

Communications Office

For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Bob Woods, Public Information Officer

Email: gainesvillepio@cityofgainesville.org

Telephone: 352-334-5017

Transportation Partnership to Create ‘Smart Testbed’ for Advanced Technologies

Gainesville, FL – The City of Gainesville, University of Florida (UF) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) are proud to announce their partnership to develop a ‘smart testbed’ for new and evolving advanced transportation technologies and equipment.

Advanced technologies such as connected and autonomous vehicles, smart devices and sensors will be tested on the UF campus and surrounding highway network. Goals for the testbed include improving mobility and safety on the UF campus and around Gainesville; to facilitate the incorporation of UF invented technologies; to quantify how people engage with automated vehicles; to collaborate with businesses to test and enhance their own technologies; and to become a national and international model for the use of technology to enhance transportation.

“We are very excited to be working with our long time partners, FDOT and the City of Gainesville, as well as the UF administration in the development and use of advanced technologies on our campus,” said Lily Elefteriadou, Ph.D., lead researcher and the director of the UF Transportation Institute (UFTI) and the Barbara Goldsby Professor of Civil Engineering. “UF is an ideal location for such testing, as speeds are relatively low, there are lots of pedestrians, extensive bicycle facilities, scooters and mopeds, and one of the most heavily-used transit systems in Florida.”

This will be the first such program in Florida to involve a city, a university and a state DOT. It will also involve industry partnerships to facilitate the development and operation of testbed. “As changes in technology and infrastructure shape new opportunities for cities, we are excited to join this unique partnership and look forward to pursuing new approaches that will benefit our community and residents,” said Teresa Scott, City of Gainesville public works director.

This initiative aligns with the UF and City of Gainesville Strategic Plans by helping to turn Gainesville and UF into a proving ground for solutions that challenge cities nationwide; testing and implementing transportation alternatives for the community; and providing technologies that highlight UF as a preeminent university and the City of Gainesville as a New American City.

“This is just one area that the city and university are collaborating to solve problems using more productive, creative and efficient methods than those used in the past,” said City of Gainesville Manager, Anthony Lyons. The two organizations have also partnered recently to establish undergraduate fellowship opportunities and a series of research awards aimed at addressing common issues in the community.

FDOT is funding the beginning research effort of the initiative. UF officials with the UFTI are currently reviewing literature and other testbed applications around the world before setting an official date to begin local tests of new transportation technologies.

For more information on the testbed, visit www.transportation.institute.ufl.edu or contact UFTI Communications and Marketing, Elaine Khoo, at elaine.khoo@essie.ufl.edu or (352)294-7823.

Please direct media inquiries to Assistant Public Information Officer, Chip Skinner, at skinnerc@cityofgainesville.org or (352) 393-7842.