

Sarasota/Manatee Public Transportation System Analysis (PTSA) Public Involvement Plan

This section summarizes the study team's approach to public involvement, to help guide the market assessment task of the Sarasota/Manatee Public Transportation System Analysis (PTSA). In keeping with the Public Involvement Plan approved for this project, the PTSA integrated public participation early in the study process using a variety of outreach methods. The target audience was representative organizations from the Sarasota/Manatee County study area with particular emphasis on the following eight major categories:

- (1) Economic development organizations;
- (2) Major employers and industry groups;
- (3) Minority or transportation disadvantaged coalitions;
- (4) Elected officials and government staff;
- (5) Educational institutions;
- (6) Environmental organizations;
- (7) Civic, homeowner and religious organizations; and
- (8) Local news and media sources.

This approach was designed to disseminate study information quickly to the broadest possible audience of residents, employees, employers, property owners, public agencies and advocacy groups. The following outreach methods were used to make contact with and raise public awareness of the PTSA project and to receive input from the community.

Plan Information Network

The consultant created a Plan Information Network (PIN) to ensure a broad-based list of contacts for public outreach efforts. The intent of the PIN is to establish a liaison between the study and the broader community through a wide range of various interest groups, and to encourage PIN members to convey study information to their respective groups or communities, and then provide the feedback to the study team. The PIN was continually updated and referenced as a means to alert stakeholders and interest groups about upcoming meetings and workshop, and solicit input throughout the study. Strategies included media notices, workshops, meetings, newsletter articles and direct mail correspondence, timed to coincide with key project milestones. Assistance from the Steering Committee was particularly helpful in generating the names and organizations contained within the PIN.

The PIN is a comprehensive database of various local organizations, community leaders and interested citizens. The list is divided into the eight categories identified previously and

contact information is updated on a continuing basis. Contacts were compiled from MPO mailing lists, website listings, chambers of commerce directories, county planning contacts, and lists of advocacy groups identified by the Steering Committee. For each organization, the team identified regular meeting schedules, newsletter timing and circulation, publication deadlines, best contact person(s), organization size and website address. Through telephone or e-mail contacts, the consultant ascertained preferred methods for disseminating study information to group members and potential for flyer postings and distribution. In addition, the PIN includes interested citizens generated from individual requests and citizen advisory committee membership lists.

The study team generated more than 400 contacts representing each of the eight categories identified, as well as individual concerned citizens. The Economic Development contacts include business-oriented groups such as chambers of commerce, business coalitions, civic associations, downtown development associations and workforce development organizations. In addition to the area's largest employers, the Major Employers and Industry category includes manufacturers, hospitals, port authorities, airports, homebuilders and building managers. The Minority and Transportation Disadvantaged groups include minority organizations, human service coalitions and senior citizen groups. The Elected Officials and Government Staff grouping also includes appropriate advisory board members. The Educational Institutions category focuses on school boards, universities, community colleges and vocational training schools. Among the Environmental Organizations are the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, ManaSota 88, GEO and other interest groups. Within the Civic, Homeowner and Religious Organization category, the most representative groups are targeted with emphasis on citizen action committees, civic associations, single-family homeowner associations, town home/condominium associations, neighborhood organizations, inter-faith ministry councils and regional religious or faith-based affiliations. The focus for Media and News Sources is local publications or electronic media that emphasize local news stories.

By categorizing the PIN list into eight groups, the study team was able to ensure broad representation and design focused outreach methods for each category. For example, economic and civic organizations tend to have morning meetings and routine newsletter mailings, whereas downtown and neighborhood groups often schedule their meetings in the evenings and often distribute their newsletter in a flyer format. For media coverage, press releases were prepared in a "copy ready" format suitable for immediate publication and distributed by the MPO. Local community meetings were identified where the PTSA findings, goals and draft recommendations could be presented and discussed. Key contacts from those meetings identify additional or affiliated groups that would be interested in the study. A detailed PIN listing is included as an appendix to this document.

Project Brochure

The project brochure is a two-sided tri-fold color publication reproducible in either black and white or color. The study team distributed more than 200 copies at workshops and meetings as well as by mail, fax and e-mail to interested groups and individuals. The brochure encapsulates the purpose of the PTSA and explains the major questions being explored by the study. It also promotes the project website as a source of up-to-date information and invites participation to join the PIN. Steering committee members and study team contact information are included as well as MPO sponsorship information and the study logo developed for project recognition and identity.

Media Contacts

The study team developed relationships with various media contacts, which resulted in a series of newspaper articles and editorials in various print and electronic media. The Sarasota Herald-Tribune printed an extensive 2-page article in January 2002 that explored the various transit strategies under consideration. The newspaper, the largest in circulation for the region with Manatee, Sarasota and Venice editions, consistently provided public meeting notices free of charge and ran several articles and editorials about the project throughout its duration. Other media that produced news stories related to this study included the Venice Gondolier, East County (Manatee) Observer, Bradenton Herald, North Port Sun, and WUSF FM (National Public Radio affiliate), among others.

In January 2002, the consultant staff filmed a video about the study with Manatee Educational TV. The video began airing in March on public television and cable access stations in Manatee County and parts of Sarasota County. A copy of the video was also provided to the MPO.

Project Website

The project team developed the PTSA project website, www.mpo-ptsa.org, which was active throughout the duration of the study. It was taken down and its material archived at the end of April 2002. The website was used primarily as an extension and information resource of the public involvement program, and not as a replacement for sound public outreach efforts, such as the Plan Information Network and workshops. The site was populated with project information, study area maps, a calendar of scheduled workshops and public participation opportunities, on-going results of workshops and other project activities. The website was updated at least monthly, coinciding with major project milestones, and it was monitored routinely for site visitor statistics and review of survey comments and responses. The website was promoted with the local media and some press coverage has resulted (see attached Herald-Tribune article).

Workshops and Focus Groups

A series of workshops and focus group discussions were held at key points in the PTSA study process to gain input from the public, stakeholders and others on the development of study recommendations. All workshops were scheduled for times and places that were accessible via existing public transportation service, and at central locations that would be recognized in the community. Meetings were advertised using various methods, including signs posted inside buses, media notices, website announcements, direct contacts with PIN members and through routine MPO communications.

The first set of three public workshops occurred in May 2001 to identify transit system issues and opportunities, and the meeting summaries were distributed to the Steering Committee and posted on the website. The Nominal Group Technique process was used to solicit input in an equitable, unbiased manner. Participants included residents, transit riders, business owners and advocacy groups. Workshops were held on consecutive days in both Manatee County (Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport board room) and Sarasota County (Venice City Hall). The purpose of these workshops was to identify key issues that needed to be addressed in the PTSA and develop evaluation measures for the alternatives. About 60 people attended both workshops, with the larger audience at the airport location.

The second set of public workshops occurred in August 2001 to review and refine draft alternatives for evaluation. These two workshops were held on consecutive days at the Manatee Central Library in downtown Bradenton, and at the Terrace Building in downtown Sarasota. These workshops were organized as open houses, with scheduled presentations at set times. The purpose of these workshops was to raise awareness and gain input on alternative transit concepts, potential alignment locations for routes and services, and identify modifications in service areas, hours and technology. About 65 people attended the two workshops, with the greater number of participants at the Sarasota location.

Finally, the third set of public workshops was held in January 2002, again on consecutive days, following completion of the alternatives evaluation. These workshops were scheduled one month prior to the presentation of the recommended transit system plan to the Sarasota/Manatee MPO on February 25, 2002. Locations were the Manatee Central Library and the first floor training room of the Sarasota County Government Center in downtown Sarasota. Participation at both workshops was good, with more than 60 participants in Sarasota and about 35 in Bradenton. The workshop entailed the presentation of evaluation results for each alternative (ridership, estimated costs, travel times, etc.), and participants were asked to allocate a financially constrained amount of resources using fake dollars to the corridor and technology of their choosing. The

Investment Game exercise forced participants into setting priorities for application of transit service enhancements. For example, light rail technology was more costly than increased fixed route bus service, so it could be applied in only one corridor, with limited funds for improvements elsewhere. However, investments in express bus service or longer operating hours for fixed routes could be applied in multiple locations using the same amount of financial resources.

Summaries of these workshops are presented in Appendix ?? of this report.

The project team also conducted a series of focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews with major employers, economic development groups, civic groups, government staff and transit agency staff. These generally were informal discussions held early in the study process to get input from community leaders. Participants included:

- ❑ Workforce Development Board Transportation Committee
- ❑ Manatee County Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee
- ❑ Sarasota County Chamber of Commerce Committee for Economic Development
- ❑ South Venice Civic Association
- ❑ Venice Area Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee
- ❑ Sarasota Memorial Hospital
- ❑ Tropicana Industries
- ❑ Council of Neighborhood Associations in Sarasota County
- ❑ Sarasota County Chapter of NAACP and residents of the Newtown community
- ❑ City of Bradenton Ward 5 Citizens Committee
- ❑ Representatives of Lakewood Ranch/Schroeder Manatee Ranch
- ❑ Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence (SCOPE)
- ❑ Sarasota Herald-Tribune
- ❑ City of Bradenton staff and elected officials
- ❑ City of Venice staff
- ❑ City of North Port staff
- ❑ Sarasota County Area Transit staff
- ❑ Manatee County Area Transit staff
- ❑ Manatee County Planning and Transportation staff
- ❑ Sarasota County Growth Management staff and 2050 Plan consultants
- ❑ Florida Department of Transportation

- ❑ MPO Citizens Advisory Committee
- ❑ MPO Technical Advisory Committee

Input from the workshops and focus groups were used to prepare the market assessment, and were used to identify, develop and evaluate alternatives.

Outreach Activities

Outreach activities have included a limited number of direct mailings to advertise public meetings, website postings, project information flyers, facsimiles, e-mail notices, public service announcements, telephone calls and press releases. The study team has also developed a public involvement survey. More than 75 hand-distributed surveys were completed and tabulated and an interactive version of the survey is located on the project website. A sample survey is attached and survey findings are summarized in an appendix to this document.

Presentations and Briefings

In addition to more than a dozen meetings with the PTSA Steering Committee, briefings and presentations were made periodically during the study process to the Sarasota/Manatee MPO and its advisory committees. As the study neared its conclusion in early 2002, a presentation of the recommended transit system plan was made in February to the citizens and technical advisory committees, as well as the MPO, to obtain feedback on major elements of the plan and its associated costs and benefits. As a result of that February MPO board meeting, the study team made presentations to many of the governing boards of area local governments to allow them to collectively learn about the study's recommendations in draft form, ask questions and suggest refinements.

Between the February 25th MPO meeting and the April 22nd meeting when the PTSA was adopted by the MPO, the study team made presentations and addressed questions of the following local government boards and agencies:

- ❑ Venice City Commission
- ❑ North Port City Commission

- ❑ Sarasota City Commission
- ❑ Sarasota County Commission
- ❑ Manatee County Commission
- ❑ Bradenton City Council
- ❑ Palmetto City Council
- ❑ Manatee County Chamber of Commerce
- ❑ Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Government Review Committee

Attachments: Plan Information Contact List Summary (representing more than 400 entries)
 Plan Information Network Core Contacts (roughly 50 contacts)
 News and Media Contacts
 PTSA Project Brochure
 Website Flyer
 Sample Survey Form
 PTSA Newsletter

Plan Information Contact List Summary

Economic Development – 27 listings

- Downtown Association of Sarasota
- Economic Development Council, Manatee Chamber of Commerce
- Englewood Area Chamber of Commerce
- Home Builders Associations of Manatee and Sarasota Counties
- Sarasota County Committee for Economic Development
- Greater Newtown Community Redevelopment Corporation
- Suncoast Workforce Board
- Venice Main Street

Education – 22 listings

- Sarasota County School Board
- School Board of Manatee County
- University of Sarasota
- University of South Florida at Sarasota
- New College

Environmental – 17 Listings

- Sarasota Audubon Society
- GEO
- Sierra Club of Manatee-Sarasota
- Historical Society of Sarasota County
- ManaSota-88, Inc.

Civic, HOA and Religious – 85 listings

- SCOPE – Sarasota County Openly Planning for Excellence
- CONA – Council of Neighborhood Associations
- Lakewood Ranch Community Association
- Southwest County Alliance
- Jewish Community Center
- South Venice Civic Association
- YMCA
- Home Owners Associations

Major Employers – 60 listings

- Tropicana
- Sarasota Memorial Health Care System
- FCCI Insurance Group
- Manatee Memorial Hospital and Health System
- Blake Medical Center
- Wellcraft Marine
- Bausch & Lomb
- Cheetah Technologies

Minority/Transportation Disadvantaged – over 100 listings

- NAACP
- HispanicAmerica
- Goodwill Industries
- Mana-Sota Lighthouse for the Blind
- Senior Friendship Centers
- Suncoast Center for Independent Living
- Citizens advocates

Media – Print and Broadcast – 38 listings

- Sarasota Herald- Tribune
- Bradenton Herald
- Venice Gondolier
- Pelican Press
- North Port Gondolier
- Longboat Observer
- The Tempo
- WWSB-TV Channel 40

Transportation/Government – 45 Listings

Citizens – 47 listings

Plan Information Network (core contacts)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>
ED	Downtown Association of Sarasota	Paul	Thorpe, Executive Director
ED	Economic Development Council/Manatee	Nancy	Engel
ED	Englewood Area Chamber of Commerce	Karen	Maurer - Community Development Director
ED	Jobs, Etc.	Tony	Newton
ED	Lakewood Ranch Community Association	Jerree	Amodio
ED	Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce	Gail	Loughgren, President
ED	Manatee Chamber of Commerce	Neil	Spirtas
ED	Sarasota Chamber of Commerce	Bill	Couch
ED	Sarasota County Committee for Economic	Kathleen	Baylis, VP
ED	Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce	Peter	Kiziu
ED	Venice Area Chamber of Commerce	Pam	Johnson
ED	Venice MainStreet Inc.	Cathy	Linder
EDU	CUTR	Chandra	Foreman
EDU	Manatee Community College	Dr. Sarah	Pappas
EDU	Manatee County Schools Foundation	Marianne	Lorentzen, Executive Director
EDU	Mantee County Schools	Karen	Nicolai
EDU	New College of University of South Florida	Mark	Blaweiss, Director, Student Affairs
EDU	Ringling School of Art & Design	Susan	Scott
EDU	Sarasota County School Board	William	Delp
ENV	GEO- Growth-restraint and Environmental	Daniel	Lobeck, Esq
ENV	ManaSota-88, Inc.	Glenn	Compton
ENV	Sierra Club of Manatee-Sarasota	Frita	Peratta
Govt	City of North Port	Bret	Harrington
Govt	City of Palmetto	Patricia (Pat)	Whitsell
Govt	City of Sarasota	David	Smith
Govt	City of Venice	Donald	Caillouette
Govt	Manatee County Planning	Leon	Kotechi
Govt	MCAT	Carl	Gaites
Govt	Sarasota County Growth Management	Dennis	Wilkison
Govt	SCAT	Jay	Goodwill
HOA_Rel	CONA (Council of Neighborhood Associations)	Bill	Zoeller
HOA_Rel	Jewish Community Center	David	Wayne
HOA_Rel	Manatee Religious Services	Ed	Donnelly, Reverend
HOA_Rel	Nokomis Area Civic Association	Don	Lewis
HOA_Rel	School, Business, Community Partnerships	Kathy	Kurz
HOA_Rel	SCOPE (Sarasota County Openly Planned	Susan	Gregory
HOA_Rel	South Venice Civic Assoc	Ellen	Hillstrom
HOA_Rel	Southwest County Alliance	Tom	Minnich
HOA_Rel	The Meadows Community Association	Frank	Reuss
MEI	Gulf Coast Builders Exchange	Stephen	Thompson, Chairman
MEI	Lakewood Ranch - Schroeder Manatee Ranch	Rex	Jensen
MEI	Sarasota Memorial Health Care System	Ronnie	Bridges
MEI	Sarasota-Manatee Airport Authority	Ray	White
MTD	Hispanamerica Community	Juliuss	Brojas
MTD	Manatee Citizen's Accessibility Taskforce	Janice	Dunbar
MTD	NAACP Sarasota	Dr. Willie	Holley
MTD	Senior Friendship Centers, Inc.	Keith	Backhaus
News	Bradenton Herald	Duane	Marsteller
News	Englewood Sun Herald	Warren	Richardson
News	Pelican Press	Ann	Johnson
News	Sarasota Herald-Tribune -newsroom	Eileen	Kelley
News	Venice Gondolier	Doug	Bolduc
News	WWSB-TV Channel 40		

News and Media Contacts

Media Source	Contact Name	Telephone	Facsimile
Access Sarasota, Govt Access TV 19	Joe Gaither	941.316.7293	
Manatee Govt Access TV	Archie Wah	941.748.4501	
Bradenton Herald	Duane Marsteller	941.748.0411	941.745.7097
East County Observer	Maggie	941.907.4252x24	941.907.9392
Englewood Sun Herald	Warren Richardson	941.474.5521	941.426.3576
FOX 13/STVT		813.876.1313	
Gulf Coast Business Review		941.330.1588	
Longboat Observer		941.383.5509	941.383.7193
Manatee Herald-Tribune, Business News		941.957.5122	
North Port Sun	Jan Baty	941.426.9544	941.423.2318
Pelican Press	Ann Johnson	941.349.4949	941.346.7118
Pelican Press reporter	Bob Ardren	941.955.4960	
Manatee Herald-Tribune - newsroom	Chris Davis	941.742.6153	941.742.6159
Sarasota Herald-Tribune	Eileen Kelley	941.957.5140	941.957.5276
SNN -SIX NEWS NOW		941.957.5466	
The Islander	Paul Roat	941.778.7978	
The Tempo	Johnny Hunter, Sr.	941.359.1065	941.351.6962
The Venice Weekly	Frank Judd	941.485.5425	941.924.1866
Venice Gondolier	Doug Bolduc	800.799.7861	941.484.8460
Venice Herald-Tribune	Earle Kimel	941.486.3053	941.486.3067
WCTQ FM 106.5		941.484.2636	
WDDV FM 92.1 The Dove		941.484.2636	
WEDU/PBS Channel 2		800.354.9338	
WEDU/PBS Channel 3		941.366.0059	
WFLA News radio 970 AM		800.932.6100	
WFLA TV-Channel 8		813.228.8888	
WJIS Joy FM 88.1		941.753.0401	
WTSP TV Channel 10 CBS		800.393.6610	
WUGL 930 The Gull		941.366.4422	
WWPR		941.749.9977	
WWSB-TV Channel 40	Kay Miller	941.923.8840	941.923.8709
WWSB-TV Ch. 40 -PSA's	Gilda Dennis		941.924.3971

PTSA Project Brochure

Website Flyer

Survey Form

Treasure Coast RPC Public Involvement Brochure Survey

Please share your thoughts about regional transportation issues and return this form to the address listed. Your input is important! Thank you.

1) In what city do you live? _____

2) In what city do you and/or other household members work? (if applicable)

3) Please rank the following list of regional land use and transportation issues in order of importance (1-9), 1 being most important:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Major highway improvements | <input type="checkbox"/> Mass transit, including buses, rail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated network of trails, bike paths | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed-use development (office, residential, retail) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proximity of jobs to residences | <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelopment or new development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency evacuation routes | <input type="checkbox"/> Character, quality, pedestrian friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |
-
-

Please fill in your name and address information here to be informed of upcoming community workshops and to be included in the Public Involvement Network or PIN.

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

(resident, home owner's association,
community group, business, etc.)

City: _____

St: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Fax: _____

Herald-Tribune Article