

Downtown Gainesville Redevelopment Plan

Prepared for
City of Gainesville

Community Development Department

August 2001



Prepared by

Ivey, Harris and Walls, Inc.

631 S. Orlando Ave., Suite 200
Winter Park, FL 32789



Table of Contents

Introduction & Executive Summary of the Finding of Necessity	2
Introduction	3
Document Organization	3
A Historic Perspective	4
The Community Redevelopment Area Defined	5
Modification of Community Redevelopment Plans	7
Blight Defined by Florida Statutes	7
Finding of Necessity	8
Executive Summary	8
Data and Analysis	10
Physical Conditions Summary	11
Property Tax Role History	16
Programmed Study Area Projects: CIP, City, and FDOT	17
Analysis & Summary	21
Redevelopment Plan & Implementation	23
Plan Subareas	24
Summary Description of the Plan	24
Central Business District	26
Transitional Industrial Areas	29
Downtown Neighborhoods	31
Corridor Commercial	35
Proposed Redevelopment Projects: Plan Concepts	36
Neighborhood Impact Element	39
City of Gainesville Housing Division	39
City of Gainesville Block Grant Division	39
Gainesville Neighborhood Housing Development Corporation	40
Habitat for Humanity	40
Sources of Redevelopment Funding and Finance	41
Tax Increment Revenues	41
Other Funding Sources / Mechanisms	44
Appendix	46
Authority to Undertake Community Redevelopment	48
Creation of the Community Redevelopment Agency	48
The Community Redevelopment Area	48

Introduction & Executive Summary of the Finding of Necessity

Introduction

The area known as “Downtown Gainesville” constitutes the City’s downtown business district and several neighborhoods in the immediate surrounding environs. Extending from the historic City center at University Avenue and Main Street, the “downtown” is effectively defined by North 8th Avenue, the Waldo Road/ Williston Road corridors, Depot Avenue and West 6th Street.

When the City of Gainesville was initially established in the mid-19th century, the downtown featured a central marketplace that was situated around the courthouse, a town square and the railroad. By the turn of the 20th century, Gainesville was a regional hub of business and agricultural trade.

Unfortunately, the downtown began to decline as the primary marketplace shortly after the end of World War II. As the city’s population increased, this growth was accommodated by new residential subdivisions that were developed west and northwest of the University of Florida. Shopping centers followed this westward shift, diminishing business activity in the once vital commercial downtown. As with many towns and cities across the country, the post war suburban migration drained the vitality of the traditional central place.

Interest surfaced in redeveloping the downtown in the early 1960s. This initiative culminated in 1981, whereby Resolution R-81-32 of the City Commission designated a 171-acre portion of the City as the Downtown Redevelopment Area. The 1981 Finding of Necessity for the Downtown area indicated a number of “blighting” factors, including pedestrian and automobile circulation conflicts; deteriorating and inadequate underground utility lines; an increased crime rate; the extensive diversity of parcel ownership and the deteriorated condition of many residential and nonresidential buildings.

In 1999 the City Commission voted to expand the existing downtown CRA to integrate adjacent neighborhoods into the downtown and to address broader issues that would impact the area’s progress in redevelopment. In accordance with Section 163.361, Florida Statutes, the City requested a modified finding of necessity in order to expand the original CRA boundary to include lands to the south and east. The consulting firm of Ivey, Harris & Walls (IH&W) was thus commissioned to assess the downtown area in

terms of the continued need for redevelopment, to update the original data from the 1981 blight study, and to incorporate data for the proposed expansion area. The analysis indicated that “blighted” conditions continued to exist in the greater downtown area, inclusive of the proposed expansion area, and was adopted by the Gainesville City Council in February 2001.

IH&W was subsequently authorized to prepare the statutorily required Redevelopment Plan for the expanded Downtown Redevelopment Area. In general, this document serves to update the previous findings and initiatives of the original Downtown Plan, and to augment the planning strategies to include the expanded, primarily residential areas to the SE and SW of the Central Business District.

Document Organization

The following sections document the planning process and the results in this Community Redevelopment Plan for Downtown Gainesville:

- the Redevelopment Plan Study Area;
- summary of the Finding of Necessity;
- existing conditions of the Redevelopment Area;
- the Redevelopment Plan, including Objectives and Strategies;
- funding sources for Redevelopment; and
- the continued operational parameters of the CRA.

A Historic Perspective

Downtown Gainesville began in the mid-19th century as the hub of the town's activities. In the mid-1880s, a Town Square developed around a courthouse, with surrounding retail establishments, offices and hotels. Built in 1881, the railroad line through the heart of town spurred construction of a number of buildings along the railroad, as well as in the downtown core. As described in a 1979 preservation study, the downtown area was the focus of town activities:

The government, groceries, doctors, lawyers, insurance men, clothing stores, hardware stores, hotels, restaurants, liverys, theatres and pool halls were all within one block of the Courthouse steps. It was a very public and dense center, and anyone wanting to leave town or enter it, buy or sell had to go downtown. (Bill G. Eppes et al., Historic Preservation/Conservation Study for the Gainesville Central City Revitalization Program, 1979, pp. 113.)

Between 1860 and 1900, Gainesville developed into a moderately prosperous urban area that served as a regional agricultural market. From a village of 269 in 1860, Gainesville grew into a small center of 3,633 in 1900. (ERLA Associates and the History Group, 1980.)

In the mid 1880s, residences in the downtown were typically constructed north of the courthouse square. This was a result of the original town plat that contained 38 blocks to the north of the square and only 14 to the south. The period of growth between 1884 and 1910 continued this trend and was characterized by residential development occurring on the immediate outskirts of the original downtown.

During the twentieth century, automobiles became a significant factor in the physical transformation of downtown Gainesville. Between 1930 and 1950, the number of cars in the city increased from approximately 5,600 to 14,900, bringing a great demand for automotive services. The moderate growth of the University of Florida to the west of downtown Gainesville did not affect the downtown district significantly during this period. However, a commercial strip began to creep westward towards the University. By 1945, Gainesville's first shopping center was built on the northwest corner of University Avenue and NW 6th Street.

During the postwar period, the University and city population grew exponentially. To accommodate this growth, subdivisions were developed around the University to the west and northwest. New shopping

areas followed the population, depleting business activity in the established commercial core. The downtown was further degraded by other events, including the widening of streets into thoroughfares, the selective removal of railroad lines, and the demolition of buildings to create parking lots. By 1951, the number of grocery stores in the downtown had been reduced from 39 to zero.

"Downtown Redevelopment" was a topic of concern by the early 1960s. Construction of new county, city and federal buildings assured that the downtown would continue to be the City's government center. Public investments were made in new library facilities, street system improvements, public off-street parking areas, acquisition of the Star Garage, and the development of a community plaza.

Consultants Barton-Aschman & Associates produced the Downtown Economic Development Strategy Plan in 1980. A key finding of the plan suggested that the more recent "public" investments had changed the character and vitality of the downtown by replacing deteriorating, but intimate, uses with larger, single-purpose, self-contained facilities. (*Barton-Ashman, Gainesville Downtown Economic Development Strategy Plan, March, 1980.*)

The loss of the downtown's traditional marketplace function has, at times, fostered an atmosphere of community criticism and focus on its weaknesses rather than strengths. Some redevelopment efforts have not adequately catalyzed the reemergence of the downtown as a center where residents of the entire city once shopped, socialized and conducted business. Other weaknesses identified in a 1990 market study included: a perceived and actual parking shortage; perceived and actual security problems; existing gaps in the urban edge where buildings should meet the street and the lack of a critical mass of activities; and, shops and visitors necessary for specialty retail. (*Blitch, Davis and Feiber, Gainesville Downtown Market Study and Urban Design Plan, 1990.*)

The Community Redevelopment Area Defined

The term “downtown” is used throughout this report to refer to the original downtown redevelopment area and the proposed expansion area. As shown on the following map, the combined area constitutes the “study area” for this Redevelopment Plan. The legal description of the study area is included in Appendix A.

The City planning and redevelopment staff defined the Downtown Gainesville Redevelopment Area after consideration and evaluation of all parcels located to the east, north and south of the existing CRA. The final determination of those parcels to be included in the redevelopment area was based upon several factors, including:

- those parcels fronting major roadways such as Main Street, University Avenue, Depot Avenue and West 6th Street;
- parcels having increased development or redevelopment potential based on adjacent land uses or land attributes;
- irregular or small or surrounded parcels that, at some future time, might be combined with adjacent parcels for a more efficient use of land;
- neighborhood or functional cohesiveness in terms of clear demarcation points, such as secondary collector roadways or changes in planned land use designations

The Downtown Gainesville Redevelopment Area is shown on the following page. According to the City’s Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data files, the study area is comprised of some approximately 1,135 separate tax parcels and a total land area of approximately 490 acres.

Modification of Community Redevelopment Plans

Section 163.361, F.S., allows the City to modify an adopted community redevelopment plan previously established under the statute. Such an amendment may be made upon recommendation of the community redevelopment agency. It also may include a change in the boundaries of the redevelopment area, or the development and implementation of community policy innovations.

Blight Defined by Florida Statutes

The Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, Chapter 163, Part III, F.S. (the "Act") authorizes local governments to establish community redevelopment agencies to improve slum and blighted areas within the local government jurisdiction. The Act provides two definitions of "blighted area." The first, Section 163.340(8)(a), focuses on deteriorated structures and public health and safety hazards, as evidenced by any or all of the following factors that "substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of a county or municipality." These include:

- predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;
- faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- deterioration of site or other improvements;
- inadequate and outdated building density patterns;
- tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- inadequate transportation and parking facilities; and
- diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title that prevents the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous areas.

The second definition of "blighted area" focuses on transportation deficiencies, and reads as follows:

An area in which there exists faulty or inadequate street layout; inadequate parking facilities; or

roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities incapable of handling the volume of traffic flow into or through the area, either at present or following proposed construction.

Finding of Necessity Executive Summary

The purpose of the Downtown Gainesville Redevelopment Plan is to eliminate blighting conditions and provide for the revitalization of the area. In this respect, Ivey, Harris & Walls, Inc. prepared a Finding of Necessity, pursuant to state statutory requirements, in the summer and fall of 2000. The Assessment of Need Study was adopted in February 2001.

From a broad perspective, the “Blight” study noted the widespread absence of stormwater management and pollution control facilities throughout the study area. This problem is noteworthy from the standpoint that facilities are missing on almost all of the parcels, and that stormwater pipes or other areawide conveyance and treatment systems also are largely non-existent. Based on a parcel specific survey of all parcels relative to the statutory criteria, the following summary points also were presented as to the need for redevelopment:

- Some 80 percent of residential parcels and 32 percent of non-residential parcels did not have defined driveway openings
- 9 percent of non-residential parcels had driveways greater than 26’ wide.
- The majority of non-residential sites, 77 percent, did not have adequate stacking space - two car lengths between the intersecting roadway’s edge of pavement and the parking bays - for cars entering the site.
- Approximately 58 percent of all residential parcels and 13 percent of non-residential parcels containing parking areas were unpaved.
- 56 percent of residential parcels and 34 percent of non-residential parcels did not have adequate area for vehicular maneuverability. In addition, sites were observed where the readily apparent shortage of parking had resulted in “unofficial” parking areas near and along the edge of the right of way.
- Only 4 percent of non-residential sites within the study area had cross access easements.
- Approximately 35 percent of residential sites and 9 percent of non-residential parcels did not have adjacent sidewalks.
- 34 percent of the parcels had no provisions for disabled access.
- Approximately 58 percent of those residential sites with pavement areas showed minor deterioration. Approximately 45 percent of the non-residential sites had minor deterioration, 1 percent had major deterioration, and 3 percent had dilapidated pavement. About one-third of all developed sites required some level of repair.
- One-third of sites within the study area did not have sidewalks. With respect to those residential sites that had sidewalks, 90 percent were in sound condition and 10 percent had minor deterioration. Similar findings were observed in non-residential sites, with the vast majority of parcels, 90 percent, having sidewalks in sound condition.
- Approximately 29 percent of residential parcels and 38 percent of non-residential parcels had some form of unconfined trash on the site. The majority of these had trash throughout the site, with 90 percent of residential sites and 63 percent in this category.
- Of all residential buildings within the study area, 50 percent were found to be in visually sound condition. Another 37 percent had characteristics consistent with minor deterioration, 10 percent had major deterioration, and 4 percent were dilapidated. The majority of non-residential sites, 76 percent, had buildings of sound condition.
- Of all residential parcels examined, 66 percent were found to have landscapes in sound condition, meaning they were well maintained and had no obvious code violations. For non-residential parcels, some 56 percent had minor deterioration and 19 percent had major deterioration or dilapidation.
- Gainesville’s road network was originally laid out in a grid pattern, with a typical block size of approximately 200 feet in length. Primary access to the Downtown District is by two

state arterial roads that intersect downtown and divide the area into four quadrants. The main east-west arterial is University Avenue (State Road 26), with 21,180 (1999) average annual daily trips through the study area. The main north-south arterial is Main Street (State Road 20-329) with 19,419 average annual daily trips.

- The City of Gainesville’s Traffic Engineering Department ranks approximately 145 signalized intersections within the City based on accident frequency. From 1994-1998, study area intersections along University Avenue and Main Street ranked among the highest accident locations in the city.
- FDOT “long form” summary data from 1994 to 1998 was reviewed to understand the nature of the accidents and to compare accident frequency for University Avenue and Main Street with State averages for similar roads. The review yielded the following noteworthy conclusions:
 1. Total long form reported accidents showed a consistent number of accidents during the reporting period, with an average of 75 and 60 accidents per year on University Avenue and Main Street, respectively.
 2. Total accidents with injuries were significantly higher on Main Street than on University Avenue. Total injuries on Main Street averaged 28 per year, with one fatality report in 1997 and 1998. University Avenue had a total of 18 injuries, with no recorded fatalities, during the five-year reporting period.
 3. For all five years, the majority of accidents on University Avenue involved rear-end or angled collisions at street intersections.
 4. For all five years, the majority of accidents on Main Street involved rear-end, angled or left-turn collisions at street intersections.
 5. For both University and Main Street, an average of 6 accidents per year involved a collision with a pedestrian or bicyclist.
 6. The majority of accidents on University Avenue occurred during peak hours and on

weekend nights. In contrast, the majority of accidents occurred between noon and 6 p.m. on Main Street.

7. Based on the relationship between vehicle usage and reported accidents, FDOT has established a series of “critical ratios” to classify a particular roadway, or roadway segment, as a safe or unsafe facility. The ratios for University Avenue and Main Street were significantly higher than the State’s critical accident ratio throughout the five-year reporting period. Thus, both roadways are considered relatively unsafe facilities.

Data and Analysis

Physical Conditions Summary

The following sections offer a summary description of the downtown Gainesville study area in terms of existing land use, recreational facilities infrastructure, transportation conditions, tax base history and programmed capital improvements. This contextual information serves to supplement the blight study information and set the qualitative framework for the updated redevelopment plan.

Land Use & Socio-economic Data

As noted in the earlier discussion of the history of the City, the Downtown Gainesville study area includes a wide variety of residential and business uses that are situated in a relatively compact setting. The City is typical of many small to mid-sized towns of the south in both its layout and its post-war experience of substantial growth in outlying areas. The City is, however, relatively unique in its status as the home of the University of Florida, one of the largest state land grant educational institutions in the southeastern area of the country.

A brief description of the prevailing land use pattern is presented in the following paragraphs. Along with this information, reference is made to an image database of each parcel in the study area that was prepared as part of the year 2000 Assessment of Need Study.

Residential Uses

Single-family residential land use is a significant land use of the redevelopment area and a predominant use of the expansion area. The Porters neighborhood in the southwest quadrant constitutes a substantial portion of the district. The Southeast Historic District is another established residential locale.

Along with the single-family land uses, pockets of duplex and higher density multi-family housing are located in various parts of the study area. The largest concentration of multi-family units, Arlington Square, forms the southeast edge of the City's business core and serves as a transitional use to the adjacent neighborhood. This complex is a product of the redevelopment efforts since the original downtown redevelopment plan was adopted. Another area of attached housing is the Porters Oaks development located near the south central boundary of the study area. A recent mixed-use development, Union Street Station, includes approximately 50 condominiums in the central core. A new row house project also is under construction just east of the City Hall on the north side of University Avenue.

The condition of housing units varies considerably within the study area. There is a substantial inventory of very high quality and high value homes that are located mainly in the eastern portion of the downtown. Many of these structures, some of which have been converted to Bed & Breakfast establishments, are historic properties of some significance. In the south and southwest portions of the study area, there is a variety of older, frame vernacular homes that range from good to poor condition.

Non-residential Uses

Non-residential land uses in the redevelopment area include commercial, industrial, mixed use, public service, recreation and unimproved properties (Figure 3). Commercial land use generally occurs within the downtown core and along University Avenue and Main Street. Civic uses are, for the most part, also situated within the core. Industrial uses are concentrated in the south central area and near SW 6th Street. A notable industrial site is the downtown headquarters and power plant of Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU).

As would be expected in a "traditional" setting, most of the development occurs as small lot, single proprietor uses. Most non-residential structures range between two and four stories, and present a varied architectural style. While the prevailing building material is brick, examples of wood, stone, stucco and exposed concrete finishes also are interspersed throughout the area.

The Alachua County School Board does not currently operate any public schools within the Downtown Redevelopment study area. However, the Board headquarters are housed in the former Kirby Smith Elementary School located along University Avenue near the eastern boundary of the district.

Socio-economic Characteristics

Earlier studies of the Downtown Gainesville area compared the local population and socio-economic characteristics to those in the balance of the City. Refer to the original blight study and redevelopment plan documents for this historic information.

The year 2000 census data was not available at the time of this redevelopment plan. As detailed census tabulations become available, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) should review the information and assess its relevance to redevelopment plans and programs.

Transportation

As noted, a well-defined network “grid” of arterial, collector and local streets traverses the study area. The arterial streets such as University Avenue and Main Street are typically designed as four lane divided or five lane sections. Collector roadways such as South 2nd Avenue are a mix of two lane and three lane sections. The local neighborhood streets are almost all two lane cross sections.

Within the downtown core, several of the local streets are made of brick. In some cases, the brick has been overlain with an asphalt surface “improvement.” While most of the downtown core streets are curbed, the curbing consists of the raised edge of the adjacent sidewalk versus the more contemporary curb and gutter drainage system. With the exception of almost all of University Avenue and Main Street, most streets provide for on-street parking. Several of the local streets within the downtown core also have been reconfigured as one-way facilities.

As one travels further away from the intersection of the University and Main Street corridors, the typical local street section changes to an open swale drainage system. Almost all of the streets consist of asphalt pavement wearing surface. This is particularly the case in the SW Porters neighborhood of the study area. Traffic calming measures such as speed humps and roundabouts are spread intermittently throughout the area, with most in the southeast residential district. The City’s Public Works Department continues to maintain and upgrade the condition of local streets on a “needs” basis as funds are available.

The majority of the area’s arterial and collector streets include sidewalks. However, the sidewalks are almost all located directly adjacent to the curb line, with no pedestrian refuge zone from vehicles traveling, in some cases, at speeds in excess of thirty (30) miles per hour.

Most local streets within the downtown business district include sidewalks. There are some locations that are completely lacking in needed facilities. For those streets with sidewalks, the walkways are of intermittent width and are generally too narrow to adequately accommodate the pedestrian volumes that occur during peak periods.

The downtown neighborhoods draw a similarly mixed finding with respect to the presence and design characteristics of pedestrian facilities. As noted in the

Assessment of Need study, there are many streets, particularly in the SW sub-area, that lack facilities.

Multi-lane arterial roadways, such as University Avenue and Main Street, tend to sever the pedestrian and broader community connections between the neighborhoods of the study area. Pedestrian crosswalks on these roads, or other features that would provide safer pedestrian access, are present only at major signalized intersections.

The City’s Regional Transit System (RTS) operates within the study area. However, there is a deficit of bus stops and other transit facilities in the area, and lengthy headways on many routes serve to discourage ridership. RTS is presently evaluating upgrades to service in the area based on their anticipated fleet expansion and available operating funds.

There are several small parks within the Downtown study area. Generally, facilities at these parks need repair, renovation or basic improvements such as seating, new play equipment, trash containers, and drinking fountains.

Lynch Park

Lynch Park is a small neighborhood park that is located on South Main Street. The nicely wooded site was donated to the City under the condition that it would remain a park in perpetuity.

Lynch Park is located across Main Street from St. Francis House, a facility that serves the hungry and homeless. The proximity of these two uses is such that the park has been burdened by the occasionally derelict activities of a homeless population. The City Parks Department has attempted to remedy this situation by removing picnic tables and benches and, at the suggestion of the Gainesville Police, by clearing the tree canopy and shrubbery for better visibility into the park. However, the negative activities reportedly continue.

Lynch Park is a significantly underutilized asset. The transient problem and the unrelated, non-residential uses on its borders have effectively isolated it from the local service population. Clearly, the redevelopment challenge is to promote the complementary uses and programs that can elevate its stature and use in the community. Along with better surrounding uses, the park should be further enhanced with seating, lighting and other improvements to become a focal activity space along South Main Street.

Tumbling Creek Park

Tumbling Creek Park is adjacent to the SW boundary of the study area. It is the largest park in the vicinity of the study area and is situated on a wooded site that occurs on a down slope away from West 6th Street. According to the City Parks Department, the basketball court is the most frequently used element of this park.

Unfortunately, this park is effectively divorced for the primary user population by virtue of its edge location at Depot Avenue and 6th Street. Both of these roads are relatively high speed, collector facilities. Further, the park's northern and western boundaries are heavily wooded and do not provide for any monitoring by neighboring uses. The Parks Department reports that

Tumbling Creek Park has a history of being an area for prostitution.

The Parks Department has identified the need to upgrade the playground and picnic facilities. However, the combination of the severe downslope and criminal problems are two negative obstacles that must be overcome for improvements to be considered a priority. There are no plans for improvements at this park at this time.

Sweetwater Park

Sweetwater Park runs on a north/south axis through much of the study area and forms the eastern boundary of the CBD. The park envelops the Sweetwater Branch drainage way and offers a natural transition to several historic properties in the southeast residential neighborhood. The linear site also serves as a connector route for bicycle traffic. As with several downtown parks, Sweetwater Park has too been plagued by reported problems with transient activities.

The park has recently been improved through a FRDAP grant. New walkways, benches, playground equipment and, picnic tables have been installed. Plans for future improvements are managed by the Nature Division of the Parks Department in conjunction with the Matheson Historical Society. One concept has been to develop the creek area into some type of botanical garden.

Porters Community Center

The Porters Community Center is a highly utilized facility in the SW residential area. Located north of the Porter's Oaks redevelopment project, the center is owned by the United Gainesville Development Corporation. Through a lease agreement, the City's Parks and Recreation Department manages both recreation programs and facility operations. Programs offered include several after school and summer youth programs. The facility also is frequently used for community meetings held by civic and church groups.

The Center initially had some crime problems due to lack of facility supervision. The Parks and Recreation Department has since partnered with the Porter's neighborhood association and the Gainesville Police Department to implement a neighborhood crime watch program.

Recent improvements to the Porters Community Center include the installation of a basketball court, benches, picnic tables, a water fountain and landscaping which were completed in April, 2001.

Opportunities to further expand the product and site offerings should be considered as an element of the redevelopment plan.

Utilities Infrastructure

Since the study area is comprised of the oldest portion of the city, most utilities have been in place for several years. Electricity, potable water, wastewater and stormwater facilities serve the study area.

Drainage Facilities

The Downtown Gainesville Redevelopment Area consists of rolling terrain that is slightly crowned in the CBD and falls in a southern, eastern and western direction. A notable stream drainage feature is the Sweetwater Branch that traverses the central portion of the study area on a north/south course. The area's drainage needs are accommodated mainly through a combination of gutter and piped and open swale systems that convey water to this flowing water body and to Tumbling Creek in the SW corner of the study area.

The development history of the downtown area generally predates the recognition of and regulatory requirement for stormwater management facilities. Roadway and site runoff discharges directly into the ditch and stream systems. Thus, there are problems of standing water and periodic flooding in portions of this district, and continuing environmental damage that has been caused by the introduction of untreated stormwater in the natural drainage system.

With the application of current permitting requirements, the need to provide on-site stormwater management facilities is a difficult and significant impediment to the redevelopment process. While the City has taken several steps to remedy this situation, including the negotiation of areawide stormwater permits and the development of common treatment ponds, the need for additional improvements is still substantial.

Water and Wastewater Facilities

Within the downtown area, potable water and sanitary sewer lines are located under the streets. Many original water lines within the study area are still in service.

Due to the increase in land use densities and intensities over the years, as well as the need for increased hydraulic pressures, some of the existing waterlines are undersized. Sufficient pipe size for fire protection is a major concern, since fire hydrant flow rates generally require a minimum six-inch line.

Many water lines of concern are four inches or smaller in diameter, as shown in Figure VI-1. The majority of the undersized lines are located west of Main Street. Because the original lines are located under the street, replacement would require partial or complete reconstruction of the street.

Another potable water line of concern is an original fourteen-inch (14") line located under South Main Street. Given its location under Main Street, replacement is unlikely unless it occurs in conjunction with future road improvements.

Property Tax Role History

The taxable value history and evaluation of the study area parcels was based upon 1997 through 2000 property tax data. In the case of the original CRA, the recent tax information was supplemented by the base year tax data from 1982. This information is presented on the following table. A detailed review of the data was performed for the year 2000, and is summarized in the following paragraphs.

Based upon 2000 tax records, the Downtown Gainesville redevelopment area includes approximately 1,140 individual parcels. Approximately 360 parcels are located within the original CRA, with approximately 780 parcels in the expansion area. In the year 2000, the adjusted tax value of the entire study area was approximately eighty million dollars. The aggregate valuation within the original CRA was forty six million dollars in the year 2000, or approximately 58% of the total. The CRA expansion area was thirty four million dollars in the year 2000, or 42% of the total.

Within the original CRA, approximately 35% of all parcels had no taxable value in the year 2000. Approximately 58% of the parcels had values of less than fifty thousand dollars. Almost three quarters of all parcels (73%) had values less than one hundred thousand dollars. Approximately 20 parcels, less than one half of one percent, had values in excess of five hundred thousand dollars. Only 11 parcels had valuations exceeding one million dollars. The average year 2000 valuation for all parcels was one hundred and twenty eight thousand dollars.

Within the expansion area of the CRA, approximately 28% of all parcels had no taxable value in the year 2000. Approximately 58% of the parcels had values of less than twenty five thousand dollars. Approximately 91% of all parcels had values less than one hundred thousand dollars. Approximately 7 parcels, less than one half of one percent of those within the expansion area, had values in excess of five hundred thousand dollars. Only 4 parcels had valuations exceeding one million dollars. The average valuation for all parcels was just over forty three thousand dollars.

Both the original CRA and the expansion area have been characterized by healthy tax base growth over the last several years. Within the existing CRA, the aggregate growth in tax values has averaged approximately 5 percent per year since 1982. The taxable base has grown from nineteen million dollars

in 1982 to forty six million in the year 2000. Within the expansion area, the aggregate value has grown from twenty eight million dollars in 1997 to thirty four million in the year 2000.

Over the last four years, the average annual rate of growth in the expansion area has slightly exceeded that of the original CRA. However, due to a higher total taxable value, the absolute growth in taxable value has been slightly higher in the original area. The overall four year increase in taxable value for the area equates to an average annual growth rate of five and a half percent (5.6%). This figure was relatively consistent for both areas and, in total, was equivalent to approximately four million dollars per year.

Programmed Study Area Projects: CIP, City, and FDOT

As noted, the Downtown Gainesville area has been the subject of studies and improvement initiatives over the last several years. The product of these efforts has been the continued development of capital improvements by local and state agencies using various funding sources as available. The current set of projects or funding programs for improvements are presented in the following sub-sections.

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) Projects

The following pages present a list of capital improvements that are planned in the Downtown Gainesville CRA per the City's FY 2001-2005 Capital Improvements Plan. Data from the first three fiscal years of the CIP are presented, as the scope of work and project costs are better defined than for those projects in the remaining two years.

General City Projects

Several general City initiatives may include Downtown Gainesville locations, should they be identified as a priority. Projects are prioritized annually based on staff recommendations and community input.

FDOT Projects

The Florida Department of Transportation has several CRA related projects that have been funded. The most notable of these is the reconstruction of North and South Main Street as a two lane divided boulevard w/ on-street parking. The project is currently in the final design phase.

**CITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE DOWNTOWN CRA
FY '01-'05 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

Project	Project Manager	Description	Budget	Funding Source
Historic Depot refurbishing	Preservation Planner	Substantial rehabilitation of Depot	FY02- \$67,000 FY03- \$288,000 FY04- \$126,491	General fund grant funds
Downtown Parking	Transportation Services Manager	Facilitate parking needs identified in downtown parking study and/or Courthouse	FY02- \$500,000	General fund
TIF Capital Improvements	Redevelopment Manager		FY01-\$71,428 FY02- \$79,292 FY03- \$80,481 FY04- \$81,689	Tax increment fund
Hippodrome facility improvements	Facilities Management Director	Facility modifications to meet ADA requirements	FY05- \$25,000	General capital projects fund
CCD Master Stormwater Facility	Stormwater Services Manager	Development of a master stormwater facility and park at Depot and South Main. Treatment of currently untreated stormwater will reduce pollution loading in surface waters.	FY00- \$1,824,000 FY02- \$500,000 FY03- \$500,000	SMU fund; general fund; 1992 bond funding; lease in/lease out funds; state funding
Courthouse parking garage	Transportation Services Manager	Design and construct a 375 space parking facility for new Courthouse and to replace spaces lost to construction of the new building.	FY02- \$5,500,000	

Project	Project Manager	Description	Budget	Funding Source
RTS benches, shelters and signs	Chief Transit Planner	Purchase and installation of shelters, benches and bus stop signage throughout the RTS service area	FY00-\$87,646	Federal funds; general fund; state funds
			FY01-\$24,258	
			FY02- \$62,500	
			FY03- \$350,000	
			FY04- \$150,000	
Sidewalk installation	Transportation Services Manager	Installation of sidewalks as identified in the Sidewalks Needs Assessment Study	FY00-\$200,000	GERRB 1994; General fund
			FY01-\$100,000	
			FY02- \$100,000	
Roadway Pavement	Transportation Services Manager	Roadway maintenance on City-maintained streets	FY00-\$600,000	General capital projects fund
			FY01-\$300,000	
			FY02- \$300,000	
GRU Water/Sewer Service Upgrades	Stormwater Services Manager	Extend new water services to CDBG eligible neighborhoods.	FY05- \$208,800	CDBG fund

Analysis & Summary

Conditions Synthesis

Based on the evaluation of prior studies, the Assessment of Need Study, and the existing conditions analysis, the Downtown Gainesville redevelopment area can be summarily characterized by its apparent assets, its latent assets, and its constraints. These summary characteristics are found on the following pages.

The study area's apparent assets are clearly conducive to redevelopment efforts, and may contribute to continued interest and security in redevelopment investment initiatives for the area. While "latent" assets also are valuable and can contribute to redevelopment success, they may be underutilized, ignored or misunderstood in terms of their long-term benefit to the community at large. Constraints can thwart redevelopment success and should be eliminated, reconciled or otherwise accommodated in terms of the redevelopment effort.

Apparent Assets

- Demonstrated community interest and support for downtown redevelopment
- The historic, traditional grid street pattern is largely intact
- Prior community recognition and acceptance of the tenets and elements of high quality urban environments
- Downtown neighborhoods are populated, with apparent gentrification and the infusion of residential uses within the CBD
- A substantial share of the historic building inventory is intact
- Numerous churches are active in the area and, with relatively sizeable landholdings, present an large scale opportunity to influence the future urban design pattern
- There is a relatively large amount of unimproved or under-improved land throughout the area
- Proximity to the University of Florida and the Downtown Campus of Santa Fe Community College
- Continued public facility investments by Alachua County, the City and the School

Board provide a downtown daytime population and consumer group for support facilities, albeit with a commensurate loss in the ad-valorem tax base

- Mature vegetation exists throughout the study area
- Sweetwater Branch provides a pivotal green space design element and linkage feature
- The Depot Avenue and West 6th Street rails-to-trails system, as well as key internal linkages, traverse the study area

Latent Assets

- Several vacant parcels are of sufficient size to develop under contemporary land development code requirements.
- Industrial areas offer a colorful and "real urban texture" opportunity for mixed use redevelopment
- Preponderance of surface parking lots provide another, albeit conditional, opportunity for redevelopment
- Pockets of relatively inexpensive land offer continued opportunity for pioneering land acquisition and assembly
- An inventory of affordable housing is still proximate to the downtown core
- Lynch Park offers a key urban green space and focal point
- The Kirby Smith public school has been closed in favor of its renovation to administrative offices

Constraints

- The combination of small lot development and lack of stormwater management facilities is a significant impediment to redevelopment
- Under-improved businesses or previous, poorly conceived façade "improvements" contribute to a vacant, derelict or seedy appearance
- Fad- or binge-businesses counter the perception of permanence and safety in the downtown

- Strategically located establishments serving the homeless or destitute, and travel patterns between these uses, contribute to the perception of an unpleasant pedestrian climate
- Environmentally contaminated tracts require detailed site assessment and remediation
- Small parcels require assembly to foster redevelopment at any significant scale
- Multi-lane thoroughfares and three lane, quasi-thoroughfares are impediments to the pedestrian ambience of the area
- Pedestrian facilities are sorely lacking in some residential areas and are undersized in the downtown core.
- Visual clutter and disparity of signage and building architecture
- The functional integrity of grid street system has been lost through strategic street closures and/or discontinuities in rights-of-way
- Pockets of deteriorating residential structures and site neglect contribute to the perception of an area-wide decline
- The periodic lack of street lighting undermines safety
- The 6th Street rail/trail right-of-way isolates properties to the east, due to few crossing points
- Most public spaces and parks need further enhancement

Redevelopment Plan & Implementation

Plan Subareas

During the course of preparing this redevelopment plan, it has become apparent that the Downtown CRA study area is effectively comprised of several sub-areas. These areas have relatively distinct characteristics in terms of their physical and functional role in the downtown, and offer an opportunity to tailor plan recommendations and strategies that are unique to their situation. The four sub-areas are as follows:

Central Business District

The central business district constitutes the majority of the existing CRA. It is the “heart” of the downtown, both in the historic and modern development context of the City of Gainesville. The CBD offers a mixed urban fabric of older, historic buildings that honor the street edge and post-war buildings that are more characteristic of the suburban model – plazas, parking lots and open lawns.

Transitional Industrial

The industrial areas of the CRA are those areas lying generally along Depot Avenue and south Main Street and, to a lesser extent, near the western boundary of the CRA along South 6th Street. The remnant vestige of the original industrial edges of the downtown, these areas include a mix of one and two story warehouse and “heavy” commercial businesses that, to various degrees, relied upon the railroad transportation system and the desire to segregate these businesses from the initial residential neighborhoods.

Downtown Neighborhoods

As noted, neighborhoods in the downtown constitute a large percentage of the land area for the expanded CRA. Two primary areas contain the majority of downtown’s housing stock: the Porter’s neighborhood, in the southwest corner of the CRA; and the southeast Historic District and residential areas immediately north of University Avenue, from Sweetwater Branch east to the CRA’s eastern boundary.

Corridor Commercial

Characterized by commercial development more typical of suburban retail areas, the Corridor Commercial area occupies a relatively small area of the expanded CRA. Businesses in this area that borders Waldo Road and the east University Avenue corridor include fast food stores, auto-related retail business, convenience stores, a rooming house, a bottling and distribution plant, and other similar uses.

Summary Description of the Plan

Clearly, several positive steps have occurred since the inception of the City of Gainesville’s Downtown Redevelopment Area. New businesses have emerged and the downtown has an active day and nightlife. The neighborhood residential areas are, to varying degrees, both desirable and distinct in terms of their population and building mix. Gentrification and the addition of new residential units underscore the relative health of these areas.

On the other hand, the signs of blight and opportunities to make further progress are still apparent. The downtown core is still characterized as a weak retail setting, storefronts remain vacant, the pedestrian ambience is still lost along the signature streets of University Avenue and Main Street. Vagrancy and other signs of neglect permeate the downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods of the study area. Indeed, there are still residential locales in the area where the perception of fear remains a concern.

In very summary terms, this updated Downtown Redevelopment Plan is focused on the continued strengthening of the City’s downtown business district and adjacent residential neighborhoods. It is based upon the strategy of investment in key public infrastructure elements and amenities, and in the funding of related programmatic activities, that can entice the private sector to respond in a similar fashion. In several cases, the Plan provides for the coordinated identification and reaffirmation of the various programs and activities of the City that are presently underway.

The presentation of the Plan has several elements. The following discussion provides a broad description of the nature of solutions that should be considered, or continued, for future implementation. Subsequently, a series of objective statements, or precepts, are offered to summarily guide the direction of individual planning decisions in the redevelopment process.

Central Business District

With regard to the City’s central business district, the challenge is to foster a climate of private investment in response to the public initiatives. As noted, one of the major detriments to redevelopment in this core is the ability to provide sufficient on-site stormwater management area to accommodate redevelopment of relatively small sites that were previously developed without any such facilities. The City has made

significant progress in this respect through agency negotiations for “areawide permitting” and the development of common stormwater management areas. The ability to continue this initiative, through projects such as the “Depot” stormwater park and other still-to-be-planned facilities, is a priority of this plan.

Similarly, the provision of sufficient parking areas cannot be left solely to the private property owner to provide on-site. This requirement not only reduces the propensity for a private property owner to even consider the redevelopment of small properties, it sharply reduces the amount of land area that can and should be used for more intensive and vital business activities. With approximately thirty percent of the total parcel area occupied by tax exempt entities, every remaining square foot counts. In this respect, the CRA should continue to promote shared parking facilities, on-street parking and the development of parking garages as various means to accommodate the necessary parking space inventory. Shared public and private investment partnerships and the sale or long term lease utilization of “air-rights” above existing surface lots should continue to be explored to implement this objective.

The development of a safe, functionally adequate and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment is another critical component to the future success of the downtown core. The restoration of the pedestrian dominant environment along Main Street and University Avenue – their conversion to lower speed boulevards – and additional streetscape improvements to the secondary and local street system must be continued to foster the reemergence of the core as a special place and a true destination. This series of improvements must not only be focused on the look and feel of the downtown – period lighting and furnishings, street trees, and continuous wider sidewalks – it also must include a systematic approach to navigation through gateway, directional and destination/amenity signage. The City’s development regulations also may warrant a review to determine the need, if any, for more specific downtown design guidelines.

Over the last several years, the downtown plaza has been subject to numerous improvements and upgrades. These improvements have been a success in drawing people to the area for periodic nighttime and other special events. However, there is still a need and opportunity to improve this and other important outdoor “rooms” throughout the study area with design

enhancements such as fountains, lighting, walkways, landscaping and seating areas. Such improvements, perhaps in conjunction with one or more unique, downtown “signature” projects, can further the renaissance of the district as a special place for recreation and relaxation on a more continuous basis.

A very clear lesson in redevelopment has been that aesthetic improvements – trees, shrubs, benches and textured pavement – cannot single handedly foster a redevelopment program of any real significance. In contrast, there are several examples of healthy downtowns where the driving force to success was in the business skills, tenacity and relationships of the key stakeholder participants. In this respect, the downtown business district and the balance of the study area can continue to benefit from a variety of existing and future programmatic initiatives to foster additional investment. Such programs may include the use of available funds for building facade improvements, special events, and incentive loans or grants for specific targeted projects such as a downtown hotel.

Finally, one of the often-mentioned impediments to redevelopment in the downtown business district has been the vagrant and transient population. While the problems and management of this population is a complex and trying issue, the City must take a proactive role in determining the most appropriate location for services targeted to this group. A balance must be struck between the compassionate care and assistance offered to this population in need, but not at the expense of deterring or otherwise stifling the ability for the balance of the City’s population to benefit from the continued revitalization of the downtown. In this respect, the City also may care to consider further refinements to regulations governing loitering and panhandling, to the allowable duration of permitted and conditional uses within various zoning districts, and operational licensure requirements for selected types of building occupancy.

Central Business District

1. Encourage intensive mix of residential and business uses based on scale, context and contribution to area vitality.



2. Aggressively promote buffering or screening of site elements such as dumpsters, grease traps, etc. “Retrofit” existing parking lots to meet minimum requirements for landscape screening and shade.



3. Encourage shared parking facilities and parking garages



4. Refine thematic system of entryway and directional signage, street lighting and furnishings.



5. Increase the use of water features as a design element: natural ponds, fountains, and small pools.



6. Aggressively promote a pedestrian dominant environment: continuous and wider sidewalks, streetscape upgrades, building signage, alleyway access, landscaping, etc.
7. Improve parks and develop one or more signature public space projects that are unique to downtown.



8. Continue to aggressively promote the programmatic elements of downtown revitalization: marketing, special events, retail education, area wide stormwater permitting, etc.



9. Continue “brownfield” programs to encourage redevelopment of environmentally compromised sites.
10. Design and position new buildings to reinforce street edge, honor surrounding architectural context, and create pedestrian scale at the street level.
11. Promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings to maintain historic sense of area.
12. Pursue redevelopment opportunities to retrofit aging or undersized utility lines, to improve drainage & stormwater facilities, and to reestablish network of streets and alleyways.

Transitional Industrial Areas

The City's original industrial areas south and west of the CBD offer a unique opportunity for an eclectic mix of residential and non-residential uses. Many of the Plan initiatives of the downtown business district can be applied to these areas, along with some noteworthy additions.

Generally, the previously mentioned concepts related to stormwater management, on-site parking and enhanced pedestrian amenities are directly applicable to this sub-area. However, in so doing, it is important to retain some element of the original industrial flavor of this area through the allowed, albeit conditional, perpetuation of the existing uses and building stock. In this respect, the City should carefully review the specific types of uses allowed in this sub-area in order to ensure all uses can reasonably coexist in a hard-edged, urban setting. Further, the development of design guidelines that underscore the essence of the area should be considered.

A pressing problem with several sites in this area is environmental contamination. In the southern extreme of the study area, the "Depot" stormwater park project has been conceived, in part, as a major remedial solution for this circumstance. To the extent that funds are available to further remedy this problem, continued efforts to catalogue and improve the environmental disposition of the existing properties of the area should be a priority of this Plan.

Another component of this redevelopment plan is the recognition of the role of the transitional industrial areas in the history of Gainesville and their ability to serve as an intermediate linkage between the downtown business district and surrounding areas. However, the nature of land uses and the historic railroad "edge" has, ironically, resulted in the areas' comparative isolation from neighboring uses. With the removal of the railroad lines, and the rehabilitation of sites such as the Train Depot, the City can consider specific opportunities to open up the grid street system to and through this locale. In addition, this area offers a unique opportunity to promote a wide range of projects that can serve the existing resident population and, perhaps, add to the inventory of enticements to lure more people downtown. Noting the relatively large size of some vacant parcels in this sub-area, an example of a desirable transitional use may be a grocery store.

In order to encourage a broader and higher valued mix of uses in the area, the City must invest in a variety of

public amenity improvements to service the potential population. The Railway Depot rehabilitation and stormwater park projects are two such efforts. The recent streetscape edge added to the GRU facility, as well as a proposed linear park near University Avenue and West 6th Street, are two others. Continued strategic investments in the park facilities, as well as related improvements for parking areas, street lighting, pedestrian linkages and other intermediate public spaces, can serve to entice private investment and reinvestment in adjacent properties. Ultimately, these actions can improve the locale and establish gateways that are an asset for the entire City.

Transitional Industrial Areas

1. Encourage a broad mix of residential and business uses based on scale, context and contribution to area vitality
2. Promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings to maintain historic sense of area.



3. Design and position new buildings in a fashion to reinforce the street edge, honor the surrounding architectural context, and create a pedestrian scale at the street level.



4. Promote concentrated buffering or screening between incompatible uses or negative site elements such as parking lots, material storage yards, outdoor fabrication or work areas.



5. Promote transit and pedestrian facility improvements where appropriate with increased headways, bus stop amenities, sidewalks, and other pedestrian amenities.



6. Consider redevelopment opportunities to retrofit aging or undersized utility lines and improve drainage.
7. Continue “brownfield” programs to encourage redevelopment of environmentally compromised sites.

8. Promote shared parking facilities and garages.



9. Improve public spaces and parks.



10. Park enhancements and parking are important elements to include with the stormwater facilities planned for the new depot park.

Downtown Neighborhoods

The Porters neighborhood and southeast residential area constitute the largest share of the downtown CRA expansion area. Both of these residential locales are characterized by a variety of housing types and styles, and include a substantial share of the City’s historic and older, vernacular style residential architecture.

Due to the age and pattern of development within the downtown residential areas, many of the amenities that are found in contemporary subdivisions – paved driveways, sidewalks and pedestrian lighting – are missing or otherwise underrepresented. Further, the development of the local street system in these areas predates many of current engineering design requirements and the now standard provisions for stormwater management.

Within the downtown residential areas, a priority of this redevelopment plan is to systematically upgrade the local street network and supporting pedestrian, utility and stormwater infrastructure. This broad initiative will take quite some time to complete and, as with other long range planning initiatives, will be dependent on the availability of funds. However, the public street system is a principal defining element of a neighborhood and in the characterization of an area as a secure and navigable place during the day and night. Ultimately, it can serve to instigate or deter the maintenance and rehabilitation of older residential properties. In conjunction with this effort, the City should consider opportunities to augment the existing grid system wherever feasible, and should consider a funding program to retrofit existing properties with permanent driveways.

As noted in the blight study, the upkeep and condition of homes and properties in the downtown residential areas also varies considerably. While one or two problem structures or sites may be occasionally intermingled among nicer properties, notable pockets of relatively derelict structures can be found in the southeastern and southwestern periphery of the study neighborhoods. The City has been active in monitoring housing conditions and, where necessary, undertaking condemnation and demolition actions. Along with the City proper, several quasi-public and private entities have participated in the rehabilitation and/or replacement of the original housing stock. This subject is further discussed elsewhere in this document.

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan clearly recognizes that code enforcement and housing supply

activities of the City and other providers must be a continued priority for implementation. Such actions can and should include programs in site acquisition and new construction, as well as structural rehabilitation, façade improvements and total site maintenance. Two specific undertakings of the City also should be focused upon the material and character of yard fences, particularly front yards, and unimproved residential driveways.

Two additional items of particular concern for the downtown residential areas are the status of local parks and recreation facilities and public schools.

With respect to park facilities, the main summary observation that can be made is that the existing parks in the greater downtown study area are not positioned or functioning as well as they could. As discussed in the parks inventory, most existing facilities are either passive in character or are located at the periphery of the study area. There are very few “tot lots” or other true neighborhood parks in the study area.

While there are very clear successes in local recreation facilities – the Porter’s Community Center and GRU Garden – the City needs to consider the development of one or two small, centrally located “focal point” parks as yet another long-term neighborhood building block. Ideally, the provision of these facilities, and the upgrading of existing parks such as Lynch Park, would be based upon the precept of strategically flanking these sites with residential or appropriate commercial/service uses to provide a day and nighttime monitoring mechanism. A similar detailed site study of the adjunct Tumbling Creek Park also is necessary. In this respect, while it is possible that this park could become a focus for additional stormwater management initiatives serving the downtown study area, the underlying site and social problems must be resolved.

With respect to school facilities, it is noteworthy to recognize that there are no public school facilities in the downtown study area. One of the City’s original elementary schools, Kirby Smith, has been converted to administrative offices of the Alachua County School Board. While it is indeed creditable that the School Board would choose to renovate the Kirby Smith school and thus maintain a downtown presence, the loss of the school as an educational facility has created another void in the downtown fabric. As funds permit, an ideal long term solution is to reestablish a local elementary school within the greater downtown study area.

Downtown Neighborhoods

1. Promote residential as the dominant land use. Promote neighborhood identity through unique entryway treatments, signage, and other signature elements. Improve street, sidewalk and stormwater infrastructures in residential areas.



2. Limit non-residential uses (office & retail) based on scale, context and contribution to neighborhood vitality.



3. Promote neighborhood appearance with reasonable, deliberate code enforcement, periodic clean up, and “amnesty” events.

- Promote various types of housing products (rehabilitation, grants, and other programs) to accommodate different demographic groups. Discourage new concentrations of low and very low-income products.



- Continue to promote existing public, quasi-public and private housing supply programs.



- Increase percentage of home ownership through low interest loans, down payment grants and work equity programs.

- Discourage concentrations of “through” traffic on local streets with multiple traffic calming techniques and route choices.



- Promote transit and pedestrian facility improvements on primary routes: increased headways, bus stop amenities, sidewalks, and other pedestrian amenities.



- Where possible, incorporate stormwater improvement projects with other redevelopment projects.

Corridor Commercial

As noted in the inventory of existing uses, examples of this more suburban style development pattern occur along East University Avenue and other key arterial entries adjacent to the study area. Generally, this type of vehicular oriented development - large lot retail, fast food and/or shopping centers - is physically out of character with that of the balance of the downtown core. However, to the extent that it fills an arguably desirable and necessary niche in the marketplace, the key to accommodating this use is to promote site design and signage attributes that can contribute to the physical elements of a traditional downtown place.

As opportunities for redevelopment and new development occur in this area, developers should be strongly encouraged to practice several of the following tenets of good urban design:

- reinforce the street edge of adjacent roadways with architecturally interesting and open, inviting building faces,
- provide high profile direct pedestrian connections and enhanced landscape features,
- minimize driveways,
- aggressively regulate the number, size, height and material of signs, and, above all,
- shield, buffer or otherwise hide the interior parking and circulation fields from the street

Corridor Commercial

1. Refine thematic system of entryway and directional signage, street lighting and furnishings.
2. Establish coordinated streetscape elements with entryways, street trees and provisions for other modes. Add bike lanes, sidewalks, bus stops, street furniture and pedestrian lighting and other streetscape elements.



3. Manage site access along approaches to strategic peripheral intersections.
4. Encourage intensive mix of business uses based on scale and context.
5. Design and position new buildings to suggest architectural "permanence." Reinforce street edge through building placement, and street walls.



6. Where feasible, promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings that contribute to historic sense of area. Aggressively promote buffering or screening of site elements such as dumpsters, grease traps, etc. "Retrofit" existing parking lots to meet minimum requirements for landscape screening and shade.
7. Implement "boulevard" entry on Main Street and West University Avenue



8. Promote ground mounted and externally lit signs on approach roadways.

Proposed Redevelopment Projects: Plan Concepts

Candidate Projects - Opinion of Costs

As noted earlier in this document, the City and other agencies are already engaged in a number of capital improvements in the study area. The Plan recognizes these already planned and programmed improvements as a favorable and consistent implementation of the redevelopment strategies contained herein. Notwithstanding these activities, the Plan also identifies a host of additional improvements that can and should be implemented as funds become available. In this respect, detailed engineering analyses are a necessary precursor to specific projects, and certain projects may surface within the broader context of site-specific redevelopment proposals. Thus, the following generalized guide is provided to merely identify the nature and order-of-magnitude cost of different project components that could occur as funds permit.

TRANSPORTATION		
Transit	Improved Bus stop - sign, seating, concrete pad	\$1,500 per site
	Bus shelter w/ furnishings and pad	\$12,000 per site
	Bus bay with shelter	\$62,000 per site
Sidewalks	6' wide concrete sidewalk	\$2,400 per 100 linear ft
	6' wide colored concrete sidewalk with decorative paving at nodes	\$4,600 per 100 linear ft
Street Lighting	Standard Concrete Pole & "Cobra Head" fixture	\$800
	Upgraded Pedestrian Pole & Lamp (w/ below grade power)	\$5,000 + conduit @ \$20/linear ft
Bicycle Lane	Additional 4' lane at edge of driving lanes	\$19,040 per mile
Bicycle Path	Paved 6' wide path beyond curb (off-road)	\$37,750 per mile
Roadways	Resurface asphalt - two lanes	\$54,200 per mile
	Mill and resurface asphalt - two lanes	\$70,400 per mile
	New asphalt pavement w/ limerock base, concrete curb and gutter- two lanes	\$200,000 per mile
Driveway Modification	New curb and apron	\$10,000 per location
INFRASTRUCTURE		
<i>Note: Infrastructure costs vary with quantities and unit costs established through detailed engineering utility analyses.</i>		
Potable Water	6" main installed	\$35,000 per mile
	12" main installed	\$87,100 per mile
Sanitary Sewer	6" gravity flow line installed (with manholes)	\$68,500 per mile
	12" gravity flow line installed (with manholes)	\$91,300 per mile
	8" force main with moderate sized lift station	\$87,200 per mile + \$70,000 per lift station
Drainage	Stormwater pipes & structures – residential areas	\$60-100,000 per mile
	Retention pond construction	\$50,000 per acre
Electrical Lines	Bury overhead lines	\$1,000,000 per mile

LANDSCAPE/HARDSCAPE AMENITIES		
Median	Sod, shrubs, groundcover, trees, irrigation	\$325 - 435 per 100 sq ft
Streetscape	Bahia Sod and Trees	\$175 per 100 sq ft
	St. Augustine Sod, trees, & irrigation St. Augustine sod, trees, irrigation, shrubs, & groundcover	\$325 per 100 sq ft \$435 per 100 sq ft
Roadside	Street trees, irrigation, limited groundcover and shrubs	\$125 - 325 per 100 sq ft
Gateways	Neighborhood Signage w/ lighting and minimal planting	\$ 8,000 each
	Major Corridor Signage with minimal planting	\$62,500 each
	Signage, lighting and substantial planting	\$84,000 each
	Hardscape, landscape, structural features, lighting, signage, banners, and/or water features	\$119,000 each
MISCELLANEOUS		
Parks	Passive park - picnic facilities only	\$25,000 per acre
	Limited active park - picnic, playground equipment, multi-purpose field	\$50,000 per acre
Lot Assembly	Purchase of land for retention or consolidation of small parcels (excluding CBD)	\$125,000 - \$250,000 per acre

Neighborhood Impact Element

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan does not propose any specific projects that would directly result in the need for a housing relocation plan. However, the Plan recognizes that the existing housing stock can be greatly enhanced through the combined efforts of the CRA with several existing housing initiatives. These efforts are a functional responsibility of other City departments or occur under independent management by other quasi-public or private groups.

The City, in cooperation with other agencies, offers several programs to assist in the construction and rehabilitation of single-family homes. Homeownership support services also are offered, including lending, education, emergency management and inspection programs. The following is a list of agencies serving the City and programs that offer assistance in improving the area's existing housing stock, particularly as it relates to the provision of low- and very-low income housing.

City of Gainesville Housing Division

The Housing Division takes a leadership role in establishing community partnerships to develop new housing stock in the Gainesville area. For example, the Housing Division played a key role in organizing development efforts for Cedar Grove II, including facilitating community-based committees to establish minimum standards for development, developer selection criteria, and the creation of a marketing plan. Such activities can be similarly applied to downtown sites of varying sizes.

The State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) is administered by the Gainesville Housing Division to prequalify first-time homebuyers throughout the City of Gainesville. The program allows the City to assist very low, low, and moderate-income families with down payment and closing costs, and other subsidies.

All programs offered by the Housing Division are geared to families with incomes at or below 80% of the City's median income. The following programs may be of assistance in improving the existing housing stock in Downtown Gainesville:

- Housing Rehabilitation. The City offers financial and technical assistance for the repair of any Housing Code violation for single-family residences including, but not limited to,

replacing a roof, making structural repairs and weatherization improvements.

- Housing Recycling Program. The City may rehabilitate boarded property that is donated or purchased. Property is subsequently offered for sale to low-income, first-time homebuyers.
- SHIP Program. The SHIP consists of a series of programs for down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers, mortgage pre-qualification for first-time homebuyers, home maintenance education, special needs grants, renovation of SHIP purchased homes, emergency repair grants and loans.

City of Gainesville Block Grant Division

The City's Block Grant Division is involved with several infill construction projects in the Downtown Gainesville area, in partnership with the Neighborhood Housing Development Corporation (NHDC) and Habitat for Humanity. The projects generally involve single lot home construction in the existing neighborhoods. The Block Grant Division provides funding for these agencies to use as leverage funds in the purchase and development of individual parcels.

Gainesville Neighborhood Housing Development Corporation

The Neighborhood Housing Development Corporation is a private corporation that works in partnership with the City and other agencies to promote home ownership and community reinvestment in blighted areas. The NHDC receives funding through both public and private entities. The City of Gainesville provides funding through Block Grants and Housing Division SHIP programs.

The NHDC's national affiliate, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, also serves as a source of funding, including 0% capital funding loans. Fee generated funds from NHDC's educational programs constitute a percentage of its overall funding. In addition, a consortium of local lenders offers the NHDC a low interest line of credit.

NHDC's five main program areas include:

1. Housing Development – new and rehabilitation
2. Lending – home repair and first-time home buyers
3. Homebuyer education
4. Homeownership counseling
5. Property inspections - i.e. lead based paints

Benchmarks established for the program include:

1. Homeownership – 2000 - assisted 76 families; 2001 - projection 120 families
2. Education seminars – 2000 – 160 graduates of 8 hour seminar in Alachua County; 2001 – projecting 185 graduates
3. Loans – 2000 - 36 loans; 2001 projection 50 loans
4. Inspections – 2000 – 18 inspections; 2001 projection 25 inspections

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization working with low-income families to provide affordable single-family housing. Lands throughout the County are purchased or donated to Habitat for Humanity. Program participants are able to select a lot from those organization's inventory. Currently, Habitat for Humanity does not own any lots in the downtown Redevelopment Area.

Sources of Redevelopment Funding and Finance

The following section provides a general review of potential sources of funding for redevelopment programs. A wide variety of financing options are available to the City and the Community Redevelopment Agency. Among these are the following:

Tax Increment Revenues

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is typically a major funding mechanism for redevelopment projects under the State of Florida Community Redevelopment Act. This increment, which is to be determined annually, is equal to up to 95% of the difference between: the amount of ad valorem taxes levied each year by each applicable taxing authority on taxable real property within the Community Redevelopment Area; and, the amount of ad valorem taxes that would have been produced by the current millage rates prior to establishing of the Redevelopment Trust Fund. Both of these amounts are exclusive of debt service millage of the taxing authorities.

The Tax Base and Revenue Projections – 2000 to 2030

Perhaps the greatest indication of the economic health of a community is the relative strength of its tax base, which is the total value of property used when determining ad valorem taxes. A stable growth rate in property value correlated favorably to the rate of inflation would indicate a strong market for real estate investment and provide stability in the rate of taxation expressed in millages assessed on property. A weak market is one in which the increase in property values is not keeping pace with the rate of inflation or worse, when property values are in a cycle of decline. This condition may give cause for an increase in tax millage to provide an equivalent amount of revenue to support government services.

The tax roll evaluation indicates that the redevelopment area has had an average annual increase in property values of over five percent (5%) over the last several years. This relatively healthy rate of growth is somewhat muted by the fact that the aggregate taxable value of the area is still relatively low (approximately \$80 million in 2000) and that approximately eighty percent of all properties have year 2000 values that are less than one hundred thousand dollars. Further, the significance of non-taxable properties – approximately one third of all

parcels – suggests that the balance of the study area must continue to increase to avoid any deterioration of the existing tax base and the need for increased taxes to offset loss of revenue.

A primary objective of the redevelopment program is to reformatify the tax base by undertaking selective capital improvements and implementing strategies to instigate private sector investment in the redevelopment area. New investment and the resulting increase in property values provides the fuel for the redevelopment program which derives its funding from tax increment revenues. Upon adoption of the updated redevelopment plan and the redevelopment trust fund ordinance, the total value of property within the redevelopment area is determined and fixed to establish the tax base. All tax revenues generated on the fixed tax base will continue to flow through the appropriate taxing authorities for budgetary purposes. All future tax revenues generated by an increase of property value within the redevelopment area are diverted to the redevelopment trust fund for program implementation. The redevelopment agency is not a taxing jurisdiction, so it does not have the authority to assess a millage rate that is applied to the value of property to generate ad valorem tax revenue.

By creating the Downtown Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency, the Gainesville City Commission has utilized statutory provisions to establish a revenue stream that can be used to finance the capital projects set forth in the Redevelopment plan. These revenues can be used to satisfy debt obligations or may be leveraged with grants, commercial loan pools and other financial strategies to successfully implement the plan.

For purposes of projecting potential TIF revenue, a graduated average annual growth rate ranging between 2% and 4% in taxable property values has been developed. These values are compounded and projected for a thirty-year period. Revenue projections assume constant millage rates (approximately 13.7 mills) and full participation (95%) from all non-exempt taxing authorities (i.e., the City and Alachua County.) The yearly TIF projection is presented on the following pages.

Several observations can be made with respect to the TIF revenue forecast. The tax base for the original downtown CRA remains fixed at the 1982 level – approximately eighteen million dollars (\$17,795,000). If approved this year, the tax base of the expansion area would be fixed at approximately thirty-five

million dollars (\$35,000,000). If near term property value appreciation were to continue in the range of 3% to 4.5% per annum, a yearly TIF revenue stream of approximately eight hundred and forty thousand dollars (\$840,000) would be realized by the year 2011.

It is likely that a growth curve different than that forecasted will occur over the time horizon of this updated Downtown Redevelopment Plan. That is, the average annual rate of growth in taxable value could exceed six percent in some years, particularly while the base is relatively small, but the rate of growth could just as easily stagnate due to a cyclical economy. A single large project in any year also could dramatically impact the aggregate tax value. In any event, the TIF projection anticipates that the growth in taxable value over the next thirty years will exceed the current total and cause it to more than double – from eighty million dollars to one hundred and eighty million dollars by 2032.

Other Funding Sources / Mechanisms

Redevelopment Revenue Bonds

The provisions of F. S. 163.3 85 allow the City or the Community Redevelopment Agency to issue "Revenue Bonds" to finance redevelopment actions, with the security for such bonds being based on the "anticipated assessed valuation" of the completed community Redevelopment Area, the "tax increment", is used to finance the long term bond debt. Prior to the issuance of long-term revenue bonds, the City or Community Redevelopment Agency may issue bond anticipation notes to provide up-front funding for redevelopment actions until sufficient tax increment funds are available to amortize a bond issue.

General Revenue Bonds

For the purposes of financing redevelopment actions, the City also may issue General Obligation Bonds. These bonds are secured by debt service millage on the real property within the City and must receive voter approval.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The CDBG monies may be committed to demolition of substandard housing units, housing rehab assistance, and home ownership assistance within targeted areas within the Community Redevelopment Area. Fund expenditures are for the benefit of low and moderate-income residents.

CDBG Commercial Revitalization Grants

Funding may be used for planning, design and construction of infrastructure that supports commercial revitalization or strategic planning initiatives for redevelopment, and revitalization of commercial properties contained in targeted areas of low to moderate income.

Parks , Recreation and Beautification Grants

The following grant programs may be used for design and construction of parks and streetscape improvements. All of these programs have funding limits, require a local matching contribution and are obtained through competitive processes.

Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP)

This annual state recreation assistance program may be used for recreational land acquisition, park design and construction. Active park amenities are normally afforded a higher priority than passive parks. \$200,000 limit, projects may be phased over several years and require variable % local match based on grant amount.

Transportation Enhancement Act Grants (TEA-21)

This is an excellent source of funding for streetscape improvements. As the name implies, this program is particularly valuable for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Annual Federal program administered through FDOT and local MPO. No specific funding limitations. Projects are awarded on merit, need and political influences.

FDOT Highway Beautification Grants

This is an annual State Highway beautification program. The annual limit is \$150,000, but projects may be phased over several years.

Keep America Beautiful Grant (KAB)

Annual landscaping grant program administered through State Department of Agriculture. \$20,000 limit, projects may be phased.

Small Business Administration Tree Planting Grant (SBA)

Annual tree planting grant geared toward supporting nursery operations and landscaping contractors with less than 100 employees. \$20,000 limit.

Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB)

Industrial revenue bonds may be used to finance industrial, and some commercial projects. The primary emphasis on such projects is the creation of jobs and, as a consequence, speculative ventures are not normally financed by these means. The City typically issues these bonds, with repayment pledged against the revenues of the private enterprise being funded. IRB's are tax exempt and consequently are typically 3 percentage points below prevailing interest rates.

Land Sales / Leases

The acquisition of property and its preparation for development are powers available to the redevelopment agency under statutory provisions. Resale or leasing of such land to private developers can provide income within the Community Redevelopment Area.

Private Contributions

Voluntary contributions by private companies, foundations and individuals are potential sources of income to the Community Redevelopment Agency. Although such contributions may only account for a small portion of redevelopment costs, they do provide opportunities for community participation with positive promotional benefits.

Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG)

This is one of several programs at the Federal level designed to fund private development through leveraged public investment. Due to cutbacks in Federal funding this is not considered a strong source of funds at this time.

Safe Neighborhoods Act - Chapter 163.502 FS

Neighborhood Improvement Districts created pursuant to the Act may request a planning grant from the state's Safe Neighborhood Trust Fund on a 100% matching basis. The District also may authorize to levy an ad valorem tax of up to 2 mills annually on real and personal property.

Direct Borrowing From Commercial Lenders

The CRA is authorized to fund redevelopment projects and programs through direct borrowing of funds. Depending on the particular project(s) funding requirements, the CRA may utilize both short and long-term borrowing. Although terms and conditions may have a direct bearing on use of a particular commercial lending institution, the CRA will generally attempt to attain the lowest available interest rate.

Appendix

Appendix A: Legal Description

The following is a legal description of a tract of land known as the Downtown Community Redevelopment Area, located within the City of Gainesville, Sections 4, 5, 8 and 9 of Township 10 south, Range 20 east, Alachua County, Florida being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of NW 1st Street and NW 8th Avenue proceed east on NW 8th Avenue to the centerline of NE 1st Street; thence south on NE 1st Street to the centerline of NE 2nd Avenue; thence east on NE 2nd Avenue to the centerline of NE 7th Street; thence north on NE 7th Street to the centerline of NE 3rd Avenue; thence east on NE 3rd Avenue to the centerline of Waldo Road; thence south on Waldo Road to the centerline of the Seaboard Coast Railroad right-of-way; thence southwest on the Seaboard Coast Railroad right-of-way to the centerline of SE 4th Street; thence southeast on SE 4th Street to the centerline of SE 10th Avenue; thence southwest on centerline of SE 10th Avenue to the centerline of SE 1st Street; thence southwest on SE Veitch Street to the western boundary of parcel 15706-001-000 according to the Alachua County Property Appraiser's records; thence south along the western boundary of 15706-001-000 to the centerline of SE 10th Avenue; thence west on SE 10th Avenue to the centerline of S Main Street; thence north on Main Street to the centerline of SW Depot Avenue; thence west on SW Depot Avenue to the centerline of SW 6th Street; thence north on SW 6th Street to the intersection of W University Avenue; thence north on NW 6th Street to the centerline of NW 2nd Avenue; thence east on NW 2nd Avenue to the west property line of parcel 14252-000-000 according to the Alachua County Property Appraiser's records; thence north on the west property line of parcel 14252-000-000 to the centerline of NW 3rd Avenue; thence east on NW 3rd Avenue to the centerline of NW 1st Street; thence north on NW 1st Street to the Point of Beginning; containing 490 acres more or less.

Appendix B: Operational Parameters of the Community Redevelopment Agency

Authority to Undertake Community Redevelopment

This document has been prepared under the direction of the Community Redevelopment Agency in accordance with the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, Chapter 163 Part III F.S. In recognition of the need to prevent and eliminate slum and blighted conditions within the community, the Community Redevelopment Act confers upon counties and municipalities the authority and powers to carry out “Community Redevelopment.” For the purpose of this Community Redevelopment Plan, the following definition taken from the Florida Statutes shall apply:

“Community Redevelopment” or “Redevelopment” means undertakings, activities, or projects of a county, municipality, or community redevelopment agency in a community redevelopment area for the elimination and prevention of the development or spread of slums and blight or for the provision of affordable housing, whether for rent or for sale, to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, and may include slum clearance and redevelopment in a community redevelopment area or rehabilitation or conservation in a community redevelopment area, or any combination or part thereof, in accordance with a community redevelopment plan and may include the preparation of such plan.”

The ability of the city or the municipality to utilize the authority granted under this Act is predicated upon the adoption of the “Finding of Necessity” by the governing body. This finding must demonstrate that:

1. One or more slum or blighted areas, or one or more areas in which there is a shortage of housing affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, exist in the city or municipality; and,
2. The rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of such an area, or areas, is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the city or municipality.

The Community Redevelopment Area

Pursuant to State Statutes, a community redevelopment area must be a slum area, a blighted area or an area in which there is a shortage of affordable housing. The Redevelopment Area consists of the Downtown Gainesville study area and adjacent areas that have become deteriorated due to age, obsolescence and the lack of investment. Unfortunately, a deteriorating area is self-propagating, and as conditions worsen, residents and private businesses become less willing to put financial resources into the area. It is this cycle that severely limits the ability of private enterprise to stop the spread of slum and blight without public assistance. The redevelopment area boundaries were delineated as the area encompassing those properties found to qualify as slum and blighted (see accompanying map).

All public redevelopment activities expressly authorized by the community redevelopment act and funded by tax increment financing must be set forth in a redevelopment plan which has been approved by the City Commission. Like the Comprehensive Plan, the Community Redevelopment Plan is an evolving document that must be evaluated and amended on a regular basis in order to accurately reflect changing conditions and community objectives. As such, this Community Redevelopment Plan has been prepared to update the established action priorities contained in the comprehensive plan based upon a new set of priorities set forth by the citizens and governing body.

Creation of the Community Redevelopment Agency

The City of Gainesville’s Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is established. The following is a summary of powers the CRA may exercise in implementing the plan, and the parameters for operation.

Powers of the Community Redevelopment Agency

As authorized by the Community Redevelopment Act, a wide variety of powers are available to the City to carry out redevelopment activities. The Redevelopment Agency is vested with the following powers pursuant to Florida Statutes, Section 163.370.

To make and execute contacts and other instruments necessary or convenient to exercise its powers in accordance with statutes;

To disseminate redevelopment information;

To undertake and carry out community development projects and related activities within its area of operation, such projects to include:

- Acquisition of a slum area or a blighted area of any portion thereof;
- Demolition and removal of buildings and improvements;
- Installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements necessary for carrying out the Community Redevelopment Plan;
- Disposition of any property acquired in the Community Redevelopment Area at its fair value for uses in accordance with the Community Redevelopment Plan;
- Carrying out plans for a program of voluntary or compulsory repair and rehabilitation of buildings or other improvements in accordance with the Community Redevelopment Plan;
- Acquisition of real property in the Community Redevelopment Project area which, under the Community Redevelopment Plan, is to be repaired or rehabilitated for dwelling use or related facilities, repair or rehabilitation of the structures for guidance purposes, and resale of the property;
- Acquisition of any other real property in the Community Redevelopment Area when necessary to eliminate unhealthy, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, lessen density, eliminate obsolete or other uses detrimental to the public welfare, or otherwise, to remove or prevent the spread of blight or deterioration, or to provide land for needed public facilities;
- Acquisitions, without regard to any requirement that the area be a slum or blighted area, of air rights in an area consisting principally of land in highways, railway tracks, bridge entrances, or other similar facilities which have a blighting influence on the surrounding area and over which air rights sites are to be developed for the elimination of such blighting influences and for the provision of housing and related facilities and uses designed specifically for and limited to, families and individuals of low or moderate income;
- Construction of foundations and platforms necessary for the provision of air rights sites of housing and related facilities and uses designed specifically for, and limited to, families and individuals of low or moderate income;
- To provide, or arrange or contract for, the furnishings or repair by any person or agency, public or private, of services, privileges, works, streets, roads, public utilities or other facilities or in connection with a Community Redevelopment Project; and to agree to any conditions that it may deem reasonable and appropriate attached to federal financial assistance and imposed pursuant to federal law relating to the determination of prevailing salaries or wages or compliance with labor standards, in activities, and to include in any contract let in connection with such a project and related activities, provisions to fulfill such of said conditions as it may deem reasonable and appropriate;

Within its area of operation:

- To acquire by purchase, lease, option, gift, grant, bequest devise, or otherwise except in eminent domain, any real property (or personal property for ins administrative purposes) together with any improvements thereon;
- To hold, improve, clear, or prepare for redevelopment any such property;

- To mortgage, pledge, hypothecate, or otherwise encumber to dispose of any real property;
- To insure or provide for the insurance of any real or personal property or operations of the city or municipality against any risks or hazards, including the power to pay premiums on any such insurance;
- To enter into any contracts necessary to effectuate the purpose of this part.
- To invest any Community Redevelopment Funds held in reserves or sinking funds or any such funds not required for immediate disbursement in property or securities in which savings banks may legally invest funds subject to their control; to redeem revenue bonds issued pursuant to this part at the redemption price established therein or to purchase such bonds at less than redemption price, all such bonds so redeemed or purchased to be canceled;
- To borrow money and to apply for and accept advances, loans, grants, contributions, and any other form of financial assistance from the Federal Government, the State, County, or other public body, or from any sources, public or private, for the purposes of this part, and to give such security as may be required and to enter into and carry out contracts or agreements in connection therewith; and to include in any contract for financial assistance with the Federal Government or with respect to a Community Redevelopment Project and unrelated activities such conditions imposed pursuant to federal laws as the city or municipality may deem reasonable and appropriate and which are not inconsistent with the purposes of this part;
- Within its area of operation, to make or have made all surveys and plans necessary to carry out the purposes of this part and with the consent of the City Council to contract with any person, public or private, in making and carrying out such plans, which plans may include, but not be limited to:
 - Plans for carrying out a program of voluntary or compulsory repair and rehabilitation of buildings and improvements;
 - Appraisals, title searches, surveys, studies, and other plans and work necessary to prepare for the undertaking of Community Redevelopment Projects and related activities;
 - Plans for the enforcement of state and local laws, codes and regulations relating to the use of land and the use and occupancy of buildings and improvements and to the compulsory repair, rehabilitation, demolition, or removal of buildings and improvements.
- To develop, test, and report methods and techniques, and carry out demonstrations and other activities, for the prevention and the elimination of slums and urban blight and development and demonstrating new or improved means of providing housing for families and persons of low income;
- To apply for, accept and utilize grants of funds from the Federal Government for such purposes;
- To prepare plans for and assist in the relocation of persons (including individuals, families, business concerns, nonprofit organizations and others) displaced from a Community Redevelopment Area, and to make relocation payment to or with respect to such persons for moving expenses and losses of property for which reimbursement or compensation is not otherwise made, including the making of such payments financed by the Federal Government;
- To appropriate such finds and make such expenditures as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this part;
- To close, vacate, plan or replat streets, roads, sidewalks, or other places;
- Within its area of operation, to organize, coordinate, and direct the administration of the provisions of this part, as they may apply to the City in order that the objective of remedying slum and blighted areas and

preventing the causes thereof within the City, and to establish such offices in order to carry out such purposes most effectively;

- To acquire by eminent domain any real property together with any improvements thereon.

The following powers shall remain vested with the City Commission of the City of Gainesville:

- The power to determine an area to be a slum or blighted area, or combination thereof, to designate such area as appropriate for a Community Redevelopment Project, and to hold any public hearings required with respect thereto;
- The power to grant final approval to Community Redevelopment Plans and modifications thereof;
- The power to authorize the issuance of revenue bonds as set forth in Section 163.385;
- The power to approve the acquisition, demolition, removal, or disposal of property as provided in Section 163.370 (4) and the power to assume the responsibility to bear loss as provided in Section 163.370 (4).