ITN COVER PAGE

City of
Gainesville

INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE: DOSD-230051-GD

Redevelopment of Old RTS Administration And Maintenance Facility

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ISSUE DATE: June 26, 2023

PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING: ☒ Non-Mandatory ☐ Mandatory ☐ N/A ☐ Includes Site Visit

DATE: July 18, 2023, 10:00am

LOCATION: ZOOM – https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7769614233?pwd=QVZSV2pnaDZlTzRmVEt1OFNiQlBrUT09

SUPPLIER QUESTIONS DUE BY: July 23, 2023, 3:00pm EDT

PROPOSALS DUE BY: August 11, 2023, 3:00pm EDT

SUMMARY OF SCOPE OF WORK:

The City is seeking proposals from experienced Respondents **and/or existing business owners** with a proven track record of undertaking and successfully completing site/building and redevelopment/renovation projects involving multi-component, mixed-use developments for the redevelopment of the Old RTS Administration and Maintenance Facility located at 100 SE 10th Avenue, Gainesville, Alachua County, FL, 32601.

For questions relating to this solicitation, contact: Gayle Dykeman, Procurement Specialist 3, dykemangb@gainesvillefl.gov

PART 1 – INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE INFORMATION

Thank you for your interest in working with the City of Gainesville on this cherished community project.

Pertinent information and required documents regarding this solicitation as part of a responsive offer are listed below:

NOTE: The terms "bidder" and "proposer" and "respondent" are used interchangeably throughout this document.

1.1   DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION

The City posts and distributes information pertaining to its procurement solicitations on DemandStar (www.demandstar.com). The City accepts submittals through e-bidding only. In order to submit a response the bidder must be registered with DemandStar. DemandStar is supported by the City so that it is free to respondents to register and submit bids. Select "City of Gainesville – Procurement Division" as the agency of choice to assure there will not be a charge to use the tool.

It is the responsibility of the respondent to monitor DemandStar. Properly registered respondents can expect to receive automatic notification of solicitations for bids and proposals by participating purchasing entities. Respondent's failure to retrieve available, required procurement information from DemandStar and include the appropriate documentation and information in solicitation replies may result in disqualification.

1.2   PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING/QUESTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS AND BID OPENING

If scheduled (refer to Bid Cover Page), attending a pre-proposal meeting is strongly recommended as the project's scope of work, procedures, and specifications will be discussed at this time. It is the only time during the bid process that respondents may ask questions directly of the City's Project Manager.

If special accommodations are needed in order to attend a pre-proposal meeting or a bid opening, please contact the Procurement Division at least 72 hours in advance.

All questions that occur outside of the pre-proposal meeting must be submitted to Procurement only, and must be received by the date indicated on the Bid Cover Page to be considered. Technical and/or specification questions will not be answered over the phone; they must be submitted by email directed to the Procurement Specialist conducting the solicitation (refer to Bid Cover Page). All questions will be answered via Addendum which will be posted on

DemandStar.com for vendor access. All addenda must be acknowledged on the RESPONDENT VERIFICATION FORM, Attachment A.

1.3   ITN TIME TABLE

The anticipated schedule for the ITN and contract approval is as follows:

Activity	Day	Tentative Date	TIME	LOCATION
RFP on DemandStar	Mon	06/26/23	3:00pm	Cone of Silence Begins
Non Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting	Tue	07/18/23	10:00am	Zoom
Deadline for receipt of vendor questions	Tue	07/25/23	3:00pm	email
Deadline for receipt of proposals/Bid Opening	Fri	08/11/23	3:00pm	Demandstar
Evaluation Meeting	Tue	08/22/23	10:00am	City Hall 332
Oral presentations - if conducted	Tue	08/29/23	10:00am	Zoom
Oral presentations - if conducted	Tue	08/29/23	4:00pm	Zoom
Final Evaluation Meeting	Wed	08/30/23	10:00am	City Hall 332
5-Day Protest Period Posting		9/1/23-9/8/2023		
Recommendation of Award to City Commission	Thu	09/21/23	10:00am	Cone of Silence Ends

All dates are subject to change. Respondents will be notified via Addendum in DemandStar.com in event of any schedule changes.

1.4   PROHIBITION OF LOBBYING

To ensure fair consideration, consistent and accurate dissemination of information for all respondents, the City prohibits communication to or with any department, employee, or agent evaluating or considering proposals during the submission process, except as authorized by the Procurement Division representative. **Additionally, the City prohibits communication initiated by a respondent to any city official or employee evaluating or considering the proposals (up to and including the City Commissioners) before the time an award decision has been made.** Any communication between proposer and the City required to obtain information or clarification for preparing a bid or to enable a proper, accurate evaluation of a proposal will be handled solely through the Procurement Division staff. **Any communications initiated between the respondent and the City outside these parameters may be grounds for disqualifying the offending respondent from consideration for award of the proposal and/or any future proposal.**

1.5   CONE OF SILENCE

During the Cone of Silence as defined in the next paragraph, except as pursuant to an authorized appeal, no person may lobby (as defined in section 1.4) on behalf of a competing party in a particular procurement process, City officials or employees except the Procurement designated staff contact in the Procurement Division. Violation of this provision shall result in disqualification of the party on whose behalf the lobbying occurred.

The Cone of Silence is the period between the issue date of the ITN, which allows for immediate submittals to the City of Gainesville Procurement Division for the Invitation to Negotiate and the time the City Officials and Employees awards the contract.

1.6   DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY OF RESPONDENTS

The qualifications of respondents for this specific Invitation to Negotiate are included in Part 3. Respondent must also demonstrate that it is responsible as defined in the City of Gainesville's Financial Services Procedures Manual, Section 41-522, as may be amended.

As a part of the proposal evaluation process, City reserves the right to conduct a background investigation of respondent, including a record check by the Gainesville Police Department if the qualifications require it. Respondent's submission of a proposal constitutes acknowledgment of the process and consent to such investigation.

No contract will be awarded to any respondent who is in arrears to City upon any debt, fee, tax or contract, or who is a defaulter, as surety or otherwise, upon any obligation to City, or who is otherwise determined to be not responsible by City pursuant to Section 41-522, Financial Services Procedures Manual, following:

These criteria consider the respondent's capability to perform:

    a. The ability of the respondent to successfully carry out a proposed contract.
    b. Past performance (including reference check), experience, business and financial capabilities, skills, technical organization, legal eligibility and reliability.
    c. Current litigation pending between the respondent and the City.
    d. Respondent has paid all debts owed to the City.
    e. Respondent possesses all required licenses.

If it is determined that the respondent is not responsible, City will notify respondent of its finding, including evidence used, and allow respondent the opportunity to come into compliance within three (3) business days of notification.

Successful Respondent must either update or complete City's vendor application, pay business tax (if applicable), and register with the State of Florida (if required by law).

1.7   RESPONSIVENESS OF PROPOSAL

Each proposal will be reviewed to determine if the proposal is responsive to the submission requirements outlined in the ITN. A responsive proposal is one which follows the requirements of the ITN, includes all required documentation, is submitted in the format outlined in the ITN, is of timely submission (via upload to DemandStar.com), and has the appropriate signatures as required on each document. Failure to comply with these requirements may deem the proposal non-responsive (see Section 41-444 of the Financial Services Procedures Manual).

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PART 2 – SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The City of Gainesville, a municipality located in central Alachua County, Florida, is soliciting Proposals for re-development of its former Old RTS Administration and Maintenance Facility location with mixed-use components (the, "Project"). The Project will be re-developed on an approximately 5.2 acre site located at 100 Southeast 10th Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32601 ("City Site").

NOTE: The original purchase of this property included the use of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. Thus, any possible lease(s) or sale of the land and buildings requires written approval from the regional FTA Office before such disposition can occur. If the City awards a lease and retains possession of the property, the FTA will require certain provisions to be included in the lease once FTA approval has been granted. Those provisions are not currently available in this ITN.

2.2 SCOPE OF WORK

a. Project Background

The City of Gainesville is located in central Alachua County, Florida. Among the many priorities of the City, one is continued investment and enhancement of its downtown core and surrounding City controlled properties. In this case, the City is interested in re-development of its former RTS Administration and Maintenance Facility. The goal is to re-develop the site with mixed-use components and/or with uses complimentary to the adjacent Depot Park.

b. Development Vision and Goals

The City is seeking proposals from experienced Respondents and/or existing business owners with a proven track record of undertaking and successfully completing profitable redevelopment projects involving multi-component, mixed-use developments for the redevelopment of the Old RTS Administration and Maintenance Facility located at 100 Southeast 10th Avenue Street Gainesville, Florida 32601 ("City Site").

1. A primary objective of this ITN is to provide for a mixed-use development of the subject City Site as expeditiously as is feasible under prevailing market conditions. In addition, the development should be complimentary to the adjacent Depot Park.

2. Landholding is specifically discouraged. Proposals with timely Project development schedules which demonstrate a plan to develop the subject site in an expeditious manner are strongly encouraged. The Project schedule will be a factor in the evaluation of proposals. Therefore, proposers are cautioned to submit realistic Project schedules as the contract and development agreement resulting from this ITN will contain damages for failing to complete the development within the proposed schedule.

3. The City anticipates awarding a contract and development agreement for the right and obligation to develop the subject City Site. The Conceptual Project proposal may provide for any combination of uses and should describe how the proposal is in keeping with the surrounding urban context and particularly the adjacent Depot Park.

4. Proposals should also take into consideration the City's overall Downtown Strategic Plan 2022 to assure continuity with adjacent properties and future plans. (Exhibit A)

c. Project Site

The subject site consists of two parcels (portions of one of those parcels) located at 100 Southeast 10th Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32601. The site map below provides the general location of the site in relation to the Gainesville downtown and surrounding amenities.

Context

- Address: 100 SE 10th Ave

- Alachua County Parcel #16005-000-000, and portions of Parcels #16004-000-000 and #15706-000-000

- Context Area: Depot Park, Cade Museum, S Main St, Industrial area, Power District, Downtown, Rail-Trail
- Zoning: PS (Public Services & Operations District)

- Mostly within the GCRA
- Mostly vacant since 2018

- Current uses: Depot Park overflow parking and offices, RTS storage & private business overflow parking
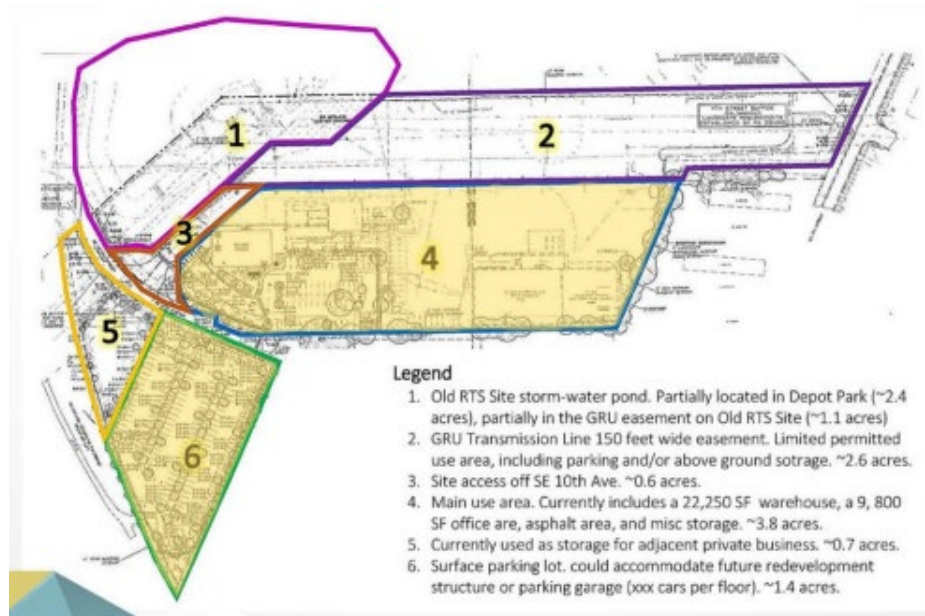
Source: City of Gainesville

The Parcel Identification and/or Folio Number of the subject parcels is 16005-000-000 and a portion of 16004-000-000. The site land area is approximately 5.2 acres and is a component of a slightly larger geography immediately south and adjacent to Depot Park. The City is in an agreement with Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) to use the easement under the power lines for additional parking. The agreement may change depending on the future status of the property.

The future land use designation of the property is Public Facilities and the existing zoning designation is Public Service. The City anticipates that the land use and zoning will be modified to accommodate future development. Summarized below is: 1) a summary of the land use/zoning information, site size more or less and other site characteristics; 2) parcel ID map and aerial view of site taken from a recent conceptual project proposal. (area highlighted in yellow).

Land Use	Public Facilities
Zone Code	PS
Zone District	Public Service
Acreage	5.2 acres mol
Prospective Zoning	U-9
Surrounding Context	Urban/Adjacent to Depot Park
Access	SE 10th Ave/SE 4th Ave S. Main Street/Bicycle Trails

Source: City of Gainesville and Alachua County Property Appraiser

Legend
1. Old RTS Site storm-water pond. Partially located in Depot Park (~2.4 acres), partially in the GRU easement on Old RTS Site (~1.1 acres)
2. GRU Transmission Line 150 feet wide easement. Limited permitted use area, including parking and/or above ground sotrage. ~2.6 acres.
3. Site access off SE 10th Ave. ~0.6 acres.
4. Main use area. Currently includes a 22,250 SF warehouse, a 9, 800 SF office are, asphalt area, and misc storage. ~3.8 acres.
5. Currently used as storage for adjacent private business. ~0.7 acres.
6. Surface parking lot. could accommodate future redevelopment structure or parking garage (xxx cars per floor). ~1.4 acres.

Source: Conceptual Project Proposal – Knot Climbing Gym

2.3 DEVELOPER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

a. After award and execution of a contract and development agreement, the Developer shall be responsible for all aspects related to and payment of all expenses associated with the planning, construction, maintenance, and operation of the proposed development and the City Site, including but not limited to, the following:

1. Securing all financing as required by the contract and development agreement resulting from this ITN and payment of all costs related to the planning, construction and operation of the proposed development.

2. Obtaining certified, insured, experienced and reputable architectural, engineering, and construction services including a general contractor, Project manager and subcontractors for the Project;

3. Duly applying for, obtaining and maintaining any and all permits, licenses, easements, property rights and approvals, necessary prior to and after construction;

4. Platting of the City Site, if necessary;

5. All development fees imposed in connection with the development by the City or any other agency of appropriate jurisdiction.

6. All off-site public improvements and/or infrastructure required for development of the City Site (streets, street widening, streetlights, sidewalks, water/sewer infrastructure, landscaping, etc.) will be the responsibility of the Developer.

7. Extension, relocation and/or upgrading of utilities, including utilities serving existing City facilities, or connection of new utilities, if necessary.

8. Any alteration, relocation, or replacement of any City and/or private facilities, either temporary or permanent, and with any measures required to maintain City and/or private operations during development shall be at the sole cost of the Developer.

9. Submission of plan(s) to mitigate any disruption to City, other public and/or private operations and/or impacts to City, public and/or private facilities. The plan(s) must be approved in writing by the City prior to commencement of any work that may impact City or private operations and/or facilities. Any damage or impacts to City, public, and/or private systems, facilities, or operations resulting from

activities undertaken or authorized by the Developer must be immediately remediated at the Developer's sole expense. If required by the City, the Developer must prepare and submit a mitigation and remediation plan. The plan must receive the written approval of the City and be executed by the Developer.

10. Certain activities which may potentially impact City facilities and/or operations may require that City employees or representatives monitor and coordinate such activities. The Developer shall be responsible for all costs incurred as a result of such activities, including payment for costs incurred by the City in providing County employees or representatives to monitor and coordinate the activities.

11. The Developer shall be solely responsible for any additional environmental review and assessments required by any authority having jurisdiction over such matters including any and all studies and analyses required for such review and assessments and for any remediation of the Site if required, at its sole expense of the Developer.

12. Filing of Development Agreement or any other agreements resulting from this ITN and payment of all recording fees.

13. Payment of any and all taxes associated with the development of the property, including but not limited to, ad valorem real estate taxes, that may be associated with the Project and/or the property.

14. Submission of monthly status reports to the City regarding the Project development upon award of the contract and development agreement. Frequency, subject matter and details covered in status reports will be determined by the City and may be changed at any time at the discretion of the City.

15. Commencement and completion of the construction of the Project in a timely manner in accordance with the Agreements resulting from this ITN and all applicable rules, regulations, ordinances and standards required by the City and any other applicable regulatory agency.

16. Prior to construction, the Developer's designated Project Manager, its Contractors and/or Subcontractors, and any other employees and/or representatives of the Proposer as the City may require, will be required to meet with City staff to provide relevant information and to coordinate construction related activities. Upon commencement of construction, such meetings will be required as frequently as deemed appropriate by the City.

17. The Developer may be required to participate in community outreach activities.

18. Obtaining bonding and/or assurance of completion as required by law and as acceptable to the City.

19. Obtaining all insurance coverages as required by the City.

20. Applying for and obtaining any necessary or applicable zoning changes and/or any other land use planning changes and/or waivers from the appropriate agency having jurisdiction. (The City does not make or offer any representation or warranty that any such requested changes will be granted.);

21. Obtaining all necessary access permits from the state, county, City and/or any authority having such jurisdiction.

b. The Proposer is solely responsible for defining and requesting a comprehensive due diligence process regarding development of the City Site if necessary for the proposal idea. The City disclaims all responsibility and liability for the completeness or accuracy of any information that it provides.

c. Acceptance by the City of the Respondent's Proposal for the City Site does not constitute or imply any type of representation or warranty, whatsoever, regarding the condition of the property, its suitability for the uses contemplated by this Solicitation or the Proposal or that development approvals or permits will be issued for the uses contemplated in the Proposal. The Developer shall be solely responsible for obtaining all such approvals and permits and for resolving any objections to the proposed uses, regardless of the source of such objections. The City does not guarantee or represent, in any way, that it will provide support or assistance to the Developer in obtaining development approvals or permits or resolving objections to the proposed uses, including but not limited to, objections to such uses by

community organizations, community activists, elected City officials or officials charged with issuing such approvals and permits.

d. In the event that the Developer fails, for any reason, to secure adequate financing for development as described, and in conformity with the schedule contained in the Development Agreement resulting from this Solicitation, the City reserves the right to terminate any agreement(s) resulting from this Solicitation.

e. To the extent a Respondent can secure an option contract on any adjacent parcels, the City is receptive to such a structure with respect to cross-collateralization with other property, Project or other assets.

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PART 3 – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Development Approach and Plan

Respondent's Conceptual Project Proposal must contain an analysis of the development approach and plan for development of the proposed Project and must:

a. Provide an executive summary describing the Conceptual Project Proposal and the Proposer's general approach to developing, constructing, maintaining, operating, and managing the proposed Project.

b. Provide a description of the overall proposed Conceptual Project Proposal. The Conceptual Project Proposal shall include a description of the Proposer's concept for the entire City Site and the approximate square footage of each component to be included.

c. Provide the Respondent's envisioned site control or disposition arrangement for the development of the City Site.

d. Provide a conceptual site plan of the City Site, including elevations, for the location/re-location/renovations of the existing buildings, the proposed mixed-use elements, and other structures and features, including roadways, sidewalks, open areas, landscaping, etc.;

e. Provide a table for each Project component with gross square footage proposed for each use, including office, commercial, residential, open space, roadways, etc.

f. Provide detailed description of each development component, including square footage proposed for each use within the component.

g. Provide a detailed financial pro forma analysis for the proposed project.

h. Provide a copy of Proposer's experience for previous similar redevelopment/renovation projects and identify how the proposed project redevelopment would exhibit similar qualities.

i. Explain how the Project would need to be positioned in terms of existing and future land use/zoning.

j. Describe the Proposer's methodology in obtaining the required regulatory approvals and building permits and complying with applicable developmental regulations, for the successful construction, operation, and use of the Project.

k. Provide an analysis of the economic impacts of the proposed development to include the following information:

   1. Estimated annual ad valorem taxes directly generated by the development;
   2. Estimated impact fees;
   3. Proposed improvements to area infrastructure;
   4. Estimated permit fees;
   5. Number of jobs to be generated during construction;
   6. Number of permanent jobs created by development;
   7. Estimated number of indirect jobs to be created by the development; and

l. Explain why the proposed development is appropriate at the City Site and complementary to existing development in the surrounding area.

m. Describe the elements that will serve to transform the City Site into a destination attractive to community residents and visitors.

n. Describe the energy efficiency, sustainability, and resiliency features to be included in the development, including the energy efficient standards met (e.g. LEED V4.1, Green Globes, WELL, etc.), and how such features comply with the requirements imposed on municipal government buildings in the City. The energy efficiency, sustainability, and resiliency analysis should consider Section 255.2575, "Energy-efficient and sustainable buildings," Florida Statutes, and the green building standards contained in the City's Code of

Ordinances under Chapter 6 Article II Gainesville Green Building Program and high-quality heritage tree preservation standards contained in Section 30-8.8 of the City's Land Development Code. Additional consideration towards an award will be given to a Project that applies for and receives a recognized sustainability standard.

o. Describe the Project management approach generally which may include:

1. Approach to leading the Project Team through Project administration
2. Day-to-day Project management and reporting
3. Design management
4. Document management
5. Contract management
6. Change management
7. Quality Control/Quality Assurance
8. Risk management
9. Operations
10. Any other areas that Respondents believes may be of interest to the City.
11. Who will lead the development of and implementation of the project (identify the project lead(s))
12. Add where equipment/ materials will be staged/ housed

3.2 Project Schedule.

The Respondent's proposal must include a Project implementation schedule. The Project schedule must:

a. Provide a realistic, detailed Project schedule for the development, from award of a contract, to Development Agreement to issuance of the last Certificate of Occupancy, identifying key tasks and duration of each.

b. At a minimum, the Project schedule must contain the following key tasks for the Project, if applicable (Specify the proposed duration of each task in number of months from award and execution of the Development Agreement until completion of each task.):

1. Time period from award and execution of contract and development agreement until completion of design;
2. Time period from award and execution of contract and development agreement until commencement of construction; and
3. Time period from award and execution of contract and development agreement until issuance of Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Completion

c. Note: Proposers are cautioned to be realistic in proposing the above-described time periods as this information will be relied upon in evaluating proposals and in establishing the Project schedule. The Development Agreement resulting from this ITN will include damages for failing to complete the key tasks included in the Project schedule.

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PART 4 - HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Instructions to respondents: Proposals must contain each of the documents listed below; each fully completed and signed, as required. Required signatures for proposal forms may be applied using electronic signature software (i.e., DocuSign, Adobe Sign, etc.). Proposals submitted which do not include the following items may be deemed non-responsive and may not be considered for contract award.

4.1 FORMAT OF PROPOSAL

 a. Table of Contents

  The table of contents should outline in sequential order the major areas of the proposal, and all pages of the proposal, including the enclosures, must be clearly and consecutively numbered and correspond to the table of contents.

 b. Technical Proposals

  The technical proposal is a narrative which addresses the scope of work, the proposed approach to the work, the schedule of the work, and any other information called for by the ITN which the bidder deems relevant.

 c. Price Proposal

  The price proposal is a presentation of the bidder's total offering price including the estimated cost for providing each component of the required goods or services.

  Bidders should indicate the dollar amount which will be attributed to each sub-contractor, if any.

  If a prescribed format for the price proposal is appended, bidders must use it; otherwise, bidders may use formats of their choice.

 d. Qualifications

  The response to the qualification requirements should address each of the qualifications set out in the section below. Bidders must provide documentation which demonstrates their ability to satisfy all of the qualification requirements. If a prescribed format, or required documentation for the response to qualification requirements is stated below, bidders must use said format and supply said documentation.

  1. Indicate the firm's number of years of experience in providing the professional services as it relates to the work contemplated.
  2. Provide details of past similar projects with summary descriptions.
  3. Provide two (2) references

4.2 CONTENT OF PROPOSAL – REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

 The following documents are required to be included in the respondent's submission:

1. Address each Qualification
2. Provide a Statement of all Qualifications that will communicate the capabilities of the respondent to successfully complete the project
3. Experience of the Team:
   a. Registered in Florida as a business
   b. Engineering and surveying expertise (licensed or authorized to practice in the State of Florida)
   c. Experience in land use and planning
   d. Experience in housing development, if applicable
4. Required Form A - Respondent Verification Form
5. Required Form B - Drug-Free Workplace Form
6. Required Form C - References Form
7. Required Form D - Pricing Proposal
8. Respondent's W-9
9. Copy of any applicable, current licenses and/or certification required by City/County/State
10. Exceptions to the ITN (refer to Part 4, 4.5 Exception to the ITN)

11. Investigation of Alleged Wrongdoings, Litigation/Settlements/Fines/Penalties
12. Copies of all relevant State and Federal licenses required to perform the work described in this ITN

4.3   PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The bid reply, containing all required documents, with authorized signatures, must be received by 3:00 p.m. on the due date indicated on the Bid Cover Page for this project. The respondent's complete pdf reply must be uploaded into DemandStar.com prior to the 3:00 p.m. deadline. This platform will not accept late submittals.

Upload bid reply as a pdf formatted document only, unless the solicitation states otherwise. The pdf document should be titled with respondent's name, bid number, and, if the reply is submitted in parts, include "Part # of x".

On occasion, the City will request proposals present pricing separately from the main proposal. If separate pricing is requested, upload a separate document that indicates Pricing as its content.

Modifications to or withdrawal of a respondent's submittal can be made up to the deadline date. Modifications and withdrawals must be documented in DemandStar.com in order to be recognized by the City. Any bid not withdrawn will constitute an irrevocable offer, for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days, to provide the City adequate time to award the Contract for the services specified in this solicitation.

Both the reply and the price proposal, if required to be submitted as a separate document, must be signed by an officer of the business who is legally authorized to enter into a contractual relationship in the name of the respondent. An authorized representative who is not an officer may sign the proposal, but must attach a corporate resolution granting authorization to the representative to execute on behalf of the business.

The submittal of a reply by a respondent will be considered by the City as constituting an offer by the respondent to perform the required materials/services.

4.4   DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Florida's Public Records Law, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, includes numerous exemptions to the general requirement to disclose information to the public in response to a public record's request. Exemptions are found in various provisions of the Florida Statutes, including but not limited to Section 119.071, Florida Statutes (General exemptions from inspection or copying of public records), and Section 119.0713, Florida Statutes (Local government agency exemptions from inspection or copying of public records). Section 815.045, Florida Statutes (Trade secret information), provides that trade secret information as defined in Section 812.081, Florida Statutes (Trade secrets; theft, embezzlement; unlawful copying; definitions; penalty) is confidential and exempt from disclosure because it is a felony to disclose such records. The Parties understand and agree that Florida's Public Records Law is very broad and that documents claimed by a Party to be confidential and exempt from public disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Law may in fact not be deemed such by a court of law. Accordingly, the following provisions shall apply:

a.   Identifying Trade Secret or Otherwise Confidential and Exempt Information. For any records or portions thereof that respondent claims to be Trade Secret or otherwise confidential and exempt from public disclosure under the Public Records Law, respondent shall:

   1.   Specifically identify the records or specific portions thereof that are confidential and exempt and reference the particular Florida Statute that grants such status. Provide one redacted copy of the record and one copy of the record with the confidential and exempt information highlighted as outlined in items 1 and 2 on the following page. Respondent shall take care to redact only the confidential and exempt information within a record.

   2.   Provide an affidavit or similar type of evidence that describes and supports the basis for Contractor's claim that the information is confidential and exempt from public disclosure.

b.   Request for Trade Secret or Otherwise Confidential and Exempt Information.
   1.   In the event City receives a public records request for a record with information labeled by respondent as Trade Secret or otherwise as confidential and exempt, City will provide the public record requester with the redacted copy of the record and will notify respondent of the public records request.

   2.   However and notwithstanding the above, in the event that City in its sole discretion finds no basis for respondent's claim that certain information is Trade Secret or otherwise confidential and exempt under Florida's Public Records Law, then City shall notify respondent in writing of such conclusion and provide

respondent a reasonable amount of time to file for declaratory action requesting a court of law to deem the requested information as Trade Secret or otherwise as confidential and exempt under Florida's Public Records Law. If respondent fails to file for declaratory action within the reasonable amount of time provided, then City will disclose the information requested.

3. If a public records lawsuit is filed against CITY requesting public disclosure of the information labeled by respondent as Trade Secret or otherwise as confidential and exempt, CITY shall notify respondent and respondent shall intervene in the lawsuit to defend the nondisclosure of such information under Florida's Public Records Law.

4. Respondent hereby indemnifies and holds CITY, its officers and employees harmless from any and all liabilities, damages, losses, and costs of any kind and nature, including but not limited to attorney's fees, that arise from or are in any way connected with respondent's claim that any information it provided to CITY is Trade Secret or otherwise confidential and exempt from public disclosure under Florida's Public Records Law.

c. How to Designate Trade Secret or Otherwise Confidential and Exempt Information
If a respondent believes that its reply contains trade secret or otherwise confidential and exempt information (as defined by Florida or Federal law) and should be withheld from disclosure to the public, in such cases the respondent must provide a redacted copy of the proposal for public access.

- Redacted means that the confidential/proprietary information in the proposal has been obscured so that it cannot be read.

- Unredacted means that the entire document, including the confidential/proprietary information, has not be obscured and is visible for the evaluation team to use in their evaluation process.

1. Upload a pdf version reply of the complete UNREDACTED proposal. Include "UNREDACTED, CONFIDENTIAL" in document title. This is the version that will be used by the evaluators when they are reviewing your proposal. It is essential that the items that will be redacted are highlighted in yellow to prevent the evaluation team from discussing these items after the award. The first page of the document for the **unredacted** document should provide a general description of the information respondent has designated as confidential and/or exempt, and provide a reference to the appropriate Florida or Federal statute supporting the confidential and/or exempt classification.

2. Upload a pdf version reply of the REDACTED copy of the proposal. Include "REDACTED" in the document title. This copy will be used to support any public records requests that may arise from this solicitation.

d. How the City will Handle Material Identified as Trade Secret or Otherwise Confidential and Exempt Information

The City's evaluators will be provided with the complete unredacted proposal, including any trade secret or otherwise confidential and exempt information. The City evaluators will maintain the confidentiality of the information through the evaluation process, including any recorded evaluation team meetings.

In the event a public record request is made to view the information which respondent claims is confidential and/or exempt, the City will notify the respondent and give the respondent a reasonable opportunity (generally 2 business days) to institute appropriate legal action to prevent the disclosure of the information claimed as confidential and/or exempt.

All public records submitted to the City, including those claimed as confidential and/or exempt, will be retained by the City and will not be returned to a respondent at the conclusion of the bidding process.

4.5   EXCEPTION TO THE ITN

Respondents may take exceptions to any of the terms of this ITN unless the ITN specifically states where exceptions may not be taken. Should a respondent take exception where none is permitted, the proposal will be rejected as non-responsive. All exceptions taken must be specific to allow the City a meaningful opportunity to evaluate and rank proposals.

Where exceptions are permitted, the City shall determine the acceptability of the proposed exceptions and the proposals will be evaluated based on the proposals as submitted. The City, after completing evaluations, may accept or reject the exceptions. Where exceptions are rejected, the City may request that the respondent furnish the services or goods described herein, or negotiate an acceptable alternative.

4.6   ONLY ONE BID

Only one bid from any individual, firm, corporation, organization or agency under the same or different name shall be considered. Should it appear to the City that any respondent has a financial interest in more than one submission under this bid, all bids in which such respondent has a financial interest will be rejected. A subcontractor is permitted to appear in more than one submittal for the same bid, as long as the subcontractor is not a lead respondent in any of the submittals. The City considers a financial interest to include, but not be limited, to joint ventures and, partnerships.

4.7   FULLY INFORMED RESPONDENT

A respondent is expected to fully inform itself as to the requirements of the Specifications and Contract terms and conditions; failure to do so will be at its own risk. A respondent shall not expect to secure relief on the plea of error.

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PART 5 – PRICING PROPOSAL

Provide a detailed financial pro forma analysis for the proposed project.

The CITY reserves the right to add or delete locations, services, items, OR materials from this contract should it be in the best interest of the City. The contract price may be adjusted upon <u>MUTUAL</u> agreement of the CONTRACTOR and the City's REPRESENTATIVE AND based upon bid prices.

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PART 6 – EVALUATION PROCESS

6.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the procedures described in the City's Evaluation Handbook.

The proposals will be evaluated using the following process: Qualifications Evaluation, Written Proposal Evaluation and/or Presentation/Interview Evaluation, and Other Factors as deemed appropriate. The City shall consider the ability of the firm's professional personnel, the timeline for completion, workload, location, past performance, and previous work with the City. This Evaluation process provides a structured means for consideration of all of these areas.

a. **Technical Qualifications Evaluation**

The Technical Qualifications Evaluation will assess each respondent's ability based on the experience and qualifications of key team members, the timeline for completion and the firm's record with regard to this type of work, particularly in the City of Gainesville or in the State of Florida. This stage does not involve review and evaluation of a proposal addressing the project scope of work. Consideration will be given to the firm's financial stability and the location where the majority of the technical work will be produced. The City will not be impressed with excessive amounts of boilerplate, excessive numbers of resumes, excessive length of resumes, excessive numbers of photographs, work that distant offices have performed, or work not involving personnel to be assigned to the proposed project.

b. **Written Proposal Evaluation**

The Written Proposal Evaluation will assess the respondent's understanding of the project and the proposed approach to be undertaken as addressed in a written proposal, including a timeline of activities for each deliverable. The evaluation process will assess how effectively the requirements of the scope of services have been addressed. The written proposal should identify a project manager and other key members of the project/service team. It should relate the capabilities of the project/service team to the requirements of the scope of services. Proposals will be evaluated on the depth of prior experience in engaging the community, working with Subject Matter Experts, and working with local governments in the State of Florida and/or with the State of Florida. Proposals will also be evaluated alongside the City's overall Downtown Strategic Plan 2022 to assure continuity with adjacent properties and future plans. (Exhibit A).

c. **Presentation/Interview Evaluation**

The Proposal Presentation/Interview Evaluation is based on an oral presentation that addresses both the technical qualifications of the firm and the approach to the project. Importance is given to the firm's understanding of the project scope of work, the placement of emphasis on various work tasks, and the response to questions. The evaluation process will assess the project manager's capability and understanding of the project and his/her ability to communicate ideas. The role of key members of the project/service team should be established based on the scope of services and the firm's approach to the project/service. The role of any subcontracted firm in the proposal should be clearly identified. Unique experience and exceptional qualifications may be considered with emphasis on understanding of the project/service, particularly "why it is to be done" as well as "what is to be done". The City of Gainesville will not be impressed with excessive boilerplate, excessive participation by "business development" personnel, and the use of "professional" presenters who will not be involved in the project or future presentations.

d. **Other factors**

The Other Factors to be considered, based upon the specific project (but not limited to), are those items, such as Small or Service-Disabled Veteran Business and/or Local Preference.

e. **Price**

Please use Required Form D – Pricing Page for this purpose. Provide a detailed financial pro forma analysis for the proposed project. Pricing will carry a weight of 50% of the total available evaluation points.

The CITY reserves the right to add or delete locations, services, items, OR materials from this contract should it be in the best interest of the City.

PART 7 – AWARD

7.1   TIE BIDS

Whenever two or more bids which are equal with respect to price, quality and service are received, preference shall be given in the following order: (1) Respondents submitting the attached Drug-Free Workplace form with their bid/proposal certifying they have a drug free workplace in accordance with Section 287.087, Florida Statutes; (2) Respondents located within the City of Gainesville, if not subject to the Local Preference Ordinance; (3) Respondents located within Alachua County; (4) Respondents located within the State of Florida; and (5) coin toss.

7.2   DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

Preference shall be given to submitters providing a certification with their qualifications certifying they have a drug-free workplace whenever two or more bids which are equal with respect to price, quality, and service are received in accordance with Section 287.087, Florida Statutes. The attached form should be filled out and returned with the qualifications in order to qualify for this preference.

7.3   CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The City may award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions. A sample contract is attached to the bid. Therefore, each initial offer should contain the respondent's best terms from a cost or price and technical standpoint and any changes to the sample contract.

The City reserves the right to enter into contract negotiations with the selected respondent regarding the terms and conditions of the contract and technical terms. If the City and the selected respondent cannot negotiate a successful contract, the City may terminate said negotiations and begin negotiations with the next selected respondent. This process will continue until a contract has been executed or all respondents have been rejected. No respondent shall have any rights against the City arising from such negotiations.

7.4   CONTRACT AWARD

The award(s), if any, shall be made to the respondent(s) whose proposal(s) shall be deemed by the City to be in the best interest of the City. The decision of the City of whether to make the award(s) and which proposal is in the best interest of the City shall be final.

7.5   CONTRACT

The Contract to be entered into will designate the successful respondent as the City's Contractor. The terms and conditions in the Sample Contract, Part 9, shall be substantially applicable as negotiated. The successful respondent will be required to execute an agreement with the City in substantially the same format as found in Part 9.

7.6   BID PROTEST

Participants in this solicitation may protest the ITN specifications or award in accordance with Section 41-680 of the Financial Services Procedures Manual.

7.7   ITN POSTPONEMENT/CANCELLATION/WAIVER OF IRREGULARITIES

The City may, at its sole and absolute discretion, reject any and all, or parts of any and all, proposals; re-advertise this ITN; postpone or cancel, at any time, this ITN process; or waive any irregularities in this ITN or in the proposals received as a result of this ITN. See Section 41-444 Financial Services Procedures Manual.

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PART 8 – GENERAL INFORMATION

8.1   REIMBURSABLES

If travel is involved in the execution of an awarded contract for this solicitation, should any air travel be required the City's travel policy allows for Coach air travel only. All other travel will be billed in accordance with the Federal General Services Administration rates which can be found at: https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates**.** In addition, long distance phone calls, printing, and other administrative costs may be billed at cost only -no mark-up. Evidence of these expenditures will be submitted when invoicing the City.

8.2   LOCAL PREFERENCE

In bidding of, or letting contracts for procurement of, supplies, materials, equipment and services, as described in the purchasing policies, the city commission, or other purchasing authority, may give a preference to local businesses in making such purchase or awarding such contract in an amount not to exceed five percent of the local business' total bid price, and in any event the cost differential should not exceed $25,000.00. Total bid price shall include not only the base bid price but also all alterations to that base bid price resulting from alternates which were both part of the bid and actually purchased and awarded by the City Commission or other authority. In the case of requests for proposals, letter of interest, best evaluated bids, qualifications or other solicitations and competitive negotiation and selection in which objective factors are used to evaluate the replies. Local Businesses are assigned five (5) percent of the total points of the total evaluation points.

Local business means the vendor has a valid business tax receipt, issued by the City of Gainesville at least six months prior to bid or proposal opening date, to do business in said locality that authorizes the business to provide the goods, services, or construction to be purchased, and a physical business address located within the limits of said locality, in an area zoned for the conduct of such business, from which the vendor operates or performs business on a day-to-day basis. Post office boxes are not verifiable and shall not be used for the purpose of establishing said physical address. In order to be eligible for local preference, in the Bid or ITN evaluation, the vendor must provide a copy of the business tax receipt and Zoning Compliance Permit. For more information on City's Local Preference Policy: Municipal Code Article X Local Preference Policy.

8.3   SMALL AND SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

Small or Service-Disabled Veteran's Business Enterprise Definition: A Small Business or a Service-Disabled Veteran's Business, which is duly licensed and authorized to engage in business and maintains a permanent principal place of operation with full time personnel within Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Gilchrist, Levy, Putnam, or Union County and possess a current City business tax receipt as required, and is so certified by the Small and Service-Disabled Veteran's Business Program Coordinator.

It is the policy of the City of Gainesville that small and service-disabled veteran businesses as defined in the Small and Service-Disabled Veteran Business Program, have the maximum practical opportunity to participate in contracting opportunities provided by the City. In keeping with this policy, each respondent is asked to state whether it will utilize small and service-disabled veteran businesses that are eligible for assistance to perform work on the project(s) being advertised.

For respondents not yet certified by the City, a small and service-disabled veteran application may be accessed via the Diversity Business Management System website. To be considered as a certified small and/or service-disabled veteran business, a respondent must have a current certificate at the time of the solicitation submittal due date. For more information on certified small and service-disabled veteran businesses, please visit the Office of Equity and Inclusion website.

8.4   LIVING WAGE REQUIREMENTS

Living Wage requirements, Ordinance 020663, as amended in Ordinance 030168, and in Ordinance 180999, and as shown on the City's web page, applies to contracts solicited by the City after midnight on March 31, 2021. Section 2-619. – Living Wage Requirements.

The following are requirements of each service contractor/subcontractor:

a. A service contract or/subcontractor shall pay a living wage to each of its covered employees during the time they are providing the covered services.

b. A copy of the living wage rate shall be posted by the service contractor/subcontractor in a prominent place where it can easily be seen by the covered employees and shall be supplied to any covered employee upon request.

c. Each service contractor shall make all of its service subcontractors aware of the requirements of this division and shall include the contract provisions listed in the **Sample Contract** under the *Living Wage* paragraph in each of its service subcontracts to ensure compliance with this article. The city shall not be deemed a necessary or indispensable party in any litigation between the service contractor and a subcontractor.

d. A service contractor/subcontractor shall not discharge, reduce the compensation of, or otherwise retaliate against any covered employee for filing a complaint, participating in any proceedings or otherwise asserting the requirement to pay a living wage under this division. A covered employee who claims their employer has not paid them a living wage as required by this division may file a written com plaint with the city.

e. Each service contractor/subcontractor shall produce payroll records, and any other requested documentation to the city as necessary for the city to audit or investigate compliance with or a reported violation of this division.

The adjusted Living Wage for this contract will be $15.00 per hour (Living Wage with Health Benefits) or $17.25 per hour if Health Benefits are not offered. The living wage for this contract will increase annually on the anniversary date of the contract at the City's prevailing living wage rate, which is updated October 1 each year.

8.5   TAXES, CHARGES AND FEES
The respondent agrees that any applicable Federal, State and Local sales and use taxes, which are to be paid by City of Gainesville, are included in the stated bid prices. Since the City of Gainesville is often exempt from taxes for equipment, materials and services, it is the responsibility of the Contractor to determine whether sales taxes are applicable. The Contractor is liable for any applicable taxes which are not included in the stated bid prices.

8.6   COSTS INCURRED BY RESPONDENTS
All expenses involved with the preparation and submission of proposals to the City, or any work performed in connection therewith shall be borne by the respondent(s). No payment will be made for any replies received, nor for any other effort required of or made by the respondent(s) prior to commencement of work as defined by a contract approved by the City Commission (if so required).

8.7   RULES; REGULATIONS; LICENSING REQUIREMENT
The respondent shall comply with all laws, ordinances and regulations applicable to the services contemplated herein, including those applicable to conflict of interest and collusion. Respondents are presumed to be familiar with all Federal, State and local laws, ordinances, codes and regulations that may in any way affect the services offered.

8.8   RECORDS/AUDIT
Contractor shall maintain records sufficient to document their completion of the scope of services established by this Contract. These records shall be subject at all reasonable time to review, inspect, copy and audit by persons duly authorized by the City. These records shall be kept for a minimum of three (3) years after completion of the Contract. Records which relate to any litigation, appeals or settlements of claims arising from performance under this Order shall be made available until a final disposition has been made of such litigation, appeals, or claims.

8.9   DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, OTHERWISE EXCLUDED

By submitting this proposal, respondent agrees that it:

   a. Is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;
   b. Has not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification, or destruction of records, making false statements or receiving stolen property;
   c. Is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, or local) with commission or any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (2) of this certification; and
   d. Has not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default.

8.10   PUBLIC ENTITY CRIME INFORMATION STATEMENT

Section 287.133 (2)(a), Florida Statutes, contains the following provisions: "A person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for public entity crime may not submit a bid on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity, may not submit a bid on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work, may not submit bids on leases of real property to a public entity, may not be awarded or perform work as a contractor, supplier, subcontractor, or consultant under a contract with any public entity, and may not transact business with any public entity, in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, for CATEGORY TWO for a period of 36 months from the date of being placed on the convicted vendor list."

8.11   INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED WRONGDOINGS, LITIGATION/SETTLEMENTS/FINES/PENALTIES

The City Commission specifically requests that responders to this document indicate in writing any investigations of wrongdoings, litigation and/or settlements, and fines or penalties (anywhere in the U.S.) involving the respondent and specific contractors listed as projected to provide services to the City. You may be required to respond to questions on this subject matter.

8.12   NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND COMMERCIAL NON-DISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENT

As a condition of entering into this agreement, the company represents and warrants that it will comply with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all other federal, state or local laws prohibiting discrimination. The company shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity, or other unlawful forms of discrimination in the solicitation, selection, hiring, commercial treatment of subcontractors, vendors, suppliers or commercial customers, nor shall the company retaliate against any person for reporting instances of such discrimination.

The City reserves the right to investigate any claims of illegal discrimination by the Contractor and in the event a finding of discrimination is made and upon written notification thereof, the Contractor shall take all necessary steps to cure and rectify such action to the reasonable satisfaction of the City. The company understands and agrees that a violation of this clause shall be considered a material breach of this agreement and may result in termination of this agreement, disqualification of the company from participating in City contracts, or other sanctions. This clause is not enforceable by or for the benefit of, and creates no obligation to, any third party.

For more information on this policy and requirement, please visit the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

8.13   USE OF ITN REPLY IDEAS

The City has the right to use any or all information presented in any reply to the ITN, whether amended or not, except as prohibited by law. Selection or rejection of the submittal does not affect this right.

8.14   E-VERIFY REQUIREMENT

Section 448.095, Florida Statute states the statute shall be construed in a manner so as to be fully consistent with any applicable federal laws or regulations. The Contractor shall (1) utilize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees hired by the Contractor during the term of the Contract; and (2) shall expressly require any subcontractors performing work or providing services pursuant to the Contract to likewise utilize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system to verify the

employment eligibility of all new employees hired by the subcontractor during the contract term. Alternatively, Contractor shall provide proof that one of the exceptions to the E-Verify federal contractor rule applies.

8.15   INTERNATIONAL PROPOSER REQUIREMENTS

The City is unable to send ACH payments to international banks. Therefore, ACH payments will <u>only</u> be made to U.S.A. banks. Additionally, the international company must be from a country that has a tax treaty with the U.S.A. International proposers must agree to these requirements and provide proof of same should they receive an award recommendation.

8.16   INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

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PART 9 – SAMPLE CONTRACT

THIS CONTRACT ("Contract"), entered into on the _____ day of_____, 20_____ between the CITY OF GAINESVILLE, a Florida municipal corporation, ("City"), and _____, ("Contractor"), , taken together, shall be known as "Parties".

WHEREAS, clauses that briefly describe project and history of project (if applicable)

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing premises and the mutual covenants contained herein, the Parties agree as follows:

1. EFFECTIVE DATE AND TERM OF CONTRACT.
The term of the Contract shall commence on the date of final execution of the contract and terminating upon completion according to the proposed schedule. The Contract may be extended, upon mutual agreement of the Parties.

2. SCOPE OF SERVICES.
Project or Product or Service Description:

,as more specifically described in the Specifications.

3. CONTRACT DOCUMENTS.
  A. The Contract consists of the following documents, whether attached to this Contract or incorporated by reference (collectively the 'Contract Documents'):

   Contract;
   Addenda to Bid Documents (*attach and identify by title, number and date*);
   Bid Documents (*attach and identify by title, number and date*); and
   Contractor's reply to Bid documents (*attach and identify by title, number and date*).

  B. The Contract Documents constitute the entire contract between the City and Contractor. In the event of conflict or inconsistency between the Contract Documents, the order of precedence for interpretation shall be the order in which the Contract Documents are listed above. Conflict or inconsistency within a particular contract document shall be resolved by having the more specific reference to the matter prevail.

4. TIME FOR PERFORMANCE.
The Parties agree that time is of the essence for the Scope of Services. Contractor shall complete the work on or before [date].

5. COMPENSATION/PAYMENT.
City will pay Contractor in an amount not to exceed ($ amount bid if lump sum or budget amount if annual agreement) for the term of the contract.   Payment shall be based upon (*describe whether City is paying on an hourly basis, or for a percentage of work completed, amount of material delivered or some other measurement).*

City shall make payments in accordance with the Local Government Prompt Payment Act, Sections 218.70, et. seq. Florida Statutes. Contractor will be paid electronically as an electronic funds transfer (EFT).

6. INDEMNIFICATION.
Contractor shall indemnify the City, its officials, agents and employees, and hold it harmless from suits, actions, damages, liability, expenses, losses and costs, including, but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees in connection with loss of life, bodily or personal injury, or property damage arising from or occasioned by any act or omission or negligence or intentional wrongdoing on the part of the Contractor and other persons employed or utilized by the Contractor.

7. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION.

CONTRACTOR shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity, or other unlawful forms of discrimination in the performance of this Contract. CONTRACTOR understands and agrees that a violation of this clause shall be considered a material breach of this Contract and may result in termination of the Contract. This clause is not enforceable by or for the benefit of, and creates no obligation to, any third party.

8. INSURANCE.
   A. During the term of this Contract, Contractor shall maintain insurance as follows:

Workers' Compensation insurance	providing coverage in compliance with Florida Statute FS 440
Professional Liability insurance	$1,000,000 per occurrence combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage
Public Liability insurance (other than automobile) consisting of broad form comprehensive general liability insurance including contractual coverage	$1,000,000 per occurrence combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage
Automobile Liability insurance	$500,000 per occurrence combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage

   B. Prior to the effective date of this Contract, Contractor shall provide to City a certificate of insurance certifying such insurance and naming City as additional insured and that City will be notified in writing at least thirty (30) days before any such insurance is canceled or materially changed.

   C. Insurance must be written by a company licensed to do business in the State of Florida and satisfactory to City.

9. SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY.

Nothing in the Contract Documents shall be interpreted as a waiver of the City's sovereign immunity as granted under Section 768.28, Florida Statutes.

10. LIVING WAGE.

The definitions, terms and conditions of the city's living wage requirements set forth in Division 2 of Article IX of Chapter 2 of the City's Code of Ordinances shall apply to this agreement. These requirements include that the service contractor/subcontractor: shall pay a living wage to each covered employee during the term of this agreement, including any extension(s) to this agreement; shall maintain records sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the living wage requirements; shall not discharge, reduce the compensation of, or otherwise retaliate against any covered employee for filing a complaint, participating in any proceedings or otherwise asserting the requirement to pay a living wage; shall cooperate with any city audit or investigation concerning compliance with or a reported violation of the living wage requirements, including providing all requested documentation. Failure to comply with the City's living wage requirements shall be a material breach of this agreement, enforceable by the city through all rights and remedies at law and equity.

11. TERMINATION.
   A. If the Contractor fails to observe or perform in accordance with the Contract Document (a "Default"), then the City, after providing at least ten (10) days written notice to the Contractor of the Default and the City's intent to terminate if such Default continues unremedied during the ten (10) day period, may terminate this

Contract without prejudice to any other rights or remedies the City may have under this Contract and Florida law.

B. This Contract may be terminated by the City, without cause, upon thirty (30) days written notice to the Contractor. In the event this Contract is so terminated, the Contractor shall be compensated for services rendered through the effective date of the termination.

12. MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT.

The obligations of the City as to any funding required pursuant to this Contract shall be limited to an obligation in any given year to budget and appropriate from legally available funds, after monies for essential City services have been budgeted and appropriated, sufficient monies for the funding that is required during that year. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City shall not be prohibited from pledging any legally available non-ad valorem revenues for any obligations heretofore or hereafter incurred, which pledge shall be prior and superior to any obligation of the City pursuant to this Contract.

13. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR.

Contractor shall be considered an independent contractor and as such shall not be entitled to any right or benefit to which City employees are or may be entitled to by reason of employment. Except as specifically noted in the Contract Documents, Contractor shall be solely responsible for the means, method, techniques, sequences, and procedures utilized by the Contractor for the full performance of the Contract Documents.

14. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND WORK PRODUCT.

A. Ownership and Publication of Materials. All reports, information, data, and other materials prepared by the Contractor pursuant to the Contract Documents, except those separately identified in the Scope of Services or in other written agreements between the Parties, are owned by the City. The City has the exclusive and unrestricted authority to release, publish or otherwise use, in whole or in part, information contained therein and relating thereto. No material produced in whole or in part under the Contract Documents may be copyrighted or patented in the United States or in any other country without prior written approval of the City.

B. Intellectual Property. Contractor warrants that it owns or has rights to use all intellectual property used for the scope of each project, including patent rights, copyrights, or other intellectual property rights, except with respect to designs, processes or products of a particular manufacturer expressly required by the City [or process or product is an infringement of a patent, copyright or other intellectual property, the Contractor shall promptly give City [and Professional if applicable] written notice of the infringement.

15. RECORDS AND RIGHT-TO-AUDIT.

Contractor shall maintain records sufficient to document completion of the scope of services established by the Contract Documents. These records shall be subject at all reasonable time to review, inspect, copy and audit by persons duly authorized by the City. These records shall be kept for a minimum of three (3) years after termination of the Contract. Records that relate to any litigation, appeals or settlements of claims arising from performance under this Contract shall be made available until a final disposition has been made of such litigation, appeals, or claims.

16. CONTRACTOR'S ASSURANCES.

Contractor warrants that the goods and services supplied to the City pursuant to this Contract shall at all times fully conform to the specifications set forth in the Invitation to Bid and be of the highest quality. In the event the City, in the City's sole discretion, determines than any product or services supplied pursuant to this Contract is defective or does not conform to the specifications set forth in the Invitation to Bid, the City reserves the right unilaterally to cancel an order or cancel this Contract upon written notice [and an opportunity to cure if applicable] to the Contractor, and reduce commensurately any amount of money due the Contractor.

17. WARRANTY.

 [are there specific warranties requested in the bid? If so, list them here or reference them here]

18. PUBLIC RECORDS.

Florida has a very broad public records law and certain records of a contractor may be considered public records. Accordingly, by entering into an agreement with the City, contractor must:

1. Keep and maintain public records required by the public agency to perform the service.

2. Upon request from the public agency's custodian of public records, provide the public agency with a copy of the requested records or allow the records to be inspected or copied within a reasonable time at a cost that does not exceed the cost provided in this chapter or as otherwise provided by law.

3. Ensure that public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements are not disclosed except as authorized by law for the duration of the contract term and following completion of the contract if the contractor does not transfer the records to the public agency.

4. Upon completion of the contract, transfer, at no cost, to the public agency all public records in possession of the contractor or keep and maintain public records required by the public agency to perform the service. If the contractor transfers all public records to the public agency upon completion of the contract, the contractor shall destroy any duplicate public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements. If the contractor keeps and maintains public records upon completion of the contract, the contractor shall meet all applicable requirements for retaining public records. All records stored electronically must be provided to the public agency, upon request from the public agency's custodian of public records, in a format that is compatible with the information technology systems of the public agency.

IF THE CONTRACTOR HAS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 119, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO THE CONTRACTOR'S DUTY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RECORDS RELATING TO THIS CONTRACT, CONTACT THE CUSTODIAN OF PUBLIC RECORDS AT (telephone number, e-mail address, and mailing address).

19. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Except as otherwise provided in this Contract, any dispute concerning a question of fact or of interpretation of a requirement of the Contract which is not disposed of by mutual consent between the parties shall be decided by the City Manager or designee, who shall reduce the decision to writing and furnish a copy thereof to the parties. In connection with any dispute proceeding under this clause each party shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard and to offer evidence in support of its version of the facts and interpretation of the Contract. The City Manager or designee shall make such explanation as may be necessary to complete, explain or make definite the provisions of this Contract and the findings and conclusions shall be final and binding on both parties. Pending the final decisions of a dispute hereunder, Contractor shall proceed diligently with its performance of the Contract in accordance with the preliminary directions of the City Manager or designee.

20. FORCE MAJEURE

If the performance of the Contract is delayed by fire, lightning, earthquake, cyclone, or other such cause completely beyond the control of either the City or the Contractor, then the time for completion of the Contract shall be extended for a period equivalent to the time lost by reason of any of the aforesaid causes.

21. APPLICABLE LAW AND VENUE.

This Contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida, notwithstanding any Florida conflict of law provision to the contrary. In the event of any legal action under this Contract, venue shall be in Alachua County, Florida.

22. DEFAULT AND REMEDIES.

The non-breaching party shall have available all remedies at law.

23. NOTICES.

Any notices from either party to the other party must be in writing and sent by certified mail, return requested, overnight courier service or delivered in person with receipt to the following:

CITY: **CONTRACTOR:**
City of Gainesville   Insert Contractor's Information
Insert Department Name
Attn:
Insert Address

24. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Contract is declared void by a court of law, all other provisions will remain in full force and effect.

25. INTEGRATION/MERGER.

This Contract, together with the attached bid documents, contains the entire contract and understanding of the Parties regarding the matters set forth herein and supersedes all previous negotiations, discussions, and understandings, whether oral or written, regarding such matters. The Parties acknowledge that they have not relied on any promise, inducement, representation, or other statement made in connection with this agreement that is not expressly contained in this Contract. The terms of this Contract are contractual and not merely recital.

26. MODIFICATION AND WAIVER.

The provisions of this Contract may only be modified or waived in writing signed by all the Parties. No course of dealing shall be deemed a waiver of rights or a modification of this Contract. The failure of any party to exercise any right in this contract shall not be considered a waiver of such right. No waiver of a provision of the Contract shall apply to any other portion of the Contract. A waiver on one occasion shall not be deemed to be a waiver on other occasions.

27. CAPTIONS AND SECTION HEADINGS.

Captions and section headings used herein are for convenience only and shall not be used in construing this Contract.

28. ASSIGNMENT OF INTEREST.

Neither party will assign or transfer any interest in the Contract without prior written consent of the other party.

29. SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS.

The Parties each bind the other and their respective successors and assigns in all respects to all the terms, conditions, covenants, and provisions of this Contract.

30. THIRD PARTY BENEFICIARIES.

This Contract does not create any relationship with, or any rights in favor of, any third party.

31. CONSTRUCTION.

This Contract shall not be construed more strictly against one party than against the other merely by virtue of the fact that it may have been prepared by one of the Parties. It is recognized that both Parties have substantially contributed to the preparation of this Contract.

32. EXHIBITS.

All exhibits attached to this Contract are incorporated hereto and made part of this Contract by reference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have executed this Agreement, or caused to be executed by their duly authorized officials, on the day and year first written above.

NAME OF COMPANY: **CITY OF GAINESVILLE:**

Signature: _____   Signature: _____

Print Name: _____   Print Name: _____

Title: _____   Title:_____

Date: _____   Date: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY

_____

City Attorney

PART 10 – REQUIRED FORMS, EXHIBITS & ATTACHMENTS

The following documents/forms are included in this section:

REQUIRED FORM A - Respondent Verification Form

REQUIRED FORM B - Drug-Free Workplace Form

REQUIRED FORM C - Reference Form

REQUIRED FORM D - Pricing Page

Exhibit A – Downtown Strategic Plan 2022

[THE REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK]

REQUIRED FORM A
(Page 1 of 2)
RESPONDENT VERIFICATION FORM

INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE

DOSD-230051-GD

REDEVELOPMENT OF OLD RTS ADMINISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE FACILITY

---

1. **RESPONDENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

   Legal Name of Respondent's Company (as reported to IRS): _____

   DBA: _____

   Authorized Representative Name/Title: _____

   E-mail Address: _____

   Street Address: _____

   City, State, Zip: _____

   Mailing Address (if different): _____

   City, State, Zip: _____

   Telephone: (_____) _____   Fax: (_____) _____

2. **DECLARATIONS OF DEBT AND DEFAULT**
   a. Respondent is <u>not</u> in arrears to City upon any debt, fee, tax or contract:

   ☐ Respondent is NOT in arrears

   ☐ Respondent IS in arrears

   b. Respondent is not a defaulter, as surety or otherwise, upon any obligation to City:

   ☐ Respondent is NOT in default

   ☐ Respondent IS in default

3. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ADDENDA**

   Respondents who receive this bid from sources other than City of Gainesville Procurement Division or DemandStar.com MUST contact the Procurement Division prior to the due date to ensure any addenda are received in order to submit a responsible and responsive offer. Uploading an incomplete document may deem the offer non-responsive, causing rejection.

   ADDENDA ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Prior to submitting this offer, I have verified that all addenda issued to date are considered as part of my offer.

   Addenda received (list all) # _____

REQUIRED FORM A
(Page 2 of 2)

4. **LOCAL PREFERENCE** (Refer to 8.2 for qualifying information)
    Local Preference requested:

    ☐ YES

    ☐ NO

    A copy of your *Business Tax Receipt* must be included in your submission if you are requesting Local Preference:

5. **QUALIFIED SMALL BUSINESS AND/OR SERVICE DISABLED VETERAN BUSINESS STATUS**
    (Refer to 8.3 for qualifying information)

    a. Is your business qualified, in accordance with the City of Gainesville's Small Business Procurement Program, as a local Small Business?   ☐ YES   ☐ NO

    b. Is your business qualified, in accordance with the City of Gainesville's Small Business Procurement Program, as a local Service-Disabled Veteran Business?   ☐ YES   ☐ NO

6. **FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER**

    FEIN: _____

7. **REGISTERED TO DO BUSINESS IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA**
    Is Respondent registered with Florida Department of State's, Division of Corporations, to do business in the State of Florida?   ☐ YES   ☐ NO (refer to Part 1, 1.6, last paragraph)

    If the answer is "YES", provide a copy of SunBiz registration or SunBiz Document Number (#_____)

    If the answer is "NO", please state reason why: _____

8. **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**
    Does your company have a policy on diversity and inclusion?   ☐ YES   ☐ NO

    If yes, please attach a copy of the policy to your submittal.

    Note: Possessing a diversity and inclusion policy will have no effect on the City's consideration of your submittal, but is simply being requested for information gathering purposes.

By signing this form, I acknowledge I have read and understand, and my firm complies with all General Conditions and requirements set forth herein; and,

☐ Proposal is in full compliance with the Specifications.

☐ Proposal is in full compliance with the Specifications except as specifically stated and attached hereto.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____

SIGNER'S PRINTED NAME: _____   **DATE:** _____

REQUIRED FORM B
DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

The undersigned respondent in accordance with Florida Statute 287.087 hereby certifies that

_____ does:
Name of Respondent

1. Publish a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition.

2. Inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the business's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs, and the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for the drug abuse violations.

3. Give each employee engaged in providing the commodities or contractual services that are under bid a copy of the statement specified in subsection (1).

4. In the statement specified in subsection (1), notify the employees that, as a condition of working on the commodities or contractual services that are under bid, the employee will abide by the terms of the statement and will notify the employer of any conviction of, or plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, any violation of Chapter 893 or of any controlled substance law of the United States or any state, for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction.

5. Impose a sanction on, or require the satisfactory participation in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program if such is available in the employee's community, by any employee who is so convicted.

6. Make a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of this section.

As the person authorized to sign the statement, I certify that this firm complies fully with the above requirements.

_____
Respondent's Signature

_____
Date

REQUIRED FORM C
REFERENCES

Name of Respondent: _____

Provide information for two (2) references of similar scope performed within the past three (3) years. You may include photos or other pertinent information.

#1 Year(s) services provided (i.e. 1/2015 to 12/2018): _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

#2 Year(s) services provided (i.e. 1/2015 to 12/2018): _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

#3 Year(s) services provided (i.e. 1/2015 to 12/2018): _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

REQUIRED FORM D
PRICING PAGE

Provide a detailed financial pro forma analysis for the proposed project.

Pricing Page should be signed by an officer of the company who is authorized to commit the company to the pricing presented and/or negotiate pricing based on the initial price presented.

_____

Authorized Signature

Title: _____

Name of Company: _____

Date:_____

PART 11 – NO RESPONSE SURVEY

ITN #: DOSD-230051-GD
DUE DATE: August 11, 2023, 3:00pm EDT
ITN TITLE: Redevelopment of Old RTS Administration and Maintenance Facility

IF YOU DO NOT BID

If you choose to not bid, please complete this form, and either upload it into DemandStar.com or email to the procurement specialist. Your reply will assist the City in developing future solicitations, your reply will remain anonymous and will be aggregated into a spreadsheet for analysis purposes only.

Check the appropriate reasons and provide additional information that may help the City develop future solicitations.

_____	The solicitation time-frame was too short
_____	My company did not learn of this solicitation until it was too late to develop a reply
_____	My company's work load did not allow time to develop a submittal
_____	If awarded, my company's work load could not support this project
_____	Specifications were not clear
_____	My company does not handle this type of work
_____	My company does not submit replies to Municipalities
_____	Have experienced delays in payments from Government agencies in the past
_____	Is there anything the City could have done differently in the solicitation package to prompt your company to submit a proposal? Explain:_____
_____	If the City were to rebid this solicitation, would your company be interested in responding?
_____	Please provide any additional information regarding this solicitation that may help us develop our next steps in fulfilling the City's needs for this project. _____

Respondent Company Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email Address: _____

Is your company a certified City of Gainesville small business?   ☐ YES   ☐ NO
(Refer to 8.2 for certification requirements)

Is your company a certified City of Gainesville service-disabled veteran business?   ☐ YES   ☐ NO
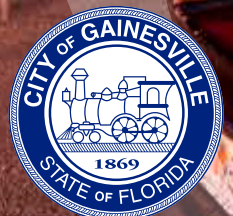(Refer to 8.3 for certification requirements)

Exhibit A

2023-992A

Downtown Gainesville
Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Document

**Adopted by Gainesville City Commission
on October 20, 2022**

CITY OF GAINESVILLE · STATE OF FLORIDA · 1869

MKSK   DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES®   eda consultants · inc.

A community vision for Downtown Gainesville

This plan is the culmination of a yearlong process that engaged hundreds of Gainesville neighbors. We acknowledge the contributions of the stakeholders that supported this plan, including the members of our Neighbor Advisory Group, Alachua County, Greater Gainesville Chamber, Santa Fe College, and University of Florida. We particularly thank the passionate and dedicated voices of our Gainesville neighborhoods that shaped this plan.

Neighbor Advisory Group (NAG)

Jacob Ihde
GCRA Advisory Board

Trevor Schneider
University of Florida

Sean McLendon
Alachua County

Jim O'Connell
UF Innovate

Staci-Ann Bertrand
Chamber of Commerce

Gigi Simmons
Porters Community Resident

Melissa Montilla
Springhill Neighborhood Resident

Darcie MaMahon
Duckpond Neighborhood Resident

Matt Howland
Downtown Resident

Jeff McMullen
Downtown Business Owner

John Fleming
Developer, Property Owner

Meg The Losen
Downtown Business/Property Owner

Hoch Shitama
Baird Center Owner

Dennayce Mavin
Owner, Salon Syx

Adam Livay
University of Florida Student

Project Leadership

Erik Bredfeldt
Economic Development and Innovation Director, Department of Sustainable Development

Sarit Sela
City Architect, Department of Sustainable Development

Consultant Team

MKSK
Development Strategies
eda

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

To plan for the future of Downtown Gainesville, the city assembled a broad coalition of community leaders and neighbors.

Collaborating with this Neighbor Advisory Group (NAG), the planning team developed a Strategic Plan that aligns with and complements current plans and initiatives, amplifies existing assets, connects with and uplifts adjacent neighborhoods, adds needed vibrancy through new residential and business opportunities, and focuses on implementation.

Throughout this inclusive process, the City of Gainesville, the NAG, and the planning team engaged the community in the creation of this Strategic Plan. Gainesville neighbors were invited to participate in many different ways across multiple platforms from the Spring of 2021 to the Spring of 2022. More than 800 voices were heard through two community meetings, 15 stakeholder

focus group meetings, and online and paper surveys. An interactive website hosted at www.cityofgainesville.org/DowntownStrategicPlan.aspx offered access to all meeting materials, online mapping and idea sharing activities, surveys, and project updates. In an effort to reach people where they are, city staff augmented this work with attendance at community events and gatherings. Finally, the GCRA Advisory Board and City Commission participated through the project through one-on-one conversations and regular project updates. Taken together, this community conversation resulted in hundreds of ideas that helped to shape and guide the plan. Throughout this planning process the community showed that they love and cherish downtown and are invested in its continued evolution and revitalization.

The Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan is organized around six key findings from community engagement that are manifested in **16 Ideas for the future of downtown:**

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

The plan explores these 16 Ideas, creating a framework of strategies and action items to enable change and transformation in Downtown Gainesville. From the very first community engagement it became clear that downtown is of tremendous importance to the community. There was a sense that downtown should be a place where the entire community feels welcome and a place that is a destination for the entire region. In doing

so, it was also evident that downtown needed to be better connected and seamlessly integrated into the urban fabric and unique character of the neighborhoods that surround it. Beyond streets and sidewalks, this interconnectedness has the potential to create a system of lush, welcoming green spaces and linear parks and trails that circumnavigate downtown, enhance sustainability and resiliency, and provide equitable access. Aligned with the continued community work being conducted around housing, the Strategic Plan also makes strong recommendations to increase housing opportunities for all, considering ways to address both affordable housing and market rate housing at scale. To remain competitive with other commercial areas of the city and region, special attention also needs to be paid to creating a supportive local business environment that enables diverse small businesses and entrepreneurs to flourish in downtown.

This plan does more than merely set forth a vision for the future growth and revitalization of Downtown Gainesville. It also sets up a practical framework for implementation that will be sustainable and impactful. Through a survey of other communities and downtowns across the country, one common element of success is the presence of a professional implementation entity that has a singular focus on downtown.

2023-992A

800+
Total GNV voices engaged through this process

This implementation entity should begin by focusing on place management, addressing issues around making downtown clean, welcoming and safe. With an approach to place management established, such an organization can expand to more complicated tasks such as investments in streetscape, placemaking, parks, programming, retail tenanting and development.

Successful implementation of the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan will require continued cooperation. This plan is just the beginning. Following the adoption of this plan, the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, the University of Florida, and other downtown organizations, stakeholders, institutions, and other strategic partners should continue the work that has started here and begin the work of making sustainable, lasting change for Downtown Gainesville.

01
Introduction

The Purpose of this Plan

The Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan represents an opportunity to create a unified vision for the future of the urban core of the city.

Throughout the community engagement process, there was a universal agreement that downtown today is falling short of community expectations. It should be the heart of the community, but many see it only as a place that serves government employees by day and attracts college students by night. It should be a destination where the entire community comes together, but it is being outpaced by newer commercial development at the edges of Gainesville. It should be a place where all residents of Gainesville feel welcome. Downtown should be everyone's neighborhood.

The good news is that community planning work to create an active and equitable downtown are already underway. The City's Vision 2035 sets forth nine goals to create an alive and vibrant downtown (at right). Concurrent plans such

as the city's Comprehensive Plan (Imagine Gainesville) and the Exclusionary Zoning & Inclusionary Zoning Study informed the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan. Together all three of these planning efforts made it clear that the Strategic Plan needed to not just uplift the core of the city, but the neighborhoods areas surrounding it as well.

Beyond these guiding foundational plans and informative community conversations, the building blocks of a vibrant downtown already exist. Recent investment in streetscapes and parks represent a community commitment to high-quality public spaces. The growth of the Innovation District to the west of downtown and the dynamism of the University of Florida and Santa Fe College in the community provide ample opportunity to drive future

investment in 21st century employment and mixed-use development.

Downtown Gainesville and its adjacent collection of districts, neighborhoods, public spaces, and institutions have tremendous local and regional importance. The area must be re-connected to the greater community fabric and equitable economic opportunity, filled with the spark of innovation, and positioned to thrive in both the knowledge economy and main street economy. Most importantly, it must continue to be a source of civic pride for greater Gainesville to bring diverse people together in a downtown that equitably attracts new employers, residents, and visitors to a place that is active and vibrant 24/7.

Purpose of the Downtown Strategic Plan

The Downtown Strategic Plan will consider the past, present, and future of downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods, and strategically outline opportunities, preserve what makes downtown special, and move downtown forward for the next decade.

City Strategic Plan: Vision 2035
Principle 6: Alive/Vibrant Downtown

Choice of a variety of residential opportunities – types and price points

Successful locally owned retail businesses

Destination for 18/7 living, working and experiencing

Equitable development in adjacent neighborhoods

Community gathering places to hangout or to have events and festivals

Well-designed, well-maintained and attractive landscaping and buildings

Additional "mid-rise" mixed-use buildings providing office and residential opportunities

Neighbors and guests feeling safe with a well-lighted Downtown

Diverse mix of small locally owned retail, national retailer and entertainment/ unique experienced-based businesses

Process & Schedule

The process for the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan was guided by the city's Core Values for Community Engagement.

The planning team began working with city staff in early 2021 to create an Engagement Brief that outlined project goals, engagement methods and techniques, and required outcomes. Once reviewed by the GCRA and City Commission, the planning team used this as a framework to guide the planning process.

While the Engagement Brief was being created, the planning team also conducted one-on-one meetings with city commissioners to understand the needs, concerns, and opportunities downtown. This feedback helped to both inform the process and provide needed context as existing communities and opportunities were explored as part of the existing conditions analysis.

The community engagement process for the Strategic Plan formally began in June 2021, with the first Neighbor Advisory Group meeting and a series of 15 stakeholder focus groups that engaged more than 90 community members. Alongside the information gathered through an online survey and website activities, the planning team took all of this initial information and input and presented it to the entire Gainesville community in October 2021 at the first community meeting at Bo Diddley Plaza. This community engagement helped to verify project direction, allowing participants to react to initial thoughts and areas of focus for Downtown Gainesville that were distilled down into six key findings.

Throughout the Fall of 2021 and Winter of 2022, the planning team worked to align the community's input and feedback with ongoing city initiatives, market analysis, and best practices to develop Gainesville specific recommendations, strategies and ideas. The resulting 16 Ideas were presented to the community at a second workshop in April 2022 that formed the basis for this plan. Along with this review and community discussion, the planning team met with the GCRA and City Commission to gain additional feedback and direction. With clear community direction, the planning team documented the plan in the Spring of 2022 with a focus on catalyst projects, strategic policies and recommendations and actionable implementation steps. The plan was submitted for adoption in August of 2022.

Ongoing Community Engagement: Project Website	Online Surveys & Activities	NAG Meetings													
TASK 1 **Build on Local Strengths** Community Assets & Opportunities					TASK 2 **Build For People** Framework for Economic Opportunity & District Development						TASK 3 **Build Long-Term Value** Catalytic Projects & Value Capture			
▶ 2021							▶ 2022							
June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	August

▲ Community Meeting 1   ▲ Community Meeting 2   ▲ Adoption

Plan Alignment

Understanding and aligning previous and ongoing planning efforts.

In the last 10 years, Gainesville neighbors has engaged and shaped various planning efforts at various scales - from neighborhood planning narratives to citywide guiding documents. As a significant community hub at the seam of east and west Gainesville, Downtown Gainesville holds special value to neighbors across the community. As such, a variety of plans include recommendations relevant to both downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods, and continue to shape its growth trajectory. Recognizing the value of this important planning work, the planning team reviewed previous and current planning efforts to identify common themes relevant to downtown. The review included adopted plans, studies, and private efforts, including those listed below.

- ► Imagine Gainesville: On-Going Coordination
- ► City of Gainesville Strategic Plan: Vision 2035
- ► Gainesville Parking Program
- ► RTS Ten Year Development Plan
- ► SW 2nd Ave and SW 4th Ave Multimodal Corridors
- ► Vision Zero Action Strategy
- ► GCRA Downtown Redevelopment Plan
- ► Cultural Center Project & Update
- ► Understanding Racial Inequality in Alachua County
- ► GCRA 10-Year Reinvestment Plan
- ► Future Land Uses
- ► Power District Planning Studies (Various)
- ► Gainesville Housing Action Plan
- ► Old Fire Station Submittal
- ► CRA Fall 2019 Report
- ► GCRA 10-Year Investment Plan, Survey & Results
- ► Mobility Online Survey Results
- ► Neighborhoods As Community Assets: The Porters Community* ("Porters Narrative")
- ► University of Florida: Strategic Development Plan, Campus Framework Plan, Campus Master Plan

*Neighborhood is referred to as Porters Quarters elsewhere in this document.

Recent Master Plans

UF Strategic Development Plan (2019)

Innovation Square
Master Plan (2012)

Power District
Master Plan (2013)

UF Landscape
Plan (2019)

NE 8th Avenue

N Main Street

NE Waldo Road

SE Hawthorne Road

SE 15th Street

W University Avenue

SW 13th Street

SW 6th Street

SE 9th Street

SW Depot Avenue

Depot Park

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

SW Archer Road
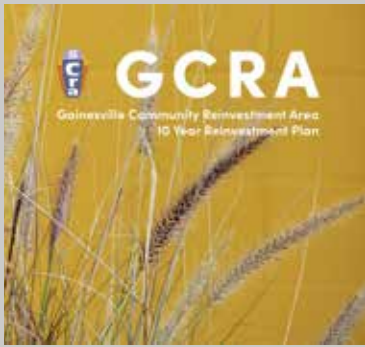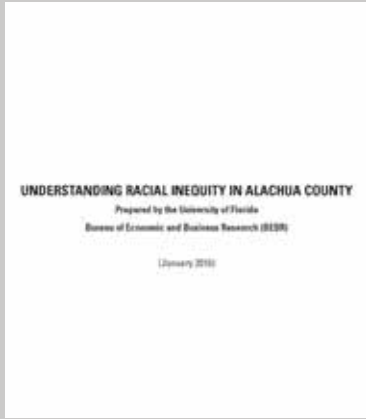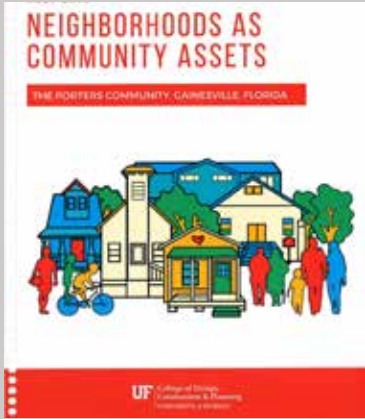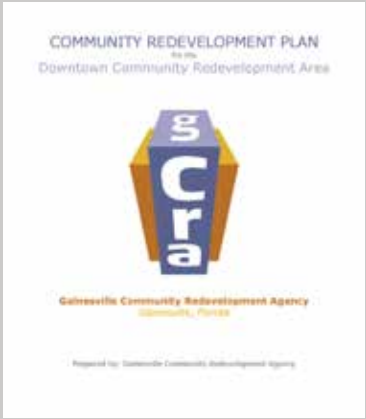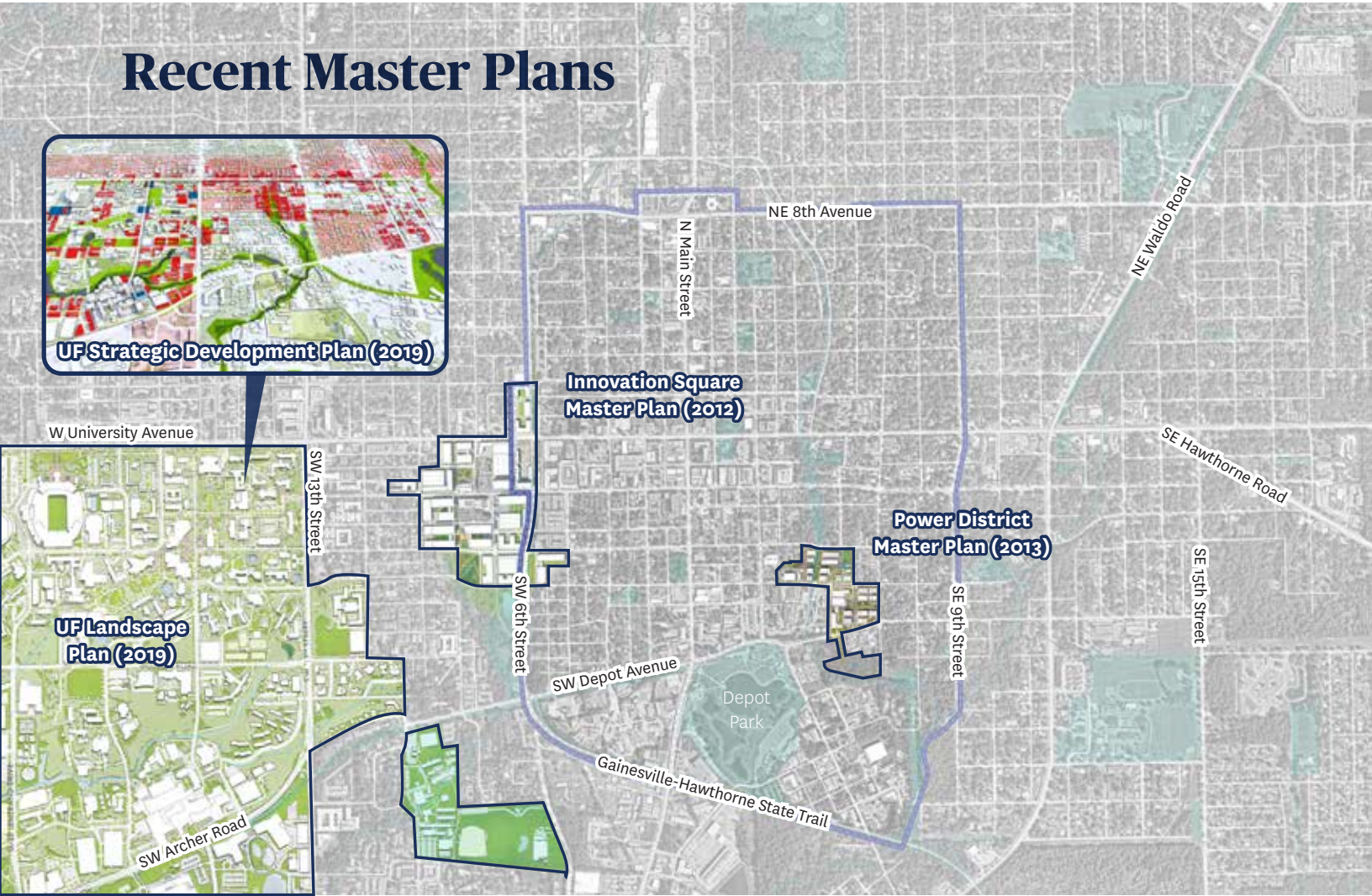
Downtown Today

Inventory of Existing Conditions

Understanding downtown and its environs by cataloging what is there.

In unearthing downtown's physical, demographic, and economic qualities and context, the planning team conducted an extensive existing conditions analysis. This analysis, outlined in this section, is an initial understanding of Downtown Gainesville to build the foundation for this plan. Augmented by our discoveries in our community engagement process, our cataloging of existing conditions focuses on what we can learn from available data sources, historical resources, and local and national databases.

This section starts with an overview of planimetric data, focusing on the physical and historic qualities of downtown and its surroundings. We start with an explanation of the boundaries we selected for our analysis, and share our impressions and take-aways from studying current neighborhood boundaries, zoning and overlays, safety data, and sidewalk gaps.

The result is a picture of downtown that starts to illustrate the commonalities and contradictions we later explore in our 16 ideas for downtown. For instance, the relationships with downtown and its surrounding communities, informs how to better connect them, and how to address the gaps and limitations in the existing pedestrian network.

Following this analysis is a summary of Gainesville's demographic and market conditions. The region and city's demographics are summarized to provide context on the community's makeup, and how it compares to other peer cities. Through this section, we explain that though Gainesville is growing as a region, downtown has experienced limited development activity in the last five to ten years. Additionally, we summarize regional development trends for multifamily housing, retail, office, and hotels. This market understanding creates

the foundation for a 10-year development program for downtown, which outlines the opportunity for non-student multifamily housing, retail, and office in downtown and informs a land use and real estate strategy later in this report.

Strategic Plan Focus Area and Greater Study Area

For the purposes of this plan, its analysis, and its subsequent recommendations, the downtown area is defined through two distinct boundaries: a focus area, and a greater study area. Together, these two boundaries give the planning team a holistic approach to analyzing the downtown area, its physical attributes, and its current regulatory context.

The **Strategic Plan Focus Area**, shown in red in the map on the following page, is where the bulk of the plan's analysis, exploration, and recommendations will focus their attention. This

Map labels: NW 8th Avenue, 9th Ave., NE 8th Avenue, Northeast Neighbors, Fifth Avenue, Pleasant Street, Duckpond, Pleasant Street, NE 2nd Street, N Main Street, NE Waldo Road, NW 3rd Ave., NE 2nd Ave., **Strategic Plan Focus Area**, W University Avenue, Dell St., North Lincoln Heights, UF Innovate, SE 9th Street, SW 13th Street, SW 4th Ave, Power District, SE 11th Street, SW 6th Street, Porters Quarters, SW 2nd St., SE 3rd St., Springhill, SE Depot Avenue, Depot Park, Greater Study Area, Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail, Azalea Trails

geography generally follows the University Avenue and Main Street corridors, and includes a triangular swath of land west of Depot Park. The area near the intersection of University and Main and around Bo Diddley Plaza is generally understood as the core of downtown, home to many of downtown's restaurants and entertainment areas. As its most walkable and pedestrian-friendly area, this boundary also includes Sweetwater Park as the easternmost edge of the core, with Santa Fe College's Blount Center on NW 6th Street at the westernmost edge.

A larger geography, noted in the map above as the **Greater Study Area** in a blue outline, is used to understand the downtown core's relationship with surrounding areas. As such, the plan's recommendations extend toward this larger boundary as we explore downtown's connectivity and the impact of its continued growth.

This greater study area includes downtown's surrounding neighborhoods (refer to page 18), as well as existing and emerging destinations. South of the downtown core, Depot Park created a new vibrant destination since its opening in

2016. As a park and community gathering place, this plan anticipates Depot Park to continue to attract Gainesville neighbors from across the entire region.

The greater study area also includes the significant redevelopment opportunity near downtown known as the Power District. This plan assumes a continuation and implementation of the Power District planning effort, started in 2013 and revisited in 2019, and supports any continuing targeted engagement efforts for the refinement of this vision for the Power District.

Surroundings Neighborhoods*

The downtown core is surrounded by four vibrant and historic neighborhoods at its edges: Pleasant Street, Duckpond, Porters Quarters, and Springhill. As seen in the map above, these neighborhood boundaries overlap with the plan's focus and study areas. As established residential enclaves, these four communities each have individual and distinct characteristics and development patterns.

► **Pleasant Street:** Founded following the Civil War more than 150 years ago, Pleasant Street is distinctive as the first Black residential neighborhood in Gainesville. Known as a center of black life and history in the city, the neighborhood operated as a "town within a town" during Gainesville's decades of segregation. Several of the neighborhood's historic churches continue to serve the community, such as the Friendship Baptist Church and the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church.

► **Duckpond:** A part of Gainesville's Northeast Historic District, Duckpond is one of the city's oldest communities, dating back to 1854. Bisected by Sweetwater Creek, Duckpond is a largely residential community with historic homes of various architectural styles. The neighborhood receives its name from the damming of Sweetwater Creek into a pond, now located within a linear green on NE Boulevard. Its most significant landmark is the Thomas Center and Gardens, a former home then hotel built in 1910 that now serves as office space for the City of Gainesville, in addition to a community event and art space.

► **Porters Quarters**:** Platted in 1884, Porters Quarters is one Gainesville's original Black neighborhoods. Named after its 19th Century land owners Olivia and Watson Porter, the original tract of land around Porter Street (now SW 5th Street) was subdivided and sold to Black residents as a means to establish a black settlement near downtown jobs, yet reinforcing the city's segregation. The neighborhood's oldest church, Shady Grove Primitive Baptist Church, was organized in 1894 and still stands in a new building. With a community center and farm in its core, the neighborhood continues to be home to a passionate and engaged residential base.

*Neighborhood history for Pleasant Street, Duckpond, and Springhill sourced from gainesvilleneighborhoodsunited.org
**Neighborhood history for Porters Quarters sourced from the "Porters Narrative"
***Depot Park history sourced from depotpark.org/history

2023-992A

Church in Pleasant Street

Thomas Center in Duckpond

Park in Porters Quarters

Springhill Park in Springhill

Map labels:

NW 8th Avenue

NE 8th Avenue

Northeast Neighbors

Fifth Avenue

Pleasant Street

N Main Street

Duckpond

NE Waldo Road

W University Avenue

Strategic Plan Focus Area

UF Innovate

North Lincoln Heights

SW 13th Street

SW 6th Street

Porters Quarters

Springhill

SE 9th Street

SE 11th Street

Greater Study Area

SW Depot Avenue

Depot Park

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

Azalea Trails

▶ **Springhill:** Located north and east of Depot Park, Springhill is one of Gainesville's oldest communities, with homes dating to the 1890s. With a residential core around Springhill Park in its northeast boundary, much of the neighborhood is home to industrial uses and land around Depot Park. Once a contaminated rail yard, the now Depot Park*** dates back to 1997, when the City of Gainesville was awarded a Regional Brownfield Pilot project grant. The 32-acre park was completed in 2016, and features a restored depot building, play areas, a large pond, and trails.

Cotton Club in Springhill

19

Map labels:
- Pleasant Street Historic District
- Northeast Historic District
- Southeast Historic District
- NW 8th Avenue
- NE 8th Avenue
- W University Avenue
- N Main Street
- NE Waldo Road
- SW 13th Street
- SW 6th Street
- SW Depot Avenue
- SE 9th Street
- SE 1th Street
- Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

Zoning labels on map:
- Mixed Use
- Conservation
- Single Family
- Single Family
- Office
- Single Family & Multi Family
- Downtown
- Mixed Use
- Planned Development
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Mixed Use
- Single Family & Multi Family
- Public Service
- Single Family
- Industrial
- Industrial

"Downtown Zoning District: Consists of the highest density and height development, with the greatest variety of uses, and civic buildings of regional importance."

Current Zoning

Downtown's current zoning reflects its status as the city's logical and recommended location for high density development. Much of the core around the Main Street and University corridors is Zoned DT, which supports mixed use buildings up to 14 stories. The surrounding zoning districts largely step down in densities as they approach nearby single family residential areas. The areas between single family districts and the downtown district fall in the Urban Transect Zones 6-9, which provide buffers in building heights and uses.

Legend:
- Single Family
- Single Family & Multi Family
- Multi-Family Residential
- Public Service and Operations
- Business
- Central City
- Mixed Use
- Office
- Education
- Industrial
- Historic District Boundary

Pleasant Street Historic District

Northeast Historic District (Duckpond)

Southeast Historic District

N Main Street

W University Avenue

SW 6th Street

SE 9th Street

SE 11th Street

NE Waldo Road

SW 13th Street

Porters Quarters

Power District

Springhill Neighborhood

SW Depot Avenue

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

NW 8th Avenue

NE 8th Avenue

▮	Historic District
▮	Residential Community
▮	Power District

Historic Districts and Overlays

Historic residential districts surround downtown's retail and entertainment areas. These districts, shown in the map above, create a regulatory overlay that impacts building heights for new developments. For instance, maximum building heights for new buildings located 100 feet from district boundaries are limited to 3 stories or 36 feet. A stricter standard applies to new buildings in the Pleasant Street Historic District, where new buildings within the district are also limited to a height of 3 stories of 36 feet. Similarly, the Power District overlay restricts new building heights to 6 stories, with the stricter restriction of 3 stories when adjacent to residential zoning, with a step-back of 15 feet per additional building story up to the maximum permitted.

The City of Gainesville is downtown's largest landowner with 130 acres of land, representing 18% of downtown. The second largest landowner is Alachua County with 20 Acres.

NW 8th Avenue

NE 8th Avenue

Thomas Center Gardens

N Main Street

NE Waldo Road

Alachua County Schools

W University Avenue

SE 9th Street

Judge Stephan P. Mickle, Sr. Criminal Court House

SW 6th Street

SW 13th Street

SE 11th Street

GRU Property

Depot Park

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

City of Gainesville
Alachua County
Alachua County Schools
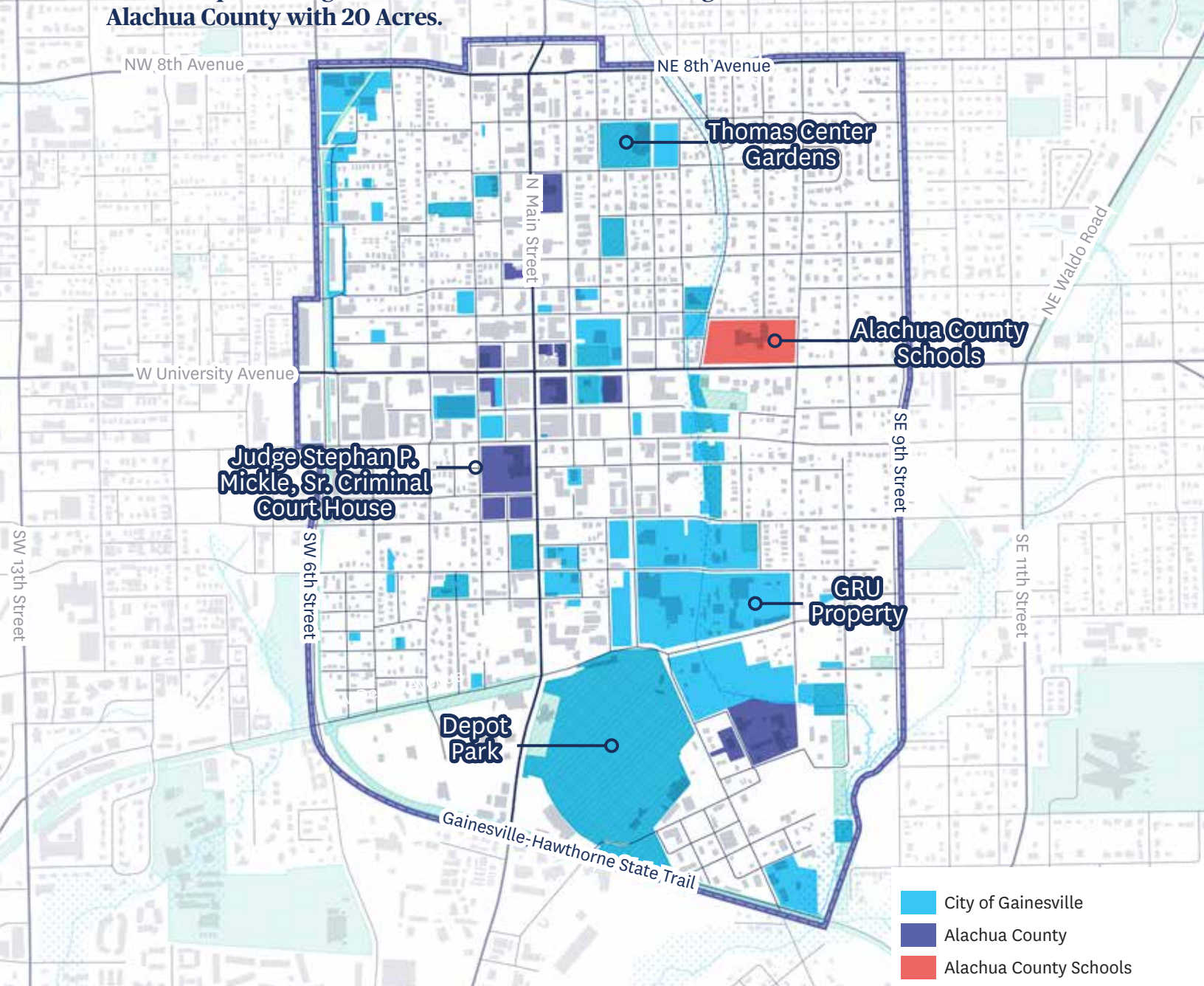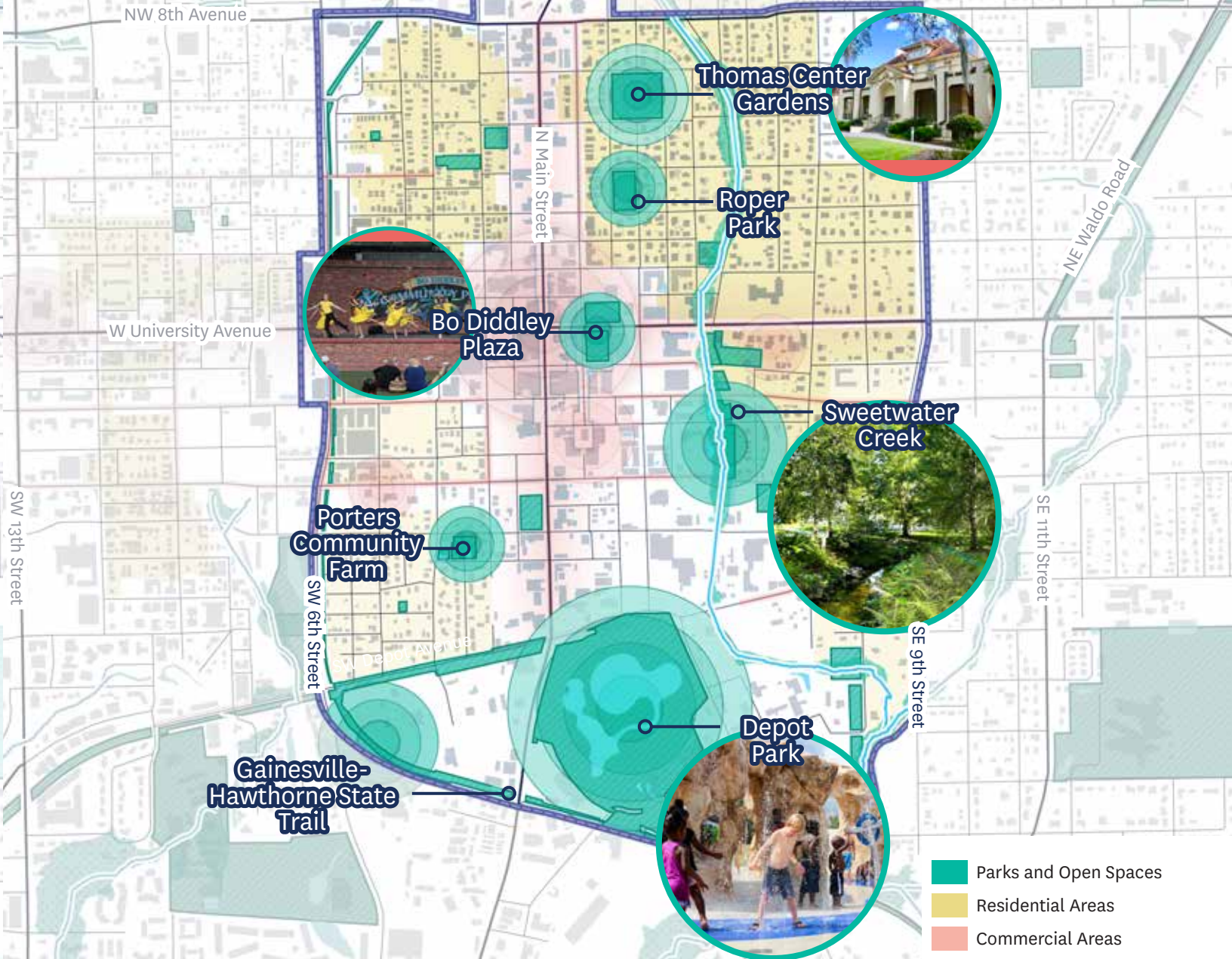
Major Land Ownership

As the city's central hub for civic uses and municipal office space, downtown's largest landowner is the City of Gainesville with 130 Acres. This acreage, which includes city offices and Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) property, nonetheless also includes parks, plazas, and other public gathering spaces. The downtown area's second largest landowner is Alachua County, which operates courthouses, office spaces, a library, and other facilities in about 20 acres of land throughout the downtown. Currently, the county is considering consolidating properties in downtown, which could open up redevelopment opportunities. Lastly, Alachua County Schools owns an administrative property, located in a landmark historic school house, in a 6.5 -acre former school along University Avenue, near Sweetwater Park.

Depot Park has created a destination just south of the downtown core. Sweetwater Branch is the opportunity to link downtown's urban parks and open spaces.

Thomas Center Gardens

Roper Park

Bo Diddley Plaza

Sweetwater Creek

Porters Community Farm

Depot Park

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

NW 8th Avenue

N Main Street

W University Avenue

SW 13th Street

SW 6th Street

SE 9th Street

SE 11th Street

NE Waldo Road

Legend:
- Parks and Open Spaces
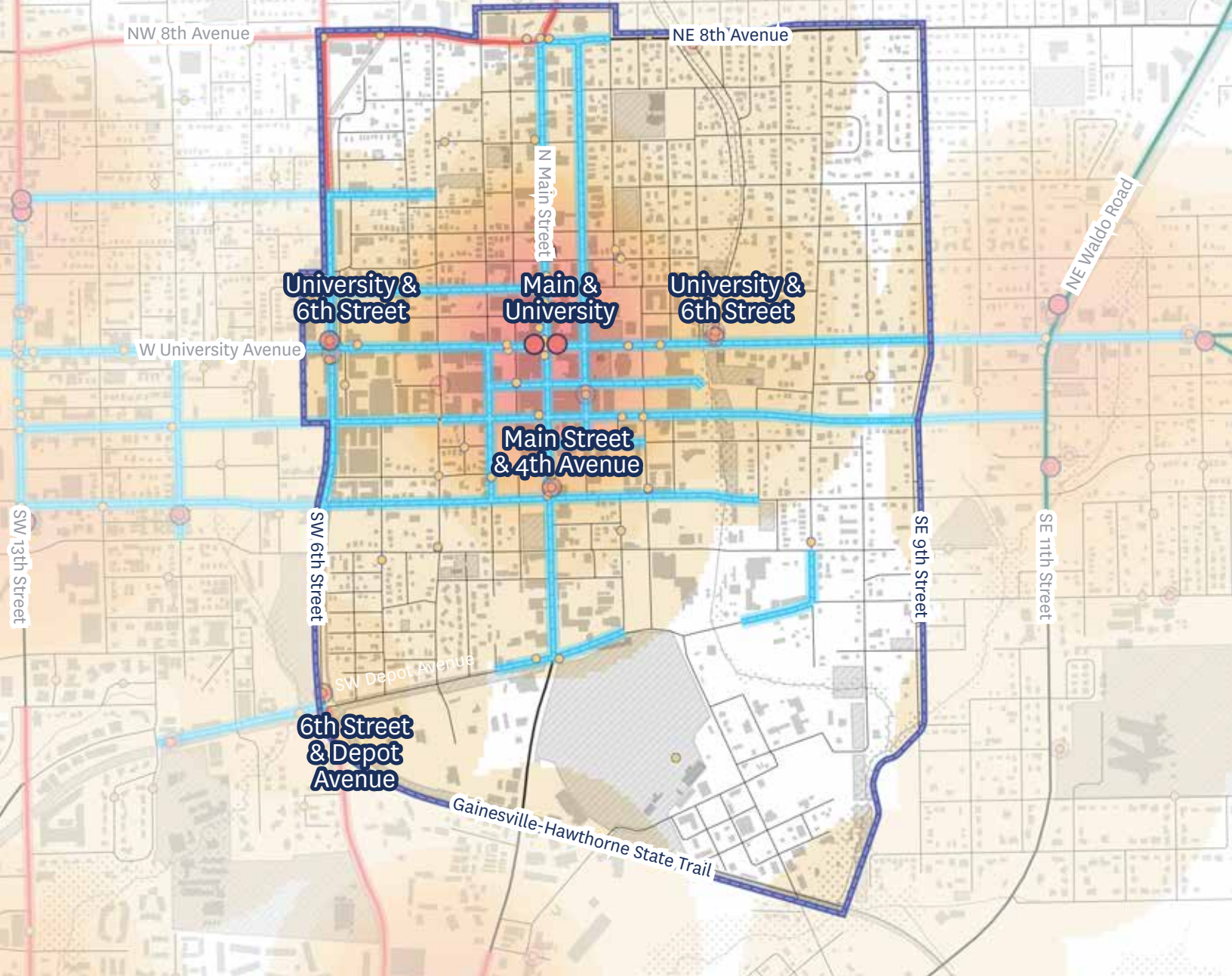- Residential Areas
- Commercial Areas

Parks and Open Spaces

As Gainesville's civic and cultural hub, downtown includes some of the community's most iconic parks and open spaces. At the heart of the core, Bo Diddley Plaza hosts events and festivals and includes a large stage and multipurpose lawn. Further south, the recent addition of Depot Park and the CADE Museum has created a new and immensely popular regional destination in what was once contaminated railyard. At the northernmost portion of the study area, the picturesque Thomas Center is home to manicured gardens in the heart of Duckpond.

An underutilized and often hidden Sweetwater Creek runs the entirety of the study area, connecting to various neighborhoods in its span. With the exception of Sweetwater Park near the Matheson Museum on University Avenue and segments along Duckpond, this natural feature is largely unseen and faces the backs of properties.

The downtown area has seen 60 vehicular incidents involving pedestrians in the last 5 years, 70% of which occurred near or along University Avenue and Main Street.

NW 8th Avenue

NE 8th Avenue

N Main Street

NE Waldo Road

University & 6th Street

Main & University

University & 6th Street

W University Avenue

Main Street & 4th Avenue

SW 13th Street

SW 6th Street

SE 9th Street

SE 11th Street

SW Depot Avenue

6th Street & Depot Avenue

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

Roadway & Intersection Safety

The city's Land Development Code establishes street typologies to correspond with the transect described in the zoning map. As shown above, downtown's key corridors are categorized as "Storefront Streets," or those streets that are recommended to exhibit the most features conducive to a walkable environment. These include street trees, wide sidewalks, and spaces for outdoor dining. The planning team also looked at vehicular incidents occurring in the last 5 years, which highlighted safety issues at intersections along University Avenue, Main Street, and West 6th Street.

Legend:
- Storefront Streets
- Principal Streets
- Thoroughfares
- Local Streets
- Vehicular Crashes involving Pedestrians (2015 - 2021)
- Vehicular Crashes (2015 - 2021)
- Crash Density (weighed for Pedestrian Crashes)

Gaps in the sidewalk network are found in the residential areas of neighborhoods close to downtown.

Existing Sidewalks
Known Sidewalk Gaps
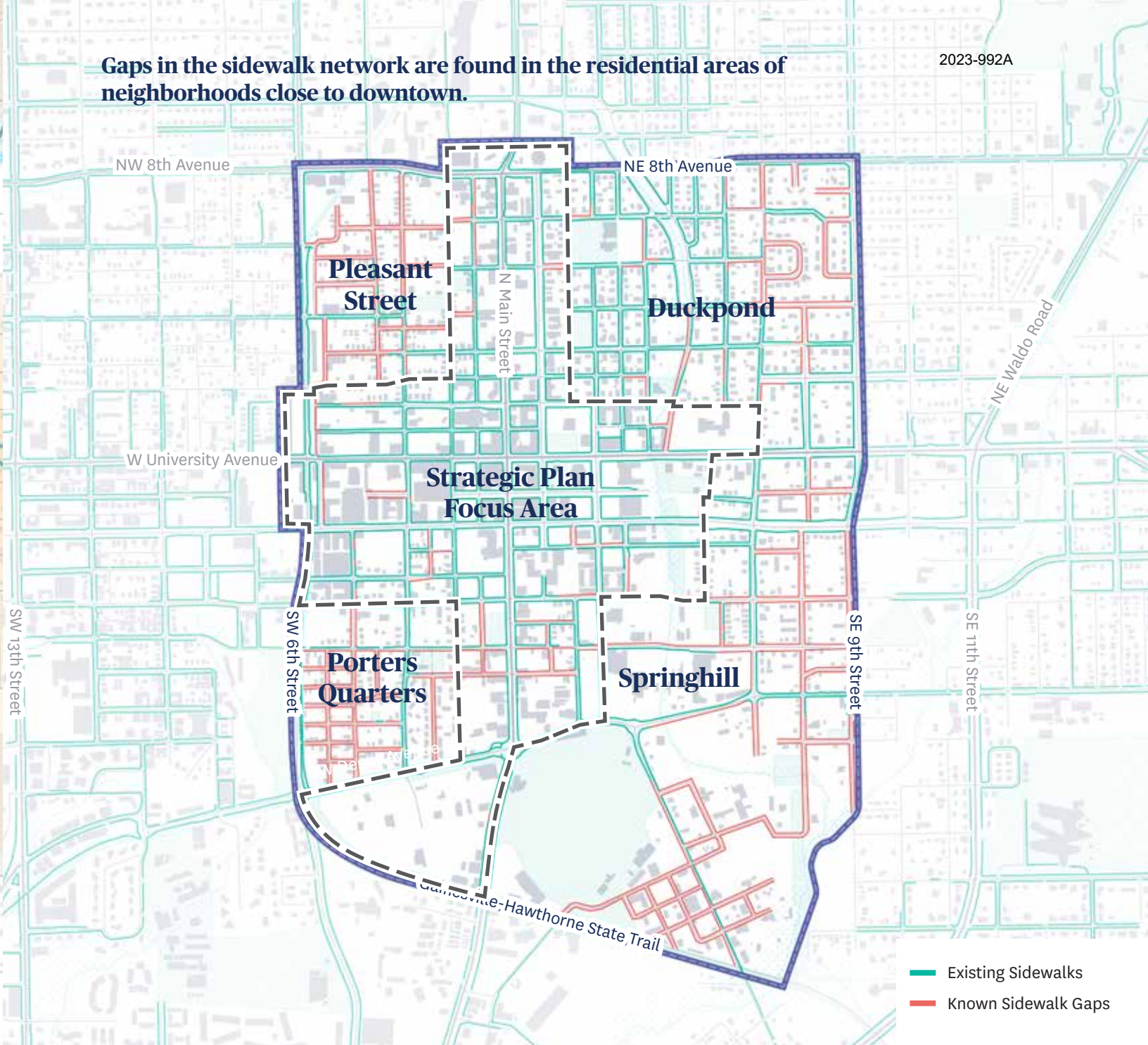
Sidewalk Gaps

The City of Gainesville inventories the location of sidewalks along public streets citywide. As seen in the map above, the plan's focus area boundary, with some minor exceptions, includes sidewalks along a majority of streets. However, there is a prevalence of sidewalk gaps just outside this boundary within the historic neighborhoods at the periphery of downtown. This is especially the case in the historically black neighborhoods of Pleasant Street, Porters Quarters, and Springhill. These gaps hinder walkability within the neighborhood, and with the downtown core.

Market Overview

The Gainesville region is growing, although Downtown has experience limited development activity given lack of developable parcels, higher development costs, and market pressures for student housing development. This is a missed opportunity since Downtown is better positioned to promote equity, sustainability, culture, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Key Findings:

► Over the last decade, there has been **minimal population growth Downtown** compared to strong growth citywide.

► Downtown's **median household income is lower than the region** emphasizing the importance of future development serving the existing community and limiting displacement.

► **Demand for close-in housing in highly-walkable neighborhoods has pushed values upward** in parts of Downtown and placed market pressures on historically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

► There has been significant **growth in renter-occupied households across all income levels** highlighting a market opportunity for new rental housing development.

► **Alachua County's economy is strong and stable**, but with growth slower than the statewide average.

► **UF is not projected to increase enrollment** over the next decade tempering market opportunities for larger-scale office, retail, and housing development.

► **There has been minimal commercial real estate development of any kind Downtown** over the last decade with most new construction occurring in other commercial clusters and nodes citywide.

► Since 2010, **private student housing has flooded the market** adding more than 10,300 beds for an increase of 47 percent.

► Given regional competition and finite demand, **future development Downtown will need to be more intentional and differentiated** and aligned with investments in place and infrastructure.

Demographics

Regional Context

A large share of the City of Gainesville's population of around 141,085 includes students at the University of Florida that has an enrollment of more than 50,000. While Gainesville is the economic, cultural, and institutional hub of Alachua County, it contains about half of the county's population (278,468) highlighting the relatively large number of suburban and rural communities throughout, including Alachua, Newberry, and High Springs.

Gainesville is within a two-hour drive of the Tampa, Orlando, and Jacksonville regions, three of Florida's top four metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) with a combined population of nearly 7.5 million, is both an opportunity and limitation—while these regions offer abundant cultural and recreational amenities and are major transportation hubs, they are also offer a wide range of economic opportunities that draw from Gainesville's workforce as well as talent pool generated from UF.

These factors limit the economic growth potential of the Gainesville region as a major employment hub, but at the same time, Gainesville is positioned to offer a lifestyle alternative anchored by a smaller-scale, yet walkable and vibrant downtown.

Regional Map

KEY METRICS

City Population: **141,085 (15th largest city in Florida)**

MSA Population: **339,247**

County seat of Alachua County

University of Florida - **5th Largest University nationally**
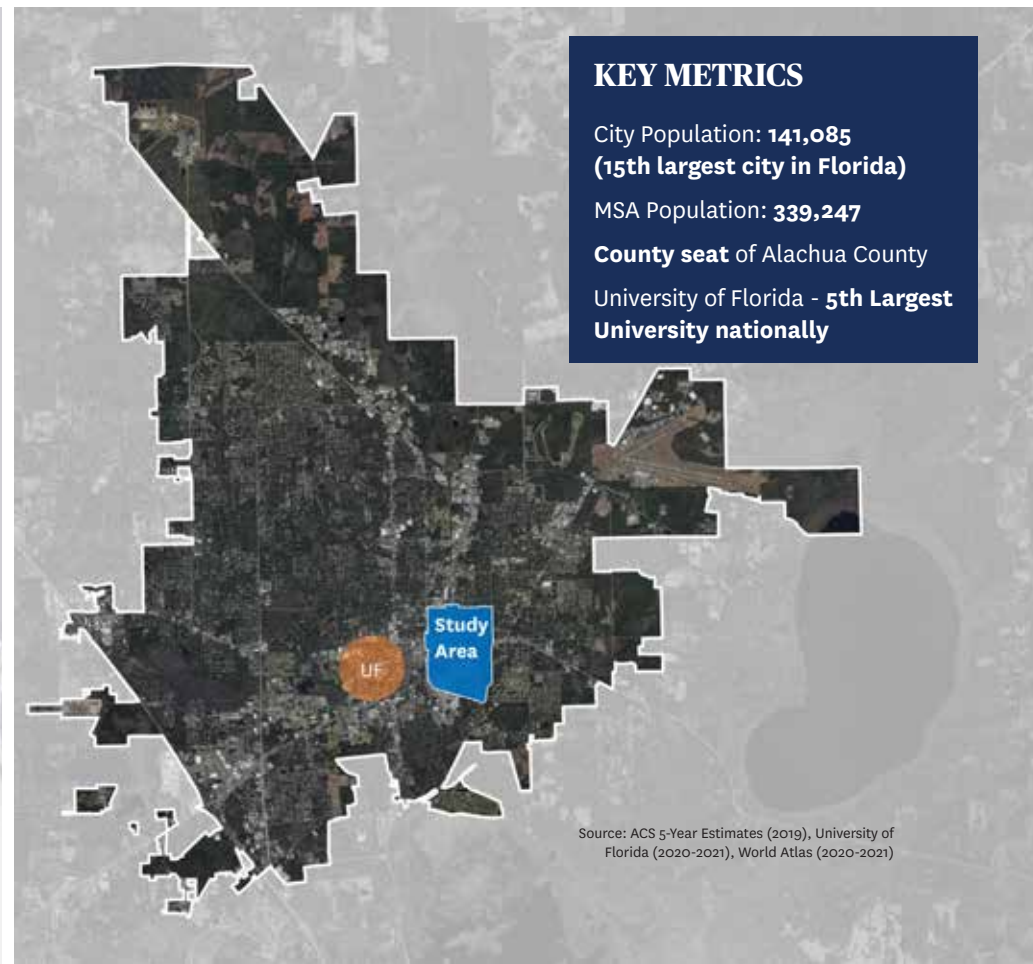
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2019), University of Florida (2020-2021), World Atlas (2020-2021)

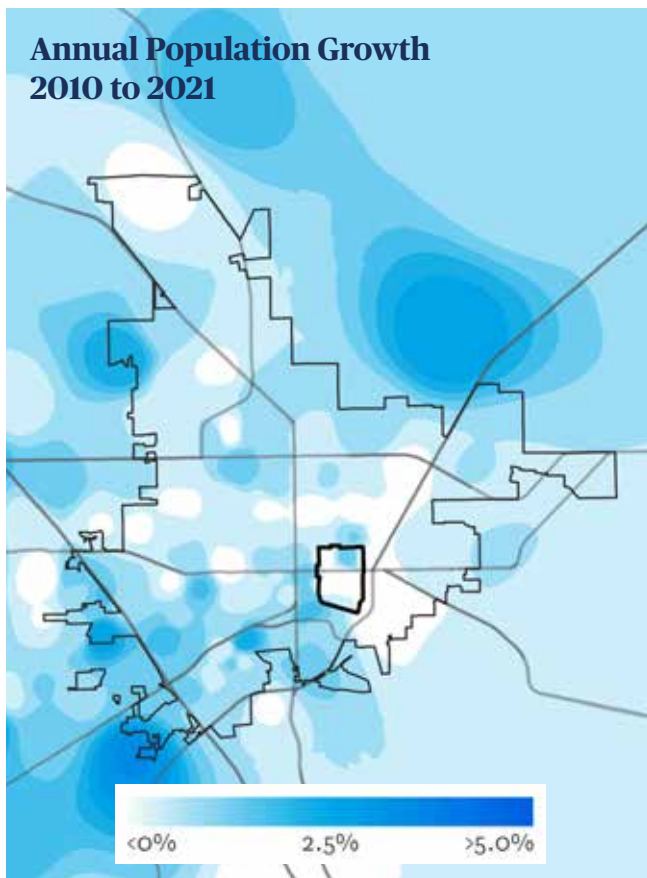**Annual Population Growth
2010 to 2021**

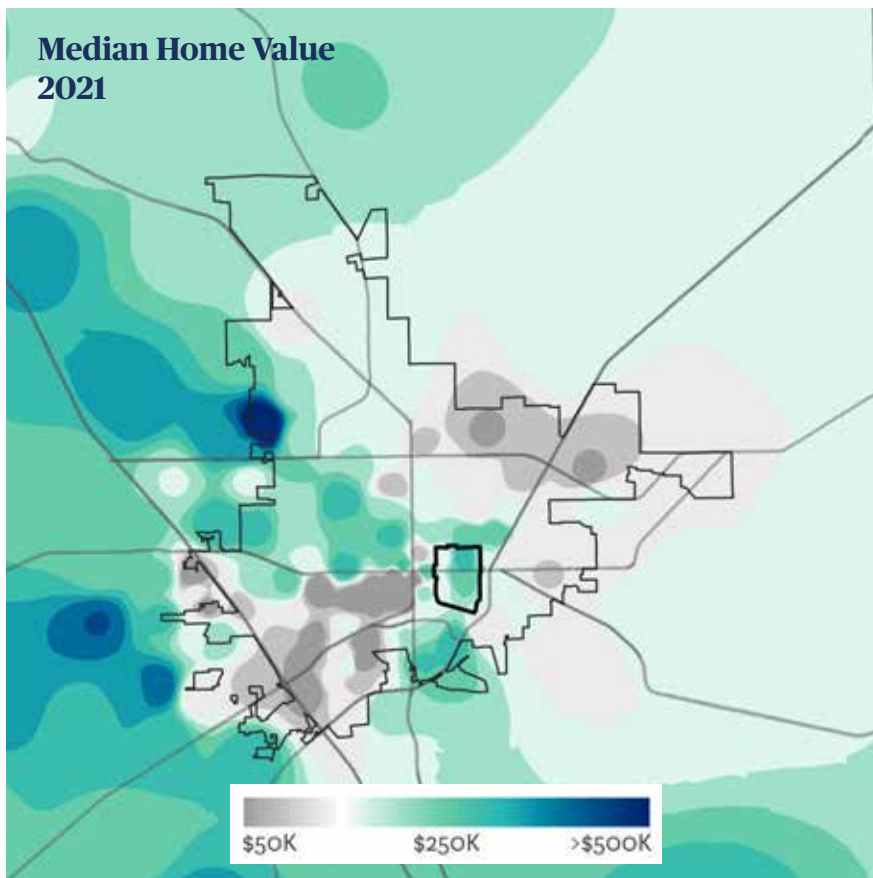**Median Household Income
2021**

Population

From 2010 to 2020, Gainesville had moderate population growth adding just over 15,600 net new residents for an increase of twelve percent; the portions of Alachua County outside of Gainesville grew at a similar rate of twelve percent adding nearly 15,500 net new residents and was relatively consistent with statewide growth of 14.6 percent. **Despite healthy regional economic conditions, the Downtown only added a few hundred residents for a rate of growth of under one percent.** This lack of population growth can be attributed to limited developable land and other development feasibility barriers, including the proliferation of private student housing.
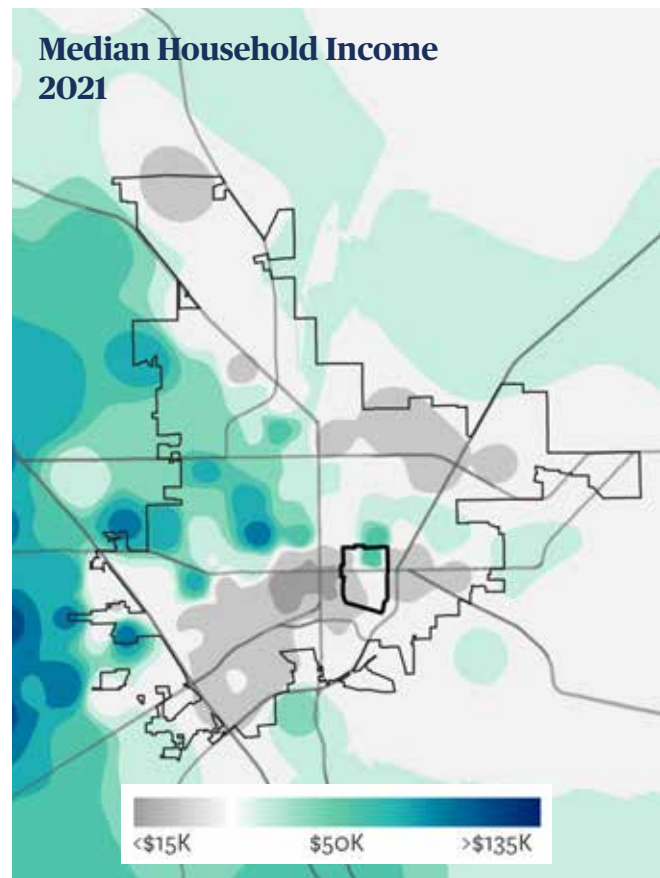
Income/Poverty

Median household income Downtown ($32,000) is somewhat lower than the city median ($39,000), but substantially lower than the county median ($53,000). These city-county disparities can be attributed to the large student population in Gainesville as well as historically disadvantaged and racially segregated neighborhoods in the urban core. In fact, of the approximately 2,000 households living Downtown, 43 percent earn less than $25,000 annually, highlighting the critical **importance of investing in affordable and mixed-income housing and ensuring that policies are in place to ensure that long-standing residents are not displaced.**

Median Home Value 2021

$50K $250K   >$500K

Educational Attainment

Consistent with other college town markets in the southeast, Gainesville is highly educated with nearly half (48 percent) of its population aged 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree compared to 45 percent for Alachua County and 31 percent statewide. **This highlights the economic potential for promoting entrepreneurship and talent attraction, in which Downtowns plays a critical role.**

Housing Tenure

More than 60 percent of households in Gainesville rent their housing, significantly higher than the state (34 percent) and county (45 percent) averages, although a large share of renters in Gainesville are students, which skews the data. **Over the last decade, there has been a significant shift in higher-income renters, with a net increase of nearly 3,100 renter-occupied households in Gainesville earning more than $50,000,** despite the market only adding around 2,000 units of non-student multi-family housing.

Housing Value

Despite Downtown's relatively low median household income, it has a higher median housing value compared to the city as whole and Alachua County. While population growth and development activity has been slow over the past decade, increasing demand for close-in housing in highly-walkable neighborhoods has pushed values upward and limited housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. Based on data from Zillow, sales of modest homes in Duck Pond are now well-above $400,000, and while sales of homes in Pleasant Street and Porter's Quarters have been generally under $300,000, values have increased substantially in recent years pricing out many long-standing residents. This validates that market demand exists to live Downtown—**what is needed is more market rate housing to alleviate excessive upward pressure on surrounding neighborhoods.**

Economic Development Trends

While the region has a steady based of university employment and has made promising gains in blue collar sectors, it has lagged in downtown-friendly industries, as well as those more commonly associated with start-ups in "new economy" industries. In other words, Downtown need more intentional effort to diversify Gainesville's economy.

Regional Employment Trends

As a result of the economic shutdown from the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2019 to 2020, the county had a net loss of more than 7,200 jobs (four percent decline). However, prior to the pandemic, from 2010 to 2019, Alachua County had very strong employment growth adding just under 29,000 net new jobs. This period of economic growth has generally followed national trends (18 percent increase in employment, although employment growth has been much more robust throughout Florida (31 percent increase). **Therefore, economic conditions in Alachua County are strong, but the economy is not booming like the state as a whole.**

Trends by Sector

Based on the distribution of employment by sector, Alachua County has more than five-and-a-half times the number of state government jobs compared to the national distribution of jobs in this sector. This can be attributed to University of Florida jobs classified by the Bureau of Economic Analysis as being in the state government sector. **Alachua County also has a relatively large share of Health Care and Accommodation and Food Services jobs, which is typical of communities with large state universities, especially those with a university medical center.**

Since 2010 to 2019, Alachua County had the most net growth in the Health Care sector adding nearly 5,500 jobs, in addition to net new jobs in Administrative and Support (3,940), and Accommodation and Food Services (3,000). During this time period, the county added around 5,000 blue collar jobs in Transportation and Warehousing, Construction, and Manufacturing, which provide low-barriers-to-entry opportunities and create better pathways for upward mobility. At the same time, **the county had less robust growth from downtown-centric industries such as Professional and Technical Services, Finance and Insurance, and Information and total county-wide employment in these sectors is below the nation average.**

Relative Change in Total Employment 2001 to 2020
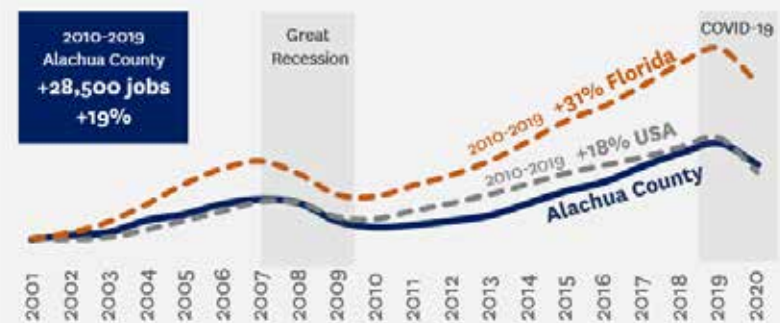
University of Florida On-Campus Enrollment
2015 to 2030
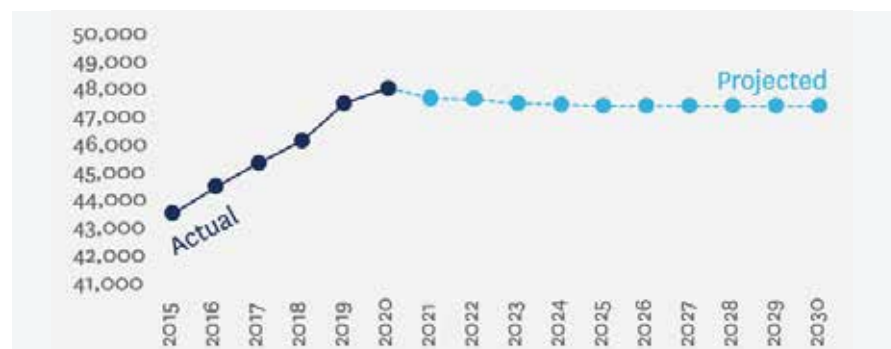
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis and Campus Master Plan Update 2020-2030 by the University of Florida Business Affairs

University of Florida

Demand for student housing has been triggered by enrollment growth at University Florida adding more than 6,000 students over the last six years. While this trend will not completely limit new student housing development—given demand for luxury student housing, the market will continue to support the replacement of older and/or less competitive properties—there will be more market equilibrium and less of a boom in student housing development that was experienced over the last decade. Conversely, **as the region's top employer, lack of employment growth at UF will also temper market opportunities for office, retail, and housing.**

Real Estate Trends: Retail Development 2010 to 2021

Gainesville
2.9M SF
new deliveries
26%
growth

Study Area
53k SF
new deliveries
5%
growth

The Standard
Built 2017 | 62K SF
$23 - $29/SF

200K SF
Innovation District

Study Area

2.3M SF
Butler North and Celebration Pointe

Butler North
Built 2016 | 758K SF
$24 - $30/SF

185 E University
Built 2016 | 2K SF
$15/SF
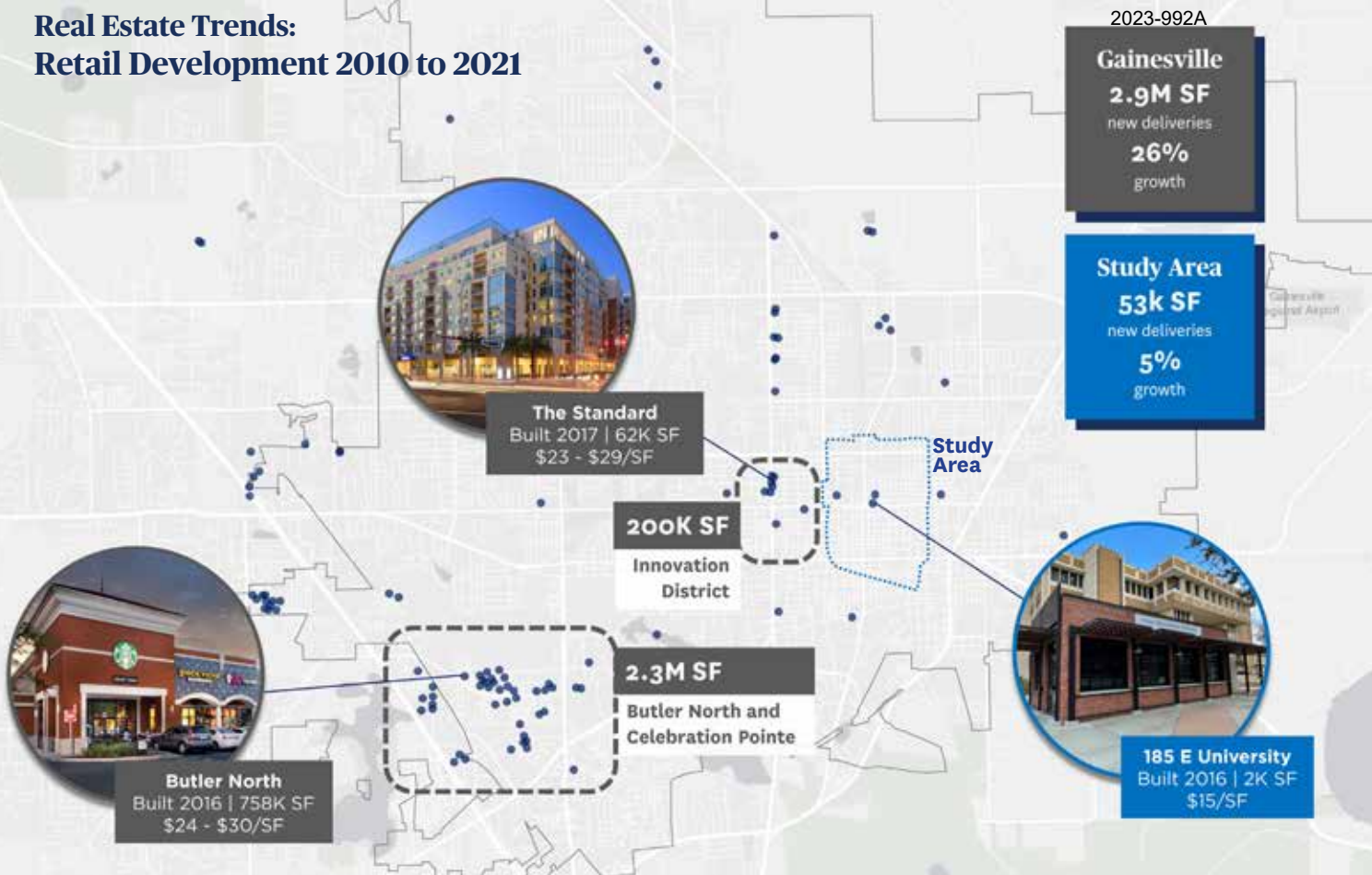
Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

Retail Trends

From 2010 to 2021, nearly three million square feet of retail space was delivered in Gainesville, of which only 53,000 square feet, or less than two percent, was located Downtown. The vast majority of the new supply was delivered within Butler North and Celebration Pointe, which now contains 2.3 million square feet of space. Much of the new supply in the urban core has consisted of 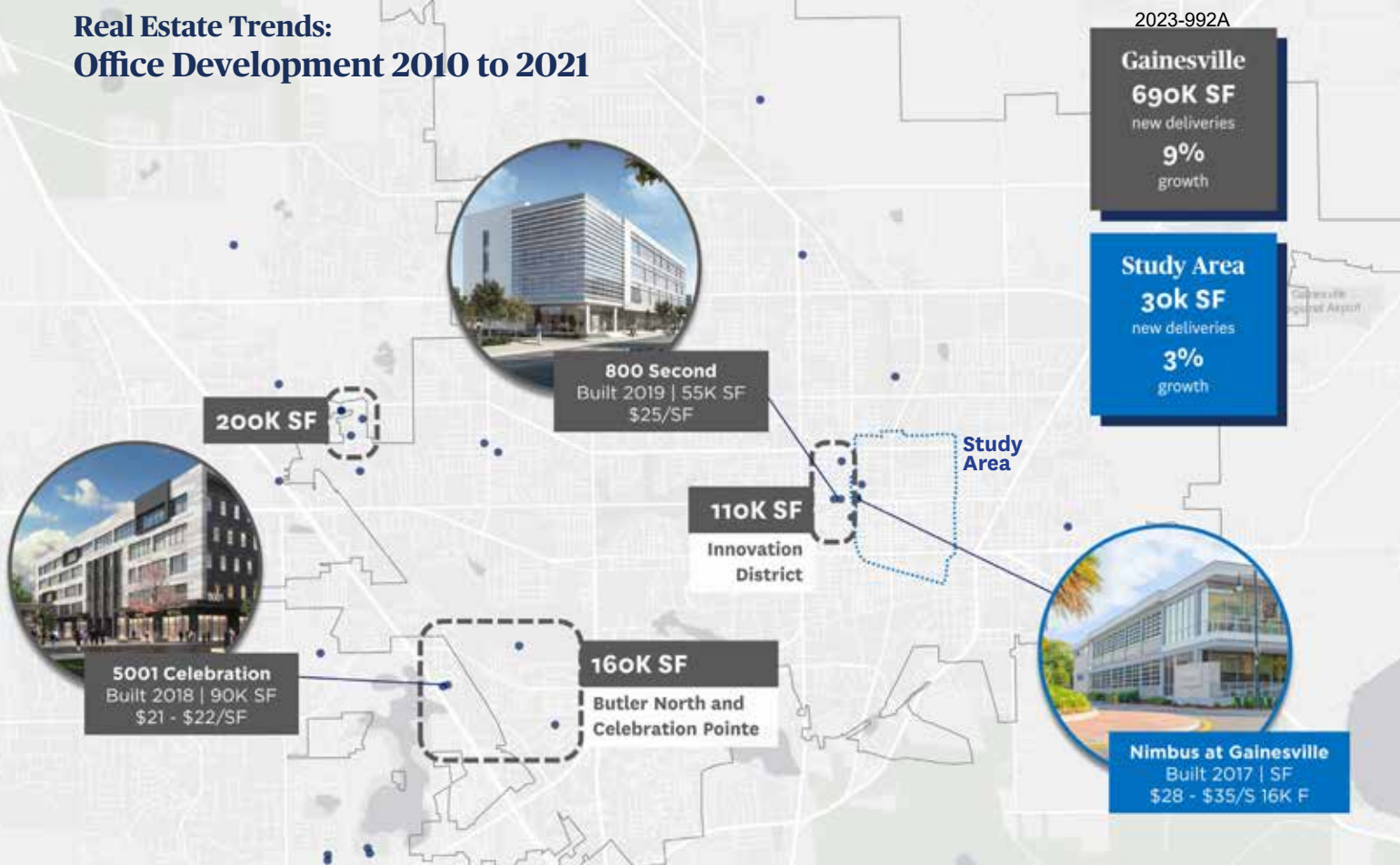ground-level commercial space contained within student-oriented properties. Within the Study Area, only a few smaller-scale properties have been delivered.

There has been limit retail rent growth over the last decade with average rents peaking at around $20 per square foot in 2019. There has been very little new supply added to the market since the pandemic in 2020 and retail rents have declined over the last two years. While Downtown could support smaller-scale niche retail development, or retail space contained within mixed-use residential buildings, given that the Gainesville market has been very slow to deliver new retail supply over the last few years, this could temper new development opportunities Downtown in the near term.

Downtown contains around one million square feet of retail space with a vacancy rate of 4.2 percent and an average rent of $16.33 per square foot (note that the vacancy rate only reflects actively listed space and not vacant/obsolete properties). The citywide vacancy rate is 3.5 percent with an average rent of $21.75 per square foot for all space, and an average rent of $25.00 per square foot for space delivered in the last 10 years. Downtown's retail space has less marketability and businesses are willing to pay a premium for newer space in suburban locations.

Real Estate Trends:
Office Development 2010 to 2021

Gainesville
690K SF
new deliveries
9%
growth

Study Area
30k SF
new deliveries
3%
growth

200K SF

800 Second
Built 2019 | 55K SF
$25/SF

110K SF
Innovation District

Study Area

5001 Celebration
Built 2018 | 90K SF
$21 - $22/SF

160K SF
Butler North and Celebration Pointe

Nimbus at Gainesville
Built 2017 | SF
$28 - $35/S 16K F

Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

Office Trends

Downtown contains just under one million square feet of office space representing around 11 percent of the city's supply. From 2010 to 2021, just under 700,000 square feet of new office space was delivered in Gainesville for an overall increase of nine percent. Just over 100,000 square feet of this space was built in the Innovation District. The Study Area added around 30,000 square feet including the 16,000 square foot Nimbus at Gainesville that was delivered in 2017. Other key regional office development nodes, include Butler North Celebration Pointe that added 160,000 square feet and 200,000 square feet built near HCA Florida North Hospital.

Historic Office Deliveries and Office Rents
2007 to 2021
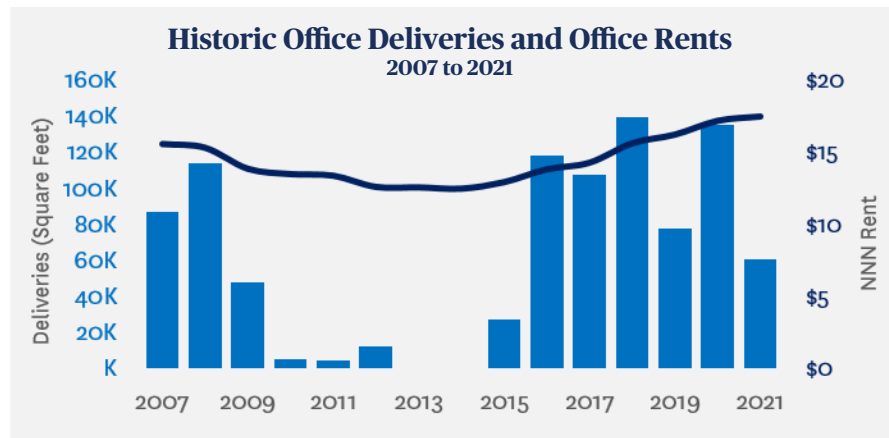
Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

Average office rents have experienced modest increases since 2015 indicating a relatively health market; however, most of this rent growth has been in properties in lower-density suburban areas. Generally, average rents Downtown ($18.84 per square foot) are consistent with average rents citywide ($18.28 per square foot), although the newest office supply in the market achieves much higher rents of $25.24 per square foot).

33

Real Estate Trends:
Hotel Development 2010 to 2021

Gainesville
1,658 rooms
new deliveries
47%
growth

240 rooms
to be completed by
2022 & 2023
98 rooms
proposed for 2025

Study Area
0
new deliveries
0%
growth

520 rooms
Innovation
District

AC Hotel by Marriott
Gainesville Downtown
To Be Completed 2022
145 Rooms

Study
Area

800 rooms
Butler North and
Celebration Pointe

AC Hotel by Marriott
Gainesville Downtown
Built 2020 | 173 Rooms

Staybridge Suites
Gainesville I-75
Built 2018 | 109 Rooms

Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

Hotel Trends

According to CoStar there are 5,165 hotel rooms in Gainesville, with 188 rooms located in the Study Area. There has been no new supply delivered Downtown since the 124-room Hampton Inn opened in 2009, although the 145-room Hyatt Place is currently under construction and is expected to open in 2022. Overall, the hotel market in Gainesville has been strong with 1,658 rooms delivered since 2010 for an increase of 47 percent.

After a slight decline in average daily rate (ADR) as a result of the pandemic, ADR is now slightly above pre-pandemic levels indicating a full recovery.

Historic Hotel Room Deliveries and Average Daily Rate
2011 to 2021
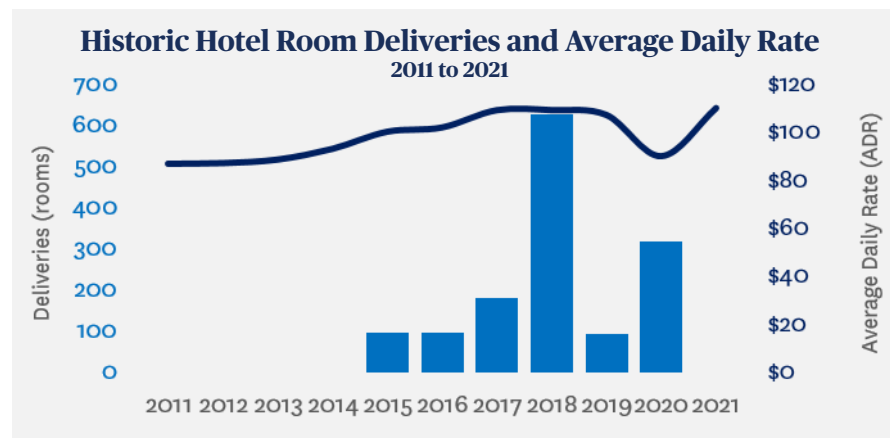
Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

Real Estate Trends: Multifamily Development 2010 to 2021

Gainesville
1,870 units
new deliveries
7%
growth

Study Area
0 units
new deliveries
0%
growth

Savion Park
Built 2014 | 55 units
$1,219 to $3,196

Integra Twenty Four
Built 2020 | 232 units
$1,450 to $2,238

Innovation District
80 MR units

Study Area

226 affordable units

500 MR units
Butler North and Celebration Pointe

- Market Rate
- Affordable
- For-Sale
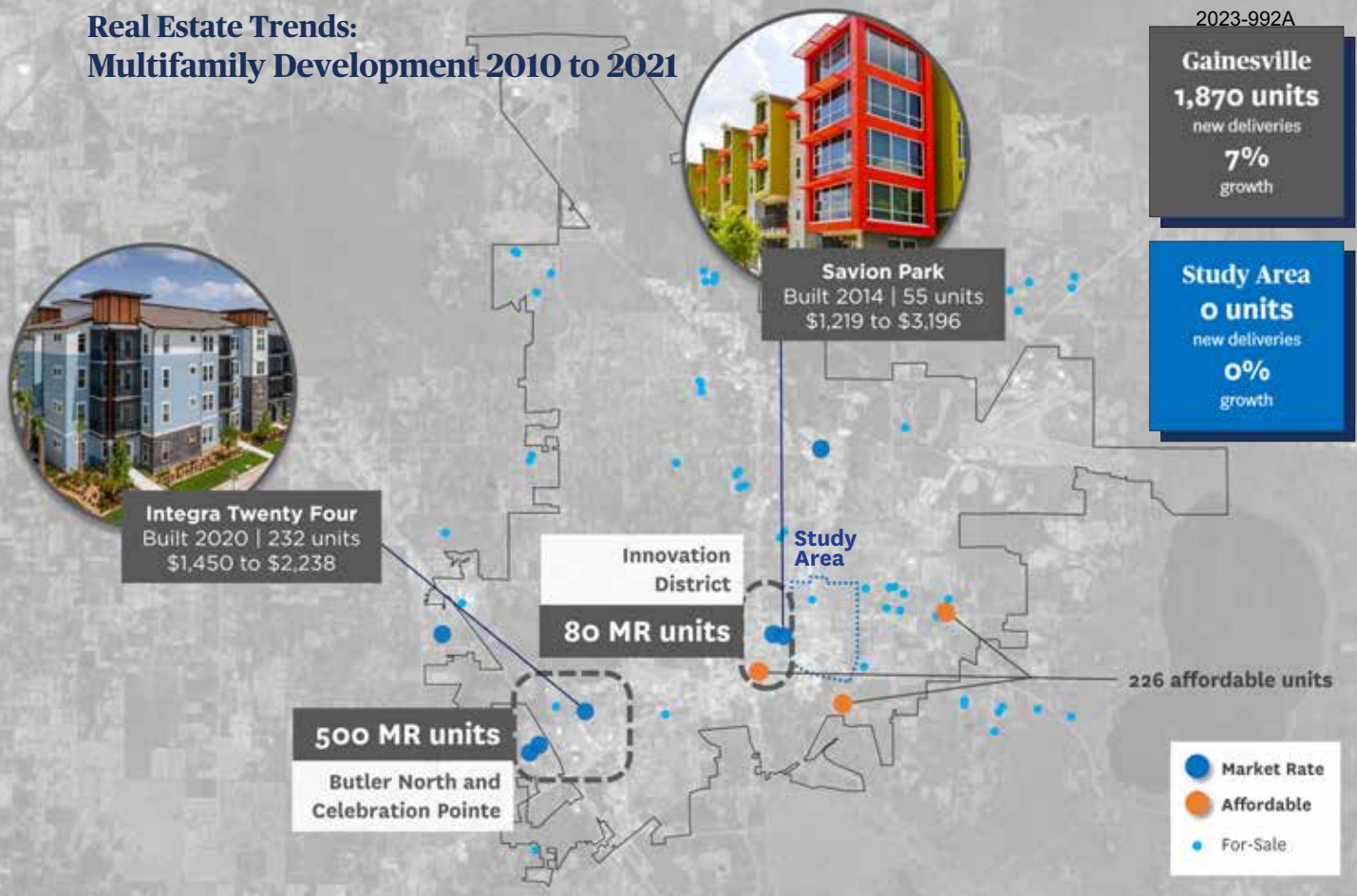
Source: CoStar (Dec 2021) and Zillow (March 2022)

Multifamily Trends

The Study Area only contains around 650 non-student multifamily housing units and no units have been delivered since before 2010. Conversely, the Gainesville market added just under 1,900 units since 2010. A large proportion of these new units are located in Butler North and Celebration Pointe with the 232-unit Integra Twenty Four being the newest and highest quality apartment in the market. The Innovation District has had some multi-family development activity, but only 80 non-student units have been delivered since 2010. There has been modest affordable housing development activity over the last decade with three new properties containing a total of 226 units.

Historic Multifamily Unit Deliveries and Asking Rents per SF
2000 to 2021
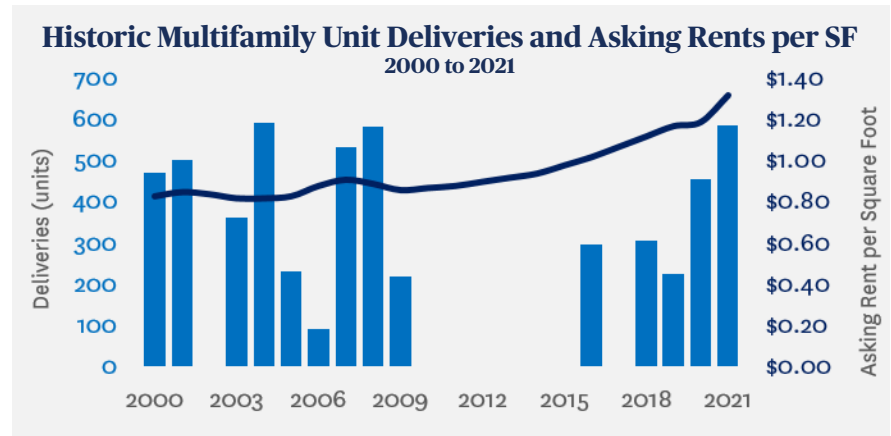
Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

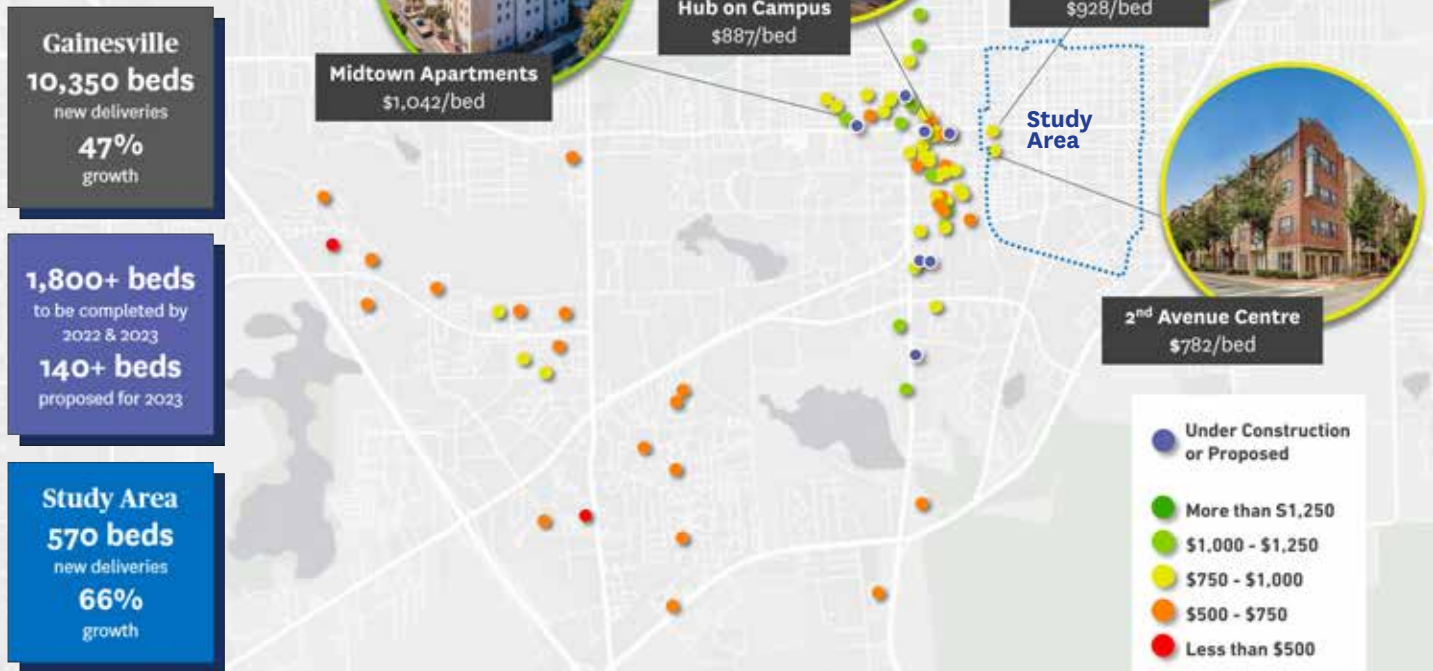Multi-family development activity citywide was stronger prior to the Great Recession and did not rebound until 2016. New development activity has been relatively steady and average rents have been increasing annually since 2012. This could be attributed to the new supply with higher asking rents. Average rents Downtown ($1,172) are higher than the citywide average ($1,095), but well-below new supply with average rents of $1,600.

Real Estate Trends: Student Housing Supply

Gainesville
10,350 beds
new deliveries
47%
growth

1,800+ beds
to be completed by
2022 & 2023
140+ beds
proposed for 2023

Study Area
570 beds
new deliveries
66%
growth

Midtown Apartments
$1,042/bed

Hub on Campus
$887/bed

The Continuum
$928/bed

Study Area

2nd Avenue Centre
$782/bed

Legend:
- Under Construction or Proposed
- More than $1,250
- $1,000 – $1,250
- $750 – $1,000
- $500 – $750
- Less than $500

Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

Student Housing Trends

In total, the Gainesville market has nearly 31,000 private student housing beds, not including dormitories and other housing options on the UF campus. Over the last decade, student housing has been the primary commercial real estate product delivered in the market adding more than 10,300 beds for an increase of 47 percent. There are an additional 1,800 beds that are to be completed in 2022 and 2023 and more than 140 additional beds proposed. The Study Area has also had significant student housing development with The Continuum and 2ns Avenue Centre both delivered since 2010. The majority of

Historic Student Bed Deliveries and Asking Rents per SF
2000 to 2021
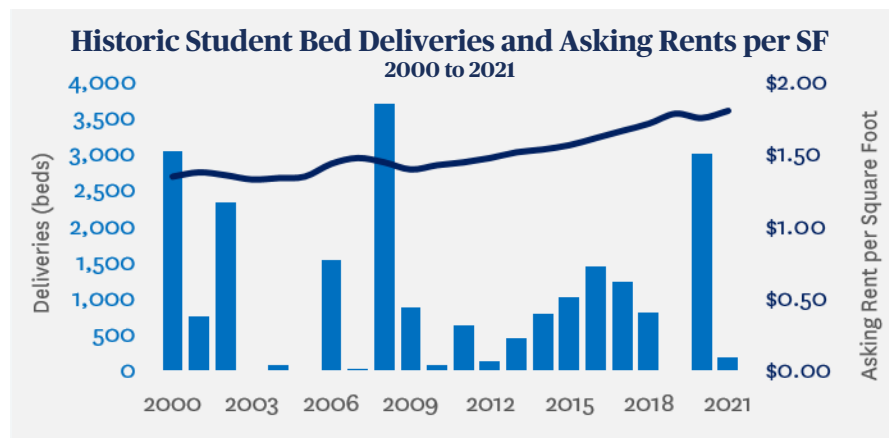
Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

the student housing supply is located just west of the Study Area closer to the UF campus. According to CoStar, rent growth has been strong and will encourage continued development of luxury student products. The encroachment of student housing development

on the Study Area has limited the market feasibility for other types of commercial development—given the very high profitability of student housing, this tends to increase market pressure on potential development sites and pushes land values upward.

Peer Cities

Understanding development trends among Gainesville's peers—southeastern college town markets with state universities with at least 29,000 students—can help inform its market trajectory and competitiveness. From 2010 to 2021, population growth in Gainesville has been modest at around seven percent, generally consistent with Tallahassee (eight percent) and Tuscaloosa (seven percent), although below Auburn (23 percent), Chapel Hill (12 percent), and Athens (10 percent). **Gainesville had the slowest delivery of non-student multi-family housing with total supply only increasing by six percent compared to its peers** (which increases between 9 and 51 percent).

This relatively slow pace of development highlights challenges with non-student housing development Downtown—despite regional population growth and a net increase in high-income renters, the market as a whole has not kept pace with multi-family housing demand. This indicates pent up demand that could be unlocked with targeted strategies and creates opportunity to position Downtown to "capture" a share of regional apartment demand.

Historic Population Growth
2010 to 2021
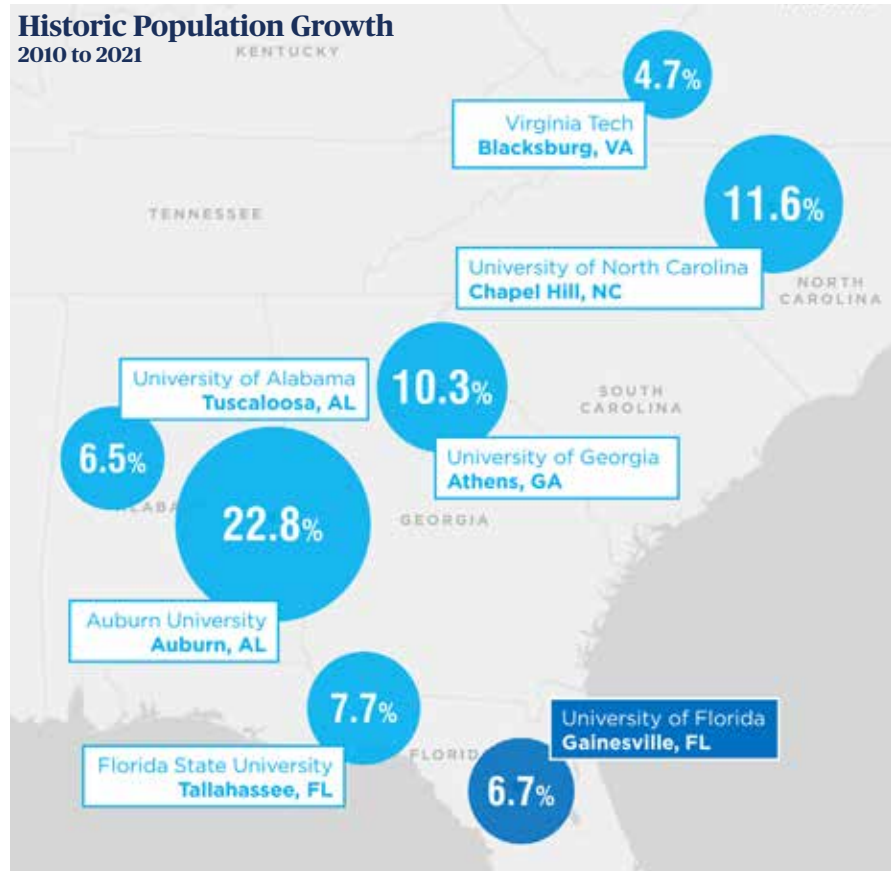
Source: ESRI (2021)

Growth in Multifamily Units
2010 to 2021
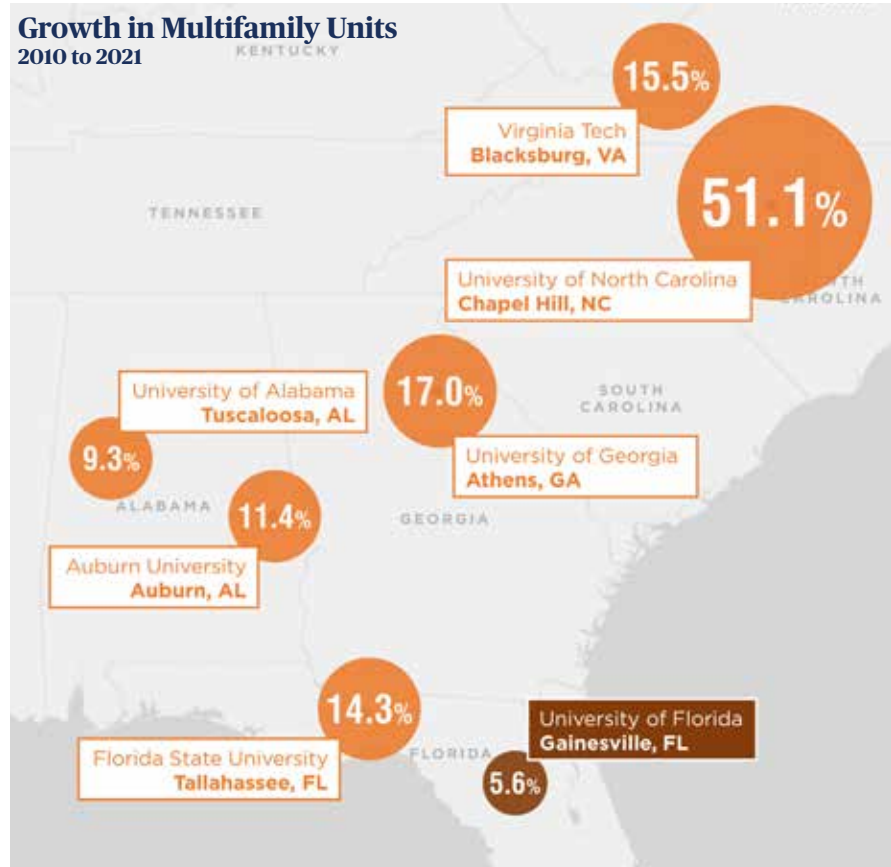
Source: CoStar (Dec 2021)

Downtown Gainesville:
10-Year Development Program

NON-STUDENT MULTIFAMILY
700-900 units

RETAIL
30-50K SF of new retail space

OFFICE
50-90K SF of new office space

Based on 1) real estate supply trends, including the pace development by product type, 2) an analysis of projected population, employment, student enrollment, and tourism growth in the Gainesville market, and 3) reasonable capture of demand for Downtown, **a 10-year development program was established to inform a land use and real estate strategy. This type of analysis is a blend of art and science that considers market data, but also community feedback, strategic objectives, land capacity and, development feasibility.** While there may be very strong demand for certain types of real estate such as multi-family housing, the supply analysis helps level-set the amount and pace of this development. Conversely, as in the case of Downtown, while the supply analysis may indicate limited development activity for certain types of real estate products, we can rely on the demand analysis to show market support and devise a strategy to help change the market trajectory. This analysis is not without limitations—the development program represents "baseline demand" based on current market conditions and spending patterns. For example, if a major corporation decided to build a headquarters in Downtown Gainesville, this would have a major impact on Downtown's economic trajectory and would be supportive of many of the goals of this plan, including generating new employment opportunities and supporting new housing and retail development. However, this type of economic development activity is highly variable and unpredictable and should not be the basis for a growth strategy. **The following development program aims to build upon existing Downtown assets, while supporting more of a growth-from-within economic strategy.**

Multi-family

Consistent with other similar downtown areas, housing demand will be the primary driver of real estate development activity. The student housing market has created barriers for non-student development (given the economic productivity of student housing, this tends to increase land values for all types of real estate), although **there is demand for 700 to 900 new non-student apartments throughout the study area, that if delivered, could be absorbed within a reasonable timeframe.**

Retail

Based on new hotel development activity, projected population growth within a 15-minute drive of Downtown, projected regional employment growth, and daily spending patterns for visitors, residents, and workers, **Downtown could capture between 30,000 and 50,000 square feet of net new retail demand.** This less-than-robust projection can also be attributed to abundant regional competition for certain types of retail, but can still inform a few strategic goals for Downtown: 1) smaller-scale, experiential, and differentiated retail development should be expected and encouraged, and 2) the viability and expansion of Downtown's retail offerings are very much tied to its ability to broaden the customer base both in terms of regional residents, visitors, and tourists.

Office

Based on the latest employment projections from Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Alachua County is projected to add around 15,000 net new jobs over the next eight years (2020 to 2028). Based on average square footage per worker and office utilization by occupation, this translates to around 1.2 million of office demand county-wide. Based on the delivery of new office space over the last decade, regional employment distribution, and competition, **there is between 50,000 and 90,000 square feet of office demand for Downtown, much of which could be accommodated by exiting vacant space.** Any new office product will need to be smaller in scale and more niche, or delivered through an institutional partner (e.g. UF or a public-private partnership).

Commercial Strategy: Bending the Curve

While Downtown has a stable employment base, it will have to take a more active role to support startups, entrepreneurs, and storefront tenanting to become a more urban and diversified place. Downtown has the opportunity to leverage its density, walkability, and existing building stock to create a more experiential and competitive commercial district.

Tech and Professional Services 1,500 jobs — Total Employment in Study Area	16% of jobs — Share of jobs in Study Area	17% growth — Proj. Employment Growth*
Retail and Hospitality 1,100 jobs — Total Employment in Study Area	12% of jobs — Share of jobs in Study Area	13% growth — Proj. Employment Growth*
Government and Education 5,300 jobs — Total Employment in Study Area	56% of jobs — Share of jobs in Study Area	5% growth — Proj. Employment Growth*
Industrial Space Jobs 500 jobs — Total Employment in Study Area	6% of jobs — Share of jobs in Study Area	12% growth — Proj. Employment Growth*

Employment Density
2021

Study Area

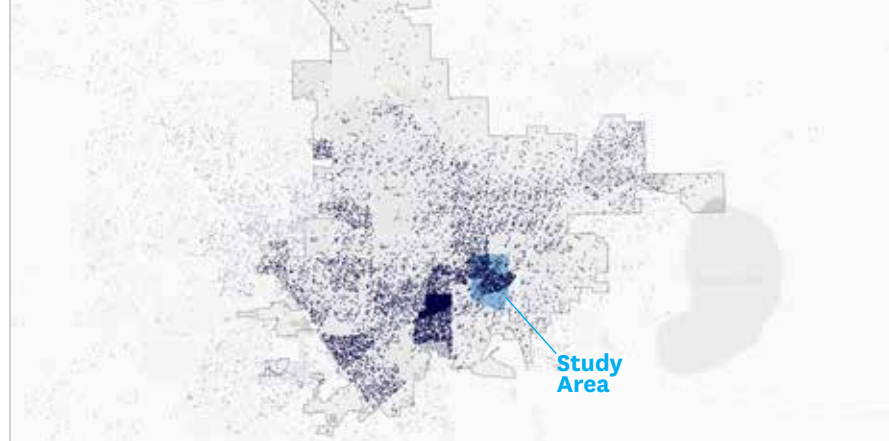Source: ESRI (2021) and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Key Sectors

There are approximately 9,500 jobs Downtown, of which, more than half (56 percent) are public sector given the concentration of city, county, state and federal government operations as well as ancillary UF operations. While only modest government sector employment growth is projected over the next ten years, Downtown's government employment base provides economic stability and is generally more diverse and representative of the community as a whole compared to other sectors. At the same time, **Downtown Gainesville will need to position itself to capture a greater share of other growing sectors county-wide that tend to gravitate to downtown areas,** including Professional, Technical, and Financial Services jobs (17 percent projected growth) and Retail and Hospitality (13 percent growth). Additionally, employment in light manufacturing and other industrial space jobs are projected to increase by 12 county-wide and the Depot Park could accommodate a portion of this growth with a cluster of maker and artisanal fabrication jobs.

Employment Density

There are abundant advantages of Downtown as an employment center given existing density, access to public transportation, presence of community services and civic resources, existing public spaces, and proximity to the UF campus. However, market barriers will need to be overcome to provide the types of real estate products, services, and investments in the public realm to enhance its overall competitiveness.

Gainesville's Competitive Retail Landscape

From a retail development perspective, Downtown Gainesville must compete with multiple retail and commercial clusters around the city, many of which are within a 15-minute drive. There is an estimated oversupply of 3.1 million square feet of retail based on local household buying power. Celebration Pointe has delivered approximately 2.3 million square feet of commercial space since 2010 and offers a differentiated product and experience in a more hermetic suburban setting. It captures a share of would-be Downtown customers given its ease of vehicular access and clean and safe environment.

The market is oversaturated in terms of total retail supply and the future of Downtown's retail environment will never compete with suburban retail clusters in terms of scale (e.g. home goods stores, supermarkets, etc.). Downtown areas are typically best positioned to offer a more authentic, vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly retail and cultural experience; however, investments are needed in the public realm, services, and marketing to allow it to compete with places like Celebration Pointe that has been created to emulate an urban experience.
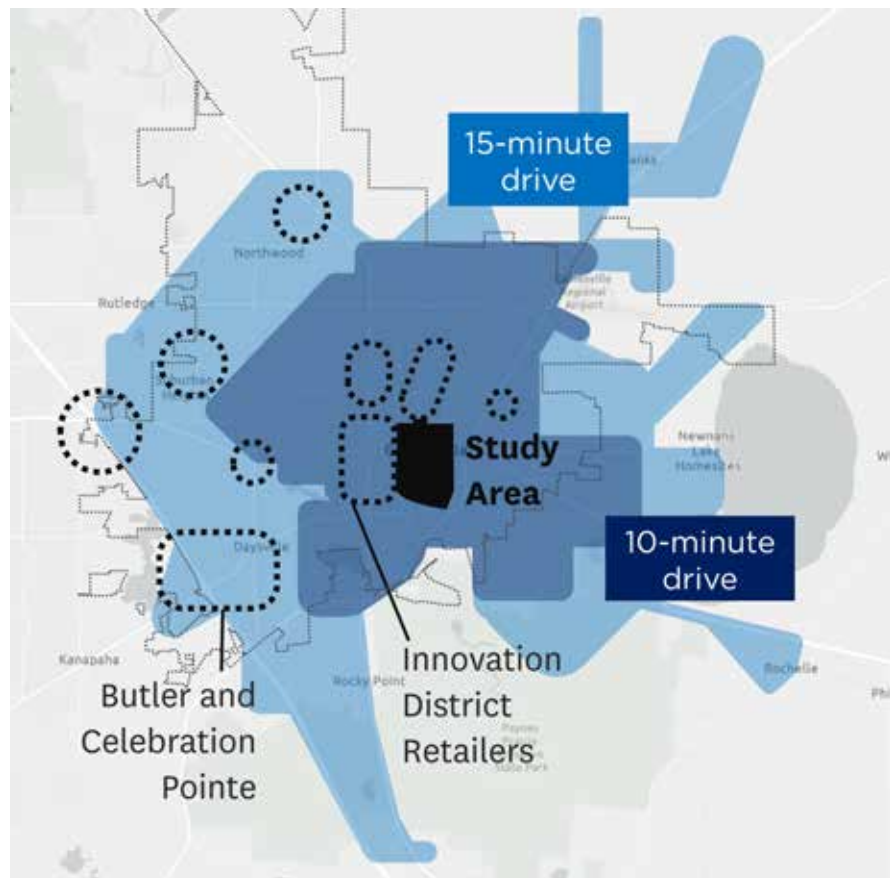

Source: ESRI (2021)

Demand is Finite

Considering the existing supply and competitiveness of nearby suburban retail clusters, **it is important to recognize that even as Downtown attracts new investment over the next decade by further leveraging the buying power of new residents, downtown workers, and hotel guests, demand is finite.** In total, based on a reasonable capture and estimated spending of 25,000 hotel guests, 1,000 new workers Downtown, and 7,000 new residents within a 15-minute drive, average annual retail spending of $41 million translates to market support of less 40,000 square feet Downtown or roughly 10 to 15 storefronts.

This emphasizes the importance of supporting smaller-scale, locally-owned businesses that can thrive in smaller spaces, but also offer a more authentic experience that cannot be found elsewhere in the region. If perceptions of safety and parking accessibility can be increased, in addition to a comprehensive marketing and branding program, a greater capture of regional customers would further strengthen the retail environment.

03
Community
Engagement
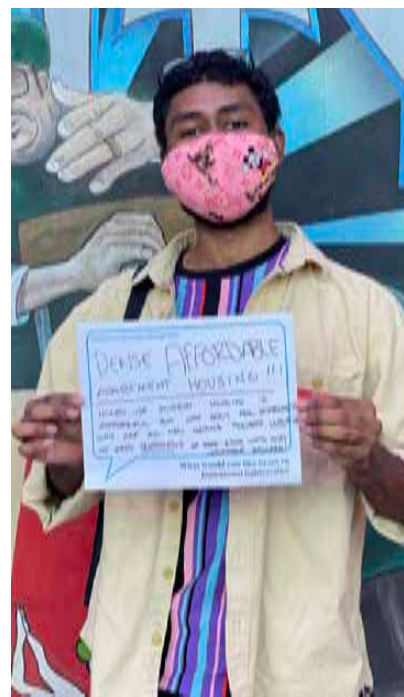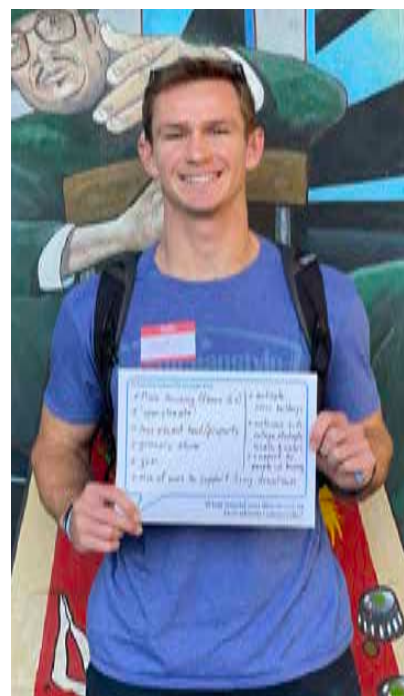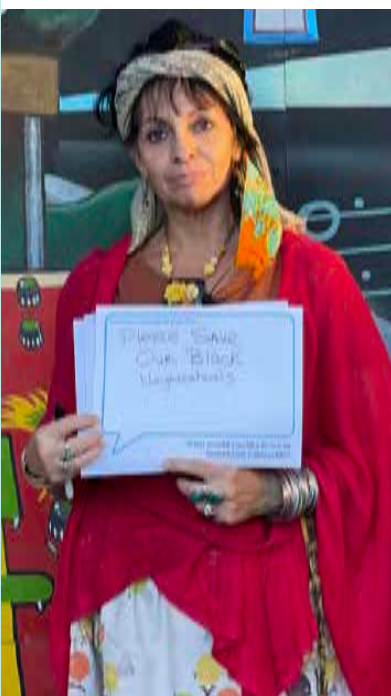
Engagement Methods

This plan represents the collective voices and ideas of hundreds of Gainesville neighbors.

Empowered through this planning process with decision-making roles, Gainesville neighbors from across the city had a direct and meaningful role in guiding the development of the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan. Through two Community Meetings, 15 stakeholder focus groups, and online and paper surveys/activities, the ideas in this plan represent the voices of 800+ Gainesville neighbors. Our

planning process engaged the community at large with the support from neighborhood leaders, the business community, institutional partners, and city staff and leadership.

A 16-member Neighbor Advisory Group (NAG) of key community leaders and neighborhood liaisons guided the process, meeting with the planning team at key project milestones. This group shaped the outcome of

this plan and served as trusted voices for communicating and encouraging participation in the planning process.

The engagement work was endorsed by City Commission at the onset of the plan and followed the City of Gainesville's Core Values for Community Engagement, shown below. This approach ensures an equitable process with shared accountability and meaningful participation.

Core Values for Community Engagement

We seek to ensure that individuals and groups most affected by a decision will be **involved in the decision-making process.** **1**	We seek to ensure that the public's contributions will **influence the decision.** **2**	We strive to make sustainable decisions by **recognizing and communicating the needs and interests** of all participants, including decision makers. **3**	We seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially **affected by or interested in a decision.** **4**
We seek input from participants in **designing how they participate.** **5**	We will **provide participants with the information they need** to participate in a meaningful way. **6**	We will communicate to participants how their **input affected the decision.** **7**	We will continuously improve our awareness of power and culture so that we can respect the **diverse histories, experiences and needs** of local residents. **8**

Source: City of Gainesville Engagement Toolkit (adapted from the IAP2)

800+
Total GNV voices engaged through this process

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS:

2 Community Meetings ◄

3 updates to the GCRA Advisory Board ◄

3 updates to the City Commission ◄

3 Neighbor Advisory Group Meetings ◄

15 Stakeholder Focus Groups ◄

One-on-one conversations with Commissioners and stakeholders ◄

Online Surveys and Activities ◄

Paper surveys at community events (distributed 400 copies) ◄

Contacted community leaders in East Gainesville ◄

2
Community Meetings at Bo Diddley Plaza

15
Stakeholder Focus Groups

150
Neighbors attended two Community Meetings

474
Neighbors responded to our Online Survey

63
Neighbors participated in our Online Activities

56
Neighbors filled out paper surveys at community events

90
Stakeholders engaged in 15 focus groups

16
Neighbor Advisory Group Members

170
Comments through online activities on the project website

320
Comments on our meeting activities and boards

Neighbor Advisory Group

The 16-member Neighbor Advisory Group (NAG) served as a representative voice for the Gainesville community in the development of a shared vision for the future of downtown. This group met four times with the project team at key project milestones to guide the process, establish priorities, and support the plan's engagement efforts.

Composed of neighbors from both downtown and nearby communities, business leaders, institutional partners, and downtown stewards, the NAG was critical in shaping the plan's recommendations and championing its ideas. Throughout the process, NAG members provided the project team with invaluable knowledge about downtown, confirming ideas and direction that resulted from our community engagement process.

In addition to the roles outlined above, NAG members also supported this process through the following actions:

► Refined and affirmed a community-driven vision for future growth and/or development in the downtown area.

► Augmented the planning team and city staff's communication and engagement with neighbors, local businesses, and stakeholders.

► Guided, evaluated, and helped refine recommendations that aligned with the key findings from the plan's engagement process.

► Served as champions for the plan's ideas and vision, helping spread the word on the plan's 16 ideas for downtown.

► Set the stage for the plan's implementation by providing insight on how to best translate the ideas in this plan into real outcomes.

Conducted virtually, NAG meetings included brief presentations from the project team, followed by lively discussion. Fully engaged throughout the entire process, the NAG met four times with the project team at all stages of the plan.

Stakeholder Focus Groups

The project team moderated 15 virtual stakeholder sessions with more than 100 participants between July, 2021 and August, 2022. Below are our major findings and take-aways from these conversations:

► **Neighborhoods around downtown** would like to preserve and enhance their existing character.

► **Downtown's strengths** are its walkability, diversity, authenticity, and destinations.

► **Density in and around downtown** is associated with housing for the University of Florida students. Community members recognize that there is a need for more housing downtown that goes beyond products for students.

► **Downtown needs to reinvent itself** and find a competitive niche to become viable, especially considering its local and regional competition, such as Celebration Pointe.

► **For downtown to be successful** there needs to be a critical mass of local retail in a walkable environment. While downtown has the foundation for this to flourish, it feels dirty and littered.

► **A perceived lack of safety** is exacerbated and augmented by a lack of lighting and the prevalence of a homeless population.

► **Connectivity is a big concern** - there are gaps in walkability and bikability between downtown and its nearby assets.

► **A perceived lack of parking** may be rooted in the fact that parking, though plentiful, is located in paid parking garages or within a short walk away from destinations.

Following these conversations, the planning team conducted additional stakeholder discussions in January and February of 2022. These meetings engaged key community leaders and parties to address on-going topics being discussed. As part of these follow ups, the planning team met with the following groups:

► Santa Fe College

► UF Innovate

► AMJ Group Inc.

► Mickle Family

► Alachua County

► Alachua County Public Schools

► Downtown Business Watch

► CADE Museum and the Thriving Cities Team

90+ Stakeholders
Engaged through this process

Neighborhood Leadership: Downtown, Porters Quarters, Duckpond, Springhill/Power District, Pleasant Street

Downtown Businesses

Educational Institutions

Emerging Leaders

Former Downtown Business Owners

Hospitality

Development and Real Estate

Arts and Culture

Planning and Design Professionals

Social Services

GCRA Advisory Board (GCRA members also attended various sessions)

City Staff (City staff also attended various sessions)

Online/Analog Engagement

A key part of any engagement process includes engagement methods outside traditional public meetings. Guided by the city's Engagement Toolkit, the planning team and city staff devised a strategy to augment engagement through both online and analog means.

Online Engagement

Online engagement launched with the plan's official public roll-out and occurred concurrent with all phases of work. Through a project website, online activities, two online surveys, and the city's official social media channels, Gainesville neighbors with Internet access were able to view meeting materials, provide input, and contact members from the team. The plan's online tools included:

► **Project Website:** A dedicated page on the city's official website served as an online repository of project information, meeting materials, and links to online surveys and activities. Updated continuously throughout the entirety of the process, this website allowed visitors to subscribe for email updates, and linked to social media events for upcoming meetings.

► **Online Activities:** A variety of online tools allowed for neighbors to directly share input and ideas with the planning team. These tools included an interactive map where users could geolocate opportunities, issues, and general comments about downtown, and an ideas wall that served as a community bulletin board where neighbors could up-vote and comment on others' ideas.

► **Online Feedback:** Conducted at two stages of the planning process, online surveys engaged the community to augment questions asked at in-person events, and ask for input on draft ideas and recommendations. With 474 responses, these surveys were invaluable in reaching a wide swath of the community.

Paper Surveys

While we find that there are certain populations that are comfortable attending community meetings or responding to online surveys, other groups are traditionally under-represented in these forums. In order to reach these under-represented voices, the planning team worked with city staff to identify key groups that would benefit from additional in-person engagement. As such, city staff attended various gatherings in East Gainesville following the larger community meetings, and distributed more than 400 paper surveys mirroring questions asked through our online engagement platforms. These surveys resulted in 56 responses from Gainesville neighbors who largely self-identified as Black or African-American.

Online Engagement:

Project Website: ◄
www.cityofgainesville.org/
DowntownStrategicPlan

Online Activities: ◄
Interactive Map, Ideas Wall

Online Feedback: ◄
Two online surveys

Project Website

Ideas Wall

Interactive Map
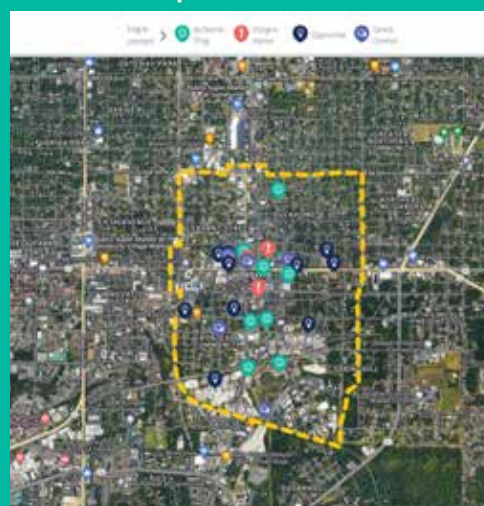
Spotlight: How Neighbors Experience Downtown*

▶ **HOW OFTEN do you visit downtown GNV?**

Daily
33%

Once a Week
12%

2-3 Times/ Week
38%

Special Events
5%

Hardly Ever
2%

Monthly
9%
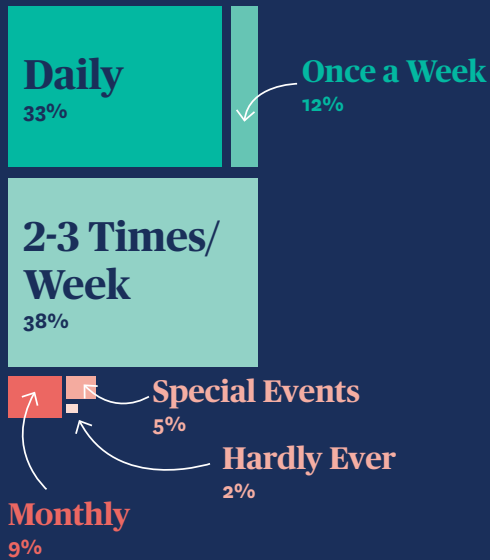
▶ **What do YOU USUALLY DO in Downtown GNV?**

Visit a Cafe or Restaurant
20%

Meet with friends
16%

Enjoy a show
15%

Enjoy a public park
14%

I work Downtown
8%

Exercise
7%

Go to a night club/bar
7%

Shop
6%

I live Downtown
5%

▶ **WHEN do you usually visit downtown GNV?**

WEEKDAYS		**WEEKENDS**
10%	Late Evening	14%
31%	Evening	30%
23%	Afternoon	25%
19%	Lunchtime	15%
17%	Morning	15%
2%	Never	2%

BO DIDDLEY PLAZA

*Feedback collected from GNV neighbors at community events and online surveys

49
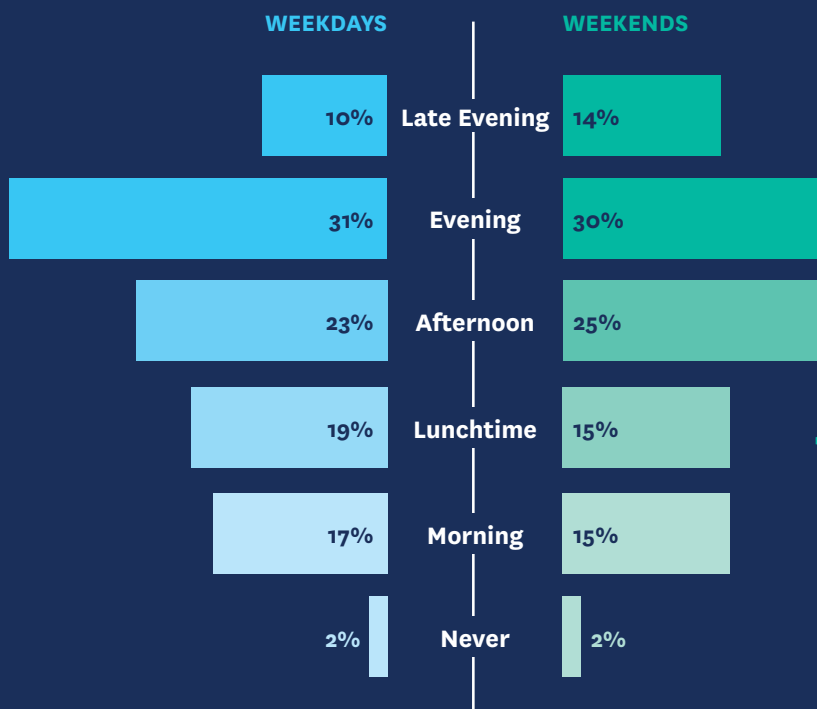
Community Meetings

Held at Bo Diddley Plaza, two community meetings brought hundreds of Gainesville neighbors together to help the planning team craft a vision for downtown. These meetings served as an invaluable tool in engaging the community at key milestones in the planning process. Through presentations, displays, activity stations, and one-on-one conversations, our meetings served a critical purpose in learning about how Gainesville neighbors use and perceive downtown, getting input on draft concepts and recommendations, and celebrati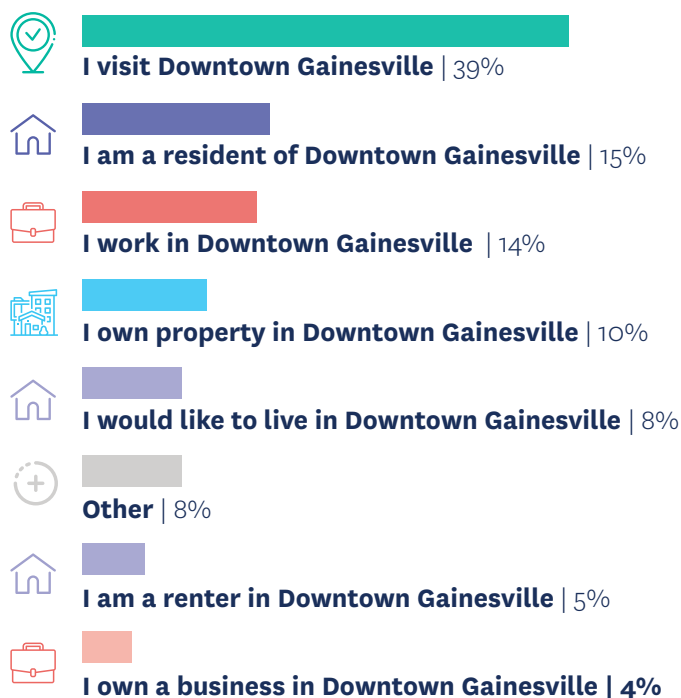ng the vision for downtown. At both meetings, the planning team was joined by community organizations that provided informational materials on their current programs and initiatives. These parters included the CADE Museum, Greater Gainesville Chamber, Visit Gainesville, and the GCRA, which also provided volunteers to support planning staff at both events.

▶ **Community Meeting 1:** At the end of October 2021, more than 70 Gainesville neighbors joined the planning team to discuss downtown's assets, issues, and opportunities. Culminating the plan's first phase of engagement, this meeting included various activity stations in an open house format. Neighbors

2023-992A

▶ **What BEST DESCRIBES you?**

I visit Downtown Gainesville | 39%

I am a resident of Downtown Gainesville | 15%

I work in Downtown Gainesville | 14%

I own property in Downtown Gainesville | 10%

I would like to live in Downtown Gainesville | 8%

Other | 8%

I am a renter in Downtown Gainesville | 5%

I own a business in Downtown Gainesville | 4%

were asked to share their feedback on what they like about downtown, what issues they would like to see change or improved, and what opportunities they envision for the future.

▶ **Community Meeting 2:** Toward the end of April 2022, Gainesville neighbors joined the planning team for a second event at Bo Diddley Plaza. At this meeting, the planning team shared a presentation outlining 16 Ideas for downtown that directly reflected six key

findings we learned through our engagement process. These findings, discussed at the end of this chapter, create the backbone for the plan's recommendations. Following the presentation, the planning team gathered around various activity stations to solicit feedback and input, while holding one-on-one conversations. This meeting, which marked the culmination of the second of three project phases, provided the necessary direction to complete this plan.

▶ **What would you LIKE TO SEE in Downtown Gainesville?**

#1 **More Businesses and Retail Options**

❝ Evening retail! Mixed variety."

❝ Housing, grocery store, diverse commercial."

❝ Build economy for black business owners in predominately black neighborhoods."

#2 **More walkable and transit-friendly streets**

❝ Calm speeds on University Ave. Wider Sidewalks."
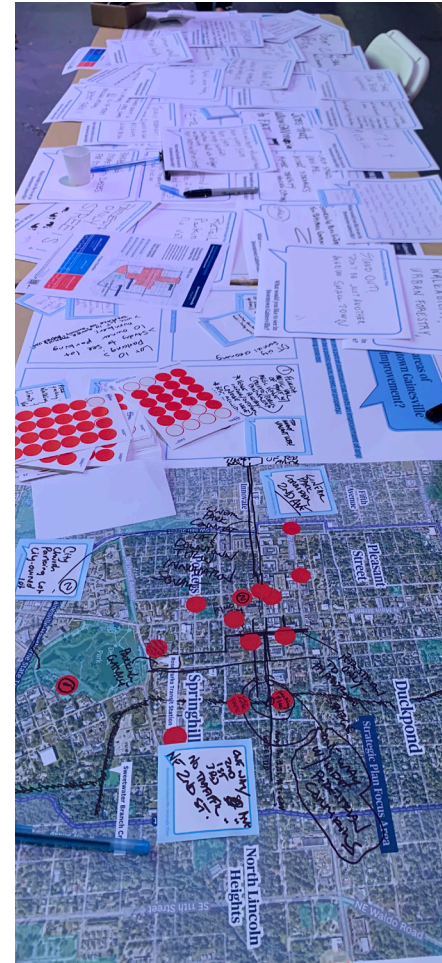
❝ Pedestrian streets and walkability/cycling"

#3 **Celebrate downtown's uniqueness and diversity**

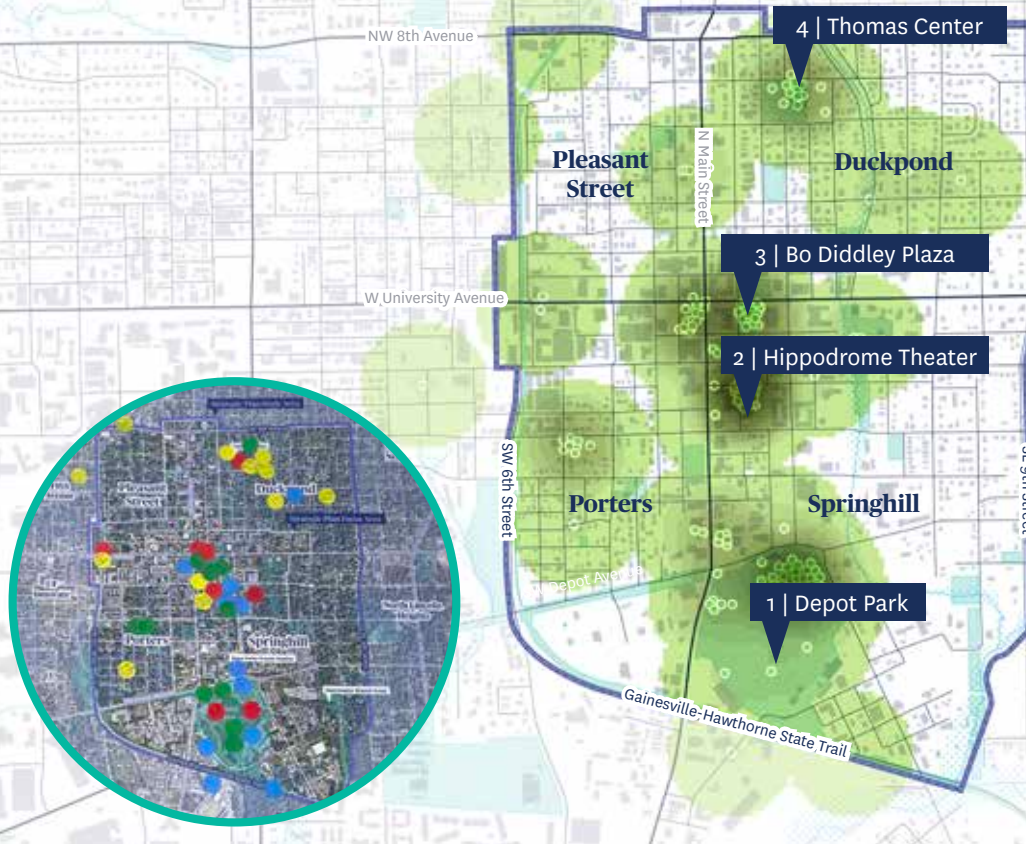❝ Stand out, don't be just like another American small town."

#4 **Parking concerns (both surplus and deficit)**

Community Meeting 1 & Online Survey Results:
What are your favorite places/things Downtown?

4 | Thomas Center

Pleasant Street

Duckpond

N Main Street

3 | Bo Diddley Plaza

W University Avenue

2 | Hippodrome Theater

SW 6th Street

Porters

Springhill

SE 9th Street

SE 11th Street

1 | Depot Park

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

At the first community meeting and through online and paper surveys, we asked Gainesville neighbors to share their favorite places and things about downtown.

The places we heard the most were the enduring assets most commonly associated with downtown, such as the Hippodrome Theater, Depot Park, Bo Diddley Plaza, and the Thomas Center. As seen in the map above, these places fall on a north-south orientation and are within walking distance to each other. Nonetheless, when asked if they would walk between these destinations, some neighbors hesitated due gaps in walkability. Similarly, when asked what things they

liked to do downtown, most neighbors commented on downtown's great restaurants, parks, and walkable streets.
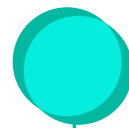

**#1
Food/Restaurants**

**#2
Parks/Trees**

**#3
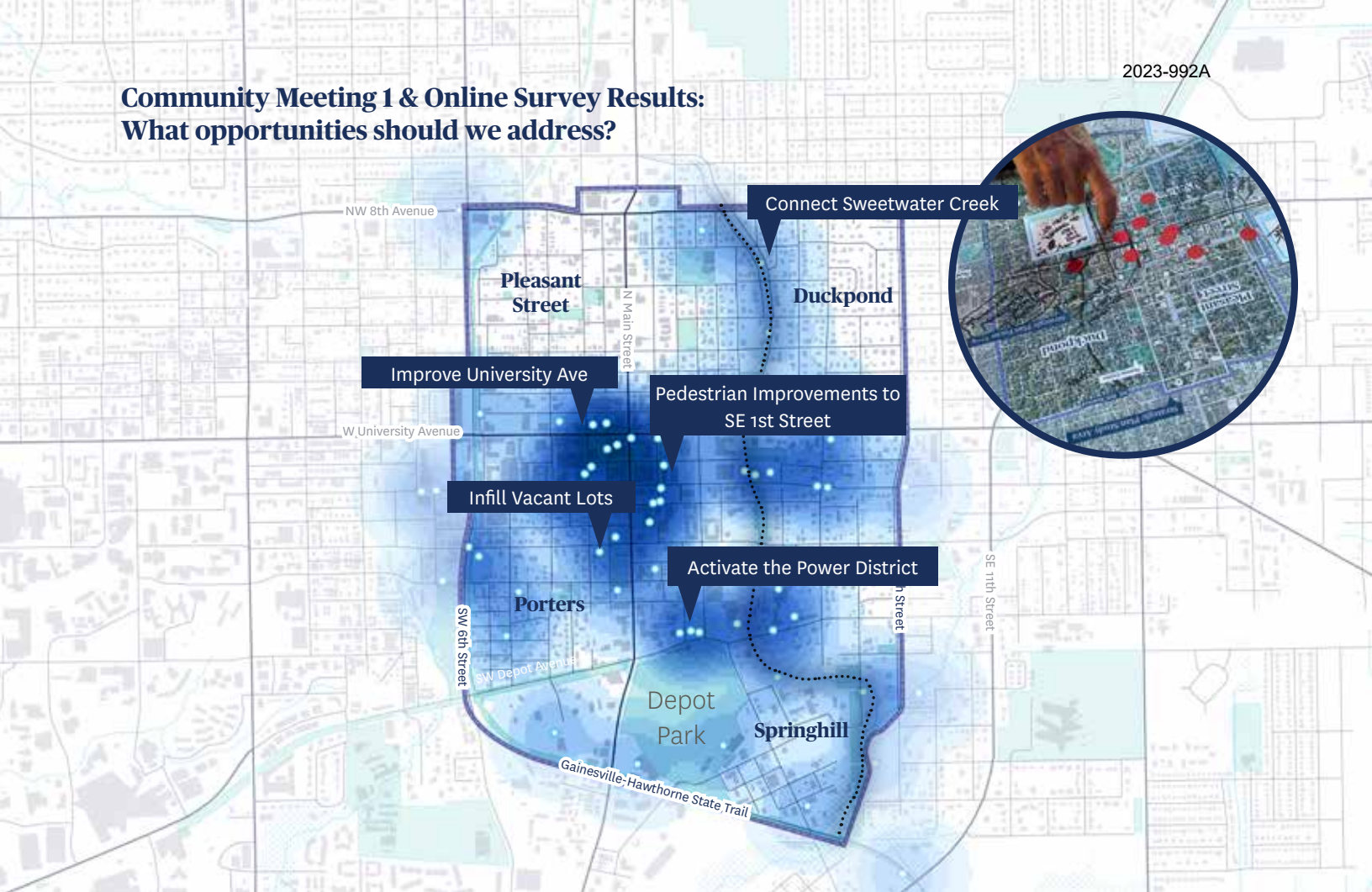Walkable**

**#4
Arts/
Theater**

**#5
Hippodrome
Theater**

**#6
Music**

**#7
Character/
History**

Community Meeting 1 & Online Survey Results: What opportunities should we address?

Map labels:
- NW 8th Avenue
- Connect Sweetwater Creek
- Pleasant Street
- Duckpond
- N Main Street
- Improve University Ave
- W University Avenue
- Pedestrian Improvements to SE 1st Street
- Infill Vacant Lots
- Activate the Power District
- SE 11th Street
- Porters
- SW 6th Street
- SW Depot Avenue
- Depot Park
- Springhill
- Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

When asked to share their vision for opportunities in downtown, most neighbors focused on downtown's vibrancy as a potential magnet in attracting more local businesses to the area. Neighbors noted that while downtown already has an eclectic mix of restaurants and retailers, more local and unique offerings were needed to help bring a critical mass of activity.

Other opportunities shared were topics previously noted as challenges faced by downtown. For instance, downtown's lack of connectivity was seen as an opportunity to build a network of pedestrian-friendly streets.

As seen in the map above, one of the most popular opportunities was the Sweetwater Creek corridor. Drawn on various maps by several neighbors, this corridor was described as a "hidden gem" that was ripe for a rediscovery.

> Consider more year-round regular programming to attract visitors from citizens and visitors alike. Make downtown more accessible."

#1 More Businesses

#2 Ped/Bike Options

#3 Affordable Housing

> Expand opportunities for unique and local businesses."

#4 Parking

#5 Safety/ Lighting

#6 Transit

#7 Homelessness

Direction from the GNV Community

This plan reflects the diverse and engaged community that shaped it.

The recommendations in this plan reflect hundreds of voices engaged in this process through community meetings, surveys, stakeholder focus groups, and online tools. From neighbors who lived walking distance to downtown, to those who drive in from the surrounding region, the comments we received reflected the diversity and richness of this community. In this diversity, we found six common threads that permeated across the hundreds of ideas and comments we received. These are listed below and serve as the backbone of this plan.

► **Become a Destination:** Downtown should strive to become a magnet that draws in visitors from across the Gainesville region. Building on its enduring assets like Depot Park and the CADE Museum, downtown needs to position itself as a destination for all Gainesville neighbors.

► **Connecting the Dots:** Downtown needs to focus on improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Though downtown's assets are within walking distance of each other, they often feel disconnected due a lack of walkable, comfortable, active and safe. Similarly, downtown needs to improve its connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

► **Strengthen the Relationship with Adjacent Neighborhoods:** Neighbors living near downtown value the character and charm of their neighborhoods, and would like to ensure that growth in downtown is mutually beneficial and compatible with the scale of their residential areas.

► **Increase Housing Opportunities:** Because of its proximity to services and destinations, downtown is the most equitable and logical place for denser housing. Housing in the downtown needs to expand beyond student housing to offer affordable and market-rate options that serve the needs of families, young professionals, and an aging population.

► **Create a Supportive Local Business Environment:** Downtown's eclectic, walkable, and vibrant environment is a natural fit for locally owned businesses. In tandem with additional housing, downtown needs more businesses to thrive and expand economic opportunities.

► **Maintain and Enhance Downtown:** It is imperative that the ideas in this plan are implemented and result in real and tangible outcomes. For this to happen, downtown needs a dedicated steward that focuses on maintaining current assets, and enhancing what is already there.

Six key findings from our community engagement...
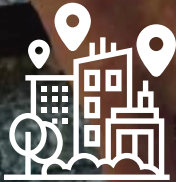
Become a Destination

Downtown needs to establish itself as a regional destination that attracts all Gainesville neighbors.

Connect the Dots

There is a lack of continuous walking, biking and transit connections in the downtown area.

Strengthen the Relationship with Adjacent Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods around downtown would like to preserve and enhance their existing character.

Increase Housing Opportunities

There is a lack of affordable and market-rate housing in the downtown area beyond student-oriented housing.

Create a Supportive Local Business Environment

Downtown needs a critical mass of locally owned businesses that support a vibrant local economy.

Maintain and Enhance Downtown

Establish an entity and implementable action plan to maintain and enhance downtown's assets.

04

16 Ideas For Downtown GNV

Setting a Vision for Downtown

Responding to the community's direction, the planning team created six overall themes that will shape the evolution of Downtown Gainesville.

This clarity of purpose allowed focused time, attention and detail to be paid to the issues and opportunities that mattered most to the Gainesville community. From these six themes, 16 Ideas were created to provide a framework for the strategies and action items that will enable change and transformation in Downtown Gainesville.

In this chapter, each of the six themes are explored, with the relevant ideas providing greater explanation and detail in to the why, what and how for each. This will solidify **why this idea** is important and **why it matters**. It will answer what it could look like and what needs to be done. It will offer suggestions on how it can be successfully accomplished and achieved. With additional detail on objectives and recommendations for each

idea, it will become clear how each idea can be enacted and implemented.

This section concludes by answering the most important question of all: **Who is going to do all of this?** Just as this plan was created by the community, implementing this plan will no doubt be a community-wide effort. However, it must be guided by a consistent, focused and supported organization. The final idea lays the groundwork for the **creation of an Implementation Entity** to begin the work of transforming downtown. Successful in other cities across Florida, the region and the country, such organizations work collaboratively with all community voices and leaders to make sustainable, lasting change in downtowns. Gainesville should be no different in continuing this

successful model for downtown revitalization. This plan sets in place the roadmap for the community to take hold of these 16 ideas and turn them into actionable projects and policies that fulfill the vision for a more vibrant, equitable, and active Downtown Gainesville.

Based on the direction from the GNV community, the 16 Ideas for downtown are...

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

Become a Destination

Across the spectrum of our conversations in the Gainesville community, the desire for a great downtown was a common theme.

There is widespread recognition of the significant role that downtown serves in support of daily life and commerce in the City as well as its critical function of driving fresh investment, drawing talent, and attracting visitors.

Downtown wears multiple hats and serves a variety of audiences, and there is not a singular move or stand-alone idea that will sustain Downtown Gainesville as a destination over the long term. Downtown is at various times an entertainment venue, ceremonial space, leisure space, public market, cultural center, commercial hub, and community living room.

To effectively deliver these various public functions and serve as a welcoming attraction for both residents and visitors, the approach to making downtown special requires a combination of efforts related to business diversity, quality of place, unique experiences, and a commitment to stewardship. Most importantly, downtown must tell an authentic story about Gainesville that captures the spirit of the community.
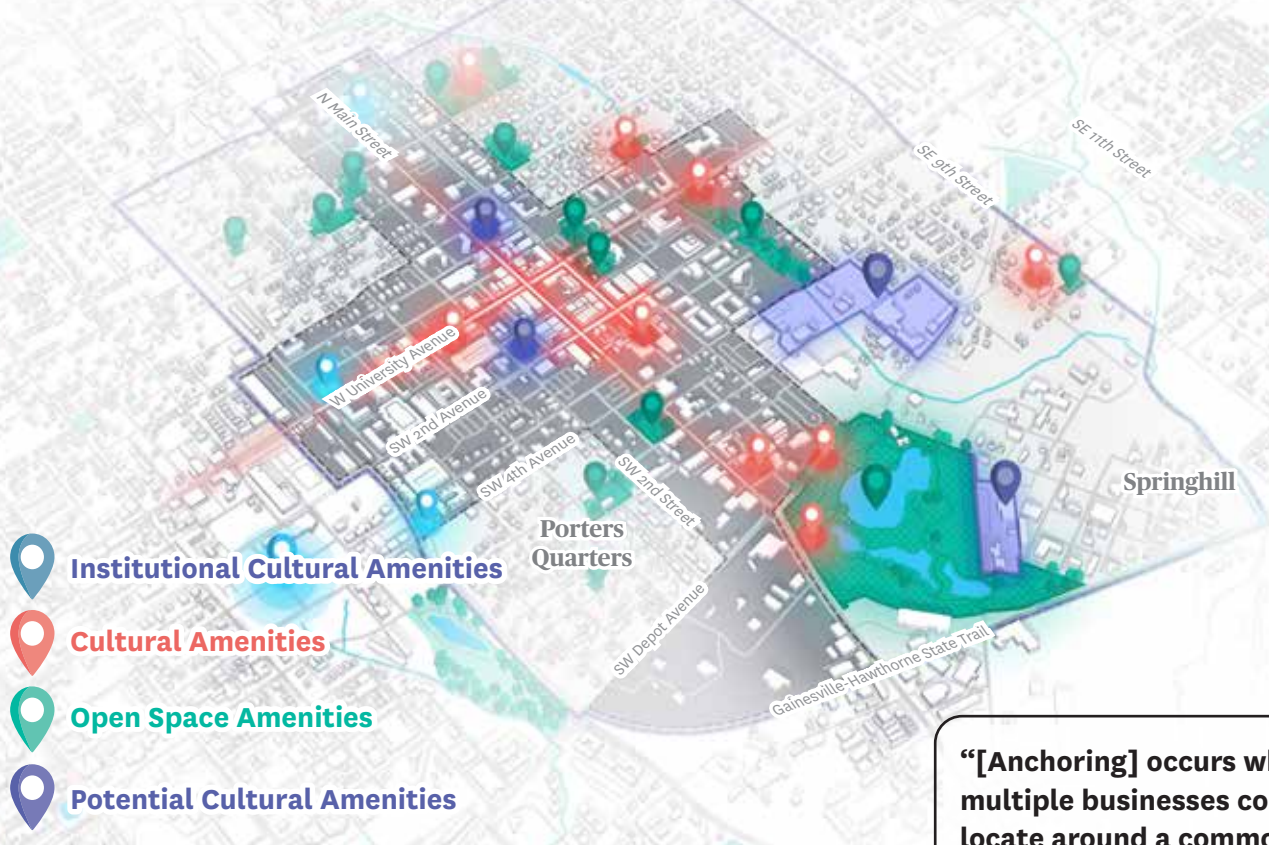
To achieve these aspirations for downtown and create a beloved destination, three ideas have emerged from the community-driven planning process:

▶ **Idea 1: Build Investment Around Local Strengths**

▶ **Idea 2: Shape Downtown Identity**

▶ **Idea 3: Create a Downtown Jewel**

Stand out! Don't be just like any other American small town."

Downtown should tell a story about who we are."

Create complementary and connected niches of unique public use and business activity around key local assets.

Institutional Cultural Amenities

Cultural Amenities

Open Space Amenities

Potential Cultural Amenities

"[Anchoring] occurs when multiple businesses co-locate around a commonly attractive external resource."

Source: The Amenity Mix of Urban Neighborhoods, Habitat International, 2020

Idea 1: Build Investment Around Local Strengths

Create complementary and connected niches of unique public use and business activity around key local assets.

The first step in strengthening Downtown's role as a local, regional, and national destination is understanding the unique assets of the urban core. These natural features, cultural amenities, historic landmarks, institutional assets and human resources contribute to Downtown Gainesville's authentic vibe and flavor.

Once identified, these local assets can form the foundation for guiding investment, development, business mix, and public activity. Many of these assets also have a stabilizing effect on real estate value and business viability and can sustain the long-term value of both public and private investment. Commonly attractive resources such as rivers, parks, and historic architecture can serve as anchors for business and development activity by drawing foot traffic, repeat visits, social media visibility, and community activity.

When future development in Downtown Gainesville is built on a foundation of local assets, two important goals can be achieved:

1. **Places, qualities and experiences** that hold value for local residents are protected and enhanced, creating a familiar and welcoming environment for the whole community.

2. **Authentic placemaking and storytelling** built around unique local attributes forms a competitive niche, attracting investment and spurring economic development.

Character Areas

Local assets are often grouped geographically around drivers of urban form, such as historic infrastructure (e.g., railroads), natural features (e.g., waterfronts), civic resources (e.g., public squares), or institutional assets (e.g., universities or hospitals). These groupings can be thought of as Character Areas within the downtown that possess distinct features that are complementary. The unique attributes of a Character Area can be aligned with the needs of varied business types and real estate products forming a symbiotic relationship between the qualities of place and the type of development.

Well-defined Character Areas built around local assets convey a strong sense of place and create recognizable districts. The definition of these areas is an important component of responsive planning (protecting features valued by the local community) and a key ingredient in business success and economic competitiveness. Articulating Character Areas and their core strengths should inform:

► Historic Preservation Policy
► Design and Prioritization of Capital Improvements
► Economic Development Policy and Targeted Business Recruiting
► Land Use Planning and Zoning Regulations
► Downtown Identity and Branding

> **"A distinct sense of place is the glue that holds any commercial district together."**
>
> **Source: Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and the Role of Commercial Districts, Main Street America**

2023-992A

The City of Gainesville, GCRA and their like-minded civic partners can play an important role as a first mover in these Character Areas. By identifying public realm improvements (e.g., parks, streetscapes, public art, restoration and adaptive reuse of landmark structures) that leverage the impact of existing assets and strengthen the sense of place, the public sector can both attract and anchor investment around targeted placemaking projects.

Downtown has three Character Areas with strong potential for near-term catalytic impact. These districts have distinct features authentic to Gainesville, the ability to collectively shape the identity of Downtown, and the potential to be connected as a series of destinations that form a one-of-a-kind experience:

► **Historic Core:**
Anchored by the Hippodrome, Bo Diddley Plaza, a growing hospitality cluster, and walkable streets with historic commercial architecture, the Historic Core is one of the most widely recognized and frequented destinations in the Gainesville community.

► **SoMa:**
With the strong popular appeal of Depot Park and the Cade Museum, access to trails and greenways, and the character of historic industrial architecture, the district along South Main Street (SoMa) is a vibrant district of arts, culture, craft manufacturing, and boutique businesses.

► **Innovation District:**
The strong institutional presence of UF Innovate and the new Santa Fe College Blount Campus make this district of industry and innovation a key attraction for new business, talent, and investment in Gainesville.

Character Areas: Create distinct, but complementary, character areas with unique local qualities that can be matched with the needs of different types of businesses and developments.

Duckpond

**Food and beverage
Boutique
Hospitality
Convenience Retail**

**Flexible Space
Galleries/Arts/Performance
Fabrication
Artisanal Design**

SoMa

Historic Core

Santa Fe College Blount Center

S Main Street

SW 2nd Street

SW Depot Avenue

Springhill

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

Porters Quarters

Innovation District

W University Avenue

SW 2nd Avenue

SW 4th Avenue

**Biotech
UF Innovate
Santa Fe College Blount Center
Future Class A or lab development**

University of Florida
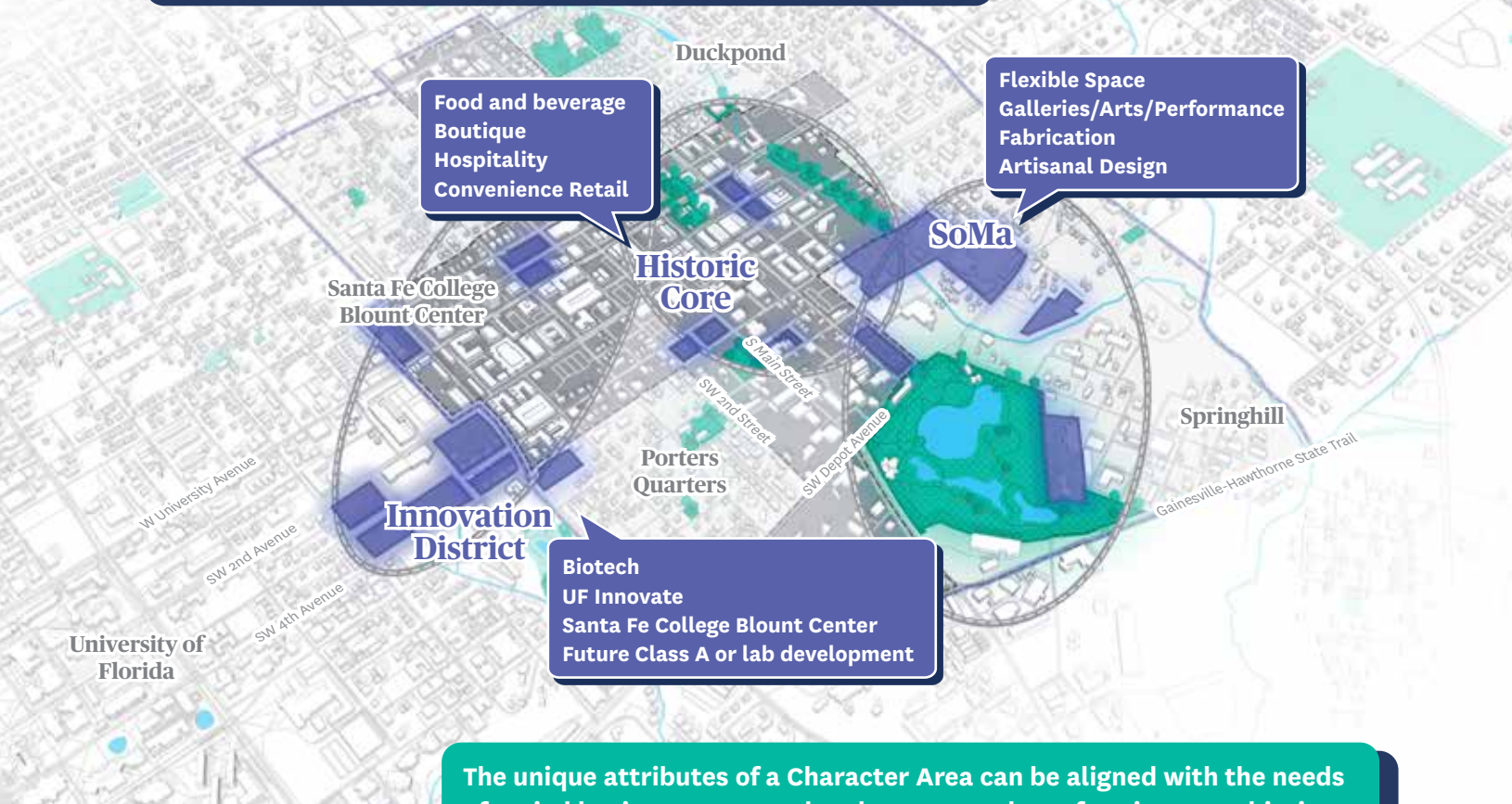
The unique attributes of a Character Area can be aligned with the needs of varied business types and real estate products forming a symbiotic relationship between the qualities of place and the type of development.

Historic Core

SoMa

Innovation District

• Sweetwater Park/Greenway access
• Arts, History and Cultural Venues
• Historic Commercial Architecture
• Bo Diddley Plaza and Hippodrome

• Historic industrial building stock
• Urban and regional trail access
• High bay warehouse and manufacturing space
• Depot Park and Cade Museum

• Downtown proximity
• Higher education presence, talent flow, and resources
• Park and rail trail access
• UF Innovate and SF Blount Campus entrepreneurial support resources

> **Clustering: Prioritize business recruitment, development activity, and public investment in the identified areas to create a critical mass of business activity and a nucleus of pedestrian energy.**

Footprint of 10-year development demand at maximum density of allowed zoning.

Footprint of 10-year development demand at density of existing downtown core.

Footprint of 10-year development demand at density of neighborhoods.

Maximum density of allowed zoning

Density of existing downtown core

Neighborhood-scale density

Clustering

Building on the idea of Character Areas outlined above, the next step in shaping downtown as a thriving destination is to **prioritize business recruitment, development activity, and public investment in these Character Areas** to create a critical mass of business activity and a nucleus of pedestrian energy. By focusing public and private investment in clusters that are anchored by local assets the community can:

► **Leverage the agglomeration benefits** that are so critical for business viability and the marketability of new development.

► **Stimulate a positive spillover** effect on surrounding areas of Downtown.

The importance of clustering is also highlighted by the relatively modest projection of the demand for commercial development over the next decade in downtown Gainesville. At densities matching the current scale of development in the downtown core, the amount of projected investment in new commercial development over the next 10 years would only cover 3% of the total downtown area.

To capture this limited resource of new investment and deploy it in a way that maximizes positive spillover effects for businesses throughout downtown and for the greater Gainesville community requires a commitment to planned investment in critical areas. By identifying key public realm investments that strengthen the quality of place in the identified Character Areas and working with the private investment community to align development opportunities, scale, and building heights with those qualities, the City will lay the foundation for a critical mass of downtown business activity and hub of community life.

"Businesses do not simply gravitate towards customers but also cluster with each other to form more attractive destinations."

Source: Location & Agglomeration: The Distribution of Retail and Food Businesses in Dense Urban Environments, Journal of Planning Education and Research, 2014
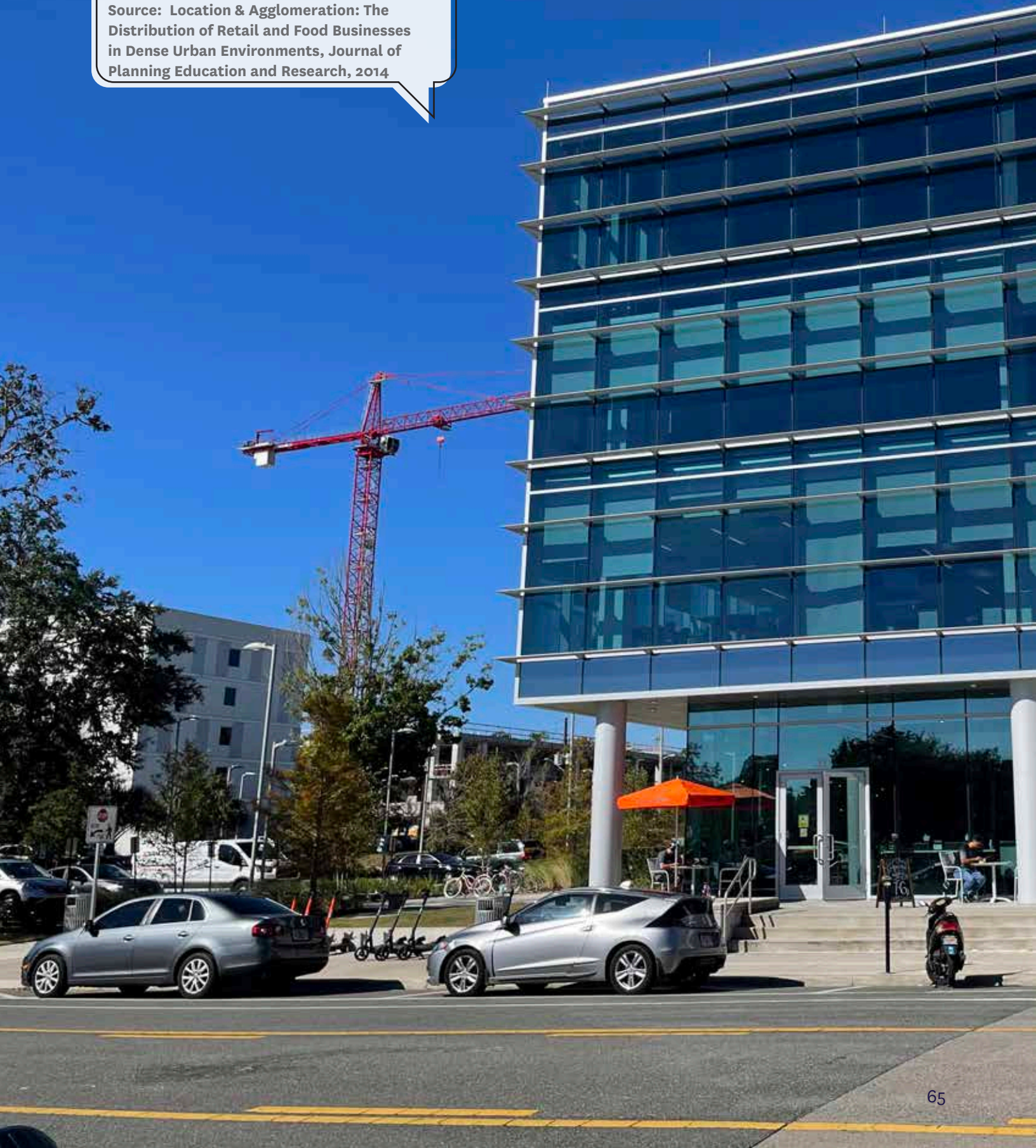
Develop a coordinated marketing and branding program around Downtown Gainesville's authentic built and living heritage

Honey, let's move to Gainesville!

Civic Identity
Downtown must feel like everyone's neighborhood: welcoming, culturally relevant and accessible

+

Destination Brand
Downtown must be one of the top factors in influencing decisions to visit, live, and invest in Gainesville

Build Around *Enduring* Assets
The identity must be rooted in place-based assets that can weather business churn and shifting economic conditions

| CADE Museum | Sweetwater Creek | Hippodrome Theater |

+

Build Around *Evolving* Assets
The identity must shine a light on the entrepreneurs, innovators, creatives, and small businesses that collectively create the fresh and evolving spirit of Downtown

| Matrixx Technologies | Diva Kouture Boutique | Wyatt's Coffee |

Idea 2: Shape Downtown Identity

Develop a coordinated marketing and branding program around Downtown Gainesville's authentic built and living heritage.

One of the questions that emerged in our conversations with the Gainesville community is "What is the identity of Downtown," and "What are we trying to say and project about Downtown?" This question gets to the root of the need for a strong downtown purpose and identity.

To create an identity for downtown that inspires civic pride and a brand for downtown that supports economic competitiveness, the community must discern and creatively shape a story and experience that is meaningful and uniquely Gainesville. It is important to

have both of these elements: a story without a corresponding lived experience is superficial and an experience without story is a missed opportunity to attract business and investment to the community.

The first consideration in discerning and highlighting a successful story about downtown is to simultaneously develop a Civic Identity and a Destination Brand. The Civic Identity is how local residents and workers perceive Downtown. It must be welcoming, culturally relevant and socially accessible to all Gainesville residents; downtown must feel like everyone's neighborhood. The Destination Brand is how the outside world perceives downtown and it must serve as one of the top drivers in influencing decisions to visit, live, and invest in Gainesville.

A second consideration in crafting the story of downtown

is to identify and build around Enduring Assets while celebrating Evolving Assets. The Enduring Assets are place-based qualities (e.g., historic landmarks, natural resources) that can weather business churn and shifting economic conditions. Bo Diddley Plaza, the Sweetwater Creek, the Hippodrome, Cade Museum and Depot Park are all examples of the built and natural heritage of Gainesville that can form the foundation of and sustain a powerful downtown identity over the long term. The celebration of Evolving Assets involves shining a light on the entrepreneurs, innovators, creatives, and small businesses that collectively create the fresh and evolving spirit of Downtown. This celebration of the living heritage of Gainesville is a key ingredient in the success of the small business environment Downtown.

More than a Logo

When considering the development of a brand and identity the first thing that leaps to everyone's mind is a logo; a graphic design exercise that populates digital and print marketing collateral. But a downtown brand is much more than that.

A strong downtown brand for Gainesville must be supported by three pillars:

Social Campaign	Place Campaign	Experiential Campaign
Robust local communication and national marketing, with consistent tone and identity.	Locally-inspired design of environmental graphics and public space.	Diverse program of public events and activities.

▶ **Social Campaign**
The Social Campaign is a dedicated program of local communication and national marketing with consistent tone and identity. The Social Campaign is a tool to share news, history, stories, and to promote the businesses and activities Downtown. With content ranging from profiles of small business owners to economic development initiatives, the communication aspect of the downtown brand requires dedicated personnel committed to real time information sharing across multiple digital platforms.

▶ **Place Campaign**
The Place Campaign involves the locally-inspired design of public spaces and environmental graphics to strengthen sense of place and civic pride. This effort involves small and large capital projects that build a consistent vocabulary of public realm improvements. Public art, wayfinding signage, district identification signage, parklets, public greens, streetscapes, and trails are all prime candidates for physical improvements that are unique to their local environment and tied to the greater identity of Downtown.

▶ **Experiential Campaign**
The Experiential Campaign is a diverse program of public events and activities appealing to a wide range of local audiences. This is especially critical since programming is essential to the success of downtown and its public spaces, and plays a role in the perception of a welcoming downtown. Rooted in engagement and conversation with the community to ensure that the program of events meets (and evolves over time to meet) the needs of the Gainesville community, the Experiential Campaign is about bringing people together. It is the sum of activities, events, and experiences downtown that are welcoming for everyone and capture the spirit of Gainesville.

Idea 3: Create a Downtown Jewel
Re-imagine Sweetwater Park as a signature public green space in the urban core of Gainesville

Urban parks are one of the most significant assets of any city due to the multivalent benefits they provide to the surrounding community: improved public health and wellness (through recreation, social interaction, and access to nature), improved ecological services (through cleaner air, cleaner water, and thermal comfort), enhanced economic competitiveness (through quality of life attraction), sustained fiscal performance (through increased real estate value), and strengthened community life (through community events, activities, and informal social interaction in a neutral, public-serving environment). For these reasons, and additional locally specific benefits, Sweetwater Park and the surrounding greenspace parcels provides a signature opportunity to drive Downtown Gainesville forward as a local, regional and national destination.

Sweetwater Park is both a valuable existing public park and an asset with tremendous untapped potential. It is part of the larger (and in-progress) Sweetwater Creek Greenway network; it is situated at a natural interface between East Gainesville and Downtown; it is adjacent to the historic core; it has ample public parking within one block, and it touches many of the signature institutions that comprise Gainesville's cultural and educational landscape.

By focusing on a refresh of this under-looked public amenity, the Gainesville community can achieve several key objectives:

► **Create a distinctive and welcoming public space** at the crossroads of Gainesville.

► **Spur investment in the historic core** through the creation of high value greenspace that draws pedestrian activity, drives positive real estate value, and connects cultural assets.

► **Creatively unlock community benefit**, environmental uplift and economic value from an urban floodplain that is largely undevelopable and surrounding natural areas that are ripe for restoration.

With significant portions of the Sweetwater Park and surrounding greenspace under the ownership of the City of Gainesville, Alachua County entities (Schools Administration, Library), and the Matheson Museum, and given the generally aligned missions of these public-serving entities, the potential for transformative change through strategic partnerships is viable.

Boltin Center

Alachua County Schools

Matheson Museum

Matheson Museum

Alachua County Library

Sweetwater Park

Bo Diddley Plaza

US District Court

Radiant Credit Union

Springhill

Springhill

University Avenue

SE 2nd Avenue

SE 4th Avenue

SE 1st Avenue

SE 4th Street

SE 3rd Street

2023-992A

Re-imagine Sweetwater Park as a signature public green space in the urban core of Gainesville.

▲ **The Current Experience**

▼ **The Potential Experience**

Recreation

Restoration

Discovery

Community

Leisure

Education

Play

To maximize the benefits of Sweetwater Park to downtown and the greater Gainesville community, there are several key design principles that should serve as a framework for future improvements:
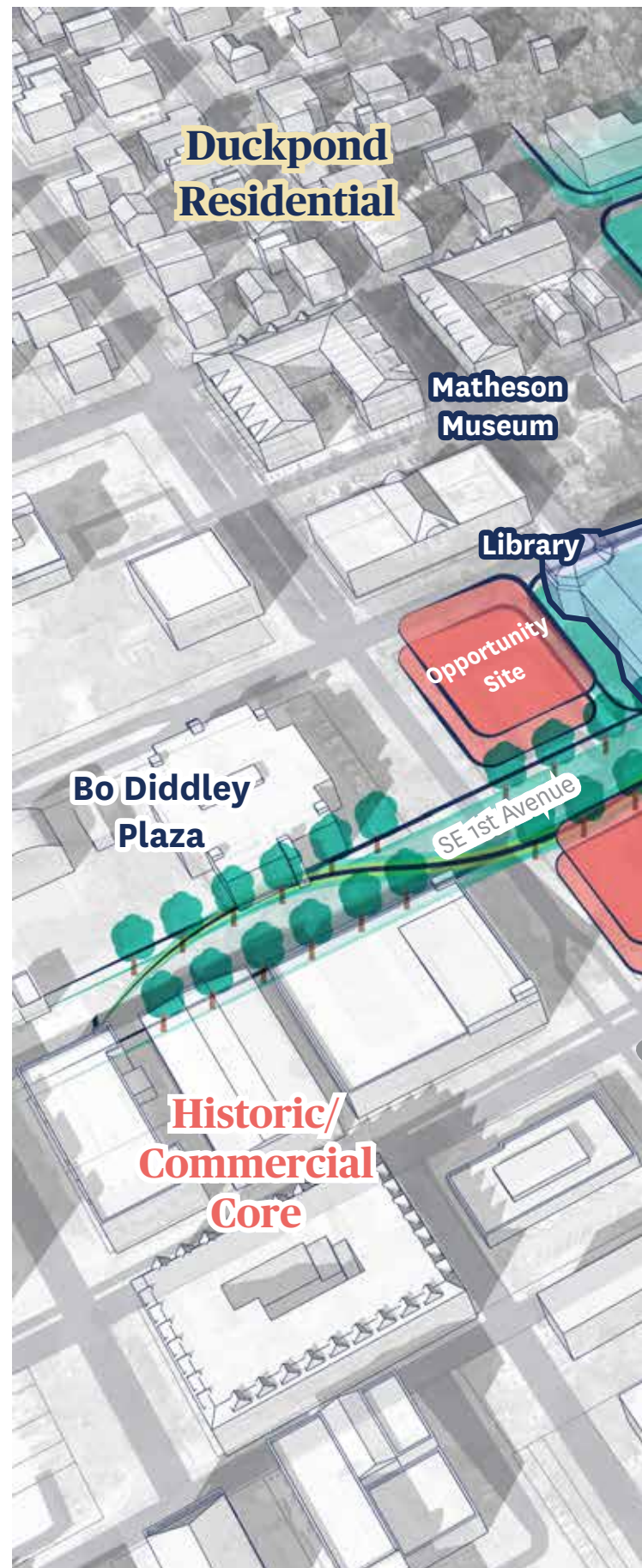
► **Public Orientation**

All existing buildings and future development should positively address Sweetwater Park. The Alachua County Library and Matheson Museum have architectural qualities (entrances, generous glazing/views) that lend themselves to orientation toward the park. This re-orientation, in conjunction with park improvements, can create opportunities for outdoor learning and programming that complement these cultural assets.

► **Public Entries**

Each adjacent neighborhood and district should have welcoming and accessible entries to the park. Springhill, Duckpond and adjacent neighborhoods will benefit from well-developed entries to the park that are safe, lighted, and inviting. The historic core of Downtown, just west of the Sweetwater Park, lacks a clear connection to the park and would benefit significantly from a formal entry along SE 1st Avenue. This connection is ideal given the low speed of traffic (SE 1st Ave is not a through street), connectivity to restaurants and businesses, relationship to Bo Diddley Plaza, proximity to hotels (existing and proposed), and pedestrian connectivity across the creek.

► **Public Edges**

Public streets and/or trails should line the perimeter of the park and provide clear navigation, lighting, and amenities. This provides a signal to park users of the availability of the entire public green space for community use and benefit.

Alachua County
Schools Building

Opportunity
Site

Southeast Historic
District

Matheson
Museum

University Avenue

SE 2nd Avenue

Opportunity
Site

Sweetwater
Park

SE 4th Street

SE 3rd Street

Springhill
Residential

SE 4th Avenue

Power District
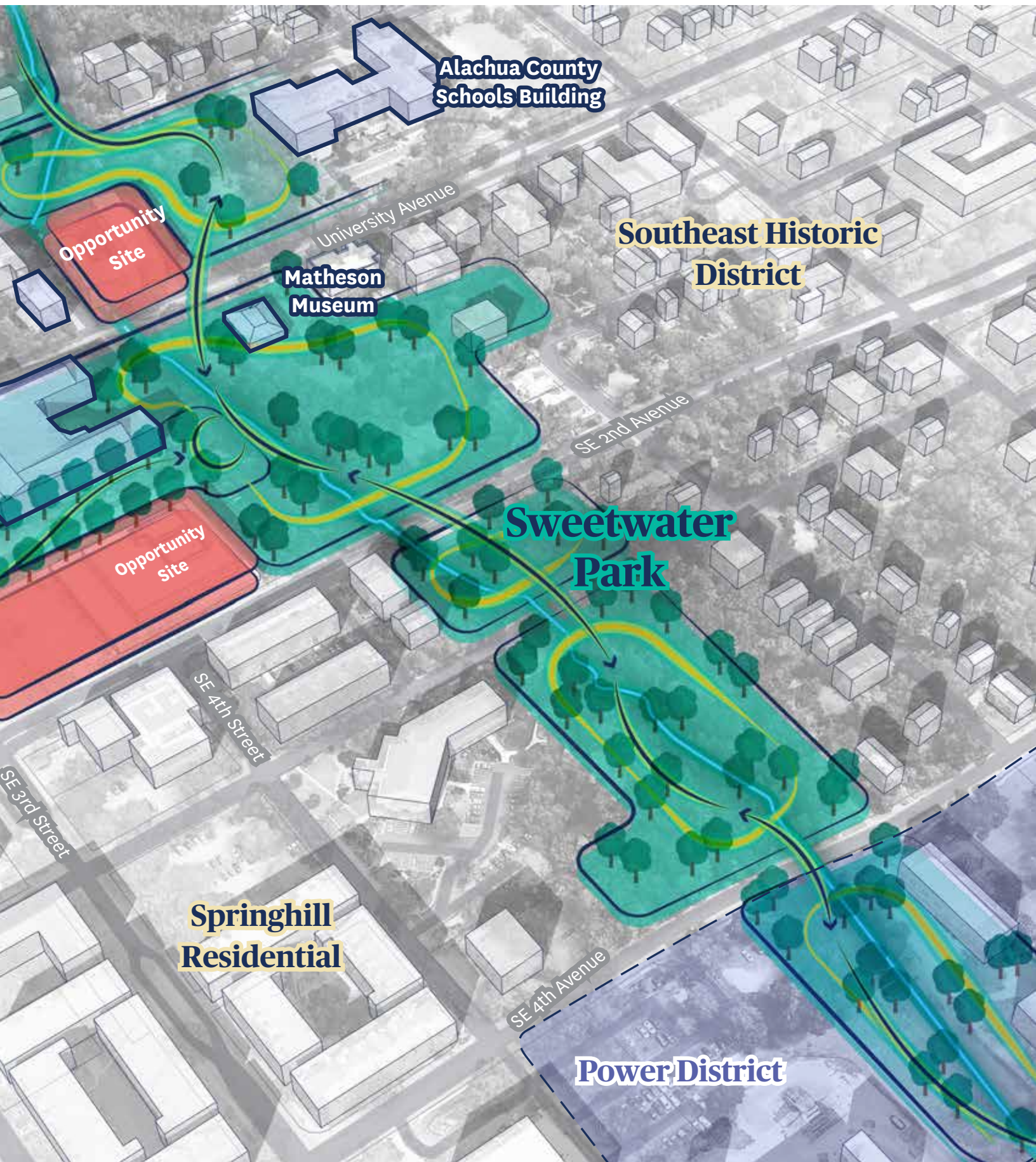
> " Making downtown a safer place for pedestrians to enjoy means more activity for the businesses in downtown."

Connect the Dots

Gainesville neighbors asked for a more walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly downtown.

Though described by many neighbors during our engagement process as having a walkable core, downtown's overall lack of connectivity is a top community priority. Downtown's most visited destinations, such as Depot Park, Bo Diddley Plaza, and the Hippodrome Theater, are located within a short walk from each other. Nonetheless, these assets feel disconnected from each other due to gaps in downtown's network of safe, walkable streets. This issue is especially heightened at downtown's periphery, where a lack of sidewalks and substandard streetscapes create barriers to walkability between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

In fact, neighbors living within walking distance to downtown anecdotally referenced times when they would rather drive and find parking, than walk. While some neighbors are able to choose to drive, others may not have access to a personal vehicle. Thus, establishing walkable connections are key in advancing community-wide equity and accessibility goals.

As a regional attraction that brings in people from the entire city and beyond, many Gainesville neighbors will continue to drive to downtown from their respective communities. Once in the downtown area, many expressed difficulty in finding parking that felt convenient

and understandable. The need for parking and the desire for a walkable, connected core are not mutually exclusive. This section starts with recommendations aimed at addressing parking by establishing a "park once" strategy where visitors are able to park at a single location and walk to various destinations. This strategy is augmented when paired with solutions that make that pedestrian experience a safe, comfortable, and pleasant one. As such, the remainder of this section focuses on ideas aimed toward improving this pedestrian and cyclist experience, while transforming existing assets like Sweetwater Creek into neighborhood connectors.

▶ **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**

> " Prioritize walking, biking, and personal mobility uses. Improve north-south bike/ped connectivity to Depot Park."

> " Center pedestrians and bicyclists first, then transit."

Idea 4: Balance the need for parking with the desire for a walkable, urban core.
Simplify regulations to make parking user friendly and clear.

As Downtown Gainesville continues to evolve, with mixed-use development replacing city-owned surface parking lots, concerns over parking availability inevitably will increase. It is important to continue to manage this important resource to balance the need for parking with the desire for a walkable, urban core that is not interrupted by vacuous surface parking lots. There are many things the city is already doing right. Paid parking has been instituted to begin to manage supply and demand, and there are no minimum parking requirements for development in downtown. Looking ahead, the city should consider the following recommendations to continue to address parking needs and foster a vibrant downtown.

► **Continue to monitor parking supply (refer to map on following page) and utilization:** The city's transportation staff already monitors supply and occupancy rates for on-street and off-street (public and private lots and garages) and catalogs all current parking regulations and cost. As a general rule, parking utilization would need to be above 90% for several hours, several days per week to have justified supply concerns. Currently, parking utilization rates in downtown surface lots only exceeds 90% in Lot 4, Lot 13, and the GRU lot on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. On-street utilization in the downtown core was only over 80% in certain locations for a short time period. This information should be updated regularly to understand the changes in supply and demand, the drivers of those changes, the impact of pricing and regulation modifications, and opportunities for additional strategic improvements. This knowledge will also

	Lot 3	Lot 4	Lot 5	Lot 6	Lot 13	GRU
Occupancy Rate at 8 PM						
Mon-Wed	54%	82%	45%	13%	90%	55%
Thu-Fri	80%	97%	79%	56%	96%	97%
Sat	80%	97%	79%	56%	96%	97%

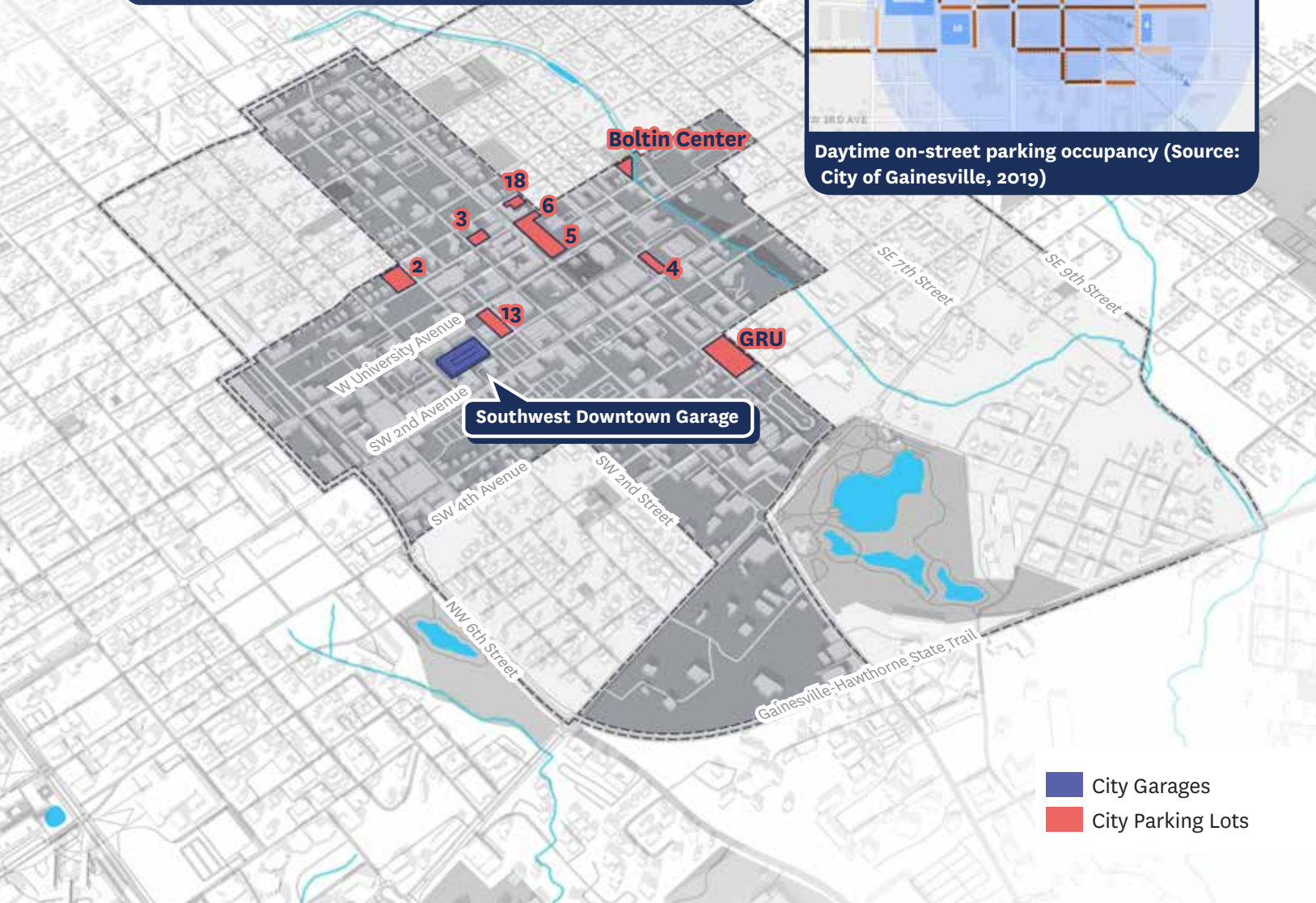**Off-street parking occupancy (Source: City of Gainesville, 2019)**

help to inform community conversations and address concerns with real-world data.

► **Continue to monitor regulations and pricing** to address supply and demand issues: City transportation staff recently made adjustments to regulations and pricing to address parking issues within downtown. Moving forward, the following general goals should inform additional changes.

- On-street parking should be regulated/priced to create turn over to allow for availability of spaces.

- Encourage employees and employers to park outside of the core.

- Long-term parking should be located in garages or surface parking lots.

► **Create a "park once" downtown:** Uncoupling parking requirements from development is a great first step to creating a "park once" downtown. With that accomplished, the city needs to foster a shared pool of parking that is widely available to all users enabling them to park once and access multiple destinations without moving their car. This can be augmented by continuing to invest in pedestrian, bicycle and transportation improvements to make it both easier and safer to get to and around downtown.

► **Improve signage, wayfinding, and communication:** To make the parking experience user-friendly, regulations should be simplified and

Study supply and occupancy rates for on-street and off-street (public and private lots and garages) and catalog all current parking regulations and cost.

Boltin Center

18

6

3

5

2

4

13

GRU

Southwest Downtown Garage

Daytime on-street parking occupancy (Source: City of Gainesville, 2019)

SE 7th Street

SE 9th Street

W University Avenue

SW 2nd Avenue

SW 4th Avenue

SW 2nd Street

NW 6th Street

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

■ City Garages
■ City Parking Lots

understandable. This communication should exist online so that people can plan their trips downtown, but also be readily evident on signage and wayfinding in and around downtown to direct people to parking and make the regulations clear. Making these improvements will also help to make people more aware of all of their parking options to spread out parking demand.

► **Continue to invest in technology:** The city is already investing in a mobile pay system to replace its obsolete meter system. Doing so will reduce maintenance costs, make parking more user-friendly and accessible and enable greater sharing of parking.

Southwest Downtown Garage

75

Idea 5: Prioritize Streets to Meet City Standards

Proactively improve downtown streets not meeting the city's current design standards.

A critical step in creating a walkable downtown is ensuring that streets are designed with pedestrians and cyclists in mind. The city's Land Development Code encourages such human-centered design through a transect strategy, in which development standards coexist with street typologies. This transect provides a hierarchy of street types that establish a symbiotic relationship between streets and buildings. These standards guide the design for streetscape elements, such as landscaping, street trees, and space for outdoor dining. When implemented and in place, the results are safe, comfortable, and walkable streets.

Proactively improve downtown streets not meeting the city's current design standards.

As seen on the map to the right, downtown's key corridors are currently classified as "Storefront Streets," or those recommended to provide the highest quality pedestrian realm with wide sidewalks, street trees, and narrow roadways. Though some of these corridors live up to this designation, others are lacking in their experience. The map in the following page illustrates where these corridors that currently fail to meet the city's design standards are located. The least
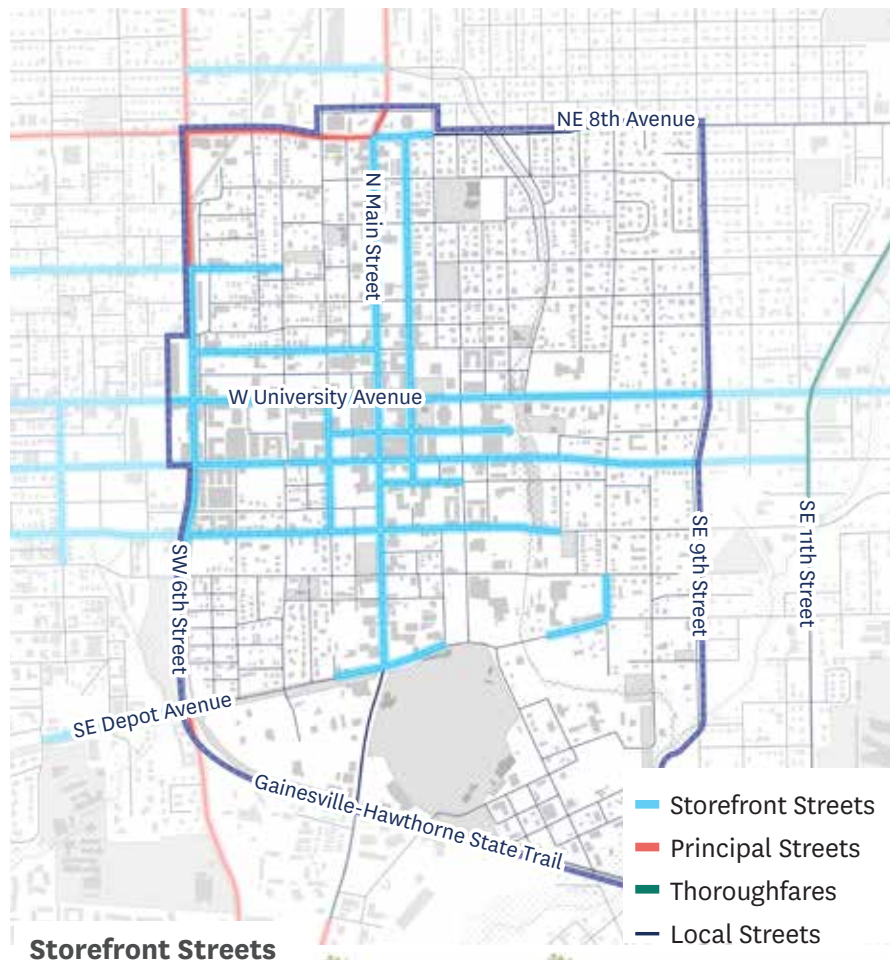
Storefront Streets

The city's zoning code identifies a hierarchy of street types with design standards for landscaping, sidewalks, and relationships to new buildings. Key downtown corridors are classified as "Storefront Streets."

walkable corridors tend to be east-west streets connecting downtown with neighborhoods, such as Porters Quarters, Fifth Avenue, and Springhill.

Addressing these gaps and upholding these standards is paramount to not only creating a walkable downtown, but ensuring that downtown remains well connected to its surroundings. This environment

will also allow visitors driving into downtown to "park once" and walk to multiple destinations.

This commitment to walkability that is already solidified in the city's Land Development Code requires commitment at the funding level. **In addition to holding developers to these standards when undergoing a project, it is important to**

Proactively improve downtown streets not meeting the city's current design standards.

NE 2nd Street
N Main Street
Pleasant Street
NW 6th Street
SE 1st Ave
SE 2nd Ave
NW 2nd Ave
NW 1st Ave
University Ave
SW 2nd Ave
SW 3rd Ave
SW 4th Ave
SW 2nd Street
SW Depot Avenue
NW 8th Avenue
W University Avenue
SW 2nd Avenue
SW 4th Avenue
Cora P. Roberson Park
Depot Park
SE 11th Street
SE 9th Street
SE 7th Street
Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

— Streets in focus area built according to city standards
— Streets not meeting city standards

prioritize investments on entire corridors currently lacking private development projects. For instance, SW 4th Avenue, a major threshold between downtown and Porters Quarters, often lacks curbs, crossings, and has an excessive amount of curb cuts. Improving streetscapes along these key corridors will connect neighbors to downtown and bridge gaps between downtown destinations by creating multiple walkable and safe routes.

NE Boulevard

University Avenue
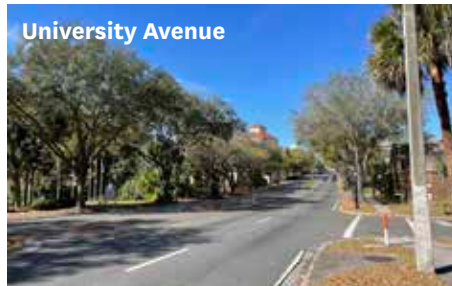
SW 4th Avenue

Idea 6: Activate the Sweetwater Corridor

Design, improve and program to activate the Sweetwater Creek corridor into a network of urban parks, green spaces, trails, and recreation areas for the entire community.

Building on the idea to transform Sweetwater Park into a downtown jewel, activating the entire downtown segment of Sweetwater Creek re-imagines this corridor as **a connected and seamless natural amenity.** This idea is one championed by the community - throughout the entirety of the planning process, Sweetwater Creek was identified to the planning team as one of downtown's greatest and most transformative opportunities.

Though a single natural amenity, Sweetwater Creek changes character as it moves its way through Duckpond, downtown, the Southeast Historic District, the Power District, and Springhill. Through much of Duckpond, the waterway remains a mostly naturalized amenity along a roadway median that, at times, lacks sidewalks and crossings. Conversely, through the Power District the waterway becomes a channelized or piped feature hidden from view. Once south in Springhill, the creek faces the backs of properties and is mostly inaccessible and lacks any visibility.

The opportunity in transforming this corridor is consequential to both downtown and the eastern neighborhoods it touches. In creating a consistent experience where the creek is framed by a wide greenway, trail amenities, linear greens, open spaces, and a healthy riparian edge, the communities directly east of downtown are also connected. This new north-south amenity also has the potential to connect some of downtown's most treasured assets, such as Depot Park, the Downtown Library, the Matheson Museum, and the Thomas Center.

A key priority in establishing this greenway connection goes beyond the creek itself, and in **establishing and ensuring safe and consistent pedestrian and bicycle travel and crossings along the corridor's thresholds.** This planning process has identified two key locations where this connectivity must be prioritized.

► **The first of these is the University Avenue corridor** near the Matheson Museum and Sweetwater Park, where there is a lack of a safe north-south pedestrian crossing.

► **The second location is through the Power District**, through which a channelized portion of Sweetwater Creek moves its way through GRU property that will likely continue to be inaccessible to public access in the near future. For this segment, streetscape improvements along SE 3rd Street that include a multi-use path, street trees, and safe crossings can provide an alternate path.

Addressing these key potential gaps is critical for the success of this corridor - if one part of the experience feels unsafe, the overall connectivity goals will be compromised.

There is palpable community excitement around a transformed Sweetwater Creek corridor that features a greenway with interwoven open spaces. Gainesville neighbors engaged in this process are ready to tackle the potential challenges that may arise in establishing a seamless connection between various communities. The improved access to open space, and the addition of a safe and pleasant connection to downtown and east side neighborhoods will continue to energize the community in transforming this natural amenity into a regional destination.
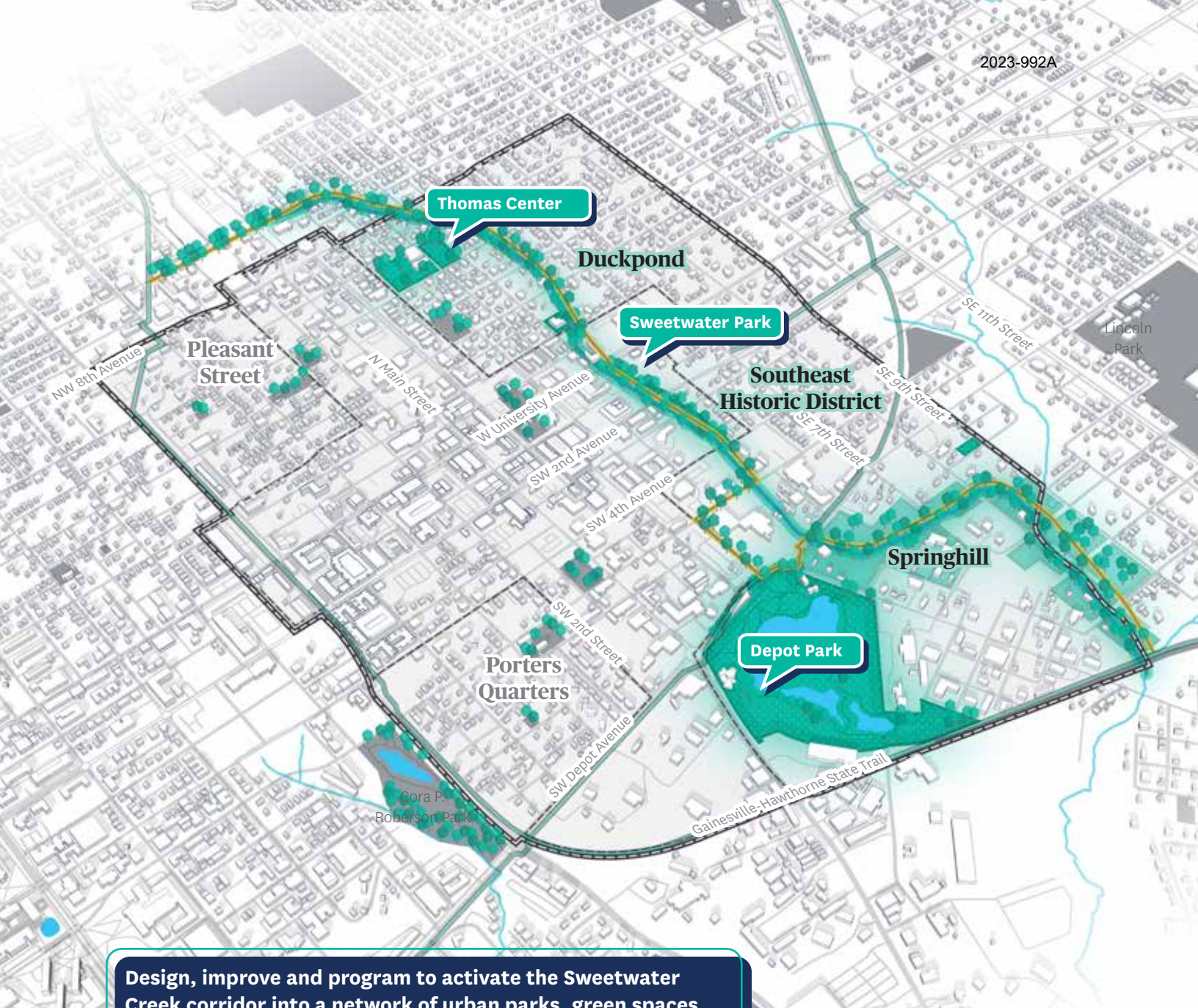

Sweetwater Park

Sweetwater Creek in Duckpond

Existing signage

Thomas Center

Duckpond

Sweetwater Park

Pleasant Street

Southeast Historic District

Lincoln Park

SE 11th Street

NW 8th Avenue

N Main Street

W University Avenue

SW 2nd Avenue

SW 4th Avenue

SE 9th Street

SE 7th Street

Springhill

SW 2nd Street

Porters Quarters

Depot Park
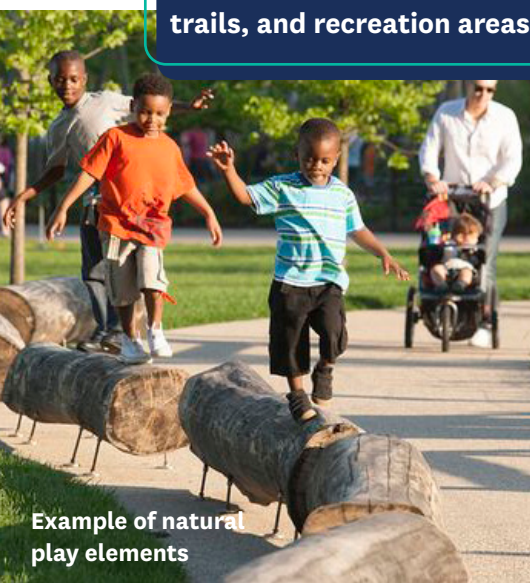
SW Depot Avenue

Cora P. Roberson Park

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

Design, improve and program to activate the Sweetwater Creek corridor into a network of urban parks, green spaces, trails, and recreation areas for the entire community.

Example of natural play elements

Potential intersection treatments

Trail signage and wayfinding

Idea 7: Create a Greenway Loop

Develop a Greenway Loop that connects neighborhoods, links to regional trail networks, and is within 6 min. walk of all downtown destinations.

While the idea of a greenway along the Sweetwater Corridor uses an existing natural amenity to create a new connection, the remaining portions of a potential Greenway Loop around downtown largely focus on connecting existing trails with downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.

The concept for a greenway loop capitalizes on one of downtown's greatest strengths - the fact that its most visited and prominent destinations are within a six-minute walk of each other. Despite this proximity, gaps in walkable connections at significant thresholds and a lack of coordinated signage and wayfinding cause these assets to feel disconnected from each other.

This plan thus recommends a greenway loop that connects the following segments, starting near Depot park and moving clockwise:

► The Sweetwater Creek Corridor described in Idea 6 of this plan.

► The existing Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail and the existing multi-use path on Depot Avenue.

► The existing multi-use path on 6th Street toward 10th Avenue.
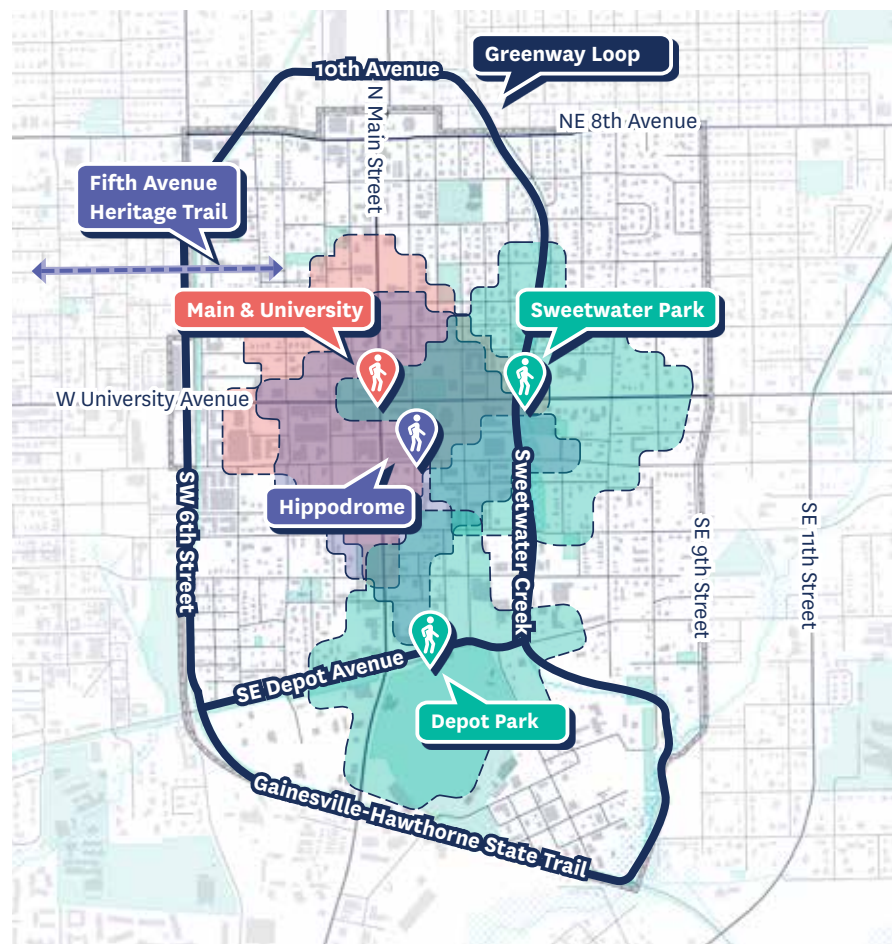
Downtown's major attractions and destinations are within a 6-minute walk of each other. However, they feel disconnected due to gaps in walkability.

► A new greenway through 10th Avenue on the northernmost side connecting to Sweetwater Creek.

Together, these connections create a seamless and coordinated trail experience both around downtown, and to its neighboring neighborhoods and institutions.

The formalization of a greenway loop has the opportunity to create meaningful connections to neighborhoods like Porters Quarters and Fifth Avenue. These connections can occur through improved crossings and trail markers, historical signage,

placemaking opportunities, wayfinding directing to community assets such as the Fifth Avenue Historic Walk, and connections to improved east-west corridors as outlined in the portion of this chapter centered around strengthening the relationship between downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods.

The potential greenway loop also strengthens a pedestrian connection between downtown and the University of Florida campus and UF Innovate. This idea advances concepts shown in previous planning documents reviewed through the plan alignment, through which

Develop a Greenway Loop that connects neighborhoods, links to regional trail networks, and is within 6 min. walk of all downtown destinations.

2023-992A

Thomas Center

Duckpond

Sweetwater Park

Fifth Avenue Heritage Trail

Pleasant Street

Southeast Historic District

Santa Fe Blount Center

Fifth Avenue

Springhill

UF Innovate

Depot Park

Porters Quarters

Roberson Park

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

Lincoln Park
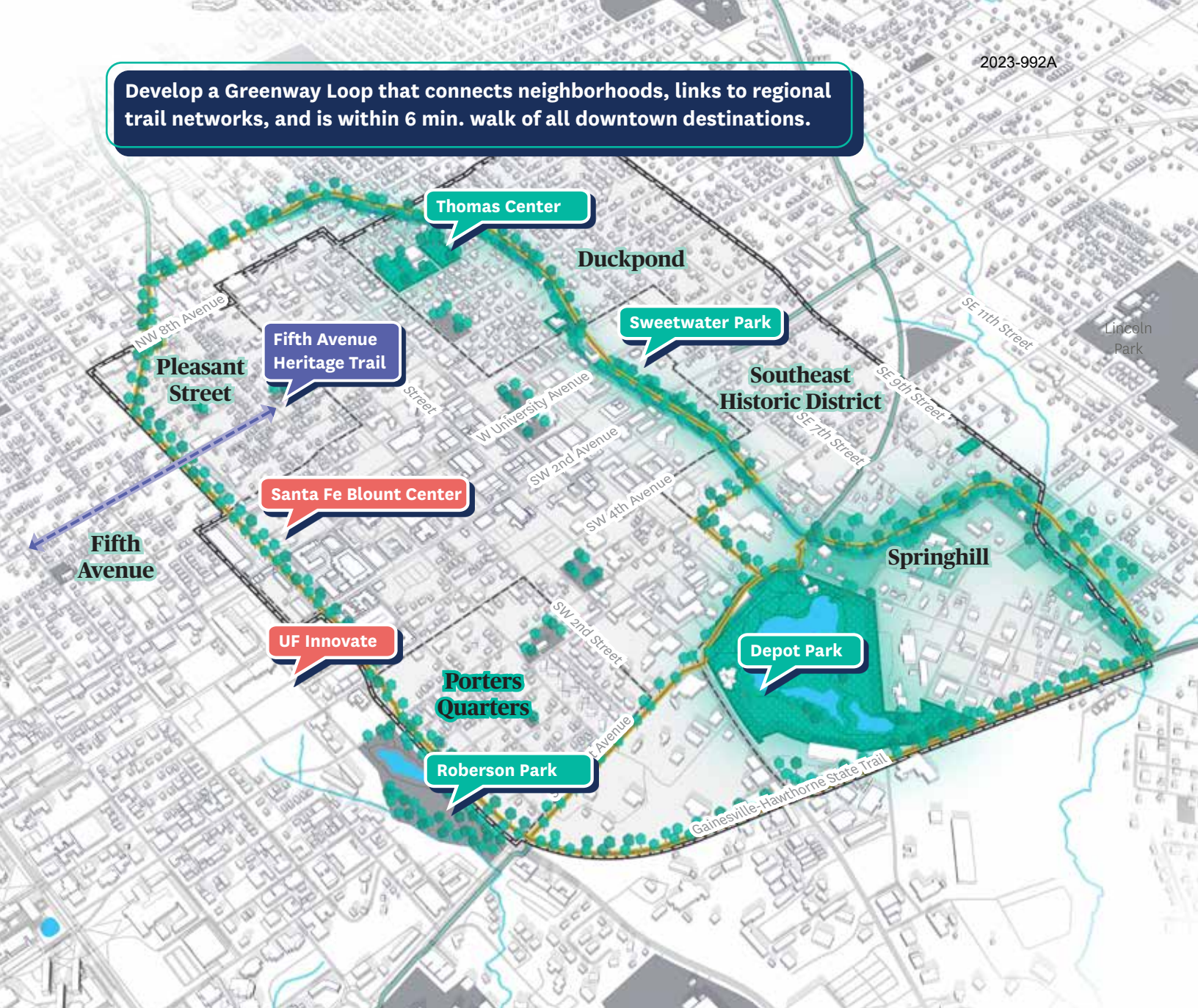
creating a safe and pleasant connection between UF, Depot Park, and downtown was highlighted as a priority.

While some portions of the loop will require improved connections, crossings, and a coordinated identity and signage, many of the segments leverage existing high quality trail systems to support a new downtown destination that will attract residents, visitors, and students alike.

Strengthen the Relationship with Adjacent Neighborhoods

> **Make sure that the plan considers the best interest for the surrounding neighborhood communities."**

Seamlessly connect downtown with nearby communities.

Gainesville neighbors from across the region shaped this plan and its recommendations. Through the Neighborhood Advisory Group, community meetings, stakeholder roundtables, online surveys, and community events, the planning team engaged on a multitude of one-on-one conversations with neighbors from the communities that immediately surround downtown. Whether they lived in Porters Quarters, Springhill, Duckpond, Fifth Avenue, or downtown, there was one common thread in the conversation - the neighborhoods that surround downtown are special and have their own character and identity. Nonetheless, understanding downtown's unique role as a regional destination with amenities that attract neighbors from all parts of the city, we also heard a strong desire to improve connections between these neighborhoods and downtown's amenities.

This section focuses on ideas that enable neighborhoods adjacent to downtown to guide future growth, so communities build on their current character and feel, while supporting growth in downtown. The ideas are twofold - one focused on improving physical connections to downtown so neighborhoods feel like part of the downtown area, and another ensures that the thresholds between downtown and the neighborhoods feel seamless and allow for each community to have a unique scale and character.

▶ **Idea 8: Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown**

▶ **Idea 9: Establish Transition Areas**

> **Make downtown feel like part of the surrounding neighborhoods, not foreign to it."**

> **Policies to maintain character rather than become just another city through nondescript development."**

> **Keep development in sync with neighborhoods, existing areas."**

Idea 8: Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown

Establish thresholds and gateways to connect neighborhoods to the opportunities happening downtown.

Creating meaningful connections between downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods is essential to ensuring that downtown feels like a part of its surroundings. Through our engagement process, neighbors living within walking distance to downtown expressed that they would like to see better sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings, and more consistent lighting. As seen on the map to the right, the city has already allocated funding through 2025 that will address some of these items, both within downtown, and along its edges.

While these improvements alleviate some gaps, having a clear focus on key corridors will better concentrate these efforts. Following a review of previous plans that included the SW 2nd Ave and SW 4th Ave Multimodal Corridors Vision(ing) report, the planning team identified four corridors that provide key connections.

University Avenue

► **What does it connect:** University Avenue is downtown's main east-west connector. Destinations include the UF campus, UF Innovate, the downtown library, the Bed and
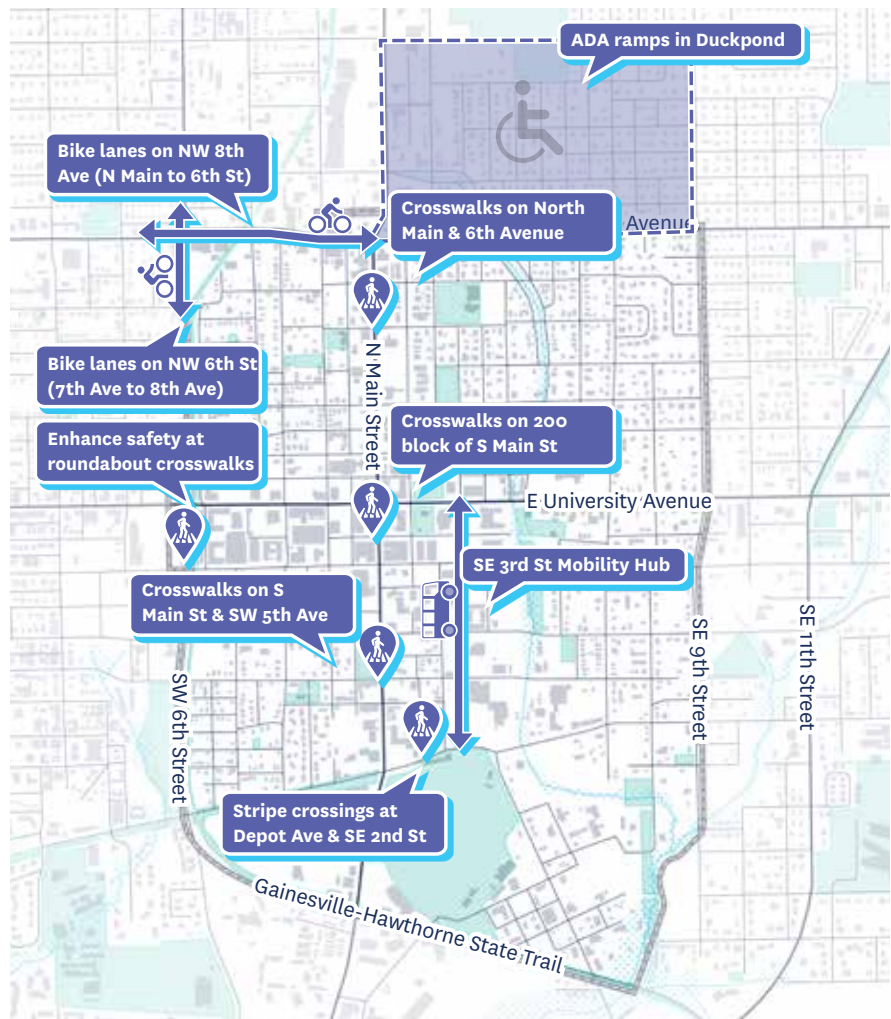
Between 2022 and 2025, mobility improvements totaling $743,000 in the greater study area will improve crossings, bike infrastructure, and the transit travel experience between downtown and nearby neighborhoods.

Breakfast district, and the neighborhood edge between Duckpond and the Southeast Historic District.

► **The opportunity:** A recent Vision Zero study identified various strategies to make this corridor safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

South 4th Avenue

► **What does it connect:** SE and SW 4th Avenue serve as thresholds between UF innovate, downtown, Porters Quarters, Springhill, and the Southeast Historic District. The corridor also

includes pedestrian access to Sweetwater Park.

► **The opportunity:** Though a key corridor, streetscapes along 4th Avenue lack adequate sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting. Improving streetscapes, adding sidewalks where there are gaps, adding north-south crossings, and consolidating or removing excessive curb cuts, will help transform this corridor from a street that divides neighborhoods, into one that brings them together.

Implement Vision Zero recommendations along University Avenue

Improve 4th Avenue from Innovation Square to Sweetwater Branch Crossing.

Northeast Historic District

SE 9th Street

Pleasant Street Historic District

Duckpond

Transform 1st Avenue into downtown's outdoor dining destination

Southeast Historic District

NW 8th Avenue

SE 11th Street

Pleasant Street

NW 6th Street

University Avenue

1st Avenue

2nd Avenue

Springhill

Develop the 2nd Avenue South corridor into the premier urban street experience in Downtown

4th Avenue

3rd Street

SW 2nd Street

Enhance Connectivity Between Power District to downtown Core (SE 3rd Street)

UF Innovate

Porters Quarters

SW Depot Avenue

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

South 2nd Avenue

► **What does it connect:** SE and SW 2nd Avenue span from UF innovate, through downtown, and Sweetwater Park toward the Southeast Historic District.

► **The opportunity:** Though already exhibiting a high quality streetscape with sidewalks and bike lanes, there are additional opportunities for improvements to transform this corridor into downtown's premiere urban street, such as additional north-south crossings and street trees.

East 3rd Street

► **What does it connect:** From Depot Park to the Thomas Center, SE and NE 3rd Street connects Springhill with downtown and Duckpond.

► **The opportunity:** Improvements to sidewalks, crossings, and bike facilities will create a safe and convenient north-south connection to Depot Park from the heart of downtown, as an alternate to South Main Street.

South 1st Avenue

► **What does it connect:** From the Southwest Parking Garage, through the "Streetery" and Bo Diddley Plaza, 1st Avenue terminates as an access drive for the downtown library near Sweetwater Park.

► **The opportunity:** With a span through the heart of downtown, this corridor has the opportunity to reflect a pedestrian-first environment. At its terminus near Sweetwater Park, there is an opportunity to become a new front door for a re-energized park.
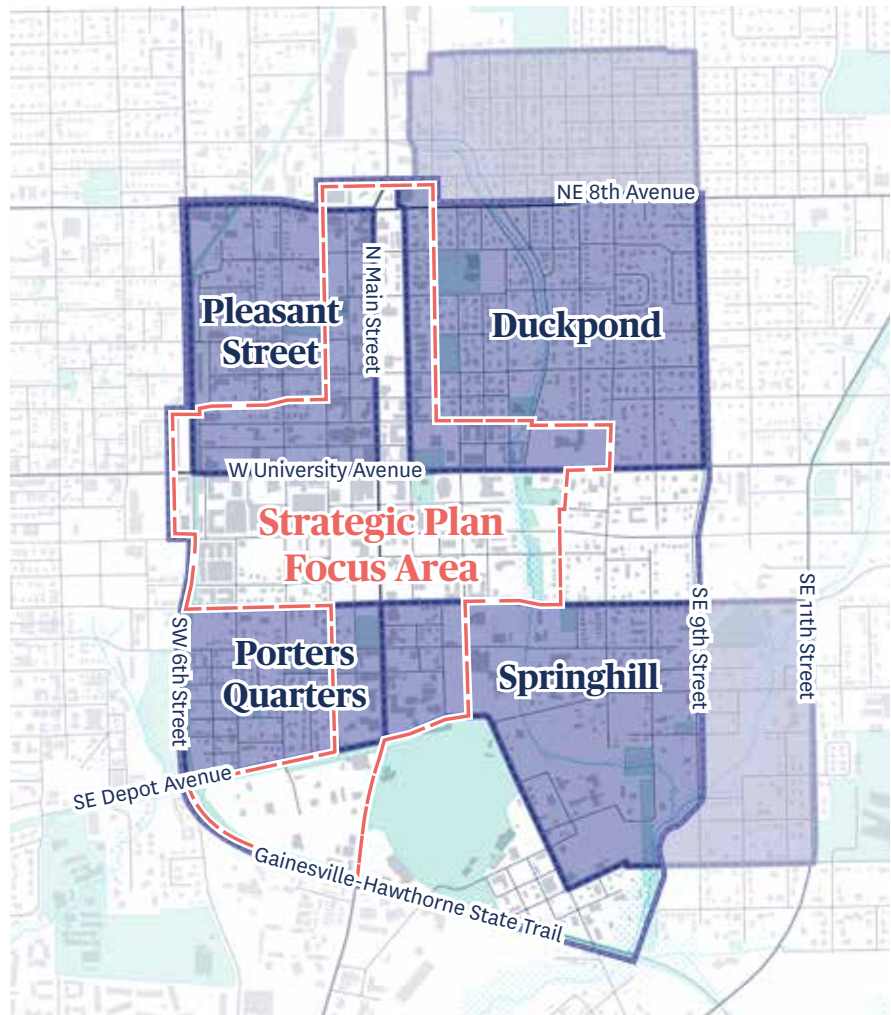
Idea 9: Establish Transition Areas
Identify transition areas between downtown commercial areas and nearby residential neighborhoods.

Growth in downtown can support and uplift those communities closest to the core. As downtown infill continues to bring new neighbors, businesses and jobs to the area, it can also support positive and community-serving growth in the neighborhoods around it.

The neighborhoods located along downtown's edges each have a distinct history, character, and scale. These communities, shown on the map to the right, are Porters Quarters, Springhill, Pleasant Street, and Duckpond. Through our engagement, these neighbors largely expressed a desire to retain what makes their neighborhoods special and ensure that growth in downtown is sensitive to the scale and densities of their residential areas.

A development pattern that contextually transitions from downtown toward the neighborhoods is already supported by policies in the city's Land Development Code. The transect established in the zoning chapter outlines recommended maximum densities for a Downtown District, which this plan supports maintaining as-is, and its subsequent Urban Zones 1 through 9. While not encompassing the entirety of downtown's edges (shown

The greater study area includes four neighborhoods within its boundaries: Pleasant Street, Duckpond, Porters Quarters, and Springhill.
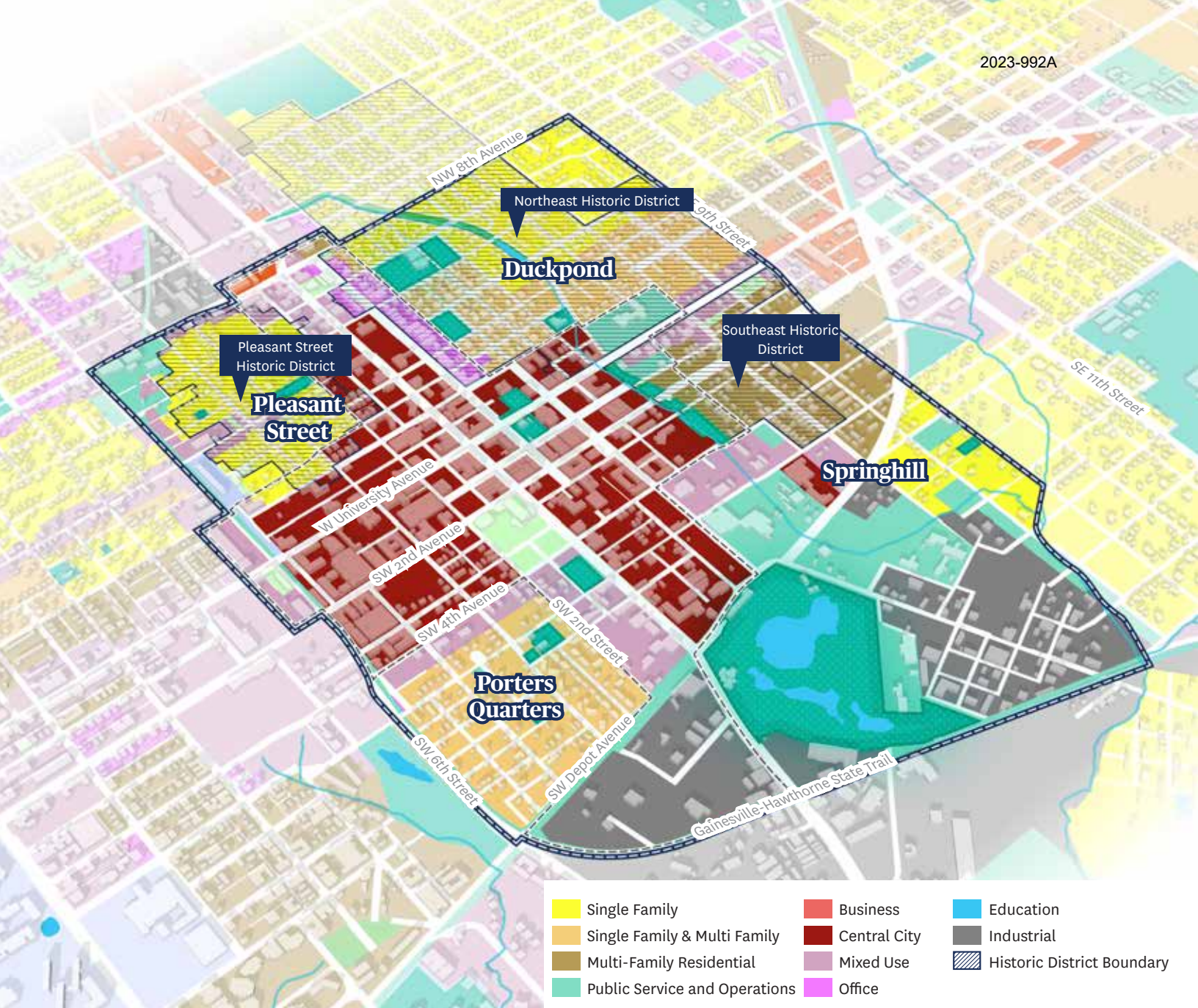
in dark red in the map on the accompanying page), these zones start to establish transition areas where a downtown district steps down in building heights and scale as it approaches single family areas, or communities with lower residential densities.

It is important to note that downtown and the downtown zoning district is where, as a city and community, high density development was deemed as both supported and encouraged. Throughout this process, Gainesville neighbors have firmly validated this notion

- that downtown is the most equitable place for high density housing because of its location, its access to amenities, and its access to services. As such, this plan supports the densities and building heights already established in the downtown zoning district.

Nonetheless, as growth occurs at downtown's edges with nearby neighborhoods, and where current zoning falls outside the transect zones, there is an opportunity to establish clear transition zones to guide new development. These zones can supplement

Northeast Historic District

Duckpond

Southeast Historic District

Pleasant Street Historic District

Pleasant Street

Springhill

Porters Quarters

NW 8th Avenue

9th Street

SE 11th Street

W University Avenue

SW 2nd Avenue

SW 4th Avenue

SW 2nd Street

SW 6th Street

SW Depot Avenue

Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail

🟨 Single Family	🟥 Business	🟦 Education
🟧 Single Family & Multi Family	🟥 Central City	⬛ Industrial
🟫 Multi-Family Residential	🟪 Mixed Use	▨ Historic District Boundary
🟩 Public Service and Operations	🟪 Office	

and build on the existing transect zones through dimensional standards and development requirements that adequately consider a surrounding residential context. **Potential strategies for these transition zones include:**

► **Height compatibility standards** that step down building heights and rooflines near single family communities.

► **Encouraging high quality infill** through the use of design guidelines that establish a harmonious relationship in building form between new and existing structures.

► **Supporting affordable housing types** beyond detached single-family or traditional multifamily, such as housing commonly associated with "missing middle" housing. These housing types include: duplexes, townhomes, small garden apartments, quad apartments, and courtyard buildings.

South Main Street gateway into Porters Quarters

Duckpond Neighborhood

87

Increase Housing Opportunities

Future housing development should meet the needs of the community at various scales and affordability levels.

Because of its central location, transit accessibility, public spaces, and civic services, downtowns are the best, most equitable and environmentally sustainable place to grow jobs and housing at all economic levels. Once strictly hubs for commerce, both in terms of jobs and shopping, downtowns across America have evolved over the last several decades into multi-faceted places with an increasing emphasis on residential neighborhood identity. This is particularly critical for Downtown Gainesville considering there has been no new non-student housing development over the last decade, while its adjoining residential neighborhoods have faced new demand pressures that have priced-out and displaced many long-standing residents. This is why the greater study area needs to address housing at various scales and affordability levels, while addressing the specific housing needs depending on typology and area.

In the case of Downtown Gainesville there are several key reasons for encouraging investment in new and existing housing development:

1. Downtown's residents need to be **more reflective of the broader community.**

2. Housing is a **value-add to employers**.

3. Housing provides **added tiers of demand for retailers.**

4. Housing can **enhance vibrancy.**

5. **Housing preservation** directly supports existing communities.

▶ **Idea 10: Address Housing at Scale**

▶ **Idea 11: Support Affordable Mixed-Income Housing**

▶ **Idea 12: Facilitate Market Rate Housing**

Housing Ecosystem
Recently Built Housing Supply by Typology

2023-992A

Neighborhood

Recent Built For-Sale Supply sold in the last three years

Affordable

Market Rate

Student

570 student beds

226 affordable units

500 MR units
1,200 student beds
800 hotel rooms

80 MR units
64 affordable units
4,500 student beds

Source: CoStar (Dec 2021) and Zillow (March 2022)

Housing Typologies and Contexts (What)

Understanding the breakdown of housing typologies (e.g. single family homes vs. apartments; owner vs. renter), their appropriate locations, and affordability levels are critical for establishing a framework for future housing development, redevelopment, maintenance, and preservation.

► **Neighborhood**: Though downtown is a neighborhood unto itself, in this context, "neighborhood" reflects primarily lower-density residential areas that are part of the Study Area, including Pleasant Street, Duckpond Springhill and Porters Quarters, but not considered the "urban core," which is higher density and includes a mix of commercial and civic uses. Future strategies

for these areas should focus on preservation, anti-displacement, home repair, and context appropriate infill.

► **Affordable**: This type of housing encompasses a wide range of income levels based on Area Median Income (AMI), described on following page. Affordable housing can accommodate very low-income households (those earning below 30 percent AMI), to moderate-income households (30 to 60 percent AMI) to workforce housing (60 to 80 percent AMI). Affordable units can be incorporated within mixed-income developments and target and/or be restricted to seniors, families, and in some cases, artists.

► **Market Rate**: Consists of higher-quality housing that targets professionals and empty nesters that generally earn above $50,000 annually. These target groups often prefer urban living in highly-amenitized mixed-use areas. Currently, Celebration Pointe offers the newest and most competitive market rate units in the Gainesville area.

► **Student:** The proliferation of student housing, with more than 10,000 beds delivered in Gainesville since 2010, has been a deterrent to the delivery of other housing products Downtown— student housing is very profitable and drives up land costs. This plan strongly emphasizes the need for non-student housing development in the greater study area, with student housing focused closer to campus.

Current Challenges

Beyond student housing, there has been little residential development of any kind downtown; at the same time, the Gainesville market as a whole has been relatively slow to deliver new multi-family units with the city only adding around 2,000 non-student units since 2010.

There is also a two-sided challenge of development— making development feasible generally requires high enough rents and sale prices to overcome development costs. **Given their densities and central locations, downtown areas typically have some of the highest land values in a given region, which is why rental and sale prices for new market rate development are typically at the very high-end of the market.** However, these market dynamics often exclude low- and moderate-income households. Given market pressures for student housing, residential investment has stagnated Downtown.

Affordability (Who)

Housing affordability is not about a type of real estate product, it is about who you are trying to serve.

There is a general mis-perception about affordable housing. It can come in many forms, but fundamentally, housing affordability is about cost burden—according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), if a household pays more than 30 percent of income towards rent, it is considered cost burdened. Based on this definition, households across a wide range of socio-economic levels can be cost burdened, not just very low-income households. This is even more relevant for places like Gainesville where the cost of living is becoming increasingly more expensive coupled with the lack of adequate wage growth in many sectors.

Analyzing community-wide housing needs requires an understanding of the distribution of household income and how it relates to area median income (AMI). As a market with a large student population, it is also important to isolate the non-student population, since many students have very low incomes, or no income at all. For example, when considering all households, 28 percent in Gainesville earn less than $18,000, or less than 30 percent AMI, but when excluding households ages 25 and younger (the many of which
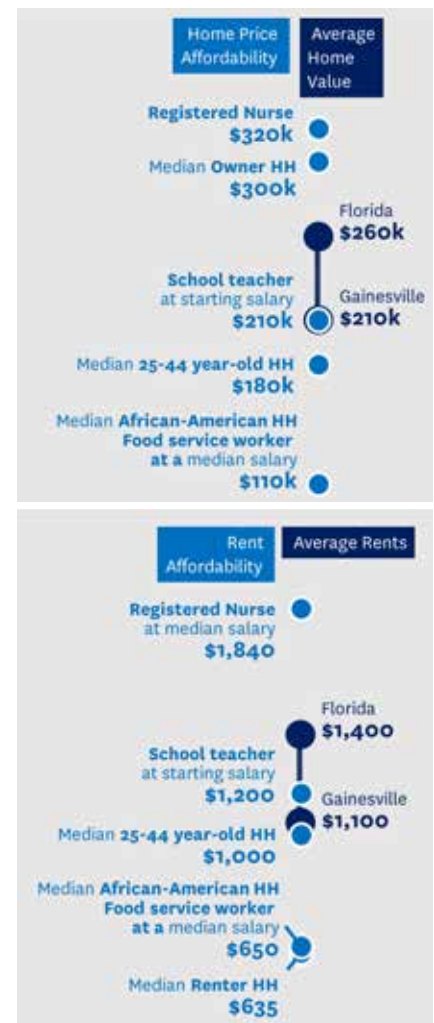

Source: ESRI (2020), Zillow (March 2021), ACS 5-Year Estimate (2019), Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 2020), Glassdoor (May 2021), CoStar (May 2021) and Bill HB 641 by the State of Florida

are students), this income bracket represents 19 percent of the households citywide. The graphic on the following page shows the household income and AMI distributions and housing prices that would be affordable within each of these brackets.
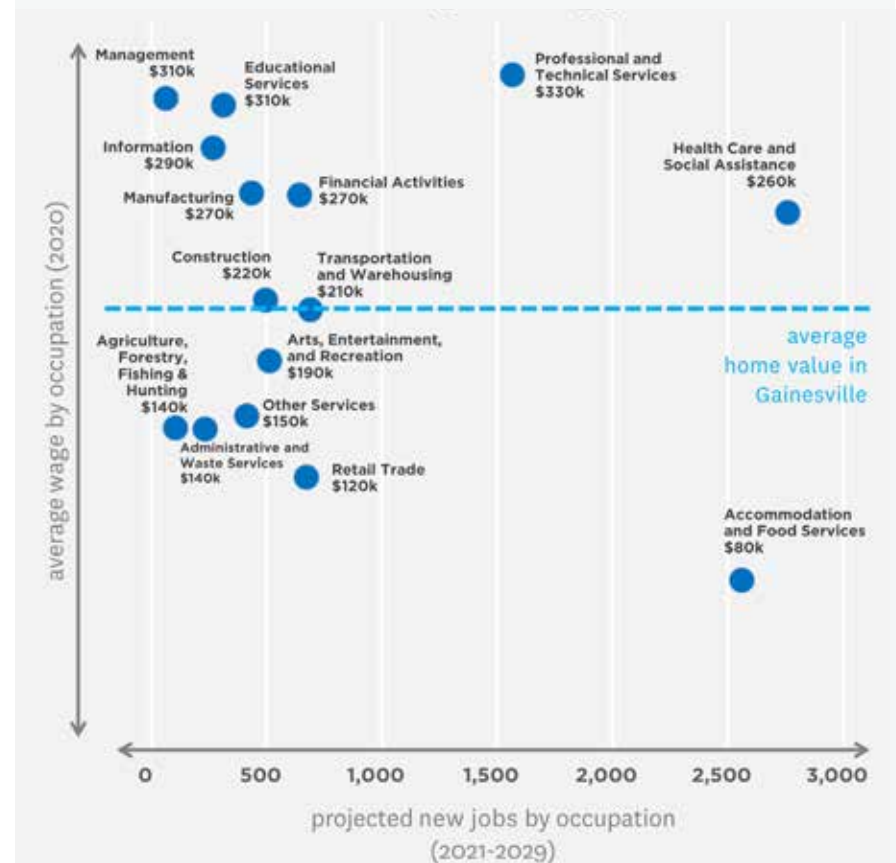
Understanding housing affordability by occupation or household composition is also critical. For example,

a teacher in Gainesville can generally afford the average rent ($1,100), although food service workers could only afford rents of nearly half of the citywide average. Disparities in housing affordability are also substantial based on race—the median income for an African American household is $26,000 and these households could only afford monthly rents of around $650.

There are increasing affordability challenges for long-standing residents, especially renter-occupied households, but the region will also need to accommodate the new workforce migrating to the market. Based on the latest employment projections for Alachua County, the county will have strong growth in higher-paying industries, including Health Care and Social Assistance and Professional and Technical Services, which will increase demand for higher-quality rental housing and potentially impact housing values, but the projected growth for Accommodation and Food Services as well as other lower-wage jobs, including those in Retail Trade and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, will put housing demand pressure on the affordable housing supply.

Affordability Metrics

Source: ESRI (2020) and ACS 5-Year Estimate (2019)
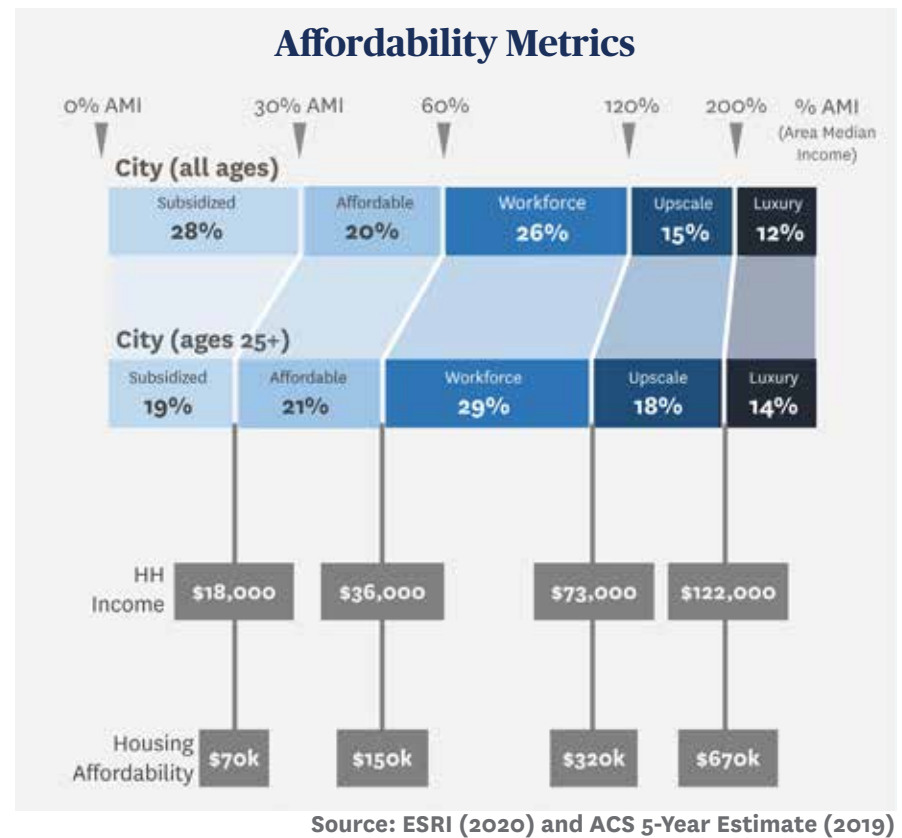
What home prices could growing jobs afford?

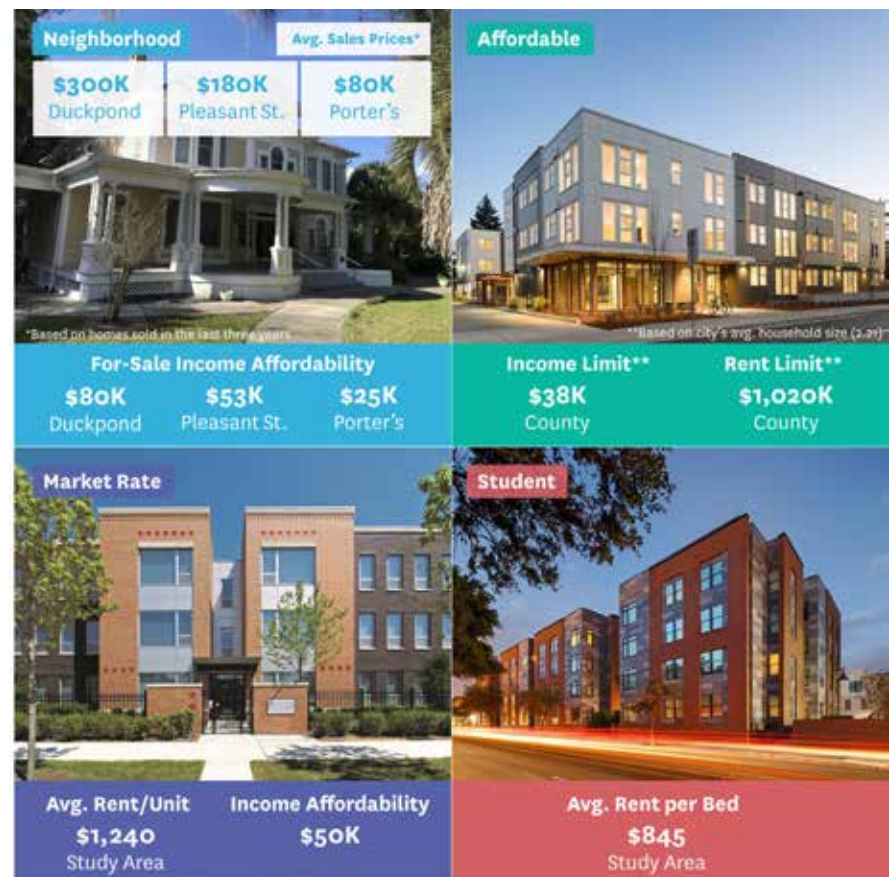Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (2021)

Supporting a Housing Ecosystem

New housing development needs to meet the character and density of its neighborhoods and align with broader community goals and objectives.

The Study Area includes a wide range of housing types, uses, and densities—with the core parts of downtown closer to Bo Diddley Plaza consisting of a mix of medium- to high-density commercial and civic structures. Duckpond, Pleasant Street, Porters Quarters and Springhill are primary single-family neighborhoods with smaller-scale commercial and community-based uses throughout.

In addition to aligning with community character, meeting the broad spectrum of housing affordability levels does not have a one-size-fits-all approach and requires a more customized approach by location. At the same time, the planning process should not be too proscriptive in terms of specific development locations, but create a framework that addresses the *housing ecosystem* by district and typology.

Neighborhood: Current and future housing stock consists of single-family attached and detached homes with some smaller-scale multi-family properties as well as scattered neighborhood commercial and community-based uses throughout. Preservation of

Neighborhood		Avg. Sales Prices*		Affordable
$300K Duckpond	$180K Pleasant St.	$80K Porter's		

*Based on homes sold in the last three years

Affordable

For-Sale Income Affordability			Income Limit**	Rent Limit**
$80K Duckpond	$53K Pleasant St.	$25K Porter's	$38K County	$1,020K County

**Based on city's avg. household size (2.22)

Market Rate

Student

Avg. Rent/Unit	Income Affordability	Avg. Rent per Bed
$1,240 Study Area	$50K Study Area	$845 Study Area

Source: CoStar (Dec 2021), Novogradac HUD Data (2021), and Redfin (March 2021)

character and community are critical success factors.

Affordable: New mixed-use construction should utilize lot sizes and depths along North Main Street in addition to inclusionary set asides and subsidy for new multi-family development in Depot Park, Power District, and catalyst sites in the core of Downtown. Housing affordability throughout the residential neighborhoods should support socio-economic diversity.

Market Rate: The urban core provides the highest visibility and marketability for new higher-density multi-family development. Co-locating with major employers, retail amenities, and services can provide a value-add to

development opportunities. The areas around Depot Park also provide redevelopment opportunities given the availability of underutilized properties.

Student: While student housing demand may level out over the next decade, given the lack of UF enrollment growth, developers will almost certainly seek opportunities to replace obsolete or less competitive properties and serve an increasingly affluent student population. It should be encouraged near the UF campus. Strategic development in the Study Area should diversify housing and commercial offering to make downtown more inclusive and diverse.

Neighborhood

Market Rate + Affordable

Market Rate

Student

University of Florida

Idea 10: Address Housing at Scale

There are numerous of definitions and policy implications for "affordable" housing, but at its core, regardless of income level, if monthly rents or for-sale housing costs exceed 30 percent of monthly income, they are *cost burdened* and housing is no longer affordable. **With rising housing values and rents, even those with good-paying essential jobs such as nurses, teachers, and policemen can even struggle to find affordable rents or homes.** Recognizing these challenges, the Florida Housing Coalition prepared the *Blueprint for Affordable Housing 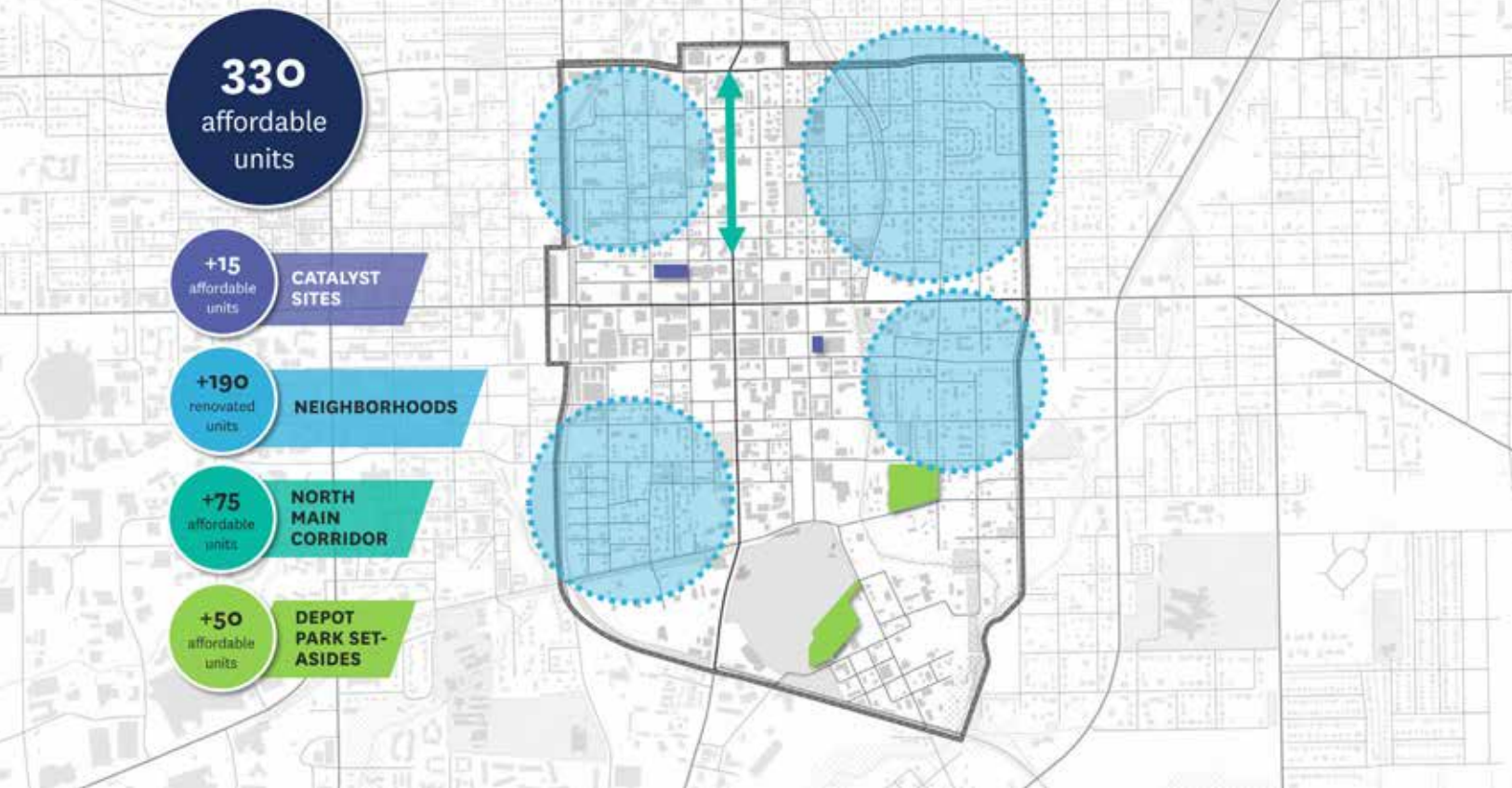for the City of Gainesville* in September 2020 ("Action Plan"), which indicated that in 2020, more than half of households in Gainesville are cost burdened and around a third (19,900 households) pay more than 50 percent of income towards rent.

As a follow up to this strategy the City of Gainesville commissioned the *Exclusionary Zoning & Inclusionary Zoning Study* released in late 2021 ("Inclusionary Study") that recommended a mandatory set-aside of 10 percent of units in new multi-family development and that they be affordable to household earnings below 80 percent area median income. While this policy has been successful in delivering affordable units in very competitive housing markets, it will have a relatively minimal impact on alleviating pent-up demand for affordable rental housing. From 2010 to early 2022, just over 2,000 multi-family units have been delivered in Gainesville, which under this policy would deliver 200 affordable units, or 20 annually, and would only satisfy a fraction of demand.

Given this overwhelming need for affordable housing, it can be easy to lose sight of the need for non-student market rate housing Downtown.

Mixed-Income Housing within the Study Area

330 affordable units

+15 affordable units — CATALYST SITES

+190 renovated units — NEIGHBORHOODS

+75 affordable units — NORTH MAIN CORRIDOR

+50 affordable units — DEPOT PARK SET-ASIDES

When considering future housing development Downtown, there is need to think holistically and to *address housing at scale*, which means applying a wide variety of housing policies, tools, and funding sources in the core of Downtown, but also recognizing the community needs and development potential throughout the Study Area, including corridors and adjacent lower-density residential areas.

Catalyst Areas (15 affordable units): There are two catalyst sites near downtown that have capacity for 100 total units, with 15 affordable units given a 15 percent set-aside. The development would consist of four- to five-story mixed-income apartments at a density of 40 units per acre.

Neighborhoods (190 renovated affordable units): There are 380 housing units that are vacant or paying well-below market rate rents within the study area. Assuming that half of these properties are vacant or undervalued due to neglect or poor conditions and can be feasibly renovated to great conditions, an additional 190 quality, renovated, affordable units can be introduced to the study area.

North Main Corridor (75 affordable): Large, underutilized properties along North Main Street have capacity for at least 75 affordable units. The development would consist of four- to five-story mixed-income apartments at a density of 40 units per acre.

Depot Park Set-Asides (Inclusionary) (75 affordable units): Large developable properties near Depot Park have capacity for 335 total units, with 50 affordable units given a 15 percent set-aside. The development would consists of four- to five-story mixed-income apartments at a density of 35 units per acre.

Idea 11: Support Affordable and Mixed-Income Housing

Capitol Gateway, a mixed-income development in Atlanta, GA (Source: Apartment Ratings)

Idea 11: Support Affordable and Mixed-Income Housing

Supporting affordable and mixed-income housing development will require establishing a toolkit that links funding sources and policy actions. The Gainesville Housing Action Plan and Inclusionary Study set the stage for comprehensive citywide approach, but for Downtown Gainesville there needs to be a customized approach based on location/district, housing type, and household need.

The following actions are not intended to be mutually exclusive—one action alone cannot fully address community housing needs at scale. These are part of a toolkit of interactive policies, interventions, and governance structures that communities across the county have used to support affordable housing development, redevelopment, and preservation, in addition to direct support for homeowners and policies and programs to minimize displacement. Additionally, a fully-realized and effective downtown housing strategy will need to leverage the required citywide policies and funding sources.

Continue pursuing alternative funding streams to support affordable housing fund

In most cases, subsidy is needed to overcome affordable housing development feasibility gaps, especially in urban areas like Downtown Gainesville given higher land and construction costs. The establishment of the Alachua County Affordable Housing Trust Fund supports the Action Plan's strategy to "Diversify Funding Sources," but the city should explore alternative funding for Downtown-specific development, including 1) leveraging student housing student housing development with an affordable housing

fee structure, 2) bolstering foundation, corporate, and institutional support, 3) payment in Lieu of affordable unit set-asides, and 4) bond issuance that targets downtown redevelopment opportunities.

Continue to pursue low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) in key areas

The LIHTC program is the largest and most effective affordable housing funding source nationwide; however, these resources are finite and the application process can be onerous and very competitive requiring multiple applications over a several year period before approval. Though allocation cycles limit how much cities and counties receive annually—only around 430 LIHTC units have been delivered in the city over the last 10 years, or 43 annually—LIHTC would provide the best opportunity to fund higher-density mixed-income housing in select corridors or around Depot Park over the mid-term. While the program is geared to support for-profit and non-profit development entities, partnerships with the city, county, and community organization can increase the competitiveness of funding applications.

Increase capacity of community development organizations (CDOs)

Given the diversity of housing and community needs throughout the study area, Pleasant Street, Duckpond, Porters Quarters and Springhill will need a different type of neighborhood-focused entity compared to a Business Improvement District (BID) or downtown organization. A dedicated CDO, a 501(c)3 organization, can often balance housing, economic development, and social service needs in a community, and also act as a conduit for public, private, and philanthropic funds. The CDO could pursue all housing subsidy funding sources for new construction, rehabilitation, and homeowner assistance. In addition, this type of organization could coordinate and improve existing services for youth and local economic development initiatives.

A successful (and impactful) CDO generally evolves over time. In many cases, these organizations are formed with a volunteer board and a single staff person primarily engaged in community organizing. Over time, the CDO can evolve into have a more direct role in property maintenance, new development, and public realm improvements, which generally requires additional staff and funds. Given economies of scale and capacity, a single

CDO is recommended with representation from each of the neighborhoods.

Establish RFP process for publicly-owned land/catalyst sites

The redevelopment of publicly-owned land provides an opportunity to mandate affordable units within the development plan. Given the number of publicly-owned assets downtown with redevelopment potential, establishing a request for proposals (RFP) process for private developers will support transparency and accountability and ensure that community-based goals are incorporated in the development plan.

Pursue neighborhood stabilization programs and policies

While higher-density development is recommended for the urban core and select areas surrounding of Depot Park, the surrounding residential neighborhoods have limited capacity for new development and future development will need to be context sensitive. A more one-the-ground approach is needed that directly supports existing homeowners and renters to ensure that they can remain in their homes over the long term. This approach can be more sustainable and viable in the long run with a well-resourced CDO to serve as a neighborhood liaison between property owners and resources.

Hudson Village, a mixed-income development in Hollywood, FL (Source: Housing Trust Group)

Provide technical assistance and outreach to long-standing homeowners

In many cases, long-standing and/or multi-generational homeowners are not aware of the programs and resources that may be available or refinancing opportunities to support reinvestment in their properties. Homeowners may also need support with title assistance or other legal documentation related to ownership and deed transfer. Community outreach and technical assistance programs should specifically target Study Area households.

Repurpose obsolete student housing as workforce housing

Although the Study Area does not have a supply of older student housing properties, the city should explore an initiative to engage with property owners with aging and/or obsolete student housing properties (or those struggling with occupancy) to assist with the repositioning of these properties as workforce housing. Potential programs could support the transfer of ownership to affordable housing developers and other entities as well as fundraising and financing for renovation.

Support the creation of a community land trust (CLT)

In alignment with the Action Plan, the creation of a CLT in select parts of the study could help support long-term ownership and affordability for the community, especially in Pleasant Street, Porters Quarters, and Springhill. Future CLT initiatives pursued by the city should prioritize these specific neighborhoods given development pressures and increasing vulnerability to gentrification.

Bolster home repair funding programs and initiatives

Continue marking, outreach, and expansion of the City of Gainesville's Housing Rehabilitation Program (HRP) that assists eligible homeowners with resulting health and safety violations with their homes, but also explore ways to expand program funding wit alternative public and philanthropic sources.

Idea 12: Facilitate Market Rate Housing

Griffis at Riata, a market rate development in Austin, TX (Source: Griffis Residential)

Idea 12: Facilitate Market Rate Housing

Given the lack of new market rate development, there are barriers that need to be overcome. While direct subsidy is not recommended for supporting market rate development there are policies that can help facilitate development and reduce risk for developers, including tax abatement, land assembly, flexible zoning, and partnerships with UF and other local employers.

Pursue tax abatement for new construction and major rehabilitations

Property tax abatement policies have been successful in other cities for prompting new residential and commercial development. While some argue that this limits near-term tax revenue for local jurisdictions, it can help bridge the feasibility gap for multi-family development. A targeted tax abatement program is select areas of downtown would encourage new market rate development, and after expiration of the abatement (typically 10 years), local jurisdictions would have a significant net gain in tax revenue.

Explore use of GCRA funds to support mixed-income housing development

The GCRA should continue exploring ways to leverage its funding and resources to support new residential development. Similar to its development agreement to fund public infrastructure improvements for the development of Hyatt Place, the GCRA should engage with developers to align strategic development interests, especially for the several catalyst sites throughout Downtown, along the North Main corridor, and around Depot Park. Potential investments include co-locating right-of-

way improvements, bike-ped infrastructure, beautification, tree planting, and other place-based investments with redevelopment sites as well as providing technical assistance to property owners and development entities.

Leverage UF Innovate as value-add for market rate development

As the hub and facilitator of growing Gainesville's technology and knowledge-based economy, UF Innovate is a beacon for talent development and attracting industry to the region. However, the lack of quality market rate housing, especially higher-end non-student apartments somewhat hinders its ability to attract companies Downtown. The presence of UF Innovate does provide a value-add to developers given that it is an activity generator and source of future tenants. UF Innovate should assist with developer outreach and marketing efforts and provide community support and communications with future residential development projects (e.g. letters of support for local officials, etc.).

Repurpose and assemble public land

Often the greatest barrier to urban reinvestment efforts is access to land or sites that have the capacity for larger-scale redevelopment and the process of assembling land can be lengthy and costly with significantly higher levels of risk compared to greenfield suburban development. The city and other local jurisdictions, especially those with significant real estate assets or holdings, can provide opportunities for new development, while still ensuring that future development is consistent with community needs and vision. The process for redeveloping public land should be formalized to ensure the needed efficiencies with development entities coupled with the necessary levels of transparency and accountability to build community support.

Explore master leasing model to lower developer risk

In the case of office or retail development, the risk of speculative real estate development (or space that will be leased to other businesses or entities) is often minimized when an agreement is in place for an entity to lease a significant portion of the space prior to construction. This same entity can occupy the space itself or sub-lease the space. This type of model continued to be explored for residential development. In some cases, a master lease agreement

can be in place for a portion of an apartment building for the use as short-term rentals to overcome development feasibility challenges, and once the market is tested, these units can be converted to conventional leases.

Leverage existing parking structures and assets to unlock development potential for vacant parcels and/or above-floor spaces

While downtown has the density, pedestrian infrastructure, and access to public transportation that can reduces the need for an automobile as well as flexible zoning that minimizes parking requirements for new development, the marketability of housing, retail, and office space is dramatically reduced without offering parking access. However, incorporating on-site parking can be challenging in downtown areas from a design or development feasibility perspective, especially for older commercial properties with above-floor space with residential redevelopment potential. The repositioning of the Southwest Downtown Garage and other city-owned parking assets and creating a process for shared-use agreements should be explored for unlocking the potential for new housing development.

Create a Supportive Local Business Environment

The small business community can collectively generate vibrancy and cultivate an identity for a district.

Based on community and stakeholder engagement and feedback, it was clear that diversifying the business offerings in Downtown Gainesville is a desired top priority. Interestingly, the business environment was also highlighted as one of the most attractive aspects of downtown, so the feedback can be interpreted as a call for more, while increasing opportunities for people of color-owned businesses and aligning overall marketing and branding efforts to support local businesses. While suburban-style automobile-centric commercial development is best positioned to satisfy certain types of retail demand such as supermarkets, big box stores, drive-through fast food restaurants and home improvement stores, downtowns provide a more walkable and experiential environment with smaller-scale storefront retail spaces that are better suited for locally-owned food and beverage, boutique, personal services, and creative uses such as art galleries and studios.

Unlocking the true potential of downtown will require creating a supportive small business ecosystem that leverages technical assistance and funding resources, marketing, and placemaking, while linking the right types of businesses with real estate product.

▶ **Idea 13: Unlock Real Estate Potential**

▶ **Idea 14: Increase Direct Small Business Assistance**

Economic Challenges in Downtown

Few Actively Listed Retail Spaces

3,000 SF of Vacant Space

Limited Office Market Potential

82,000 SF of Vacant Space

Lack of Non-Student Housing Development

No apartments delivered since 1980s

Limited Market Support

Less than 40,000 square feet of net new retail space

Decrease in Businesses

6 percent decrease since 2010

Increasing Regional Competition

Celebration Pointe 2.3M SF retail 500 apartments

Economic Diversification

50+ percent of Downtown jobs are public sector

Source: CoStar (2022), ACS 5-Year Estimates (2019), ESRI (2021)

What are the challenges?

Lack of actively listed retail space: While vacancy persists, there is a relatively small supply of actively listed retail spaces (according to CoStar, in 2021, there were only 15,400 square feet of vacant space Downtown).

Limited leasing activity: Leasing activity downtown has been very slow over the last several years with annual average leasing of only 12,000 square feet over a four-year period (2018 to 2021) compared to an annual average of 206,000 square feet citywide. When considering net leasing activity, there was a decline of around 45,000 square feet downtown compared to an increase of 246,000 square feet citywide. *Source: CoStar*

Decline in small businesses: From 2010 to 2019, there was a six percent decrease in small businesses (establishments with fewer than 20 employees) in downtown zip codes compared to a six percent increase in the county and 15 percent increase citywide. *Source: U.S. Census, County Business Patterns*

Lack of non-student housing development: Successful retail districts rely on and serve multiple tiers of demand, including regional visitors, tourists, employees, and residents. The lack of higher-density non-student housing has limited retail support especially for neighborhood retail uses such as food stores, personal services, and more diversified food and beverage offerings.
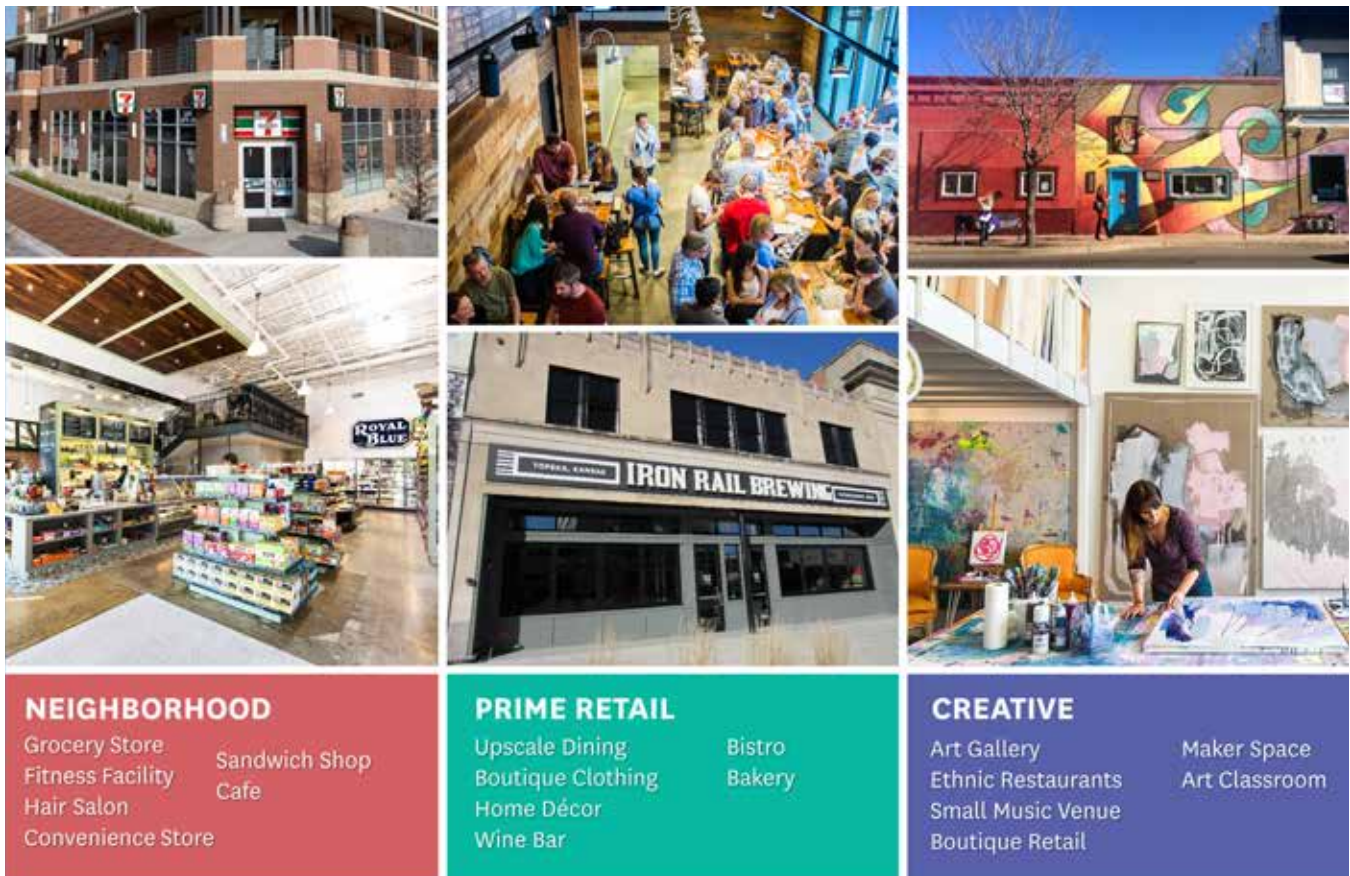
Increase in regional competition: The continued development of Celebration Pointe with its 2.3 million square feet of commercial space and 500 apartments has pulled spending activity out of Downtown, which has emphasized the need for downtown to create a clean, safe, and accessible environment, while promoting its identity, culture, and authenticity to remain competitive.

Economic diversification: With more than 50 percent of downtown jobs in the public sector, there is a critical need to support economic diversification. Downtown can provide added value to prospective employers given its walkability, access to transportation and services, and proximity to the UF campus. Investments in the public realm and housing development can also support economic diversification.

Limited market support: Given competition from nearby retail clusters and modest projected regional growth, between 30,000 and 50,000 square feet of net new retail space can be supported.

NEIGHBORHOOD
Grocery Store
Fitness Facility
Hair Salon
Convenience Store
Sandwich Shop
Cafe

PRIME RETAIL
Upscale Dining
Boutique Clothing
Home Décor
Wine Bar
Bistro
Bakery

CREATIVE
Art Gallery
Ethnic Restaurants
Small Music Venue
Boutique Retail
Maker Space
Art Classroom

Right Sizing Opportunity

With an oversupply of retail space within a 15-minute drive of Downtown, this competitive landscape limits development opportunities. At the same time, as the retail market evolves with the proliferation of online shopping and continued evolution of suburban-style strip centers, town centers, and shopping malls, **downtowns across the country have had to adapt and provide more experiential offerings that meet the needs of multiple tiers of demand, including residents, employers, regional visitors, tourists, and in the case of cities with major universities, students.**

There are effectively three types of retail categories that "work" in downtowns:

Neighborhood: These meet the day-to-day needs of nearby residents and employees, such as small and specialty grocery stores, health and beauty, salons, lunch spots, fast casual restaurants, and cafes.

Prime Retail: These are primarily hospitality-based offerings and need to be supported by a much broader customer base, including regional visitors (e.g. those living outside of the study area or in suburban areas) as well as business travelers and tourists. Tenants include full-service restaurants, bistros, boutiques, and higher-end home decor.

Creative: These uses include galleries, ethnic restaurants, performance venues, maker spaces, and other recreational amenities that serve as destinations and activity generators for locals and visitors. They occupy a wide range of spaces from repurposed light industrial space to smaller storefronts to pop-up establishments such as those within temporary retail spaces, repurposed shipping containers, or food trucks.   Given the existing types of businesses and built environment surrounding Depot Park as well as the CADE Museum, this area is prime for more destination-creative uses.

Unlocking the true potential of downtown is more than just filling vacant storefronts. It requires the cultivation of an ecosystem that links small business resources, technical assistance, marketing, and the built environment.

A future economic strategy for downtown needs to consider the diverse range of stakeholders and entities with a focus on creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses. This includes meeting an establishment's retail estate needs, but also providing resources, technical assistance, collaborations, marketing, and programmed public spaces to allow them to grow and thrive. From a small business perspective, creating a clean and safe environment for their customers is paramount in addition to parking management and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure.

In the case of Downtown Gainesville, given regional competition, finite demand for retail, and relatively soft office market, there is a need to right size opportunity and focus on a growth-from-within strategy. The organic growth of food and beverage, retail, and cultural uses around Depot Park demonstrates the creative potential, identity, and character of Gainesville's small business community and sets the stage for continued momentum in the core areas of Downtown. While future development should not be prescriptive, there should be more intentionality and curating of uses and business types, in addition to supporting the overall downtown experience.

Much like the housing affordability and development feasibility conundrum, a major component to this process is recognizing the importance of retail space affordability, while balancing the need for property owners to derive enough revenue to support reinvestment in their properties. This also speaks to the need to create a full spectrum of opportunities throughout the Study Area.

Downtown Small Business Ecosystem

Innovation District — $24/SF - $30/SF Lease Rate
- Biotech
- UF Innovate
- UF strategic positioning
- Future Class A or lab development

Professional Services — $20/SF - $25/SF Lease Rate
- Finance
- Legal
- IT
- Step-Up Space
- Architecture and Engineering

Main Street — $12/SF - $15/SF Lease Rate
- Food and beverage
- Boutique
- Personal services
- Fitness

Established Employers — $20/SF - $22/SF Lease Rate
- Local government
- UF
- Santa Fe College
- GRU

Makers/Creative — $6/SF - $10/SF Lease Rate
- Flexible Space
- Galleries/Arts/Performance
- Fabrication
- Artisanal Design

Link business type with real estate product and location

One of the most fundamental components to the downtown business ecosystem is the linkage between business type their real estate needs, both in terms of physical space, but also sustainable lease rates and locational attributes. For example, a coffee shop often needs to be in a highly-visible location with ample foot traffic, but in a smaller space with a more affordable lease rate, while artisanal and creative industries prefer open and less finished space that is accessible to amenities, but with less priority for visibility.

While the **Innovation District** is just west of the Study Area, it is still relevant to the downtown plan since it offers some of the highest quality office space in the region coupled with entrepreneurial support resources to bolster the regional innovation industry. Lease rates are at the top of the market and future Class A office development—or other supportive tech resources such as wet lab space—can be accommodated in the future, which is the focus for the Study Area is more on repurposing existing commercial space, programming, and tenanting strategies.

Professional Services: This sector includes financial services, legal, architecture/ engineering, administrative, and smaller tech businesses, including startups and setups. Much of this demand can be accommodated with existing office space (1.2 million square feet with around 80,000 square feet of vacant space), which also provides a market opportunity to reinvest in existing spaces, including historic office space. Lease rates generally need to be positioned below Class A leases, in the $20 to $25 per square foot range. These uses are the most appropriate in the core areas of Downtown, but also the North Main corridor. Access to parking is critical for workers and customers.

Downtown Small Business Ecosystem
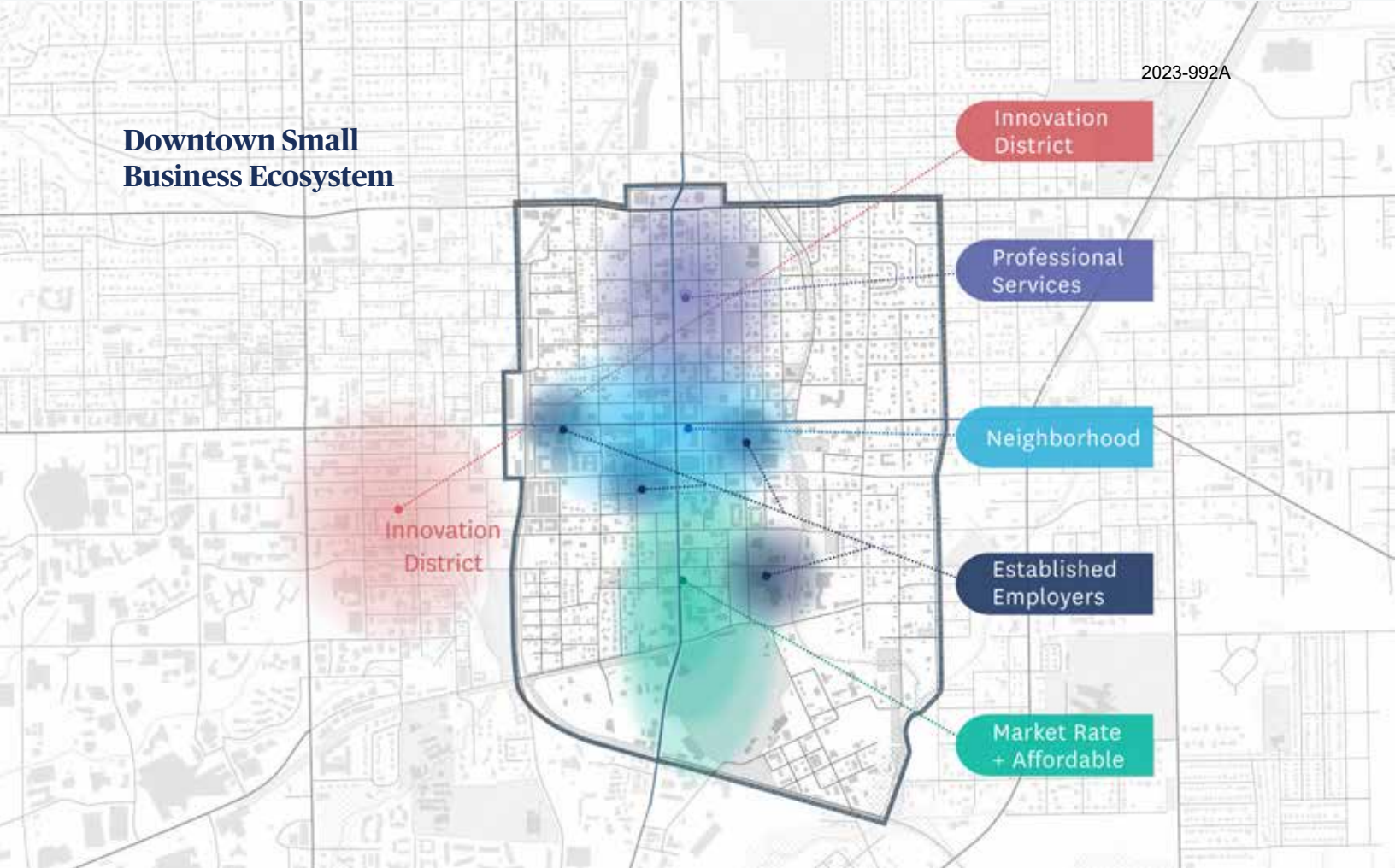
Main Street: This category generally includes street-level storefront businesses such as smaller retail, boutiques, food and beverage, personal services, and some professional service uses such as real estate offices. These are the most visible businesses with the most potential for promoting community identity and vibrancy. The most important criteria are visibility, signage, customer accessibly, district cleanliness and safety, and lease affordability. Ideal lease rates for locally-owned businesses are around $15 per square foot— lease rates of $20 per square foot and higher are generally only achievable for national chains or highly-productive full-service restaurants. Property

owners seeking to achieve these higher rent thresholds can often result in prolonged periods of vacancy.

Established Employers: More than half of the jobs downtown are the public sector, which limits growth opportunities, but these employers also serve as community anchors and provide long-term economic stability. While lease rates are less critical, their general locations and operations can be leveraged to support complementary uses such as retail and residential as well as community services.

Makers/Creative: These include fabricators, artisanal designers, craftspeople, and production companies as well as gallery spaces and studios that typically occupy existing and/or repurposed industrial spaces. Generally, users require open flexible floorplans and affordability with lease rates of less than $10 per square foot. The areas around South Main Street and Depot Park are ideal for this type of activity given the existing building stock, existing small business community, and alignment with the mission of the Cade Museum. This should also be leveraged as part of a marketing and branding initiative.

Idea 13: Unlock Real Estate Potential

Though storefront vacancy is not widespread throughout the Study Area, creating opportunities for space activation, especially for those spaces that are not being activity marketed, as well as tenant diversification are still critical for the district's future viability. **Given the ever evolving nature of retail, space needs to be adaptive to changing trends and needs and must be customizable to a broad range of uses beyond traditional storefront users.** The City should continue working with existing and prospective businesses for occupying city-owned property, including the parking garage, Bo Diddley Plaza, and Power District.

Curate a Broad Mix of Ground-Floor Uses

A successful commercial District maintains a diverse mix of ground-floor tenants in order to serve the needs of multiple segments of demand (workers, residents, and visitors) and allow for greater vibrancy throughout the day and evening.

In order to attract more visitor spending, destination and entertainment retail is needed, including bars, restaurants, venues, breweries, and boutiques; however, there is also a need to capture more local household spending with more service-oriented businesses such as dry cleaners, salons, fitness centers, or other daily needs retailers as well as daytime offerings for the local workforce, including cafes and lunch spots.

Given the demand capture needed to support brick and mortar retail in the face of competition from big box stores, online sales, or other retail districts, the Study Area also needs to incorporate a mix of non-retail tenant users such as storefront offices, galleries or arts-based uses, or live-work residential spaces. Though not direct contributors to the sales tax base, these types of uses can "fill the gaps" and offer additional market support for existing retailers. The diversification of retail users should be positioned to further enhance the broader sub-district vision and strategies, as presented previously.

Curate a Broad Mix of Uses

DAYTIME AND LOCAL RETAIL	STOREFRONT OFFICE SUITES	CIVIC ANCHORS	SERVICE RETAIL	CREATIVE/ ARTS	EXPERIENTIAL & DESTINATION
Artist Shops and Galleries, Antiques, Local Shops, Cafes, and Lunch Spots	Small Creative Firms, and Service Providers	Library and Student Spaces	Personal Care Services, Barber Shops, and Salons	Galleries, Art Studios, and Practice Spaces	Bars, Full-Service Restaurants, Indoor Sports, Eatertainment, Music Venues, and Breweries

Daytime and local retail
Storefront Office Suites
Civic Spaces
Service Retail
Creative/Arts
Experiential & Destination

8am 10 12pm 2 4 6 8 10 12am

Establish a diverse mix of uses during all active hours of the day

Idea 13: Unlock Real Estate Potential

Source: storefront.com

Activate Storefronts: Facilitate Startups and Popups

Installing temporary or "popup" retailers, restaurants, art studios, and other uses in vacant storefronts can add vitality to an otherwise quiet block, provide property owners a modest source of revenue, and help local entrepreneurs test business concepts that could become permanent fixtures in the future.

Popups also complement community events designed to bring visitors to the area for a special experience. Visitors that participate in these events will be even more likely to leave with a positive impression of Downtown Gainesville—and be more likely to return—if they see a district with more unique local businesses and a continual change in programming and offerings.

A Place-Management Organization (see Idea 15) would play a role in facilitating these types of uses—ranging from one weekend to six months—by matching entrepreneurs with willing and interested owners of vacant space, and by developing a framework for these short-term arrangements. Resources such as a template popup lease could identify and address issues specific to a short-term occupancy, and offer a balanced starting point for negotiation between landlord and tenant.

The facilitating organization could also offer small matching grants ($1,000 to $2,000) for modest improvements that make space move-in ready for a temporary use, such as by clearing space, painting walls white, or building simple display cases. Finally, stakeholders could work with the City's Department of Sustainable Development to codify occupancy permit standards appropriate for this special type of short-term use. A "popup toolkit" could outline this approvals process, and connect interested parties to key resources and information.

Repurpose Obsolete Space: Continue or expand assisting upgrades and improvements to commercial district building stock

Maintaining Downtown Gainesville's character will be critical for its long-term positioning as an attractive destination for visitors and future residents, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining its commercial building stock, especially its ground-floor retail environment.

One such program is the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area's (GCRA) Business Improvement Grant that provides a 50 percent matching grant for eligible improvements to building exteriors with rewards of up to $50,000 for most properties and up to $150,000 for historically designated properties. Dick Mondell's Burgers and Fries on SW 4th Avenue provides a success story from this program. GCRA should *actively* engage with downtown property owners to continue marketing the program and to build support for increased funding.

Source: Guide to Greater Gainesville

Idea 14: Increase Direct Small Business Assistance

► CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CIED)

► GREATER GAINESVILLE CHAMBER

► UF INNOVATE / ACCELERATE at THE HUB

► GAINESVILLE TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENERUSHIP CENTER (GTEC)

- ☐ Incubator Space
- ☐ Technical Assistance
- ☐ Startup and Entrepreneurial Support
- ☐ Networking and Mentoring
- ☐ Access to Capital Assistance
- ☐ Marketing Support
- ☐ Workforce Training

Idea 14: Increase Direct Small Business Assistance

Building upon a growth-from-within strategy, programs, spaces, and resources need to be in place to ensure that aspiring entrepreneurs and small businesses have the tools to thrive in Downtown Gainesville. From the engagement process, the small business community was identified as one of the most prominent assets of Downtown, which could be further bolstered through continued partnerships with local entrepreneurial service providers and resources as well as expanded direct funding for small businesses. Embedded in this strategy is also creating a more intentional and expansive marketing and branding campaign that celebrates Downtown's business community.

Leverage Entrepreneurial Support Resources

Gainesville is fortunate to already have many of the key resources and entities needed to support this ecosystem, including Center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED), Greater Gainesville Chamber, UF Innovate and Accelerate at The Hub, and Gainesville Technology Entrepreneurship Center.

In many ways, there is less of a need to create new programs, but to expand existing programs, create better alignment between providers, and assist with acclimating aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small business with Downtown. Maintaining an entrepreneurial ecosystem generally requires the following assets, tools, programs, and resources:

Technical Assistance: This includes direct advising and assistance on small business planning and operations, financial management, administrative management, growth/expansion, among others, and are often provided through the U.S. Small Business Administration Small Business Development Centers (SBDC);

Startup and Entrepreneurial Support: This includes the needed supports for launching new businesses, which includes Main Street, professional services, and tech and high-growth businesses. The types of services vary depending on the sector, which tech and high-growth business programs are often aligned with accelerator programs and linkages to venture capital investment, while Main Street startup assistance can provide general new business support and advising on real estate and workforce needs.

Access to Capital Assistance: One of the biggest deterrent to startup growth is the lack of capital, which is especially challenging for people of color given disparities in income, wealth, and property ownership. Increasing the role of CDFIs, micro-lender, and other investment entities and enhancing financial literacy will critical for the economic future of startups and small

businesses, but these efforts represent a citywide and regional challenge that will require a coordinated approach. The City should revive efforts around the Opportunity Loan Fund.

Marketing Support: Businesses in downtown districts need foot traffic to survive. Many small businesses do not have the revenue or resources for enhanced and targeted marketing and advertising, although a coordinated district marketing campaign and event programming schedule would have a profound impact on expanding market share.

Networking and Mentoring: Though seemingly fundamental, engaging with friends, colleagues, or business peers is often the most effective way of assessing business challenges. Local non-profits and economic development organizations can provide more formalized and structured business support resources, but facilitating peer-to-peer

networking opportunities is also a very critical component to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Events should be informal, inclusive, and multi-generational.

Workforce Training: Linking startups and small businesses with capable staff (temporary or full-time) is critical. Given the presence of UF, Gainesville has a very deep talent pool, although accessing the workforce and ensuring that it meets the needs of local businesses should be a seamless process. Partnerships are currently being pursued by the City, County, Santa Fe College, and private sector.

Incubator Space: More than just providing work space, incubators are a portal into the innovation and entrepreneurial community. They can take many forms from basic co-working spaces to spaces with more programmatic elements that include accelerators and on-site entrepreneurial support organizations. There is no one-size-fits-all incubator and they should be positioned to serve a wide range of industries, including retail, arts/creative, and Main Street businesses. The City has experience with incubator space through the establishment of the GTEC in East Gainesville, but it should explore a satellite operation within the Study Area.

Startup Grants

Arch Grants
St. Louis, MO

ARCH GRANTS

$50K grant for startups to move to Downtown St. Louis for at least one year

Startups encouraged to lease space at 76,000 SF co-working/incubator (T-REX)

Facility includes the offices of entrepreneurship support organizations and venture capital firms

20 percent of startups led by people of color and 40 percent are led by women.

Tenant Relocation Grants

Broad Street Tenant Recruitment Grant
Richmond, VA

VENTURE richmond

$10K grant for moving to select stretch of Broad Street; one-year minimum lease term

Types of qualifying businesses include retailers, restaurants, makers, entrepreneurs, and other startups

Partnership with Metropolitan Business League (MBL) to assist recruitment efforts to include small, women, and minority (SWaM) and immigrant-owned businesses

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Create Startup Grant Program

Access to capital is almost always the primary barrier to entry for aspiring entrepreneurs. This is especially challenging for people of color given the generational wealth gap and/or lack of equity from homeownership, personal savings, or other assets. Capital can come in many forms, including conventional lenders, micro-lenders or CDFIs that have less stringent underwriting requirements and can offer below market loan products, private equity investors, venture capital investors, and startup grant programs. All of these sources are critical to the startup ecosystem and creating better communication and pathways to these sources should continue to be explored.

Startups need funding more than anything, but most conventional lending products are unavailable for startup businesses, and without access to equity, aspiring entrepreneurs do not have the ability to test their products or services.

Accelerator programs can be very effective, but they can also be very competitive and some startups are often unwilling to commit equity shares for program participation. Creating a startup grant program for regional, national or international businesses to relocate to downtown Gainesville would provide much needed capital support for startups, broaden the pool of startup companies to relocate Downtown, and enhance visibility and marketability of the region as an entrepreneurial hub. A future grant program should also intentionally target people of color-owned businesses. These types of programs are typically established using a combination of public, private, institutional, and philanthropic funds.

Maintain and Enhance Downtown

> **"** **We can't tell our story if basic issues aren't addressed."**
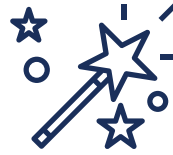
An implementation entity should begin by focusing on place management, addressing issues around making downtown clean, welcoming and safe.

Throughout the engagement process for the Downtown Strategic Plan, we heard from leaders, stakeholders and community members concerned about everything from broken and dirty sidewalks, unsafe conditions, a lack of lighting, and poorly maintained landscaping. To make downtown welcoming and attractive to residents, businesses, employees, and visitors we must first address these basics concerns. Only then can we build momentum to address the larger community vision around creating vibrant places, spaces and storefronts and a connected, green, walkable and bikeable downtown. Focusing on these baseline issues will both support existing downtown businesses, public spaces, and arts and culture institutions and enable the recent, new and planned investment in downtown to succeed. With stability in place, downtown can them move to the next task of investing in the built environment and additional redevelopment, opening the next chapter for Downtown Gainesville's evolution. Two ideas have emerged from the community-driven planning process:

▶ **Idea 15: Form a Place-Management Organization**

▶ **Idea 16: Continue to Build Capacity**

> **Make it beautiful and welcoming."**

> **Our public spaces don't attract people. Maintenance is a big issue."**

> **Focus on making downtown cleaner, safer and more welcoming to families."**

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).

Establish an Implementation Entity

Given the complex nature of downtowns—and the different constituents necessary to develop and implement a shared vision—an implementation entity that is completely focused on downtown has been proven to be effective in numerous communities across the region and the country. Such an organization would be able to facilitate, build and sustain the public-private partnerships necessary to guide and execute implementation. These organizations are usually placed outside of governmental and institutional frameworks and have dedicated funding sources, allowing them to be insulated from changes in leadership and variations in budget cycles. Combined with the ability to focus 100% on downtown, this enables implementation entities to effect change quickly.

It is important to note that this organization would a convener of the many voices, actors, and entities involved in downtown. It is also important to recognize that this group is distinct from others that many might associate with taking on

some of the tasks of downtown advocacy, programming, or review and approval. As the management entity for downtown, this work would go beyond advocating for downtown resident concerns (GDOT) or the allocation and disbursement of funds for infrastructure projects (GCRA). It would seek to collaborate with these groups and others, in addition to working with the city, county, business owners, arts and culture institutions, etc. to maintain and improve downtown. It has been suggested that bringing the "Friendship 7" back together could help jump start this new implementation entity. Tasking this mix of public, private and institutional partners and leaders (Alachua County, the City of Gainesville, University of Florida, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, UF Health, Santa Fe College and Alachua County Public Schools) has been proven to be a successful model for creating such organizations in other cities.

Roles and Responsibilities

This new organization should be the lead facilitator for the Downtown Strategic Plan with an initial focus on place management. As this implementation entity becomes more established, it can continue to add capacity and take on more complex roles and responsibilities. Depending on the community, these downtown-focused groups

take on various forms: Special Improvement District (SID), Business Improvement District (BID), Downtown Investment Authority, Community Investment Corporation, Community Development Corporation, Downtown Partnership, or Community Improvement District. Based on community need, these groups tend to focus on specific areas of concern, but most start with ensuring that downtown is clean, safe, and welcoming to visitors. Building from that foundation, many take on greater responsibilities to lead the transformation of downtowns. Funding sources vary from organization to organization with most clean and safe services offered by SID/ BID type organizations funded by special assessments, and other special projects or more advanced organizations are funded by a combination of membership dues, corporate sponsorships, service and development fees, real estate leases, and operating asset revenue streams.

2023-992A

Roles and Responsibilities

The Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District in Columbus, Ohio operates clean and safe services for downtown as well as providing security services, homeless resources, and ambassadors.

The Midtown Alliance in Atlanta established a brand that provides a unique sense of place, defining the district and building awareness.

The Louisville Downtown Partnership invested in the South Fourth Street streetscape to provide space for retail, outdoor dining, seating and gathering space, new street tree plantings, permeable paving on-street parking and speed tables to slow traffic.

Clean and Safe Services

Provide dedicated staff to deal with litter removal, graffiti removal, planting, watering and beautification. Many have "downtown ambassadors" trained to help visitors with directions and recommendations, as well as trained safety personnel that interface with local police to help make downtown feel welcoming and safe. Others also offer homeless outreach services to connect people with need assistance and resources.

Marketing/Branding

Marketing downtown and communicating about activities, programming and events is a critical function. Establishing a downtown or district brand identity is key to building awareness and inviting people to visit.

Streetscapes

Investing in downtown in the form of improved streetscapes and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can help to support retail, drive activity and make downtown more welcoming. Providing space for outdoor dining, seating, wide sidewalks, and shady comfortable streets improves the walkability and usability of downtown.

Roles and Responsibilities

Partnering with a local developer, the Upper West Side Community Improvement District created a pocket park to provide needed green space in this growing district in Atlanta.

The Columbus Downtown Development Corporation has invested in a range of downtown park spaces over the past 15 years from the Scioto Mile, Columbus Commons, the Scioto Greenways, and Dorrian Green. This investment in public space has driven private development adding nearly 6,000 residents in the past 10 years.

Public spaces require programming. The 3CDC has invested in Washington Park and Fountain Square and has focused on culturally relevant programming to ensure that downtown and Over the Rhine are welcoming to all Cincinnati residents. In 2021 it put on 667 events for a total of 11 million visitors.

Placemaking

Improving public spaces in downtown through landscaping, plazas, pocket parks, and other gathering places provides a platform for downtown residents, workers, and visitors to interact. These small-scale investments can transform a vacant lot or underutilized space into a valued community asset.

Parks/Open Space

Leveling up from small-scale placemaking, some organizations have invested in parks and open space, providing needed recreational, play, event and gathering space in downtown. These signature investments provide a needed urban amenity that helps to attract not just day-to-day activity but also help to catalyze redevelopment and reinvestment.

Programming

The programming of public spaces – large and small – is critical to the success of downtown. These spaces require activities and experiences to draw people to downtown. Scaled from street musicians to concerts, from food trucks to festivals, it is important to plan, support and fund diverse, relevant programming that welcomes everyone downtown.

The Gordon Square Arts District has curated retail in several Detroit Avenue storefronts providing rotating pop-up spaces to help small businesses test concepts to attracting unique retailers to provide a diverse mix of business types to attract visitors to the district and provide services to existing residents.

3CDC has invested in $820 million in the Over the Rhine District and Downtown Cincinnati including 417 affordable and 176 market rate unit of mixed income housing in 15 total projects.

Idea 16: Continue to Build Capacity
Define the roles and responsibilities of the new organization.

Building from the clean and safe services that are a recommended baseline function for this new organization, an eye should be kept on the next steps that need to be taken to work toward greater responsibility and implementation steps. This could include a focus on programming, placemaking, branding, tenanting and investments in the public realm and redevelopment.

To build the capacity of this new implementation entity, the city and others should start with the following steps:

► Host an Implementation Retreat that brings City Staff, stakeholders, and leadership together to discuss a downtown management organization.

► During this retreat, reach out to other Business Improvement Districts, Special Improvement Districts, Downtown Development Corporations/ Authorities to better understand the process of creating such an entity.

► Following this retreat, develop a memorandum with summary of interviews, start-up considerations, lessons learned, and step-by-step tasks for implementation

Retail Tenanting

Vibrant retail is key to creating a downtown experience that is unique and interesting. Some downtown organizations assist in matching interested tenants to vacant storefronts, facilitating leases and curating a mix of retail to appeal to a broad audience. Others have taken a more hands-on approach in master leasing space, facilitating start up and pop up and providing financial assistance for small business.

Guide Redevelopment and Enable Affordability

Acquisition, control and development of vacant or underused property in downtown is the most advanced level of investment guided by downtown organizations. Doing so allows groups to shape the redevelopment of downtown, providing both needed catalytic projects but also responding to community needs through the prioritization of certain types of development be it office, hospitality, market rate and affordable housing, or commercial space.

Case Studies

The peer investigation should focus on why and how each peer entity started, the roles and responsibilities of each, and their identified lessons learned. To jump start these efforts, the planning team created four case studies that highlight groups that offer a range of different types of services from the fundamental clean and safe services to more advanced groups that have actively participated in real estate redevelopment and public realm investments. Working from this initial list, we encourage the city and others to reach out to these and other organizations to ask more specific questions and gain more insight into the establishment of an implementation entity.

Louisville, KY
Louisville Downtown Partnership

Downtown Ambassadors

South Fourth Street

Founded:
2013 and comprised of two existing organizations: Downtown Management District and Downtown Development Corporation.

Operating Budget:
$1.7M in expenditures/revenues (FY 2021). Funding sources include BID assessments, contracts for services, and other sources.

Mission:
To take the long view on downtown success, through strengthening commerce, providing high-quality placemaking, improving visitor, resident, and workforce experiences, and to stimulate high-quality development and vitality in Louisville's Downtown.

Roles & Responsibilities:

► Economic and physical planning

► Development of downtown and surrounding areas

► Marketing and special events

► Manages Commercial Loan Fund and Downtown Housing Loan Fund

► Facilitate events that other groups develop and run

► Clean and safe services

Projects & Accomplishments:

► Streetscape improvements

► 4th Street Live!

► Hotel projects

► Downtown housing projects

► Commercial corridor development

► Downtown Louisville Master Plan

Columbus, OH
Columbus Downtown Development Corporation

Columbus Commons

Scioto Peninsula Development

Dorrian Green Park

Yoga at the Commons

National Veterans Memorial & Museum

Clean and safe services

Founded:
2002 to implement the Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan and to address the decline of investment in and prioritization of Downtown Columbus.

Mission:
To lead catalytic, transformative developments in the heart of Ohio's capital city.

Operating Budget:
$13.8M in expenditures and $20M in revenues (FY 2019). Funding sources include contributions, program services, and rental property income.

Roles & Responsibilities:
► Lead catalytic development

► Make initial investments

► Provide proof of concept for private development community to make further investments

► Manage Housing Investment Funds

► Clean and safe, homeless outreach and ambassador services are provided by Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District, a related, but separate organizations.

Projects & Accomplishments:
► Restoration of the Scioto Riverfront (Scioto Mile and Scioto Greenways)

► Transformation of City Center Mall to Columbus Commons, a mixed-use development ($100 million in public space investment into $400 million in private investment)

► Strategic Planning for downtown and Master Planning for downtown districts

► Dorrian Green Park

► National Veterans Memorial & Museum

► Scioto Peninsula Redevelopment, the 26-acre Phase I is nearly complete with 329 residential units, 231,000 square feet of office space, and a 198-room hotel

► Topiary Park Crossing, a 100-unit affordable housing development

► Variety of programming events ranging from audiences of 100 to 7,500:
  · Family events
  · Fitness
  · National act concerts
  · Arts performances

Jacksonville, FL
Downtown Vision, Inc. & Downtown Investment Authority

Downtown Vision, Inc.

Founded:
2000 as the Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown Jacksonville.

Operating Budget:
$2.1M operational budget (FY 2021). BID funding from $1.10 per $1,000 of assessed value.

Mission:
To create and support a vibrant downtown and promote downtown as an exciting place to live, work, visit and invest.

Roles & Responsibilities:

► Provide Clean and safe services

► Provide marketing and stakeholder support

► Research – collect data, analyze trends and publish a State of Downtown report

► Events and programming

► Placemaking - Public space beautification, activation and management

► Aligns services and projects with the Downtown Investment Authority

Downtown Investment Authority

Founded:
2012 as the Public Economic Development Agency to promote general business interests in downtown.

Operating Budget:
$1.1M operational budget (FY 2022). Funding source is the city's general fund.

Mission:
To serve as a clearinghouse to establish an identity for the region that capitalizes on partnerships to guide the revitalization of the core of the City of Jacksonville. To attract investment, facilitate job creation and residential density, while assuring a unified effort is strategically focused to implement action through capital investments, planning, advocacy, marketing and the establishment of policy for the general community and downtown stakeholders.

Roles & Responsibilities:

► Acts as the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and implements near-, mid, and long-term projects, programs, incentives, and initiatives.

► Manages allocates funds from the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Trust Fund

► Acts as the Economic Development Agency of the city within the boundaries of downtown

► Oversees the Office of Public Parking, which manages city-owned parking lots and garages.

Projects & Accomplishments:

► Restoration of the Barnett National Bank Building with a mix of uses and 107 loft-style apartments and the University of North Florida Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

► Broadstone River House, a six story, 264-unit apartment development

► Florida Blue Parking Garage, a 862 space garage that freed up a riverfront surface lot for development of the FIS headquarters that will employ 500 people

► Four mixed-income affordable housing developments that total more than 500 units

Miami, FL
Miami Downtown Development Authority

Biscayne Green

Programming

Flagler Street Beautification

Ambassadors

Downtown Baywalk concept

Founded:
1967

Operating Budget:
$13.6M operational budget (FY 2021-2). Funding through a special tax levy of properties within the district and reimbursements from the City of Miami for community projects.

Mission:
To grow, strengthen, and promote the economic health and vitality of Downtown Miami.

Roles & Responsibilities:
► Advocate, facilitate, plan, and execute business development, planning, capital improvements, and marketing and communication strategies

► Is the economic development and marketing agency charged with bringing businesses, people, and visitors to Downtown Miami

► Provide business assistance and help them navigate the requirements of opening or expansion

► Clean and safe, homeless outreach services, and landscape installation and maintenance through its Downtown Enhancement Team and Downtown Ambassadors

Projects & Accomplishments:

► Downtown Baywalk, a five-mile long pedestrian promenade along the waterfront

► Downtown Riverwalk and Greenway, a 10-mile pedestrian path and on-road facility

► Reconstruction of Flagler Street in 2015 featuring a new $13 million streetscape with new bike racks, enhanced crosswalks, new street lighting fixtures and upgraded sidewalks, and live oak trees along both sides of the road

► Biscayne Green which is in preliminary design to transform six blocks of Biscayne Boulevard by reducing vehicle lanes, adding on-street parking, building wider sidewalks, providing a dedicated bicycle facility, and space for retail kiosks and outdoor dining.

Implementation

Implementation Matrix

From Vision to reality. Implementing this plan will require focus across organizations and stakeholders.

Successful implementation of the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan will require diligent focus from the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, the University of Florida, and other downtown organizations, stakeholders, institutions, and other strategic partners. While implementation will eventually be guided by a new place-based management organization that expands capacity over time, in the short term implementation will need to be guided by the leadership that participated in this planning process.

The planning team has created an implementation matrix that highlights each of the 16 Ideas presented in this plan. For each Idea, there are related recommendations, identified partners to lead and provide support, and a suggested timeframe.
This matrix is a dynamic tool to both evaluate success and to identify needed adjustments or changes. As some are completed, others might be added. Likewise, funding availability and other opportunities may alter priorities or enable projects that had not been considered at the time of this plan completion. Successfully utilized, this implementation matrix will provide strategic direction, guide priorities, and ensure accountability.

▶ **Immediate = 0-1 years**

▶ **Short term = 1-3 years**

▶ **Medium term = 3-5 years**

▶ **Long term = 5+ years**

▶ **Ongoing = Consistent annual area of focus**

Idea	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Become a Destination			
Idea 1: Build Investment Around Local Strengths ► Create distinct, but complementary, character areas with unique local qualities that can be matched with the needs of different types of businesses and developments. ► Prioritize business recruitment, development activity, and public investment in the identified areas to create a critical mass of business activity and a nucleus of pedestrian energy	City of Gainesville, Implementation Entity	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents, Arts and Culture Institutions, Greater Gainesville Chamber	Ongoing
Idea 2: Shape Downtown Identity ► Develop a coordinated marketing and branding program around Downtown Gainesville's authentic built and living heritage. ***Order of magnitude cost of $70,000 to $115,000.*** ► Establish this as a priority project for the newly-formed Place-Management Organization dedicated to promoting and enhancing Downtown (see Idea 15)	City of Gainesville, Implementation Entity	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents, Arts and Culture Institutions, Greater Gainesville Chamber	Ongoing
Idea 3: Create a Downtown Jewel ► Re-imagine Sweetwater Park as a signature public green space in the urban core of Gainesville. ***Order of magnitude construction cost per acre of $850,000 to $1.2M*** ► Prepare a Conceptual Design and Feasibility Study to attract funding, implementation and programming partners. ***Order of magnitude cost of $155,000 to $215,000.***	City of Gainesville, Implementation Entity	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents, Arts and Culture Institutions, Greater Gainesville Chamber	Short term

Idea	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Connect the Dots			
Idea 4: Balance the need for parking with the desire for a walkable, urban core. ► Continue to monitor parking supply and utilization ► Continue to monitor regulations and pricing ► Create a "park once" downtown ► Improve signage, wayfinding, and communication ► Continue to invest in technology	City of Gainesville, Alachua County	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents	Ongoing
Idea 5: Prioritize Streets to Meet City Standards ► Proactively improve downtown streets not meeting the city's current design standards, prioritizing streets identified through this planning process (refer to map on page 77 and corridors identified in Idea 8).	City of Gainesville, Implementation Entity Alachua County, Florida DOT	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents	Medium to Long term
Idea 6: Activate the Sweetwater Corridor ► Design, improve and program to activate the Sweetwater Creek corridor into a network of urban parks, green spaces, trails, and recreation areas for the entire community. ***For segments with unimproved trails, order of magnitude construction cost per linear foot of trail of $190 to $250.***	City of Gainesville, Implementation Entity	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents, Arts and Culture Institutions, Greater Gainesville Chamber, Alachua County Schools	Medium term
Idea 7: Create a Greenway Loop ► Develop a Greenway Loop that connects neighborhoods, links to regional trail networks, and is within 6 min. walk of all downtown destinations. ***For segments with unimproved trails, order of magnitude construction cost per linear foot of trail of $190 to $250.***	City of Gainesville, Implementation Entity, University of Florida, Santa Fe Community College, UF Innovate	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents, Arts and Culture Institutions, Greater Gainesville Chamber	Medium term

Idea	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Strengthen the Relationship with Adjacent Neighborhoods			
Idea 8: Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown ► Establish thresholds and gateways to connect neighborhoods to the opportunities happening downtown. ► Prioritize the University Avenue, South 4th Avenue, South 2nd Avenue, East 3rd Street, and SW 1st Avenue corridors. ***Order of magnitude Cost per improvement type shown below:*** - ***Intersection improvements with pedestrian signalization: $300,000 to $450,000 per intersection*** - ***Intersection improvements without pedestrian signalization: $125,000 to $200,000 per intersection*** - ***Sidewalk gap improvements: $85 to $115 per linear foot of sidewalk***	City of Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida DOT, UF Innovate, University of Florida	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents	Short to medium term
Idea 9: Establish Transition Areas ► Identify transition areas between downtown commercial areas and nearby residential neighborhoods.	City of Gainesville	Downtown property owners, businesses, residents	Short term
Increase Housing Opportunities			
Idea 10: Address Housing at Scale ► Implement site specific strategies for Catalyst Areas, Neighborhoods, the North Main Corridor, and Depot Park	City of Gainesville	Gainesville Housing Authority, Alachua County Housing Authority, housing developers	Short to medium term

Idea	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Idea 11: Support Affordable and Mixed Income Housing ► Continue pursuing alternative funding streams to support affordable housing fund ► Continue to pursue low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) in key areas ► Increase capacity of community development organizations (CDOs) ► Establish RFP process for publicly owned land/catalyst sites ► Pursue neighborhood stabilization programs and policies ► Support the creation of a community land trust (CLT) ► Bolster home repair funding programs and initiatives ► Provide technical assistance and outreach to long-standing homeowners ► Repurpose obsolete student housing as workforce housing	City of Gainesville	Community Development Organization, Gainesville Housing Authority, Alachua County Housing Authority, housing developers	Short to Medium term
Idea 12: Facilitate Market Rate Housing ► Pursue tax abatement for new construction and major rehabilitations ► Explore use of GCRA funds to support mixed-income housing development ► Leverage UF Innovate as value-add for market rate development ► Repurpose and assemble public land ► Explore master leasing model to lower developer risk ► Leverage existing parking structures and assets to unlock development potential for vacant parcels and/or above-floor spaces	City of Gainesville, Alachua County	University of Florida, UF Innovate, GCRA, housing developers	short, medium, and long term

Idea	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Create a Supportive Local Business Environment			
Idea 13: Unlock Real Estate Potential ► Curate a Broad Mix of Ground-Floor Uses ► Activate Storefronts: Facilitate Startups and Popups ► Repurpose Obsolete Space: Continue or expand assisting upgrades and improvements to commercial district building stock	City of Gainesville, Alachua County, Implementation Entity	Downtown property owners and businesses, GCRA, Greater Gainesville Chamber, Visit Gainesville	Short to Medium term
Idea 14: Increase Direct Small Business Assistance ► Leverage Entrepreneurial Support Resources ► Create Startup Grant Program	City of Gainesville, Implementation Entity	Center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED), Greater Gainesville Chamber, UF Innovate and Accelerate at The Hub, Gainesville Technology Entrepreneurship Center, CDFIs	Short to Medium term
Maintain and Enhance Downtown			
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).	Alachua County, the City of Gainesville, University of Florida, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, UF Health, Santa Fe College and Alachua County Public Schools	GCRA, Downtown residents, business owners, and employers	Immediate
Idea 16: Continue to Build Capacity ► Define the roles and responsibilities of the new organization.	Implementation Entity	City of Gainesville, Alachua County, University of Florida, GCRA	Short term

Gainesville, FL

2022