“The reality of Innovation Square is the result of an amazing community effort, energy and ‘will’ to create that special urban place that will nurture an environment of creativity, entrepreneurship and a sense of home.”

- Ed Poppell, Vice President for Business Affairs and Economic Development, University of Florida
DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY. INNOVATION SQUARE.
Cities are growing around the world as people are moving from rural and suburban areas to be a part of the phenomenon that is urban life. While there are many reasons for this, the primary motivation is our need for human interaction and the myriad benefits that emerge from this interaction. For millennia the trend has been for populations to congregate in order to engage with others; to create and innovate through the collision of people and ideas. There may have been dips in this progress over time, but the general trend has remained strong. And it remains strong today.

In the face of emergent technologies that would seem to promote isolation, the reverse has in fact been happening. While we spend more time online and communicating electronically, we have also been spending more time face to face with our fellow citizens; in cafes, restaurants, shops, parks, and other public places. It is this interaction that is emerging as the foundation for the heightened exchange of ideas and the proliferation of innovation.

Innovation is predicated on this collision. Its very nature is taking ideas and making them better, in many cases through avenues that were never intended or conceived of by the originator. This interaction is critical to the process, and there is real value in creating an environment in which this is not only allowed but incentivized at every level. This incentive is captured through a heightened sense of community, through making it as easy as possible to do the things that promote innovation. Much of the world makes demands on us that get us further from this goal. In this project, this district, and this community, the aim is to facilitate the great ideas, the inventions, and the information that will propel us closer to more fulfilling and sustainable communities: a better future for all of us.

Gainesville, the University of Florida, and the broader territory, contain a unique mixture of the ingredients needed for this to happen. The area has a strong community and a premiere research institution. The combination of the two provides a highly livable, walkable, adaptable and sustainable environment within which future research and associated activities will thrive, building on past successes and expanding the positive alliances and partnerships that are precipitating some of the most creative and innovative products, companies and solutions in the world. And all in a place where people live truly fulfilled and rich lives.
Successful communities are built on strong, lasting foundations. They last through time, building on past success, and they grow, leveraging to full advantage the breadth and diversity of elements within the geography of the community. Gainesville continues to build on its rich history and tradition, and the myriad resources of the city that have produced one of the premiere education and research environments in the world, as well as a great place to live. The city and university are models for both civic and educational excellence. Beginning in the 1970’s, the university diversified and expanded into one of the top universities in the nation. Today, the University of Florida is a leading public research university situated in what Money magazine called “the best place to live” in the United States; the Gainesville community.

This community, however, is comprised of much more than just the University and the City. There is a rich fabric and diversity that propels the community beyond the typical college town as evidenced by the following examples. Affiliated with the University of Florida Health Science Center, Shands Healthcare is one of the Southeast’s premier health systems. Alachua County and the City of Gainesville have both established levels of excellence and inspiration in the execution of civic and public works programs. The transformation of Gainesville’s downtown is being led by the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency. The Chamber of Commerce has formed Innovation Gainesville (iG), a community initiative to harness innovation to create jobs in health and green technologies. Santa Fe College, emerging as a premier technical college, offers a unique advantage to this research community, preparing students for positions within the research and associated fields. Progress Corporate Park is a productive setting for the many bioscience, tech and other companies. The Alachua County School System is one of the premier systems in Florida, with achievements such as the state’s highest SAT scores, four of the best high schools in the nation and one of the best International Baccalaureate programs in the world. And Gainesville Regional Utilities is advancing the platform and operation of the necessary and complex systems into an efficient and responsive framework that provides state-of-the-art support for future research-based development.

The Gainesville community is exceptional in ways that go beyond the individual successes of any of its distinguished elements.
DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY, INNOVATION SQUARE.

GULF OF MEXICO

ATLANTIC OCEAN

ALABAMA

GEORGIA

SOUTH CAROLINA

TALLAHASSEE

JACKSONVILLE

DAYTONA BEACH

ORLANDO

TAMPA

MIAMI

FT LAUDERDALE - WEST BALM BEACH

GAINESVILLE

FLORIDA

FLORIDA'S HIGH TECH CORRIDOR

GULF OF MEXICO

CITY

5 MILES

COUNTY

25 MILES

STATE

50 MILES

VICINITY

1 MILE

NEIGHBORHOOD

1/2 MILE

DISTRICT

1/4 MILE
Innovation Square is envisioned as one among a series of interrelated districts within the larger community; districts that create symbiotic relationships, providing benefits for all. The square, positioned as an intense zone for research and research related activities, will develop and deliver resources and opportunities beyond its boundaries. And conversely, the larger community will contribute resources that benefit the core district. These relationships are a critical element of a successful system and are the cornerstone of the project. The districts span geography and program, and provide an organizational structure within which the myriad elements of the community can be leveraged to best advantage for success. They are organized in the following manner:

**Florida High Tech Corridor.** The region in the state of Florida that has a concentration of existing and proposed research based projects that will operate in concert with each other.

**County.** The entirety of the county, comprising all of the elements, inclusive, that constitutes the regional vitality of the greater Gainesville area. **City.** The city is the fulcrum through which regional, local, and subsidiary matters are aligned. **Vicinity.** The convergence of geographically proximate entities that impact and are impacted by the development of Innovation Square, including the University of Florida campus, downtown Gainesville, the Shands hospitals, and others not in the neighborhood proper. **Neighborhood.** The political boundary, and zoning district, generally understood as University Heights, including the surrounding residential areas, the mixed use areas along University Avenue and other establishments comprising this district. **Innovation Square District (ISD).** This is a newly constituted body that is comprised of mixed use properties that provide a centrally located local authority to oversee the specifics of development in this area. **Core.** The core is the central four-block area in which the highest intensity of research activity is located.

The districts are intended as general area distinctions that foster efficient and appropriate decision making processes to provide for successful interaction of the multiple constituencies throughout the broader community. As the project unfolds and matures, it is reasonable that the parameters of each district might be adjusted to suit future conditions.
Innovation Square is first and foremost a research-oriented development. As such, it is imperative that research is of utmost consideration in planning and implementation decisions. These decisions should be guided by knowledge of global trends and initiatives in research, general issues pertaining to the development of research communities, and specific research considerations for Innovation Square. The global research environment is changing constantly. These changes range from specific research endeavors to global shifts in research methodology, all of which affect the planning of environments that foster innovative research. The global evolution of research will have direct impact on the constitution of Innovation Square, as it unfolds in the coming years and decades.

Innovation Square presents a number of unique opportunities in planning for a highly integrated environment. First among the opportunities is the location directly adjacent to the University of Florida. This co-location provides future research professionals with unequaled access to research infrastructure and technology at the University, as well as the intellectual capital of the academic researchers. The relationship between the two will foster increased innovation and productivity within the research and academic communities. It is this relationship, and the open exchange of ideas between the two that offers opportunities beyond those found in a traditional research park setting. Because of this, it is critical the project is designed to reinforce this dynamic framework in every way possible.

In the district setting itself, interaction will be facilitated through the careful disposition of the various elements that provide an armature for discourse. Simply put, the district will be designed to make meeting and exchanging ideas and information a commonplace. It is accomplished with centrally located, highly animated public spaces that foster collaboration, much as a local market in a traditional town facilitates interaction among its citizens. The remote laboratory will no longer be the only theater for research, but the streets, courtyards and common interior spaces will themselves be literal extensions of the laboratory. And these areas will have ancillary programs: cafes, restaurants, boutiques, technology centers, conference facilities, as well as shaded outside areas that are required to see this vision fulfilled.
LIVABILITY

Livability is simply the state of well being of the citizens of a community. Ultimately this is a strategy for creating a place where people want to live, and where they thrive as a result living in this place.

WALKABILITY

In the design and execution of this district, a highly connected system of streets that supports healthy activity is critical to the innovative collision in the district. As these ideas are reinforced, the potential of the entire district, and it’s research, are greatly expanded.

ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability relies upon the existence of a framework into which components can be inserted, changed, modified and replaced with minimal impact on the larger framework, and it requires that the framework be the permanent platform upon which adaptation occurs.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is the aligning of one’s goals; reduce carbon output, increase healthy food production, create a lasting community, with one’s actions to realize our goals. This district is an opportunity to clearly and successfully align our goals and actions in the pursuit of true sustainability.
The primary act of city building, whether for a new city or research district, is the creation of the physical public realm. This act represents the fundamental principal in this redevelopment and deals specifically with the conversion of land into an urban framework of streets and infrastructure, public spaces and buildings, and block and lot configurations. The urban framework, particularly the configuration of streets and blocks, provides a long-term structure for changing patterns of land use, building form and building occupancies. How this structure is designed is vital to the performance of a city. Small yet easily developable blocks are the key to creating a city that not only allows, but promotes public activity through its walkability. The formation of such a public framework is the first step toward livability, sustainability, and adaptability; all within the context of a strong community. The strategic projection of a public framework has a long history in the constitution of enduring cities, from the Roman use of the ‘cardo’ and ‘decumanus’ to Oglethorpe’s plan for Savannah, or the Commissioners’ Plan of 1811 for the city of Manhattan. These plans all passed from regulatory documents to constructed places, and have all survived adaptations throughout the maturation of each.

In the creation of a district such as Innovation Square, it is critical that these principals are reinforced through the development of the public components of the district as well as through the development of the individual projects. Livability is predicated on the notion that it should be as easy as possible to live a rich and interactive life without relying on an automobile for the majority of one’s daily routine. Walkability is critical to the success of a community and to the health of its citizens. If one can, and desires, to walk in a particular place it indicates that there is alignment of a number of factors that make successful cities and towns. Adaptability is key to the continued success of any community. Adaptability relies upon the existence of a framework into which components can be inserted, changed, modified and replaced with minimal impact on the larger framework. Sustainability is not a single project but a comprehensive strategy for creating better communities; from the energy sources used to power appliances to the way waste is removed from the site. In many ways this is a constant process of experimentation.

Gainesville has evolved over time such that it is, a highly livable, walkable, adaptable and sustainable community, and it will continue to strengthen these characteristics into the 21st century.
The development framework for Innovation Square consists of six critical elements: districts, grid, greenway, streets, parking, and uses. Layered together, these elements are vital in implementing a sensitive and systematic approach to creating a dynamic research community within the existing urban fabric of midtown Gainesville.

Districts. The districts define the three areas within and contributing to the operation of Innovation Square. The core is the high intensity area of science and technology research; the Innovation Square District (ISD) is the larger self-regulating collection of commercial landowners within which the research and its associated development will unfold; and the vicinity district is the larger area of influence including the residential neighborhoods along with other areas that comprise this part of Gainesville.

Grid. The grid is the underlying physical structure that clearly delineates between the public and private realm, it is permanent, establishing mobility and development within the district.

Greenway. The greenway gives a geographical as well as emotional center to the district.

Streets. The streets define the level of hierarchy within the district, establishing areas of activity, access, recreation and reflection, as well as design criteria for these critical elements.

Parking. Parking strategically addresses the reality of a needed infrastructure, addressing the needs of today by insuring adequate levels to promote development, but further providing a strategy that addresses the future of a changing and as-yet undefined market, along with a realignment of accessibility and modes of transportation throughout the city.

Uses. Uses provide a roadmap for providing the richness of activity and collision of members of the community, and for the myriad elements needed to successfully live and work in a particular city district.

The precise implementation of these critical elements establishes a layered relationship between differing urban systems. While each of the elements maintains individual operational characteristics, when they are appropriately combined, they provide the means to achieving the commonly held vision that is the foundation for Innovation Square, a diverse and vibrant community that provides a backdrop for innovation.
DISTRICTS

Innovation Square itself is envisioned as one of three symbiotic districts within the larger context of the region. These central districts define, benefit, and support each other: the Vicinity district, the Innovation Square District (ISD) and the Core District, and they tie to the larger, regional districts.

GRID

The grid is a sustainable framework that allows for adaptation over time. It allows the physical structure of the City of Gainesville to successfully evolve over time and will continue to allow for the program of Innovation Square to unfold with positive and lasting impact to the existing structure of the City.

GREENWAY

The Greenway is central to Innovation Square. It is the binding element and focal point within the district. It is a connection between the activity along University and the southern park area; a series of spaces such as squares, plazas, and parks; for researchers, residents and visitors to interact and collaborate.
STREETS

Streets must be addressed as spaces for people and most importantly for the success of Innovation Square, for socializing and interacting. They are central to creating a place that encourages collaboration among researchers and clearly defines a unique sense of place unlike that of other typical research parks.

PARKING

Innovation Square integrates varying land uses that serve the larger goals of the research community and those of the community. While the core district will be the center of research, significant retail, restaurant, residential and hospitality as well as additional lab and supportive space shall be integrated throughout the district.

USES

Innovation Square integrates varying land uses that serve the larger goals of the research community and those of the community. While the core district will be the center of research, significant retail, restaurant, residential and hospitality as well as additional lab and supportive space shall be integrated throughout the district.
The elements of the district, as described in the previous section, are the constituent parts of any successful urban development strategy. These elements, however, must be allocated both geographically as well as temporally; they must unfold across an area and emerge through time in a well-choreographed process that ensures the alignment of the vision and the execution of the project. As such, plan can be considered both a noun and a verb. As a noun, the plan is a document that delineates where and how the parts of the district are located. As a verb, the plan is an active process and a series of projections that indicate the number of elements and the frequency with which they appear. Each of these characteristics of the plan will change over time, but while many elements of the plan are fungible, it is the plan that sets in place the relative importance of each of these elements; those that may change more freely, and those that may not.

The plan clearly delineates the development framework for Innovation Square. It defines the physical elements of the vision and how each element interacts within the plan. The plan also clearly describes a preferable relationship among the elements of the plan and the sequencing of their implementation. The plan anticipates that the elements that constitute the public realm will be less open to change; more permanent, while allowing for significant flexibility within the private realm, allowing each building’s design and program to vary while adhering to the broader requirements of the plan.

The essential elements within the plan include: Uses. The types of uses as well as the desired mix; Phasing. The larger strategy for implementation over time; Projections. The degree of development and population growth that might occur as the project is developed; Landscape. Regulating the elements within the public realm; Transportation. A strategy to balance projected growth with multiple accessibility opportunities and options; Utilities. A general district-wide strategy for sharing resources and minimizing redundancies of resources, as well as providing an operational framework.
This image is a detail aerial of the Innovation Square District (ISD) that indicates the envisioned vibrancy and overall potential for the area. It describes the general character and quality of the area, and it should act as a visual guide for future development.

This image is a broader aerial view that indicates the proximity of the ISD to both downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida. The district, as is clearly evident in this image, will provide a seamless link between downtown and the University, as well as a stage for innovation.
Above. This image is a perspective view of the proposed greenway through the heart of the Core District, as well as a threshold to Tumblin Creek and the trail systems beyond. It clearly describes the intention of bringing a flexible and well-designed natural component into the urban framework.

Right. This image, across 2nd Avenue, and into the new square, describes the vibrant public framework, the people, the landscape, the commuters, the residents all harmoniously creating the context for a truly collaborative and rich living and working environment.
Above. The diagram describes the nested relationship between the various design and development regulations and guidelines. The foundation is the flexible, accommodating base zoning district, the Urban Mixed Use-2 District. In the Innovation Square District, with the constitution of a BID (see p. 166), a higher level of oversight ensures the vision for the district is maintained. And, finally, in the areas directly managed by the University of Florida Development Corporation, requirements for building performance and operation are provided through the direct agreements between the individual developer and the UFDC. The overlapping system ensures that great flexibility and innovation remain at the forefront of the development process while providing the necessary guidance for specific conditions to create a stable and lasting district.
The regulations for this district are created to promote and encourage redevelopment of the existing commercial blocks in this area. The district is intended to encourage pedestrian mobility and to allow uses compatible with each other. Furthermore, this district will allow for establishments engaged in conducting research and experimental development in the physical, engineering or life sciences, in order to facilitate technology transfer from institutions of higher learning to the market place. The basic vision for the district is codified and embedded in the regulatory structure. It is reinforced through a process that yields clarity of intent and execution through simplicity; simple charts, simple maps, simple sentences and simple diagrams. The elements all serve to reinforce the clear relationship between the public and private realms in the district. This simplicity and clarity ensures that these ideals are institutionalized and have a life beyond the single project.

The operation of the code is such that administration is streamlined, variations, when appropriate, are adopted, definitions are minimized, information is centrally located and easily apprehended. Those few elements that are of critical importance to the success of the district are clearly described, while the remaining elements are left open to innovation and creativity.

Beyond the jurisdictional regulations there are additional elements of the development process that require a higher level of coordination than can be offered within the flexibility of the underlying regulations. This is carried out through the Innovation Square District (ISD), a business improvement district structured to facilitate development while maintaining a high level of alignment with the vision for the district. The combination of the clear and flexible zoning regulations and the efficient and equitable Business Improvement District works in concert to provide the optimum relationship between requirements and opportunities. In this system creativity and originality, along with speed and efficiency, of development are fostered, while the vision and its vital characteristics are exigent and, ultimately, ensured throughout the district.
Innovation Square represents a significant opportunity to transform the way we develop the world in which we live. As the 21st century unfolds, changes will emerge that we can’t possibly yet predict. We can, as we have for the past century, plan for our future based on projections of what we know will come, or we can accept the fact that the future is to a large degree unknowable. At Innovation Square we understand that the future, while unpredictable, is also abundant with opportunity. As such the district provides a framework within which these opportunities may be realized as effortlessly as possible. The system is predicated on the idea that decisions should be made that offer the best possible outcome relative to our vision and goals for the district. These decisions should be based on thoughtfulness and research, not merely the repetition of previous models. And further, the implementation of these decisions should be incentivized. It should be easy to do things, build things, and make things that align with the goals of the district. And the elements that make up the district; the regulations, infrastructure, transportation, and others, should facilitate this process.

We believe that Innovation Square is the environment in which the elements of research converge with the elements of everyday life to provide an incomparable place to create.