

## History of Reports and Actions Regarding Redevelopment of the Fairgrounds Site

- In 2002, the County obtained an appraisal of the Fairgrounds properties. The appraisal, completed by Weigel-Veasey Appraisers, Inc., concluded that the Fairgrounds infrastructure had a value of approximately \$7.2 million, not including land. At that time, the Board directed staff to develop a scope of services for an economic feasibility report to determine the demand for redevelopment of the site, to work closely with the North Florida Fair Association on a relocation site, and to obtain public input from the neighborhood to be included in the report.
- The 2005 Fairgrounds Economic Feasibility Report (Report), prepared by Strategic Planning Group, Inc., addressed the possible redevelopment of the Fairgrounds, and provided a market analysis in order to determine the potential land uses that could be supported in the future at the Fairgrounds location, including development feasibility. The Report assessed the 2004 value of the Fairgrounds parcels encompassing 103.7 acres (excluding the Cox Stadium site, its parking lot, and the Leon County Cooperative Extension Office) at \$5.9 million. The Report concluded that large-scale redevelopment of the Fairgrounds site would not be feasible for 8 to 10 years (2013-2015), but would be subject to changing market conditions. The Board accepted the Economic Feasibility Report during a February 25, 2005 workshop. Based on the current market situation and past trends, it is reasonable to assume that any large-scale redevelopment of the site would not be feasible until after 2015. Staff was directed to begin to identify an alternative site for the future relocation and redevelopment of the North Florida Fairgrounds.
- In April 2006, County staff identified a 114-acre parcel near the corner of Capital Circle Southeast and Woodville Highway, referred to as the “Flea Market Tract” due to its location across from the Flea Market. The United States Forest Service (USFS) advised that this site was no longer manageable as a national forest, and that they planned to sell the property upon Congressional authorization. The USFS intended to use the proceeds of the sale to purchase additional environmentally sensitive lands in North Florida. County staff verified the 114-acre parcel as a prime property for the relocation of the North Florida Fairgrounds and the Board directed staff to work with USFS to seek Congressional approval for the sale of this parcel.

The relocation of the Fairgrounds was an ongoing legislative effort of the County and a key component of Leon County’s Southern Strategy to reinvigorate the south side of Leon County. While the County and the USFS were not able to secure the Congressional authorization for surplus the Flea Market tract, the Nature Conservancy presented a land exchange opportunity that would allow the County to secure the Flea Market tract without Congressional authorization. This opportunity was presented to the Board on April 13, 2010.

- At the April 13, 2010 Board meeting, there was considerable and lengthy discussion of Agenda Item #15, “Authorize the Purchase of the Flea Market Tract on Capital Circle Southeast for the Future Relocation of the North Florida Fairgrounds”. The Board, however, accepted the staff report and took no further action to acquire the Flea Market Tract.

- At the May 11, 2010 Board meeting, the Board directed staff to “bring an agenda item on developing a scope of services, preparing for a Request for Proposals (RFP), on the feasibility of the redevelopment of the existing Fairgrounds site to include current zoning and land use regulations/permits, an urban land use planning analysis on the feasibility of the redevelopment of the existing Fairgrounds site.”
- At the August 17, 2010 Board Meeting, the Board authorized the County Administrator to issue a Request for Qualifications for a North Florida Fairgrounds Redevelopment Study, approved a Budget Amendment Request realizing \$75,000 from the General Fund Contingency for the consultant fee, and directed staff to prepare a conceptual Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment for the Fairgrounds parcels to allow for a mixed-use urban development pattern.
- At the March 15, 2011 Board meeting, staff brought an agenda item to the Board seeking approval to award the market feasibility study for the relocation of the Fairgrounds to Real Estate InSync. The Board directed staff to revise the RFP to combine the feasibility assessments for the proposed sports complex and the relocation of the Fairgrounds as one study to determine the best uses of the Apalachee Regional Park, the North Florida Fairgrounds, and the Flea Market tract properties. After several Commissioners expressed concerns about the County’s anticipated FY 2012 budget shortfall on April 12, 2011, the Board declined to issue an RFQ for a comprehensive feasibility assessment of the proposed sports complex and the relocation of the Fairgrounds.
- At the June 28, 2011 Board meeting, the Florida Sports Foundation presented a report that provided an assessment of the County’s current inventory of competitive sport facilities and identified the need for sport venues that would generate an economic impact through the development of sport tourism. Following the presentation, the Board directed staff to bring back an RFQ for an economic feasibility analysis of a competitive sports complex. Contrary to prior direction on this project, the Board requested that the analysis gauge the most appropriate location(s), as determined by the market, rather than imposing site-specific criteria and engaging the consultant for the purposes of master planning a site (e.g. the Apalachee Regional Park or the North Florida Fairgrounds).
- At the July 10, 2012 Board meeting, the Board accepted Real Estate InSync’s Economic Feasibility Assessment of a Sports Complex, and took no further action with regard to funding the proposed sports complex with general revenue. The report recommends an indoor Fieldhouse facility with a minimum of 10 basketball courts, 16 volleyball courts, 12 wrestling mats, 2 lacrosse/soccer fields (100,000 sf facility) at a cost of \$27.5 to \$35.8 million. The Fairgrounds was the third highest ranked site for such a facility with 88 points (O’Connell Property received 90 and Northwood Center 89). However, this contemplated relocation of the Fair to allow for construction of the new sports facility.