



Chapter 8 Equity/Livability



Table of Contents

8.0 Equity/Livability	8-1
8.1 Accessibility.....	8-2
8.1.1 What is accessibility like in Sarasota/Manatee?	8-3
8.2 Limited English Proficiency	8-3
8.2.1 LEP Assessment for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO	8-4
8.3 Active Transportation Plan	8-5
8.3.1 Existing Conditions	8-6
8.3.2 Identifying an Active Transportation Vision Network	8-6
8.3.3 Opportunities for Implementation	8-7
8.3.4 Who are the Users?.....	8-8
8.4 Transit Development Plans	8-8

List of Figures

Figure 8-1: Vehicles Available for Occupied Housing Units.....	8-1
Figure 8-2: Zero Vehicle Households	8-2
Figure 8-3: Accessibility illustrated by travel time	8-3
Figure 8-4: Limited English Proficiency populations	8-4
Figure 8-5: ATP Vision Network.....	8-7
Figure 8-6: Bicycle Design User Profiles	8-8

List of Tables

Table 8-1: Future Transit Options	8-9
---	-----

Supporting Documents

- Regional Accessibility Analysis
- Limited English Proficiency Plan
- Active Transportation Plan
- MCAT Transit Development Plan
- SCAT Transit Development Plan





8.0 Equity/Livability

The MPO incorporates access, equity, and multiple modes in project priorities.

The MPO plans for people of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities by prioritizing trails and an active transportation network.

Four primary documents guide the way that the LRTP addressed the topics of Equity and Livability. These include:

- The Regional Accessibility Analysis (2018)
- Limited English Proficiency Plan (2017)
- The Active Transportation Plan (2019)
- Sarasota County and Manatee County Transit Development Plans

The location of households that do not own a vehicle is one indicator of potential inequity within a transportation system. In fact, as shown by **Figure 8-1** only about 5% of households in the region do not own a vehicle, and almost 50% of households have at least one vehicle. In Sarasota and Manatee Counties, these households tend to be centered around the downtown areas of Palmetto, Bradenton, Sarasota, and Venice and are shown in more detail as **Figure 8-2**.

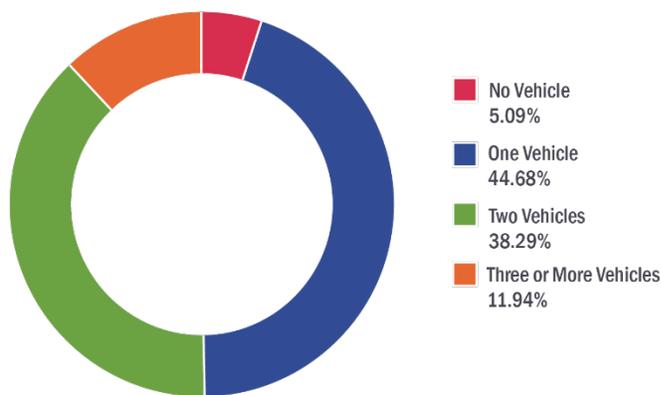


Figure 8-1: Vehicles Available for Occupied Housing Units

Equity/Livability

Objectives

Projects shall...

- Increase** access to bus stops and transfer stations; and availability of park and rides.
- Expand** access to essential services and affordable housing
- Improve** access for persons with disabilities
- Ensure** equity in all transportation decisions

Prioritization Factors

Does the project...

- Improve** access to transit?
- Improve** access to transit in low-income or minority communities?
- Improve** access to affordable housing?
- Provide** access for low income or minority communities?
- Provide** accessibility for bicycle and pedestrians?
- Provide** accessibility to food, medical, or education facility?

Vision Statements

- Increase housing and transportation choices
- Provide more multi modal options including safe walking and bicycling
- Preserve corridors for future premium transit to connect urban centers.

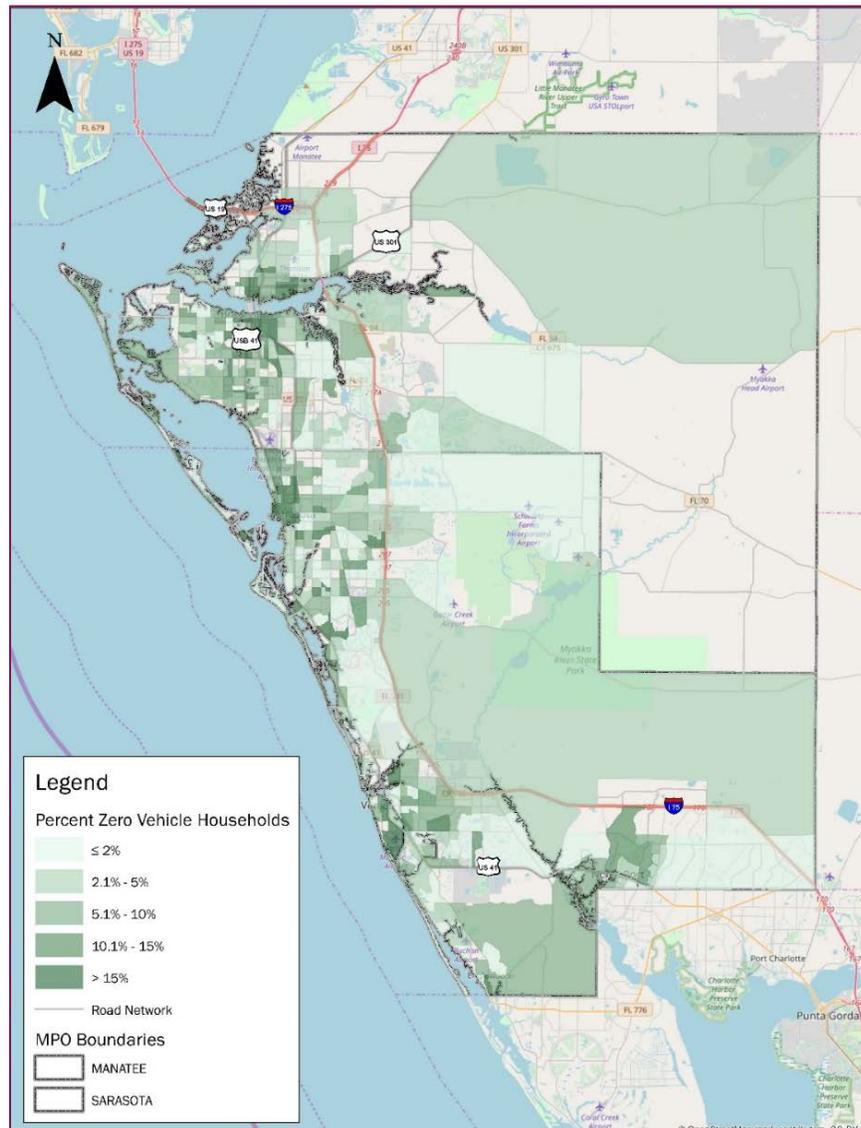


Figure 8-2: Zero Vehicle Households

8.1 Accessibility

One of the most promising strategies for communities to evaluate how their development and mobility goals are promoting a more equitable transportation network is to adopt transportation planning and project selection performance measures. These performance measures help evaluate if projects are meeting what matters most to the community: increasing access to opportunities, destinations, essential services, or even friends and family. Ultimately, this approach can expand the equity conversation by helping to identify communities that don't have appropriate access to opportunities such as access to jobs, healthcare, or services. This lack of access may be indicative of larger or parallel issues in the community. The MPO addressed the topic of accessibility in detail in its 2018 Regional Accessibility Analysis Metrics Report.



Figure 8-4: Limited English Proficiency populations

8.2.1 LEP Assessment for the Sarasota/Manatee MPO

As a recipient of federal funding, the MPO must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information and services it provides. As noticed in the Federal Register/ Volume 70, Number 239/ Wednesday, December 14, 2005/ Notices, there are four factors to consider in determining “reasonable steps”.

- **Factor 1.** The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area;
- **Factor 2.** The frequency with which LEP persons encounter MPO programs;
- **Factor 3.** The importance of the service provided by MPO programs; and
- **Factor 4.** The resources available and overall cost to the MPO.



The DOT Policy Guidance gives recipients of federal funds substantial flexibility in determining what language assistance is appropriate based on a local assessment of the four factors listed above. Additional information on the analysis and results of this assessment were included in an appendix to the MPO's Public Participation Plan as the *Limited English Proficiency Plan, 2017*.¹

8.3 Active Transportation Plan

In 2019, the MPO prepared the *Active Transportation Plan*. Active transportation is movement that utilizes physical activity, either fully or in part to get to your desired destination. A safe and comprehensive active transportation network accommodates people of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities by providing a variety of routes and modes by which to access essential destinations and neighboring jurisdictions, providing economic and social opportunities for people. An effective network has many benefits:

Improve safety for all modes- In September 2018, the MPO adopted a Vision Zero initiative and has been working with FDOT and local jurisdictions to eliminate traffic related fatalities and serious injuries in the Sarasota/Manatee region by performing road safety reviews and audits in high crash locations and increasing safety education in the community. Smart Growth America's Dangerous By Design 2019 report rated the North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton area as the fourth most dangerous metropolitan area in the country for pedestrians². Designing and operating roadways for safe speeds and convenient access for all users and increasing emphasis on safe bicycle and pedestrian access and mobility can help advance the MPO's goal of Vision Zero.

Improve multi modal mobility- The MPO seeks to customize active transportation solutions based on the function of the roadway, distinguishing facilities that support regional mobility from those that provide localized circulation and accessibility. This approach can improve efficiency and reliability for all modes, when compared to adding travel lanes on a limited number of roadways. Multi modal design also considers the needs of persons with disabilities, such as wheelchair users and people with reduced eyesight.

Increase community health - Adding features that support safe walking and biking promotes increased physical activity for all and improves community health and quality of life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed extensive resources as part of their Community Strategies Initiative to integrate walking and bicycling infrastructure in communities that will result in regular physical activity and improve public health outcomes³.

¹ Limited English Proficiency Plan, Sarasota Manatee MPO, 2017. Accessed at:

<https://www.mympo.org/files/40/Public-Participation-Plan/451/Limited-English-Proficiency-Plan-.pdf>

² Dangerous by Design 2019, Smart Growth America. Accessed at: <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

³ CDC Community Strategies Initiative. Accessed at: <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/community-strategies/index.htm>



Spur economic development - A network of streets designed for all modes enhances community connectedness, access to services, and recreational opportunities. Transportation investments prompt private development response. A Complete Streets approach to infrastructure investment spurs a corresponding development investment that supports a variety of uses and development types. Walkability and access to transit are becoming more critical to a community's economic competitiveness, due largely to demand from millennials and baby boomers.

8.3.1 Existing Conditions

An area profile was prepared for the region by gathering socio-demographic information, employment statistics, current mode split, and taking inventory of the current state of the active transportation network. Areas with concentrations of low median household income, zero-car households, mobility dependent age groups, and lower median income and higher often have higher concentrations of transit dependent populations.

Walk Scores were developed for the municipalities in Manatee and Sarasota counties using the publicly accessible, online platform containing the scores for thousands of cities and neighborhoods. Walk Scores for the Activity Centers identified in the ATP were given scores of 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating greater walkability in an area. Downtown Sarasota and Palmetto have the highest walk score in the region, where, as indicated on the Walk Score site, daily errands can be completed without having to use a car. Some of the areas with the lowest Walk Scores include Bradenton Beach, Siesta Key, and Lakewood Ranch. Lower scores indicate that almost all daily errands require traveling by car.

Trails throughout the region are used for both walking and bicycling and provide separated facilities for users of all levels to use with comfort. Most trails in the region are in Sarasota County, particularly east of I-75 around the Myakka State Park area. Trails in more urbanized areas include those along the barrier islands and along US 41/Tamiami Trail. Most planned trails are the segments of the SUNTrail alignment. The existing trails in Manatee County are sparse, found in the area northwest of Bradenton and east of I-75 closer to the Myakka Head airport.

8.3.2 Identifying an Active Transportation Vision Network

The ATP Vision Network includes the planned SUNTrail network as a spine throughout the region. The goal of the Vision Network is to build off this spine to connect the major activity centers in the region with a safe and comfortable car-free trip. The Vision Network was created by identifying gaps that could be filled to more closely align low stress routes combined with shortest path options, low-speed streets, and streets with an existing bike facility. The Vision Network shown in **Figure 8-5** was created by taking advantage of existing bikeable segments and adjustments that would improve route directness and input from local planning activities.

A near-term, focused on bike routes that exist today and smaller gaps that can be filled to improve route directness, was also developed as an incremental way for prioritizing implementation of the Vision Network.

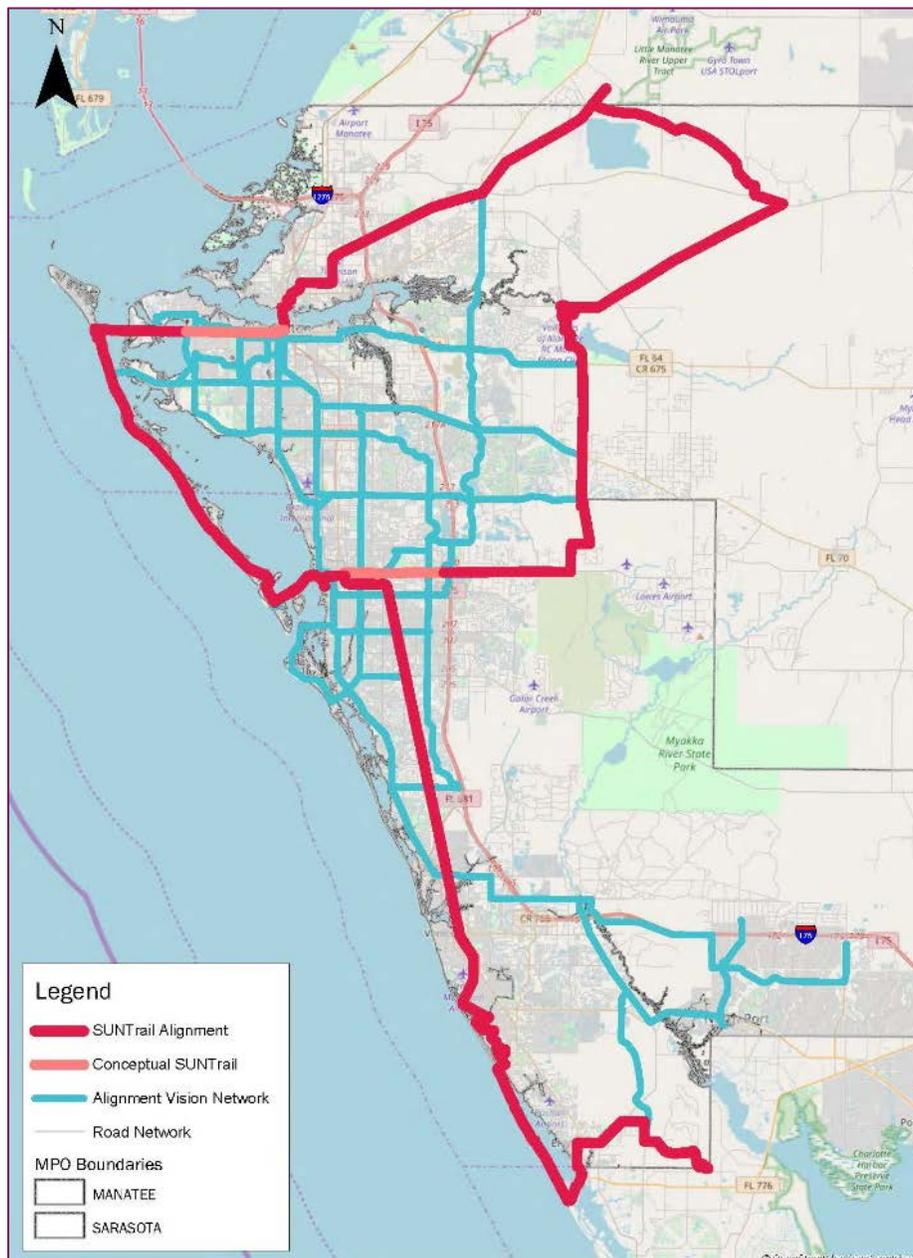


Figure 8-5: ATP Vision Network

8.3.3 Opportunities for Implementation

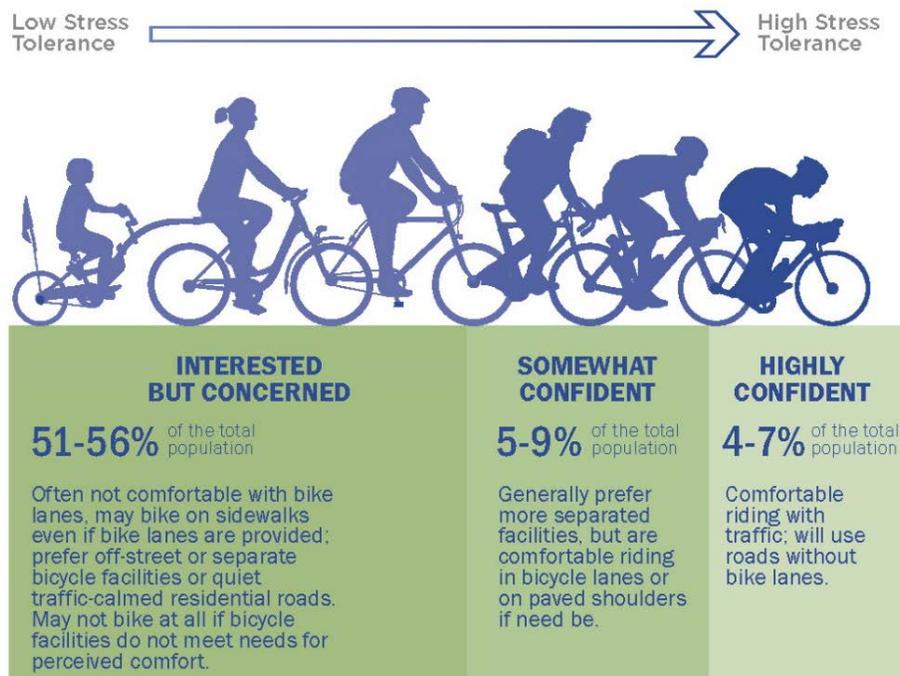
The number of traditional funding sources for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities continues to be limited. Most federal funding requires a match from state or local governments. Due to funding constraints, some transportation needs are left unmet without dedicated funding sources. The use of creative partnerships can enhance funding opportunities and/or financial arrangements. Potential partners may include major local or regional employers directly served by the active transportation network system. As active transportation spending is greatly affected by



annual budget and appropriation actions at the federal, state and local levels, dedicated local funding will offer the region increased flexibility to fund multi modal and flexible transportation options and to keep pace with evolving transportation, market and community trends. Local discretionary sales taxes are a common source of local tax revenue across the country. In 2016, Manatee County was one of several counties in the state to approve a sales tax for transportation.

8.3.4 Who are the Users?

For bicycling, different user types are considered throughout the Active Transportation Plan to understand the appropriate facilities to address both commuting and recreational needs. The typical characteristics that define a user’s profile are comfort level, bicycling skill and experience, age, and trip purpose. These characteristics fluctuate daily for users. A bicyclist may be willing to travel on a bike lane when commuting to work, but then choose a bike path separated from traffic when bicycling recreationally, for example. Research has identified different adult users with varying needs that travel by bicycle on roadways. These different users have been defined as those that are Interested but Concerned, Somewhat Confident, and Highly Confident. **Figure 8-6** illustrates the characteristics of the different bicyclists.



Source: Adapted by Kittelson & Associates, Inc. from FHWA Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide

Figure 8-6: Bicycle Design User Profiles

8.4 Transit Development Plans

According to FDOT’s TDP Handbook, a Transit Development Plan (TDP) is 10-year horizon plan intended to support the development of an effective multi modal transportation system within a county. The TDP serves as the basis for defining public transit needs, a prerequisite to receive



The MPO Board supports the community vision to preserve key corridors for future premium transit to connect urban centers. In fiscal year 2021 the MPO will conduct a transportation alternatives study on US 41, the interior spine of the regional transportation network, as the first potential premium transit corridor. This is not about 'taking a lane' but it is about identifying where there may be right-of-way that could be used for bus stopping or passing lanes and other infrastructure improvements to support on-time 20-minute headways as a first step to a more robust transit network. There is also support from the tourism community for employee van pools. I-75, US 41, and University Parkway have been identified as the first corridors to be retrofitted for autonomous vehicles and this may include autonomous transit.