

Bradenton/Palmetto Downtown Mobility Study
Focus Group

Celebration Center at Lamb Park, Palmetto
February 20, 2008
8:00 am to 9:00 am

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

- Bridges
 - Northern Palmetto growth affects what's going on inside the core
 - Affected by the interstates and development north of the river
 - Back-up during morning rush hour going into Bradenton and during evening rush hour going into Palmetto
 - Traffic back-up can last about 1 hour during specific times of the day
- 8th Avenue
 - Need to consider prohibiting left turns
 - Need to slow down traffic; afford businesses the drive-by clientele
 - All day congestion
 - Has become worse in the last year and a half
 - Viewed as part of the downtown core; needs to be designed for that purpose and function accordingly

Ideas

- Enhance multimodal transportation, so less people will have to use their cars (and can avoid bridges); promote walkability
- Divert cut-through traffic on 8th Avenue to Desoto Bridge
- Bring in anchors to Palmetto to necessitate various forms of transportation
- Make Palmetto a destination point for tourism:
 - Segway tours
 - Electric scooters/bicycles would ease congestion
 - "Green" trolleys between Palmetto and Bradenton
 - Riverwalk tours
 - Multiplex sport facility
 - Roundabouts for light-to-medium traffic areas
 - Commuter rail (long-term)
 - Open up waterfront for events/concerts

- Address parking and safety issues in downtown
- Make 10th Avenue more pedestrian friendly (e.g. 24' to 22' street widths, lower speeds, angle parking)
- No roundabouts- just get traffic through during rush hour
- Slow down traffic at all times of the day
 - Lots of drivers running traffic lights (especially on 8th Ave) leads to unsafe conditions
- Cyclist Concerns:
 - Wants to be able to cycle from Palmetto to Bradenton
 - All public buildings should have bike amenities (e.g. bike racks/lockers)
- Strike a balance between making Palmetto a destination spot and getting people out in a timely manner

Things to consider

- Palmetto Town Center is a good example of walkable, livable environment
 - Will hopefully bring more pedestrian traffic
- Need a series of options; community buy-in; provide solutions to the issues
- Downtown Development Guidelines
- Not a solution to just build more roads
- Winter Park is a good example of a pedestrian friendly town
- Nothing in Palmetto to attract people
- Why are roadway projects being built with no provisions for pedestrians or cyclists?
- Plans for residential development in Palmetto will hopefully take place as economy gets better
- At 5th Street and 10th Avenue- there is an interest in converting the old bank to a restaurant
- Ft Hamer bridge plans are important for the Downtown Mobility Study

- Almost all elementary school kids walk to school and several schools are located in or near the downtown