



## KENNEDY BOULEVARD REVISITED

If you suggested Kennedy Boulevard should be twice as wide as it is, or have half the driveways, chances are good that you would hear from some concerned neighbors. But would anything less dramatic really make a difference on this heavily traveled corridor?



*Kennedy Boulevard as it exists today.*

If the MPO's Kennedy Boulevard Corridor Study is any judge, there is value in the sum of many small projects. Part of the MPO's county-wide congestion management program, the analysis being finalized this month got into the nitty-gritty details of what makes Kennedy function better. It also reopened a decade-old discussion on the street's potential to be a gateway boulevard for the city.

Formerly known as Grand Central Avenue, the street between Downtown Tampa and the Westshore district carries as many as 52,500 cars per day. Intersections operate at up to 110% of their design capacity during the afternoon rush hour. Bicycle lanes are nonexistent, and sidewalk users dodge telephone poles, missing curb ramps, and cars that dive into boundary-less parking lots.

The bus service, one of the more well-riden routes in the HART system, makes its last daily run in the 8 o'clock p.m. hour.

Tampa City Councilmember and MPO Livable Roadways Committee Chair Linda Saul-Sena envisions a road that is kinder and gentler as well as more efficient. "Kennedy is our Main Street, and it needs an update. It's like the carpet in my hallway: it was great 12 years ago, but it's looking a little shabby." The study suggests streetscaping with trees, lights, and street furniture (benches, trash cans, drinking fountains) using a historic look at the downtown end of the corridor and a more contemporary look west of Henderson.

It also recommends work at the most congested and the most accident-prone intersections. For example, adding a northbound through lane at Dale Mabry and a northbound left turn lane at MacDill could reduce delay in all directions. At Grady Avenue - often blocked by back-ups from Dale Mabry - crashes could be prevented by closing the median, and nighttime crashes could be prevented on Howard and Armenia by improving the lighting.

See **KENNEDY BLVD** - Continued On Page 2

### In This Issue...

- I-4 Connector
- Planning Tampa's Neighborhoods
- Central Hillsborough County Map

### Focus On . . . Central Hillsborough

*This year, each issue of The Mobility Focus will highlight one of four sections of Hillsborough County, focusing on the area's transportation projects, issues, and happenings. This issue highlights Central Hillsborough County and includes the City of Tampa, Town & Country, and Egypt Lake.*



New express bus service between Westshore and Downtown at rush hour could better serve some riders and possibly attract more. New bicycle routes could parallel Kennedy, on the north side using North A and North B Streets, and on the south using Azeele, Platt, and Cleveland Streets. Gaps in the corridor's network of sidewalks and bus shelters can be filled based on the greatest need, using the study's thorough inventory.

Some recommendations are already being implemented. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is evaluating the Grady median closure. The City of Tampa will fill intermittent sidewalk gaps on both sides of Cleveland Street, from Willow Street to Armenia Avenue, this spring.



*The contemporary look - proposed for the western portion of the corridor.*

The city has also looked at the MacDill and Dale Mabry intersections and agrees with the lane addition concepts. Funding for this and other recommendations is still to be identified.

The study findings are currently being discussed by the MPO and its advisory committees. A community meeting will be held March 17, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Jefferson High School and all are welcome to participate in the discussion. For more information or a copy of the draft study, contact **Ronnie Blackshear** at (813) 272-5940 ext. 351, [ronnieb@plancom.org](mailto:ronnieb@plancom.org). ❖



*The historic look - proposed for the downtown end of the corridor.*

### DID YOU KNOW...?

When the first Hillsborough County commissioners met in 1846, the general topics were taxes, transportation, a new courthouse and jail, and downtown development.

## I-4/ CROSSTOWN CONNECTOR GAINS MOMENTUM

Imagine a new, seamless route between Interstate-4 and the Selmon Crosstown Expressway near Downtown Tampa, and then plan to open that road to traffic less than ten years from now! That was the mission undertaken by the "Finance Task Team," representing the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Hillsborough County, the Tampa Port Authority, City of Tampa, Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority, and the Hillsborough County MPO.

With limited funding, and construction estimated to cost \$130 million, the Finance Task Team needed to get creative. "The sooner we are able to fund the project, the less it ultimately costs us, particularly when we're talking about the right-of-way phase of the project," said FDOT District Planning Manager, Robert Clifford.

The proposed location is between 27th Street and 31st Street, connecting to the Selmon Crosstown Expressway near 34th Street (please see the centerfold map).

The new road would accommodate truck trips between the Port of Tampa and I-4, many of which now travel through the Ybor City

historic area. Currently, 10,000-12,000 trucks come to or from the port every day, and projections for the future are 16,000-18,000 trucks/day.

The Task Team is exploring whether funds can be made available to buy right-of-way earlier. It is also exploring loan opportunities, such as a statewide infrastructure bank that allows up to a 30-year payback, and the Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Fund.

The Task Team is also looking for other creative types of funding, such as inclusion in the upcoming federal transportation funding bill as a demonstration project.

Some money - \$7 million - has been found for design of the northern portion of the road, though design of the southern portion is still unfunded. Design of the part north of 7th Avenue is currently about 60% complete.



*The proposed connector between Interstate-4 and the Selmon Crosstown Expressway will relieve traffic traveling through Ybor City's historic district.*

For more information on the I-4 Connector, please contact **Ken Hartmann**, Finance Task Team Chairman at (813) 975-6000. ❖

# PLANNING TAMPA'S NEIGHBORHOODS

Some Tampa neighborhoods are developing neighborhood plans with the assistance of the Hillsborough County City – County Planning Commission, whose transportation team also staffs the Hillsborough MPO. These neighborhood plans describe communities' vision for the future, and outline activities and recommendations to achieve that vision.

In the mid-90's, the Tampa City Council adopted a neighborhood element to the Tampa Comprehensive Plan that set the course for providing technical support to neighborhood plans. These plans must be developed by grass roots efforts, and once complete, obtain a 75% approval by vote of its citizens.

## TAMPA HEIGHTS BUILDS ON ITS STRENGTHS

Residents and property owners approved the neighborhood plan that will guide the future of Tampa Heights on November 12, 2002.

Located immediately north of Downtown, Tampa Heights' historic homes sit side by side with social services. When large-scale developments were proposed to revitalize the Heights, residents wondered whether the neighborhood's heritage would be negatively affected.



*Restoration of historic homes preserves the heritage and character of Tampa Heights.*

The adopted plan highlights economic development for the benefit of all community members, respect for the neighborhood's historic character and existing street grid, and opportunities to capitalize on the social and human assets the neighborhood has today.

The Planning Commission has unanimously endorsed the Tampa Heights Neighborhood Plan and has recommended it for approval to the Tampa City Council. Making the plan a reality will depend on community volunteers through partnerships of grants, private development, foundations, and social services.

For further information, contact **Michele Ogilvie** of The Planning Commission at 273-3774, ext. 317.

## DAVIS ISLANDS: REDISCOVERING ITS VALUES

Last spring, the Tampa City Council created a neighborhood planning committee that seeks to preserve the historic charm and nature of the Davis Islands community, located just to the south of Downtown Tampa.

The eight-member appointed task force began its work with a fact-finding community-wide meeting at which citizens identified four areas of concern. These areas are: 1) land use; 2) transportation (speeding and traffic); 3) parks and recreation, and 4) community

character and aesthetics. The task force then broke into study circles to articulate the issues, analyze the constraints, and discover the opportunities and values pertaining to each area.

The results from the task force meetings will be taken to a community-wide meeting for citizen comments in Spring 2003.

For further information, contact **Rose Petrucha** of The Planning Commission at 273-3774, ext. 320.

## SEMINOLE HEIGHTS: RETHINKING THE COMMERCIAL STRIP

The spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in the historic neighborhood of Seminole Heights!

This neighborhood known for its restored bungalows and tree-lined streets faces challenges in corridors with high-speed traffic, chain-link-fenced car lots and street crime.



*Locals envision redevelopment on Florida Avenue.*

A group of volunteer residents and business people is taking inventory of the existing land uses of the two main business corridors, Nebraska and Florida Avenues, and surveying the businesses about the difficulties and opportunities they face. After looking at the data, the group plans to discuss a long-term vision for these commercial corridors.

Questions may be directed to **Tony Garcia** of The Planning Commission at 273-3774, ext. 332. ❖

## ONE-STOP SHOPPING FOR CONSTRUCTION INFO

Too much road construction, too little information? Never fear. Bay Area Commuter Services and the FDOT are working together on a thorough list of projects that could affect your daily commute.

New maps will show all interstate, expressway, highway, county road, and other construction and/or repair projects that will last 30 or more days. Updated twice a year, the maps will also provide information on alternate travel routes, bus routes, carpooling, vanpooling, and other options. Look for these maps in upcoming issues of the *Tampa Bay Commuter*, which is distributed free of charge at local newspaper racks. Or, check for a link on the Bay Area Commuter Services Website, [www.tampabayrideshare.org](http://www.tampabayrideshare.org).

For more information, contact **Marian Ange** with the FDOT at (813) 975-6405 or **Sandi Moody** with Bay Area Commuter Services at (813) 282-8200. ❖

## MPO BOARD



**Commissioner  
Richard Glorioso**  
Chairman



**Lucilla L. Ayer, AICP**  
Executive Director

**Commissioner Richard Glorioso**  
Chairman

**Councilman Shawn Harrison**  
Vice Chairman

**Mayor Fran Barford**  
City of Temple Terrace

**Kimberlee DeBosier**  
Chair, Expressway Authority

**Commissioner Pat Frank**  
Board of County Commissioners

**Mayor Dick Greco**  
City of Tampa

**Louis E. Miller, Executive Director**  
Hillsborough Co. Aviation Authority

**Commissioner Kathy Castor**  
Board of County Commissioners

**Councilwoman Linda Saul-Sena**  
City of Tampa

**Commissioner Thomas Scott**  
Board of County Commissioners

**Commissioner Ken Hagan**  
Board of County Commissioners

**George Williamson, Port Director**  
Tampa Port Authority

**Steve Polzin**  
HARTline Representative

**Kenneth A. Hartmann, P.E. (Ex-Officio)**  
Secretary, FDOT District Seven

**Anne L. Madden (Ex-Officio)**  
The Planning Commission

**Lucilla L. Ayer, AICP**  
MPO Executive Director

**Linda M. Ferraro**  
MPO Administrative Assistant

**Jim Porter, Assistant County Attorney**  
MPO Attorney

# M.P.O. NEWS BRIEFS



## FDOT BUDGET SHORTFALL

Due to a downturn in the economy, the state legislature goes into session this spring with less in federal transportation funding than in past years. The latest estimate from the federal government was a \$750 million decrease to the State of Florida.

In just our region, District 7 of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), a federal revenue shortfall of about \$84 million has been estimated in the next Five-Year Tentative Work Program. District 7 has not had to delete any projects due to the federal shortfall, although some were deferred into later years.

Hillsborough County's portion of the District 7 Work Program, approximately \$1.4 billion total over five years, includes 13 traffic operations and safety projects and 22 resurfacing projects in the first three years. The currently adopted Five-Year Work Program sets aside \$42 million for the 40th Street project, but there still may be a shortfall.

## GANDY PROPOSAL SCALED BACK

A study of two possible connectors between the Gandy Bridge and the Selmon Crosstown Expressway was suspended after the December MPO meeting, in favor of a lower-cost proposal to improve Gandy Boulevard itself.

The FDOT reported it could not reasonably expect to fund either of the approximately \$300 million proposed options in its study: a double-decker of Gandy Boulevard, or a bypass along an existing CSX rail track. Both of these options had generated controversy with local residents and businesses.

At the same meeting, State Senator Jim Sebesta suggested measures to improve traffic flow and aesthetics on Gandy Boulevard west of the Crosstown, including medians, landscaping and street lights, computerized traffic signals, more turn lanes

and fewer driveways, for an estimated cost of \$20 million. The MPO unanimously endorsed this alternative project, while leaving the door open for other long-term solutions.

## THE MPO WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Following the November elections, Hillsborough County appointed two new representatives to the MPO, County Commissioners Kathy Castor and Ken Hagan. The MPO Board also welcomes a new representative of the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, Ms. Anne Madden. Plant City Commissioner Richard Glorioso was reelected as the MPO Chair, and Tampa City Councilman Shawn Harrison as Vice Chair for 2003. Welcome all, and best wishes for a productive year on the MPO!

## NEW COMMITTEE TO ADVISE BOARD

Formerly a sub-group of the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee, the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Committee now has a life of its own. Made up of transportation staff from various agencies, this group of professionals aims to coordinate the hardware and software now being pieced together to manage traffic on area roads. For example, when a remote camera owned by the City of Tampa shows traffic snarled on the downtown interchange, the information can be fed to a FDOT-owned variable-message board on the interstate to warn drivers upstream. The new committee will review technology proposals and studies, and make recommendations to the MPO and other agencies. Check the calendar for upcoming meetings!

## SUNSHINE LINE SERVICES IMPROVE

Hillsborough County's Sunshine Line (formerly Share-A-Van), which carries disabled and low-income residents on necessary trips for less than the cost of a taxi, is evaluated annually by the MPO's Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board.

See **NEWS BRIEFS** - Continued On Page 8

# COMING UP NEXT...

## HART UPDATES ITS PLAN

Every three years – soon every five years, under new FDOT rules – HART takes stock of its buses, vans, shelters, and services, and reevaluates where it wants to be ten years later.

This year, the HART Board will adopt its Transit Development Plan for 2004-2013. Though minor changes in the plan are required every year for HART to qualify for state funding, this year's "major update" will include:

- market research on public transit customers;
- quantifying demand for new routes and improvements;
- a status report on current services with goals for 2004;
- a project list and financial plan for 2004-2013.

Your ideas are needed as the HART Board – and the MPO Board, which reviews the plan in May – discusses questions like, *Are our public transportation services adequate today, and will they be adequate in the future? If there were additional funds for public transportation, what is the first thing that should be done?*

HART will hold public meetings this spring. For details, contact HART Public Relations at (813) 223-6831.

## SETTING PRIORITIES FOR SPENDING

Every year at about this time, the MPO solicits project proposals from local transportation agencies. Using set criteria, the MPO evaluates the proposals and ultimately adopts a priority list. Projects that rank high on the list generally are funded in five years, using federal dollars



channeled through the FDOT.

The MPO is currently reevaluating how it ranks projects. Some changes will be implemented this spring, with the

*One of HART's programs is to add bus shelters, like this one recently built on Nebraska Ave, at well-traveled stops.*

# Calendar Spring Meetings

Meetings take place at County Center, 601 East Kennedy Boulevard in Downtown Tampa, unless otherwise noted.



### MPO Board

**9:00 a.m., 2nd Floor**  
March 18, 2003  
April 15, 2003  
May 6, 2003

### Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

**1:15 p.m., 18th Floor**  
March 19, 2003  
Ybor City Visitor Information Center  
1600 E. 8th Avenue, Suite B 104  
April 16, 2003  
May 14, 2003

### Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

**5:30 p.m., 18th Floor**  
March 12, 2003  
April 9, 2003  
May 14, 2003

### Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

**1:30 p.m., 18th Floor**  
March 24, 2003  
April 21, 2003  
May 19, 2003

### Policy Committee

**9:00 a.m., 18th Floor**  
March 25, 2003  
April 22, 2003  
May 20, 2003

### Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (ITS)

**1:30 p.m., 18th Floor**  
March 20, 2003  
May 15, 2003

### Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB)

March 6, 2003, 9:30 a.m.  
Plant City City Hall, 302 W. Reynolds St.  
April 23, 2003, 6:00 p.m.  
2nd Floor

### Joint Citizens Advisory Committee (Hillsborough and Pinellas MPO's)

March 4, 2003, 4:00 p.m.  
URS Corp. Office, 7650 W. Courtney  
Campbell Cswy.

### MPO Chairs' Coordinating Committee (CCC)

**West Central Florida MPO's**  
March 14, 2003, 11:30 a.m.  
Call (813) 272-5940 ext. 338 for location.

remainder to take effect in next year's round of project rankings.

This year's changes focus on one of the three MPO programs, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. CMAQ projects must reduce air pollution, for example by helping people carpool or by reducing back-ups at intersections. The MPO plans to standardize how air pollution estimates are calculated, looking at the methods of other MPO's around the country.

Next year's changes will be more global, looking at questions like:

See **COMING UP NEXT** - Continued On Page 8



601 East Kennedy Boulevard 18th Floor  
 P.O. Box 1110  
 Tampa, Florida 33601-1110  
 085101

PRSR STD  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 TAMPA, FL  
 PERMIT 2411

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**NEWS BRIEFS** - Continued From Page 6

This past year, the board found that service improved in many areas, including better on-time performance, a reduction in the number of complaints, and less service interruptions due to breakdowns. Client satisfaction surveys showed that over ninety-four percent of patrons were satisfied with the program. If you are interested in a full copy of this report, please call **Mark Hudson** at (813) 273-3774, ext. 338. ❖

**WE NEED YOU!**

The MPO has vacancies on its 14-person Citizens Advisory Committee, a group of volunteers who give “person-on-the-street” advice to the MPO Board. Three citizens can be appointed by the MPO members listed on page 6. For more information, call **Mark Hudson** at 273-3774, ext. 338.



Check Out the MPO  
 on the Internet

[www.hillsboroughmpo.org](http://www.hillsboroughmpo.org)



**COMING UP NEXT** - Continued From Page 7

- ❖ How do proposed projects fit into the Long Range Transportation Plan?
- ❖ How do other MPO's allocate dollars for specific types of projects, such as bicycle improvements or “intelligent transportation systems” projects?
- ❖ In general, what factors and criteria do other MPO's consider, when they are evaluating and ranking projects?

The MPO would like to hear your thoughts about this, and we've included a postage-paid comment card in this newsletter for your use. If you would like more information about our ranking process or about applying for funding, please contact **Ronnie Blackshear** at (813) 273-3774 ext. 351. ❖

**DID YOU KNOW...?**

Tampa's first electric streetcar lines built in 1892 reached its peak of popularity in the 1920s with almost 24 million passengers in 1926.

