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City of Ocala
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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 28th 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 27th 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 8th Avenue, and the entry into Ocala at NE 20th 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 35th Street to the north, US 441(Pine Avenue) to the east, SW 3rd Street - SW 10th 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 28th 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 27th 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 5th 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		
Land Use	Taxable Value	% of Base
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%
Total Taxable Value	\$470,209,155	

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.

Table 2.1 - West Ocala CRA Existing Land Use Summary		
Land Use	Acres	Percentage of Total
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%
Total	2,383.28	100 %

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:

Table 2.2 - West Ocala CRA Future Land Use 2010 Summary		
Land Use	Acres	Percentage of Total
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 27th 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 27th 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.

Table 4 - Arterial Roadways with Traffic Counts and Level of Service 2014						
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 http://www.ocalafl.org/uploadedFiles/TPO_Services/2013%20DRAFT%20TC_TM%20Manual.pdf						

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 4th 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, Objective s 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 29th 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 10th Street, and a majority of commercially developed lots along SW College Road (SR 200). Uses along US 27, 27th 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

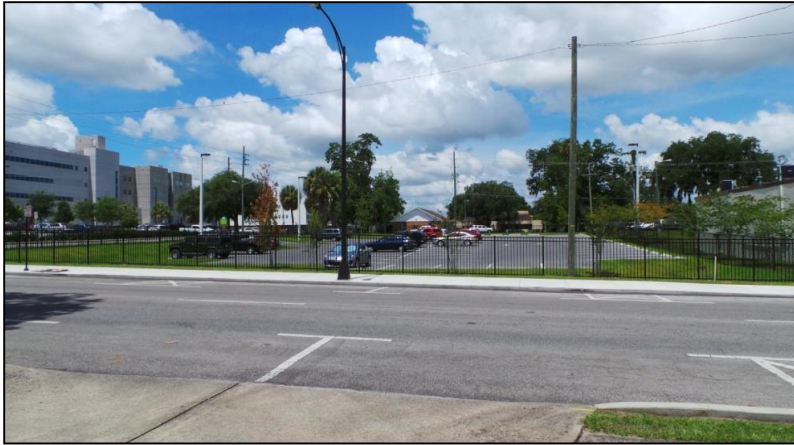
Newly Constructed, Well Designed Ground Sign



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

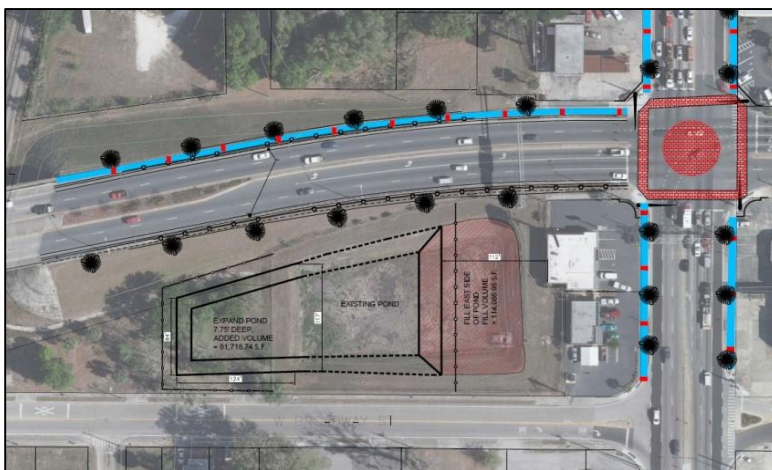


Ansafone Parking Lot

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*

8. 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

9. 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)
10. 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

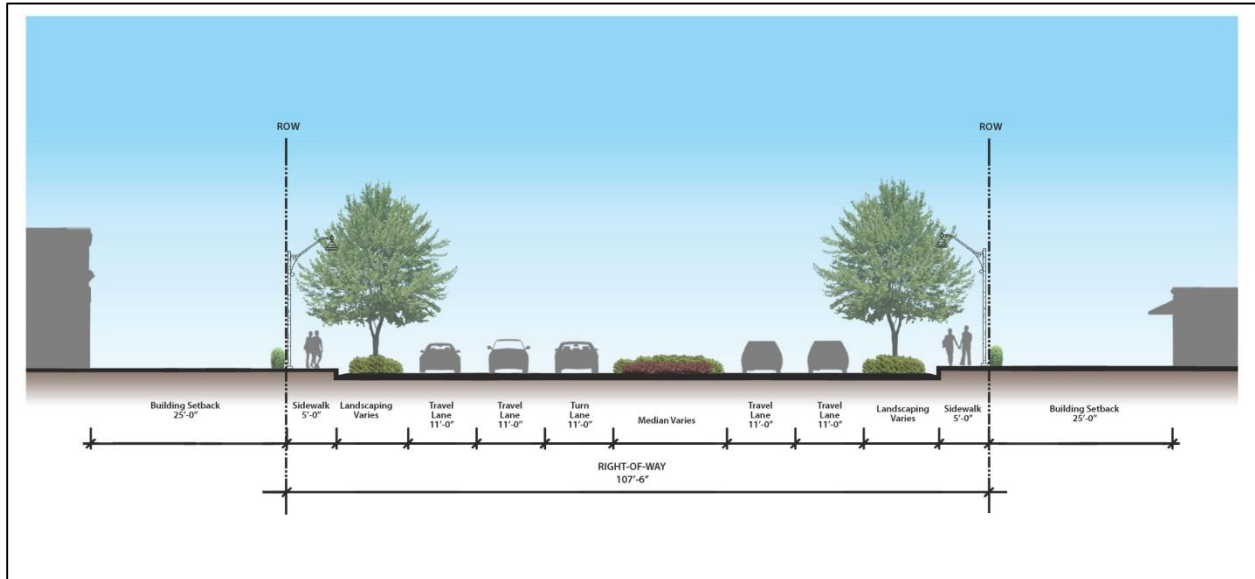


Downtown Ocala SR 40 and Pine Avenue Gateway



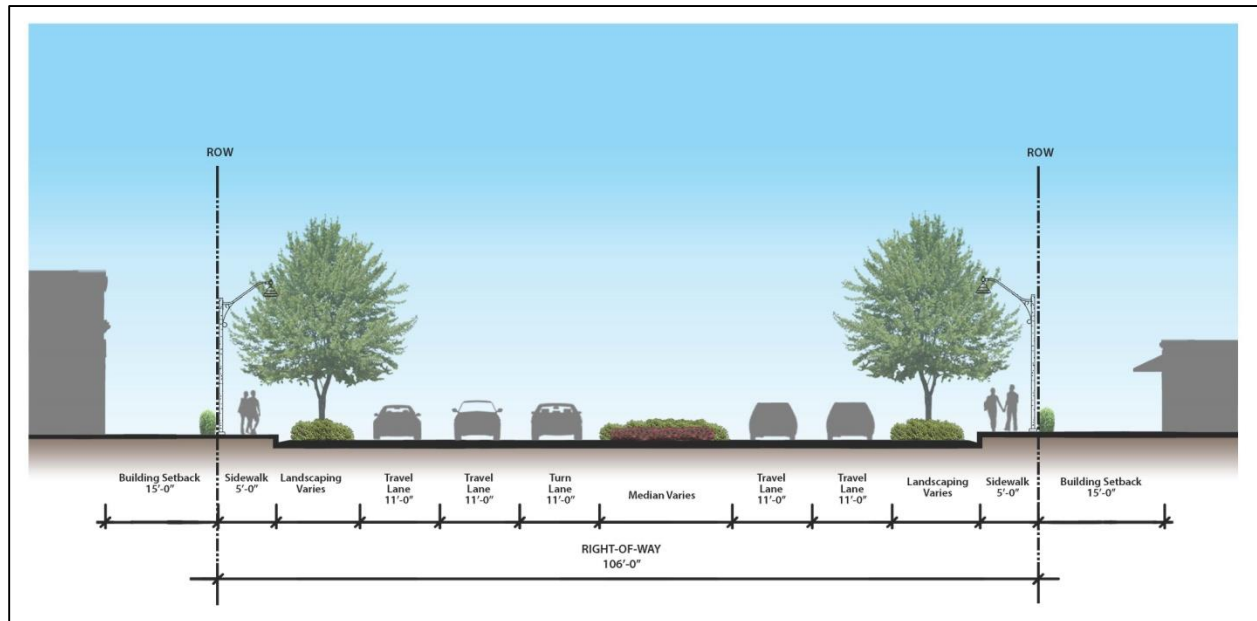
Croskey Commons Catalytic Site Rendering

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

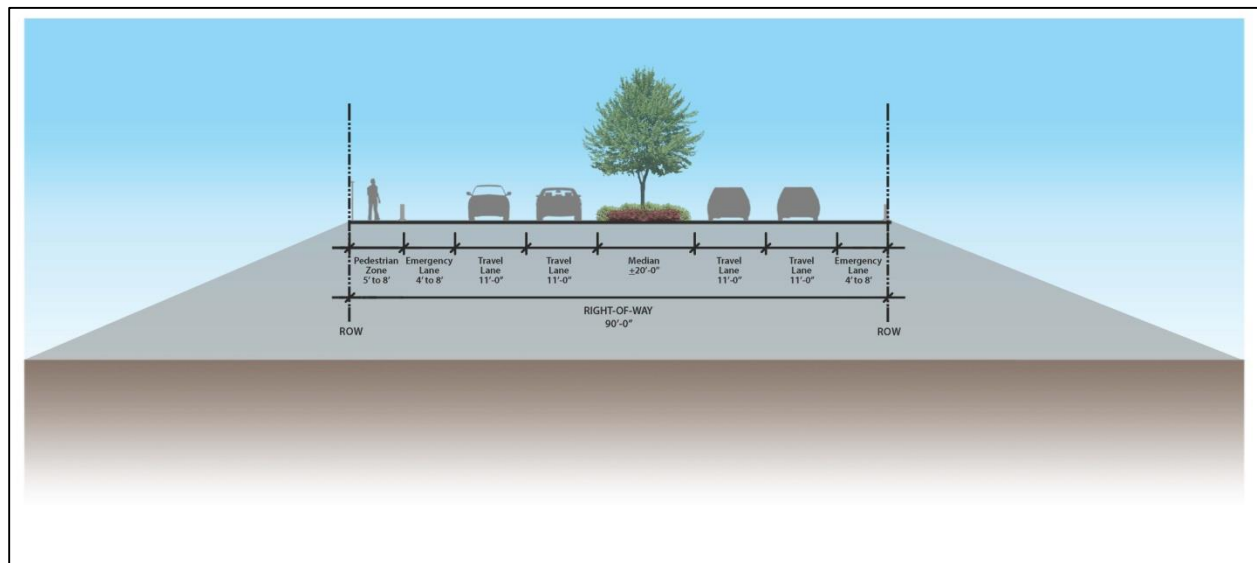


SR-40/East of I-75 to 27th Avenue to reflect expansive right of way and pedestrian path

WO 2:



SR-40. Croskey Common and Big Apple (27th 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.

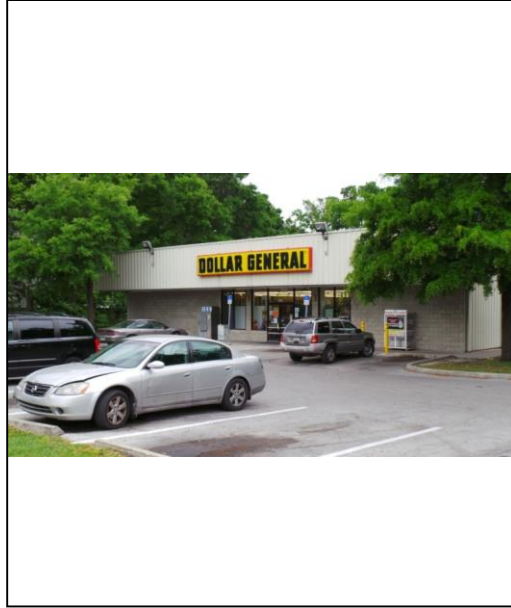
Materials

Recommended



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

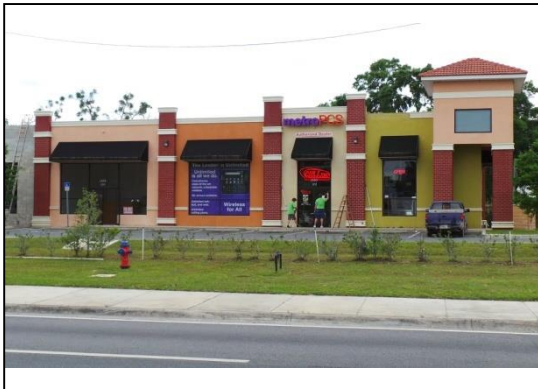
Not Recommended



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.

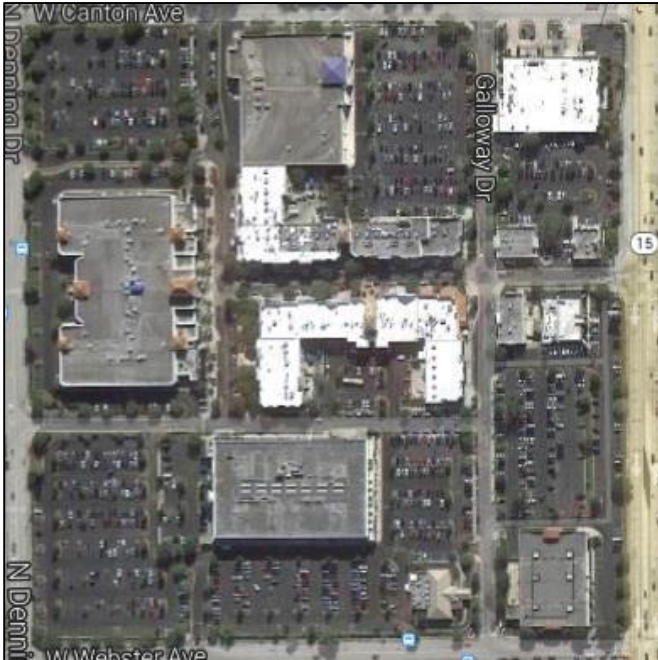
Not Recommended



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

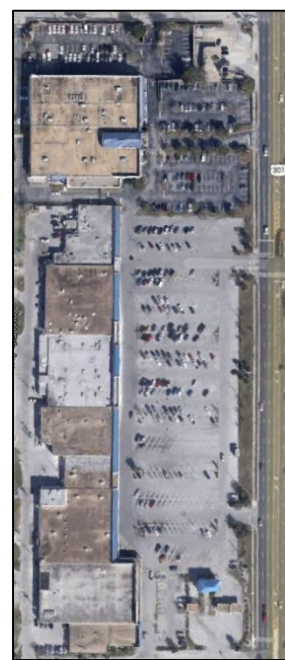
Surface Parking

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.

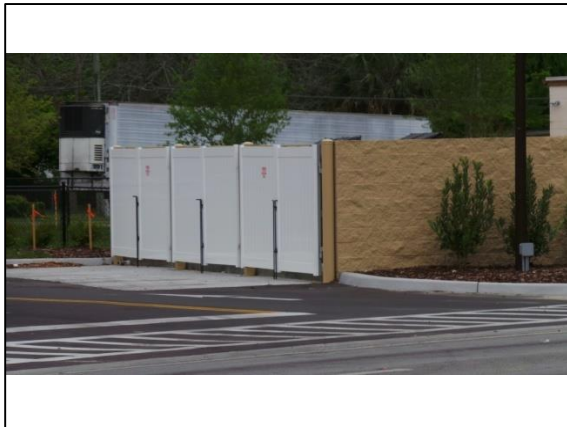
Not Recommended



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.

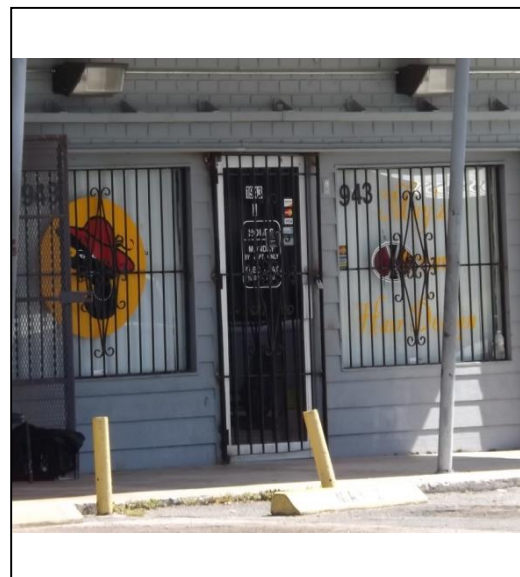
Windows and Doors

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

- 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.

Table 5 - Transportation Improvement Projects					
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.

**WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT**

May 9, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Background	4
II. Description of Proposed West Ocala CRA Expansion Area	4
III. Current Physical Conditions Assessment	5
IV. Summary of Finding of Necessity Analysis	8
V. Consistency with Ocala Comprehensive Plan	9
VI. Goals, Objectives and Strategies	11

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
Table 1 Existing Land Use	5
Table 2 Residential Buildings Quality & Grades	6
Table 3 Citywide vs. Expansion Area – Assessed Property Value	6

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Maps

Map 1	West Ocala CRA
Map 2	West Ocala CRA Expansion Area
Map 3	West Ocala CRA Expansion Existing Land Use
Map 4	West Ocala CRA Expansion Future Land Use
Map 5	West Ocala CRA Expansion Area Redevelopment Plan
Map 6	West Ocala CRA Master Plan Map

Appendix 2 – Legal Description

Appendix 3 – Resolution Adopting Finding of Necessity

Appendix 4 – Finding of Necessity for CRA Amendment

I. Background

Creation of West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area

On May 7, 2013 the Ocala City Council adopted Resolution No. 2013-42, Finding of Necessity West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), finding the existence of one or more blighted areas in the City of Ocala referred to as the “West Ocala Redevelopment Area”, finding the conditions in the area meet the criteria described in Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes, for a blighted area.

The Ocala Community Redevelopment Agency approved the West Ocala Redevelopment Area Plan on March 17, 2015.

On November 17, 2015 Resolution 2016-10 was adopted by Ocala City Council. The resolution modified the Community Redevelopment Area boundary to include the West Ocala Redevelopment Subarea and adopted the West Ocala Area Community Redevelopment Plan.

On April 18, 2017, the Ocala City Council adopted Resolution No. 2017-34, Finding of Necessity West Ocala Redevelopment Area Expansion Area, finding the conditions in the area meet the criteria described in Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes, for a blighted area.

II. Description of Proposed West Ocala CRA Expansion Area

Map 1 - West Ocala CRA shows the boundaries of the West Ocala CRA area. The proposed Expansion Area is outlined on Map 1.

As shown on Map 2 – West Ocala CRA Expansion Area, the proposed expansion area is generally bounded by NW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue on the east, NW 17th Place on the south, NW 22nd Avenue on the west, and NW 21st Street on the north; except that the parcels fronting on NW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue between NW 17th Place and NW 21st Street are already in the West Ocala CRA.

According to the Marion County Property Appraiser records, the proposed expansion area contains 64 parcels encompassing an area of approximately 59.7 acres, excluding right-of-ways. The Marion County Property Appraiser records indicate the existing West Ocala CRA contains 2,806 parcels encompassing an area of 2,376 acres excluding right-of-ways. Therefore, the expansion area would increase the West Ocala CRA area by 2.5%.

Existing Land Use

The proposed expansion area is comprised of 57 small single family residential parcels, several large industrial parcels and other undeveloped lots. The land use acreages are shown in Table 1 – Existing Land Use. The platted residential lots are part of Phoenix Heights subdivision, which

was formerly workforce housing for the Royal Oak facility. Map 3 – West Ocala CRA Expansion Area Existing Land Use shows the location of the land uses.

TABLE 1 – EXISTING LAND USE			
Land Use	Acres	Parcels	Notes
Residential – Platted	9.3	57	Phoenix Heights
Developed		30	
Undeveloped		27	
Residential – Undeveloped	18	2	
Institutional – Undeveloped	3	1	
Industrial – Active	8	2	
Industrial – Undeveloped	8	1	
Industrial – Vacant Bldg.	13.4	1	Old Royal Oak Site
TOTAL	59.7	64	
Undeveloped	22.55	31	
% Undeveloped	38%	48%	

Source: MCPA (2016) Note: The vacant land classification is based on zoning of the property.

III. Current Physical Conditions Assessment

A. Building Conditions

Table 2 – Residential Buildings Quality Grades & Age provides information on the quality and age of residential buildings in the proposed expansion area. The newer buildings in fair condition were built by Habitat for Humanity.

Demolished Residential Buildings

Due to unsafe and unsanitary conditions, the City of Ocala has had to acquire and demolish twenty-two (22) residential buildings since 2012 within the proposed area boundaries. Most of the homes were built in 1957 and were 620 to 750 square feet in size. The City now owns the vacant lots. The frontage of these lots ranges from 55' to 65' and the lots area is .12 to .2 acres or 5237 to 8712 square feet.

Industrial Building Conditions

The former Royal Oak Charcoal plant closed in 2006 after many years of decline and has remained inactive for the last 10 years. At closure, 43 jobs were lost. The overall site encompasses 24.28 acres, with 13.4 acres developed as for industrial use and the remainder is undeveloped. The old Royal Oak buildings are classified as being in poor to fair condition.

TABLE 2 – RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS QUALITY GRADES & AGE		
Quality Grades	Number & Percent of Buildings	Age (yrs)
Unusable	7 (23%)	60
Poor	0	
Low	14 (47%)	60
Fair	9 (30%)	< 10
Average	0	
Good	0	
Very Good	0	
Excellent	0	
TOTAL	30	

Source: MCPA (2016)

B. Property Values

Table 3 compares the change in assessed property values of the proposed expansion area to the City from 2012 to 2016.

TABLE 3. Citywide vs. Expansion Area – Assessed Property Values			
	2012 Assessed Value	2016 Assessed Value	% Change
Expansion Area	\$2,036,350	\$2,266,585	11%
City of Ocala	\$4,340,988,780	\$4,915,302,356	13%

Source MCPA (2016, 2012)

Due to the limited amount of parcels the percent change in the expansion area is skewed by a significant increase in a few large industrial parcels. Of the 62 parcels, 58 (94%) have increased by 4% or less. This includes 29 (47%) that have not increased in value or declined in value. Removing the few large industrial parcels from the query, the percent change in assessed property values in the proposed expansion area is 7%, or 53% of the Citywide increase.

C. Development Pattern

There are roads along the perimeter of the area. A local residential street serves the subdivision. The abandoned Royal Oak site, which takes up 40% of the proposed expansion area, is located in

the center of the area and as such interferes with providing an adequate street layout for the area. This can be seen on Map 2.

The lot layout and building density patterns are not consistent with the City's Future Land Use Map.

D. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

Environmental Contamination

The former Royal Oak Charcoal plant site encompasses 24.28 acres. A Phase I ESA has been completed and found several contaminants of concern. Years of operation and poor air emissions control technology (ATSDR 2007 report) have potentially impacted the site and surrounding residential areas with airborne deposits of heavy metals and Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons. The facility itself likely contains wood preservatives; creosote, pentachlorophenol, arsenic, ACM, LBP.

Phoenix Heights (former workforce housing for Royal Oak facility, still occupied). Airborne deposition of heavy metals and PAH contamination from Royal Oak facility is suspected. ACM and LBP are also suspected based on age (1957) of structures, as well as septic tanks.

The Royal Oak and Phoenix heights properties are in close proximity to Howard Middle School and the well-used Lillian Bryant public park.

Code Enforcement Cases

According to the City of Ocala Code Enforcement Manager, the following City Code violations are indications of unsafe and unsanitary conditions: Abandoned/Derelict Vehicles, Dilapidated Structures, Illicit Discharge, Job Abandonment, Junk & Debris, Litter-yard Waste, Misc. Nuisances (including animal waste), Nuisances Generally (including septic tank discharges, garbage, etc.), Pool Barriers, Vacant Building, Vacant/Unsecured Building, Water Collections, Water/Sewer Violations, and Weeds.

There have been 72 code cases in the last five (5) years based on such unsanitary and unsafe conditions on the 64 parcels within the expansion area.

IV. Summary of Finding of Necessity Analysis

In the last five (5) years, 2012-2017, twenty-two (22) residential buildings had to be demolished due to unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Of the remaining thirty (30) buildings, 7 (23%) are classified as unusable; 14 (47%) are deemed to be in poor condition and the other 9 (30%) in fair condition.

Additionally, based on data obtained from Marion County Property Appraiser database, forty-eight percent (48%) of the parcels in the proposed expansion area are undeveloped. This condition is indicative of the economic distress in the area caused by the number of deteriorating structures.

The abandoned, former Royal Oak property encompasses 40% of the proposed expansion area. Since it is situated in the center of the area, it prevents an adequate street layout from being installed and inhibits the proper development of the area.

The assessed values of real property in the area lag behind the City average. Ninety four percent (94%) of the parcels in the proposed expansion area have increased 4% or less since 2012, while the increase for the City as a whole has been 13%.

The presence of the abandoned former Royal Oak facility in the center of the area prevents proper accessibility and usefulness of the area. The lot layout is not consistent with the City's Future Land Use Map Neighborhood and Medium Density/Special Districts.

The operation of the Royal Oak facility in the area for thirty-five (35) years has produced environmentally hazardous conditions in and around the proposed expansion area.

In the proposed expansion area, which contains 64 parcels, there have been 72 code cases in the last five (5) years based on unsanitary and unsafe conditions.

The building density patterns are not consistent with the City's Future Land Use Map Neighborhood and Medium Intensity/ Special District.

The thirty (30) residential lots have different owners. The diversity of ownership makes it unnecessarily onerous to conduct environmental clean-up and subsequent redevelopment of the area.

The City of Ocala owns twenty-two (22) lots in the Phoenix Heights subdivision. The lots have environmental contamination caused by the Royal Oak facility.

V. Consistency with Ocala Comprehensive Plan

163.360 (2) (a) states the community redevelopment plan shall conform to the comprehensive plan for the county or municipality as prepared by the local planning agency under the Community Planning Act.

163.360 (4) states prior to its consideration of a community redevelopment plan, the community redevelopment agency shall submit such plan to the local planning agency of the county or municipality for review and recommendations as to its conformity with the comprehensive plan for the development of the county or municipality as a whole.

Ocala Planning Initiatives

There have been several planning initiatives undertaken that have contributed to the current Ocala Comprehensive Plan and thus influence the West Ocala Redevelopment Plan and this amendment.

- Ocala 2035 Vision was adopted in October 2010.
- As a continuation of the Ocala 2035 Vision, the West Ocala Community Plan was adopted in December 2011.

The Future Land Use Element was amended in January 2013 to incorporate the recommendations of the above documents. The Future Land Use Element is the central element of the Comprehensive Plan that guides this CRA Plan Amendment.

The intent of this Redevelopment Plan Amendment and its consistency with the Comprehensive is reflected in proposed Goal 4 which states - Redevelop the expansion area in accordance with the Future Land Use designations of Neighborhood and Medium Intensity / Special District, consistent with West Ocala Community Plan and compatible with the surrounding area.

Future Land Use Element

Map 5 - Future Land Use Map, indicates 42 acres of the proposed expansion area is Medium Intensity / Special District and 17.7 acres is Neighborhood. The intent of the districts are described below.

The intent of the Medium Intensity/Special District category is to identify neighborhood and community-serving activity centers, generally represented as “Medium Low” or “Medium High” on the Ocala 2035 Vision. The Medium Intensity/Special District category facilitates developments with two (2) or more uses. Permitted uses include residential, office, commercial, public, recreation, educational facilities and institutional. Light industrial shall only be allowable in designated locations as specified in the Land Development Code and must meet the intent of

the Medium Intensity/Special District category, including form and design guidelines as applicable. This mix is intended to promote a walkable urban form.

The intent of the Neighborhood category is to identify and reserve predominantly residential and ancillary uses. Existing street pattern, tree canopy cover, character, and residential occupancy shall be considered when designating areas with the Neighborhood category. The form of buildings and development may be regulated by a Corridor Overlay. Residential is the primary use. Single family uses are allowed based on the Land Development Code, up to the maximum density permitted by the Comprehensive Plan. Multifamily uses shall be reviewed through the development process to determine compatibility, with specific approval criteria being further defined in the Land Development Code.

West Ocala Vision & Community Plan

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

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

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

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

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

Housing Element

There is an objective and strategies specific to the expansion area that deal with affordable housing. This is consistent with Policy 1.2 of the Housing Element.

VI. Goals, Objectives & Strategies

The Goals, Objectives, and Strategies of the West Ocala Redevelopment Plan are amended to include the following.

Goal 4: Redevelop the expansion area in accordance with the Future Land Use designations of Neighborhood and Medium Intensity / Special District, consistent with West Ocala Community Plan and compatible with the surrounding area.

Objective 1: Prepare a final Planned Development (PD) plan for a mixed-use neighborhood that includes housing, retail, institutional, recreational and light/green industrial uses. The conceptual plan is shown on Plan Amendment Map 1- Pine Oaks Square.

Objective 2: Upgrade infrastructure and purchase properties for purpose of assembling land for redevelopment.

Objective 3: Remove blighted structures and develop policies to address property maintenance issues.

Objective 4: Conduct environmental assessment and pursue clean-up opportunities to remediate site contamination

Objective 5: Develop grant, incentives and funding mechanisms to support redevelopment, with a focus on low-income and affordable housing

The specific strategies that support Goal 4 and its objectives are:

- Acquire and assemble land for redevelopment.
- Utilize brownfield and CRA funding to assist with environmental assessment and clean-up efforts.
- Continue code enforcement actions on nuisance properties.

- Provide grants and incentives to encourage redevelopment by private enterprise that is consistent with the Redevelopment Master Plan with the focus on low-income and affordable housing.
- Install infrastructure and facilities necessary to implement the above Goal and Objectives.

The expansion area will be added into the current Redevelopment Plan and become part of the Martin Luther King Avenue corridor and the Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies associated with that corridor.

The expansion area will be incorporated into the West Ocala CRA Master Plan Map (Map 6) and be identified as Pine Oaks Square.

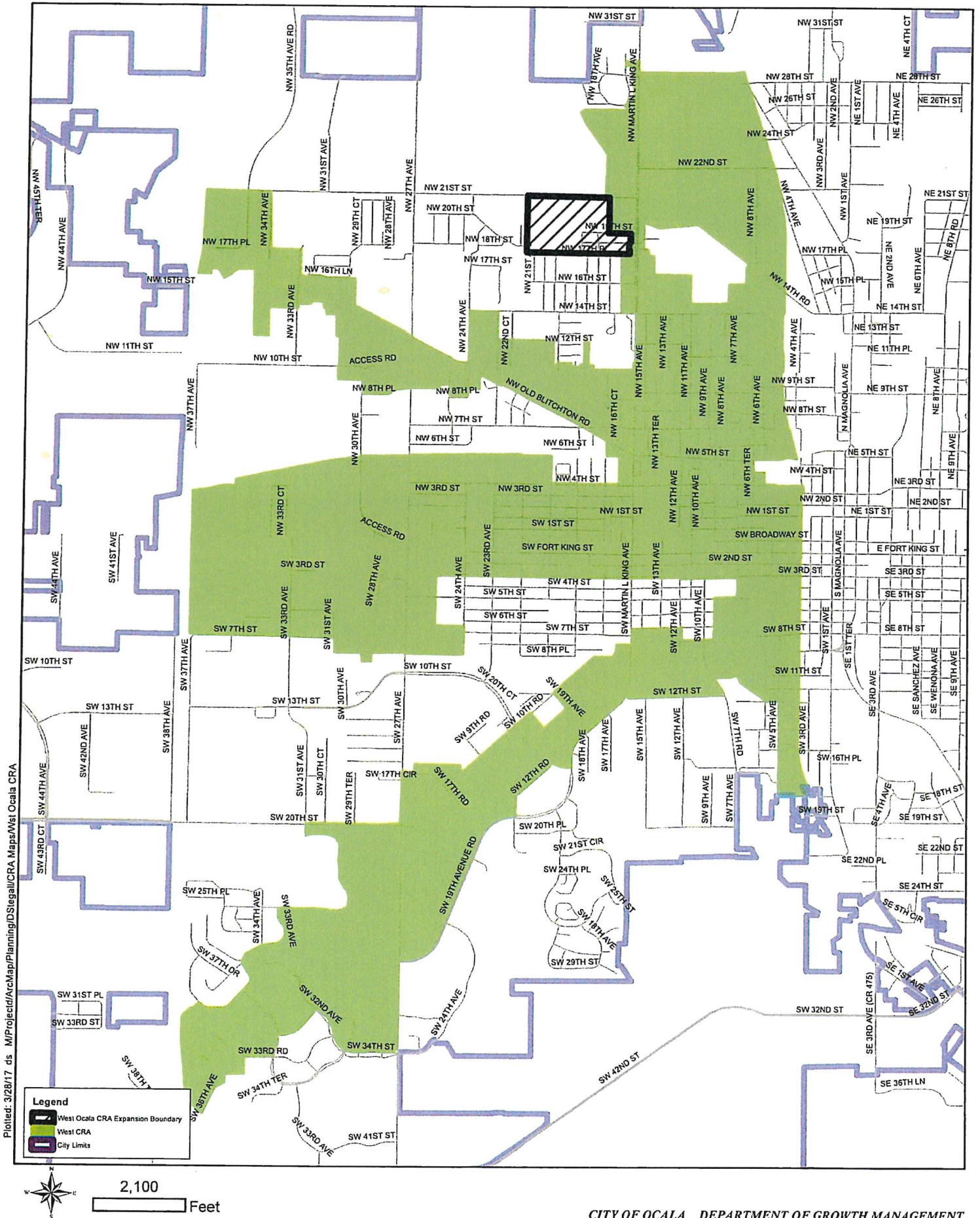
The West Ocala tax increment district will be expanded to include this expansion area. The West Ocala CRA expires in 2045 and as per agreement with Marion County, the CRA retains 90% of tax increment. These provisions will also apply to the expansion area.

WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT
May 2017

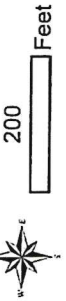
APPENDIX 1 MAPS

Map 1	West Ocala CRA
Map 2	West Ocala CRA Expansion Area
Map 3	West Ocala CRA Expansion Existing Land Use
Map 4	West Ocala CRA Expansion Future Land Use
Map 5	West Ocala CRA Expansion Area Redevelopment Plan
Map 6	West Ocala CRA Master Plan Map

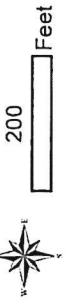
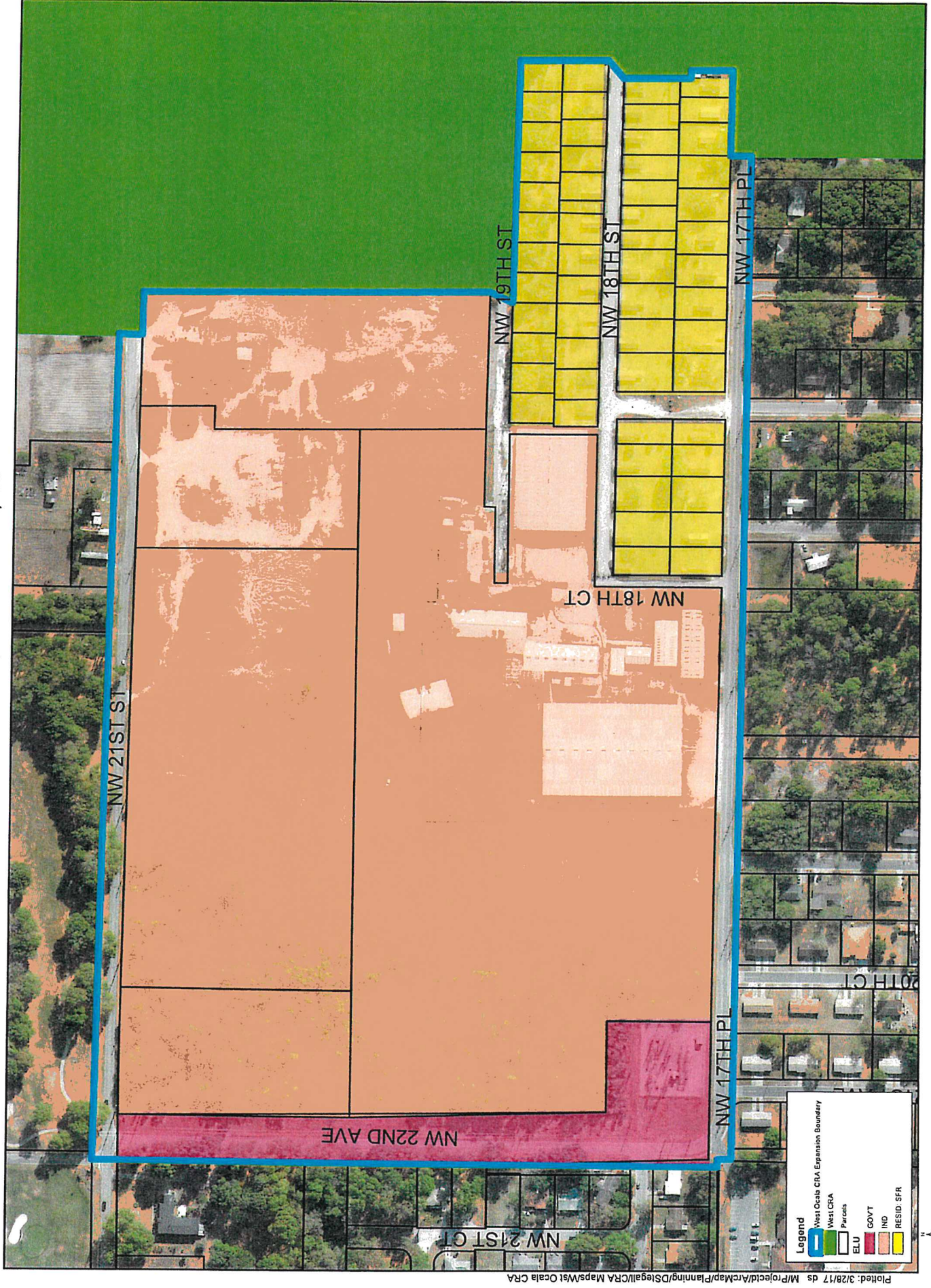
West Ocala CRA Expansion Map #1



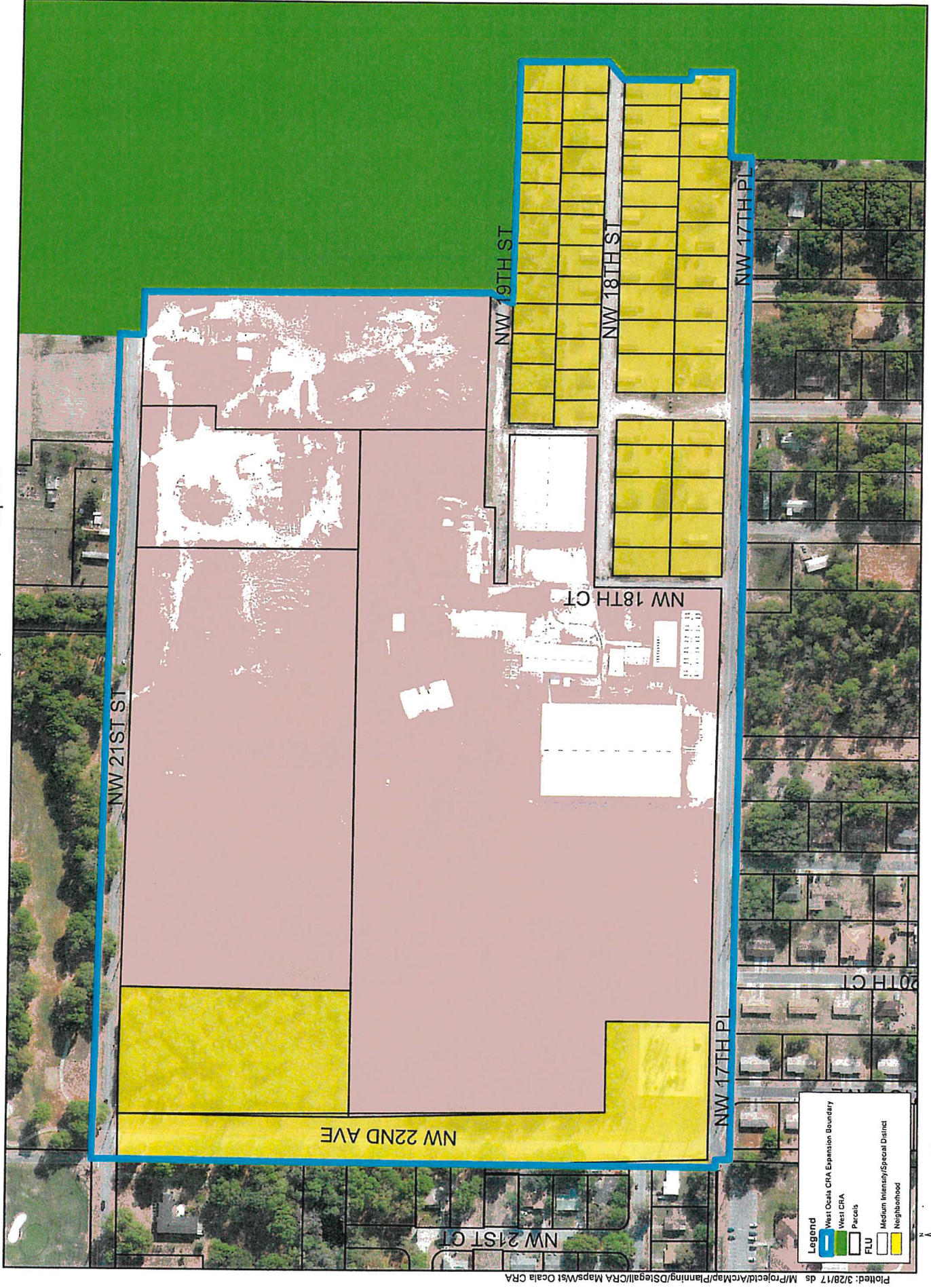
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West Ocala CRA Expansion ELU Map #3



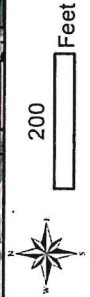
West Ocala CRA Expansion FLU Map #4



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Legend






- West Ocala CRA Expansion Boundary
- West CRA
- Parcels
- FLU
- Medium Intensity/Special District
- Neighborhood

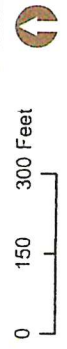


Map 5

West Ocala CRA Expansion Area Redevelopment Plan

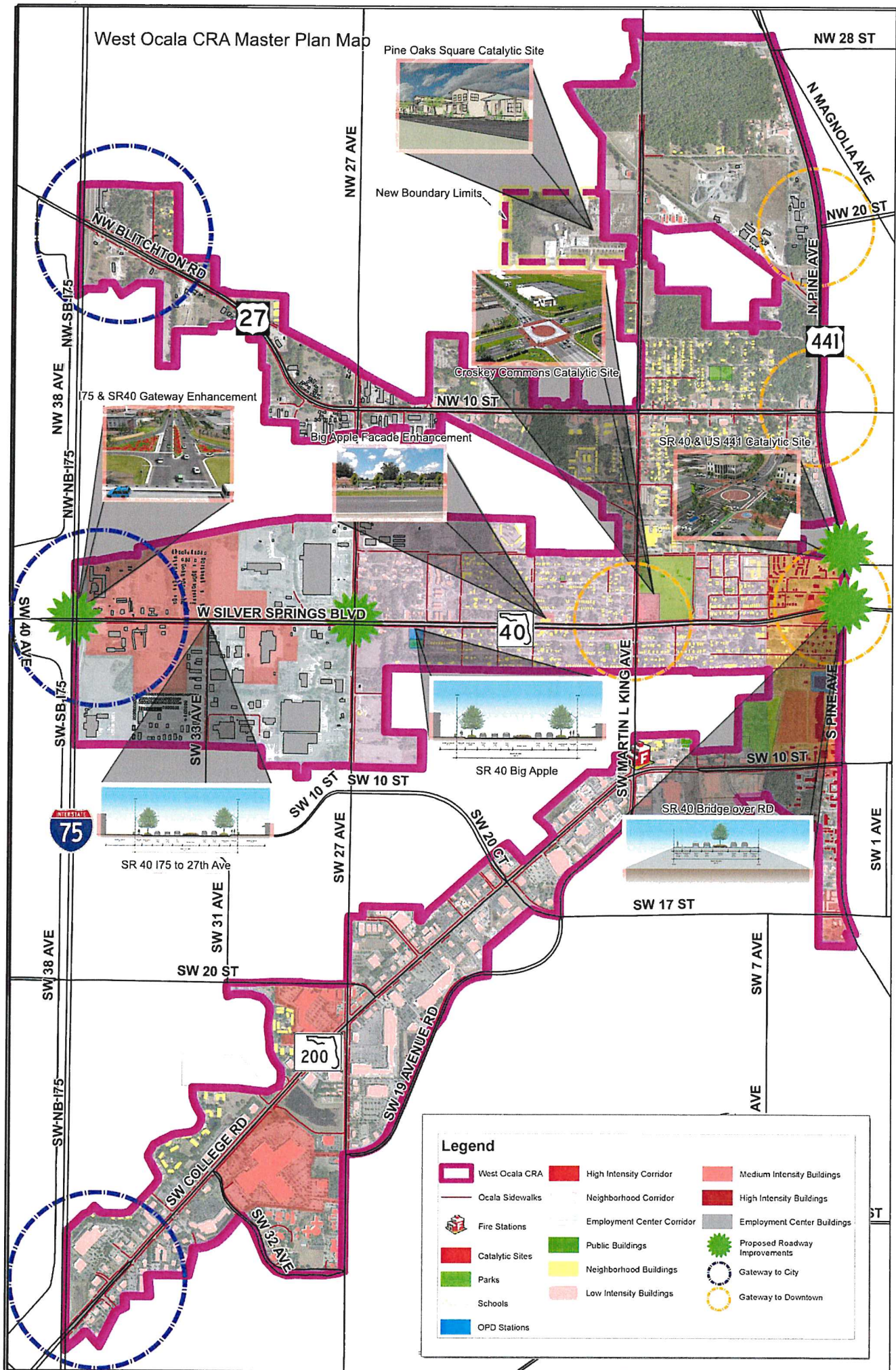
Legend

-  West Ocala CRA Expansion Area
-  West Ocala CRA Boundary
-  High Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Low Density Residential
-  Mixed Use
-  Institutional
-  Light / Green Industrial & Commercial
-  Recreation
-  Proposed Streets / Rights-of-way
-  Parcel Boundaries



Sources: Esri | HERE | DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

West Ocala CRA Master Plan Map



**WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT**

May 2017

APPENDIX 2 – LEGAL DESCRIPTION

WEST OCALA CRA EXPANSION

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

NOTE: THE PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS (PID) IN THIS DESCRIPTION ARE PER THE MARION COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER'S WEB SITE AS OF APRIL 26, 2017.

BEGIN AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF PID 21939-000-17, ALSO BEING LOT 12, PHOENIX PLACE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 11, PAGE 183, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EAST BOUNDARY LINE THEREOF TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 12; THENCE CONTINUING SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EAST BOUNDARY LINE OF PID 21939-000-12 AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 5636, PAGE 1784, TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID PARCEL; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF PID 21939-004-13 AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 5993, PAGE 1885; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EAST LINE THEREOF TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID PARCEL; THENCE CONTINUE SOUTHERLY, THEN EASTERLY, THEN SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EASTERLY BOUNDARY LINE OF PID 21939-004-09 AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 4461, PAGE 469, TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID PARCEL; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTH BOUNDARY LINE OF SAID PID 21939-004-09, AND ALONG THE SOUTH BOUNDARY LINE OF PID 21939-004-08 AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 4461, PAGE 495, AND ALONG THE SOUTH BOUNDARY LINE OF PID 21939-004-07, BEING ALSO LOT 1, DONLIN COMMUNITY, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 11, PAGE 155, TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE SOUTHERLY TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF PID 2195-025-000, ALSO BEING THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 25, BUNCHE HEIGHTS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK C, PAGE 98, BEING ALSO A POINT ON THE SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NW 17TH PLACE; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG SAID SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND CONTINUING TO THE WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NW 22ND AVE; THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG SAID WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND CONTINUING TO THE NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NW 21ST ST; THENCE EASTERLY ALONG SAID NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND CONTINUING TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF PID 21414-002-00 AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 5850, PAGE 744; THENCE SOUTH TO THE SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID NW 21ST ST.; THENCE EASTERLY ALONG SAID SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE AND CONTINUING TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF PID 21943-001-00 AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 4046, PAGE 1423; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EAST BOUNDARY LINE THEREOF TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID PARCEL; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF PID 21939-000-24, BEING ALSO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 5, PHOENIX PLACE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 11, PAGE 183, SAID CORNER ALSO BEING ON THE SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF NW 19TH ST.; THENCE EASTERLY ALONG SAID SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

ALL AFOREDECRIBED LANDS BEING IN THE CITY OF OCALA, MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA.

**WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT**

May 2017

APPENDIX 3 – RESOLUTION ADOPTING FINDING OF NECESSITY

RESOLUTION 2017-34

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OCALA, FLORIDA; FINDING THE EXISTENCE OF ONE OR MORE SLUM AND BLIGHTED AREAS IN THE CITY OF OCALA REFERRED TO AS THE "WEST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA EXPANSION AREA "; FINDING THE CONDITIONS IN THE WEST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA EXPANSION AREA MEET THE CRITERIA DESCRIBED IN SECTION 163.340(8), FLORIDA STATUTES, FOR A BLIGHTED AREA; FINDING THAT THE REHABILITATION, CONSERVATION, OR REDEVELOPMENT, OR COMBINATION THEREOF, OF THE WEST OCALA REDEVELOPMENT AREA EXPANSION AREA, IS NECESSARY IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, MORALS OR WELFARE OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE CITY; FINDING THAT THE NEED TO AMEND THE CURRENT COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN MAY EXIST; PROVIDING FOR THE CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO RECOMMEND AND ADOPT AN AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION OF THE CURRENT COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN TO CHANGE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE EXISTING COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS; DIRECTING CITY STAFF TO COOPERATE IN SUCH EFFORT; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS:

- A. As used herein, the terms defined in Section 163.340, Florida Statutes, have the meanings as set forth therein. Further, as used herein, the "Redevelopment Act" refers to Part III, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes;
- B. By Resolution No. 88-37, adopted by the Ocala City Council ("City Council") on March 15, 1988, City Council found that one or more slum or blighted areas existed within the City in the area described in the Resolution (the "Downtown Redevelopment Area"), and that the rehabilitation, conservation or redevelopment, or combination thereof, of such area was necessary in the interest of public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the City. Pursuant to such Resolution, the Downtown Redevelopment Area became the City's Community Redevelopment Area;
- C. Pursuant to Resolution No. 88-48, adopted by City Council on April 12, 1988, City Council created the Community Redevelopment Agency ("Agency"), and designated the City Council as the Agency pursuant to Section 163.357, Florida Statutes;
- D. By Resolution No. 88-52, adopted by City Council on May 24, 1988, the City adopted a Community Redevelopment Plan for the Downtown Redevelopment Area;
- E. By Ordinance No. 2009, adopted by City Council on June 1988, the City established a Redevelopment Trust Fund ("Fund") and provided for the deposit therein of tax increment revenues as described in Section 163.387(1) Florida Statutes;
- F. By Resolution No. 93-66, adopted by City Council on June 29, 1993, the City designated the Downtown Development Commission ("DDC") as the Agency pursuant to Section 163.356, Florida Statutes;

- G. By Resolution No. 99-01, adopted by City Council on June 22, 1999, the City designated City Council as the Agency pursuant to Section 163.357, Florida Statutes, and named the DDC as the advisory board to the Agency;
- H. By Resolution No. 99-121, adopted by City Council on August 10, 1999, the City found that one or more slum and blighted areas existed within the area described therein (the "North Magnolia Redevelopment Area"), that the rehabilitation, conservation or redevelopment, or combination thereof, of the North Magnolia Redevelopment Area was necessary in the interest of public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the City, and that the need existed to amend the Community Redevelopment Plan to include the North Magnolia Redevelopment Area;
- I. By Resolution No. 2000-07, adopted by City Council on November 2, 1999, the City adopted a modification to the Community Redevelopment Plan. The modification included a change to the Community Redevelopment Area boundary designating a part of the Redevelopment Area as the "Downtown Redevelopment Area" and the other part as the "North Magnolia Redevelopment Area," and the adoption of the "North Magnolia Redevelopment Area Community Redevelopment Plan" dated June 22, 1999, as the redevelopment plan for the North Magnolia Redevelopment Area;
- J. By Resolution No. 2006-43, adopted by City Council on March 28, 2006, the City adopted a further modification to the Community Redevelopment Plan, amended the Community Redevelopment Plan as set forth therein, and extended the duration of the Community Redevelopment Plan, as more particularly set forth therein;
- K. City Council adopted Resolution No. 2013-42 on May 7, 2013, finding the existence of one or more blighted areas in the City of Ocala referred to as the "West Ocala Redevelopment Area," finding the conditions in the area meet the criteria described in Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes, for a blighted area;
- L. By Resolution No. 2016-10, adopted by City Council on November 17, 2015, the City adopted a further modification to the Community Redevelopment Plan. The modification included a change to the Community Redevelopment Area boundary designating a part of the Redevelopment Area as the "Downtown Redevelopment Area," "North Magnolia Redevelopment Area," and "West Ocala Redevelopment Area and the adoption of the "West Ocala Redevelopment Area Community Redevelopment Plan" dated March 17, 2015, as the redevelopment plan for the West Ocala Redevelopment Area

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OCALA, FLORIDA:

1. **Incorporation.** The above matters are incorporated herein.
2. The City Council hereby finds, based upon information presented to the City Council in a public meeting, that one or more slum and blighted areas exist within the area as described and depicted on the attached Finding of Necessity (the "West Ocala Redevelopment Area Expansion Area"), and that the conditions in the West Ocala Redevelopment Area Expansion Area meet the criteria described in Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes, as a "blighted area."

3. The City Council further finds and determines that the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or combination thereof, of the West Ocala Redevelopment Area Expansion Area, is necessary in the interest of public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the City.
4. This Resolution constitutes a finding of necessity by the City Council concerning the West Ocala Redevelopment Area Expansion Area pursuant to Section 163.355, Florida Statutes.
5. As a result of the findings of the existence of a slum or blighted area in Section 2 hereof, and of the necessity for the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment or combination thereof, in Section 3 hereof, the City does hereby find that a need may exist to amend the Current Community Redevelopment Plan to include the West Ocala Redevelopment Area Expansion Area.
6. The City Council shall consider whether it should recommend and adopt an amendment or modification of the Current Community Redevelopment Plan to change the boundaries of the existing Community Redevelopment Area to add the West Ocala Redevelopment Area Expansion Area.
7. City staff is hereby directed and authorized to take all action necessary and appropriate to assist the City Council in making such recommendation, and, upon such recommendation, to present appropriate documents to City Council to amend or modify the Current Community Redevelopment Plan and to notify all taxing authorities pursuant to the Act.
8. **Notification to Taxing Authorities.** The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to notify all taxing authorities of the adoption of this Resolution.
9. **Effective Date:** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

This resolution adopted this 18 day of April, 2017.

CITY OF OCALA

By: 

Brent R. Malever

President, Ocala City Council

ATTEST:

By: 

Angel B. Jacobs

City Clerk

Approved as to form and legality:

By: 

Patrick G. Gilligan

City Attorney

**WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT**

May 2017

APPENDIX 4 – FINDING OF NECESSITY

**FINDING OF NECESSITY
FOR
EXPANSION OF
WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT SUB-AREA**

April 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Background	3
II. Description of Proposed West Ocala CRA Expansion Area	4
III. Definition of Blight and Blight Indicators	5
IV. Analysis	6
V. Findings	9
VI. Conclusions	10

LIST OF TABLES

		<u>Page</u>
Table 1	Existing Land Use	5
Table 2	Residential Buildings Quality & Grades	6
Table 3	Citywide vs. Expansion Area – Assessed Property Value	8

LIST OF MAPS (Appendix A)

Map 1	West Ocala CRA
Map 2	West Ocala CRA Expansion Area
Map 3	West Ocala CRA Expansion Existing Land Use
Map 4	West Ocala CRA Expansion Future Land Use

I. Background

Creation of West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area

On May 7, 2013 the Ocala City Council adopted Resolution No. 2013-42, Finding of Necessity West Ocala Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), finding the existence of one or more blighted areas in the City of Ocala referred to as the “West Ocala Redevelopment Area”, finding the conditions in the area meet the criteria described in Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes, for a blighted area.

The Ocala Community Redevelopment Agency approved the West Ocala Redevelopment Area Plan on March 17, 2015.

On November 17, 2015 Resolution 2016-10 was adopted by Ocala City Council. The resolution modified the Community Redevelopment Area boundary to include the West Ocala Redevelopment Subarea and adopted the West Ocala Area Community Redevelopment Plan.

Map 1 - West Ocala CRA shows the boundaries of the area.

There is a small area (outlined on Map 1) abutting the CRA, which although exhibiting the same blighting conditions, was not included in the CRA. The redevelopment needs of this area are evident; therefore, it is prudent to propose expanding the CRA to add this area.

Process for Expanding West Ocala CRA

A field inspection of the proposed expansion area reveals the area has much the same blighting conditions as documented in the Finding of Necessity prepared for the West Ocala CRA in 2013. As required by 163.361(4) a modification to a community redevelopment plan that includes a change in the boundaries of the redevelopment area to add land must be supported by a resolution as provided in s. 163.355. Therefore, in order to amend the CRA Plan for the purpose of expanding the CRA, the City Council must first adopt a resolution, supported by data and analysis, which makes a legislative finding that the conditions in the expansion area meet the criteria described in s. 163.340 (8).

The resolution must state that:

- (1) One or more slum or blighted areas, or one or more areas in which there is a shortage of housing affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, exist in such county or municipality; and
- (2) The rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of such area or areas, including, if appropriate, the development of housing which residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, can afford, is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of such county or municipality.

This document provides findings, based on data and analysis, to determine whether the City Council should make a finding of necessity, pursuant to Section 163.355, F.S., that the conditions in the proposed expansion area meet the criteria for a blighted area as defined in

Florida Statutes. In making this determination, City Council may also consider additional evidence presented at public hearings at which the issue will be considered, as well as its own knowledge of the proposed West Ocala CRA.

II. Description of Proposed West Ocala CRA Expansion Area

As shown on Map 2 – West Ocala CRA Expansion Area, the proposed expansion area is generally bounded by NW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue on the east, NW 17th Place on the south, NW 22nd Avenue on the west, and NW 21st Street on the north; except that the parcels fronting on NW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue between NW 17th Place and NW 21st Street are already in the West Ocala CRA.

According to the Marion County Property Appraiser records, the proposed expansion area contains 64 parcels encompassing an area of approximately 59.7 acres, excluding right-of-ways. The Marion County Property Appraiser records indicate the existing West Ocala CRA contains 2,806 parcels encompassing an area of 2,376 acres excluding right-of-ways. Therefore, the expansion area would increase the West Ocala CRA area by 2.5%.

Existing Land Use

The proposed expansion area is comprised of 57 small single family residential parcels, several large industrial parcels and other undeveloped lots. The land use acreages are shown in Table 1 – Existing Land Use. The platted residential lots are part of Phoenix Heights subdivision, which was formerly workforce housing for the Royal Oak facility. The City has acquired 22 of the platted parcels through code enforcement and other means. Map 3 – West Ocala CRA Expansion Area Existing Land Use shows the location of the land uses.

TABLE 1 – EXISTING LAND USE			
Land Use	Acres	Parcels	Notes
Residential – Platted	9.3	57	Phoenix Heights
Developed		30	
Undeveloped		27	
Residential – Undeveloped	18	2	
Institutional – Undeveloped	3	1	
Industrial – Active	8	2	
Industrial – Undeveloped	8	1	
Industrial – Vacant Bldg.	13.4	1	Old Royal Oak Site
TOTAL	59.7	64	
Undeveloped	22.55	31	
% Undeveloped	38%	48%	

Source: MCPA (2016) Note: The vacant land classification is based on zoning of the property.

III. Definition of Blight and Blight Indicators

In order to expand the West Ocala CRA a "Finding of Necessity Study" must document the existence of "blight" conditions, as defined by Section 163.340(8), Florida Statutes, in the area. Section 163.340 (8), Florida Statutes, defines blighted area as follows:

"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, endanger life or property or are leading to economic distress; and in which two or more of the following factors are present:

- (a) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking 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 conditions.
- (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.
- (n) Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.
- (o) A substantial number or percentage of properties damaged by sinkhole activity which have not been adequately repaired or stabilized.

However, the term "blighted area" also means any area in which at least one of the factors identified in paragraphs (a) through (o) is present and all taxing authorities subject

to s. 163.387(2)(a) agree, either by interlocal agreement with the agency or by resolution, that the area is blighted. Such agreement or resolution must be limited to a determination that the area is blighted. For the purposes of qualifying for the tax credits authorized in chapter 220, "blighted area" means an area as defined in this subsection.

Based on the above definition, indicators of blighting conditions were analyzed in order to make findings and ultimately a determination if a blighted area exists. These indicators include building conditions, assessed values, street layout, lot layout and building density pattern, unsanitary and unsafe conditions, and property ownership.

IV. Analysis

A. Building Conditions

Table 2 – Residential Buildings Quality Grades & Age provides information on the quality and age of residential buildings in the proposed expansion area. The newer buildings in fair condition were built by Habitat for Humanity.

TABLE 2 – RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS QUALITY GRADES & AGE		
Quality Grades	Number & Percent of Buildings	Age (yrs)
Unusable	7 (23%)	60
Poor	0	
Low	14 (47%)	60
Fair	9 (30%)	< 10
Average	0	
Good	0	
Very Good	0	
Excellent	0	
TOTAL	30	

Source: MCPA (2016)

Demolished Residential Buildings

Due to unsafe and unsanitary conditions, the City of Ocala has had to demolish twenty-two (22) residential buildings since 2012 within the proposed area boundaries. Most of the homes were built in 1957 and were 620 to 750 square feet in size. The City now owns the vacant lots. The

frontage of these lots ranges from 55' to 65' and the lots area is .12 to .2 acres or 5237 to 8712 square feet.

Industrial Building Conditions

The former Royal Oak Charcoal plant closed in 2006 after many years of decline and has remained inactive for the last 10 years. At closure, 43 jobs were lost. The overall site encompasses 24.28 acres, with 13.4 acres developed as for industrial use and the remainder is undeveloped. The old Royal Oak buildings are classified as being in poor to fair condition.

B. Street Layout

There are roads along the perimeter of the area. A local residential street serves the subdivision. The abandoned Royal Oak site, which takes up 40% of the proposed expansion area, is located in the center of the area and as such interferes with providing an adequate street layout for the area. This can be seen on Map 2.

C. Property Values

Table 3 compares the change in assessed property values of the proposed expansion area to the City from 2012 to 2016.

TABLE 3. Citywide vs. Expansion Area – Assessed Property Values			
	2012 Assessed Value	2016 Assessed Value	% Change
Expansion Area	\$2,036,350	\$2,266,585	11%
City of Ocala	\$4,340,988,780	\$4,915,302,356	13%

Source MCPA (2016, 2012)

Due to the limited amount of parcels the percent change in the expansion area is skewed by a significant increase in a few large industrial parcels. Of the 62 parcels, 58 (94%) have increased by 4% or less. This includes 29 (47%) that have not increased in value or declined in value. Removing the few large industrial parcels from the query, the percent change in assessed property values in the proposed expansion area is 7%, or 53% of the Citywide increase.

D. Lot Layout and Building Density Pattern

The lot layout and building density patterns are not consistent with the City's Future Land Use Map. Map 4 - Future Land Use Map, indicates 42 acres of the proposed expansion area is Medium Intensity / Special District and 17.7 acres is Neighborhood. The intent of the districts is described below.

The intent of the Medium Intensity/Special District category is to identify neighborhood and community-serving activity centers, generally represented as "Medium Low" or "Medium High" on the Ocala 2035 Vision. The Medium Intensity/Special District category facilitates

developments with two (2) or more uses. Permitted uses include residential, office, commercial, public, recreation, educational facilities and institutional. Light industrial shall only be allowable in designated locations as specified in the Land Development Code and must meet the intent of the Medium Intensity/Special District category, including form and design guidelines as applicable. This mix is intended to promote a walkable urban form.

The intent of the Neighborhood category is to identify and reserve predominantly residential and ancillary uses. Existing street pattern, tree canopy cover, character, and residential occupancy shall be considered when designating areas with the Neighborhood category. The form of buildings and development may be regulated by a Corridor Overlay. Residential is the primary use. Single family uses are allowed based on the Land Development Code, up to the maximum density permitted by the Comprehensive Plan. Multifamily uses shall be reviewed through the development process to determine compatibility, with specific approval criteria being further defined in the Land Development Code.

E. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

Environmental Contamination

The former Royal Oak Charcoal plant site encompasses 24.28 acres. A Phase I ESA has been completed and found several contaminants of concern. Years of operation and poor air emissions control technology (ATSDR 2007 report) have potentially impacted the site and surrounding residential areas with airborne deposits of heavy metals and Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons. The facility itself likely contains wood preservatives; creosote, pentachlorophenol, arsenic, ACM, LBP.

Phoenix Heights (former workforce housing for Royal Oak facility, still occupied). Airborne deposition of heavy metals and PAH contamination from Royal Oak facility is suspected. ACM and LBP are also suspected based on age (1957) of structures, as well as septic tanks.

The Royal Oak and Phoenix heights properties are in close proximity to Howard Middle School and the well-used Lillian Bryant public park.

Code Enforcement Cases

According to the City of Ocala Code Enforcement Manager, the following City Code violations are indications of unsafe and unsanitary conditions: Abandoned/Derelict Vehicles, Dilapidated Structures, Illicit Discharge, Job Abandonment, Junk & Debris, Litter-yard Waste, Misc. Nuisances (including animal waste), Nuisances Generally (including septic tank discharges, garbage, etc.), Pool Barriers, Vacant Building, Vacant/Unsecured Building, Water Collections, Water/Sewer Violations, and Weeds.

There have been 72 code cases in the last five (5) years based on such unsanitary and unsafe conditions on the 64 parcels within the expansion area.

F. Property Ownership

The City has acquired 22 of the platted parcels through code enforcement and other means. The remaining platted lots are under separate ownerships.

V. **Findings**

The definitions of blighted area in 163.340(8) were applied to the results of the analysis in Section IV. to produce the following findings.

163.340(8) Substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures; in which conditions, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies, endanger life or property or are leading to economic distress

In the last five (5) years, twenty-two (22) residential buildings had to be demolished due to unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Of the remaining thirty (30) buildings, 7 (23%) are classified as unusable; 14 (47%) are deemed to be in poor condition and the other 9 (30%) in fair condition.

Additionally, based on data obtained from Marion County Property Appraiser database, forty-eight percent (48%) of the parcels in the proposed expansion area are undeveloped. This condition is indicative of the economic distress in the area caused by number of deteriorating structures.

163.340(8) (a) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities.

The abandoned, former Royal Oak property encompasses 40% of the proposed expansion area. Since it is situated in the center of the area, it prevents an adequate street layout from being installed and inhibits the proper development of the area.

163.340(8) (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 conditions.

The assessed values of real property in the area lag behind the City average. Ninety four percent (94%) of the parcels in the proposed expansion area have increased 4% or less since 2012, while the increase for the City as a whole has been 13%.

163.340(8)(c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.

The presence of the abandoned former Royal Oak facility in the center of the area prevents proper accessibility and usefulness of the area. The lot layout is not consistent

with the City's Future Land Use Map Neighborhood and Medium Density/Special Districts.

163.340(8) (d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.

The operation of the Royal Oak facility in the area for thirty-five (35) years has produced environmentally hazardous conditions in and around the proposed expansion area.

In the proposed expansion area, which contains 64 parcels, there have been 72 code cases in the last five (5) years based on unsanitary and unsafe conditions.

163.340(8) (e) Deterioration of site or other improvements.

The data and analysis provided in 163.340 (8) (a) through (d) provides findings that also support the finding of deterioration of site or other improvements.

163.340(8) (f) Inadequate and outdated building density patterns.

The building density patterns are not consistent with the City's Future Land Use Map Neighborhood and Medium Intensity/ Special District.

163.340(8) (m) Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area.

The thirty (30) residential lots have different owners. The diversity of ownership makes it unnecessarily onerous to conduct environmental clean-up and subsequent redevelopment of the area.

163.340(8) (n) Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.

The City of Ocala owns twenty-two (22) lots in the Phoenix Heights subdivision. The lots have environmental contamination caused by the Royal Oak facility.

VI. Conclusions

The analysis in this study has identified and documented conditions in the recommended proposed West Ocala CRA expansion that are consistent with the definition of blight contained in the Florida Statutes. The findings provide the basis for the City of Ocala to adopt a resolution acknowledging the existence of blight in the proposed West Ocala CRA expansion area. These findings also provide justification for using the tools provided to local governments through Chapter 163 Part III of the Florida Statutes, The Community Redevelopment Act.

Therefore, this Report establishes that, within the proposed West Ocala CRA expansion area:

- (1) There are a high percentage of deteriorated or deteriorating structures.
- (2) Conditions within such structures, as indicated by government–maintained statistics or other studies, are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property.
- (3) The following additional factors exist:
 - a. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;
 - b. The aggregate assessed values of real property in the proposed West Ocala CRA for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the previous 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. Diversity of ownership that inhibits the efficient clean-up environmentally contaminated land and proper redevelopment of property;
 - h. Government owned property with adverse environmental conditions.

Further, the foregoing establishes the necessity for the rehabilitation, conservation or redevelopment, or combination thereof, of the proposed West Ocala CRA expansion area, is necessary in the interest of public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the City.

The purpose of the Community Redevelopment Act is to provide local governments the ability to combat deteriorating urban conditions which retard development of other areas. The intent of the legislation is to reduce or eliminate the conditions found in the area; conditions, which hinder sound future growth and development.

Redevelopment and infill development, by nature, is generally more costly than the development of vacant land. Improved property is invariably more expensive than vacant property, as the cost of demolition and the preparation of build-out must be added. Additionally, when developing or redeveloping property, it is often necessary to assemble more than one parcel of land.

Redevelopment activity also triggers mandatory compliance with more costly, modern development standards. Often environmental clean-up is required which adds expense.

The higher costs associated with property redevelopment will have significant implications for attempts to redevelop the proposed West Ocala CRA expansion area. The private sector is not likely to absorb the risks and costs of such an undertaking alone. Therefore, the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area is the most appropriate tool for the City of Ocala to use when planning, designing and participating with the private sector to revitalize West Ocala.

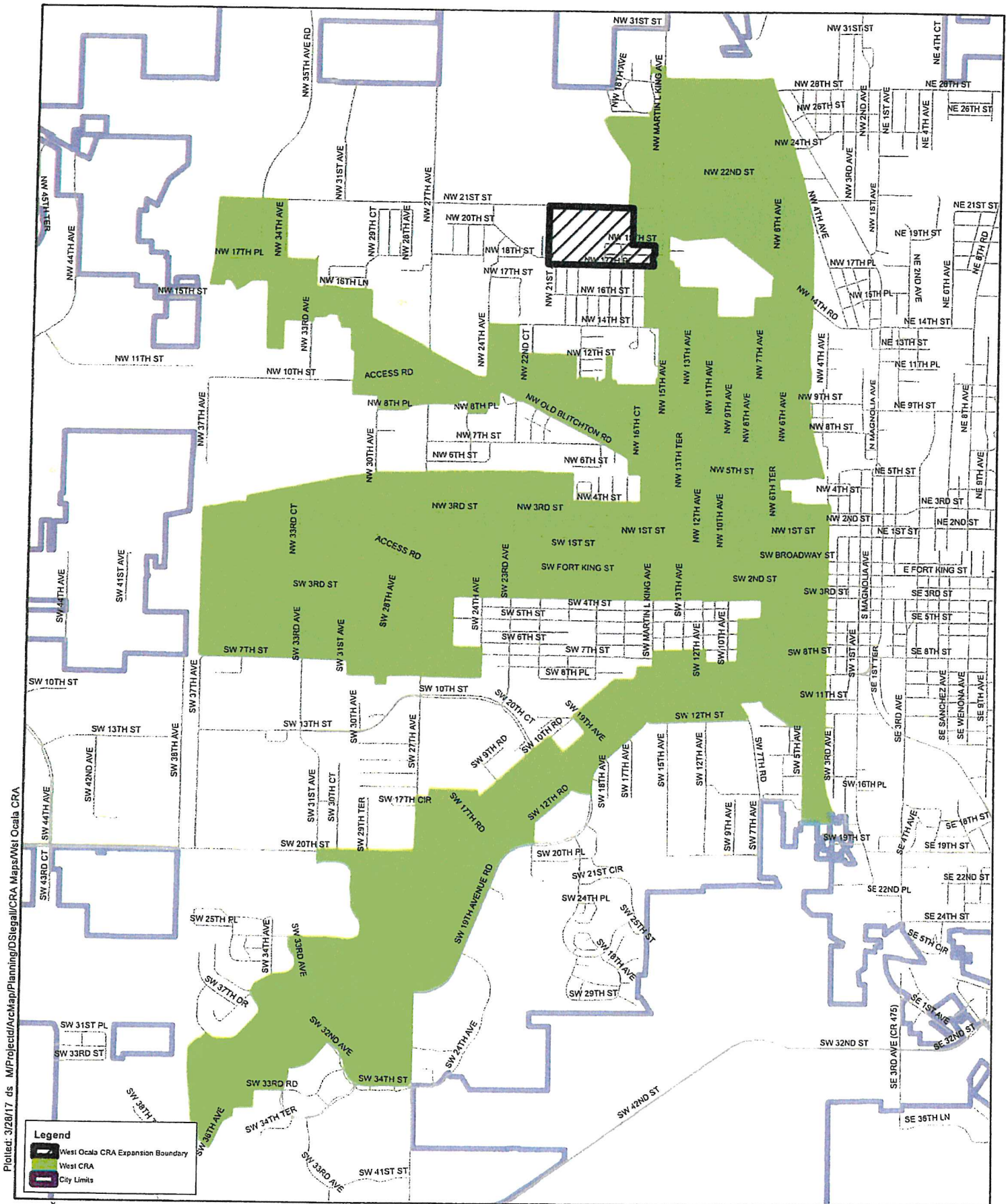
The recommended West Ocala CRA expansion area boundaries and parcels are shown on Map 2.

**FINDING OF NECESSITY
FOR
EXPANSION OF
WEST OCALA COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT SUB-AREA**

APPENDIX A

MAPS

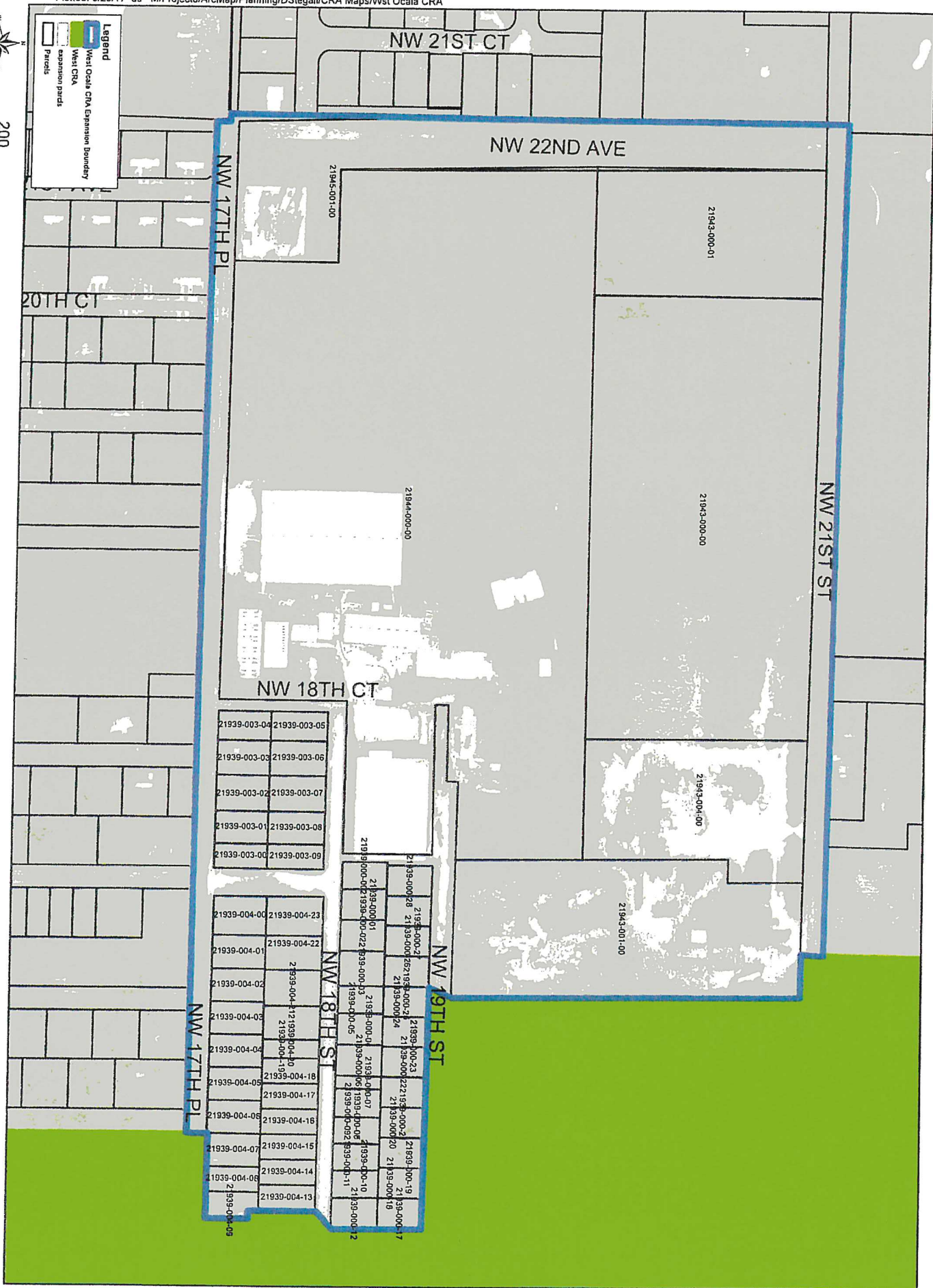
West Ocala CRA Expansion Map #1



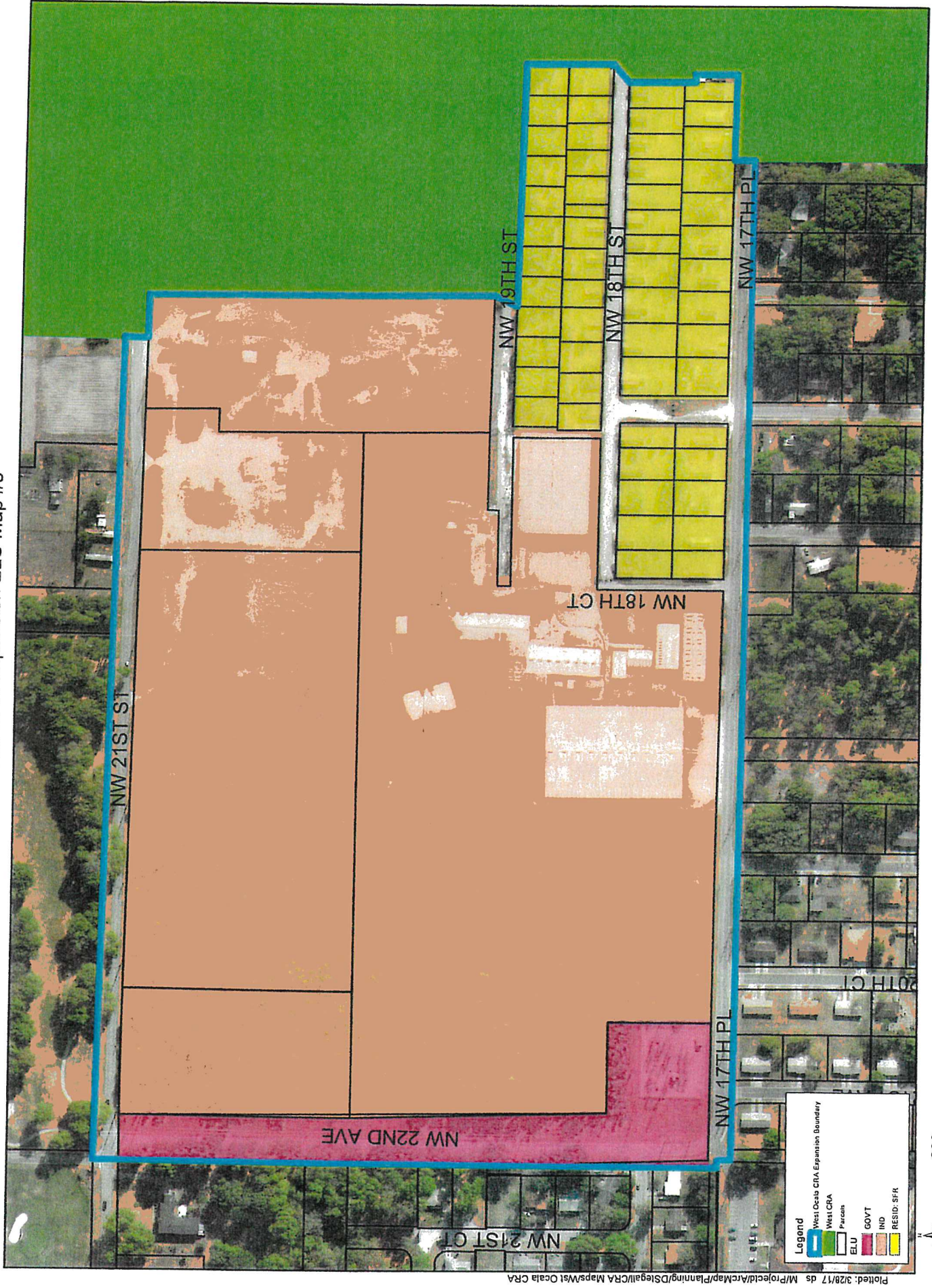
CITY OF OCALA DEPARTMENT OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT

200

Feet



West Ocala CRA Expansion ELU Map #3



West Ocala CRA Expansion FLU Map #4



Plotted: 3/28/17 ds M:\Project\ArcMap\Planning\DS\Legal\CRA Maps\West Ocala CRA

Legend

- West Ocala CRA Expansion Boundary
- West CRA
- FLU
- Medium Intensity/Special District
- Neighborhood

200 Feet