

## RTS Rundown

### RTS Reflects on 2024 Accomplishments



**RTS** achieved – and in some cases surpassed – many goals in 2024. Below is a list of a few projects currently in progress.

**Ridership:** RTS continued its upward passenger trend in FY 2024 – despite driver shortages and other challenges – ridership increased 7.3% from 5.1M to over 5.5M passenger trips, and productivity over 10.3% on passenger trips per hour.

**Grant Award:** Received \$26.4 million Low or No Emission (LoNo) grant to purchase 19 Hybrid-electric buses and install a solar facility at the RTS employee parking lot. Buses are expected to arrive by the end of calendar year 2026.

**Transit Restoration Plan:** Estimated completion in November 2024. Formed community-based committee and developed public involvement plan. Shared project status with Gainesville, county and MTPO.

**Transit Development Plan:** Estimated completion in March 2025 with contract award in progress.

**Zero Emission Plan:** Estimated completion in December 2024 with contract award in progress.

**East Gainesville Transfer Station:** Project architectural and engineering (A&E) service proposals came three times higher than the budget. Staff worked with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to approved changes to grant. Selection of A&E services currently underway.

**Paratransit Services Study:** Estimated completion moved to March 2025. RTS is working with the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) and FDOT to evaluate RTS paratransit services.

**Bus Stop Improvements with Ramps, Shelters, and Sidewalks:** ADA improvements – Phase I (98 bus stops) design is complete, and construction is already underway, with planned completion in Spring of 2025. Phase II (186 bus stops) engineering and design firm has been selected and is under contract. Further funding is required to fully build out wheelchair access for all RTS bus stops.

**Contract Negotiations with UF, SFC and Alachua County:** Contracts executed with SFC (through June 20, 2026) and county (through September 3, 2025), and negotiations underway for a new UF service contract starting January 1, 2025.

**RTS Management Watch:** The cross-functional team consisting of staff from RTS, DFS and OMB collaborated to address the concerns identified in the Management Watch by developing the RTS Financial Monitoring Guideline; this Guideline was approved by the City Manager on September 18, 2024.

**Asset Management System:** New RTS fleet management system implementation.

**RTS 50th Anniversary Celebration:** Celebration occurred for April 12, 2024.

## Maintenance Tech News by Jason Garrett, Director of Fleet Management

### RTS Fleet Submits Second Round Application for Its “Charge Forward” Charging Infrastructure Development Plan

RTS Fleet completed the second round application for the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant (CFI).

The City of Gainesville is proposing to strategically deploy forty-seven (47) publicly accessible EV charging stations on City and Alachua County properties to improve access to EV charging for low-income residents and help to build out the charging network.

The City's utility, GRU, is the fifth largest municipal electric utility in Florida, serving approximately 332,000 residents in Gainesville and the surrounding areas. The City, Alachua County, and GRU have a long track record of developing programs to assist low-income residents, including energy efficiency improvements and affordable housing projects. The Project will further build on this track record by making EVs more accessible to low-income residents.

#### Grant application is \$14.569 million

- Federal share is \$11.655
- Vendor share is \$2.914
- Duration is 4 years from grant award
- CFI Grant is administered through US DOT/FHWA

#### 17 locations were submitted

- MLK Center
- Butler Plaza – RTS
- Sweetwater Park
- Depot Park
- City Hall
- Eastside Community Center
- Northside Park
- Downtown Parking
- GTEC
- Alachua County DMV
- Alachua County Health Department
- Sweetwater Preserve
- Veterans Park
- Cynthia Moore Chestnut Park
- Tower Branch Library
- University Air Center
- Gainesville Regional Airport

If approved, the 17 locations would receive 23 Level 2 chargers and 24 Level 3 chargers. The locations were decided on by a combination of site accessibility, daily traffic load, proximity to point of interest, land availability, proximity to evacuation routes, proximity to disadvantaged areas, and estimated disadvantaged area use. The City, County, GRU, and charging vendors all partnered for this grant application.

## The Planning Corner

by Krys Ochia, Transit Planning Manager

### FTA-funded Transit Restoration Plan has segwayed into the FDOT-required Transit Development Plan



Federal Transit Administration

**Restoration and Transit Development plans:** The FTA-funded Transit Restoration Plan has segwayed into the FDOT-required Transit Development Plan. The two complementary plans

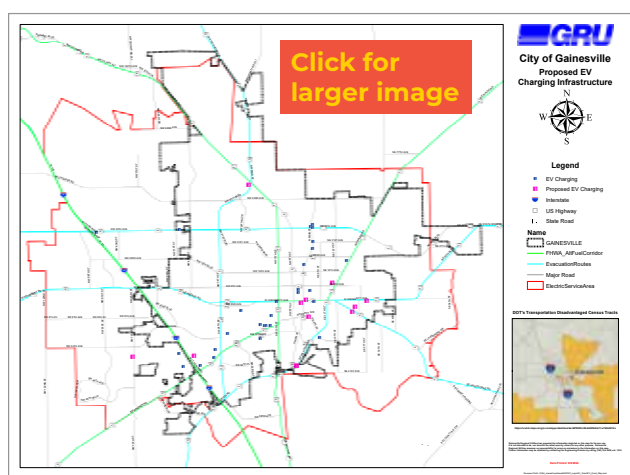
are proceeding under the same advisory or steering committee. Any projects and programs for improving transit services in RTS' service area must be included in the TDP, which required that information and data from the Restoration Plan have been merged into the TDP.

Preliminary survey results show that 38% of bus customers will not ride the bus if changes are made to the current RTS service structure. In other words, almost 40% of RTS customers will drop-off the “grid” if the existing and what they believe is an effective network is modified.

Consultants are scheduled to discuss the TDP report with the City Commission on January 16, 2025.

#### RTS Weekly Review

The Planning Department is initiating a new information sharing spot for management. It will be known as the “RTS Weekly Review”. Every Monday, this summary will arrive in management mailboxes in a PowerPoint format depicting RTS activity roundup for the previous week. The review will focus on the following areas: Ridership, On-Time performance, Canceled service hours and Preventable accidents. The graphs will include data for the preceding week for comparison. The same information will be shared weekly with drivers.



Proposed EV charging location map. Click map for larger image.

## Employee Spotlight

### 2024 Employee Award Recipients



Daphyne Sesco (left) and Jesus Gomez, Tranist Director (right).

#### Director's Award

**Daphyne Sesco, Procurement Specialist III**  
The 2024 Director's Award is presented to Daphyne Sesco for her dedication and unselfish service to RTS. Daphyne reviews requisitions and FTA guidelines, and helps facilitate RTS and City bids. She has a combined 36 years in procurement and 15 with the City.

#### CITY EMPLOYEE AWARDS

• **Kijofa Kirkland**  
"Above the Call" Award

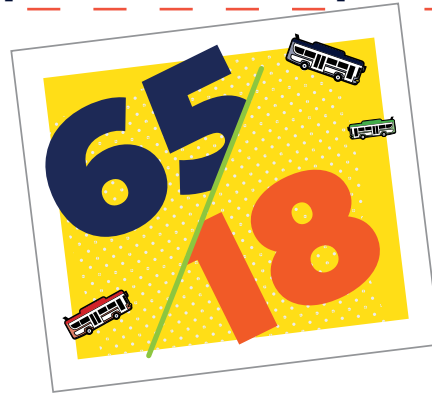
#### RTS OPERATIONS AWARDS

- **Livevah F-Lekunze**  
Transit Operator of the Year
- **Andrew Akes**  
Rookie Transit Operator of the Year
- **Joseph Colwell**  
Operations Employee of the Year

#### RTS MAINTENANCE AWARDS

- **James "Chip" Rowell**  
Mechanic of the Year
- **Harry "Hal" Penley**  
Maintenance Employee of the Year
- **Damion Stuart**  
Maintenance Rookie of the Year

## Operations Dispatch



### Age-based FareFree Bus Card Program to Start January 1, 2025

The Age-based FareFree Program allows eligible customers aged 18 and under or 65 and over to ride RTS buses during regular service hours without paying a fare. Customers 18 and under with height of more than 46 inches are required to apply for and obtain a program card.

[Apply today](#)



**February 14-15**

Florida's transit professionals are heading to Gainesville, Florida, for the Annual Florida Triple Crown Rodeo. The 2025 event will be hosted by Gainesville RTS.

## Parking and Planning Debbie Leistner, Transportation Planning & Parking Manager

### Short-Term Parking Restriction on the South Side of the 1st Floor of the Garage to Be Removed

by Jessica Krauszer, Planning Administrative Service Manager for Facilities



Beginning October 31, 2024, the short-term parking restriction on the South side of the 1st floor of the garage will be removed and the parking will be returned to all needs of garage parkers, including long-term permit holders (Passport Zone 35200).

The section opposite the ADA marked spaces on the North side and the three spaces next to the ADA marked spaces will remain reserved for short-term parking of 2 hours only from 6am – 8pm each day (Passport Zone 35260). After 8pm, these spaces will be subject to the \$5 flat rate. A permit does not allow you to park in these spaces. If you

choose to utilize these spaces for the two-hour period during the day or overnight, payment must be made.

The ADA parking spaces on the 1st floor remain as is and are not subject to the 2 hour limit.

#### Other Important Topics:

1. By the end of the year, some repair work will be commencing on the 2nd floor. We will notify you when the work will begin and what areas will need to be blocked off.
2. Please continue to abide by the remaining restrictions in other areas, such as marked spaces for ADA, City employees/vehicles, Palms Condo, etc.
3. Please do NOT back-in to the parking space. It is imperative we be able to see the vehicle's license plate at all times. Backed-in vehicles are subject to citation.
4. Please visit your vehicle periodically to check its health (battery, tires), to ensure it hasn't been damaged or vandalized

and to see if any notices or citations have been placed on it. We recommend a minimum of once per week.

5. Monthly and quarterly permit purchases are non-refundable. If you have your permit set up on auto-renew, be sure to cancel this feature if you do not intend to renew for the next period.
6. Please be sure your permit is active and your license plate number is entered correctly, and updated when necessary. We are unable to void citations for such errors.

We thank you for choosing to park with us. Please contact us at 352-334-2569 or [parking@gainesvillefl.gov](mailto:parking@gainesvillefl.gov) with any questions. For more information about other downtown parking changes, please visit [gainesvillefl.gov/parking](http://gainesvillefl.gov/parking).

#### Parking Resource Links

- [What zone am I in?](#)
- [Which permit should I apply for?](#)
- [Required documents/proof of residency](#)

### Planning to Start New Intersection Modification Project in 2025

Funding was obtained for the construction of modifications at the intersection of Waldo Rd and NE 3rd Ave. The plan will enhance the safety of the crossing, improving accessibility to transit and enabling the expansion of the bike boulevard system. Construction is expected to start in 2025/2026.

#### Micromobility

The Micromobility program enhances accessibility as a convenient option for short trips. Discounted options available for those who qualify.

#### Learn more

[City of Gainesville Micromobility Program](#)

## Vision Zero by Karla Rodrigues-Silva, Capital Projects Manager & Vision Zero Coord. Debbie Leistner, Transportation Planning & Parking Manager

### Vision Zero Earns Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant

The City of Gainesville, the University of Florida, and Alachua County were awarded the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant to conduct planning activities toward Vision Zero goals and enhance road safety and mobility.

Gainesville will conduct several planning initiatives, including speed management strategies, addressing unlit zones, and improving pedestrian and bike infrastructure.

Alachua County will focus on high-crash corridors, such as N 16th Avenue and SW 20th Avenue, to reduce severe and fatal crashes through measures like advanced technology implementation and complete street evaluations.

The University of Florida will conduct Road Safety Audits along SW 34th St (SR121) and SW 35th Pl within the university's influence area spanning 13.5 miles.

Each activity emphasizes data-driven diagnostics, targeted countermeasures, and cost-effective, impactful implementations to promote safety and equity citywide. These efforts align with Vision Zero's goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries, prioritizing human life over speed and efficiency.

#### Learn More About the SS4A Grant

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/ss4a/2024-awards>



**HIRING NOW**  
**Transit Operator**  
**Vehicle Service Attendant**  
[go-rts.com/careers](http://go-rts.com/careers)

## NOTICES

### RTS CAB Meeting

Wednesday, January 22 @ 5:30 PM  
RTS Administration Building  
34 SE 13th Road  
Gainesville, Florida 32601

### Want to subscribe to the DOT newsletter?

Join via the RTS apps or email us at [RTSNews@gainesvillefl.gov](mailto:RTSNews@gainesvillefl.gov) to be added to our mailing list.

