Gainesville.
Citizen centered
People empowered

Welcome to Gainesville, Florida!

Gainesville is the center of Alachua County and composes approximately half its population. It is the hub of North Central Florida—90 minutes southwest of Jacksonville, two hours north of Tampa, and two hours northwest of Orlando and its theme parks. Miami and Fort Lauderdale are five hours southeast and Atlanta is five hours north.

Gainesville is a wonderful city and internationally recognized as a place where people go to be healed and educated. It and its surrounding environs are a dream destination for outdoor enthusiasts—an area graced with rolling hills, lakes, upland forests, hammock and prairie, creating a natural playground. The climate is outstanding and make water activities like world-class fishing, canoeing, diving and kayaking accessible year-round. Or, take to the land for birding, hiking, biking, and the unique adventure of climbing trees with a local company that provides fun, safe, year-round tree-climbing events.
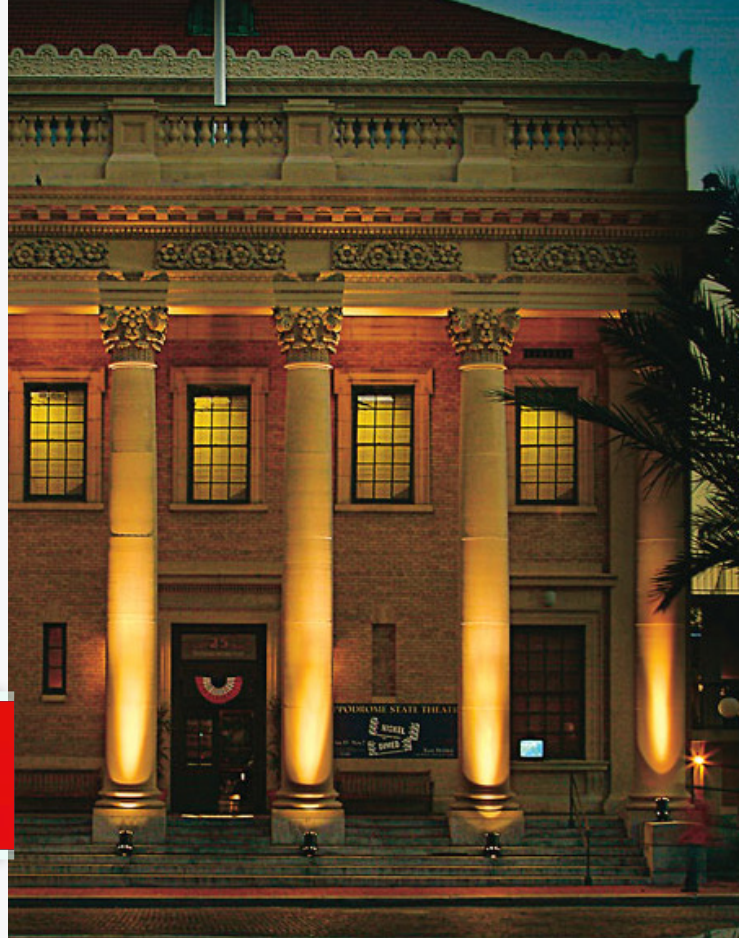
Photo by Randall Stewart

The area is blessed with parks like Paynes Prairie, the San Felasco Hammock Preserve, and Sweetwater Wetlands—just three of the many such places that offer incredible sanctuary to wildlife. Marvel at the unusual Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park, where boardwalks are placed over streams that flow into a limestone sinkhole, and then watch the water disappear underground. Another popular spot is the Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, where giant Victoria lilies grow in the wetlands, with some leaves reaching up to three meters in circumference! The city has numerous active and specialty parks as well. Depot Park in the downtown is symbolic of the best of Gainesville has to offer. This onetime contaminated industrial site now includes 32 acres of ponds, trails, a kids' splash pad, picnic tables, pavilions, low green hills, a splash pad, the Pop-A-Top general store, a boxcar beer and wine garden, and the Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention. The Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo allows for an up-close look at the wildlife, during a student led tour that showcases what working with zoo animals is all about.

Gainesville's downtown is the heart of the city, with a quintessentially quaint gathering of shops, restaurants, theatres and parks. This is a city that feels lively, yet personal. During the day, take a stroll down tree-lined streets, where Spanish moss drapes from 100 year old trees, and then stop for live music at the Bo Diddley Community Plaza. Wednesdays on the Plaza offers vendors selling locally grown vegetables and fresh-baked pastries at the Union Street Farmer's Market (an open-air collection of mainstream retailers as well as unique boutiques). As night approaches, browse the one-of-a-kind and fun shops around the Union Street Station. Mouth-watering cuisine will tempt your palate at the area's many restaurants ranging from Cuban pastries to sushi. Then, take in a play or movie at the well-known Hippodrome State Theatre. Or visit a local theater such as the Acrosstown Repertory Theater or the Gainesville Community Playhouse, the latter being the oldest community theater in Florida.

The city boasts many festivals. In April, Santa Fe College hosts the Spring Arts Festival, where you can view and purchase high-quality artwork and enjoy jazz and blues concerts. In October, Gainesville transforms its downtown into an outdoor arts showcase for the Downtown Festival and Arts Show. The event hosts more than 250 artists annually and adds food, music and a kids' "Imagination Station" to its well-attended attractions.

Another side of Gainesville involves rugged sports centering around the city's beloved University of Florida Gators. The university's teams are consistently nationally ranked and a powerhouse in the Southeastern Conference. Attendance at UF's Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, also known as "The Swamp," regularly exceeds 90,000 football fans. Watching other Gator sports, including women's soccer, gymnastics and volleyball, is popular. Notably, in 2007, the university became the only school in NCAA history to win the men's basketball and football national championships in the same year.

Gainesville hosts a large number of racing competitions. The Gainesville Raceway is one of the fastest tracks on the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) circuit. Each March, it hosts the the Association's Gatornationals, one of the sport's most revered events.

Education thrives in Gainesville. In terms of enrollment, the aforementioned University of Florida (UF) is the fifth largest public university in the United States with over 50,000 students. By campus land area, it is the third largest. Santa Fe College adds another 17,000 students to the community. As a result, the median age in the city is 26, and young people play an enormous role in the social and commercial aspects of Gainesville. Together, with the educational institutions, they create a vibrancy, curiosity and progressiveness seldom found in a community.

Gainesville is recognized as a great place to live! In 2018, Livability.com ranked Gainesville 38th on its list of the "Top 100 Best Places to Live, while Thrillist.com recognized Gainesville as the best college town in America. In 2007, Gainesville was ranked as one of the "best places to live and play" in the United States by National Geographic Adventure. Having a strong university presence means the community is diverse, energetic and very welcoming. Newcomers are quickly embraced and valued for what they bring to the community rather than how long they have lived in the city. Housing prices are reasonable—the average home sales price being a little over $180,000. The city is very safe, and the local public schools provide an excellent education.

Technology is important here and start-ups have a helping hand from the Innovation Hub (housed in Innovation Square, in midtown

Gainesville). It is part of a national trend where research and development districts are being created near college campuses. Just two blocks away lies UF helping to support the Hub offers access to venture capital, innovative thinking and legal advice. The start-ups have been very successful in creating jobs and attracting residents to the surrounding midtown area. The Hub has helped 61 companies. which in turn have created over 750 jobs and attracted over $50 million in private investment. Thanks to their success, the surrounding midtown area is seeing new restaurants and housing, with older buildings being renovated.

The city is well known for its medical facilities. Shands Healthcare is a medical network and its hospital facilities have been recognized as among the 50 best hospitals in the nation. Gainesville is also proud of being recognized as the "Healthiest Community in America" by the Wellness Councils of America.

The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean are only 90 minutes away. If you need to go further, the Gainesville Regional Airport is serviced by multiple airlines, and you can easily catch a cruise ship from Port Canaveral (the second largest cruise port by passenger volume in the world), Jacksonville, and Tampa for that dream vacation.

All in all, Gainesville is simply a great place to live, work, play, and raise a family so please dust off your resume and apply to be our next city manager.

HISTORY

Gainesville was founded in 1853 on the proposed route of the Florida Railroad Company which would stretch from Fernandina Beach to Cedar Key (a point on Florida's west coast about halfway between Tallahassee and Tampa). Following the Civil War, the city prospered as an important agricultural hub involving first cotton, and later citrus and vegetables. Two more railroads reached Gainesville by the 1880s. When the great freezes of 1894–95 and 1899 destroyed the citrus crop, the industry moved south. Phosphate mining and lumbering then became important parts of the local economy. A manufacturing area also grew up south of downtown, near the railroads.

Major changes came to Gainesville early in the 20th century. In 1905 the city offered its first bond issue and the money was used to start a sewer system and pave important streets. The University of Florida opened with 136 students in the fall of 1906. When private companies were unable to provide adequate electric service to Gainesville, the city built a generating plant, which became operational in 1914.

Gainesville participated in the national economic boom that followed the end of World War I. It remained solvent throughout the Great Depression and unemployment was lower than in most of the country. Agriculture continued to be a mainstay and, along with the University of Florida, helped stabilize the local economy.

Changes in city government occurred in the 1920s. The city changed its charter to add a city manager. The police force was increased from three men to nine, and a desk sergeant was available to answer a telephone 24 hours a day. Increasing demand for electricity led the city commission to consider contracting with Florida Power and Light rather than issuing bonds to expand the city generating capacity. The voters, however, disagreed and passed an

Table 1: Principal Employers, Gainesville, FL

Employer	Industry	Employees
University of Florida	Education	28,118
UF Health	Healthcare	12,959
VA Medical Center	Healthcare	6,250
Alachua County School Board	Education	3,943
City of Gainesville	Government	2,120
North Florida Regional Medical Center	Healthcare	2,098
Gator Dining Services	Food Services	1,200
Nationwide Insurance	Insurance	973
Alachua County	Government	812
Publix Supermarkets	Retail	783

Source: Gainesville, FL 2018 CAFR

of the century, the University of Florida had an enrollment of 44,000 students, was considered a premier university, and had become one of the major research institutions in the South.

The surrounding areas of the county also changed dramatically in the postwar years. By 1970 Alachua County had 104,000 inhabitants with three-fourths of them residing in or around the Gainesville city

amendment to the city charter forbidding it.

World War II brought further economic prosperity and population growth to Gainesville. Even before the United States entered the war, the opening of Camp Blanding brought soldiers and their families to the city. The airport, which was built with New Deal money, in the 1930s was improved and became Alachua Army Airbase. Agriculture prospered and local business received contracts to produce military supplies. Building construction also increased. The university was used to train enlisted men, air cadets and officers.

After World War II, the G.I. Bill meant a major boom in enrollment at the University of Florida. In fact, the population of Gainesville doubled from 1940 to 1950 and Gainesville Regional Utilities had to dramatically expand its water, sewer and electric capacity. By the end

limits. As the retail stores and merchants moved to large malls around I-75 and outside the city, the population began to shift there as well, and Gainesville's downtown area became a professional and government center.

In the 1980s a number of its neighborhoods became historic districts, preserving their unique residential character and protecting the Victorian homes. The city sponsored and supported financially significant restoration projects like the Thomas Center, the Hippodrome, the Seagle, and the American Legion buildings. A new courthouse, new library, and the five-story Union Street Station were built, while older buildings like the Star Garage, the Florida Theater and the Bethel Gas Station were restored.

Today, Gainesville continues to prosper primarily due to the university, health care, and entrepreneurs. See next section.

COMMERCE

See Table 1 (above) for Gaineville Prinicipal Employers.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gainesville continues to grow steadily. The Census Bureau estimated its population in 2018 to be 133,857, an 8% increase over the 2010 population of 124,354. As previously noted,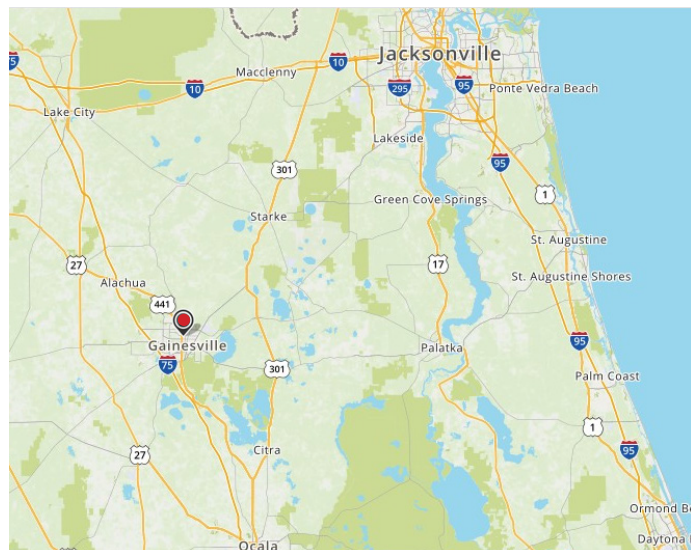 the city's demographics are heavily influenced by the large student population. Examining Table II (below) shows that those between the ages of 15 and 25 compose 36.8% of the city's total population.

Overall, Gainesville composes almost exactly 50% of Alachua County's total population.

CLIMATE

Gainesville's climate is defined as humid subtropical. Summers are wet and warm with high temperatures in the 90's. From October through May, however, the Gainesville area has a climate distinct from much of peninsular Florida with occasional freezing temperatures at night and sustained freezes every few years. The all-time record low of 10°F was reached on January 21, 1985, and the city was struck by a substantial snow and ice storm on Christmas Eve, 1989. Snow was also recorded in 1976, 1996, 2010 and most recently in January of 2016. Tropical storms (that is, hurricanes) rarely have any significant impact on the area.

Table 1: Gainesville Demographics

Estimated Population: 133,857			
Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	66.0%	0 to 15	10.5%
Black	22.0%	15 to 25	36.8%
Asian	6.9%	25 to 45	25.8%
Native American	0.3%	45 to 65	17.1%
Two or More Races	4.8%	65 to 85	8.3%
Total	100%	Over 85	1.5%
Hispanic Ethnicity (all races)	10.7%		

Educational Achievement (over age 25)	
High School or Higher	91.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	43.1%

Other Statistics	
Median Age–Gainesville	26.0
Median Age–U.S.	37.8
Poverty Rate	33.6%
Mean Household Income	$51,019

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

GEOGRAPHY

Gainesville is located in North Central Florida at roughly the same latitude as Houston, TX. It has a total area of 49.1 square miles of which 48.2 square miles is land and 0.9 square miles is water. The area is characterized by gently rolling hills and is an average of 170 feet above sea level.

THE GOVERNMENT

Gainesville operates under the traditional council-manager plan of government whereby the City Commission makes policy and the City Manager oversees the city's day-to-day operations. The Commission is comprised of a Mayor and six commissioners. All serve three-year terms and are limited to two terms. The Mayor and two commissioners are elected at large while the other four commissioners represent geographic districts.

The city government has six charter officers and they include the City Manager, City Attorney, City Auditor, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, General Manager of Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) and the Clerk to the Commission. See Figure 2 (below) for more detail.

Gainesville provides all the typical city services with water, sewer, gas, electric and communications being provided through GRU (which reports directly to the commission, not through the manager.) The city has approximately 1,300 employees while GRU adds another 900. As can be seen from the employee counts, GRU is a very large component of the government. It also serves a significant customer base in the unincorporated county. The general government budget is approximately $126 million and the all funds budget for the city is approximately $354 million.

Figure 2: Gainesville Organizational Chart

City of Gainesville
FY 2019 ADOPTED ORGANIZATION CHART
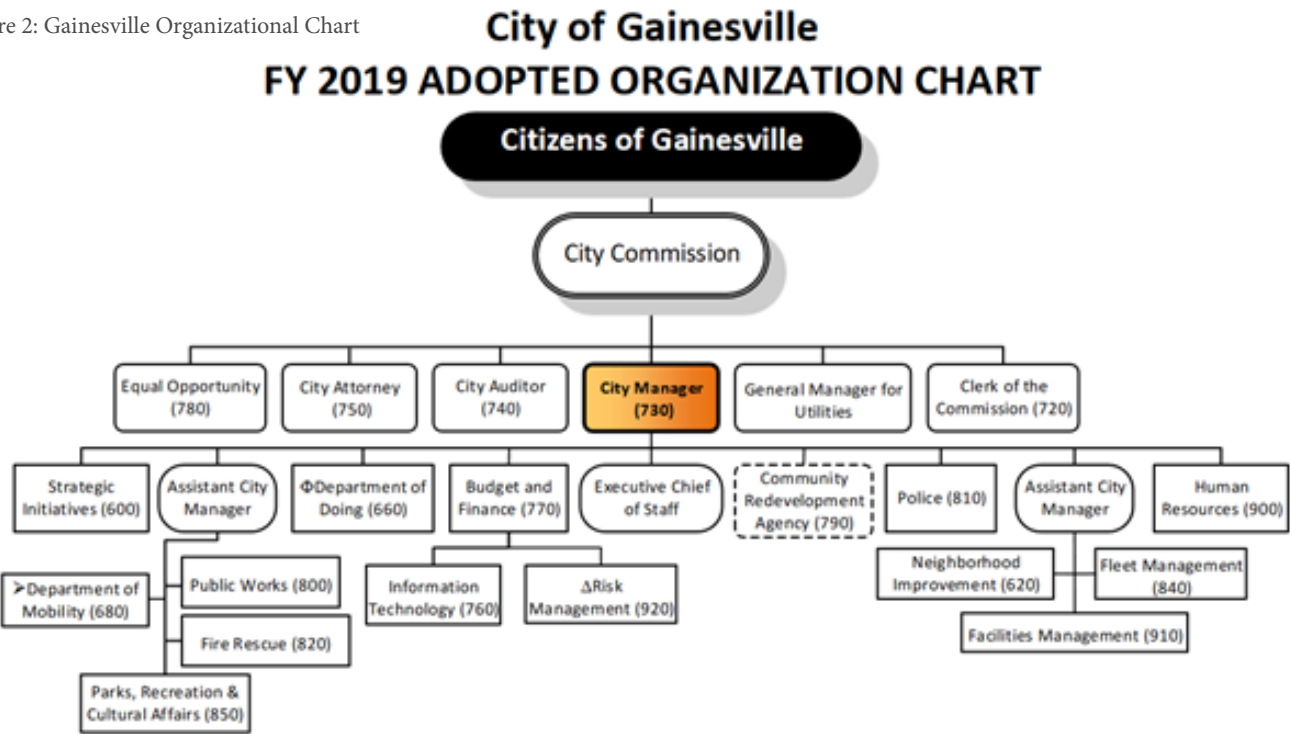
GRU adds another approximately $450 million. Overall, both the utility and the city are in good financial condition. The city has five (5) unions and must manage seven (7) collective bargaining agreements.

The city's leaders truly want the best for their residents, customers and employees. The elected officials work well together, are collegial, and move on once an issue is voted on. They do not let discussions become personal. All are caring. They think highly of their staff and strongly favor empowering them to do their jobs. The leaders are truly innovative and forward thinkers. Seeking progress and embracing change is the way of life in Gainesville. In 2016, the city formed a Blue Ribbon Citizens Panel to evaluate how the city of Gainesville become more competitive. While the report was extensive, its basic recommendations were to, " …make the city of Gainesville a helper, not hurdle", "to shift the culture from No to Yes", "from reactive to proactive," "from prescriptive to facilitative", "from policy-oriented to services-oriented", "from siloed to team-based," and "from expert language or jargon to plain spoken." For the past three years, the city has been on a journey to create a responsive, citizen's centered government. Much has been accomplished but much remains to be done in order to make Gainesville it a leader for years to come!

THE CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Unlike many cities, Gainesville's primary focus is future-oriented. Its elected official are driven to make it the next great American city and strive to find ways to continually improve the quality of life for all its residents, in both small and large ways. Yes, the trash needs to be picked up on time. Yes, resources are tight. Yes, its infrastructure needs to be maintained, and so on. Those, however, are transactional issues and under control. What really matters to the residents of Gainesville is being strategic and constantly striving to make the city a better place to live, work, play, and raise a family—not just for the few but for every element of the community. Gainesville's current budget cites four areas of strategic focus: (1) Supporting a strong economy which includes cultivating job diversity and increasing wages. (2) Fostering greater equity through building equity and vibrant neighborhood (including affordable housing); (3) Planning for [and promoting] a better future (including better youth programs, mobility for all residents, and moving towards zero waste); and (4) Becoming a model (by providing "creative space for the outside-of-the-box thinking that is required for the spark of ingenuity and partnership to thrive in Gainesville"). The city's interest in implementing Smart Cities technology is but one example.

It is not just words here. Residents are willing to spend money to support a higher quality of life for all. For example, it was felt that not all the county's children received adequate nutrition and healthcare. In 2018, 62% of the voters approved establishing the Children's Trust of Alachua County, financed as a special taxing district, to address these needs. At the same time, 68 % of the voters approved a half-cent sales tax to improve school facilities. In 2016, 60% voters approved a half-cent sales tax for land conservation and public parks. The City Commission has stated racial and gender equity (not to be confused with equality) is to be part of the strategic framework that underlies everything the city does—that is, in all its organizational and operational beliefs, policies, practices and procedures. The Commissioners demonstrated its importance recently by unanimously agreeing to dedicate two new staff positions, and to allocate $600,000 to over the next two years in furthering equity for all.

The challenge is to support these initiatives through government action while at the same time, getting government out of the way. That was the focus of culture shift the 2015-2016 Blue Ribbon Citizens Panel recommended and which the city's elected leaders embraced three years ago. Much has been done but much remains. Silos need to continue to be broken down and new practices introduced. Most importantly, however, is getting everyone—throughout the organization and at all levels—to believe in and act in concert with the vision. The task has been likened to turning an aircraft carrier. The chore is massive but once headed in the right direction, it will be difficult to stop or even slow. The city is already better for that and will get even better!

In terms of transactional challenges, the most significant challenge is fiscal. While Gainesville is presently financially sound, costs continue to rise. No one desires to raise taxes to compensate. The situation is complicated by the amount of tax-exempt property in the city. Being an educational and governmental center has many blessings but also means a large amount of developed land does not pay

taxes. Creative ways continue to be needed to address the future funding needs.

The number of major actors the City Manager will need to work with can be challenging. In addition to the typical state, federal and local governmental entities, the University of Florida and Santa Fe College are major institutions. Improvements can be made in all these relationships. Internally, the manager will need to coordinate, satisfy and/or work with not just the elected officials and the City Attorney, but also the City Auditor, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, General Manager of Gainesville Regional Utilities, the Clerk to the Commission and, of course, the unions.

The final challenge/opportunity to mention is economic development. It is an area where the elected officials want to focus. The city's economy is doing very well overall and now is the time, while the national economy is healthy, to capitalize on what is already here and for the city to help it grow for an even brighter future.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The city of Gainesville wants a dynamic and experienced leader who will continue to guide the organization to the citizen centered vision the community and its elected leaders have embraced! The next City Manager will be an action-oriented and progressive leader, who will partner with the City Commission and staff to drive Gainesville to reach its goals. The individual will be someone who will recognize opportunities and seize them, even taking risks, in order to promote and move the city forward.

The next City Manager will be honest and have great integrity. He/she will be energetic while down to earth, and a team player who demonstrates strong leadership skills while conveying sincerity. The best candidate will be someone who can make the Commissioners comfortable that their views are being heard and who will help bring them to consensus. He/she will realize that giving the credit to others is often the best way to get things done.

Gainesville is a city that expects the best from its government. The City Commission wants a City Manager who will build relationships and work to bring everyone together for common goals and good. He/she will need to celebrate and give credit to those who develop new ideas.

Florida has a reputation for transparency and Gainesville has taken it to an even higher level. The next manager must appreciate and be comfortable with it. The individual will be an outstanding communicator in every way and to every element of the community—not just with the elected officials and staff, but with residents, external actors (both governmental and nongovernmental) and with Gainesville's various communities—business, educational, university, non-profits, neighborhood associations, religious, media, and so on). He/she will be willing and able to have both the easy and the unpleasant conversations face to face. The ideal candidate will be someone who listens, is open minded and does not arrive with preconceived ideas. The individual will address all situations in a tactful manner and show upmost respect for everyone. He/she will treat all people equally without regard to position, money or influence, showing dignity to all. The individual will take pains to ensure that information flows inside and outside the organization, as well as up and down. In other words,

Gainesville-City Hall

the manager will take pains to ensure everyone is fully informed and that no one is surprised.

The ideal candidate will be an outstanding manager. The individual will set realistic goals for the staff to achieve, provide the necessary resources, and then allow the staff to see the project through. He/she will expect to be kept informed but will not micromanage. The best candidate will have experience managing a large organization and accomplishing the city's work through his/her managers. The new City Manager will be a mentor who uses inspiration instead of intimidation, and someone the staff likes to work for—not someone they have to work for. He/she will exemplify having fun and finding joy in their work. In other words, Gainesville is seeking an outstanding, seasoned professional manager.

While managing the city's operations is important, the individual will take time to think about and plan for the future. He/she will be strategic, and forward thinking. The ideal candidate will thrive on creativity. The individual will be able to quickly develop a viable implementation plan from what some might consider a "crazy" idea the Commission put forth the night before. The next manager will encourage innovation throughout the organization. Continuing the restructuring of processes and the organization to be more efficient and effective in serving the public will be important. In addition to outstanding

analytical skills, being able to look over the horizon to anticipate and resolve potential problems before they become issues will be critical. Exploring and applying new technologies (such as Smart Cities) to benefit the Gainesville community will help determine whether the manager is successful. At the same time the manager will question everything, always looking for ways to improve.

He/she will work hard to create a sense of pride within city employees, building on their commitment to serve the community and to produce a first class work product. The individual will be someone that the employees respect, and who shows care for them. Building pride and morale will be a top priority. Much will be accomplished through improving communications and treating everyone fairly and with dignity and respect.

The individual will relate well to and understand the needs of both the business and residential communities. The ideal candidate will be professional but also friendly and outgoing. He/she will be comfortable in the community and interact extremely well with the public. Outstanding people skills will be critical. He/she will spend time in the community, meeting with residents and businesses, listening to their concerns and actively working towards finding ways to make solutions possible and happen.

Outstanding customer service is very important here, and the City Manager will be expected to lead the way. It will be a core principle and a way of life. He/she will be someone who works with the Commission, the community, local businesses and regional partners to find solutions to problems, as opposed to someone who tends to find

reasons to say no. That said, he/she will realize you cannot please everyone. Having a thick skin may not be enough. You may have to grow another, tougher layer.

The next City Manager will have at least a bachelor's degree in business or public administration, or an area related to local government management. The ideal candidate will have ten years' experience in city management and expertise in local government management and finance. Skill in intergovernmental relations is a must. Knowledge and experience with Smart Cities, as well as addressing racial and gender equity, are highly desirable. The ideal candidate will know how to pursue external funding; be it grants, legislative set-asides or some other source of funds from out of town. The individual will be expected to make a commitment to Gainesville, viewing this opportunity as the pinnacle and not a steppingstone.

COMPENSATION

The salary will be commensurate with experience and range is $225,000 to $275,000. Benefits are excellent.

PREVIOUS CITY MANAGERS

Historically, Gainesville's City Managers have had lengthy tenures. Of the last three, one stayed nine years, one ten years, and the most recent three years (with 11 total years) with the city.

RESIDENCY

Position requires residency within city limits.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit45@cb-asso.com by July 31st. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or David Collier at (772) 260-1858.

THE PROCESS

Applicants will be screened between August 1st and 28th. Finalists will be selected on September 5th with interviews conducted on September 17th and 18th. A selection is anticipated to be made on September 19th.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Gainesville is a welcoming community that values diversity. It encourages men and women of all races, ethnicities and beliefs to apply. Under Florida law, all applications are a public record and subject to disclosure. A Veteran's Preference will be awarded if applicable and according to Florida Law.

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING