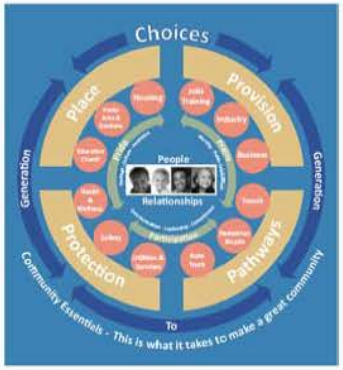
West Ocala

Vision & Community Plan

December 20, 2011

Created by



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- » Howard Middle School Students
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West Ocala Community Plan: Introduction Process & Participation

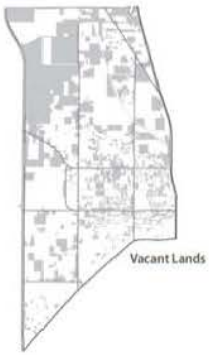
As a continuation of the Ocala 2035 Vision, the West Ocala Community Plan is the City's first specific planning area study. Ocala's 2035 Vision Plan sees downtown Ocala as a vibrant regional center. The success of that vision is inextricably linked to the success and health of the West Ocala Community. To put this in context is to consider the relationship of the Community with the center of Ocala and some of the community's history.

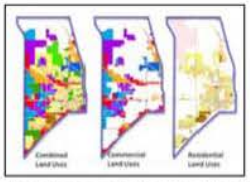
Physically, three existing and one proposed I-75 interchanges provide access to four primary road corridors (SR 200, SR 40, US 27, and NW 35th/ Pine Ave.) that run through the West Ocala Community to the core of the City. These road corridors feed more traffic to the City's core than any of the other major corridors combined.

Economically, the community includes the city's largest industrial/ distribution employment center and the planned Ocala Marion County Commerce Park (the Magna project)

Visually and experientially, the story that most visitors and business opportunities will remember about the City of Ocala is the experience being displayed along I-75 and throughout the West Ocala Community.

To achieve its vision for a vibrant downtown the City must make significant investments to support the downtown core. These critical investments will need to include business access to regional, national and international markets and the economic health of immediately surrounding support communities like West Ocala.





The West Ocala Community Study Area encompasses 6048 acres, 14,600 residents, the city's largest industrial/distribution employment center, and the historic center of Ocala's African-American cultural community.

Area demographics, vacant land and building inventory data suggest there are many opportunities for economic development, green field development, and community redevelopment. The data also suggests that there is great purpose in making the West Ocala Community the first planning area to build on the principles of the City's 2035 Vision.

West Ocala Community Study Area: 2000 - 2010 Census Comparative Analysis

	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change %	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change %	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change %	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change %	2000 Study	2010 Study	Change %	2000 City	2010 City	Change %
	Tract 15	Tract 15		Tract 16	Tract 16		Tract 17	Tract 17		Tract 18	Tract 18		Area	Area		Wide	Wide	
Total Population	4,196	3,534	-16%	3,934	4,338	10%	4,398	4,979	13%	2,079	1,750	-16%	14,607	14,601	-0.04	45,943	56,315	**23%**
Average Household Size	2.52	2.49	-1%	2.20	2.49	13%	2.78	2.50	-10%	2.59	2.55	-2%	2.52	2.51	-1%	2.29	2.30	**0.4%**
Number of Households	1,665	1,420	-15%	1,047	999	-5%	1,545	1,990	29%	791	678	-14%	5,048	5,087	1%	20,501	23,103	**13%**
Owner Occupied Housing Units	1,008	825	-18%	421	383	-9%	613	489	-20%	340	275	-19%	2,382	1,972	-17%	10,673	11,662	**9%**
Renter Occupied Housing Units	657	595	-9%	626	616	-2%	932	1,501	61%	451	403	-11%	2,666	3,115	17%	7,973	11,441	**43%**
Vacant Housing Units	228	366	61%	109	161	48%	203	440	117%	136	170	25%	576	1,137	68%	1,855	3,661	**97%**
Total Housing Units	1,893	1,786	-6%	1,156	1,160	0%	1,748	2,430	39%	927	848	-9%	5,724	6,224	9%	20,501	26,764	**31%**
Median Household Income*	$23,623	$27,520		$31,569	$23,767		$19,769	$22,484		$15,718	$15,398		$22,570	$22,427		$30,888	$36,812	**19%**
Household Income*																		
Less than $25,000	873	662		398	517		958	1022		555	384		2,784	2,585		7,704	7,713	
$25,000 to $34,999	285	174		209	75		232	396		121	66		347	711		2,766	2,795	
$35,000 to $49,000	212	135		164	75		162	199		100	42		638	451		3,052	7,187	
$50,000 to $74,999	213	193		187	167		131	186		41	90		572	636		2,846	1,646	
$75,000 to $99,999	29	160		78	51		20	27		0	86		127	324		1,186	2,581	
$100,000 or more	43	10		11	77		9	56		7	0		70	143		1,250	39,822	
White	1,669	1,231	-26%	2,595	2,798	8%	865	1,398	62%	114	89	-22%	5,243	5,516	5%	33,474	39,822	**19%**
African American	2,436	2,155	-12%	973	1,058	9%	3,092	2,961	-4%	1,829	1,605	-12%	8,330	7,779	-7%	10,174	11,795	**16%**
Hispanic	89	155	74%	387	819	112%	486	1,186	144%	169	49	-71%	1,131	2,209	95%	2,636	6,586	**150%**
Asian	6	8	33%	67	99	48%	46	83	80%	4	0	-100%	123	190	54%	559	1,464	**162%**
Other*		88			271			419			17			795		831	1,655	**99%**

** Where Data for a particular category was not available that data point has been intentionally left blank.*

2010 Income Data from Am. Comm. Survey (ACS) 2006 - 2009 Estimates 12/08/11

Community Study Area Demographics 2010

Total Population	14,601 persons
Average Household Size	2.51 persons
Number of Occupied Households	6,224 dwelling units
Owner Occupied	32%
Renter Occupied	50%
Vacant Housing Units	18%

Community Study Area Data: 2011

Study Area Gross Acreage

6048 Acres

Vacant land Area

2163 Acres (36% of Gross Acreage)

Existing Single Family lots (less than five (5) Acres)

2351 Lots

Vacant Residential Parcels (less than five (5) Acres)

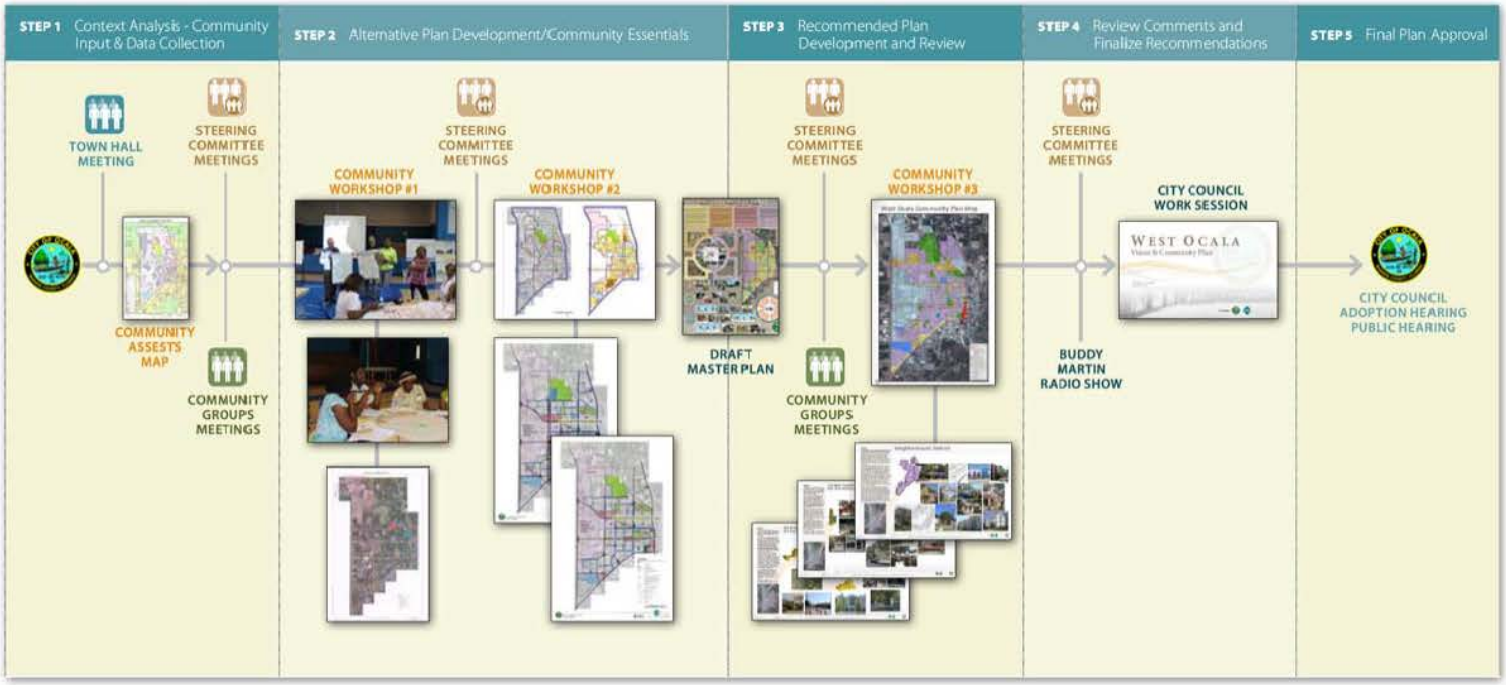
1180 lots (50% of Existing Single Family lots (less than five (5) Acres)

West Ocala Community Plan: Introduction Process & Participation

In implementing the City's goal for an extensive public outreach, the City's Growth Management Planning staff and its consultants VHB MillerSellen have engaged the local community, city departments and interested parties in development of this community based plan. A steering committee of community residents has been critiquing, advising, guiding and working alongside the City's planning team to understand specific community concerns and aspirations as well as building community consensus for the West Ocala Community vision, master plan and recommendations. The steering committee and the planning team have conducted numerous community workshops, presentations to community organizations, and one on one discussion with residents.

As a result of the public outreach and community workshops, community residents participated in identifying over 200 individual issues and concerns noted in these general categories

- Appearance
- Economic/Jobs
- Health & Wellness
- Housing
- Infrastructure – City Services
- Recreation
- Safety
- Schools
- Sense Of Community
- Transportation



Some of the priority needs expressed included:

- Communication with and throughout the community
- Jobs, especially for teens & young adults
- Magnet schools, balance with the needs of the children in the community
- Redevelop MLK Park/Croskey Center including more youth activities and a branch library
- Medical services
- Grocery store serving neighborhood and community

The common purpose, for this planning study, is to improve the collective futures for West Ocala's residents through development and implementation of a sustainable, "living" and enduring Community Plan. To move toward this goal, the West Ocala Community Plan includes recommendations to be implemented through:

- Land use,
- Land use policy,
- Zoning
- Form Based Codes,
- Design Overlay Districts,
- Community Redevelopment Districts, etc

The intent of these actions is to help facilitate economic growth, community connectivity, neighborhood improvements, placemaking, opportunities, and enhance community pride and communications.

History

The West Ocala Community's historic overview is included to give a brief introduction to the rich culture, places, and events that have helped shape West Ocala as a community and the City of Ocala as a whole. As part of this planning effort members of the community expressed their own experiences and history as residents of West Ocala. They have helped shape the vision, plan and its recommendations. However, it is clear that there is much more history available in the community than has been expressed and reviewed for this plan. We encourage the Community to come together to record their stories and family histories, to gather photographs, articles, conduct and record oral interviews, etc.. This information, when gathered and preserved, can help bring generations together, can help understand the successes, failures and unintended outcomes of prior decisions and can shape the community for generations to come.

This Historic overview is predominately an executive summary edited verbatim from the *History of West Ocala & Final Survey Report West Ocala, Florida. Performed for the City of Ocala Planning Department By Anderson Consulting, Savannah, Georgia June 2001 and the History of Ocala, City of Ocala's website http://ocalafl.org*. We encourage the reader to go to these sources to read the full documents. The Final Survey Report was produced in conjunction of the adoption of the West Ocala Historic District which is a small portion of the West Ocala Community Plan Study Area.

Minor edits have been made for continuity and the focus has been placed on the time line and places. The information up to the 1940's is from the survey report and the subsequent information is from additional research and observations conducted as part of this planning process.

Historic Overview

When the United States acquired Florida in **1821**, the population of what would become Marion County consisted largely of Native Americans and African Americans. Settlements of white European Americans did not occur until after an 1823 treaty was passed that restricted Native Americans to the southern portion of Florida.

Steamboats on the Ochlawaha 1820's -1880's[4]

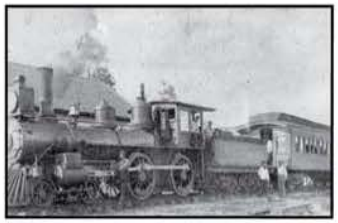
Marion County was established in 1844. Florida achieved statehood in 1845. The first plat of Ocala was created in March of **1846**. The City originally consisted of 80 blocks situated around a public square. The square was to become the County Courthouse and a center of activity for Marion County.

The economy of antebellum Marion County was largely agricultural based, with several large plantations producing corn, sugar cane, cotton and tobacco. The labor force was predominately African American slave labor. The census of 1860 indicates that African Americans accounted for 62% of the population of Marion County.

Courthouse on the Square[4]

During the Civil War, Marion County served as a production center providing food, clothing and arms to the Confederate Army.

After the war ended in 1865, African Americans continued to live in Marion County as free persons. The Freedman's Bureau was created in 1865 to assist the former slave population. Among its actions, The Bureau promoted education and opened 87 schools across Florida. James H. Howard, a former slave owner, donated a parcel of land on the corner of Osceola and 3rd Streets for the first African American school in Ocala, Howard Academy.


Railroads Support New Economys 1880's- 1900's[4]

In 1868, M.A. Clouts, an African American, was appointed Sheriff in Marion County and by the end of the Reconstruction period in 1879, Marion County had sent seven black representatives to the Florida House. One distinguished representative, Tom Long, introduced a bill establishing free public schools in Florida.

Steamboats were first introduced in Florida in the 1820s and by the **1870s** they were the main mode of transportation. The majority of steamboat pilots at that time on the Ocklawaha River were African Americans. By 1870, the African American population had grown to 73% of Marion County's total population.

The citrus industry boomed in Marion County between 1870 and the Great Freeze of 1895 as did railroad expansion, which brought new population and development.

Ocala was beginning to expand outside of its original city limits.

A fire in Downtown Ocala in 1883 destroyed most of the major buildings. Many of those buildings had been reconstructed in brick, granite, and metal by **1887**. Consequently Ocala became known as "The Brick City."

History

Baseball was played in any open space available. Pickup games between church and social groups led to the formation of the Florida State League in 1892, one of the earliest leagues of its kind in the South.

The majority of African American residents began to settle west of the downtown core. Ocala's main east-west thoroughfare, Broadway (now Silver Springs Boulevard), was the commercial heart of downtown. The street was home to many of Ocala's most prosperous African American businessmen and leaders. The area was well known as West End Ocala by the **1890s**.

West Ocala grew north and south out from West Broadway. The majority of Ocala's African Americans residents lived, attended school, worshipped, and worked in this area. Additionally, many of the businesses in this area were owned and operated by African Americans.

In 1881, F.P. Gadsden organized the Ocala Bazaar, which was located on South Magnolia Street near the courthouse. The Ocala Bazaar became the largest store of its kind in Ocala. In 1888, Gadsden was elected City Treasurer and Tax Collector and later served on the City Council.

In 1891, the Metropolitan Realty and Investment Company was organized. It was the first African-American corporation to be granted a charter by the State of Florida.

Metropolitan Bank Founders[4]

In 1893, the Emerson Memorial Home and School described as an "Industrial School for Colored Girls" was located at the corner of Madison (now NW4th Street) and 23rd Street (now NW 12th Avenue). By 1927, it was called the Baptist Theological Seminary.

In January of 1889, Florida's International and Semi-Tropical Exposition was held in Ocala. The Exhibition Hall was located on 40 acres along West Broadway, between 22nd and 24th Avenues. The Hall housed horticultural and agricultural products, natural curiosities, and products from every industry with the grounds being described as "having a panorama of tropical plants, flowers, rustic arbors, rockeries, fountains, and a dance floor was said to be the largest in the South."

West Ocala Tropical Exhibition[4]

Promotional literature touted West Ocala as similar to "New York's Harlem...the coming popular city district for fashionable residence." It described the area as having electric lights, city water and fire protection, and a street railway.

West Broadway Ocala[4]

When the Exposition Hall opened in 1889, Cuban workers from Tampa were employed to demonstrate cigar making. Shortly after, several cigar factories were constructed just west of the Exposition building. This area was originally called "Havanatown." The cigar village was bordered by N.W. 4th Street, Martin Luther King Blvd., S.W. 24th Avenue and S.W. 7th Place. The area was later named "Marti City" after a visit there by Cuban Patriot Jose Marti.

The failure of the citrus crop form the Great Freeze of 1895 threw Marion County into a depression. By 1909, Marti City was abandoned by workers who moved to Tampa and Miami to find work.

After the failure of the citrus crop, the area's agricultural industry began to diversify. To boost the growing agricultural prospects of livestock, cotton, tobacco, and vegetables, the Marion County Fair was established at the western edge of Ocala. The fairgrounds included a racetrack, exhibition buildings, and livestock sheds. The fair also attracted national figures including Booker T. Washington. Industries such as naval stores, turpentine, and lumber were growing. In 1912, the H.A. Fausett Planing Mill was situated at the corner of Broadway and 22nd Street (now NW 11th Avenue).

By **1914**, black residents were said to be some of the most prosperous in the South. African American businesses lined West Broadway from Magnolia to 16th Avenue. The Ocala Bazaar was thriving downtown as was a new black-owned hotel. The Metropolitan Savings Bank was organized and was located in Ocala's central business district. Its president was West Ocala resident, F.P. Gadsden. It was the first African-American bank incorporated in the State of Florida. Gibbs Crompton also began Crompton's Dry Goods Store located on West Broadway.

Many of the houses along West Broadway and the adjoining side streets were very large two-story residences.

Howard Academy continued to educate many of Florida's future leaders including Effie Carrie Mitchell, who was the first African-American woman to practice medicine in Florida.

History

By 1928, Ocala had 11 African American churches, the largest being Mt. Zion and Mt. Moriah.

The **1920s** saw a rise in the number of African Americans entering professional fields. Howard Academy had been the training ground for many future doctors, businessmen and political leaders. In 1925, Dr. R.S. Hughes opened the American National Thrift Association Hospital, which was the only facility to treat African Americans for hundreds of miles. It was located on West Broadway and Pine Street. Other notables included Dr. Nathaniel Hawthorne Jones and Dr. E.E. Lamb, and Mrs. Mattie J. Shaw who started The Florida Watchman newspaper.

Black-run businesses extended west from Magnolia Street to 16th Avenue.[1]

John Jacob Gerig, the owner of a local drug store pushed for a modern place to play baseball and attract professional teams to the city. A few months before he was elected mayor in 1929, the local chamber of commerce had solid plans to move forward with a baseball park on the county fairgrounds. Soon, the Great Depression hit Ocala, and by 1932 the city's central location, which had established it as a railroad hub, made it a magnet for the unemployed and desperate. The county fairgrounds would become a transient camp.[3]

The onslaught of the Great Depression resulted in a severe decline in property values, local governments went bankrupt, and unemployment skyrocketed. African-American owned businesses in Ocala also suffered. By **1930**, the African American population accounted for only 49% of the population. The New Deal of the Roosevelt Administration began in 1933 to provide additional welfare relief. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was begun to provide work for the labor force. In **1936**, only 500 African Americans were registered to vote due in large part to the poll tax and continued Jim Crow laws.

In 1936 Howard Academy was rebuilt with Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds. WPA projects provided employment and civic improvements to Ocala. Streets were widened and sewer lines were extended.[1] In 1936, the Works Progress Administration funded the Ocala baseball project. Officials chose a portion of the fair grounds, still a transient camp, for the site. In 1939, Gerig baseball field and softball park (now MLK Park) complete with a concrete grandstand, dugouts, clubhouses and fences, was finished and the Milwaukee Brewers were on their way.[3]

In 1943 the African-American hospital on West Broadway was closed after the death of Dr. Hughes. Blacks could be treated at the main hospital in town but were segregated until the 1960s.[1]

Howard Academy[4]

In the **1950's** upgrading highway systems was a priority for President Eisenhower. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 allowed the use of federal funds in acquiring right-of-ways for projects. As a result West Broadway (SR 40) and Pine Street (US 441/ Pine Avenue) were widened into faster thoroughfares bisecting the community and the downtown. This drastically altered the character of the area and resulted in the loss of this historic streetscape and the majority of its historic buildings.[2]

Development in Ocala followed the general trends of construction that occurred throughout the north central area of Florida. The 1940s witnessed a rebirth of development and investment in Florida with new residences and new businesses catering to the new World War II-era military population.

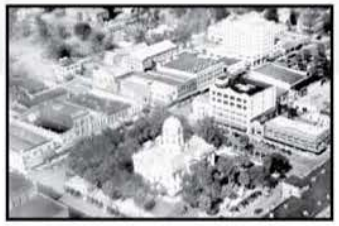
After 1950, the widespread use of the automobile was reflected in suburbanizing Ocala's historically urban downtown and the proliferation of automobile centric strip commercial development along the city's primary road corridors.

In **1963**, Interstate-75 was under construction from Wildwood to Lake City and in 1969 was completed across the state according to its original plan. The completion of Interstate 75 at the edge of West Ocala added to the erosion of the central business districts and the West Ocala Community.[2]

Through the 1960s, Red Sox farm teams would hold spring training at Gerig Field. Baseball legends Ted Williams and Carl Yastrzemski played spring ball in west Ocala. 1972 marked the end of spring training in Ocala.[3]

Ocala Baseball Gerig Field[6]

School desegregation, had been mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1955. When the Supreme Court issued a second and stronger school desegregation ruling in **1969**, Howard High School was closed. Black students then went first to Ocala High and later to the new Forest High and Vanguard High. One of the unintended consequences of school desegregation in the West Ocala Community's has been that the children have become less connected to the community.



West Ocala and Magnolia from the Square[4]

North Magnolia Street[4]

North Magnolia Street[4]

North Magnolia 1960's Auto Dominated[4]

History

Through the **1970's** older housing in the historic eastern neighborhoods of the community such as Tucker Heights experienced an accelerated decline in part due to the westward and northern expansion of newer housing in West Ocala , closing of neighborhood centers, and ongoing road widening.

Like much of Florida, Marion County and Ocala has continued to emphasize the speed and accessibility of the road network. Expansions to SR 40, US 27, SR 200, NW 27th Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and Pine Avenue/ US 441 have created additional automobile capacity yet have also increased the separation and erosion of neighborhoods and neighborhood businesses. At the same time they have helped support Ocala's automobile centric strip commercial development patterns.

The History of West Ocala is an account of vision, perseverance, revival and opportunity. It has been expressed through its citizens, its sense of community and it's landmarks. Many of it's citizens were it's champions for new ideals. People like:

Dr. R. H. Hughes, 1882-1943, physician and founder of the only black hospital in Ocala/ Marion County.

William H. Jackson, founding president of Hampton Junior College, 1958-1966. After integration, Hampton Junior College merged with Central Florida Community College at the Hampton Center.

Dr. Lee Royal Hampton, the first black dentist in Marion County, practiced from 1913-1935. The Hampton Center is named in his honor.

Dr. Effie Carrie Hampton was the first licensed female physician in Florida and one of the founders of the Florida Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Association. . She was licensed from 1906 to 1935.

Pine Street 1900[4]

Pine Street Ocala 1950[7]

Pine Street Ocala 1952[7]

Pine Street Ocala 2011[5]

Delia J. Brown, 1881-1982, was Florida's first black female mortician.

Dr. Nathaniel Hawthorne Jones opened his practice in Ocala in 1926 and was the first black doctor to become a staff physician at Munroe Memorial Hospital. Dr. N.H. Jones Elementary School is named in his honor.

Pinkney Woodbury, A local activist and historian, Woodbury also co-authored the book "The Struggle for Survival: A Partial History of the Negroes of Marion County, 1865 to 1976."

James C. Cunningham, Elected to City Council in 1975, was the first African American to win a City Council election in 86 years and the second African American councilman since Harry W. Chandler.

E.D. Croskey, the first African American to run the City of Ocala Recreational Parks Department.

Rev. Frank Pinkston, was a leading voice for civil rights activists in Marion County.[2]

The History of West Ocala has also been expressed through its landmarks and places.

Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Complex is a living example of the community's vision, perseverance and revival. By the early 1990s, despite a community effort to save the Gerig Fields historic structures, the concrete was crumbling and the structures had become havens for the homeless, drug users, and violent crime, and there was no money to invest in a restoration effort.[3] However that facility was transformed into the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Complex, including playing fields and The E.D. Croskey Recreation Center, and the College of Central Florida's Hampton Center. Today it is a hub of activity for West Ocala.

West Ocala's history continues to be written with community programs and new landmarks, emerging opportunities and community champions. This history has its roots in the foundation of its rich culture and heritage and is an unfolding of this community's vision for being a dynamic, diverse, friendly, safe and connected community with vibrant residential, business, governmental, cultural, educational and entertainment centers.

Bibliography

[1] *Final Survey Report West Ocala, Florida. Preformed for the City of Ocala Planning Department By Anderson Consulting, Savannah, Georgia June 2001.*

[2] *The City of Ocala's website. http://www.ocalafl.org*

[3] *History of Gerig Field When baseball was king in Ocala, Carlos E. Medina, Correspondent Published: Thursday, July 8, 2010 http://www.ocala.com/article/20100708/articles/100709762*

[4] *Source of Photography: http://www.floridamemory.com, Department of State or the State Library and Archives of Florida, Florida Photographic Collection, Florida Memory Project*

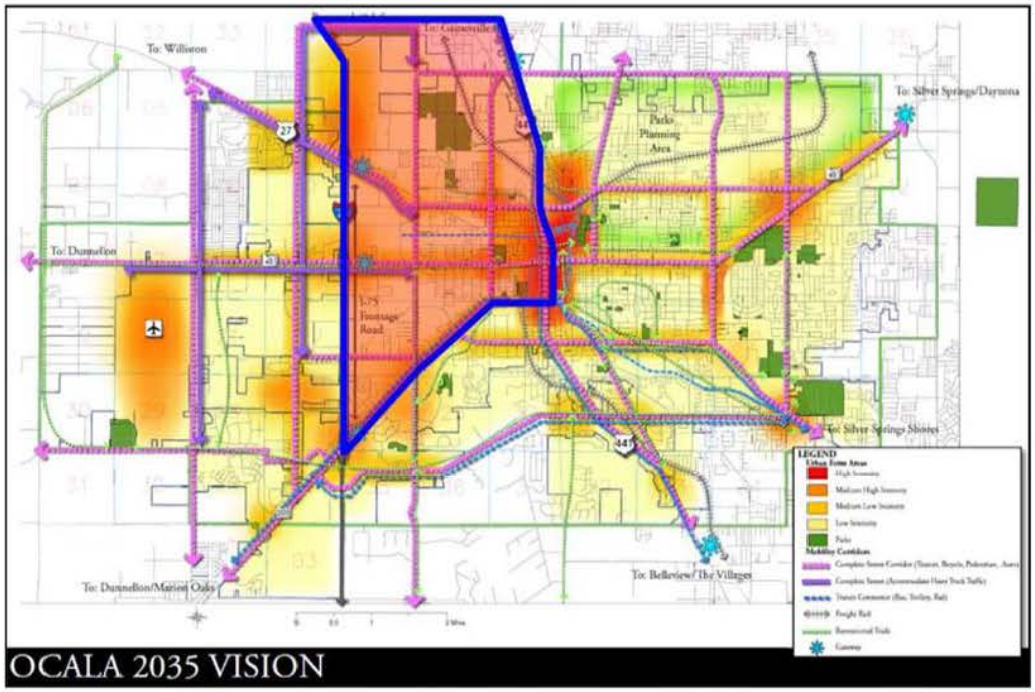
[5] *Source of Photography VHB Miller Sellen*

[6] *Source of Photography Gerig Field By Carlos E. Medina, Postcard from the collection of Mark Hammer.*

[7] *Source of Photography: City of Ocala, FDOT*

[8] *Source of Photography: Navella Haynes*

Ocala 2035 Vision



Vision Principles:

"Ocala is…"

…a community of natural and man-made beauty

…a community of neighborhoods

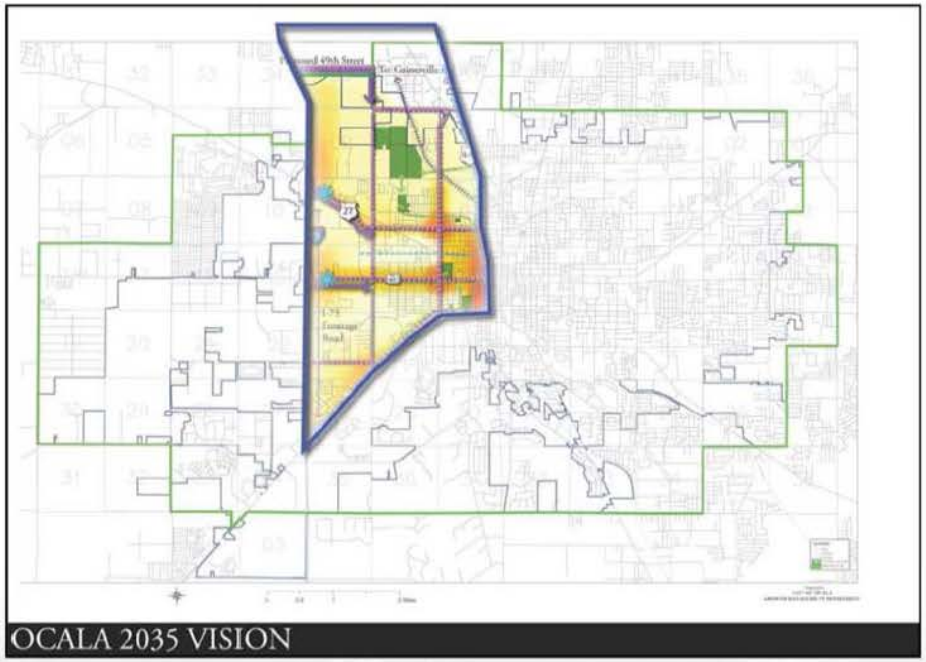
…a vibrant hub of residential, retail, office, governmental, cultural, and entertainment activity

…the County Seat, a vitally active center for regional employment in Marion County

…a city with viable mobility options for all citizens and visitors

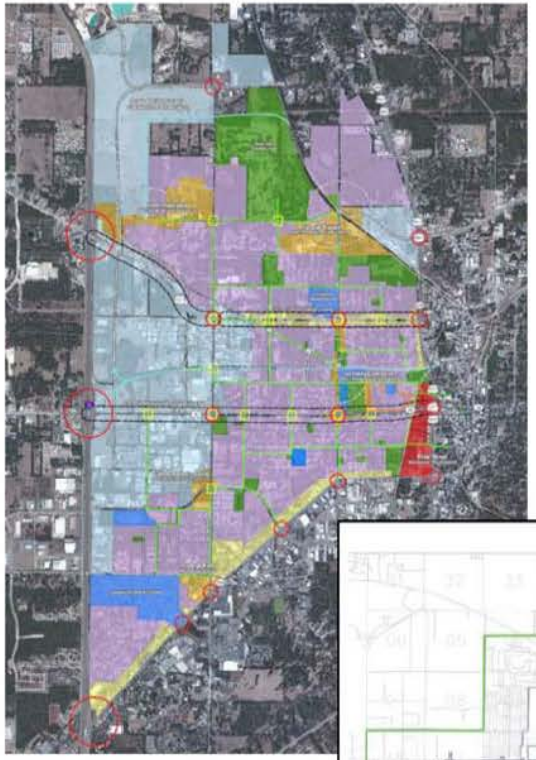
…welcoming residents and visitors through attractive gateways that invite people to experience our dynamic and friendly community

How does the West Ocala Community fit into the Ocala 2035 Vision ?



West Ocala Community Vision & Master Plan

Purpose & Priciples

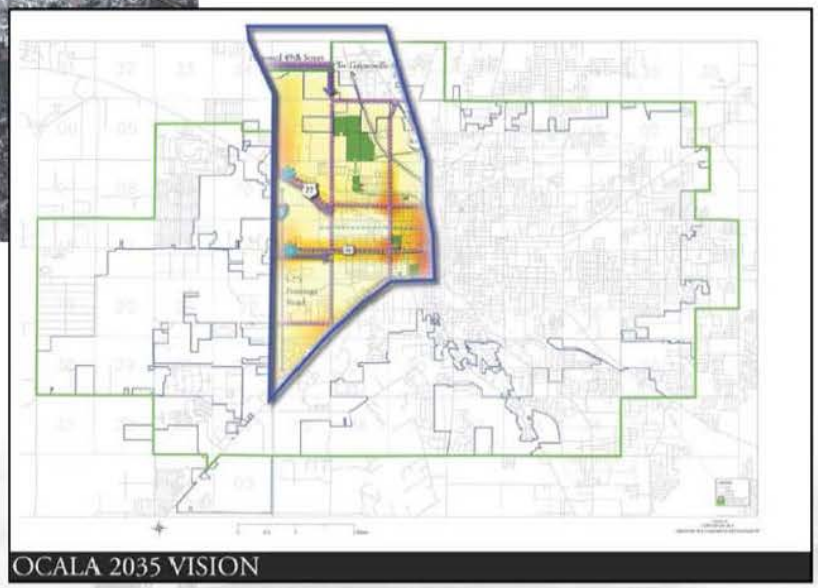


Purpose for the West Ocala Community Plan

- To Establish Priorities for Future Decisions
- To describe what the Community wants to look like in the future
- To build community consensus and support for improving the collective futures of West Ocala's residents through formulation of a sustainable, "living" and enduring Community Plan
- To reconnect people, neighborhoods and community
- To encourage good choices that will shape our community from generation to generation!

West Ocala Community Area Plan Desired Outcomes

- Ongoing community engagement and participation
- Recommended actions to promote connectivity between neighborhoods, the West Ocala Community, and the City
- Recommended actions for development and redevelopment
- A living, enduring, and flexible plan
- A Future Land Use Map and Land use policies based on the West Ocala Plan included in the City's 2035 Comprehensive Plan
- Designation of a Community Redevelopment Area CRA within West Ocala to focus on physical improvements and economic sustainability



The West Ocala Community 2035 Vision Principles

- A diverse, dynamic, friendly and safe community
- A community of walkable and connected neighborhoods
- A vibrant community of residential, retail, business, governmental, cultural, educational and entertainment activity centers
- A community with a variety mobility options for all citizens and visitors
- A community with attractive gateways and tree lined streets
- A community of connected parks and neighborhoods
- A healthy, diverse and caring community of neighbors and neighborhoods who watch for and care for one another from infant to aged, generation to generation

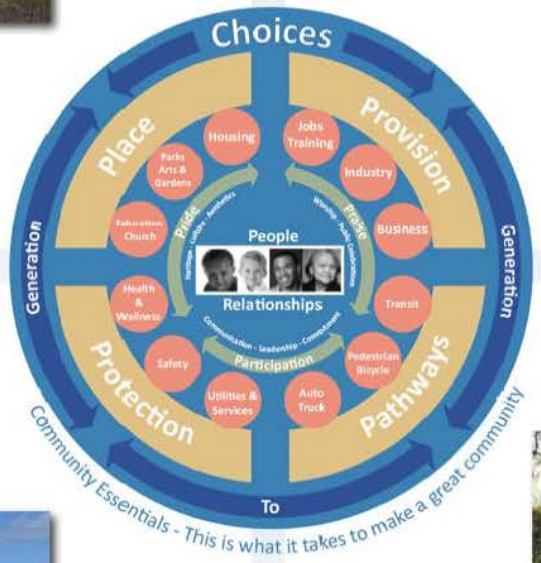
Essentials of Community

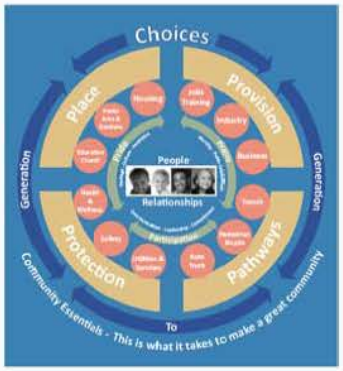
Intent

A Great community is built on a foundation of relationships and choices that contribute to the well being of the community from generation to generation. The most important relationships are people caring for people and people caring for the places in which they live, work, learn, play and grow. This diagram and photographs suggest the interdependency of the essential elements needed to make a community sustainable and enduring. They are intended to provide a reminder and reference in evaluating ongoing choices and decisions implementing the community's vision for improving the collective futures of West Ocala's residents and the City of Ocala.

Consider the various parts and how each relates to all the others on the diagram. For example Place and Pathways are typically associated with physical feature essentials of a community but they are also related to the health & wellness of a community. Health & wellness are also related to the Provision and Protection essentials when considering decisions for medical and emergency services within the community.

This diagram was developed for West Ocala From the comments, concerns and suggestions of West Ocala's residents and community leaders who participated in the many public workshops and steering committee meetings. The West Ocala Community like this essentials diagram has many parts, ideas and relationships that will take consistent participation, communication, commitment, leadership and champions to re-connect and transform it into a great and enduring community. The whole community should become greater than the sum of its parts.





Recommendations

Participation – Communication – Leadership – commitment

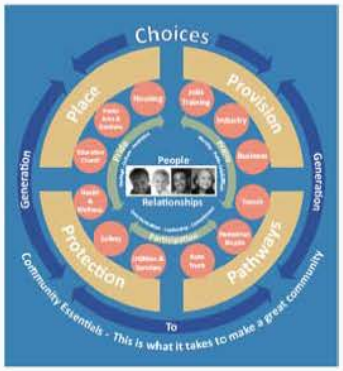
1. Connect all community support organizations, associations, churches etc. to support positive growth and change to make the West Ocala Community a healthy, diverse and caring community of neighbors and neighborhoods who watch for and care for one another from infant to aged, generation to generation.
2. Support community wide communications, public participation and civic engagement programs
3. Identify, organize and empower community and neighborhood "Champions" as a Steering Committee committed to communication, building trust, increasing awareness, promoting community wide participation and involvement shaping positive community change.
4. Continue The West Ocala Community Plan Steering Committee role as champions and community builders in the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) planning process and as community liaisons to the School Board, the City's Advisory Boards, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council meetings and special workshops. Organize, capture and celebrate the verbal and written history of the West Ocala area.
5. Develop an expanded heritage center /cultural museum.

Provision – Jobs – Industry – Business – Education – Health Care

6. Provide development incentives to promote business/economic development within the West Ocala Area in return for preferred hiring and job training of West Ocala Community residents or other economic benefits to the community.
7. Enhance livability and attractiveness of West Ocala by encouraging development, additional walk able high quality school(s) and achieving a high percentage of neighborhood children attending neighborhood schools.
8. Maximize the City's investments in the Magna site by encouraging a mix of uses including Class A Office, business and clean industry within the project. To ensure that existing and future residential development adjacent to the site will not be adversely impacted from the proposed development of the Magna project, significant buffers shall be provided along the boundaries of the project.
9. Review and amend ordinances to promote care for children and aged within the community.
10. Review and amend ordinances to promote development of local business, social places that promote safe and healthy community.
11. Promote development of a Marion County branch library within the community.
12. Provide higher residential densities near mixed use centers and "Employment Centers" to provide a close linkage between jobs, job training and housing
13. Develop a phased program for undergrounding existing and future utilities to remove visual clutter and reduce power service interruptions to homes and businesses resulting from storm damage.
14. Improve access to banking and financial services.

Places – Mixed Use

15. Incorporate into Comprehensive Plan policy the Intent statements described in the West Ocala Plan:
    - "Croskey Commons" Main Street Mixed Use District
    - "North Gate Way" Main Street Mixed Use District
    - "Pine Oak Square" Main Street Mixed Use District
    - "Cotton Park Crossing" Main Street Mixed Use District
    - "College Park" Mixed Use District
    - Neighborhoods District
    - Employment Center District
    - Gateways & Corridors
    - Pine Avenue Corridor Downtown Reconnected
16. Promote re-connection of West Ocala and downtown Ocala within a highly walkable and connected urban core. Pine Avenue (US 441) between 17th Street and NE 2nd Avenue is encouraged to be road dieted to provide for a variety of modes of transportation including walking, bicycles, motor vehicle, and bus transit. It is intended to provide safe and comfortable pedestrian sidewalks and crossings with pedestrian refuges. Streets, pedestrian ways, bikeways, open space and transit networks should re-connect this district to surrounding neighborhoods and open spaces. The private development, on US 441 shall meet the urban development standards of the downtown area.
17. Encourage development of compact mixed use districts at various and appropriate scales to support walkable neighborhoods and needs within the West Ocala Community.
18. Redevelop the Croskey/MLK complex into the West Ocala Community's primary mixed use district " Croskey Commons". Include civic, culture/arts, recreation, learning, and community events along with business and retail uses organized around a "main street" design pattern including:
    - MLK Park Recreation fields and child play areas
    - Hampton Center
    - Croskey Center redevelopment – multi-use facility; conference center; banquet hall; classrooms; more activities & games entertainment for youth & young adults, swimming pool improvements
    - Branch library
    - Senior Activity Center
19. Promote master planned development of the area surrounding the Pine Oaks Country Club Golf Course with a variety of housing, two mixed use districts with, rail transit access, and a major road linking NW 21th St. from the Magna development east to Pine Street at NE 20th St..
20. Incentivize infill development and redevelopment to reduce vacant lot inventory and promote building improvements as a catalyst for positive change in West Ocala's neighborhoods. Respect and reflect the best of West Ocala architectural history without restricting innovative expression of those styles, good architecture and energy efficient green building solutions
21. Encourage compact, mixed use development with densities and intensities that support a variety of housing, employment, retail, medical and recreational choices.



Recommendations

Places – Housing Choices

22. Promote infill development with a variety of attached and detached housing types.
23. Provide development incentives for builders who are able to bring a variety of housing types, choices, pricing along with a preferred hiring of West Ocala community residents for infill development and redevelopment in the community.
24. Provide medium and high density residential near business and industry clusters to provide a close linkage between home and employment.

Places – Housing Redevelopment

25. Promote redevelopment of West Ocala's housing projects into affordable mixed housing neighborhoods
26. Incentivize redevelopment of vacant and abandoned housing units

Places & Pathways – Corridors & Adaptive reuse concepts

27. Adopt Overlay Design Standards and guidelines that promote and incentivize adaptive reuse of properties along SR 40, US 27, MLK Blvd. and 27th Ave.
28. Do not promote strip commercial uses along SR 40, US 27, MLK Blvd. and 27th Ave.

Places & Pathways – Complete Streets

29. Provide traffic calming elements such as traffic circles and intersection improvements along Old Blitchton Road between US 27 and Martin Luther King Avenue and on Martin Luther King Avenue between SR 40 and US27 to discourage through traffic, and increase safety for the residents.
30. Promote a high quality and desirable public realm through the connectivity of safe and accessible streets, multi -modal pathways, and trails
31. Promote Joint use Corridors: Rail (transit & freight), Street & Bikeway
32. Include proposed connector roadways and intent in Comprehensive Plan Policies:
    - NE 21st Street extension to US 441
    - Northeast MLK connector to US 441
    - NW 35th Avenue from Magna to SW 7th Street
    - North South roadway on the north side of SW 20th Street
    - North South roadway on the south side of SW 17th Street extension

Places & Pathways – Mobility & Transit

33. Promote a high quality and desirable public realm through the connectivity of safe and accessible streets, multi -modal pathways, and trails.
34. Improve pedestrian comfort and safety adding sidewalks and street trees along all streets throughout the West Ocala Community.
35. Develop multi modal corridors along existing rail to increase transit and community accessibility, include rail, local streets, trials and bikeways.
36. Expand and re-route bus transit service to make system accessible/walkable for residents throughout the community.
37. Create a rail transit and service loop connecting the proposed Magna development with existing spur south of US 27. Promote transit connecting housing and workplaces. Promote transit connections to downtown and Medical District

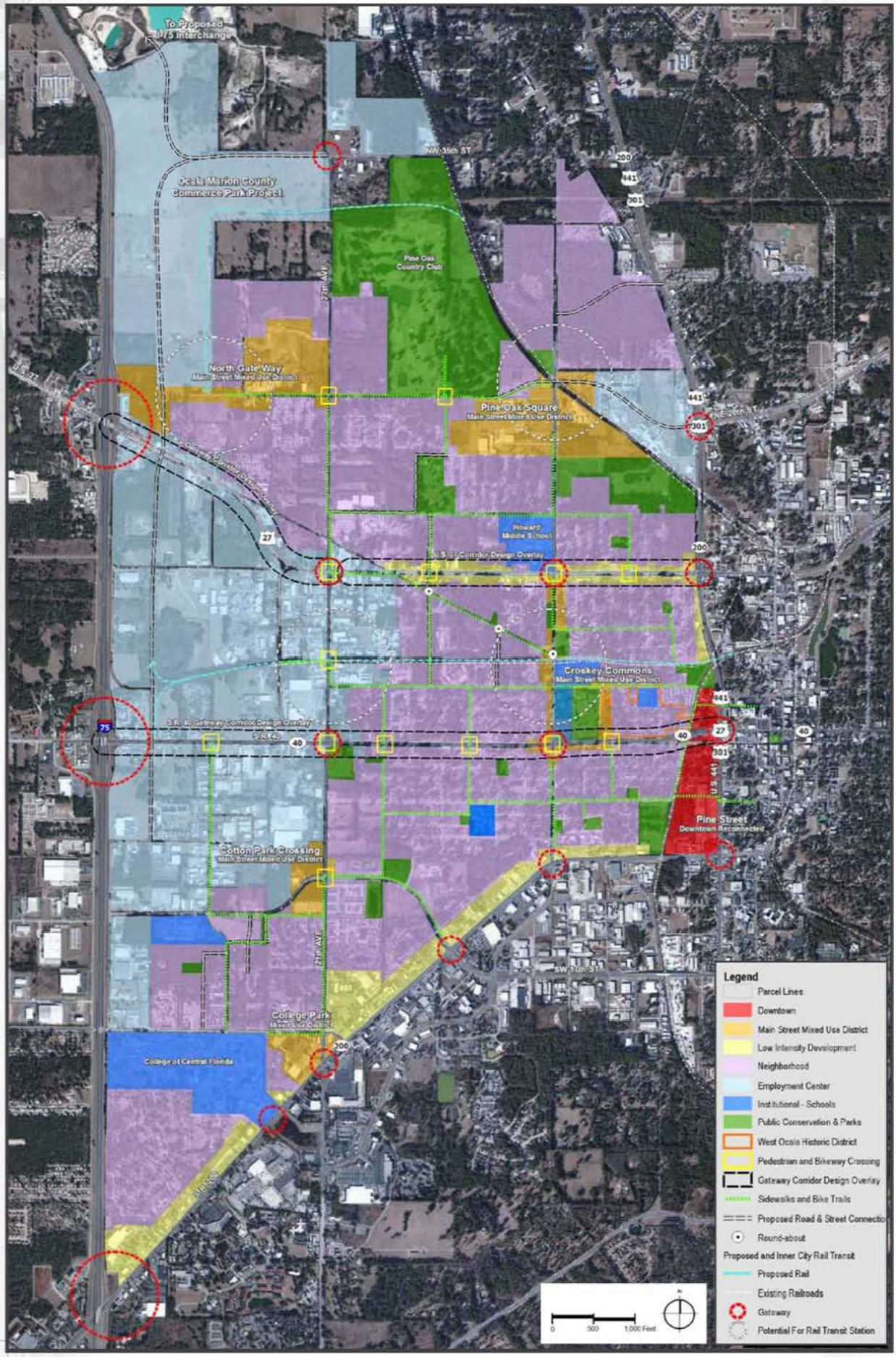
Places & Pathways - Community & Neighborhood Parks

38. Create a variety of safe and accessible public parks, squares and greens throughout the community as focal points for neighborhood and community activities and events. Creating a connected network of parks sidewalks and trails.
39. Promote recreational, social gathering, community celebration and community gardening activities within this network of parks.
40. Incorporate city drainage retention areas into this parks network
41. Develop a community based program for maintenance of vacant lots or lands within area neighborhoods to improve public safety, health and community appearance. Where possible, acquiring or leasing vacant lands for redevelopment or transforming them into community spaces and gardens.

Places & Pathways - Gateways

42. I-75 interchanges shall be improved to create attractive "gateways" welcoming residents and visitors into the community.
43. Create a city gateway near the intersection of SR 40 and 27th Ave. as
44. Redevelopment of the intersection of SR 40 and MLK Avenue Ave. as a city gateway
45. Redevelopment of the intersection of Pine Avenue and SR 200 Ave. as a city gateway
46. Redevelopment of the intersection of US 27 and 27th Ave. as a city gateway

West Ocala Community Plan Map



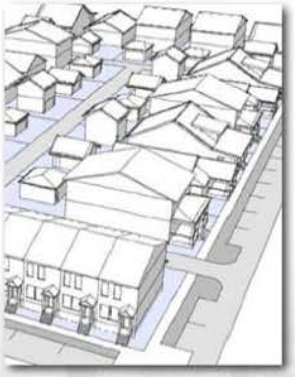
Neighborhoods District

Intent

The intent of the Neighborhood land use category in West Ocala is to promote a walkable urban form expressed as identifiable residential neighborhoods where the predominant land use is residential and the primary modes of transportation include walking, bicycles, automobiles, and bus transit. Buildings are generally low and mid rise in character. Housing types associated with this category are predominately small lot single family detached homes, attached homes like row houses or townhomes and garden style multifamily buildings. The history, character, and connecivity of existing neighborhoods should be considered in new development and redevelopment proposals. New development and redevelopment may allow for higher densities on existing small lots to create a mix and diversity of housing types.

A variety of housing types are encouraged to provide quality multi-generational housing choices within the neighborhoods. Buildings and porches are brought closer to the street to create a more urban setting and allow for increased development potential on lots with shallow depth. The local street network is typically a highly connected grid with short block lengths that encourage walking. The street and block patterns are generally more rectilinear and similar to the patterns associated with West Ocala's Historic District. Streets should include curb and gutter sidewalks on both sides, street trees, shade landscaping, and low level street lighting. Parks and open spaces ranging in size from neighborhood parks to community oriented activity based parks should be provided throughout the Neighborhood land use category areas. Both Public and private stormwater management facilities should be designed as recreational amenities and included in parks and open spaces. Public parks or open spaces should be located within walking distance of the majority of housing units within neighborhoods. Parks, open spaces and collector streets should form a connected network of sidewalks and multi-use paths/trails.

Other neighborhood supporting secondary uses may be permitted but should be limited in number, and subject to compatibility review for architectural character, building scale and intensity. These secondary uses may include; public, office, and health care, education/recreation/social, service and retail uses. Neighborhood supporting secondary uses are typically located in stand-alone corner buildings located at the intersection of two collector streets. The main entrance and building façade should front the street. Parking will be limited and located on the street and in the rear of the building screened from surrounding residential uses. These uses should not be located midblock and not allowed in aggregate to form linear or strip commercial/retail development patterns. To not overwhelm any one street, corner businesses should be dispersed with a multiple block separation. They should be accessible by sidewalks, bikeways and public transit.

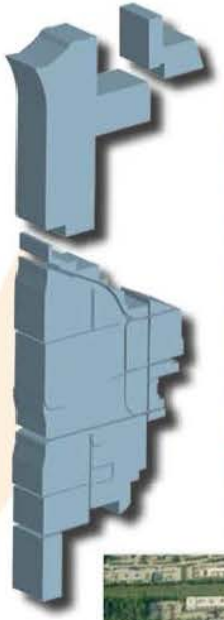


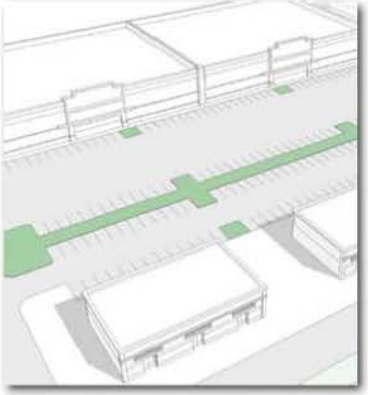
Employment Center District

Intent

The intent of the Employment Center land use is to promote a regionally-important and vibrant hub for business, enterprise, research and development and employment activities. It has a significant contribution to the identity and branding of The City of Ocala and is of special importance to the quality of life in West Ocala. Therefore development and redevelopment should promote excellence in the design and construction of buildings, environmental systems, outdoor spaces, transportation facilities, wayfinding and streetscapes; and shall support and protect the vitality and quality of life in adjacent properties and neighborhoods. Access is primarily from major collectors, arterials or limited-access highways. The primary modes of transportation include, automobiles, trucks, freight rail, bus, and commuter rail transit provisions should be made for walking, bicycles and inner city rail transit.

As the most intense non-residential development within the City the Employment Center land use category is generally characterized by low and mid rise buildings on horizontally mixed use sites where building form is emphasized more than use. Uses typically included in this district are public, office, business, wholesale, industrial, professional service and retail.





Croskey Commons

Main Street Mixed Use District

Intent

The Croskey Commons Main Street mixed use district is generally located within the center of West Ocala's traditional and historical neighborhoods and community assets. It is near the intersection of W. Silver Springs Boulevard (SR-40) and Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard (NW 24th St).

The intent of this district is to promote a compact and walkable urban form that serves as a focal gathering place for recreation, civic, social and cultural activities within the West Ocala Community. Croskey Park, The Hampton Center, a library and Recreation Center and a community gardens and farmer's market should become key components of this district. Permitted uses include Residential, Office, Commercial, Public, Recreation and Open Space, and Institutional.

Development and redevelopment is intended to take on the form of a walkable main street with on street parking and with access to multi-modal transportation, including bicycles and transit. This district is characterized by buildings that are one (1) to four (4) stories in height and may contain more than one use. The emphasis will be on building form and orientation to the street and public spaces, rather than type of use.

Buildings are located close to the street, and are not separated from sidewalks by surface parking lots. Wide sidewalks, plazas, and civic areas are provided to encourage pedestrian and community activities and events. Shade for pedestrians should be provided through landscaping and/or building design components, such as balconies, arcades, awnings, and canopies.

Parking occurs on-street, behind buildings or within structured parking lots. Front surface or side surface parking may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Cotton Park Crossing
Main Street Mixed Use District

Intent

The Cotton Park Crossing Main Street mixed use district is located at the intersection SW 10st Street and SW 27th Ave.

The intent of this district is to promote a compact and walkable urban form that serves as a neighborhood gathering place for civic, social, and commercial activities promoting redevelopment and new development supporting surrounding residential and employment center uses in the southeast quadrant of the West Ocala Community. Permitted uses include residential, office, commercial, public, recreation and open space, institutional. Enhanced pedestrian crossing on SW 27th Ave, improved connections to surrounding uses and streets, and redevelopment of the SW 10th street west of SW 27th Ave as the "Main Street" are important features of this district.

Development and redevelopment is intended to take on the form of a walkable main street with on street parking and with access to multi-modal transportation, including bicycles and transit. This district is characterized by buildings that are one (1) to four (4) stories in height and may contain more than one use. The emphasis will be on building form and orientation to the street and public spaces, rather than type of use. To provide for the transition from this district to an adjacent Neighborhood or Corridor Overlay district development will be subject to review for architectural character, building scale and intensity so as to be compatible with and supportive to the adjacent district.

Buildings are located close to the street, and are not separated from sidewalks by surface parking lots. Wide sidewalks, plazas, and civic areas are provided to encourage pedestrian and community activities and events. Shade for pedestrians should be provided through landscaping and/or building design components, such as balconies, arcades, awnings, and canopies.

College Park
Mixed Use District

Intent

The College Park mixed use district is located at the intersection SW 27th Ave. and SR 200. The intent of this district is to promote a compact and walkable urban form that serves as a neighborhood gathering place for civic, social, and commercial activities supporting the College of Central Florida and surrounding residential areas. Permitted uses include residential, office, commercial, public, recreation and open space, institutional. Creation of a gateway feature on SR 200 and 27th Ave., enhanced pedestrian crossing on SW 27th Ave, improved connections to surrounding uses and streets, and to the College are important features of this district.

This district is characterized by buildings that are one (1) to four (4) stories in height and may contain more than one use. The emphasis will be on building form, as well orientation to the street and public spaces, rather than type of use. To provide for the transition from this district to an adjacent Neighborhood or Corridor Overlay district a development will be subject to review for architectural character, building scale and intensity so as to be compatible with and supportive to the adjacent district.

Buildings are typically located close to the street, are not separated from sidewalks by surface parking lots. However on a case-by-case basis and subject to design review a building may be located on a moderate build-to line from the street and public right-of-way. Parking occurs on-street, behind buildings or within structured parking lots. Front surface or side surface parking may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Wide sidewalks, plazas, and civic areas are provided to encourage pedestrian and community activities and events. Shade for pedestrians should be provided through landscaping and/or building design components, such as balconies, arcades, awnings, and canopies.

North Gate Way
Main Street Mixed Use District

Intent

The North Gate Way Main Street mixed use district is located within the northwest quadrant of the West Ocala Community. It is generally located at the intersection of NW35th Ave and NW 21st Street between I-75 and NW27th Ave.

The intent of this district is to promote a compact and walkable urban form that serves as a gathering place for civic, social, and commercial activities promoting redevelopment and new development in the northwest quadrant of the West Ocala Community and supporting uses to the Ocala Marion County Commerce Park. A grocery store, development of mixed use, and a transit station should become key components of the this district. Permitted uses include residential, office, commercial, public, recreation & open space, institutional and light industrial (green industry) may be considered on a case by case basis.

Development and redevelopment is intended to take on the form of a walkable main street with on street parking and with access to multi-modal transportation, including bicycles and transit. This district is characterized by buildings that are one (1) to four (4) stories in height and may contain more than one use. The emphasis will be on building form and orientation to the street and public spaces, rather than type of use. To provide for the transition from this district to an adjacent Neighborhood or Corridor Overlay district development will be subject to review for architectural character, building scale and intensity so as to be compatible with and supportive to the adjacent district.

Buildings are located close to the street, and are not separated from sidewalks by surface parking lots. Wide sidewalks, plazas, and civic areas are provided to encourage pedestrian and community activities and events. Shade for pedestrians should be provided through landscaping and/or building design components, such as balconies, arcades, awnings, and canopies.

Parking occurs on-street, behind buildings or within structured parking lots. Front surface or side surface parking may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Pine Oak Square
Main Street Mixed Use District

Intent

The Pine Oak Square Main Street mixed use district is located within the north east quadrant of the West Ocala Community. It is located at the intersection Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard and NW 21st Street and the proposed NE 20th Street extension.

The intent of this district is to promote a compact and walkable urban form that serves as a gathering place for civic, social, and neighborhood commercial activities promoting redevelopment and new development in the northeast quadrant of the West Ocala Community. Pine Oak Golf Course and re development of industrial properties into green industry or mixed use, and consideration of additional amenities such as a conference center, community garden and/or a transit station should become key components of the this district. Permitted uses include residential, office, commercial, public, recreation & open space, institutional and light industrial (green industry).

Development and redevelopment is intended to take on the form of a walkable main street with on street parking and with access to multi-modal transportation, including bicycles and transit. This district is characterized by buildings that are one (1) to four (4) stories in height and may contain more than one use. The emphasis will be on building form, as well as orientation to the street and public spaces, rather than type of use. To provide for the transition from this district to an adjacent Neighborhood or Corridor Overlay district a development will be subject to review for architectural character, building scale and intensity so as to be compatible with and supportive to the adjacent district.

Buildings are located close to the street, and are not separated from sidewalks by surface parking lots. Wide sidewalks, plazas, and civic areas are provided to encourage pedestrian and community activities and events. Shade for pedestrians should be provided through landscaping and/or building design components, such as balconies, arcades, awnings, and canopies.

Parking occurs on-street, behind buildings or within structured parking lots. Front surface or side surface parking may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Pine Avenue Corridor

Downtown District Reconnected

Intent

It is the intent of the Pine Avenue Corridor-Downtown District is to promote reconnection of West Ocala and downtown Ocala within a regionally-important and vibrant hub of activity that allows residents to live, work, shop, play and grow within a highly walkable and connected urban core.

Pine Avenue (US 441) is encouraged to be road dieted to provide for a variety of modes of transportation including walking, bicycles, motor vehicle, and bus transit. It is intended to provide safe and comfortable pedestrian sidewalks and crossings to downtown uses. Streets, pedestrian ways, bikeway, open space and transit networks should reconnect this district to surrounding neighborhoods and open spaces. As the most intense residential and non-residential development within the City the Downtown land use category is generally characterized by a variety of buildings that may contain residential, public, office, and health care, education/recreation/social, service and retail uses. New development and redevelopment should be encouraged to provide a variety of uses mixed horizontally and vertically. Building form is emphasized more than use with architectural styles. To provide for the transition from this district to an adjacent Neighborhood or Corridor Overlay district a development will be subject to review for architectural character, building scale and intensity so as to be compatible with and supportive to the adjacent district.

Buildings are typically located close to the street with pedestrian space established between the street and buildings. Wide sidewalks, pocket parks, plazas, and civic areas are provided to encourage pedestrian and commercial activity at street level. Shade for pedestrians should be provided through landscaping and building design. Parking typically occurs on-street, behind buildings or in structured parking lots. Surface parking may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Housing types associated with this category are predominately attached homes like row houses, townhomes, multifamily buildings and mixed used buildings where residential units may be located over commercial uses.

Gateways & Corridors

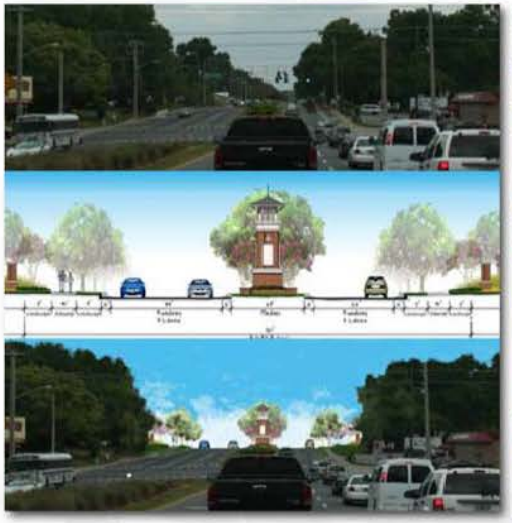
Intent

This exhibit is intenced to begin the discussions and the creative process on why and how to enhance the City's economic competiveness, identity and high quality of life through its gateways and corridors. These images and illustrations provide ideas and examples for the gateways and corridors identified on the West Ocala Community Plan.

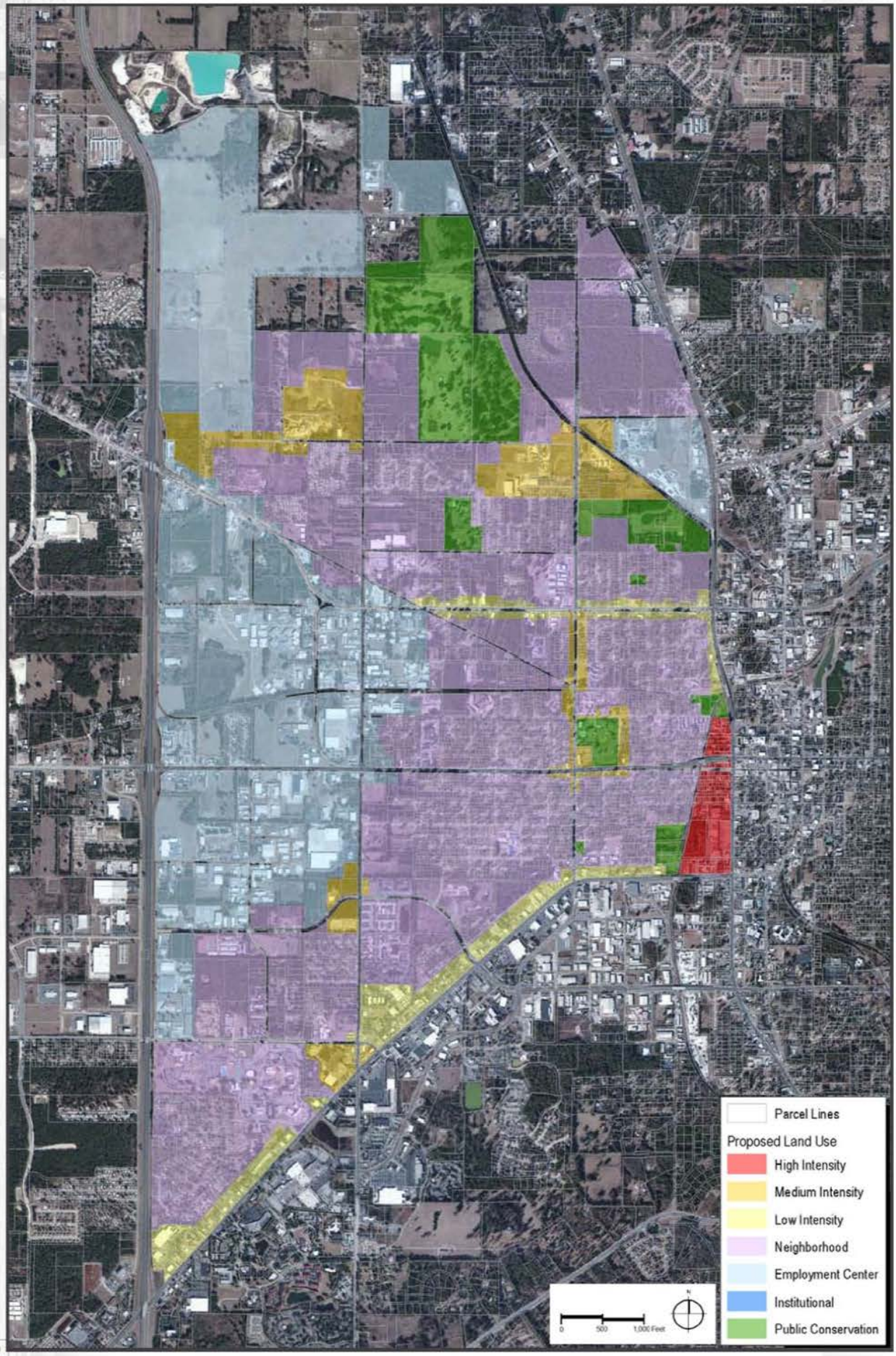
Ocala is a well known area for industry due in part to its visibility along I-75. For Ocala to be competitive in the economic marketplace drawing businesses, industry, and jobs into the City, especially into the Downtown, it will take building a stronger identity and image as a business ready city and with a high quality of life.

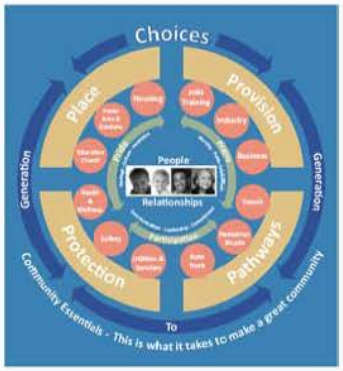
The City, private investment, and residents w ll need to create, enhance, and maintain the types of spaces, environments, features, and amenities that attract and retain employers and employees now and in the future.

A major component of the City's identity is achieved through arrival, wayfinding and sense of community, experienced at it physical gateways and along its travel corridors. It is the intent of the City's Vision and the West Ocala Community Plan to promote improvements to the gateways and corridors though public and private initiatives that will include physical improvements, adoption of building and site design guidelines and standards, adaptive reuse for buildings and properties and providing for the appropriate transition to adjacent land uses, especially neighborhoods, along designated corridors.



West Ocala Future Land Use Map





Glossary of Terms

Accessible Streets or Neighborhood:
Areas which are well connected, so that it may be approached from different directions, not only a single route or method.

Arcade:
In architecture, a series of arches carried by columns or piers that form a covered walkway.

Architectural Character:
Regarding buildings, the features and design elements of the building that give it a particular style or function.

Arterial:
Classification of a roadway; a roadway capable of carrying a large amount of vehicles.

Building Scale:
In architectural composition, the proportions of a building in relation to its elements and neighboring buildings.

Build-to Line:
A specific distance from the edge of a property line where the edge of a building must be constructed.

Champion:
An advocate for an idea, project, or goal.

Class A Office or Business:
New or high quality building or for-profit enterprise.

Collector:
Classification of a roadway; a roadway to which automobiles are funneled from inside neighborhoods.

Community Redevelopment Area (CRA):
Portion of a community designated by a local government to which taxes paid by the property owners within the portion will be used for public realm improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, parks, or beautification.

Compact:
A building concept in which structures are placed closer together so that inhabitants can easily access other structures by foot, bicycle or public transit.

Complete Street:
A roadway designed to accommodate multiple modes of transportation such as vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles and/or transit in a safe and comfortable manner.

Connected Neighborhood or Core:
Portions of areas that are accessible to one another via a street, trail or complete street.

Connectivity:
The ability to access various portions of areas. Demonstrated by few dead-end streets, more trails or with a gridded street pattern.

Consensus:
General agreement among members of a group.

Gateway:
An area or place designed and marked to delineate a neighborhood, part of a city, or another region.

Horizontal Mixed Use:
Various and different types of activities placed within one-story buildings.

Infill Development:
Structures placed in a vacant area or on a vacant parcel between existing structures, especially in urban settings or city centers.

Intensity:
Gross building square feet divided by the acreage.

Living:
In reference to a Planning document, the review and update schedule of the document, according to the desires of the document creators and stakeholders.

Placemaking:
The concept of designing an area to include all activities necessary for vibrant human interaction.

Public Realm:
Those areas for which a public entity, such as a local government, holds responsibility.

Road Diet:
The process of calming automobile traffic by decreasing or eliminating traffic lanes, and adding features that make the roadway more inviting for pedestrians or other methods of transportation.

Service Loop:
In terms of public transportation, a closed system within which a bus service or train may operate in the most efficient manner.

Streetscape:
The beautification of a roadway that may include landscaping and improved pedestrian facilities.

Sustainable (in development):
The Ability to maintain or support an activity or process over the long term. Development or growth, without significant deterioration of the economy, environment and depletion of resources on which the well-being of the City's current and future residents, work force and visitors depend.

Undergrounding:
The act of placing utility services such as electric power lines below the natural surface to improve aesthetics and safety and to guard against storm damage.

Vertical Mixed Use:
Various and different types of activities placed within multi-storied buildings.

Wayfinding:
The act of navigating an area. In development, a series of themed signs which provide direction to a landmark or feature in an urban area.

Walkable Main Street or Neighborhood:
A high intensity urban area within which a human is able to walk to all necessary services, usually less than one square mile.

Walkable Urban Form:
Type of development style that promotes higher intensities, with an emphasis placed on pedestrian facilities.