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MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN, PROPOSED

This report is a supplement to the "Major Streets and Parking" Report prepared by Harland Bartholomew and Associates, City Planners for the City of West Palm Beach in 1952.

The purpose of this report is to bring up to date certain proposals made in the Bartholomew Report and to recommend some changes necessitated by conditions that have changed since these proposals were made. Since the time of the preparation of the Bartholomew Report, the Florida State Road Department in cooperation with the Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners prepared a Comprehensive Traffic Study for this County in 1959. The study is quite comprehensive. Its recommendations include a Major Thoroughfare System with a 20-year projection broken down into 4-5 year programs. The study is based on many significant factors including population, existing conditions, traffic patterns and traffic flow, origin and destination studies and other pertinent data.

The Major Street System devised by Bartholomew and Associates was designed to serve a population of some 85,000 persons. Although the City has increased only about 1/3 of this projected growth for which this system was designed, it is significant to note that while the population increase in the City in this period based on the 1960 U. S. Census report was only about 29%, the increase in the total County was 95%. This increased County population has resulted in increased use of our major streets, and other public service facilities due mainly to the coastal location of the City, and the fact that the City is the County seat and major retail center in the County.

At the time of the Bartholomew Study, data showed that the predominant traffic movement was in a north-south direction through the City. This is still true today, but to a decreasing extent with respect to the total volume of traffic in this County. To begin with the Sunshine State Parkway has been constructed since that time. This route is carrying an average daily traffic of 11,298 vehicles. Both routes, State Road 809 (Military Trail) and State Road 7, west of the City are carrying increasing amounts of traffic.

The volume of east-west traffic is increasing in proportion to the north-south traffic at a higher rate. This is caused by the fact that incorporated municipalities immediately to the west of the City have increased about 3,500 in population, 1950-60, not including the increase of residents in the unincorporated area in this same vicinity. The increase in population of the Town of Palm Beach has caused some increase in traffic eastward too.

One can see then, that the 1951 picture is changing somewhat. The total traffic volume in either direction is still increasing. But the percentage of increase is greater in the east-west direction compared to that in the north-south direction for the same period.

BY-PASS ROUTES

The majority of through traffic still traverses the City's central business district. This is still a serious defect in our local street system. An extensive street widening program to correct this situation would be prohibitive at this time.

Therefore we have to turn to the development of limited access by-pass routes in order to adequately handle the situation. Too, because of the rapid growth taking

place in this immediate area, sound planning cannot be limited to existing corporate limits. One must look beyond these limits so that what is planned as a peripheral by-pass route today will not become a main street in the center of town years hence.

This situation is peculiar to this area, more so than any place else because of the linear-coastal type of development and dense fringe population.

Since the preparation of the 1952 Plan, the City has extended its western boundary approximately 6 miles west to include about 19 square miles in the north-western part of the City. (See Map 1, West Palm Beach and Environs). The Parkway will no longer be beyond the outskirts of the physical limits of the City, in fact it almost cuts the City in half. State Road 7 now becomes a peripheral route; the Parkway assimilates the character of an outer By-Pass Route and proposed Route 9 (Federal 95) becomes an inner By-Pass Route.

MAJOR NORTH-SOUTH STREETS

The Major north-south streets are many in number. South Dixie, North Dixie and Broadway still remain important traffic carriers. South Dixie and South Olive are one way traffic carriers for a portion of their length through the Central Business District, south to Belvedere. This is necessitated by the large volume of traffic moving in a north-south direction between the railroad and the lake. Aside from the possible widening or the creating of additional one-way routes on the other parallel north-south streets, the only alternative is to develop the by-pass routes. Serious consideration should also be given to the possibility of developing the Florida East Coast Railroad right-of-way as the major north-south corridor route in the event it is ever abandoned and the railroad is combined with the Seaboard Airline Railroad. This would relieve much of the traffic volume on the existing north-south routes.

Flagler Drive for its entire length from Gregory Place near the south City limits north to 36th Street should be developed as a scenic drive. This is imperative to maintaining West Palm Beach as a tourist attraction and a City of beauty for which it is nationally known.

Broadway is a street that carries U. S. 1 traffic in the extreme northern part of the City. The City is extremely limited in being able to develop an additional north-south traffic carrier route in the north part between the lake and Florida East Coast Railroad. Study should be given to developing Greenwood-Pinewood Avenues as a major traffic carrier to supplement Broadway. Here again the possibility of making use of the Florida East Coast Railroad right-of-way as a major traffic route, if and when this right-of-way is ever abandoned, should be considered.

Parker-Tamarind are both streets that now carry a substantial volume of traffic. Many trucks make use of Tamarind. The Planning Department is considering the possibility of incorporating a major route through the redevelopment area to the west and north of the Central Business District. The purpose is to create a new north-south connector street connecting Australian, Parker and Tamarind to Broadway and at the same time providing peripheral access to the Central Business District.

Australian, Congress and Kirk are major north-south streets planned in connection with the Westward Expansion Area. These routes can be secured with sufficient right-of-way widths to overcome future problems of traffic flow. Included in this group too is 12th Street which is partially designed as a north-south street to carry traffic from north of Okeechobee Road to the area north of the central business district.

Military Trail is becoming increasingly important as a north-south traffic

carrier. This should continue to grow in importance notwithstanding the development of by-pass routes and other north-south major streets. Additional right-of-way should be secured now for future widening of this route. A 100 feet right-of-way is recommended. Steps should also be taken through means of zoning regulations to protect this route against further indiscriminate roadside development.

MAJOR EAST-WEST STREETS

The major east-west streets are increasing in importance due to the Westward Expansion. Okeechobee Road will become increasingly important as a traffic carrier due to the fact that it is the direct connector with the Sunshine State Parkway, and because it brings traffic directly into the central business district. Part of Okeechobee Road is presently four-laned with a central planting strip. Similiar planning should be maintained through the core of the City if possible. It is hoped that the portion of Okeechobee Road through the center core area will become a peripheral street on the south edge of the central business district eventually. It is also a primory link, via the bridge, with Palm Beach.

Plans are presently under consideration to straighten out that portion of Okeechobee Road that loops around the south end of Clear Lake. This should be four-laned as described above. An overpass over the Seaboard Airline Railroad tracks should be planned in addition to an interchange with Route 9 and Parker-Tamarind or Australian Avenues.

Southern Boulevard (SR 80) is a street in need of immediate attention. This is the east-west connector street servicing the Palm Beach County Airport Terminal and the home base airfield of the President of the United States. If transient tourists, business-

men and indeed national dignitaries using the airport facilities are to judge this City by this entrance gate to the City, which we feel they do, then considerable improvement should be made in this right-of-way including planting and maintenance. This street should be four laned from the town limits of St. Cloud east to South Bridge.

45th Street is an east-west street that is becoming more and more important as a traffic carrier in the northern part of the City. Study should be given to this area to determine the validity of improving 45th Street or extending 54th Street west, past the hospital area to 45th Street extension, or creating a new east-west route in the vicinity of the overhead power transmission lines along the north corporate limits of the City. The latter proposal is felt to be necessary in view of the fact of the continuing development of the Port of Palm Beach facilities in this area immediately north and adjacent to the City's boundary line. Truck traffic to and from this port will be required to travel already heavy trafficed streets or traverse already developed residential areas unless some new route is developed.

12th Street is now the main east-west street connecting the westward expansion residential area with the core of the City. This supercedes the development of 15th Street proposed in the Bartholomew Report. That portion of 12th Street east of the Seaboard Airline Railroad will be studied in connection with the redevelopment of that area.

Belevedere and Forest Hill are main streets connecting residential areas to the west with the main part of the City. As residential construction takes place in the west, these roads will increase in use as traffic carriers. Indiscriminate and haphazard development of roadside uses along these right-of-ways should be controled so that eventually traffic movement will not be interrupted.

Clematis, Fern, Datura, Georgia and Florida, etc. should all be thought of as access streets to service the central business district. It is becoming increasingly important to have these streets used as service streets rather than major traverse streets through the central business area.

Park, Lakewood and Palmetto Streets, etc. mentioned in the Bartholomew Report as major east-west streets have developed as streets of lesser importance and are now properly in the category of collector streets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A coordinated major thoroughfare and street improvement program involving State, County and City roads must be developed if this City is to realize the most value from money spent for these improvements. The problem is too acute to authorize street improvements on the basis of local desires rather than under a coordinated program wherein each level of government can obtain the maximum benefit out of the sum total expenditures made for road improvements.

The proposed Major Thoroughfare Plan, as herein presented, is a paper document. It is worth only the paper it is written on if it is not reinforced with a source of revenue to effectuate the "paper" plan. This means cooperation:

cooperation of the planners to uncover various possible means of finding new sources of revenue;

cooperation of fiscal agents, financial directors and attorneys to transpose these ideas into the framework of laws under which the governmental units operate;

cooperation of the governing bodies to put these proposals into operation.

APPENDIX

THE STATE ROAD DEPARTMENT REPORT

The majority of the proposals set forth in this plan are based on the findings and recommendations of the report, "A Traffic Study and Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Palm Beach County" prepared by the Florida State Road Department in cooperation with the Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners. The report was prepared in 1959.

The purpose of this study was "to develop a long range road and street plan for Palm Beach County which will conform to and encourage the land development planned for the area and serve the future traffic demand which at the same time be economically feasible." The scope of the report covers completely all phases of the survey from the collection of data through its preparation, analysis and evaluation into findings and recommendations. The resultant product is a twenty-year master highway plan.

A few of the excerpts of that report, as they directly apply to the City of West Palm Beach, are listed here for reference purposes.

PALM BEACH COUNTY 20-YEAR PROGRAM

1. FIRST FIVE YEARS

4-Laning Projects

"Belvedere Road between Olive Avenue and west limits of Haverhill (except

relocation section through present airport)".

"Southern Boulevard between Cloud Lake and State Road A-1-A".

"12th Street from Okeechobee Road to Flagler Avenue".

"Australian Avenue and northern extension between Okeechobee Road and Lake Park Road".

New 2-Lane Projects

"Extend Jessamine Street from Interstate to Tamarind Avenue".

"Extend Georgia Avenue, in West Palm Beach and Lake Worth, to "D" Street in Lake Worth".

"Bunker Road-Illinois Street between Congress Avenue and U. S. 1".

Bridges

"Southern Boulevard Bridge-Widen existing bridge to 4-Lanes or parallel 2-Lane bridge to make one-way pair".

"Georgia Avenue Bridge-Over West Palm Beach Canal-New 2-lane bridge".

"Add connecting ramps to Flagler Memorial Bridge for access to Flagler Avenue".

2. FIVE TO TEN YEARS

4-Laning Projects

"Flagler Avenue between 45th Street and Southern Boulevard in West Palm Beach".

New 2-Lane Projects

"Congress Avenue through present airport".

3. TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS

4-Laning Projects

"Flagler Avenue between Southern Boulevard and Lucerne Avenue".

Bridges

"Flagler Avenue Extension Bridge over West Palm Beach Canal--New 4-lane bridge".

4. FIFTEEN TO TWENTY YEARS

4-Laning Projects

"Forest Hill Boulevard between Military Trail and Flagler Avenue".

CONDITIONAL PRIORITIES

DESCRIPTION OF ROAD

CIRCUMSTANCES OF CONDITIONS THAT JUSTIFIES PROJECT

2-Laning Congress Avenue from
Okeechobee Road to 45th Street

Westward Development of West Palm
Beach

MAJOR NORTH-SOUTH ROUTES

Interstate Route No. 95 (State Road 9). This is to be a freeway type of facility and is a part of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. This route is essentially the "backbone" of the Major Thoroughfare System for the coastal area and when completed will carry the heaviest traffic volumes of any facility within the county. It has approximately six miles of common alignment with the Sunshine State Parkway in the northern part of the county. Details concerning this facility are given

in a previous section of this report."

"U. S. 1 (State Road 5). From the south city limits of Lake Worth to 12th Street in West Palm Beach U. S. 1 is a double route. At present within West Palm Beach, Poinsettia and Olive Avenues are acting as one-way pairs between Belvedere Road and 12th Street. No extension of this one-way pair for U. S. 1 is being recommended because it is felt that these streets to the south in Lake Worth become too far removed from each other to operate effectively as one-way pairs. The advantages of one-way pairs are discussed in a previous section. The Interstate Route as well as Flagler Drive and other north-south planned arterials will give considerable traffic relief to U. S. 1."

"Congress Road (State Road S-807). This facility when completed will be one of the main north-south arteries, ultimately running between 45th Street in West Palm Beach and Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach. Through the Westward expansion area of West Palm Beach, a two-lane facility is proposed between Okeechobee Road and 45th Street. The remainder of this route is proposed to be a four-lane facility before the end of 20 years. Sections of it are programmed to be built first as two-lane and later four-lane."

"Flagler Avenue. This route is recommended to be developed into an important north-south four-lane arterial street. A major portion of this route already exists within West Palm Beach. It is also recommended that this artery be extended to the south as far as Lucerne Avenue in Lake Worth. To complete this needed traffic distributor may require some filling along the lake shore but when completed will probably be the most scenic drive in this area. This route is needed to help relieve the traffic congestion on U. S. 1. Because of the limited number of cross streets, this facility has the potentiality of carrying more traffic than any other at-grade four-lane

highway in the area. Most intersections are of the "Tee" type which have greater capacities in general than intersections which involve cross traffic.

It is also recommended that a partial interchange be constructed between Flagler Avenue and Flagler Memorial Bridge. One direct connecting ramp should be built to serve northbound traffic on Flagler Avenue wishing to go east on the bridge. Another direct connecting ramp should be built to serve westbound traffic on the bridge wishing to go north on Flagler Drive. The remaining movements for the interchange of traffic between these two facilities can be accomplished with a minimum of traffic conflicts by proper use of the existing street system in the vicinity. This improvement would also result in better operation of both facilities."

"Georgia Avenue (West Palm Beach) and "D" Street (Lake Worth)." This proposed two-lane facility could be classified as a collector or feeder street. It is a much needed facility and would involve only a small cost to complete. Construction would involve connecting the existing Georgia Avenue with "D" Street with less than a mile of new roadway. When this is completed this will be the only street connection, other than the Interstate Route between the cities of West Palm Beach and Lake Worth between the Seaboard Airline and the Florida East Coast Railroads. This would greatly improve the circulation of traffic between the two cities."

"Australian Avenue-Voss Road-Strozier Street." This facility when completed will be one of the main north-south 4-lane arterial streets between Belvedere Road and Lake Park Road."

MAJOR EAST-WEST ROUTES

"Forty-fifth Street (State Road 702). This arterial route and interstate collector is expected to require four-laning from Military Trail to the intersection with N. Poinsetta Avenue in West Palm Beach."

"Twelfth Street. This route is the main arterial street serving the Westward Development of West Palm Beach and also will have a major interchange with the Interstate Route."

"Okeechobee Road. Because of the impracticality of widening Okeechobee Road east of the Interstate Route location, a one-way pair of streets is proposed, largely made up of Okeechobee Road and Jessamine Street. This one-way pair is a continuation of the Lakeview-Okeechobee one-way pair in West Palm Beach. The jog between Jessamine Street and Lakeview Avenue will require some corner easing which will necessitate some right-of-way acquisition. This one-way pair connects one of the major Interstate interchanges with the City of West Palm Beach and the Town of Palm Beach. It is anticipated that this interchange will serve the heaviest traffic volumes of any in Palm Beach County."

"Belvedere Road. This route is a main east-west arterial and also an Interstate collector. A four-lane facility is proposed from Haverhill to Olive Avenue."

"Southern Boulevard (State Road 700-80). This is the east-west cross county arterial route connecting the western county communities with the coastal area. Expected traffic growth during the next twenty years will warrant four laning this route from "20 mile Bend" east to the junction with State Road A-1-A. Portions of this route are at present four-laned while other portions, which are two-lane, are presently operating above practical capacity. This route also has an interchange with the Interstate Route. The western "legs" of the "Y" beyond "20 mile Bend" should

adequately handle future traffic for twenty years as two-lane facilities except areas in the western part of the county."

"Illinois-Summit-Bunker Road. This is proposed as a two-lane collector route between Military Trail and Flagler Avenue. A grade separation is planned where this route crosses the Interstate Route. Future land development may warrant an extension of this facility west of Military Trail."

"Forest Hill Boulevard. This route is an arterial and Interstate collector and is being recommended to be four-lane between Military Trail and Flagler Avenue to carry anticipated future traffic demand. West of Military Trail a good two-lane facility is proposed with extension to State Road 7. An interchange with the Interstate Route is also proposed for this route."

"Greenbriar-17th Avenue. This facility is proposed as a two-lane collector route between Military Trail and Flagler Avenue. Where this route crosses the Interstate Route, a grade separation is proposed."