

**LESIGLATIVE #
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**CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA
2013 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The central city core of Gainesville is experiencing economic growth due in large part to the redevelopment efforts of the City of Gainesville and its partners as well as interest from private developers. This area, including downtown and east Gainesville, has seen significant development and infrastructure improvement which has impacted the economic potential for the central city. The City of Gainesville and its partners such as the University of Florida, Alachua County, the State of Florida and others have worked together to create an atmosphere of economic opportunity and sustainable growth with a goal of revitalizing this part of our community. Gainesville has a unique opportunity to leapfrog ahead and create a new model of community economic development; the community has mobilized with unified goals of establishing a model of community collaboration and innovation and to further enhance its effectiveness as a crucible for developing high tech companies. Establishing true public/private partnerships and further leveraging research funding and faculty expertise coming into the University of will catalyze growth and spur the creation of creative class jobs.

Current and planned projects include: Depot Park which includes the remediation of a contaminated site; the Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative (SEGRI); Innovation Square and the Power District; historic preservation; mixed use development; economic development; and infrastructure improvements such as streets, sidewalks, street and pedestrian lighting, and utility improvements. **The City of Gainesville would like the support of the Alachua County delegation for these redevelopment efforts. Initiatives that are at the forefront which are essential for the successful revitalization of the central city and the overall economic prosperity of the city are Innovation Square, premium transit services, and job training and education. Project stakeholders are pursuing funding assistance from multiple sources, including a number of Federal Agencies. We respectfully request advocacy assistance from the City's Congressional Delegation as these funding opportunities present themselves.**

Innovation Square and the iDistrict

The Innovation District (iDistrict) spans roughly 44 acres in the heart of Gainesville's urban core. Development of the iDistrict provides a strong physical link between Downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida. It also represents the symbolic link of a deeply integrated town/gown partnership in which the University, Shands HealthCare (affiliated with the University of Florida)City of Gainesville, Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), and Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) work together in a collaborative partnership to bring investment, growth, economic development, and job creation to the community. The core development is a mixed-use, research-oriented 24-hour live/work/play community that will translate the knowledge developed at UF and elsewhere into commercial and business applications. The iDistrict has the capacity to include up to 6 million square feet of new building space and generate thousands of new jobs to the community. Many of these jobs will be high-wage positions in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. However, a high level of support services in commercial retail, residential, and other fields will be generated to meet the demand generated by the "creative class" innovation economy centered in this district.

The community has formed strong institutional partnerships in order to proactively establish the necessary framework that will support and cultivate iDistrict development: The CRA has partnered with the City and GRU to streamline and clarify zoning and utility regulations and the development review process. The CRA, GRU, UF, Shands HealthCare, and the City of Gainesville, and private sector have coordinated high-level utility master planning to ensure that capacity, design, and delivery of services are well integrated into development plans. Urban design standards have been adopted to ensure walkability and multi-modal opportunities connecting the iDistrict, Downtown, and the University of Florida. The partnership is developing innovative stormwater systems that will be interwoven into urban design standards in order to address stormwater in a holistic, district-wide manner.

The Innovation Hub research/technology business incubator is now open, and plans for additional buildings are in the permitting process. Plans for major capital improvements are also progressing and include: roadways, stormwater, utilities, parks/public spaces, public/public, and public/private partnerships, and more. All stakeholders, both public and private are working together to ensure full integration of plans, with the ultimate goal of creating a vibrant urban area that will create jobs and generate unprecedented levels of urban development. This district will not only benefit the local community, but serve as a national and international model.

CRA plans to design and construct approximately \$4 million in transportation, stormwater, and utility improvements in 2012-2013. These infrastructure improvements are necessary to support the planned additional buildings and high-tech jobs which are slated for the iDistrict in 2012-2013.

Power District

Immediately adjacent to Depot Park is the Power District, approximately 12 acres of downtown property formerly utilized as support areas for utility operations. The Power District presents tremendous economic opportunities for the community. It is emerging as one of the city's most vibrant districts and includes an eclectic mix of industrial, artistic, commercial, and residential spaces. In late 2011, GRU relocated operations away from this district, providing an opportunity for large-scale redevelopment and economic development. The CRA, as lead agency, has coordinated master planning work in order to literally rebuild this section of town, and is working to enable flexible, streamlined zoning regulations that will bolster efforts to attract new commercial opportunities and jobs to the area.

The area will serve as an important compliment to Innovation Square and the iDistrict, as it provides the opportunity for Innovation Economy businesses with assembly/production/manufacturing needs the ability to locate and grow within Gainesville's urban core. Currently, the CRA is leading a partnership with the City and GRU to establish a "catalyst" economic development project in the Power District. The project, a public/private partnership with Prioria Robotics, will provide an anchor tenant for the Power District, and will afford Prioria the opportunity to expand their growing business within the local community. Prioria is a locally grown clean tech company which develops and produces unmanned aircraft and other engineering solutions for industrial robotics, medical device applications, and military and homeland security applications. Prioria is seeking to bring its production capabilities into the

City, and specifically to Downtown Gainesville. The company anticipates adding approximately 40 new high wage jobs over the next five years.

The catalyst project incorporates economic development, business retention, and redevelopment initiatives. Costs needed to fund the catalyst project include funding for the site rehabilitation, and for infrastructure improvements. CRA is lead agency for this project, with partnerships from the City of Gainesville and GRU. The project is “shovel ready”, with Prioria scheduled to move into the space in early 2013. **The funding needed is \$700,000 to fund site design/engineering, construction and infrastructure work necessary to rehabilitate the site and adaptively reuse it in a partnership with Prioria Robotics.**

Depot Park

Depot Park is a 32-acre greenspace located in Downtown Gainesville. The project will become Gainesville’s “central park” and is the future home of a 40,000 square foot Cade Museum of Innovation, which will be constructed and operated in a partnership with the family of the late Dr. Robert Cade, founder of Gatorade. The park will include state-of-the-art park design and urban greenspace techniques; however the project is far more complex than these components would suggest. The project includes: large-scale brownfield remediation, historic preservation, economic development, public/public and public/private partnerships, innovative stormwater urban stormwater management, LEED design/construction, wetland protection/remediation, and the development of multi-use trails that will serve as the hub for Gainesville’s rails-to-trails transportation system.

Final environmental remediation of the site is currently underway, and the Gainesville CRA, as lead agency for park development, is currently coordinating construction of the historic Depot Building and surrounding park areas. This project will serve as the entrance to the park, and will provide community space as well as opportunities for commercial uses/business incubation/economic development opportunities. Construction of this portion of the project is scheduled for completion in Fall 2012. Build-out of the Park (including major pond features which will treat stormwater for the entire Downtown area) and of the Cade Museum will follow. The Depot Park project is a major collaboration between a variety of funding partners. To date, extensive work has been accomplished in environmental remediation of the site, adjacent roadway and infrastructure improvements, and the on-going rehabilitation of the Depot Building. Additional funding is needed to complete construction of the park. Development of Depot Park is strongly linked to economic development initiatives in the Power District and to Innovation Square/the iDistrict.

Funding partners include: Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency, Gainesville Regional Utilities, City of Gainesville, Florida Dept. of Transportation, Wild Spaces & Public Places, City of Gainesville Stormwater Management Utility.

Additional partners include: Alachua County, St. Johns River Water Management District, State of Florida, Florida Division of Natural Resources, Florida Communities Trust, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, Cade Museum of Creativity & Innovation.

Remediation is fully funded and environmental clean-up is nearing completion. Stormwater improvements are fully funded and planned for construction in 2012-2014. Cade Museum is planning to invest \$20 million in development of the museum, slated to open in 2015. Funding for park improvements, estimated at \$900,000, is needed to complete construction documents and to construct the Park.

SEGRI

Southeast Gainesville includes important commercial corridors, residential neighborhoods, and business opportunities. Major initiatives in the area include the City's business incubator, the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC), and the redevelopment potential of the 15-acre former Kennedy Homes site, which is envisioned to become a mixed-income, environmentally sustainable community. Redevelopment of the GTEC area presents a unique opportunity to better link GTEC (as well as any potential spin-off companies and/or other supportive commercial ventures) with the surrounding community; potentially providing jobs, services, and mixed-use development to serve the needs of both eastern Gainesville and the city as a whole. Additionally, concentrated redevelopment and economic development initiatives in the GTEC area would serve to implement many of the concepts identified in SEGRI, Plan East Gainesville, the Eastside Redevelopment Plan, and other similar initiatives. Redevelopment of this area could allow companies graduating from the GTEC incubator to locate on nearby lands and remain within the community. It may also serve as a catalyst to attract other businesses and development projects that would benefit from close proximity to the GTEC site. The property is well situated along a major transportation corridor, has good access to local neighborhoods and schools, and has synergy-building proximity with another large-scale redevelopment initiative at the former Kennedy Homes site. Additionally, the GTEC area boasts close proximity to Downtown, Innovation Square, the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, and the airport. **The current funding need for SEGRI is \$10 million for planning, infrastructure and site development. The City is working with local and state partners to close this funding gap, but we are also seeking assistance through the Department of Housing and Urban Development.**

Waldo Corridor

The Waldo Road corridor is an important entryway into the City of Gainesville. The area is home to new investments, such as a new Wal-Mart Supercenter, existing commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors, and the Gainesville Regional Airport. The area enjoys minimal traffic congestion, proximity to downtown and the University of Florida, and opportunities for new investment and development, including the site of the former Alachua County fairgrounds. This site is a 47-acre parcel that is slated for redevelopment into new business uses which will benefit the local community. Potential partners include the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, and the Gainesville CRA. **The City seeks assistance for planning and predevelopment activities.**

Armory Park

The Gainesville City Commission has expressed interest in potentially acquiring the property for use as a city park dedicated to reserve soldiers ("Reserve Park") where residents can honor the contributions of our citizen soldiers and to bring the remaining property back to active use to benefit the community and the local economy. Approximately two years ago, the United States Army Reserve completed renovation on a property located across the street (at 1300 NE 8th

Avenue), which had previously been a United States Navy Reserve center. After completing renovations, offices and equipment of the US Army Reserve 257th Transportation Battalion and other elements of the United States Army Reserve relocated from 1125 NE 8th Avenue to 1300 NE 8th Avenue. Since that time the property at 1125 NE 8th Avenue has appeared to be vacant and falling into disrepair.

Given the great demands on and tremendous services performed by citizen soldiers in reserve units of all branches of the military, particularly in the decade since September 11, 2001, we believe a public park so dedicated to be a noble and worthwhile goal. In addition, the City and citizens of Gainesville have expressed interest in co-sponsoring an annual picnic (which we understand has traditionally been held at that location) in honor and recognition of reservists and their families. **Currently, the property has been transferred over to the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the City seeks continued assistance from its Congressional Delegation to ensure transfer ownership of the property located at 1125 NE 8th Avenue, Gainesville, Florida to the City of Gainesville.**

PREMIUM TRANSIT SERVICES

The City of Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS) is a mid-sized agency that provides public transit service to the City of Gainesville and the adjacent areas of Alachua County. RTS service area is approximately 75 square miles with a total of 38 fixed routes, including 10 University of Florida (UF) campus shuttles. RTS provided more unique challenges daily as a result of adapting its service to both students and city residents, RTS continues to play a key role in building successful partnerships within the community and is committed to providing a safe, courteous and reliable transportation alternative to the greater Gainesville area.

RTS Administration, Operations and Maintenance Facility Expansion

Over the past ten years, the demand for transit services has outstripped RTS resources and the Federal Transit Administration has communicated its concerns about the need for RTS to expand their facility. The existing facility was originally designed to maintain a fleet of 40 buses. Today, with difficulty, RTS maintains 111 buses in the same facility.

RTS has secured approximately \$23.7 million in Federal grants and local funds and is working on phase 1 of the project, which consists of the land acquisition, engineering and design, site work, and construction of a 100 bus maintenance facility. **Funds are needed for phase 2 and 3, which consists of the engineering and design of administration and operations buildings and a maintenance facility to host an additional 130 buses. The City of Gainesville requires an additional \$28 million to continue the project.**

Purchase Replacement Buses

RTS currently operates 19 buses that are eligible for retirement, an average fleet age of 15,1 years and annual maintenance costs of approximately \$45,000 per bus. Although the city has received FTA and FDOT grant allocations for buses, the city still needs to replace at least 23 buses in order to be able to sustain regular service and reduce high maintenance costs.

Replacement buses will require \$8 million in funding to sufficiently update the fleet.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service

BRT is an enhanced bus system that operates on designated travel lanes or other running ways that allows BRT to operate at faster speeds, provide greater service reliability and increase customer convenience. These attributes combined with its use of advanced technologies and operational enhancements such as alternative fare collection methods and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) create a system with a strong positive image and identity. The City of Gainesville, Alachua County and Metropolitan Transit Planning Organization locally adopted transportation plans all support the implementation of BRT service as soon as 2015. The initial BRT implementation would likely connect a regional shopping mall, the University of Florida main campus, downtown Gainesville, and then terminate at the regional airport. **BRT service is the priority transit project for the City of Gainesville to provide premium transit services both in terms of implementation and transit resources. The funding needs for this project are estimated at \$38 million for infrastructure improvements and over \$3.6 million in annual operating expenses.**

Streetcar Service

Gainesville's streetcar project is envisioned as a key component to stimulating downtown redevelopment, enhancing community livability and promoting infill development. The streetcar would operate on existing streets in existing travel lanes. **The streetcar project is the second transit priority and is in the development phase. Feasibility studies will need to be conducted prior to implementation and \$1 million is needed to complete the study.** The Streetcar is currently in the early planning phase, but is quickly gaining support from a diverse group of community stakeholders. City staff recently submitted a grant application to receive FTA Livability funds to conduct a streetcar Alternatives Analysis and is waiting on the award results.

LAW ENFORCEMENT / EDUCATION

Youth Services and Education

The Gainesville Police Department is committed to enhancing the successful partnership with the Reichert House Youth Academy, the Black on Black Crime Task Force, the School Board of Alachua County and other local agencies and jurisdictions to achieve the goal of improving intervention strategies for at-risk youth, decreasing gang activity, and supporting educational and mentoring activities for this population. This commitment has been formalized via strategic initiatives that are included in the City of Gainesville's FY 2011 City Commission Strategic Plan. Among other things, the strategic plan includes initiatives aimed towards:

- Implementing intervention programs that identify, address and assess at-risk behaviors in high crime areas;
- Intervention programs that target and address gang related activity;
- High school dropout rate and low graduation rate of students in urban schools'
- Education initiatives aimed at preparing students for comprehensive exams such as the FCAT and alternative education to assist students and adults taking the General Education Development (GED) test;
- Job training and employment preparation, placement and follow-up services for at-risk youth; and

- A comprehensive, multi-faceted plan that involves intervention strategies and support systems for at-risk families.

The Gainesville Police Department is seeking \$1 million from local, state and federal sources to support initiatives for at-risk youth populations in the City of Gainesville.

Law Enforcement Technology

The Gainesville Police Department continues to work with local, state and federal partners to address a severe technological need identified by officers in the field. This request is for base radios which are permanently mounted, vehicle specific radios that have superior range and transmission capabilities for use by patrol. The amount would cover the purchase of the radios and associated licenses. This need has been identified through the agencies strategic plan and the number one technological need. Licenses associated with the radios would be planned for and budgeted by the agency in future years.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration

The Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration project will improve water quality and restore the natural sheetflow of water onto the wetlands of Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, a National Natural Landmark and Florida's first state wildlife preserve. The project will restore 1,300 acres of wetlands and will achieve the goals for reducing nutrients required in the Alachua Sink total maximum daily load (TMDL). The TMDL for Alachua Sink was established by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and approved by EPA in 2006. The Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration Project is broadly recognized as an innovative and regionally significant water quality improvement project. Project partners include St. Johns River Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Transportation and Alachua County. **The City of Gainesville and its partners at the local, state and federal level has provided nearly all of the funding to complete the estimated \$28 million project leaving an estimated need of \$2 million. The remainder of the project costs will be funded by local, state and federal partners.**

In addition, the City requests assistance in working with EPA to ensure that the project is compatible with the Numeric Nutrient Criteria (NNC) rule adopted by EPA in November of 2010. Site Specific Alternative Criteria as allowed by the NNC must be established and approved by EPA for the Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration Project to comply with the NNC. Investments in project planning and development now total approximately \$3 million. The City is meeting with EPA officials in order to develop strategies to ensure that the project can continue.

Biomass Plant

GRU is committed to being a leader in the provision of environmentally responsible energy for the community we serve. Our 100-megawatt biomass project, which will be fueled by wood waste, will meet GRU's need for improved reliability, increased fuel diversity and long-term cost savings for customers. Almost two-thirds of the energy GRU currently produces is fueled by coal, and 25 percent comes from natural gas. EPA's final rule deferring regulation of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from biogenic sources (issued July 1, 2011) for three years is a step

in the right direction. With GRU's 30-year agreement to purchase 100 MW of Biomass-fueled electric generation from the Gainesville Renewable Energy Center, cost projections rely on biomass regulation as cost neutral. GRU supports EPA's permanent ruling of biomass carbon neutrality.

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (H.R. 1), enacted in February 2009, created a renewable energy grant program that is administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury. This cash grant may be taken in lieu of the federal business energy investment tax credit (ITC). Grants are available to eligible property placed in service in 2009, 2010 or 2011 or placed in service by the specified credit termination date. At this point, the GREC biomass project remains on schedule to begin construction soon and thus will be eligible for the federal grant. This is an important factor in the economic impact of the project on Gainesville residents. If for some reason a schedule delay made the biomass plant ineligible for the grant, it could cost Gainesville residents \$6 million per year. **Any extension of this legislation would benefit Gainesville, removing the risk from schedule delays.**

Numeric Nutrient Criteria

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has developed the Nutrient Standards and Assessment Procedures for Surface Waters (Ch. 62-302 and Ch. 62-303) which GRU believes to be the favorable approach to water nutrient regulation. The bill must undergo ratification by the Florida Legislature; however, it contains rules that GRU deems to be practical and reasonable, while still protecting water quality. This bill has been drafted so that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must either approve it in its entirety or reject it in its entirety. **The City of Gainesville and GRU supports EPA's approval of the Nutrient Standards and Assessment Procedures for Surface Waters (Ch. 62-302 and Ch. 62-303) proposed by FDEP in its entirety.**

Koppers Health Study

Community partners have proposed a Community Health Study to assess the health status of the residents living in proximity to the Koppers superfund site, with the goal of evaluating and comparing the incidence of health problems in this population as compared to the general population. A comprehensive health study has never been implemented for the residents surrounding the superfund site. There are numerous benefits to conducting a health survey for this population. It is assumed that residents living in the proximity of the Koppers Superfund site may have been exposed to a variety of chemical contaminants. If a correlation between exposure to these contaminants and incident of adverse health effects can be determined, educational programs aimed at reducing residents exposure can be implemented resulting in an improved health status of the residents. Public health information about health effects related to the contaminants will improve the quality of the medical care and services for the general population. **It is estimated that a Community Health Study will cost approximately \$100,000. The partners participating in the Community Health Study project anticipate looking to various local, state and federal sources for funding contributions to complete the Community Health Study.**

TARGETED FEDERAL GRANTS

The City of Gainesville actively targets federal grant programs with the intent of utilizing the funds to achieve the goals of the city and ultimately benefit the citizens and community. The following is a categorical list of federal grant programs, both competitive and formula based, that the city supports,

Federal Agency	Grant Program(s)
Housing and Urban Development	CDBG HOME Continuum of Care Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant
Department of Energy	EECBG Biomass
Department of Justice	Byrne Discretionary Law Enforcement Technology Juvenile Accountability
Department of Homeland Security	State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)
Department of Commerce	Economic Development Administration Competitive Grant Program
Department of Education	Elementary and Secondary Education Promise Neighborhoods
Department of Transportation	Bus and Bus Facilities Small Starts
Environmental Protection Agency	State and Tribal Assistance
Department of Labor	Workforce Investment Act
Treasury	CDFI New Markets Tax Credits

INTER-AGENCY INITIATIVES

Grant Program	Federal Agencies
Sustainable Communities	HUD Transportation
Livability Initiative	HUD Transportation EPA

FEDERAL FUNDING AUTHORIZATIONS

The City of Gainesville supports the following federal funding authorizations. Project names have been included for those authorizations from which the city has requested funding.

SAFETEA-LU Transportation Reauthorization

Highway Projects – Depot Avenue
SW 62nd Blvd

Transit Projects – Transit Vehicle Purchase
RTS Operations and Maintenance Facility Expansion
RTS Intelligent Transportation System

Workforce Reinvestment Act

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Water Resources Development Act

Payne's Prairie Sheetflow