



# Scenic Views

## Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway Corridor Management Entity

Manatee County, Sarasota County, The Cities of Bradenton, North Port, Palmetto, Sarasota, Venice

September 2010

### Monthly R-Card pass provides unlimited rides on SCAT and MCAT

Bus passengers in Sarasota and Manatee Counties are able to purchase a monthly pass that provides unlimited rides on all Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) and Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) routes. The "R-Card" went on sale in July, costs \$60 and is good for 30 days after first use.

Seniors with a Medicare or Gold card, as well as disabled persons, can purchase a discount R-Card for \$30.

The R-Card are available at the following Sarasota County locations:

- SCAT Downtown Transfer Station, 1565 1st St.
- Goodwill Bargain Barn, 7501 15th St. E.
- SCAT Administration, 5303 Pinkney Ave.

For people not traveling in Manatee County, other SCAT passes still being sold include monthly \$40 (discounted \$20); 7-day \$15 (discounted \$7.50); and One day \$3. These current SCAT passes are on sale at the above locations, as well as various other Goodwill stores listed in the SCAT Ride Guide.

## City of Venice

What used to be an eyesore along U.S. 41 Bypass in Venice will soon be a lovely natural and tranquil site called **Ruscelletto Park**. **Ruscelletto** is the Italian word for little stream, describing Hatchett Creek, a beautiful stream that passes through the area on its way to the Gulf of Mexico.

The former RV and boat sales lot is being transformed with a storm-water pond and native vegetation. The pond will help drain rain water from the U.S. 41 Bypass. Abandoned concrete buildings, including one that was below the FEMA elevation standards, were removed to make way for pedestrian and bike trails and an observation deck where nature lovers may see herons and egrets, and possibly an alligator.

Just three blocks from the Historic Train Depot, Venetian Waterway Park and Legacy Trail, the park adds another link in the Ribbons of Venice trails providing scenic views and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program and Sarasota County contributed funding to purchase the property and develop the park. The entire project is expected to be completed in spring of 2011.

For more information contact: Pam Johnson, Public Information Officer City of Venice, 401 W. Venice Ave., Venice, FL 34285 (941) 486-2626; Ext. 24005





## Chairman's Note

In order to encourage and facilitate participation in the Scenic Highway Program, future meetings will take place on a rotating basis, in member entities' meeting facilities. We hope this will nurture collaboration and a greater understanding of entity needs.

Additionally, we have asked members to identify local individuals or groups that might have interests and objectives inline with the CME's so we can broaden the scope of expertise, experience and resources available to the Committee. As a result, the CME is happy to announce that **Darryl Turner, President of Turner Tree and Landscape has joined the Committee. Welcome Darryl!**

- North Trail meetings with the FDOT...

Two meetings with FDOT and others concerning improvements to US41 in the vicinity of USF reverted back to an issue of "traffic counts". It is clear to many that this area is atypical and hence should not be evaluated using standard FDOT criteria. We are hopeful further discussions with local governmental officials, FDOT and interested groups will result in getting the improvements this stretch of Tamiami Trail so desperately needs.

**We urge the City Commissioners to make North Trail improvements a priority initiative and not postpone action to the 2015 -2020 timeframe.**

- We are pursuing establishing an educational initiative that will promote knowledge among visitors, residents and our youth of the historical, cultural resources along the Scenic Highway. We intend to reach out to and gain the support of current programs and thus strengthen their efforts as well. One group we especially see the program being of interest and value to would be our local elementary and high school students.

- Also, designing and seeking funding for movable "banner" type signage ( for use in libraries, schools, shopping malls, hotels, etc) is also underway. The banners will identify cultural and other sites of interest, and directions for getting to each . The content can be changes from time to time to highlight special events in our region. ( See last page for banner concept ideas ). Some funding will be needed for this initiative to progress.

- Work continues with MCAT and SCAT to finalize how we can effectively display the Scenic Highway logo on selected bus stop signs along the Tamiami bus route. The ability to tie-in the bus stop signage with other educational and tourist focused tools will ensure we extract the most value out of the project.

We hope to engage businesses and other organizations in supporting Scenic Highway initiatives, and encourage other organizations who have similar objectives to contact us to see how we can work to achieve common goals. Toward that end, we have included the North Trail Redevelopment Partnership's Mission Statement in this news Letter. We invite this group and anyone interested in this area to meet with the CME and, together, make this area the jewel that it deserves to be.

Hugo V. Mazzoli, CME Chairman



## Contact Information

Coordinator:

Robert Herrington

Planning Manager

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization

Email: [Bob@mympo.org](mailto:Bob@mympo.org)

Hugo Mazzoli, CME Chairman

Email: [HVMAZ@aol.com](mailto:HVMAZ@aol.com)

## North Port becomes a “University Town”

### North Port

University of South Florida North Port campus. The opening took place on Monday, August 23, 2010. The City of North Port became a “university town” with the opening of the

The campus in North Port includes 643 enrollments, with plenty of room to grow. The 6,400 square foot educational center at the corner of Pan American Boulevard and **Tamiami Trail** includes four classrooms plus seminar and student work space.

The North Port campus is an upper-level university for those with an associates or bachelor’s degree interested in pursuing a bachelor’s or master’s degree, professional certification, or continuing education. Courses will include undergraduate degrees in business, social science, elementary education, psychology, and criminology. A masters program in educational leadership also will be offered. As a major institution among Florida universities, USF brings a significant investment to the City including financial, academic, faculty, and staff resources.

The University’s most important contribution is the students who will come to the North Port campus, receive their academic training and upon graduation, decide to make the North Port community their residential and/or business home.



Higher educational opportunities inside the City of North Port also can lead to higher paying jobs. In addition to the faculty working inside the university, a university produces a quality employment base which can be attractive to many business owners who may be looking to relocate.

This also means more higher learning opportunities for North Port residents, even those who might not be students. The University of South Florida’s Institute for Public Policy and Leadership offers many open seminars on interesting and timely topics. This offers North Port residents, as well as those in surrounding communities, a unique opportunity to gain a higher level of knowledge and opportunity.

The residual impact of having USF in the City will be seen in an increased demand for retail and other services. A university along the U.S. 41 corridor translates into continuous traffic in one of our most developed business districts. Local businesses have the unique opportunity to serve college students who are looking for things to do in between classes. This also leads to opportunities for more businesses to move into North Port, such as coffee shops, internet cafés, and other retail.

### **City of North Port Quick Facts - Updated as of: Spring 2010**

- Population: 55,759 residents
- The City of North Port is the largest city in Sarasota County in both land mass and population.
- Median resident age: 38.7 years
- Estimated median household income in 2008:
- North Port: \$50,684
- Per capita personal income: \$24,162

....More quick facts on North Ports website



## Manatee County

### South County Community Redevelopment Area of Manatee County

The Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) is a designated special district for the purposes of attracting investments in commercial and residential neighborhoods in an effort to enhance the area, increase the tax base, and to encourage public and private improvements.

Manatee County has established two CRAs – 14<sup>th</sup> Street West CRA, and South County CRA. CRAs operate with support of a citizen advisory board and have adopted a redevelopment plan to guide necessary improvements. Advisory boards have five to 15 volunteer members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

These CRAs are situated on the Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway – Window to Gulf Coast Waters. The 14<sup>th</sup> Street West CRA which has constructed an attractive series of landscaped medians along a section of the highway, a small community park, and started an annual Spring festival, will be the focus of a future article. The CRAs also are part of the Tamiami Trail Petroleum Brownfields Revitalization Initiative underway in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

South County CRA has a number of accomplishments as well. These include development of Pride Park, street lights, sidewalks, security cameras, enhanced law enforcement, street trees and landscaping, events such as the Pride Park Fall Festival, Movies in the Park, area cleanups, and more. Projects in planning include a new community center on land purchased for this purpose, soccer field at an elementary school, additional neighborhood streetlights, and summer youth activities. A commercial matching grant for landscape improvements within the South County CRA is under consideration. Businesses along 15<sup>th</sup> Street East are initiating improvement and branding efforts along their corridor, although not along the Trail.

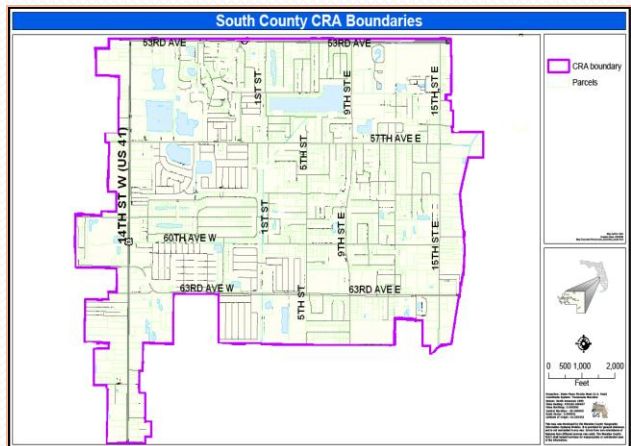
The South County CRA is bounded by 53rd Avenue West on the north, Bowlees Creek, west of 15th Street (Old US 301) on the east, 65th Avenue and the U.S. 41 Corridor to 69th Avenue West on the south, and the west side of U.S. 41 on the west. The South County CRA Citizen Advisory Board meeting is held at 5:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month at Harllee Full Service Family Center, 6423 9th St. E., Bradenton.

Under Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III), local governments are able to designate specific geographic areas as Community Redevelopment Areas (CRA's) when certain conditions exist.

Examples of conditions that must be present to support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area include, but are not limited to: the presence of deteriorated structures, faulty lot layout, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, inadequate parking, and relatively high crime rates. To document that the required conditions exist, the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a Finding of Necessity.

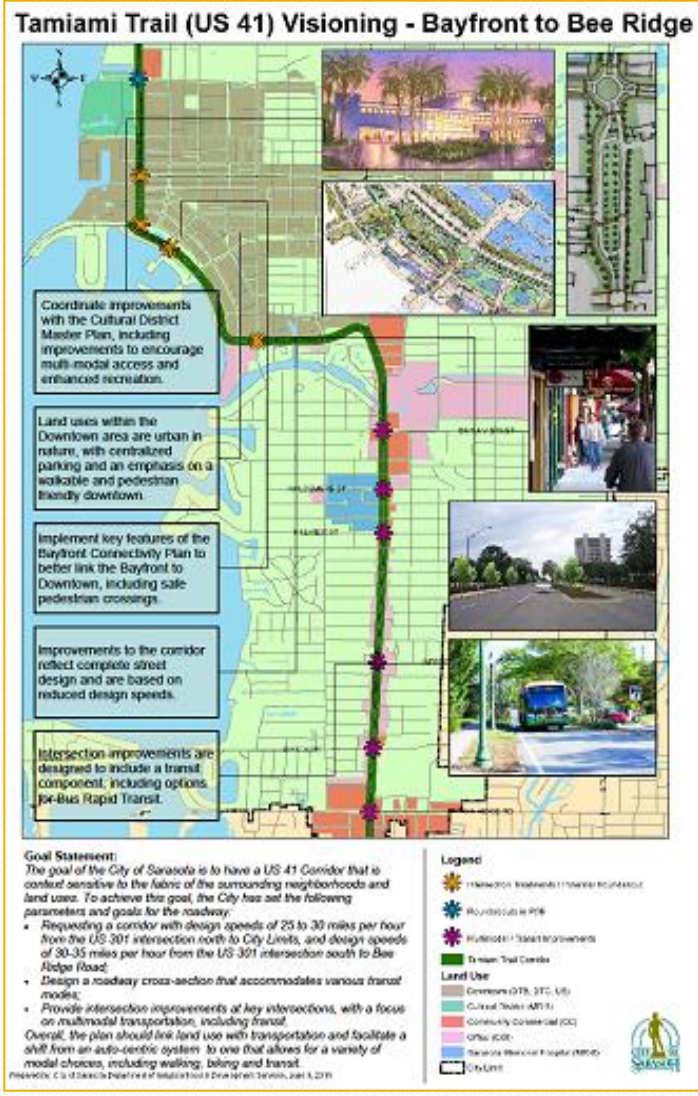
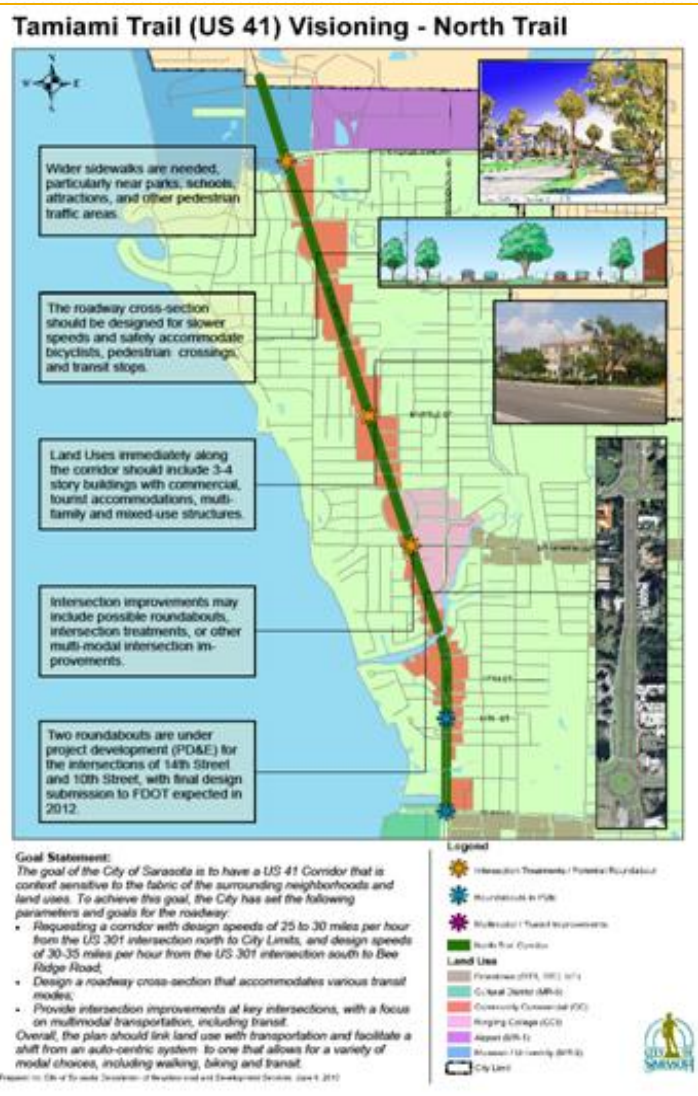
The South County Community Redevelopment Plan was adopted by the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners on December 17, 2002 and amended in June, 2006. The CRAs are Administered through the Neighborhood Services Department, Economic Development Division. Additional Information is available from the Manatee County website:

[www.mymanatee.org](http://www.mymanatee.org)



## City of Sarasota

The long-term goal of the City of Sarasota is to transform the US 41 corridor into a multi-modal facility through various design changes. The idea is to make US 41 an environment that is friendlier to pedestrians and bicyclists and allows for improved cross connections. These types of improvements will have a great effect on changing the character of the North Trail, which is another goal of the City. The City of Sarasota has requested that these recommendation be part of the MPO's 2035 update of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LTRP).





## North Trail Redevelopment Partnership of Sarasota, Florida

The North Trail Redevelopment Partnership is a non-profit corporation comprised of community leaders, representatives of institutions such as USF, Ringling College, Ringling Museum, and New College, business owners, IBSSA, Tahiti Park, Bayou Oaks and Central Coconut neighborhood representatives, Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, local architects, planners, and City of Sarasota planning staff to study, understand and work to facilitate positive redevelopment of the North Trail.

Their mission statement reads: “The North Trail Redevelopment Partnership (NTRP) is a broad-based, collaborative community initiative that fosters sustainable, predictable, economic redevelopment along North Tamiami Trail to achieve a revitalized, attractive, safe and inviting environment for business, institutions and neighborhoods.” One of the highest priorities of the NTRP is attracting high-quality employment centers along the trail to support sustainable commercial, residential and cultural amenities. Sustainable redevelopment involves study and implementation of the basic ingredients of community: transportation, character and speed of US 41, regulatory issues, economic factors, crime, relationships with and between institutions, neighborhoods and businesses, market perception and communications. Each facet is researched and addressed by one of the subcommittees listed below. Integration of these efforts is overseen by the body of the group.

- Communication and Rebranding
- Economic Redevelopment
- Redevelopment
- Public Safety
- Institutional

The NTRP recognizes that sustainable redevelopment along the North Trail will be a long and sometimes slow process. The NTRP is in for the long haul and one of the most significant accomplishments to date is the formation of a stable, self sustaining group under the umbrella of a nonprofit Florida Corporation recognized as a 501c6 by the IRS. Since formation, the NTRP has been successfully involved with:

- Placing the North Trail on the City’s priority list
- Successful adoption of “Tamiami Cultural District” as the formal new name for the area north of 10<sup>th</sup> street on way finding program by gathering support from all the major stake holders on the trail.
- Adoption of the Enterprise Zone on the majority of the NT commercial parcels in November 2009
- Assisting the Ringling Museum in the successful and timely installation of banners to serve as advertising and identity for the Ringling Intl Arts Festival
- Travel to study successful redevelopment models elsewhere in the state by Members of the Redevelopment Committee. Our Chairman has traveled to other parts of the world (Toronto, Canada and Ahmedabad, India) to study BRT and light rail models successfully being applied to transit oriented redevelopment.
- Creation of a marketing and communications tool, the North Trail website [www.northtrailalliance.org](http://www.northtrailalliance.org)
- Addition of North Trail on MPO’s long term transportation plan
- Obtaining a grant approved with the help of neighborhoods from the city to install the first security camera on the North Trail.

Redevelopment of the North Trail faces many challenges. The NTRP believes that the North Trail has many assets such as the fine educational institutions, arts programs, museums, proximity to transportation, diverse population and workforce, historical significance and strong neighborhoods. Success lies in capitalizing on the strengths while pursuing opportunities for improvement.

## City of Bradenton

A bold strategy targeting a winding street that runs parallel to Tamiami Trail calls for renovated parking lots and alleyways, spruced-up properties and more and scaping in an effort to create a pedestrian-friendly connection between the downtown waterfront and the Village of the Arts.

The “Artisan Avenue” plan - a brainchild of Mayor Wayne Poston, County Administrator Ed Hunzeker, architect Rick Fawley, builder Mike Carter and attorney Cliff Walters, and a current project on the table of the Bradenton Downtown Development Authority – brings to life a mostly drab stretch of public and private property along 11<sup>th</sup> Street West (even where the road technically does not exist) from the Manatee River to the Village in places like the County parking garage, parking lots and office buildings.

Imagine a renovated County parking garage with a new exterior matching the City’s new parking garage at 12<sup>th</sup> Street West and Eighth Avenue and a ground floor consisting of retail instead of parking spaces. Or the 22-space parking lot behind the County’s administration building turned into an entertainment courtyard, the offices buildings at Fourth Avenue West getting a mix of retail and residential uses. Other suggestions envision a pedestrian mall between Sixth and Eighth Avenues, a town square in place of the current City Hall parking at Third Avenue West and Old Main Street and public art displays throughout the corridor along with brick pavers, landscaping/hardscaping, kiosks, fountains and more enhancements aimed at creating a comfortable, attractive and walkable setting.

Generating foot traffic on 11<sup>th</sup> Street West, or “Artisan Avenue,” not only provides the desired connection from the river to the arts district, encourages development on underutilized real estate and puts government surplus back on the tax rolls, but it also would generate pedestrian traffic throughout downtown Bradenton and the Village of the Arts. Traffic that could be drawn westward to Tamiami Trail.

## City of Palmetto

Located along the southwest coast of Florida, in an area known as the Cultural Coast, the Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway invites residents and guests to experience a unique piece of Florida. For travelers willing to spend a little time, a tour along the Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway educates them of the long and diverse history of the area, the community and culture that continues to be linked to the Tamiami Trail. The City of Palmetto in North

Manatee County has enjoyed the Tamiami Highway for decades. Once the main thoroughfare north To Tampa and south to Miami, the scenic corridor truly is a window to the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and its source tributaries.

In the past few years, the City of Palmetto has enhanced a portion of the “Business 41” section of the Trail (it splits just north of town and realigns in downtown Bradenton to the south) by re-naturalizing the western side of the Desoto Bridge northern landing peninsula. This bridge is the oldest existing bridge spanning the Manatee River. In Native American Legend, the Manatee River divided the Calusa and Timicuan peoples, and was known as the “Singing River” because of the most beautiful and lovely music it mysteriously made on certain moons.

This City project called, Estuary Preserve, once was the home of foreign Brazilian Pepper and Melaluca trees, bobcats and trash. Today, it is a beautiful natural vista that overlooks the Manatee River expanse and boasts a very healthy population of red, black and white mangroves, cypress and other native flora and fauna.

Palmetto’s efforts have created useful park amenities nestled alongside natural habitats that all overlook the “Singing River”. On some dusky evenings bottle nose dolphins and manatees can be seen meandering in the slow moving currents. Trails and swing sets, benches and walking bridges adorn the Estuary, waiting for passersby to visit and enjoy the environment. The work of the city is not complete, future amenities planned and budgeted over the next few years may include solar lighting, more walking paths along the river’s edge and a kayak launch.

This facility is the exact embodiment of what the Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway stands for. It is a compliment to the road that leads us to and from our hometown. The Estuary is a “window” from which to view and truly enjoy the slow flowing Manatee River waters to the Gulf in the most beautiful of natural settings. Palmetto is proud to be a destination on the Tamiami Trail and offers this Estuary Preserve on the Manatee River for all to enjoy as a token of gratitude.



## Sarasota/ Manatee MPO to Submit HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO is working in partnership with a consortium of MPOs, the Chairs Coordinating Committee of West Central Florida, local governments and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council to submit a joint regional planning grant application that would providing funding to address integrated land use, transportation, housing, environmental issues and economic development for the US 41/Tamiami Trail corridor through both Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

The Sustainable Communities planning grant will assist the Sarasota/Manatee region in defining future outcomes, strategies and implementation actions to integrate future development and redevelopment in the US 41/Tamiami Trail corridor with premium forms of regional public transportation that will connect the two counties and eventually the larger West Central Florida region.

The project will result in a regional framework plan for Transit Oriented Development (TOD), multimodal connectivity, sustainability and livability that will guide public and private actions within a corridor study area that covers much of the core urbanized area in both counties. The plan will address housing choice and affordability for a range of incomes, and community revitalization strategies that link housing, transportation, public health and green infrastructure to reduce energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions for improved air quality. The project will entail a detailed inventory and analysis of land use and urban form in the study area to define mixed use centers at various scales, and guide their development program to ensure the right level of density, diversity and design to create economically viable, accessible and effective TODs. These centers will be connected through a multimodal network of streets, transit services, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities to reduce auto dependence and improve housing-transportation affordability.

The planning activities will be guided by a stakeholders committee involving the MPO, Manatee and Sarasota Counties, the cities within the study area, the Florida Department of Transportation and the Tampa Bay and Southwest Florida Regional Planning Councils.

The initial study area will include US 41 on the west (roughly ½ mile west of the road's centerline), the Hillsborough County line on the north, and the Charlotte County line to the south, with Lockwood Ridge/Beneva/45<sup>th</sup> Street/Ellenton-Gillette Road forming the eastern boundary through much of Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

This all fits into a larger picture of the One Bay initiative (led by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council) and TBARTA regional multimodal master planning framework in the 7-county West Central Florida region as one of several sub-regional "catalyst" plans that provide the focus, energy and cohesion to transform a vital part of the community's fabric into a more sustainable future, blending transportation and housing choice, economic opportunity and environmental sustainability.

## Visit these websites for the latest information on events in our region



Sarasota Convention and Visitor's Bureau  
<http://www.sarasotafl.org/events/>

Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce  
<http://www.sarasotachamber.com/events/>

Visit Florida  
<http://www.visitflorida.com/events>

Anna Maria Island & Longboat Key  
<http://www.annamariaisland-longboatkey.com/>

Manatee County and Bradenton  
<http://www.visitbradenton-manatee.com/>

Manatee Chamber of Commerce  
<http://www.manateechamber.com/>

Venice Chamber of Commerce  
<http://venicechamber.com>

North Port  
<http://northportchamber.com>

## Educational “Banner” ideas

The purpose of the Information banner is to provide an attractive, updateable, moveable fixture on which the historic and cultural resources of the Tamiami Trail Scenic Highway would be on display for tourist and residents .

The banners would be located in shopping centers, airports, municipal buildings, retail establishments such as hotels, convention centers, real estate and developer tract sites, and educational institutions as an educational tool.

The information created for the banner may be reproduced in a brochure format for distribution in retail outlets, local area transit venues, as well as at the sites indicated on the handout.

The flexibility of the banner concept mitigates the issues of the cost or damages to walls related to the installation of wall hung signs.

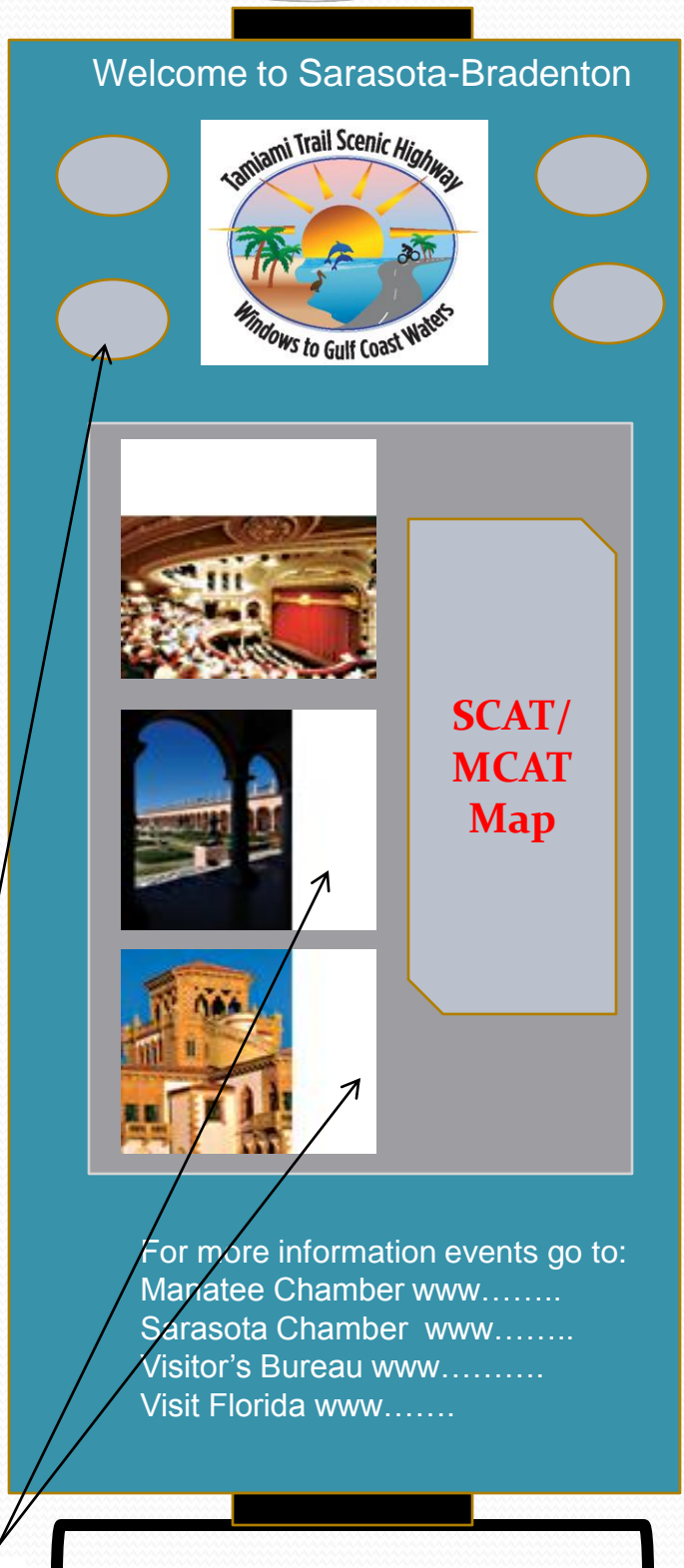
Initial placement sites will be focused on locations which attract the largest number of visitors ( malls, airport and major hotels.)

Another part of this project entails an educational activity geared toward increasing awareness among elementary to high school age students. While not “out of town” visitors, this group and their families represent a substantial number of visitors, many of which have not visited our many sites of interest.

**Ideas,  
comments,  
sponsors  
welcomed!**

Sponsors

Site  
Bios



For more information events go to:  
 Maratee Chamber [www.....](#)  
 Sarasota Chamber [www.....](#)  
 Visitor's Bureau [www.....](#)  
 Visit Florida [www.....](#)