

Downtown Gainesville Implementation Retreat

City Commission Update

December 1, 2022



MKSK

Strategic Plan: 16 Ideas for Downtown GNV



Become a Destination

- ▶ **Idea 1:** Build Investment Around Local Strengths
- ▶ **Idea 2:** Shape Downtown Identity
- ▶ **Idea 3:** Create a Downtown Jewel



Connect the Dots

- ▶ **Idea 4:** Balance the need for parking with the desire for a walkable, urban core.
- ▶ **Idea 5:** Prioritize Streets to Meet City Standards
- ▶ **Idea 6:** Activate the Sweetwater Corridor
- ▶ **Idea 7:** Create a Greenway Loop



Strengthen the Relationship with Adjacent Neighborhoods

- ▶ **Idea 8:** Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown
- ▶ **Idea 9:** Establish Transition Areas



Increase Housing Opportunities

- ▶ **Idea 10:** Address Housing at Scale
- ▶ **Idea 11:** Support Affordable and Mixed Income Housing
- ▶ **Idea 12:** Facilitate Market Rate Housing



Create a Supportive Local Business Environment

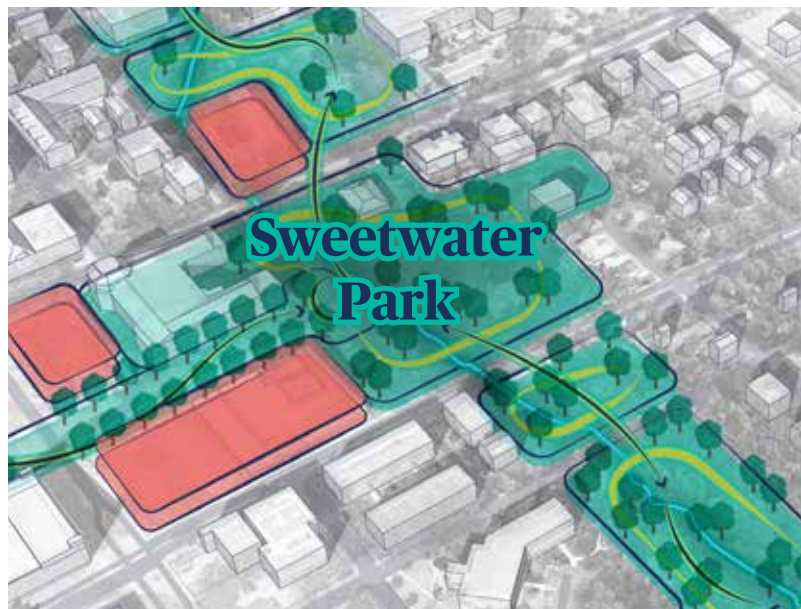
- ▶ **Idea 13:** Unlock Real Estate Potential
- ▶ **Idea 14:** Increase Direct Small Business Assistance



Maintain and Enhance Downtown

- ▶ **Idea 15:** Form a Place-Management Organization
- ▶ **Idea 16:** Continue to Build Capacity

Implementing the Vision: Where to Start



Idea 3: Create a Downtown Jewel

- **Prepare a Conceptual Design and Feasibility Study** to attract funding, implementation and programming partners to re-imagine Sweetwater Park as a signature public green space in the urban core of Gainesville.



Idea 8: Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown

- **Prioritize the SE/SW 1st Avenue corridor** as downtown's premiere outdoor dining destination, by establishing a pedestrian-first environment.



Idea 15: Form a Place-Management Organization

- **Organize around the protection/enhancement of core assets** (Downtown's competitive niche) and addressing key livability/business viability issues (maintenance/cleanliness, safety, etc).

Implementation Retreat Results

Building on the ideas and momentum from the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan, City Staff and the MKSK team facilitated an implementation retreat with community leaders on November 3-4, 2022. This retreat focused on providing targeted next steps toward making the plan's visions for the Streatery, Sweetwater Park, and a downtown management organization a reality.

Implementation Retreat: Goals and Deliverables

Goal 1 Provide targeted next steps toward making the plan's vision for Sweetwater Park a reality.

- ▶ **Deliverables:** Scope outline for Vision and Feasibility Study, including summary of approach to stakeholder and community engagement; summary of potential project partners and stakeholders; summary of study funding sources; summary of capital and operational funding opportunities.

Goal 2 Provide targeted next steps toward making the plan's visions for the Sreatery and the 1st Avenue Corridor a reality.

- ▶ **Deliverables:** Graphic and narrative support to staff to summarize input and action items.

Goal 3 **Goal 3:** Provide action items toward establishing a downtown management organization.

- ▶ **Deliverables:** Memorandum with summary of interviews, start-up considerations, lessons learned, and step-by-step tasks for implementation.

Implementation Retreat Schedule

Day 1: Thursday, November 3, 2022

**Leadership Team Kick-off
and Brainstorming Session**
(9:00 AM - 10:30 AM)

**Streatery/Sweetwater Park:
Stakeholder Listening Session**
(10:30 AM - 12:00 PM)

Streatery/Sweetwater Park Walking Tour
(1:30 PM - 3:30 PM)

Day 2: Friday, November 4, 2022

**Leadership Team Introduction Session:
Downtown Management Organization**
(9:30 AM - 10:00 AM)

Jacksonville Downtown Vision Conversation
(10:00 AM - 10:30 AM)

Miami Downtown Development Authority Conversation
(10:30 AM - 11:00 PM)

Columbus Special Improvement District Conversation
(11:30 PM - 12:00 PM)

Louisville Downtown Partnership Conversation
(12:00 PM - 12:30 PM)

Wrap-up Session with Staff
(1:30 PM - 2:30 PM)

Sweetwater Park Next Steps

2022-752

GOAL for today: Address critical path to Vision & Feasibility Study

Winter '22 -
Spring '23

Practical assessment of project challenges and order-of-magnitude costs to ensure feasibility

Relationship-Building

Need and Purpose

Vision and Feasibility

Design Documentation

Procurement

Construction

Operation and Maintenance

Feedback and Evolution

Aspirational vision of property transformation to generate community enthusiasm and attract project partners

Space and infrastructure planning for features, activities and experiences that *support community needs and wellness*



Greenville Unity Park - Renderings

Sweetwater Park: Key Findings

- ▶ **Sweetwater Park presents a big recreation and open space opportunity** for downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- ▶ **The park is underutilized** because there is a perceived lack of safety. The park feels isolated, secret, and hidden.
- ▶ **We need to create a destination** that is connected to Depot Park, but provides a different experience. Unlike Depot Park, Sweetwater Park could focus on a quieter place for contemplation, meditation, and connecting with nature.
- ▶ **The park’s “theme” could inform its programming.** If this park is intended as a quiet space for contemplation, activities like tai chi could be integrated.
- ▶ **The Department of Sustainable Development**, in a partnership with Wild Spaces & Public Places, is a natural fit to lead this effort. This would be supported by ongoing engagement a Solutions Group led by residents, downtown businesses, local institutions and project champions.

2022-752

Natural extension of Depot Park, most successful recreation in 30 years	Need connection to Depot Park - people need to feel safe walking in between	People are not using the park now because of lack of safety	Park feels secret, hidden
Challenge is shape - long and linear, harder to maintain for safety, visibility. Trail focus rather than depot and community focused	Depot is destination - food, boozar, play. Expand what makes it attractive. Sweetwater as greenspace with restaurant, performance space, reasons to go there!	More people = less pushback on the investment	Thriving Cities Initiative with neighborhoods in Sweetwater loop festival (February)
Connection to Depot Park. Sweetwater connection to neighborhoods, Sweetwater could be part of loop	Library: point of programming, bring people to the park, children area with playground/reading room	activities for teens/older kids, with library: butterfly garden, green spaces	Loop would be popular with teens: bigger space to see downtown



Streatery Next Steps



STREATERY / PEDESTRIAN ZONE

- ▶ Street redesign for flexible use and beautification
- ▶ Closed to thru traffic and on-street parking, except emergency services
- ▶ Businesses operate within their properties and portions of the ROW, extent to be determined.

FESTIVAL STREET

- ▶ Street redesign for flexible use and beautification.
- ▶ Open to thru traffic and on-street parking daily, but can be easily closed for events.
- ▶ Businesses operate within their property rights, expanded sidewalks, and regular special events.


Streatery: Key Findings

- ▶ **The Streatery provides a lively outdoor space** in the heart of downtown, but could be more business-friendly by adding some flexibility to the street closure.
- ▶ **The Streatery feels underutilized and under-programmed.** There are not enough restaurants to activate the space during the daytime.
- ▶ **There is a difference in the parking needs** of daytime businesses versus the nighttime use of restaurants.
- ▶ **The closure makes it challenging** for some businesses to have deliveries, as trucks have to park in the middle of the road.
- ▶ **Parking issues are not the same for all businesses** - these vary by type of business and their times of operation.
- ▶ **The Streatery zone by Flaco's is very successful**, though some Pleasant Street neighbors are concerned with the closure of a significant neighborhood entrance and would like to see this re-opened to traffic.



Like current setup, need for seasonal approach when use is highest.	July versus November - impact of heat on use	Space fills up consistently year round and in summer, except for rain	Space 3 more lively than the other two, well designed
Flexibility - daytime car use versus nighttime pedestrian use	Deliveries - trucks park in front of businesses, block traffic (ex. Starbucks by hippodrome)	Mist and fans can make a difference during heat, make outdoor spaces pleasant	Parking downtown: a parking problem means people want to be there, not a big problem downtown
Flaco's safer crossing on University would improve connection to other Streatery spaces. Cars have crashed into the building a few times prior to Streatery	Flaco's Pleasant Street gateway, patio and Streatery could be used as a community welcoming space (showcase PS history with signage)	Flaco's: Streatery there has increased safety because of people using it. Emergency vehicles into neighborhood have not been an issue, wants to work with neighbors to get support	Support for Lucy's space - markets, tables, ability to move tables

Place-Management Organizations Interviewed

	 <p>Louisville Downtown Partnership Louisville, KY</p>	 <p>Columbus Downtown Development Corporation Columbus, OH</p>	 <p>Jacksonville Downtown Vision, Inc. Jacksonville, FL</p>	 <p>Miami Downtown Development Authority Miami, FL</p>
Year Founded	2013	2002	2000	1967
Budget	\$1.7M in expenditures/revenues (FY 2021).	\$13.8M in expenditures and \$20M in revenues (FY 2019).	\$2.1M operational budget (FY 2021)	\$13.6M operational budget (FY 2021-2)
Funding Sources	BID assessments, contracts for services, and other sources.	Contributions, program services, and rental property income.	\$1.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value	Special tax levy of district properties and reimbursements from the City of Miami
Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clean and safe services ▶ Marketing and special events ▶ Economic and physical planning ▶ Development of downtown and surrounding areas ▶ Manages Commercial Loan Fund and Downtown Housing Loan Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clean and safe, homeless outreach and ambassador services. ▶ Lead catalytic development ▶ Provide proof of concept for private development community to make further investments ▶ Manage Housing Investment Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clean and safe services ▶ Marketing and stakeholder support ▶ Data research & trends ▶ Events and programming ▶ Placemaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clean and safe, homeless outreach services, and landscape installation ▶ Advocate, facilitate, plan, and execute business development, planning, capital improvements, and marketing and communication strategies ▶ Economic development and marketing ▶ Business assistance for opening or expansion requirements

Place-Management Organizations: Commonalities

Jacob Gordon, Jacksonville
Downtown Vision



Neal Schafers, Miami DDA



Marc Conte, Columbus SID



Rebecca Fleischaker, Louisville DT
Partnership



- ▶ **Each has a governance structure** that is independent of routine City operations and control.
- ▶ **A funding mechanism that is distinct and supplemental** to City financial contributions.
- ▶ **A vibrant Ambassador program** designed to promote outreach to downtown stakeholders.
- ▶ **A vital marketing/communications presence** that advocates on behalf of the downtown and reiterates the downtown brand.
- ▶ **Provisions of enhanced services** inclusive of clean/safe; business development; real estate curating, events/programming and place making.

Downtown Management: Key Findings

- ▶ **A downtown management organization needs to be nimble and responsive.** This organization offers a premium service – over and above what the City provides.
- ▶ **Place management organizations are on the forefront of policing** – not leading with enforcement, but instead through crisis-intervention, homeless outreach, and partnerships with public safety.
- ▶ **Being an independent agency** allows these organizations to act fast with a relatively small staff, maintaining relationships with property owners while still being well-connected to the City and County.
- ▶ **Downtown management agencies are not forced** on property owners, they are formed from a need and desire for enhanced services.



Thank You!



MKSK