

GETTING IN, OUT AND AROUND *the Gateway Area*

A variety of transportation improvements are already planned in the Gateway Area. However, implementing the improvements will be costly and could take many years to complete. But because mobility in, out and around the Gateway Area is key to the Area's success as an economic center as well as its success as a livable community, it is important to look at ways to enhance, integrate and fast-track key projects. It is also important to integrate land uses and modes of transportation effectively so as to provide for shorter travel times, to provide for alternative modes of travel, and to address mobility and safety in and around the Area.

However, coordination of transportation impacts and land use decisions in the Gateway Area is critical so as not to exacerbate roadway congestion and mobility issues, including the significance of the Area's roadways during hurricane evacuation.

Therefore, recommendations for Board consideration include:

RECOMMENDATIONS

With completion of the Airport Master Plan, begin to **review the existing facilities against the projected level of demand** to allow for the identification of, what, if any, enhancements are needed for the Airport to meet forecasted activity.

Work with the FDOT and the MPO to secure State and federal **funding for completing transportation-related capital improvement projects** in the Gateway area.

Request that the MPO complete its evaluation of transportation alternatives, including guideway and the feasibility of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the Gateway Area, to **increase Area-wide mobility options**.

Request that the MPO review the **feasibility of a Gateway "looper"** to move people around the Gateway Area.

Secure funding for, and **complete scheduled improvements** to Roosevelt Boulevard, Ulmerton Road, U.S. Highway 19, Interstate 275, and Gandy Boulevard.

Because of their significance to **hurricane evacuation**, require that County Emergency Management staff be involved in the CIP and project planning process associated with the Area's evacuation routes to ensure that evacuation priorities are considered in all project schedules and designs.

Complete the planning for the Speedway, and adjacent, property for the Roosevelt Boulevard/CR 296 connector and for the **potential intermodal transportation hub** at this location.

Review, and amend as necessary, the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan and, where appropriate, associated land development regulations, as well as the Countywide Plan, to **support better integration of residential development, and their supporting retail and service uses proximate to employment areas.**

Work with/encourage the private sector to identify areas in the Gateway Area with potential to **develop to affordable residential uses proximate to employment**, thereby reducing automobile dependence.

Review signage needs; consider better directional signage at, for example, the Airport Business Center.

Planning for Continuity and Character in THE GATEWAY TO THE COUNTY

The Gateway Area is just that – it is a “*gateway*” to Pinellas County for travelers from across the Bay, and for Airport travelers from different cities in and outside of the Country. But there is nothing that sets it apart as a distinct and important area.

The Area benefits from a significant natural greenspace provided by the Gateway Preserve, and some of the landscaping done in association with the DRIs is attractive and complements the surrounding environment. But there is no continuity in the surroundings. Opportunities do exist to beautify, or bring character to the landscape, and to enhance the natural surroundings, through coordinated application of development regulations, and through specific themed projects.

The County has significant opportunity to use its properties, its regulations, and its influence in the design of major roadway improvements, to have a positive impact on the appearance, the character and the environment of the Gateway Area.

But some continuity in the design and overall character of the Area might be beneficial and desirable, which necessitates coordination and a multi-jurisdictional commitment. For example, a multi-jurisdictional commitment to things like corridor beautification, continuity in landscaping and landscaping standards, and interspersions of greenspaces, common areas, and onsite or “inter-site” paths and trails would contribute significantly to quality of life in the Gateway Area.