

Chapter 2, Transportation Element

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Transportation Plan is to develop a multimodal system built around an expanded and efficient street and highway system, which will feature public transportation elements and enhanced pedestrian/bicycle facilities. The plan continues to assess the needs for current and future transportation systems, establish policy guidelines for use by staff and decision makers at all levels of government, and set standards for the provision of public facilities. The MPO and its member governments--including Charlotte County, the City of Punta Gorda, and the Charlotte County Airport Authority--assisted in the development of this plan.

B. Planning Process

The development of the LRTP included a significant public participation process; technical analysis through transportation modeling and geographic information systems (GIS); project selection criteria developed from the public process and State/Federal regulations; and transportation plans and regulations from local, State, and Federal government. Public involvement continues to be an important building block for the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization's planning process. The process continues to include complete information; timely public notice; full access to key decisions; and early and continuing involvement of the public through the MPO Board, Board of County Commissioners, City Council, Airport Authority, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and a number of other citizen groups and committees. Public participation continues to yield a variety of results, depending on the technique or methodology used. However, a pattern of issues and concerns have developed through the data obtained from various surveys, meetings, advisory committees, and public hearings. Usually topping the list were hurricane evacuation, maintenance of sidewalks/bikeways, public transportation, and traffic signalization improvements.

The MPO works closely with the County and the City, using a variety of public participation techniques. By utilizing the recommendations of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Environmental Management Office, the MPO initiated the use of the Community Impact Assessment for its long-range planning process. The process involves participation by the various neighborhood, church, and civic groups. This group participation allows for input from a wide variety of demographic, geographic, and organizational communities.

C. Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

1. Future Land Use Element

The Transportation Element is closely related to several Comprehensive Plan Elements. The strongest relationship is with the Future Land Use Element. The traffic model from the LRTP, on which the Transportation Element is based, was developed from the Future Land Use Map. Census data (along with housing trends, Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), and utility plans) were used to distribute population growth predicted by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) (Table 2.1). Existing and

future population densities were also considered. Seasonal (transient) population adjustments were made to the model population base. Base values and seasonal adjustments combine to form a total population consistent with the Comprehensive Plan (Medium BEBR plus 22% seasonal population).

**Table 2.1
Population Forecast Adjustment**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
BEBR Low		151,000	157,800	163,100	166,600	168,200	167,700
BEBR Medium or Estimate	142,529	158,900	174,700	190,600	206,000	220,800	234,200
BEBR High		166,900	192,800	220,700	249,900	280,300	311,400
Seasonal Population Medium BEBR times 22 percent		193,858	213,134	232,532	251,320	269,376	285,724
BEBR Medium/High Average		162,900	183,750	205,650	227,950	250,550	272,800
Adjustment to Balance			8,500	8,000			
Population	142,529	162,900	192,250	213,650	227,950	250,550	272,800

Source: Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

The local MPO and Florida DOT consultant prepared the Transportation model in a manner which results in consistency with the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan requires population totals equivalent to Medium BEBR with a 22% adjustment for seasonal population.

2. The Recreation and Open Space Element

The sidewalk and bikeway priority needs were developed, in part, to access existing and near-future parks. In the Recreation and Open Space Element, sidewalks/bikeways were ranked as the most important recreation improvement for Charlotte County in a survey.

3. Natural Resources and Coastal Management Element

Hurricane evacuation issues are addressed in the Natural Resources and Coastal Management Element, with regard to natural disasters and highway evacuations. The effectiveness of the hurricane evacuation routes is dependent on a well-developed road network. A severe weather event is one of the project selection criteria for transportation facilities. Other project selection criteria include wildlife crossings, improvement of water quality, and/or improvement of environmental integrity in some manner. Alternatives which avoid negative impacts to environmental, preservation, reservation, and conservation areas are preferred over those that do not.

4. Capital Improvements Element

Projects identified in the Transportation Element are included in the Capital Improvements Element. These projects are reviewed annually.

5. Intergovernmental Coordination Element

Intergovernmental coordination is important to providing cooperation and coordination between both local and regional agencies when dealing with transportation issues, which is consistent with the Intergovernmental Coordination Element.

II. LEGISLATION

Legislation and programs influencing transportation plans include State and local regulations; the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); and the relationship of State, regional, metropolitan, and local plans.

A. State and Local Regulations

There are many State and local regulations and programs governing land use and development impacts that relate to transportation needs in Charlotte County. Some of these include aviation land use, commercial vehicles, highway access management, and bicycle/pedestrian issues.

Aviation land uses are addressed through the establishment of an overlay district and its supporting regulations. Development of the airport is guided by the State level in the Florida Aviation System Plan. The plan predicts an increase in airport service from general aviation to commercial that will provide passenger and air cargo service. The plan recommends consideration of the potential capacity of existing land use. Additionally, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) authorized the Piper Road alignment study, which focused on enhanced airport access and security. Charlotte County Code regulates airport land use in Section 3.9-65 (Airport Zones).

Charlotte County provides regulation for operating large trucks and commercial vehicles on roadways and bridges through Sections 2.4-23.1 and 2.4-25, in conjunction with FDOT regulations.

Highway access management provides a mechanism to assist in planning and managing growth. Florida Administrative Code 14-97 regulates this issue through the FDOT Highway Access Management Guide. Chapter 3-6, Article IV, of the Charlotte County Code governs highway access. The purpose is to minimize conflict, insure consistency with the comprehensive plan, and provide standards. Traffic impact statements and traffic control plans (Sections 3-7-88 and 89) are required to determine the impact a development may have on the road system. Minimum requirements for transportation facility concurrency are detailed in Section 3-5-331 (3). Planned Development Districts (PD) are governed in Section 3-9-49 (d). Design criteria are provided for the location of PD's to insure adequate transportation facilities that meet the adopted service levels. The City of Punta Gorda governs highway access management in Ordinance 26-10 (5).

Bicycle/pedestrian issues are governed in Charlotte County through the Subdivision Regulations. Section 3-7-85 details provisions for bicycle paths, lanes, sidewalks, and pedestrian ways.

B. Federal Legislation

The Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 represented landmark Federal legislation, which changed the transportation planning philosophy of the nation. SAFETEA-LU, the successor to the ISTEA legislation, incorporates the same philosophies as its predecessor. These changes figure prominently in a number of arenas: planning for mobility, public participation,

management systems, and planning factors. These factors are discussed in a separate section under the analysis.

SAFETEA-LU requires that all components of transportation be planned as one system. In theory, local governments, through the MPO process, now have more influence on the projects to be federally and State funded and can shift funding from highway projects to other transportation modes, such as transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Public participation continues to play a key role in the transportation planning process. The manner in which public participation was incorporated into the process is outlined in the previous Introduction section and in greater detail in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Transportation management systems include data collection and analysis systems to address issues that are critical to the capital improvement programming process. These issues include highway pavement and bridge condition, safety, review of alternative methods to address congestion problems, public transportation, and intermodal facilities. These management systems will result in the preservation of existing facilities, lower life-cycle costs, lower overall costs to the community, and more effective use of limited transportation dollars.

While the SAFETEA-LU legislation does not regulate development of local comprehensive plans directly, the LRTP is regulated by SAFETEA-LU. Consistency between the MPO LRTP and the local comprehensive plan is required by SAFETEA-LU.

C. Relationship of State, Metropolitan, and Local Transportation Plans

Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship among the State and local transportation plans and programs. The Long Range Transportation Plan is based on community priorities, Federal and State regulations, the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), system plans (e.g., the Transit Development Plan and bicycle/pedestrian plans), area plans (e.g., corridor studies), and local comprehensive plan transportation and land use elements. The Long Range Transportation Plan is used to develop MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) priorities, system and area plans, and comprehensive plan transportation elements.

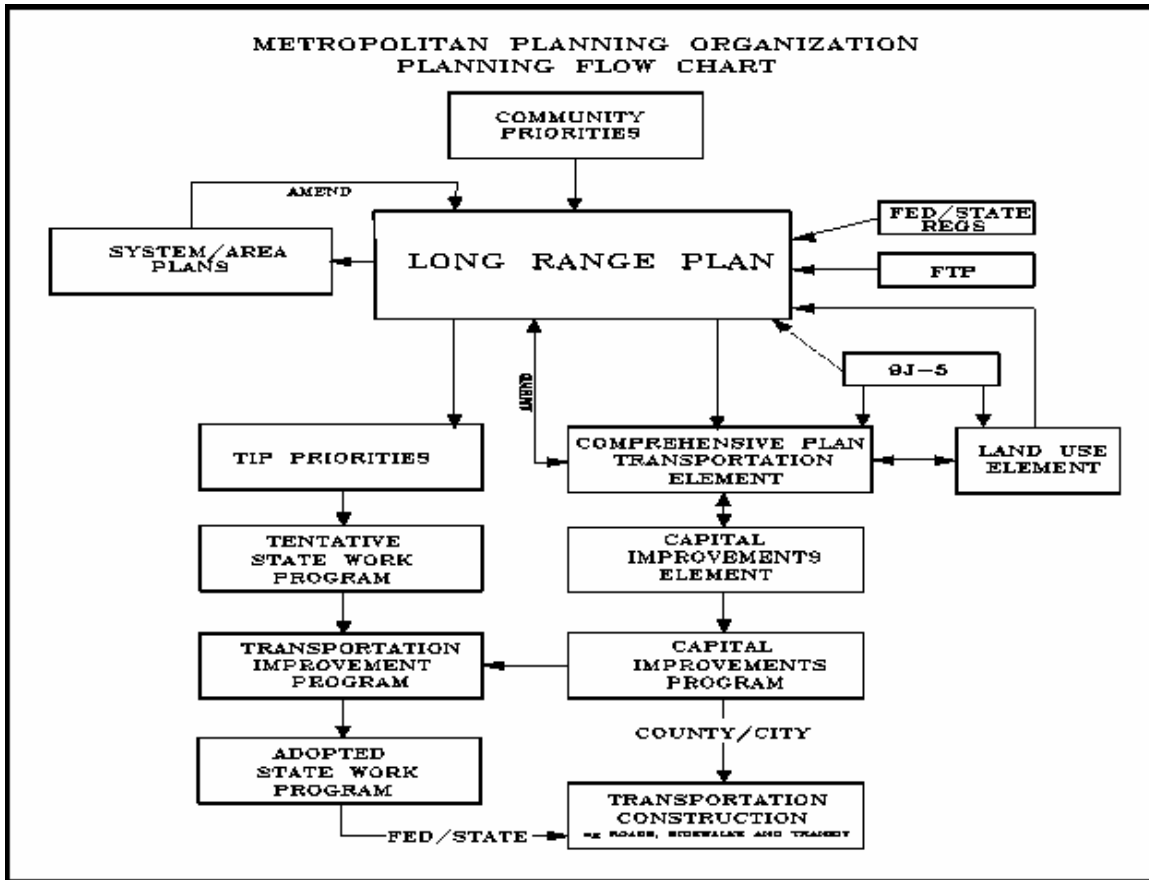
The TIP priorities are used to develop the Tentative State Work Program, the TIP, and the Adopted State Work Program. The Adopted State Work Program includes funding commitments for construction of Federal and State transportation projects.

The comprehensive plan transportation elements, land use elements, and capital improvements elements are developed concurrently. The County and City Capital Improvements Programs (CIP's) are based, in part, on the Capital Improvements Element (CIE). The CIP's include funding commitments for construction of City and County transportation projects. The Federal/State and City/County transportation projects are coordinated through the TIP.

The MPO Board has authority over the Long Range Transportation Plan and the TIP. The Florida Department of Transportation has authority over the FTP and the State Work Program.

The Board of County Commissioners and the City Council have authority over the Comprehensive Plan elements and the CIP's.

**Figure 2.1
Metropolitan Planning Organization Planning Flow Chart**



Source: Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

III. INVENTORY

A. Description

The inventory of existing facilities and conditions provides basic data to evaluate the existing transportation system. The MPO developed the inventory with the cooperation of Charlotte County, the City of Punta Gorda, Charlotte County Airport Authority (CCAA), Charlotte County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (LCB), and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The release of 2000 Census data shows that Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda are now part of the North Port-Punta Gorda Urbanized Area (formally known as the Punta Gorda UA), while Englewood and Boca Grande are now part of the Sarasota-Bradenton UA. The population of the North Port-Punta Gorda UA is 122,421 people, of which 97,918 live in Charlotte County. The Sarasota-Bradenton UA has a population of 559,229, of which 29,825 live in Charlotte County. Charlotte and Sarasota share populations, particularly along the Gulf Coast, where the community of Englewood is split between the two counties. Two independent districts, the Englewood Water District and Englewood Fire Control District, provide service in both Charlotte and Sarasota County. It is unlikely that Lee County, which lies to the south of Charlotte County, and Charlotte will overlap county boundaries at any point in the near future. The northern portions of Cape Coral have not been subdivided into platted lands. Physically, the State's acquisition of the Charlotte Flatwoods/Yucca Pen properties, as an addition to the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area, provide a barrier to the linking of Charlotte and Lee County suburbs.

Further east in the East-County Planning Area, a similar scenario exists if the future land use remains "Agriculture," Resource Conservation, and Preserve. This situation could change, however, with the designation of a "New Town" in the East County Planning District, such as has been requested by the Babcock Florida Company to allow development of slightly less than 20,000 acres of land located north of SR 78 in Lee County and east of SR 31 in Charlotte County. Such an approval could open the door for a future Charlotte/Lee urbanized area. Future land use designations in East-County will remain "Agriculture" and "Preserve," at least for the next planning period.

B. Street and Highway Elements

1. Federal Functional Classification System

The Federal Functional Classification System, updated in 2005, represents the major road network for the County. Roads are classified as interstate (freeway), principal arterial, minor arterial, major rural or urban collector, minor rural collector roadways, and local/residential streets. Principal and minor arterials can provide a connecting link between urban areas, serve as a hurricane evacuation route, connect to regional commerce centers, provide access to airports or major public facilities, or interconnect to other major thoroughfares. Major collector roads include access to minor public facilities, interconnection of minor thoroughfares, or access to concentrated lands. Minor collector roads provide access to diffused land uses. The only distinction between major and minor collector roads is in rural

areas, where land uses can be diffused. All other roads are considered to be local roads (Map 2.1, Federal Roadway Functional Classification). Map 2.11, Anticipated Federal Roadway Functional Classification, presents changes in classification anticipated with completion of the 2030 Cost Feasible Plan.

a. Interstate 75

Interstate 75 is approximately 22 miles in length in Charlotte County (5% of the classified roads), extending from Lee County to the City of North Port (Sarasota County). There are five exits in Charlotte County (two north of the Peace River and three south of the River). The I-75 Multimodal Master Plan identifies additional improvements, including HOV lanes. I-75 is part of the National Highway System, the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) and Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (FSIS). The level of service on I-75 is set by the state.

b. Principal Arterials

US 41, US 17, and Toledo Blade Boulevard (from US 41 to Sarasota County line) are the three principal arterials in the County, equaling about 42 miles (10% of the classified system). US 17 is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) and Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (FSIS) running from I-75 north to the DeSoto County line. The Florida Department of Transportation has completed the widening of US 17, from within the boundary of the City of Punta Gorda to the DeSoto County line.

c. Minor Arterials

There are fifteen minor arterials in Charlotte County:

- Harborview Road (CR 776/Edgewater Drive/Flamingo Boulevard)
- Jones Loop Road Extension
- Midway Boulevard
- Piper Road
- Veterans Boulevard
- Winchester Boulevard
- CR 39 (Toledo Blade Boulevard)
- CR 765 (Burnt Store Road)
- CR 765A (Taylor Road, from US 41 to Jones Loop Road)
- CR 769 (Kings Highway)
- CR 762 (Tuckers Grade)
- CR 771 (Gasparilla Road)
- CR 775 (Placida Road)
- SR 31
- SR 776

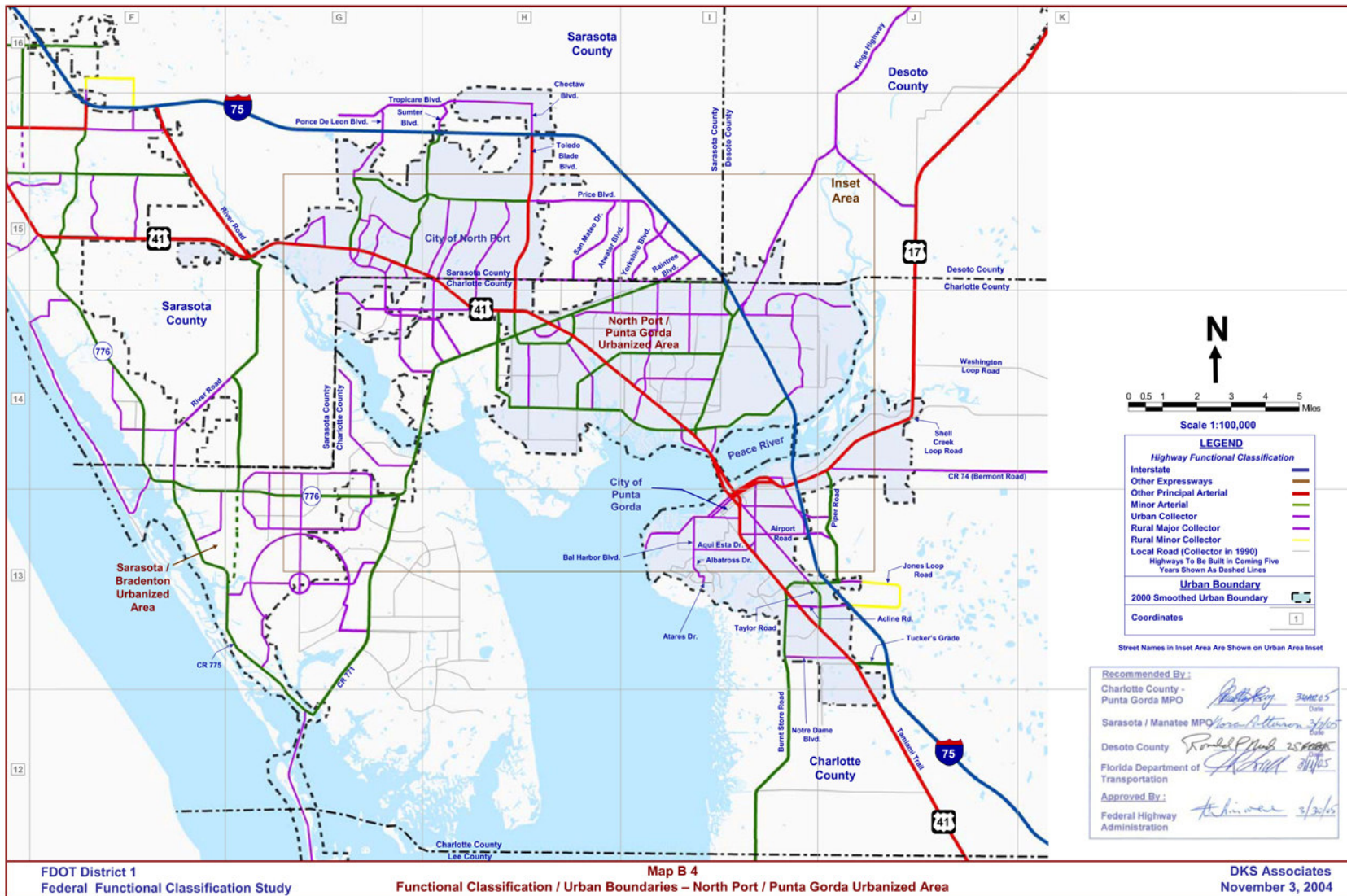
d. Collector Roads

The County manages an extensive system of collector roads. Of the 425 miles of roadway classified in Charlotte County, 52% are urban or major rural collectors (222 miles), and 13% are minor rural collectors (54 miles).

e. Local/Residential Roads

In addition to the classified system, there are over 2,000 miles of local/residential roads in the County. Charlotte County roads which are classified under this system correspond to 1.64% of all such roads within the State.

Map 2.1 Federal Roadway Functional Classification



2. Roadway Level of Service (LOS)

Level of service is a measure of traffic flow and congestion. As defined in the Highway Capacity Manual, “a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream; generally described in terms of such factors as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety.” When considering LOS, it is important to understand the different analysis types and what is to be achieved. Maintaining acceptable LOS for transportation facilities is critical, not only in times of emergency, but also for the daily functioning of the County. In addition to concerns regarding the multimodal performance of roadways and the function of business, the degree of safety and congestion directly affects quality of life (Map 2.2, Roadway Level of Service).

The 1994 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), published by the Transportation Research Board, defines measures for roadway levels of service. For arterial and collector roads, the measurement of effectiveness is average speed. The measure of effectiveness for freeways is density.

Charlotte County’s Board of County Commissioners sets roadway LOS for all its roadways except for Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funded roadways.

As of 2008, roadway levels of service on roadways in which the state sets the standard are as follows:

SIS Roadways

I-75	Level of Service C	County line to County line
US 17	Level of Service C	I-75 north to SR 764
US 17	Level of Service B	SR 764 to DeSoto County Line

FIHS Roadways

I-75	Level of Service C	County line to County line
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TRIP Roadways

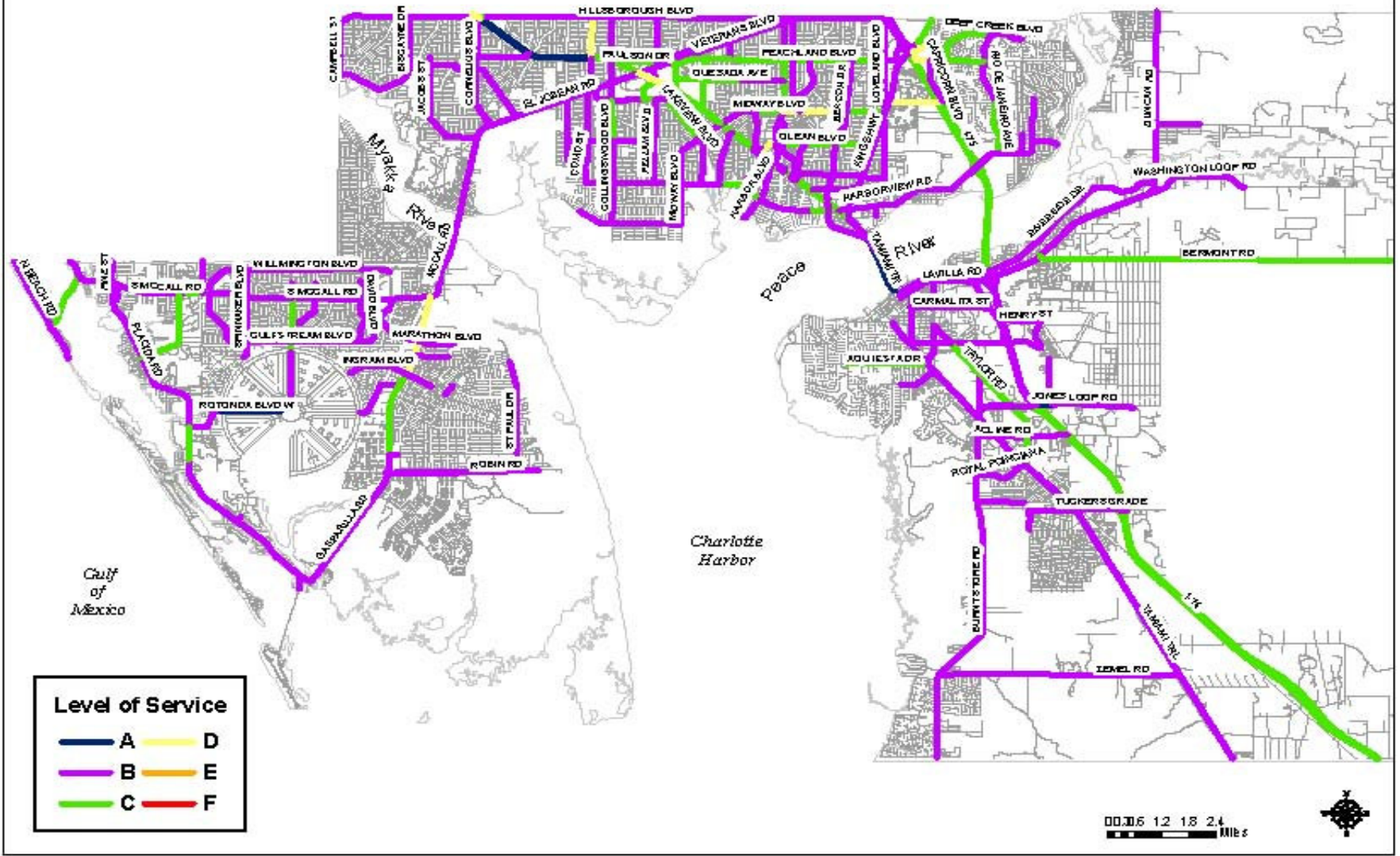
Burnt Store	Level of Service D	Notre Dame north
Burnt Store	Level of Service C	Notre Dame south to Lee County line
Toledo Blade Blvd	Level of Service D	US 41 to Sarasota County line
Winchester Blvd	Level of Service D	CR 775 to SR 776



Charlotte County
Land Information Section
Mapped 10/2008 by L.E.
Source: Charlotte County GIS

Map 2.2 2008 Level of Service Map

This map is a representation of compiled public information. It is believed to be an accurate and complete depiction for the stated purpose. Charlotte County and its employees make no guarantee, implied or otherwise, as to its use. This is not a survey, nor is it to be used for design.



3. Maintenance Responsibility

The State, County, and City governments all have road maintenance responsibility in the County. Maintenance has several different levels: minor repair (mending potholes, etc.), resurfacing/rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Resurfacing and drainage improvements are the most common form of maintenance of classified roads. FDOT, through funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), maintains I-75, US 41, and US 17. The Federal Government can also provide funding for the resurfacing of State and classified local roads. FDOT also maintains SR 776 and SR 31. State road maintenance funds cannot be used on local roads. Over the past 30 years, County Roads 775, 771, 39, 74, 776, 765, 769, 764 (Washington Loop), and 762 (Tuckers Grade) were arbitrarily transferred from State maintenance responsibility to County. The County and City share responsibility for the public roads not maintained by the State. The City maintains local public roads within the City limits through its general fund. The County maintains arterial and collector roads, which it has accepted for maintenance through the Road and Bridge Program, through funding from gas tax revenues. Maintenance responsibilities are shown on Map 2.10, Maintenance Responsibilities.

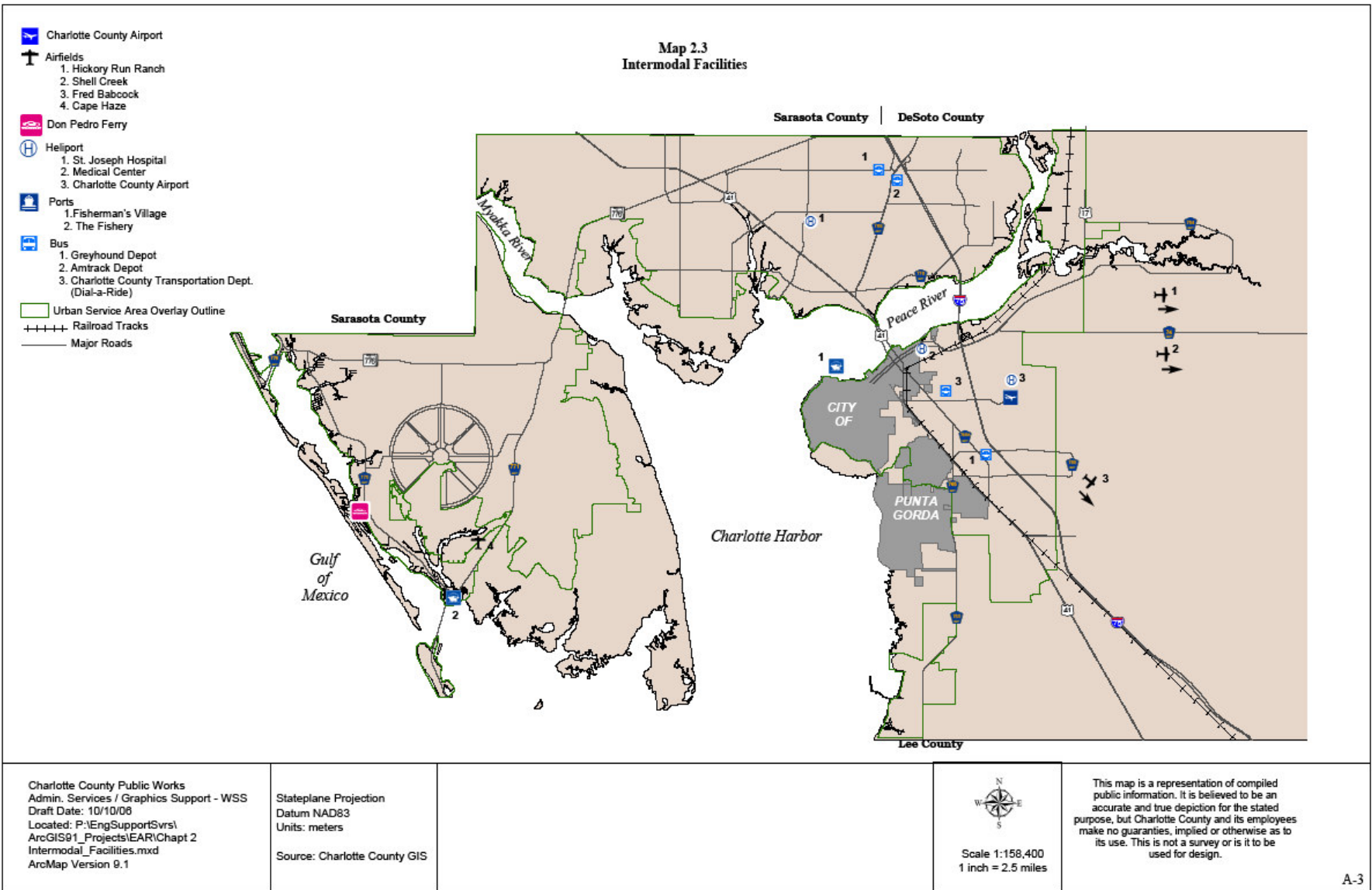
4. Number of Lanes

Of the 457 centerline miles of classified roadways in Charlotte County, there are approximately 1,111 lane miles. There are more than 364 miles of two-lane undivided roadways. These roadways constitute 80% of the total miles. Of the remaining 93 miles, there are 3 miles of two-lane divided roads, 6 miles of two-lane one-way roads, 3 miles of three-lane one-way roads, 22 miles of four-lane freeway, 49 miles of four-lane divided roads, and 8 miles of six-lane divided roads.

5. Intermodal Facilities

Because of the low-density, suburban development pattern which emphasizes private automobiles, intermodal facilities are not well developed in the County. However, some individual components are in place, including the Charlotte County Airport (which is connected to both I-75 and US 17), the Amtrak Station (Kings Highway only), and Kings Highway and Jones Loop Road Greyhound bus stations. The locations of Charlotte County's intermodal transportation facilities are illustrated on Map 2.3, Intermodal Facilities.

Against the backdrop of the County's lack of through roads, strip commercial development, and platted land problem, Charlotte County's best opportunity for future intermodal transportation facilities is through development of initiatives such as the Airport Commerce Park and Murdock Village. By locating a mix of industrial, commercial, and multifamily residential uses near the County Airport, I-75, US 41, US 17, and a railroad, the Airport Commerce Park can integrate three major forms of transportation: air, rail, and road. By providing a mix of commercial, residential, civic, and recreational opportunities in the urban center of unincorporated Charlotte County, the Murdock Village initiative provides a concentration of destination-type uses, amenable to mass transit. The pedestrian scale at which Murdock Village will be developed, along with the mix of uses, will help eliminate the need for trips to US 41 which would inevitably result if the area included within this initiative were developed according to its existing plats.



C. Public Transportation

Public transit systems generally include both transit and paratransit components. Transit is operated on fixed route with fixed schedules, while paratransit modes have routes and schedules that change with the desires of individual users. Paratransit is a flexible transportation service that is demand-responsive, designed to carry passengers from their origins to specific destinations (often door-to-door) by immediate request or by prior reservation.

In Charlotte County, the general mass public transit system is the County-operated paratransit system, Dial-a-Ride. Services started on January 2, 2001. Greyhound bus service is also offered in the County. There are no public transit terminals, transfer stations, or designated transit rights-of-way in the County.

The County also has a Transportation Disadvantaged paratransit services called the Sunshine Ride. The Statewide Transportation Disadvantaged Program (Chapter 427, Florida Statutes) defines transportation disadvantaged (TD) persons as:

. . . those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or children who are handicapped or high-risk or at risk as defined in s. 411.202.

Florida's coordinated TD system serves two population groups. The first group includes all those who are elderly, disabled, or low income. This group, referred to as the Potential TD Population (also referred to as "TD Category I"), is eligible for trips purchased by social service agencies. The Potential TD Population is considered roughly analogous to the transit dependent market. For Charlotte County, the TD Category I group is very large, because of the high percentage of people age 60 and over. Of course, many in Category I are not transportation disadvantaged.

The second population group (a subset of the first) includes people who are transportation disadvantaged, according to the eligibility guidelines in Chapter 427 Florida Statutes (i.e., those persons from the Potential TD Population who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation, and children who are "high-risk" or "at-risk"). These persons, referred to as the TD Population (also referred to as "TD Category II"), are eligible for trips purchased through the State TD Trust Fund, as well as for trips purchased by social service agencies.

By State law, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) is charged with the responsibility to accomplish the coordination of transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged. To ensure coordination of these services, the Commission contracts with local community transportation coordinators to provide TD transportation services within each county.

The Charlotte County Transit Division (CCTD) is the designated Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Charlotte County and provides coordinated transportation services to

non-sponsored clients and to clients sponsored by other agencies. The Charlotte County Transit Division currently maintains an inventory of 26 vehicles. Existing public transportation services are available through two primary sources: the service coordinated by the Charlotte County Transit Division and service that is provided outside of the coordinated program.

1. Coordinated Service

The Charlotte County Transit Division provides and coordinates shared-ride, door-to-door paratransit service for persons who are transportation disadvantaged in the County. Service is offered on an advanced-reservation basis, generally for subscription (standing order) trips or on a demand-response (random) basis.

In addition to providing service itself, CCTD also coordinates services conducted by other transportation operators, including the Charlotte County Veterans Council, Charlotte County Community Mental Health, Christian City (Grove City Manor), Boys and Girls Clubs, Charlotte County Council On Aging, Cooper Street Recreation Center, Port Charlotte Cultural Center, and the Charlotte County School Board (Head Start Program). Two private, for-profit companies--Ambitrans Medical Transportation, and Astor Cab, are also under contract, providing service within the coordinated system.

In FY 1995, these services totaled 103,676 one-way passenger trips, with the majority of the trips being for medical, nutritional, and educational/training purposes. These trips were provided for clients of the above-mentioned programs and for persons who qualify under the State-prescribed guidelines for TD eligibility.

2. Non-Coordinated Service

Other transportation services are provided by public and private agencies, as well as volunteer organizations which are not part of the CTC's coordinated system (non-coordinated operators). The Charlotte County TDP identifies eight non-coordinated agencies and a dozen taxicab and limousine services.

3. Service Area and Levels of Service

The service area is all of Charlotte County, which is approximately 819 square miles or 693 square land miles. The Charlotte County Transit Division provides several levels of service, including daily congregate meal routes in Charlotte Harbor, Punta Gorda, and Englewood and daily shopping routes to all points in the service area. The routes to major activity centers (or trip attractors) are on a subscription basis as daily routes serving Charlotte County Community Mental Health and weekly routes serving the Visually Impaired Persons Program and Charlotte County Special Training and Rehabilitation (STAR).

A trip generator is a location or site that produces or attracts trips. Major generators in Charlotte County have been identified by the Charlotte County Transit Division and are based on sites served through the Transportation Disadvantaged Program. These sites include:

- Apartments/Condominiums
- Congregate Living Facilities

- Group Homes
- Mobile Home Parks
- Public Housing Units
- Subsidized Housing Units

Daily service is also provided to Bay Pines Veterans Hospital in Clearwater and the Veterans Administration Clinic in Fort Myers by means of a coordinated operation agreement with the Charlotte County Veterans Council. Service to other medical facilities in Sarasota, Tampa, and Clearwater is provided on a limited basis.

The Veterans Council of Charlotte County provides volunteer drivers, while the Charlotte County Transit Division provides two lift vans, fuel, repairs, insurance, dispatch services, and scheduling. The Veterans Council of Charlotte County also operates two vans for ambulatory clients, with grant funding from the Disabled American Veterans Association and match funding from the Board of County Commissioners.

D. Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail

The Florida Department of Transportation oversees the Florida Scenic Highways Program. The program is designed to identify, highlight, and enhance the unique cultural, historical, archaeological, recreational, natural, and scenic resources along Florida's roadways. It is based on the voluntary efforts of collective groups of diverse stakeholders who wish to heighten the awareness and protection of local intrinsic resources of many forms.

There are five key benefits to attaining the designation as a Scenic Highway. Those include resource protection, community recognition, economic development and tourism, community vision, and partnering. Charlotte and Sarasota County undertook a SR 776 Corridor Study in 2003 in order to identify the resources along that corridor, opportunities to enhance those resources, and formulate a community visioning plan. Among the short term goals of the study was the designation of SR 776 as a Florida Scenic Highway. The study was accepted by both respective County Commissions and on July 12, 2005 Charlotte County approved the formation of the Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail Corridor Advocacy Group to move forward with the Scenic Highway designation process.

On March 12, 2007, the Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail Corridor Advocacy Group completed the eligibility phase of the designation process and was authorized by the state's Scenic Highway Advisory Committee (SHAC) to continue with the process. On February 12, 2008 the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners approved Resolution 2008-10 supporting the designation. The letter from the Florida Department of Transportation was sent on April 9, 2008 formally designating the Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail as a Florida Scenic Highway.

Charlotte and Sarasota's Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail travels a total distance of 47.9 miles, including two loop roads along its path. The Cape Haze Loop begins at SR 776 and CR 771 and extends 16.8 miles to the CR 775 and SR 776 intersection. The Old Englewood Loop begins at West Dearborn's intersection with SR 776 and extends 5.6 miles to the Old Englewood Road

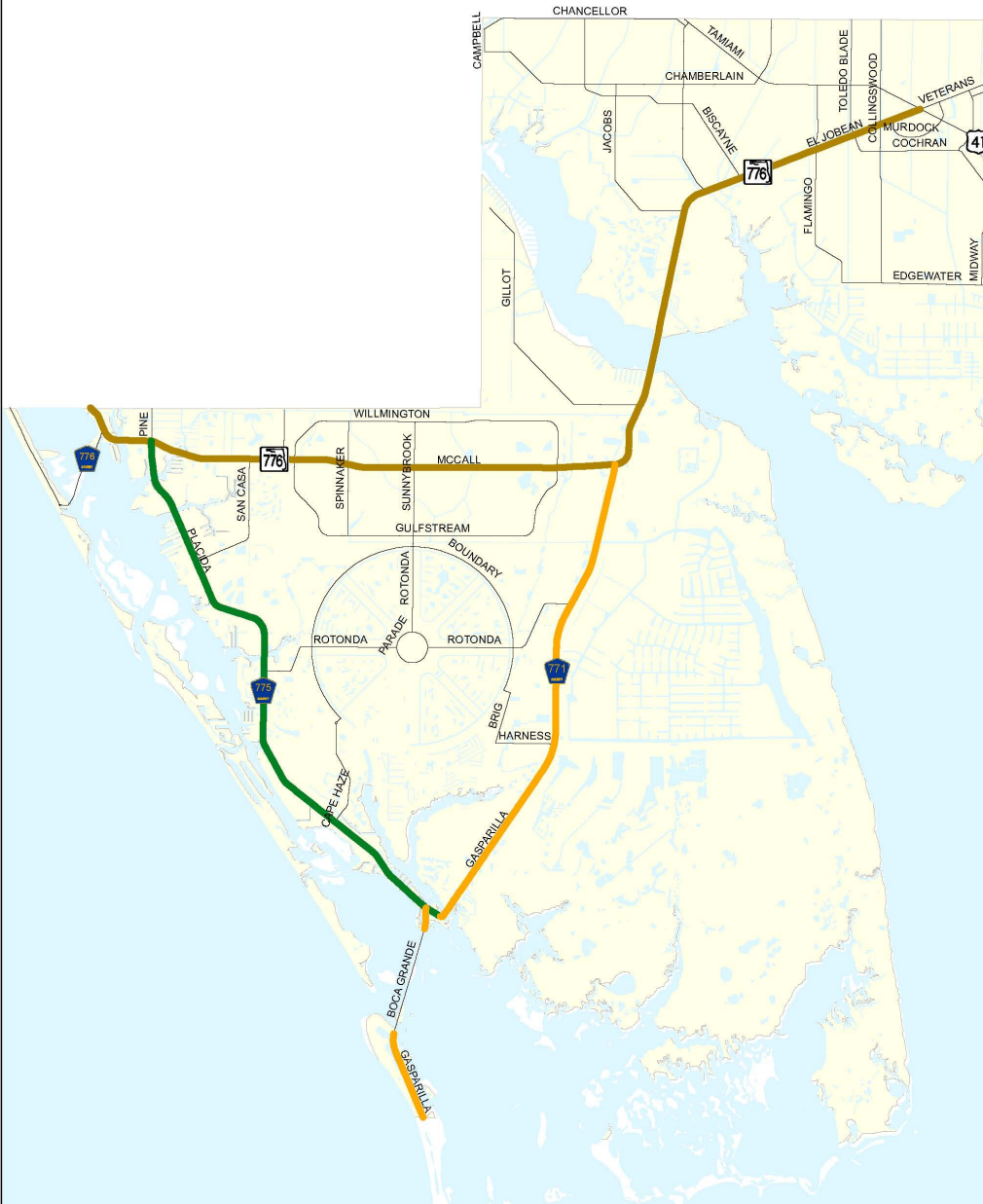
intersection. The trail contains over 50 diverse and exceptional intrinsic resources that represent Florida's special history, sites, and features. These cultural and historic resources, some of which are one-of-a-kind sites within the state, preserve a Florida from long-ago. Natural and scenic resources provide active and passive recreational and educational experiences while providing the traveler with breathtaking vistas complete with native wildlife and habitats.

The goals and intent of the Corridor Management Plan are carried forth through the joint Charlotte-Sarasota County Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail Corridor Management Entity (CME). The CME consists of citizen volunteers from both counties. It has been established as a 501 C3, to assist in the efficient application for and receipt of funding and resource grants to facilitate the protection and enhancement of the Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail resources.



Map 2.4

Charlotte County Scenic Highway Map



<p>Charlotte County Land Information Section</p> <p>Mapped 06/12/2008 by J MacDonald Source: Charlotte County GIS Map Location: M:\comdev\jig\john\martina\1\Scenic_Highway\1 SR_776_CR_771_CR_775_Scenic_Highway.mxd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Road 771 County Road 775 State Road 776 	<p>Scale: 1:95,000 1 inch = 1.5 miles</p>	<p><small>This map is a representation of compiled public information. It is believed to be an accurate and true depiction for the stated purpose, but Charlotte County and its employees make no guarantee, implied or otherwise as to its use. This is not a survey, nor is it to be used for design.</small></p>
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E. Sidewalks and Bikeways

Sidewalks and bikeways are increasingly referenced during any public discussion of transportation. The public support enjoyed by these traditional alternatives to the automobile is evidenced by the passage of two local option sales tax initiatives, in 1998 and 2002, in which sidewalks figured prominently. In addition to providing an alternative to automobiles, pedestrian and bike safety is one of the primary reasons for public support of these facilities. In the months leading up to the November 2002 vote to extend the Penny Sales Tax revenue for six years, the public very clearly expressed its desire to see sidewalks and bikeways installed along roads that serve schools, in areas which would enhance neighborhoods, and to provide pedestrian access to amenities such as parks.

As identified in the 1997 Transportation Element, certain transportation enhancement projects were programmed for funding and have been completed. These projects include sidewalks on Harbor Boulevard, Pioneer Trail Phases 1 and 2, Trabue Harborwalk Phases 1 and 2, and the construction of the Bayshore Linear Trail. In addition, the Penny Sales Tax revenue generated funding for 37 projects that serve neighborhoods and schools. The County's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) provided funding for eight additional sidewalk projects, and FDOT is funding (or providing partial funding) for five more, including a major project on US 41, from the Peace River Bridge going north.

The City of Punta Gorda's Alternative Transportation Plan 2030 and Five-Year Alternative Transportation Capital Improvement Program: Program 2006-2010 were adopted in March 2006. The City program includes improvements to both existing and proposed sidewalks. The plan includes an implementation schedule. Charlotte County developed a series of draft plans in conjunction with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), but it has not adopted a bicycle/pedestrian master plan.

Sidewalks and bikeways are considered in the 2006 LRTP. Sidewalks and bikeways are also identified as congestion management strategies. In addition to the comprehensive plan, there are a number of ordinances and resolutions by the County and City which address bicycle/pedestrian policies. Municipal Service Benefit Units/Taxing Units (MSBU/TU's) were created by the County to address infrastructure needs, which include bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Funding for construction of sidewalks and bikeways continues to be available through local and private sources. Most Federal and State funding for these facilities has dissolved, at least for the time being. The staffs will continue to pursue Federal and State funding sources through the MPO process, but they are extremely limited and very complicated to obtain.

The Board of County Commissioners has made a strong commitment to incorporate bicycle infrastructure wherever the opportunity presents itself as part of new or improved transportation projects. These are provided as separate facilities (Cape Haze Pioneer Trail), designated on-street bicycle lanes (Placida Road/Pine Street), space provided for undesignated bicycle lanes (Veterans Boulevard), and shared bicycle/pedestrian facilities (San Casa Boulevard, Airport Road, Taylor Road, Beach Road, and most new sidewalk installations). The use of bicycles as an alternate mode of transportation has become more popular in the United States and Charlotte

County in recent years. Increasing numbers of people have found this to be an acceptable form of commuting during pleasant weather conditions, particularly as more bicycle facilities have been created. Of course, in Charlotte County, most bicyclists ride for recreation.

F. Airport Facilities

An "airport facility" can be identified as any area of land or water improved, maintained, or operated by a governmental agency for the landing and takeoff of aircraft; privately owned paved runways of 4,000 or more feet in length; and any appurtenant area which is used for airport buildings, other airport facilities, or right-of-way. Under this definition, one general aviation airport, several private airports, and two hospital heliports exist in Charlotte County (Map 2.3, Intermodal Facilities, Appendix A). Both heliports are in urban areas; the Charlotte County Airport is in an infill area.

The Charlotte County Airport is located three miles southeast of the City of Punta Gorda. The airport was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II for use as a training field. It is now owned and operated by the Charlotte County Airport Authority (CCAA). The CCA funds are currently generated from airport/industrial park revenues. The Charlotte County Airport Master Plan Update was adopted by the predecessor of the Charlotte County Development Authority in February 1992 and updated in 2003. This element provides a detailed inventory of existing facilities, forecasts aviation demands over the next 20 years, evaluates airfield capacity and alternatives, recommends a land use master plan for the Airport, and identifies the needed aviation facilities and priority action programs for the future development of the Airport.

The Civil Airport Imaginary Surfaces (clear zones) are used to establish the height controls for airspace protection and to provide safety buffers between aircraft arriving and departing an airport's terminal airspace and objects on the ground. These surfaces apply to existing, instrument-flight operating procedures created to permit operation of the airport 24 hours per day in virtually all weather conditions. Map 2.4, Airport Imaginary Surfaces, illustrates the imaginary surface locations (clear zones) around the Charlotte County Airport. Imaginary airport surfaces can be used to create runway overflight zones for compatible land use controls and public safety.

The Airport's operational airspace is a reserved area of imaginary surfaces in the vicinity of the Airport and should be kept clear of obstructions. Tall structures that penetrate this airspace reduce airport capacity and aviation safety, because aircraft flight procedures must be modified to avoid the structure. The location of future tall structures must be carefully planned and coordinated to comply with Florida Statutes and aviation safety requirements and to minimize additional impacts on aviation capacity and safety.

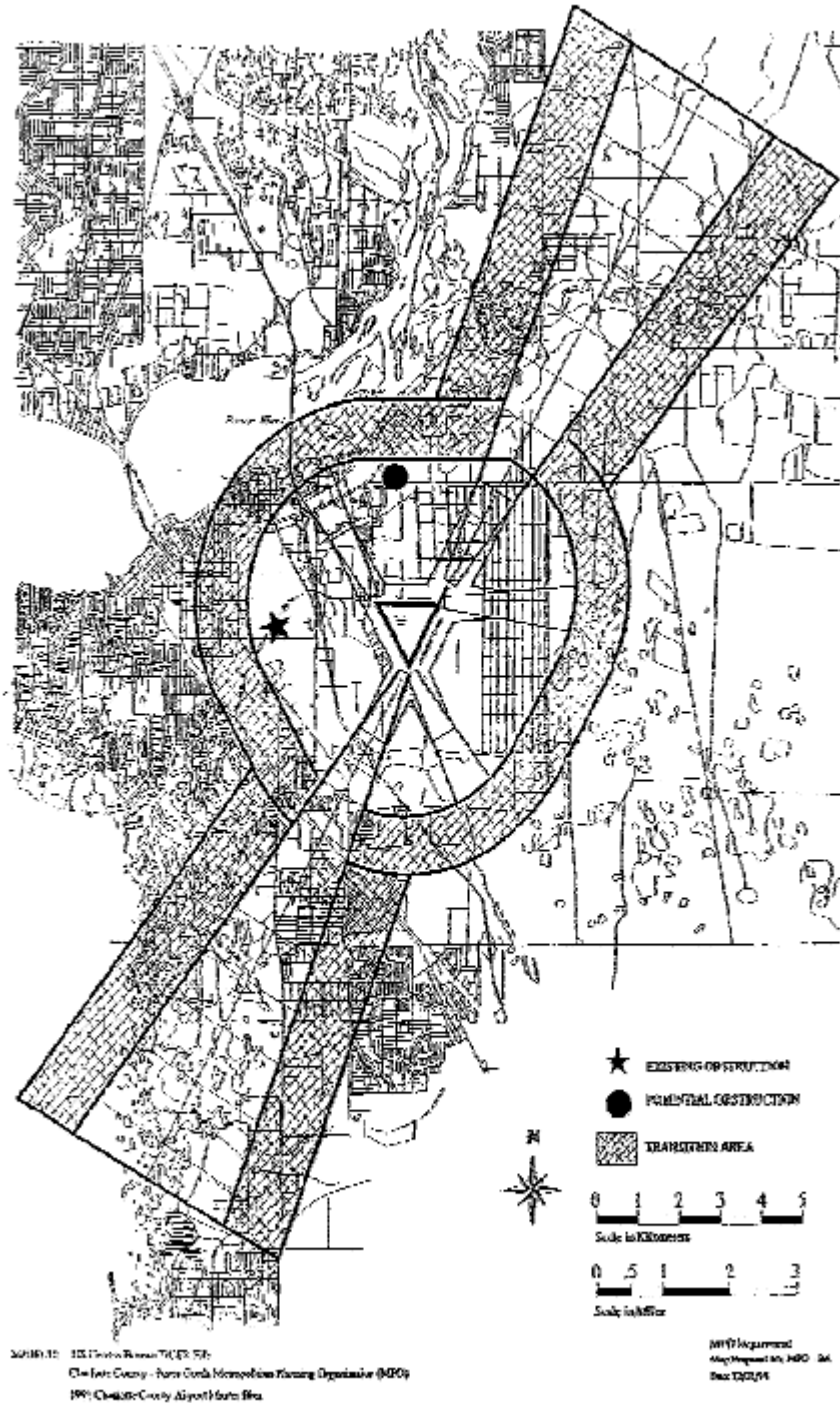
Areas within the exposure level contours can be used to identify incompatible uses for possible mitigation actions and to establish land use controls to limit future incompatible development. The noise contour maps for base year 1990 and projections for 2006 were developed in the 1991 Charlotte County Airport Master Plan.

Future land uses which are affected by noise levels of at least 65 Ldn (Ldn is a measure of noise relative to the time of day) include industrial, agricultural and a very small area of mobile home residential just outside Airport property.

The Airport has identified several initiatives as necessary to serve general aviation demands in the near term, including rehabilitation of airfield pavements and relocation of Runway 15/33. The Airport completed an updated master plan in 2003. It supports an industrial park less than a mile away that is 100% occupied. The industrial park area is not developed to capacity, as 250 acres remain for development. The Airport plans to continue serving flight training, recreational users, and business users and would like to extend the runway to 8,500 feet, add an ILS and control tower, and construct a commercial airline terminal building.

The Airport Commerce Park is located at the Charlotte County Airport, with sites offered from 1 to 150 acres, industrial zoning, and a foreign trade zone. The Airport Commerce Park is located minutes from I-75, US 41, and US 17.

Map 2.5 Airport Imaginary Surfaces



October 7, 1997

G. Hurricane Evacuation

Roadways which serve day-to-day traffic circulation needs also assist in hurricane evacuation, especially early in the evacuation process. As a hurricane approaches landfall, one by one, roadways may become impassible. There are a variety of factors that need to be assessed prior to the implementation of any hurricane evacuation. Population, vehicles, and route conditions must be considered when creating a hurricane evacuation plan. (Map 2.5, Hurricane Evacuation Routes/Landfalling Storm Surge)

1. Affected Population

The population of Charlotte County is particularly vulnerable because of Charlotte Harbor (the second largest estuary in Florida, with an area of 270 square miles and a 4,500 square mile basin), the Peace River, and the Myakka River. Due to the historic platting and growth, most of the County's development, encompassing all but the most eastern portions of Charlotte County, lies within the Coastal Planning Area. Most of Charlotte County is designated as a Coastal Area in accordance with 9J-5 FAC rules. Within the Coastal Planning Area lies the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA). As of 2005, there were approximately 162,900 people resided in Charlotte County year round, so hurricane evacuation is a major factor which is considered both pre- and post-development.

The County's population increases by approximately 30% during the winter months, due to the return of winter residents or "snowbirds." Seasonal population must be considered during the planning stages of Emergency Management, since the increase in population results in a corresponding increase in evacuation times. Fortunately, the County's seasonal population increase (November – May) does not coincide with hurricane season (June – October).

2. Vehicles

As the County's population grows, so too grows the number of vehicles the County's road network will have to handle during an evacuation. With each increasing storm intensity, the number of vehicles increases as well. According to the 2001 HES, approximately 75% of the vehicles registered in Charlotte County would be utilized during evacuation. This means that 76,988 vehicles would need to be evacuated during a major July event, while 87,722 vehicles would need to be evacuated if a major storm came ashore during October.

The floodplains associated with these major bodies of water encompass much of the County's urbanized area, as development has historically occurred in proximity to the coast and rivers. The two rivers separate the geographical regions of Charlotte County into West, Mid-, and South County.

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council's (SWFRPC) Hurricane Evacuation Study 2001 identifies Charlotte County as the county most vulnerable to the impacts from hurricanes and tropical storms. This is particularly true of the Cape Haze Peninsula (also known as the West County Planning District), which is (as illustrated in Map 2.4 Hurricane Evacuation Routes/Landfalling Storm Surge in the Appendix) entirely within the Tropical Storm and Category I, II, and III Hurricane Vulnerability Zones and yet hosts more than one-

third of the County's platted lot inventory (approximately 50,000 lots). In addition, lands adjacent to the Harbor and two rivers are also influenced by storm surge. Map 2.4 identifies land areas subject to storm surge, based on a model developed by the National Hurricane Center. Charlotte County has many low-lying, poorly-draining areas that are subject to periodic flooding, which can result not only from tropical weather, but also from prolonged periods of heavy rains which may inundate the soils and overwhelm natural and manmade drainage systems. The classified road network is shown on Map 2.4 to illustrate those roads which may be impacted, depending on the severity of the storm.

The SWFRPC prepared an update of the Hurricane Evacuation Study (HES) in 2001 to refine and improve the 1995 plan. A revision of the SLOSH (Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes) model in 1990 generated new data for the location of the storm surge lines by hurricane category. The current SLOSH model analyzed 727 separate storms for their potential impact on Southwest Florida, including Charlotte County. The results of the simulations are summarized in five flood categories and discussed in the HES 2001. A zone for each category depicts the maximum extent of the flooding resulting from all of the storms of that category

As the 1995 HES suggested, arterial roadways form the backbone of any hurricane evacuation effort. The development of Charlotte County through a platted lands design leaves limited options for evacuation from the coastal border. Identification of the routes and an assessment of the capacities of the roadway system are the components of evacuation route selection. Roadway conditions, such as low elevation and the ability to accommodate rainfall flooding, become Charlotte County's limiting factors in roadway capacities.

3. Routes

Charlotte County was platted for development according to a 1950's vintage pattern, which emphasized winding streets and few through roads. This has left Charlotte County with a road system that provides few options for evacuees, who must leave areas from the coast and areas in which most of these subdivisions were platted. This situation is exacerbated by the County's geography, which divides it into three geographic regions separated by two major rivers and a harbor, making the road system reliant on bridges over water. Since roads are the foundation of an evacuation plan, the County must maintain a level of service for roads. However, it must be realized from the onset that neither the County nor the State can build the number of roads necessary to evacuate the population during the worst case scenario storm event. Early warning and prompt evacuation is essential.

Throughout Charlotte County, evacuation routes tie into the State-wide transportation network, which affects the capability for hurricane evacuation. The County's evacuation problem is greatest in the West County Planning Area, which includes all of the subdivisions platted on the Cape Haze Peninsula and the County's barrier islands. Transportation in the West County Planning Area is based on three major roads: State Road 776 and County Roads 771 and 775. SR 776 plays a critical role in West County evacuation in that both CR 771 and CR 775 connect with it, and evacuees must travel at least a portion of SR 776 to get out of harm's way. Evacuation north along SR 776, through Sarasota County, tends to follow the coast, and so, in itself, SR 776 is not a good alternative. However, moving east,

then north, SR 776 connects to Interstate 75 at Exit 31 and on to Kings Highway, which moves inland. However, this route entails crossing the Myakka River Bridge, which could become a choke point in an evacuation. Fortunately, this bridge was recently expanded to four lanes, which reduces its choke potential.

The other routes from the Cape Haze Peninsula also involve SR 776, which intersects with the recently constructed Winchester Boulevard, initially conceived as an evacuation route. The new Winchester Boulevard extends north from SR 776 in Charlotte County to River Road in Sarasota County, which eventually intersects with US 41 and I-75. It passes through State-owned lands which will not be developed and, therefore, will not add any additional evacuees. Phase II of the Winchester Boulevard project will connect Placida Road (CR 775) to the existing Winchester intersection with SR 776. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2007, when all environmental permits have been received. This hurricane evacuation route continues to be a high priority for funding in Charlotte County.

The County's other two primary evacuation routes are US 41 and Interstate 75. These roads also serve as primary evacuation routes for other counties. The number of vehicles exiting other counties will increase the number of vehicles calculated for Charlotte County. The County has reviewed alternate routes, such as US 17 and CR 74, for Charlotte County evacuees to use to complete a successful evacuation plan.

4. Capacities

After assessing the roadway system by identifying the acceptable routes, the next step is the assessment of roadway capacities. The capacities of the local roadways are based on the characteristics defined by the Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, in coordination with FDOT. Interstate and rural highway capacities are developed from FDOT's Florida Level of Service Tables and Standards Handbook. Using the Highway Capacity Manual, directional split ratios are adjusted and applied to the identified evacuation routes. These directional splits are provided to address the time of day in which an evacuation may take place--50/50 being the lowest and representing road capacities during the middle of a workweek day, 70/30 being an intermediate capacity during a weekend day, and 90/10 being a quick capacity which might occur after 9:00 p.m.

5. Conditions

The condition of the evacuation route is a major component of ensuring safe and timely evacuation. Many of the County's routes are located within low-lying areas which can flood from rainfall or tidal surge, making evacuation hazardous or impossible. Rainfall flooding may pose a greater hazard to evacuation efforts than early shoreline flooding or early winds.

In part to address hurricane evacuation concerns, and in part to maintain good traffic flow overall, the MPO has identified several areas for improvements. Charlotte County has programmed funds to address bridge replacements and/or modifications in areas that frequently flood, as previously recommended in the Transportation Element. For example, Aqui Esta Drive, an urban roadway that a large population center in Punta Gorda would have to utilize to access US 41, has been identified for improvements in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan. The proposed improvements include raising the road's elevation and

replacing or modifying a substandard bridge that is subject to flooding. The location of the bridges will be mapped based on criteria in the 2030 LRTP, which require critical bridges to be either replaced or repaired.

US 17 also serves as an evacuation route for local residents. US 17 has been widened along its entire length in Charlotte County. In addition to improving evacuation conditions in the South County Planning District, this project will provide regional benefits, notably to Lee County evacuees as well.

Improvements are also underway for the Mid-County Planning District. Concurrent with the adoption of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, and as discussed in its Transportation Element, FDOT funded a signalization program, known as ATMS, to improve traffic flow along US 41. The system is intended to provide computer control and monitoring of traffic flows, as well as traffic signal timing for efficient evacuation. The State has not concluded the design as of this writing. Once completed, the project should improve evacuation times and routes for residents in Mid-County.

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan identified a number of LOS problems with the County's network. This update addresses/discusses current conditions in terms of the FDOT-updated Q/LOS standards effective September 1, 2002.

a. State Road 776 (US 41 to Sarasota County Line)

At the time the 1997 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, this facility was identified as needing improvement to avoid failure. This problem has been corrected through the year 2020 by expanding SR 776 to four lanes throughout its length and, in some cases, to six lanes. The addition of bikeways and sidewalks, included as part of the expansion, will also help conserve the Q/LOS of this road. The linking of the disjunctive segments of the access roads paralleling SR 776, which is currently underway, will further enhance the function of SR 776, particularly in regard to local business trips.

b. Placida Road/CR 775 (SR 776 to Rotonda Boulevard West)

Also identified in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan as a road in danger of failing, Placida Road has been expanded to four lanes (divided and with a fifth lane in sections) from Rotonda Boulevard north to the Sarasota County line (Pine Street). These improvements are projected to keep this road at an acceptable Q/LOS for the foreseeable future. From Rotonda Boulevard south to its intersection with Boca Grande Causeway to Gasparilla Island, it is anticipated that widening could be programmed by 2030, as development continues to take place in this area. The roadway is currently satisfactory for the demand.

c. US 41/Tamiami Trail

This facility is one of the most critical transportation corridors from Lee County to the City of North Port and Sarasota County, serving as the primary thoroughfare through the City of Punta Gorda and some of the most developed portion of the County. According to FDOT policy, the provision of six travel lanes is the maximum number that will be constructed, therefore, other measures must be explored in order to maintain acceptable operation. FDOT is currently in the final stage of the design of a comprehensive upgrade

of signals along the US 41 corridor and throughout the County that will optimize traffic flow. The County and MPO staffs have identified the need for geometric improvements at a number of intersections in the corridor and have proposed to FDOT that a comprehensive analysis be conducted to begin this program. Also, the County has requested that FDOT's FY 2008 work program include a PD&E study for the widening of the last four-lane segment (North County) of the roadway between Enterprise Drive and Sumter Boulevard in the City of North Port. In addition, to provide alternative parallel capacity, the County has begun the design and purchase of right-of-way/mitigation land for the first phase of improvements to the Flamingo Boulevard/Edgewater Drive Corridor, from US 41 near the Peace River to US 41 at Toledo Blade near North Port. This improvement is intended to serve as a bypass to US 41, particularly for travelers who wish to pass through Mid-County on their way to West County and northern destinations, and vice versa. The County has acquired approximately 50% of the required right-of-way and 100% of the land for mitigating the anticipated impacts the expansion will have on the Florida scrub jay. This scrub jay mitigation is being funded in part by a grant from the Florida Communities Trust, which is a program funded by Florida Forever legislation and administered by the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

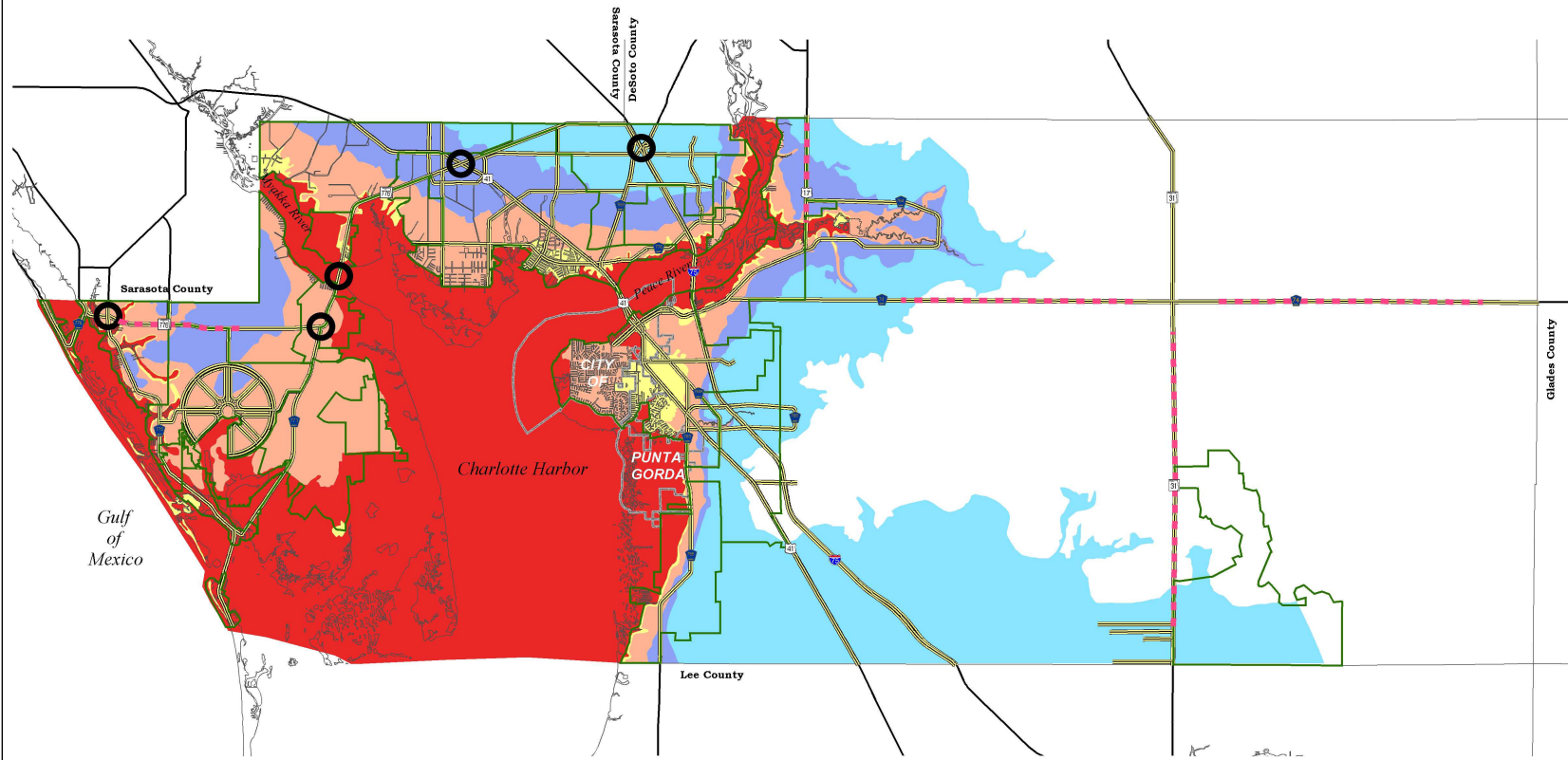
d. Veterans Boulevard

This is also an important corridor serving Mid-County, connecting from Kings Highway at I-75 to the Murdock area. Though illustrated on many of General Development Corporation's early plat drawings, Veterans Boulevard was not constructed until 1996, when it was completed by Charlotte County. Prior to the construction of Veterans Boulevard, Peachland Boulevard functioned at a LOS D. The widening of the remaining portions of Veterans Boulevard to four divided lanes was completed in Spring 2006.

e. US 17

This roadway serves as a major corridor, connecting the City of Punta Gorda and portions of South County with I-75, DeSoto County, and the interior of the State. A substantial percentage of the traffic is commercial, particularly freight, citrus, and produce trucks. This commercial use has intensified with the completion of the regional Wal-Mart Distribution Facility on US 17 in DeSoto County, just north of the County line. With the designation of the land around the County Airport as a Commerce Park and completion of the Piper Road connection to US 17 at Regent Road, US 17 will continue to carry higher volumes of traffic. The last phase of the four-lane widening of US 17 to the DeSoto County line was completed by FDOT in 2005.

**Map 2.6
Hurricane Evacuation Routes / Landfalling Storm Surge**



Charlotte County Public Works
Admin. Services / Graphics Support - WSS
Draft Date: 10/06
Revised Date: 5/27/08
Located: P:\EngSupportSvrs\
ArcGIS91_Projects\
EAR\hurricane_evac_surge.mxd
ArcMap Version 9.1

Stateplane Projection
Datum NAD83
Units: meters

Source: Charlotte County GIS,
SWFRPC, C.C.Com.Dev.
& CCPW

- Roads Subject to Flooding
- Evacuation Routes
- Recommended Traffic Control Points
- Highways
- Urban Service Area Outline

- Storm Surge**
- Tropical Storm - 3.1 to 5.7 Feet Above Mean Sea Level (MSL)
 - Category 1 - 4.5 to 6.6 Feet Above MSL
 - Category 2 - 8.3 to 12.3 Above MSL
 - Category 3 - 11.3 to 20 Feet Above MSL
 - Category 4-5 - 17.2 to 31.7 Feet above MSL

Scale 1:205,920
1 inch = 3.25 miles

This map is a representation of compiled public information. It is believed to be an accurate and true depiction for the stated purpose, but Charlotte County and its employees make no warranties, implied or otherwise as to its use. This is not a survey or is it to be used for design.

H. Current Conditions

Concurrency monitoring is very important in maintaining adequate levels of service. To monitor the LOS of the County's road network, the 1997 Comprehensive Plan established a Concurrency Monitoring System, which includes a computer program to track changes in the LOS. This program utilizes data from the County Public Works Division and the MPO and is administered by Community Development. Road segments are monitored twice a year at six-month intervals, which result in each segment examined both in-season and out-of-season, accounting for tourist traffic. LOS may vary from count to count. Currently all roadways meet level of service requirements. Community Development personnel use the computer program when reviewing individual development proposals, as well as rezoning, land use, and special exception requests. The number of trips generated by the proposed development, land use, or rezoning are calculated using the most current trip generation estimates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual. The resulting figures are then added to the existing traffic counts to determine whether the new development will cause the affected roadway segments to fall below the acceptable LOS. However, due to the County's archaic platting pattern, which forces most traffic onto the few major through corridors.

1. US 41

US 41 is operating at acceptable levels of service through at least the 2013 time frame. Additionally, Charlotte County has programmed a number of improvements to make Edgewater Drive serve as a by-pass or reliever of US 41 traffic. The 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan indicates that LOS on both I-75 and US 41 will be a major issue by 2020. County staff intends to work with FDOT to discuss these and other traffic management issues in 2009.

2. Cochran Boulevard

Cochran Boulevard traverses what has become an urban center of unincorporated Charlotte County, and serves major facilities including Port Charlotte high School, Charlotte Vo-Tech, the Town Center Mall (via a connection to Murdock Circle, the School Board Administrative Center, and the County Administrative Center (again via a connection to Murdock Circle). Because there are few alternative routes, Cochran Boulevard will continue to be a major collector. Facilities for this area and traffic volumes can be expected to continue to increase.

Roadway and pedestrian/bicycle improvements to the Cochran Boulevard/Lakeview Boulevard intersection were completed in 2006.

3. Toledo Blade Boulevard

The County and MPO have identified funding for the extension of Toledo Blade Boulevard from Murdock Village to the North Port City limits and are currently finalizing a joint project agreement to have the widening extended north to the I-75 interchange.

4. Edgewater Drive/Flamingo Boulevard

The County has initiated a comprehensive project for the extension and widening of Edgewater Drive and portions of Flamingo Boulevard, as a by-pass to US 41. When

completed, these improvements will correct the current LOS problems with the Edgewater segment identified above and will also provide some relief to US 41. The FDOT/County transportation model for the LRTP shows significant improvement to US 41 in the horizon year.

5. SR 776

SR 776 is the only major east-west arterial serving the Cape Haze Peninsula in West County. Traveling east, SR 776 turns northward at roughly the intersection with CR 771. This heavily traveled corridor provides the only crossing of the Myakka River between West and Mid-County. Even though SR 776 is currently operating at an acceptable level of service, due to its recent widening, the 2030 LRTP shows that the LOS is expected to fail along most segments by 2020. The recent improvements to the Myakka River Bridge expanded the eastbound lanes to allow re-striping to three lanes in the future, as the need arises. The existing westbound bridge can only accommodate two travel lanes. Minor interim improvements, such as the addition of turn lanes and reconfiguration of intersections, will improve the operation of this major facility in the short term. As SR 776 is the primary evacuation route and the only route to connect Englewood/Cape Haze to other portions of Charlotte County, the widening of the roadway could become critical before the year 2030 planning horizon. The significance of SR 776 as an evacuation route is recognized in the Natural Resources and Coastal Planning portion of the Comprehensive Plan and is discussed in the Hurricane Evacuation section in this EAR. State analysis shows that the roadway meets level of service requirements through at least 2014.

6. Roadways of Special Emphasis

US 41, SR 776, I-75 and CR 771 are roadways which will receive special study in 2009. US 41, SR 776 and I-75 are roads over which the state has jurisdiction. CR 771 is a county responsibility. Levels of service for these roadways indicate acceptable levels of service through the planning period, but the mix of poor economic conditions, sporadic growth and traffic from intra-county and inter-county sources makes it important that these roadways receive ongoing scrutiny to ensure that concurrency is maintained. The main planning issues for these roadways are discussed in the following text and a number of policies were added to the Goals, Objectives and Policies section of this element to address these planning needs.

Analysis - Five or More Years – SR 776 and CR 771

Charlotte County conducted an analysis of its roadway levels of service on the basis of 5 and 10 year growth trends. The results of this study produced a list of projects, including one of more sections of SR 776 and CR 771. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) conducted a similar analysis for SR 776 and its roadways. FDOT and the County model results were in conflict. FDOT's model showed improvements on SR 776 to be unnecessary through the County's current capital improvements planning horizon. FDOT reviewed Charlotte County's model and found that growth was overestimated. Improvement to these facilities was unnecessary during the planning period. Charlotte County plans to meet with FDOT in 2009 to further refine analysis procedures.

US 41

Review of State Generalized LOS Tables had indicated that US 41 was over capacity along several segments over the 5 year planning window; however, operationally, roadway traffic volumes have not been perceived as a great concern. Kimley-Horn was hired to perform an operational analysis of the roadway, and this analysis revealed that Charlotte County citizens' driving needs and preferences did not fit the State's theoretical model. Instead, traffic was more dispersed throughout the day, resulting in lower peak traffic volumes than might normally be expected. The likely cause of this variation was the higher than average age of Charlotte County's population: retirees are not rushing to jobs during peak periods to the same extent that other counties experience on their road system. Kimley-Horn's study demonstrated that the county has capacity through the 5 year planning period. They also provided a catalog of intersection improvements which will help the efficiency of that roadway.

I-75

The state FDOT identified that I-75 was failing concurrency from Tucker's Grade south to the Lee County line. The road was at level of service "B" for this portion of roadway. The operating level of service is already "C." The state 5 year projected level of service was a "D", based upon general 10 year trending. Charlotte County does not have jurisdiction over this roadway, and the state does not intend to upgrade the roadway until after 2030. This is the only segment of I-75 set at "B." The county sought a waiver to change the level of service from a "B" to "C" and a reevaluation of levels of service trending, based upon economic conditions over the 5 year planning period. The state evaluated the reasonableness of level of service change and looked at the reality of development and population trends in the area. It also looked at the segments to the north and south and found that it was appropriate to change the segment termini. FDOT agreed to change the segment LOS to a "C," and future growth projections to a "C." The result is that I-75 is not failing over the 5 year window in Charlotte County.

I. Rail Lines and Terminals

The Florida Southern Railroad began construction of the line from Arcadia to Punta Gorda in 1885, with the first train arriving in Punta Gorda on July 24, 1886. The line was originally built as a 3' narrow gauge but was widened to standard gauge (4'8½") in 1892.

At the time, the port at Punta Gorda had more cargo shipments than the port at Tampa. The rail lines on the Charlotte Harbor and Northern served a second port at Boca Grande. However, the lines in the western part of the County have been abandoned. These abandoned railroad rights-of-way have been mostly acquired by the County and are being used as transportation corridors. The right-of-way adjacent to SR 776 was used for the SR 776 road widening. The right-of-way parallel to CR 771 was used for the Cape Haze Pioneer Trail.

The remaining functional rail line is owned by CSX (Map 2.3, Intermodal Facilities, Appendix A). However, Seminole Gulf Railways entered into a 60-year lease of the underlying real estate in 1987. In addition, Seminole Gulf owns the track, road bed, bridges, and platform at the Punta Gorda Depot. This 90-mile line extends from Naples to Arcadia and ties into the CSX system.

The line currently supports rail freight and rail excursions. Currently, Seminole Gulf operates six trains per week through the County.

J. Public Parking Facilities

Neither Charlotte County nor the City of Punta Gorda own or operate parking garages or any park-and-ride facilities, nor do any private parking garages exist. Certainly, providing sufficient pedestrian and bicycle access and integrating those modes with existing and future transit would benefit the community. Unfortunately, the two truck stops utilized by intercity bus services have a very limited number of parking spaces. The biggest challenge may be to provide safe, well-lit shelters for users on the midnight work shift change. Locations could be determined from a survey of workers, students, and parents conducted by the major employers and affected schools. It is recommended that the MPO assist the County Transit Division, major employers, and affected schools with developing a consistent survey form for their use. If the results of such a survey indicate needs and locations, local governments should approach those shopping center owners about designating a minimum number of parking spaces for park-and-ride purposes.

K. Port Facilities

The County has no designated port facilities.

IV. ANALYSIS AND FUTURE CONDITIONS

A. Introduction and Summary

This section is intended to supplement the preceding sections by considering the inventory of the components of the transportation system, identifying major issues and approaches, addressing system needs and deficiencies, developing a multimodal approach, and coordinating the transportation system with growth and land use. The 2030 LRTP was a comprehensive analysis of all the elements that affect transportation now and in the future. The Plan provides a guide for the future through the Needs Assessment. The 2030 LRTP Needs Assessment draws on needs identified in the previous Year 2025 LRTP, as well as additional needs brought forward by State and local agencies. Needs were also suggested by the TAC, CAC, and the public. These transportation needs were analyzed and augmented by developing alternatives that simulated future traffic conditions, using the Sarasota/Manatee/Charlotte Regional Planning Model (SMC-RPM).

The 2030 Needs Plan from the LRTP was not constrained by the affordability of the system. It instead focused on necessary facility changes that would result in improved mobility and generally benefit the community, taking into account policy constraints. However, Federal regulations require the MPO to ensure that the LRTP is cost feasible. The anticipated financial resources must be sufficient to cover all of the projected capital, operating, and maintenance costs of the total transportation system, including both existing and planned facilities and services through the year 2030.

Since funding is not available for all projects in the unconstrained Needs Plan, candidate projects were prioritized to determine which would be recommended for inclusion in the Cost Feasible Plan. The overall mix of projects between modes was derived from the Needs Plan and trends in spending, but individual projects were generally classified and prioritized within each funding source. Balancing the projects contained in the Needs Plan assessment against the projected available revenues was an iterative process.

MPO member agencies, including FDOT, Charlotte County, and the City of Punta Gorda, provided revenue projections through the year 2030. The revenues generally come from existing sources, estimated for the year 2030 based on current trends. Revenues through 2005/2010 are already committed and are part of the local agencies' Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) and the MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Therefore, this analysis identifies funding for transportation improvements from 2011-2030. Some revenues have restrictions as to type or jurisdiction of facilities on which the funds may be spent. Other revenues may only be spent on certain roads, such as the Florida SIS.

Projections of revenues available for transportation improvements in Charlotte County are based on current legislative policy and assume no change in these policies. Similar to the cost estimates, all revenue projections are in year 2006 dollars. Although the projections considered increased revenues because of growth in future years, they were not adjusted for the impacts of inflation. Table 2.2 shows capital, operating and maintenance revenue, and costs sources itemized by agency.

**Table 2.2
Projected Transportation Funding, 2011-2030**

Capital				
Mode of Travel	Revenue (X1000)	Costs (X1000)	Percentage of Total Cost	Difference (X1000)
SIS	\$309,235	\$309,235	49%	0
State	\$51,547	\$133,618	21%	(\$82,071)
County	\$238,112	\$160,285	26%	\$77,827
Other	\$0	0	0%	\$0
Roads Subtotal	\$598,894	\$603,138	96%	(\$4,244)
Public Transportation	\$8,508	\$8,508	1%	\$0
Bike/Pedestrian	\$13,840	\$13,840	2%	\$0
Total	\$621,242	\$625,486	100%	(\$4,244)
Operating and Maintenance				
Mode of Travel	Revenue (X1000)	Costs (X1000)	Percentage of Total Cost	Difference (X1000)
Roads	\$153,462	\$153,462	71%	\$0
Public Transportation	\$61,937	\$61,937	29%	\$0
Total	\$215,399	\$215,399	100%	\$0

Source: Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

B. Highway Transportation

Using the existing and committed (E+C) highway network, model runs were performed using the regional model to forecast traffic volumes and conditions for the year 2030, assuming no improvements to the road network other than those in the E+C network. The results provided an estimate of where congestion can be expected and how severe that congestion will be. The standard used for calculating road performance was volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio. V/C ratio is a measure of the amount of traffic a roadway is actually carrying in proportion to the amount of traffic it was designed to carry. Thus, a V/C ratio of 1.2 represents a road that is carrying the theoretical maximum amount of traffic possible to operate acceptably. For the purposes of this evaluation, roads were considered to be congested if they had a year 2030 V/C ratio of 1.2 or greater.

Analysis of the model runs indicated that much of the existing or expected congestion lies on the major north-south corridors, such as I-75, US 41, CR 776/El Jobean Road, and Burnt Store Road. However, east-west roads connecting these north-south corridors will also see their share of capacity deficiencies. These roads can be expected to see significant congestion by 2030, if capacity improvements are not made.

One of the most important elements in the development of the Transportation Plan was to identify those projects necessary to relieve existing congestion or congestion forecasted by the Regional Planning Model. Several road widening projects were incorporated into the Transportation Plan as possible means of relieving congestion on those roads. These projects included a number of roadway expansion projects: Burnt Store Road, Edgewater Drive, Flamingo Boulevard, Gulfstream Boulevard, CR 776/Harborview Road, CR 768/ North Jones Loop Road, Liddy Street, Piper Road, Raintree Boulevard, CR 39/Toledo Blade Boulevard, Tuckers Grade, US 17, US 41, SR 776/El Jobean Road, I-75, SR 776/South McCall Road, CR 775/Placida Road, and SR 771/Gasparilla Road (Table 2.3, Cost Feasible Plan – Highway Projects). Map 2.9 presents the 2030 Thoroughfare Plan graphically as outlined in the Cost Feasible Plan (Table 2.3). Map 2.11 shows anticipated 2030 Functional Roadway Classification changes. Note: future maintenance of these roads is expected to remain with current jurisdictions (Map 2.10, Maintenance Responsibilities), except that Charlotte County expects the City of Punta Gorda to propose future annexations. Such roads will become the City's responsibility.

In addition to the widening of these existing roads, several new roads or extensions of existing roads were included in the Transportation Needs Plan. These projects were designed to provide parallel relief to existing congested roads or to improve the connectivity of the road network. Among these projects are the extensions of CR 765/Burnt Store Road, I-75 Frontage Road (Luther Road), Gulfstream Boulevard, Harbor Boulevard, North Toledo Blade Boulevard, Raintree Boulevard Connector, Tuckers Grade, N/S Roadway, Sulstone Road, Westchester Boulevard, and Biscayne Drive (Table 2.4, Needs Plan).

A new interchange is also included in the Needs Plan for the Raintree Boulevard area at I-75 in Sarasota County. Although this project is not within Charlotte County, the need was identified, and coordination with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO was conducted to study the regional transportation needs. The purpose of this interchange project is to improve access to I-75 and make better use of the existing road network within Sarasota and Charlotte Counties.

There are certain cases in which the widening of a road may prove infeasible because of right-of-way restrictions, impacts on adjacent land use, or community concerns. In those situations, Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Transportation System Management (TSM) projects were proposed as alternatives to road widening. TDM/TSM strategies could include access management, intersection and signalization improvements, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects. Proposed candidate roadways for TDM/TSM strategies included US 41 north and US 41 south of the Peace River Bridge. For those roads on which both road widening and TDM/TSM were proposed, the TDM/TSM project would be an option to replace the widening project.

This E+C transportation network includes all existing facilities, plus those capacity improvement projects funded and committed by the end of the year 2010. The major roadway capacity improvements for all State, County, and City roads were included. The highway network was tested by loading it with vehicle trips forecast for 2030. This test showed how the transportation system would perform in 2030, if no additional capacity improvements were made beyond what

is already programmed or committed. It also provided a benchmark for comparison with other 2030 alternative transportation networks or systems.

The Needs Plan represents all of the capacity improvement projects necessary for Charlotte County to meet vehicle travel and congestion needs in the year 2030. The Needs Plan is also a “blueprint” that identifies the capacity projects that will be required for Charlotte County.

**Table 2.3
Cost Feasible Plan – Highway Projects**

Project ID	Roadway	From	To	Proposed Improvement	Year 2030 ADT (approx.)	SIS Project Cost *	Other State & County Project Cost **	Total Cost
2	CR 765/Burnt Store Road	Lee County Line	US 41	Expand to 4-lanes	57,000	\$0	\$30,381,000	\$30,381,000
3	Edgewater Drive	Collingswood Boulevard	Harbor Boulevard	Expand to 4-lanes	40,000	\$0	\$21,391,360	\$21,391,360
4	Flamingo Boulevard	Edgewater Drive	SR776/El Jobean Road	Expand to 4-lanes	30,000	\$0	\$15,154,812	\$15,154,812
10	CR 776/Harborview Road	Melbourne Street	West of I-75	Expand to 4-lanes	35,000	\$0	\$9,828,797	\$9,828,797
11	CR 776/Harborview Road	I-75	Rio de Janeiro Avenue	Expand to 4-lanes	35,000	\$0	\$3,879,936	\$3,879,936
12	CR768/North Jones Loop Road	US 41	Piper Road	Expand to 6-lanes	40,000	\$0	\$12,726,332	\$12,726,332
13	Liddy Street Extension	Veterans Boulevard	Wilton Avenue	Expand to 4-lanes	16,000	\$0	\$3,967,371	\$3,967,371
14	North Toledo Blade Extension	CR 39/Toledo Blade Blvd.	Liddy Street	New 4-lane facility	24,000	\$0	\$18,514,012	\$18,514,012
15	Piper Road	North Jones Loop Road	US 17	Expand to 4-lanes	17,000	\$0	\$20,164,736	\$20,164,736
16	Raintree Boulevard Connector	Veterans Boulevard	Sarasota County Line	New 4-lane facility	41,000	\$0	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
20	Tuckers Grade	US 41	I-75	Expand to 6-lanes	31,000	\$0	\$6,980,950	\$6,980,950
24	US 17 *	Piper Road	CR 74/Bermont Road	Expand to 6-lanes	36,000	\$863,850	\$0	\$863,850
26	US 41	Tuckers Grade	US 41 Split	Expand to 6-lanes	50,000	\$0	\$32,878,626	\$32,878,626
29	US 41	Enterprise Drive	Sarasota County Line	Expand to 6-lanes	60,000	\$0	\$22,966,174	\$22,966,174
30	SR 776/El Jobean Road	CR771/Gasparilla Road	US 41	Expand to 6-lanes	90,000	\$0	\$56,256,008	\$56,256,008
31	I-75 *	Lee County Line	US 17	4-lanes to 6-lanes	90,000	\$236,374,000	\$0	\$236,374,000
32	I-75 *	CR 776/Harborview Road	Sarasota County Line	4-lanes to 6-lanes	124,000	\$71,997,000	\$0	\$71,997,000
36	SR 776/South McCall Road	CR 775/Placida Road	San Casa Road	Expand to 6-lanes	45,000	\$0	\$8,167,302	\$8,167,302
37	SR 776/South McCall Road	San Casa Road	Sunnybrook Boulevard	Expand to 6-lanes	43,000	\$0	\$13,350,398	\$13,350,398
39	CR 771/Gasparilla Road	Rotonda Boulevard East	SR 776/South McCall Road	Expand to 4-lanes	23,000	\$0	\$12,295,571	\$12,295,571
Total Cost						\$309,234,850	\$293,903,385	\$603,138,235

*Cost from SIS Cost Feasible Plan

** Costs are stated in present value dollars (includes Design, R/W, CEI, and Construction)

All costs are stated in present day dollars (2006)

Adopted by the MPO Board December 12, 2005

Source: Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

20 Projects at Cost of Over \$603 Million

Table 2.4 Needs Plan – Highway Projects

Project ID	Roadway	From	To	Proposed Improvement	Year 2030 ADT (approx.)	Total Project Cost **
1	CR 765/Burnt Store Road Extension	CR 765A/Taylor Road	Florida Street	New 4-lane facility	19,000	\$5,290,530
2	CR 765/Burnt Store Road	Lee County Line	US 41	Expand to 4-lanes	57,000	\$30,381,000
3	Edgewater Drive	Collingswood Boulevard	Harbor Boulevard	Expand to 4-lanes	40,000	\$21,391,360
4	Flamingo Road	Edgewater Drive	SR776/El Jobean Road	Expand to 4-lanes	30,000	\$15,154,812
5	I-75 Frontage Road/Luther Road Extension	CR 776/Harborview Road	Rampart Boulevard	New 2-lane facility	16,000	\$3,333,668
6	Gulfstream Extension	Coach Road	CR 771/Gasparilla Road	New 4-lane facility	17,000	\$10,666,087
7	Gulfstream Boulevard	Forkland Avenue	Coach Road	Expand to 4-lanes	25,000	\$18,252,091
8	Gulfstream Extension	San Casa Road	Forkland Avenue	New 4-lane facility	15,000	\$11,610,824
9	Harbor Boulevard Extension	Veterans Boulevard	Hillsborough Boulevard	New 4-lane facility	10,000	\$2,163,449
10	CR 776/Harborview Road	Melbourne Street	West of I-75	Expand to 4-lanes	35,000	\$9,828,797
11	CR 776/Harborview Road	I-75	Rio de Janeiro Avenue	Expand to 4-lanes	35,000	\$3,879,936
12	CR768/North Jones Loop Road	US 41	Piper Road	Expand to 6-lanes	40,000	\$12,726,332
13	Liddy Street Extension	Veterans Boulevard	Wilton Avenue	Expand to 4-lanes	16,000	\$3,967,371
14	North Toledo Blade Extension	CR 39/Toledo Blade Boulevard	Liddy Street	New 4-lane facility	24,000	\$18,514,012
15	Piper Road	North Jones Loop Road	US 17	Expand to 4-lanes	17,000	\$20,164,736
16	Raintree Boulevard Connector	Veterans Boulevard	Sarasota County Line	New 4-lane facility	41,000	\$5,000,000
17	Raintree Boulevard Extension	Sarasota County Line	I-75 (Sarasota County)	Expand to 4-lanes	41,000	\$10,154,812
18	Raintree Boulevard Interchange at I-75 (Sarasota Co.)		N/A	New Interchange	--	\$40,000,000
19	CR 39/Toledo Blade Boulevard (Sarasota Co.)	Hillsborough Boulevard	Price Boulevard (Sarasota Co.)	Expand to 4-lanes	31,000	\$14,725,944
20	Tuckers Grade	US 41	I-75	Expand to 6-lanes	31,000	\$6,980,950
21	Tuckers Grade Extension	New N/S Roadway	US 41	New 6-lane facility	22,000	\$11,104,683
22	Tuckers Grade Extension	CR 765/Burnt Store Road	New N/S Roadway	New 6-lane facility	22,000	\$12,293,691
23	New N/S Roadway	Zemel Road	Tuckers Grade Extension	New 2-lane facility	5,000	\$24,416,354
24	US 17 *	Piper Road	CR 74/Bermont Road	Expand to 6-lanes	36,000	\$863,850
25	US 41 Bridges	US 17 SB/Marion Avenue	Melbourne Street	Expand to 6-lanes	125,000	\$55,224,811
26	US 41	Tuckers Grade	US 41 Split	Expand to 6-lanes	50,000	\$32,878,626
27	US 41	Zemel Road	Tuckers Grade	Expand to 6-lanes	55,000	\$24,449,552
28	US 41	Lee County Line	Zemel Road	Expand to 6-lanes	50,000	\$12,250,953
29	US 41	Enterprise Drive	Sarasota County Line	Expand to 6-lanes	60,000	\$22,966,174
30	SR 776/El Jobean Road	CR771/Gasparilla Road	US 41	Expand to 6-lanes	90,000	\$56,256,008
31	I-75 *	Lee County Line	US 17	4-lanes to 6-lanes	90,000	\$236,374,000
32	I-75 *	CR 776/Harborview Road	Sarasota County Line	4-lanes to 6-lanes	124,000	\$71,997,000
33	I-75	Lee County Line	US 17	6-lanes to 8-lanes	108,000	\$148,364,160
34	I-75 (Peace River Bridges)	US 17	CR 776/Harborview Road	Expand to 8-lanes	132,000	\$41,299,920
35	I-75	CR 776/Harborview Road	Sarasota County Line	6-lanes to 8-lanes	134,000	\$40,019,280
36	SR 776/South McCall Road	CR 775/Placida Road	San Casa Road	Expand to 6-lanes	45,000	\$8,167,302
37	SR 776/South McCall Road	San Casa Road	Sunnybrook Boulevard	Expand to 6-lanes	43,000	\$13,350,398
38	CR 775/Placida Road	Cape Haze Drive	Rotonda Boulevard West	Expand to 4-lanes	16,000	\$15,137,213
39	CR 771/Gasparilla Road	Rotonda Boulevard East	SR 776/South McCall Road	Expand to 4-lanes	23,000	\$12,295,571
40	Sulstone Road Extension	Sulstone Road	Sandhill Boulevard	New 2-lane facility	5,000	\$2,891,024
41	Westchester Boulevard Extension	Westchester Boulevard	Harborview Road	New 2-lane facility	11,000	\$4,754,128
42	Biscayne Drive Extension	Cornelius Boulevard	Flamingo Boulevard	New 4-lane facility	11,000	\$15,034,301
Total Cost						\$1,126,575,710
*Cost from SIS Cost Feasible Plan						
** Costs are stated in present value dollars (includes Design, R/W, CEL, and Construction)						
All costs are stated in present day dollars (2006)						
						42 Projects at Cost of Over \$1.1 Billion
Source: Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan						

The key to effectively planning future road improvements is to understand the County's travel patterns. This means understanding where people live, work, and shop; where they are coming from and where they are going. To understand these issues, the County will continue to participate with the MPO on the various studies undertaken to identify current and future population concentrations, their likely destinations, the demand for public transit, and other aspects of developing a transportation system that will function as the County continues to grow. Such studies will indicate where improvements will have the greatest benefit, where the County can help shape future origins and destinations through the provision of infrastructure, and where Comprehensive Plan amendments (such as Babcock Ranch, Murdock Village, and the Airport Commerce Park) can help create more self-sufficient patterns of development for the future.

When compared to the average Florida resident, Charlotte County residents are more likely to be older, with almost half the County's population (48.8%) composed of persons age 55 or older. Household income and vehicle availability data suggest that the population is middle class, with lower percentages in the County than in the State at the opposite ends of the income and vehicle availability scales. Although the majority of workers in the County drive alone, when compared to statewide figures Charlotte County workers closely match the carpool/vanpool use profile.

1. Traffic Safety

County staff monitors all accidents using the Small Computer Accident Records System (SCARS), which is reported quarterly to law enforcement agencies and County and City personnel. The purpose is to support traffic engineering programs and to enhance enforcement measures to improve public safety. In 2005, there were 4,072 reported accidents in the County, which represents a decrease of 6.6% from the 2004 statistics. While personal injuries in these accidents increased by 6.9%, the number of fatalities declined from 37 to 20. Many of the crashes occurred at or near intersections where there are turning movements and other vehicular conflicts. The staff maintains a record of the locations with the highest number and most severe crashes. Intersections along US 41 appear most frequently on this list. This roadway is the responsibility of FDOT and, through the MPO work program; County staff has asked that the State focus on a number of locations for improvements to reduce conflicts and, ultimately, the number of crashes. The County has made a number of improvements at problem intersections on County-maintained roadways and has programmed changes (Table 2.5, Traffic Intersection Improvements).

**Table 2.5
Traffic Intersection Improvements**

Intersection	Improvement
1. Veterans/Circuit City/Target Centers	Directional median break installed
2. Veterans/Toledo Blade	Geometric improvements
3. Toledo Blade/Quasada	Signal improvements
4. Toledo Blade/Hillsborough	Signalization planned
5. US 41/Tuckers Grade	Signalization programmed
6. SR-776/Flamingo Boulevard	Signalization and geometric changes planned
7. Kings Highway/Maple Leaf Estates	Directional median break completed
8. SR-31/Bermont Road (CR-74)	Geometric changes programmed
9. I-75/Jones Loop Road	Signalization and geometric changes programmed
10. I-75/US 17 Ramps	Signalization completed
11. US 17/Regents Road	Signalization completed
12. I-75/Kings Highway	Signalization and geometric changes completed
13. Veterans/Kings Highway	Geometric changes planned
14. Veterans/Peachland Boulevard	Geometric changes programmed
15. Kings Highway/Sandhill Boulevard	Geometric changes completed
16. Harborview/Kings Highway	Geometric changes completed
17. Kings Highway/US 41	Geometric changes completed
18. Veterans/Atwater	Geometric changes completed
19. Toledo Blade/Lakeview	Signalization & geometric changes completed
20. Toledo Blade/Pelham	Signalization & geometric changes completed
21. Toledo Blade/Education	Signalization completed
22. Carmalita/Cooper	Geometric changes programmed
23. Airport/Taylor	Signalization & geometric changes under construction
24. Aqui Esta/US 41	Geometric changes programmed
25. Aqui Esta/Bal Harbor	Signalization & geometric changes programmed
26. Placida Road/Rotonda West	Geometric changes completed
27. Placida Road/Boca Grande Causeway	Signalization & geometric changes completed
28. Placida Road/SR-776	Geometric changes completed
29. Placida Rd/Lemon Bay High School	Signalization & geometric changes completed
30. US 41/Paulson Drive	Signalization completed
31. US 41/Lowes Entrance	Signalization & geometric changes completed
32. Toledo Blade/Peachland Boulevard	Signalization & geometric changes completed
33. US 41/Murdock Circle	Signalization changes completed
34. Red Light Running Detectors	Partial installation
35. US 41/Airport Road	Signalization & geometric changes under construction
36. US 41/Airport/Pompano/Shreve	Geometric changes programmed
37. US 17/Bermont Road	Geometric changes completed
38. US 17/Marlypia	Geometric changes completed
39. US 41NB/US 17SB	Geometric changes completed
40. Harbor/Midway Boulevard	Signalization changes completed
41. Placida/Cape Haze	Signalization & geometric changes completed
42. Jones Loop/Taylor	Signalization & geometric changes completed
43. Jones Loop/Knights	Signalization & geometric changes planned

Source: Charlotte County Public Works Division - 2006

2. Hurricane Evacuation

Hurricane evacuation has consistently been a community priority through the development of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Improvements for hurricane evacuation include the four-laning of SR 776, four-laning of US 17, traffic management/control through the computerized traffic signal system, a possible turnpike east and parallel to I-75, and incremental improvements to the Charlotte County road network and critical bridges, implemented through project selection criteria. All these projects, except for the turnpike, have been completed or are currently under construction.

Hurricane evacuation for people with special transportation needs will be implemented by the Office of Emergency Management. The evacuation program, called the “Special Needs Program,” was established in response to Florida State Law requirements. Recruitment for evacuation transportation is advertised in the news media, in brochures, and by announcements during hurricane awareness seminars. Emergency Management requests that people who need, or know someone who needs, evacuation transportation contact the department for registration forms. Registration for this program is voluntary and does not require a reference through a social service agency. In Charlotte County, there are approximately 10,663 people who are unable to provide transportation for themselves. Of these 10,663 people, between 800 and 900 are registered for the Special Needs Program. Program registration increases during a storm event.

3. Congestion Management

The MPO documented its Congestion Management System for Charlotte County on August 12, 1996. The document included a discussion of public participation, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Congestion Management System Work Plan, objectives and policies, performance measures, data collection, strategies, congested corridors, unfunded projects, project selection criteria, and evaluation procedures.

Performance measures included mode split, passenger transit trips per capita, and roadway level of service. Vehicle occupancy was addressed by including driving alone and car pooling/vanpooling as one of the mode splits. Congestion Management Strategies and progress for each were documented in Table 2.6.

The Transportation Element includes transportation project selection criteria. The criteria were based on the six management systems, citizen, and State priorities. Criteria which address congestion directly include congestion management (including ITS, HOV, etc.), safety (reducing congestion resulting from incidents), alternative modes (sidewalks and transit), and promotion of infill development (urban service area strategy). These criteria make up about half the total possible score. Other criteria--such as improving the Florida Intrastate Highway System, hurricane evacuation, traffic circulation, and freight movement--also have congestion management implications.

**Table 2.6
Potential Congestion Management Systems Strategies**

Potential Highway Strategies	Congestion/Mobility Benefits and/or Impacts
Add High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes where warranted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve travel times • Increase vehicle occupancy • Reduce regional trips
Roadway Widening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity • Reduce congestion
Convert signalization intersections into grade-separated intersections where applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity • Improve mobility
Potential Transit Strategies	
Park-and-Ride Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase mobility
Potential Bicycle/Pedestrian Strategies	Congestion/Mobility Benefits and/or Impacts
New Sidewalks and Designated Bicycle Lanes on Local Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase mobility and
Design Guidelines for Streetscape Enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase pedestrian mode shares • Discourage motor vehicle use for short trips
Improved Safety of Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase non-motorized mode shares • Reduce incidents
Potential TDM Strategies	
Alternative Work Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce peak-period VMT • Improved travel time for participants
Telecommuting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce VMT • Reduce SOV trips
Ridesharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce work VMT • Reduce Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) trips
Potential ITS/TSM Strategies	
Traffic Signal Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce number of stops • Improve travel time
Highway Information Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce travel times and delay • Some peak-period travel shifts
Potential Access Management Strategies	
Driveway/Median Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve mobility • Increase efficiency • Improve travel times for through traffic
Turn Lanes and new or Relocated Driveways and Exit Ramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase efficiency • Improve travel times and reduce delay • Improve mobility and safety
Potential Land use Strategies	
Mixed-Use Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase pedestrian use • Decrease SOV trips • Decrease in VMT

Source: Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

C. Land Use Forecasts

Socioeconomic data, such as population and employment information, are a vital component of travel demand forecasting models used for transportation planning. The County and the MPO participate in the development and maintenance of this information for Charlotte County. This model input data is historically updated on a five-year cycle, thus requiring a periodic update to the input data, including base year and forecast socioeconomic data.

The 2000 and 2030 population control totals were fixed numbers based on the 2000 validation year model and Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) estimates, respectively. Table 2.1 Population Forecast Adjustment summarizes the low, medium, and high BEBR population estimates. An average of the BEBR medium and high population estimates was selected by MPO staff as the best representation of future population. However, adjustments were made to reflect variability in short-term growth. These adjustments were necessary to accommodate expected short-term growth through the year 2015. It is forecasted that Charlotte County's 2030 population will be 272,800, with a total employment of approximately 113,900 employees. This represents an increase in population of approximately 130,000 persons and 56,000 employees from 2000 to 2030. The forecasted population and employment for Charlotte County from 2000 to 2030 represents an average annualized growth of 3.05% for population and 3.22% for employment.

The entire socioeconomic data development process was supported by a series of interactive review workshops, conducted by the consultant with the members of the review team (County, City, and MPO staff). During these workshops, control totals, approved development, and zone-by-zone data forecasts were reviewed and adjusted as needed. These review workshops resolved forecast issues that could not be addressed by the forecast tool, thus requiring manual intervention that greatly enhanced the validity of the data forecasts.

The key focus of these review workshops was to identify the approved developments and other areas with a high potential for growth. The development totals and timing are intended to be the best representation of future growth. The actual timing of the anticipated future growth may vary from the assumptions in this study (i.e., growth in 20 years as opposed to 15 years), but the road network improvements required to accommodate this growth will be a necessity in either case.

The methodology used to identify the locations of employment growth, resulting from redevelopment, was based on the analysis that could be completed within the scope of services, using the best available data at the time the forecasts were developed. This necessitated the use of existing, readily available data. The opportunity exists for a more refined consideration of redevelopment growth in the future, should the resources become available.

1. Babcock Ranch

Of course, the sudden appearance of the proposed Babcock Ranch development has had a significant effect on the County's Comprehensive Plan and, ultimately, the LRTP. The Babcock Ranch proposal and analysis were not included as part of the transportation modeling, since the LRTP process was in the final stages as this proposal came forward.

However, the staffs of Lee and Charlotte Counties, as well as the respective MPO's, worked closely with the traffic consultant for Babcock Ranch in preparing the development agreement, the highlights of which are itemized below in this discussion.

From the overall planning perspective, the Babcock Ranch developer is required to create a Babcock Ranch Overlay District (BROD) to establish its own special urban service area, since the property is 20 miles away from the existing Charlotte County service area. The BROD regulations provide a design framework for community planning. The intent of this overlay district is to provide guidelines by which the transition from vacant lands to an environmentally integrated planned development (town center and village neighborhoods) shall be regulated. All uses within the district will be compatible with surrounding uses and interrelated with the other properties in the district through a cohesive network of vehicular, pedestrian, and greenways systems. The purpose of the overlay district is to demonstrate design concepts and development parameters that would guide the future growth of this new community.

This overlay district could potentially involve the construction of almost 18,000 housing units; 6,000 hotel rooms; 664,000 square feet of industrial uses; almost 3 million square feet of commercial uses; 72 holes of golf; 7 schools; and up to 295 acres of parks. Service and office areas would account for almost 2 million square feet. Under this proposal, 13,686 acres are to be developed as the BROD and 74,000 acres have been sold to the State of Florida.

The Babcock Ranch project, as proposed, would create a city of approximately 50,000 people in the most rural area of both Charlotte and Lee Counties. This could require the widening of a number of roadways, including SR 31, Wilson Pigott Bridge over the Caloosahatchee, CR 74 (Bermont Road), the expansion of SR 78 and SR 80, a new access at I-75, and new east-west connectors at Nalle Grade and Oil Well Roads. These transportation-required improvements are not included in the Lee MPO or Charlotte County MPO 2030 Plans, and funds are not available for these projects.

Several of the salient items in the agreement include:

- Preparation of a comprehensive transportation analysis, using a blended model for Charlotte and Lee Counties
- Confirmation of a minimum percentage (22%) for internal capture of trips (down from their projected 52% capture)
- Confirmation that the project will fund a comprehensive roadway improvement program (widening of SR 31 to four and six lanes and Bermont Road to four lanes)
- Commitment to dedicate a 250' minimum right-of-way to the County along SR 31 for future transportation uses
- Commitment to make the development a successful, multi-modal transportation community (buses, trolleys, pedestrian/bike facilities, etc.)

2. Murdock Village

The Murdock Village Community Redevelopment Area consists of approximately 1,200 gross acres of land within the unincorporated area of Charlotte County. The County has assembled approximately 870 acres of property within the Redevelopment Area. The Murdock Village Community Redevelopment Area is comprised of approximately 3,000 platted lots that were part of the General Development Corporation's subdivisions from the 1960's. Although substantially platted, the area was only sparsely developed.

The Murdock Village Community Redevelopment Area was identified as a key site for redevelopment, due to the "Findings of Necessity" Report prepared by the County in 2003 that determined the area was "blighted" within the meaning of the Community Redevelopment Act.

As stated in the Murdock Village CRP, the vision is to create a mixed-use, high-tech, energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly community that embodies several fundamental concepts. These concepts include the development of a vibrant and attractive gathering place for the entire community in the form of a Town Center; "five-minute walk" access to parks, facilities and services; pedestrian-friendly street access network; and interior greenway and blueway open space linkages that integrate the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) with existing County and community resources.

The redevelopment of Murdock Village is expected to occur according to the Murdock Village CRP, as provided for in Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. The Board of County Commissioners has approved Ordinance 2005-020, which established the Murdock Village Trust Fund, to allow for the collection of tax increment revenues that can be used for a variety of activities associated with the redevelopment. The Murdock Village CRP was found to be consistent with the Charlotte County Growth Management Plan by the local planning agency. The Murdock Village Mixed-Use Redevelopment District land use designation was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in January, 2005, and further articulates the vision for Murdock Village by establishing densities and intensities. In addition, the County has received a Binding Letter of Interpretation of Vested Rights (BLIVR) from the Florida Department of Community Affairs that determined the following uses were vested: 2,744 single family; 538 multi-family; and 3,023,882 square feet of commercial. This sale offering anticipates that at least 2.17 million square feet of commercial; 2,744 single family; and 538 multi-family units will be available to the selected developer, subject to site plan approval.

From a transportation standpoint, the project is designed to be a true multi-modal development, with convenient pedestrian/bike facilities interconnecting the various land uses. The roadways and "centers" are designed to accommodate transit vehicles as the phases of the project develop. As indicated in an earlier section, the two major arterials serving Murdock Village (Toledo Blade Boulevard and Flamingo Boulevard) will be improved and enhanced as key transportation facilities for the Village and this area of Mid-County.

D. Multi-Modal Transportation

Multi-modal transportation is defined as having or involving several travel modes, including automobile, truck, freight, public transit, bicycle, pedestrian, terminals, car/vanpools, and High

Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. Another term used in transportation planning is inter-modal, which is defined as a transportation system interconnecting, and including, different modes of transportation. An example would be a transit station that accommodates auto passenger drop-off and pick-up, as well as bike and pedestrian connections. Federal transportation legislation requires that MPO's develop a LRTP that is multi-modal, with inter-modal connections.

As communities begin the transition from rural to urban, the elements of the transportation system begin to change also, and people begin using more urban modes of travel rather than solely the automobile. While continued improvements and enhancements to the roadway network can provide short-term relief to safety and congestion problems, other modes must be explored and developed to provide travel choices for the long term. Highways alone will never be capable of satisfying all the transportation needs of the public. It is doubtful that contemporary American society's dependence and infatuation with the automobile will significantly decline in the foreseeable future. However, long-term rising fuel costs and lengthy commutes may make alternative transportation modes more appealing and, particularly in urban areas, timely alternatives to the single occupant vehicle must be pursued to encourage the use of alternative travel modes to reduce dependence on the automobile. Ultimately, a successful transportation system must offer options to the public. It must be multi-modal in design.

Transit projects developed for the Cost Feasible Plan were prioritized, based on the current Transit Development Plan (TDP) completed in 2004 and the current and expected revenues available through 2030. Transit capital costs were developed with the following guidelines:

- Project costs were updated, where possible, to reflect the latest cost estimates, and existing grant funding has been reallocated between projects to account for cost changes;
- Transit operating and maintenance costs were based on estimates provided by Charlotte County Transit.
- The financial assumptions that were used are based on Charlotte County Transit's 2005-2014 TDP.

Cost Feasible Transit Projects	
<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Expenses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Buses in Daily Service • Dial-A-Ride Evening Hours • Saturday Service* • US 41 Corridor Shuttle Service • Dial-A-Ride in Englewood* • North Port Service to Port Charlotte • Express Bus to Fort Myers • Intercity from Punta Gorda to Arcadia • Transit Planner/ Technical Specialist <p>*Now being provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Replacement • Buses for Service Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ US 41 Corridor ○ Englewood ○ North Port ○ Fort Myers ○ Arcadia • Maintenance, Miscellaneous, and Passenger Amenities • Bus Washing System • Advanced Public Transit System Technology

Source: Charlotte County Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

1. Public Transportation

An extremely small percentage of people in Charlotte County use alternative modes of transportation other than the automobile, as would be expected for a community at this stage of development. Optimistically, this is less than half of a percent of all trips. The predominant focus of this plan is two-fold: to evaluate transportation facilities as they exist today, and to begin planning to update and integrate the following facilities as elements of a multi-modal transportation system.

For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and the 2030 LRTP, public transportation is defined as any form of transportation in which a person pays another party for transportation in a vehicle. Charlotte County Transit is the public transportation provider for Charlotte County. It currently operates three distinct public transportation programs: Transportation Disadvantaged (“Sunshine Ride”), Dial-A-Ride, and Medicaid non-emergency transportation..

The Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program started in 1989 under the auspices of the Florida Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged. TD serves residents with physical

disabilities, those aged 60 and older, children at risk, qualified low-income residents, and those living in rural areas. These riders make reservations at least 24 hours in advance for trips for life-sustaining activities such as congregate dining, medical appointments, and grocery stores. Service is provided by approximately 26 County vehicles and by contracted local cab companies. The CCT also provides vans to several non-profit organizations that use their own drivers.

In 2001, the CCTD began operating the Dial-a-Ride service, which is open to any member of the public, and thus it is termed general mass paratransit. The service area includes all the urbanized portions of Charlotte County, excluding the bridgeless barrier islands. Its service mission is to provide high-quality, low-cost, door-to-door paratransit service to the residents of Charlotte County. Operating on a reservation-only basis, the service is available Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Many other vendors provide charter, shuttle bus, "trolley," and taxi services to Charlotte County residents, as well as scheduled inter-city service as described under Inter-modal Facilities.

In 2004, Charlotte County updated its Transit Development Plan (TDP), as required by FDOT, to maintain eligibility for State Block Grant funding. The 2005-2014 TDP was the first five- and ten-year plan in Florida. It provides direction and information to the MPO LRTP 2030 Update, as well as for the five-year Transportation Improvement Program, the annual Unified Planning Work Program and budget, and this Comprehensive Plan update. Specific objectives of the TDP include:

- Identify existing local transit services and resources;
- Evaluate existing transit resources;
- Evaluate transit policies on public transportation;
- Develop transit alternatives consistent with need;
- Develop an implementation plan;
- Determine future transit needs;
- Develop a future cost-feasible transit plan; and
- Define unmet transit needs.

Using year 2000 U.S. Census information, the TDP found that the key transit dependent population was located along the US 41 Corridor, from Murdock through eastern Punta Gorda. The corridor is a prime candidate for locating a regularly-scheduled, fixed route. Route deviation service is also a very important element that should also be explored, as the most transit-dependent residents represent over 12% of the total County population. A variety of needs, options, and recommendations comprise five general categories:

- A variety of funding enhancements;
- Expanding Dial-a-Ride service hours and days;
- Adding new transit services, including shuttle service along the US 41 Corridor, regularly-scheduled service from North Port to Murdock and Port Charlotte, express bus service to Fort Myers and Arcadia, and connections to inter-city bus service locations;

- Capital Improvement Projects, including bus replacements and additions; improved maintenance facilities; and utilizing technology to computerized reservations, scheduling, and fare collection where possible; and
- Strategic initiatives, including operating efficiencies and changes, and marketing and outreach programs.

2. Dial-a-Ride System Improvements

The advance reservation Dial-a-Ride service operates Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. As previously detailed, system ridership has steadily increased since service was first introduced in January 2001. However, with the increased popularity, there is limited passenger capacity at specific times of the operating day, resulting in an ever-increasing rate of trip denials. Additionally, the limited hours and days of service constrain the travel opportunities for those residents who rely on the Dial-A-Ride system as their primary means of mobility. Some of the specific actions to pursue include:

- The addition of more buses in daily service. As the Dial-a-Ride system's popularity continues to increase, the number of buses and operators available to provide service has remained at 12 buses since service inception. One additional bus should be added to the base service in alternate years, or as demand dictates. (Years Two through Ten)
- Expand the Dial-a-Ride Service to evening hours. The lack of evening service precludes access to many evening events and social opportunities. Additionally, the limited hours preclude the system's use by many residents who attend school or work in the evenings, especially individuals who work in the commercial and food service industries. Extending the Dial-a-Ride service beyond 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. would require the addition of two to four buses and operators. It is recommended that three buses initially be provided to extend the Dial-A-Ride service hours until 10:00 p.m., with additional buses added in subsequent years to meet demand. (Year Five)

3. Carpool and Vanpool

By sharing a ride with one or more people, Charlotte County commuters could save money on gas and parking, because passengers share these expenses with fellow carpool members. Carpoolers can choose to ride with others as few or as many times per week as desired, giving them the flexibility of driving their own car for pre-arranged meetings or appointments. Once signed up for a rideshare program, commuters are provided with a personalized computer match list of people who live and work nearby. After the commuter receives tips on how to form a carpool, it is up to him/her to follow through.

If a commuter's trip is lengthy (e.g., more than ten miles one way), a vanpool should be considered. For example, the Sarasota Manatee Commuter Assistance Program suggests a vanpool for a group of 8 to 12 employees to ride together to work. A contractor provides a van to one member of the group, who volunteers to drive participants to and from work, picking them up from either their residences or a common pick-up area, such as a park-and-ride lot. Each passenger pays a low, monthly fare that covers the cost of maintenance,

insurance, and gas. Vanpooling is set up on a month-to-month basis, so there's no long-term commitment. Users are urged to try it for a month and see if vanpooling is for them.

4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The use of bicycles as an alternate mode of transportation has become more popular in the United States and Charlotte County in recent years. Increasing numbers of people have found this to be an acceptable form of commuting during pleasant weather conditions, particularly as more bicycle facilities have been created. Of course, most bicyclists in Charlotte County ride for recreation. Sidewalk facilities in the County are concentrated in the areas around Punta Gorda and Port Charlotte. The 1998 referendum allowed for the construction of 30 miles of sidewalk and bicycle facilities in the region. The 1998 and 2002 referendums allowed funding for sidewalk projects through the year 2008. The MPO maintains a list of sidewalk needs for the City and County, which it received from various sources, including residents, the School Administration, Board of County Commissioners, a number of citizen committees, the City of Punta Gorda, and Charlotte County.

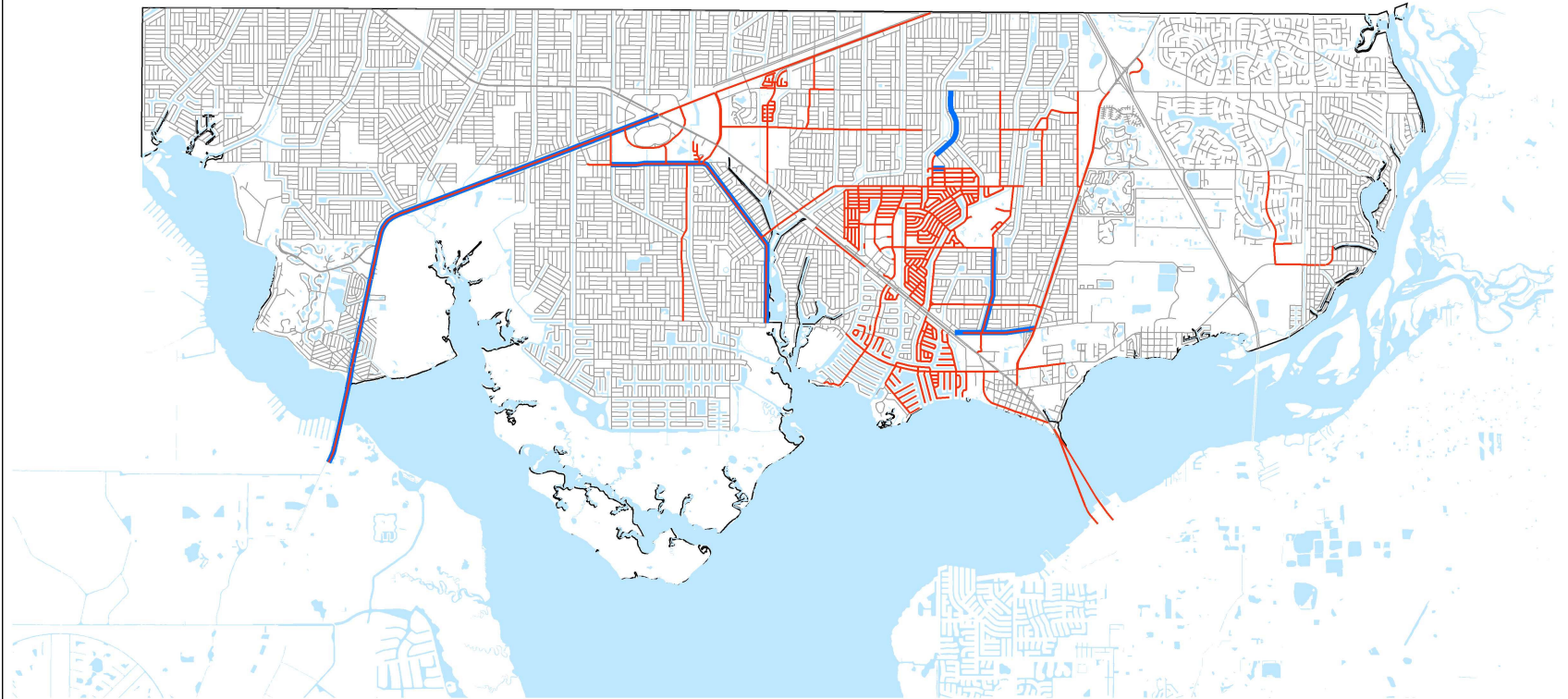
The MPO LRTP identifies projects for both the bicycle and pedestrian projects in the Cost Feasible Plan, based on the policy that all future road projects, except on limited access roads, will include bikeways and sidewalks. Other bicycle and pedestrian projects were selected for funding through an iterative scoring and public involvement process and are exclusively retrofits to existing facilities (Maps 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8, Appendix A).

Generally, pedestrian improvement corridors will be selected at a future date, using criteria as follows:

- serves a school (School Administration)
- serves a park (Parks & Recreation)
- provides enhanced pedestrian/bicycle safety
- provides linkage and connections within a community
- serves a census-designated urbanized area
- population density around a sidewalk
- road segment is classified.

Safety improvement and public awareness programs are also included in the Cost Feasible Plan. A more detailed description of the project prioritization processes for bicycle and pedestrian projects is available in the Charlotte Harbor Heritage Trails Master Plan, August 2002; Sales Tax Sidewalks 1998 and 2002; City of Punta Gorda Florida Alternative Transportation Plan 2030; Sidewalk and Bicycle Trails Plan (included in the LRTP).

Map 2.7
Mid-County Sidewalks & Bikeways




Charlotte County Public Works
Admin. Services / Graphics Support - WSS
Draft Date 10/06
Revised Date: 5/27/08
Located: P:\EngSupportSvrs\
ArcGIS91_Projects\
EAR\Map\Mid_Cnty_Sidewalk_Bike.mxd
ArcMap Version 9.1

Stateplane Projection
Datum NAD83
Units meters

Source: Charlotte County
GIS & Public Works
Departments

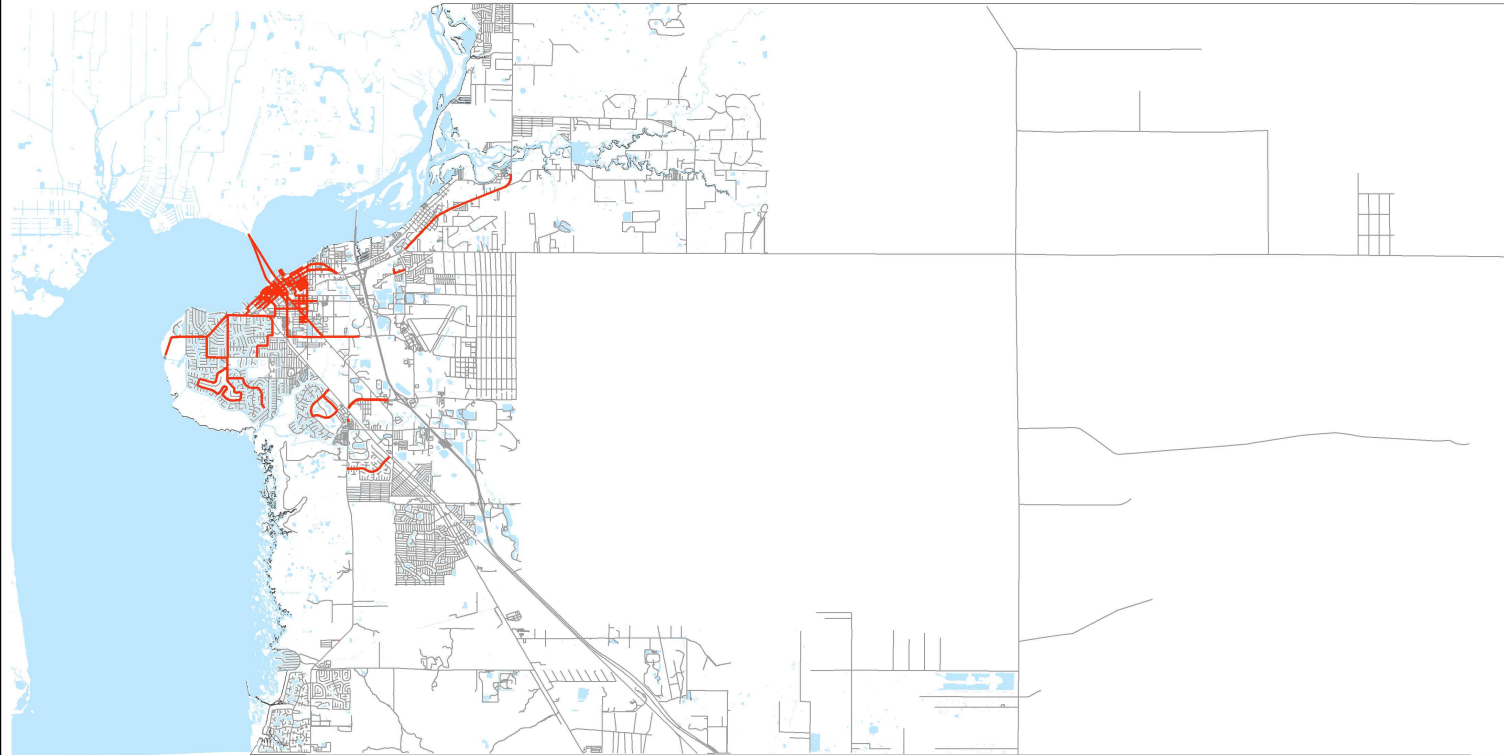
- Sidewalk
- Bikeway
- Streets
- Water


Scale 1:79,200
1 inch = 1.25 miles

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A-6

Map 2.8
South / East County Sidewalks & Bikeways




Charlotte County Public Works
Admin. Services / Graphics Support - WSS
Draft Date 10/06
Revised Date: 5/27/08
Located: P:\EngSupportSvrs\
ArcGIS91_Projects\EAR\Map\
South_East_Cnty_Sidewalk_Bike.mxd
ArcMap Version 9.1

Stateplane Projection
Datum NAD83
Units meters

Source: Charlotte County
GIS & Public Works
Departments

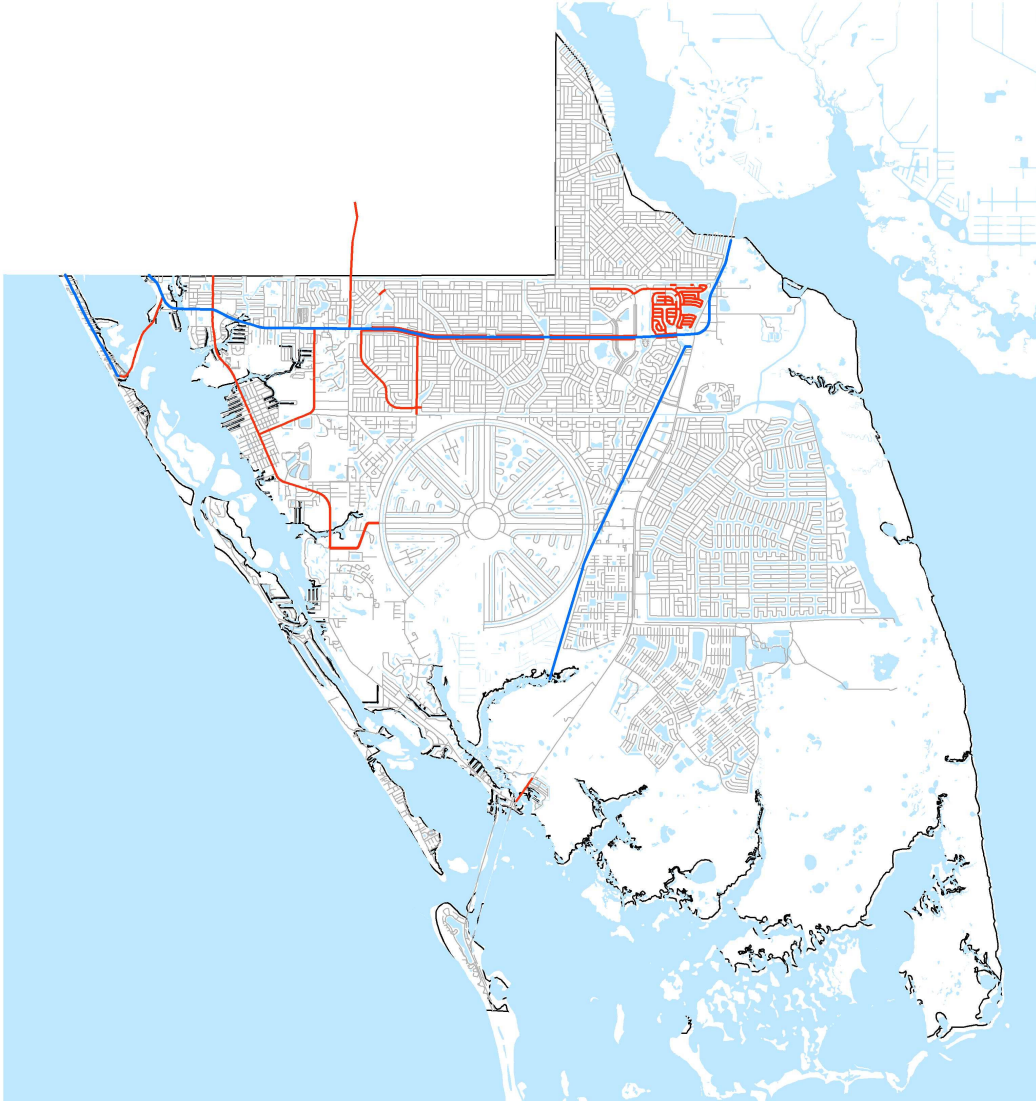
— Sidewalk
— Bikeway
— Streets



Scale 1:158,400
1 inch = 2.5 miles

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A-7

**Map 2.9
West County Sidewalks & Bikeways**



<p>Charlotte County Public Works Admin. Services / Graphics Support - WSS Draft Date 11/06 Revised Date: 5/27/08 Located: P:\EngSupportSvrs\ ArcGIS91_Projects\ EAR\Map\West_Cnty_Sidewalk_Bike.mxd ArcMap Version 9.1</p>	<p>Stateplane Projection Datum NAD83 Units meters Source: Charlotte County GIS & Public Works Departments</p>	<p>— Streets — Sidewalk — Bikeway</p>	<p> Scale: 1:95,040 1 inch = 1.5 miles</p>	<p>This map is a representation of compiled public information. It is believed to be an accurate and true depiction for the stated purpose, but Charlotte County and its employees make no guarantees, implied or otherwise as to its use. This is not a survey or is it to be used for design.</p>
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5. Charlotte County Airports

According to a report from the Continuing Florida Aviation System Planning Process (CFASPP), dated April 2005, Charlotte County is actively looking to increase the level of general aviation activity. The Airport Authority's vision for the future includes incorporating commercial activity, extending the runway, and constructing a control tower.

The Airport, which completed an updated master plan in 2003, has identified several initiatives as necessary to serve general aviation demands in the near term, including rehabilitation of airfield pavements and the relocation of Runway 15/33. It would like to extend the runway to 8,500 feet; add an ILS and a control tower; and construct a commercial airline terminal building. The Airport plans to continue serving flight training, recreational users, and business users.

The Airport supports an industrial park that is less than a mile away. Although the industrial park is currently 100% occupied, the area is not developed to capacity, as 250 acres remain available for development.

The Enterprise Charlotte Airport Park is located at the Charlotte County Airport, with sites offered from 1 to 150 acres and features industrial and foreign trade zoning. This commerce park is located minutes from I-75, US 41, and US 17.

The Charlotte Airport area has the potential to add a significant number of jobs to the Charlotte County economy. Hurricane Charley caused extensive damage to the Airport and surrounding property. With repairs and improvements, the Airport, the adjoining industrial park, Edison Community College, and the Charlotte County Public Safety Complex will contribute to the region's overall economic recovery and security.

Development of the Airport and its industrial park will drive the economy, not only of Charlotte County but southern DeSoto County as well. However, the level of success for the industrial park is contingent on the County's development approach, infrastructure improvements, and the extension of utility services.

A significant improvement and realignment for Piper Road, the main access roadway, is currently being designed to enhance the ground transportation connection to this facility. The project is partially funded through a multi-year grant from the FDOT inter-modal access program. It is estimated to be a \$30 million project.

6. Trucking Facilities

The movement of commercial freight into and out of Charlotte County is extremely important to businesses, as well as residents. Charlotte County freight origins and destinations were extracted from the year 2000 FDOT Transearch commodity database. The highest volume freight carriers are private companies, such as supermarkets and lumber companies, followed by for-hire trucks and air cargo.

Commodity transportation is dominated by the clay/concrete/glass category. A number of sand and rock mines exist in the County. The freight movement within the County is greater than freight movement into/out of Charlotte County. For freight that originates in Charlotte County, the major receiving counties are Dade, Broward, Duval, and Hillsborough. The top exporting counties to Charlotte County are Dade, Duval, Hillsborough, and Polk.

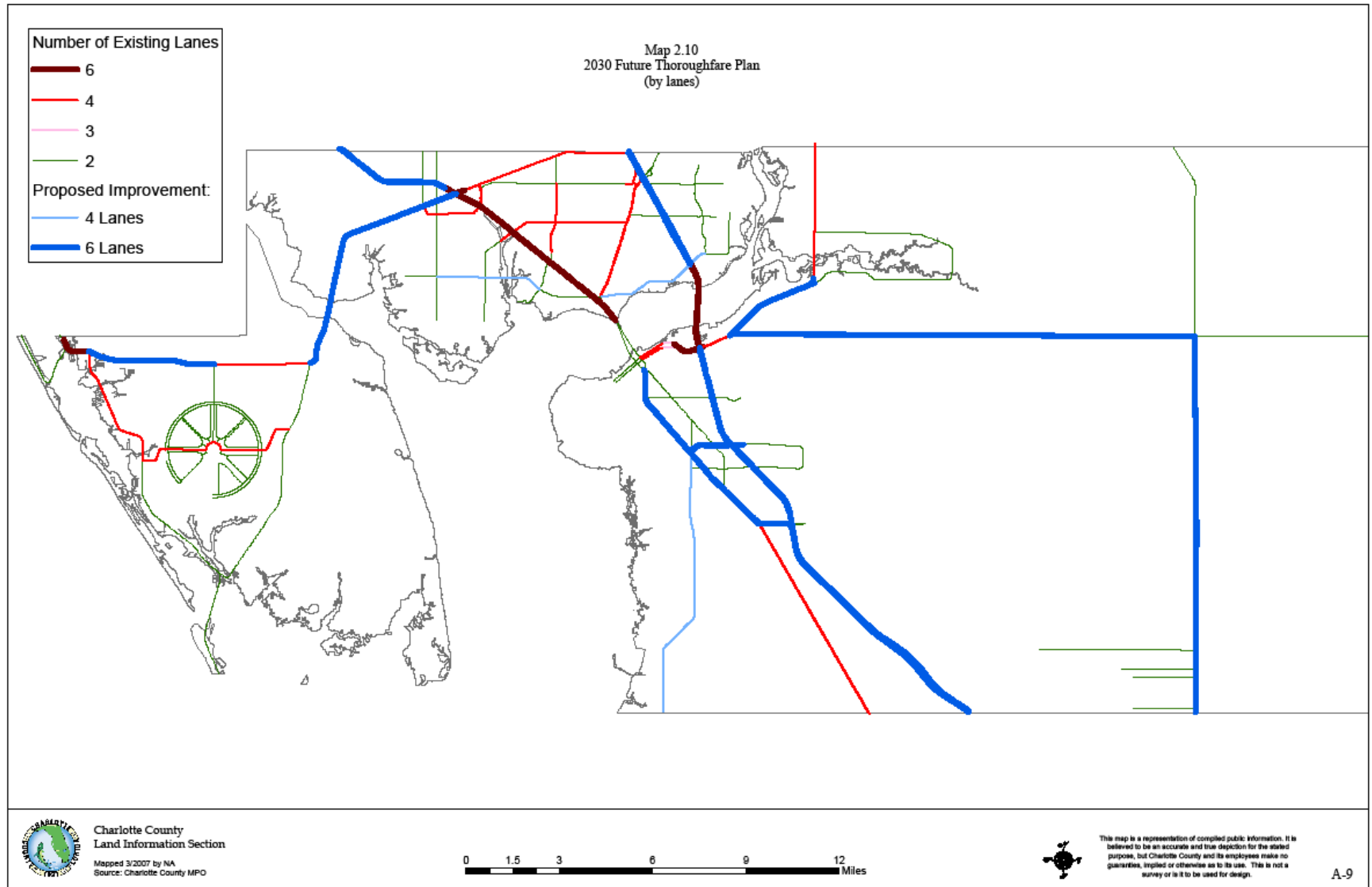
7. Projected 2030 Industrial Land Use and Intermodal Facilities

The year 2030 projected industrial employment areas are concentrated in a few key areas within Charlotte County. The projected industrial growth is focused on the following areas:

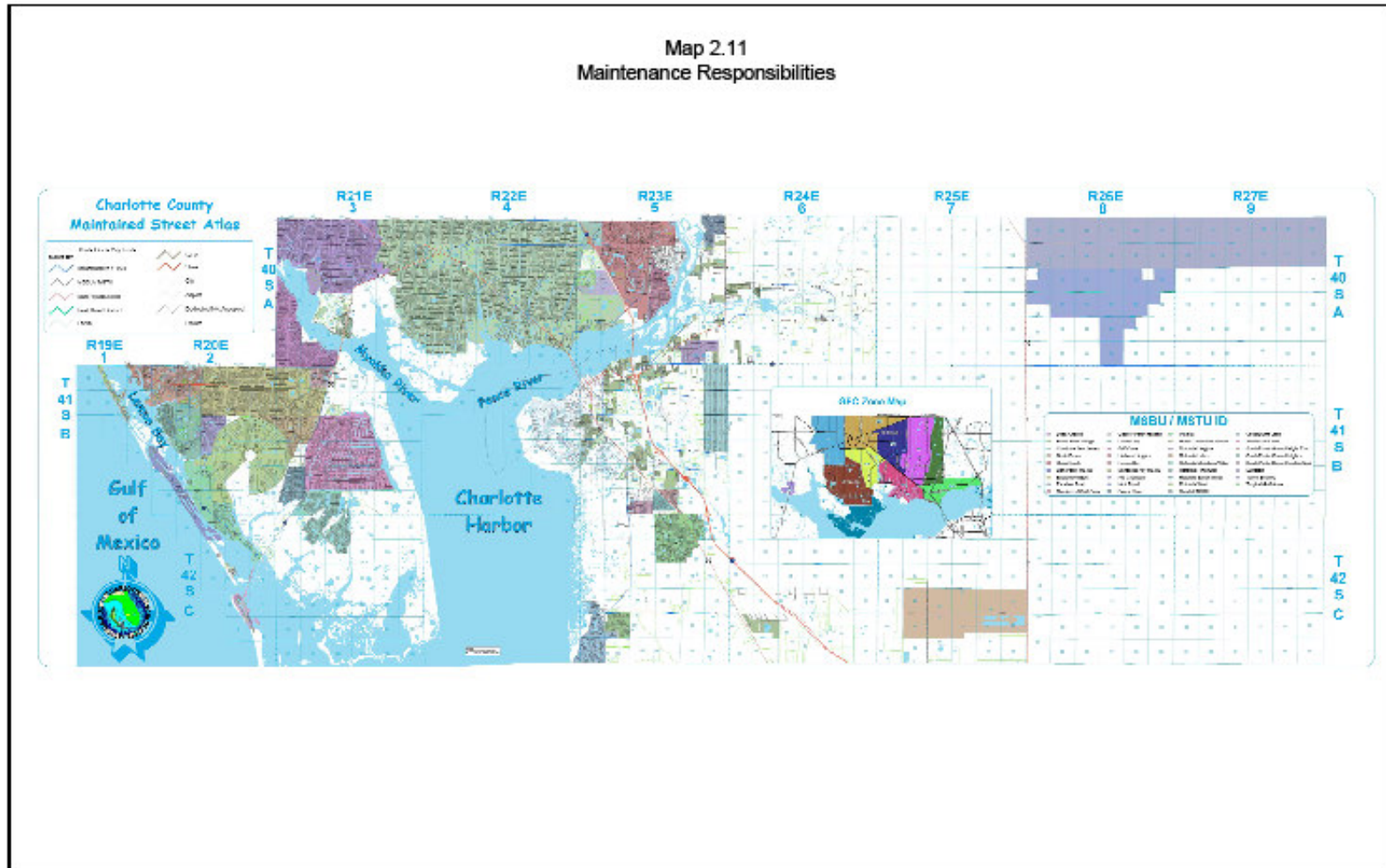
- US 41 south of the Sarasota County
- US 41 north of the Peace River
- I-75 and US 41 south of the Peace River (Airport area)
- SR 765 (Burnt Store Road) north of the Lee County line
- Eastern portion of Charlotte County

Most of these areas are served by US 41 and I-75. The areas showing industrial growth in the eastern part of Charlotte County, with the new industrial warehouse sites (Wal-Mart, Home Depot, etc.) on US 17 in DeSoto County, will place demand on US 17, SR 31 and SR 74.

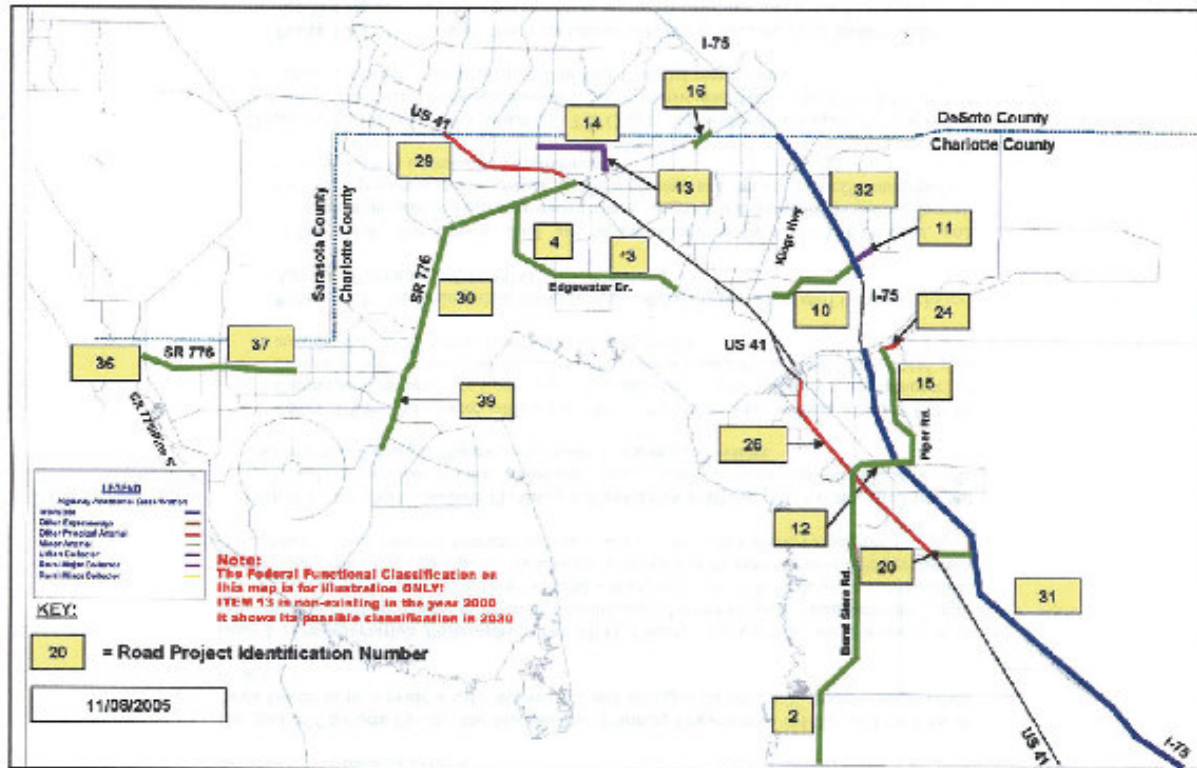
In addition, special attention should be given to the US 17 Corridor, from the DeSoto County line to I-75. The presence of a new Wal-Mart distribution center, and another possible distribution center just inside the DeSoto County line, make this segment of highway important for truck freight movements. Other corridors that will need to be monitored in the future include US 41 and I-75. These highways will remain important truck routes in the region. As industrial development continues to grow, modifications and improvements to these routes will be necessary in order to facilitate efficient truck traffic flow. Also, with the current vision for the Charlotte County Airport (including the proposed Publix distribution center on Piper Road, which is anticipated to employ 300 to 500 people), careful planning of development in and around the Airport is very important. Careful planning now will help to eliminate future hurdles in Airport growth and development.



Map 2.11
Maintenance Responsibilities



Map 2.12
 Core Feasible - Highway Projects
 MAP 2004 Federal Transportation Infrastructure Inventory



A-11

V. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Charlotte County adopts the following set of Goals, Objectives, and Policies to guide the transportation decisions leading to the horizon year of 2030, as stated in this Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. These principles will assist in creating an orderly process of planning, design, permitting, funding, construction, and maintenance of transportation facilities for the decades to come.

The goal of Charlotte County, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the City of Punta Gorda is to provide a safe, convenient and energy-efficient multi-modal transportation system.

Goal 1 (Transportation Philosophy): The MPO, County, and City declare a transportation planning philosophy grounded in the Safe Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and subsequent updates to Federal re-authorization, emphasizing protection of the public investment, provision of transportation options, protection of neighborhoods and the environment, economic development, and public participation.

Objective 1.1 (Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)): The County shall use the MPO and its processes to guide long-range transportation decisions that provide for a safe, convenient, and energy-efficient multi-modal transportation system.

Policy 1.1.1: The elected officials on the MPO Board shall consist of three County Commissioners, one City Councilmember, and one Airport Authority Commissioner, or as provided by an adopted revised MPO Apportionment Plan. The MPO Board also includes the FDOT Secretary as a non-voting member.

Policy 1.1.2: The County shall participate, as needed, by providing staff for the Technical Advisory Committee of the MPO.

Policy 1.1.3: The County shall use factors identified by the SAFETEA-LU, and subsequent updates to Federal re-authorization, to guide transportation planning, through the use of project selection criteria, traffic modeling, and funding of traffic management systems, such as intersection improvements.

Objective 1.2 (Management Systems): The County will analyze the results of management systems for pavement, bridges, congestion, public transit, and intermodal in the development of Comprehensive Plan updates, including their financial components.

Policy 1.2.1: Continue to share data related to highway pavement and bridge conditions, accident reports, traffic counts, levels of service/congestion, transit facilities/equipment, and intermodal facilities with other State and local agencies.

Policy 1.2.2: The County will assist the MPO effort to maintain a highway pavement management system for classified or Federal-aid roadways off the State system. This

management system will include monitoring of pavement conditions and prioritization of pavement management based on need.

Policy 1.2.3: The County will assist the MPO effort to maintain a bridge maintenance system, in conjunction with the FDOT inspection program that includes monitoring of bridge structural conditions.

Policy 1.2.4: The County will provide data for the MPO effort in maintaining a safety management system that provides for the analysis of accidents and accident rates, compares rates with the State and nation, and reports findings to the Technical Advisory Committee, the Citizen Advisory Committee, and the Community Traffic Safety Team to assist in developing work program priorities.

Policy 1.2.5: The County will assist the MPO effort in implementing strategies outlined in the Congestion Management System and Needs Plan, including travel demand management, traffic operations, public transit, growth and access management, and sidewalks/bikeways.

Policy 1.2.6: Apply the current MPO Congestion Management System numerical indicators to measure achievement of the community's mobility goals. Such measures include modal split, annual transit trips per capita, and roadway service levels.

Policy 1.2.7: The County will assist the MPO effort to maintain an inventory of transit facilities/equipment and intermodal facilities and to identify deficiencies in the provision of transit and intermodal facilities/equipment for inclusion in the Needs Plan and capital projects considerations.

Policy 1.2.8: The County will continue to use life-cycle costs in the decision making for design and engineering of highway pavement and other transportation facilities, when such information is available.

Objective 1.3 (Maps):

Transportation maps in the Transportation Element shall be consistent with future land use maps, to the extent that the planned transportation system is consistent with the existing and proposed densities, housing, and employment patterns and land uses provided for in the Future Land Use Plan.

Objective 1.4 (adopted 1/30/09): Charlotte County shall support the efforts of the Lemon Bay/Myakka Trail Corridor Management Entity in fulfilling the intent of the Corridor Management Plan.

Policy 1.4.1 (adopted 1/30/09): Charlotte County may designate a liaison to the Corridor Management Entity (CME). As feasible, the liaison will keep the CME apprised of County decisions and procedures that have a direct relation to the implementation and furtherance of the Corridor Management Plan. The liaison will coordinate activities between the CME and the County as appropriate.

Goal 2 (Intermodal/Multi-Modal Facilities): Coordinate each component of the transportation system with other components to achieve convenience, energy and traffic flow efficiency, safety, and cost effectiveness.

Objective 2.1 (Intermodal Facilities): Design every component of the transportation network in coordination with other components to achieve convenience, traffic flow efficiency, cost effectiveness, and safety. Design each component of the transportation network with the future land use plans to ensure that existing and proposed population densities, housing, employment patterns, and land uses are consistent with transportation modes and services.

Policy 2.1.1: The County will make every effort to provide transportation facilities which address more than one mode and shall make those multi-modal project higher priorities for funding.

Policy 2.1.2: The County will incorporate sidewalks and/or bikeways into all road or intersection capacity improvement projects (i.e., construction of new lanes) for urban and transition area collector and arterial streets and other transportation facilities where these improvements are part of a pedestrian/bicycle network.

Policy 2.1.3: The County will give priority to facilities which serve unique and multi-modal transportation functions (such as the Airport, rail, or van pool/park-and-ride transit terminals) and will coordinate road and transit improvements to complement future needs of intermodal terminals and infrastructure.

Policy 2.1.4: The County will give priority to intermodal connections--including surface transportation access to aviation, rail, and seaport facilities--through project selection criteria.

Policy 2.1.5: The County will use the FSUTMS (version 5.3 or higher, provided by the Florida Department of Transportation) through the MPO to coordinate road and transit improvements with existing and proposed population densities, housing, and employment patterns and land use.

Policy 2.1.6: The County will continue to strive to place additional facilities in the County and region on the SIS.

Objective 2.2 (Transportation Mode Options): The County will continue to make every effort to create reasonable modal choices for the public with the design and implementation of all transportation projects.

Policy 2.2.1: The County will evaluate all new or rehabilitated transportation facilities for the opportunity to provide alternative modes of travel.

Goal 3 (Major Roadways): The County will continue to maintain an integrated roadway system of arterials and collectors which is safe, economical, and convenient for efficient traffic circulation throughout the County and interconnecting with adjacent jurisdictions.

Objective 3.1 (Financially Feasible Plan): The County's Cost Feasible Plan (included in this Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element and the MPO LRTP Financially Feasible Plan) will be coordinated, and adopted with documentation of any modifications, to provide a convenient and energy-efficient multi-modal transportation system.

Policy 3.1.1: The 2030 Financially Feasible Plan generally includes various road widening projects, traffic system management, road and bridge maintenance, sidewalks/bikeways, transit, and safety improvements. The County will continue to use this plan as the guide to identify projects for the Capital Improvement Program.

Policy 3.1.2: The County will continue to coordinate the proposed transportation improvements based on the MPO priorities, Transportation Improvement Program, and the State Work Program, as outlined in the Financially Feasible Plan.

Policy 3.1.3: The County will continue to utilize the needs assessment of this Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element to guide development of the Capital Improvement Program, so that the financially feasible projects are implemented.

Policy 3.1.4: The County will continue to utilize the needs assessment of the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element to guide right-of-way protection and acquisition for future transportation access and/or for public access.

Objective 3.2 (Freight Routes):

The County will continue to plan and implement transportation improvements that enhance the movement of freight, by identifying important freight routes and developing funding sources in the transportation planning and capital improvement programming process.

Policy 3.2.1: The County will continue to coordinate with FDOT, the MPO, and private firms (which rely on truck transport) to designate truck routes, which accommodate the efficient movement of goods.

Policy 3.2.2: The County will ensure, through truck restrictions and regulations, that the requirements are clear to truckers, residents, and enforcement officers.

Policy 3.2.3: The County will continue to consider the designated truck routes and posted bridges when developing priorities for pavement and bridge maintenance. The weight-restricted bridges on designated truck routes will be reviewed as an aspect of the MPO Bridge Management System and the County's bridge maintenance program.

Policy 3.2.4: The County will continue to coordinate with the Airport Authority, FDOT, MPO, and other public and private parties to plan, fund, and implement transportation improvements that will enhance access to air and rail facilities.

Goal 4 (Sidewalks/Bikeways): The County will continue to provide bicycle/pedestrian facilities in existing and planned transportation corridors to enhance access to educational facilities, governmental facilities, commercial facilities, new residential developments and subdivisions, and recreational facilities and in compliance with requirements of the Americans' with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Objective 4.1 (Priority Needs): The County will continue to incorporate sidewalk and bikeway needs and priorities into the transportation planning and capital programming process for the traffic circulation system, as an alternative to automotive transportation and to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy 4.1.1: The County will continue to give priority treatment to sidewalk/bikeway needs in the development of the Capital Improvement Program for improved modal choice, pedestrian and bike safety, and congestion management.

Policy 4.1.2: The County will continue to assign a high priority to the construction of sidewalks and/or bikeways on collector and arterial streets serving schools, commercial areas, and parks as a funding priority over other sidewalks/bikeways.

Policy 4.1.3: Based on economic feasibility, the County will continue to provide pedestrian and bike facilities in the form of sidewalks and/or bike lanes, widened outside travel lanes, and/or paved shoulders with street improvement projects, including road widening, bridge construction, and resurfacing projects.

Policy 4.1.4: The County will continue to participate with the MPO in the development of an updated bicycle, pedestrian, greenways, and trails circulation master plan.

Policy 4.1.5: The County will continue to assign a high priority to construction of sidewalks and bikeways that complete phased projects, close gaps, or provide linkages in the existing sidewalk and bikeway network.

Policy 4.1.6: The County will continue to fund and program adequate maintenance and repair of existing sidewalks and bikeways.

Policy 4.1.7: The County will continue to cooperate with adjacent counties in establishing regional interconnected bicycle, pedestrian, greenway and trail systems.

Policy 4.1.8: The County will continue to facilitate the development of sidewalk and/or bikeway plans to guide development of a uniform sidewalk/bikeway system.

Policy 4.1.9: The County will process a code revision of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) to require sidewalks and/or bikeways on all urban and transition area collector and arterial streets in accordance with a needs analysis and the master plan.

Policy 4.1.10: The County will continue to require adjacent private property owners to provide sidewalk and/or bikeway facilities on all urban, transition area collector and arterial streets, and other transportation facilities where these improvements are part of a network at their cost in accordance with a needs analysis and the master plan.

Goal 5 (Aviation): The County will continue to coordinate with the Airport Authority to systematically enhance and expand aviation facilities at Charlotte County Airport, concurrently with increases in general aviation and scheduled passenger service demand.

Objective 5.1 (Airport Ground Access): Charlotte County will continue the design, permitting, funding, and land acquisition to implement the Piper Road airport access improvements, as shown in the alignment study and widening plan approved by the Board of County Commissioners, FDOT, and the Airport Authority.

Policy 5.1.1: The County and the Airport Authority will continue to pursue FDOT intermodal funding for the realignment and widening of Piper Road, which will provide improved access to the Airport via I-75, along with numerous opportunities to enhance the security of the facility.

Objective 5.2 (Adjacent Land Uses): The County will make every effort to ensure that land uses adjacent to the Charlotte County Airport shall be compatible with the existing Airport, as well as compatible with the current Airport Master Plan.

Policy 5.2.1: The County will assist the Airport Authority in maintaining the prohibition of any new obstructions to aviation operations, which intersect existing "Civil Airport Imaginary Surfaces," as described in Federal Aviation Regulation Part 77.25 or in future "Civil Airport Imaginary Surfaces" or "runway protection zones," as described in the current Airport Master Plan.

Policy 5.2.2: The County will continue to coordinate with the Airport Authority to protect the Airport from encroachments of incompatible land uses including, but not limited to, residential, schools, hospitals and other noise-sensitive or dense developments adjacent to existing or future Civil Airport Imaginary Surfaces and Runway Protection Zones (documented in the current Airport Master Plan, adopted by the Charlotte County Airport Authority).

Policy 5.2.3: The County will continue to make every effort to ensure land uses that are consistent with the current Airport Master Plan (adopted by the Charlotte County Airport Authority), the Airport Commerce Park Overlay District, the Enterprise Charlotte Airport Park zoning district, and the Comprehensive Plan and will employ innovative land use strategies.

Policy 5.2.4: The County will continue to participate with the Airport Authority on updates of the Airport Master Plan.

Goal 6 (Railroads): The County will continue to monitor the status of the existing railroad (Seminole Gulf Railroad) and assist with planning for improved railroad freight and passenger service.

Objective 6.1 (Service Improvement): The County will participate with planning efforts to improve rail freight and passenger service.

Policy 6.1.1: The County will participate with planning efforts to improve and enhance access to Amtrak.

Policy 6.1.2: The County will continue to participate in studies designed to evaluate and plan improvements to highway and rail freight service.

Objective 6.2 (Abandoned Right-of-Way): The County will continue to preserve the abandoned railroad rights-of-way for future transportation purposes.

Policy 6.2.1: The County will consider alternative uses of abandoned railroad rights-of-way--such as light rail, dedicated transit corridors, sidewalks/bikeways, or roadway improvements--in congestion management plans.

Objective 6.3 (Railroad Crossings): The County will continue to promote safety at railroad crossings.

Policy 6.3.1: The County will continue to press the Seminole Gulf Railroad to maintain its facilities in a safe and satisfactory manner, particularly the existing at-grade railroad crossings.

Goal 7 (Public Transit): The County will continue to plan for high-quality, low-cost public bus service that is safe, convenient, and accessible to all and accommodates the transportation disadvantaged, while improving the quality of life by building a sense of community through connecting neighborhoods.

Objective 7.1 (Meet Needs): As travel demand forecasts warrant improved transit service, the County will consider a cost-effective expansion of public transportation services, through the most effective mix of options (identified in the most current Transit Development Plan), with a priority on persons who are transit dependent.

Policy 7.1.1: For all phases of transit development, the County will strive to keep the system simple and dependable, to maximize ridership, and to continue to explore operational efficiencies, such as the use of smaller vehicles, flexible community bus service, and route deviation.

Policy 7.1.2: The County will continue to comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all other pertinent Federal, State, and local regulations.

Objective 7.2 (Low-Cost Service): The County will make every effort to maintain low capital and operating costs, support public transportation in the long term by choosing low cost options, maximize Federal and State funds, and adopt new technologies that improve cost effectiveness.

Policy 7.2.1: Through the MPO, the County will continue to maintain and enhance State and Federal funding sources.

Policy 7.2.2: As opportunities present themselves, the County will support the MPO to identify and pursue private sponsorship options (e.g., public/private partnerships, trading possible future bus stop space for parking, etc.).

Policy 7.2.3: The County will continue to use advertising on the buses as a revenue source.

Policy 7.2.4: Through support of the MPO, the County will continue to investigate and implement the use of appropriate technologies to improve service quality, efficiency, and reliability.

Objective 7.3 (Connected Transportation Modes):

The County will continue to coordinate the expansion of the public transportation system with improvements in related facilities, such as sidewalks and taxi stands.

Policy 7.3.1: The County will continue to provide comfortable and useful facilities at major destinations--including benches, shelters, trees, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities--as opportunities present themselves.

Policy 7.3.2: The County will continue to coordinate the planning and implementation of sidewalks and bike paths associated with major bus origins and destinations.

Policy 7.3.3: The County will continue to explore the potential for bike storage facilities near transit routes and provide bike racks on buses where feasible.

Objective 7.4 (Transportation Disadvantaged): Through the MPO, the County will continue to provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach to planning and developing transportation services that meet the needs of transportation disadvantaged persons.

Policy 7.4.1: In coordination with the MPO, the County will continue to coordinate with public and private (non-profit and for-profit) agencies and providers of transportation services to develop and implement a coordinated system that meets the needs of transportation disadvantaged persons.

Policy 7.4.2: As opportunities present themselves, and in cooperation with the MPO, the County will consider expanding levels and quality of service to meet the needs of the Transportation Disadvantaged.

Objective 7.5 (Travel Demand Management): In anticipation of future traffic congestion problems, the County, in cooperation with the MPO, will plan and implement travel demand management strategies to relieve traffic congestion, as outlined in the most recent MPO Congestion Management System Study.

Policy 7.5.1: As traffic congestion increases and opportunities present themselves, the County will participate with regional MPO's to implement a Commuter Assistance Program.

Policy 7.5.2: The County will continue to assist the MPO with quantitative data and analysis to support growth management policy development that reduces total and peak hour travel demand and will continue growth management policies that reduce travel demand.

Policy 7.5.3: The County will continue to participate with the MPO to exchange information on parking demand, so that amendments may be made to the development codes that affect parking lot requirements.

Policy 7.5.4: The County will explore the potential for park-and-ride facility sites, in conjunction with a Commuter Assistance Program, if and where a need is indicated.

Policy 7.5.5: The County will continue to encourage developers to provide interconnected and shared public/private parking facilities, with secure pedestrian connectivity, to reduce required off-street parking.

Policy 7.5.6: In cooperation with the MPO, the County will measure the effectiveness of the travel demand strategies on the modal split and annual transit trips per capita.

Objective 7.6 (Meeting Future Demand): The County will continue to maintain, improve, and enhance public transit service to meet current and future demands and needs.

Policy 7.6.1: The County will continue to develop and implement creative community bus services that best respond to local conditions and needs.

Policy 7.6.2: As need and demand support change, the County will consider expansion of the hours and days of operation.

Policy 7.6.3: The County will continue to adhere to the comprehensive safety plan to ensure the safety of employees, passengers, and the public.

Policy 7.6.4: In conjunction with the MPO, the County will continue to investigate and implement the use of appropriate technology to improve service and reliability.

Objective 7.7 (Transit Role): The County will continue to communicate the role of transit in Charlotte County.

Policy 7.7.1: The County will continue to make every effort to improve the image and visibility of Charlotte County Transit.

Policy 7.7.2: The County will continue the ongoing marketing program, with a unified theme for all transit services provided by Charlotte County Transit.

Policy 7.7.3: The County will continue to develop marketing programs, with the goal of maintaining and increasing market penetration and developing new market segments for services (e.g., youth, employment based).

Policy 7.7.4: In coordination with the MPO, the County will continue to develop ongoing programs, providing education and outreach on public transportation service alternatives and their importance and benefits to Charlotte County.

Objective 7.8 (Multi-Modal Connectivity): In cooperation with the MPO, the County will continue to enhance and improve multi-modal connectivity throughout the region.

Policy 7.8.1: Through the MPO process, the County will continue to work cooperatively with neighboring communities to implement services that improve the connectivity between public transportation modes and services.

Policy 7.8.2: The County will continue to work through the MPO to ensure coordinated regional transportation planning and programming.

Goal 8 (Congestion and Level of Service): The County will continue to monitor levels of service on the roadway network and prioritize improvements.

Objective 8.1: The County will continue to strive to achieve and maintain adopted levels of service on roadways.

Policy 8.1.1: In the Capital Improvement Program, the County will continue to give priority to roadways which operate below adopted levels of service.

Policy 8.1.2: The County will adopt a level of service “D” for all arterials and collectors, except for roadways designated as part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) and Florida’s Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) and roadways funded with Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funds. The state controls levels of service for these facilities.

Policy 8.1.3: The County will adopt FDOT’s established level of service on all Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) and Florida’s Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) and roadways funded with Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funds, Intrastate Highway System roadways, to include US 17 and I-75.

Goal 9 (Capital Improvements Program): The County will continue to prepare the CIP, based on the priorities for public safety, congestion mitigation, and the provision of multimodal facilities.

Objective 9.1: The County will continue to select projects to be funded in the CIP, based on criteria that focus on public safety, congestion mitigation, and enhanced mobility for all modes of travel.

Policy 9.1.1: The County will continue to prioritize transportation with consideration of the following:

- Project improves public safety
- Project reduces congestion, particularly where levels of service do not meet adopted standards
- Project improves traffic circulation
- Project improves hurricane evacuation and recovery
- Project has limited environmental impact
- Project improves freight movement
- Project improves an intermodal facility
- Project addresses public transportation
- Project preserves/improves bridges
- Project protects public rights-of-way
- Project improves or provides alternatives to the Florida Intrastate Highway System

Objective 9.2: The County will continue to protect existing and future right-of-way from building encroachment.

Policy 9.2.1: The County will continue to consider advanced right-of-way acquisition as a priority.

Objective 9.3: The County will continue to place appropriate emphasis on the Capital Improvements Element as a planning tool for the County Capital Budget process.

Policy 9.3.1: Charlotte County staff will hold an interdepartmental workshop to establish written procedures which promote ongoing coordination between departments with concurrency responsibilities (i.e., Growth Management, Public Works, Budget, Administration, Parks, Solid Waste, and Utility) by July 2009. Procedures will include requirements for separate meetings addressing project identification and project agreement, development of improvement cost estimates and at least one joint meeting dedicated to discussion of funding strategies.

Policy 9.3.2: Charlotte County will hold a workshop with Commissioners emphasizing the importance of the Capital Improvement Element system, current needs, budgetary constraints and recommendations for future Capital Improvement Element approvals.

Goal 10 (Major Intra- and Inter-County Transportation Corridors): The County will continue to coordinate with the MPO, FDOT, and adjacent jurisdictions to provide for efficient intra-County and inter-County vehicular travel, by planning an integrated system of transportation corridors.

Objective 10.1 (Hurricane Evacuation Corridors): In conjunction with the MPO, FDOT, and adjacent jurisdictions, the County will continue to enhance hurricane evacuation corridors connecting to all geographical areas of the County.

Policy 10.1.1: The County will continue to take the lead with other government agencies, including Sarasota and Lee Counties, to establish and maintain effective hurricane evacuation routes from the Cape Haze Peninsula and Gasparilla Island.

Policy 10.1.2: The County will continue to maintain and enhance all County-designated hurricane evacuation routes.

Policy 10.1.3: In general, the County will incorporate the following criteria when considering improvements to the hurricane evacuation corridor:

- The roadway connects inland and away from the coast
- The roadway rises out of areas affected by storm surge
- There are a minimum of water crossings
- The roadway provides a direct route to higher elevations and/or shelters
- The roadway is not affected by rainfall flooding

Objective 10.2 (I-75 Access): In cooperation with the MPO and FDOT, the County will participate in the provision of adequate access for the community to and from I-75, with emergency evacuation as a priority focus.

Policy 10.2.1: The County will continue to participate with FDOT and the MPO on all studies related to I-75.

Policy 10.2.2: The County will continue to participate in the regional transportation group in pursuit of a new I-75 interchange in the vicinity of Raintree/Yorkshire.

Objective 10.3: The County will coordinate corridor analysis with the MPO, FDOT, DCA and adjacent jurisdictions to ensure that acceptable methodologies are identified for 5 year analysis of improvement needs for the Capital Improvements Schedule.

Policy 10.3.1: The County will take the lead in coordinating a meeting with the MPO, FDOT, DCA and neighboring jurisdictions to identify the best methodology for 5 year projections of improvement needs and to coordinate future improvements of roadways by July 2009. Roadways such as I-75, US 17, SR 776, and CR 771 will be evaluated.

Policy 10.3.2: Charlotte County will evaluate and implement a revised project selection methodology to improve project selection for the County's Capital Improvements Element and Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Schedules by FY09/FY10.

Policy 10.3.3: Charlotte County will add, as a priority, roadways identified through the new project selection methodology. These projects will be added beginning in the FY09/FY10 budget.

Goal 11 (Street Corridor Design): Street and highway corridors represent a significant proportion of public land and, as such, will be designed to maximize the public benefit.

Objective 11.1: The County will continue to include landscaping and general beautification for all transportation corridors.

Policy 11.1.1: The County will continue to maintain the volunteer, street tree planting program.

Policy 11.1.2: The County will continue to select low-maintenance, drought-tolerant, native plants for use in street landscaping.

Objective 11.2 (Traffic Access Management): The County will continue to manage traffic access for urban collectors and all arterials to preserve the capacity of these facilities.

Policy 11.2.1: The County will continue to provide, or allow the provision of, median openings in residential areas and shared driveways, except where existing conditions would result in large numbers of U-turn movements, following the latest edition of the FDOT Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction, and Maintenance for Streets and Highways.

Objective 11.3 (Neighborhood Meetings): For all major transportation improvement projects, the County will continue to incorporate citizen participation in the design process through various methods (town meetings, newsletters, etc.).

Policy 11.3.1: For all major transportation improvement projects, the County will continue to make every effort to avoid and/or minimize impacts on private properties, through an alternatives selection process.

Goal 12 (Environmental Consideration): For all new and expanded transportation systems, the County will continue to thoroughly evaluate alignment options that will minimize impacts on environmentally sensitive habitats and air quality and maximize the opportunities for protecting these lands.

Objective 12.1 (Sensitive Habitats): The County will continue to plan and design transportation improvements to limit impacts within sensitive habitats, including wetlands, listed species habitat, undisturbed uplands, and other identified land.

Policy 12.1.1: The County will consider alternative alignments for new transportation facilities to avoid sensitive habitats and consider alternatives which avoid sensitive habitats, through alternative selection criteria in long-range planning or project development and environmental studies.

Policy 12.1.2: In the alignment of new transportation facilities, including additional bridging, the County will assign priority to alternatives which avoid flood-prone areas and impact sensitive lands the least, through project selection criteria.

Objective 12.2 (Air Quality): The County will continue to strive to maintain good air quality through a variety of techniques, including the least amount of air pollutants per FSUTMS traffic model.

Policy 12.2.1: The County will continue to select alternatives which impact air quality the least.

Goal 13 (Development Regulations): The County will continue to improve the development codes and policies to maintain clear, concise, and enforceable regulations, which fully address on-site and off-site development impacts, yet function in a streamlined manner.

Objective 13.1 (Government Regulations): Local government development regulations shall ensure that impacts of development approvals occur concurrently with adequate roads, and that maximum safety, efficiency, and cost effectiveness are achieved.

Policy 13.1.1: The County will continue to implement and improve its highway access regulations.

Policy 13.1.2: The County will continue to require Traffic Impact Statements for development projects that will generate vehicular traffic, which will potentially have a substantial impact on the existing transportation network in accordance with adopted County regulations.

Policy 13.1.3: The County will continue to follow standards that eliminate or minimize traffic conflicts with bicycles and pedestrians.

Policy 13.1.4: The County will continue to pursue implementation of regulations requiring sidewalks in new subdivisions, commercial areas, and new multifamily developments.

Policy 13.1.5: The County will continue to enhance the land development regulations to promote a mixture of land uses throughout the County at major public transportation destinations and private employment centers, to encourage use of bus and ridesharing services.

Policy 13.1.6: The County will continue to enhance the building design guidelines and development regulations to encourage design for public transportation in commercial and

industrial projects within the urban service area and provide for interconnection of adjacent residential areas with other land uses, by removing barriers that restrict bus, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation, according to community preference.

Objective 13.2 (Concurrency): Transportation facilities in the County, at a minimum, shall meet all concurrency requirements, as stipulated in state statutes.

Policy 13.2.1: The County shall implement the code revisions stipulated in state statutes, relating to infrastructure improvements, to comply with the concurrency legislation.

Goal 14 (Intergovernmental Coordination): The County will continue to participate in all transportation planning and improvements within or affecting the County.

Objective 14.1 (Financing): In coordination with the MPO and FDOT, the County will continue to pursue multi-jurisdictional funding sources for shared facilities, seeking funds for transportation facilities from a variety of Federal and State sources, including Proportionate Share provisions for transportation improvements.

Policy 14.1.1: The County will continue to foster and encourage interlocal agreements with adjoining cities and counties for shared development, implementation, and maintenance responsibilities on selected roadways.

Policy 14.1.2: Through the MPO, the County will continue to work cooperatively with adjacent local governments and the Airport Authority to secure State and Federal grants for transportation infrastructure improvements.