

Alternative Transportation Plan

2030



City of **Punta Gorda**, Florida
Urban Design Group

Mitchell S. Austin, Urban Planner

Alternative Transportation Plan: 2030

The City of Punta Gorda Alternative Transportation Plan: 2030 has been developed through the efforts of the Urban Design Group and Public Works Department with extensive input from various interested citizens, Charlotte County Public Works Staff, and the Charlotte County-City of Punta Gorda MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Alternative Transportation Plan provides guidance for the logical long-range expansion of a network of pedestrian, bicycle, and kayak/canoe facilities. This Plan coupled with a targeted short-range five-year capital improvement program represents the City of Punta Gorda's continuing effort to enhance property values and the quality of life for all citizens.

The Alternative Transportation Plan encompasses the entire City of Punta Gorda; however due to a number of enclaves some logical system connections cross into unincorporated Charlotte County. It is important to note that these segments are to be funded through Charlotte County, FDOT, and other funding sources.

This Plan is designed to guide the City of Punta Gorda and by extension Charlotte County to take measurable steps toward the goal of improving the quality of life for residents in the City of Punta Gorda area, creating a more sustainable environment, providing greater opportunity for recreation, reducing traffic congestion, and vehicle noise. Developing an attractive and inviting Alternative Transportation System is a key element in preserving the City of Punta Gorda as a place where people want to live, work, and visit.

The City of Punta Gorda first developed a Comprehensive Community Sidewalk Program in 1991 to maximize usage and enhance pedestrian safety. The Alternative Transportation Plan: 2030 is designed to maximize access, safety, recreation, and transportation through a logical plan for the long-range development of sidewalks, bicycle routes, and kayak/canoe facilities. The City will pursue the development of these facilities through a mix of City general revenues, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Charlotte County, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and private developer funding as appropriate and financially feasible. Expenditure of City funds will be defined through a five-year capital

improvement program to be updated annually as existing conditions change. The Alternative Transportation Plan: 2030 will be updated at least every five-years to keep up with existing conditions. Additional updates will be required in conjunction with any annexations or major rezoning efforts.

Existing Conditions

The City of Punta Gorda has 53 miles of existing sidewalks with an additional 1.5 miles of trails, no designated bicycle lanes or routes, and no designated kayak/canoe launch points (Exhibit A). The majority of streets in downtown Punta Gorda currently have sidewalks in a fairly coherent grid pattern north of the railroad right-of-way. South of the railroad right-of-way while the street grid is generally present the sidewalks are sporadic and not well connected. In the Punta Gorda Isles sections of the City recreational sidewalks exist along some of the connecting streets. However, this network is less complete within the Burnt Store Isles and Burnt Store Meadows neighborhoods, which are not connected to the rest of the system. The City has existing boat ramps at Ponce de Leon Park and Laishley Park as well as beach areas in Ponce de Leon Park and Gilchrist Park that could serve as kayak/canoe launch points. These facilities are not currently marked for kayak/canoe traffic. Addition of signage and site-specific design and construction work might be required to accommodate ADA access and for the creation of more ideal kayak/canoe launch configurations.

Future Potential

Based on the existing conditions technical staff and public input a system of proposed sidewalks (Exhibit B), bicycle routes (Exhibit C), and kayak/canoe launch points and blue water trails (Exhibit D) has been developed. These proposed networks are based on existing conditions, current Land Development Regulations, and future development patterns. Three distinct areas became evident: Downtown Punta Gorda, South of Downtown; and the Punta Gorda Isles, Burnt Store Isles, and Burnt Store Meadows areas. The conditions and future development potentials of these distinct areas are described independently, however it is important to note that all three areas make-up the unique quality and character of the City of Punta Gorda.

Downtown Punta Gorda

Downtown, with its mix of residential, tourist, retail, and office uses has a great potential to be a place where primary transportation can be by walking or bicycling. The network is largely in place with only minor connections required on the eastern, southern and western edges. The primary goal in this section of the city is the completion of the Harborwalk and additional beautification through additional landscaping, street furniture, and decorative pavers, bricks, or stamped concrete where appropriate. The Harborwalk currently stretches from Fisherman's Village in the West through the harbor front parks and along W Retta Esplanade to the Best Western hotel and on the East side of US 41 at Laishley Park to the end of Patty Ave. The key section from Best Western To Laishley Park will complete the chain and be an asset for the residents, business owners, and visitors. Priority will also be given to enhancing the bicycle facilities within the downtown through signage, bicycle lanes, and the development of the Linear Park multi-use path. Additionally two kayak/canoe launch points will be designated through signage and possible site improvements at Laishley Park and Gilchrist Park pending further study of Kayak/Canoe launch site requirements.

South of Downtown

The area generally just south of downtown poses distinct challenges with busy US 41 and Taylor Road between the bulk of the City and the public schools which serve as the area's major attractors. The area has five schools Baker Academy (Head Start), Sally Jones Elementary, Punta Gorda Middle, Charlotte High, and Edison College, which is located just east of the City Limits. The primary goal in this area will be increasing connectivity from the surrounding neighborhoods to the school locations. Through new private development the city will work toward providing sidewalks along all streets in these areas that have multifamily or commercial zoning designations. Special care, consideration, and coordination with Charlotte County School District will need to be given to safety due to the high number of children likely to use these facilities.

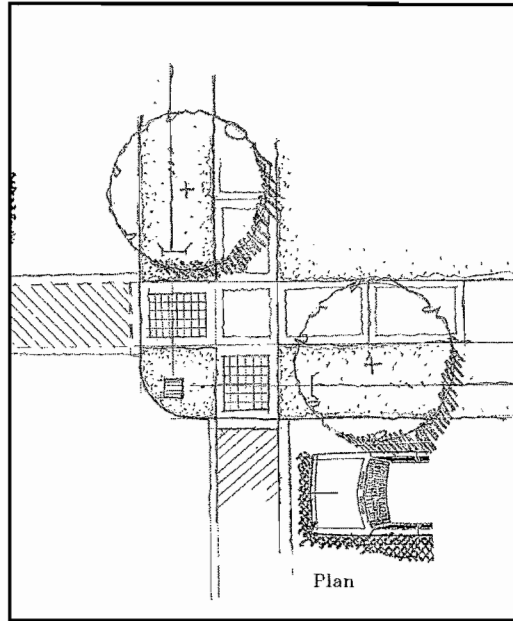
Additional funding for sidewalks in this area may be available through the Safe Route to School Program administered by the Florida Department of Transportation.

Punta Gorda Isles, Burnt Store Isles, and Burnt Store Meadows

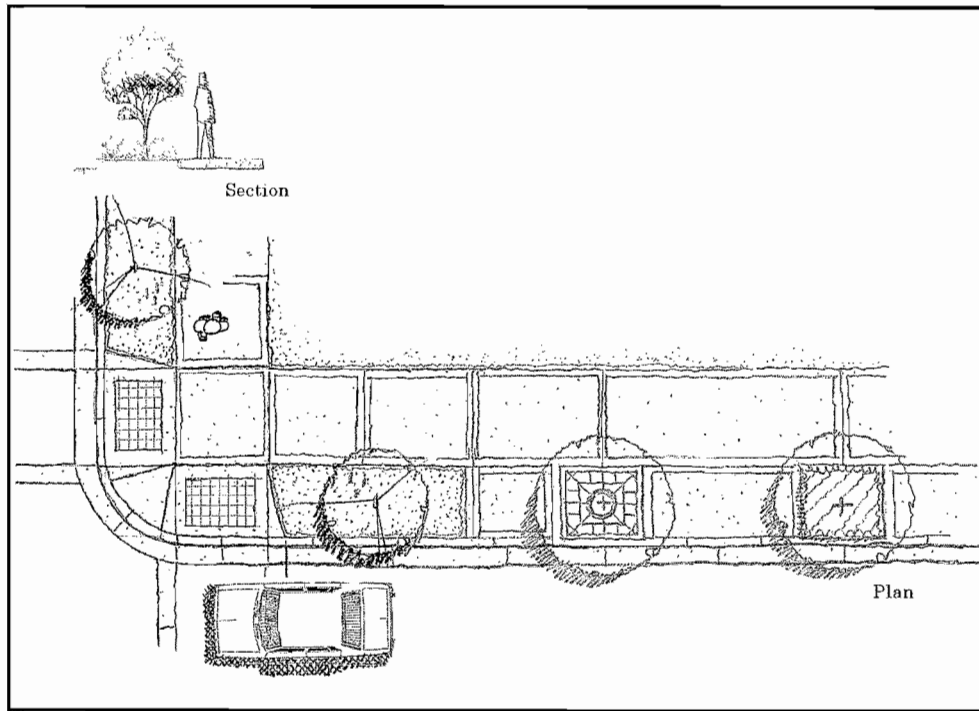
In these sections of the City recreational sidewalks exist along some of the connecting streets. The primary goal for this area is to construct sidewalks on the remaining connecting streets. The second goal will be to better connect Burnt Store Meadows, Burnt Store Isles, and Punta Gorda Isles to the rest of the City's pedestrian and bicycle network by multiuse path linkages along Burnt Store Road, Aqui Esta Road, and US 41. Additionally, bicycle safety will be increase through the appropriate placement of share the road signage. Through new private development the city will work toward providing sidewalks along all streets in these areas that have multifamily or commercial zoning designations. In addition a kayak/canoe launch point will be designated through signage and possible site improvements at Ponce de Leon Park pending further study of Kayak/Canoe Launch site requirements.

Standards

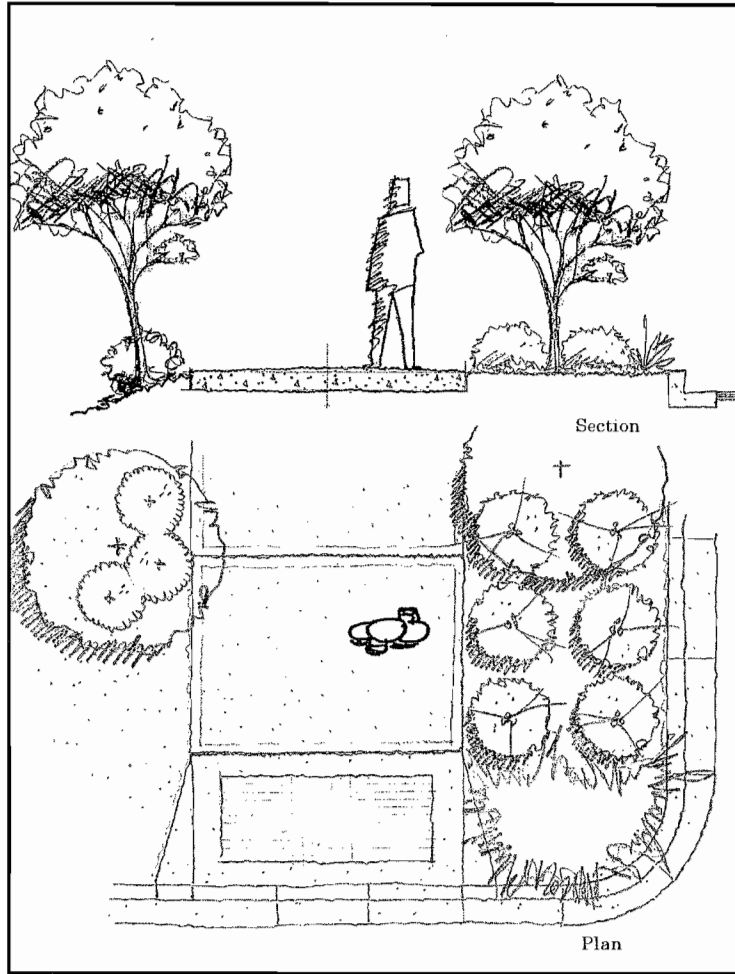
This list of standards is designed to provide a baseline design standard for pedestrian, bicycle, and kayak/canoe facilities. Best available engineering practices shall determine actual construction methods and types. This document is intended to set minimum standards for these types of facilities. Any higher standards will generally be accepted based on staff review. Lower design standards due to site-specific constraints, will be reviewed, for possible approval by the City of Punta Gorda Director of Urban Design on a case-by-case basis.



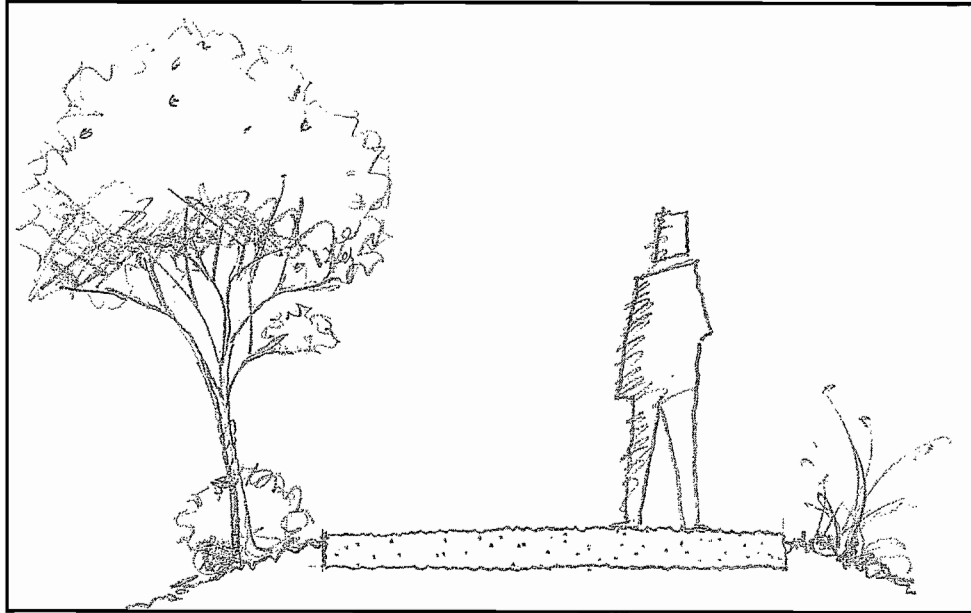
Standard sidewalks shall be a minimum of 5-foot wide concrete with engineering standard. Street intersections and major driveways shall require textured and colorized concrete meeting generally accepted engineering practices designed to visually and tactilely warn pedestrians of the potential of vehicular conflicts. Sidewalks in suburban areas shall be separated from the street by a minimum 6-foot wide planting strip where right-of way allows. Drainage shall be handled through swales where feasible. Where swales are not feasible due to narrow right-of ways drainage shall be handled through best available engineering design (example: curb and gutter, storm water credit structures in adjacent areas, and infiltration).



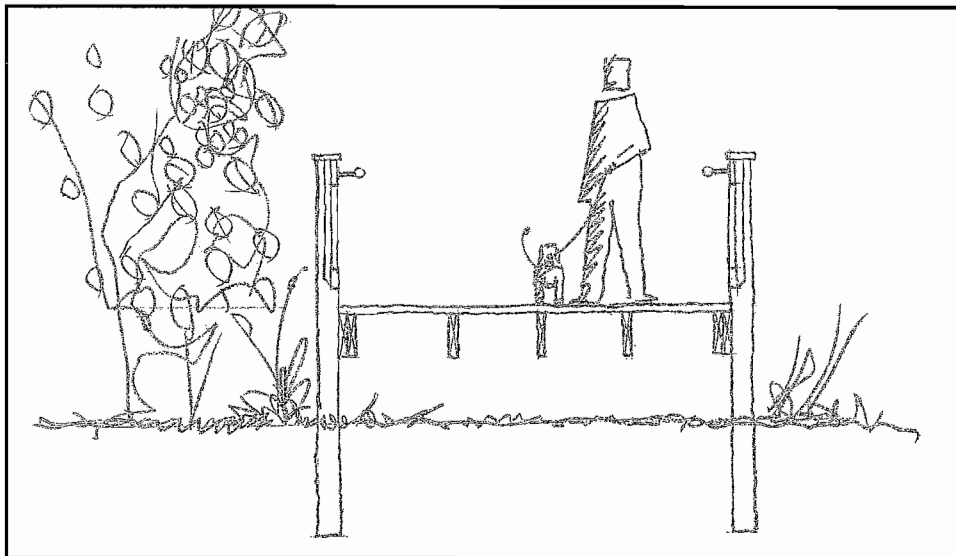
In areas of new commercial development or in existing urban areas, minimum of 8-foot wide sidewalks constructed of concrete, special pavers, bricks or stamped concrete, curb and gutter drainage is required. Street intersections and major driveways shall require textured and colorized concrete meeting generally accepted engineering practices designed to visually and tactilely warn pedestrians of the potential of vehicular conflicts. Sidewalks shall be separated from the street by a minimum 6-foot wide planting strip or a minimum 5-foot wide strip of paving material with tree cutouts at regular intervals. Drainage shall be handled through best available engineering practices while preserving pedestrian access.



Special sidewalks predominantly located near schools shall be a minimum of 8-foot wide concrete engineering standard. Street intersections and major driveways shall require textured and colorized concrete meeting generally accepted engineering practices designed to visually and tactilely warn pedestrians of the potential of vehicular conflicts. Sidewalks shall be separated from the street by a minimum 6-foot wide planting strip where right-of way allows. Drainage shall be handled through swales where feasible. Where swales are not feasible due to narrow right-of ways drainage shall be handled through best available engineering design (example: curb and gutter, storm water credit structures in adjacent areas, and infiltration).

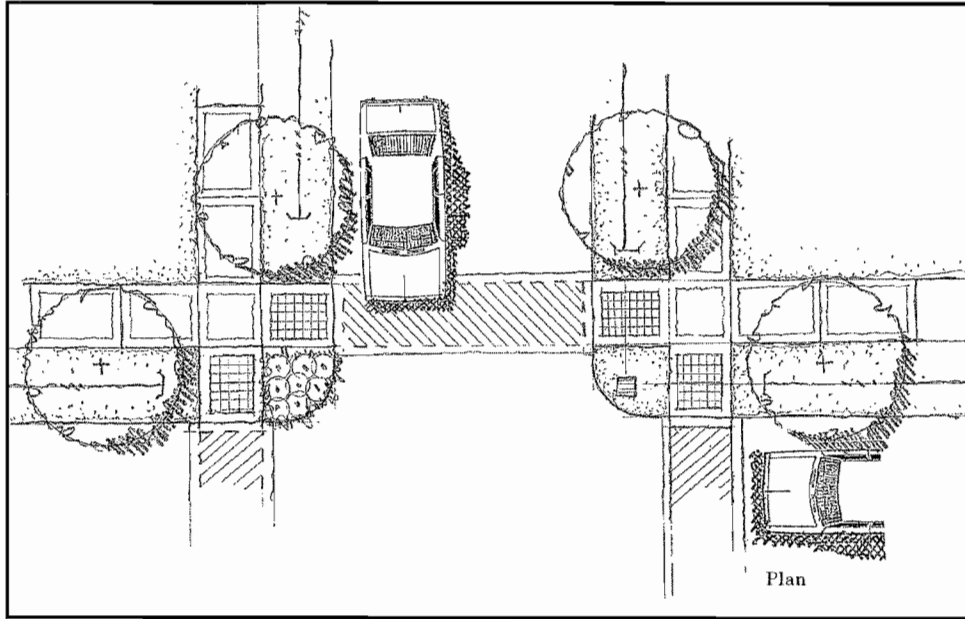


Trails shall be constructed a minimum of 8-feet wide of shell, sand, and Portland cement construction to simulate shell with a higher durability factor. This standard is designated for park settings and not associated with standard road right-of ways. Any street intersections shall require textured and colored concrete meeting generally accepted engineering practices designed to visually and tactilely warn pedestrians of the potential of vehicular conflicts.

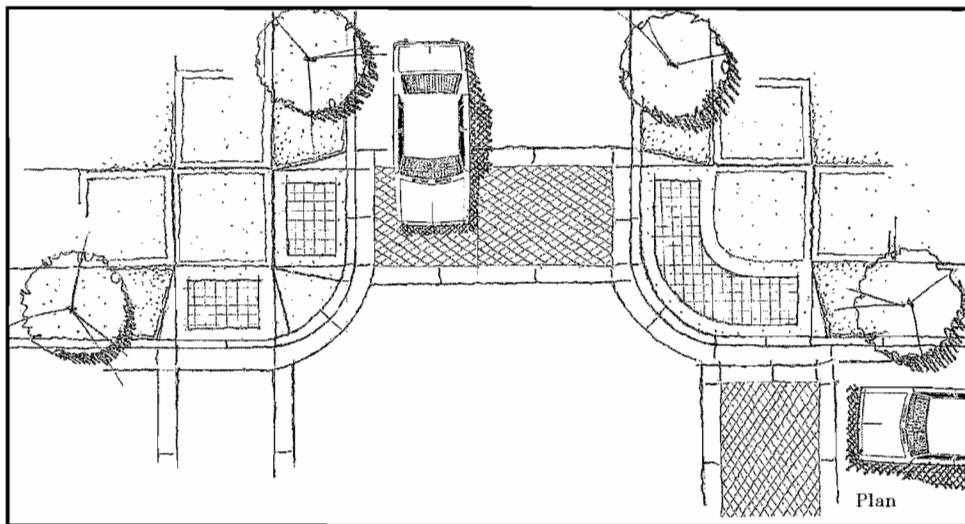


Boardwalks shall be a minimum of 8-feet wide and constructed of wood or similar material and elevated from the surface by piers to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Railings shall be constructed to a height of 42-inches with a grab bar at 36-inch height for

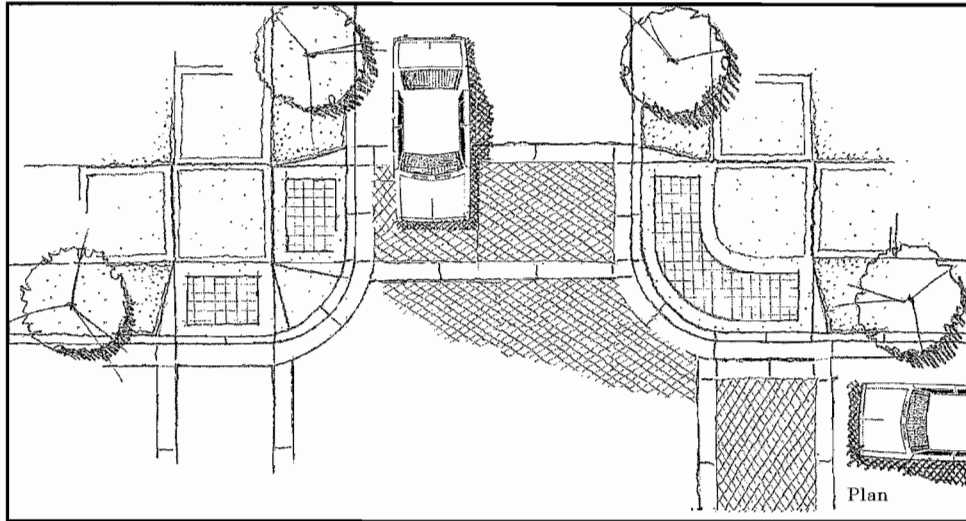
additional safety. This standard is designated for park settings with environmentally sensitive areas and not associated with standard road right-of ways



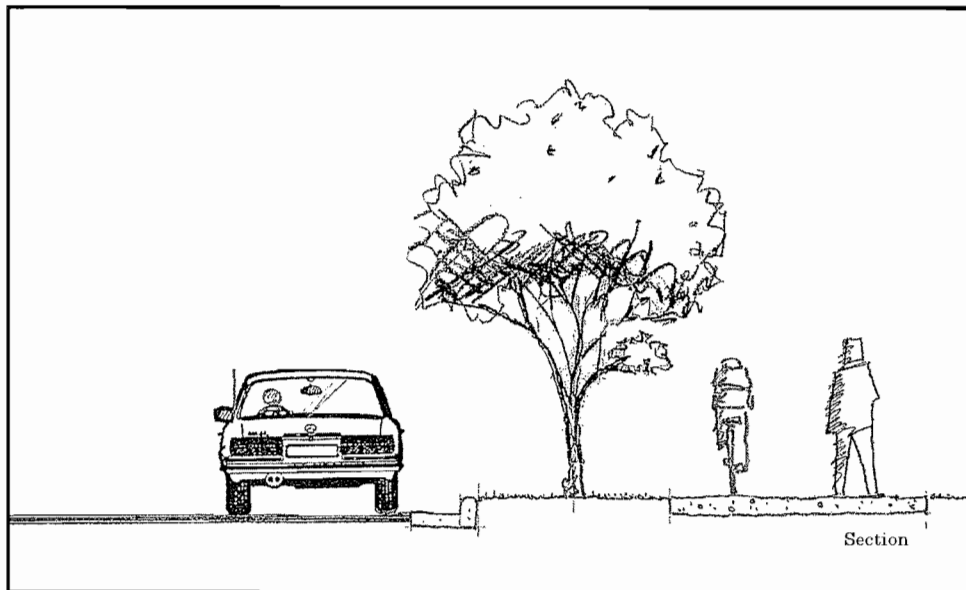
Painted Crosswalks shall be designated with 6-inch minimum width markings of solid white lines. Between the parallel lines diagonal 6-inch width markings shall be placed in a regular pattern with distances between markings not to exceed 1-foot. Crosswalk width shall be field determined with a minimum width of 6 feet.



Special treatment crosswalks to include pavers, bricks, or stamped concrete shall be a minimum of 5-feet in width contained on each side by 18-inch wide concrete bands. Sub-base shall be provided to best available engineering practices.

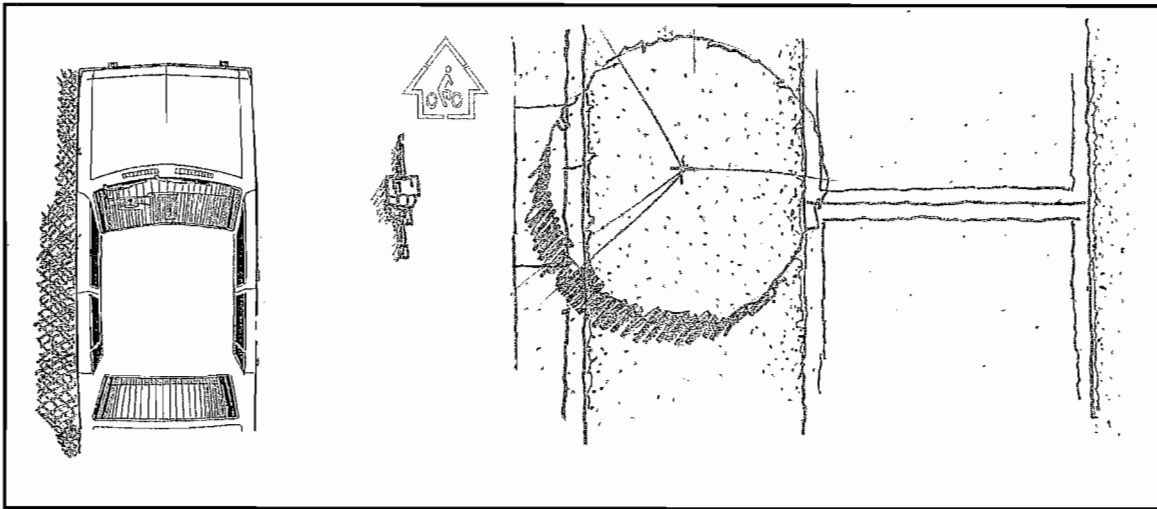


Special treatment intersections to include pavers, bricks, or stamped concrete shall cover the entire intersection contained by 18-inch wide concrete bands. Crosswalks shall be designated by an additional 18-inch wide concrete band to create a crosswalk a minimum of 5 feet wide.

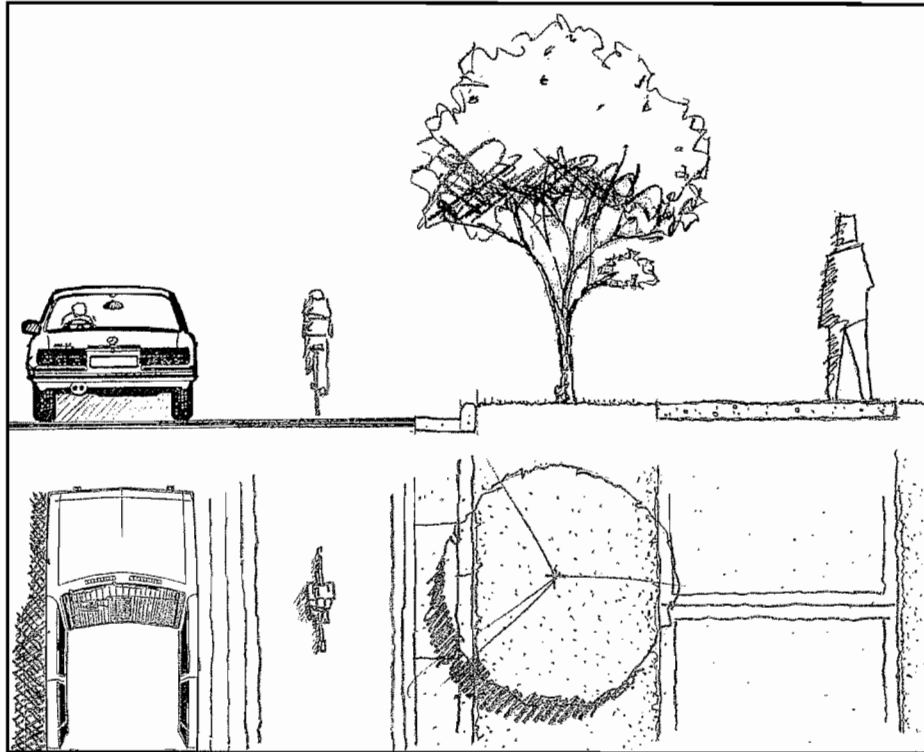


Multi-use paths shall be a minimum of 8-feet wide concrete, or asphalt engineering standard as appropriate. Street intersections and major driveways shall require textured

and colorized concrete meeting generally accepted engineering practices designed to visually and tactilely warn pedestrians of the potential of vehicular conflicts. Multi-use paths shall be separated from the street by a minimum 6-foot wide planning strip where right-of-way allows or placed in a logical flowing fashion in park settings. Drainage shall be handled through swales where feasible. Where swales are not feasible due to narrow right-of ways drainage shall be handled through best available engineering design (example: curb and gutter, storm water credit structures in adjacent areas, and infiltration). Additionally, standard bicycle route signage is required.



Hybrid bicycle lane for motor vehicle and bicycle traffic shall be a minimum of 14 feet wide but no wider than 14-feet 9-inches not including gutter. A width of 14 feet allows a motor vehicle to safely pass a bicycle without crossing into the adjacent travel lane, and the maximum 14 feet 9-inch width prohibits a motor vehicle from passing another motor vehicle on the right. Hybrid bicycle lane markings shall be placed at regular intervals no less than every 600 feet, and in advance of all intersections and major driveways. Standard bicycle route and share the road signage shall also be required.



Standard bicycle lanes shall be a minimum of 5-feet wide from the outside edge of the outer lane marker to the edge of pavement. Standard bicycle lane markings shall be placed at regular intervals no less than every 600 feet, and in advance of all intersections and major driveways. Standard bicycle route and share the road signage shall also be required.

Kayak/canoe launch points shall consist of an appropriate dock facility and designated by standard signage.

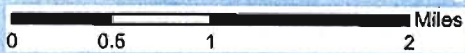
Existing Sidewalk Network



Legend

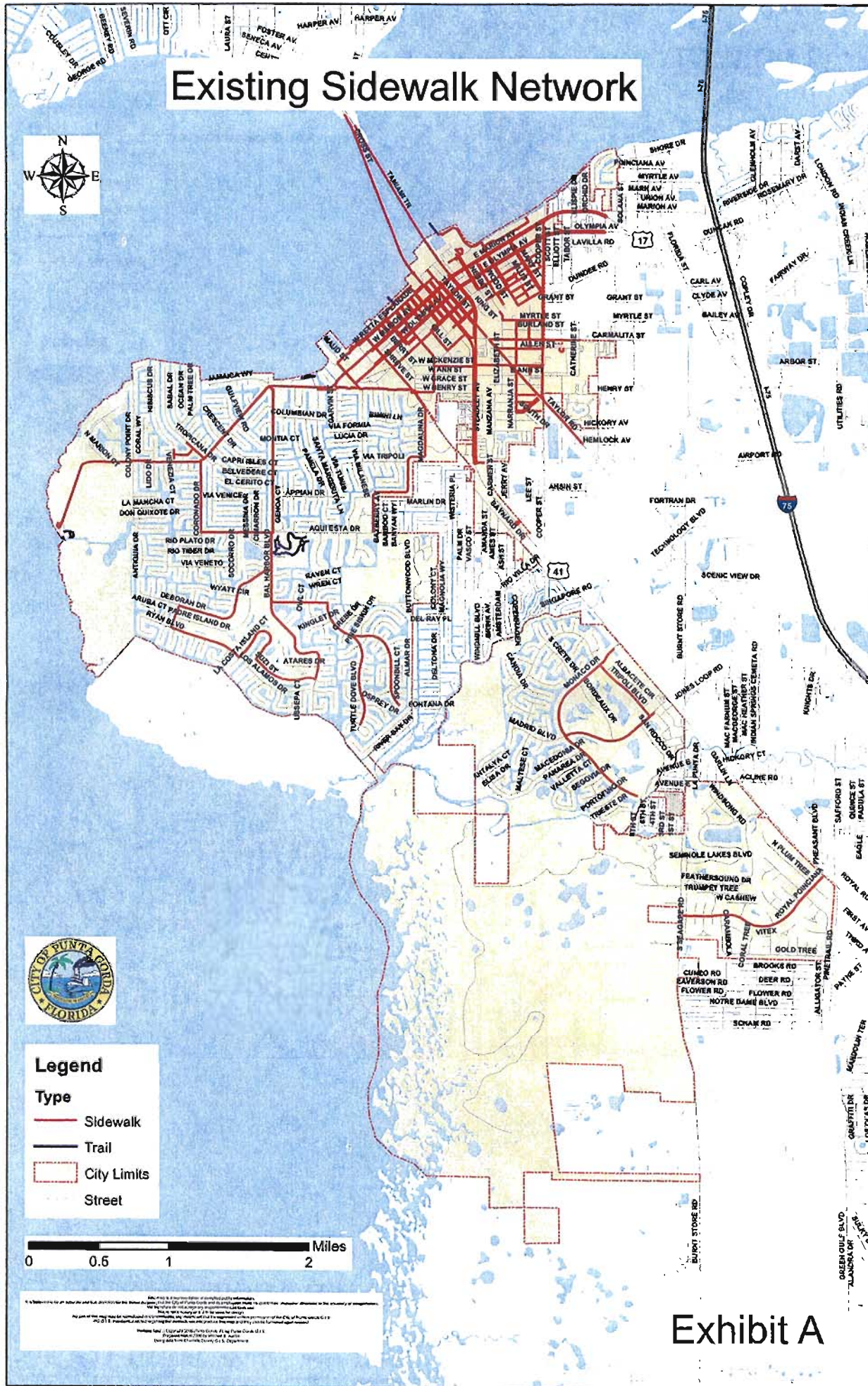
Type

- Sidewalk
- Trail
- City Limits
- Street



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Exhibit A

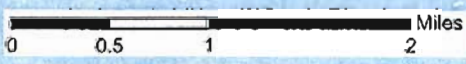


Bicycle Routes: 2030



Legend

- Bike_Route
- City Limits
- Street



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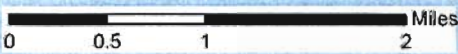
Exhibit C

Kayak/Canoe Network: 2030



Legend

- Launch Points
- Blueway Trails
- City Limits
- Street



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Exhibit D

