



Office of Capital Asset Planning & Economic Resilience

TO: Lee Feldman, City Manager

THRU: Phil Mann, Interim Assistant City Manager
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FROM: Sarit Sela, City Architect

DATE: February 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Redevelopment Considerations for the 8th & Waldo Site – Due Diligence for Community Engagement

If You Want Different Results, You Have to Try Different Approaches.
Unknown.

To better understand the 8th & Waldo site strengths, constraints, and opportunities, and to accurately present those to the public in future engagement process, Staff collected data from selected expert City community builders and institutional partners regarding their experience with the site. The data collected in January 2021 included a total of 14 surveys, and multiple communications with representatives of the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, Colliers International, School Board of Alachua County, Alachua County Environmental Protection Department, and City staff.

Here are the main topics raised in the information received thus far:

1. What elements of the site need to stay and why?

1. There is a consensus among survey participants about the unique benefits of the recreational offering on-site, including the Dwight H Hunter Pool, MLK Jr. Multi-Purpose Center, Citizens Park and Citizens Field Stadium. These are all inclusive facilities, serving neighbors of all ages, year-round.
2. Some recognize Citizens Field Stadium as a local landmark. Others commented that unless an alternative site and development funding are identified, Citizens Field Stadium should stay as it is the primary field for multiple high school sports.

3. GFR facilities must stay on site, unless funding is available for relocation sites, design and construction of new facilities off site (Fire Station #3, GFR Admin and Training areas, Safety City). All GFR facilities can relocate, so long as equal or better accommodations are developed.
4. The street network provides connectivity and infrastructure and should remain in its general location.

2. Are there any known capital improvements planned for the site?

1. Field lighting improvements for Citizens Park (WSPP).
2. Bleacher improvements at MLK Center (WSPP).
3. Locker room improvements at Dwight Hunter Pool (WSPP).
4. All PRCA facilities on site are included in the WSPP project list. To our knowledge, no other improvements are currently planned beyond the ones abovementioned.
5. Construction will begin soon on an enhanced pedestrian crossing at NE 15th St and NE 12th Ave, leading into Citizens Field Park and connecting to existing sidewalk on east side off street. Ideally, this would continue west with a formalized multi-use path along the northern edge of the site, connecting to adjacent neighborhood streets.
6. The VFW is going to connect to existing sanitary sewer on the south side of Citizen's Field.

3. What are the site constraints / considerations for redevelopment?

1. Environmental.
 - a. According to a 2011 Phase 1 Environmental Study, there are on site environmental conditions that may impact future redevelopment, including an old landfill, former and current land uses that include chemical use and storage.
 - b. A follow up environmental study is required to determine the scope of these conditions and their potential impact on future redevelopment.
2. Facility relocation, funding and schedule.
 - a. To make room for redevelopment, relocating and reconstruction of some existing facilities will be needed. Replacing existing uses like GFR offices and the Football Stadium are contingent on finding new locations and funding for those uses. The associated costs and development time should be included in the cost and schedule of this site's development.
3. Connectivity:
 - a. Barrier of major four-lane road to east (particularly for bikes/peds).
 - b. Limited vehicular access for large events (existing entrances to site from minor local streets).
 - c. Limited parking for large events.
4. Residential context
 - a. Compatibility with adjacent single-family homes (mitigate noise, traffic, light, etc.)
 - b. Mitigate the potential for gentrification. Redevelopment on this property has the potential to become controversial and highly politicized.
5. Site's land use/zoning may need to be changed to align/support any reconstituted uses.

6. Funding/partnerships for redevelopment implementation and for on-going operation.

4. What are the strengths of the site?

1. Size, Location & Connectivity:
 - a. Large, contiguous property.
 - b. Visible from Waldo Road, central location in eastern Gainesville.
 - c. Easy access to major roadways.
 - d. Well connected to public transit and near an existing trail.
 - e. Within walking distance to residential neighborhoods.
2. Established Recreation Destination:
 - a. Well-recognized recreation destination. Variety of activities and programming, used by a variety of user groups.
 - b. Inclusive, serving neighbors from the vicinity and beyond.
 - c. Large open space - accounts for more than 50% of PRCA field usage reservations.
3. Utility infrastructure in place.
4. Existing GFR facilities
5. Safety City draws a few thousand visitors annually for safety events and activities.
6. Community history.
7. City ownership makes for simpler rezoning land-use changes processes.

5. What other initiatives does the city have planned or in progress in the vicinity that could impact or work in synergy with the site?

1. Vision Zero efforts are focused on a wider area that includes this site (this effort is about reducing/eliminating serious injury and deaths from traffic crashes).
2. TBD location for a mobility hub in east Gainesville. The increase of micro-transit could be of great benefit to the project put on this site.
3. TBD location for the development of a healthcare clinic, innovative food market, and a collaborative community resource center in the area.
4. Recently completed Reserve Park.
5. Smokey Bear Park Phase II.
6. Redevelopment of the Clarence R. Kelly Center.
7. Donation of 12 lots for affordable homeownership in Duval.
8. The future of the Job Corps and Tacachale is not certain.
9. Reconstruction of Metcalfe Elementary School and Howard Bishop Middle School nearby.

6. What stakeholders should we consider during the community engagement process?

- Neighboring residents, neighborhood associations, schools and churches
- Neighboring property and business owners
- Existing facility user groups (i.e., swim, soccer, etc.)
- School Board of Alachua County (SBAC)
- Bicycle Pedestrian Adv Board (BPAB)

- Mobility Bike Safety Coordinator
- Kiwanis of Gainesville
- Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
- FDOT
- University of Florida
- Santa Fe College
- City staff
- City Commission
- GCRA Advisory Board
- Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Advisory Boards
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Senior Center
- UF Health
- North FL Medical Center
- Tacachale
- Fun for Gator Kids
- Prospective partner organizations that might be able to provide programming / services at the site as a partnership with the City

7. Other Considerations & Opportunities:

1. Site size lends itself to the creation of a significant development that may have the potential to ignite development and investment in the area.
2. Opportunity to build on the recreational offering to create a stronger, more cohesive center for all ages, with expanded programming, complemented by services and retail.
3. Market Analysis:
 - a. Current demographic numbers and traffic patterns in the area do not bode well for retailers in many retail businesses. The products and services offered by Wal-Mart and the new Wawa would be difficult to compete with for the location of 8th and Waldo Road.
 - b. What appears to be missing is job employment centers and a strong day time population to support the residential nighttime population.
 - c. Primary uses feasible for this site appear to be Community Services including community recreational, community activity for all ages.
 - d. The secondary uses that might occur consequently are food and beverage retail, farmers market, sports related personal services/retail, entertainment, and health services.
4. Need to well define goals and brand to successfully compete with other recreation and retail centers (i.e., Celebration Pointe, Butler Plaza, Jonesville).
5. Consider ways to prevent gentrification and integrate surrounding communities in success.
6. Pedestrian safety / connectivity from Duval.
7. Celebrate and build on history.
8. Opportunity to integrate mixed use, mixed income development on site.

8. Next Steps:

1. Environmental study to assess constraints on future redevelopment. Staff is working on a proposal with Consultants and will share with Management for funding request.
2. Work with GFR and Colliers to explore land acquisition for facility relocation, costs, and design and construction costs and funding.
3. Reach out to adjacent properties for potential acquisition.
4. Community engagement planning and implementation.

Ongoing: Project Core Team meets weekly, and includes staff from GCRA, Sustainable Development, Mobility, GFR, PRCA, Communications & Engagement, Office of Equity, and CAPER.

Next update to the City's Working Group and GCRA Advisory Board will be provided once Environmental Impacts have been clarified, and Engagement Plan drafted.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Copies:

Deborah Bowie, Assistant City Manager

Fred Murry, Assistant City Manager

8th & Waldo Internal Core Group Members

8th & Waldo Internal Working Group Members

Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA) Advisory Board Members