



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CONSTRAINED ROADS STUDY

Summary of Workshop Comments November 14 & 15, 2006

Introduction

Two public workshops were held on Tuesday, November 14, 2006 at McLane Middle School, 306 N. Knights Avenue in Brandon and on Wednesday, November 15, 2006 at Walker Middle School, 8282 N. Mobley Road in Odessa (Northwest County).

The purpose of the workshops was to review and discuss the proposed roadways on the constrained roads lists. Constrained roads are those that are considered unfeasible for future widening or improvement due to high cost, negative community or environmental impacts, government policy or other reasons. Participants were asked to comment on whether specific roads should be taken off or kept on the list.

A summary of comments made during the presentation, as well as written comments, are presented below. A total of 32 comment sheets and 10 petitions were completed (or mailed in) at the November 14 workshop, while 21 comment sheets were completed at the November 15 workshop. Appendix A includes copies of all written comment sheets.

Summary Of Comments

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2006 - BRANDON

Comments/Questions during Presentation

1. South County population has already exceeded 2025 projections, which means our infrastructure is completely inadequate. Bell Shoals, Boyette, Bloomingdale and SR 60 are all at Level of Service (LOS) F. We need to widen some of the east-west roads rather than all north-south roads as shown on the constrained roads list.
2. The County has created our existing traffic problems. Quit studying it and do something about it now!
3. If Pulte Developers provides the funding to improve the local roads, we need to remove Bell Shoals from the constrained roads list. How will the County hold Pulte to their commitment and ensure that their money goes towards the needed improvements?
4. We want Bell Shoals to be widened BEFORE Pulte's development is built.
5. Brandon is becoming an undesirable place to live.
6. Valrico Road, north of SR 60, has no left-turn into the Publix shopping center. It creates more havoc and cars cannot get in and out. The County needs to change that turn and remove the barrier.

7. Bloomingdale Road is terrible, you cannot get anywhere due to the congestion. The section from Lithia-Pinecrest to Dover has not been improved, even though it is completely developed. Where is the money coming from to widen Bruce B. Downs when there is no funding going towards our roads?
8. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) needs to develop a new definition for Level-of-Service (LOS); too many roads in our county are LOS F, and those roads are not even on the constrained list. Redefining the LOS would eliminate our frustration and improve our quality of life.
9. The County needs to widen our roads even if it is not what the majority of people want. It is time to improve our roadway system.
10. It would help if school buses had pull-outs so that they do not create a back-up for the cars.

Bell Shoals Road was mentioned several times as one of the roads that is in need of improvement; however, most participants agreed that only the section between Bloomingdale and Fish Hawk Ranch should be widened, particularly due to the proposed new development called Lake Hutto, which will add about 3,000 homes to the area. The developer of Lake Hutto, Pulte Developers, has indicated that they would give about \$90 million to the County to improve the roads nearby. At the time of this workshop, the BOCC did not approve the development. However, on December 5, the BOCC met and approved the development with a 5-2 vote.

A show of hands was taken at the workshop regarding certain roads that continued to be a point of discussion. The following results were as follows:

11. The majority of participants were in favor of keeping Windhorst (between Lakewood and Kingsway) on the constrained roads list (one person mentioned widening MLK Jr. Boulevard to alleviate traffic on Windhorst).
12. The majority of participants were in favor of keeping Bell Shoals (between Bloomingdale and Lithia-Pinecrest) on the constrained roads list.
13. The majority of participants were in favor of widening Bell Shoals (between Bloomingdale and Fish Hawk Ranch).
14. Some participants were in favor of keeping Kingsway (between SR 60 and MLK, Jr. Blvd.) on the constrained roads list; however, nobody raised their hand to have this roadway widened.

Written Comments - the number in () indicates the number of comments made

15. Remove Bell Shoals (between Bloomingdale and Boyette) from the constrained roads list (12).
16. Oppose the widening of Bell Shoals north of Bloomingdale (5 comments and 10 petitions).
17. Review the removal of Williams Road (between US 92 and MLK, Jr. Blvd.) from the list due to nearby planned developments and apartments (1).

18. Include concurrency for emergency vehicle operations and locales.
19. Keep Kingsway (between SR 60 and MLK, Jr. Blvd) on the list; if the road is widened, we would lose our homes through eminent domain; please save/conservate our neighborhood (1).
20. Keep Windhorst Road on the list. Please remove the Windhorst extension through Lake Valrico or extend it up to Sydney and Valrico roads (2).
21. Keep Kingsway Road on the list (1).
22. Many of the roads on the list need to be improved and widened, however, this will not solve traffic congestion. We need to offer alternate routes for commuters, such as extending Leroy Selmon across Tampa Bay and connecting South County at Big Bend (1).
23. Businesses along Valrico Road would like something done about the barrier on N. Valrico Road; it prohibits a left turn from Valrico into the Publix shopping center (1).
24. What is being done about Sydney Road/Valrico Road and Durant Road/Lumsden Road areas? Congestion is horrific (1).
25. We need a meeting in South County since our roads are “constrained” as well (2).
26. We need some accountability of where our \$2 billion in tax dollars over 5 years are being spent; little has been spent in South County (1).
27. The proposed Beltway is an expensive “boon-doggie” and will not serve those going to Tampa or the I-75 corridor (1).
28. Adding a left-turn lane and synchronizing traffic lights would improve traffic flow (1).
29. Widening roads will improve congestion; however, taking money from the new Pulte development to widen Bell Shoals and Lithia Pinecrest for Pulte’s sake is ludicrous! Fix current road problems, don’t add more problems (1).
30. Too much time is spent on planning and not enough on getting it done. We need a viable mass transit system that moves people; we do not need additional roads (1).
31. The look and feel of Brandon is being lost due to poor planning and failure of the County to approve developments only if roads are built first (1).
32. Improve Valrico Road (1).
33. Due to poor planning and unchecked growth over the past 40 years, it is time to bite the bullet and do what is needed to improve our roads. We need County staff to recommend the right thing and our County Commissioners to do the right thing for all citizens of Hillsborough County, not just individual special interest groups (1).
34. We need a 4-lane road that connects I-4 to Lithia-Pinecrest or Bloomingdale (1).
35. Remove the proposed Lumsden Extension from Mulreanan to Turkey Creek (1).

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2006 - NORTHWEST COUNTY

Comments/Questions during Presentation

1. What is the status of the Citrus Park Drive Extension? (Ned Baier indicated that there seems to be quite a bit of support for the project, but it is about five years away.)
2. Concerned about the long term effects of taking some of the roads off the list. We live here and like the “rural” environment. Based on the County’s Comprehensive Plan, if a property is located on a 2-lane road, you can request a commercial development of up to 20,000 square feet. If a road is widened to four lanes, the square footage of that commercial development significantly increases. Examples of this include Waters Avenue, Sheldon Road and Erlich Road, among others.
3. Concerned about taking Gunn Highway off the list. So much of our traffic is from Pasco County; I don’t want to spend my tax dollars on Pasco traffic. Gunn was on the constrained roads list because of environmental reasons. Now it is off the list. I would like to put it back on the list due to environmental constraints and policy. (Ned mentioned that the regional traffic has created a need for the Veteran’s Expressway/Suncoast Parkway to be widened to Van Dyke Road, although it is still five years out. The County is very sensitive to widening Gunn Highway).
4. What is the time line for opening the Lutz Lake Fern ramps on the Suncoast Parkway? (Ned mentioned that the project is about 15 years out).
5. Consider adding noise walls along residential roads to decrease noise, primarily in Westchase where homes back up to Race Track Road. The County took away our conservation area, so noise levels have increased significantly. (Ned indicated that it is the County’s policy to build noise walls or implement other mitigation measures to reduce noise in neighborhoods).
6. Give tax relief to residents (who live on widened roads) to make improvements in their homes that would abate noise.
7. Keep Keystone Community Plan as is; it is not fair that the County can come in and start changing our road plans. (Ned explained that the purpose of this study is not to “come in and change the road plans”, but to validate the constrained roads list. If the County removes only one road that the community wants, our study has been effective).
8. What is the County’s plan for Livingston Road between County Line Road and Sinclair Hills? (Ned indicated that it is no different than the Keystone Community Plan. There are differing opinions about whether Livingston should be widened. The County is reviewing both scenarios now).
9. In Plantation, there are many roads that are constrained. What if we had a major hurricane or tsunami? How would we evacuate?
10. Show the residential areas on your maps so that we can see the impact of improved roads on our neighborhoods.
11. Gunn Highway is approved to be widened to South Mobley. When will that occur? (Patrick indicated that the project is out for construction bid at this time).
12. The Citrus Park Plan shows traffic calming on Erlich Road, i.e., narrowing of streets, on-street parking, etc. It does not make sense - how does that play into these decisions? (Ned indicated that Erlich Road is only “squaring off” the curve at Gunn/Erlich near the Publix and the on-street parking was rejected).
13. Too many projects get shelved; if these roads come off the list, will other projects get shifted? (Ned responded, “no”).

14. What about mass transit as an option? (Keli Paul responded that the outcome of the analysis showed that only about 3,000 trips would be removed, which is not a significant amount).

A show of hands was taken at the workshop regarding Gunn Highway. The majority of participants were in favor of keeping Gunn Highway on the constrained roads list, while a few participants wanted it widened.

Written Comments - the number in () indicates the number of comments made

15. Keep Gunn Highway on the constrained roads list; we like the small community feel. Keep our lakes, well fields, etc.; they are part of our community (4).
16. Please remove Gunn highway from the constrained roads list; congestion is becoming worse and accidents are increasing (4).
17. Keep all roads on the list constrained (4).
18. Remove Race Track Road from the list (1).
19. Remove Van Dyke Road from the list (1).
20. Concerned about the narrowing of Erlich/Gunn for the proposed Citrus park plan; do not narrow unless other roads are to be built (1).
21. Build a light rail system on the Veteran's Expressway (1).
22. Consider building more round-a-bouts.
23. Please look at a road connection from SR 54/Gunn Highway diagonally south to Veteran's/Lutz Lake Road to alleviate traffic on Gunn (1).
24. The Keystone Community Plan Corridor must remain on the constrained roads list; keep Keystone rural and give residents another alternative to urban/suburban living (3).
25. Keep all roads in Lutz constrained (1).
26. Do not allow roads to be more than 6 lanes (1).
27. The 3 counties of Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough should talk about the issues regarding Pasco and Pinellas County residents using and congesting Hillsborough County roads (1).
28. Leverage mass transit for county-to-county travel (1).
29. Use more turn lanes, not wider roads (1).
30. Improve congested intersections, for example, near Gunn/Mobley at Walker Middle School (1).
31. Keep Lynn Turner Road on the list constrained (1).
32. Also consider adding buffer walls along residential roads to protect privacy and decrease noise (1).
33. Like Alternative F - less congestion on Tarpon Springs/Boy Scout/Crawley (1).
34. Traffic control devices are needed on Tarpon Springs Road at intersections (i.e., Boy Scout) and traffic calming techniques around the curves to prevent serious accidents (1).
35. Remove Boy Scout Road from the list (1).

36. Race Track Road should be straightened to eliminate accidents (i.e. near Gunn Highway)
(1).

NEXT STEPS

Hillsborough County will conduct additional workshops in February 2007 after a second tier of analysis. The public will have another opportunity to provide comments at the workshops. The final recommendations will be completed by March 2007 with a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners in April 2007.