

**STEP 3: Three team members answered the Melrose questions  
(Steps 1 & 2 are outlined on pp 5–10)**

**Would you go to Melrose?**

**If NO, why not?**

**If YES, what would you do? How long would you stay?**

**Tyler—No**

“Everything I saw listed places in Gainesville, not Melrose, except for their Facebook page. While it looks like they have a few decent restaurants and bars, there was nothing that appealed to me enough to drive there from Gainesville. I felt like I was missing something about what they have to offer, but I couldn’t find anything else.”

**Betsy—No**

“After many Google searches, I found nothing of interest in Melrose. Their Facebook page was also not so great. Perhaps I’d rent a lakefront house but, otherwise, there doesn’t seem to be much to do in the community.”

**Denise—Unlikely**

“If I was out for a drive in the area, I might look for a few of the geocaches located there and MAYBE there would be something else for me to do or an interesting place to eat. I didn’t find any while searching online, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t there.”

**Search Terms Used**

Things to do Melrose Florida  
Yelp—Melrose FL  
Facebook—Melrose Florida  
History Melrose Florida  
Restaurants Melrose Florida  
Shopping Melrose Florida  
B&B Melrose Florida  
Geocaching Melrose FL

**Websites Visited**

<http://www.wikido.com/us/fl/melrose>  
[www.yelp.com/search?find\\_desc=Things+To+Do&find\\_loc=Melrose%2C+FL](http://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Things+To+Do&find_loc=Melrose%2C+FL)  
[www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Melrose-Florida/103953182973105/](http://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Melrose-Florida/103953182973105/)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melrose\\_Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melrose_Florida)  
[www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g34435-Melrose\\_Florida-Vacations.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g34435-Melrose_Florida-Vacations.html)  
[www.bedandbreakfast.com/melrose-florida.html](http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/melrose-florida.html)  
[www.geocaching.com/adventures/geotours/operation-recreation](http://www.geocaching.com/adventures/geotours/operation-recreation)  
[www.scout.me/thing-to-do-near-melrose-fl/section-family-fun](http://www.scout.me/thing-to-do-near-melrose-fl/section-family-fun)  
[www.yelp.com/search?find\\_desc=Things+Do+find\\_loc=Melrose%2C+FL](http://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Things+Do+find_loc=Melrose%2C+FL)



## Is Melrose a visitor destination?

A team of six conducted the on-site assessment of Alachua County and nine communities, including Melrose, on October 4–13, 2014 and November 8–12, 2014.

Melrose is easy to find and, according to a few websites, is one of the primary routes between Gainesville and the Atlantic Coast. We didn't find much evidence of this although it could have been the time of year or the days of the week we visited.

During the week, Melrose is pretty quiet. Only a few people were encountered outside, and there was very light traffic on State Road 26/Bellamy Avenue.

Melrose appears to be developing as a weekend stop for those interested in the arts. We asked a few people about what there was to do. Two asked if we had a boat and when we said, "No," they looked at us funny and said there wasn't anything to do without going somewhere else.

The others all suggested activities and attractions outside of Melrose.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS



The entry corridors to Melrose are welcoming. They're visually more wide-open than other areas and landscaped boulevards in the downtown area would create a more intimate feel. The width of the street and the openness may make it unlikely that pedestrians will cross the street to explore additional opportunities.



## WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION?

Based upon the *Visit Gainesville* page for Melrose, Lake Santa Fe appears to be the main focus for what there is to do in the community. As a visitor seeking to access the lake, it was difficult to find information or directions for beaches, boat ramps or public access. This should be available throughout the region—not just for Lake Santa Fe, but for all water resources.

Business owners should add detailed listings to the *Visit Gainesville* site, especially about arts-related options. Listing them in the overall description without providing specifics and links to websites doesn't help potential visitors as much as it could.

### LAKE SANTA FE

*Lake Santa Fe has been designated by Florida as an "Outstanding Florida Water" which means it is "worthy of special protection because of its natural attributes." Two to four pound large-mouth bass are common, with six to eight pounders possible.*

Lake Santa Fe is two miles wide east-to-west, and three miles long north-to-south. It is a spring-fed lake offering excellent fishing for black crappie, bluegill and redear. Directly north is Little Lake Santa Fe. The two lakes are connected by a short waterway called "the pass", which makes for good fishing for large-mouth and stocked sunshine bass. Though many homes surround the lake, the fish habitat is outstanding with many areas of cypress and healthy maidencane grass beds. Fishing is best early and late in the day or at night. Lake Santa Fe and the adjoining Santa Fe Swamp are considered the headwaters of the Santa Fe River, the largest tributary of the mighty Suwannee River.

*On the banks of spring-fed Lake Santa Fe, sits Melrose, Florida a town that makes good use of this proximity.*

Boating and fishing are excellent here, especially anglers looking to hook black crappie, bluegill and redear. Two to four pound largemouth bass are common, with six to eight pounders possible for you dreamers. Though many homes surround the lake, fish habitat is outstanding with many areas of cypress and healthy maidencane grass beds. Off the water, two galleries form the artistic backbone of Melrose. The Melrose Bay Art Gallery is a co-op gallery showcasing some of North Central Florida's best artists and craftspeople. The other, Bellamy Road Fine Arts, Literature and Film Gallery, features a broad array of quality used books along with artwork, a wifi lounge, specialty coffees, literary events, lectures, musical performances and classic and experimental films.



## WHAT IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?

The arts are clearly Melrose’s draw for visitors—as a day trip destination and as a spur-of-the-moment stop while driving through.

Cross-promotion, updated websites and collaborative events improve visibility. Promote specific days that everything is open as the core focus.

Be sure every venue is listed on *Visit Gainesville* and find ways to connect with the 352 Arts Roadmap project.



Heritage Park is charming and continued promotion of events on the signboard encourages passers-by to stop and walk around.

The beach at Melrose Bay is a well-kept secret. Signage would bring more visitors, if that’s what the community wants. The downside is visitors to the beach are not necessarily spending money in the community and put additional strain on this resource.



## MELROSE AS A VISITOR DESTINATION TODAY

### Strengths & Opportunities

- Adaptive reuse of historic buildings
- Arts businesses and community resources
- Access to Lake Santa Fe
- Public park
- Friendly residents and shop owners

### Challenges & Threats

- Bedroom community
- Increased traffic impacts pedestrian safety
- Lack of critical mass of businesses

## NEXT STEPS

### RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED WITHIN THE REPORT

- Consider landscaped boulevards on SR 26
- Public access information for the lake
- Business listings on VisitGainesville.com
- Arts connection to 352 Arts Roadmap
- Beach signage

### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION

#### ***Community Vision***

Melrose has a core of arts-related businesses and community offerings that visitors cannot find elsewhere in the area. Exploring expansion of this as part of a community visioning process makes sense. Conversations about how to support existing businesses, recruit new ones and how the arts might create a defined identity for the community would be good.

Bringing residents and property owners together in an innovative format breathes new life and energy into planning for the future. Implementation with a focus on the community quality of life creates a higher probability for success.

