

**SELMON  
EXPRESSWAY**

Whiting Street PD&E Study

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**Sociocultural Effects  
Evaluation**

February 2024

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# 1.0 Project Summary

## 1.1 Project Description

In July 2019, the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA), in coordination with the City of Tampa, began a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate the needs, costs, and effects of extending East Whiting Street (Whiting Street) and reconfiguring the eastbound on-ramp of the Selmon Expressway at North Jefferson Street (Jefferson Street) and eastbound off-ramps at South Florida Avenue (Florida Avenue) and Channelside Drive. The study considered extending Whiting Street to North Meridian Avenue (Meridian Avenue) and included improvements and realignment of the existing segment of Whiting Street, from Jefferson Street to North Brush Street (Brush Street). The extension would provide a direct connection of the Whiting Street corridor to Meridian Avenue, thereby improving traffic flow and safety for all transportation modes and offer additional connections within the street network.

It was anticipated that the Florida Avenue off-ramp would be widened to two lanes, the Channelside Drive off-ramp would be removed, and a new Whiting Street off-ramp would extend from the Selmon Expressway, near Morgan Street, to Nebraska Avenue and intersect with the new Whiting Street alignment to provide a direct connection from the Selmon Expressway. See **Figure 1-1** for the project location map.



Figure 1.1: Project Location Map

On February 22, 2022, a Public Hearing was held at the THEA boardroom to present the project's preferred alternative to the general public, project stakeholders, and other interested parties. Based on comments received during this hearing, and during subsequent meetings with project stakeholders such as the City of Tampa, it was determined that the project preferred alternative should be revised to only address proposed improvements to Whiting Street and its connection to Meridian Avenue, and the removal of the eastbound Channelside Avenue off-ramp and replace it with a ramp connecting to Whiting Street. Widening of the Florida Avenue off-ramp to two lanes would no longer be proposed. However, rectangular rapid flash beacon (RRFB) pedestrian signals would be installed at the ramp's connection with Florida Avenue.

These modifications to the project's preferred alternative also resulted in the need to revise the project's purpose and need to reflect the vision of project stakeholders. The revised purpose and need for the project are provided in **Section 1.2** below.

## 1.2 Project Purpose & Need

The purpose of this project is to provide a direct connection of the Whiting Street corridor to Meridian Avenue to improve traffic flow and safety for all transportation modes and offer additional connections within the street network. The project will also reconfigure the eastbound on-ramp to the Selmon Expressway at Jefferson Street and remove the eastbound off-ramp from the Selmon Expressway to Channelside Drive and replace it with a ramp connection to Whiting Street. These improvements will improve safety, traffic circulation, and access to Whiting Street and Meridian Avenue.

The need for the project is based on the following criteria:

### **Roadway System Linkage**

Based on volume forecasts found in the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM) Version 8.2 and the proposed additional development associated with the Water Street Development plan and future development plans at the former Ardent Mill site, traffic demand and congestion along the capacity constrained Channelside Drive and Cumberland Avenue corridors are expected to significantly increase by the design year (2046). The proposed extension of Whiting Street to Meridian Avenue will provide a parallel route for these facilities which would better distribute vehicular demand, promote safety, and improve traffic operations along these corridors. Additionally, the Whiting Street extension will also support the City of Tampa's accessibility objectives through grid network enhancement.

### **Multimodal Linkage**

The Tampa Center City Plan envisions Tampa as a community of livable places and connected people. One of the "building blocks" for this future is livable connections for "safe pedestrian and bicycle access around town." Proposed improvements along Whiting Street include the addition of a 10-foot-wide two-way cycle track and 10-foot-wide sidewalks on both the north and south sides of the roadway. These improvements will provide safe travel facilities for both pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as a connection between the Selmon Greenway Trail and Meridian Avenue Trail, and to the Riverwalk via City of Tampa's proposed "Quick Build" cycle track along Whiting Street west of Jefferson Street, which will further enhance multimodal linkages.

### **Safety**

The Channelside Drive off-ramp terminates into a 5-leg intersection at Channelside Drive and Morgan Street, which is a major pedestrian access point to the Amalie Arena. This creates both safety and operational concerns at this location. Six (6) years of data (2013-2018) were reviewed, and 14 crashes have occurred at this ramp. As the Water Street Project builds out to the east of the ramp system, pedestrian conflicts are expected to be exacerbated. Also, the planned widening of the Selmon Expressway south of the downtown ramps will alleviate congestion issues and result in higher speed, higher volume interactions at this ramp. As such, eliminating pedestrian conflicts, and redirecting Downtown East traffic beyond the Water Street District is critical to proactively address safety concerns as both the Selmon Expressway and Downtown Tampa continue to develop.

### **Transportation Demand**

Based upon the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM) Version 8.2, East Jackson Street (39,000 average annual daily traffic (AADT) and Kennedy Boulevard (34,000 AADT) are expected to reach their operational capacity by 2040. As the Water Street Project develops, the vehicle demand is expected to increase. The proposed connection of Whiting Street could carry up to 14,800 AADT, providing valuable route divergence and congestion relief to the parallel facilities.

## **1.3 Preferred Project Alternative**

THEA has committed to provide a new connection to Meridian Avenue, by extending Whiting Street between Brush Street and Meridian Avenue. In order to construct the extension of Whiting Street, the existing railroad tracks will need to be removed. Removing the railroad tracks and completing the extension to Meridian Avenue will offer an additional connection within the street network, providing additional route choices and alleviating congestion. The improvements can be broken up into four distinct locations. See **Figure 1-2** for each location of proposed improvements.

Below is a detailed description of the proposed improvements for each location.

### **Location A**

Whiting Street currently ends at Brush Street, west of the existing railroad tracks. The preferred alternative proposes to extend Whiting Street, from Brush Street to Meridian Avenue, with a new signal at the T-intersection of Whiting Street and Meridian Avenue. The proposed typical section for the Whiting Street extension includes two 11-foot-wide travel lanes in the eastern direction, one 11-foot-wide travel lane in the western direction, a 10-foot-wide cycle track separated from the north side of the westbound travel lane by a four-foot traffic separator, curb and gutter, and 10-foot-wide sidewalks on both the north and south sides of the road. The eastbound approach to Meridian Avenue includes one 11-foot-wide dedicated left turn lane and one 11-foot-wide left/right turn lane. The existing grassed median on Meridian Avenue will be split in order to accommodate the proposed signalized intersection. The preferred alternative includes the addition of a northbound dedicated left turn lane from Meridian Avenue to Whiting Street and the opening of the median to feed a southbound left turn lane from Meridian Avenue to Whiting Street. The preferred alternative does not propose any other improvements to Meridian Avenue.



Figure 1.2: Locations of Proposed Improvements

**Location B**

Whiting Street is currently a two-lane roadway with on-street parking on both the north and south sides of the road. East of the Selmon Expressway, Whiting Street is a brick road in need of repair. The preferred alternative proposes to widen/reconstruct Whiting Street from two to three lanes with two 11-foot-wide travel lanes in the eastern direction, one 11-foot-wide travel lane in the western direction, a 10-foot-wide cycle track separated from the north side of the westbound travel lane by a four-foot traffic separator, curb and gutter, and 10-foot-wide sidewalks on both the north and south sides of the road. The 10-foot-wide cycle track will extend to Jefferson Street. The preferred alternative also includes the installation of a new traffic signal at the intersection of Whiting Street and Brush Street.

**Location C**

The existing exit Ramp 6B provides users the ability to travel east along Channelside Drive, towards Amalie Arena and the Florida Aquarium. The preferred alternative proposes relocating exit Ramp 6B approximately 700 feet north and providing a direct connection to Whiting Street. The proposed ramp includes a single 15-foot-wide ramp lane, which will remain on structure beyond the existing Jefferson Street on-ramp. From this point, the ramp profile begins to decrease and the ramp will be supported by a Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) wall, which ends approximately 100 feet south of Whiting Street. The ramp widens to three 12-foot-wide lanes at the intersection, with one dedicated left turn lane and two

dedicated right turn lanes. The proposed ramp will cut off access north, along Nebraska Avenue, and therefore requires a horizontal curve to connect Nebraska Avenue to Finley Street. The existing Jefferson Street on-ramp entrance will be shifted to the north to accommodate the new Whiting Street off-ramp.

**Location D**

The current configuration of exit Ramp 6A includes a tight single lane loop ramp that merges onto Florida Avenue under a free-flow condition. While modifications to this ramp are not proposed as part of this project, safety improvements, including the addition of RRFB pedestrian signals at the ramp's connection with Florida Avenue, and removal of existing landscaping within the inside of the ramp loop to improve sight distance are proposed.

## 1.4 About this Document

This Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE) for the Whiting Street PD&E Study evaluates and addresses the effects of the proposed transportation improvements on the community and the quality of life of its residents and visitors. The SCE process assesses social, economic, mobility, aesthetic, land use, and relocation effects, including any possible issues that can be associated with Civil Rights, Environmental Justice, and nondiscrimination laws. These effects are assessed in the evaluation with hyper-focus on minority, low income, and other marginalized populations.

The SCE process is supported by the development of a Community Characteristics Inventory (CCI). This comprehensive summary gives an in depth understanding of the affected communities through description of the sociocultural context of the project area including community facilities/services; presence of certain population groups; and indications of community values, concerns and preferences. The data used in this document for the sociocultural effects evaluation and community characteristics inventory comes from the Florida Geographic Data Library (FDGL).

## 2.0 Existing Conditions Community Characteristics Inventory

The SCE process is supported by the development of a CCI and Impact Analysis for each defined community within the study area. The CCI is a comprehensive summary of the quantitative and qualitative data used to support the decisions made during the SCE Evaluation process. The CCI is used to acquire a better understanding of the affected community and potential issues considered in an effort to evaluate the effect of a transportation action on the community. A CCI is valuable in identifying and later resolving issues.

### 2.1 Study Area

The study area is defined as the geographic areas that include all communities with the potential to be affected by a transportation action. The study area typically includes communities immediately surrounding the project but may also extend beyond the typical project corridor. The study area for this project is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

### 2.2 Existing Land Use

The following section identifies the project's consistency with local and regional land use and transportation plans while evaluating the project's consistency with the physical characteristics of the area. Land use patterns assist in identifying the potential effects on unique community features (e.g., historic landmarks/structures), and changes in land use.

Existing land use was assessed through review of current zoning map information. Land use information was gathered from the City of Tampa through GIS shapefiles. The predominant land use present west of Meridian Avenue is Central Business District-2 which is characterized by high density development including office and residential high rises featuring a mix of land uses on the site. Particular attention is paid to the public realm which requires a hierarchy of pedestrian, transit, and vehicular oriented streets. To the east of Meridian Avenue the predominant zoning is Channel District 1, 2, or 3. This zoning is characterized by high density residential with a mix of supporting commercial land uses.

### 2.3 Community Focal Points

Community focal points are public or private facilities, organizations or locations that hold special importance to local residents. These types of facilities include:

- Schools
- Religious Centers
- Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Hospitals
- Group Care Facilities
- Government Buildings
- Fire Stations
- Cultural Centers
- Civic Centers
- Cemeteries
- Aviation Facilities
- Health Care Facilities
- Multimodal Facilities (existing recreational trails, mobility trails, bike trails)

Tables 1 through 8 list the community focal points in the study area. The focal points are shown in Figure 2.1.

Table 1: Educational Facilities in SCE

Facility	Address
Hillsborough County District Office	901 E Kennedy Boulevard
Rampello Downtown Partnership K-8	802 E Washington Street
Carlton Academy Day School	205 N Brush Street
University of South Florida Health	124 S Franklin Street

Table 2: Religious Centers in SCE

Facility	Address
St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church	509 E Twiggs Street
First Presbyterian Church	412 E Zack Street
Sacred Heart Catholic Church	509 N Florida Avenue
First Baptist Church of Tampa	302 W Kennedy Boulevard
St. Peter Claver Church	1203 N Nebraska Avenue
MT Moriah Primitive	1225 N Nebraska Avenue

Table 3: Park and Recreational Facilities in SCE

Facility	Address
Chillura Courthouse Square	641 E Kennedy Boulevard
AIDS Memorial Park	102 W Hyde Park Place
Lykes Gaslight Square Park	410 N Franklin Street
Columbus Statue Park	300 Bayshore Boulevard & Platt Street
Contanchobee Fort Brooke Park	601 Ice Palace Drive
Downtown Ribbon of Green	233 S Ashley Drive
Macdill Park	100 N Ashley Drive
Tony Janu Park	240 Bayshore Boulevard
Tampa General Hospital Park	35 Columbia Drive
City of Tampa Park	1226 E Cumberland Avenue
Turtle Ditch (Unofficial)	No official address (S of 101 N Brush Street)

Table 4: Hospitals in SCE

Facility	Address
Tampa General Hospital	1 Tampa General Circle

Table 5: Group Care Facilities in SCE

Facility	Address
Hyde Park Counseling Center	207 W Verne Street
St. Johns Parish Day Middle School	240 Plant Avenue
Channelside Academy of Math & Science	1029 Twiggs Street

Table 6: Government Buildings in SCE

Facility	Address
US Department of Commerce	1101 Channelside Drive
Hillsborough County Center	601 E Kennedy Boulevard
Hillsborough County	601 E Kennedy Boulevard
Tampa Municipal Office Building	306 E Jackson Boulevard
HC Downtown Office	601 E Kennedy Boulevard
Honorable Robert A Foster	401 N Jeffersom Street #125

Table 7: Fire Stations in SCE

Facility	Address
Tampa Fire Station #1	808 E Zack Street

Table 8: Multimodal Facilities in SCE

Facility
Hillsborough River Trail
Hillsborough Bay Trail
Riverwalk Trail
Bayshore Boulevard Greenway
Meridian Trail
Lykes Gaslight Square Park
Joe Chillura Courthouse Square Park
Selmon Greenway



Figure 2.1: Focal Points in Study Area

## 2.4 Demographics – Census Block Groups

The demographic data describes the population based on the characteristics shown in **Tables 9-12**. **Figure 2.2** shows the census block groups used to compile the data in the study area.

Table 9: Demographic Comparison, Total Population

Evaluation Criteria	SCE Study Area	Hillsborough County	Florida
Total Population	668	1,422,278	21,477,737
Percent White	65.08%	70.5%	74.5%
Percent Black	3.74%	16.8%	16%
Percent Asian	7.93%	4.1%	2.8%
Percent Other*	10.53%	8.7%	3.5%
Percent Hispanic (regardless of race)	12.72%	28.7%	26.4%
Percent Minority**	30.24%	58.3%	48.7%
Percent Ages 22 through 29	36.98%	77.5%	80.3%
Percent Age 20 through 64 with a Disability	3.45%	13.9%	20.9%
Median Age	39	37.2	42.4

\*Population includes person identified as American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, Two or More Races.

\*\* Combines Race and Ethnicity to identify the total population that is a member of either a racial or ethnic minority.

Table 10: Demographic Comparison, Income

Evaluation Criteria	SCE Study Area	Hillsborough County	Florida
Median Household Income	\$81,719	\$58,884	\$59,227
Percent of the Population Below the Poverty Line	10.96%	14.6%	12.7%

Table 11: Demographic Comparison, Language

Evaluation Criteria	SCE Study Area	Hillsborough County	Florida
Percent of the Population that Speaks Only English	80.5%	79.1%	76.9%
Percent of the Population that Speaks a Language Other Than English	19.5%	20.9%	23.1%
Percent of the Population that Speaks a Language Other Than English, doesn't speak English "very well"	7.1%	8.7%	10.3%

Table 12: Demographic Comparison, Households and Housing Units

Evaluation Criteria	SCE Study Area	Hillsborough County	Florida
Average Household Size	2	2.74	2.67
Total Number of Housing Units	537	580,511	9,674,053
Number of Housing Units Occupied	456	526,175	7,736,311
Percent of Occupied Housing Units, Owner Occupied	12%	58.6%	65.4%

Because it provides more detail about the education and transportation demographics than the Census Block Groups, the 2015-2019 ACS Census Zip Code Data (33602) was used to analyze education and transportation demographics within the Census Block Groups. This data gives totals for the entire zip code and does not reflect the sole census block groups within the study area, **Tables 13-14** and **Figure 2.3** shows the zip code data.

Table 13: Demographic Comparison, Education

Evaluation Criteria	SCE Study Area	Hillsborough County	Florida
Percent of the Population 25 and over with Less than a High School Diploma or Equivalent	6.6%	12.9%	13.4%
Percent of the Population 25 and over with a High School Diploma or Equivalent	21.9%	26.77%	28.7%
Percent of the Population 25 and over with a Bachelor’s, Master’s Doctorate or Professional Degree	28.5%	25.1%	22.3%

Table 14: Demographic Comparison, Transportation

Evaluation Criteria	SCE Study Area	Hillsborough County	Florida
Percent of Population that Commutes to/from work via a car, truck or van	80.4%	88.3%	88.3%
Percent of Population that Walks to/from Work	5.1%	1.5%	1.4%
Percent of Population that takes Public Transportation	1.2%	1.4%	1.8%
Percent of the Population that Travels to Work/From via “other” means	2.8%	1.8%	2.6%
Percent of the Population that Works from Home	10.5%	7.1%	6.2%

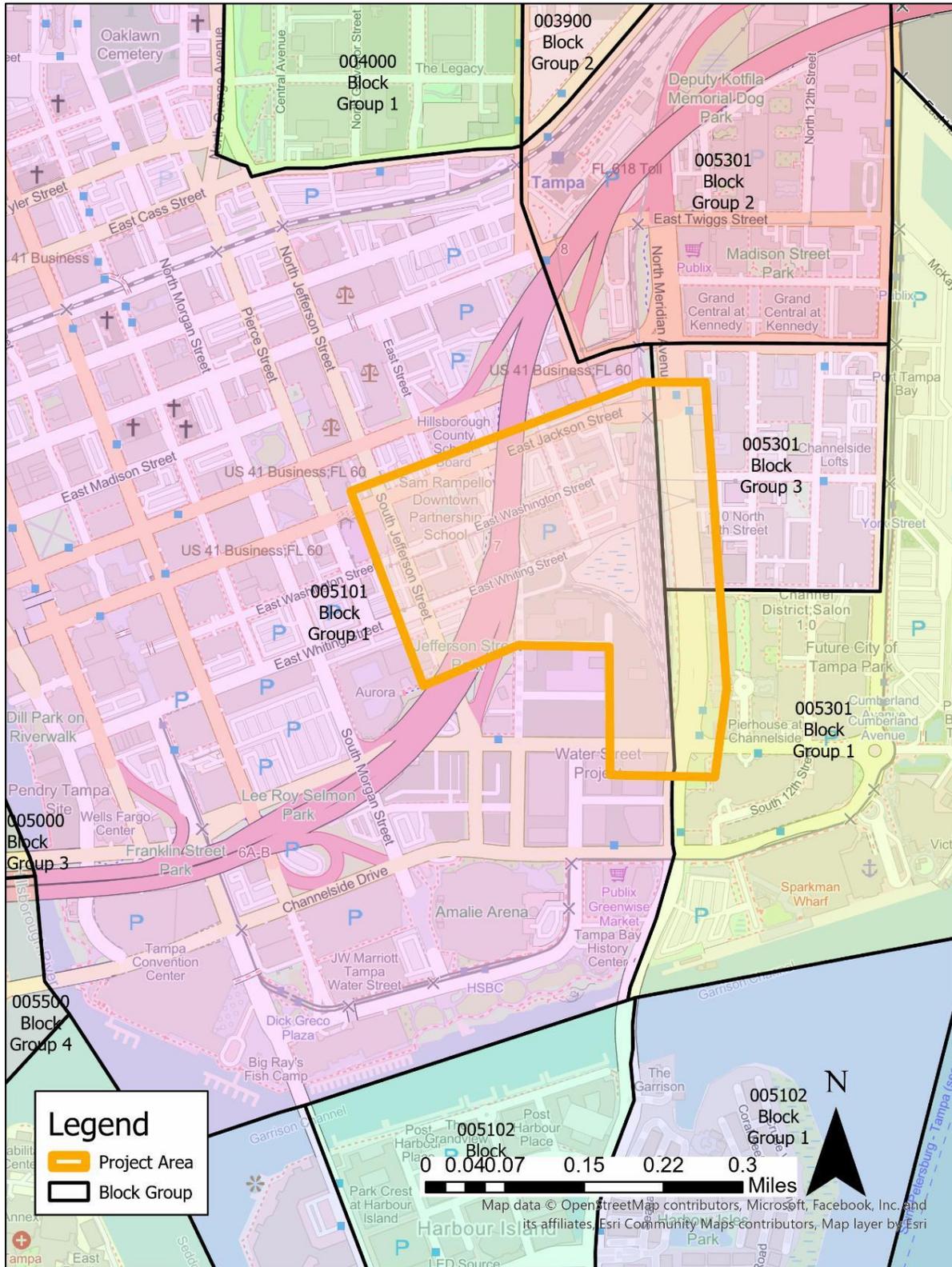


Figure 2.2: Census Block Groups in Study Area

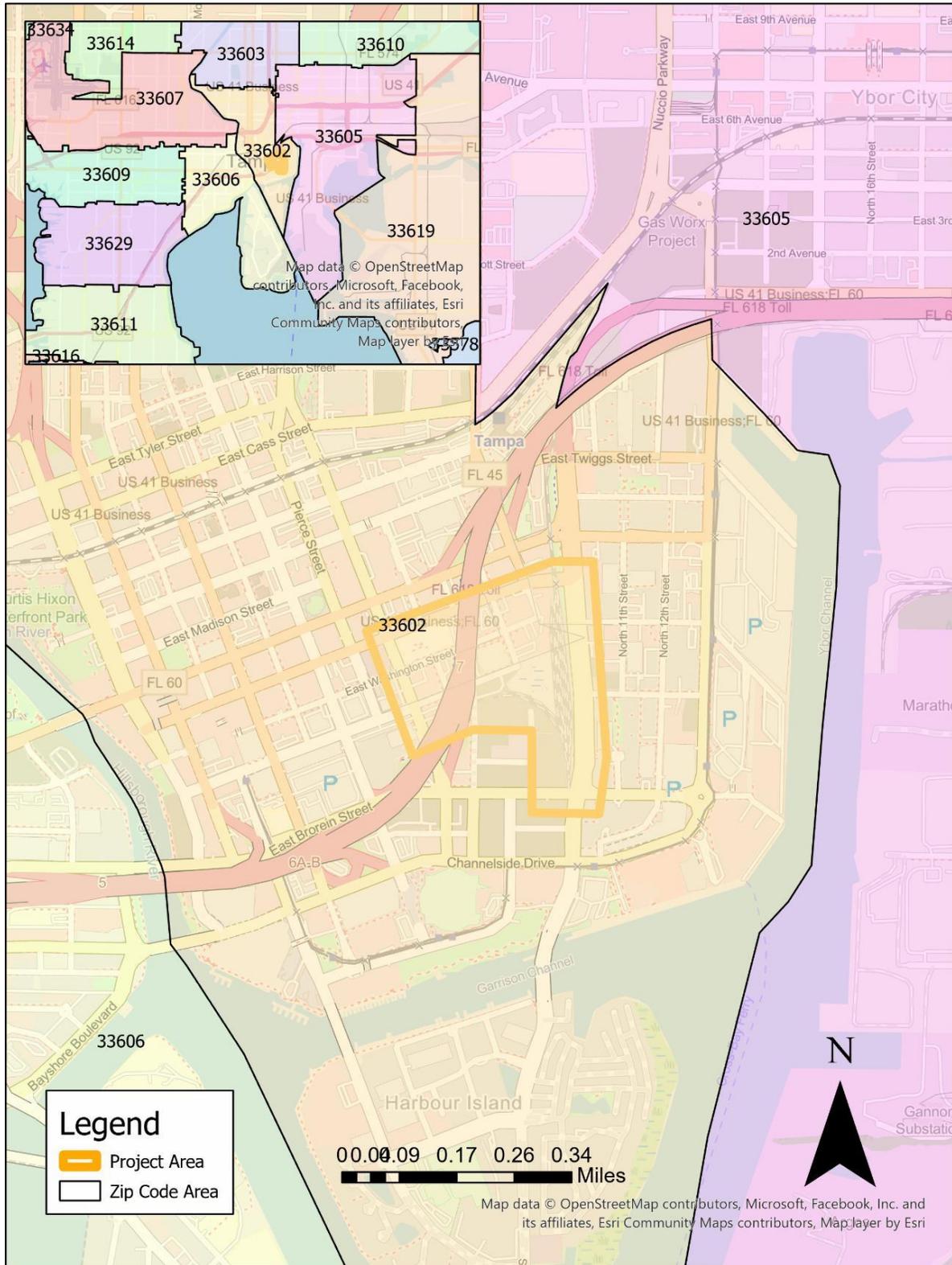


Figure 2.3 Zip Codes in the Study Area

## 2.5 Safety and Emergency Response

The SCE Evaluation includes the effects of the transportation project on neighborhood safety. In this context, the evaluation of safety considers whether or not residents feel safe in their neighborhood and includes issues ranging from emergency response times, access to community facilities, and livable community features. There is one emergency facility located within the study area, Tampa Fire Station #1 located at 808 E Zack St. The fire rescue station is not located within the SCE study area, they are located within a 2,640-ft buffer (1/2 mile).

## 2.6 Community Goals/Quality of Life

All local governments in Florida are required to adopt a Comprehensive Plan that includes goals for future land use, transportation, housing, recreation, and capital improvements. As transportation actions can affect communities and influence the quality of life of its citizens, it is important that potential impacts and benefits to community facilities, cultural resources, parks and recreation areas, community cohesion, safety/emergency response, and compatibility with community goals and issues.

*The City of Tampa's updated version of the Comprehensive Plan is designed to shape the City's future for generations to come. Tampa is a great city to live in, offering a diversity and rich urban life that nurtures residents' creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. (Imagine 2040: Tampa Comprehensive Plan)*

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies presented in the City of Tampa's Comprehensive Plan Elements reflect the community's needs. According to the Comprehensive Plan, the following Mobility Objectives will positively influence downtown Tampa and can be partially achieved through this project:

- Objective 1.1: Encourage downtown revitalization, urban redevelopment, and infill development in a manner that supports the city form concepts articulated in the Vision; is consistent with objectives to provide adequate delivery of multimodal transportation system options; and mitigates adverse traffic impacts to neighborhoods.
- Objective 1.2: Prioritize and implement roadway and intersection improvements consistent with the City's growth projections, land use plan, and urban infill and redevelopment demand.
- Objective 1.3: Establish and maintain level of service standards for roads and public transit service and local facility planning guidelines for pedestrian and bicycle facilities consistent with the City's growth projections, land use plan, and urban infill and redevelopment strategy.
- Objective 4.1: Identify local and collector streets to form a network of connections to disperse traffic and give people a choice of routes to residential neighborhood destinations such as schools, parks, and village centers.
- Objective 4.2: Minimize impacts of roadway widening projects and ensure compatibility with environmentally sensitive lands and residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- Objective 6.1: Reduce the per capita number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes within the City of Tampa by a minimum of 10%.
- Objective 6.3: Maintain operational efficiency of the arterial and collector roadway network and support the operational efficiency of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) highway facilities through optimization of parallel and supporting arterial roadways.

## 2.7 Tax Base

When considering effects on the tax base, many variables are reviewed. These variables include property values, the millage rate of a community, total ad valorem revenue collected by the community, the percentage of the budget of the community that is funded by ad valorem revenue, the percentage of the total ad valorem revenue collected in the study area, and the effect of the project on property values in the study area.

This project will not have any adverse effects on the tax base of Hillsborough County and the other adjacent municipalities. The enhanced mobility has the potential to support increased vehicular traffic for the region and provides for other future development areas in the central business district.

## 3.0 Potential Effects

### 3.1 Land Use Changes

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area. The 2011 Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use and Land Cover map identified Commercial and Services (47.36 acres, 38.34%), Transportation (32.49 acres, 26.3%), Open Land (15.91 acres, 12.88%), and Industrial (15.08 acres, 12.21%) as the major existing land uses within the 500-foot project buffer area. The project is located in one Census Designated Place: Tampa. Within the 500-foot project buffer area, there are two Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) which are The Quad Block (1.65 acre, 1.33%) and Downtown Tampa (108.72 acres, 88.02%); however, there are no Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). The City of Tampa Adopted 2040 Future Land Use Map identifies future land uses along Whiting Street in the project study area as primarily Central Business District, and Regional Mixed Use. **Figure 3.1** shows the DRIs in the project area.

While current development in the project study area is replacing the industrial and open land to commercial and services and residential, minimal changes to surrounding land uses are anticipated as a result of this project.

### 3.2 Planning Consistency

The Whiting Street project is included in THEA's FY 2022 Work Program. Planning and Design are funded for 2021-2023, with right of way acquisition slated for 2022, and construction for 2024-2025. THEA will fund the project with toll revenues.

### 3.3 Mobility

The EST GIS analysis identified one existing recreational trail (Meridian Trail) within the 500-foot project buffer area. It also identified one Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network in Florida, one Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Hiking Trail Priority (2018-2022), and one OGT Multi-Use Trail Opportunity which is the Selmon Greenway Trail segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor. **Figure 3.2** shows the trails and bus routes in the study area.

Portions of the study area are identified as a Land Trail Priority on the 2018 Florida Greenways and Trails Opportunity and Priority Land Trails Map.

There were 15 bus transit routes identified through the EST GIS analysis, which include 12 local bus routes (Routes 1,12,19,20,24,25,275,30,360,400,60,7,8 and 9), one in-town trolley (Route 800), and the Pirate Water taxi. These routes serve several areas of Hillsborough County, including Davis Islands, South Tampa, Brandon, and MacDill Air Force Base.

Pedestrian accommodations are provided throughout the project study area including sidewalks, crosswalk striping and crossing beacons. No bicycle lanes are provided on the streets within the project study area; however, bicycle accommodations are provided with the Meridian Trail and the Selmon Greenway Trail (a segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor), and a future bi-directional cycle track is planned for Cumberland Avenue, south of Whiting Street.

The proposed project will enhance mobility resources.

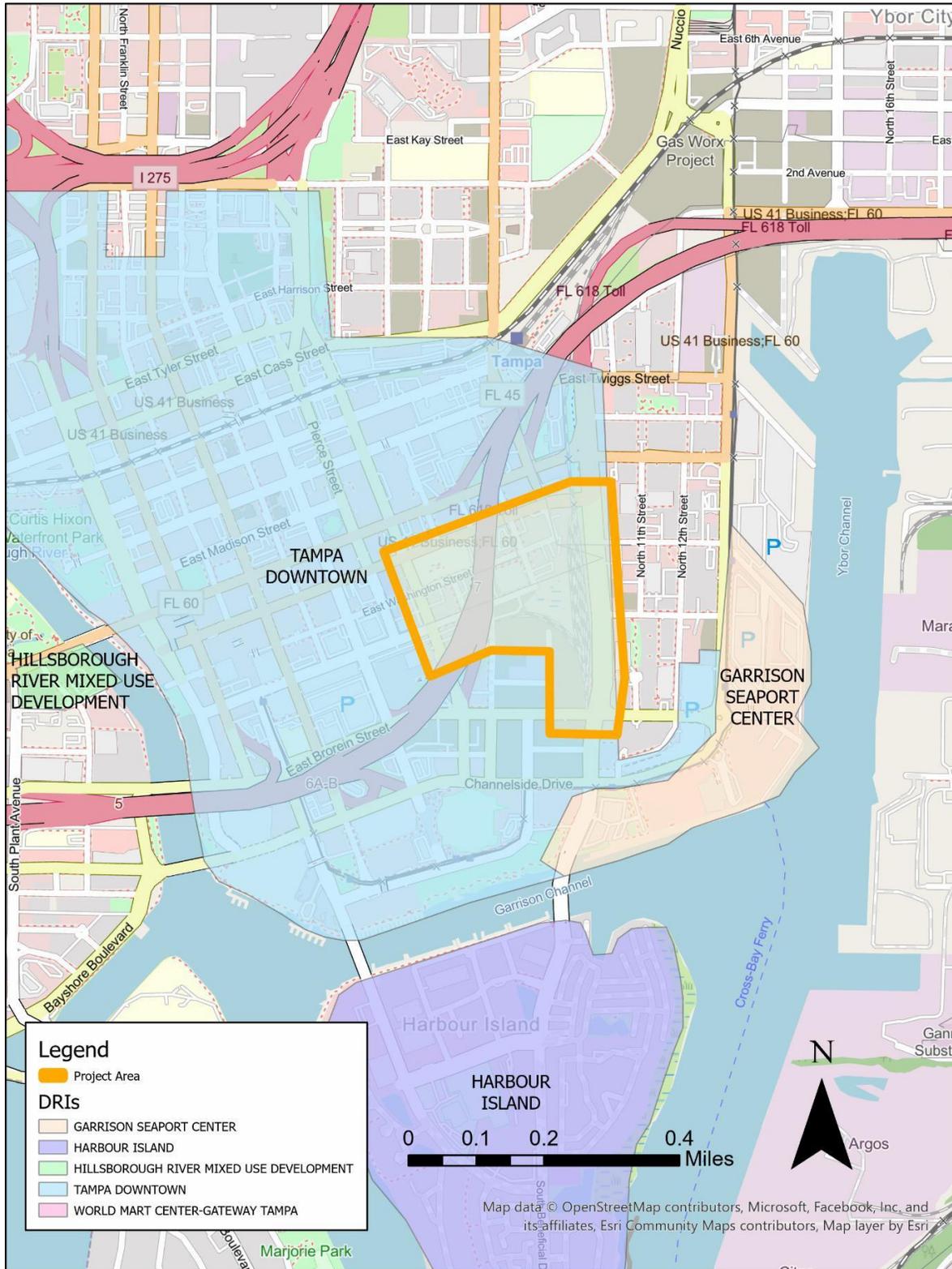


Figure 3.1: DRIs in Study Area



Figure 3.2: Transit Routes and Trails in Study Area

### 3.4 Aesthetic Effects

The EST GIS analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area. The 2011 Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use and Land Cover map identified Commercial and Services, Transportation, Open Land, and Industrial as the major existing land uses within the 500-foot project buffer area.

While current development in the project study area is replacing the industrial and open land to commercial and services and residential, minimal changes to surrounding land uses are anticipated as a result of this project. The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement with aesthetic resources.

### 3.5 Relocation Potential

The EST GIS analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area. The 2011 Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use and Land Cover map identified Commercial and Services, Transportation, Open Land, and Industrial as the major existing land uses within the 500-foot project buffer area. There are 5.05 acres (4.09%) of high density residential land use, and no mobile home or RV parks present within the project study area.

Project improvements will be made within an existing corridor with right of way acquisition as necessary. No residences or businesses are expected to be relocated. Access to proximate businesses may temporarily be affected and/or modified as a result of the project. Encroachment into surrounding parcels (if necessary) will be coordinated with the appropriate property owners.

### 3.6 Social

The EST GIS analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area lies within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area and includes the Census Designated Place of Tampa. Community features present include one civic center (Amalie Arena), the Meridian Trail, the Selmon Greenway Trail (a segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor), and Rampello K-8 Magnet School. There is one archaeological and historic resource identified within the project study area (Fort Brooke). However, as a result of a cultural resources assessment of the project area, three additional historic resources determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified. The proposed project will result in impacts to two of these resources, an unrecorded segment of the Florida Central & Peninsular Railroad (8HI11987) and Ardent Mills (8HI15084). Coordination with the Florida Division of Historic Resources is ongoing to address proposed project related impacts to these two historic resources.

### 3.7 Demographics

The Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) was used to review and explore the demographic data. The FGDL is available online to offer a mechanism for spatial data throughout the state of Florida. In addition, the Census 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2017 was used to gather additional demographic data. The ACS data reflects the approximation of the population based on a polygon project study area intersecting the Census Block Groups along the project corridor.

### 3.7.1 Population and Income

The ACS identified 9,967 households with a population of 668 people. The median household income is \$81,719. Several households are below poverty level (10.96%) and 0.22% of households receive public assistance.

### 3.7.2 Race and Ethnicity

The minority population within the project study area makes up 30.24% of the total population, and is comprised of "Hispanic or Latino of Any Race" with 85 people (12.72%), "Asian Alone" with 53 people (7.93%), "Claimed 2 or More Races" with 37 people (5.54%), and "Some Other Race Alone" with 34 people (5.09%). There are 25 people (3.74%) that have a "Black or African American Alone" ethnicity.

To conduct a detailed analysis of minority totals and low-income areas within the Census Block Groups, the 2010 US Census Block Data was utilized since it provides more information than the FGDL for this dataset. This data gives totals for the entire Census block and does not reflect the approximation of the population based on the polygon project study area intersecting the Census blocks. This data identified four Census blocks with a total population of 183. The Census blocks had a minority population of 11%.

### 3.7.3 Age and Disability

In the year 2017, the data reports the median age as 39 and persons ages 22 through 29 comprise 36.98% of the population. There are 21 people (3.45%) between the ages of 20 and 64 that have a disability.

### 3.7.4 Housing

There are a total of 537 housing units reported in the year 2017. These housing types consist of multi-family units (97%) and single-family units (3%). Of these housing units, 73% are renter occupied, 15% are vacant units, and 12% are owner occupied.

### 3.7.5 Language

The 2017 data shows that there is only one person that "Speaks English Not at All" and 14 people that "Speaks English Not Well or Not at All". Additionally, there are 13 people that "Speaks English Not Well". Based on US DOT Policy Guidance, the FDOT has identified four factors to help determine if Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services would be required as listed in the FDOT Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 11.1.2.2. Based on a review of these factors, there is 4.19% LEP population for this alternative.

Impacts on the social environment and community cohesion are anticipated to be minimal due to the fact that access to proximate residences, businesses, and recreational features could temporarily be affected during project construction.

## 3.8 Farmlands

Farmlands are not applicable to this project.

### 3.9 Economic

The EST GIS analysis identified two Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). The two DRI's identified in the project study area are The Quad Block and Downtown Tampa. According to the 2011 Urban Service Area Capacity Study prepared for the Hillsborough County Planning Commission, the development order for the Quad Block Development has expired. The Downtown Tampa DRI will redevelop the downtown area and offer improvements to connectivity, for both pedestrians and motorists.

This proposed project will enhance economic resources and regional connectivity.

### 3.10 Section 4(f) Potential

Section 4(f) is not applicable to this project.

### 3.11 Historic and Archaeological Sites

The EST GIS analysis identified 28 previously recorded archaeological and historic structures located within the 500- foot project buffer area. All but one of the previously recorded archaeological and historic resources within the 500-foot project buffer were either not evaluated by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), deemed ineligible for the National Register Historic Places (NRHP), or had insufficient information. Only the Fort Brooke (HI00013) site was deemed eligible for the NRHP. However, as a result of a cultural resources assessment of the project area, three additional historic resources determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified. The proposed project will result in impacts to two of these resources, an unrecorded segment of the Florida Central & Peninsular Railroad (8HI11987) and Ardent Mills (8HI15084). Coordination with the Florida Division of Historic Resources is ongoing to address proposed project related impacts to these two historic resources.

### 3.12 Recreation Areas

The EST GIS analysis identified one park and recreational facility (Washington Street Park) and one existing recreational trail (Meridian Trail) within the 500-foot project buffer area. It also identified one Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network in Florida, one Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Hiking Trail Priority (2018-2022), and one OGT Multi-Use Trail Opportunity which is the Selmon Greenway Trail segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor. Portions of the study area are identified as a Land Trail Priority on the 2018 Florida Greenways and Trails Opportunity and Priority Land Trails Map. **Figure 3.3** shows the parks and trails in the study area.

The proposed project is expected to have moderate involvement with recreation areas.

### 3.13 Title VI

In accordance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with LEP", the project team will continue to make every effort to reach out to disadvantaged groups. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Public involvement has been conducted by THEA, with attention to Environmental Justice, to ensure transportation needs are addressed throughout the project. This outreach is detailed in the project's Public Involvement Plan.

The proposed project is not anticipated to displace any residents within the community. Changes to social relationships and patterns and disruptions to community cohesion are not anticipated since the proposed

project is located along existing roadways. The proposed project will improve safety, improve connectivity to communities, and provide enhanced mobility of goods and improve access to businesses in the area.



Figure 3.3: Parks and Trails in Study Area

## 4.0 Public Involvement

Throughout the course of this study, there has been continuous and broad-based public involvement. Public outreach activities have included small group meetings and workshops conducted with property owners, and general public meetings and agency coordination. Public outreach tools included newsletters and a project website. This section provides a summary of the coordination efforts and comments received from the community throughout the study.

### 4.1 Advanced Notification

Advanced Notification (AN) is the means through which Federal, State and local agencies are informed of proposed actions by THEA. The AN provides an opportunity for early involvement of federal, state, and local agencies in the PD&E phase and allows agencies to share information and concerns regarding the proposed action. In 2019, THEA mailed a project AN package to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Florida State Clearinghouse. THEA then distributed the package to federal, state and local agencies, as well as appropriate government representatives. The AN Package is included in **Appendix A**.

### 4.2 Public Involvement Program

A project specific Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed at the beginning of the study process. The PIP was created to guide the project team's communications and interactions with all interested parties during the study. The plan describes specific methods and techniques regarding the public involvement approach for the project and ensures a free flow of information between the THEA, property owners, local governments, agencies, stakeholder groups, business owners, and other interested parties. The PIP is included in **Appendix B**.

### 4.3 Public Meetings

A Public Information Meeting was held May 20, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Due to COVID-19, the meeting was held virtually. The meeting was advertised through the Florida Administrative Register on May 6, 2021. A meeting notice was also sent out to the project mailing list, which includes elected and appointed officials, property owners within 300 feet of the study area, and members of the public. THEA SunPass account holders were also notified, and the meeting was announced in THEA's newsletters and on social media. In total, the meeting lasted 64 minutes, and the project staff received five questions from the attendees. The comments received as part of the alternatives workshop are included in **Appendix C**.

A Public Hearing was held February 22, 2022 at 5:00 pm in the Board room at the THEA office, 1104 E Twiggs St, Tampa. The meeting was advertised in the Tampa Bay Times on February 2, 2022 and February 13, 2022. A meeting notice was also sent out to the project mailing list, which includes elected and appointed officials, property owners within 300 feet of the study area, and members of the public. THEA SunPass account holders were also notified, and the meeting was announced in THEA's newsletters and on social media. The in-person hearing consisted of information stations and a pre-recorded presentation. An open house was held 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Attendees were able to view the project displays and documents and discuss the project with staff. The pre-recorded presentation began at 6:00 pm. Public comments were accepted on comment cards submitted to the team and a court reporter was available to receive comments in a one-on-one setting. In total, five comments were received during the official public comment period. The comments received as part of the public hearing are included in **Appendix D**.

## 4.4 Project Website

A project specific THEA webpage was established ([www.selmonstudies.com/whiting-pde-study/](http://www.selmonstudies.com/whiting-pde-study/)) to provide updated information about the project and upcoming public meetings. Website contents include:

- Background of the project, including project location map
- Purpose of the study, including constraints and existing conditions
- Outline of the process taken to complete the PD&E Study
- Description of the alternatives, including materials/graphics
- Project schedule
- Public Information Meeting presentation recording
- Commenting procedures

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The potential sociocultural effects that could result from construction of the proposed improvements as considered and discussed in this document, indicate that the project will have minimal or no impact to the communities within the project area. The anticipated mobility improvements, to the local downtown network as well as mobility for the region are anticipated to benefit the community. Approximately 0.24 acres of additional right-of-way from three parcels will be required to construct the proposed project.

# Appendices



# Appendix A

Advanced Notification Package



**Whiting Street and Washington Street Extensions  
and Selmon Expressway Ramps Reconfiguration  
Project Development and Environment Study**

**Whiting Street from Jefferson Street to North Meridian Avenue  
Washington Street from Nebraska Avenue to North Meridian Avenue  
Reconfiguration of Selmon Expressway On-ramps at Jefferson Street  
and Off-ramps at Florida Avenue and Channelside Drive**

**Hillsborough County, Florida**

**Purpose and Need**

**Project Description**

Whiting Street and Washington Street are parallel two-lane roads between Ashley Drive and Channelside Drive in Downtown Tampa. Neither road is continuous. Whiting Street has an approximately 0.1 mile gap between North Brush Street and North Meridian Avenue. Washington Street has two approximately 0.1 mile gaps between North Tampa Street and North Franklin Street and between North Nebraska Avenue and North Meridian Avenue. The project proposes extending both Whiting Street and Washington Street to North Meridian Avenue, as well as improvements and re-alignment of the existing segment of Whiting Street from Jefferson Street to North Brush Street.

The study will also evaluate reconfiguring the on-ramps to the Selmon Expressway at Jefferson Street and the off-ramps at Florida Avenue and Channelside Drive. It is anticipated that the Florida Avenue off-ramp will be widened to two lanes, the Channelside Drive off-ramp will be removed, and the new Whiting Street off-ramp will extend from the Selmon Expressway near Morgan Street to Nebraska Avenue and intersect with the new Whiting Street alignment. These modifications will provide a direct connection from the Selmon Expressway to improve safety, traffic circulation and access to Whiting Street and North Meridian Avenue.

**Purpose and Need**

The purpose of this project is to provide a direct connection of the Whiting Street and Washington Street corridors to North Meridian Avenue to improve traffic flow and safety for all transportation modes, increase capacity on the adjacent street network, and offer additional connections within the street network. The project will also reconfigure the on-ramps to the Selmon Expressway at Jefferson Street and the off-ramps at Florida Avenue and Channelside Drive to provide a direct connection from the Selmon Expressway to improve safety, traffic circulation and access to Whiting Street and North Meridian Avenue.

The need for the project is based on the following criteria:

### **SYSTEM LINKAGE**

Based upon the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM) Version 8.2, the existing roadway network will be over capacity by the 2045 design year. Additional network connectivity such as the Whiting Street and Washington Street extensions and ramp reconfigurations, are necessary to provide additional route choice and access to alleviate the congestion.

### **SAFETY**

Safety and operational concerns with the Florida Avenue and Channelside Drive off-ramps include substandard radius and a free-flow merge movement onto Florida Avenue with a sidewalk/crosswalk conflict. The ramp termini onto Channelside Drive terminates into a 5-leg intersection at Channelside Drive and Morgan Street, which is a major pedestrian access point to the Amalie Arena. Six (6) years of data (2013-1018) were reviewed, and 14 crashes have occurred at this ramp. As the Water Street Project builds out to the east of the ramp system, the adverse impact of geometric issues and pedestrian conflicts are expected to be exacerbated. Also, the planned widening of the Selmon Expressway south of the downtown ramps will alleviate congestion issues and result in higher speed, higher volume interactions at this ramp. As such, improving the ramp geometry, eliminating pedestrian conflicts, and redirecting Downtown east traffic beyond the Water Street District is critical to proactively address safety concerns as both the Selmon Expressway and Downtown Tampa continue to develop.

### **TRANSPORTATION DEMAND**

Based upon the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM) Version 8.2, Jefferson Street (39,000 AADT) and Kennedy Boulevard (AADT 34,000) are expected to reach their operational capacity by 2040. As the Water Street Project develops, the vehicle demand is expected to increase. The proposed connections of both Whiting Street and Washington Street could carry up to 14,800 AADT each, providing valuable route divergence and congestion relief to the parallel facilities.

**Whiting Street and Washington Street Extensions  
and Selmon Expressway Ramps Reconfiguration  
Project Development and Environment Study**

**Whiting Street from Jefferson Street to North Meridian Avenue  
Washington Street from Nebraska Avenue to North Meridian Avenue  
Reconfiguration of Selmon Expressway On-ramps at Jefferson Street  
and Off-ramps at Florida Avenue and Channelside Drive**

**Hillsborough County, Florida**

**Preliminary Environmental Discussion**

*Social and Economic*

**Land Use Changes**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area. The 2011 Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use and Land Cover map identified Commercial and Services (47.36 acres, 38.34%), Transportation (32.49 acres, 26.3%), Open Land (15.91 acres, 12.88%), and Industrial (15.08 acres, 12.21%) as the major existing land uses within the 500-foot project buffer area. The project is located in one Census Designated Place: Tampa. Within the 500-foot project buffer area, there are two Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) which are The Quad Block (1.65 acre, 1.33%) and Downtown Tampa (108.72 acres, 88.02%); however, there are no Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). The City of Tampa Adopted 2040 Future Land Use Map identifies future land uses along Whiting Street in the project study area as primarily Central Business District, and Regional Mixed Use.

While current development in the project study area is replacing the industrial and open land to commercial and services and residential, minimal changes to surrounding land uses are anticipated as a result of this project.

**Social**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area lies within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area and includes the Census Designated Place of Tampa. Community features present include one civic center (Amalie Arena), the Meridian Trail, the Selmon Greenway Trail (a segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor), and Rampello K-8 Magnet School. There is one archaeological and historic resource identified within the project study area (Fort Brooke).

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Sociocultural Data Report (SDR) was used for demographic data (the SDR can be found within the Community Coordination section of the EST). The SDR uses the Census 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) data and reflects the approximation of the population based on a polygon project study area intersecting the Census Block Groups along the project corridor. Using the polygon project study area, the SDR identified the following demographics.

### Population and Income

The SDR identified 456 households with a population of 668 people. The median household income is \$81,719. Several households are below poverty level (10.96%) and 0.22% of households receive public assistance.

### Race and Ethnicity

The minority population makes up 30.24% of the total population comprising of “Hispanic or Latino of Any Race” with 85 people (12.72%), “Asian Alone” with 53 people (7.93%), “Claimed 2 or More Races” with 37 people (5.54%), and “Some Other Race Alone” with 34 people (5.09%) within the project study area. There are 25 people (3.74%) that have a “Black or African American Alone” ethnicity.

To conduct a detailed analysis of minority totals and low-income areas within the Census Block Groups, the 2010 US Census Block Data was utilized since it provides more information than the SDR for this dataset. This data gives totals for the entire Census block and does not reflect the approximation of the population based on the polygon project study area intersecting the Census blocks. This data identified four Census blocks with a total population of 183. The Census blocks had a minority population of 11%.

### Age and Disability

In the year 2017, the data reports the median age as 39 and persons ages 22 through 29 comprise 36.98% of the population. There are 21 people (3.45%) between the ages of 20 and 64 that have a disability.

### Housing

There are a total of 537 housing units reported in the year 2017. These housing types consist of multi-family units (97%) and single-family units (3%). Of these housing units, 73% are renter occupied, 15% are vacant units, and 12% are owner occupied.

## Language

The 2017 data shows that there is only one person that “Speaks English Not at All” and 14 people that “Speaks English Not Well or Not at All”. Additionally, there are 13 people that “Speaks English Not Well”. Based on US DOT Policy Guidance, the FDOT has identified four factors to help determine if Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services would be required as listed in the FDOT Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 11.1.2.2. Based on a review of these factors and the fact that there is 4.27% LEP population for this alternative, LEP services will be required.

Impacts on the social environment and community cohesion are anticipated to be minimal due to the fact that access to proximate residences, businesses, and recreational features could temporarily be affected during project construction. A Sociocultural Effects Evaluation is included in the Project Development and Environment Study scope. A Public Involvement Plan is also included in the Project Development and Environment Study scope.

## **Relocation Potential**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area. The 2011 Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use and Land Cover map identified Commercial and Services, Transportation, Open Land, and Industrial as the major existing land uses within the 500-foot project buffer area. There are 5.05 acres (4.09%) of high density residential land use, and no mobile home or RV parks present within the project study area.

Project improvements will be made within an existing corridor with right of way acquisition as necessary. No residences are expected to be relocated. Access to proximate businesses may temporarily be affected and/or modified as a result of the project. Encroachment into surrounding parcels (if necessary) will be coordinated with the appropriate property owners. For these reasons, minimal involvement regarding relocation potential is anticipated. A Sociocultural Effects Evaluation and a Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan are included in the Project Development and Environment Study scope.

## **Farmlands**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area with no prime farmlands present.

The project is expected to result in no involvement with farmlands.

## **Aesthetic Effects**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area. The 2011 Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use and Land Cover map identified Commercial and Services, Transportation, Open Land, and Industrial as the major existing land uses within the 500-foot project buffer area.

While current development in the project study area is replacing the industrial and open land to commercial and services and residential, minimal changes to surrounding land uses are anticipated as a result of this project. The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement with aesthetic resources and will be analyzed during Project Development.

## **Economic**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified two Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). The two DRI's identified in the project study area are The Quad Block and Downtown Tampa. According to the 2011 Urban Service Area Capacity Study prepared for the Hillsborough County Planning Commission, the development order for the Quad Block Development has expired. The Downtown Tampa DRI will redevelop the downtown area and offer improvements to connectivity, for both pedestrians and motorists.

This proposed project will enhance economic resources and regional connectivity.

## **Mobility**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified one existing recreational trail (Meridian Trail) within the 500-foot project buffer area. It also identified one Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network in Florida, one Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Hiking Trail Priority (2018-2022), and one OGT Multi-Use Trail Opportunity which is the Selmon Greenway Trail segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor. Portions of the study area are identified as a Land Trail Priority on the 2018 Florida Greenways and Trails Opportunity and Priority Land Trails Map.

There are 14 bus transit routes that were identified through the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis. There are 12 bus routes and two in-town trolleys. The bus routes included in the analysis are: 02, 04, 08, 09, 12, 19, 22X, 23X, 25X, 27X, 31, and 46. The two trolley routes include 96 and 98. These routes service several areas of Hillsborough County, including Davis Islands, South Tampa, Brandon, and MacDill Air Force Base.

Pedestrian accommodations are provided throughout the project study area including sidewalks, crosswalk striping and crossing beacons. No bicycle lanes are provided on the streets within the

project study area; however, bicycle accommodations are provided with the Meridian Trail and the Selmon Greenway Trail (a segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor).

The proposed project will enhance mobility resources. A Sociocultural Effects Evaluation is included in the Project Development and Environment Study scope.

## *Cultural*

### **Section 4(f) Potential**

Section 4(f) is not applicable to this project.

### **Historic and Archaeological Sites**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified 28 previously recorded archaeological and historic structures located within the 500-foot project buffer area. All but one of the previously recorded archaeological and historic resources within the 500-foot project buffer were either not evaluated by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), deemed ineligible for the National Register Historic Places (NRHP), or had insufficient information. Only the Fort Brooke (HI00013) site was deemed eligible for the NRHP.

There have been 17 surveys conducted within the 500-foot project buffer area, but not a comprehensive Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) of the Whiting Street project area. According to the EST GIS, there are several parcels with pre-1970 construction dates located within the 500-foot project buffer area that have not been recorded. There does not appear to be the potential for a historic district.

A CRAS will be prepared for this project and will include an archaeological and historic resources field survey. The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with historic and archaeological sites.

### **Recreation Areas**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified one park and recreational facility (Washington Street Park) and one existing recreational trail (Meridian Trail) within the 500-foot project buffer area. It also identified one Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network in Florida, one Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Hiking Trail Priority (2018-2022), and one OGT Multi-Use Trail Opportunity which is the Selmon Greenway Trail segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor. Portions of the study area are identified as a Land Trail Priority on the 2018 Florida Greenways and Trails Opportunity and Priority Land Trails Map.

The proposed project is expected to have moderate involvement with recreation areas.

### *Natural*

#### **Wetlands and Surface Waters**

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) dataset of the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis did not identify any wetlands within the 500-foot project buffer area. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Wetlands 2011 dataset identified 1.1 acres of freshwater marshes within the 500-foot project buffer area..

A Natural Resources Evaluation Technical Memorandum will be prepared for this project to document any involvement with wetlands.

The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement with wetland resources.

#### **Water Quality and Quantity**

Within the 500-foot project buffer area, the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified two waterbody ID's: Hillsborough River (WBID: 1443E) and Ybor City Drain (WBID: 1584A1). The Ybor City Drain (WBID: 1584A1) is a designated Verified Impaired Florida Water for dissolved oxygen and fecal coliform.

The 500-foot project buffer area of this project is within the jurisdiction of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). Also present within the 500-foot project buffer area are 28 Environmental Resource Permits, one Water Use Permits, and 19 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permits. Throughout the project study area, stormwater runoff drains to a closed storm sewer system via curb and gutter inlets and is conveyed to stormwater ponds. The proposed stormwater management system associated with the project will be developed to meet the design and performance criteria established in the SWFWMD Environmental Resource Permit Applicant's Handbook - Volumes I and II for the treatment and attenuation of discharges to impaired waters; the design will make every effort to maximize the treatment of stormwater runoff from the proposed roadway improvements. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program will also be implemented to control the effects of stormwater runoff during construction. For the above reasons, involvement regarding water quality and quantity resources is anticipated to be minimal. A Water Quality Impact Evaluation is included in the Project Development and Environment Study scope.

#### **Floodplains**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified 8.95 acres (8.58%) in the D-FIRM 100-year floodplain within the 500-foot project buffer area. During Project Development, engineering design features and hydrological drainage

structures will be designed such that stormwater transport, flow, and discharge meet or exceed flood control requirements.

The proposed project is expected to have minimal involvement with floodplain resources.

### **Wildlife and Habitat**

Within the 500-foot project buffer area, the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified that the project is within the Greater Tampa Bay Ecosystem Management Area and the core foraging area of wood storks. There were no Rare or Imperiled Fish reported. Given the relatively low number of wildlife and habitat resources reported within the 500-foot project buffer area and the fact that the 500-foot project buffer area is located within a developing urban environment, minimal involvement regarding wildlife and habitat resources is anticipated. A Natural Resources Evaluation Technical Memorandum will be prepared for this project to document any involvement with wildlife and habitat.

### **Coastal and Marine**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis did not detect any data for Environmentally Sensitive Shorelines within the 500-foot project buffer area. The project is located in the Tampa Bay Estuarine Drainage Area (EDA). No Coastal Barrier Resources were identified within the 500-foot project buffer area.

The proposed project is anticipated to have minimal involvement with coastal or marine resources.

### ***Physical***

#### **Noise**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified the entire 500-foot project buffer area as within the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area. The 2011 Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Florida Land Use and Land Cover map identified Commercial and Services, Transportation, Open Land, and Industrial as the major existing land uses within the 500-foot project buffer area. There are 5.05 acres (4.09%) of high density residential land use, and no mobile home or RV parks present within the project study area. Additional noise sensitive sites identified within the 500-foot project buffer area include the Meridian Trail, the Selmon Greenway Trail (a segment of the Urban Tampa Loop Corridor), Washington Park, the Meridian Condominiums, City Blue Condominiums, Slade at Channelside Condominiums, and Rampello K-8 Magnet School.

A noise analysis will be conducted during Project Development and a Noise Study Report will be completed.

The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement regarding noise level issues and predicted noise levels due to implementing the project will be analyzed in detail during Project Development.

### **Air Quality**

The project is located in an area that has been designated as attainment of all National Ambient Air Quality Standards established by the Clean Air Act of 1990 and subsequent amendments.

The proposed project is expected to have minimal impact on air quality.

### **Contamination**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified one Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Off Site Contamination Notices, three Hazardous Waste Facilities, one Onsite Sewage sites, eight Petroleum Contamination Monitoring Sites, 13 Storage Tank Contamination Monitoring sites, five Super Act Risk Sources, 19 US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), one US EPA Regulated Air Emissions Facilities (ICIS-AIR), and eight US EPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Regulated Facilities located within the 500-foot project buffer area.

A contamination screening evaluation will be conducted in Project Development and a Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER) will be prepared. Any source identified will be assessed to determine the need for remediation during construction.

The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with potential sources of contamination.

### **Infrastructure**

Potential contaminated infrastructure sites are described in the Contamination issue. The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis and map review identified eight Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) obstructions, one wireless antenna structure, four electric power transmission lines, two electric substations, and three railroads (2,176 linear feet) were identified within the 500-foot project buffer area.

The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with infrastructure resources.

### **Navigation**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis did not identify any potential navigable waterways along this corridor.

The proposed project is expected to have no involvement with navigation resources.

### ***Special Designations***

#### **Outstanding Florida Waters**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis did not identify any Outstanding Florida Waters within the 500-foot project buffer area.

The proposed project is expected to have no involvement with Outstanding Florida Waters resources.

#### **Aquatic Preserves**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis did not identify any Aquatic Preserves within the 500-foot project buffer area.

This proposed project will have no involvement with Aquatic Preserves resources.

#### **Scenic Highways**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis did not identify any Scenic Highways within the 500-foot project buffer area.

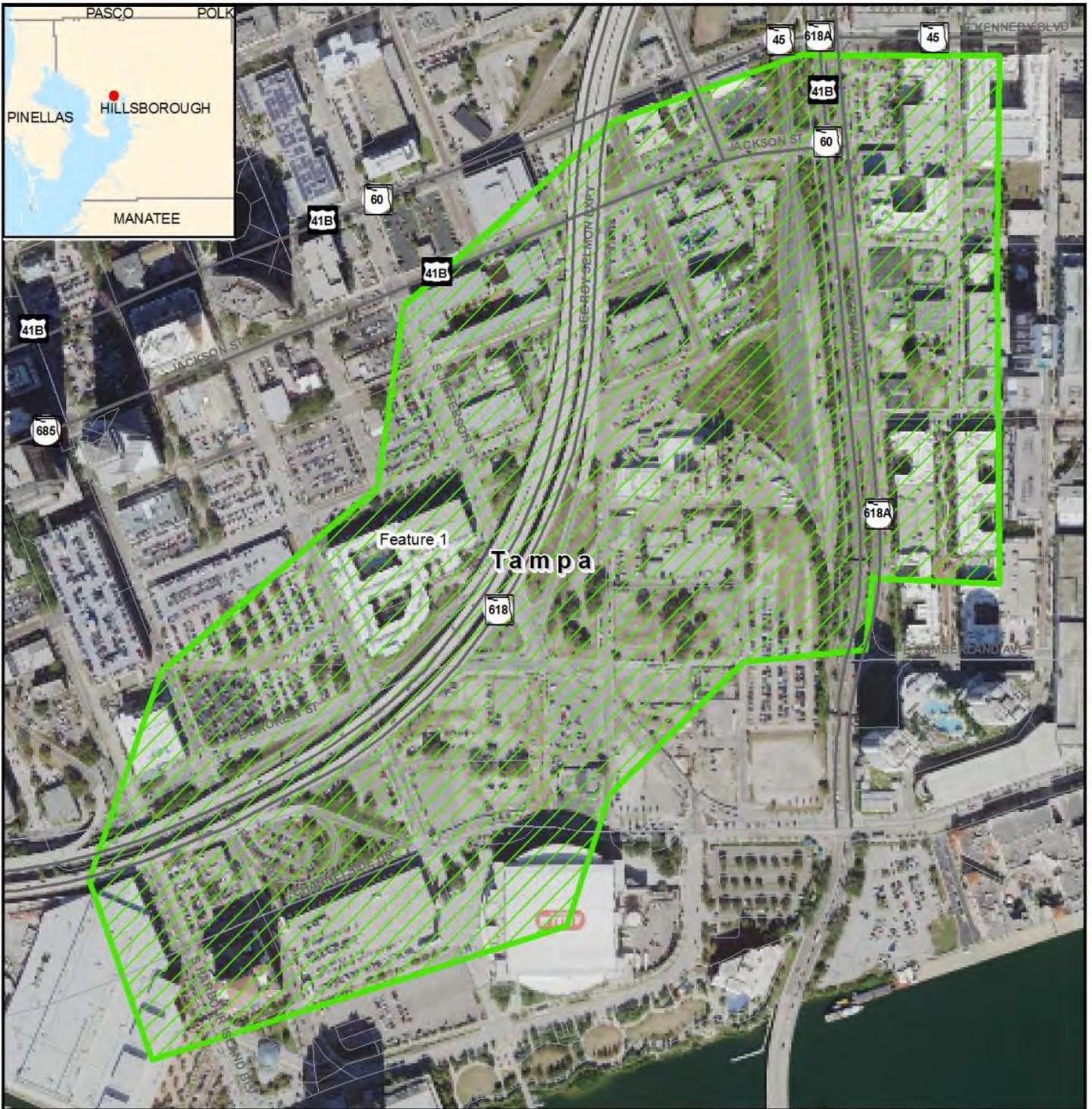
The proposed project will have no involvement with any Scenic Highway resources.

#### **Wild and Scenic Rivers**

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis did not identify any Wild and Scenic Rivers within the 500-foot project buffer area.

The proposed project will have no involvement with any Wild and Scenic Rivers.

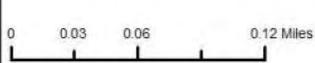
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Project Aerial Map

-  Area of Interest
-  Major Road
-  Local Road or Trail

Data Sources:  
Highways - NAVTEQ  
Digital Orthophotograph - ArcGIS Online



9/26/2019

**etdm**  
Environmental Screening Tool



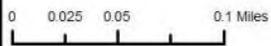
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Project Base Map

- Area of Interest
- Managed Conservation Lands
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- City Limits

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 US Census Bureau  
 County Property Appraisers  
 Florida Natural Areas Inventory

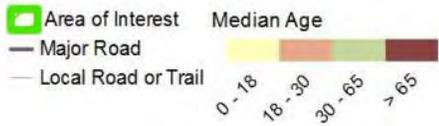


9/26/2019

# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Age Distribution Map



Data Sources:  
 US Geological Survey  
 FL Department of Transportation  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Census Bureau (2010)

0 0.02 0.04 0.08 Miles



9/26/2019

**etdm**  
 Environmental Screening Tool



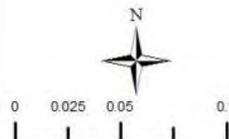
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Coastal and Marine Map

- City Limits
- Navigable Water Way
- Swamp or Marsh
- Exposed Rocky Platform
- Sand Beach
- Gravel Beach/Riprap
- Exposed Tidal Flat
- Sheltered Tidal Flat
- Mixed Sand And Gravel Beach
- Sheltered Rock/Seawall/Vegetated
- Exposed Vertical Rocky Shore/Seawall

- Coastal Barrier Resource Area
- Continuous Seagrass
- Discontinuous Seagrass
- Aquatic Preserve
- Non-vegetated Wetland
- Vegetated Non-forested Wetland
- Wetland Forested Mixed
- Wetland Coniferous Forest
- Wetland Hardwood Forest

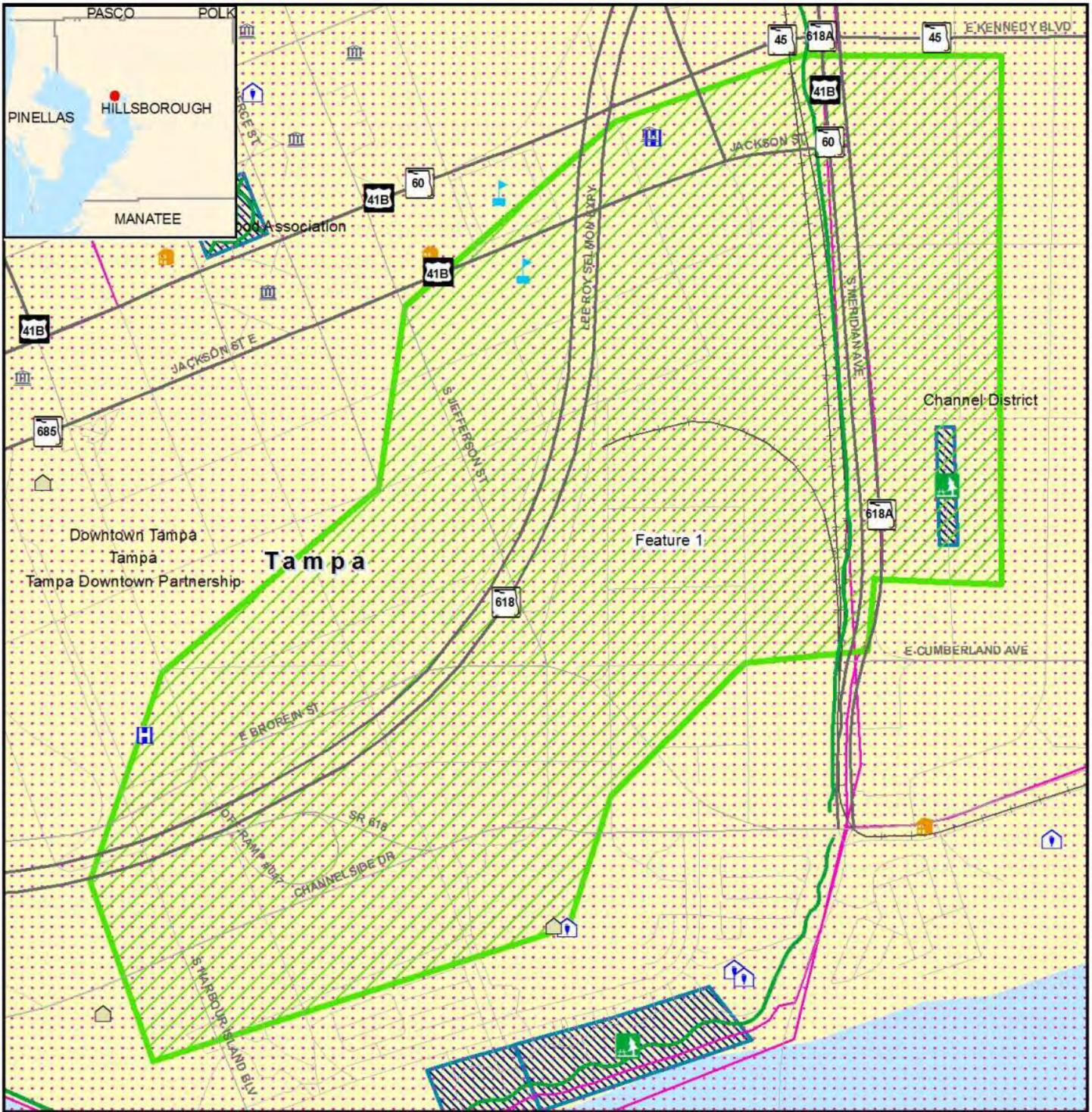


Data Sources: NAVTEQ; US Geological Survey; Florida Marine Research Institute; Florida Department of Transportation; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association; Florida Water Management Districts



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# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Community Services Map

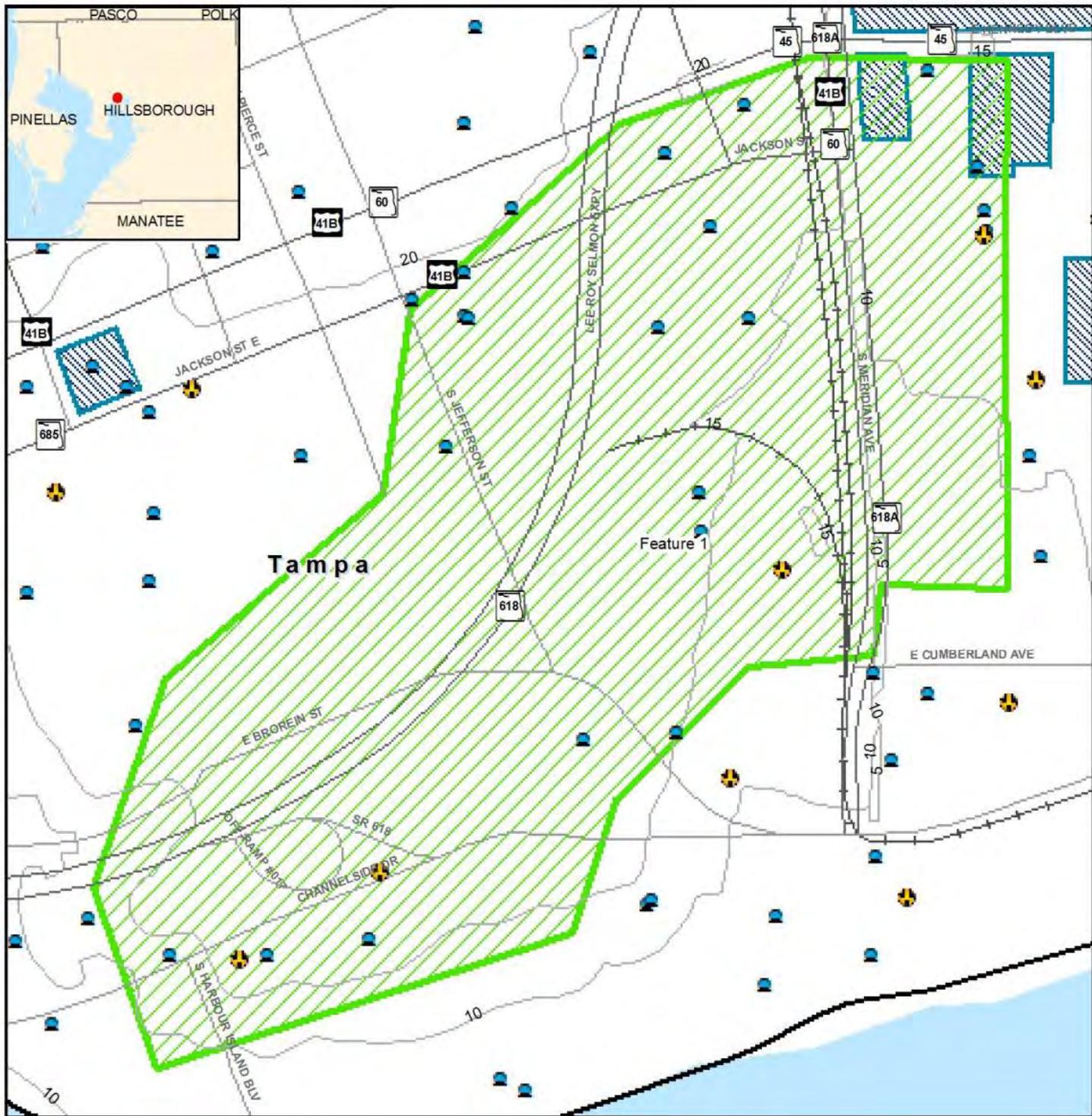
- Area of Interest
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- City Limits
- Government
- Civic Center
- Cemetery
- Social Service
- Community Center
- Law Enforcement
- Place of Worship
- Cultural Center
- Fire Station
- Health Care
- School
- Park
- Recreational Trail
- Community Boundary
- Conservation or Recreation Area

Data Sources: US Geological Survey; FL Department of Transportation; NAVTEQ; FL Property Appraisers; FL Natural Areas Inventory



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# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Contamination Map

Area of Interest	Hazardous Material Site	Brownfield Area	Excessively Drained	Somewhat Poorly Drained
Major Road	Power Plant	5 FT Contour	Well Drained	Poorly Drained
Local Road or Trail	Toxic Release Inventory	Superfund Site	Somewhat Excessively Drained	Very Poorly Drained
Dry Cleaning Facility	Nuclear Site	FDEP Tanks	Moderately Well Drained	Unclassified
Solid Waste Facility				

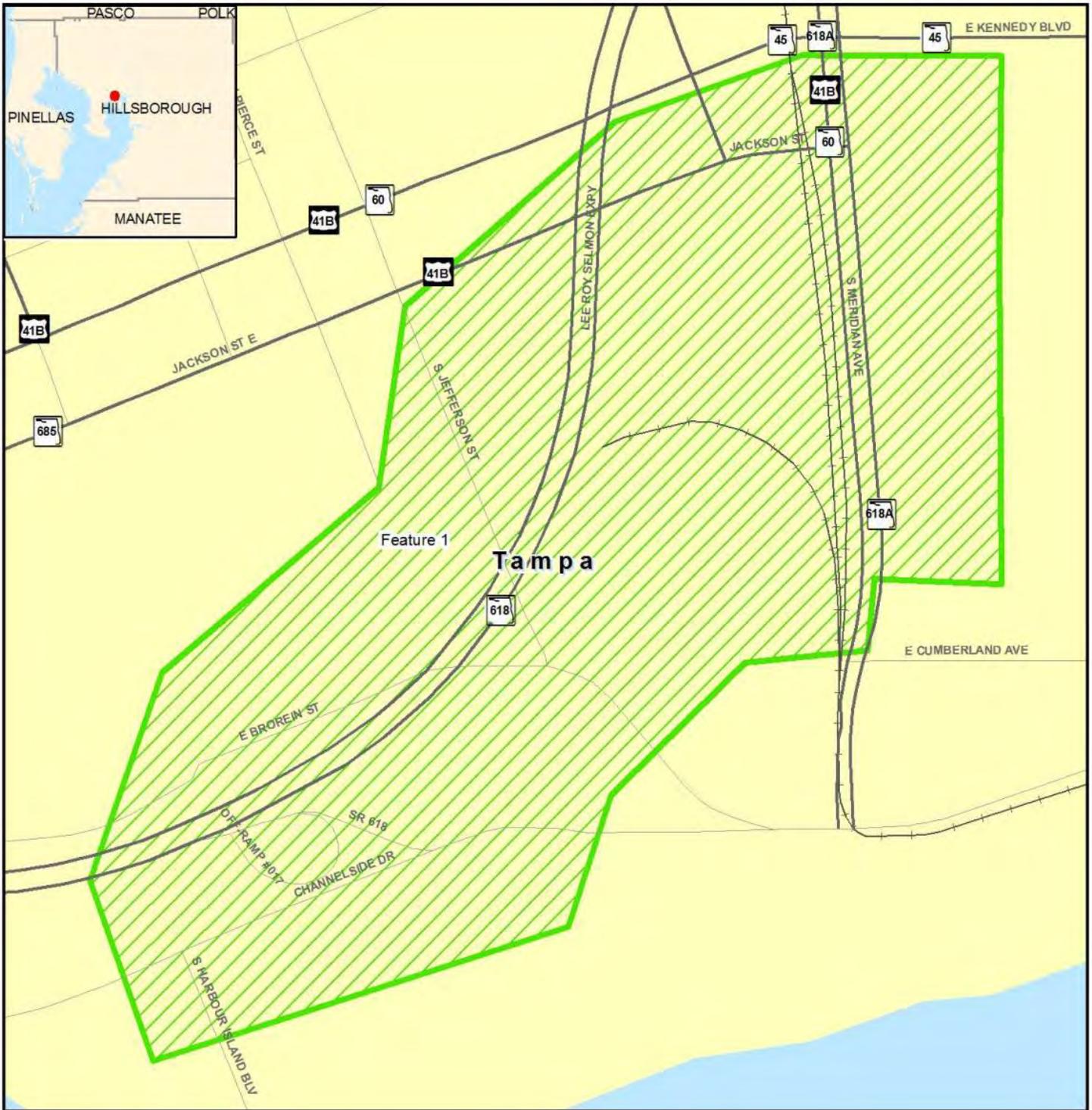
Data Sources: NAVTEQ; US Geological Survey; FL Department of Transportation; FL Department of Environmental Protection; FL Water Management Districts; US Environmental Protection Agency; Natural Resource Conservation Service

0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Miles

9/26/2019

Environmental Screening Tool

# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Farmlands Map

- |                     |                      |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Area of Interest    | Cropland/Pastureland | Prime Farmland Soils |
| Major Road          | Nurseries/Vineyards  |                      |
| Local Road or Trail | Specialty Farms      |                      |
| City Limits         | Tree Crops           |                      |
|                     | Rural Open Lands     |                      |

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 Florida Water Management Districts  
 US Geological Survey  
 Natural Resources Conservation Services

0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Miles

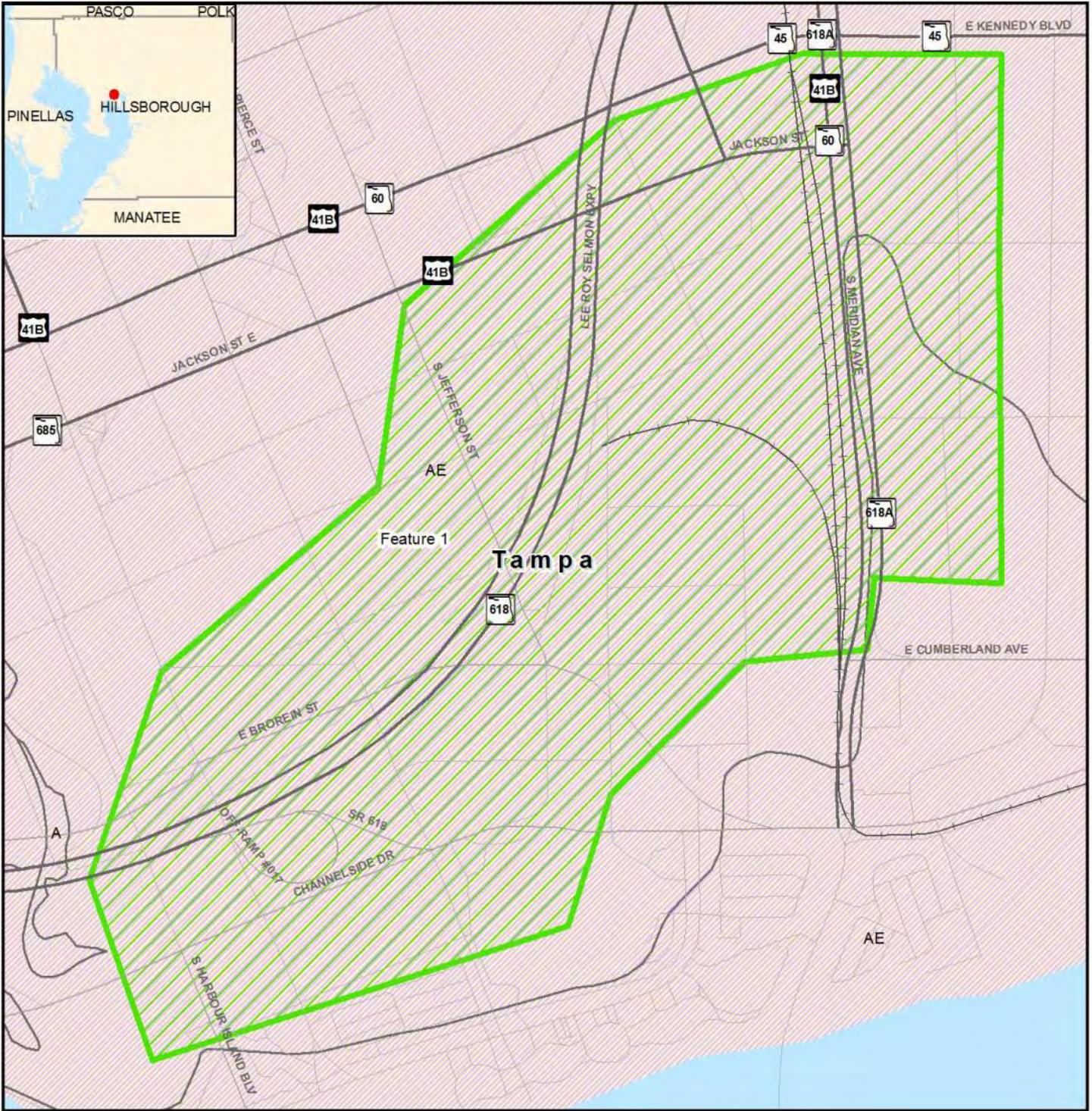


9/26/2019

**etdm**  
 Environmental Screening Tool



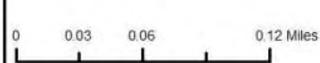
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Floodplains Map

- Area of Interest
- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- City Limits

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 Federal Emergency Management Agency

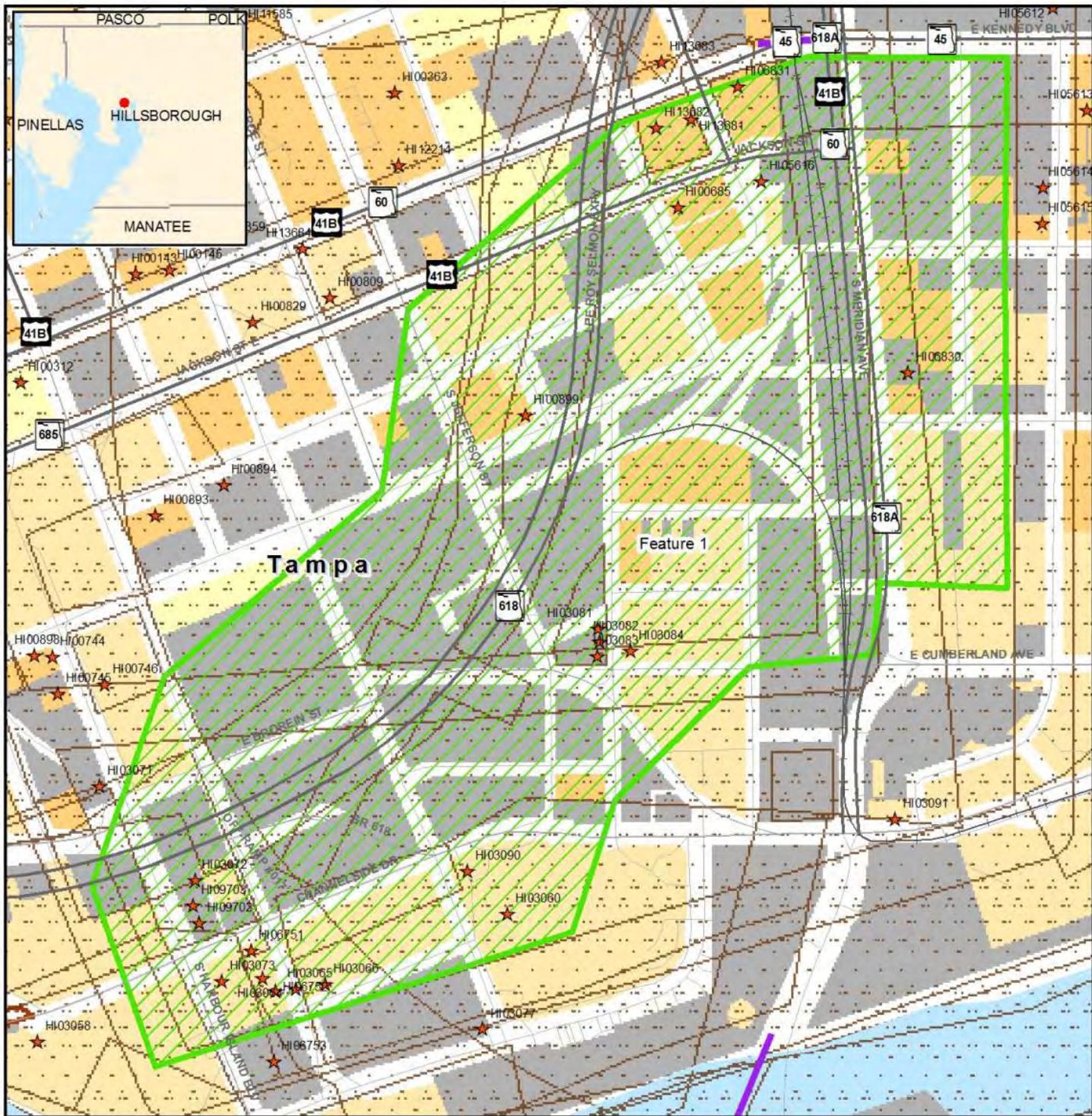


9/26/2019

**etdm**  
 Environmental Screening Tool



# AOI - Whiting Street 500

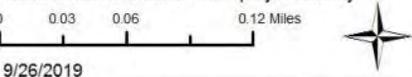


## Historic Resource Map

- |                     |                      |                                     |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Area of Interest    | Year Built           | Historic Structure                  |
| Major Road          | Pre 1970             | Historic Bridge                     |
| Local Road or Trail | Post 1980            | State Historic Highway              |
|                     | 1970 - 1979          | Historic Cemetery                   |
|                     | Parcels w/ no values | Historic Resource Group             |
|                     |                      | Cultural Resource Field Survey Area |

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 Florida Department of Transportation  
 Florida Department of State,  
 Bureau of Archaeological Research

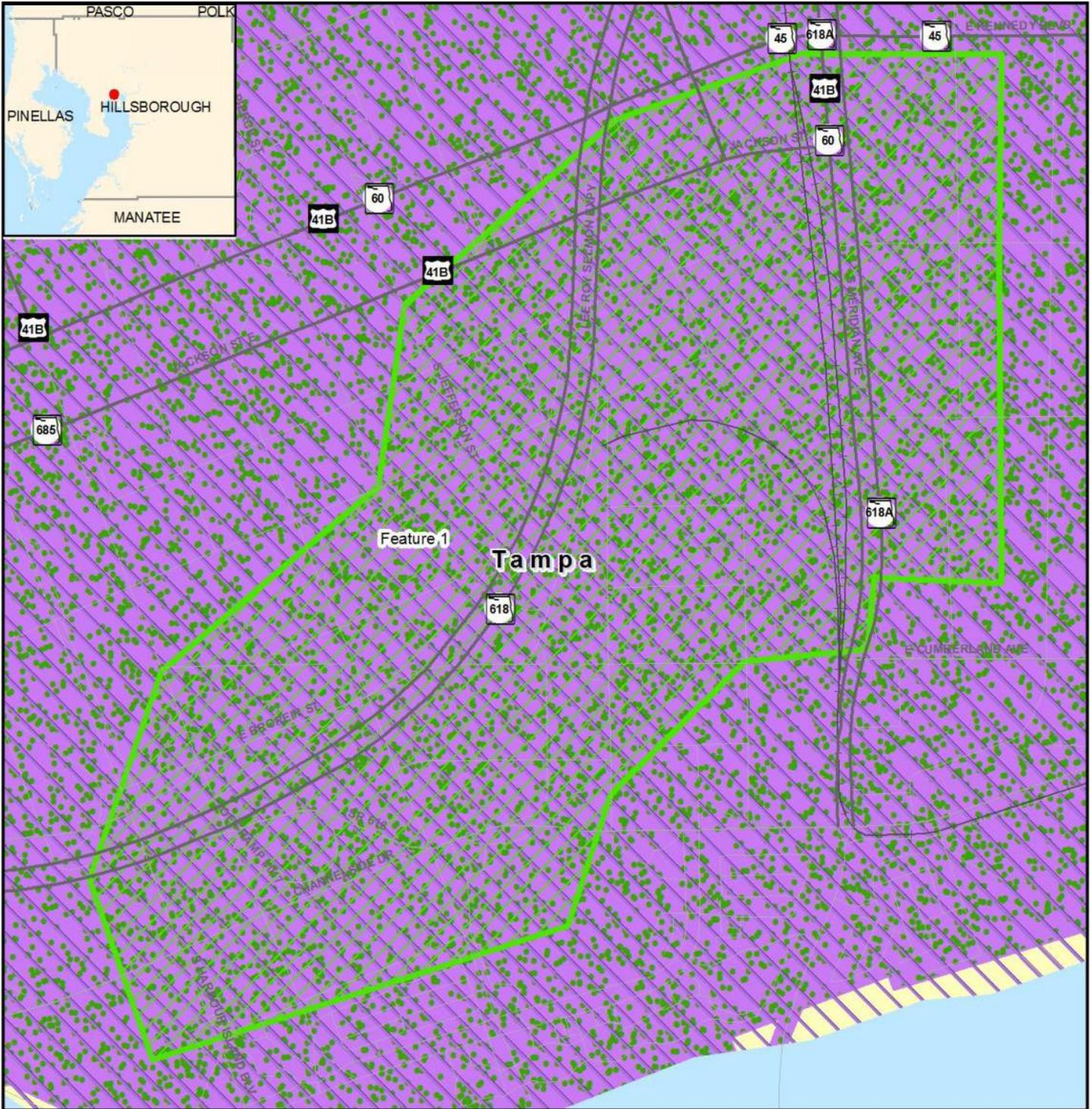
Note: Historic properties depicted on this map represent resources listed in the Florida Master Site File excluding archeological site locations, which, pursuant to Chapter 267.135, Florida Statutes, may be exempt from public record (Chapter 119.07, Florida Statutes). Absence of features on the map does not necessarily indicate an absence of resources in the project vicinity.



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# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Hydrogeology Map

Area of Interest	Recharge Areas of the Floridan Aquifer	Surface Geology	Oligocene	Pleistocene/Holocene
City Limits	Discharge 1 to 5	Eocene	Oligocene/Miocene	Pliocene
	Discharge > 5	Miocene	Pleistocene	Pliocene/Pleistocene
	Discharge < 1	Miocene/Pliocene	Holocene	
	Recharge 1 to 10			
	Recharge > 10			
	Recharge < 1			

0 0.025 0.05 0.1 miles

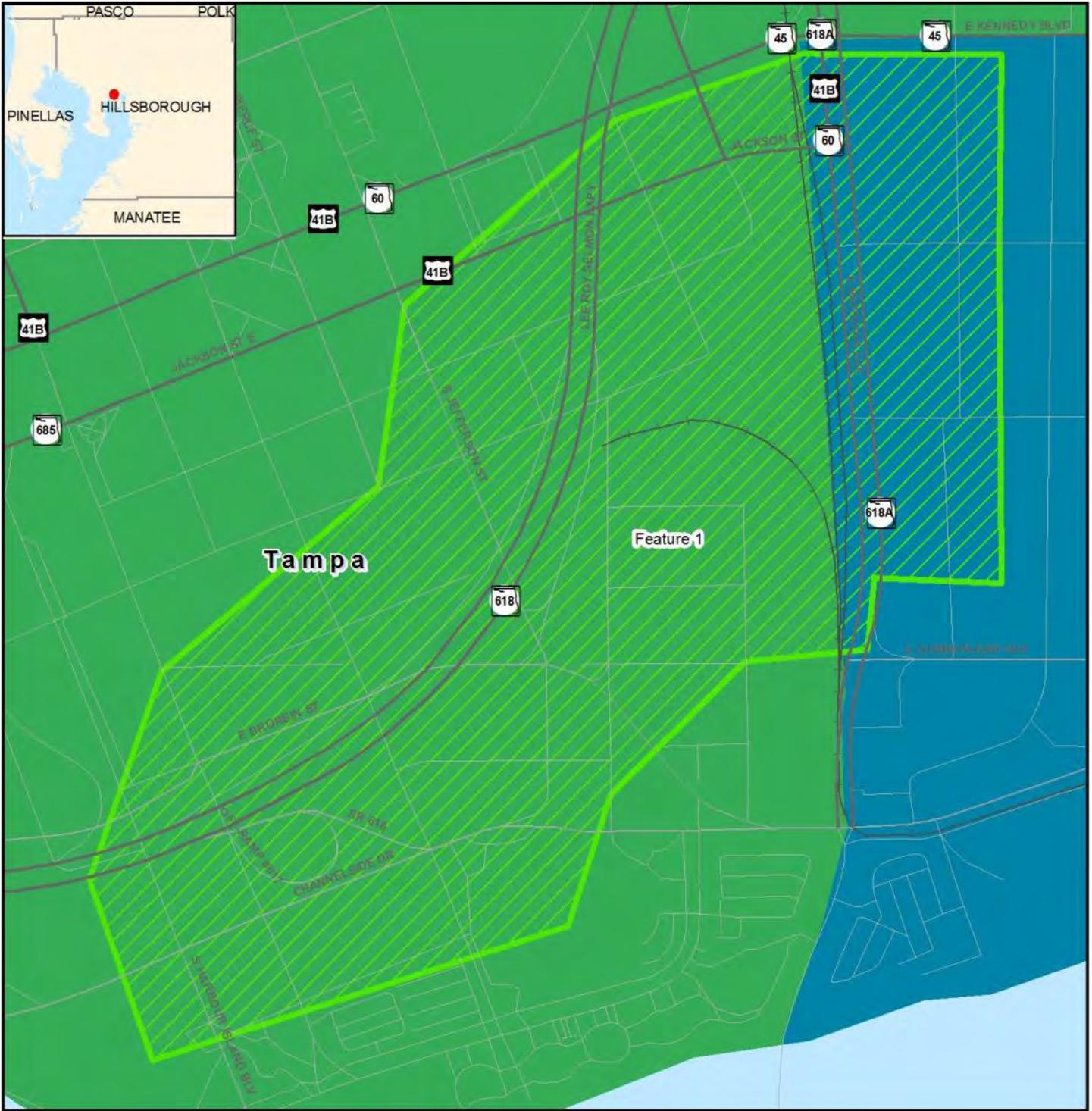
Data Sources: NAVTEQ; US Geological Survey  
 Florida Department of Transportation  
 South West Florida Water Management District  
 Florida Geological Survey

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This map and its content is made available by the Florida Department of Transportation on an "as is," "as available" basis without warranties of any kind, express or implied.

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## Income Map



Data Sources:  
 US Geological Survey  
 FL Department of Transportation  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Census Bureau (2010)

0 0.03 0.06 0.12 Miles



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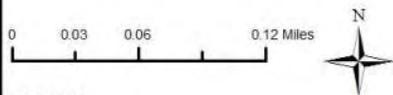
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Integrated Wildlife Model Map

- Area of Interest
- Low Habitat Quality
- Medium Habitat Quality
- High Habitat Quality
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 Florida Department of Transportation  
 Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission



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# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Land Use Map

- |                         |               |              |                         |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Area of Interest        | Agricultural  | Other        | Retail/Office           |
| Major Road              | Industrial    | Public       | Vacant (Residential)    |
| Local Road or Trail     | Institutional | Right-of-Way | Vacant (Nonresidential) |
| Mining                  | Recreational  | Water        | No Data                 |
| Open (Not Agricultural) | Residential   |              |                         |

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 Florida Department of Revenue  
 Florida Department of Transportation  
 Florida County Property Appraiser Offices

0 0.03 0.06 0.12 Miles

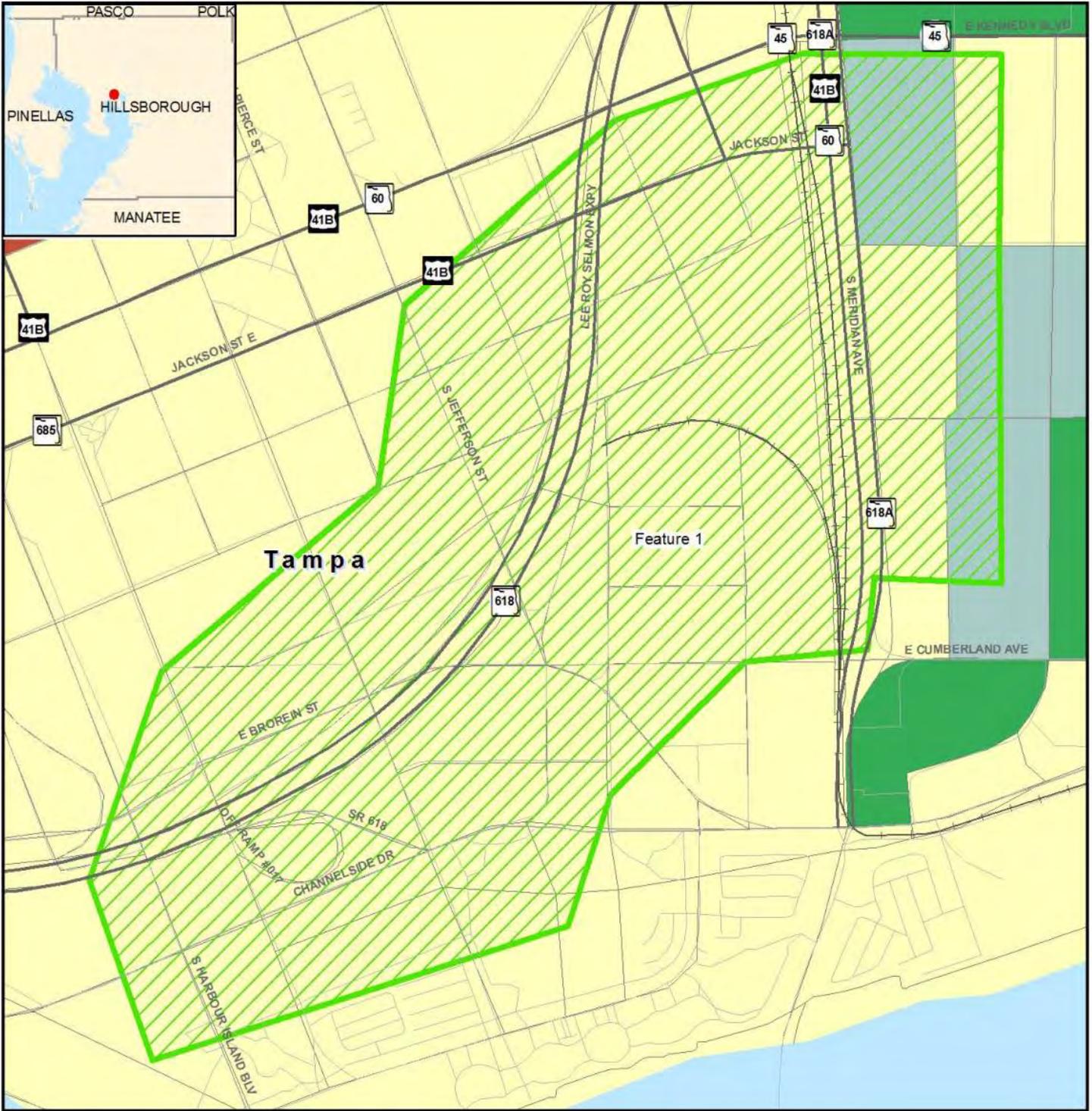


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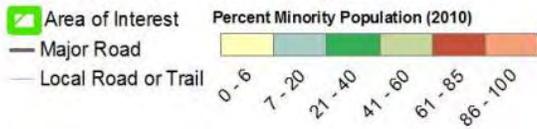
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 Environmental Screening Tool



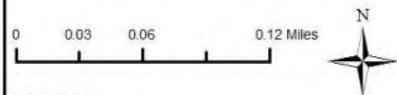
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Minority Population Map

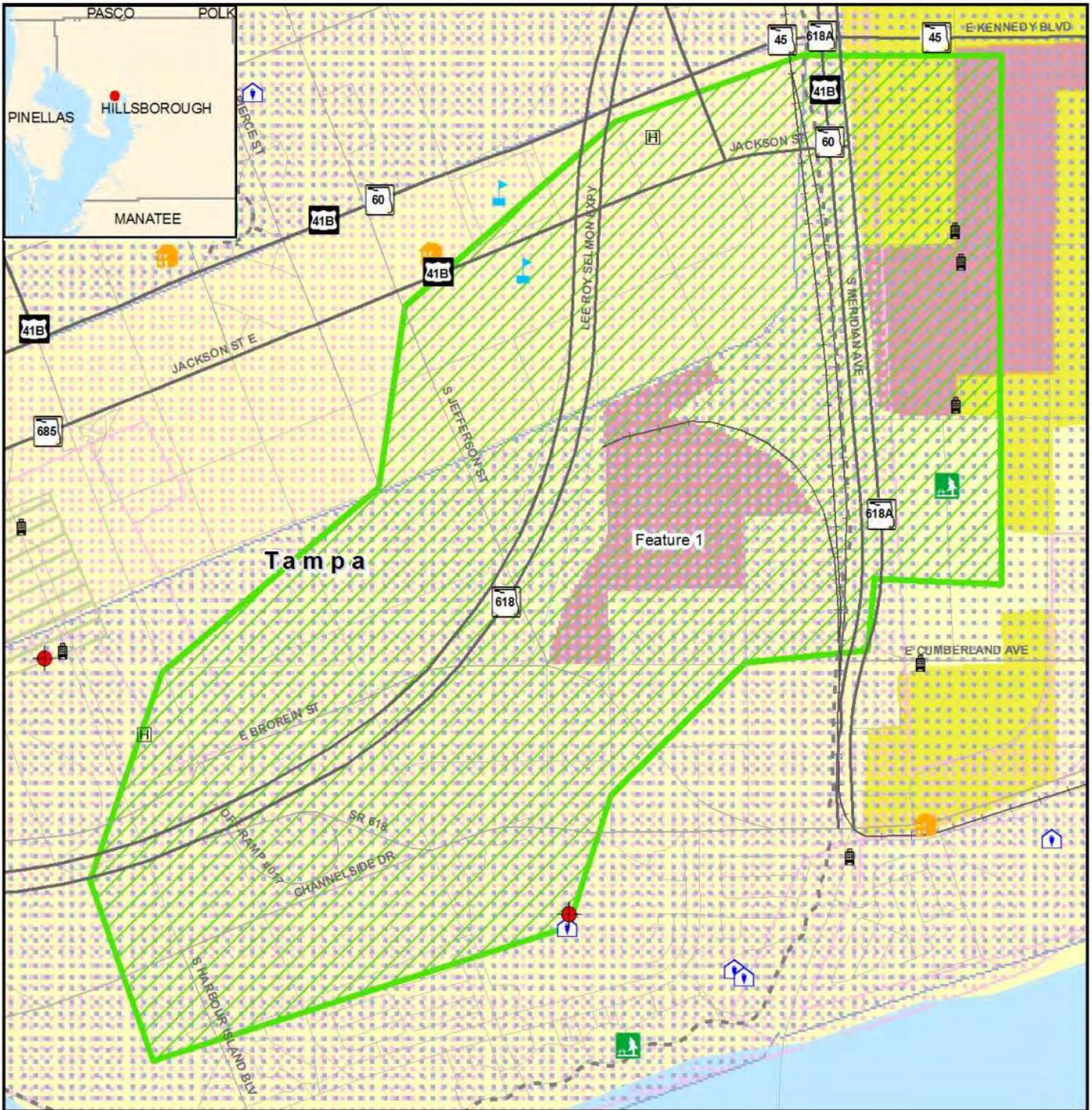


Data Sources:  
 US Geological Survey  
 FL Department of Transportation  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Census Bureau (2010)



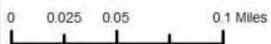
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# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Noise Map

- |                  |                           |                  |                           |                          |
|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Area of Interest | Condo Owners Associations | Cultural Center  | Historic Cemetery         | Industrial               |
| City Limits      | Hospitals                 | Health Care      | Planned Unit Developments | Residential              |
| Noise Barriers   | Laser On-site             | Park             | Wildlife Refuges          | HUD Renewal              |
| Existing Trails  | Group Care Facilities     | National Parks   | National Park Projects    | Nat'l Estuarine Reserves |
|                  | Cemetery                  | Place of Worship | Marine Sanctuaries        | Enterprise Zones         |
|                  | Community Center          | School           | Military Installations    | DRI                      |

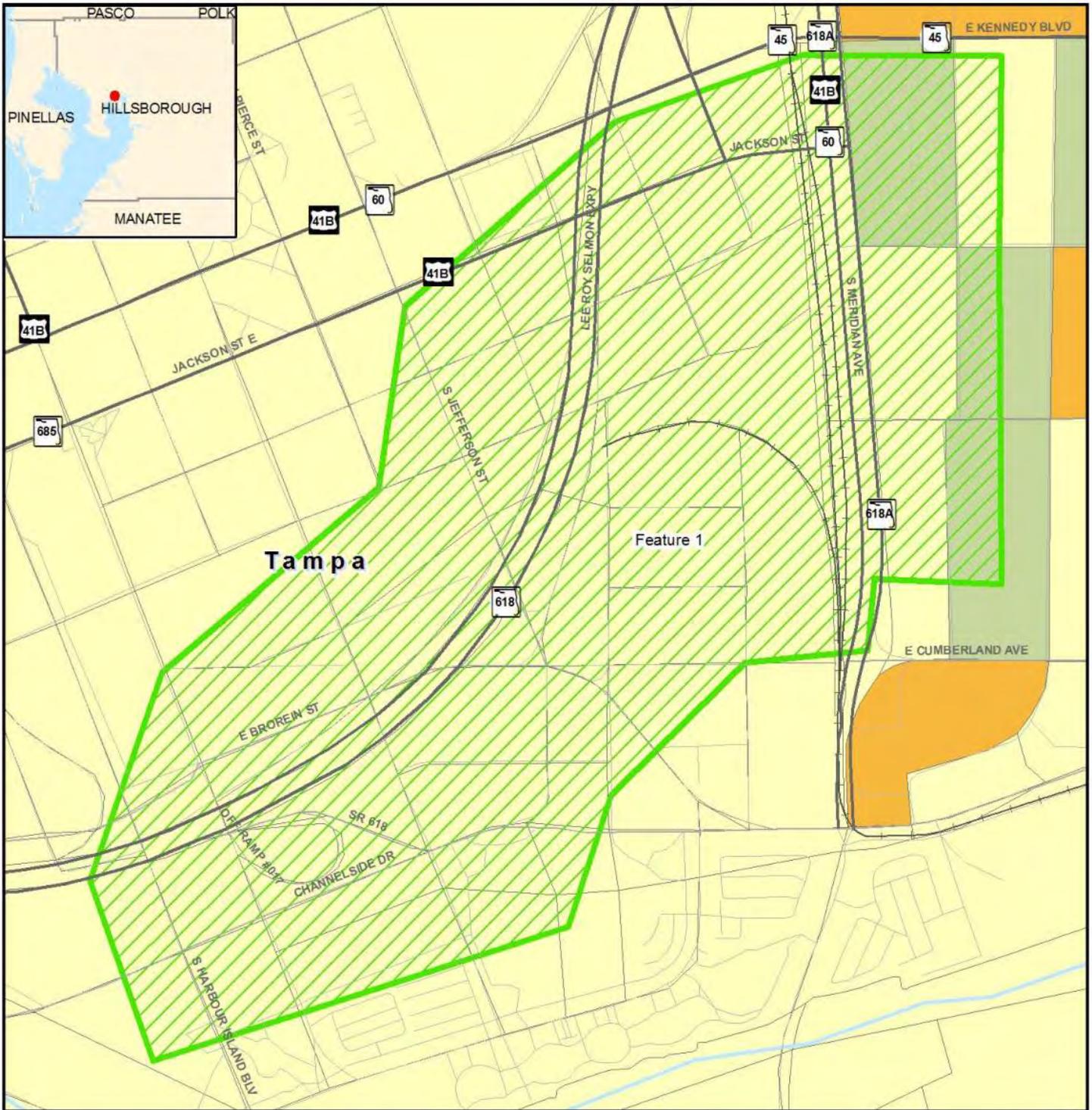


Data Sources:  
 GeoPlan Center, US Geological Survey, US Census Bureau,  
 HUD, Florida DOT, US Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service,  
 NOAA, National Estuarine Research, Enterprise Florida

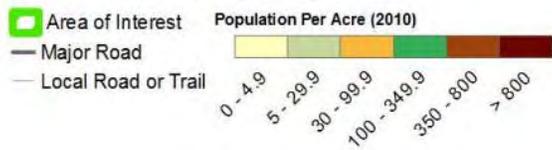


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# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Population Density Map



Data Sources:  
 US Geological Survey  
 FL Department of Transportation  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Census Bureau (2010)

0 0.02 0.04 Miles

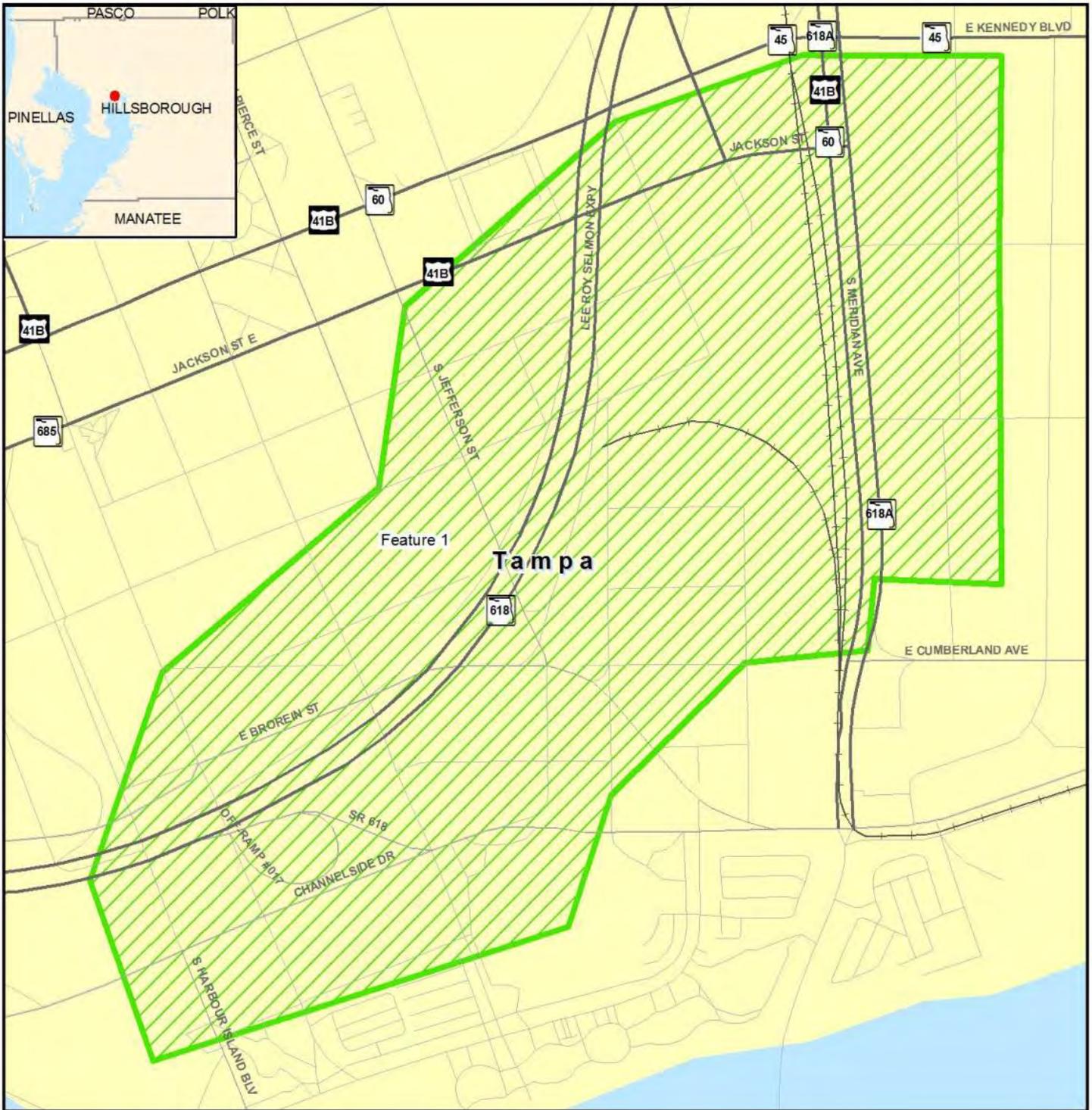


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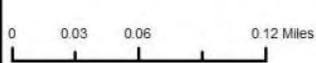
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Recreational Areas Map

- Area of Interest
- Conservation or Recreation Area
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- City Limits

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 Florida Natural Areas Inventory



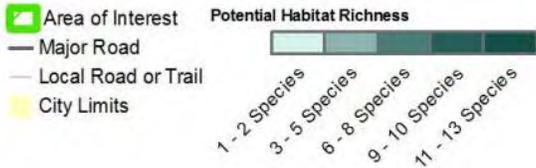
9/26/2019



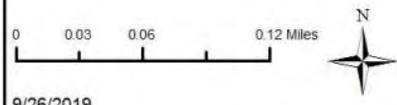
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Species Potential Map

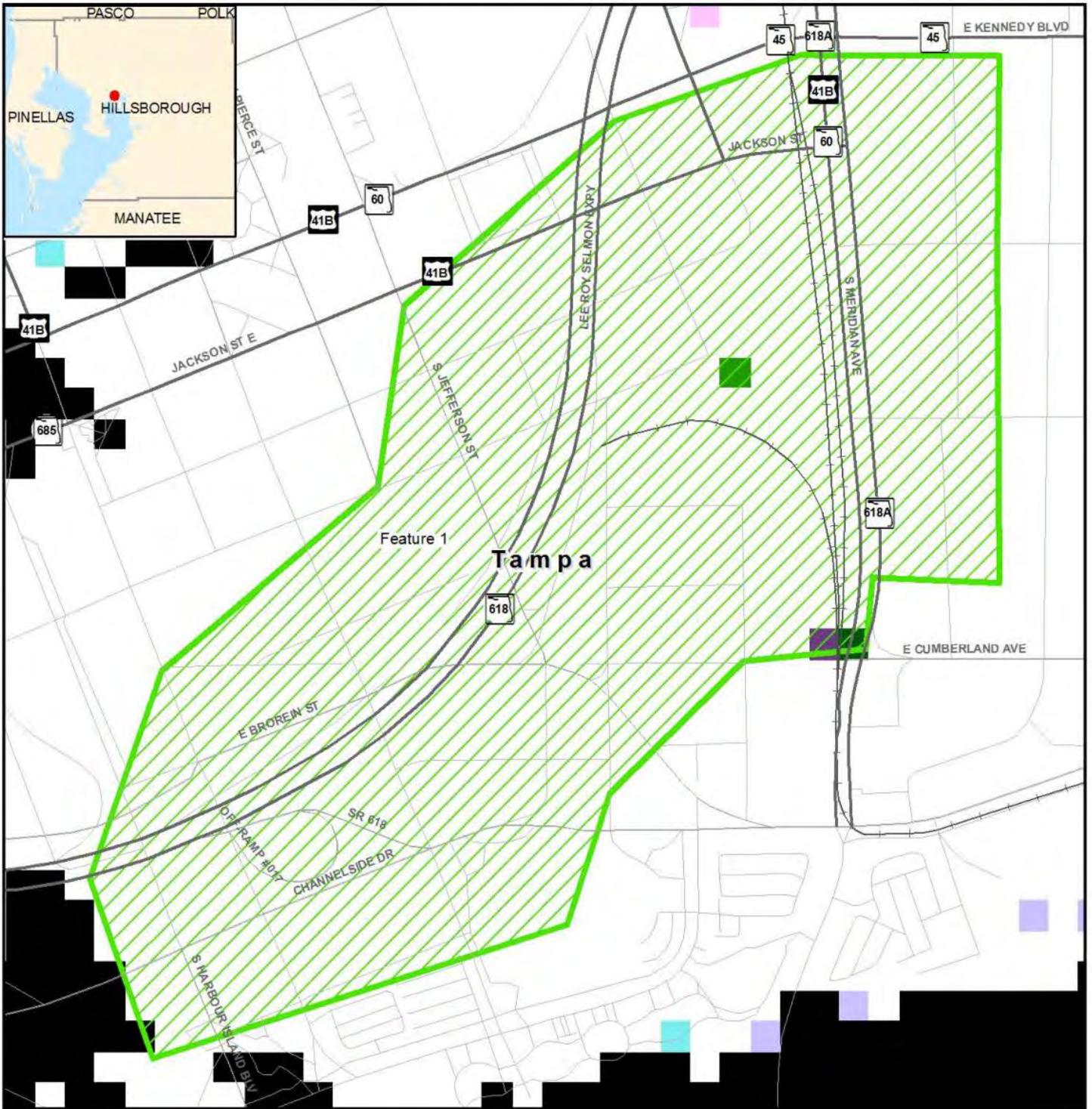


Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 Florida Department of Transportation  
 Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission



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# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Vegetation Map

Area of Interest	Mixed Hardwood-pine Forest	Shrub Swamp	Salt Marsh	Improved Pasture	Melaleuca
Not Classified	Hardwood Hammocks and Forests	Bay Swamp	Mangrove Swamp	Unimproved Pasture	Brazilian Pepper
Coastal Strand	Pinelands	Cypress Swamp	Scrub Mangrove	Sugarcane	High Impact Urban
Sand/Beach	Cabbage Palm-live Oak Hammock	Cypress/Pine/Cabbage Palm	Tidal Flats	Citrus	Low Impact Urban
Xeric Oak Scrub	Tropical Hardwood Hammock	Mixed Wetland Forest	Open Water	Row and Field Crops	Extractive
Sand Pine Scrub	Freshwater Marsh and Wet Prairie	Hardwood Swamp	Shrub and Brushland	Other Agriculture	Exotic Plants
Sandhill	Sawgrass Marsh	Hydric Hammock	Grassland	Australian Pine	
Dry Prairie	Cattail Marsh	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Bare Soil/Clearcut		

0 0.03 0.06 0.12 Miles

Data Sources: NAVTEQ; Florida Department of Transportation; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

etdm Environmental Screening Tool

FDOT

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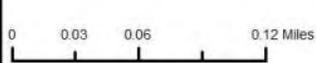
# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Water Resource Map

- |                     |                        |                           |             |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Area of Interest    | 1st Magnitude Spring   | Drainage Basin            | Water Body  |
| Major Road          | River, Stream or Canal | Outstanding Florida Water | Swamp/Marsh |
| Local Road or Trail | Navigable Water Way    | Surface Water Class I     |             |
| City Limits         | SFWMD Canals           | Surface Water Class II    |             |

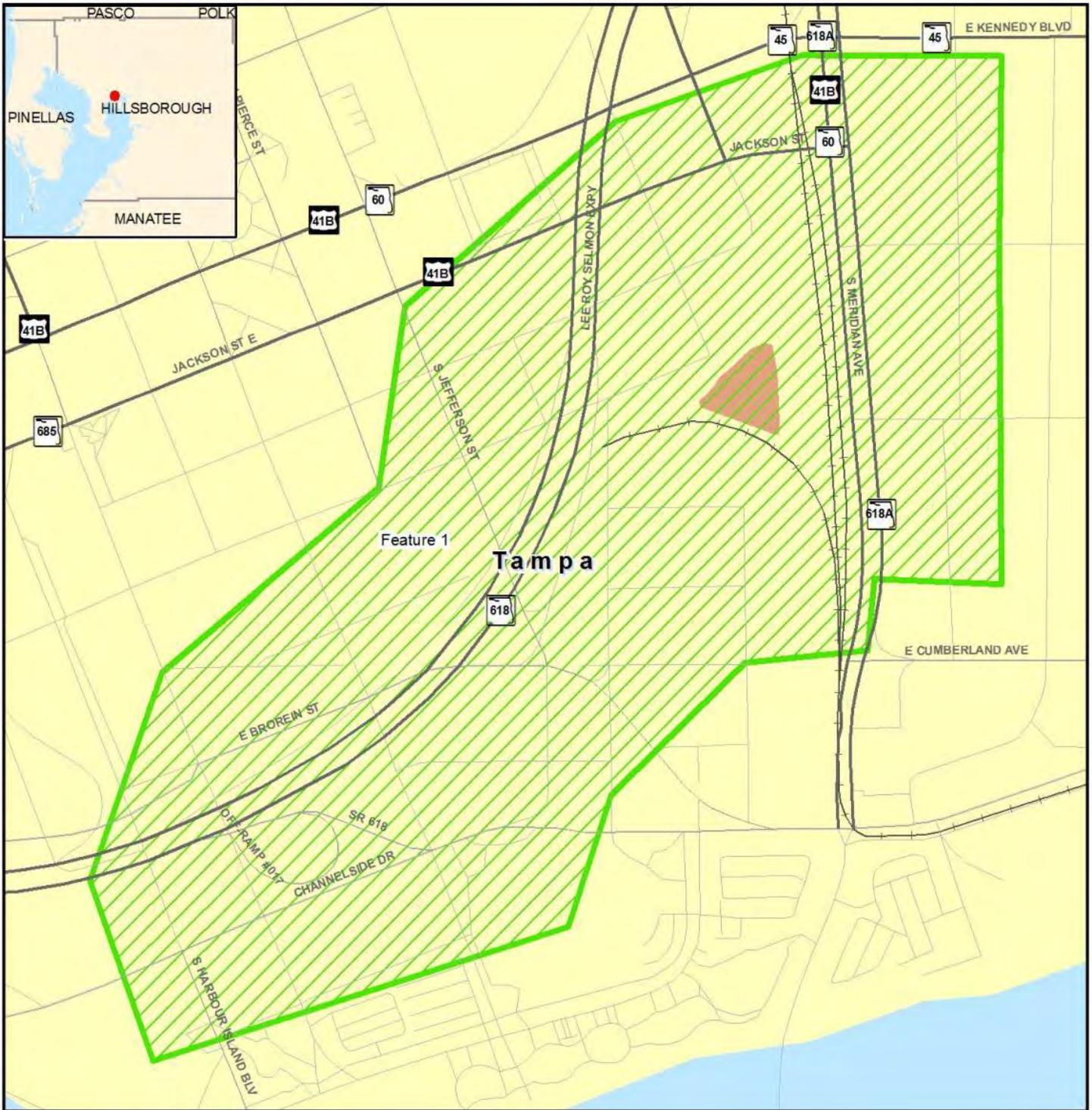
Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 US Geological Survey  
 Florida Department of Transportation  
 Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
 Florida Geological Survey  
 US Bureau of Transportation Statistics



9/26/2019



# AOI - Whiting Street 500



## Wetlands and Surface Waters Map

- Area of Interest
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- City Limits
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh
- Non-vegetated Wetland
- Vegetated Non-forested Wetland
- Wetland Forested Mixed
- Wetland Coniferous Forest
- Wetland Hardwood Forest

Data Sources:  
 NAVTEQ  
 Florida Water Management Districts  
 US Geological Survey



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# Appendix B

Public Involvement Plan



# **SELMON EXPRESSWAY**

## Whiting Street PD&E Study

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### Public Involvement Plan



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## 1.0 Project Overview

The Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate the needs, costs, and effects of extending Whiting Street and Washington Street and reconfiguring the eastbound on-ramp of the Selmon Expressway at Jefferson Street and eastbound off-ramp at Florida Avenue and Channelside Drive. The study will consider extending Whiting Street and Washington Street to Meridian Avenue and include improvements to and re-alignment of the existing segment of Whiting Street from Jefferson Street to North Brush Street. The extension will provide a direct connection of Whiting Street to Meridian Avenue to improve traffic flow and safety for all transportation modes, increase capacity on the adjacent street network, and offer additional connections within the street network. The study area is shown in **Figure 1**.

### 1.1 Study Objective

The Whiting Street PD&E will analyze the extension/new alignment of the Whiting Street corridor, extending to Meridian Avenue, including improvements and realignment of the existing portion of the Whiting Street corridor between Jefferson Street and Brush Street, as well as the extension of Washington Street from Nebraska Avenue to Meridian Avenue. The study also will analyze reconfiguring the eastbound on-ramp to the Selmon Expressway at Jefferson Street and the eastbound off-ramp at Florida Avenue, removing the off-ramp at Channelside Drive, and adding a new eastbound off-ramp to Whiting Street.

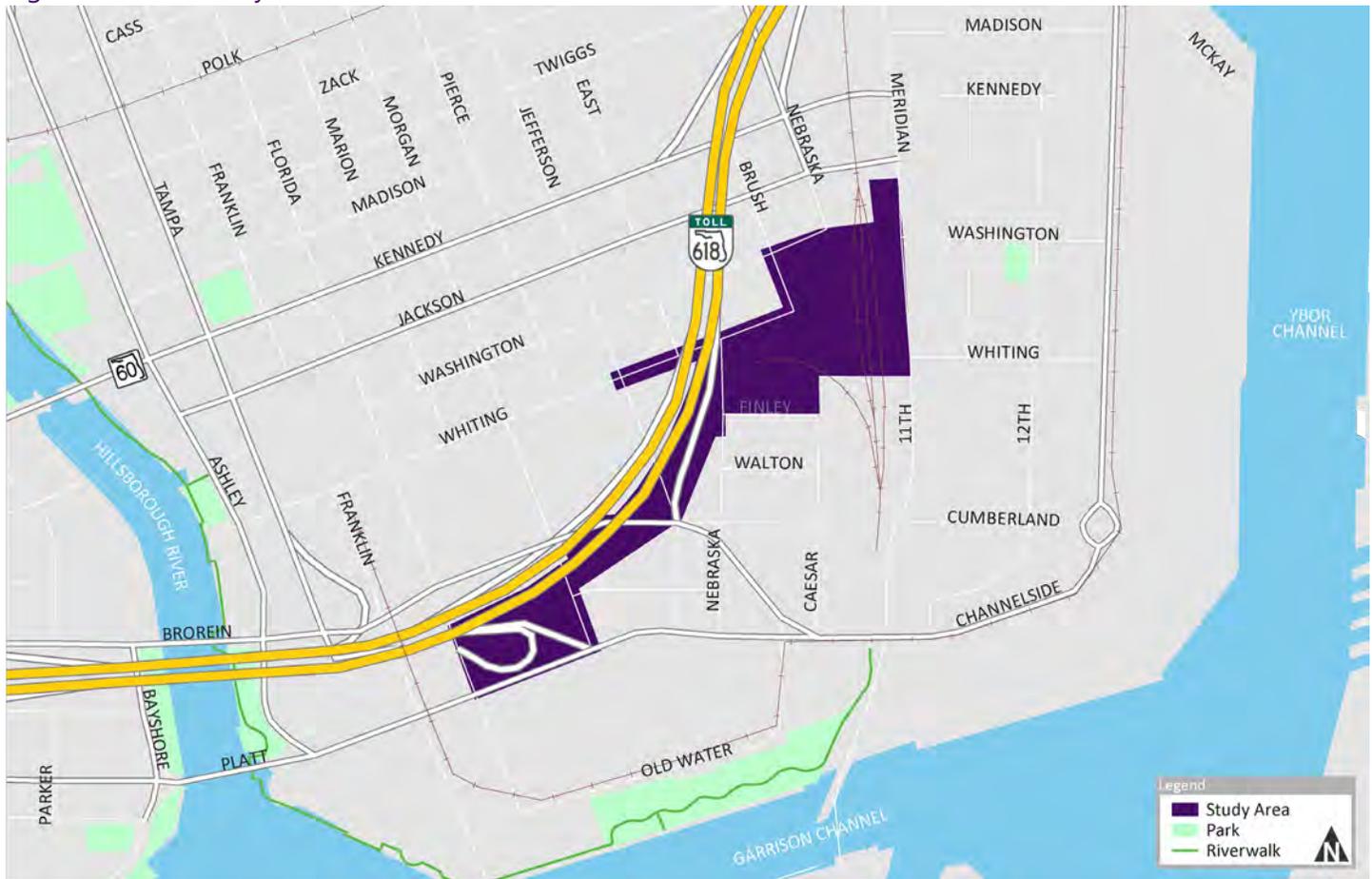
### 1.2 Project Background

The purpose of this project is to improve safety, accessibility and circulation along the Selmon Expressway and throughout to the downtown and Channel District. The extensions of Whiting and Washington Streets will provide capacity improvements, while complementing the City's street grid network. Significant development throughout the City and Channel District, alongside anticipated traffic demand on the Selmon Expressway, has further spurred the need to improve downtown accessibility and circulation options, as well as enhance the safety and traffic flow along the Selmon Expressway.

The extension of Whiting Street is a commitment from THEA to the City of Tampa related to the Selmon Expressway Reversible Express Lanes (REL) project. Once ConAgra (Ardent Mills) vacates the property in the Channel District, CSX rail lines currently serving the flour mill will be removed to allow for the re-alignment and extension of Whiting Street.

The Whiting Street PD&E will be conducted in close coordination with the South Selmon PD&E and Selmon East PD&E to study capacity needs along the entire Selmon Expressway.

Figure 1: PD&E Study Area



## 2.0 Public Involvement Plan Overview

### 2.1 Purpose

Involving and listening to the public will ensure the PD&E Study recommendations have stakeholder and community support. This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is a strategic guide for the public involvement approach that will be used while conducting the PD&E to inform the public how they can be involved in the process. This PIP is in accordance with *Part 1, Chapter 11 of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) PD&E Manual*.

The following describes the potentially affected communities, stakeholders, and audiences, the general goals and guiding principles, and the means and methods that will be used to most effectively notify, engage, and ensure the involvement of the public and stakeholders. The PIP will be modified and updated throughout the process as needed.

### 2.2 Study Contact Information

All public materials will include a statement about providing additional comments or requesting more information with contact telephone and email address for the THEA Project Manager and Director of Public Affairs and Communications. The consultant project manager and deputy project manager will be the internal contacts for the study. In addition, a project email will be set up for the public to provide comments and ask questions specific to the project. The following provides the contact information and roles of the key staff during the PD&E study.

**Bob Frey**

Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority  
Director of Planning and Innovation

813-272-6740 Ext. 203  
[bobf@tampa-xway.com](mailto:bobf@tampa-xway.com)

1104 E Twiggs Street, Suite 300  
Tampa, FL 33602

**Anna Quiñones**

Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority  
THEA Project Manager

813-272-6740 Ext. 124  
[anna.quinones@tampa-xway.com](mailto:anna.quinones@tampa-xway.com)

1104 E Twiggs Street, Suite 300  
Tampa, FL 33602

**Susan Chrzan**

Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority  
Director of Public Affairs and Communications

813-272-6740 Ext. 130  
[sue@tampa-xway.com](mailto:sue@tampa-xway.com)

1104 E Twiggs Street, Suite 300  
Tampa, FL 33602

**Bill Howell, PE**

HW Lochner, Inc.  
Consultant Project Manager

813-357-3750  
[bhowell@hwlochner.com](mailto:bhowell@hwlochner.com)

4350 W Cypress Street, Suite 800  
Tampa, FL 33607

**Don Skelton, PE**

HW Lochner, Inc.  
Consultant Deputy Project Manager

813-357-3750  
[dskelton@hwlochner.com](mailto:dskelton@hwlochner.com)

4350 W Cypress Street, Suite 800  
Tampa, FL 33607

### 3.0 Branding

The project team, in coordination with THEA, will create a brand and look to provide a consistent visual representation of the project to increase public recognition of project outreach materials and tools. This branding package will include the following materials:

- PowerPoint templates
- Web content
- Meeting agendas and summaries
- Handouts
- Sign-in sheets
- Comment forms
- Exhibit and display boards
- Document templates and covers
- Press and media releases
- Letters, memos, and transmittals

## 4.0 Identification of Stakeholders and Interested Parties

A variety of stakeholders are anticipated to have interest in this study, including property owners/tenants, business owners/tenants, state and local officials, special interest groups, and motorists who use this roadway. Stakeholders for this study may include, but not be limited to:

- Elected and appointed officials
- City and county government and transportation agencies (City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, Hillsborough MPO, Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, FDOT)
- Environmental agencies and coalitions
- Special interest groups (tourists, trucking industry, seasonal populations)
- Business owners and tenants
- Public interest groups (neighborhood and business associations)
- Transportation system users
- Chambers of commerce and business organizations
- Residents

At the beginning of the study, coordination with local leaders, elected officials, agency staff, and other stakeholders will assist in identifying individuals, businesses, organizations, community leaders, and others that have an interest in the project. Additional stakeholders and interested parties will be identified through research and review of past and ongoing efforts. All interested parties will be added to the study contact database and included in relevant study communications.

### 4.1 Study Area Demographics

The study area is completely within the southern portion of downtown Tampa, within the Community Redevelopment Area of the Tampa Downtown Partnership. Immediately adjacent to the east, the Channel District neighborhood borders Meridian Avenue. Southeast of the study area, the Port Tampa Bay district borders the Ybor Channel and Garrison Channel. **Figure 2** shows the neighborhoods in the downtown area.

The Census tracts that include the study area have approximately 28,685 employees and 4,546 residents, of which less than one percent are zero-car households, approximately five percent are over the age of 65, and 11 percent have limited English proficiency. Water Street, currently under development south and east of the project, is located within the three downtown districts and will change the demographics of the area surrounding the study area significantly over the next 10 years. However, for the purposes of this PIP, the study team will focus on the existing demographics for outreach efforts.

Figure 2: Downtown Tampa Neighborhoods



## 4.2 Identification of Agencies and Affected Public

This project will be constructed within downtown Tampa, completely within the City of Tampa. The local, regional, state, or federal agencies having a concern in this project due to jurisdictional review or expressed interest are listed below. The agencies and tribes will be contacted by THEA through the Advance Notification process in accordance with the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification. As other concerned public agencies are identified throughout the study, they will also be listed and contacted.

### 4.2.1 Agencies and Tribes

- Regional Agencies
  - Southwest Florida Water Management District, ETAT Representative
  - Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
  - Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority
  - Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County
- Local Agencies
  - City of Tampa Barrio Latino Commission
  - City of Tampa Community Partnerships and Neighborhood Engagement
  - City of Tampa Economic and Urban Development
  - City of Tampa Emergency Management
  - City of Tampa Fire Rescue

- City of Tampa Parks and Recreation
- City of Tampa Planning and Development
- City of Tampa Planning and Urban Design Division
- City of Tampa Police
- City of Tampa Public Works and Utility Services
- City of Tampa Solid Waste
- City of Tampa Transportation and Stormwater Services
- City of Tampa Utilities
- Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority
- Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission
- Hillsborough County Conservation and Environmental Lands Management
- Hillsborough County Economic Development
- Hillsborough County Emergency Management
- Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission
- Hillsborough County Fire Rescue
- Hillsborough County Hispanic Liaison
- Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Hillsborough County Neighborhood Relations
- Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation
- Hillsborough County Public Works
- Hillsborough County Sheriff
- Hillsborough County Solid Waste
- Port Tampa Bay
- Tampa International Airport
- Tampa Sports Authority
- Native American Tribal Officials
  - Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
  - Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma
  - Poarch Band of Creek Indians
  - Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
  - Seminole Tribe of Florida

#### 4.2.2 Elected and Appointed Officials

- Florida State Senators
  - State Senator, District 18
  - State Senator, District 19
- Florida State Representatives
  - State Representative, District 60
  - State Representative, District 61
- Hillsborough County
  - County Commissioner, District 1
  - County Commissioner, District 2
  - County Commissioner, District 3
  - County Commissioner, District 4

- County Commissioner, District 5, Countywide
- County Commissioner, District 6, Countywide
- County Commissioner, District 7, Countywide
- County Commissioner, County Administrator
- Constitutional Officers
  - Sheriff
  - Property Appraiser
  - Supervisor of Elections
  - Tax Collector
  - Public Defender
- County Management
  - Deputy County Administrator
  - Fire Chief
  - Chief Communications Officer
  - Chief Development & Infrastructure Services Administrator
  - Operations & Legislative Affairs Officer
  - Chief Financial Administrator
- City of Tampa
  - Mayor
  - Council Member, District 1, At-Large
  - Council Member, District 2, At-Large
  - Council Member, District 3, At-Large
  - Council Member, District 4,
  - Council Member, District 5
  - Council Member, District 6
  - Council Member, District 7
- City Management
  - Chief of Staff
  - Manager of Community Partnerships & Neighborhood Engagement
  - Administrator of Economic and Urban Development
  - Director of Marketing & Communications
  - Director of Planning & Development
  - Administrator of Public Works & Utility Services Administrator
  - Director of Transportation & Stormwater Services
  - Urban Development Manager (Channel District Community Redevelopment Area)
  - Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) CEO
- Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board
  - 5 Hillsborough County Commissioners
  - 3 City of Tampa Councilmembers
  - City of Temple Terrace Mayor
  - City of Plant City Mayor
  - HART Board of Director Representative
  - Tampa Aviation Authority CEO

- Tampa Port Authority Port Director
- Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority Executive Director
- Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commissioner
- Hillsborough County School Board Representative
- Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Staff
  - Executive Director
  - MPO Assistant Executive Director
  - Executive Planner

### 4.2.3 Neighborhoods, Businesses, and Other Associations

- Tampa Downtown Partnership
- Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce
- South Tampa Chamber of Commerce
- Tampa Bay Partnership
- Channel District Community Alliance
- Port Tampa Bay
- Strategic Property Partners

Those whose property lies, in whole or part, within the adjoining area (1,000 feet on either side of the corridor), as well as other local citizens who may be impacted by the construction of this project, will be notified. This portion of the mailing list will be developed using GIS data based on the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser database. Interested people outside of the notification area will be added to the mailing list at their request.

## 5.0 Outreach Activities and Meetings

Various outreach methods will be used to notify the stakeholders and interested parties by the project team to promote interest in the proposed project and to solicit public input into the PD&E process. In addition to distributing information, THEA staff will hold public meetings and initiate and lead discussions with affected stakeholders, partner agencies, and the community to share study progress and address issues as they arise. All outreach activities involving the public and stakeholders will be logged in a master public outreach activity database. The database will include mailings, presentations, meetings, briefings, events, workshops, and the public hearing. To the extent feasible, the database will include the location, time, presenter, number of attendees, and other pertinent information.

### 5.1 Mailing List

A mailing list will be developed and maintained to support public meeting invitations, newsletter distribution and direct public contact. Contact information will consist of email addresses, which will be added to (or removed from) the list as available or requested. The mailing list will be updated/maintained throughout the study through ongoing outreach, sign-in sheets (attendees to meetings can note if they would like to be added to the mailing list), the project website (by clicking on the link to be added to the mailing list), and other methods. The mailing list will include:

- Affected landowners
- Federal, State, and Local officials
- Special interest groups
- Resource agencies
- Businesses and business organizations
- Members of the public within 1,000 feet of the corridor
- Other interested individuals

Anyone expressing interest in the project will be added to the project mailing list and will be able to participate in the PD&E process through various public outreach opportunities. The mailing list will be created and housed on Zoho, a web-based comment management system already in use by THEA. The mailing list will be updated and maintained throughout the duration of the study.

## 5.2 Letters

Individuals on the mailing lists will be contacted by direct mail or email and provided a letter for project information and meetings. Notification letters will be prepared by THEA and sent to property owners and public officials/ agencies at least 14 days before public meetings.

- **Property Owner Letters.** THEA will mail letters to those whose property lies, in whole or part, within 1,000 feet on either side of the centerline of each project alternative (Section 339.155 F.S.). This portion of the mailing list will be based on the County Property Appraiser's records.
- **Public Officials and Agency Letters.** THEA will send letters or emails to local elected and appointed public officials and agencies. For those who do not have an available email address, notices will be sent by U.S. Mail.
- **Other Interested Parties.** THEA will send notices by mail and/or email to public and private groups, organizations, businesses and/or individuals who request to be placed on the mailing list for this project.

## 5.3 Newsletters

Newsletters will be distributed by email, mail, or in-person to elected and appointed officials, agencies, business owners/tenants, property owners/tenants, and identified interested individuals or groups. Newsletters will also be posted on the project website. Newsletters will be emailed and mailed at least 10 days before the meetings serving as notice of the public meetings, and will provide an overview of the project, updates on the study activities, a summary of the findings or recommendations, next steps, opportunities to be involved in the project, and contact information for the project team. To distribute PD&E Study information, newsletters will be made available to organizations such as neighborhood/civic groups, churches, Hillsborough County, and the City of Tampa, to publish in existing newsletters and web sites. Three newsletters will be distributed during the study process:

1. Notification of the Alternatives Public Meeting
2. Notification of the Public Hearing
3. Announcement of the results of the study

## 5.4 Public Notices/Display Ads

Meeting notifications will be placed in local newspapers to announce each public meeting and invite people to attend. Public advertisement will consist of a legal display advertisement published in the Tampa Bay Times newspaper before the Alternatives Public Meeting (10-14 days prior to meeting) and the Public Hearing twice prior to the public hearing (15-20 days prior to the hearing and 7-10 days prior to the hearing). The ads will be placed in the following publications:

- Tampa Bay Times
- Centro Mi Diario and/or La Gaceta
- Florida Sentinel
- Tampa Bay Online
- Tampa Bay Business Journal
- University of South Florida Oracle
- Florida Administrative Register

## 5.5 Project Website

THEA will develop and maintain a project website throughout the PD&E Study to serve as a user-friendly and informative site available for the public and agency staff to retrieve, review, and comment on study information and materials. The website will provide access for individuals to submit their comments and questions. Project Information available on the website will include:

- Project background information
- Project documents and reports
- Project schedule
- Project location map
- Public involvement activities
- Meeting announcements
- Link to submit comments
- Link to sign up for the mailing list
- Contact information

## 5.6 Social Media

Social Media (social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and media sharing sites such as YouTube) can be a major component for fostering community engagement, discussion, and study ownership by the public, as well as providing feedback and comments. Social Media activities should be integrated with other communication activities of the PIP and focus on building an engaged and active community. Social media allows for easy sharing of information, networking across various social and professional groups, adding to the reach of the project. It is also allows the study team to understand how the public feels about the project and the team to determine whether there is a need to focus on new messaging or change or add public outreach methods.

THEA social media will be used to distribute content that promotes upcoming events, and make periodic announcements about the study including advertisements of the public meetings, or key milestones.

## 5.7 Visualizations, Renderings, and 3D Animation

Visual materials such as renderings or 3D animation can have had a dramatic impact at public presentations. 3D maps, graphics, renderings, and animation will help communicate the design elements for a broad audience.

## 5.8 Scheduled Public Meetings

### 5.8.1 Online Alternatives Public Meeting

An online/virtual Alternatives Public Meeting will be held to provide the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to review the study alternatives and provide comments. Citizens may comment on the alternatives presented and suggest additional alternatives or recommendations. The meeting will be advertised and conducted as an online informational meeting. To advertise the meeting, THEA will publicize the meeting through social media, newsletters, press or media releases, and newspaper display ads.

Because the format of the meeting is online, participants can review the materials at their convenience. Materials will include a presentation (PowerPoint or similar) that discusses the project description and background, goals and objectives, purpose and need, existing conditions, preliminary project alternatives, and methodology for evaluating the alternatives. Typical sections, aerials, renderings, charts, and graphs will be used to communicate the alternatives and the potential benefits, impacts, and challenges.

Participants will be able to provide comments through the virtual meeting or through the project website. All comments received within 10 days of the meeting will be collected as part of the alternatives meeting and will be considered prior to developing the alternatives to be carried forward into the analysis.

## 5.8.2 Public Hearing

In compliance with the PD&E Manual, 23 CFR 771 and Section 339.155, Florida Statutes, a public hearing will be conducted to provide members of the public the opportunity to formally comment on the recommendations of the study. The following outlines the process for holding the public hearing.

**Public Hearing Site.** The Public Hearing will be held at an appropriate facility convenient to the study area. The proposed locations will be visited in advance of the Public Hearing to locate and reserve a facility that accommodates the anticipated number of attendees and meets the requirements outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Potential locations include:

- Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority Headquarters  
1104 E Twiggs Street  
Tampa, FL 33602
- John F Germany Public Library  
900 N. Ashley Drive  
Tampa, FL 33602

**Public Advertisement.** A legal display advertisement will be published twice in the area newspaper with the largest daily circulation, Tampa Bay Times newspaper, once between 15 and 30 days and once between seven 7 and 10 days prior to the public hearing. All advertisements to local newspapers will be sent via email or by registered mail, returned receipt requested. In addition, an announcement of the public hearing will be published in the Florida Administrative Register at least 7 days prior to the public hearing.

**Letters of Invitation.** Newsletters and/or notification letters will be sent to all property owners as required by Section 339.155 Florida Statutes, and to local elected and appointed government officials notifying them of the upcoming public hearing. Letters will be emailed to elected officials notifying them of the Public Hearing. Letters will also be sent to all addresses on the contact list that expressed interest in receiving project updates.

**Hearing Preparation.** A narrated PowerPoint presentation will be prepared, as well as project corridor aerial maps, graphics, and handouts will be prepared to supplement the presentation.

**Transcript.** A verbatim transcript of the Public Hearing will be prepared by a court reporter. The transcript package will include oral comments received at the hearing received by the court reporter, during both the informal and formal portions of the hearing. All Public Hearing documentation (handouts, presentation, graphics, etc.) will be included in a Public Hearing Scrapbook.

**Documents for Public Review.** Environmental and engineering reports to support the PD&E Study evaluation will be available for public review at least 21 calendar days prior to the Public Hearing date.

**Locations of Documents for Public Review.** Public notice will be provided in the public hearing advertisement and by mailed invitational newsletters/letters listing where the study documents are located for public review. Documents to be provided include any documents that discuss how the alternatives analysis was conducted, the results of the analysis, and the recommendation of the study. The documents will be available for review at the following locations:

- Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority Headquarters  
1104 E Twiggs Street, Suite 300  
Tampa, FL 33602
- John F Germany Public Library  
900 N. Ashley Drive  
Tampa, FL 33602

**Title VI and Related Statute.** Information regarding the Title VI Program and the Relocation Assistance Program, which complies with Title VIII, will be provided in the letters, handouts, signage, the presentation, and through staff at the public hearing.

**Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance.** Notification of the THEA's intent to comply with the ADA will be provided in the advertisements for the public hearing, in the notification letters/newsletters to property owners/tenants and local officials, in handouts, and by selection of a public hearing location that meets all ADA requirements.

**Assistance for Spanish-Speaking Attendees.** Spanish language assistance will be provided in the study handouts and applicable websites throughout the duration of the study.

**Public Comments.** Participants will be able to provide written comments and formal verbal comments at the public hearing, and written, email, or telephone comments following the public hearing. All comments received within 10 days of the hearing will be included in the public hearing record and will be considered prior to preparing the final recommendation of the study.

**Public Hearing Follow-up.** The following procedures will occur after the Public Hearing.

- **Responses.** Responses to letters and comments received as part of the hearing and questions and comments not answered at the public hearing will be made in writing if deemed necessary
- **Recommendation Notice.** A legal notice announcing the approval of the final document and recommendations will be published in the Tampa Bay Times newspaper. In addition, news items detailing the Department's recommendations will be provided to local media. A newsletter announcing the approval of the final document and recommendations will be prepared and distributed to those on the mailing list.

**Public Hearing Transcript Package.** A transcript package will be produced and submitted following the public hearing. The transcript package will include a verbatim hearing transcript prepared by an approved court reporter, an errata sheet detailing any transcript discrepancies, a copy of all correspondence received by THEA as part of the public hearing record, and affidavits of publication for newspaper ads advertising the hearing.

## 5.9 Unscheduled Public Meetings

In addition to scheduled public meetings, additional meetings with the public, elected officials, special interest groups, homeowners' associations, or public agencies may be needed to communicate the project alternatives and ultimately the project recommendations to ensure they represent the needs of the community and are supported by stakeholders and the public.



## 6.1 Responding to Comments

Each comment received will be reviewed by the project team and logged in the master Zoho comment database and categorized or coded. Information logged will include (as available or applicable) the date received; format of comment (email, survey, etc.); name of the person making the comment; agency or organization the person represents; contact information, such as physical address, email, phone number; comment; category or code; and other information as applicable. Comments requiring a response will be assigned to the appropriate staff to develop the response. The response will be logged into the Zoho database as well, including the responder's name, date of the response, response, and other information as applicable. Responses should be sent within 7 days of receipt of the comment, unless the response will take additional time to provide.

## 7.0 Evaluation of the Public Involvement Plan

To measure the effectiveness of the public engagement efforts, an evaluation process will be defined and used throughout the PD&E study. This will allow the study team to identify opportunities to make changes to the strategies in place or add additional strategies to reach additional members of the community as needed.

### 7.1 Public Involvement Summary Report (PISR)

A Public Involvement Summary Report (PISR) will be created and submitted at the conclusion of the study. The PISR will contain, at a minimum, all documentation regarding public participation performed throughout the study. This report will include:

- All comments received from the public and the responses provided
- All comments received as part of the Advance Notification process
- List of coordination meetings with local officials and agencies
- Record of public meetings, including all materials provided and sign-in sheets
- Record of the public hearing, including sign in sheets, handouts, display materials, presentation script and slides, and verbatim transcript of formal portion of the public hearing
- Proof of publication of legal ads

The PISR will be submitted with the final engineering documents.

# Appendix C

Alternative Workshop Comments Received



## Alternatives Update Public Meeting Questions and Answers

The following lists the questions received and answers given during the Whiting Street Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study Alternatives Update Public Meeting. The meeting was held Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Webinar ID: 840 6551 0201  
Start Time: 5/20/2021 6:08 PM  
Duration: 64 minutes

### Question 1:

**Does alternative 2 remove the bicycle lane?**

#### Response:

Alternative 2 does not provide a bicycle lane. Rather, it encourages bicycle travel on Cumberland, which is the planned City cycle track. Cumberland also ties into the Selmon Greenway. In exchange for the bike lane, 10 ft. sidewalks are provided in Alternative 2.

Asker Name: Charles Kasbeer  
Asker Email: ckasbeer@consoreng.com

### Question 2:

**Can you attempt to keep the trail (and width) flowing through the new crosswalks so it doesn't lose the feel of an actual trail?**

#### Response:

We will evaluate providing a crosswalk width that is compatible with the width of the trail.

Asker Name: Justin Willits  
Asker Email: willitsj@gohart.org

### Question 3:

**Why is an exit ramp from the Selmon Expressway onto Florida Ave. necessary?**

#### Response:

To provide safe and efficient access into downtown Tampa and the northbound Florida Avenue major artery.

Asker Name: Robert Creighton  
Asker Email: rcreightoniii@hotmail.com

### Question 4:

**What 4 properties are targeted for acquisition?**

#### Response:

The four parcels are owned by two property owners, and THEA has been in communication with both owners.

Asker Name: Raphael Marie Clarke  
Asker Email: rclarke@acra-inc.com

**Question 5:**

**Will THEA be responsible for street trees along new sidewalks? If so, will THEA plant shade trees to provide pedestrians with a comfortable walking condition?**

**Response:**

Yes, THEA will be responsible for meeting the City of Tampa's landscaping and tree ordinances.

Asker Name: Robert Creighton

Asker Email: rcreightoniii@hotmail.com

**Question 5:**

**Will new bike lanes be protected?**

**Response:**

While they will not be buffered they will be similar to the Platt Street bike lanes.

Asker Name: Robert Creighton

Asker Email: rcreightoniii@hotmail.com

# Appendix D

Public Hearing Comments Received



## Public Hearing Questions and Answers

The following lists the comments received and responses given (as applicable) during the Whiting Street Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study Public Hearing comment period. The meeting was held Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 5:00 pm.

### Comment 1:

**It is my sincere hope that the city will prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access and safety in this project, to ensure that Tampa can be a more walkable and safe city for all residents and businesses. Any solution that removes safe bicycle and pedestrian access limits opportunity for fewer cars on the road and better local mobility.**

### Response:

*No response needed*

Date Received: 2/24/2022

Format Received: Website Form

### Comment 2:

**Yes with all the inflation I've been very busy to take care of all the circumstances but I'm very concerned about everything that's happening in today's society always remember Republican for which is stands I will always be**

### Response:

*No response needed*

Date Received: 2/24/2022

Format Received: Email

### Comment 3:

**I am a resident of Channel District and my business, CeVe, is a member of Embarc Collective on Whiting St. I reviewed the material on <https://whitingstreetpde.com>, including the presentation material from the February 22nd Public Hearing, which I also attended. I am excited about the connectivity of Whiting St to Meridian Ave but I have a few additional questions that I can't find answers to.**

**The website mentions 10 foot sidewalks on Whiting St but the presentation specifically calls out the south side of Whiting St for bicyclist. Will both the north and south sidewalks be 10 feet, or will one of them be narrower or wider?**

**The website mentions "Add signs to communicate to drivers and bicyclists that Whiting Street is bicycle-friendly." What exactly are these signs? Are these Shared Lane Markings ("sharrows") on the vehicle lanes, or something else?**

**Will there be any changes to the width (widening or narrowing) of the existing Meridian Greenway path?**

**What is the proposed speed limit for Whiting St?**

**Did your studies include the future pedestrian and bicycle traffic demand and impact of the additional lanes on injuries to vulnerable road users?**

Are all relevant FHWA safety countermeasures from <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/> being implemented in the proposed changes, including appropriate speed limits, crosswalk visibility enhancements, bicycle lanes, and road diets?

Also, it doesn't appear that any of the 100+ Embarc Collective member companies were notified about the public hearing, only Embarc Collective staff, who didn't pass the information on to members. Would you consider a brief meeting with interested member companies to discuss the project and answer questions?

#### Response:

- Both the north and south sides of Whiting Street will have 10' paths
- Specific signage will be determined during the project design phase.
- No changes to the width of the Meridian Greenway path are proposed as part of this project.
- The posted speed will be equal to or less than 30 MPH.
- Project design is based on anticipated 2045 traffic demand and incorporates pedestrian and bicycle design safety standards found within the FDOT Design Manual and/or the Florida Greenbook Design Standards for this type of facility.
- Appropriate FHWA safety countermeasures have been incorporated into the proposed design and will be further detailed during final project design.
- We are sorry you were not aware of the meeting. Public hearing notices were sent to the owners of the properties surrounding the project. The owner of Embarc was notified through a notice sent in the mail. The meeting was also included in the Downtown Partnership and Channelside Neighborhood Association newsletters. In addition, the meeting was advertised in the Tampa Bay Times and on THEA's social media. Please contact Krystina.Steffen@Tampa-Xway.com to schedule a meeting.

Date Received: 3/4/2022

Format Received: Email

#### Comment 4:

**My comments are posed as a series of questions but please interpret them as suggestions. The grid connections and bike/ped safety considerations are both greatly appreciated and needed.**

- 1. Is there a way to discourage cut-through traffic as part of this project? This has been an issue for years. It seems that adding a toll at each of the downtown exits would help. Anecdotally we know some westbound drivers want to save the toll by exiting downtown then drive down Bayshore Blvd.**
- 2. How will the green space be turned into a community gathering space? Will the space under the elevated Selmon also be considered for improvements/activation? Seems like a great opportunity to integrate with the Selmon Greenway. Will pedestrians be able to enter this space from all sides?**
- 3. At the public hearing I saw a reference to retention ponds that does not appear in most of the material. I found the "pond-siting report" online and see that a few are proposed, which is surprising for such an urban area. Are there no other alternatives (like underground vaults)? At a minimum can these be turned into public park-like settings with access to them? (I heard from the City's resilience officer that the state is interested in this and has funding allocated).**
- 4. Nebraska is evolving as a main corridor to new developments like Encore and GasWorx. What is the suggested n/s connection since it will be bifurcated by the new ramp?**

5. What is the proposed speed limit? Will it be consistent with the streets around it?
6. Materials stated that Whiting Street will be widened to 4 lanes but the renderings show 6 lanes for most of it (including the turn lanes). What is the width of these lanes? Will Vision Zero safety strategies such as ample time to cross, No Right on Red and leading pedestrian intervals be implemented?
7. Is there advance warning on the ramps to alert drivers to watch out for bike/ped?
8. How is the corridor going to accommodate bikes (other than the placement of signs declaring it bike friendly)? Varying speeds on sidewalks can be dangerous for pedestrians.
9. Will continuous bike/ped counters be part of the project?
10. Overall, can Water Street's public realm standards and design be replicated in these adjacent streets? They have set a high bar for the rest of downtown!

As always, please let me know how we can help advance these projects. For the record, this has not been reviewed by our board of directors.

#### Response:

Thank you for your comments and for your interest in the project.

Date Received: 3/6/2022

Format Received: Email

#### Comment 5:

As a resident of Channel District who works at Embarc Collective on Whiting St, I look forward to using this new connection into the downtown grid, both as a pedestrian and a cyclist. My main request is to do everything you can to maximize the facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchairs, scooters, and other micro-mobility options. As Channel District and Water Street developments grow, and car ownership in younger populations declines, there should be significantly more residents and workers choosing active transportation.

The proposed 10-foot sidewalks are appreciated but really minimal given that there are no dedicated bike lanes. Without bike lanes, we'll have bicycles and scooters (active and electric) sharing the sidewalks with pedestrians and traveling at significantly different speeds in both directions. I would like to see dedicated bike/scooter lanes or a wider path (14 feet), at least on one side of the road. We also know that sidewalks are often obstructed by light poles, traffic control cabinets, benches, trash cans and other treatments that effectively limit their use (just see Meridian Ave and Kennedy Blvd as examples of this). I saw a comment about directing cyclists to a future Cumberland cycle track extension, but I would argue that active transportation should be prioritized because drivers (who are not impacted in the same way by weather conditions) are better suited to take longer alternative paths.

I would prefer for Whiting St to be 3 lanes with a center turn lane. This is consistent with FHWA road diet recommendations being implemented around the country, and provides for better safety for pedestrians crossing the street. With the additional turn lanes, Whiting St will grow from 2 lanes (today) to 6 (at the new intersections), which significantly increases the risks for pedestrians crossing the street.

I would also like to see Whiting St narrowed to fewer lanes rather than widened with an additional turn lane. Meridian Ave and Twiggs St are among the worst to cross and navigate as a pedestrian or cyclist downtown, so

Whiting St presents an opportunity to improve the status quo. I would also love to see the Meridian Greenway widened to 14 feet or more.

I hope the Whiting St speed limit remains at 30 miles per hour like the rest of the downtown grid.

As I stated in my previous questions below, Embarc Collective members (over 100 companies) were apparently not notified about the study or public hearing, and the ones I've spoken to would be grateful for a meeting to discuss this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

**Response:**

We are sorry you were not aware of the meeting. Public hearing notices were sent to the owners of the properties surrounding the project. The owner of Embarc was notified through a notice sent in the mail. The meeting was also included in the Downtown Partnership and Channelside Neighborhood Association newsletters. In addition, the meeting was advertised in the Tampa Bay Times and on THEA's social media. Please contact [Krystina.Steffen@Tampa-Xway.com](mailto:Krystina.Steffen@Tampa-Xway.com) to schedule a meeting.

Date Received: 3/8/2022

Format Received: Email