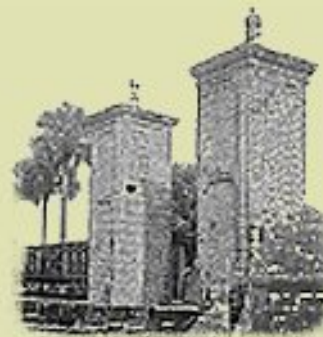




THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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July 9 2010

Comptroller proposes tentative millage rate stay at current 7.5

A tentative tax millage rate of 7.5 for the coming year, unchanged from the current year, will be recommended to our City Commission Monday by City Comptroller Mark Litzinger.

The tentative millage rate is set to provide the county with a figure for tax notices. The final rate will be set after City Commission public workshops in August and public hearings in September.

Monday's regular commission meeting begins at 5 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall, and includes a presentation on proposed commuter rail service to Jacksonville, an update on infrastructure plans for our commemoration period, and an ordinance moving historic district style changes from state review to local control.



City Clerk Rogers retiring

City Clerk Karen Rogers will retire July 20 after eleven years with our city, the last four as our city's chief records-keeper.

Her position is one of three appointed directly by our City Commission, along with the city manager and city attorney. John Regan was named unanimously to succeed Bill Harriss effective July 1. City Attorney Ron Brown was appointed three years ago.

City Manager Regan will discuss with commissioners Monday the application process for Rogers' replacement.



Rogers

Commuter rail to Jacksonville studied

Spanish Quarter embraces youth

A group of nine local youngsters this week joined the parade of school groups who visit our Colonial Spanish Quarter annually.

It's the second year an Embrace Our Youth group has learned about blacksmithing, leatherworking, and home life in colonial St. Augustine.

The Embrace Our Youth summer program focuses on character building, and includes visits to city hall, courthouse, school offices, and area attractions.

Photo: Leatherworker Mark Warren demonstrates skills

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The road(s) to our 450th

A landscaped entry replacing a former car wash at US 1 and King Street, entry corridor improvements along King Street, San Marco Avenue, and Anastasia Boulevard, upgrading Riberia Street, pedestrian-friendly redesign along our bayfront - and those are just the transit parts of infrastructure as we prepare for our upcoming commemoration period.

City Manager John Regan will give a progress report to commissioners Monday on infrastructure projects in the works and proposed as we look ahead to traffic, parking, wayfinding, and restrooms for an anticipated visitor surge from 2013, the 500th anniversary of Ponce de Leon's discovery of Florida, through 2015, the 450th anniversary of St. Augustine's founding.

Historic district style ordinance moves forward

Following review and recommendation by our Planning and Zoning Board, commissioners Monday will consider an ordinance to move control of Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP) from our Comprehensive Plan to the City Commission level.

The guidelines dictate that new construction in our preservation districts must be colonial period, and any changes are required to go through a Comprehensive Plan amendment with state review. The Comprehensive Plan change would allow the commission to amend at the local level by ordinance, and includes a series of public hearings to assure community input on any preproposed changes.

The style issue surfaced three years ago as commissioners sought to allow alternate styles in Historic Preservation

A Jacksonville Transit Authority (JTA) Commuter Rail [Feasibility Study](#), with St. Augustine as one of three preferred corridors, will be presented to commissioners Monday.

JTA's James Boyle will present the 2008 study, which targets a North Corridor to Yulee, Southeast Corridor to St. Augustine, and Southwest Corridor to Green Cove Springs as preferred starters.

"Once implemented, commuter rail will be another critical component in providing transit mobility options for the neighboring counties of Clay, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler, Nassau and Baker," the study's executive summary says.

City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline requested the report as commissioners recently jumped on board another mass transit initiative, an Amtrak passenger rail service along the east coast from Jacksonville to Miami.

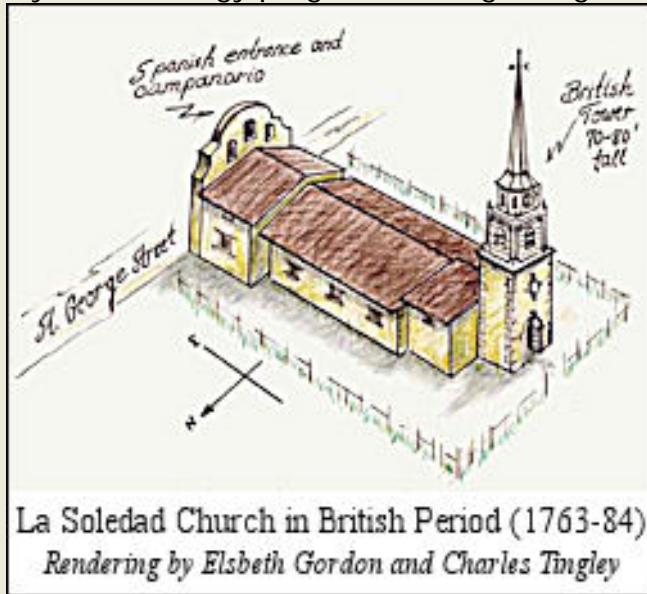
Anticipated ridership in 2015 for the St. Augustine corridor: 2,410 to 4,810, with costs of \$195 million for our corridor.



District One, south of the Plaza, which has developed a variety of later styles over the past century.

Tales of our city told in archaeology

From an historic exhibit panel at Cuna and Spanish streets to an aggressive historic marker program to "symbolically resurrect" structures "burned by pirates, or lost to decay before the country was born," our city's archaeology program is being brought to the surface.



The St. Augustine Foundation, Inc., and our city's Archaeology Division will place an exhibit panel at Spanish and Cuna streets describing that area from late 1600s to the early 1900s in a "Microcosm of Urban Archaeology in Downtown St. Augustine, Florida." The proposal goes before our Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) Thursday.

And our volunteer St. Augustine Archaeological Association (SAAA) has formed a team to begin a series of markers "to bring life to ... little known sites" that have yielded archaeological evidence of historic activity. The laminate markers allow graphic as well as text.

Currently planned are markers at two sites in our earliest settlement south of the Plaza. A *Los Remedios* marker will be placed near the corner of King and Aviles Streets, the *La Soledad* marker on St. George Street just south of the Villa Flora.

Los Remedios was St. Augustine's principal parish church

from 1572 to 1702. The shrine of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad was built shortly after 1572, with a hospital attached in 1597, becoming the first hospital in the continental United States.

SAAA is applying proceeds of archaeological tours to the marker program and seeking community support for the markers, costing \$1,000 to \$1,200 each. Contact Nick McAuliffe: nmcauliff@yahoo.com SAAA P.O. Box 1301 St. Augustine FL 32085-1301.

History's Highlights

Three centuries on a street corner

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our commemorations, drawn from research by George Gardner.

5 years and 2 months to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary

An account of archaeological investigations at the corner of Cuna and Spanish streets, illustrating the diversity of deposits typical of St. Augustine's colonial downtown district.

The Late First Spanish Period (1672-1763) finds remnants of a post-in-ground wattle-and-daub structure. One of the posts is charred, perhaps from English-led sieges in the early 18th century.

Above it is an oyster-shell foundation with embedded ceramics and iron nails, likely the "house of boards" of Manuel Jacinto listed in the index to the 1763 Puente Map.

In 1777, Pablo Sabate and his family arrive on the property as refugees from Andrew Turnbull's New Smyrna colony,

where they live in a "house of palm," most likely a wood structure with a thatched roof.

Sabate, a Menorcan, earns his living as a fisherman and farmer. By 1801, he turns to other means of support - running a tavern. It is an L-shaped tabby building with two rooms, with a tabby floor and brick hearth recorded in one room.

The builders use broken bottles at the base of the oyster shell foundation - a unique way to support the massive shell foundation as well as dispose of trash. Numerous fragments from broken tumblers and goblets, coins, over 120 pipe fragments, iron cooking implements, and a marionette fragment suggest its function as a tavern.

This is not uncommon. The early Spanish use portions of their homes for commercial enterprises. During the Second Spanish Period (1784-1821), more than 25 taverns are documented in the colonial downtown district - the equivalent of a tavern on every block.

The Sabate family owns the property until the mid-1800s. A two-story frame vernacular dwelling is built in 1885 as a rental house for working-class families. City Directories from 1899-1930 list the occupations of the people living on the site: a porter, a tailor, a laborer, and a laundress.

Oscar "Dixie" Canova and his wife, Estelle, buy the house and property in 1931. Locals recount Dixie as a bootlegger during Prohibition; Dixie later opens a bar on nearby St. George Street.

The house on the property is demolished shortly after Dixie's death in 1969. The St. Augustine Foundation purchases the vacant lot in 1978, and calls on the city's Archaeology Division to test the lot prior to installing a formal garden. A poster prepared by City Archaeologist Carl Halbirt and Planning and Building Historic Preservation Planner Melissa Dezendorf results in plans for an exhibit panel on the site.



Account drawn from a proposed historic exhibit panel for the corner of Cuna and Spanish streets

Photo: Spanish Street neighborhood in 1898, one of numerous graphics on panel

Courtesy of St. Augustine Historical Society

The St. Augustine Report is published by the Department of Public Affairs of the City of St. Augustine each Tuesday and on Fridays previewing City Commission meetings. The Report is written and distributed by George Gardner, former St. Augustine Mayor (2002-2006) and Commissioner (2006-2008) and a longtime newspaper reporter and editor. Contact The Report at gardner@aug.com

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