

I3: PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE ANALYSIS & REPORT



WHAT

In December of 2016, the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce launched the Putting Children First Infrastructure Investment Initiative, or i3. Having spent nearly a year evaluating the needs as presented and researching funding options available to pay for these needs, the i3 Steering Committee and the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce support a School Board of Alachua County sales-tax initiative in 2018 to fund infrastructure repairs to our K-12 schools.



WHY

Alachua County's children are its best asset and helping to ensure they learn in the best possible school facilities, travel on safe roadways and enjoy well-designed and executed recreational facilities is key to a thriving and sustainable way of life. The Chamber launched i3 as a citizen-driven process to investigate the County's infrastructure needs, facilitate public input and discussion about these needs and identify options to fund them.

WHO

The i3 Steering Committee is comprised of the following individuals:

- Brian Scarborough, Chair, and Executive Vice President, HUB
- Khanh-Lien Banko, President, Alachua County Council of PTAs
- Judy Boles, Executive Director, The Education Foundation of Alachua County (retired)
- Aaron Bosshardt, President, Bosshardt Realty and Property Management
- Scott Buchanan, Vice President, AMJ Inc. of Gainesville
- Dean Cheshire, Partner, Cheshire Companies
- Evelyn Foxx, President, Alachua County NAACP
- Joe Hancock, President, Alachua Chamber of Commerce
- Diyonne McGraw, Chair, African American Accountability Alliance
- Clay Sweger, Principal and Director of Planning, eda
- Ex officio: Jay Nordqvist, Principal Engineer, GSE
- Ex officio: Jonathan Mills, Realtor, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services--Trend Realty

For more information, visit gainesvillechamber.com/public-policy/i3/



FAST FACTS



- The list of repairs and renovations needed at our schools is long, and these repairs can't wait. For example, because their cafeterias cannot accommodate them, schoolchildren are forced to have lunch as early as 9:15 am. Aging air conditioning systems are either not working or freezing the classrooms. In some science labs, eyewash stations don't work. And at this school alone, there are 22 portables to augment traditional classroom space.
- Our school system, which serves more than 27,000 students, is made up of buildings that average 34 years old. Just to catch up on routine maintenance to roofs, HVAC systems, painting and flooring is estimated to cost \$18.6 million.
- A half-cent sales tax can generate \$16 million per year in our County. Advantages to a local sales tax include helping keep property taxes low, ensuring funds are spent on a well-defined purpose and within a set timeframe, and facilitating that the tax be shared between residents and visitors to our community.
- The i3 Steering Committee's chief recommendation—given unanimous approval by the Chamber's Public Policy Committee and Board of Directors and reflected in the report—is to support the School Board of Alachua County's half-cent sales tax initiative in 2018 to fund infrastructure repairs to area schools.
- To produce the report, the i3 Steering Committee conducted research, including attending 18 meetings with public officials, holding three public input meetings around Alachua county and hosting four community presentations. Overall, the initiative engaged over 200 people.

