

# GO ENHANCE RTS STUDY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



May, 2014

## Table of Contents

**1.0 Public Involvement..... 1**

1.1 *Public Involvement Plan ..... 1*

1.2 *Technical Committee..... 1*

1.3 *Project Advisory Working Group ..... 2*

1.4 *Policy Boards and Agency Administration..... 2*

1.5 *General Public Involvement and Outreach..... 4*

    1.5.1 *Public Outreach Activities..... 4*

    1.5.2 *Websites..... 6*

    1.5.3 *Getting the Word Out ..... 7*

1.6 *TITLE VI Public Involvement Program ..... 7*

1.7 *Public Meeting #1: GO Enhance RTS Study Introduction and Initial Routing Segment Alternatives Meeting and Public Comments..... 9*

1.8 *Public Meeting #2: Refined “Premium Transit” Alternatives Meeting and Public Comments . 10*

1.9 *Public Meeting #3: Recommended Locally Preferred Alternatives Meeting and Public Comments ..... 11*

## Appendices

APPENDIX A.....Public Involvement Plan

APPENDIX B..... Summary of Public Comment Sheet, March 2013

APPENDIX C..... Public Meeting 2 Summary

APPENDIX D..... Summary of Public Comment Sheet, July 2013

APPENDIX E..... Public Meeting 3 Summary

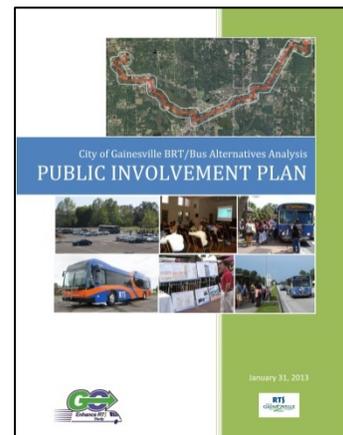
APPENDIX F..... Summary of Public Comment Sheet, May 2014



## 1.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

### 1.1 Public Involvement Plan

At the initiation of the GO Enhance RTS Study, a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was drafted to outline the approach to engage public participation throughout the planning process to ensure that all transportation concerns are considered in identifying the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in the City of Gainesville, Florida. The PIP provided a blueprint for defining methods and tools to educate and engage stakeholders in the decision-making process for this project. The PIP was designed to ensure that stakeholders are provided a number of opportunities to be informed and engaged as the Alternatives Analysis (AA) progresses (see Appendix A).



There were five (5) outreach objectives to inform and involve citizens, other agencies and local governments and to provide them with opportunities to influence the LPA.

- **Objective A:** Coordinate with the City of Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS), other City of Gainesville offices, Alachua County and separate corridor stakeholders.
- **Objective B:** Solicit public input from neighborhood, homeowner/condominium and business associations, and university/college faculty and students within the corridor study area.
- **Objective C:** Provide opportunities for the public-at-large to comment on the project.
- **Objective D:** Develop a variety of communications and public involvement programs that are easily accessible for everyone to participate and comment on the project.
- **Objective E:** Comply with FHWA/FTA Title VI Program to ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination relating to this project.

The GO Enhance RTS Study included a variety of different levels of participation ranging from technical to general perspectives to gain an overall consensus of the LPA for the study corridor. Several tiers of communications were established for this study in order to facilitate broad scale community participation.

### 1.2 Technical Committee

The technical committee was the first involvement tier and included key personnel that were involved in the daily management, work tasks and in providing technical, political and public interface direction. The study's technical committee was comprised of representatives from Gainesville RTS, City of Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), University of Florida (UF) and the Parson Brinckerhoff (PB) Team. From study initiation through the drafting of the LPA, the technical committee met five (5) times.

- **October 11, 2012** (GO Enhance RTS Study overview, scope and work schedule, MAP-21 update, Study name and logo, PIP, Existing/Future Conditions Report outline, and future goals and objectives)
- **December 4, 2012** (Approved logo and letterhead, and draft Existing/Future Conditions Report and Project Briefing Document)
- **April 10, 2013** (Public outreach update, initial screening evaluation overview and confirmation of refined corridor alternatives for detailed evaluation)
- **August 22, 2013** (Refined build alternatives, ridership methodology and public outreach activities)
- **February 17, 2014** (Detailed Definition and Evaluation of Alternatives Report, and presentations to the PAWG and final public meeting)

### 1.3 Project Advisory Working Group

The second participation tier was the Project Advisory Working Group (PAWG). The PAWG provided supplemental input to the goals and objectives, ridership modeling methodology and build alternatives. The PAWG was comprised of representatives from the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, FDOT (District 2), UF, Santa Fe College (SFC), Agencies/Public Entities and Business/Builders Associations. From study initiation through the drafting of the LPA, the PAWG met five (5) times. The following identifies the dates of each of the meetings held by the PAWG.

- **October 23, 2012** (GO Enhance RTS Study overview)
- **December 18, 2012** (Purpose and need, goals and objectives, evaluation measures, and initial alternatives)
- **April 23, 2013** (Public involvement update, initial screening evaluation review, confirmation of refined corridor alternatives for detailed evaluation)
- **September 4, 2013** (Public involvement update, refined build alternatives, Tier 3 evaluation and ridership methodology)
- **February 24, 2014** (Detailed definition and evaluation of refined alternatives and draft LPA with potential funding sources)

### 1.4 Policy Boards and Agency Administration

Throughout the planning process, the technical committee had the opportunity to brief and seek input from the administration and officials from the City of Gainesville, Alachua County and North Central Florida Regional Planning Council – Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO). From study initiation through the drafting of the LPA, a total of 13 individual meetings with City and County Commissioners, two (2) City Commission meeting, two (2) MTPO Board meetings, one (1) MTPO – Citizen Advisory Committee meeting, and one (1) MTPO – Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

The following identifies meetings that have occurred.

- City of Gainesville – One-on-one City Commissioner meetings (GO Enhance RTS Study overview, and solicit comments via comment sheet about the alternative analysis and public concerns).
  - **December 18, 2012**
    - Mayor Craig Lowe
    - Commissioner Lauren Poe (At-large)
    - Commissioner Yvonne Hinson-Rawls (District I)
    - Commissioner Susan Bottcher (District III)
    - Commissioner Randy Wells (District IV)
  - **December 19, 2012**
    - Commissioner Thomas Hawkins (At-large)
    - Commissioner Todd Chase (District II)
- Alachua County – One-on-one County Commissioner meetings (GO Enhance RTS Study overview, and solicit comments via comment sheet about the alternative analysis and public concerns).
  - **December 19, 2012**
    - Commissioner Robert Hutchinson (District 3)
  - **January 8, 2013**
    - Commissioner Mike Byerly (District 1)
  - **January 10, 2013**
    - Commissioner Lee Pinkoson (District 2)
    - Commissioner Charles Chestnut (District 5)
  - **February 21, 2013**
    - Commissioner Susan Baird (District 4)
- **June 3, 2013** - North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, MTPO meeting (GO Enhance RTS Study overview, BRT/enhanced bus options and refined corridor route options)
- **June 10, 2103** - Briefing with Mayor Braddy (GO Enhance RTS Study overview and to provide him the opportunity to share his thoughts on the project and planning process)



- **February 21, 2014** - City Commission meeting (Initial presentation of LPA)
- **March 20, 2014** - City Commission meeting (Detailed definition and evaluation of refined alternatives and draft LPA with potential funding sources)
- **April 2, 2014** - MTPO Technical Advisory Committee meeting (Detailed definition and evaluation of refined alternatives and draft LPA with potential funding sources)
- **April 3, 2014** - MTPO Citizens Advisory Committee meeting (Detailed definition and evaluation of refined alternatives and draft LPA with potential funding sources)
- **April 14, 2014** - MTPO Board meeting (Detailed definition and evaluation of refined alternatives and draft LPA with potential funding sources)

**1.5 General Public Involvement and Outreach**

**1.5.1 Public Outreach Activities**

One of the primary goals for the GO Enhance RTS Study was to ensure project information is not only provided to the public, but those living, working and visiting within and adjacent to the study area had easily accessible forums to provide their opinion regarding future RTS routes and services. Each of the events was advertised through the website and media, in addition to distribution of flyers at RTS transit stations and on RTS buses, student unions at UF and SFC, and at various community meetings. Public opinion comment sheets were provided at the public and community meetings, information booths, and on the study website at [www.go-enhanceRTS.com](http://www.go-enhanceRTS.com) to solicit public comments regarding the initial “premium transit” alternatives, refined “premium transit’ alternatives and the LPA.

The following is a listing of the public outreach activities that occurred.

**January to February 2013** (GO Enhance RTS Study overview and to gain input on public perceptions for enhanced transit service in the Study corridor)

- **January 22, 2013** - Rosa Parks RTS Downtown Station (Information Booth)
- **January 22, 2013** - UF (Information Booth)
- **January 22, 2013** - Public Open House
- **January 23, 2013** - SFC (Information Booth)
- **February 6, 2013** - Black on Black Crime Task Force Meeting



University of Florida



Santa Fe College



January 22, 2013 Public Open House

**May to June 2013** (GO Enhance RTS Study update and to review refined premium transit alternatives)

- **May 20, 2013** - Builders Association of North Central Florida (BANCF) Meeting
- **May 23, 2013** - Public Open House and Workshop
- **June 5, 2013** - Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Public Policy Committee Meeting
- **June 5, 2013** - Black on Black Crime Task Force Meeting
- **June 10, 2013** - FloridaWorks Combined Committee Meeting



Black on Black Crime Task Force



May 23, 2013 Public Open House and Workshop

**February 2014 (GO Enhance RTS Study findings and to review recommended LPA's)**

- **February 26, 2014 - Public Meeting**



February 26, 2014 Public Meeting

**1.5.2 Websites**

A variety of outreach tools were used to communicate and engage the public. These tools include the GO Enhance RTS Study website, [www.go-enhanceRTS.com](http://www.go-enhanceRTS.com), open houses, information booths, presentations/workshops and attendance at community group meetings. The website provided updated project information, announced public meetings and forums to obtain study information and contained contact information. The project website was designed to allow community comments, suggestions, questions, complaints, and includes search options. Project presentations, maps and even interactive questionnaires/comments pages are located on the website. Google language translation is provided on the Study website to allow all viewers to read the website in their language of preference. Between January 20, 2013 and April 19, 2014, the project website was viewed nearly 5,000 times. Gainesville RTS and Alachua County also announced upcoming meetings and provided links on their websites to [www.go-enhanceRTS.com](http://www.go-enhanceRTS.com).



GO Enhance RTS Website





Gainesville RTS Website



Alachua County Website

### 1.5.3 Getting the Word Out

The GO Enhance RTS Study's contact list exceeded 400 individuals. Prior to each meeting, public notices were emailed to those that have provided us with an email address prior to each public meeting/event. Presentations, study information and meeting notices were provided to various community groups and organizations to help spread the word of the GO Enhance RTS Study, such as: Black on Black Crime Task Force, Builders Association of North Central Florida (BANCF), FloridaWorks, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, UF and SFC. The Gainesville RTS posted public meeting notices at their bus stations and on buses, and the City of Gainesville posted information at the City Community Centers to inform the public of upcoming meetings. Press releases of upcoming public meetings were provided to the Gainesville Sun and the Independent Florida Alligator, and published in the Florida Administrative Register.

### 1.6 TITLE VI Public Involvement Program

Complying with FHWA/FTA Title VI Program was an identified outreach objective and served as the guiding element in the promotion, conduction and documentation of each public outreach event and activity. Every effort was made to ensure that no one was excluded from providing public comment due to race, color, or national heritage, through the following outreach resources: Study website, media releases, bilingual public flyers (Spanish and Chinese), translation services at public meetings, accessible staff, assistance to persons with disabilities, ease of public comment submission (via phone, fax, email, US mail and in-person at public meetings) and public open houses/meetings.

- **Website** - The study website (www.go-enhanceRTS.com) was updated on a regular basis and included comment opportunities, meeting announcements, presentations, planning documents, the ability to be added to the study's mailing list, interactive comment sheets, and direct access to the public involvement coordinator. There was also a Goggle language translation tool allowing users to select their language of preference.
- **Staff Accessibility** - Staff was accessible in person, on the phone, by mail, by fax, by email or by online comment forms. Contact information for staff was provided on the agency's website, at presentations and in meeting handouts. Translation services were offered at the public meetings.



- Media Releases - Public meeting information was sent to media contacts, including local daily and weekly newspapers (i.e., Independent Florida Alligator and Gainesville Sun). Press releases included the abbreviated Title VI Notice to the public, bilingual (Spanish and Chinese) translation, accessibility and translation services requests, and contact information for agency staff.
- Opportunities for Public Comment - Comments were accepted by phone, fax, email, US mail and in person at any of the public meetings, and could also be turned into RTS bus drivers. Comment sheets were used to gauge public sentiment on proposed alternatives and refined alternatives. The comment sheets were available for completion at each event, as well as on the study website. The results of the comments were provided to the technical committee and PAWG, and posted on the study website.
- Public Meetings - Three (3) public meetings (January 22, 2013, May 23, 2013 and February 26, 2014) were held during the evening at the Gainesville Regional Utilities Administration Building, which is along public transit routes for easier access to the meeting venue. Open house and/or presentation formats were conducted to convey the study information and to solicit public input. The following activities were used to outreach and assist all persons to participate without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin.
  - A Title VI Public Participation Program Policy announcement was posted at each public meeting.
  - Public meeting invitations/flyers were sent to community leaders, business/neighborhood associations, developers/designers, media and public-at-large (over 400 contacts). Abbreviated Title VI Notice, bilingual (Spanish and Chinese) translation, accessibility and translation services requests were included on the invitations/flyers.
  - Posted on Gainesville RTS and County websites.
  - Posted on Gainesville RTS buses and stations.
  - Distributed to City Community Centers.
  - Published in the Florida Administrative Register.
  - Assistance was available to complete written comment sheets and sign-in/contact forms.
  - A Spanish translator was available at most meetings. If they were unavailable and a translator was requested, the person's contact information was taken and the person was contacted and provided the study information.

## **1.7 Public Meeting #1: GO Enhance RTS Study Introduction and Initial Routing Segment Alternatives Meeting and Public Comments**

The focus of the public outreach activities from January to February 2013 was to gain input on public perceptions for enhanced transit service in the Study corridor and the initial routing segment alternatives.

A public open house workshop was conducted on January 22, 2013 at the Gainesville Regional Utilities to introduce the study and initial route segments. Presentation boards were displayed to learn about the GO enhance RTS Study and initial route segments. A total of 28 members of the public attended the open house workshop. Since it was a public open house, no formal meeting summary notes were taken.

The public opinion comment sheet was distributed at the open house workshop and other community outreach activities during the months of January and February 2013, such as information booths at the Rosa Park RTS Downtown Station, UF, SFC and Black on Black Task Force Meeting. A total of 229 comment sheets were completed (including returned comment sheets from the outreach activities and on-line comment sheets from the study website); see Appendix B for summary of the public comment sheet - all public comments are paraphrased.



## 1.8 Public Meeting #2: Refined “Premium Transit” Alternatives Meeting and Public Comments

Based on technical analysis and public input the six (6) initial subarea alternatives were repackaged into two (2) refined “premium transit” alternatives with some routing options for the two refined alternatives.

A public open house and workshop was conducted on May 23, 2013 at Gainesville Regional Utilities to present the two (2) refined “premium transit” alternatives. Presentation boards were displayed during the open house and a formal presentation was conducted afterwards with open discussion at the end. A total of 44 members of the public attended the open house workshop; see Appendix C for workshop summary - all public comments are paraphrased.

The public comment sheet was distributed at the May 23, 2013 Open House and Workshop and other community outreach activities during the months of May and June 2013, such as presentations at various community and agency meetings.

- Builders Association of North Central Florida - May 20, 2013
- Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization - June 3, 2013
- Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce - June 5, 2013
- Black on Black Crime Task Force - June 5, 2013
- FloridaWorks - June 10, 2013

In addition, the public comment sheet was available on the study website at [www.go-enhanceRTS.com](http://www.go-enhanceRTS.com) from May 20 to June 21. A total of 107 public comment sheets were completed (both returned from the outreach activities and the on-line comment sheet). Two (2) additional comment sheets were also received via email; see Appendix D for summary of the public comment sheet - all public comments are paraphrased.

### **1.9 Public Meeting #3: Recommended Locally Preferred Alternatives Meeting and Public Comments**

Based on a detailed evaluation and public input on the two (2) refined “premium transit” alternatives, a limited stop bus service referred to as Transportation System Management (TSM) was recommended.

A public meeting was conducted on February 26, 2014 at Gainesville Regional Utilities to present the recommended TSM alternative. A formal presentation was conducted with open discussion afterwards. A total of 29 members of the public attended the public meeting; see Appendix E for workshop summary - all public comments are paraphrased.

The public comment sheet was distributed at the February 26, 2014 public meeting and was available on the study website at [www.go-enhanceRTS.com](http://www.go-enhanceRTS.com) from February 26 to April 19, 2014.

The recommended LPA’s were also presented to the City Commission and the MTPO, and the on-line public comment sheet was mentioned at those meetings.

- Gainesville City Commission Meeting - February 21, 2014 and March 20, 2014
- MTPO Technical Advisory Committee Meeting - April 2, 2014
- MTPO Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting - April 2, 2014
- MTPO Board Meeting - April 14, 2014

A total of 156 public comment sheets were completed (returned from the outreach activities, on-line comment sheet, emailed and faxed-in); see Appendix F for summary of the public comment sheet - all public comments are paraphrased.