THE GAINESVILLE QUESTION.

"AT THE END OF THE DAY,
THE QUESTIONS WE ASK
OURSELVES DETERMINE
THE TYPE OF CITY
THAT GAINESVILLE
WILL BECOME."

In the beginning,
we started with
ONE simple question.

HOW CAN GAINESVILLE BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE?

And this one simple question...

...became a revolutionary idea.

THE GAINESVILLE QUESTION THE GAINESVILLE ANSWER

How can Gainesville become more Competitive?

Our Big Idea.

In 2015, the Mayor and City Commission asked "The Gainesville Question": *"How can the City of Gainesville, Florida become more competitive?"* This is the story of the answer to that question: "The Gainesville Answer." It's not the whole story. It's not the end of the story. It's the beginning of the story, a first chapter, with more chapters waiting to be written in the days, months, years ahead—and written not only by the Task Force formed to come up with an answer, not by the city but by you. By us. All of us, acting together, will write the chapters going forward. Ultimately, for The Gainesville Answer to be a real answer it has to belong to all of us, because it is founded on this fundamental belief: The competitive spirit is alive in each of us. It is part of the city we call home. It needs to be honored and supported; it needs to be unleashed. Sometimes it needs to be left alone. Other times it needs to be challenged. At all times it needs to be respected. That's how The Gainesville Answer will emerge and then flourish. It is who we are and who we wish to be, as individuals and as a community. ***Here's the story.***

Question: *How will Gainesville become more competitive?*
Answer: Our Big Idea. We will make Gainesville the most citizen-centered city in America.

Question: *What do we mean by "citizen-centered"?*
Answer: We will make the City of Gainesville a helper, rather than a hurdle, to our citizens. We will design the city government so that it serves the needs of the people, rather than those of the city government itself. In ways large and small, we will place the citizens of our city in the center of everything the city does, all the services the city delivers, all the information the city collects, all the decisions the city makes. We will be guided by a question that has to have one core and consistent answer: Does this serve the needs of the citizens of Gainesville? We are here to help you, celebrate you, guide you, and let you find your way forward in making Gainesville an even greater city to live in.

Question: *What's in it for the city?*
Answer: Our idea is one big idea, but it consists of hundreds—thousands—of small, every day opportunities to make Gainesville the most citizen-centered city in the world. As we make our idea a reality—as we make our city more citizen-centered—we'll keep and attract the very best citizens, businesses and ideas, no matter what the future throws our way. We will keep and attract people who share our big idea and who want to join us to make it an ever improving reality: **Gainesville—the city designed with its citizens.**

This is a story about a journey, a fundamental shift from the way things have traditionally been—and not just in Gainesville, but in cities all over the country—to the way we want them to be, the way we know they can be, the way we know they should be.

It's a cultural shift:
From a culture of "No" **to a culture of "Yes, and"**
From reactive **to proactive**
From "expect citizens to come to you" **to "meet citizens where they are"**
From policy-oriented **to service-oriented**
From siloed **to team-based**
From expert language or jargon **to plain spoken**

Question: *What's the story behind the story of Gainesville becoming citizen-centered?*
Answer: Here's what happened . . . so far.
After the Mayor and the City Commission posed the original question, the city created the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee on Economic Competitiveness (BRACEC), gave it a board of 23 members, a staff, and put it to work. The specific language in the March 19, 2015 resolution reads, *"The Committee's primary responsibility is to study, research, evaluate, and make recommendations to the City Commission concerning changes to the City's regulations, organization, processes, technology, and staffing to improve the City's business environment. The Committee should examine the business environments of other relevant cities and organizations. . . recommending ways the City can improve, proposing changes, and recommending short and long term strategies."* **That was the official beginning of our journey.**

It's important to note that, from the beginning, no one pre-ordained the results of the Blue Ribbon Committee; no one had pre-programmed the outcome of the Blue Ribbon Committee; there was no off-the-shelf report that had already been written; and there were no answers developed in another community that the Blue Ribbon Committee was going to appropriate, simply changing the name in the document from the other community and substituting our city's name. **Far from it.** In fact, from the beginning the idea was to approach "competitiveness" for Gainesville as if it were a blank sheet of paper.

The challenge was to think broadly, widely, creatively and freshly. Going into the project, we understood that, if you want to be competitive, you have to be different. If you want to be different, you have to be uncomfortable. Only then, when you are able to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, can you generate the kind of new ideas, practices and programs necessary to fulfill the original mission: a more competitive Gainesville. That meant that, unlike most—if not all—of the comparable initiatives in cities across the country and around the world, Gainesville had the freedom and the opportunity to ask the right questions. That is profoundly important, in fact, essential. If you don't ask the right questions about competitiveness, you cannot possibly generate the right answers. So the right place to start is with the right questions. The expectation from the beginning was, with enough hard work and creative thought, the right answers emerge from the right questions.

GAINESVILLE HAD THE FREEDOM AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.

Question: *What Does It Mean to Be "More Competitive"?*
In April, 2015, the Blue Ribbon Committee held the first of many retreats to delve into that fundamental question. It knew that many cities and communities all over the world have been searching for the same thing. They all want to be "more competitive." But why? And what does it even mean? To help the Blue Ribbon CCommittee begin to address this question, we brought in Alan Webber, co-founder of Fast Company magazine. *The following section is the story of how the Blue Ribbon Commission began to answer that question and what occurred during the retreat.*

Question: *Why do cities and communities all want to be "more competitive"?*
The reason for this global burst of interest in being more competitive seems clear: the dizzying, dramatic and unpredictable rate of change that is upsetting and disrupting economic, social and political norms everywhere.

The old institutions that fostered and promoted the creation and development of jobs no longer seem to fit the new economy. Technology has disrupted old businesses and old business models. Whole economic sectors and traditional industries have shrunk—some have even disappeared. The result has de-stabilized careers, wages, and benefits. Things that used to seem predictable, dependable and fixed have all been tossed to one side. That's as true for individuals and families as it is for organizations, businesses, institutions, even governments. At the same time, so much change has opened up new opportunities. Keen observers of the social and economic environment have suggested that it makes sense to recast "wicked problems" as "wicked opportunities." Innovation and entrepreneurial openings have put a new emphasis on education, collaboration, data and technology, and "outside the box" thinking.
For each of the old ways being disrupted, there has to be a new one that is doing the disrupting.

The search for enhanced competitiveness is a smart response to these changed and changing times. In fact, it would be irresponsible to sit idly by in the midst of so much change and simply accept the status quo. We may not be able to predict the future, but we certainly can assess the past and the present. From that assessment, it seems clear that it is far better to do what can be done to create the future, rather than simply waiting for it to arrive.

Question: *What kinds of responses have most cities and communities marshaled as their approaches to enhanced competitiveness?*
Since so much of the disruption involves changing economic realities and business models, it stands to reason that one important response is for a community to assess its economic development strategy. If jobs are drying up, companies moving or closing, wages and benefits not keeping up with the cost of living—if the tax base is threatened, neighborhoods put at risk, schools declining—then a logical reaction is to generate an economic development strategy that fits the new reality. A community developing such a strategy might well ask, "what are our core strengths? What makes us a desirable place for people to live and companies to do business? What are our weaknesses, our areas that need improvement or investment? How can we use our resources—human, natural, social, political—to devise a coherent, consistent economic development strategy that will allow us to differentiate ourselves from any other city or community?" A second strand of thinking about enhanced competitiveness involves the city government itself. A number of years ago, Jack Welch, as CEO of General Electric, posed a provocative, challenging strategic question for American business: What if technological change and customer empowerment meant that no established company could ever again raise its prices? What would that mean for the way they did business? Today, most governments face that exact question, but not as a thought exercise: They simply cannot raise new taxes or revenues; they have to come up with a different way of doing business. In the context of enhanced competitiveness, that financial constraint can be a positive forcing mechanism. Cities will have to learn how to do more—or at least as much—but with fewer resources. City government will need to streamline its operations, reorganize its functions, and alter its reporting relationships. The idea is that a city can become more competitive by becoming leaner and more efficient. But if those are the two most common responses to the challenge of becoming more competitive, the question remains: Is that really what it means to become competitive? And if those responses are the most common ones, does that also mean that they are the least likely to yield real differentiation—and real competitiveness? In other words, if that's what everyone else is doing, does it make sense for Gainesville to do it, too? Or is there another way, a way that would put Gainesville on a genuinely unique path? To get to the answer to that question, we need to step back and ask another question. We need to drill a little deeper into the idea of the city. *We need to ask another right question.*

IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO PUT GAINESVILLE ON A GENUINELY UNIQUE PATH?

Question: *What Is a City For? How Does a City Function?*
Because cities have become big, complicated organizations—complex, multi- faceted, interrelated systems, much like a large corporation—it's easy to confuse what a city does with what a city is for. The Blue Ribbon Committee, when asked to list all the functions of the city—what the city does—quickly and effortlessly filled up a large easel-sized sheet of paper with a variety of operations. Safety and security. Planning and zoning. Issuing permits. Building and maintaining infrastructure. Transportation. Energy. Collecting taxes. The list was long and inclusive. It covered all of the things that show up in city budgets, all of the functions, operations, activities that any city does, every day of the week, twenty-four hours a day. But what a city does is not really what a city is for. Just as cities have become as big and complex as a large private-sector company, so cities often make the same mistake that companies make, falling prey to confusing what they do with what they are actually for. One of the Harvard Business Review's most famous articles, *"Marketing Myopia,"* by Ted Levitt, makes the point very effectively. The reason the railroads went out of business, Levitt wrote, was that they thought they were in the railroad business. They should have realized they were in the transportation business. A company that sold tools for handymen went bankrupt because it thought it was selling drills. But its customers were buying holes. In other words, the companies mistook what they did with why they were in business. The same could be said for the city.
Because the city has been charged with a variety of responsibilities, from public safety to public transportation, it's easy to mistake the purpose of the city for the functions it performs. But the purpose of the city is not to run its various departments. That's what the city does, not what it is for.

So what is the city for?
Answer: The city exists, fundamentally, for the people of the city. That is such a simple idea that in some ways it is a radical notion and is worth repeating: The city is for the people. The purpose of Gainesville is the people of Gainesville. In many ways, the corollary with a business is still apt. Many years ago, the founder of the field of management, Peter Drucker, wrote that the purpose of a business is to make and keep a customer. **The purpose of the city is the people of the city.**

Question: *If that's what the city is for, then how should the city function?* The city should function to serve the people of Gainesville. It should be designed and operated in a way that will make the lives, the work, the daily experiences of the people of Gainesville as pleasant, enjoyable, efficient and positive as possible. Every day, the people of Gainesville should have excellent "user experiences" as they go about their daily lives. If you think about it, it makes sense. It cuts through the complexity of systems, policies, bureaucracies and budgets and arrives at a simple, direct, honest truth. The city is not the collection of the things it does. It is not the departments that exist to do those things. Those functions and operations are a surface-level expression of a more fundamental, underlying truth: The city is for the people. **The city should be as simple and effective as possible in its interactions with its people.**

Every day, there are tens of thousands, perhaps millions, of interactions between the city and the people of the city. Each of those interactions is a "moment of truth," a user experience that is either a positive, pleasant experience—or not.

Question: *What if the City of Gainesville were to become "the most user friendly city in the world"? What if Gainesville concentrated on offering its citizens "the best user experiences in the world"?*
Answer: Here's the big idea. Making Gainesville the most citizen-centric city in the world would be the most distinctive, unique and differentiated approach to making Gainesville "more competitive" as a city. No other city has adopted that strategy, that goal, that approach. While other cities are working on their economic development strategies or moving around the reporting relationships on their organization charts, Gainesville will become the most user-friendly city in the world.

Question: *What Does It Mean to Be User Friendly?*
If you ask almost anyone—members of the Blue Ribbon Committee included—if they've ever had an exceptional user experience, the answer is usually an enthusiastic "yes!" It could be the seamless check-in experience at a hotel front desk, where the desk clerk welcomes you by name and immediately makes you feel that all of her attention is on you—because she is genuinely glad that you are coming to stay as a guest at her hotel. While she only works there, she gives you the feeling that it is "her" hotel. It could be the atmosphere of fun and entertainment at a theme park, where everything from the colorful costumed characters to the perfectly groomed landscaping is designed to give your child a memorable, happy, personalized experience—the kind she'll talk about for the foreseeable future, because of the impression it's left on her. It could be one of the new, technology-enabled ride-share services that puts all of the information about the car that's coming to pick you up on a simple-to-use app on your smartphone. It tells you where the car is, the name of the driver, how far away it is from you, when it is estimated to arrive, how much your ride will cost. Because it already has your credit card information, you don't have to worry about handing money over to the driver. And after you arrive at your destination, it even asks you to rate the experience and records your feedback as a way of evaluating the driver and rewarding (or punishing) him in future transactions. And your receipt is automatically emailed to you, for easy recordkeeping. It could be a pizza parlor that lets you phone in your order or send it in via an app—and gives you regular updates on the progress your personal order is making as it moves through the preparation process, including an exact estimate as to when your doorbell will ring and the pizza will be delivered. **Everyone, it seems, has a user experience that summarizes what it means to feel that the whole operation was designed with them in mind: a customer-centric, user-friendly experience, from end-to-end.** When you write down the components that comprise those experiences, it turns out there are a number of shared themes or defining elements that they all have in common. While they have all, in fact, been carefully, thoughtfully and comprehensively designed, to the user they feel unforced, natural and authentic. They are designed to give the user more power and control in the interaction. The user has access to information, either through technology, as a smartphone app or desktop site, or through comprehensive, easy-to-use, accurate and up-to-date signs and displays. Processes are transparent. The user knows what to expect, how the experience will unfold, and usually how long it will take. There are few (or no) surprises. Information is never withheld—on the contrary, much of the satisfaction in the experience is a result of information being shared readily and pleasantly.The interaction with employees is focused on the satisfaction of the customer. The customer is encouraged to ask questions or seek additional results unconditionally. The satisfaction of the customer is the ultimate aim of the interaction. The experience goes beyond a mere transaction; it is designed to forge an actual relationship between the customer and the employee of the organization. The actual value that is exchanged is as much in the relationship that is created as it is in the goods or services that are purchased. Customer satisfaction and repeat business are ultimately more important than exacting the highest one-time price. The experience includes a critically important feedback loop; the customer is invited to submit an evaluation of the experience—and the evaluation actually matters in the operation of the business going forward.

THE EXPERIENCE GOES BEYOND A MERE TRANSACTION; IT IS DESIGNED TO FORGE AN ACTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CUSTOMER AND THE EMPLOYEE OF THE ORGANIZATION.

These components practically leap out at you when you experience them first- hand. It is as if the company has drawn an individualized circle that represents its offering, and then it has put you—you and your personalized interests—in the center of that circle to make sure that you feel that it has been designed with you in mind. That is a user experience in which the company has demonstrated that it has designed its way of doing business, not around the goods and services that it is striving to sell, but around the wellbeing and satisfaction of its customers. It is a world-class user experience and a simple, pleasant and satisfying customer interface, for each and every customer.

Question: *What Does That Mean For a City?*
The companies that have designed their operations to provide world-class user experiences have done the hard work to make it look easy. They have combined the best capabilities of information technology, design thinking, workforce training, and leadership development at all levels of the organization to re-imagine what the company is for and how it functions. They have built a culture and a set of practices that constantly reinforce that singleness of purpose. The way in which they hire, train, promote and reward their employees holds the organization to its customer-centric purpose. Customer feedback is taken seriously. Information is shared readily. Mistakes are acknowledged and used as opportunities for improvement, not as a reason for punishment. The physical spaces and even the routine communications between the companies and their customers are carefully thought out, evaluated and designed to enhance the user experience. What about cities? Today there are signs that this approach is being applied in bits and pieces in some cities and public sector operations in the United States and around the world. **What if, in Gainesville, the work of becoming the most user-friendly city in the world went beyond small-scale experiments and became the systems-based approach to every aspect of the city's culture and operations?** At the moment, that is simply a "what if?" question. But used by the Blue Ribbon Committee and the city as a whole, it can frame an entirely new and different conversation about the future of Gainesville.

Question: *How Does User-Friendliness Translate Into Competitiveness?*
Let's go back to the beginning: what's the definition of victory for Gainesville? What's the purpose of the Blue Ribbon Committee? The goal is to make Gainesville "more competitive." That means Gainesville should be the community of choice for more people, more businesses, more service agencies, more entrepreneurs, more artists, more residents, more students. It should offer its people more choices, more opportunity, more possibilities. In fact, the great urbanist, Jane Jacobs, once wrote that **the purpose of a great city is choice: to give more people more choices.** How can Gainesville achieve that goal? One answer would be to do what other cities are doing—pursuing economic development strategies and government reorganization—but to do it slightly better. **But there's a better answer:** Based on the change that is taking place in the world, both public and private, the better answer would be to change the game. To do something that no other city is doing. To play for a higher-level purpose, to aspire to a more distinctive—a more competitive—way to become more competitive. There is a bigger idea here: What if the city were re-designed—re-imagined—around its people? What if the city were truly user friendly, and not just in a few ways, but in a comprehensive way? The components exist, the capability to do just that.

WHAT IF THE CITY WERE RE-DESIGNED—RE-IMAGINED—AROUND ITS PEOPLE? WHAT IF THE CITY WERE TRULY USER FRIENDLY?

The technology exists, to put information into the hands of most if not all the people of the city. The practices of design thinking exist, to help guide us in asking the right questions, to look in the right places, to re-design the user experience in everyday life in the city. We can develop and train the city's employees around a new purpose and a new set of practices. It begins by asking the right questions: What is the city for? How does the city function? The answers come when we look at every interaction between the people and the city with fresh eyes: What is the user experience? At that moment of truth when the individual and the city make contact, how does it feel to the individual? How could that interaction be made easier, simpler, more pleasant, more efficient? How do we change the focus from seeing that moment of truth from the perspective of the bureaucracy to seeing it through the eyes of the individual: How do we improve the user experience, and do it every time? How does the city learn to see itself through the eyes of its people? To the best of our knowledge, no city is asking this question in a comprehensive way—despite the fact that the opportunity is clearly there. **It represents the kind of thinking that can actually deliver competitive advantage to Gainesville—by re-imagining and re-designing the city around the real lives of its people.**

Question: *What happens next? Where do we go from here?*
The Blue Ribbon Committee concluded its first quarter of work. However powerful the retreat, however exciting the answer taking shape appeared to be, the work was just beginning. A few weeks later we took the next step: Split up into three subgroups, one to interview users, one to interview the providers of service and one to look at the global question and how it all fits together. For the next few months, hundreds of interviews took place. What occurred during this process was something that few would have predicted—or believed. Both the users and providers learned more about each other, about the perspective each had. Out of that each side developed a genuine common understanding and empathy for one another. The Blue Ribbon Committee members came back to the meetings surprised to learn that government employees were not only open to discussion about what issues exist, they also provided useful and thoughtful insight into how to solve some of the deepest concerns. The common theme—lack of empowerment—became obvious. City employees at every level, for whatever reason, did not feel empowered to change the dialogue, did not feel as though they could speak up, speak out in favor of change. This was both alarming for the Blue Ribbon Committee—and also a tremendous source of relief: The city has a workforce that wants to change, has ideas on how to do create change—but needs room to breathe, safety to try new things and the tools and resources to make a difference. On the other side—the users—expressed frustration at the process of almost everything. They were not sure if they were being supported or helped. They weren't sure if the transaction of getting a permit or signing up for a recreation program was worth the difficulty, even if, in most cases they needed to do it in order to accomplish their goal. They mused out loud, almost pleadingly: *Please listen to me. I love it here but it is challenging to do much with the government.* What was needed was a different lens, a more insightful way to get at the themes emerging from each subgroup and to connect them toward the user-centered ideas discovered during the first retreat. The third group, the "reframers" began to discuss the context of the work: How did it all fit together? What was the big idea? How could we make it work? Around this same time, the Blue Ribbon Chair and Executive Director went to California to attend a Chamber of Commerce trip to recruit businesses and learn best practices. The trip also included a visit to IDEO, the world renowned design thinking firm. In what could best be described as a turning point—and an unexpected one—the visit marked a way forward. The IDEO visit included learning about **"design thinking."** Design thinking began as a way to think through design challenges involving products and services—making them more customer-friendly. In design thinking, the user and the user experience are at the center of all creative solutions. The conversation revolved around what cities, counties, states or countries were doing to apply the design thinking way of problem solving to the daily challenges of various government interactions.

How could a city improve its service with design thinking? What could we learn from design thinking that might apply to our city? And for Blue Ribbon Committee the biggest question of all: Has any government tried to take on the challenge of designing or redesigning a government, not just for one specific function or a small part of the city? If so, who? If not, why not? We came out with another key question.

Question: *Could IDEO help Gainesville become the first city to become citizen-centric?*
It's one thing to leave a meeting like that excited and inspired. It's another thing to hire a firm like IDEO, to find the resources to put them to work and to meet the short time frame for creating a real deliverable product. At the same time, we were convinced that we were on to something. Something bold, something innovative, something fundamentally true and worth pursuing as far as we could. A bold idea needs bold partners used to doing big things.

WHAT COULD WE LEARN FROM "DESIGN THINKING" THAT MIGHT APPLY TO OUR CITY?

Alan Webber started and sold the best business magazine the United States had known; IDEO has designed some of the world's best known products and is widely considered the most innovative design firm in the world. The Blue Ribbon Committee members embraced the idea of hiring IDEO; a number of community stakeholders agreed that we should pursue an engagement with the firm. They formed a "coalition of the willing"—the kind of cooperative support that we will need for Gainesville to become competitive. Citizens from higher education, trade organizations, municipal entities, a foundation, and anonymous donors all decided that, by working together, we could achieve our desired outcome, a result we could implement.

That cooperative approach was itself a bold idea. And it worked. The groups that worked together not only enabled the pursuit of our bold idea; they also came to constitute a user group, a band of implementers, and a sample representing diverse parts of the community: thousands of businesses, tens of thousands of workers and employees and a broad cross-section of citizens.

Question: *Can we learn how to translate what we've learned into action?*
We began the next step, again, by asking the right questions— two big questions: **What does a vision for a user-centered city look like? And how could it work in the every day exercise of city government?** These two design challenges engaged the energy, ideas and commitment of hundreds of citizens, business owners, government employees, visitors, elected officials—people who happened to come into a down town store front set up for those kinds of unplanned interactions. The process was fundamentally different from past efforts: Everything was co-designed with the people, not designed for them. The effort brought about a number of shifts in the way the Blue Ribbon Committee thought about Gainesville and competitiveness. None was more important than the language that entered into the conversations. Instead of thinking about the people of Gainesville as "users," we all began to talk about a city that was genuinely "citizen-centered." A citizen-centered design approach allowed everyone to realize that citizens were now going to be the center of the diagram. A "user" sounds like a transaction; but a "citizen" makes it a relationship.

Question: *What does Citizen-Centered Mean?* **It means that we're going to make our city a helper, rather than a hurdle. It means that we're going to shift to a new mindset that's more about people than about policy.**

A citizen-centered city is a more competitive city. It attracts the very best businesses, citizens and ideas and creates growth and expansion.

In the end the idea is to redesign the City so that it helps, celebrates and guides it's citizens—and then gets out of their way so they can get on with making Gainesville an even greater place to live.

WE CALL IT CITIZEN-CENTERED GAINESVILLE: THE FIRST AND ONLY CITY DESIGNED THIS WAY.

Question: *What now? How do we take what we learned from IDEO and move ahead? And how do we do it together?*
We learned a lot from the IDEO project; many of those lessons will be found in the booklet drafted on this subject. But some are here as a way of providing context for some of the recommendations that follow. We approached our design challenge with human-centeredness in mind. What is this? First, it is fundamental to our strategy to make Gainesville more competitive. It ensures our thinking and final recommendations are rooted in user-insights. It is a method for understanding people's needs and creating products, services and experiences to fulfill them. This process translates observations into opportunities for design and more importantly, for action. Designing and testing prototypes of early solutions allowed us to tackle complexity, make it easier for people to ask the right questions, and implement solutions that have a positive impact on people's lives. Here's the process we used, adapted from IDEO's design thinking approach: **Inspire: Exploring for insights.** A great insight is authentic; it's not something you would immediately think of; and it describes how users think or feel. **Ideate: The process of generating ideas.** A great idea is novel and exciting; it solves a real problem; and it is relevant to the design challenge. **Implement: The path that leads from the project room to the market.** A great experiment is easy to build and run, and will grow the idea. Using this process, we addressed the first design question: Who is the "target audience" for our citizen-centric approach? Who will use the services? It's unfair—inequitable--if the city selects one group over another. Our design decision – We have chosen to design for the mindset of the "first-timer." If someone experiencing a city service for the first time feels welcome, valued and well-served, then the most experienced citizen will, too. **We are creating citizen-centered services that serve everyone in Gainesville.**

Question: *How will we apply this?*
Cross-disciplinary, dedicated teams are essential to practicing human-centered design. Designers, subject matter experts and program managers with varying backgrounds and different specialties bring diverse perspectives to problem solving. That's not the way most city's work. It's not typical. But, in fact, our way, this way, will make a big difference. It enables a team to see "users" perspectives from new and unexpected angles, to generate a wider range of ideas and to build on the ideas of others. The team was designing with the public and for the public; therefore we chose to design in public. **We engaged the Gainesville community as co-designers in the work, to bring more perspectives to the problems we were trying to solve and the solutions they generated.** But just as importantly, we saw engaged citizens as critical stakeholders in helping to bring the designs to life. From the outset of the project, we organized ourselves in a storefront in downtown Gainesville. That meant citizens and passers-by could see what we were working on. They could participate in generating ideas, offering suggestions and taking part in workshops. Throughout the project we held regular open house events to share the work and to get feedback on the design directions. We saw an outpouring of interest from the community. People of all ages, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, people from all sectors of the community, people who had never shown their faces in City Hall—all felt welcome, energized, engaged and valued by the citizen-centric design process. Gainesville citizens played the roles of research participants, subject-matter experts, co-designers, and prototypers, infusing their perspectives every step of the way. They visualized ideal government meeting spaces using construction paper and pipe cleaners; they acted out skits depicting how they would like interactions with government to take place; they mapped out existing processes and identified opportunities for improvement. They rolled up their sleeves and immersed themselves fully in the process.

Question: *Where did we garner useful insights—sharp, perceptive and actionable statements that helped us look differently at what we thought we already knew?*
If you want to know how to make the city work better, you talk with citizens who don't feel the city works well for them. We looked for citizens and businesses who were not well-served by the current system; we looked inside the city's planning and development services department. We talked to established local businesses with a track record of success to understand better where the system did work for them. We even took our own idea for a new business to the Chamber of Commerce and online with the city website to get a first-hand understanding of what a citizen experiences in dreaming up and starting a new business: What pieces are missing, what pieces don't work, how the whole process feels. As much as possible we conducted all of our interviews in the field—going to someone's place of business, visiting a farmers market, sitting down in a home to see the experience through the eyes of the citizen. All of these experiences helped the team develop deep empathy for the people of the city—the citizens at the center of the design process.

Question: *How do you use prototypes?* –Make an idea tangible, where the best ones are rough enough that users can see the potential. Too polished and users tend to focus on its flaws. Citizen-centered design uses prototypes to make an idea tangible. A prototype is best when it's rough and unfinished; an early version of an idea allows users to see the potential of an idea. If it's too polished, users focus on the flaws rather than the promise. For that reason, we created lightweight, paper-based "journey cards" that portrayed in a simple mock up form the track any project takes from idea to implementation. We also developed an assessment tool early on to get critical feedback on the overall direction we were taking.

CITIZEN-CENTERED DESIGN USES PROTOTYPES TO MAKE AN IDEA TANGIBLE.

We produced a mock experience to test what it was like for citizens to interact with a new city "department" by generating service scripts, signature interactions, and refined versions of the early tools. Successful business owners and city staff played the roles. Would-be new business owners brought real scenarios for the prototyped new department to help solve. We heard authentic stories of real businesses opening for the first time in Gainesville. One successful business owner told us that, at the early stages of their enterprise, they had no idea what the city process was. Their biggest fear: they'd be ready to open their doors, but wouldn't be able to do because they'd failed to do something that they'd never known they were supposed to do. Prototypes told us what business owners needed. They wanted tools that would actually help them. They wanted on-line messaging to inform them. They wanted a process timeline, to make the journey visible. They wanted an action officer to guide them, help them, solve problems, simplify the process. **These insights were invaluable. Prototyping told us how the city worked, what citizens wanted and what adjustments would make the most difference in making us citizen-centric.**

Question: *How do you create a service blueprint?* A service blueprint connects the dots between new or redesigned interactions and citizen needs, so they come together as one seamless service experience. Becoming citizen-centric means designing new tools and resources from the experience and the point of view of citizens: How will citizens hear about the service? How will they find it? How does a new city service actually integrate into the life of citizens? What are the moments that matter the most? The team created a service blueprint to illustrate the broader landscape of starting a business in Gainesville. One of the lessons: Starting a business is more than just obtaining permits and licenses. **Starting a business is an entire journey:** It begins with dreaming up the new idea, getting everything done to open the door, celebrating the first customer, and running the business for years to come.

Question: *What's the map to guide us as we become citizen-centric?*
Ultimately, we need to develop a plan, a guide to bring our big idea to life with a series of doable strategic steps or phases. We need goals for each phase—and we need to set our priorities, so we know what to focus on and when. We know that all of the work that uncovered opportunities and prototyped new solutions are really nothing more than the beginning of a long journey to bring these services to life. We need a map. The map will describe the changes we need to make to reach our goal, to achieve our big idea. **That's our next assignment: A document that lays out the changes to our city that will get us started on the journey to becoming the most citizen-centric city in the world.**

IT'S NOT THE END OF THE STORY. IT'S THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY.

Today the world runs on ideas. We have one. And we think it's a very good one.

The idea is this: "Competitiveness" for a city isn't a program or a project that gets bolted on to existing city departments. The idea is that competitiveness today is a new, different and better way for the city to "do business"—to conduct itself in its fundamental relationship to its citizens. It's not a "thing." It's a way. It's the way Gainesville works.

Our idea borrows a way of doing business from many of the most admired companies in America today. Those companies organize themselves around their customers: they are truly customer-centric.

Our idea is for the city to organize itself around its citizens— to put the people of the city in the center of its offerings, services and operations. It is truly citizen-centric. The question is, how do we make it happen? While the world runs on ideas, it changes through implementation. Ideas without execution are only ideas. Ideas plus execution equals change. So rather than offering "recommendations" that could seem like mere suggestions or optional choices, we're calling for changes.

These are Needed Changes.

There are specific actions we need to take, attitudes we need to shift, practices we need to adopt, problems we need to remedy, skills we need to develop and designs we need to create—working together. Of course we need both: good ideas, relentlessly implemented. We need prototypes—and we need them to be replicable, scalable, teachable. One-off change projects, no matter how good, will not get us where we want to go. We need a consistent lens for viewing, critiquing and implementing changes: How does this look through the eyes of our citizens? We need to embrace both a new way of thinking and a new way of working. One without the other will yield only hollow, temporary victories.And we need a concerted team effort.

Every part of our city, every group in our community, every citizen at every level has an important role to play and a vital contribution to make. It will take all of us working together.

OUR GOAL IS TO BECOME THE MOST CITIZEN-CENTRIC CITY IN THE WORLD.

That is an ambitious—and attainable—goal.

It will require four critical changes to the operation of city government.

1. Culture. The way citizens interact with their city government will look and feel different because of the systems we use to connect, the language we use to communicate and the approach we use to solve problems. We will create a positive culture of real public service.

2. Organization. The delivery of city services and the structure of city departments will be meaningful, accessible and intuitive to the citizens they are designed to serve.

3. Role. The job of the city government is to support and enhance the ability of citizens to meet their needs, get their business done and enjoy the choices that come from living in the city.

4. Mindset. The city government will adopt, establish and practice a "new normal" when it comes to the everyday interactions with citizens, truly making Gainesville the most citizen-centric city in the world.

To support these four changes, we have adopted six guiding principles to govern the new relationship between citizens and their city—whether they're launching a new business, selecting a park for their child's birthday party or just getting started as a new resident of Gainesville. Distilled from experience and developed through research, these principles form the foundation of our work going forward. They keep us grounded. They remind us of what really matters. They give us guidelines as we come back to first principles at every step of our journey toward being citizen-centric. They help us ask the right question: How does this serve the needs, hopes and aspirations of the people of Gainesville? Does it genuinely make for a better life in our city for the people who call this place home?

The six principles are:

1. We embrace a shared sense of purpose. We all win when Gainesville citizens realize their dreams.

2. We believe in relationships, not transactions. We work as people with people—not as bureaucrats versus applicants. To do that, we meet people where they are, talk how they talk, work how they work.

3. We adopt an entrepreneurial mindset. The fastest, cheapest, best solution may not yet exist. We want to be the innovators who create it—at all levels and in all functions of government.

4. We make it modular. City services and departments need to work together, collaborate, coordinate, cooperate and combine- sometimes in unexpected ways.

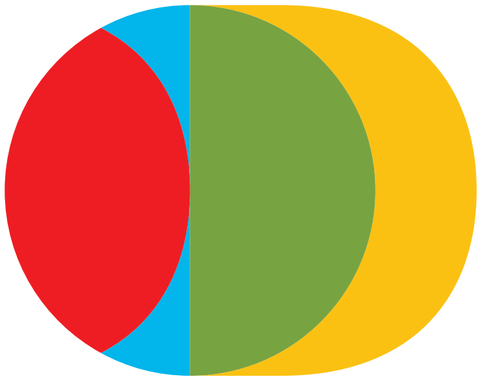
5. We show people where they are in the process. The only reason citizens feel lost in their dealings with they city is that they don't know where they are. People have a right to information and transparency.

6. We empower citizens at every interaction. Help comes not only from the outcome of an interaction—it is embedded in the quality of every experience. Even if the city has to tell a citizen to take two steps back, there is a way to do that that represents a big step forward.

THAT'S THE CONTEXT. NOW COMES THE CONTENT.

What follows are the changes we need to make to turn Gainesville into the world's most citizen-centric city. **There is an internal logic** to these changes, an order to them that makes sense, builds momentum and creates cohesion and consistency. This is not a menu: The idea is not to pick and choose among them. **We need to do all of them** to achieve our ambitious goal. **How we do them,** however, is something we can and must decide among ourselves as a community.

That we do them must be non-negotiable. These are serious changes that we need to make, not options, notions or recommendations. First, let's list the changes. Then we'll go into each change in more detail.



Change 1: Our Commitment

Change 2: One Band, One Brand

Change 3: Our "Get It Done" Plan

Change 4: The Talent to Win

Change 5: Our Front Doors

Change 6: Policy-Making That Works

Change 7: The Citizen at the Center

Change 8: The Department of Doing

Change 9: The Department of Measuring

That's the list. It's how we actually do the challenging, exciting, remarkable work of making Gainesville the most citizen-centric city in the world.

Let's look in more detail at each of the nine changes.

CHANGE 1:
OUR COMMITMENT

The idea of orienting the city around its citizens is a serious one.

That's why we need to take it seriously. That's why we need to make a public commitment of our sincerity of purpose. We need to commit to make it happen now and to demonstrate our ongoing determination to carry it forward into the future.

The first change is a simple and powerful oath taken by every city employee — a commitment to the idea of a citizen-centric government. City Commissioners will take the oath as well as every current city employee. Every new employee will take the pledge at the start of orientation. Those who have contracts with the city or do business with the city as outside consultants or advisors will be encouraged to take the oath as a sign that they understand and agree with the growing web of relationships that will embed this idea in our city and carry it forward to others.

To make the oath simple and transparent, the city will construct a dedicated website where the Pledge of Commitment is posted. People can sign the pledge digitally; the site will be searchable by name and organization for full transparency.

Our commitment —and the process of crafting it—will have another benefit: It will generate wide-ranging conversation about what it means to be "citizen-centric"; it will create opportunities for citizens and the city to examine existing relationships and expectations and bring to the surface currently unspoken and unexamined assumptions; and it will provide the basis for a systemic examination of the processes at the core of the city's operations, including hiring, service design and delivery, performance reviews and actual measurements of our new citizen-centric goal.

By placing my name here,
I will commit that a citizen-centered city is our shared sense of purpose. We all win when Gainesville Citizens realize their dreams. I will work in my daily life to help contribute to this by adopting an entrepreneurial mindset, empowering citizens at every turn and treating access to information and citizen participation as every citizen's right. By making our city genuinely citizen-centric, we will ensure that we attract, retain and empower the very best people, businesses and ideas, no matter what changes the future may bring. I am committed to this purpose.

CHANGE 2:
ONE BAND, ONE BRAND

Our commitment to being the most citizen-centric city in the world is more than a commitment—it is also a story.

It is our story—a shared story- that distinguishes us, unifies us and brings us together as a community. And it is our brand—a story that we not only tell each other but also take out into the world with pride and with promise. The way we tell this story helps us define it, articulate it, locate it in specific practices and experiences and ultimately achieve it. It is our brand—and a brand is a promise we make to ourselves and to others.

The City currently has a brand based on the message "Every Path Starts With Passion" and an accompanying logo. It's unclear how well-known this message is as an expression of the city's promise. Also open to question is the relevancy of the message to today's residents—or their interpretation of the meaning of the message.

We do know that the original goal was to have the entire city and significant organizations adopt this brand and logo as a shared identity. This hasn't happened.

Charter offices of the city government may have adopted the "Every Path Starts With Passion" logo and message—and also their own logo and message. Many departments within city government also have their own logo and message. Outside organizations have agreed to use the city's logo and message, but in practice have simply not followed through.

To implement our new commitment to being citizen-centric, we need a new logo and a new message. We need to adopt a new story and own our new, bold brand. We need to get acceptance, participation and buy-in of our new, unique story. That means, first, designing a logo and a message that capture the essence of our promise to be citizen-centric. That means putting that logo and message on every communication that comes from the city—from formal publications to emails. It means actively encouraging organizations in the city to make the logo and message part of their communications as a way of expressing how the city does business—whether in recruiting a new professor to the city, in encouraging a business to relocate to the city or encouraging existing residents and organizations in the city to step up and step into our new story, our new brand, our new shared story. It is a commitment that makes us different and we should own it together with pride and with promise.

CHANGE 3:
OUR "GET IT DONE" PLAN

One of the ways the city currently does business is through the adoption of a strategic plan containing a series of strategic initiatives.

Each charter, if it has a plan, is separate and apart from every other charter: For example, each charter may have its own information technology plan, its own capital improvement plan and so on.

Each plan is designed, developed and adopted independently—without the benefit of coordination, integration, leverage or actual strategy. This is not an approach that is citizen-centric; yet it is a fundamental building block for city budgeting and operations at virtually every level. We need to change it—if we are genuinely committed to being a citizen-centric city.

To be truly citizen-centric we need to create one strategic document that combines, in one place, all of the activities, operations and expenditures that should be considered together—and do it from a citizen's point of view.

There should be one citizen-centric strategic plan for the city—a unified document that directly guides resource expenditures, financial planning, workforce development, policy decisions, collective bargaining and service delivery to the citizens of Gainesville.

While each charter is a distinct office, we are all one city, one organization, one brand, one story. Look at this through the eyes of our citizens: Do citizens differentiate between various departments or geographic areas of the city? As they drive in their cars or ride the bus, visit a park or drink from a water fountain, do they stop to ask which department is delivering the service or which part of the city they happen to be in? If they don't, why should the city? A single unified plan will help us achieve our goal of becoming the most citizen-centric city in the world. It will enhance communication, coordination and implementation. It will give the City Commission the planning tool it needs to understand the policy choices embedded in the budget; it will give the Commission an actual strategic plan by which to commit the city to the steps we need to take to become ever more citizen-centric. It will give citizens a clear and understandable document by which to understand the operations and investments that flow directly from the choices presented in a consolidated plan.

To implement this change the charter offices need to begin working together to develop a process to create a "get it done" strategic plan, bringing together in a single plan the many independent plans that currently exist. We need to change the way the city actually does business—the way we get things done—and this is a vital step toward making that happen. There are two components that need reconsideration and redesign: timing and process.Currently the strategic plan is developed just before the City Commission considers the budget.

That means that the budget does little to reflect the strategic plan. There is a simple fix to this problem: Change the timing of the development of the strategic plan so that it is in place before the development of the budget, capital improvement plan, five-year financial forecast and collective bargaining agreements. In terms of process, we need to adopt changes that make the development of the strategic plan much more citizen-centric.

For example: We need to hold workshops with citizens and staff to develop, design and model goals and initiatives for the city. **Rather than having meetings where different departments interact with groups of citizens at different times, we need to adopt a process where citizens can see and understand their city as a unified whole.**

We need to create a process that allows citizens to break down the silos that too often define the way services are delivered—and we need a process that allows city employees to see the city through the eyes of its citizens. We need a process that underscores one of our core values: The city exists to help its citizens achieve their hopes, dreams and aspirations.

CHANGE 4:
THE TALENT TO WIN

Any plan or strategy—any big idea or bold new goal—is only as good as the talented people who implement. Very simply: it takes talent to win.

The City of Gainesville has many talented people who care deeply about the work they do as city employees. At the same time, the work of implementing the needed changes required for us to reach our goal means more than a simple continuation of "business as usual." **In fact, it explicitly requires "business as new"—altering structures and operations, re-designing practices and approaches, modifying systems and habits, piloting projects and experiments.**

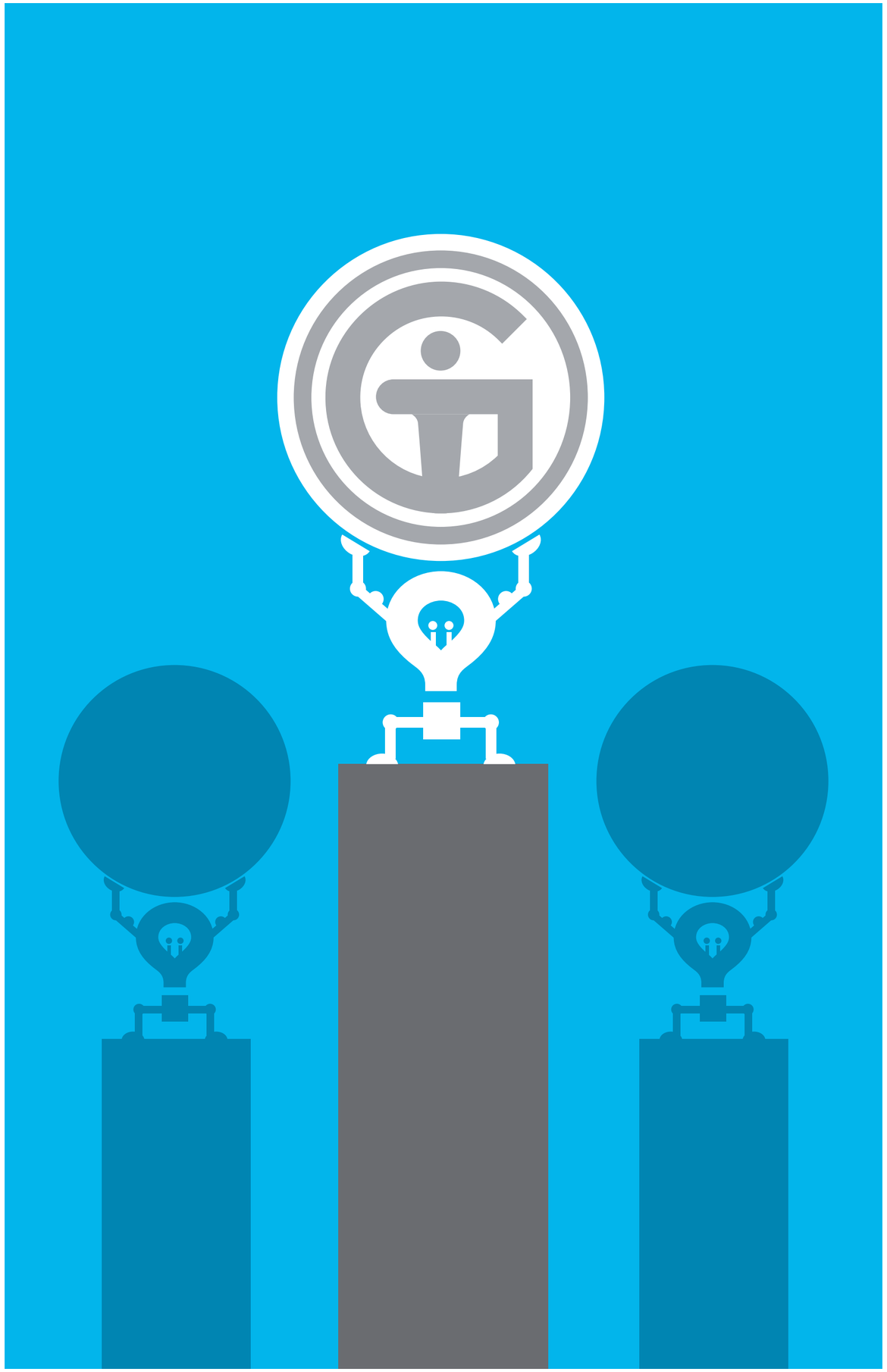
As good and as committed as our people are, these changes mean that it will be up to us to provide them with the training and skill development that match the new work and work styles. For example, it makes sense for city employees to learn the skills and approaches embodied in design thinking as practiced in many of the most innovative, customer-centric companies today; team building exercises and cross-disciplinary problem-solving skills will also give city employees tools they need to implement the plans and projects our new goal requires.

To get the fastest start and to realize the greatest benefits, we should focus initially on the city departments that already do the most training. They can more quickly roll out the needed changes and also provide the most immediate feedback. Another opportunity for rapid training and roll out may come with city departments that can re-deploy some part of their training budget or departments where there is either above-average turn-over or above-average new hiring. In addition to adding to the skills of our existing city employees, the recognition of the importance of training and development in these critical areas will also have a positive impact on future hiring decisions: In assessing future hires, the city will be looking for talented individuals who can act as service designers and entrepreneurs—a mindset every employee needs to embrace going forward.

We need to regard the delivery of government services as an enormous design opportunity. Every day the city provides services to its citizens; every day we have an opportunity to ask, "How can we provide that service in a way that builds trust between citizen and the city? How can we provide that service in a way that puts the citizen at the center of the experience? How can we provide that service in a way that genuinely makes our city more citizen-centric?" City employees deliver remarkable service to citizens when the interaction is meaningful, special and effective.

To make that kind of service an essential part of living, working and doing business in Gainesville, we need to teach, coach and mentor employees in the art of citizen-centric service delivery. Finally, our longer term strategy is to unleash the untapped talent and creativity that exists within city employees. There are many employees who have talents that are different than the job they are currently performing. There are many employees who could do more and do better in a job that aligns more completely with their talents, skills, values and aspirations. The city benefits when its employees have the opportunity to realize their dreams and fulfill their potential—just as it benefits when citizens can realize their dreams.

To that end, we need to build a portal to match skills desired with skills needed; a portal that allows city employees to find the fit within city government which optimizes their potential. An additional benefit of this portal is that it would enable the city to find within its existing workforce the talents it needs to accomplish some desired task—without resorting to outside vendors or contracting for outside services. To be clear, there will always be the need for some outside services. But this approach will empower employees to aspire to new opportunities, to help each other, to engage in cross-training and skill development, and to see city employment as an open opportunity for self improvement and growth. It will help us build the depth and strength of our talent pool and give additional respect to our city employees. It explicitly recognizes that making our city citizen-centric requires a pact of mutual respect and trust between citizen and city employee. Making that pact real through training and skills development takes us closer to our shared goal.



CHANGE 5:
OUR FRONT DOORS

Citizens can't have a good ongoing experience with the city if they don't know how to get started. For that reason, as a necessary point of departure for becoming citizen-centric, we need to provide easy access to the different departments and services offered by the city.

Our front doors need to be clear, easy to find and simple to use. There is no "one right way" for citizens to access the city. In fact, that's the point: It's important to offer a variety of front doors so citizens can use the one—or ones—they prefer.Here are a number of current, new or redesigned front doors for citizens to use:

1. Website We need to change the City's website. It was recently redesigned—and the new version is an upgrade from the previous one. But that redesign was done before we established our new, fundamental design specification: The website must be designed with the citizen—the end user—in mind. For most citizens, the current website requires too much prior knowledge to access and make use of it. Here's the question we need to ask about the website: How would Google or any other customer-centric search engine design a citizen-centric website? How can we make a website that delivers the information citizens want, in a user-friendly, simple and accurate way? There's another element to becoming more citizen-centric when it comes to the web, in general: The city's information belongs to the people. They should be able to access the documents and data they need to solve problems, make decisions, develop plans and assess the performance of the city. That means we need to begin the process of scanning city documents, for example, and opening city data sets for citizen review, giving citizens the information they want, when they want it and how they want it.

2. Phone Tree For many citizens, the easiest way to access the city is by phone. Unfortunately, today too often a simple phone call from a citizen to the city turns into a series of hand-offs, as the call is transferred from person to person trying to find the correct information or get the answer to a question. The answer is to re-design the phone tree so that it works for the citizen, not for the bureaucracy: it needs to be set up and publicized so citizens know who to call in the first place. In addition, an action office, as described below, or a simple 311 number for city information can simplify and streamline the phone system.

3. Entrance Spaces In some case, the idea of a front door is more than a metaphor—it is an actual physical reality. As the research is uncovered, there are front doors in a best-practice businesses that are specifically designed to be customer-friendly: There is a greeter to welcome the customer or a concierge service to help guide the customer or a scheduler to help a customer make a service appointment—all designed to enhance the customer experience at the front door. We need to take a lesson from these examples; we need to re-design the actual front doors of city spaces to make them citizen-friendly. For example, City Hall, the city's most traditional civic building, is not currently designed to be citizen-centric. There are few signs to guide citizens as they enter; for most hours of operation there is no staff person to answer questions; and there are locked or closed doors that suggest a general lack of interest in engaging citizens in their own building. We need to embrace the idea that physical spaces send messages to users; a space that is hard to access, difficult to navigate or simply uninterested in being helpful sends an unmistakable message about the relationship between the citizen and the city. Making public spaces more citizen-friendly sends an important signal about our larger goal for the city.

4. Action Officers. If we genuinely want to help citizens navigate the city government easily, transparently and successfully, we need to create a new position within city government: Let's call it an Action Officers. The job qualification is simple: We want people who are enthusiastic about working with and helping citizens get where they want to go, find the information they are looking for and get done what they want to get done. We want people who know how to assist citizens by cutting through red tape and knocking down hurdles. We want people who are eager to be a direct line between a citizen and the city. We want people who have the right mindset about creating a positive experience for every citizen. We can teach the skills—knowledge of the city and its departments, how to comply with policies, where to turn for solutions. We need people who come to the job with the right mindset.

5. Welcome Wagon. When the Welcome Wagon business was founded in 1928, it had a simple model: a Welcome Wagon hostess would visit a new arrival to a town and present a gift basket filled with helpful coupons and tips on ways to get started in a new community. As part of our commitment to being citizen-centric, we need to re-imagine a 21st century welcome wagon that makes every new citizen or business feel valued and welcome to our community. For example, we need to make it easy for new arrivals to get their utilities hooked up and their trash collection arranged. We need to introduce the city's educational, cultural and recreational offerings to new arrivals in a way that is friendly, easy and fun. The best way to make a good friend is to be a good friend. We need to be the best new friend our new citizens and new businesses have ever had. Making that happen represents a huge advantage for our citizens—and our city.

CHANGE 6:
POLICY-MAKING THAT WORKS

What is the difference between policy and practice—and why is there so often such a wide gap? Most of the time, we think of the city's policies as prescriptions: This is the way we want things to work. Too much of the time, citizens are left scratching their heads when they encounter city policies: Why do things work—or not work—that way?

Frequently the initial intention and the ultimate experience are two very different things, separated by actual practice and the passage of time. In fact, time is a serious issue when it comes to policy: For example, the Land Development Code is reviewed roughly every 20 years—but citizens and businesses may encounter it virtually every day.

As a result, the question, "Why is it like that?" may go unanswered for years, leaving citizens frustrated and businesses hamstrung. For Gainesville to be citizen-centric we need to close the gap between policy and practice; we need to embrace an approach to policy-making that works for the people of the city. The way to start making that change is to use a citizen-centric, interactive design process for making policy.

To begin this process we need to create the following foundation:

1. Train city officials, employees and others participating in the ongoing work of making Gainesville citizen-centric in the methodology of design thinking. Design thinking, of course, won't eliminate all of the friction that is part of any policy-making process. But it is a useful tool for framing and re-framing approaches to reaching desired outcomes, can help structure a less adversarial proceeding where there is always some degree of differing opinions and create ways to examine different approaches to making policy and delivering services.

2. Learn to frame policy questions as design challenges. Part of design thinking is changing any policy-making exercise from the design of a tight restriction into the asking of a loose question. For example, instead of assuming that the right answer to dealing with trees cut as a result of development is a policy to limit the amount of trees that can be cut, why not ask the question, "How can we maintain a desirable degree of shade and tree coverage as part of Gainesville's overall design?" Over time, we can learn to start with the right question—the outcome we can all agree on—and work back from the outcome to the best policy approach to achieve it.

3. Make co-design part of the policy-making process. Too often, citizens experience policy-making as a top-down undertaking. Or it feels as if it is expert-driven, and citizens aren't given the standing or the status to have their voices heard because they aren't "experts." (Of course they are experts—experts at what it means to them to live and work in Gainesville.)

To change this, we need to engage citizens, staff and organizations on an equal playing field (recognizing that, ultimately the City Commissioners will be the ones to vote on final policy recommendations.) We need to replace the traditional City Commission subcommittee approach with design thinking workshops as much as possible. An example of a process that worked was the one used in considering vehicles for hire; the inclusive design used for that issue may point the way forward to an approach we can use as the new standard operating procedure for the city.

4. Make the place fit the process, not the process fit the place. Too many of the public spaces currently used for policy-making exercises are not conducive to a citizen-centric approach. Sometimes the problem is something as simple as the current set-up in Commission Chambers that requires presenters to turn their backs to the Commission whenever they want to point to something displayed on the screen. While we are re-designing the thinking and the process that goes into policy-making, we need to re-design the spaces where we hold the conversations.

CHANGE 7:
THE CITIZEN AT THE CENTER

This may be the most fundamental, the most essential, change of all.
It is the change that takes the language of being "citizen-centric" and translates it into a new mental model of the relationship between the citizen and the city. It replaces the old, traditional pyramid of power where the citizen doesn't even appear and replaces it with a new circle of city services with the citizen literally in the center: Citizen-centric.

Here's what this means in more detail. If you ask citizens or city employees to draw a picture of "the way the city works" or "the way the city is structured," most will automatically produce a pyramid with the mayor and commissioners at the top and city offices and departments branching out down below. If you ask them to draw where citizens stand in relation to this pyramid, they would likely produce stick figures somewhere out on the periphery, looking in at the pyramid from a distance.

This drawing is the problem—and the opportunity. We need a new drawing—one with the citizens at the center and the offices, departments and services arrayed around the citizens in an easy to understand, easy to see, easy to access circle. This is the organization chart we need; it is the organization chart of the future; it is the organization chart already in use by many of the best businesses in the world, who put their customers in the center of a surrounding circle of goods and services.

There's a second step in this redrawing of the way the city does business—and it involves how we talk about the way the city does business. Just as the city's organization chart holds citizens at an arms-length, so does the jargon of the city place citizens at a communication disadvantage. Too often, it appears, to do business with the city, citizens have to learn the equivalent of a foreign language: bureaucrat-ese. Think about it this way: When you sit down at the dinner table with friends or family, do you begin a conversation by asking, "How were your economic development activities today?" Or do you simply ask, "What did you do today?"

The point is this: To be citizen-centric, the city needs to talk the way its citizens talk, not require citizens to learn to talk the way the city talks. We need to call city departments by their real names. We need to de-jargonize the way citizens and the city communicate. We need to re-draw the organization chart so citizens are in the center. What do you call the department in the city where citizens go to get help with their neighborhood issues? How about the Department of Living? What do you call the department where citizens go to learn about parks, recreation, sports and outdoor activities? How about the Department of Playing? Everything we do (and don't do) sends a message. The way we visualize the city's organization chart and the language we use to describe the city's operations tell every citizen what and how the city thinks of them and acts toward them. In the next section we'll take a look at how a Department of Doing could put the citizen at the center of a key part of doing business in the city and begin the process of re-orienting the way citizens and the city communicate and work together.

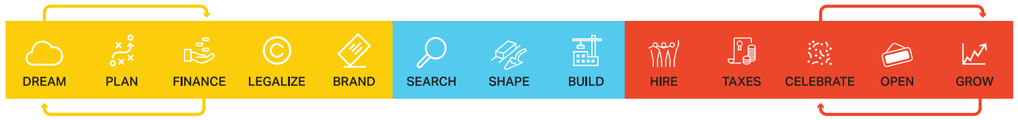
CHANGE 8:
THE DEPARTMENT OF DOING

Becoming citizen-centric is an ongoing process. We have to start the process—and the learning and the improving—someplace that makes sense. Let's start where the city and the Blue Ribbon committee have already found common ground: Helping businesses get things done. In 2015 the city developed a concept for a new development services center to co-locate all permitting for real estate development projects. As part of the work of the Blue Ribbon committee, that idea developed into the Department of Doing—a consolidated governmental unit to facilitate the many different steps in the process of starting or growing a business in Gainesville. The logic is clear: To be more competitive, become the easiest city in the country in which to start or grow a business—a part of becoming citizen-centric. The goal is straightforward: Make it seamless for citizens—whether seasoned real estate developers or first-time business owners—to get the answers they need from the city in a helpful, transparent and timely fashion.

Mission Statement: If you are starting or growing a business, you may need help. You may need experts who can help you find your way, navigators who can help guide you through unfamiliar processes, paperwork that is easy to understand and free of jargon. A less-talk-more action approach to permitting, zoning and compliance. A clear path ahead of you. A city that believes in your business as much as you do—and wants you to succeed as much as you do. All in one place.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DOING *Continued*

Here are some of the design specs to start building the Department of Doing.



Service Diagram: Every business takes a journey. A service diagram will show the 13-step process that depicts what citizens need to do to be successful on that journey. Typically, the city itself only gets involved directly with 3 of the 13 steps. But a citizen-centric city would understand each of the 13 steps—including the ones that don't directly involve the city—and offer helpful facilitation and navigation where needed, providing access to the entire government, introductions to other organizations that may have expertise in some of the steps and act as an advocate on behalf of the citizen to get the business started or the project completed.

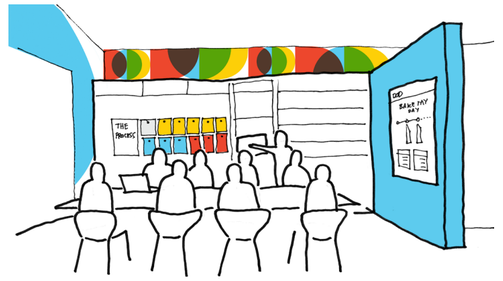
Action Officer: Action Officers are the direct link between the citizen and the city. The are equipped with knowledge of the department or departments they cover; they understand city policy and know how to comply with it; they are authorized to act as problem-solvers on behalf of citizens. Think of them as guides, liaisons, empathetic emissaries, experts and doers when it comes to helping citizens overcome hurdles or slice through red tape. They have the skills to evaluate visitors' needs and guide them in the appropriate direction, demonstrate empathy in times of stress and get a process started toward an outcome that exceeds citizens' expectations.

Build Your Business Journey Cards: This simple, well-designed modular tool lays out for citizens the process for starting or growing a business. The cards will be a tool unique to Gainesville, built by and for Gainesville. Citizens will find the cards at the Department of Doing and other locations; using the cards they will be able to build their own path for starting or growing a business, or get the help of experts in creating a path together. The cards are useful because of their transparency: They feature a common language, modular design, estimated times to complete various steps in the process, identification of common pitfalls and complexities and portability. The cards will be as useful for a seasoned expert as for novices going through the process for the first time. They are a tangible demonstration of the city's intent to become citizen-centric.

Digital Assessment Tools: The heart of these tools is a web browser that is available 24/7/365, offering real time information, answers to questions, access to documents and digital guidance for citizens who prefer web-enabled interactions. It works along with the Journey Cards to provide more information, anticipate questions and give up-to-date guidance. Citizens will be able to access a customizable timeline feature specific to their project, create a checklist of critical tasks and collaborate with team members. Digital Tracking & Assessment: A further refinement of the Digital Assessment Tool, this tracking and assessment feature allows citizens to see exactly where they are in the process: For example, the first two steps in the process may be completed, two steps—Branding and Finance—are underway, and the next step—Shape—is ready to begin. Critical features include citizen account login to maintain user protection, a customized timeline for each project, automatic notification of progress and next steps and identification of relevant resources to aid in the process.

G.I.Y. Kit: Handed out all year, this package of tools is designed to jumpstart any citizen's journey. The useful features include: contact information for Action Officers, a process overview workbook, a comprehensive data tool, process cards, department information and other elements that will emerge as we build the Department of Doing.

Where does all of this take place? Is there an actual Department of Doing? People need a place where they can get things done—or, to be more accurate, people need places where they can get things done. One of the fundamental principles of being citizen-centric is that we need to offer people choices—options for getting things done that work best for them. For some people, a trip to City Hall or the Thomas Center can be intimidating, uncomfortable or simply inconvenient. So we are creating four different options that citizens can choose from when they want to start the process.



Community Events: Community Events consists of a portable service center hosted by Action Officers. The service would largely consist of outreach and explanation of the services available at the Department of Doing. For example, community events would explain to citizens what the Department of Doing is for, how it works, what the steps are in launching or growing a business, as well as the check points that define the progress any project goes through.

Mobile: A mobile unit would work in tandem with community events to take the offerings of the Department of Doing out into the community. It would not require an "event" for it to make an appearance in a neighborhood, although events could be scheduled around neighborhood or community visits. It is designed to provide a greater degree of one-to-one service.

House Calls: House Calls represent the most customized service provided to citizens: By making an advance appointment, a citizen could arrange for a personal visit to go through the G.I.Y. Kit, access the online tools, ask questions and resolve problems.

Basecamp: Basecamp is a studio-like work space where citizens can go to have all of the steps in the process taken care of and where all relevant experts will be available. Basecamp will be hosted by Action Officers who will assess visitors' needs and provide the proper assistance. Other city employees whose help is needed for a specific project will make Basecamp their "second office" and be available on an as-needed basis. Other professionals, such as accountants, lawyers, designers, job placement experts or other outside organizations with relevant skills or interests in business creation or project development could have workspaces at Basecamp and use the space there as a convenient place for meetings to advance a project or resolve a problem.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DOING *Continued*

A closer look at the Action Officer

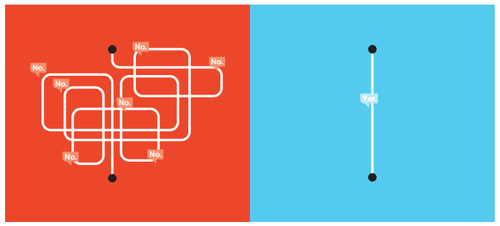
WE'RE ADDING A NEW SERVICES ROLE— AN ACTION OFFICER— THAT COMPLEMENTS THE CITY COMMISSION'S POLICY-MAKING.

The Action Officer is instrumental in capturing and communicating insights from citizens to inform policy making.

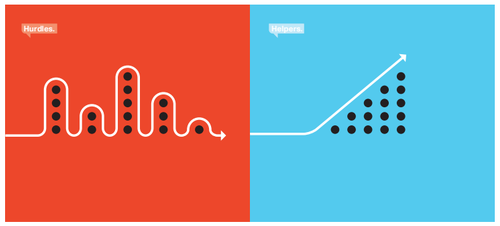
Rather than hiring for city employees deeply steeped in a process, we're looking for Navigators who are enthusiastic about providing additional resources, have expertise in service design, amazing customer service, and an orientation towards getting things done.

These people are the direct line between the citizens and the city. They're armed with strong knowledge of the department(s) they cover, know how to comply with policy and are authorized to act on behalf of citizens. They act as the liaison, the guide, the shoulder to lean on, the expert, and the "doer" when it comes to overcoming hurdles and exceeding expectations. Think of them as part June Cleaver, part Albert Einstein and a dash of SuperHero. They're equipped with this simple guide to triage visitors, gain empathy, and get the process started.

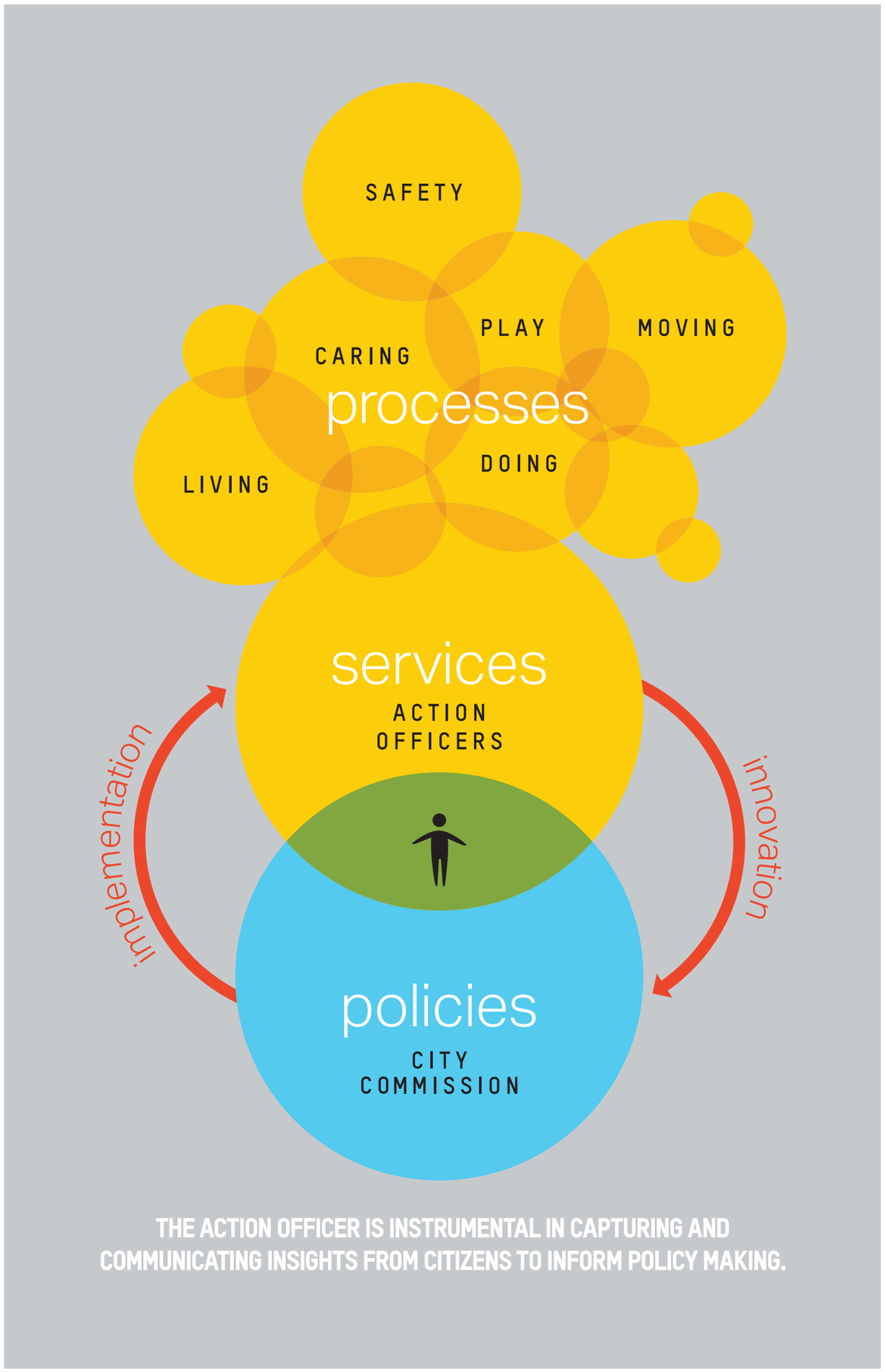
FROM NO TO YES



from	**a culture of No**
to	**a culture of Yes, and...**
from	**reactive**
to	**proactive**
from	**expect customers to come to you**
to	**meet customers where they are**
from	**policy-oriented**
to	**service-oriented**
from	**siloed**
to	**team-focused**
from	**expert language or jargon**
to	**plain-spoken**
from	**transactional**
to	**relational**
from	**inaccessible**
to	**accessible**
from	**cold**
to	**appreciative**



FROM HURDLES TO HELPERS



THE ACTION OFFICER IS INSTRUMENTAL IN CAPTURING AND COMMUNICATING INSIGHTS FROM CITIZENS TO INFORM POLICY MAKING.

CHANGE 9:
THE DEPARTMENT OF MEASURING

We want this bold new idea to work. We also want to know if it is working, how well it is working and how it could work better.

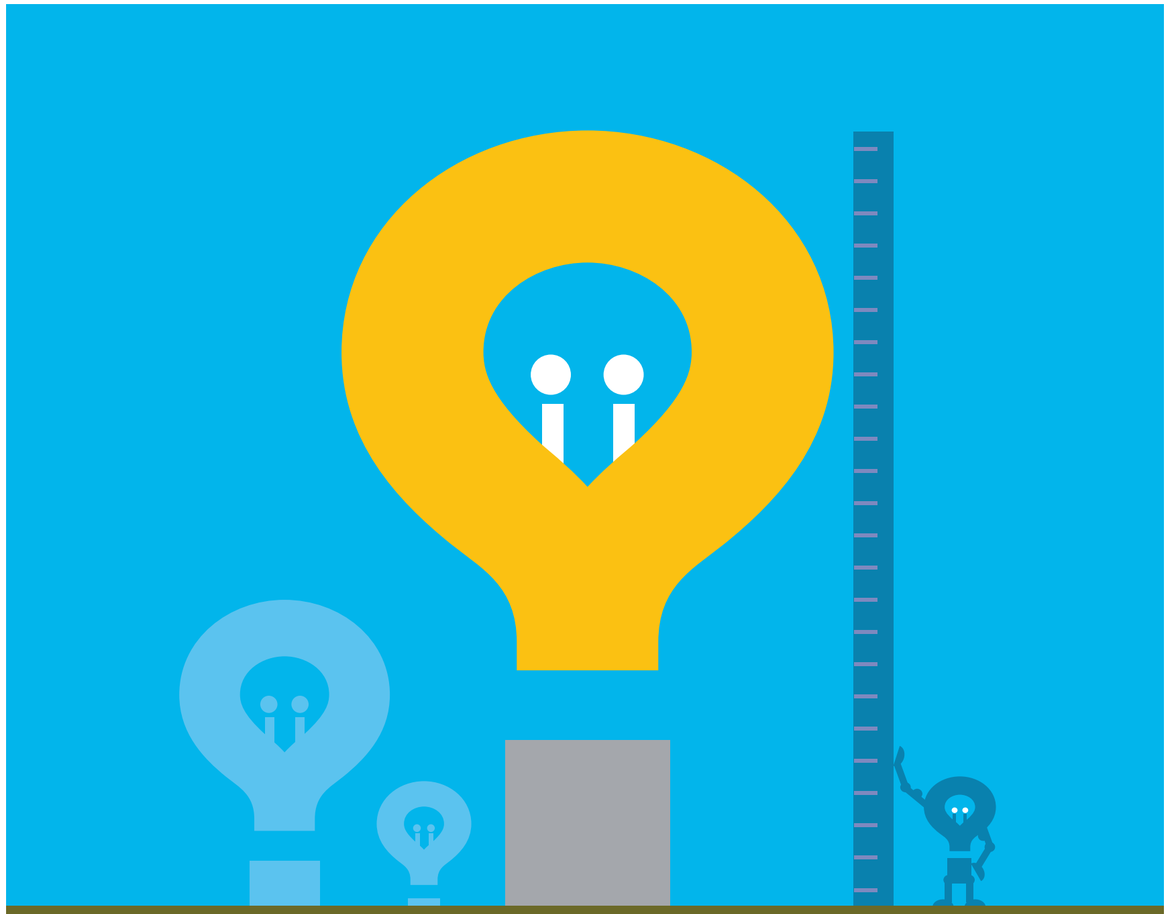
From business, we understand the precept that says, "What gets measured is what gets done." From civic engagement, we understand the importance of a feedback loop between the citizens and the city, an ongoing dialog about what's being done, what's not being done, what could be done better or differently, what could be added and what could be eliminated.

Metrics and dialog are vital components of implementing change. They are the necessary guidance system that go along with a process that is innovative and evolutionary: We are embarking on a process that we believe in so much that we believe in measuring it, discussing it and constantly improving it.

For that reason, we propose a Department of Measuring, a command center for collecting, analyzing and responding to real time feedback from citizens; a conversation center for engaging in ongoing dialog with citizens about their experiences with our journey to become citizen-centric and to get their ideas for measuring and evaluating our progress; and a dashboard for collecting, assessing and disseminating the data that both citizens and the city need to evaluate how we are doing.

There will be quantitative data and qualitative data—numbers and stories, individual experiences and perceptions and community-wide input and comment. We not only want to do this—we want to do it right. Doing it right means holding ourselves—and each other—accountable for this bold innovative idea.

It is Gainesville's idea, it is Gainesville's future—and we are all in it together.We can make it work if we work at it together.



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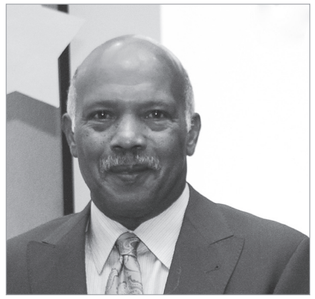
It is Gainesville's future.
And we are all
in it together.

DEDICATION



We dedicate this work to the late Curtis W. Paris Jr., whose courage, dedication and commitment to the Gainesville community was an inspiration to us all.

AND MUCH GRATITUDE

City of Gainesville

Mayor Ed Braddy
Commissioner Helen Warren
Commissioner Harvey Budd
Commissioner Charles Goston
Commissioner Craig Carter
Commissioner Todd Chase
Commissioner Randy Wells

Many thanks to:

Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee for Economic Competitiveness
Mitch Glaesar, Chair
Dr. Lisa Armour
Dean Cheshire
Gerry Dedenbach
Randi Elrad
Dave Ferro
John Fleming
Corey Harris
Thomas Hawkins
Erin Henderson
Diego Ibanez
Brian Leslie
Tom Lyons
Lee May
Diyonne McGraw
Tommy McIntosh
Lee Nelson
Omar Oselimo
Curtis Paris
Jackie Paris
Angela Tharpe
Robert Wapole
Matt Webster

Staff
Anthony Lyons, Executive Director
Vanessa Riley
Lila Stewart
Kelly Thompson

Due to the generosity of our project partners, this vision, this mission, this dream of designing a better Gainesville is possible.
University of Florida
UF Health
Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce
Builders Association of North Central Florida
Community Foundation of North Florida
Anonymous Philanthropists
Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency
Cox Communications
Planning and Development Services team
Gainesville-Alachua County Association of Realtors
Emiliano's Cafe
Depot Park
Reggae Shack
IDEO
UF Hillel
Trimark Properties

A special thank you to the countless businesses, citizens, community leaders, city employees, and staff that contributed to the findings in this presentation.
We applaud your commitment to creating a better Gainesville!

LET'S GET DESIGNING!

Thoughts, Notes, Doodles, Sketches, Masterpieces, Brain Storms, Rants,

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I WANT TO BE PART OF THE BIG IDEA

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YES! I WANT TO BE PART OF THE BIG IDEA!

PLEASE CONTACT ME!

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Comments:

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