Thoroughfare Plan

The purpose of the Thoroughfare Plan is to guide both the public and private sectors of the County and the various municipalities in future decisions involving thoroughfares. It will serve as an indication of the locations and capacities that need to be designed into the construction of new, or upgrading of existing thoroughfares. More specifically, the goal of this plan is to:

1. Provide for the efficient movement of vehicular traffic into and throughout the County.
2. Identify the right-of-way needs to be dedicated to accommodate a proposed thoroughfare.
3. Ensure adequate roadways to serve existing and proposed developments.
4. Assist in identifying Capital Improvement Program needs.
5. Reduce the traffic volumes in residential areas by ensuring adequate arterials.
6. Serve as a planning tool and assist coordination with other agencies.

The street system of a county forms the skeleton on which the county is built. The functions of urban roadways are twofold and often in opposition to each other. First, a roadway must be designed to serve the safe and expedient through movement of people and goods. Second, it provides access to adjacent property and is often used for vehicle parking. Rarely can one street serve both needs effectively; therefore, a variety of streets serving different functions provide the most efficient service.

A street can be a positive or negative influence on the various lands uses within the county. For example, a
major street carrying large traffic volumes would have a negative effect within a residential neighborhood but would have a positive effect on commercial land uses. At the other extreme, a low carrying capacity street would have a positive influence in a residential area, while it would have a negative influence on commercial land use potentials.

The street system projected beyond the built-up, urbanized area can affect the location preferences for future land uses. Land uses that need good access to major traffic flow will locate on the designated major streets. At the same time, low density residential land uses will often be located away from these major carriers where a quieter pace is possible or be designed in ways to mitigate the impacts of the thoroughfare.

Improving the efficiency of the present traffic corridors and insuring that future corridors will function as designed is more complicated than just ensuring that adequate right-of-way is provided. Other design functions will also be necessary to improve the efficiency of traffic flow, such as the channelization of turning traffic out of the through lanes and eliminating endless numbers of access points for commercial and residential land uses. Another method that reduces conflict points is to use frontage roads along major streets where a minimum number of access points is allowed. This arrangement allows free movement along the frontage road without the conflict with through traffic. Designing residential land uses that “back up” to major streets, and controlling the number of commercial access points along major streets by locating them in a unified development, will help eliminate the conflict between local and thoroughfare traffic.

Individual streets and highways do not serve independently of each other but must form an integrated system. Each street has certain design characteristics that allow them to function as intended. The thoroughfare standards contained within this plan are consistent with nationally accepted standards. They have also been adopted by most of the municipalities within the county.

The Thoroughfare Plan provides the locations of the county’s arterial and collector street network along with the right-of-way requirements for each portion of this system. The Thoroughfare Plan is provided on page 10.78 of this document.