

**Petition PB-15-122 SVA.** City of Gainesville. Vacation of right-of-way to incorporate the vacated area into the Downtown Plaza. Located on the east side of SE 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the north side of SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue between University Avenue and SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

Lead Planner Dean Mimms, AICP, gave the staff presentation. He noted that representatives from the several City departments that are involved in redevelopment of the Downtown Plaza were in attendance, as was an Assistant City Manager. In response to questions from the Plan Board, Mr. Mimms explained that vacation of the right of way area for the sidewalks and the resultant incorporation of the sidewalk area into the Community Plaza will result in the sidewalk area being subject to City park rules rather than to the different rules that pertain to the public right of way. When asked specifically by Vice-Chair Ackerman if homeless people will be precluded from sleeping in that area [during the hours when the Community Plaza will be closed], Mr. Mimms replied “I would think so”. Steve Phillips, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, reiterated that the rules are different, that sleeping after hours in parks is not allowed, and that sleeping in the sidewalk area will not be allowed after Community Plaza closing hours if the right-of-way is vacated.

Chair Condon asked why this petition did not come to the Plan Board before construction started for the Community Plaza redevelopment project. Sarah Vidal-Finn, Interim Manager of the Community Redevelopment Plaza responded by explaining that the project evolved over time, and it became apparent that the boundaries of the Community Plaza would need to be expanded, which would require some right-of-way vacation. Board Member Adam Tecler asked what will happen to on-street parking spaces that are currently reserved for Steamer’s (an eating place on the Plaza). Ms. Vidal-Finn replied that the described use of those parking spaces was approved in Steamer’s lease on a temporary basis (only during the time of reconstruction of the Plaza) by the City Commission.

After the motion (below) was made and before the vote was taken, Vice-Chair Ackerman and Chair Condon noted that the impact of the proposed vacation of right-of-way on sleeping on sidewalks should have been communicated previously to the community of people that is engaged with the homeless, rather than foregoing raising it in a very public way until this public hearing. He added that there are benefits to transparency, and Chair Condon concurred.

<b>Motion By:</b> Crystal Goodison	<b>Seconded By:</b> Stephanie Sutton
<b>Moved To:</b> Approve Petition PB-15-122 SVA and find: 1) that the vacation of right-of-way for these sidewalks will not foreclose pedestrian or bicycle use of them and will not foreclose non-motorized access to adjacent uses or transit stops; and 2) that the vacation of right-of way is in the public interest.	<b>Upon Vote :</b> 4-2 (Nays: Ackerman and Condon)