



# Depot Avenue Multimodal Corridor

Gainesville, Florida

City of Gainesville

Counterclockwise from top: the Depot Avenue Rail-Trail Pedestrian Bridge (Helyx Bridge) is a signature gateway to the corridor; Depot Park entrance; renovated train depot at Depot Park (all photos ©City of Gainesville).

The City of Gainesville's multimodal corridor provides key links to opportunities and amenities and supports concurrent redevelopment efforts.

## CONTEXT

- Completed in spring 2018.
- Southeast.
- Suburban.
- \$15 million.
- 5,000+ AADT.
- 1.73 miles.

## COMPLETING THE STREET

- Provides multimodal access to a major university, hospital, regional transportation hub, and rail-trail network.
- Iconic bicycle-pedestrian bridge is a signature gateway to the corridor.
- Incorporates numerous aesthetic and placemaking elements.

## WHAT WAS THE PROJECT DRIVER?

Gainesville was once a rail hub for the North Central Florida region. However, by the late-20<sup>th</sup> century, rail operations had ceased and the town's train depot had fallen into disrepair. In 1997, the City of Gainesville won a US EPA Brownfield pilot grant to remediate industrial pollution at the depot site. Despite its proximity to a university, a hospital, and the city's downtown, the neighborhood surrounding the depot also showed signs of neglect, as seen in the deteriorating condition of its roadways and buildings. Plans to renovate the depot and turn the remediated Brownfield site into the city's Central Park served as a catalyst for the Depot Avenue Transportation Corridor Study and the City's efforts to revitalize the area surrounding Depot Park.

## HOW DID THIS CONNECT THE COMMUNITY?

**Bicycle and pedestrian assessments** and **road safety audits** helped determine the corridor's deficiencies. **Road diets** and **Complete Streets** treatments were identified as needed improvements. Through **context sensitive solutions**, the City also incorporated area residents' feedback in the development of the corridor's design and aesthetic elements. These elements include decorative lighting and brick sidewalks that improve bicycle-pedestrian safety and complement surrounding land uses. As part of its public engagement program, the City also employed **virtual public engagement** and unique **visualization techniques** including the use of 3D rendering fly-throughs to communicate the project scope, including its alignments and amenities.



*Depot Avenue and the historic train depot during its renovation (©City of Gainesville).*

The fourth and final segment of the Depot Avenue multimodal corridor was completed in spring of 2018. The corridor provides enhanced multimodal connectivity between the historic Cotton Club neighborhood, Depot Park, the historic Porter's neighborhood, high-density student residential housing, medical facilities, and the University of Florida – one of the nation's largest universities by student enrollment. The corridor also provides **expanded access to transit** by connecting to the Rosa Parks Downtown Transit Station – a hub for local and intercity buses.

Further, the corridor links two of the region's shared-use rail trails. The Gainesville-

Hawthorne State Trail provides off-street bicycle and pedestrian access to nearby Paynes Prairie State Park and the neighboring town of Hawthorne. The Depot Avenue Rail Trail runs parallel to the Depot corridor and links the University with a number of residential neighborhoods. These two rail-trails intersect at Depot Park.



*Depot Park playground (©City of Gainesville).*

In 2012, the City completed modification of a former railroad bridge to create a signature bicycle-pedestrian gateway between the University and multimodal corridor. The award-winning design of the Helyx Bridge features a simulated railroad track twisted into the shape of a brightly colored DNA strand. This design references both the area's rail history and the City's contemporary role as home to leading scientific research institutes.

## WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS?



INVEST

The project links a number of formerly disjointed sections into a single multimodal corridor with a focus on bicycle-pedestrian connectivity and aesthetics elements that include decorative lighting and sidewalk treatments. The corridor also provides an important foundation for the City's efforts to improve the economy and livability of surrounding neighborhoods.

Awards: American Public Works Association, Project of the Year (Transportation, structures under \$5 million): Depot Avenue Rail-Trail Pedestrian Bridge

### For more information:

<http://www.gainesvillepublicworks.org/projects/depot-avenue-segment-4-2/>