

Mobility Districts and Traffic Studies

During the last Comprehensive Plan update in 2008, the City of Sarasota identified the need to develop a citywide strategy for enhancing the mobility options of all users. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan recognized that road widening projects can have a negative impact on urban neighborhoods and the environment and that a new approach to both manage traffic concurrency and facilitate redevelopment throughout the city is needed. The City also recognized the need to apply land use and mobility strategies to encourage such desired redevelopment in targeted areas of the city. This continues to be supported through the work of the City's Urban Design Studio (UDS) related to land use and thoroughfare analysis.

Sarasota's Citywide Mobility study is an initiative to integrate land use, transportation system planning and design, and transportation funding to help achieve these goals. The primary strategy is to create the foundation for prioritizing multimodal projects and developing an incentive-based development review process to encourage infill and redevelopment in specific areas.

Mobility Districts

The adopted Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and previous planning initiatives have targeted certain areas in the City for infill and redevelopment. As redevelopment is expected to bring an increase in population and employment, mobility will continue to be a critical issue. Mobility must be addressed both on a citywide level and within specific infill and redevelopment areas. As part of this assessment process, a detailed review of the City's existing and future land use patterns was undertaken during the Mobility Study. The existing land use provides an understanding of the City's development patterns, while the FLUM provides a framework of the City's vision for future redevelopment. This helps to ensure that the recommendations for mobility districts are consistent, rather than in conflict, with this vision. The current work of UDS affirms the proposed mobility district areas and ensures they are consistent with planning efforts.

The City of Sarasota adopted the current *Sarasota City Plan* (Comprehensive Plan) in 2008. The land use patterns identified in the FLUM provide a guide for where future mobility alternatives should be considered or enhanced. For example, the FLUM identifies activity centers, mixed-use areas, and commercial corridors that are ideal for targeting mobility enhancements. In addition, the FLUM identifies areas considered "single-use" (typically low density, single-family), where land use patterns may not support alternative mobility options other than bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The current FLUM has been carefully developed by staff, vetted by the public, reviewed by state and local agencies, and ultimately approved by local policymakers. As such, it is appropriate to use the FLUM as the base guide in developing mobility districts. Below are the three proposed mobility districts:

1) Downtown Mobility District

Although it is a relatively small geographic area, Downtown Sarasota is the employment and commercial focal point in Sarasota, serving as the major urban/activity hub within the city, as well as a countywide and regional attractor. This district includes the areas generally found within the Downtown Bayfront, Downtown Core, and Urban Edge Future Land Use Categories. The Downtown is and will remain the highest-density and intensity area within the city. The Downtown produces, on average, the highest taxable value per acre within the city and is therefore a considerable revenue generator. The mix and design of uses, grid network, location of the main transit transfer station, and existing multi-modal networks enable the Downtown to not only be conveniently served by transit, but also function as a highly walkable and bikable area. The development goal of the Downtown is

continued infill, redevelopment, and diversification of uses; however, as population and employment growth continue to rise within this area, increased attention to alternative transportation modes is needed.

2) Commercial Corridors and Centers Mobility District

Commercial corridors and town centers are identified as areas that have the potential to be urban/activity hubs outside of Downtown. The district typically includes properties in and around commercial corridors. These areas are envisioned to have a mix of commercial and residential uses, highly walkable and bikable, as well as supportive of higher-capacity transit. Residential uses typically include townhouses, rowhouses, and apartments, as well as single-family homes on smaller lots on the periphery of the center. First-floor commercial uses, offices, and retail under apartments and condominiums make up the core of a town center. Commercial corridors are identified where areas of concentrated development could provide a linear connection between different parts of the city, thereby providing a link between areas of more intense development. The land uses and non-single use depths along commercial corridors may be varied and include a wide range of densities, depending upon the character of the corridor and the surrounding area. However, they typically consist of a variety of low and mid-rise buildings with a mix of employment and residential uses. Commercial corridors and centers should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly and provide the framework for future transit service or improvements.

3) Single-Use Mobility District

Single-use areas are the remaining portions of the city that are not within other district/sub-district types. They consist primarily of single-family residential and some lower-intensity office and commercial uses. They are walkable, bikable, and may support some level of transit. Infill and redevelopment on a lower intensity scale may be permitted, as long as the character and livability of the neighborhood is not disrupted. These areas should be protected from intrusion of high-speed commuter traffic by incorporating traffic management measures such as signage, landscape design, roadway design, and, if necessary, traffic calming measures. Special attention should be paid to ensure that a compatible transition exists between the single-use areas and the other mobility districts. This transition could be achieved using building setbacks, building height limitations, and design elements such as landscaping, building orientation and massing, lighting, and the location of parking.

The three mobility districts are shown in the attached graphic.

Development Review Process—Traffic Studies

Current Process:

The City of Sarasota has a transportation concurrency process in which a traffic study is required to quantify the impacts of a proposed development's traffic on the city's road network. The traffic study is used to determine, if, upon approval, traffic generated by the development will reduce the level of service on roadways below their adopted standards.

A de minimis project is one where a proposed development's traffic generation is projected to be so low (less than 1%) that the impact is negligible and no mitigation or further action is needed to receive a certificate of concurrency. If a proposed project contributes more than 1% additional traffic to a street based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual standards, then a traffic study is required under the current process. The traffic study requires information on the project details and site plan, as well as study of the existing traffic conditions, projected traffic generation and distribution, available existing and committed capacity, and traffic circulation/access management. The traffic study evaluates projects assuming the roadways are operating at the City's adopted level of service (per State Statute) and determines if the impact of the proposed project

degrades the system, dropping it below the adopted level of service. If so, roadway and intersection improvements are identified within the study to help traffic flow more freely at the most congested times of the day. If an improvement is required based on the results of the traffic study, then the developer pays their fair share of the improvements in order to maintain the level of service to satisfy concurrency requirements. *NOTE: The developer is not responsible for improving existing streets/intersections that currently do not operate at the adopted level of service; it is the City of Sarasota's responsibility.*

Proposed Process:

While traffic studies would continue to be required for certain-sized projects, a trip generation threshold to determine when a traffic study is needed would be established for each mobility district. The threshold numbers are based on an analysis of the last twelve years of development projects where a traffic study was required. The analysis identified at what level traffic generated by the development project was significant enough to impact the road network and require an improvement or proportionate share payment, versus those projects where the traffic generation was not significant and only required payment of the impact fee. Even though these development projects were obligated to perform a comprehensive traffic study, many of them were not required to pay for and construct roadway improvements as they did not significantly degrade level of service standards. As such, these traffic studies generated little to no benefit to the public, developer or staff, and, in a sense, engendered a false expectation to the general public in that no tangible roadway improvement was required to be constructed (See summary table of recent project examples on page 5.). Furthermore, when a roadway improvement was actually required, most of the improvements recommended by the traffic studies included costly road widening projects, which typically have not been supported by the community.

When a development is completed, the developer pays for their added trips based on the use(s) and this money goes to fund multimodal projects listed in the CIP, as long as the number of trips is below the threshold for that district. However, if the number of trips is more than the threshold, then a traffic study is required to determine the extent of the impact on the roadway system. Based on the results of the traffic study, the developer would then pay their share of the recommended roadway improvements. As is the case today, the developer would pay the greater amount of either the cost for their added trips or the cost of their share of roadway improvements, but not both.

The proposed thresholds have been developed for each mobility district to set the bar at a level where it is unlikely that if a study were required, the outcome of the study would result in developer obligations above and beyond payment of the multimodal fee. The analysis for previous development projects within the downtown area found projects that generated on average 250 or less trips were not required to fund any type of roadway improvement related to the proposed development, based on the results of the traffic study. Those projects exceeding a 250 trip generation typically had to fund some sort of roadway improvement after completing a traffic study. Under the proposed process, a development project in the Downtown Mobility District adding less than 250 trips would still be required to pay the multimodal transportation impact fee, but would not need to perform a comprehensive traffic study. The analysis found that for the proposed Commercial Corridors and Centers Mobility District, the trip generation threshold number was at 100 to expect a benefit and recommended improvement(s) upon completion of a traffic study. For the Single Use Mobility District, the trip generation threshold number was at 50. It should be noted that the trip generation threshold numbers are based on added new trips within a specific time of day, referred to as PM peak, which is generally between 4:00 PM—6:00 PM.

Staff has observed that while the developer is unsure what to expect, the community has been equally unsure and with the changes in the State law, the findings have been frustrating for many. If the proposed trip generation

threshold numbers for the mobility districts are adopted, it should provide another layer of predictability for all those involved related to where and when additional roadway improvements are required.

The proposed process still obligates the developer to pay the multimodal transportation impact fee (adopted October 1, 2014 by the City of Sarasota) and evaluate and address driveway/site access and site design requirements, even if no traffic study is required. There is no proposal to waive any of these fees. It should also be noted that all development projects must still meet all applicable Zoning Code and Engineering Design Criteria Manual (EDCM) criteria otherwise needed for approval.

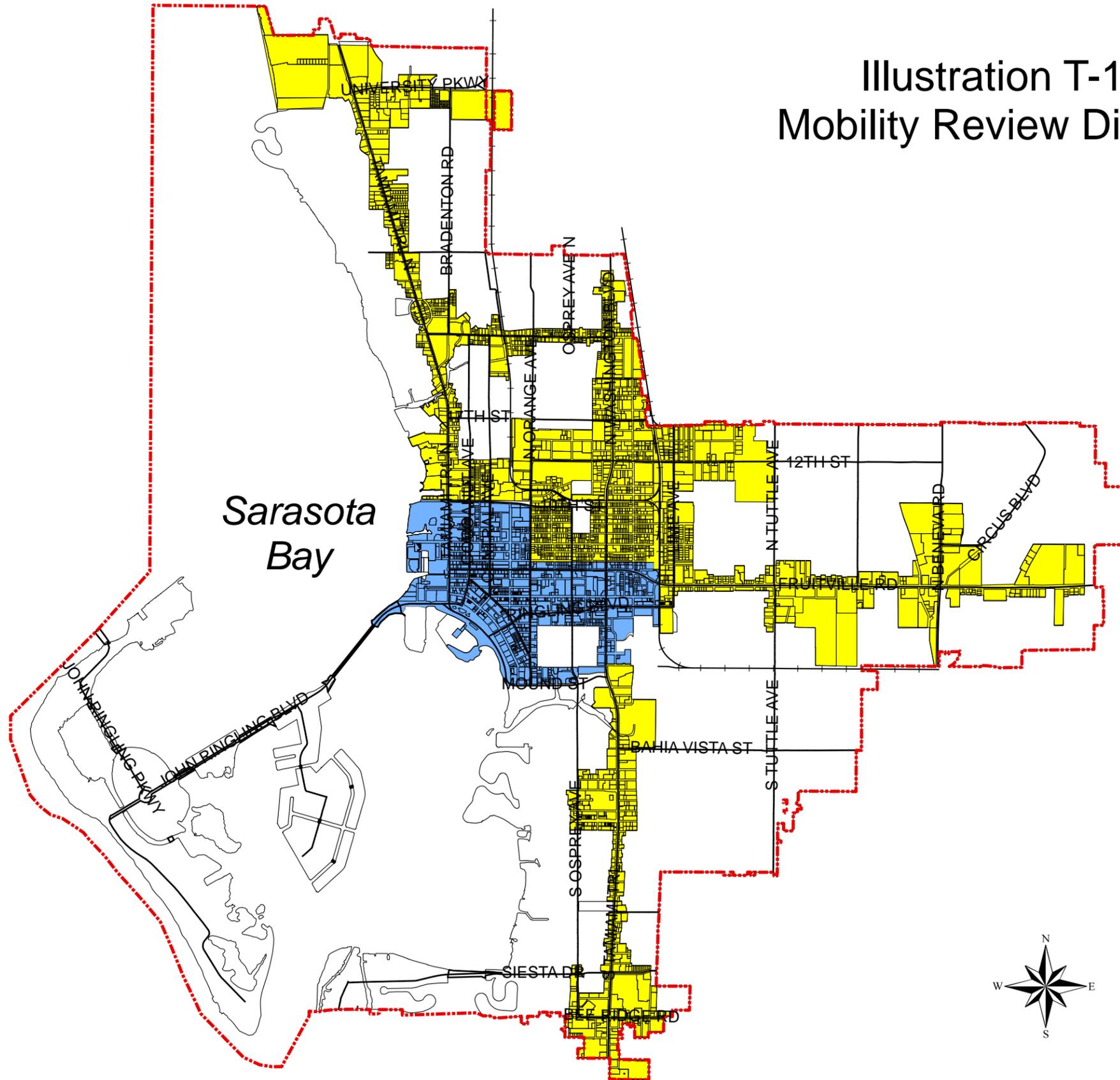
The cost of a trip on the system is based on a project's proposed use(s) and is adopted under the multimodal transportation impact fee, which the City has the sole authority to set. This fee is now able to fund multimodal capacity projects the community supports for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, in addition to capacity improvements for drivers. This provides a level of predictability for the community (and developer) regarding the future transportation improvements as such projects, based on community input, would be adopted into the CIP.

The 2011 Community Planning Act, as well as environmentally/financially unsustainable road widening projects identified in the Comprehensive Plan, are factors in modifying the approach to transportation concurrency. If nothing is done, recommended improvements from traffic studies will continue to result in programming costly road widening projects in order to meet conventional levels of service and the City will be obligated to fund most, if not all, of these improvements. The new approach is simply a tool to better direct developer funds (multimodal transportation impact fees) towards projects the community desires.

Summary of recent traffic studies:

Date	Project Name	Location	Trips added	Findings
10/29/13	Fifth St Parking Lot (Rezone)	1435 Fifth Street	35	The project met the City's transportation concurrency requirements and no mitigation improvements were required.
5/22/14	State St Garage	1538 State St	152	The project met the City's transportation concurrency requirements and no mitigation improvements were required.
5/24/14	The Vue	US 41 and Gulfstream Ave	186	The project met the City's transportation concurrency requirements and no mitigation improvements were required.
7/10/14	Embassy Suites	US 41 and 2nd St	95	The project met the City's transportation concurrency requirements and no mitigation improvements were required.
In process	Taco Bus	1548 Main St	27	Expected to meet the City's transportation concurrency requirements with no mitigation improvements required.

Illustration T-10 Mobility Review Districts



Mobility Review Districts

- Downtown
- Centers and Corridors
- Parcels
- Major Roads
- Railroads
- City Limit

Single-Use Neighborhood parcels are not displayed.



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