

Appendix A

Public Involvement



Public Involvement

Plan (PIP) Summary

Background

The purpose of this project is to create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) to include all of Hall County, including the member jurisdictions of Flowery Branch, Gainesville, and Oakwood. Some bicycle and pedestrian facilities currently exist in the cities and the county, and others have been proposed or planned. However, there is no comprehensive inventory or plan for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This plan will identify a comprehensive system of bicycle/pedestrian facilities designed to serve a variety of users, integrate this system with the overall transportation system, and identify specific design standards, implementation actions, and potential funding sources. The resulting document will be a phased action plan with specific policies, strategies, and projects with cost estimates and identified funding opportunities.

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that meets countywide needs and is supported by the community. Public involvement ensures that the public is a partner in the process of determining strategies to be undertaken. In addition, federal regulations mandate that MPOs include a certain level of public involvement in the development of long-range transportation plans. The following federal regulations will provide guidance to this plan: National Environmental Policy Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.

The following PIP is designed to take the public beyond information and engage them in the discussion of this study. The activities described below are organized by type: Outreach, Involvement and Measures of Effectiveness.

Outreach

Flyers

Flyers will be designed and distributed to announce and generate interest in the public meetings. Flyers will be distributed to community and organizational groups through the GHMPO and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force members. The flyers will also be posted on the website.

Web Site Updates

The Hall County website will include a link for information describing the planning process, project schedule, and upcoming events. This information will be updated at key milestones throughout the study.



Media Outreach

In order to reach the largest segment of the general public as possible, media releases will be distributed at key milestones providing updated project information and opportunities for involvement.

Community Displays

Project information will be created and displayed at the storefront window of The Jaeger Company, located just off the Gainesville square to raise awareness of the project and to generate interest. These displays will be updated at key milestones throughout the study.

Involvement

Involvement of the community will be sought through a Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force and two planned public meetings. The desired result of this segment of the PIP is to provide a means for everyone interested in the project to be involved and provide input during all stages of the project.

Bike and Pedestrian Task Force

A Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force (consisting of local agency representatives, nonprofit representatives, and private sector organizations) will participate in three facilitated meetings during the planning process.

The initial meeting will include an introduction to the project and a question and answer session. The stakeholders will participate in a facilitated exercise to identify issues and opportunities they see within the region regarding bicycle and pedestrian planning. A cornerstone of the first meeting will be a suitability evaluation of existing roadway corridors for bicycle travel and a review for demand of pedestrian facilities.

A second meeting will be held toward the end of the existing conditions analysis. The objective of this meeting is to identify goals and objectives, strategies and performance measures and to review draft design standards.

A third meeting will be held near the end of the planning process. The objective of this meeting is to review, evaluate, and prioritize potential projects, strategies, and programs against the goals and objectives of the plan and performance measures. In addition, Task Force members will discuss next steps.



Public Meetings

Public meetings are critical and necessary mechanisms for involving the general public in the planning process. Two community meeting dates are planned at key points to solicit valuable public input. The first meeting date will take place early in the project to provide information to the public regarding the scope of the plan; to gather input on issues and perceived problems in the bicycle and pedestrian system; identify key origins and destinations; and to review draft goals and objectives. The second meeting date will be held during the identification and selection of projects and will emphasize consensus building exercises to finalize goals and objectives and to prioritize projects for inclusion into the plan.

Measures of Effectiveness

A combination of quantitative and qualitative measures will be used to evaluate public involvement activities. Quantitative measures are useful in providing information concerning type and level of involvement. Qualitative measures are useful in determining the level of change that has occurred regarding education and awareness of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the quality of response to this involvement. In turn, this information can be used to update the type of public involvement tools used.