

City to present solutions to ease traffic

Information session scheduled Thursday

By Pete Skiba

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The traffic in downtown Cape Coral flusters drivers now. Imagine what it will be like in 15 or 30 years.

That's what planners tried to do when they proposed solutions to allow traffic to flow through the downtown areas on major roads such as Del Prado Boulevard and Cape Coral Parkway.

The city's transportation department and the redevelopment agency plan to let people know what they have come up with to help with the traffic.

The information session is scheduled for 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday in the La Venezia Ballroom on Club Square.

The first of three phases starting in 2007 could be implemented with minor construction, said Cape Coral transportation engineer Rashad Hanbali.

The first recommendation would try to tackle a major morning headache for drivers trying to get to work across the Caloosahatchee River during morning rush hour.

The recommendation would add two temporary left-turn lanes on Del Prado Boulevard for those turning east onto Cape Coral Parkway during morning rush hour from 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Construction would do away with a concrete median and open up three right-turn lanes to traffic coming from the bridge on Cape Coral Parkway to Del Prado Boulevard from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Plans call for signs to go up across



Del Prado and Cape Coral Parkway to inform drivers of the lane changes.

More innovations would move a traffic signal from Southeast 47th Terrace at Del Prado to Southeast 46th Lane by 2015. This would allow for better spacing between cars.

Additional better vehicle spacing could happen earlier by traffic light timing changes..

By 2030, the Cape Coral Bridge could be eight lanes according to the study. All the ideas are concepts and more ideas are planned to be unveiled at the information session for public discussion, Hanbali said.

The Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Agency plans to turn the downtown into a thriving area with offices, restaurants and homes for the population of 150,000 people. All the development is sure to bring more traffic.

The traffic study began last June and covered the area from Tudor Drive to the west along both sides of Cape Coral Parkway to the Cape Coral Bridge at the east and north up Del Prado boulevard to Southeast 44th Street.

“The study is not yet complete but we do have some ideas,” Hanbali said. “The study area is beyond the CRA because you have to look at adjacent access to the area.”

Del Prado Boulevard and Cape Coral Parkway remain the two main corridors feeding and going through the downtown area.

The study’s recommendations end by 2030. All the recommendations are only possible alternatives. People should feel free to attend the information session to not only see what is recommended but to voice their opinion, officials said.

“We’ll have numbered paper lists to the displays so that people could pinpoint the intersections near where they live and better understand the

IF YOU GO

- What: Public information session on Downtown Redevelopment Area Traffic Study
- When: 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Thursday
- Where: La Venezia Ballroom, formerly Waterford Ballroom, 4646 S.E. 10th Place, on Club Square, Cape Coral

DOWNTOWN CAPE CORAL TRAFFIC

Here’s a snapshot look at the traffic on Cape Coral Parkway:

- An estimated 48,000 cars use the road every day.
- Rush time 7-9 a.m.; peaks 7 to 8 a.m.
- 67 percent of drivers are eastbound on Cape Coral Parkway during morning rush hour
- 48,800 cars per day on Cape Coral Parkway near Palm Tree Boulevard
- 76 percent of downtown drivers ride alone during rush hour; 19 percent have a passenger
- 61 percent of downtown Cape Coral drivers are going across the Caloosahatchee River when they drive downtown during peak hours
- 74 percent of downtown drivers use Cape Coral Bridge more often than the Midpoint Memorial Bridge
- 41 percent use Cape Coral Parkway during rush hour

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exhibits,” said Susan Viola, a spokeswoman for Gray-Calhoun & Associates, the consulting firm conducting the study.

Bob Greco, community redevelopment agency chairman, came up with an idea.

unfinished side that would make it available for 100 to 200 cars to park,” Greco said. “We’re trying to create a community with jobs and homes so that people won’t have to make a daily commute over the bridge.”

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