

Overview of Community Impacts Associated with UF Transit Service Reductions

The transit partnership between City of Gainesville and the University of Florida (UF) spans a period of 27 years. Over the decades the joint transit investments created a robust transit system that serves as national model and evolved into a key aspect of the Gainesville's quality of life and the backbone of the City's transportation system, also helping inform land use decisions. At its peak the UF contribution funded approximately 58% of the transit operating costs and constituted over 75% of the system's ridership with over 7.4 million trips by UF riders in a single year. Today UF's contribution funds approximately 48% of transit operating costs and is projected to comprise over 68% of the system's ridership with 3.9 million trips by UF riders by the end of FY24.

The frequent, accessible and convenient transit service contributed to reduced vehicular trips and reduced congestion over time. As recognized in the adopted UF Campus Master Plan, 2020-2030¹ (CMP), *"the continued trend toward generally declining traffic counts both in and around the main UF campus ... can be attributed to high student use of the transit system and an increase in student housing on-campus and within walking distance to campus."* The plan adopted a UF context area for the purposes of assessment and mitigation of transportation impacts associated with UF and outlines several goals and objectives to continue to improve transit services within such area. Examples of the emphasis on transit as a key aspect of the plan are shown under Objective 1.3 that specifically highlights the need *"to reduce the dependence on single-occupant vehicles as a primary mode of travel to campus"* outlining the expansion of transit services as a key strategy, and under Objective 2.3 outlining the need for a continued partnership with the City *"to provide transit facilities and services that are convenient, safe, and responsive to the needs of the campus community"*.

The proposed reduction of UF contribution towards transit to \$6.8 million/year is contrary to the goals and objectives of the CMP and is expected to significantly impact the transportation system increasing congestion, travel delays, and exacerbating safety, equity and environmental concerns. In addition, the significant deviation from the adopted CMP may require a reevaluation of UF's impacts and mitigation needs and revisions to the Campus Development Agreement with both the City and Alachua County. The traffic analysis completed in support of the CMP assumed continued and sustained transit operations and therefore projected that future traffic along roads within the UF Context Area would have a de minimus impact; that assumption may no longer be valid under the proposed budget reduction.

The impacts of the proposed cut is very significant as 10 transit routes would operate with reduced frequency and another 11 transit routes would be eliminated. As depicted in Table 1, this change can be expected to generate over 8,300 new average daily vehicular trips, compared to 611 transit trips. This is of particular concern as it may lead to increased levels of congestion along road segments in the City's High Injury Network, including segments of SW 34th St, Archer Rd, and University Ave immediately adjacent to campus where both the City and UF have diligently been working together towards solutions to reduce traffic deaths and severe injuries. Figure 1 depicts the expected impacts immediately adjacent to campus where several efforts are under way to reduce vehicular travel and travel speeds and to improve overall conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.

The safety impacts of the proposed transit service reductions are estimated at approximately \$4 million over the next 10 years. The changes are also contrary to the City's climate actions and investments in the electrification of the transit fleet as the proposed budget reduction is expected to generate additional traffic and congestion, increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Additional analysis is needed in order to quantify the magnitude of environmental impacts.

¹ UF Campus Master Plan, 2020-2030 online at <https://facilities.ufl.edu/campus-planning/campus-master-plan/campus-master-plan-2020-2030/>

Table 1: Projected Impact of Proposed Budget Reduction

Transit Route #	Current Transit Trips/day	Future Transit Trips/day	New Vehicular Trips/Day
PROPOSED SERVICE REDUCTION			
1	45	33	356
5	50	39	233
8	32	22	200
9	38	26	394
12	57	40	450
16	17	14	84
20	59	42	630
21	30	22	283
35	54	41	353
38	49	33	678
PROPOSED SERVICE ELIMINATION			
17	12	-	314
25	13	-	226
28	16	-	337
34	15	-	222
46	9	-	195
118	38	-	1,640
122	17	-	425
125	17	-	585
126	10	-	232
127	19	-	413
150	15	-	100
	611	313	8,349

Figure 1: Sample Impact of Proposed UF Budget Cuts along Segments of the High Injury Network

