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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10/2/2012

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INNOVATION SQUARE WINS STATE REDEVELOPMENT AWARD

Gainesville, Fla. — The Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA) has selected Innovation Square to receive two statewide redevelopment honors. The FRA presents awards annually to projects that exhibit the best practices in Florida redevelopment over the past year.

This year, the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has earned the award for “Out of the Box” redevelopment efforts related to Innovation Square. This honor underscores the multifaceted approach that major stakeholders – including the CRA, City of Gainesville, Shands at UF, the University of Florida, and GRU – have devoted to planning and developing the mixed-use research district. “Often redevelopment centers around a singular issue – whether it is a capital improvement, planning study, creative partnership, infrastructure upgrade, or beautification goal. Innovation Square has a much more holistic focus,” said Kelly Huard Fisher, Interim Director of the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency. “Gainesville has not only tackled all of these types of issues, we’ve taken a very strategic and comprehensive approach. We’ve overhauled the zoning code to allow for flexibility and clarity. We’ve examined utility needs and coordinated both short and long term infrastructure improvements across multiple agencies and the private sector. We’ve brought the University, the City, and the business community to the table to achieve our shared goals of job creation, investment, and high quality redevelopment. It’s an exciting time for Gainesville, and we’re thrilled that the FRA has recognized these efforts.”

In addition to the “Out of the Box” Award, the CRA and Innovation Square will also receive the FRA’s highest honor: The “2012 President’s Award.” This award, which recognizes the “best of the best” in urban redevelopment across the state, highlights the ambitious scope of Innovation Square, accomplishments to date, and future promise. Innovation Square will transform 12 underutilized blocks connecting Downtown and the University of Florida into a walkable, livable, sustainable commercial and research district that advances the community’s economic development goals while cultivating jobs, investment, and creativity within the city’s urban core. Says Fisher, “The level of coordination really sets Gainesville and Innovation Square apart from other communities. Whether it is building a road, developing a building, or attracting and growing a company, there is collaboration across a wide range of stakeholders. We are building lasting partnerships that are yielding major results.”

The FRA awards committee carefully selects the winners from over 60 entries. All of the entries embody the spirit of successful community redevelopment and revitalization. "The FRA annual awards program brings statewide recognition to our members and their successful revitalization efforts," said Marc Mondell, FRA President. "Progress made today will sustain new growth and redevelopment for our communities, and we are very proud of these efforts." The winners will be honored during FRA's 2012 Annual Conference awards dinner, to be held October 25, 2012.

Founded in 1974, the FRA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to assisting Florida professionals and volunteers in community revitalization efforts. With its mission of "transforming spaces, revitalizing places," FRA is committed to providing a forum for its more than 300 members to share knowledge and common experiences regarding revitalization opportunities and issues. FRA advocates for quality urban economic development and urban infill, and serves as a statewide clearinghouse for redevelopment information.

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