

City of
Gainesville

Economic Development Framework

City Manager's Office
April 24, 2025



FY 2026 Strategic Plan

Goals



A Great Place to Live & Experience



Resilient Local Economy



Equitable Community



More Sustainable Community



“Best in Class” Neighbor Services

Critical Organizational Components



Top Priorities



FY 2026 Strategic Plan



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Goals



A Great Place to Live & Experience



Resilient Local Economy



Equitable Community



More Sustainable Community



“Best in Class” Neighbor Services

Critical Organizational Components



Financial Stability



Technology & Facility Upgrades



Organizational Culture



Communications and Community Relations



Downtown Business and Community Revitalization



East Gainesville Transformational Development



Economic Development via Business Expansion and Job Growth



Equity Framework and Small Business Development



Public Safety, Public Health and Gun Violence Prevention



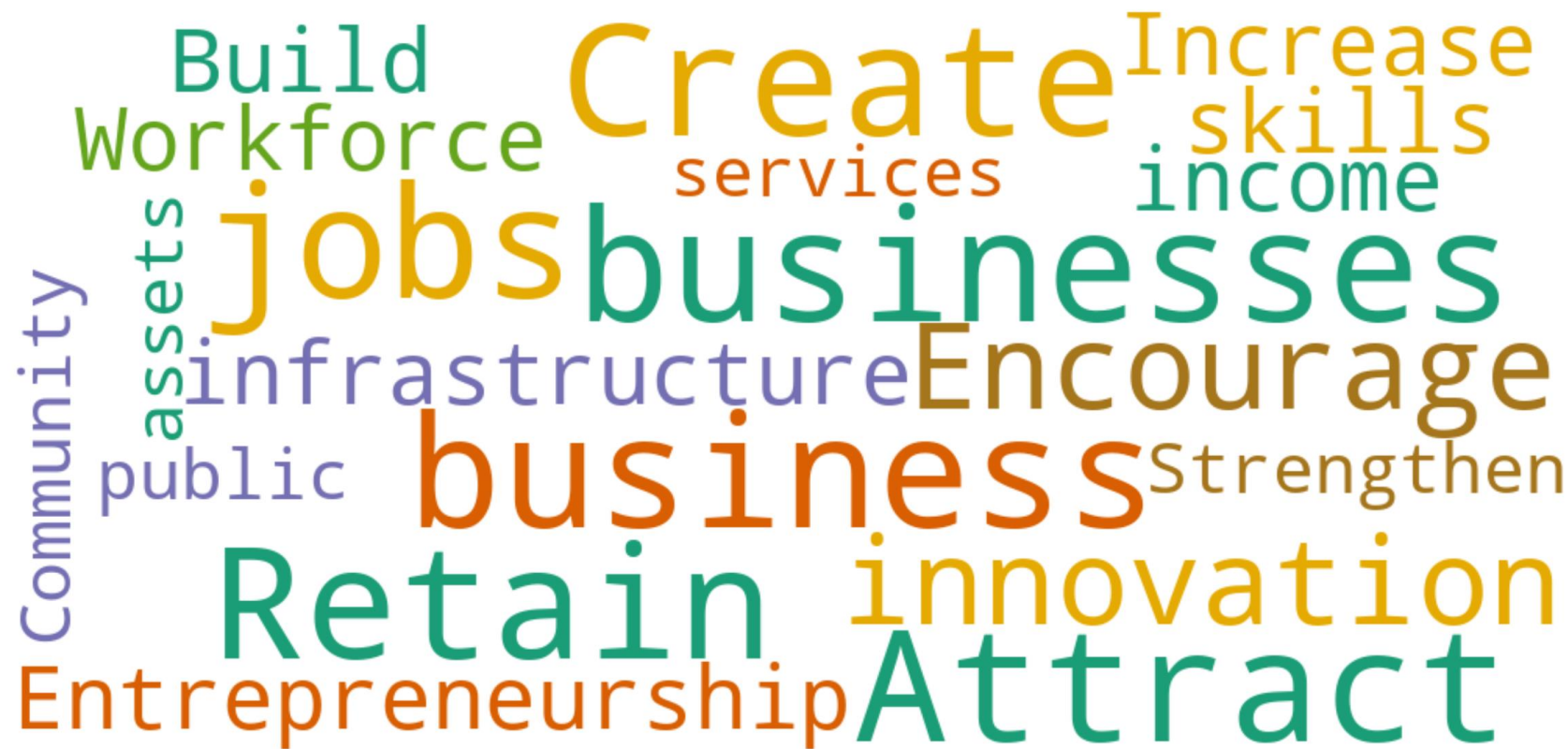
Natural and Built Environmental Improvements



Transportation, Trails and Mobility

Economic Development

Creating the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, businesses, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, job creation, and private investment.



Goal



Drive citywide economic development by targeting high-impact transformational projects through a multi-faceted, phased funding and implementation strategy

Objectives


- 1 | To help ensure Gainesville is a desirable partner for investors, developers and public sector institutions
- 2 | To develop a properly themed and bundled suite of capital projects with transformative community impact
- 3 | To increase business opportunities in Gainesville for small business development throughout the community
- 4 | To increase available resources to address capital projects that will benefit all partners
- 5 | To develop phased funding and implementation strategies for such projects
- 6 | To suggest organizational and process improvements that will enhance timely and properly focused project development




Investments


Overview


Insights


**Focus
Funding
Partnerships**



Overview



Overview

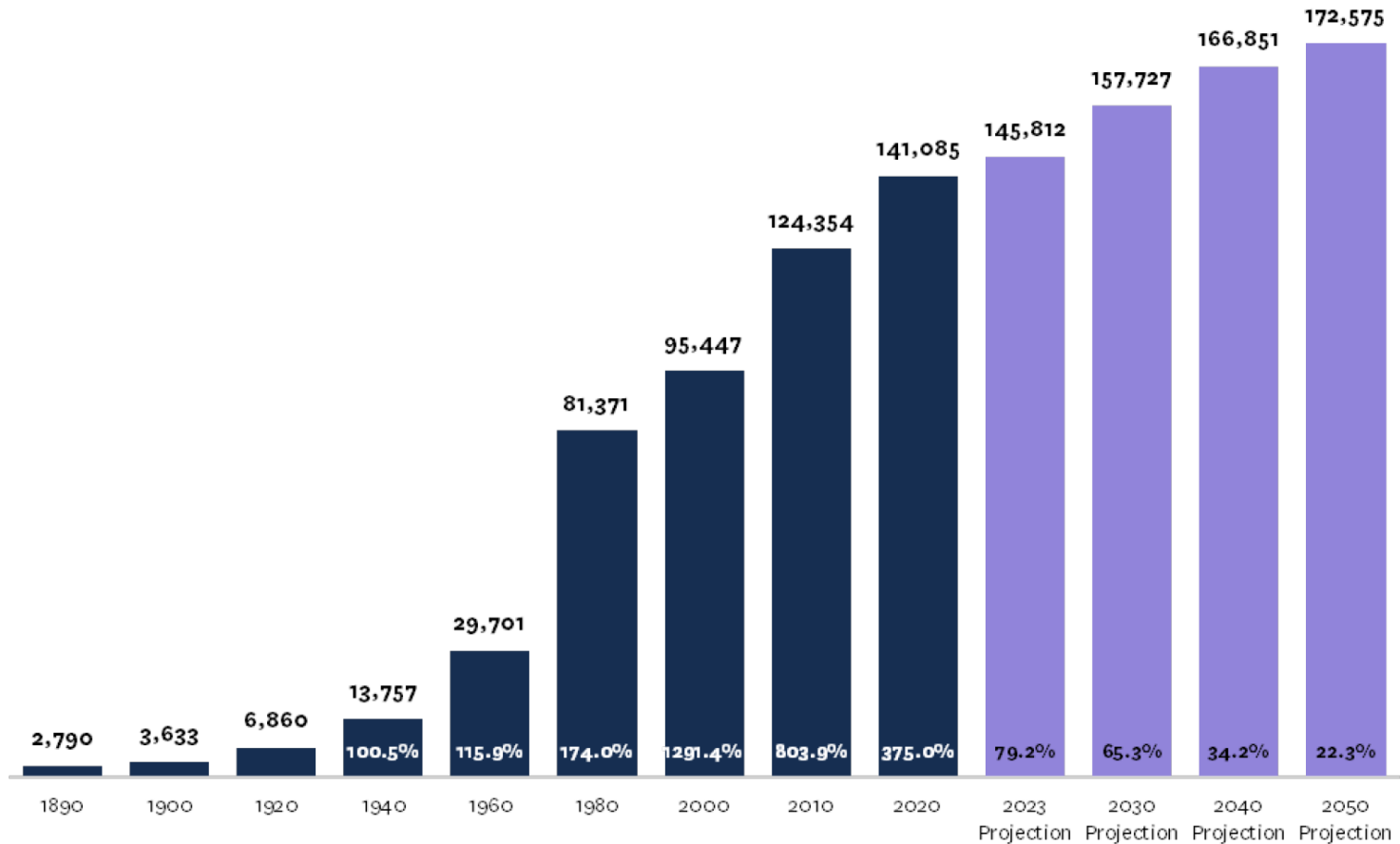


Overview of Current Economic Development Landscape

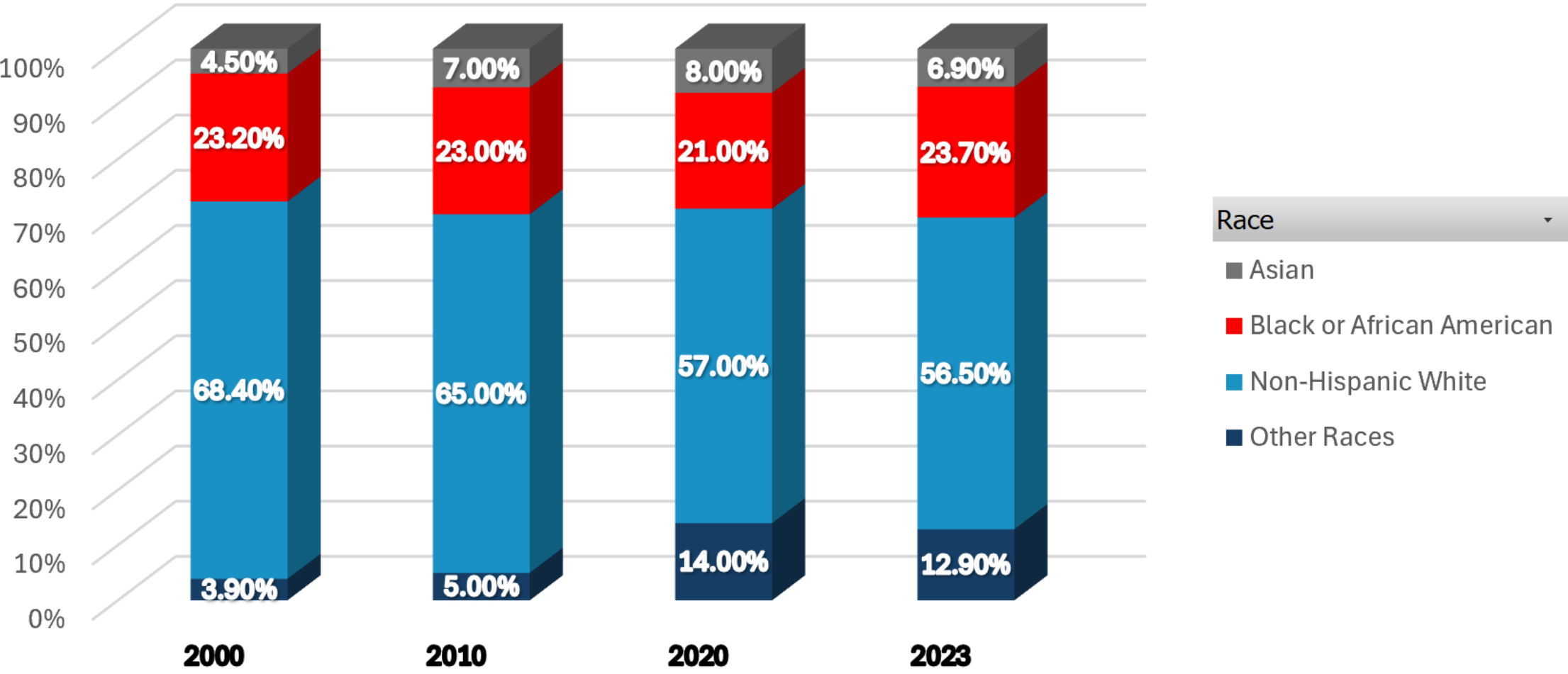
Gainesville Quick Facts	
Area	65.27 square miles
Climate	89°F average high temperature 65°F average low temperature 35 average inches rain per year
Indigenous Group	Timucuan
Establishment of Town	1854
Date of Incorporation	1869
Adoption of Present Charter	1927
Form of Government	Commission – Manager
Terms of Office	
Mayor	4 years (2 term limit)
Commissioners	4 years (2 term limit)
Fiscal Year Begins	October 1
Retail Sales Tax	7.5%
Millage Rate	6.4297
Population (BEBR 2024)	150,120
Unemployment Rate (2024)	3.40%
Poverty Rate	28.00%
Median Home Value	\$279,300
Median Household Income	\$45,611

Demographics

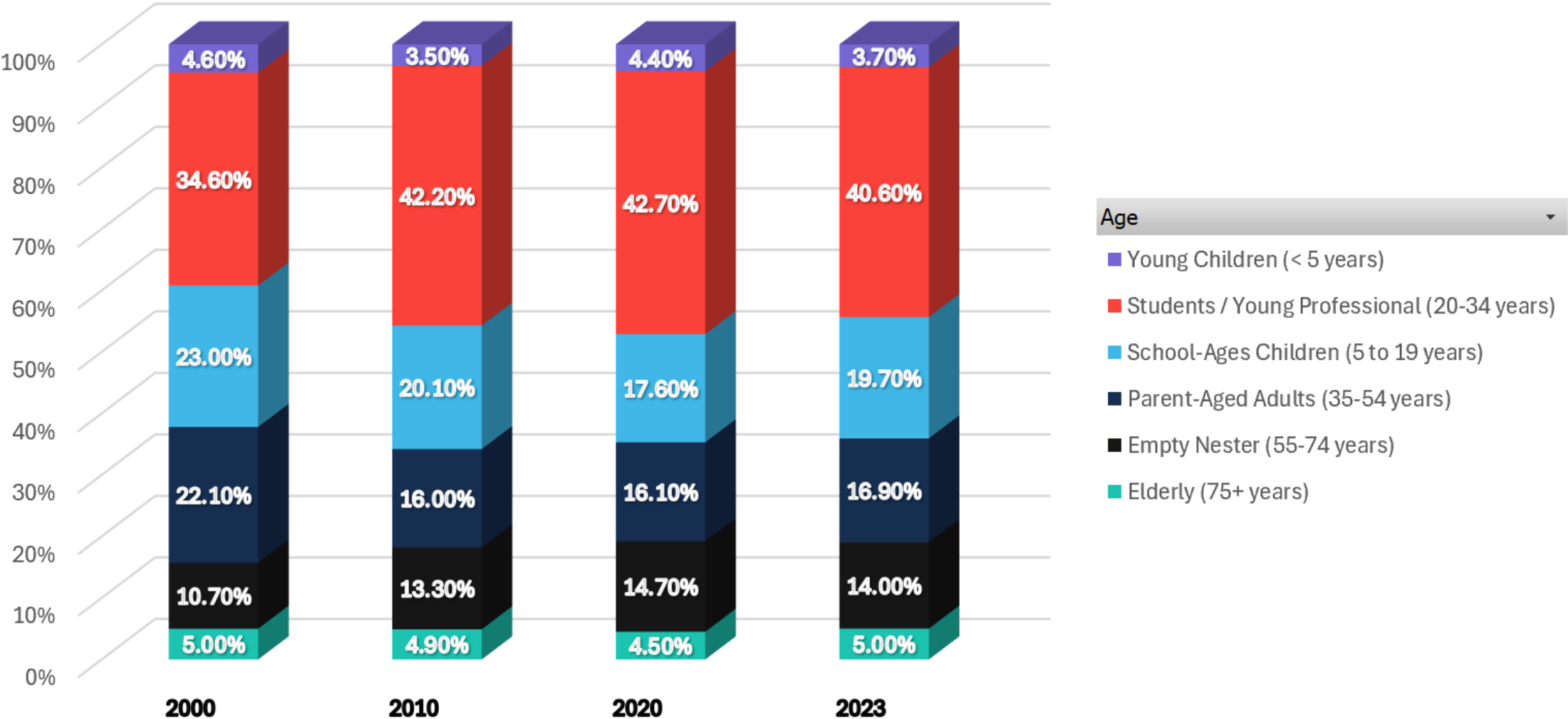
Gainesville Population and Projections



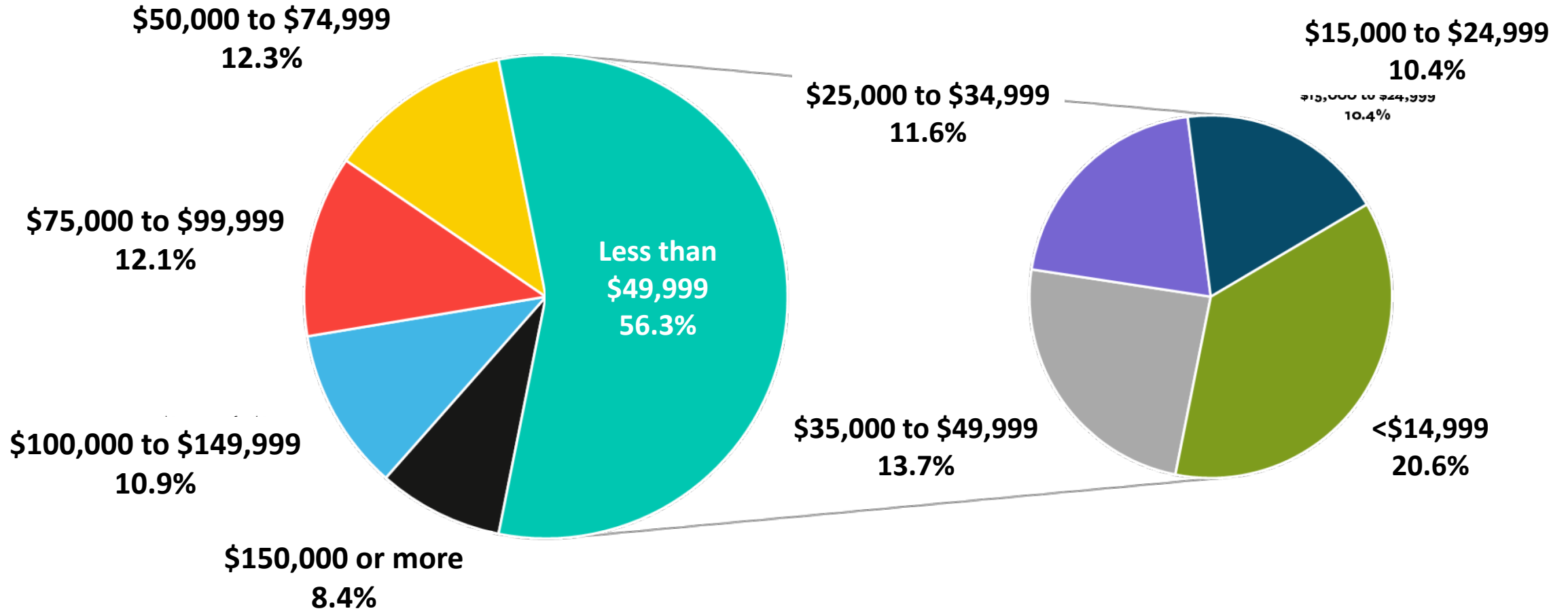
Gainesville Population by Race



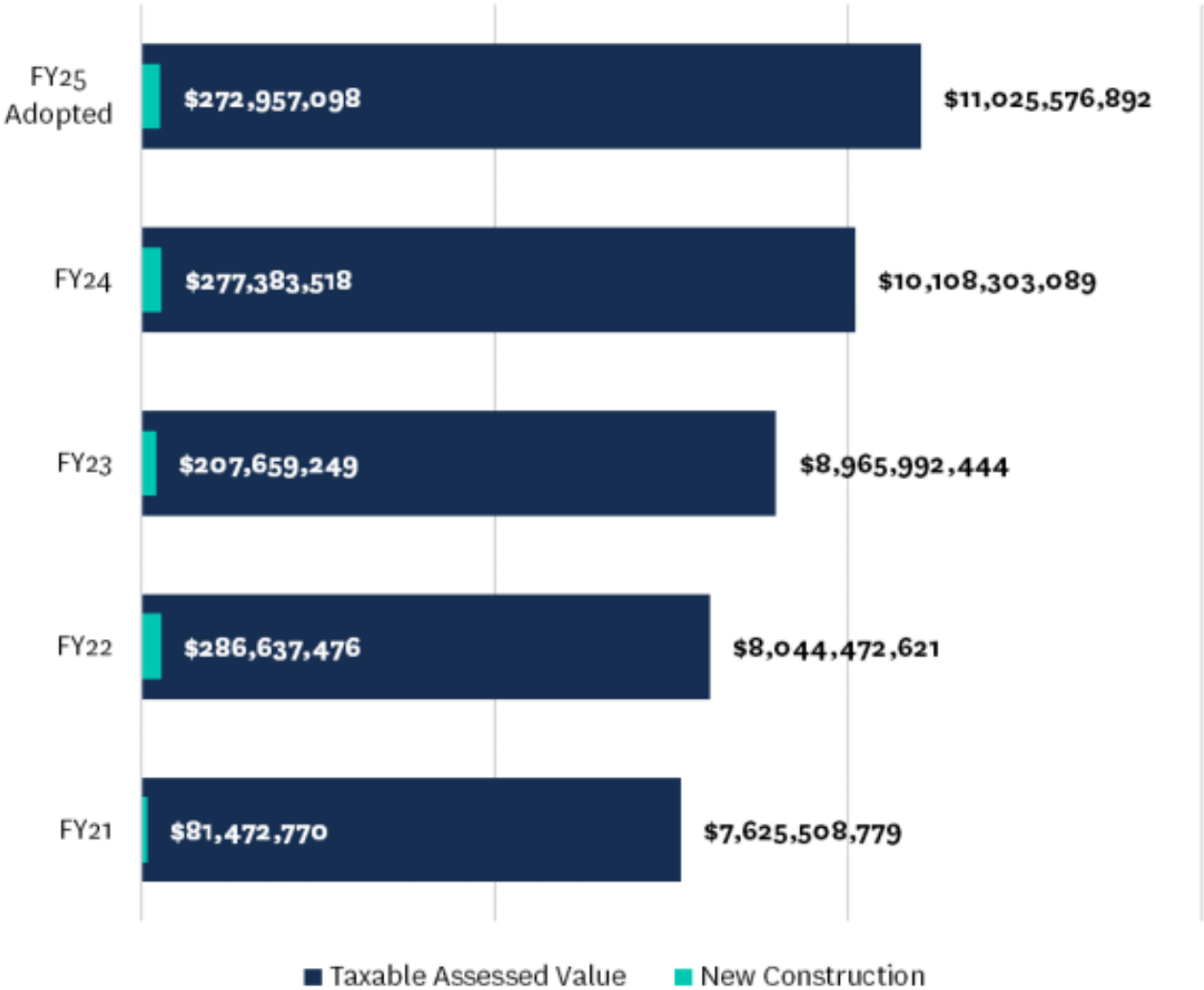
Gainesville Population by Age



Income Per Household



Growth Indicators: Tax Revenue Growth



Growth Indicators: GDP Growth Rate

☆ Gross Domestic Product: All Industries in Alachua County, FL (GDPALL12001)

Observations ▾

2023: **19,820,853**

Updated: Dec 4, 2024 8:37 AM CST

Next Release Date: Dec 3, 2025

Units:

Thousands of U.S. Dollars,
Not Seasonally Adjusted

Frequency:

Annual

1Y

5Y

10Y

Max

2013-01-01

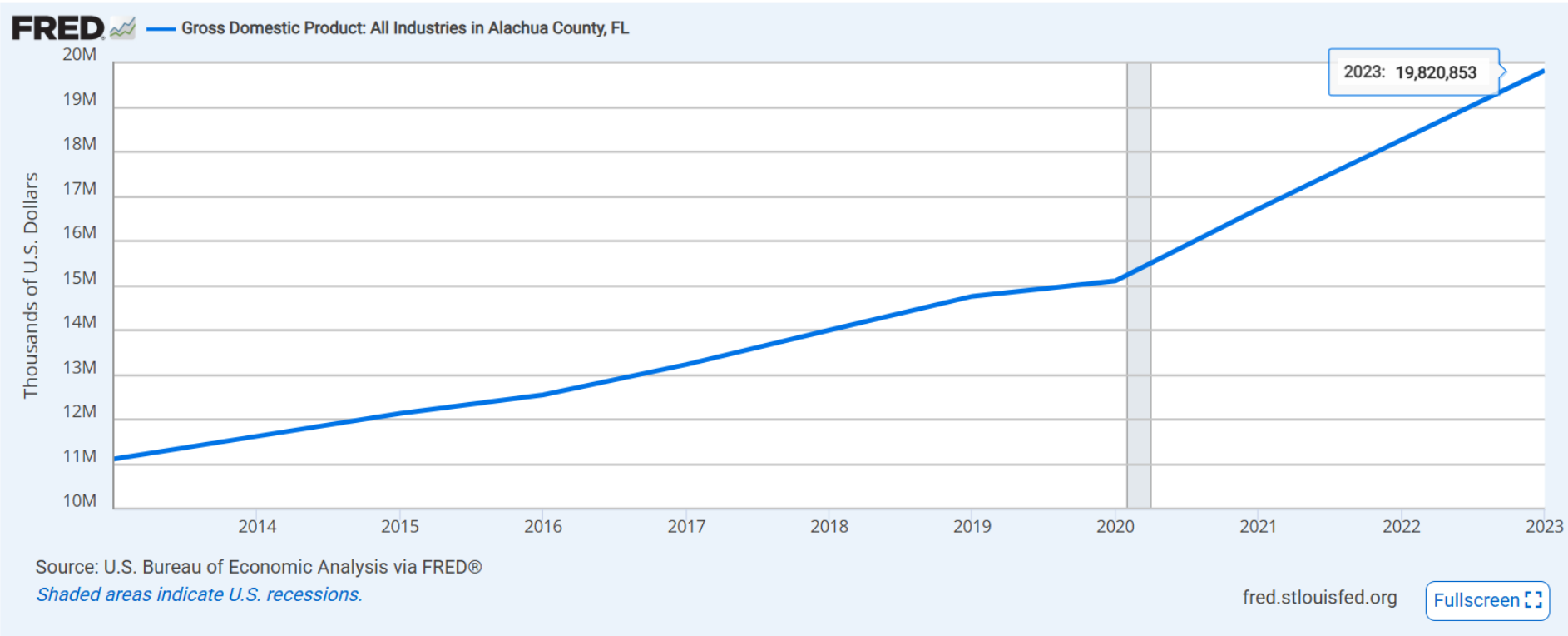
to

2023-01-01

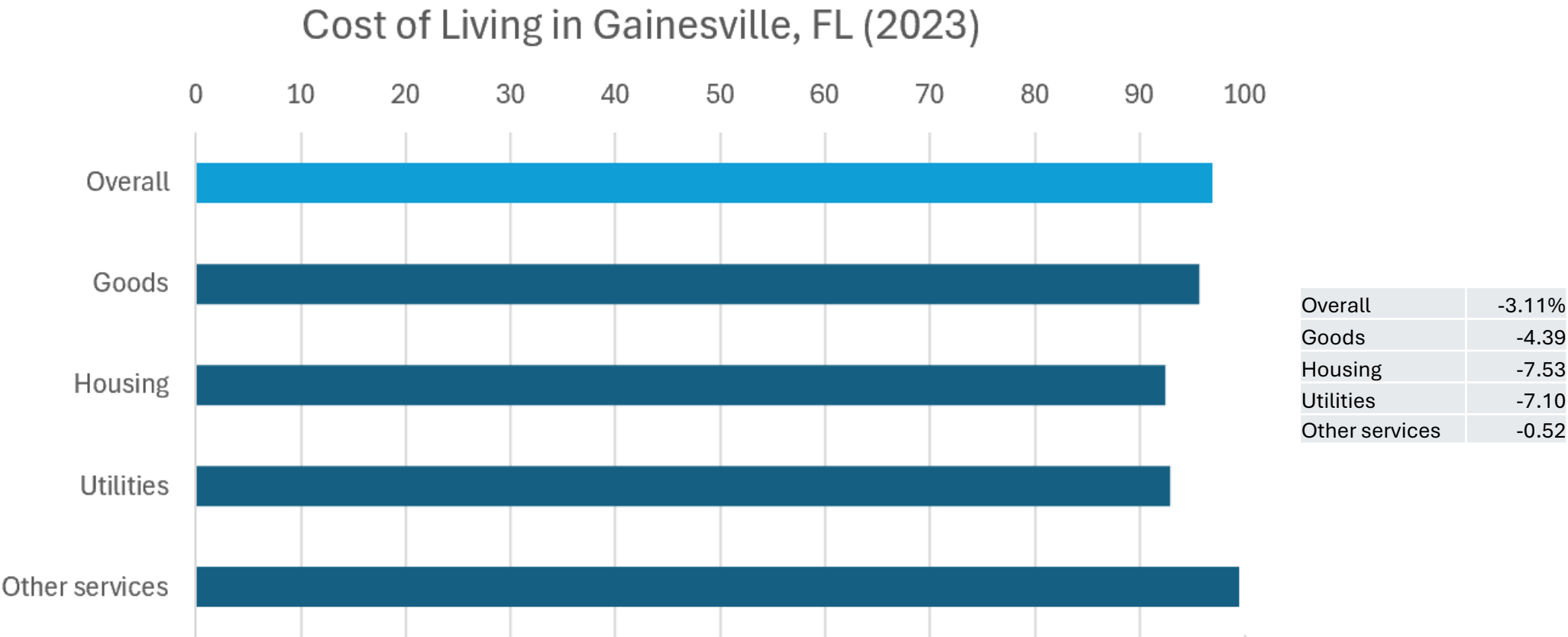
Edit Graph

Download

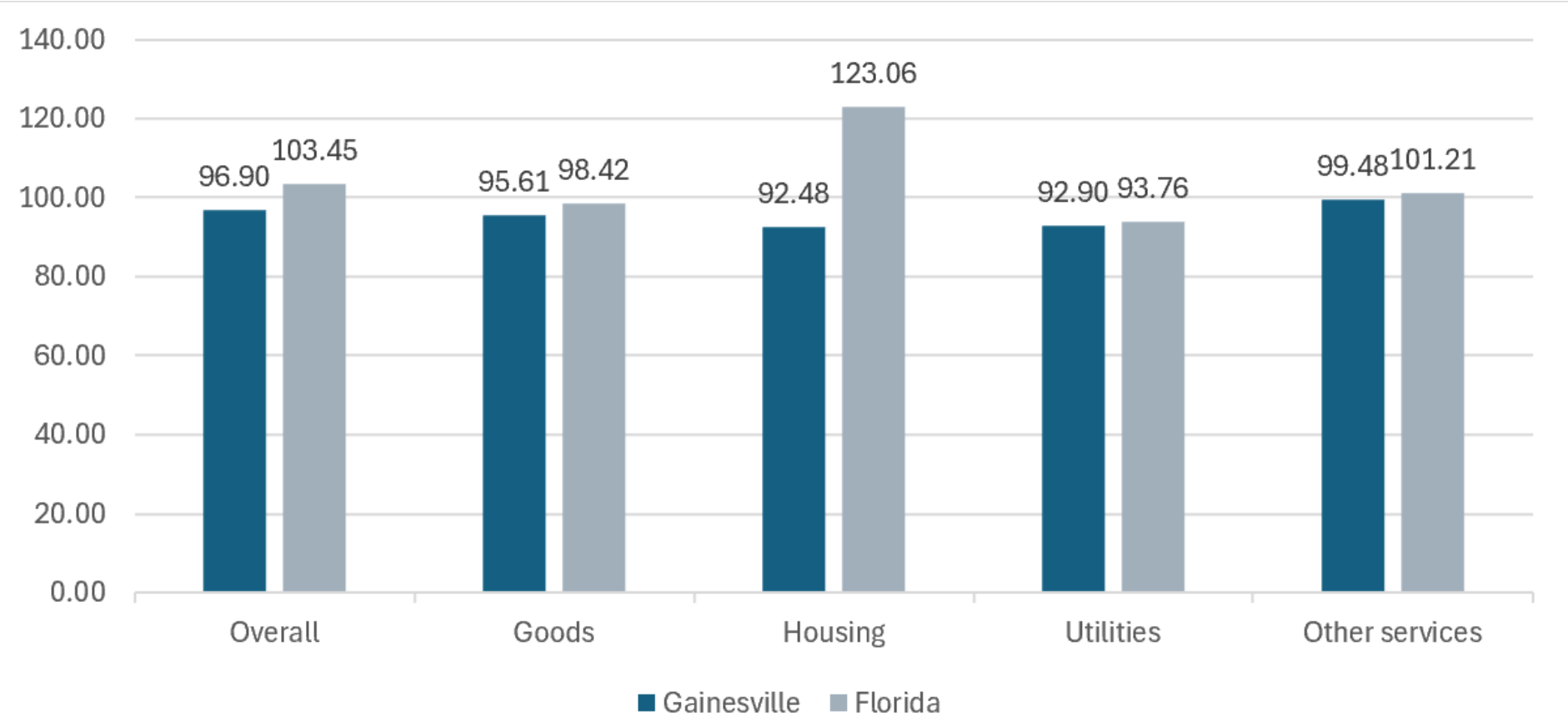
View Map



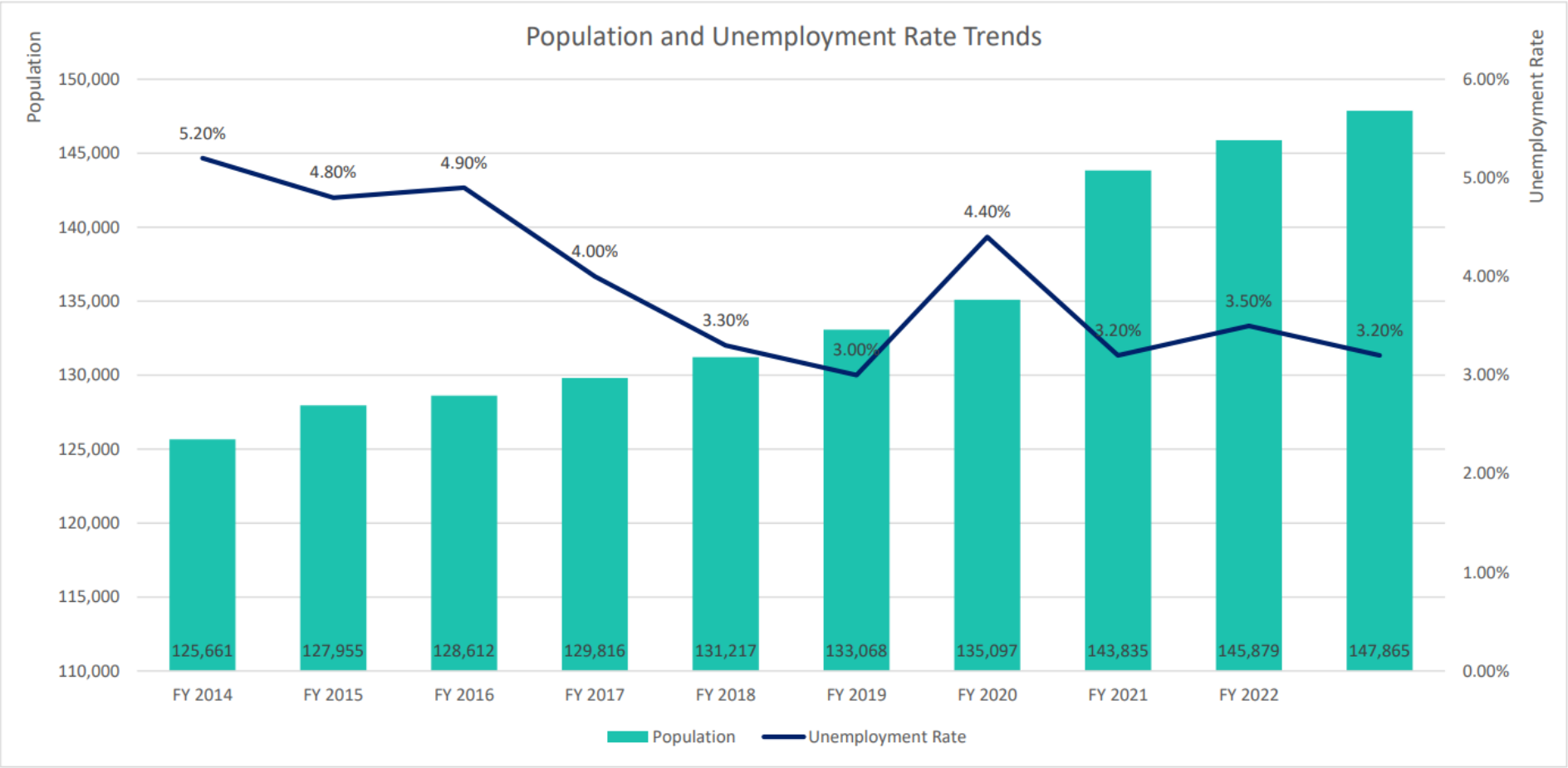
Cost of Living Index (vs. National)



2023 Cost of Living Index

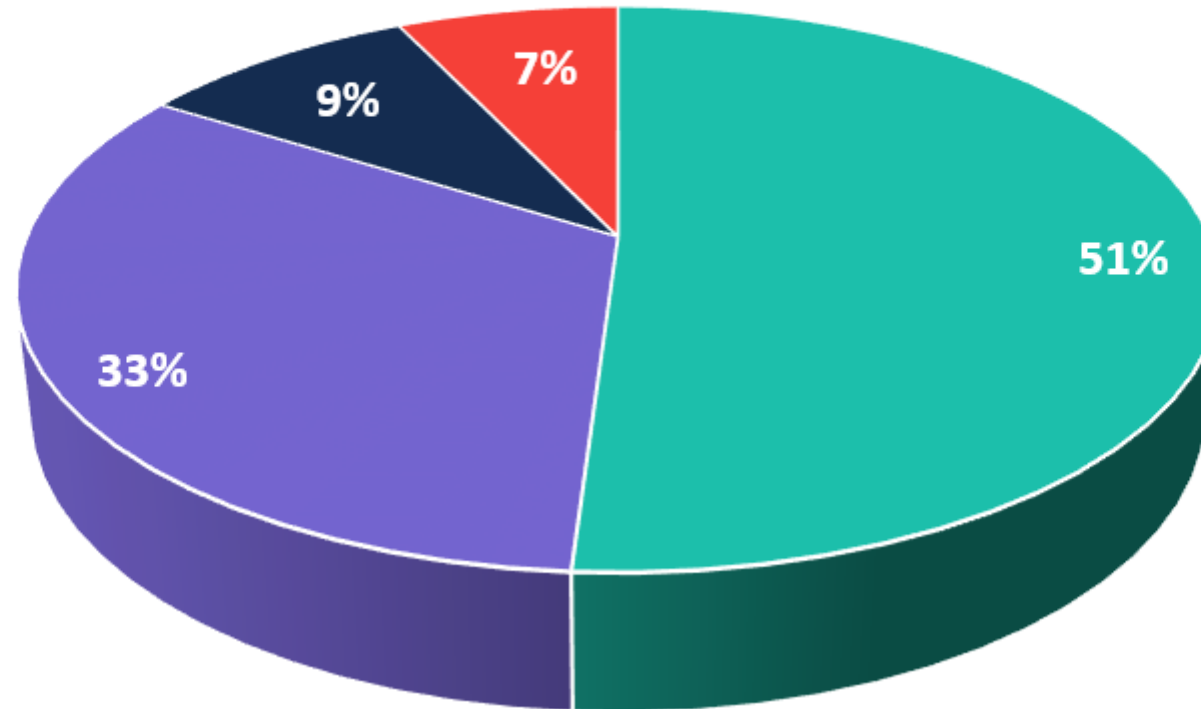


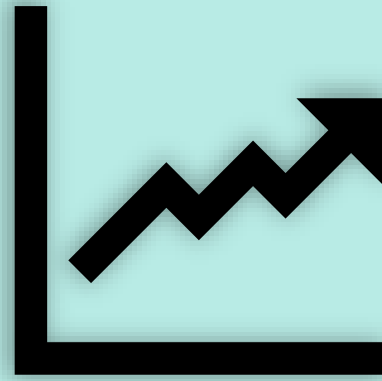
Growth Indicators: Employment



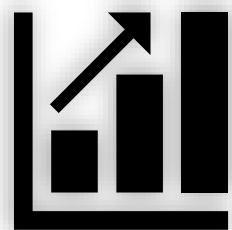
Top Industries by Total Employment

■ Education: ■ Healthcare: ■ Government: ■ Grocers and Food Service:





Investments



Investments



Growth Indicators: Infrastructure



Catalyst Building Renovations - GFR Headquarters	\$12,300,000
Renovation and Expansion of GFR Station 3	\$15,500,000
Public Works Operations Building	\$27,000,000
GPD Property and Evidence Building	\$18,000,000
NE 9th St Resurfacing and Protected Bike Lane	\$5,200,000
NW 8th Ave/NW 6th St	\$246,210
SW 47th Ave Extension (Phase 1)	\$3,618,132
University Ave	\$8,000,000

Past Success

SW 62nd Boulevard Connector

Cost: \$18.8 million

Purpose: Links the Newberry Road and Oaks Mall area with the Archer Road and Butler Plaza area, improving accessibility, safety and shaving time off neighborhood commutes.



Growth Indicators: Housing

Past Success

Deer Creek

Cost: \$14.6M

Purpose: Creation of a 62-unit affordable housing apartment community designed for seniors (62 and older)



From 2022 to current:

- Funded & Completed: 270 units
- City’s Investment: \$ 1,471,877
- Pending Completion: 292 units
- City’s Investment: \$7,908,909

Woodland Park Phase II	144	\$4,258,000
Jessie's Village	22	\$511,700
East University Cottage	18	\$68,269
Hawthorne Height	86	\$139,561

Growth Indicators: Jobs



- Zoning Reform
- Airport Gateway Study
- Business Improvement Grants
- Cornerstone/EHEDI

Past Success

Innovation Square

Cost: \$7M direct public investment

Purpose: Transformed the area between the UF and downtown Gainesville into a live-work-play innovation hub



Growth Indicators: Quality of Life

Past Success

Massey Park Playground (1001 NW 34th St.)

Cost: \$2,024,824.37

Purpose: Offers a wide variety of physical, social and sensory play experiences for children of all ages and abilities



City of
Gainesville

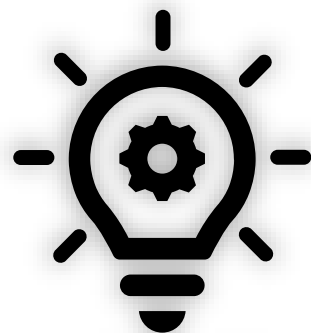


SE 8th Ave Trail	\$825K
SE 15th St Trail	\$927K
NE 31st Ave Trail	\$846K
SW 47th Ave Trail	\$880K
Sweetwater Trail 2	\$1M
Sweetwater Trail 1	\$1.5M
NW 23rd Ave ROW Trail	\$400K
Ambassadors	\$3.1M (over three years)
Downtown Events Programming	\$100K
Stretery	\$3.2M





Insights



Insights



Personal Observations - Strengths



- Cohesive forward focused City Commission
- Strong, professional management team
- Potential for high quality public and private partnerships
- Innovation District and Downtown
- GCRA concept
- Quality of life priorities
- Stable financial condition, low debt and solid credit ratings
- Publicly owned developable land
- No GOB debt

Personal Observations – Weaknesses

- Political climate
- Fractured relationships
- Economic disparities
- No real structures to help promote a shared vision for the greater GNV area among all major stakeholders
- Constrained budget; impacts of GRU transition
- Significant portion of tax roll is exempt
- Uncertainty due to leadership change at UF



Impressions From Meetings (Perspectives of Others)

- Frustration expressed by some with permitting, review processes
- Mixed comments on quality of interaction/communication with partners
- Interpersonal relationships seem solid and respectful
- Public investment in East GNV has been a serious need for decades
- Partnerships are not cultivated
- Appears to be a shared desire to move GNV forward
- A real sense that this is Home!



Past Planning Efforts And Studies

Many plans covering many service areas and needs

- Affordable housing – several
- East GNV economic development – several
- Community vitality report
- UF strategic development plan
- Racial inequality studies - several
- Airport economic development
- Parks master plans
- Transit development, TIP, long range transportation plan
- Industrial use study, business park location analysis
- Downtown Strategic Plan
- GCRA plans and updates
- 8th and Waldo plans
- Vision Zero
- Numerous County plans
- And many more...

Solid Base of Quality Information to Work From!



Unfunded Needs

Greater Downtown

- Land acquisition for city needs and for use in economic development joint ventures
- Continued downtown commercial and residential development
- Downtown parking enhancements
- Continued development of Innovation District consistent with master plan
- Power District/South Main St. Redevelopment, private investment, zoning, and tie in with Downtown
- Sweetwater Creek Park enhancements
- Pedestrian and bike way connectors
- Future Alachua County redevelopment opportunities
- Vacant storefronts
- Ambassador team after 2029



Unfunded Needs

East GNV

- 8th & Waldo: Citizen's Field, MLK Community Center, pools, park development
- Economic development strategies and public private partnerships to increase private investment in East Gainesville
- Continued development at and adjacent to Cornerstone
- Land acquisition for city needs and for use in economic development stimulus
- Private investment in housing and quality of life amenities
- Attracting quality services like retail, banking, healthcare, and food



Unfunded Needs

Other projects

- Public Works emergency operations enhancements
- City Hall and other public buildings
- Public Safety, Fire Stations
- Park development in SW GNV
- Cultural Arts Center
- Thomas Center repair and refresh
- Transportation mobility improvements



Priority Focus Areas

- 1) Downtown/Innovation District – economic generators, catalytic areas
- 2) East GNV – requires investment and stimulus

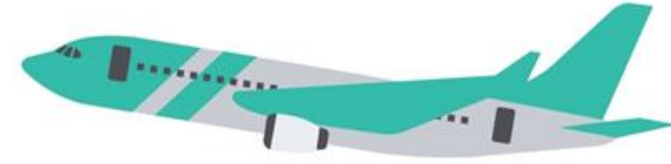
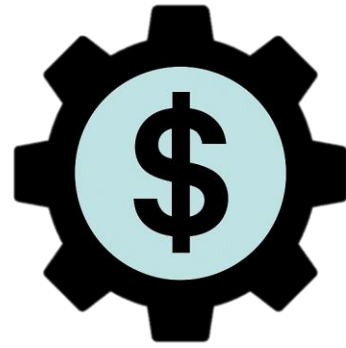


Economic Development Approaches





**Focus
Funding
Partnerships**



Focus Funding Partnerships



Phased Approach – Immediate Priorities



Phased Approach – Immediate Priorities

- Estimated cost: \$12M–\$42M
- Potential funds:
 - GCRA – \$13M
 - Wild Spaces Public Places – \$5M
- ACPS should be a major partner:
 - Level of ACPS participation will directly impact project scope and scale
 - Cannot invest capital unless it owns property
 - Land conveyance + joint-use agreement necessary (with reverter clause)
 - ACPS would benefit Olympic/ dive pool for 8th & Waldo



Phased Approach – Immediate Priorities

- Streamline approval processes
- Appoint ombudsman for major projects
- Form a Development Coordination Committee
- Amend zoning code as warranted to support targeted development areas




Phased Approach – Immediate Priorities

- Meet with developers to address misconceptions
- Ensure Streatery supports downtown businesses
- Resolve delays in Lot 10 project launch
- Bring options to City Commission



Phased Approach - Within 2 Years (2025-2027)

Renegotiate GCRA Agreement

- 
- Extend agreement to allow bonding of GCRA revenue streams
 - County and City as true partners with a reimagined governance structure
 - Increase annual contributions from both City and County
 - Add periodic escalators
 - Create a new multi-year redevelopment plan focused on:
 - Downtown / Innovation District
 - East Gainesville
 - Power District / S. Main
 - Begin pay-as-you-go projects at 8th & Waldo after agreement execution
 - Explore special obligation debt using non-ad valorem revenue

Phased Approach - Within 2 Years (2025-2027)

1

Renegotiate GCRA Agreement

2

Prepare For Major Capital Project Financing Initiatives

- Prioritize and cost long-term infrastructure projects
- Develop a General Obligation Bond (GOB) initiative
- Launch public education and engagement campaign
- Ensure local economic benefit during design/construction:
 - Local hiring
 - Subcontracting
- LEED certified wherever applies
- Phase projects over multiple years
- GOB funding capacity:
 - 0.25 mills = ~\$65–70M over 10 years
 - 0.75 mills = \$200M (\$5.36/mo for \$250K home)
- Conduct in-depth debt analysis and sizing

Phased Approach - Within 2 Years (2025-2027)

Renegotiate GCRA Agreement

Prepare For Major Capital Project Financing Initiatives

Organizational Suggestions

1

2

3

- Create a regional Leadership Council (City, County, UF, Santa Fe, Chamber, etc.)
- Consider forming an Economic Development Organization to promote the region and attract business

Over the Next 2-10 Years



Continue advancing the amended GCRA plan for the 20-year period

- Report on progress
- Track taxable roll growth, job creation, business development & other indicators
- Amend as mutually agreed upon

Over the Next 2-10 Years



- Track success of all entities created to stimulate economic development in greater GNV

Continue advancing the amended GCRA plan for the 20-year period

- Report on progress
- Track taxable roll growth, job creation, business development & other indicators
- Amend as mutually agreed upon

Over the Next 2-10 Years

If GOB is approved:

- Create citizen oversight board
- Launch Series 1 issuance and implement over 12 years
- Regular reporting to Commission and stakeholders

Sample projects:

- Redevelopment at 8th & Waldo
- Property acquisitions potential partnerships
- Fire stations and emergency facilities
- Trails and bike/ped infrastructure (e.g., Sweetwater Creek)
- New park in SW Gainesville
- Cultural Arts Center
- Continued investment in EHEDI/Cornerstone and Waldo Rd.



Why This Approach?

- Builds strong partnerships
- Enables strategic, phased funding to meet longstanding needs
- Leverages assets to drive taxable roll growth
- Increases East Gainesville investment through roll growth
- GCRA extension helps offset capital project operations
- Allows time to align with UF and UF Health leadership changes
- Addresses biggest hurdle—post-GRU separation O&M funding
- Political conditions can change—plan for flexibility



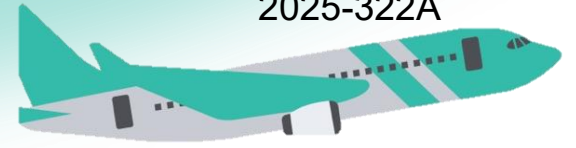
Suggested Next Steps

- Negotiate a land conveyance and joint use agreements with ACPS for Citizen's Field
- Negotiate an extension of the current GCRA with modified provisions
- Accelerate downtown development via expedited processes & leadership initiatives
- Begin initial work, including producing a schedule of potential projects and costs, and a detailed workplan, for the development of a GOB initiative for voter consideration
- Meet with community, governmental, higher education, and business leaders to create an Economic Development Council for the Greater Gainesville Area



City of
Gainesville

2025-322A



THANK YOU!

