

# 2015

City of Ocala  
Tye Chighizola  
Astrida Trupovnieks  
Endira Sharma  
Jennifer Normoyle

## **WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

This document contains background information, evaluative data, goals and strategies required to implement the development of the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area along major segments of transportation corridors and in an inner core neighborhood of Ocala.

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
I. Overview .....	4
II. Introduction .....	5
III. Current Physical Conditions Assessment .....	7
IV. Current Regulatory Environment .....	17
V. Previous Plan Initiatives .....	20
VI. Challenges and Opportunities .....	23
VII. Community Participation and Preparation of Plan Concepts .....	27
VIII. Goals, Objectives and Strategies .....	28
IX. Other Funded Projects .....	48
X. Implementation Plan .....	48
XI. Financing Plan .....	51

**List of Tables**

	<u>Page</u>
Table 1. Taxable Value by Land Use 2013 .....	10
Table 2.1. West Ocala CRA Existing Land Use Summary .....	11
Table 2.2. West Ocala CRA Future Land Use 2010 Summary .....	12
Table 3. Catalytic Sites with Acreage and Ownership 2014.....	13
Table 4. Arterial Roadways with Traffic Counts and Level of Service.....	14
Table 5. Transportation Improvement Projects .....	48

## **I. Overview**

West Ocala Community Redevelopment Plan  
Great Gateways, Viable Corridors, Thriving Community

### Executive Summary

The West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area (Plan) envisions corridors that offer residents, businesses, visitors and investors inviting places to shop for their everyday needs, conduct commerce, interact with one another, and access opportunities for economic growth. It is designed to improve the appearance, function and market value of the City's key commercial corridors with the aim towards restoring economic vitality.

In accordance with Florida Statutes 163.360, Ocala City Council determined that a geographic area of West Ocala was blighted by Resolution 2013-42. This geographic area is bounded by Interstate 75 on the west, Pine Avenue on the northeast, SW College Road on the south and Northwest 28<sup>th</sup> Place to the north. The major corridors which fall within the redevelopment area include State Road 40 from I-75 on the west and Pine Avenue on the east, US 27 from I-75 on the west to Pine Avenue on the east, and State Road 200 from I-75 on the west and Pine Avenue on the east; portions of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue are also included.

It is important to understand the Plan reflects the implementation of specific capital projects and reinvestment goals, objective, and strategies on the SR 40 corridor first. This decision is based in City Council's desire to focus on SR 40 which serves as the primary gateway into the heart of the City. As revenues from tax-increment financing become available after projects on SR 40 are completed and financed, capital projects on other corridors located in the CRA will be programmed.

While SR 40 is the first redevelopment priority in terms of capital projects, the other reinvestment strategies reflected in the Plan apply to the remaining corridors without any delay. For example, Goal 3 which is defined later in this Plan involving the improvement of vacant, dilapidated and nuisance properties which are barriers to corridor redevelopment will apply to all corridors simultaneously. Should funding from the redevelopment trust fund and other sources become available, the Plan's goals, objectives and strategies relative to capital projects will be implemented throughout the CRA.

It is also important to understand that Florida Statutes 163.360(2) (c) sets forth the requirement to provide for the development of affordable housing in the Community Redevelopment Area, or state the reasons for not addressing the development of affordable housing in the area.

The West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area Plan does not address the development of affordable housing in the area. The purpose of the Plan is to concentrate on revitalization primarily on and within the major corridors in the boundaries of the CRA, with the expectation the surrounding neighborhoods would be favorably affected by the public improvements and reinvestment strategies described in this Plan.

Previous planning initiatives which closely influence the Plan including the Ocala 2035 Vision and West Ocala Community Plan (Appendix 1) do not identify the development of affordable housing

as a priority. Instead, they require the City to prepare specific Community Plans for neighborhood preservation, enhancement, redevelopment, and new development by 2022. Among the desired outcomes of the West Ocala Redevelopment Plan completed in 2012 is the creation of a CRA which focuses on physical improvements, attractive gateways, and economic sustainability by 2014. The Plan concentrates on these outcomes.

The City's Housing Element within the Comprehensive Plan (Appendix 2) addresses the provision of safe, sanitary and affordable housing in West Ocala and citywide. Nearly 100 percent of the City's CDBG allocation is dedicated to the development and rehabilitation of housing for low income families and the elderly. The City's annual SHIP funding is directed towards housing rehabilitation. The City will continue to work closely with Habitat for Humanity, Ocala Housing Authority, and other housing nonprofit organizations to address affordable housing needs, and any displacement which may occur during the rehabilitation process on an ongoing basis.

## **II. Introduction**

The City of Ocala is in the midst of an ambitious effort to redevelop its gateways and corridors into desirable centers of economic activity. Gateways and corridors are primary access points into communities, and form a coherent geographical unit that offer the greatest opportunities for attracting private investment, stimulating commerce, and producing physical and social benefits to business, visitors and residents living in nearby neighborhoods.

The West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area Plan examines gateways and corridors beyond a definition of particular locations on a map (Appendix 3). The Plan's approach to gateways and corridors looks at function and opportunity. The city's community destinations lie some distance from its highway oriented gateways. Ocala's corridors serve a broad gateway purpose, drawing people into the community.

Ocala's gateways announce that you have entered the city. As the first thing that people see when entering Ocala, these gateways create a lasting impression of the community. These gateways should be lighted, well landscaped and designed with quality so they present an enduring positive image.

The primary gateway point for Ocala that continues through the heart of the city and Downtown occurs at the SR 40 and Interstate 75 interchange. Other interchange gateway locations occur at SR 200 and US 27. The interchanges create a focal point for a gateway, and the roadway system establishes these points as the primary entrances to Ocala.

Other gateway locations located away from interchanges occur at key road junctures including Croskey Center at SR 40 and Martin Luther King Boulevard, entry into Downtown from the west at SR 40 and Pine Street, entry into Downtown from the east at SR 40 and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the entry into Ocala at NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Pine Avenue, to name a few.

Around the country, planning and economic development professionals have been working together to redevelop corridors that work for their communities. Even though Ocala's corridors are the primary neighborhood facilities for transportation, commercial services, and public services, SR 40, SR 200, US 27, Pine Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard have declined in activity and vibrancy. In the 1960s, retail demand began to shift to the outer edges of city and to the suburbs as new suburban residential areas emerged. Commercial streets, once a seam of related uses, became

locations of deteriorating buildings, empty storefronts, code enforcement violations and marginal businesses. This undersupply of quality goods and services generated poor pedestrian environments and amenities, untended streetscapes and sidewalks, and other conditions of urban blight.

Despite deteriorating economic use, SR 40, SR 200, US 27, Pine Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard will continue to serve as gateway corridors which provide visitors with primary access to Ocala and also function as the major internal transportation arteries for city and area residents. These gateways and corridors create the most significant initial image of the community for visitors and potential business investors. These features have the potential to encourage quality private investment and enhance community appearance, or alternatively, detract from these important purposes.

The formation of the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area Plan was challenging. A large part of the challenge of improving the city's gateways and corridors involved resolving the conflicting functions and objectives on these roadways and are noted here.

- The primary corridors in Ocala involve state and federal highways. The primary objective of these roads is to move traffic safely and efficiently.
- The corridors are commercial districts comprised of strip plazas, small neighborhood eating establishments, pop-up businesses, and convenience stores. These businesses seek visibility and convenient access.
- The gateways and corridors at interchanges serve the automobile-oriented traveler with fuel, car repair, and fast food. Hotels, once serving the traveling public, are housing individuals and families left homeless by the economic downturn.
- These corridors support pedestrian activity where nearby neighborhood residents often without private transportation walk to commercial and public services.
- These roadways are important parts of the community image. The appearance of infrastructure, structures, and vacant land along these roads shape the impression of Ocala formed by visitors, non area residents, and potential investors.

Orchestrating the redevelopment of West Ocala's gateways and corridors requires at least three complementary strategies: restructuring the pattern of land use and the type of development lining the corridors, incorporating the redesign and enhancement of the right-of way, and supporting the redevelopment of catalytic locations to stimulate new investment. The first of these complementary strategies will be implemented by Ocala Vision 2035, amended Comprehensive Plan, and new form-based code. The second and third complementary strategies while also a part of these urban planning tools will be implemented by the West Ocala Community Plan and West Ocala Redevelopment Plan.

The redevelopment plan for West Ocala specifically addresses the second and third complementary strategies in Section VIII.

### **III. Current Physical Conditions Assessment**

#### Population Characteristics

The CRA represents 39 percent of the total area of the West Ocala Community Plan study area. The larger study area is defined as NW 35<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, US 441(Pine Avenue) to the east, SW 3rd Street - SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street - SR 200 (SW College Road) to the south, and I-75 to the west.

The geographic area of the CRA, a segment of the West Ocala Community Plan study area, is bounded by I-75 on the west, Pine Avenue on the northeast, SW College Road on the south and NW 28<sup>th</sup> Place to the north. The major corridors which fall within the redevelopment area include SR 40 from I-75 on the west and Pine Avenue of the east, US 27 from I-75 on the west to Pine Avenue on the east, and SR 200 from I-75 on the west and Pine Avenue on the east; portions of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue are also included.

According to the 2013 Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), the City of Ocala has a population of 57,468 while the ESRI, Inc. data shows the West Ocala Community Plan study area has a population of only 10,149 in 2012. This represents 17.6 percent of the total city population.

The population distribution from the center of the larger study area represents a potential market of additional people for the purpose of supporting new development within the CRA. In 2012, 5,404 people lived within a 1 mile radius of the study area and 16,889 people lived within a two mile radius. ESRI projects these numbers to remain stable in 2017.

The center of the smaller segmented CRA is located at 2145 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Street in West Ocala. The ESRI, Inc. data shows there are currently 675 people living within one fourth mile of the geographic center, and 2,655 within one-half mile. This means that existing and future development within the CRA has pedestrian access to a potential market of more 2650 people on a daily basis. This is perhaps one of the best indications of the continuing profitability of small, neighborhood retail in West Ocala.

#### Household Characteristics

There are 1,497 households within the study area compared to 24,395 within the City. There are 2,108 households within a 1 mile radius of the study area, 6,279 within a two mile radius, and 13,393 within a three mile radius. The percentage of these households with no vehicle is 21 percent, 15 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

The study area average household size is 2.8 people compared to 2.33 people in the City. Appendix 4 - Statutory Requirements 163.362 details additional information regarding housing characteristics. The residential units map found in Appendix 4.4 depicts the housing characteristics found in the CRA.

There are a total of 252 households within one-fourth mile of the center of the CRA, and 1,117 households within one-half mile. Of family households with two or more people within one-half mile of the center, slightly less than 25 percent are husband-wife families, approximately 30 percent have no spouse present, and approximately 28 percent have a female head of household.

Approximately 25 percent of households are owner-occupied of which 15 percent are owned with a mortgage, and 10 percent are owned free and clear.

### Race and Ethnicity

Just over 63 percent of the City population is non Hispanic white, and 20.4 percent is African American, and 11.7 percent are Hispanic or Latino. The race and ethnicity within the study area is different than compared to the City. There is a higher proportion of the study area population that is African American, or 78.8 percent.

Within one-half mile of the center, 60 percent is African-American, and 23 percent is of Hispanic origin.

### Income, Education and Employment Characteristics

#### *Income*

The per capita income in the study area is \$10,206 as compared to the City of Ocala per capita income of \$22,215. Forty percent of the households within the study area have incomes less than \$15,000 and 33 percent of households have incomes between \$15,000 and \$34,999.

From within one-half mile of the center of the CRA, 30 percent of all households had annual incomes of less than \$15,000, 18 percent had incomes between \$15,000 and \$24,999, and 23 percent had incomes between \$25,000 and \$34,999.

Median household income divides the income distribution into two equal groups having incomes above the median, and the other having incomes below the median. The median household income in the study area is \$20,299 which is just over fifty percent of the City's median household income of \$ 39,806.

While the median household income is \$20,229, the median household income is \$21,182 within a one mile radius, \$27,505 within a two mile radius, and \$32,849 within a three mile radius.

#### *Education*

While 33 percent of the study area has at least some college education, only 46 percent are White-Collar Employed, as compared to 23 percent and 60 percent, respectively, for the City of Ocala.

From within one-half mile of the center, 28 percent of the population at least 25 years of age had a High School diploma, 23 percent had some college, 15 percent had an Associate Degree, and only four percent had a Bachelor's Degree.

#### *Employment*

From within one-half mile of the center of the CRA, 82 percent of the civilian population at least 16 years of age in the labor force is employed, and 18.5 percent is unemployed. Forty percent has white collar occupations, 37 percent has blue collar occupations, and 23 percent work in Services.

### Housing Characteristics

According to ESRI, there are 1,497 occupied housing units within the boundaries of the study area. Fifty-four percent are renter occupied units, and 46 percent are owner occupied. Of total housing units, approximately 13 percent are vacant. Within the CRA, there are 1,048 residential parcels with homes. There are 757 vacant (undeveloped) residential parcels.

Within one-half mile of the center of the CRA, 47 percent of the owner-occupied housing units ranged in value between \$50,000 and \$99,000. Thirty-three percent of owner-occupied housing units were under \$50,000 in value.

### Commercial Real Estate

According to GIS data for Marion County, there are approximately 5,201,439 square feet of commercial building real estate within the West CRA. Approximately, 60 percent of this space was vacant in 2013.

In the retail sector, the CRA is comprised of 108 single tenant retail related parcels with a total building square footage of 1,517,686 square feet. Multi-tenant retail comprises a total of 1,512,341 square feet of building space. Convenience store parcels encompass 60,083 square feet. In the office sector, the CRA contains 635,770 square feet. In the restaurant sector, the CRA contains 212,831 square feet. In the banking sector, the CRA contains 88,578 square feet.

Of all other commercial sectors, including hotel rooms, vehicle dealers, mobile home dealers, and car wash parcels, the CRA contains 1,174,148 square feet of building area.

### Industrial Real Estate

According to GIS data for Marion County, there are 3,803,384 square feet of buildable industrial area within the West CRA. Approximately, 15 percent of this space was vacant in 2013.

### CRA Taxable Value by Land Use

Of the roughly 2,376.3 acres of property in the CRA as of 2013, 1,936.6 acres are taxable. Compared to the existing CRA (374.8 taxable acres of 548.3 total), this number is high. According to 2013 Marion County Property Appraiser data the number of undeveloped properties in the CRA is 1,100; this number includes all zoning classifications, as well as DRAs and WRAs.

**Table 1 - Taxable Value by Land Use 2013**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Taxable Value</b>	<b>% of Base</b>
Undeveloped	\$20,290,876	4.32%
Developed Single Family Residential	\$21,215,858	4.51%
Developed Multi-Family Residential	\$28,115,740	5.98%
Developed Commercial	\$330,640,333	70.32%
Developed Industrial	\$63,279,731	13.46%
Developed Institutional	\$4,868,971	1.04%
Developed Utility	\$1,797,646	0.38%
<b>Total Taxable Value</b>	<b>\$470,209,155</b>	

Existing Land Use

The land use analysis describes how property is being used according to the City of Ocala Land Use Map and the Marion County Property Appraiser. It indicates which uses are most prevalent, where similar uses are clustered, the size of those uses, and opportunities for new users.

The existing land use analysis reveals that Commercial is the most common use in the CRA, accounting for nearly 29 percent of the total land area. This use includes mostly retail, gas station, fast food, and convenience stores. Most of the retail centers are older strip commercial centers with some viable businesses. There are approximately 78 office buildings, mostly one story, housing various uses, including professional, medical services, and community non-profit organizations.

The USDA defines a food desert as urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Based on this definition, West Ocala is a food desert, grocery stores providing fresh food options to residents are lacking in the commercial uses in this area.

Undeveloped land is the second most common use in the CRA with nearly 24 percent of the total land area. While a portion of land which is listed as vacant by the property appraiser, a closer look reveals there are portions dedicated to surface parking, water retention areas, and public open space.

Industrial is the third most common use in the CRA with nearly 16 percent of total land area.

Residential is the fourth most common use in the CRA with 14 percent of total land area.

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Agricultural	14.91	0.63%
Commercial	690.34	28.97%
DRA	64.94	2.72%
Education	30.52	1.28%
Government	130.82	5.49%
Industrial	375.86	15.77%
Institutional	29.77	1.25%
Office	90.89	3.81%
Recreation	2.7	0.11%
Residential	342.16	14.36%
Undeveloped	570.28	23.93%
Worship	40.09	1.68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,383.28</b>	<b>100 %</b>

*Existing Land Use Data utilized from EAR 2011*

Existing Zoning

Zoning addresses use, height, setbacks, and Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The underlying zoning for the majority of the property within the CRA is M-1 Light Industrial, although there are lots which are zoned B-4 General Business District, B-2 Community Business Districts, and R-2 Two Family Residential District.

More intense zoning classifications, such as industrial uses can be found in specific industrial districts. Commercial and office uses can be found along major arterial corridors with residential neighborhoods located on collector and local roadways. Moving east along the corridors from I-75, within the CRA there is a transition of uses; arterial corridors tend to be generally commercial, interspersed with undeveloped land and residential. North and west of the corridors, the dominant land uses become single family and multi-family residential.

Future Land Use

The City’s future land use map shows land use types and densities the city has determined to be the most desirable for a particular area. The map defines large geographic areas which are proposed for six types of development that extend from the most urban at the core to the least urban at the edge of the City. The availability of public services and facilities (including transportation, water and wastewater, drainage, parks and recreation, fire protection, and police protection), environmental limitations and compatibility with surrounding land uses are the primary factors which determine the density, intensity, and type of development that may occur.

Although services, environmental limitations and surrounding land uses are major considerations when defining land uses, natural characteristics of the land, accessibility, public choice and transportation network also define future land use and densities.

In 2010, the City of Ocala amended its Comprehensive Plan to incorporate:

<b>Table 2.2 - West Ocala CRA Future Land Use 2010 Summary</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Neighborhood	635.43	24.94%
Public	79.51	3.12%
Employment Center	697	27.36%
High Intensity/CBD	103.63	4.07%
Medium Intensity	320.73	12.59%
Low Intensity	711.4	27.92%
Total	2,547.7	100 %

*Future Land Use data utilized from City of Ocala's Comprehensive Plan*

### Future Form-Based Code

Form based code (FBC) is a means of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form by creating a predictable public and private physical realm with a lesser focus on land use. Over the years, urban sprawl, deterioration of historic neighborhoods, and an under consideration of pedestrian safety has discouraged a compact, walk-able urbanism. The form-based code is a tool to address these deficiencies and provide local governments with the regulatory means to achieve future development objectives.

Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes, presented in both diagrams and text, are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale of development.

This is in contrast to conventional zoning's focus on the segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through mutually exclusive parameters like floor area ratios, dwelling units per acre, setbacks, and parking ratios.

In 2010, as part of the approval of the City's Ocala 2035 Vision, the City included a recommendation to develop a Form-Based Code to regulate the desired site design and building form for appropriate areas of the City particularly in the downtown area. In 2013, the City revised their existing Comprehensive Plan and included the following policy regarding the adoption of a Form Based Code:

Policy 4.1: By 2014, the City shall create and adopt a Form Based Code as part of its Land Development Code, to promote and regulate the desired site design and building form for designated areas and, in connection therewith, shall consider design themes established in the Ocala 2035 Vision. The Form Based Code shall include a regulating plan that establishes the specific geographic area within which these standards apply.

The City also required that development within the High Intensity Future Land Use Designation, which includes the downtown, shall be regulated by a Form Based Code.

Staff is currently working on an ordinance for the creation of a downtown Form Based Code. The code is scheduled to be adopted in the first quarter of 2015.

Ownership Patterns

The CRA has large tracts of land under single ownership which will facilitate redevelopment. Of the large tracts (parcels totaling 5 or more acres in size) of land lining the corridors, 40 are under single ownership and 4 have more than one owner.

The introduction of the Plan identifies the strategy of promoting the redevelopment of catalytic locations to stimulate new investment. Twelve sites are identified as high profile, catalytic project areas that possess the potential to transform the surrounding area and have a positive influence of future development. Lining SR 40, the catalytic locations are located at:

- 1) Eastern Intersection of I-75 and SR40
- 2) Vacant Lot Adjacent to Golden Flake at parcel 22763-000-00
- 3) Skyline located at 3030 W Silver Springs Blvd
- 4) Intersection of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SR40
- 5) Crosky Center located at 1501 W Silver Springs Blvd
- 6) Western Intersection of South Pine Avenue and SR40

Of the catalytic site locations, 3 are under single ownership.

**Table 3 - Catalytic Sites with Acreage and Ownership 2014**

Catalytic Site	Acres	Multiple Ownership	Single Ownership
Eastern Intersection of SR40 & I-75	413.61	X	
Intersection of 27th Ave & SR40	18.73	X	
Croskey Center - 1501 W Silver Springs Blvd	28.64	X	
Gaitway Plaza - 2701 SW College Rd	23.16	X	
Paddock Mall - 3100 SW College Rd	62.32	X	
Pine Shopping Center - 720 S Pine Ave	11.39	X	
Western Intersection of Pine Ave & SR40	5.06	X	
Skyline - 3030 W Silver Springs Blvd	20.64		X
Western Intersection of SW 10th St & Pine Ave	3.9	X	
Western Intersection of SW 17th St & Pine Ave	9.09	X	
Vacant Lot Adjacent to Golden Flake - 22763-000-00	27.8		X
Vacant Lot Adjacent to Pine Shopping Center - 2851-002-000	9.87		X

Circulation and Block Pattern

Block pattern describes the way in which the lots, blocks, and streets are laid out in the context of natural features. Block patterns reflect the historic context, as well. Older communities where the primary mode of transportation is walking may have shorter blocks than newer areas supporting vehicular traffic.

The West Ocala CRA is characterized as having 391 blocks in a primarily gridded pattern. The major roadways within the CRA are SR 40, SR 200, US 27, and portions of Martin Luther King Boulevard and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These facilities are classified as arterial roadways. The local streets within the CRA are generally laid out in a regular gridded pattern.

The major roadways are typically 4 - 6 lanes with 2 - 3 lanes in each direction, a grass or concrete median, and have at least one turn lane and shoulders in each direction. However, gateway corridors leading into the City of Ocala fail to give travelers a clear identity of Ocala. Contributing to this identity problem is the location and auto-oriented nature of buildings along State Road 40, State Road 200 and US 27. Most of the commercial buildings are set back from the road right-of-way and are fronted by expanses of parking, creating a large void between the road and buildings.

The existing traffic conditions (daily volumes) are shown in the table below.

Roadway	From	To	Number of Lanes	ADT	LOS	v/C
I-75	SR 200	SR 40	6	69,000*	B	0.74
	SR 40	US 27	6	63,500*	B	0.68
SR 40	I-75	SW 27th Ave	4	29,500*	C	0.74
	SW 27th Ave	US 441	4	24,000*	C	0.60
US 27	I-75	SW 27th Ave	4	19,900*	C	0.50
	SW 27th Ave	US 441	4	26,500*	C	0.67
SR200	I-75	SW 27th Ave	6	43,000*	C	0.72
	SW 27th Ave	MLK Jr. Ave	6	38,500*	C	0.64
	MLK Jr. Ave	US 441	4	26,500*	C	0.67
*Data from road segments were averaged v/C = percentage of roadway capacity utilized Source: Marion County TPO 2009-2013 Traffic Counts & Trends Manual <a href="http://www.ocalafl.org/uploadedFiles/TPO_Services/2013%20DRAFT%20TC_TM%20Manual.pdf">http://www.ocalafl.org/uploadedFiles/TPO_Services/2013%20DRAFT%20TC_TM%20Manual.pdf</a>						

There are 26 signalized intersections, with as many safe pedestrian crossings, and 166, 866 linear miles of sidewalks.

Bicycle lanes can be found scattered throughout the CRA. Although bike lanes are inconsistent, the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is working towards closing gaps with the 2035 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Bike Ped Master Plan). Upon completion of the pedestrian bicycle

facility improvements set out in the 2035 Bike Ped Plan will considerably improve safety throughout the CRA.

Appendix 5 depicts existing bicycle lanes and gaps in the West Ocala CRA.

Sidewalks exist along all major corridors in the CRA, connecting commercial areas to residential. Additionally, sidewalks can be found along collector and local streets throughout neighborhoods; however, there are areas in which gaps still exist. The City has identified approximately 8,281 linear feet where gaps in sidewalks currently exist in the West Ocala CRA.

Appendix 6 depicts existing sidewalks and gaps in the West Ocala CRA.

Staff is currently assessing right-of-way availability to gain understanding of the feasibility of adding additional sidewalks to the areas where sidewalks are lacking.

Public transportation currently serves the entire CRA. SunTran, a traditional, fixed-route, public transit system exists within the City and services most of the CRA. Many employment centers, such as those located in the industrial districts, as defined by the Future Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan, do have direct access to public transportation routes. SunTran has routes connecting the industrial centers south of SR 40 and east of I-75, on North Pine Ave, and most of US 27 primarily to the residential districts within in the CRA.

Schools

Schools located within the CRA include: Madison Street Elementary, Howard Elementary, and Contemporary Christian Academy. Schools located just outside the boundaries that are attended by residents of the CRA include: College Park Elementary, Dr. N H Jones Elementary, Howard Middle, Hale Academy, and the College of Central Florida.

The 2035 Bike Ped Plan will address the provision of safe routes to schools by providing sidewalks along all streets within a 2 mile radius of schools.

Open Space

A positive feature of the CRA is the amount of existing open space and the walk-ability to public parks from neighborhoods. There are currently 7 public parks and 2 walking trails in the CRA. This compares to 73 parks and 8 walking trails city wide. A map outlining Open Space in the CRA can be found in Appendix 4.2.

The parks located in the West Ocala CRA are:

- 1) Poinciana Park
- 2) Second Chance Tot Lot
- 3) Martin Luther King Recreation Complex
- 4) Rivers Tot Lot
- 5) Thompson Bowl
- 6) Lamb Park
- 7) OPD Playground

Additionally, the following parks located within West Ocala neighborhoods:

- 1) Lillian Bryant Park
- 2) Pine Oaks Golf Course
- 3) Pine Oaks Preserve Disc Course
- 4) Scott Springs
- 5) Polly Palmer at Paddock Park
- 6) MLK Memorial
- 7) Boys & Girls Club

In 2010, the City completed its City of Ocala Recreation & Parks Master Plan. The purpose of the plan was to identify current recreation conditions and deficiencies, and provide recommendations for corrective measures by 2035. The recommendations of the Parks Master Plan have been incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The Parks Master Plan is strategically broken into five sub districts. West Ocala spans two sub districts, Northwest and Southwest; the West Ocala CRA is contained within those two sub districts.

Presently, the Northwest District is deficient in two neighborhood parks and almost four neighborhood parks in 2035. The Southwest District is deficient nine neighborhood parks and will be deficient by nine neighborhood parks by 2035.

The Martin Luther King Recreation Complex, a 24.01 acre complex located at 1510 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street, is located in the West Ocala CRA. The buildings located within the complex include the Hampton Aquatic Fun Center and the E.D. Croskey Recreation Center. The Parks Master Plan envisions a significant renovation and expansion of the Martin Luther King Recreation Complex, and a demolition and new construction of the Aquatic Fun Center and Recreation Center. The new facilities are intended to enhance walk-ability and improve West Ocala's accessibility to health, fitness, and community well-being.

In order to promote walk-ability, the City anticipates the need to acquire land to provide additional walking trails and a linear park connecting West Ocala to downtown.

Pocket parks, small parks accessible to the general public, promote walk-ability and can have a positive influence on neighboring property values. The Department of Recreation and Parks is currently developing plans to add pocket parks on surplus city-owned land in West Ocala. There are approximately 12 potential parcels of surplus land in the West Ocala CRA.

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan is found in Appendix 7.

### *Neighborhood Impacts*

The following section describes the potential impacts of redevelopment efforts on the residential neighborhood of the Community Redevelopment Area and surrounding areas. While neighborhood impacts have been considered for the specific redevelopment goals, objectives and strategies recommended in this Plan, it should be noted that all of these projects are in the early stages of planning. Therefore, some impacts resulting from their implementation may as yet be

undetermined. As these projects become more clearly defined, and additional impacts are identified, this section of the Plan will be amended. Other actions described in the Plan for subsequent years are subject to further refinement.

#### *Relocation of Displaced Residents and Businesses*

Over the long term, relocations may be contemplated by this Plan in connection with projects. While very limited relocations are anticipated, it is important to note that changing conditions and modifications to planned projects may result in residential and/or business displacement through sale and purchase of private property. In the event that existing or future CRA projects do require the relocation of residents or businesses, a relocation plan will be submitted as a component of the project reflecting close coordination with Ocala Housing Authority

It is anticipated the CRA and the City, as well as private developers will expand the housing stock and housing variety as the economic activity to the area is restored. This will provide additional opportunities to relocate residents within the CRA boundaries.

To protect the residents and businesses within the CRA, the CRA will formally adopt a relocation policy containing procedures for relocation, and work with existing housing agencies and partners to follow established procedures.

The Plan anticipates the ability to acquire land for redevelopment purposes. As projects are identified, purchase and relocation budgets will be established and submitted to the CRA for approval.

## **IV. Current Regulatory Environment**

### Florida Statutes

In 1969, the Florida State Legislature enacted Part II, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, enabling local units of government to establish a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to improve slum and blighted areas within their jurisdiction.

Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes states: “Blighted area” means an area in which there are a substantial number of deteriorated, or deteriorating structures, in which conditions, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies, are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property, and in which two or more of the following factors are present:

- a. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, or public transportation facilities; roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities;
- b. Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to the finding of such condition;
- c. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- d. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- e. Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- f. Inadequate and outdated building density patterns;

- g. Falling lease rates per square foot of office, commercial, or industrial space compared to the remainder of the county or municipality;
- h. Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- i. Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the county or municipality
- j. Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- k. Fire and emergency medical service calls to the area proportionately higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- l. A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- m. Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area; or
- n. Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.

As established above, under the definition of “blighted area” set forth in Florida Statutes, in addition to the substantial number of deteriorating structures and conditions leading to economic distress, or endanger to life and property, two or more of the fourteen (14) listed additional factors must be present.

The Finding of Necessity attached in the Appendix 8 and 9 demonstrates the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area meets the statutory definition of blighted area which has led to economic distress or endangers life or property. It further identifies at least four of the additional factors in the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area.

Specifically,

- Approximately 77 percent of structures in the area have a below-average Quality of Structure, significantly higher than the 43.60 percent of such structures within the City as a whole that have such characteristics. Further, 16.98 percent of all City structures with Quality of Structure issues are located within the West Ocala CRA.
- Over 39 percent of all parcels located within the West Ocala CRA are vacant and/or undeveloped.
- 65.71 percent of the structures in the West Ocala CRA were built before 1979. There is a high correlation between the age of such structures and the Quality of Structure grade for the properties. Of the 758 structures built prior to 1959, 743 (or 98.02 percent) have a sub-standard Quality of Structure.
- Approximately one in three of all residential and commercial parcels in the West Ocala CRA have lot sizes below those required by the City’s Code of Ordinances, and do not meet contemporary design standards.
- Since 2007, the assessed property values within the West Ocala CRA have declined almost 23 percent (compared to a net decline of only approximately 20 percent within the City as a whole.)

- There are 115 septic tanks in the West Ocala CRA.
- The deteriorated or deteriorating structures have resulted in economic distress, endanger life or property.

The foregoing discussion formed the basis of the acceptance of the Finding of Necessity for the establishment of the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area in 2013.

### Enterprise Zones

Section 290.001 through 290.016, Florida Statutes (the Florida Enterprise Zone Act) authorizes the establishment of enterprise zones. Enterprise Zones are established in areas demonstrating pervasive poverty, unemployment, and general distress.

Pursuant to Section 290.0055 and 290.0057, Florida Statutes, the City created an enterprise zone development agency prior to making application to the State for recognition of an enterprise zone within its jurisdiction, and adopted a strategic plan.

Pursuant to Section 290.0057(2), Florida Statutes, the City's Planning and Zoning Commission submitted its written recommendations the plan conformed to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

On November 17, 2009, the City Council adopted ordinance 2010-12 establishing Article VI in the chapter 106 of the Code of Ordinances specifically for the establishment of the Enterprise Zone. On the same date, City Council passed resolution 2009-10 which nominated the area in West Ocala as a part of the City's designated enterprise zone, created the City's Enterprise Zone Development Agency, adopted the City's enterprise zone strategic plan, and authorized the application to the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development requesting establishment of the City of Ocala's Enterprise Zone.

Nearly 25 percent of the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area falls within the Enterprise Zone, or 1,560 acres out of a total of 6,296 acres.

### Brownfield Redevelopment Area (BRA)

The primary goals of the Brownfield Redevelopment Act are to reduce public health and environmental hazards on existing commercial and industrial sites that are abandoned or underused based on these hazards and create incentives to encourage cleanup and redevelopment.

The City initiated its Brownfields program in 1996. Its Brownfields Redevelopment Area covers approximately 7.8 square miles. Nearly 45 percent of the BRA is located in West Ocala, or 1,121 acres out of a total 2,500 acres.

The City of Ocala is able to identify, categorize and monitor forty-five (45) West Ocala sites of environmental concern which pose an impediment to redevelopment efforts. Redevelopment efforts are further impeded by substantial poverty, unemployment, and limited educational attainment.

Approximately 35 percent of the West Ocala population is below the poverty level which is more than one and two-thirds times the city rate of poverty of 20.7 percent, and almost two and a quarter times the county rate of 15.6 percent. Transportation is a challenge for the community, 48 percent of residents have no access to personal transportation, compared to 12 percent and 6 percent for the city and county, respectively.

Brownfield Assessment Grants of \$200,000 each were received in 1999, 2004, and 2006. Since 1999, the Ocala brownfields program has accomplished the following:

- Developed a program for community education, involvement, and accessibility related to environmental issues leading to the improved health of the community
- Assembled a Brownfield Advisory Board of diverse community stakeholders
- Provided a program for community environmental stewardship, public input on environmentally distressed sites, and the maximum use of existing infrastructure
- Establishment of 700 jobs
- Facilitated property transactions of more than 56 acres within the BRA
- Performed Phase I Environmental Assessments for 48 Brownfield Sites
- Performed Phase II Environmental Assessments for 16 Brownfield Sites
- Remediation of 3 Brownfield Sites

Each year since 2011, the City has requested \$200,000 in brownfields hazardous substance assessment funding and an additional \$200,000 in petroleum assessment funding from the US EPA to address assessment activities within its brownfields area. These requests have not been funded.

The City has taken steps to increase its brownfields program activity to restore its success in achieving assessment funding.

## **V. Previous Planning Initiatives**

The overall vision for West Ocala's corridors was initially expressed in the Ocala Vision 2035 and Future Land Use Element (FLU) of the City of Ocala's Comprehensive Plan.

### Ocala Vision 2035

Adopted by resolution as a component of the Comprehensive Plan, the Ocala 2035 Vision Statement and Principles include a composite of goals and policies which describe Ocala's physical character and function in the year 2035 and beyond. This document describes the look, function and methods to achieve a community of attractive neighborhoods supported by attractive and viable gateways that invite people to experience our dynamic city. The Ocala 2035 Vision is found in the Appendix 10 of this Plan.

### Future Land Use Element

The Future Land Use Element (FLU), the central element of the Comprehensive Plan, provides perhaps the most vivid illustration for how the Ocala 2035 Vision will be realized through goals, objectives and policies (Appendix 4.3). The West Ocala Community Redevelopment Plan is

consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Section VIII specifically identifies strategies to accomplish many of the Future Land Use Element objectives and policies.

The consistency between the FLU and CRA Plan is given below:

*FLU:* Objective 1 states, “City shall incorporate the vision, principles and strategies of the Ocala 2035 Vision into the City’s organizational and administrative structure to promote its long-term implementation.” Policy 1.2 requires the City to evaluate and program capital improvements consistent with the Ocala 2035 Vision.

*CRA Plan:* Highlighted throughout the Plan, are direct references to the integration of the Comprehensive Plan, Ocala 2035 Vision, West Ocala Community Plan, and the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Plan. Section X: Implementation Plan details these documents as West Ocala’s redevelopment implementation tools, and describes how the coordination of goals, objectives and strategies will be achieved within the City’s administrative structure and Capital Improvement Plan.

*FLU:* Objective 3 states, “City shall geographically identify Ocala’s neighborhoods and, where appropriate, develop Community Plans.” Policy 3.2 requires the City to prepare specific Community Plans for neighborhood preservation, enhancement, redevelopment, and new development. Policy 3.4 requires the City to program and fund capital improvements projects identified in the Community Plan to improve the appearance of the public realm to attract private investment.

*CRA Plan:* Goal 1, Objectives 1 through 7, Strategies 1 through 10 are consistent with enhancement, redevelopment and new development.

Goal 2, Objectives 1 through 4, and the illustrations serving as visual strategies are consistent with preservation, enhancement, redevelopment, and new development.

Section X: Implementation Plan describes incorporating public realm improvement recommendations into the City’s Capital Improvement Plan.

*FLU:* Objective 4 states, “City shall establish physical character and design standards to protect its natural and man-made beauty, rich history, and natural and cultural resources.” Policy 4.1 requires the City to create and adopt a Form Based Code as part of its Land Development Code to promote and regulate the desired site design and building for designated areas in connection with the themes of the Ocala 2035 Vision. Policy 4.4 requires the City to prepare design standards for gateway features on SR 200, SR 40, US 441, US 27 and Interstate 75 to create attractive “front doors” to the community. Policy 4.5 requires the City to identify gateways and other special areas through the community planning process.

*CRA Plan:* The Plan’s Executive Summary, Introduction, Previous Planning Initiatives and Section X: Implementation Plan are consistent with Objective 4 of the FLU. Additionally, Goals 1 and 2 along with all associated objectives and strategies are consistent with Objective 4.

*FLU:* Objective 5 states, “The City shall plan and promote diverse mixed-use centers offering convenient shopping and services easily accessible by neighborhood residents wishing to either walk, ride a bicycle, use public transit, drive motorized vehicles, or utilize other viable mobility options.

Policy 5.1 requires the City to create a current and updated inventory of vacant or underutilized properties with mixed-use zoning, or within one-quarter mile of a transit corridor that are proximate to residential neighborhoods. This inventory will be available for business recruitment and relocation purposes.

*CRA Plan:* Goal 3, Objectives 1, 4, and 5 are consistent with this Objective 5.

*FLU:* Objective 6 states, “The City will implement the development patterns depicted in the Ocala 2035 Vision.” Policy 6.1 requires wide sidewalks, pocket parks, shade, landscaping, plazas, and areas to encourage pedestrian activity.

*CRA Plan:* Goal 2, Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4 and associated strategies are consistent with Objective 6.

*FLU:* Objective 7 states, “The City intends to promote quality urban design in the development and redevelopment of automobile-oriented suburban corridors.” Policy 7.1 requires the City to establish Corridor Overlay guidelines that incorporate physical gateways to provide a sense of arrival into the community.

*CRA Plan:* Goal 2, Objectives 2, 3, and 4 and associated strategies are consistent with Objective 7.

*FLU:* Objective 9 states, “The City will promote attractive design and the concentrated and intense urban form described in the Ocala 2035 Vision, Best Practice Design Guidelines.” Policy 9.1 requires building entrances to be oriented towards the public right-of-way. Front facades shall include windows to provide “eyes on the street” and increase pedestrian comfort and safety. Policy 9.3 requires site design to incorporate native landscaping to provide shade for pedestrians and buildings. Policy 9.5 addresses efficient stormwater connections in order to maximize development potential on-site.

*CRA Plan:* Goal 2, Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4, and associated strategies are consistent with Objective 9. Goal 1, Strategy 7 specifically addresses efficient stormwater connections.

### West Ocala Vision & Community Plan

In response to the City Council’s desire to focus first on the implementation of the Ocala 2035 Vision in West Ocala, the West Ocala Community Vision and Community Plan was completed in 2012. Foremost in this plan, were the designation of a West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area, and the development of a Community Redevelopment Plan.

The consistency between the Vision & Community Plan and the CRA Pan is given below:

*Vision & Community Plan:* Providing development incentives to promote business/economic development within West Ocala

*CRA Plan:* Goal 1, Objectives 1, 4 and 7, and all associated strategies are consistent with this recommendation.

*Vision & Community Plan:* Enhancing attractiveness of West Ocala

*CRA Plan:* Goal 2, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and all associated strategies are consistent with this recommendation. Goal 3, Objectives 2, 4, and 5 and all associated strategies are consistent with this recommendation.

*Vision & Community Plan:* Improving the connection between downtown Ocala and West Ocala

*CRA Plan:* Goal 1, Objectives 2, 3, 5 and 6 and Strategies 8 and 9 are consistent with this recommendation

*Vision & Community Plan:* Promoting infill development

*CRA Plan:* Goal 1, Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 and Strategies 1-9 are consistent with this recommendation.

*Vision & Community Plan:* Reducing vacant and blighted properties

*CRA Plan:* Goal 3, Objective 1-5, and all associated strategies are consistent with this recommendation

*Vision & Community Plan:* Incorporating the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan to West Ocala's special districts, corridors and gateways.

*CRA Plan:* Highlighted throughout the Plan, are direct references to integrating the Comprehensive Plan, Ocala 2035 Vision, West Ocala Community Plan, and the West Ocala Community Redevelopment Plan. Section X: Implementation Plan details these documents as West Ocala's redevelopment implementation tools.

Goal 1, Objectives 1-6 specifically address corridors. Goal 2, Objectives 1-4 and all associated strategies specifically address special neighborhood districts, entranceways and gateways.

The West Ocala Vision & Community Redevelopment Plan is included in the Appendix 1 of this Plan.

## **VI. Challenges and Opportunities**

On May 6, 2013, the Ocala City Council adopted Resolution 2013-42 approving the West Ocala Finding of Necessity which demonstrated blighting conditions in accordance with Florida Statute 163.330-163.450.

The West Ocala Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Plan (Plan) provides the framework for the redevelopment of a specific area of Ocala. The West Ocala CRA is bounded by Interstate 75 on the west, Pine Avenue on the northeast, SW College Road on the south and Northwest 29<sup>th</sup> Place to the north. This area is comprised of long segments of SR 40, SR 200, US 27, Pine Avenue and Martin Luther King Avenue, the Plan's primary corridors. Neighborhoods closest to the urban core, located between Martin Luther King Avenue to the west, Pine Avenue to the east, and north/south of SR 40 are also included.

As illustrated in the Existing Land Use Map, the CRA consists primarily of residential, industrial, and undeveloped lots along SR 40, a mixture of commercial, office, and undeveloped parcels along Pine Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and a majority of commercially developed lots along SW College Road (SR 200). Uses along US 27, 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd are comprised of many small single family residential parcels, large industrial parcels, large undeveloped lots, with several institutional uses and places of worship scattered throughout. The commercial development can be characterized by marginal or empty strip shopping centers, gas and automobile service stations, and fast food restaurants.

The transportation corridors in West Ocala identified above function as gateways connecting visitors, citizens, and area residents from the interchanges and outer neighborhoods to downtown and other in-town locations. They often serve as the only connection between the interstate and neighborhoods to offices, schools, institutions and retail outlets. In the last 50 years, West Ocala's commercial strip corridors have aged and lost their attractiveness as development locations. These locations are experiencing disinvestment, resulting in vacant, abandoned and underutilized property, such as abandoned gas stations, dilapidated motor courts and obsolete retail strip centers. Despite disinvestment, these corridors remain key parts of the regional transportation network and are often well positioned for reuse and development because of the high volumes of traffic.

In accordance with FS 163.360 (1), the City Council approved the West Ocala Finding of Necessity (FON) demonstrating the existence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures. In addition, the FON demonstrated economic disuse by illustrating a decrease in aggregate assessed property values over the last five years, faulty lot layout unsuitable to meet today's contemporary development standards, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, and deterioration of site or other structural improvements.

For the purpose of assessing deterioration, the following information from the Marion County Property Appraiser was evaluated:

- 1) Quality of Structure- This information is generated pursuant to the "Field Operations Real Property Residential Quality Grade Manual." A similar manual for commercial quality grade does not exist. The manual discusses how construction quality is used in the valuation process through the assignment of grade factors. It provides guidelines for determining the quality grade of improvement based upon types of materials, design features and workmanship characteristics of each quality grade. This manual and pictures of the graded improvements are contained in the Appendix of the FON.
- 2) Actual Age-According to the Florida Real Property Appraisal Guidelines, adopted by the Florida Department of Revenue, "Actual age is the chronological age of real property improvements." The Florida Real Property Appraisal Guidelines are located in the Appendix of the FON.
- 3) Effective Age-also according to the Florida Real Property Appraisal Guidelines, "Effective age is the age indicated by the physical condition of real property improvements. Effective age is determined by consideration of the actual age of the property, the quality of maintenance, any renovation, and any observed deferred maintenance."

Detailed data concerning Quality of Structure is found in the FON. It is summarized below:

- 1,602 structures, representing approximately 76.2 percent of the structures in the West Ocala CRA have issues concerning Quality of Structure.

The age of buildings, both residential and commercial, is a potential indicator to the declining conditions of the CRA. Aging buildings typically require increased maintenance and repair. Additionally, the interior space, exterior appearance, and functional aspects of older buildings may be considered obsolete for modern market demands. Because of their age, older buildings are more difficult to properly maintain and their value typically does not support additional investment. Further, a concentration of older, poorly maintained and deteriorated buildings creates many negative influences in an area including a loss of economic status, a lack of interest in new development, and increased occurrence of crime, and decreased revenues for businesses.

Detailed data concerning Actual Age is found in the FON. It is summarized below:

- Approximately, 65.71 percent of the structures with the West Ocala CRA are over 30 years old.
- 89 percent of all structures in West Ocala between 33-42 years old have Quality of Structure issues
- 89 percent of all structures in West Ocala between 43-52 years old have Quality of Structures issues
- 98 percent of all structures more than 53 years old have Quality of Structure issues

The effective age analysis can only depreciate a parcel's original value down to 40 percent of its original value. When additional depreciation must be applied to a parcel, the Property Appraiser makes a downward adjustment in the Quality of Structure grade. Thus, the parcels with Quality of Structure issues may have problems with, not only construction materials or workmanship, but also extensive depreciation.

Detailed data concerning the Effective Age of structures is found in the FON. It is summarized below:

- While the usefulness of the Effective Age date is limited given the lowest depreciation level of 40 percent, the West Ocala CRA has a higher percentage of structures with an Effective Age of more than 24 years than does the City as a whole (36.8 percent as compared to 18 percent).

The second requirement for a blighted area under section 163.340 (8) is that the conditions within the deteriorated or deteriorating structures (and therefore area), as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies, are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property.

Government-maintained statistics and studies indicate that deteriorated and deteriorating structures have a negative impact on the investment potential of a community. They impair economic growth,

and contribute to a lack of private investment to maintain the integrity and value of existing development, depreciation in property values, decreased potential for new development, and a reduced tax base for the City. Additionally, deteriorated structures create added expense for the community generated by increased code enforcement and inspection resources, fire hazards, and community policy, and can provide a strain on such services. The structures also present an increased fire hazard potential.

For example, as set forth in greater detail elsewhere in this Plan, the proposed area's property values have declined significantly and such decline has been greater than the decline in property values within the City as a whole; this is indicative of economic distress. There have been extensive code enforcement proceedings involving unsafe and unsanitary conditions; this shows that the deteriorated structures with such conditions endanger life or property. And the large number of vacant parcels depicts not only the absence of development, but also the lower potential for new development and, of course, a reduced tax base for the City with resulting economic distress.

Section 163.340 (8) requires at least two of the Community Redevelopment Act's fourteen factors must also be present to determine that blight conditions exist in West Ocala.

Detailed data concerning these factors is found in the FON. They are summarized below:

#### Faulty Lot Sizes

- Parcels with faulty lot sizes do not meet contemporary design standards in terms of size and usefulness. These properties are limited by their size in relation to parking and setback requirements, encroachment, and landscaping requirements.
- Fifty two percent and 53.3 percent of all parcels within the B-1 and B-1A zone respectively, in the West Ocala CRA, are less than 10,000 square feet in area and therefore do not meet the minimum lot size requirement under the City's Code of Ordinances.
- Approximately 26 percent of the commercially zoned properties (B-1 to B-5) in the CRA have lot sizes below those required by the zoning code.

#### No Appreciable Increase in Aggregate Assessed Values Over Five Years

- While property values increased within the CRA by 2.7 percent from 2007 to 2008, they declined in the next four years by 25.1 percent, resulting in a net decline of 23 percent.
- The mean home value in West Ocala was 43 percent of the citywide mean home value
- The declining property values support the conclusion that the deteriorated or deteriorating structures within the CRA are resulting in economic distress.

#### Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

The percentage of unsafe and unsanitary conditions is also an indicator of the blight in the West Ocala CRA.

Detailed data of this indicator is found in the FON. It is summarized below:

- During the time period 2007 through 2012, 2,734 code violations
- In 2013, 115 septic tanks were located in the CRA

#### Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements

The information discussed above and analyzing the data in the FON that supports the conclusion that there are a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures within the CRA, also supports the conclusion that there has been deterioration of site or other improvements.

Photographs depicting rusted signs, broken sidewalks, improperly maintained green space, and other examples of deterioration are found in the FON.

#### Opportunities

Section VIII of the Plan identifies goals, objectives and strategies to transform blighted structures characterized by economic distress, and factors of decline into opportunities for new investment.

The Plan examines gateways, corridors, and catalytic locations in terms of function and opportunity. It recommends specific actions the City and its partners can undertake to stimulate private investment and improve the physical character of these locations.

### **VII. Community Participation and Preparation of Plan Concepts**

Stakeholder input played a critical guiding role in the creation of this plan. Input was sought through a Community Redevelopment Area Advisory Committee (CRA AC), a series of public workshops and internal committee meetings. The CRA Advisory Committee began its planning process in 2011 by participating in redevelopment learning activities, touring proposed CRA areas, noting conditions and assisting with the development of the Findings of Necessity (FON). A list of CRA Advisory Committee members is contained in the Appendix.

Equipped with information and data accumulated within a two year period from 2011 to 2012, the West Ocala CRA Advisory Committee attended three public workshops to establish plan goals, objectives and strategies throughout 2013. What follows is a summary of the public participation process and recommendations derived from it.

The workshops and main accomplishments of each were as follows:

#### Workshop #1 CRA Planning for West and East Ocala Advisory Committees

- Reviewed key findings and recommendations of the Finding of Necessity Reports
- Covered content and requirements of CRA Redevelopment Plans

- Introduced and discussed goals, objectives and strategies to address corridor conditions revealed in FONs
- Group discussion of corridor conditions, goals and objectives

#### Workshop #2 Presentation of Concepts and Strategies

- Recap, discussion and selection of priority goals and objectives
- Presentation, discussion and selection of catalytic corridor sites
- Group discussion and selection of redevelopment strategies at catalytic corridor sites
- Introduction and discussion of conceptual renderings of improvements at catalytic sites

#### Workshop #3 Presentation of Conceptual Renderings

- Presentation of Corridor Redevelopment Strategies and Conceptual Renderings
- Public Comments Incorporated into Plan

### **VIII. Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

The overarching purpose of the West Ocala Redevelopment Plan (Plan) is to reverse conditions of blight and economic decline as demonstrated by the West Ocala Finding of Necessity. Closely tied to The Ocala Vision 2035, City Comprehensive Plan, and the West Ocala Community Plan, the Plan’s goals and objectives begin the transformation to the more urban, amenity-driven, people-centered town center focus. The preferred locations for these centers are at gateways, key corridor segments and primary crossroads with high volumes of traffic and pedestrian activity.

Where the Ocala Vision 2035 and subsequent Comprehensive Plan Amendments address corridor revitalization by restructuring the pattern of land use, positioning of buildings, uses occupying structures, location of parking facilities and height and intensity of development lining the corridor, the Plan takes the next step. The Plan identifies goals, objectives and strategies to transform blighted corridors characterized by economic decline into places new property owners, existing property owners and private developers will once again choose to invest.

The redevelopment workshops created a forum for community members to take a “hands-on” role in the physical design and identification of goals and objectives.

The city and advisory committee members had a vision of SR 40 leading into West Ocala as a great street and welcoming gateway with development opportunities, shops and offices mixed together to create a vibrant backbone. The vision, goals and objectives would also apply to the Plan’s other corridors.

The goals, objectives and strategies identified by the community to achieve revitalization are given below:

Goal 1: Coordinate public and private resources to increase private capital investment on commercial corridors

Objective 1: Provide incentives to attract private development including but not limited to expedited permitting, fee payments/waivers and property assembly assistance

Objective 2: Identify and promote catalytic sites with the greatest potential for contemporary redevelopment projects by the private sector

Objective 3: Attract supportable private development which derives maximum benefit from corridor locations

Objective 4: Expand the city's business revitalization grant program to include site improvements, signage, and building interior improvements

Objective 5: Encourage the location of a Competitive Intelligence Center (Library) in a key corridor West Ocala location providing after school tutoring, learning, and extra-curricular learning opportunities

Objective 6: Establish a land acquisition program to reduce the barriers to redevelopment imposed by very long blocks with shallow parcels typical of aging corridor property for the purpose of promoting walk-ability and improving connections between West Ocala and downtown

Objective 7: Establish a land acquisition program and financial incentive program at catalytic corridor locations to promote new development and redevelopment to private investors

Objective 8: Establish a land acquisition program to assemble parcels with faulty lot sizes for redevelopment purposes

The specific strategies which support Goal 1 and its objectives are:

1. Expedited review process for development or redevelopment project within the CRA
2. Waiver, payment or subsidized City permit fees, impact fees, utility connection fees
3. Provision of grants for property improvements which add value in the CRA and increase the potential for property redevelopment including business revitalization grants, removal of unsightly structures, new signs, and energy-related improvements
4. Provision of grants for reimbursements of certain up front expenses, or provide operating income for a project until break-even lease-up is achieved.
5. Waiver or modification of certain site requirements to accommodate limited property configurations and shallow parcel size may also be considered.

*NAPA Auto Parts Business Revitalization Grant*



*Before*



*After*

*Conceptual Business Revitalization Grant*



*Before – Big Apple*



*After – Big Apple*

*Demolition of Existing Structure*



*Before - Lone Star Restaurant*



*After - PDQ Restaurant*

*Newly Constructed, Well Designed Ground Sign*



*Market Street at Heathbrook*

6. Provision of grants up to the tax increment to assist with up front development costs, parking, property assembly, or support operating income until break-even leasing is achieved for qualifying development

*City Acquired Land utilized for Public Parking for Business in CRA*

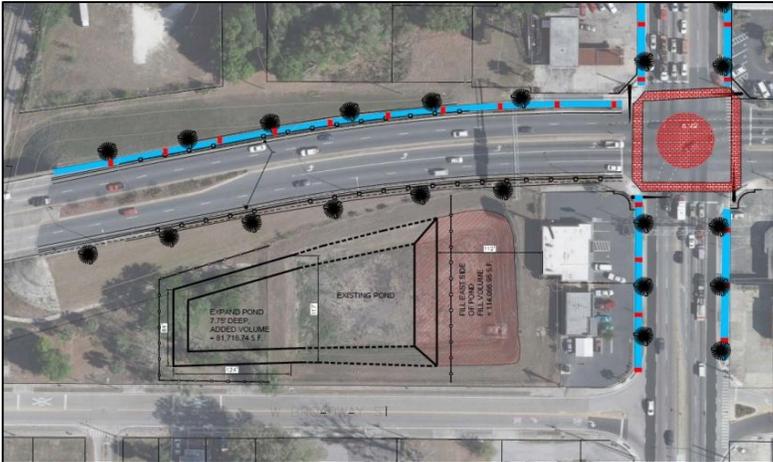


*Ansafone Parking Lot*

- 7. Provision of grants to eliminate need, relocate, or reduce size of on-site drainage where possible



*SR 40 and Pine Ave DRA before reduction and relocation to provide for redevelopment of catalytic site.*



*SR40 and Pine Ave DRA after reduction relocation to provide for redevelopment of catalytic site and additional parking*

- Promote redevelopment of corridor sites comprised of a cohesive grouping of parcels that appear to have a spatial relationship as identified in West Ocala Community Plan and CRA Plan process



*Cohesive Grouping of Parcels on SR 40/Silver Springs Blvd with Spatial Relationship*



*Redeveloped Cohesive Grouping of Parcels into Linear Park*

- Promote redevelopment of corridor sites which reinforce connections between development and quality of life, leverages new growth to improve the community, and reconnects neighborhoods with the city (Appendix 11)
- Assist in the development of a plan to establish a library in West Ocala to improve access to learning



*Proposed Library Site at MLK Blvd and SR 40.*

11. Assist in the development of a new multi-purpose center in West Ocala to promote accessibility to health, fitness, and community well-being.

Goal 2: Restore value and prominence to gateways, corridor segments and crossroads by enhancing their physical appearance and visually differentiating their special character

Objective 1: Design and construct streetscape improvements to include pedestrian crossings, pedestrian-scale lighting, and other amenities at key crossroads

Objective 2: Design and construct streetscape improvements and other visual amenities at key gateway locations, including interchanges and entrances to neighborhoods

Objective 3: Improve Ocala's multimodal corridors through design and construction of well-organized cross sections

Objective 4: Create a Corridor Overlay District for the implementation of commercial sign standards, lighting, building design, finishes, and street furniture

The specific strategies which support Goal 2 and its objectives are given below:

- Streetscape Improvements and Key Gateway Features



*City of Ocala I-75 and SR 40 Gateway*

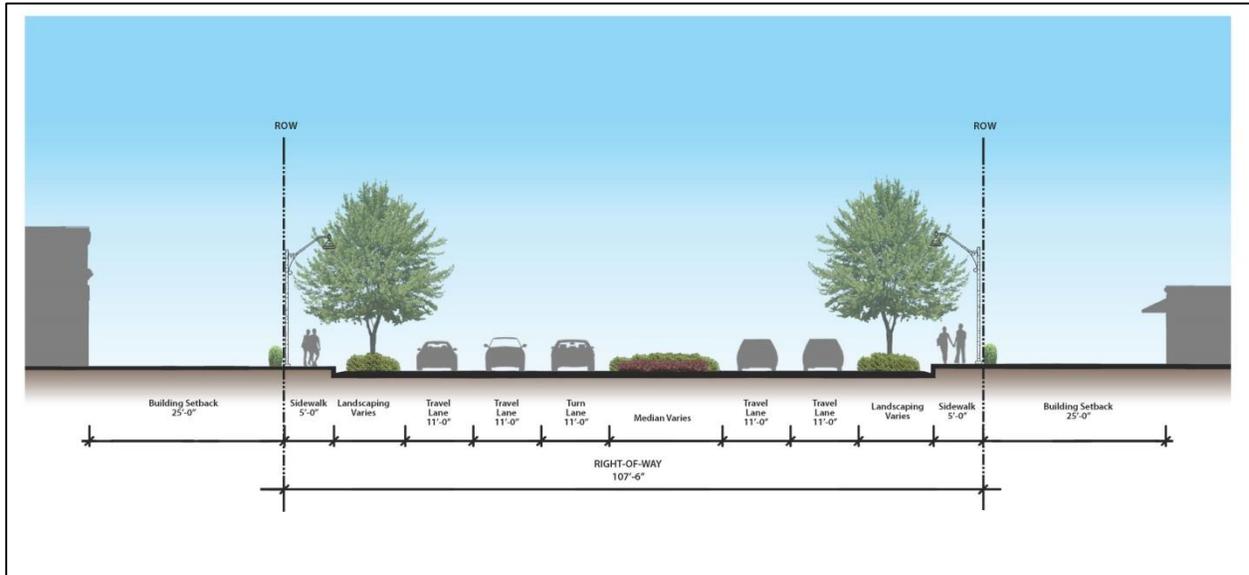


*Downtown Ocala SR 40 and Pine Avenue Gateway*



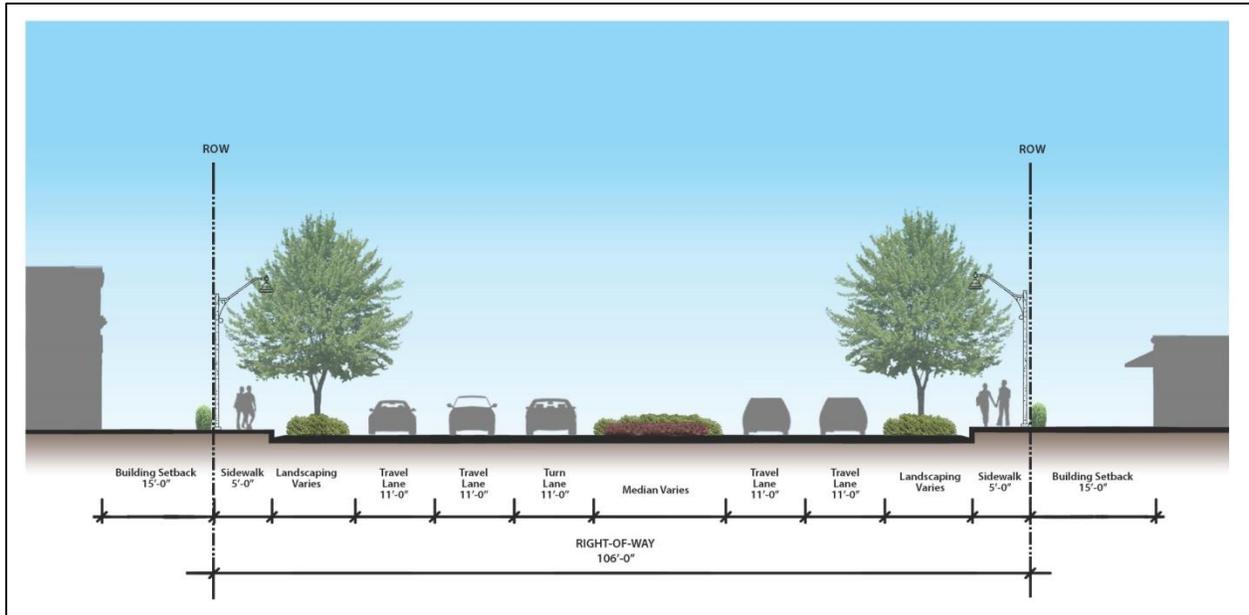
*Croskey Commons Catalytic Site Rendering*

- Improve Multimodal Corridors Lacking Aesthetics through Design of Cross-Sections

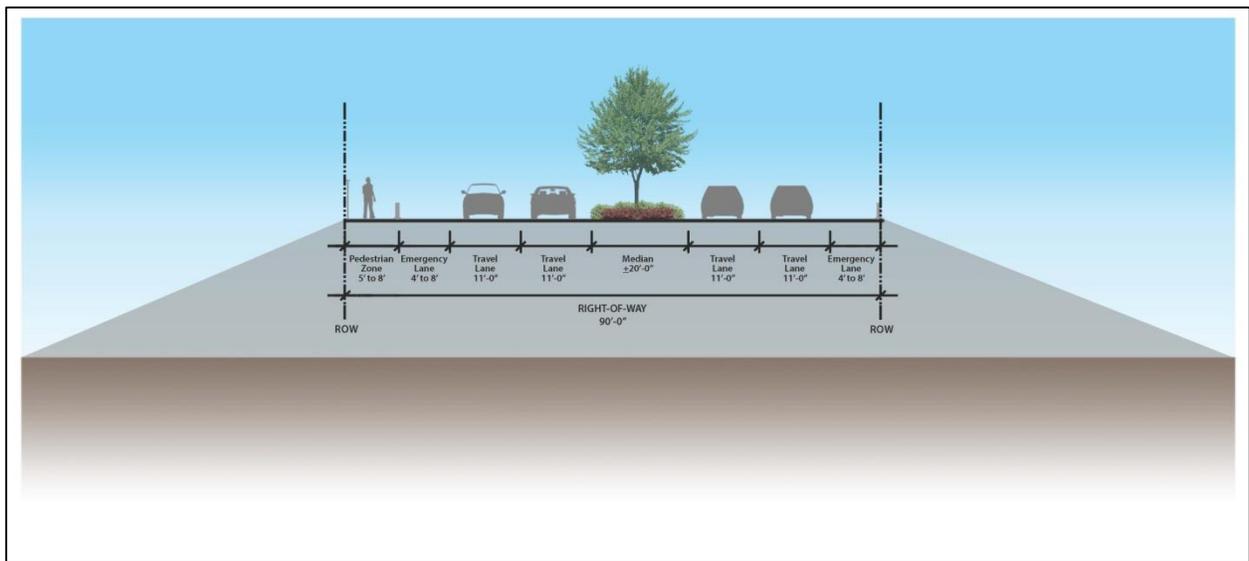


*SR-40/East of I-75 to 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue to reflect expansive right of way and pedestrian path*

WO 2:



SR-40. Croskey Common and Big Apple (27<sup>th</sup> Avenue to base of bridge)

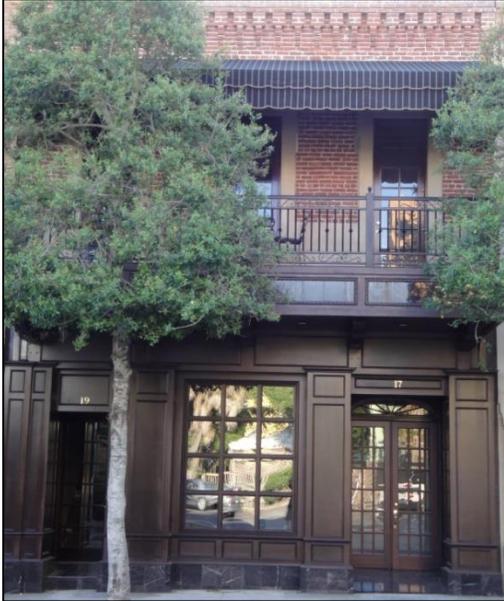


SR-40 (Bridge over Railroad)

- Implement Corridor Overlay District and architectural review by ordinance for establishment of sign and design standards for existing and new development to improve the image, character and value of Ocala's commercial corridors
- Provide for commercially feasible compliance period of new sign and design standards.

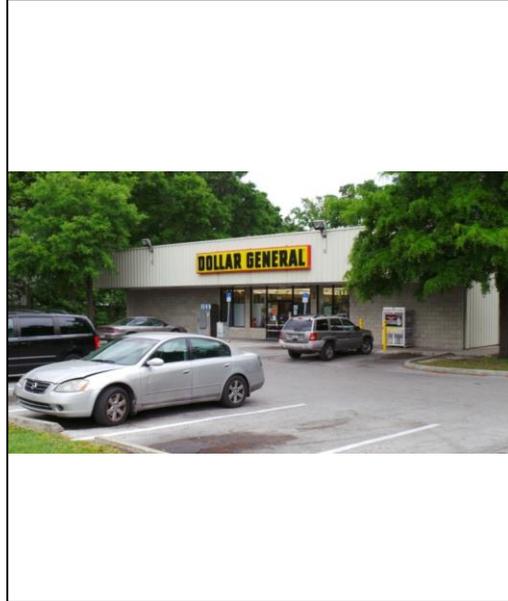
## Materials

### Recommended



*Architectural material and detailing should address each street frontage. The building finish should enhance the street/neighborhood.*

### Not Recommended



*Inappropriate architectural character, lack of appropriate detailing and low quality material create a sense of impermanence and fail to create the desired sense of place.*

## Color and Finish

### Recommended



*Colors and veneer materials should reflect the desired architectural character of the building and the neighborhood.*

### Not Recommended



*The use of gaudy or excessively dark colors is generally inappropriate.*

## Awnings and Canopies

### Recommended



*Awnings or canopies should be compatible in material and construction to the building. Colors should be compatible to the color scheme of the façade and the awning/canopy should be appropriately sized to the façade.*

### Not Recommended



*Awnings and canopies should be maintained as part of the building facade; rusted poles, soffits and aluminum/wood wraps should be painted and replaced to avoid dilapidated appearance.*

## Lighting

### Recommended



*Streetlight design should be compatible with the desired character of the neighborhood and/or street. Lights should be scaled appropriately to the street on which they are placed; pedestrian scale for local streets, taller, vehicular scale for thoroughfares.*

### Not Recommended



*Lighting should be pedestrian scale, unattached from electrical poles. Design should assist in reducing vehicular glare and distraction*

## Security

### Recommended



*Security grilles should be integrated into the design of the building and should be unobtrusive when the business is open. Use of unbreakable glass or placing grilles inside of windows or doors is preferred.*

### Not Recommended



*Accordion gates, solid panels and exterior grilles, grates or bars are not appropriate.*

## Roof Utilities, Service Areas, Mechanicals

### Recommended



*All utilities, service areas and mechanical devices should be screened from public view. If placed on a roof, an appropriately sized parapet should screen such appurtenances from view.*

### Not Recommended



*Utilities, service areas and mechanical devices should not be visible from public areas or neighboring properties.*

## Vacant Structures

### Recommended



*Vacant or Abandoned Structures should be maintained in such a manner as to not be an eyesore or decrease property values in the surrounding neighborhood.*

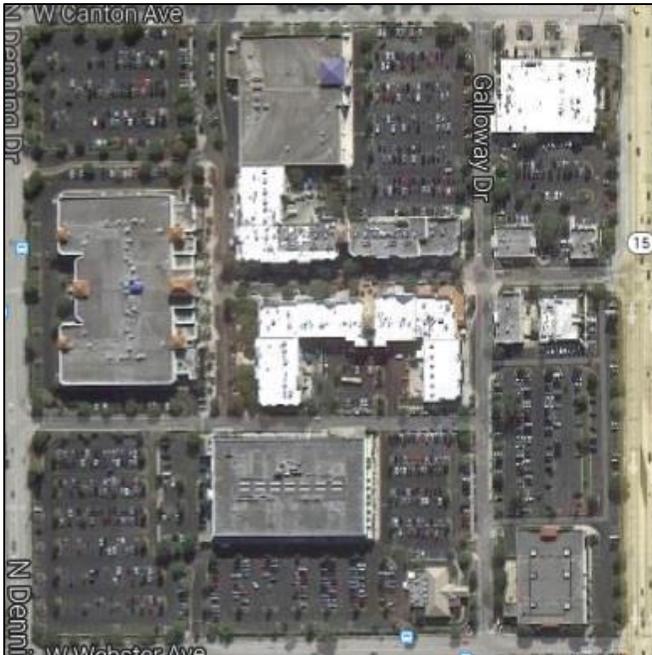
### Not Recommended



*Boarded windows, overgrown weeds, and debris should be avoided in vacant structures.*

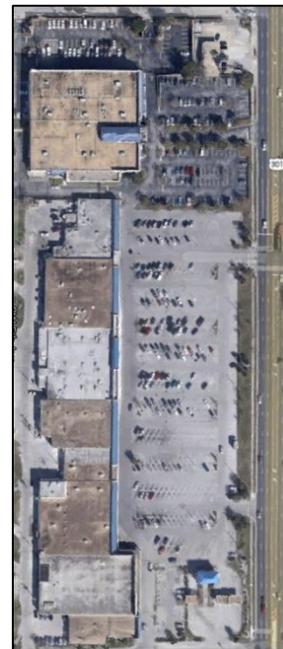
## Surface Parking

### Recommended



*Winter Park Village - Parking in Rear with commercial uses lining streets and pathways, all parking buffered with landscaping and trees.*

### Not Recommended



*Pine Plaza, Ocala - Parking facing arterial road, no landscaping.*

## Signage and Communication Elements

### Recommended



*Signage should be unobtrusive in nature, not a distraction to either vehicular traffic or pedestrian. Signage should keep with architectural character of building.*

### Not Recommended



*Ground level or monument signage is preferred to reduce sight line pollution. Multi-tenant signage should maintain a standard color and font.*

## Landscape Design

### Recommended



*Landscape buffers and tree allotment should follow code of ordinance requirements while being well maintained.*

### Not Recommended



*Landscape islands should be trimmed and kept in accordance with design and neighborhood standards.*

## Streetscape, Open Space, Furniture

### Recommended



*Street furniture should be representative of the neighborhood by color and design. Open space should be well maintained.*

### Not Recommended



*Streetscape, open space, and furniture should be well integrated in design to lend to pedestrian connectivity and neighborhood charm.*

## Recyclables and Refuse Collection Areas

### Recommended



*Recyclables and refuse collections, although necessary, need not be visible. Should either be located in the rear of buildings and businesses or in an attractive enclosure.*

### Not Recommended



*At no time should recyclables and refuse collection bins or boxes be located on thoroughways.*

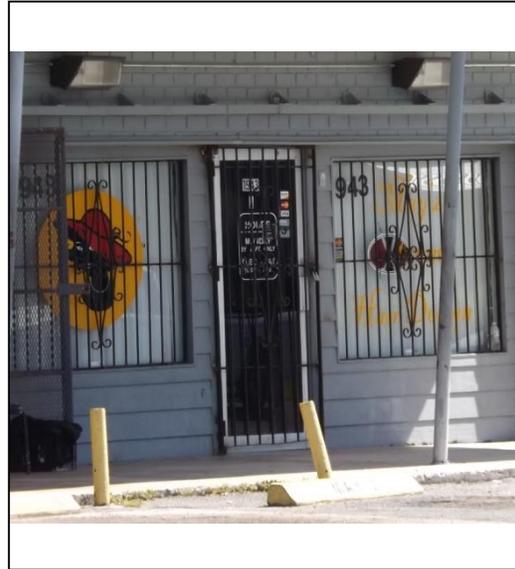
## Windows and Doors

### Recommended



*Windows and doors should fit the architectural design of the building and surrounding neighborhood while not being obstructed by security grills. Doors must meet ADA requirements.*

### Not Recommended



*Windows and doors should have minimal obstruction, i.e. advertising, signage, grills, etc.*

## Building Orientation

### Recommended



*The front entrance of buildings should face street in order to enhance the vibrancy of the neighborhood on a vehicular and pedestrian scale.*

### Not Recommended



*Vacant or void space walls should never face streets or roadways. Increases safety concerns for pedestrians.*

Goal 3: Improve vacant, dilapidated and nuisance properties which are barriers to corridor redevelopment and negatively impact the value of corridors and neighborhoods

Objective 1: Create and update a comprehensive inventory of vacant, dilapidated and nuisance properties to understand the scope and scale of the issues

Objective 2: Establish a specialized CRA Corridor Redevelopment Plan property maintenance code for implementation in the Corridor Overlay District

Objective 3: Educate the public of the positive economic impact of maintaining properties lining the corridors

Objective 4: Establish programs to remediate dilapidated and nuisance properties for reuse and resale opportunities

Objective 5: Establish a land acquisition program to acquire properties with code enforcement liens, tax delinquencies, and other blighted characteristics for redevelopment purposes

Objective 6: Seek additional funding opportunities and partnerships with community affordable housing providers to upgrade blighted housing and remove unsafe/unsanitary conditions for low-income individuals and families

Objective 7: Identify suitable areas of West Ocala for the purposes of the development of new housing opportunities which incorporate energy efficient materials and appliances

The specific strategies which support Goal 3 and its objectives are:

- Establish new commercial property maintenance standards for existing properties to foster pride, care and investor confidence patterned after Section 94. Affirmative Maintenance Requirements of the City Code;
- Amend existing provisions of Section 34. Environment, specifically the definition of weeds, unsightly matter, and nuisances of the City Code to foster pride, care and investor confidence.
- Maintenance of vacant lots along corridors

Recommended



*After Code Enforcement Action*

Not Recommended



*Before Code Enforcement Action*

- Removal or remediation of empty and deteriorated swimming pools along commercial corridors

Recommended



*Courtyard by Marriott - Ocala, FL*

Not Recommended



*Dilapidated Motel - Ocala, FL*

- Require commercial property owners to remove litter from property line to front edge of pedestrian right of way

Recommended



*Before Code and Clean-up*

Not Recommended



*After Code Enforcement Action Enforcement Action*

- Impose maximum fines for violations of commercial property maintenance standards along corridors
- Establish a pilot land bank program to inventory, accept and maintain nuisance properties located on commercial corridors for blight removal, remediation and redevelopment purposes
- Develop a pilot funding strategy to carry out land bank program objectives
- Increase housing grants from state and federal sources
- Establish partnerships with Habitat for Humanity, and other nonprofit affordable housing providers

### Corridor Master Plan

The corridor master plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for future redevelopment in West Ocala. The Comprehensive Plan, Ocala Vision 2035, West Ocala Community Plan and, finally, the West Ocala CRA Plan together identify the vision, principles, goals and strategies to generate significant new public and private investment to reverse overall trends of disinvestment in recent decades.

Based on citizen committees, project consultants and evaluation by staff, future investment in the corridor should be geared more towards higher intensity, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly development than currently exists. The corridor master plan reflects each planning effort's careful attention to both sides of the corridor's right of way line. The land use pattern and the thoroughfare design were planned together and reinforce each other.

Illustrated by a location map, the corridor master plan shows the desired features at automobile oriented interstate gateways, a change from auto-oriented to multimodal transportation through the corridor while approaching activity centers, and redesigned intersections to reflect the unique character of the neighborhood where they are located. The map further illustrates the redevelopment potential of abutting properties and streetscape enhancements to enhance the driver’s approach and image of the corridor.

**IX. Other Funded Projects**

The City’s Five Year Capital Improvements Plan reveals 30 capital projects planned for West Ocala, and 16 to be completed in the West Ocala CRA. These projects are listed in Appendix 12.

FDOT Transportation Improvement Projects

Transportation projects totaling over \$25.2 million are planned within the CRA with a projected completion date of five years. The project phases are listed below in Table 5. The four phases of the transportation planning process include: 1) Preliminary Design & Environmental (PD&E), 2) Physical Design (PE), 3) Right of Way Acquisition (ROW), and 4) Construction (CST). Each project listed in Table 5 has been funded through the phase listed.

<b>Table 5 - Transportation Improvement Projects</b>					
Corridor	From	To	Improvement	Funding Allocated	Funding Through Phase
SR 40	SW 27th Ave	SW 40th Ave	Interchange Improvement	\$9,621,332	ROW
SR 40	at MLK Jr. Ave		Intersection Improvement	\$167,000	PE
US 27	NW 27th Ave	NW 44th Ave	Widen to 6-Lanes	\$1,005,000	PD&E
US 27	US 441	CR 225A	Resurfacing	\$6,852,905	CST
US 441	at SR 464		Add NB Left & Right-Turn Lanes	\$530,000	PE
US 441	SR 40	Broadway Street	Extend NB Queue Lane	\$510,000	PE
*I-75	at SR 200, SR 40 and US 27		Interchange Modifications	\$6,570,381	ROW

*\*Additional ROW funding will be necessary*

**X. Implementation Plan**

This section provides the strategic direction that should be followed to incrementally emerge into a form that better captures market value and projects a positive community identity. Implementing this strategy will require the participation and support of city officials, planners and engineers, stakeholders, and residents. It will require a reorientation in thinking about the corridors and some of the practices involved in planning and designing it. And, it will require the adoption of new policy tools and programs that can effectively instigate the necessary restructuring.

The degree to which revitalization is possible in the short term varies, not only between corridors but often between segments of a single corridor. Depending on the condition of various segments along any given corridor, some segments may need a gradual transition, whereas others may be ready for dramatic near-term change. Inventorying the conditions in place and checking them against demand and investors' intentions should be considered. This will provide a basis for shaping expectations and priorities.

Ideally, the timing of public realm investments in capital improvements within the public right-of-way should coincide with the installation of private improvements on the other side of the right-of-way. However, under the direction of redevelopment focused municipalities, this may not be the case. To successfully revitalize commercial corridors, the corridor planning team, public works, transportation planning organization, and recreation and parks must collaborate effectively to define the design and investment to which all parties will adhere to as improvements are made.

The collaboration of multiple agencies helps make projects eligible for funds from transportation, community development, and environmental agencies.

#### The Role of Local Government in Plan Implementation

Local government is uniquely equipped to leverage policy, planning, and investment tools in support of corridor revitalization. As noted throughout this Plan, local government historically convenes stakeholders to participate in corridor redevelopment since interaction, support and consistency of decision-making is needed throughout what is typically a lengthy implementation period.

The public right-of-way is owned and controlled by the public sector. Many of the corridor rights-of-way in the Plan are owned by the state's Department of Transportation which will coordinate redesign with the city. The Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is an entity who can aid or impede implementation of the corridor plan.

#### Implementation Tools: Ocala Vision 2035, Form Based Code, West Ocala Community Plan, and West Ocala CRA Plan

As noted in a previous section, new policies including those outlined in the Ocala Vision 2035, Form Based Development Code, and the West Ocala Community Plan promote the essential changes envisioned for the corridors. Instead of being organized by land use categories, Ocala's corridors will be organized by center and segment type. The new policies will address form and placement of buildings and the relationships between them for each type of center and segment. The development code is being prepared in concert with specifications for improvements to the public realm, including both existing and new public rights-of-way.

The West Ocala CRA Plan provides a bridge between the goal-oriented language of Ocala Vision 2035 and West Ocala Community Plan, and the details of the Form Based Development Code. The Plan depicts a map of the corridors, established boundaries of the corridor's centers or segments, and establishes a visual standard of desired places. The Plan also identifies the strategies to achieve these new desired places.

## Implementation Recommendations

- 1) Coordinate Goals, Objectives and Strategies with All City Departments, Florida Department of Transportation and TPO

Planning and engineering entities at the city, state and TPO should refer to the implementation strategy and associated gateway improvements when reviewing individual development proposals within Ocala. Each proposed project should comply with the design recommendations, reinforce the desired character of the corridor, and contribute to creating a cohesive, memorable, and economically viable place. Developers should work with City staff and refer to the Plan prior to generating design concepts, in order to better understand how their property fits into the context of the corridor and gateway plan and expectations for public/private amenities.

- 2) Place Projects in the Capital Improvements Plans

The City should refer to the recommendations in the Plan to coordinate, design, and budget for capital improvements and to define public/private partnerships to finance and maintain gateway improvements, where possible. The City should refer to the designs for the individual segments and places as a basis from which to develop more detailed plans.

- 3) Define a Maintenance Strategy for Each Project

Since it is desirable to achieve the highest levels of safety, security and comfort along gateway corridors, budget and long term maintenance are important considerations when making investments. Typically, urban places must protect its improvements against pollution, heat, wear and tear, unintentional damage, and vandalism. Materials, furnishings, and plantings used in streetscape projects should be selected for their durability as well as ease of maintenance, servicing, and replacement.

Each improvement should be created that defines a funding source, such as a special maintenance assessment district or city operating budget for maintenance. The entity responsible for maintenance should be identified.

- 4) Task CRA Advisory Committee to Assist in the Creation of the Corridor Overlay District Facilitated by a Professional Consultant

Members should include property owners, business owners, youth, and young adults and led by an experienced chairperson who follows a meeting structure that fairly lets everyone have their say. The Committee will, of course, include those most affected first, then those who are generally interested. Next, committee memberships will be filled with any missing areas of expertise. The Committee will explore contemporary group processes to identify problems and design solutions efficiently and effectively.

- 5) Utilize the City's Website and Marketing Program to Inform and Promote the Goals and Objectives of the Plan

Communicating effectively in today's cluttered media marketplace will require the City to hone in on creative information and marketing campaign that positions the goals and objectives of the plan into

a strong singular message. The good news is the research and strategies of the West Ocala CRA Plan will be in place upon approval by City Council. The logos and brands to position West Ocala's opportunities to different audiences already exist to create the strong singular message on line, and in print.

## **XI. Financing Plan**

The West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area financing plan is comprised of CRA Project Funding Availability and Spending Plan for CRA Strategic Goals by year. Projected annual tax increment revenue prepared by staff, and detailed cost estimates prepared by VHB and the City's Engineering Department form the basis of the financing plan.

### Projected Project Funding Availability

The principal source of revenue for use by the Community Redevelopment Agency is the Tax Increment Redevelopment Trust Fund. For each taxing year beginning in 2015, ad valorem taxes generated by the assessed taxable real property value in excess of the base year assessment total are deposited in the Trust Fund. Annual ad valorem contributions will be deposited into the redevelopment fund until tax year 2044. For planning purposes, assessed value of taxable real property is estimated to remain flat until fiscal year 2017, and experience annual growth limited by the statutory cap of 3 percent annual increase in taxable values. Tax increment revenues will be adjusted annually by information provided by the Property Appraiser, and other economic analysis.

### Spending Plan for CRA Strategic Goals

Short-term strategies reflected in the Plan will be incorporated into the City's annual operating budget in the redevelopment trust fund, and implemented within one to five years by staff, and professional service contract. Several short-term strategies will require the participation of West Ocala citizens groups. Mid-term and long-term strategies will be incorporated into the City's annual Capital Improvements Plan, and Five Year Capital Improvements Plan. The improvements will be financed by issuing revenue bonds supported by the redevelopment trust fund and annual tax increment deposits. The costs projections for projects reflect 2014 costs, and will be adjusted during the engineering phases of the projects.

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the primary development finance tool available to Ocala for Plan improvements. Where a mutual benefit and a demonstrated transportation need exists, the Florida Department of Transportation and TPO enter into cooperative agreements with the City to fund in whole, or in part, improvement projects located on the state and federal highway system. Segments of State Route 40, State Route 200, Pine Avenue (State Route 441/301) and US 27, all located within the West Ocala CRA, are on the state and federal highway system. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. is a local road.

Revenue bonds are planned for issuance in FY19 and FY 23 for the purpose of infrastructure, economic incentive grants related to property acquisition and equipment, and capital improvements on SR 40, as shown in the Implementation Matrix and Financing Plan (Appendix 13 and 14 respectively). The current financial projection anticipates additional tax increment will be available

beginning in FY 29 for capital improvements designed to stimulate economic investment along the remaining CRA corridors.

As required by Section 163.362(10) Florida Statutes, the Plan provides a time certain for completing all redevelopment financed by increment revenues. The Financing Plan and TIF Projections reflects the estimated costs of the improvements, projected timing of bond issuance, and year in which improvements will be designed and constructed.

It is important to note that current TIF projections (Appendix 15) do not support the cost of improvements. Variables which will impact the ability of the TIF revenues over time include but are not limited to housing values, rate of inflation growth, and interest rates. In addition, the City will continue to evaluate the availability of other sources of revenue including the general fund and state and federal grants.