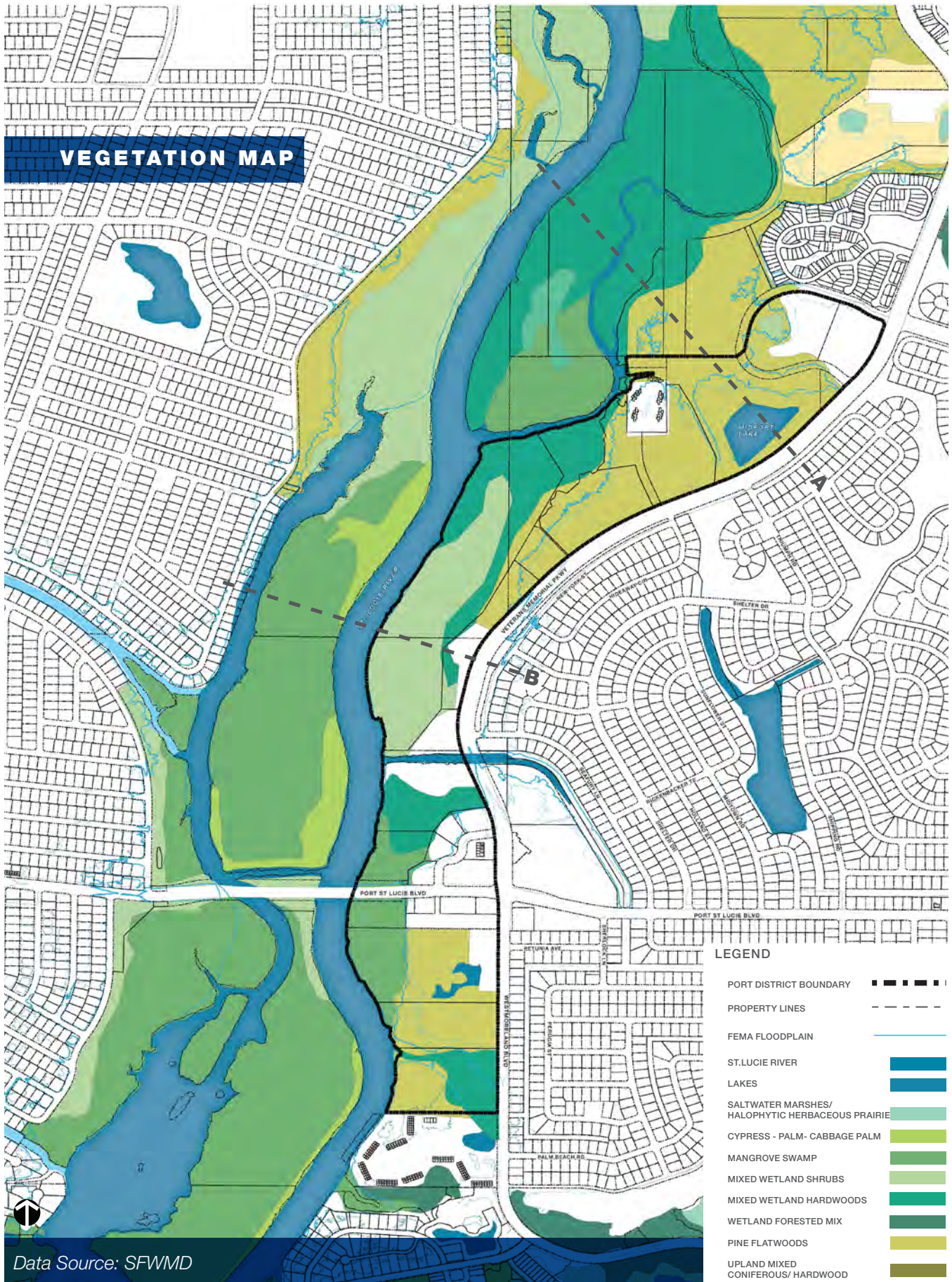
Natural sandy beaches play an important role in the natural shoreline dynamics and should not be altered. The restoration of estuarine beaches is encouraged through the removal of exotic species, landscaping and the removal of shore protection structure is feasible.



“ State and county-owned public lands with **natural** shorelines provide a **wildlife** corridor which connects a variety of **natural communities** and facilitates to a **wilderness experience** that is easily **accessible** to the residents of White City, Port St. Lucie, and Stuart. ”

(North-Fork-St-Lucie-AP-Management-Plan)

VEGETATION MAP

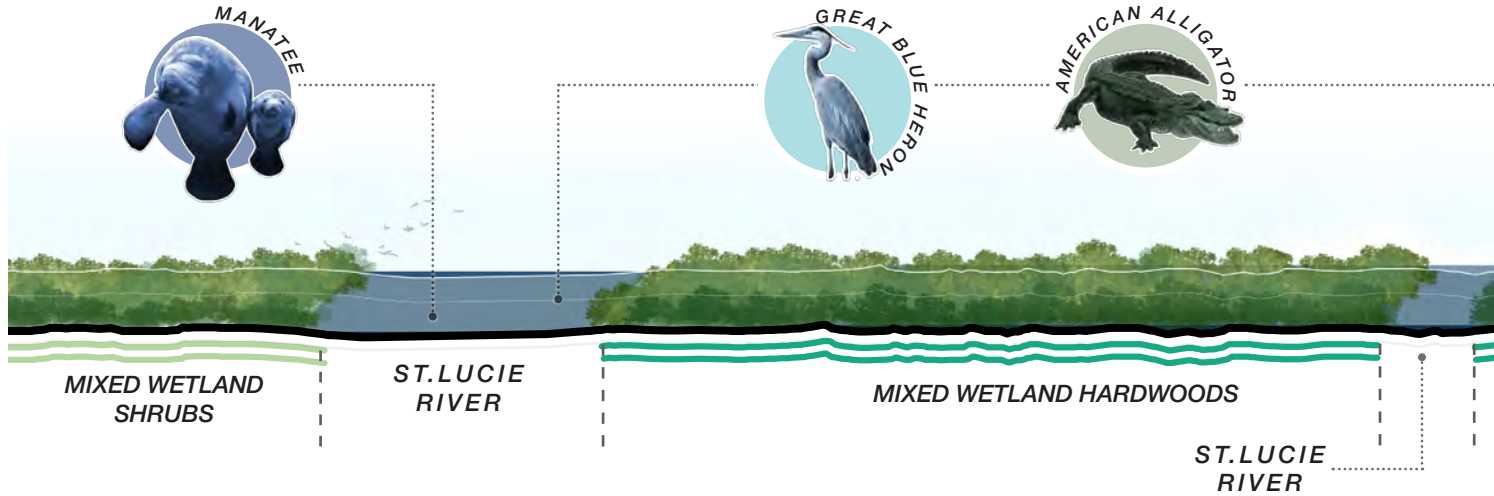


LEGEND

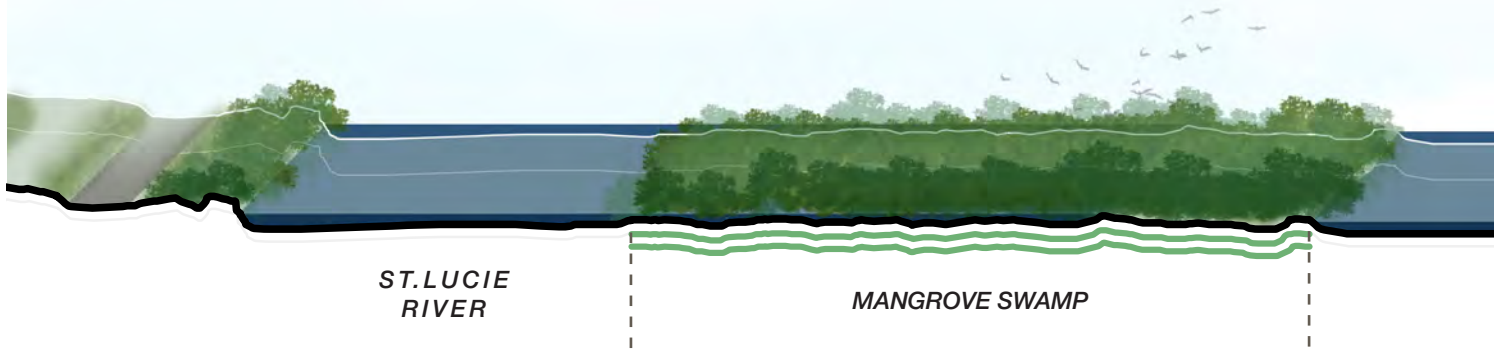
PORT DISTRICT BOUNDARY	— — — — —
PROPERTY LINES	- - - - -
FEMA FLOODPLAIN	— — — — —
ST. LUCIE RIVER	█
LAKES	█
SALTWATER MARSHES/ HALOPHYTIC HERBACEOUS PRAIRIE	█
CYPRESS - PALM - CABBAGE PALM	█
MANGROVE SWAMP	█
MIXED WETLAND SHRUBS	█
MIXED WETLAND HARDWOODS	█
WETLAND FORESTED MIX	█
PINE FLATWOODS	█
UPLAND MIXED CONIFEROUS/ HARDWOOD	█

Data Source: SFWMD

SECTION A
ST.LUCIE RIVER - MIDPORT LAKE



SECTION B
ST.LUCIE RIVER - VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK



PSL Study Area is unique in the quantity of protected and conserved open space that provides a rich habitat for protected and endangered species. This habitat is not only an environmental resource, but provides that essence of authenticity and individuality that should define the “Port” brand.

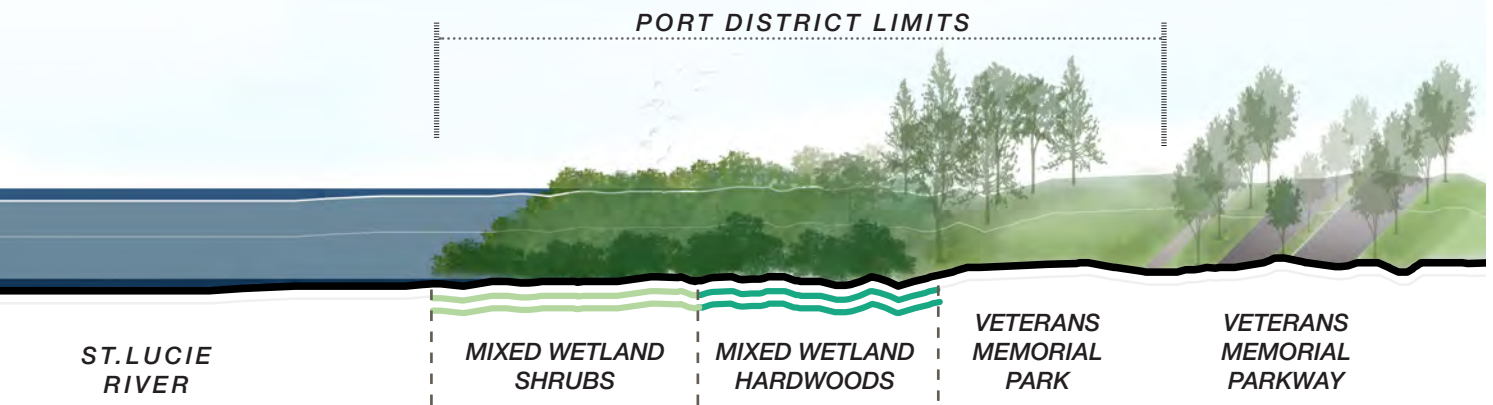
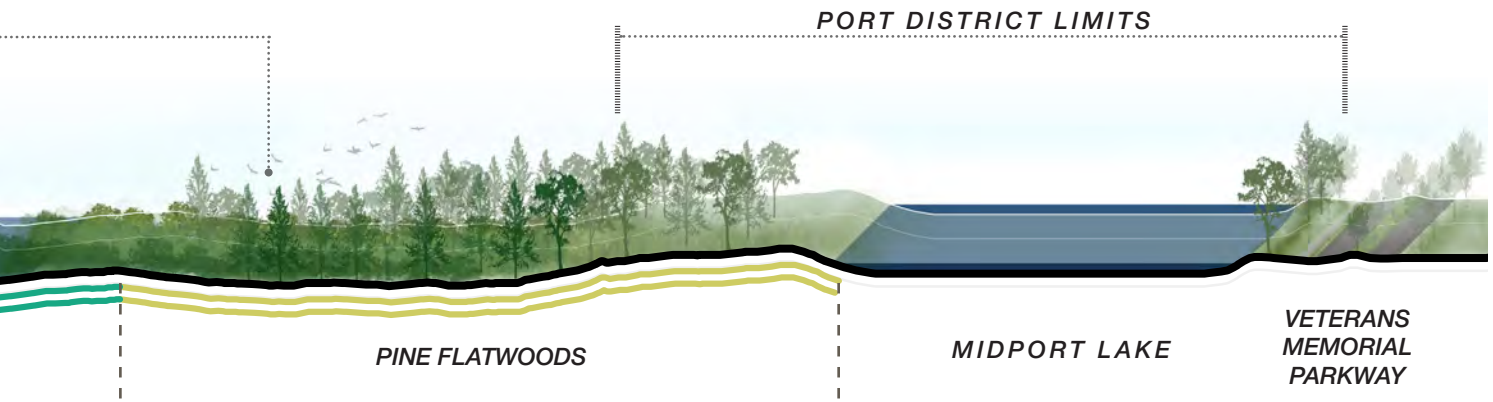
Mangroves

The Mangrove forest system is protected and any alteration must go through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to obtain permitting. The Department ensures all requirements are met.

Florida Manatee

Manatees, protected under the Endangered Species Act, live in the North Fork of the St Lucie River. Water pollution from canals, sediment, non-native floating species, muck, and boating interfere with their existence.





American Alligator

As the official state reptile of Florida, the alligator has an enormous habitat range. An alligator can live in fresh or brackish water, which encompasses canals, lakes, marshes, swamps, rivers, creeks, and ponds. Preserving these green corridors is essential because without alligators, many other species supported by their presence would suffer as well.

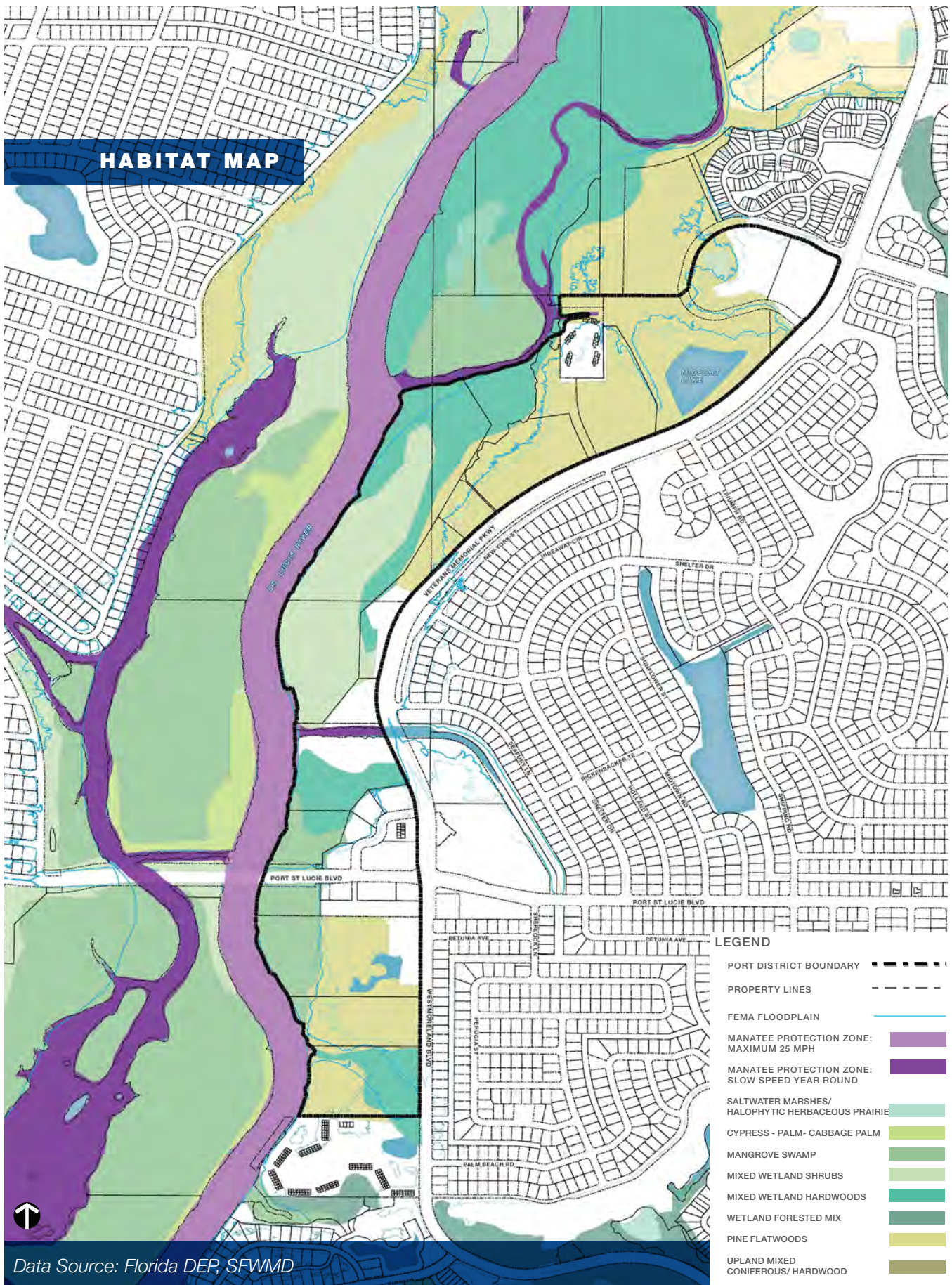


Great Blue Heron

One of many water bird species to call this area home, Great Blue Herons rely on trees and mangroves for their nesting colonies. Preserving their natural habitat is crucial because, as a keystone species, herons keep other species, like frogs, insects, and lizards, from becoming too prolific, which would create an environmental imbalance.



HABITAT MAP

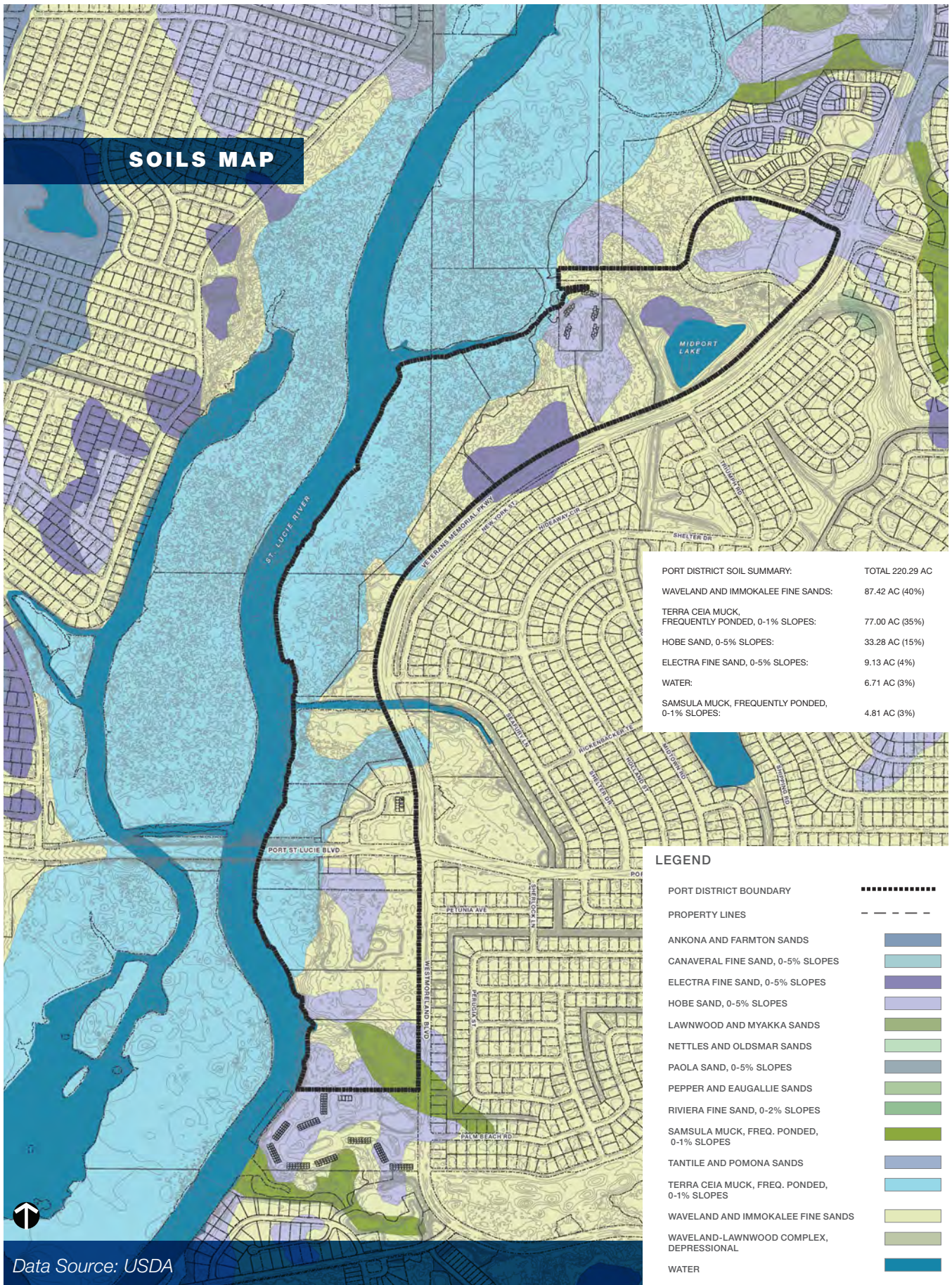


LEGEND

- PORT DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- PROPERTY LINES
- FEMA FLOODPLAIN
- MANATEE PROTECTION ZONE: MAXIMUM 25 MPH
- MANATEE PROTECTION ZONE: SLOW SPEED YEAR ROUND
- SALTWATER MARSHES/ HALOPHYTIC HERBACEOUS PRAIRIE
- CYPRESS - PALM - CABBAGE PALM
- MANGROVE SWAMP
- MIXED WETLAND SHRUBS
- MIXED WETLAND HARDWOODS
- WETLAND FORESTED MIX
- PINE FLATWOODS
- UPLAND MIXED CONIFEROUS/ HARDWOOD

Data Source: Florida DEP, SFWMD

SOILS MAP



PORT DISTRICT SOIL SUMMARY:		TOTAL 220.29 AC
WAVELAND AND IMMOKALEE FINE SANDS:		87.42 AC (40%)
TERRA CEIA MUCK, FREQUENTLY PONDED, 0-1% SLOPES:		77.00 AC (35%)
HOBE SAND, 0-5% SLOPES:		33.28 AC (15%)
ELECTRA FINE SAND, 0-5% SLOPES:		9.13 AC (4%)
WATER:		6.71 AC (3%)
SAMSULA MUCK, FREQUENTLY PONDED, 0-1% SLOPES:		4.81 AC (3%)

LEGEND

- PORT DISTRICT BOUNDARY - - - - -
- PROPERTY LINES - - - - -
- ANKONA AND FARMTON SANDS [Dark Blue Box]
- CANAVERAL FINE SAND, 0-5% SLOPES [Light Blue Box]
- ELECTRA FINE SAND, 0-5% SLOPES [Purple Box]
- HOBE SAND, 0-5% SLOPES [Light Purple Box]
- LAWNWOOD AND MYAKKA SANDS [Green Box]
- NETTLES AND OLDSMAR SANDS [Light Green Box]
- PAOLA SAND, 0-5% SLOPES [Grey Box]
- PEPPER AND EAUGALLIE SANDS [Light Green Box]
- RIVIERA FINE SAND, 0-2% SLOPES [Green Box]
- SAMSULA MUCK, FREQ. PONDED, 0-1% SLOPES [Dark Green Box]
- TANTILE AND POMONA SANDS [Light Blue Box]
- TERRA CEIA MUCK, FREQ. PONDED, 0-1% SLOPES [Light Blue Box]
- WAVELAND AND IMMOKALEE FINE SANDS [Light Yellow Box]
- WAVELAND-LAWNWOOD COMPLEX, DEPRESSIONAL [Light Green Box]
- WATER [Dark Blue Box]

Data Source: USDA

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS & SITE OBSERVATIONS

Key Stakeholder Takeaways

- Environmental protection
- Expanding access to recreational opportunities
- Integrating nature throughout the district as a means of placemaking and differentiation
- Public access and environmental restoration are the highest priorities
- Public art
- Improved public space

Key Observations

Access Points should be more easily identifiable and abundant. Increasing interaction with the river and with nature requires more inclusive access to walking trails, boat launches, and fishing piers. Improved signage and design for access points presents an opportunity for cohesive branding.

Protecting the Environment is a central component to this planning process. The natural resources in PSL make the area unique and desirable and must be preserved as much as they are celebrated. Any site enhancements or interventions should be considered through the lens of environmental protection and

restoration, while making these features more visible. To protect the natural environment habitat, wildlife and vegetation criteria should be followed for the siting of all docking facilities. The siting, design, materials, construction and economic feasibility are all considerations in reviewing marina requests to ensure the protection of sensitive lands and wildlife.

Environmental Education opportunities are abundant across the site. The vast conservation land and copious presence of federally and state-protected species, many of which are unique to the region, present a meaningful way to connect culturally to the ecosystem.



These armored banks provide a sunning habitat for the alligator, but do not provide a visually enticing environment.



Environmental education opportunities abound throughout the study area.

Seasonal Weather Patterns may affect usability of site features, including recreation opportunities and public spaces. Considering ground cover and green stormwater infrastructure to absorb rainfall, shade elements to shield from heat and rain, and landscaping to promote ecological health and add visual amenity could help keep PSL activated year-round.



Wildlife permeates the Port District and adds defining character.



Boardwalks already help connect the district to the water, but adding more miles will bring residents closer to nature and the wilderness at the district's core.



The Port District is mostly accessible by car, but added bike facilities, boat launches and an improved streetscape will improve accessibility for all.



PLANNING AND LAND USE

NATURAL ASSETS AND OPEN SPACE ENCOMPASS APPROXIMATELY 134 AC OF THE STUDY AREA, OR 61%

DOCUMENT REVIEW

- Strategic Plan 20/21
- Code of Ordinance, PSL

Key Goals

- Safe, Clean & Beautiful
- Vibrant Neighborhoods
- Quality Education for All Residents
- Diverse Economy & Employment Opportunities
- High Quality Infrastructure & Facilities
- Culture, Nature & Fun Activities
- High Performing Governmental Organization

Vision

“Port St. Lucie has great neighborhoods, excellent educational opportunities for lifelong learning, a diverse local economy and employment options, convenient transportation, unique natural resources including the St. Lucie River, and leisure opportunities for an active lifestyle.”

The Future Land-Use Plan calls for a total of 11% of Open Space within the city, which is provided by much of the study area.

One of the focuses of the Comprehensive Plan is the protection of natural resources. There are three categories of open space in the FLU Plan; Recreation, Conservation and Preservation.

The zoning designation of OSC prohibits development in lands within the FLU categories of Conservation and Preservation.

Development Regulations

The following intended improvements are regulated or require review:

- Boardwalks, open air shelters in wetlands, floodplain areas
- Alcohol permits
- Food trucks on public property
- Signage
- ROW – signage, landscaping
- Construction activities on sovereign submerged lands within the preserve

Construction activities within the preserve must be submitted to DEP and SFWMD regulatory staff. Permitting success will consider the minimization of impacts to the preserve and support eco-friendly engineering designs.

Improvements that correspond to the maintained list of “high priority projects” could help applicants meet the public interest requirements outlined in the aquatic preserve rule (Chapter 18-20 F.A.C.).

Per the PSL Code of Ordinance, trees and plantings (other than turf) are prohibited in the right of way, unless specifically approved. This may need to be addressed to enhance the creation of pedestrian friendly walks along roadways.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS & SITE OBSERVATIONS

Key Stakeholder takeaways

- Retail and commercial uses can be mutually beneficial to open space preservation and destination creation
- Attract retail that is supportive to the Port and the goals to create a destination that is environmentally responsible and authentic to the place
- There is a need for more destination restaurants and local, authentic food and drink opportunities, such as a brewery spot
- The area needs to “tie it all together,” creating a safe haven, refuge, place to come home
- Provide social gathering opportunities, such as restaurants and retail, so PSL residents do not have to leave their own town for social activity
- Create multi-modal connectivity - Boats, shuttles, trolley, bike, rentals, and other options for access can address the parking deficiency and create a unique experience
- The Study Area needs the “Wow factor”
- Insufficient parking throughout the Study Area is a problem
- Ensure better access to amenities

Key Observations:

The Promenade on the River hosts two restaurants, Fernando’s and Hurricane Grill & Wings, which both feature outdoor waterfront patios. During the site visit, it was observed that outdoor patios were popular and there was a wait for waterfront tables.

Everyone appears to arrive by car. The visual and physical access to the businesses was unclear and understated. Physical access was through a parking lot with unclear entrances.

After dark the river was not visually apparent on the patios, but still provided a draw.

Corner of SE Port St Lucie Boulevard and SE Westmoreland Boulevard is a commercial corridor intersection. Though it has “Riverwalk” branding and nomenclature that refers back to the river, the visual, physical connection and presence of the river are not part of the actual experience.

Three of the four corners have landscaping and development signs made of a combination of brick and precast concrete. Two of the corners sport water features. The roadways are large; 8 lanes wide with a 3 foot, raised concrete median.



The Bridge Plaza has a promenade and can be enhanced with branding and access to the public open space



The entrance to the boardwalk empties out into the parking lot of Bridge Plaza rather than into a continuous pedestrian connection.

There are on street bike lanes and pedestrian crossing signals. However, the intersection is not comfortable for walking or biking due to the design, width, and traffic volume.

The Bridge Plaza has the potential to be a better connection to the river's public spaces. Adding access through the strip building running north-south would provide a pedestrian link to the Botanical Gardens creating a sense of cohesion that could improve the public realm.

Walkability and the pedestrian experience are key to making the private realm feel a part of the River District. Creating opportunities to visually and physical connect the area's entrance and outdoor dining to the boardwalk would enhance the pedestrian experience and should be uninterrupted by vehicular circulation.

There are plans to add a restaurant in the outparcel, which could help make the River District more of a destination. A second story deck is being discussed that could take advantage of the views to the river

The Bank property is closed, presumably due to COVID-19. If it does not reopen this is a key opportunity to create stronger, improved access in the area. Additional activity-generating space would also help support the open space and draw people to the District.

Lyngate Park is the northern most gateway of the study area. As a key entry point to the Port District, it should reinforce the brand, provide parking, and serve as a Community Park. Currently, Lyngate

Park is one of 4 parks in the study area. It has the most acreage and most park programming. These elements include nearly 80 parking spaces, a pavilion, 2 ball fields, 2 tennis courts, a basketball court, 4 racquetball courts, restrooms, a sand volleyball court, playground, dog park and wifi.

More parking may be needed to ensure access to the park is sufficient, especially as increased recreation and programming draw more people.

Edges need to be more engaging and act as a window to the river and open space.

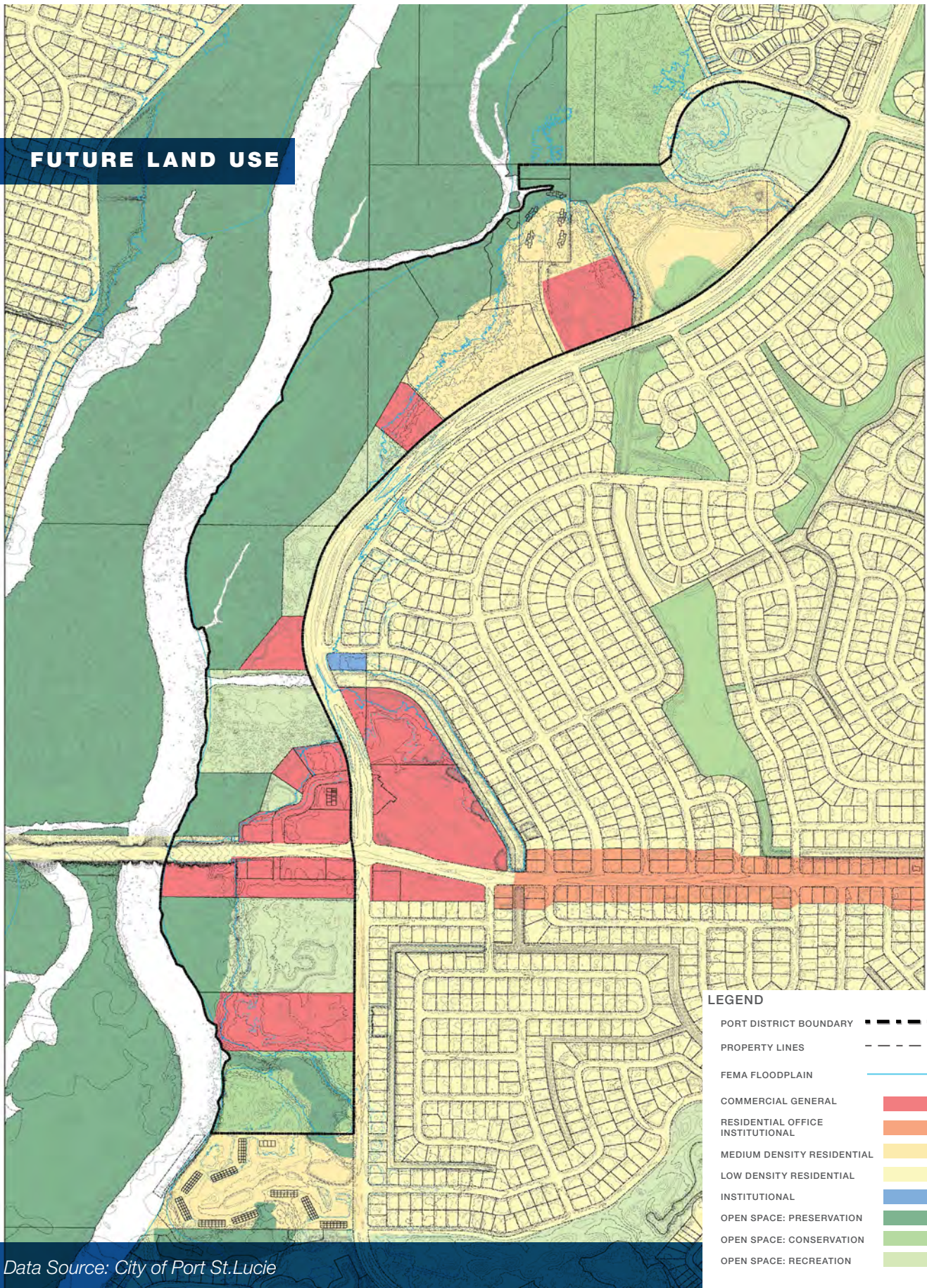
Gateways can be added to support the district brand and identity.

Overall, the district is a disjointed set of parks needing visual cues, branding and physical (terrestrial and aquatic) cohesion. The user experience throughout the area needs to be addressed from the street, the water, and parking entrances to help establish a better sense of place and connection.



This house built in 1961 represents typical housing stock from the early development of PSL, and is under consideration to be relocated into the study area for public use.

FUTURE LAND USE



Data Source: City of Port St. Lucie



PROGRAMMING

DOCUMENT REVIEW

- Port St Lucie Code of Ordinances
- PSL Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan
- Public Art Master Plan

Park spaces should encourage occupancy and activity to foster the sense of safety generated by having “eyes on the park,” a term describing the protection achieved through community. Park activity can be structured (programmed by city staff or approved vendors) or unstructured (activities that individuals bring to the park). Balancing structured and unstructured programming must consider:

- Potential for earned income
- Maintenance requirements
- Staffing levels
- Community benefit

Permitting unstructured activities has many benefits, but typically encompasses a narrow range of activities. Codes or regulations that affect the use of public spaces should be reviewed to ensure success for meeting the vision of the Port District. Supporting culturally diverse, non-programmed activities can support individual, families and groups. Picnicking, grilling, family reunions, and birthday parties provide vibrancy to a park if they are not over-regulated or cumbersome to access.

PSL Park Use Regulations

In review of the above documents, several constraints have been identified that could hamper programming and the overall community enjoyment of the public park space.

- Hours of operation
- Alcohol permits
- Allowable activities
- Use of skateboards, scooters, bikes, boats, and golf carts
- Over regulation of other activities
- Cost and/or ease of reservation of shelters
- Available facilities
- Regulations regarding where dogs, bikes, boats, and picnicking are allowed

Public Art in PSL

The Public Art Master Plan outlines several steps to better integrate public art into the PSL landscape, such as:

- Art as placemaking to establish community gathering points,
- Prioritizing large-scale art installations,
- Engagement with local artists, and
- Improved program guidelines.

Coupling public art programs with other citywide efforts was recommended to increase the reach of the program and better leverage resources. The plan recommends placing public art along the city’s gateways, in activity centers, in parks and along trails, in roundabouts, and within streetscapes.

Public art implementation ideas presented within the plan include:

- Creating an art trail through the Port District with interactive art play structures,
- Using art to celebrate and connect to nature,
- Sculptural water features to connect thematically to the river,
- Large-scale public art projects as branding that can create city landmarks,
- Temporary art installations as a catalyst for events and programs to activate the area



Art installations and programming can be the impetus for festivals and public events that can bring greater activity to the Port District.



Large-scale art can become landmarks across the site and serve to reinforce the Port brand.



Environmental art opportunities can enhance the natural environment and help tie the district together.



Interactive art installations can activate the public realm and serve as the catalyst for community gathering.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS & SITE OBSERVATIONS

- Provide recreational opportunities that connect throughout the entire study area for walking, biking, boating
- Provide “special moments” that are connected together to create a larger experience that keep people coming back for new and longer experiences.
- Create a memorable destination, that reflects on PSLs history as well as the future and has something to offer year-round
- Improve access to the water
- Improve boat opportunities by providing more boat ramps, boat parking, and docking opportunities
- Plan with a respect to property ownership (state, local, private) and with a clear understanding of the opportunities and constraints
- Communicate about the place and opportunities: digital advertising, gateway and district signage, etc.
- Authentically reflect the place: river town, river camp, low country
- Create and support the brand so it is a known place – “going to the Port...”
- Diversity – PSL has a diverse population. Programming and elements should reflect diverse needs and desires
- There is an over abundance of signage focused on

COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

Community input was gathered through multiple community meetings-- conducted both in-person and via video conferencing software to accommodate safety precautions-- in-meeting polling, an online survey, and a site visit.

Engagement was used to identify what gaps existed in current infrastructure and planned resources, what community members saw as the area's greatest assets, and what could make the Port District more desirable. Questions were tailored to understand need in the three guiding categories of *Explore*, *Gather*, and *Connect* that have driven this work.

The accompanying graphics summarize community opinion regarding existing conditions, assets, and amenities. The survey also sought to understand what the area needs to improve quality of life and attract more activity.

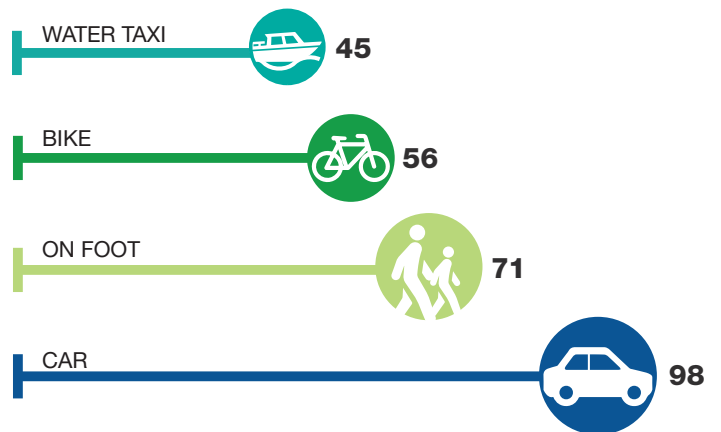
The survey had 136 respondents. The results showed that the natural attractions present on the site were the most visited and used, followed by programmed events, the commercial options along the Promenade, and the Rivergate Boat Ramp. Driving is by far the most used means of accessing the district, with improved walkability cited by most respondents as a hope for the future.

Access to nature, increased programming, and better connectivity were identified as the greatest community needs.

WHAT EXISTING FACILITY DO YOU VISIT/USE THE MOST?



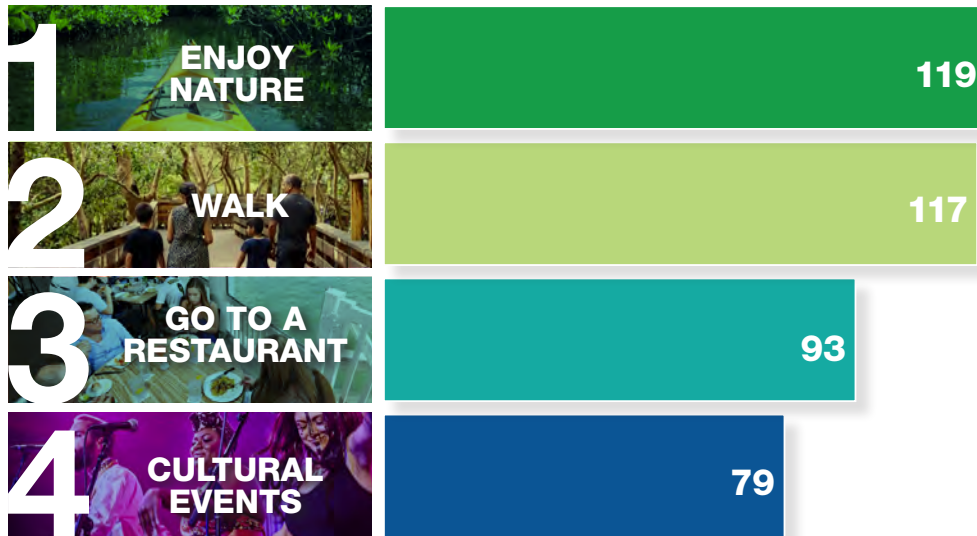
HOW WOULD YOU ACCESS THE PORT DISTRICT?



136
RESPONSES

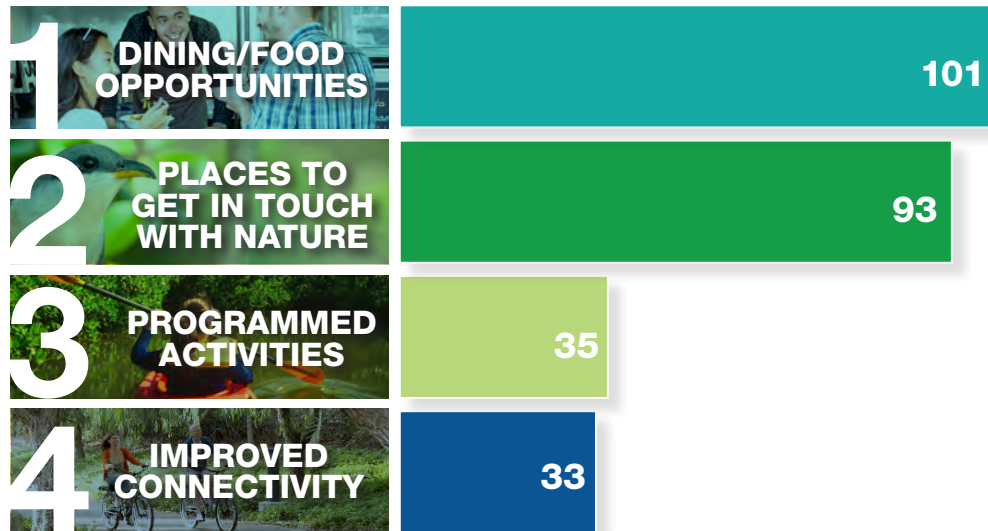
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN THE PORT DISTRICT?

TOP CHOICES



WHAT IS MISSING MOST FROM THE PORT DISTRICT?

TOP CHOICES





LandDesign