

### **CITY OF OKEECHOBEE**

FLAGLER PARK DESIGN
REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
55 SE THIRD AVENUE
OKEECHOBEE, FL 34974
MARCH 29, 2021
3:00 P.M.
REVISED OFFICIAL AGENDA

**MEMBERS** 

Robbie Chartier, Chair
Bert Culbreth, Vice Chair
Susanne Clemons
Regina Hamrick
Kathy Scott
Jennifer Tewksbury
Denise Whitehead
ALTERNATE MEMBERS
Robert Burdge
Greg Maynard

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ATTENDANCE

### III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. Motion to adopt agenda.
- B. Public participation for items not on the agenda requires a comment form.

### IV. MINUTES

A. Approve the March 8, 2021 minutes.

### V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review the Flagler Parks maintenance budget for the current fiscal year.
- B. Presentation by Landscape Architect Tammy Cook-Weedon with Calvin, Giordano & Associates.
- C. Discuss the conceptual plan as presented by the Economic Council of Okeechobee (Exhibit 1).
- D. Discuss upcoming meeting schedule.
- VI. ADJOURN MEETING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE AND BE ADVISED that if any person desires to appeal any decision made by the FPDRAC with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need to ensure a verbatim record of the proceeding is made and the record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal will be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk's Office in person or call 863-763-9814, Hearing Impaired: Florida Relay 7-1-1 no later than four business days prior to proceeding.



## CITY OF OKEECHOBEE FLAGLER PARK DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE MARCH 8, 2021 DRAFT OFFICIAL MINUTES

### I. CALL TO ORDER

The initial meeting of the Flagler Park Design Review Advisory Committee (FPDRAC) was called to order by City Clerk Lane Gamiotea on Monday, March 8, 2021, at 4:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida.

### II. ATTENDANCE

Deputy City Clerk Bobbie Jenkins called the roll. Regular Members Robbie Chartier, Susanne Clemons, Bert Culbreth, Regina Hamrick, Kathy Scott, Jennifer Tewksbury, and Denise Whitehead were present. Alternate Member Greg Maynard was present. It was noted for the record that Alternate Member Paulette Bragel resigned effective March 5, 2021.

### A. ELECTION OF CHAIR

City Clerk Gamiotea opened the floor for nominations for Committee Chairperson. A nomination was made by Alternate Member Maynard and seconded by Member Whitehead. No other nominations were offered. **Motion Carried Unanimously**. NOTE FOR CLARIFICATION: An alternate member cannot offer motions when not sitting in place of a regular member. To clear up this issue, the nomination is noted to be made by Member Whitehead as a second is not required per Roberts Rules of Order.

The Chairperson's seat was relinquished by Clerk Gamiotea to the newly appointed Chairperson, Robbie Chartier. Chairperson Chartier opened the floor for Vice-Chairperson nominations. Member Scott nominated Bert Culbreth. No other nominations were offered. **Motion Carried Unanimously**.

### III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

- **A.** Motion by Member Clemons, seconded by Member Scott to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion Carried Unanimously**.
- **B.** There were no comment cards submitted for public participation for any issues not on the agenda.

### IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Attorney Fumero presented and reviewed the application of sunshine, public records, and ethics laws as they relate to and govern the FPDRAC and City Staff. The State Code of Ethics key concepts are: members cannot accept gifts that would influence a decision; cannot do business with the City of Okeechobee; and cannot misuse their positions to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for themselves or on behalf of others. Committee Members are also held to the State public records and open public meetings laws, known as the "Sunshine Laws."

### IV. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

ITEM A CONTINUED: Members cannot discuss with one another, outside a convened publicly advertised meeting, any topic that will or could come before the FPDRAC. He reviewed the three-part test as to whether an item is a public record and explained Members cannot destroy anything that falls under the test. He strongly advised against using personal devices to conduct FPDRAC business, such as their personal computers and/or cell phones. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation has been incorporated into the minute file.

### B. DISCUSS GOAL OF COMMITTEE

The FPDRAC's purpose is to gather analysis and information to recommend proposed Flagler Park improvements, landscape plans, structures, signs, design guidelines and other relevant considerations to the City Council based upon deliberations and public input. Funding sources were discussed briefly. Member Whitehead advised she would contact the County's grant writer, Ryan Ruskay with RMPK Funding, to ascertain what he would charge the City to assist in applying for grants. Member Scott added that grants are also available through the Main Street Arts Alliance Program. At the next meeting items to be presented and discussed are: the conceptual plan approved by the City Council on August 4, 2020, as presented by the Economic Council of Okeechobee; a presentation by Landscape Architect Tammy Cook-Weedon with Calvin, Giordano, and Associates; and the Flagler Parks maintenance budget for the current Fiscal Year.

### C. DISCUSS RULES AND PROCEDURES

Attorney Fumero distributed and reviewed a memorandum that provided information pertaining to the rules and procedures of the FPDRAC. A copy has been incorporated into the minute file.

### D. DISCUSS WEBPAGE AND ASSIGN CITY EMAILS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

To ensure transparency, a separate page for the FPDRAC has been created on the City's website to post information for the community. Administrator MontesDeOca explained City email addresses have been assigned to all Members. Detailed instructions will be provided to each Member via email.

### E. DISCUSS UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

After a brief discussion, the consensus of the FPDRAC was to meet on Mondays at 3:00 P.M. How often they meet will be determined after the presentation has been made by the Landscape Architect. The next meeting will be Monday, March 29, 2021, at 3:00 P.M.

### V. ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 P.M.

Submitted by:	<u> Lane</u>	Gamiotea	, CMC,	City	Clerk
	Appro	ved on: _			

Please take notice and be advised that when a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Special Magistrate with respect to any matter considered at this Hearing, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. City Clerk media are for the sole purpose of backup for official records of the Clerk.



AUG 2020 // PREPARED FOR THE CITY COUNCIL OF OKEECHOBEE

Executive Summary	1-2
Park Descriptions	3-16
City Hall Plaza	3-4
Veterans Memorial Square	5-6
Speckled Perch Square	7-8
Seminole Square	9-10
Settlers Square	11-12
Cattleman's Square	13-14
Butterfly Square	15-16
Public Feedback	17
Local Support	18
Submitted By	19-20



AUGUST // 2020

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of the last 12 months, the Economic Council of Okeechobee County has worked with landscape professionals, many local stakeholder organizations and elected City officials in the development of the proposed redesign of our Flagler Parks.

Through an all-encompassing redesign and renovation like what is broadly proposed in this package, our City has the opportunity to preserve cherished elements of our local history, celebrate our agricultural heritage, create a continuous and consistent sense of place, and truly begin to invest in over seven acres of priceless green space for the benefit of current and future generations.

The intent of this initiative from the beginning has been to establish a unified vision for the future of our centrally-located Flagler Parks; a vision which reflects our character as a community, is conducive to multiple types of downtown events, and which draws residents and visitors alike to the area.

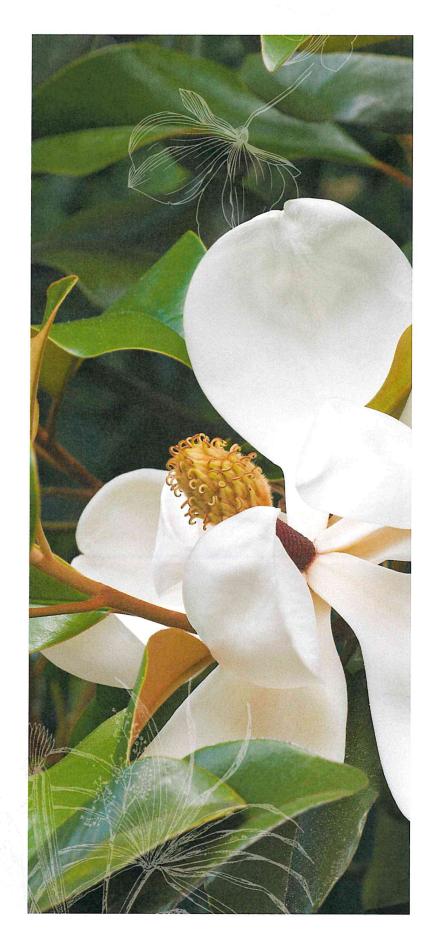
The following conceptual redesign does not address specific financial obligations, parties responsible for completion, or details related to the full scope of the various projects presented.

This document is intended only to address the following goals, with the overall intent to establish a unified and community-wide vision for Downtown Flagler Park:

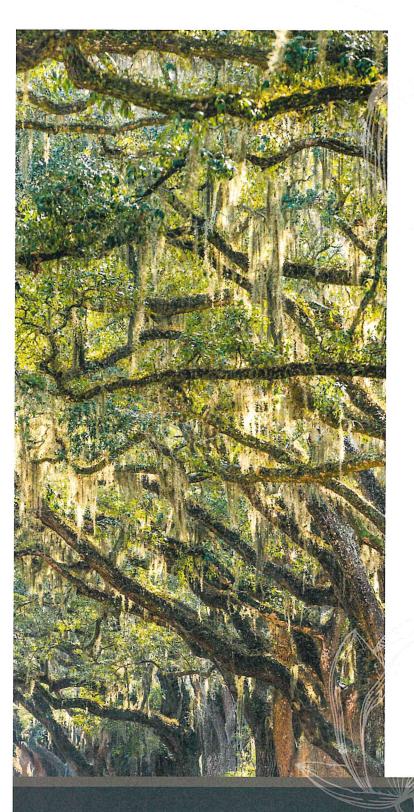
- Provide a unique identity to each of the seven proposed park squares while still designing each to feel connected to a larger whole
- Improve pedestrian walkability from square to square
- Elevate the functionality of each park square by strategic use of landscape and hardscape materials
- Preserve the over seven acres of green space for use as a public park for future generations
- Establish a visibly attractive downtown district to encourage increased traffic for local businesses
- Create more prominent focal points in park centers
- Substantially improve the general aesthetics of our community

Prioritizing consistency throughout Flagler Parks, site functionality, the establishment of tree canopies, and increased attention to detail related to our community character will also serve the downtown area well in the future.

As a result of extensive research for well over a year, collaborative efforts with professionals and local stakeholders, and a thorough public comment period, the Economic Council of Okeechobee County recommends the following conceptual redesign of Downtown Flagler Park for the City Council's consideration.



| PARK DESCRIPTIONS



Park I

### CITY HALL PLAZA

Located between Southeast 3rd Avenue and Southeast 2nd Avenue

This park celebrates the history of the City of Okeechobee and its incorporation in 1915. Markers should be placed to denote the first City Council meeting held on July 13, 1915 with Peter Raulerson as Mayor, Henry Chandler as City Clerk, and Council Members L.M. Raulerson, W.L. Coats, Dr. Roy Darrow, Smith Drawdy and C.L. Hatchi.

A stage with a paved ADA accessible seating area at the center of this park will provide a more permanent location and stately presence for both smaller community events and larger events, attracting visitors from surrounding areas.

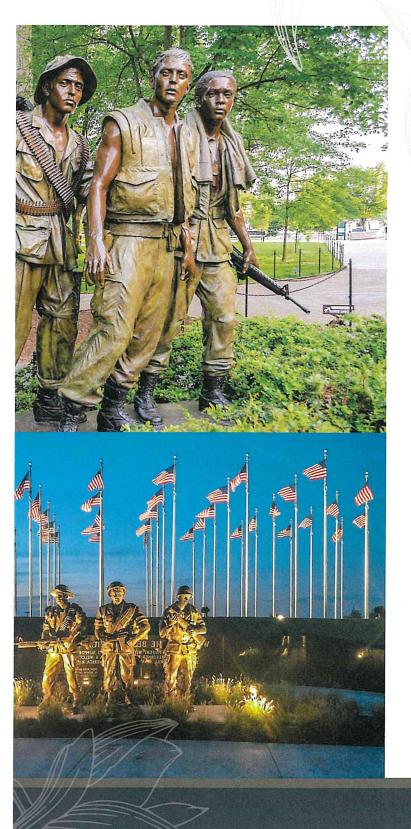
Lawn seating beyond the low seat wall may be used for concerts or larger community ceremonies.

Sidewalks in this park are recommended to be redesigned to mirror the other Flagler Parks with historic criss-cross pathways.



- Create memorable park entrances at each corner of City Hall Plaza
- Establish live oak tree border along the perimeter of the square
- Replace light posts with taller, more stately posts to match the rest of Flagler Park
- Use landscaping to screen unsightly utilities
- Relocate small chickee to Seminole Square for consistency and functionality
- Provide shade for seating areas by either structures consistent with nearby architecture or shade trees
- Create more comfortable and usable seating patterns
- Update damaged trash receptacles and other outdated hardscape
- Remove the existing unhealthy plant material





Park II

### VETERANS MEMORIAL SQUARE

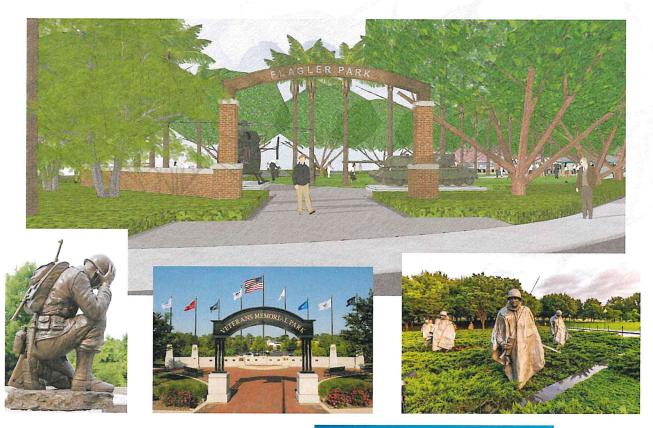
Located between South Parrott Avenue and Southwest 2nd Avenue

This park honors our nation's military veterans and memorializes the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in our U.S. military

A large arched sign at the entrance of this park is recommended to announce the Downtown Flagler Parks of Okeechobee at our main thoroughfare. A new layout would provide functional seating areas at memorial monuments while redesigned landscape screens provide privacy for reflection

New landscape beds along the perimeters of the park are recommended to provide structure, serve as noise buffers, and provide a barrier to safely separate children from adjacent traffic.

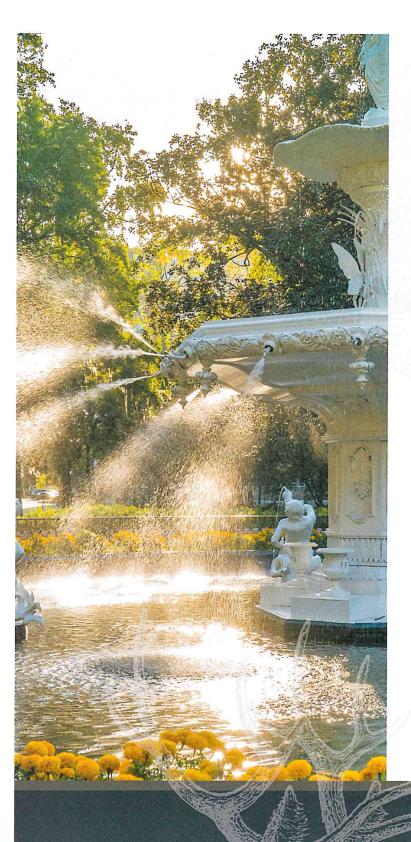
The center of the park may be left open to accommodate displays and events





- Create memorable park entrances at each corner of Veterans Memorial Square
- Complete live oak tree border along the perimeter of the square
- Create a more usable plaza layout for veteran and memorial events
- Consider bronze monuments honoring soldiers as educational focal points
- Utilize landscaping to create more privacy from the roadway traffic and for noise reduction

DOWNTOWN
FLAGLER PARKS



Park III

### SPECKLED PERCH SQUARE

Located between Southwest 2nd Avenue and Southwest 3rd Avenue

Okeechobee is renowned for our worldclass bass fishing and has even been recognized as the "Speckled Perch Capital of the World." This park is intended to celebrate our outdoor lifestyle and the unique wildlife native to Okeechobee County

A traditional fountain or an interactive water feature for children located at the center of the park is recommended to serve as the main focal point.

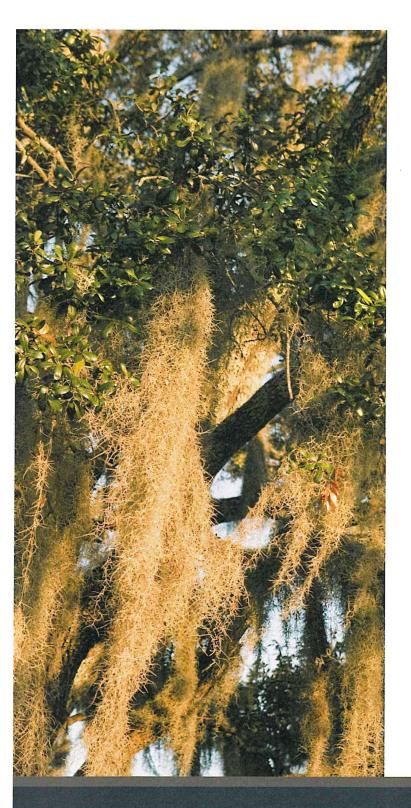
Life-size bronze art depicting native Florida wildlife is recommended to be placed at the central water feature and other prominent locations throughout the square.

Restroom facilities are recommended at the east end of the square with easy access from the adjacent *Veterans Memorial Square*. The majority of the park is designed to remain open for festivals and events.



- Create memorable park entrances at each corner of Speckled Perch Square
- Complete live oak tree border along the perimeter of the square
- Replace outdated and inconsistent site furniture with one cohesive style throughout all parks. Select furniture to reflect the style of the newly designed parks and to serve the different functions of each park square
- Create a larger, more usable central plaza
- Create stronger hardscape connectors





Park IV

### SEMINOLE SQUARE

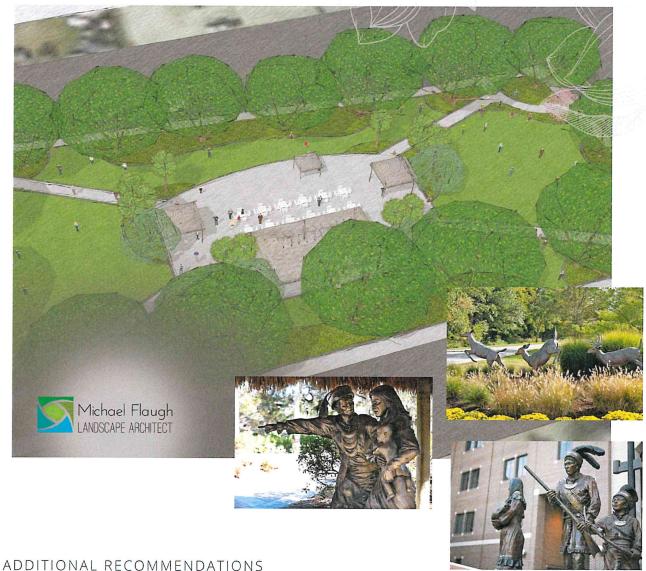
Located between Southwest 3rd Avenue and Southwest 4th Avenue

The fourth square within the Flagler Parks is dedicated to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and its historic influence on Okeechobee County.

Existing chickees are recommended to be incorporated in the new park layout. The addition of a larger chickee structure will offer more opportunities for larger events or may serve as a covered seating area.

The smaller chickee from existing City Hall Square may be relocated here to be incorporated with an open courtyard in the center of the park square.

Life-size bronze sculptures of historic Seminole figures are recommended to be incorporated in the landscape to resemble a traditional Seminole camp. This would be designed to educate visitors of the Tribe's history and influence in Okeechobee, Florida.



- Create memorable park entrances at each corner of Seminole Square
- Establish live oak tree border along the perimeter of the square
- Screen all existing utilities with cohesive landscaping
- Remove small aluminum gazebo
- Redesign square to give chickees a purpose as an integral part of the space
- Place park furniture (tables and benches) more purposefully
- Work directly with Seminole Tribe of Florida to ensure historic accuracy

2020 VISION FOR OKEECHOBEE'S DOWNTOWN FLAGLER PARKS



Park V

### SETTLERS SQUARE

Located between Southwest 4th Avenue and Southwest 5th Avenue

This park is dedicated to the historic leaders, businesses and events responsible for shaping Okeechobee into the community it is today.

A flag pole is placed at the center of the park at the central plaza dedicated to Colonel R.E. Hamrick.

Additional bronze markers are recommended to be placed at prominent locations within the square to highlight the first settlers and businesses of the community, including: Peter & Louisiana Raulerson; Dr. Anna & Dr. Roy Darrow (Park Drugs); Dan McCarthy (first grocery, feed and hardware stores); Lewis Raulerson (Raulerson's Department Store); and Henry Flagler, who recognized the prime location of Okeechobee County halfway between coasts and adjacent to a major body of water. Early boosters envisioned Okeechobee a metropolis and massive rail hub - a "Chicago of the South."

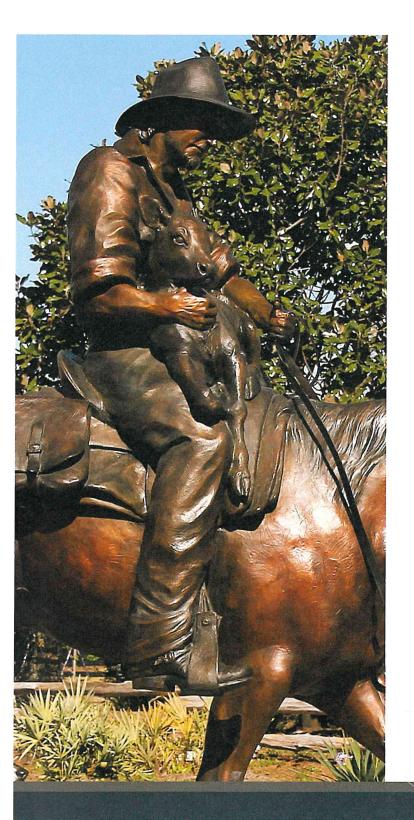


- Create memorable park entrances at each corner of Settlers Square
- Establish live oak tree border along the perimeter of the square
- Redesign plantings around existing gazebo to open views and incorporate in new park layout

### ON NEARBY PARK STREET

• Redesign low maintenance, simplified, cohesive corner landscape islands. Remove diseased and unhealthy queen palms for more shade trees appropriate for the space along the entire Park Street in the Downtown District





Park VI

### CATTLEMAN'S SQUARE

Located between Southwest 5th Avenue and Southwest 6th Avenue

This intends to celebrate the rich agricultural heritage of Okeechobee County. The park layout and landscaping fully supports Main Street's Cattle Drive Sculpture project as the prominent focal point of the park square.

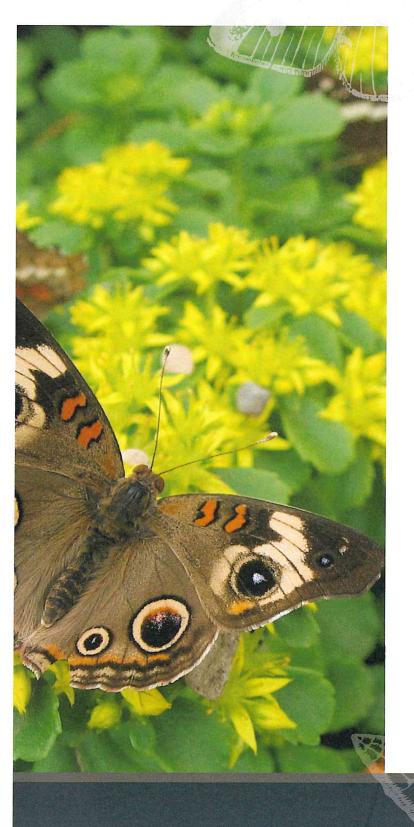
The cattle drive sculpture project includes life-sized bronze sculptures of a horse and rider, a calf, dog, six head of cattle and a cowboy on a fence. This permanent art display will be installed at the center of the park. Each figure will be strategically placed within a natural landscape to resemble early cattle grazing in Okeechobee County.

The art installation will be complete by 2021 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of cattle first arriving to the state in 1521.



- Create memorable park entrances at each corner of Cattleman's Square
- Establish live oak tree border along the perimeter of the square
- Add flag holders to light posts for seasonal or event flags for this park square and along the remaining squares for consistency
- Relocate/remove concrete pads which aren't conducive to the art installation or functional for seating arrangements
- Relocate existing palms to create more attractive groupings





Park VII

### BUTTERFLY SQUARE

Located between Southwest 6th Avenue and Southwest 7th Avenue

This park provides a whimsical play area for children. Strategic landscape designs blend the colorful butterfly art displays with the "old Florida" aesthetic of the remaining parks to establish a cohesive presentation of the entire area

The existing butterfly garden and playful sculptures are recommended to be surrounded by a creative native play space incorporating natural landscape elements and native vegetation. Seating areas should be placed under new tree canopies around the play area.

Restroom facilities are recommended to be located at the east end of the park with easy access from the adjacent Cattlemen Square. Added landscape buffers around the park serve as a barrier between active children and nearby traffic



- Create memorable park entrances at each corner of Butterfly Square
- Create usable, comfortable seating areas for parents and children
- Redesign pathways to celebrate historic criss-crossed layout as in remaining park squares
- Remove existing dead and diseased plant material
- Screen unsightly views with strategic landscaping



### PUBLIC COMMENT & FEEDBACK

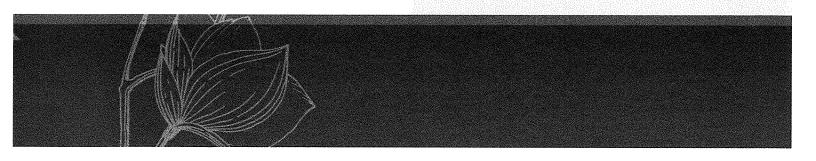
Through each step in this initiative, the Economic Council was thorough in gathering and taking into consideration feedback from fellow stakeholder organizations, City officials, and interested members of the general public. The Council also invited the public to view the project in its entirety and offer official comment on multiple occasions at two separate locations. Comment cards were made available at the public exhibition on January 15th at IRSC, at the exhibition at the Okeechobee County Courthouse where the park plans were displayed for several weeks, and online through the Economic Council's official website.

Public feedback varied widely, but the majority of all comments received were supportive for a unified plan. This proposal is intended to be conceptual in nature and does not aim to specifically address each concern presented. However, the feedback gathered should certainly be considered for future development of the space.

Each comment card received is included in the supplemental background information in this packet.

### COMMENTS RECEIVED INCLUDED BUT WERE NOT LIMITED TO:

- The provision of shade to make park use realistic in Florida weather
- Concerns with ongoing and professional maintenance of the public's investment over the long term
- Location and placement of weapons and artillery in Veterans Memorial Square;
   Substantial support was provided for different placement of artillery relative to appropriateness and functionality of the space. In contrast, comments were also received which were not in favor of moving or adjusting the placement of artillery under any potential circumstance.
- Concerns relative to ongoing maintenance of restrooms. In contrast, many were in favor of public restrooms especially when considering downtown events.
- Safety and security for children, especially in the designated play areas. Driver speeding on Highway 70 was noted many times as a high concern.
- Concerns relative to Christmas decorations in the parks, though seasonal celebrations are not addressed in this conceptual redesign.



# LOCAL SUPPORT & ENDORSEMENTS

The conceptual redesign has been directly communicated with and subsequently supported by the following local stakeholder organizations:

- Okeechobee Main Street
- Okeechobee Main Street's Arts & Culture Alliance
- Fine Arts Club of Okeechobee
- Okeechobee Historical Society
- Chamber of Commerce of Okeechobee County
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Okeechobee County Tourist Development Council
- Okeechobee County School District
- Indian River State College
- Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation

The recommendation to adopt and implement a centralized beautification plan for the City of Okeechobee is also recommended by the community's Economic Development Plan as publicly proposed and adopted in 2018 by the POLICOM Corporation. This recommendation in the local economic development plan states: "To improve the general appearance of the core center of the City of Okeechobee, a central beautification program should be initiated. Most successful small economies have taken this initiative to demonstrate to out-of-town companies the community takes pride in itself."

Each letter of endorsement from local stakeholder organizations is included in the supplemental background information in this packet.



#### THOUGHTFULLY PREPARED & RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

PAGE | 19

The Members of the Economic Council of Okeechobee County

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The mission of the Economic Council of Okeechobee County is to create an environment that promotes prudent economic growth and improves the quality of life in Okeechobee County, Florida.

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### <u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>

Thank you to the extremely knowledgeable team at Michael Flaugh, Landscape Architects for the abundant expertise and exceeding professional excellence.



