



**REVISED Northwood Parcels Proposal**  
Alliance of Tallahassee Neighborhoods (ATN)  
October 17, 2022

## **Introduction**

This document details ATN's revised response to the City's request for community input on the Northwood property now that the performing arts center will not be included on the site. We continue to urge the City to make the site a model of sustainability and to hire a recognized expert in community development master planning to work with staff and the project consultants.

Our proposal reflects city commission discussions regarding the property, citizen input given at the public meetings at the Senior Center and at the meeting on the nearby Lake Ella parcel, conducted by Commissioner Porter, and from our walk and drive-throughs of the property and neighborhoods. We've developed an integrated, holistic proposal that meets needs and desires identified by citizens.

## **Guiding Planning Considerations**

**1. The entire Northwood parcel should remain under city ownership for the benefit of the entire community.**

Since Mayor Dailey first introduced the notion of purchasing the property at the end of a city commission meeting on April 10, 2019, the guiding consideration was to control the destiny of the site, one of the last large tracts of land centrally located in the city, a lesson learned from a commission trip to Greenville, SC. As Mayor Dailey stated, the site could be "redeveloped as a workforce housing neighborhood that complements an elementary school, a middle school, and Levy Park.... In light of the fact that the city owns the dirt, it gives us the opportunity to control the destiny of the property specifically to what is developed there."

**2. We must take advantage of this golden opportunity for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.**

This is a large parcel, centrally located, and in close proximity to public schools, grocery and retail shops, and parks. It has been described as a site for not just a police headquarters, but for clearly identified and well-documented community needs: affordable and workforce housing and community services. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to address these needs in creative, effective, and caring ways. This site is a call to community, not just a call to development.

**3. To realize this opportunity, we need a public-oriented, creative, and guiding master plan.**

We cannot let the property develop piecemeal. With a public-oriented and creative master plan, this property can become an exemplary model of integrated community spaces and services. We'll lose this potential synergy if we don't act before further decisions are made. Already the police headquarters was sited without regard to what will be on the rest of the property. Going forward we need to create synergy among all the parcels, buildings, functions, designs, and neighborhood interconnections to maximize community use and development.

A good master plan will enhance not only onsite entities, but the neighborhoods and businesses around them. The plan should complement planning for the North Monroe corridor. Northwood is also one point of the "Community Services Triangle" concept that includes the Senior Center and current TPD property at Lake Ella. Planning should not be limited to Northwood site but include the community-based opportunities and interrelatedness of nearby sites, including schools, grocery and retail stores, etc. For that, we need a comprehensive, integrated, and guiding master plan.

- To get the necessary vision-guiding master plan, we need a recognized expert in public-oriented, community development master planning to work with Tallahassee-Leon County planning staff.

We need a master plan whose vision and boldness matches the large size of this unique parcel. This is an opportunity for Tallahassee to create a caring, supportive, respectful community development solution that meets clearly defined needs. We have a clearly competent planning staff. However, the uniqueness of this project, its potential and complexity call out for the targeted use of outside expertise in this type of community project. This approach is common in academic research, business transformations, scientific endeavors, medical innovations. We should use it.

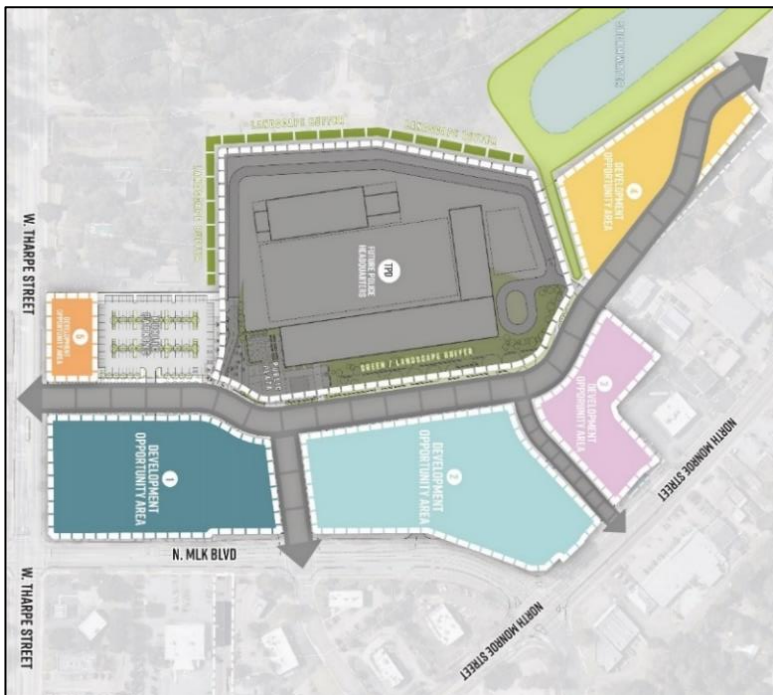
### Our Vision

**Overall, we envision Northwood as a campus-like environment, with interconnected public spaces, linked by shaded and well-landscaped wide walkways and islands of greenery, fountains, bike racks, and ease of movement from parcel to parcel. The site and individual parcels should meet community needs and provide appealing places to live, work, learn, and play. An inviting, exciting place!**

The campus needs an engaging focal point that the whole community can enjoy. The options are unlimited- some ideas include activities for children such as sculptures that children can play in or creative use of the rooftops, such as gardens and other interesting spaces; they could be linked into an inviting “Highline” style park, such as in New York City. The City should engage community youth to help design the space and let planners know what they would like to see.

If the City is to meet its 2050 carbon neutrality goals, this City property should be a model of sustainability. It should be carbon neutral (at a minimum) and carbon negative (as an aspirational goal.)

### Parcel by Parcel Descriptions



Parcel Key	
<b>Parcel 1</b> (dark blue)	Youth Activities Center Housing
<b>Parcel 2</b> (light blue)	Housing Community Resource Center
<b>Parcel 3</b> (lavender)	Community Work Hub Nature Area
<b>Parcel 4</b> (yellow)	Community Conference Center
<b>Parcel 5</b> (orange)	Transit Hub

Services would be offered by community-based agencies, etc. through partnerships and service agreements.

Staging implementation of these community spaces and services will allow time to identify the roles and responsibilities of appropriate City departments and budget resources to build the structures and buy associated equipment and fund operations, staffing, and maintenance.

As construction may be phased in over time, the future footprints could serve as active spaces in the meantime and provide opportunities for additional activities. These could include, for example, raised gardens, picnic areas, small acoustic performance areas, walking and exercise trails with exercise stations, community gardens, outdoor art, or a Farmer’s and Artist’s market space.

**Parcel 1 (Tharpe and MLK)**

**Community Youth Activities Center (South approximately half of parcel)**

Parcel 1, across from Raa Middle School and Reudiger Elementary, is an ideal location for a community activities center oriented to children and youth. This center could function similar to the Sue McCullum Community Center, which hosts an afterschool program but uses the space at other times for other groups and activities. Like the Senior Center, rooms and spaces could be designed to serve multiple purposes, as shown below.

Activities	Spaces
Sports and recreation; study hall; tutoring and classes; computer lab; game rooms; arts and crafts rooms; music, dance and yoga, and theater rooms; quiet space; reading nooks, English and foreign language instruction  Garden space  Digital Information Library satellite	Gymnasium Room with mirrored wall Room with soundproofing Kitchen/ drink and snack room Rooms wired for many computers Classroom size spaces Small meeting room size spaces Storage rooms Garden space  Walking/Running Track around Building Drop off/ Pick Up Zone
<b>Green Space Activities</b>	
Playing Fields - Different sports and games Gardening	

**Affordable Housing (North approximately half of parcel)**

Tallahassee has a desperate need for workforce and affordable housing. Mayor Dailey introduced the idea of buying the Northwood property by saying what a great place it would be for teachers and city employees to live, close to schools, groceries, a park, and buses. A housing development should be an appealing, affordable place to live, built to green standards and integrated with the campus environment.

By “affordable” we don’t mean high-end housing, with a few units reserved for those who pay less. We mean housing that individuals and families with low and middle incomes can afford, which could include subsidized units. This housing should be integrated into the park-like atmosphere of the site, with inviting walkways, benches, and a space for gardens that incorporates places for people to sit and watch others gardening, as this invites participation.

**Parcel 2 (MLK and North Monroe)**

**Affordable Housing (South approximately half of parcel)**

Continued appealing, affordable place to live, built to green standards and integrated with the campus environment.

**Community Programs and Resources Center (North approximately half of parcel)**

We envision this parcel offering access to many community resources and services that would meet both current and future needs and improve lives. Many of these resources could be provided by community partners.

Activities	Spaces
Restorative/Mediated Community Justice/Conflict Resolution Legal Aid Notary Service Career Education and Counseling Services and Referrals Life Skills GED Prep Job Search and Placement Services and Referrals Volunteer Opportunities and Placement Services Non-Profit Forums and Community Outreach Private Sector Forums and Community Outreach Mental Health Counseling Services and Referrals Social Work Services and Referrals Basic Health Screenings and Referrals Public Library Mini-Branch online Services Daycare Training on Site with perhaps drop-off or partial day care, as well as Adult partial-day or drop-off care	Computer Lab/Internet Access Resource/Library Room Quiet reading and Study Area Multi-Purpose Classrooms Meeting rooms Rooms for small groups or 1-on-1's Kitchen/ drink and snack room Storage Rooms  Model Daycare Center for Program Participants; toddler playground
Green Space Activities	Green Spaces
Sports and games Gardening	Playing fields Park benches Picnic areas

**Parcel 3 (North Monroe)**

**Community Work Hub**

Where we work has been shifting and is expected to continue to be more flexible. This parcel could be used as a work hub. The building could house co-working spaces, with wide porches for a community café and eating/ socializing area on the ground floor, along with space for pop-up vendors and artists. The area outside could include space for food trucks. As a relatively open space, the building would be easy to convert to other uses in the future as community needs evolve.

The space between the hub and existing restaurants could include a dog park, which is needed for the residences on-site.

The master plan should also address the future use of property now leased by two restaurants.

**Parcel 4 (Northern interior parcel next to pond)**

**Community Conference Center and Nature Area**

To integrate the four-story police department, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the green pond area, we recommend a two-story conference center that easily fits its environment, much as the city’s Parks and Recreation Headquarters does. It would allow individual meetings and conference-type meetings for community-based organizations and the private sector. Being part of the campus environment, with an observation area facing the pond, it would embody the best of Tallahassee for small-scale gatherings. The pond should remain a natural wildlife observation and drainage area.

The road that runs at this point of the property is drafted to continue to Monticello, which is already a difficult intersection to navigate. To prevent the road from becoming a raceway/thoroughfare through the campus and impacting the already congested Monticello Drive, it could terminate in a cul-de-sac at the conference center.

## **Parcel 5 (Tharpe)**

### **Transit Pavilion for Buses, Trolley, Drop Off and Pick Up**

Looking at the Community Services Triangle and Midtown as a whole, we believe it's time to try again with a circulating trolley that allows neighbors to walk and ride and residents who live farther away to drive or bike and ride to many destinations throughout Midtown, including the Senior Center, the Senior public apartments next to the Senior Center, the merchants of Midtown, the Grove, Lafayette Park, and Lake Ella/current TPD property. To that end, we recommend using parcel 5 to include some car parking (lot already shown in the draft of the property) and a pavilion for trolley and bus riders. This could also include pickup/drop off space for parents and for Uber and Lyft. We note that the city property is currently being used by Raa parents to pick up and drop off their kids for school.

### **Exterior Borders**

Northwood's borders are important both as transitions to other neighborhoods/activities and as attractive and inviting entries into the property. The perimeter sidewalks that run alongside the development should be widened to become promenades (such as those on Franklin Blvd.) They should be well-landscaped on both the road side and the development side. The plan could also include pedestrian bridges to facilitate safe passage between the Northwood campus and the schools, adjoining neighborhoods, the Publix Plaza and the laundry and nearby restaurants, and Levy and Lake Ella parks.

Development on the site should face into the property so as to encourage people to come into the campus. Care will need to be taken to site dumpsters and loading platforms so that they are masked. The view from the interior should be of inviting residences and community centers, and green space for pedestrians. We believe this will require a strong design code so as to create an inviting environment.