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Alachua County
Fairgrounds Redevelopment

Zoning Map Amendment
Justification Report

Prepared for Submittal to:
The City of Gainesville, Florida

Prepared on Behalf of:
Alachua County
Board of County Commissioners (BoCC)

Prepared by:



June 15, 2009

Revised July 14, 2009



Statement of Proposed Change

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) is proposing a zoning map Amendment for the existing Alachua County Fairgrounds site and concurrent a Large-scale Future Land Use Map Amendment. The County's existing fairgrounds site currently has a City of Gainesville Conservation Zoning district. The proposed zoning change affects only the western ± 74 acres of the property, leaving ± 28 acres of the site in a Conservation (see Illustration 3B) Zoning district. The proposed rezoning designates ± 74 acres with the newly adopted Business Industrial (BI) zoning district, promoting redevelopment and new employment opportunities. This change supports Plan East Gainesville's, and many of the City of Gainesville and Alachua County's Comprehensive Plans' goals, objectives, and policies.

Plan East Gainesville's summary report, endorsed by both the City and County recommends that the existing fairgrounds site be used as an "office and industrial mixed-use employment center." In support of this goal, the City of Gainesville Commission amended their Comprehensive Plan in 2004 to add *Policy 2.1.5* of the Future Land Use Element. This Policy calls on the City to work together with the County towards the goal of creating this mixed-use employment center. This rezoning application is an example of that continued coordinated effort.

As a continued step towards this goal, the City of Gainesville created the Business Industrial (BI) Future Land Use designation and Zoning district for use in appropriate and compatible areas throughout the City. To further the City's and County's shared goals, objectives, and policies, and to bring redevelopment to the Fairgrounds property, the BoCC is seeking to amend the existing zoning district to Business Industrial (BI), a district that will allow redevelopment in the form of business development, commerce, and establishing an employment generating activity center.

Appropriate development implementation on the Fairground's property will be coordinated with the City of Gainesville. The concurrently submitted Large-scale Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment application for the site complements the requested zoning district and provides limitations to the distribution of uses, design criteria, landscaping, pedestrian, and vehicular access. Further, as a major step towards implementing Plan East Gainesville, the City and County will continue to move towards the further implementation of a sustainable development plan for the Gainesville urbanized area, and the City of Gainesville itself.

*Responses to Application***A. Surrounding Land Uses**

The Fairgrounds site is located north of State Road 222 / NE 39th Avenue and east of State Road 24 / Waldo Road, adjacent to the Gainesville Regional Airport. The site includes the Alachua County Agricultural Extension office, as well as the existing Alachua County Fairgrounds. Surrounding uses include the Gainesville Regional Airport to the north and east. To the south of the site are community supportive services such as the University of Florida Library System off-site storage warehouse, the Alachua County Jail, the Work Release Program, and the George Kirkpatrick Law Enforcement Training Center. To the west of the site, across Waldo Road, is a commercial/industrial area and land owned by the City of Gainesville. Please see Figure 1 and Illustrations 1B and 2A. Existing land uses surrounding the site will not be adversely affected by the proposed land use change.

Figure 1: Surrounding Property Uses and Future Land Use Designations

Direction	Property Use	Future Land Use Designation
North	Gainesville Regional Airport	Public Facilities, Conservation
East	Gainesville Regional Airport	Public Facilities
South	University of Florida Library off-site storage, the Alachua County Jail, Work Release Program, and George Kirkpatrick Law Enforcement Training Center	Public Facilities
West	Gas Station, Tool Rental Facility	Commercial, Industrial

B. Adjacent Land Use and Zoning**Figure 2: Surrounding Property Uses and Zoning Districts**

Direction	Property Use	Zoning District
North	Gainesville Regional Airport	Public Services, Conservation
East	Gainesville Regional Airport	Public Services,
South	University of Florida Library off-site storage, the Alachua County Jail, Work Release Program, and George Kirkpatrick Law Enforcement Training Center	Public Services,
West	Gas Station, Tool Rental Facility	General Business (BUS), Limited Industrial (I-1)

Generally, there is Institutional/Public and Commercial-type land uses located along three sides of the proposed development. Located south/southwest of the site are small-scale industrial/automotive uses. The requested BI Zoning is effectively a mix of uses,

currently existing within the area (i.e. Business, Industrial, and Office). The requested action is appropriate given the urban location and access to public facilities.

C. Impact on Residential Streets

The site is located adjacent to the Gainesville Regional Airport (GRA), a one-hundred foot (100') SR 222 right-of-way, and 260 foot SR 24 / Waldo Road right-of-way. Much of the existing development pattern is Institutional/Public and Commercial in nature, consisting of Alachua County Jail, George Kirkpatrick Law Enforcement Training Center, and GRA. The project site will have direct access onto SR 222 and will request a connection to the new GRA access roadway to promote sound transportation planning, interconnectivity, and support multiple emergency access points. There are no residential streets within the immediate area. Thus, it is not anticipated that the proposed land use change will impact residential streets in any manner.

D. Impact on noise and lighting

The GRA main terminal facility is located to the north of and immediately adjacent to the fairground's property. The airport has several hazard zones associated with it, including noise and height zones. The least impacted zone, the 65 Ldn noise zone, extends onto the Fairgrounds property (Figure 3). However, according to the Federal Aviation Administrations' (FAA's) recommended use for this zone, business uses may be allowed to occur on the site. Appropriate building techniques will be used to ensure minimal noise impact for buildings located within the 65 Ldn noise zone.

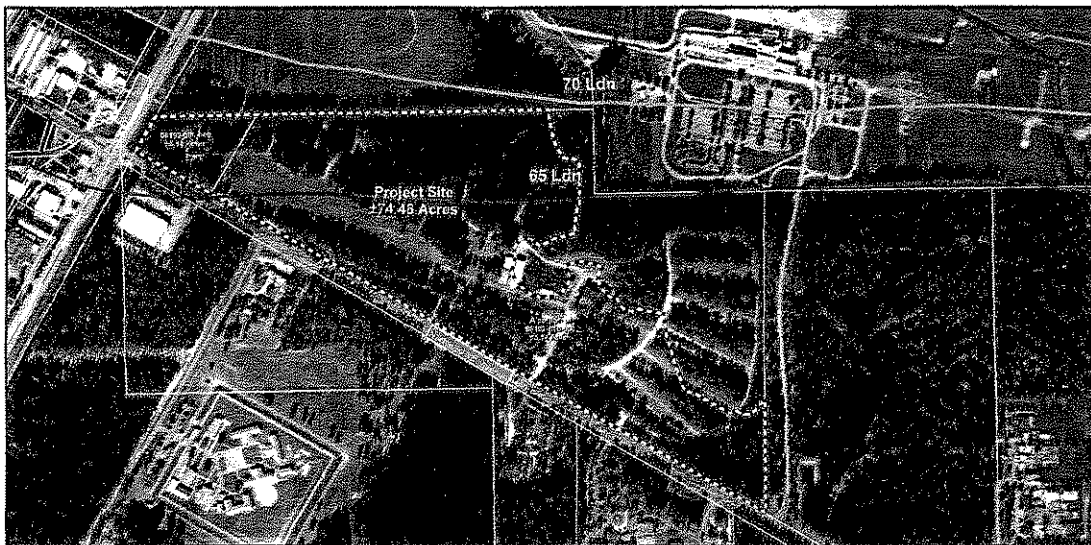


Figure 3: Airport Noise Zones

In addition to the adopted noise zone, the City of Gainesville has also established a height notification zone. Buildings that exceed one foot (1') of elevation for every one-hundred feet (100') of horizontal distance from the runway will be required to notify the FAA and receive verification that they do not create a navigation hazard. The Fairgrounds site

ranges in horizontal distance from approximately fourteen-hundred feet (1,400') at the closest to thirty-seven hundred feet (3,700') at the farthest, which will allow for buildings between one (1) and three (3) stories tall without notification. Should taller buildings be constructed on the site, all necessary determinations and notifications will be made.

A mixed-use employment center will not adversely affect the public facilities south of the site. Lighting or noise that may be associated with proposed development will not adversely affect adjacent properties, as they are already well lit and most are fully enclosed or security controlled sites. Additionally, most sites are set back from SR 222/NE 39th Avenue, which is a major four (4) lane arterial roadway adjacent to the site. Appropriate buffers, as may be necessary, will be used to further contain any potential noise or impact from the site.

E. Environmental Features

The current Alachua County fairgrounds site is larger than the proposed zoning map amendment. Therefore, areas of the site that are excluded from the proposed amendment consist mostly of wetland areas on the property's eastern side. These wetland areas have been historically impacted by the provision of parking areas. In concert with Plan East Gainesville's, the City of Gainesville's, and Alachua County's goals is the exclusion of the wetlands areas from potential development. Retaining the existing Conservation Future Land Use and Zoning designations on these wetland areas promotes this shared goal. In addition, Alachua County will work with the City of Gainesville to restore environmentally-sensitive areas by removing exotic invasive species and developing wetlands mitigation plans.

As part of this application, a comprehensive evaluation of the wetlands was performed by David W. Hall Consulting. Dr. Hall's study included delineation of on-site wetland areas and existing habitat evaluation. The delineated wetlands, which have been reviewed by the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (AC-EPD), are shown in Illustration 4. The project site's eastern edge has generally been defined by a seventy-five foot (75') wetland buffer. No rehabilitation plan has been developed. During the fairgrounds site redevelopment, a restoration plan will be created. For wetland areas that may exist on the developed portion of the site, an average fifty foot (50')/thirty-five foot (35") minimum buffer will be established to protect these natural resources.

The fairgrounds site is also within the City's Secondary and Tertiary Wellfield Protection Zones (Figure 4, Page 5). These zones carry specific restrictions on the types of uses that may occur. While the Business Industrial (BI) zoning district allows for light industrial uses, any development that may occur on the site would be required to meet the standards of the Wellfield Protection District. On-site uses will be limited to those that are compatible with the District and those uses must comply with applicable Land Development Regulations requirements throughout the course of redevelopment.

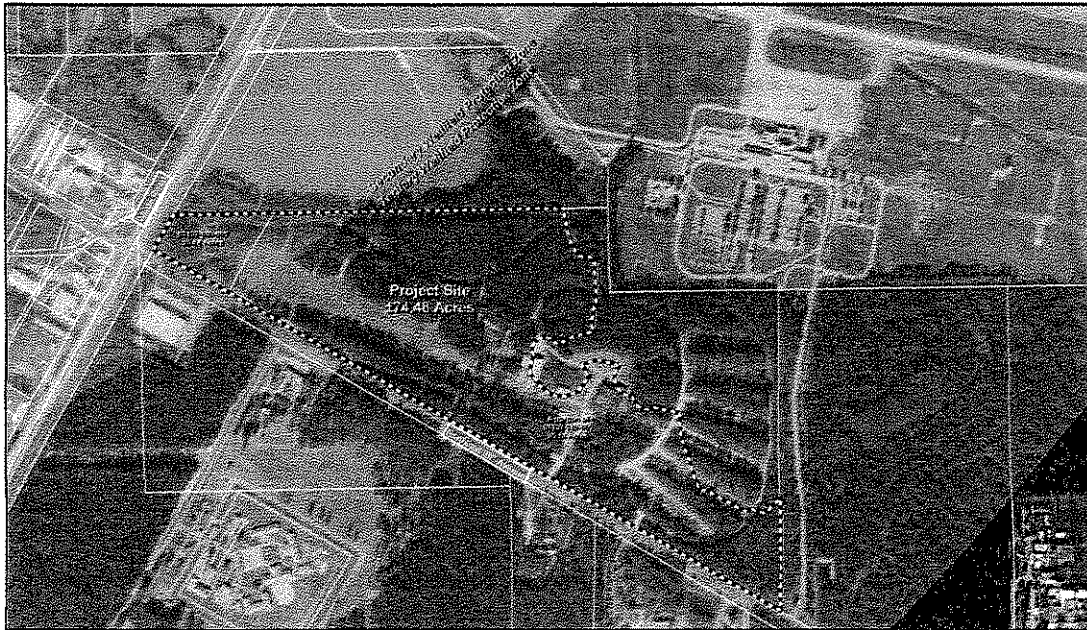


Figure 4: Wellfield Protection Zones

F. Community Contribution

The Alachua County Fairgrounds redevelopment project will support several of the City's and County's Comprehensive Plans' Goals, Objectives, and Policies. First among these is respect for the natural environment. By setting aside nearly 28 acres of land as conservation and committing to a restoration plan, the Fairgrounds site will aid in the protection of the Newnan's Lake watershed and overall context area. Further, these areas will serve as community recreation areas, providing a recreation terminus to the proposed Northeast 27th Street Greenway.

Redevelopment of the Fairgrounds site as a mixed-use office/light-industrial project also supports the City's and community's initiative to recruit more technology-based research and development firms. Through the presence of the University of Florida, it is natural to tap into the talent that is produced and the wealth of research-oriented activities that develop within major universities. In addition, the City's unique personality and size make it attractive to technology and "creative class" companies who wish to relocate. The Fairgrounds site will add to the City's supply of sites that can accommodate a wide variety of users that wish to have larger facilities than would be possible within the Urban Mixed Use areas of the City, mainly due to the size of the available land within the site.

The development of a mixed-use environment further supports the goals of the City and County. By providing community supportive retail and service uses within the project site, redevelopment of the Fairgrounds property will provide an opportunity to reduce the number of external trips generated by its users. Individuals who work at the site will have on-site recreation and supportive services available to them. With the provision of sidewalks within the development, the use of automobiles within the site will be reduced.

G. Potential Long-term Economic Benefits

As a mixed-use employment center, the former Alachua County Fairgrounds site will provide a northern gateway to East Gainesville and create a definitive activity center. The provision of supportive retail and service uses will provide for efficient development with minimal external impacts. At the same time, its location on Waldo Road and at the terminus of the proposed Northeast 27th Street Greenway provides opportunities for residents to live close to work and walk, ride their bike, or use public transit for daily commutes. Both existing Route 24 and future Route 25 will serve the project site. In addition, the provision of Bus Rapid Transit on either the Northeast 27th Street Greenway or Waldo Road provide additional community transit service.

While the economic benefits for East Gainesville are significant, ties to the Northeast 27th Street Greenway are also important. The provision of walking trails and interpretive - site materials will benefit the community as whole by providing recreation and enjoyment of the on- site natural resources. Another benefit will be the expansion of transit directly to the site and, potentially, support for enhanced transit service in the area in the form of additional routes or increased frequency, as the site matures and fully develops.

H. Level of Service Standards

The proposed Zoning Map amendment will change portions of the existing Alachua County Fairgrounds site's City of Gainesville Conservation zoning to City of Gainesville Business Industrial. This request represents an increase in permitted density as demonstrated throughout this report. LOS calculations are based on the net increase in density/intensities.

Based on Figure 5 below, the City of Gainesville Business Industrial Density Residential Zoning is more intensive than the Conservation Zoning resulting in an overall increase in the potential impacts to the Level of Service standards.

Figure 5. Future Land Use Comparison

Zoning (Municipality)	Description	Density / Intensity
Conservation (Gainesville)	Conservation	0.2 du/ac
Business Industrial (maximum)	Urban Employment	4.0 FAR
Business Industrial (probable)		2.0 FAR

Roadways:

The project site is located within Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA) Zone A. Subsequently, the redevelopment project is not required to meet the LOS standards, as set by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for SR 222 and SR 24, given that that a feasible funding mechanism has been established to mitigate transportation impacts. Trip generation for the proposed change is presented in the Figure 6: Estimated Trip Generation.

Figure 6. Estimated Trip Generation

Land Use (ITE Code)	Units	PM Peak Rate	Average PM Total	PM Peak Hr Enter/Exit
<i>Proposed Potential</i>				
Research & Development Center (ITE 760)	74.48 acres	15.44	1,150	138/1,012
<i>Existing Potential</i>				
University/College (ITE 550)	7 employees	0.88	6	2/4
County Park (ITE 412)	74.48 acres	0.06	5	2/3
Total Net Increase			1,139	134

1. Trip generation rates are from the Institute of Traffic Engineers, *Trip Generation*, 8th Edition. No pass-by or internal capture rates were used. All generation used the linear rate. Intensities are estimated based on acreage and current listed employees.

As required by Florida State Statute, the following impact analysis is based on a maximum (theoretical) development scenario. Many factors will restrict the project site from reaching this maximum development scenario. For example, the project site is located within the Airport zone of influence resulting in building height limitations on portions of the site. In addition, required parking, landscaping, buffers, etc. will result in the overall building intensity to be lessened. Therefore, a probable development scenario may be between 1.5 and 2.0 FAR.

Potable Water ($FAR\ 4.0 \times 74.48\ acres = 12,977,395\ sq.\ ft.$):

$(12,977,395\ sq.\ ft.) \times (0.1\ gallons\ per\ sq.\ ft.\ per\ day) \times (1.6\ water\ LOS\ to\ wastewater\ LOS\ ratio) = 2,076,384\ gallons\ per\ day.$

Wastewater Flow ($FAR\ 4.0 \times 74.48\ acres = 12,977,395\ sq.\ ft.$):

$(12,977,395\ sq.\ ft.) \times (0.1\ gallons\ per\ square\ foot\ per\ day) = 1,297,740\ gallons\ per\ day.$

Solid Waste Generated ($FAR\ 4.0 \times 74.48\ acres = 12,977,395\ sq.\ ft.$):

Solid waste generation disposal will not exceed the City's established LOS of 0.655 tons of solid waste per capita per year disposed (3.6 pounds of solid waster per capita per day disposed). Solid waste generation collection will not exceed the City's established level of service of 1.07 tons of solid waste per capita per year collected (5.9 pounds of solid waste per capita per day collected).

$(12,977,395\ sq.\ ft.) \times (5.34\ lbs/square\ feet/year) = 34,649\ tons/year$

Recreation:

There are no estimated recreation impacts from the proposed amendment.

Public Schools:

There are no estimated Public Schools impacts from the proposed amendment.

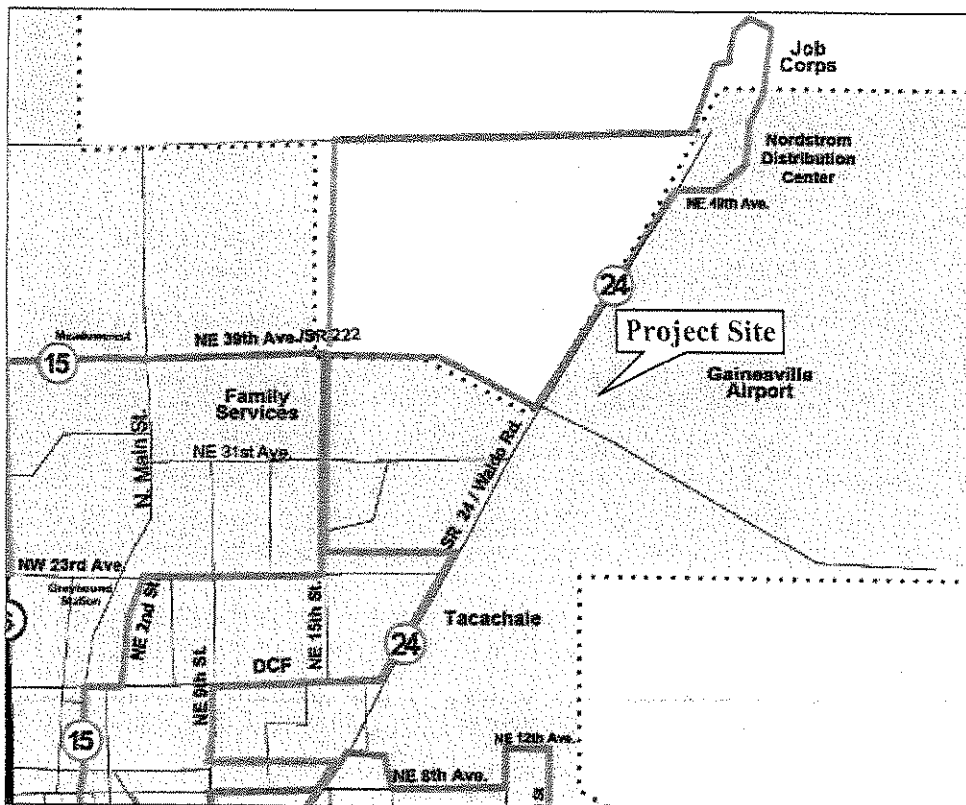
Access by Transit, Bikeways, and Pedestrian Facilities

The project site is located on State Road 24/Waldo Road and State Road 222/NE 39th Avenue. State Road 24/Waldo Road is served by the Regional Transit System (RTS) route #24. RTS route #24 is accessible from various stops along Waldo Road, including an existing transit stop at the project site.

Being directly connected to an existing RTS transit facility, commercial shopping, and restaurants increases the likelihood for future residents to utilize public transit. Figure 7 illustrates the availability of RTS transit to the site.

Figure 7. Regional Transit System (RTS) Routes Proximate to Project Site

Source: <http://www.go-rts.com>



SR 222 / NE 39th Avenue is listed in the City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Mobility Element as having a "Bike Lane or Paved Shoulder" on the Bicycle Facility Types Map. While SR 24 / Waldo Road, south of the site, is listed as having an off-street bicycle facility. Access to regionally-scaled shopping and the University of Florida context area can be accomplished by bicycle from the site. On-site parking facilities for bicycles will also be provided to allow for additional multi-modal opportunities within the redevelopment site.