

## 5.0

### Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations are provided that support the 2001 Master Plan, the project prioritization detailed earlier in this report and the conceptual framework for promoting bicycle infrastructure in the Gainesville area. Implementation and general policy will determine the success and degree that a bicycle infrastructure will be advanced, implemented and utilized. The suggestions below are not comprehensive and in some cases may be anecdotal. Nevertheless, they support the bicycle initiative and should be seriously considered.

1. **Budget** - The MTPo should establish a policy of assigning a base percentage of all transportation expenditures to bicycle infrastructure, promotion and education for some lasting period of time such as 10 to 20 years (then review the results and accomplishments to reevaluate the program). One possible strategy would be to allocate the percentage of funding based on the ridership attempting to be captured — if 15% of the transportation share (US Government Goal) is to be by bicycle, we should invest at least that percentage on the infrastructure to promote this goal. The US average cycle mode split is just over 1% with cities such as Davis, California at 17% (60% of the students use cycles as the primary mode of transportation). European counterparts demonstrate potential achievements with Sweden and Germany at 10%, Denmark at 20% and the Netherlands at 28%. A pilot study conducted by the University of Florida Sustainability Task Force indicated that 9% percent of the trips to UF are by Bicycle.

Specific data on community expenditures is difficult to assess given the complexities of budget allocations, funding sources and yearly variance in spending. Detailed research on this topic should be conducted by staff or a consultant to develop a more refined budget target. Anecdotally, communities such as Oulu, Finland and Davis, California have similar or smaller populations with smaller universities and much better infrastructure and subsequently high cycle mode splits.

A recurring base funding allocation should be established to promote education, public service announcements (PSAs) and advertisements that promote a more cycle friendly culture and make infrastructural improvements known. It could be used to fund local research, bicycle staff, education programs and promote better design through competition projects.

2. **Use of Public Right-of-Way** - The MTPo should develop policy to encourage or reclaim the use of existing utility right-of-way for public access as non-motorized transportation corridors. This is especially important for public owned utilities where the land is already in the public realm. This may require some kind of indemnification and maintenance agreement for use of land conduits held by private utilities.

3. **Planning** - The Comprehensive Plan and implementing land development regulations should have provisions that require new housing developments to be connected to any adjacent neighborhoods with bicycle and pedestrian public access ways.
4. **Nets Connectivity** - Policy should be developed to initiate an application procedure for neighborhoods wishing to initiate better bicycle pedestrian connectivity. This process should also include a review by the School Board of Alachua County and an evaluation of qualification for the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003* Safe Routes to Schools Program (\$70 million to be distributed nationally). This would optimize safer and more direct routes to school as part of the larger connectivity initiative. Allowing neighborhoods to initiate these connections should reduce the expenditure of resources in areas that are not receptive to this type of connectivity. A recurring budget should be established for these projects.
5. **Nets Design** - Design protocols should be developed for neighborhood connectivity programs to formalize options for transforming drainage ways, storm water basin areas and existing unused City right-of-way into bicycle pedestrian connections. This could be implemented through a *Neighborhood Connectivity Design Protocols* study and guidelines to develop a set of strategies and design expectations for acceptability for governmental funding.
6. **Appropriate Speed Limits** - In most areas in the US and Europe where autos, cyclists and pedestrians share the same space, speed limits are 20 mph (US school zones and campuses) and 18 mph (European neighborhoods). Based on City and County Public Works Department policies, 25 mph is the lowest speed limit currently allowed to be posted in the City or County (excludes school zones). A reassessment of this policy and protocols (in accordance with Florida Statute 316.189-(1)) for implementing 20 mph speed limits in appropriate residential locations (such as those without sidewalks) is recommended. At 20 mph only 10% of auto-cycle accidents are fatal (30 mph - 50% are fatal; 40 mph - 90% are fatal). Fatality Data excerpted from the Alachua County Corridor Design Manual, November, 2002.
7. **Speed Limiting Devices** - Design speeds are typically set too high, resulting in road designs that encourage vehicles to travel at speeds above those posted (or that are safe). Holistic design approaches that are becoming more popular can change this condition. Rather than employ speed deterrents such as humps, bumps, shelves and trays, alternatives such as vegetation, parking and surface mottling and changes can be used to define space and limit speed. Careful design can actually suggest lower speeds, but maintain clear paths allowing emergency vehicles to pass without slowing for bumps, etc., thereby maintaining high response times — a critical safety issue that should preclude the use of emergency vehicle inhibiting speed control devices. Suggestions for spatial speed control devices are included in Section 6.0 Infrastructure Design Recommendations of this report. The strategies identified not only reduce speed but rationalize movement to make auto-cycle-pedestrian areas more compatible for each of the scales of use.

8. **Vacant Lands** - The MTPO should recommend that local governments develop a policy that is not tolerant of vacant land with potential for non-motorized transportation, recreation and the development of useful public space and promotion of public amenity. Such options include tax disincentives (higher rates) for under-utilized land languishing in the community. This could leverage unmotivated property owners to develop or contribute easements rather than squander the present usefulness — it should be expensive not to use important lands. This strategy would be particularly beneficial in the case of the CSX rail-trail corridor (Hawthorne Braid) which has been unused for many years.
9. **Education** - Continue the highly successful “Safe Ways to Schools” program and other school bicycle educational programs such as the *Share the Road* program through support of the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Program — educating the youth is an investment in the future of cycling.

Robust continuing education programs should be adopted for City of Gainesville and Alachua County Staff regarding the newest ideas and responsible techniques for integrating and expanding bicycle infrastructure and protocols. Staff must be convinced and committed to ideas and concepts to overcome the daily obstacles, nimbys and budgetary challenges that innovative design inevitably encounters.

Cutting edge proposals for urban design, infrastructure and transportation in the US are actually in-place, operational and have been highly utilized producing reliable user evaluations of their strategic effectiveness. Traditional Town Planning, Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND), well designed high density housing, efficient automobile infrastructure and traffic management, electric light rail (trams), natural gas (clean burning fuel) busses and bicycle/pedestrian oriented design are commonplace in these areas of the world. A policy of sending City and County staff not only to cities in the United States but also to cities in Europe, Latin America and even Asia is an important educational investment with high potential for future dividends.

Education for avid motorists is also critical. This is critical initiative to reform public opinion regarding the status of cyclists and their contribution to a cleaner, quieter and more sustainable community (not unlike non-smokers who were a minority voice at one time). Promoting awareness of cyclists, courteous driving habits and the rules-of-the road is difficult as there is no formal infrastructure for conveying these messages beyond school. Consideration should be given to implementing bicycle awareness seminars as one of the choices for the optional driver education courses offered in lieu of traffic penalties. It could also be made mandatory if people find themselves availing themselves of multiple courses.

The local Drivers License office could conduct a cycle awareness survey as part of new license renewals.

10. **Law Enforcement** - In conjunction with infrastructural improvements, enforcement of bicycle and automobile interaction laws should become a priority — especially in high transportation density areas such as around campus. Warning issuance periods should proceed strict enforcement of fines — the fine stage must be carried out. Important standards for bicycles to maintain include proper yielding of right-of-way (autos and pedestrians), traveling with proper equipment (helmet under 16 or night light), traveling in designated areas and in the proper direction, and obedience of traffic signal devices. This promotes predictability and respect between vehicular modes. Expand enforcement of lane maintenance laws. Floating randomly between lanes, weaving, changing lanes through turns, wide turns, changing lanes at intersections, careless driving and driving too close to the shoulder are common local practices that are especially dangerous to cyclists attempting to “share the road”.
11. **Bicycle Coordinator** - The City of Gainesville should appoint a professional level staff member as the bicycle coordinator and clarify the responsibilities of the position. Currently the position seems to be shared by two persons with unclear (to the public) areas of responsibility limiting consistent communication regarding projects and opportunities. This position(s) should oversee the base budget for bicycle initiatives and should actively seek funding from federal, state and private funding agencies. Perhaps a more senior analyst with a staff of one or two program assistants would be a workable model.

This position should also liaise with the University of Florida especially for coordinating funding (UF should be a major contributor to the commuter infrastructure to campus) between governmental initiatives and UF contributions.
12. **Licensing & Registration** - A voluntary bicycle licensing program in addition to, or as part of the University of Florida's program is recommended as a strategy for assessing bicycle use, infrastructural needs and disseminating educational information. Home addresses of cyclist users can be used to focus resources. Registration is a great tool for law enforcement to curtail thefts (immediate verification of ownership), return abandoned bicycles to owners and contact owners if cycles are removed for being illegally parked or for being locked to inappropriate facilities.
13. **Network Stewardship** - A direct outcome of the public workshop was the recommendation to engage volunteer and civic groups for maintenance of the paths and lanes. This could be extended to businesses such as the adopt-a-median program. Furthermore, University of Florida School of Building Construction Students, School of Architecture students, local scout troops and other volunteers could design and construct pavilions, and install landscaping along trail systems. The MPTO should designate a contact to administer proposals for these support initiatives.

14. **Funding** - The 2001 Master Plan provides an excellent list of funding sources and should be reviewed at the initiation of any project. Further suggestions not contained in that report include:

University of Florida - UF generates 50,000 commuters per day with only a little over 20,000 parking spaces. Recognizing this impact the University of Florida Master Plan Transportation Element acknowledges its “fare share” responsibility for improving bicycle infrastructure in coordination with the MTPD to upgrade commuter facilities including pedestrian and cycle overpasses, tunnels and the creation of park-n-ride facilities at the urban boundary.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - Through public health initiatives this foundation is beginning to fund community infrastructure and initiatives that promote routinized physical activity.

Federal Government - The *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003* provides federal money for the *Safe Routes to Schools Program*, section 150 of title 23 with a budget allocation of \$70 million to be distributed nationally. Proposals for utilization of these funds could leverage the safety benefit with the added benefit of public health through neighborhood connectivity and more routinized physical activity.

Centers for Disease Control - The new initiatives that focus on the relationship between urban design and obesity provide opportunities for innovative projects to be funded by the CDC in conjunction with research that could be conducted by the University of Florida.

15. **Concurrency** - the City of Gainesville should consider requiring new developments to provide bicycle facilities on adjacent transportation infrastructure to meet concurrency when automobile LOS is degraded. In the case of smaller projects, the cost for bicycle facilities could be collected toward a fund to upgrade multiple segments with bicycle infrastructure.
16. **Maintenance** - Public comments included a policy recommendation for a community wide contact for maintenance reporting. When trails are in need of repair, cleaning and general maintenance the correct contact agency is difficult to determine. Perhaps this could be through the internet as well as by phone.
17. **Amenities** - There are too many potential amenities to mention here but key conceptual strategies are discussed. Amenities and infrastructure should not marginalize cyclists but raise their stature as contributors to a better community. Incentives for amenities such as cycle lockers, showers at work, free bus ride options, parking buy out or cash bonuses should be promoted through tax incentives to area businesses and directly implemented by governmental agencies.



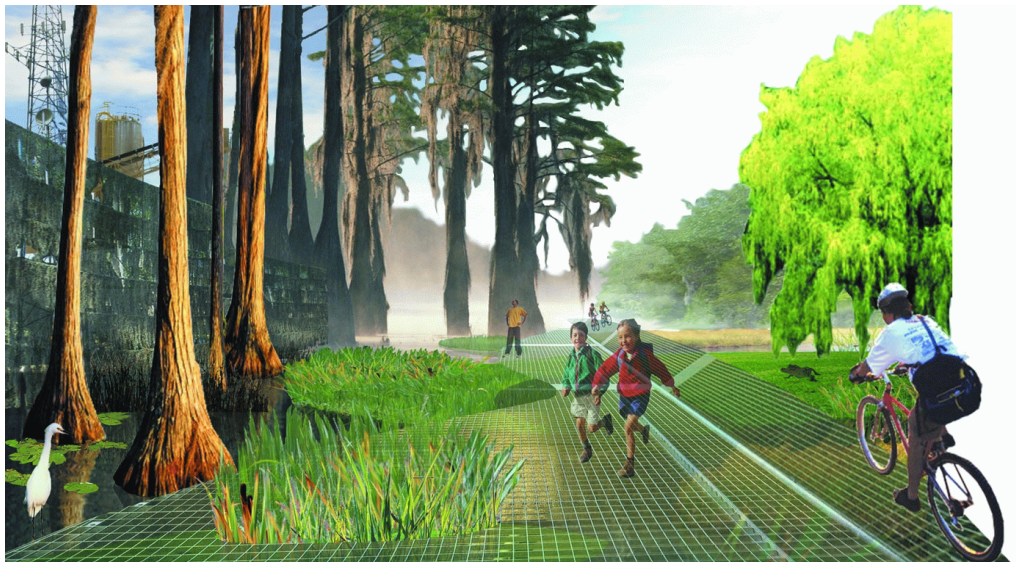
18. **Community Design** - If citizens move from their automobiles (which provide high levels of comfort) to bicycles for commuting (to work, shopping or other errands) the new natural environment of transport should be inspiring. It should be relatively free from pollutants, road debris and excessive negotiations around incomplete facilities. To apply the best practices of cycle design within the complex existing infrastructure of urban fabric, innovative design solutions will be required. Strict adherence to AASHTO guidelines will not provide solutions to complicated problems. The *Alachua County Corridor Design Manual* (November, 2002) provides an excellent basis for community specific design practices and expectations and should be expanded or a companion document for bicycle facilities should be developed. To advance this initiative, the MTPO should invoke design competitions and Request for Proposals (RFP) to flesh out innovative and effective transportation related projects.

Design Competitions promote innovation through research based design to meet practical concerns, offer promotional opportunities to leverage funding, integrate related benefits and usually elevate the character of public space. They engage the public in the act of crafting the community and promoting the expectation for quality public space. This method produced outside funding and proposals from national and international firms in the Gainesville Eco-History Trail design competition (Hawthorne Braid). The competition administration and call for entries was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the University of Florida.

Images from the Gainesville Eco-History Trail Design Competition winning entry — Luoni Gold Design Studio. Vegetal foyer at trail head (top), farmers market and public grove (facing page - upper), fluvial recharge and habitat corridor (facing page - lower) and innovative phytoremediation of arsenic contamination along trail (right).









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