



Memo

To: Michele Lieberman, Alachua County Manager

Via: Anthony Lyons, City Manager 
Dan Hoffman, Assistant City Manager 

From: Sarit Sela, City Architect

Date: November 29, 2018

Re: Staff feedback on the Alachua County's DRAFT Market Demand Study & Site Options Analysis for a New Multi-Purpose Event Center in Alachua County, Florida, Draft v1 – November 16, 2018, by Victus Advisors.

The Alachua County hired Victus Advisors to produce a Market Demand Study & Site Options Analysis for a New Multi-Purpose Event Center in Alachua County, Florida (“draft Study”). Victus Advisors was tasked with analyzing the market viability of three (3) potential locations for the event center, as defined by the County. Sites include (A) Koppers Site (B) MLK Site, and (C) North Waldo Road Sites (Tacachale Center Site or Alachua County Fairgrounds Site).

On November 20, County staff shared with City staff the draft Study for review. Following the document review, City staff suggests the following feedback about the Site Scoring Matrix criteria and ranking for Site B, 1400 NE 8th Ave (MLK Site) for County consideration (draft Study, pages 89, 94-5).

1. *Site Specifics: Site size and configuration / ability to accommodate building program (draft scoring: 1 out of 3)*

Analysis: The MLK Multi-purpose facility is an indoor recreation facility situated in a 25-acre recreation complex at the northwest corner of the NE 8th Ave and Waldo Rd intersection.

The complex includes the MLK Multi-Purpose facility, the Dwight H. Hunter NE Pool, Citizen's Field (fields) and the Citizen's Field Stadium. In addition, the City owns the neighboring 9-acre site, where the Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) Administration complex, Fire Station #3, and the Kiwanis Safety City are located. Furthermore, the City is potentially partnering with an adjacent private property owner for the redevelopment of a 7-acre property, located just south of the NE 8th Ave and Waldo Rd intersection. This combined property of 41-acres is highly developable and well configured for the proposed event center program as defined by the County. It also has great accessibility and visibility from major transportation corridors.

The draft Study refers to a 10-15 acre MLK site (page 94), but no map or site boundary area are provided.

Please refer to the attached *8th & Waldo presentation (item #180528)* for further details.

Recommendation:

- a. Final Study to include a Site study area map to clearly identify the geographic boundaries of the subject MLK / 8th & Waldo Site.
 - b. City Staff recommends the scoring of 3 out of 3 for this matrix criteria.
2. *Site Specifics: Ability to accommodate additional commercial development on site (draft scoring: 1 out of 3)*

Analysis: In addition to its capacity to accommodate the event center as defined by the County (draft Study, pages 98-101) and discussed above, the MLK / 8th & Waldo Site has the capacity to accommodate additional, highly visible and accessible commercial development, fronting Waldo Rd, NE 8th Ave, and the internal corridor NE 14th St.

High visibility and accessibility are key factors to the potential success of commercial development. The corner configuration of the site allows for highly visible iconic developments. Over 35,000 cars pass by the Waldo Rd and NE 8th Ave intersection daily. Based on recent traffic data, it appears that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate site traffic as both corridors currently operate at a level of service C. In addition, 4 bus routes serve this intersection and thousands of people live within 15-min walk from it, contributing to the site's centrality and accessibility.

Please refer to the attached *8th & Waldo presentation (item #180528)* and *MLK 8th Waldo Concept Plan with Numbers* for further details.

Recommendation: City Staff recommends the scoring of 3 out of 3 for this matrix criteria.

3. *Site Specifics: on-site parking opportunities (draft scoring: 1 out of 3)*

Analysis: The construction of a multi-story central parking garage and some surface parking is feasible on site. The proposed parking garage will replace the GFR admin complex to conveniently serve the entire complex. The garage footprint is compact and efficient, relative to surface parking. As demonstrated in the attached *MLK 8th Waldo Concept Plan with Numbers* document, a 5-story central garage can provide 920 spaces (ground floor parking area of 65,000 sq. ft., and 87,500 sq. ft. parking on all other floors). Additional 80 spaces can be provided (a) as surface parking throughout the site, (b) by the construction of a 6-story garage instead of 5 story, or, (c) by the construction of a secondary garage on the parcel south of NE 8th Ave, as demonstrated in the attached document. Mixed-use development can wrap around the ground floor of the garage structure(s) to increase commercial and community activity, and create a more inviting environment.

Please refer to the attached *8th & Waldo presentation (item #180528)* and *MLK 8th Waldo Concept Plan with Numbers* for further details.

Recommendation: City Staff recommends the scoring of 3 out of 3 for this matrix criteria.

4. *Site Specifics: Environmental considerations, demolition/relocation, and other costs (draft scoring: 2 out of 3)*

Analysis:

- a. The MLK / 8th & Waldo site is not subject to any environmental concerns, such as contamination or flood zone.
- b. In addition, the majority of the site is currently used for compatible recreation uses, and is zoned for public, recreation, and mixed-use uses (see 8th & Waldo presentation (item #180528), slides 12 and 27).
- c. The Site is well equipped with infrastructure and existing facilities that can support future event center redevelopment and save funds (see 8th & Waldo presentation (item #180528), slides 12 and 29).

Recommendation: City Staff recommends the scoring of 3 out of 3 for this matrix criteria.

5. *Economic & Hospitality Factors: Compatibility of adjacent property uses (draft scoring: 2 out of 3)*

Analysis:

- a. The majority of the site is currently used for recreation and is zoned for public service, recreation, and mixed-use, in line with the proposed event center program.
- b. The existing open fields, roads, commercial uses, and easy access to main roads will help buffer additional site activities from nearby neighborhoods.
- c. The adjacent local- and national- level businesses along Waldo Rd, NE 8th Ave and E University Ave would work in synergy with growing activity on this Site. Growing economic and cultural activity in this prime location will help catalyze economic and social activity in East Gainesville.
- d. Please refer to the attached *8th & Waldo presentation (item #180528)* for further details.

Recommendation: City Staff recommends the scoring of 3 out of 3 for this matrix criteria.

6. *Economic & Hospitality Factors: Convenient highway access (draft scoring: 1 out of 3)*

Analysis: The MLK / 8th & Waldo site is located off the Waldo Rd (SR-24), provides easy access to the Gainesville Regional Airport (7-min drive), I-75 (12 min drive), and the cities of Waldo and Jacksonville. Also, E University Ave (SR-26), NE 8th Ave and NE 16th Ave, all main east-west thoroughfares in and from- Gainesville, can be reached within a couple of minutes' drive from the site.

Recommendation: City Staff recommends the scoring of 3 out of 3 for this matrix criteria.

In summary, City staff appreciates the research the County and its Consultants are putting into studying the viability of a County event center. We are pleased the County provided City staff the opportunity to review the document at this early stage, and provide feedback.

City staff believes the draft Study should be revised to include the key points discussed above to accommodate the County's event center program. We hope the backup information provided with this letter can contribute to the County's research of the potential of this site.

City staff will be happy to further assist the County on this effort, and will welcome the opportunity to meet in person or collaborate in any other form the County and its consultants find useful. To date, City

staff have had limited opportunity to engage with the consultant. We would appreciate if you would share this information with your Board of County Commission. Please let us know if you have any questions or need additional information.

CC: Honorable Mayor Poe and Members of the City Commission [City of Gainesville]

Attachments:

- A. 8th & Waldo presentation, City Commission on November 15, 2018, item #180528
- B. MLK 8th Waldo Concept Plan with Numbers

Scenario 2

Preliminary Devt. Data

1. 33,500 sf per floor (2 stories)
2. 45,000 sf per floor (2 – 3 stories)
3. Garage:
 - 65,000 sf gd. floor = 119 spaces
 - 87,500 sf up. floors (5 levels) = 161 spaces/floor
 - Total ± 924 spaces
4. 25,000 sf (1 story)
5. 18,000 sf (2 – 3 stories)
6. 35,000 sf (2 – 3 stories)
7. 14,700 sf (2 – 3 stories)
8. 15,000 sf (2-3 Stories)
9. Garage:
 - 45,000 per floor = 82 spaces
 - x (6 levels) = ± 492 spaces
10. 106,000 sf per floor (2-3 stories)
11. 46,000 sf
12. 52,000 sf
13. 54,000 sf

