PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

Engaging the public in the development of this plan was important to the MPO because the people who drive, walk, bike, or take transit in the region know where there are deficiencies and where there are solutions. This insight was vital in helping the MPO develop a financially feasible plan that accommodates future travel demands across all modes and ensures the projects that are funded are addressing the requests and recommendations of the public. Educating and informing people about the MPO process and how the steps in that process are advancing projects toward achieving the goals and objectives for the region was a critical component on the public involvement process.

This update included a substantial public involvement effort to engage residents on how to improve the region’s transportation system through a number of forums including: monthly Steering Committee meetings, a public workshop, 21 focus group meetings, and an online public engagement website hosted through MindMixer.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

One of the ways the Sarasota Manatee MPO engaged the public was through focus groups discussions with organizations and interest groups throughout the region. The benefit of focus group discussions are their small-group nature, which allows participants to feel more comfortable in expressing their opinions on a given topic. The objectives of the focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews were to identify values and priorities and communicate information and issues to be considered in the transportation planning process.

Focus group participants were given a four-question survey to help kickoff discussions. The comments received during the focus group discussions focused on increasing transportation options through more frequent transit, safer bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other modes like water taxis. Participants also recommended developing a holistic vision for the region, studying proposed developments for their long-term impacts on traffic congestion, improving

MAP OF FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS
coordination among the many jurisdictions in the region, and improving traffic technology.

The focus groups held included:

- City of Palmetto - Community Redevelopment Agency
- City of Bradenton – Central Community Redevelopment Agency
- Manatee County - Lakewood Ranch Business Association
- Manatee County – Federation of Homeowner Associations
- Manatee County – Parrish Civic Association
- Manatee County – Lakewood Ranch District Directors
- Manatee County – Local Coordinating Board for Transportation Disadvantaged
- Manatee County - Manatee Chamber of Commerce
- City of Sarasota - North Sarasota and Newtown
- City of Sarasota - City Council of Neighborhood Associations
- City of Sarasota - Condominiums on the Bay Association
- City of Sarasota - Downtown Condominium Association
- Sarasota County - Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
- Sarasota County – Local Coordinating Board for Transportation Disadvantaged
- Sarasota County – Local Coordinating Board for Transportation Disadvantaged
- Sarasota County – Council of Neighborhood Associations
- City of Venice - Chamber of Commerce
- City of North Port - Chamber of Commerce
- Focus Group for Local and Regional Environmental Interests
- Focus Group for Local and Regional Freight Interests
- Sarasota/Manatee MPO’s Bicycle Pedestrian Trails Advisory Committee

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

An “open house” style public workshop was held on March 12, 2015 from 4 pm to 7:30 pm at the Dan McClure Airport Auditorium to present initial data and information to the public and solicit feedback on how the region might expand the transportation system. About 30 people attended the workshop. The materials presented for review and comment included four maps (2010 and 2040 congestion delays, 2014 MPO Transportation Project Priorities, and Regional Roadways), a participant questionnaire, and a workshop evaluation.

MINDMIXER

An additional way the MPO engaged residents in the conversation of improving the region’s transportation was through the use of a MindMixer website. The MindMixer website is an online platform open to the public that posed questions to participants on a range of issues, including transportation preferences, major issues, ways to improve transportation, and project prioritization. The questions were updated every month over the course of eight months and came in different formats, such as open-ended, surveys, polls, and map-related questions. Using this technology was beneficial in reaching people who may not be able to attend meetings or workshops in person. It also supplements the in-person public engagement opportunities by allowing people to contribute their ideas and weigh in from the comfort of their homes at any time. The Sarasota/Manatee region is very large and this website allowed those residents living far away from meetings or unable to attend meetings to participate online and have their opinions be heard. Several elected officials and members of the MPO Board participated in the website through the “Who’s
APPENDIX

Listening page in which they reviewed residents’ responses and residents could directly contact their elected officials.

The graphs on the following pages summarize the results from each of the questions posed during the monthly updates of the site.

JANUARY

WHAT MODE OF TRANSPORTATION DO YOU USE MOST?

- Personal vehicle: 80%
- Walk: 16%
- Bicycle: 4%
- Bus transit: 0%
- Other (add comment below): 0%
WHAT ALTERNATIVE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION WOULD YOU USE IF YOU WERE UNABLE TO DRIVE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus transit</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride from family member/friend</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (add comment below)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IF RIDING A BICYCLE IN SARASOTA/MANATEE WAS EASIER, I WOULD DO IT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE FOLLOWING THINGS WOULD MAKE BICYCLING IN SARASOTA & MANATEE COUNTIES EASIER FOR ME:

- Separate paths or trails for bicycles
- Availability of bicycle lanes
- Shorter distances between places I want to go
- Increased bicycle safety
- Slower vehicle speeds
- Other (add comment below)
- Availability of showers (at work, for example)
- Nicer weather (currently too hot, too rainy)
- Athletic ability

HAVE YOU NOTICED AN INCREASE IN TRAFFIC/CONGESTION AROUND THE NEW MALL AT THE UNIVERSITY TOWN CENTER?

- Yes: 45%
- No: 55%
SHOW US A CITY WITH GREAT MOBILITY

Berlin-Karshorst S-Bahn Station. Note bus stop designated by the circled H (Haltestelle). Tram stop (not shown) is located on the roadway under and perpendicular to the elevated railway (S-Bahn) seen in the background.

Love the DC Metro!
WHAT BIG CHANGE COULD WE MAKE TO IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE IN OUR REGION?

Develop a neighborhood open space to provide local business to serve a neighborhood within walking/biking distance of homes.
Many people living in historic Osprey walk to nearby Walmart and Post Office. However, there is a 1-block missing sidewalk segment at the corner of US 41 and Bay St that is badly needed.

WHAT BIG CHANGE COULD WE MAKE TO IMPROVE THE SIDEWALKS IN OUR REGION?
Add sidewalks on both sides of US 301 from Haben Blvd to I-75

Require vegetated buffers with trees between all sidewalks and the streets
There is a missing sidewalk for about ½ block at the corner of Bay St and US 41, making pedestrians walks through the grass.

This 3 mile stretch of 6 lane 45 mph highway has incomplete sidewalks. Bus Route 99, the most popular line by far in both counties runs on this roadway. The gaps must be filled in. Apparently newly developed properties were required to install sidewalks.
WHAT BIG CHANGE COULD WE MAKE TO IMPROVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BICYCLISTS IN OUR REGION?

Bike lanes and/or a multi-use path is needed along Bay St from US 41 to the Osprey Junction trailhead and the Legacy Trail.

Other Ideas (not location-specific):

- Paint current bike lanes green
- Protected bike lanes at key intersections and wherever possible
WHAT BIG CHANGE COULD WE MAKE TO IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN OUR REGION?

During season, free bus service should be provided along Manatee and Cortez to Anna Maria Island to encourage more people to take transit rather than drive.
The 9:15 pm southbound departure of Rt. 17 should run all the way to Venice so people living in Osprey and beyond can use SCAT to go to downtown Sarasota in the evenings.

**HOW CAN WE PROVIDE BETTER TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR THE SENIORS IN OUR REGION?**

- Reduce speeds on roads known to have high concentrations of elderly populations
Merge MCAT & SCAT, have shorter headways, longer operating hours, shorter travel times, rationally placed bus stops, signalized crossing points, covered & well-lit shelters, complete street designs, shade trees.

Bus routes need to be adapted to the needs of Seniors; needs of workers going to jobs and seniors do not match.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO BE MORE PREPARED FOR MAJOR EMERGENCIES?

No comments received

WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT MOBILITY FOR SENIORS AND YOUR SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THOSE CONCERNS?

Look for an example of senior transportation service to model after.

Decrease public transit wait times to 30 minutes.

Run buses on Sundays, later in the day on week days.

Allow golf carts on sidewalks.

Larger letters on signage, better lighting for signage.

Traffic signal management.

Move light posts out of the sidewalks.
APPENDIX

DURING WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES DO YOU EXPERIENCE THE MOST REGULAR CONGESTION?

- Work (morning commute) - 40%
- Work (evening commute) - 27%
- Recreation (beaches) (Saturday and Sunday mid day) - 20%
- Weekday mid day - 7%
- Weekend mornings - 6%
- Shopping (weekday evenings) - 5%
- Weekend evenings - 0%

SHARE WITH US A PHOTO OF A TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CONCERN YOU HAVE IN THE SARASOTA/MANATEE REGION.

"Rye Rd/SR 64 intersection needs a traffic light immediately; waiting in traffic is annoying but SAFETY comes first."

SHARE WITH US A PHOTO OF A ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUE IN OUR REGION
3/25/15 Accident evidences how poorly constructed the intersection at Rye Rd/SR 64 intersection is

**ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY MORE MINUTES EACH DAY DOES IT TAKE YOU TO GET TO YOUR DESTINATIONS BECAUSE OF CONGESTION?**

- 10 minutes longer for a 25 minute commute near Downtown Bradenton intersections
- In season, 30-45 minutes longer. Off-season 5-10 minutes longer
- 5-10 minutes longer

**APRIL**

**HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION TO CREATE BETTER COMMUNITIES?**

- Bring traffic data to the table. Review crash data before reviewing the site plan. Place parking lots, driveways, and buildings in the right places, and not being reactive once the building is up. Be on the front end of safety and health
- Don’t forget about older neighborhoods. New/improved transportation appears in new developments first. Refocus on older neighborhoods.
- Compact development causes less traffic and need for roads.
- Mix land uses. Less segregation of land uses. Improve proximity and more travel options (bike, ped, transit) become viable
- Provide incentives to builders who build where there is existing infrastructure
DO YOU THINK TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT MAKES SENSE FOR CERTAIN PLACES IN THE REGION? IF SO, WHERE?

• The beaches and barrier islands. They have limited space for “conventional” transportation to succeed.
• Close off Main St and make fully walkable with retailers
• In three locations: 1) in the downtown areas of existing towns and cities, where this type of development originally existed; 2) anywhere there is opportunity for redevelopment along existing transit lines; and 3) anywhere a large scale parcel of land is being developed contiguous to other development.

IF YOU HAD THE MONEY, WHAT IS THE ONE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT YOU WOULD MAKE HAPPEN IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

• A ferry system for each Key with parking on main land and trolley, bus, & bikes available at the dock
• Real-time responsiveness for traffic signal timing
• Move the street light posts off the Bee Ridge sidewalk
• Extend University Blvd to SR 70. Help spread out traffic area east of Lorraine Rd
• Randomly close roads – Fruitville westbound from 6 am to 9 am, eastbound from 4 pm to 7 pm

WHAT ONE STEP COULD WE TAKE TO MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER FOR ALL ROAD USERS?

• Less cars on the road. Make bicycling and walking the norm. Mass transit needs help.
• Traffic calming techniques
• Reduce number of lanes & lower speed limits
OF THESE TWO OPTIONS, WHICH DO YOU THINK THE MPO SHOULD INVEST IN?

- **Mobility within existing urban areas**: 38%
- **Regional transportation connectivity**: 62%

WHAT TYPES OF TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS DO YOU THINK ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR REGION?

- **Roadway mobility within existing urban centers**: 18%
- **More safe places for people to walk**: 13%
- **More safe places for people to bike**: 13%
- **Regional roadway connectivity and capacity**: 18%
- **Expanded bus transit systems**: 15%
- **Advanced traffic signal timing**: 8%
- **Other**: 7%
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY TO HAVE A VARIETY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS?

• We have to make it easier for people to come to work in Sarasota, to make our residents and tourists happy. At the same time we should decrease the # of cars in town by offering attractive, frequent reliable public transportation between the keys, town and points of interest such Mote, Ringling, WBTT etc.

• Equity of access to transportation

• Look at more North South corridors across Manatee River, also look at better use of our water ways to move people to islands

• Need to focus on moving people not vehicles. Cannot build our way out of congestion

• Can help decrease the traffic on our roads. Vehicles can fill the gap when other options are not available.

• Supporting elderly population who rely on this mode. Without a quality transit system (and the land use densities to support it), numerous residents will become increasingly homebound, limiting the ability to interact with society in a meaningful manner and creating additional physical and mental health issues

WHERE DO WE NEED TO IMPROVE OR EXPAND ON THE NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS AROUND OUR REGION?

• Maximize connections to beaches, parks, & activity centers

• Connecting east-west & north-south. Connect some urban trail to the eastern trails.

• Urban areas to encourage walkability

• Legacy Trail extension through North Sarasota

JUNE

No new questions posted

JULY

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS WE SHOULD TRACK IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SAFETY OF OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM OVER TIME?

• Track the number of dedicated bicycle lane miles added each year

• Count the number of bicycle-related deaths and injuries in each county each year. We need safer bike lanes and transport options that get people out of the chair and into the world exercising and appreciating our beautiful area!
WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM? (COULD ONLY SELECT ONE ANSWER)

- ITS deployments must actually work, however. They are not the solution for every transportation problem and the technology must be thoughtfully used and monitored for effectiveness.

- Enhancing intergovernmental coordination within our counties and across our boundaries
- Reducing delays through Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Maintaining roadway capacity
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR SELECTING TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC VITALITY? (COULD ONLY SELECT ONE ANSWER)

- Developing and maintaining a financially feasible transportation system that meets the future needs of our region
- Regional access to economic generators (Port Manatee, Sarasota-Bradenton Int'l Airport, passenger and freight intermodal hubs)
- All 3 are important but we may not have had the need for them if adequate future planning had taken place starting in the 50s. Let's don't push future planning off until tomorrow.
WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY?

- This will have impact into the future of this area. With existing data, problem areas are predictable and modifications to site plans can be made to encourage the least amount of added impact on high traffic and crash areas. It's a no brainer. But could be called benign neglect at present not connecting the data to development in terms of safety issues.

- Reduce the time between upgrading infrastructure needed to address added strains imposed by new developments. Perhaps securing a percentage of impact fees upfront and applying the funds toward rendering designs for the improvements.

- Grid planning lends itself to public transit; gated communities and cul de sacs do not. Land use devoted to business indicates jobs and a need for transportation.

- This is forward logical thinking that deals with prevention on the front end.
IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH TYPES OF ROADWAY PROJECTS SHOULD RECEIVE FUNDING PRIORITY?

- Improving mass transit will help alleviate congestion
- Give priority to road projects that fill in missing links for safe, continuous bicycle network. Restripe existing roads to add designated bike lanes.
- Need more North and South routes from Sarasota to North Port
- Needs assessment should determine ranking of projects. Look at crash data and projected population density in area of consideration

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**Survey Results:**

- Widening existing roads to improve congestion in already congested areas (40%)
- Other (please comment as to what) (6%)
- None of the above (please comment as to why) (27%)
- Building new roads in developing areas projected to grow in population (27%)

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- Needs assessment should determine ranking of projects. Look at crash data and projected population density in area of consideration
PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR TOP 5 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN MANATEE COUNTY

MANATEE COUNTY ROADWAY NEEDS: IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH TYPES OF ROADWAY PROJECTS SHOULD RECEIVE FUNDING PRIORITY?
PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR TOP 5 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN SARASOTA COUNTY

2. Widen Honore Ave from 2 to 4 lanes between 83rd Ave E and 17th St
8. Widen Cattlemen Rd from 2 to 4 lanes between Fruitville Rd and Palmer Blvd
27. Widen River Rd from 2 to 4 lanes between I-75 and Winchester Blvd
6. Create a new 2 lane road crossing over Interstate 75 between the proposed new Lakewood Ranch extension and Honore Ave
11. Create a new 4 lane road (called Iona Rd) between Fruitville Rd and Palmer Blvd
20. Widen US 41 Tamiami Trail from 4 to 6 lanes between Stickney Point Rd and SR 681
31. Create a new 4 lane road (called Manasota Beach Rd) between Sarasota County Line/North Port boundary and River Rd
1. Widen I-75 to 6 general purpose lanes & 4 special purpose lanes between the Manatee County Line and River Rd
5. Widen McIntosh Rd from 2 to 4 lanes between Fruitville Rd and Bahia Vista St
7. Create a new 4 lane road (Lakewood Ranch extension) between University Pkwy and Fruitville Rd