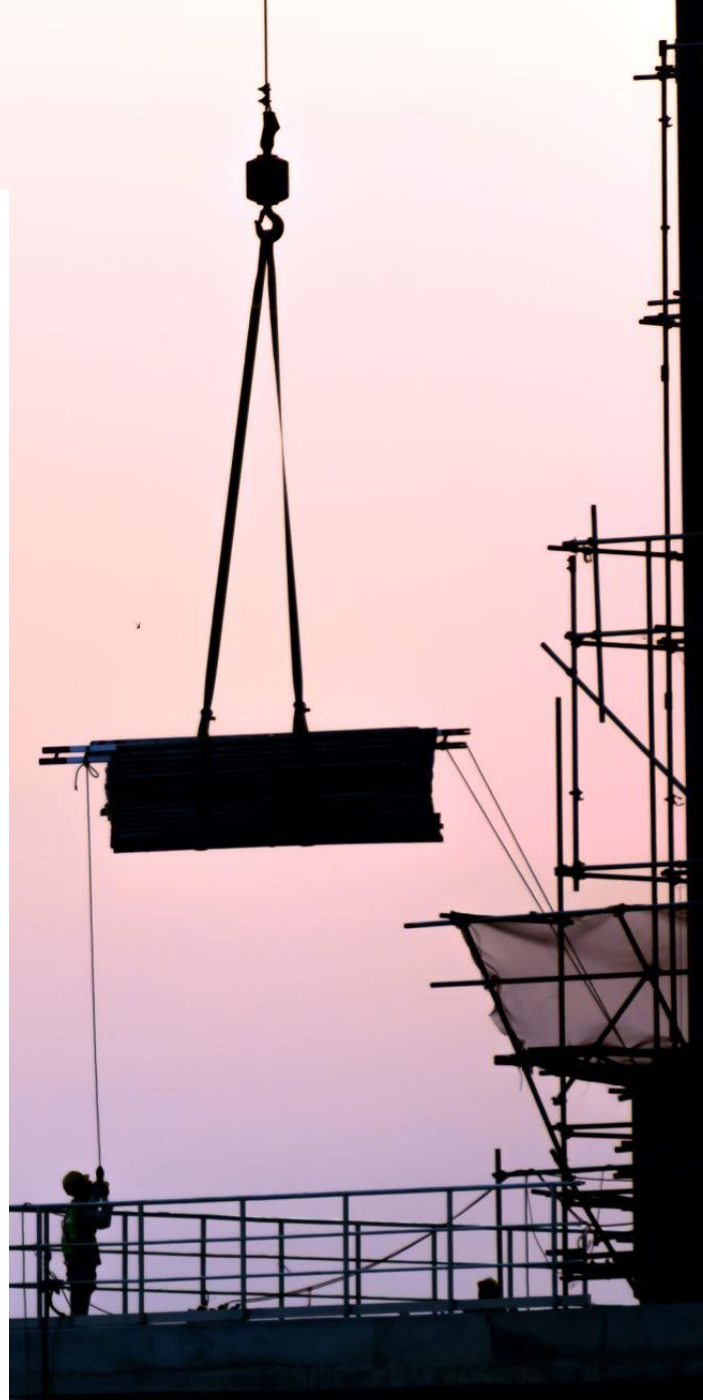

OBT/441 Brownfield Coalition Media Kit



2021- 2024

**East Central Florida Regional Planning Council
City of Apopka
City of Eustis
City of Kissimmee
City of Longwood**



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The Project

Introduction

After nearly half a decade of collaboration, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) was awarded a major Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The \$600,000 grant, one of only two Brownfield Cleanup and Assessment grants of this size awarded in the state this round, provides new opportunities for the planning council to collaborate with local municipalities to identify and begin their redevelopment of potential brownfields. The coalition is comprised of the ECFRPC and the cities of Apopka, Eustis, Kissimmee, and Longwood.

A Brownfields Advisory Committee, comprised of local stakeholders, will assist in identifying sites and will work as a liaison between the ECFRPC and local communities. The Advisory Committee is paramount to ensuring continued progress in the regional approach towards brownfields spearheaded by the ECFRPC.

Thanks to the collaboration spearheaded by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Central Florida jurisdictions will now be able to begin the process of adequately addressing contaminated sites.

Sites classified as a brownfield can see a wide variety of previous uses, some of the more common ones are listed below. All seven of these uses typical of a brownfield site have historical been found along the entire OBT/441 corridor.



Gas Stations



Medical Facilities



Dry Cleaners



Auto Repair Shops



Old Factories



Old Landfills



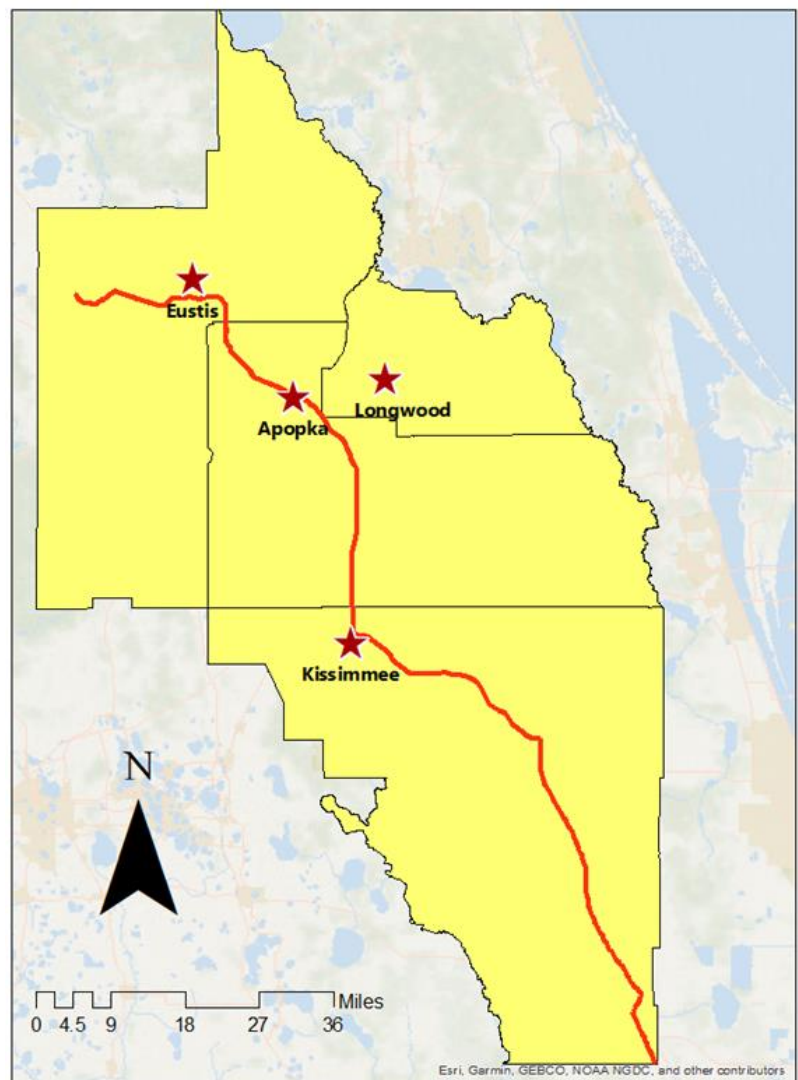
Golf Courses

Background

While the orange groves that once lined Orange Blossom Trail/U.S. 441 (OBT) have long been paved over, the corridor is still one of the primary North/South routes through Central Florida. By 1965, OBT carried more traffic than any other Florida thoroughfare and became the primary route through Central Florida for tourists visiting attractions like Cypress Gardens and Silver Springs.

The Orange Blossom Trail and its corresponding train, the Orange Blossom Special, have long played a role in Central Florida's tourism culture. With the addition of the highway system and tourism magnets like Disney World and Universal Studios, OBT saw a decrease in tourists. By the 1990s, the corridor was rife with crime and closed businesses. Today the corridor is filled with abandoned motor lodges, closed gas stations, former auto repair shops, and warehouses. These sites threaten surrounding environmental media and drinking water, as detailed in the following sections. A preliminary GIS inventory analysis revealed approximately 124 brownfields sites along the OBT in our region. Perception of contamination associated with these sites has created an overall disinvestment throughout the OBT corridor.

Years of disinvestment has meant the OBT corridor has become an impoverished area with increased homelessness, low-income populations, crime, and a severe shortage of affordable housing. Due to the large span of this highway and the myriad of regional issues affecting it, revitalization of the OBT corridor can only be achieved by working collaboratively and across jurisdictional boundaries.



The Coalition Partners

East Central Florida Regional Planning Council



Since 1962, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council has provided technical assistance to governments and organizations throughout its eight-county region (Brevard, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia). The region covers 6,500 square miles and is home to more than 3.5 million residents. The ECFRPC provides expertise and technical analysis to its members.

Using various industry tools and proprietary techniques, ECFRPC staff offer a unique regional understanding of economic development. This knowledge is crucial in assisting partners in developing their economic plans and understanding the economic impacts of events or policy decisions.

The ECFRPC oversees the regional Economic Development District (EDD) via a partnership with the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Multiple technology-focused research centers have opened in East Central Florida thanks, in part, to funding received via the EDD.

One of the primary roles the ECFRPC oversees related to the EDD is the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This multi-year roadmap ensures the long-term resilience of the region's economy. This has resulted in over \$15 million in grant funding within the past decade, providing an ROI of \$2.59.

Apopka

Located in the heart of Central Florida, Apopka is the second-most populous city in Orange County (behind Orlando). Like all of the communities in this brownfields coalition, Apopka grew around its rail lines, with its early economy primarily concentrated in the citrus. Best known as the "Indoor Foliage Capital of the World," Apopka continues to expand its economic portfolio as the region grows.

Today the city primarily serves as a bedroom community with a steady stream of new family-oriented neighborhoods in development. Nearby, Lake Apopka has garnered national attention for its successful remediation that continues to this day. The lake, the fourth largest in the state, is just one of dozens of lakes and water features found throughout Apopka. The city's primary transit access is via OBT/441, the 429 Beltway, and SR 436. Apopka is also connected via the West Orange Trail, a 22-mile multi-use bike and pedestrian trail. The West Orange Trail runs through the Apopka's downtown and across OBT/441 via a large steel fern-crowned pedestrian

bridge that has become iconic for the community. Nearby sits another large fern sculpture, honoring the city's indoor foliage past.

The Wekiva Parkway and Kelly Park Road have now opened up new opportunities for growth in the region, allowing for Apopka to shape its future via this high-traffic corridor.

Eustis

Nestled on the southern shores of Lake Eustis, the region around Eustis traces its history back to the Pleistocene Epoch, which is to thank for its unique hilly landscape, along with its rich archaeological offerings. More recently, Eustis was founded in the late 1800s as a steamboat stop. The city is connected via the Harris Chain of Lakes to the St. Johns River and, ultimately, the Atlantic Ocean. Rail access opened in 1880. The area was known for its ideal climate for citrus production. Eustis became known as "Orange Capital of the World" and was home to a U.S. Department of Agriculture research facility that pioneered the hybridization of citrus.

A short-lived hotel in the downtown area was transformed into Waterman Hospital in 1937, with the downtown area growing up around the local medical facility. Once the hospital moved to OBT/441 in nearby Tavares in 2003, downtown Eustis was left with a multi-block empty lot that has yet to be redeveloped even as other sections of downtown have seen new investments. Despite this, the rest of downtown Eustis has remained vibrant with a multiple restaurants, a performing arts theater, and numerous retail stores welcoming locals and tourists alike.

Kissimmee

Founded as an outpost for Florida cowboys, Kissimmee prospered due to its location on the shores of Lake Tohopekaliga. With steamboat and rail access, the city served as the home office for Hamilton Disston's dredging and development operations. Much of the land to the east and south of Kissimmee was dredged by Disston, who at the time was the single largest landowner in the United States. To this day, Disston's development of the area can be seen with many canals and human-made waterways crisscrossing the former swamplands to the south and east of Kissimmee.

The area continued as a primary hub for Florida's ranching and citrus industries until Walt Disney World opened nearby in 1971. After the introduction of Disney World, the area's economy was transformed by tourism. Since the county's founding, Kissimmee has served as the county seat for Osceola County, with many government offices downtown, including some within the historic courthouse building. Multiple

nearby hospitals and medical offices form the backbone of the community's Medical Arts District.

Today, downtown Kissimmee is accessed via the SunRail commuter rail, the Kissimmee Gateway Airport, OBT/441, John Young Parkway, and Hwy 192. The downtown is also known for its large lakefront park, home to a marina and multiple historical monuments. A large welcoming archway spans OBT/441 in the downtown area, and historical plaques throughout the city still honor the cowboy roots of the area. Nearby, Osceola Heritage Park is home to multiple sporting events throughout the year, including the Silver Spurs Rodeo, the largest rodeo east of the Mississippi.

Longwood

Originally known for the massive millenniums old cypress trees in an old growth forest just north of the city, Longwood has always been a unique Seminole County destination. By the late 1800s, the Seminole County city had established itself as a major tourism magnet with multiple hotels connected via a railway to nearby Sanford. The next century saw connections beyond the railway, which helped connect Longwood to the ever-growing Orlando area.

Today, Longwood continues to have great connections with a SunRail commuter rail station and multiple crucial highway corridors, along with easy access to I-4. Along the northern edge of the city is the Cross Seminole Trail, a multi-use bike trail that is part of the Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail. Downtown Longwood is one of two Historic Districts in Seminole County located on the National Register, and has become home to many weekly events in the revitalized Reiter Park. Nearby, South Seminole Hospital, part of Orlando Health, serves as one of the community's largest employers.

Now approaching the centennial of its incorporation as a city in 2023, Longwood continues to grow, focusing on new investments in and near the former dog track, which closed in 2020 after operating in the community for 85 years. This southern gateway to Longwood is now being reimagined as a vibrant corridor with new retail and restaurant opportunities.

Definitions

Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) – The ABCA is a remedial plan document that considers alternatives to the proposed cleanup. It must consider the site characteristics, including contamination issues, applicable laws, surrounding environment, land use restrictions, potential future uses, and cleanup goals. All reasonable alternatives, including taking no action, must be included in this analysis. The chosen cleanup method is selected via this analysis. The effectiveness, implementation restraints, and estimated cost of the cleanup must be considered in the analysis. Sea level rise, increased frequency and intensity of flooding, and other potential extreme weather events must be considered in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the resilience of the remedial options¹.

Brownfield – The United States Congress defines brownfields through a 2002 amendment to CERCLA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act) Public Law 107-118 (H.R. 2869) as ‘real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off greenspaces and working lands.’².

Brownfield Areas – Brownfield areas are contiguous areas that include one or more brownfield sites. Not all lots within a brownfield area may be contaminated. In Florida, the designation of a brownfield area is recognized via a local government resolution.

Brownfield Redevelopment – Prior to redevelopment of a brownfield site, one must address via remediation, removal, or contain contaminants that may be located within the site. After this cleanup takes place, restoration, rehabilitation, or new construction on the site may occur.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/programmatic-requirements-brownfield-grants>

² <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-107publ118>

Community Involvement Plan (CIP) – A site-specific strategy that outlines specific actions that will be undertaken during the course of the site investigation and cleanup to ensure communication with the affected community. According to the EPA, the CIP is “both a document and the culmination of a planning process”³. It is designed to ensure public input within the decision-making process. It reflects community needs, concerns, and expectation related to the site investigation and cleanup.

Environmental Justice – The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all peoples with no population bearing a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences. Environmental Justice also ensures past transgressions that have resulted in disproportionate environmental degradation are acknowledged and adequately addressed.

Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) – An environmental site assessment involves testing the perceived problematic items at the potential brownfield. Previous use of the site determines what potential contaminants may be present. The assessments are broken into two phases, with Phase I identifying sites via historic use records, interviews with property owners or nearby residents, reviews of existing databases, or site visits. Once a potential site is identified, it moves into a Phase II ESA which involves testing the perceived contaminants.

Exposure Pathways – This refers to how a person, species, or environment encounters the contamination. Common types of exposure pathways include air, groundwater, soil, and surface water.

Health Assessment – According to the EPA, “An ATSDR health assessment is a preliminary assessment of the potential risks to human health posed by individual sites. It is an evaluation performed by a public health professional that consists of reviewing environmental sampling data and other site-related information (e.g., remedial, public health evaluations, endangerment assessments) prepared/provided by EPA and other sources”⁴.

³ <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-community-involvement-tools-and-resources>

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-glossary#c>

Healthfield development – Just as brownfields can be a source of pollution for a community, their redevelopments can be a magnet for ensuring healthier and safer environments. These redevelopments are referred to as ‘healthfields.’ Some of the features that may include are access to healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, medical facilities, green space, and affordable safe housing.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment – Identifies potential environmental concerns. A Phase I Environmental Assessment involves a review of records, a site reconnaissance (walk-through), and interviews to evaluate whether past or current activities at the site raise environmental concerns. Further described in EPA’s AAI and in ASTM1527-05 standard.

Phase II Environmental Site Assessment – Evaluates potential concerns identified in the Phase I ESA. Phase II ESAs are tailored to meet site-specific needs and, at a minimum, may involve limited sampling and analysis to confirm or rule out potential environmental concerns.

Quality Assurance Project Plan – a formal document describing the quality assurance, quality control, and other technical activities that must be implemented to ensure results of sampling and laboratory work will satisfy stated performance criteria.

Site Rehabilitation Completion Order (SRCO) – Once all potential contaminants have been adequately cleaned and/or removed from the site a SRCO will be issued. This is only issued once all rehabilitation activities have been completed, and no further action is required.

More definitions and useful terms can be found on the EPA’s Superfund Glossary.
<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-glossary>

Acronyms

AAI – All Appropriate Inquiry, a standard set forth by EPA for conducting Phase I Environmental Site Assessments.

ABCAs – Analysis of Brownfield Clean Up Alternatives

ACRES – Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System. An online database for Brownfields Grantees to electronically submit data directly to EPA.

AOC – Area of Concern

ASTM – American Society for Testing and Materials, an organization that writes technical standards and guidelines.

BAC – Brownfield Advisory Committee

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

CMMP – Contaminated Materials Management Plan

COC – Certificate of Completion

COC –Contaminant of Concern. A chemical or substance that has the potential to adversely affect humans due to its concentration, distribution, and mode of toxicity

CTLs – Cleanup Target Levels

DBE – Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. These are for-profit businesses where socially or economically disadvantaged individuals own at least a majority interest and control management and daily business operations. Some of the more common disadvantaged group include racial, ethnic, and gender minorities; others are considered on a case-by-case basis.

ECFRPC – East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

ECHO – Enforcement and Compliance History Online. An EPA public database that provides compliance monitoring, enforcement, and demographic data for approximately 800,000 active regulated facilities.

EDA – Economic Development Administration

EDD – Economic Development District

EPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency

ERP – Environmental Resource Permit

ESA – Environmental Site Assessment

FAC – Florida Administrative Code

FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection

FDOH – Florida Department of Health

FDOT – Florida Department of Transportation

FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

FWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service, sometimes referred to as USFWS

GIS – Geographic Information System

GPR – Ground Penetrating Radar

HASP – Health and Safety Plan

MBE/WBE – Minority and Woman Owned Business Enterprises

NAICS – North American Industry Classification System

NHPA – National Historic Preservation Act

NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

OSHA – U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration

QAPP – Quality Assurance Project Plan

QEP – Qualified Environmental Professional

RFP – Request for Proposal

RFQ – Request for Quotation, sometimes called an Invitation For Bid (RFB). The soliciting of select suppliers and contractors to submit price quotes or bids for tasks related to the project.

SIC – Standard Industrial Classification

SRCO – Site Rehabilitation Completion Order

SSQUAPPs – Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plans

TAB – Technical Assistance to Brownfields

USGS – United States Geological Survey

WMD - Water Management District

Examples and Best Practices

When developing the proposal for the grant application, ECFRPC staff looked at several communities that have shown leadership in developing successful brownfields projects. Some of the communities with noteworthy best practices are listed below.

Brownfield Project Examples

Dania Beach – Dania Pointe (N. Bryan Road, Dania, FL 33004)

- 102 acres – mixed-use retail anchored development
- Redevelopment of an industrial site, previously home to a small family entertainment center with an abandoned roller coaster (The Dania Beach Hurricane). Outdoor village style retail center with 1 million sq. ft. of retail, plus multiple hotels, offices, multi-family housing, and entertainment venues. Previously known as Dania Live. The project involved removing all existing structures and reworking the site to develop an outdoor mall style village center with numerous national retailers, accommodations, and multi-family housing.

Daytona Beach – William Square (112 Orange Ave., Daytona Beach, FL 32114)

- 3.7 acres – mixed-use condo anchored; multiple buildings developed as individual lots.
- A former blighted apartment complex within the South Atlantic CRA purchased and demolished by the city. Initial plan for brownstone homes was canceled due to lack of demand. Project won the President’s Award at the 2015 Florida Redevelopment Association conference. Though the project took some time to be realized, it has now brought higher-end housing to the Riverwalk area.

Jacksonville – Lofts at LaVilla (995 Water Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204)

- 1.78 acres – 130-unit affordable housing development
- Previously multiple vacant lots in a prime location in downtown Jacksonville adjacent to the Federal Reserve and walking distance to the Prime Osborn Convention Center. The site had contamination due to historic discharge from The Great Jacksonville Fire of 1901. The project introduced 130 affordable housing units in a five-story building on the site. The site redevelopment also included the creation of five full-time positions.

Orlando – City View (595 W Church St, Orlando, FL 32805)

- 4 acres – Mixed-use development with workforce housing, executive-level office space, and retail.
- Former gas station with underground tanks. Rehabilitation required tank removal and excavation of petroleum contamination. The cleanup was privately funded, with Bank of America providing \$400,000 for the cleanup. The project resulted in 40% affordable/60% market-rate apartments. 198,000 square feet of offices, including a global headquarters for a Fortune 500 company, 25,000 square feet of retail, 266 apartments, and a 1,000-space parking structure were developed on the site.

Orlando – Mills Park (1650 N. Mills Ave., Orlando, FL 32803)

- 14.5 acres – Mixed-use development with housing, medical offices, and retail.
- A small segment of the lot was identified as contaminated. The project ensured it was cleaned as part of a multi-phase redevelopment of the property. The owners used brownfields funding to offset the cost of the project. The project also included the development of a bike trail connecting the neighborhood to downtown.

Tallahassee – College Town (805 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32304)

- 5.74 acres – Mixed-use development with a focus on student housing and retail.
- Previously an industrial district with multiple brownfield lots within the district. The project is a joint venture between the local CRA and the Seminole Boosters. With a budget of \$27 million, College Town brought 71 apartments to the site with multiple retail, dining, and entertainment spaces. Numerous existing structures on the site were saved and worked into the design, helping the area keep the industrial feel it previously had. One such warehouse is now home to national retailer Urban Outfitters. Large-scale artwork is prominent throughout the site.

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