

# Plan East Gainesville

## Final Report



**Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization  
(MTPO)  
for the Gainesville Urbanized Area**

In  
Association  
with:

Alachua County  
City of Gainesville  
Gainesville Regional Utilities  
Florida Department of Transportation

February 2003

*Prepared by Renaissance Planning Group*



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*Prepared by:*



*Renaissance Planning Group*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite more than two decades of gradual economic decline and lack of investment, East Gainesville is poised for resurgence. With the area’s proximity to downtown and the University of Florida, and the presence of assets like the Gainesville Regional Airport, a good regional road network, and abundant natural resources, growth will eventually come to East Gainesville. The questions are how soon, and whether that growth will be piecemeal, dispersed and of marginal value to local residents. Or will growth occur in a manner that creates critical mass to attract renewed interest and leverages other investments in a way that provides for needed economic growth while ensuring a quality development pattern consistent with the stated objectives of the community? These questions have been at the forefront of discussion during the past year.

The challenge in the Plan East Gainesville process is to create a framework that balances the potentially competing desires for expanded economic, commercial and residential growth with a preference of many in the area for preservation of the natural environment and maintenance of the “peaceful” qualities that make East Gainesville unique. Doing so requires a change in the geographic profile and perceptions of the area through a vigorous and sustained revitalization program, complemented with a commitment to public investment and marketing the virtues of the area. The energy, enthusiasm and civic pride are in place for that to happen. This plan presents the culmination of a public process to define the area’s values and priorities in a way that will enable East Gainesville to flourish.

Through the one-year process of the Plan East Gainesville project, Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) staff, with the assistance of a diverse Steering



*Public outreach involved numerous workshop activities with East Gainesville residents and other stakeholders throughout the course of the study.*

Committee of citizens and stakeholders, has engaged in a dialogue with citizens who live or work in East Gainesville. After one year of input received through multiple focus groups, community meetings, and a three-day charrette, the citizens have delivered a clear message: make a commitment to East Gainesville, and do so in a way that provides a catalyst to propel it in a direction towards sustained revitalization, with expanded options for commerce, housing, transportation and preserves its unique natural character.

This Executive Summary presents the vision for East Gainesville and major study recommendations that have been developed through this highly interactive public participation process. It builds upon an analysis of conditions, challenges, and opportunities for revitalization in the study area outlined in the Community Profile (attached as an appendix to this report). The body of this report describes each element of the plan along with an implementation program and set of recommended design guidelines oriented toward the creation of civic focal points in the form of mixed-use development centers.

## **COMMUNITY VISION**

Building on the MTPO's adopted Livable Community Reinvestment Plan, the Plan East Gainesville project entails a comprehensive economic revitalization plan that achieves a balance of environmental preservation with land development and improved transportation mobility. Priority objectives for the Plan include:

- *Expand the range of housing choices to attract and retain residents with a variety of income levels;*
- *Target specific areas for mixed-use development centers that can support and sustain higher levels of employment, commercial and social activities;*
- *Protect vital natural resources, such as the watersheds, creeks, tree canopy and scenic vistas that make East Gainesville unique;*
- *Create opportunities for increased walking, bicycling and transit use through compact development patterns, urban design and development of new facilities and services, and*
- *Improve the inter-connectivity of the transportation system to minimize impacts to the state highway system and ensure improved accessibility between East Gainesville and other parts of the Gainesville urbanized area.*

To achieve those objectives and respond to community concerns and ideas, a conceptual master plan was developed that organized the study area into urban, suburban and rural districts.

Several land use and transportation alternatives were evaluated and presented, and a recommended plan developed from that process. The following vision statement, formed at the April 2002 charrette, served as a guide for this entire effort:

*East Gainesville will preserve and showcase the natural environment through open space conservation and the creation of thriving community centers that support strong neighborhoods, promote sustainable economic opportunity and a well-connected community, and embrace the history, culture and diversity of the area.*

Supporting goals are to:

- *Reflect the strength, quality and diversity of the people and neighborhoods by investing in the infrastructure and human potential;*
- *Celebrate and preserve natural resources as a unique, integral feature of the community through compact development, enhanced access and increased awareness of the area's natural amenities;*
- *Realize the potential for compatible economic opportunity and social interaction through connectivity of neighborhoods with mixed-use centers that bring higher paying jobs and provide services; and*
- *Enhance the multi-modal connectivity within the East Gainesville community and to regional employment and commercial centers.*

## **RECOMMENDED PLAN**

The consensus formed by the participants in the study revolves around the need for focused development and a signature project created in a manner that supports existing residents and local businesses, and leverages private sector investment. As best stated during a banking and development community forum, held in the spring, “invest in the public infrastructure, and the development community will respond.”

The priorities developed in this plan seek to present, in a phased approach, answers to the problems with land use and lack of investment expressed by participants during the year of the study. One key to the ultimate success of the Plan East Gainesville project is a dedicated commitment to rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure and the establishment of a specific land use plan and a capital improvement plan that will guide development. No single development or group of developers will wholly change the face of the Plan East Gainesville

area. However, if public commitment to the people and infrastructure of East Gainesville is achieved, then the pendulum is likely to swing in the direction of private sector reinvestment in, and rejuvenation of, East Gainesville. Figure A presents the recommended plan. Its overall themes and strategies necessary to change the geographic profile of East Gainesville include:

1. Provision of increased economic opportunity through targeted development in key commercial centers;
2. Restoration of the natural waterways and preservation of natural lands surrounding Newnan's Lake and Paynes Prairie;
3. Elimination of the physical segregation and improved access between Eastside Gainesville from the more prosperous areas of downtown, the University of Florida and the western commercial areas.

### **Special Area Plan**

The major elements of the Special Area Plan provide a tiered land use framework to organize land uses in a way that supports the vision. It focuses on the creation of compact, walkable mixed-use centers and the transformation of the Alachua County Fairgrounds into an office and industrial mixed-use employment center. These re-development efforts will provide expanded and economic commercial opportunity, and foster the preservation and diversity of residential neighborhoods. The Alachua County Fairgrounds site represents an ideal location for the attraction of higher wage industrial or technology-sector jobs because of the site's size, location and proximity to the airport and related distribution facilities. The 103-acre site, adjacent to Waldo Road and nestled between a proposed new airport access road on the north and NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the south, also provides high visibility for a mixed-use office/hotel commercial development that can support the needs of the area's workforce, residents and business travelers. The vision for redevelopment of the Fairgrounds into an employment center entails the following major elements:

- *Completing a land swap to relocate the existing Fairgrounds facilities to a suitable location with similar regional highway access;*
- *Constructing a new airport access road to Waldo Road immediately north of the Fairgrounds to enhance access and visibility;*
- *Extending East 27<sup>th</sup> Street from SR 20 (Hawthorne Road), which is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS), to NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the existing entrance to airport. This would not only provide more direct access for passengers and workers, but also would*

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*support freight and goods movement to the airport, surrounding businesses and the North 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue truck route;*

- *Relocating the Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) operations facility to the north Waldo Road corridor to provide a base for employment and services with excellent truck access;*
- *Consider establishing an Industrial Development Authority to provide for the planning, marketing and infrastructure financing necessary to attract light manufacturing, service, office and supporting retail, restaurant and hotel/conference center uses to the site;*
- *Establishing premium Bus Rapid Transit service on Waldo Road connecting the Fairgrounds Employment Center and airport with downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida as part of a regional system, and*
- *Creating a stronger link between the Fairgrounds Employment Center with the City of Gainesville's Ironwood Golf Course to aid in attracting meetings and businesses to the airport area if suitable facilities existed.*

Another central element and signature project of this plan is to connect the traditional commercial center of East Gainesville at Five Points with the continuing successful revitalization of downtown Gainesville. This redevelopment effort would focus on the area located immediately south of East University Avenue/Hawthorne Road between East 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets. It would center on a reconstructed SE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as the center's Main Street. The Special Area Plan preserves large tracts of land in the study area for conservation and outlines locations for clustered residential development that preserves open space, expands housing choices for a variety of income ranges, and supports eco-tourism opportunities.

### **Land Conservation Plan**

Complementing the land use plan is a Land Conservation Element that establishes priorities for the preservation and protection of natural lands and enhancement of the area's unique natural resources. The land conservation plan has two primary objectives: 1) preserve and protect natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations, and 2) improve the visibility and access to those resources through amenities that enhance the appreciation and perception of the Eastside, and provide for improved connectivity between neighborhoods and commercial or economic centers. This is accomplished through the creation of a greenway network that restores waterways to improve water quality and provides for multi-use trails that connect community facilities and neighborhoods. Specific priority areas of focus include the Lake Forest Creek and Newnan's Lake Greenways.

## **Transportation Element**

There are projects both large-scale and small-scale that can have a substantial impact on mobility and livability in the Plan East Gainesville study area. While much of the transportation discussion and analysis has focused on the impact of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS), it is equally important that streets be made more livable at critical locations where people gather or cross to reach desired destinations.

Priority transportation recommendations are to maintain the existing FIHS in its present location, but to develop alternative transportation connections that provide for improved pedestrian, bicycle and transit accessibility and mobility within the study area and linking it to the destinations in the greater Gainesville Metropolitan Area. Enhancements to the FIHS network to facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian access are central to the plan.

A signature project recommended in the transportation plan is the development of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that provides improved transit travel times and amenities. The BRT would enjoy priority treatment at key traffic signals and, where feasible, run on dedicated bus lanes using signature transit vehicles with distinctive markings and stations. The BRT would



link East Gainesville with downtown, Shands Hospital, the University of Florida and Butler Plaza via a regional system that would generally operate along Archer Road, Depot Avenue and the Waldo Road Rail Trail corridor to Five Points. Two routes would then diverge – one would travel along Waldo Road to the Fairgrounds Employment Center and Airport, and one would travel along Hawthorne Road to SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. Part of the system – from I-75 to Shands – is already included in the MTPO’s 2020 long-range transportation plan. This recommendation would extend the service along a logical corridor providing improved regional transit connectivity for Eastside residents and businesses.

Promoting economic opportunity is the objective of constructing the extension of SE 27th Street from Hawthorne Road north to NE 39th Avenue as a two-lane divided roadway functioning within a greenway corridor. This project would provide improved connectivity to the airport, jails and employment centers at NE 39th Avenue, and would help relieve the

intersection of Waldo Road and East University Avenue of regional truck traffic. Additional transportation enhancements are recommended for several local streets with a predominantly residential character.

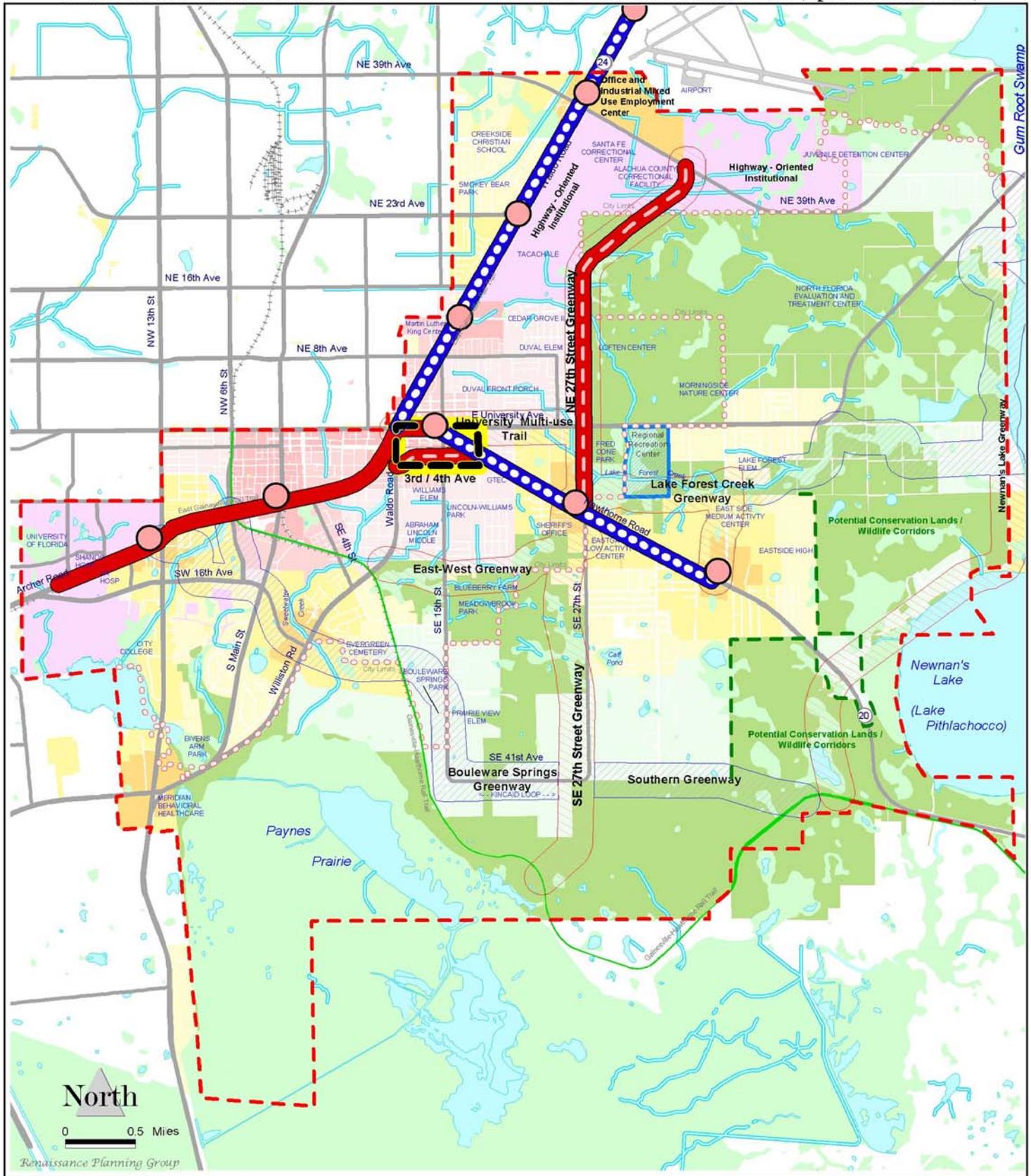
## **SUMMARY**

This report is organized into the following sections: Environmental Conditions, Plan Elements for Land Use, Conservation, Transportation, and Implementation. Appendices are included for the Community Profile, Design Guidelines and a summary of public involvement activities. The Community Profile and Design Guidelines are intended to also serve as stand-alone documents that provide a context for development and implementation of the plan. Keeping the product of this community-based planning effort moving forward through the process requires continued joint planning and development activities by each of the study partners. A major element of that collaboration is the preparation of a marketing program design to attract federal and state investment, along with private sector interest in achieving the community's stated redevelopment objectives.

Figure A

PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE

Recommended Master Plan (Special Area Plan)



North

0 0.5 Miles

Renaissance Planning Group

Five Points Priority Redevelopment Area

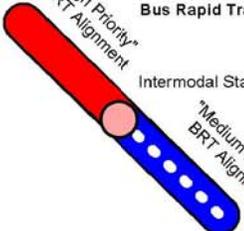


Roadway Modifications

"High Priority" NE 27th Street 3rd / 4th Avenue



Bus Rapid Transit



Intermodal Station

Greenway Corridors

"High Priority"



"Medium Priority"



Conservation

Urban Center

Urban Transition

Urban

Suburban Center

Suburban Transition

Suburban

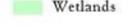
Rural

District

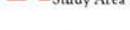
City Limits



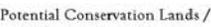
Rail Trails



Wetlands



Study Area Boundary



Railroad



Potential Conservation Lands / Wildlife Corridors Boundary



# COMMUNITY PROFILE

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# **Plan East Gainesville Community Profile**

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**Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO)  
for the Gainesville Urbanized Area**

**In Association with:**

**Alachua County  
City of Gainesville  
Gainesville Regional Utilities  
Florida Department of Transportation**

**October, 2002**





# East Gainesville Community Profile

## INTRODUCTION

The Plan East Gainesville Community Profile provides a snapshot of the East Gainesville study area. It highlights existing conditions of the East Gainesville community that influence the development of the planning study. The profile includes maps, narratives, photos and graphics to describe neighborhood demographics, land uses, public services, transportation facilities, jobs, and other issues affecting the community. This document serves as a summary of findings from community discussion forums and data review to provide a basis for developing and evaluating alternatives, and selecting a plan for implementation of specific projects, programs and policies.

## PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE

Plan East Gainesville is a coordinated community planning study, jointly funded by Alachua County, the City of Gainesville, the Florida

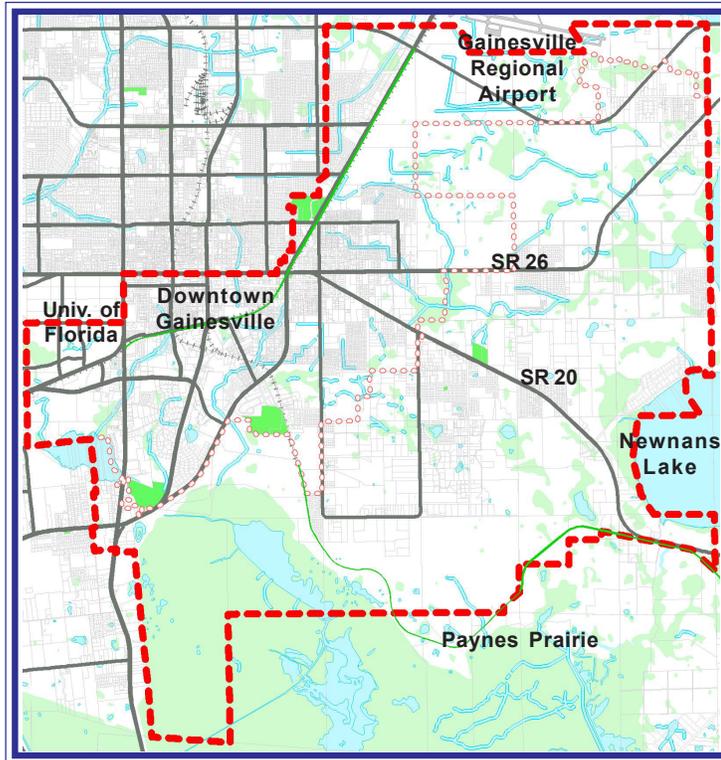
Department of Transportation (FDOT), Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) and the Gainesville Urbanized Area Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO). The MTPO is made up of the five City of Gainesville Commissioners and the five Alachua County Commissioners. Its role is to coordinate projects, set priorities and establish policy guidance for the transportation program in the Gainesville Metropolitan Area (GMA).

Plan East Gainesville builds on the adopted MTPO 2020 Livable Community Reinvestment Plan, the long range transportation plan for the GMA. Based upon the Plan East Gainesville study, the MTPO will prepare an action plan for preservation of community character, quality development and revitalization of East Gainesville, built on the following components:

- 1) Land Conservation Plan
- 2) Special Area Plan
- 3) Transportation Plan

The project has entailed a 3-day charrette, meetings, interviews and group discussions with East Gainesville residents, youth, bankers and lenders, environmental groups, property owners, employers and other interested parties. This community input is used to establish a strategic vision for the community on how to plan for quality growth and development in East Gainesville.

### PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE STUDY AREA



*The Plan East Gainesville Study Area includes about 21,000 acres of land in both the City of Gainesville and unincorporated Alachua County. It is nearly one-third size of the entire Gainesville Urbanized Area.*

## A COMMITMENT FOR THE FUTURE

True sustainable revitalization of East Gainesville will take a concerted effort of the entire community, not just eastside residents, a few departments within the government, and beneficent nonprofit organizations. It will take consistent application of a set of complementary strategies that range from allocating grant funds to assembling land through eminent domain.

It will take a change in institutional relationships, with a commitment to follow through on projects, programs and policies. The vision that guides the plan should not be lost among future discussions about the details of implementation.

The policy guidance from the Plan East Gainesville project will need to be consistently translated into applications for grants, assignment of priority funding and strengthened interagency coordination over the short and long term. Its implementation requires a conscious decision by Alachua County and the City of Gainesville to elevate East Gainesville for priority investment and allocate discretionary resources to preserve land, attract jobs and link land use with transportation. A joint planning framework is needed to ensure that complementary strategies relating to schools, jobs, environmental stewardship and transportation have shared expectations among agency participants and the community.

State and federal transportation investments must not only avoid chronic impacts to lower income, minority and disadvantaged communities, but by law they must also demonstrate equitable benefit. Over the last 30-40 years, major investments in the community's transportation system have traditionally benefited university students and commuters from the growing western suburbs of Gainesville. Planned projects continue that trend, including the narrowing of lanes on University Avenue west of Waldo Road, the dedicated lane for rapid bus transit on Archer Road, and the building of the SW 62<sup>nd</sup> Boulevard/SW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue extension. The one recent major transportation project in East Gainesville – the widening of SR 20 as part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System – is directly in conflict with several stated community redevelopment objectives.

Given the MTPO's adopted Livable Community Reinvestment Plan and its leadership in this unique planning process, it is reasonable to expect substantial benefits from federal and state demonstration grants and discretionary funding for transit-friendly and walkable redevelopment. The reauthorization of the federal transportation law, referred to as TEA-3, is

## Plan East Gainesville Mission Statement

As a result of a significant public participation program, develop a joint City of Gainesville and Alachua County special area plan, land conservation plan and transportation plan to revitalize the eastern Gainesville Urbanized Area, after considering the environmental, economic, neighborhood and transportation impacts of proposed development.

likely to offer funding for “smart growth” initiatives that promote community livability, sustainability and transportation mobility. Federal funds to support livable community initiatives for East Gainesville can be used for urban redevelopment and transit expansion. As the plan is completed, projects should be developed with such potential grant sources of funding in mind.

### PROJECT CONTEXT

In recent years, East Gainesville has predominantly served as a location for large institutional uses and government buildings. However, its transportation system and residential population base can support additional development if negative perceptions about income and crime can be overcome. Through the Plan East Gainesville process, the community will help identify suitable locations for encouraging diverse types of development, including walkable, mixed-use projects, employment centers and higher end housing options. The process could include redevelopment or new development, but it must be balanced with preservation of the environment, local neighborhoods and existing local businesses.

The Plan East Gainesville study area encompasses about 21,000 acres of low-density residential neighborhoods, uncongested commercial corridors, and vital natural resources. Also included in the study area boundaries, but physically, socially and economically

separate from East Gainesville are the downtown and Shands/VA hospital employment centers. These areas will be considered in the study as they relate to East Gainesville, primarily through transportation systems and access to employment.

Bounded on the north by the Gainesville Regional Airport, the Plan East Gainesville study area reaches east to Newnan's Lake, south to Paynes Prairie and west to downtown. At NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue, the area wraps around the Shands/VA hospitals, extending south to the intersection of SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Williston Road.

Once a productive agricultural and residential area, East Gainesville has experienced declining population and limited economic investment since the 1960s, when I-75 was developed to the west of Gainesville. Today the community battles perceptions of high crime levels, poor schools, considerable poverty and unsightly litter.



Unlike West Gainesville, which has experienced substantial economic growth, East Gainesville has retained much of its natural character and low-density development pattern. Recent public and private investment has resulted in projects such as a new sheriff's office, a technology incubator, an affordable residential development, and a \$400,000 community park. Neighborhood associations, nonprofit corporations and public leaders have initiated area cleanups, community policing and economic promotion. As Gainesville grows, the natural resources, convenient location and lack of congestion on the east side are likely to attract renewed interest from developers and others from the sprawling west side.

As an area of ecological significance, East Gainesville must balance environmental and neighborhood

preservation with economic growth and redevelopment. Its proximity to downtown, the University of Florida, the airport, and Paynes Prairie creates tremendous opportunities with sizeable risks. Investment in quality development can capitalize on East Gainesville's location, transportation corridors, and low land prices to stimulate the local economy while protecting the area's natural lands and neighborhoods.

Issues and Opportunities:

- Attract investment in housing and jobs
- Preserve natural resources
- Protect and improve existing neighborhoods and businesses
- Improve multimodal accessibility

**WHO LIVES IN EAST GAINESVILLE?**

Both East Gainesville and Alachua County are growing in population, as reported in population counts from the 2000 Census and growth projections from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Florida. Alachua County's population, of 217,955 is projected to reach 280,139 by 2020, an addition of 62,184 residents over 20 years. East Gainesville comprises about 16 percent of the total county population, close to 34,000 people, and is projected to grow to about 52,000 people by 2020. About 20 percent of the City of Gainesville's population lives in East Gainesville within the city limits.



*East Gainesville is a diverse community with about equal proportions of white and black residents.*

According to the 1990 Census, about 65 percent of East Gainesville households earned incomes lower than the median household income for the

City of Gainesville, which was \$21,077 in 1989 dollars. The median income for Alachua County at that time was \$22,084. The 2000 Census reports median income for Alachua County as \$31,426, and for Gainesville as \$28,164. Assuming similar income patterns to 1990, it

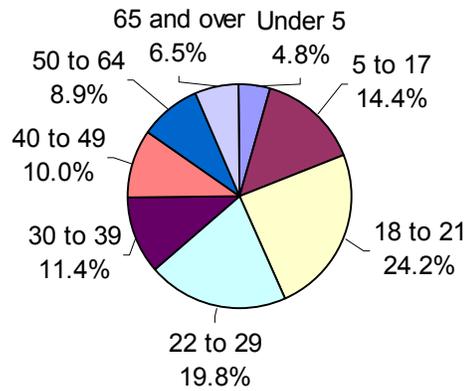
**Plan East Gainesville**

can be inferred that the majority of East Gainesville residents earned less than \$28,164 in 2000. At this income level, most of the population may be eligible for homeownership and neighborhood revitalization programs such as Florida’s State Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP), and various federal homeowner assistance programs.

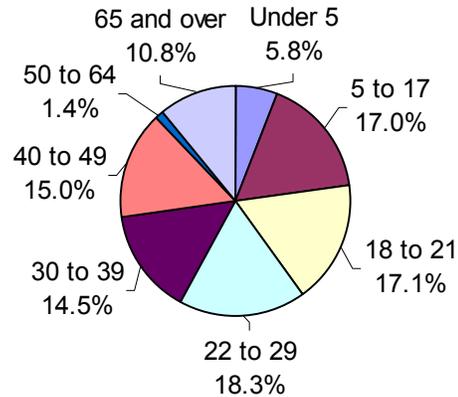
East Gainesville also contains a higher proportion of single parent households than Alachua County. Most (55%) of the children in East Gainesville live in homes with single mothers, compared to Alachua County, in which most (65%) of the children live with a married couple. Single-parent households account for 14 percent of East Gainesville households and only nine percent of Alachua County households. Married couples or families account for 39 percent of Alachua County households, but only 22 percent of East Gainesville households. Single individuals account for roughly one third of all households in both East Gainesville and Alachua County.

According to the 2000 Census, the racial profile of the study area differs from the County’s racial distribution.

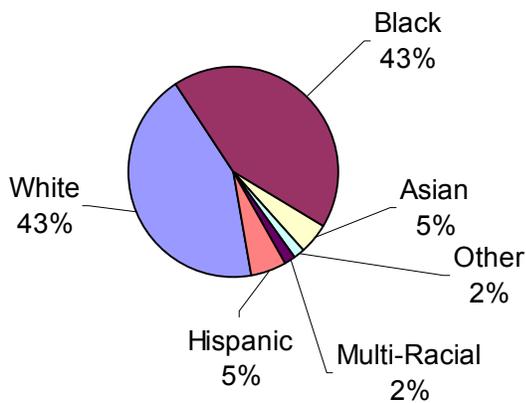
**East Gainesville Population (Age)**



**Alachua County Population (Age)**



**East Gainesville Population (Ethnic Summary)**



There are 15,362 black people in East Gainesville, making up 43 percent of the area. Forty-four percent of the population is white. The black population of the County includes 42,062 people, about 19 percent black persons countywide, with 70 percent white.

The age distribution in East Gainesville today indicates that the largest group is aged 18-29 years, comprising about 44 percent of the area’s population. Very young people and the elderly make up the smallest age groups at about 12 percent of the same population. Age distribution is similar to the County in that the largest age group (31%) is between 18 and 29 years old, while only 15 percent of the County population is very young or elderly.

The data indicate that as workers enter their peak earning years (30-64), they may leave East Gainesville to purchase better housing or seek higher paying jobs.

**Population Summary:**

- Equal mix of black and white
- Large group of young adults
- Lower incomes than the area median
- More single-parent households

Issues and Opportunities:

- Attract more diverse housing mix
- Educate and retain young adult population
- Encourage successful families

**Residential Development Patterns**

Mature residential neighborhoods anchor East Gainesville. The majority of housing stock in East Gainesville is more than 30 years old, with a median



*East Gainesville has several well established single-family neighborhoods located within an easy commute distance of jobs.*

year built of 1966. Density of development may reach a maximum of only eight dwelling units per buildable acre. More than 25 percent of the land area in East Gainesville is designated for this low density, single-family use.

Abandoned, dilapidated or boarded-up properties make up about 10 percent of the neighborhoods east of



Waldo Road. Targeted housing rehabilitation, infill development and code enforcement can help to improve these properties.

The new Cedar Grove II development at Waldo Road and NW 12th Avenue exemplifies a successful affordable housing program, with an emphasis on attractive community design.

In 2000, 35 percent of East Gainesville households owned their homes, while 65 percent rented. This rate of homeownership is significantly lower than in Alachua County, where 55 percent owned and only 45 percent rented their homes. However, several housing assistance programs administered by the City of Gainesville and Alachua County are available to East Gainesville residents, including a down-payment assistance program for city employees.

East Gainesville’s rural areas provide opportunities for strategically located, higher income housing that targets single family homeowners with financial means and purchasing power. Such housing may be clustered around a village center, minimizing negative effects on the natural or rural environment. In East Gainesville, the population seeking higher end housing priced at \$200,000 or more may be a potential market for village-type locations with attractive natural resources, scenic vistas and recreational opportunities, within easy commute to several major employment centers.

Issues and Opportunities:

- Rehab and improve existing housing stock
- Introduce higher-end single- and multi-family housing
- Reduce investment risk and environmental impacts through clustered housing

**School Systems**

Alachua County schools in East Gainesville operate with excess capacity but suffer from a poor reputation. Discussion of closing Prairie View Elementary School in the southeastern Kincaid Loop area caused a great deal of controversy in the 2001-2002 school year.

The State of Florida’s School Public Accountability Report (SPAR) rated Charles Duval, Lake Forest, Prairie View and Joseph Williams Elementary Schools as C, C, D, and D,



respectively. However, Lincoln Middle School received an A rating, and Eastside High received a B rating. Eastside High has been designated as a magnet school, offering an International Baccalaureate program as well as a culinary institute. Although improvement may be needed in the elementary schools, East Gainesville schools serving the upper grades deserve a positive reputation.

Alternative schools on the east side include the Lofton Center, offering specialized vocational training; the Horizon/New Pathways Center, offering specialized programs for children in grades six through 12; and the A.Q. Jones Center, a school for emotionally challenged children in grades one through 12. The Regional Detention Center, also administered within the Alachua County School District, is also located within the Plan East Gainesville study area.

Santa Fe Community College's (SFCC) downtown campus is located at West University Avenue and West 6th Street. An important asset for East Gainesville, SFCC offers community programs, career and technical training, and continuing education, as well as flexibly scheduled undergraduate programs for Associate of Arts degrees, Associate of Science degrees or university transfer credits. Community members would like to see an increasing Santa Fe Community College presence in the core East Gainesville area. The College is considering expanding its downtown campus.

Issues and Opportunities:

- Introduce charter/magnet schools
- Improve lower grades
- Showcase Eastside High School for its innovative programs
- Showcase Lincoln Middle School for its history and grades

**Employment and Economic Development**

The Gainesville MTPO projects employment in East Gainesville to grow by 53 percent within the next 20 years. Similarly, job growth in the County is projected to increase 64 percent by the year 2020. Enterprise Florida reports the unemployment rate in East Gainesville at three percent. This statistic implies that the

real employment issue in East Gainesville is not a shortage of jobs, but a shortage of higher paying jobs.



*The Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC) supports higher-paying job creation and local economic development. It is home to the Plan East Gainesville Resource Center.*

A variety of economic agencies have taken an interest in East Gainesville. The Alachua County/Gainesville Chamber of Commerce formed the Eastside Economic Development Committee in 1995. East Gainesville was designated as a State of Florida Enterprise Zone in 1995, and the City of Gainesville appointed the Gainesville Enterprise Zone Development Agency (GEZDA), a citizens' advisory board, to oversee the Enterprise Zone programs. In 1997, the East Gainesville Development Task Force, a nonprofit, community-based organization for the advancement and improvement of East Gainesville, was formed, which later became East Gainesville Development Corporation. These organizations often work together for the economic development of the area, sometimes overlapping in their agendas and personnel.

The City of Gainesville's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has established revitalization areas for stimulating economic development and improving physical characteristics. Funding is obtained through tax increment financing, in which property values in the defined areas are capped at their assessed value in a particular year. Any subsequent increases in tax revenues due to rising property values in the area form a dedicated fund for revitalization of the area. The City of Gainesville's Downtown and Eastside CRA districts include almost all of the Plan East Gainesville study area

within the city limits. Discussions lately have involved developing an Arts Incubator program as one way to stimulate local economic investment and revitalization. Alachua County has proposed a CRA district between Hawthorne Road and East University Avenue, extending from the city limits to NE 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

Economic development, bringing job opportunities and neighborhood-serving commercial uses, is a very high priority among East Gainesville residents who attended community open houses and workshops during the first phase of the Plan East Gainesville study. Residents emphasize the importance of improving the physical appearance of existing businesses, overcoming perceptions of economic risk and attracting additional residents with diverse incomes. Property owners would like to maximize the value of their commercial properties, building on the proximity to downtown and the highly accessible existing transportation network.

The Gainesville Regional Airport, the City of Gainesville Airport Industrial Park and Tacachale, a transitional home for persons with disabilities, occupy the northern industrial sector of East Gainesville. Much of this area is also undeveloped rural land. Businesses such as Nordstrom's, Clariant Life Science Molecules, Florida Food Service, Flightline Gainesville, Heat Pipe Technology and Atkins Technical form a basis for employment and economic strength in East Gainesville. Most of these companies are located in the industrial center near the Airport, which has the potential to be a prominent East Gainesville job center. "Mom and Pop" businesses, such as Phase III Building Supply and The Eastside Eatery, among others, contribute to the economic diversity of the area. Alachua County schools, the University of Florida and the area's regional government center also strengthen the employer base.

Educating and enhancing the local workforce presents a challenge in the community, as the median completed educational level is only 10.5 grades. Residents who have attended Plan East Gainesville workshops would like to implement creative approaches to learning geared toward the needs of potential employers. Alachua County prioritizes recruitment of businesses that are willing to participate in the Job Training

Partnership Act (JTPA), providing training for both skilled and unskilled workers. Santa Fe Community College, the Lofton Center and other high schools in the Alachua County school system provide vocational programs, but local schools face perceptions of poor performance and undesirability. Locating charter schools and magnet programs on the east side could both improve the image of East Gainesville schools while further educating the workforce.

Issues and Opportunities:

- Attract high-paying jobs
- Train and educate the local workforce

### **Safety and Crime Prevention**

The perception of high crime rates presents a barrier to residential and commercial investment in East Gainesville. Although the community faces drug-related crime, overall incidents of crime are lower in East Gainesville neighborhoods today than they were last year. When comparing crime data for half of 2001 with January through June of 2002, crime incidents have decreased overall by about 12 percent for neighborhoods in the east area. Still, East Gainesville accounts for 41 percent of reported crime in the city but only 20 percent of the population.

Often, improved police attention in a community will increase the reported crime rate, as more crimes will be discovered and residents will be more likely to report crimes. Perceptions of crime may increase in spite of the fact that the crime rate is decreasing or may even be lower than in other areas. In the 1997 East Gainesville Task Force Action Plan, Sgt. Ash of the Gainesville Police Department discussed the perception of high crime in East Gainesville, stating that actual differences between crime rates on the east and west sides of town were marginal.

The Gainesville Police Department (GPD) has developed a Community Oriented Policing (COP) program for the citizens of Gainesville. Community oriented policing involves building a partnership in which the police, the communities they serve, and other agencies work together to address concerns such as crime, illicit drugs, and neighborhood decay.

Community policing seeks to empower communities to help make their neighborhoods better, safer and healthier places in which to live and work. The GPD has organized the City into specific geographic districts, assigning a dedicated officer to each one in order to solve neighborhood problems. Eight of these districts are within the Plan East Gainesville study area.

Along with increased police enforcement, the community can battle perceptions by noting the rule of the broken window. Visitors often associate unmaintained physical structures with an attitude of neglect that encourages crime. Facade improvement and code enforcement, then, become viable strategies for improving the community image. Additionally, providing locations for young people to gather and enforcing no-loitering laws can improve the area's image. The good news is that the problem of perception may be larger than the actual crime problem.

Issues and Opportunities:

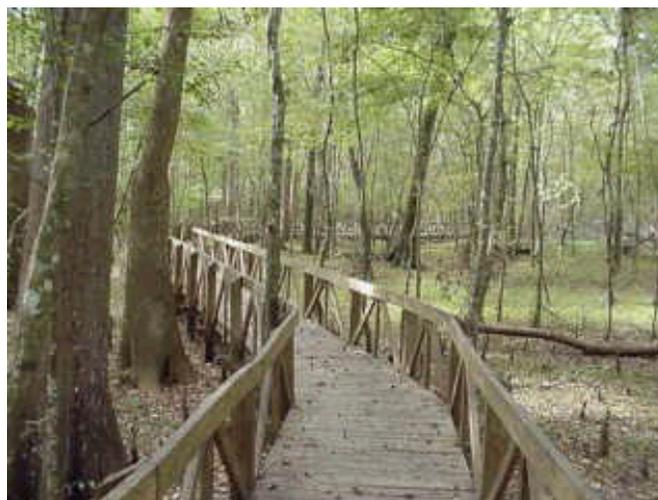
- Improve perceptions by physical maintenance
- Build on current programs to continue the decrease in crime

**ENVIRONMENT**

East Gainesville enjoys many natural features, preservation lands and viable resources, including 33 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Community residents speak fondly of access to wild life, beautiful green space and a clean, quiet environment. Protecting and promoting the natural environment while encouraging economic development presents a unique challenge for East Gainesville.

Paynes Prairie, a 13,735-acre wet prairie forms the south boundary of the Plan East Gainesville study area. It supports 20 percent of the vegetative species within Florida. Other natural attractions include Gum Root Swamp and Morningside Nature Center. The Gum Root Swamp, located in the northeast corner of the study area, is home to abundant birds and wildlife.

Morningside Nature Center on East University Avenue preserves 278 acres of nature trails, wetlands and pine forest, including a Timucuan village and an old Florida



Biven's Arm Nature Walk

homestead created for community education. Other parks along East University Avenue include Fred Cone Park, which is under development and will serve as a community focal point along with Young America Park.

East Gainesville boasts the largest lake in the Gainesville area, Newnan's Lake. The Plan East Gainesville Land Conservation Plan addresses preserving and celebrating this lake through improved public access and visibility as a central community feature. Newnan's Lake is currently experiencing low water levels and poor water quality.

Because East Gainesville lies within a low aquifer recharge area (4-8 inches/year), the area depends heavily on rainfall.

Pollutants drain into the lake from nearby areas via a series of creeks and canals.



Trash, debris and pollutants from stormwater runoff drain into Newnan's Lake and Paynes Prairie. These canals also form barriers between neighborhoods.

A variety of creeks flow throughout East Gainesville. Both Lake Forest Creek and Little Hatchet Creek drain into Newnan's Lake, while Sweetwater Branch Creek drains into Paynes Prairie. The 1,710-acre drainage

**Plan East Gainesville**

basin for Sweetwater Branch discharges mostly untreated stormwater from the downtown area into the prairie. To address this problem, a stormwater retention and treatment facility is under development near Depot Avenue. It will provide a park setting for the community while treating the runoff that threatens to pollute the prairie.

The Calf Pond Watershed surrounds Kincaid Loop, an ecologically sensitive area offering a peaceful, natural setting with diverse housing stock. Located on the southern edge of town, Kincaid Loop is home to the Blueberry Farm and Bouleware Springs Park. Lincoln Estates, the Woodbine Community and a recycling facility are also located in this area.

The Blueberry Farm is a vital part of East Gainesville's character and represents economic value as a local business. Visited on a regular basis by student groups, the farm has been harvesting blueberries since 1999.

Bouleware Springs, a trail head for the Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail, provides good access to historic, natural parts of the community. Its springs supplied water for all of Gainesville until 1913 and are now designated as a historic landmark, with facilities for group meetings and recreational activities.

Evergreen Cemetery is also located in the southern portion of East Gainesville, due west of Kincaid Loop. This cemetery is the resting place of several Gainesville founding fathers. Its directors wish to expand the cemetery and protect it from road construction and new development. The Jewish Veterans Cemetery, near the Five Points intersection where East University Avenue, Waldo Road, and Hawthorne Road intersect, adds a historic park attraction to this busy location.



Hundreds of small-quantity, hazardous waste generators including dry cleaners, paint and body shops, auto garages, and dentist offices reside on Gainesville's east side. There are 22 known hazardous waste cleanup sites. In addition, drainage canals containing trash and pollution form barriers to community.

However, these drainage canals and power line easements can serve as part of a greenway corridor network, and brownfield cleanup funding can encourage new development in the area. In addition, the city plans to ensure 50 - 60 percent tree canopy coverage within the city limits, exceeding the American Forestry Association's recommended average of 40 percent. The area has potential, based on continued growth, to exceed national Air Quality Standards for ozone and particulate matter.

Issues and Opportunities:

- Expand greenways utilizing existing canals and utility easements
- Preserve and connect natural parks and centers
- Protect aquifer levels and water quality

## EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE

### Urban, Suburban and Rural Framework

The Plan East Gainesville Study Area can be organized into three broad categories: Urban, Suburban and Rural. This helps define land use types and establish design criteria. Each category is intended to reflect objectives for land conservation and development, to preserve community character and set design expectations. The Urban sector includes the downtown Central Business District, extending westward to include Shands Healthcare and student housing just east of the University of Florida, and extending eastward to include the Duval and Lincoln Estates neighborhoods.

Higher-density development, smaller lot sizes, busy traffic corridors and extensive commercial and cultural activity characterize this category. Parks and greenspace provide a neighborhood civic focal point and buffer residential areas from commercial uses. Contiguous undeveloped land is uncommon. Although high-rise buildings may not be abundant in this category,

the concept is to promote neighborhoods and commercial areas that are proximate to each other and oriented to a city center. Higher end multifamily housing should be encouraged within this area in places such as Five Points and along South Main Street, to promote transit use and proximity to commercial areas. A Plan East Gainesville priority is to preserve and connect the eastern neighborhoods and corridors in the Urban sector to the vibrant downtown residential areas and commercial district.

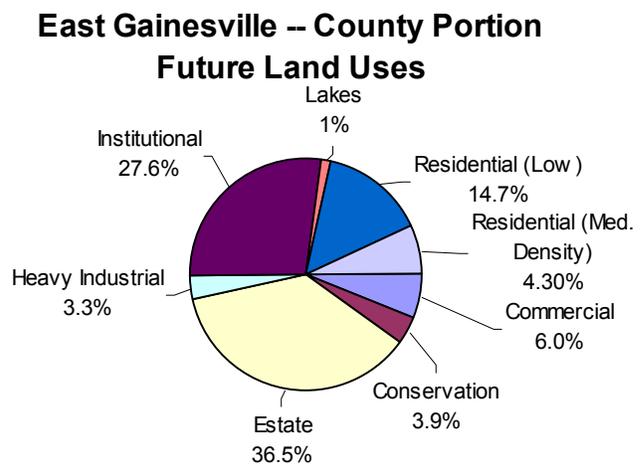
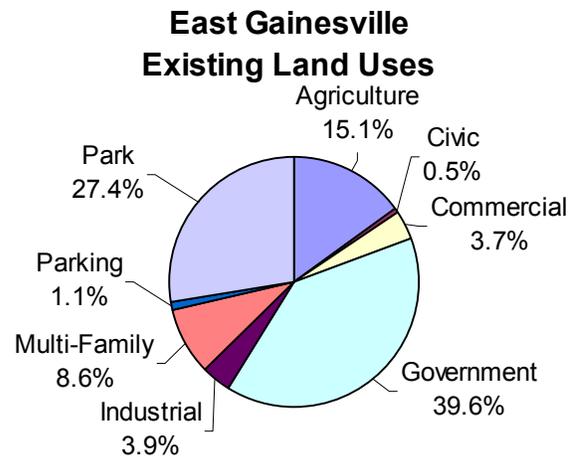
The Suburban section is lower density than the Urban area, acting as a transition to lower density with more of a highway orientation. It surrounds the Urban section, extending south down SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, South Main Street and Williston Road, reaching east to Hawthorne Road near Eastside High School, and extending north to include Lake Forest Elementary, much of East University Avenue, Morningside Nature Center and the Loftan Center. Larger lot sizes, low-density residential neighborhoods, strip commercial centers, unhindered traffic-flow and vacant, developable parcels characterize much of this sector. The area also includes some agricultural land that may be preserved or developed in the future.

The Rural area surrounds the Suburban section, functioning to sustain the lakes, ponds and creeks, Paynes Prairie and agricultural lands at the periphery of the City. Extensive vacant, agricultural and park lands predominate. Mature, organic neighborhoods exist in the vicinity of Kincaid Loop. The rural designation preserves existing greenspace and allows very little to no growth. What new development may occur should be built as a rural cluster, or compact village, to maximize the preservation of open space. At the eastern edge of the Rural sector, certain areas are designated for independent, self-contained villages, with housing and neighborhood or specialty retail on site. Clustered, low density, higher-end housing could enjoy scenic vistas and access to Newnan’s Lake or Gum Root Swamp. Institutional uses such as Tacachale, correctional facilities and fairgrounds occupy the area to the north.

Each of these three categories can provide a useful template for ensuring the development of sustainable economic, housing and transportation opportunities in East Gainesville.

**Land Use Summary**

City and County future land use maps designate most (about 80%) of East Gainesville for Conservation, Public/Institutional, and Residential uses. Existing land uses are consistent with future land use plans, showing primarily conservation areas, government uses and residential neighborhoods. Twenty-five percent of East



Gainesville land is currently vacant, and new commercial development is virtually nonexistent.

Within the city limits, almost half of East Gainesville property is planned for public facilities or education. Another 28 percent is planned for residential use, including a large amount of vacant land. With 14 percent of East Gainesville designated for conservation, only 16 percent is left for economic growth through commercial, industrial and mixed-use developments.

Under County jurisdiction, about 55 percent of East Gainesville land is planned for residential use. Areas planned for future commercial and industrial uses are primarily located near the airport, comprising roughly 13 percent of future land use. Almost one third of the land is planned for institutional purposes such as schools, treatment centers, correctional facilities or other campuses.

### Neighborhoods

East Gainesville residents value their rich and diverse neighborhoods and the positive relationships among neighbors. Many residents on Gainesville’s east side have lived in the community for multiple generations. Neighborhood associations benefit from very involved community members. Some of the neighborhood groups and associations within the Plan East Gainesville study area include Lincoln Estates, North Lincoln Heights, Duval/Eagle Eyes Crime Watch, Springhill, Sugarhill, Kirkwood, Woodland Park and the Porter’s Community.



*East Gainesville neighborhoods boast attractive, quiet streets with ample shade and peaceful surroundings.*

#### *Lincoln Estates Neighborhood*

This neighborhood benefits from a strong neighborhood identity, civic investment, a good network of well-defined streets, and local schools and parks. The McPherson Center and Lincoln-Williams Park offer opportunities for a community center, providing a neighborhood focal point. However, a high potential for cut-through traffic threatens the neighborhood’s stability,

and poor connections to the Hawthorne Road/E. University Avenue commercial area contribute to a sense of isolation.

#### *Duval Neighborhood*

This neighborhood benefits from active neighborhood associations, including Eagle Eyes Crime Watch, Open Door Ministries and the Front Porch Florida Duval Area Governor’s Revitalization Council. Designated as a State of Florida Front Porch community, it has access to annual funding for special improvement projects. Although housing stock ranges from medium to poor repair, abundant vacant land offers opportunity for improvement through infill development.

NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue offers opportunity for neighborhood retail uses, and 30 acres of vacant land in the center of the neighborhood is under consideration for a stormwater park. Like Lincoln Estates, the high potential for cut-through traffic threatens stability. However, access to this neighborhood from Waldo

Road, University Avenue and Hawthorne Road increases the potential for economic development. The recreational rail-trail forms the western boundary of this neighborhood, with the Loftan Center offering vocational training immediately east.

Although it carries the potential for economic development, Waldo Road also forms a barrier between the Duval neighborhood and the

neighborhoods and recreational uses to the west, such as the Martin Luther King Center and Citizen’s Field. Safer pedestrian and bike access across this corridor should be considered in future plans.

#### *Business Corridors*

##### *Waldo Road Corridor*

Serving as the northern entry into East Gainesville, Waldo Road offers the potential to provide a sense of arrival into the community, and its regional access encourages economic development in the area. The northern section of Waldo Road, close to the airport

and the truck route on NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, has good access for freight distribution and jobs. Its proximity to industrial and institutional land uses offers economic opportunity. In addition, Gainesville Regional Utilities is involved in the Plan East Gainesville study effort to identify and gain community input on relocating its operation facilities to Waldo Road from its current downtown location in the 500 block of SE 5th Avenue.

The Gainesville Regional Airport could serve as the anchor for industry, commerce, hotels and restaurants on the northern side of East Gainesville. As a transportation hub, it could attract industry with shipping needs as well as passenger traffic that would utilize hotels and restaurants. Building upon the airport's synergy, the Alachua County Fairgrounds might be considered as a location for economic development. However, this option brings some controversy with it, and conflicting visions for the area would need to be resolved. The Fairgrounds could remain as they are, used for special events on an occasional basis, or could be relocated to an area that offers improved crowd control and accommodates noisier events.

The Waldo Road entry needs a gateway with visual clues for drivers to slow down and notice the surroundings. There is no sense of arrival and no transition from a high-speed, rural roadway to an urban environment. High-speed traffic on this wide street acts as a barrier to pedestrians, bicyclists and others going from the Duval area to the Martin Luther King Center, Citizens Field and downtown Gainesville.

The gateway could be placed at the boundary of Tacachale and the Cedar Grove II development located at NW 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Tacachale, a community for Floridians of diminished capacity, represents a transition area between residential and industrial land uses. Cedar Grove represents new housing stock that is intended to

be integrated with future commercial uses facing Waldo Road.

*Hawthorne Road*

Hawthorne Road (SR 20) forms the eastern entry to the East Gainesville area. As with Waldo Road, it has the potential to provide a sense of arrival in the community, but needs a gateway. Again, the area needs a transition from a high speed, rural roadway to an urban environment, utilizing visual clues to slow drivers down.



*Local business like Phase III Building Supply on Hawthorne Road depend on pass-by traffic and the buying power of local residents.*

Although landscaping has been placed along Hawthorne Road, it lacks a sense of place. This can be created by a defined center, civic or public space with visible connections to its edge surroundings. Requiring building scale to better match street scale can create a sense of visual context, which would contribute to an improved sense of place. Currently, the corridor has poor

accessibility. However, the area around the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC) at the SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street intersection offers economic potential through quality development.

*Hawthorne Road Activity Centers*

City and County Activity Center designations seek to provide nodes of mixed-use, more intense development that maximizes the use of infrastructure in relation to the population. By designating Activity Centers, the City and County can encourage the clustering of new economic investments. The resulting traffic, infrastructure requirements and waste generation can then be addressed efficiently so that government services are used to their maximum benefit. At the same time, the economic and social benefits of many businesses and people converging in a central location can be maximized. Alachua County has designated a ½-mile by ¾-mile area north of the Hawthorne Road / SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street intersection as the East Side Medium Activity Center, which is an employment-based activity

center. Land use plans permit institutional facilities such as educational, cultural, health care or community service. Office uses may occur in such fields as health care, law, engineering or professional services. Industrial uses such as training facilities, light manufacturing, warehousing, or auto sales and repair will also be allowed. Residential uses in the mixed development will be designed as a transition to surrounding unmixed residential uses. Certain landscaping, architectural and sign standards will be required to create a unified development appearance while buffering and integrating the Activity Center.

The East Side Medium Activity Center will be included in the County’s Transportation Improvements Program and Capital Improvements Program. To strengthen private investment in the Activity Center, the county will encourage job training linked with job creation, the creation of a business incubator and the coordination of community policing and neighborhood servicing efforts.

The County has planned a smaller activity center, the Eastgate Low Activity Center, at the intersection of Hawthorne Road and SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street. This center is smaller than the one mentioned above, but has similar goals in density and land use. This center could provide a location for clustered government facilities, building on the existing Sheriff’s Office.

The City of Gainesville has designated the Central City Town Center in the downtown area to integrate the University of Florida, Shands at Alachua General



Hospital and the Central City District into a single, vibrant core.

## TRANSPORTATION

Plan East Gainesville is commissioned to produce a Transportation Plan as one of its final work products. The plan will build upon the adopted MTPO 2020 Livable Community Reinvestment Plan, which set a strategic vision for the region. That vision is to “make strategic investments that support livable community centers and neighborhoods by:



*Plenty of excess roadway capacity dominates the physical landscape of East Gainesville’s commercial corridors.*

1. Reinvesting in the traditional core areas of Gainesville and the towns of Alachua County to develop walkable downtown centers;
2. Connecting a limited number of highly developed mixed-use centers, and
3. Providing a high level of premium transit service in a linear Archer Road corridor.”

The Plan East Gainesville Transportation Plan will be a system plan that considers how best to support redevelopment. It will examine how to integrate and facilitate movement of auto traffic, pedestrian traffic, bicycle use and transit activities within the study area, while also connecting East Gainesville to the broader, outlying community.

**East Gainesville Roads**

The primary East Gainesville arteries, Hawthorne Road, Waldo Road, University Avenue, Main Street and Williston Road, are operating at less than 75 percent capacity, with plenty of room to accommodate traffic increases from commercial and residential growth. Exceptions lie at the southwestern boundaries of the study area, along SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street at the University of Florida and along Archer Road at Shands. Most of the roads are currently operating at 35 to 75 percent of their designated levels of service. A review of traffic count data on East Gainesville arterial roads for the last 10 years reveals only very slight increases in traffic volumes. This lack of traffic congestion offers an advantage to East Gainesville as it provides easy access to the city and outlying areas.



The MTPO 2020 Livable Community Reinvestment Plan proposes transforming the character of University Avenue from NW 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Waldo Road from a five-lane, high-speed corridor to a three-lane roadway with one lane of traffic each way and a center turn lane. This concept allows for on-street parking and wider sidewalks, making the corridor area more of a pedestrian-friendly destination. By stopping at Waldo Road, this livability initiative would further separate East Gainesville from more prosperous areas of the city. Thus, consideration should be given to extending this treatment east of Waldo Road into the Five Points commercial area.

A potential side effect of the lane reductions on University Avenue is an increase in traffic on residential streets. Providing acceptable travel alternatives, whether in the form of improved connections for a network of local streets, or a new alternative transportation corridor, may be necessary to balance adequate east-west mobility and community livability.

**Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA)**

The City of Gainesville has adopted a Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA) as a strategy to encourage economic vitality and promote urban redevelopment, infill development, and a wider range of viable travel choices. All land uses and development located within the TCEA, except for Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), are excepted from transportation concurrency for roadway level of service standards. However, the TCEA does not relieve requirements for development to mitigate its impact through multimodal transportation strategies, such as walking, bicycling and transit use, and urban design features.

The TCEA is divided into two zones, Zone A and Zone B. Zone A covers the area around the University of Florida, downtown and much of the Plan East Gainesville study area. Zone B covers much of the more recently developed area of the city located north and west of the University. Zone A requirements are intended to encourage economic investment in the eastern portion of the city by reducing the transportation infrastructure costs borne by developers. Development would still be required to ensure safe, convenient and comfortable pedestrian access to and from their sites, but significant transportation investments would depend on public agency funding sources to the maximum extent feasible. The requirements for Zone B have a similar objective, but are more stringent in terms of developer requirements based on the amount of automobile trips generated.

Alachua County is taking a similar approach to concurrency management, with proposed Comprehensive Plan policies that allow concurrency exceptions for projects promoting public transportation.

**Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS)**

The Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) runs through the heart of East Gainesville, connecting from I-75 along Williston Road ( SR 331) and running northward to University Avenue (SR 26). It continues east along University Avenue, then southeast along

Hawthorne Road (SR 20), where it enters Putnam County. Plans for revitalizing the Five Points intersection, where University Avenue, Waldo Road and Hawthorne Road intersect, will need to take into consideration the impact of the FIHS.



*Hawthorne Road (SR 20) is designed to serve the mission of the Florida Intrastate Highway System by moving automobile traffic efficiently between urban areas.*

Designated by the Florida Legislature in 1990, the FIHS is a statewide highway system designed with a capacity standard for higher traffic volumes than other state roads. The system’s design speed is also higher, meant to move traffic faster than other roads. Consequently, comfortable pedestrian crossings and good transit accessibility will be difficult to create. The state will not allow a reduction of traffic capacity on the FIHS, thus limiting development and driveway access along the affected corridor.

Not only are plans for the Five Points intersection affected by the FIHS, but other major intersections such as Hawthorne Road / 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Hawthorne Road / 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. The state recently widened Hawthorne Road (SR20), and it remains a hostile environment for non-automobile travel due to the scale of buildings, access and the characteristics of the street.

Three alternatives for the FIHS alignment through East Gainesville are under consideration through the Plan East Gainesville study. The first alternative is to leave the FIHS as it is currently routed. This option would

allow for low density, marginal improvement to enhance or beautify the Five Points area, but would not allow for significant amounts of mixed-use or pedestrian-friendly development. Taller buildings that are closer to the street with more of a street enclosure would not be compatible with the goals of the FIHS. It is possible that East University, NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, NE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue or NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue could be developed as pedestrian-friendly environments rather than the Five Points intersection. However, intersection modifications might be needed to maintain traffic flow on the FIHS in the future.

The second option under investigation is to continue the FIHS directly northwest to connect with Waldo Road, rather than utilizing East University Avenue as a connecting link. This option would require some condemnation of private property in the southwest corner of the Duval neighborhood. It would allow East University Avenue to be redeveloped with fewer FIHS constraints, providing a seamless connection between East and West University Avenue without the barrier of the high-traffic FIHS artery. East University Avenue could then become a very walkable, attractive area. The Lincoln Estates neighborhood would enjoy improved access into the area, but the Duval neighborhood would still need to negotiate the FIHS.

The third option is to connect the FIHS through the southern portion of East Gainesville to Williston Road, and perhaps SW 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, leaving the Five Points area completely untouched by the system. The corridor’s interaction with greenway systems and activity centers would need to be determined, but it could work well with a possible rerouting of State Road 24 away from Archer Road and the Shands and VA hospitals to SE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This option would eliminate the FIHS from consideration in redevelopment plans, while creating a new, limited-access road that may be able to satisfy FDOT objectives.

### **Southeastern Connector Road**

Periodic attempts have been made over the last 20 years to extend SE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue from its current terminus at Williston Road (SR 331) and connect it with Hawthorne Road (SR 20). A stub out exists at Williston



Drainage canals or powerline easements like this one near the County Health Department could also serve as greenway corridors for transportation.

Road where the extension could possibly occur. Currently, SR 20 directs traffic through downtown Gainesville via University Avenue (SR 26). The project has been advanced in the past as a way to reduce the amount of regional traffic traveling on University Avenue by offering a bypass route with better access to I-75 and medical, employment and commercial activities on the southwestern side of Gainesville.

A southeast connector would provide a route that connects SR 331 with SR 20 via an alignment that has yet to be determined. The project has historically met strong opposition from a variety of groups, notably because of potential environmental impacts to Sweetwater Branch and impacts to neighborhoods, agricultural lands, Evergreen Cemetery and churches. Therefore, prior to any decision on the proposed route, a full range of traffic management strategies on existing roads, as well as alternative and parallel routes to the north, must be thoroughly analyzed and considered. It should not be a given that the project would entail the extension of SE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The MTPO 2020 Needs Plan envisioned a connector road of a relatively moderate speed “limited access, policy-constrained scenic parkway” that would remain as a two lane divided roadway with landscaping and a parallel multi-use path adjacent to it. The route would be sensitive to community impacts in its location and design, but could provide sufficient mobility and mitigate

potential congestion and neighborhood cut-through traffic. The analysis of options and recommended solutions is a key part of the Plan East Gainesville study.

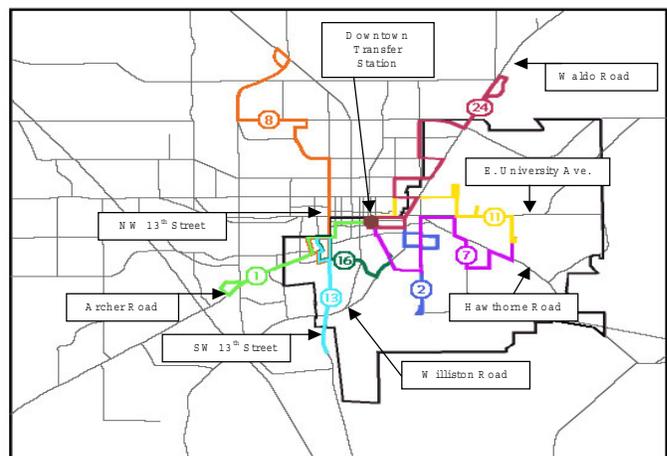
**Public Transportation**

Eight Regional Transit System (RTS) bus routes serve the Plan East Gainesville study area, but only four extend east of the Downtown Transfer Station. These four routes – 24, 11, 7 and 2 — run every hour and require an East Gainesville rider to transfer buses downtown in order to access citywide activity centers. Bus schedules are purposely staggered in order to allow convenient connections. Final bus runs in the evenings range between 6 pm and 7 pm, depending on the route.



In contrast, the four routes that serve Shands and the University of Florida – 16, 13, 1 and 8 – have 10-, 15- 20- and 30-minute headways, respectively. During the summer, their final bus runs are generally around 7:30 PM. However, from fall to spring the Later Gator service runs until 3 AM.

**East Gainesville Bus Routes**



Five additional routes – 43, 15, 10, 6 and 5 – originate at the Downtown Transfer Station and proceed west or north, out of the Plan East Gainesville study area.

Concerns have been expressed about RTS operating two separate systems, as there is noticeably better service and frequency enjoyed by the University of Florida and in the southwest portion of the metropolitan area where a large student population resides. Students pay for bus service on a semester basis through the University of Florida fee system, and this dependable funding source allows the RTS to focus routes in areas of high demand, where on-campus parking constraints make bus service more viable.

Ridership in the East Gainesville area, along with its associated funding through grants and bus fares, is less consistent because of lower development densities and dispersed land uses. However, the need is arguably greater than any other part of the community because of demographic factors like age, income and disability. Longer headways on Gainesville’s east side contribute to lower ridership. Potential riders whose working hours extend into the evening are unable to take advantage of the system because of the unavailability of evening service. Low ridership may cause a route to be served even less frequently or eliminated.

In the long-range plan for the MTPO, a busway with a dedicated lane is planned for transit vehicles along Archer Road from I-75 to the employment center at Shands and the VA Medical Center. A long-range objective should be to continue this system past SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street into East Gainesville, providing a level of transit connectivity to the west. Also in the long term, express bus service is planned to link Gainesville with outlying areas such as Waldo, Palatka, Starke and Hawthorne via park-and-ride lots in these communities. Funding for this service has not been identified.

**Bicyclists and Pedestrians**

Currently, many of the streets in East Gainesville present a hostile environment to pedestrian and bicycle traffic. High speeds, wide crossing points, poor visibility and lack of access characterize the primary roadways.



*Development of greenway corridors in East Gainesville can serve a transportation purpose, as well as define boundaries of neighborhoods and provide a buffer between land use patterns.*

The current multi-use trail system in East Gainesville includes the Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail, extending south to Paynes Prairie and funded to extend northward from Boulevare Springs to Depot Avenue, and up West 6<sup>th</sup> Street to downtown. The Depot Avenue Rail Trail extends east along Depot Avenue, then northward along Waldo Road. Although the system skirts around the most populated portion of East Gainesville, the Plan East Gainesville Land Conservation Plan will recommend significant expansions to include this area. As it expands, the Rail Trail system can provide an environmentally friendly alternative to automobile travel, providing safe connections throughout the city. This trail network is the foundation for what could become an interconnected system of greenways that connects East Gainesville employment and activity centers while



*Bicyclist with groceries on SE 24th Street.*

providing access to recreational areas, parks and other natural resources. The greenways would serve as buffers between areas of more urban, high-density land uses and suburban and

rural, low-density uses, while providing safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians away from wide, busy roads.

Another important consideration for East Gainesville is urban design for pedestrian accessibility. Existing land uses and development patterns are segregated and lacking in adequate features to support a healthy pedestrian environment. Both new development and redevelopment must create a safe, comfortable and accessible pedestrian context through building scale and orientation, improved physical connections, and increased visibility through buffers and design features.

## SUMMARY - ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Plan East Gainesville is a partnership between multiple public agencies, private organizations and nonprofit community groups. It is coordinated by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) for the Gainesville Urbanized Area.

The challenges facing East Gainesville and desired solutions are not new. Formal and informal community planning efforts have taken place periodically since the mid-1970s to revitalize the area; the latest being the work of the East Gainesville Development Task Force. What is new about the Plan East Gainesville project is a coordinated study process involving community residents, stakeholders, City and County government and the Florida Department of Transportation to define specific actions and responsibilities for implementing the plan. Unlike previous efforts, this plan will integrate land conservation, development and transportation priorities into an overall vision, set of projects and policies to guide preservation and redevelopment of the area. The following issues and options guide its development.

### Land Conservation

East Gainesville is distinguished with a rich context of natural resources. Its proximity to outstanding environmental resources like Paynes Prairie, Gum Root Swamp and Newnan's Lake, and the area's tree canopy, are strong assets deserving protection and enhancement. Unfortunately, few who do not live in East Gainesville are aware of these amenities because they are largely hidden from view. The major land conservation issues facing East Gainesville include:

- Habitat elimination within prime forested uplands and wetland habitats containing threatened and endangered species
- Pollution from stormwater runoff -- a system of creeks draining into Paynes Prairie and Newnan's Lake discharging stormwater runoff and other pollutants from development
- Limited public access points to enjoy and showcase the area's natural amenities
- Disruption of wildlife corridors from new development and transportation arteries.

Options for consideration include creating a network of greenway corridors linking parks, recreation and scenic vistas as East Gainesville's "Emerald Necklace," which would also serve as a buffer between urban, suburban and rural development. Existing drainage canals and power line easements could support the greenway system. The Alachua County Forever program has identified several parcels in the study area for potential acquisition, and clustering new development into village or town centers would preserve more open space for ecological habitat and aquifer recharge, which would also help reduce noise and light pollution.

### Land Use and Demographics

Development patterns and socioeconomic characteristics make a profound statement about the character of a place. These features come into play in both a physical sense and through perception; both of which affect civic pride and the level of private investment. In East Gainesville, the strength of the community lies within its close-knit neighborhoods, churches and public institutions. Its proximity to thriving commercial and employment centers like downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida positions East Gainesville well for future economic investment.

However, years of declining private investment have left a legacy of underutilized parcels, vacant or unsightly buildings, and limited commercial uses that presents an image of neglect and crime. The northern industrial area of East Gainesville, while serving as a job base and support for the local economy, is an example of how land use patterns can hinder the marketability of an area both physically, in terms of aesthetics, and through

negative perceptions associated with these uses. The proliferation of correctional facilities in this area can impact opportunities for future development. The existing industrial development pattern in the northeast area includes the Santa Fe Correctional Center and Alachua County Correctional Facility. These types of industrial uses can affect future development options because they limit the range of compatible land uses that can be developed nearby. For example, neighborhoods and other residential scale types of development may not be appropriate near industrial areas, or may need appropriate transitions, such as buffers and landscaping, to lessen impacts. Also, this area may be perceived as one that is not ripe for economic investment because of the negative aesthetics associated with these uses. In this case, co-locating other government-related services, commercial and office uses may be a more appropriate strategy to encourage new quality development.

A fundamental issue that must be decided is the level and type of economic investment relative to land conservation objectives. Major land use and socioeconomic issues include:

- A relative lack of high-end single family housing
- The absence of a well-defined center, with accessible civic or public spaces
- The perception of crime and failing public schools that limits the area's potential
- Separated and automobile oriented land uses
- A lack of viable local commercial land uses like movie theaters, restaurants and retail stores, requiring residents to travel to downtown or beyond to satisfy many of their shopping and social needs
- Commercial buildings that do not fit the scale of the wide arterial streets, contributing to a high-speed, pedestrian unfriendly environment
- The proliferation of correctional facilities in the northeast area
- Undefined activity centers that lack specific policy guidance to ensure a well-integrated urban form.

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners has adopted a development moratorium pending completion of the plan. Land use and design options include creating a stronger link between downtown and

the Five Points commercial area east of Waldo Road; encouraging the development of compact, walkable mixed-use centers with easy access to public transportation; creating civic gateways at major entry points; encouraging higher paying jobs; and restricting commercial uses outside of designated areas. Increasing the diversity of housing for various income levels is also a viable strategy for economic development.

### Infrastructure

In order to promote quality development in East Gainesville, the area must be served by adequate infrastructure. Some properties in East Gainesville lack services, such as central water and sewer systems, which can hinder economic development opportunities. Deficiencies in water and sewer service, particularly, can lead to economically distressed areas because new, quality development needs access to these systems. Both the City and County long range plans require that new developments with densities greater than two units an acre (*Alachua County Comprehensive Plan*) and new or expanded subdivisions, industrial uses, and other non-residential uses at densities greater than one unit per acre (*City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan*) have access to centralized potable water and wastewater systems to support the proposed development. The PEG area is served by GRU, and currently utility services are present or are readily available to serve the area. Any gaps in service are addressed by GRU's water and wastewater extension policy that provides for service to future development.

The Plan East Gainesville area is generally well served with potable water in the northwest and southwest areas of East Gainesville. There are gaps in service adjacent to and within the Kincaid Loop area, along the Newnan's lakeshore area, along the eastern side of Waldo Road and generally to properties in the northeast area and south of NE 39th area.

Sanitary sewer gaps in service occur along some properties adjacent to Waldo Road, in the Kincaid Loop area, Newnan's Lake area, and on properties in the Northeast, south of NE 39th Avenue. Also, sewer infrastructure within much of the County's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is limited with the

following exceptions. Sewer lines extend along University Avenue inside the city limits and along Hawthorne Road east to the point where Lakeshore Drive intersects with Hawthorne Road. Sewer lines also serve Eastside High School and Lake Forest Elementary school.

Fiber optic cable is not available in many areas of East Gainesville, including much of the area adjacent to and surrounding Waldo Road, Kincaid’s Loop, and Newnan’s Lake. The northeast area and much of the northwest and southwest also have gaps in fiber optic facilities, with facilities provided along portions of NE 39th Avenue, Archer Road/Depot Avenue and 13th Street south of Archer Road. The gaps in the fiber optic cable network can hinder development opportunities, as this infrastructure would be needed to enhance developments such as a high technology employment or a convention center. It should be noted that extensions are available through GRU to serve development in these areas.

Stormwater facilities are provided throughout East Gainesville and there generally have not been problems with flooding in the area. The area is well served by stream systems to accommodate stormwater run-off that is discharged to Newnan’s Lake. Drainage issues do exist in the Calf Pond Watershed area and additional stormwater facilities are needed to accommodate stormwater attenuation in this area.

**Transportation**

East Gainesville enjoys excellent regional automobile accessibility through several state roadways. Uncongested roads such as Waldo, Hawthorne, Williston and NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue provide excellent access for industrial, institutional and commercial land uses. A growing network of multi-use trails provides increasing recreational and transportation options for the community. Public transportation service connects East Gainesville with the region’s major commercial and employment centers. Despite these positives, the area’s transportation system needs improvement to support the community’s objectives. Issues include:

- Wide and fast state highways that form barriers for walking and bicycling
- The Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) that slices through the center of East Gainesville and separates it from the traditional downtown area
- Higher standards for the FIHS that constrain the potential for redevelopment along Hawthorne Road, despite relatively low traffic volume
- Poor neighborhood access to commercial centers
- Proposed new road corridors that may improve accessibility and economic development, but threaten to fragment neighborhoods, disrupt sensitive environmental features and redirect private investment away from existing local businesses.

Many transportation options are under consideration. These include the enhancement of existing roads and intersections to improve connectivity between neighborhoods and commercial areas. If substantial redevelopment is desired, FIHS constraints must be addressed, perhaps by diverting or realigning the system so it maintains the FDOT design standards for limited access and efficient traffic movement. Regional and local transit service linking East Gainesville and outlying communities with employment centers in the downtown and western areas needs to be considered. Such transit service would tie in with the redevelopment of mixed-use centers to create logical gathering points and increase transit accessibility and ridership.

Two distinct voices articulate a vision for the future of East Gainesville. One advocates economic growth, opportunity for higher paying jobs, expanded housing options and a greater array of shopping, dining and entertainment choices for local residents. The other calls for preservation of a peaceful, low-density environment that protects the area’s abundant natural resources, with low impact, small-scale quality redevelopment.

Those competing viewpoints are plainly at odds without a clear, specific and enduring framework for conservation, economic development and improved mobility. Achieving a balanced framework is the central purpose of the Plan East Gainesville project. Such a strategy requires redirection of existing market forces to the eastside, and creation of new markets for quality redevelopment that maximizes land conservation

opportunities, and supports higher income housing, walking and use of public transportation.

### Funding Sources

Several potential funding sources are available for planning initiatives in East Gainesville. Major program areas for planning initiatives include transportation systems, such as regional transit, roadways, and bikeways, as well as utilities, land conservation, and community development.

Some available funding programs for transportation systems include various local, state and federal funds. Funding options for regional transit projects include the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grants, gas taxes, funding from the University of Florida as well as other federal, state, and local funds. Roadway projects can be funded through local gas taxes, developer impact fees, FDOT grants and other federal dollars. However, it should be noted that neither Alachua County nor the City of Gainesville currently has an impact fee program. Sidewalk/bicycle funding include such sources as federal funding through the Surface Transportation Program, Transportation Enhancement Funding, Community Development Block Grants and Highway Safety Grant Program; state programs, such as the State Safety Grant Program, Recreational Trails Program, Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program, and Florida Communities Trust; and local dollars are available through low interest loans, an infrastructure surtax, as well as private and non-profit grants.

In addition, funding to help create transit-oriented development centers in East Gainesville is likely to be available through the 2003 reauthorization of the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, or TEA-21 (the next transportation spending law is referred to as TEA-3). The new law will likely include additional funding for certain transportation projects (such as transit investments, intermodal centers, safe routes to schools, greenways, etc.) as well as demonstration grants and program funding that the FDOT, MTPO and, in some cases, local government, can seek.

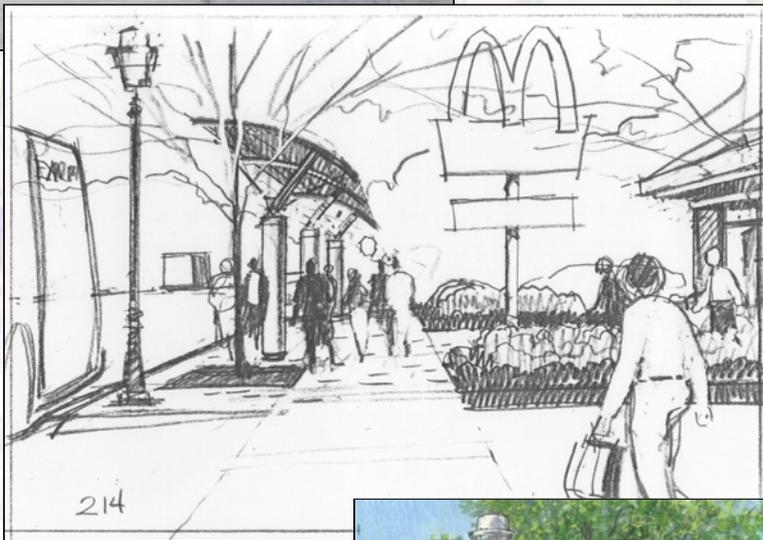
Funds for stormwater drainage are available through sources such as user fees, Community Development Block Grants, and the State Revolving Fund. Gainesville Regional Utilities pays for extensions of electricity services from its capital budget, unless undergrounding is required. In which case, the beneficiary shares the cost. Water and waste water extensions are paid for by the beneficiary. GRU has also requested some federal appropriations for water and waste water for an unincorporated area.

Conservation funding opportunities include the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) CARL Program-the Conservation and Recreation Lands purchasing program, the Water Management District's Save Our Rivers program, sales tax, and private conservation groups. The Florida Communities Trust Florida Forever Program provides grants to eligible applicants for the acquisition of land for community-based parks, open spaces and greenways that further the outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs identified in local government comprehensive plans. Emphasis in this program is placed on low income and minority communities.

Other funding sources for community development projects include special revenue funds available to the City of Gainesville such as Community Development Block Grant funds, Community Redevelopment Agency funds and Gainesville Enterprise Zone Development Agency funds. The PEG study will specifically identify funding sources available for proposed projects in the study area.









# EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

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## **EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section of the final report outlines the existing environmental conditions of the Plan East Gainesville study area which has been completed to set the context and assess the needs, issues, and opportunities that exist within the study area. This comprehensive overview is meant to direct the stakeholders of this project to develop specific goals, objectives, policies, and programs to be included in the Plan East Gainesville Conservation Element. Environmental conditions maps have been included to highlight areas that may contain environmental issues that need to be addressed or areas that represent opportunities to provide access or conserve unique environmental features within the study area. The following is a brief description of the existing conditions of the natural resources of the East Gainesville study area.

### **LAND CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE**

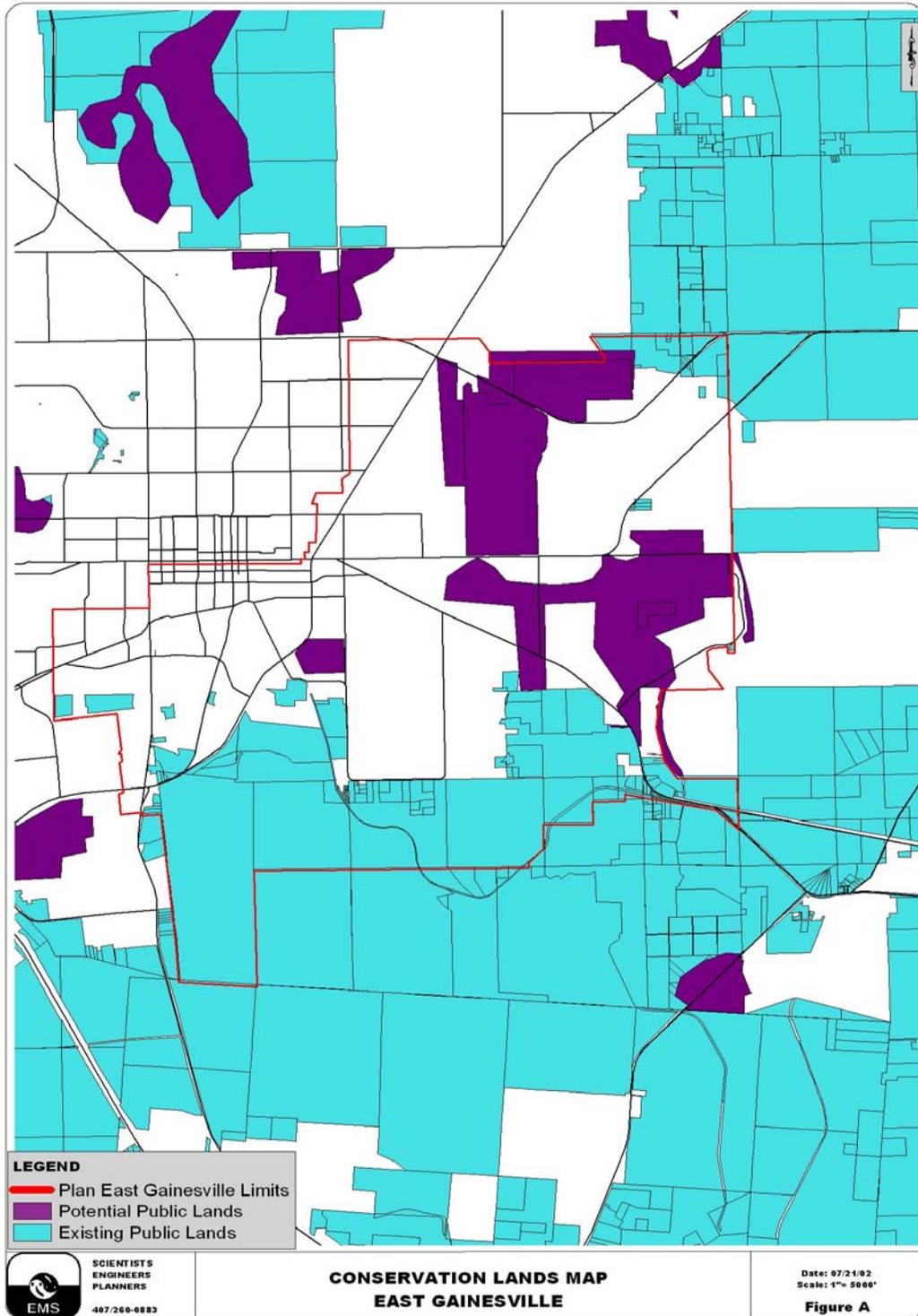
The City of Gainesville currently exceeds the Level of Service for park sites per the standards set for the year 2000, in their Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Level of Service required is as follows: Nature Parks-6 acres per 1000, Sports Complex 0.5 acres per 1000, Community Parks-2 acres per 1000, and Neighborhood parks-0.8 acres per 1000. The existing Level of Service for Nature Parks is 17.02 acres per 1000, Sports Complex is 1.01 acres per 1000, Community Park is 2.27 acres per 1000, and Neighborhood Park is 1.51 acres per 1000. Nature parks, community parks, neighborhood parks and sports complexes are available in all sizes and shapes throughout the City.

As growth and redevelopment of East Gainesville continues, the acquisition of additional conservation lands and open space will be needed to meet the needs of the community. Additional community parks and neighborhood parks may be achieved through “Pocket Parks” that are developed within vacant tracts of lands in neighborhoods and natural areas alike. Pocket Parks can provide opportunities to build community centers within the urban areas, and opportunities for scenic vistas or points of destinations when tied to the greenway network.

Scenic vista opportunities exist along Newnan’s Lake, Paynes Prairie, and Lake Forest Creek. Public lands are already in place that could serve as destination locations with observation towers, making these large areas visually accessible to a wider portion of the population such as the disabled or elderly. Passive scenic opportunities are a valuable commodity to these population groups, who can no longer pursue activities such as hiking and biking.

Nature parks represent an opportunity to partner with Local and State agencies to purchase property to conserve natural resources. St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and Florida Department of Protection (FDEP) currently have programs to identify and acquire habitat for conservation. A regional nature park has been proposed within the project area. (See the Environmental Setting map for location of the proposed park.) This park is being projected as the hub of a network of green corridors that would connect to other parks and public spaces within East Gainesville. The use of floodplain and floodway corridors make natural greenways that could be developed into recreational areas with little or no impact to natural areas.

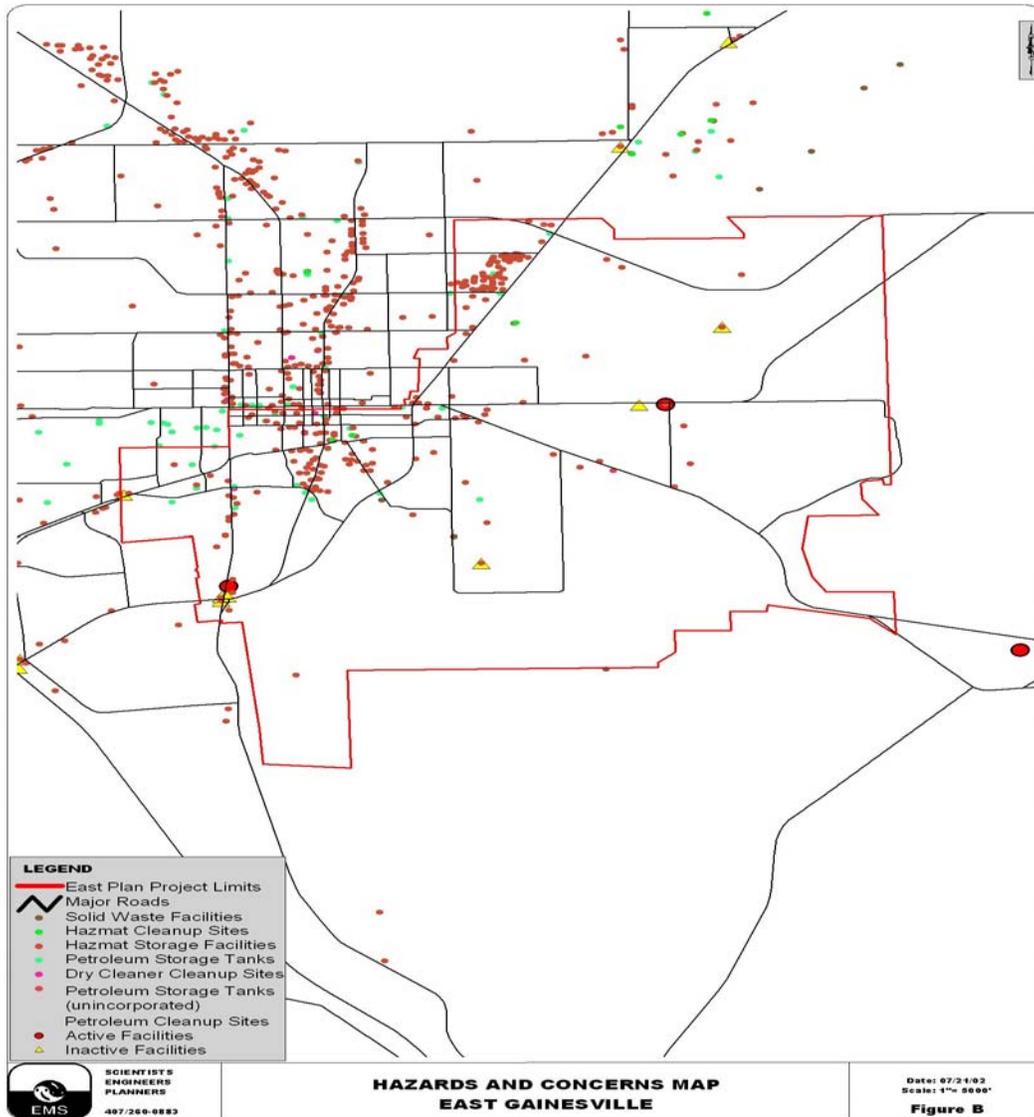
Alachua County and the City of Gainesville are actively pursuing the acquisition of lands to protect and conserve natural resources within the Gainesville area. The County’s program, Alachua Forever, targets and ranks potential acquisition sites on an annual basis. Potential acquisition parcels are ranked according to their ability to protect water resources, natural communities, plants and animals as well as provide recreational opportunities. Acquisition parcels are also evaluated to determine if it is economically feasible to purchase and maintain the parcels as conservation/open space. Within the study area specifically, several parcels have been identified for acquisition to connect the existing public lands within Paynes Prairie to lands around Newnan’s Lake. Potential acquisition sites, as well as existing public lands, have been depicted on Figure B, Conservation Lands Map below. Many of the goals for conservation within the East Gainesville study area can be met through the acquisition of these parcels and should be a key element of the overall plan.



**Figure B: Conservation Lands Map – East Gainesville**

**HAZARDOUS SITES**

Hazardous sites, for the purpose of this section, are those sites listed by the State of Florida, Alachua County and the City of Gainesville as small quantity hazardous waste generators, sites that contain underground storage tanks, and sites that have been sited for violation of soil or groundwater contamination. Figure C, below, depicts the locations of these sites within the Gainesville area.



**Figure C: Hazards and Concerns Map – East Gainesville**

There are twenty-two (22) known hazardous sites within the Gainesville area, which have been sited for violation by FDEP or have undertaken remedial action. Approximately one half of these sites fall within the project area. The sites are concentrated in the industrial areas surrounding the airport and along US 441 south of downtown. The Environmental Settings Map (Figure G) depicts the known hazardous sites as well as potential hazardous sites found on State and County databases.

As transportation options and redevelopment plan alternatives are examined, these sites as well as the registered small quantity hazardous material generators should be identified. Limitations to development are possible when dealing with sites that have undergone remedial action or have a potential for soil or groundwater contamination.

## **SURFACE WATERS AND WETLANDS**

The City of Gainesville contains over six thousand acres of surface waters and wetlands, see Figure D. The Plan East Gainesville project area contains several critical water basins, including Sweetwater Branch, which receives drainage from Downtown Gainesville to Paynes Prairie; Little Hatchet Creek, which receives drainage from the airport industrial area; Lake Forest Creek, which receives drainage from the Five Points business area and the neighborhoods east of downtown; and Calf Pond, which drains the mostly agricultural areas southeast of the City.

Several policies have been adopted by the City of Gainesville and Alachua County to help restore and preserve surface waters and wetlands. These include vegetative buffers adjacent to development, the creation of environmental districts, erosion control regulations, requirements of mitigation for impacts to surface waters and wetlands, and continuing cooperation with State and Federal agency acquisition programs. Policies concerning no net loss of wetlands and no further degradation of water quality within these critical basins will ensure the long-term survival of these natural areas and the functions they perform.

### **Sweetwater Branch Basin**

The Sweetwater Branch basin is critical due to the abundance of development within the basin and its direct hydrologic connection to Paynes Prairie and the Alachua Sink. Pollution in the form of stormwater runoff from developed areas has impacted Paynes Prairie through nutrient loading, which has caused growth of nuisance species along the northern boundary of

the prairie. This has reduced the acreage of open prairie and habitat for wildlife, which utilize the prairie. Shrub species such as Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), saltbush (*Baccharis spp.*), and elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) are aggressive species that thrive on nutrient rich runoff. These species are typically not a component of the prairie ecosystem and are an indicator that runoff from the urban areas has not been filtered of phosphates and nitrates from fertilizers and road runoff.

### **Little Hatchet Creek Basin**

The Little Hatchet Creek basin has been impacted through the channeling of portions of the creek. While these manmade improvements help to control floodwaters and reclaim low-lying lands, it has reduced the filtering effect of natural floodplains and wetlands along the creek. This has resulted in reduced water quality within Newnan's Lake, reduced quality of wetland habitat along the creek, and has decreased the transition between floodplain areas and development. Policies to reverse these trends are needed to ensure the long-term survival of Little Hatchet Creek, Newnan's Lake and habitat for many wetland and water dependent species. Additional stormwater pollution abatement policies may be needed or the use of transfer of development credits to provide areas for stormwater retrofit projects and the recovery of lost floodplain.

### **Lake Forest Creek Basin**

The Lake Forest Creek basin also has been impacted by channeling of portions of the creek as well as runoff from existing development. The lack of stormwater filtering within this system has reduced water quality within Newnan's Lake and impacted wetland habitat within the basin. The policies stated above for Little Hatchet Creek would also apply to this basin. Relief for this basin is also being proposed in the form of a regional park to serve East Gainesville. Acquisition of several large parcels for the park will reduce further impacts from development and provide opportunities for retrofitting stormwater treatment areas within the park.

### **Calf Pond Basin**

The Calf Pond basin is comprised of agricultural and large lot residential uses southeast of the City. This rural basin has not been impacted to the degree the previously mentioned urban basins have experienced. The Calf Pond basin, like the Sweetwater Branch drains to the Alachua

Sink. This basin represents an opportunity to preserve natural waterways and protect groundwater through conservation efforts such as land acquisition and land use regulation.

### **Newnan's Lake**

Newnan's Lake is currently experiencing poor water quality, with chlorophyll concentrations well above natural levels. While the cause is unclear, a contributing factor is increased stormwater runoff from the urban areas. The lake is receiving runoff directly or indirectly from the Lake Forest and Little Hatchet drainage basins located on the east side of Gainesville, which include industrial areas such as the airport. Newnan's Lake has also seen a dramatic reduction in volume in the last two decades. Lower than average rainfall and an increased demand for water from the aquifer are suspected as the main reasons for the lower water levels. Lower water levels further concentrate the chlorophyll levels and allow for the growth of emergent vegetation in the shallowest areas of the lake. Open water has been replaced by large monocultures of Cattails (*Typha spp.*), which thrive in the nutrient rich waters. As the emergent vegetation expands, habitat is lost for plants and animals that require open water habitat. In addition, recreational opportunities are reduced. Boating, canoeing, and scenic vistas have all been impacted. Less open water concentrates the amount of boat traffic, increasing the risk of collision. Scenic vistas from adjacent roads and properties are also blocked by the large stands of cattail or shrub vegetation found along the edges of the lake.

### **Paynes Prairie State Preserve**

Paynes Prairie is one of Florida's largest wet prairie habitats. Paynes Prairie is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). As noted above, Paynes Prairie receives surface water flows within the East Gainesville study area from the Sweetwater Branch drainage basin. Due to a fear of losing the prairie habitat, FDEP biologists have been studying the growth of woody invasive species along the northern portion of the prairie. This invasion of woody species into the prairie, which naturally consists of mostly grasses, is thought to be caused by nutrient and sediment loading from the surface water runoff from Sweetwater Branch basin. Controlling the influx of untreated stormwater upstream of the prairie is a key element to the protection of Paynes Prairie.

## **Alachua Sink**

The Alachua Sink is a naturally formed sinkhole that connects directly to the Floridan Aquifer. The Alachua Sink, which is located within the Paynes Prairie State Preserve, represents a critical area of concern for potential groundwater contamination. Surface water runoff from the Sweetwater Branch basin and Paynes Prairie directly impact the water quality within the sink and the aquifer. Protection of the Sweetwater Branch-Alachua Sink corridor will need to be addressed to protect the area's drinking water supply from potential contamination.

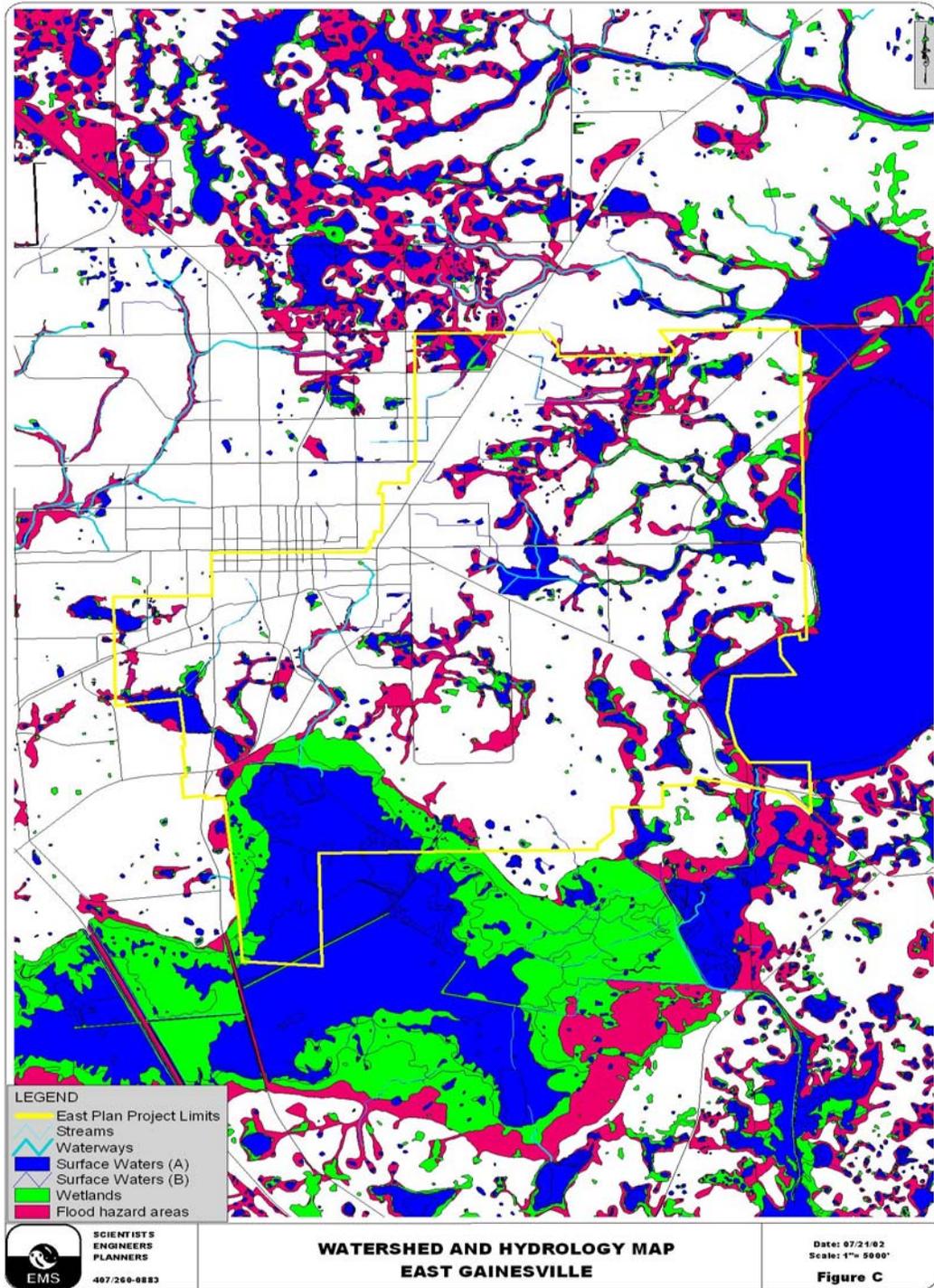


Figure D: Watershed and Hydrology Map – East Gainesville

## **FLOODPLAINS AND FLOODWAYS**

The major floodplains and floodways within East Gainesville (Sweetwater Branch, Calf Pond, Lake Forest Creek, and Little Hatchet Creek) drain to either Paynes Prairie or Newnan's Lake, see Figure D. Impacts to the floodplains and floodways will directly or indirectly affect these surface water bodies, which have already shown signs of degradation from stormwater runoff, erosion and siltation. Much of the floodplains and floodways receive protection through local, State and Federal programs such as wetland regulations and flood insurance requirements.

Floodplains and floodways are also very important corridors for wildlife that utilize the Gainesville area. Floodplains and floodways are able to support a wide range of vegetation and wildlife species due to fluctuations in water levels throughout the year. These undeveloped corridors are links to larger undeveloped areas such as Paynes Prairie and Newnan's Lake allowing wildlife additional food sources and shelter.

The City and County have adopted policies to protect wetlands that overlap into the protection of much of the floodplain and floodways that exist within the project area. Coordination with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and local public works departments will insure proper fill permits are secured and erosion and siltation impacts are reduced.

Floodplains and floodways also represent an opportunity to provide passive recreational trails throughout the project area. Commercial and residential development of floodplains and floodways are regulated as stated above. However, trails can be developed in such a fashion as to not impact the flood storage capacity of the basin. In addition, floodplains and floodways in East Gainesville are typically associated with linear rivers and creeks, again making them useful as recreational amenities. Finally, many of the floodplains and floodways contain or are adjacent to existing public lands and community facilities such as churches or schools, which could be connected to planned regional park facilities and/or additional points of interest.

## **GROUNDWATER**

The City of Gainesville and Alachua County rely exclusively on groundwater for their water supply. The main water producing aquifer in Alachua County is the Floridan aquifer. The Floridan aquifer lies approximately 150 feet below the surface and is composed of layers of

limestone. In the northeastern portion of the county, this aquifer is confined by the low permeability beds of the Hawthorn Group, a confining clay layer. The Hawthorne Formation provides a protective barrier or filter to the Floridan aquifer from surface aquifers that receive surface waters through direct runoff or percolation.

In Alachua County, potentiometric surface maps of the Floridan aquifer have been developed over the last forty years. The potentiometric surface associated with an aquifer is a surface that represents the level to which water will rise in wells drilled and tightly cased into that aquifer. Based on this definition, the surface is determined or constructed by measuring water levels in a network of cased wells drilled into that aquifer. Because the potentiometric surface is usually dynamic, responding to fluctuations in the water budget of the aquifer, the water level measurements of the individual wells of the network are typically completed within a limited time interval, usually a few days. The water levels can then be plotted and contoured to produce a potentiometric surface map.

The potentiometric surface maps for Alachua County show a slight decrease in pressure over the last 40 years. Changes in the potentiometric surface can be attributed to changes in rainfall patterns as well as water usage of the area. From 1993 to 1998, potentiometric surface maps show little change, while increases in the average annual pumping rate increased 17%. The continued mapping of the potentiometric surface is important to monitor the water supply for the Gainesville area.

The East Gainesville area is also a low aquifer recharge area averaging 4-8 inches a year, with the highest rate of recharge occurring within the eastern portion of the County. This is primarily due to thick clay layers creating a surficial water table not allowing percolation into the surface aquifers and then to the Floridan Aquifer. In addition, the predominant groundwater flow of the Floridan Aquifer is in a westward direction away from East Gainesville. The combination of low recharge and groundwater flow away from the study area leaves the natural habitats dependent on rainfall patterns and surface water levels. Due to the presence of this shallow surficial aquifer, the proximity of surface waters and groundwaters allows for the easy transfer of contamination and/or pollution.

The Plan East Gainesville study area lies within the Perforated Zone of the Floridan aquifer. This means that groundwater contamination from point or non-point sources has a moderate to

high potential of occurrence. This is due to the partial removal of the Hawthorne confining layer through natural forces (sinkholes) or through the effects of man (erosion).

Groundwater contamination potential is highest within the Sweetwater Branch and Little Hatchet Creek drainage basins due to the prevailing land uses. Commercial and industrial land uses increase the potential for groundwater contamination through the possibility of spills of harmful chemicals used in a variety of industries. Automotive repair shops along Waldo Road utilize petroleum products as well as solvents for cleaning, and paints. Industrial and manufacturing uses south and west of the airport would also be a concern. The State and Alachua County have an existing system of monitoring businesses that produce or use any harmful chemicals. The location of these businesses can be found on Figure C - Hazards and Concerns Map.

Per the City and County's Comprehensive Plans, efforts are underway or have been implemented to protect groundwater supply and quality. These efforts are varied but include development regulations, hazardous site clean up, stormwater retention requirements, monitoring programs, and management of groundwater resources.

As the land use plan and redevelopment plan for East Gainesville are developed, the potential impacts to groundwater and/or measures to prevent groundwater contamination should be of prime consideration. The Sweetwater Branch water basin, which is connected to Alachua Sink, should include policies to reduce the number of businesses that have a potential to impact groundwater resources. The Little Hatchet Creek drainage basin policies need to address existing stormwater systems (canals) and future development. In addition, stormwater runoff from new and existing roads should be addressed throughout the study area.

## **UPLANDS AND HABITATS**

Within the Plan East Gainesville project area there are significant tracts of undeveloped land, which have the potential to support the wide variety of threatened and endangered species present in Gainesville and the Alachua County area. Paynes Prairies and the East Side Greenway are large natural communities made up of various land covers that provide upland and wetland habitats for wildlife. In association with these two large areas are smaller tracts of land that have not been developed and provide a chance to link these larger tracts into one wildlife corridor in

southeast Gainesville. Many of the tracts are less than 100 acres including old farmlands and others forested areas that are undeveloped. Parcels in the area of Kincaid Loop and within the Calf Pond basin would connect existing conservation lands associated with Paynes Prairie and Newnan's Lake and further north to Little Hatchet Creek.

Larger regional wildlife corridors exist within Gainesville and the Alachua County area. The Ocala National Forest, lakeshores within Orange Creek Basin, and wetland habitats along the lower Ocklawaha River area are three examples of areas that have been preserved for the conservation of wildlife habitat. Paynes Prairie and the East Side Greenway represent the local link to these larger areas.

The connection of natural areas is important to maintain linkages from one type of habitat to other habitats for wildlife. Many species depend on a variety of habitats in order to carry out their life functions. Fragmentation of habitats through development and the construction of roadways reduce wildlife movement, which could reduce the long-term survival of some species in the Gainesville area. Wildlife crossings need to be included into the design of new or improved roadways within the project area to maintain connectivity of natural habitats. Wildlife crossings can be as simple as enlarging culverts at drainage crossings or designing creek crossings to meet the needs of large mammals such as bears, bobcats, and deer. Policies will be needed to ensure new roadway projects will not result in further fragmentation of habitats. Commercial and residential development standards could include upland buffers to wetlands and floodplains to ensure connectivity is maintained in undeveloped parcels within the project area.

Due to the wide variety of habitats, a wide variety of wildlife species may utilize these areas including gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*), eastern indigo snakes (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), red-cockaded woodpeckers (*Picoides borealis*), Florida black bears (*Ursus americanus floridanus*), wood storks (*Mycteria americana*), bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and Florida sandhill cranes (*Grus Canadensis pratensis*). Biodiversity hot spots have been depicted on the Environmental Settings Map. These areas represent locations where plant and animal species listed as endangered, threatened or a species of special concern have been observed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory.

The City has recently completed an environmental regulation overlay to identify parcels that could be purchased to preserve as environmental and recreational lands. In addition, the City

and County have implemented several goals and objectives into their Comprehensive Plans to protect environmentally sensitive lands including: a monitoring program, development regulations, encouraging clustered development to provide open space, tree planting programs, and land acquisition. Many of these same programs or policies will be included in the East Gainesville plan.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL /HISTORICAL SITES**

There are thirty-three (33) historic sites on the National Register of Historic Places in the Plan East project area, see Figures E & F for their locations. It should be noted that the PUD located on SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street is also eligible for the National Register. The majority of the sites are located in downtown Gainesville and on the campus of the University of Florida. The City has established historic preservation districts in the downtown area to preserve and protect existing and potential historic structures. The historic districts, as well as the historic sites are depicted on the Environmental Settings Map. Policies to protect historic properties that may not meet national criteria will help maintain the character of historic neighborhoods such as Duval and Lincoln Estates. Structures and sites that represent the character of East Gainesville should be preserved regardless of their national status. Community centers in neighborhoods such as Spring Hill serve as a focal center for the neighborhood and are worthy of protection.

A majority of the archaeological sites within the Gainesville area are located within the project area. Sites range from pre-historic pottery finds to homesteads of early pioneers in the Gainesville area. Pre-historic sites include areas utilized by Native Americans during the St. Johns Era, up to approximately 1600 A.D. The majority of the historic sites date back to the 1800's and early 1900's as Gainesville was settled.

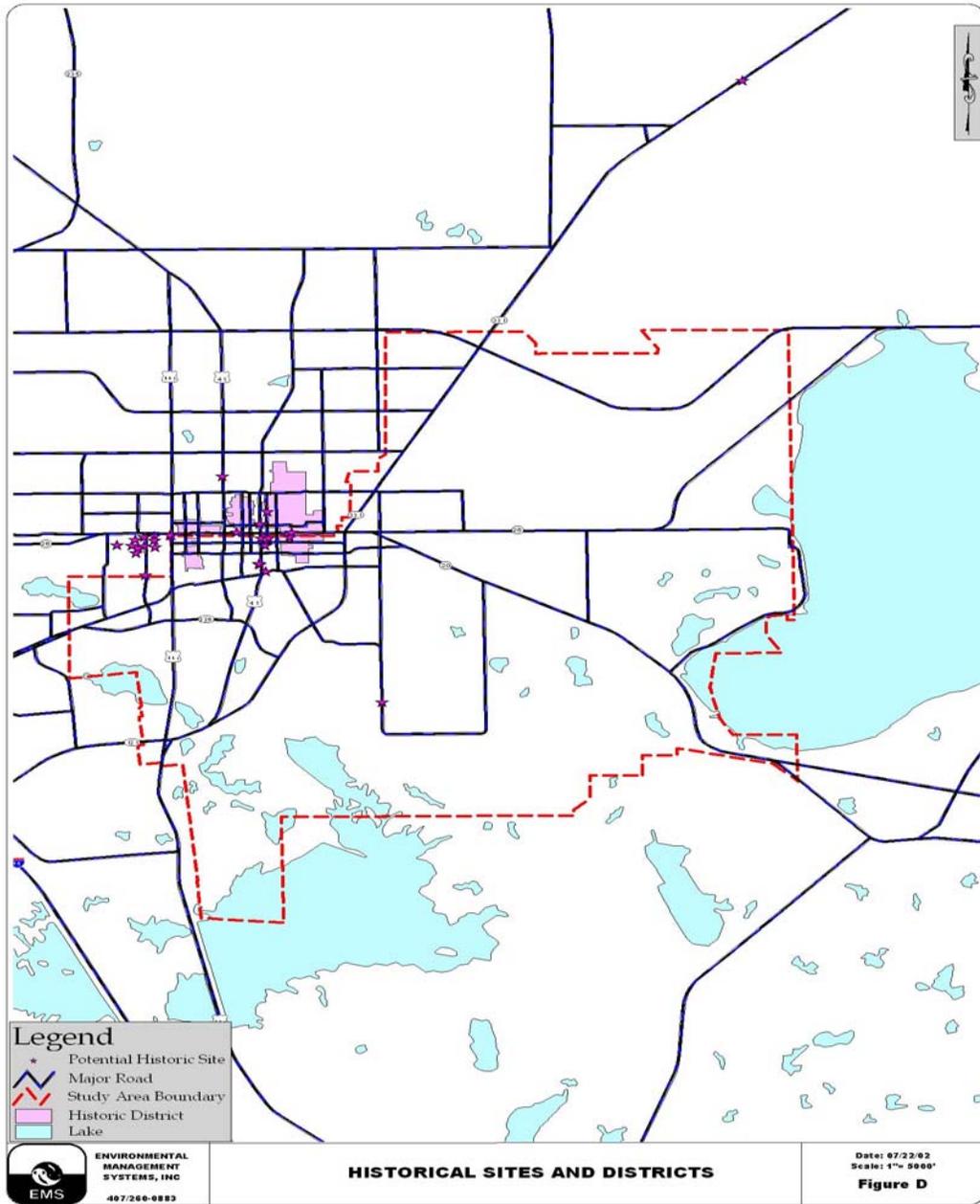
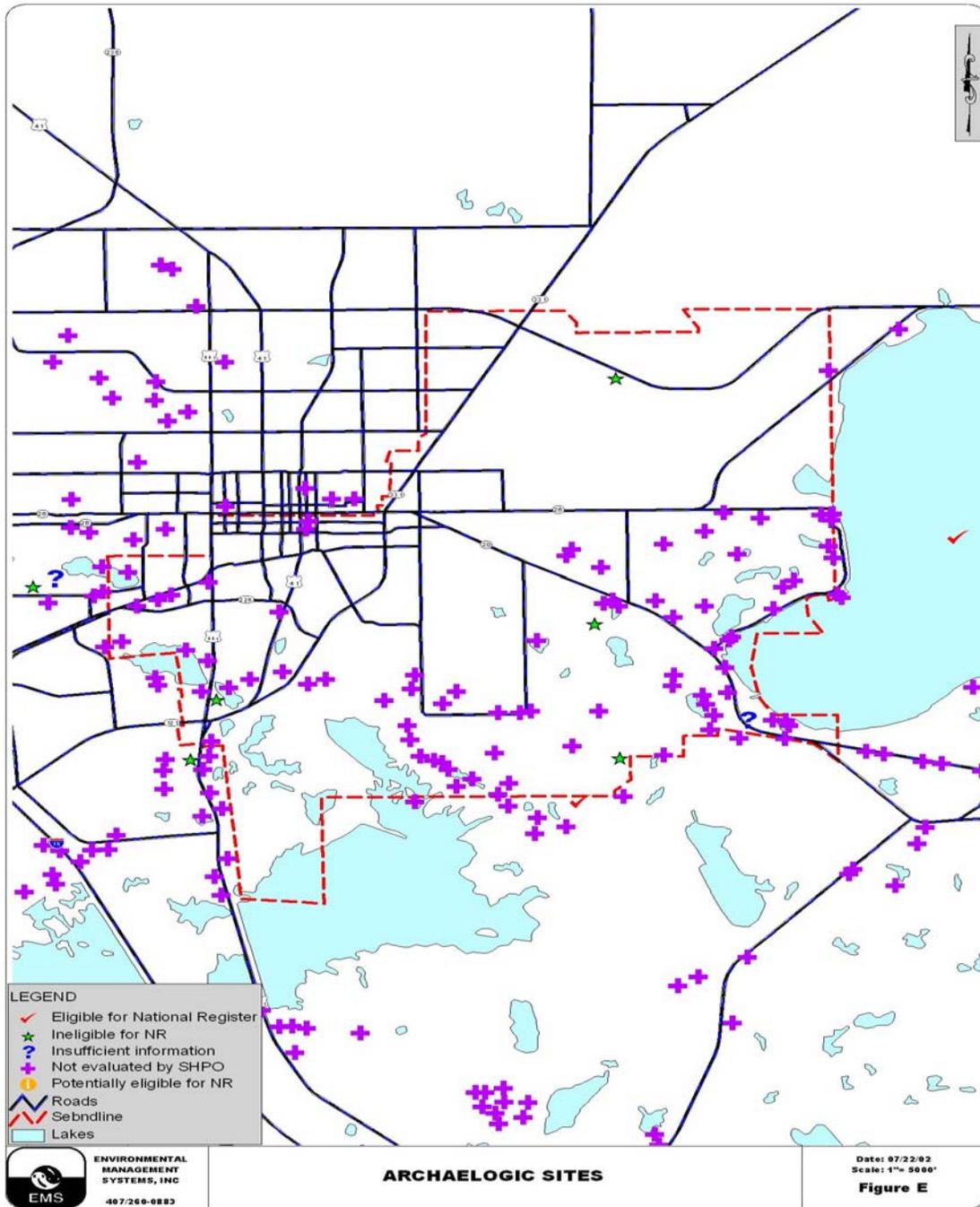


Figure E: Historical Sites and Districts



**Figure F: Archaeological Sites**

The State Historic Preservation Officer has designated many of these sites as ineligible for the National Register. However, fifteen sites have been designated as eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register. These sites are dispersed throughout the project area and may limit future development on some parcels.

Both pre-historic and historic sites have been located in the project area from the edge of Paynes Prairie to the airport. Many of the sites are located on existing public lands, but many within the Calf Pond area are located on private property. The need to acquire these parcels is enhanced by the ability to preserve not only natural areas, but also these archaeological sites. In addition, many of the archaeological and historic sites could be tied into the greenway corridors as destination points or a series of points of interest.

## **AIR QUALITY**

Currently, both the City of Gainesville and Alachua County do not exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, ozone and lead. Motor vehicles are the largest source of pollutants such as nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds and particulate matter, within the City. As levels of air pollutants rose in the late 1990's, Alachua County formed the Air Quality Commission to study and section on a number of air quality issues in the County. The commission sectioned that NAAQS might be exceeded for ozone and particulate matter with increased population and industrial growth.

The Air Quality Commission has recommended several strategies to conserve air quality in the Gainesville area, including tree planting, non-auto dependent travel, mass transit, and the use of alternative fuels. Many of these recommendations can be achieved through zoning and design performance standards, landscaping regulations, and regional multi-modal transportation planning.

The transportation and redevelopment plans proposed for this project should, through land use regulations and expansion of travel choices, reduce the reliance on the automobile for the residences within the project area. Reduced numbers of trips combined with a moderately flowing roadway should allow East Gainesville to maintain the air quality currently enjoyed today.

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Environmental Justice as, “the fair treatment for people of all races, cultures and incomes, regarding the development of environmental laws, regulations and policies.” To address environmental justice, the Plan East Gainesville project has adopted the FDOT’s Community Impact Assessment process as outlined in the Project Development and Environment Manual. This process includes public involvement, description of the project area, development of a community profile, analysis of impacts, documentation of findings, and identification of solutions.

The Plan East Gainesville process has included numerous opportunities for all members of the community to voice their concerns and issues within the study area. Open House meetings were held in January 2002 and July 2002, a community charrette was held in April 2002, and stakeholder focus groups have met throughout the planning process. The Plan East Gainesville community involvement process also included additional public workshops to choose alternatives for environmental policies during the Fall of 2002. In addition, the community profile document for East Gainesville that has been prepared specifically for the Plan East Gainesville study further fulfills the environmental justice requirements.

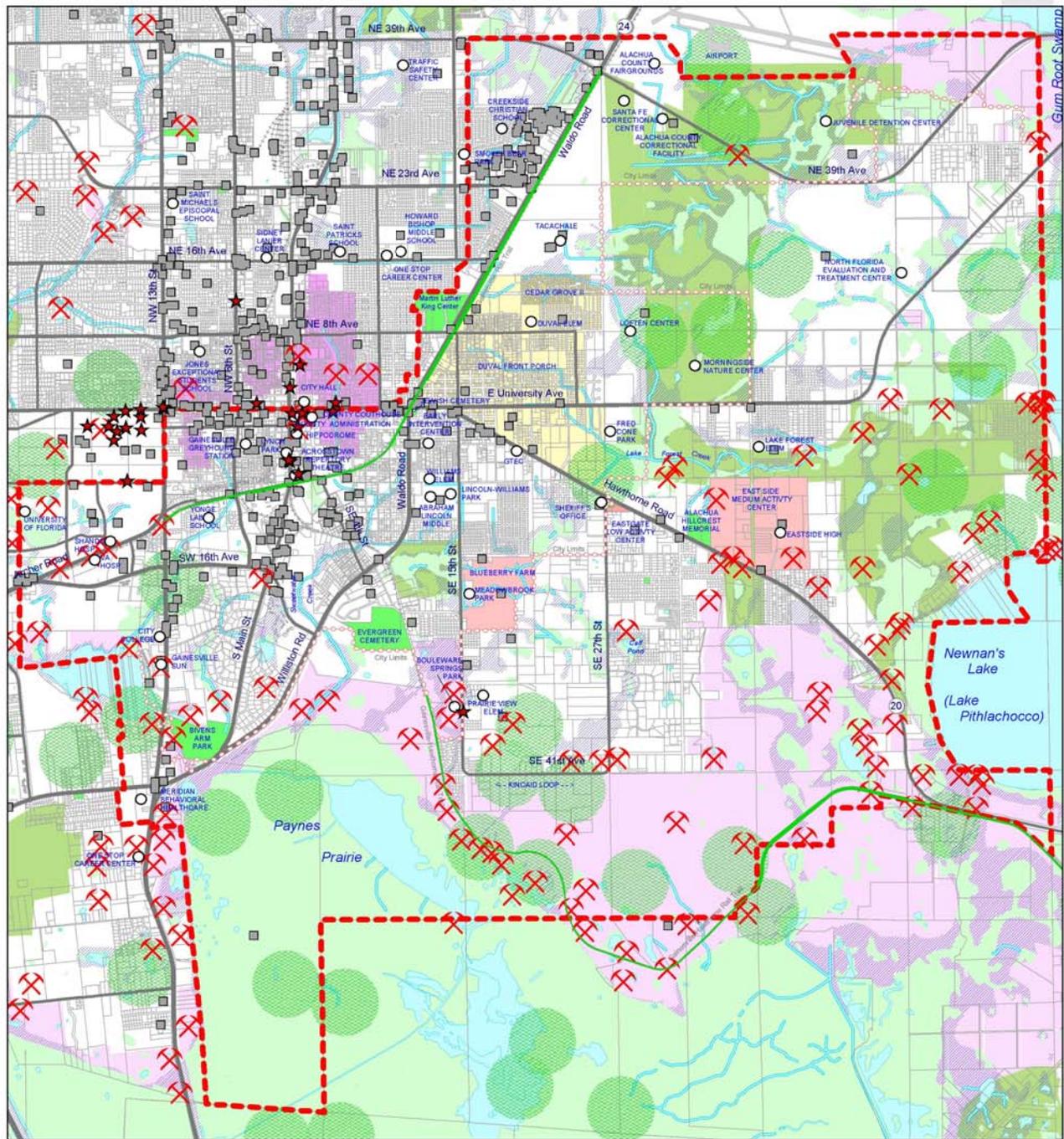
Since many of the natural resources in the Gainesville area are found within or adjacent to the study area, policies directed to the protection and conservation of these resources will help improve the quality of life for the residents. The protection of groundwater through land use regulations, for example, may also protect minority neighborhoods from industrial or institutional uses located within their neighborhoods.

## **SUMMARY**

The East Gainesville study area contains a wide variety of environmental issues and opportunities. Much of the urban area of East Gainesville was developed prior to the adoption of many environmental laws and regulations. Any redevelopment of this area, for example, would need to update the stormwater infrastructure to protect resources such as wetlands, lakes and rivers, floodplains and floodways, and the aquifer. Yet, within the urban areas, there is opportunity to provide habitat for wildlife or greenways for trails. The future of the rural portions of the study area will be affected by the policies adopted as a part of this planning

process. The protection and conservation of several unique environmental features can address concerns of loss of wildlife habitat, impacts to groundwater quality and loss of wetlands.

As development of the alternatives proceeds through review by the MTPO, the steering committee and public workshops should address the main environmental issues of East Gainesville. Issues of prime consideration should include: protection of the Sweetwater Branch-Alachua Sink corridor, water quality and quantity in Newnan's Lake, acquisition of parcels for conservation to connect public lands at Paynes Prairie and Newnan's Lake, and the protection of groundwater from potential contamination. Each of these goals, as well as additional goals, policies and objectives will be developed as part of the Conservation Element of the East Gainesville Plan.



Study Area Boundary

Railroad

Rail Trails

Potential Historic Site  
 Archaeologically Significant Site  
 Hazard or Concern for Potential Contamination

Potential Public Lands  
 Wildlife Hot Spots  
 Existing Public Lands  
 Wetlands  
 Flood Hazard Area  
 Historic Districts



# LAND USE

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## **FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The East Gainesville Plan contains four elements, Land Use, Conservation, Transportation, and Implementation, that together form an integrated strategy to meet the project’s vision established through the community involvement process. This planning effort builds upon the MTPO’s adopted Livable Community Reinvestment Plan to provide a comprehensive revitalization plan for East Gainesville that balances environmental preservation, land development, and improved transportation mobility.

Priority objectives for the Plan included:

- *Protect vital natural resources, such as the watersheds, creeks, tree canopy and scenic vistas that make East Gainesville unique;*
- *Expand the range of housing choices to attract and retain residents with a variety of income levels;*
- *Target specific areas for mixed-use development centers that can support and sustain higher levels of employment, commercial and social activities;*
- *Create opportunities for increased walking, bicycling and transit use through compact development patterns, urban design and development of new facilities and services, and*
- *Improve the inter-connectivity of the transportation system to minimize impacts to the state highway system and ensure improved accessibility between East Gainesville and other parts of the Gainesville urbanized area.*

The objectives resulted from extensive discussions with the community and were used to evaluate and test alternatives during the planning process. Evaluation measures based upon these objectives applied to the alternatives, in combination with public participation, have resulted in a recommended plan that is vision based and balances land use, the environment, and transportation mobility.

### **MAJOR ISSUES**

East Gainesville has many assets that could attract appropriate private investment: proximity to downtown, available land, infrastructure capacity, and environmental assets. Yet the market has not responded by investing in the area with the construction of market rate homes or

providing a full range of shopping and service uses. Years of declining private investment have left a legacy of underutilized parcels, vacant or unsightly buildings, and limited commercial uses that presents an image of neglect. When viewed in this way, the key to community improvement is economic development.

While East Gainesville is a recognizable, residential community, it is incomplete. It lacks diversity of housing. A more diverse housing stock was an issue of importance in development of the plan. Concerns include relative lack of market investment in new higher end single-family housing and the potential for concentration of affordable housing projects in East Gainesville. At the same time, there is a recognized need to stabilize and improve the existing stock and provide opportunities for replacement housing for existing residents.

The image of the community and its perception in the marketplace can influence the level of private investment. Community involvement efforts noted the perception of crime and school quality as key issues. The area lacks a well-defined center, with accessible civic or public spaces, although it is endowed with numerous community facilities.

Options exist for East Gainesville relative to its desired land use pattern. Currently, land uses are segregated and primarily automobile-oriented. Designated activity centers lack definition and specific policy guidance to ensure a well-integrated urban form. There is a lack of viable local commercial land uses like movie theaters, restaurants and retail stores. Commercial buildings do not fit the scale of the wide arterial streets, contributing to a high-speed, pedestrian unfriendly environment. New investment could come in the form of traditional, suburban development. Alternatively, with the investments in transit and careful design, new development could occur at a more compact, walkable scale that delivers an integrated land use mixture. Strategic public investments, combined with specific land use and design strategies, can create incentives for economic development to attract private investment.

## **FUTURE LAND USE VISION**

The future land use plan is intended to create thriving activity centers supported by strong neighborhoods. Land use and design strategies will encourage the development of compact, walkable mixed-use centers with easy access to public transportation while limiting the intensity of commercial uses outside of designated activity centers or targeted infill areas along existing roads. Economic development will, in turn, encourage higher-paying jobs through designation

of land employment uses. Finally, increasing the diversity of housing for various income levels will provide more and better housing options for existing residents, while attracting new residents.

A new image will be created for East Gainesville as an attractive area to live, work, and recreate. Showcasing the area's environmental assets with the creation of greenways will help create this image. Transformation of the built environment with the construction of civic gateways at major entry points and enhanced roadways will also serve to create a more favorable community image. Also, redevelopment of the Five Points Area as a signature project will send a positive signal that supports reinvestment in the area. Finally, a centerpiece of the recommended plan for revitalizing East Gainesville is to redevelop the Alachua County Fairgrounds as a mixed-use employment center. This site represents an ideal location for the attraction of higher wage industrial or technology-sector jobs because of the site's size, location and proximity to the airport and related distribution facilities. The site would include mixed-use office/hotel commercial development that can support the needs of the area workforce, residents and business travelers. The vision for the Future Land Use Element is as follows:

*Realize the potential for compatible economic opportunity and social interaction through connectivity of neighborhoods with mixed-use centers that bring higher paying jobs and provide services.*

## **RECOMMENDED PLAN**

### **Tiered Land Uses and Activity Centers**

The future land use designations for the special area plan are based upon the development framework and environmental settings concept. The tiered land uses: Urban, Suburban and Rural districts organize land use by concentrating development within centers, creating a distinct edge between developed areas and rural lands, and providing for land conservation. Centers identified within each district include a compact core mixed-use developed area and an edge or transition area that primarily includes higher density residential uses. The development intensity of the center and edge depends on its location within the urban, suburban and rural framework. This concept is illustrated in Table 1.

The Urban district includes the downtown Central Business District, extending westward to include Shands Hospital and student housing east of University of Florida, and extending eastward to include the Five Points area, and the Duval and Lincoln-Williams neighborhoods. Within the urban sector, the concept is to encourage development of urban neighborhoods and commercial areas that are proximate or oriented to the city. A priority is to connect the eastward neighborhoods and corridors in the Urban sector of the study area to the more vibrant University of Florida and downtown business districts with the proposed Bus Rapid Transit system and greenways.

The Suburban district is lower in density than the urban district and provides a transition to lower density with more of a highway orientation. It surrounds the city section, extending south down SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, South Main Street and Williston Road, reaching east to Hawthorne Road near Eastside High School, and extending north to include Lake Forest Elementary, East University Avenue, Morningside Nature Center and the Lofton Center. Central Utilities serve the Suburban area and would be expanded as necessary to support activity center development.

The Rural district surrounds the Suburban district, functioning to sustain the lake, prairie and agricultural lands at the periphery of the city. The rural designation preserves existing greenspace and allows very limited growth. Central utilities would not be extended into the Rural area. What new development may occur would be built as a rural cluster, or village, to preserve open space. Extensive vacant agricultural and parklands predominate. Clustered, low density, higher-end housing could enjoy scenic vistas and access to Newnan's Lake or Gum Root Swamp.

The District designation recognizes special use areas, such as the University of Florida and Shands Hospital. The district designation also applies to the institutional uses along Waldo Road and NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which are identified as a Highway-Oriented Institutional District in the Special Area Plan.

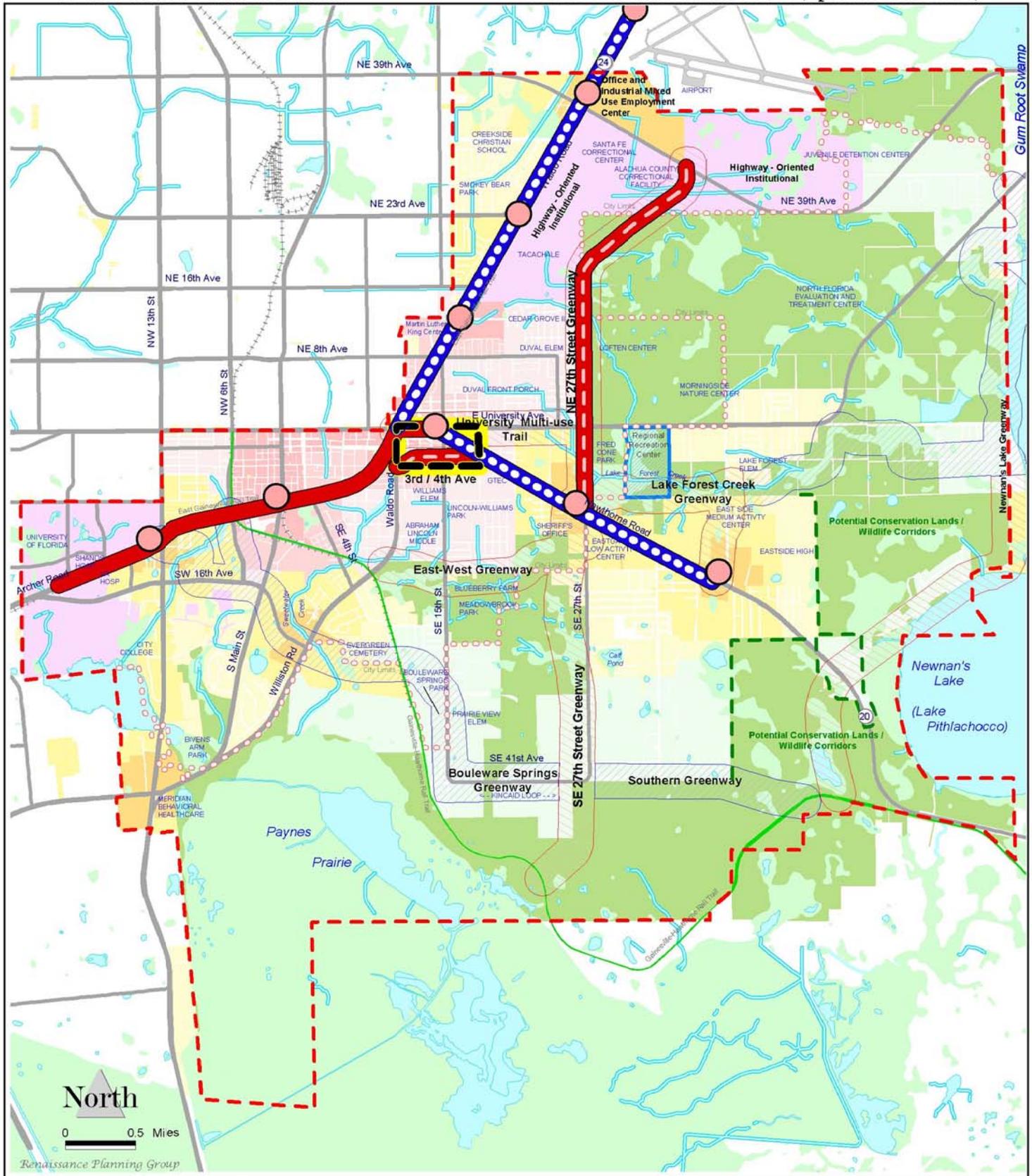
**Table 1: Tiered Land Uses**

	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
<b>Center</b>	Mixed-use High density Short blocks (<600 ft.) <i>Uses: Professional offices, medical uses, small shops, studios, services, restaurants, multi-family residential</i>	Mixed-use High density Short blocks (<600 ft.) <i>Uses: Employment centers, professional offices, small shops, services, studios, movie theatres, multi-family residential</i>	Mixed-use Moderate density Neighborhood retail <i>Uses: Single-family residential, small shops, civic uses</i>
<b>Transition</b>	Mostly residential High residential density Moderate non-residential density along major roads Short blocks (<600 ft.) <i>Uses: Multi-family residential, large scale retail, grocery stores, movie theaters</i>	Mostly residential Moderate residential density Moderate non-residential density along major roads Moderate blocks ( 600 to 1,200 ft.) <i>Uses: Single- and multi-family residential, large scale retail grocery stores</i>	NA
<b>General</b>	Primarily residential Moderate density (4 to 15 du/ac.) Short blocks (<600 ft.) <i>Uses: Single- and multi-family residential, civic uses, corner store</i>	Primarily residential Low density (1 – 4 du/acre) Large blocks (>1,200 ft.) <i>Uses: Single-family residential, civic uses, schools, corner stores</i>	Low density (<2 du/ac.) Primarily residential Clustered lots w/large open spaces <i>Uses: Single-family residential, civic uses</i>

Figure H

PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE

Recommended Master Plan (Special Area Plan)



North

0 0.5 Miles

Renaissance Planning Group

Five Points Priority Redevelopment Area



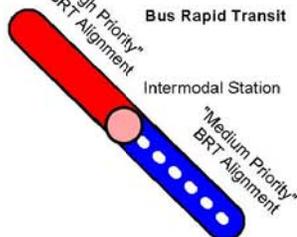
Roadway Modifications

"High Priority" NE 27th Street 3rd / 4th Avenue



Bus Rapid Transit

Intermodal Station



Greenway Corridors

"High Priority"



"Medium Priority"



Conservation

Urban Center

Urban Transition

Urban

Suburban Center

Suburban Transition

Suburban

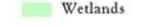
Rural

District

City Limits



Rail Trails



Wetlands



Study Area Boundary



Railroad



Potential Conservation Lands / Wildlife Corridors Boundary



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## **SPECIAL AREA PLAN**

The Special Area Plan map identifies the conceptual location and extent of the land uses within the study area. This section will highlight significant features of the proposed plan for specific sub-areas that play a key role in the evolution of East Gainesville.

### **Hawthorne Road and NE/SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street**

Hawthorne Road presents significant economic development opportunities to create pedestrian scale, transit-oriented development with high design standards. The focus of development in the corridor is three primary activity centers including Five Points, SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, the Fairgrounds Employment Center, and the Regional Recreation Center adjacent to Fred Cone Park. The development of these activity centers is tied to a major transit investment from Archer/downtown to East Gainesville via Hawthorne Road and to the creation of a new NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway Corridor. The activity center designation identifies areas planned for mixed-use, high-density development that is supported by a high level of transit service. Transition areas create the opportunity for larger scale commercial uses, such as a grocery store, and moderate-intensity residential uses.

#### **Five Points**

The Five Points Activity Center will become the new “downtown” of Gainesville’s east side, supported by the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. This activity center has been identified as a priority for redevelopment as a signature project, or catalyst, for private sector reinvestment. The location of the recommended activity center was adjusted because the FIHS is not proposed for relocation from Hawthorne Road. Instead, the enhancement of SE 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue provides an opportunity for a cohesive district south of University Avenue between Williston Road and SE 18<sup>th</sup> Street. The thirteen acre area south of Hawthorne Road between SE 15<sup>th</sup> and SE 18<sup>th</sup> Streets provides the greatest potential for initial redevelopment of existing non-residential uses, with the potential for expansion of redevelopment activities to the west to Waldo Road.

As an Urban Center, a mixture of uses would be provided, including professional office, retail, services, restaurants, and multi-family residential. The development would be urban in scale, with building setbacks designed to create a street wall, greater detail at the street level, parking at the rear of the building, and sidewalk and landscape amenities. The Five Points

Activity Center is within the City of Gainesville’s Eastside Redevelopment District and is within an Enterprise Zone. These designations provide a means for implementation of the redevelopment of the area.

### **SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street**

The SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street activity centers provide additional opportunities for mixed-use development, supported by the BRT system. As Suburban Centers, development in the centers would include, mixed-use, high density development, although at a somewhat lower scale than the Five Points center. The mixture of uses would emphasize employment centers, service and office uses, retail, and multi-family residential uses.

These centers are designated as activity centers in Alachua County’s comprehensive plan. Alachua County has designated a ½-mile by ¾-mile area north of the Hawthorne Road / SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street intersection as the East Side Medium Activity Center allowing institutional, office, industrial, and some residential uses to promote economic development and new employment. The Eastgate Low Activity Center, at the intersection of Hawthorne Road and SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street, is smaller than the one mentioned above, but has similar goals in density and land use. Based upon the recommendations of the Plan East Gainesville master plan, amendments to these activity centers will be recommended. These activity centers are not currently within a Community Redevelopment Area, and it is recommended that one be established.

### **Alachua County Fairgrounds Employment Center**

The plan proposes the creation of an office and industrial mixed-use center on the fairgrounds site. The development potential is linked to accessibility to Waldo Road, the site’s proximity to the airport, and the new NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street extension connecting Hawthorne Road to NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Uses could include light manufacturing, service, and office uses, with supporting retail and restaurant uses, and possibly a business hotel and conference center. This strategy is long-term and would require a focused economic development initiative to achieve.

### ***Vision for a new Fairgrounds Employment Center***

The Gainesville Regional Airport serves as an anchor for the northern part of the Plan East Gainesville study area. Despite its obvious economic value to the community and ability to help leverage such endeavors as the Gainesville Airport Industrial Park, the Airport is considered by

many in the community to be an underutilized asset. Surface transportation access to the airport is somewhat limited, and the presence of its correctional facility and industrial surroundings do not present the most attractive face to visitors or potential business travelers arriving in the community. The airport has initiated a master planning effort that seeks to enhance its roadway access and upgrade many of its facilities, operations and customer amenities. Part of that process entails a proposed new roadway directly connecting to Waldo Road that could serve as the airport's main passenger entrance. To complement that effort and effectively increase the significance of the airport as a major influence in East Gainesville's long-term renaissance requires a multi-faceted strategy targeted for the northeast area.

A centerpiece of the recommended plan for revitalizing East Gainesville is to redevelop the Alachua County Fairgrounds as a mixed-use employment center. This site represents an ideal location for the attraction of higher wage industrial or technology-sector jobs because of the site's size, location and proximity to the airport and related distribution facilities. The 103-acre site, adjacent to Waldo Road and nestled between a proposed new airport access road on the north and NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the south, also provides high visibility for a mixed-use office/hotel commercial development that can support the needs of the area workforce, residents and business travelers. Funding for demonstration projects to expand the airport's runways and the new roadway connection to Waldo Road should be tied to the development of buildings designed to attract major distribution facilities for businesses like United Parcel Service (UPS) and/or Federal Express. A concerted strategy, involving such partners as the Gainesville-Alachua County Airport Authority, Chamber of Commerce's Council for Economic Outreach, the University of Florida, and state and local agencies, is needed to leverage necessary resources. The vision for redevelopment of the Fairgrounds into an employment center entails the following major elements:

- *Completing a land swap to relocate the existing Fairgrounds facilities to a suitable location with similar regional highway access;*
- *Constructing a new airport access road to Waldo Road immediately north of the Fairgrounds to enhance access and visibility;*
- *Extending East 27<sup>th</sup> Street from SR 20 (Hawthorne Road), which is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS), to NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the existing entrance to airport. This would not only provide more direct access for passengers and workers, but also would support freight and goods movement to the airport, surrounding businesses and the North 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue truck route;*

- *Relocating the Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) operations facility to the north Waldo Road corridor to provide a base for employment and services with excellent truck access;*
- *Consider establishing an Industrial Development Authority to provide for the planning, marketing and infrastructure financing necessary to attract light manufacturing, service, office and supporting retail, restaurant and hotel/conference center uses to the site;*
- *Establishing premium Bus Rapid Transit service on Waldo Road connecting the Fairgrounds Employment Center and airport with downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida as part of a regional system, and*
- *Creating a stronger link between the Fairgrounds Employment Center with the City of Gainesville’s Ironwood Golf Course to aid in attracting meetings and businesses to the airport area if suitable facilities existed.*

Together, the assembly of those elements has tremendous potential to leverage the lasting revitalization of East Gainesville through the attraction of higher wage jobs and providing a stronger and more visible destination for regionally significant industrial, commercial and office uses. While the state’s Tacachale facility is expected to remain essentially in its present form for the foreseeable future, the transformation of the Airport/Fairgrounds area has the potential to guide a future re-use of that property for positive economic gain if circumstances change.

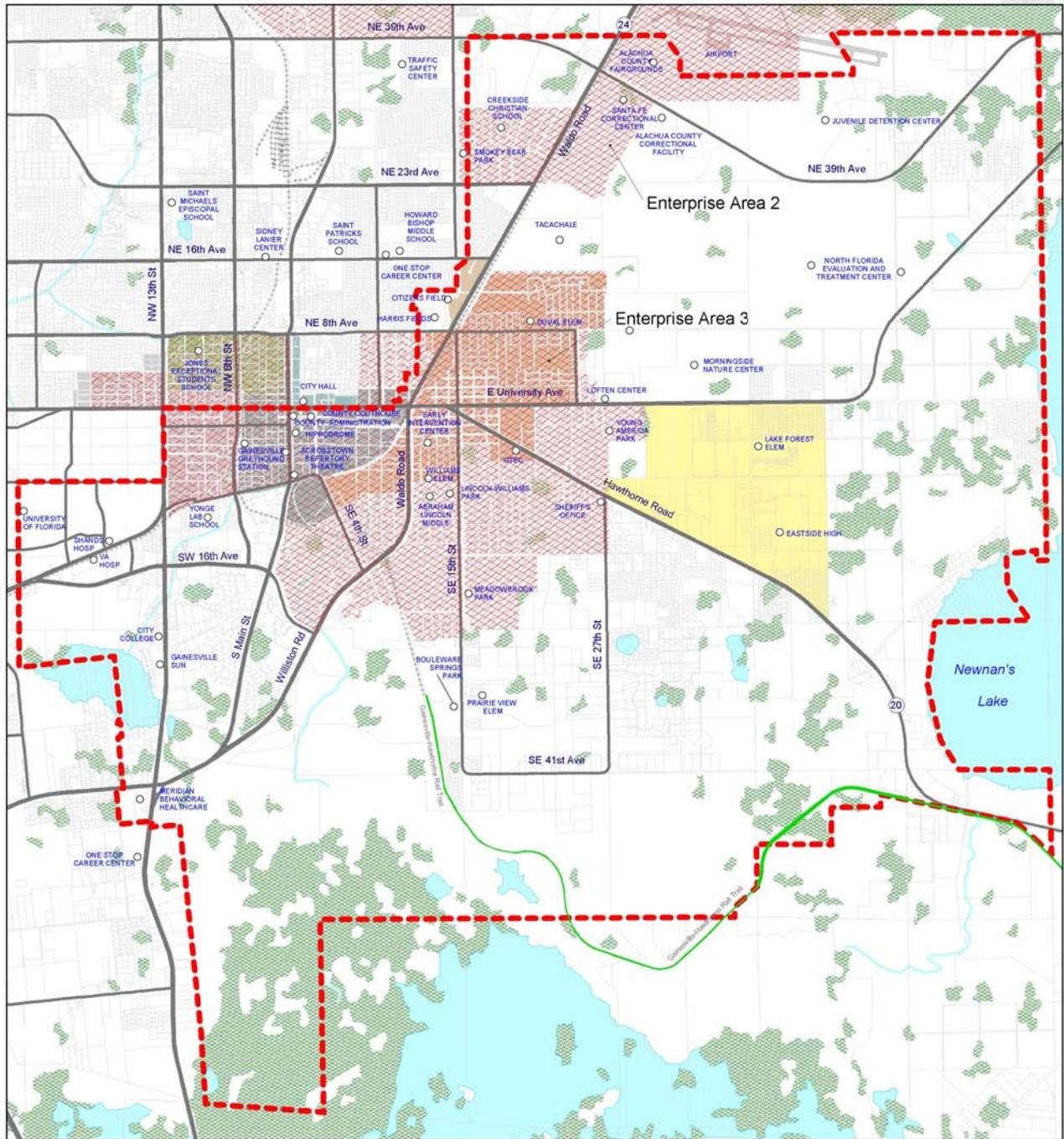
### **Regional Recreation Center**

To create critical mass and leverage investment in East Gainesville in a way that promotes economic growth while ensuring quality development, a regional recreation center should be considered for the property that is located to the east of Fred Cone Park (see Figure H, Recommended Master Plan). This property is considered suitable for use as a regional recreation attraction, such as a water theme park, nature or history museum, or cultural center, with the intent of attracting outside visitors to East Gainesville. The area surrounding this property includes regional park facilities that would support development of the site as a compatible recreational use. It is recommended that the Tourist Development Council coordinate with the City and County to explore the potential of this site and market the area with a family oriented focus.

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**SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street**

The City of Gainesville and Alachua County have prepared a SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street Special Area Plan that addresses design guidelines and redevelopment within the corridor. Implementing regulations are being prepared. The Special Area Plan is consistent with this planning effort, but does not focus on this area because it is already being addressed through this planning effort.



- Redevelopment Areas
  - College Park/Depot Avenue
  - Downtown
  - Eastside
  - Fifth Avenue
- Enterprise Zones
- Potential Community Redevelopment Agency District
- Wetlands



## **Waldo Road**

The Waldo Road corridor undergoes a distinct transition in character. South of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the land uses have a more urban character, transitioning to the institutional uses north to NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The plan proposes retrofitting a portion of Waldo Road as a boulevard to provide improved pedestrian accessibility and complement the proposed BRT service south of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The Special Area Plan calls for and Urban uses in the corridor south of NE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue within the City of Gainesville’s Eastside Community Redevelopment Area. This segment includes the Duval Front Porch neighborhood and the enhanced 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue multi-use trail. Uses in the corridor may not achieve the intensity envisioned within the activity centers along Hawthorne Road, but could support neighborhood and community serving office and retail uses, as well as residential uses such as townhouses. A redevelopment opportunity exists at the proposed BRT stop at NE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue for mixed-use development based upon the availability of vacant land east of Waldo Road known as the Camp property. The property has been designated as an activity center in the Special Area Plan. Dev

## **Highway-Oriented Institutional District**

The plan proposes a Highway-Oriented Institutional District to recognize the institutional uses along Waldo Road and NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This district recognizes the existing character of the area consisting of large-scale institutional uses such as Taccachale and the correctional facilities further east along NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This designation also recognizes the planned relocation of Gainesville Regional Utilities operations facilities to a site on Waldo Road, south of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These facilities are an important employment center and provide needed community services. The character of the area is fixed, and no major land use changes are proposed relative to the Highway-oriented Institutional district.

## **Rural Land Uses**

The rural land uses in the special plan recognize the unique environmental setting that gives the area its unique character. The proposed Newnan’s Lake and Lake Forest Greenways would enhance the character of the area and provide appropriate public access, particularly to Newnan’s

Lake. The Rural District also recognizes the viability of continued agricultural uses on the Blueberry Farm, which residents have identified as an important community asset.

The Special Area Plan calls for preservation of environmental areas, while recognizing very limited development potential for low-density residential development. No specific locations for Rural Centers are identified on the Special Area Plan map. However, the plan recognizes the potential for creation of Rural Centers with mixed-uses including residential, neighborhood commercial, and civic uses. Potential locations were identified on Hawthorne Road near Newnan's Lake.

### **Neighborhood Housing Development**

Overall, creating more and better employment opportunities in the activity centers and at the fairgrounds site, and providing a strong transit linkage to employment opportunities in the central city, will stimulate demand for housing. The proposed master plan addresses the provision of diversified housing through several strategies.

One strategy is to create opportunities for the market to provide higher end market-rate single-family housing in suburban and rural areas on sites with natural amenities. This strategy capitalizes on the environmental assets of East Gainesville including the wetlands and creeks, Newnan's Lake, and existing parks. The creation of a greenway system to improve the accessibility and visibility of these features will enhance the image of the area, making it more attractive for residential development. Better community services and retail opportunities will also attract new residential development.

A second strategy promotes the creation of higher density housing within the activity centers. The promotion of higher density residential uses as part of a mixed-use development will create opportunities for new types of housing products not currently present in this market. Attached, owner-occupied housing such as townhouses or lofts, and urban scale, low to mid-rise apartment units, would be permitted within the activity centers, contributing to the creation of a more diverse housing stock.

### **Schools**

Schools form the building blocks of community by providing a focus for neighborhood development. School quality is also a key factor in attracting new residents. Although adequate

school capacity exists in East Gainesville, the opportunity exists to enhance school quality through additional investments in the schools themselves and in the surrounding area. Existing public schools could be supported with additional public investments, including adjacent park sites, improved pedestrian and bicycle access, and greenways connections.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPECIAL AREA PLAN**

The land use and transportation alternatives developed and evaluated for the project reflected different approaches to move from a conceptual plan created early in the planning process to a more specific Special Area Plan. The alternatives developed conform to the MTPO's Livable Community Reinvestment Plan objectives of reinvesting in the core downtown areas and creating highly developed mixed-use centers, but in somewhat different ways. The alternatives generally sought to focus development into compact, or clustered, areas, with large tracts of undeveloped land left as open space and greenway corridors. Three alternatives were developed: a multi-centered development pattern, a transit northeast alternative, and a transit southeast alternative.

For comparison purposes, all the alternatives assumed an equal amount of growth in East Gainesville through the year 2020, as shown in Table 2. The difference in the alternatives was in how the growth would be allocated into different parts of the study area. In terms of overall growth assumptions, population would increase from about 34,000 in 2000 to almost 56,000 by 2020, and employment would increase from about 22,500 in 2000 to nearly 37,000 in 2020. Those population and employment projections would increase the Plan East Gainesville study area's proportion of Alachua County's population and employment by four percent, respectively, and reflected a constrained build-out of the conceptual master plan to net out undevelopable lands.

These growth projections do not represent a build-out scenario. The total reflects a more compact development pattern that uses increases in density and intensity of land uses in key centers to accommodate a reasonable projection of growth through 2020, while preserving large areas of undeveloped and suburban land at existing low densities. The analysis was used to evaluate the feasibility of various centers to accommodate the potential growth and evaluate the transportation system that would be needed to support it.

**Table 2: Projected Study Area Growth Totals**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Increase</b>
<b>Population</b>			
County	217,955	280,140	62,185
Study Area	33,987	55,752	21,765
Percent of County	16%	20%	35%
<b>Employment</b>			
County	116,784	157,275	40,491
Study Area	22,654	36,826	14,172
Percent of County	19%	23%	35%
<b>Employment/Population Ratio</b>			
County	54%	56%	65%
Study Area	67%	66%	65%

## SUMMARY

This section presents the Future Land Use Element for the Plan East Gainesville project. The plan presents a vision of a revitalized community that balances environmental concerns and transportation mobility consistent with the plan objective. The plan proposes an alternative future to East Gainesville with vibrant, mixed-use centers that transform the former automobile-oriented development. Revitalization is based upon a strategy of using public investments to leverage the market, and enhancing the area’s environmental assets to transform the community’s image. Economic development efforts will enhance opportunities for the area residents, attract new investment, and encourage the development of a diverse community.

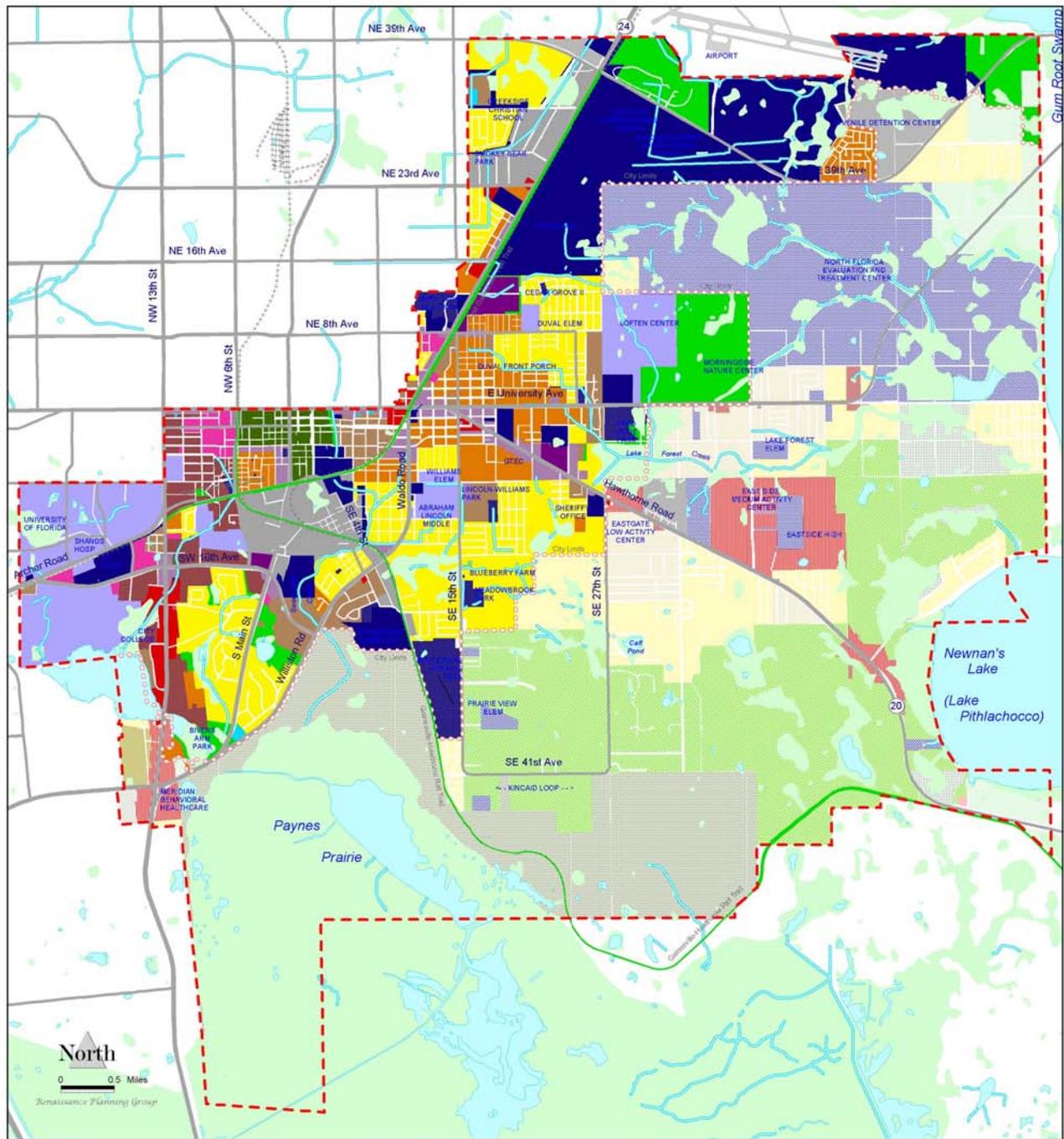
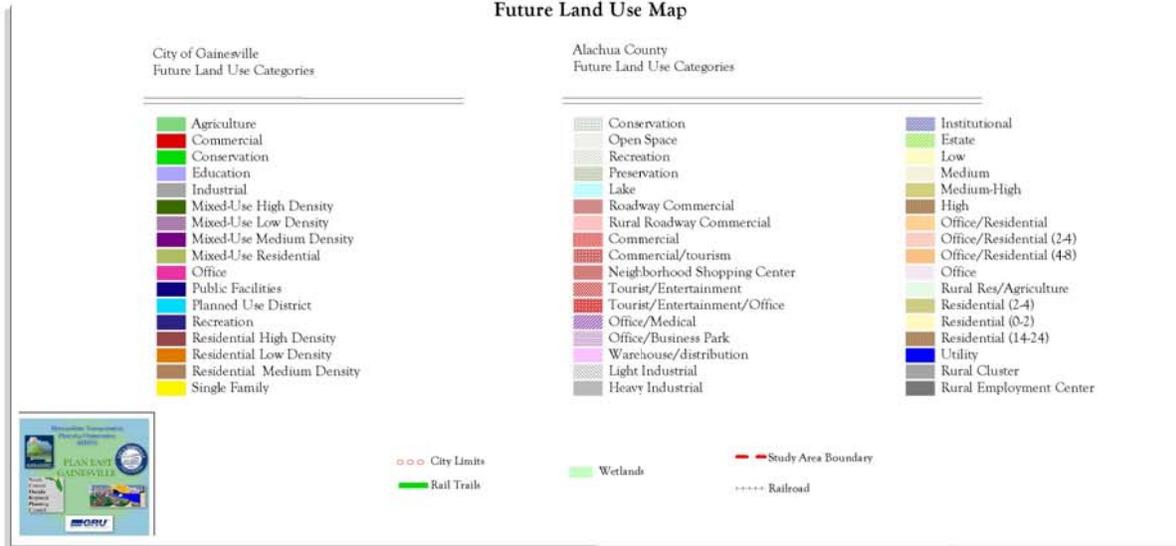


Figure J  
**PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE**  
 Future Land Use Map





# CONSERVATION

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## **CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

### **MAJOR ISSUES**

East Gainesville enjoys many natural features that give the area its special character and great potential. Many of these resources have experienced impacts from urban development that has impacted water quality in the adjacent Payne’s Prairie and Newnan’s Lake. The Plan provides many opportunities to improve environmental quality while improving access and visibility of these assets. Specific issues and opportunities include seeking to expand greenways utilizing existing canals and utility easements, preserving and connecting natural parks and centers, and improving water quality. Protecting and promoting the natural environment while encouraging economic development presents a unique challenge for East Gainesville.

### **CONSERVATION VISION**

The natural areas of East Gainesville can become its greatest asset, creating a sense of place and community that will help redefine the area’s image. These features can be showcased through creating greenway connections, enhancing their visibility, and restoring their environmental quality, particularly for the Sweetwater Creek and Lake Forest Creek. Improving access and visibility of Newnan’s Lake with a greenway is one of the highest priorities to achieve this goal. This vision for the Conservation Element expresses the critical role that greenways and open space play in creating a cohesive community as follows:

*Celebrate and protect natural resources as integral to the community by promoting enhanced access and awareness and integrating them into the fabric of the community using a network of greenways. Use environmental features to help shape land use patterns and define the community’s image.*

### **RECOMMENDED PLAN**

The recommended plan proposes a unique interconnected greenway system that will serve several inter-related purposes. Greenways provide access to and connect the area’s

environmental resources, enhancing their visibility. Improvement of water quality and control of stormwater through enhancement of canals and creeks will provide additional environmental benefits. Greenways also provide transportation mobility and access by connecting neighborhoods with business centers, shopping areas, schools and parks. Acquisition of conservation land is also a secondary strategy where needed to enhance existing public lands and acquire lands needed to complete the greenway system.

### **Proposed Greenways**

The proposed greenway system incorporates three functional types of corridors. The system uses environmentally sensitive conservation areas and riparian corridors, existing or proposed transportation corridors and existing roadways identified as multi-use trail opportunities. The function of these greenways is dependent on the surrounding land use. Typically, the greenways that traverse environmentally sensitive lands can be considered “rural greenways” and corridors surrounding roadway networks can be considered “urban greenways.” The multi-use trails will incorporate bicycle and pedestrian supportive design elements. The intersection of each greenway and multi-use trail should create a “sense of place through pocket park facilities or a commercial node.” With a significant focal point, each intersection will serve as a destination point.

There are several proposed greenways which link critical conservation lands and riparian corridors. These include Newnan’s Lake Greenway, Lake Forest Creek Greenway, Southern Greenway and East-West Connector Greenway (see the Recommended Master Plan and Priorities map below). Newnan’s Lake Greenway, the Lake Forest Creek Greenway and the East-West Connector Greenway are considered to be priorities in the plan. These greenways should function as wildlife corridors, habitat linkages, passive recreational destination opportunities and support water quality improvement. This type of greenway is the most critical in preserving rural land or acquiring public land to link significant habitats and essentially preserve a corridor.

### **Newnan’s Lake Greenway**

The Newnan’s Lake Greenway will provide a regional connection from the Gum Root Swamp generally along the western shoreline of Newnan’s Lake. The greenway will connect

with the Southern Greenway and the Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail, which are located along the northern portion of Paynes Prairie. It will also provide a water quality enhancement component much needed in the Newnan's Lake basin. Development around the lake and surrounding wetland habitat has reduced the water quality and habitat value from untreated stormwater runoff and the greenway will serve to filter pollutants and sediments before reaching Newnan's Lake. In addition, acquisition of conservation lands in this area have the potential to provide a critical linkage for wildlife from the Gum Root Swamp south to Paynes Prairie. Other enhancement opportunities include a boardwalk and multi-use facility along parts of the lake to enhance public access, and a wildlife crossing under SR 20.

### **Lake Forest Creek Greenway**

The Lake Forest Creek Greenway is another top priority. This greenway connects the NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway with the Newnan's Lake Greenway to the east, with proposed connections to East Side High School and Lake Forest Elementary School.

Lake Forest Creek has been degraded by channeling and untreated runoff from surrounding properties. It flows into Newman's Lake, contributing to the lakes' very poor (and declining) water quality. In portions of the creek, concrete has been used to alter the flow of water. The plan will propose restoring the creek to a natural free-flowing system through revegetation and stabilization along the shoreline. Shoreline enhancement will allow for more volume while slowing flow. A stormwater park is also proposed near the beginning of this system in the Duval neighborhood to enhance water quality by pretreating flow entering this system. This greenway will provide a significant riparian corridor for animal movement and water quality improvement. A natural trail along the shoreline will also provide passive recreational opportunities and transportation access from neighborhoods to the Five Points commercial center. However, access to the creek should remain limited.

### **Southern Greenway**

The Southern Greenway will extend from the eastern end of SE 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue to the east along the northern edge of Paynes Prairie to the Newnan's Lake Greenway and Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail. This greenway will use an existing utility right-of-way corridor and

provide a buffer between residential properties and Paynes Prairie. It will also provide another shorter recreational route from the SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway to the Newnan's Lake Greenway.

### **East-West Greenway**

The East-West Greenway is a top priority and begins at Williston Road just north of the Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail. This greenway extends to the east adjacent to the Blueberry Farm and terminates at the SE/NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway near the Eastgate Low Activity Center. This greenway will provide a recreational opportunity while preserving natural wetlands and a vital part of East Gainesville character, the Blueberry Farm. This greenway would only support non-auto travel linking suburban residential areas in Kincaid Loop with major activity areas in downtown and the University area.

### **NE/SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway**

The NE/27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway runs north to south connecting the Regional Airport, and proposed Office and Industrial Mixed-Use Employment Center, to the Gainesville Hawthorne Rail Trail. The NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street section between Hawthorne Road and NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue proposed as part of the NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street roadway extension will intersect with the Lake Forest Creek Greenway near Hawthorne Road at the proposed activity center. Fred Cone Park and the Loftan Center will be served by the greenway. This leg has been identified as a priority because there is a unique opportunity to create the greenway before the road will be developed to ensure limited commercial development and limit access to the road. Right-of-way acquisition can occur in advance of funding for the roadway modification.

The SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street greenway connects with the East-West Greenway near the Eastgate Low Activity Center, and the Southern Greenway and Bouleware Springs Greenway at the south end.

### **Bouleware Springs Greenway**

The Bouleware Springs Greenway begins at the intersection of Archer Road and SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street. It follows SW 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east and follows along a portion of Sweetwater Creek adjacent to Evergreen Cemetery. It provides connections to the Gainesville Hawthorne Rail Trail and Bouleware Springs Park. The Greenway continues east along SE 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue to the SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway. Several neighborhoods and community facilities, including Prairie View Elementary School, will be connected by this greenway, offering recreational opportunities

and accessibility to residents. As a hydrologic connection to Paynes Prairie, the Sweetwater Creek basin is a critical corridor opportunity. This greenway will provide stormwater attenuation before reaching Paynes Prairie.

## **Multi-Use Trails**

There are three multi-use or roadway enhancement corridors identified in the plan. These include portions of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, East University Avenue and East 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Enhancements include designated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, pedestrian lighting and plantings. These trails are considered to create pedestrian friendly streets and allow an environmental feel in an urbanized area. Designing green infrastructure into the streetscape will enhance transportation choices, improve air quality, filter stormwater runoff and create a more “walkable” close-knit community.

The plan proposes enhancements along NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue from East 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the Loft Center. Incorporating bike lanes and pedestrian amenities will create a more livable street. Amenities should include more visible street crossings, transit shelters and pavement treatments to slow traffic.

East University Avenue from Waldo Road to the East 27<sup>th</sup> Street is another multi-use trail opportunity. A stormwater park is proposed in this area that will improve water quality entering the Lake Forest Creek system. This corridor should incorporate a bike lane, pedestrian friendly crossings, wider sidewalks and vegetation plantings.

SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street from East University Avenue to SE 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue has been identified as needing multi-modal enhancements due to the land uses located along the corridor. There are two elementary schools, one middle school and two parks located along SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Proposed enhancements include bicycle/pedestrian treatments and traffic calming design elements. Street modifications will provide safe crossings for school children and park users while reducing speed travel. Some suggested enhancements include sidewalk widening, bulb-outs at intersections, recognizable pedestrian crossings, pedestrian signals and pedestrian scale lighting. Planting shrubs and small trees along the sidewalks will help filter stormwater runoff and create a buffer between vehicles and humans.

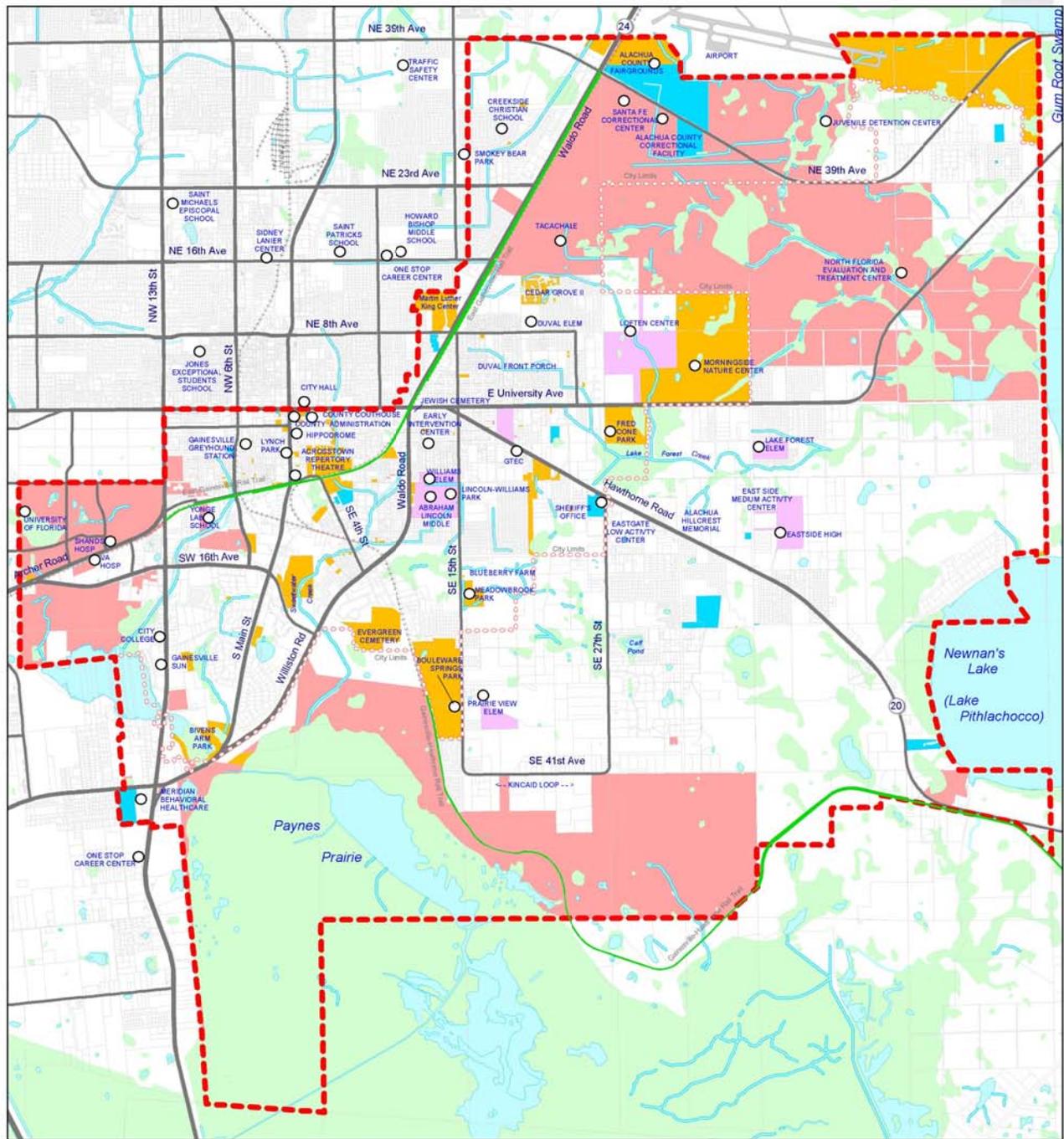
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## **CONSERVATION LANDS**

Currently there are approximately 10,000 acres of conservation land within the Study area with a large portion of those acres publicly owned. The priority for land acquisition are those parcels that would establish a corridor or habitat linkage with other conservation lands. Available public land was a criterion for designing the greenway system, so acquisition may only be needed for a relatively few number of parcels. Acquisition priorities should include lands within the proposed Newnan’s Lake Greenway, Lake Forest Creek Greenway, and NE/SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway. Purchasing parcels around Newnan’s Lake will promote water quality and protect the rural character of the area, and create a linkage to publicly owned lands in Payne’s Prairie. Identification of these properties as potential conservation lands is consistent with the lands identified in the Alachua County Forever land acquisition program.

### **Restoration**

The City of Gainesville and Alachua County have policies in place to help restore and preserve surface waters and wetlands. These include vegetative buffers adjacent to development, the creation of environmental districts, erosion control regulations, requirements of mitigation for impacts to surface waters and wetlands, and continuing cooperation with Local and State agency acquisition programs. As priority parcels are identified and slated for acquisition for the greenway system, restoration and enhancement opportunities must be established. The success of the greenways habitat value will depend on a well-designed restoration/enhancement and monitoring program.



- School Board Properties (SBAC)
- State Properties
- County Properties
- City Properties
- Wetlands
- Study Area Boundary
- Railroad
- Rail Trails



PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE



# TRANSPORTATION

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## **TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

### **MAJOR ISSUES**

Transportation provides a vital template to the redevelopment and careful planning for quality growth in East Gainesville. The existing network of roadway corridors provides for excellent regional accessibility, linking East Gainesville with employment, institutional and commercial opportunities throughout Gainesville and the region. With the confluence of SR 20, SR 26, SR 331 and SR 24, East Gainesville is a transportation hub for regional arterial roadways that link outlying areas, such as Waldo, Hawthorne and even Jacksonville and Palatka, with downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida. The presence of the Gainesville Regional Airport within the study area presents intermodal transportation opportunities that have led to several successful economic development projects in the form of industrial uses and commercial distribution centers. Northeast 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue – a designated truck route – provides direct access between the airport and I-75; further supporting enhanced economic development opportunities in the northeastern part of the study area.

As stated in the Community Profile section of this report, there is an abundance of capacity on East Gainesville's road network. State Road 20, which, along with SR 331 (Williston Road) and portions of SR 26 (East University Avenue), is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS), provides the backbone of this regional system. Existing traffic counts indicate that all of the major arterial roadways carry traffic volumes that average about half the capacity available based on their adopted level of service standard. However, by the year 2020 a portion of Williston Road (SR 331) from East University Avenue to SE 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is projected to exceed its available capacity.

The major roadways in East Gainesville also provide an organizing framework for how redevelopment and new development should occur to enhance economic opportunity, ensure preservation of natural areas and support land use patterns that promote walking, bicycling and use of public transportation. The intersection of major roads provides for the accessibility and market needed for the creation of mixed-use centers. Such centers can provide enhanced employment, commercial and residential development, within a compact, walkable scale

environment designed to reduce automobile trips and retard the growth of strip commercial sprawl land use patterns.

The principal challenges to mobility in East Gainesville, however, relate less to the regional accessibility provided by high capacity state roads, but to the lack of street interconnectivity, marginal levels of public transportation service and poor conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists seeking access to destinations both within and external to the study area. The major highways that define East Gainesville's boundaries and its historic commercial center present a barrier – both physical and psychological – for the community. These high-speed, four and six-lane roads are designed to move traffic rapidly through the area, tacitly implying that there is nothing to make stopping worthwhile. They also present difficult crossing hurdles for people who want to walk or ride their bicycles from Lincoln Estates, Duval or any of the other East Gainesville neighborhoods to destinations across the street or in downtown Gainesville.

The physical separation created by these roadways exacerbates the problem of a lack of interconnectivity of streets within East Gainesville. The local road network is limited in its continuity. For example, people wishing to travel from areas adjacent to SR20/Hawthorne Road like the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center or Sheriff's administration building, have no direct access to the regional airport or industrial land uses along North Waldo Road or NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. There are no east-west travel corridors south of Hawthorne Road that provide direct linkages to downtown, the new Alachua County Courthouse, the University of Florida, the Shands/Veterans Administration Hospital complex and other destinations to the west. As the city of Gainesville redevelops the area along South Main Street and Depot Avenues, there will be more destinations, and likely a greater need for east-west travel to reduce dependence on an increasingly congested and constrained University Avenue.

Public transportation service to East Gainesville is generally adequate during the day given the development densities in the area, but service levels drop significantly at 6 PM, and circuitous, relatively infrequent routes reduce travel times. That makes it more challenging for workers or people who have a choice to ride the bus or drive a car to use the service on a routine basis. Creating a more linear transit system, which provides direct and efficient linkages between emerging East Gainesville activity centers, downtown, Santa Fe Community College, the University of Florida and the Archer Road medical/commercial corridor would provide an incentive to use the service.

Finally, unlike many other parts of Gainesville and Alachua County, there are few well-defined commercial, residential or civic centers in East Gainesville that represent destinations for people to gather and conduct business or engage in social activities. This lack of community focal points in relative proximity to established residential areas or cluster of businesses is a land use problem that has a profound impact on transportation. It forces people to drive farther, rely on the automobile for most, if not all, of their travel needs, and substantially reduces the amount of walking and bicycling. A lack of activity centers increases the public cost for transportation because of inefficient transit operations and additional road building needs. It also increases private costs for transportation. Nationally, transportation equals nearly 20 percent of the average monthly household cost; most of that is for the ownership, maintenance and insurance of automobiles. That percentage can be even higher – as much as 50 percent – for lower income households. Households that can rely on public transportation for a greater proportion of their travel needs, such that fewer cars are needed per household, would see a direct reduction in their monthly expenses.

This Transportation Element presents the means by which the multi-modal transportation system will be developed for the East Gainesville area. The Element has been structured to reflect extensive community involvement in the year-long planning process, as well as to support the objectives and recommendations outlined in the Land Use and Conservation Elements.

## **TRANSPORTATION VISION**

Consistent with the strategic vision of the Gainesville MTPO's Livable Community Reinvestment Plan (aka 2020 Transportation Plan) and the overall vision developed for Plan East Gainesville at the April charrette, this Transportation Element calls for the area's transportation system to support a well-defined land use plan that identifies the location, predominant use and scale of several mixed-use, walkable centers to support the economic and commercial revitalization of East Gainesville while helping to preserve and showcase the area's natural resources. It also outlines the creation of a seamless, integrated transit system that links East Gainesville activity centers with the downtown, University of Florida and commercial development along the linear Archer Road corridor. The vision statement for the Transportation Element of Plan East Gainesville is thus presented as follows:

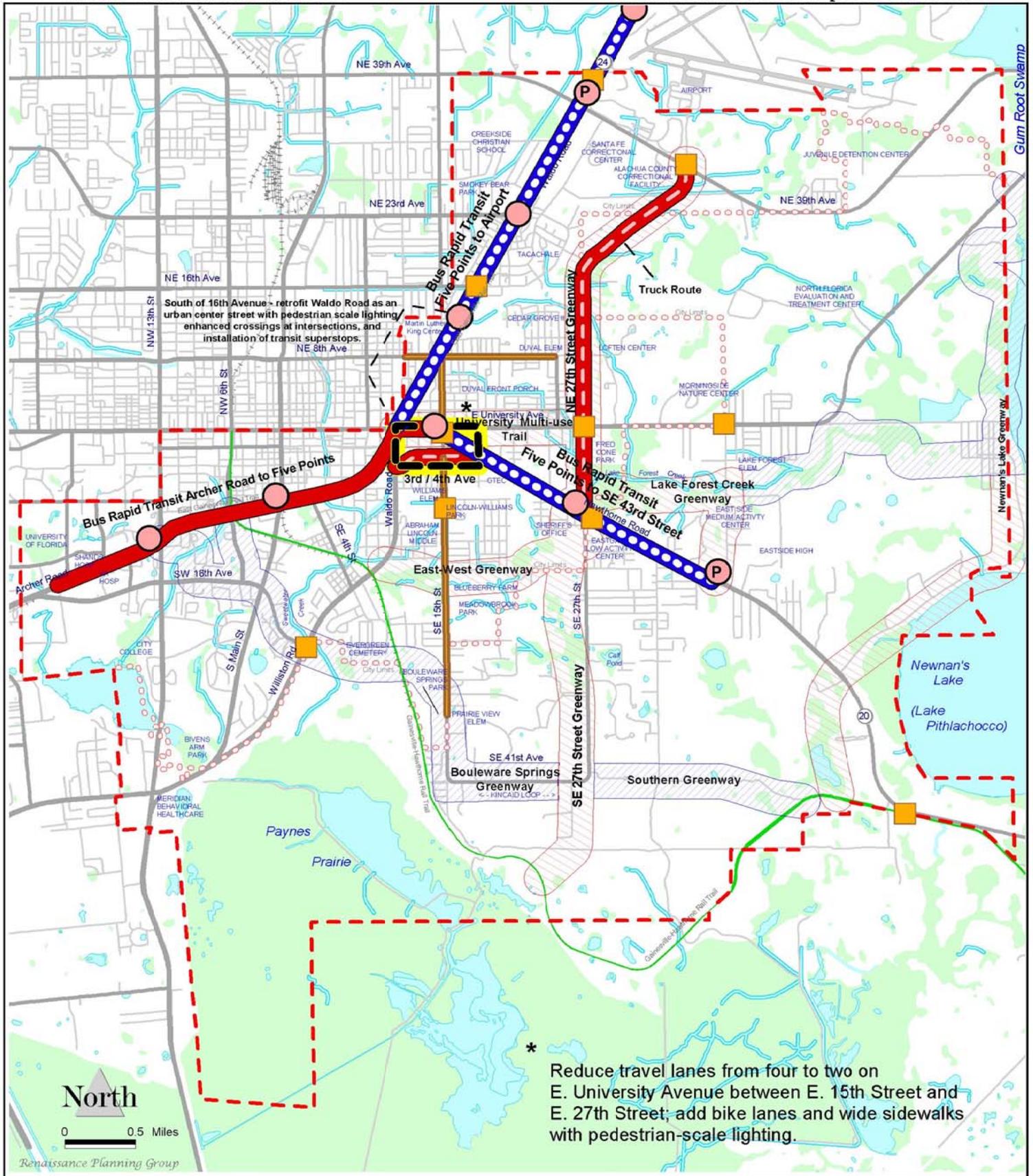
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*Enhance the multi-modal mobility of East Gainesville by establishing premium transit service linking the area with key employment and commercial centers, increasing street connectivity and promoting high quality accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists to the built and natural lands within the area.*

This vision is intended to guide the development and implementation of a series of transportation projects that will help transform the geographic profile of East Gainesville into a more vibrant and attractive place for people to live, work and play. The transportation projects, in part, are intended to leverage public investment into higher quality private investment at several high visibility centers by reducing the level of risk and stimulating a market response. The projects are also intended to support the revitalization and preservation of established neighborhood residential and rural areas. By avoiding roadway projects that divide residential areas, and selecting roadway enhancement projects that promote street interconnectivity and non-auto accessibility, the transportation plan seeks to stabilize and strengthen established urban and suburban neighborhoods. In the rural district, the few transportation projects focus on completing a network of greenways to increase access to parks and recreational opportunities, and to restrict rezoning of land for more intensive uses that would allow development to encroach into areas more suited for preservation.

## **RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The Plan East Gainesville transportation plan is intended to address the major mobility and accessibility issues defined through the public participation process and documented in the Community Profile section of this report. A central issue in the preparation of the study recommendations involved the development and evaluation of several land use-transportation alternatives that examined options for dealing with the presence of the FIHS, the potential extension of a new roadway at SE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Williston Road to Hawthorne Road, and location of future mixed-use development centers that would expand economic and commercial opportunities for residents while encouraging greater use of public transportation and encourage walking and bicycling.



\* Reduce travel lanes from four to two on E. University Avenue between E. 15th Street and E. 27th Street; add bike lanes and wide sidewalks with pedestrian-scale lighting.

<p><b>Five Points Priority Redevelopment Area</b></p>	<p><b>Add bike lanes, curb bulb-outs and other calming measures</b></p>	<p><b>Bus Rapid Transit</b></p> <p><b>"High Priority" BRT Alignment</b></p> <p><b>"Medium Priority" BRT Alignment</b></p> <p>Intermodal Station</p> <p>Park-n-Ride</p>	<p><b>Greenway Corridors</b></p> <p>"High Priority"</p> <p>"Medium Priority"</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ City Limits</p> <p>— Rail Trails</p> <p>— Wetlands</p> <p>--- Study Area Boundary</p> <p>++++ Railroad</p>
<p><b>Construct enhanced 2-lane roadway</b></p> <p>NE 27th Street</p> <p>3rd / 4th Avenue</p>	<p><b>Gateway / Intersection Pedestrian Enhancements</b></p>			



## **Public Transportation**

As shown in Figure L, the cornerstone of the recommended transportation plan for Plan East Gainesville is to establish a Bus Rapid Transit service that unifies East Gainesville with downtown and the Archer Road corridor as part of an integrated regional system. The high frequency service would employ a series of bus preferential treatments, including traffic signal priority, rapid passenger boarding and alighting, intersection queue-jump lanes and dedicated travel lanes to reduce bus travel times to key destinations and increase the person-carrying capacity of the transportation system. Given the redesign of the Depot Avenue corridor, on-street parking on parts of Hawthorne Road, and the existing rail-trail across SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, along Depot Avenue and connecting to Waldo Road, there is good potential for a BRT service operating on dedicated travel lanes for at least a portion of service.

Unlike traditional forms of public transportation, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) provides a stronger impetus for transit-oriented redevelopment around stations because of the commitment to the service expressed in terms of higher technology infrastructure (such as priority signals, enhanced stations, dedicated lanes, signage, etc.) and signature vehicles. The type of service provides a premium level of service that provides faster travel times and, as a result, is likely to substantially increase ridership and attract a different market of users, such as those who have a choice to ride transit or drive a car.

The initial BRT service would connect from Archer Road to the Five Points area via Depot Avenue and the Waldo Road rail-trail alignment. Two routes would then diverge from that centrally-located transfer station, with service operating along Waldo Road to the proposed Fairgrounds Employment Center and Regional Airport, and along Hawthorne Road to serve the planned mixed-use centers at 27<sup>th</sup> Street and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. Major stations would be located at points where redevelopment or new development is planned to occur.



**Figure M: Photo Illustration of a Potential Bus Rapid Transit Station on Waldo Road at NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

Park and ride lots located at SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and on north Waldo Road would help capture new riders living near those locations for a quick, seamless ride into the region's employment centers.

The service plan for the BRT requires frequent service – operating at least every 10 to 15 minutes during the peak periods – and running a longer span of service into the early evening to enable workers to reach their destination at the end of the day. As commercial development along the line occurs, service may be extended until 10 PM or later. Both the transit vehicles and stations should have signature, highly visible features to distinguish the service from ordinary bus service.

This ultimate BRT system depends on the available funding, and the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) will need to prioritize each segment. More detailed engineering analysis will need to be performed to establish an operating plan. A phased implementation plan is recommended, as described in the next section of this report, which would begin introducing these service elements based on financial feasibility. The initial link

needs to provide a connection to East Gainesville at Five Points. Depending on the availability of funding, subsequent phases would extend service northeast along Waldo Road to the Fairgrounds/airport area, and southeast along Hawthorne Road to the SE 27<sup>th</sup> and SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street activity centers. Initial implementation may focus on acquisition of signature vehicles and signal system priority treatments, while later phases would entail construction of dedicated lanes along existing right-of-way, such as the Depot Avenue and Waldo Road rail-trail, or where on-street parking exists on Hawthorne Road.

Transit stations for the BRT service would occur in two forms: 1) stations that facilitate pedestrian accessibility because of their proximity and integration with transit-oriented development so that with quick boarding and alighting can occur, and 2) park-and-ride stations. Both would provide intermodal connections with other modes, such as local bus routes, bicycle facilities or automobile parking. The first type of transit station would include shelters, benches, information kiosks, newspaper racks and vending, supported by immediately adjacent commercial land uses. Located within mixed-use centers in a more urban development framework, transit patrons would generally walk or ride bicycles to the station. The park-and-ride BRT stations would have many of the same amenities as the first type, but because of their suburban location would have more land devoted to parking. Approximately 10-20 parking spaces should be reserved for transit patrons who would drive to the station. These locations must be a relatively short drive (five minutes or less) from residential areas to capture potential riders, such as people who live in the vicinity of Ironwood Golf Course and Eastside High School. With no charge for parking, the lots may also attract people who are commuting to downtown or the University from outlying areas.

Regular fixed-route bus service, operated by the Regional Transit System, may need to be modified or restructured to feed and otherwise support the BRT service outlined in this plan. However, these operational details of BRT are premature at this time. The main concept that should be considered is that BRT stations, particularly at Five Points and the Fairgrounds Employment Center, serve as intermodal transfer centers, where multiple bus routes can converge to minimize the time spent waiting to transfer between routes.

## Florida Experience with BRT

There is a substantial amount of interest throughout Florida in preferential treatments for bus service. Both Orlando and Miami-Dade County have some form of Bus Rapid Transit in place today. Miami’s South Dade Busway, operated by Miami-Dade Transit Authority (MDTA), is a retrofit of a rail corridor running parallel to US 1 to provide BRT service on dedicated travel lanes linking the southern extent of the Metrorail system with South Miami-Dade suburbs. The eight-mile busway has 15 stations, and a planned 11.5-mile southern extension is underway. Orlando’s Lymmo service, operated by Lynx, circulates through the downtown core area on a 2.3-mile route using dedicated travel lanes with a separate signal system coordinated with automobile traffic signals. There is no charge to ride. The Lymmo runs every five minutes during peak periods, using low-floor compressed natural gas (CNG) buses with automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology. The system’s total capital cost was \$21 million when constructed in 1997.



Other BRT systems are in various stages of planning and implementation. In Jacksonville, as part of The Better Jacksonville Plan, voters approved \$100 million to buy land for at least one transit corridor for a future rapid transit system. The first of those studied is the North/Southeast corridor, running from Dunn Avenue in North Jacksonville to the Avenues Mall in the Southeast. Modes could include simply adding additional bus lanes or providing a dedicated busway for rapid transit vehicles. The second study, exploring possible routes for an East/Southwest corridor, running from Orange Park in Clay County to the Jacksonville Beaches, is now underway. A suburban Orlando BRT system is under development in the Maitland-Altamonte Springs area using Intelligent Transportation Systems technology to offer deviated demand-response service that circulates between major employment and commercial centers. Bus preferential treatment studies are also underway in the Pinellas County and Broward County.

## Roadways

Much of the public discussion and analysis for Plan East Gainesville is related to the potential for new roadways and modifications to existing roads. The context for this analysis

involved two transportation issues: planned lane reductions on University Avenue between Waldo Road and West 34<sup>th</sup> Street, and the presence of the FIHS as an impediment to pedestrian-scale redevelopment of the Five Points area at Hawthorne Road and East University Avenue. Those issues are described more fully in the Community Profile section of this report. Several potential corridors were explored and evaluated to respond to those issues and address the need for improved connectivity in East Gainesville. The major roadway options included:

- *Constructing a new limited access two- or four-lane road at the stub-out of SE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Williston Road and connecting it to Hawthorne Road (formerly known as the Southeast Connector road);*
- *Constructing a new two- or four-lane limited access road connecting Williston Road to SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street via an alignment located immediately south of SE 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenues and along the northern edge of the Blueberry Farm;*
- *Modifying the existing SE 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues to provide an enhanced roadway that provides a more direct connection between Williston Road and Hawthorne Road;*
- *Constructing a two-lane extension of SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street north of its existing terminus at Hawthorne Road to the Gainesville Regional Airport at NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue.*

The first two options were examined with the potential for a re-alignment of the FIHS away from its existing location to allow for changes in roadway geometry that would better support the creation of a walkable town center at the Five Points area. This was considered because of the inherent conflict between the goals of the FIHS and community redevelopment objectives. Analysis of the options entailed use of the Florida Standard Urban Transportation Model Structure (FSUTMS), which is a tool the MTPO uses to evaluate the potential effectiveness of new roadways or capacity modifications, along with an evaluation of potential community impacts and input from participants at public workshops.

Based on the analysis and feedback from workshop participants, the FIHS realignment alternatives were rejected, and of the option described above, the selected roadway modifications include the SE 3<sup>rd</sup>/SE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue enhancement and the extension of SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street to NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A discussion of these recommendations is presented below.

The planned new east-west roadways met with considerable citizen opposition, as expected, despite constraints placed on their construction that would have restricted access and kept them to two lanes, while precluding re-zoning for commercial development by establishing a greenway “envelop” around the road right-of-way. Primary concerns related to fears that the road

would create noise and light pollution in areas that are embraced for their quiet, natural and “peaceful” setting. Of the two options, the southern alignment from the SE 16<sup>th</sup> stub-out was least favored in public forums. However, both were viewed as splitting intact neighborhoods and creating unsafe conditions by crossing SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street, which has a substantial amount of pedestrian and bicycle activity. Business owners along Hawthorne Road voiced opposition to the new alignments because of a concern that pass-by traffic would be diverted away from their storefronts. Concerns were also expressed that new development built along or at the intersections of the new road would undermine the viability of existing local businesses. In addition, many residents stated that a shift of the FIHS further south to a new corridor would result in two separate “problem” roadways with excess capacity and their associated negative impacts.

The traffic volume forecasts for the new roads resulted in traffic volumes of between 7,000 – 12,000 vehicles per day in 2020, depending on the alternative. That amount does not justify construction of a four-lane facility. Given the expected cost of constructing the roadway, it appears to be insufficient to merit building the roadways even under the assumptions that University Avenue will be constrained and additional growth will occur in East Gainesville. Furthermore, because only a relatively small segment of the FIHS becomes congested under the base 2020 scenario (assuming no substantial growth in East Gainesville), there does not appear to be a capacity demand to build new facilities.

Based on that assessment and the objective of improving connectivity to encourage quality redevelopment, the recommended plan does not include a re-location of the FIHS or construction of a new east-west connector road. Hawthorne Road, University Avenue and Williston Road would continue to function as part of the FIHS. Instead, the plan focuses on creating a two-lane enhanced “main street” east-west connection via SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and SE 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and extending SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street as a two-lane roadway to the airport. These projects also directly relate to the Special Area Plan land use recommendations of creating employment and mixed-use centers at strategic locations in the study area. Each of those projects is discussed below:

### **SE 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Enhancement**

These existing streets are two-lane undivided local roadways located on the northern boundary of the Lincoln Estates neighborhood. The roads are of sub-par quality, lacking

continuous sidewalks, bicycle facilities or adequate lighting. In the Special Area Plan, this location was chosen as the preferred place for redevelopment of a walkable town center with a mix of uses that includes residential, commercial and professional office. The location provides good accessibility to the Lincoln Estates neighborhood, and the proximity of regional roadways to enhance market appeal.

The recommended enhancement would be to retrofit the existing roadway so it functions more as a main street for the redevelopment of an urban mixed-use center. This would provide a low-speed design of 25 miles per hour, and would serve as a focal point within the center. There would be two travel lanes with striped on-street parking, and eight-foot sidewalks on both sides. A 66-foot right-of-way would be required to accommodate a landscape buffer between the road and sidewalk and curb and gutter drainage. The result is a pedestrian-oriented street realm that enables the FIHS on SR 20/26 to function as intended. The SE 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor enhancement would provide direct access to downtown via SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

### **SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Extension**

To provide a key linkage between the existing and proposed employment centers along NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Fairgrounds Employment Center, Gainesville Regional Airport, etc.) and the Eastgate Low Activity Center at SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Hawthorne Road, the extension of 27<sup>th</sup> Street is proposed. This road is in the adopted MTPo 2020 Transportation Plan (Livable Community Reinvestment Plan), although it is not considered financially feasible. The road would be constructed from Hawthorne Road to NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a two-lane roadway functioning within a greenway corridor to limit access and mitigate wetland impacts, primarily on the road's eastern boundary. This project would provide improved connectivity to the airport, jails and employment centers at NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as well as providing improved access to the Fred Cone regional park on East University Avenue. As a designated truck route, the extension would help relieve the intersection of Waldo Road and East University Avenue of regional truck traffic. It would provide economic development support to businesses located in an area suitable for highway-oriented institutional uses, such as the proposed relocation of the Gainesville Regional Utilities operations facility. To the extent practical, the design of the road would provide a direct connection with the airport entrance road on NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

As demonstrated in the travel demand modeling for this project, a new NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street would carry just over 10,000 daily trips in 2020. This new facility would help relieve traffic currently on State Road 20, 24, and 26, and reduce pressure on the intersection at Waldo Road and East University Avenue. The new road would also begin to form an urban bypass, routing regional traffic away from the downtown and the University of Florida, by creating a connection to the North 39th Avenue truck route and Interstate 75.

### **Other Roadway Modifications**

There are several other roadway-related projects recommended to enhance the quality of East Gainesville’s urban environment rather than add capacity for automobiles. These projects are designed to complement recommended land use and conservation strategies, and therefore fall under the category of enhancements.

Construction of the East 27<sup>th</sup> Street extension enables retrofitting a portion of Waldo Road as a boulevard to provide improved pedestrian accessibility and complement the proposed BRT service. Waldo Road currently displays the characteristics of a high-speed intercity highway through the study area. This is appropriate for much of the roadway, but as traffic arrives into the traditional city urban area of Gainesville there should be visual and physical clues that encourage slower traffic and increased awareness for pedestrian travel.

North of NE 16th Avenue, Waldo Road should remain oriented to providing access for highway oriented land uses, but south of NE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue the road should have a lower design speed due to the more residential orientation of land uses and a greater demand for pedestrians to cross the road. The Camp Property, identified in the Special Area Plan as a mixed-use urban center located immediately south of that intersection, represents a transitional land use to anchor the redesign of the roadway as an urban boulevard. Initial gateway/pedestrian accessibility treatments need to focus on the key intersections at NE 16<sup>th</sup>, NE 12<sup>th</sup> and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues. The appendix of design guidelines provides additional details about the desired treatments for a boulevard.

Although the FIHS should remain in its existing location, an upgrade of the pedestrian and transit infrastructure is needed to support redevelopment and help reduce the physical and psychological barrier the corridor represents. This would include BRT treatments along East University and Hawthorne Road designed to increase the person-carrying capacity of the

corridor, while increasing pedestrian safety and comfort. At a minimum, signature gateway treatments should be placed at the intersections of Williston Road and SE 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and on Hawthorne Road at SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street, SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street and at Lakeshore Drive.

There is a tremendous amount of excess capacity on East University Avenue east of where the road splits with Hawthorne Road at East 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Current traffic counts indicate that daily traffic is less than half the available capacity. This wide road segment encourages speeding and presents a barrier that reduces accessibility from the Duval neighborhood to the redevelopment district located immediately to the south. Given the excess capacity on East University Avenue (which is projected to continue through 2020 based on the modeling performed for this project), lane reductions are recommended from East 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the location of the proposed East 27<sup>th</sup> Street extension. The extension of East 27<sup>th</sup> Street provides an alternative route for traffic, thus providing a stronger traffic circulation context to use the space created to add bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, and create a center landscape median to transform the segment into an urban boulevard as a gateway to Fred Cone Park. Because this section of roadway is not part of the FIHS, it would be relatively easier to obtain FDOT approval to transform its character as part of the redevelopment plan for the Five Points area.

Two collector streets that provide an important connection in East Gainesville are also recommended for enhancement: NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and East 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Both roadways function within an area that is predominantly residential, with schools, churches and parks on both sides. Each road also provides access to neighborhood-oriented commercial land uses. Residents have identified both roadways as posing conflicts for pedestrians and bicyclists, and there are no bicycle facilities on either roadway. The recommended enhancements are to add bike lanes, provide improved pedestrian visibility at key intersections, and implement subtle traffic calming measures, such as speed tables and intersection curb bulb-outs to reduce traffic speeds at SE 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and at NE 25<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 19<sup>th</sup> Terrace.

It should be noted that the Alachua County Bicycle Master Plan identifies several roadway enhancement projects and bicycle corridor alignments that serve East Gainesville. The Bicycle Master Plan provided specific details concerning ranking of potential projects for prioritization based on right-of-way, physical conditions of the roadway or corridor and estimated demand. The Master Plan identifies several high priority enhancement projects in the Plan East Gainesville study area. They include roadway re-striping projects on NE 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NE 15<sup>th</sup>

Street, East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street, East University Avenue, and Hawthorne Road, and new construction projects for the Downtown East Central Trail and the NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Trail. An Enhancements Working Group comprised of local agency staff and others has been organized to oversee the evaluation and prioritization of those projects. Although the projects listed are in the high priority category, none of them are included in the top five enhancement project priorities recommended by the Enhancements Working Group. However, the Gainesville to Hawthorne Rail-Trail Downtown Connector Project, which directly serves the southern portion of the Plan East Gainesville study area, has been recommended for funding (with design underway in Spring 2003).



**Figure N: Photo Illustration of an Enhanced NE 8th Avenue in Front of Duval Elementary School**

### **Greenway System**

A proposed greenway system is a central component of the study recommendations. The system provides for an integrated land preservation, recreation and transportation strategy for East Gainesville. In terms of transportation, the greenway system includes a series of interconnected multi-use trails (designed to be shared with easements for power lines or drainage basins to the extent feasible) with trailheads at pocket parks or mixed-use centers, to provide better access to Fred Cone Park on East University Avenue, as well as community and neighborhood centers throughout the east side of Gainesville.

Where possible, the greenway system has been located along existing or potential conservation lands. Specific alignments will be determined as projects are designed. Locations for the proposed system follow either environmentally sensitive areas or parcel boundaries.

The greenway system provides for greater transportation accessibility to commercial or employment areas through connections along Lake Forest Creek, the corridor on the northern boundary of the Blueberry Farm, and along SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. A complementary benefit of the system is that it would provide a buffer between more intensive urban uses and suburban or rural land uses. And, in the case of the East 27<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, the new road is planned to be located within a greenway corridor that acts as a buffer between the road and environmentally sensitive land. This would ensure limited access, preclude a commercial re-zoning and, with proper design, enable multi-modal transportation to occur in an environmentally sound manner.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH MTPO LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN VISION**

The transportation plan furthers the vision of the MTPO's Livable Community Reinvestment Plan in several ways. First, the plan supports the creation of highly developed mixed-use centers in East Gainesville, as called for in the MTPO plan. These centers, such as at Five Points, provide important gathering points to support increased levels of walking and public transportation. Second, by targeting the connection of local streets within the urban district and avoiding the construction of a new bypass road through the southern half of the study area, this plan is consistent with the MTPO's long-range vision of reinvesting the traditional core areas to develop walkable town centers. A bypass route has the potential of drawing traffic – and customers – away from established commercial areas, thus potentially reducing their future viability. Finally, the plan supports the MTPO's vision of a high level of premium transit service within a linear Archer Road corridor through a series of transit preferential treatments known collectively as Bus Rapid Transit. This plan extends that service from the Shands Hospital area through the southern part of downtown Gainesville along Depot Avenue and into East Gainesville at Five Points. This investment would make the Archer Road premium transit service truly a regional type of service that connects workers and employment centers in East Gainesville with major civic, employment and commercial destinations elsewhere in the urbanized area. This project unifies east and west parts of the community, enhancing the transit level of service for a traditionally underserved segment of the population, and provides

additional assurances that environmental justice concerns about the locational benefits of public transportation investments are being met to comply with the spirit and law of the Presidential Executive Order 12898. Among the U.S. Department of Transportation rules implementing the Executive Order are “To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.”

## **SUMMARY**

This section presents the Transportation Element for the Plan East Gainesville project. The plan has been developed to support the special area land use plan objectives that were defined through a series of community meetings, workshops and discussion forums. The proposed land use objectives and strategies are guiding the transportation plan, but there is a symbiotic relationship between the two elements. Investment in transportation infrastructure and improved accessibility can substantially increase the value of property for commercial development. This type of public investment can provide a stimulus to the market by reducing real estate investment risk and helping to create a critical mass of activities in a given area. Similarly, redevelopment objectives and desired land use patterns should dictate the kind of transportation system that can efficiently and effectively support those objectives.

Thus, creation of walkable mixed-use development centers requires a supporting system of interconnected streets, efficient transit service, and comfortable and convenient walking conditions. Land uses that focus on job creation through manufacturing or distribution requires good regional highway accessibility. Finally, protecting natural resources and increasing the public’s accessibility to those resources requires a policy of compact development patterns and a system of low-impact trails. The plan for East Gainesville has all those ingredients. The plan presents a complementary set of transportation strategies designed to help Alachua County and the City of Gainesville reach their objectives for economic growth, preservation of neighborhoods, revitalization of established communities and preservation of natural resources. As growth occurs, this plan is designed to guide development toward a higher quality that adds value for local residents and businesses alike.



# IMPLEMENTATION

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## **IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW**

The Plan East Gainesville Special Area Plan is a visionary, long-term plan that will only be achieved through strong partnerships. These partners will include public entities such as local governments partners, Gainesville and Alachua County; state agencies like FDOT and DEP; public agencies such as the MTPO, and the St. John’s River Water Management District. Other critical partners are service providers like GRU; the financial community; the faith-based community; environmental and other interest groups; and non-profit community based organizations. Finally, the critical role of the private investor, both individual and institutions, must be recognized and encouraged.

Implementation will require public and private investment. Some of these funds will come from traditional sources, such as capital improvements program monies. Projects within the Special Area Plan will compete with projects city and county-wide for prioritization of projects, and it will require strong policy direction to secure scarce Capital Improvement Program (CIP) dollars for strategic investments in East Gainesville. Similarly, prioritization of transportation funds occurs at a regional level.

In other cases, funds are more directly linked to redevelopment activities including Community Redevelopment Area funds, Community Development Block Grant funds, and affordable housing programs such as SHIP. Funding constraints also apply here.

### **SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The short term implementation strategies focus on those steps which change East Gainesville’s image, or “geographic profile.” In order to promote private investment in the community, it is necessary to promote the area’s assets, which include proximity and accessibility to downtown, abundance of natural and recreational lands, market ready land, and the diverse community. Strategies to accomplish this are through early implementation of priority, signature projects and creation of a coherent marketing program. The prioritized implementation actions are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Implementation Plan**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Land Conservation Plan</b>	<b>Special Area Plan</b>	<b>Transportation Plan</b>
Near term (0 - 5 Years)	Identify properties for land acquisition; seeking grants and funding; begin land acquisition	Amend City and County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code Prepare marketing plan/toolkit	Amend MTPO Long Range Plan to add BRT system
	NE/SE 27th Street Greenway	Five Points Redevelopment: Prepare detailed master plan; amend CRA Plan; form implementation partnership; identify funding; program public improvements	Bus Rapid Transit Phase 1: Increased service frequency and span of service; traffic signal priority; limited stops; distinctive buses; shelters
	Lake Forest Creek Greenway: stormwater park	Planning for SE 27 <sup>th</sup> , SE 43 St. and NE 12 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Activity Centers	BRT new Starts Process: Alternatives Analysis to refine alignment
	Newnan's Lake Greenway	Fairgrounds Employment Center: Planning, form implementing authority; obtain development approvals; secure financing for infrastructure improvements	NE 8th Avenue and SE 15th Street Avenue enhancements
	East-West Greenway	Mixed income housing requirements in place	Downtown East Central Trail and Idylwild Connector Trail
		New single family residential development Establish Community Redevelopment Area for unincorporated area	Intersection enhancements at Waldo Road and NE 16th and NE 8th Avenues
Mid term (5 - 10 Years)	Regional Park Facilities Plan	Activity center development along Hawthorne Rd., Five Points, SE 27th St., SE 43rd St. and NE 12 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	Bus Rapid Transit Phase 2 - Transit super stop stations, faster fare collections systems, Intelligent Transportation System technology
	Continued land acquisition and restoration activities	Higher density housing within activity centers	BRT New Starts process: Preliminary Engineering, design, and environmental impact statements
	Boulevard Springs Greenway	Fairgrounds Employment Center: construction of infrastructure; marketing; initial development	SE/NE 27th Street Extension
	Southern Greenway		SE 3rd/4th Avenue Roadway Modification
			E. University Avenue Corridor Enhancement - Waldo Road to NE 27th Street
			Transit service enhancement on North Waldo Road
Long term (10+ Years)	Newnan's Lake lakeshore restoration	Fairgrounds Employment Center: Continued development.	Bus Rapid Transit Phase 3 - Exclusive Bus Lanes on Archer Road/Depot Avenue/Waldo Road Trail

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## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

This section will discuss the infrastructure investments for transportation and utilities needed to implement the Special Area Plan.

### **Transportation**

The future transportation system outlined in this plan is intended to support the land use and economic development objectives articulated in the Plan East Gainesville vision. As such, implementation of the transportation plan must occur as a means to use public funding sources to leverage private sector investment while improving the person carrying capacity of the transportation system. This section outlines the implementation steps needed for the major transportation projects identified in the plan.

Transportation recommendations considered such factors as the existing roadway level of service, forecast travel demand for the year 2020, estimates of cost, existing and projected funding sources and the community vision developed through public involvement activities. As a result of these tasks, the priority transportation recommendations presented in Table 1 were developed. The lowest cost projects – gateway intersection treatments, pedestrian visibility treatments and enhancement projects related to resurfacing or restriping – should receive the highest priority. These projects typically can be implemented for \$5,000 to \$25,000, and will go a long way to sustaining momentum for the plan during the period before larger projects begin construction. Implementation steps and funding sources for major transportation projects in the plan are described below.

### **Public Transportation Projects**

The implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) signature project is a substantial undertaking that requires action by the MTPo and its partners to seek federal funding assistance. Capital funds are eligible through the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), under the U.S. Department of Transportation’s New Starts program, Section 5309. This is the federal government’s primary financial resource for supporting locally-planned, implemented, and operated transit “guideway” capital investments including BRT. Planning and project development for New Starts projects is a continuum of analytical activities carried out as part of the metropolitan planning and National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

review processes. TEA-21 and the Federal Transit Administration specify criteria for New Start eligible projects that include:

- *Mobility improvements;*
- *Environmental benefits;*
- *Operating efficiencies;*
- *Cost effectiveness;*
- *Other factors;*
- *Transit supportive land use and future patterns, and*
- *Local financial commitment.*

To specifically qualify for Section 5309 New Starts capital funding, candidate projects must result from an Alternatives Analysis (also known as major investment study or multimodal corridor analysis) study that evaluates appropriate modal and alignment options for addressing mobility needs in a given corridor. Alternatives Analysis can be viewed as a bridge between systems planning (which identifies regional travel patterns and transportation corridors in need of improvements) and project development (where a project's design is refined sufficiently to complete the NEPA environmental process). The alternatives analysis study is intended to provide information to local officials on the benefits, costs, and impacts of alternative transportation investments developed to address the purpose and need for an improvement in the corridor. Potential local funding sources for implementing and operating the alternatives should be identified and studied, and New Starts criteria should be developed. At local discretion, the alternatives analysis may include the undertaking of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders – including the general public – in the alternative analysis study process is critical.

Alternatives analysis is considered complete when a locally preferred alternative (LPA) is selected and adopted by the MTPO into the Cost Feasible Transportation Plan. At this point, the project may enter the preliminary engineering and design phases.

The TEA-21 law and its funding commitments expire in 2003. Congressional hearings are underway to reauthorize the law and establish funding levels for an additional six years. To jump-start the process for Plan East Gainesville, the MTPO and its member agencies are encouraged to seek a Congressional Earmark in the Reauthorization of TEA-21. An earmark

request in the amount of \$3 million is likely needed to undertake the Alternatives Analysis and to implement the initial bus preferential treatments related to signal system priority. About \$1 million of that amount would enable the Alternatives Analysis to sufficiently address the benefits, costs and impacts of the regional BRT system, particularly in terms of operational and community impacts of establishing service on dedicated travel lanes. The analysis would thus address the “Archer Road premium transit service” contained in the adopted 2020 Livable Community Reinvestment Plan, as well as the extension of that service from Shands to Five Points, North Waldo Road and the Hawthorne Road corridor. The \$2 million remaining would be needed to support computer software and hardware required to control the traffic signals using transponders aboard the transit vehicle.

This earmark would require a local match, typically of 20 percent. Given the regional significance of these projects and their ability to attract federal funds, the local match should come from funding provided by the City of Gainesville, Alachua County and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). This would lend substantial support to the joint planning initiatives that have been discussed in the community over the last several years. There are several sources of state funds that can be used to assist with the local match (typically up to one-half of the non-federal share of the project):

**Public Transit Block Grant** – discretionary funding based on formula amount each year to transit system. Can be used for operating, capital, service development or corridor funding.

**Transit Corridor** – discretionary funding for new services in a corridor when service is designed to help reduce congestion or other mobility problems. If the project has regional significance, it can be funded with 100 percent state funding.

**Service Development** – funds designed to improve or enhance existing service, limited to a three year period; may cover operating or capital.

**Commuter Assistance** – provides funds for park and ride lot development and rideshare programs. The park and ride lot element could support the BRT program.

**Urban Transit Capital Grant Program** – these funds must be matched with local funds and may be used for vehicles, equipment, facilities and technology items (e.g., signal priority).

**Intermodal Access Program** – funding for studies or capital projects that improve intermodal accessibility for people and goods; may be funded at the 100 percent level of projects

for statewide significance. Eligible costs may include right-of-way acquisition, facility design, construction or purchasing.

Each of the above funding sources requires a formal proposal to FDOT for review, evaluation and selection. The District Two office typically reviews submissions and has the proposals presented to a Technical Advisory Group for recommendations, with awards given annually. The MTPO should take the lead role in development of the grant proposals, with assistance provided by the City of Gainesville and Alachua County to sufficiently document the project purpose, need and additional financial resources that will be used to implement the service.

Completing the New Starts process can be time consuming, and because of the tremendous demand for New Starts funding nationwide, it is not expected that Gainesville would receive substantial funding for 10 years or more. Thus, while the Alternatives Analysis is underway, the Regional Transit System, in cooperation with the MTPO, Alachua County, FDOT and other appropriate partners, should implement the short-term strategies outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4: Ranking of Transit-Related Transportation Projects**

<b>PHASE 1</b> <b>Within the next five years</b>	<b>PHASE 2</b> <b>Within the next 10 years</b>	<b>PHASE 3</b>
<u>Complete Transit Alternatives Analysis</u> – alignment details, estimate ridership, refine costs and develop a financial plan.	<u>BRT Transit Super Stop Stations</u> - Low-floor and/or wide-door boarding also result in time savings.	<u>Exclusive Bus Lanes on Archer Road/Depot Avenue/Waldo Road Rail Trail</u> - Traffic lanes reserved for the exclusive use of buses allow buses to by-pass congested
<u>Traffic Signal Priority</u> - Buses that receive an early or extended green light at intersections reduce travel time.	<u>Faster or Advance Fare Collection Systems</u> - Convenient and rapid fare collection through prepayment or electronic passes result in time savings.	roadways and could also reduce the distance between destinations. Linkage from Sutter Plaza/I-75 via Shands/VA hospital complex to Five Points area.
<u>Limited Stops</u> - Increasing distances between bus stops improve operating speeds.	<u>Intelligent Transportation System technologies</u> - Advance technology can maintain more consistent distances between buses and inform passengers at BRT stops when the next bus is arriving.	<u>Extend Exclusive Lanes East</u> As support grows, the exclusive lanes may be extended further to the mixed-use centers at Waldo Road and NE 39 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, and at Hawthorne Road and SE 43 <sup>rd</sup> Street.
<u>Improved and Unique Bus Shelters</u> - Unique bus shelters differentiate Bus Rapid Transit Service from regular bus service.	<u>Complete Preliminary Engineering, Design and Environmental Impact Statement</u> – necessary for federal funding.	
<u>Cleaner, Quieter and More Attractive Buses with Distinctive BRT Markings or Color</u> - Distinctive buses can help differentiate Bus Rapid Transit Service from regular bus service.		

According to discussions with RTS staff and the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), there are bus preferential treatments that can be completed in the short term at relatively low cost. The technology for signal system priority is readily available and the cost to outfit buses with the system is not insurmountable. These strategies need to be closely coordinated between the RTS, City of Gainesville, Alachua County and FDOT. The MTPO should convene a working group with the appropriate staff from these agencies to establish protocols and an operational plan for short-term implementation of bus preferential treatments within the proposed BRT system corridor, from I-75 to East Gainesville.

Finally, the MTPO should consider amending its adopted 2020 Transportation Plan to add the BRT as a priority in its Needs Plan, which is not financially constrained. While not necessary, this action would likely make it easier to justify a request from the area’s local Congressional Delegation for an earmark in the TEA-21 Reauthorization. As the Alternatives Analysis is completed, the MTPO can then decide which, if any, additional segments of the BRT

system should be incorporated into the financially feasible element of the next major update of the Long Range Transportation Plan to continue moving the process forward. Currently, only a small section of Archer Road is considered financially feasible for BRT treatments in the MTPO Transportation Plan.

### **Roadway Modifications**

The roadway projects identified in the plan fall into two categories: capacity expansions and enhancements. The extension of East 27<sup>th</sup> Street is primarily designed to improve access and preserve the capacity of the State Highway System. The completion of the SE 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue connection is partly a capacity project because of its benefit to SR 24/26 in terms of traffic dispersal. However, it is also an enhancement project because it will transform the existing cross-section into a true “main street” that is able to support the redevelopment objectives identified for the Five Points area. The other projects, including the retrofits to Waldo Road, East University Avenue, East 15<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, are enhancement projects that do not provide additional automobile capacity.

Funding for the two capacity projects should be sought through the MTPO process from the FDOT. Both projects have economic development value by supporting intermodal accessibility and redevelopment, but most importantly, provide direct benefit to the State Highway System. Currently, only the 27<sup>th</sup> Street extension is in the MTPO adopted 2020 Transportation Plan, but it is listed as the last project in the plan and has no funding. During the update of its next long range plan for 2025, the MTPO should re-prioritize this extension as a Cost Feasible project. In the meantime, potential grant funding support should be sought from the FDOT because of the benefits to the FIHS.

In Florida, several resources are available to fund transportation improvements for economic development purposes. The Governor’s Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development administers Florida’s Economic Development Transportation Fund, known as the “Road Fund.” The program provides local governments with funding for transportation-related projects necessary to induce companies to locate, remain, or expand in their jurisdictions. At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides funding and technical assistance to designated Economic Development Districts using several programs, including a public works program that funds infrastructure projects to attract

industry, expand businesses, and provide economic diversification. The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council (NCFRPC) planning region is a designated Economic Development District, and NCFRPC staff provides assistance with researching and applying for EDA funding and similar resources. These state and federal programs may be combined, as demonstrated by the \$1.87 million in grants awarded to Okaloosa County for infrastructure improvements at the airport, consisting of a new taxiway. Such projects may be combined with Gainesville Regional Airport's new master planning effort to leverage funds for the connection of East 27<sup>th</sup> Street.

The SE 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue connector project must be included as part of the detailed physical master plan completed for the Five Points redevelopment. The roadway should function as the main street for this urban center, and would need to be integrated into the design to promote maximum multi-modal accessibility. Assuming that sufficient land can be assembled for the redevelopment project, the road could be constructed as part of the master plan development.

The MTPO will also need to prioritize the enhancement projects identified in the plan. Specifically, the bike lanes and traffic calming treatments on East 15<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, along with lane modifications to a portion of East University Avenue, must be programmed through the MTPO's list of enhancement projects or tied to resurfacing projects when they are programmed. Through the Enhancement Working Group details concerning alignments and priorities need to be refined and projects advanced as funding and redevelopment permits.

**Table 5: Transportation Implementation Program**

Project	From	To	Type	Estimated Cost	Time Frame
Bus Rapid Transit Phase 1	I-75	Five Points	Bus preferential treatments (signal system priority)	\$2-4 million	2003 to 2008
Bus Rapid Transit Phase 2	Shands/VA	Five Points, Waldo Road North and Hawthorne Road activity centers	Dedicated bus lanes and additional treatments	\$15 to \$35 million*	2010 to 2020
East 27 <sup>th</sup> Street	Hawthorne Road	NE 39 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Construct new 2 lane roadway within greenway corridor	\$10.5 million	2010 to 2020
SE 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Williston Road	Hawthorne Road	Enhance as Main Street	\$2.5 million	2005 to 2008
NE 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Waldo Road	New East 27 <sup>th</sup> Street extension	Enhance with bike lanes, etc.	\$750,000	2003 to 2008
E 15 <sup>th</sup> Street	Boulevard Springs Park	NE 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Enhance with bike lanes and traffic calming	\$1.4 million	2003 to 2008
E. University Avenue	East 15 <sup>th</sup> Street	New East 27 <sup>th</sup> Street extension	Reduce from 4 to 2 travel lanes and enhance	\$700,000	2010 to 2020
Top Priority Greenways	Lake Forest Creek, Newnan's Lake, and East-West Greenways		Multi-use trail and environmental enhancement	\$6.1 million	2005 to 2015
Medium Priority Greenways	Boulevard Springs, SE 27 <sup>th</sup> Street and Southern Greenways		Multi-use trail and environmental enhancement	\$8.5 million	2015 to 2025
Downtown East Central Trail	NW 39 <sup>th</sup> Avenue		SR 331/Williston Road	\$760,380	High priority**
Idylwild Connector Trail	US 441/SW 13 <sup>th</sup> Street		Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail	\$423,660	High priority**

*These cost estimates are general; as details about the projects are decided the costs must be refined for prioritization.*

*\* Cost varies depending on whether Hawthorne Road and Waldo Road corridors are included, or if route ends at Five Points*

*\*\* Alachua Countywide Bicycle Master Plan, June 2001 - Priority One Benefit/Cost Ratio Projects*

The way that the greatest number of greenways and enhancement projects will be completed is through partnering – using power lines and drainage canals, for example, that are owned and maintained by GRU or the Water Management District. Working in collaboration on these types of projects to leverage resources is the best way to make the most of the opportunities outlined in this plan.

Similarly, the MTPO has adopted policies concerning the construction of bicycle travel facilities in conjunction with roadway construction projects. The policies apply to state, county and city arterial and collector streets. When there is reconstruction or new construction of a

roadway, the project(s) shall include either in-street bicycle lanes or wide curb lanes to accommodate bicycle travel. Curb ramps for sidewalks at intersections shall also be constructed to accommodate those bicyclists who choose to use the sidewalk. When a roadway is resurfaced on curb-and-gutter cross sections, the roadway shall be striped to provide for outside travel lanes of width up to 15 feet by making the interior travel lanes and center turn lane 11 feet wide. If insufficient right-of-way exists, the maximum width shall be provided. On non curb-and-gutter cross sections, the pavement surface shall be extended for at least four feet beyond the motorized vehicle travel lane. Within the Gainesville Metropolitan Area, this space shall be constructed, striped and marked according to the design criteria for bicycle lanes.

Transportation projects are typically funded through gas tax revenue that is collected by the state and forwarded to the federal government. Allocations are then returned to the local areas on a statutory formula, derived by the Florida Department of Transportation. These revenues are then divided into allocations for expenditure on the State Highway System (SHS) and off the SHS, which are typically county and city roads functionally classified as either local collectors or the main arterials through the community.

Transportation revenues, particularly for projects off of the State Highway System, are declining in Alachua County. As shown in the table below, although there are slight increases in the amounts, \$100,000 between the 11th to 20th years, it is important to note that transportation projects will become more expensive as time goes on. In addition, these projections are in 1998 dollars and devaluation of the dollar must be taken into consideration. Therefore, the least expensive projects are the ones prioritized and constructed with current funds.

**Table 6: Projection of Existing Revenue Sources for New Projects FY 2006 to FY 2020 (1998 Dollars)**

Funding Type	Amount (millions)			
	FY 06-10	FY 11-15	FY 16-20	TOTAL
Statewide Interconnected System	\$2.0	\$2.0	\$2.7	\$6.7
Travel Choices				
Other Arterial Construction/ROW	\$17.6	\$23.2	\$23.3	\$69.7
Transit	\$5.6			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25.2</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>76.4</b>

Source: Florida Department of Transportation 2020 Revenue Forecast Update-Gainesville Metropolitan Area (January, 2000)

This area of the funding scenario is the least likely to display support, or potential, in the coming years. Although there is funding to construct new facilities as they relate to the Florida Intrastate Highway System, the Interstate Highway System and its interchanges, and now the State Intermodal System (SIS), little funding will be available to modify local facilities, and less for non-roadway projects. In the October 2001 Federal and State Transportation Funding Analysis, prepared for the MTPO, staff noted that although funding levels seem to increase, these funding peaks have been associated with large projects such as the widening of Interstate 75, the construction of the Florida Intrastate Highway System through Alachua County and the reconstruction of the NW 39th Avenue / Interstate 75 interchange. Thus, as noted in the 2020 Transportation Plan, additional recurring transportation funding sources must be identified to meet the urban area's mobility needs into the future.

Potential alternative funding sources for projects off the state system have surfaced in Alachua County over the past decade. The now expired County Incentive Grant Program was used to fund portions of SW 24th Avenue and SW 62nd Boulevard. The City, County and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization should actively pursue, and monitor for opportunities, funding sources that may become available for local projects. Such sources may include the local option gas tax, transportation impact fees and additional sales tax. Several counties in Florida, including Pinellas, Seminole, Flagler and others have used the sales tax to fund needed infrastructure for transportation facilities and other uses.

### **Other Infrastructure: Water, Wastewater, Gas, and Telecommunications Services**

An important component of the Plan East Gainesville (PEG) recommended plan is the provision of essential utility infrastructure to promote quality, well-planned development. The PEG recommended plan will function as a general framework for future utility provision to ensure that the land uses illustrated on the plan will have adequate utilities provided in a timely manner. It is particularly important to ensure that infrastructure improvements are available to accommodate development and redevelopment of the designated mixed-use activity centers contained in the plan. Specifically called for in the recommended plan is provision of central water and sewer lines, natural gas mains, and extension of telecommunications services to these centers.

## Infrastructure Improvement Needs

The PEG study area is generally well served or extensions are available from Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) for water, wastewater, gas, and fiber optic cable systems (see Table 7). Central water is readily available for the designated urban and suburban activity centers, including SE Hawthorne Road and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, SE Hawthorne Road and SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street, the Five Points Priority Redevelopment Area, South Depot and South Main Street, SW Archer Road and SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Office and Industrial Mixed-Use Employment Center (see Figure H, Recommended Master Plan). Wastewater infrastructure is also readily available at these locations, with the need for a lift station at the SE Hawthorne Road and SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street activity center, which also includes the Eastside Activity Center as designated in the County’s Comprehensive Plan, and the recommended employment center.

**Table 7: Gainesville Regional Utilities Availability to East Gainesville**

	<b>Water Availability</b>	<b>Wastewater Availability</b>	<b>Gas Availability</b>	<b>GRUCOM Availability</b>
<b>Plan East Gainesville Recommended Urban and Suburban Centers</b>				
SE Hawthorne Rd / SE 43 <sup>rd</sup> Street	Readily Available	Readily Available Need Lift Station	2,000’ Extension	Readily Available
Office & Industrial Mixed-Use Employment Center (NE 39 <sup>th</sup> Ave. / Waldo Rd.)	Readily Available	Readily Available Need Lift Station	1,500’ Extension	Readily Available
Five Points Priority Redevelopment Area (SE Univ. Ave. / Waldo Rd.)	Readily Available	Readily Available	Readily Available	Available 1/5 mile ext.
S. Depot / S. Main St.	Readily Available	Readily Available	Readily Available	Readily Available
SW Archer Rd. / SW 13 <sup>th</sup> St.	Readily Available	Readily Available	Readily Available	Readily Available
SE Hawthorne Rd. / SE 27 <sup>th</sup> St.	Readily Available	Readily Available	Readily Available	Readily Available
<b>Plan East Gainesville Potential Rural Centers within the Recommended Rural District</b>				
Area South of Newnan’s Lake	6,800’ Extension	15,500’ FM Extension with Lift Station	2 Miles	Significant Extension Required
Area East of Airport (Copeland Area)	2,700’ Extension	2,700’ FM Extension possible Lift Station	1.5 Miles	Significant Extension Required
SE 55 <sup>th</sup> Blvd. / Lake Shore Dr.	Readily Available	6,600’ FM Extension with Lift Station	1.5 Miles	Available Extension Needed

Gas service is also readily available through GRU, with the need for a 2,000-foot gas line extension to the SE Hawthorne Road and SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street activity center and a 1,500-foot extension to the recommended employment center. It is important to note that extension of natural gas mains is not the only option to provide gas service to new customers. GRU also provides island type gas systems to serve customers that are not located near an existing gas main. The cost associated with these types of systems is much less than a typical system if customers are located a significant distance from a natural gas main. Fiber optic service is available in the recommended urban and suburban centers, with a .20-mile extension needed to the SE University Avenue and Waldo Road activity center.

Within the rural district, water and sewer systems are also generally available, with a 6,800-foot water extension, 15,500-foot wastewater extension and lift station needed to serve the area south of Newnan's Lake and a 6,600-foot wastewater extension with lift station needed at SE 55<sup>th</sup> Boulevard and Lake Shore Drive activity center. The rural area to the east of the airport also requires a 2,700 foot water line extension, 2,700 foot sewer extension and possibly a lift station to serve new development. Gas lines would need to be extended to serve the Newnan's Lake area (2 miles), airport area (1.5 miles), and Lake Shore Drive area (1.5 miles). Significant fiber optic cable extensions are also required to serve new development in these areas.

### **Project Priorities**

The top priority water, wastewater, gas, and telecommunications projects for the PEG recommended plan include the provision of service to the following designated mixed-use activity centers:

1. *Five Points Priority Redevelopment Area* – as the BRT system is extended along Archer Road to Five Points, this area will become a focal point for mixed-use development. Services are readily available from GRU, with an extension required for fiber optic cable service.
2. *Office and Industrial Mixed-Use Employment Center* – the recommended infrastructure needs for the employment center include a lift station and extension of natural gas lines, with water, wastewater, and telecommunications service readily available from GRU.

Other priority projects include the provision of services to the remaining designated urban and suburban centers. Consideration should also be given to providing service as required to rural centers within the rural district. Specific service needs for the centers are outlined in Table

7, GRU Availability to East Gainesville. It is important to note that although extensions may be required in some instances to provide natural gas or telecommunication services, the cost for extension depends on the projected demand.

In addition, a commitment from the MTPO, GRU, Alachua County and the City of Gainesville should be considered to provide both above ground and below ground infrastructure to the recommended activity centers, including the County's eastside activity center. One consideration is to establish a Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) special district to fund water and sewer infrastructure for areas that are currently deficient as identified by City and County staff. The MSBU would be established as a special taxing district with fees assessed based on the benefits derived from individual properties, such as the amount of acreage or street frontage.

### **Responsibility for Service: Water and Wastewater Extension Policy**

The water/wastewater extension policy objective as set forth by GRU is that the cost of capital facilities required to serve new customers shall be borne by those new customers through a combination of connection charges and extension policies. New connections to existing water lines and existing gravity sewers are required to pay all applicable connection charges, such as meter set, treatment plant, collection system, pump station, and force main base system charges.

For on-site water lines and gravity sewer lines, the developer is responsible for constructing and financing all on-site water and wastewater lines. These facilities must be constructed to GRU standards and are then deeded to GRU for operation and maintenance. The developer is also required to construct the on-site system to enable extension of service to future phases of development and adjacent property under the same ownership, and may be required to construct the on-site system to enable future service to adjacent properties. Private on-site water distribution and wastewater collection systems may be allowed if adjacent properties cannot be served from such systems and if operation and maintenance is funded.

The developer is required to pay all costs associated with a new pump station that provides wastewater service to a new development and must be designed to serve all phases of the development. The pump station must be designed and constructed to GRU standards to be operated and maintained by GRU. The developer is required to provide all necessary land rights to allow GRU to extend gravity sewers to serve adjacent properties. Private pump stations may

be allowed is adjacent properties cannot be served, if the developer obtains all required permits for the station, and if operation and maintenance is funded.

### **Timely and Efficient Provision of the Infrastructure**

The recommended master plan calls for new developments and new or expanded subdivisions, industrial uses and other non-residential uses to have access to centralized potable water and wastewater systems to support the proposed development, consistent with policies as set forth in the City and County comprehensive plans. The East Gainesville area is served by GRU, and currently utility services are present or are readily available to the recommended centers. Public and private investment for infrastructure will be required to adequately serve the PEG recommended centers. Prior to development, public and private funding strategies should be in place to ensure that central water and sewer will be available concurrent with or prior to the impacts of development. This approach will provide a rational alternative to otherwise haphazard efforts to provide services by individual property owners.

## **POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

This section will provide an overview of policies and programs necessary to support implementation of the Special Area Plan.

### **Activity Centers**

The Activity Center concept will ultimately be implemented through the marketplace investing in development of property consistent with the Special Area Plan. However, getting from the concept to reality will require careful planning, coordination, and public investment. The infrastructure investments in transportation and utilities described in this section are one component of leveraging the market. Other investments, such as gateway treatments and civic spaces will be determined based upon a more detailed physical plan for each activity center. As described below, the first priority is developing a plan for the Five Points redevelopment area. Prioritizing development of the other activity centers will be dependent upon the property owners and market for those developments.

## **Priority Redevelopment Project**

The first step is to actively pursue a priority redevelopment project, which is tied to a major transit improvement and other public investments. Redevelopment of the Five Points Activity Center should be a priority in conjunction with BRT and the SE 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue enhancements. The means for implementation, the Community Redevelopment Area, is in place to provide the administrative and financial resources for this effort. A more detailed physical master plan should be prepared to provide a detailed plan of the desired urban form, and to identify the necessary public investments. Implementation of the master plan could occur through formation of a partnership that includes the public partners: the City, the County Community Redevelopment Agency, and the MTPO. Other partners could include a Community Development Corporation (or other community-based non-profit partner), entities such as Fannie Mae, a collaboration among area lending institutions, property owners, and developers.

Key steps will include programming the public investments necessary to leverage the redevelopment project. In addition to the transit and roadway enhancement projects, other types of investments may include streetscaping, sidewalk and pedestrian improvements, public open spaces, and other infrastructure, such as storm water. Investments for land assembly for resale may also be required.

### **Financing and Investment Strategies**

Securing appropriate investment in the community must be proactive in the beginning. The market is not currently investing in the area, and the situation changes, specific strategies will need to be devised to recruit individual and institutional developers and assist them in obtaining financing. The designation of Enterprise Zones along Waldo Road, Hawthorne Road, and University Avenue also serve as an incentive for developers.

For the development community in particular, certainty regarding the development potential and timing of development approvals, will create an attractive investment climate. Financing will need to be secured through the identification of financial institutions willing to participate in a lending consortium or to become equity partners. In this way, risk is spread among several investors and investment becomes more attractive. Obtaining the participation of one or more community development banks is an essential part of this financing strategy. East Gainesville

provides an ideal opportunity for banks to meet their Community Reinvestment Act goals through investment.

### **Community Redevelopment Areas**

The three City of Gainesville Community Redevelopment Areas (CRA) provide vehicles for implementation of the Special Area Plan. The use of the CRA as a means of implementation extends beyond funding of recommended improvements using tax increment financing. The adopted redevelopment plan provides a list of activities and framework for implementation. In particular, the Downtown and Eastside Redevelopment Plans should be amended to incorporate the recommended Activity Centers and enhanced roadway treatments.

The proposed CRA within the unincorporated Alachua County should be established to implement the Special Area Plan, with an emphasis on activity center development.. The proposed boundaries, however, should be reviewed to ensure that they are inclusive of the activity centers SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 43<sup>rd</sup> Activity Centers south of Waldo Road. Expanding the boundaries eastward to Newnan’s Lake to include park and ecotourism opportunities was examined. This option should be carefully reviewed for consistency with the intent and purpose of the Community Redevelopment Act in promoting infill and redevelopment. Finally, the boundaries of the Eastside CRA should be reviewed to determine if they should be expand eastward to the city limits to be contiguous to the proposed county CRA.

### **Alachua County Fairgrounds Employment Center**

The development of the Alachua County Fairgrounds Employment Center is a long-term strategy that would require a focused economic development initiative to achieve. Most likely, a special purpose entity such as an Industrial Development Authority would be required to provide structure for the creation of a unified employment center by providing planning, marketing, and infrastructure financing. Participation by the Chamber of Commerce’s Council for Economic Outreach, the University of Florida, the Gainesville-Alachua County Airport Authority and state and local agencies may be required to facilitate relocation of the Fairgrounds. In addition, the future land use and zoning of the property would need to be amended to support the office and industrial uses. Specific implementation actions for redevelopment of the Fairgrounds into an employment center entail the following major elements:

- *Completing a land swap to relocate the existing Fairgrounds facilities to a suitable location with similar regional highway access;*
- *Constructing a new airport access road to Waldo Road immediately north of the Fairgrounds to enhance access and visibility;*
- *Relocating the Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) operations facility to the north Waldo Road corridor to provide a base for employment and services with excellent truck access;*
- *Consider establishing an Industrial Development Authority to provide for the planning, marketing and infrastructure financing necessary to attract light manufacturing, service, office and supporting retail, restaurant and hotel/conference center uses to the site; and*
- *Creating a stronger link between the Fairgrounds Employment Center with the City of Gainesville’s Ironwood Golf Course to aid in attracting meetings and businesses to the airport area if suitable facilities existed.*

### **Land Acquisition for Greenways and Conservation**

Land acquisition is a recommended strategy for implementing the Special Area Plan by prioritizing acquisition in the Newnan’s Lake Greenway, East West Greenway, and Forest Creek Greenway. Primary responsibility for land acquisition would be through the Alachua County Department of Environmental Protection, St. Johns River Water Management District, Alachua County Forever Program for properties in the unincorporated area, such as the Newnan’s Lake Greenway and the SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway. Where proposed greenways are located in part within the City of Gainesville, a partnership between the City and County to jointly acquire lands would be needed. In addition, the Lake Forest Creek Greenway and Sweetwater Creek Greenway would also be coordinated with the proposed stormwater improvement projects.

Alachua County and the City of Gainesville are currently actively pursuing the acquisition of lands to protect and conserve natural resources within the East Gainesville. Alachua County Forever targets and ranks potential acquisition sites according to their ability to protect water resources, natural communities, plants and animals as well as provide recreational opportunities. Acquisition parcels are also evaluated to determine if it is economically feasible to purchase and maintain the parcels as conservation/open space. Within the study area specifically, several parcels have been identified for acquisition to connect the existing public lands within Paynes Prairie to lands around Newnans Lake. Many of the goals for conservation within the East Gainesville study area can be met through the acquisition of these parcels and other priority

projects, which should be should be formally submitted for review through the Alachua County Forever process.

Additional funding for land acquisition is available from a variety of sources. State sources include the Florida Recreation and Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Florida Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program, the Recreational Trails Program, Florida Communities Trust (FCT) and the Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program. Other public funding sources include local sources, and the St. John's River Water Management District. Non-governmental sources of funds include the Trust for Public Lands and the Alachua County Trust.

The recommendations for greenways and land acquisition should be integrated with Alachua County's ongoing planning efforts to develop a Land Conservation Plan and a Greenway/Open Space System Plan. It is intended by Alachua County that these plans will be implemented through coordination with other land acquisition and management programs; private donations and dedications; regulatory mechanisms; and taxation policies, such as agricultural and bluebelt assessments.

### **Housing Programs**

Implementation strategies related to housing focus on diversity in housing. Where affordable housing developments are developed using City or County assistance, mixed-income projects should be required. For example, single-family or multi-family housing projects funded through the SHIP program could be required to provide market rate units as a condition of funding approval. This would allow the provision of affordable housing that is integrated with market-rate housing, increasing the diversity of the housing stock. Responsibility for implementation of the mixed-income concept would rest with the Housing Programs of the City and County respectively through their Housing Assistance Plan.

For profit and non-profit developers may also seek financial assistance for development of affordable housing through the Florida Housing Finance Corporation through programs such as Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Bond Program, the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program or the Housing Credits program.

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## **Marketing Program**

To enhance the East Gainesville’s image and emphasize its assets, a marketing effort will be undertaken. This effort must include creating informational materials that highlight the area’s assets. This marketing plan/toolkit would be available for economic development agencies, realtors, lending institutions and others interested in promoting development in the area. The marketing program is necessary to maintain the focus on East Gainesville and move the process continually forward. Ideally, such an effort would entail a partnership between local groups like the East Gainesville Development Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce and Tourist Development Council. Marketing efforts could include on-going activities such as a farmer’s market. Close collaboration must occur between the City of Gainesville’s Economic Development Coordinator and Alachua County’s own efforts to promote economic growth and implementation of a CRA.

## **Other Strategies**

A variety of other strategies have emerged based upon stakeholder input during the planning process and are summarized below.

### **Green Development**

The Florida Green Development Working Committee of the Florida Green Building Coalition, Inc. has developed green development standards. Encouraging development consistent with these standards, particularly within the Rural District, would implement the Special Area Plan vision of highlighting the natural features of the area. Briefly, the elements of green development can be summarized as addressing three areas: environmental responsiveness, resource efficiency, and community and cultural sensitivity. Projects must consider siting and land-use issues; conserve energy, water, and other resources; provide a healthy and comfortable indoor space through the use of reused and recycled products, as well as energy- and resource-efficient products; blend in with the natural environment and protect open space; increase a sense of community; and address cultural issues.

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## **Regional Recreation Center**

To create critical mass and leverage investment in East Gainesville in a way that promotes economic growth while ensuring quality development, a regional recreation center should be considered for the property that is located to the east of Fred Cone Park (see Figure H, Recommended Master Plan). This property is considered suitable for use as a regional recreation attraction, such as a water theme park, nature or Native American history museum, or cultural center, with the intent of attracting both local and outside visitors to East Gainesville. The area surrounding this property includes regional park facilities that would support development of the site as a compatible recreational use. It is recommended that the City and County jointly work with the Tourist Development Council to explore the potential of this site and market the area with a family oriented focus.

## **Preserving Agriculture Use**

Consistent with the theme of preserving natural areas to enhance the area's character, preservation of the Blueberry Farm in perpetuity as an agricultural and education use was identified as a priority by stakeholders. Options for preservation of the Farm include a conservation easement to ensure its continued use.

## **Schools**

Improvement of East Gainesville schools can be implemented through investments in the schools themselves, and investments in supporting infrastructure. Existing public schools could be supported with additional public investments, including adjacent park sites, improved pedestrian and bicycle access, and greenways connections. The School Board of Alachua County can be a partner in these efforts by pursuing strategies consistent with their strategic plan. Physical improvements to existing schools including renovation and construction to upgrade facilities should be encouraged, including the site master planning process at Loftan High School. Other strategies could include examining the enrollment and capacity of the schools as part of the community based zoning task force contemplated in the strategic plan. Partnerships with the community, government, and academic agencies including the University of Florida, the City and the County, for specialized additions to the curriculum should also be pursued.

## **Social Issues**

Supporting the social infrastructure, the area’s residents, should not be overlooked in the development of the Special Area Plan. The need for social programs was identified by stakeholders as important ensuring that the plan benefited area residents. Job training programs and more access to higher education was identified as important factors to ensure that East Gainesville residents would have an opportunity to qualify for any new job opportunities that were created in the area. Providing active recreation opportunities and after school programs was a priority, as were programs to reduce drug and crime activity.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE CHANGES**

The recommended Special Area Plan will be incorporated into the City and County’s comprehensive plans and implemented through land development code changes. It is not recommended that the Special Area Plan result in wholesale, administrative land use changes. Rather, the plan provides the framework to shape land use decisions and guide private development. In some cases, however, administrative land use changes would be appropriate. For example, public projects such as the Office and Industrial Mixed-Use Employment Center would require a Future Land Use Map change at the appropriate time to reflect planned land uses.

Specific implementation steps requiring comprehensive plan or land development code changes are discussed below.

### **Adopt Special Area Plan**

Adopting the Special Area Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan would require amendment of the Future Land Use Elements of the City of Gainesville (Objective 4.3) and Alachua County (Section 8.0) to incorporate a Special Area Plan Map and related policies. Policies should address:

- *Land use densities and intensities*
- *Design requirements*
- *Locational requirements*
- *Prioritization of capital improvements*

- *Housing strategies.*

### **Design Guidelines**

Providing an appropriate land use mixture is not sufficient to create a walkable, transit-supportive community. The design characteristics of an area are a significant determinant of how the area will function. Design guidelines have been developed to provide guidance in how these areas should develop.

### **Transportation Improvements**

Amend the City of Gainesville Transportation Element to include the NE 27<sup>th</sup> Street from Hawthorne Road north to NE 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a two-lane divided roadway functioning within a greenway corridor. This improvement is currently shown on the Alachua County Transportation Map Series. Also, the proposed land reduction on University Avenue between 15<sup>th</sup> Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Street to two lanes should be shown on the Future Number of Lanes Map in the Transportation Map Series.

The Bus Rapid Transit facilities should also be reflected in the Transportation Element. The routes should be designated as a future transit improvement on the City and County Transportation Map Series, and described in the Transportation Element policies.

### **Capital Improvements Element**

The Capital Improvements Element outlines capital investments within the next five years based upon the local governments capital improvements budget. Inclusion of the public investments for major transportation investments should be reflected in the element.

# APPENDIX A

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## DESIGN GUIDELINES





# PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE | DESIGN GUIDELINES







Renaissance  
Planning  
Group

PROJECT PRINCIPAL

*Whit Blanton, AICP*

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RPG - CHARLOTTESVILLE

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*PRESENTED TO:*

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MTPO)  
FOR THE GAINESVILLE URBANIZED AREA

*IN ASSOCIATION WITH:*

ALACHUA COUNTY  
CITY OF GAINESVILLE  
GAINESVILLE REGIONAL UTILITIES  
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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## design guidelines | introduction

One of the primary challenges facing East Gainesville is the lack of a definable focal point, or center of activity, that can serve as a gathering place for civic, commercial or recreational functions. Despite the presence of several strong neighborhoods, the regional airport, and other important community and natural features, the area is largely without a strong organizing structure of land use patterns that promote civic pride and attract private investment. To preserve the positive attributes of the area's character and enhance East Gainesville's urban form, it is important that development set an appropriate context to achieve the community's goals.

Without a definable center of the community, East Gainesville lacks the critical mass needed to support a diversity of residential and non-residential land uses. Such a critical mass can contribute to increases in property values, which in turn, results in additional revenue for capital improvements. A lack of gathering places also limits the effectiveness of public transportation to meet people's daily needs, and contributes to an inconvenient and potentially unsafe pedestrian environment. These problems must be overcome if East Gainesville is to reach its potential.

The purpose of the Plan East Gainesville design guidelines is to articulate the desirable urban form that promotes a pedestrian scale of development and improved accessibility to public transportation. The design guidelines are intended to encourage new development to meet community expectations in terms of the vision for walkable, mixed-use centers that enhance the character of the area and provide increased opportunities for economic activity and destinations that serve local residents. Thus, the design guidelines

contained in this section focus on how such centers should evolve, how they need to connect internally and externally, and how compact development can help preserve the area's significant natural resources and rural character. These design guidelines give specific instructions for the development of recommended centers in East Gainesville.

An area as large as the East Gainesville study area - with more than 21,000 acres - needs several well-defined centers of differing use, scale and form. Such centers must reflect the character of the surrounding area to ensure compatibility of uses and encourage the appropriate scale of development. The design guidelines address that needed diversity through a framework of urban, suburban and rural land use types that govern specific design elements.

As such, the design focus in each area will vary. For example, one objective is to strengthen the connection of East Gainesville's urban center at Five Points to Gainesville's successful redevelopment efforts in the downtown central business district. In the suburban district, the design standards need to reflect the strong regional roadway network that supports economic development opportunities near the Gainesville Regional Airport, or providing mixed-use development opportunities along Hawthorne Road. In the rural area, clustered development of residential with neighborhood, or eco-tourism uses, can help balance a diversity of housing stock with maintenance of natural lands. Thus, the design guidelines provide an important context for encouraging quality growth that can achieve the dual objectives of expanded economic opportunity and preservation of character in East Gainesville.

## design guidelines | purpose

The purpose of these design guidelines is to insure that the Plan East Gainesville area is developed in a manner that:

- Reflects the strength, quality and diversity of the people and neighborhoods by investing in the existing infrastructure and human potential.
- Celebrates and preserves natural resources as a unique, integral feature of the community through compact development, enhanced access and increased awareness of the area's natural amenities.
- Realizes the potential for compatible economic opportunity and social interaction through connectivity of neighborhoods with mixed-use centers that bring higher paying jobs and provide services.
- Enhances the multi-modal connectivity within the East Gainesville community and to regional employment and commercial centers.
- Ensures that the area is developed and redeveloped into a high quality community.
- Provides uniform building and site design standards to establish high quality development.

# design guidelines | study area map

## PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE OVERLAY AREA

The designated Plan East Gainesville study area, as depicted in FIGURE 1, is subject to the design guidelines as set forth in this report. The boundary is defined by the Gainesville Regional Airport to the North, Newnan's Lake to the East, Payne's Prairie to the South, and downtown Gainesville to the West. The three colored bands illustrate the recommended urban, suburban, and rural districts.

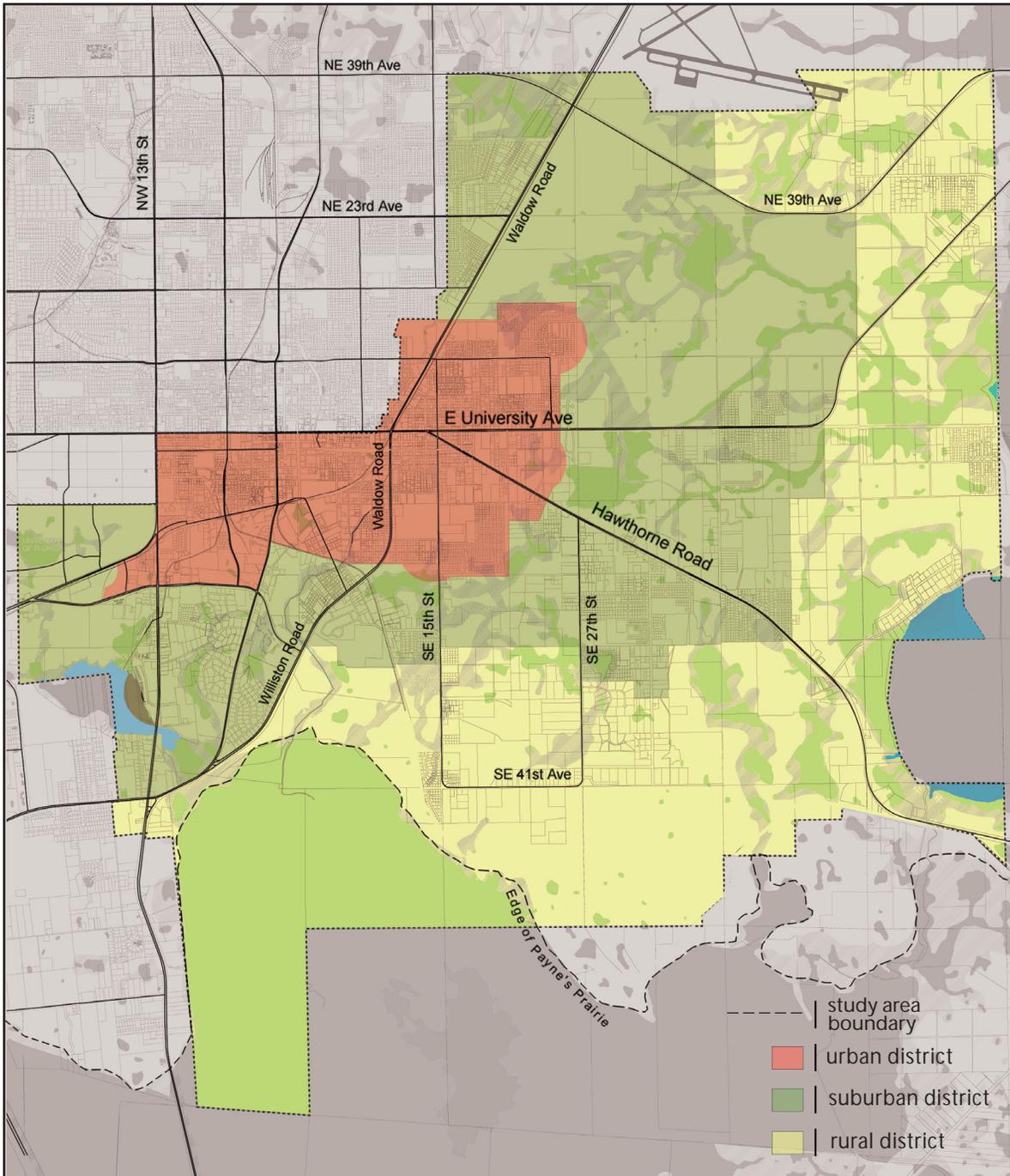


FIGURE 1 PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE OVERLAY AREA MAP

**SECTION 1 | CENTERS**



# section 1a | centers map

## WALKABLE CENTERS : URBAN, SUBURBAN, & RURAL

The 'walkable centers' map illustrates the use of dense, concentrated development promoting pedestrian activity. The circles, or 'centers,' represent walkable areas with a 1/4 mile radius, equivalent to a five minute walk. The bold center circle (1/8 mile radius) depicts high-density mixed-use areas surrounded by a ring of lower-density residential development and other transitional uses. The centers would contain a wide range of amenities allowing residents to walk and bike to daily activities. Centers are possible in many situations, urban to rural, and take many forms: linear, clustered, and isolated. The depicted centers represent logical focal points for development based on existing parcel lines and land uses and are meant to illustrate the concept of pedestrian-oriented development through the organization of clustered centers. The walkable centers map was used to develop the Recommended Master Plan (FIGURE 4). Using the centers map as a guide, it is possible to amend the Recommended Master Plan in the future to accommodate additional centers.

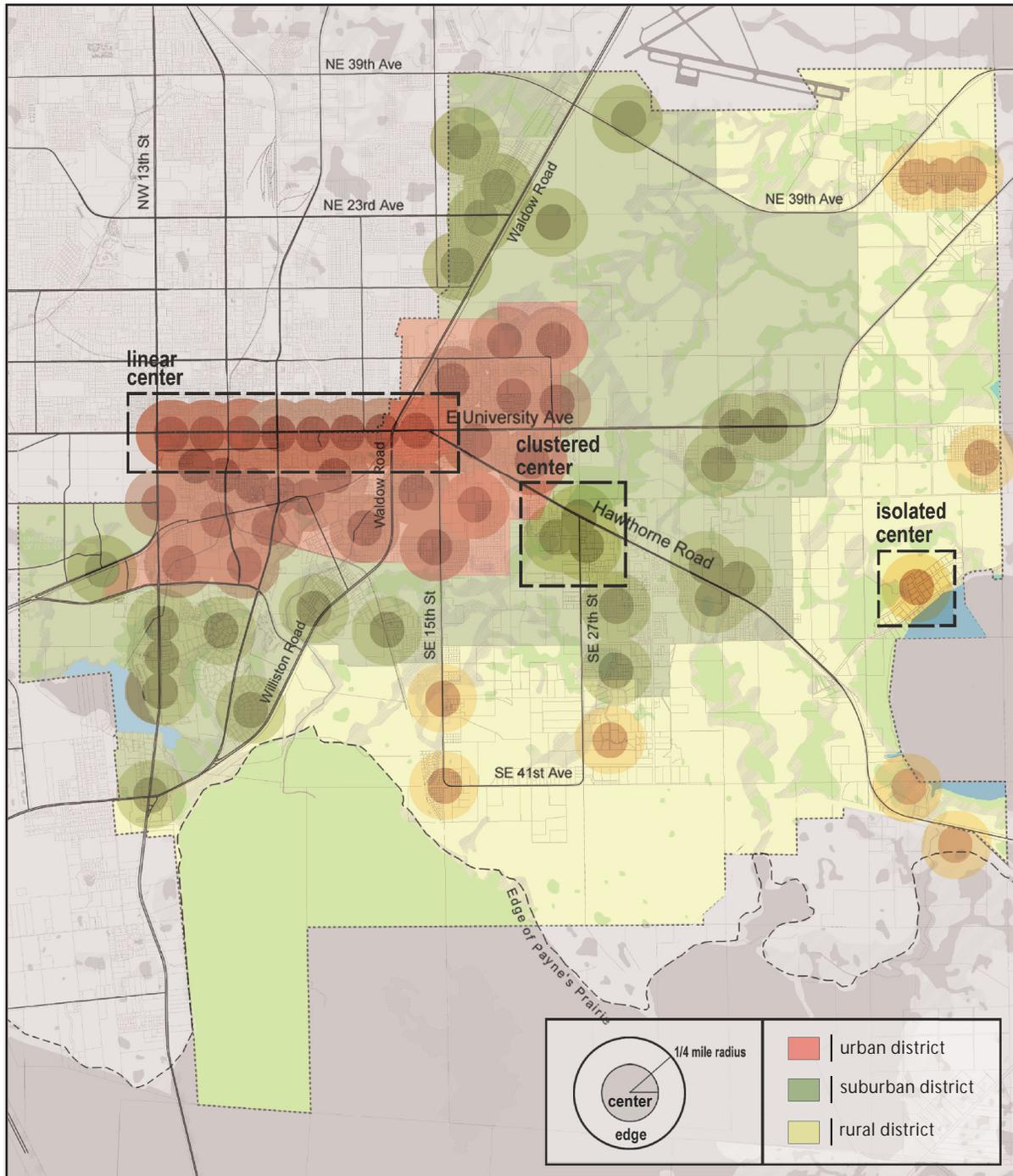


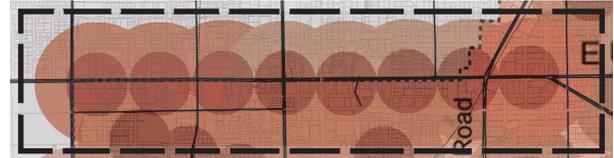
FIGURE 2 WALKABLE CENTERS CONCEPT MAP

# section 1b | center types

The tiered Urban, Suburban and Rural districts organize land use by concentrating development within 1/4 mile radius centers, creating a distinction between developed areas and rural lands, and providing for land conservation. Centers identified within each tier include a compact mixed-use area and a transition area that primarily includes residential uses. The development intensity of the center and transition depends on its location within the urban, suburban and rural framework. Walkable centers (1/4 mile radius) may be combined and configured to create larger, integrated centers. The use of standard 1/4 mile building blocks as a base for development ensures walkable, pedestrian oriented centers. Linear and clustered centers utilize this approach. An integrated multi-modal transportation network links various centers within Urban, Suburban, and Rural districts.

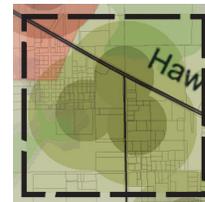
## LINEAR CENTERS

Linear centers combine multiple 1/4 mile radius centers configured side-by-side, creating a large, extended center. Linear centers are typically aligned with important, high-traffic corridors, with development focused along the major thoroughfares. Combined centers arranged in a linear fashion allow for continuous and integrated high density development along the street edge, providing mixed-uses, pedestrian sidewalks and paths, and multi-modal transportation opportunities. Transitional areas of linear centers, displaced from the major thoroughfares, include commercial and residential uses to support the core.



## CLUSTERED CENTERS

Clustered centers develop as combined and overlapping 1/4 mile radius areas. The shared centers create a large unified mixed-use area supported by transitional development along the perimeter. Combining multiple center areas allow for a more substantial concentration of commercial and retail uses, distributed over a larger area, than allowed by a single 1/4 mile radius center. Although larger, the shared center should carefully maintain qualities of scale, density, and walkability. Clustered centers should serve as focal points for the surrounding area.



## ISOLATED CENTERS

Single 1/4 mile radius centers are isolated centers. Isolated centers function independently, with a mixed-use center and surrounding residential transition area. Typically, isolated centers are smaller in scale and intensity than linear and clustered centers. Because they encompass a smaller, less concentrated area, isolated centers do not contain all of the amenities shared by combined centers. A multi-modal transportation network serves isolated centers, making linear and clustered centers accessible for residents.



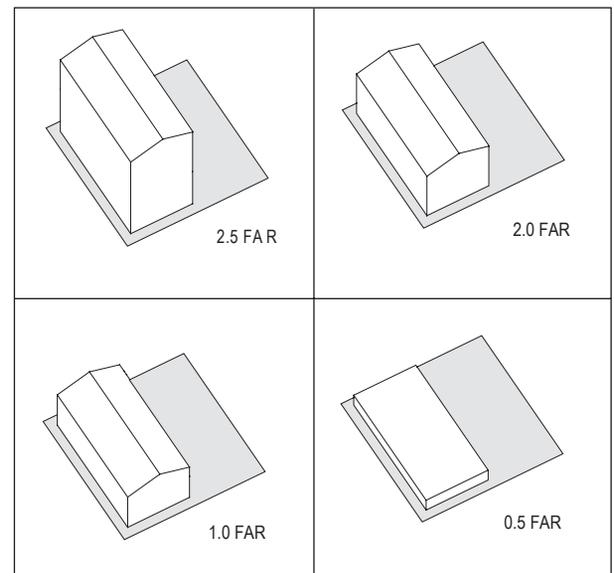
# section 1c | center guidelines

Well planned blocks, lots, and buildings are critical to quality development. A vital, walkable center must have residential, retail, and civic uses organized in close proximity and connected through networks of streets, sidewalks, and paths. Block types must be carefully arranged to provide a seamless progression from center to edge. Density, building height and frontage, street type, and landscape treatment should reflect the transition from compact urban centers to lower density rural areas.

The tiered land uses: Urban, Suburban, and Rural, organize land use by concentrating development within centers, creating a distinct edge between developed areas and rural lands. Centers identified within each district include a compact mixed-use core and an edge or transition area that primarily includes residential uses. The development intensity of the center and edge depends on its location within the Urban, Suburban, and Rural districts (see FIGURE 2).

## DEFINITION: FLOOR AREA RATIO

Floor Area Ratio, or FAR, is the ratio of the sum of the net floor area of all buildings on a lot to the developable site area of the lot. Two-story buildings covering 50% of the site area constitute a 1.0 FAR, while four-story buildings covering the same percentage have a 2.0 FAR.



## section 1c.1 | urban center

Urban development must encourage the creation of urban neighborhoods and commercial areas that are proximate or oriented to the city. High-density mixed use centers form the core of the urban area. Small block sizes, high floor area ratios, and continuous street frontage help create intimate, appealing streetscapes for businesses and pedestrians. Moving away from the center, more residential uses are accommodated. The transition of use, from compact retail and office to residential, should be clearly reflected in changing block sizes, setbacks, and frontage types.

The Five Points Activity Center (see FIGURE 4, Recommended Master Plan) has been identified as a priority for urban redevelopment as a signature project, or catalyst, for private sector reinvestment. The Five Points Priority Redevelopment Area will become the new "downtown" of Gainesville's east side, supported by the proposed

Bus Rapid Transit system. As an Urban Center, a mixture of uses would be provided in the Five Points area, including professional office, retail, services, restaurants, and multi-family residential. The development would be urban in scale, with building setbacks designed to create a street wall, greater detail at the street level, parking at the rear of the building, and sidewalk and landscape amenities.

The diagram below depicts a fragment of an urban center, illustrating the transition from center to edge over 1/4 mile (1,320'). Block sizes, relative density, and open spaces are represented.



### urban center | center

#### THOROUGHFARE

Street Type ..... Main Street, Local Street, Avenue, Boulevard (*section 2a*)  
 Movement ..... slow  
 Width ..... 30'-60'

#### STREETSCAPE

Walk Type ..... sidewalk with arcade  
 Walk Width ..... 8'-12'  
 Planting Type ..... street trees in planting wells  
 Planting Width ..... 6'  
 Lighting Type ..... sidewalk lighting and building illumination (*section 2c*)  
 Parking ..... on-street, structured, and internal surface (*section 2f*)

#### BLOCK

Block Size ..... 200' - 400'  
 Type ..... Mixed-Use: Retail, Office, Institutional,  
 Residential (apartments, townhouses)

#### LOT

FAR ..... 2.0  
 Bldg. Coverage ..... 60%  
 Street Frontage ..... 80% minimum

#### BUILDING

Frontage ..... Shop, Arcade (*section 2b*)  
 Height ..... 2-4 stories  
 Setback ..... 0'

### urban center | transition

#### THOROUGHFARE

Street Type ..... Local Street, Avenue, Boulevard (*section 2a*)  
 Movement ..... moderate  
 Width ..... 30'-60'

#### STREETSCAPE

Walk Type ..... sidewalk  
 Walk Width ..... 6'-8'  
 Planting Type ..... street trees in planting wells or strips  
 Planting Width ..... 4-6'  
 Lighting Type ..... sidewalk lighting and building illumination (*section 2c*)  
 Parking ..... on-street and internal surface (*section 2f*)

#### BLOCK

Block Size ..... 400' - 600'  
 Type ..... Mixed-Use: Retail, Office, Residential  
 (attached and single family)

#### LOT

FAR ..... 1.0 - 1.5  
 Bldg. Coverage ..... 50%  
 Street Frontage ..... 70%

#### BUILDING

Frontage ..... Shop, Stoop, Dooryard, Common Yard (*section 2b*)  
 Height ..... 2-3 stories  
 Setback ..... 5-15'

## section 1c.2 | suburban center

The Suburban district surrounds the compact Urban district (see FIGURE 4, Recommended Master Plan). Suburban centers have lower floor area ratio's, street frontage requirements and building heights as well as more generous standard block sizes than urban centers. Despite changes in density and scale, suburban centers should achieve characteristics of walkability and intimacy similar to those in urban settings. Suburban centers should have lower-intensity mixed-use blocks with buildings close to hugging the right-of-way and framing the street to create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly street environment. The edge area has primarily residential uses.

The recommended master plan proposes the creation of an office and industrial mixed use center on the Alachua County Fairgrounds site which is located in the

suburban district. The Alachua County Employment Center could include light manufacturing, service, and office uses, with supporting retail and restaurant uses, and possibly a business hotel. The center would serve commuting employees as well as those residing in the immediate area.

The diagram below depicts a fragment of a suburban center, illustrating the transition from center to edge over 1/4 mile (1,320'). Block sizes, relative density, and open spaces are represented.



### suburban center | center

#### THOROUGHFARE

Street Type ..... Main Street, Local Street, Avenue (*section 2a*)  
 Movement ..... slow to moderate  
 Width ..... 30'-40'

#### STREETSCAPE

Walk Type ..... sidewalk with covered walkway  
 Walk Width ..... 6'-8'  
 Planting Type ..... street trees with planting strips  
 Planting Width ..... 6'  
 Lighting Type ..... sidewalk lighting and building illumination (*section 2c*)  
 Parking ..... on-street, internal surface, and surface (*section 2f*)

#### BLOCK

Block Size ..... 200' - 400'  
 Type ..... Mixed-Use: Retail, Office, Institutional,  
 Residential (apartments, townhouses)

#### LOT

FAR ..... 1.0 - 1.5  
 Bldg. Coverage ..... 55%  
 Street Frontage ..... 70% minimum

#### BUILDING

Frontage ..... Arcade, Shop, Stoop (*section 2b*)  
 Height ..... 2-3 stories  
 Setback ..... 0'-10'

### suburban center | transition

#### THOROUGHFARE

Street Type ..... Local Street, Avenue (*section 2a*)  
 Movement ..... moderate to fast  
 Width ..... 30'-45'

#### STREETSCAPE

Walk Type ..... sidewalk  
 Walk Width ..... 4'-6'  
 Planting Type ..... natural vegetation buffer  
 Planting Width ..... n/a  
 Lighting Type ..... roadway illumination (*section 2c*)  
 Parking ..... on-street and surface (*section 2f*)

#### BLOCK

Block Size ..... 400' - 800'  
 Type ..... Mixed-Use: Retail, Office, Residential,  
 (attached and single family)

#### LOT

FAR ..... 0.5 - 0.75  
 Bldg. Coverage ..... 50%  
 Street Frontage ..... 60%

#### BUILDING

Frontage ..... Shop, Stoop, Dooryard, Common Yard (*section 2b*)  
 Height ..... 1-2 stories  
 Setback ..... > 10'

## section 1c.3 | rural center

The Rural district surrounds the Suburban district, functioning to sustain the lake, prairie and agricultural lands at the periphery of the city (see FIGURE 4, Recommended Master Plan). The rural designation preserves existing greenspace and allows very limited growth. New development would be built as a rural center, or village, to preserve open space. An extensive expanse of vacant, agricultural and park land predominates. Rural centers are predominantly low-density, residential developments with homes setback and screened from public roadways.

Rural developments should have small multi-use centers that provide neighborhood scale retail and office space to serve low-density development. The center establishes an identifiable, shared community space for residents as well as

offering basic amenities (i.e. corner store). The natural setting of Newnan's Lake is a primary location for rural center development. Potential development should establish a shared focal point (civic use, park, mixed-use buildings) for local residents, surrounded by low-density housing.

The diagram below depicts a fragment of a rural center, illustrating the transition from center to edge over 1/4 mile (1,320'). Block sizes, relative density, and open spaces are represented.



### rural center | center

#### THOROUGHFARE

Street Type ..... Main Street, Local Street, Avenue (*section 2a*)  
 Movement ..... moderate  
 Width ..... 30'

#### STREETSCAPE

Walk Type ..... sidewalk  
 Walk Width ..... 4'-6'  
 Planting Type ..... street trees with planting strips  
 Planting Width ..... 4'  
 Lighting Type ..... sidewalk lighting and building illumination (*section 2c*)  
 Parking ..... on-street and surface (*section 2f*)

#### BLOCK

Block Size ..... 200' - 800'  
 Type ..... Mixed-Use: Retail, Office, Residential  
 (attached and single family)

#### LOT

FAR ..... 0.25 - 0.5  
 Bldg. Coverage ..... 40%  
 Street Frontage ..... 50%

#### BUILDING

Frontage ..... Shop, Stoop, Dooryard (*section 2b*)  
 Height ..... 1-2 stories  
 Setback ..... 0-15'

### rural center | transition

#### THOROUGHFARE

Street Type ..... Local Street, Avenue (*section 2a*)  
 Movement ..... moderate to fast  
 Width ..... 24'-30'

#### STREETSCAPE

Walk Type ..... none  
 Walk Width ..... n/a  
 Planting Type ..... existing vegetation buffer  
 Planting Width ..... n/a  
 Lighting Type ..... roadway illumination (*section 2c*)  
 Parking ..... on-street and surface (*section 2f*)

#### BLOCK

Block Size ..... n/a  
 Type ..... Residential (single family)

#### LOT

FAR ..... < 0.5  
 Bldg. Coverage ..... < 2 du/ac.  
 Street Frontage ..... n/a

#### BUILDING

Frontage ..... Common Yard. Rural Setback (*section 2b*)  
 Height ..... 1-2 stories  
 Setback ..... > 15'

# section 1c.4 | design matrix

## DESIGN MATRIX: APPLICATION OF DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Design Matrix (FIGURE 3) illustrates the application of design elements for centers within the urban, suburban, and rural districts. The design guidelines, assuming existing standards are applicable, are intended as an additional layer of regulation and should be used to amend both of the city and county land development codes to create uniform development standards for East Gainesville. The overlay zoning area is meant to enhance and supplement existing centers. The recommended distribution of design elements is meant to ensure consistency in scale and density within centers, however, the use of such elements is not limited to this outline.

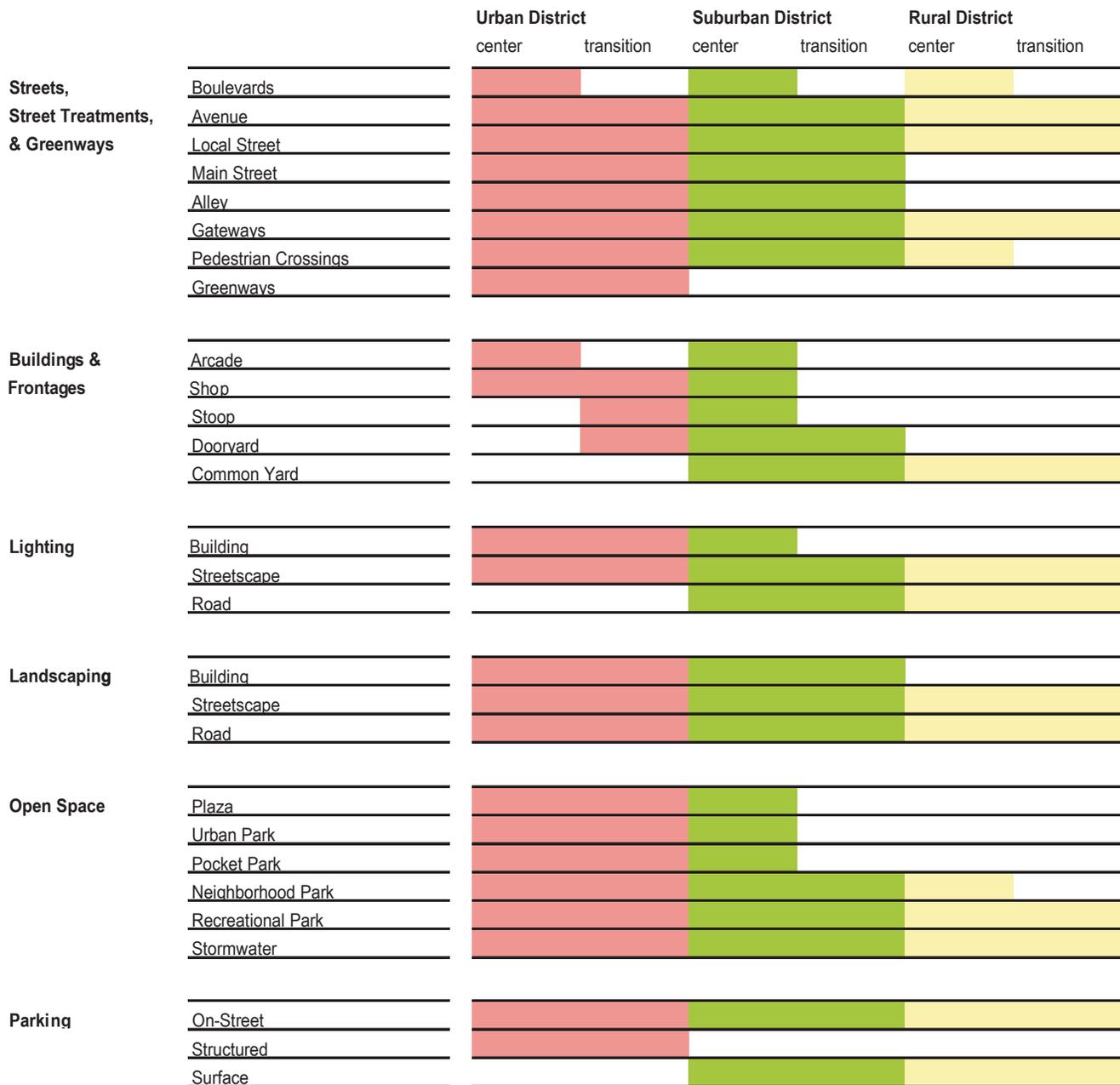


FIGURE 3 DESIGN MATRIX: APPLICATION OF DESIGN ELEMENTS

# section 1d | recommended plan

## PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE RECOMMENDED MASTER PLAN

This map illustrates the recommendation for the master plan and reflects the concepts shown in FIGURE 2. In addition to illustrating center locations, prioritized transportation projects and greenway corridors are represented.

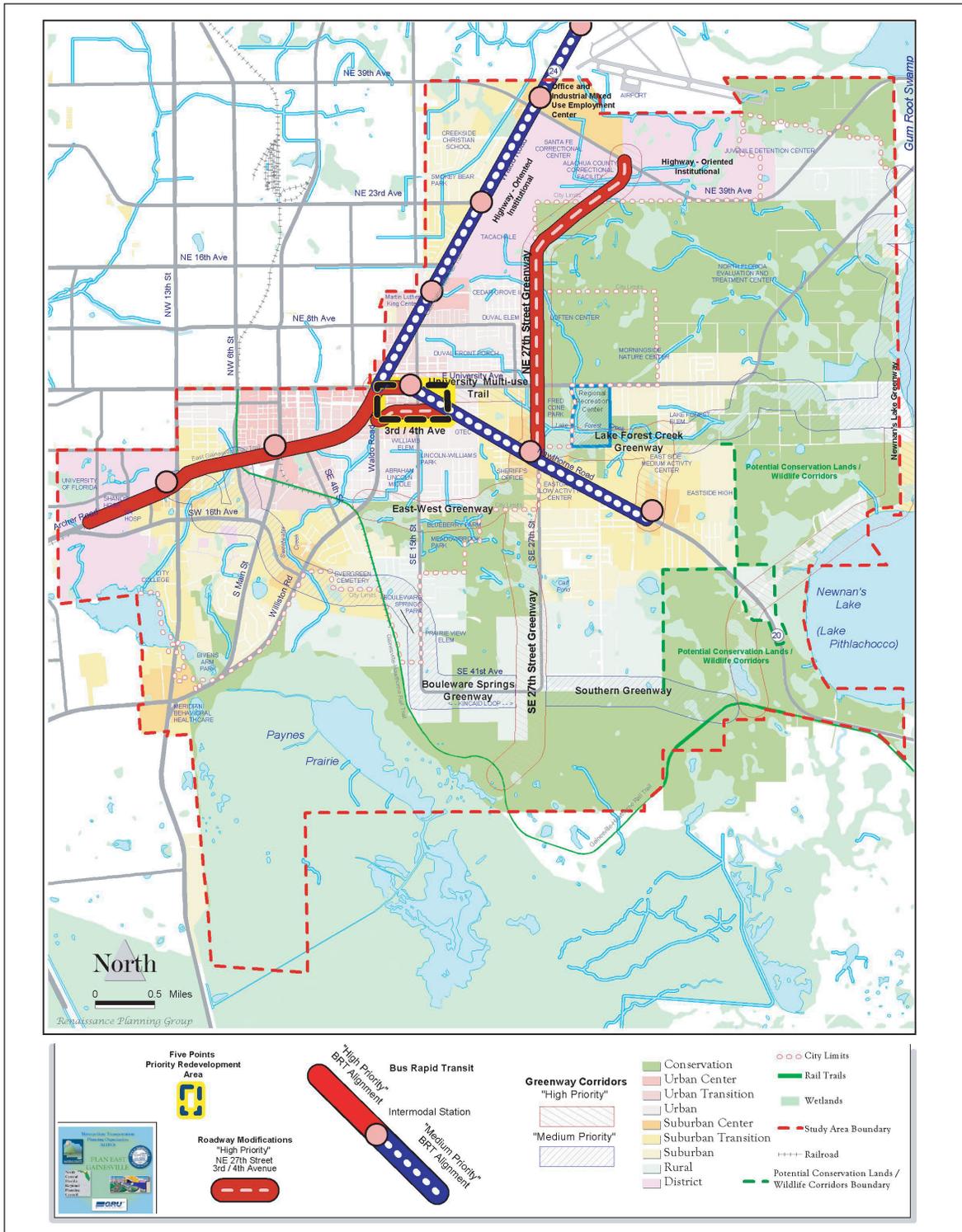


FIGURE 2 PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE RECOMMENDED MASTER PLAN AND PRIORITIES



## SECTION 2 | **DESIGN ELEMENTS**



# section 2a | streets, street treatments, & greenways

Streets and corridors provide the framework for the center. Effective street design is critical to the success of a mixed-use activity center. Streets must provide an efficient and interconnected network for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Street function and appearance must be balanced with the built environment and create a pleasant and safe experience for all travelers and residents that have homes and/or businesses facing the street.

To ensure a lively street setting, street networks must avoid concentrating travel on a few large roads. A more diverse roadway fabric provides multiple routes of access and evenly distributes activity to create a more energized urban environment. The dispersal of vehicle loads allows streets to be narrower and treated at a human scale. Streetscape elements provide a softened appearance and enhance the quality and appeal for pedestrians. On-street parking and street trees help define a comfortable pedestrian realm buffered from vehicular traffic. Narrow road widths naturally reduce travel speeds and give greater spatial enclosure to the street environment. Enclosure allows the streetscape to be experienced as an 'urban room,' a space that attracts pedestrians and jumpstarts activity.



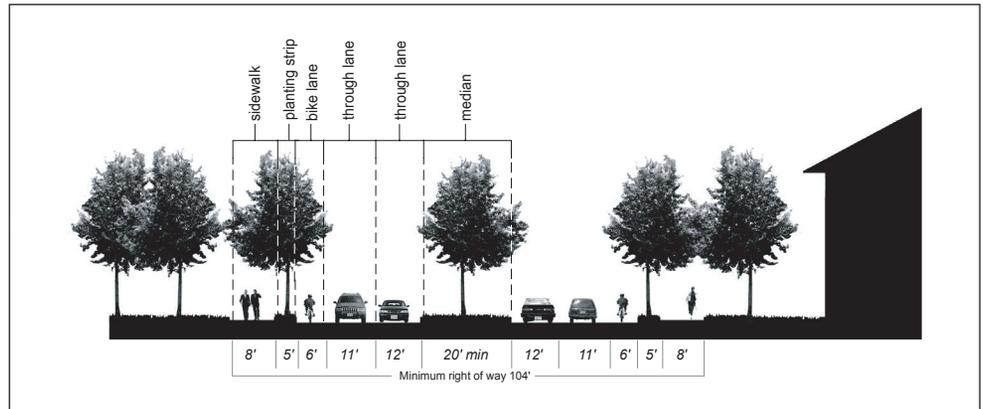
## section 2a.1 | boulevard

A boulevard provides multi-lane access to commercial and mixed use buildings. Medians separate slower traffic at the edge of the designated right-of-way. Center lanes allow through traffic. Boulevards allow for a variety of uses, frontage types, sidewalks, and pedestrian activity. Planting strips and trees provide shade, scale, and aesthetic quality.

### Recommended Standards

- Lanes with marked bike path
- Maximum 4 travel lanes
- Planting Strips - 5' - 11'
- Sidewalks - 8' on each side
- Design Speed - 40-45 mph (maximum)
- Posted Speed - 40 mph
- Requires a 104' Right-of-Way (ROW)
- Drainage - curb and gutter

*This roadway section is comparable to the **arterial: urban activity center** as classified in the Alachua County Corridor Design Manual.*



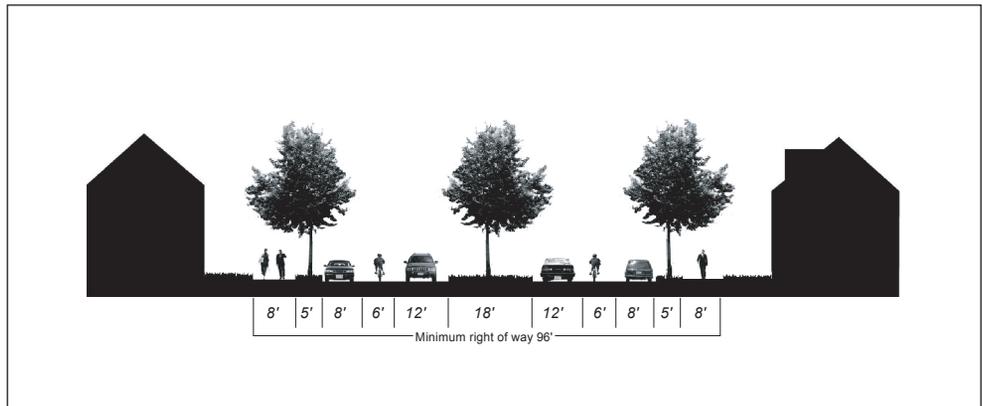
## section 2a.2 | avenue

An avenue provides short distance, medium speed connections between neighborhoods and core areas, often terminating at prominent buildings or plazas. Avenues may also circulate around squares or neighborhood parks. Planting strips and on-street parking separate the pedestrian realm from vehicular traffic.

### Recommended Standards

- Lanes with striped parking and bike lanes
- Maximum 2 travel lanes
- Planting Strips - 5'-7'
- Sidewalks - 8' on each side
- Design Speed 30 mph (maximum)
- Posted Speed 25-30 mph
- Requires a 96' Right-of-Way (ROW)
- Drainage - curb and gutter

*This roadway section is comparable to the **collector: urban activity center** as classified in the Alachua County Corridor Design Manual.*



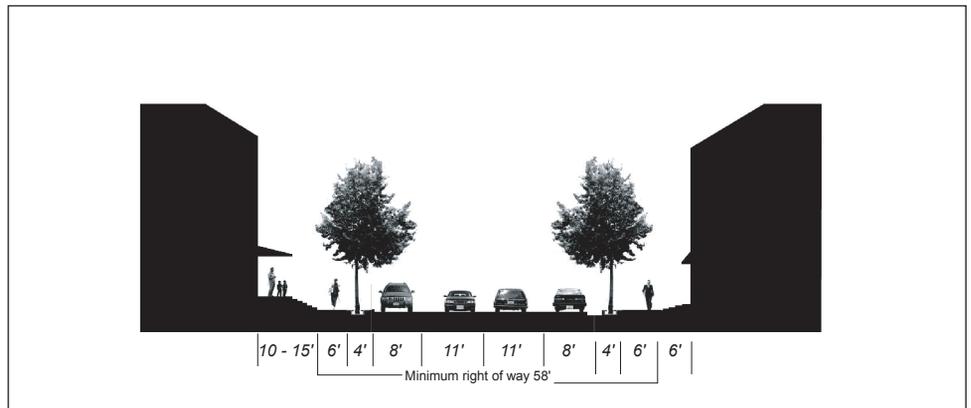
## section 2a.3 | neighborhood street

A neighborhood street provides low-speed access from main streets and avenues to commercial and residential areas. Narrow street width creates spatial enclosure. Stoop and dooryard fronts allow setbacks, buffering residential units from vehicular traffic. Planting wells may contain street trees.

### Recommended Standards

Lanes with striped parking  
 Planting Strips - 4'  
 Sidewalks 6' on each side  
 Design Speed 25-30 mph (maximum)  
 Posted Speed 25 mph  
 Requires a 58' Right-of-Way (ROW)  
 Drainage - curb and gutter

*This roadway section is comparable to the neighborhood street: neighborhood center as classified in the Alachua County Corridor Design Manual.*



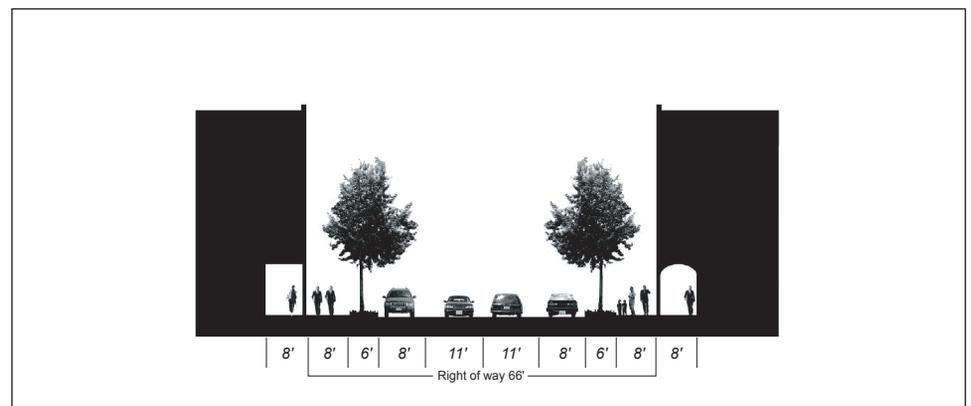
## section 2a.4 | main street

A main street provides low-speed access to high-density mixed use commercial and residential areas. A main street may serve as a focal street within a mixed-use center. Narrow street width creates spatial enclosure and sidewalk bulb-outs allow short pedestrian crossing distances. Planting strips are replaced with planting wells.

### Recommended Standards

Lanes with striped parking  
 Maximum 2 travel lanes  
 Planting Wells - 6'  
 Sidewalks 8' on each side (w/ 8'-10' arcade)  
 Design Speed 25 mph (maximum)  
 Posted Speed 20-25 mph  
 Requires a 66' Right-of-Way (ROW)  
 Drainage - curb and gutter

*This roadway section is comparable to the main street as classified in the Alachua County Corridor Design Manual.*

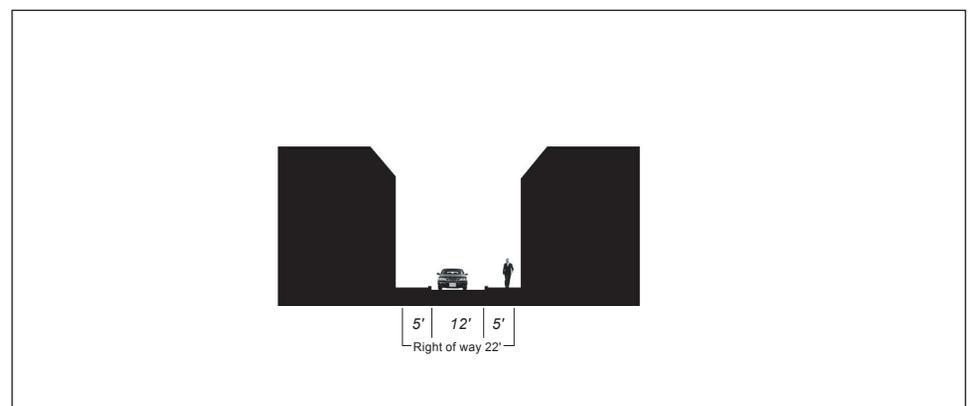


## section 2a.5 | alley

An alley provides property access, but is not intended to accommodate through traffic. Often allows access to interior parking. Utilities may be located in alleyways to provide service connections to rear elevations.

### Recommended Standards

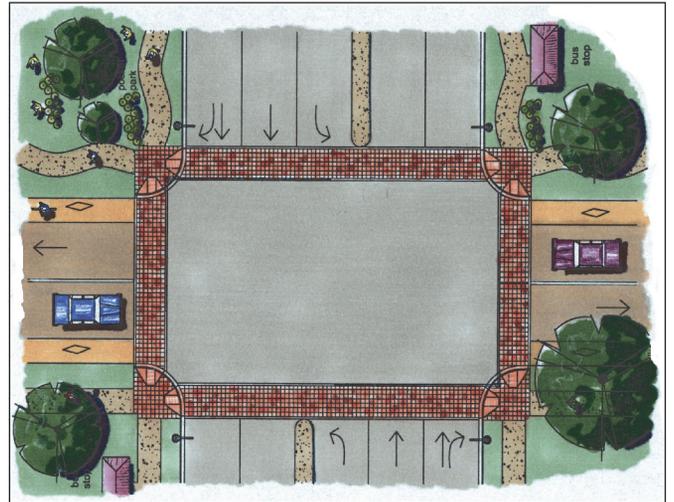
Single Lane with no parking  
 Maximum 1 travel lane  
 Planting Strips - n/a  
 Sidewalks 5' on each side  
 Design Speed 10-15 mph (maximum)  
 Posted Speed 10 mph  
 Requires a 20'-22' Right-of-Way (ROW)  
 Drainage - n/a



## section 2a.6 | gateways

The objective of a gateway is to announce that one is entering a special area. A gateway can be a single memorable icon or it can be comprised of several vertical and horizontal elements. If properly designed, a gateway placed at the entrance to a special corridor can result in slowing a driver's speed thereby creating a safer pedestrian environment.

In the Plan East Gainesville study area, it is important to place gateways at important nodes along the designated corridors. Gateway features should include specialty lighting with banner opportunities, mast arm signal poles and special pavement treatments at crosswalks and the intersections. The intersection curb/sidewalk area should be designed with a 20' radius curb and gutter and provide a safe haven for pedestrians to wait before crossing the roadway. The sidewalk materials can be specialty pavers or concrete based on the influence of the specific corridor. Crosswalks should clearly be marked. The use of specialty pavers in crosswalks may be difficult due to FDOT regulations in certain corridors. Where pavers will not be permitted, crosswalks can be constructed using stamped and colored asphalt or thermoplastic paint. Corridors that have multiple lanes should provide a safe pedestrian refuge area in the median. Countdown crosswalk lights should also be considered.



## section 2a.7 | pedestrian crossings

Pedestrian crossings are a critical element of the pedestrian network. Safe and convenient crosswalks make a sidewalk system usable and appealing, encouraging pedestrian activity. Crosswalks should be clearly marked and located carefully in relation to vehicular traffic.

To ensure safety and usability, crossing distances should not exceed 50'. Bulb-outs and median refuge islands should be used to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians. Marked crosswalks (specially paved or painted) indicate the appropriate route across traffic for pedestrians, assist the visually-impaired, and serve as a reminder to motorists. Crosswalks should be aligned with the path of the sidewalk to ensure accessibility. Intersections and crossing areas with heavy traffic or wide crossing distances require crossing signals to aid pedestrians and motorists.



# section 2a.8 | greenways

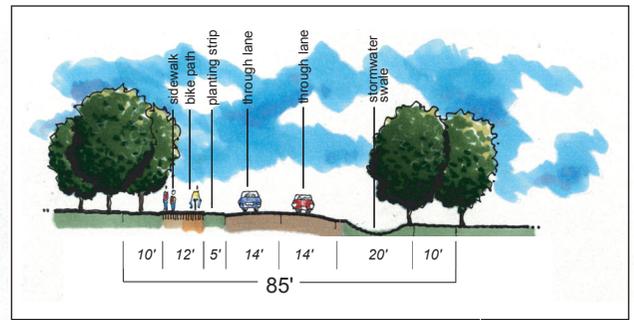
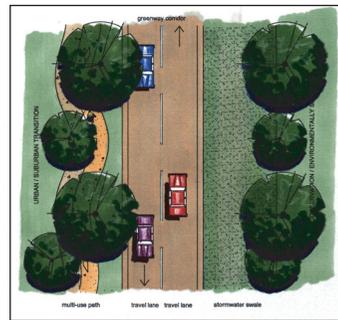
Greenways can range in form from narrow urban trail corridors to winding river corridors to very wide, wilderness-like landscape linkages. All corridors have certain basic characteristics in common. But the diversity of greenway types and forms, combined with geographic differences, means that different kinds of greenways should function in different ways, both ecologically and socially.

Ecologically, greenways can protect natural areas and diminish the isolating, disruptive effects of habitat fragmentation on wildlife and water resources. From a social perspective, greenways provide places for recreation and help maintain the scenic quality of landscapes. It is important from a transportation mobility and access perspective that greenways function by connecting places where people want to go: neighborhoods, business centers, shopping areas, schools and parks.

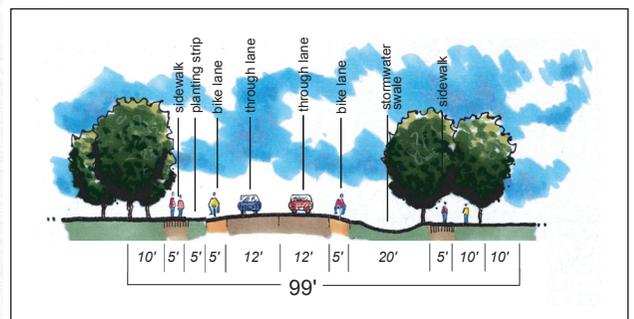
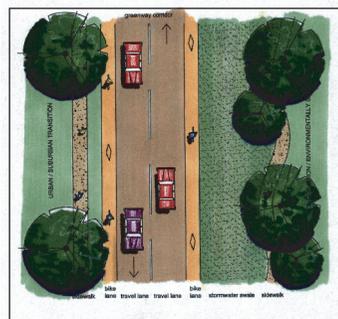
Typically, greenways that traverse environmentally sensitive lands can be considered "rural greenways" and corridors surrounding roadway networks can be considered "urban greenways." Multi-use trails will incorporate bicycle and pedestrian supportive design elements. The intersection of each greenway and multi-use trail should create a sense of place through pocket park facilities or a commercial node.

The three options shown illustrate multi-use trail opportunities for East University Avenue from Waldo Road to East 27th Street. This corridor should incorporate a bike lane, pedestrian friendly crossings, wider sidewalks and vegetation plantings. Options A and B show the extension of NE 27th Street from Hawthorne Road the NE 39th Avenue, representing an urban/suburban transition protecting environmentally sensitive land and incorporating drainage swales. Option C is a prototypical example of an urban multi-use trail that can be incorporated into an urban district.

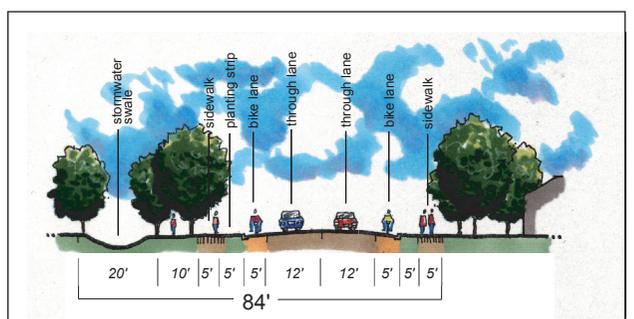
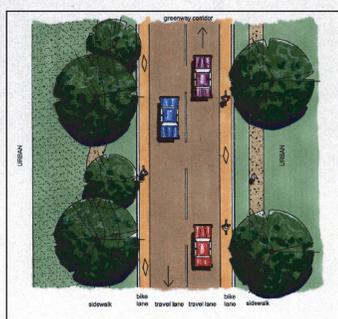
OPTION A - Multi-Use Path with Stormwater Swale



OPTION B - Bikelanes and Sidewalks with Drainage Swale



OPTION C - Bikelanes and Sidewalks



# section 2b | buildings & frontages

Building frontages are the interface between the public street and the building interior. Treatment of building fronts should reflect the use of the interior space. Retail frontage (storefront) is intended to draw the public into the interior, while residential frontage (setback with raised porch) protects the privacy of the interior, yet allows the residents to observe and engage with neighbors and passers-by.

The ground level should always be given the most careful consideration. Ground floor heights, facade articulation, setbacks, and entry design have a critical impact on the overall street environment. The typical progression from street to building includes vehicular traffic, on-street parking, landscaping elements and street trees, sidewalk, and building entry. The dimensions and relationships between elements vary depending upon building types and uses, vehicle traffic, and pedestrian traffic.

Buildings in the core should abut the right-of-way to create a significant street presence, such as in the Five Points area. Arcade fronts and shop fronts create a shared space between the sidewalk and building. This overlap provides a gradual transition from the busy flow of the street to the building's interior. Minimum ground floor heights ensure that the civic nature of the streetscape is maintained. Stoop and dooryard entries are set further back from the street, free from busy vehicular traffic.



## section 2b.1 | building recommendations

### BUILDING ORIENTATION

Buildings should be sited to complement the existing built environment while recognizing the characteristics of the specific project site. Building placement must respect important existing features of the site, such as natural elements or historical structures. Building orientation should balance the combined impacts to building occupants, pedestrians, and open space users. Building entries should border main streets and public thoroughfares to foster vibrant, walkable streetscapes and allow for clear pedestrian access and circulation. When possible, principles of passive solar design, such as screening the south elevation to avoid daytime heat gain, should be employed to help orient buildings. Parking and building service equipment should be placed at the rear of the building lot, visually removed from the streetscape.

### BUILDING MASSING

Massing describes the physical form of a building or group of buildings. In order to maintain a comfortable feeling of scale, building massing must be carefully considered in building design. Massing should be compatible with surrounding buildings to create a streetscape that maintains a consistent scale while allowing unique articulation between buildings. A single, uniform building mass should be avoided. Variations in height and horizontal divisions may be used to create facade articulation. Visual aspects of larger buildings must be detailed to maintain a sense of human scale, particularly at the pedestrian level. Varying window treatments and facade materials helps break the mass of a building. Facade elements should highlight primary entrances and different building uses. Roof equipment should be screened from view using setbacks and parapets.

### FLOOR ARTICULATION

In multiple story buildings, floors should have distinctive changes in exterior material, texture, ornamentation, and color. Floor articulation is especially important for mixed-use buildings. Facade treatment should reflect different interior uses, combining larger degrees of transparency for retail space and smaller openings for residential use. Typically, the first one or two stories of multiple story buildings are articulated as an architectural base meant to complement human scale and movement. The increased floor height of the base and covered walkways tie the building to the pedestrian realm. Prominent facade treatments at ground level help to highlight public entrances. Upper stories may be slightly setback from the base and treated with different materials and colors, a particularly useful model for mixed-use development.

### ENTRY

Building entry treatment is dependent on use. Retail, office, and residential entries have different purposes and priorities. Retail space should have a ground-floor entry fronting the public thoroughfare and visible to pedestrians. The entrance should incorporate transparent areas that integrate the interior space with street activity. Signage may be incorporated into the building facade or covered walkway. Often, offices require more private interiors. Office entries should also front public thoroughfares to ensure visibility. Residential entries, when part of a dense area, are set to the side or rear of the building. Often, significant entries are located along the street edge, but side and rear options handle routine traffic. In less dense areas, single-family residence entries are set back from the street right-of-way. Covered porches and stoops are suggested to make visual and spatial connections between the house and street.

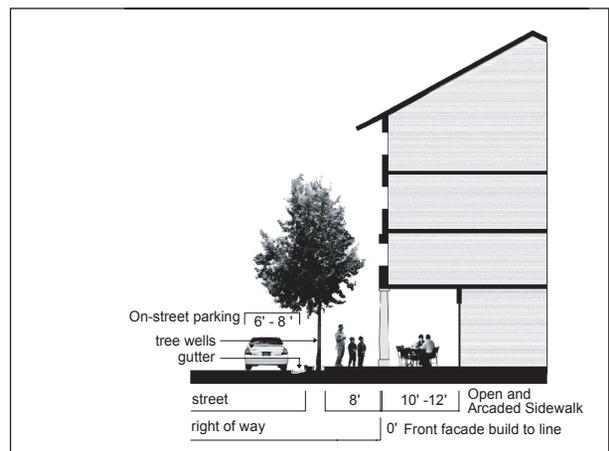
## section 2b.2 | arcade front

### RETAIL AND MIXED USE

An arcade is a series of arches or piers often used to support an overhead covering to create a partially enclosed, protected walkway. Arcade fronts draw the building to the edge of the right-of-way, integrating the sidewalk with the built space. The shared arcade space provides shade and weather protection. Ground floor retail functions can expand into the arcade space. The covered space is an ideal setting for outdoor cafe and restaurant seating.

#### Recommended Standards

- Ground Floor Height . . . . . 14' minimum
- Build to Line . . . . . 0'
- Sidewalks . . . . . 8'
- Arcade (covered sidewalk) . . . . . 10'-12'
- On-street parking
- Planting wells with shade trees



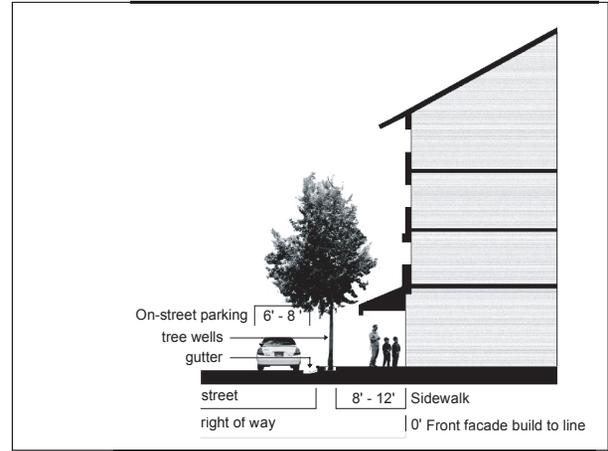
## section 2b.3 | shop front

### RETAIL AND MIXED USE

A shop front is intended to promote retail activity. Building facade should be at or near the edge of the right-of-way. Minimum ground floor heights ensure a civic presence at street level. A ground floor facade often has large openings to draw attention inward. Awnings and signage may cantilever over the right-of-way.

#### Recommended Standards

- Ground Floor Height .....14' minimum
- Build to Line ..... 0'-10'
- Sidewalks ..... 8'-12'
- Planting wells with shade trees
- On-street parking
- Awnings and Cantilevered Sign



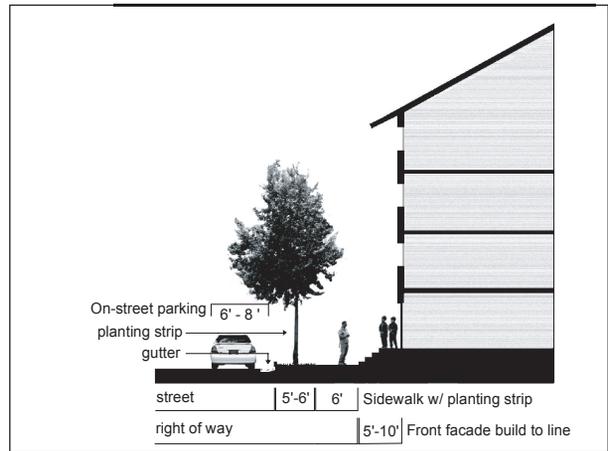
## section 2b.4 | stoop front

### RETAIL AND MIXED USE

A stoop front provides a comfortable interface between the public streetscape and residential units. Elevating the entrance above sidewalk grade helps minimize building set back. The 'stoop' should be oriented towards the street to encourage interaction between residents, neighbors, and passersby. May mix with Shop Fronts.

#### Recommended Standards

- Elevated Ground floor entry ..... 5' maximum
- Ground Floor Height .....10' minimum
- Build to Line ..... 5'-10'
- Sidewalks ..... 5'-7'
- Planting strips with shade trees ..... 4'-6'
- On-street parking



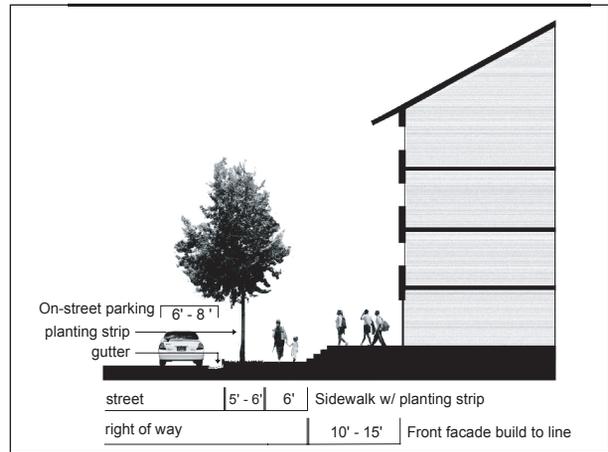
## section 2b.5 | dooryard front

### RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED USE

A dooryard front includes a paved or landscaped surface between the right-of-way and front facade line and provides gradual transition from sidewalk to building. The large transitional space and elevated entrance allow the building to negotiate significant elevational changes. The open surface can be enclosed as a porch or retained as outdoor space.

#### Recommended Standards

- Elevated Ground floor entry ..... 5' maximum
- Ground Floor Height .....10' minimum
- Build to Line ..... 10'-15'
- Sidewalks ..... 6'
- Planting strips with shade trees ..... 4'-6'
- On-street parking



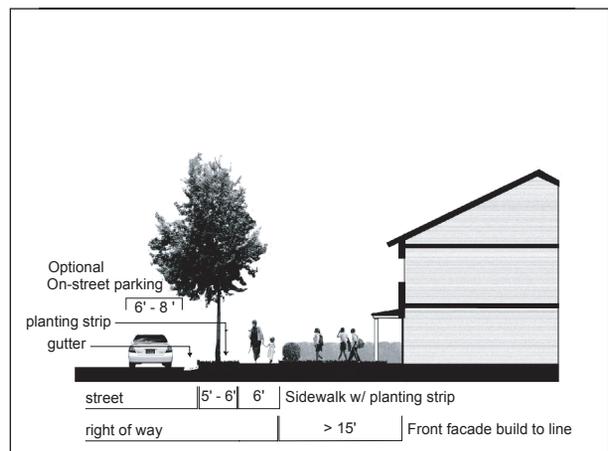
## section 2b.6 | common yard

### RESIDENTIAL USE

A common yard front uses a substantial building setback. The front yard created may be fenced or unfenced and should be visually continuous in landscaping with adjacent yards. With the deep setback as a buffer, common yards are suitable for higher speed thoroughfares.

#### Recommended Standards

- Ground Floor Height ..... no minimum
- Build to Line ..... >15'
- Sidewalks ..... 6'
- Planting strips with shade trees ..... 4'-6'
- Landscaped yard



## section 2c | lighting

Lighting should be carefully integrated with the built landscape. Building, streetscape, and high-speed roadway lighting have unique purposes and requirements. Scale, intensity, and fixture design should vary between areas of different densities and uses. Fixtures should contribute to the streetscape, fostering pedestrian activity and walkability. Ornamental light posts and fixtures help to create an attractive streetscape and should be consistent with the architectural character of the immediate area. In addition to concerns of aesthetics and scale, lighting is an important element of public safety. Well lit streets and alleys help to promote a secure environment and encourage night time activity.



### section 2c.1 | building

Exterior building lighting serves both safety and aesthetic purposes, illuminating dark areas and providing highlights and accents. Effective lighting should showcase building and landscape features, add emphasis to important spaces and promote night time vitality, appearance, and safety. Lighting should be used to highlight entries and architectural features where appropriate. All light sources should be shielded to eliminate night time glare that could be harmful to other buildings or roadways. Light shields keep light focused downward, keeping the night time sky and stars free from light pollution. Building mounted lights may be used in place of light posts to safely illuminate alleys and narrow side streets.

### section 2c.2 | streetscape

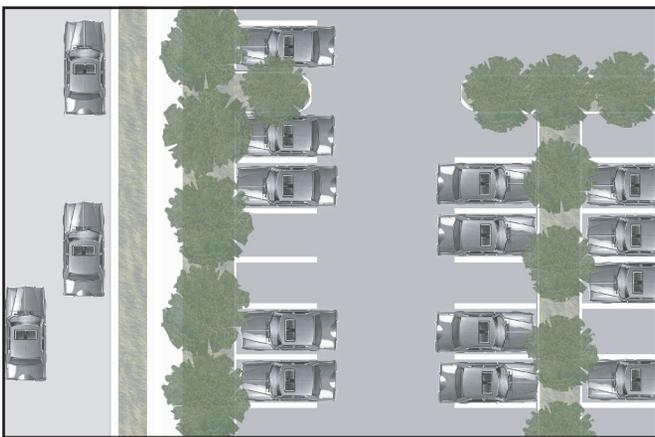
Street lighting should be integrated with the scale and character of surrounding buildings and pedestrian areas. A large number of low-intensity lights is preferred to fewer, higher-intensity lights to create an attractive pedestrian streetscape. In downtown areas, lightposts should be eight to twelve feet in height on both sides of the street and spaced no more than 30 feet apart. For natural quality, lighting elements should provide full-spectrum light to prevent color distortion. Light shields keep light focused downward, keeping the night time sky and stars free from light pollution. Ornamental fixtures allow lighting to fit seamlessly into the streetscape during daylight hours.

### section 2c.3 | roadway

Roadway lighting should be designed to enhance the safety of vehicular and pedestrian flows. Light posts may be located at both edges of the right-of-way or within a landscaped central median. Ornamental posts or posts that incorporate signage may be used to highlight dense centers and gateways. Lighting should be concentrated at intersections and crosswalks to enhance walkability. In pedestrian areas, roadway lighting (if needed) should not adversely affect the qualities of the streetscape lighting. Light shields keep light focused downward, keeping the night time sky and stars free from light pollution.

## section 2d | landscape

Landscape design should aesthetically complement and enhance the character of buildings, roads, and the pedestrian streetscape. Landscape, by drawing natural elements into the built environment, buffers harsh elements in order to maintain pedestrian-friendly and visually appealing streets. Different landscape strategies are dependent on building scale, density, thoroughfare type, and land use. Trees and plantings also have important environmental benefits, protecting air quality and water run-off and providing shading to buildings, cars, and pedestrians. Hardscape (bricks, pavers) should be used to highlight important public spaces and signal significant roadway elements such as bus stops and crosswalks.



TYPICAL PARKING LOT BUFFER

### section 2d.1 | building

Landscape design should help define the major paths and building entrances while providing a buffer from busy vehicular traffic and paved parking areas. Landscape materials should be selected to enhance the building's texture, color, and pattern. Primary consideration should be given to elevations that border public streets. Buildings may also use landscape elements to create outdoor seating and congregation spaces. If planned considerably, trees can provide solar shading and visual screening for interior spaces.

### section 2d.2 | streetscape

An essential element of a vibrant attractive streetscape is landscaping. Landscape treatments are used to buffer vehicular traffic from pedestrian movement while providing a visually appealing and physically comfortable environment. Planting strips and trees help to distance paved sidewalks from the street, visually screen passing vehicles, and make the sidewalk a more intimate space. Street trees can help to create walkable streets in both high-density centers and residential neighborhoods. Landscape buffers may also screen parking lots and conceal building equipment.

### section 2d.3 | roadway

Landscape should be used to integrate roadways with the surrounding area. Tree and planting screens protect adjacent buildings, properties, and open land from high-speed traffic. Roadway landscape treatments help ease the transition between center and edge conditions with landscaping taking a more formal appearance at gateway locations. Medians, which break down large road widths, also contribute to this transition.

## section 2e | open space

Carefully planned open space is necessary for the richness of mixed-use centers and the vitality of the public realm. Open space is a broad classification for public spaces ranging from community recreational areas to civic squares. The scale, enclosure, and density of surrounding conditions inform the properties of the open space: formal/informal, active/passive, and open/contained. Formal civic spaces should be located in the center area, serving the area of highest intensity, while recreational facilities, greenways, and neighborhood parks should be strategically placed to serve the mixed-use communities surrounding the core.

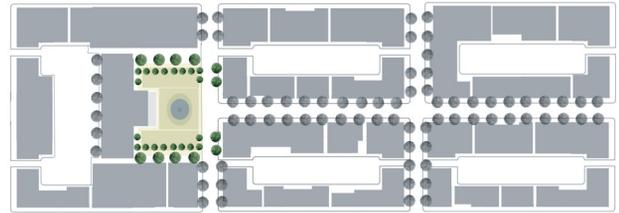
Many qualities contribute to the appeal of open spaces. Often, environmental and natural features are integrated into open space planning. Wetlands, critical slopes, drainage swales, and vegetation should be conserved as open public space wherever possible. In urban settings, water retention systems can be rethought and formalized as landscape elements that punctuate design.

Attractive civic spaces in the center, such as canals, ponds, and fountains promote gathering, interaction, and comfort. Moveable seating, tables, and elements that are multi-functional (planters that are at seat height) allow people to congregate and personally define spaces. Shade trees, greens, and cooling fountains help create a comfortable setting.



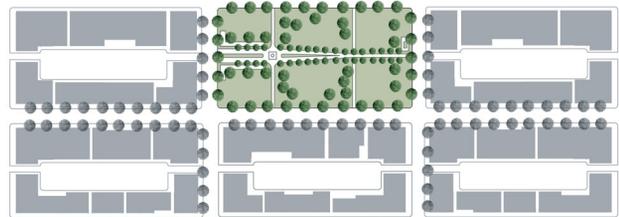
### section 2e.1 | plaza

A plaza is the most formal public space and is generally less than half the size of a block located at the intersection of important thoroughfares. It is devoted to civic uses and commercial activity and is surrounded by buildings on all sides. Its landscape is composed primarily of durable pavement and formally planted trees. Significant architectural features such as fountains, statues, and other vertical elements help mark the civic prominence of the plaza. Such features are most successful when planned in accordance with a strong visual axis, allowing the plaza to be read from a distance.



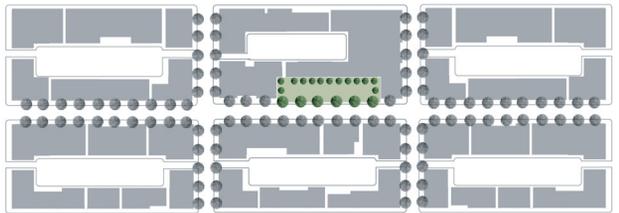
### section 2e.2 | urban park

An urban park occupies at least a full downtown block. Its landscape consists of lawns, paved walks, and shade trees. Formal fountains and statues are also often incorporated. Landscape elements can help to organize the park into a series of smaller spaces that offer a diversity of qualities and uses. Urban parks may be surrounded by civic buildings and residential uses. In certain instances, civic buildings can accompany the park on a shared block. Urban parks may establish Farmer's Markets as a potential use to promote economic development activity in the area. Urban parks provide an excellent terminus for greenways and bicycle routes originating outside the core. In most cases, it is appropriate to frame the park within a visual axis.



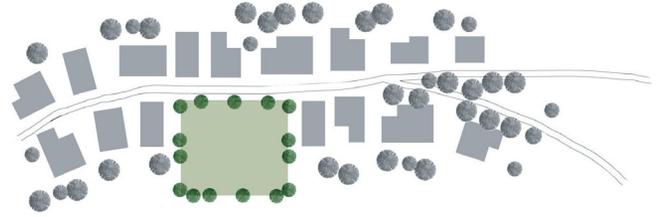
### section 2e.3 | pocket park

A pocket park is a small park that often occupies a 'left over' space between buildings. Pocket parks are block fragments (typically no longer than 100' of frontage) that provide vegetation, shade, and open space within densely built areas. Due to their small scale, pocket parks predominantly serve immediately adjacent buildings and thoroughfares. These small, informal breaks in the dense fabric provide a healthy counter to more prominent civic spaces such as urban parks and plazas. Pocket parks may establish Farmer's Markets as a potential use to promote economic development activity in the area.



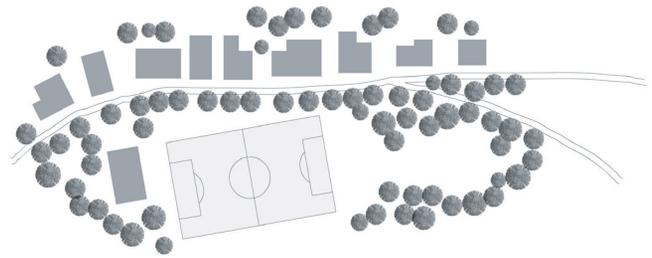
## section 2e.4 | neighborhood park

A neighborhood park is an open public space serving a residential area. The space may be used for civic gatherings and recreation. Neighborhood parks provide a safe open area free from moving traffic for children and neighborhood residents. Neighborhood parks may be bound by residences or small-scale institutional or civic buildings to form a common green. Such parks are intended to serve the local area, unlike recreational parks which serve a larger residential population.



## section 2e.5 | recreational park

A recreational park is an open public space reserved for civic gatherings and recreation. Often, recreational parks are designed around existing natural features. Its landscape consists primarily of grassy areas, paved or unpaved walks, and shade trees. Formal playing fields may be established to serve community needs. The park should be surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, and civic buildings. Recreational parks may also serve nearby institutions. Parking needs and other necessary facilities must also be considered. May range from 3 to 10 acres in size.



## section 2e.6 | stormwater

Planning for stormwater detention is essential for maintaining an ecological balance. Stormwater detention prevents flooding and helps decrease the amount of sediment and other pollutants that flow into other bodies of water. Stormwater ponds should not disturb wetlands, as they serve as natural stormwater retention areas. The use of shared stormwater detention systems for multiple sites is recommended.

Stormwater ponds and swales should be developed as aesthetic amenities, with regard for the surrounding landscape and buildings. In urban settings, ponds may become formal pools with retaining walls, integrated into the dense fabric as a attractive public elements. Open space ponds should incorporate gradual side slopes and landscaped vegetation to create a natural setting. Gradual slopes reduce erosion and operate as safety features, eliminating the need for fencing. Stormwater ponds that must be enclosed should be located in the rear yard or not visible from the roadway. The reuse of stormwater for site irrigation is encouraged.



## section 2f | parking

The proper supply, placement and design of parking is a key element in creating an environment conducive to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users as well as those traveling by car. Standard requirements can lead to an oversupply of parking spaces and open expanses of asphalt. Better management and design strategies can help integrate parking into high-density areas and reduce the demand for parking spaces.

Reducing minimum off-street parking requirements and setting average-usage standards instead of peak-usage standards can help spur development. Allowing developers to count on-street parking towards their requirement helps alleviate off-street parking needs. Shared parking allows activities and functions with different peak hours to use the same spaces, significantly cutting down the total spaces needed.

Structured parking is appropriate in high-density areas. Garages reduce the total amount of paved area and can fit well into an urban area, maintaining scale and facade articulation. Wrapping structured parking around the perimeter with liner buildings allows a seamless integration into the urban setting and maximizes the property revenue potential.

Large lots with surface parking should be designed in relation to the established block size of the surrounding street grid and parking aisle widths should be consistent with standard street right-of-way requirements. These considerations prepare the site for future infill development, in which surface parking areas are converted into a mix of buildings, garages and streets. Incentives are often needed to offset the high construction cost of parking garages.



### section 2f.1 | on-street parking

On-street parking provides parking spaces within the thoroughfare right-of-way. It contributes to the street environment, helping to buffer pedestrian space from vehicular traffic. Spaces are distributed evenly along the street edge helping to maintain the visual consistency and appeal downtown.

#### Recommended Standards

- Parking space dimensions** - 8' x 20'
- Parking Angles** - parallel, 30, 45

Trees may be planted to define separation between spaces

Curb bulb-outs are necessary at pedestrian crossings to limit crossing distances



### section 2f.2 | structured parking

Structured parking allows for an efficient use of space in high density areas. Garages eliminate the need for extensive surface parking and help maintain a consistent density within downtown areas. Garages should be located within block interiors wrapped by perimeter liner buildings or as stand alone structures with careful attention to facade articulation that reflects proportion, rhythm and massing of surrounding buildings.

#### Recommended Standards

- Parking space dimensions** - 9' x 19'
- Parking Angles** - 45, 60, 75, 90
- Aisle width** - (1-way traffic) 15'-22'
- Maximum ramp slope** - 5%
- Minimum Vert. Clearance** - 8'2"-10'6"

Access is provided by mid-block alley



### section 2f.3 | surface parking

Landscaping is required to break the visual blight of large paved areas. Lots should be placed in the rear of buildings or block interiors to minimize visual impact. Trees provide screening and noise reduction to help ease disruption. Plantings within parking lots also help to reduce storm water runoff, filter air, provide shade, and maintain property values.

#### Recommended Standards

- Parking space dimensions** - 9' x 19'
- Parking Angles** - 45, 60, 75, 90
- Aisle width** - (2-way traffic) 26'-30'
- Max. uninterrupted spaces** - 12
- Landscape/plantings**-10% of total area

Planted trees screen lot from road and divide large lots into smaller scale zones



## section 2f.4 | planning for future development

Low density retail development is often characterized by wide, uninterrupted expanses of asphalt. Parking design and site layout often limit the opportunity for future development and increased density.

Well planned parking strategies, however, can prepare a site for future growth. Arranging surface parking in accordance with standard block size and orientation allows the site to be developed gradually, lot by lot and block by block. Selective aisles should be designed consistently with standard right-of-way dimensions, creating a framework for future road development. By planning for future streets and blocks, parking lots can be gradually integrated with the surrounding fabric. Piece by piece, paved open lots may be transformed into higher-density centers.





## SECTION 3 | **SIGNATURE PROJECT**



# section 3 | five points area

The Five Points area signature project illustrates the development of a new "downtown" supported by the Bus Rapid Transit system and station area at the intersection of Hawthorne Road, Waldo Road, and University Avenue. This activity center has been identified as a priority for redevelopment and a potential catalyst for private sector reinvestment. The enhancement of SE 3rd/4th Avenue provides an opportunity for a cohesive district oriented south of University Avenue between Waldo Road and SE 15th Street.

As an Urban Center, a mixture of uses would be provided, including professional office, retail, services, restaurants, and multi-family residential. The development would be urban in scale, with building setbacks designed to create a street wall, greater detail at the street level, parking at the rear of the building, and sidewalk and landscape amenities.

The Tackle Box site sits at the intersection of East University Avenue, Hawthorne Road, and SE 15th Street. The site's location provides a strategic opportunity for the revitalization of the Five Points area. These pictures illustrate the transformation of the Tackle Box site in the Five Points Area.



**EXISTING CONDITIONS:**  
SE 15TH STREET & UNIVERSITY AVENUE INTERSECTION

## stage one

The redevelopment of the Tackle Box site would occur in multiple phases, beginning with landscape and general aesthetic improvements. The installation of new or widened sidewalks, planting strips, and street trees can be a successful initial investment. As a first step, these elements increase the area's visual appeal and transform the automobile-dominated streets into an attractive environment for pedestrians. Street trees provide shade, visual screening, and a safety buffer from moving traffic. Landscaped medians may be used to help reduce the large, uninterrupted paving widths of multi-lane roadways. Landscape treatments within the median can be used to highlight gateways and significant intersections along East University Avenue. Paved or painted crosswalks also increase intersection safety and add aesthetic appeal to the street. Also, steel utility poles and mast arms should be installed to carry traffic and pedestrian signals and street signs. Bike lanes should be integrated along SE 15th Street to further develop the multi-modal transportation network and connect to the Gainesville/Hawthorne Rail Trail. Implementing these measures would increase the attractiveness and walkability of the Five Points area, in turn drawing pedestrian activity and private investment.



**STAGE ONE:**  
SE 15TH STREET & UNIVERSITY AVENUE INTERSECTION

## stage two

Aesthetic and landscape improvements will enhance the livability, walkability, and visual appeal of the Five Points area. These qualities, combined with immediate access to a multi-modal transit system, will attract private investment and development. Dense, mixed-use development should be concentrated around the transit station site on Hawthorne Road and the Tackle Box site. New buildings should abut the right-of-way, addressing the street edge to form a continuous street wall and giving the streetscape intimacy and a sense of enclosure. Buildings should integrate arcades and covered walkways to provide shaded spaces for sitting, conversing, and dining. The Tackle Box site and Hawthorne Road transit station site should have ground floor retail with office space above. Continuous ground floor retail spaces add energy to the area and benefit from street level activity. Street lighting should also be provided to promote night time activity.

By developing a set of base elements (landscaping, street trees, paved sidewalks, etc.), the Tackle Box site and Five Points area may be primed for mixed-use urban blocks and buildings, and ultimately a new downtown for east Gainesville.



**STAGE TWO:**  
SE 15TH STREET & UNIVERSITY AVENUE INTERSECTION



# APPENDIX B

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## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REPORT





## **APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REPORT**

### **SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS**

The public participation effort for Plan East Gainesville was designed to define target audiences and tailor outreach methods accordingly. Several target audiences were defined as “public,” including residents and property owners within the study area, public agencies, special interest and advocacy groups, the media, and elected and appointed officials. A critical element of the public outreach process involved the participation of a Steering Committee to guide the development of the plan. The Steering Committee was comprised of key community stakeholders, citizens, development representatives, elected officials and staff. The group met regularly throughout the study process and its members included agencies and organizations including the Gainesville Regional Airport, Santa Fe Community College, University of Florida, Gainesville Regional Utilities, Alachua County, City of Gainesville, Regional Transit System, Tachachale facility, Shands Healthcare, Alachua County School Board, Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, and City of Gainesville Police Department.



An important step to identifying potential stakeholders in the area was to develop the Plan Information Network. The network consists of a contact list of key business and community groups that were involved in the study and identifies a point of contact and means of communication among group members so that project updates and invitations to workshops can be included in the organization’s internal communications. The network included community groups, homeowner’s associations, special interest groups and other organizations representing different perspectives in the study area.

Another public outreach method for the project was to maintain the Plan Resource Center in Gainesville. The resource center is located within the study area and open at least one day or evening per week; key personnel with local knowledge and experience staffed the office and provided study information to the public throughout the planning process. The GTEC was used to display study area materials, including maps, photographs and concept plans and served as a meeting place for focus groups and community meetings.

The public outreach methods were designed to ensure community involvement and to obtain input that established the community vision and helped to formulate plan recommendations. Outreach methods included the following:

- Flyers and meeting announcements (timed strategically throughout the study process and to supplement the PIN);
- Web site/discussion forum;
- Camera/photography exercise; as part of the visioning process, representative groups from the community including high school students and other residents with different perspectives will take pictures of community elements they would like to preserve and enhance or change;
- Press releases/public service announcements/flyers; and
- Documentary videos provided by the MTPO.

The Plan East Gainesville study also involved community workshops and focus group discussions throughout the course of the project. The following list summarizes the community issues and recommended actions as expressed during the public participation process. The purpose of the focus group discussions, community meetings and the charrette, as described in the next section, was to promote and sustain a meaningful dialogue with the community that furthered the visioning process and influenced the final study recommendations.

### **SUMMARY OF PEG COMMUNITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *East Gainesville is underdeveloped, neglected, needs better accessibility;*
- *East Gainesville has development potential because of its available land and existing infrastructure;*

- *East Gainesville needs to protect its green space, well defined neighborhoods, and natural areas and promote more landscaping and gateway features;*
- *East Gainesville needs better jobs, economic opportunity, commercial development, and more diverse housing;*
- *Development in the downtown area provide economic spin-off and opportunity for East Gainesville;*
- *Roadways in East Gainesville are adequate with regard to regional access;*
- *The northeast industrial area has strong market appeal as an employment center with good facilities in place;*
- *There is a need for additional shopping and recreational opportunities in East Gainesville;*
- *There is a need to address community issues such as drug-related crime and neighborhood beautification in East Gainesville;*
- *A marketing program should be developed that tout's assets of the area, such as low land costs and natural features;*
- *To leverage further investment in East Gainesville, local bankers and lenders would be willing to mutually finance a quality mixed use project;*
- *A priority for East Gainesville is to introduce higher value housing to change the perception of the area and provide housing options for residents and an impetus to the commercial market;*
- *Major needs for the area include investment in public infrastructure as a key to reducing risk for new development, and quality schools, including magnet schools to help attract residential investment;*
- *Development should be integrated with watershed planning, creek restoration opportunities, preservation of wetland areas, and protection of Newnan's Lake and Calf Pond;*
- *Land acquisition priority projects should include proposed projects for greenway corridors;*
- *Support enhancement of 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> street as the proposed east-west connector;*
- *Opposition to the southernmost east west connector along SE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue;*
- *Support Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Archer Road to the Five Points Area;*
- *Support redevelopment of the Five Points area;*
- *Areas are needed in East Gainesville for light industrial uses - the Fairgrounds area may be appropriate for this type of use;*
- *Support creation of an employment center; and*
- *Lake Creek Forest Area (Newnan's Lake) is a priority area for greenways and conservation; this includes the proposed Newnan's Lake Greenway.*

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**WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS COMPLETED FOR THE PEG STUDY****January 31, 2002 Kick-off Meeting**

The purpose of the first meeting was to formally initiate the project with the community, identify issues, concerns and ideas related to the study. More than 100 people attended. When asked to describe East Gainesville, respondents in the meeting described the East Gainesville area as an underdeveloped, neglected part of town. In contrast, other respondents described East Gainesville as having “better accessibility,” “natural beauty,” “convenience,” “diversity,” “spaciousness,” and as being a place to “enjoy life at a slower pace.” Some respondents also noted the “development potential” of the area because of its available land and existing infrastructure.

In response to the question, “*What are East Gainesville’s greatest assets and challenges?*” responses ranged from the area having large amounts of green space, natural areas and recreation to the area’s committed active citizens and diversity of its population. Greatest challenges facing the area include a lack of jobs, economic opportunity, and commercial development, as well as substandard housing, perceived high crime and aging development. Participants responded that the greatest needs in East Gainesville include more jobs and economic opportunity east of downtown, revitalizing neighborhoods and commercial areas, expanding commercial development, and protecting natural resources and preserving open space.

**March 1, 2002, Economic Development / Real Estate Focus Group**

The Real Estate Focus Group was held with several area bankers and real estate lending experts to discuss the positive attributes of East Gainesville that could help form a foundation for real estate investment and economic opportunity. Participants commented that proximity to downtown is both an attribute and a liability in that the downtown’s strength provides economic spin-off and opportunity for East Gainesville; but that the downtown captures desirable non-residential uses.

Participants stated that the area enjoys excellent regional transportation infrastructure. The utilities in place, particularly closer in to the city and schools are at 50 percent capacity. The airport is viewed as positive, but it is not being used to its potential because of a lack of support services such as a hotel, restaurants and similar services. Other comments included that the northeast industrial park has strong market appeal with good facilities in place.

Participants believe that East Gainesville has well-defined neighborhoods, another strong asset for growth. There are also plenty of opportunities for infill development. Conservation land is both an asset and a liability, in that it provides opportunities for recreation and eco-tourism, but it fragments development and access. Overall, having conservation land makes development of compact mixed-use centers more appropriate.

Participants expressed that principal limiting factors for more economic investment in East Gainesville are that there is a historical conflict between downtown, core area interests and East Gainesville; recent examples include the County Courthouse location. Available land is continually bypassed and the attitude toward and perception of East Gainesville is a significant problem, with the perception being worse than the reality. The area also needs more landscaping and gateway features to create a sense of identity for East Gainesville.

#### **April 4, 5, 6, and 7, 2002 Community Workshop (Charrette)**

The purpose of the workshop was to develop a specific vision for East Gainesville and focus on the key elements needed for a livable, economically viable community. The four-day workshop included several activities to craft a vision statement and development plan for the area. The workshop provided an open forum for participants to discuss topics such as the adopted Year 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan, concepts of new urbanism, “walkable” communities, and activity centers, transportation funding, issues related to the Florida Intrastate Highway System, alternative strategies to manage traffic in the Hawthorne Road corridor, and proposed existing and future conditions analyses. Other major activities included exercises to assess the livability of neighborhoods, identify visual preferences, discuss planning concepts and strategies, and develop a vision statement and plan for the area.



*Charrette activities included a bus tour of the study area to help craft a vision for the plan.*

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**May 15, 2002 East Gainesville Youth Focus Group Meeting**

The RPG team conducted a workshop/forum to obtain input from East Gainesville young people regarding current livability conditions and future redevelopment plans. The group brainstorming and feedback sessions focused on finding ways to improve current neighborhood livability conditions in East Gainesville and developing long range strategies to ensure a quality future for the area. The participating students were asked to respond to the following two questions:

*“As a young person living in East Gainesville, what issues should be addressed to make the community more livable/enjoyable to you?”*

*“What issues should be addressed that would entice you to make your permanent home in East Gainesville once you complete your education?”*

The responses to the first question focused primarily on the need for additional recreational activities and shopping options in East Gainesville. The participants also pointed out the need to address other important community issues such as drug related crime, neighborhood beautification, homelessness, economic development, and housing. The group expressed strong concerns about street corner drug sales and related crime in the community. Getting drugs off the street was the group’s second ranked priority. When asked if the perception of the area as a high crime area was accurate, the participants were nearly unanimous in the opinion that street corner drug dealing was a reality and a major community problem, from their perspective.

The responses to the question regarding the future of the community reflected both maturity and understanding of serious community livability issues. When asked what essential livability ingredients were necessary for the long-term survival of the neighborhoods on the east-side, respondents talked about the need for additional job creating businesses, diverse housing options (affordable/market rate), the elimination of drugs, and dependence on social services.

**June 4, 2002 Bankers / Real Estate Lenders Focus Group**

The Gainesville Council for Economic Outreach hosted a discussion forum with several of the area’s leading bankers and real estate lending experts. The purpose was to identify what it might take to encourage lending institutions to make investments in East Gainesville and to improve the area’s financial attractiveness for private sector initiatives.

The main points identified include investment in public infrastructure, proximity to strong markets (e.g., downtown Gainesville), presence of a national credit tenant (e.g., Wal-Mart or Publix) and improving the residential sector to help reduce risk and increase the likelihood of investment in East Gainesville. Participants expressed that marketing of East Gainesville is necessary. A marketing program aimed at lenders and developers should be developed that touts the region's assets (low land costs, availability of large land parcels with relatively few owners, natural features, accessibility to important destinations, unclogged roads, etc.) and identifies specific desired development areas. Also, bankers stated that they would be willing to join together to spread out the risk to do a demonstration mixed-use project as a way to guide developers and leverage further investment. Participation by major public agencies to help lessen risk is a key factor in making this happen.

According to participants, the perception of East Gainesville needs to change. The first priority needs to be residential development (or redevelopment). Introduction of higher value housing in “great places to live,” such as areas with good natural vistas, wooded areas, water, etc. would provide a strong push to the commercial and residential market. It is important to bring in higher paying businesses to East Gainesville to increase opportunities for current residents and encourage residential investment. Other major needs included investment in public infrastructure as a key to reducing risk for new development; quality of education and adequate resources, and magnet schools to help attract residential investment; and creating gateways to improve the sense of identity and appearance of physical improvement.

#### **June 4, 2002 Environmental Focus Group**

The Alachua County Environmental Protection Department hosted a discussion forum with several of the area's environmental experts, including representatives from local and state agencies and other environmental stakeholders. The focus of the discussion concerned creek restoration opportunities, data assembly and identification of environmental hazards and features.

The group discussed the conceptual phase of the plan and the importance of enhancing the creek system, preserving wetland areas and identifying land acquisition priority projects for proposed greenway systems. Other uses for acquired conservation lands include passive, resource based recreation, wildlife corridors and scientific study. The group agreed that the PEG study could recommend greenway projects to the Alachua County Forever program.

Other important considerations mentioned by the group were to integrate development with watershed planning because Newnan's Lake was currently in poor condition. Another comment was to target restoration efforts in the Calf Pond Watershed.

### **July 16, 2002 Community Workshop**

The purpose of this workshop was to finalize the vision statement, present the draft conceptual master plan and obtain guidance on its components, including design elements, greenways/natural resources/conservation features and possible corridor modifications. Products of the meeting included an approved vision statement and refined concept plan, and specific direction on translating the concept into projects or alternatives for evaluation.

### **October 29, 2002 Community Workshop**

The purpose of this workshop was to present the study results and gain input on draft recommendations and priorities for the revitalization of East Gainesville. The workshop provided the community with the opportunity to review and refine the final plan elements before presentation to elected officials for adoption. The groups were asked to review the alternatives, results of the evaluation, and identify priorities and specific implementation actions for each functional area. Although consensus was not reached on all points, the results and priorities are summarized below:



#### **Transportation:**

- *Support enhancement SE of 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Avenues as the proposed east-west connector;*
- *Opposition to the southernmost east-west connector along the extension of SE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue;*
- *Support Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Archer Road to the Five Points Area.*

#### **Land Use:**

- *Support redevelopment of the Five Points area;*
- *Areas are needed for light industrial - the Fairgrounds area may be appropriate for this type of use;*
- *Support creation of the proposed employment center at the fairgrounds.*

#### **Conservation:**

- *Lake Forest Creek Area Feeding (Newnan's Lake) is a priority area for greenways and conservation; this includes the proposed Newnan's Lake Greenway.*

### **November 4, 2002 Faith Leaders Focus Group Meeting**

The purpose of the meeting with representatives from six churches in the East Gainesville study area was to obtain input from the faith community regarding PEG proposed options and recommendations. When asked what should be the top priorities for the redevelopment of East Gainesville, the participants' responses focused mostly on economic and livability issues, such as job creation and training programs. The participants stressed the need for more active parks and indoor facilities, as opposed to passive green space and for after-school programs at all of the elementary and middle schools. Drugs and related crime were seen as major deterrents to the area's revitalization. Displacement and gentrification of residents in areas targeted for redevelopment was a major concern. Affordable housing set asides, subsidies, and comprehensive relocation strategies were deemed critical to mitigate negative impacts on existing residents. Infrastructure and housing improvements throughout the area should be included in the plan recommendations.

The faith leaders were excited about the proposed redevelopment of the Five Points area and the fairgrounds site. They also felt that the proposed BRT system would stimulate additional development in the areas surrounding the transit stations. The participants' feedback on the proposed connector road was consistent with the input received at the community meeting. They did not support the connector road, but supported the idea of enhancing the SE 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor to enhance the viability of the Five Points Project. The participants were not enthusiastic about the proposed greenways, which they did not feel were a priority given other concerns and problems facing the area.

