

Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
for the Gainesville Urbanized Area
Gainesville Urbanized Area Transportation Study



Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan Update
Technical Report I: Public Involvement

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**Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
For the Gainesville Urbanized Area
YEAR 2045 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE**

**Technical Report 1
Public Involvement**

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ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan was to provide a roadmap to systematically achieve goals and objectives for participation, ensuring diverse and inclusive public input during the development of the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area. The Public Participation Plan includes goals, targeted objectives, a variety of strategies and tools, and tactics to ensure effectiveness. The Public Participation Plan, as amended is included in the Appendix. As required by federal law, the plan was available for a 45-day review and comment period before it was approved and amended.

Pre-COVID-19 Pandemic

Initially, the public involvement process for the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan was guided by a Public Participation Plan. The Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan Public Participation Plan was consistent with the Public Involvement Plan. During this period, the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan Vision Statement, Principles and Strategies were approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area.

COVID-19 Pandemic

In March 2020, the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic disrupted normal transportation planning and public participation activities beyond mitigations in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization Continuity of Operations Plan. In accordance with the State of Florida Office of the Governor Emergency Order Number 20-69, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area approved continuity of operations resolutions for emergency administrative authority, public involvement and virtual meetings via communications meeting technology. By subsequent Executive Orders, the State of Florida Office of the Governor Emergency Order Number 20-69 was extended to cover the balance of the time period for the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan update process.

Due to the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic and state and local mandates to avoid in-person meetings and large gatherings for public health and safety reasons, public workshops and committee meetings were changed to virtual web-based meetings and/or telephone conference call platforms. Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area meetings and public hearings were conducted on a web-based platform and broadcasted on Cox Cable Channel 12. Closure-of and limited-access to public buildings impacted distribution of flyers and public notices.

In addition to the amendment of the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan Public Participation Plan to mitigate for COVID-19 Pandemic impacts, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization also revised its Continuity of Operations Plan and Public Involvement Plan to provide mitigation for disruptions of operations and public participation as severe as has occurred from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

PROJECT WEBSITE

Information about the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan process was posted on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area website www.ncfrpc.org/mtpo/LRTP.html. The website contained general information about the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan planning process and upcoming meetings, as well as contact information for project staff. The website was updated throughout the process and provided interested parties with project information, links to surveys, and opportunities to provide comments and to sign up to receive communications and announcements about the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan. A calendar identifying all project-related public meetings and activities was posted on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area website.

SURVEYS

Surveys were another tool used for collecting public comments on the Year 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan. An online survey was available on the website at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Gainesville2045LRTP>. The online survey gave the public an opportunity to be involved during the planning process. The online survey results are included in the Appendix. The Survey was distributed via a link to local stakeholder groups, advisory committees and the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area's email distribution list, and announced multiple times at all three public workshops, as well as both during the adoption process for the Needs Plan.

Due to public gathering limitations during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the workshops were conducted virtually via communications media technology.

MEETINGS/PRESENTATIONS

Staff from the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area and consultant staff made presentations at virtual public workshops for the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan process. The workshops were held on the dates listed below:

- Workshop #1, May 12, 2020;
- Workshop #2, June 9, 2020; and
- Workshop #3, July 7, 2020.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Briefings were also provided to the Technical Advisory Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Board of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area throughout the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan process. The meeting minutes are included in the Appendix. Due to public gathering

limitations during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the committee meetings were held virtually via communications media technology.

PRESENTATIONS

Briefings were provided to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area at key points during the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan process, including at the public hearings: June 22, 2020 (Needs Plan public hearing) and August 24, 2020 (Cost Feasible Plan public hearing). Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area public meetings included a time for public comment, serving as an additional opportunity for the public to share their comments on the transportation needs and priorities. Minutes for the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area meetings are available on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area website www.ncfrpc.org/mtpo and in the Appendix.

EVALUATION

The various methods used to engage the public in the development of the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan provided a wide range of feedback throughout the process. The combination of workshops and advisory committee meetings allowed participants to focus on their priorities and needs for the transportation network in the Gainesville Urbanized Area. Held at various points in the process, these activities provided important feedback on the plan recommendations, shaping the final Needs and Cost Feasible Plans. A summary of the Community Public Workshops is included below:

COMMUNITY PUBLIC WORKSHOP 1

The first scheduled community public workshop for the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan was held on May 12, 2020 virtually via a web-based platform, in compliance with state mandated social distancing orders related to COVID-19. The workshop was hosted by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area.

This workshop was the first of a series of three community public workshops and two public hearings conducted during the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan update. The workshop was designed to allow participants to provide input to help identify transportation issues and needs. Public involvement is very important to this planning process, as the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan sets transportation priorities and guides the federal, state, and local funding for transportation projects over the next 25 years.

Workshop Attendance

Twenty persons participated in the workshop, of which eight persons were from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. Also attending were six members of the project team from the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area and

project consultant firm. The other 11 persons were from various agencies, including the Florida Department of Transportation, Alachua County, and the City of Gainesville. Both e-mail and newspaper advertisement notices were provided to encourage stakeholders to attend the workshop. Project representatives were available to discuss the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan, receive public input, and answer questions.

Public Notification

Workshop invitations were sent to stakeholders by e-mail. In accordance with the Public Participation Plan COVID-19 Pandemic Addendum, public notices were placed on the front door of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area office and on the Alachua County Administration Building exterior bulletin board. The invitations and public notices included the date, time, web address and call-in information for the virtual Community Public Workshop #1. Workshop notification and materials were placed on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Urbanized Area Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan webpage.

Media Notification

The workshop was advertised in advance with display advertisements in The Independent Florida Alligator, Gainesville Guardian, and The Gainesville Sun and digital advertisements on their respective websites. A press release was distributed to major local media outlets.

Workshop Agenda

The workshop agenda included a 45-minute slide presentation which gave an overview of 2045 growth projections, an overview of the long-range transportation plan process, major topics, including the goals, objectives, and policies and the requirements of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act and the project schedule. This was followed by a question and answer session and discussion of plan needs by members of the public in attendance.

Workshop Handouts

The slides from the presentation for the workshop were posted on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area webpage. Participants were encouraged to view and share with their friends, family, and neighbors the presentation and discuss their thoughts and concerns regarding the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan with project team members. Additionally, they were also encouraged to share the contact information for the project team members as well as the online survey link.

Public Comments

There was one e-mail received from the public prior to the workshop, which was read to the workshop attendees as part of the discussion and questions session. Public discussion centered on the process and what to expect in subsequent workshops. Participants were encouraged to share their opinions and questions through e-mail to Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area staff or via the online survey, and to freely distribute the online survey link.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC WORKSHOP 2

The second workshop for the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan was held on June 9, 2020 virtually via a web-based platform, in compliance with state mandated social distancing orders related to COVID-19. The workshop was hosted by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area.

This workshop was the second of a series of three workshops and two public hearings conducted during the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan update. The workshop was designed to present the results of the Gainesville Urbanized Area Transportation Study travel demand model testing and evaluation and receive input regarding two future (Year 2045) transportation networks: Alternative 1 - allocates future revenues primarily to new corridors and Alternative 2 - allocates future revenues primarily to existing corridors. Public involvement is very important to this planning process, as the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan sets local transportation priorities and guides the federal, state, and local funding for transportation projects over the next 25 years.

Workshop Attendance

Twenty-five persons participated in the workshop, of which 16 persons were from the City Gainesville and Alachua County. Also attending were five members of the project team from the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area and project consultant firm. The other four persons were from various agencies, including the Florida Department of Transportation, Alachua County, and the City of Gainesville. Both e-mail and newspaper advertisement notices were provided to encourage stakeholders to attend the workshop. Project representatives were available to discuss the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan, receive public input, and answer questions.

Public Notification

Workshop invitations were sent to stakeholders by e-mail. In accordance with the Public Participation Plan COVID-19 Pandemic Addendum, public notices were placed on the front door of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area office and on the Alachua County Administration Building exterior bulletin board. The invitations and public notices included the date, time, web address and call-in information for the virtual Community Public Workshop #2. Workshop notification and materials were placed on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Urbanized Area Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan webpage.

Media Notification

The workshop was advertised in advance with display advertisements in The Independent Florida Alligator, Gainesville Guardian, and The Gainesville Sun and digital advertisements on their respective websites. In addition, flyers were placed on the City of Gainesville Regional Transit System buses. A press release was distributed to major local media outlets.

Workshop Agenda

The workshop agenda included a slide presentation that gave an overview of Year 2045 Needs Plan Development, Forecasted Year 2045 Growth, Potential Needs Plan Projects, and the project schedule. An online survey was deployed during the beginning of the presentation, with a request for the attendees to complete for the discussion phase. The workshop specific survey asked the attendees to mark their top three projects and was discussed in realtime during the workshop at the designated time noted to the attendees at the beginning of the presentation. The results of the survey are provided in the Appendix. In addition to the survey, a question and answer period also allowed attendees to ask questions and discuss their ideas and concerns with members of the project team.

Public Comments

Public comments included notes from a former city commissioner for the City of Archer and comments from a current city commissioner for the City of Archer regarding the importance of adding two lanes to State Road 24 (Archer Road) from SW 75th Street to the City of Archer. Other comments included clarifying that bicycle and pedestrian projects will be considered. The Needs Plan projects were reviewed, and some participants utilized the survey to provide a ranking preference for their top three projects.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC WORKSHOP 3

The third community public workshop for the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan was held on July 7, 2020 virtually via a web-based platform, in compliance with state mandated social distancing orders related to COVID-19. The workshop was hosted by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area.

This workshop was the third of a series of three workshops and two public hearings conducted during the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan update. The workshop was designed to present the adopted Year 2045 Needs Plan and estimated revenue forecasts for State Highway System, Federal Transportation Alternatives Program and Federal Surface Transportation Program projects. The adopted Year 2045 Needs Plan includes: Roadway projects (including Strategic Intermodal System projects), Transit projects, Bicycle and Pedestrian projects, and Aspirational projects (beyond 2045). This workshop was an opportunity to receive public input regarding projects to be funded in the Cost Feasible Plan that was subsequently adopted on August 24, 2020. Public involvement is very important to this planning process, as the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan sets local transportation priorities and guides the federal, state, and local funding for transportation projects over the next 25 years.

Workshop Attendance

Twenty-three persons participated in the workshop, of which 12 persons were from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. Also attending were five members of the project team from the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area and project consultant firm. The other six persons were from various agencies, including the Florida Department of Transportation, Alachua County, and the City of Gainesville. Both e-mail and newspaper advertisement notices were provided to encourage stakeholders to attend the

workshop. Project representatives were available to discuss the Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan, receive public input, and answer questions.

Public Notification

Workshop invitations were sent to stakeholders by e-mail. In accordance with the Public Participation Plan COVID-19 Pandemic Addendum, public notices were placed on the front door of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization office for the Gainesville Urbanized Area and on the Alachua County Administration Building exterior bulletin board. The invitations and public notices included the date, time, web address and call-in information for the virtual Community Public Workshop #3. Workshop notification and materials were placed on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Urbanized Area Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan webpage.

Media Notification

The workshop was advertised in advance with display advertisements in The Independent Florida Alligator, Gainesville Guardian, and The Gainesville Sun and digital advertisements on their respective websites. In addition, flyers were placed on the City of Gainesville Regional Transit System buses. A press release was distributed to major local media outlets prior to the meeting.

Workshop Agenda

The workshop agenda included a slide presentation.

Public Comments

Nine comment forms were received at the workshop.

Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan Survey

An online survey was available from May 6, 2020 to August 24, 2020, and was announced to the public at workshops and public hearings to encourage feedback from the general public. Seven comments were received; however, one comment was a duplicate. Comments provided are included in the Appendix, and included multiple comments concerning the need to add two lanes to State Road 24 (Archer Road) from SW 75th Street (Tower Road) to the City of Archer and on other specific roadways with congestion and commuter traffic considerations, as well as transit, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. These comments, along with the public comments, were used for project evaluation and prioritization criteria.

Environmental Justice (Low-Income, Minority, and Special Population Groups Outreach)

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 United States Code 2000d-1) provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Title VI provides the following protection and activities relative to public involvement:

- Encourages the participation of minorities as members of planning or advisory bodies for programs receiving Federal funds;
- Requires information and services to be provided in languages other than English when significant numbers of potential beneficiaries have limited English-speaking ability; and
- Requires entities to notify the entire eligible population about programs.

This Long-Range Transportation Plan update included outreach to the elderly, persons with disabilities, minorities and low-income community, environmental justice populations such as transportation disadvantaged, transit-dependent, and other groups traditionally under-represented in the plan update process. To ensure outreach to low-income, minority, elderly, and other special populations, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization, consistent with the Public Participation Plan COVID-19 Pandemic Addendum, ensured that the following groups were contacted throughout the process (Table 1). These groups were contacted by email with invitations for all three workshops, and notice was provided concerning the adoption public hearings for distribution to their listservs.

Table 1: Low-Income, Minority and Other Special Population Groups

Group
Center for Independent Living – North Central Florida
Chamber of Hispanic Affairs
Latina Womens League
Elder Care
Fifth Avenue Neighborhood Association
Azelea Trails Homeowners Association
Cedar Grove II Neighborhood Association
Duval Neighborhood Association
Lincoln Estates Neighborhood Association
Pineridge Neighborhood Association
Springhill Mount Olive Neighborhood Association
Sugarfoot Community Anglewood Association
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Southwest Alliance of Gainesville
League of Women Voters
Hispanic Outreach and University of Florida
Bartley Temple United Methodist Church
Upper Room Ministries

Faith Community
Gainesville Citizens for Active Transportation

COMMENTS

Throughout the planning process, public comments were collected at public hearings and workshops, through the website/e-mail, and other venues, as described in this report. These comments were incorporated into the development of all plan components, including the Year 2045 Needs Plan and Year 2045 Cost Feasible Plan.

APPENDIX A