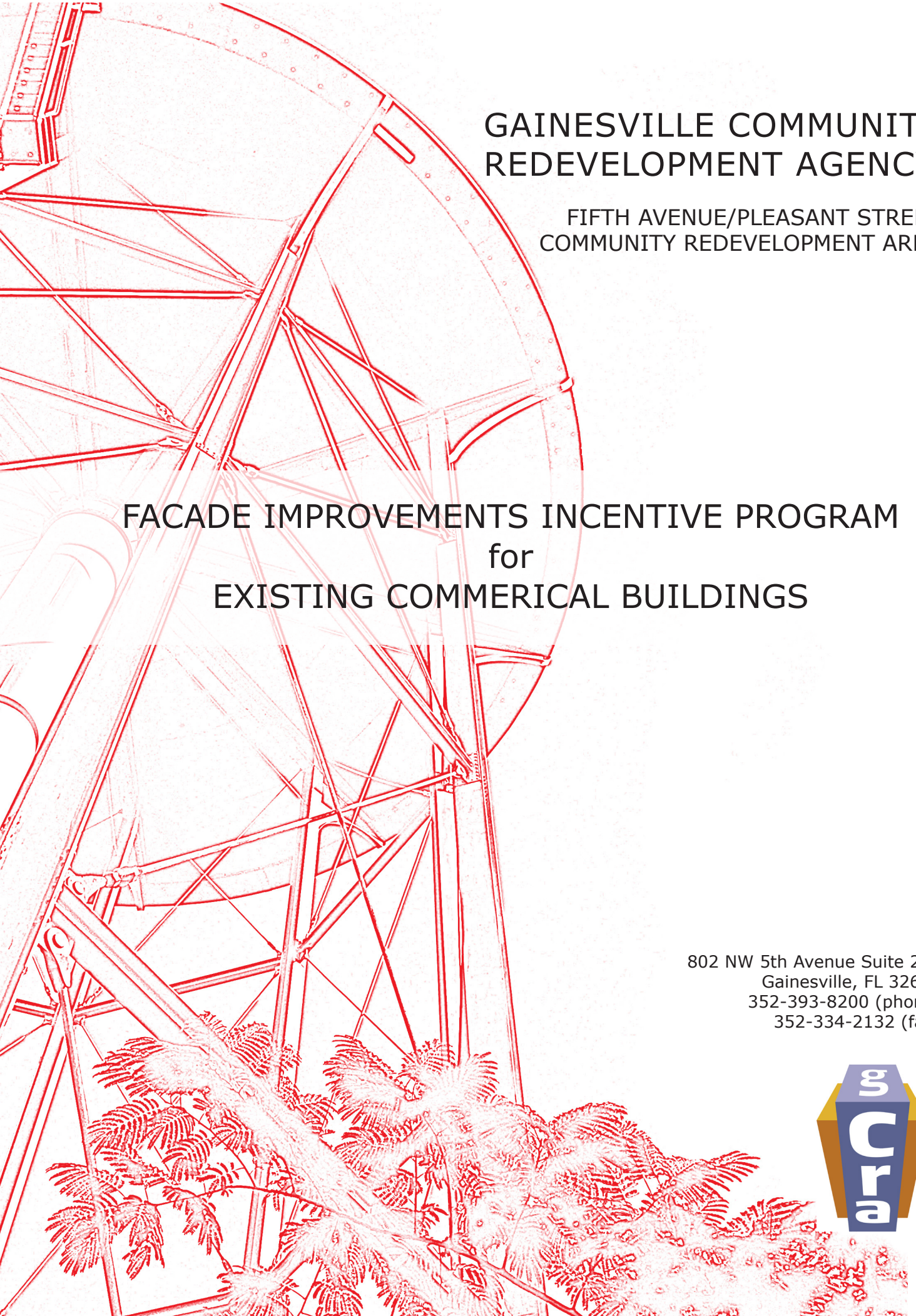

GAINESVILLE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

FIFTH AVENUE/PLEASANT STREET COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS INCENTIVE PROGRAM for EXISTING COMMERICAL BUILDINGS

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FACADE IMPROVEMENTS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

I. Purpose

The Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is offering a competitive, matching façade grant program within the Fifth Avenue/Pleasant Street (FAPS) Redevelopment Area. The program provides an incentive to owners of buildings and/or businesses who wish to improve the exterior appearance of their commercial property. Buildings located along target corridors are eligible for grants up to $10,000 to improve building facades. The façade grant will be awarded as a reimbursement to the applicant upon completion of the project. Applicants are responsible for providing a dollar-for-dollar match for all grants awarded through this program.

II. Applicant Eligibility and Requests for Funding

Who is Eligible:
Building owners or occupants (who have obtained written approval from building owners) in eligible buildings. Eligible buildings must be located on the target corridors identified in this document, and must not have received a façade grant within the last three (3) years. Applicants must provide a dollar-for-dollar match of all grant funding received.

Applicants who have previously received a façade grant within the last 12 months are eligible to re-apply for a supplemental grant for an amount not exceeding 25% of the original grant award for the same building. The supplemental grant is also subject to the funding match provision. If a project has already received the maximum grant award, then the project is ineligible to receive a supplemental grant. Note: preference is given to new projects over supplemental grant applications.

Target Corridors:
Funding is limited to those commercial buildings physically located on the following corridors: NW 5th Avenue and NW 8th Avenue. Buildings must face and have their primary entrances located on these corridors. Preference is given to those buildings located on NW 5th Avenue. Preference is also given to properties with architectural or cultural historic significance.

Matching Funds:
Applicant must commit to expending (at least) a cash match equal to the grant funds sought in the application. The only form of match that will be accepted is the cash value of goods and services used (Work done by business or building owner will not be funded for labor) to improve the façade visible from the target corridor. At the completion of the project, grant recipients will be required to provide documentation of these approved expenses to the CRA. Once the project work and the expense documentation is approved and verified, the CRA will provide payment to the façade grant recipient.

How to Apply:

1. Visit the CRA website, www.gainesvillecra.com, or contact the CRA office at 352.393.8200 to request a grant application. Design assistance may also be provided if/when appropriate, at the discretion of CRA staff.

2. Submit a completed application to the CRA before the application deadline stated in Section V of this document. Only complete applications will be accepted! Applications containing the following items shall be deemed complete:

    - Completed application form
    - Photographs of the existing building conditions
    - Description of the proposed improvements
    - Color sketches and/or digital illustrations of elevations and proposed improvements
    - Description and examples of materials to be used, proposed colors, and the construction procedure
    - Two cost estimates from different sources
    - The general liability insurance certificate and contractor's license for the applicant's selected contractor
    - If the applicant is not the property owner, the application must also include a written statement of agreement with the proposed façade improvements and with the CRA façade program requirements. This statement must be signed by the owner of the property

Eligible Improvements:
Eligible improvements are those found only on the primary public entrance and one additional elevation that are visible from the target corridor. No interior improvements or maintenance activities will be funded. Examples of eligible improvements are listed below; however please be aware that this list is not exhaustive:

- Signage - including removing old signs and the design, production and installation of new signs or renovation of existing signs if compliant with current codes.
- Awnings/Canopies - including the removal of old awnings and canopies and the design, production, and installation of new awnings and canopies.
- Facades - Includes work performed on the exterior storefront of a building such as cleaning masonry (high pressure water or steam - sandblasting is prohibited on masonry structures), painting, re-pointing or mortar joints, woodwork, window and/or door replacement, other repairs or rebuilding historic storefronts.
- Walls, Fencing and Landscaping – Includes work that removes and replaces or adds appropriate fencing and landscaping to hide incompatible uses or negative site elements such as storage yards, outdoor fabrication, work area, or dumpsters.
- Lighting – installation of new exterior lighting
- Façade Materials – repair or replacement of masonry, woodwork, metal work, gutters/downspouts, or other similar materials
- Windows and doors – repair or replacement of windows and/or doors
- Removing and disposing of old façade coverings - (i.e. vinyl and aluminum cladding, window boards)
- Design fees - (not to exceed 5% grant award, up to $500)
- Outdated security features - Removing rollup metal security doors, metal window grates, etc.
- Removing excessive window signage - Reduce window signage to allow 95% window transparency.
- Original building elements - Restoring original decorative building elements.
- Increasing glazing (window area) - Increasing amount of glazing to attain a minimum of 40% of façade area.

The following items are excluded from eligibility for the façade grant: interior improvements, exterior improvements not visible from the target corridors, exterior improvements visible less than 24 hours per day, features designed to be installed temporarily, features that do not meet the applicable provisions of the City of Gainesville Land Development Code including special area plans, activities that are primarily for maintenance (i.e. power washing) except to maintain brick masonry. Generally, roof repair is not eligible unless it is integral to the redesign of the façade. In this case, the portion of the roof work that would be eligible for the grant is at the discretion of the FAPS Redevelopment Advisory Board.

Maintenance items are not eligible for funding: Activities that will be deemed maintenance items are painting, power washing, asphalt sealing, landscape maintenance and other maintenance-type activity. This list is not exhaustive. In the event that painting, power washing, brick repair or similar cosmetic work is proposed to take place in conjunction with significant structural enhancements, then those activities will be eligible for the incentive.

Schedule:
Applicant must commit to finishing the project within a reasonable timeframe appropriate to the work proposed. An appropriate time shall be 12 months for projects involving design, permitting, and construction. The 12 month period begins the day after the grant application is approved by the FAPS Redevelopment Advisory Board. The CRA and grant recipient will negotiate and agree to a work schedule to ensure progress on the project. The schedule will become part of the grant agreement. Schedule modifications/extensions may be administratively considered on a per-project basis, providing the applicant can provide evidence of substantial progress toward project implementation. Grant funds allocated to the project will revert back to the FAPS Redevelopment Area's façade grant fund and the façade redevelopment agreement will terminate if the grant recipient fails to make progress according to the agreed upon work schedule.

III. Requests for Funding

Applications for funding must adhere to the following guidelines outlined below:

- Applications will be evaluated according to a point system (this system is explained in Section IV of this document.) This amount of points a project receives will determine the amount of funding it is eligible to receive. However, the maximum grant potential for any building is $10,000.

- Each storefront will be eligible for a maximum grant of up to $5,000. (A storefront is defined as having a street address and public access to the business.) If a storefront is greater than 30 feet in width or if a building contains multiple store fronts, the building will be eligible for a maximum grant of up to $10,000.

- If the building, regardless of the number of storefronts, has a second elevation or second floor that can be seen from the targeted corridor –and façade improvements are also proposed for this second elevation/ floor – the building will be eligible for a maximum grant of up to $10,000.

- The dollar-for-dollar match provided by the Grant Recipient shall be cash value for goods and/or services. Upon completion of the project, the grant recipient will provide documentation of approved costs to the CRA. The CRA shall verify the expenses and provide reimbursement for the grant amount to the grant recipient.

- Work done by business or building owner will not be funded for labor.

IV. Evaluation of Grant Applications

CRA staff will evaluate applications against the criteria listed below. No partial points will be awarded. Staff will make funding recommendations to the FAPS Redevelopment Advisory Board, which shall approve, disapprove, or modify the recommendations. The Board reserves the right to reject grant applications that in its view, propose inappropriate colors or designs. The Advisory Board's recommendations shall be forwarded to the Executive Director for final action.

A maximum of 70 points are available to each project. Project funding levels will be determined, in part, by how well each application addresses these criteria, according to the formulas listed below.

- Under 10 points = up to 20% of the maximum level of funding eligibility

- 10 – 14 points = up to 50% of the maximum level of funding eligibility

- 15 – 19 points = up to 70% of the maximum level of funding eligibility

- 20 – 34 points = up to 85% of the maximum level of funding eligibility

- 35+ points = up to 100% of the maximum level of funding eligibility

SweetBerries Eatery and Frozen Custard received a facade grant in 2015.

Points criteria will be awarded in the following categories. The points listed are the maximum amount available for each category:

- ♦ Project is physically located along NW 5th Avenue (10 points), or NW 8th Avenue (3 points)

- ♦ Project removes opaque window signage (3 points)
  If the applicant removes opaque window signage either from existing windows or in conjunction with installation of new windows so that no less than 95% of the window is maintained as transparent, up to 3 points will be awarded. Artistic decoration on windows is not counted toward the area restriction.

- ♦ Project transforms the building from the worst to the best case (5 points)
  This is a major transformation that improves the façade condition so that no further improvement would be possible. The project is the highest and best outcome for the building.

- ♦ Project provides improvements to an historic building. (7 points)
  Historic structures are at least 50 years in age and may be notable for either cultural or architectural contributions to the neighborhood.

- ♦ Project advances an appropriate style for this building (3 points)
  The improvements are compatible with the building's style and complement original features.

- ♦ Project preserves or restores original decorative building elements (3 points)
  Original decorative elements include permanent detailing as part of the original construction such as cornices, decorative masonry, and historic details.

- ♦ Project is needed to attract or retain one of the following businesses: restaurant/café, retail, or office (5 points)
  Project necessary to retain an existing occupant engaged in one of the target businesses, or, if the storefront is vacant/about to be vacated, the project is needed to renovate the storefront for a new business engaged in one of the target businesses. To claim these points, a letter of interest from the business must be received by the CRA with the grant application.

- ♦ Project corrects commercial building code deficiencies related to the façade (3 points)
  The applicable portion of the commercial building code is Section 13-205, Exterior Structures. Projects correcting conditions that would normally constitute a violation of this code will be awarded up to 3 points. A complaint does not have to be filed against the building.

- ♦ Project includes removing non-original cladding materials that cover an original storefront (3 points)
  Projects removing non-original wall cladding made of aluminum, wood, stucco, masonry or other opaque materials that reveal original walls and windows and enhance the storefront will receive up to 3 points.

- ♦ The project includes environmentally sustainable features, materials, and/or practices (5 points)
  This may include (but is not limited to) low VOC paint, energy efficient lighting, energy efficient doors/ windows, drought tolerant and/or native plantings, recycling or reuse of building/construction materials, etc.

- ♦ The project is new façade project at the site, as opposed to a supplemental grant request. (3 points)

- ♦ Additional points are given for individual improvements, i.e. 1 point each for painting, awning repair/ replacement, window repair/replacement, door repair/replacement, landscaping, signage, lighting, repairing masonry, repairing woodwork/metalwork, power washing, removing old wiring, and other improvements.

V. Application Deadline

The CRA will announce the opening and closing dates of each application cycle Applicants must submit their applications to the CRA no later than 5:00 PM on the closing day of an application cycle. Submit completed applications to:

Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency
Attn: FAPS Facade Improvement Incentive Program
802 NW 5th Ave. Suite 200
Gainesville, FL 32601

VI. Grant Guidelines

1. The building façades eligible for the program must be visible from a target corridor in the FAPS Redevelopment Area.

2. The grant funds may not exceed 50% of the façade improvement project and may not exceed $10,000.

3. The CRA will determine the level of funding, if any, that is appropriate for each project. The CRA is not obligated to provide awards to all applicants.

4. Buildings must meet Health and Safety Standard of the code.

5. Grants may be awarded for projects started but not completed before the grant award provided all provisions of the matching grant program are met.

6. All improvements conducted with the use of matching grant funds must be performed in a manner consistent with the City Land Development Code and all applicable regulations, codes and ordinances.

7. Grant recipients and building owners must agree that improvements made using these funds will stay in place and be maintained a minimum of five years. The Owner shall execute a Façade Preservation Easement in the form required by the CRA, in order to ensure the Owner maintains the work in good condition and without material change for a period of 5 years. The CRA will record the Easement and return a copy to the Owner. If the improvements are replaced or not maintained within five years of façade project completion, the grant recipient must repay a pro rata portion of the grant proceeds invested in the project for the number of months remaining as further described in the façade redevelopment agreement required to be filed, a copy of which is attached here to. By acceptance of the Grant and filing of the façade redevelopment agreement, Grant Recipient and, if applicable, building owners, agree to restore and maintain (keep in good working condition and appearance) the improvements during the five year period, and upon failing to do so shall be obligated to repay a pro rata portion of the grant as described above. The same requirement shall be in effect if the building or business lease is transferred within five years of façade project completion.

   Exceptions:

   i. The improvement has been damaged beyond repair (i.e. broken awning) and the grant recipient has replaced the improvement.
   ii. The improvement was replaced for the purpose of further renovation that will enhance the project, as determined in the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee.

8. Applicant is responsible for obtaining or having obtained all required building permits for the work undertaken and must have a current business license throughout the project.

9. Projects must be completed, or show substantive progress (as determined by CRA staff) within 12 months of the grant award. The CRA shall disburse funds to the grant recipient upon demonstration that the work has been completed.

10. Grant recipients may undertake projects in a limited number of phases over a two-year span. No phase shall exceed 12 months. If the entire design is approved as part of the initial application, staff approval only will be required on additional phases. Approval of the initial application does not insure that funding will be available for later phases.

11. Grant extensions shall be granted by the CRA on a very limited, case-by-case basis where the contractor is having difficulty meeting the deadline due to weather delay, scheduling conflicts or supply issues.

12. The CRA shall have no liability for workmanship, design, or construction related to the project receiving grant funds under this program.

13. Once a maximum grant for any storefront has been awarded, including the 25% supplemental grant explained in Section II.B, the business occupying the storefront or building owner cannot reapply for another grant for the same location for a 3-year period.

14. New grant applicants will have priority over projects applying for funding for phased work.

15. Grant Recipient agrees to allow the CRA to photograph the project for use in future publications.

VII. Digital Design Assistance

In an effort to encourage participation in the Facade Improvement Incentive Program, the CRA will offer a technical assistance/digital design consultation to potential grant applicants. This "one-on-one" assistance will be provided to help the building/business owner determine the most effective changes for their building and complete their grant application. Grant applicants will discuss proposed changes with CRA staff and then receive a digitally enhanced image of the changes for inclusion in the grant application.

VIII. Grant Application Process

The Grant application process is as follows:

1. Staff reviews the application, completes application ranking, and makes a funding recommendation to FAPS Redevelopment Advisory Board at its regularly scheduled public meeting.

2. FAPS Redevelopment Advisory Board reviews application rankings and either approves, disapproves or approves with conditions.

3. The CRA will notify applicant of approval or denial in writing.

4. Subsequent to approval, applicant and CRA prepare a façade redevelopment agreement.

5. Applications and façade redevelopment agreements will be presented to the Executive Director or his designee for final action.

6. Grant recipient provides cost documentation and requests funds after completing the proposed façade improvements.

7. CRA staff inspects the project and the expense documentation to verify completion of work as proposed in the application.

8. CRA disburses funds to grant recipient within 30 days of approval of the completed project.

X. Nondiscrimination

The City of Gainesville and the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability (protected characteristics) and will not tolerate any such discrimination by or against its employees or citizens utilizing City services, programs, and activities.