



Disston Avenue Concept Planning Project Application

2020 Complete Streets Call for Projects

Prepared for:  **FORWARD
PINELLAS**

Prepared by:  **Tarpon
Springs**

Disston Avenue Concept Planning Project Application

2020 Complete Streets Call for Projects

CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS



October 23, 2020

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Subject: City of Tarpon Springs Application for Forward Pinellas Complete Streets Program Concept Planning Project Grant

The City of Tarpon Springs is excited to submit this application for the Forward Pinellas Complete Streets Program Concept Planning Grant. There is an opportunity to connect the north and south segments of Disston Avenue and add multimodal improvements within the area to provide a safe and comfortable alternative to US 19. The Disston Avenue project corridor, which includes the historic Union Academy neighborhood, is in a position to take advantage of the many regenerative activities happening in the vicinity. An extension of Disston Avenue would connect to Belcher Road, which is a significant County corridor. The complete streets concept planning grant would allow for the opportunity to evaluate the proposed connection for adverse impacts to the surrounding community and to develop concepts utilizing a complete streets approach to mitigate impacts.

The project meets all the criteria listed in the grant application:

- 1. The project has support:** City Council approved a resolution on September 22, 2020 in support of a complete street concept planning grant. The City also funded \$40,000 for an initial planning phase not including staff time that is currently underway. The grant would allow for the process next year to continue with more detailed outreach and analysis. The project is also consistent with a number of City and Forward Pinellas efforts over the years.
- 2. Catalyst for transformative change:** The project aligns with the City's economic development goals to continue the infill residential development and revitalization of a historic neighborhood. The 225-acre Tarpon Springs Downtown Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) is located just west of the project corridor and the improvements proposed for Disston Avenue will have a positive, catalytic impact on the surrounding area.

This project aligns with the Forward Pinellas countywide plans and strategies. The Active Transportation Plan identified the project corridor as a future proposed community trail and complete street treatments in the corridor would help connect to a wider regional bike and pedestrian network. Additionally, this project would include meaningful and deliberate conversations with the local community as part of the Disston Avenue extension, which is listed in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan's list of Existing Plus Committed Transportation Projects 2020 – 2024.

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There have already been significant investments by the City and other agencies surrounding the project area. Efforts to study needed improvements on the parallel arterial routes (US 19 and Alt. US 19) have been conducted at the countywide level to both facilitate the movement of people and to promote local and regional culture and placemaking.

More locally, **the opening of the newly constructed Meres Boulevard extension is imminent, along with additional roadway upgrades and improvements of Mango Street between the Meres Boulevard extension and US Highway 19. This important east-west corridor intersects Disston Avenue and provides connections to commercial, recreational and employment destinations.** And at a neighborhood level, the City continues the maintenance and upkeep of the historical character of the Union Academy neighborhood – for example, by regularly maintaining the original brick roads in this area, and improving walkability on corridors such as Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Safford Avenue and Lemon Street.

This grant funding will allow for a planning-level study to work with the public and community stakeholders to develop context-sensitive concepts for Disston Avenue to provide local, north-south continuity for all users in a way that is both transformative and retains the character and culture of the neighborhoods. This project will foster much-needed opportunities in the area by looking to infill vacant and abandoned lots with housing options as well as providing connections to surrounding commercial and recreational uses. The project also facilitates the utilization of existing open space (such as the capped city landfill and the Duke energy easement) for mobility and recreation.

We believe that this grant funding will help the City to realize a complete streets approach for the Disston Avenue corridor. The project meets all the grant criteria, including a funding match, support from past planning projects, and the potential for transformative local redevelopment. The City of Tarpon Springs looks forward to working with Forward Pinellas to bring a complete streets transformation to the heart of our City.

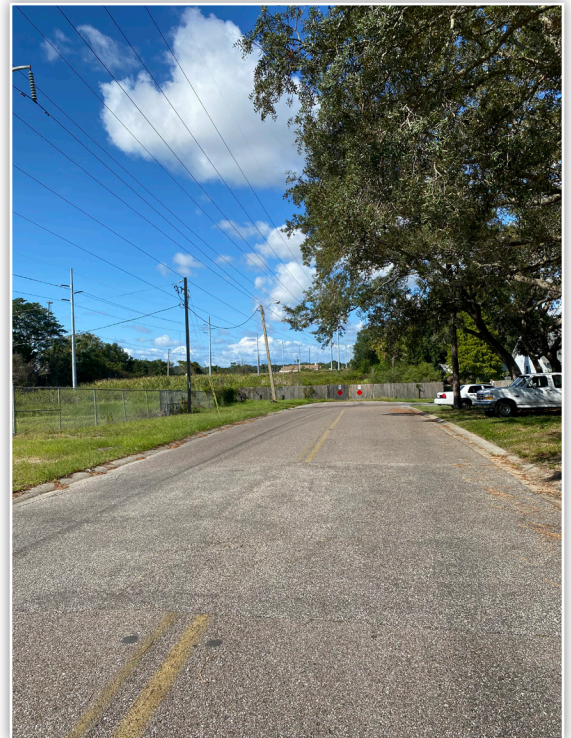
Thank you for your consideration,



Renea Vincent, AICP, CPM
Planning Director
City of Tarpon Springs



North Gap at Mango Street



South Gap at Woodhill Drive

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A stylized, light blue line-art graphic of a city street grid is positioned on the left side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. It features a mix of straight and curved lines representing streets and blocks.

Project Context and Background

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PROJECT CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

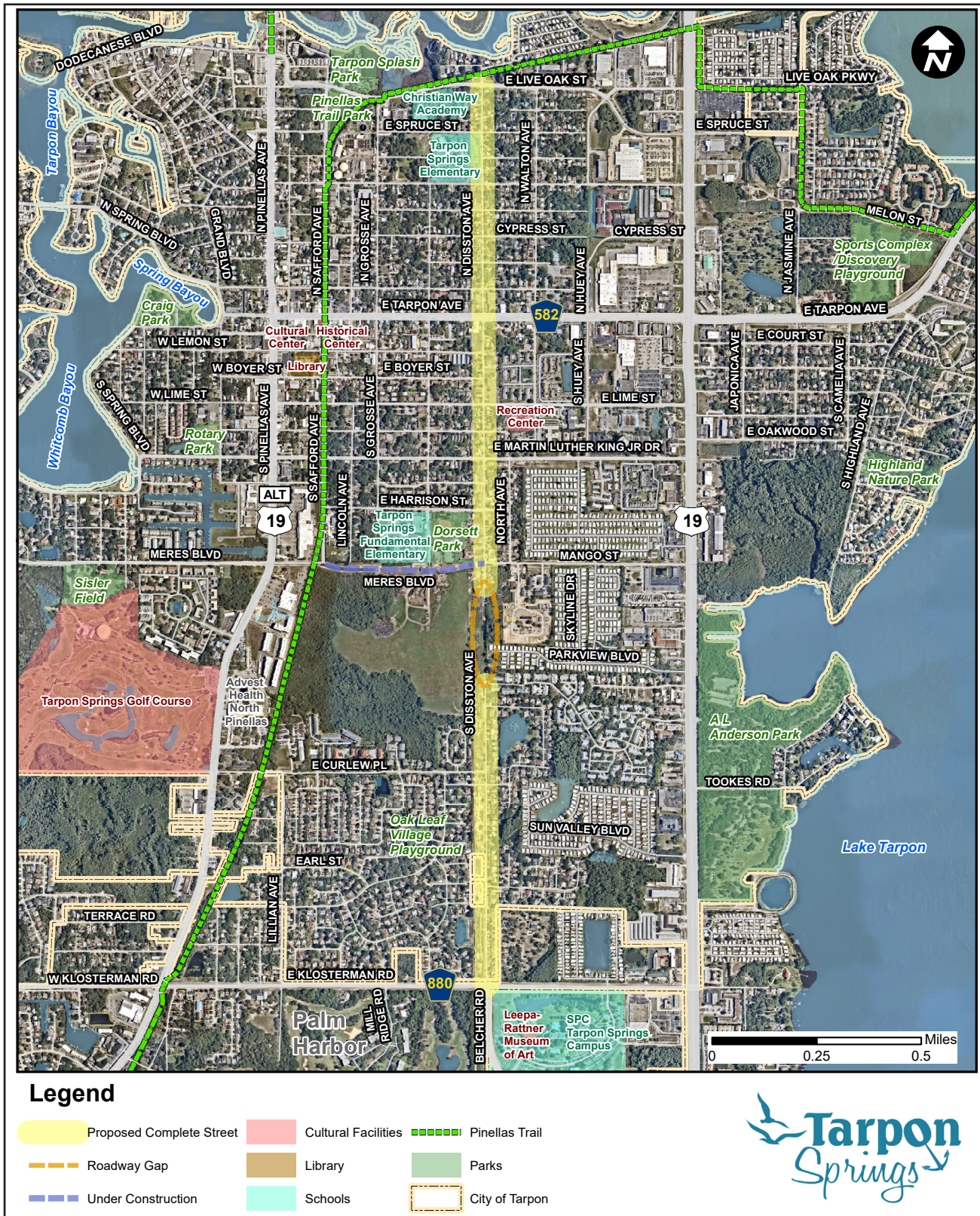
LOCATION PROFILE

Disston Avenue, the project corridor, is located approximately halfway between US 19 and Alt. US 19 (South Pinellas Avenue), providing an important north-south connection in the heart of Tarpon Springs. The two-lane road extends just over two miles starting from the southern edge of the City across from Belcher Road (a major corridor to south Pinellas County), to the northern edge of the City at the Live Oak-Spruce Street extension to US 19 near the Pinellas Trail.

- ▶ Project limits: Belcher Road to Live Oak-Spruce Street; roadway gap from Woodhill Drive to South of Mango Street
- ▶ Project length: 1.91 miles; network gap 0.22 miles
- ▶ Jurisdiction: City of Tarpon Springs
- ▶ Road type: Local road, 2 lanes undivided
- ▶ Posted Speed: 30 mph
- ▶ Sidewalks: 4 feet; intermittent sidewalk gaps
- ▶ Bicycle Lanes: No existing bicycle lanes
- ▶ Transit: Adjacent to transit routes
- ▶ Lighting: Minimal and intermittent
- ▶ Crossings: 13 crossings at 4-way intersections

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Figure 1: Project Location Map



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LOCATION CONTEXT

History

Disston Avenue is located in the historic Union Academy neighborhood, one of Pinellas County's oldest African-American communities and originally settled by workers employed in the local lumber and sponging industries. The neighborhood is laid out in a traditional 19th century grid street pattern and portions of the area still contain the old brick streets. Most of the corridor including the Union Academy neighborhood is within Tarpon's only census tract designated as a federal Economic Opportunity Zone. The City of Tarpon Springs has approximately 25,528 people and about 20% live within ¼ mile of the project corridor limits.

One of the earlier planning efforts in this neighborhood was the Union Academy Neighborhood – A Solutions Plan completed in April, 1997. This plan was a citizen-driven effort to identify transportation, land use, housing, economic and other infrastructure issues and solutions.

There have been recent redevelopment efforts to infill and revitalize Union Academy neighborhood, particularly as it relates to providing additional affordable housing in the neighborhood, by building on vacant lots, improving homes in disrepair, and demolishing (and redeveloping) dilapidated housing. The nearby



Historic Brick Streets South of E. Tarpon Avenue Intersection

Tarpon Springs Downtown Community Redevelopment Area offers a Building Code Assistance Grant, Façade Improvement Grant Program, and a Restaurant Recruitment Grant Program. The City's Special Area Plan, adopted in 2011 also encompasses the CRA area and beyond providing for form-based development options and incentives for mixed use and infill.

Land Use

The project corridor spans a number of important, but disconnected land uses. Adjacent to the corridor, along the east and west, are commercial nodes and activity centers that provide retail and employment services for the local community. At the center of the corridor, at the quarter-mile gap, is City-owned open space (a capped landfill) that has the potential to provide recreational benefits to the neighborhood and larger community. The corridor includes several adjacent or nearby schools in the area - Tarpon Springs Elementary School, Tarpon Springs Fundamental Elementary, and St. Pete College - Tarpon Springs Campus.

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Unique Characteristics

- ▶ The project corridor includes an approximate one-quarter mile gap where Disston Avenue is not constructed. There is a growing discussion in completing the Disston Avenue connection and providing a context-sensitive north-south connection to support the land uses in the area that foster a multimodal community. The City is currently constructing Meres Boulevard that intersects Disston Avenue and will connect Alt. US 19 to US 19.
- ▶ Directly adjacent to much of the corridor is a Duke Energy easement.

CORRIDOR NEEDS

The corridor has unique factors that demonstrate the need for mobility improvements including the following:

- ▶ Gaps in the sidewalk network; sidewalks that are narrow or in poor condition
- ▶ Inadequate crossing infrastructure
- ▶ Underutilized open space
- ▶ Low-income, transit-dependent population
- ▶ Parallel, north-south corridors in the City are at maximum width and will experience greater-than-capacity traffic in the near future
- ▶ Lack of wayfinding to the nearby Pinellas Trail
- ▶ Localized flooding on parts of Disston Avenue



Duke Energy Easement

A stylized, light blue line-art graphic of a city street grid is positioned on the left side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. It features a mix of straight and curved lines representing streets and blocks.

Application Requirements

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APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

This grant application meets all of the criteria of the **Forward Pinellas Complete Streets Program Concept Planning Project Application**. Below is more information on how the Disston Avenue corridor meets the intent of the grant.

1. APPLICATION MUST INCLUDE A LETTER OR RESOLUTION FROM THE APPLICANT'S ELECTED BOARD, DOCUMENTING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT.

The Appendix A includes a letter of resolution from the City of Tarpon Spring's Board of Commissioners documenting community support of this project.

SUPPORTING LOCAL AND COUNTY EFFORTS

There are a significant number of supporting efforts for complete streets concepts for the area:

City Efforts

- ▶ **"Multi-Modal Quality of Service Analysis" (MMQOS)** identified the Disston-Belcher corridor as one of the three critical street segments needed to provide alternative routes to US 19 and Alt. US 19. The Meres-Mango segment which provides an east-west connection and intersects Disston Avenue (also identified in the MMQOS report) is currently under construction.
- ▶ **Two Special Designation Areas** identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan intersect the corridor - Urban Infill Neighborhood and Multimodal Transportation District.
- ▶ **Comprehensive Plan Policy 1.1.9** of the Transportation Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan calls for the creation of a multimodal extension of Disston Avenue from Curlew Place to Mango Street that is compatible with adjacent residential development, including a multimodal emphasis and traffic calming measures. Recent discussions have included evaluating for adverse impacts upon the surrounding community and to see a complete streets approach.
- ▶ **Comprehensive Plan Policy 1.2.4** addresses housing in the area and states that the City shall continue to support the Union Academy Neighborhood Strategic Neighborhood and Business Plan 2005-2015 in which Ordinance 2000-33 designated Union Academy as an urban infill area.
- ▶ **The Union Academy Solutions Plan** seeks to preserve and promote culture and character in the area. The plan was prepared by the community based, nonprofit civic group Citizens Alliance for Progress, Inc., active since the 1980s. The Union Academy Solutions Plan amended in 2000 addresses the need for a complete sidewalk network in the community and improvements to landscaping and lighting.

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Forward Pinellas

Forward Pinellas has conducted several parallel studies that reflect support for transformative change in the area:

- ▶ **Advantage Pinellas:** Construction of Disston Avenue is listed in the Existing Plus Committed Transportation Projects (2020-2024). While not currently funded, it is a key project for the city and has been on the MPO's radar for over 20 years through its inclusion in several long range transportation plans. In addition, the plan identifies nearby US 19 and Alt. US 19 as significant transit corridors.
- ▶ **Active Transportation Plan:** It's identified as a future proposed community trail that connects with an east-west community trail that provides further connection to US 19 and Alt. US 19.
- ▶ **Alt. US 19 Cultural Corridor:** Celebrates the uniqueness and character of the area.
- ▶ **US 19 Corridor Land Use and Economic Analysis:** The study provides multimodal and land use recommendations for the adjacent area.

2. APPLICATION MUST DEMONSTRATE HOW THE PROJECT WILL BE A CATALYST FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE.

This project prioritizes implementation of safer streets and better connections for all users in the corridor aligning with the highest priority needs identified by Forward Pinellas for the County. It will directly serve a diverse and underserved community, while providing the region-wide benefits of an alternative north-south connection. Street improvements that promote walking and biking, and that connect to parks, trails, and important regional destinations such as US 19 commercial district, the Alt. US 19 cultural corridor, and downtown will have positive, transformative impacts on adjacent residential land uses and support the development of more housing density in the corridor. The project will also look at housing and other land use opportunities along the corridor and will directly inform a Comprehensive Plan update.



Required Application Information

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REQUIRED APPLICATION INFORMATION

This section **includes all of the 11 required application questions** asked in the application.

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A - C. SIDEWALKS, TRAILS AND BIKE FACILITIES

Although there are some sidewalks and trails in and around the project corridor to facilitate walking and biking, there **are gaps and a lack of connectivity as shown on Figure 2**. These gaps make walking and biking challenging in the area. According to Strava Metro Data analyzed for the County's Active Transportation Plan (2020), there is a high pedestrian and bicycle demand within Tarpon Springs. There are currently **no dedicated bicycle facilities along Disston Avenue**. Future complete street improvements to Disston Avenue would allow for a more interconnected pedestrian and bicycle network, as there are existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities adjacent to Disston Avenue on Belcher Road, Alt. US 19 (S Pinellas Avenue), US 19, and E. Klosterman Road and the nearby Pinellas Trail, to the west.

Existing sidewalk conditions include four to five foot sidewalks and there are several large gaps particularly on the west side of the street. For the entire project corridor, a majority of sidewalks have little to no buffer from the road and are in fair condition.

Percent coverage of existing sidewalks: Approx. 61%



Typical sidewalk and crossing conditions Northern Segment of Disston Avenue



Typical sidewalk condition Southern segment of Disston Avenue



Existing sidewalk conditions North of Mango Street

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Currently, there are existing sidewalk and bike facilities that intersect Disston Avenue and provide essential east-west connections to nearby commercial land uses along US 19 and to the downtown activity center and other employment nodes along Pinellas Avenue. Connector streets that provide access generally provide sidewalks on at least one side of the road. **Disston Avenue can provide a critical link in the city's sidewalk and bicycle facility network. The proposed complete streets project will incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements that will fill sidewalk and bicycle facility gaps and improve the overall City multimodal network.**

Existing conditions indicate several intersections **lack adequate or ADA compliant sidewalks** such as E. Lime Street, Harrison Avenue, and Cypress Street. In addition, several properties contain large parking lots with driveway widths well over the recommended 30 to 40 ft. (depending on land use), per the City of Tarpon Springs Land Development Code Section 129. This presents a safety concern for pedestrian users, specifically ADA users.



Bicycle lane on E. Klosterman Road; Potential future Disston Avenue connections

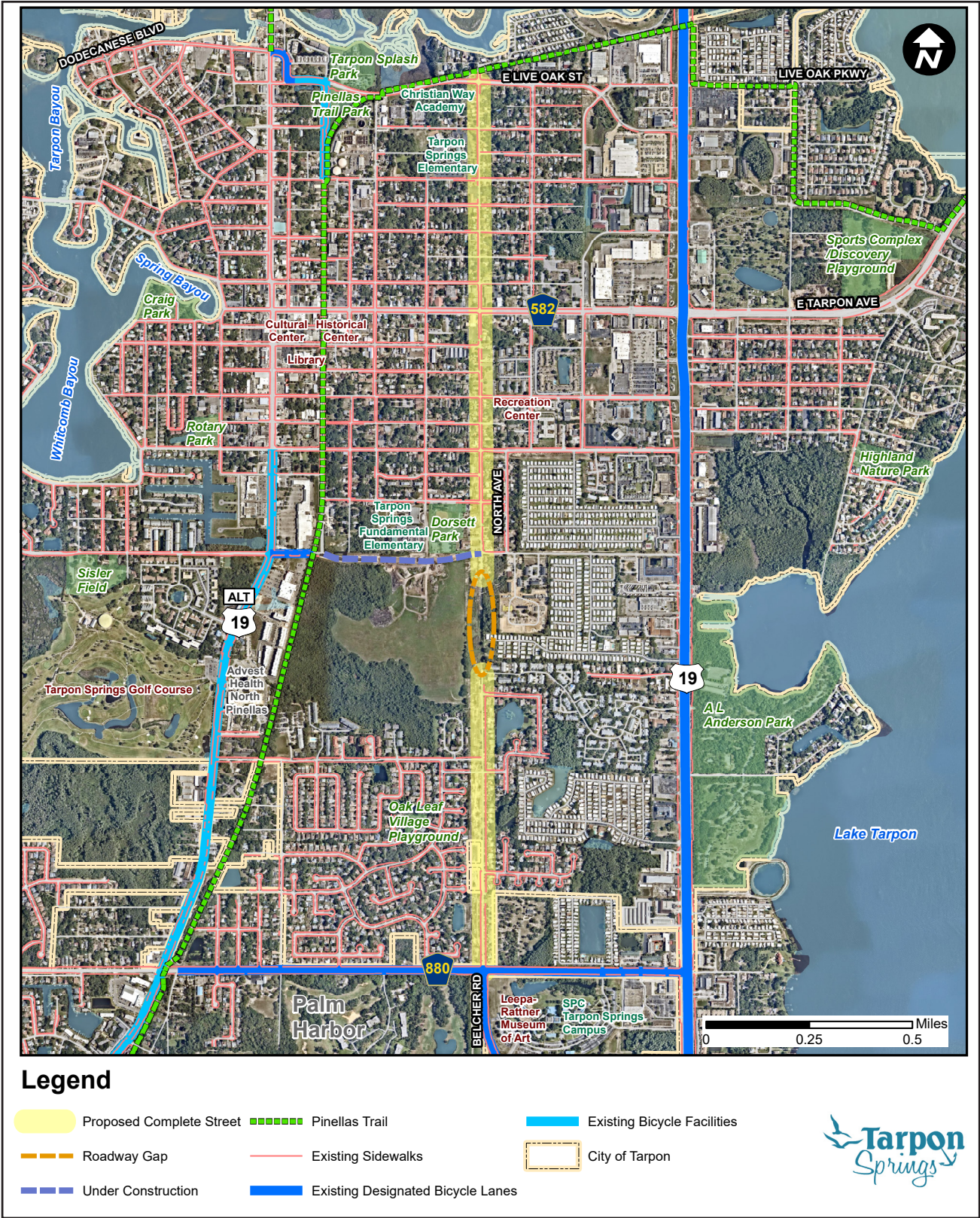


Existing Church at Pent Street Intersection; Approx. 174 ft. driveway.

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Figure 2: Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities



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Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail – the regionally-important Pinellas Trail runs parallel to the project corridor until the very north end, where the trail curves east and intersects Disston Avenue just north of Live Oak Street. There are numerous connections to the trail from streets that intersect Disston Avenue, via sidewalks. **Filling in the sidewalk gaps on Disston Avenue would increase the interconnectedness of the sidewalk network and provide residents a safe path on local roads to access the Pinellas Trail.** In addition, crossing improvements are needed at the Disston Avenue/Live Oak intersection to facilitate a safe connection to the Pinellas Trail.



Pinellas Trail- connection point at Live Oak Street



Existing Pinellas Trail Facilities at Live Oak Street

D. SAFETY CONCERNS

Based on data from Forward Pinellas, Disston Avenue had a total of **114 crashes from 2015 to 2019**. Two pedestrian crashes and three bicycle crashes occurred within the five year timeframe. The most common crash type were angle crashes occurring at intersections, which usually indicates poor crossings or sight distance issues. The lower number of crashes on Disston Avenue can continue through complete street enhancements including providing safer routes to the Tarpon Springs Elementary School at the north end of the corridor. **The opportunity exists to provide multimodal options on a slower speed and volume street.**

The project corridor is surrounded by two major roads with a high rate of crashes, US 19 and Alt. US 19. Specific crash details for the project corridor and the two adjacent major roadways can be found in Table 1. US 19 is a major safety concern for the City of Tarpon Springs with 7 fatalities and 56 incapacitating injuries occurring from E. Klosterman Road to E. Live Oak Street from 2015 to 2019. Even with designated bicycle facilities, US 19 and Alt. US 19 still had a significant number of vulnerable user crashes. **Although the number of crashes are lower on Disston Avenue than other corridors in the area, those walking and bicycling are forced to use Alt. US 19 or US 19 which have a significant number of crashes.** The bicycle crash rates and lack of areawide facilities, provide a opportunity to provide a local North to South bicycle facility connection on Disston Avenue.

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Table 1: Crash Analysis 2015 to 2019 (E. Klosterman Road to E. Live Oak Street)

Category	Project Corridor	US 19	Alt. US 19
Total Crashes	114	1,320	462
Pedestrian Crashes	2	16	10
Bicycle Crashes	3	8	13
Fatalities	0	7	0
Incapacitating	1	56	9

Total number of crashes involving vulnerable users: 32 on Alt. US 19, 6 on Disston and 87 on US 19



Lack of adequate crossing facilities at E. Tarpon Avenue

Figure 3 shows how providing a safe connection along Disston Avenue could have a real safety benefit for those walking and bicycling. Figure 3 shows the number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes in the area. A crash severity map is located in Appendix B, indicating the total number of fatalities and incapacitating injuries for the project corridor, US 19, and Alt. US 19.

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Figure 3: Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes 2015 to 2019



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E. TRANSIT SERVICE

There is no existing transit service on Disston Avenue. The project corridor does provide a connection to three Pinellas SunCoast Transit Authority (PSTA) routes 19, 66L, and 703 (Jolley Trolley Coastal). Route 66L is a limited stop transit route that runs twice a day (in both directions). In addition, Pasco County transit runs route 19 to the Tarpon Mall. Headways vary ranging from 50 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes, the longest headway belonging to Route 19 (PSTA). Additional headway information per route is shown below.

Headways:

- ▶ Route 19 – 60 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes
- ▶ Route 66 L – 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes
- ▶ Route 703 (Jolley Trolley Coastal) – 1 hour to 1 hour and 13 minutes
- ▶ Pasco County Route 19 – 50 to 55 minutes

There are 15 transit stops within a ¼ mile radius of the project corridor. Based on data provided by PSTA, **there are a high number of boardings and alightings for two nearby transit stops** on Tarpon Avenue and Huey Avenue (181 boardings, 253 alightings). Existing transit shelters adjacent to the project corridor at Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue could benefit from shelter stop improvements such as covered shelter, transit schedules, and amenities (trash).

The Florida Department of Transportation Alternative US 19 Corridor Study Vision Plan (October 2018) examines the significance of the transit route on Alt. US 19, with more than 1,500 daily boardings, and lists downtown Tarpon Springs as an area of significance in terms of daily boarding. The connection of the Meres Boulevard corridor between Alt US 19 and US 19 may open future route alternatives to the County's transit providers. The Disston corridor would play an important role in evaluation of these options.



Transit stop at E. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr

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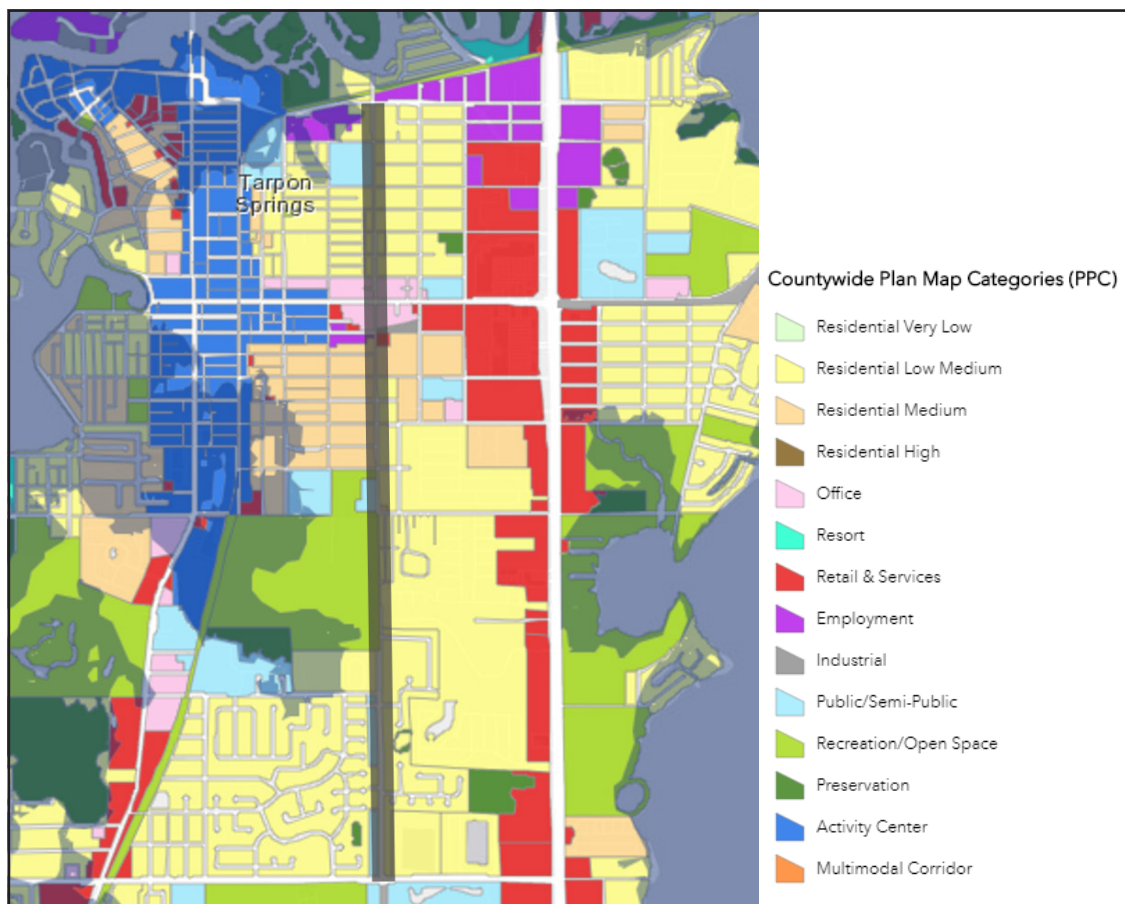
F. ACTIVITY CENTER & MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR ACCESS/CONNECTIONS

The project corridor is central to several corridors and centers of countywide importance.

US 19 and Alt. US 19 are shown as primary and secondary north-south future transit corridors, respectively, on the Countywide Land Use Strategy Map. Bridging these two corridors and intersecting Disston Avenue is the supporting future transit corridor, Tarpon Avenue. In addition, there are two nearby activity centers (a community and neighborhood center shown on Figure 5, both along Alt. US 19). Furthermore, the close proximity of the activity center designation found on the Countywide Rules map is shown below in Figure 4. This project **would provide connections to these two activity centers** (which are approximately one quarter mile away from the corridor) by enabling north-south movements through the corridor.

The completion of Disston Avenue will provide safe, convenient access to both the countywide future transit corridors as well as nearby activity centers. Along with the completion of the east-west Meres Boulevard extension, a multimodal and continuous Disston Avenue will complete the walkable grid necessary to facilitate non-vehicle trips in this area. By providing an alternative to US 19 and Alt. US 19, which are both more than a quarter mile from Disston Avenue, the multimodal project corridor will promote and enable safe and healthy walking, biking and transit trips by the members of this community.

Figure 4: Countywide Rules Map



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G. CRA PLANS

The project corridor is not located within a CRA, but it is within walking distance of the 225-acre Tarpon Springs Downtown CRA, directly to the west. The potential for residential urban infill in the project corridor, in response to a vibrant multimodal Disston Avenue, would complement the efforts of the nearby CRA and would work together to achieve the City's redevelopment goals. The City's Special Area Plan implements the CRA and the Community Activity Center (Figure 5) with form-based, mixed use and infill options. The CRA/SAP also overlaps the western and northern portions of the Union Academy neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Center depicted on Figure 5 encompasses an area that is currently developing with multi-family uses and has potential for additional mixed use development. The connection of this area via Meres Boulevard extension and Disston Avenue will improve mobility and destination access options.

H. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are a number of redevelopment efforts in the area around the project corridor which both support and would be supported by the proposed improvements to Disston Avenue.

Two Special Designation Areas identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan intersect the project corridor which make the surrounding area supportive of multimodal transportation improvements: an Urban Infill Neighborhood and a Multimodal Transportation District (MMTD). The intent of establishing the MMTD is to foster development and redevelopment in the area west-adjacent to Disston Avenue.

On either side of Disston Avenue, corridors of regional importance have recently been studied for roadway improvements to boost local economy, regional travel, and placemaking. US 19 is a critical thoroughfare for the county with more intense commercial uses. Alt. US 19 and the surrounding areas are important centers of commerce, art, community identity, and history, also providing many connections to the Pinellas Trail – one of the county's greatest cultural assets. **The Disston Avenue corridor can leverage the surrounding investments to streetscape and buildings to further promote redevelopment in the City's residential areas by building continuity in bike, pedestrian, and transit amenities that will attract a viable and stable mix of development.**

The Meres Boulevard extension, an east-west corridor between US 19 and Alt. US 19 is currently under construction and will provide an additional connection to the Pinellas Trail and retail centers along Alt. US 19.

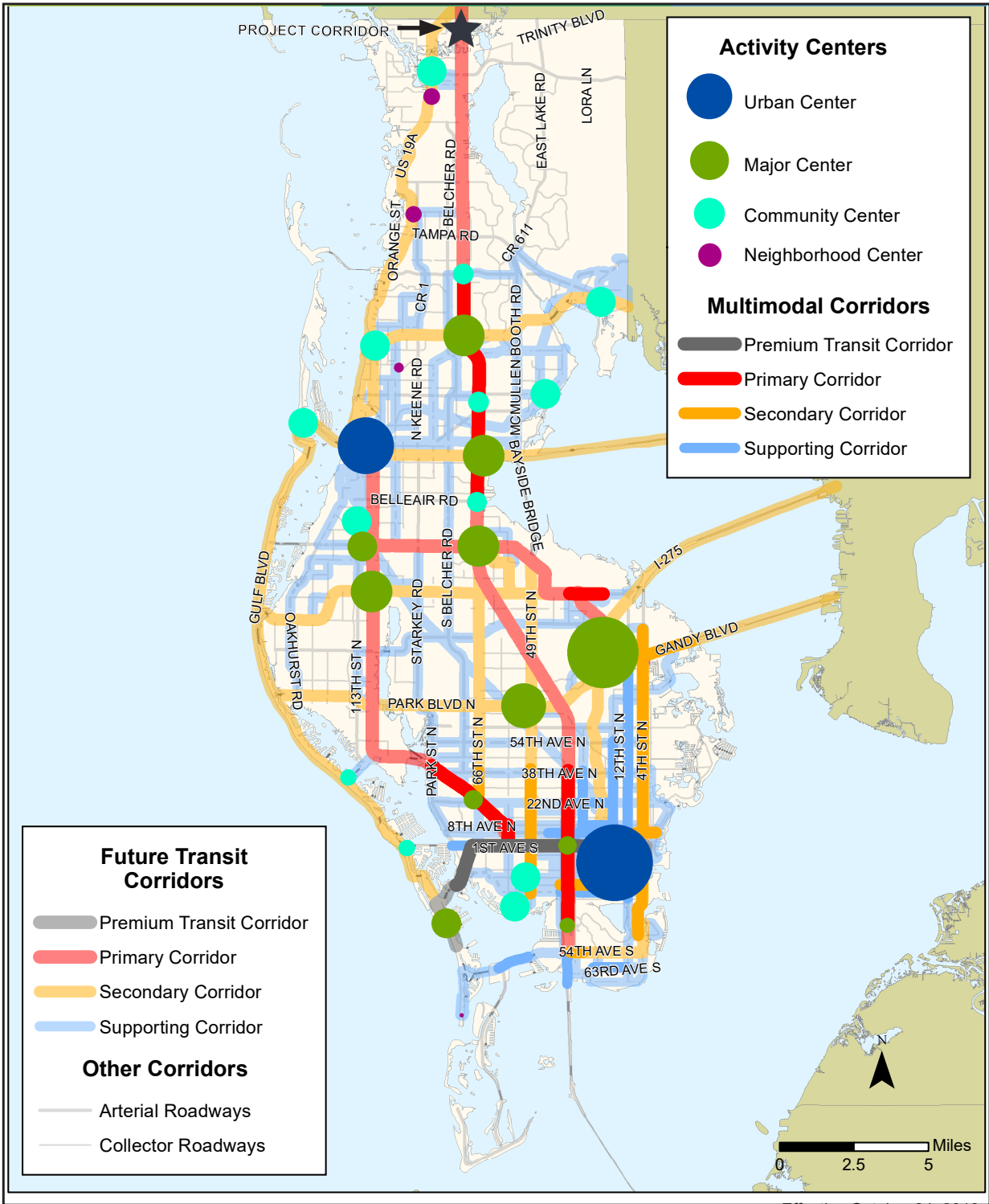


Ongoing Meres Boulevard extension construction

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Figure 5: The Land Use Strategy Map



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I. STREET LIGHTING

The **project corridor has limited street lighting**, the lighting is consistent on the east from Woodhill Drive to E. Klosterman Road. From Mango Street to Live Oak Street, lighting is dispersed and consists of a light pole mounted on an existing telephone pole; mainly located at intersections next to community features (i.e. Tarpon Springs Elementary School). **The proposed complete streets project will provide an opportunity to enhance street lighting among the corridor for vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists** through ornamental pedestrian focused options, such as the existing lighting features present on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.



*Example of proposed ornamental lighting;
current lighting style exists on E. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive*

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2. COST ESTIMATE

Provide a cost estimate and documentation of the local match being provided by the applicant.

Project Cost Estimate: \$168,000

The development of a concept plan is estimated to cost approximately \$168,000, which will also include a supporting detailed land use, multimodal transportation and origin/destination analysis. More information is provided below on the tasks and cost breakdown.

Total requested of Forward Pinellas:	\$100,000
Local Match:	\$68,000

The City of Tarpon Springs will provide a local match of up to **\$68,000** (40% of the project) which includes **\$40,000** of funds (approved in September 2020) for Phase 1 of the project which **is now underway**. Phase 1 will kick start the process with initial analysis and outreach. The City will also be providing **\$28,000** of in-kind services which will include the following:

- ▶ Providing data needs and data collection
- ▶ Hosting and updating a project webpage and engagement tool
- ▶ Scheduling and coordinating public outreach and stakeholder meetings
- ▶ Reviewing and assisting with presentations and other materials
- ▶ Review of public comment
- ▶ Supplemental development of resources and presentations to stakeholders

TASKS AND CONSULTANT COST BREAKDOWN:

PHASE 1: INITIAL ANALYSIS AND OUTREACH \$40,000

(Underway and Fully Funded by City of Tarpon Springs - expected to be completed March 2020)

Task 1 Project Start and Grant Application	\$7,000
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- ▶ Project Kick-off and progress meetings
- ▶ Assistance with applying to Forward Pinellas

Task 2: Existing Conditions/Existing Analysis	\$10,900
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- ▶ Review of existing plans
- ▶ Basemapping
- ▶ Land use context and roadway condition inventory
- ▶ Field visits
- ▶ Summary of existing plans and conditions

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Task 3: Initial Stakeholder Outreach

\$7,300

- ▶ Preparation and facilitation at up to five (5) stakeholder interviews calls/meetings
- ▶ Conduct one round of one-on-one meetings with the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and/or City Commissioners
- ▶ Two (2) agency meetings (including Forward Pinellas, FDOT, PSTA, Pinellas County, and Duke)
- ▶ Summary to be documented as part of a Final Report

Task 4: Preliminary Modeling and Traffic Forecasting

\$8,000

- ▶ Final Technical Memorandum including analyses, figures, and all supporting information

Task 5: Recommendations, Initial Concepts, and Opportunities

\$6,800

- ▶ Opportunities and Constraints mapping
- ▶ Recommendations Report with initial land use and mobility concepts and next steps

PHASE 2: ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP TASKS

\$100,000

(Expected 8 month schedule)

Task 6: Land Use Market Analysis

\$14,500

- ▶ Review US 19 analysis
- ▶ Final Technical Memorandum including land use analyses, figures, and all supporting information to establish market dynamics that can impact the area

Task 7: Multimodal Transportation Patterns Analysis

\$34,300

- ▶ Multimodal travel patterns analysis
- ▶ Traffic Counts and detailed data collection
- ▶ Operational and Diversion Analysis

Task 8: Additional Public Outreach

\$22,100

- ▶ Up to six (6) additional stakeholder calls/meetings, Walk audit
- ▶ One (1) community forum
- ▶ One (1) online survey
- ▶ Up to two (2) public meetings with Planning and Zoning Board and Commission
- ▶ Outreach summary

Task 9: Complete Streets Concepts and Final Report

\$29,100

- ▶ Complete Street concept renderings, up to six (6)
- ▶ Mobility (improvements with and without the extension) and land use actions (i.e. Comprehensive Plan Amendments)
- ▶ Draft and Final Report

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3. MULTIMODAL MOBILITY

The Disston Avenue complete street project proposes numerous improvements intended to encourage and broaden access to multimodal travel.

BIKING & WALKING

By connecting the two segments of Disston Avenue, the project will connect a disadvantaged area to social, faith based, health, commercial, recreational, and community institutions and uses in a direct and safe route that does not necessarily require a vehicle.

Proposed benefits that will foster biking and walking include:

- ▶ Wider, multiuse sidewalks
- ▶ Ornamental, pedestrian-level street lighting
- ▶ Traffic calming
- ▶ Connections to commercial, health, recreational, community uses
- ▶ Wayfinding elements
- ▶ Landscaping
- ▶ Access management
- ▶ Pinellas Trail connection improvements
 - » Enhanced connection at Live Oak Street
 - » Meres extension connection from Disston Avenue to west of Alt. US 19
- ▶ Intersecting bike lane connection improvements
- ▶ Crosswalk improvements

The Forward Pinellas Active Transportation Plan identified strategic locations for future pedestrian and bicycle improvements. As shown in Figure 6, **the project corridor is identified as a future proposed community trail that would extend from the existing bike lane south of the corridor and connect to another proposed community trail that extends east and west near the center of the corridor.**

A plan view showing how this project will interconnect with the existing grid and multimodal pathways, as well as land uses is shown as Figure 6.



Tarpon Elementary School; Future improvements to enhance safe routes to schools



Lack of sidewalk connections; Opportunities with utility easement

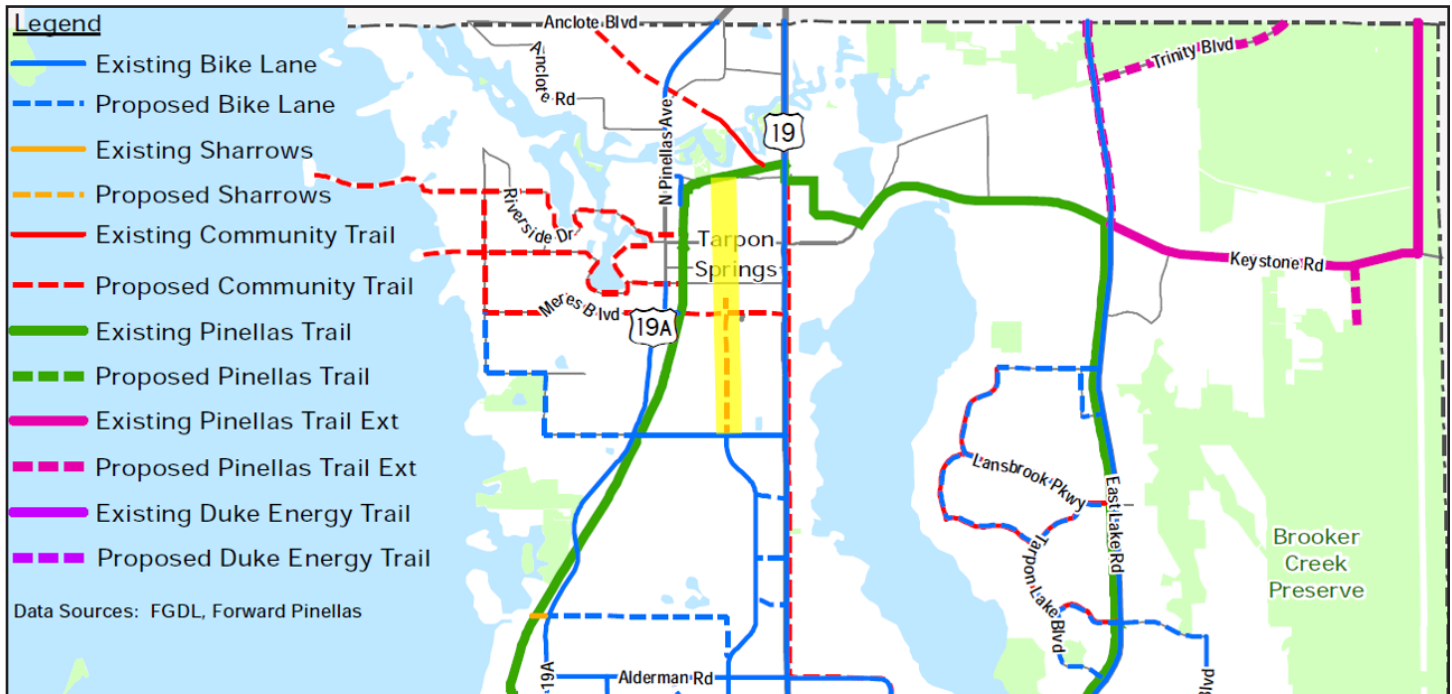


Residential and office uses in close proximity

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Figure 6: North Area Vision Map



TRANSIT ACCESS

The nearest transit routes are on intersecting Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. While there are currently connecting sidewalks and some street lighting in the area of the project corridor, the improvements listed above will support transit use by providing a safe and comfortable walking environment for the first and last mile of the trip. **Enhanced accessibility and safe paths, including better lighting, to transit services/stops will be a focal point of the planning effort. This supports efforts to provide enhanced transportation options to the underserved community in the Union Academy neighborhood.**

In addition, both Alt. US 19 and US 19 are identified on the Transit Investment Framework map in the Advantage Pinellas plan as significant transit corridors - Alt. US 19 as a Limited stop/High frequency route and US 19 as a Regional express service (US 19). The opportunity is to better connect the community to these major transit corridors and land uses over time.

VEHICLE ACCESS

An extension of Disston Avenue, which would provide a continuous connection to Belcher Road (a significant north/south roadway in the County), **will need to be carefully designed to limit and mitigate vehicle speeds and cut through traffic while providing a connection for all users. This funding grant will allow the City to have additional, important conversations with the public and stakeholders, that may support or have concerns about the extension,** and allow for robust analysis and development of concept options.

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SUPPORTIVE LAND USE

This project intends to take advantage of underutilized open spaces and right-of-way in the corridor to provide community-wide aesthetic and public utility. The resulting revitalization of the roadway and surrounding **land could provide a catalyst for additional housing and missing middle opportunities, some neighborhood uses, and utilization of open space for recreation and environmental spaces. The increased housing options would include the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lots with affordable housing and the addition of multifamily units.**

Figure 7 shows the land use context with commercial areas within walking and biking distance. The potential Disston Avenue extension needs to carefully consider neighborhood impacts. However, the transformative opportunity is an improved complete street that could connect a disadvantaged area to social, faith based, health, commercial, recreational, educational, and community institutions and uses.



Mix of land uses on Disston Avenue



Single-family homes located adjacent to automobile light industrial uses.

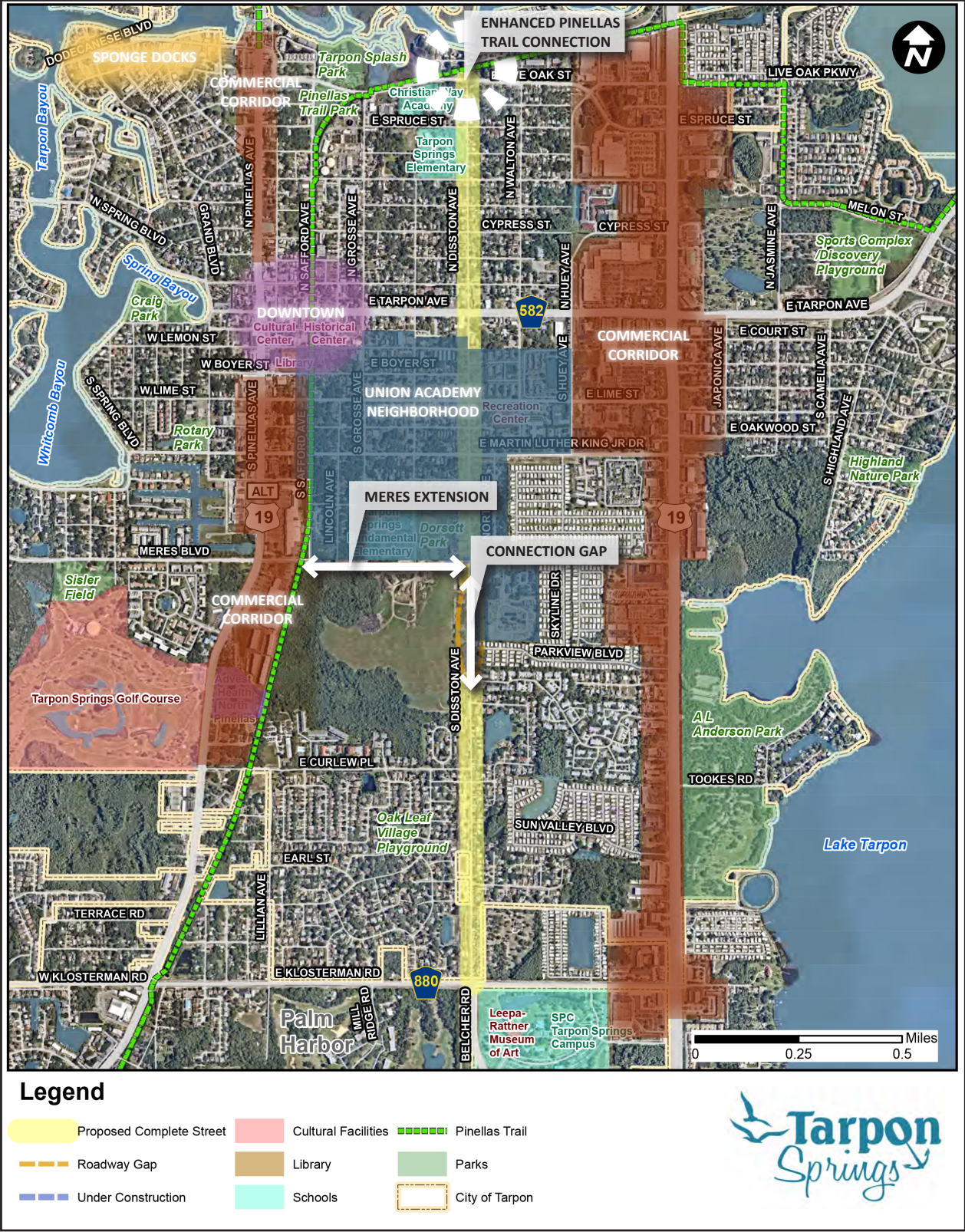


Dorsett Park is one of multiple community facilities along the corridor.

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Figure 7: Disston Avenue Plan View



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4. LOCAL PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Two Special Designation Areas identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan intersect the project corridor which make the surrounding area supportive of multimodal transportation improvements: an Urban Infill Neighborhood and a Multimodal Transportation District (MMTD). The intent of establishing the MMTD is to foster development and redevelopment in the area west-adjacent to Disston Avenue. As described in the City's Future Land Use Element: "the MMTD will require developers to utilize design techniques that foster "livable walkable communities" in exchange for increased densities and intensities. The MMTD also recognizes the limited ability of the City to add new vehicle lanes and instead opts for sidewalks, bike lanes, and other improvements to enhance modal split toward alternatives to the personal vehicle.

Additionally, a **City housing policy directly addresses the need to support existing land uses in this area**: Policy 1.2.4 states that the City shall continue to support the Union Academy Neighborhood Strategic Neighborhood and Business Plan 2005-2015 in which Ordinance 2000-33 designated Union Academy as an urban infill area.

This project also aligns with many Forward Pinellas Countywide Plan Strategies, including the following:

- ▶ LU 9.7 **Identify corridors that connect lower-income communities with employment districts and workforce development resources [...]**
- ▶ LU 16.1 To Reduce Automobile Congestion – **The more connected the roadway network and bike/pedestrian infrastructure through an area, the more access and circulation options are provided reducing automobile dependence on a limited number of routes and providing viable transportation alternatives**
- ▶ LU 16.1 Create Quality Connecting Streets – **Connecting streets that intersect with arterial or collector corridors within the plan area should provide access for all users**, including but not limited to pedestrians and bicyclists, and street lighting to ensure safe access to transit facilities and commercial uses located within plan area

5. PROJECT SCHEDULE

Phase 1 will allow for an initial analysis and outreach to further frame the concept plan strategy. Phase 1 is expected to be completed by March 2021, which will align with the grant timing. The Forward Pinellas Complete Streets grant funding will allow for the process to continue after March, with Phase 2, which is **expected to occur over an eight (8) month period**. Based on timing of the grant funding and contract discussions, the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2021 or the first quarter of 2022.

If the concept plan is approved by the Board of Commissioners, the City would then seek funding to begin the design and construction process. The construction timeline is dependent upon the complexity of design, construction sequencing, and availability of funds. Depending on the complexity, anticipated design and engineering, timelines could vary between twelve (12) and twenty-four (24) months.

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6, 7 & 8. LAND USE

The residential and open space land uses within the project corridor **show signs of economic disparity. Single-family, bungalow-style homes in the north end of the corridor are located within a patchwork of vacant lots, underutilized open space, schools, recreational uses, and nodes of low-density office buildings and neighborhood churches.** Vacancy rates were calculated based on existing land use code description data from the Pinellas County Property Appraiser. Some of the land classified as vacant is owned by Duke Energy and utilized as a transmission corridor. **The project corridor has a higher instance of vacant parcels 17.52% than the 8% vacancy rate for the adjacent major commercial corridor of US 19** (Forward Pinellas 2018 US 19 Corridor Land Use and Economic Analysis for Tarpon Springs). This high rate of vacant parcels along the corridor hinder the community's ability to build economic vitality and social cohesion. There are 35 existing land use categories within ¼ mile buffer, the five existing land uses with the highest acreage are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2: Existing Land Use Disston Avenue – 1/4 mile buffer

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Single Family	216.37	29.95%
Vacant Commercial	77.75	10.76%
Mobile Home	54.52	7.55%
Public Schools	44.84	6.21%
Multi-Family 10+ Units	38.24	5.29%
Other Land Uses	290.67	40.24%
Total	722.39	100.00%

Source: Pinellas County Property Appraiser

Table 3 provides a summary of the future land use categories in the area.

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Table 3: Future Land Use Disston Avenue - 1/4 mile buffer (Pinellas County)

Future Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Residential Urban	244.23	33.81%
Residential Low	117.88	16.32%
Recreation/Open Space	94.15	13.03%
Residential Medium	69.89	9.67%
Institutional	53.91	7.46%
Water	27.64	3.83%
Preservation	26.60	3.68%
Residential/Office General	20.49	2.84%
Industrial Limited	17.81	2.47%
Residential Suburban	15.29	2.12%
Transportation/Utility	11.41	1.58%
Community Redevelopment District	9.15	1.27%
Commercial General	8.06	1.12%
Scenic Corridors	3.29	0.46%
Industrial General	1.54	0.21%
Residential Low Medium	1.04	0.14%
Total	722.39	100%

Source: Pinellas County Property Appraiser

COMPLETE STREET TREATMENT BENEFITS

Even modest changes in the project corridor could have transformative impacts on adjacent residential land uses. **These changes could include aesthetics, wayfinding, placemaking, providing a gateway to the downtown and sponge docks, pedestrian/bicyclist/transit improvements, and creation of more housing options to promote urban infill.** Extension of the current Special Area Plan form-based code platform to the office-space nodes could better integrate these uses into the surrounding residential neighborhood, creating a sense of continuity along the corridor. Open spaces (particularly the former city landfill adjacent to the gap in Disston Avenue) could provide recreational park space for the community and further connect the north and south segments of the road.

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9 & 10. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Forward Pinellas 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan update, provides a summary analysis of environmental justice populations (minority and low-income) based on data at the Census Tract level. Based on this report, a portion of the project corridor (from E. Tarpon Avenue to E. Klosterman Road) is **located in a census tract where the minority population exceeds the countywide average** (see Figure 8 on the following page). The minority population percentage for the entire project corridor is 35%, as shown in Table 4.

As indicated in Table 4, there are several vulnerable populations within the project corridor. Within a ¼ mile buffer, **Disston Avenue has a higher percentage of minorities, age 65 and over and population below poverty level than the City of Tarpon Springs and Pinellas County.**

In addition, the Florida Department of Transportation Alternative US 19 Corridor Study Vision Plan (October 2018) indicates a high percentage of households without access to a vehicle in Tarpon Springs between Alt. US 19 to US 19 from E. Tarpon Avenue to E. Klosterman Road. This section of Tarpon Springs ranges from 16% to 30%, higher than the County listed average of 11% to 15%.

Complete street enhancements will foster improvements that benefit vulnerable populations such as enhanced lighting, driveway reductions (access management), enhanced crossings, ADA compliant sidewalks, etc.

Table 4: Demographic Information

Existing Land Use	Disston Avenue (1/4 mile buffer)	City of Tarpon Springs	Pinellas County
Total Population	5,044	25,528	982,705
Per Capita Income	\$25,851	\$34,326	\$34,978
Median Household Income	\$35,171	\$52,544	\$54,148
% Minority Population	35%	21%	27%
Under 18	819 (16%)	4,084 (16%)	154,224 (15.7%)
Age 65 and Over	1,564 (31%)	7,443 (29%)	259,057 (26%)
Population below Poverty Level*	17%	13%	12%

Source: ESRI Community Analyst, 2020 Data
2014 - 2018 ESRI Community Analyst Data

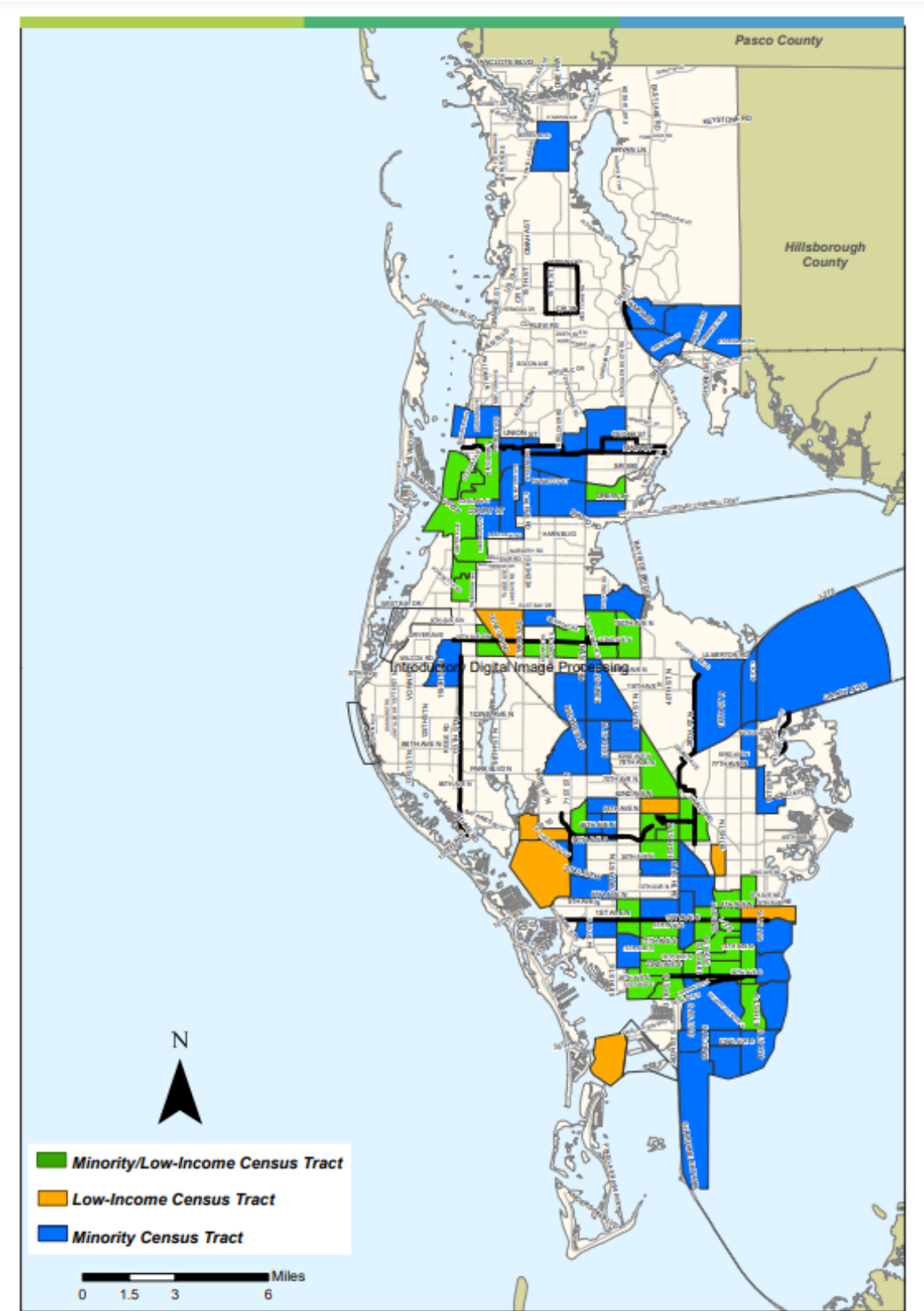
11. GRANT ALLOCATION

The City of Tarpon Springs is willing to accept a lower grant allocation than \$100,000. Receiving the full amount will provide the funds needed to move the project faster through the conceptual phase and allow for the detailed technical analysis and public outreach to be conducted for what the City's Board of Commissioners discussed as a once in a generation opportunity.

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Figure 8: Disadvantaged and Active Transportation Plan:
Low Income and Minority Census Tracts





Appendix A: Resolution Letter

Rexea V. - P+Z

RESOLUTION 2020-61

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS EXPRESSING ITS SUPPORT FOR A "COMPLETE STREETS" CONCEPT PLANNING GRANT FOR DISSTON AVENUE TO BE SUBMITTED TO FORWARD PINELLAS FOR FUNDING CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE FORWARD PINELLAS COMPLETE STREETS PROGRAM; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, in 2007 the City of Tarpon Springs conducted a "Multi-Modal Quality of Service Analysis" (MMQOS) that identified a Multi-Modal Transportation District in support of implementing the Sponge Docks and Community Redevelopment Area Special Area Plan (SAP), and

WHEREAS, the MMQOS report identified priority bike, pedestrian and road way improvement projects within the Multi-Modal Transportation District that would improve the overall bike, pedestrian and auto connectivity to support implementation of the SAP; and

WHEREAS, the completion of the Disston-Belcher corridor was identified as one of three critical street segments needed to provide alternative local routes to US 19 and Alt. US 19; and

WHEREAS, the Meres-Mango segment (also identified in the MMQOS report) is under construction; and

WHEREAS, the Policy 1.1.9 of the Transportation Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan calls for the creation of a multi-modal extension of Disston Avenue from Curlew Place to Mango Street that is compatible with adjacent residential development, includes a multi-modal emphasis, and also calls for traffic calming measures for the entire Disston Corridor ; and

WHEREAS, Disston Avenue is a north-side corridor that transverses the historic Union Academy neighborhood and any proposed connection between Belcher Road and Disston Avenue must be evaluated for adverse impacts upon the surrounding community;

WHEREAS, the Disston Avenue-Belcher Road project must identify methods to mitigate impacts through best practices, such as a Complete Streets approach, can provide.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the City of Tarpon Springs, Florida, that:

Section 1. The Board of Commissioners of the City of Tarpon Springs, Florida, hereby affirms its support of a multi-modal/complete streets approach to improving Disston Avenue-Belcher Connection and the overall Disston Avenue corridor submitted on behalf of the City of Tarpon Springs to Forward Pinellas for funding consideration within the Forward Pinellas Complete Streets Program:

Section 2. That this Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

PASSED and ADOPTED this 22nd day of September, 2020.


CHRIS ALAHOUZOS, MAYOR


JACOB KARR, VICE MAYOR


TOWNSEND TARAPANI, COMMISSIONER


CONNOR DONOVAN, COMMISSIONER

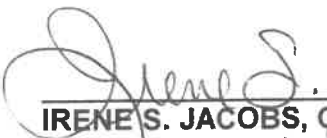

COSTA S. VATIKIOTIS, COMMISSIONER

MOTION BY: VICE MAYOR KARR
SECOND BY: COMMISSIONER TARAPANI

VOTE ON MOTION

COMMISSIONER VATIKIOTIS	<u>Yes</u>
COMMISSIONER DONOVAN	<u>Yes</u>
COMMISSIONER TARAPANI	<u>Yes</u>
VICE MAYOR KARR	<u>Yes</u>
MAYOR ALAHOUZOS	<u>Yes</u>

ATTEST:


IRENE S. JACOBS, CMC
CITY CLERK & COLLECTOR

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


THOMAS J. TRASK, B.C.S
CITY ATTORNEY

A faint, light blue map graphic is positioned on the left side of the page. It shows a network of streets and blocks, with a more dense grid in the lower half and more irregular, winding lines in the upper half.

Appendix B: Supporting Maps

Disston Avenue Concept Planning Project Application

2020 Complete Streets Call for Projects

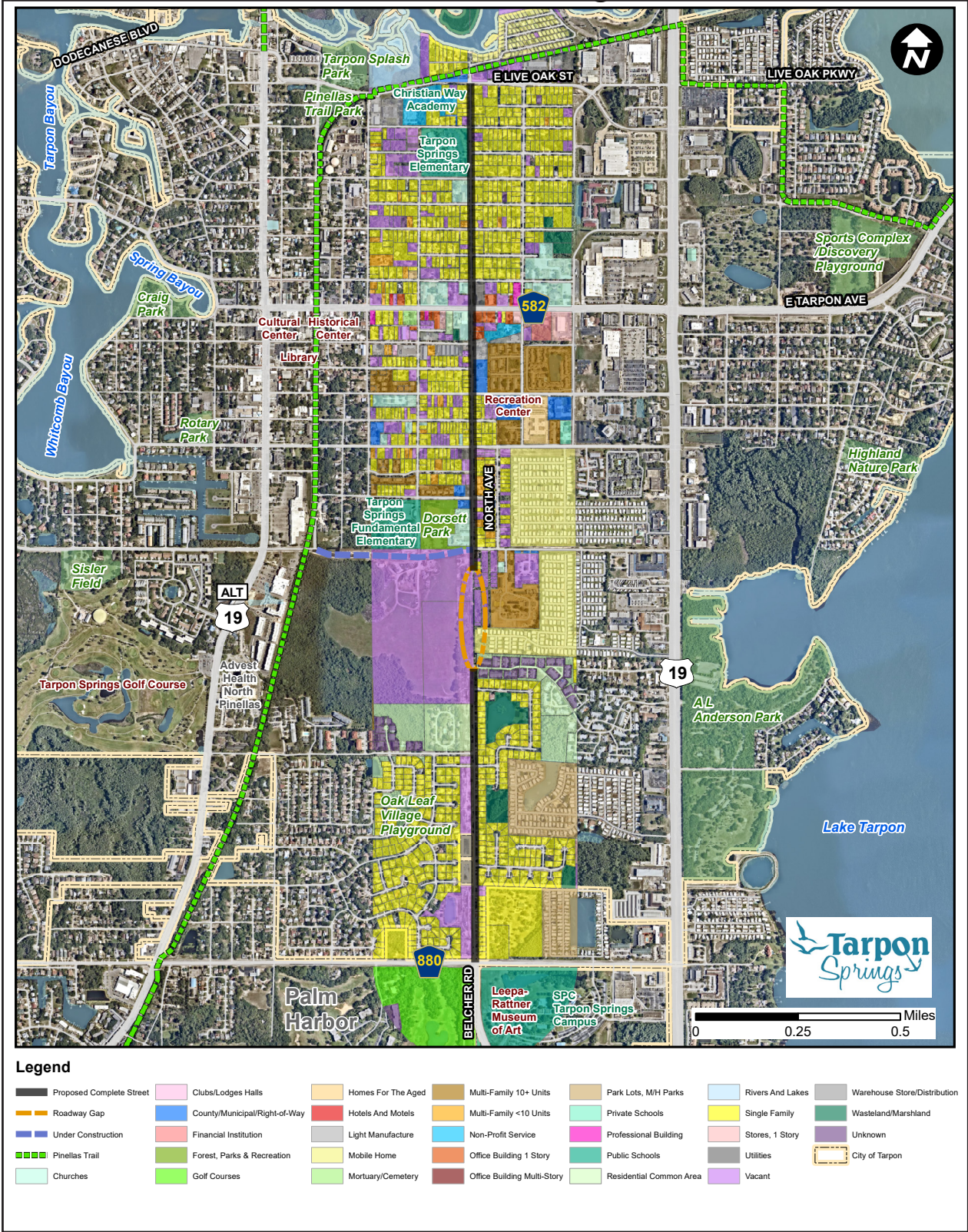
Figure 9: Crash Severity 2015 to 2019



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Figure 10: Existing Land Use Map



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Figure 11: PC Future Land Use Map

