

Two series of meetings with officials, agencies, and stakeholders were instrumental in understanding the needs and opportunities for a successful bicycle, pedestrian, greenways, and trails system in St. Lucie County.

In the first round of meetings, Glatting Jackson met with the following stakeholders during the week of September 18-21, 2006:

- St. Lucie County Commissioners
- Steering Committee
- Bicycle-Pedestrian Focus Group
- St. Lucie County Administrator
- St. Lucie County Department of Public Works
- St. Lucie County Growth Management Department
- St. Lucie County Environmental Resources Department
- St. Lucie County Parks and Recreation Department
- Equestrian Focus Group
- Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- South Florida Water Management District
- Environmental Advisory Committee (held 10/10/06)
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The following public meetings were scheduled to give residents from every “quadrant” of the County an opportunity to participate. Two meetings had no members of the public in attendance; brief notes are included for the three meetings where there was public participation.

- Port St. Lucie – 2 members of the public
- Southwest County – 0 members of the public
- Northwest County – 0 members of the public
- Northeast County – 2 members of the public
- Oxbow Eco-Center – 48 attendants

Partly as a result of the low attendance of the public meetings, a second round of meetings consisted of conversations with the following stakeholders between November 1 and November 6. These meetings were intended to provide further input and guidance for the plan that was not gained in the September meetings.

- City of Fort Pierce
- City of Port St. Lucie Department of Planning
- St. Lucie County School Board
- St. Lucie County Department of Public Works
- Steering Committee
- St. Lucie County Environmental Resources Department
- St. Lucie County Department of Growth Management

The results of each meeting are summarized briefly; complete meeting minutes are located in Appendix C.



#### 4.1 STEERING COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS

##### **Steering Committee – 9/18/2006**

As the first meeting by this purpose-formed committee, the discussion primarily centered around who should be involved in this planning process and existing plans that should be considered. The Committee identified the following areas as places of special concern:

Specific Areas of Concern/Interest:

- Area between the inlets
- Taylor Creek crossing
- Existing railway corridors

##### **Steering Committee – 11/02/2006**

- The Committee reviewed the summary of the meetings held to date and accepted the community input to date.
- Joe Webb presented the Research of Official Documents (Section Two) for the committee's review and approval.
- The situation of the low turnout at the public meetings was discussed. The consensus of the group was to proceed with the planning process and hold another public meeting when there is a preliminary plan for people to see.
- The group reviewed the preliminary plans and marked up the plans with possible revisions.

#### 4.2 COMMISSIONER INTERVIEWS

##### **St. Lucie County Commissioners – 9/17/2006**

Glatting Jackson met with Commissioners Craft, Smith, Coward, Hutchinson, and Lewis, to discuss priority needs. Interestingly, the input from each commissioner differed amongst the four of them, but a few priority issues were mentioned by more than one:

- Safety, particularly around schools
- Funding Sources
- Consideration of existing plans

#### 4.3 COUNTY STAFF WORKSHOPS

##### **County Administrator – 9/19/2006**

- TVC area should be easier to plan for than other parts of the County.
- North County = covered by County
- Midway Road = covered by County
- The plan will need to look at many sources of funding. The County wants to work cooperatively with the municipalities and the State.

##### **St. Lucie County Department of Public Works – 9/19/2006**

The meeting with Public Works covered a range of topics; most notably, the Department reviewed its current practices in and outside of the urban services boundary and described its existing maintenance system. The long-term major issue involved with the creation of a bicycle/pedestrian/greenways/trail system is the amount of resources needed to maintain it. In the short term, the Department struggles in giving specific directions for development extractions.



**St. Lucie County Growth Management Department – 9/19/2006**

The primary topics of discussion were particularly challenging locations for planning in St. Lucie County, opportunities to create a unique trail system/ecotourism attraction, and the need for a more detailed, half-day planning session with the Department.

Specific Areas of Concern/Interest:

- US 1/Scenic Highway
- Savannas area
- Linkage to Jensen Beach
- Taylor Creek Crossing
- Canals 23, 24, 25
- Mosquito Impoundment
- White City
- Old Dixie Highway Plan

**St. Lucie County Environmental Resources Department (ERD) – 9/21/2006**

The meeting with the Environmental Resources Department consisted primarily of physically marking areas on the base maps that have special issues or opportunities as environmental and/or recreational resources.

Special Areas of Concern/Interest:

- Hunter's Run
- Allapattah Access
- Glades Cutoff Road
- Midway Road
- Lakewood Park
- Canals and canal crossings

**St. Lucie County Department of Parks and Recreation – 9/21/2006**

The meeting with the Department of Parks and Recreation was a mechanism to touch base. The County's Department does not develop nor administer trails, but believes that their work in the Savannas is relevant to the creation of this plan. While safe routes to parks are desirable, the staff believed it would not be financially feasible to link all parks to one another except for some opportunities to do so along the eastern corridor of the County.

**St. Lucie County Environmental Resources Department – 11/06/2006**

Glatting Jackson met with the ERD to review objectives. The major topics of conversation were the use of multi-use paths along both sides of canals; a looping, interconnected equestrian trail system; and the importance of connecting to Martin, Okeechobee and Indian River Counties.

**St. Lucie County Department of Growth Management - 9/19/2006**

As discussed in September, Glatting Jackson met again with the Department of Growth Management to receive and include city-proposed development plans.

**St. Lucie County Department of Public Works – 11/02/2006**

Glatting Jackson followed up with the Department of Public Works to obtain street inventory reports and upcoming roadway projects.



#### 4.4 PARTNER AGENCY WORKSHOPS

##### **Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization – 9/20/2006**

The meeting with the neighboring MPO focused on their current projects and concerns, primarily the growing importance of Route 609 in the Martin County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The following points of connectivity were also discussed:

- Canal 23
- Access to Allapattah
- Jensen Beach area

##### **South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) – 9/20/2006**

Working together with the SFWMD is crucial to the success of creating a diverse, high-quality system of trails in St. Lucie County, especially due to the agency's holdings in the west. At this meeting, SFWMD agreed that trails are compatible uses in conservation lands, and that the only other major recreation uses at this time were bird-watching and hunting. The intent of CERP—the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program—was clarified in terms of the plan and is relevant only in terms of watershed issues.

Special Areas of Concern/Interest:

- Canal 23
- Adam's Ranch

##### **St. Lucie County School Board – 11/02/2006**

The School Board is most concerned with children being able to reach school safely. By law, children are not eligible for transportation if they live less than two miles away from the school. The major concern is providing safe sidewalks and bikeways around the schools where currently there are many hazards such as arterials without crossings, a lack of shoulders, and no pedestrian bridge crossings.

#### 4.5 USER GROUP WORKSHOPS

##### **Bicycle-Pedestrian Focus Group – 9/19/2006**

This group was formed under a previous initiative but had been inactive. The major topics of conversation were concern over the following:

- Lack of connectivity of existing sidewalks and trails system
- Lack of diversity of use types on existing sidewalks and trail systems

Specific Areas of Concern/Interest:

- US 1
- Indian River Drive
- Jensen Beach Boulevard to Walton Road

##### **Equestrian Focus Group – 9/20/2006**

One member of the equestrian community of St. Lucie County met with Glatting Jackson and gave an overview of the issues and desires of this particular user group. Many members of the user group are clustered in two areas: the western County lands or near/in Port St. Lucie, and there are two major existing equestrian facilities: Bluefield in the west and Savannas in the east.



While no specific areas of concern/interest were discussed, the following are important considerations for planning for the equestrian community:

- 20 miles/day is a guideline for a good day-ride
- Horses have two-dimensional vision and are uncomfortable in dark, enclosed places such as tunnels
- Most owners haul into existing equestrian areas rather than ride to them.

**Environmental Advisory Committee – 10/10/2006**

Because of scheduling constraints, the Glatting Jackson meeting with the EAC occurred three weeks after the first round of stakeholder meetings. Primary concerns of the EAC are getting children outside and interacting with nature; creating a diverse, connected system; providing mobility options to populations who cannot drive; and the liability associated with constructing, maintaining, and monitoring trails.

**4.6 PUBLIC WORKSHOPS**

Because of the large scale of the project, four public meetings were established to provide a forum for the public in the four quadrants of the county: the northeast (Fort Pierce area), the southeast (Port St. Lucie area), the northwest, and the southwest. Attendance was low, and no members of the public attended the meetings intended for northwest and southwest residents.

**Southeast County (Port St. Lucie area) Public Meeting – 9/19/2006**

Because of the intimate nature of small meetings, much of the input from the Port St. Lucie residents was recorded directly onto area maps. The comments that were not noted graphically were:

- “Are there opportunities for PSL Blvd?”
- “It would be good to have a “walking park” near cluster of schools.”
- “Riverwalk building/ ‘Town Center’ of PSL should be considered when planning trails around PSL”
- “Morningside is an attractive street and a potentially good place for sidewalk or trail.”

**Northeast County (Fort Pierce area) Public Meeting – 9/21/2006**

- There was no public attendance at this meeting

**Oxbow Eco-Center Public Meeting – 6/28/2007**

The Primary issues/additions to map:

- Paved loop trail that allows bicycling along full extent of south Hutchinson & Indian River Drive. It is viewed to be an important addition that would be an eco-tourism attraction and allow for bicycling/running events that could be held annually. Alternative to Indian River Drive could be a Rail with Trail system.
- Use Florida Power & Light lines
- South Hutchinson – wants on-road bike lanes in addition to multi-use
- Fort Pierce “Crossroads” area needs to be a priority.
- Lennard Road - multi-use trail
- Need east-west corridors across US1
- Port St. Lucie’s Riverwalk included, Hub? (parking?)



- Need north-south corridor in NW quadrant (Bud Adams plans/Adams Ranch)... more connections in western PSL ... Tradition plan (Core Communities), other planned developments in west PSL/SW SLC?

#### 4.7 ADJACENT COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

##### **City of Fort Pierce Officials and Stakeholders – 11/01/2006**

This series of meetings consisted of conversations with City Commissioners Ed Becht and Duke Nelson. Both officials mentioned upcoming regulations and projects that could have large impacts on Fort Pierce, such as the requirement of greenways and trails in new developments and the possibility of light rail by 2020.

Special Areas of Concern/Interest:

- Indian River Drive
- Jenkins Road Area
- Hartman Road Area
- Savannas

##### **City of Port St. Lucie Commissioners - 11/01/06**

At the recommendation of other stakeholders, Glatting Jackson met with two Commissioners of Port St. Lucie: Commissioner Michelle Berger and Commissioner Jack Kelly. Both officials noted the environmental importance of the city but from different angles: Berger focused on the potential of ecotourism whereas Kelly noted the City's stewardship of its resources.

Special Areas of Concern/Interest

- North Fork of St. Lucie River
- Wood Stork Trail
- Western areas: North West/Torino in particular
- Walton Road
- City Center Project

##### **City of Port St. Lucie Planning Department – 11/02/2006**

- County plans need to mesh with City plans
  - They will provide what plans they have in digital format although they do not have a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan
  - The County should contact the City Public Works Department and encourage them to commission a plan at this time.

#### 4.8 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Though the range of input from these meetings is quite broad, a number of themes emerged. Below is a compilation of general issues, opportunities, and specific geographic areas that may require more attention and analysis.

**General Issues:**

- **Connectivity:** the current system lacks connections between its existing infrastructure, and does not reach many places of interest.



- **Public safety:** St. Lucie County has one of the top 10 “Meanest” Streets system—meaning the most deadly—in the country. There is an acute need, particularly in a two-mile radius around schools, to provide safe bicycle and pedestrian transportation options.
- **Diversity of trail types and users:** there is a demand for different trail uses such as mountain biking, equestrian trails, jogging, etc.
- **Maintenance and Liability:** Not only does the current system have to be upgraded and repaired, but there is concern over the maintenance required for an extensive system and the accompanying liability.

**General Opportunities:**

- **Canals:** there is an opportunity to capitalize on the scenic system of canals throughout the County, which are already thoroughfares.
- **East and West Connections:** there is a strong desire to incorporate both the more urbanized areas of the eastern portion of the County to the more rural and natural western areas into a system of diverse, interesting loops.
- **Railway Corridors:** Rail line ROW, especially in the eastern section of the County, is particularly well-suited to the development of a rail-with-trail project.
- **Unique natural areas:** places such as the Savannas and the North Fork have great significance to St. Lucie County, but can be better connected to each other and more accessible via trails and sidewalks.
- **Cooperative efforts:** the plan must involve the cities of St. Lucie County, but also agencies like South Florida Water Management District and the Martin County MPO. It is ideal to connect to existing neighboring systems, such as Martin County’s sidewalks and bikeways in the Jensen Beach area.

**Specific areas of focus:**

- 2-mile radii around schools
- US 1, A1A, Indian River Drive, Scenic Highway
- Taylor Creek
- Canal 23
- Walton Road
- Savannas Area
- Allapattah Access (Martin County)
- Midway Road

