Fairgrounds Master Planning Research Project Results
Master Planning Process Overview

**Phase 1, Facilities Assessment:** Evaluated condition of the site, buildings, and grounds; assessed the adequacy and condition of existing site amenities; Identified emerging themes related to the potential for facility improvements.

**Phase 2, Community Input:** Conducted stakeholder interviews, hosted a public meeting, and distributed an online survey to gather input related to the types of improvements and events our community would like to see at the fairgrounds.

**Phase 3, Conceptual Plans:** Provided a menu of options for Council and community consideration which includes multiple concepts and elements as well as a story book of potential architectural themes that reflect the improvements the community and partners envision for the fairgrounds.
Master Planning Project Guiding Principles

1. Developing a **plan to guide investments** and maintain the history and heritage of the Fairgrounds complex as a brand and as a cultural institution;

2. Increase **opportunities for community activities** and use as a destination facility;

3. **Maximize visitor experience** by providing continuous connectivity, improved signage, and other theme-based aesthetic and/or branding elements;

4. **Identifying redevelopment opportunities** to meet current and future community needs including emergency management;

5. **Promote innovation** as a lead theme through research-based planning and innovative projects;
Existing Facilities Assessment – Phase I
## Existing Facilities Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paving</td>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>Existing roads are fair but consider paving current shell roads which could also serve as walkways for outdoor events to frame an “event lawn”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkways</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>No existing walkways in the core area, with severe lack of shading, lighting and urban provisions for the existing and future activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>Need an overall landscape design to provide for an attractive park atmosphere. Planting of a significant number of trees providing shade, color. Unite the complex with the natural vegetation surrounding the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>The existing signage is technologically obsolete as well as insufficient for the current and future needs of the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Existing Facilities Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>Parking areas are sufficient but becomes unusable during heavy rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External lighting</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>Lighting is insufficient and inadequate to satisfy the needs early morning activities (i.e., Farmers Market) and evening community activities/events. Consider solar power to address operating costs of enhanced lighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>With the modified rain patterns (stronger concentrated rain events), a very serious drainage study should adapt the grounds for flooding resiliency. The difficulties have already been felt strongly enough to demand attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>The buildings have been meticulously maintained and provide a great space for community events. Consider upgrades to the Hester &amp; Daugharty building to make it feel less like a warehouse and provide access to the restrooms located inside these buildings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Potential Improvements to Hester & Daugharty Buildings
Community Input Process Results – Phase II
Community Input Process – Phase II

- **Stakeholder interviews**
  - March 21, 2022
  - UF/IFAS Extension, County staff, Fair Association, Farm Bureau, and Cattlemen’s Association.

- **Public meeting**
  - June 16, 2022, at Fairgrounds
  - 28 participants

- **Public survey**
  - May 25 – June 26
  - 336 respondents
Approximately how many times in the previous 12 months have you visited the Volusia County Fairgrounds?
How would you rate the overall quality of the Fairgrounds?
How important are the Fairgrounds to your quality of life in Volusia County?
In your opinion, do the Fairgrounds need improvements
Qualitative Data Themes
## Priorities for Investments – Survey & Meeting Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>PUBLIC SURVEY</th>
<th>PUBLIC MEETING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Add or enhance facilities (i.e., building improvements)</td>
<td>Acquire new property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Add or enhance community events or programs</td>
<td>Add or enhance facilities (i.e., building improvements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Add or enhance amenities (i.e., grounds or equipment improvements/additions)</td>
<td>Improve signage and aesthetics of fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Maintain existing facilities</td>
<td>Improve access to and through the fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Improve signage and aesthetics of fairgrounds</td>
<td>Add or enhance amenities (i.e., grounds or equipment improvements/additions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Improve access to and through the fairgrounds</td>
<td>Add or enhance community events or programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Acquire new property</td>
<td>Maintain existing facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What level of importance should each of the uses described below be given at the Fairgrounds?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Importance*</th>
<th>Investment Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>Agricultural education and associated industry activities (i.e., livestock shows, cracker day, farmer’s market, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>Youth activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>Entertainment for residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>Public/ community facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>Social Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>Events, activities, or infrastructure that highlight environmental awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>Economic development/tourism activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>Highlight innovative technology (i.e., solar energy).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The level reported is the average using the following scale of 0 (not important) to 10 (very important).
Emergent Themes

1. Secure the territorial integrity through acquisition of neighboring parcels.

2. Recondition the grounds, through adequate drainage, lighting, shading/landscaping, renewable energy generation and addressing building deficiencies.

3. Develop an attractive, shaded gathering place for outdoor activities for the community.

4. Develop new venues: Early Florida historic village, an open-air covered facility.
Emergent Themes

4. Incorporate the stewardship of the Volusia County conservation lands assets through a Volusia Forever Conservation and Sustainability Center.

5. Promote education, especially informal and early agricultural education intensifying the use of existing facilities.

6. Prepare for eastside development with widened roads with sidewalks and amenities. Connect with a walking path along Prevatt Ave.

7. Public Communications program: Develop an image. Reformat digital outreach, signage, and increase visibility through celebrations of the 100 years of the Fair (1923-2023) and the 50 years of the Farmer’s Market (1975-2025) as planned landmarks for inaugurations and special events.
Proposals
Proposal 1
Proposes the development of the scope of work within the existing boundaries of the site without the need to purchase additional land. This plan includes:

- the Volusia Forever Conservation Center which will be located adjacent to the existing IFAS offices expanding and sharing the existing demonstration gardens
- a new Open Air Stage
- a new Open Air Arena envisioned with movable bleachers to accommodate multiple functions and events, as well as emergency situations
- a Vegetated Central Lawns that provides 2 shaded paths for patrons from each existing entry way across the site while intersecting in the Celebration Plaza which provides a tensile canopy for additional exhibitions and seating areas
- shaded rest areas are located alongside the Central Lawn within the rain gardens
- an new Early Florida Village located by the west entrance providing a small chapel, demonstration shops and a reception hall for wedding and other events
Taking as an example the successful Depot Park located in Gainesville, FL, the idea to develop an open air stage overlooking the center of the site, anchors the Midway while enhancing aesthetics and drainage issues.

The open arena serves as a nexus that connects the two water bodies providing scenic views on both ends and allowing for cross-ventilation.
Volusia County will take stewardship in the development of the Volusia Forever Conservation Center as the unifying hub that will gather all the information available for locals and visitors as a main touristic attraction that will aid in the propagation and protections of these conservation lands.
The team has explored an alternative location for the Open Air Arena to be located south of the Tommy Lawrence Arena, but due to the current constraints of the site, the Arena will be limited in size and vehicular circulation within it for emergency situations presents additional challenges that alternative 1 to the east of TLA does not have.
The Central Ave. has a very important task, it is responsible for the visual unifications of the site. This green shaded promenade allows patrons to enjoy the grounds comfortably and protected from the hot temperatures. Evergreen trees able to create this type of canopy will endure this spinal core that ties back all the adjacent elements within the site. Rest areas will be located along the avenue to provide shaded seating areas for visitors. The implementation of pavers and/or pervious surfaces under the canopy will aid with issues if drainage and run-off rain water.

The main intersection point of the avenue will be Celebration Plaza, a memorable and sculptural celebration of the legacy and upcoming anniversary of the Fair and the Farmer’s Market that could be displayed for generations to come.
The development of the Volusia Forever Conservation Center to be located on the east adjacent lands provides the opportunity to create and immerse visitors in the real experience of these conservation lands. By providing picnic areas, bird watching towers, elevated walkways, and demonstration habitats, the center will become a destination stop for all travelers.
The proposal of an Early Florida Village will contribute to elevate the VCF as the ultimate educational reference of the history of the area. A very attractive feature that not only can be utilized during the Fair but for spacial occasions such as weddings, receptions and small gatherings, the Village will offer the charm of the old days that is hard to find.
Proposal 3 - west land acquisition

Proposes the same layout as Proposal 1 with the additional west land envisioned as a new Sport Complex Facility which hosts various sport fields, water sports and a camp site on the South west wing. A feasibility study should be conducted to understand which sports are more appropriate for the area.

List of Interventions

1. Volusia Forever Conservation Center
2. Additional Parking
3. Emergency Management HQ
4. Shuttle Service Drop-off / Pick-up
5. Shaded VIP Solar Parking
6. Chapel
7. Early Florida Village (EFV)
8. EFV Square
9. EFV Demonstration Shops
10. EFV Reception Hall
11. Celebration Plaza
12. Open Air Stage
13. Open Air Arena
15. Improves Parking Signage
16. Entrance New Signage
17. Rest Areas
18. Vegetated Central Avenue
19. Grass Seating
20. Demonstration Gardens
21. Enhanced Entry Way
22. Sport Complex Facilities
23. Kids Playground
24. Splash Park
25. Pool
26. Basketball Courts
27. Lacrosse Field
28. Olympic Swimming Pools
29. Football Field
30. Volleyball Court
31. Track Field
32. Camp Site
33. Soccer Field
34. Bleachers
35. Supporting Facilities
36. Kayak Ramp
37. West Entrance
38. South Entrance
Master Plan Proposal 3 - West Land Acquisition  
(apply to options 3 and 4)

The acquisitions of the Kilimanjaro properties will place the VCF as the new sport destination complex in the area. Not only providing various sports alternatives, but also amenities for the community, such as the pools and the children’s park, the camp site or the RV park.

Examples

Figure 56

Figure 57

Figure 58

Figure 59

Figure 60
Master Plan Proposal 4 (east + west land acquisition)

List of Interventions

1. Volusia Forever Conservation Center
2. Additional Parking
3. Emergency Management HQ
4. Shuttle Service Drop-off / Pick-up
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26. Basketball Courts
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28. Olympic Swimming Pools
29. Football Field
30. Volleyball Court
31. Track Field
32. RV Park
33. Soccer Field
34. Bleachers
35. Supporting Facilities
36. Kayak Ramp
37. West Entrance
38. South Entrance

Proposal 4 - east + west land acquisition

Proposes a combination of Proposal 1 and 2 with the acquisitions of both east and west adjacent parcels. The only variation on the west land will be a RV Park located on the SW wing in place of the previous camp site proposal.
Both alternatives for the South-West wing of the Kilimanjaro properties provides lodging venues, one less formal and in a deeper contact with nature as a camp site, and a more formal RV park that could provide a more steady revenue to the site. A great choice for those bikers and visitors that find hard to locate affordable lodging options during events.

Legend:

- **Existing Buildings**
- **Proposed Interventions**
- **Proposed Water Feature**
- **Proposed Rainwater Garden**
- **Forested Areas**
- **Clear Green Areas**
- **Existing Retention Ponds**
- **Existing Circulation**
Phase 1 Improvements

- Recommended for current $750,000 funding allocation and potential $1 million FDACS grant:
  - Upgrade (preferably green) infrastructure to address drainage issues
  - Provide solar powered exterior lighting to expand use
  - Repave existing and pave current shell roads
  - Implement a landscape plan to provide for shade
  - Develop signage to help the community navigate the fairgrounds
Potential Improvements

- Simultaneous to Phase 1 and with alternative funding source(s):
  - Acquire properties to the east of the fairgrounds to develop a Volusia Forever Environmental Education Trail and parking area