



City of Gainesville

2008 Federal Legislative Statement

December 11, 2006

Table of Contents

	Page
I. Community Development Initiative	
• Downtown Revitalization Project	1
II. Public Transportation Enhancement Initiative	
• Administration and Operations Facility Expansion	2
• Multimodal Transportation Center	2
• Bus Replacement	2
• Traffic Management System	3
III. Education Initiative	
• Opening the Doors to Math and Science	4
IV. Housing Enhancement Initiative	
• Southeast Gainesville Renaissance	5
V. Homeless Housing and Services Initiative	6
VI. Regulatory Initiative	
• Cabot/Koppers Superfund Site	8

CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

FY 2008 FEDERAL AGENDA

I. Community Development Initiative

The Downtown Revitalization Project

The Gainesville Downtown Revitalization Project is a \$31.4 million project to revitalize the traditional heart of the city and East Gainesville. This funding request is for \$9.5 million, which will be used to fund urban park development, stormwater management facilities, and reconstruction of Depot Avenue. The Project aims to reverse the effects of several decades of urban decay and environmental contamination that have eroded the economic and social health of the city core. This area is a key sector and is adjacent to the University of Florida, one of the nation's largest universities, the Health Sciences Center, and downtown Gainesville.

To date, the first phase of brownfield cleanup and stormwater facility construction has been completed. Phase Two cleanup and construction of the remaining stormwater facility and roadway are well into advanced planning and permitting stages.

The Downtown Revitalization Project is embraced by many enthusiastic community partners, including the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, the University of Florida, Gainesville Regional Utilities, neighborhoods, businesses, and civic and recreation organizations. The Project is crucial to the quality of life of thousands of citizens, now and in the future.

The City of Gainesville has secured approximately \$22 million in grants, loans, and local government funds. Funding partners are the United States Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Program (\$200,000), FL Department of Environmental Protection (\$1.1 million), St. Johns River Water Management District (\$715,000), US Department of Housing and Urban Development (\$526,300), Florida Recreational Trails Program (\$200,000) and the State Revolving Fund, which provided a \$15 million construction loan.

II. Public Transportation Enhancement Initiative

The City of Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS) provides public transit service to the City of Gainesville and the adjacent areas of Alachua County. The transit system's service area covers approximately 75 square miles with a total of 38 fixed routes, including 10 University of Florida (UF)

campus shuttles. RTS provided the community with more than 8.6 million passenger trips in FY 2006 and an average of 45,000 weekday trips. RTS continues to play a key role in building successful partnerships within the community, and enjoys a highly successful partnership with UF. The City of Gainesville and RTS is committed to providing a safe, courteous, and reliable transportation alternative.

Administration and Operations Facility Expansion

The City is seeking **\$2 million** in federal funding assistance for the expansion of its RTS Administration and Operations facility. Over the past nine years, the demand for transit services has outstripped available RTS resources. RTS has initiated plans to expand its present operations and administration facility. RTS has completed the first two phases using local, state and federal funds. Phase one included the construction of the employee parking lot and phase two the site work in preparation for the facility expansion. The City is ready to begin the third phase of the project, which consists of design and construction of the RTS Administration and Operations facility.

Multimodal Transportation Center

The City is seeking **\$3 million** in federal funding assistance for the Multimodal Transportation Center. The success of RTS has led to an unsafe and crowded transit transfer center located on the Downtown City Plaza. Several years ago, the City purchased the old Gainesville Regional Utilities engineering center and land to site a Multimodal Transportation Center. Local, state and federal funds are currently being used for phase one of this project, which consists of engineering, design, demolition of the old building and site work preparation for designated bus bays and building. Additional funds are needed to construct the Multimodal facility with covered passenger walkways and any required parking for employees and visitors.

Bus Replacement

The City is requesting **\$14 million** in federal assistance for replacement buses. RTS currently operates 52 buses that are eligible for retirement, with average fleet age of 15.8 years and annual maintenance costs of approximately \$45,000 per bus (\$2,340,000 in maintenance costs per year). Even though the City will receive SAFETEA-LU grant allocations for buses and FDOT funds, it still needs to replace at least 40 buses in order to be able to sustain its regular service and reduce maintenance costs.

Table 1.- Summary of Funding Needs

Project	Total Cost	Funding Obtained	Funding Needs
RTS Facility Expansion	\$2,800,000	\$800,000 ⁽¹⁾	\$2,000,000
RTS Multimodal Transportation Center	\$5,140,000	\$2,140,000 ⁽²⁾	\$3,000,000
RTS Replacement Buses	\$18,300,000	\$4,300,000 ⁽³⁾	\$14,000,000

(1) Section 5309 Grant (\$300,000), FDOT Funds (\$250,000), and Local Funds (\$250,000)

(2) Section 5309 Grant (\$980,000), FDOT Funds (\$500,000), and Local Funds (\$660,000)

(3) SAFETEA-LU Grant allocation for FY06-FY09

Traffic Management System

The City is requesting \$9 million in federal funding assistance for the Traffic Management System.

The \$18 million Traffic Management System includes replacement of its computerized traffic signal system and construction of a traffic management center that will allow real time adjustments in the traffic signal system to maximize traffic flow and respond to incidents on the roadway.

New Intelligent Transportation System technology allows communities to effectively manage traffic without having to widen constrained roadways in fully developed urban areas. While an effective Traffic Management System can increase efficiencies in traffic movement by 10 to 15%, an environmental benefit of reducing carbon emissions by an estimated 90,000 tons per year in the Gainesville area will also be realized.

The City has appropriated \$5 million from bond proceeds and has established funding partnerships with Alachua County (\$2 million) and the University of Florida (\$3.8 million). In addition, the City has entered into a regional transportation agreement with our neighboring Marion County and City of Ocala in order to qualify for state transportation funding opportunities.

III. Education Initiative

City of Gainesville and Alachua County Public Schools Partnership for Student Success Opening the Doors to Math and Science for Disadvantaged Students

While the total population of students in Alachua County made adequate yearly progress in mathematics in the 2006 FCAT assessment, African-American students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students did not. This contributed to four of the seven high schools in Alachua County being graded as “D” schools by the Florida Department of Education. In addition, the 4-year graduation rate for African-American students in Alachua County Public Schools is 51%. We have a significant achievement gap in Alachua County for disadvantaged students. As the global economy becomes more technologically dependent, these students are being left farther behind.

With the academic support and exposure to the possibilities of the world around them, we believe these students can be successful. To that end, the City of Gainesville and Alachua County Public Schools have entered into The Partnership for Student Success, a broad-based program intended to provide meaningful support to a school system facing many challenges.

On behalf of the Partnership for Student Success, the City of Gainesville is requesting a total of \$636,800 to implement a comprehensive program aimed at closing the achievement gap in mathematics for the at-risk 9th and 10th grade students in the public high schools.

Component #1: Provide a credit-based Extended School Day program in Math

Entering 9th grade and 10th grade students, previously identified as at-risk by their FCAT scores and academic record, would be invited to participate in an extended day program at each high school. This program would allow them to earn one elective credit toward graduation. The curriculum would be based on building their mathematics skills and applying these skills in scientific lab experiences. Students will learn to value mathematics as they see a need for learning it. Field trips to the University of Florida and Santa Fe Community College will show the students what is waiting for them if they do well in their academics.

**Projected Budget:
\$470,000**

Component #2: Provide a credit-based mathematics/science Summer Camp

Entering 9th grade and rising 10th grade students, previously identified as at-risk by their FCAT scores and academic record, would be invited to participate in a summer camp. The students would be engaged in hands-on math and science activities and would have field trips designed to acquaint them with the scientific discoveries going on at the University of Florida and Santa Fe Community College in their own home town. Students would earn one-half elective credit toward graduation for their participation in the summer camp. An additional benefit to this component is the positive experience that such a program would provide these students. Research has shown that relationships are important in student achievement, particularly for at-risk students. A positive experience with the high school and the teachers prior to entering high school will start the student off well the following year.

**Projected Budget
\$112,800**

Component #3: Provide after-school tutoring

For the students who are not able to attend the Extended School Day program, a tutoring program will be instituted at each high school to provide support for their mathematics and science classes. Teachers will be employed to provide tutoring before and after school 2-4 days per week. An enrichment curriculum as well as tutoring on specific questions will be available to help students build their conceptual knowledge in mathematics.

**Projected Budget
\$54,000**

TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST \$636,800

IV. Housing Enhancement Initiative

Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative

The City of Gainesville is requesting \$3.3 million in Federal funds to implement the pre-development and construction phases of the Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative. The development of mixed-income residential housing on vacant parcels envisioned in the proposed project will be significant in revitalizing Southeast Gainesville. The purpose of this funding request is to eliminate slum and blight by encouraging mixed-income infill residential development in older neighborhoods in Southeast Gainesville. This effort is a specific initiative to implement new residential development pursuant to the recently adopted "Plan East Gainesville" vision.

The City has a contract pending to purchase a large parcel, Kennedy Homes Apartments, in the amount of \$1,950,000. In addition, the cost for the demolition of the existing structures on site is estimated at \$600,000 and the removal of the asbestos is estimated to cost \$350,000. The City has committed funding for the acquisition, demolition and asbestos removal from a combination of the City's local revenue/bond funding and HOME Program funds.

Recently, the City of Gainesville applied for a \$5 million grant from the State of Florida Housing Finance Corporation under a pilot program, Community Workforce Housing Innovation Program (CWHIP), which is designed to provide affordable housing opportunities for homebuyers who are in the City's workforce and essential services personnel categories. This development will contain approximately 90 attached and detached new homes, of which 45 units will be sold to the City's workforce and essential services personnel with incomes less than approximately 140% of the median family income adjusted for family size. The grant funds will be used to make site improvements and provide subsidies to the homebuyers.

According to the Housing Data Analysis Report in the City of Gainesville's Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan, between the years 2005 and 2010, demand for additional new single family housing units will be approximately 1,888. Although there is a stock of affordable homes for sale on the market, there are many barriers preventing low and moderate income households from purchasing a home. Such barriers are high down payment/closing costs, credit problems, difficulty in securing financing and a lack of knowledge about the home buying process. The Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative is aimed to help these individuals acquire safe, decent, and affordable housing.

V. Homeless Housing and Services Initiative

10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

The City of Gainesville requests \$2.8 million to continue implementation of the City of Gainesville-Alachua County 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. In December 2005, the City of Gainesville and Alachua County completed the 10-Year Plan following an intense six-month effort on the part of over 100 volunteers, including public officials and staff from local public agencies and nonprofit organizations. Gainesville and Alachua County now join over 220 other communities across the country that have chosen to address the issue of homelessness in a deliberate, comprehensive fashion through a locally developed 10-year plan.

Based on recent point-in-time surveys, there are an estimated 550-650 unsheltered homeless persons living in Gainesville and Alachua County. The 10-Year Plan proposes adding another 350 beds to the existing housing inventory to shelter or house homeless persons over the next 10 years. To accomplish this goal, the City, County and other providers will continue to apply for federal, state and other grants to provide these beds.

Another key component of the 10-Year Plan is the creation of a case management-focused one-stop center for homeless services. The center will provide intake and assessment, referrals for emergency shelter and housing, personal hygiene facilities, communications access, outreach services, and emergency assistance. Homelessness prevention services at the one-stop center will include enhanced educational, job training and employment, and related services for at-risk and homeless individuals and families. The City and County have taken the first step towards creating the one-stop center by budgeting more than \$358,000 from local sources for the first year of operation, which is scheduled to begin in spring 2007.

This request is for \$800,000 to expand the operation of the one-stop center to include core services that are needed to effectively transition individuals to self-sufficiency, plus \$2 million to begin construction of the first phase of a permanent campus-like one-stop homeless assistance facility that could address the housing needs of the homeless, as well as their services needs.

To date, the City and County have budgeted over \$553,500 from local resources (City, County, CDBG, and private donations) for the implementation of the 10-Year Plan.

CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

FY 2008 FEDERAL AGENDA – Regulatory Initiative

Cabot/Koppers Superfund Site Immediate Measures and Cleanup

The City requests assistance in its efforts to pursue action from USEPA to ensure that the City's water supply is protected from contamination from the Cabot/Koppers Superfund site, and that the site is properly cleaned up in a timely manner. The Cabot/Koppers site has been a designated Superfund site since 1983 and is located 2 miles directly upstream of the City wellfield. Despite the presence of significant contamination, particularly at the Koppers portion of the site, there have been minimal actions taken to clean up the site or to prevent the contamination from reaching the City's wellfield.

The City has been highly proactive in working with USEPA to pursue measures to protect the City's wellfield and obtain timely and permanent cleanup of the site. The City has assembled a team of internationally renowned experts in groundwater contamination and remediation to review the site and advise and assist the City. This team has been instrumental in developing recommendations for actions needed to protect the water supply and clean up the site. This team has recommended that immediate actions be taken to contain the contamination below the Koppers site to prevent it from potentially reaching the City's wellfield.

The City requests assistance in working with EPA to ensure that:

1. Immediate actions are taken to contain the contamination below the Koppers site and protect the City Wellfield; and
2. The Cabot/Koppers Superfund site is properly cleaned up in a timely manner.