

Gainesville Innovation Zone Referral to the City Plan Board
City Commission Agenda Item Back-Up

The proposed Gainesville Innovation Zone has five foundational principles: 1) proximity; 2) existing community assets/investments; 3) existing public incentives; 4) the State of Florida's recent emphasis on developing the Innovative Economy; and 5) similar efforts of Peer Cities.

The issue of fostering innovative economy opportunities *proximate* to the UF campus has come not only from representatives of previously visited communities but more recently has been stressed by those seeking these opportunities within this community. In terms of existing assets, the boundaries of the Gainesville Innovation Zone recognize *existing assets and investments* by various community partners including the main UF campus footprint and recently announced Eastside UF campus; Santa Fe Community College's downtown campus; and downtown Gainesville and the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC). *Public incentives* exist in the form of those flowing from the Enterprise Zone and the overlapping Community Redevelopment Area's (CRA) in the event that a gap is encountered by those seeking to foster development opportunities. *The State of Florida* has established the facilitation of the innovative economy as a primary objective of state economic development efforts. The University of Florida is a partner along with the University of Central Florida and University of South Florida in the Florida High Tech Corridor program. This program is designed to attract, retain and grow high tech industry and to help develop the workforce to support these industries. Currently, the University of Florida administers a matching grant research program that attempts to foster applied research between the University and industry partners. The Florida Legislature passed legislation, including approximately \$350 million in FY 06/07 resources targeted at innovative economic development. Finally, several *peer cities* nationwide are establishing similar innovative/technology zones or corridors that spatially define areas of focused efforts designed to build critical mass for the local innovative economy.

The intent of the Gainesville Innovation Zone is not to create a new regulatory framework for innovative economy development within its boundaries. Currently, a development regulatory framework is in place via existing land use and zoning regulations including the recently adopted Urban Mixed Use categories. Inclusion of the Gainesville Innovation Zone conceptual map and supporting objectives/policies in the Intergovernmental Element will institutionalize and define the City's efforts at building and developing this segment of the local economy in cooperation with local and State partners.