

# Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area

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2024

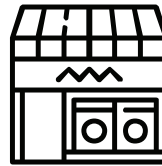
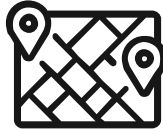
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## Annual Report



Gainesville  
Community  
Reinvestment  
Area





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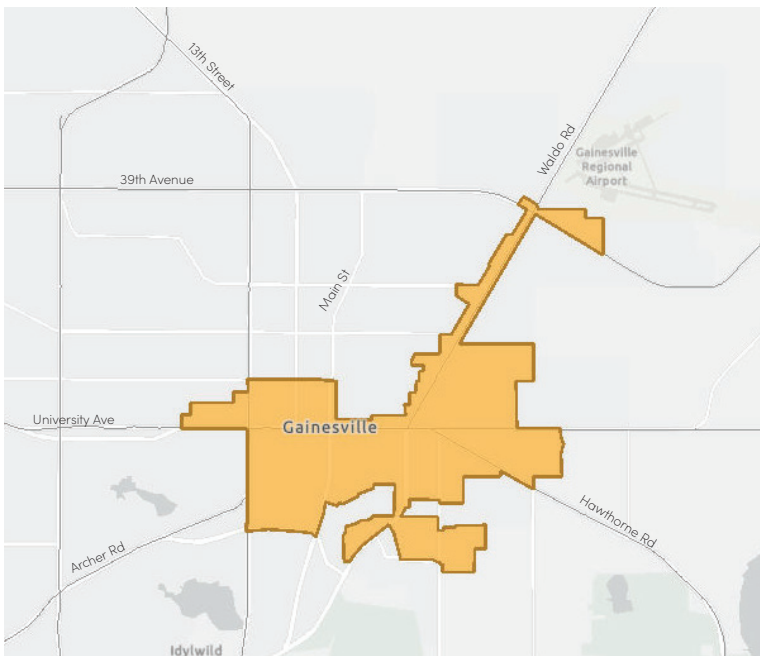
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# About the GCRA

The Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA) was formerly known as the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), created by the City of Gainesville, under the authority of the "Community Redevelopment Act of 1969" (see Section 163.330 et seq of Florida Statutes). Between 1979 and 2001, the City created four community redevelopment areas – Pleasant Street/Fifth Avenue (1979), Downtown (1981), College Park/University Heights (1995) and Eastside (2001) – each with a redevelopment trust fund holding tax increment financing (TIF) revenue. This revenue would fund major public improvement projects including Depot Park, the A Quinn Jones Museum and Cultural Center, South Main Street, Innovation District infrastructure, and NW 1st Avenue in College Park as well as incentivize private development projects such as Union Street Station, the Hampton Inn, and several apartment complexes in downtown and University Heights.

In April 2019, the City of Gainesville and Alachua County approved an interlocal agreement that would 1) dissolve the four existing CRAs and eliminate future TIF contributions by the City and County; 2) create the "Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area" the boundaries of which covers the same boundaries as the four previous CRA areas; and 3) create a new funding mechanism whereby the City and County would contribute a total of \$70.7 million over a ten year period between FY2019 and FY2029 to fund redevelopment within the GCRA. This agreement was ratified on October 1, 2019, through the Ordinance 181001. The ordinance also created the GCRA department which reports to the Office of the City Manager, is governed by the City Commission, and guided by a citizen advisory board.

**GCRA Boundary**



**GCRA Funding**

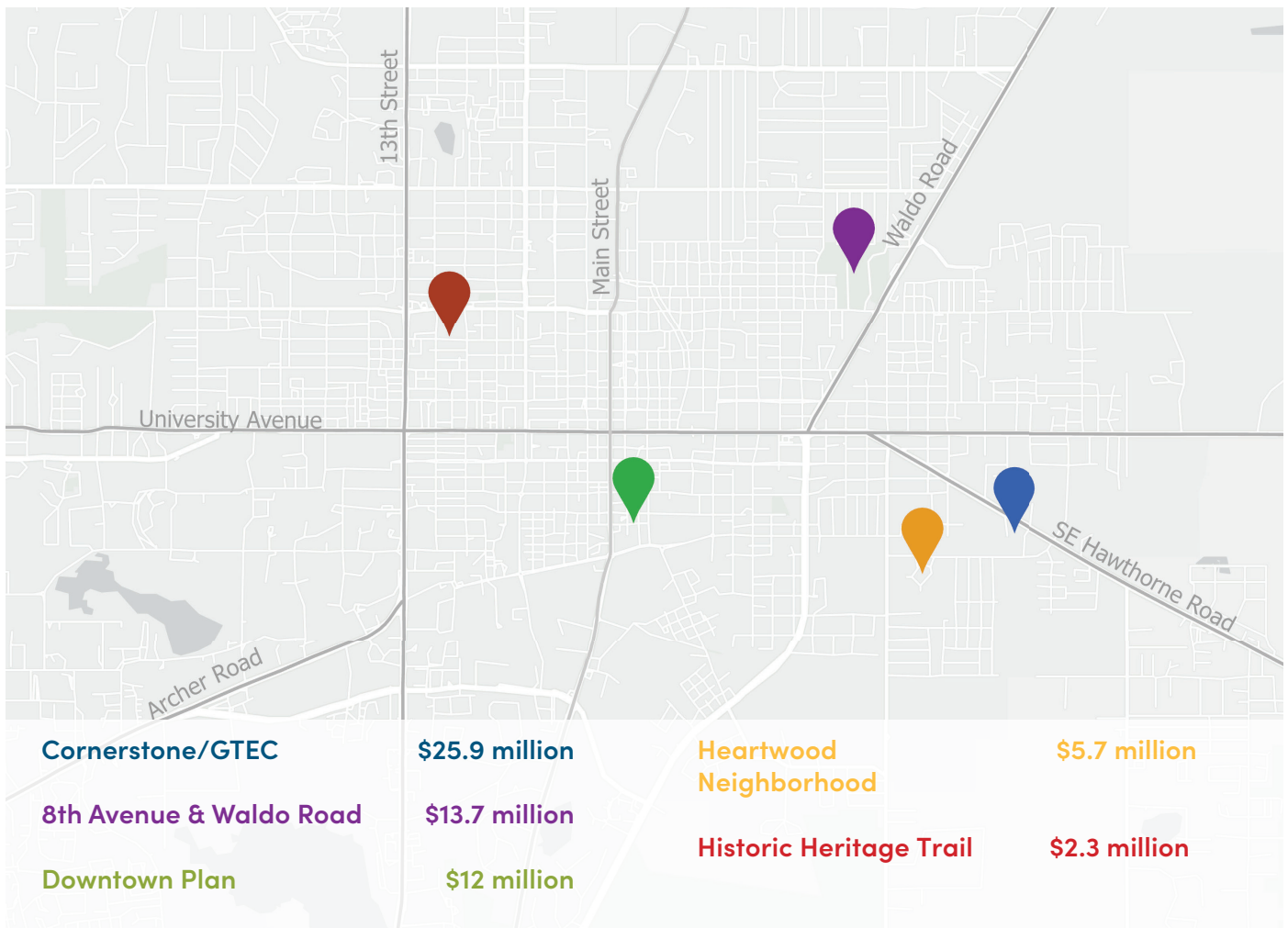
| Due Date             | County Contribution    | City Contribution | Metropolitan Area Funds (County) |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1-Jan-20             | \$4,191,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$100,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-21             | \$4,091,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$200,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-22             | \$3,991,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$300,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-23             | \$3,891,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$400,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-24             | \$3,791,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$500,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-25             | \$3,691,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$600,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-26             | \$3,591,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$700,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-27             | \$3,491,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$800,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-28             | \$3,391,460.39         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$900,000.00                     |
| 1-Jan-29             | \$3,325,657.89         | \$3,325,657.89    | \$1,000,000.00                   |
| <b>10-Year Total</b> | <b>\$70,705,380.30</b> |                   | <b>\$5,500,000.00</b>            |





# 2024 Annual Report

The Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA), with ongoing backing from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County, is making progress on its five transformational initiatives while ensuring that its smaller undertakings continue to offer assistance to local residents and businesses. Collaborative endeavors that were established in FY 2022 with other departments on the GCRA's transformative capital projects have maintained their momentum in the FY 2024 reporting period. These include planning for the 8th and Waldo Road project, continued development of the Cornerstone campus on SE Hawthorne Road, and implementation of the Downtown Strategic Plan. Each of the transformative projects is outlined below with their respective projected budgets through the 2029 fiscal year. It is important to point out that these figures represent the total projected funds and not available funds as of the 2024 fiscal year.



Note: These numbers represent estimated available budget based on past expenditures and planned future budgets (data based off of 08/14/2024 data). The GCRA may reflect in future annual reports shifting funds between these projects if the city decides to prioritize one project over another.

# Major Transformational Projects

## Cornerstone Eastside Health and Economic Development Initiative (EHEDI)

Initiated in FY 2022, Cornerstone Phase 2 continues to be a collaborative effort involving Alachua County, the City of Gainesville, the Federal Department of Treasury (via ARPA funds), the Federal Transit Authority, and UF Health. In 2023, GCRA facilitated the purchase of additional property to integrate the Eastside Health and Economic Development Initiative (EHEDI) site with the existing Cornerstone property, expanding the project site to approximately 31.5 acres.

Significant progress was made in 2024, with the completion and opening of the UF Health Clinic in August 2024, providing much-needed healthcare services to the community. (The clinic's construction came from a combined \$4.5 million of pooled City and County ARPA funds.) Infrastructure improvements have advanced smoothly, with the roadway connecting SE Hawthorne Road to SE 8th Avenue nearing completion. The construction process has proceeded without complications, keeping the project on track for its anticipated completion in June 2025.



UF Health Urgent Care Center seen from SE Hawthorne Road

The on-site Regional Transit System (RTS) transfer station, funded by a \$4.1 million grant from the Federal Department of Transportation, remains a key component of the project. Once completed, this hub will strengthen transportation options for East Gainesville, supporting both economic growth and improved mobility for residents and workers, who now must travel to the Rosa Parks Downtown Station to connect with most RTS routes. Construction design and permitting are currently underway, and construction is anticipated to begin in the last quarter of the calendar year.

Moving forward, GCRA remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering sustainable growth through the Cornerstone initiative. Once the infrastructure project is completed, GCRA will begin marketing the five vacant development sites. The City, in partnership with County staff, plans to issue an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for a grocery store anchor tenant in FY 2025. These strategic investments continue to create opportunities for businesses, enhance community resources, and contribute to the economic development of East Gainesville.



## Cornerstone & GTEC

The Cornerstone Campus was originally designed in 2015 with six ready-to-build lots, with GTEC and Mérieux Nutriscience having built out three of them. The GCRA has remained dedicated to enhancing the city-owned GTEC Facility, continuing its role as a premier entrepreneurial incubation space while also strengthening its benefit to the community. As part of these ongoing efforts, the City Commission approved extensive renovations. These improvements are a key step in revitalizing the facility to better serve the growing entrepreneurial community.



A significant development this year is the rebranding of GTEC from the “Gainesville Technology and Entrepreneurship Center” to the “Gainesville Training, Entrepreneurial, and Community (GTEC) Center”. This change retains the familiar acronym while more accurately reflecting its mission to better connect with and serve the surrounding community. The GTEC incubator continues to support economic growth, now housing 18 small and local, businesses. GCRA also remains committed to its partnership with Santa Fe College, expanding programming opportunities for entrepreneurs and fostering regional collaboration.

Interior renovations, designed by Walker Architects, will modernize the space to align with best practices established by Greenwood Consulting. The GCRA is currently finalizing construction documents, with groundbreaking for these renovations scheduled for FY 2025. These upgrades will provide a more functional and supportive environment for the diverse businesses operating within GTEC.





## NE 8th Avenue and NE Waldo Road



Existing Site Plan for 8<sup>th</sup> and Waldo

The 8th Avenue and Waldo Road project focuses on revitalizing the recreational complex and bringing economic development to the site. The GCRA boundary was amended in 2022 by the City Commission and County Commission to include the entire 41-acre NE 8th Avenue and Waldo Road site<sup>1</sup>. In addition to Citizens Field and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreation Center, the project site includes playing fields, a skate park, swimming pool and obsolete Gainesville Fire and Rescue Facilities, occupying nearly six acres of the site.

In 2023, the City's Parks Recreation and Cultural Affairs (PRCA) Department was in charge of a feasibility and traffic study that was to examine renovations and potential changes to the site. CH Johnson was contracted by PRCA with the GCRA funding the feasibility study. As part of the study, two community engagement events were held in July 2023, and a draft report was submitted to the City in September. The City Commission was presented the report in October 2023 and instructed city staff to prepare a land use plan and financial feasibility as well as to continue looking for financial resources to construct the updated 8th Avenue and Waldo Road site.

In July 2024, the GCRA contracted with the local engineering company CHW/NV5 (hereafter referred to as NV5) to explore how feasible the suggestions were from CH Johnson. The contract specified several elements to be accomplished by the consultants. The first element is a study of different land use and facility scenarios for the complex as well as a redesign of NE 14th Street, if necessary, to facilitate more efficient use of the site. The study would take as its starting point the recently completed work of CH Johnson Consulting but was also to incorporate and/or be informed by the designs/studies/findings/recommendations from prior work done on the site.

The second element was to ensure that the 8th and Waldo Road project would be a catalyst for reinvestment along a corridor that is challenged by small lots, large holdings of state land, and a road with limited east-west crossings.



The final element was to improve the safety, mobility and aesthetics of NE 8th Avenue and NE Waldo Road. Both of these corridors are important to improve the function and aesthetics of future development on the Project site. But streetscape planning must differentiate between the two corridors, recognizing the different challenges and roles they play. Waldo Road is within the state road system and carries heavy traffic volumes as well as serving a goods-distribution function serving large trucks carrying freight from US 301 to US 441 and I-275. Under state jurisdiction, there are limitations to what the City can require along the corridor. With the limited number of east-west crossings between East University Avenue and NE 39th Avenue, Waldo Road also inhibits commercial development on its east side and has served to isolate neighborhoods east of the corridor.

On the other hand, NE 8th Avenue is under City jurisdiction providing more latitude to create a pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal corridor. Traditional placemaking features can be deployed more readily to enhance the street and link the neighborhoods east and west of Waldo Road.

With the contract being signed late in the reporting year, there was mostly work mobilizing the consulting team and coordinating with the City. Site surveys were conducted by NV5 from July through September 2024.

Site Plan 'A'



Site Plan 'B'



## Forward looking in FY 2025

NV5 began project planning in FY 2025 in earnest by holding stakeholder meetings with city, county and other agencies with interests in the complex. The team also held neighborhood meetings in Duval Heights as well as two public meetings in the first five months of FY 2025. After a November community engagement and individual briefings with City Commissioners, NV5 examined different land-use and facility scenarios that would lead to a preliminary design that can be used to move directly into final construction plans and permitting after City Commission approval in Summer 2025.

In February 2025, NV5 presented options at a community engagement at the MLK Center and would present two options at the March 12th Alachua County School Board meeting and the March 13th General Policy Committee meeting. Out of these two meetings came authorization by the Board and the GPC to discuss the disposition of Citizens Field.

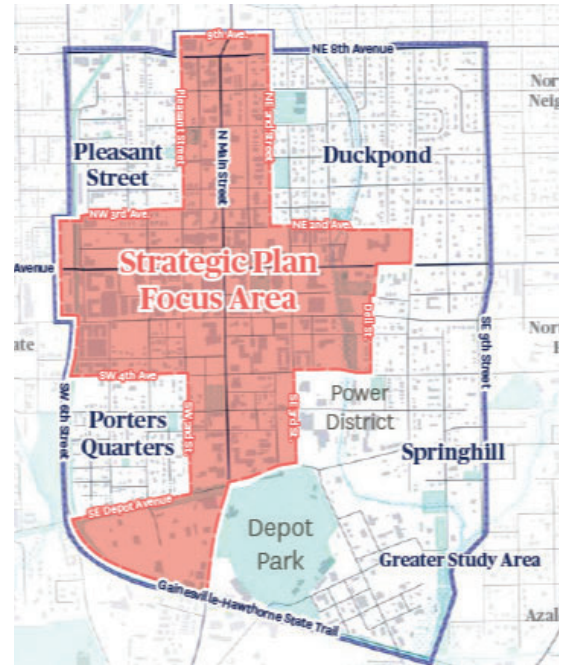
Update: NV5 will produce a preliminary design that will be able to move to final construction plans and permitting by the Summer of 2025.

## Downtown Strategic Plan

The GCRA 10-year Reinvestment Plan called for creating a “*Downtown Master Plan*” (later renamed “Downtown Strategic Plan”). GCRA funding was used to hire the consultant MKSK who developed the plan between June 2021 and August 2022. The City Commission adopted the “Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan” (Downtown Plan) in October 2022, and the Downtown Plan would later receive a “Downtown Achievement Award of Excellence” in the summer of 2023 from the International Downtown Association in the area of “Planning, Design, and Infrastructure”. In FY 2024, the GCRA made significant strides to forward implement the “Downtown Strategic Plan”.

The vision of the Downtown Plan is expressed through the following ideas/goals<sup>2</sup>:

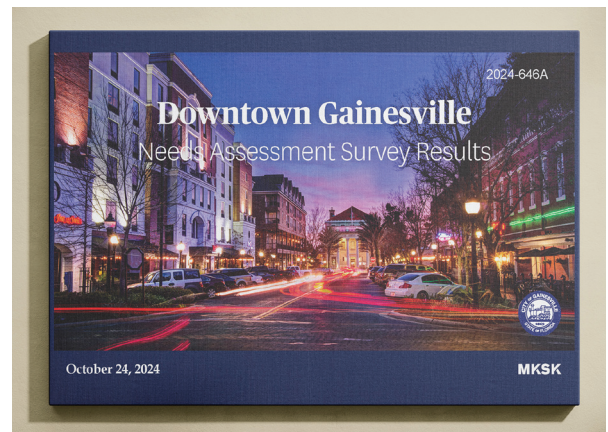
- **Become a Destination**
  - ◇ Idea 1: Build investment around local strengths
  - ◇ Idea 2: Shape downtown identity
  - ◇ Idea 3: Create a downtown jewel
- **Connect the Dots**
  - ◇ Idea 4: Balance the need for parking with the desire for a walkable, urban core.
  - ◇ Idea 5: Prioritize streets to meet city standards
  - ◇ Idea 6: Activate the sweetwater corridor
  - ◇ Idea 7: Create a greenway loop
- **Strengthen the Relationship with Adjacent Neighborhoods**
  - ◇ Idea 8: Connect neighborhoods to downtown
  - ◇ Idea 9: Establish Transition Areas
- **Increase Housing Opportunities**
  - ◇ Idea 10: Address housing opportunities at scale
  - ◇ Idea 11: Support affordable mixed-use housing
  - ◇ Idea 12: Facilitate market-rate housing
- **Create a Supportive Local Business Environment**
  - ◇ Idea 13: Unlock real estate potential
  - ◇ Idea 14: Increase direct small business assistance
- **Maintain and Enhance Downtown**
  - ◇ Idea 15: Form a place-based management organization
  - ◇ Idea 16: Continue to build capacity.





During FY 2024, GCRA undertook a number of efforts to bring into reality the previous 6 goals. First, in January 2024, GCRA recommended, and the City Commission approved a plan to reallocate more than \$12 million in interlocal and tax increment financing funds to implement the Downtown Plan. In spring 2024, the GCRA created the Downtown Advisory Board (DAB) to provide recommendations to the City Commission on a range of topics related to the budget, policies, amendments to the Downtown Strategic Plan, and other matters affecting Downtown Gainesville. The seven members were appointed to the DAB in early June, and it had its first meeting on June 11th. The DAB met monthly through September.

To increase pedestrian activity and support Downtown businesses, the GCRA recommended, and City Commission approved the Pilot Downtown Events Grant Program on May 2, 2024. By the end of FY 2024, eight grants were awarded approximately \$32,000 in GCRA funds. The funding supported events ranging from night markets, to music and film festivals, and marches and parades. All of the events supported the continuation of the first goal, 'become a destination.' Additional grant awardees have events scheduled in FY 2025. Additionally, it is anticipated the City Commission will approve a permanent replacement to the pilot event program in FY 2025.

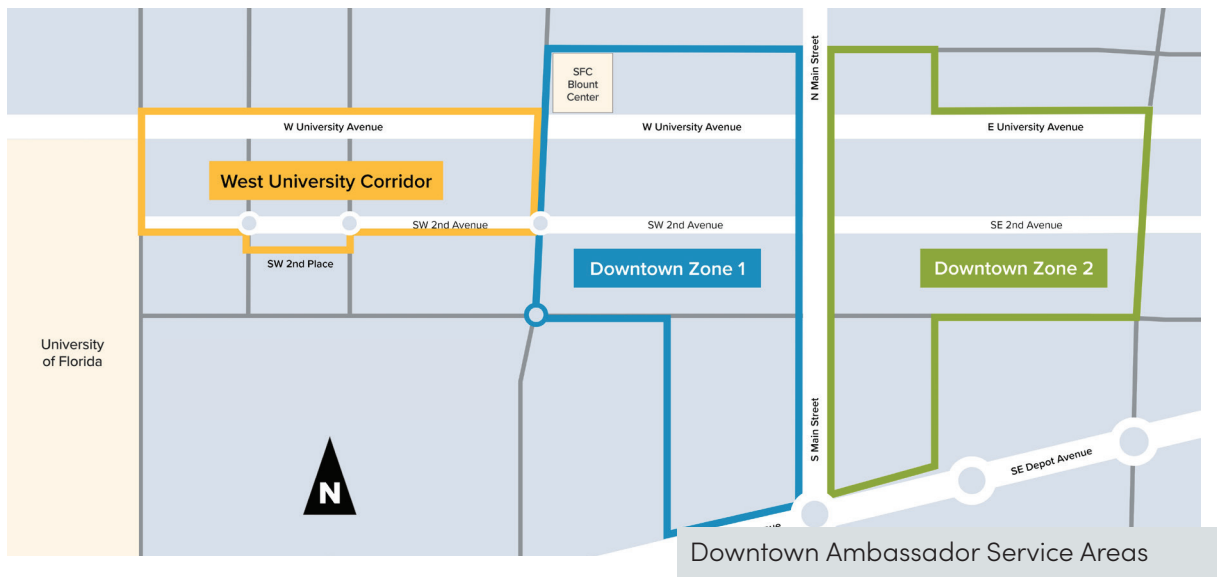


To assist in furthering the vision of the Downtown Plan and aligning the budget with citizen priorities the GCRA contracted again with MKSK, developed the Plan, to conduct a Downtown Needs Assessment. The assessment was conducted in July 2024 using a survey. The survey closed with over 1,400 responses. The survey identified a number of components to continue the efforts begun through the Downtown Strategic Plan including:

- Promoting safer and more lively public spaces
- Supporting local businesses and the desire for additional retail spaces
- Better services for the unhoused
- The desire for improved parking solutions
- The desire for a variety of events and activities that cater to diverse groups
- Addressing cleanliness, safety, and maintaining the aesthetic appeal of downtown
- Enhancing lighting and flowers to make downtown more welcoming



A key finding in both the Downtown Plan as well as the survey was the need for a “clean and safe” Downtown Gainesville. To that end, in the summer 2024, the GCRA began negotiating with Block by Block, the industry standard for “place management” companies, to establish a Downtown Ambassador Program, with safety and cleaning ambassadors who will provide visitor support within the Downtown boundary.



On August 15th the City Commission approved the agreement with Block by Block and the contract was executed on September 12, 2024 (The ambassadors hired would begin work in FY 2025 in early December 2024) The services to be performed include:

- Create a visible presence throughout Downtown and West University Corridor.
- Aid visitors, residents, students, pedestrians, businesses and the general population. Aid may be providing directions, information, public safety escorts or just a reassuring uniformed presence on the street seven days a week.
- Assist with livability issues within the service area by building relationships with vulnerable population groups and connecting them with available social services.
- Assist area businesses in addressing happenings in the public realm that disrupt business.
- Assist in small cleaning tasks, such as picking up isolated litter and reporting on expanded cleaning needs.
- Develop and introduce additional areas of opportunity to enhance conditions;
- Create potential for workforce development opportunities for local residents with barriers to traditional employment.
- Provide meaningful benchmarking and information on service delivery through statistical data analysis utilizing its Smart System.



The contract is for three years with an option to extend it twice in one-year increments.

Some statistics from December 2024 through January 2025 for the Downtown Ambassador program are:

- 780 graffiti paint or stickers removed
- 563 safety interactions to assist businesses
- 534 directions given to downtown visitors
- 401 cleaning tasks to assist businesses
- 152 service calls for houseless neighbors
- 119 trash bags removed
- 102 automobile assistance
- 17 calls for police/fire/EMS

\*Note these numbers also include the West University Ambassador Zone



## Business Improvement District Development

The Downtown Plan also called for the establishment of a “place management organization” to deal with safety, cleanliness, event programming, marketing and other issues unique to downtowns. To conduct this analysis, GCRA contracted with MKSK December 9, 2023, to examine the formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) to include the Downtown and Innovation District. The contract called for MKSK to engage and perform public engagement events with Property Owners, Businesses, and Stakeholders within the BID, as well as the University of Florida, Santa Fe College and other approved stakeholders. MKSK will develop a BID revenue model and preparing a draft BID ordinance for adoption by the City Commission. It is expected that MKSK will complete their analysis in mid-summer 2025, with the findings presented to City leadership for direction.

## The Streatery

During FY 2024, the City of Gainesville and GCRA began developing design solutions to make “The Streatery” located along SW 1st Avenue from SW 2nd Street to South Main Street, a permanent feature and amenity for Downtown Gainesville. The Streatery originated in 2020 as an emergency tool to support local businesses with an expanded outdoor seating area during the COVID pandemic. Temporary measures were installed to provide safe pedestrian areas in two selected areas downtown: (1) SW 1st Ave, from S. Main St. to SW 2nd St, and (2) from NW 2nd St, W University Ave to NW 1st Ave.





Beginning in January 2024, Public Works and Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area staff engaged JBPro, a local engineering firm, to 1) develop conceptual Streatery designs, 2) prepare construction cost estimates, and 3) solicit public and stakeholder feedback on the design. Pursuant to direction from staff, the design includes the following basic elements:

- Repair of existing street conditions including fixing drainage issues and remediating existing trip hazards caused by uneven bricks.
- Enhanced Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design.
- Infrastructure for enhanced programming opportunities, including installation of electrical receptacles to support events, markets, and festivals.
- Improved pedestrian lighting.
- Additional landscaping.
- Flexible design to accommodate use of the Streatery for events, outdoor seating, etc. when closed, and vehicular parking if/when open.

An update on the Streatery design to the General Policy Committee (GPC) was scheduled for late September 2024, but was postponed due to Hurricane Helene. The GPC meeting was rescheduled for late October, after another hurricane related cancelation. The GPC provided direction to staff about the need for additional input from the public, DAB and the GCRA Advisory Board prior to final action on the plans by City Commission. These two boards made recommendations on January 7, 2025, and February 4, 2025. On February 20, 2025, the City Commission authorized the City Manager to proceed with the final design of the Streatery with brick pavers, gateway amenities at South Main Street and planters/seating in the center of the corridor and parking lot frontages.



## Power District

The Power District, which includes properties surrounding the Kelly Power Plant in the 400 block of SE 3rd Street, was a major initiative for the City since the 2013 adoption of a master plan for the area. The severing of Gainesville Regional Utility from City government in 2023 by the Florida Legislature, clouded which entity was owner of the underlying Power District properties. With that in mind, in June 2023, City Commission authorized the movement of funding from Power District to Downtown Strategic Plan.

## Former RTS Site Redevelopment

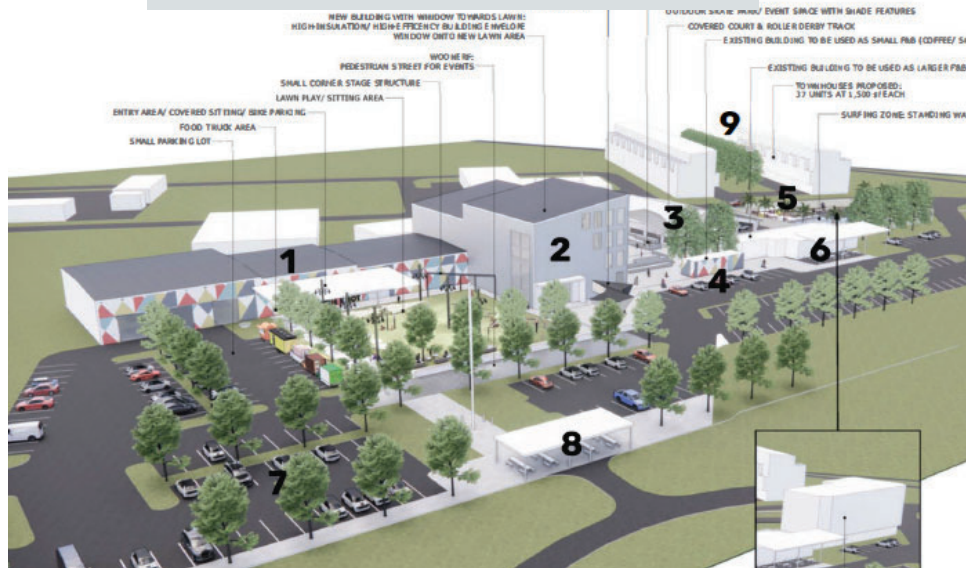
When Gainesville Regional Transit System moved its headquarters and maintenance yard in 2014, Downtown had a development opportunity located next to Depot Park. In 2023, the City issued in July 2023, an Invitation to Negotiate to develop the property, with the sole respondents being the Florida Music Hall of Fame and the Knot Climbing Gym. In October 2023, the Knot Climbing Gym was selected as the City's redevelopment partner, with the project estimated to bring up to \$25 million in total investment over the next five years. Negotiations were entered into with the Knot Climbing Gym for purchase and development of the property per their proposal.



Negotiations commenced between the City of Gainesville and the Knot Climbing gym with the City approval of the Invitation to Negotiate in October of 2023.

In July 2024, after a period of due diligence and negotiations between the Knot and the City, the City Commission approved the disposal of the old Regional Transit System property located at 100 SE 10th Avenue. This is a multi-step process that requires the Federal Transportation Authority to allow the sale of the property and authorizes the City Manager or designee to execute all related transaction documents. The next steps will be the execution of the sales contract.

Planned uses for components on the property



### 1- Bus Building

Existing Bus Building: 19,250 SF

### 2-New Construction

Climbing Gym Expansion: 10,000 SF

### 3- Skate Park / Venue

Lighted/Shaded Skate Park: ~1ac

### 4-Skate Shop

Footprint: 600 SF

### 6-Fast-Casual Restaurant

Proposed Restaurant: 3,700 SF

### 7-Parking Redesign/Landscaping

Estimated: 2.6ac

### 8-Depot Park Transition - Pavillion

Pavillion: tbd

### 9-Market Rate Townhouses

Estimated: 37 units @1,500 SF



## Heartwood

The Heartwood neighborhood is a 34-unit subdivision located on 15 acres at 1717 SE 8th Avenue and occupies the former Kennedy Homes site. The mixed income neighborhood is comprised of eleven sold affordable Dreams to Reality residences. The rest being Showcase lots sold to the buyer to contract with one of two builders and Market rate homes where the City builds the home and sells it.

The GCRA contracted June 12, 2023, with a local architect to provide lot-specific designs for the next two homes to be constructed. Currently, sixteen lots are available for sale. The company CHW/NV5 began work on developing plans for: new fencing, landscaping, including entryway and common areas, pathway improvement along pond and through common area connecting eastern and western sides of the neighborhood, entry signage, and irrigation for new entry landscape and common area landscape.

The City completed construction on 1 Showcase home and 2 City-funded market-rate homes, with all three homes listed for sale. Each home earned its certificate of occupancy: Lot 31 on September 1, 2023; Lot 32 on January 29, 2024; and Lot 33 on April 12, 2024.



Heartwood Neighborhood Aerial provided by a member of the community







To fulfill water management requirements Ecosystem Research Corporation was contracted with to complete the final vegetation monitoring report for the Heartwood wetland systems.

Current status: As of March 2025 the three homes on the market have been sold. In addition, the design for the entry signs, fencing, and landscaping has been completed with construction expected to be completed by fall 2025.





## Historic Heritage Trail - Fifth Avenue / Pleasant Street

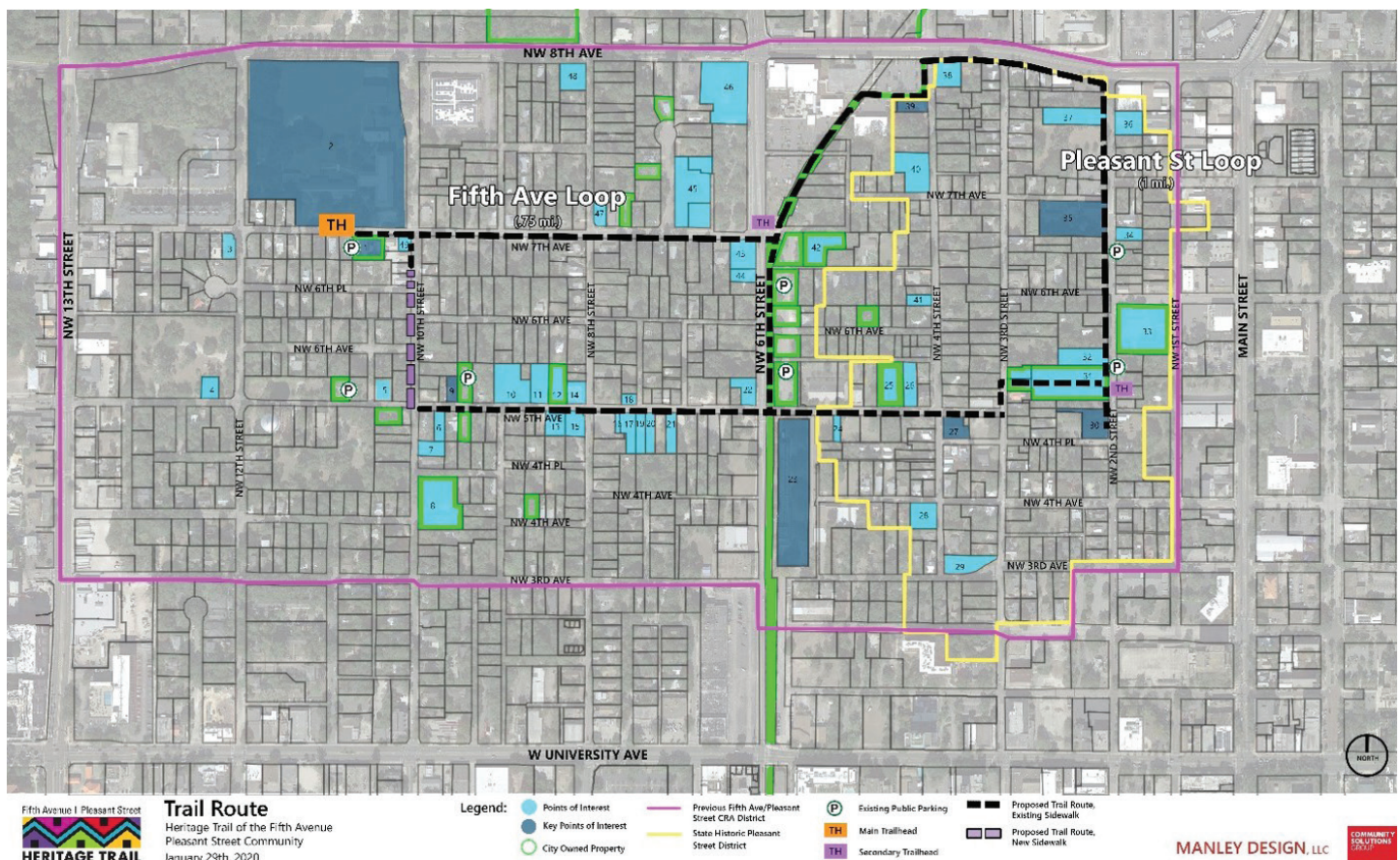
The project is a signature component of the GCRA's 10-Year Reinvestment Plan. The trail travels through neighborhoods symbolic in Gainesville of civil rights struggles and is uniquely its own while being reflective of other similar communities in the Southeast. It is envisioned as a system of physical markers and locations that identify significant people, achievements, history, and cultural knowledge within key historic African American neighborhoods. The purpose of the project is to provide trail visitors with information about the area, leading to heightened awareness and appreciation of the history of these communities.



The GCRA put out an Invitation to Negotiate in FY23, and Community Planning Collaborative was selected by the evaluation committee and approved by the City Commission on September 21, 2023.

During FY24, Community Planning Collaborative has been actively working on the Historic Heritage Trail project, holding a number of stakeholder meetings, community workshops, and providing updates to the GCRA Advisory Board over the course of the fiscal year. One of the engagements featured a bus tour of the proposed trail.

As of March 2025, the Community Planning Collaborative is in the final phase of plan development with draft marker designs, location and content being presented to stakeholders and the community in winter 2025. A final plan is expected to be submitted to the City Commission for approval in June 2025.





## Public Space & Streetscape

The GCRA worked with a supplier to replace banners on East University Avenue between Waldo/Williston Road and East 15th Street. The GCRA continues to maintain the Eastside Gateway with landscapers working to keep it looking its best every month including with new plantings (seen in the bottom right of the photo below).



Aerial View of Eastside Gateway provided by a member of the community



# GCRA Programs

The GCRA, through its Community Enhancements Programs, continued to assist residents within its boundaries with its **Heirs Property Assistance** program, **My Neighborhood** grant program, **Neighborhood Paint** program, **Business Improvement Grant** program, **Community Partnership** program, **Model Block and Attainable Housing Initiatives** and **Porters Quarters Neighborhood Improvements**.

## Heirs Property Assistance Program

The Program improves neighborhood stability by growing individual wealth and access to property ownership by assisting in the clearing of property titles for the heirs.

Assisted 7 new applicants in FY24 with 12 total cases completed or closed this fiscal year. During FY 2024, the City, Alachua County, and University of Florida negotiated a five-year cooperative agreement whereby the Levin College of Law would use intern law students to assist families with resolving estate property issues. The City and County would be providing financial support to the College of Law for the program. This agreement was executed in late 2024.

## My Neighborhood Grant Program

The Program encourages strong community connections by incentivizing long-term homeownership within neighborhoods. This Program provides for community members who lived in Cedar Grove II, Greater Duval, Fifth Avenue, North Lincoln Heights, Pleasant Street, Porters, Springhill, Sugarhill, and Heartwood (formerly Kennedy Homes) for at least three years prior to 2011.

GCRA had one Applicant to the Program, and it was still to be processed by the end of FY 2024.

## Neighborhood Paint Program

The Program improves the exterior of homes within eligible neighborhoods located within the GCRA boundary by repainting them at no cost to income eligible residents. The GCRA painted 30 homes in FY 2024.



Before



After

## Business Improvement Grant Program

The Program encourages private investment to make significant improvements to building exteriors. The improvements must return public benefits such as enhanced corridor aesthetics, improved pedestrian comfort, and public safety. The program is a 50 percent matching grant program that pays recipients after all approved work is complete and after review and confirmation that their vendors were paid. Additionally, a five-year easement is placed on the property where the GCRA must approve any changes to the improvements, or the recipient is required to pay back a pro-rated amount.

Twenty entities expressed interest in FY24, with the following applicants approved for funding:

| Entity                            | GCRA Grant Award | Private Investment | Total Investment |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 601 Group LLC                     | \$50,000         | \$77,194           | \$127,194        |
| Beasley & Williams                | \$10,591         | \$10,591           | \$21,182         |
| Akira Wood <sup>3</sup>           | \$150,000        | \$150,000          | \$300,000        |
| DA Joyce Builders                 | \$30,000         | \$36,438           | \$66,438         |
| Sublime Tacos                     | \$30,000         | \$30,810           | \$60,810         |
| <b>Completed Total</b>            | <b>\$270,591</b> | <b>\$305,033</b>   | <b>\$575,624</b> |
| Capone's (in process)             | \$50,000         | \$50,000           | \$100,000        |
| Downloadable Studios (in process) | \$50,000         | \$50,000           | \$100,000        |
| <b>Projected Total</b>            | <b>\$370,591</b> | <b>\$405,033</b>   | <b>\$775,624</b> |

DA Joyce Builders, Sublime Tacos, Beasley & Williams LLC, and 601 Group LLC, completed their grant work during the fiscal year. In March 2025, Akira Wood continues their grant work that will at minimum have improvements in excess of \$300,000. Capones and Downloadable Studios had their grant approvals in process.

Of note, the grant work done by Sublime Tacos won a City of Gainesville beautification award.

Additionally, during this time frame the Business Improvement Grant Program was paused for new applications pending a rewrite of the Program. The amended Program was approved by City Commission in November of 2024. For the first FY2025 application cycle, the GCRA brought to the Downtown Advisory Board five Tier 2 applications and one Tier 3 application for review and provided to City Management for approval two Tier 1 applications







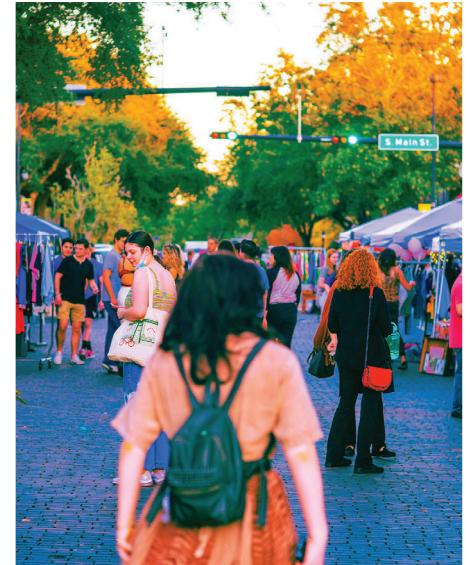
## Community Partnership Grant Program

The purpose of the Program assists local community organizations with grant funds to support arts and cultural initiatives, cultural celebration, recovery and resiliency, neighborhood improvements, and encourage economic development. The events must be free and open to the public.

The Program this year was changed from a biannual review process to a quarterly review process. This was done to allow more flexibility for grant applicants with their submittals.

The Program approved grants for twelve applications in FY 2024. Due to the cycle of the Program being out of sync with the City's fiscal year overlaps of approved events can occur. In FY 2024 two events that were approved in FY 2023 occurred in FY 2024 and two events approved in FY 2024 will be held in FY 2025.

A total of five events were held in FY 2024, with a total of \$17,800 invested in the community. The events that were held were the Flying Pig Parade, Pride Community of Center of North Central Florida, Greater Duval Neighborhood's Seniors on the Move, the 44th Annual 5th Avenue Arts Festival, and Dion Dia Records Road to Ill: Battle of the Bands. The events were held at and around Bo Diddley Plaza, in the Greater Duval Neighborhood, and at the Streatery in front of How Bazar.





## District Wide Landscape Maintenance

The GCRA maintains a number of city-owned properties to alleviate blight within its boundary. All landscape maintenance is provided by small, local, and diverse businesses. The Governor of Florida signed HB-1645 on July 1, 2023, which put in place a GRU Authority that takes the place of the City Commission. The GRU Authority have claimed ownership/control of the Power District properties and as such the GCRA is no longer maintaining the landscaping there. Additionally, the GCRA is no longer maintaining landscaping at the Catalyst Building after Gainesville Fire Rescue moved into the building.

| Alachua County<br>Parcel Identification         | Street Address   | Descriptor          |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 13912-000-000                                   | 1018 NW 5th Avenue   | Vacant Lot          |
| 14479-000-000                                   | 414 NW 5th Avenue  | Vacant Lot          |
| 13748-001-000                                   | 810 NW 3rd Avenue  | Vacant Lot          |
| 11740-000-000                                   | 1490 SE Hawthorne Road   | Eastside Gateway    |
| 12907-000-000                                   | Southwest Corner of SW 5th Avenue & SW 4th Street                        | Streetscape Corner  |
| 13369-000-000                                   | Southeast Corner of SW 7th Avenue & SW 5th Terrace                       | Streetscape Corner  |
| 13008-000-000                                   | Northwest Corner of SW 5th Avenue & Main Street                          | Porters Gateway     |
|   | South Main Street: Between Depot Avenue and South 16th Avenue (.75miles) | Streetscape         |
| 11340, 11340-1, 11340-1-2, 11340-1-3, 11340-1-4 | 2153 SE Hawthorne Road   | Cornerstone         |
| 16102-010-000                                   | 1717 SE 8th Ave  | Heartwood Community |



## Model Block and Attainable Housing Initiatives

In 2021 and 2022, GCRA staff developed a framework for the potential development of property in Porters Quarters neighborhood located at 405 SW 5th Avenue. The framework, called the “Building Blocks Plan”, was developed through a series of community engagement events, interviews, and surveys. The Building Blocks plan was presented to the GCRA Advisory Board at its February 21, 2023, meeting. The Board directed staff to seek more input from the Porters Quarters community and to develop a more concrete plan.

Community voices predominantly expressed a desire for single-family homes, in harmony with the neighborhood’s character, catering to both past and current residents. To address housing shortages and prevent gentrification, the GCRA enlisted DAG Architects for a two-phase approach (Design and Construction Documents), focusing on 1-2 unit developments on approximately 1/3-acre lots in both neighborhoods. DAG’s evaluation will consider setback requirements, site features, and community feedback, with the GCRA budget influencing the scale. The initiative aims to seamlessly integrate residential units, enhancing natural, historical, and economic characteristics while respecting the neighborhood’s unique context.

The GCRA held three community engagements in FY 2024 to determine direction and develop an agreement from the community for home design(s) for the infill lot in Porters Quarters. GCRA expects the project to begin in mid-2025 after final community engagement efforts with the neighborhood. The goal is to have the project complete by mid-2026.

## Porters Quarters Neighborhood Improvements

The GCRA as well as its predecessor organization the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency has been investing in the Porter’s Neighborhood since at least 2016. Below is a list of projects partially or fully funded by the GCRA.

- SW 3rd Street – Construction of 1,500 linear feet of sidewalks, decorative paving, utility upgrades, and lighting (2016)
- SW 5th Avenue – Construction of 1,900 linear feet of sidewalk, two gateway features, and landscaping (2016)
- SW 6th Street – Re-striping to add additional parking, safety crossing, and bike lanes
- Added trail connectors to 6th Street trail
- SW 4th Avenue – Re-striping to add parking to address neighborhood concerns regarding the 4th Avenue food park
- Depot Avenue and Depot Trail improvements
- SW 3rd Street – Sidewalk and crossing enhancements
- Lynch Park improvements





As part of the “Ten Year Reinvestment Plan”, the GCRA has budgeted nearly \$600,000 for neighborhood improvements in the Porters Neighborhood that could potentially improve infrastructure, aesthetic conditions and safety. Infrastructure projects include sidewalks, stormwater, improvements and curb and gutter. Aesthetic conditions or beautification projects include fencing and landscaping. Safety improvements include lighting, traffic calming (speed tables) and crossing/ accessibility enhancements such as ramps meeting the requirements of the American Disability Act.

To prioritize projects, GCRA conducted a survey in the Porters Quarters neighborhood. The survey was undertaken at three engagements, between 6/26/24 and 7/20/24. The goal of the survey was to receive feedback and had three components, which were:

1. To prioritize 5 possible neighborhood improvements previously identified by the community
  - a. Lighting Enhancement
  - b. Fence Replacement
  - c. Pink House Redesign<sup>4</sup>
  - d. Speed Feedback Signs
  - e. Raised Intersection
2. Discuss ideas for a city-owned infill lot
3. Learn about Community Land Trusts and their potential to benefit and improve neighborhoods.

|  |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Porters Quarters Neighborhood Improvements Poll Results</b></p> <p>The Porters Quarters community ranked these suggestions for neighborhood improvements during meetings held on June 26, August 13, and August 20, 2024.</p> <p>\$598,903.00 in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds are available. They can only be used for infrastructure, beautification, and safety enhancements.</p> <p>Scale<br/>1 = most wanted<br/>5 = least wanted</p> <p><span style="color: green;">■</span> In Progress<br/><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Requires Further Action</p> | <p><b>A. Fence Replacement</b><br/>Quantity: 1 fence<br/>Choose from 3 options</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b><br/>Enhanced safety and beautification</p> <p><b>Proposed Location:</b><br/>Along Depot Avenue, from SW 3rd Street to SW 2nd Street<br/>Along SW 2nd Street, from Depot Avenue to current site</p> <p>a. Black Aluminum: \$36,000.00</p>  | <p><b>B. Lighting Enhancement</b><br/>Quantity: 2<br/>Cost: \$45,000.00</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b><br/>Enhanced safety</p> <p><b>Proposed Location:</b><br/>SW 2nd Street</p>  | <p><b>C. Raised Intersection</b><br/>Quantity: 1<br/>Cost: \$325,000.00</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b><br/>Traffic calming and enhanced pedestrian crossing</p> <p><b>Proposed Location:</b><br/>The intersection of SW 3rd Street and SW 5th Avenue</p>  | <p><b>D. Speed Feedback Signs</b><br/>Quantity: 2<br/>Cost: \$48,000.00</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b><br/>Traffic calming and enhanced driver awareness</p> <p><b>Proposed Location:</b><br/>SW 5th Avenue - eastbound at the 500 block between SW 5th Terrace and SW 5th Street<br/>westbound at the 600 block between SW 2nd Street and SW 5th Street</p>  | <p><b>E. The Pink House Redesign</b><br/>Quantity: 1<br/>Cost: \$496,288.00</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b><br/>Enhanced safety and beautification</p> <p><b>Proposed Location:</b><br/>225 SW 5th Avenue<br/>Complete renovation of building to use as a new community center</p>  |
|  | 2  | 1  | 5  | 4  | 3   |



City staff discussed each of these options and allowed the community to ask questions. The community members were then asked to prioritize these options using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important, and 5 being the least important.

The engagements were held at two locations. The first was held at the Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center (with transportation provided to and from the event from the Porters Community Center). The second and third were held at the Porters Community Center.

The \$598,903 Tax Increment funding for these projects can only be used for infrastructure, beautification, and safety enhancements.

# End of the Fiscal Year Balance Sheet

| <b>BALANCE SHEET</b>                            | <b>Eastside</b> | <b>Fifth Avenue<br/>Pleasant Street</b> | <b>Downtown</b>    | <b>College Park<br/>University Heights</b> | <b>GCRA Fund</b>    | <b>Total</b>           |
|---|-----------------|---|--------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------|
| Total Assets                                    | \$59,102        | \$299,090                               | \$1,777,534        | \$4,458,232                                | \$23,186,956        | <b>\$29,780,914.00</b> |
| Total Liabilities                               | \$0             | \$0                                     | \$1,200            | \$0  | \$648,177           | <b>\$649,377.00</b>    |
| Total Fund Balance                              | \$59,102        | \$299,090                               | \$1,776,334        | \$4,458,232                                | \$22,538,779        | <b>\$29,131,537.00</b> |
| <b>Total Liabilities &amp;<br/>Fund Balance</b> | <b>\$59,102</b> | <b>\$299,090</b>                        | <b>\$1,777,534</b> | <b>\$4,458,232</b>                         | <b>\$23,186,956</b> | <b>\$29,780,914.00</b> |

Note: Any balance in the CRA funds must be expended within the former CRA's geographic boundaries

## Special Thanks

### **FY 2024 GCRA Advisory Board**

Richard Allen  
Angelica Arbelaez  
Amanda Demaria  
Heather Kates  
Joakim "Jay" Nordqvist  
Davonda Brown

Retired members are below:

Nicholas Hill  
Michelle Calhoun  
Sarah Erekson

### **FY 2024 Gainesville City Commission**

Harvey L. Ward, Mayor  
Desmon Duncan-Walker, Mayor-Pro Tempore, District I  
Commissioner  
Ed Book, District II  
Casey Willits, District III  
Bryan Eastman, District IV  
Reina Saco, At-Large Seat A  
Cynthia Moore Chestnut, At-Large Seat B

### **Alachua Board of County Commissioners**

Anna Prizzia, Chair, District 1  
Marihelen Wheeler, District 2  
Mary Alford, Vice-Chair, District 3  
Ken Cornell, Chair, District 4  
Charles S. Chestnut, IV, District 5

# Final Amended FY24 Budget

| <b>Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area Fund 1132 (Interlocal) Amended Budget as of August 15, 2024</b> |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>Sources:</b>  |                        |
| Interfund Transfer Revenue   | \$3,325,658.00         |
| Intergovernmental Revenue  | \$3,791,460.00         |
| Charges for Services   | \$185,099.44           |
| Use of Fund Balance  | \$18,414,898.23        |
| <b>Total Sources</b>   | <b>\$25,717,115.67</b> |
| <b>Uses:</b>   |                        |
| City Attorney  | \$91,540.01            |
| City Manager   | \$36,009.15            |
| Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area  | \$1,762,652.19         |
| Housing & Community Development  | \$49,604.90            |
| GCRA Cornerstone   | \$403,695.03           |
| GCRA Heartwood   | \$1,937,878.71         |
| Community Partnership Grants   | \$77,000.00            |
| Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan  | \$5,728,922.48         |
| Eastside Food Mobility Hub   | \$4,853,804.76         |
| Economic Development 8th & Waldo   | \$2,750,341.51         |
| GCRA Historic Heritage Trail   | \$2,113,937.16         |
| GCRA Porter Neighborhood Improvements  | \$149,829.10           |
| GTEC Capital Improvements  | \$4,357,695.92         |
| Heirs Program  | \$210,000.00           |
| Model Block & Attainable Housing Strategies  | \$654,292.26           |
| My Neighborhood Grant Program  | \$153,244.32           |
| Neighborhood Paint Program   | \$257,838.39           |
| Residential Improvement Programs   | \$48,904.68            |
| SE Hawthorne Road Corridor Improvements  | \$4,491.00             |
| University Avenue Corridor Improvements  | \$4,491.35             |
| Non-Departmental   | \$70,944.64            |
| Planned Use of Fund Balance  | -\$1.89                |
| <b>Total Uses</b>  | <b>\$25,717,115.67</b> |

# GCRA in the Community

The GCRA collaborated on, hosted, attended, and/or sponsored a number of community events throughout the year the below are a sample of some of the events the GCRA took part in.

- Fifth Ave Community Meetings (2nd Tuesday Monthly)
- Duval Community Meetings (3rd Monday Monthly)
- Heartwood Open House (11/11/2023)
- Heirs Property Program Workshop #2 (11/9/2023)
- First Missionary Baptist Church Health Fair (11/18/2023)
- Alachua County Property Appraiser Probate Summit (2/8/2024)
- Heirs Property Program Workshop #3 (3/7/2024)
- Heirs Property Program Workshop #4 (3/14/2024)
- Heritage Trail Engagement (6/5/2024)
- Porters Quarters Engagement Event (Cotton Club Museum) 6/26/2024
  - Follow-up engagement (08/13/2024)
  - Follow-up engagement (08/20/2024)
- Urgent Care Clinic Grand Opening (7/27/2024)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The site includes approximately 7 acres of roadways and right of way. page 5

<sup>2</sup> The entirety of the goals can be found here <https://www.gainesvillefl.gov/files/assets/public/v/2/sustainable-development/documents/downtownstrategicplan-approved2022.pdf> page 7

<sup>3</sup> Akira Wood has not completed as of end of fiscal year. To receive the \$150,000 from the GCRA they must at minimum have \$300,000 total of expenses paid. page 18

<sup>4</sup> The Pink House is located at 225 SW 5th Avenue, Gainesville, Florida and is zoned Multi-family medium density residential page 23

## Notes



**Prepared by**

City of Gainesville  
Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area  
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Gainesville, FL 32641