

## CITY OF GAINESVILLE 2014 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

### GENERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY

#### **Preserve the City of Gainesville's Strategic Goals and Interests**

As a general policy, the City of Gainesville seeks to preserve its home rule authority to govern the city, its citizens, and its property. The city supports any legislation that will advance the city's strategic goals, that improves the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, or that responsibly increases revenues or enhances the city's authority to conduct the public's business.

The city will oppose any legislation that mandates increased costs or loss of revenues, or that would diminish the fundamental home rule authority of the city. The City of Gainesville will oppose legislation by the State of Florida that preempts local authority to represent the interests of our citizens and will support efforts to repeal such preemptions that currently exist.

#### **Florida League of Cities Legislative Priorities and Key Issues**

The City of Gainesville is a member of the Florida League of Cities (FLC). Members of the Gainesville City Commission and City of Gainesville staff participate in the FLC legislative policy setting process and legislative policy councils. The City Commission generally supports the legislative priorities and key issue positions adopted by FLC. Through the duration of the legislative session, City of Gainesville representatives will communicate our position on specific legislation and our concurrence or differences with the FLC position. As a Charter City under the Florida Constitution, the City of Gainesville supports the Home Rule Authority of local governments.

### GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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#### **Governance of Gainesville Regional Utilities**

**The City of Gainesville opposes any state legislation that alters the governance of Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU).** The governance of GRU is set forth by the charter of the City of Gainesville. Any modification to that governing structure should be by the elected city officials of Gainesville and the voters of the City of Gainesville in accordance with that charter.

#### **Campus Development Agreements**

**The City of Gainesville supports the continued funding of the State University System Concurrency Trust Fund to fully address the impacts of State University System (SUS) campus development on host local governments and supports maintaining Campus Development Agreements (CDA).** Section 1013.30, Florida Statutes, requires that a CDA be formed between the SUS campus and the host local government. CDAs address impacts on local infrastructure and services that the additional density and development of the university have on the surrounding host community. Historically, these agreements have required the SUS to pay a fair share of the costs associated with impacts to: storm water management; potable water; sanitary sewer; solid waste

collection and disposal; parks and recreation; public transportation; and fire rescue services. The SUS has paid for these impacts through the SUS Concurrency Trust Fund which is no longer being funded by the Florida Legislature. In order to maintain the partnerships forged between state universities and their host communities it is important that the Campus Development Agreement process continue unchanged and funding be restored to the SUS Concurrency Trust Fund.

### **Local Government Pension Plans**

Chapters 175 and 185 of the Florida Statutes were established under the pretext of providing a uniform retirement system for Firefighters (175) and Police Officers (185). The statutes authorize the establishment and collection of excise taxes on property and casualty insurance policies sold within a municipalities corporate limits to be used to pay for pension benefits of firefighters and police officers. The Statutes also define minimum benefits and restrict the use of tax receipts above the base year (1997) to be used for “extra benefits.” **The City of Gainesville supports local authority to bargain changes to pension benefits under Statues 175 and 185 as agreed upon by the city and local bargaining units. The city is supportive of amendments to Statutes 175 and 185 to allow a system that provides realistic minimum benefits, to allow for all excess premium tax revenue to be used to provide these benefits, and to allow more flexibility to local governments is essential to enable local governments to react to the rising costs and current revenue pressures.**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Innovation Square**

**The City of Gainesville supports incentive programs available through the State of Florida to encourage the continued development of Innovation Square and the attraction and retention of companies that will utilize Innovation Square and benefit the local and state economy.** Innovation Square is a significant redevelopment project located between Downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida campus. This project is a coordinated effort of the City of Gainesville, the University of Florida, and Shands. From being a super incubator to company relocation, Innovation Square will support research and development companies in the physical, engineering, or life sciences. Innovation Square has the capacity to bring huge benefits to Gainesville. The most obvious impacts will be in the areas of economic development and job creation/retention among other benefits such as the redevelopment of the former Alachua General Hospital site and enhancement of the surrounding properties. Economic development programs such as those aimed at job creation/retention, business startup and incubator funds, and workforce training and development will be beneficial to Innovation Square. Additionally, the City of Gainesville and its Innovation Square development partners will actively pursue funding and incentive programs that can be utilized to assist in the infrastructure needs to improve the Innovation Square site and ultimately attract quality businesses and employers. This includes utility projects and transit service improvements.

## **Job Training and Education**

The City of Gainesville recognizes the importance of a diverse workforce that possesses a variety of talents to attract businesses and spur economic development. For the city to reach its economic development goals and for projects such as Innovation Square and central city redevelopment to be successful it is essential that our citizens have opportunities to receive job training and education. **Gainesville supports the creation of programs and the continuation of existing programs that assists job seekers and the unemployed receive training and education that will allow them to take advantage of existing jobs and jobs that will result from the economic development efforts of the city and its partners. The city supports minority employment programs as well as programs aimed at employment of at-risk populations such those that focus on reducing the recidivism rate of ex-felons.**

### **Eastside Redevelopment Area Initiatives: Former Kennedy Homes & GTEC Sites**

**The largest undertakings of the Eastside Redevelopment area are the redevelopment of the former Kennedy Homes site and the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC) property. These redevelopment initiatives will provide new housing stock and employment opportunities within East Gainesville. The City is seeking funding and/or tax incentives in support of these initiatives to spur economic development, livability and sustainable design in the area. Redevelopment will require utility upgrades, road and parking construction, stormwater treatment solutions, community outreach, marketing and recruiting efforts.**

The sites are located within a quarter mile of each other, about one mile from downtown Gainesville and two miles from the University of Florida, and are situated among well-established neighborhoods, schools and churches, with additional natural amenities located nearby.

The former Kennedy Homes site which once served as public housing was demolished in order to stabilize and revitalize a significant portion of East Gainesville. The site, 15 acres total, contains a vacant 10 acre parcel and approximately 5 acres of wetlands. The redevelopment project will create a community which demonstrates functional sustainability through its design, its systems and its interactions with future residents. A community that embraces new urban design while placing an emphasis on responsible building construction practices and sustainable living systems that integrate engineering, function, and use in order to maximize the residents living experience.

The GTEC business incubator and its associated amenities are located on part of the 12 acre GTEC site and are a key for its redevelopment. The redevelopment project will leverage on the human capital and tangible resources associated with GTEC to spur economic development in the area. The proposed schematic Master Plan layouts an office and retail focused mixed-use development aiming to retain GTEC graduate companies in East Gainesville and attract additional economic activity to the vicinity.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

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*The City of Gainesville will seek funding through the State of Florida during 2014 for the following projects. Funding will be sought through state agencies, grant programs, and other available funding sources.*

### **Little Hatchet/Lake Forest Creek Watershed Management Plans**

Both Little Hatchet Creek and Lake Forest Creek contribute surface water to Newnans Lake which is a hypereutrophic lake due to high concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorous. Newnans Lake is also classified as an impaired water body by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The FDEP (per the adopted 2007 Orange Creek Basin Management Action Plan) has stated that a 74% reduction in total nitrogen and a 59% reduction in phosphorous is required for the lake to not be impaired. The FDEP has also classified Little Hatchet Creek as being impaired for high levels of fecal coliform. Approximately 22% of the nitrogen loading and 28% of the phosphorous loading into Newnans Lake comes from Little Hatchet Creek and Lake Forest Creek.

In order to begin reducing nutrient loading to Newnans Lake and meet the pollution load reduction goals set by the FDEP, the city needs to develop watershed management plans to identify and prioritize water quality improvement projects. This project is going to be included in the St. Johns River Water Management District Orange Creek Basin, Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan and is a priority for the Orange Creek Basin Working Group. **The City of Gainesville is seeking \$200,000 which is 40% of the \$500,000 estimated total cost of developing the updated watershed management plans. Funding will be sought from appropriate State of Florida agencies and grant programs.**

### **Tumblin Regional Wetland**

The City of Gainesville completed a watershed management plan (WMP) for Tumblin Creek. This creek discharges into Bivens Arm which is classified as an impaired water body by the FDEP. Bivens Arm has low levels of dissolved oxygen, high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous and high turbidity. A significant amount of the contributing runoff into Bivens Arm is from Tumblin Creek.

The City of Gainesville has identified (through the recently completed WMP for this watershed) a number of projects that can help in improving the water quality in Tumblin Creek and Bivens Arm. One of the projects identified in the WMP is a regional wetland treatment project which includes the following:

1. Addition of a trash trap in Tumblin Creek before it discharges into Bivens Arm
2. Re-hydration of wetlands adjacent to Tumblin Creek's outlet into Bivens Arm to treat runoff before discharge into Bivens Arm

Estimated removals of TN and TP for the sediment trap (82.7 lbs./yr. and 84.3 lbs./yr., respectively)

In order to improve the water quality in the Tumblin Creek watershed, Bivens Arm and meet the pollutant reduction goals set by the FDEP, the city needs to construct this regional wetland. The cost of all phases of this regional wetland is \$1,000,000. **The city will seek \$1,000,000 from sources including State of Florida agencies and grant programs.**

This work ties directly into the potential storm water management systems envisioned for Innovation Square as well. On-site treatment is proposed at Innovation Square, before the un-treated water reaches the mouth of Tumblin Creek. Through this process, much of the un-treated current run-off will be managed in such a way that it supports the revitalization of the watershed and puts better water into the system.

### **Flooding and Conveyance in Tumblin Creek**

The City of Gainesville has completed a watershed management plan (WMP) for Tumblin Creek and has identified areas with severe conveyance deficiencies. These deficiencies have resulted in flooding due to undersized conveyance structures. The WMP identified 3 major areas of concern and below are these areas listed in priority and their associated costs for improvement:

1. The Innovation Square site: \$820,000
2. The NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue area: \$250,000
3. NW 14<sup>th</sup> Street from University Avenue to NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue: \$350,000

To prevent flooding in these areas and provide the residents in these areas safe access during severe storm events, the city needs to improve the stormwater conveyance system in these flooding areas. **The city is seeking funding from State of Florida agencies and grant programs for all three conveyance upgrades in the priority set above.**

This work also ties directly to the storm management systems envisioned at Innovation Square. The project is conceived of as providing both on-site capacity management, as well as district-wide capacity management for storm water. In addition, the square can act as a gateway into the larger Tumblin Creek system, providing capacity at that point for all upstream runoff. This work will support the overall goal of the district as a model for stormwater management.

### **SW 62nd Blvd Connector: SR24/Archer Rd to SR26/Newberry Rd**

Total Cost: \$100,000,000

Local Match: \$47,000,000 (development contribution)

Funding Needs: \$53,000,000

Description: The SW 62nd Blvd Connector is a project of regional significance with demonstrated potential to reduce congestion and increase safety on the regional, state and federal transportation systems (including portions of I-75, SR 24, SR 26 and SR 121). This project has strong community support and reflects the joint efforts of public agencies to address mobility needs in the metropolitan area. In addition, it aligns with recent efforts by the Florida

Department of Transportation to address mobility needs in the I-75 corridor. The SW 62nd Blvd Connector will enhance system connectivity and expand modal transportation choices increasing mobility and accessibility to all users. The initiative focuses on the construction of a four-lane multimodal facility that expands the transportation network implementing innovative traffic management techniques and creating opportunity for implementation of a bus rapid transit (BRT) system. The project achieves the community's redevelopment objectives by generating employment opportunities, increasing community livability and fostering regional economic growth.

#### **Adaptive Reuse of the former Gainesville Correctional Institute (GCI) property**

**The City of Gainesville is seeking \$ 1,385,000 from the state to assist with the renovation and development of the former Gainesville Correctional Institute (GCI) property in order to provide a variety of human services and neighborhood programs including homeless services. The City has invested \$2.3 million for the project including the purchase of surplus state property. Funding will be sought from appropriate State agencies and grant programs.**

The City of Gainesville is working toward the purchase of the former Gainesville Correctional Institute (GCI) property in November, 2013, in order to develop a full service Human Services campus providing a variety of public services for homeless/needy individuals and families in the community. The facility will be able to offer services such as employment training, laundry facilities, medical, meals, case management, shelter, and additional services once fully operational. The initial funding request will be to renovate the largest assets of GCI; the commercial kitchen & cafeteria and dormitory buildings. Many services will be provided through the commercial kitchen & cafeteria from meals to the homeless, culinary training, to commercial business opportunities, all operating in one facility.

The City has enough funding to bring one of the four dormitory buildings up to code for much needed residential/shelter services, however the other dormitory buildings offer a great opportunity to provide additional shelter services to address housing needs for the homeless, as well as, young people graduating out of the foster care system, at-risk youth, young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age, veterans, families and other shelter needs in the community.

Additionally, due to the size and space available at the site, there are agriculture/horticulture opportunities which could include organic farming, community gardens, food forest, greenhouse operations, aquaculture, composting operations, and more. The City has already reached out to potential partners for their input and expertise in these areas, and has received great response from the community agriculture/horticulture experts.

The GCI project will provide the opportunity for the City to work with the private and public sector in developing the first full service Human Services Campus in the state, and could serve as a model for adaptive reuse.