

Land Use Analysis Shands/Alachua General Hospital University Heights Neighborhood

Early in 2002, the University of Florida Real Estate Department asked the City Commission to evaluate the merits of revising the land use and zoning of parcels within the University Heights neighborhood owned by the University through Shands Hospital/Alachua General Hospital (AGH). The objective was to encourage the redevelopment of parcels that may be underutilized in a location that would benefit from additional commercial and residential development. The Commission was interested in the issue of whether the current land use and zoning is consistent with Dover Kohl's vision for the area, and directed staff to report back after preparing an analysis of the merits of this proposal.

Planning Division Staff Analysis and Recommendations

Staff studied an area in the northeastern portion of the University Heights neighborhood where a concentration of Shands/AGH ownership exists. The area is 57 acres in size, or 48 acres when streets are not included. Note that not all of the study area is owned by Shands/AGH.

The bases for the selection of the area are the overall objectives of the University Heights Special Area Plan and the many policies recently adopted by the City in its Urban Design (UDE), Transportation Mobility (TME) and Future Land Use (FLUE) Elements of the 2001 Gainesville Comprehensive Plan. Such policies and objectives call for residential infill development in appropriate locations, mixed use, and higher densities in appropriate locations to improve transportation and housing choice, the overall health of downtown housing and retail, and quality of life. The relevant policies from the plan are found in the appendix of this report.

This area is crucial for achieving a large number of goals and objectives in the City Comprehensive Plan. High-quality residential, walkable urban design, and healthy retail uses are critical here, since the area is adjacent to the University of Florida campus to its west and downtown Gainesville to its east—both of which are extremely important centers of activity for the community. By protecting or providing healthy residential and retail development, and doing so with walkable design, Gainesville can take dramatic, effective steps toward achieving a number of community objectives, such as reducing urban sprawl, reducing traffic problems, providing more housing and travel choice, improving in-town retail and service health, reducing crime and vacancy problems, and improving the overall quality of life.

Gainesville suffers if this University Heights area is not healthy—particularly because of its being nestled between the campus and downtown.

Staff calculated the percentage of existing uses in this area to determine the character of the area and whether it is, in fact, an underused area.

Proportion of Uses in Study Area

| Use | Percent of Total |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Asphalt Surface Parking | 50% |
| Office | 19% |
| Retail/Service | 12% |
| Residential | 9% |
| Hospital | 7% |
| Vacant | 1% |

As the table shows, approximately half of the area is consumed by surface parking lots—lots that often reduce neighborhood vibrancy, safety, and walkability. Surface parking lots also tend to be a relatively inefficient use of land in a downtown.

In addition, approximately one-fifth of the area is used for offices.

Staff then considered whether there were zoning and land use classifications which would provide more efficient, beneficial use of the area.

Within the study area, staff established criteria to decide that certain areas would be most appropriate for consideration of new classifications:

- Parcels that currently have an office-residential designation;
- Parcels that do not contain uses which would be made non-conforming with a residential or mixed-use designation;
- Parcels owned by Shands/AGH; or
- Parcels that have designations that do not allow higher density residential or retail.

Removed from consideration in the study area, therefore, were parcels south of SW 2nd Avenue between SW 6th Street and SW 10th Street, and parcels in the north and northeast portions of the study area.

This left a group of parcels generally located north of SW 2nd Avenue between SW 6th Street and SW 10th Street.

These parcels were selected if they were owned by Shands/AGH, had land use and zoning designations that did not support higher density residential or mixed use, or both.

Many of these parcels are currently designated as OR (office residential), which allows residential uses up to 20 units per acre. One parcel has MD (medical) zoning. Parcels adjacent to the south carry MD zoning. Parcels to the north carry MU-1 (mixed use low intensity) zoning, as do the parcels adjacent to the east. Parcels adjacent to the west carry OR (office residential) and RH-1 (8-43 du/ac residential high) zoning. All of these adjacent designations would be compatible with residential high or mixed use zoning.

After reviewing existing city zoning designations, staff recommends applying MU-1 (mixed use low) and RH-2 (residential high density, 8-100 units per acre). See attached map. Underlying land uses will also need to be changed to MUL (mixed-use low density, 8-30 du/ac) and RH (residential high density, 8-100 du/ac).

Alternatively, staff would recommend RH-1 (residential high density, 8-43 units per acre) in lieu of RH-2 (see attached map). Compared to RH-2, which allows up to 100 units per acre, there is considerably less allowable maximum density with RH-1, and it matches the RH-1 zoning to the west. A disadvantage of RH-1 relative to RH-2 is that it does not allow various office uses, nor does it allow secondary retail uses, both of which are allowed by special use permit in the RH-2 district.

The important differences between the existing OR and MD zoning districts and the proposed RH and MU-1 zoning districts are that the latter would allow higher density residential use, and a much broader mix of office and retail use. A change to MU-1 zoning would allow the existing medical uses to remain conforming. The properties proposed for RH-2 (or RH-1) zoning would allow the existing residential uses to remain conforming. Currently, Regional Transit System bus routes 4, 5, 6, and 10 serve these parcels.

Staff believes the RH-2 (or RH-1) and MU-1 zoning could provide more vibrancy, improved property values, improved retail and service health, and more transportation and housing choice in the area. This portion of the neighborhood contains many modestly sized lots, as well as larger lots. Special attention will have to be given to the design of any proposed new construction in parcels adjacent to the University Heights Historic District to assure compatibility with the historic character of that district.

Staff recommends that the City initiate a petition to change designations of these parcels as described above.

Attachments

- Applicable Policies from the Gainesville Comprehensive Plan
- Aerial photo of study area
- Parcels proposed for re-zoning

Appendix

Applicable Policies from the Gainesville Comprehensive Plan:

Urban Design Element

- Policy 2.1.2** The City shall, through appropriate land development regulations, allow and encourage a range of housing patterns, including row house developments, vertical mixed-use, and other multi-family development at appropriate locations – particularly near neighborhood centers.
- Policy 3.7.1** The City shall recognize the potential of University Heights to be a mixed-use, attractive neighborhood proximate to the University and downtown by adopting and maintaining a Special Area Plan for University Heights as an attractive place to live, work, and shop.
- Policy 3.7.2** The City shall continue to coordinate with the Community Redevelopment Agency to invest in appealing pedestrian streetscape in University Heights in order to encourage livability of this neighborhood near the city's center and provide walkable, and inviting sidewalks.

Future Land Use Element

- Policy 1.1.1** To the extent possible, all planning shall be in the form of complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.
- Policy 1.1.2** To the extent possible, neighborhoods should be sized so that housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other.
- Policy 1.1.3** Neighborhoods should contain a diversity of housing types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries.
- Policy 1.1.4** The city and its neighborhoods, to the extent possible, shall have a center focus that combines commercial, civic, cultural and recreational uses.
- Policy 1.2.3** The City should encourage mixed use development, where appropriate.
- Policy 1.5. 9** The land use map should designate appropriate areas for multi-family residential development in close proximity to neighborhood centers and important transit routes. When appropriate and in a way not detrimental to single-family neighborhoods, the City should encourage the establishment of residential, retail, office, and civic uses within ¼-mile of the center of neighborhood centers as an effective way to reduce car trips and promote transit, walking, and bicycling.

Policy 2.1.2 The City's Future Land Use Plan should strive to accommodate increases in student enrollment at the University of Florida and the location of students, faculty, and staff in areas designated for multi-family residential development and/or appropriate mixed-use development within 1/2 mile of the University of Florida campus and the medical complex east of campus (rather than at the urban fringe), but outside of single-family neighborhoods.

Policy 4.1.3 The City will review proposed changes to the Future Land Use Map by considering factors such as, but not limited to, the following:

1. Overall compatibility of the proposal;
2. Surrounding land uses;
3. Environmental impacts and constraints;
4. Whether the change promotes urban infill; and
5. Whether the best interests, community values, or neighborhood support is achieved.

In no case shall this or any other Policy in the Future Land Use Element indicate a presumption that the City shall support a change of designation of land use for any parcel.

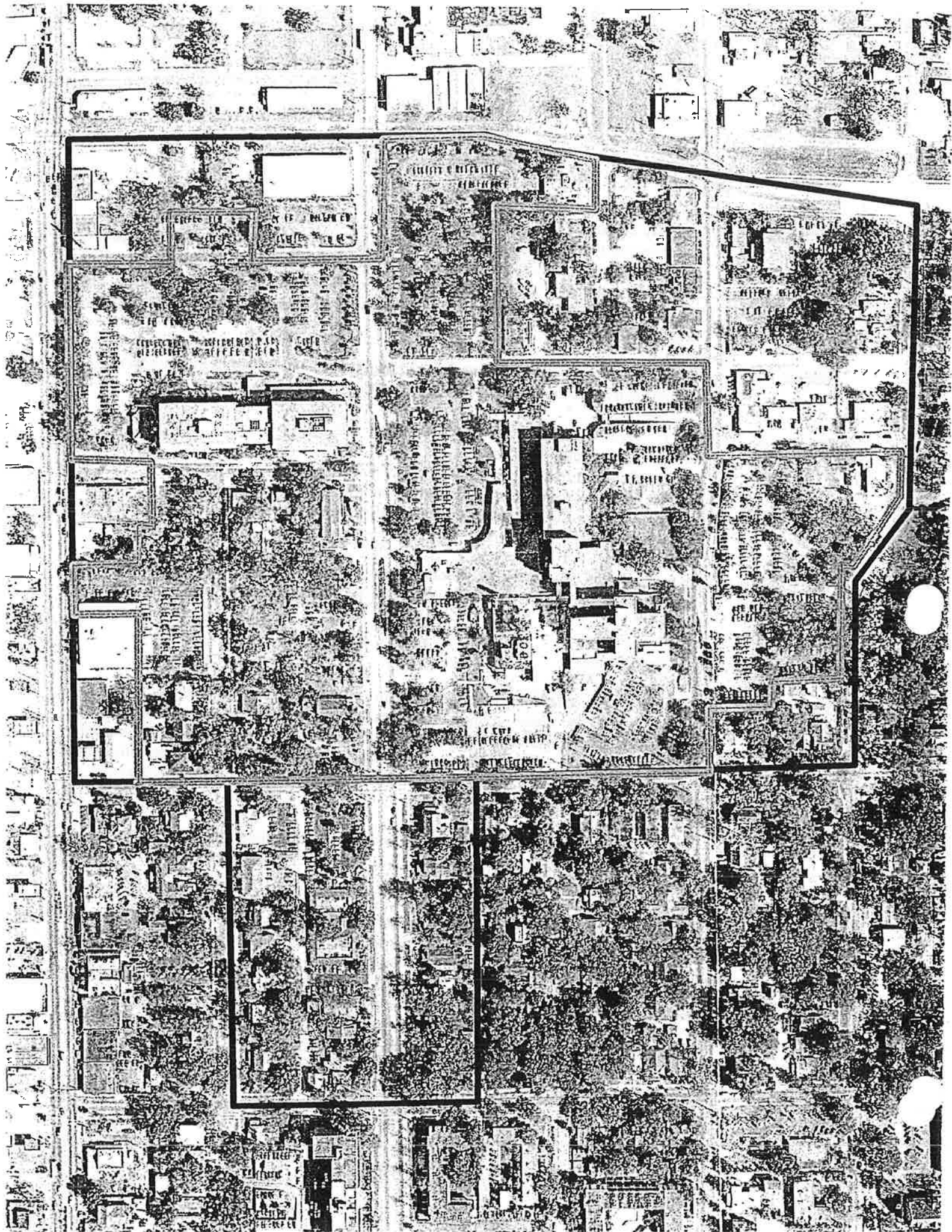
Transportation Mobility Element

Policy 1.2.1 The City's future land use map shall remain consistent with transportation choice strategies such as: retaining higher residential densities and non-residential intensities near and within neighborhood (activity) centers and within transit route corridors; car-oriented land uses primarily outside of areas oriented toward transportation choice; mixed use designations in appropriate locations; and centrally located community-serving facilities.

Policy 3.1.1 The City shall strive to increase the amount of land designated for multi-family development, when appropriate, on the Future Land Use Map near important transit stops along arterials and collectors.

Policy 3.2.1 The City shall strive for a residential density of at least 8 units per acre for developments in areas that are or will be served by frequent transit. The City shall strive for an average net residential density of up to 6 du/acre citywide.

Policy 3.2.3 The City shall strive to provide main bus service within ¼ mile of 80 percent of all medium and high density residential areas identified on the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan, and within the RTS service area.



WEST UNIVERSITY AVENUE

STATE ROAD NO. 26

MU_1

RH_2

MU_1

RH_1

SW 1ST AVENUE

RH_2

OR

OR

SW 2ND AVENUE

OR

RH_2

RH_1

SW 3RD AVENUE

RH_2

RH_2

Existing Zoning

Legend

■ ■ ■ Proposed Re-Zoning Area

▤ ▤ ▤ AGH Owned Area

▭ Study Area

SW 5TH AVENUE

SW 4TH AVENUE

RH_2

SW 10TH STREET

OF

MD

OF

OF

OF

MD

MD

MU-1

OR

MU-1

OR

MU-1

OR

SW 8TH STREET

OR

OR

OR

OR

OR

MD

MD

SW 8TH STREET

OF

MD

OF

OF

SW 3RD AVENUE

OF

MD

SW 7TH STREET

MD

MD

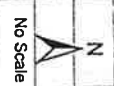
MU_1

SW 6TH STREET

OF

SEABOARD COASTLINE

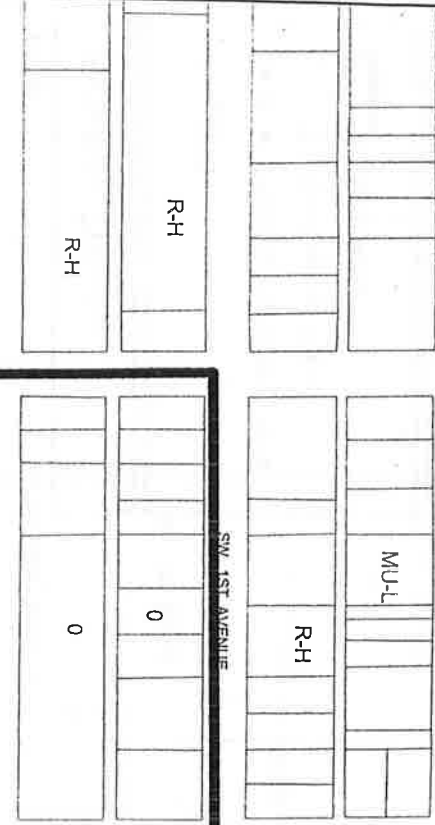
City of Gainesville
Gainesville, Florida
Department of Community Development
June 24-2002



WEST UNIVERSITY AVENUE

STATE ROAD NO. 26

NW 1ST AVE

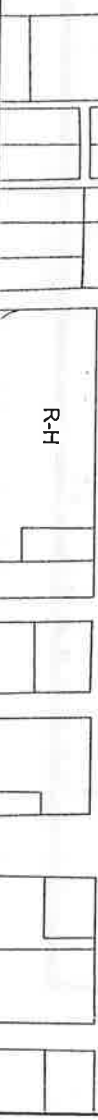
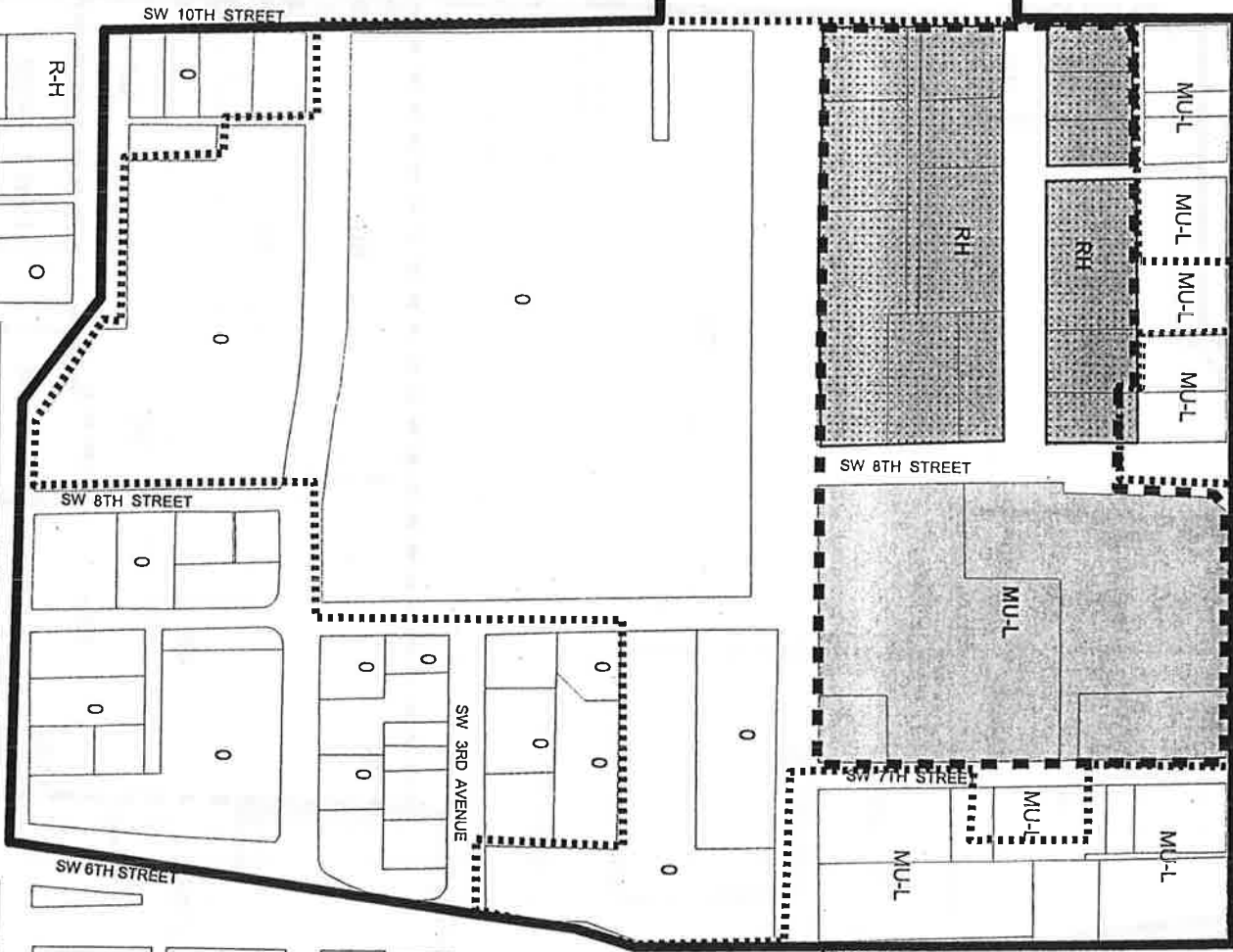


Proposed Land Use

Legend

- MU-L
- RH
- Proposed Land use change
- AGH Owned Area
- Study Area

City of Gainesville
 Gainesville, Florida
 Department of Community Development
 June 24, 2002



WEST UNIVERSITY AVENUE

STATE ROAD NO. 26

MU_1

RH_2

MU_1

RH_1

RH_2

OR

OR

SW 1ST AVENUE

SW 2ND AVENUE

OR

RH_1

SW 3RD AVENUE

RH_2






SW 4TH AVENUE

RH_2

SW 5TH AVENUE

Proposed Zoning

Legend

-  MU-1
-  RH-1
-  Proposed Re-Zoning Area
-  AGH Owned Area
-  Study Area

City of Gainesville
 Gainesville, Florida
 Department of Community Development
 June 27, 2002



SW 10TH STREET

OF MD OF OF

OF OF

MD

MID

RH-1

RH-1

MU-1

MU-1

MU-1

SW 6TH STREET

MU-1

SW 8TH STREET

OF MD OF

OF OF

SW 3RD AVENUE

OF

MID

SW 7TH STREET

MU_1

SW 6TH STREET

OF

SEABOARD COASTLINE

WEST UNIVERSITY AVENUE

STATE ROAD NO. 26

MU_1

RH_2

MU_1

RH_1

RH_2

OR

OR

SW 2ND AVENUE

OR






RH_2

RH_1

SW 3RD AVENUE

Proposed Zoning

Legend

-  MU-1
-  RH-2
-  Proposed Re-Zoning Area
-  AGH Owned Area
-  Study Area

City of Gainesville
 Gainesville, Florida
 Department of Community Development
 June 24, 2002

SW 5TH AVENUE

SW 4TH AVENUE

RH_2

RH_2



SW 10TH STREET

OF

MD

OF

OF

OR

MD

MD

RH-2

MU-1

RH-2

MU-1

MU-1

SW 8TH STREET

MU-1

SW 8TH STREET

OF

MD

OF

OF

SW 3RD AVENUE

OF

MID

SW 7TH STREET

MU_1

SW 6TH STREET

OF

SEABOARD COASTLINE