

Citizen Comments for the
June 08, 2021 Joint County/City
Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing

The following Citizen Comments were received for
Item 1 - Joint Public Hearing on 2021 Cycle Comprehensive Plan
Amendment

Joint County/City Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing, June 08, 2021 Citizen Comments

Item 1 - Joint Public Hearing on 2021 Cycle Comprehensive Plan Amendment	Name: Jan Bennitt
Lobbyist: No	Address: 3135 Haddam Court, Tallahassee, Florida 32308
	Date Submitted: 6/7/2021 2:13:00 PM

June 7, 2021

Honorable Mayor Dailey, County and City Commissioners, CRTPA Staff, and all Stakeholders:

My name is Jan Bennitt and I live in Rose Hollow at 3135 Haddam Court.

Rose Hollow is a neighborhood of sixty-one homes with a single point of egress, which is onto Thomasville Road via Brockton Way. Brockton is about five feet north of the north entrance to Thomasville Road Baptist Church and a similar distance south of the entrance to Dorothy B. Oven Park. Our ability to safely enter and exit our neighborhood has been significantly impacted by increased traffic at these locations as well as increased capacity at the School of Arts and Sciences-Thomasville Road and, of course, the very busy fire station just north of the park. For these reasons, we are always very interested in and concerned about, any proposed changes to Thomasville Road traffic in the area.

In April, we first heard of the proposed Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path, which is part of the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Project which we understand, by our layman's interpretation, will be adopted by the passage of the ordinance you are considering today. An information outreach email about the project was sent to a former HOA Board member and was forwarded by that person to our current HOA President, Nancy Hough. Current Rose Hollow Board members and committee chairs immediately began trying to understand the complexities of the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency and its Citizen's Advisory Board. We attended three Q&A Sessions and arranged a meeting for residents with Jack Kostrzewa, the CRPTA Assistant Director. We were not able to get answers to our specific questions about the proposed plan and were told those questions would not be available until the design phase of the plan begins. At no time in all of these late April through May meetings did ANYONE mention the ordinance under consideration or its public hearing scheduled for June 8, 2021. In fact, we were repeatedly told that this plan was just in the feasibility study phase and that the next public hearing was not until July.

Had one of us not stumbled upon the notice in the Tallahassee Democrat advertising the June 8th meeting, we would undoubtedly not be here today. I am confident that no one would have said: "Gosh, you know those Rose Hollow folks who have been pursuing us for answers to their questions about this Thomasville Road Path would probably want to know about this public hearing. We really ought to call them and make sure they know and understand what it's about."

Let me be clear, I know that every one of the members of the commissions and all of the CRTPA staff and other stakeholders who have been involved in the work of preparing these plans and this ordinance are sincere public servants with the best interests of all of the public in mind, but I also believe it sometimes occurs that groups, particularly when trying to qualify for funding from particular grants with specific criteria, can get caught up in bringing together only those advisors who are well-positioned and educated in the language of those things to develop a plan that meets those specifications and can lose sight of the needs and impacts of other parts of the community.

Again, as representatives of our neighborhood, we began digging for answers. What we found was on the CRTPA website and in the pages of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, the Greenways Plan, the CRTPA Citizen's Multimodal Advisory Committee, and other linked sources, but what was not available were the answers to our questions about how the proposed Thomasville Road Multiuse Path would impact our neighborhood. I also felt that while we were referred to those sources by the CRTPA staff, we were not supported in understanding and interpreting them. We were basically on a scavenger hunt through pages and pages written in the obscure private lexicon of urban planning.

We then collaborated on a letter to our mayor, which was copied to all of the commissioners and staff including the School Board member who sits on the CRTPA Board along with three Leon County Commissioners and three Tallahassee City Commissioners who serve on that Board. We collated our unanswered questions and asked for the mayor's help, as our elected leader, in understanding this issue. To date, those who have responded have referred us back to the same CRTPA staff that we have already addressed with our questions.

Along the way, I came to the conclusion, shared by many of my neighbors, that the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path is not the right approach to the stated goals of reducing vehicle use and emissions and increasing "connectivity" for low-income populations and seniors. I have serious concerns about putting a bi-directional multi-use path that is twelve-feet wide on a heavily-trafficked, fume-filled, urban thoroughfare. I counted the bicycles parked at Publix, Trader Joe's, Hobby Lobby, and Home Goods on Saturday. There were none. There are no bike parking amenities at any of those locations. I cannot imagine trying to transport my groceries in the basket of my bike from Publix to Rose Hollow in the heat out there today, let alone in August, nor how many trips it might take. These observations have convinced me that the proposed path is purely recreational in nature. I cannot support the increased safety risks to the patrons, employees, and residents of the dozen or so businesses and residential streets, just in the area from Hermitage to Metropolitan, with their single points of egress being onto Thomasville Road for recreation.

If the ordinance you are considering today does NOT act to accept the proposed Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path as part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Project, then we ask only that you make that very clear in your comments at the public hearing. We did our best to interpret the language of the notice, but we will be happy to be educated in its true intent if we are mistaken. My neighbors and I in Rose Hollow will continue to be active followers of the work of the CRTPA in the future now that we know it exists. We will continue to make contact with as many stakeholders and neighboring communities as may be impacted by their projects. We hope that in the future the motoring public and neighborhoods will be included along with the cycling community and the running community, both of which are well represented on the CRTPA Citizens Advisory Committee.

Thank you for your service to our community and your consideration of these comments.

Jan Bennitt

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Item 1 - Joint Public Hearing on 2021 Cycle Comprehensive Plan Amendment	Name: Nancy Hough
Lobbyist: No	Address: 3126 Brockton Way
	Date Submitted: 6/7/2021 2:49:00 PM

Thank you Mayor Dailey, Chairman Minor and Commissioners for allowing me to speak to you today.

I am here because I am unclear what the implications are of your adoption of this Ordinance and its impact on our ability to have a voice, going forward, in this process. I am the current President of the Rose Hollow Homeowners Association and have been in this position since January of this year. The first notice we received of the Proposed Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path (which is part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan) came in mid-April of this year and I immediately reached out to CRTPA. Our neighborhood participated in the planned Q&As as well as a meeting specifically for Rose Hollow. During the course of those events, we expressed a desire to be made aware of any upcoming Public Hearings and were informed that there would be Public Hearings beginning probably in July but at no time, to my knowledge, were we made aware of this Public Hearing to Amend the Comprehensive Plan to adopt by reference the BPMP.

I have questions. Does your adoption of the Ordinance indicate the City/County's complete acceptance and blessing on all the projects listed within its pages? Does your adoption of this Ordinance preclude us from future input at Public Hearings specifically for the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path which will greatly impact our and surrounding neighborhoods?

We have sought answers via a letter of June 2 to the Commissions, government staff and Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency Board Members but, to date, have not received responses to those questions, only acknowledgments of receipt of the letter. I appreciate those acknowledgements and look forward to the answers to our questions.

I ask that you not vote tonight, to adopt this Ordinance if, by doing so, it will shut us out of the process.

Thank you.

Nancy Hough