



City of  
**Gainesville**



# **FY 2025 GCRA Annual Report & Workplan**

Presented to the Joint City and County Commission

# Achievements & Impact

## Win Phillips Town Gown Relations Award (Dec. 2024)

- 2024 Partnership Initiative Award for UF Health Urgent Care Center – Eastside, given to UF Health, City of Gainesville and Alachua County
- Project: Cornerstone EHEDI

## City of Gainesville Beautification Awards (Apr. 2025)

- Commercial and Community Hubs, given to The Lynx Bookstore
- Commercial and Community Hubs, given to South Main Station
- Project: Downtown

## City of Gainesville Awards (Aug. 2025)

- 2025 Community Innovators Award, given to the Downtown Ambassadors
- Project: Downtown



# Data In Action

In FY 2025, GCRA strengthened its use of data to guide capital investment, economic development strategy, and neighborhood revitalization efforts.

## Investment Targeting

- Housing tenure, transaction, and exemption tracking in **Porters** to monitor neighborhood stability
- Private investment scans and development pipeline tracking in **East Gainesville**
- Trail mapping, land use analysis, and visual simulation to support implementation planning of **Heritage Trail**

## Market Intelligence & Activation

- **Downtown** vacancy and retail leakage analysis to guide business recruitment
- Grocery access gap analysis to support competitive RFP strategy at **Cornerstone EHEDI**
- Economic Development Framework dashboards to support strategic alignment

## Performance & Transparency

- Property transaction analysis to monitor investment activity and neighborhood change in Porters
- **Grant awardee** mapping to demonstrate geographic impact and build public support for reinvestment

## Economic Dev. & Strategic Investment

- Synthesized demographic, environmental, and economic data to inform equity-centered planning priorities
- **8th & Waldo** ED Program analysis to align opportunities with community conditions and land use
- Private investment scans and development pipeline tracking in **East Gainesville**

# Cornerstone EHEDI and GTEC Center

In this section:

1. Cornerstone Eastside Health and Economic Development Initiative
2. GTEC Center Renovation

# Cornerstone

## Accomplished in FY 2025

- Launched "Food Trucks at Cornerstone" initiative (Jan. 2025) will restart in early FY26
- Released an Invitation to Negotiate for a grocer (May 2025)
- Completed infrastructure network for Cornerstone Phase 2 (Jul. 2025)

## Planned for FY 2026

- Develop RFP for real estate services to market available pads
- Develop plans for a Cornerstone Market that will support local entrepreneurs
- Assess the viability of establishing a food truck commissary





GTEC Center

Mérieux NutriSciences

UF Health Urgent Care Center Eastside

Future RTS Transit Station

# Cornerstone

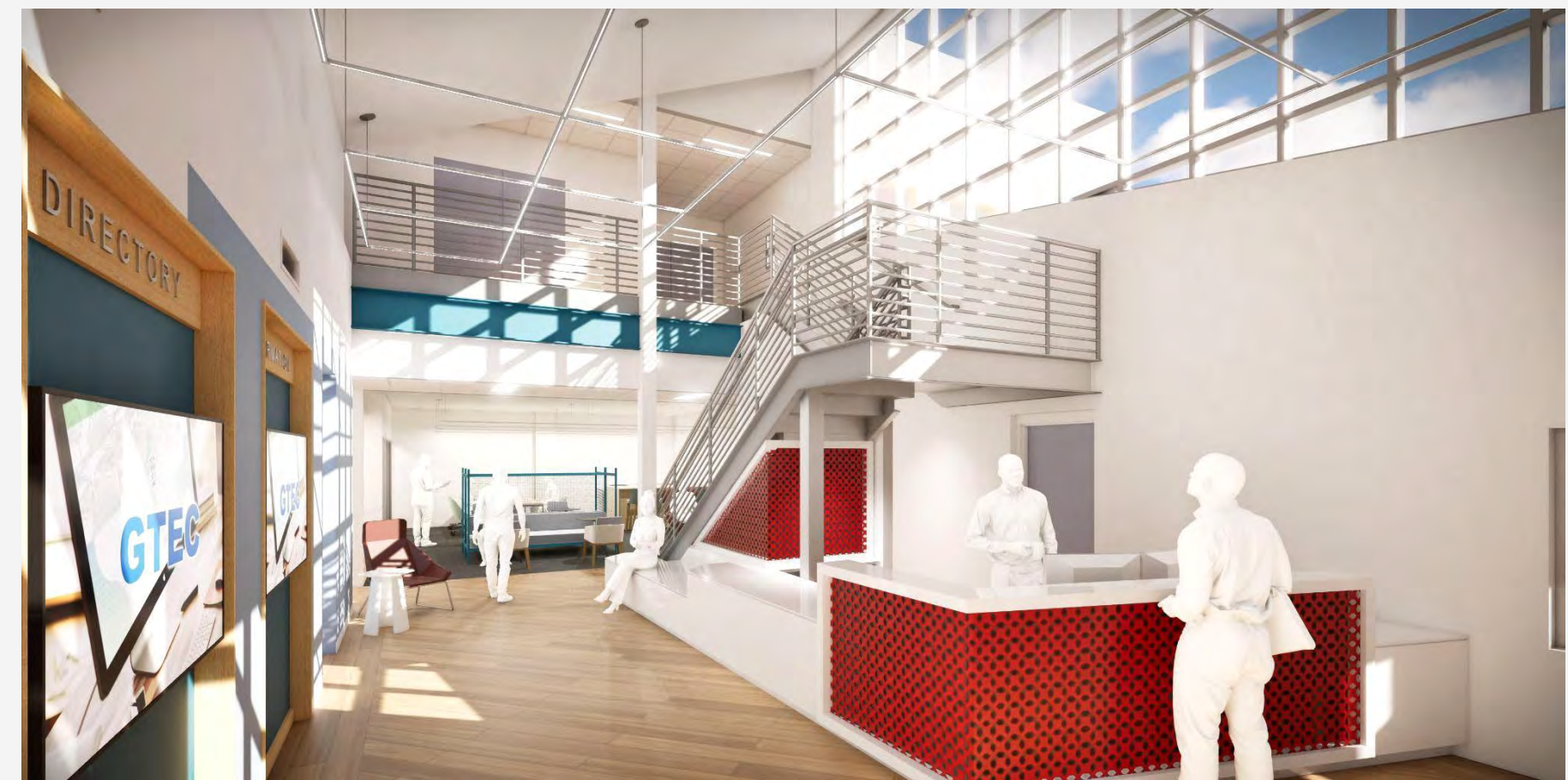
# GTEC Center Refresh

## Accomplished in FY 2025

- Rebranded as The Gainesville Training, Entrepreneurship, and Community (GTEC) Center
- Completed HVAC Assessment Report from Mitchell Gulledge Engineering, Inc. (Jul. 2025)

## Planned for FY 2026

- Completed 100% construction design documents with Walker Architects for GTEC refurbishment (Oct. 2025)
- Start construction on GTEC refurbishment (Spring 2026).  
On right: renders of GTEC Center lobby and exterior patio renovation
- Partner for innovative trainings, like Vibe Coding with GNV.AI, (Dec. 2025)



# NE 8th Avenue and Waldo Road

In This Section:

- Citizens Field Revitalization Project
- 8th and Waldo Economic Development Incentive Program

# Citizens Field Revitalization

## Accomplished in FY 2025

- Workshop with >130 attendees at MLK Multipurpose Center (Nov. 2024, Feb. and Apr. 2025)
- Presented conceptual site plans at city board meetings during Winter and Spring 2025
- City Commission selected Scenario 1 as preferred design (Jun. 2025)
- ACPS (school board) explores buying/reconstructing Citizens Field

## Planned for FY 2026

- City Commission offers to sell Citizens Field to Alachua County Public Schools (Oct. 2025)
- City Commission briefed (Dec. 2025)
- Identified of funding availability
- Identify early action steps and final revitalization plan for the project (Fall/Winter 2026)
- Released solicitation Dec. 2025 for A&E and CMAR firms to prepare permit-ready documents (Fall 2027)



# Revised Recommended Site Plan



## Cost Estimate

	Element Estimate	Running Total
Remediation	\$4,917,000.00	\$4,917,000.00
Multi-Purpose Fields	\$2,003,364.00	\$6,920,364.00
Stormwater & Trails	\$3,186,810.00	\$10,107,174.00
Utilities for Stadium	\$462,000.00	\$10,569,174.00
Stadium Parking Lot	\$1,304,424.00	\$11,873,598.00
Competition Pool & Aquatic Center	\$14,620,650.00	\$26,494,248.00
Demolition of Existing Pool	\$522,852.00	\$27,017,100.00
Community Pool	\$1,339,635.00	\$28,356,735.00
Senior Center Building Pad	\$622,776.00	\$28,979,511.00
MLK Renovations	\$11,987,910.00	\$40,967,421.00
Senior Center	\$9,535,350.00	\$50,502,771.00
Replacement Playground	\$330,000.00	\$50,832,771.00
Lighting of Fields	\$2,640,000.00	\$53,472,771.00

\* Stadium costs can vary between basic renovation at \$10M to new stadium at \$20M - \$40M+; Stadium costs, including demolition, are not included in this total.

\*\* Total includes construction, design, permitting, FFE, and CM fees.

\*\*\* Senior Center Building Pad will be constructed with the funding identified.

## Schedule (Single Phase of Construction)



# 8th & Waldo Economic Development Incentive Program



## **Stimulate Redevelopment and Adaptive Reuse**

Encourage the transformation of underutilized or vacant sites into productive, community-serving spaces.



## **Enhance Corridor Aesthetics and Visual Identity**

Support improvements that create a more cohesive, welcoming, and attractive public realm.



## **Economic Development and Promote Local Job Creation**

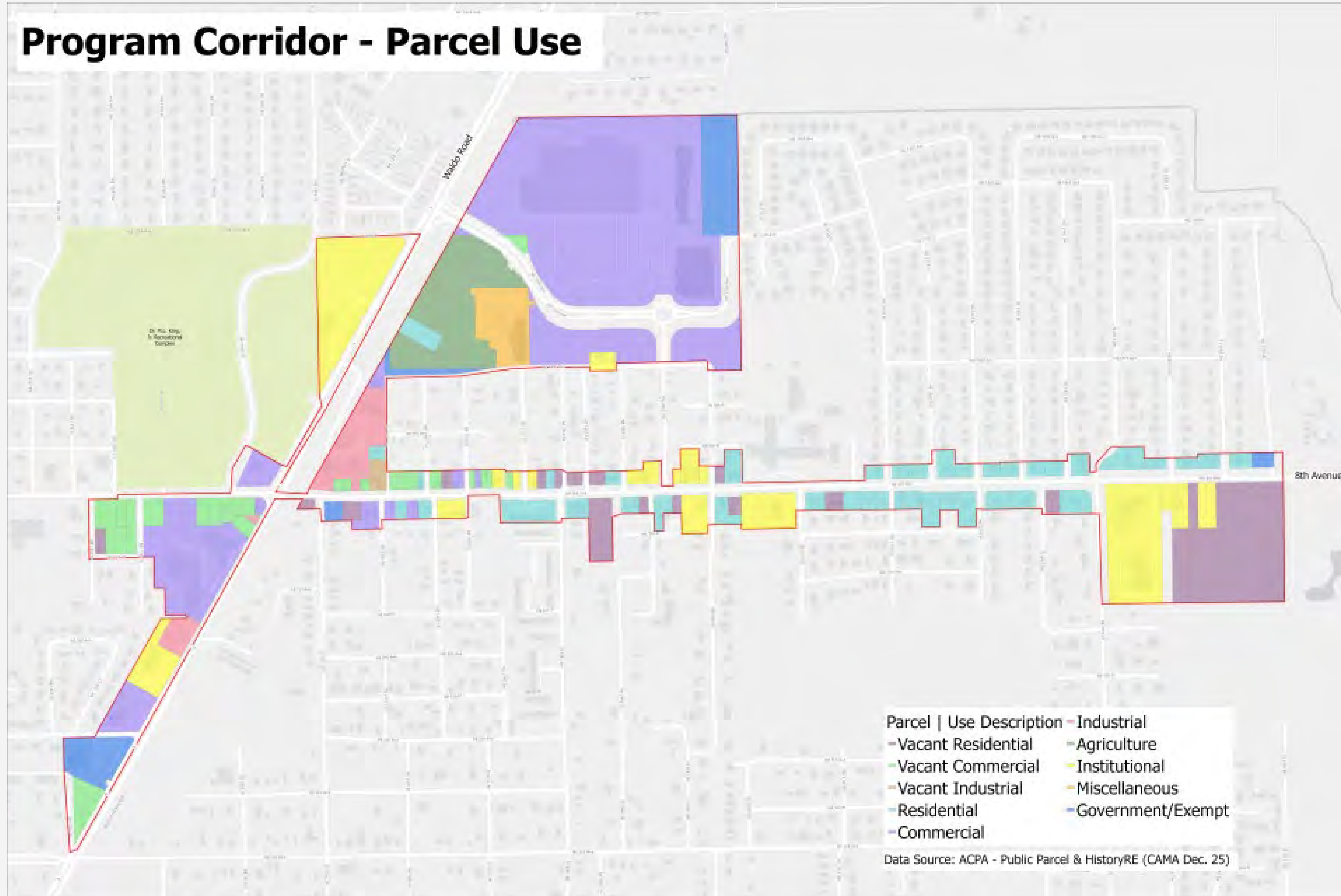
Prioritize projects that result in long-term employment opportunities, especially for residents of East Gainesville.



## **Attract New Businesses and Support Existing Ones**

Incentivize the relocation, expansion, or modernization of businesses that add value and vitality to the corridor.

# Eligible Program Area - 8th & Waldo EDIP



Category and Eligible Parcels	
Vacant Residential	18
Vacant Commercial	25
Vacant Industrial	3
Residential	41
Commercial	13
Industrial	4
Agriculture	1
Institutional	17

# 8th & Waldo Economic Development Incentive Program

## Accomplished in FY 2025

- Drafted "Corridor Improvement and Economic Development Incentive Program" (Mar. to Jun. 2025)
- City Commission approved \$2M from Citizens Field Revitalization budget to pilot the program (Aug. 2025)

## Planned for FY 2026

- Program approved by City Commission (Oct. 2025)
- Develop and implement a marketing plan for the rollout of the program, and finalize the application deadline (Dec. 2025)
- Stakeholder kickoff meeting and program launch (Jan. 2026)



# Heartwood Neighborhood

In This Section:

- FY 2025 Activity

# Heartwood Milestones

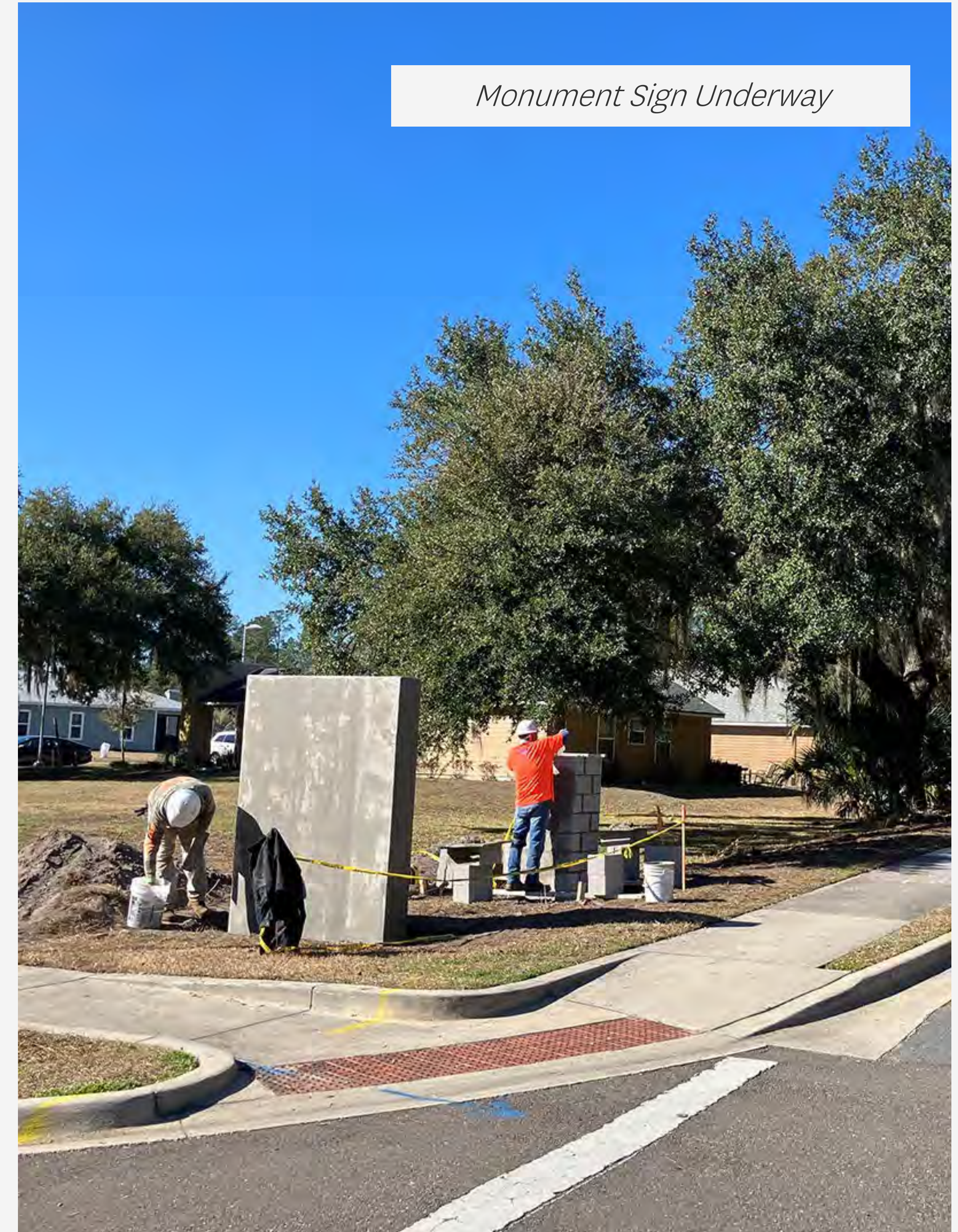
## Accomplished in FY 2025

Design completed for:

- New fencing (currently underway)
- Landscaping, including entryway and common areas
- Pathway improvement along pond and through common area
- Entry monument signage (currently underway)
- Irrigation for new entry landscape and common area landscape

## Planned for FY 2026

- Notice to Proceed with Heartwood Amenities – Jan. 2026, completion by Apr. 2026
- CCOM approved implementation of a Community Land Trust (Jan. 2026)



# Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan

## In This Section:

- FY 2025 Activity
- Plan and Project Alignment
- Holiday 2025 Activation
- The Streatery
- Downtown Ambassador Program
- Business Improvement Grant (BIG Program)
- Downtown Events Grant
- Community Partnership Grant
- Porters Quarters

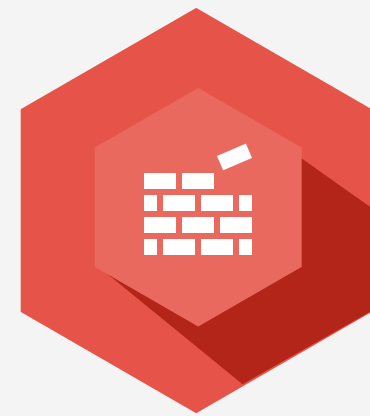
# Downtown Milestones

## Accomplished in FY 2025



**Dec. 2024**

Launched the **Downtown Ambassador Program**



**Feb. 2025**

Finalized design and funding approach for **The Streatery**



**May 2025**

Launched the **Downtown Directory** (Phase 1) from storefront analysis



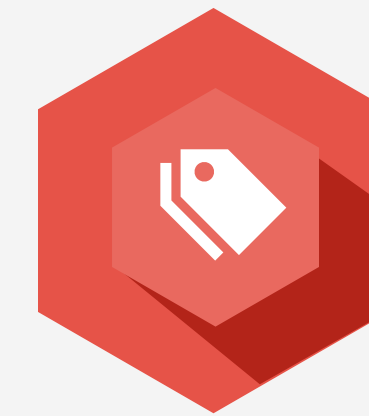
**May 2025**

Attended **Sociable Cities** training with GPD and Gov. Affairs and Comm. Relations



**Jun. 2025**

CCOM approved (Feb.) and seated the **Downtown Advisory Board**



**Aug. 2025**

Awarded 10 grants for the **BIG Program** totaling \$447,700 in funds



**Aug. 2025**

Continued maintenance of **The Streatery** during closure & allotted \$2M towards future construction



**Sep. 2025**

Planned activation for 2025 **Christmas Holiday** season



**Sep. 2025**

Supported 19 events via **Downtown Event Grant** with \$86,094 grant funds

# Downtown

## Planned in FY 2026

- Launched 2025 Downtown Holiday Activation, this includes:
  - **Seasonal Decorations** on SW 1st Street (from Bo Diddley Plaza to The Hippodrome)
  - Downtown **Holiday Lights Contest** for businesses
  - Downtown **Winter Market Series** at The Streatery from Dec. 2025 to Jan. 2026
- Researching how to build seasonal activation for Dec. 2026
- Planned Downtown Events Grant RFP with a focus on programming The Streatery post-construction
- Planned traffic signalization study for Main Street and University Avenue intersection (Spring 2026)

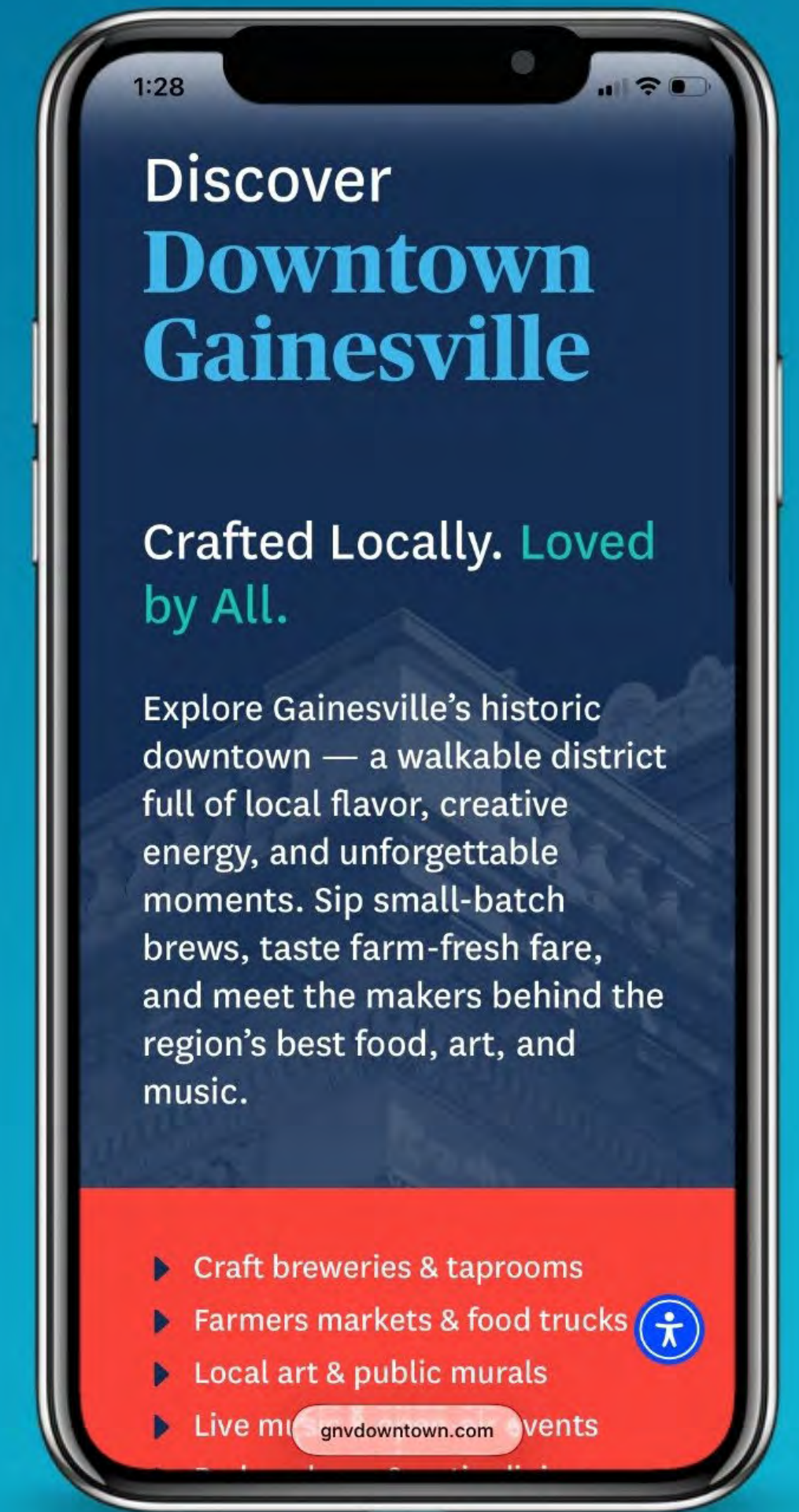


# Downtown Strategic Plan

GCRA leads implementation of the award-winning **Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan** (2022), which outlines 16 transformative ideas to make downtown Gainesville safer, cleaner, beautiful, and more vibrant.

Informed by the 2024 Downtown Needs Assessment Survey, we're delivering projects and programs that respond directly to community priorities, including:

- Beautification and Placemaking Initiatives
- Business Improvement Grant (BIG Program)
- Downtown Advisory Board
- Downtown Ambassador Program
- Downtown Events Grant
- Downtown Inventory and Directory





1. Become a Destination



2. Connect the Dots

3. Strengthen Relationships with Adjacent Neighborhoods



4. Increase Housing Opportunities



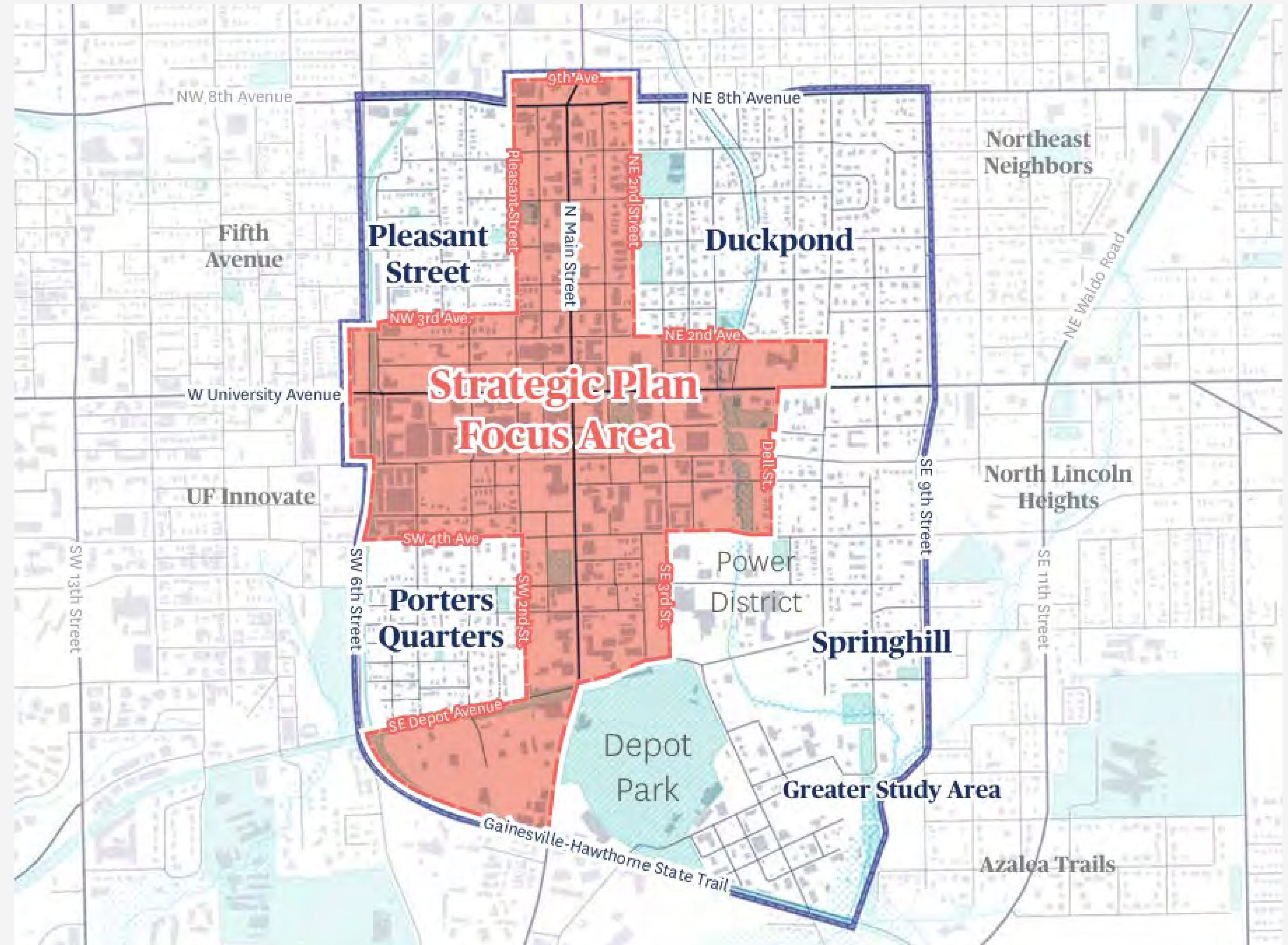
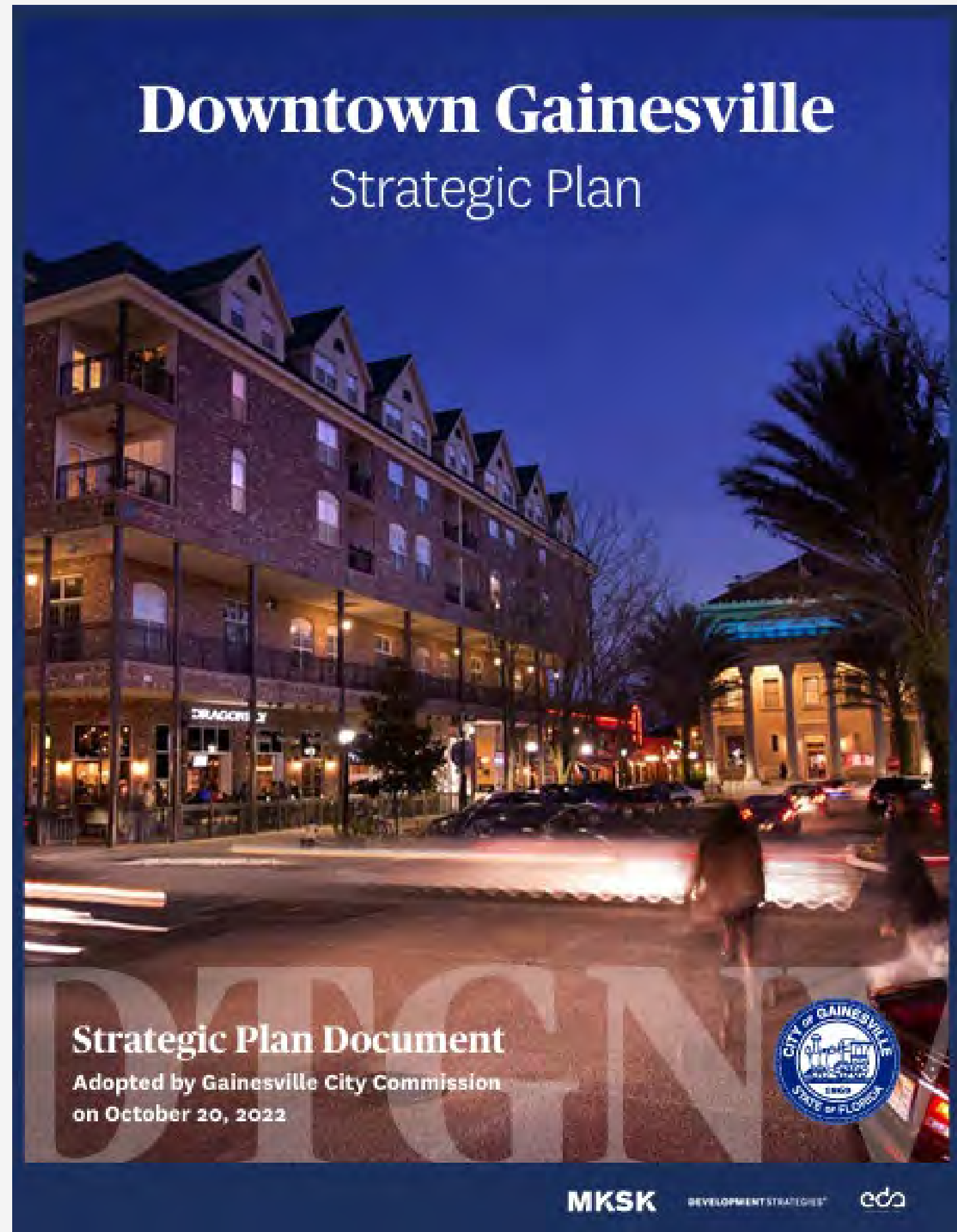
5. Create a Supportive Local Business Environment



6. Maintain and Enhance Downtown



# Downtown Projects and Programs



# Downtown Investment FY 2025

## Downtown Strategic Plan Projects

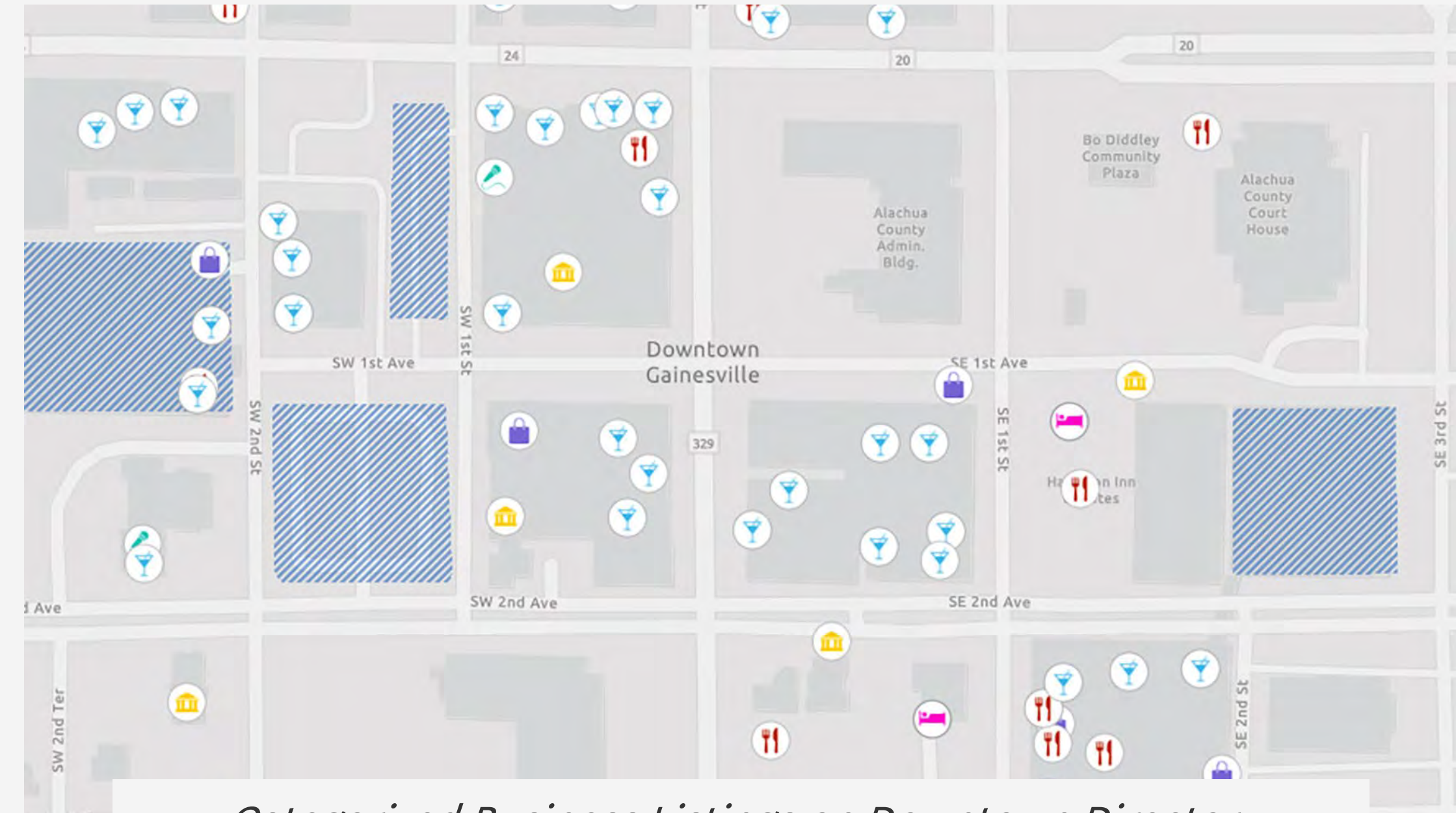
**FY 2025 Investment: \$2.9 million**

	City Funds	Private Sector	Total Investment
Business Improvement Grant (BIG Program)	\$447,700	\$447,700	\$895,000
Community Partnership Grant	\$40,000	\$90,760	\$130,760
Downtown Ambassador Program and Public Works Downtown Detail Cleaning Contract	\$1,310,000		\$1,310,000
Downtown Events Grant	\$86,094	\$78,883	\$164,977
Downtown Holiday Lights Contest	\$3,373		\$3,373
Downtown Seasonal Decorations	\$34,970		\$34,970
Downtown Winter Market Series	\$70,715		\$70,715
Grace Marketplace Support	\$350,000		\$350,000

# Sociable Cities

## Accomplished in FY 2025

- Created a baseline for how city departments address and think about Downtown
- Completed training alongside GPD and Gov. Affairs and Community Relations (May 2025)
- Results include:
  - **Storefront Analysis** of the Downtown Strategic Plan Area including commercial and retail vacancies
  - Delivery of online **Downtown Directory (Phase 1)**, available at [www.GNVdowntown.com](http://www.GNVdowntown.com)
  - Engage publicly with downtown users (business owners on SE 1st Street), etc.
  - Identified placemaking and beautification opportunities for Downtown



*Categorized Business Listings on Downtown Directory*



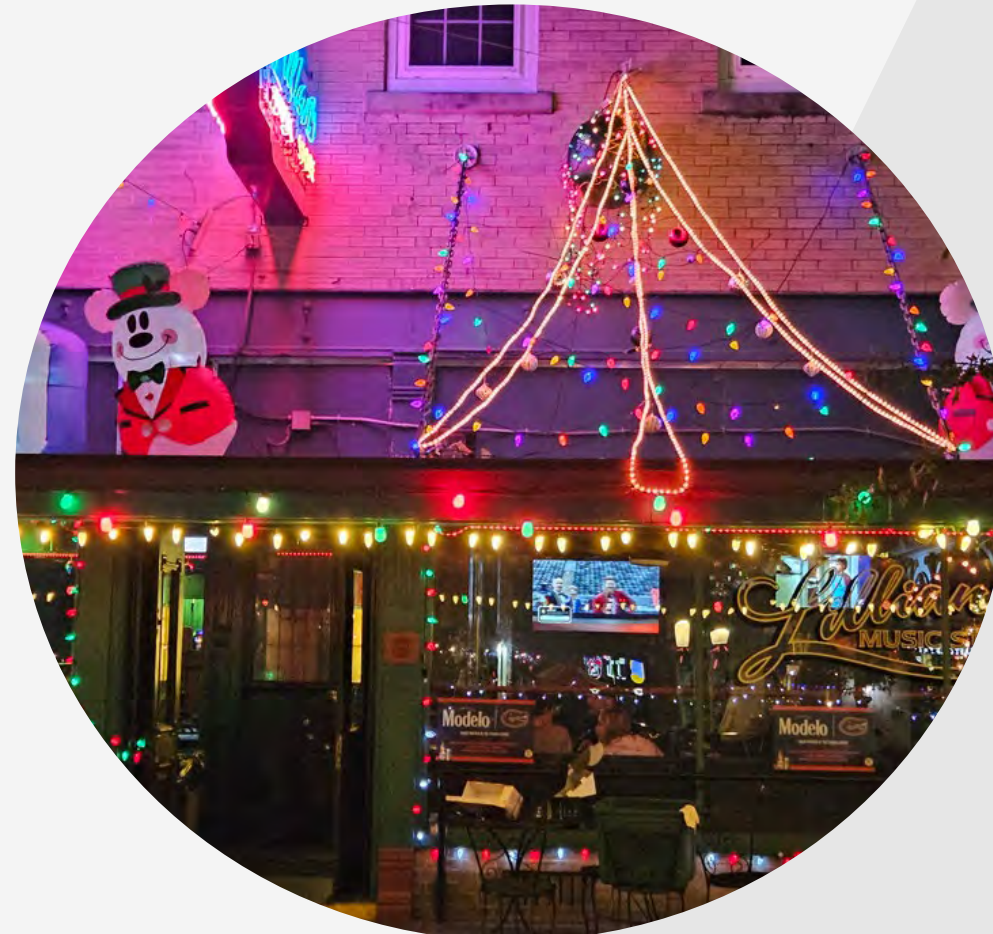
*With RHI founder, Jim Peters*

# Holiday 2025



## Festive on First

- Holiday decorations and light installation on SE 1st Street
- Installation locations: The Hippodrome, Bo Diddley Plaza, and SW 1st Street
- Completed early Nov. 2025 and removed Jan. 2026



## Holiday Lights Contest

- Open to businesses within the Strategic Plan focus area
- 10 final contestants competed across three categories for community votes
- 400 votes submitted during Dec. 2025 to Jan. 2026

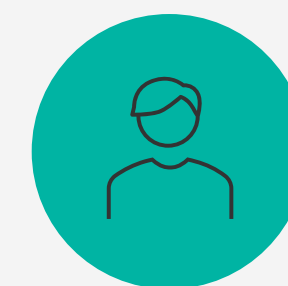


## Downtown Winter Market Series

- Contracted with Creative Cultural Consulting
- Weekend market series over 7 consecutive weeks from mid-Dec. 2025 to Jan. 2026
- Included 651 total vendor spaces from Gainesville and statewide



“Thank you very much for the wonderful decorations the city provided for the Hippodrome!!!  
It was beautiful! We had so many compliments about them. Really, the entire downtown looked great!  
Also, hats off to the guys installing our decorations! ”



**Dave Peck**  
Hippodrome Theatre

“Congratulations on bringing the holiday magic to downtown. I love the way your team decorated the area.  
I will be sad to see the garland come down, but alas I understand it can't be Christmas all year.”



**Gabrielle Byam**  
Hippodrome Theatre

# The Streatery

Transforms 106 SW 1st Avenue into a more pedestrian-friendly public space, supporting infrastructure upgrades, downtown activation, and long-term redevelopment goals.



## Accomplished in FY 2025

- GCRA hosted design workshop for community feedback (Dec. 2024)
- Finalized design and funding approach (Feb. 2025)
- City Commission formalized the name “The Streatery”
- Approved reconstruction of the street to support pedestrian use and added infrastructure (Aug. 2025)
- \$2 million committed by the GCRA towards project
- City Public Works designated as lead for street reconstruction



# The Streatery

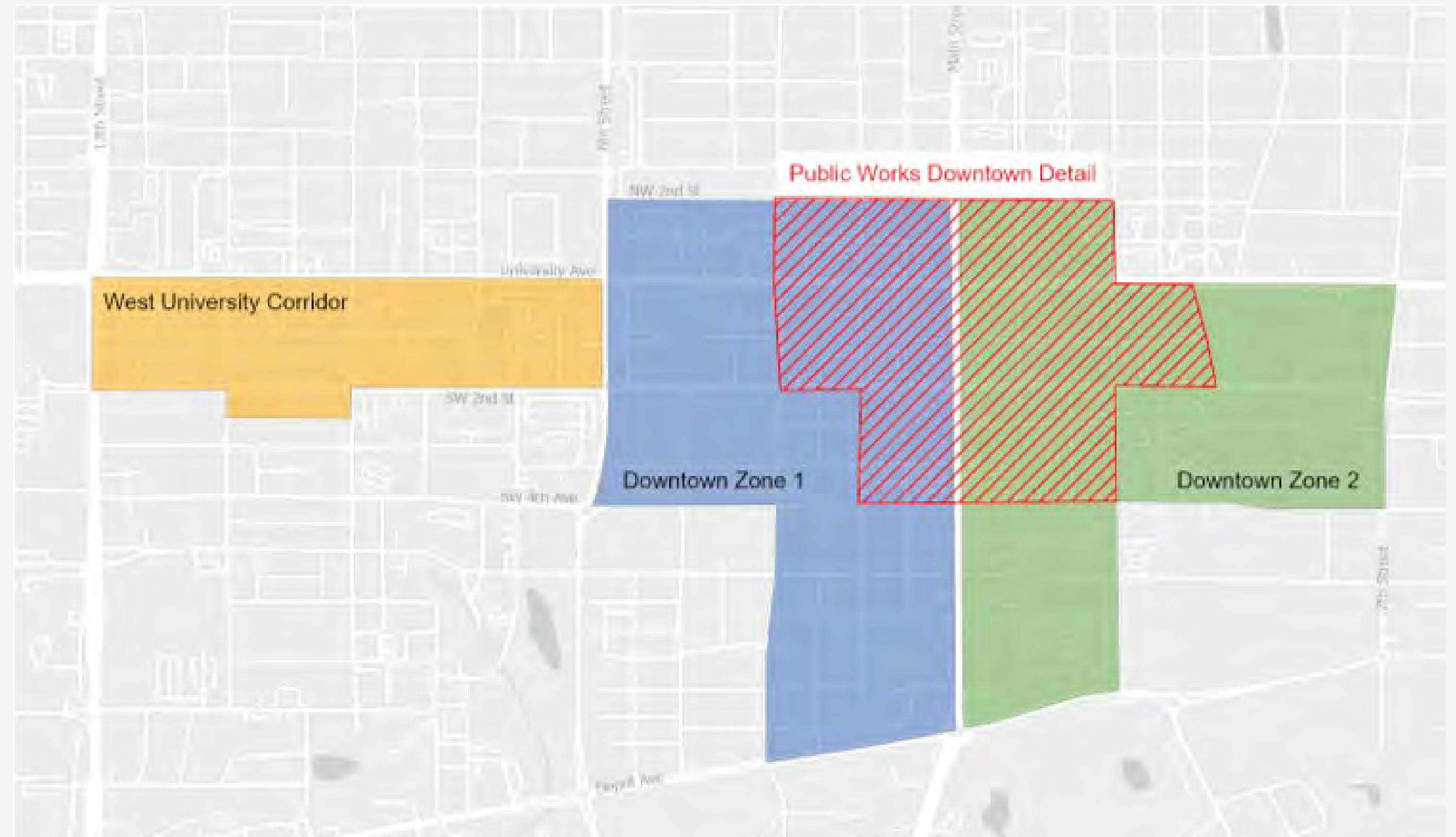
## Planned for FY 2026

- Coordinate street reconstruction with Lot 10 redevelopment into a residential, multi-story building
- Align construction timelines to ensure underground infrastructure is completed one time
- GCRA to continue advancing programming and activation in alignment with the Downtown Gainesville Strategic Plan



# Downtown Ambassador Program

- Program Launched Dec. 2024
- Advances the Downtown Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment priorities
- Services: Safety, Cleaning, Hospitality and Outreach
- Two service areas: Downtown and the West University Corridor
- Public Works handles the Downtown Detail area (DAP offers Hospitality, Safety and Outreach services here)
- Received 2025 Community Innovators Award, given to private partners, for their dedication to downtown (Aug. 2025)





## Lesser-Known Standard Services by Request

- Power Washing Public Areas
- Car Battery Jumpstarts
- Leaf Blowing Sidewalks
- Weed Abatement (> 6 inches)
- Giving Directions (very popular)
- Safety Escorts to Destination

# Program Performance (Dec. 2024 - Dec. 2025)

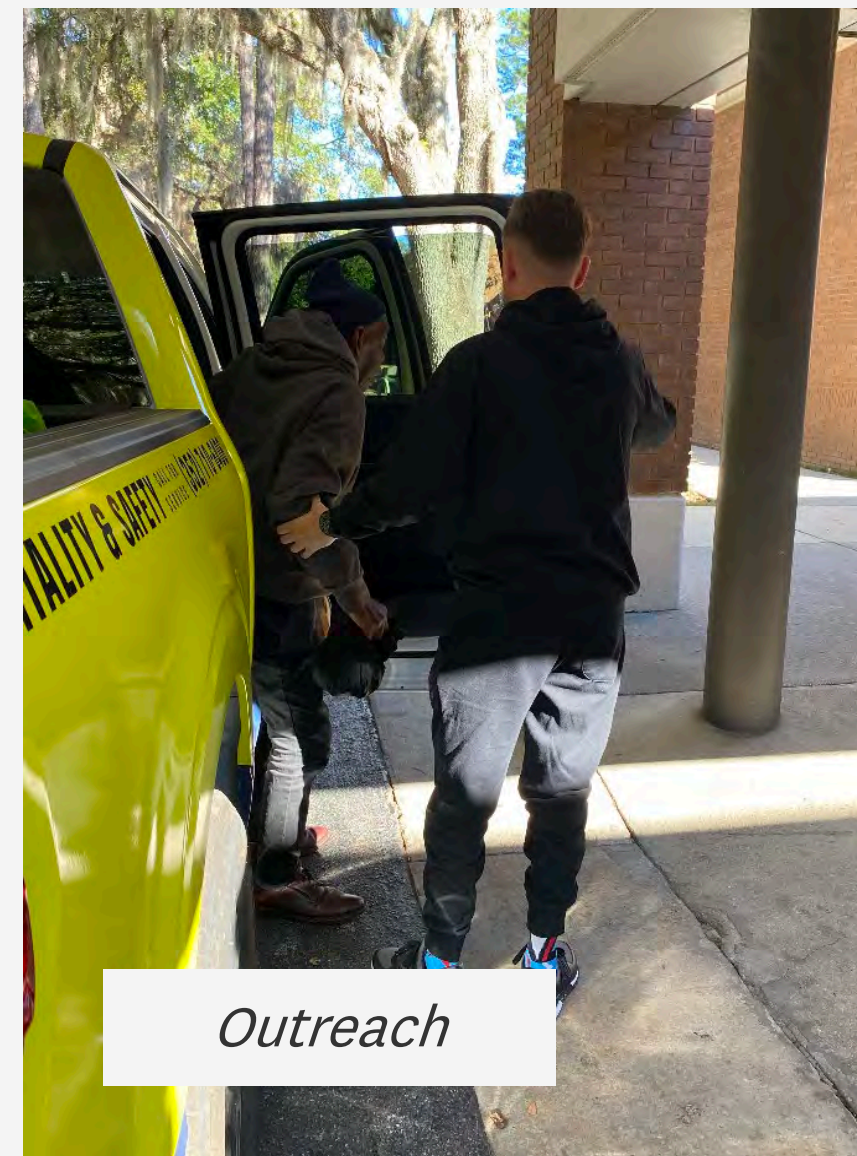
- 2,683 graffiti and stickers removed
- 2,737 city structures cleaned
- 1,289 bags of trash removed (258 cubic yds)
- 804 biohazard clean ups
  
- 18,573 safety interactions supporting businesses
- 7,542 visitors welcomed to downtown
- 1,359 directions and recommendations to downtown visitors
  
- 339 safety escorts provided
- 126 car battery jumpstarts provided
  
- 609 service calls for unhoused individuals
- 149 referrals for essential documents
- 100 wellness checks to unhoused individuals
- 68 people helped with getting a new ID



*Cleaning*



*Safety*



*Outreach*



*Hospitality*

# FY 2025 Program Performance: Cleaning

Q1 - Dec. 2024 Only



# FY 2025 Qualitative: Cleaning

## Ambassador-Led Issue Identification

- Through daily program operations, recurring accessibility and quality-of-life concerns were identified at select RTS bus stops
- Some stops were being occupied by non-riders, limiting access for active transit users

## Focus Location

- 13th St. & W. University Ave. bus stop
- High-use location serving students, families, and community members
- Ongoing congestion reduced rider comfort, safety, and accessibility



# FY 2025 Qualitative: Cleaning

## Ambassador-Focused Response

- Ambassadors documented conditions and elevated concerns through city channels
- Worked with RTS bus drivers to identify priority locations
- Supported appropriate GPD enforcement of designated transit space use
- Initiated and maintain cleanup and site restoration efforts

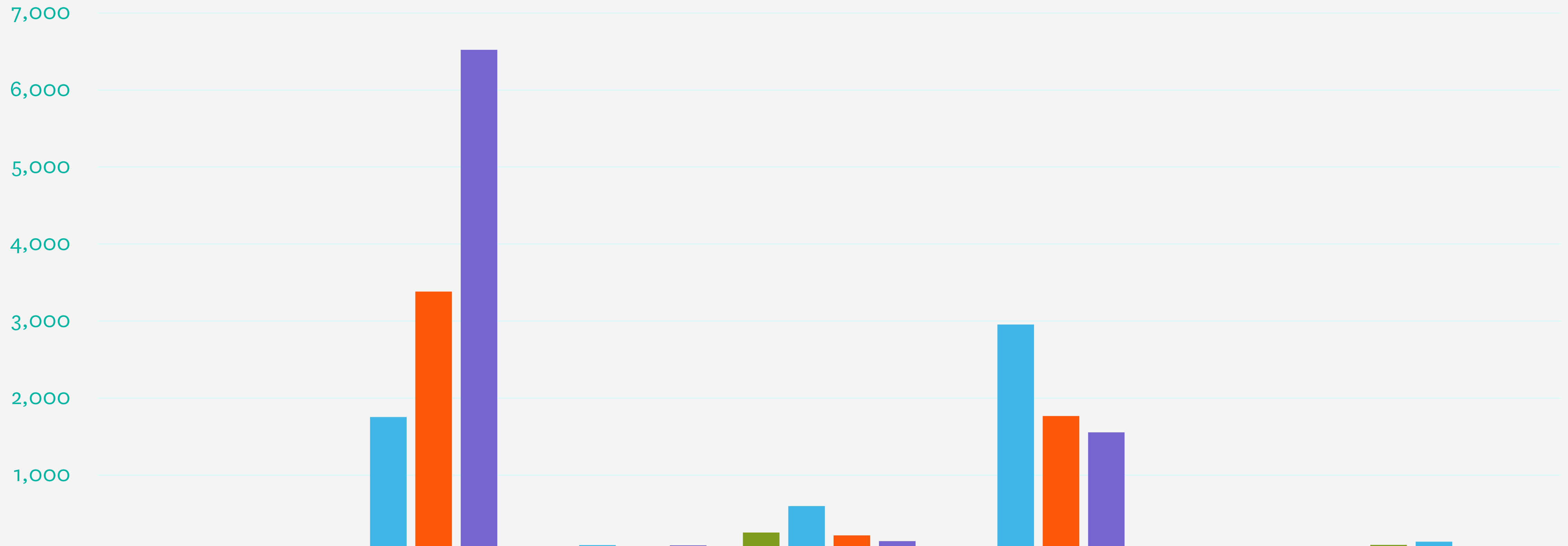
## Results

- Improved accessibility and order at the bus stop
- More welcoming, functional environment for transit riders
- Demonstrated the Ambassadors' role as a non-enforcement, frontline connector supporting coordinated city responses



# FY 2025 Program Performance: Safety

Q1 – Dec. 2024 Only



	Automobile Assistance	Business Contact	Camping/Sleeping	Give Directions	Hospitality Assistance	Request Police/Fire/EMS	Safety Escort
Q1	65	-	28	255	-	-	95
Q2	25	1,755	91	598	2,955	30	136
Q3	19	3,383	66	218	1,768	13	32
Q4	14	6,522	89	143	1,555	9	34

# FY 2025 Qualitative: Safety

## 1. Ambassador-Led Observation

- Observed a group of young adults, with one individual showing signs of medical distress
- Team repositioned to safely assess the situation and initiated contact to check on the individual's wellbeing

## 2. Early Concern Identified

- The individual appeared unresponsive and in distress, prompting immediate escalation
- Ambassadors prioritized safety and rapid coordination, not enforcement

## 3. Emergency Coordination

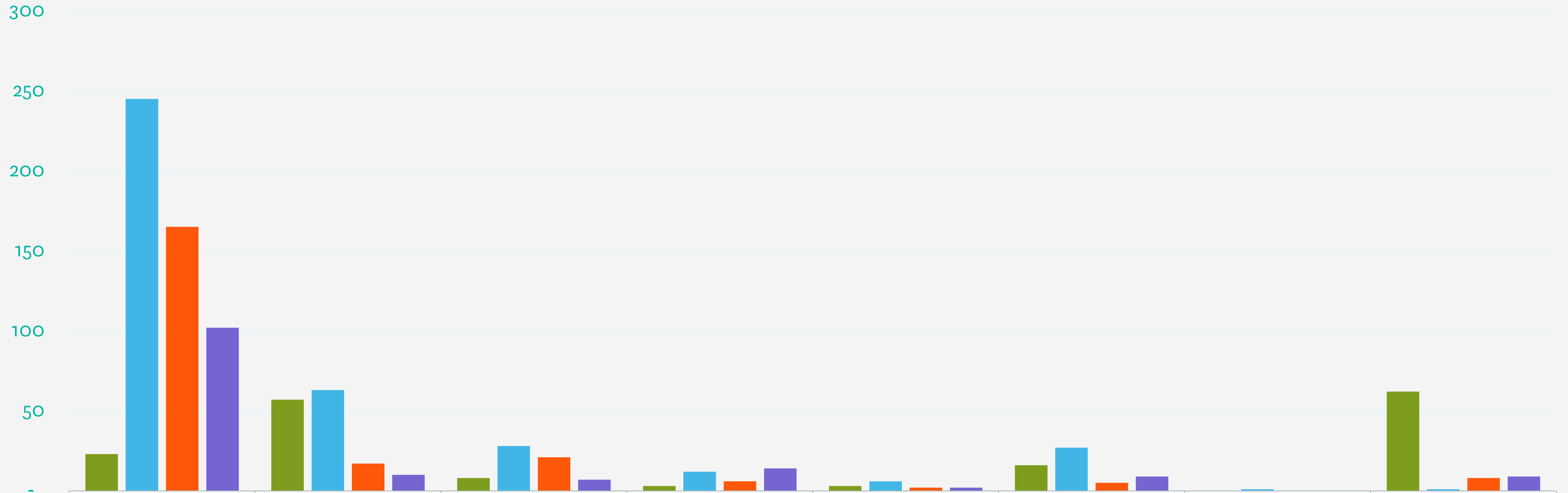
- Ambassadors quickly coordinated with GPD and EMS
- EMS conducted an on-site assessment and transported the individual to Shands Hospital for further care

## 4. Impact

- Early identification and quick coordination ensured the individual received timely medical attention
- Demonstrates the Ambassador Program's role in welfare checks, situational awareness, and emergency response support

# FY 2025 Program Performance: Outreach

Q1 – Dec. 2024 Only



	Calls for Service (Houseless)	Documentation Referral	ID Voucher	Outreach - Food/Water Provided	Street Level Services Provided - Clothing	Street Level Services Provided - Other	Transportation Voucher Issued	Wellness Check
Q1	23	57	8	3	3	16	-	62
Q2	245	63	28	12	6	27	1	1
Q3	165	17	21	6	2	5	-	8
Q4	102	10	7	14	2	9	-	9

"Thank you for your presence and the wonderful work you are doing in our community. I've been working at the County Admin building for 8 years and I certainly feel a sense of comfort knowing they are here."



**Kyle**

Alachua County Tax Collector

"Definitely noticed a difference! Streets are cleaner, and we like their friendly presence. And even though we feel for homelessness and the need of our less-fortunates, not having too much solicitation to our customers in the streets has definitely brought some comfort to our guests."



**Sita Marlier-Challandes**

Alpin Bistro and Café Voltaire

# Downtown Ambassador Program



## Planned for FY 2026

- Enter Year 2 of a three-year contract, with up to two one-year extensions available
- Continue refining operations based on stakeholder and community feedback

# Business Improvement Grant (BIG Program)

Provides up to \$150,000 in funding to help businesses repair and improve their physical spaces through a 50% reimbursable grant.

FY 2025 has strong participation from historic properties, where four historic buildings applied and were awarded funding

## Impact:

- Preserves historic and cultural buildings
- Strengthens neighborhood gathering spaces
- Supports reinvestment along key commercial corridors
- Ensures long-term care of Downtown's most meaningful places
- Supported businesses in completing visible, long-term property improvements
- Example project: South Main Station, which completed grant-funded improvements contributing to corridor revitalization

**10**

Properties Selected  
for Funding in FY25

**\$447,700**

Invested in Private Public  
Realm Improvements

# BIG Program Recipients: South Main Station & The Lynx Bookstore

Before



After



# FY 2025 BIG Program Awardees



Camellia Rose Inn



City Church Gainesville



Porters Bodega



Florida Theatre (x2)



Laurel Oak Inn



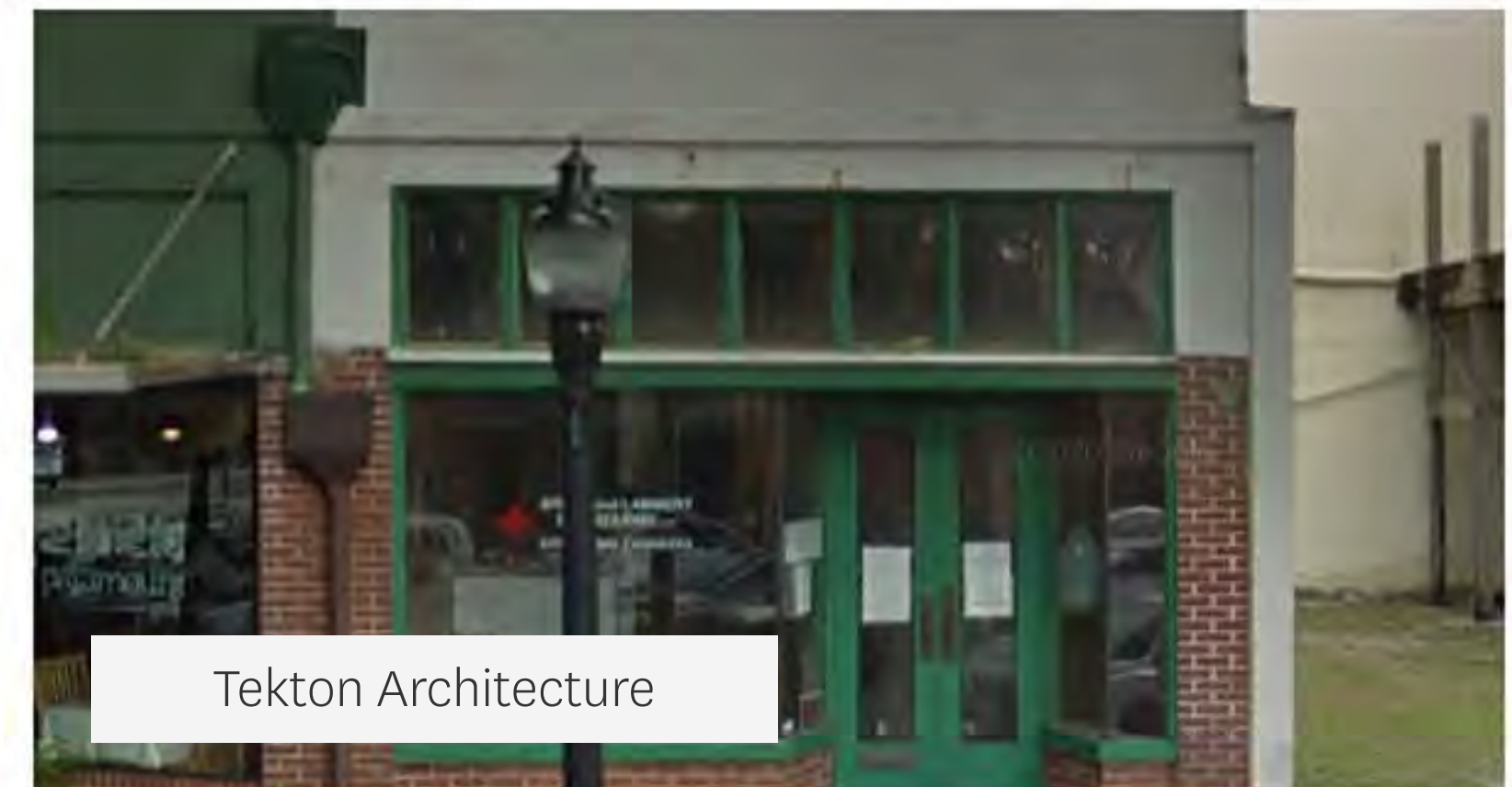
Matheson House



Pleasant Street Civil Rights and Cultural Center



The Seagle Building



Tekton Architecture

# Downtown Event Grant

Transitioned from a pilot in FY 2024 to a permanent program in FY 2025.

It supports free, public-facing events that activate Downtown, encourage economic activity, and enhance the use of public spaces through accessible community programming.

## Accomplished in FY 2025

- Transitioned from pilot to permanent program
- Shifted to a 50% matching grant model
- Implemented a two-tier grant structure:
  - Tier 1: up to \$5,000 (internal review)
  - Tier 2: up to \$30,000 (City Commission approval)

**19**

Downtown Events  
Supported

**\$86,094**

Invested in Community  
Programming

# Downtown Event Grant



## Planned for FY 2026

The program enters FY 2026 with strong support from the Downtown Advisory Board and the City Commission, reflecting continued confidence in the program's impact.

- \$184,924 total funding (\$84,000 more than FY25)
  - Tier 1: 40% (\$73,969) | Tier 2: 60% (\$110,954)
  - Tier 2 RFP release: February 2026
- City Commission review: April–May 2026

# Community Partnership Grant

Supports local organizations with grant funding for arts and culture, cultural celebrations, neighborhood improvements, resiliency, and economic development.

All funded events are free and open to the public.

## Planned for FY 2026

- Continue funding community-led, public-facing events
- Implement minor application formatting updates to improve clarity and ease of use for applicants

## Accomplished in FY 2025

**20**

Community Events  
Funded

**\$40,000**

Invested in  
Local Initiatives

# Porters Quarters

In This Section:

- FY 2025 Activity
- Porters Pink House
- Infill Lot Housing

# Porters Quarters

GCRA continues to invest in the Porters Quarters neighborhood to improve safety, infrastructure, and overall appearance.

These efforts reflect resident priorities and the city's long-term commitment to neighborhood care.



Ongoing GCRA investment in the Porters Neighborhood since 2016



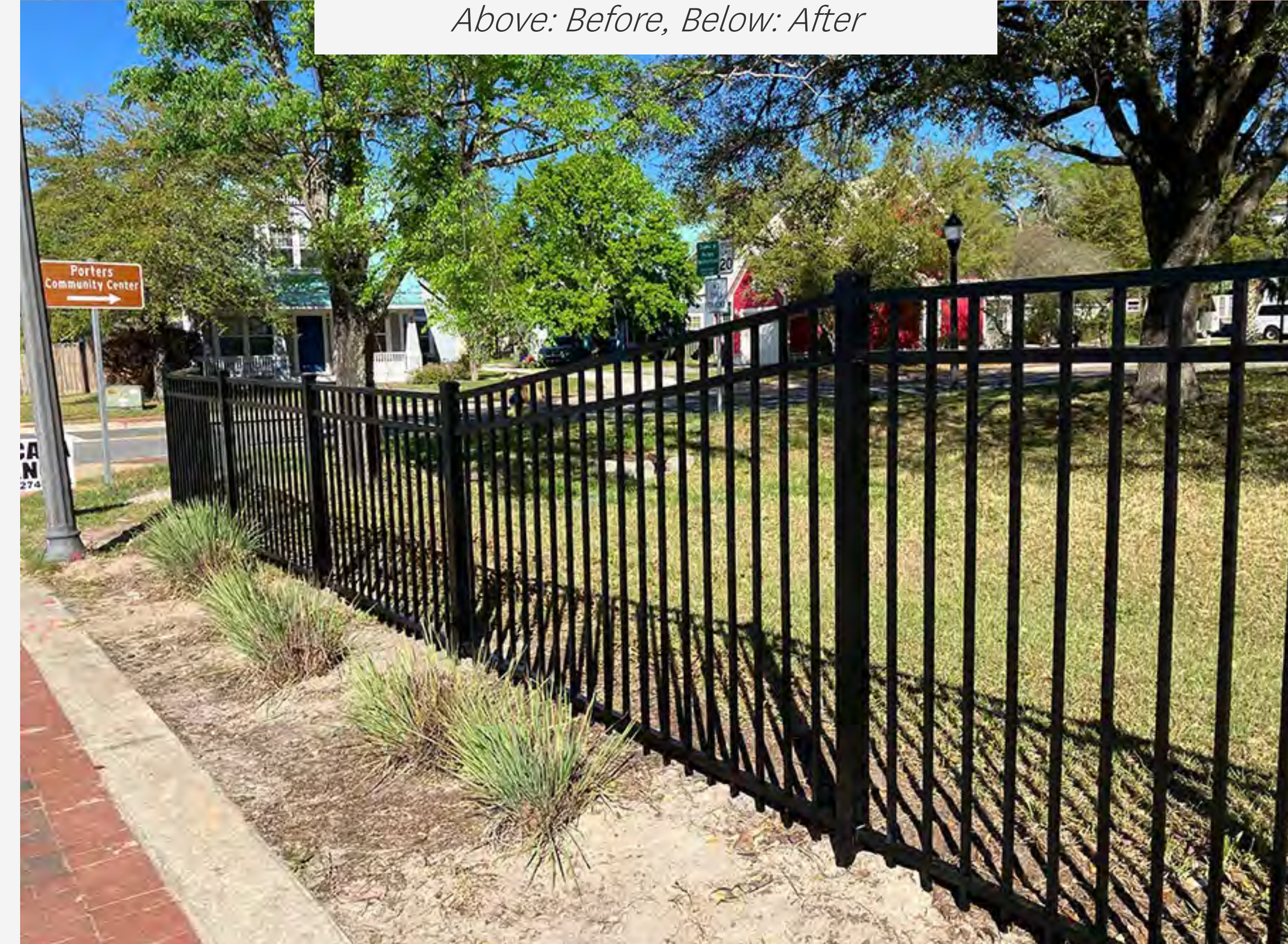
Replacement of aging fencing along Depot Ave. and portions of SW 2nd Street (Mar. 2025)



Resident-identified priority supporting safety, beautification, and neighborhood pride.



*Neighborhood Fence Replacement  
Above: Before, Below: After*



# The Pink House Community Center



Take GMP to  
City Commission

Complete/submit  
construction documents

Start site work and  
construction

Complete construction

# Porters Infill Lot Housing

## Creating site plan & architectural designs

May 2025



Hosted neighborhood meeting on zoning/land use change

Aug. 2025



File rezoning/land use change application with city Sustainable Development

FY 2026



Planning community engagement and ideas for CCOM review

FY 2027



Complete construction estimation by end of calendar year 2027

*Infill Lot at 405 SW 5th Ave.*

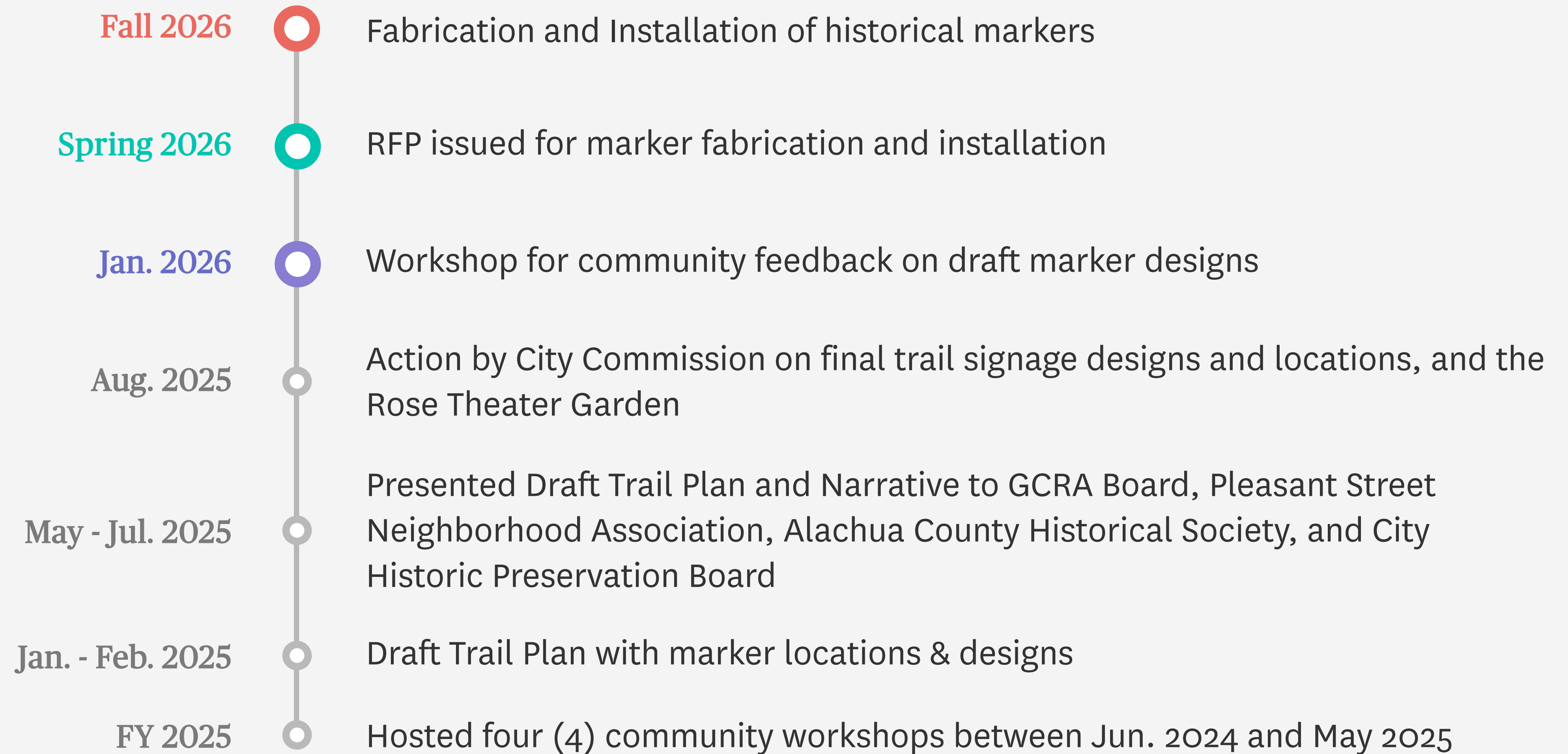


# 5th & Pleasant Black Heritage Trail

In This Section:

- FY 2025 Activity
- Trail Marker Designs

# Heritage Trail Milestones



# Marker Type - Trailhead Concept (Pedestrian Totem)

**Trailhead Concept**  
 Pedestrian Totem - Sign design  
 Standards for City Parks



- ← Trail Logo
- ← Trail Theme  
(90 PT National Bold Font)
- ← Graphics/Photographs
- ← Trail Introduction Text  
(28 PT National Bold Font)
- ← Locator Map
- ← Unifying AQJ Museum  
Brand & Color Scheme
- ← Potential Gainesville  
Chert Stone Base Area



# Fifth & Pleasant: The Neighborhood That Built Generations

## 5th & Pleasant: El Vecindario que Formó Generaciones



### Fifth Avenue & Pleasant Street Neighborhood Timeline

- 1421 - Ferdinand the King of Spain awarded a massive land grant to Don Fernando de la Maza Arce.
- 1424 - Nathaniel Brant, a merchant from Baltimore, platted over 30,000 acres of the Arce lands Spanish Grant.
- 1824 - Gainesville was established and named after Edmund F. Gaines.
- 1829 - Originally named Brant's Addition and eventually West Gainesville, the Pleasant Street area is established as Gainesville's Black section.
- 1832 - Union Academy was established by the Trustees' Bureau to provide for the education of both adults and children.
- 1834 - African Americans begin to purchase property from the Brant Estate, settlers arrived from neighboring plantations and other Southern states, especially Georgia and South Carolina.
- 1837 - Gainesville's oldest African American church, Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church is organized. The current building was completed in 1904.
- 1877 - Joseph T. Wells is elected as the first African American Mayor of Gainesville.
- 1877 - Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church is established.
- 1880 - Between 1880 and 1900, Pleasant Street (NW 3rd Street) became the neighborhood's first commercial district.
- 1884 - Brant's Addition is platted. Bounded by NW 20th Ave, NW 25th St, University Ave, and NW 10th St, it later became known as the 5th Avenue section of the neighborhood.
- 1884 - Friendship Baptist Church is established. The current sanctuary was completed in 1910.
- 1891 - The St. Augustine Mission School is organized.
- 1891 - Mount Carmel Baptist Church is organized. The street day and Mount Carmel Baptist Church was completed in 1924.
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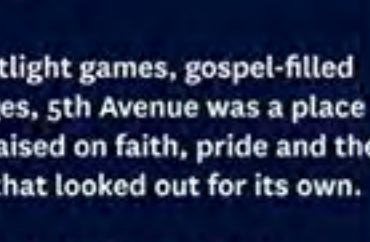
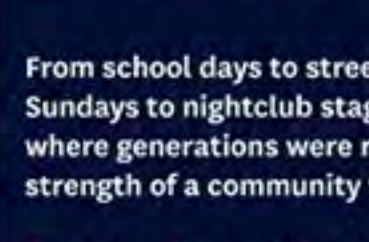
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# Fifth & Pleasant: The Neighborhood That Built Generations

## 5th & Pleasant: El Vecindario que Formó Generaciones



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The 5th Avenue/Pleasant Street neighborhood has been known for its great food and strong cooking traditions for many years. At the center of this reputation is its history of soul food and barbecue. Soul food comes from the African American experience and mixes flavors and cooking styles from Africa, the Caribbean, and the American South. Popular dishes include fried chicken, collard greens, and cornbread. Barbecue, which also has roots in African and indigenous traditions, is known for its slow-cooked meats and bold, smoky sauces.

The neighborhood was home to several popular restaurants. Mom's Kitchen, started by Lula Mae and George Young in the 1960s, was a favorite spot until it closed in 2006. It had replaced the old Rock Front Grocery Store. Mama Lu's, run by Lorena "Mama Lu" Alexander from 1975 to 1995, became a well-loved place to eat. Parker's BBQ, owned by William "T.T." Parker from 1958 to 1973, was famous for its ribs, chicken, and seven different barbecue sauces—ranging from mild to "super saucy" hot.

Other local favorites included Walter's Blue Room & BBQ, the 5th Avenue Lunch Room, and Maggie's Restaurant, all adding to the area's strong food culture and community pride.

El vecindario de 5th Avenue/Pleasant Street ha sido conocido durante muchos años por su excelente comida y sus sólidas tradiciones culinarias. En el centro de esta reputación está su historia de soul food y barbacoa. El soul food proviene de la experiencia afroamericana y mezcla sabores y estilos de cocina de África, el Caribe y el sur de Estados Unidos. Platos populares incluyen pollo frito, coliflor verde (brócoli), y pan de maíz. La barbacoa, que también tiene raíces en tradiciones africanas e indígenas, es conocida por sus cortes de carne cocinados a fuego lento y sus salsas intensas y ahumadas.

El vecindario fue hogar de varios restaurantes populares. Mom's Kitchen, iniciado por Lula Mae y George Young en la década de 1960, fue un lugar favorito hasta que cerró en 2006. Había reemplazado la antigua tienda Rock Front Grocery Store. Mama Lu's, dirigida por Lorena "Mama Lu" Alexander entre 1975 y 1995, se convirtió en un lugar muy apreciado para comer. Parker's BBQ, propiedad de William "T.T." Parker de 1958 a 1973, era famoso por sus ribs, pollo y siete diferentes salsas barbacoa—desde suaves hasta picantes como "super saucy".

Otros favoritos locales incluyen Walter's Blue Room & BBQ, el 5th Avenue Lunch Room y Maggie's Restaurant, todos contribuyendo a la fuerte cultura culinaria y el orgullo comunitario del área.



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For more information, visit: 5thandPleasant.com

City of Gainesville

Barber shops and beauty salons have played a major role in the 5th Avenue/Pleasant Street community for generations, and long for hair care, but also as important social and information hubs. These spaces provided a safe place for people to gather, talk about current events, share advice, and connect with others. They helped build strong relationships and created a sense of community.

One well-known example is Clara's Beauty Salon, which operated for more than 50 years and became one of the most recognized businesses in Gainesville's Black community. The owner, Clara Griffin, graduated from Apex Beauty School in Atlanta in 1946. After traveling for several years, she returned to Gainesville and opened her salon, attached to her home at the corner of NW 8th Street and 7th Avenue.

Throughout her career, Clara styled the hair of many well-known people, including the late R&B singer Minnie Riperton and models from the Ebony Fashion Fair. Her success reflects how these businesses are not only places of beauty but also symbols of pride, independence, and connection in the community.

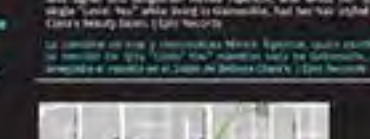
Barberías y salones de belleza han desempeñado un papel fundamental en la comunidad de 5th Avenue/Pleasant Street durante generaciones, no solo para el cuidado del cabello, sino también como importantes centros sociales y de información. Estos espacios brindaban un lugar seguro para reunirse, hablar sobre eventos actuales, compartir consejos y conectarse con otros. Ayudaron a construir relaciones sólidas y a crear un sentido de comunidad.

Como fuente de orgullo cultural e identidad, también ofrecieron oportunidades importantes de emprendimiento, especialmente para las mujeres. Crear un barber shop o salón de belleza significaba tener control sobre tu propio negocio y generar un impacto positivo en el vecindario.

Un ejemplo bien conocido es Clara's Beauty Salon, que operó durante más de 50 años y se convirtió en uno de los negocios más reconocidos de la comunidad negra de Gainesville. Su propietaria, Clara Griffin, se graduó de Apex Beauty School en Atlanta en 1946. Después de viajar por varios años, regresó a Gainesville y abrió su salón, adjunto a su casa en la esquina de NW 8th Street y 7th Avenue.

A lo largo de su carrera, Clara peinó a muchas personas conocidas, incluida la fallecida cantante de R&B Minnie Riperton y modelos de la Ebony Fashion Fair. Su éxito refleja cómo estas empresas no solo son lugares de belleza, sino también símbolos de orgullo, independencia y conexión en la comunidad.

Las estilistas Dorothy Payton, Ruby Bingham, Juanita Bradley, and Ada Kirkland también ayudaron a mantener a las mujeres a la moda y al tanto de las últimas noticias. Barberías como Plummer's brindaron espacios sociales y oportunidades comerciales para los hombres.



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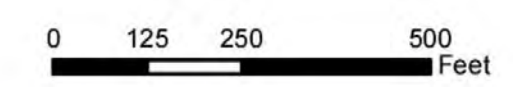
City of Gainesville



City of Gainesville  
 Alachua County Public Schools

● Proposed Marker Location

### 5th Avenue | Pleasant Street Heritage Trail Draft Marker Parcel Location Map



# In Closing

In FY 2026, GCRA will build on FY 2025's progress with targeted investment, operational refinement, and measurable impact across Downtown and East Gainesville, working to:

- Protect historic and neighborhood assets
- Activate Downtown through programming and infrastructure
- Support small businesses and private investment
- Strengthen public safety and quality-of-life efforts
- Ensure every dollar invested advances measurable revitalization outcomes

## Ensuring work is:



**Targeted:** Resources directed where need and opportunity align



**Strategic:** Capital projects informed by market and demographic realities



**Equitable:** Planning grounded in measurable community conditions



**Transparent:** Public-facing tools that show impact and accountability