

Park Design Meetings – East Gainesville SPROUT Project Task Force (EGSP TF)**January 26 - Park Design Workshop and Risk Assessment/Feasibility Study Discussion**

Staff and ECT/Genesis Group will facilitate a design workshop. Citizens from the entire community are encouraged to attend. The workshop will seek feedback from the community on the proposed park designs and remediation strategy for the CSX property.

Time: 9 AM – 12 PM

Place: Multi-Purpose Room, GRU

January 29 - EGSP TF Regular Meeting

The Task Force will review the public comments and suggestions obtained at the January 26, 2002 workshop and advise staff on the appropriateness of this information for further design development. Other regular business will also be addressed.

Time: 5-7 PM

Place: Multi-Purpose Room, GRU

February 19 - EGSP TF Regular Meeting

The Task Force will review changes to the design concepts incorporated since the January 29, 2002 meeting. Staff will seek approval of one of the concepts and a recommendation to obtain authorization from the City Commission for further design development. Other regular business will also be addressed.

Time: 5-7 PM

Place: Multi-Purpose Room, GRU

March 11 - City Commission Meeting

Staff will seek approval to proceed with further design development of the Task Force-approved conceptual design.

Time: 1 PM

Place: City Commission Auditorium

Attention Gainesville Residents!

Depot Park Design Workshop

*Saturday, January 26th, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the
GRU Administration Building, 301 SE 4th Ave.*

You are invited to voice your opinion on Depot Park design concepts. The city plans to cleanup a contaminated former industrial site near South Main Street and Depot Avenue, and restore it as a public stormwater park with bike trails, walking paths, boardwalks, interpretive exhibits, native vegetation and plenty of open spaces.

Depot Park will contain wetlands and ponds for animals and plants, and will naturally treat stormwater from downtown, making the community more environmentally friendly. The park will be a great place to bring family and friends for picnics, a walk or just to enjoy the scenery. Come help design your new community park!



Call Matt Dubé, City of Gainesville,
at 334-5029 for more information.

East Gainesville SPROUT Project Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the East Gainesville SPROUT Project?

A: The project is a collaborative effort to cleanup and restore properties known as brownfields in the Depot Avenue and South Main Street area of downtown Gainesville. A brownfield is an abandoned, idle, or underused industrial or commercial property where redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. The City of Gainesville will cleanup and restore these properties as a public park.

Q: What has contaminated the project site?

A: A coal gasification plant operated on Depot Avenue across from the old Depot Building from the 1880's to about 1950. The plant generated coal gas, which was used for heating and lighting, and a process by-product known as coal tar. Coal tar entered a drainage ditch on site and contaminated the CSX railroad property south of the Depot Building. The tar contaminated the soil and groundwater on this site, which is now fenced to prevent trespassers from entering the area

Q: Who is responsible for cleaning up the site?

A: In 1992, the City of Gainesville agreed to clean up the site as part of the acquisition of the Gainesville Gas Company assets completed in 1990. The City will use GRU gas service revenues to pay for the cleanup.

Q: Why is the City of Gainesville redeveloping the site as a public park?

A: The City recognizes the need to provide green space and stormwater treatment in the downtown area. The combination of these two factors is expected to improve the aesthetics, economic vitality, and environmental quality of the central city district. The site contains features such as wetlands, rail trails, and old Gainesville Depot that make it an excellent choice for a park.

Q: Why are green space and stormwater treatment needed?

A: Green space provides the public with multiple opportunities for outdoor recreation in a casual setting. Many cities provide these opportunities for citizens to enhance the quality of life; however, Gainesville currently does not have such a place downtown. Stormwater treatment is a requirement for land development. Treatment removes contaminants that would harm the environment if not managed properly. Removing contaminants from downtown stormwater prevents them from entering Sweetwater Branch and ultimately, the Floridan Aquifer beneath Alachua Sink.

Q: What is the strategy for managing downtown stormwater?

A: Rather than require individual downtown redevelopment sites to provide treatment, the sites will instead drain into an approximately 11-acre pond constructed in the park. This strategy streamlines downtown site redevelopment by reducing costs, the number of permits, and land requirements associated with individual on-site stormwater facilities. Developers can therefore dedicate more resources to enhancing development projects.

Q: How much area of downtown will drain into the park?

A: Approximately 80 acres.

Q: What will the park look like and what can people do there?

A: The park will appear as if the ponds and vegetation developed naturally. Native plants will be used extensively on site. The initial concept for the park specifies mostly casual recreation such as biking, walking, rollerblading, picnicking, and nature observation. In addition to the trails, paths, and green spaces to support those activities, the City will build a skate park for skateboarders and a children's playground. Community acceptance, grant obligations and available funding will determine the final mix of facilities.

Q: What is the City doing to ensure that the park will be safe to visit?

A: Security is a top priority that will be addressed to some extent through the design of the park. Consultants for the City will develop a security plan, which will include lighting, fencing, and space planning to increase security. Other security measures will be implemented through the Gainesville Police Department and community based programs.

Q: Will the ponds be fenced?

A: The ponds will appear as though they were designed by nature and should not require fencing. The edges of the ponds will slope gradually so that only very shallow water will be adjacent to the shoreline. The maximum depth varies but would not average more than approximately 5 feet.

Q: Is funding available for construction?

A: Funding is currently available through the City of Gainesville Stormwater Management Utility to construct the stormwater basins, enhance the existing wetlands and provide amenities necessary to the stormwater function. Funding for the park is not yet available. The City will apply for state and federal grants to finance the park construction.

Q: What is the timeframe for completing the project?

A: The park will be constructed in several phases. The actual schedule is subject to many factors including regulatory approvals, funding levels, and contractor availability. The current schedule calls for site cleanup starting in 2002 for the former gas plant site (2003 for the CSX property) and park construction in 2004.

Contact: Matt Dubé, Projects Coordinator, City of Gainesville, (352) 334-5029