



**STRATEGIC  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
GAINESVILLE**

**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**JANUARY 2017**

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
GAINESVILLE**

## INTRODUCTION



The University of Florida is a major land-grant institution established in Gainesville, Florida, in 1906. In the summer of 2015, the Board of Trustees committed to reexamining the University's 100-plus-year-old, 2,000-acre campus and environs with the goal of transformative intervention intended to position UF as a top 10 public university and ensure its continued stature as a preeminent Florida institution.

The Board of Trustees charged the Office of the Chief Operating Officer with the creation of a strategic development plan that would identify creative but practical ideas to re-envision what the campus might look like in 40 to 50 years and to examine the University's important relationships with the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. In February 2016, UF established a 26-member Steering Committee comprised of leaders from the University, the City, and the County, and retained a consultant team of Elkus Manfredi Architects and DumontJanks to tackle this assignment in a nine-month study.

The Strategic Development Plan seeks to define a path to enhanced preeminence for the University of Florida and its host community. The plan will prepare UF and Gainesville for the future, identifying ways to optimize growth, intensity and density, economic viability, and livability, looking beyond the horizon of the current 10-year campus master plan, both in scope and in vision. Its recommendations focus on high-level strategic actions that integrate a wealth of data and address objectives identified in the planning process. These transformative ideas will drive the University's planning for the next five decades.

# pre·em·i·nence

\prē-e-mə-nən(t)s\

**noun**

**the fact of surpassing all others; superiority.**

President Kent Fuchs has defined preeminence for the University of Florida as “doing things other universities would seek to emulate.” Using this idea as a guiding principle, the Steering Committee worked with the consultant team to engage stakeholders from the University, the City, and the County to envision our future together.

## PROCESS

8

PUBLIC  
MEETINGS

97

COMMUNITY  
STAKEHOLDERS  
INTERVIEWS

114

UF STAKEHOLDERS

8

STEERING  
COMMITTEE  
MEETINGS

1

SYMPOSIUM

59,000

POI ICONS PLACED  
BY 2,000 COMAP  
PARTICIPANTS

Broadly, the process sought to ascertain opportunities for leveraging preeminence, determine optimal synergy between the University and the City, integrate with ongoing campus master planning initiatives, enhance the quality of the built environment, foster strong physical connections between the campus and the community, identify and address weaknesses in infrastructure, communicate a comprehensive vision that engages the entire community.

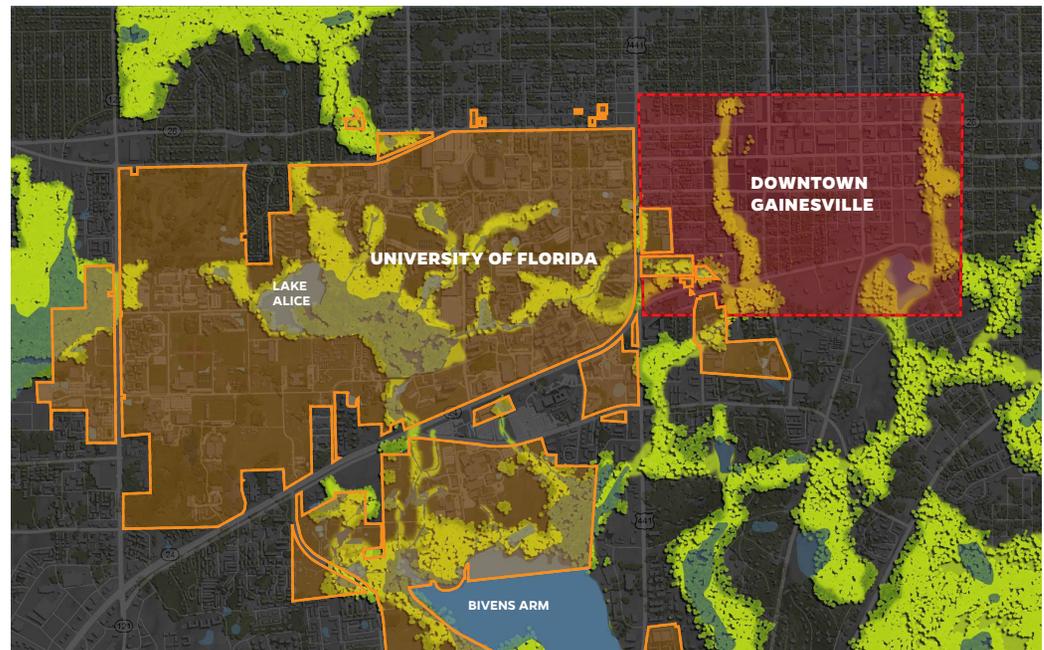
The plan was developed in three phases over a period of nine months in 2016. During phase 1, the Steering Committee and consultant team collected myriad data about the physical and cultural environment of the University in the context of the City of Gainesville and Alachua County and benchmarked UF against the nation's leading universities. Initial visioning in this phase led to the development in phase 2 of three objectives to guide the planning effort. Strategies for physical growth and policy were also explored in this phase. In phase 3, ideas were refined into four initiatives, each with corresponding action items for the University. During this final phase, the University began to reach out to an even wider audience to gain feedback on the plan's initial findings. At the conclusion of the effort, the Steering Committee presented the plan to the University's Board of Trustees for approval. The Board endorsed the plan unanimously, and UF announced its commitment to the Strategic Development Plan, its intention to formalize a partnership with the City of Gainesville, and its support of the initiatives with seed funding.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND BENCHMARKING

In order to ensure that the project was driven both by data and observations, the team gathered and analyzed data about the campus and the community through over 100 first-hand interviews, University and City archives, and an interactive online mapping survey. Considerations included ecology, demographics, historic growth patterns, transportation and land use, and building use. The team also benchmarked the University and Gainesville against peer institutions and their host communities, examining the country's top 20 public and top 10 private universities for comparative analysis of enrollments, residency, space allocations, density, research expenditures, and the presence of a “plus one” in the community, whether a government institution, a major corporate headquarters, a state capital, or another major university. In conducting this effort, the team considered several key questions — What does a preeminent research university look like? What distinguishes a good college town from a great college town? How can we optimize the UF/City relationship? How should we prepare for the future together?

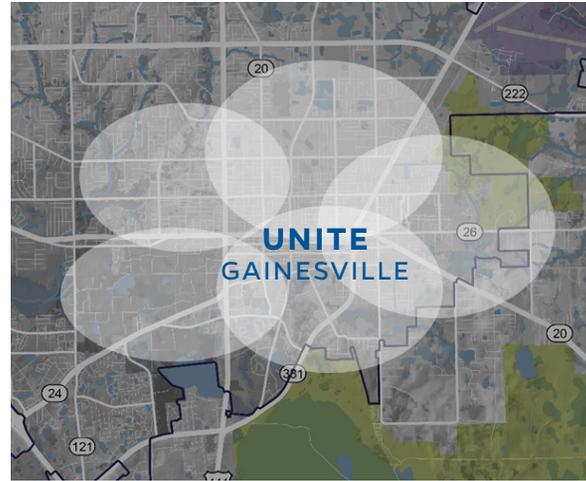
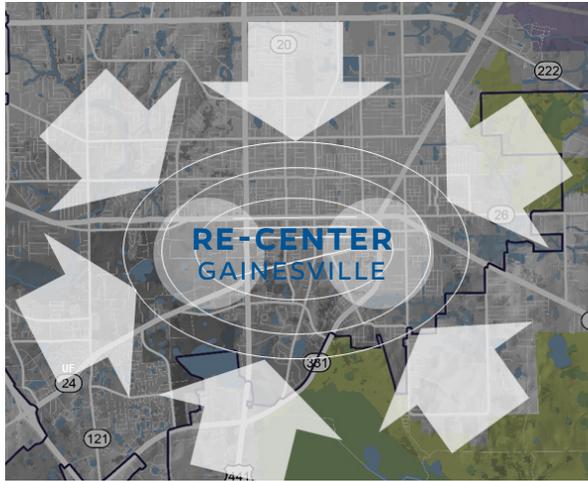
Data revealed key factors that became the basis for the Strategic Development Plan. One, Gainesville's natural systems are an important resource for the community and outdoors places are among the community's most noted and beloved amenities. Two, Gainesville has the second lowest density among peer institutions' host communities, which has implications for the kinds of connections and collaboration essential for a vital University and a vital community. Three, the City faces a number of challenges that the University can help address in order to advance the joint success of the University and the City.

Gainesville's natural systems, particularly the aquifer system and stream corridors, will be critical as a foundation for the region's future and need protection in order to survive and thrive. Focusing new development on and off campus closer to Downtown will improve densities — increasing vitality — and reduce open space impacts.



## OBJECTIVES

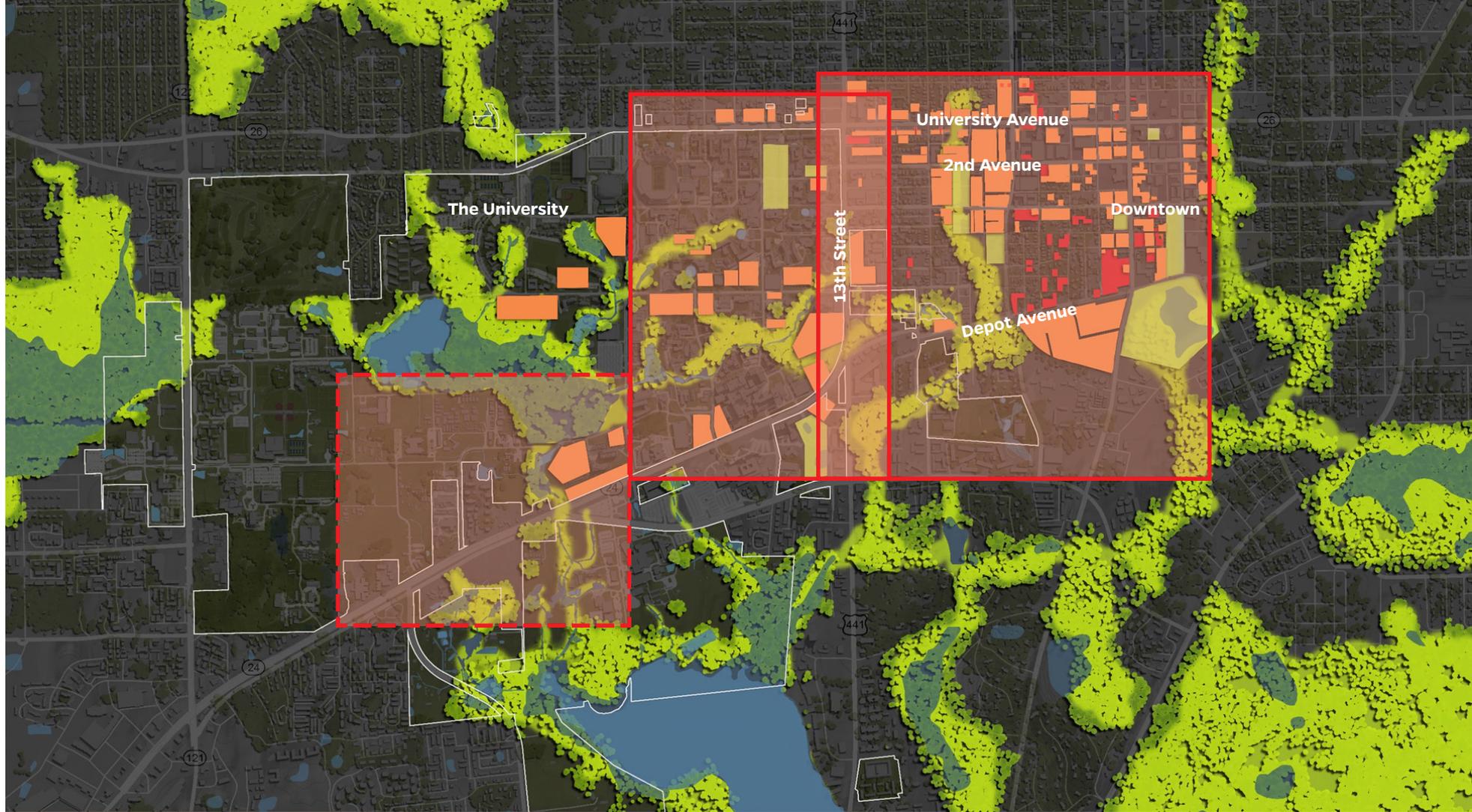
Based on analysis of the comprehensive data, three objectives were formulated to provide a framework for the plan's growth and policy recommendations. Re-centering Gainesville's growth and development in and around Downtown where the University meets the City will improve overall vibrancy. Uniting Gainesville's communities with the University will strengthen the community as a whole. Sustaining the community by promoting social, personal, economic, and ecological health will enable long-term success for the University and the City.



## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Development potential was analyzed in three Red Box areas, with primary focus on the eastern portion of campus and the off-campus area between the University and Downtown. The aim was to investigate potential sites for purposeful growth that could create active centers and compelling environments for learning, living, and working that are rooted in Gainesville's underlying ecological framework. Conservative parameters for density yield a development potential of 6 million square feet on campus and 8 million square feet off campus.

On campus, this potential translates to 950,000 to 1.9 million gross square feet of potential academic growth, the capacity for 4,500 to 5,500 beds in new residence halls (based on a five-story model), and the potential for 2.36 to 3.04 million gross square feet for medical, reasearch, and private uses.



Off campus, the team defined five precincts between campus and Downtown to investigate further for redevelopment. These are not neighborhoods, but rather areas that share similar urban qualities or could be positioned strategically as a unit. Downtown itself has a number of underutilized and vacant parcels that would benefit from infill, making it more of a destination. The zone around Depot Avenue is primarily residential, although there is a developing, distinctive arts district identity near Main Street. University Avenue has the potential to become an active primary corridor with a mix of office and residential space above retail and restaurants. The area around Southwest 2nd Avenue, including Southwest 4th Avenue, has a mix of residential and commercial properties. West 13th Street is a north/south gateway lined with UF buildings and larger residential buildings separated from the street edge with green buffers.

## INITIATIVES

### New American City



The University of Florida and the City of Gainesville will become a lab for collaborative investigation into solutions for the United States' most pressing societal and sustainability challenges. The **New American City** initiative addresses topics including income opportunity, workforce development, demographic shifts, entrepreneurship, health, food, housing, transit, technology, schools, arts, and culture.

### Proximity



Direct engagement often brings about new ideas that lead to innovation. Recognizing that **Proximity** is essential for the knowledge economy, the Strategic Development Plan recommends that the University re-center growth by concentrating future development in the eastern third of campus, and coordinate with the City to encourage development between Downtown and the campus.

### Strong Neighborhoods

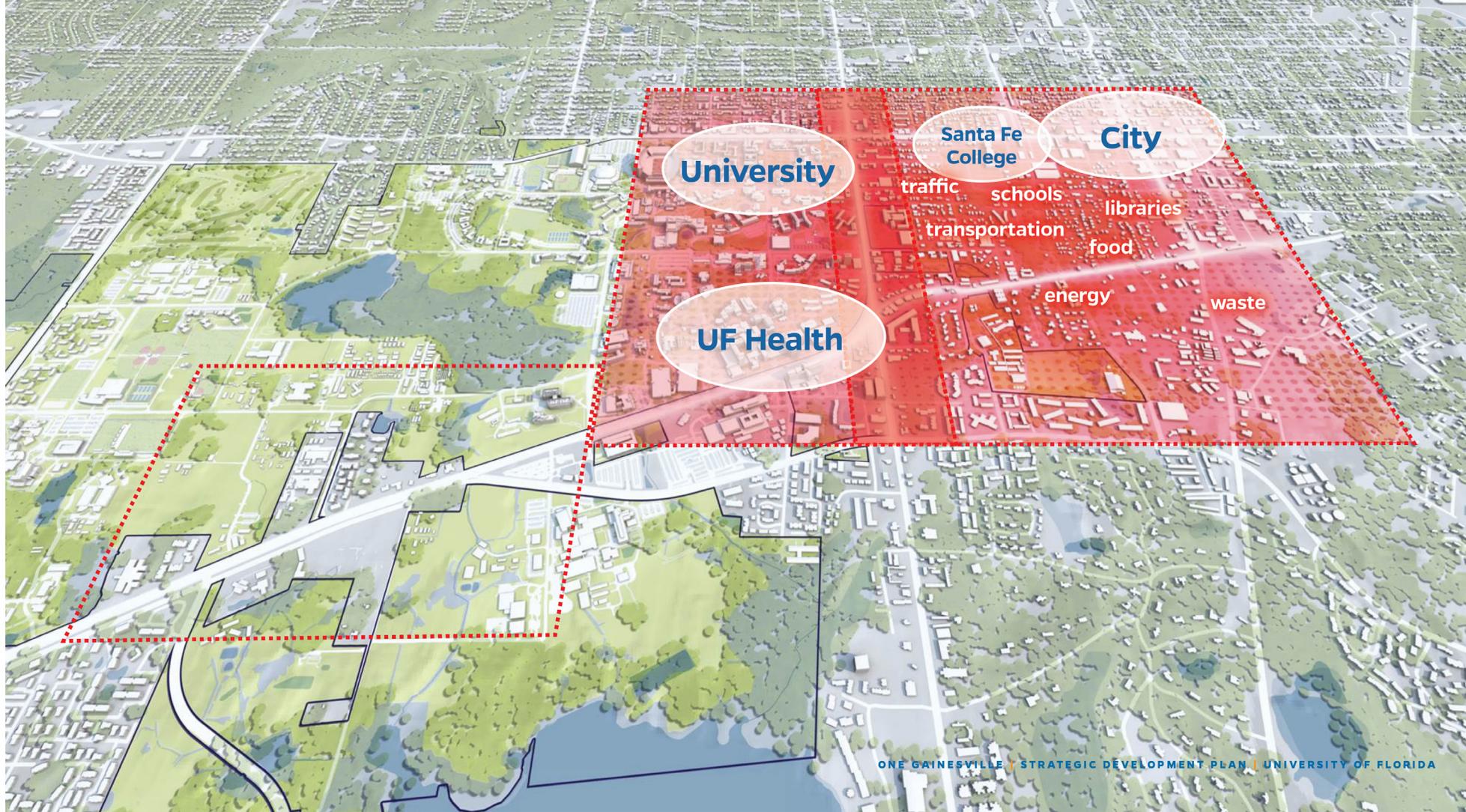


Supporting **Strong Neighborhoods** around the University will sustain UF in its continual bid for preeminence and benefit the community as a whole. Through this initiative, the University of Florida will work with the City and its neighborhoods to strengthen pride of place by listening to the community's needs and collaborating on shared objectives.

### Stewardship

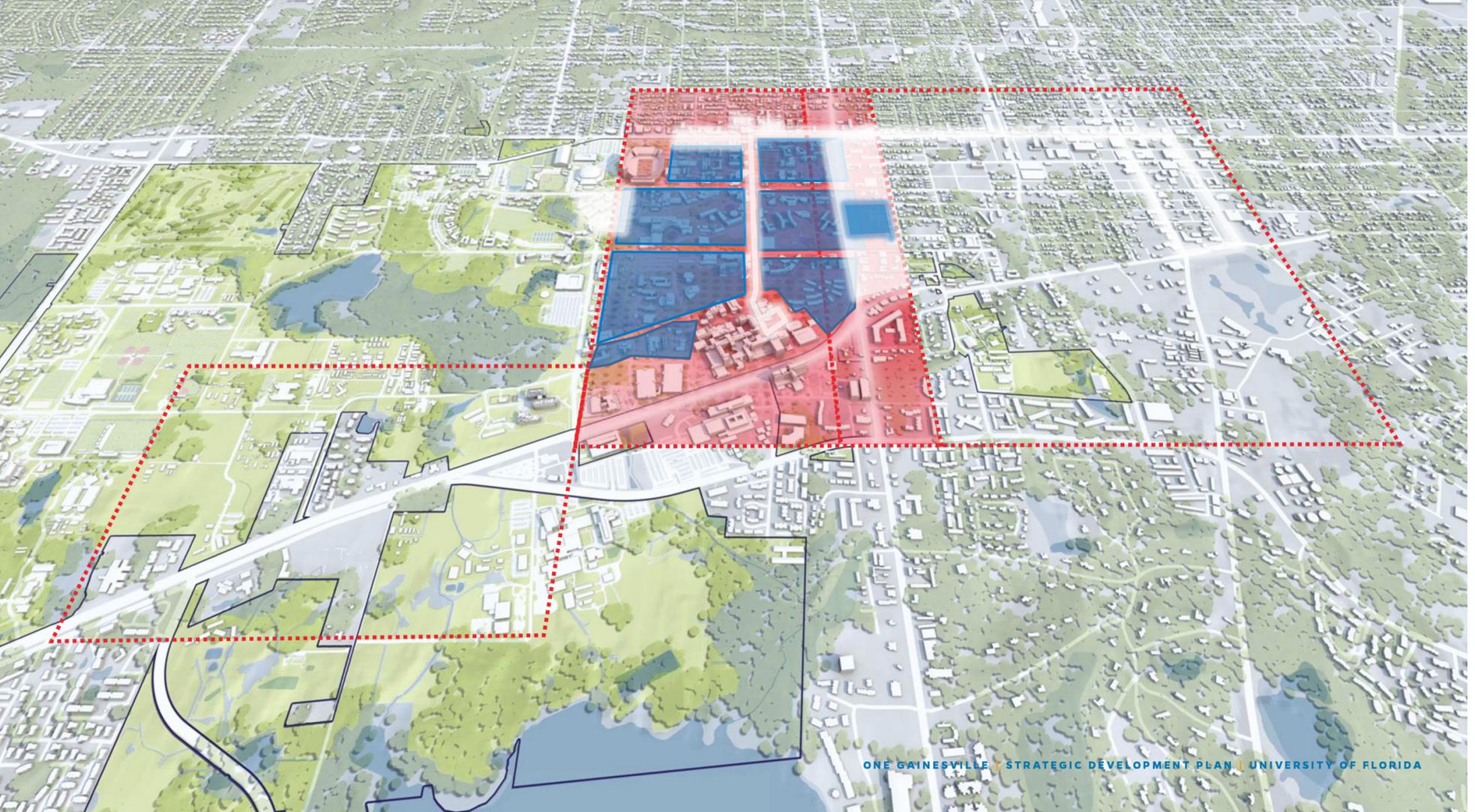


As one of the nation's great land-grant institutions, the University must actively promote the **Stewardship** of its physical environment. Gainesville's outdoor amenities knit campus and community together, providing some of the City's greatest resources and attractions. An infrastructure framework based on enhancing open spaces and key ecological corridors will enable strategic growth that fosters preeminence for the City and campus.



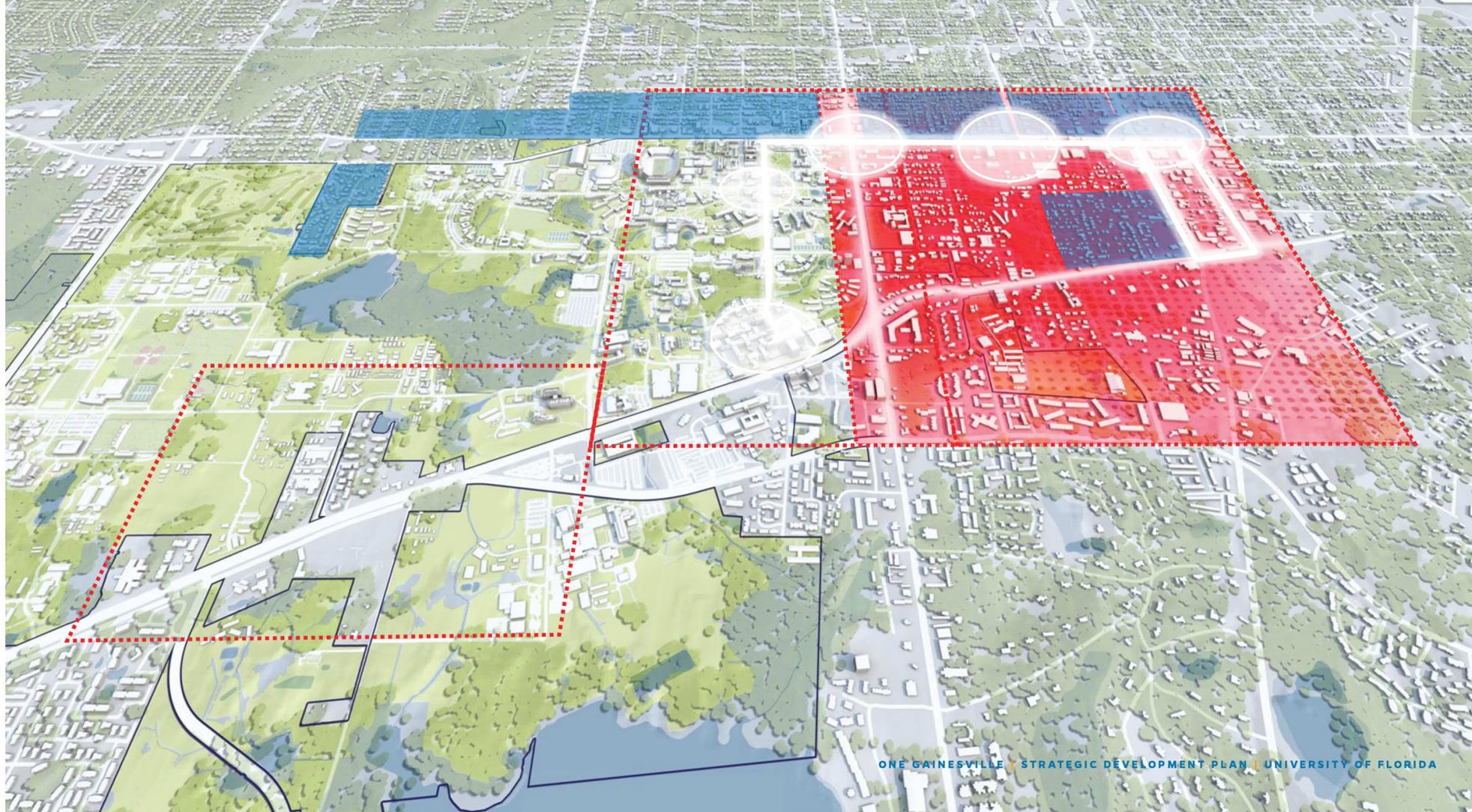
## New American City

The Strategic Development Plan calls for anchor institutions to join forces to address challenges of mobility, education, health, housing, and livability, and to collaborate on creating inclusive solutions. Institutionalizing this cooperation is one of the key game-changing ideas of the plan. In an economy driven by talent, the goal is to provide infrastructure, resources, and the environment needed for companies and institutions to attract, retain, and nurture talent.



## Proximity

Proximity is key to the collaboration that fuels the knowledge economy. The Strategic Development Plan recommends that the University re-center growth by concentrating future development in the eastern third of campus, and coordinate with the City to encourage development between Downtown and the campus. It also suggests studying transportation and parking, the best uses for existing space, facilities maintenance and growth, and ways to make Newell Drive the primary connection between the academic core and the UF Health medical complex. Other campus gateways, including the Cultural Plaza and law school, will be examined as important nodes for community engagement, transportation, connections, and wayfinding. Immediate plans to support this initiative include renovations to the Plaza of the Americas and redesign of Newell Drive, which will establish Newell as the primary corridor of research, innovation, and collaboration.



## Strong Neighborhoods

City/University collaboration will examine the east/west corridors connecting Downtown and campus, guiding investments at key pulses, investigating fixed-transit options, and revisiting the master plan for Innovation Square with the goal of promoting interaction, connection, and future development. The plan also calls for improving the identity of Southwest 13th Street as a gateway to campus and the City, evaluating existing regulations with an eye toward defining appropriate height and density for development, and promoting better relations between students and residents of neighborhoods near campus by catalyzing housing diversity between campus and Downtown. This will ensure quality of life in accessible neighborhoods where people of diverse backgrounds and income levels thrive together.



## Stewardship

The Strategic Development Plan envisions a New American City where advancement of the region's ecological health and outdoor amenities is the backbone of future growth. Creating a roadmap to investing in innovative energy systems, green infrastructure, multiple reliable modes of transportation, and sustainable food systems will reduce vulnerability to climate risks and ensure the well-being of Gainesville's current and future residents.

## ACTION ITEMS



### New American City

1. Connect Talent to Issues
2. Form a UF/City Cooperative Body
3. Create a Smart City Lab
4. Establish an Innovation Investment Strategy
5. Promote University Programs Downtown
6. Increase Community Participation Opportunities at UF

### Proximity

1. Concentrate On-campus Development in the East
2. Plan for Implementation
3. Undertake a Residential Life Plan
4. Concentrate Downtown Development
5. Create New Civic Spaces



### Strong Neighborhoods

1. Preserve Neighborhoods
2. Connect Downtown and Campus
3. Support Appropriate Regulation
4. Encourage Residential Options
5. Improve the Identity of SW 13th Street



### Stewardship

1. Plan Campus Open Space and Infrastructure
2. Partner with City on Environmental Issues
3. Develop Efficient Resource Cycles
4. Model Healthy Food Streams



## VISUALIZING GROWTH



Achieving the objectives outlined in the four initiatives will foster growth that will significantly transform the built environment both on campus and Downtown. The Strategic Development Plan tested the capacity for future growth in both. Conservative estimates suggest that the eastern third of campus can support approximately 6 million square feet of new construction and the precinct of Gainesville between 13th Street and 1st Street could support up to 8 million square feet. Together, these now underutilized parcels provide enough capacity to support all anticipated growth for the next four to five decades.

The following pages illustrate how growth can transform key areas of campus and the City, addressing the challenges of the New American City by fostering innovation through proximity, active civic engagement with strong neighborhoods, and the synergistic relationship of the land and the built environment. As the plan is pursued over the next fifty years, it will be important to use the ecological framework to ensure a built fabric for the wider Gainesville community that is both vibrant and sustainable.



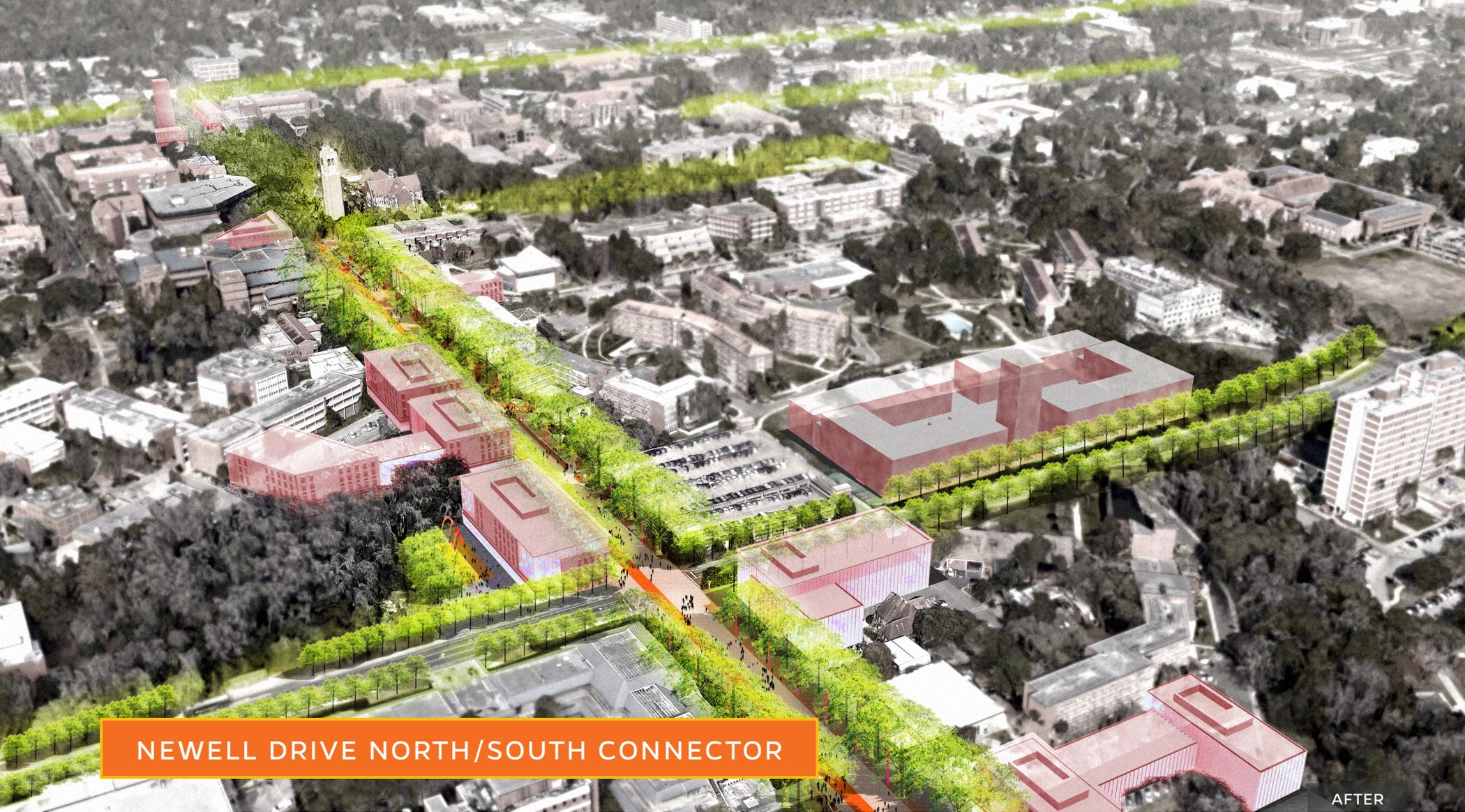
## CONNECTIVE CORRIDORS AND CIVIC SQUARES

Reinforcement of connective corridors and the creation of new civic squares would contribute significantly to fostering a more connected community that is welcoming to all. East/west connectors provide important physical connections between the University and the City, while north/south connectors provide primarily internal connections within smaller districts. The plan offers recommendations for the key corridors and also proposes the creation of five new civic squares. Two new entry courts marking important portals to campus would enhance the University's externally-facing presence, and three new iconic spaces within the campus would provide space for large campus-wide events.



## CONTEXTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The development model identifies vacant or underutilized parcels on campus and in the City that could be redeveloped to reinforce the objectives and initiatives identified by the Strategic Development Plan. Each development parcel is modeled with a three- to five-story building as appropriate to the context. The following before-and-after visual interpretations of key areas are intended to offer greater specificity about the kinds of development contemplated in support of the four initiatives.



## NEWELL DRIVE NORTH/SOUTH CONNECTOR

AFTER

The plan repositions Newell Drive as the most important street on campus, connecting University Avenue, the historic campus core, the UF Health medical complex, and Archer Road from north to south. Fixed-route transit along this tree-lined street could improve connectivity between the center of campus and the center of Downtown. Commitment to dense development with active ground floor uses along Newell with academic uses above could maximize the gains from transit investment.



BEFORE



TIGERT HALL COURT AT 13TH STREET

AFTER

At the 2nd Avenue approach to campus just north of Tigert Hall, an inviting new entry court, marked by a monument or sculpture and accommodating visitor parking along the periphery, could make for a friendlier approach to campus for both prospective students and neighbors. This important new gateway for the University could become one of its five new iconic civic squares.



BEFORE



## INNOVATION SQUARE

AFTER

As a pivotal location between campus and the University, Innovation Square should both connect people to Tumblin Creek Park while also reinforcing the east/west movement between the campus and Downtown via a green corridor with active ground floor uses and a pedestrian- and bike-friendly streetscape. The site is prepared to support large research and office buildings, while proposed residential buildings fronting 4th Avenue step down in height approaching 6th Avenue and the abutting neighborhoods and will keep the area active at night.



BEFORE



AFTER

University Avenue is the primary urban corridor connecting downtown Gainesville to the University of Florida. New mixed-use projects with four to five stories atop retail and restaurants fronting tree-lined sidewalks could attract a wide range of visitors. A fixed-route transit system could catalyze demand for new spaces and provide easy access between Downtown and campus. A more continuous and generous streetfront with fewer curb cuts would promote an attractive and safe pedestrian experience.



BEFORE



## DOWNTOWN ARTS AND CULTURE DISTRICT

Downtown is the hub for the City's arts and cultural facilities. The plan proposes an Arts Walk — a pedestrian connection between University Avenue and Depot Avenue — that could strengthen downtown Gainesville's identity as an arts and culture district and promote the increased use of Depot Park, which has recently seen significant investment. Fixed-route transit along Main and East 3rd Streets would make these facilities and the park more accessible, creating a vibrant pedestrian-friendly district.



ENDORSEMENT, DECEMBER 1, 2016

**The University of Florida Board of Trustees endorses the **Strategic Development Plan: One Gainesville** — with its four initiatives of the **New American City, Proximity, Strong Neighborhoods, and Stewardship** — and supports the University administration’s work directed toward implementing the plan.**

The Strategic Development Plan defines a path to preeminence for the University of Florida and its host city, Gainesville. The plan re-envisioned the campus for 40 to 50 years and seeks to transform the important relationship with Gainesville and Alachua County. It prepares UF and the surrounding community for the future by identifying optimal initiatives related to growth, intensity and density, economic viability, and livability in a framework for the University and host community to come together to achieve preeminence.

## FIRST STEPS

The University's first steps in advancing the four initiatives include:

### New American City

- Signing a memorandum of understanding with the City of Gainesville, creating a joint working group to collaborate on common strategic goals
- Designating \$250,000 for community research awards to address the issues confronting the City and the University

### Strong Neighborhoods

- Designating \$50,000 for a College of the Arts–City Arts Initiative partnership
- Identifying UF resources that can benefit surrounding neighborhoods

### Proximity

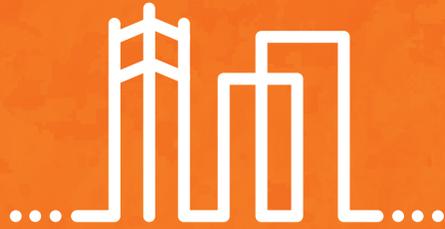
- Creating a set of UF campus design guidelines to reinforce the Strategic Development Plan
- Commencing the Plaza of the Americas renovation and the creation of civic squares

### Stewardship

- Engaging the College of Design, Construction and Planning in the creation of a landscape master plan
- Designating \$50,000 to identify solutions directed toward UF/City/County environmental issues

## CALL TO ACTION

The Strategic Development Plan defines a path to preeminence for the University of Florida that is anchored in a culture of civic engagement and a commitment to fostering proximity of people and places to spark creativity and discovery. The University and City of Gainesville's collaboration via a unique partnership will amplify the efforts of both in building a stronger, healthier community by putting the University's intellectual capital to work on pressing urban challenges and developing a vibrant central core for the University and City through purposeful physical growth. Success depends on shared vision, shared objectives, and shared commitment. The time is now. Every move counts.



**STRATEGIC  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
GAINESVILLE**

**STRATEGICDEVELOPMENT.UFL.EDU**

ELKUS | MANFREDI  
ARCHITECTS

**UF** | Office of the Senior Vice President  
and Chief Operating Officer  
UNIVERSITY *of* FLORIDA

204 Tigert Hall  
PO Box 113100  
Gainesville, FL 32611-3100  
352-392-9122

DUMONTJANKS