

APPENDIX C: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Introduction

In July 2007, the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) initiated a year long Transit Development Plan (TDP) study to take a fresh look at Hall Area Transit (HAT) to identify and evaluate existing transit services, review travel behavior, and recommend public transportation solutions in our rapidly growing area. One of the key tasks of the study was community and agency coordination. This task involved soliciting input regarding Hall Area Transit (HAT) from key stakeholders, area agencies, and HAT riders, and the general public. This section includes summary reports from the following community and agency coordination task elements:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Response to Stakeholder Inquiries
- Public Meetings
- Outreach Meetings
- General Surveys
- HAT On-Board Surveys

Stakeholder Interviews

Members from the consultant team, URS, worked with GHMPO and HAT to identify key stakeholders for individual interviews which were conducted in person and via telephone. Relevant questions and discussion points were developed to guide this process and a summary of the responses and common themes are listed in this report.

A total of thirty stakeholders were identified to be interviewed for their input regarding the Transit Development Plan. Four elected officials were selected to be interviewed in person, and twenty-six were selected for interviews via telephone. Of the four anticipated in person interviews, three were conducted. The individual not interviewed was Lamar Scroggs, Mayor of Oakwood. Mayor Scroggs indicated that the responses Oakwood City Manager Stan Brown gave in his telephone interview also represented his views.

Twenty-three of the twenty-six individuals selected for telephone contact were interviewed. The three individuals not interviewed due to their limited availability were: Richard Higgins, Chairman, Hall County School Board; Bobby Banks, Hall County Board of Commissioners; and Dr. Ed Schrader, President, Brenau University. A detailed list of the stakeholders can be found in Table 1.

Main Issues

References were made to almost every question about the need to promote the service more effectively and that more public relations and marketing are needed to increase visibility. Several respondents mentioned they believe the system needs a new look. Blue buses and the name Red Rabbit don't match.

There were many references to a need for transit service in the Hispanic community. Myrtle Figueras stated that the Spanish language brochure is not enough to encourage ridership in the Hispanic community and recommended that HAT hire Spanish speaking bus operators.

Unfortunately, several of the respondents are not very aware of the services HAT provides or where the routes actually go. One seemed confused about the difference in the Red Rabbit and paratransit service.

Table 1 – Key Stakeholders Identified for the TDP Process

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	MODE OF CONTACT	DATE OF CONTACT	COMMENTS
Wayne Dempsey	Executive VP and CFO	Brenau University	Telephone	9/28/2007	
Ed Schrader	President	Brenau University	N/A	N/A	Mr. Schrader was not available for interview
Lana Fuentes-Krummen	Director	Catholic Social Services	Telephone	9/20/2007	
Diane Hirling	Mayor	City of Flowery Branch	In Person	9/27/2007	
Bill Andrew	City Manager	City of Flowery Branch	Telephone	9/18/2007	
Bob Hamrick	Mayor	City of Gainesville	In Person	9/27/2007	
George Wangemann	Council Member	City of Gainesville	Telephone	9/19/2007	
Danny Dunagan	Council Member	City of Gainesville	Telephone	9/25/2007	
Myrtle Figueras	Council Member	City of Gainesville	Telephone	9/25/2007	
Ruth Bruner	Council Member	City of Gainesville	Telephone	9/27/2007	
Bryan Shuler	City Manager	City of Gainesville	Telephone	9/24/2007	
Lamar Scroggs	Mayor	City of Oakwood	N/A	N/A	Indicated responses of Stan Brown represented Oakwood
Stan Brown	City Manager	City of Oakwood	Telephone	9/18/2007	
Bob McGarry	Executive Director	Disability Resource Center	Telephone	9/19/2007	
Richard Devine	Manager, Transportation Services	GA. Dept. of Human Resources	Telephone	9/18/2007	
Raymond Mensah	District Coordinator	GA. Dept. of Human Resources	Telephone	9/24/2007	
Shirley Whitaker	Asst. to Superintendent for Special Activities	Gainesville School System	Telephone	9/20/2007	
Martha Nesbitt	President	Gainesville State College	Telephone	9/21/2007	
Sam Chapman	Policy Committee Member	Gainesville-Hall MPO	Telephone	9/24/2007	
Kit Dunlap	President/CEO	Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce	Telephone	9/20/2007	
Jim Shuler	Administrator	Hall County	Telephone	9/20/2007	
Billy Powell	Commissioner	Hall County Board of Commissioners	Telephone	9/19/2007	
Bobby Banks	Commissioner	Hall County Board of Commissioners	N/A	N/A	Mr. Banks was not available for interview
Deborah Mack	Commissioner	Hall County Board of Commissioners	Telephone	9/21/2007	
Steve Gailey	Commissioner	Hall County Board of Commissioners	Telephone	9/25/2007	
Tom Oliver	Chairman	Hall County Board of Commissioners	In Person	9/27/2007	
Richard Higgins	Superintendent	Hall County School Board	N/A	N/A	Mr. Higgins was not available for interview
Michael Moye	President	Lanier Technical College	Telephone	9/21/2007	
Chad Bolton	Planning Manager	NE Georgia Medical Center	Telephone	9/28/2007	
Denise Deal	Executive Director	Vision 2030	Telephone	10/7/2007	

Following is a summary of responses received to individual questions:

- 1. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 indicating not important and 10 indicating very important, how would you rank public transportation when compared with other services such as roadways, schools, parks and recreational facilities, recycling services, fire and emergency services?**

Rankings for the entire group averaged 5.9 for transit (ranging from 2 to 10). Two respondents commented without providing a ranking.

Respondents had opinions on the topic covering everything from, the community being tied to their vehicles with no desire to use transit, to the service “is good for people who use it”. One participant actually uses the service, but most respondents felt that the service is poorly utilized overall.

- 2. Do you believe that Hall Area Transit (HAT) should expand operations to include some form of commuter services, i.e. express bus or vanpools?**

The overwhelming response to this question was yes. One person wasn't sure and several felt the issue should be evaluated prior to committing to new service.

- 3. How is HAT perceived in the community? What is your perception of transit's role in the community?**

Most respondents feel the community's perception is that HAT is used by a very small percentage of the population. People in the community cite seeing empty buses or buses with one or two people riding as proof the system is underutilized. Other comments included that the community believes the service is “a waste of taxpayer money”; however, several respondents believe the service is a real necessity for the area. Respondents also stated that many people are not informed about HAT and that more marketing is needed to increase the visibility of the service.

- 4. What are the major strengths and accomplishments of the transit system?**

Overwhelmingly, respondents believe the service does a good job for people who have no other transportation options, especially the disabled. Several mentioned the service is efficiently run and that management is very good at responding to community needs. Other comments included that the service is reasonably priced, the demand response works well and three people responded that the very fact that it has stayed in business is an accomplishment.

- 5. How does (or could) HAT services impact your organization/community?**

Once again, there were many references to the fact that the service is doing a good job for people who need it and it should be promoted more effectively. Several respondents stated the Hispanic community needs the service but doesn't find it very accessible to them. One of two respondents mentioned the need for more buses and weekend service. Respondents from the three colleges believe student ridership will increase if the service is promoted more aggressively to that audience.

One respondent believes HAT can be a “tremendous asset” to the Vision 2030 transportation goals. She mentions there are references to transportation throughout the Vision 2030 document, specifically with regard to school age children.

6. Are there current needs for additional or fewer HAT services? If so what type, where and/or when?

Several respondents felt their answers to question #5 were applicable to this question. Several respondents didn't feel they knew enough about the service to offer suggestions, and one doesn't believe additional service is needed.

Other ideas mentioned were:

- a. Airport service.
- b. Service to the MARTA station.
- c. Park and ride with a connection to the Gwinnett system.
- d. Extend routes further into the county.
- e. Weekend service and/or extended hours.
- f. A route down Atlanta Highway promoting the service to the Hispanic community.
- g. Easier to access schedules and better overall promotion of the service.
- h. Additional buses to help increase frequency.
- i. More frequent service at lunch or peak times to the downtown area, hospital and Brenau University.

7. As public transit service is dependent on subsidies, what is the most appropriate funding source?

Most of the respondents feel the major funding source should be the Federal government with contributions by the city, county and transit ridership. One respondent listed SPLOST or local sales dollars as funding sources. Four respondents didn't really feel they could comment on this question. Two respondents believe the only reason the system is funded at all is due to the requirement for the county to do so in order to get road subsidies.

One respondent mentioned again that the public perception is that the system is a waste of taxpayer money and he feels something should be done to convince the public it's good for the community. Another respondent mentioned he thought the taxpayers should determine the funding source.

8. What is happening in Hall County in terms of residential and commercial development? How much? Where? How can transit best respond to these trends?

Most all agreed that major residential growth is occurring in Gainesville and South Hall County. One respondent guessed that growth could also be as high as 180% in East Hall and North Hall and several mentioned the senior residential area at Deaton Creek off Friendship Road. Growth in the Hispanic population was also mentioned again as having important potential for transit service. One respondent stated that commercial growth is county wide but he is unsure as to how transit can “fit into that picture”. One respondent mentioned the need for park and ride and commuter service to connect to the Gwinnett system and reduce traffic, but another raised the issue that there is some opposition to the idea of taking people outside the county to “spend their money”.

Additional ideas for how transit can respond to these trends: Provide service to senior residential areas, south and east sides of Gainesville, the YMCA in East Hall, apartment complexes and moderately priced housing, the new location of the Social Security office, and to the new hospital under construction in South Hall and the surrounding area.

9. As HAT has been experiencing increased ridership over the past few years, what do you feel is responsible for this growth?

The majority agreed that much of the increase in ridership is directly related to population growth. Four respondents were surprised to hear that ridership has increased. The issue was raised again for the need to do more marketing, but at least three respondents feel that better awareness and education about the service are responsible for the growth in ridership.

Other contributors mentioned were:

- a. The route changes.
- b. Current management.
- c. Word-of-mouth.
- d. Better frequency and more bus stops/shelters.
- e. Cost of gas and operating a vehicle.

10. Do you believe that the current escalating fuel prices will promote additional public interest in using HAT or other transit services?

Opinions were split almost equally on this question, with twelve respondents either saying yes or maybe, and eleven responding no. However, many of the respondents feel that riding the bus cannot compete with the convenience of the personal automobile.

11. If you could pick one thing to change about the transit system, what would it be?

Two respondents were confused as to why the blue buses are called Red Rabbit and five would definitely change the name and image. Six respondents would like more information, marketing and better communication and one mentioned the need to conduct a survey to determine where people want to go. Five either wouldn't change anything or didn't have any ideas for change.

Other ideas for change include:

- a. Additional bus stops.
- b. Extended hours of operation and on weekends.
- c. 30-minute frequency.
- d. Emphasize benefits to businesses and not just employees.
- e. More bus shelters.
- f. Community perception.

12. Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding local and/or countywide transit?

Most respondents felt their answers to the first eleven questions were sufficient. However several did offer either new information or reiterated responses from earlier questions. Some of the issues mentioned were:

- a. Concentrate on finding out where people want to go.
- b. HAT seems to be well run with a concern about meeting customer needs. Excellent director who knows the community.
- c. It's a waste of taxpayer money but if more people used it the respondent stated he might feel differently.
- d. The service needs to be more accessible to the Hispanic community.
- e. Increased marketing to attract more people and change community perception.
- f. This survey is a good idea.

Response to Stakeholder Inquiries

During the interview process, many Stakeholders indicated there is a need to promote HAT service more effectively and that more public relations and marketing are needed to increase visibility. However, several respondents indicated elements of HAT service are confusing, for example, "Blue buses and the name Red Rabbit don't match". There seemed to be confusion about the difference in the Red Rabbit and Dial A Ride service. In order to clarify these issues, answers are provided to the following frequently asked questions:

1. What kind of services does HAT currently provide?

Hall Area Transit (HAT) has served the City of Gainesville and Hall County since 1983. As the public transit service provider for the County, HAT's mission is to provide efficient, effective, and affordable public transportation allowing riders to access employment, retail shops, recreational facilities, medical offices, social service agencies, government offices, and other key destinations.

Hall Area Transit is the umbrella organization for the following services:

- Dial-A-Ride – County Wide Demand response service
- Red Rabbit – Fixed route service
- Mobility Plus – ADA Paratransit service

HAT provides public transportation to the urban and rural portions of Gainesville and Hall County. Services include scheduled fixed route service (Red Rabbit) and paratransit service (Mobility Plus) within the City of Gainesville and a demand-responsive van service (Dial-A-Ride) in the outlying areas of the County. The urban fixed route service consists of three (3) fixed routes with coverage of major transportation corridors, such as:

- Browns Bridge Road/Jesse Jewell Parkway,
- Limestone Parkway,
- John W. Morrow Jr. Parkway,
- Athens Street/Athens Highway, and
- Dawsonville Highway

HAT also provides convenient access to local community service/civic venues and to a number of other key destinations, including but not limited to:

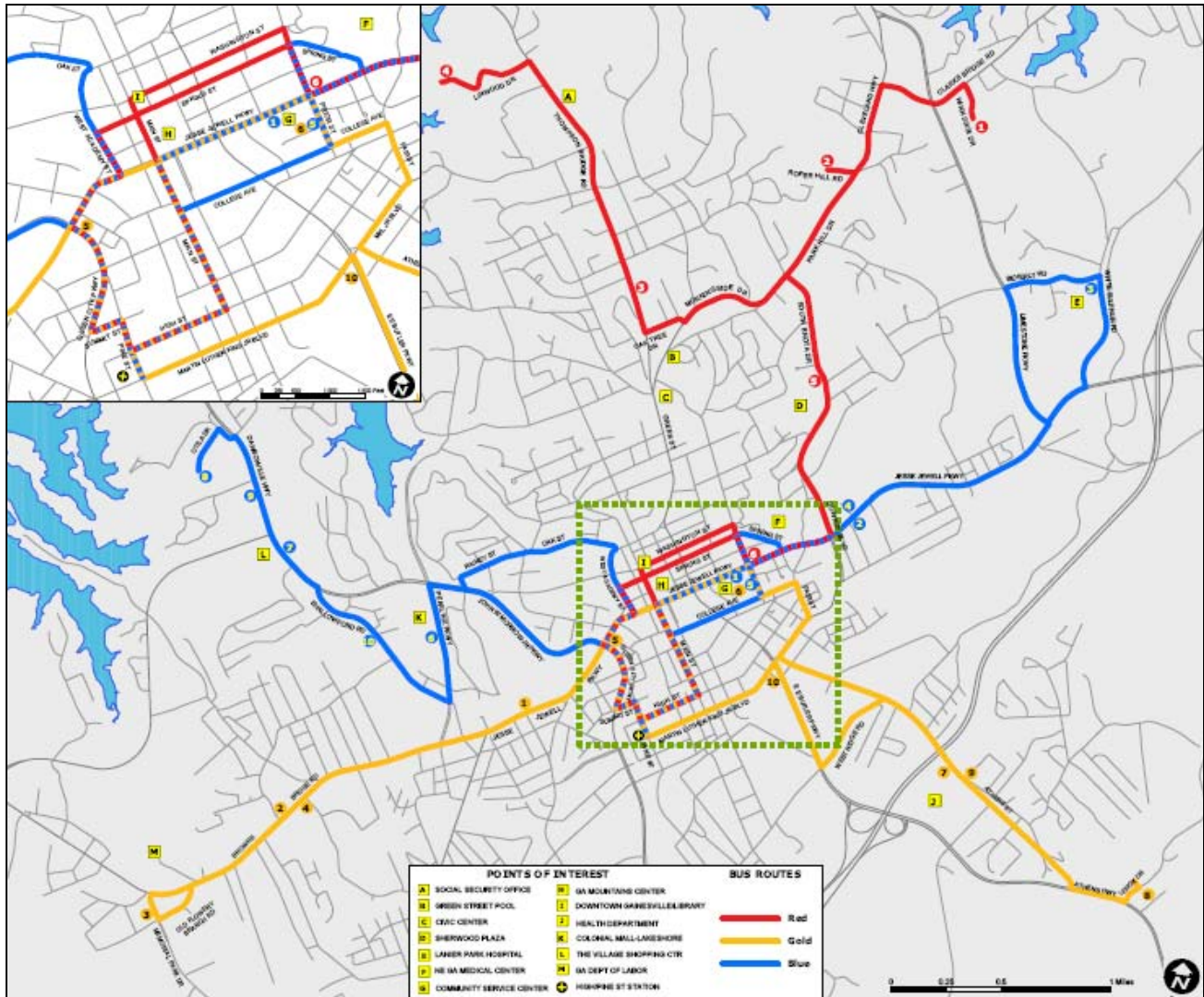
- Downtown Gainesville
- Hall County Library
- Lakeshore Mall
- Hall County Health Department
- The Village Shopping Center
- Georgia Mountains Center
- Gainesville Public Utilities, at Red Rabbit Transfer Station
- Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC)
- NGMC Lanier Park Hospital
- Sherwood Plaza
- Community Service Center
- Civic Center
- Joint Administration Building
- Court House (Old and New)

Access to HAT's demand-responsive van service can be attained by contacting HAT 48 hours in advance to reserve service. Vans are equipped with special lifts and service is provided on a curb-to-curb, shared-ride basis. Note: Curb-to-curb service is generally understood to mean service from the point of boarding the vehicle to the point of disembarking from the vehicle. Door-to-door service is understood to encompass assistance beyond the vehicle that could include, for example, helping the person into their home or their destination, meeting them in the medical office or business, or providing some other personal assistance beyond actual use of the transit vehicle itself.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, HAT provides complementary paratransit service within a three-fourth mile distance of Red Rabbit fixed routes to eligible persons with disabilities, who by virtue of their disability are unable to access or use the Red Rabbit services.

The HAT System Map illustrates the current coverage area for fixed route service.

HAT System Route Alignment



2. When do the services operate and what is the cost to the rider?

The Red Rabbit fixed routes operate between 6:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays. There is no service on weekends or City of Gainesville holidays. Fares on the Red Rabbit are \$1.00 per one-way trip. A half-fare of \$0.50 is the cost charged to seniors above age 60, children aged 18 and below, persons carrying a Medicaid card, and students. Transfers between routes are free, and remain valid within 50 minutes from the time of issuance.

Service frequencies are every 30 minutes throughout the day on the Blue Route, and every 60 minutes on the Red and Gold Routes. The Blue and Gold Routes' schedules are synchronized for timed transfers at the High Street-Pine Street Red Rabbit Transfer Station. Westbound services arrive and leave at :55 and :00 on the hour, respectively, while the eastbound services arrive and leave at :25 and :30 on the hour.

There are two components to the demand-responsive service offered by HAT. These include the ADA-complementary paratransit service required for the service area within a three-fourth mile distance from Red Rabbit transit stops, and the demand-responsive van service offered by HAT to all persons residing and working in Hall County outside of the Red Rabbit service area. The county wide service provided by HAT is called "Dial-A-Ride" and the ADA-complementary service is called "Mobility Plus".

For Dial a Ride service, HAT maintains a distance-based fare structure: \$2.00 for travel up to two miles, \$3.00 for distances greater than two but less than four miles, and \$4.00 for trips up to seven miles. Dial a Ride and Mobility Plus services are curb-to-curb operations.

3. How is transit funded?

Listed below are the funding sources typically utilized by transit providers in Georgia. Note: A local match for transit projects is not a requirement to receive Federal highway/roadway funding.

Federal Funding

Federal funding typically comes from the following programs:

Section 5307 – Urban Area Formula Program (applies to HAT Red Rabbit service)

This program (49 U.S.C. 5307) makes Federal resources available to urbanized areas and to Governors for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas and for transportation related planning. An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more that is designated as such by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Section 5309 – Bus and Bus Related Facilities Program

The transit capital investment program (49 U.S.C. 5309) provides capital assistance for three primary activities:

- New and replacement buses and facilities;
- Modernization of existing rail systems; and
- New fixed guideway systems.

Section 5311 - Rural and Small Urban Areas Transportation Program (applies to HAT Dial-A-Ride service)

This program (49 U.S.C. 5311) provides formula funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in areas with populations of less than 50,000. It is apportioned in proportion to each state's non-urbanized population. Funding may be used for capital, operating, state administration, and project administration expenses. Funds may be used for capital, operating, and administrative assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, and nonprofit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups), and operators of public transportation services. The state must use 15 percent of its annual apportionment to support intercity bus service, unless the Governor certifies that these needs of the state are adequately met. Projects to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Clean Air Act, or bicycle access projects, may be funded at 90 percent Federal match. The maximum FTA share for operating assistance is 50 percent of the net operating costs.

Additional federal funding:

Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program

This program (49 U.S.C. 5316) provides formula funding support to states and large urban areas, with allocations based on the number of eligible low-income persons and welfare recipients. The program provides capital and operating assistance for new transit services which provide greater access to employment and related support services, or which transport residents from urbanized or nonurbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. Up to ten percent of JARC funds may support planning, administration and technical assistance activities. The State of Georgia serves as the designated recipient for JARC funding on behalf of urbanized areas below 200,000 population. Projects seeking JARC funding are competitively selected and must be derived from a locally-developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

Section 5317 - New Freedom Program

This formula program (49 U.S.C. 5317) supports the development of transit and paratransit services and facility improvements addressing the mobility needs of persons with disabilities that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The State of Georgia serves as the designated recipient for New Freedom funding on behalf of urbanized areas below 200,000 population. Projects seeking New Freedom funding are competitively selected and must be derived from a locally-developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

State Funding

The State of Georgia, under the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), has administrative responsibility for the Federal programs related to transit operating and capital for cities with populations under 200,000. Section 5307, 5309 and 5311 programs have administrative guides developed by GDOT that can be accessed from the GDOT website. Contact with GDOT should be made and the program's administrative guides should be reviewed to determine the availability and timing for funding. Typically, the application process begins in April of each year with funds being available in July. The state does provide matching shares for capital grants for the Section 5307, 5309 and 5311 programs. The state provides no funding assistance for operations.

Local Funding

The local share for funding transit capital and operating can come from a variety of sources provided that they did not originate from a federal source. Typically, local share comes from three main sources, general fund, ad valorem taxes (property taxes), or sales taxes dedicated specifically to transit. For capital, general revenue or capital improvement bonds may be considered as a local share source.

4. Why is the fixed route system called the Red Rabbit?

A Citizen Advisory Committee was formed in 2000 to create a fixed route system. This Committee worked with a designer and selected the Red Rabbit name and design for the new service.

5. How many people use HAT?

Since October 2004, when HAT implemented service adjustments recommended in the Comprehensive Operations Analysis/Strategic Plan, Red Rabbit ridership has increased steadily each year. Annual ridership, which reached a low of 32,393 passenger trips in Fiscal Year FY 2004, rebounded to 58,404 trips for the FY ending in June 2007, eclipsing all-time highs for the service each year. This growth represented an average annual increase of 21.7 percent over

three years. Ridership particularly grew during the second half of FY 2007, rising from 196 average daily passenger trips in January 2007 to 279 in June 2007. The June figure is bolstered slightly by the issuance of fare-free coupons for City of Gainesville and Hall County employees, offered from mid-June through August as part of HAT's participation in the annual "Dump the Pump" promotion by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).

6. How are the bus route alignments determined?

HAT has provided fixed route bus service in Hall County since January 2001, following the receipt of competitive Federal Job Access and Reverse Commute program funding. The original route configurations were determined by linking points of interest in large loops, connecting at a transfer center. Following numerous recommendations from the 2004 Comprehensive Operations Analysis and Strategic Plan, HAT modified its fixed route service to improve system efficiency and ridership. Particular changes included reducing the number of routes (from 4 to 3), vehicle miles traveled, and passenger travel times, while transitioning some routes from the loop orientation to a more radial network design.

7. How much money is spent on marketing?

Marketing expenses include, printing, newspaper advertisements, brochures, purchasing bus shelters, part time marketing staff, graphic design consultant and customer appreciation days. Total cost over the last four years is \$200,000.

8. Who is the marketing target audience?

In seeking to build transit awareness and usage, HAT must effectively address a variety of target groups. Some are currently using the system; some have immediate potential to use public transportation, while others are unlikely to do so until a more extensive transit network is established. Additional marketing can target people living, working or playing close to the existing transit lines. Current and potential users are:

- Seniors
- Persons with Disabilities
- Low Income Families
- Workers Commuting Within the County
- College Students
- Visitors

Public Meetings and Community Outreach

The Transit Development Plan included two public meetings and two community outreach meetings to determine the transit needs of Hall County residents. The public meetings were held at the Georgia Mountains Center and were open to the general public. Because the Hispanic community is often under-represented during public involvement activities due to language and cultural barriers, the community outreach meetings were focused primarily on engaging the Hispanic community to elicit participation from this segment of the population. The first community outreach meeting was held at the Community Health and Information Fair at the Georgia Mountains Center. The second outreach meeting centered on working with Hispanic leaders to promote the TDP within their community and encourage the Spanish-speaking population to participate in the study. In addition to the meetings, an interview with the project team was conducted in Spanish on La Que Buena radio station in order to promote the study.

Public Meeting on September 27, 2007

The public meeting was held on Thursday, September 27 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Georgia Mountains Center. The GHMPO staff and members of the URS consultant team helped to facilitate the meeting.

Objective of the Meeting:

The purpose of the public meeting was to inform the community about the TDP development process and to provide citizens an opportunity to share their ideas, thoughts, and recommendations about issues such as:

- Current transit needs and concerns in Hall County
- Major transit routes needed in the County
- Transit strategies to address traffic congestion in Gainesville
- The role of Hall Area Transit in our community
- Regional commuter service

Public Notices and Informational Materials:

The URS project team assisted in the creation of informational material for public notice that announced the meeting date. Meeting notices in English and Spanish were mailed to over 400 members on the GHMPO mailing list, 138 churches and 13 schools. Notices were also sent to the elected officials. Press Releases were sent to the *Gainesville Times Access North Georgia* and *Mexico Lindo*. The project team was interviewed by La Que Buena, a Hispanic radio station, to promote the meeting to the Spanish-speaking community. Additionally, GHMPO advertised the meeting and provided information on the TDP study their website, www.ghmpo.org. Attendees were provided an information package containing a fact sheet, a comment form and survey forms.

Public Meeting Format:

The hour and a half meeting combined a variety of communication methods to provide information to the community to hear their concerns, priorities and reactions. The first thirty minutes of the meeting was designed as an “open house” format with boards and

maps placed all around the room. A Spanish speaking staff member was available to provide information and answer questions in Spanish. Four stations were set up in the meeting room with display boards and participants were asked open-ended questions about the displays with their responses recorded on flip charts.

The displays depicted:

- HAT system maps
- Study area characteristics
- Study area maps
- A dot placement exercise

The dot exercise encouraged participants to place dots under categories for two questions. The results follow:

Question 1: If public transit were available to you, where would you mostly use it to go? (Participants could select more than one category)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Dots</u>
Dining	8
Work	6
Recreation	5
Medical	7
School	7
Shopping	7

Question 2: How much would you be willing to pay for a one-way fare?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Dots</u>
\$1.00	8
\$1.50	0
\$2.00	0
\$2.50	0

Presentation

Following the initial open session, the participants were asked to be seated for a presentation on the TDP. Randy Knighton of Hall County Government, provided introductory comments and Srikanth Yamala from GHMPO began the presentation. Mr. Yamala gave a background of MPO's in general and of GHMPO in particular, including facts, organizational structure and the planning process. The URS consultant Project Manager Chip Burger presented information on HAT, including history, operational statistics, funding sources, services, and fares. Mr. Burger also presented the study purpose, key tasks, study schedule, and service area characteristics. The presentation concluded with a summary of what the participants had shared during the open session, with Janice Crow of HAT leading the discussion. A question and answer period followed the presentation and the findings are presented below.

Findings

Several comments, concerns, and recommendations were received following the presentation. They are listed in the following six categories:

I. Preferred Destinations

- Atlanta Highway
- Adult Learning Center
- City of Oakwood
- Department of Family and Children Services
- Unemployment Office
- Social Security Office
- Department of Labor
- East Hall Library
- Gainesville Career Center
- Gainesville State College
- YMCA
- Francis Meadows
- Avida Community Partners
- Brenau University (East Campus)
- Create a connection to Oakwood from downtown Gainesville.
- Create connectivity with MARTA
- Connect to Gwinnett Transit at park and ride lot
- Create a connection between North GA College and Gainesville State College.
- HAT Blue Route bus #2 Northeast is currently underutilized.

II. Operational/Infrastructural Changes

- Need for more park and ride lots to support transit
- Relocate stops farther away from curbs
- Increase size of signage
- Route electronic notices
- Extend hours of operations
- Create Saturday operations
- Create a run from 12:30-1am to cover night shifts
- HAT should hire its own mechanics
- Transit should be reliable, dependable, effective

III. Advertising/Promotions

- Raise money through local advertising
- Work with local business to advertise
- Greater emphasis on advertising
- Emphasize the benefits (of bus ridership)
- Need a picture a blue bus with a red rabbit. (Ms. Crow informed the audience new red buses are forthcoming)
- Create "free ride days" (Ms. Crow noted HAT already has "Free Fridays" sometimes).

IV. Fare Policy

- Need to make people aware of the fare before they get on the buses
- Consider a day pass- how much would it cost?
- There is little willingness to pay a higher fare because of seniors and fixed income residents as well as poor students.

V. Suggestions for Future Public Meetings on the TDP

- Change of future meeting locations so that transit riders can attend.

- Avoid Wednesday night meetings because of church services.

VI. Miscellaneous

- Address public perception that much money is being spent on transit for a few people.

Summary:

Several themes and overarching comments were provided by over 30 participants at this meeting. The individual comments generally ranged from new transit routes to increased frequency to better marketing strategies, but the most popular and overall themes from the first public meeting are as follows:

- Many of the participants use transit and would like to see HAT service expanded to other areas/destinations
- Participants stated they currently live outside the HAT service area and would like the option of utilizing transit
- HAT should consider regional commuter services in the future
- HAT should do more advertising and marketing of their services

Public Meeting on February 26, 2008

The public meeting on February 26, 2008 was the second and final meeting to obtain feedback on recommended routes and develop consensus. This report summarizes the purpose, approach, and key findings from the meeting. The public meeting was held on Tuesday, February 26 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Georgia Mountains Center. The GHMPO staff and members of the URS consultant team helped to facilitate the meeting.

Objective of the Meeting:

The purpose of the public meeting was to inform the community about the recommendations to expand and improve transit service and receive feedback.

Public Notices and Informational Materials:

The URS project team assisted in the creation of informational material for public notice that announced the meeting date. Meeting notices in English and Spanish were mailed to over 400 members on the GHMPO mailing list, 138 churches and 13 schools. Notices were also sent to the elected officials. Press releases were sent to the *Gainesville Times Access North Georgia* and *Mexico Lindo*. Additionally, GHMPO advertised the meeting and provided information on the TDP study their website, www.ghmpo.org. Attendees were provided an information package containing a fact sheet and a comment form.

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maps placed all around the room. A Spanish speaking staff member was available to provide information and answer questions in Spanish. Four stations were set up in the meeting room with display boards and participants were asked open-ended questions about the displays with their responses recorded on flip charts.

The displays depicted:

- Maps of each individual recommended alignment (seven)
- Current Hall Area Transit system maps
- Revised system maps including recommended routes

Presentation

Following the initial open session, the participants were asked to be seated for a presentation on the TDP. Randy Knighton of Hall County Government, provided introductory comments and Srikanth Yamala from GHMPO began the presentation. Mr. Yamala gave a background of MPO's in general and of GHMPO in particular, including facts, organizational structure and the planning process. The URS consultant Project Manager Chip Burger presented information on HAT, including history, operational statistics, funding sources, services, and fares. Mr. Burger also presented the an overview of the TDP, the methodology used in developing the new service options, the study recommendations for the five-year action plan, and the next steps for the TDP. The presentation concluded with a summary of what the participants had shared during the open session, with Janice Crow of HAT leading the discussion. A question and answer period followed the presentation and the findings are presented below.

Findings

Several recommendations regarding potential destinations were received following the presentation.

Preferred Destinations

- Atlanta Highway
- Gainesville State College
- Extend Red Route north to Murrayville
- Provide service to Rabbit town
- Provide service on Spout Springs Road
- Provide service on Harmony Church Road

Additionally, the questions, answers, and comments generated during the discussion following the presentation were recorded. They are listed below:

Question, Answer, and Comment Summary

Q. Why has service to Gainesville State University been put off to Year 3 (of the five-year plan)?

A. Planned service improvements for Year 1 will double the operations of the current system. The plan is to implement new service in phases in light of available funding.

Q. Will proposed pedestrian routes (from another GHMPO initiative) be available on the internet?

A. Yes

Comment: Hall Area Transit is the best compared to most places, including Atlanta.

Q. What has been done to reduce the carbon footprint?

A. That task is outside the scope of this project, but the benefit (of transit) on carbon emissions will be seen in a few years as children learn to utilize transit instead of cars.

Comment: For the Hispanic community, improve marketing and outreach so that this community understands the bus schedules.

Comment: More marketing material needs to be available in Spanish.

Q. How do we get people on the buses? Is it just about marketing?

A. HAT will be marketing more towards meeting a number of priorities:

- Priority 1 - Establish solid/well-utilized routes. Be where the service is needed.
- Priority 2 - Continue to improve service
- Priority 3 – Initiate more aggressive marketing/outreach, including the Hispanic community.

Q. Does HAT have its own mechanics?

A. Hat vehicles are currently serviced by City of Gainesville mechanics. A HAT service worker is available for minor repairs.

Q. Has HAT had instances where Dial-A-Ride requests cannot be accommodated at the requested time?

A. The program is heavily utilized in the peak hours before 9:00 am. An additional vehicle is expected from GDOT, but near term improvements will be difficult given the current staffing and resources.

Q. What does HAT do about safety/security?

A. HAT has a safety program including:

- A safety plan
- Surveillance cameras (internal and external)
- Automatic Vehicle Locators
- Curb to curb service on the Dial-A-Ride service

Q. Are HAT drivers CPR certified?

A. Yes

Q. Can shopping trips be accommodated on HAT vehicles?

A. Yes – especially if the trip is flexible.

Q. Will monthly passes be available?

A. Not at this time, but coupons are available in various amounts. A special pass for high school students will be available this summer (2008).

Summary:

Several themes and overarching comments were provided by over 30 participants at this meeting. The individual comments generally ranged from support of the new transit

routes to quicker new service implementation to better marketing strategies. At the end of the meeting, the participants expressed the following:

- Most participants felt the meeting was helpful
- Most understood what was presented
- The majority of the attendees felt the TDP recommendations should be supported

Community Outreach Meeting on October 13, 2007

Objective of the Meeting:

To inform the Hispanic community about the TDP development process and to receive citizen input on various transit related issues.

Outreach Meeting #1 Format:

A Community Outreach Meeting for the Gainesville-Hall MPO (GHMPO) Transit Development Plan was conducted on October 13th at the Community Health and Information Fair at Georgia Mountains Center. Representatives of the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) and Hall Area Transit (HAT) and their consultants were available to discuss the project at a booth at the health fair to increase awareness and answer questions about HAT service. HAT schedule information and promotional materials were distributed to approximately 500 health fair participants. A Spanish speaking staff member was available to provide information and answer questions in Spanish. Two display boards were set up and participants were to complete survey forms. The displays depicted:

- HAT system map
- County study area map

The survey forms were available in English and Spanish. The completed forms were summarized, along with surveys from other sources, in the Survey Summary report.

Community Outreach Meeting on October 27, 2007

Objective of the Meeting:

To inform the Hispanic community about the TDP development process and to receive citizen input on various transit related issues.

Public Notices, Information and Materials:

A Community Outreach Meeting for the Gainesville-Hall MPO (GHMPO) Transit Development Plan was held on Wednesday October 27, 2007 from 5:30 to at 6:30 p.m. at Los Carrillos Restaurant in Gainesville. Flyers were distributed at the Health Fair on October 13th at the Georgia Mountains Center, mailed to 25 leaders in the Hispanic community that had participated in previous outreach efforts and distributed by key contacts in the Hispanic community. *Mexico Lindo*, a local Hispanic newspaper, published an article on the event. Attendees were provided survey forms.

Public Meeting Format:

The meeting was informal and held at a local restaurant to encourage open, active participation. Representatives of the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) and Hall Area Transit (HAT) and their consultants were available to discuss the project and answer questions in an open format. Light refreshments were served. A Spanish speaking staff member was available to provide information and answer questions in Spanish. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and state where they lived. Two display boards were set up and participants were asked open-ended questions about their transit needs and concerns with their responses recorded on flip charts. The displays depicted:

- HAT system map
- County study area map

A total of 12 participants attended the meeting and six completed survey forms were received.

Findings:

Key findings revealed that:

- None of the participants currently use transit because it does not serve the areas they live or work
- Participants stated they currently live outside the HAT service area and would like the option of utilizing transit as an alternative to the automobile
- Most of the participants live along Highway 129. Others live in the Briarwood/Oakwood and Memorial Park areas
- Many stated a lack of awareness of the schedule as another reason they do not use transit. The schedule should be very simple stating:
 - Origin/destination and time
 - Origin and destination should be landmarks that the community is familiar with
 - Currently too many numbers and too much information, which leads to confusion
 - Color code routes for people who cannot read
- Atlanta Highway was cited as an important corridor for the Hispanic community where there is currently no service. This corridor would be a good location for transit expansion.
- It was suggested that service along Atlanta Highway should at least provide a connection from downtown (Jesse Jewel) to the bridge (Browns Bridge) and eventually all the way to Oakwood/Gainesville State College.
- Other potential corridors suggested for transit expansion include:
 - Highway 60 North to Murrayville
 - Highway 129 South to the Flea Market (south of Pendergrast close to I-85)
- A request was made for transit service from the Boys and Girls Club from Highway 129 near the school to the Club's location on Fair St (behind the Fair St. School). There are about 50 children that need transportation to get to the club after school between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. The request was denied because the seating in the buses was deemed inappropriate for children.

- It was suggested that HAT do more advertising and marketing of their services to the Hispanic community
- Other suggestions for service improvements included:
 - More bus stops and/or shelters
 - Code buses like in Mexico
 - Hire Spanish-speaking drivers
- Several ideas for reaching out to the Hispanic community were mentioned:
 - Build awareness through the churches, particularly St. Michael's which has the largest Hispanic congregation
 - Advertise at the chicken plants
 - Public displays at WalMart and Target
 - Hold another meeting at Carrillos restaurant on a weekend
 - Advertise at parks and recreational areas on weekends during children's athletic activities

Notes for La Que Buena Radio Interview, September 25, 2007

Interviewer from La Que Buena: We have Carlos Azcorra of URS Corporation with us today to discuss Hall Area Transit and the Transit Development Plan currently being conducted by the Gainesville–Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization or GHMPO.

Q. Carlos, what would you like to tell our listeners about transit and the study?

A. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Hall Area Transit and the Transit Development Plan or TDP. Hall Area Transit currently operates scheduled route service, known as the Red Rabbit, on three routes in the Gainesville Area, Dial-A-Ride rural transit service in Hall County, and paratransit service for disabled riders.

The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO), on behalf of Hall Area Transit (HAT), has initiated a five-year action plan or Transit Development Plan. The purpose of the TDP is to improve planning, funding, and delivery of the HAT services which reflects the transit program objective to plan for an effective, convenient, and accessible system.

Q. Why is the TDP important?

A. The TDP will provide Hall Area Transit with an action plan and will be used as a strategic guide for public transportation in Hall County for the next five years. The TDP provides an opportunity to evaluate existing transit services, review travel behavior, and identify new transit solutions in our rapidly growing community.

Q. How can the public get involved?

A. There are a number of ways:

First, GHMPO is conducting a public meeting at the Georgia Mountain Center on September 27th, beginning at 5:30 pm. There will be maps and displays for review and discussion and Spanish speaking planning staff will be available to provide information and answer questions. Information will be available on area

characteristics and potential transit service alternatives under consideration. Community involvement is critical to develop a Transit Development Plan that responds to the needs and expectations of the Gainesville and Hall communities.

We hope people will come to this important meeting to share their thoughts and ideas about topics such as:

- Current transit needs and concerns in Hall County
- Major transit routes needed in the County
- Transit strategies to address traffic congestion in Gainesville and
- The role of Hall Area Transit in our community

Second, persons who cannot attend the meeting can participate in an online survey, in Spanish, by visiting the GHMPO website at www.ghmpo.org and clicking on the TDP survey button. The survey contains approximately twenty questions and should only take a few minutes to complete.

Third, surveys are available at the Development Services Building at 440 Pryor Street in Gainesville, on the HAT transit vehicles, and at area libraries, schools, and other public buildings.

Additionally, a Hispanic Outreach meeting will be conducted in the near future to focus on the transit needs of the Hispanic community. Please check the GHMPO website, listen to this station for Public Service Announcements, or contact Srikanth Yamala with GHMPO at 770.531.6809

September 27, 2007 Public Meeting Notice (English)



Gainesville - Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization

Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Hall County - Oakwood

Public Meeting

Transit Development Plan

Thursday, September 27, 2007, 5:30-7:00 P.M.
Georgia Mountains Center
301 Main Street
Gainesville, GA 30501

The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) is the federally mandated agency responsible for transportation planning, which gives residents of Hall County a greater say in the development and administration of plans and programs for the transportation systems in our community.

The GHMPO, made up of local citizens, government staff and elected officials, is currently developing a Transit Development Plan (TDP), which provides an opportunity to evaluate existing transit services, review travel behavior, and identify new transit solutions in our rapidly growing community. The TDP will serve as a strategic guide for public transportation in Hall County over the next 5 years.

Please come to this important meeting to share your initial thoughts and ideas about topics such as:

- Current transit needs and concerns in Hall County
- Major transit routes needed in the County
- Transit strategies to address traffic congestion in Gainesville
- The role of Hall Area Transit in our community
- Regional commuter service

For additional information contact Srikanth Yamala, GHMPO Staff at 770-531-6809. More information on the GHMPO's planning activities can be accessed at www.ghmpo.org.

Your Comments Matter!

Phone (770) 531-6809

P.O. Box 1435, Gainesville, GA 30503

Fax (770) 531-3902

September 27, 2007 Public Meeting Advertisement (Spanish)



Gainesville - Hall
Organización de Planificación Metropolitana

GHMPO Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Hall County - Oakwood

Asamblea Pública

Plan de Desarrollo de Tránsito

Jueves, 27 de septiembre de 2007, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Georgia Mountains Center
301 Main Street
Gainesville, GA 30501

La organización de planificación metropolitana de Gainesville-Hall (La GHMPO por sus siglas en Inglés) es la agencia por mandato del gobierno federal responsable de la planificación de transporte, que proporciona a los residentes del condado de Hall una mayor oportunidad de opinar acerca del desarrollo y la administración de planes y de programas para los sistemas de transporte en nuestra comunidad.

La GHMPO, compuesta de ciudadanos locales, de personal de gobierno y de funcionarios electos, está desarrollando actualmente un Plan de Desarrollo de Tránsito (TDP por sus siglas en inglés), que proporciona una oportunidad de evaluar servicios existentes de tránsito, de revisar hábitos de viaje, y de identificar nuevas soluciones de tránsito en nuestra comunidad de crecimiento rápido. El TDP servirá como guía estratégica para el transporte público en el condado de Hall durante los próximos 5 años.

Venga por favor a esta reunión importante para compartir su opinión inicial e ideas en temas como por ejemplo:

- Necesidades y preocupaciones del tránsito actual en el Condado de Hall.
- Las rutas importantes del tránsito necesitadas en el Condado.
- Estrategias de tránsito para tratar la congestión del tráfico en Gainesville.
- El papel de la organización "Hall Area Transit" en nuestra comunidad
- El servicio regional de conmuta

Para mayor información, contacte a Srikanth Yamala, del Personal de la GHMPO al 770-531-6809. En el portal del Internet www.ghmpo.org puede encontrarse mayor información acerca de las actividades de planeación de la GHMPO.

¡Sus comentarios son importantes!

Phone (770) 531-6809

P.O. Box 1435, Gainesville, GA 30503

Fax (770) 531-3902

February 26, 2008 Public Meeting Notice (English)



*Gainesville - Hall
Metropolitan Planning Organization*

Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Hall County - Oakwood

Public Meeting

Transit Development Plan

Tuesday, February 26, 5:30-7:00 P.M.
Georgia Mountains Center
301 Main Street
Gainesville, GA 30501

The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) is the federally mandated agency responsible for transportation planning, which gives residents of Hall County a greater say in the development and administration of plans and programs for the transportation systems in our community.

The GHMPO in coordination with Hall Area Transit (HAT) is currently developing a Transit Development Plan (TDP) that will serve as a strategic guide for public transportation in Hall County over the next 5 years. An essential part of this planning process is involving the public from the early stages through completion.

At our previous public meeting in September 2007, citizens were asked to comment on existing transit services and identify new transit routes. Subsequently, input was gathered from stakeholders, surveys, and outreach meetings, as a way to address transit needs in our county. Based on these inputs and later inputs from the GHMPO committee members, recommendations have been developed to expand and improve transit service.

Please come to this important meeting as we want to hear your thoughts and opinions on the proposed improvements.

For additional information contact Srikanth Yamala, GHMPO Staff at 770-531-6809. More information on activities surrounding this study can be accessed at www.ghmpo.org.

Tell Us What You Think!

Phone (770) 531-6809

440 Prior St SE, Gainesville, GA 30503
www.ghmpo.org

Fax (770) 531-3902

February 26, 2008 Public Meeting Notice (Spanish)



Gainesville - Hall *Organización de Planeación Metropolitana*

Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Hall County - Oakwood

Asamblea Pública

Plan de Desarrollo de Tránsito

Martes, 26 de Febrero , 5:30-7:00 P.M.
"Georgia Mountains Center"
301 Main Street
Gainesville, GA 30501

La organización de planeación metropolitana de Gainesville-Hall (La GHMPO por sus siglas en Inglés) es la agencia por mandato del gobierno federal responsable de la planeación de transporte, que proporciona a los residentes del condado de Hall una mayor oportunidad de opinar acerca del desarrollo y la administración de planes y de programas para los sistemas de transporte en nuestra comunidad.

La GHMPO en coordinación con Hall Area Transit (HAT) está desarrollando actualmente un Plan de Desarrollo de Tránsito (TDP por sus siglas en inglés), que servirá como guía estratégica para el transporte público en el condado de Hall durante los próximos 5 años. Una parte esencial en este proceso de planeación es involucrar al público desde fases iniciales hasta su culminación.

En nuestra asamblea previa de Septiembre de 2007, a los ciudadanos se les pidió comentaran acerca de los servicios de transporte existentes e identificaran nuevas rutas de transporte. Seguidamente, los datos de las partes interesadas, de las encuestas, y de las asambleas de divulgación fueron recabados, como una forma de resolver necesidades de transporte en nuestro condado. Basados en estos datos y en datos futuros de los miembros del comité de la GHMPO, se han desarrollado recomendaciones para expandir y mejorar el servicio de transporte.

Por favor venga a esta importante asamblea ya que quisiéramos escuchar sus ideas y opiniones acerca de las mejoras propuestas.

Para mayor información, contacte a Srikanth Yamala, del Personal de la GHMPO al 770-531-6809. En el portal del Internet www.ghmpo.org puede encontrarse mayor información acerca de las actividades de planeación de la GHMPO.

¡Díganos lo que piensa!

Tel (770) 531-6809

440 Prior St SE, Gainesville, GA 30503
www.ghmpo.org

Fax (770) 531-3902

October 13, 2007 Community Outreach Notice (English)



*Gainesville - Hall
Metropolitan Planning Organization*

Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Hall County - Oakwood

Community Health & Information Fair

Saturday, October 13, 2007
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Georgia Mountains Center
Gainesville, Georgia

The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO), on behalf of Hall Area Transit, is conducting a five-year action plan or Transit Development Plan (TDP). One of the tasks of the TDP is to discuss the transit needs of the Gainesville-Hall community.

We would like you to share your thoughts and ideas about topics such as:

- Current transit needs in Hall County
- Major transit routes needed in the County
- Regional commuter service

Your input will be used to help improve existing transit services and determine where additional transit services are needed. Please take a moment to complete our survey so HAT can better serve you and your community.

For additional information contact Srikanth Yamala, GHMPO Staff at 770-531-6809. More information on the GHMPO's planning activities can be accessed at www.ghmpo.org. A link to the survey is also available online at the GHMPO website.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Phone (770) 531-6809

P.O. Box 1435, Gainesville, GA 30503

Fax (770) 531-3902

October 13, 2007 Community Outreach Notice (Spanish)



Gainesville - Hall

Organización de Planificación Metropolitana

GHMPO

Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Condado de Hall - Oakwood

Feria Comunitaria de Salud e Información

Sábado, 13 de octubre, 2007

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Georgia Mountains Center

Gainesville, Georgia

La organización de planificación metropolitana de Gainesville-Hall (la **GHMPO** por sus siglas en inglés), en nombre de la organización Hall Area Transit (la **HAT** por sus siglas en inglés), está realizando un plan de acción de cinco años o un **Plan de Desarrollo de Transporte** (el **TDP** por sus siglas en inglés). Una de las tareas del **TDP** es tratar las necesidades de transporte de la comunidad de Gainesville-Hall.

Nos gustaría que nos comparta sus ideas y pensamientos sobre temas como por ejemplo:

- Las necesidades y preocupaciones del transporte actual en el Condado de Hall.
- Las rutas importantes del transporte necesitadas en el Condado.
- El servicio regional de conmuta

Sus contribuciones servirán para ayudar el mejoramiento de los servicios de transporte existente y para determinar donde se necesitan servicios de transporte adicionales. Por favor, tome un momento para llenar nuestra encuesta para que la **HAT** pueda servir mejor a usted y a su comunidad.

Para mayor información, contacte a Srikanth Yamala, del Personal de la **GHMPO** al 770-531-6809. En el portal del Internet www.ghmpo.org puede encontrarse mayor información acerca de las actividades de planificación de la **GHMPO**. En el portal del Internet de la **GHMPO** se puede encontrar un enlace en línea a una encuesta *En Español*.

¡QUEREMOS SABER DE TI! ¡PARTICIPA!

Teléfono: (770) 531-6809

P.O. Box 1435, Gainesville, GA 30503

Fax (770) 531-3902

October 17, 2007 Community Outreach Notice (English)



GHMPO

*Gainesville - Hall
Metropolitan Planning Organization*

Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Hall County - Oakwood

Community Outreach Meeting

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

5:30-6:30 PM

Los Carrillos Restaurant

503 Atlanta Highway

Gainesville, GA 30501

The Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) is hosting a community outreach meeting to discuss the transit needs of the Hispanic community in the Gainesville-Hall area.

Please come to this important meeting to share your thoughts and ideas about current transit needs and concerns in Hall County and major transit routes needed in the County. Light refreshments will be served.

For additional information contact Srikanth Yamala, GHMPO Staff at 770-531-6809. More information on the GHMPO's planning activities can be accessed at www.ghmpo.org. A link to an online survey in Spanish is also available on the GHMPO website.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Fax (770) 531-3902

October 17, 2007 Community Outreach Notice (Spanish)



GHMPO

Gainesville - Hall

Organización de Planificación Metropolitana

Flowery Branch - Gainesville - Condado de Hall - Oakwood

Asamblea Comunitaria

Community Outreach Meeting

Miércoles, 17 de Octubre, 2007

5:30-6:30 PM

Restaurante "Los Carrillos"

503 Atlanta Highway

Gainesville, GA 30501

La organización de planificación metropolitana de Gainesville-Hall (La GHMPO por sus siglas en Inglés) esta realizando una Asamblea Comunitaria para tratar las necesidades de transporte de la comunidad Hispana en el área de Gainesville-Hall.

Por favor, asista a esta asamblea importante para compartir sus ideas y pensamientos sobre las necesidades actuales y las preocupaciones del transporte público en el condado de Hall y las rutas principales de transporte necesitadas en el condado. **Se servirá un refrigerio ligero.**

Para mayor información, contacte a Srikanth Yamala, del Personal de la GHMPO al 770-531-6809. En el portal del Internet www.ghmpo.org puede encontrarse mayor información acerca de las actividades de planificación de la GHMPO. En el portal del Internet de la GHMPO se puede encontrar un enlace en línea a una encuesta *En Español*.

¡QUEREMOS SABER DE TI!

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Fax (770) 531-3902

Surveys

In addition to the public meetings and community outreach meetings, two different surveys were administered during the initial phase of the TDP. One survey was for the general public, and the other was focused on existing Hall Area Transit riders. The surveys were available in English and in Spanish. Printed copies of the surveys were distributed throughout Hall County and the survey could also be completed online through the GHMPO website.

General Survey

From September to November 2007 a *General Survey* was given in Hall County to ascertain attitudes about public transit. Surveys were distributed at public meetings, schools, libraries, churches, major employers, social service organizations and online via link on GHMPO website. In all 306 members of the community responded. 105 of those surveyed responded to the survey in Spanish and 201 responded in English. Of those responding 207 were female and 99 male. The majority of respondents were between the age of 18 and 54 with almost equal numbers coming from the age groups 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54.

Of the respondents seventy one percent said that they do not take transit. Forty six percent said that they did not use transit because it is not available in their area. Eighteen percent stated that transit does not take riders where they need to go. This illuminates a need that could be met by rearranging or expanding the current transit system so that it reaches more riders. Of the respondents, 88 percent stated that if transit were available to them they would use it. This shows a significant group that is underserved by the current transit services as well as an area of the service that has great potential if expanded. The majority of respondents, 66 percent, said that if transit were available they would take it to work. Moving the workforce is an important part of transit since it contributes to the local economy. Forty one percent of respondents who answered the question stated that they work in the Gainesville-Hall area. This data shows that need for workforce mobility specifically within Hall County.

Additional information was gathered to address underserved areas in the Gainesville-Hall study area. The most popular answers were the City of Oakwood, Atlanta, Atlanta Highway, and the Mall of Georgia. Questions were also asked as to how the service could be improved. Respondents stated that service should include more buses and more routes, that service should run for longer hours including Saturday and Sunday service and cover more areas. These suggestions mirror the answers given above addressing why certain respondents do not ride transit.

On-Board Survey

From September to November, 2007 an additional survey was given in Hall County specifically to people riding the Red Rabbit. This *On-Board Survey* was given in Spanish and English and completed by 104 people. Of the respondents, 62 percent were female and 38 percent male. The age range of respondents was spread out almost evenly between all ranges 18 to 54.

Of the respondents 38 percent said they were using the bus to get to work. This is the most important reason for transit-getting people to and from work. Increasing access

between the workforce and their jobs boosts the local and regional economy. A significant portion of respondents, 51 percent, stated that they use transit five days a week, which shows that those who use the service use it often. It also shows that people are using it for a Monday through Friday work or school schedule. The second most popular use for the bus was for a Doctor's appointment, at 18 percent. This is also a necessary use of transit. Promoting and increasing access to public health benefits the entire community. Respondents also said that they were taking transit to look for jobs, visit family, go to the grocery store, and to the bank.

When asked if there were areas that are not currently served but that need to be, 68 percent of respondents said yes. Some of the most popular suggestions for areas of expanded service include Oakwood, the Department of Family and Child Services (DFACS), the Department of Labor, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and Flowery Branch. When asked in what ways could transit service be improved respondents stated that more buses should be utilized, that service should run on weekends, that busses run more often and that hours should be extended earlier for a.m. routes, and later for p.m. routes.

Cost is also an important consideration when operating transit. Deciding upon a fare that is equitable yet contributes enough the cost of operations is key. Respondents were asked whether they would be willing to pay more for transit. Of the respondents who answered, 68 percent stated that they would be willing to pay more. Of those 85 percent said they would be willing to pay between 25 cents and one dollar more. If transit were expanded either by routes or by running time this could be a potential source of revenue.