

# 2016 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



## TOP PRIORITIES

### **SKILL SET BUILDING, JOB TRAINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- The central city core of Gainesville is experiencing economic growth due in large part to the redevelopment efforts of the City of Gainesville, the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and its partners as well as interest from private developers. This area, including downtown and east Gainesville, has seen significant development and infrastructure improvement which has impacted the economic potential for the central city. Partners such as the University of Florida, Alachua County, the State of Florida and others have worked with the City and CRA to create an atmosphere of economic opportunity and sustainable growth with a goal of revitalizing this part of our community

### **INTERGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

- The City of Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS) is a mid-sized agency that provides public transit service to the City of Gainesville and the adjacent areas of Alachua County. The RTS service area is approximately 76 square miles with a total of 48 fixed routes, including 10 University of Florida (UF) campus shuttles. RTS provided more than 10.8 million passenger trips in FY 2014 and an average of over 40,000 weekday trips. By adapting its service to both students and local residents, RTS plays a key role in building successful partnerships within the community and is committed to providing a safe, courteous and reliable transportation alternative to the Gainesville urbanized area.

### **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

- GRU Supports Biomass Carbon Neutrality, Transition to Compressed Natural Gas Vehicles, Expanded Use of Renewable Energy, 1603 Amendment to Level Playing Field for Purchase of Power Plants and EPA Clean Power Plan Rule

### **VIOLENCE, INTERVENTION, PREVENTION AND REENTRY**

- Supports proactive programs that work with the youth who are the greatest of need and who have demonstrated patterns of delinquency.

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**2016 CITY OF GAINESVILLE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

**SKILL SET BUILDING, JOB TRAINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**JOB CREATION INFRASTRUCTURE:**

Gainesville has a unique opportunity to leapfrog ahead and create a new model of community economic development; the community has mobilized with unified goals of establishing a model of collaboration and innovation and to further enhance its effectiveness as a crucible for developing high tech companies. Establishing true public/private partnerships and further leveraging research funding and faculty expertise coming into the University of Florida, along with the City and CRA's extensive outreach and economic development programs will catalyze growth and spur the creation of creative class jobs.

**Current Projects Include:**

- Completion of Depot Park
- Finalizing the remediation of a contaminated site
- Building stormwater ponds to support additional growth downtown and creating a world class public park amenity; the ()
- Expansion of Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center GTEC and former Kennedy Homes Redevelopment, which includes the
- Expansion and creation of a commercial corridor on the eastern side of Downtown
- Creating an adjacent 15-acre mixed-use development on the site of a former housing project
- Innovation Square, a collaboration with the University of Florida to create a live/work/play research and innovation community
- Power District, 17 acres of decommissioned utility buildings and property being repurposed into an mixed-use post-industrial urban village.

These community initiatives include layers of redevelopment and community engagement including but not limited to historic preservation, redevelopment, economic development, rebranding, marketing and infrastructure improvements such as streets, sidewalks, street and pedestrian lighting, and utility improvements.

## **Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC) Area and the Former Kennedy Homes Site**

Directly east of the Power District; the Eastside Redevelopment Area is home to the City's first technology incubator, the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC). Adjacent to GTEC is the former Kennedy Homes site, a 16-acre site planned for redevelopment. The GTEC and former Kennedy Homes areas are an important connection to Gainesville's downtown and will compliment growth in the Power District and Innovation Square District, creating a signature east-west Technology Corridor for the City of Gainesville.

### **Partnerships:**

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is working with interested partners to create a sustainable community that will support the growing innovation economy and future expansion at GTEC and surrounding sites.

### **Projects:**

The CRA also completed an infrastructure analysis along Hawthorne Road, a major corridor through the area.

### **Request for Federal Assistance:**

Funding is needed for GRU to prioritize and complete an upgrade to a major lift station that services the majority of the Eastern Gainesville area.

## **Innovation Square and the iDistrict**

The Innovation District (iDistrict) spans roughly 44 acres in the heart of Gainesville's urban core. Development of the iDistrict provides a strong physical link between Downtown Gainesville and the University of Florida. It also represents the symbolic link of a deeply integrated town/gown partnership in which the University, Shands HealthCare (affiliated with the University of Florida), City of Gainesville, Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), and Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) work together in a collaborative partnership to bring investment, growth, economic development, and job creation to the community. The core development is a mixed-use, research-oriented 24-hour live/work/play community that will translate the knowledge developed at UF and elsewhere into commercial and business applications. The iDistrict has the capacity to include up to 6 million square feet of new building space and generate thousands of new jobs to the community. Many of these jobs will be high-wage positions in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. However, a high level of support services in commercial retail, residential, and other fields will be generated to meet the demand generated by the "creative class" innovation economy centered in this district.

### **Partnerships:**

The community has formed strong institutional partnerships in order to proactively establish the necessary framework that will support and cultivate iDistrict development:

- The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has partnered with the City and GRU to streamline and clarify zoning and utility regulations and the development review process and is building two new roadways through the district to provide necessary infrastructure and create greater connectivity.

The CRA, GRU, UF, Shands HealthCare, and the City of Gainesville, and private sector have coordinated high-level utility master planning to ensure that capacity, design, and delivery of services are well integrated into development plans. Urban design standards have been adopted to ensure walkability and multi-modal opportunities connecting the iDistrict, Downtown, and the University of Florida. The partnership is developing innovative stormwater systems that will be interwoven into urban design standards in order to address stormwater in a holistic, district-wide manner.

The Innovation Hub research/technology business incubator is now open, and plans for additional buildings are in the permitting process. Plans for major capital improvements are also progressing and include: roadways; stormwater; utilities; parks/public spaces; public/public and public/private partnerships; and more. All stakeholders, both public and private are working together to ensure full integration of plans, with the ultimate goal of creating a vibrant urban area that will create jobs and generate unprecedented levels of urban development. This district will not only benefit the local community, but serve as a national and international model.

CRA is currently constructing approximately \$4 million in transportation, stormwater, and utility improvements. These infrastructure improvements are necessary to support the planned additional buildings and high-tech jobs which are slated for the iDistrict in 2014-2015. Two buildings are planned to start construction in I2 for a total of 250,000 sq.ft. of research, commercial, and residential space.

### **Depot Park and the Power District**

After decades of disinvestment, the area immediately south of Gainesville's Downtown core is being revitalized into what is known as the Power District and Depot Park. Depot Park is a 32-acre designated Brownfield that is being remediated by the City and GRU and transformed into Gainesville's premier urban green space. The City/GRU has invested nearly \$30,000,000 in funds to remove environmental contamination, install new infrastructure and roadways, and invest in public amenities such as the restored Depot (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), walking and biking trails, a children's play area, and park gardens and pathways. At the central focal point of the park are large stormwater treatment basins, representing nearly \$5 M in

capital investment that will support infill and redevelopment in Gainesville's downtown. The Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention has plans to construct a 45,000 square foot museum on the Depot Park site, with Phase I planned to begin construction in 2015. Currently the City is finalizing remediation of the property and constructing the stormwater ponds. Park development, led by the CRA, is planned to begin construction during 2014.

Immediately adjacent to Depot Park is the Power District, approximately 17 acres of downtown property formerly utilized as support areas for utility operations. The area represents approximately 50,000 sq.ft. of potential adaptive reuse of 6 buildings with 700,000 sq.ft. of proposed development at full build-out. The Power District presents tremendous economic opportunities for the community. It is emerging as one of the city's most vibrant districts and includes an eclectic mix of industrial, artistic, commercial, and residential spaces. In late 2011, GRU relocated operations away from this district, providing an opportunity for large-scale redevelopment and economic development. The CRA, as lead agency, has coordinated master planning work in order to literally rebuild this section of town, and is working to enable flexible, streamlined zoning regulations that will bolster efforts to attract new commercial opportunities and jobs to the area. Additional investigations are scheduled to begin in early 2014 to explore the feasibility of daylighting portions of Sweetwater Branch Creek into a community green space, stormwater treatment amenity, and redevelopment asset. The proposed master plan identifies over 2 acres of new public open space with 1,300 linear feet of new streets, 4,000 linear feet of refurbished streets, and over 350 new parking spaces to serve the district and Depot Park. The CRA has currently appropriated approximately \$500,000 in funds towards the Power District initiative. Additional funding will be necessary to assist with the redevelopment of the area and to recruit redevelopment investment and business development. Such projects include but are not limited to development recruitment, utility infrastructure upgrades, building improvements and new construction, stormwater infrastructure, brownfield remediation, and streetscape enhancements.

The area will serve as an important compliment to Innovation Square and the iDistrict, as it provides the opportunity for Innovation Economy businesses with assembly/production/manufacturing needs the ability to locate and grow within Gainesville's urban core. Currently, the CRA lead a partnership with the City and GRU to establish a "catalyst" economic development project in the Power District. The catalyst project, a public/private partnership with Prioria Robotics, will provide an anchor tenant for the Power District, and will afford Prioria the opportunity to expand their growing business within the local community. Prioria is a locally grown clean tech company which develops and produces unmanned aircraft and other engineering solutions for industrial robotics, medical device

applications, and military and homeland security applications. Prioria has brought its production capabilities to the Power District and moved into the newly converted and renovated warehouse building in February 2013. The company anticipates adding approximately 40 new high wage jobs over the next five years. The catalyst project incorporated economic development, business retention, and redevelopment initiatives. Funding for the catalyst project included building reuse and renovation and infrastructure improvements. CRA was the lead agency for this project and partnered with the City of Gainesville and GRU. The project is substantially complete.

Master planning and rezoning is currently underway and additional funding is needed for construction and infrastructure improvements on the balance of the former Gainesville Regional Utilities sites. There is current interest from local technology companies in relocating to the Power District, which will require additional renovations to former warehouses to convert them to the appropriate uses. Cost estimates have not yet been obtained for this work but the City is seeking additional funding to continue its efforts in this important area of Gainesville urban core.

### **Empowerment Center Human Services Campus- Capital Project**

The Empowerment Health Center (EHC) at the former Gainesville Correctional Institute (GCI) location will provide access to healthcare services for all underserved residents in the Alachua County region. It is the next logical step in transforming the GCI to a true Human Services Campus.

The EHC will be designed and equipped to provide traditional medical, dental, and behavioral health services in a modern setting. The facility will incorporate current best practices for patient management, including electronic health records (EHR) and on-demand access. Professional staffing for medical, dental, and mental health services will be provided primarily by volunteer professionals in the community. Service availability will include evenings and weekend clinics. Additionally, safety net providers may offer access to non-traditional and ancillary healthcare services such as acupuncture, therapeutic massage, specialty medical clinics, and physical therapy.



Alachua County has a long and successful history of healthcare volunteerism and an active and interested Safety Net Collaborative. When fully renovated, the EHC will be available for use by healthcare safety net providers in the community. The EHC supervisor will work closely with Safety Net Collaborative members to offer a meaningful scope of service to all eligible and

underserved residents, thereby transforming the former GCI into a model Human Services Campus.

**Federal Request:** \$700,000 to renovate the medical building bringing it up to ADA requirements.

### **Rapid Rehousing**

The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program will provide financial assistance and services to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless and help those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. The funds under this program are intended to target individuals and families who would be homeless but for this assistance. The funds will provide for a variety of assistance, including: short-term or medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services, including such activities as mediation, credit counseling, security or utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and case management.

Federal Request:

#### **C. R. Layton United States Army Reserve Center – 1125 Northeast 8th Avenue**

In 1950, the City of Gainesville conveyed title for 6.8 acres of vacant property located at 1125 Northeast 8th Avenue to the Federal government. The US Army developed the property into a 35,625 square foot Army Reserve Center that was completed in 1953. The deed of conveyance contained a reverter clause indicating that the property would revert back to the City of Gainesville if no longer needed by the Federal government. Over 60 years later, in late 2011, the City was notified the property was no longer needed and would be conveyed to the City. The City was provided with an Environmental Condition of Property Update Report that was prepared for the US Army in 2010. This report identified issues in the building that would need to be addressed prior to any future reuse of the building. These issues include asbestos, lead paint and mold. In early 2013, the US Army determined that additional testing was needed and which was completed in the summer 2013. City staff also felt it was in the best interests of the City to complete further testing and assessment of the property.

The City conducted a Phase II Environmental Assessment of the property. Based on the testing results of soil and ground water, Water & Air Research, Inc. concluded no adverse impacts were detected. However, based on air samples acquired at various locations throughout the facility, primarily two locations were found to have moderate mildew spore types which were similar to



outdoor samples. Water & Air Research recommended running the air conditioning system to lower the moisture in the air and cleaning any obvious areas of mold before occupancy.

The additional testing by the US Army included a specific study of asbestos in the building. The study identified additional suspect asbestos containing materials but did not confirm whether these materials contained asbestos. The US Army has indicated that they will do no further testing or maintenance of the property. The City is seeking to confirm whether these suspect materials contain asbestos or not then update cost estimates for remediation of the lead paint and asbestos in the building. Current estimates of the costs to remediate the lead paint and asbestos are in the range of \$350,000. The City is seeking federal funding to cover the costs of the remediation and hoping to confirm this before accepting the property back into City ownership. The US Army and the City will need to sign a document to confirm the property ownership reverting back to the City.

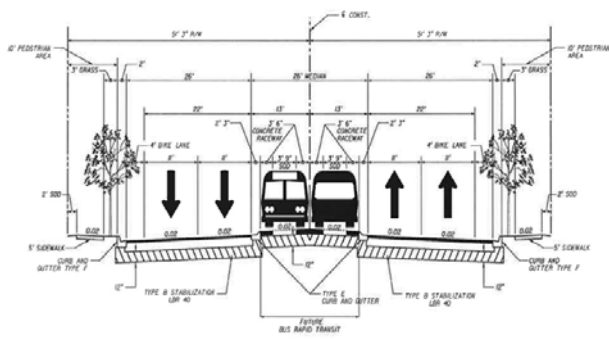
## **INTERGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

### **W 62<sup>nd</sup> Boulevard Connector:**

The W 62nd Blvd Connector is a project of regional significance with demonstrated potential to reduce congestion and increase safety on the regional, state and federal transportation systems (including portions of I-75, SR 24, SR 26 and SR 121). This project has strong community support and reflects the joint efforts of public agencies and the private sector partnerships to address mobility needs in the metropolitan area. In addition, it aligns with recent efforts by the Florida Department of Transportation to address mobility needs along the I-75 corridor. The W 62nd Blvd Connector will enhance system connectivity and expand modal transportation choices increasing mobility and accessibility to all users.

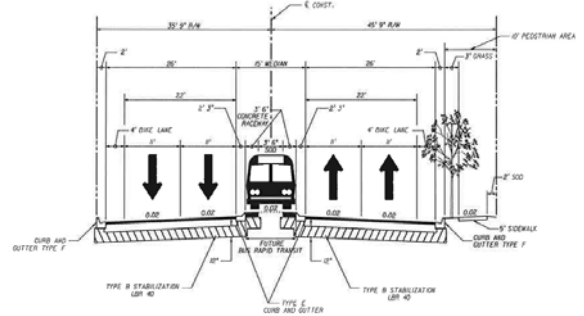


The initiative focuses on the construction of a four-lane multimodal facility that expands the transportation network. The project achieves the community's redevelopment objectives by generating employment opportunities, increasing community livability and fostering regional economic growth. The total cost of the W 62nd Blvd Connector project is \$100,000,000 and \$47,000,000 is paid for through local funding. This project may be accomplished in phases with Phase 1 cost of \$23,800,000.



FOUR LANE URBAN TYPICAL SECTION  
WITH FUTURE BUS RAPID TRANSIT IN MEDIAN  
SW 20TH AVE. TO NW 1ST PLACE

NOTE: OPTION OF DOUBLE BARRIER CURB  
TO BE EVALUATED IN DESIGN PHASE.



FOUR LANE URBAN TYPICAL SECTION  
WITH FUTURE BUS RAPID TRANSIT IN MEDIAN  
SW 40TH BLVD. TO SW 20TH AVE.

NOTE: OPTION OF DOUBLE BARRIER CURB  
TO BE EVALUATED IN DESIGN PHASE.

## SW TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS



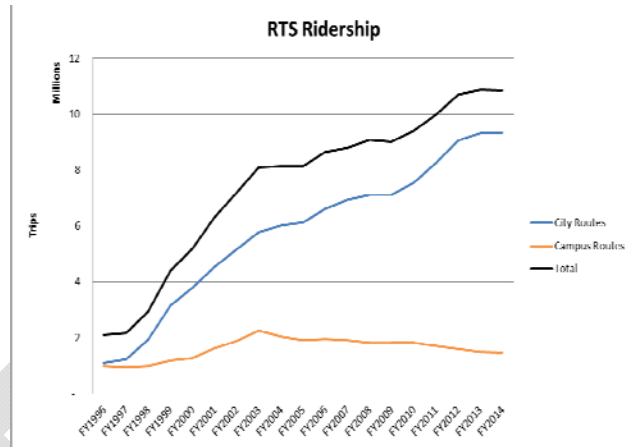
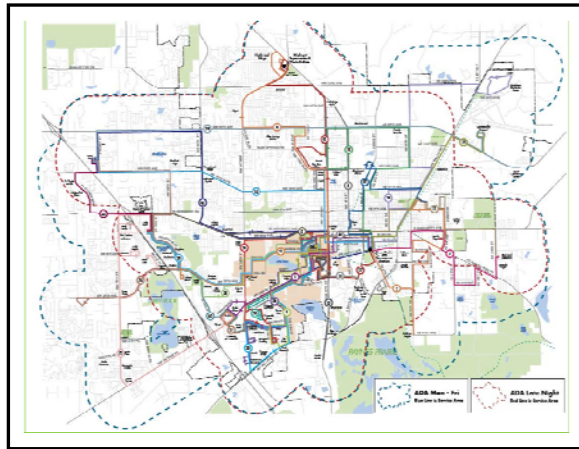
- Alternative N/S route paralleling I-75 and SR 121
- Increases capacity for local and regional trips
- Economic Development opportunities with Butler Plaza Expansion and Celebration Pointe

### Transit:

Over the past 10 years, the demand for transit services has exceeded RTS' resources. In 1998, RTS started its collaboration with UF to provide students prepaid, unlimited access to transit service by incorporating a transportation fee in UF students' tuition. In 2010 the same type of partnership began with Santa Fe College (SF). Similarly, over the last decade RTS enrolled the area's top employers in the RTS Employee Bus Pass Program, with over 32,000 employees now covered. As a result, since 1998 RTS' ridership has increased almost four fold and the Gainesville Urbanized area has the highest transit mode share in the state.

The last major update to the RTS Ten-Year Transit Development Plan (TDP) occurred in 2014 and proposed implementation of over 30,000 additional annual hours of service. These service

improvements would increase weekday and weekend service spans and help RTS achieve its goal of 30 minute frequencies or better on all routes.



### Regional Transit System (RTS) Fleet Replacement and Expansion

One of RTS's goals is to reduce bus fleet energy consumption, which in turn will help improve fuel economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and lower maintenance costs. RTS currently runs both bio-diesel and hybrid-electric vehicles. The five hybrid-electric buses that RTS operates have experienced over 15% fuel consumption reductions when compared to the rest of the fleet. To prepare for the future, RTS also plans to explore adding Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses to its fleet.

RTS has more than doubled its fleet size since 1997 to address the huge ridership increases mentioned above. In order to meet the demand, RTS acquired a number of used buses, which caused the average fleet age to soar to over 12 years old by 2000. This became incredibly costly, with an evaluation of RTS' fleet showing that the average cost per mile for vehicles older than 6 years old was almost twice that of vehicles 6 years or younger. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants have helped to reduce the fleet age to approximately 8 years but 55 RTS buses still exceed their useful life in years or mileage per FTA standards. This figure is expected to grow to over 100 vehicles by 2024. Older, high-mileage vehicles require upwards of \$45,000 more annually in repairs than newer vehicles. Additionally, these more intensive repairs require more staff time and consume a greater share of limited maintenance facility space. RTS needs to replace these 55 buses in order to sustain regular service and reduce maintenance costs. Additionally, as discussed above, RTS also has a number of service expansions planned to keep up with demand. Therefore, it is simply not a matter of only improving the current fleet age but also to keep pace with the pressure to grow the system.

It's important to note that this fleet replacement and expansion strategy is articulated in the goals, objectives and priorities of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), TDP, the Gainesville Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan, Alachua County's Mobility Plan, and the City of Gainesville's Comprehensive Plan.

RTS efforts to use alternative fuels on its fleet includes potentially adding CNG buses. Because of the large capital investment required to implement this fuel type, and the capital investment required beyond the vehicle level, RTS believes that a comprehensive cost/benefit study of this technology should occur before purchasing any equipment. Study would consider portion of fleet required to switch fuel type to be cost-effective, required capital investment, and cost sharing strategies with other local and regional entities.

#### **Bio-diesel Buses:**



#### **Articulated Buses:**



*Hybrid-electric**Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Buses:***Request for Federal Assistance:**

Bio-Diesel Buses - RTS requests \$31,500,000 to replace 45 older diesel engine buses with new ones.

Articulated Buses - In order to meet demand on some of RTS's most popular routes, RTS requests \$5,500,000 to purchase 5 articulated buses. A strategic approach in their placement will allow one articulated bus to be substituted for 2 standard 40' buses and reduce the total number of buses needed in a corridor and capital costs.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Feasibility Study- RTS request \$500,000 to determine the feasibility of using CNG.

### Transit Amenities and Technology Improvements

#### Transit Amenities:

RTS service standards dictate amenity requirements at each stop and prioritize bus stops that require Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) modifications. Improving pedestrian infrastructure makes the bus riding experience more comfortable, safer, and marketable, particularly in a climate like Florida's. On-board surveys conducted for the last two major TDP updates have revealed that the addition of amenities at stops is only prioritized less than improving route frequency.

These on-board surveys have also helped to highlight travel patterns and show that in addition to on-line stop improvements there is a deficiency in transfer facilities that add inefficient travel time to a number of trips. To improve accessibility and frequencies, transfer facilities are being proposed at UF, SF, the Five Points area, NW 13th St, Butler Plaza, and the Oaks Mall. The proposed Five Points station was the subject of a recent FTA Ladders of Opportunity grant proposal as it is strongly believed that it along with a few route modifications would improve job and health services access to the City’s most destitute population.



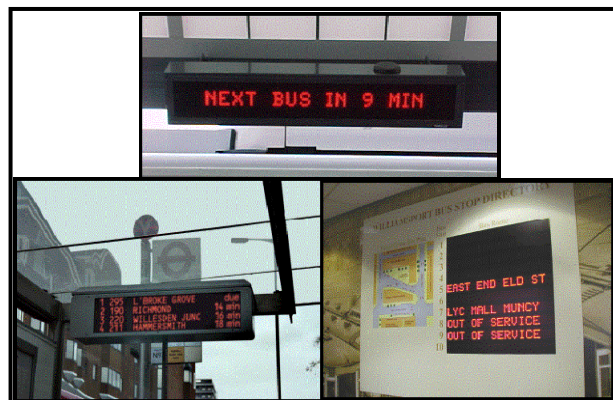
**Request for Federal Assistance:**

RTS requests \$20,000,000 for transit amenities and five transfer facilities.

**Technology Improvements:**

Increases in RTS ridership and a number of efficiency gains have a direct correlation with the technology improvements RTS has implemented in the last several years. Real-time bus arrival information (“Gator Locator”) has reduced the uncertainty and time required to use transit and Automated Passenger Counters (APC) have provided insight into a vast of array of travel behaviors. The latter lets RTS know where amenities should be provided, running times that should be adjusted and a whole host of other valuable information.

Even with these enhancements though, RTS continues to rely on antiquated software and manual techniques to schedule services, facilitate transfers, create job assignments,



and carry out the routine, daily tasks of a transit agency. A large number of transit agencies RTS's size or smaller now utilize algorithms and modern software interfaces to reduce agency operating costs by upwards of 10%. A recent local demonstration at RTS by a major vendor showed savings of over \$100,000 annually. Importantly, the latest transit software also helps satisfy the asset tracking demands placed upon agencies following the passage of the most recent federal transportation bill, MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act)

Request for Federal Assistance:

RTS is requesting \$4,500,000 to acquire an enterprise solution for scheduling, maintenance and operations software, including real-time information kiosks at major locations.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration**

The City of Gainesville is seeking \$2 million in funding for a water quality/surface water resource protection project. The requested funding will be used for construction of public access facilities at the Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration Project that is currently under construction. The Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration Project is a \$29 million project that the City is currently constructing in order to improve water quality in Paynes Prairie and meet Florida Department of Environmental Protection regulatory requirements. The project will also help to restore 1,300 acres of wetlands within Paynes Prairie and provide a public park for education, nature viewing and recreation. The funds being requested will be used to construct public viewing towers and interpretive signage. These facilities will ensure that visitors will have a greater understanding of the purpose of this investment in water resource improvements. The amount sought is 7 percent of the \$29 million total project cost.

### **Biomass Carbon Neutrality**

GRU supports and advocates for the permanent treatment of biomass fuel as carbon neutral. In demonstration of GRU's commitment to providing clean and renewable energy, GRU executed a 30-year agreement to purchase 100 MW of wood-waste biomass-fueled electric generation from the Gainesville Renewable Energy Center (GREC). With approximately 47 percent of the energy GRU produces being fueled by coal, and 53 percent from natural gas (calendar year 2012), the decision to invest in biomass fuel-fired energy was made as part of a strategy to diversify GRU's fuel mix and protect customers from fluctuating fuel costs.



While the EPA's deferral on regulating Greenhouse Gas emissions from biogenic fuel sources (issued July 2011 through July 2013, subsequently extended through July 2014) was a step in the right direction, GRU supports EPA's permanent ruling of biomass fuel as carbon neutral. Project costs will be impacted by the cost of carbon regulation would it require capital investments to install emissions control equipment that will be borne by GRU customers.

### **Support for Transition to Compressed Natural Gas Vehicles**

The City of Gainesville is seeking funding in support of our goal of transitioning our fleet of vehicles from traditional gasoline to compressed natural gas. The City of Gainesville currently owns 123 buses and 776 on-road vehicles, all of which rely on a mixture of diesel and unleaded gasoline. Fuel for the City is \$2.1 million and Regional Transit Services (RTS) fuel is over \$3.5 million. By transitioning 25% of our transit fleet and 33% of our eligible heavy- and medium-duty diesel general fleet to Compressed Natural Gas (30 buses and 55 vehicles), we \$28,249 project saving our community for general fleet. RTS is unable to predict total savings at this time but would studies show a significant savings in fuel cost but could be offset with higher maintenance operating expenses over the life of the CNG fueled fleet.

### **Support for Expanded Use of Renewable Energy**

The City of Gainesville is seeking funding and/or tax incentives in support of our commitment to increasing our use of renewable energy by Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU). In addition to being among Florida's leading utilities in the deployment of solar energy, GRU has contracted to purchase 100% of the renewable, biomass fuelled output from the Gainesville Renewable Energy Center's biomass plant, a privately held company. This will amount to 100 MW of clean, local, renewable energy for GRU customers.

### **1603 Amendment to Level Playing Field for Purchase of Power Plants**

The City of Gainesville supports amending Section 1603 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to allow the recipient of a 1603 payment to transfer specified energy property to a governmental entity without triggering recapture. Section 1603 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5), as amended ("Section 1603"), appropriates funds for payments to eligible persons who place in service specified energy property during 2009-2011 or after 2011 if construction began on the property during 2009-2011 and the property is placed in service by a certain date known as the credit termination date. The 1603 program filled the gap created by diminished demand for investor tax credits following the 2008 financial crisis, and achieved the near-term goal of creating and retaining jobs as well as the long-term goal of expanding the use of clean and renewable energy and decreasing dependency on non-renewable energy sources.

To finance the construction of a facility eligible for a 1603 payment, a developer may enter into a power purchase agreement ("PPA") with a counterparty for a term of 20-30 years in order to secure a guaranteed revenue stream from power sales generally priced at then-current market rates. Such PPAs typically provide for one or more purchase options to allow the counterparty to

acquire the facility in certain circumstances. As the rules are currently written, the City of Gainesville is deemed ineligible to benefit from the grant. Transfer of ownership of the Gainesville Renewable Energy Center to the City of Gainesville would trigger the grant recapture provision of Section 1603.

Amending Section 1603 as outlined would place municipalities on a level playing field. Further, as the 1603 payment would have already been paid, this amendment would not cause the Federal government to incur any additional costs.

### **EPA Clean Power Plan Rule**

Over the last decade, the City of Gainesville/GRU has done exactly what we believe the EPA's Clean Power Rule intends to accomplish - greatly reduce carbon dioxide emissions. We set a goal of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to seven percent below 1990 values by the end of 2013 and, with a concerted effort, exceeded this goal with a thirteen percent reduction by the end of 2012. GRU has invested millions to add renewable energy to our generation mix, use more natural gas and implement aggressive energy conservation programs since 2005. This has not been without a cost to our customers. GRU currently has the highest electric rates in the state of Florida, in part due to our actions taken to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>. With these factors in mind, there are two primary points we offer for consideration in proposed CO<sub>2</sub> rulemaking.

First, the proposed rule does not give credit for the significant investments made by utilities for renewable energy and energy efficiency programs to reduce greenhouse gas CO<sub>2</sub> prior to 2012. We believe that EPA should allow states to incorporate emission reductions made by electric systems prior to the effective baseline of 2012.

A second primary concern relates to the potential for stranded costs from early investments our community made to comply with EPA's Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) and Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR). While EPA recognizes the increased costs to the consumers with load shifting to natural gas, it does not consider the stranded costs for those units that still carry considerable debt. We would urge the EPA to fully consider Florida's unique situation with respect to fuel diversity, system reliability, economic growth, technological feasibility, and especially the investments and additional costs our customers already bear and any additional costs that will be forced upon them in the future.

### **VIOLENCE, INTERVENTION, PREVENTION AND REENTRY**

The Gainesville Police Department provides municipal policing services to a population of 124,354 located in Gainesville, FL. Years ago, the Gainesville Police Department realized that they must be more proactive in working with the youth who are the greatest of need and who have demonstrated patterns of delinquency. The 2012 Alachua County School Juvenile arrest data indicates that 34.7% of District students are African American; whites make up 46.6%, Hispanics make up 7%, multiracial 6.8%, and Asian 4.7%. When you examine those who are charged with crimes, whites make 32% and blacks were charged in 70.7%.

The Police Department has long since realized that there must multiplicity solutions to addressing crime and despair in the City of Gainesville. Our agency works with a number of community stakeholders to address crime and other quality of life issues by partnering with community based organizations and local government institutions designed to not only impact crime, but address some of it causative factors.

The Gainesville Police Department's highest priority is public safety for the citizens of Gainesville. As a Community Oriented Policing Agency it is implicitly understood that the origins of crime are rooted in complex societal issues. Therefore, the Gainesville Police Department realized years ago that we must be more proactive in working with the youth who are the greatest of need and who have demonstrated patterns of delinquency.

### **Reichert House Youth Program**

The Reichert House Youth Academy was established in 1987, as a result of a growing number of at risk young black males between the ages of 12 through 18 (4th to 12 grade), predominately from lower income, single family households creating crime problems and other socially unacceptable behaviors within Gainesville communities. Candidates are referred by the courts, States Attorney's Office, police officers, schools, public housing officials, Department of Juvenile Justice, and parents.

The program has grown from very humble beginnings to encompass a permanent educational complex including a main building containing classrooms, library, fully supported computer room, administration offices, board room, complete kitchen and multi-purpose room. A high school wing has been added containing classrooms and administrative offices as well as a fully supported computer lab. A functioning music/video production studio is available for participants to become involved in the many processes and jobs available in media operations. Staffed with an executive director, operations manager, 5 intervention officers, police officer, 3 state certified teachers, and an academic coordinator Reichert's Vision has continued to support and grow the facilities to meet the needs of at risk young men throughout the Gainesville and surrounding communities. Our current funding sources are both public and private. Because of our success and growth, we are in the process of building on donated land (\$55,000) the new modular elementary wing (\$150,000) to include a fully supported STEM lab (\$50,000) completed November 2014. The academic programs are primarily funded by a grant obtained through a relationship with the Alachua County School Board. Employees and operations are funded by the City of Gainesville, Black on Black Task Force and City of Gainesville/Alachua County grants. Transportation is funded by the City of Gainesville.

### **Program Success and Accomplishments:**

Reichert House graduates have achieved success in both their personal life and post academic endeavors as well as achieving their occupational goals. Graduates have been successful in the college, military, law enforcement, Fire Department, law school and medical school. The 2011, 2012 graduation rates for seniors was 100%.

**Request for Federal Assistance:**

The federal request for this project is estimated at \$250,000 to continue Moral Recognition Therapy program and to provide two full-time teachers, one for the elementary and one for the middle school.

**Mental Health and Public Education for Violence Prevention**

The Gainesville Police Department is coordinating efforts between Meridian Behavioral Health Services, CDS Family and Behavioral Health Services, Inc., Alachua County Schools, the Court System (Eighth Judicial Circuit, FL) and Juvenile Justice Providers to develop a system of care (SOC) for youth. The youth requiring these services are overwhelmingly youth of color. This fact has led to a disproportionate number of youth of color entering the juvenile justice system in our judicial circuit. The overall objective of the SOC will be to assess behavioral issues and collaboratively intervene with the student and family before these issues become arrestable offenses. Support services will include referrals for individual and family counseling, psychiatric referral, diversion to community conferencing, teen court, and restorative justice programs, mentoring, testing, and assessment.

**Request for Federal Assistance:**

Funding in the amount of \$50,000 is requested to support the development of the SOC to provide training to faculty, counselors and law enforcement officers for the purpose of improving communication with youth and families in crisis and more fully understanding the ramifications of dealing with children with special needs (autism, ADHD, substance abuse, intellectual and psychiatric deficiencies).

**Domestic Violence**

The majority of domestic violence cases in this community are committed by men. A new grassroots effort championed by Gainesville Police Department's (GPD) Rebuilding Coordinator targets men involved in speaking out against intimate partner violence.

**Key Developments:**

- A community Rally was held December 7 utilizing social media as a vehicle for advertising the event.
- GPD Domestic Violence detectives and other agencies have formed a High Risk Team response to Domestic Violence. The purpose of this team is to identify the most dangerous cases of domestic violence and implement interventions to prevent cases from escalating to lethal levels. The team strives to interrupt this pattern of escalation by focusing equally on victim safety and offender accountability utilizing a three-pronged approach: Early identification of high risk offenders through risk assessment; an

individualized multidisciplinary response to high risk cases; and coordinated monitoring and containment of offenders.

- GPD is also examining ways to address victims of sexual assault.

**Partnerships:**

- Alachua County Office of Victim Services Rape Crisis Center to launch a website for anonymous reports of sexual assault. The site provides information about intimate partner violence, victim rights and free resources available in the community. The University of Florida will work with GPD to develop videos aimed at sexual assault prevention that will aired as public service announcements.

The Gainesville Police Department (GPD) has received continuously funding through OVW's Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of protection Orders Program since 2007 and has developed several innovative programs that assist victims of domestic violence and their families that have been recognized nationally. GPD will seek funding from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) in 2014.

With the continued assistance of the Office on Violence Against Women the Gainesville Police Department will continue to expand these outreach efforts to address the effects of domestic and intimate partner violence in our community and increase awareness about prevention and support.

**Request for Federal Assistance:**

In order to complete our domestic violence videos for public service announcements, we are requesting federal assistance in the amount of \$25,000.