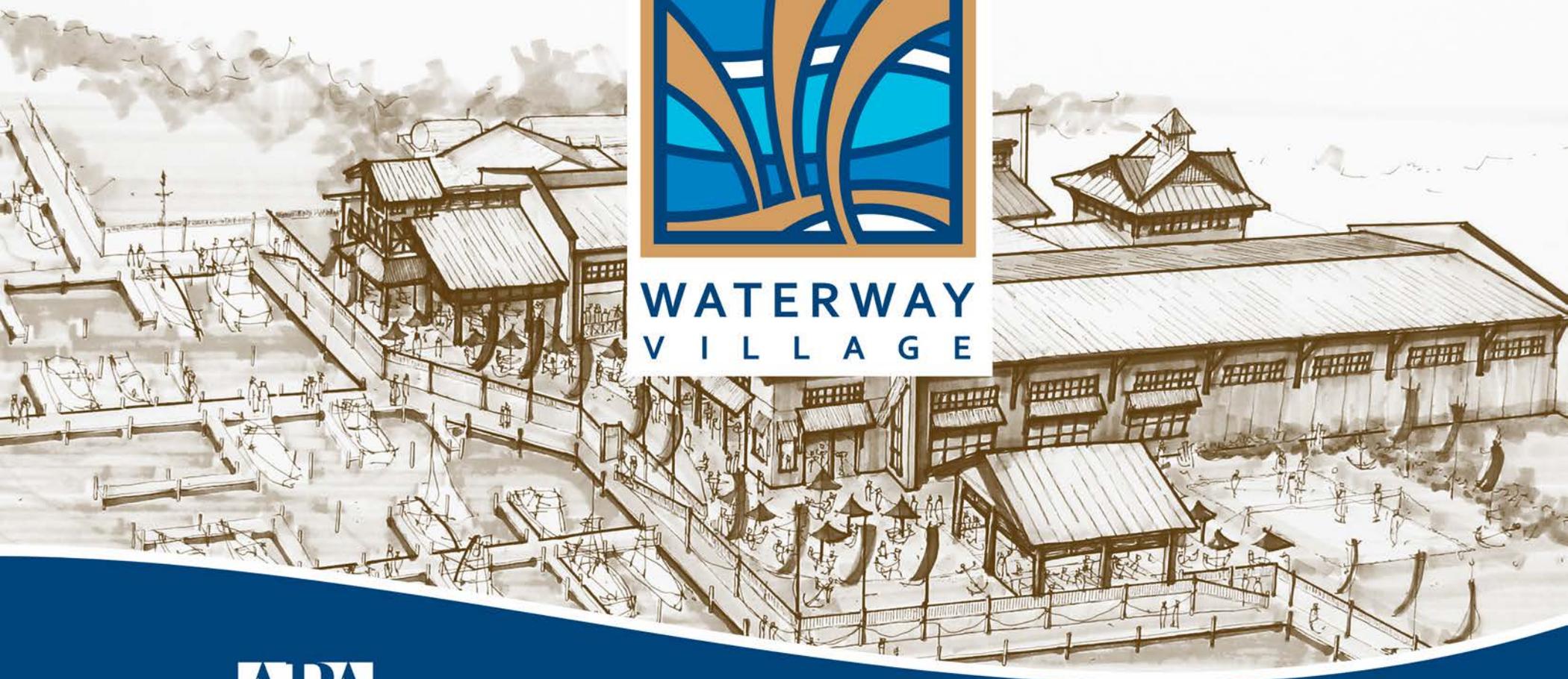


A MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD DOWNTOWN DISTRICT



**WATERWAY**  
V I L L A G E



Alabama Chapter  
American Planning Association  
2014 Awards Program



A MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD  
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT



**WATERWAY**  
V I L L A G E

# Outstanding Planning Award for a Project or Implementation Tool

February 2014

**Nominee:**

Honorable Robert Craft, Mayor  
City of Gulf Shores  
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P.O. Box 299  
Gulf Shores, AL 36547  
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**Nominator:**

Andy Bauer, AICP  
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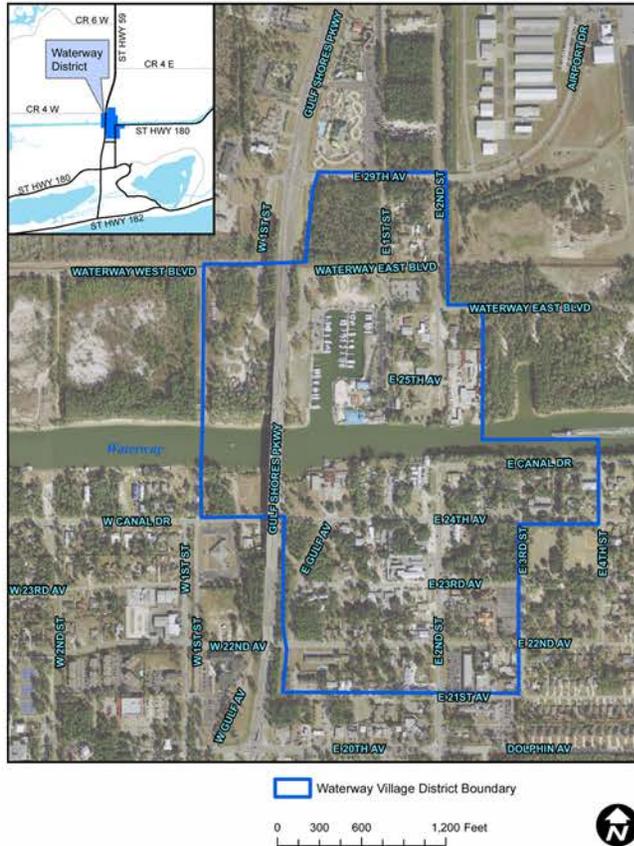


Alabama Chapter  
**American Planning Association**  
2014 Awards Program



# Summary Description of the Plan

The City of Gulf Shores seeks recognition from the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association for the city's Waterway Village District as an Outstanding Planning Award for a Project or Implementation Tool. Waterway Village includes 130 acres of land on both sides of the Intracoastal Waterway, is affectionately known as "Old Gulf Shores" and was the historical heart of the city. In accordance with the City's Land Use Plan, the City formulated and adopted a comprehensive specific neighborhood revitalization growth plan utilizing smart growth planning tools. During the process support was garnered from citizens and public/private organizations and over 1.8 million dollars was invested to spark redevelopment of this district. Waterway Village is a dense, compact, walkable, mixed use, neighborhood downtown district that encourages an active working waterfront with a network of waterfront and neighborhood greenways and open spaces and will geographically diversify the economy of Gulf Shores.



# Originality/Innovative/Transferability

*Waterway Village is the first regulations of its type in the state of Alabama to preserve historic working waterfront heritage and serves as community resilience strategy.*

## Preservation of Working Waterfront Heritage

Gulf Shores was settled as a small fishing village in the 1850's. From the 1930's to the 1980's the Intracoastal waterfront served as the City's historic center and was home to shrimp boats, oyster docks, public water accesses and seafood processing plants.

The City of Gulf Shores is the first coastal community in Alabama to adopt a local ordinance to preserve and protect its working waterfront heritage. During the 2008 Legislative Session a House Joint Resolution created the Alabama Waterfront Access Study Committee to identify the loss and potential loss of diversity along the shorelines of Alabama, and to document how these losses impact access to the state's public trust waters. Many communities throughout Alabama were historically more reliant upon their waterfront locations.



The initial concept for creating an Intracoastal waterfront development plan that focused on improving access and preserving the Gulf Shores' working waterfront heritage was sparked through the City's cooperation with Mississippi/Alabama Sea Grant's Outreach Program and Auburn University Marine Extension & Research Center. Waterway Village Overlay District, as implemented, allows for the re-establishment of water-dependent businesses and provides model language for traditional, commercial, and recreational working waterfronts.

## Community Resiliency/Sustainability

Located in the central Gulf of Mexico, Gulf Shores has experienced significant challenges in recent years. As the community works to recover from hurricanes and oil spill impacts on its beaches, the City recognized the critical need to geographically diversify a local economy that is reliant on beachfront tourism.

With the implementation of Waterway Village, the City seeks to spark a year-round economic driver that operates in any weather and in the event of a natural or human-caused disaster. Due to the development's location along the more protected Intracoastal Waterway, it is less exposed to the extreme conditions of the Gulf, and is designed to be buffered from natural and unnatural disasters. Providing a second economic engine located away from the beach is a community resilience and sustainability strategy.

# Public Participation

*In order to shape and determine its own future, Gulf Shores has, over the years, developed visionary and framework plans based upon the input of its citizens.*

The City acknowledges community support and buy in is vital to accomplishing the goal of transforming this area into a vibrant waterfront neighborhood.

Before initiating planning efforts, the City and Watkins Acy Strunk Design, LLC began by engaging the community to identify local needs and interests. Initially, the City and design consultant targeted 15 property and business owners in the area for a brainstorming session to glean what their ideas were for the future of this area. The property owners' vision focused on redevelopment that would include:

- a seafood market
- retail establishments
- restaurants
- fishing opportunities
- public parking
- improved streetscapes
- better walkability
- waterfront greenway
- ferry service across the Intracoastal Waterway



The City developed an initial concept plan incorporating the goals of the property owners. As plans evolved, no less than 5 public meetings (including publicly advertised meetings) and work sessions were held by the Planning Commission and City Council. This transparency helped the City to generate the support of citizens and to forge crucial partnerships with public and private agencies for funding and design services.

*“Our primary obligation is to serve the public interest and we, therefore, owe our allegiance to a conscientiously attained concept of the public interest that is formulated through continuous and open debate. We shall achieve high standards of professional integrity, proficiency, and knowledge.”*

*– Section A AICP Code of Ethics*

- The Mississippi /Alabama Sea Grant and Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center performed legal research related to the creation of the Waterway District.
- Grant money from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the development of a regional storm water management plan and design of a waterfront pedestrian greenway.
- British Petroleum (BP) provided funding for the design services and construction of a 200 space public parking lot, and transformation of East 24th Avenue into a walkable pedestrian friendly neighborhood street.



# Role of Planners

*Planners played a key role in formulating and implementing Waterway Village. Planners identified what public and private resources were available for development and educated city leaders, boards, and the public on the innovative planning techniques used to create Waterway Village.*

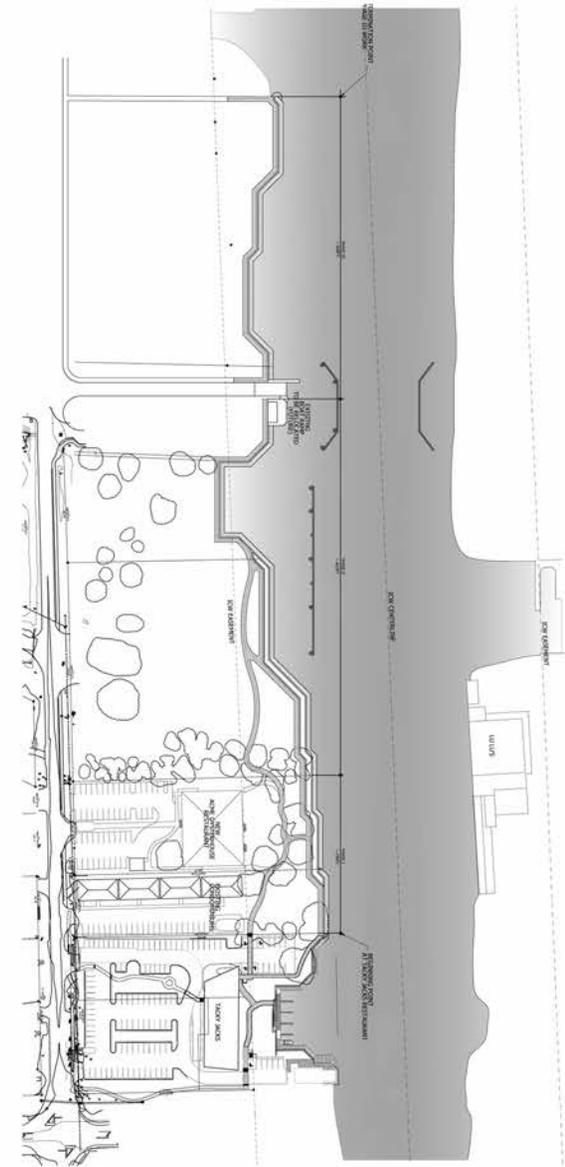
Planners began by recognizing the area's existing assets and challenges. The gridded street pattern was identified as an asset lending itself to the development of an inter-connected, walkable, downtown district. This focus on linkages would help to address the spatial divide that exists in the area. To the east and west of the district are large established single-family residential areas divided by a highway. A pedestrian greenway with interpretive signage along the Intracoastal waterfront was envisioned as an approach to reconnect these two neighborhoods.

The area's pre-existing zoning posed a challenge to redeveloping this area as a traditional downtown neighborhood. The pre-existing zoning encouraged suburban type development as opposed to development patterns better suited to traditional downtowns and did not allow for traditional waterfront uses such as a seafood market and fishing piers.



## Key sustainable development strategies employed by planners for Waterway Village include:

- A thoroughfare assembly plan predetermines street design for maximum pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and to insure safe vehicular/pedestrian interactions.
- Waterway Village is designed to be a “park once environment” similar to the downtown’s of yester year and will not be successful without the installation of on-street parking and restriction of on-site parking to the rear of buildings.
- The design of a 1,700 foot linear pedestrian path along the south bank of the Intracoastal Waterway. The pedestrian greenway is seen as a centerpiece of the Waterway Village design that will help meet the goals of improving access to the waterway, and contribute to long term community identity and character.
- The implementation of an innovative regional urban stormwater management strategy for Waterway Village. Drainage treatment requirements, including but not limited to porous parking techniques, treatment inlet boxes with skimmers or traps, subsurface basins for infiltration or detention, prefabricated multi-chamber water quality devices, stormwater treatment mitigation, native landscaping techniques, rain gardens, and bioswales are encouraged to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff.
- The conversion of East 24th Avenue into a pedestrian friendly street featuring on-street parking, 10 foot wide brick paver sidewalks, benches, trash receptacles, and pedestrian scale lighting.



Waterfront Pedestrian Pathway

# Comprehensiveness

*The plan for Waterway Village utilizes contemporary sustainable planning practices and is based upon the objectives of the Citywide Framework and Land Use Plans.*

Waterway Village was designed and adopted in accordance with the specific goals of the 1998 Citywide Framework Plan and 2008 City's Land Use Plan. The Citywide Framework Plan indicates this area of the city should encourage the development of major mixed-use developments on the North Shore of the Intracoastal Waterway. The Land Use Plan envisions this area of the city developing as a Neighborhood Activity Center. Neighborhood Activity Centers serve as the social and recreational focal point of neighborhoods and should be planned and designed and constructed as such. Neighborhood Activity Centers may include uses such as a grocery store, supporting retail and service commercial, office, restaurants and residential uses. Both the Citywide Framework Plan and Land Use Plan are publicly endorsed and adopted documents.



Aerial Build Out Scenario

# Effectiveness/Results

*Waterway Village has set the standard for plan implementation and advancing the cause of planning along the Alabama Gulf Coast.*

Waterway Village presents a visionary approach to revitalizing a historic area of Gulf Shores which has become overlooked and neglected. Currently the Gulf Shores Intracoastal waterfront is home to the abandoned relics of its past industrial uses. Much of the residential development in the area is dilapidated, and the area is in need of rejuvenation.

Working from the Citywide Framework Plan, Land Use Plan and the goal of creating a mixed use activity center along the Intracoastal Waterway the City has implemented the Waterway Village plan. Compact development benefits the environment by maximizing the use of land, preserving open spaces, utilizing environmentally friendly stormwater management strategies, and encouraging healthy transportation options such as walking and biking.

Waterway Village has pumped life back into an area of the city which was once the heart of Gulf Shores. Reinvestment in this area has improved property values, spurred redevelopment, and the city is in hope this area will be transformed into the social, economic, and recreational center of activity for the abutting neighborhoods. Waterway Village meets the need of offering a neighborhood downtown living environment and an authentic waterfront destination for tourists.

To initiate the redevelopment, the City of Gulf Shores has made significant investments of staff and financial resources.

1. Modified the city's Zoning Ordinance to encourage and allow this area to develop as a compact mixed use neighborhood downtown district that encourages waterfront seafood uses.
2. Purchase of \$400,000 of property in the district for construction of a centralized 200 space public parking lot.
3. Completed construction of a 1.8 million dollar capital improvement project including a 200 space public parking lot and transformation of East 24th Avenue into a pedestrian friendly street.
4. Acme Oyster House has opened an 8,000 square foot, 400 seat seafood restaurant in Waterway Village employing 120 people.
5. Developed a wayfinding signage plan for Waterway Village to brand it as a unique, authentic, transformative place.

Long-term success of Waterway Village hinges on the ability of the city to continue to attract investment and partners, both public and private. The City of Gulf Shores is determined to create a "place that could only be here" and believes Waterway Village is a model for other coastal cities with regards to smart growth, neighborhood revitalization, and preservation of historic working waterfront businesses.



New Acme Oyster House Restaurant

4. Obtained a \$29,000 matching grant from the Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Department, Coastal Division, to fund professional services associated with the design of a linear pedestrian promenade along the Intracoastal Waterway and a regional storm water management strategy for the district

5. Garnered grant money from the BP Seafood and Tourism Promotion Fund to support the construction of a 200 space public parking lot and streetscape improvements in the district.

Long-term success of Waterway Village hinges on the ability of the city to continue to attract investment and partners, both public and private. The City of Gulf Shores is determined to create a “place that could only be here” and believes Waterway Village is a model for other coastal cities with regards to smart growth, neighborhood revitalization, and preservation and encouragement of historic working waterfronts businesses.

6. Completed construction of a 1.8 million dollar capital improvement project including a 200 space public parking lot and transformation of East 24th Avenue into a pedestrian friendly street.

7. Acme Seafood has opened the first new seafood restaurant in Waterway Village.

8. Developed a wayfinding signage plan for Waterway Village to brand it as a unique, authentic, transformative place.



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**WATERWAY**  
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Letters of Support &  
Press Coverage

# Gulf Shores Waterway Village District begins to take shape with \$1.6 million in projects under way



By Marc D. Anderson | [manderson@al.com](mailto:manderson@al.com)  
Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)



on September 17, 2013 at 12:29 PM, updated September 17, 2013 at 12:35 PM

**GULF SHORES, Alabama** -- With a \$550,000 parking project under way near Canal Park and the council's approval this week of a \$1.1 million contract for 24th Avenue improvements, the city is well on its way to building the first phases of the envisioned Waterway Village District.

Both projects were awarded to Asphalt Services Inc. with funding covered by a \$1 million BP tourism grant, the city and a \$360,000 parking assessment that will be paid to the city by Acme Oyster House, which is building a new restaurant along 24th Avenue on the canal.



[View full size](#)

The future site of the Waterway Village District parking area is shown about a month apart as the top photo was taken on August 19, 2013, and the other Sept. 16, 2013. The \$550,000 project on East 24th Avenue will include 215 parking spaces and is the first phase of the new retail, commercial and entertainment district. (Marc D. Anderson/manderson@al.com)

## WATERWAY VILLAGE VISION

**Gulf Shores waterway district improvements to begin**

**Gulf Shores' new Waterway Village, its 'second coast,' gets boost from Acme Oyster House**

**Gulf Shores moving ahead with improvements along Intracoastal Waterway**

### All Stories

Public Works Director Mark Acreman said the East 24th Avenue cityscape project will tie into the under-construction Acme restaurant as well as the new parking area and other businesses along the street.

"This will be on-street parking, sidewalks and stamped concrete," Acreman said. "We'll have new decorative lighting, landscaping, irrigation, everything from park benches to trash receptacles is all being included in this project."

The improvements will cover a roughly quarter-mile stretch of 24th Avenue from Ala. 180 by Tacky Jack's restaurant to Canal Park under Holmes Bridge.

"It's going to be brand new, we're completely redoing the roadway," Acreman said.

The two projects will serve as a foundation for a much broader goal of invigorating retail, commercial and entertainment development around the Intracoastal Waterway -- what Mayor Robert Craft has said could become the city's "second coast" thanks to success already seen by LuLu's at Homeport Marina.

Created by the council in 2012, the Waterway Village Overlay District encompasses about 71 acres north of the canal around LuLu's, and roughly 103 acres south of the waterway to East 20th Avenue, between the state highway and East 3rd Street.

Planning and Zoning Director Andy Bauer, who spearheaded the Waterway District idea, said once the streetscape improvements are complete it should be primed to attract new businesses.

"It looks like the plans we've got will definitely encourage some people to put some money in there," Bauer said.

Construction of the 215-space public parking area on a roughly 3-acre, city-owned lot bordered

by East 24th Avenue and East Gulf Avenue is expected to be finished by the end of the year. East Gulf Avenue will become part of the parking lot but motorists will still be able to cross over the lot between East 23rd and East 24th avenues, according to Acreman.

Work on the streetscape project will likely begin this month with construction slated to be done by February, the same time Acme expects to finish its newest restaurant.

The 24th Avenue project also includes the construction of a closed drainage system to serve future development in the district.

"So when the rest of it developments -- we hope it will take off south of this location -- all of the drainage system that is going under East 24th Avenue will be at a size large enough to handle that future development," Acreman said. "This is kind of front-loading the project."

Long-term plans for the district include paths along the edge of the canal on its north and south side around the Holmes Bridge. Bauer said that vision will require a lot of work through cooperation with private landowners as well as the Army Corps of Engineers.



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East 24th Avenue, as seen on Monday, Sept. 16, 2013, will undergo a complete renovation in coming months as part of Gulf Shores' recently formed Waterway Village Overlay District. (Marc D. Anderson/manderson@al.com)

# Gulf Shores' new Waterway Village, its 'second coast,' gets boost from Acme Oyster House



By Marc D. Anderson | [manderson@al.com](mailto:manderson@al.com)  
Email the author | Follow on Twitter



on May 08, 2013 at 5:03 PM, updated May 09, 2013 at 7:18 AM

**GULF SHORES, Alabama** -- When developer and businessman Mac McAleer took Lucy Buffett and her famous brother, Jimmy, to a rundown site in the shade of the Dr. W.C. Holmes Bridge on the Intracoastal Waterway a decade ago there were doubts that anything could succeed there.

Lucy Buffett had just lost her lease for her restaurant, LuLu's, on state land along Weeks Bay and needed to find a new home.

"I had Jimmy walk out with me to the old hole that was there," McAleer recalled. "There wasn't a marina there. I said, 'OK, there it is.' Lucy looked at me and shook her head and said, 'Oh, man. I don't know,' and Jimmy looked at it and said, 'Yeah, LuLu's on steroids.' He got it. That's what I saw and that's what he saw. Lucy was very skeptical, but it has paid off for her very well."

Not only has it paid off for the now popular LuLu's at Homeport Marina, but the area around the canal has begun to flourish with the opening of Tacky Jack's across the waterway from LuLu's on the south side and a soon-to-open Acme Oyster House -- of New Orleans' French Quarter fame -- that was announced during a Wednesday news conference under the Holmes Bridge.

The success of LuLu's was also the impetus for the city to plan for smart growth around the north and south side of the canal through a Waterway Village Overlay District with the aim to serve as an economic off-the-beach anchor for the city.

At the news conference -- where Waterway Village plans were also announced -- Mayor Robert Craft talked about how developing the canal area is part of the council's plan to enhance the beach economy while protecting the city's family-friendly image.

"When we started measuring the opportunities that we had the thing we felt most excited about was this waterway and the ability to take advantage of that in a way that we never have before," Craft said. "It becomes more of a second coast. It provides us with an opportunity for visitors and residents, alike, to enjoy this waterway and enjoy dining and entertainment opportunities that will be created here."

LuLu's led the way, Craft said, and that has more recently been followed by Tacky Jack's and Rhythm and Ribs, just off the canal's south side.

"And it's not just who's here but who's coming," Craft said to a crowd of about 100 people at Canal Park. "So part of this announcement, maybe the most important part of this announcement, is the announcement of our new partner that will be moving a restaurant to this area. You've seen the ads so it's no longer a surprise but we are delighted to have a restaurant such as Acme's, and a fun destination such as Acme's, to come to our community and have confidence that this is the place where they can continue to enhance their reputation."

Lucien Gunter, chief executive officer of Acme Oyster House, said the restaurant will be the sixth one in the South, first in Alabama and largest at just over 8,000 square feet. It will be near Tacky Jack's on 24th Avenue at the current site of a small mobile home park.

"It took us 103 years to get to Gulf Shores and I told the mayor you know us Cajun boys we tend to move a little slow but we sure are glad that we're here today," Gunter said. "The project that the city has laid out, I have to tell you that in working with the mayor and the staff with our local investors here in Gulf Shores it has been an absolute pleasure. I have never seen a government body that was so receptive to sitting down and saying, 'Hey, let's make progress. Let's do something that's special.'"

Gunter said the company is shooting to open the restaurant in March 2014 with about 100 employees. It will have a seating capacity of nearly 500.

"It's also a very proud moment for us to be part of what we think is going to be such a great success for the city," Gunter said.

The Waterway Village covers both sides of the Intracoastal Waterway and the zoning district lays the groundwork to revive an old area of town with more entertainment, retail and restaurants where the old highway 59 swing bridge used to cross the canal. The Holmes Bridge was built in 1971 just west of the old one and the area soon became an afterthought for many.

Councilman Steve Jones said when he moved to Gulf Shores 22 years ago the canal was called "The Ditch" with little to no development. When the idea of reviving the area first came up Jones said he was "real skeptical."



View full size

A crowd gathers to watch the Gulf Shores' news conference on Wednesday, May 8, 2013, announcing the city's Waterway Village district and the opening of Acme Oyster House on the canal south side next year. (Marc D. Anderson/manderson@al.com)

"I really didn't see this happening," Jones said, "but over the last five or six years I really have begun to believe that this is really a viable alternative to the beach and something that is just essential to sustain our economy."

Jones said large-scale developments pegged for the canal area that fell victim to the recession, such as Bon Secour Village, served as a valuable learning experience as the city regrouped and fresh ideas

poured in.

One of those ideas was the waterway district that was spearheaded by Planning and Zoning Director Andy Bauer and approved by the council last spring. It gained momentum in the fall thanks to BP funds that were awarded to promote Gulf Coast tourism and seafood industries in states impacted by the 2010 oil spill. Gulf Shores was awarded two \$500,000 grants to be paid out this year and next. With the first batch of BP funds the city will construct a 215-space public parking area, make streetscape upgrades along East 24th Avenue and East 2nd, add on-street parking, more sidewalks with lighting amenities, benches and landscaping. Bauer said he expects the work to be done by January 2014.

The pedestrian-friendly district also calls for a half-mile waterfront boardwalk along the canal from Tacky Jack's west to the bridge.

Bauer said the district is a great opportunity for the city to realize the canal's potential.

"Think about what they do in south Florida on the waterways," Bauer said. "Not that ours will look just like that or anything but we definitely have not realized the potential canal, McAleer smiled as he talked about where the new waterway development started and where it is going."

"I love it," said McAleer, a former Krispy Kreme executive who owns the 25 acres of property where LuLu's and Homeport Marina are located. "This for me, when we came here and developed LuLu's we were all by ourselves over there and we grew it for 10 years. Tacky Jack's came in on this side and tried to make it over here and I think they're doing OK. But to bring in Acme, a name like that, I'm very pleased to bring a brand in like that. I love it. It just enhances the area, truly."

As for future waterway development, McAleer says he's in talks with an Atlanta hotelier interested in building on two acres of property by Homeport Marina, while west of the Holmes Bridge, portions of the old Bon Secour Village site are ripe for renewed residential development.

# Big Daddy's to open Gulf Shores location

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## Big Daddy's celebrated its sixth anniversary in March



## Related Stories

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Posted: Sunday, January 26, 2014 8:26 am | Updated: 9:22 am, Mon Jan 27, 2014.

STAFF REPORT |  0 comments

GULF SHORES, AL - Big Daddy's Restaurant, a staple for years on the Fish River near Fairhope, is planning a location in the Gulf Shores Waterway Village area.

"It's official, we will be opening a Big Daddy's Grill in Gulf Shores this spring!" Jason "Big Daddy" Newsom wrote on the restaurant's Facebook page. "I have been given a wonderful opportunity to open this second location and because of my incredible employees, I will be able to do so."

According to Newsom's post the location was formerly Rhythm and Ribs and is located at 2420 E. Second Street, across the street from Tacky Jacks which is on the Intracoastal Waterway.

"We will be hiring all positions very soon," Newsom wrote. "Check back to see the progress and photos. Now it's time for me to take a deep breath and dive in head first! A huge thank you to all of you, without your support on Fish River we wouldn't be in a position to expand!"

The space formerly contained a long-time Mexican restaurant and then was Rhythm and Ribs for about two years and owned by Louisiana investor Ronnie Penton. It closed last year and has been vacant since.

On East 24th Avenue just east of the location, the city is completing a parking lot, widening the road and putting in on street parking and other improvements. On the same street the Acme Oyster is nearing completion of its newest restaurant across the waterway from LuLu's.

[You can see more on Big Daddy's HERE at GulfVisitorGuide.com](#)

# Construction continues in Gulf Shores Waterway Village district

[Previous](#) [Next](#)



Acme Oyster House  
Gulf Shores, Alabama

## A rendering of the new Acme Oyster House now under construction



### Related Galleries

#### Waterway Village skyline changing

GULF SHORES, AL - The skyline in the new Waterway Village along East 24th Avenue and the Intracoastal Waterway is changing as construction on the new Acme Oyster House is progressing nicely. Rainy weather didn't stop workers from climbing high to hang lumber on the new frame at the location on the south bank with LuLu's as a backdrop just across the water on the north bank. (JOHN MULLEN/Islander Photos)



Oyster House Boardwalk • Hwy 59, Gulf Shores • 251-948-244

Posted: Monday, November 25, 2013 3:20 am | Updated: 3:51 pm, Tue Nov 26, 2013.

BY JOHN MULLEN [jmullen@gulfcoastnewspapers.com](mailto:jmullen@gulfcoastnewspapers.com) | 0 comments

GULF SHORES, AL — Dust is flying, machines are humming and boards are being sawed and nailed as the skyline over Gulf Shores' new Waterway Village district is changing.

City leaders hope to make East 24th Avenue a pedestrian friendly dining and entertainment destination to compliment the draw of the area's beautiful beaches.

Two additions in pursuit of that vision are under construction now. Acme Oyster House is going up on the south bank of the Intracoastal Waterway directly across from LuLu's and the city is constructing a parking lot across the street on the east side of the Alabama 59 bridge.

"We have locations in Louisiana and Destin and knew we wanted something in between," Acme Marketing Director Jeremy DeBlieux said. "Once we visited Gulf Shores and heard the vision behind Waterway Village, we fell in love. This area will become an entertainment and dining destination and that's the business we're in."

Construction of the new restaurant is proceeding well, DeBlieux said, and an early 2014 opening date is within sight.

"Everything's going fine," he said. "We're on a very aggressive construction schedule with a wonderful contractor who is using all local subcontractors. Hopefully they'll turn it over to us with a certificate of occupancy in very early February and should open two weeks after that. Mid to late February, the good Lord willing and the creek don't rise."

He's hoping the opening will be before the traditional start of spring break so the business can take advantage of the season's first tourist influx.

"We knew that there's a small window for us to get open and operationally sound before spring break starts," DeBlieux said. "If we don't hit that then there's an even narrower window between spring break and Memorial Day. We working to get it built as quickly possible."

Plans for the Gulf Shores location include 8,450 square foot of interior space, 3,650 square feet of exterior covered space and seating for approximately 450 guests. The restaurant will offer lunch and dinner

seven days a week and will bring approximately 100 jobs to the area.

The new parking lot will be paid for with a \$500,000 BP Seafood and Tourism Marketing grant. It will include not only a 215-space public parking area, but will implement streetscape improvements along East 24th Avenue and East 2nd Street including the addition of 50-60 on-street parking spaces, sidewalks, landscaping, decorative lighting and street furniture throughout the area.

Right now the parking lot is red dirt and the road will have to be torn up for improved drainage, but Public Works Director Mark Acreman says all is going according to plan.

"We're pouring the curbing right now and within the next week some rock and asphalt will be coming in," Acreman said. "We'll complete that in December."

Then the focus will be on infrastructure that must be completed before the cosmetic final work can begin.

"On 24th Avenue, right now we're addressing all the underground utilities, adding and installing the drainage system," Acreman said. "We'll be tearing up the road and redoing it here in the next month and we're scheduled to complete that in February."

"We have to completely regrade the entire road. The profile of the road changes so that the whole road will come up. We'll then put down new base then add the base needed for the on-street parking. Then we'll repave all of it."

During that time parts of the road will be closed to through traffic, but it will be done in sections. The first section to be closed will be from the Acme site to Canal Park underneath the Alabama 59 bridge. This work caused the section of road to be closed from Friday until sometime today.

"When you have to do underground storm piping and it gets out into the road there's no other way to keep it open safely," Acreman said. "We'll finish that section, reopen that section of road and move to another section and do the storm water there."

"Once we get the storm water in most of the utility relocations will not require any closure of the road. We'll be working on the side, on the right of way near the edge of the pavement."

# New Development: Restaurant coming to Gulf Shores

Posted: May 08, 2013 4:48 PM CDT

Updated: May 18, 2013 4:49 PM CDT

By Debbie Williams - [bio](#) | [email](#)



GULF SHORES, Alabama - A part of Gulf Shores that most folks never see is being developed as the city's second coast, the intracoastal waterway.

"We have an opportunity to create something special over here." Gulf Shores mayor Robert Craft says "Waterway Village" will take what has been an un-used area and make it a focal point. "We intend to create an alternate vacation destination for dining, shopping, entertainment like Lulu's and Tacky Jack's we're wanting to add to that."

Construction of sidewalks, improved roadways and parking areas is expected to start in the next few days.

The intracoastal waterway is one of the best kept secrets. Lulu's and Tacky Jack's know that and now they'll have a new neighbor, Acme Oyster House.

"How could you not be excited about being a part of something so phenomenal." CEO Lucien Gunter says construction on their eight thousand square foot restaurant is expected to begin July first. "In clusters of restaurants like we are going to have here those clusters draw crowds."

Taking advantage of the second coastline is not a new idea according to Lulu's Mac McAleer. "We tried to do it before the recession hit. This is the rebirth of that again. We all suffered a bit and it's so nice to see we're back to work. We're creating jobs again. It's such a good feeling."

The city of Gulf Shores will use a million dollar seafood and tourism grant from BP to develop Waterway Village.



**Acme Oyster House**  
Gulf Shores, Alabama

Artist rendering of new Acme Oyster House in Gulf Shores.



[www.gulfshoresal.gov](http://www.gulfshoresal.gov)