

Eau Gallie Downtown Retail Recommendations

Gibbs Planning Group, Inc.
June 7, 2005



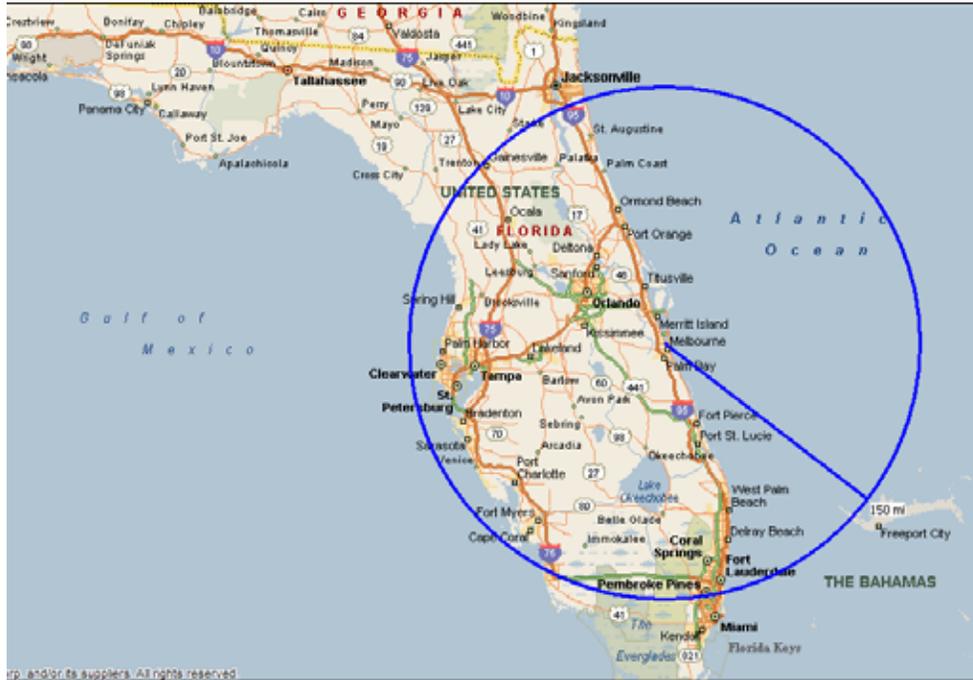
Eau Gallie has a handful of small businesses, art galleries and community buildings that offers an attractive historic shopping village.

General Observations

The historic waterfront Eau Gallie village center contains a unique collection of independent retailers, offices and civic uses that have great potential. The commercial district has a refreshing authentic 1960's Florida coastal character that is often sought out by many businesses and residences seeking an alternative to faux modern subdivisions and shopping centers. Anchored with a county library, churches, a community recreational facility, a friendly hardware store and the Brevard Museum of Arts and Sciences, Eau Gallie does indeed offer a quality of life that is rare today.

However, as a whole, the Eau Gallie area is not functioning as a commercial shopping district; instead, each of its businesses and civic uses are single destinations. Little cross-shopping occurs from business to business. This lack of pedestrian activity limits the sustainability and growth potential of its businesses and civic institutions. The area is so far off the beaten path, that it is likely that only a small percentage of the Melbourne region's residents and visitors even consider making Eau Gallie a destination.

Given central Florida's future development, and the attraction of Eau Gallie's waterfront location, it is likely that the area will experience a significant amount of development during the next five-ten years. A new proposed park and a soon to open restaurant represent positive movement towards the commercial area's economic growth.



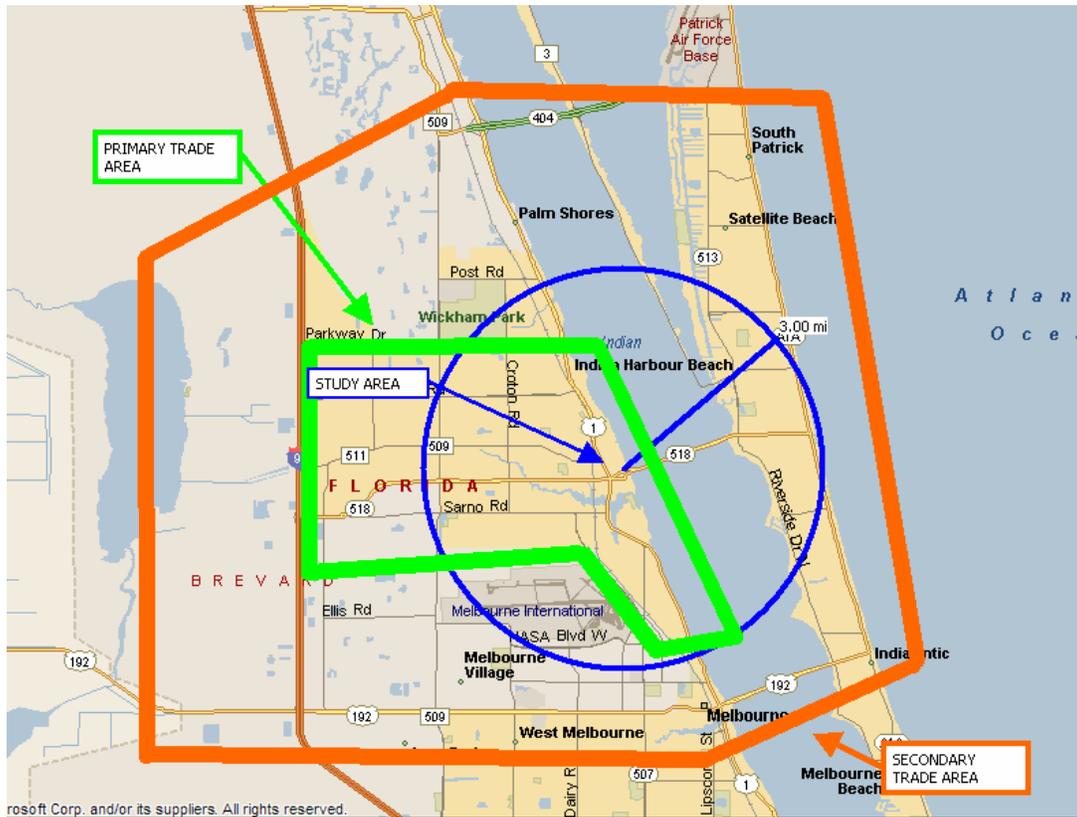
Eau Gallie-Melbourne is located within 150 miles Jacksonville, Miami and the Bahamas, and is a popular sailing destination for boaters.

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 Eau Gallie 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 Eau Gallie region on June 2-3, 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 Eau Gallie primary trade area varies for each business, but on average extends approximately 3-4 miles.

Market Observations

The greater Eau Gallie region's demographics are representative of the low to middle American market, with average household incomes ranging from \$25,100. - \$49,600. per year. Significantly higher incomes ranging from \$58,500. - \$87,000. per year are located within four miles to the north and to the east along the Beach Island area. The greater Melbourne Eau Gallie market is generally underserved with retail options, resulting in more frequent trips to Orlando's many shopping centers.

Melbourne does have a large multi-screen cinema, numerous discount department stores and fast food restaurants. In addition, downtown Melbourne has a successful emerging restaurant and specialty retail district that has received national reorganization as a "Cool City", by Richard Florida.



Eau Gallie has an emerging collection of small retailers and art galleries, as well as numerous established neighborhood businesses.

Merchandise Mix

During its peak in the late 1950's and early 1960's, Eau Gallie was an independent city and its commercial district met the basic needs of its surrounding neighborhoods with grocery stores and local services. The commercial district suffered a steady decline in the mid 1960's after a "modern" shopping center opened, taking with it many of Eau Gallie businesses.

During the past ten years the Eau Gallie has experience a small, but steady rebuilding effort that included the opening of the Arts and Science museum and several new businesses. Presently, the area's retailers include: an art supply store, several second hand-resale shops, a florist and a busy hardware store. Recently a new candy store and doctor have opened along Highland Street.

Recommendations:

- *As much as possible, the Eau Gallie should attempt to both retain its existing unique retail mix, while attracting new businesses that service the local neighborhoods.*
- *Because of its small size and historic nature, Eau Gallie should attempt to focus on one primary business theme such as an arts village or quality neighborhood goods and services.*
- *The area should avoid directly competing with downtown Melbourne as a major restaurant destination with a large collection of leading restaurants. Instead, focus on smaller cafes, coffee shops, bakeries*

and a few full service restaurants that complement the artist or neighborhood theme.



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

Recommendations (Cont.):

- There should be special emphasis in attracting quality neighborhood goods and services including a green grocery such as Whole Foods or Trader Joes; 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 Eau Gallie's Street's waterfront views and Highland Street.*
- Limit the amount of professional office along Highland Street to less than 20% of the total frontage.*

Vehicular Circulation

The Eau Gallie commercial area is aligned along two streets, each with different vehicular circulation problems. Highland Street's traffic although calm, is too light for most businesses demands. Eau Gallie Boulevard (west bound) offers needed traffic volumes, but at too high of speeds to allow for comfortable pedestrian movement and easy impulse visits by passing motorists. In addition, the waterfront Pineapple Street also has high traffic volumes and speeds that limit pedestrian movement between the library, Conchey Joe's restaurant and the balance of the Highland retailers.



Recommendations:

- *Implement traffic calming measures along Eau Gallie Boulevard West and along Pineapple Street.*
- *Maintain on-street parking along Eau Gallie Boulevard.*

Streetscape & Signage

Eau Gallie’s streetscape appears to still be in its original pre-war vintage. Most sidewalks are poorly maintained concrete, with little or no street tree plantings. Site furnishing are generally lacking, or in a tattered state of repair. The pedestrian and walk lighting is modern silver 25-30’ tall highway lighting with exposed wires strung pole to pole. These light standards, although efficient, do not reinforce the area’s historic nature and create an unattractive atmosphere for dining and shopping. Street signs are the standard green and white reflective specification.

The town has recently purchased land along Highland Street to build a new park, that is slated to start construction this fall. The sidewalks along Highland and Eau Gallie Boulevard West are generally too narrow to accommodate outside café seating.



The commercial district's sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and street furniture are dated and does not reflect the quality of its businesses.

Recommendations:

- *Repair existing damaged sidewalks, match present materials and standards.*
- *Replace existing benches, trash containers and signage as appropriate for the historical period of the district.*
- *Install street trees, landscaping, large planters and flowers along all primary streets.*
- *Install updated "You are Here" business directory to locate all retailers and restaurants in the Highland Street area.*
- *Work with FDOT to have "Historic Downtown" signs installed along I-95.*
- *Proceed with the construction of the new town square, including the new Rotary pavilion. As much as possible, design the square and pavilion to the highest standards, and to reinforce Eau Gallie's unique historic character.*
- *Special care should be taken to ensure that the new park has good lighting and has open sight lines from surrounding streets to maintain security.*
- *Widen existing sidewalks as much as possible, continue using concrete as the primary walk material.*
- *Install pedestrian scaled lighting.*

- *Install major identity signage along U.S. 1, and both segments of the Eau Gallie Boulevard to announce the commercial district's location.*
- *Improve pedestrian linkages between the Library and the surrounding business district.*



Although the County Library is a major anchor for the Eau Gallie shopping district, existing linkages and views to adjacent buildings are cut-off, limiting cross pedestrian movement and shopping. Photo on the left is a view from the library looking south towards Conchy Joe's Restaurant. Photo on the right is a view from the Library's entry looking west towards the Brevard Museum of Arts and Sciences primary entry.

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 worst 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 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 Eau Gallie commercial district appears to have plenty of parking for its existing size, plus for a limited amount of expansion. Most shoppers utilize the existing on-street parking spaces. Overflow and employee parking is available in the Civic Center surface lot, located along Highland Street. However, as the downtown continues to grow, a parking shortage will likely emerge and cause the expansion to stall. At least one business owner interviewed stated that they would like to significantly increase the size of their store, if they could find more parking and room to expand.

Recommendations:

- *Begin planning for new off-street public parking lots in the core Eau Gallie downtown area to accommodate future growth and development.*
- *Reduce the existing residential on-site parking requirements for residential from the existing 2 stalls per unit to 1 stall per unit or less.*
- *Reduce the onsite residential parking requirement from 2 cars per unit to 1 car per unit, minimum.*
- *Consider replacing the existing diagonal parking along the west side of Highland Street with parallel parking, to allow for a 10' wider sidewalk. This widened walk will encourage shaded afternoon outside dining.*



Eau Gallie's commercial buildings cover a wide range of historical periods.

Building Facades:

The Eau Gallie area has a variety of pre and post war buildings that combine to create a unique urban shopping district. 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:

- *Implement a color painting program to reinforce each buildings historical period.*
- *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.*
- *Promote infill of new construction to help link the shopping district's businesses and to encourage cross-shopping.*

Long Range Planning:

The Eau Gallie commercial district will be facing significant development pressures in the near future. Unchecked, this new development could cause the area to both loose its present charm and even damage many of its commercial viability. Basic infrastructure improvements such as parking, streetscape and a master plan should be implemented to ensure that the new growth occurs in a deliberate and desirable sequence.



Eau Gallie is a popular boating community with many boat owners driving from as far as Orlando.

Recommendations:

- *Plan and construct river boat slips including transient visitor dockage.*
- *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 --

