



## 2018-2019 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal

Proposal Instructions: The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund Proposal (this document) must be completed by the governmental entity applying for the grant and signed by either the chief elected official, the administrator for the governmental entity or their designee. Please read the proposal carefully as some questions may require a separate narrative to be completed. If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.

### Governmental Entity Information

Name of Governmental Entity: Columbia County

Government Federal Employer Identification Number: [REDACTED]

Primary Contact Name: Glenn Hunter

Title: Director of Economic Development

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### Public Infrastructure Grant Eligibility

Pursuant to section 228.101, F.S., the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was created to promote economic opportunity by improving public infrastructure and enhancing workforce training. Eligible entities that wish to access this grant fund must submit public infrastructure proposals that:

- Promote economic recovery in specific regions of the state, economic diversification or economic enhancement in a targeted industry ([View Florida's Targeted Industries here](#)).
- Are not for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation or business entity.
- Are for infrastructure that is owned by the public and is for public use or predominately benefits the public.

**1. Program Requirements:**

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

Each proposal must include the following information describing how the project satisfies eligibility requirements listed on page 1.

**A. Provide a detailed description of the public infrastructure improvements.**

Construction of 0.5mgd wastewater treatment plant serving NFMIP; the North central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity Catalyst site and eastern Columbia County. - Please see Narrative 1.A.

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**B. Provide location of public infrastructure, including physical address and county of project.**

Project is located in the NFMIP at 5994 E US Hwy US 90, approximately 3 miles east of Lake City. The Parkway will replace existing County road, Tyre Road - Please see Attachment A.I. and A.II.

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**C. Is this infrastructure currently owned by the public?**  Yes  No

If no, is there a current option to purchase or right of way provided to the County?

The land and easements for the Wastewater Treatment Plant will be donated to the County by Weyerhaeuser and it will connect to existing City collection lines . - Please see Narrative 1.C.

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**D. Provide current property owner.**

Columbia County and Weyerhaeuser Company

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**E. Is this infrastructure for public use or does it predominately benefit the public?**

Yes  No

The Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) will service not only the NFMIP but also rural areas of Columbia County east of Lake City.

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**F. Will the public infrastructure improvements be for the exclusive benefit of any single company, corporation or business entity?**

Yes  No

The Wastewater Treatment Plant provides a regional benefit through economic development efforts to bring targeted industries to the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) Catalyst site and the NFMIP and by providing additional wastewater treatment capacity to development areas throughout the county - Please see Narrative 1.G.

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**G. Provide a detailed description of, and quantitative evidence demonstrating, how the proposed public infrastructure project will promote:**

- Economic recovery in specific regions of the state;
- Economic diversification; or
- Economic enhancement of a Targeted Industry ([View Florida's Targeted Industries here](#)).
  - Describe how the project will promote specific job growth. Include the number of jobs that will be retained or created, and in which industry(ies) the new net jobs will be created using the North American Industry Classification System ([NAICS](#)) codes. Where applicable, you may list specific businesses that will retain or create jobs or make capital investment.
  - Provide a detailed explanation of how the public infrastructure improvements will connect to a broader economic development vision for the community and benefit additional current or future businesses.

This project provides both economic diversification to the North Central Florida region and enhancements to targeted industries. In a RAO that has been heavy in silviculture and agriculture, this projects attracts advanced manufacturing. - Please see Narrative 1.G.

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## **2. Additional Information:**

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

**A. Provide the proposed commencement date and number of days required to complete construction of the public infrastructure project.**

The Wastewater Treatment Plant will take 6 to 9 months to design and permit, 3 months for bidding and 12 months for construction.

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**B. What permits are necessary for the public infrastructure project?**

The WWTP will require an NPDES permit from DEP for the construction and discharge of the plant and a Water Management ERP permit.

- C. Detail whether required permits have been secured, and if not, detail the timeline for securing these permits. Additionally, if any required permits are local permits, will these permits be prioritized?

No permits have been secured for the WWTP. We estimate 6 to 9 months to design and permit. No local permits needed.

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- D. What is the future land use and zoning designation on the proposed site of the infrastructure improvements, and will the improvements conform to those uses?

Mixed Use Development/Conservation Future Land Use Map Designation and Mixed Use Development-Intermodal ("MUD-I")/Conservation Zoning Designation. The project conforms.

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- E. Will an amendment to the local comprehensive plan or a development order be required on the site of the proposed project or on adjacent property to accommodate the infrastructure and potential current or future job creation opportunities? If yes, please detail the timeline.

Yes  No

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- F. Is the project ready to commence upon grant fund approval and contract execution? If no, please explain.

Yes  No

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- G. Does this project have a local match amount?

Yes  No

If yes, please describe the entity providing the match and the amount.

Weyerhaeuser will donate the land and easements for the property valued at over \$1,500,000. Additional match information in narrative. - Please see Narrative 3.C.

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- H. Provide any additional information or attachments to be considered for this proposal. Maps and other supporting documents are encouraged.

Attachment A - Maps,  
 Attachment B - Targeted Industries,  
 Attachment C - Letters of Support and  
 Attachment D - Approvals and Authority

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### 3. Program Budget

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

**Estimated Costs and Sources of Funding:** Include all applicable public infrastructure costs and other funding sources available to support the proposal.

1.) **Total Amount Requested**      \$ 10,000,000  
 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

**A. Other Workforce Training Project Funding Sources:**

City/County                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Private Sources                \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other (grants, etc.)            \$ \_\_\_\_\_                      Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total Other Funding**        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Public Infrastructure Project Funding Sources:**

Construction                    \$ 821,900  
 Reconstruction                \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Design & Engineering        \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Land Acquisition               \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Land Improvement             \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other                                \$ 2,000,000 - Land, ROW                      Please Specify: Donation  
**Total Project Costs**           \$ 12,821,900

**Note:** The total amount requested must equal the difference between the workforce training project costs in 3. and the other Public infrastructure project funding sources in 2.

- C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding and any other pertinent budget-related information.

The above budget reflects only the cost of constructing a WWTP. Local matching funds for construction will be budgeted in future fiscal years after the completion of the design and permitting. It does not include the existing financial commitment by Weyerhaeuser, the State of Florida and the County on the NFMIP and the NCF RAO Catalyst Site. Please see Project Narrative 3.C.

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#### 4. Approvals and Authority

(If additional space is needed, attach a word document with your entire answer.)

- A. If the governmental entity is awarded grant funds based on this proposal, what approvals must be obtained before it can execute a grant agreement with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (e.g., approval of a board, commission or council)?

A grant award and match will only need the approval of the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners.

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If board authorization is not required, who is authorized to sign?

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- B. If approval of a board, commission, council or other group is needed prior to execution of an agreement between the governmental entity and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity:

- i. Provide the schedule of upcoming meetings for the group for a period of at least six months.
- ii. State whether entity is willing and able to hold special meetings, and if so, upon how many days' notice.

The County Commissioners meet the first and third Thursdays of every month. The Chair of the Board can call a special meeting with 72 hours notice.

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- C. Attach evidence that the undersigned has all necessary authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the governmental entity. This evidence may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a delegation of authority, citation to relevant laws or codes, policy documents, etc.

See Attachment D - Approvals and Authority

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I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have express authority to sign this proposal on behalf of the above-described entity and to the best of my knowledge, that all data and information submitted in proposal is truthful and accurate and no material fact has been omitted.

Name of Governmental Entity: Columbia County

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: Tim Murphy, Chairman

Representative Signature: *Tim Murphy*

Signature Date: August 13, 2014

## 1. Program Requirements

### A. Detailed Description of the Public Infrastructure Improvements

Columbia County requests Florida Job Growth Fund grant to construct a wastewater treatment facility that will serve the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity's (NCF RAO) 500-acre Catalyst Site, the North Florida Mega Industrial Park (NFMIP), and economic development target areas in eastern Columbia County, including the Lake City Gateway Airport and Florida Gateway College. The Florida Job Growth Grant funding sought under this application would fund the construction of a scalable 500,000 gallon per day wastewater treatment plant.

This grant creates a tremendous opportunity for potential growth for the North Central Florida region's manufacturing sector by making the NFMIP and the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) Catalyst site construction ready. The County has begun the project to construct the rail spur to the site and is completing the engineering with Weyerhaeuser on the second and third rail segments. These sites within the NFMIP already have access to water, gas and electricity. However, the City has recognized that the existing wastewater collections system has older segments that constrict the flow between the NFMIP and the City's current wastewater treatment plants. These bottlenecks limit the future growth east of Lake City by capping the amount of wastewater that can reach the current treatment plants

This Florida Job Growth Fund project application will place accessible and scalable wastewater treatment on site and create access into the park's developable sites. This application reflects a partnership between the City of Lake City and Columbia County, along with the landowner Weyerhaeuser, to provide a comprehensive wastewater solution that advances economic growth within the eastern portion of the county. It represent a solution that readies the NFMIP as well as accommodate growth within the eastern portion of the county.

**Goal:** As a joint effort between Columbia County and the City of Lake City, construct a wastewater treatment facility to provide needed wastewater capacity to the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) Catalyst site, the NFMIP, two corrections facilities, the Florida Gateway Airport, Florida Gateway College and additional identified economic development sites east of Lake City. Previous plans for sewer to the NFMIP provided short term solutions by upsizing existing wastewater collection lines in an effort to pump the effluent to the aging WWTP across town. Under this application, the City and County would provide a long term growth solution for the NFMIP and the adjacent development areas by providing on site treatment capacity. The County will design and build a scalable wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) which will start treating 500,000 gallons per day and increase in capacity at 250,000 gallon increments to meet the demands of new industry. The County will build the plant and the City of Lake City will own, operate and maintain the facility. The City will connect

the WWTP to the existing City owned wastewater collections system and will divert flow of the collections system to the new WWTP to create additional treatment capacity for economic development projects in the area. This also allows the WWTP to be operational and functioning from the day of completion, enabling existing businesses to expand.

### **C. Is the Infrastructure Currently Owned by the Public?**

Weyerhaeuser has committed to donate land for the wastewater treatment plant and additional County ROW and drainage easements. Upon completion, Columbia County will transfer ownership of all public utilities to the City of Lake City, who will own, operate and maintain all wastewater facilities.

### **G. Economic Enhancement of a Target Industry**

#### **Improvements Promote Economic Recovery, Economic Diversification, or Economic Enhancement of a Target Industries**

Construction of a wastewater treatment plant supports the development of the NFMIP which totals more than 2,600 acres to include the State of Florida's designated 500-acre NCF RAO *Catalyst Site* for a 14-county region. The NCF RAO has a long history of being known as a "wood basket" which means silviculture (forestry) has been the mainstay industry. The growing, harvesting and processing of timber into an array of manufactured products has over a 100-year history in the region. Although the timber industry has served the region well, diversification in Advanced Manufacturing is the key to a significant economic impact on the region. As you can see from the attached Enterprise Florida's *Qualified Targeted Industries* fact sheet, the diversification of potential manufacturing sectors is virtually endless at the NFMIP due to the available acreage and infrastructure. The project will enhance the recruitment of any number of the industry sectors listed and increase Florida's competitiveness with other states for these projects. Typically, these projects range from 500 to 4,000 new jobs. The advanced manufacturing job sectors identified by Enterprise Florida are covered in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) in Codes 311–339. **(Please see Attachment B.I. Enterprise Florida - Qualified Targeted Industry Fact Sheet and Attachment B.II. NAICS CODES.)**

Wastewater Treatment Facilities

The State of Florida has designated Columbia County as an Economically Distressed Rural County and included the County within the NCF RAO. The United States federal government recently confirmed that census tract 1103 in Columbia County is now a Florida Opportunity Zone and, the NFMIP sits within this Zone. Opportunity Zones are low-income areas which provide tax incentives to encourage investment through job growth. The surrounding region is also primarily rural and economically distressed. This project will improve the road infrastructure into the NFMIP enabling the development of manufacturing in this primarily rural agricultural region. Governor Scott and the legislature have demonstrated a commitment to increasing the manufacturing sector and Enterprise Florida has placed Advanced Manufacturing as a crosscutting strategy across all of its industries targeted for growth through recruitment, expansion, and business retention.

According to State demographic data, most of the counties in the region have poverty levels higher than the State average and have lower educational attainment:

	<b>% HS Graduate</b>	<b>% Bachelor or Higher</b>	<b>% Work Outside County of Residence</b>	<b>% in Poverty</b>
Florida	86.90	27.30	17.50	15.80
Baker	81.70	11.50	53.10	16.80
Bradford	76.50	10.90	58.40	21.30
Citrus	86.60	16.90	22.30	17.50
Columbia	85.70	15.10	24.30	19.70
Dixie	78.80	7.90	26.60	29.30
Glichrist	82.90	11.40	61.20	19.20
Hamilton	73.70	9.90	32.10	31.80
Jefferson	79.90	18.50	60.70	19.40
Lafayette	75.50	11.60	41.20	23.80
Levy	81.50	10.90	50.60	22.10
Madison	82.00	11.30	30.40	27.00
Putnam	78.50	11.80	30.30	27.30
Suwannee	78.80	11.60	34.80	23.60
Taylor	76.30	9.00	11.60	21.20
Union	74.10	7.80	50.30	26.20
2015 Data from NFEDP/ Florida Legislature Office of Economic and demographic Research				

## Connects to Broader Economic Development Vision

The 2,622-acre NFMIP is located east of Lake City, comprising three miles of roadway frontage along U.S. Highway 90, adjacent to Florida Gateway College and Lake City Gateway Airport. Within the NFMIP is one of four state-designated *Catalyst Sites*. Florida Statute (2)(b) states: “*Catalyst site* means a parcel or parcels of land within a rural area of opportunity that has been prioritized as a geographic site for economic development through partnerships with state, regional, and local organizations. The state’s prioritization of this site alone should emphasize the need to fund Segment I of the NFMIP Parkway which will complete the necessary transportation infrastructure to facilitate the development of the NCF RAO Catalyst Site.

The growth of manufacturing in Florida represents one of the most impactful opportunities to expand the state’s economy. Columbia County, along with the North Central Florida region, is poised to support such growth through its location and through its asset, the NFMIP. The NFMIP, a Weyerhaeuser owned site, is a Certified Mega Industrial Park by McCallum Sweeney that contains the 500-acre Catalyst Site which is a *Certified CSX Select Site*. These certifications confirm that engineering analysis, environmental studies, wetland delineation, and other necessary due diligence has been completed for the entire NFMIP and the *Catalyst Site* - serving notice that it is ready for Industrial Development. The NCF RAO *Catalyst Site* is also a state-designated Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) under the JAXPORT Foreign Trade Zone #64. Additionally, NFMIP has Memorandums of Understanding with Columbia County, JAXPORT and Port Tampa Bay, which commits all parties to make a concerted, cooperative effort to make best use of this prized designation. This combination of certifications, due diligence, and entitlements allows the State of Florida and the Columbia County Economic Development Department to stimulate economic growth and investment through creative incentives and tax advantages to bring jobs to rural North Florida through the NFMIP.

Currently, manufacturing comprises just 4.2 percent of total employment in Florida, which ranks 44th in the nation in its share of industry jobs. However, Governor Scott and the legislature have demonstrated a commitment to increasing the manufacturing sector as Enterprise Florida has placed Advanced Manufacturing as a crosscutting strategy across all of its industries targeted for growth through recruitment, expansion, and business retention. For every \$1 spent in manufacturing, \$1.81 is returned to the economy. This is the highest multiplier effect of any economic sector. In addition, for every one worker in manufacturing, there are another four employees hired in other ancillary activities.

In Florida, according to a 2016 report, there are an estimated 19,613 manufacturing establishments employing 342,458 people, or 4.1 percent of the State's workforce. More importantly, the average annual wages of the workforce employed in manufacturing is \$53,500, which is among the highest of all industries state-wide.<sup>1</sup> The Economic Policy Institute, in its report, "The Manufacturing Footprint and the Importance of U.S. Manufacturing Jobs," notes that the manufacturing sector's wage premium is a clear path to the middle class.

In Columbia County, however, the manufacturing wage hovers around \$46,000, demonstrating the need for additional market share in the county and the region.<sup>2</sup> Leveraging logistical strengths, available land, and a labor force of more than 1,200,000 within a one-hour drive, the NFMIP increases the state's competitiveness in the manufacturing sector and offers promise in a rural region that has a need for additional employment. The region includes the 14-county North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity.

The NFMIP is one of the few viable sites within all of Florida which has the potential to recruit a *Catalyst Project* of such great magnitude as an auto assembly plant. Florida has a readily available market of almost 20 million people and other major markets within an eight hour driving range. Florida Statute 288.0656(2)(a) states: "*Catalyst Project*" means a business locating or expanding in a rural area of opportunity to serve as an economic generator of regional significance for the growth of a regional target industry cluster. The project must provide capital investment on a scale significant enough to affect the entire region and result in the development of high-wage and high-skill jobs." The NFMIP with NCF RAO Catalyst Site was designated due to the fact that there is enough acreage, two Interstate highways, water, wastewater, high-capacity electric power, natural gas, two major telecommunication carriers' fiber optic lines, two Class I railroads, an airport with an 8,000-ft. runway to accommodate freight or corporate planes, and an adjacent community college for workforce training needs.

As mentioned above, the NCF RAO Catalyst Site is certified as a *CSX Select Site*. The NFMIP is only one of two sites in the State of Florida in very close proximity to two Class I rail lines (CSX and Norfolk Southern). CSX's main east/west freight line, serving Jacksonville, Florida to New Orleans, Louisiana, is located immediately north of the NFMIP and NCF RAO Catalyst Site and will soon have direct access by a County owned rail spur. This CSX freight line connects the entire CSX system serving the eastern seaboard east of the Mississippi River. The Norfolk Southern point of terminus in Florida is within one mile of the NFMIP. The Norfolk Southern rail system serves the eastern seaboard and two states west of the Mississippi River.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.floridajobs.org/REDI/Rural%20Manufacturing%20Study%20v3.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> StatsAmerica County Profile

CSX *Select Sites* are the first, premium certified rail-served sites for industrial development and expansion. CSX is currently marketing the NFMIP site on their **CSX Site Select** website: <https://www.csx.com/index.cfm/customers/industrial-development/search-property-types/csx-select-sites/detail/?i=F406DBE8-B01C-4C61-BFC9DF566EA6F564>

Funding for the wastewater treatment plant would finalize the necessary infrastructure and enhance the marketability of the state designated *Catalyst Site and the NFMIP*.

Additionally, Florida Gateway College is in the process of developing two new workforce training certification programs, which will create a pipeline of a talented workforce certified in auto mechanics and/or aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul certifications. Both certifications would support an auto assembly plant, aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities (MRO) and other maintenance and manufacturing facilities. MRO skills easily transfer and overlap automotive mechanic skills and advanced manufacturing skill needs.

A strong example of the extraordinary economic impact the NFMIP can make is the success the same landowner, Weyerhaeuser, had in South Carolina. The investment Weyerhaeuser has made in the NFMIP to ready the site for industry development represents the same steps taken for a site the company co-owned in Berkeley, SC. That site is now the home to Volvo's first manufacturing plant in the U.S. Initially Volvo was to invest \$500 million to build this plant and hire 4,000 employees, but it announced on September 25, 2017 that it's increasing its investment to \$1 billion and will hire an additional 1,900 employees. That is a \$1 billion investment, which will employ nearly 6,000 employees at build-out – not counting the supporting service industries' jobs. The work done to ready the NFMIP is the same work, which was done for the SC land. That is the opportunity this site brings to the region and state; a tremendous asset to compete for such an industry at the international level.

<http://www.wyff4.com/article/volvo-cars-expanding-sc-plant-investment-to-dollar1-billion/12463332>

NFMIP's accessibility to Florida's extensive port system compliments Governor Scott's investment of more than \$10 billion into state ports to support the growth of international trade. This policy is dependent not only on increasing imports, but more importantly, on increasing the number of Florida-made products that can be exported.

**(Please See Attachment A. Maps)**

Florida Power & Light (FPL), another partner of the NFMIP, serves the project with both distribution lines and a 115 kV transmission line. FPL is currently constructing a 38.5-mile, 230 kV transmission line to run within the same right of way as the 115 kV

transmission line. This is part of FPL's significant capital investments in its electrical system to help the company provide affordable, reliable and clean energy to its 4.9 million customers. The Duval - Raven project includes construction of a new 230 kV to 115 kV transmission substation near the North Florida Mega Industrial Park. Total estimated cost of the project is \$70-75 million. This project provides new availability of power at transmission level voltage at 230 kV, in addition to the currently available 115 kV and 13 kV. This significantly enhances the utility infrastructure and power availability for large industry that may locate at NFMIP. This significant existing and proposed electrical infrastructure is yet another asset for the NFMIP and the NCF RAO *Catalyst Site*.

Manufacturing in rural Florida remains an under-realized opportunity, but the NFMIP, and RAO Catalyst Site within the NFMIP, offers enormous opportunity to spur a rising rural economy and jobs for Columbia County, the 14 counties within the NCF RAO, and the entire State of Florida. The Florida Job Growth Grant funding sought under this application provides access to the interior of the NFMIP, making additional acreage shovel ready for industrial development and creating opportunity for growth for the North Central Florida region's manufacturing sector.

## Benefits Current and Future Businesses

The construction of the WWTP not only benefits the NFMIP and the catalyst site, it will provide additional wastewater capacity for existing and future businesses in other targeted development areas. This comprehensive solution points towards the partnership between the City of Lake City and Columbia County and, our collective efforts to support job growth in a significant way. The City of Lake City has concerns that their existing sewer collection lines may not have the capacity based upon their day-to-day operational observations. The City believes there are size restrictions between their existing wastewater treatment plant on St Margaret's Street and the key development areas identified in the Rudder Study and the Economic Development Strategic Plan. These restrictions limit the City's ability to provide wastewater treatment to the North Central Rural Area of Opportunity Columbia County Catalyst Site located at the North Florida Mega Industrial Park, the Bell Road Corridor, two corrections institutions, Florida Gateway College, and the Airport Industrial Park. With the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund's assistance, the City and the County will locate a new WWTP in the eastern part of the county, on the NFMIP site. This site will serve the Park and other areas of the county where meaningful job growth is occurring. This project will help the County's Economic Development Department's current efforts with Project 18-10, a manufacturing facility which will locate in the NFMIP and create 30 high wage jobs.

As part of the project, the City will divert flow from selected economic development areas to the new WWTP, freeing capacity at the current city-owned facilities, and avoiding the overtaxing of the wastewater collection lines in the older sections of the City. This additional capacity will allow for growth in existing businesses and the capacity for new employment growth. For example, Columbia County's Economic Development Department is working with Project 18-6 which is a \$30 million capital investment project with plans to construct a 100,000 square foot facility and create 75 high wage, high demand jobs at the Bell Road Corridor. The company is a Transportation Logistics Targeted Industry that will acquire 50 acres near I-10, US 41 and US 441, in an economically distressed area. The City will limit additional related industry adjacent to Project 18-6 due to these restrictions without the creation of additional capacity throughout the wastewater system.

Similarly, the City's Utility Director has identified the area near the NFMIP, Lake City Gateway Airport, and Florida Gateway College, as facing the same limitations with the wastewater collection lines due to growth around these developing properties. The City has prioritized the Airport for development due to the aviation targeted industries by the state and EFI. Both the City and County maintain industrial parks adjacent to the airport, but without an adequate and reliable wastewater treatment plant and collections system, existing key employers, such as Florida Gateway College, HAECO, Cold

Storage, Homes of Merit, Hunter Panels, the Department of Corrections and others have limited growth potential. However, because of their proximity to the site, flow from these industries would be redirected to the WWTP constructed with the Florida Jobs Growth Fund.

## **2. Additional Information:**

### **D. Future Land Use and Zoning: Please see Attachment A: VII. Statement of Land Use and Zoning letter, Future Land Use and Zoning maps.**

The Wastewater Treatment Plant will be located in the North Florida Mega Industrial Park. The Industrial Park is located in an unincorporated area of Columbia County, just outside Lake City's city limits. The North Florida Mega Industrial Park, has a Mixed Use Development and Conservation Future Land Use Map Designation and a Mixed Use Development-Intermodal ("MUD-I") and Conservation Zoning Designation. The Industrial Park conforms with these designations.

### **G. Grant Match Consideration**

Columbia County is requesting \$10,000,000 to construct the wastewater treatment plant. The County will provide a match of \$821,900. Weyerhaeuser will provide a match in the form of \$1,500,000 in land for the WWTP and \$500,000 in dedicated easements and property beyond the existing County rights-of-way.

It is extremely important to take note of the ongoing investment by Columbia County, Weyerhaeuser, and the State of Florida. As of July 2017, Weyerhaeuser's investment has exceeded \$4,120,500 which includes costs associated with the land-use, zoning, permitting, negotiating the rail spur easement, securing the Foreign Trade Zone and Inland Port designations (which entailed expensive and lengthy third-party site due diligence), trade and economic studies and marketing of the greater Columbia County region. Weyerhaeuser is currently marketing the Park, Columbia County, and the North Central Florida Region on a national level, in partnership with Columbia County, Enterprise Florida, CSX and FPL. Weyerhaeuser has conducted the environmental studies, surveys, preliminary design work and many other studies to acquire the McCallum Sweeny and CSX Select Site certification. The company negotiated a land swap with the U.S. Forestry Service to acquire the required right-of-way for the rail spur crossing U.S. Forestry land.

Columbia County and the North Florida Economic Development Partnership have continued to seek funding to achieve shovel-ready status. The State of Florida has invested in the NFMIP project. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity twice awarded the NFMIP project a \$300,000 grant; one for a feasibility study and a second

for the design work related to rail for a total of \$600,000. In addition, The State through the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund has provided \$3,135,600 to extend a rail spur to the NFMIP site.

This public private partnership has produced a certified industrial park, poised for development that will benefit the North Florida Region while allowing Florida to compete nationally for major economic projects. Considerable monies have been spent after the *Catalyst Site* designation in 2004 to bring these 2,622 acres from agriculture/silviculture use to an industrial site that can accommodate major industry and is certified shovel-ready. This Mega Industrial Site has become a prime location for economic development for this 14-county region. It's come so far but it needs the road improvement, the wastewater capacity and stormwater improvements to cross over the finish line.

#### **H. Additional Information**

As long ago as 2004, the site preparation and marketing were addressed by the State of Florida, but due to the number of hurricanes in 2004 and 2005, funding was not available. Then with the downturn of the real estate market and the 2008 recession, funds continued to be scarce. This is an excerpt from the first Columbia County \$300,000 Rural Infrastructure Fund application memorandum dated May 11, 2009 recommending the award. Note: RAOs were formerly known as RACECs.

“The Rural Economic Development Catalyst Projects are focused on targeting tomorrow’s most promising industries to create new high value-added jobs, capital investment, and an economic benefit that will ripple throughout each Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC). Florida’s rural areas have experienced comparatively strong population and employment growth, but still have higher poverty rates and lower income levels. The Catalyst Projects, through higher wages and increased levels of economic activity, will help income levels in the rural areas converge towards higher state and national averages. The Project was conceived to implement the Rural Priority of the 2004 Statewide Strategic Plan for Economic Development.

At the 2004 Florida Regional Economic Development Summit was held in 2004 a Seven-Point Plan was developed which addresses the economic development issues of the three RACECs designated by Executive Order. During the 2005 Legislative Session, the Legislature appropriated \$2 million to implement the Strategic Rural Marketing Priority of the Seven-Point Plan and the 2004 Statewide Strategic Plan for Economic Development, as a critical economic

stimulus for the three RACECs. After the 2005 Session through calendar year 2008, additional forums were held to: create a process that encourages participation of all RACEC Counties; evaluate what a Regional Catalyst project should look like; identify target industries; and select a single catalytic site that would benefit the entire Region.

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) agencies were engaged in briefings and discussions of proposed target industries, sites, and marketing opportunities in 2006 and 2007. The purpose of the meetings with the REDI agencies was to raise the awareness of the potential financial need for infrastructure improvements, the potential for modification of policy requirements to support development of a regional site, and to ensure that any selected site would be permissible. Memoranda of Agreement were also signed by local governments to demonstrate commitment to the selected Catalyst Sites and to outline the distribution of project revenues throughout the Region.

North Central RACEC comprised of fourteen counties identified two catalyst sites for their Region because of the large number of counties. One of the top two sites selected was the Plum Creek Property\*, a green space of approximately 500 acres, located in Columbia County. The catalyst site is ideal because of its central location within the RACEC, road and rail accessibility, and the lack of critical zoning or environmental impediments. However, the region would be unable to absorb the cost of adding the infrastructure necessary to make the Catalyst Site competitively marketable to targeted industries without the REDI agencies' assistance.”

*\*Plum Creek merged with Weyerhaeuser in February 2016*

After thorough review of the most recent demographic information, the Rural Economic Development Initiative determined and recommended the 14-county region should be re-designated for another 5-year term as a Rural Area of Opportunity. Please see attached Executive Order 18-158 signed by the Governor June 11, 2018.

Most federal and state grant funding sources require a specific company to commit to a certain number of jobs in order to receive grant funding for infrastructure. As one of three state designated Rural Areas of Opportunity, the region and County have limited resources and cannot finance this project alone. The Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund is specifically designed to fund infrastructure improvements to benefit multiple companies. This request for funds includes the site preparation, mobilization and construction of Segment 1 of the NFMIP Parkway with the stormwater management facility that will open up access into the catalyst site. The NFMIP and NCF RAO Catalyst Site is a prime example of a quality public-private partnership, where the work completed will benefit the rural North Florida Region while allowing the State of Florida to competently compete for major economic projects.

### 3. Program Budget:

#### C. Detailed Budget Narrative:

Columbia County is requesting \$\$10,000,000 from the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund with a match of \$821,900 in local funds and in-kind services as well as a \$2,000,000 donation of land, right of ways and easements. The Florida Job Growth Grant funding sought under this application would fund the construction of a 500,000 gallon per day wastewater treatment plant.

Weyerhaeuser's investment in the NFMIP has exceeded \$4,120,500 which includes costs associated with the land-use, zoning, permitting, negotiating the rail spur easement, securing the Foreign Trade Zone and Inland Port designations (which entailed expensive and lengthy third-party site due diligence), trade and economic studies and marketing of the greater Columbia County region. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity twice awarded the project a \$300,000 grant; one for a feasibility study and a second for the rail engineering and design work (Rail Segment 3) for a total of \$600,000. The private funds have also included 90% of the design work needed to construct Segment 1 of the NFMIP Parkway. In addition, The State has provided \$3,135,600 to extend a rail spur to this site (Rail Segment 1).

The NFMIP partnership, through investments of both time and money, has already completed the following design components, due diligence, and coordination for the NFMIP:

- Master planning of the site;
- Transportation and rail access planning;
- Acquisition of the rail spur easement, held by Columbia County, from the U.S. Forest Service;
- Land-use amendments and mixed-use (including 8MM square feet of industrial) zoning approvals;
- Engineering design and final construction plans for NFMIP Rail Spur Segments 1, 2 and 3 which extend from the CSX main rail line into the NCF RAO *Catalyst Site*;
- Permitting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Suwannee River Water Management District for conceptual NFMIP build-out (including but not limited to stormwater facilities master plan, mass grading, and wetland delineation);
- Permitting with the Florida Department of Transportation for the At-grade rail crossing of U.S. Highway 90/State Road 10;
- Various studies for the NFMIP to ensure developable footprint(s), transportation access, and labor availability;

## Wastewater Treatment Facilities

- Utility infrastructure planning, geotechnical assessments and environmental audits;
- Certification processes with:
  - McCallum Sweeney for its Mega Industrial Site certification;
  - CSX for its *CSX Select Site certification* of the *Catalyst Site*;
- Creation of a Foreign Trade Zone (#64) with JAXPORT;
- Memorandums Of Understanding with JAXPORT and Port Tampa Bay;
- Marketing to attract employers to the site.

This grant creates the opportunity for potential growth for the North Central Florida region's manufacturing sector by making the NFMIP and the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) Catalyst site construction ready. These sites already have access to water, gas and electricity. The County has begun the project to construct the rail spur to the site and is completing the engineering with Weyerhaeuser on the second and third rail segments. Rail remains County owned and maintained infrastructure; the County will work on funding plans for the future segments as industry commits to the site. In addition, both the City and County will work on the internal infrastructure projects related to specific industrial projects as well as the future expansion of the wastewater treatment plant beyond the initial 0.5mgd.

This Florida Job Growth Fund project application will place accessible and scalable wastewater treatment on site and create access into the park's developable sites. This application reflects a partnership between the City of Lake City and Columbia County, along with the landowner Weyerhaeuser, to provide a comprehensive wastewater solution that advances economic growth within the eastern portion of the county. It represent a solution that readies the NFMIP as well as accommodate growth within the eastern portion of the county.

Because of this existing investment and commitment, upon grant award, Columbia County can move swiftly into finalizing the design and commencing construction of the WWTP. We anticipate design and permitting to begin immediately after execution of a contract agreement.

**Lake City/Columbia County Wastewater Treatment Plant**

Mott MacDonald has completed a detailed budget summarized below:

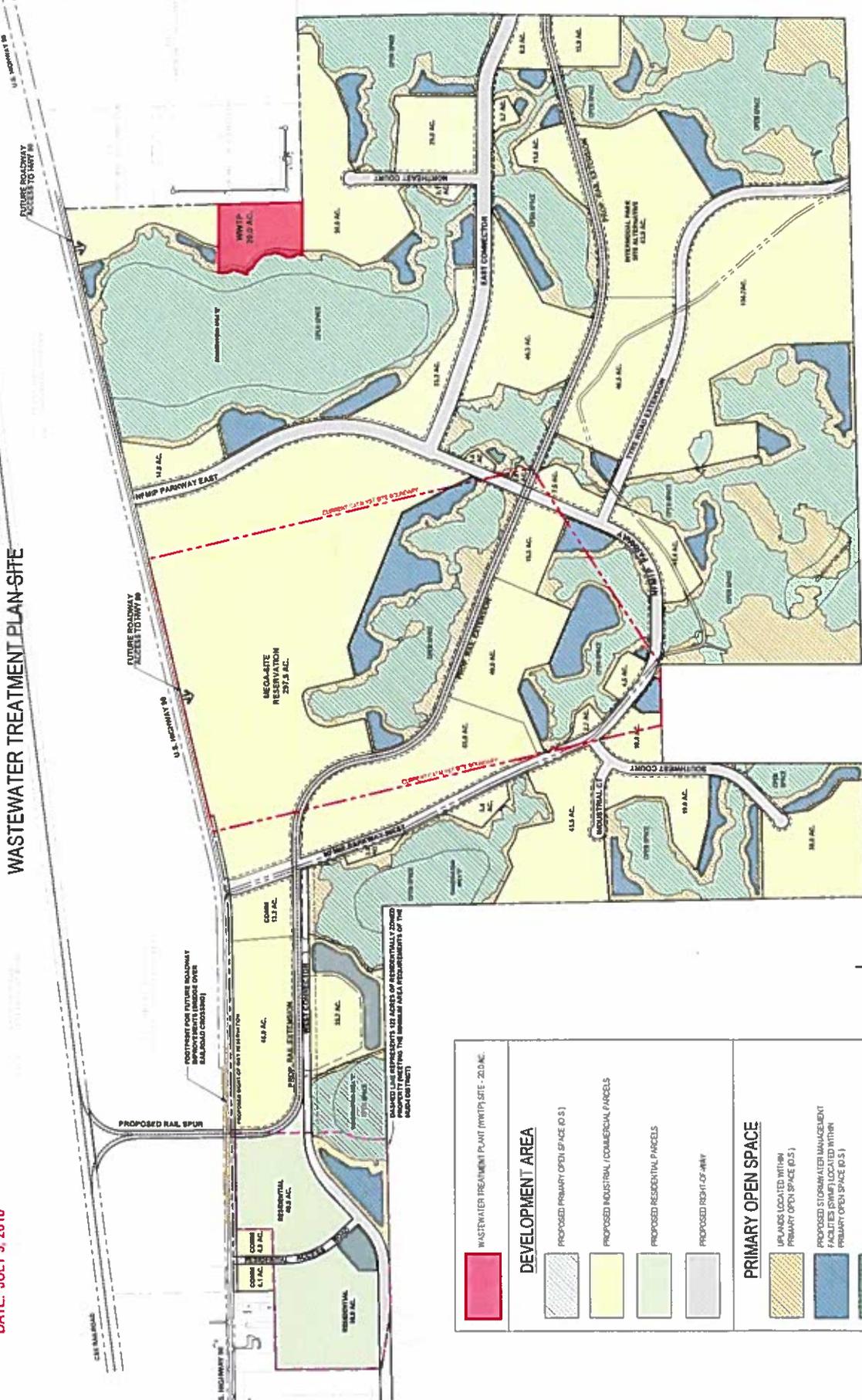
Summary of OPCC for 0.5 MGD WRF				
Description		Total Price	0.75 MGD	1.0 MGD
Headworks- Mechanical		\$350,000	\$175,000	\$175,000
Headworks- Structure		\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0
SBR & Post Eq. Tanks- Mechanical		\$500,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
SBR & Post Eq. Tanks- Structure		\$1,500,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
Sludge Dewatering - Mechanical		\$300,000	\$0	\$300,000
Sludge Dewatering - Building		\$200,000	\$0	\$0
Chlorine Contact Chamber		\$255,000	\$255,000	\$0
Digester		\$563,000	\$0	\$563,000
Generator and Pad		\$185,000	\$185,000	\$0
Pipe, Fittings, and Valves		\$400,000	\$132,000	\$132,000
Electrical Equipment		\$350,000	\$175,000	\$175,000
Site Development		\$200,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Subtotal		\$4,953,000	\$2,122,000	\$2,395,000
General Conditions, Bond and Insurance	7.5%	\$371,500	\$198,938	\$224,531
<b>CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL</b>		\$5,324,500	\$2,320,900	\$2,619,500
Allowance for effluent disposal (sprayfield)		\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
Contingency and engineering fees	30%	\$2,497,350	\$1,146,270	\$1,235,850
<b>TOTAL PROJECT ESTIMATE</b>		<b>\$10,821,900</b>	<b>\$4,967,200</b>	<b>\$5,355,400</b>

## **ATTACHMENT A**

- I. NFMIP Wastewater Treatment Plant Site**
- II. NFMIP Major Market Availability Maps (2)**
- III. NFMIP Transportation Corridors Map**
- IV. NFMIP Conceptual Development Plan**
- V. NFMIP Electric Utilities Map**
- VI. NFMIP Natural Gas Utility Map**
- VII. NFMIP Telecommunications Utility Map**
- VIII. NFMIP Water Utility Map**
- IX. NFMIP Wastewater Service Map**
- X. Statement of Land Use and Zoning letter, Future Land Use and Zoning Maps**

**PRELIMINARY - SUBJECT TO CHANGE**  
**DATE: JULY 9, 2018**

# NORTH FLORIDA MEGA INDUSTRIAL PARK WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLAN-SITE

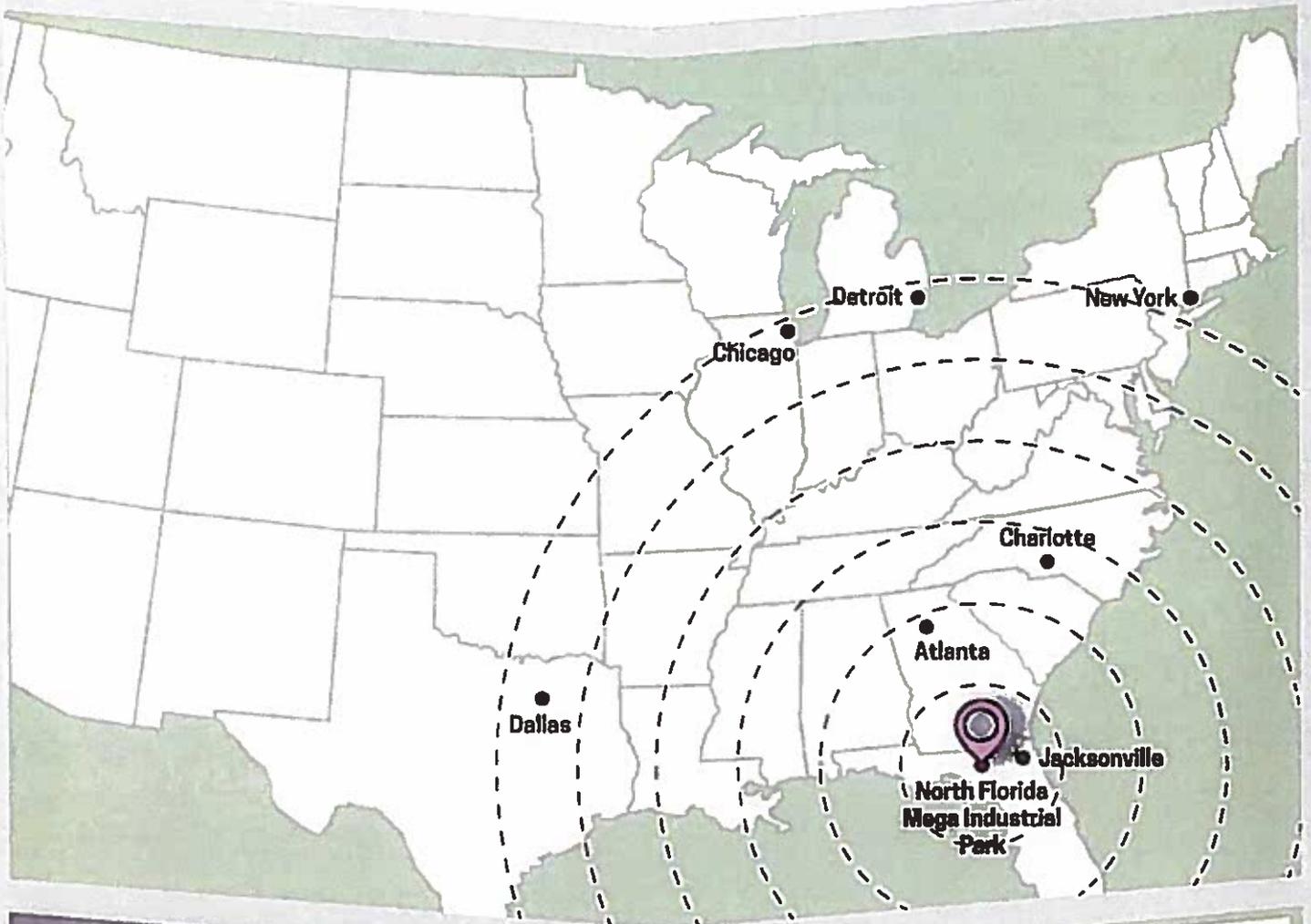


	WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTTP) SITE - 20.0 AC.
<b>DEVELOPMENT AREA</b>	
	PROPOSED PRIMARY OPEN SPACE (P.O.S.)
	PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL / COMMERCIAL PARCELS
	PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL PARCELS
	PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY
<b>PRIMARY OPEN SPACE</b>	
	UPLANDS LOCATED WITHIN PRIMARY OPEN SPACE (P.O.S.)
	PROPOSED STORAGE/HAZARD MANAGEMENT FACILITIES (S/HM) LOCATED WITHIN PRIMARY OPEN SPACE (P.O.S.)
	EXISTING WETLANDS TO BE PRESERVED WITHIN PRIMARY OPEN SPACE (P.O.S.)
	NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA RURAL AREA OF OPPORTUNITY (RAO) CATALYST SITE (CSX SELECT SITE)



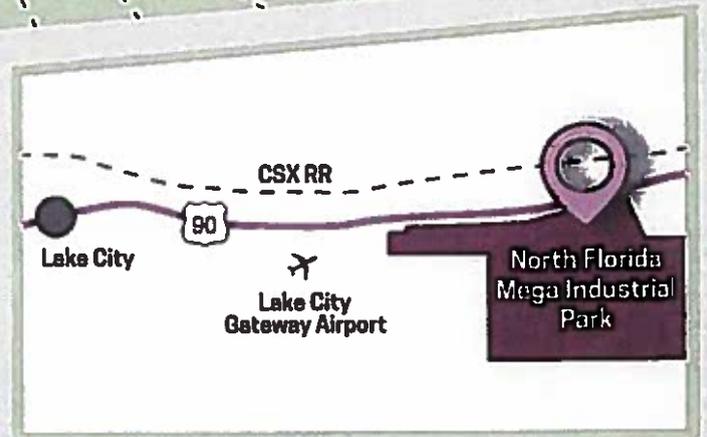


# North Florida Mega Industrial Park



## City / Miles / Kilometers / Hours by Truck

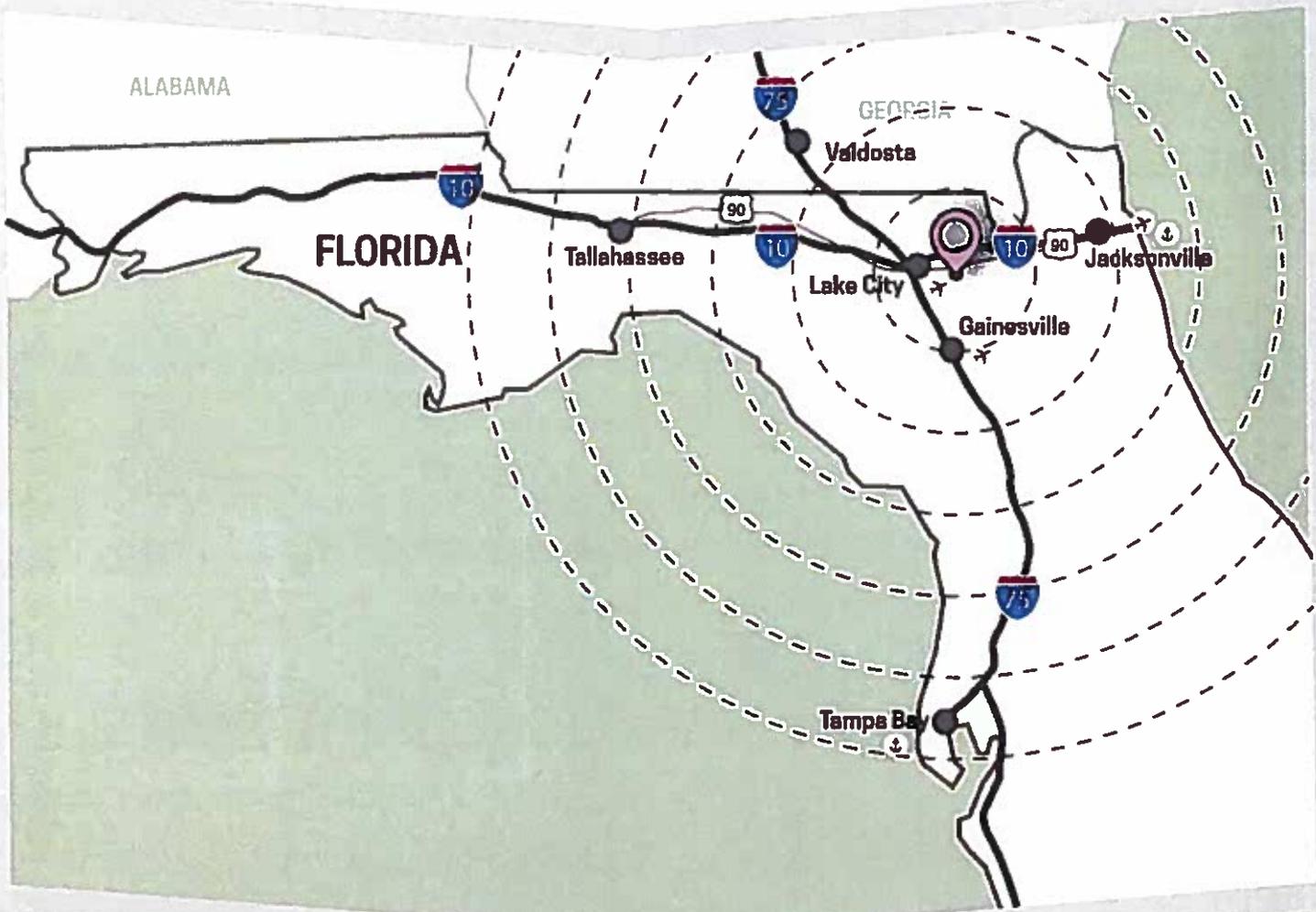
Atlanta, GA	207	334	2 hrs
Charlotte, NC	491	789	6.25 hrs
Chicago, IL	1,004	1,616	12.5 hrs
Dallas, TX	992	1,596	12.75 hrs
Detroit, MI	1,109	1,764	14 hrs
Jacksonville, FL	0	0	0 hrs
New York, NY	1,381	2,221	18 hrs



**North Florida Mega Industrial Park**  
[NorthFloridaMegaIndustrialPark.com](http://NorthFloridaMegaIndustrialPark.com)

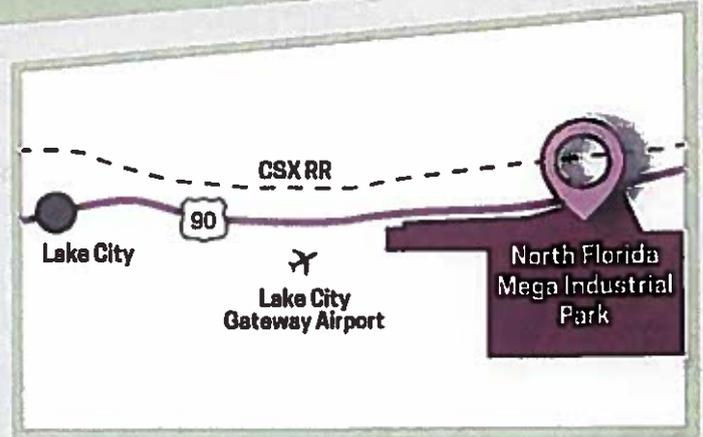


# North Florida Mega Industrial Park



### City / Miles / Kilometers / Hours by Truck

Atlanta, GA	287 mi / 462 km	4.4h
Gainesville, FL	50 mi / 81 km	1.0h
Jacksonville, FL	61 mi / 98 km	1.2h
Tallahassee, FL	108 mi / 174 km	1.5h
Valdosta, GA	124 mi / 200 km	1.7h
Jacksonville Port	74 mi / 119 km	1.1h
Port of Tampa Bay, FL	172 mi / 277 km	2.5h



**North Florida Mega Industrial Park**  
[NorthFloridaMegaIndustrialPark.com](http://NorthFloridaMegaIndustrialPark.com)



PRELIMINARY - SUBJECT TO CHANGE  
 DATE: AUGUST 10, 2017

# CONCEPTUAL MARKETING PLAN

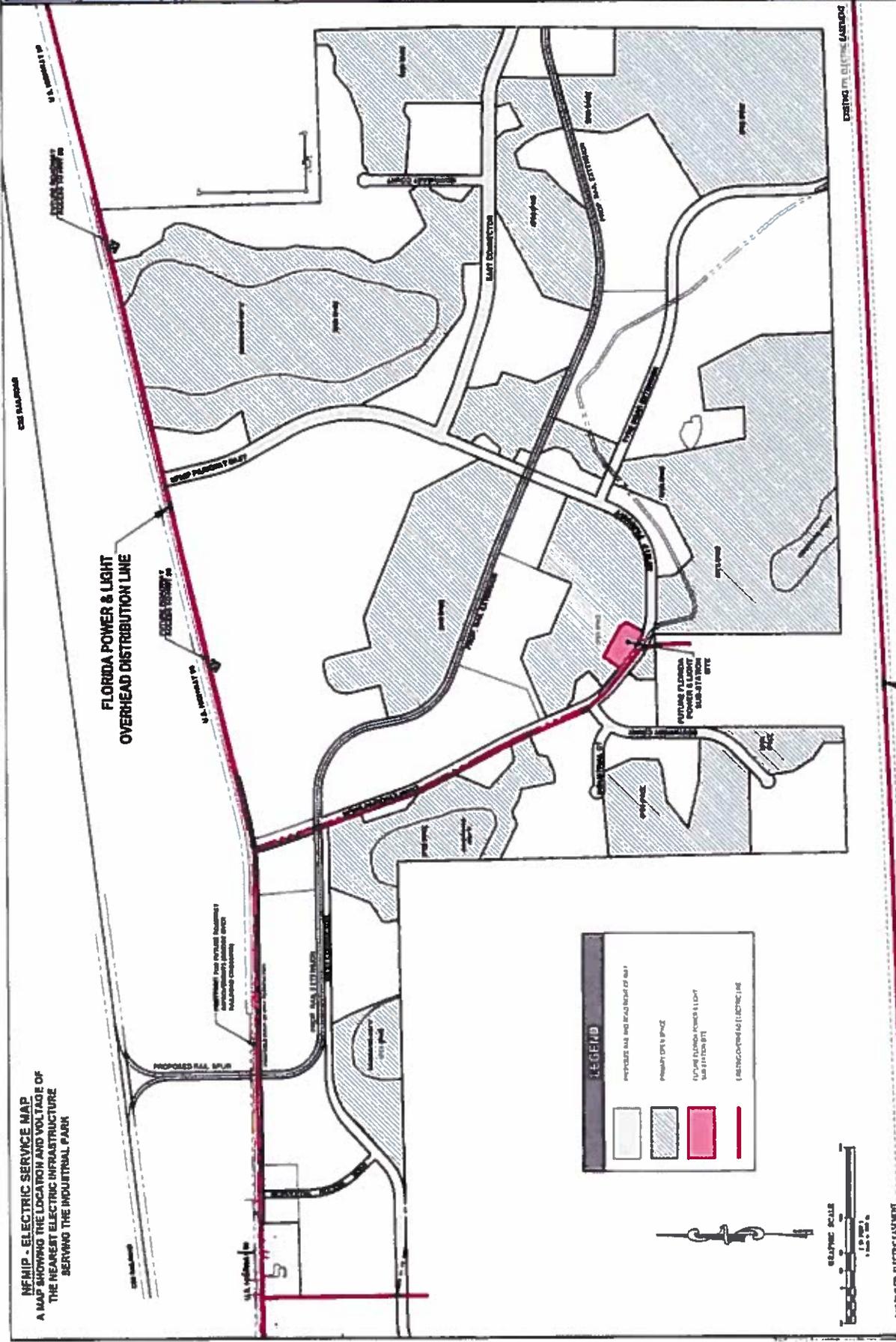
DATE: 8/10/17

DEVELOPMENT AREA	
	PROPOSED RESIDENT (OVER 50% OF S.I.)
	PROPOSED MIXED (RETAIL, COMMERCIAL, PARKS)
	PROPOSED RECREATION / FACILITIES
	PROPOSED ROAD OR AIR
PRIMARY OPEN SPACE	
	UNPAVED UNUTILIZED OPEN SPACE (OVER 50% OF S.I.)
	PROPOSED SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES (SPORT UTILIZED WITHIN RESIDENT OVER 50% OF S.I.)
	EXISTING UTILIZED TO BE PRESERVED WITHIN RESIDENT OVER 50% OF S.I.
	NON-DEVELOPABLE, FLOODPLAIN, AND/OR OTHER REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS (OVER 50% OF S.I.)



**North Florida  
 Mega Industrial  
 Park**

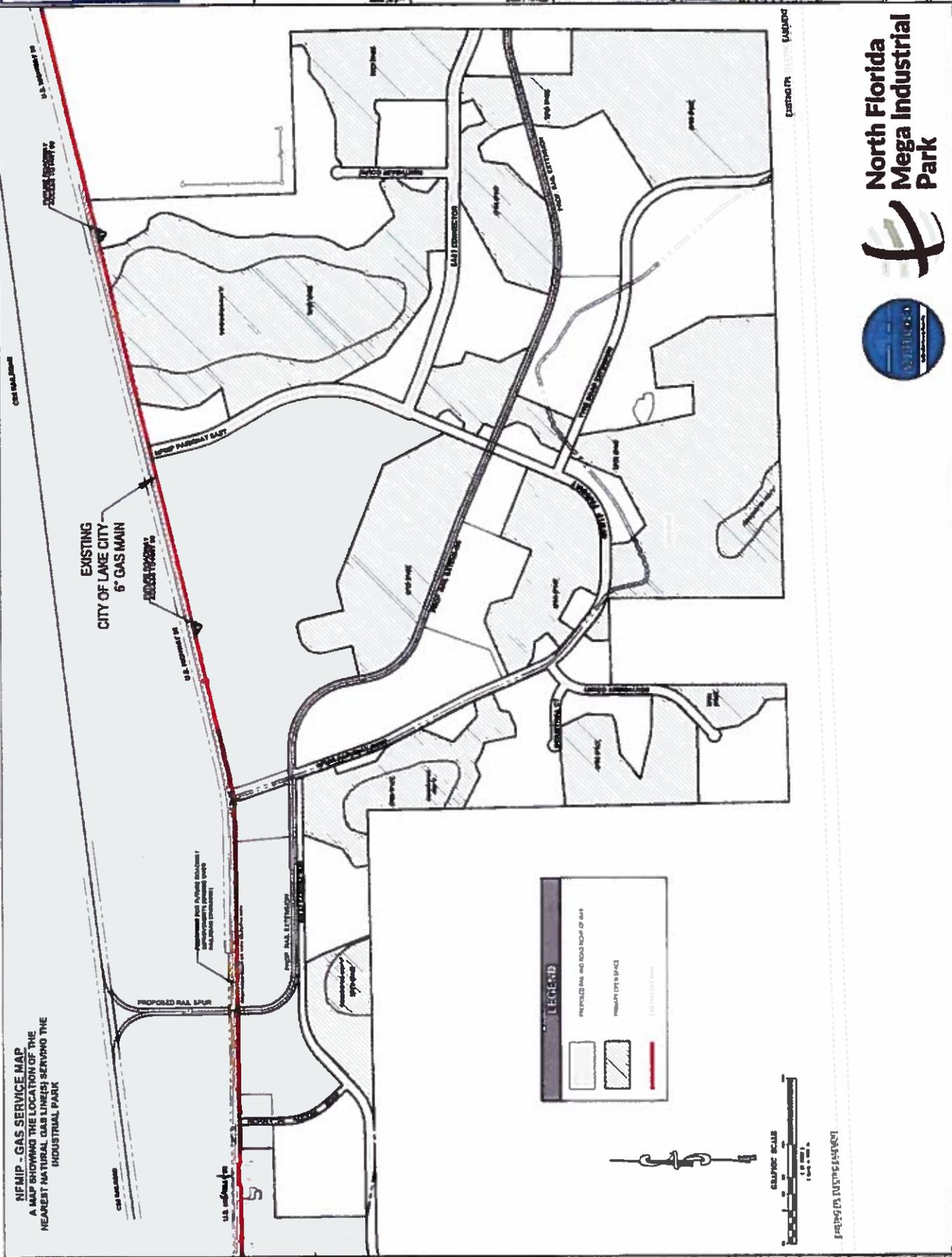
	North Florida Mega Industrial Park BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA		<b>25 Moore Bass</b> CONSULTING
--	---	--	------------------------------------



**NFMIP - ELECTRIC SERVICE MAP**  
A MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION AND VOLTAGE OF THE NEAREST ELECTRIC INFRASTRUCTURE SERVING THE INDUSTRIAL PARK



**FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT**  
**OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LINES**  
**(115 KV - EXISTING)**  
**(230 KV - JUNE 2018)**



**NFMIP - GAS SERVICE MAP**  
 A MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE  
 NEAREST NATURAL GAS LINES SERVING THE  
 INDUSTRIAL PARK

**LEGEND**

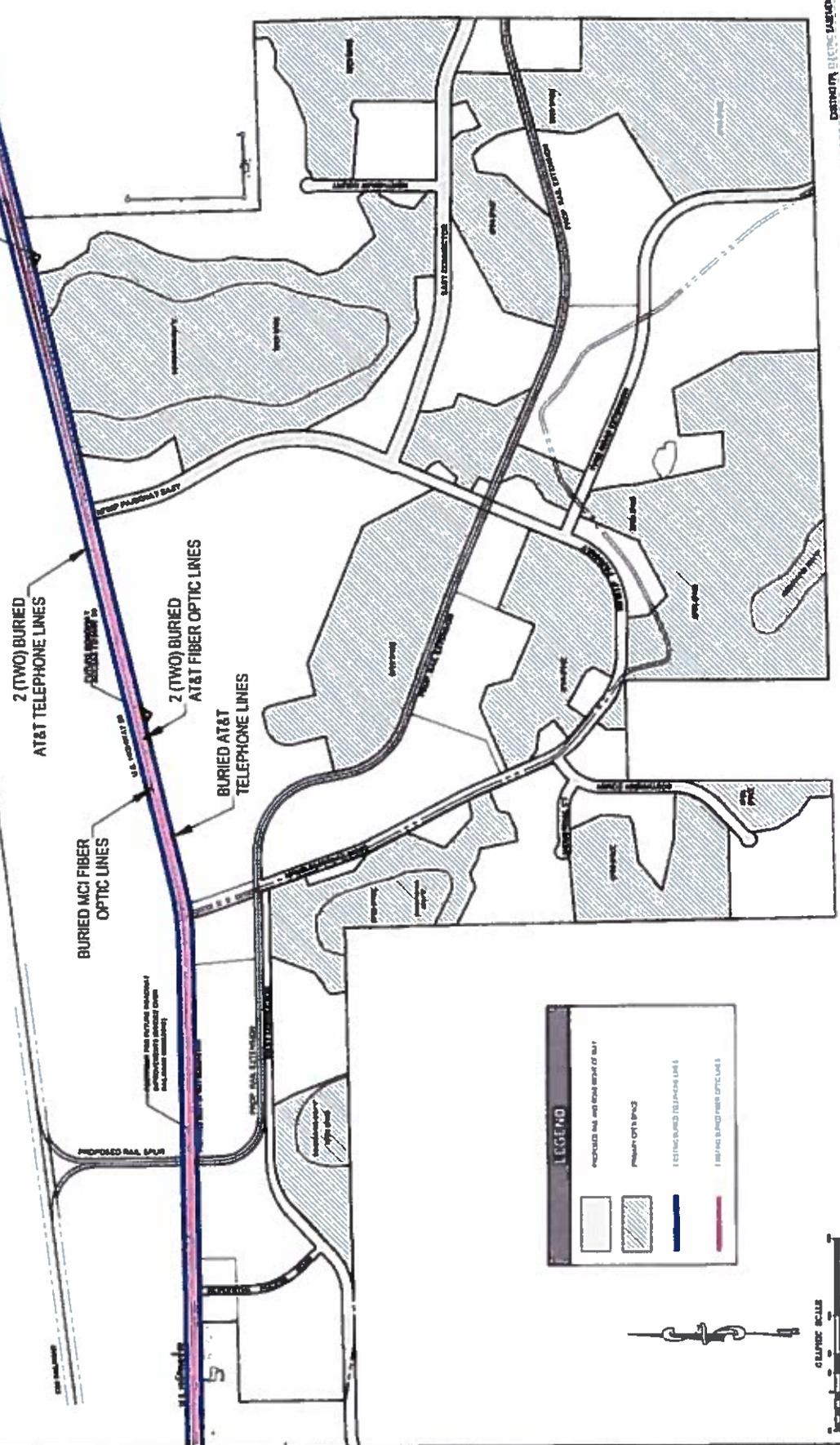
- EXISTING NATURAL GAS LINES
- PROPOSED NATURAL GAS LINES
- PROPOSED 6\"/>



DATE: 08/15/2011


**North Florida  
Mega Industrial  
Park**

**NF-MIP - TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICE MAP**  
 A MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE NEAREST TELECOMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE SERVING THE INDUSTRIAL PARK



**LEGEND**

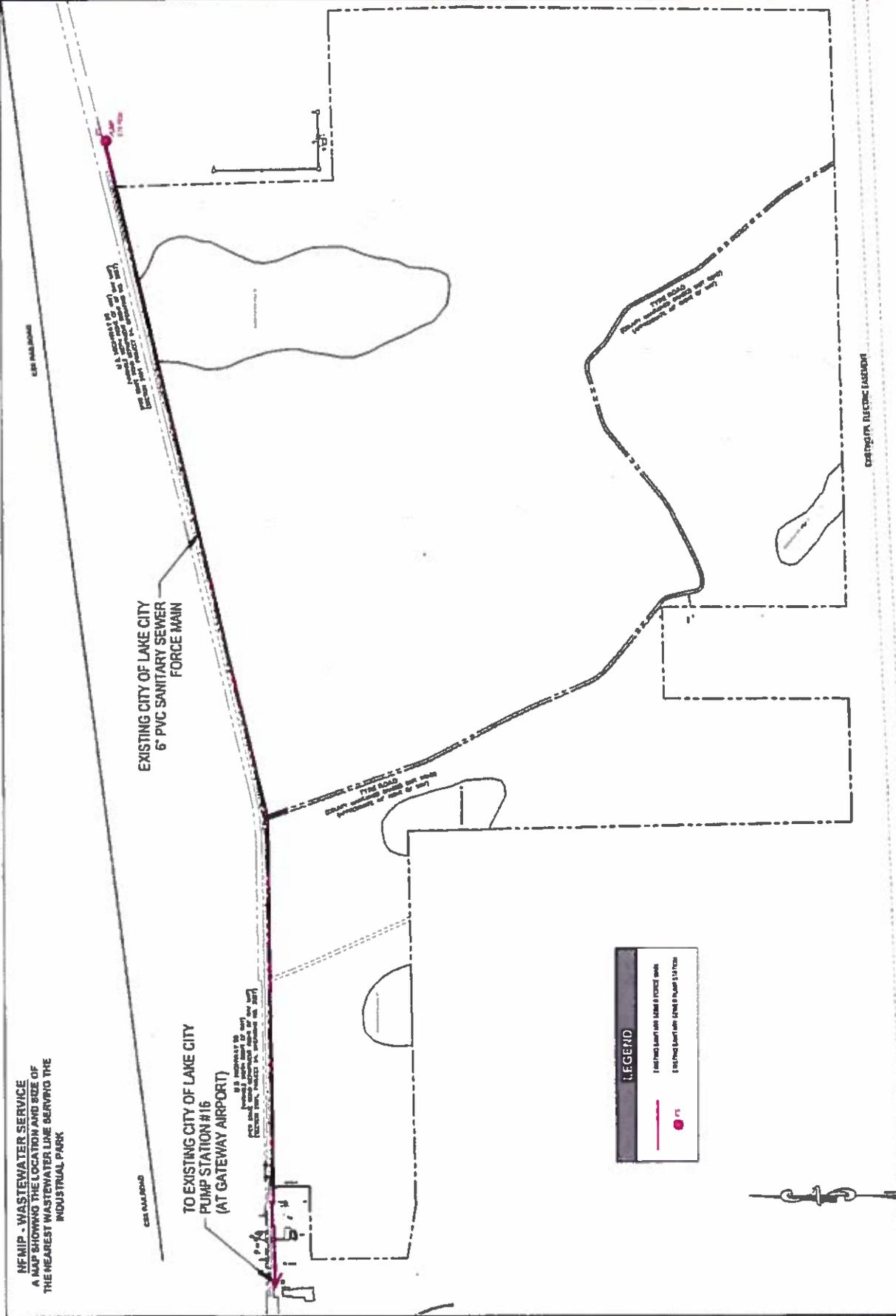
- PROPOSED BURIED TELEPHONE LINES
- PROPOSED BURIED FIBER OPTIC LINES
- EXISTING BURIED TELEPHONE LINES
- EXISTING BURIED FIBER OPTIC LINES



SCALE BY DISTANCE FACTORS

**North Florida Mega Industrial Park**





**North Florida Mega Industrial Park**  
  
  
  
 1

NFMIIP - WASTEWATER SERVICE  
 A MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION AND SIZE OF  
 THE NEAREST WASTEWATER LINE SERVING THE  
 INDUSTRIAL PARK

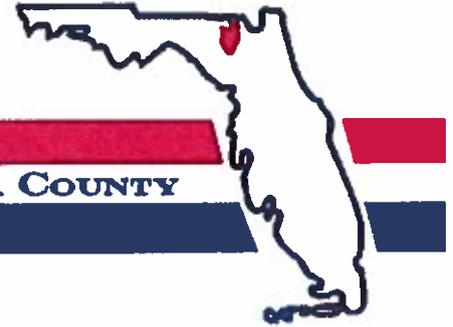
EXISTING CITY OF LAKE CITY  
 6" PVC SANITARY SEWER  
 FORCE MAIN

TO EXISTING CITY OF LAKE CITY  
 PUMP STATION #16  
 (AT GATEWAY AIRPORT)

**LEGEND**  
 6" PVC SANITARY SEWER FORCE MAIN  
 6" PVC SANITARY SEWER FORCE MAIN

GAINESVILLE  
 1:50,000

District No. 1 - Ronald Williams  
District No. 2 - Rusty DePratter  
District No. 3 - Bucky Nash  
District No. 4 - Everett Phillips  
District No. 5 - Tim Murphy



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS • COLUMBIA COUNTY**

August 15, 2017

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

David Kraus  
Risk Management Director  
Columbia County  
263 NW Lake City Ave  
Lake City, FL 32056

Re: Statement of Land Use and Zoning

Tax Parcels 31-3s-18-10332-000; 32-3s-18-10335-000; 33-3s-18-10337-000; 34-3s-18-10339-004;  
05-4s-18-10347-000; 04-4s-18-10346-000; and 03-4s-18-10345-001

Dear Mr. Kraus,

In response to your request for a statement of land use and zoning for Tax Parcel Numbers 31-3s-18-10332-000, 32-3s-18-10335-000, 33-3s-18-10337-000, 34-3s-18-10339-004, 05-4s-18-10347-000, 04-4s-18-10346-000, and 03-4s-18-10345-001, the subject property is located in the unincorporated limits of Columbia County, Florida, has a Mixed Use Development and Conservation Future Land Use Map Designation and a Mixed Use Development-Intermodal ("MUD-I") and Conservation Zoning Designation.

Attached are maps depicting the FLUM and Zoning. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone at [bstubbs@columbiacountyfla.com](mailto:bstubbs@columbiacountyfla.com) or (386) 754-7119.

Sincerely,

Brandon M. Stubbs  
County Planner/LDR Admin.  
Building & Zoning

BOARD MEETS THE FIRST THURSDAY AT 5:30 P.M.  
AND THIRD THURSDAY AT 5:30 P.M.

P.O. BOX 1529 ▼ LAKE CITY, FLORIDA 32056-1529 ▼ PHONE: (386) 755-4100

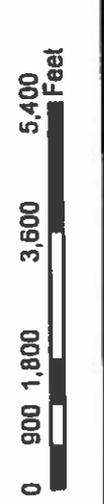
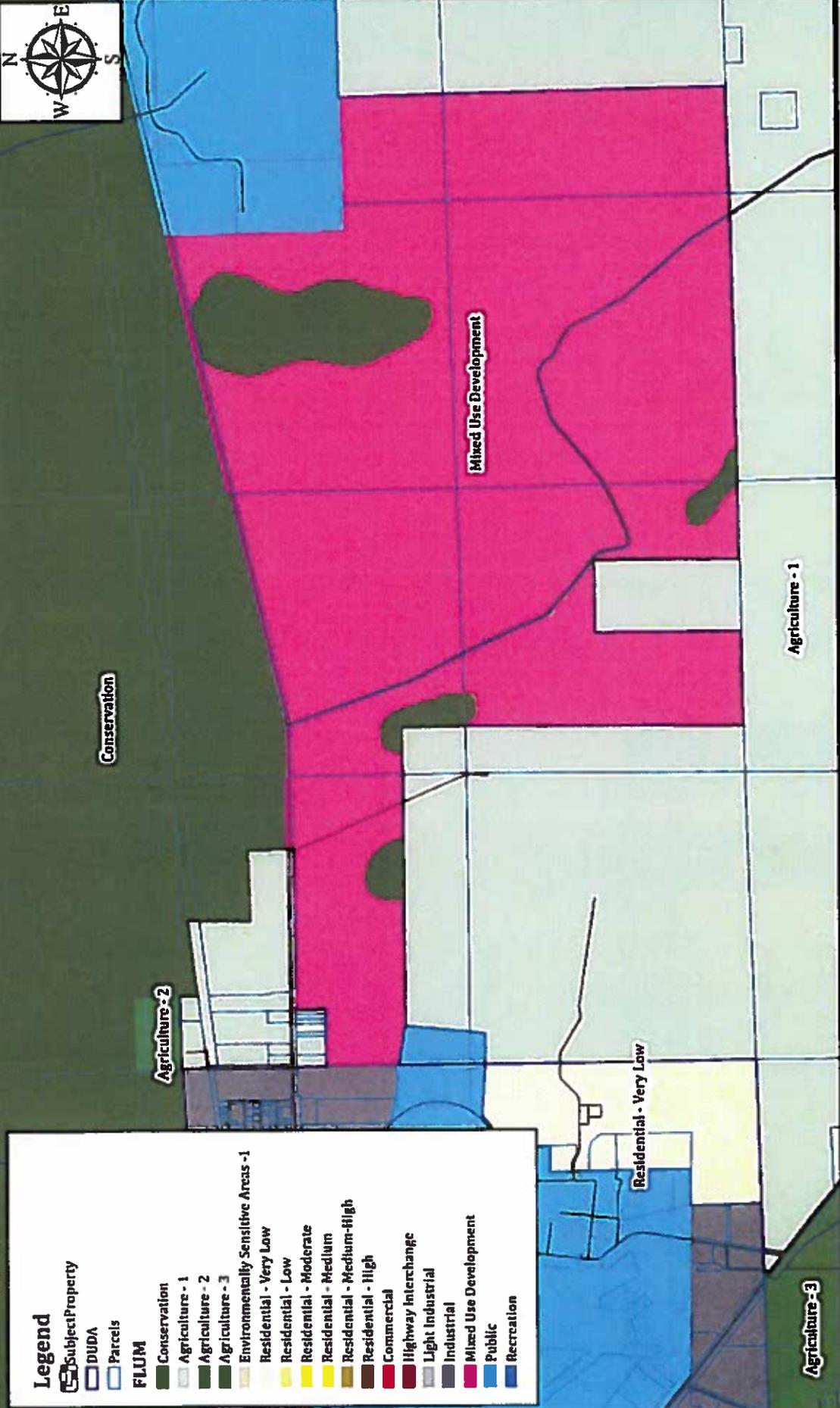


# Future Land Use Map Plum Creek MUD Mixed Use Development



**Legend**

- Subject Property
- DUDA
- Parcels
- FLUM**
- Conservation
- Agriculture - 1
- Agriculture - 2
- Agriculture - 3
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas - 1
- Residential - Very Low
- Residential - Low
- Residential - Moderate
- Residential - Medium
- Residential - Medium-High
- Residential - High
- Commercial
- Highway Interchange
- Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Mixed Use Development
- Public
- Recreation



**DISCLAIMER:** The data is provided "as is" without warranty of any representation of accuracy, timeliness, or completeness. The burden of determining accuracy, timeliness, or completeness for use is the sole responsibility of the requester. Columbia County makes no warranties, expressed or implied, as to the use of the data. The requester acknowledges and accepts the limitations of the data, including the fact that the data is dynamic and in a constant state of maintenance, correction, and update.

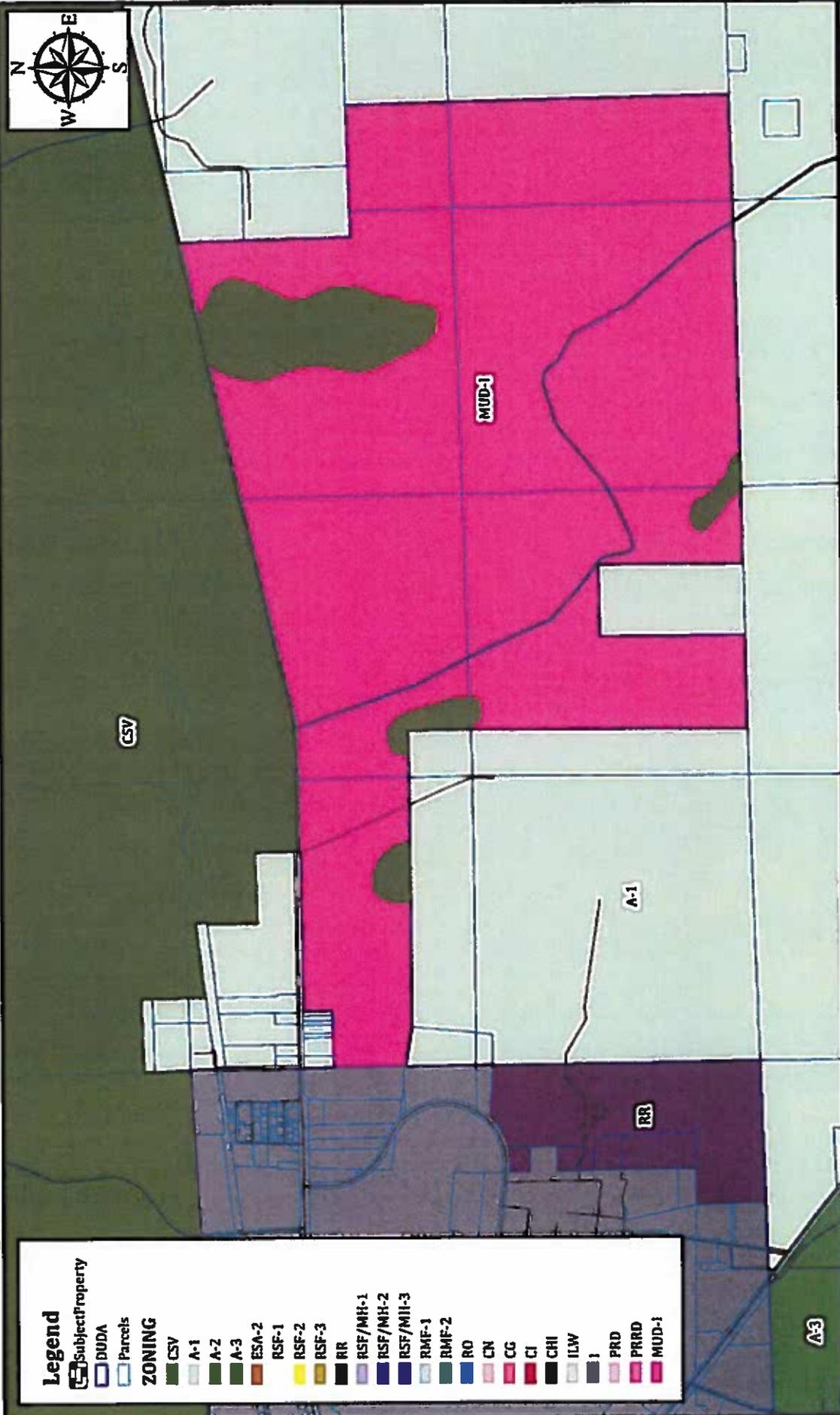
Prepared By: Brandon M. Stubbs  
Columbia County Building & Zoning Department  
Prepared on August 2017



# Official Zoning Atlas

## Plum Creek MUD-1

### Mixed Use Development-Intermodal ("MUD-1")



Legend	
	Subject property
	DUDA
	Parcels
ZONING	
	CSV
	A-1
	A-2
	A-3
	ESA-2
	RSF-1
	RSF-2
	RSF-3
	RR
	RSF/MH-1
	RSF/MH-2
	RSF/MH-3
	RMF-1
	RMF-2
	RO
	CN
	CG
	CI
	CHI
	ILW
	I
	PRD
	PRRD
	MUD-1

Prepared By: Brandon M. Stubbs  
 Columbia County Building & Zoning Department  
 Prepared on August 2017

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## **Attachment B**

- I. Enterprise Florida – Qualified Targeted Industry Fact Sheet**
- II. NAICS CODES**

# Qualified Targeted Industries for Incentives



*Businesses able to locate in other states and serving multi-state and/or international markets are targeted. Call Centers and Shared Service Centers may qualify for incentives if certain economic criteria are met. Retail activities, utilities, mining and other extraction or processing businesses, and activities regulated by the Division of Hotels and Restaurants of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation are statutorily excluded from consideration. All projects are evaluated on an individual basis and therefore operating in a target industry does not automatically indicate eligibility.*

For additional information about Florida's business advantages, please visit Enterprise Florida's website at [www.enterpriseflorida.com](http://www.enterpriseflorida.com) or call 407-956-5600.

## MANUFACTURING RELATED JOBS

<https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/sssd/naics/naicsrch?chart=2017>

THERE ARE LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES THAT WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR LOCATION AT THE COLUMBIA CATALYST SITE.  
Please click on the hyperlink about to view.

### 2017 NAICS

The following table provides detailed information on the structure of NAICS.

Sector	Description
<a href="#">11</a>	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
<a href="#">21</a>	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
<a href="#">22</a>	Utilities
<a href="#">23</a>	Construction
<a href="#">31-33</a>	Manufacturing
<a href="#">42</a>	Wholesale Trade
<a href="#">44-45</a>	Retail Trade
<a href="#">48-49</a>	Transportation and Warehousing
<a href="#">51</a>	Information
<a href="#">52</a>	Finance and Insurance
<a href="#">53</a>	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
<a href="#">54</a>	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
<a href="#">55</a>	Management of Companies and Enterprises
<a href="#">56</a>	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
<a href="#">61</a>	Educational Services
<a href="#">62</a>	Health Care and Social Assistance
<a href="#">71</a>	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
<a href="#">72</a>	Accommodation and Food Services
<a href="#">81</a>	Other Services (except Public Administration)
<a href="#">92</a>	Public Administration

**ATTACHMENT C**  
**LETTERS OF SUPPORT & RESOLUTIONS**

- I. Governor Scott Letter of Support**
- II. Executive Order 18-158**
- III. CSX Railroad Letter of Support**
- IV. City of Lake City Letter of Support**
- V. North Florida Economic Development Partnership (NFEDP) Letter of Support**
- VI. Memorandum of Understanding – JAXPORT**
- VII. Memorandum of Understanding - PORT TAMPA BAY**
- VIII. News Release – US Forestry**



**RICK SCOTT**  
GOVERNOR

September 23, 2011

Elizabeth Agpaoa, Regional Forester  
USDA Forest Service Southern Region  
1720 Peachtree Road, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30309

Dear Ms. Agpaoa:

This letter is being written in support of the Columbia County Industrial Authority's request for 11.9 acres of public lands from the U.S. Forest Service and the Osceola National Forest. The land will be used to provide right-of-way to build, construct and maintain a rail spur to serve the North Central Florida Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) Catalyst Site.

The Catalyst Site, part of a long term investment of Florida and the North Central region, is specially designated to help attract economic development opportunities and high paying jobs to a critical rural area. The site truly represents a significant, cooperative effort among numerous local and state agencies, local governments and private partners.

Fourteen Florida counties worked closely together to identify the best site for the region and then improve the site for economic development projects. Now the region is poised to benefit from these efforts. Specifically, the expansion of the Panama Canal and anticipated demand from the JAXPORT mean the Catalyst Site is ideally positioned for a regional logistics and distribution center. To be effective, direct rail and road access is required for the Catalyst Site.

I appreciate your consideration of this important project and the request for public lands. I ask that you join the cooperative effort to make this project a success and support a 14-county region which is ready to get to work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott".

Rick Scott  
Governor

# STATE OF FLORIDA

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 18-158

WHEREAS, although economic progress has been made in many rural areas, Florida remains committed to creating private-sector jobs in every part of the state; and

WHEREAS, rural communities are stewards of the vast majority of Florida's land and natural resources, upon which the State's continued growth and prosperity depend; and

WHEREAS, successful rural communities are essential to the overall success of the State's economy and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, certain rural communities are struggling to maintain, support or enhance job creating activities or to generate revenues for education and other critical government services such as infrastructure, transportation and safety; and

WHEREAS, Section 288.0656(7), Florida Statutes, authorizes the Rural Economic Development Initiative to recommend to the Governor up to three areas for designation as rural areas of opportunity; and

WHEREAS, a rural area of opportunity is comprised of rural communities designated by the Governor that have been adversely affected by an extraordinary economic event, severe or chronic distress, or a natural disaster or that presents a unique economic development opportunity of regional impact; and

WHEREAS, the counties of Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor and Union were designated

on April 23, 2003, by Executive Order 03-74, as a Rural Area of Opportunity for a term of five years; and

WHEREAS, the counties of Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor and Union have been subsequently re-designated as a Rural Area of Opportunity by Executive Orders 08-132 and 13-151; and

WHEREAS, the re-designation will expire on June 12, 2018, and the Rural Economic Development Initiative met on March 16, 2018 and agreed to recommend the Governor continue the designation of the counties of Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor and Union as a Rural Area of Opportunity.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICK SCOTT, Governor of Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article IV, Section 1(a), Florida Constitution, and Section 288.0656(7), Florida Statutes, do hereby issue the following Executive Order, effective immediately:

Section 1.

The area within the boundaries of the counties of Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor and Union is designated as a Rural Area of Opportunity.

Section 2.

This area shall be a priority assignment for the Rural Economic Development Initiative.

### Section 3.

On a case-by-case basis, the criteria, requirements or similar provisions of economic development incentives may be waived. Such incentives include, but shall not be limited to, the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program under section 288.106, Florida Statutes, the Quick Response Training Program under section 288.047, Florida Statutes, the Quick Response Training Program for participants in the Welfare Transition Program under section 288.047(8), Florida Statutes, Economic Development Transportation projects under section 339.2821, Florida Statutes, the Brownfield Redevelopment Bonus Refund under section 288.107, Florida Statutes, and the Rural Job Tax Credit Program under sections 212.098 and 220.1895, Florida Statutes.

### Section 4.

Access to the assistance available under this designation as a Rural Area of Opportunity shall be contingent upon the execution of a memorandum of agreement between the Department of Economic Opportunity, the governing bodies of the counties, and the governing bodies of the municipalities including within the designated area. Such memorandum of agreement shall specify the terms and conditions of the designation, including, but not limited to, the duties and responsibilities of the counties and any participating municipalities to take actions designed to facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses in the area, as well as the recruitment of new businesses to the area.

### Section 5.

Pursuant to Section 288.0656(7)(c), all state agencies and departments shall use all available tools and resources to the extent permissible by law to promote the creation and development of any catalyst project designated by the Rural Area of Opportunity, that has

been recommended by the Department of Economic Opportunity and identified by Enterprise Florida, Inc.

Section 6.

This designation shall be in effect for five years and will expire on June 11, 2023. The Rural Economic Development Initiative may recommend the designation be terminated or continued based on economic development progress from current base lines or upon performance under the memorandum of agreement.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and have caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, this 11th day of June, 2018.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
RICK SCOTT, GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SECRETARY OF STATE

FILED  
2018 JUN 11 AM 11:11  
TALLAHASSEE FLORIDA



Aubrey Brown  
500 Water St, Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Tel. 904-3664740 Fax. 904-3591077 E-mail. [Aubrey.Brown@CSX.com](mailto:Aubrey.Brown@CSX.com)

01 February, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

CSX Transportation supports the Projected Site collaboratively developed by the Columbia County Industrial Development Authority (IDA), the North Central Florida Rural area of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) Group, and the Plum Creek Land Company. The 2,590 Acre project Site is west of the Lake City Airport, and south of U.S. Highway 90, in Columbia County, Florida.

All parties believe that rail service to the site will provide the greatest opportunity for meaningful economic development, to not only Columbia County, but also the thirteen other counties in the North Central RACEC district and the State of Florida. In addition, the Governor's office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development (OTTED) recognized the significance of this project with a \$300,000 grant.

CSX has agreed, with certain contingencies, to provide service to the site if access between the existing rail and the project site is obtained. CSX recognizes that the land between the existing rail line, our main east-west corridor, and U.S. 90, is part of the Osceola National Forest. However, these lands are critical to the overall access to the Project Site and the success in attracting meaningful economic opportunities.

Finally, we ask for your consideration in the request for public lands, for this purpose, as submitted by Plum Creek Land Company and the Columbia County IDA.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Brown", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Aubrey Brown  
Manager Regional Development



Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)  
Enterprise Florida  
Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

March 29, 2018

Re: Enterprise Florida/DEO Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund Application  
Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal  
North Florida Mega Industrial Park (NFMIP)  
Parkway, Rail Crossing and Stormwater Facility  
Columbia County, Florida

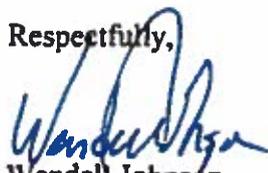
STEPHEN M. WITTE  
JAKE HILL, JR.  
EUGENE JEFFERSON  
MELINDA MOSTER  
GEORGE WARE  
WENDILL JOHNSON  
AUDREY F. SIKES  
FRED KOEHLER, JR.

Dear Members of the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund Review Committee:

On behalf of the Mayor, City Council and our Community, this confirms that the City of Lake City strongly supports Columbia County's submission of the referenced Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal on behalf of the NFMIP. Over the last several years the City has worked vigorously with Columbia County and NFMIP officials and with recent approval of the CSX "rail spur" NFMIP is nearing the point of reality. As one of Florida's designated "Rural Areas of Opportunity" the success of NFMIP will clearly be a great success for Florida.

Upon completion of the referenced infrastructure NFMIP will be one step closer to offering high quality development sites at a prime location with shovel-ready status. Lake City and Columbia County residents should be extremely encouraged by the positive economic impact which will evolve from development activity within the NFMIP; development which can effectively begin soon with the requested financial support from the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund. Accordingly, please accept our gratitude in advance for your favorable consideration and approval of Columbia County's Grant Proposal.

Respectfully,

  
Wendell Johnson  
City Manager

cc: Mayor and City Council



# NORTH FLORIDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

## Board of Directors

Daryl Register, Chair  
Executive Director, Baker County Chamber

Todd Gray, Vice-Chair  
Gilchrist County BCCC

Diane Head, Secretary  
Executive Director, NF Workforce  
Development Board

Dave Pektik, Treasurer  
Levy County EDM

James G. Bennett, Commissioner  
Baker County BCCC

Ross Chandler, Commissioner  
Bradford County BCCC

Pam Whittle, Director  
N FL Regional Chamber

Ronald Williams, Chairman  
Columbia County BCCC

Glenn Hunter, Executive Director  
Columbia County Economic Development  
Department

Mark Hatch, Commissioner  
Hick County BCCC

Tim Alexander, County Manager  
Hick County BCCC

Bobby Crosby, County Administrator  
Gilchrist County BCCC

Beth Burnham, Commissioner  
Hamilton County BCCC

Susan Ramsey, Exec. Director  
Hamilton County Development Authority

Stephen Fulford, Commissioner  
Jefferson County BCCC

Lance Lamb, Commissioner  
Lafayette County BCCC

John Meeks, Commissioner  
Levy County BCCC

Rick Davis, Commissioner  
Madison County BCCC

Allen Cherry, Immediate Past Chairman  
President, Madison County  
Development Council

Clay Laib, Commissioner  
Putnam County BCCC

Brian Bergen, Vice President-  
Economic Development  
Putnam County Chamber

Ronald Richardson, Commissioner  
Suwannee County BCCC

Dr. Alvin Jackson, Jr.  
Suwannee County Economic Development  
Director

Scott Frederick, President  
Taylor County Development Authority

Karen Cossey, Commissioner  
Union County BCCC

Kellie Hendricks Connell  
Union County Clerk of the Court

Marc Hoenstein, Director-Economic Development  
Duke Energy

James Bush, External Affairs Manager  
Florida Power and Light

Steve Dopp  
NCF Regional Planning Council

Patrick Woel, Executive Director  
NEFEC

Jeff Hendry, Executive Director  
NFEDP

The Honorable Rick Scott  
The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

April 20, 2018

Dear Governor Scott:

This letter is written in support of the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund application for the new North Florida Mega Intermodal Parkway Project for the North Florida Mega Industrial Park (NFMIP) which contains the Columbia County *Catalyst Site*. As the lead regional economic development organization, the North Florida Economic Development Partnership (NFEDP) has extensive knowledge and understands the significant impact this transportation improvement will make in attracting large projects to the NFEDP's 14-county region.

The *Catalyst Site* designation was established in Florida Statutes which allows for up to four *Catalyst Sites* within Florida's the thirty-two (32) rural counties. The NFMIP Segment I Parkway project at the NFMIP would impact this 2,600-acre site and provide the opportunity for huge projects needing a large amount of acreage, existing water, wastewater, high-capacity electricity, natural gas and telecommunications all of which are available within a short distance.

The NFMIP site is one of the few sites in Florida conducive to locating a project the size of an auto assembly plant which would have a significant positive impact in this rural region. Additionally, the NFMIP is designated an Inland Port and is a part of JAXPORT Foreign Trade Zone #64. However, without the NFMIP-Segment I road project, this site's available transportation will be constrained and impede economic development.

The NFEDP commends you, Governor Scott, for developing a grant program that will fund desperately needed infrastructure to attract and serve numerous projects to locate in rural Florida. Stating to a prospect "we can build a road into the site" is not nearly as effective as stating "we have a road into the site".

Please give strong consideration in the approval of this application. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Jeff Hendry, Executive Director

North Florida Economic  
Development Partnership

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
PLUM CREEK LAND COMPANY, COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
AND PORT TAMPA BAY**

**THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ("Memorandum") is made and executed by and between Plum Creek Land Company, a Delaware corporation, Columbia County, Florida, a political subdivision of the State of Florida (the "County"), and the Tampa Port Authority d/b/a Port Tampa Bay, a body politic and corporate existing under and by virtue of the Laws of the State of Florida, in order to form a strategic partnership to enhance economic development and global commerce in North Florida.**

**WHEREAS, significant growth in international commerce is expected for the foreseeable future and drives the need for cooperation between the port and inland locations in order to maximize economic development, achieve efficient use of resources and ensure effective delivery of goods; and**

**WHEREAS, cooperative agreements facilitate information sharing and open dialogue, which allow stakeholders to benefit from wide ranging expertise and information concerning situations or challenges as they are occurring; and**

**WHEREAS, longer term benefits of cooperation can prevent or diminish obstacles to achieving an efficient port corridor supply chain to inland locations; and**

**WHEREAS, the development and location of import distribution centers within proximity to a deep water port is a key catalyst for increased ship service.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual provisions hereinafter contained, the parties indicate and memorialize their mutual understanding as follows:**

**I. SCOPE**

- A. This Memorandum sets forth the basis of mutual understanding between the parties to explore the benefits of a strategic partnership for the purpose of enhancing global commerce between the Port Tampa Bay corridor supply chain and Plum Creek Land Company's North Florida INTERMODAL PARK® in Columbia County, Florida.**
- B. This understanding will be ongoing until and unless any one of the parties withdraw by giving thirty (30) days written notification to the other parties' primary point of contact and liaison identified in Section C(7) below.**
- C. The following sets forth the intent of the parties:**
  - 1. The parties agree to share information that may assist the parties in the joint marketing of one another's locations.**
  - 2. The parties agree to prioritize one another's locations in marketing and promotion efforts to attract and maintain global businesses. The parties agree to meet and communicate regularly and more frequently as needed to share best practices, educate prospective businesses, and identify new opportunities for mutual benefit. The parties share interest in promoting opportunities that have the**

potential to increase business for Port Tampa Bay while increasing employment and investment in Columbia County at Plum Creek Land Company's North Florida INTERMODAL PARK®. In this manner, the parties intend to form an informal marketing alliance, which is designed to result in the development of a key inland connection to the port. The types of marketing and promotion activities envisioned by the parties include, but are not limited to, website promotion, references in marketing presentations and brochures, and joint participation in outreach events. Outreach events are expected to include trade shows as well as meetings with importers/exporters, site selection influencers, foreign direct investment candidates, commercial real estate brokers and economic development professionals. The parties agree to invite each other to party-sponsored public events where prospects of mutual interest are in attendance.

3. To the extent each party is able, the parties agree to provide one another with timely information to improve international commerce through the Port Tampa Bay corridor supply chain.
4. To the extent each party is able, the parties agree to meet on a periodic basis to discuss needs associated with Port Tampa Bay and inland port logistics, and the development of plans intended to meet logistics needs.
5. To the extent each party is able, the parties agree to identify and discuss strategies to stimulate intermodal transport and optimum use of the intermodal system, including meetings with rail and other transportation-related companies.
6. To the extent each party is able, the parties agree to highlight one another's cooperation and successes through internal and external communications.
7. The parties agree to identify a staff representative as a primary point of contact and liaison for each party.

Columbia County

By: *Kurtz*

County Official

Date: 11/19/15

Plum Creek Land Company

By: *Janet*

Corporate Officer

Date: 10/15/15

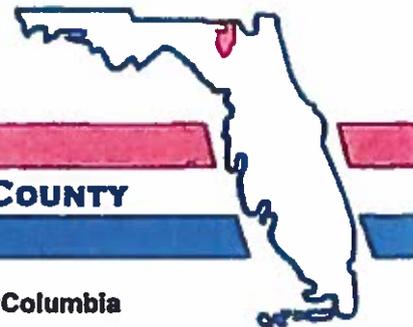
Port Tampa Bay

By: *A. Paul*

Chief Executive Officer

Date: 10/27/15

District No. 1 - Ronald Williams  
District No. 2 - Rusty DePratter  
District No. 3 - Bucky Nash  
District No. 4 - Stephen E. Bailey  
District No. 5 - Scarlet P. Frisina



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS • COLUMBIA COUNTY

### Memorandum of Understanding between Columbia County – Florida (“Columbia County”) and Jacksonville Port Authority (“JAXPORT”)

**THIS AGREEMENT** is executed by and between Columbia County and JAXPORT in order to form a strategic partnership to enhance economic development and global commerce in North Florida.

**WHEREAS**, significant growth in international commerce is expected for the foreseeable future and drives the need for cooperation between the port and inland locations in order to maximize economic development, achieve efficient use of resources and ensure effective delivery of goods.

**WHEREAS**, cooperative agreements may facilitate information sharing and open dialogue, which allow stakeholders to benefit from wide ranging expertise and information concerning situations or challenges as they are occurring.

**WHEREAS**, longer term benefits of cooperation can prevent or diminish obstacles to achieving an efficient port corridor supply chain to inland locations.

**WHEREAS**, the Jacksonville Port Authority Strategic Plan dated December 5, 2013 identifies the development and location of import distribution centers within proximity to a deep water port as a key catalyst for increased steamship service and recommends that JAXPORT market areas with multiple Class I rail access that are located near port property for the potential development of logistics centers.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, consideration of the mutual provisions hereinafter contained, the parties agree as follows:

#### I. Scope of Agreement

- A. This Agreement sets forth the basis of mutual understanding between the parties to explore the benefits of a strategic partnership for the purpose of enhancing global commerce between the JAXPORT corridor supply chain and specifically the North Florida INTERMODAL PARK® in Columbia County, Florida.
- B. This Agreement will be for a one year term. Renewal of this Agreement and continuation of the Agreement will be subject to each Party signing a renewal agreement.
- C. The following sets forth the intent of the parties.
  1. The parties may agree to share information that may assist the parties in the joint marketing each other's locations.

BOARD MEETS FIRST THURSDAY AT 5:30 P.M.  
AND THIRD THURSDAY AT 5:30 P.M.

P O BOX 1529

LAKE CITY, FLORIDA 32056-1529

PHONE (386) 755-4100

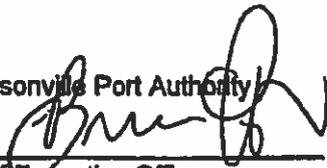
2. The parties agree to work together and cooperate as needed to form and maintain a federally designated U.S. foreign-trade zone ("FTZ") magnet site under FTZ 64's Alternative Site Framework ("ASF") specifically at the North Florida INTERMODAL PARK® subject to federal regulations and requirements. In order to allow for the grantee sponsorship of the FTZ 64 magnet site at the appropriate time, JAXPORT (as the Grantee of FTZ 64) agrees to reserve one FTZ magnet site out of the federally mandated maximum number of FTZ 64 magnet sites for this purpose.
3. The parties agree to meet as needed and no less frequently than twice per year to share best practices, educate prospective businesses and identify new opportunities for mutual benefit. The parties share interest in promoting opportunities that have the potential to increase business for the port while increasing employment and investment in Columbia County specifically at the North Florida INTERMODAL PARK®. In this manner, the parties may intend to form an informal marketing alliance, which is designed to result in the development of a key inland connection to the port when mutually agreed upon. The parties may agree to invite each other to party-sponsored public events where prospects of mutual interest are in attendance.
4. To the extent each party is able; the parties agree to provide each other with timely information to improve international commerce through the JAXPORT corridor supply chain.
5. To the extent each party is able; the parties agree to identify and discuss strategies to stimulate intermodal transport and optimum use of the intermodal system.
6. To the extent each party is able; the parties agree to highlight each other's cooperation and successes through internal and external communications.
7. The parties agree to identify and maintain a staff representative as a primary point of contact and liaison for each party.

Columbia County

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Official

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Jacksonville Port Authority

By:   
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 6/19/14



**USDA FOREST SERVICE NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: December 31, 2014  
Contact: Susan Blake, 850-523-8500  
Website: [www.fs.fed.us/r8/florida](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/florida)  
Follow us on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/NFinFlorida](http://www.twitter.com/NFinFlorida)

**National Forests in Florida completes  
unprecedented land exchange**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – In an unprecedented land exchange by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Forests in Florida recently finalized a land exchange in Columbia, Baker and Union Counties with timber and land company Plum Creek to secure permanent easements for the Florida National Scenic Trail and Florida's Strategic Intermodal System.

The land exchange involved a 6.27 acre tract of the Osceola National Forest, in which Columbia County was granted a permanent easement to connect from the existing east/west rail line originating from the Port of Jacksonville to a proposed logistics center or intermodal park on Plum Creek land in Columbia County.

"Together, we all came up with a plan that would make it truly a win, win scenario for the public and the Forest Service, while also accomplishing the objectives of what Columbia County and Plum Creek want to achieve," said Kyle Jones, Lands, Minerals and Special Uses Program Manager for the National Forests in Florida.

The National Forests in Florida and the Osceola National Forest worked with Columbia County and Plum Creek representatives, with the help and facilitation of Western Land Group, to devise a viable land exchange that would benefit the county, stakeholders and the community. As a result, Plum Creek exchanged and donated a total of 12.35 acres of land for an easement, re-routing access to the Florida National Scenic Trail in perpetuity.

"Everyone looked at the final exchange package and was very satisfied that it would not only be in the public's interest, but be determined to be of approximate equal value," said Adam Poe, president of Western Land Group. "It was really a great collaborative process."

The intermodal system proposed by Columbia County will access Interstates 10 and 75, along with U.S. Highways 90, 41, 441 and State Road 100. In addition, the exchange will provide passage to two class one railroads owned by CSX and Norfolk Southern, and a local municipal airport with an 8,000 foot runway.

"North Florida is still a rural area; we want the best for our people. We'll do everything we can to bring in projects like this that have the potential to successfully bring in new businesses to boost our local economy," said Dale Williams, Columbia County Manager. "This would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Forests Service."

**Columbia County is one of fourteen counties collaborating to build economic diversity and create new jobs as part of the North Central Florida Rural Area of Critical Economic Concerns (RACEC) as designated by the Florida Legislature.**

**"We worked in concert with Columbia County. They were very much a partner with us in order to move this project forward to create jobs for the region," said Allison Megrath, Manager of Real Estate for Plum Creek.**

**###**

**ATTACHMENT D**  
**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

- I. RESPONSE TO 4C: Approvals and Authority**
  - a. Certifying Letter from County Attorney**
  - b. Home Rule Charter for Columbia County, Florida**

COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

**Office of the County Attorney**

**Joel F. Foreman**  
County Attorney  
207 S. Marion Avenue  
Post Office Box 550  
Lake City, Florida 32056  
Tel. 386.752.8420  
Fax 386.752.8431

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August 23, 2017

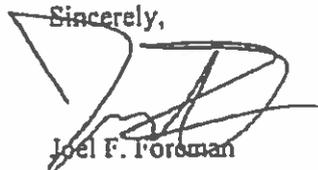
Grant Administrator

**RE: COLUMBIA COUNTY LETTER OF STATUS**  
**Florida Job Growth Grant Fund – Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal**

This letter is to certify that Columbia County, Florida, is duly chartered and organized under the laws of the State of Florida and that the County has the authority to carry out the purposes of Federal grants as a government entity. I attached hereto a copy of the Home Rule Charter for Columbia County, Florida, as evidence of the County's organization and powers.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Joel F. Foreman

JFF/ann

Enclosures as Indicated.

cc: David Kraus

# **HOME RULE CHARTER FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

## **PREAMBLE**

***THE PEOPLE OF COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA, by the grace of God free and independent, in order to attain greater self-determination, to exercise more control over our own destiny, to create a more responsible and effective government, and to guarantee constitutional rights to all equally, do hereby ordain and establish this Home Rule Charter as our form of government for Columbia County.***

## **ARTICLE I** **CREATION, POWERS AND ORDINANCES OF HOME RULE CHARTER GOVERNMENT**

### ***1.1 Creation and general powers of home rule charter government***

***Columbia County shall be a home rule charter county, and, except as may be limited by this Home Rule Charter, shall have all powers of self-government granted now or hereafter by the Constitution and laws of the State of Florida.***

### ***1.2 Body corporate, name and boundaries***

***Columbia County shall be a body corporate and politic. The corporate name shall be Columbia County. The county seat and boundaries shall be those designated by law on the effective date of this Charter.***

### ***1.3 Construction***

***The powers granted by this Home Rule Charter shall be construed broadly in favor of the charter government. The specified powers in this Charter shall not be construed as limiting, in any way, the general or specific power of the government, as stated in this article. It is the intent of this article to grant to the charter government full power and authority to exercise all governmental powers necessary for the effective operation and conduct of the affairs of the charter government.***

### ***1.4 Special powers and duties of county***

***1.4.1 County purposes. The county, operating under this Charter, shall have all special powers and duties which are not inconsistent with this Charter, heretofore granted by law to the Board of County Commissioners, and shall have such additional county and municipal powers as may be required to fulfill the intent of this Charter.***

***1.4.2 Municipal purposes. The county shall have all necessary powers to accomplish municipal purposes within special districts. Property situated within municipalities shall not be subject to taxation for services rendered by the county exclusively for the benefit of the property or residents not within municipal boundaries, nor shall property situated in the county be subject to taxation for services provided by the county exclusively for the benefit of the property or residents within municipal boundaries. To this***

*end, the Board of County Commissioners may by ordinance create districts for the purpose of levying ad valorem taxes and special assessments to pay for the furnishing of municipal services, and the tax imposed shall be within the limits of millage set for municipal purposes. Should such services be furnished within a municipality, the total millage levied by the municipality and the county district levy for this municipal purposes shall not exceed the maximum millage set by law for municipal purposes.*

### **1.5 Transfer of powers**

*Whenever a municipality, special district or agency shall request the performance or transfer of a function to the county, the county shall have the power and authority to assume and perform such functions and obligations. This section does not authorize a transfer in violation of Article VIII, §4 of the Constitution of Florida.*

### **1.6 Division of powers**

*This Charter hereby establishes the separation between legislative and administrative functions of this government. The establishment and adoption of policy shall be the responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners and the execution of that policy shall be the responsibility of the County Manager.*

### **1.7 Relation to state law**

*The provisions of this Charter are not intended, and shall not be construed, to conflict with the Constitution of the State of Florida, general law, or special law approved by vote of the electorate.*

### **1.8 Conflict of County Ordinances with Municipal Ordinances; Pre-Exemption**

*Notwithstanding any other provisions of this charter, any County ordinance in conflict with a municipal ordinance shall not be effective within the municipality to the extent of such conflict regardless of whether such municipal ordinance was adopted or enacted before or after the County ordinance, provided, however, that the County may by ordinance adopt minimum countywide standards for (i) regulating adult entertainment, (ii) protecting the environment by regulating air or water pollution, (iii) outdoor burning, (iv) hours of sale of alcoholic beverages, (v) animal control, (vi) firearms and weapons, and (vii) protection of Level of Service standards for County-maintained roads. The intent of this section is that no person within a municipality shall be governed simultaneously by two sets of ordinances covering the same subject matter, activity, or conduct, except in matters of minimum adult entertainment, pollution, regulatory standards, outdoor burning, hours of sale of alcoholic beverages, animal control, firearms and weapons, and protection of Level of Service standards for County-maintained roads. Where a county ordinance establishes a minimum standard as authorized by this section, nothing prevents a municipality from establishing a more restrictive ordinance which shall prevail within its municipal boundaries to the extent of any conflict with county ordinance.*

**ARTICLE 2**  
**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH:**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**2.1 Composition**

*There shall be five county commissioners' districts in Columbia County, which shall be numbered one to five, inclusive, the districts together covering the entire county and as nearly equal in population as practicable. Five County Commissioners shall reside one in each of the districts, and each Commissioner shall be nominated and elected only by the qualified electors who reside in the same county commission district as the Commissioner.*

**2.2 Redistricting**

*In the first odd-numbered year after each decennial census, the Board of County Commissioners shall initiate the process to divide the county into districts of contiguous territory, following the existing boundaries of municipalities where possible and as nearly equal in population as possible. The Board of County Commissioners may initiate the process to redivide the districts in any other odd-numbered year.*

*Recommendations for redistricting shall be the responsibility of a citizens redistricting committee appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. The redistricting committee shall be funded by the Board of County Commissioners. The redistricting committee shall be composed of an odd number of not less than 11 and not more than 15 members. No elected officials nor employees of Columbia County shall be a member of the redistricting committee. All members of the redistricting committee shall be registered voters residing within Columbia County. Vacancies shall be filled within 30 days in the same manner as the original appointment. The redistricting committee shall have its first meeting before May 15 of the odd numbered year in which redistricting is required. The redistricting committee shall adopt rules of procedure to govern its actions and all meetings of the redistricting committee shall be open to the public and conducted in compliance with Florida's sunshine laws. The redistricting committee shall, to the extent practicable and consistent with the law, preserve the several municipalities and geographically cohesive racial or ethnic minority communities from fragmentation. The redistricting committee shall present their recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners no later than the Board of County Commissioner's first regular meeting of September of that year. The Board of County Commissioners may approve the recommendation without amendment or reject the recommendation with written explanation for the rejection provided to the redistricting committee. If the recommendation is rejected, the redistricting committee shall reconvene and consider the written explanation for rejection presented by the Board of County Commissioners. The redistricting committee shall present their final recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners no later than the Board of County Commissioner's first regular meeting in October of that year. The Board of County Commissioners shall act upon the recommendation of the redistricting committee at that meeting by accepting, modifying or rejecting the redistricting committee's recommendation. If the Board of County Commissioners modifies or rejects the final recommendation of the redistricting committee, it shall adopt a final redistricting plan no later than the Board of County Commissioner's first regular meeting in December.*

*Whenever the boundaries of existing county commissioners' districts are changed by the Board of County Commissioners, it shall cause an accurate description of the boundaries of such districts, as changed, to be entered upon its minutes and a certified copy thereof to be published once each week for four (4) consecutive weeks in a newspaper published in the county. Proof of such publication shall be entered on the minutes of the Board of County Commissioners. The publication of such copy shall be for information only and shall not be jurisdictional.*

### **2.3 Qualifications and Election.**

*County commissioners shall be qualified electors of the county. Commissioners shall reside one in each of the commission districts. Candidates shall reside in their respective districts at the time of qualifying to run, or at the time of appointment to any vacancy. Candidates shall otherwise qualify for election at the same time and in the same manner provided by general law for county commissioners in non-charter counties, except that election shall be non-partisan as provided in Section 5.2 of this Charter. Any commissioner who shall remove his or her residency from the district for which he or she is elected shall thereupon become disqualified to represent said district and the office of any such commissioner shall be deemed vacant, except that any commissioner who is removed from a district by redistricting may continue to serve during the balance of the term of office.*

### **2.4 Terms of office**

*Each commissioner shall be elected for a term of four (4) years, beginning on the second Tuesday after election, and continuing after such term until his or her successor is elected and qualified. Terms shall be staggered so that one more or one less than half of the commissioners elected from residence areas are elected every two years.*

### **2.5 Salary and other compensation**

*Salary and other compensation of the county commissioners shall be the same as those set by general law for the county commissioners of non-charter counties.*

### **2.6 Vacancies and suspensions**

*Vacancies in any county commissioner's office or other elected county office shall be filled in accordance with the Constitution and general laws of Florida, except that the filling of any vacancy by election shall be on a non-partisan basis as provided in this Charter. Commissioners and other elected county officers may be suspended or removed from office in accordance with the Constitution and general laws of Florida, and in addition may be recalled from office as provided in this Charter.*

### **2.7 Meetings**

*The organizational meeting of the Board of County Commissioners shall be held on a date in December of each year which is established by the Board of County Commissioners in the County Administrative Code. At its organizational meeting the Board of County Commissioners shall elect a chair and vice-chair by majority vote to serve for a period of one (1) year, and shall each year thereafter elect from its membership a chair and a vice-chair, who may succeed themselves.*

*The Board of County Commissioners shall provide by resolution for the location, time and place for holding all regular meetings of the Board of County Commissioners. [as amended January 1, 2007]*

**2.7.1 Special meetings.** *Special meetings may be held on call of the chair or two (2) or more commissioners. Upon call for a special meeting, the County Manager shall give adequate public notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting in accordance with the procedures established in the administrative code. Action by the Board of County Commissioners at a special meeting shall be limited to the purpose for which the special meeting was called.*

**2.7.2 Location of meetings.** *The Board of County Commissioners shall meet at the county seat except that it may determine by resolution, from time to time, the place or places within the county at which the Board of County Commissioners shall meet for the purpose of conducting its business, provided that the notice of the time and place shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county at least one (1) week prior to the holding of any such meeting outside the county seat. Such notice shall contain an agenda of all matters to be acted upon.*

## **2.8 Powers**

*The Board of County Commissioners shall have all jurisdiction and powers which are now and which hereafter may be granted to it by the Constitution and laws of Florida, provided that such powers shall be exercised in a manner consistent with this Charter. The Board of County Commissioners, in addition to the powers and duties provided in the Charter, shall have the specific powers and duties to:*

*(1) Appoint and reappoint the County Manager by a vote of a majority of the entire Board of County Commissioners, and remove the County Manager during a contract term by either a majority vote of the entire Board of County Commissioners at each of two successive regular meetings or by a majority plus one vote of the entire Board of County Commissioners at one meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, which meeting may be a regular meeting or a special meeting.*

*(2) Adopt such ordinances as may be necessary to carry out both county and municipal powers and purposes; except that the Board of County Commissioners shall not have the power currently granted by law to municipalities to impose a utility or public services tax.*

*(3) Review the budgetary requests including salaries and make the final budgetary determinations and appropriations for all county governmental operations including but not limited to county management, all administrative departments of the government, adjustment boards and special authorities and tax districts which request a portion of the millage levied for county purposes under the Constitution of Florida or such other millage as may be levied by the county for municipal service districts, excepting the school system.*

*(4) Adopt by a two-thirds vote of the entire Board of County Commissioners such rules of parliamentary procedures as shall be necessary for the orderly transaction of the business of the Board of County Commissioners.*

(5) *Designate which officers and employees shall be bonded and fix the amount and approve the form of the bond.*

(6) *Adopt an Administrative Code. The Administrative Code shall organize the administration of county government and set forth the duties, powers and operating procedures of all County officials, agencies and departments under the Board of County Commissioners. The Administrative Code shall not apply to the elected county constitutional officers*

(7) *Exercise any power of the County not lodged in any other office by this Charter.*

## **2.9 Legislative procedures**

*The Board of County Commissioners may take official action only by the adoption of ordinances, resolutions or motions. Except as otherwise provided by this Charter, all ordinances, resolutions or motions shall be adopted by majority vote of the entire Board of County Commissioners in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and laws of Florida. A majority of the entire Board of County Commissioners shall constitute a quorum and the concurrence of a majority of the entire Board shall be required to adopt, amend or repeal any ordinance. The concurrence of a majority of those present shall be required to adopt, amend or repeal a resolution or motion under the terms of this provision. All commissioners in attendance, including the chair or presiding officer, shall vote on all Board of County Commissioners actions except when prevented from doing so by a provision of general law.*

## **2.10 Code of ordinances**

*The Board of County Commissioners shall maintain a current codification of all ordinances. Such codification shall be published and made available for distribution on a continuing basis.*

## **2.11 Public Notice and Information**

*In addition to any notice required by law, the Board of County Commissioners shall use the Internet, or any other widely available and economically feasible technology hereafter developed and specified in the Administrative Code, to provide the public with convenient and timely access to its regular and special (non-emergency and non-confidential) meeting agendas, including the information provided to the Board for its consideration. The failure of the Board to provide such information shall not invalidate any action as to which all statutorily required notice has been provided, but such failure may be deemed nonfeasance in office. The Board shall also adopt measures to ensure that such information is available for the meetings of any subordinate boards for which any notices in addition to those required by Section 286.011, Florida Statutes, are required to be published.*

*[as amended November 7, 2006].*

**ARTICLE 3**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH: COUNTY MANAGER**

**3.1 County Manager: qualifications**

*There shall be a County Manager who shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners. The County Manager shall be chosen on the basis of his or her professional training, executive and administrative experience and qualifications. The County Manager need not be a resident of the County at the time of appointment but shall maintain residency within the county during the tenure of office and shall not engage in any other business or occupation without the express approval of the Board of County Commissioners.*

**3.2 Compensation and terms of employment**

*The Board of County Commissioners shall establish the salary for the County Manager at a level which is commensurate with the requirements of the position and shall at least annually review the performance and salary. Terms and conditions of compensation and employment shall be set forth in a contract.*

**3.3 Powers and duties**

*The County Manager shall be head of the administrative branch of county government, and shall be responsible to the Board of County Commissioners for the proper administration of all affairs of the county. The County Manager shall attend all regular and special meetings of the Board and shall have the right to participate in its discussions. The County manager shall prepare and submit the annual operating and capital program budgets to the Board of County Commissioners, and execute the budget and capital programs in accordance with appropriations and ordinances enacted by the Board of County Commissioners.*

*The County Manager shall:*

- (1) Administer and carry out the directives and policies of the Board of County Commissioners and enforce all orders, resolutions, ordinances, and regulations of the Board to assure that they are faithfully executed.*
- (2) Report to the Board on action taken pursuant to any directive or policy within the time set by the Board and provide an annual report to the Board on the state of the county, the work of the previous year, and any recommendations as to actions or programs the administrator deems necessary for the improvement of the county and the welfare of its residents.*
- (3) Provide the Board, or individual members thereof, upon request, with data or information concerning county government and to provide advice and recommendations on county government operations to the Board.*
- (4) Establish the schedules and procedures to be followed by all county departments, offices, and agencies in connection with the budget and supervise and administer all phases of the budgetary process.*

(5) *Prepare and submit to the Board after the end of each fiscal year a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the county for the preceding year and submit his or her recommendations.*

(6) *Supervise the care and custody of all county property.*

(7) *Recommend to the Board a current position classification and pay plan for all positions in county service.*

(8) *Develop, install, and maintain centralized budgeting, personnel, legal, purchasing and other administrative procedures and systems.*

(9) *Organize the work of county departments, subject to an administrative code developed by the manager and adopted by the Board, and review the departments, administration and operation of the county and make recommendations pertaining thereto for reorganization by the Board.*

(10) *Employ, supervise, discharge, or remove any employee under the jurisdiction of the Board pursuant to procedures adopted by the Board.*

(11) *Negotiate leases, contracts, and other agreements, including consultant services, for the county, subject to approval of the Board, and make recommendations concerning the nature and location of county improvements. Ensure that all terms and conditions in all leases, contracts, and agreements are performed and notify the Board of any noted violation thereof.*

(12) *Order, upon advising the Board, any agency under the manager's jurisdiction as specified in the administrative code to undertake any task for any other agency on a temporary basis if he or she deems it necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the county government to do so.*

(13) *Perform such other duties as may be required by the Board of County Commissioners.*

### **3.4 Non-interference by Board of County Commissioners**

*Except for the purpose of inquiry and information, members of the Board of County Commissioners are expressly prohibited from interfering with the performance of the duties of any employee of the county government who is under the direct or indirect supervision of the County Manager by giving said employee or employees any instruction or directives. Such action shall be malfeasance within the meaning of Article IV, Section 7(a) of the Florida Constitution. However, nothing contained herein shall prevent a County Commissioner from discussing any county policy or program with a citizen or referring a citizen complaint or request for information to the County Manager or County Attorney. [as amended November 7, 2006].*

### **3.5 Temporary absence or incapacity**

*The Board of County Commissioners may appoint an acting manager in the case of vacancy or temporary absence or disability of the County Manager, until a successor has been appointed and qualified or until the County Manager returns.*

## **ARTICLE 4** **ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS**

### **4.1 Initial departments**

*The initial departments of the Board of County Commissioners shall be those that exist upon the adoption of this Charter. Departments may be created, revised, merged or abolished by the Board of County Commissioners.*

### **4.2 Department heads**

*Department heads shall be appointed, supervised and terminated by the County Manager, and shall be employees at will and shall be responsible to the County Manager. The County Manager shall have the sole authority to terminate any department head with or without cause. The decision of the County Manager to terminate a department head may be appealed to the Board of County Commissioners pursuant to policy adopted by the Board.*

## **ARTICLE 5** **COUNTY OFFICERS**

### **5.1 County constitutional officers**

*The constitutional offices of Sheriff, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Clerk of the Circuit Court, and Supervisor of Elections shall remain as elected constitutional officers, and their powers, duties and functions will not be altered by this Home Rule Charter. The constitutional officers shall perform their executive and administrative functions as specified by law. The Clerk of the Court shall be ex officio clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, auditor, recorder and custodian of all county funds.*

### **5.2 Non-partisan election of county officers**

**5.2.1 Non-partisan offices.** *The County Commissioners, the County Attorney, the Superintendent of Schools and the County Constitutional Officers shall be elected on a non-partisan basis.  
[as amended November 7, 2006].*

#### **5.2.2 Non-partisan election procedures.**

*(a) The name of an unopposed candidate for an office provided to be non-partisan by this Charter shall not appear on any ballot, and such candidate shall be deemed to have voted for himself or herself at the general election.*

*(b) If two or more candidates, neither of whom is a write-in candidate, qualify for such an office, the names of those candidates shall be placed on the ballot at the first primary election. If any candidate for such office receives a majority of the votes cast for such office in the first primary election, the name of the candidate who receives such majority shall not appear on any other ballot unless a write-in candidate has qualified for such office. An unopposed candidate shall be deemed to have voted for himself or herself at the general election. If no candidate for such office receives a majority of the votes cast for such office in the first primary election, the names of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes for such office shall be placed on the general election ballot. If more than two candidates receive an equal and highest number of votes, the name of each candidate receiving an equal and highest number of votes shall be placed on the general election ballot. In any contest in which there is a tie for second place and the candidate placing first did not receive a majority of the votes cast for such office, the name of the candidate placing first and the name of each candidate tying for second shall be placed on the general election ballot.*

*(c) The candidate who receives the highest number of votes cast for the office in the general election shall be elected to such office. If the vote at the general election results in a tie, the outcome shall be determined by lot.*

**5.2.3 Qualification by petition.** *A candidate for non-partisan office may qualify for election to such office by means of the petitioning process provided in general law.*

**5.2.4 Other provisions.** *In all respects not expressly provided in this charter, non-partisan elections shall be governed by the procedures set forth in general law for non-partisan school board elections; provided that nothing therein shall impair the constitutional rights of candidates to freedom of expression and association.*

## **ARTICLE 6 POWERS RESERVED TO THE PEOPLE: INITIATIVE AND RECALL**

### **6.1 Initiative**

*The electors of Columbia County shall have the right to initiate county ordinances in order to establish new legislation that is not in conflict with the State Constitution, general law or this Charter, and to amend or repeal existing ordinances when such amendments or repeal are not in conflict with the State Constitution or general law, upon petition signed by a number at least equal to seven percent of electors qualified to vote in the last preceding general election; provided that the number shall contain at least seven percent of the qualified electors in three or more commission election districts. Any citizen also has a constitutional right to instruct representatives and petition for redress of grievances.*

**6.1.1 Procedure for petition.** *The sponsor of an initiative shall, prior to obtaining any signatures, submit the text of a proposed ordinance to the Supervisor of Elections, with the proposed ballot summary and the form on which signatures will be affixed and obtain a dated receipt therefor. Any such ordinance shall embrace but one subject, and matter directly connected therewith. The sponsor shall cause a notice of such submission to be published within fourteen days after the date of submission, in a newspaper of general circulation in the County. The allowable period for obtaining signatures on the petition shall be completed not later than six months after initial receipt of the petition by the Supervisor of Elections.*

*The sponsor shall comply with all requirements of general law for political committees, and shall file quarterly reports with the Supervisor of Elections stating, to the best of the sponsor's information and belief, the number of signatures procured. The time and form of such reports may be prescribed by ordinance. When a sufficient number of signatures is obtained, the sponsor shall thereupon submit signed and dated forms to the Supervisor of Elections and upon submission shall pay all fees required by general law. The Supervisor of Elections shall, within sixty (60) days after submission, verify the signatures thereon, or specify a reason for the invalidity of each rejected signature if the petition is rejected for insufficiency of the number of valid signatures. If the petition is rejected for insufficiency of the number of signatures, the sponsor shall have an additional thirty (30) days within which to submit additional signatures for verification. The Supervisor of Elections shall, within thirty (30) days verify the additional signatures. In the event sufficient signatures are still not acquired, the petition initiative shall be rendered null and void and none of the signatures may be carried over onto another identical or similar petition.*

*6.1.2 Consideration by Board of County Commissioners. Within sixty (60) days after the requisite number of names has been verified by the Supervisor of Elections and reported to the Board of County Commissioners, the Board of County Commissioners shall give notice and hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance according to law and vote on it. If the board fails to enact the proposed ordinance, it shall, by resolution, call a referendum on the question of the adoption of the proposed ordinance to be held at the next general election occurring at least forty-five (45) days after the adoption of such resolution. If the question of the adoption of the proposed ordinance is approved by a majority of those registered electors voting on the question, the proposed ordinance shall be declared by resolution of the Board of County Commissioners to be enacted and shall become effective on the date specified in the ordinance, or if not so specified, on January 1 of the succeeding year. The Board of County Commissioners shall not amend or repeal an ordinance adopted by initiative prior to the next succeeding general election, without the approval of a majority of the electors voting at a referendum called for that purpose.*

*6.1.3 Limitation on ordinances by initiative The power to enact, amend or repeal an ordinance or amend this Charter by initiative shall not include ordinances or provisions relating to administrative or judicial functions; the county budget; debt obligations, capital improvement programs, salaries of county officers and employees, the assessment or collection of taxes; or matters inconsistent with the Charter, the general laws of Florida, or the Florida Constitution.*

## **6.2 Recall**

*The County Commissioners shall be subject to recall as provided by general law. Any elected constitutional county officer may be recalled in the manner provided by general law for recall of a county commissioner of a charter county. A successor to the unexpired term of office of any recalled commissioner or elected constitutional county officer shall be selected in the manner provided by the Constitution or general laws of Florida for filling of vacancies in office after recall in charter counties.*

**ARTICLE 7**  
**SPECIAL DISTRICTS AND AUTHORITIES**

*As provided in Article VIII, §1(g) and §6 of the State Constitution, the Board of County Commissioners may by ordinance amend or repeal any local or special act of the Legislature applicable solely to the unincorporated area of the County.*

**ARTICLE 8**  
**MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

**8.1 Effective date**

*This Charter shall become law when approved by a majority of those electors voting on the matter in a referendum to be held in the county in November 2002 under the provisions of the Constitution and laws of Florida. The Charter Government shall assume all powers and duties provided by this Charter on the first day of January 2003, the effective date of this Charter.*

**8.2 Transition**

**8.2.1 Continuation of laws, ordinances and contracts.** *Unless expressly provided otherwise in this Charter, the adoption of this Charter shall not affect any existing contracts or obligations of Columbia County; the validity of any of its laws, ordinances, regulations, and resolutions; or the term of office of any elected county officer, whose term shall continue as if this Charter had not been adopted.*

**8.2.2 Initial county commissioners.** *The persons comprising the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners on the effective date of this Charter shall become the initial members of the Board of County Commissioners of the charter government and shall perform the functions thereof until the expiration of their terms or until qualification of their successors as provided by law.*

**8.2.3 Initial County Manager and attorney.** *The County Administrator and County Attorney serving on the effective date of this Charter shall serve as the County Manager and County Attorney respectively.*

**8.2.4 Employee continuation** *All employees of the former county government shall on the effective date of this Charter become employees of the county government created by this Charter. All existing wages, benefits, collective bargaining certifications and agreements, contracts and conditions of employment shall continue, until modified by lawful action of the Board of County Commissioners.*

**8.2.5 Continuation of agencies and advisory bodies.** *All existing appointments or designations of non-governmental agencies or corporations to act as official agencies of the County shall remain in full force and effect in accordance with their original terms, until amended or terminated by the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with the terms of such appointment and the provisions of this Charter. All members of advisory boards, resource groups or committees appointed for terms expiring after the effective date of this Charter shall continue to serve their terms without necessity of reappointment under this Charter.*

**8.2.6 Outstanding bonds.** *All bonds, revenue certificates, and other financial obligations of the county outstanding on the effective date of this Charter shall be obligations of the charter government. All actions taken by the former government relating to the issuance of such obligations are hereby ratified and confirmed. Payment of such obligations and the interest thereon shall be made solely from and charged solely against funds derived from the same sources from which such payment would have been made had this Charter not taken effect.*

### **8.3 Charter amendment**

**8.3.1 Amendment by Board of County Commissioners.** *The Board of County Commissioners, upon the concurrence of not fewer than a majority plus one of its entire membership, shall have the authority to propose by ordinance amendments to this Charter not inconsistent with the State Constitution or with general law.*

**8.3.2 Amendment by petition.** *Amendments to this Charter, not inconsistent with the State Constitution or with general law, may be proposed by a petition signed by a number of electors at least equal to ten per cent of the number of electors qualified to vote in the last preceding general election; provided that the number shall contain at least ten percent of the number of such qualified electors in three or more commission election districts; and further provided that any such amendment shall embrace but one subject and matter directly connected therewith. The sponsor of an amendment shall, prior to obtaining any signatures, submit the text of the proposed amendment to the Supervisor of Elections, with the proposed ballot summary and the form on which signatures will be affixed. The procedures for initiative petitions set forth in Section 6.1.1 of this Charter shall thereafter be followed. The power to amend this Charter by initiative shall not extend to administrative or judicial functions; the county budget; debt obligations, capital improvement programs, salaries of county officers and employees, the assessment or collection of taxes; or matters inconsistent with the Constitution or general laws of Florida.*

**8.3.3 Amendment referendum** *The Board of County Commissioners shall cause any Charter amendment proposed under section 8.3.1 or 8.3.2 to be submitted to the electors for their approval. If a general election is scheduled more than sixty (60) days after the proposed amendment is proposed or validated, the question shall be placed on the ballot at a special election held concurrent with the general election, or at any earlier special election called for that purpose. Notice of said referendum, together with the language of the proposed amendment, shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation in the county, at intervals of at least seven (7) days, but not less than five (5) nor more than thirty (30) days prior to the referendum. Passage of proposed amendments shall require approval of a majority of electors voting in said election.*

### **8.4 Charter review**

*Not later than July 1 of the year 2011 and of every eighth year thereafter, the Board of County Commissioners shall appoint a Charter Review Commission to review the Charter of the county. The Charter Review Commission shall be appointed in the same manner as a Charter Commission under Section 125.641 of the Florida Statutes as that section now exists or may be hereafter amended. The commission shall be funded by the Board of County*

*Commissioners and shall be known as the "Columbia County Charter Review Commission." It shall, within one (1) year from the date of its first meeting, present to the Board of County Commissioners its recommendations for amendment or revision of the Charter or its recommendation that no amendment or revision is appropriate. If amendment or revision is to be recommended, the Charter Review Commission shall conduct three (3) public hearings, at intervals of not less than ten (10), nor more than twenty (20), days, immediately prior to the transmittal of its recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners shall schedule a referendum on the proposed charter amendments or revisions concurrent with the next general election. The Charter Review Commission may remain in existence until the general election for purposes of conducting and supervising education and information on the proposed amendments or revisions.*  
*[as amended November 7, 2006].*

#### **8.5 Severability and validity**

*If any part of this Charter is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder thereof shall remain in full force and effect. It is the intent of the people of Columbia County that the provisions of this Charter with respect to the non-partisan election of County Commissioners are an exercise of their constitutional prerogative to provide for their governing body under Article VIII, section 1(e) of the Constitution of Florida; and that the provisions of this Charter with respect to the non-partisan election and recall of the county constitutional officers are an exercise of their constitutional prerogative to choose county officers in another manner or to abolish such offices as provided in Article VIII, section 1(d) of the Constitution of Florida. To the extent that it is necessary to the protection of these prerogatives of self-government, offices under this Charter are deemed created by the people of Columbia County through this Charter, and all of the powers and duties conferred by general law upon offices of like name in non-charter counties are transferred to the offices of the same name under this Charter. This Charter shall not otherwise be construed to alter, transfer, diminish or abolish any of the powers or duties of such offices now or hereafter existing under the Constitution and general laws of Florida.*

BCC Approved: 2/7/13

Amendments Approved in General Election 11/3/12

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