

Bradenton/Palmetto Downtown Mobility Study

Workshop #3 Summary

As the Bradenton/Palmetto Downtown Mobility Study nears its conclusion, the cities are seeking public input on the draft Multimodal Plan recommendations including priorities and funding options. The final public workshop was held February 18 at the Bradenton Municipal Auditorium from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, and was aimed to solicit feedback on the draft recommendations. Short-term and long-term strategies focus on roadway, bicycle/pedestrian and transit improvements including project costs and an action plan to enhance mobility that supports downtown redevelopment. The Study proposes design improvements for a new Downtown Transit Center in Bradenton, modifications to support a shared path for cyclists and pedestrians on the Green Bridge, traffic calming features such as roundabouts; and ways to make Manatee Avenue (Bradenton) and 14th Street and 8th Avenue (Palmetto) more pedestrian-friendly while maintaining traffic flow.

The Study has outlined approximately \$50 million in needed transportation projects to improve mobility and access through the downtown proximity. Some projects are imminent in scope with minimally-associated costs, while others are prolonged and require more investment. Funding opportunities include federal, state and local sources.

The Workshop began with an informal review of project materials, followed by a presentation by Whit Blanton. The Presentation reviewed the plan's near-term and long-term recommendations for roadway, transit and bicycle/pedestrian projects. An implementation plan was also proposed, including potential funding options. The following outlines the near-term implementation plan (0-3 years) for Bradenton and Palmetto. For more information regarding the presentation and workshop materials, refer to www.downtownmobility.com

Bradenton

- MLK, Jr. Avenue restriping for on-street parking and calming
- 13th Street transit mall
- Green Bridge shared use path
- 9th Street E @ Manatee Avenue intersection improvements and signage
- Enhanced pedestrian facilities

Palmetto

- 10th Street – Add center turn lane and intersection improvements
- Haben Boulevard roundabout
- Haben Boulevard / US 301 intersection improvements
- Green Bridge shared use path
- Bike and pedestrian markings on 4th and 20th Streets

After the Presentation, the team was available to discuss the plan recommendations and answer any questions. The attendees were asked to complete a brief questionnaire, to which the following provides an overview of their responses. It is important to note that the majority of questionnaire responders live and/or work in Bradenton.

Package of Proposed Mobility Strategies

Approximately 89% of respondents support (with or without reservations) the plan for automobile circulation in the two downtowns. The split is just about even between these two groups. Reservations are raised concerning charging for parking to get people to use garages, using angled parking as opposed to parallel parking, and implementing traffic calming on 17th Avenue West.

About 61% of respondents fully support bicycle and pedestrian circulation, while the remaining 39% support with reservations, including concern over having only one side of the bridge with a bike path.

And 53% support the plan for transit circulation, 42% support with reservations with one attendee indicating that a trolley or tram should be considered in place of a traditional bus. In addition, a need for bus service on 15th Street E from MLK Avenue to 26th Avenue E was expressed.

Individual Plan Components

(The following are comments made by workshop attendees and are paraphrased for ease of understanding).

- Calming Manatee Avenue is unrealistic unless a vibrant downtown exists
- No more roads should be closed in Bradenton; re-open 5th Street and 11th Avenue W
- Make Manatee Avenue a two-way street and not a through-street; need something to use as a bypass to keep folks moving
- Palmetto transit leaves a group at Business 41 and 26th Street W stranded (68-unit low-income apartments for seniors)
- Provide density mitigation combined with concurrency waivers

Timing of Plan Components

Approximately half of all respondents support a third bridge crossing, while half do not support US 41 overpasses over major roadways. Related to near-term strategies, 41% of respondents support lane reductions on Manatee Avenue & 6th Avenue, 14th Street in Bradenton and 8th Avenue in Palmetto, 35% support with reservations and 24% do not support. And all respondents (100%) agree with the phasing of the plan components.

Additional Comments

(The following are comments made by workshop attendees and are paraphrased for ease of understanding).

- [Need]water taxi from Bradenton to Palmetto and out to Island

- There is no reason to go to downtown Bradenton. Most "needs" are satisfied by Sarasota and Tampa; doubt that the financial and community leadership exists to create the "art & cultural mecca"
- Looks like an excellent way to begin necessary "restructuring" of traffic patterns to enhance usage of downtown area
- Maximize on street parking in downtown to get visitors and retail even if it means decreasing sidewalk widths and making one-way streets with parking on one side
- Traffic calming on 17th Avenue W; traffic calming on 9th Street W south of 9th Avenue W; and efficient travel through town, not to [town]