

FINDING OF NECESSITY



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd Redevelopment Area



FINDING OF NECESSITY

for the creation of the

University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd Redevelopment Area

EXHIBIT 2
PAGE 2 OF 46

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In association with:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Jacksonville, as part of its Renew Jacksonville campaign, desires to create a Community Redevelopment Area and Master Plan for three major commercial corridors University Boulevard, Merrill and Arlington Roads, within the Arlington community. The overall area has been subject to several recent redevelopment planning efforts including:

- ✓ Arlington Town Center Vision Plan – 2005
- ✓ Old Arlington Neighborhood Action Plan – 2007
- ✓ Greater Arlington/Beaches Vision Plan – 2010,
- ✓ Ongoing Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA), Jacksonville Transportation Authority and Florida Department of Transportation studies,
- ✓ The area has been designated an Urban Priority Area in the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan which designates areas in need of redevelopment.

Per Florida Statute, Chapter 163, Part III, before the City can create a Community Redevelopment Area, Community Redevelopment Plan and Redevelopment Trust Fund; it must first determine that the proposed Redevelopment Area (RDA) shows evidence of slum or blight as defined by the Statute. The means of providing such evidence is Finding of Necessity (FON) Report. The Finding of Necessity is the first of several steps that must be undertaken before the proposed RDA is approved as a Community Redevelopment Area.

Chapter 163, Part III, lists a number of criteria that must be met in order for an area to be designated as "Slum or Blighted". To be defined as "Slum" an area needs to meet one or more of the three definitions of Slum; or meet two or more of the fourteen (14) conditions of "Blight". The Statute also states that in the case that all taxing districts that are subject to the Statute are in agreement that the area is blighted, only one blight criteria needs to be met. The fact that the City of Jacksonville is a consolidated City/County and that it is the only Taxing Authority subject to this effort; then only one condition of blight needs to be defined. That said, this Finding of Necessity Report while not finding "Slum" conditions, has identified a minimum of six (6) of the 14 conditions necessary to define the proposed RDA as "Blighted".

The six (6) conditions of blight are:

- 1) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities. (Section 163.340 [8] a., F.S.)
- 2) Faulty lot layout in relationship to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness. (Section 163.340 [8] c, F.S.)
- 3) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions. (Section 163.340 [8] d, F.S.)
- 4) Deterioration of site or other improvements. (Section 163.340 [8] e, F.S.)
- 5) Inadequate or outdated building patterns (Section 163.340 [8] f, F.S.)
- 6) Incidents of Crime. (Section 163.340 [8] j, F.S.)

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is document blight conditions that exist within the proposed Redevelopment Area to comply with Sections 163.335, 163.340, and 163.355, F.S. The study focuses on existing conditions and regulatory constraints to development within the Redevelopment Area and its ability to eliminate or prevent the development or spread of blight within the Arlington, specifically the University Blvd, Merrill Road and Arlington Road commercial corridors.

1.1 BACKGROUND

This analysis focuses on the existing physical characteristics and support infrastructure of the Redevelopment Area and its ability to generate economic return and local tax revenues. As a general matter, areas that are in a state of physical decline, are underutilized, or are improperly deployed, limit the City's ability to remain competitive in a larger economic context, ultimately affecting its financial condition and its level of services.

Real property assets and the supportive infrastructure that are physically or functionally deteriorated or do not meet contemporary development standards are constrained in their ability to generate adequate tax revenues necessary to improve these conditions. As such, their physical character and utility are key factors in determining a community's economic health. The lack of real property value in these areas result in insufficient ad valorem revenue to improve these areas and necessary improvements are essentially subsidized by other areas of the City. This inequity and shift in the tax burden requires the City to consider additional tax revenues to improve these declining areas, with those revenues being generated in the area which requires improvement.

This analysis relies substantially on interpretations of government data, visual inspections of properties, and geographic information system data. While the County's tax roll data is assumed to be reliable, this analysis cannot guarantee its accuracy.

The State of Florida recognizes the potentially negative impacts to cities created by areas that may be inferior to community standards and quantitative and value-based expectations. These areas tend to be unsustainable and, ultimately, may become a burden on the jurisdiction in which they exist. The Act was created and adopted through Chapter 163, Part III, F.S. (Community Redevelopment Act of 1969), as a tool to assist in remedying areas to improve the general public welfare and local tax base and for redevelopment of specific geographic areas. The Act declares that the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment of deteriorated and distressed areas are necessary in the interest of public health, safety, morals, and welfare.

To qualify for establishment under the provisions of the Act, a City must prepare a "Finding of Necessity" to determine that the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment of an area meets criteria broadly described as "slum" or "blighted" and is necessary in the interest of the health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the community. These terms carry specific statutory references and qualifiers distinct from their common understanding and use.

This Finding Report is intended to be consistent with the statutory requirements for establishing the Redevelopment Area pursuant to Chapter 163, Part III, F.S. Generally, this Redevelopment Area appears to contain similar conditions—infrastructure deficiencies, development hardships, and stunted investment—as those found in other existing community redevelopment areas within Florida.

1.2 THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT ACT

The purpose of the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969 (the "Act") is to assist local governments in preventing and/or eliminating blighted conditions detrimental to the sustainability of economically and socially vibrant communities. The following paragraphs describe those blighting conditions, their specific effects and the intentions of the community redevelopment system as a tool for implementing policy and programs as they apply to the Study Area.

Section 163.335(1), F.S....slum and blighted areas which constitute a serious and growing menace, injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the state; that the existence of such areas contributes substantially and increasingly to the spread of disease and crime, constitutes an economic and social liability imposing onerous burdens which decrease the tax base and reduce tax revenues, substantially impairs or arrests sound growth, retards the provision of housing accommodations, aggravates traffic problems, and substantially hampers the elimination of traffic hazards and the improvement of traffic facilities; and that the prevention and elimination of slums and blight is a matter of state policy and state concern in order that the state and its counties and municipalities shall not continue to be endangered by areas which are focal centers of disease, promote juvenile delinquency, and consume an excessive proportion of its revenues because of the extra services required for police, fire, accident, hospitalization, and other forms of public protection, services, and facilities.

Section 163.335(2), F.S....slum or blighted areas, or portions thereof, may require acquisition, clearance, and disposition subject to use restrictions, as provided in this part, since the prevailing condition of decay may make impracticable the reclamation of the area by conservation or rehabilitation; that other areas or portions thereof may, through the means provided in this part, be susceptible of conservation or rehabilitation in such a manner that the conditions and evils enumerated may be eliminated, remedied, or prevented; and that salvageable slum and blighted areas can be conserved and rehabilitated through appropriate public action as herein authorized and the cooperation and voluntary action of the owners and tenants of property in such areas.

Section 163.335(3), F.S....the powers conferred by this part are for public uses and purposes for which public money may be expended and police power exercised, and the necessity in the public interest for the provisions herein enacted is declared as a matter of legislative determination.

Section 163.335(5), F.S....the preservation or enhancement of the tax base from which a taxing authority realizes tax revenues is essential to its existence and financial health; that the preservation and enhancement of such tax base is implicit in the purposes for which a taxing authority is established; that tax increment financing is

an effective method of achieving such preservation and enhancement in areas in which such tax base is declining; that community redevelopment in such areas, when complete, will enhance such tax base and provide increased tax revenues to all affected taxing authorities, increasing their ability to accomplish their other respective purposes; and that the preservation and enhancement of the tax base in such areas through tax increment financing and the levying of taxes by such taxing authorities therefore and the appropriation of funds to a redevelopment trust fund bears a substantial relation to the purposes of such taxing authorities and is for their respective purposes and concerns.

1.3 FINDINGS OF NECESSITY

The Finding of Necessity, as set forth in **Section 163.355, F.S.** is an assessment of the Study Area that provides the evidence of blight and need for redevelopment due to the area's deficiencies in attracting market-based investment of the same rate and quality as surrounding areas and the City as a whole. The analysis relies upon a variety of empirical data and observations by the City of all the parcels within the Study Area in determining the existence of slum or blighted conditions as defined by criteria outlined in **Section 163.340, F.S.**

If an area is deemed blighted under the Act, a resolution may be adopted by the City Council finding that there are indeed such conditions within the defined study area, and that the repair, rehabilitation, and/or redevelopment of such areas is in the interest

To qualify for establishment under the provisions of the Act, a City must prepare a "Finding of Necessity" to determine that the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment of an area meets criteria broadly described as "slum" or "blighted" and is necessary in the interest of the health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the community. As defined by **Section 163.340, F.S.**, these terms carry specific statutory references and qualifiers distinct from their common understanding and use.

Section 163.340 (7) "slum area" means an area having physical or economic conditions conducive to disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, poverty, or crime because there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or non-residential, that are impaired by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age, or obsolescence, and exhibiting one or more of the following factors:

- a) Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces;
 - b) High density of population, compared to the population density of adjacent areas within the county or municipality, and overcrowding, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies and the requirements of the Florida Building Code; or
 - c) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.
- Section 163.340 (8)** "Blighted area" means an area in which there are a substantial number of deteriorated, or deteriorating structures, in which conditions, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies, are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property, and in which two or more of the following factors are present:
- a) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities;
 - b) Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to the finding of such conditions;
 - c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
 - d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
 - e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;
 - f) Inadequate and outdated building density patterns;
 - g) Falling lease rates per square foot of office, commercial, or industrial space compared to the remainder of the county or municipality;

- h) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- i) Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- j) Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- k) Fire and emergency medical service calls to the area proportionately higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- l) A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- m) Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free inalienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area; or
- n) Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.

However, the term "blighted area" also means any area in which at least one of the factors identified in (a) through (n) are present and all taxing authorities subject to Section 163.387(2) (a), F.S., agree, either by Interlocal agreement or agreements with the agency or by resolution, that the area is blighted. Such agreement or resolution should determine only that the area is blighted. For purposes of qualifying for the tax credits authorized in Chapter 220, F.S., "blighted area" means an area as defined in this subsection.

The statutes further provide that a "community redevelopment area" is defined as "... a slum area, a blighted area, or an area in which there is a shortage of housing that is affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, or a coastal and tourist area that is deteriorating and economically distressed due to outdated building density patterns, inadequate transportation and parking facilities, faulty lot layout or inadequate street layout, or a combination thereof which the governing body designates as appropriate for community redevelopment. For community redevelopment agencies created after July 1, 2006, a community redevelopment area may not consist of more than 80 percent of a municipality." (Sec. 163.340 [10], F.S.)

1.4 REDEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES

If the City Council accepts this report and adopts the Finding of Necessity Resolution, they must then comply pursuant to **Section 163.356** to prepare a Redevelopment Plan for the Area described in the Finding of Necessity Resolution. The Redevelopment Plan must provide physical information on the redevelopment area and identify potential project types that can diminish or eradicate the specified blighted conditions.

Per Statute, before the City Commission Council can adopt any resolution or enact any ordinance to approve a Redevelopment Plan or establish a Redevelopment Trust Fund, the City Council must provide public notice of proposed actions to each taxing authority which as the power to levy ad valorem taxes within the RDA boundaries, pursuant to **Section 163.346**, which states that before the governing body adopts any resolution or enacts any ordinance required under **Section 163.355**, **Section 163.356**, **Section 163.357**, or **Section 163.387**; creates a community redevelopment agency; approves, adopts, or amends a community redevelopment plan; or issues redevelopment revenue bonds under **Section 163.385**, the governing body must provide public notice of such proposed action pursuant to **Section 125.66(2)** or **Section 166.041(3)(a)** and, at least 15 days before such proposed action, mail by registered mail a notice to each taxing authority which levies ad valorem taxes on taxable real property contained within the geographic boundaries of the redevelopment area.

Such notice alerts these taxing authorities to any possible changes in their budgets as a result of a redevelopment action. As a policy matter, it is assumed that the entities listed within Table 1 will receive notice of any actions stemming from either this analysis or subsequent initiatives should they be authorized under the terms of the Act. Some of these entities may be exempt pursuant to **Section 163.387(2)(c), F.S.** Should the FON be approved, the CRA is not requesting any contribution from the Duval County School Board, Florida Inland Navigation nor St. Johns River Water Management District.

Table 1. Duval County Taxing Authorities

Duval County Taxing Authorities
City of Jacksonville
Duval County General Government Duval County School Board
Florida Inland Navigation District
St. Johns River Water Management District

Under the Act, a Redevelopment Plan is subjected to a compliance review conducted by the Planning and Zoning Board before it can be submitted to the City Council for approval. The Board has up to sixty (60) days to review the Redevelopment Plan as to its conformity with the **City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan** and provide comments to the Community Redevelopment Agency. After receiving recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Board, the City Council acting as the governing body shall hold a public hearing on the approval of a Redevelopment Plan.

The next step under the Act is the creation of a **Redevelopment Trust Fund for the University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd CRA**. The most recent certified real property tax roll prior to the effective date of the ordinance will be used to establish the tax base (the "Base Year") in order to calculate the tax increment. In the present case, the assumed timetable to move forward suggests that the calculation of the tax increment will rely on the 2014 certified rolls.

After implementation of the redevelopment procedures described above, the Redevelopment Trust Fund becomes funded upon the availability of tax increment revenues. Tax increment revenues become available as the result of increased property assessments associated with new development and redevelopment within the RDA beyond those of the Base Year. Funds allocated to and deposited into the trust account are used by the Community Redevelopment Agency to finance or refinance any community redevelopment it undertakes pursuant to the approved Redevelopment Plan.

2. UNIVERSITY BLVD/MERRILL/ ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT AREA

2.1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Redevelopment Area (RDA) is confined to a specific area along and adjacent to University Boulevard, Merrill and Arlington Road corridors within the greater Arlington Community of the City of Jacksonville/Duval County, Florida. The Redevelopment Area is approximately 1,242 acres consisting of 1,302 parcels, which is 0.2 percent (.0023) of the total city area of 840 square miles. The Redevelopment Area is comprised of three major corridors located within the larger Arlington area whose boundaries are the St. Johns River to the West, Arlington Expressway to the South, Ft. Carolina Road to the North, and I-295 to the east (see Figure 1 and Figure 2, and Appendix B for legal description).

There have been numerous previous studies of this overall study area including:

- ✓ Town Center Vision Plan - 2005
- ✓ Old Arlington Neighborhood Action Plan – 2007
- ✓ Greater Arlington/Beaches Vision Plan – 2010
- ✓ Ongoing JEA and JTA studies

The 2005 Town Center Vision Plan whose focus was largely on University Boulevard. The Plan noted that University Boulevard:¹

- ✓ "Is rapidly decaying and property values are declining"
- ✓ "Is facing economic and social degradation"
- ✓ "Is unsafe for pedestrians and schoolchildren"
- ✓ "Is blighted and needs trash removed"

The 2007 Old Arlington Neighborhood Action Plan also noted many concerns of blight related issues including²:

- ✓ Aesthetics concerns: "debris along roadways, unkempt homes needing repair, telephone poles and overhead power lines, vacant homes"
 - ✓ "Lack of investment"
 - ✓ "Vacant commercial properties"
 - ✓ "Adequate drainage is missing"
 - ✓ "Adequate water and sewer is missing ... deteriorating septic systems"
- The 2010 Greater Arlington/Beaches Vision Plan noted:³
- ✓ The need for median landscaping along corridors
 - ✓ "Create more crime free multi-family housing"
 - ✓ "Town and Country Shopping Center needs to be redeveloped"
 - ✓ "Abandoned and underutilized commercial areas need to be improved"
 - ✓ "Create better bike and pedestrian connections"

Based on part by these past studies, the Redevelopment Area boundary was delineated due to blighted conditions, such as underutilized land uses, faulty lot layout, deteriorating building and site conditions, vacant commercial buildings, congested and unsafe roadways, lack of investment, inadequate and deteriorating infrastructure, crime and safety conditions and overall aesthetic conditions. The declining nature of the business community along these corridors, as well as conflicting land uses, have contributed to the blight conditions within this area boundary.

- 1 Town Center Vision Plans, University Boulevard, page 7
- 2 The Old Arlington Neighborhood Action Plan, page 38
- 3 Greater Arlington/Beaches Vision Plan, Appendix A

2.2 STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

As discussed, the proposed RDA is primarily oriented to the three commercial corridors in the Greater Arlington area and while connect to various neighborhoods, it does not include the totality of any of the affected neighborhoods of: Monterey, Arlington, Lake Lucina, Arlington Park, Minor, or University Park.

2.3 BOUNDARY

The following graphic shows the proposed boundaries for the University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd RDA.

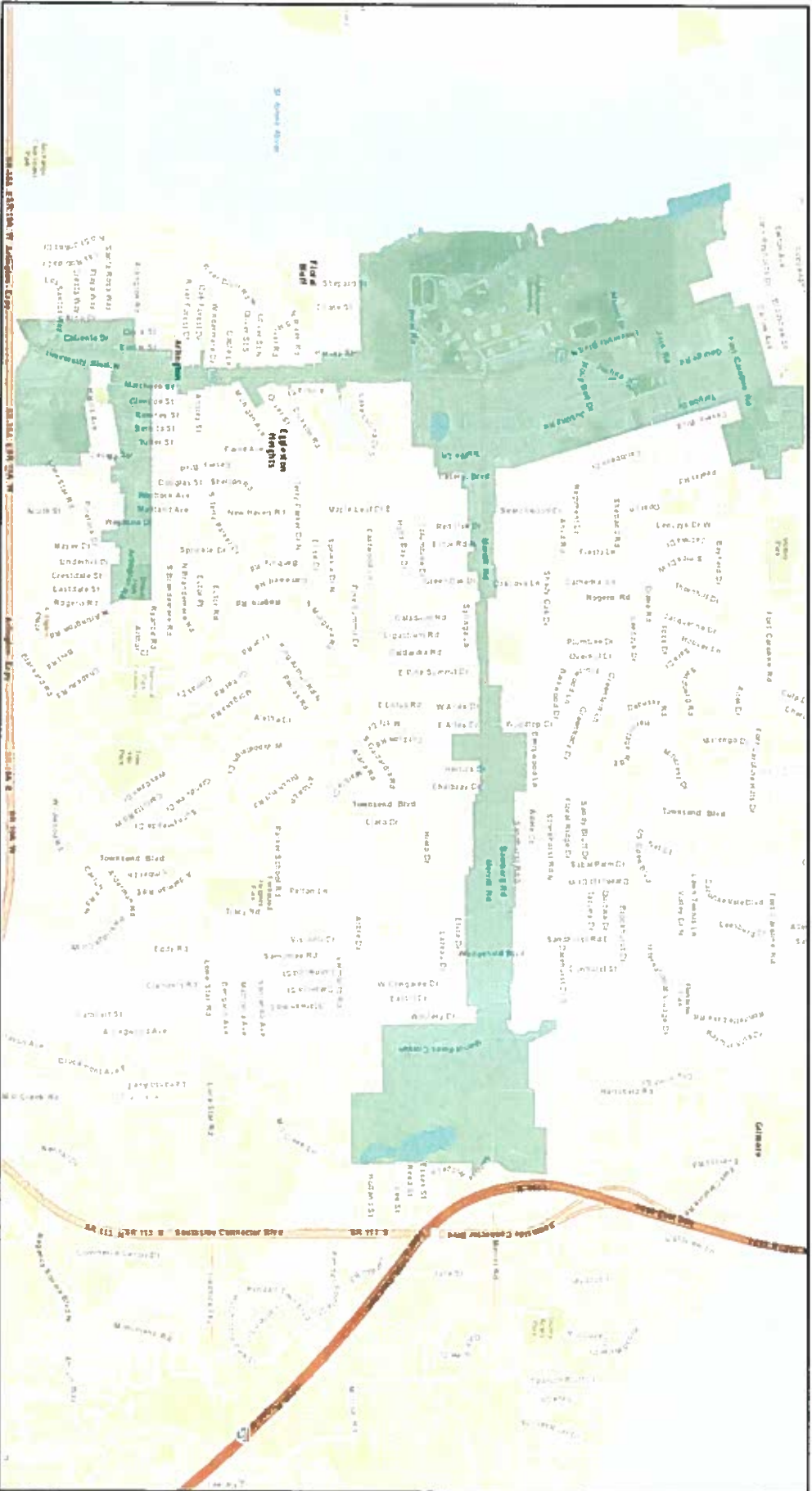


Figure 1: Proposed RDA Boundaries



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd
Redevelopment Area



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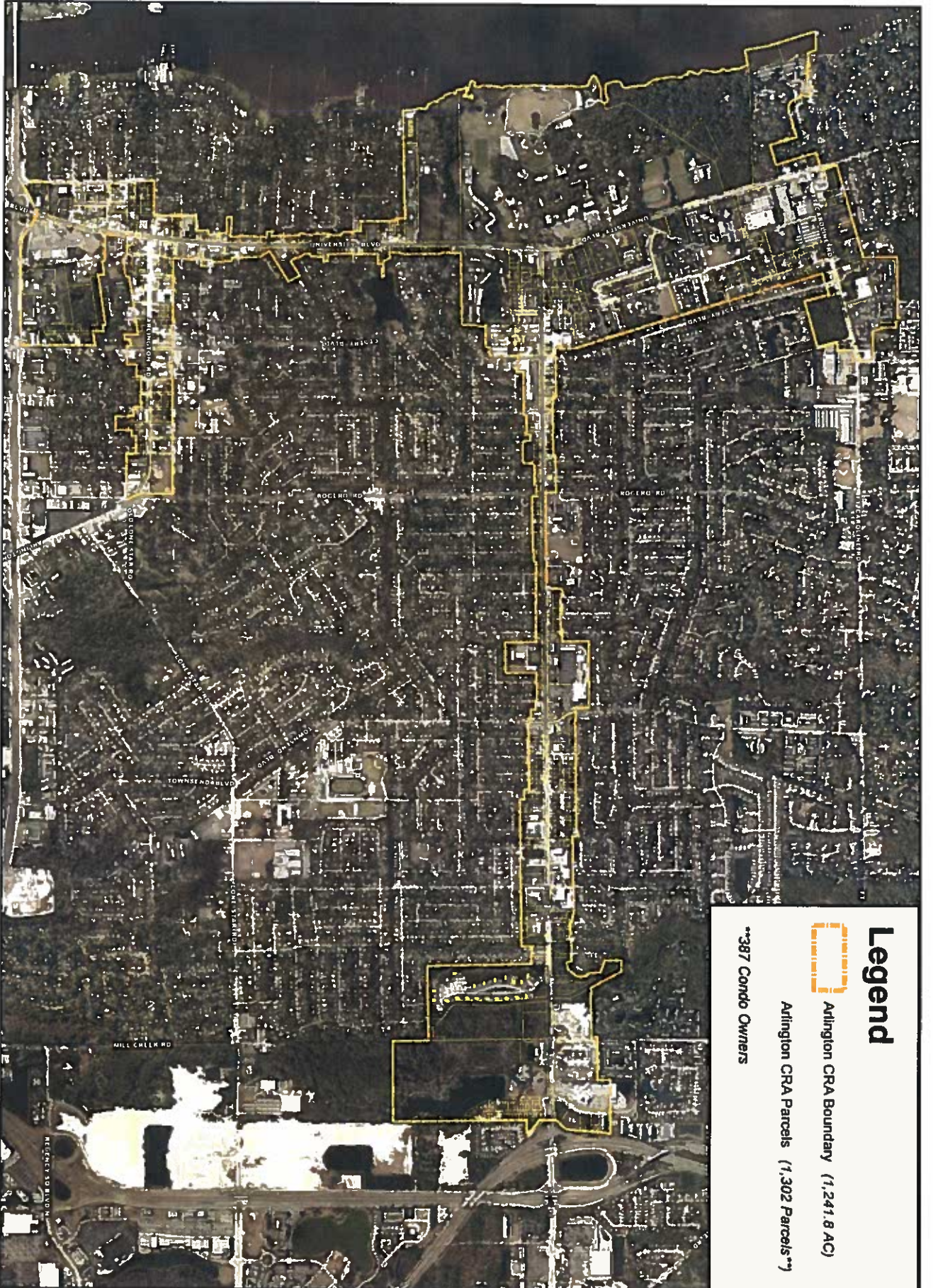


Figure 2: Aerial of RDA Area - Parcels



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd
Redevelopment Area



SPG



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2.4 RDA EXISTING LAND USE

Based on the 2030 City of Jacksonville Comprehensive Plan, the majority of the RDA falls within an Urban Priority Area (UPA) which is intended "to encourage revitalization and the use existing infrastructure through redevelopment and infill development". As shown in Table 2, the largest use of land is Institutional which comprise 33 parcels (the largest use is the campus of Jacksonville University). Residential use comprises the largest number of parcels (812) which account for 338 acres, followed by commercial parcels (260) or 206 acres, vacant parcels (174) or 111 acres, government parcels (8) accounting for 47 acres and 15 industrial parcels occupying 8.5 acres. As better shown in the detail maps contained within the Appendix, there is a lot of conflicting residential and commercial land uses within the RDA, primarily along Merrill Road.

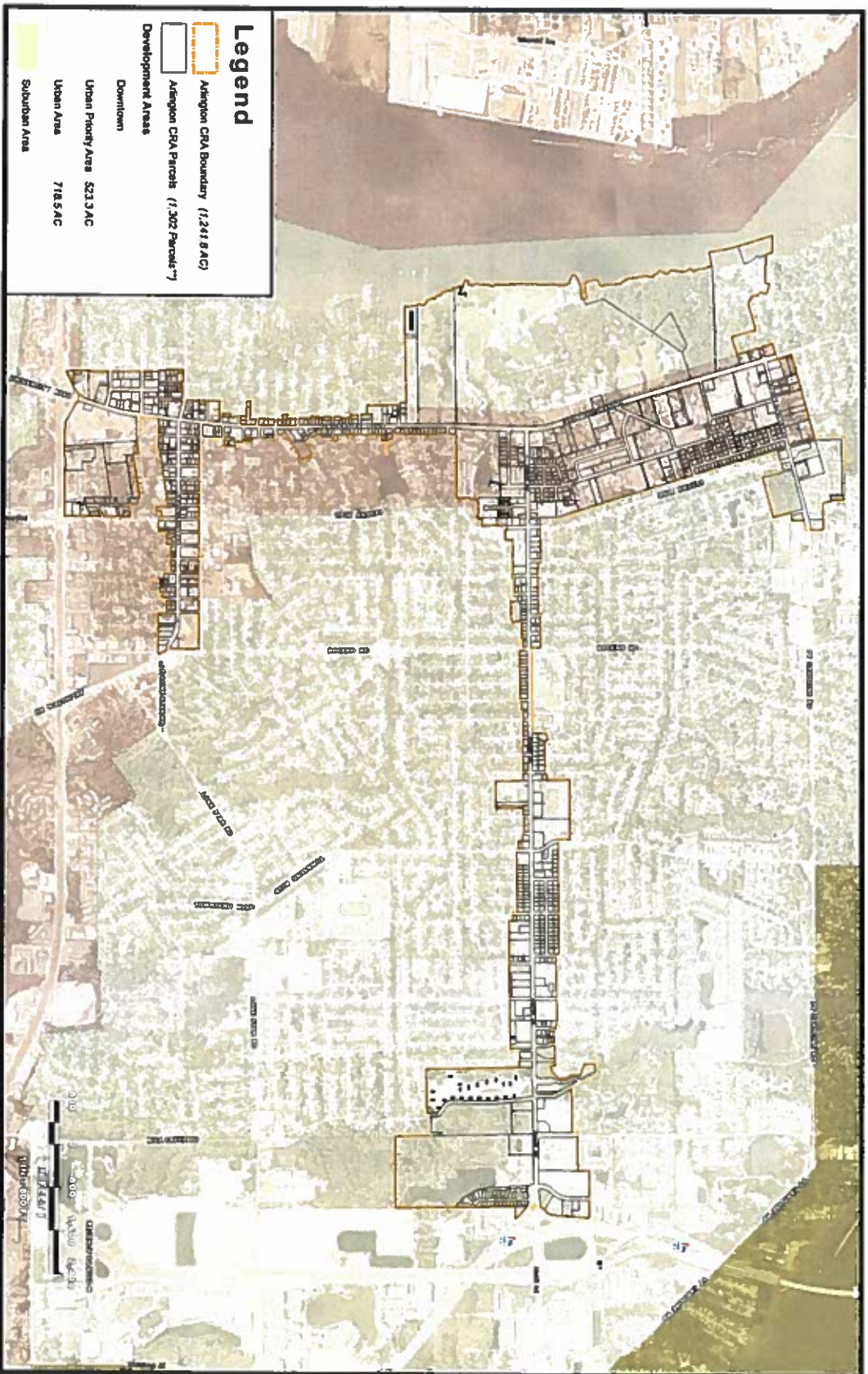


Figure 3: Jacksonville Development Area



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd
Redevelopment Area



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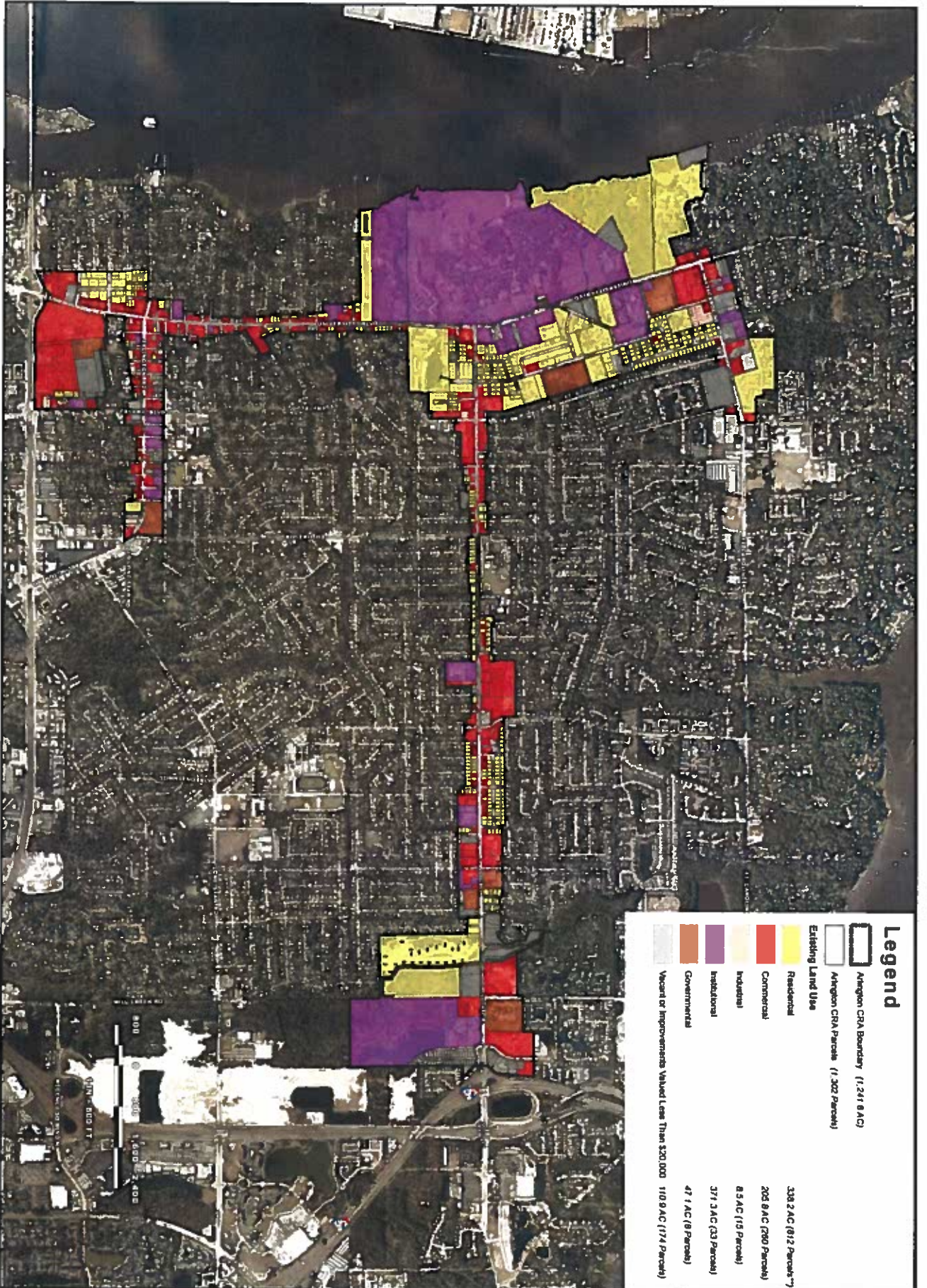


Figure 4: RDA Existing Land Use



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd
Redevelopment Area



SPG

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As shown in Table 2, the largest use of land is Institutional which comprise 33 parcels (the largest use is the campus of Jacksonville University). Residential use comprise the largest number of parcels (812) which account for 338 acres, followed by commercial parcels (260) or 206 acres, vacant parcels (174) or 111 acres, government parcels (8) accounting for 47 acres and 15 industrial parcels occupying 8.5 acres. As better shown in the detail maps contained within the Appendix, there is a lot of conflicting residential and commercial land uses within the RDA, primarily along Merrill Road.

Table 2: Proposed RDA Existing Land Use

Type	Parcels	Acreage
Institutional	33	371.3
Residential	812	338.2
Commercial	260	205.8
Vacant	174	110.9
Government	8	47.1
Industrial	15	8.5

Source: (City of Jacksonville - May 2015)

2.5 RDA FUTURE LAND USE (2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN)

As shown in Figure 5, the City's 2030 Future Land Use Map designed nine (9) Future Land Use districts within the RDA.

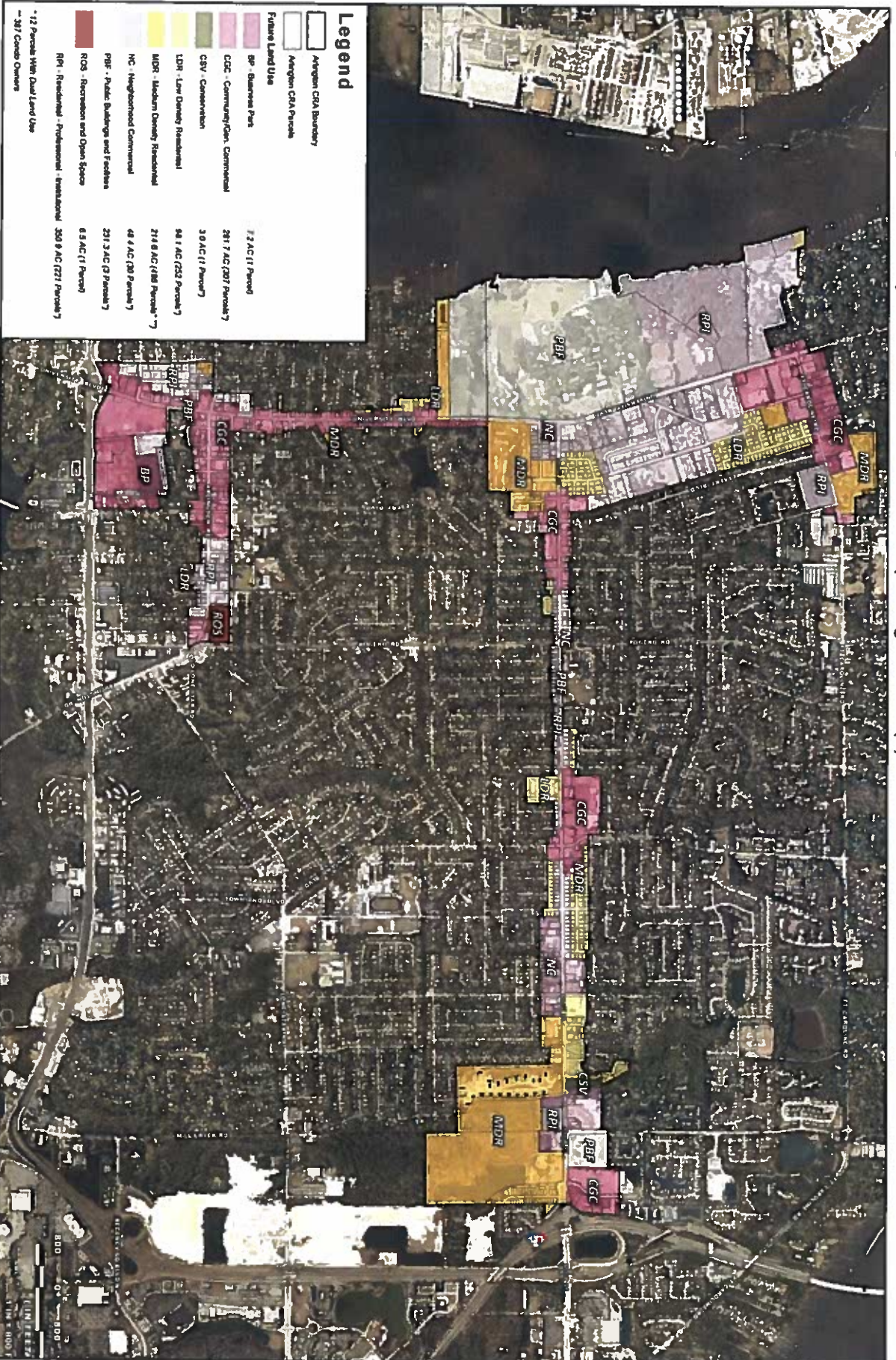


Figure 5: RDA Future Land Use



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd
Redevelopment Area



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As shown in Table 3, the four largest future land uses within the RDA are: RPI, CGC, PBF and MDR. Assuming that the FON is approved and the future CRA Redevelopment Plan is adopted, the CRA will probably have a different Future Land Use Plan which would require an amendment to the City's 2030 Future Land Use Map.

Table 3: Proposed RDA Future Land Use

Future Land Use	Parcels	Acreage
BP - Business Park	1	7.2
CGC - Community/Gen. Commercial	307	281.7
CSV - Conservation	1	3
LDR - Low Density Residential	252	98.1
MDR - Medium Density Residential	486	214.6
NC - Neighborhood Commercial	30	48.4
PBF - Public Buildings and Facilities	3	231.3
ROS - Recreation and Open Space	1	6.5
RPI - Residential-Professional-Institutional	221	350.9

Source: City of Jacksonville Comprehensive Plan, May 2015

Having identified the Redevelopment Area as a unified and homogenous area, SPG reassessed and updated the blighted area conditions from the previous studies to consider the specific conditions that constitute slum or blight as indicated in the Community Redevelopment Act identified by the Florida Legislature, as described in **Section 163.340 (7) or (8), F.S.**, and described previously.

To determine whether there is sufficient evidence to prove and document slum and/or blighted conditions, existing conditions data from government statistics and other available data were collected and analyzed, together with field observations. The following describes the analysis of the existing conditions and finding of slum and/or blighted area conditions.

FINDING

Most of the RDA is contained within what the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan states is an Urban Priority Area. Urban Priority Area designation is intended to identify and encourage areas in need of redevelopment and to employ urban development characteristics.

FINDING

2.6 CONDITIONS OF STRUCTURES

To determine if there was a "substantial number of deteriorating or deteriorated structures" within the Redevelopment Area, involved an examination of code enforcement cases within the proposed RDA area. While some of the buildings are in sound condition with general maintenance of the structures, such as painting, pressure washing, landscaping, etc., being at issue, many of the buildings and sites are underused and discourage reinvestment in the community. Some of these conditions relate to improper or poor maintenance of yards and improvements and structural deterioration such as broken signs, and cracked driveways and sidewalks.



Code enforcement data is another good indicator of property/structure condition and ongoing maintenance. For the Redevelopment Area, five years of Code enforcement data were analyzed and are summarized in Table 4.

An inspection does not equal a violation. Inspection constitutes the code officer responding to a property. Once at the property, multiple violations can be cited on that property depending on the nature of the complaint. For example, a "regular" nuisance property can have one or two violations (overgrowth and/or trash & debris). A residential case can have 1-20 violations depending on the property.

Table 4: Code Inspections within Proposed RDA

Year	Code Inspections		
	RDA	Citywide	% RDA
2010	395	141,109	0.002799
2011	618	130,508	0.004735
2012	575	109,754	0.005239
2013	467	103,636	0.004506
2014	850	111,149	0.007647
2015 (thru May)	273	50,760	0.005378

RDA is equal to .00231 percent of the City's acreage

Source: *City of Jacksonville Comprehensive Plan, May 2015*

According to the City's Code Enforcement data, there was an increase in property deterioration, lack of maintenance, nuisances, and other physical decay between 2010 and 2014 within the Redevelopment Area. The City of Jacksonville is very conscious about enforcing Code violation issues and, to combat blight.

FINDING

This analysis demonstrates that there are "substantial number of deteriorating or deteriorated structures" within the Redevelopment Area ranging from improper or poor maintenance of yards and improvements and structural deterioration, such as broken signs, cracked driveways and sidewalks, and broken storm-water drainage systems, which also contribute to unsanitary or unsafe conditions.

These contributing factors serve as qualifying conditions for blighted area. Improper siting and placement of refuse collection creates unsanitary and unsafe conditions, which contribute to visual and physical blight. Lack of compliance with City regulatory and community design standards can contribute to the need for a focused community redevelopment emphasis. According to City staff, the only properties within the RDA that are currently in compliance with Zoning Code are "the CVS parcel located at the southeast corner of University and Merrill (at the JU entrance) and also those properties located on Merrill Road east of Townsend Boulevard. All other parcels in the study area that were developed prior to implementation of the revised development code in 1991 are substandard or deficient in relation to the current minimum landscape and/or parking requirements, usually both".

FINDING

2.7 LAND USES

The City of Jacksonville's existing land use, zoning, and future land use were used to reach a reasonable understanding of the pattern of development activity within the Redevelopment Area, identify whether existing land uses are permitted under current zoning regulations, assess whether neighboring uses are compatible with each other, and determine whether certain uses assist or deter development activity.

The existing land use and future land use within the Redevelopment Area are shown in Figure 1 and 2 and within Tables 2 and 3. A sustainable commercial development requires more than one acre to be viable. As shown most of the parcels within the RDA is less than one (1) acre in size.

Many of the land uses that once thrived have given way to uses that under-use existing sites. Some businesses have relocated, and buildings remain empty particularly in the older shopping center properties. There is a lack of a substantial commercial investment along all three corridors within the Redevelopment Area as witnessed by the amount of for sale or lease properties.



Residences still occupy commercially-zoned lands, creating non-conformities.



Changes to the land development regulations will be needed to address these issues; creating a new plan and zoning and urban design framework in the area will aid in attracting new development.



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Most residentially-used lands have been zoned for other uses, such as commercial, professional, or office for many years, and a few conversions have occurred along all three corridors. In addition to the existing conflicts between residential and nonresidential uses, increased vehicular traffic using the old residential curb cuts, which is a safety issue, as some vehicles are forced to back into traffic on all three corridors.



Another issue with the current parcel inventory is the number of County, City, institutional, and other land uses that are off the tax rolls in the Redevelopment Area.

FINDING

Even though the City's future land use and zoning are consistent and satisfy State of Florida's requirements, the parcels designated as commercial are inadequate in size and cannot accommodate the maximum allowable density/intensity under the present designations without property aggregation or variances. These old platted lands provide a parcel system that fosters outdated building patterns and inappropriate accessibility, contributes to poor drainage, and negates development of a sufficient size and type to produce overall community benefits.

FINDING

2.8 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Field observations identified that many of the pedestrian and bicycle routes within the Redevelopment Area are defective or inadequate. There is limited formal pedestrian connection to city amenities, schools, or shopping and existing sidewalks are substandard with respect to current design and accessibility requirements. Few interior sites have a pedestrian connection to the commercial areas, and most residential neighborhoods are devoid of sidewalks.

There is also a lack of median landscaping (Arlington Road has the most landscaped medians which are east of Cesery Blvd), street trees, safe crosswalks, bikeways, and wayfinding signs, within the Redevelopment Area.

FINDING

The lack of a viable, comprehensive system of accessible sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and dedicated multimodal facilities, and the absence of streetscaping, pedestrian lighting, traffic calming devices, and wayfinding signage creates additional support for defective or inadequate street layout and roadways as well as unsafe conditions that contribute to physical and visual blight. This may hamper new investment opportunities and may contribute to further deterioration of the Redevelopment Area.

FINDING



2.9 STORMWATER FACILITIES

A substantial portion of the Redevelopment Area exhibits poor drainage conditions as a result of outdated platted lands, historic construction techniques, and lack of sufficient stormwater management facilities and conveyances. Many of the existing developed sites pre-date current environmental and stormwater management requirements. Redevelopment of these sites will likely trigger some level of compliance with new stormwater treatment standards..

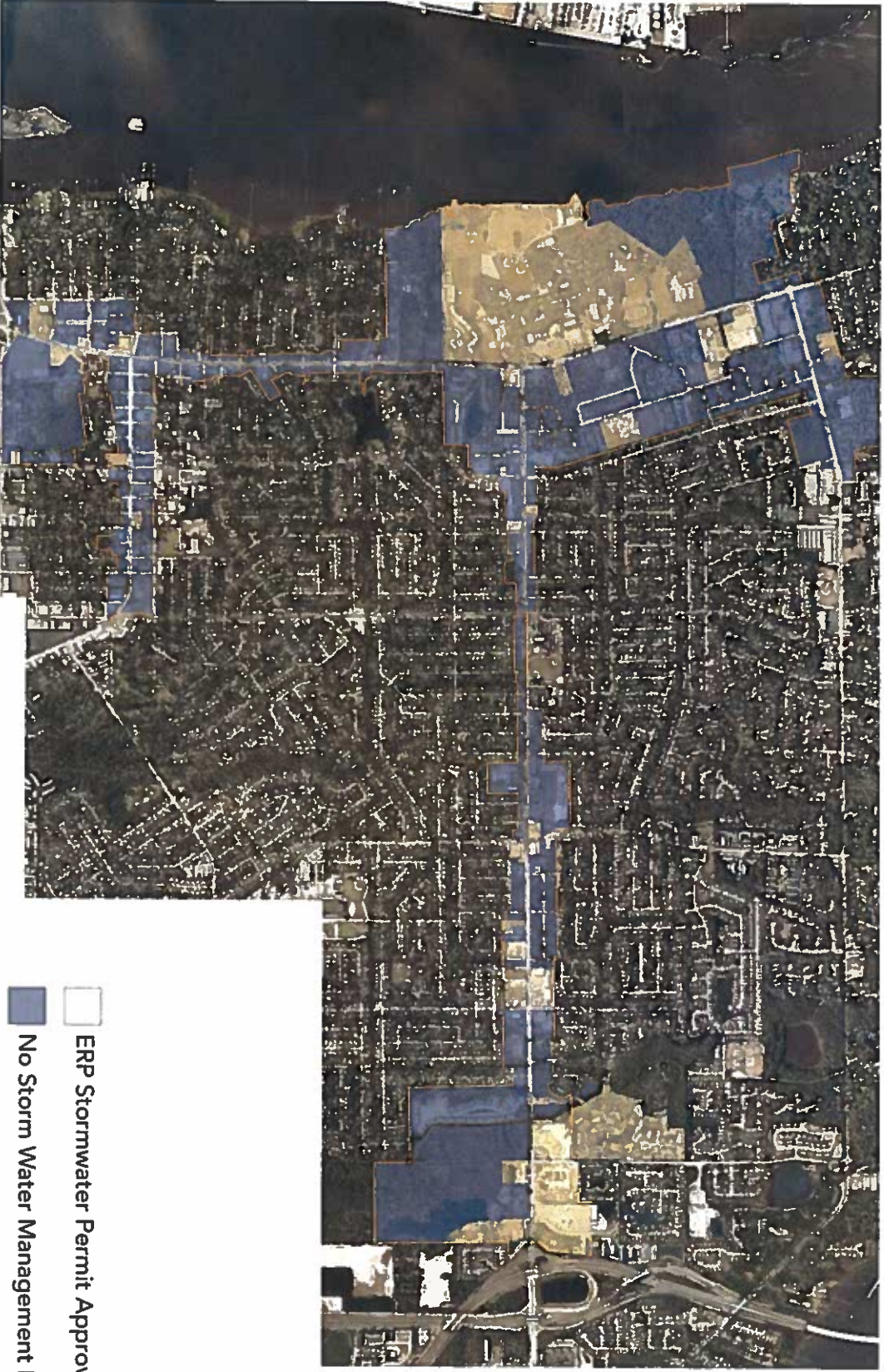


Figure 6: RDA Stormwater



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd
Redevelopment Area



SPG GENESIS



FINDING

The poor drainage conditions as a result of outdated platted lands, historic construction techniques, and insufficient stormwater management facilities and conveyances all contribute to defective or inadequate infrastructure, and unsafe or unsanitary conditions, and inadequate or outdated building patterns serve as qualifying conditions for blighted area. Evaluation of an area-wide, comprehensive stormwater management strategy is an appropriate effort in support of economic revitalization of the Redevelopment Area. The City has identified projects within the Redevelopment Area as part of the stormwater master plan that are in need of improvement. Additional programs are necessary to reduce stormwater discharge into the various streams, creeks and St. Johns River, such as shared stormwater facilities, property assemblage, property redevelopment, dual purpose stormwater ponds/parks, etc.

FINDING

2.10 OVERHEAD UTILITIES

The majority of the corridors consist of overhead utilities to provide electricity and telecommunication. These wooden utility poles also double as light poles for roadway lights along arterial and collector roads. Overhead utilities create fire hazards, accidents, and safety risks from power outages due to downed lines.

Overhead utilities also cause visual blight with dangling wires traversing the roadways and limit streetscaping efforts, which may hamper new investment opportunities and may contribute to further deterioration of the Redevelopment Area. The Merrill Road corridor has overhead utility lines on both sides of the corridor. JEA is currently studying the possibility of relocating or burying the overhead utilities along one side of the Merrill Road corridor.

FINDING

The existing overhead utilities create additional support for unsafe conditions and defective roadways, which contributes to physical and visual blight. Undergrounding overhead utilities improves roadway safety by preventing roadway obstacles during hurricanes and reducing the chance of motorists striking poles, and fire hazards due to downed lines.

The appearance of an area can be greatly improved by reducing the visual clutter of overhead utility wires. Undergrounding overhead utilities allows the City to highlight the Redevelopment Area without a maze of poles and wires in the way. Without overhead utilities, the Redevelopment Area can more readily undertake improvement projects such as sidewalk widening and tree planting without having to snake around poles or trim vegetation to make way for power lines, thus providing more attractive, efficient, and safer redevelopment.

FINDING



EXHIBIT 2
PAGE 27 OF 46



2.11 POTABLE WATER AND SANITARY SEWER FACILITIES

City staff identified general areas within the Redevelopment Area that have limited potable water or sewer lines (see Figure 7).

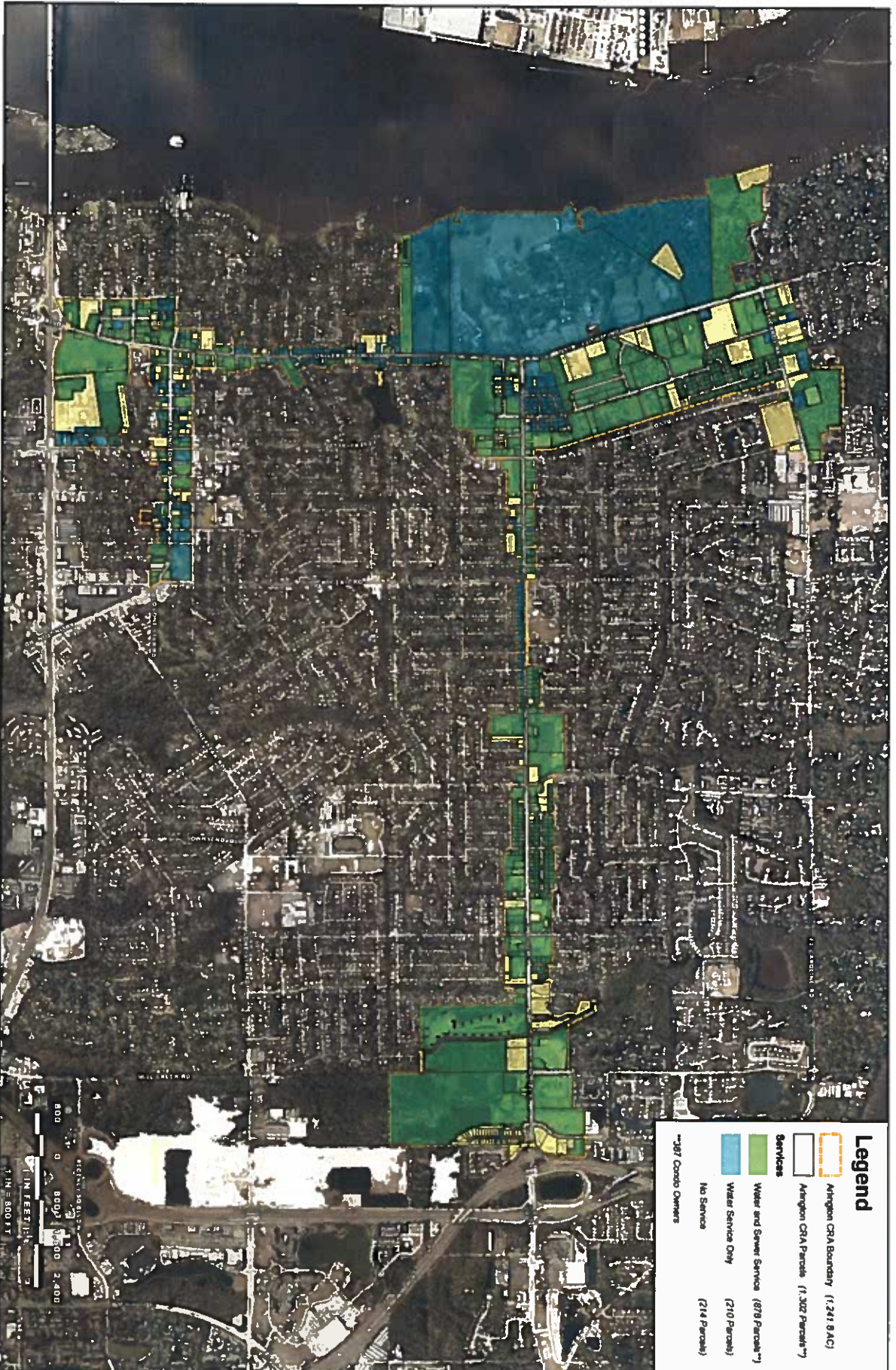


Figure 7: RDA Water/Sewer Availability



University Blvd/Merrill/Arlington Rd
Redevelopment Area



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The City has also documented that the overall study (areas adjacent to the corridors) have a significant amount of failing septic tanks (Figure 8).

Study Area

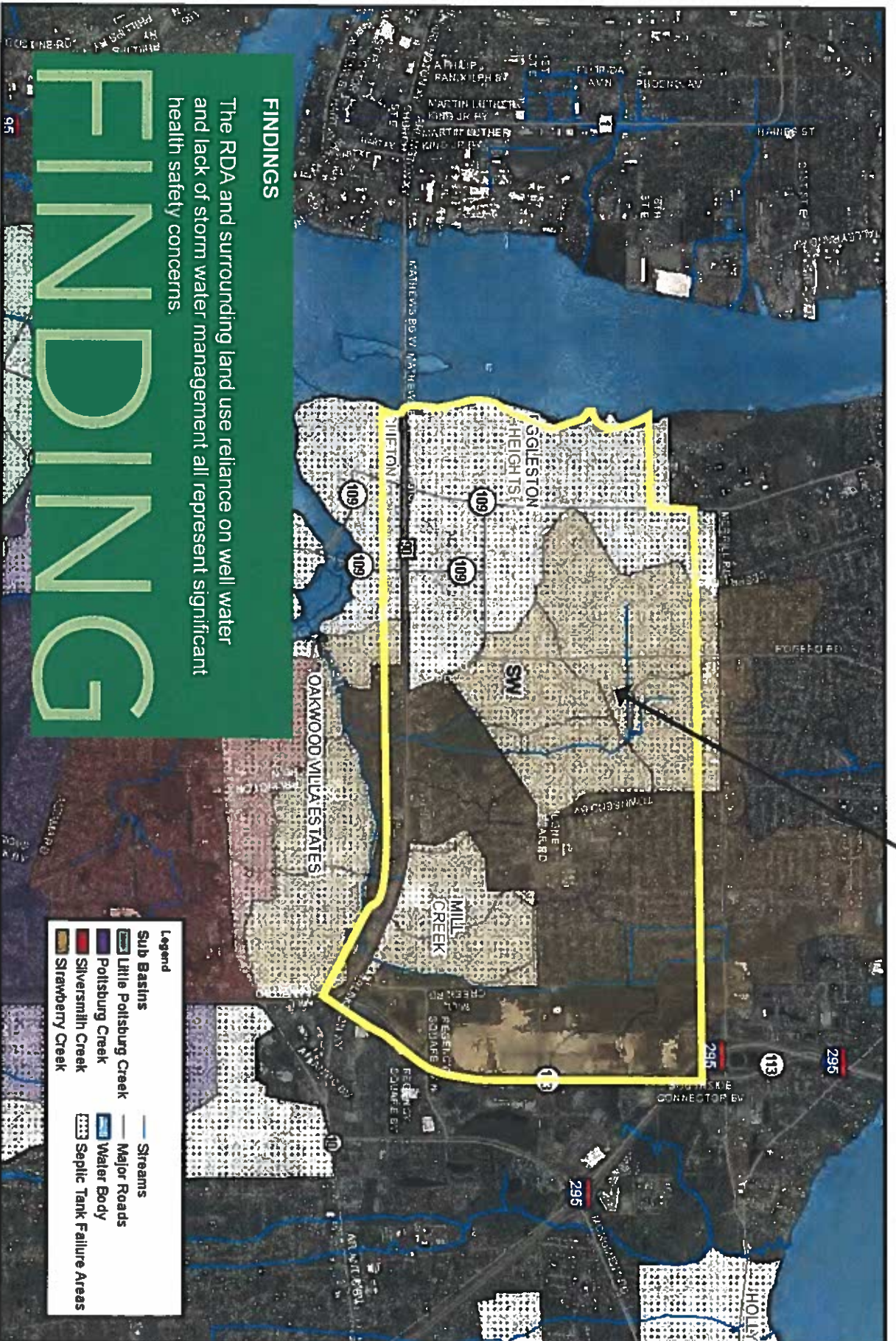


Figure 8. Failing Septic Tanks - Source: City of Jacksonville Comprehensive Plan, May 2015

2.12 OCCURRENCES OF CRIME

As shown in Figure 9, most of the City's crime is committed in a rather small area (as shown in the white areas), Compared to the City as a whole the RDA does have a higher degree of crime overall. While it does not contain the highest number of "hot spots", it does contained a number of "hot spots" as shown in Figure 9.

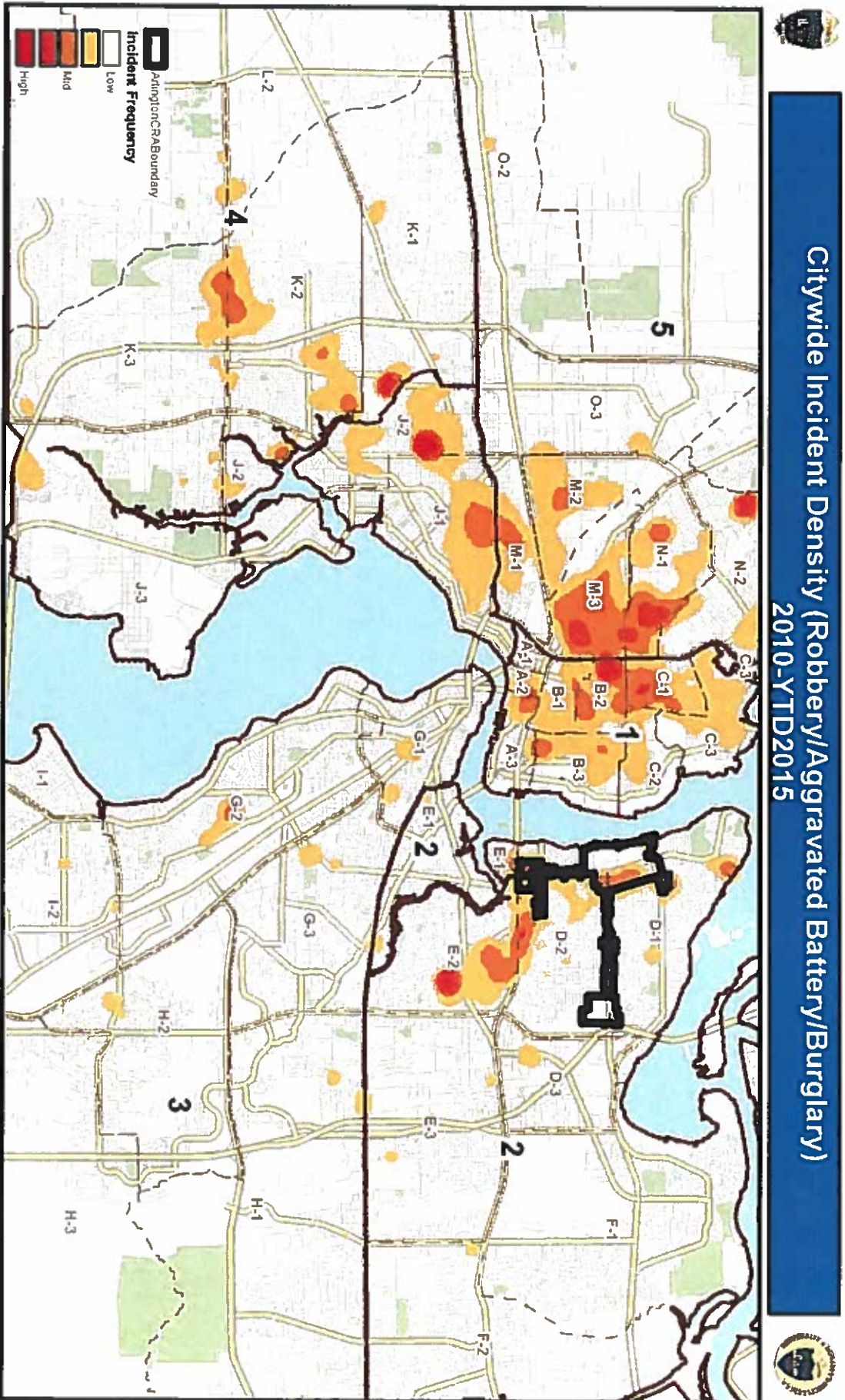


Figure 9: Citywide Occurrence of Crime (2010 to present)- Source: Sheriff's Department, June 2015



Citywide Incident Density (Robbery/Aggravated Battery/Burglary)
2010-YTD2015

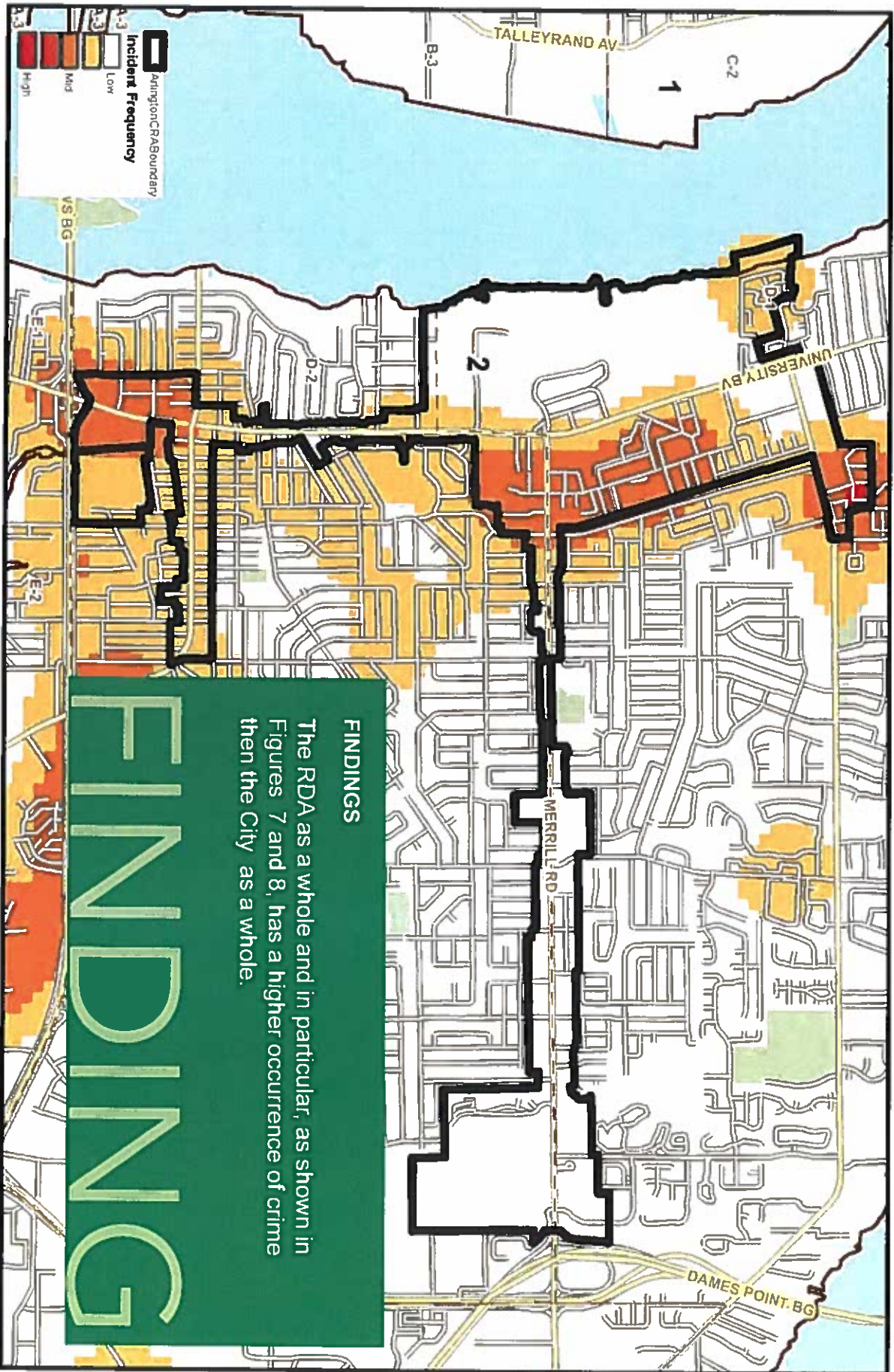


Figure 10: Citywide Incident of Crime (2010 to present) - Source: Sheriff's Department, June 2015

3. BLIGHTED AREA CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Determining if slum or blight conditions exist within the proposed Redevelopment Area is an initial step in ascertaining an area's appropriateness for designation as a Redevelopment Area. This Finding Report concludes the following based on the physical, economic, and regulatory conditions, as well as government-maintained statistics.

Based on the definition and criteria for determining "Slum Area" as specified in Section 163.340 (7), F.S. (see Section 1.3.2 of this report) and the findings concluded in this report, the proposed Redevelopment Area is not considered a "Slum Area."

However, the proposed Redevelopment Area is considered a "Blighted Area" as specified in Section 163.340 (8), F.S. (see Section 1.3 of this report) based on the findings concluded in this report. From the 14 criteria, of which 2 or more conditions are required to be considered a "Blight Area," at least six (6) conditions exists in the proposed Redevelopment Area, as follows.

1. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities (Section 163.340 [8]a, F.S.)

There is a predominance of defective or inadequate street layout from years of FDOT and City widening of each of the Corridors, leaving smaller and smaller parcels on which to make investment. In addition, early platting of the city also left lots that are generally undersized or lack the desired lot widths or depths to accommodate current parking, stormwater, and land development requirements, and other regulations.

Multiple driveway connections along the corridors do not meet current driveway or intersection separation criteria, which contributes to poor traffic circulation by creating potential vehicle and pedestrian or bicycle conflicts, poor sight triangle visibility, or difficulty in achieving accessible routes. Lack of inter-connectivity between existing developed sites also contributes to traffic congestion.

There is a lack of available, comprehensive system of accessible sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and dedicated multimodal facilities. There is limited and no formal pedestrian connection to city amenities, schools, and shopping. Existing sidewalks are substandard with respect to current design and accessibility requirements. Few interior sites have a pedestrian connection to commercial areas. Public transportation facilities along the corridors generally reflect deteriorating conditions, poor physical placement, or lack of appropriate facilities.

Uncontrolled access points, lack of parking, poor signage, and poor or nonexistent drainage, faulty street lay-out, no curb and gutter in many places, and other factors are detrimental to private reinvestment and a successful economic development environment.

Overhead utilities hamper streetscaping efforts and create inadequate roadways by preventing sidewalk widening and tree planting and having to snake around poles or trim vegetation to make way for power lines, which may hamper new investment opportunities and may contribute to further deterioration of the Redevelopment Area.

2. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness (Section 163.340 [8] c, F.S.)

Due to early platting of the city and widening of University Boulevard by FDOT, and the City's widening of Merrill and Arlington Roads, many of the properties within the Redevelopment Area have irregular dimensions that create lot sizes and shapes and make compliance with current building, zoning, parking, stormwater, and other land development regulations difficult. Majority of blocks reflect a high proportion of owners, with few adjoining parcels or aggregated parcels under single ownership. In terms of reinvestment, the properties in the area may be difficult to consolidate property for redevelopment purposes. A sustainable commercial development requires more than one acre to be viable. Most of the land parcels are less than an acre in size.

3. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions (Section 163.340 [8]d, F.S.)

The multiple driveway connections that create poor traffic circulation, inadequate parking facilities, and lack of viable, comprehensive system of accessible sidewalks and bicycle facilities create unsafe conditions within the Redevelopment Area.

Substantial numbers of buildings are substandard, with many reaching toward a state of dilapidation and clear underutilization.

According to the City's Code Enforcement data, there was an increase in property deterioration, lack of maintenance, nuisances, and other physical decay between 2010 and 2014.

Sanitary conditions, in particular, siting and placement of refuse collection consistent with City design standards, was noted as lacking in a majority of existing facilities and sites, such as placement of additional dumpster facilities within designated parking or landscape areas, placement of dumpsters that block potential emergency access routes, and damaged or deteriorating enclosures.

A significant portion of the corridor and surround land uses rely on wells for water and lack sanitary sewer facilities. The City has documented that much of the overall study area south of Merrill Road have failing septic tanks. The Redevelopment Area exhibits poor drainage conditions as a result of historic construction techniques and lack of sufficient stormwater management facilities and conveyances. Many of the existing developed sites pre-date current environmental and stormwater management requirements.

Many existing stormwater management facilities are not under proper maintenance and exhibit conditions that contribute to on-street and adjoining property ponding or flooding, such as standing water, damaged inlet structures, clogged piping, and inappropriate use of facilities (parking, storage, etc.), which may cause stormwater runoff into the Arlington and St. Johns Rivers, polluting the water and ecosystem.

The existing overhead utilities create unsafe conditions due to the potential for downed lines to cause fire hazards and obstruct the roadways and increasing the chance of motorists striking the poles.

Overhead utility lines can be found on both side of the Merrill Road corridor also degrade the aesthetics of the corridor and its adjoining neighborhoods.

The absence of sanitary sewer lines within portions of the Redevelopment Area creates unsanitary and unsafe conditions and limits redevelopment efforts. To meet current and future development within the Redevelopment Area, the City/CRA should add sanitary sewer lines and extend central sanitary sewer service to all developed properties to protect the public health and environment.

4. Deterioration of site or other improvements (Section 163.340 [8]e, F.S.)

Some of these conditions relate to improper or poor maintenance of yards and improvements, structural deterioration, or unrepaired storm damage. In all land use categories, there are substantial numbers of deteriorating structures and underused properties that are contributing to conditions that are not supportive of redevelopment and private investment within the Redevelopment Area. Some of the structures also reflect conditions relating from prior right-of-way acquisitions and impacts from the widen of University Boulevard and Merrill/Arlington Roads widening that have rendered some of the properties functionally obsolete.

5. Inadequate or outdated building patterns (Section 163.340 [8]f, F.S.)

The Redevelopment Area contains a mix of land uses—commercial, industrial, single-family, and multi-family residential. Most of the residentially-used lands have been zoned for other uses, such as commercial, professional, or office for many years, and a few conversions have occurred along all three corridors. One problem with the current system of lots is the number of County/City, institutional, and other lands that are off the tax rolls in Redevelopment Area.

The Redevelopment Area is affected by a lack of parking and stormwater management, small buildable areas, insufficient land to expand, incompatible adjacent uses, and problematic access due to archaic rights-of-ways. Residences still occupy commercially-zoned lands, creating non-conformities. Changing the land development regulations will be needed to address these issues, creating a new plan, and zoning and design system in the area will aid in attracting new development.

University Boulevard and Arlington Road served as the historical commercial center of the area. The nature of retail and business along this corridor has changed dramatically. With the exception of the Southern Boundary areas, small-scale sites are sometimes at a disadvantage. The original platted lots have insufficient area to meet standard development requirements desired for today's commerce. There is a lack of a substantial commercial investment along the corridors within the Redevelopment Area.

Many of the residential structures appear to be substandard and reflect conditions inconsistent with current zoning. This area is devoid of sidewalks and good drainage, and many Code violations exist.

Faulty lot sizes and shapes, poor locations, and problematic title situations offer little if any value to a community. Lots and buildings may be left vacant, leaving them subject to physical deterioration. These conditions contribute to visual and physical blight.

6. Incidents of Crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality (Section 163.340 [8]j, F.S.)

The RDA contains numerous "hot spots" for Robbery/Aggravated that exceeds most areas of the City: the southern part of the RDA around the Town and Country Shopping Center; the Justina/Merrill Road area; and to the north at the western end of Ft. Caroline Road as shown in Figure 8.

APPENDIX A: DETAILED BOUNDARY MAPS



Detailed Boundary Map Key

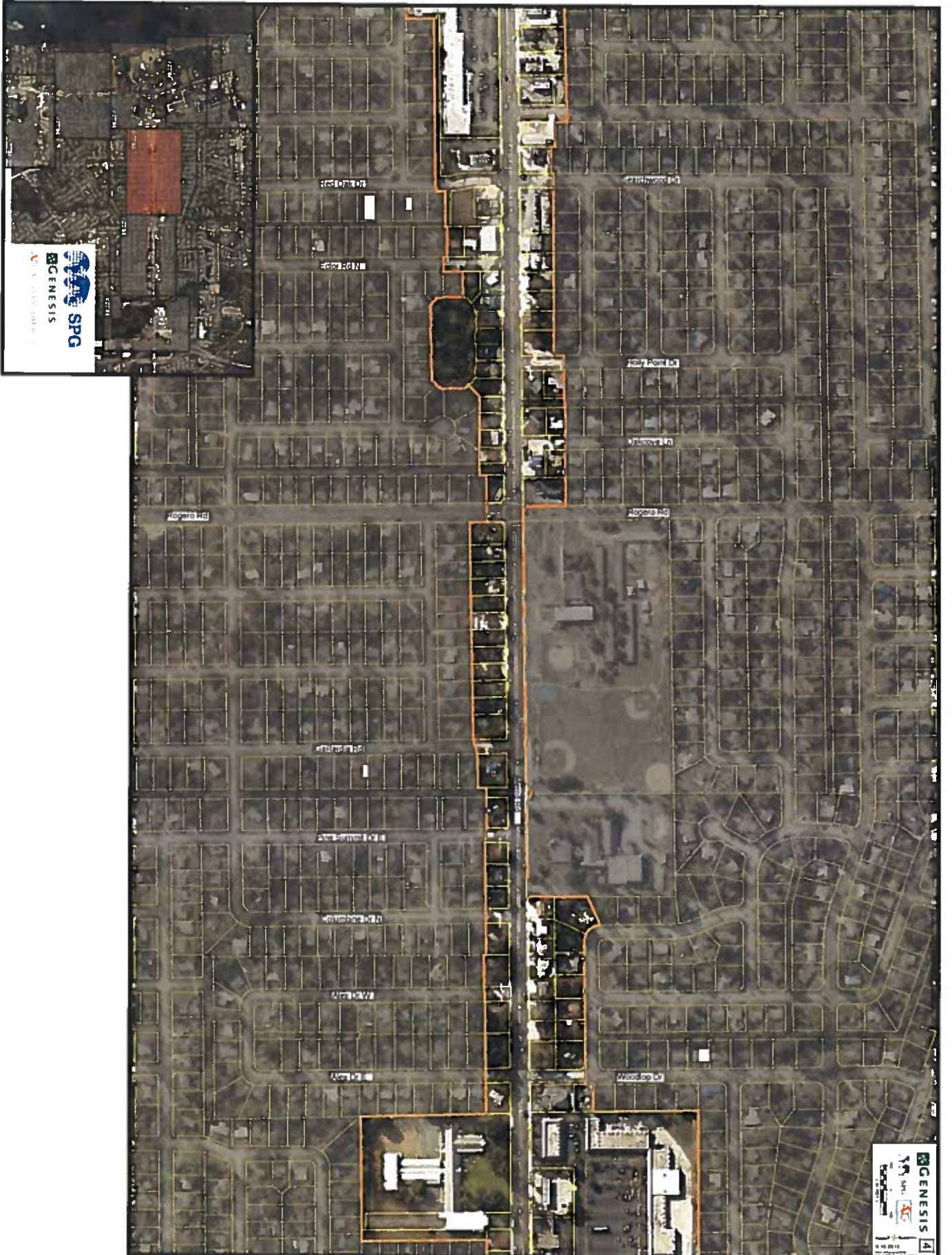








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ADG Acuity Design Group




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APPENDIX B: RDA SURVEY

