

# The Plaza / Square / Park

Public Space in the form of parks, greens, squares, plazas, playgrounds, pavilions, or recreational located in each neighborhood is crucial to the public realm. The following principles can be followed for the design of public space:

- All designated civic open spaces should be at grade level and accessible to the public.
- The landscape design should support and express environmental, cultural, and historical attributes unique to Lake Wales. The landscape design should also promote connection with nature, social interaction and mental restoration.
- Views of natural features should be preserved or maximized.
- The landscape design should promote connection to surrounding neighborhood resources, amenities and services, and provide for optimum accessibility, safety and way-finding.
- Stormwater management improvements should be integrated with the final landscape design as aesthetically and visually pleasing design elements.
- Whenever appropriate, landscape design should promote sustainability awareness and education through interpretive signs, demonstrations and other forms of interpretation.

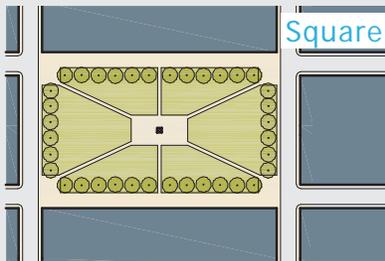
The appropriate arrangements for varying types of civic open spaces are described below. The types of open space could be applied to different parts of Downtown depending on the character of the neighborhood.



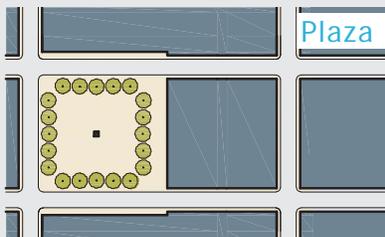
**Park:** A natural preserve available for unstructured recreation. A park does not need to be fronted by buildings. Its landscape shall consist of paths and trails, meadows, waterbodies, woodland, recreational fields, and open shelters, all naturalistically disposed. Parks may be lineal, following the trajectories of natural corridors.



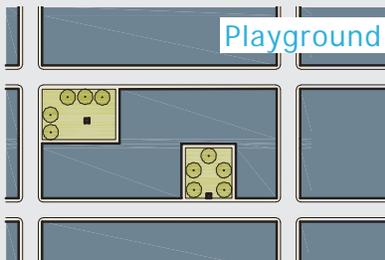
**Green:** Open space available for unstructured recreation. A green may be spatially defined by landscaping rather than buildings fronting it along the edges. Its landscape shall consist of lawn and trees, naturalistically disposed.



**Square:** Available for unstructured recreation and public gatherings. A square is spatially defined by building frontages. Its landscape shall consist of paths, lawns and trees, formally disposed. Squares shall be densely shaded and provide seating. Trees and shrubs shall be located as to define a specific geometry of open space and shall promote security by allowing visibility through all areas.



**Plaza:** Available for public gatherings and outdoor markets. A Plaza shall be spatially defined by building frontages. Its landscape shall consist primarily of pavement. Plazas should use pervious pavers, where feasible. Trees are optional.

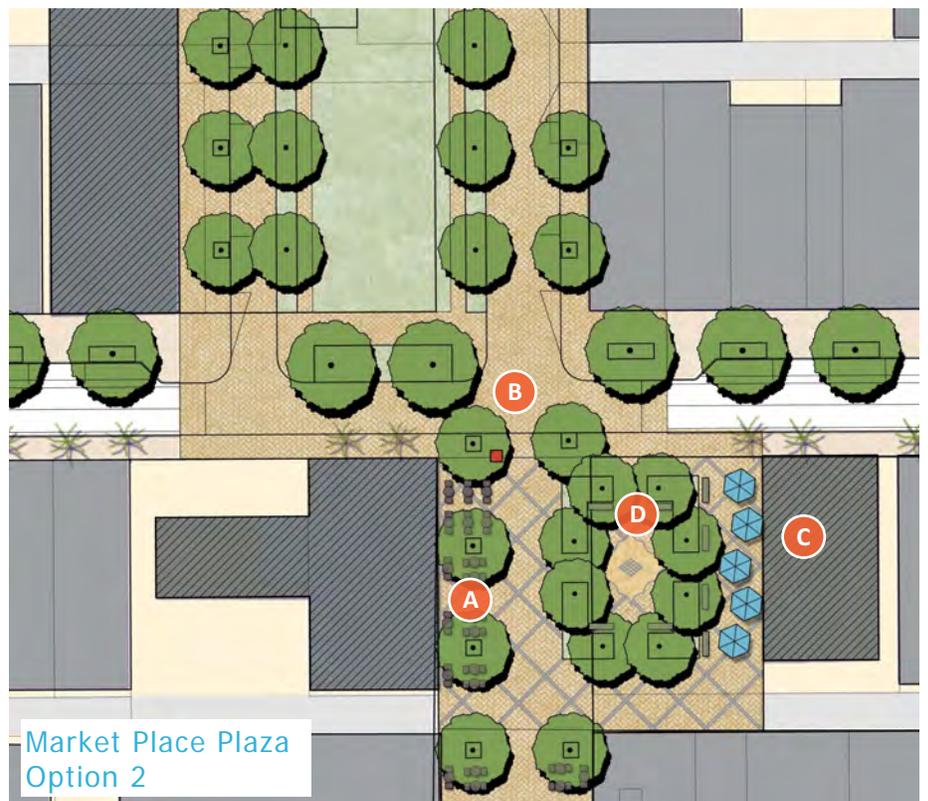


**Playground:** Designed and equipped for the recreation of children. A playground should be fenced and may include an open shelter. Playgrounds may be interspersed within residential areas and may be placed within a Block. Playgrounds may be included within parks, greens, and squares.

## Market Place Plaza

Market Place Plaza is the segment of Market Street that has been converted to a pedestrian plaza, and currently hosts many Downtown gatherings and events. As Park Avenue is reconfigured to create space for people to walk, dine, and activate the heart of Downtown, this important civic space can also be redesigned to better accommodate daily activity as well as host large community gatherings. Key ideas include:

- A** Shade trees define the plaza space, creating a comfortable atmosphere for pedestrians and outdoor dining.
- B** Market Place Plaza can extend across Park Avenue; the raised, curbless intersection will connect pedestrians on both sidewalks. Over time, the plaza will lead to a new Town Square that replaces parking lots to the north.
- C** An existing parking lot east of Market Place Plaza can be reused for an infill Main Street building, and an extension of Market Place. Buildings that front Market Place should have active ground floor facades; cafe seating can extend into the plaza under shade trees.
- D** The new Market Place extension could be designed for a number of purposes. The City and Main Street should work together to define priorities for how the space will be used, to guide the final design. Alternatives shown here include *Option 1*: a flexible open hardscape area that can be used for larger community events; and *Option 2*: a formal landscaped area with additional shade trees and seating areas.



## DOWNTOWN ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

- A** Downtown's primary streets (Park, Stuart, Central and Orange Avenues, and 1st Street), are redesigned to maximize pedestrian space and tree canopy.
- B** A new town square creates a central gathering place north of Park Avenue and Market Street, on city-owned parking lots.
- C** A new building provides doors and windows that puts a public face on an expanded Market Place Plaza.
- D** A cycle track and tree-lined sidewalk on 1st Street creates a better connection from Downtown to the Northwest Neighborhood.
- E** Infill buildings are encouraged on underutilized land (vacant parcels and/or parking lots) in Downtown to activate frontages.
- F** As parking lots and street design changes gradually and displace existing parking, new parking supplies can be utilized in Downtown garage, as well as lots east of Scenic Highway.
- G** Potential location for a new multi-purpose events center, which can draw additional patrons to Downtown. The facility could host plays, concerts, art installations, and private events, and could be managed by a third party.
- H** Left turn lanes are removed along Scenic Highway at its intersection with key Downtown Avenues, to narrow the crossing distance. New high-visibility crosswalks make it easier to utilize parking on the east side of the tracks.
- I** Trails provide connections to Crystal Lake and Lake Wailes, and the new linear park.
- J** A roundabout at Crystal Avenue and Scenic Highway simplifies traffic movement and improves pedestrian connections.





CRYSTAL LAKE

CRYSTAL AVE

MARKET ST

ORANGE AVE

PARK AVE

STUART AVE

CENTRAL AVE

1ST ST

SCENIC HWY

# Visualizing Change



## Reimagine Park Avenue and Create a Town Center

Today, Market Place Plaza is the center of the Downtown's historic core, yet it is faced by blank walls. The plaza could be expanded into an adjacent parking lot; a small remaining portion of the lot could be used as a development site. This infill building would have doors and windows to put a proper public face on this critical community space.

An upgraded, pedestrian-friendly Park Avenue could be elevated at the intersection with Market Street, creating a curbsless area and opportunity to expand the plaza across the street. This connects to a City parking lot to the north, an ideal location for a new town square that accommodates larger gatherings.

# Park Avenue & Market Street





EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED FUTURE CONDITIONS