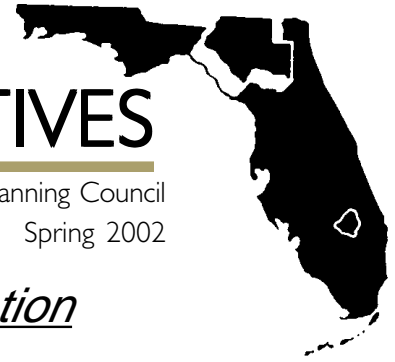


REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A Quarterly Publication of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Spring 2002



Special Edition: Transportation

PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE

The Gainesville/Alachua County Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO), an interlocal agreement organization staffed under contract by the Regional Planning Council, is coordinating the development of an action plan for the revitalization of East Gainesville that addresses development, land conservation and transportation needs. The plan's work products will be considered for inclusion in the city and county comprehensive plans and land development regulations. It will also outline specific budgets and sources of funds for priority capital projects. Alachua County, the City of Gainesville, the Florida

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TD SERVICES NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGION

Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program (TD) began in 1979 with the adoption of Chapter 427, Florida Statutes. The Florida Legislature adopted this legislation to provide public transportation services to disadvantaged individuals in a coordinated and cost-effective fashion.

Individuals eligible for TD assistance include those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent on others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities. Also eligible are children who are handicapped, at high-risk or at-risk as defined in s. 411.202, Florida Statutes.

The Planning Council serves as the designated official planning agency for nine

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Plan East Gainesville Subcommittee Chairman, Alachua County Commissioner Rodney Long, introduces the planning study to over 120 participants who attended the kickoff meeting.

(TD Services continued from Page 1)

counties in the region under Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program. The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) for the Gainesville Urbanized Area serves as the planning agency for Alachua County. As the planning agency, the Council conducts planning studies to increase transportation services to the eligible population in each county. Currently, the Council and the MTPO appoint and staff ten transportation disadvantaged coordinating boards in the region.

During the 2002 Legislative Session, Florida's Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged sought and won an increase in the State Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund which pays for the trips taken by eligible residents. While the legislation is expected to increase the TD Trust Fund by an estimated \$9 million statewide, the actual amount of additional funding will be determined when the Legislature returns in special session.

Also this year, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged plans to hire an independent consultant to analyze and develop recommendations for modifying the current TD Trust Fund distribution formula. Many local transportation disadvantaged boards believe the current formula is not equitable to the rural counties. If this belief is borne out, a change in the current funding formula could bring additional transportation disadvantaged funds to the rural areas of the State.

At the 9th Annual Training and Technology Conference, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged presented the following awards:

- 2001 Safety Award to the Suwannee River Economic Council;
- 2001 Dispatcher/Scheduler of the Year award to Ms. Deanna Land, Suwannee River Economic Council Dispatcher;
- Certificate of Achievement to Ms. Ruth Jenkins, a member of the Union County - Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board for her volunteer service on the Board; and
- Certificate of Achievement to A & A Transport for its outstanding service as the - Community Transportation Coordinator for Union County.

Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program provides life-sustaining transportation services to persons who are unable to transport themselves because of age, disability or income status.



SCENIC U.S. 441 “OLD FLORIDA HERITAGE HIGHWAY”

Due to the determined efforts of a group of Alachua County residents and local officials, that portion of U.S. 441 extending from the Alachua/Marion county line north to the edge of the City of Gainesville urban area was designated as a “Florida Scenic Highway” in 2001. This designation includes a number of scenic loop and spur (local) roads for a total of 45 miles of scenic corridor in the southern half of Alachua County.

Scenic areas and towns served by these roads include Micanopy, a former Seminole town, Cross Creek, the former home of author Margorie Kinnan Rawlings, the Paynes Prairie State Preserve, the Lochloosa Wildlife Conservation Area, the Lake Wauberg recreation area, and Orange and Lochloosa lakes. In addition to and as a result of the historic and natural scenic vistas, the area offers exceptional recreational opportunities including bicycling, hiking, fishing and swimming.

The Florida Department of Transportation provided staff support for the designation application, and continues to work with the Corridor Management Council in developing plans and programs for the enhancement and protection of the corridor.



(Plan East Gainesville continued from Page 1)

Department of Transportation, Gainesville Regional Utilities and the MTPO are jointly funding the study.

The MTPO for the Gainesville Urbanized Area is made up of the mayor and four City of Gainesville Commissioners and the five Alachua County Commissioners. Any MTPO action requires a majority of both commissions. The MTPO's role is to coordinate, set priorities, and establish policy guidance for the transportation program in the Gainesville metropolitan area. The MTPO has contracted with Renaissance Planning Group to assist it with the development of the project plan.

A four-day public workshop is scheduled for April 4 - 7 to discuss topics such as the MTPO's recently-adopted 2020 Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan, the various concepts of 'new urbanism,' 'walkable' communities and activity centers, transportation funding, issues related to the Florida Intrastate Highway System, alternative strategies to manage traffic in the SR 20 corridor, and proposed existing and future conditions analyses. Other major activities will include exercises to assess the livability of neighborhoods, identify visual preferences, discuss planning concepts and strategies and develop a vision statement and plan for the area.

The plan is scheduled to be completed by December, 2002.

North Central Florida
Regional Planning Council
2009 NW 67 Place, Suite A
Gainesville, FL 32653-1603

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