

CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

FY 2006 FEDERAL AGENDA

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January 10, 2004

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I. Community Development Initiative

Downtown Revitalization Project

The City is requesting \$11.0 million in federal funding assistance for the construction of the Depot Regional Stormwater Project and reconstruction of Depot Avenue. The City and its funding partners are providing approximately \$19.0 million towards the total estimated cost of \$30.0 million for these two projects. The Depot Regional Stormwater Project is a major capital project to improve environmental quality, foster economic development, and enhance recreation access near downtown Gainesville. The revitalization initiative is dependent on restoring a brownfield site as a 35-acre master stormwater facility and urban park. The facility will manage stormwater within 125 acres of the Sweetwater Branch Watershed. Currently, Sweetwater Branch discharges untreated stormwater runoff directly to the Payne's Prairie State Preserve and the Floridan Aquifer, the source of the drinking water supply for many communities in Florida. The project will serve the community by reducing the harmful effects of stormwater and protecting a drinking water source. The Depot Regional Stormwater Project will also provide primary park and recreation opportunities in an economically distressed neighborhood. Park features include a historic train depot, skate park, and Rail Trail Hub to provide linkage to Gainesville's extensive rail trail system. The recreation elements will promote healthy recreation choices to enhance citizen's health and well-being. Reconstruction of Depot Avenue into a multi-modal transportation boulevard will link neighborhoods in East Gainesville with the University of Florida and job centers throughout the greater downtown area and will infuse the area economically. The reconstruction will also provide pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the surrounding neighborhoods and the Depot Regional Stormwater Park.

Gainesville Youth Development and Support Initiative

The City and Alachua County together are requesting \$2 million in federal funding assistance for this joint initiative. Of these funds, the City is requesting \$1 million for upgrade of public recreation infrastructure in the most economically distressed neighborhoods. The City has a significant number of older low-to-moderate income neighborhoods that lack access to public recreational facilities. The population of these neighborhoods includes disproportionately large percentages of children and youth, single-parent families and the elderly, whose quality of life is diminished by high crime and low employment prospects. The City and the County currently are contributing substantial funding to their joint initiative in the form of local government operating funds (\$100,000), federal and state grants (\$799,200), federal pass through grant funds (\$7.0 million) and cash and in-kind match (\$400,000).

II. Public Transportation Enhancement Initiative

Regional Transit System Facility Expansion Project

The City is seeking \$7 million in federal funding assistance for expansion of its Regional Transit System (RTS) facility. Over the past seven years, the demand for transit services has outstripped available RTS resources. RTS has initiated plans to expand its present operations, administration and maintenance facilities. RTS has formed a Facilities Expansion Committee and is in the process of constructing phase 1, the new employee parking lot and completing design plans for phase 2, expansion of the RTS Administration and Operations facilities. The anticipated start date for phase 2 is March 2005. We now need to move to phase 3 of the project, Bus parking and Maintenance Facility expansion. We estimate the cost of the maintenance facility project to be \$7 million and are requesting that amount.

RTS facilities are located along the southeastern border of a major brownfield redevelopment project. The project, known as the East Gainesville Sprout Project, was initiated by the City of Gainesville. It features the creation of a large stormwater park intended to capture and filter stormwater drainage from downtown Gainesville before the drainage empties into environmentally sensitive Payne's Prairie. Other elements in

the East Gainesville Sprout Project include rehabilitation of the City of Gainesville's Historic Old Depot, development of a botanical garden, recreational trails and additional greenspace for downtown Gainesville.

Plans for facility expansion include the following:

- *Shop Expansion:* Shop expansion includes adding additional bus bays for repairs and maintenance of our expanded fleet, relocation of vehicle fueling and washing stations and a design to accommodate the larger vehicles projected for service.
- *Parking:* Fleet parking must be re-designed and reconfigured to provide a workable flow for transit activities. Such activities include bus "probing" (downloading passenger information) on return from shift, refueling, going through the automated bus wash and finally parking the bus.
- *Other Elements* included in the RTS plan for facility expansion are safety video camera monitoring, swipe card technology for secured employee parking, and proper outdoor lighting.

Multi-Modal Transportation Center

The City and RTS are seeking an additional \$4,000,000 in federal funding assistance for the Multi-Modal project. The success of the RTS has led to an unsafe and crowded transit transfer center located on the City Plaza. Several years ago, the RTS purchased the old GRU Engineering center and land to locate a Multi-Modal Center. An earmark of \$1,000,000 was received in 2003 to begin engineering, design and demolition of the old building. Preliminary concept designs indicate a need for additional funds to fully realize the potential of the site and construct an appropriate facility with covered walkways for passengers, a suitable building and sufficient parking for employees and other users of the facility.

III. Housing Initiative

Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Project

The City of Gainesville is seeking \$5.3 million in federal funding to assist with acquiring and developing mixed-income housing on vacant parcels in Southeast Gainesville, a short distance from the City's downtown, located in a CDBG target area and State Enterprise Zone. The City's goal is to develop, through public and private partnerships, infill residential development with a mix of incomes. Developments would include pedestrian- and transit- oriented features such as front porches, recessed garages, sidewalks, and community parks. With funding assistance, the City could acquire one or more parcels for residential development by the City, while providing master planning to encourage equivalent quality development by the private sector. Revitalization of this portion of Southeast Gainesville would be consistent with the goals of the recently adopted Plan East Gainesville.

Southeast Gainesville is an older, less developed part of the City of Gainesville and is in need of significant revitalization. The City has created a track record of ability to develop new residential units, with its development of Cedar Grove II to the north, containing 131 new residences. The City's Community Redevelopment Agency is undertaking streetscape enhancements and other improvements in the recently created East Side Redevelopment District just north of the target area for this initiative. The Florida Department of Transportation, with the participation of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization, has made improvements to the nearby Hawthorne Road corridor. The City has constructed the Gainesville Enterprise Technology Center, a business incubator, in the immediate area. The Alachua County School Board operates Williams Elementary School, which includes a magnet program for gifted students, in the immediate area, as well as Lincoln Middle School, which includes a Lyceum Academy program drawing middle-school children from throughout the county for an enriched curriculum. Creation of high quality, well designed infill housing stock in this area, serving a variety of income levels, will encourage revitalization of this traditionally underserved area, and will provide urban infill in contrast to the community's overall pattern of significant growth to the west. Therefore, the City is requesting \$5.3 million for acquisition, infrastructure and residential development associated with this project.

IV. Public Safety Enhancement Initiative

Joint Communications Project

The City of Gainesville and Alachua County are requesting \$4.8 million to replace obsolete technology with countywide and regional command, control and communication (C³) integrated and interoperable wireless digital data. In the past three years, Gainesville and Alachua County have invested a total of more

than \$20 million in local funds along with significant staff resources to create an interoperable voice (radio) communications system and centralized operational control for disasters, terrorism events, large assembly events (90,000+ in attendance) and daily operations. In creating the system, there have been a variety of agencies linked through an interoperable command, control and communications (C³) voice system. Nearly all public safety agencies, public works agencies, utilities, transportation facilities (airport, bus transit) and specialized teams have been included in the project. The capstone project needed to complete the C³ networking of all these agencies is an integrated data system to supplement and enhance interoperability and rapid information sharing and updates. This component is needed to integrate information collected for homeland security and other emergent situations in order to furnish it to first responders and others in real-time. As individual agencies have adopted wireless digital technologies, it has become apparent that these new systems require updated backbone systems in computer aided dispatch (CAD), information storage and retrieval, mapping and data analysis in order to provide all users, particularly first-responders, pertinent information over an integrated framework. The current 14 year-old technology (CAD and other backbone systems) lacks the capability, both in hardware and software, to achieve these goals.

This project is unique in its focus on regionalization, multi-agency (city, county and state responders) and tight integration of disparate agencies in an interoperable data environment. Such a project is at the leading edge of Federal initiatives to provide effective use of multiple local and regional resources in the first response to any major emergency, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and terrorist events.”

V. Public Infrastructure Initiative

Pollution Prevention Initiative

Murphree Wellfield Monitoring Network

Gainesville Regional Utilities is requesting \$750,000 in federal funding assistance for the establishment of a regional groundwater monitoring network. The catalyst for this project was the discovery that the aforementioned Koppers site is contributing pollutants to the Floridan Aquifer from which our community draws their drinking water. The establishment of this early warning detection system will alert GRU to potential pollution threats not only from the Koppers site but also from any potential pollution sources that may not be known. These sentinel wells will provide advance warning of possible contamination with roughly 20 years to remove the contaminants before they can reach our Murphree Wellfield. GRU has budgeted \$190,000 for engineering studies and design and for the construction of the first two wells in the network. Funds are needed for the construction of the remaining wells and for the establishment and management of the entire twenty-six well monitoring network. This funding will provide peace of mind and security to the community of more than 175,000 people who rely on the Murphree Wellfield for their sole source of drinking water. The funding that we have applied towards this project demonstrates GRU's high level of commitment to protecting our Community's pristine water supply and our confidence that this project is a critical element in that effort. We feel that applying money towards effective pollution prevention programs is the most prudent use of our ratepayer's funds and request aid from the federal government in support of this pursuit.

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has been working with Koppers since the mid-1980's to identify chemical contaminants concentrations and plume movements. There is no question that the contamination has reached the drinking water aquifer that the community uses for its water supply or that the direction of movement of the contaminants is towards the community's wellfield. Construction of the sentinel well network will provide two immediate benefits to the public. The first is by providing a definitive network of groundwater interception, the public can be assured that the contaminants have not entered the City's water supply. Secondly the community can monitor the results of any future source removal at the contaminated site to ensure that the testing did indeed identify the source of the contaminants.

Public Infrastructure Development Initiative

Water Supply Enhancement in Low and Moderate Income Neighborhoods

The City of Gainesville is requesting \$1M to be leveraged with local funding and other grant monies to provide a central water supply to low and moderate-income neighborhoods currently on wells. The \$1M will be used to provide central water service to residents both within the City of Gainesville and in adjacent unincorporated areas. Funds being requested will be leveraged with funding from the City of Gainesville

and Alachua County to provide central water service to low-income families. In addition, the City of Gainesville has set aside approximately \$100,000 per year to extend infrastructure within the city, with the first priority being CDBG target areas. A two year partnership between Alachua County and the City of Gainesville, has already resulted in \$133,000 in funding for low-income families in the adjacent unincorporated areas. Funding is being sought to pay for on-site costs such as plumbing costs associated with converting residents from wells to central water service as well as costs to extend water service and pay applicable connection charges. Initial phases of this program will target low to moderate income areas.

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure for Five Points Project, Plan East Gainesville

Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) is requesting \$1 million in federal grant funding assistance for the purpose of reconstructing and relocating utility infrastructure in the Five Points area, as well as providing water and wastewater capacity to redevelopment projects. The Plan East Gainesville process was a community based planning effort that was undertaken to develop a shared vision for improving East Gainesville, an area characterized by gradual economic decline and lack of investment. Redevelopment efforts will require the relocation and upgrade of utility infrastructure to support more intensive development. Further, water and wastewater connection charges will be required due to increased capacity requirements. The requested grant funding will be used to pay for utility system improvements and connection charges to promote redevelopment in east Gainesville.

VI. Other Support

Public Transportation Acquisition Project

Gainesville and the Regional Transit System (RTS) have joined a coalition of Florida west coast area transit systems to pursue bus acquisition appropriations. The coalition consists of HARTline, RTS, Manatee County, Lee County, Sarasota County, Lakeland, Okaloosa County, Suwannee Valley and others. The RTS is requesting \$5 million through the consortium. Our desire is to replace our aging buses on a reasonable schedule and avoid the need for large fleet replacements every twelve years. Purchasing eight to ten buses per year would accomplish this vital goal and provide a logical capital budgeting process. New buses are vital to the continued operation of RTS services. Of our 106 total buses, 58 are over the 12-year-old threshold and eligible for replacement, with several eighteen years of age or older. Vehicles to be replaced include non-lift equipped, non-ADA accessible buses.

The passenger loads we carry have resulted in extreme wear and tear on the used buses that were purchased to accommodate the increased number of trips provided. To meet the ridership demands used buses have been purchased during our expansion. Many of these buses were not ADA accessible and beyond the twelve year federal life span threshold, which has contributed to the current crisis of worn-out, obsolete buses draining our financial resources to keep them operating. Success has also led to increasing expectations among other community groups for the enhancement of transit services in their neighborhoods. There are areas of our service area that receive service on 10 to 15 minute headways and other areas that only receive service every hour. These inequities must be addressed in the near-term

Transportation Authorization Initiatives

Within the reauthorization of the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), Alachua County and the City of Gainesville continue to support public transit as the top transit priority for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area. Public transit's most critical need is to expand the existing maintenance and administrative facilities (\$6,650,000), followed by continued bus fleet replacement and expansion (\$17,590,000). The City and the County support the overall themes and strategies of Plan East Gainesville, requesting a Bus Rapid Transit Planning Study (\$500,000). Within the reauthorization, the City and the County request also includes specific transportation projects: an Intelligent Transportation System (\$23,384,000), the Reconstruction and Enhancement of Depot Avenue (\$6,000,000) and Gainesville Regional Airport Roadway and Access Improvements (\$4,500,000).

Koppers Superfund Site Cleanup

Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) is requesting action on the cleanup of the USEPA designated Koppers Superfund Site, which was listed on the National Priority List in 1983. The Koppers site in Gainesville is located only two miles away from our Murphree Wellfield, the sole source of public drinking water for more than 175,000 people. It is of utmost importance to this community that the high quality of our sole

source of drinking water be protected and preserved. It was originally assumed by the EPA that contaminants from the Koppers site would not migrate beneath the thick layer of clay above the aquifer. But in 1993 it was discovered that migration through the clay was occurring, and contaminants from wood preservation were found at low levels in the Floridan Aquifer in 2003. Action needs to be taken immediately on this site to prevent contaminants from reaching the Murphree Wellfield and contaminating a pristine water supply. This requires prompt action from the EPA on this site which was first identified as polluted in the mid-1970s. On behalf of the citizens of Gainesville and Alachua County, GRU requests immediate and urgent action be taken on the matter of protecting Gainesville's water supply and the 175,000 people who rely upon it.