



Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Feasibility Study – Live Question & Answer Session #2

May 3rd, 2021, 4 PM

Some comments and questions were reworded for clarity

Jack Kostrzewa, CRTPA: Welcome everybody to the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Feasibility study virtual project room, this is a Q&A session. We wanted to first give a little bit of an overview, and then ask you know if you guys have any questions or comments and then move from there. We don't have any pre-set time so we will be on for a while waiting to see if anybody else jumps online. If you ask your question and you got your answer and you're good with it, there's no need to hang around unless you want to, that's completely up to you.

The Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Feasibility Study started back in 2020 and it's from Betton Road to Metropolitan Boulevard with connections up into the Market District. There's a couple of things that are going on in the corridors connecting to the Market District project. There's a Blueprint project near the Premiere Gym area around the stormwater facility and they're moving forward with a project that is going to have community amenities in it. And we're also trying to connect to that as well, and we're working out how that can possibly be done without having to go onto Thomasville Road and deal with the interchange it at Thomasville Road and Interstate 10. That's not a really pleasant interchange, and I know a couple of people who are pretty savvy riders who don't go that way. They won go anywhere that deals with the interchange. They go around to Live Oak Plantation Road and Timberlane School Road and find their way around that way. So, there is another part of the project that we're also addressing with our partners at Blueprint. Some of the other things is that when we started this project, it had come out of the Tallahassee-Leon County Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. But before that it was actually in the Greenways Master Plan as well, which was from the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department. So as the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan grew, that project was incorporated into those efforts. And that project was ranked, along with all the other projects, and was ranked really high in terms of making connections and providing linkages to parks and schools and to activities. So, there's more than just us wanting to go out there and do this just to do this. There's a linkage in there that we're trying to build. Similar to the roadway system that we've got with arterial roads, collector roads in neighborhood roads, we also have a similar bike system as part of the Bike and Ped Master Plan. So we're starting with the arterial roads, which would be something like the Thomasville Road project and it would be a wider path that would make those connections and go off into the neighborhoods or connect to a smaller road through the neighborhood network effort that we've that we've got going on with our partners as well in Planning and in Blueprint. That would be part of the development of the project would also be taking a look at these other connections and making sure that we're addressing those as best we can, and incorporating those as best as we can. We have quite a few parks along the corridor, so we may not be able to connect all of them, but they will have some access to the trail not far away from them. With that, Kate, is there anything that you wanted to cover with any of the materials from the virtual room?

Katelyn Widness, Kimley-Horn: We just wanted to let you know that these Q&A sessions are kind of in coordination with that live Q&A room that will be up for an additional three weeks. I think it will be



closing on May 25th, so that's a Tuesday. In that virtual room there's materials that give some background about the project that includes things like the bicycle and pedestrian master plan, what this connects, as well as a lot of the information that we've gathered during this feasibility study. So that relates back to coordination we've done with Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department regarding some trees that are out there, understanding available right-of-way that's out there, understanding the different types of driveways that we have along the corridor, the different types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. And that's really what we've collected now to present that information to the public, and then hear from the public of whether they support this project, if they'd like to see it on the East side of the road or the West side of the road based on connectivity to things, and we're going to incorporate that information into some of the preliminary findings and information gathering that we've done during this feasibility study. I encourage you, if you haven't looked through all those materials, to do that because there's a lot of great background information as well as send to anybody else you know that lives or travels along the corridor to provide input. There's an option to leave a comment in the room number 4 in the drop down, or you can email Jack comments.

Jack Kostrzewa: Sure, thanks Kate. This is a planning study at this point, so there haven't been any decisions made about the location, the width, where it's going to go, what's going to happen with the intersections, and so forth. We first went out and did a feasibility study, and now we're looking for public input in this part of the process, and then in about a month or two, we're coming back with some alternatives and that's when we start to get to taking a look at those details based on the comments in and the existing conditions assessment, and where we might have a better opportunity to identify the path location in a general sense. Then we'll move into design, probably next year sometime in 2022, and then move from there, so there's still plenty of time. We're still taking comments and again, if you haven't sent in comments and you'd still like to send in comments, we will be taking them all the way up through May 25th. And that still won't stop us from taking comments if you have them after that as well. With that, I think we have three external people, correct? If you have questions, just go ahead and ask, or if you want to raise your hand, there's a little smiley face with the hand at the top. You can just raise your hand and it will pop open a hand on our menu, so we know if you've got questions. Nancy, it looks like you've got some questions, right?

Nancy (Guest): Yes, I do have a couple of questions. I am at Rose Hollow on that side of the road northbound. So, I guess that puts us on the East side of this thing. It's a big busy area in here with the School of Arts and Science, of course, on the other side, but we've got our fire station, Thomasville Road Baptist is extremely busy seven days a week with people coming and going. And I think that the speed being that this is a major thoroughfare, it's always a challenge. People coming from the North side of town into town, 45 miles an hour or more, and people stop to turn in. I'm a big walker and we don't like being on Thomasville Road walking to be quite honest. I'm just thinking in terms of people having to wait for people walking by, cars going by and coming down Thomasville at that speed, and stopping to get into these places. There is a concern as to why Thomasville Road was picked. I know that on your maps and stuff, you showed the Goose Pond Trail, is there any way things could go along that and go back up Hermitage Boulevard to Raymond Diehl? And come back to Metropolitan Boulevard to avoid all



of that heavy, heavy traffic that's so dangerous. It's the Market District on that west side that you are trying to get people to, right?

Jack Kostrzewa: Correct.

Nancy (Guest): It seems like that west side is linked if the path is on the west side already, as opposed to having to cross Thomasville Road. Anyway, it's stuff like that that was just concerning to me because I know how the traffic is in this area.

Jack Kostrzewa: Sure. The traffic isn't just going fast down that part of Thomasville Road, just to let you know it's going pretty fast all the way down. So, you're not alone.

Nancy (Guest): Yeah.

Jack Kostrzewa: On the West side of the road, there's some asphalt that is identified as a sidewalk, but I think we all agree that it's not a sidewalk. It's pretty weak. There are some things that could be done on that side, but to be honest with you, we are going to have to cross at some point because of right-of-way restrictions that we've got on the East side of the road. So, we're trying to figure out where the best place to move over to the West side of the road would be, where we have right-of-way. From what I'm hearing is that you don't like it on the East side of the road, so if we're able to move it to the West side of the road, is that more comfortable for you then?

Nancy (Guest): It is, yes, it's definitely more comfortable for me, for our neighborhood as a whole, really. I do like the idea of a path because we definitely walk and go back up Hermitage and go to Goose Pond Trail. But Thomasville Road is just such a horror.

Jack Kostrzewa: Yeah.

Nancy (Guest): It's not a walker friendly kind of place, but anyway, that's my concern. If it seemed like there was less to have to deal with on that side of the road further down, that's probably not true. Going into town on that side of the road.

Jack Kostrzewa: Right. And a couple other things; with the Goose Pond Trail, we're still investigating the opportunity to make a connection on a harder surface on that Goose Pond connection going all the way down to Hermitage Boulevard where it crosses over and continues south. It would have to be a separate project, but we're investigating that as well. Some of the issues that we also have with Rose Hollow and Dorothy B. Oven area is that there's a pretty substantial wall which would have to be moved further east, and that's a lot of work to have to do to fit something in there that would be possibly on the back of curb. What we've found is that people do not like being on the back of curve or the sidewalk is built right to the back of curb. So, the idea here is that we're moving further away from the curb to get that path built so that there's quite a distance in between, depending on the right-of-way again. How far that is depends on the right-of-way, but away from where the traffic is. So, you've got your separation and there's much more safety built into that when it occurs. It's sometimes perceived, but it's also a very real



thing when you have cars flying by you at 50 to 60 miles an hour that makes it very concerning for people. From the East side, there's some things that are not very good that we don't want to deal with on that side of the road between the Church, Rose Hollow, and Dorothy B. Oven Park. I would say that that there's some better things on the West side of the road that we see, and we have met with the School of Arts and Sciences and talked to them extensively about some opportunities that we have there. In terms of people crossing the road and riding on the sidewalk, and cars stopping it wouldn't be any different than they are now. It still has to be negotiated and people need to be aware of pedestrians and what's going on out there, so that won't go away. But we're hoping that we'll be able to include some better signage out there, so when we do have more people and bikes and whatever anybody else is doing out on that trail, that there's an opportunity for people to be aware of what's going on. So those things are kind of inherent design, but at the same time, you want to make sure that you're doing that up front, not waiting for design to tell you, "This is what we need to do." So that's why we're trying to be proactive about it.

Greg Slay: One of our goals is to have as few crossings over Thomasville road as we can get away with, but we think probably at the end of the day, we're going to have at least one or two, but hopefully no more than that. We would try to have those where we have traffic signals right now as well.

Jack Kostrzewa: That was my next point, that we were looking for an area or an intersection that is signalized and has very few conflict points, which would almost eliminate Hermitage Boulevard because that is a very complicated intersection. For a three-legged intersection, that's pretty complicated. I would say the neighborhood is the fourth leg, but it's not like there's another collector road or arterial connecting to it on the west side. But still, Woodgate Way and Armistead Road are much less complicated, and they already have signals that are actuated, so it's a better choice to get away from Hermitage. And those are the kind of things that we are investigating.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): Hello Jack, this is Jan Bennitt. I live in Rose Hollow; may I jump in?

Jack Kostrzewa: Sure.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): And I'm sure I missed something, I had to deliver my grandchildren home before I could come back and jump into the meeting. At that Rose Hollow and Brockton Way exit, we currently have a significant challenge with sightlines because of that Dorothy B. Oven wall, which they told us could not be moved. Now I don't know how accurate that is, but they led us to understand that there was some regulation, DOT, that there was something that prohibited them from moving that wall. So, I don't know what that was, but it really creates a problem because we literally have to get onto the sidewalk to see if there's anyone on the sidewalk. Which is not so bad if it's a pedestrian, but if it's a cyclist, it's not a good situation. We already had one of our renters hit a cyclist. Doctor, how long ago was that, a couple years? But that is our concern, particularly because of the age of the residents of Rose Hollow. We have that sightline issue so whatever happens, were it to be. All those people who now can walk and cycle to the light show in Dorothy B. Oven Park, which from Thanksgiving until New Years, would make it essentially another lane of constant traffic in the evening hours. And that's a concern,



because we already have law enforcement mobilized for us to get out on the weekends. And on Elf Night, they have to be there for Rose Hollow, we have special signs we have to show them so they can stop that traffic to get us in and out. So that's my concern, that we have a sightline issue there, and to make sure that is on your radar and you absolutely know about it. And the serious safety concern it is to us.

Jack Kostrzewa: Yeah, we don't take that lightly. I have to say between Kate and CRTPA staff, we've been there enough to try to negotiate that exit out as well, and it's not fun. No one wants to put anybody else in a situation where it's worse than what it is. Keeping those things in mind, and in the ability to actually move that wall that Dorothy B Oven Park makes it less of an opportunity than it would be on the West side where it's pretty open. There's tree and parking lot that will need to be negotiated, but not like on the East side of the road. If you had a choice, you'd rather see it on the west side of the road then?

Jan Bennitt (Guest): Well, there's a school over there too. They have a whole other set of safety issues. They have buses, they have drop off and pick up, so I'm not wishing bad luck on them. We did everything we could to block their expansion for all of those reasons, but were unsuccessful. And I know that they're expanding their numbers again this year, even though their site remains the same, so I'm concerned for the safety of those children as well as the faculty and the parents getting in and out. All of the drop off/pick up times there every day are another challenge.

Jack Kostrzewa: Sure, and that won't go away. Kate and I met with the School of Arts and Sciences, and I think of all the students there, they have far more drivers. They only have about 3 or 4 kids that actually ride their bikes or walk to school. So, you're right, we'll have to take a look and make sure that we've got that all accommodated. They were actually excited about having the trail on that side of the road because they saw that as an opportunity as more than just a before school and after school thing, but an opportunity to get out and utilize that for educational purposes. We're quite aware of the issues associated with that. I think about three or four years ago, there was a safety study done in that area with FHWA, and Greg Slay and Greg Burke would probably remember better than I would. But we're aware of all the safety issues that came out of that and the things that they suggested should happen to make that a better area.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): That would have been before the variance to the PUD, and the expansion that they've had.

Jack Kostrzewa: Right. That would. This would have been three or four years ago, or so. But I will take your comments and make sure that we've got those noted, and we're meeting with Rose Hollow on Wednesday. I anticipate hearing the same thing from a number of people from your neighborhood.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): I apologize in advance for the redundancy.

Jack Kostrzewa: No, it's fine because we want to make sure that everybody is aware of this project, and



the last thing we want to do is go through the process and then be doing something out there and have someone say “I never heard about this and I didn't know what was going on.” It happens all the time, so we just want to make sure that everyone is aware and met with. If it comes down to it, we'll just say that Jan and Nancy made sure to let us know what was going on when we were in the planning phases of the project.

Katelyn Widness: And this is the information we want to hear during this public engagement. We can go out there and do field reviews, we all drive the corridor, some of us live along it, but you guys know that intersection and accessing it, as well as you said Nancy that you walk. This is what we want to hear from different user types out there of what their experiences are to make sure that we're going to come up with the best possible solution to incorporate a trail along the corridor.

Jan Bennett (Guest): Yeah, we still have some difficulty making sure that everyone understands that traffic exiting Thomasville Road Baptist Church heading North on Thomasville Road has the right-of-way. People existing Brockton Way have to wait for them. And because they don't all know that, sometimes it becomes a problem because they won't go, and we're stuck because they have the right-of-way. So, it's just all of those layers of people coming and going in that same spot that is not aligned across the street.

Jack Kostrzewa: We won't make it any worse, I can guarantee you that. Hopefully we'll be able to find a solution that might help you out a little bit. We don't know. Any other questions?

Katelyn Widness: Mary Kay has her hand up.

Mary Kay Falconer: I just wanted confirmation on the right-of-way. I think earlier you told me that you're trying to avoid having to acquire right-of-way, and you're going to stay within the right-of-way that you have? Is that what your goal is on the path?

Jack Kostrzewa: Yes, yes.

Mary Kay Falconer: I just wanted to confirm that because I support that.

Jack Kostrzewa: So do we.

Katelyn Widness: Jan I think you joined a little bit late, but we were just saying that if you don't have any more questions or comments, you don't have to stay on the whole time of the meeting. We are recording it in transcribing it as well, so if somebody jumps on in 30 minutes, you will be able to access what that conversation was on the CRT PA website. But you're more than welcome to stay on as well.

Jan Bennett (Guest): I appreciate that, and I really want to thank you both for engaging with the community. We got a late start, sorry about that, but we talk to each other and hear a lot. Everyone in here will get the word on whatever transpires, and we'll make sure that it's communicated.

Katelyn Widness: And we encourage everyone to that you're talking to in the neighborhood to definitely look at virtual meeting room that's up. There are materials in there and you can leave comments. If they



want to go in there and provide similar comments of what you all provided tonight, please tell them to do that. Those comments become a part of the project record and will be communicated to the CRTPA board regarding how many people suggested they preferred it on the West side of the road in this area if that's what everyone feels.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): I found the virtual project room very easy to navigate and understand, it is very well put together. I did already leave comments there as well.

Nancy (Guest): Thank you.

Katelyn Widness: Great. OK.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): Of course, without more detail, it's difficult to give comments that are more specific, so I know that as you guys get further along in the planning stage, that will be updated. Am I correct in assuming that?

Jack Kostrzewa: We'll have a have a new virtual room when we get to our second set of meetings. But we'll update the web page to reflect the comments that we receive in the next steps in the process. The webpage can be found at CRTPA.org.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): When you get further along in the planning stage, I'm sure whatever you have up, we'll have more detail about where it's looking like things are going to actually be. But that's a little further down the road, I'm gathering.

Katelyn Widness: Yeah, so what we'll do is after this round of public engagement, and more data collection that we're working on, we will come up with a few feasible alternatives that can work and that will be presented to the public to have the public almost vote in a sense of which they prefer of the feasible alternatives. And then that's what would be presented to the CRTPA board for either approval on moving forward or deciding not to move forward with the project. Now that won't go into such detail that it will show design-level alignments. It will be more of if it's on the west side or the east side of the road, and where there would be crossings.

Nancy (Guest): OK, thank you all. This has been very helpful.

Jan Bennitt (Guest): And of course, the devil is always in the details, so it's all well and good until they start digging up your gardenia bushes, right?

Greg Burke: Jan and Nancy, this is Greg Burke with CRTPA staff. We mentioned there was a roadway safety audit that occurred in that area and that was actually presented to our board about three years ago. I have a link in there and we can certainly send that out, but some of that audit actually looked at your location there and some of the issues were documented as well as some of the suggestions. We



can certainly provide that link to you or send that out besides putting it right now on this virtual meeting.

Nancy (Guest): OK, that would be wonderful.

Jan Bennett (Guest): I think the only the only caveat that I'm trying to emphasize, and I appreciate your considering it, is that things are not what they were three years ago. The expansion of activities at the Church, including the fact that they hire out parking to the nursing staff at the neurology clinic that's up on the other side of Dorothy B. Oven Park. Their staff walks across that way now and the Church has activities that go on every single day of the week. They have expanded that tremendously. Just to be sure that you take a look at the current status, because there has been a lot of change in that three years.

Greg Burke: Good point.

Jack Kostrzewa: I'll make sure, Nancy, that the link gets sent out.

Nancy (Guest): OK, thank you. I'll get it out to everybody. Thank you very much.

Jack Kostrzewa: OK.

Nancy (Guest): Yeah, I appreciate it.

Jan Bennett (Guest): I'm going to check out you guys. Thank you very much.

Nancy (Guest): I am too, thank you. I appreciate everything you're doing.

Jack Kostrzewa: Thank you again.