

Bradenton/Palmetto Downtown Mobility Study  
Focus Group

Manatee Chamber of Commerce, Bradenton  
February 20, 2008  
12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

\*See attached sheet for list of attendees

Alan Steinbeck initiated the meeting by introducing the project team members and presenting a brief overview of the project. A facilitated discussion, led by Alan, allowed the members to provide their ideas and concerns on the study's goals and objectives. The following summarizes these thoughts categorically:

Major Issues

- One-way pairs
  - o Impact on downtown pedestrian movement is affected by 45 mph traffic
  - o Severs the downtown- creates an island where the courthouse sits
  - o Problems: speed of cars, lack of pedestrian amenities, unsafe crossings
- Striking a balance between moving people to and from the beaches and creating a more livable downtown
  - o Need to engage constituent groups interested in through-traffic only
  - o Need to reflect the idea of a livable downtown in a coherent manner
- Design of downtown roadways encourage people to race through town
  - o Manatee Avenue- More through lanes in downtown than to the west
  - o 1st Street
  - o Business 41

Other Issues

- SR 64 out east is reduced to 35 mph, but it's 45 mph where it's congested- this does not make sense
- Transit
  - o SCAT buses come into downtown Bradenton
  - o MCAT ridership to downtown can be improved
- Bridges
  - o Congestion on the bridges is harming the downtown business climate
  - o Timing of lights may help the situation

Ideas

- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Street- 2 left turn lanes would help

- Incorporate ideas/findings from previous studies
  - Post-development, timing of lights needs to be re-examined
    - o Timing is not right at any of the intersections; this is exacerbated by peak hour traffic
- City needs a viable bypass West to East traffic needs to be accommodated
- Quality of driving experience is important
    - o Need to slow down traffic to see more of downtown
  - Study should focus on Bus 41 revitalization out towards Desoto Square Mall
    - o Opportunities to develop
    - o Need to attract people during rush hour to retail/food outlets
    - o Seems to be more traffic going N-S now, coming from Parrish and other areas (
  - Talk of making 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue an E-W corridor; only E-W corridors now are Manatee and Cortez

#### Things to Consider

- Additional turn lanes at 9th Street West (between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave W) allow for left turn to Palmetto, right turn to US 301 and straight toward the interstate
- Need alternative solutions to just building more roads
- Dredging of Wares Creek will result in new bridges- how will this affect traffic?
- How to overcome previous objections to altering the roadway network
- Ft. Hamer bridge is still an issue
- What's going on with the smart light system purchased a couple years ago?

#### Recommendations

- Need better coordination with FDOT on state roads (see SR 64)
- One-way pairs are too fast, too wide:
  - o Could live with one-ways if they were not as wide, slower speeds, sidewalks, trees; eliminate one lane, add on-street angled parking, bump outs (
  - o Enhances pedestrian environment; will not take long to implement; cost is achievable
- Financial Plan
  - o Timing is essential; time improvements with other programmed projects