

## **West Pensacola Sector: Priority Issue 3 – Transportation**

### **Introduction**

The initial community workshops gave residents the opportunity to voice opinions about numerous topics affecting their neighborhoods. Transportation was a major point of emphasis for many citizens. With Florida State University and Tallahassee Community College forming bookends to the Sector, area roadways are often clogged with commuter traffic. When combined with standard workday travel along the major corridors of West Tennessee Street, West Pensacola Street, and Lake Bradford Road, congestion in the area presents challenges which need to be addressed.

Throughout the community workshops, citizens in the community have recognized the existing high-density development along major corridors, a prerequisite for successful mass transit. Both students and long time residents have suggested using small, quick TalTran shuttles to better serve the dense student populations at the numerous apartment complexes in the Sector. Support has been expressed for additional bike lanes and creating connections to the existing Greenways System. Recognizing the close proximity of numerous daily services, ideas were also put forward for improving pedestrian facilities to achieve connectivity. This is more than appropriate given West Pensacola Street is currently zoned Urban Pedestrian. Specifically, residents recommended the following transportation improvements and land use compliments for the sector.

### **General Transportation Strategy**

1. Add gateways to the area by constructing planted medians and sidewalks connecting businesses along W. Tennessee Street, W. Pensacola Street, White Drive, and Ocala Road.
2. Connect Florida State and TCC with transit and bicycle/pedestrian improvements.
3. Make neighborhoods safe for pedestrians while minimizing impacts of cut-through traffic.

### **Street Recommendations**

- Add neighborhood entrance with traffic calming feature along Cactus Street
- Add traffic calming along White Drive and Airport, Atkamire, and Mayhew Drives.

- Improve road maintenance along sector roads including roadway striping and trimming hedges/trees
- Replace ditches with culverts and drainage in Lipona Drive area.
- Pave Hayward and McKeithen Streets

**Transit Recommendations**

- Connect Tallahassee Community College to Florida State via bike paths
- Modify TalTran’s bus routes from an inefficient spoke system to sector specific loop lines
- Encourage student shuttles for high density apartments
- Construct more pedestrian facilities along Cactus, Hayward, McKeithen, and W. Tennessee Streets from Ocala Road to Appleyard Drive.

**Existing Conditions**

The City of Tallahassee is projected to add 50,000 new residents in the next 25 years. In addition, the three educational institutions in the community estimate that they will add approximately 7,000 new students by 2010. This growth in the general and student populations will put additional strain on transportation services. The City’s Growth Management department, which maintains data on roadway concurrency, reports that several roads in the West Pensacola Sector are deficient or nearly deficient due to the extreme traffic volume. A road is considered deficient when it does not have room to add one percent of its total capacity and remain in compliance with concurrency. Near deficient segments are those that cannot absorb 5 percent of the calculated capacity. As detailed in *Table 1* below, several connecting roads are overburdened. For example, the intersection of Lake Bradford and Jackson Bluff Roads has been noted for its congestion and has undergone capital upgrades to improve traffic flow.

***Table 1: Roadway Concurrency Evaluation***

<b>Road (direction)</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
Appleyard (south)	West Pensacola	Jackson Bluff	Deficient
Appleyard (north)	TCC	Tennessee	Near Deficient
Call (east & west)	West Tennessee	Stadium	Near Deficient
Chapel (north)	Westridge	Call	Near Deficient
Jackson Bluff (east)	Hendry	Lake Bradford	Deficient
Lk. Bradford (north)	Jackson Bluff	Gaines	Deficient

Lipona (north)	Jackson Bluff	West Pensacola	Near Deficient
Ocala(north & south)	West Pensacola	West Tennessee	Near Deficient
Stadium (south)	Connector	West Pensacola	Deficient
West Tennessee (west)	White	Appleyard	Near Deficient
West Tennessee (east)	White	Ocala	Near Deficient

Because of congestion problems in the area, mass transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity must be improved and promoted. TalTran routes serve the major roadways in the Sector, with east-west routes along West Tennessee, West Pensacola, Jackson Bluff and north-south service on Appleyard Drive, Mabry Street, and Stadium Drive. On street parking near apartments or rental neighborhoods adds to the congestion. This issue should be addressed in the City parking standards and enforced by Code Enforcement. Sidewalks are found throughout the area but there are disruptive gaps and adjacent open drainage ditches can pose a safety hazard. Pedestrian facilities are lacking in most residential areas and along some major corridors, such as Jackson Bluff Road, Belle Vue Way, and sections of West Tennessee Street. Lastly, while bike lanes can be found in the Sector, as yet there are no official connections to the countywide Greenway System. However, the first leg of the St. Marks Trail begins on Ocala Road near its intersection with West Tennessee Street.

## Proposed Projects

### Roadways

Projects have recently been undertaken to improve the surface condition of Jackson Bluff Road and traffic flow at its termination point with Lake Bradford. Additional projects in the area include, gateway improvements along West Tennessee Street and Lake Bradford Road. Gateway enhancements are intended to improve visitors' image of Tallahassee. These projects may include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and median and right-of-way landscaping, which is often credited with a certain level of traffic calming. According to the 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan, within the next four years, West Pensacola Street will be expanded from 2 to 4 lanes along the section from Appleyard to Capital Circle SW. This is intended to limit congestion between the two sections that have already been widened to four lanes.

***Table 2: Roadway Improvement Projects***

Road	From	To	Project Description	Construction Schedule
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Lake Bradford	Orange	Gaines	Gateway enhancement	10.05 – 7.07
West Tennessee	Ocala	Dewey	Gateway enhancement	10.05 – 7.07
West Pensacola	Appleyard	Capital Circle SW	Widening from 2 to 4 lanes	LRTP 2020; Priority #13

The table above of budgeted and approved roadway improvement projects does not directly coincide with the concurrency deficiencies noted in *Table 1*. Many of the roadway sections found to be deficient or near deficient are located in residential areas that limit the ability to expand roads. Appleyard Drive is listed as deficient due to the congestion which occurs at the termination point with Jackson Bluff Road. Ocala Road is nearly deficient due to its role as a primary connector between West Tennessee and West Pensacola Streets. The segment is currently a four-lane road with intense development on either side leaving little room to expand.

In view of the congested traffic flow and increasing urbanization in the sector, concurrency deficiencies could eventually prevent infill development and promote sprawl by pushing new homes farther away from the city center. Alternatives to road expansion will need to be explored to address these capacity issues.

### TalTran

In the past year, TalTran has undertaken what it has dubbed its Renaissance Plan. Possible improvements to come out of this series of analysis and recommendations make reference to new routes, punctuality, customer service, and route reconfiguring. The plan is not final but proposed recommendations in the West Pensacola Sector include, the need to lesson headways from hourly to 30-minutes due to intense student ridership. Also likely in relation to high student ridership, new service is proposed for the Ocala Road corridor. The needs of many patrons go beyond the standard workweek. TalTran is analyzing which routes are best served by extensions into the late evening and throughout the weekend.

Infrastructure improvements are seen as another side to improving transit service in our community. Bus stops are being inventoried to determine higher intensity stops which are best

suited for shelters, benches, and amenities. These are likely to be near transfer locations, major street intersections, and major trip generators. In addition to the improvements to regular stops, TalTran intends to develop “superstops” in each quadrant of Tallahassee, including the West Pensacola Sector. These would act as transfer stations, thereby negating the need to travel to C.K. Steele for the majority of transfers. Lastly, cost feasibility is being examined for the implementation of limited-stop commuter express buses along major corridors, including West Tennessee Street. This potential service would necessitate the creation of park-and-ride lots beyond Capital Circle.

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian*

Many involved citizens mentioned the need to improve accessibility and connectivity in the Sector. In particular, sidewalks, bike lanes, and greenways could help transport people in ways besides the automobile. There are numerous projects slated for the West Pensacola Sector that are in various stages of development. The aforementioned gateway enhancement projects along West Tennessee Street and Lake Bradford Road will include both sidewalk and bike lane facilities. The PASS projects will include new sidewalks where there are none and the enclosure of open drainage ditches. The Long Range Transportation Plan of the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) has West Pensacola Street listed to receive bicycle and pedestrian improvements from Stadium Drive to the western city limits.

The Tallahassee-Leon County Greenways Master Plan lays out plans for greenways, parks, and multi-use trails throughout our community. Proposals in the plan are purely conceptual and lack a definitive timetable due to funding constraints. Included within the plan is the Education Quadrant Greenways. The proposed trail runs roughly adjacent to the CSX railroad between Tallahassee Community College and Lake Bradford Road, with an eventual connection to Florida State. North-south connections to other trails are found along Ocala Road and Mabry Street. The connectors are intended to link student housing areas and Innovation Park and the future FSU Intramural facilities, respectively. Planned projects are listed below in *Table 3*.

**Table 3: Bike, Pedestrian, & Greenway Improvement Projects**

<b>Modal Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Construction Schedule</b>
Bike & Pedestrian	Lk. Bradford Rd. from Gaines St. to Springhill fork.	Bike lanes provided in both directions and pedestrian sidewalks improved.	10.05 – 7.07
Bike & Pedestrian	W. Tennessee St. from Ocala Rd. to Dewey Dr.	Provision of new bike lanes & sidewalks, improvements made to existing sidewalks	10.05 – 7.07
Pedestrian	Lipona Rd. from W. Pensacola St. to Jackson Bluff Rd.	PASS project - New sidewalks and enclosure of drainage ditches	Committed Funding; No firm construction schedule
Bike & Pedestrian	W. Pensacola St. from Stadium Dr. to western city limits	Provision of bike lanes and improvements made to existing sidewalks	Cost feasible need; No firm construction schedule
Pedestrian	Belle Vue Way from Mabry St. to Hayden Rd.	PASS project - New sidewalks and enclosure of drainage ditches	Cost feasible need; No firm construction schedule
Greenway	Adjacent to CSX railroad in forested, undevelopable lands (100 year FP)	Connection between TCC and FSU via Innovation Park and Lk. Elberta Park	Low Priority; all work dependent upon funding
Greenway	San Luis Park at intersection of Ocala and W. Tennessee	Provide a corridor extension of the St. Marks Trail	Low Priority; all work dependent upon funding

**Strategies**

The Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department in conjunction with the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency, TalTran, and City Public Works have developed plans to meet the future transportation needs of the community. The proposed projects noted in this report are scheduled for beginning construction dates ranging between Fall 2005 to 2008. Due to the urbanization of the West Pensacola Sector, improvements to public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities are of utmost importance.