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Local News - Wednesday, June 13, 2007

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## Plan seeks solutions for congested lanes

### Projects may cost \$1.4 billion by year 2030

By **ASHLEY COX**  
The Times  
GAINESVILLE

As Hall County continues to grow, so will the traffic.

To prepare the area for the inevitable influx, the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization is currently developing its 2030 long-range transportation plan.

The plan identifies existing and new transportation solutions in the rapidly growing community, as well as establishing short-term priorities and developing long-term goals for the county's transportation needs.

During a public meeting Monday evening, residents were invited to comment on the transportation plan, which is divided into a four-tiered time line.

Srikanth Yamala with the planning organization outlined five potential focus areas that are included in the plan:

- Connection between Thompson Bridge Road and Highway 365
- Widening of Ridge Road from Queen City Parkway to Jesse Jewell Parkway
- The intersection of Jesse Jewell and John Morrow Parkways
- Extension of Spout Springs Road to McEver Road
- Expanding to six lanes Interstate 985 from the Hall County line to Exit 24

"We heard a lot about the need to widen Spout Springs Road," Yamala said. Construction on the project is slated to begin between 2014-2020, but many residents said it should have been placed higher on the priority list.

Yamala said the intersection of Jesse Jewell and John Morrow Parkway is one of the worst in Gainesville.



Tom Reed The Times

**Traffic backs up in the eastbound lane of Jesse Jewell Parkway at the intersection of Queen City/John Morrow Parkways. The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization met with residents Monday evening to discuss solutions to traffic through the development of the 2030 long-range transportation plan.**

#### On the net

To see the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization's existing long-range transportation plan, visit [www.ghmpo.org](http://www.ghmpo.org).

Widening Ridge Road "would definitely take some of the traffic from Jesse Jewell Parkway," he said.

Jeff Carroll, senior transportation planner with Wilbur Smith Associates in Columbia, S.C., said the population in Hall County is expected to jump to 300,000 by the year 2030.

In order to keep up with that growth, much money will be needed to complete all projects outlined in the transportation plan.

Carroll said construction projects will total \$1.2 billion. Maintenance will cost about \$132 million.

Transit will be another \$67.6 million, for a total cost of \$1.4 billion being spent on transportation projects and improvements by 2030.

"This is a continual process," Carroll told the audience. However, "We're on the right track here."

For additional information about the transportation plan, contact Yamala at (770) 531-6809.

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