

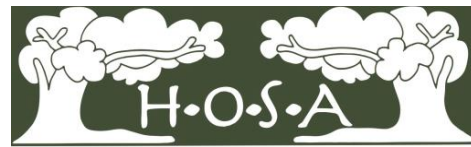
The Porter Avenue Community Conversations Project

*A Path Forward for Growth and Development
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 2021-2022*



HISTORIC • OCEAN • SPRINGS • ASSOCIATION

A Letter from HOSA



HISTORIC·OCEAN·SPRINGS·ASSOCIATION

The Board and membership of the Historic Ocean Springs Association is pleased to present this report summarizing activities and findings from our HOSA Porter Avenue Community Conversations Project.

As we gift this report to the City of Ocean Springs, it is our hope that the City will see this document as a resource as they consider development requests and plan improvements along Porter Avenue, especially the area from the Biloxi/Ocean Springs Bridge to City Hall at Dewey Avenue. The content of this report is built largely from comments and suggestions of residents and stakeholders who are financially and emotionally invested along Porter Avenue and in the surrounding areas.

The Porter Avenue area is an important and developing corridor into the heart of Ocean Springs. New specialty businesses, eateries, galleries, historic churches, boutique hotels and professional offices blend in with residences and live oaks to define this area of our historic city. HOSA believes that how growth occurs along Porter Avenue matters greatly, both to that area and to Ocean Springs.

More than two years ago, HOSA began talking about growth and change along Porter Avenue. We recognized that our community was facing issues common to other growing cities, focusing mostly on the need to support growth and creativity while also protecting the fabric of an existing historic area. HOSA members considered how and if our community organization might assist in facilitating a process to address these issues as they relate to our Ocean Springs. After much deliberation, we formed the design for a project we felt would be productive: a series of community conversations where stakeholders, residents and other interested citizens could voice their input in constructive conversations, working together toward developing a vision and a planning resource tool for the Porter corridor. To make certain that our efforts were facilitated in a professional manner, HOSA contracted with the team at Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, which is an arm of MSU. We are grateful for the assistance and teamwork of GCCDS, and for their leadership in designing this final document. Our project stalled in 2020 due to restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, but we never stopped making progress. HOSA feels that the community conversations held in 2021 were worth waiting for. We are excited to present this final product as the result.

Some places give us an emotional sense, while others do not. A “sense of place” is a term often used to describe the feeling a person experiences while in a specific location. Porter Avenue has a distinctive sense of place, derived from the unique combination of buildings, streets, trees, open spaces, sounds, light, landscaping, density, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, public art, and more. These qualities, combined with the strong spirit of the many people who care about Porter Avenue, create an area of this city which is truly rich in its sense of place. HOSA sees the challenge for our community now is to embrace growth and creativity while preserving existing qualities of the Porter Avenue area. From this, we see the sense of place that is Porter Avenue becoming deeper and more beautifully unique. HOSA presents this document to the city as a resource to assist in that effort.

Susan Gullede,
HOSA President

Working Together for a Common Goal

This document is the result of many hands working together, with a common goal of contributing to our extraordinary community of Ocean Springs. Every person and organization involved in the process from its conception, to each community meeting, to the the printing of this final report has played an integral role in envisioning the very best for Porter Avenue. For each one of you, we are grateful!

The Project Team



The Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) is an active community non-profit organization that has donated over \$700,000 in community projects to Ocean Springs over the past 30+ years. HOSA is comprised of dues-paying individual and business members who contribute their time, talents, and donations motivated by their appreciation and love for this community. HOSA's mission is to protect, promote and preserve the unique charm of historic Ocean Springs. HOSA loves the past, present, and future of Ocean Springs. HOSA has no employees, only members, and as a 501(c)(3) organization, donations to HOSA are tax-deductible. New members are welcome. HOSA can be contacted at historicoceanspringsassn@gmail.com.

The 2022 volunteer Board of Directors are:

Susan Gullede, President	Jessie Florence Zenor, Vice-President
Lynn Linenberger, Secretary	Kathryn Shanks, Treasurer
Michael Goodwin, Member at Large	Peggy Stowers, Member at Large
Randy Hagan, Member at Large	Russ Bayne, Ex-Officio
Melanie Allen, Ex-Officio	



The Gulf Coast Community Design Studio is a professional service and outreach program of Mississippi State University and the College of Architecture, Art + Design. GCCDS was established in Biloxi, Mississippi in response to Hurricane Katrina to provide architectural design services, landscape and planning assistance, educational opportunities, and research to organizations and communities along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. GCCDS works through close, pragmatic partnerships with local organizations and communities in and beyond the three Mississippi coastal counties, putting professional expertise to work in order to shape vibrant and resilient Gulf Coast communities.

HOSA's Project Leadership Team and Task Force

Project Chair, Melanie Allen and Co-Chairs Mickey Williams, Kathryn Shanks, and Jessie Florence Zenor

Task Force: Susan Gullledge, Randy Hagan, Peggy Stowers, Michael Goodwin, Lynn Linenberger, and Russ Bayne

Project Advisory Team

Fred Moran, Hank Zuber, Ricky Authement, Roxy Condrey, Ted Condrey, Joe Cloyd, Jan Hume Munn, Kait Sukiennik, Sonia Cowart, Dennis Cowart and our late friend Larry Cospier. Additional thanks to project supporters Dr. Michael Weems and Harriet Perry.

The City of Ocean Springs

Thanks go to Planning and Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, City Planner Wade Morgan, and Planning and Grants Assistant Amanda Moser, each for their kind and valued assistance throughout the project. We also send a special thanks to Mayor Kenny Holloway, Alderman at Large Bobby Cox, and Ward 2 Alderman Ricky Authement for their participation in our final Community Conversation meeting.

Meeting Places

We are immensely grateful to Pastor Rick Brooks and the wonderful folks at St. Paul United Methodist Church for allowing HOSA to hold three well-attended community meetings in their Wesson Building at St. Paul's Downtown Church campus at 800 Porter Avenue. We also want to thank St. John's Episcopal Church, the Greenhouse, and The Mary C O'Keefe Cultural Center for allowing us to hold Project Advisory Team meetings at their facilities.

Sharing Partners

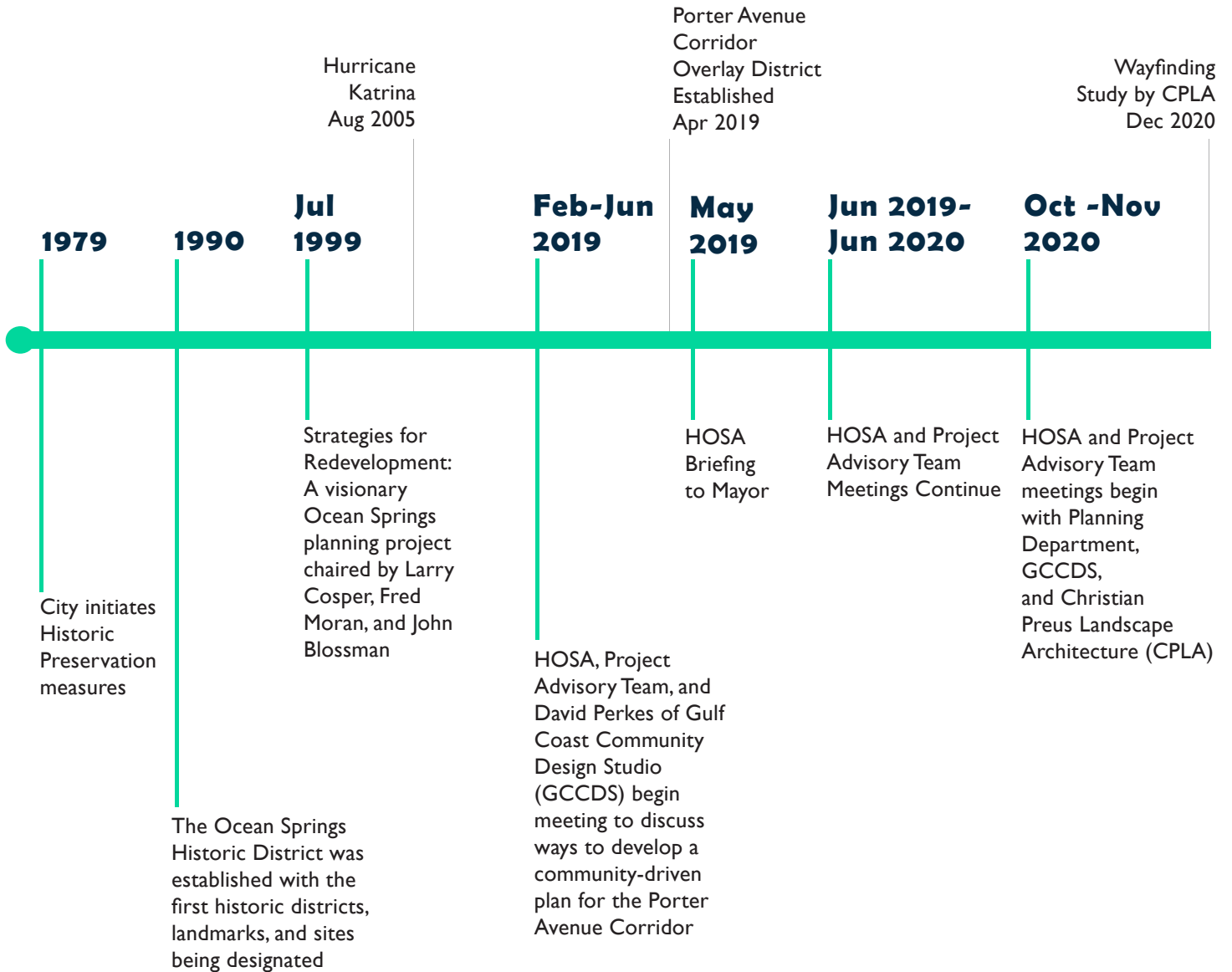
We appreciate the assistance of the following community partners:

- Dr. Mark LaSalle and Arborist David Minkler for providing input on care for the important Ocean Springs urban tree canopy.
- Liz Elmore, OSPREY (Ocean Springs Pedestrian and Residents for Exercise and Youth Safety) for sharing research on ways to promote safe pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- Nancy Wilson, OSEA (Ocean Springs Environmental Alliance) for contributing information about the value of being good stewards of our abundant natural resources.

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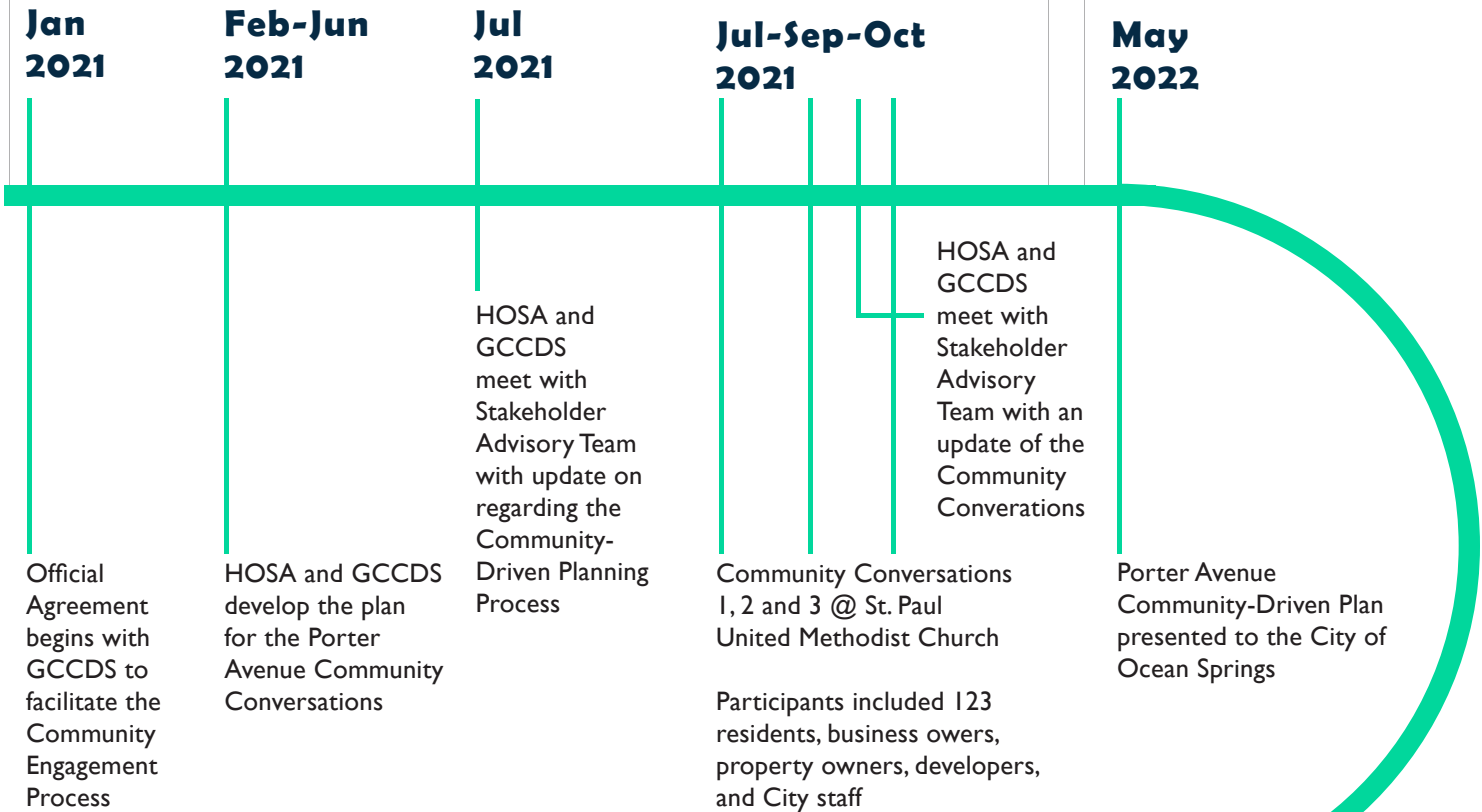
Timeline



Western Gateway Improvements are Funded Dec 2020 for FY2021

Downtown Parking, Traffic and Travel Study by Dale Partners Spring 2022

HOSA's Interpretive Signage Project Begins April 2022



A Path Forward

We envision a future where the City and Community work together through the Recommendations and Action Steps herein, to maintain the character of Porter Avenue while embracing creativity, growth, and change.

Background

Old Ocean Springs Historic District: A History of the Porter Avenue Area

The Old Ocean Springs Historic District is comprised of several residential blocks situated to the south and west of the City's downtown business district. It includes part of Porter Avenue as well as a large peripheral area influenced by what occurs along Porter Avenue.

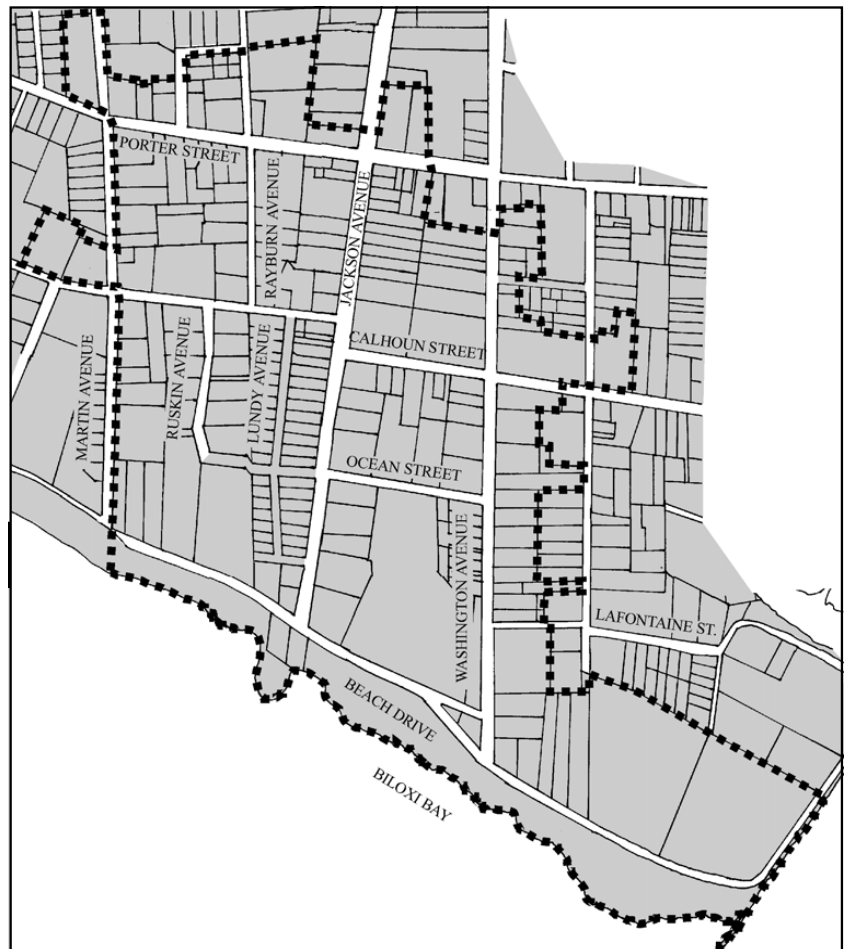
There is a long history of mixed-use zoning along Porter, Washington, and Jackson Avenues that includes residential, professional business, and commercial development. The district reveals a diversity of architectural styles, local stylistic adaptations, and a variety of building forms. Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Craftsman stylistic interpretations predominate upon Creole cottages, Planter's cottages, shotgun houses, and bungalow forms, all well-suited for our Gulf Coast climate with few chimneys and many porches.

The architectural style is also indicative of the continuous development of Ocean Springs as a resort community. Approximately a century after the 1699 establishment of nearby Fort Maurepas, Ocean Springs was settled as a colonial fishing village. This area experienced only limited growth until the inception of a steamer service in the 1820-1830s, which ran between Mobile and New Orleans.

The discovery of mineral springs near Old Fort Bayou in the 1850s awakened new interest in this small community, leading to

the construction of numerous hotels and boarding houses, as well as elaborate resort homes. Post-war prosperity and completion of the railroad running between Mobile and New Orleans encouraged this trend.

Numerous residences have been restored, transitioning to modern non-residential uses along the Porter Avenue Corridor. New specialty businesses, eateries, galleries, and boutique hotels blend in with professional offices, historic churches, and the heritage Live Oak trees, defining Porter Avenue as we know it today.



Map of the Old Ocean Springs Historic District. Source: Ocean Springs Historic District Design Guidelines, 2010.

Project Background

With the current rate of growth and changes in Ocean Springs, citizen input that can shape the future of our communities is more important now than ever. In October 2021, after nearly two years considering and discussing the possibilities with members, city leaders, and other stakeholders, HOSA led and funded a community-driven planning effort that would facilitate community and citizen input around the future growth of one of our growing and changing areas: Porter Avenue.

As early as January of 2019, HOSA began discussions with the City Planning Department around the topic of growth on Porter Avenue. A Project Advisory Team emerged from among the HOSA membership which began to identify goals for this project including how to engage the broader community.

In this way, a triangular approach was established that would involve the City Planning Department, a Project Advisory Team, and the broader community. Collectively,

the “community” included residents, property and business owners, developers, builders, and City staff, many of whom share two or more of these roles.

The community of focus for this project is Porter Avenue from the Highway 90 bridge to Dewey Avenue, and the project is all about maintaining the character of an historic area while embracing

creativity, growth, and change through Community Conversations.

In order to hear and understand all community concerns, needs, hopes, and ideas, HOSA contracted with the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (GCCDS) to facilitate community input in a way that would become a valuable resource for the City

to consider while planning for growth along Porter Avenue. Great care has been taken to develop a meaningful process for community engagement that can be duplicated as other communities in our city experience similar challenges.

This project is all about maintaining the character of an historic area while embracing creativity, growth, and change through Community Conversations.

What and Who is the Porter Avenue Community?

The focus area of the Community Conversations Project is Porter Avenue from the Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge to Dewey Avenue. For the purpose of this project, the properties directly facing Porter Avenue are the focus of Community Conversations. The property owners directly adjacent to the corridor (annotated by white highlight in the image below and on the facing or following page) received hand-addressed invitations via the U.S. Postal Service.

More broadly however, the conversation includes not only property owners, residents and businesses along Porter Avenue, but all fans of Porter Avenue. Beyond the street-facing properties, residents and businesses within neighboring areas may be affected by development along the corridor. Thus, HOSA also sent out notices via email and social media to welcome and include everyone interested in the Porter Avenue Community Conversations.



IMAGE CAPTION: Porter Avenue, from Highway 90 to Dewey Avenue, is the community of interest for this project. Residents, business owners, and property owners in the nearby vicinity were invited to attend each of three open community workshops. Property owners directly adjacent to the corridor (highlighted in the image above) received invitations via the U. S. Postal Service. Map compiled by GCCDS.

Participation Map



PARTICIPATION MAP: The map above shows the Porter Avenue Property Owners as well as the general home or business location of workshop participants. Dots off the map represent those whose address did not appear within the map boundary. Map by GCCDS.

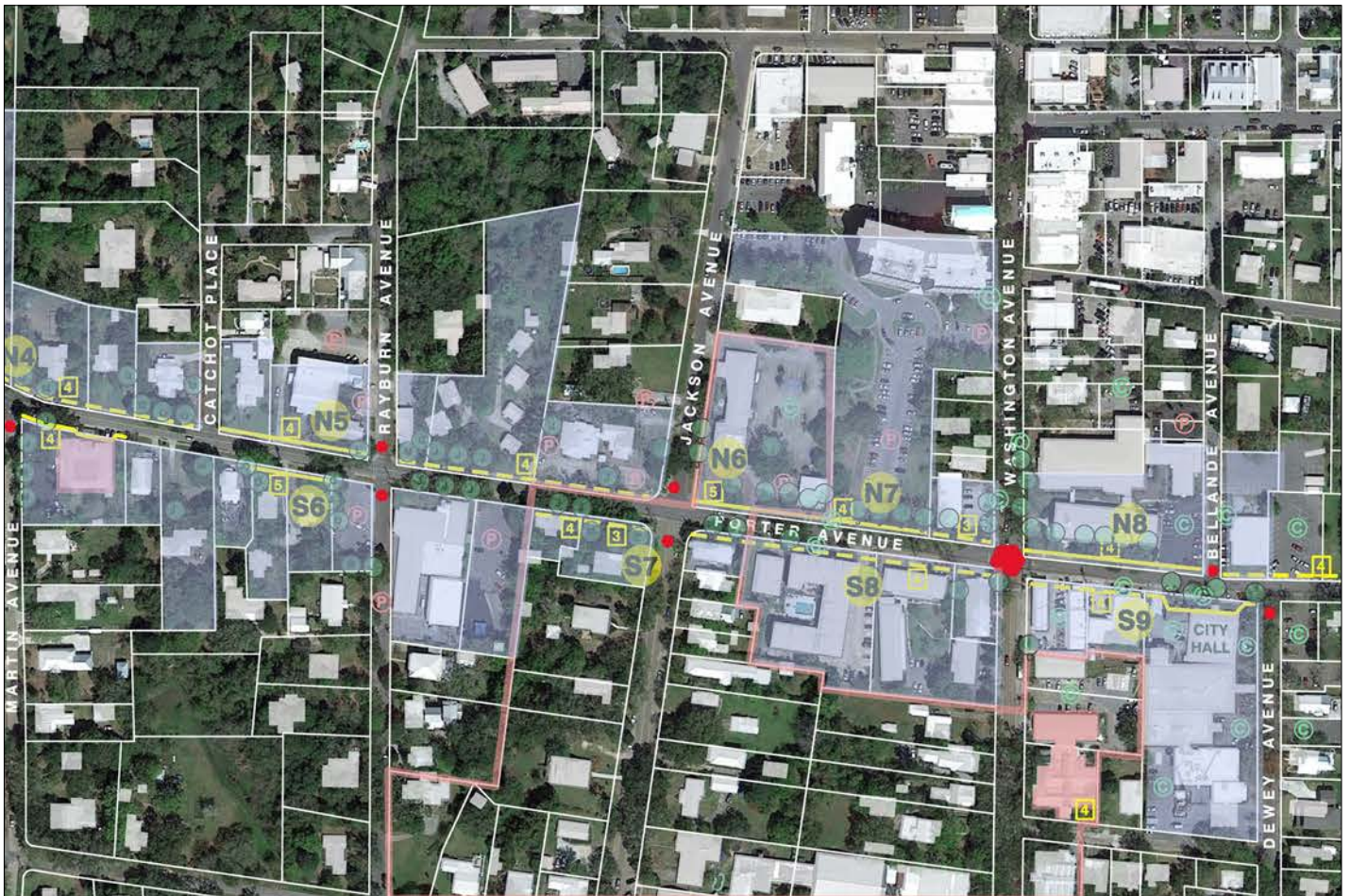


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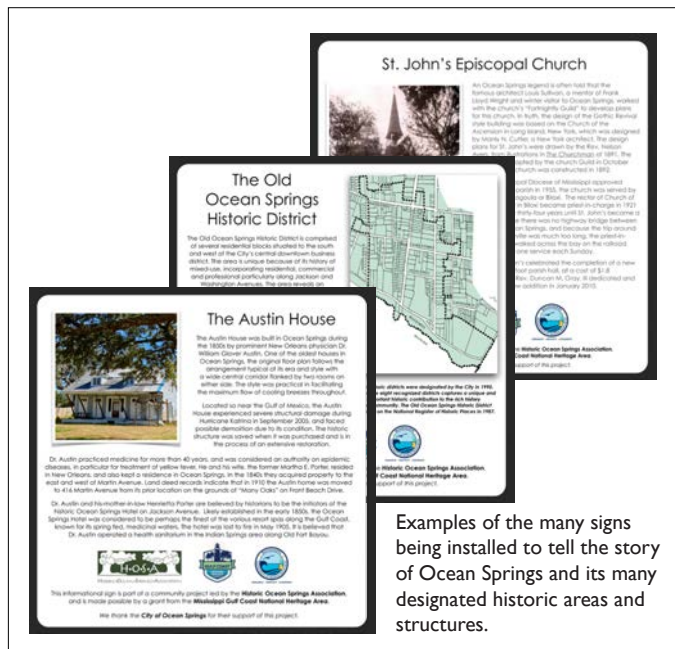
Other Relevant Projects

Simultaneous with the timeframe of this project, several other relevant projects were in motion or recently completed. These projects spanned topics that were frequently mentioned as areas for needed improvement by workshop participants. These noteworthy projects are referenced below:

- 1 Ocean Springs Downtown Parking, Traffic and Travel Study.** This project engaged the community in a series of focus groups to analyze the current conditions and concerns relating to the Ocean Springs downtown parking, traffic congestion, and circulation, and to discuss potential solutions. The project is funded through the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, and took place from August through December 2021. A report on the findings and recommendations will be published by Dale Partners in collaboration with the City in the Spring of 2022.



- 2 HOSA's Interpretive Signage Project.** This project is funded by the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area Program of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. During the Porter Avenue community meetings, HOSA listened to attendees who suggested that signage placed around town to highlight landmark places and local history would be a great way to promote and share the cultural fabric of our historic areas. HOSA has acted on this suggestion with the first historic signs completed in April 2022. Many more will be coming soon in more than three dozen locations.



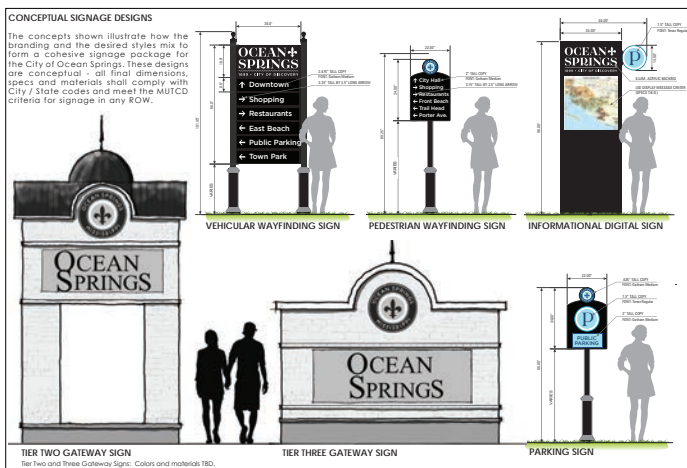
Examples of the many signs being installed to tell the story of Ocean Springs and its many designated historic areas and structures.

3 Ocean Springs Bridge Improvements for the Western Gateway. This \$200,000 project was funded through the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' Tidelands Grant Funds for FY2021. Though it has been temporarily delayed, it will address the intersection of Porter and Hwy 90 at the Bridge in terms of safety, signage, and aesthetic. The detailed scope of work is currently being created by the City.



Hwy 90 at Porter Avenue is seen by the community as a prime opportunity to create a welcoming entry into the Porter Avenue Corridor. Image courtesy of GCCDS.

4 [Ocean Springs Wayfinding Study](#), December 2020. Funded by the Mississippi Department of Transportation



this project was facilitated and prepared by CPLA Planning and Design. During a 6-month planning and design endeavor, discussions were facilitated with a steering committee made up of business leaders, community advocates, engineering professionals, the Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and members of HOSA. The result is a vision for branding that includes specific signage categories. Future signage projects are identified in the report which is available on the City of Ocean Springs website.

The Community-Driven Process

HOSA and GCCDS worked together closely to develop a community-driven process that would provide the setting for all stakeholders to be heard and to be in open dialogue with one another.

To engage the broader community, three public workshops were scheduled for Summer through Fall 2021, which became known as Community Conversations. During the course of the Community Conversations, the HOSA Advisory Team was kept updated of the progress, and the City Planning Department was consulted with as needed in order for the workshop facilitators to better understand, for instance, the existing design review process. This

continued communication and triangular approach helped to inform the structure and content of each public workshop.



A triangular approach served to facilitate communication throughout the process.

The process was guided by three primary goals:

1

To work together with the community to create people-friendly places that foster creativity, inspiration, learning, and sense of community.

2

To consider the area's historic past while innovating a vibrant, well-loved and well-functioning mixed-use corridor that aligns with its residential character.

3

To demonstrate a relevant and replicable process that can potentially serve other communities throughout the City of Ocean Springs.

Community Conversations through in-person workshops and on-line surveys:



Image courtesy of HOSA.

GCCDS worked closely with HOSA in the design and planning of three open community workshops that facilitated community and citizen input regarding the future growth of Porter Avenue from the Highway 90 bridge to Dewey Avenue. Throughout the process, the priority has been to hear and understand all community concerns about growth and development as well as the community's desire and ideas for the future of Porter Avenue.

The three workshops were held at St. Paul United Methodist Church on Porter Avenue. They were scheduled during the evening hours to ensure the greatest possible participation. HOSA advertised the workshops

through email, social media, and via hand-addressed invitations that were mailed to all stakeholders and businesses within a block of the focus area along Porter Avenue. An on-line survey was administered after Workshop #1 to get additional input from community members who were not physically present at the workshop.

Following each workshop a recap and all community input was compiled by GCCDS and shared with HOSA's Project Leadership and Task Force members, and a meeting ensued to debrief and plan for the next upcoming workshop. In this way,

each workshop informed the content, process, and engagement activities of the next workshop. Overall, 112 attendees participated in the three community workshops and 11 additional community members participated in the online surveys for a total participation of 123 citizens involved in the community conversations over the three-month period.

Project Advisory Team Meetings

A Project Advisory Team was established prior to the beginning of the project. In addition to this group's role in helping establish the goals for the project, they met with HOSA and GCCDS intermittently and their input helped to shape the content of the community workshops. Meetings with this group were held prior to Workshop 1, and after Workshop 2, resulting in additional voices and perspectives which are reflected in the findings.

City Planning Department Meetings

In addition to preliminary meetings with HOSA and the Planning Department that took place before the project was funded, a final meeting was scheduled with the City Planning Department after Workshop 2. GCCDS arranged this meeting to better understand the design review process and the perspective of department staff. This meeting revealed the need to clearly present a review of the City's current processes, which was presented in Workshop #3.



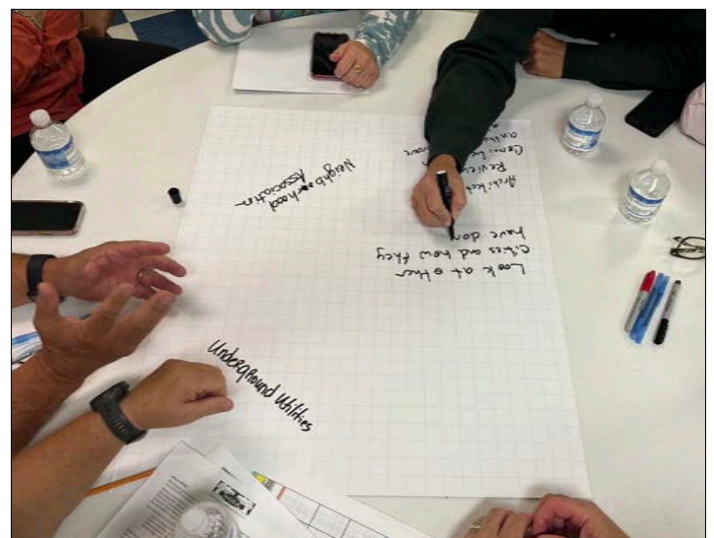
123 citizens overall participated in the workshops and/or the on-line surveys . Image courtesy of GCCDS.

Community Voice

The three public workshops were designed to work together and to guide participants through a logical way of thinking about the challenges presented by growth and development, especially when coupled with honoring its historic character and past.

The first workshop got the community conversation started by introducing the whole project upfront, then focusing on what feels complete or incomplete about various segments along Porter Avenue. The

second workshop shifted to focus on the public space, that is the space including everything in the streetscape and everything in the public right-of-way up to the sidewalks. The third workshop shifted focus once again, this time to private property and how private property shapes or guides the overall character of Porter Avenue. This workshop introduced the idea that there are existing processes that guide development in Ocean Springs, and specifically on Porter Avenue, and that those



123 citizens overall participated in the workshops and/or the on-line surveys. Images are courtesy of HOSA and GCCDS.

processes can be influenced and shaped by a well-organized community.

The systematic framework for public workshops remained constant, with each workshop informing specific activities for the next month's workshop. The following pages detail the format for each including facilitation materials used, presentations, large and small group activities, and all community input collected whether spoken or in writing.



A natural progression of workshop topics was designed to provide the systematic framework that would guide the conversations over three workshops at one-month intervals.



123 citizens overall participated in the workshops and/or the on-line surveys . Images are courtesy of HOSA and GCCDS.

Workshop #1 : Getting the Community Conversation Started

July 27, 2021

Attendance: 68

Desired Outcome:

The focus of this workshop was to identify and document the community's opinions regarding the most *complete* and *incomplete* areas of Porter Avenue in terms of both physical and intangible characteristics to understand what is truly valued, and how the less *complete* zones can be modified or improved.

Schedule and Materials:

- Exhibit: Large Format Viewing Map and Property Images, displayed as shown below
- Handout: Project Timeline, on table for each participant
- Presentation: Introducing the Project
- Discussion on Complete vs. Incomplete Streets
- Small and Large Group Activity : Complete vs. Incomplete Areas
- On-Line Survey



Exhibit: Large Format Viewing Map. Participants viewed the map shown above as they entered the workshop. It exhibited existing conditions and the scope of the project along Porter Avenue from Hwy 90 to Dewey Avenue. The map included street names, property bounds, building footprints, sidewalk conditions, lighting, parking opportunities, intersection signage, significant trees, and designated historic places. Additionally, 4"x6"

images of each property along the corridor correlated with the aerial-view map. Participants indicated their property with adhesive dots so the team could understand who was present in relation to the project area, and what areas were not well-represented. Attendees whose property didn't fall within the bounds of the map placed a dot and indicated the street name in the margin.

Handout: Project Timeline.

Porter Avenue Community Driven Planning A project of the Historic Ocean Springs Association							
GOAL 1: To facilitate neighborhood conversations about the future of Porter Avenue from the Hwy 90 Bridge to Dewey Avenue.							
GOAL 2: To present the findings as a Community Driven Plan to the City of Ocean Springs.							
T I M E L I N E							WRAP UP and PUBLIC PRESENTATION
Description	Oct 2020 - Jun 2021	Jul 2021	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21
Part 1 -- Preparation / Data Collection							
During this period the project partners coordinated to produce a well-informed base map, site imagery, and plan for today's public meeting.	✓						
Part 2 -- Workshops (Neighborhood Conversations)							
Workshop 1 (July 27, 2021) Getting the Neighborhood Conversation Started - We'll discuss what is most complete / incomplete including both the physical and intangible. - Call for on-line input		✓					
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE							
DESIRED OUTCOME: Hear from neighbors to identify and document the most complete and incomplete areas of Porter Avenue in terms of both physical and intangible characteristics to understand what is truly valued, and how the less complete zones can be modified or improved.							
Workshop 2 (August 2021) The Streetscape / Public Right of Way - We'll discuss setbacks, lighting, shade, walkability, bike ability, parking, traffic flow, cross walks, safety, stormwater. - What's working? - What can be improved? - Call for on-line input							
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE							
DESIRED OUTCOME: Identify work the City can begin to implement.							
Workshop 3 (September 2021) (The Character / Development Guide / Private Property) - If we think about the future of Porter Avenue, what would we hope for? - What fits? - What doesn't fit? - How do we guide future development? - Call for on-line input.							
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE							
DESIRED OUTCOME: Arrive at consensus on the type of plan, if any, will guide development to achieve the desired character of Porter Avenue.							
Part 3 -- Community Presentation							
GCCDS compiles workshop findings and prepares the Community-Driven Plan for Porter Avenue: - Identifying project priorities for the City. - Identifying the community's priorities and preferred process to guide development.							
HOSA and GCCDS presents the Community Driven Plan for Porter Avenue to the City and Public.							



Presentation : Introducing the Project.

The GCCDS presented a series of slides to introduce the project, the mixed-use history of Porter Avenue, the community-driven design process, and the timeline so attendees could understand the planning work that had occurred to date as well as the plan for upcoming workshops.

David Perkes facilitated a discussion with the large group to introduce the terms *complete* and *incomplete* as they relate to Porter Avenue. What might a *complete* street feel like, and why does it feel *complete*? What are some of the characteristics of the most *complete* areas along Porter Avenue. The attendees were encouraged to think of both physical characteristics such as nice sidewalks, lighting, and shade trees, as well as intangible characteristics such as being innovative, inspiring or neighborly.

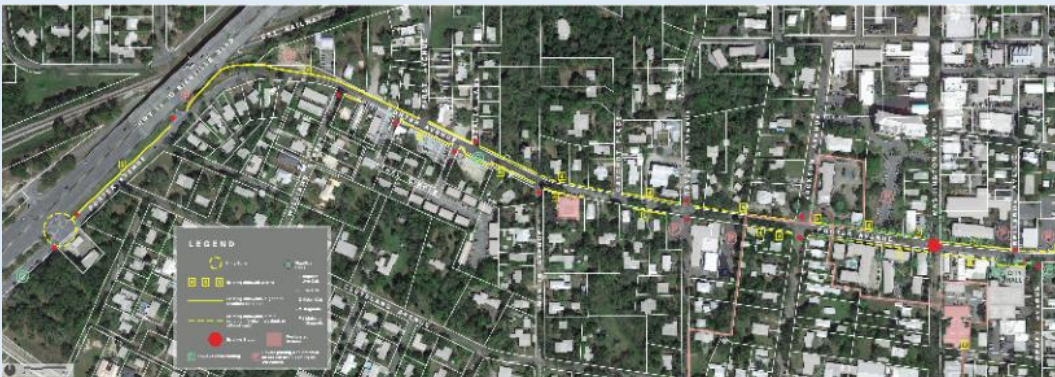
Small and Large Group Activity Complete vs. Incomplete Areas.

Participants worked in small groups to continue the discussion, and noted their ideas on sticky notes. Each table was then invited to share the collective findings of their group, which were then recorded on chart paper by the workshop facilitator for all to view.

All comments are reflected as community input at the end of this section, and in the Findings section of this report.

SLIDE I

PORTER AVENUE COMMUNITY DRIVEN PLANNING



A process to achieve the community's vision for Porter Avenue in a series of neighborhood conversations.

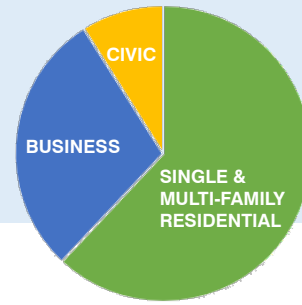


MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
GULF COAST COMMUNITY
DESIGN STUDIO

SLIDE 2

A History of Mixed-Use

Along Porter Avenue



- 67 Parcels Border Porter Avenue.
- Most (+/- 62%) are single- or multi-family dwellings.
- 20+ Parcels (28%) include a variety of over 25+ small businesses such as shops, eateries, bars, medical offices, design professionals, attorneys, Realtors, fitness studios, bed & breakfasts, convenience stores, and gas stations.
- 6 Parcels (9%) include churches, funeral homes, government offices and civic buildings



SLIDE 3

Community Driven Planning Process

Goals for Porter Avenue



- To work together with community to create places that foster creativity, inspiration, learning, and sense of community;
- To consider the historic past while innovating a vibrant, well-loved and well-functioning mixed-used corridor that is people-friendly and in alignment with its residential character;
- To create a safe and walkable street with ample lighting, parking, and shade;
- To utilize a relevant and replicable process.

SLIDE 4

Project Timeline

Part 1 : Team Planning, Preparation and Data Collection



OCTOBER 2020 – JUNE 2021

During this period HOSA, the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, City Staff, Dale Partners Architects, and a project Stakeholder Advisory Committee coordinated to produce a well-informed base map, site imagery, and plan for today's public meeting.

SLIDE 5

Project Timeline

Part 3 : Public Presentation of Findings



SEPT - OCT 2021

GCCDS will compile the workshop findings and prepare the Community-Driven Plan for Porter Avenue:

- Identifying project priorities for the City.
- Identifying the community's priorities and preferred process to guide development.

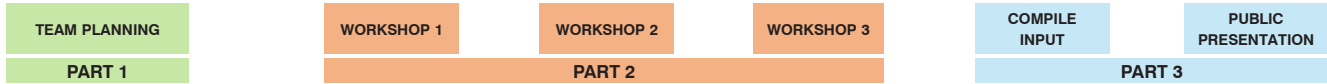
DECEMBER 2021

HOSA and GCCDS will present the Community-Driven Plan for Porter Avenue to the public.

SLIDE 6

Project Timeline

Part 2 : Neighborhood Conversations



JULY 2021
Workshop #1

Workshop 1 (July 27, 2021)
Getting the Neighborhood Conversation Started
- We'll discuss what is most complete / incomplete including both the physical and intangible.
- Call for on-line input

COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK
RECONVENE WITH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DESIRED OUTCOME: Hear from neighbors to identify and document the most complete and incomplete areas of Porter Avenue in terms of both physical and intangible characteristics to understand what is truly valued, and how the less complete zones can be modified or improved.

AUGUST 2021
Workshop # 2

Workshop 2 (August 2021)
The Streetscape / Public Right of Way
- We'll discuss setbacks, lighting, shade, walkability, bike ability, parking, traffic flow, cross walks, safety, stormwater.
- What's working?
- What can be improved?
- Call for on-line input

COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK
RECONVENE WITH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DESIRED OUTCOME: Identify work the City can begin to implement.

SEPTEMBER 2021
Workshop # 3

Workshop 3 (September 2021)
(The Character / Development Guide / Private Property)
- If we think about the future of Porter Avenue, what would we hope for?
- What fits?
- What doesn't fit?
- How do we guide future development?
- Call for on-line input.

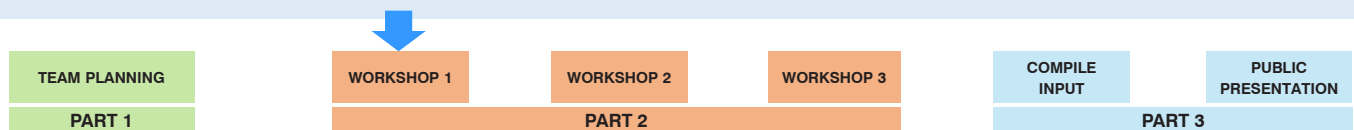
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK
RECONVENE WITH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DESIRED OUTCOME: Arrive at consensus on the type of plan, if any, will guide development to achieve the desired character of Porter Avenue.

SLIDE 7

Today's Focus

Part 2 : Neighborhood Conversations Workshop #1



Getting the Neighborhood Conversation Started

- We'll discuss what is most complete / incomplete including both the physical and intangible aspects of Porter Avenue.
- Call for on-line input

Desired Outcome:

- Hear from neighbors to identify and document the most complete and incomplete areas of Porter Avenue in terms of both physical and intangible characteristics to understand what is truly valued, and how the less complete zones can be modified or improved.

On-line Survey. To glean additional input from those not attending the workshop, a 10-question on-line survey was distributed via email and social media by HOSA. The survey included hyperlinks to all background materials, and the questions in the survey mirrored those of the in-person workshop as closely as possible. Questions were intentionally open-ended in hopes of receiving the most authentic responses. Survey questions are shown below:

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

Q1	Have you reviewed the background document links above, to bring you up-to-speed on the project goals, the timeline, and the focus of Workshop #1?
Q2	Contact Information. At the workshop, participants signed in and put blue dots on the project map to indicate where they live or own property in relation to the project. We'd like to know "who is here" or who is participating in the conversation. We'd also like to keep you posted on future workshops.
Q3	Thinking about streets in general, not just Porter Avenue, there are many things that make a good street, one that is pleasant and safe to walk and drive on and generally a nice place to be. At the workshop the term "COMPLETE" was used to describe these elements (physical characteristics) and even the intangible qualities of a good street. In your own words, list or describe some elements and qualities that you think would be important to make a good or "COMPLETE" street.
Q4	At the workshop, participants described "COMPLETE" areas along Porter Avenue as including qualities such as ample sidewalks, plenty of shade, nice landscaping, a well-maintained building facade, feeling safe, places that people like to gather and share memory-making experiences. According to this definition of "COMPLETE" (and your own response to Q3) what would you say are the most "COMPLETE" areas along Porter Avenue. Please name 3-5 areas, and tell WHY they feel "COMPLETE" to you. Example: From Street A to Street B, because it is always shady and cool there on my afternoon walks.
Q5	Conversly, what areas along Porter Avenue would you say are the most "INCOMPLETE"? Please list 3 and tell us what makes these areas feel "INCOMPLETE" to you.
Q6	Using up to 6 words, how would YOU describe the Porter Avenue CORRIDOR and AREA?
Q7	When you have guests in town, what places or sites in the Porter Avenue AREA do you like to show them?
Q8	Now thinking of OCEAN SPRINGS OVERALL, what qualities do you believe make Ocean Springs unique?
Q9	Thinking about the special and historic places in Ocean Springs, what are YOUR ideas for telling the stories of these places and the local culture of Ocean Springs to both residents and visitors?
Q10	Thank you for participating! AT WORKSHOP #2 we'll take a closer look at the PUBLIC SPACE (the right-of-way) from sidewalk to sidewalk. Please watch your mailbox and the HOSA Facebook Page for the announcement of Workshop #2, planned for Tuesday, August 31 at 6pm at St. Paul United Methodist Church on Porter Avenue. We hope to see you there! Do you anticipate attending Workshop #2?

Workshop #1 Community Input

The following tables represent Community Input from Workshop #1 relating to complete and incomplete areas of Porter Avenue. All written or spoken comments in small group activities and large group sharing are organized here. Some groups had more to share than others, and comments acquired via on-line survey are also included in the table.

SMALL GROUP AND SURVEY COMMENTS INCLUDE:

GROUP	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East of Martin (except sidewalks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West of Martin from Bridge: trees, lighting, landscape Apartments across from Dr. Weems: needs beautification, trees, landscape Under bridge: under-utilized, consider parking there
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like to see inviting porches or an outside bench at every residence to encourage neighborhood conversation 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Jackson to Dewey: trees, sidewalks, slower traffic Rayburn westward Near the Roost: outside seating is nice, inviting, attractive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West end is more commercial and 'open', less inviting The Bridge / Entry: needs sense of arrival for Porter Avenue
	Other Insights / Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the zoning on Porter Avenue? 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin to Dewey (except sidewalks): these places offer an inviting view beyond the building (i.e., around the churches), as compared to Government Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near Jackson: lighting and sidewalks Martin to the Beach
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does this relate to setbacks? Need consistent lighting, sidewalk improvements and safe provision for cyclists Not in favor of parallel parking which is not safe for cyclists Not in favor of a dense entertainment district Favors keeping Porter mostly residential 	
4	Porter House (the Roost) to Strip Center	
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest a trolley or parking shuttle to alleviate high traffic 	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin to Roost: attention to detail, lighting, the consistency is important at night West end near Greenhouse and Sweet's Lounge: complete in terms of gathering place, good memories The Library and surrounding area Guyton Condos The Funeral Home and surrounding areas The Cottages: cute, throw-back, Live Oak trees are best 	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington to the Beatnik: trees, landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Brick to Beach: no sidewalk, few trees, feels disconnected Overpass: lack of trees, landscape Washington to Rosies Uniforms Dumping at apartment complex
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need parking solutions for new businesses and golf carts; consider how to utilize the area under the bridge 	

GROUP	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BOK to Greenhouse: preserves history, trees, sidewalks Cottages: trees, sidewalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area near Five Seasons: sidewalks Bridge corridor
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favors preserving the historical buildings 	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin to Jackson: sidewalks The Cottages: the Live Oak canopy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West of Martin
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not in favor of too much parking; keep it minimal; favors keeping Live Oaks 	
Lg Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the Church to the Roost The block east of Town Hall: small homes, trees Near funeral home: trees and personality of buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Back Edges' near Martin: could be more inviting; there is a fear of theft
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking is a problem Side walks are a good thing, and could be wider to meet ADA requirements There is confusion about what is commercial and what is not 	
On-Line Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area around The Roost: lighting, shade, trees, sidewalks Church areas: shade, sidewalks Guyton Street: shaded walks Beatnik: landscape and site design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach to Williams: inconsistent sidewalks, signage needed Williams to Martin: business facades, poor sidewalks, lighting Martin to Magnolia: poor and uneven sidewalks Washington to Church: too congested w/ street parking Martin to Yacht Club: gaps, poor lighting, facade improvements needed. lack of landscaping Washington to City Hall: too congested with parking at Knuckleheads too close to street, parallel parking at Baptist Church presents safety issue Hwy 90 interchange: dangerous and uninviting Azalea to Williams: looks "junky" with the exception of the business area in the brick strip mall area
	Other Insights and Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent lighting, sidewalk improvements and bike lanes are needed Porter Avenue is currently not as welcoming as it could be and presents a tremendous opportunity to create perfection, especially in the under-developed areas The street is varied in terms of use and need We value the overall small-town feel and quaintness of Ocean Springs with its blend of art, history, nature, and access to shopping We value community involvement and taking good care of natural resources such as the Live Oak Canopy 	
	Ideas for telling stories of historic places include (on-line input only): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a visual line that could be followed throughout the city to discover historical sites and venues of interest Creating large-scale public art murals and installations depicting historic past of OS and its existing structures Historic sites of interest include Fort Maurepas, Crooked Feather, East Beach, Marble Springs, WAMA, formerly Mary C, Ruskin Oak, formerly front beach Walking or riding tours of Ocean Springs Telling the stories of Ocean Springs' past through the lens of its historic trees 	
General Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Voice. The residents and business owners of the area (the public) want to express their concerns and ideas before decisions are made Over Commercialization. "Let's not duplicate Government Street" Sidewalks. The community advocates for ample sidewalks on both sides of the street with ADA compliance Homelessness. The need for the City to consider actionable solutions for the homeless population was expressed People-friendly. A street should be safe, well-lit, aesthetically pleasing, inviting and well-maintained (free from debris, trash, potholes and obstructions) Landscaping should be low-maintenance with trees and shrubs that provide seasonal interest Respecting boundaries. Parking should be well-allocated so as to discourage parking on private lawns and yards Multimodal. A street should be accessible to all whether walking, cycling, or driving a motor vehicle; speed limits should be appropriate to promote good traffic flow and accommodate all users with clear rules and regulations 	

Workshop #2 : The Streetscape and Public Right-of-Way

September 7, 2021

Attendance: 30

Desired Outcome:

The focus of this workshop was for the community to work both together and individually to identify and document what exactly they hope for the streetscape and public right-of-way of Porter Avenue.

Schedule and Materials:

- Exhibit: Large Format Viewing and Participant Representation Map (as in Workshop #1, not shown)
- Handout: All About HOSA and the Project, on table for each participant
- Handout: Project Timeline, updated and on table for each participant
- Small Group Activity #1: Complete / Incomplete Review Exercise
- Presentation and Handout: Streetscape Options and Identifying Preferences
- Large Group Discussion and Small Group Activity #2
- Digital Polling



Who is HOSA?

The Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) is a local non-profit organization that has donated over \$700,000 in community projects to Ocean Springs over the past 30+ years.

HOSA is comprised of dues-paying individual & business members who love the unique charm of this community. Annual individual memberships start at \$25, and business memberships start at \$100. Our organizational mission statement is to protect, promote and preserve the unique charm of historic Ocean Springs. HOSA loves the past, present, and future of Ocean Springs. We use donated funds to support projects to benefit the community.

Our volunteer Board of Directors are:

Susan Gullede, <i>President</i>	Jessie Florence Zenor, <i>Vice-President</i>
Lynn Linenberger, <i>Secretary</i>	Kathryn Shanks, <i>Treasurer</i>
Michael Goodwin, <i>Member at Large</i>	Peggy Stowers, <i>Member at Large</i>
Randy Hagan, <i>Member at Large</i>	Russ Bayne, <i>Ex-Officio</i>
	Melanie Allen, <i>Ex-Officio</i>

HOSA has no employees. Our members contribute their time, talents, and donations motivated by their appreciation & love for this community. As a 501(c)(3) organization, donations to HOSA are tax-deductible. New members are welcome.

Why is HOSA leading & funding this Porter Avenue community engagement effort?

HOSA believes in the value of community & citizen input. We feel these three Porter area community workshops, and the ideas & opinions that come from them, hold significant value in future planning. HOSA also believes that because of the rate of growth & change Ocean Springs is now experiencing, that this is an important time to gather input on how citizens see Ocean Springs in the future. HOSA has contracted with professionals at the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (an arm of MSU) to assist us in this process. The final document created by GCCDS & HOSA will be gifted to the City of Ocean Springs, with our hope that it will be used as an important resource document as future projects are reviewed.

Other HOSA community projects we are working on in 2021 include:

- Contracted with artist Christopher Stebly for creation of an updated version of his original mural "*Ocean Springs: Past, Present and Future*", to be installed in Marshall Park;
- Awarded a total of **\$6,000 in college scholarships** to three deserving OSHS seniors;
- Continued care and maintenance of historic Marshall Park;
- Partnering with the Jackson County Master Gardeners in care of the **HOSA Blossman Garden** in Shearwater Park as a **registered Monarch WayStation**;
- Working on design & content for a series of informational signs highlighting cultural landmarks around the City of Ocean Springs;
- Advocacy for care of the important and iconic Ocean Springs Urban Tree Canopy;
- Working with the City, the Chamber, the Witches Ride and the Mary C on plans for a Halloween celebration for kids & families this October.

**Handout: All About HOSA and
the Porter Avenue Community
Conversations Project .**

Handout: Project Timeline.

Porter Avenue Community Driven Planning													
A project of the Historic Ocean Springs Association													
GOAL 1: To facilitate neighborhood conversations about the future of Porter Avenue from the Hwy 90 Bridge to Dewey Avenue.													
GOAL 2: To present the findings as a Community Driven Plan to the City of Ocean Springs.													
T I M E L I N E											WRAP UP and PUBLIC PRESENTATION		
Description							Oct 20 Jun 21	Jul 2021	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21
Part 1 -- Preparation / Data Collection													
During this period the project partners coordinated to produce a well-informed base map, site imagery, and plan for today's public meeting.							✓						
Part 2 -- Workshops (Neighborhood Conversations)													
Workshop 1 (July 27, 2021)													
Getting the Neighborhood Conversation Started - We'll discuss what is most complete / incomplete including both the physical and intangible. - Call for on-line input								✓					
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH HOSA								✓					
DESIRED OUTCOME: Hear from neighbors to identify and document the most complete and incomplete areas of Porter Avenue in terms of both physical and intangible characteristics to understand what is truly valued, and how the less complete zones can be modified or improved.								✓					
Workshop 2 (September 7, 2021)													
PUBLIC SPACE: The Streetscape / Public Right of Way - We'll discuss an array of options and discuss their pros/cons for setbacks, lighting, shade, walkability, bike ability, parking, traffic flow, cross walks, art -Which options do most community members want? - Call for on-line input													
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH HOSA													
DESIRED OUTCOME: Identify work the City could begin to implement.													
Workshop 3 October 2021)													
PRIVATE PROPERTY Character / Development Guide - If we think about the future of Porter Avenue, what would we hope for? - What fits? - What doesn't fit? - How do we guide future development? - Call for on-line input.													
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH HOSA													
DESIRED OUTCOME: Arrive at consensus on the type of plan, if any, will guide development to achieve the desired character of Porter Avenue.													
Part 3 -- Community Presentation													
GCCDS compiles workshop findings and works to prepare the Community-Driven Plan for Porter Avenue: - Identifying project priorities for the City. - Identifying the community's priorities and preferred process to guide development.													
HOSA and GCCDS presents the Community Driven Plan for Porter Avenue to the City and Public.													
Relevant projects by the City of Ocean Springs:													
1. Ocean Springs Downtown Parking, Traffic and Travel Study (currently underway, City contract with Dale Partners)													
2. Ocean Springs Wayfinding Study (completed early 2021, City contract with Christian Preus, LA)													
3. Ocean Springs \$200,000 improvement project for the intersection of Porter and Hwy 90 at the Bridge (out for bid)													

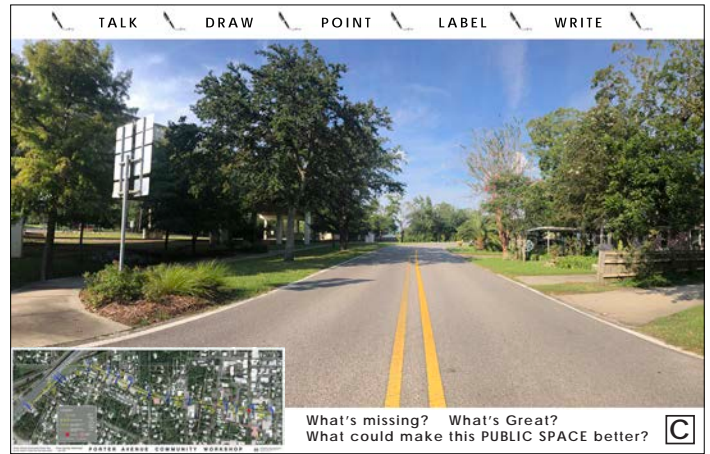


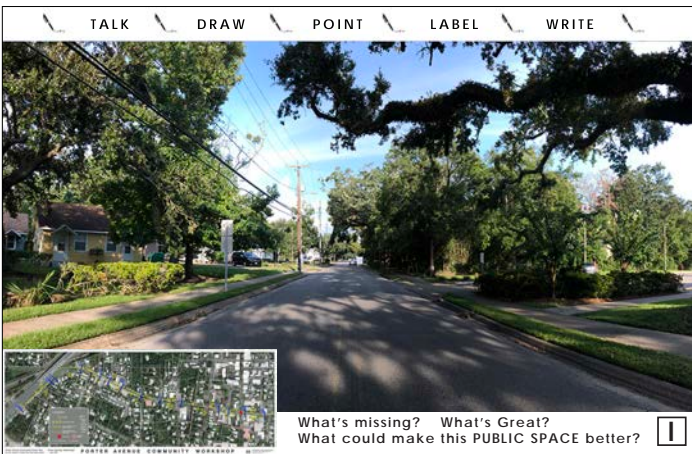
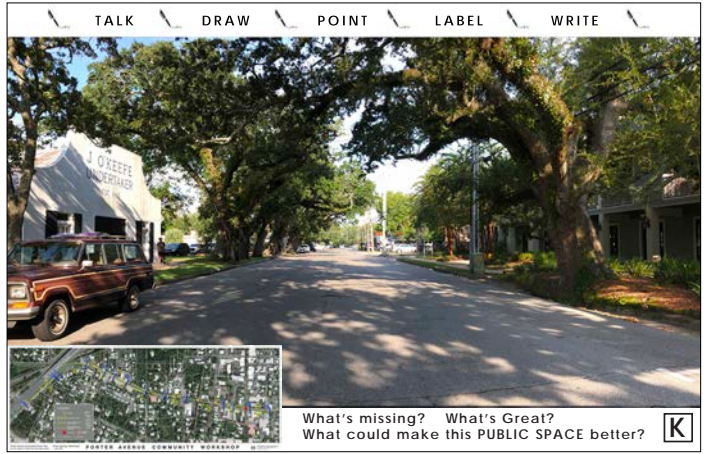
WE ARE HERE TODAY

Small Group Activity #1 : Complete / Incomplete Refresher Exercise.

As a refresher from Workshop #1, participants worked in small groups to identify the areas of Porter Avenue they consider to be most complete or incomplete. Each table was given 2 different road sections on 11x17 sheets. They were asked to discuss them with their group, and draw or write on the sections, thinking about what's missing, what's great, or what could make this public space better.

Teams then presented their group's collective responses to the large group. GCCDS collected the handouts after the meeting since these included notes, comments, and sketches by the participants, all reflected as community input at the end of this section, and in the Findings section of this report.





Presentation of Streetscape Options

Large Group Discussion and Small Group Activity #2 : Streetscape Options and Identifying Preferences.

GCCDS facilitated a large-group discussion using a visual array of options for each of the following categories: landscape, lighting, walkability, bike-ability, parking, traffic flow, crosswalks, and art. The visual aids were projected on the wall, and each table was given an 11x17 hardcopy as well.

Pros and cons for each of the options in each category were discussed by the large group and then within small groups. Participants freely asked questions and gave comments on the various options for each category, and also noted their comments on the handouts.

Interspersed throughout this activity, there were two short presentations by community advocacy groups:

- Liz Elmore, President of the Ocean Springs Pedestrian and Residents for Exercise and Youth Safety (OSPREYS), which is dedicated to improving pedestrian and cyclist safety; and
- Nancy Wilson, of the Ocean Springs Environmental Alliance (OSEA) regarding their efforts to advocate for the Ocean Springs urban tree canopy and infill of trees, along with other sustainable environmental practices that balance community use and natural resource protection.

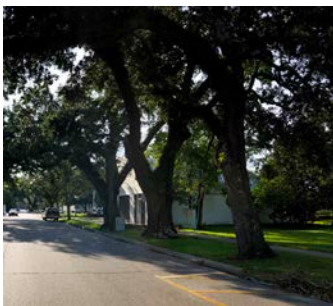
Participants individually recorded their preferences for each of the streetscape categories through a digital polling platform. The comments in large and small group conversations as well as the polling results are reflected as community input at the end of this section, and in the Findings section of this report.

SLIDE / HANDOUT I

LANDSCAPE

FOR DISCUSSION:

The last workshop identified several areas that felt complete due to adequate shade and aesthetic. How do we want to improve the street landscape? Which types of landscape does the community prefer based on the illustrations, and pros/cons discussion, and what are some ideas to incentivize this type for new development as well as potential improvements?



LARGE LIVE OAKS AND MAGNOLIAS ONLY.



MEDIUM SCALE STREET TREES.
(Assume native species)



MIXED OR LAYERED USE OF LARGE AND SMALLER SHADE TREES WITH SMALLER SHRUBS AND PLANTS.



FEW TREES / SHADE.

SLIDE / HANDOUT 2

LIGHTING

FOR DISCUSSION: The last workshop identified consistent lighting as a priority. What type of lighting is best suited for Porter Avenue? What are the concerns (i.e. ped- bike visibility, theft-assault prevention, business visibility, etc.)? What does the community prefer based on the illustrations and the pros/cons discussed for each type? What are the concerns about lighting influencing residences?

NOTE: The style of lighting (ornate, contemporary, historic) will be avoided in this discussion.



DUAL POST PROVIDES HIGH LIGHTING FOR ROADWAY AND LOW LIGHTING FOR SIDEWALKS.

LIGHTING THE ROADWAY.

UPLIGHTING.



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
GULF COAST COMMUNITY
DESIGN STUDIO

SLIDE / HANDOUT 3

WALKABILITY AND TRAFFIC FLOW

FOR DISCUSSION: The last workshop identified cross walks and traffic flow as a priority. How do we want to provide safe places for pedestrians to cross while also maintaining traffic flow for both motorized and non-motorized vehicles? How frequent should cross-walks be to achieve this balance? What type of striping does the community want? What does the community prefer based on the illustrations and discussion?

NOTE: The community clearly prioritizes and advocates for ample-width sidewalks on both sides of the street with ADA compliance.



STRIPED WITH 'STOP FOR PEDESTRIAN' BOLLARD.



CROSSING SIGNALS



STANDARD STRIPED CROSS WALK



NO CROSS WALK



SLIDE / HANDOUT 4

PARKING

FOR DISCUSSION: The last workshop identified parking as a priority to be addressed. What types of parking are needed and best suited for Porter Avenue? What is the message we're hoping to convey (i.e., do and don't park areas, I should be able to park close to the business I'm entering, or a message of 'park and walk' Porter Ave.)? What does the community prefer based on the illustrations and the pros/cons discussed for type? Are there other ideas?



ON-STREET PARALLEL.



BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT / SHARED PARKING. (FRONT OF BUSINESS)



GOLF CART PARKING.



SHARED PARKING. (BEHIND BUSINESSES)



PARK FREE AND RIDE.



FREE POCKET PARKING WITH SELECT METERED CONVENIENCE PARKING

Behind building parking.

OTHER OPTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Side Street Parking. (hour restricted)
- Delivery Truck and Golf Cart Parking closest to intersections. (hour-restricted)



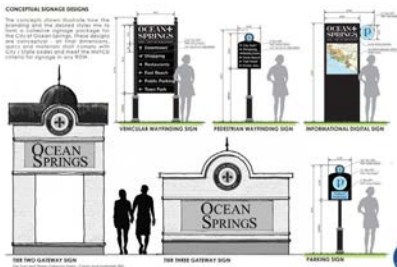
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
GULF COAST COMMUNITY
DESIGN STUDIO

SLIDE / HANDOUT 5

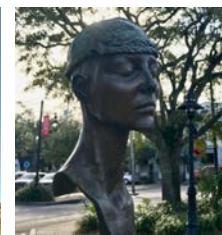
ART, STORYTELLING & COMMUNICATION IN IN PUBLIC PLACES

FOR DISCUSSION:

Previous conversations have identified art as something to be considered for Porter Avenue. In public places there are opportunities for public art, and potentially incorporating art into the function of the public streetscape. What is best suited



WAYFINDING. The concepts shown illustrate wayfinding concepts based on the 2021 City of Ocean Springs Wayfinding Study.



PUBLIC ART IN GATHERING PLACES. Public art created by local artists. Can be a sophisticated expression of the uniqueness of a place, and become landmarks for residents and visitors.



MURALS. Murals provide the opportunity tell the story of a place while supporting / promoting local artists, and boosting economic development.



CROSS WALKS AND STREET ART. One recent example is the Walter Anderson inspired crosswalk on Washington Avenue. What about a 3-D crosswalk?



Digital Polling.

Through SLIDO digital polling, the following multiple choice questions gave the workshop facilitator quantifiable data regarding community preferences on each of the streetscape categories: landscape, lighting, walkability and traffic flow, parking, bike-ability, and art. Responses were intended to be projected in real-time for the audience to view the collective responses, though technical challenges prevented the real-time viewing. Instead, the facilitators announced the responses to the group as the results came in.

POLLING QUESTIONS:

Q1	<p>LANDSCAPE: How would you like to see the landscape develop along Porter Avenue? (select up to 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Live Oaks and Southern Magnolias o Medium Scale Street Trees that won't interfere with power lines o Mixed or layered use of native large and small shade trees, as well as smaller shrubs and plants o Few trees for ease of maintenance
Q2	<p>LIGHTING: In addition to safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorized vehicles, what is your main concern about lighting along Porter Avenue? (select up to 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Business Security o Residential Security o Consistency o Welcoming and aesthetic o Minimal impact on surrounding neighborhoods
Q3	<p>WALKABILITY AND TRAFFIC FLOW: Which type of crossing design do you think is best for Porter Avenue? (select up to 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Standard crosswalk striping at each intersection. o Crosswalk striping with 'Stop for Pedestrians' bollard at each intersection. o Crossing signals with push button. o No crosswalks. The street should be able to be crossed anywhere.
Q4	<p>PARKING: Which parking options would you prefer along Porter Avenue? (select up to 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Parallel Parking (free) o Parking pockets (free) with selected metered parking o Delivery truck and golf cart parking (hours-restricted) closest to intersections o Shared parking in front of businesses for convenience o Shared parking behind businesses to preserve the aesthetic of the street o Parking trolleys or golf cart services from public parking lots o On-street perpendicular and diagonal parking o On-street parallel parking o Parking on side streets (hours-restricted)
Q5	<p>BIKE-ABILITY: Which type of bicycle traffic use and striping do you prefer along Porter Avenue? (select one)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dedicated bike lanes o 'Share the Road' signage and road symbols without dedicated bike lanes o Encourage cycling on sidewalks
Q6	<p>ART, STORYTELLING, AND COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC PLACES: Which public art types are you in favor of? (select as many as you wish)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Murals on Walls of Businesses o Artistic Crosswalks o 3-D Crosswalks o Art by local artists o Public art / sculpture in common gathering areas. o Art that reflects the ecology and culture of Ocean Springs o Art that tells the history of Ocean Springs

Workshop #2 Community Input

The following table represents Community Input for Workshop #2, which was collected during the workshop conversation and through the digital polling app. The responses below represent the community’s preferences for improvements in the public right-of-way. Fifteen of the thirty attendees participated in the poll. Community preferences can potentially be addressed by the City in collaboration with the community, using this baseline data as a guide.

POLLING RESPONSES:

Q1	<p>LANDSCAPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 93% Mixed or layered use or native large and small shade trees, as well as smaller shrubs and plants 60% Live Oaks and Southern Magnolias 27% Medium Scale Street Trees that won’t interfere with power lines 0% Few trees for ease of maintenance
Q2	<p>LIGHTING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% Welcoming and aesthetic 64% Consistency 21% Minimal impact on surrounding neighborhoods 14% Residential Security 0% Business Security
Q3	<p>WALKABILITY AND TRAFFIC FLOW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 71% Standard crosswalk striping at each intersection. 64% Crosswalk striping with ‘Stop for Pedestrians’ bollard at each intersection. 21% Crossing signals with push button. 0% No crosswalks. The street should be able to be crossed anywhere.
Q4	<p>PARKING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83% Shared parking behind businesses to preserve the aesthetic of the street 58% Parking trolleys or golf cart services from public parking lots 42% Shared parking in front of businesses for convenience 33% Delivery truck and golf cart parking (hours-restricted) closest to intersections 25% Parking on side streets (hours-restricted) 17% Parallel parking (free) 17% Parking pockets (free) with selected metered parking 8% On-street perpendicular and diagonal parking
Q5	<p>BIKE-ABILITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 71% Dedicated bike lanes 29% ‘Share the Road’ signage and road symbols without dedicated bike lanes 0% Encourage cycling on sidewalks
Q6	<p>ART, STORYTELLING, AND COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC PLACES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% Art that tells the history of Ocean Springs 100% Artistic Crosswalks 92% Murals on Walls of Businesses 85% Art by local artists 69% Art that reflects the ecology and culture of Ocean Springs 69% Public art or sculpture in common gathering areas 23% 3-D Crosswalks

CONVERSATIONAL COMMUNITY INPUT:

While the polling responses offer a quantitative picture of the community's preferences, it should be noted that the large and small-group conversations throughout this workshop were meaningful and shed light on the community's knowledge, concerns and wishes in greater detail relating to each of the topic areas discussed. The presentations by Liz Elmore (OSPREYS) and Nancy Wilson (OSEA) were informative and relevant, further prompting meaningful comments and conversation.

First, it became clear at this workshop how important the natural resources are to many of the stakeholders present. Citizens and local associations, as well as the City, want to work together to protect the urban tree canopy that is iconic to Ocean Springs. Overall, the community advocated for the importance of more education and stewardship to protect the heritage Live Oaks and the urban tree canopy. Citizens also expressed their interest in seeing nature-based or low impact development stormwater management solutions that can beautify the landscape while also mitigating for stormwater's impact on waterways.

Second, there is a great deal of knowledge and interest among the community in terms of pedestrian and bicycle safety. Participants advocated for slower vehicular traffic to ensure the street is safe for all users. While everyone acknowledges the challenges of creating dedicated bike

lanes due to the width of the right-of-way, the community clearly wants to see bicycle signage improvements including 'share-the-road' signage and bike chevrons painted on the road surface. Overall, the community wants to see prioritization and clear improvements in terms of pedestrian and bicycle safety, and understands these can be balanced with the expected increase in vehicular traffic and the need for parking.

Regarding parking, parallel parking is a known hazard for cyclists and citizens want to see parallel parking eliminated. They are open to creative parking solutions to provide ample parking, and also want to see private property boundaries respected. Finally, the community expressed enthusiasm for the opportunities for art, storytelling, and communication in public places along the Porter Avenue Corridor. There is a keen desire among participants to know more about the area where they live, and many expressed how interpretive signage would meet this need. Well-planned signage could incorporate the history, culture and ecology of the Porter area, telling the story of place, and would benefit residents, business owners, and visitors to the area as well. Art in many forms is highly desired among the community for Porter Avenue

Workshop #3 : Beyond Public Space: Neighborhood Character and Development

October 28, 2021

Attendance: 88

Desired Outcome:

The focus of this workshop was the space between the sidewalk and the building, how this private space shapes the character of Porter Avenue, and what processes already exist or could be created to help achieve the desired character. The goal was to develop two or more ideas for a customized approach or process that can guide and shape the growth along Porter Avenue. Participants were encouraged to consider that the process should allow for residents and the community in general to be more involved and more knowledgeable during the process, and at the same time allow for business owners and developers to have room to do their best work. Since past workshops seemed to result in people clustering in familiar groups, this workshop sought to get a different stakeholder “types” talking with each other (i.e., residents, business owners, builders, etc.).

Schedule and Materials:

- Exhibit: Large Format Viewing and Participant Representation Map (as in Workshop #1, not shown.)
- Handout: All About HOSA and the Project, on table for each participant
- Handout: Project Timeline, updated and on table for each participant
- Chart paper and pens (on each table)
- Presentation: Existing Processes that Guide Growth and Development by GCCDS
- Small Group Activity #1: Desired Character and Expectations for Process
- Small Group Activity #2: Ideas and Solutions

Handout: All About HOSA and the Porter Avenue Community Conversations Project.



Who is HOSA?

The Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) is a local non-profit organization that has donated over \$700,000 in community projects to Ocean Springs over the past 30+ years.

HOSA is comprised of dues-paying individual & business members who love the unique charm of this community. Annual individual memberships start at \$25, and business memberships start at \$100. Our organizational mission statement is to protect, promote and preserve the unique charm of historic Ocean Springs. HOSA loves the past, present, and future of Ocean Springs. We use donated funds to support projects to benefit the community.

Our volunteer Board of Directors are:

Susan Gullede, <i>President</i>	Jessie Florence Zenor, <i>Vice-President</i>
Lynn Linenberger, <i>Secretary</i>	Kathryn Shanks, <i>Treasurer</i>
Michael Goodwin, <i>Member at Large</i>	Peggy Stowers, <i>Member at Large</i>
Randy Hagan, <i>Member at Large</i>	Russ Bayne, <i>Ex-Officio</i>
	Melanie Allen, <i>Ex-Officio</i>

HOSA has no employees. Our members contribute their time, talents, and donations motivated by their appreciation & love for this community. As a 501(c)(3) organization, donations to HOSA are tax-deductible. New members are welcome.

Why is HOSA leading & funding this Porter Avenue community engagement effort?

HOSA believes in the value of community & citizen input. We feel these three Porter area community workshops, and the ideas & opinions that come from them, hold significant value in future planning. HOSA also believes that because of the rate of growth & change Ocean Springs is now experiencing, that this is an important time to gather input on how citizens see Ocean Springs in the future. HOSA has contracted with professionals at the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (an arm of MSU) to assist us in this process. The final document created by GCCDS & HOSA will be gifted to the City of Ocean Springs, with our hope that it will be used as an important resource document as future projects are reviewed.

Other HOSA community projects we are working on in 2021 include:

- Contracted with artist Christopher Stebly for creation of an updated version of his original mural “*Ocean Springs: Past, Present and Future*”, to be installed in Marshall Park;
- Awarded a total of **\$6,000 in college scholarships** to three deserving OSHS seniors;
- Continued care and maintenance of historic Marshall Park;
- Partnering with the Jackson County Master Gardeners in care of the **HOSA Blossman Garden** in Shearwater Park as a **registered Monarch WayStation**;
- Working on design & content for a series of informational signs highlighting cultural landmarks around

Handout: Project Timeline.

Porter Avenue Community Driven Planning							
A project of the Historic Ocean Springs Association							
GOAL 1: To facilitate neighborhood conversations about the future of Porter Avenue from the Hwy 90 Bridge to Dewey Avenue.							
GOAL 2: To present the findings as a Community Driven Plan to the City of Ocean Springs.							
T I M E L I N E						WRAP UP and PUBLIC PRESENTATION	
Description	Oct 20 Jun 21	Jul 2021	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21
Part 1 -- Preparation / Data Collection							
During this period the project partners coordinated to produce a well-informed base map, site imagery, and plan for today's public meeting.	✓						
Part 2 -- Workshops (Neighborhood Conversations)							
Workshop 1 (July 27, 2021)							
Getting the Neighborhood Conversation Started - We'll discuss what is most complete / incomplete including both the physical and intangible. - Call for on-line input		✓					
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH HOSA		✓					
DESIRED OUTCOME: Hear from neighbors to identify and document the most complete and incomplete areas of Porter Avenue in terms of both physical and intangible characteristics to understand what is truly valued, and how the less complete zones can be modified or improved.		✓					
Workshop 2 (September 7, 2021)							
PUBLIC SPACE: The Streetscape / Public Right of Way - We'll discuss an array of options and discuss their pros/cons for setbacks, lighting, shade, walkability, bike ability, parking, traffic flow, cross walks, art - Which options do most community members want? - Call for on-line input			✓				
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH HOSA			✓				
DESIRED OUTCOME: Identify work the City could begin to implement.			✓				
Workshop 3 (October 28, 2021)							
BEYOND PUBLIC SPACE: Neighborhood Character & Development - If we think about the future of Porter Avenue, what do the diversity of stakeholders hope for? - What fits or doesn't fit? What is the desired character of Porter Avenue? - How do we guide future development, and how much freedom or control do the stakeholders want or need for this place? - Call for on-line input.							
COMBINE IN-PERSON AND ON-LINE FEEDBACK RECONVENE WITH HOSA							
DESIRED OUTCOME: Arrive at 2-4 ideas for a customized approach that can guide and shape the growth along Porter Avenue.							
Part 3 -- Community Presentation							
GCCDS compiles workshop findings and works to prepare the Community-Driven Plan for Porter Avenue: - Identifying project priorities for the City. - Identifying the community's priorities and preferred process to guide development. HOSA and GCCDS presents the Community Driven Plan for Porter Avenue to the City and Public.							
Relevant projects by the City of Ocean Springs:							
1. Ocean Springs Downtown Parking, Traffic and Travel Study (currently underway, City contract with Dale Partners)							
2. Ocean Springs Wayfinding Study (completed early 2021, City contract with Christian Preus, LA)							
3. Ocean Springs \$200,000 improvement project for the intersection of Porter and Hwy 90 at the Bridge (out for bid)							



WE ARE HERE TODAY

Presentation : Existing Processes that Guide Growth and Development

Participants at each table were asked to note on their chart paper what stakeholder group they represented (business owner, resident, fan of Porter Avenue, developer, or City representative). In this way, participants could recognize the diversity or non-diversity represented at their table.

As the workshop facilitator, GCCDS presented a pre-discussion review that described current systems including base zoning, the design review process, the Ocean Springs

Historic District Review Guidelines, and the Porter Avenue Corridor Overlay District. Wade Morgan, City Planner for Ocean Springs was available to offer more detail on the design review process.

SLIDE I

WORKSHOP 3: Neighborhood Character & Development

Focus: The space between the sidewalk and the building which includes the public-facing landscape, property lighting, setback requirements, the building, and off-street parking. We're thinking about ways to guide and shape existing as well as future property appearances, how they relate to the street and to each other— whether business or residential.

Today's Goal: Develop 3-4 ideas for a customized approach or process that can guide and shape the growth along Porter Avenue. The process should allow for:

- Community / residents to be involved and more knowledgeable during the process.
- Business owners and developers to do their best work.

These will be processes that the city and the community can use going forward.

SLIDE 2

PRE-DISCUSSION REVIEW of Current Systems

Current systems for growth along Porter Avenue

Base Zoning

R-1 Low density Single Family Detached Dwellings. Allows 1-3 du/acre. Consistent with traditional suburban development patterns.

R-2 Low-Medium Density Single-Family Detached Dwellings . Low to medium density single-family detached dwellings. Allows density of 2-4 du/acre. Consistent with traditional neighborhoods.

RM-2 Multi-Family Residential. Highest density residential district. Allows 12 or more du/acre. Includes a variety of attached dwelling types including townhomes, row houses and apartments Dwelling units may be included in a mixed-use structure.



CMX-1

Neighborhood Commercial/ Mixed Use. Least-intense commercial mixed-use district. Maximum 2-story building height. Applies to neighborhood corridor areas with smaller scale commercial uses and a variety of surrounding residential uses. High traffic uses are not appropriate.

CMX-2

Community Commercial/ Mixed Use. Medium-intensity commercial mixed-use district. Maximum 35' building height. Creates a corridor of compatible mixed uses that link more intensive Regional Commercial Centers (CH). Detached and attached residential, and mixed-use buildings allowed as of right when scale, form and design requirements are met.

CH

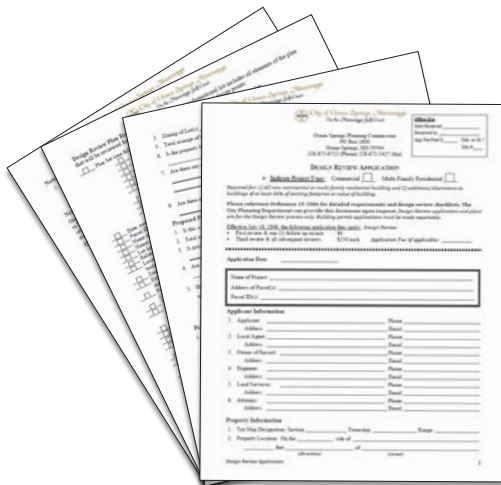
Regional Commercial Most intense commercial mixed-use district. Allows up to 75' building heights. Includes most intense retail, office and residential development patterns with high traffic generation rates that serve a regional population.

SLIDE 3

PRE-DISCUSSION REVIEW of Current Systems

Current systems for growth along Porter Avenue

Design Review Process



Who reviews the design?

Department of Planning and other lead staff within the department or a designee:

- Planning Director
- City Engineer
- Public Works
- Stormwater Manager

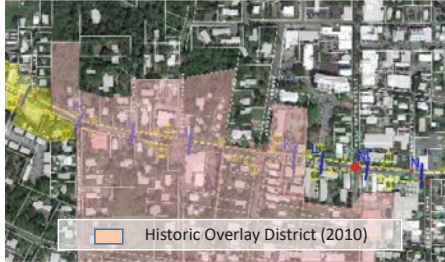
A city-wide evaluation process in a structured point-based system.

SLIDE 4

PRE-DISCUSSION REVIEW of Current Systems

Current systems for growth along Porter Avenue

Historic District & Design Guidelines



A tool that encourages orderly, creative, and compatible development in historic areas, along with the thoughtful and sensitive treatment of historic properties.

Three types of historic designation:

- **National Register**
- **Mississippi Landmarks**
- **Local Designation**
 - *Preserves the historic character and architectural integrity of buildings and areas.*
 - *Protects irreplaceable community resources.*
 - *Maintains an aesthetically pleasing place to work and live.*
 - *Protects historic buildings from demolition*
 - *Encourages compatible new construction.*

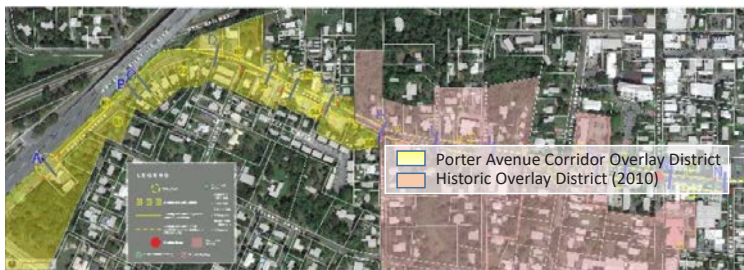
Provides an additional layer of design review.

SLIDE 5

PRE-DISCUSSION REVIEW of Current Systems

Current systems for growth along Porter Avenue

Porter Avenue Corridor Overlay District



Opportunities for infill projects that will mend the neighborhood fabric and intensify economic and social activity, providing greater flexibility in the use of existing and future buildings, uses allowed in the Porter Avenue district.

Some of the key principles:

- Respecting urban location and historic context.
- Promotes street facing small-scale retail, residential, lodging, and office uses.
- Recommends attractive and public open spaces.
- Promotes a neighborhood streetscape that is pedestrian-friendly and interwoven into the neighboring residential areas.
- Advocates for sufficient off-street parking resources behind the primary street-oriented structures.
- Primary buildings face Porter Avenue, and include porches with garage doors facing off Porter;
- Reinforces the definition of the public realm through building mass and orientation towards the street.

Provides an additional layer of design review.

Large Group Activity #1 : Desired Character of Porter Avenue and Expectations for Process

The conversation was directed to invite participants' input on two things:

1. The desired character of Porter Avenue, and
2. Expectations, questions or concerns regarding the process to guide growth and maintain a desired character.

An instructions slide (shown below) was projected, explaining the tasks for each small group. Each table also

received a handout of the instruction slide to reference during the activity.

After the groups had each spent about fifteen minutes discussing these topics among themselves, they shared with the large group what their group had discussed and the comments were recorded on chart paper for all to view. Those comments are reflected as community input at the end of this section, and in the Findings section of this report.

SLIDE 6 / HANDOUT FOR ACTIVITY #1

QUESTIONS / CONCERNS

5
MIN

In terms of DESIGN ...
what is the
DESIRED CHARACTER
of Porter Avenue?

10
MIN

In terms of **PROCESS** to
GUIDE GROWTH
and **MAINTAIN**
DESIRED CHARACTER,
what are the expectations,
questions, and concerns?

Group Discussion and Small Group Activity #2: Ideas and Solutions

At this point in the workshop, participants were encouraged to review the stakeholder types in their group, and to move around, possibly repositioning themselves at another table so that each table would reflect a diversity of stakeholder types.

The task for each table was to spend about five minutes brainstorming ideas about how the community could improve or develop a process or tools to guide future growth— tools that aren't already covered under zoning

or the historic or overlay districts. As a team, each table then worked to write out and elaborate on two or more key ideas. Each team spent about fifteen minutes developing their ideas, then presented to the large group the ideas and conversations that came from their group.

Seven groups worked together and shared their ideas, which were recorded on chart paper for all to view. All comments are reflected as community input at the end of this section, and in the Findings section of this report.

SLIDE 7 / HANDOUT FOR ACTIVITY #2

IDEAS / SOLUTIONS

*What are some things we can do to inform future development?
How might current systems be built on to be more helpful?*

5 MIN

BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm ideas (write down several without judging any) about how the community could develop a process or tools to guide future growth, that aren't already covered under zoning;

Talk with your table about how some of these might work for different stakeholder types.

What are **YOUR IDEAS** for a custom system to guide growth on Porter Avenue that works for everyone?

15 MIN

REFINE

As a team narrow in on **TWO** (or more) from the brainstorming activity.

EXPAND on these. Get as **DETAILED** as you can about (and write down) how these ideas might look and work.

20 MIN

PRESENT

Workshop #3 Community Input

The following tables represent community input from Workshop #3 relating to the desired character of Porter Avenue, and to their expectations, questions or concerns about development along the corridor. Additionally, each group was encouraged to work together to develop 3-4 ideas for a customized approach or process that can guide and shape the growth along Porter Avenue, and to consider a process that would allow for:

- Community and residents to be involved and more knowledgeable during the process.
- Business owners and developers to do their best work.

The input from these conversations is as follows:

ACTIVITY #1

DESIRED CHARACTER	EXPECTATIONS / QUESTIONS / CONCERNS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not too commercial (not Government Street) • Roads and sidewalks adapted to provide for root systems of historic trees • Charm, historic and cultural tree canopy • Tell the story of this place • Welcoming and community-oriented • Small town character (not commercialized) • Trees maintained and well-cared for, with more being planted • Have a historical perspective; signage that tells the history of the place • A nice variety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How development impacts drainage • What's to prevent a Wendy's (for instance)? • Should there be additional review for Porter Avenue? • What is the process for moving toward underground utilities or permeable pavers when projects happen? • How do we maintain or encourage a variety while guiding growth? • How do we help good things happen without limiting too much? • Who is leading the charge? • Are there incentives for various practices? • Blind eyes to new development and variances. It seems there are things in place that don't work. • Can we consider processes that reward people for good work, as opposed to setting a lot of restrictions? • Who would be the champion for Porter Avenue?

Workshop #3 Community Input (cont'd)

ACTIVITY #2

GROUP	IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a council to talk to each other on a regular basis. • The City should verify the traffic is safe and suitable for planned growth. • The City should enforce its ordinances.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could there be a neighborhood association with approval authority (or a least a vote)? • The Unified Development Code (UDC) should be followed.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Porter Avenue Council, looking more closely at the overlay district. • Create a welcoming image that makes a statement. • Could there be a City-matching grant for facade projects?
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider that beauty is in the eye of the beholder; not everyone has the same opinion of what that means. • There should be traffic limits. • Entry at Hwy 90 and sidewalks to the beach should be addressed.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote small family-owned businesses. • There should be stricter adherence to tree ordinances. • Drainage must be addressed; it is as an issue throughout downtown. • Property owners should be able to do what they want.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not much mechanism for citizen input currently. • Is there a way for citizens to be heard and for this to be initiated by the City? • What is our vision? Could there be a 10-year plan created by citizens and presented to the City (both on-line and in-person)?
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More citizen input from the beginning; a citizen-based committee so that the process is an organic outgrowth of civic process rather than a reactive or adversarial approach for each project. • Small area plans and long-range plans
MAYORAL COMMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City will be working on an updated comprehensive 20-year plan in the near future. Citizens will have input in this process and plan. • Drainage Study: Dollars will be allocated to assess drainage with a focus on acquiring funding to address the drainage issues.

Lessons Learned About the Workshop Process

The workshops were designed so the process could be beneficial and replicated in other communities. The following Lessons Learned are provided as a reference for those wanting to use this workshop process in other communities and neighborhoods.

- 1.** With 123 individuals participating in the process, many attending all three community meetings, we learned that what matters along Porter Avenue matters to many people, which is evidence of how attached stakeholders are to their communities and to their properties. Even with a pandemic and unexpected hurricanes, dedicated citizens made it a priority to be part of a community forum where their concerns are heard and where their opinions matter.
- 2.** We learned that serious and even difficult conversations about the future of Porter Avenue or any neighborhood can take place among people with different opinions, without emotionally charged confrontations. In fact, these conversations can be very beneficial.
- 3.** We learned to keep the schedule loose. Rather than scheduling all public meetings up-front, we planned a general schedule of one public meeting per month. This offered enough flexibility so that it wasn't difficult to work around obstacles such as the ongoing pandemic, or unpredictable storm events.
- 4.** Similarly, we learned the value of creating a broad outline upfront for all public workshops, with the intention of allowing each workshop to further inform and refine the structure of upcoming workshops. This flexible process kept us really listening to what the community was saying. Additionally, the important role of the Project Advisory Team became more apparent as the process and project unfolded since the team's ongoing feedback also helped to shape each public meeting.
- 5.** The on-line survey tool provided participants a solid structure where they could very constructively voice their opinions in writing, whether positive or negative. By the nature of on-line surveys participants did miss the opportunity for community members to ask questions or get clarification during large-group presentations, or to benefit from open dialogue with other participants. Nevertheless, it is a tool that should be used in order to be the most inclusive of all who want to participate, or who may find that articulating their thoughts in writing is less intimidating or more authentic for them.

Lessons Learned About the Workshop Process (cont'd)

6. The timing of the informational meeting with the City Planning Department was critical. Scheduling this meeting after the 2nd public workshop allowed the facilitators to have enough information about community concerns and wishes for Porter Avenue and to have the best questions ready. It was during this informational meeting that HOSA and the facilitators learned there was a gap in communication in that the City's plans and processes were not well-understood by the community. We might not have had the right questions to ask, had we met with the department earlier. Looking for gaps in communication will be important to any community-driven planning process for any community. The facilitator can then work with the community and the City to tailor feasible solutions for each community to bridge those gaps. Better lines of communication can be built through public education, and through creating a relationship that is efficient, mutually respectful, and trusting.

7. We found that it was okay and even important to repeat ourselves at times. No matter how many workshops we planned, it was good to recognize that for some it would be their first workshop. For those new to the process, it was helpful for the project team to plan to repeat some of the basics from prior workshops, and to give some allowance for first-time participants who may want to express their own concerns, even though they may have been mentioned by others in earlier workshops.

8. We recognized the value of scheduling meetings on week nights when City staff and elected officials could attend. After working through two meetings scheduled on Tuesday evening which is the same evening of weekly Council meetings, we scheduled the third workshop on a Thursday evening. The conversations at the third meeting were enriched by the presence of our City Planner, the Mayor and two Aldermen.

9. Most importantly, we learned that the process is just as important, if not more so, than the findings. Providing a framework for each interested person to be heard and to express their hopes, concerns, and ideas is key to ongoing community engagement. We learned that there is great value in facilitating a meaningful process so that what is most important to the individuals and the collective community is known and understood by all.

Findings

The findings are a summary of all community input broken down by workshop. They include comments and ideas expressed in Project Advisory Team meetings as well, and are further informed by meetings with the City Planning Department. The findings reflect the collective desire and concerns of the community.

Each finding is coded with a number and letter.

The number represents the workshop in which the comment or idea was expressed, and the letter offers a clear way to label each summarized finding. These codes are then referenced in the Recommendations and Action Steps on pages 60-63.

Workshop Method:

A facilitated discussion for the large group and small group activities sought to identify what it means for a street to be ‘complete’ or ‘incomplete’. Participants worked to identify the most complete and incomplete areas of Porter Avenue in terms of both physical and intangible characteristics to understand what is truly valued, and how the less complete zones can be modified or improved. Additional input gathered via an on-line survey is also included in the findings below.

Summary of Outcomes:

Overall, the community expressed a desire for this corridor to reflect a local character that is unique and allows for artistic creativity while maintaining a balance of residential and business properties. Citizens expressed that protecting our natural resources is important to them. They want to know more about the area where they live, and want to see stories of the history, culture and ecology told through interpretive signage. Specific areas were identified as favorable or most “complete”. These included areas such as The Roost and the churches, with desired characteristics such as:

- Sidewalks (well-maintained and accessible)
- Shade due to preservation of historic canopy
- Aesthetic landscaping between the street and building
- Minimal on-street parking
- A mix of small historic homes and businesses
- Consistent lighting
- Places for gathering

Conversely, areas that were void of shade, landscape, sidewalks, consistent lighting, and connection or inspiration were identified as the least “complete” areas. A welcoming sense of arrival, signage for visitors, and space for cyclists is missing.

Specific areas named as unfavorable or least complete included: the bridge or entry onto Porter Avenue due to safety and the lack of a welcoming sense of arrival; many properties west of Martin due to building facades, landscape, shade, and sidewalks; the congested on-street parking near Washington.

Findings:

I-A	Informed Community Voice. The community wants to be informed and to be heard with opportunities for citizens to express their concerns and ideas before decisions are made.
I-B	Connection. The community values a quaint historic corridor where neighbors gather and can be well-connected.
I-C	People-Friendly. The community desires a street that is accessible and safe for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. It should be well-lit, aesthetically pleasing, and inviting with all components being well-maintained.
I-D	Tree Canopy and Landscape Quality. The community desires a shaded corridor and greater stewardship and preservation of the historic canopy. They desire landscaping that provides aesthetic value to the street and properties. It should be relatively low-maintenance with trees and shrubs that provide ecological value and seasonal interest.
I-E	Traffic Flow. The community wants to see lower speed limits, good traffic flow, and accommodation for all users including cyclists, pedestrians, and differently-abled with clear rules and regulations.
I-F	Careful Growth. The community wants to maintain the mixed-use zoning and character of Porter Avenue without it becoming too commercialized, crowded, and noisy. The community wants to be able to rely on regulations for building and growth with the assurance that guidelines, laws and standards will be upheld.
I-G	Parking. The community wants to see parking that is well-allocated with minimal on-street parking. Parking that does not impede with safe bike and pedestrian travel or residential boundaries is important to them.
I-H	Art and Storytelling. The community wants to see more public art and the telling of history, culture, and ecology.
I-J	Entry. The community desires a welcoming and safe sense of arrival as well as signage for visitors.

Workshop Method:

Participants discussed public space topics that were identified as priorities in Workshop #1. They are ranked by preference or priority using a digital polling survey. These findings overlap with the findings of Workshop #1, yet utilize a more quantifiable method to measure community preferences. Topic categories included:

- Landscape
- Lighting
- Walkability, Bike-ability, and Traffic Flow
- Parking
- Art / Storytelling and Communication in Public Places

Summary of Outcomes:

Each of these topics can combine to reflect prioritizing a safe, welcoming, beautiful and vibrant corridor that is alive with creativity and values its natural resources. The findings represent the desires of the community, many of which can be implemented by the City in collaboration with community input. In fact, conversations with the City Planning Department following Workshop #2 revealed that City staff want their processes to work as best practices for the community. The gaps in understanding that exist between the City Planning Department and the community open the door for education, collaboration, and greater community involvement.

Findings:

2-A	Landscape. The community favors a mixed or layered landscape along Porter, and preservation and preventative maintenance of the heritage oaks with greater efforts toward incentivizing their protection, in addition to providing education that supports stewardship of this natural resource.
2-B	Lighting. The community would like to see consistent lighting prioritized with minimal impact on surrounding communities.
2-C	Walkability, Bike-ability and Traffic Flow. The community wants to see traffic flow and cyclist safety addressed through lower speed limits, elimination of parallel parking, share the road striping, and future planning for dedicated bike lanes. It favors artful crosswalks at every intersection, possibly with 'stop for pedestrian' signage.
2-D	Parking. The community is in favor of shared parking behind businesses where possible to preserve the aesthetic of the street. Also favored are parking trolleys or golf cart services from public parking lots, as well as shared parking in front of adjacent businesses for convenience. There is some openness to the idea of hours-restricted parking for delivery trucks, golf carts, and parking on side-streets as long as residential property boundaries are respected. Much lower favorability was expressed for paid parking pockets, or free on-street parking of all types.
2-E	Art / Storytelling and Communication in Public Places. The community favors art in public places by local artists, whether murals, sculpture, or crosswalks. The community favors art that depicts the history, culture, and ecology of the area.

3

Beyond the Public Space : Neighborhood Character and Growth

WORKSHOP #3

Workshop Method:

Participants learned about the existing City processes to manage growth and development such as zoning, the design review process, and overlay districts. Participants worked together to develop 3-4 customized approaches that can guide and shape growth along Porter Avenue.

Two additional meetings, one with the City Planning Department and one with HOSA's Stakeholder Advisory Group also influenced the perspectives and findings.

Summary of Outcomes:

Participants benefited from interaction and conversation across stakeholder groups. The City Planning department has a meaningful and efficient design review process, which many community members are unaware of. The process works well for the City and for developers, but leaves the community at large out of the process. It's important to community members to know and understand what is being proposed in advance of seeing a project built.

The community is interested in being more knowledgeable about the processes used by the Planning Commission, and wants to understand who is in charge of making decisions or influencing change. The community is asking, "Who would be the champion for Porter Avenue?"

Many of the desired characteristics and challenges of growth that were identified in previous workshops were reiterated in Workshop #3. Additional concerns included topics such as homelessness, underground utilities and improved stormwater drainage, which are referenced on page 56.

Findings:

3-A	Stakeholder Cohesion. Participants benefited from interaction and conversation across stakeholder groups (i.e., residents, builders, business owners, property owners, etc). They learned from one another in a setting where they also heard one another.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builders and developers have creative ideas and often feel over-burdened by the demands on them. • The public has a need to be informed and to contribute to the shaping of growth on Porter Avenue.
3-B	Education. There is a need for greater education around the existing systems including zoning, the application and design review process, and overlay districts.
3-C	Neighborhood Group. There is desire for a neighborhood group to be established that can influence policy, practice, and decision-making. It is desired that the group's focus would be on bringing about good projects, not merely preventing bad ones.
3-D	Modifying the Process. The Planning Department has an existing system for hearing community input regarding relevant and meaningful modifications to the ordinance and the design review process.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is community interest in seeing development plans in the early process stages. • There is an interest in revisiting the guidelines of the Porter Avenue Overlay District.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is interest in establishing incentives for various practices to encourage the desired local, unique, and creative character of Porter Avenue.

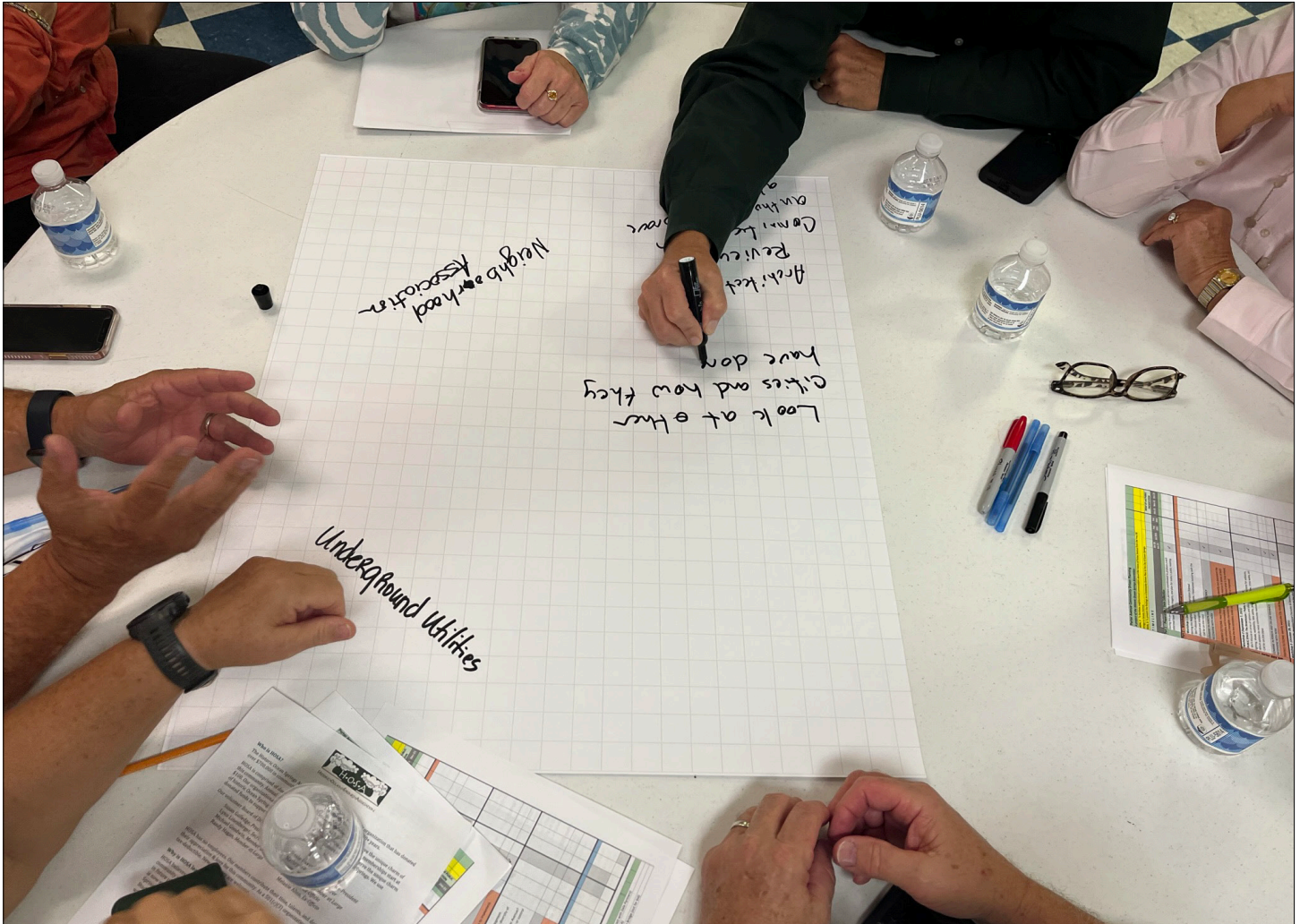


Image courtesy and GCCDS.

Other Findings on Topics Worth Noting

The following topics were mentioned and deserve further analysis though they do not fall within the scope of this project. These include:

- Homelessness. This was brought up in each of the three community workshops, indicating there is a real need to consider actionable solutions for the homeless population. The community will be pleased to know that the City is currently working with a Task Force at this time to consider short term and long term recommendations. HOSA is part of this effort.
- Stormwater and Drainage Issues. Issues surrounding drainage were primarily brought up during Workshop #3. This warrants an analysis beyond the scope of this project and consideration of a incentives for sustainable stormwater management through low impact development and green infrastructure.
- Underground Utilities. Interest in underground utilities was brought up at each of the three workshops and warrants further analysis in terms of cost / benefit and feasibility. Damage to existing root systems must be avoided and is just as important as the current challenges with canopy disfiguration that occurs to clear utility lines.

Recommendations and Action Steps

To help the City and community of Ocean Springs envision *A Path Forward* for the future of Porter Avenue, all findings on the preceding pages were categorized thematically according to comments and data collected in three community meetings, two stakeholder advisory meetings, and informational meetings with the City of Ocean Springs Planning Department.

The findings directly inform ten specific recommendations with corresponding action steps that can be carried out in the future months. Suggestions as to who might take the lead on each are also provided, though meaningful collaboration is an assumed condition. Naturally, good collaboration between the City and community groups will be the strength of this community-driven plan. Community groups will be able to organize around their most genuine interests and concerns, and will benefit from a strong relationship with the City, with its many valuable resources.

The structure of the recommendations and action steps to follow is designed as an actionable *Community-Driven Plan for Porter Avenue*.

For the City:

One set of recommendations is addressed to the City of Ocean Springs. These fall primarily within three actionable approaches:

- Physical improvements and maintenance
- Education and Communications
- Community voice, inclusion and trust

For the Community:

The second set of recommendations is addressed to the community, These fall primarily within three additional actionable approaches:

- Community engagement
- Community organizing
- Collaboration with the City and local, creative organizations representing art, history and the environment.

Together, these are designed and intended to guide the community in achieving the desired characteristics for Porter Avenue in a process that is inclusive and reflective of all stakeholders.

For the City to Consider

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS	
Tree Canopy and Landscape Quality <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1CD, 2A)</i>	
Workshop participants expressed a preference for a layered landscape along Porter Avenue that preserves the Live Oak tree canopy that is enhanced with native understory trees and shrubs.	
1	A Prioritize maintenance of the existing tree canopy to preserve the health of the historic Live Oak and Magnolia trees and their root systems. Ensure City maintenance staff and subcontractors are trained according to ANSI-A300 standards and receive ongoing professional development training that supports a healthy tree canopy.
	B Conduct an analysis of the existing landscape requirements for new development, and whether these meet the community preferences, particularly as it relates to tree planting requirements and beautification. Consider ways to incentivize development that aligns with community preferences.
	C Consider whether underground utilities for new development along Porter Avenue might provide an opportunity to enhance the tree canopy, if this can be done without compromising existing root systems.
	D Consider how a landscape incentive program for established properties might improve the aesthetic along some areas of Porter Avenue, and/or provide ecosystem services such as shade, and through low-impact development / green infrastructure stormwater management strategies (i.e., bioswales, rain gardens, native tree plantings, etc.). Private property owners and businesses can be incentivised to plant trees of designated species on their own properties.
	E Consider expanding education to developers and the general public that prioritizes protection and proper maintenance of the tree canopy and natural resources.
Lighting <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1C, 2B)</i>	
2	A Conduct a lighting study and cost analysis to provide consistent lighting along Porter Avenue that will eliminate low-visibility sections that are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.
	B Identify design and implementation funding sources, possibly working with community groups such as HOSA, Main Street, or OSPREY.
Walkability / Bike-ability / Traffic Flow <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1CE, 2CE)</i>	
Creating a safe and easy-to-navigate street for everyone is a high priority for citizens, whether walking, cycling, or driving a motorized vehicle. Workshop participants expressed a preference for artful crosswalks at every intersection, possibly with 'Stop for Pedestrian' bollards.	
3	A Consider reducing traffic speed on Porter Avenue, and draw attention to the lower speed for motorists coming off Hwy 90.
	B Identify funds to repair existing sidewalks (based on the sidewalk study conducted during this project, and on further analysis).
	C Consider striping on existing street surface with share-the-road chevrons.
	D Install traffic signage indicating that Porter Avenue is a shared road and there is a 3' distance law for cyclists.
	E Conduct cost analysis and identify funding sources for crosswalk striping. Consider opportunities to work with HOSA PAPOS, WAMA, and others for funding of artistic crosswalks such as the one on Washington Avenue at the WAMA crossing.
	F Conduct a study and cost analysis to redesign the street with ample sidewalks and bike lanes. Consider partnerships to fund this analysis.

For the City to Consider (cont'd)

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS and SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS (cont'd)	
4	<p>Parking <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1G, 2D)</i></p> <p>Parking should be well-allocated with minimal on-street parking to prioritize cyclist safety and street aesthetic. The community is open to a wide-array of free parking options as long residential lawns are respected.</p>
	<p>A Present and disseminate the recent parking study to the community through the Chamber and to established community and neighborhood groups in addition to the usual dissemination through the City's website.</p>
	<p>B Review findings from this Workshop Series related to parking which can be added to the information gathered in the recent parking study.</p>
5	<p>Art / Storytelling / Communication in Public Places <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1HJ, 2E)</i></p> <p>Workshop participants expressed they value art in public places, and see art as a way to create a welcoming and vibrant Porter Avenue Corridor.</p>
	<p>A Present and disseminate the recent wayfinding study to the community through the Chamber and to established community and neighborhood groups in addition to the usual dissemination through the City's website.</p>
	<p>B Identify funds for design and implementation of a welcoming entry to Porter Avenue from the Hwy 90 Bridge. Consider working with community groups such as HOSA, PAPOS, Main Street, local artists, or other community groups, along with a professional design team.</p>
	<p>C Work with community groups such as HOSA, PAPOS Main Street, and other community groups and professionals with a background in art, culture, history, and storytelling to plan for future projects or installations, whether temporary or permanent.</p>
6	<p>Community Voice, Inclusion, and Trust <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1AB, 1F)</i></p> <p>While existing systems do provide a path to inform and include community, local community organizations can assist and serve as a liaison to ensure the community is informed and heard, which can lead to building greater trust and better communities.</p>
	<p>A Consider how to get the word out more effectively about upcoming and ongoing projects the City is working on. Disseminating upcoming plans through community organizations or neighborhood groups will keep the City in touch with its citizens and vice-versa.</p>
	<p>B Consider how to insert into the design review process a step that requires developers to provide a summary, drawing, and/or conduct a public meeting for upcoming projects as part of the application process. This is somewhat challenging since it would make sense to only make public the City-approved version, though the community wants to feel informed before the decision has been made for final approval.</p>
	<p>C Consider how a designated neighborhood group might become part of the design review process.</p>
	<p>D The community desires for the City to promote, uphold, and enforce regulations as related to building and growth.</p>

For the Community to Consider

	OUR RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS	WHO WILL MOVE THIS FORWARD?*	
7	Ongoing Community Engagement <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1A, 3ABCD)</i>		
		Community engagement should continue. This will promote cohesion across stakeholder types and provide an ongoing platform for community to be informed and give input in a meaningful way.	Porter Stakeholders
	A	Develop a community engagement plan including a schedule of topics to be addressed in the immediate future, and how community engagement will be facilitated overall.	HOSA, The Chamber, other local groups
	Host education sessions by City staff. Education sessions will equip citizens with the knowledge of process while also building relationships between the City and the Community.	HOSA	
B	Early topics should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing processes as presented by members of the Planning Department. City of OS existing and upcoming projects and plans as presented by City representatives. Establishing an official Porter Avenue Neighborhood Group. 		
8	Revisions to the Porter Avenue Overlay District Guidelines <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1A, 3ABD)</i>		
		The Porter Avenue Corridor Overlay District should be revised to include clear guidelines and/or policy that is relevant and feasible without being too limiting, reflecting the desires of the whole community. There is interest in the guidelines becoming an added step in the design review process for new development and improvements along Porter Avenue.	Porter Stakeholders, other local groups
	A	Form a group of mixed stakeholder types (i.e., developers, residents, property owners, business owners) to review, analyze, and rewrite the document. The group should be able to take this on as a short-term project and carry it through to completion, moving it forward to the point of incorporation into the Ordinance.	Porter Stakeholders, other local groups
	B	Meet with the City's Planning Department to learn their perspective and brainstorm ideas for revisions.	Designated group
	C	Draft revisions and propose changes to the City's Planning Department.	Designated group
	D	Communicate with HOSA regarding the process, progress, and approved changes.	Designated group
E	Communicate updates to the broader community through the City and other community organizations.	The Chamber, other local groups	

* Suggestions for the type of organization that may be well-structured to move a particular recommendation or action step forward.

For the Community to Consider (cont'd)

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS and SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS		WHO WILL MOVE THIS FORWARD?*
Establish a Porter Avenue Neighborhood Group <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1BF, 3ACD)</i>		
9	<p>Meaningful involvement relating to the growth along the Porter Avenue corridor is important to this community to ensure existing and future processes become more accessible to the community. There is interest in establishing a group that can work within the existing design review process and have influence early in the process regarding decisions that are made. By making plans more clear and accessible to the public, feedback will likely be less negative and more productive.</p>	Porter Stakeholders, other local groups
	<p>A</p> <p>Develop a purpose and method of operations for the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will membership be established? • How will the group communicate with the City? • How will the group gain influence in the decision-making process? • How will the group communicate its progress to the greater community? <p>Consider models such as a Home Owners Association or a group that works as a committee of the Main Street Association. Working within an existing organization that already has a relationship with the City could be a benefit.</p>	Porter Stakeholders, other local groups or a designated group
	<p>B</p> <p>What tasks will the group address first? There is interest in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing development plans in the early process stages. • Establishing incentives for various practices to encourage the desired local, unique, and creative character of Porter Avenue. 	Designated group
Art, Storytelling, and Communication in Public Places <i>(Corresponding Findings: 1BF, 3CE)</i>		
10	<p>A creative and innovative corridor that tells the story of place is important to this community. Historically, HOSA has had a significant role toward this end in collaboration with the City and other community organizations.</p>	HOSA, PAPOS, WAMA, The Chamber, OSEA, OSPREYS
	<p>A</p> <p>Continue to seek collaborative partnerships and funding including partnerships with the City to move forward the work of local artists in the creative and innovative development of the Porter Avenue Corridor as well as telling the story of place including the history, culture, and ecology of Ocean Springs.</p> <p>B</p> <p>Consider the following ideas gleaned from citizens thus far, and seek other ideas as well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An easy-to-follow visual 'story line' that visitors can follow, either by foot, bike, or motor vehicle to learn more about the history, culture, and ecology of Porter Avenue as they explore local places. • Public art installations and murals on buildings. • Artful crosswalks. 	

* **Suggestions for the type of organization that may be well-structured to move a particular recommendation or action step forward.**

In Conclusion

Clearly, the success of the Porter Avenue Community Conversations Project is in that it served to help bring awareness to everyone of the various opportunities to a) to address the challenges, b) to invite community involvement and leadership, and c) to work in coordination with the City. The Recommendations and Action Steps on pages 60-63 are the most conclusive synopsis for this project and should be referenced frequently to ensure the much-needed work ahead aligns with the desires of the community.

Addressing the Challenges.

The challenge of finding balance between promoting growth, creativity, and the existing character of an older neighborhood is obviously multi-faceted. Creating a people-friendly corridor means providing a shaded and aesthetic corridor with sufficient lighting and traffic flow, while also ensuring a welcoming and safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. **For this to become a reality, communication that educates will be as important as communication that regulates.** Creating a sense of place is also important to a people-friendly corridor. The modern-day function of a place, as well as its history, culture, and ecology all work together to emanate a sense of place. Interpretive signage that tells these historic, cultural, and ecologic stories will go far to communicate relevance to citizens who want to know more about the area where they live. Community preferences relating to landscape, lighting, walkability, cycling, parking, and more are outlined in the Findings section of this report, with steps to achieve these preferences included in the Recommendations and Action Steps.

The Importance of Community Involvement and Leadership.

The workshop process helped community members recognize the opportunities for involvement and even leadership, as well as their capacity to take an active role to shape how their community looks, functions, and grows. In the very near future, it is recommended that a committed group of citizens form a task group for the purpose of revisiting the existing Porter Avenue Overlay District. Additionally, it is recommended that a Porter Avenue Neighborhood Group be established as a means for the community to organize and influence decisions related to growth and development over the long term. Suggestions for how this group might form and potential first steps are detailed in the Recommendations and Action Steps of this

report. It is important that the group be representative of the various stakeholder types of Porter Avenue, recognizing also that stakeholders oftentimes wear more than one 'stakeholder hat'. Developers and business owners who also live in the neighborhood are keenly interested in maintaining a safe, welcoming, and healthy neighborhood. This group could be tasked with ensuring that existing and future processes become more accessible to the community. It is also important for the City to encourage community involvement in a way that reinforces and values the community's role in the structure of the design-review process.

Coordination with the City.

The workshop process served to demonstrate the value of constructive, informal conversations between citizens and City staff as they approach common issues. This process allowed a platform for the City to recognize the validity of citizen concerns, while also increasing their understanding of City processes for shaping development. There is important work to be done together by the City, property owners, developers and all stakeholders. Recognizing how one another's actions overlap and working together will benefit the community. Collaboration is key.

The Recommendations and Action Steps include specific steps for the City, and other steps specific to the Community. Both include clear ways that each will be reliant on the other. For example, all parties involved must work together to build better lines of communication and share responsibility in public education. Local community organizations can assist the City and serve as a liaison to ensure the community is informed and heard, which can lead to building greater trust. Similarly, the City offers resources and capacity that can be immeasurably helpful to community organizations. For these overlapping reasons, it will be very important for the City and the recommended Porter Avenue Neighborhood Group to create and maintain a relationship that is efficient, mutually respectful, and trusting.

The community-driven process, findings, and recommendations frame a threshold of opportunity. Stepping over that threshold in an on-going community-driven process will continue to guide *"the path forward"* for the much-needed work ahead. Going forward, it will be important to refer to the Recommendations and Action Steps on pages 60-63 frequently, and even to build on them through on-going community engagement. Working together in this way can ensure the path forward continues to align with the desires of the community. ■