

## Daytona Beach Downtown Retail Recommendations

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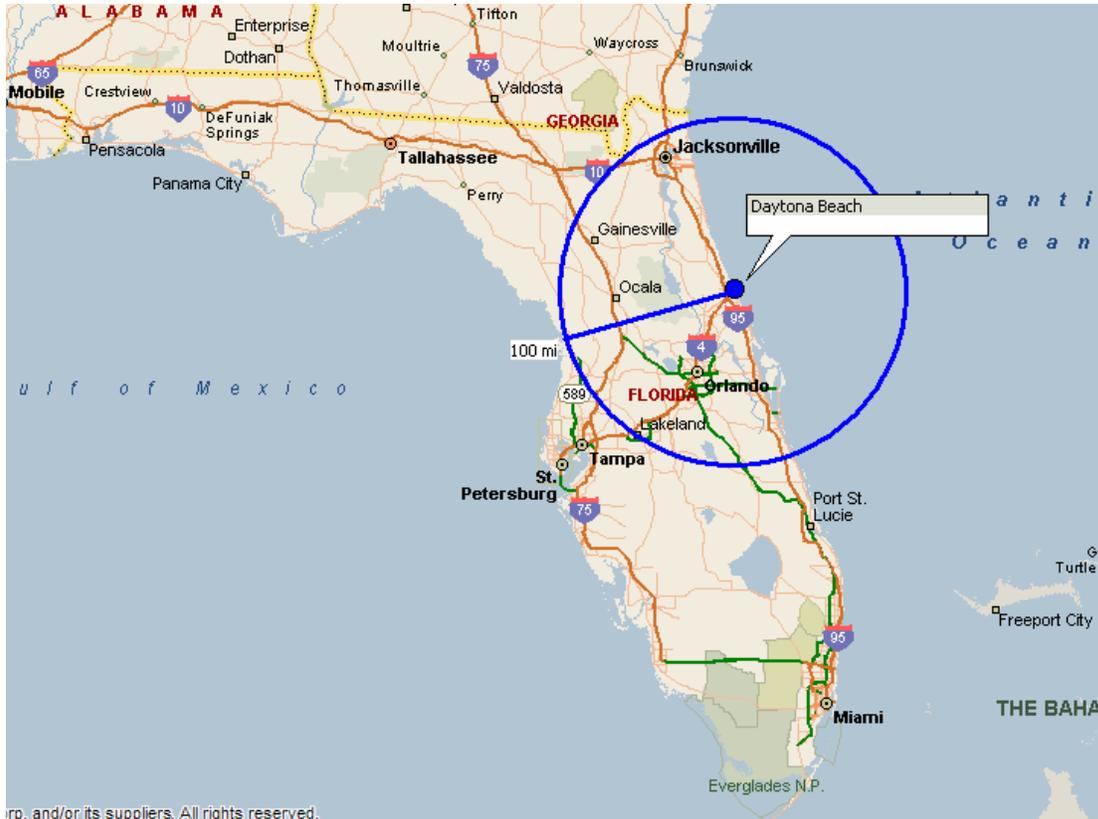


*Daytona's Beach Street has numerous small businesses, restaurants and retailers that offer an attractive historic shopping district.*

### **General Observations**

The waterfront downtown Daytona Beach Street commercial district is in the early phases of what will likely be a significant economic redevelopment boom. The commercial district is attractive and well maintained with an updated streetscape and freshly painted storefronts. Numerous new residential developments are in the planning stages, in and around the downtown. A pioneering non-waterfront 24 dwelling residential and commercial development that sold-out in only two weeks is under construction. In addition, the downtown is near Bethune Cookman College. A major performing arts center is also under construction on the waterfront that will provide a significant cultural anchor for Beach Street district.

However, as a whole, the Beach Street district appears to only be capturing a very small percentage of the region's shopping and restaurant expenditures. Beach Street's primary businesses include: motor cycle shops, wig stores, second-hand and collectable boutiques, pawn shops and service type businesses. In addition, the downtown does have several leading and popular retailers including a jewelry store, apparel stores, cafes and small gift shops. The greater Daytona area is surrounded with numerous modern shopping centers, malls that offer conventional high volume mass appeal retailers and restaurants.



*Daytona Beach is located within 100 miles of Tampa and Jacksonville, Florida along the state's central east coast.*

### **Purpose and Limits of Study**

GPG was commissioned by the State of Florida Department of Community Affairs to conduct a general analysis of the historic Daytona Beach Street commercial district. The purpose of GPG's observations and recommendations is to increase commerce and retail sales in the downtown. During this analysis, GPG visited the general entire Daytona region on May 31- June 1, 2005 touring many of its shopping centers and the Beachside commercial districts. During this analysis, GPG also met with several city staff and small business owners to gain insight into

the local demographics, market preferences and their suggestions for the study area.

The findings of this study are only based upon GPG's two day visit and brief interviews with the public and local stakeholders. These interviews and information received has not been independently verified. This report's observations and recommendations should not be the sole basis of any master planning, design, land purchases, capital improvements, leasing, financing or development.



*The Beach Street's primary trade area varies for each business, but on average extends approximately 4 miles.*

### **Market Observations**

The greater Daytona region's demographics are representative of the middle American market, with incomes in the mid to middle upper range. The average annual household incomes located within an eight mile radius of Beach Street range from \$35,600. to \$66,600. The highest incomes are located to the north and in Beachside. The region also benefits from many major tourist events including the Daytona 500

Speedway and the motorcycle festival. It is reported that 7-8 million people visit Daytona per year.

The general market seems well serviced in most retail categories including department stores, apparel, discount retailer and restaurants. It was reported that most residents conduct all of their primary shopping within the greater Daytona region, only driving to Orlando several times per year for major event purchasing.

That being said, a second regional mall and a lifestyle center are presently proposed within ten miles of Beach Street. These new retailers represent a missed opportunity to capture additional trade in the downtown including restaurants, apparel, gifts and cinemas.



*Beach Street's business mix includes small gift shops, antiques stores, wig salons, cafes, jewelry stores, motorcycle stores and bars.*

### **Merchandise Mix**

During its peak period during the late 1950's and early 1960's, the downtown Beach Street shopping district reportedly captured almost all of the region's retail spending. Major national anchors including: Kress, Sears, Montgomery Wards, Woolworths and JC Penney were located in the downtown along with a wide variety of apparel, shoe, gifts and neighborhood stores. The downtown suffered a steady decline after rejecting a proposal for a downtown shopping center and losing its anchor stores to a suburban mall in the late 1960's.

During the past ten year's the Beach Street area began a steady rebuilding effort that included a new streetscape, implementation of a Main Street program and a significant amount of private investment. Presently, the Beach Street district has a wide variety of small service and specialty type retail and service businesses that include: restaurants, bars, gift shops, apparel stores, wig shops, antiques and

resale shops, pawn shops, auto dealers and motorcycle sales and repair shops.



*A green grocery such as Whole Foods or Trader Joes will complement the downtown retail mix and help to promote additional residential development and renovation in the downtown area.*

***Recommendations:***

- As much as possible, the downtown should attempt to create a focused balance of quality neighborhood goods and services and specialty retailers. The retailers should include local independents, regional and national and selected to meet the regular needs and desires of the community, while reinforcing the existing commercial base in the surrounding area.*
- There should be special emphasis in attracting quality neighborhood goods and services including a green grocery such as Whole Foods or Trader Joes; a pharmacy; a bakery or bread store; coffee shop; and gourmet carry-out foods. These neighborhood services will help to reinforce and support new housing construction and renovation in the downtown.*
- Restaurants should be encouraged to take advantage of Beach Street's waterfront views, updated streetscape.*
- Continue to limit non-retail uses along Beach Street. Encourage service businesses such as: medical, financial, real estate and designers along the side streets.*
- Consider allowing freestanding kiosks along the riverfront park side.*

## **Vehicular Circulation**

The downtown suffers from high speed vehicular traffic that limits pedestrian movement and cross shopping. The International Speedway Boulevard is six lanes wide at Beach Street and discourages pedestrian movement north and south. The author was almost run over several times while photographing along Beach Street and International Speedway Boulevard.

### ***Recommendations:***

- *Reduce the width of International Speedway Boulevard or install a traffic median to improve pedestrian safety and movement.*
- *Consider installing textured pavement and other traffic calming measures to slow vehicular traffic speeds along International Speedway Boulevard and Beach Streets.*
- *Consider improving the alleys and installing specialty stores.*



*The existing streetscape furniture is attractive, but needs additional attention: a new "YOU are HERE" way-finding "business mix sign" and additional flowers and landscaping.*

## **Streetscape & Signage**

The existing Beach Street streetscape is well designed and maintained and an asset to the commercial district. The light fixtures and the street furniture are both clean and functional. Many shoppers were noted sitting on benches. Many of the trash containers are in need of repair and it was reported that most of the river walk park lights are not in working order.

### **Recommendations:**

- *Continue to maintain the streetscape at present levels or better.*
- *Install additional landscaping, large planters and flowers along Beach and International Speedway Boulevard.*
- *Expand the existing streetscape along International Speedway Boulevard between the rail tracks (Carswell Street) and the new river bridge to improve pedestrian safety and to improve the views of the shopping district to the island traffic.*
- *Allow for A type free standing signs and limited amounts of merchandise to be displayed in front of retailers storefronts.*
- *Install new way-finding signage to direct visitors from I-95 and Beachside to the downtown.*
- *Install updated “You are Here” business directory to locate all retailers and restaurants in the Beach Street area.*
- *Work with FDOT to have “Historic Downtown” signs installed along I-95.*
- *Encourage retailers to keep store window lights turned on until 11:00 pm.*



*The City provides an effective parking management program that encourages long term parking to be located in larger public lots, allowing for shopper friendly spaces in front of the shop fronts. Such signs should be of high quality and not plastic.*

### **Parking**

Parking is one of the most critical issues facing any shopping district. People do not need to shop, and when parking is difficult, most potential shoppers will avoid the visit, often never returning. The parking problem is typically compounded in urban locations because of the multi-uses

and tight space. In addition, the parking problem is often made worse by employees and business owners occupying the prime spots.

In contrast, these same shoppers will demand parking directly in front of a convenience store such as a video store or carry-out food. Should such a space not be available, the typical shopper will believe that the parking is problematic and not convenient. As a result, shoppers will tend to avoid the center for shopping in the future.

Many of neighborhood shoppers prefer to run in and out of specific retailers and are unwilling to park in remote lots. This double standard held by American consumers is not necessarily fair to the small downtown merchant, but the behavior is a reality that must be addressed. The unwillingness to park in remote lots or underground decks could put many of the smaller neighborhood shops at risk. A grocery store or anchor type tenant's shopper will often use garages, because of the longer duration of their visit.

Shoppers have different parking expectations for destination businesses than they do for neighborhood and convenience type of shops. When visiting restaurants, fashion and home furnishings, shoppers tend to make multiple store visits, often totaling more than an hour. In exchange for the greater variety of stores and merchandise offered in a destination type center, shoppers are willing to park further away from storefronts than they would be in a neighborhood center. Destination visitors will also perceive parking to be more convenient (and closer), if they can see the store entry from their parking stall, even if its hundreds of feet away.

The downtown commercial district appears to have plenty of parking for its existing size, plus for a limited amount of expansion. Most shoppers utilize the diagonal parking located along Beach Street. Overflow and employee parking is available in surface parking lots located west of the Beach Street shops. As the downtown continues to grow, a parking shortage will likely emerge and cause the expansion to stall. The city enforces its 2 hour parking limit along Beach street, and the author received a ticket for parking for 2.5 hours.

***Recommendations:***

- *Begin planning for public parking decks to be installed on existing city lots to accommodate long term growth.*
- *Reduce the existing residential on-site parking requirements from the existing 2 stalls per unit to 1 stall per unit or less. Consider allowing for residential dwellings to purchase long term leases from public lots-decks.*
- *Continue regular parking enforcement.*

- *The downtown should have a balance of both long-term destination type parking and short-term convenience stalls. An overall ratio of 3.5 cars per 1000 sf of gross retail square feet is ideal. The parking ration could be reduced to 3.0 cars per 1000 sf of commercial if office is combined with the retail with a ratio of 25% office to 75% retail GLA. The short-term parking must be easily accessible on-street or surface lots that is carefully managed to keep long-term users from using.*
- *Reduce the onsite residential parking requirement from 2 cars per unit to 1 car per unit, minimum.*



*Historic buildings should be retained and new construction should not allow first level parking decks such as is common in the Beachside commercial district.*

### **Building Facades:**

The Beach Street area has numerous excellent historic buildings that are representative of the region's heritage. Such buildings are not only interesting, but help to make the commercial district unique and therefore, competitive with modern shopping malls and future lifestyle centers.

### **Recommendations:**

- *Continue the existing building color painting program.*
- *Implement a strict historic preservation guidelines and codes to preserve important historic structures.*
- *Establish incentive based historic design guidelines for new development in the downtown.*
- *Require store fronts along downtown streets with a minimum of 70% clear glass and retail frontages.*



*The International Speedway and Bridge Street intersection needs to be narrowed, with traffic calming to allow for easy pedestrian movement along the entire shopping District. Long rang planning should consider the movement of many of the civic buildings from City Island to be closer to Bridge street.*

### **Long Range Planning:**

Although the downtown has many major civic anchors in the downtown including: courthouses, a yacht club, armory and library; these anchors are somewhat distant from the Beach Street shops and do not provide as much potential activity as they could. In addition, many of these buildings are located on prime waterfront property, but remain mostly inward orientated.

### **Recommendations:**

- *As the existing courthouses, armory and library need replacing, consider locating as close to the Beach Street shopping district as possible, and no more than a two minute walk.*
- *Plan and construct additional boat slips including transient visitor dockage.*
- *Consider redeveloping the waterfront city island into mixed use public and private land uses that include residential and public park lands.*
- *Encourage as much new residential construction as is reasonable in the downtown.*
- *Conduct a community wide visioning and master planning charrette with a leading urban planning firm to gain a consensus of community values and goals that can be implemented in a practical master plan.*

-- END OF REPORT --