



Gainesville's Bold Vision: Strategic Investment for Transformational Results



**Angela Sheppard
Deputy City Manager**



GAINESVILLE

— EST. 1821 —



Chartered in 1821



47.7K people in Gainesville



150,000 daytime population



Lake Lanier 12M annual visitors



Hub of Northeast Georgia



Bankrate, Housing Heat Index

The South's Best Cities On The Rise 2024



- Hottest Metro Areas 2023**
1. Gainesville, GA
 2. Knoxville, TN
 3. Cape Coral – Fort Myers, FL
 4. North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL
 5. Charlotte, NC

- Coldest Metro Areas 2023**
1. Pittsburgh, PA
 2. Cedar Rapids, IA
 3. Medford, OR
 4. Shreveport-Bossier City, LA
 5. Chico, CA

17. Gainesville, Georgia



Credit: City of Gainesville

While [Gainesville](#) has long been Georgia's favorite resort destination, Lake Lanier is just one of its many draws. The lake's sprawling footprint continues to welcome visitors and new residents alike, who seek fun in the sun and plenty of aquatic recreation along its 38,000 acres. Plus, there's a boutique-filled downtown district and a spate of new restaurants that have opened up over the last few years.

Its population growth should come as no surprise: Zillow named Atlanta one of its 10 hottest housing markets for 2023, and according to Bankrate's recent Housing Heat Index, Gainesville, Georgia is the hottest metro area in the entire country.



Raleigh, NC and Gainesville, GA Top Milken Institute's 2025 Annual Rank of Best-Performing Cities



January 14, 2025 (Los Angeles, CA)--Raleigh, NC is the best-performing large metropolitan area, according to the 2025 Milken Institute Best-Performing Cities (BPC) report, taking the top spot in the rankings following two consecutive years of ranking among the top-three large cities. Among small cities, Gainesville, GA tops the index after being featured among the BPC's top 10 small metropolitan areas every year since 2016. These cities' rankings were fostered by strong job and wage growth and a robust high-tech presence.

The index, published annually since 1999, reflects cities' effectiveness at leveraging their resources to promote economic growth and provide their residents with access to the essential services and infrastructure needed for success. The index is based on job creation, wage growth, and the high-tech sector's output growth, in addition to measures of access to economic opportunities, such as housing affordability and broadband coverage.

Small US Cities: Tier I

Gainesville, GA
St. George, UT
Idaho Falls, ID
Bend-Redmond, OR
Midland, TX
Jefferson City, MO
Coeur d'Alene, ID
Jacksonville, NC
Missoula, MT
Auburn-Opelika, AL
The Villages, FL
Winchester, VA-WV
Elizabethtown-Fort Knox, KY
Wenatchee, WA
Lawrence, KS

Development of Excellence in the Public Realm – The City of Gainesville’s Midland Greenway and TAD

Owner: City of Gainesville

Developer: Norhaven Partners; Terwilliger Pappas

Architect: Dynamik Design

General Contractor: Fortune Johnson and Summit Contracting Group

The Midland Greenway in Gainesville is a transformational urban revitalization effort to create a walkable greenway on a 300-acre former CSX rail corridor in downtown. Spearheaded by the City’s investment in master planning, creation of Gainesville’s first Tax Allocation District, land acquisition and infrastructure delivery, it has paved the way for over \$175 million in adjacent private development. Though it’s already resulted in a thriving neighborhood with trails, green space, thousands of square feet of commercial space, and over 600 new residential units, Gainesville continues investment in Midland, adding a dog park, renovating the northernmost segment, funding stormwater management via pond systems and natural landscaping, and more.

2025 ULI ATLANTA AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

ULI Atlanta - 2025 Awards for Excellence Dinner

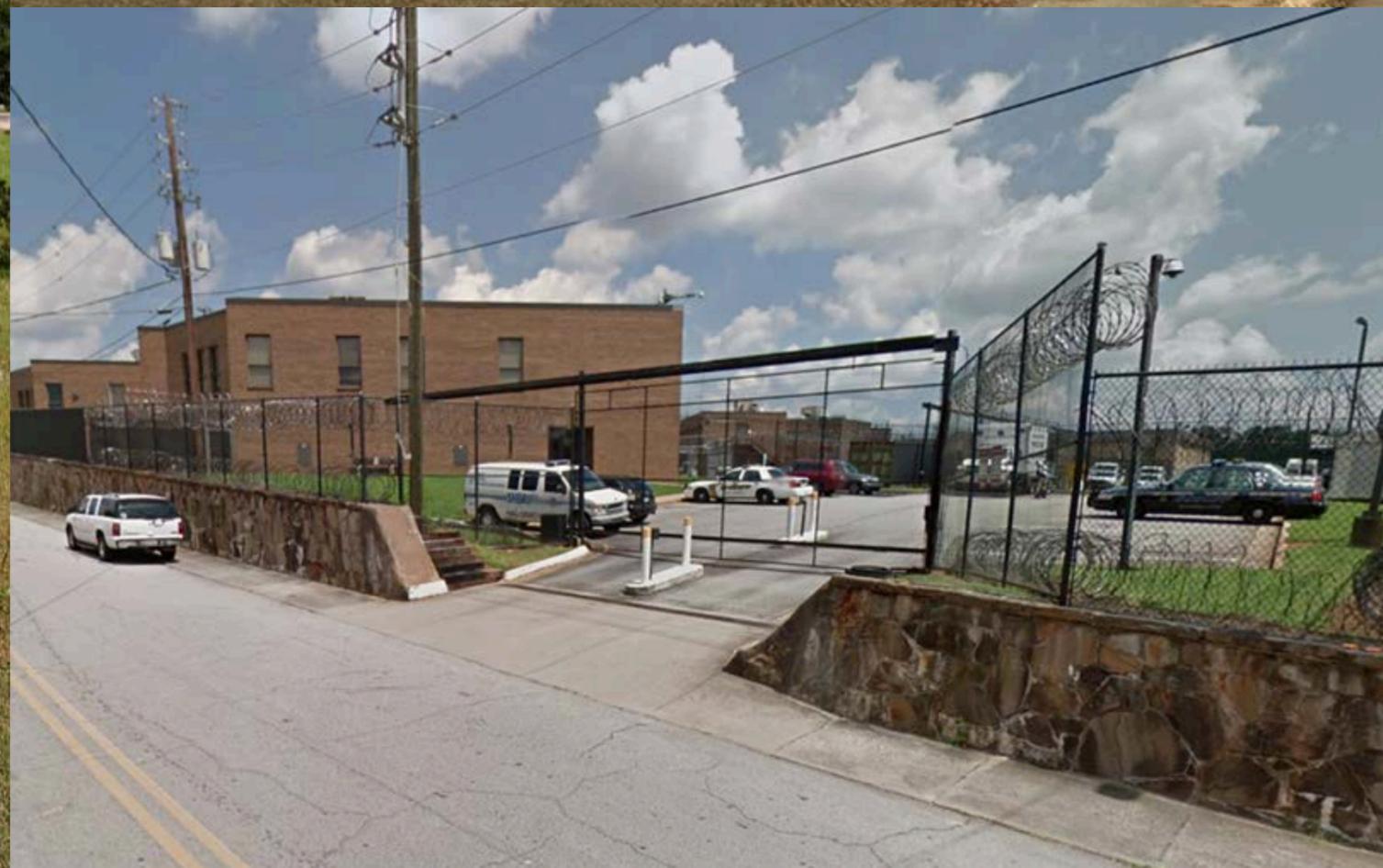




DOWNTOWN OF THE YEAR

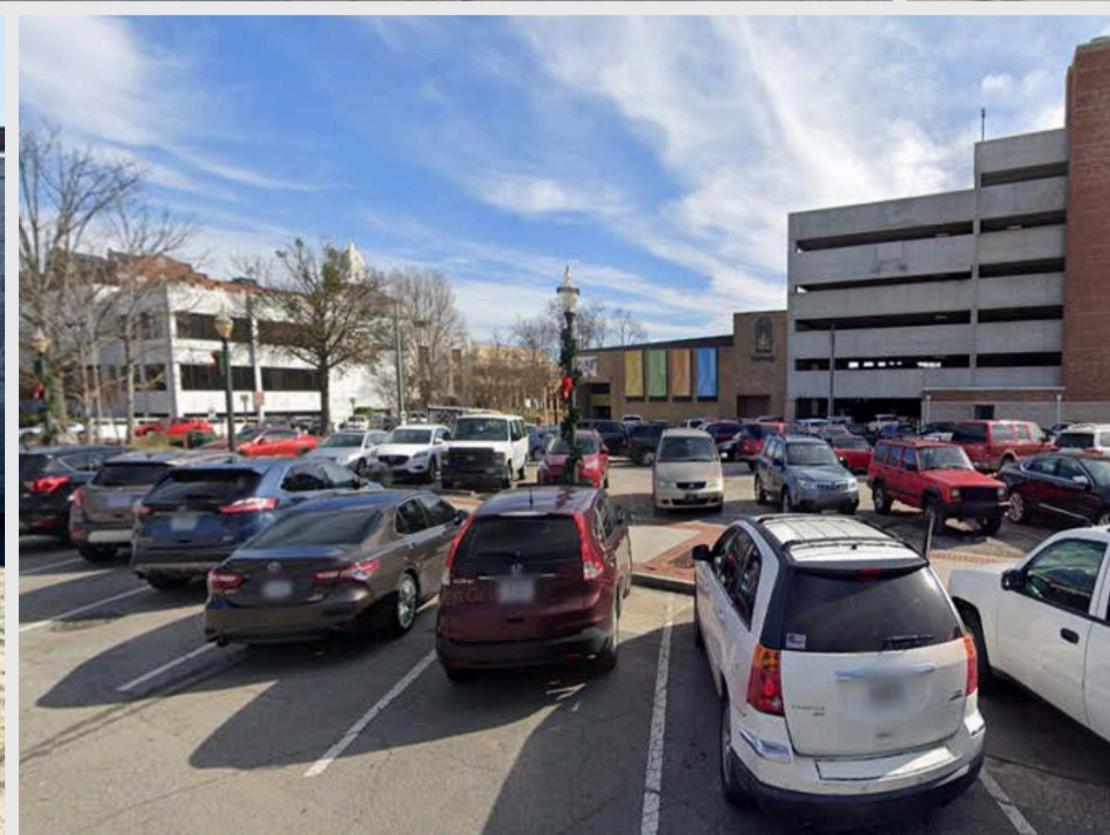
GAINESVILLE







The Old Gainesville





THE MARKET ALONE WILL NOT FIX THIS

Needed a multi-prong approach for redevelopment



Public Investments

Make Public Investments to build confidence and pave the way for private investment

Programming

Program the targeted redevelopment area to create demand and bring vitality to the Community

A Plan

A Plan to create a common vision for the future

Financial Tools

Financing mechanisms that would incentivize Private Investment

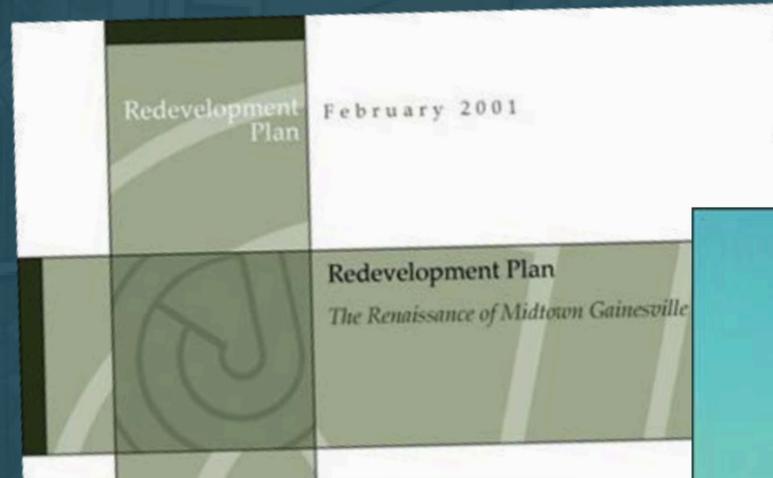
Strategic Land Acquisitions

Purchase key land within the targeted redevelopment area to keep the vision on target



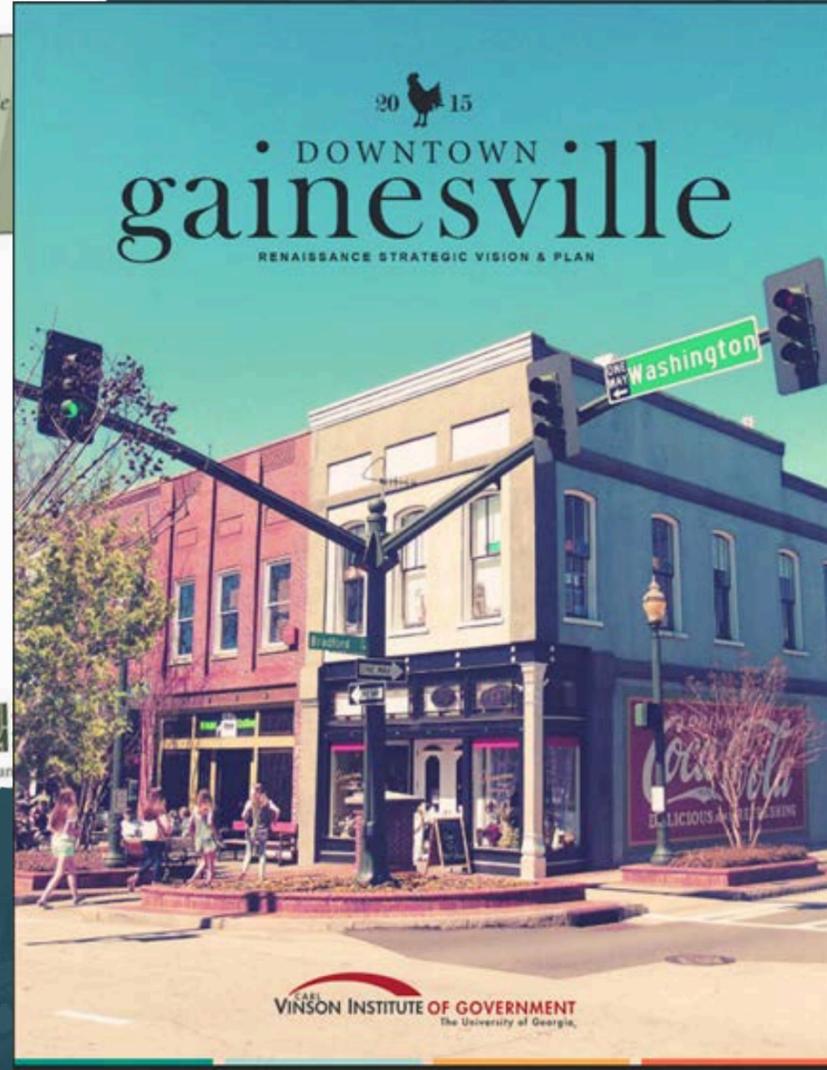
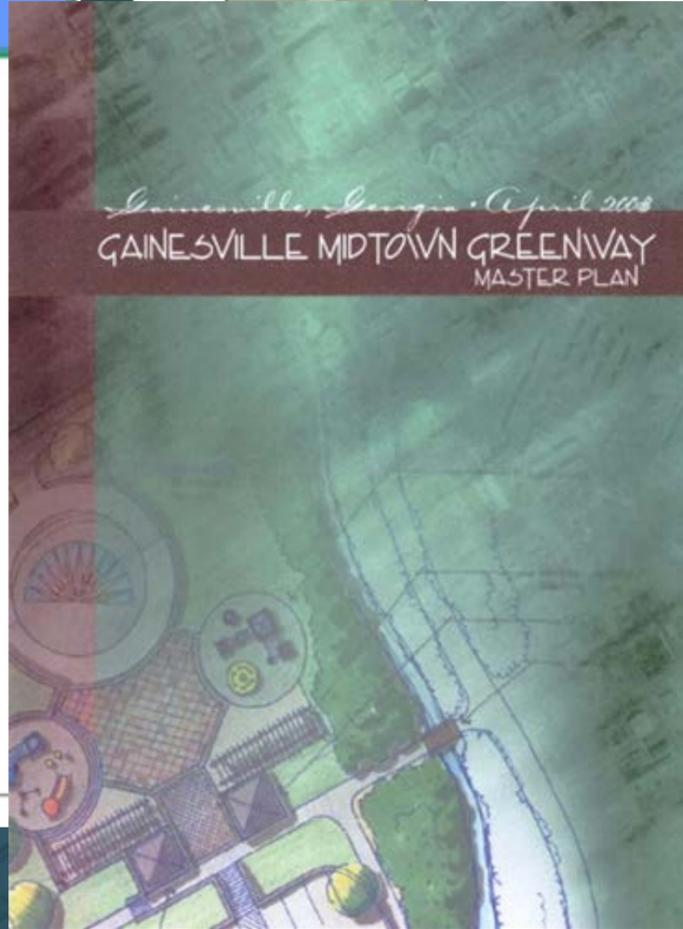
A Plan

A Plan to create a common vision for the future



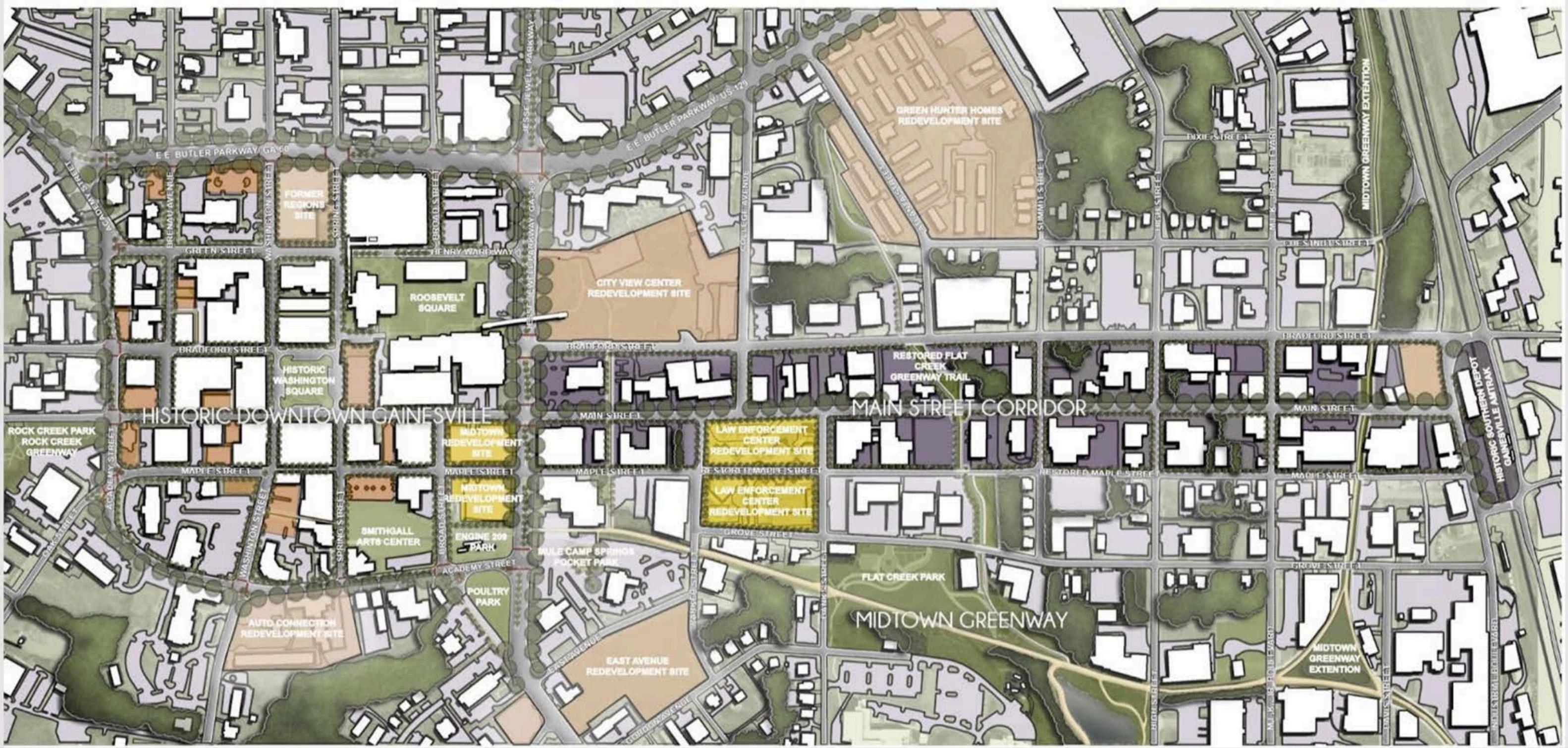
Prepared for
The City of Gainesville
The Hall County Commission
and
The Gainesville City Schools Board of Education
By
Bleakly Advisory Group
&
McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP

September 18, 2006



JUNE 7, 2022

Focus area: Downtown and Midland 2015 Downtown Gainesville Master Plan



Midland

Downtown





Financial Tools

Financing mechanisms that would incentivize Private Investment

Tax Allocation District

A financial tool where future tax growth in a district is used to fund improvements in the area today.

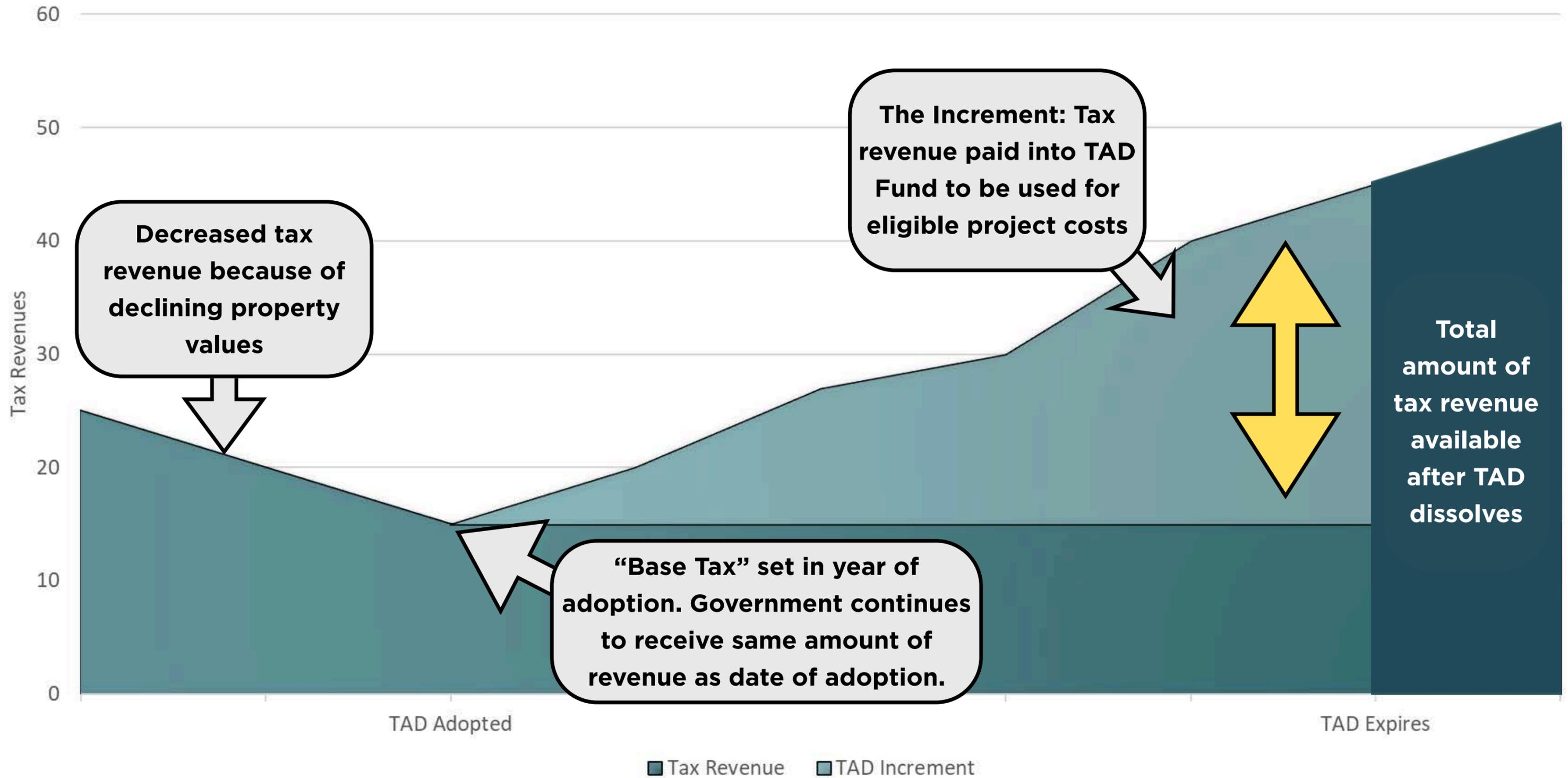
Provides gap financing for deals that otherwise wouldn't work

Reduced risk for private developers

Local government is a partner and can mold the development to fit their vision

Funds can be used to enhance a project or for public purposes

Tax Allocation Districts : How They Work





Midtown TAD

Created 2006

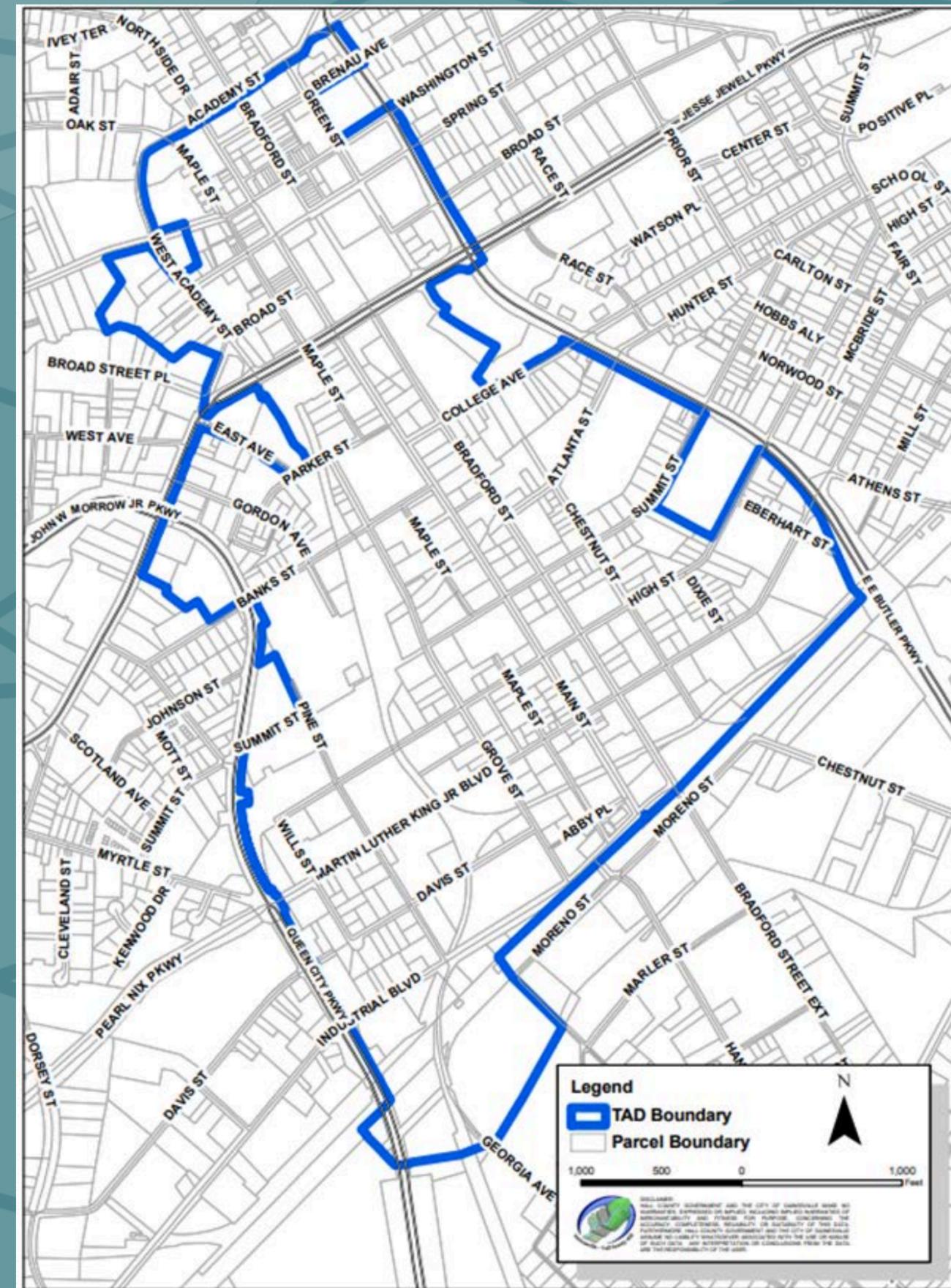
The Midtown TAD covers both the Downtown and Midtown areas of Gainesville that are targeted for redevelopment. The TAD was adopted in accordance with State Law. IGA's were signed with the School System and Hall County in 2007 to secure their participation.

Size & Value

- 250 Acres
- 528 Parcels
- Certified Tax Base \$85M

Participants

- City of Gainesville
- Gainesville School System
- Hall County





MIDTOWN TAD STATS



**30
Projects**

First TAD project approved in 2009. A total of 31 projects have been approved to date



\$46.7M

Total amount of TAD funding approved and committed to projects



**\$17,500 -
\$13.2M**

The range of amounts awarded per project



\$291M

Total estimated private investment of approved projects



\$85M

Base Taxable Value of the district when the TAD was established in 2006



\$473M

Taxable Value of the district in 2025





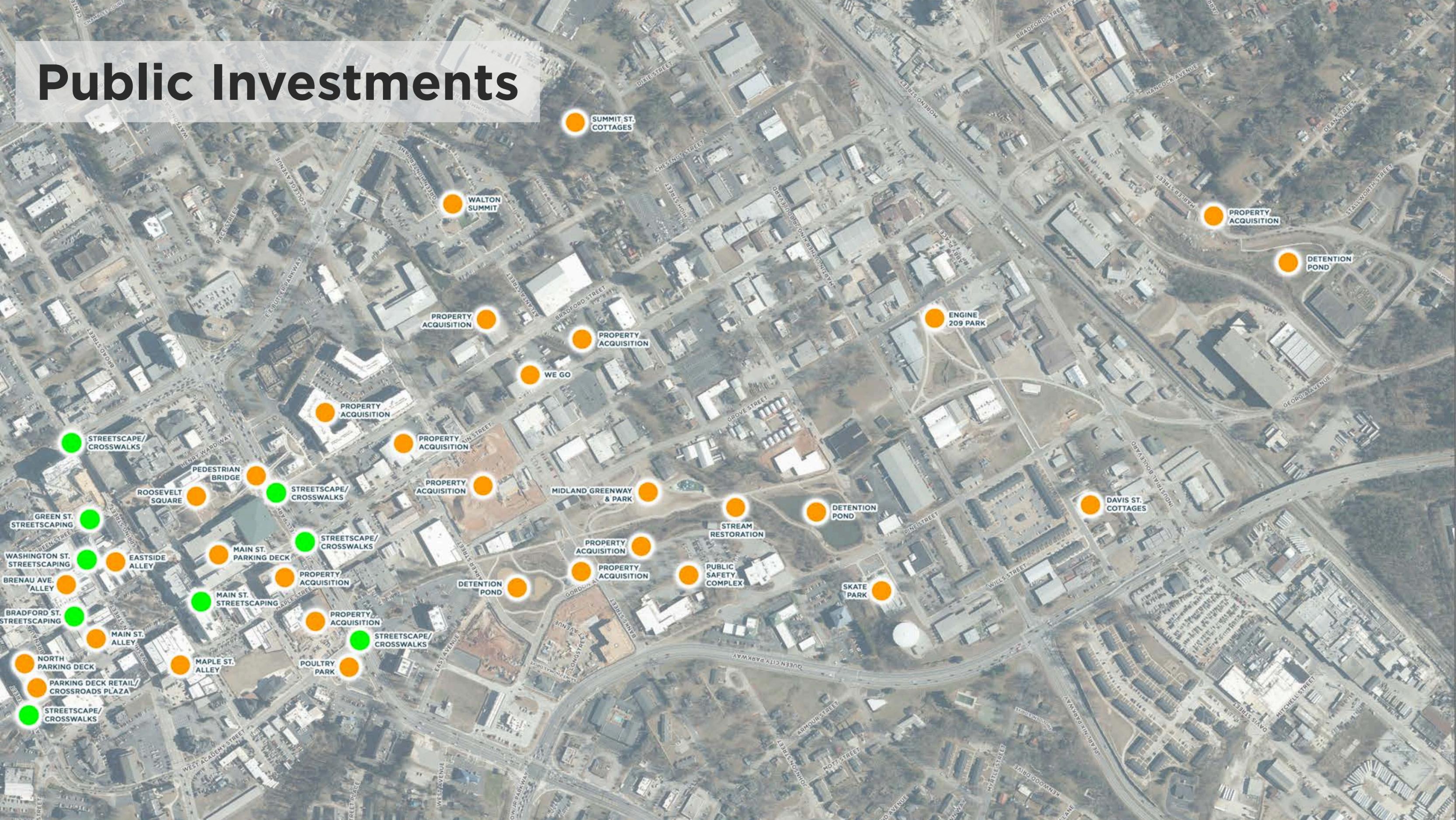
Public Investments

Make Public Investments to build confidence and pave the way for private investment



GAINESVILLE

Public Investments



SUMMIT ST. COTTAGES

WALTON SUMMIT

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

DETENTION POND

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

ENGINE 209 PARK

WE GO

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

STREETSCAPE/CROSSWALKS

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

MIDLAND GREENWAY & PARK

DETENTION POND

DAVIS ST. COTTAGES

GREEN ST. STREETSCAPING

ROOSEVELT SQUARE

STREETSCAPE/CROSSWALKS

STREAM RESTORATION

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

SKATE PARK

WASHINGTON ST. STREETSCAPING

EASTSIDE ALLEY

MAIN ST. PARKING DECK

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

DETENTION POND

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

BRENAU AVE. ALLEY

MAIN ST. STREETSCAPING

PROPERTY ACQUISITION

STREETSCAPE/CROSSWALKS

BRADFORD ST. STREETSCAPING

MAIN ST. ALLEY

MAPLE ST. ALLEY

POULTRY PARK

NORTH PARKING DECK

PARKING DECK RETAIL/CROSSROADS PLAZA

STREETSCAPE/CROSSWALKS

STREETSCAPE/CROSSWALKS



Midland Greenway



**Purchase 0.7
mile segment
of rail line to
build park and
greenway**

**Took 5 years to
convince the
RR to abandon
the active line**

**Located within
the heart of the
targeted
redevelopment
area and was
catalyst for
change**

**Phase One
opened 2012
and Phase Two
opened 2021**





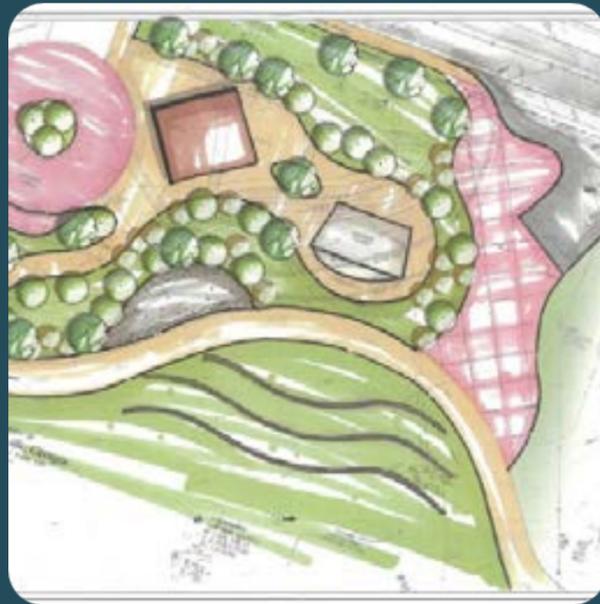






Midland Greenway & Area Improvements

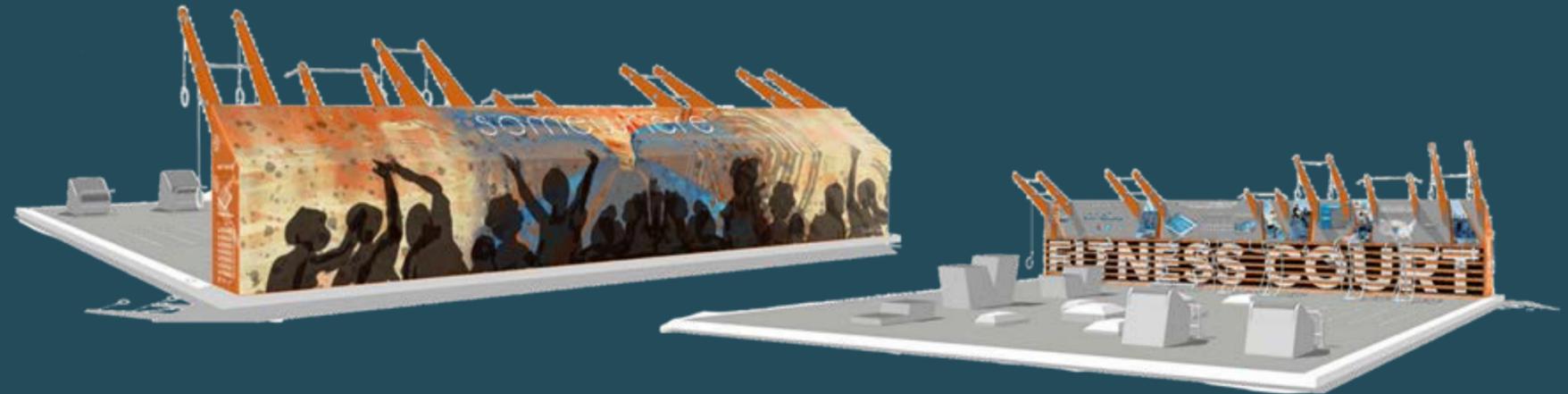
Ampitheatre



Inclusive Playground



Fitness Court



MIDLAND GREENWAY





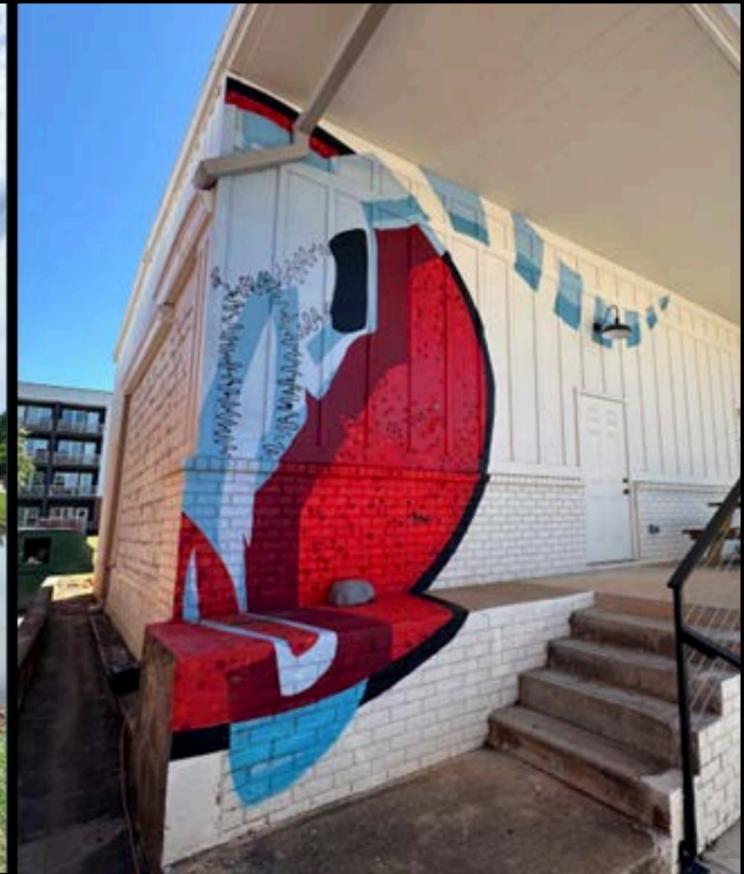
FOR LEASE
NORTON
770.297.4800
CHARLIE HAWKINS
678.614.0837
WILL COBB
770.654.7791











Google

11/24/2025

GAINESVILLE JUSTICE CENTER





GAINESVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

1



Downtown Placemaking

Streetscaped
to widen
sidewalks, add
landscaping &
lighting

Built parking
deck on north
end of
downtown to
foster growth

Closed
underutilized
street and
converted to
public plaza
with
restaurants

Infused public
art in
unexpected
places to
encourage
visitors to
explore





Streetscaping





Streetscaping





CONSTITUTION

re-cess

YELLOW TIP

ROLLIE

112



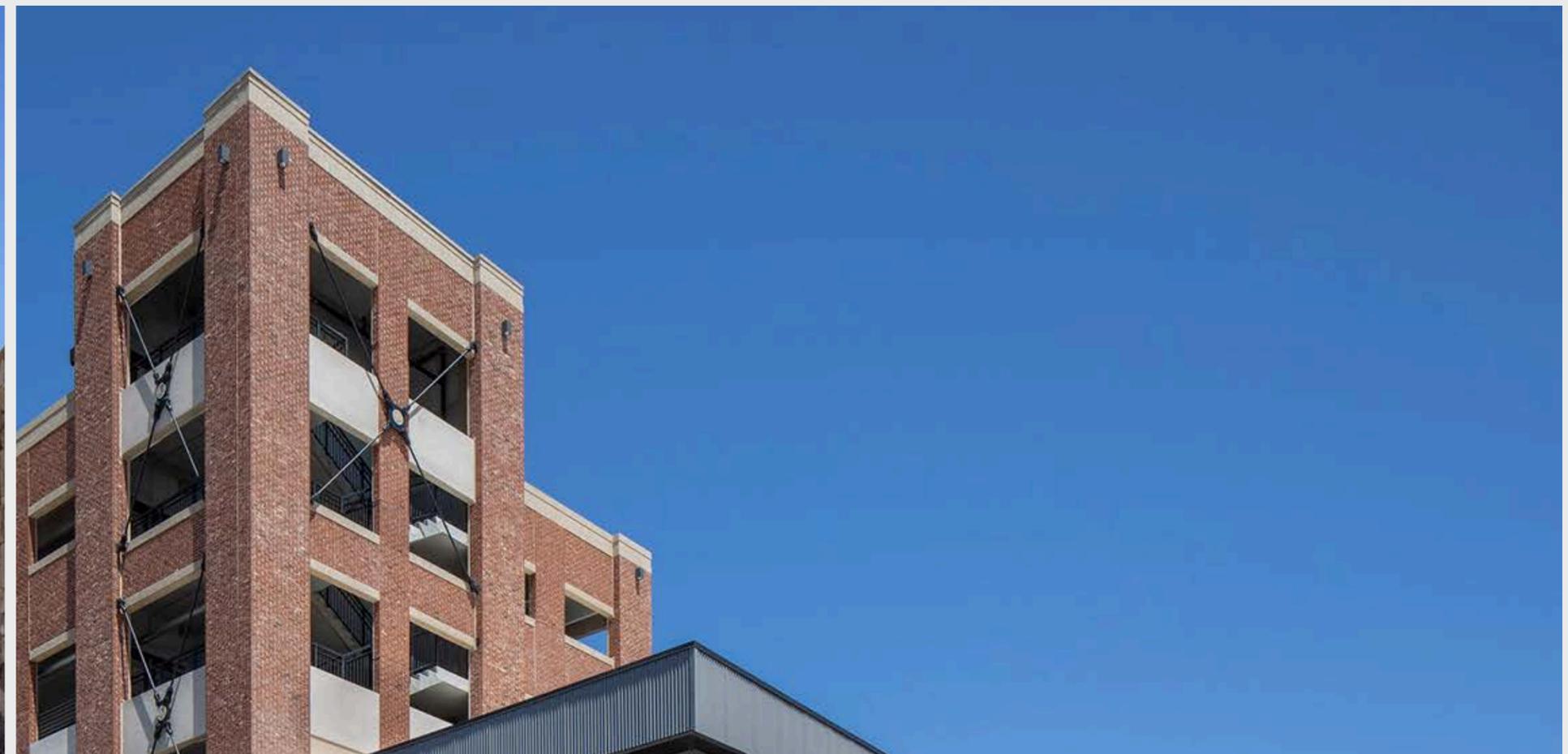
Brenau Avenue

TUNER
WALL & BIRTH
INSURANCE



PARKING

PARKING





Downtown & Midland Connection + Placemaking





DOVEY GREENWAY







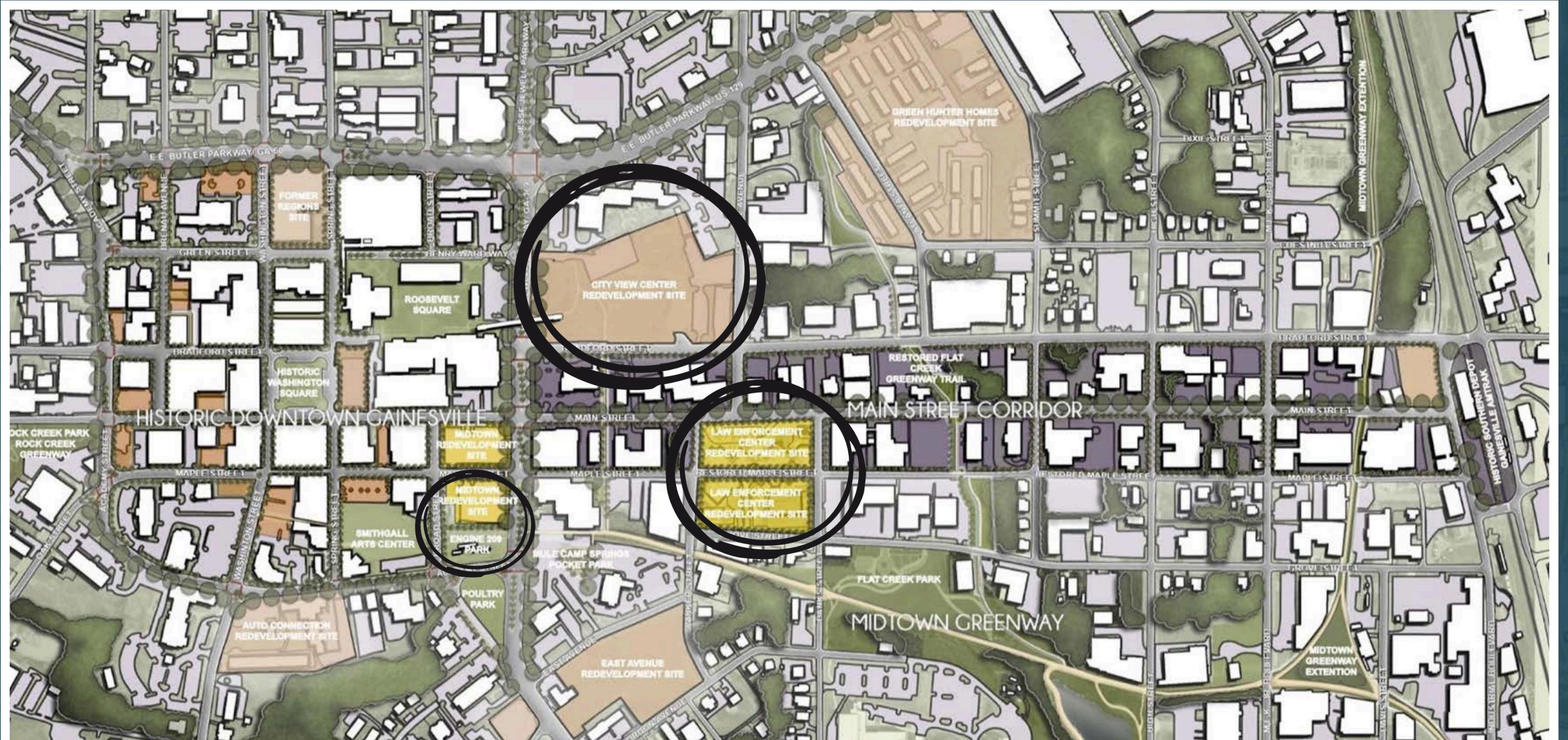


Strategic Land Acquisitions

Purchase key land within the targeted redevelopment area to keep the vision on target



Strategic Land Acquisitions







BOOT
BARN Hall
AT BOURBON BROTHERS

BOOT
BARN Hall
AT BOURBON BROTHERS

BOOT
BARN Hall

BOURBON BROTHERS



BOURBON BROTHERS
← SMOKEHOUSE & TAVERN →







The Jail Site

4 Acre Tract



City
purchased
from Hall
County in
2012 for
\$7.2M

Was to be
sold to private
company to
house
immigration
detainees

Leased to
private
company for a
period to cover
debt

Demolished
in 2017 when
no adaptive
reuse could
be
determined







Bridge to Nowhere

6.8 Acre Tract



Zoned in 2008 for Hotel and Offices. Became victim of Great Recession

City purchased property in 2018 after years of being vacant

City issued RFP for development in 2019 to align with City vision

Paired property with Jail site and focused on housing + retail

RFP ISSUED FOR REDEVELOPMENT



RFP Issued

Established procedures, selection process and goals for the RFP prior to issuing. Established review committee and distribution list of developers.

01



Site Development Goals

Development must be unique to Gainesville and have a mixture of uses including residential and retail. Must have multi-story buildings and connectivity to greenway.

02



Selection Criteria

Developers were allowed to propose on just one site or both sites. Selection was based on meeting development goals, not price

03



Interviews & Research

Short-listed firms meeting development goals and showing financial capacity and experience to complete the development

04



Contracts & Closings

Entered into binding contracts with the selected company, Terwiliger Pappas. "Bridge to Nowhere" as Phase One and "Jail Site" as Phase Two.

05





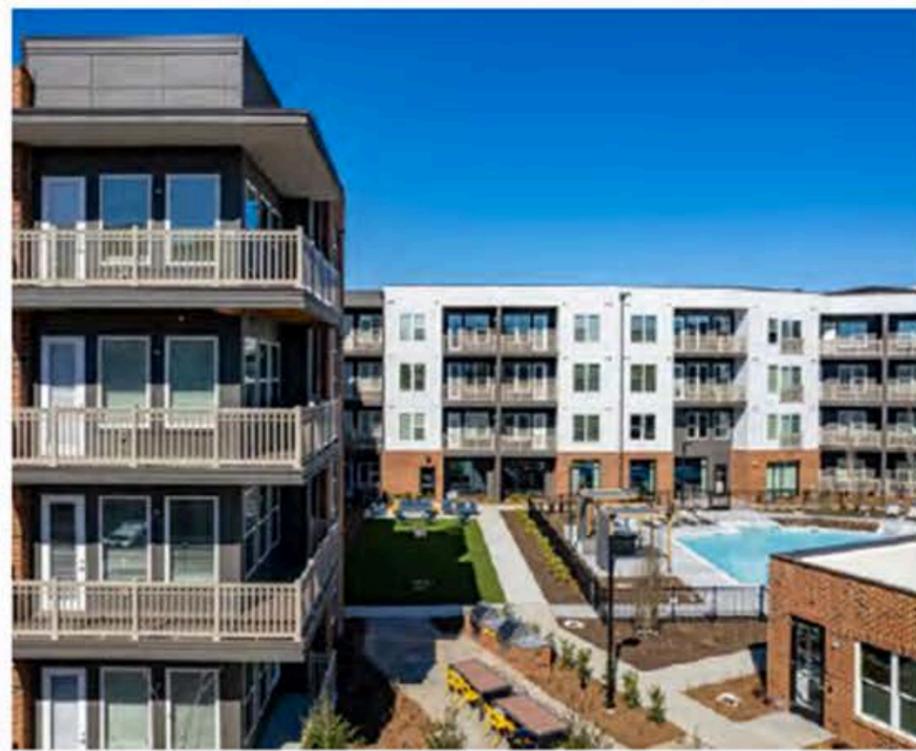
GALAXY COFFEE

bistro





THE EVERLY



DEVELOPER: Terwilliger Pappas

ARCHITECT: Dynamik Design

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Fortune Johnson

STORIES: 4

UNITS: 220

RETAIL: 10,000 SF

ACRES: 6.8

The Everly is a mixed use project created to extend the public realm of downtown Gainesville across Jesse Jewel Parkway via an existing sculptural pedestrian bridge. The project welcomes residents with the embrace of a contemporary architectural trellis that wraps a public plaza with outdoor gatherings spaces and an amphitheater. The plaza is anchored by two 2-story retail buildings, providing 10,000 SF of vibrant restaurant space, creating an active destination along the existing "Highlands to Islands" pedestrian and bike trail that runs through the site.

The four story, 220-unit residential buildings redefine apartment living in downtown Gainesville with warm exterior finishes and pedestrian friendly design that engages the street and provides an urban experience in the heart of downtown Gainesville. Upscale amenities include an, expansive clubroom, fitness, co-working space, luxury pool courtyard and pet spa.





SOLIS

GAINESVILLE

DEVELOPER: Terwilliger Pappas

ARCHITECT: Dynamik Design

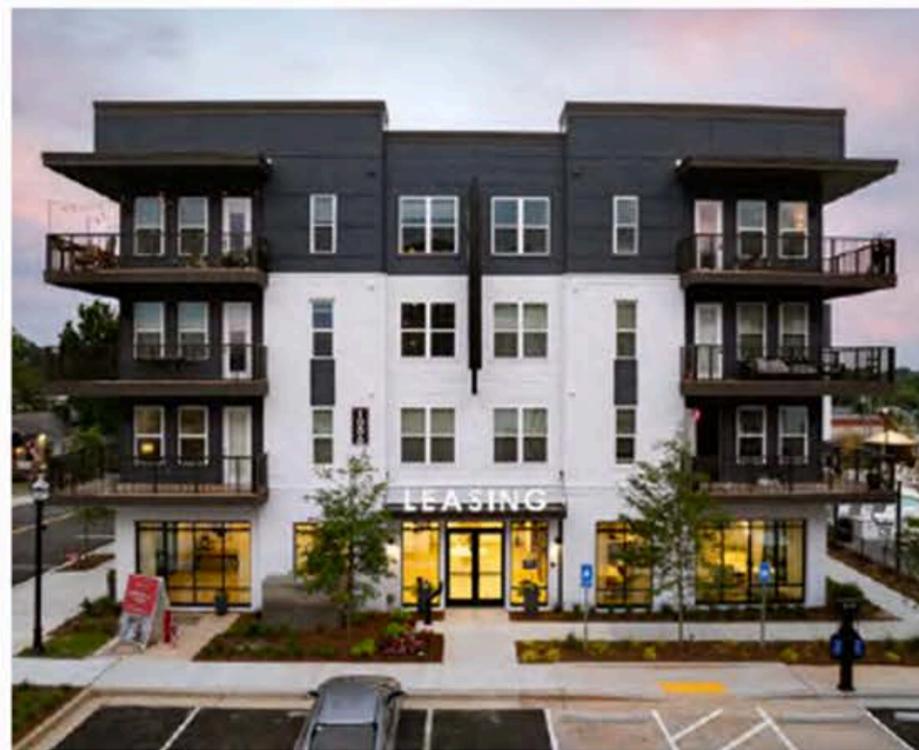
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Summit Contracting Group

STORIES: 4/5 SPLIT

UNITS: 184

ACRES: 4.1

Solis Gainesville Phase II is a multifamily project located in the heart of Gainesville, Georgia. This 184 unit project is composed of three 4/5 split residential buildings. The project features approximately 6,200 SF of indoor facilities; this includes the fitness suite, clubroom, parcel room and the leasing office. The pool and outdoor space is seamlessly tucked into the overall design of the building, making it feel like a hidden gem within the urban landscape. Additionally, 5,500 SF of ground floor is allocated for retail space. The modern inspired exterior is composed of painted white brick with board and batten mixed with cementitious paneling and features a flat roof.





Carroll Daniel Construction

130 Main Street

\$17.1 Million Investment

Redevelop vacant lot downtown for use as 64,000 sf Class A office space

\$500K for Office + \$1.5M for Expansion of Parking Deck in TAD Funding

Completed November 2023



Marriott Courtyard & The National Apartments

111 Green Street

\$71.5 Million Investment

132 room hotel, parking deck, 143 multi-family units

\$10.9M TAD Funds & Privately Funded

Completed 2023



Gainesville Renaissance Building

106 Spring Street

\$25 Million Investment

3-Story Mixed Use, Retail, Brenau University, Residential

\$3M TAD Funds & Privately Funded

Completed December 2022



Bradford Building

126 Bradford Street

\$14 Million Investment

5-Story Building, Restaurant and Office Space

\$1.87M TAD Funds & Privately Funded

Completed October 2025



Midland Apartments

1000-3000 Saint Thomas Drive SW

\$49 Million Investment

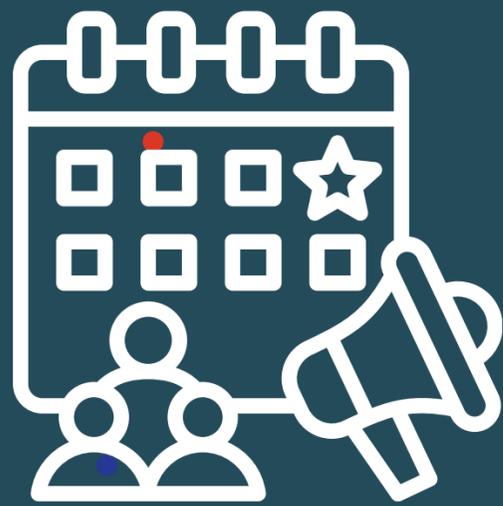
214 Units wrapping Midland park replaced dilapidated rental housing

\$5.4M TAD Funds & Privately Funded

Completed 2024







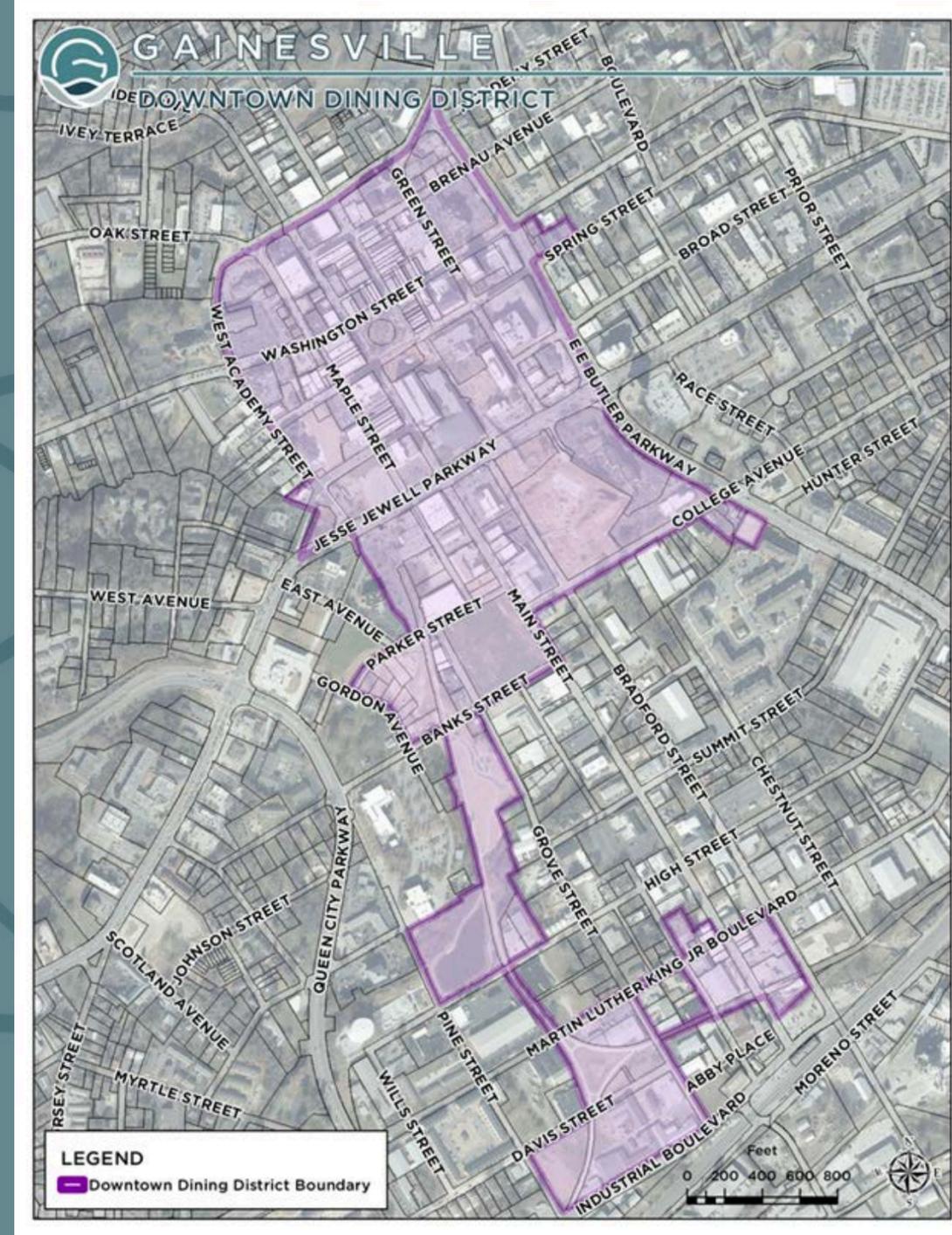
Programming

Program the targeted redevelopment area to create demand and bring vitality to the Community

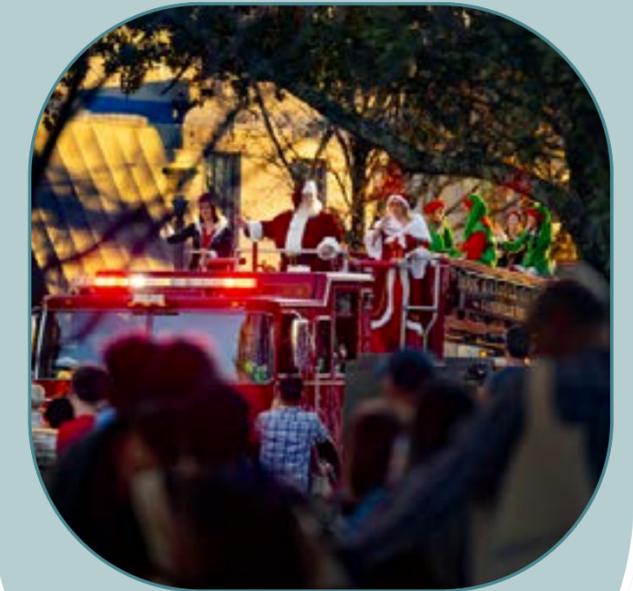


Downtown Dining District

First Implemented 2017 & Expanded 2022







CONNECTIVITY

Create connectivity with Trolleys and “Cool Buses” for our citizens. On Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the summer, the City runs a trolley route through neighborhoods to downtown and back between 5:30 - 10 p.m. During the holidays, the trolley runs a route between the Wilshire Wonderland of Lights and downtown.





2025

MEMBERSHIP

78



MEMBER
MAIN STREET MEMBERS

48



30 YEARS OF MAIN STREET SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

2,359



DOWNTOWN EVENTS

255K



EST. ATTENDANCE

39



SPONSORS

DEVELOPMENT

612



VOLUNTEER HOURS

15K



DOWNTOWN TROLLEY AND COOL BUS RIDES

39



SPONSORS

32



NET NEW BUSINESSES OPENING OR EXPANDING

110



EST. NET NEW JOBS CREATED

103



OF COMPLETED BUILDING REHAB PROJECTS

4



PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

\$27.9 MIL



TOTAL PUBLIC / PRIVATE INVESTMENT

2



AWARDED GRANTS

\$7,395



MAIN STREET MONEY SOLD

309



POLE BANNERS

21



HOUSING UNITS ADDED

11



PROPERTIES SOLD

9



OF NEW CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

\$14K



GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED

EVENTS



downtown
GAINESVILLE
MAIN STREET PROGRAM

INVESTMENT

SO HOW DID WE DO?

Public Investments

Make Public Investments to build confidence and pave the way for private investment

Programming

Program the targeted redevelopment area to create demand and bring vitality to the Community



A Plan

A Plan to create a common vision for the future

Financial Tools

Financing mechanisms that would incentivize Private Investment

Strategic Land Acquisitions

Purchase key land within the targeted redevelopment area to keep the vision on target







Tax Digest History

CITY OF GAINESVILLE CURRENT 2025 TAX DIGEST AND 5-YEAR HISTORY

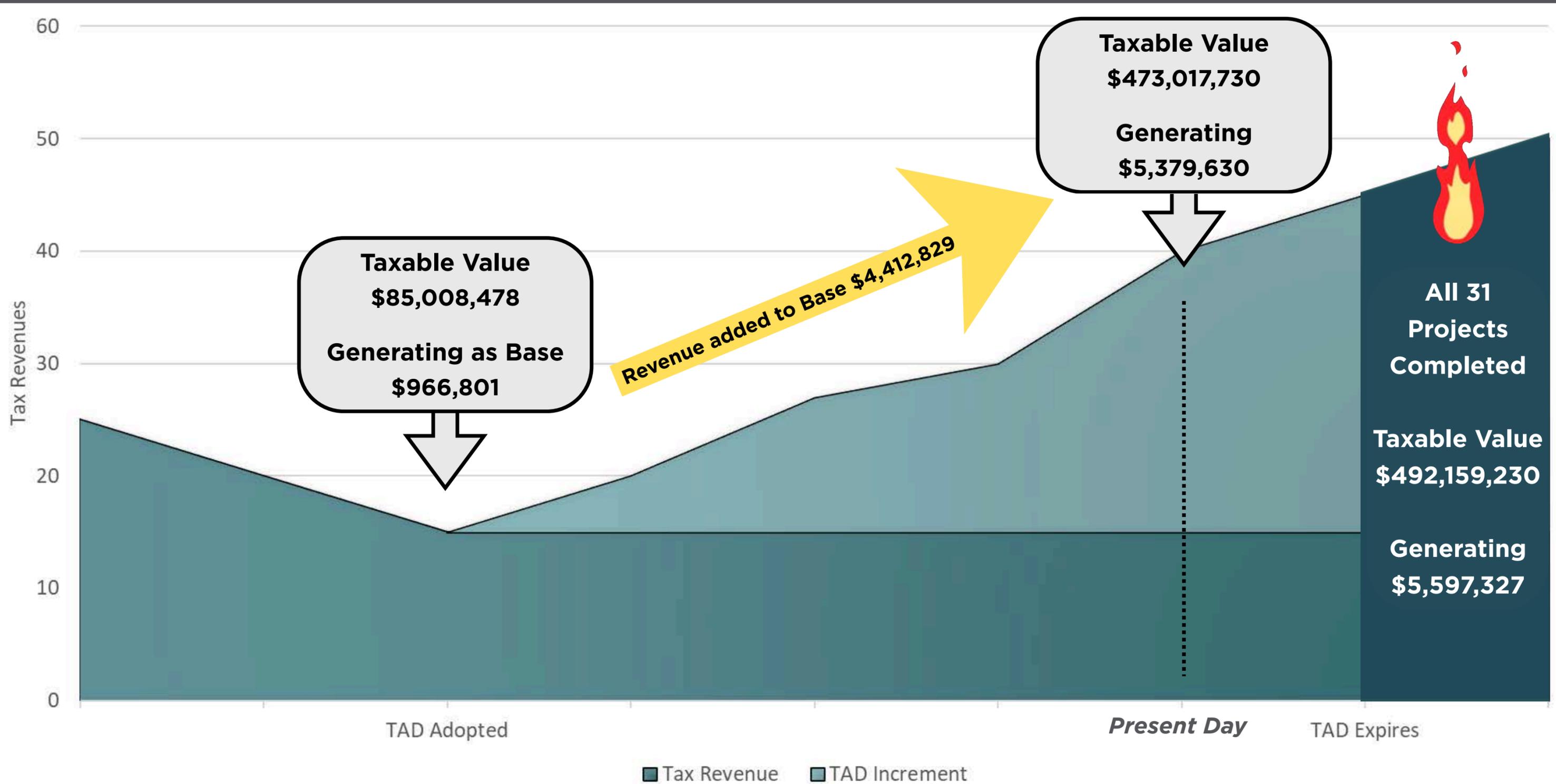
CITY OF GAINESVILLE	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Real and Personal Property	7,383,639,921	7,737,572,181	9,004,898,115	11,294,513,388	12,627,123,385	12,920,470,021
Motor Vehicles	41,339,925	32,620,625	46,115,375	47,750,650	49,387,875	43,687,125
Mobile Homes	22,755	21,398	34,498	25,893	25,365	26,108
Heavy Duty Equipment	126,450	88,200	92,180	48,013	0	347,185
GROSS DIGEST	7,425,129,051	7,770,302,404	9,051,140,168	11,342,337,944	12,676,536,625	12,964,530,439
Less: Exempt Properties	1,284,893,675	1,323,154,138	1,543,627,971	2,007,515,575	2,561,518,870	2,351,336,138
NET DIGEST	6,140,235,376	6,447,148,266	7,507,512,197	9,334,822,369	10,115,017,755	10,613,194,301
Less: M & O Exemptions	439,046,845	427,864,565	588,878,498	723,601,488	619,431,190	617,615,430
NET M & O DIGEST	5,701,188,531	6,019,283,701	6,918,633,699	8,611,220,881	9,495,586,565	9,995,578,871

Gross Digest and Net M&O have increased 75% in the last 5 years

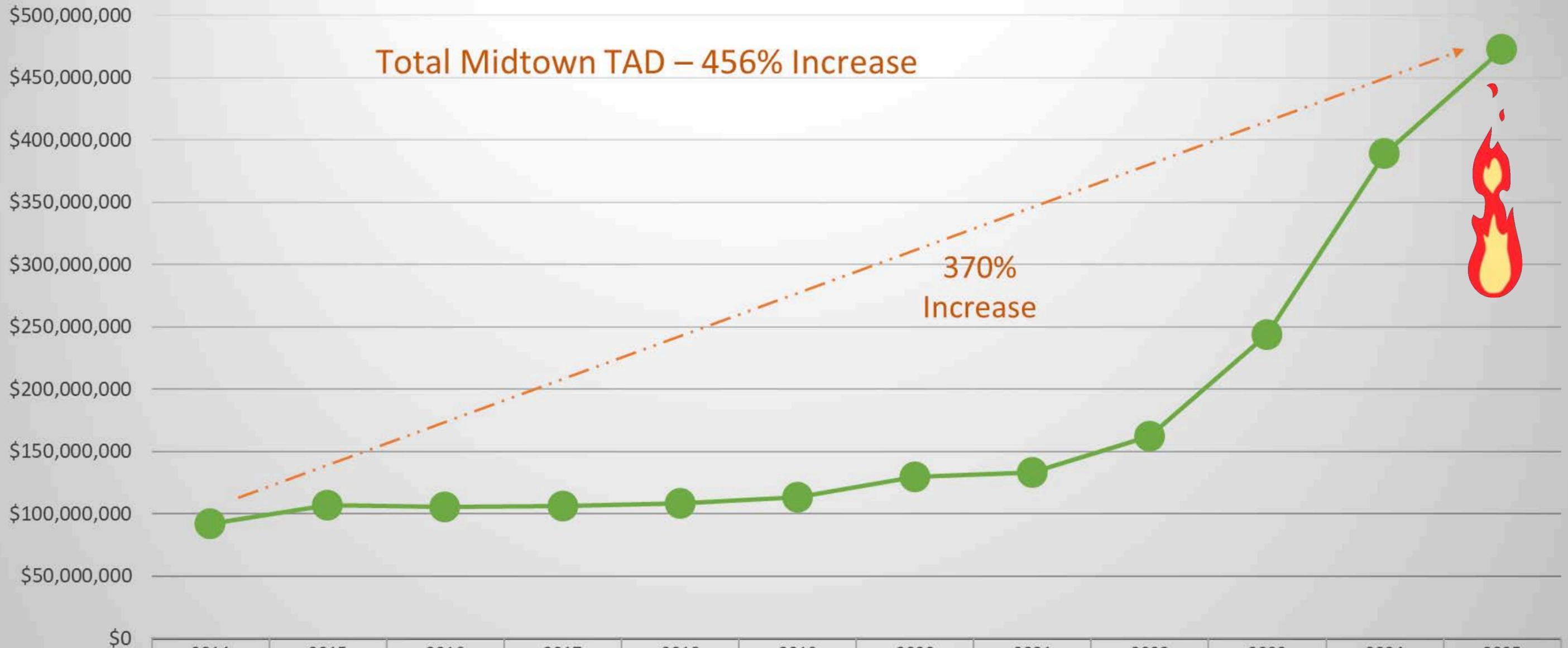


Net M&O has increased 154% in the last 10 years

Midtown Tax Allocation District : The Stats



Midtown TAD Taxable Value



	2014 Assessed Value	2015 Assessed Value	2016 Assessed Value	2017 Assessed Value	2018 Assessed Value	2019 Assessed Value	2020 Assessed Value	2021 Assessed Value	2022 Assessed Value	2023 Assessed Value	2024 Assessed Value	2025 Assessed Value
—●— Total Taxable Value	\$91,766,276	\$106,851,798	\$105,198,511	\$106,052,553	\$108,087,573	\$113,105,963	\$129,574,273	\$132,835,198	\$162,037,180	\$243,560,418	\$389,052,148	\$473,017,730



Council and Staff must be in agreement and alignment on the vision, otherwise it will never be realized.



01

Intentional Action

Transformation doesn't happen by accident. It is intentional, constant and daily-driven action.



02

Private Investment follows Public Investment

Public investment reduces private risk. Private developers are willing to invest in your community once they know you are willing to do the same.



03

Control Key Redevelopment Sites

Control key sites in redevelopment target areas. Buy property when it is for sale, which won't usually match when you are ready. Step in when the private market can't or won't if it is necessary.



04

Focus on Long Term Generational Gain

Be willing to take short-term losses, both monetarily and politically, for long-term generational gains.



05

Don't Forget the Fun

Buildings create the space, but the placemaking and programming bring the demand, life and vitality to a community.



QUESTIONS?



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gainesville.org



Email:

asheppard@gainesvillega.gov

Angela Sheppard
Deputy City Manager