

Citizens North Monroe Task Force 2021 FINAL REPORT

Findings & Opportunity



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Executive Summary

At the Annual Retreat in January 2021, the Board approved a strategic initiative that called for the creation a task force to examine issues related to the North Monroe Street corridor. On April 13, 2021, the Board formally established the Task Force by Resolution No. 21-12 to convene with community stakeholders, residents, and business owners along the North Monroe Street corridor to provide findings of fact and identify opportunities to enhance the quality of life along the segment between Fred George Road and Tharpe Street. Specifically, the Task Force was charged with examining opportunities for corridor improvements, strategies to reduce crime, and approaches to respond to issues of homelessness. The Resolution established the scope and composition of the Task Force, a six-month timeframe to document findings in a report to be presented back the Board for consideration

The County undertook similar efforts in 2012 and 2016 when the Board established a task force to look at revitalizing the Huntington Oaks Plaza and the segment of North Monroe Street from I-10 to Fred George Road. The 2021 Task Force sought to build upon those previous efforts and respond to new conditions including impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is in that context that the Task Force began their work in June 2021.

The 12-member Task Force appointed by the Board last spring is comprised of citizens, business representatives, and non-profit leaders. The Task Force met from June to September focusing on corridor improvements, crime reduction and responses to human trafficking and homelessness. The Task Force held immersive topic sessions with field experts and staff to examine the condition of the corridor. The Task Force was able to hear and learn from field experts, and then to have keen discussions that reflected both agreement and civil discourse. The sessions were also open to the public and interested stakeholders were also able to review the Task Force activities through the project website.

The Final Report is reflective of the volunteer 12-member Task Force and its ardent deliberations to enhance North Monroe Street. The report acknowledges the vast amount of work that has already been performed along the corridor, summarizes public and private sector efforts currently underway, and identifies planned investments which provides the framework and context for the findings identified in the Task Force's Final Report. This Final Report outlines the following recommendations based on these findings:

a. Corridor Improvements:

- i. *Provide Blueprint staff the Task Force's Final Report for future consideration as part of the North Monroe Gateway Project.*
- ii. *Evaluate a new strategic initiative for the County to explore operating a Welcome Center near I-10 (not specific to any interchange).*
- iii. *Direct staff to coordinate with the City and FDOT to schedule the necessary restriping and pavement markings along the North Monroe Corridor.*
- iv. *Continue to encourage and support efforts by FDOT to install landscaping along the North Monroe Street corridor.*
- v. *Support FDOT's request of StarMetro to slightly relocate the bus stop at the School of Math and Sciences on North Monroe Street to preserve sight distance for the school entrance/exit and upgrade the bus stop to include a bench and shelter.*
- vi. *Encourage StarMetro to incorporate other North Monroe Street bus stops north of I-10 in its Capital Improvement Program for upgrades including shelters and benches.*
- vii. *Direct staff to request FDOT to mitigate the gaps in continuous sidewalk access along North Monroe Street in support of local residents and businesses.*
- viii. *Direct staff to work with the consultant selected for the Land Use Element Update to examine retail land uses and possible amendments to the Lake Protection Land Use Map along the North Monroe Street corridor.*

b. Crime and Human Trafficking:

- i. *Direct staff to prepare a Proclamation in support of Human Trafficking Awareness Month (January) to be signed by the Chairman and to identify opportunities for County engagement next month.*

- ii. *Continue to support the Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center pilot program to educate and train business owners and residents to recognize and respond to human trafficking.*
 - iii. *Encourage the Human Services Street Outreach Team to participate in STAC's human trafficking awareness training.*
 - iv. *Request the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation assess the compliance of public lodging establishments in Leon County for meeting state requirements for human trafficking awareness training and signage.*
 - v. *Direct staff to identify tactics to help educate and inform citizens and businesses on the North Monroe Street corridor of the programs offered by local law enforcement agencies and encourage use of these programs to deter crime.*
- c. Homelessness
- i. *Continue to support the Street Outreach Teams efforts to provide housing to unsheltered individuals and families including emergency shelter, hotel vouchers, and diversion services.*
 - ii. *Direct staff to facilitate the creation of a one-page shareable resource guide for businesses and residents through coordination with Big Bend Continuum of Care, Big Bend 211, Salvation Army, and Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center.*
 - iii. *Consider funding the two Homelessness Outreach Street Team Deputies, as provided in a separate agenda item, to address homeless individuals that are disrupting businesses or trespassing and camping in neighborhoods.*

The Citizens' North Monroe Task Force Final Report provides perspective and information for the Board, offering strategies and action items to improve the overall condition of the North Monroe Street Corridor.

Introduction

North Monroe Street (U.S. Highway 27) is a highly traveled commercial corridor in Northwest Leon County. The corridor has served as an important arterial to the north to Gadsden County and Bainbridge, Georgia which has an inland port. North Monroe Street also serves as an important primary exit point east and west from I-10. Leon County continues to prioritize projects along this corridor, particularly the unincorporated portion north of I-10 to Fred George Road. Previous County initiatives and strategic planning efforts along the northern portion of the corridor, including the Huntington Sense of Place project and improvements, the adoption of the Lake Protection Node development standards, as well as other efforts outlined in this report, continue to guide and provide opportunities for development and redevelopment. The County and City have jointly pursued major infrastructure and leisure improvements along the corridor through the Blueprint sales tax projects. In addition, the County continues to work with FDOT to encourage landscaping and intersection improvements along the corridor to support vibrant businesses and residential communities.

Over the previous several years, business owners and residents have reported a decline in overall appearance and condition along the corridor. Past crime reports indicate a high number of arrests for offenses such as human trafficking, assaults, and larceny. Additional pressures have been experienced recently due to hotels housing higher numbers of homeless residents due to COVID-19 impacts. Local businesses and residents have expressed interest in addressing these quality-of-life issues along with the continued investment along the corridor by the Board of County Commissioners.

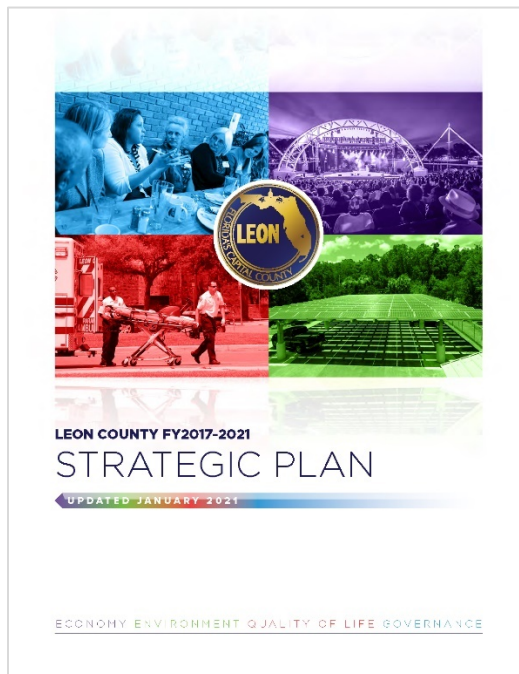
At its January 25, 2021, Annual Retreat, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved pursuing the creation of a Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force, staffed by Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, with the purpose of identifying opportunities to reduce crime and improve overall conditions along North Monroe Corridor between Fred George Road and Tharpe Street. The efforts of this Task Force were to be similar to a previous North Monroe Corridor planning effort in 2016, which resulted in an action plan for the segment north of I-10 to Fred George Road focusing on business and economic revitalization as well as opportunities to enhance pedestrian and open space amenities.



Leon County Strategic Plan

The FY 2017-2021 Leon County Strategic Plan includes the County's vision, priorities, and initiatives that guide daily efforts, as well as bold goals and five-year targets, which keep County employees striving to make Leon County a special place to live, work, and play. The Strategic Plan is updated annually.

In line with the Vision, Mission, and Core Values of the County, the Strategic Plan outlines Strategic Priorities, Strategic Initiatives, and Bold Goals.



Strategic Priorities: Leon County's Strategic Priorities are high-level categories of focus in the County's major areas of responsibilities: Economy, Environment, Quality of Life, and Governance. The priorities consider the County's future in each area and are critical to the success of the community. As part of the strategic plan, these priorities inform every decision and every initiative made by Leon County.

Strategic Initiatives: Leon County's strategic initiatives are program- or area-specific projects that align with the County's strategic priorities to serve and strengthen the community. In the FY2017-2021 Strategic Plan, the 75 strategic initiatives ensure that the optimized resources of the County are aligned to address the community's most pressing issues and to achieve the County's top priorities.

Bold Goals and Targets: Bold goals are truly "stretch" goals that will be big and difficult to achieve but are worthy of Leon County's best efforts. Bold goals require the County to explore new partnerships, identify new opportunities, and inspire new ideas. Leon County's five-year targets are aligned with each strategic priority and will communicate to the public and staff throughout the County the specific results the County expects to achieve through the collective execution of the strategic initiatives. Achieving these five-year targets will demonstrate results, accountability, and the strength of long-term planning.

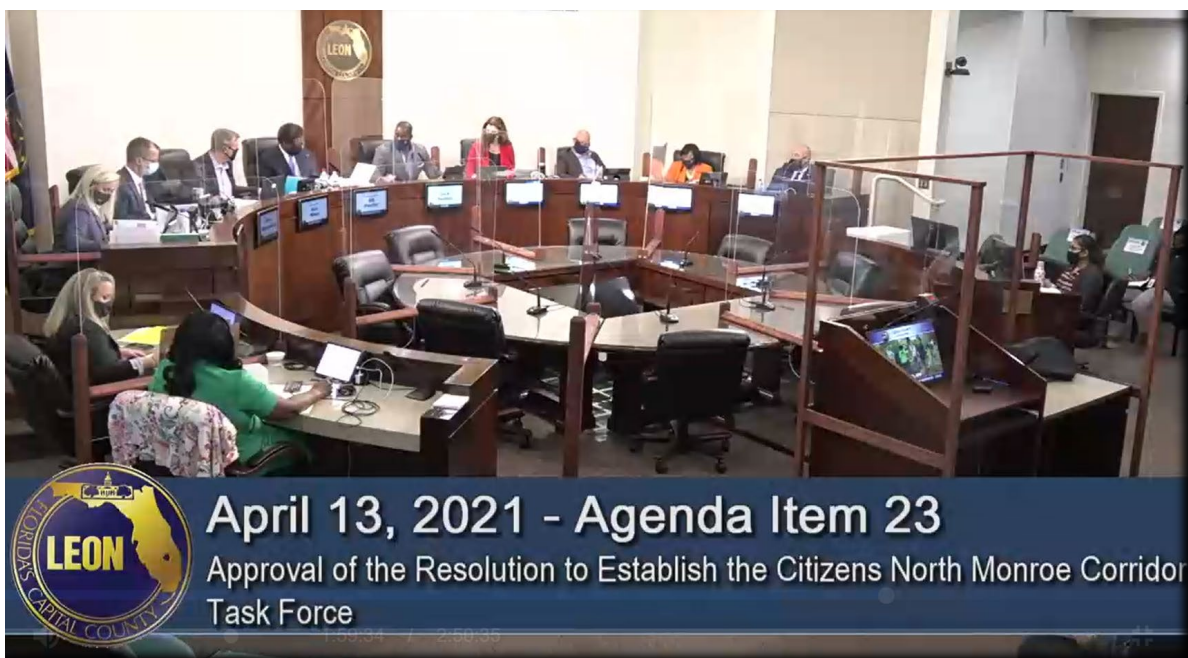
At the annual retreat on January 25, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously agreed to add a strategic initiative regarding the North Monroe corridor as described in the next section of this report. A status report on the implementation of the recommendations will be brought back to the Board next fall.

Leon County Strategic Initiative

At the annual retreat on January 25, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously agreed to add a strategic initiative under the “Quality of Life” strategic priority for supporting neighborhoods. The revision to add the strategic initiative to the FY2017-FY2021 Leon County Strategic Plan was ratified in February of 2021. The strategic initiative is to:

Create a Citizens' North Monroe Street Task Force with City of Tallahassee participation, staffed by the City/County Planning Department charged with identifying opportunities to reduce crime and improve conditions along the North Monroe Corridor between Fred George Road and Tharpe Street. (2021-10)

Work on the strategic initiative began almost immediately with crafting an agenda item for Task Force establishment and composition. The Board of County Commissioners formally established the Citizens' North Monroe Task Force at the April 13, 2021, meeting via Resolution 21-12 (Appendix A). Task force appointments followed in May and June with task force sessions beginning in June of 2021 and running through September of 2021.

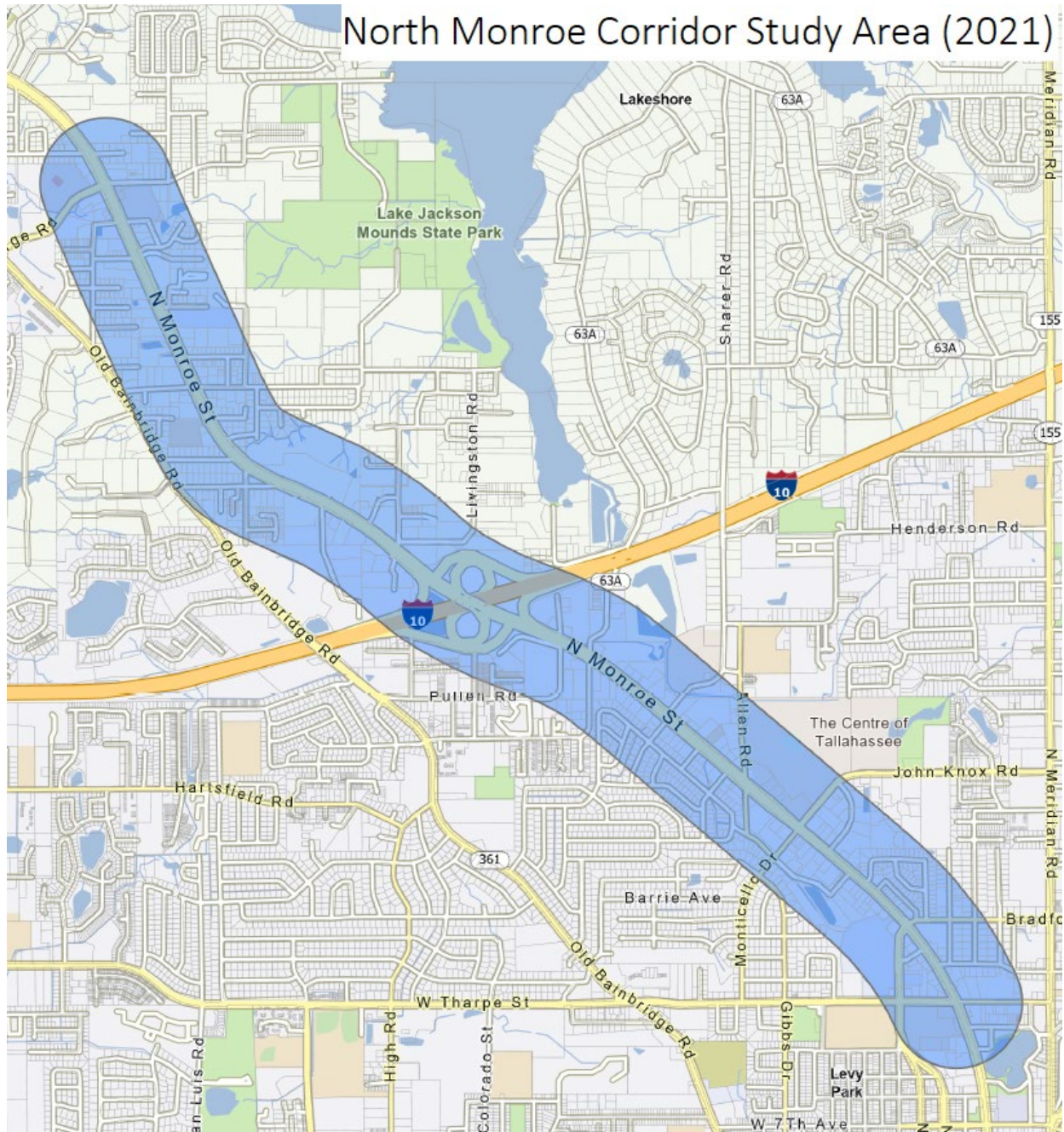


Citizens North Monroe Task Force Final Report

The North Monroe Corridor

Study Area

The area of study for the Citizens' North Monroe Task Force was defined as the North Monroe Corridor between Fred George Road and Tharpe Street. The study area is shown on the following map.



Overview of the North Monroe Corridor

As noted previously, North Monroe Street (Highway 27) is a highly traveled commercial corridor in Northwest Leon County. The segment of North Monroe Street in the study area is maintained by the Florida Department of Transportation. The corridor is punctuated by the Huntington Plaza and the Lake Jackson Trading Post retail center at the northern end of the corridor, the I-10 interchange at the midway point, and Tharpe street at the southern end of the corridor. Approximately half of the corridor study area is in the County and half is in the City. With the I-10 interchange as a primary gateway to the community, the number of automobile trips is over 30,000 per day regularly. I-10 has between 53,000 and 73,500 average daily trips east and west in the area of the North Monroe Street exit. On North Monroe Street, average daily trips as of 2020 include approximately 38,000 trips heading south on North Monroe Street from the I-10 interchange and 32,500 heading north on North Monroe Street from the I-10 interchange. North Monroe Street is also a focus corridor for major improvements including median and sidewalks near Lake Ella and a planned sidewalk from John Knox Road to Lakeshore Drive on the west side of North Monroe Street.

The population along the corridor includes over 2,000 residents averaging 30 years of age with a median income of approximately \$47,790 and a mean income of \$62,106. Corridor residents are educated with 95% being high school or higher graduates and 35% having college bachelor's degrees or higher.

Businesses along the corridor include retail commercial, hospitality commercial and office. There are a total of 505 businesses along the corridor, both large and small employers. Retail is concentrated at centers, like the Lake Jackson Trading Post and nodes near intersections in the northern portion of the corridor. South of the I-10 interchange, commercial retail exists on both sides of North Monroe in a fairly continuous fashion through the downtown area. Along the corridor area, commercial includes approximately 2.4 million square feet of retail with a robust occupancy at around 95% and steady market rents. Over the last 10 years, the occupancy number fluctuated during the post-recession period but in the last five years has remained steady.

Office uses include about 60 properties with 618,000 square feet and reflects typical rents for the area. Corridor office has performed well given the general decline in the amount of office space nationally. A differential existed during the recession between advertised rent and actual rent, but overall rents have increased steadily over the last 10 years.

Hospitality commercial, which includes hotels around the I-10 interchange and near Silver Slipper Lane, includes about 21 properties having approximately 1,865 rooms. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, some hotels near I-10 provided temporary emergency housing for residents from the Kearney Center (the community's primary emergency shelter). This was because Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines resulted in diminished capacity at all emergency shelters.

As noted previously, the County continues to prioritize corridor projects, particularly the unincorporated portion north of I-10 to Fred George Road. County initiatives and strategic planning efforts along the northern portion of the corridor include the Huntington Sense of Place project and improvements, as well as the adoption of the Lake Protection Node development standards, which continue to guide and provide opportunities for development and redevelopment. In addition, the County continues to work with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to encourage landscaping and intersection improvements along the corridor to support vibrant businesses and residential communities.

Leon County and the City of Tallahassee have jointly pursued major infrastructure and leisure improvements along the corridor through the Blueprint sales tax projects. The Lake Jackson Greenway project will provide bike and pedestrian connectivity from Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park to Lake Ella, just south of Tharpe Street. Community engagement sessions were held in March 2021 and the design is anticipated to be completed by early 2022. The North Monroe Gateway Corridor project is an \$11 million streetscaping and safety enhancement project included in the Blueprint sales tax. Future improvements will focus on the corridor from I-10 south to Tharpe Street.

The North Monroe corridor, particularly near the I-10 interchange, has drawn attention and a desire to consider opportunities to address a rise in criminal activity and homelessness. Local businesses and residents have expressed

interest in working with the County to address these quality-of-life issues. The Big Bend Continuum of Care 2020 Point in Time Data on January 27, 2020 noted a total of 764 individuals in Leon County who indicated that the individual/household was experiencing homelessness by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition, which is the generally accepted definition of homelessness.

Of those 764 individuals, the data indicates that 87% were sheltered (661 people) and 13% unsheltered (103). The Kearney Center experienced a 54% reduction capacity (as did other emergency shelters) due to CDC guidelines for COVID-19. Before COVID-19, Kearney Center had capacity for 375 people, but during COVID-19 the center had capacity for 187 people. The Kearney Center began housing its population in local hotels on North Monroe Street in mid-2020; between 188 and 200 people required additional housing that was provided in area hotels. On April 1, 2021, the Kearney Center reopened with limited capacity and began phasing clients out of hotels into its primary center and other housing options; a capacity limitation continues to exist due to the COVID-19 pandemic but the capacity is increasing as overall local conditions related to COVID-19 continue to improve.

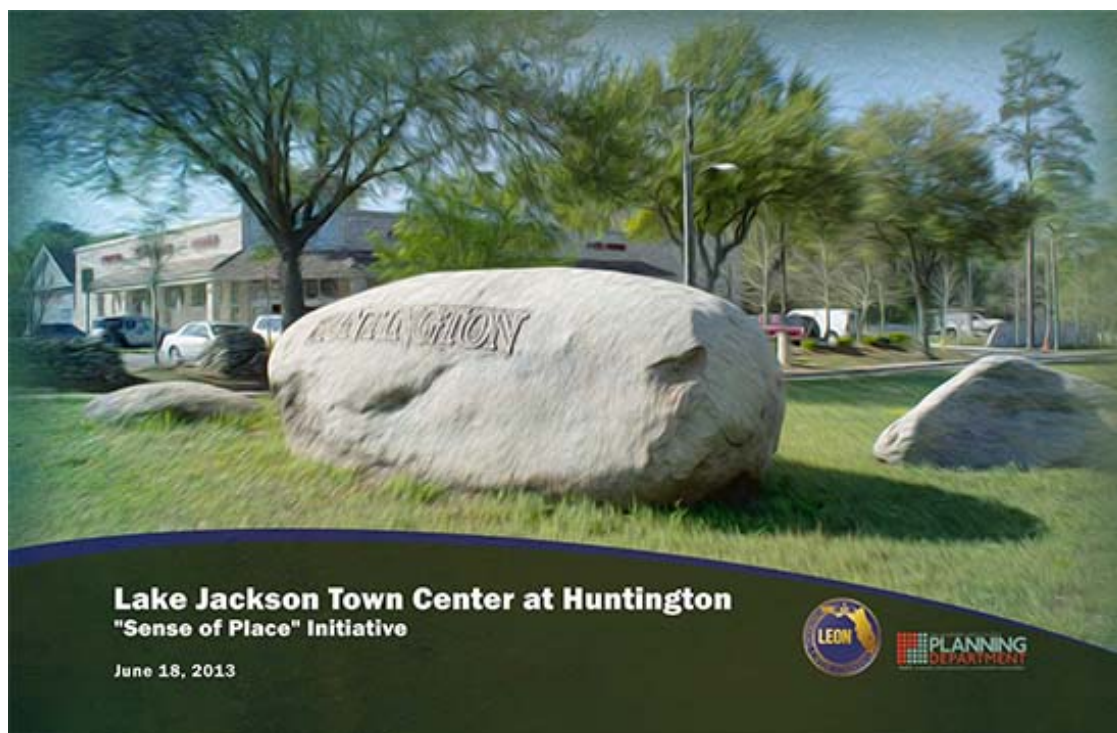
All of these opportunities noted above were evaluated and discussed by the Citizens North Monroe Task Force and are outlined in more detail in this report.

Previous Planning Efforts and Related Investments on North Monroe

Numerous planning efforts guided by the County Commission focused on the North Monroe corridor with the goal of improving the roadway's aesthetics as a gateway into the community and safety, and have resulted in public investment along the corridor. As described below, significant planning efforts that yielded subsequent improvements were the Huntington Sense of Place Plan, the 2016 North Monroe Corridor Action and Management Plan, the Monroe Street Access Management and Lake Ella Implementation Study, and the 2011-2012 Knight Creative Communities Institute (KCCI) initiative focused on North Monroe as a gateway into the community.

Huntington Sense of Place Plan

Similar to the FY 2017-2021 Leon County Strategic Plan described earlier, the Leon County Board of County Commissioners previously adopted a FY 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. Pursuant to the FY 2012-2016 Strategic Plan, the Lake Jackson at Huntington Sense of Place Initiative was undertaken to redevelop the (former) Huntington Oaks Plaza to house the expanded Lake Jackson Branch Library and new Community Center. Leon County and the City of Tallahassee have several burgeoning placemaking districts that are easily identifiable, and Huntington has all the necessary pieces – strong neighborhoods, community schools, a beloved gathering spot at the library and plenty of retail destinations along North Monroe Street – to become a strong, cohesive and recognizable "Sense of Place," meaning people develop or experience positive emotive bonds and attachments in particular locations and environments.



At the June 18, 2013 Board meeting, the County Commission accepted the Lake Jackson Town Center at Huntington "Sense of Place" Initiative. Following a 2014 status report and the allocation of \$100,000, improvements were identified including:

Jackson View Boat Landing: The Huntington Sense of Place Report specifically identified the need to provide for park facilities (picnic tables and grills, landscaping, etc.) at the boat landing located along North Monroe Street at Lake Jackson. On October 28, 2014, the Board of County Commissioners authorized \$50,000 of the \$100,000 authorized for implementation of the Sense of Place Report to be utilized for design and permitting services associated with the Jackson View Boat Landing improvements. Subsequently, construction was authorized by the Board of County Commissioners at the October 13, 2015, meeting in the amount of \$663,000 and the improved Landing was opened to the public in March 2017. The boat landing includes improved parking and boat ramp, new dock structures, new deck along with an observation pier, and new park signage, restroom facilities, and landscaping.



North Monroe Median Landscaping Improvements: Building on the recommendations of the Sense of Place Report, the County requested FDOT funding for design and construction of landscaping improvements on North Monroe Street north from Interstate 10 to Cool View Drive. This request led to the inclusion of a landscaping project on North Monroe Street from Interstate 10 north to the Gadsden County line in the FDOT Five-Year Work Program. In FY 2018, the design and construction of landscaping improvements along this section of North Monroe was funded by the FDOT at \$945,000 and improvements were completed.



Lake Jackson Branch Library and Community Center: Originally opened in 1991 in the Huntington Oaks shopping center on North Monroe Street, the renovated Lake Jackson Branch reopened to the public in the same shopping center in 2012. The library is nearly double the size of the previous branch and includes numerous amenities for the northwest Tallahassee community along the North Monroe corridor. The reopening precipitated community interest to explore future improvements to the area which led to a sense of place initiative. The County purchased the shopping center and successfully refurbished it. Resulting from this action, the shopping center currently has a high occupancy rate of over 90%.



The Community Center established since the adoption of the Huntington Sense of Place Plan also served as the central meeting location for the Citizens' North Monroe Task Force.

2016 North Monroe Corridor Action and Management Plan

A previous North Monroe Corridor planning effort in 2016 resulted in an action plan for the segment north of I-10 to Fred George Road focusing on business and economic revitalization as well as opportunities to enhance pedestrian and open space amenities. A summary of this action plan is included in Appendix A.

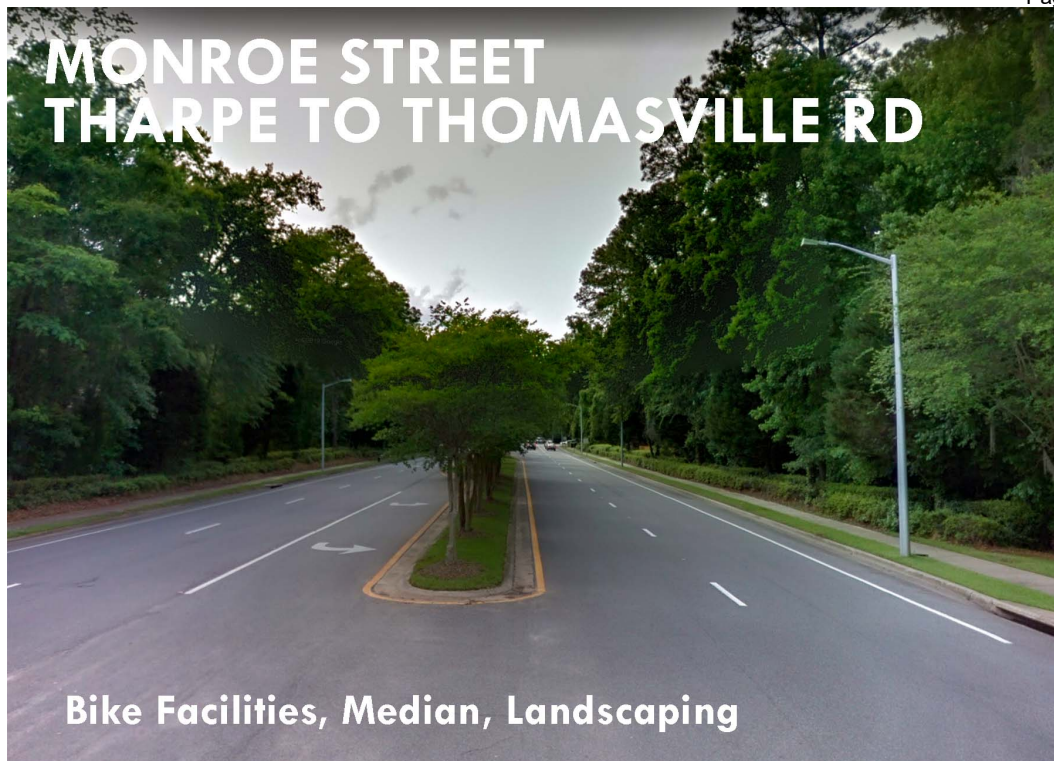
The 2016 Task Force created by the County Commission with members appointed by the County Administrator and composed of business owners, homeowners' associations, and residents, met approximately four times over a four-month period. This Task Force identified beautification and safety issues associated with the commercial and residential uses along the North Monroe Corridor.

After meeting to examine revitalization efforts, the 2016 Task Force recommended support for FDOT median projects, signage code improvements, and an improved transit stop at Walmart near Sessions road. At the budget workshop on June 14, 2016, the Board of County Commissioners accepted the North Monroe Street Corridor Action and Management Plan and authorized \$75,000 to provide for enhanced transit stops on the north and southbound transit stops at the Lake Jackson Walmart area. Other specific recommendations included measures to "Revise the sign code to reduce blight and establish a consistent 'gateway' signage standard for US 27 corridor." The Leon County Department of Development Services and Environmental Management (DSEM) is currently in the process of updating the Sign Code Ordinance, including the changes for the Monroe Street corridor consistent with the 2016 Task Force recommendations.



Monroe Street Access Management and Lake Ella Implementation Study

In 2012, the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) initiated the first phase of a project that focused on opportunities to improve safety and access along the Monroe Street corridor from John Knox Road south to Magnolia Drive. Specifically, the feasibility of installing medians along this corridor segment was evaluated. The first phase of the study identified an opportunity to install medians from Tharpe Street to Seventh Avenue and the second phase of the study included extensive public input for three areas of Midtown including North Monroe Street. As a result of the public input emphasis was placed on medians, landscaping and bicycle lanes.



Ultimately, this project led to the installation of medians, a new pedestrian crossing, landscaping, and safety enhancements in the Lake Ella area of North Monroe Street (Seventh Avenue to Tharpe Street), representing a total investment of \$1,052,543.64.



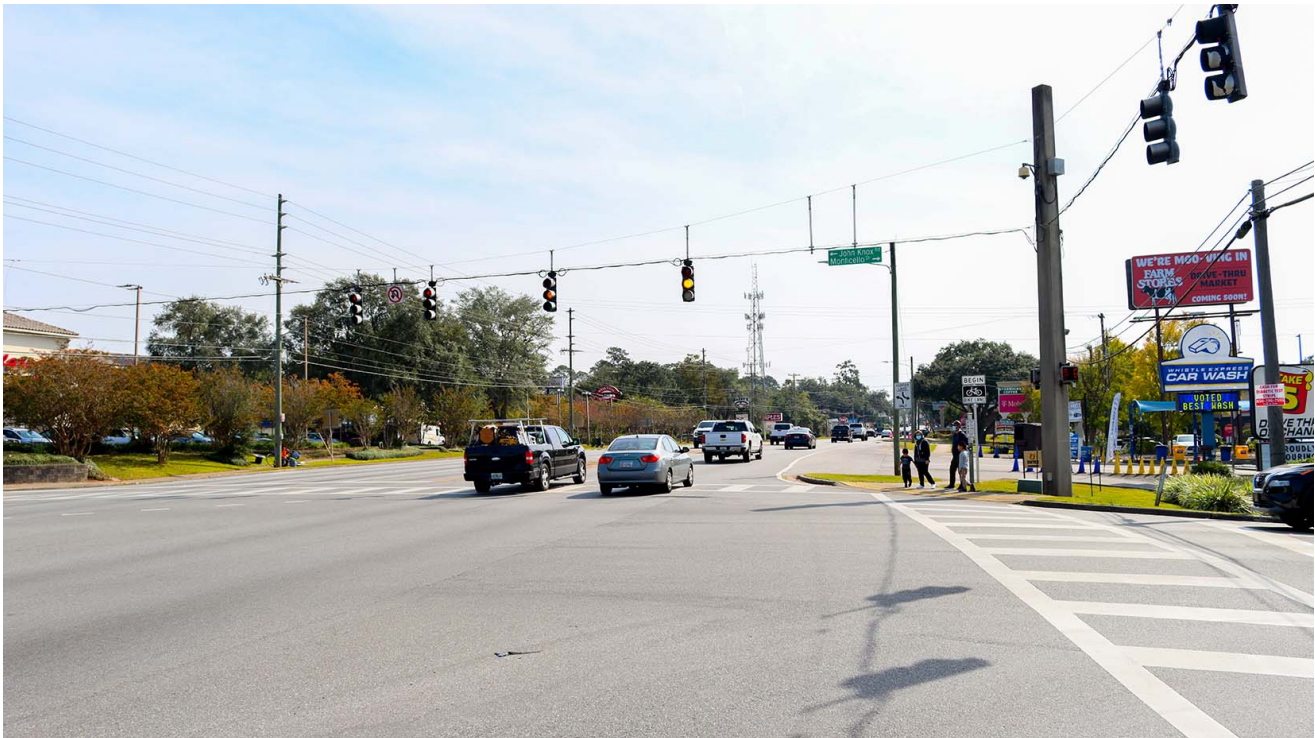
Other Previous Investments on North Monroe

Over the past three years, FDOT has invested approximately \$10 million in improving the North Monroe corridor with most improvements supporting the goals of the Blueprint North Monroe Gateway project as follows:

Monroe Street Sidewalk Planning (John Knox to Lakeshore Drive): The FDOT FY 2020 – 2024 Work Program includes \$520,000 in funding for the design of a sidewalk on the west side of North Monroe from John Knox to Lakeshore Drive. The tentative FDOT FY 2021 –2026 Work Program includes \$486,190 in funding for the design of a sidewalk on the west side of North Monroe from John Knox to Lakeshore Drive. CRTPA is managing the design of the project which is further mentioned in this report. FDOT is the primary construction manager and planned funding source for the project. There is coordination between FDOT, CRTPA and Blueprint to bring the project and any enhancements to the corridor.



Monroe Street Resurfacing Project (John Knox to Thomasville Road): From 2016 to 2019, Blueprint, the County, City, and CRTPA worked with FDOT to integrate key improvements into the FDOT Monroe Street resurfacing project consistent with the North Monroe Gateway project. Utility upgrades began in late summer 2018, and resurfacing improvements were recently completed. The total project cost was \$6.4 million which included brick paver-style crosswalk treatments from Tharpe Street to Monroe Street, new crosswalks added at 7th Avenue to support the Tallahassee Senior Center and at the intersection of Thomasville Road, ADA improvements including sidewalk and curb ramp upgrades throughout corridor, the addition of new bike lanes from John Knox to Tharpe Street, and new shared lane designations from Tharpe Street to Monroe Street.



Monroe Street Medians (Tharpe Street to Seventh Avenue): Through the Lake Ella Implementation Study conducted by the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) in partnership with FDOT in 2012 for the purpose of addressing analyzing traffic and travel patterns and to identify network deficiencies, proposed alternatives were identified through a public process. FDOT funded the installation of landscaped medians on North Monroe Street from Tharpe Street to Seventh Avenue. Subsequent to the construction of the medians, a signalized pedestrian crossing was added to provide a safe crossing for pedestrians across North Monroe Street from the Lake Ella area. Construction began in 2016 and the total project cost was \$970,000.



Monroe Street Northbound Lane Addition (John Knox to Lakeshore Drive): In collaboration with Leon County Government, FDOT completed a third lane north bound on North Monroe Street in 2016 from John Knox Road to Lakeshore Drive. The County contributed \$359,553 for the project design. The total project cost was \$3 million and included the addition of a curb and reconstruction of the sidewalks on the east side of Monroe Street, improving safety for pedestrian and StarMetro users along this route. A new northbound bicycle lane was also added, as well as enhanced pedestrian crossings and ADA improvements.



Safe Routes to School: Project Landscaping: Under a Local Agency Program (LAP) agreement with the City of Tallahassee which included approximately \$150,000 in funding, the FDOT project provided various Safe Routes to School projects including approximately 0.7 miles of sidewalk in various locations including Canopy Oaks Elementary School and the School of Math and Sciences on North Monroe Street. The projects were completed between 2019 and 2020.



Talpeco Road Intersection Improvement: As part of a \$1.1 million project, FDOT improved the intersection at Talpeco Road including signalization, turn lanes, drainage, sidewalks, crosswalks and landscaping in 2018. The improvement addressed both safety and aesthetics.



Landscaping: As part of a planned \$886,000 project, FDOT improved landscaping along US 27 from the Gadsden County line to the intersection of I-10 between 2016 and 2020.



Midtown Placemaking: Phase I Transportation Improvements - C RTPA, working with FDOT, proposed and made improvements to the area near Thomasville Road and North Monroe Street including better crosswalks and sidewalks. The Connections 2040 Regional Mobility Plan (adopted on November 16, 2015) identified Five Points (Thomasville Road/Meridian Road/Seventh Avenue intersection) for improvement. The project was included on the Regional Mobility Plan (RMP) Roadways Priority Project List. A "Thomasville Road (Midtown) Safety Study" FDOT safety study was conducted on Thomasville Road (Monroe Street to Betton Road). That study was presented to the C RTPA on September 19, 2016, and identified potential pedestrian safety improvements along the corridor.

North Monroe Sidewalks: CRTPA identified the opportunity to construct a sidewalk from John Knox Road to Lakeshore Drive. As described in the Florida Department of Transportation Improvements section previously, the CRTPA in coordination with the FDOT is currently working towards improving this segment of North Monroe (0.888 miles in length). Pedestrian use along the roadway includes StarMetro transit users. There are three StarMetro transit routes located on the corridor including the Big Bend, Hartsfield and San Luis routes. StarMetro's Forest Route connects with the Big Bend route at its northern most stop. Three StarMetro transit shelters are located on the west side of North Monroe Street to Lake Shore Drive. The sidewalk project is currently in a \$400,000 project design phase through CRTPA (funded by FDOT). FDOT, as the primary construction funding and management source, is considering project construction funding in the near future and will be responsible for managing that project moving forward.

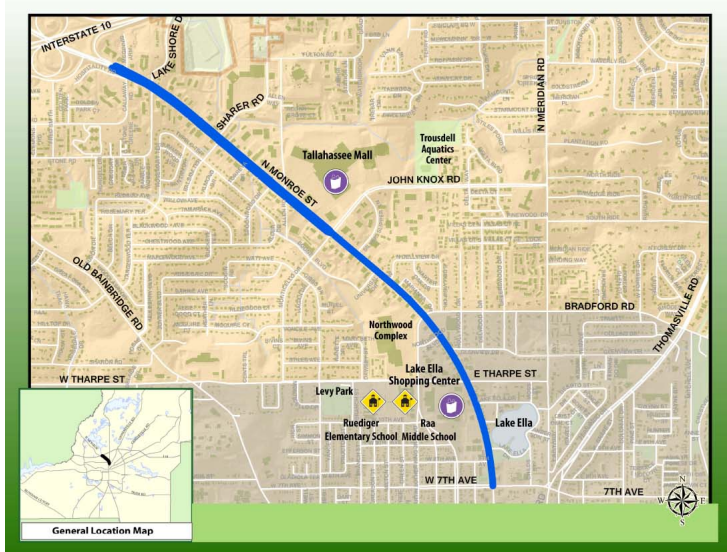


Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Improvements

Blueprint has been active in pursuing and leveraging projects along the North Monroe corridor in its role as the sales tax extension project administrator and community partner with FDOT and CRTPA. Based on the voter approval of the penny sales-tax extension, Blueprint has several activities and projects on-going or planned to begin within the next several years.

North Monroe Gateway: The Blueprint sales tax extension approved by Leon County voters in November 2014 included the North Monroe Gateway project anticipated to be funded at approximately \$11 million. The project is intended to create a northern gateway entrance into Tallahassee that clearly identifies and brand Tallahassee from I-10 to Seventh Avenue. The project goals include improving safety through pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, promoting reinvestment, and improving the quality of life for residents and daily commuters. The breadth of the improvements includes signage, sidewalks, transit, medians, plantings and art. While this project has not yet been initiated by Blueprint, staff has been collaborating with FDOT on improvements to the North Monroe corridor consistent with the goals of the Blueprint 2020 North Monroe Gateway project. There has been investment since 2014 of approximately \$7.67 million, primarily funded by FDOT, that includes roadway and sidewalk improvements. Additional projects as part of this initiative will be identified and advanced through Blueprint's prioritization process and leveraged as other FDOT projects involving US 27 (North Monroe Street) occur.

North Monroe Gateway



Project Highlights

- Creates northern gateway entrance into Tallahassee that clearly identifies and brands Tallahassee from Interstate 10 to Seventh Avenue.
- Complements the Midtown Sense of Place Project (landscaping along Monroe Street from Tharpe Street to the Thomasville Road intersection), creating a continuous entrance.
- Improves aesthetics to promote reinvestment and improves the quality of life for residents and daily commuters.
- Improves safety through pedestrian and bicycle enhancements.
- Estimated Cost: \$9.4 million

Many visitors, residents, and former residents, including those coming to FSU and FAMU football games, enter Tallahassee via North Monroe Street. Currently, the automobile-oriented street is age and empty or underutilized properties along the corridor do not make an attractive or thriving first impression. Investment in the corridor through streetscaping and pedestrian/bicycle safety enhancements that will improve this entrance into the City and catalyze further redevelopment of the properties.

Gateways



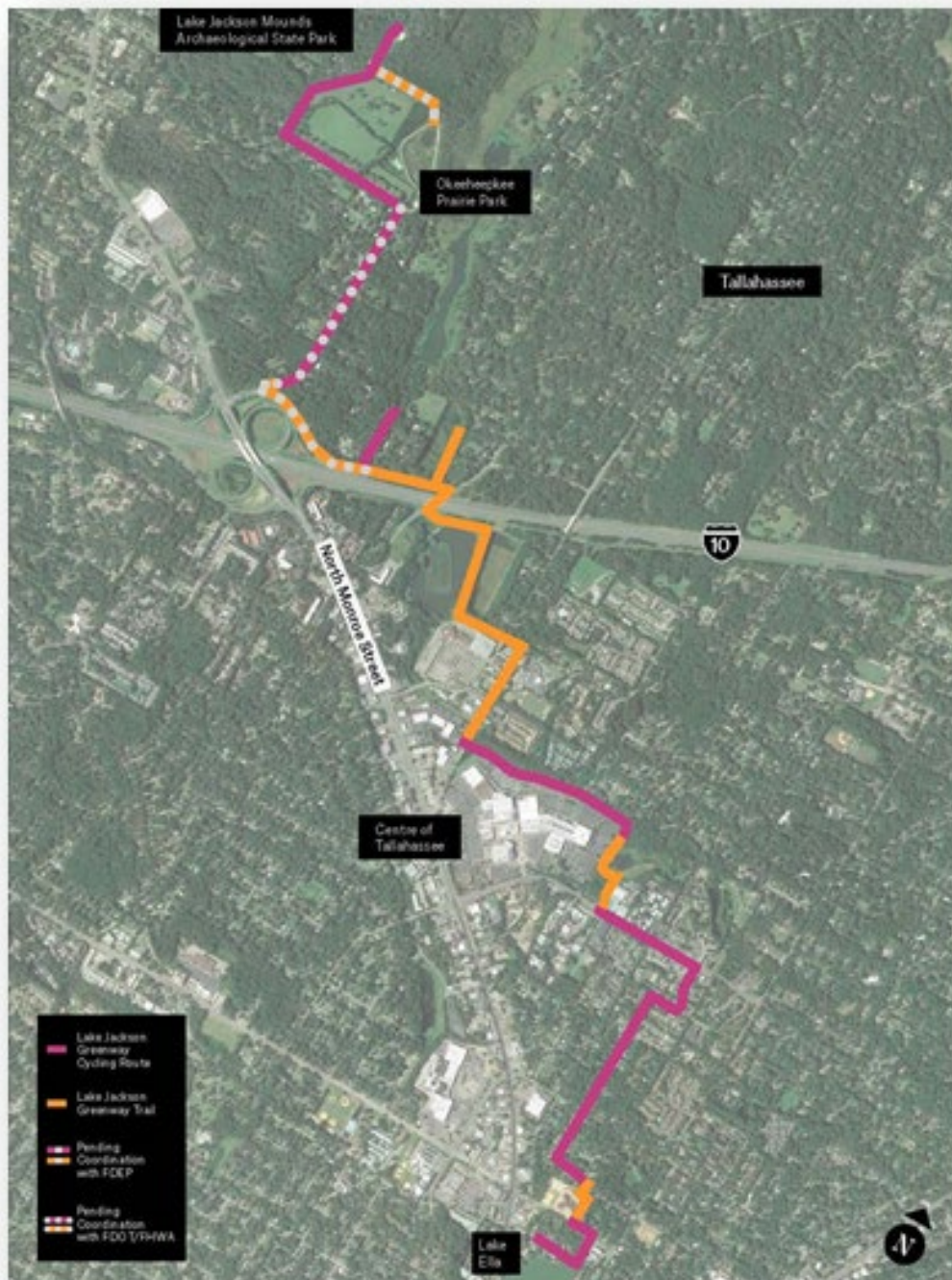
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Lighting Retrofit: FDOT has also identified funding for a lighting retrofit project along North Monroe Street, from Thomasville Road to Fred George Road. Blueprint and the City Electric Utilities Department are coordinating with FDOT on the opportunity to upgrade the fixtures to a style similar to the Gaines Street light fixtures and consistent with the goals of the Blueprint 2020 Midtown Placemaking project, which extends from the Thomasville Road intersection north to Tharpe Street. Staff is currently evaluating the cost, budget impacts, and leveraging amount from FDOT.

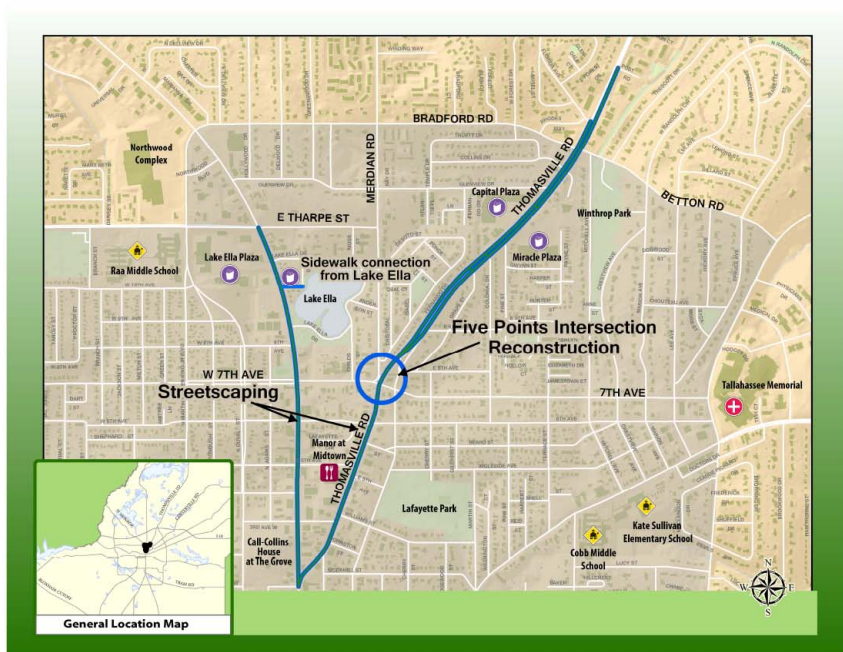


Lake Jackson to Lake Ella Greenway: The Lake Jackson Greenway was approved as part of the 2015 Leon County Greenways Master Plan and the Blueprint 2020 sales tax extension. The greenway plan provides connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists from Lake Jackson to Lake Ella along a variety of trails and roads. Blueprint completed a route feasibility study in November 2020 and facilitated community engagement in March 2021. The project is currently under design with anticipated design and construction cost of \$2.44 million.



Midtown Placemaking: Blueprint and CRTPA are working to make improvements from the Midtown Placemaking Action Plan. Adopted by the City Commission in 2011, the plan includes marketing and branding, public art and events, and infrastructure improvements. The "Midtown Placemaking (Thomasville and Monroe Roads)" Community Enhancement project (Blueprint IA 2014 Sales Tax Extension) identified improvements at the five-points intersection of Meridian Road/Thomasville Road/Seventh Avenue (including streetscaping) to Monroe Street (Thomasville Road to Tharpe Street) and Thomasville Road (Monroe Street to Post Road). Within Midtown Area Transportation Plan Phase II, the priorities include removing the center turn lane, improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities, enhancing landscaping, and undergrounding electric utilities. This requires coordination due to the FDOT jurisdiction of roadways. Projects are funded in the Blueprint budget from 2021 to 2024 at \$5.55 million. The total project is anticipated to be \$27.9 million including full funding in FY 2033.

Midtown Placemaking



Project Highlights

- Creates a unique, pedestrian-friendly sense of place in the Midtown area.
- Improvements at the five-points intersection of Meridian Road/Thomasville Road /Seventh Avenue.
- Streetscaping on Monroe Street (Thomasville Road to Tharpe Street) and Thomasville Road (Monroe Street to Post Road).
- Streetscaping improvements include:
 - Wider sidewalks
 - Enhanced crosswalks
 - Benches
 - Lighting
 - Landscaping
 - Signage.
- Estimated Cost: \$22 million

This project makes streetscape enhancements and placemaking improvements in Midtown, along Monroe Street and Thomasville Road. Enhancements will expand areas for safe pedestrian activity and improve area aesthetics along these two major thoroughfares. As was the case on Gaines Street, these streetscape improvements may promote reinvestment and increased pedestrian traffic for area retailers. This project also seeks to reconfigure the five-points intersection, which should improve automobile and pedestrian accessibility to the surrounding properties.

Community Enhancement Districts



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Leon County Investments

Leon County Public Works is responsible for local and neighborhood infrastructure. The County has invested in neighborhood sidewalks and roads in the North Monroe Corridor area. Two projects in the area include:

Crowder Road Sidewalk: The Leon County Public Works project consisted of a \$102,970 project to design and construct a 6-foot sidewalk along the north side of Crowder Road and the east side of Indian Mound Road. The project also included drainage improvements, a stormwater conveyance system, and swale modifications.



Crowder Road Intersection Improvement: The \$480,000 intersection improvement project will enhance the operational capacity of Crowder Road at US 27 (North Monroe Street).

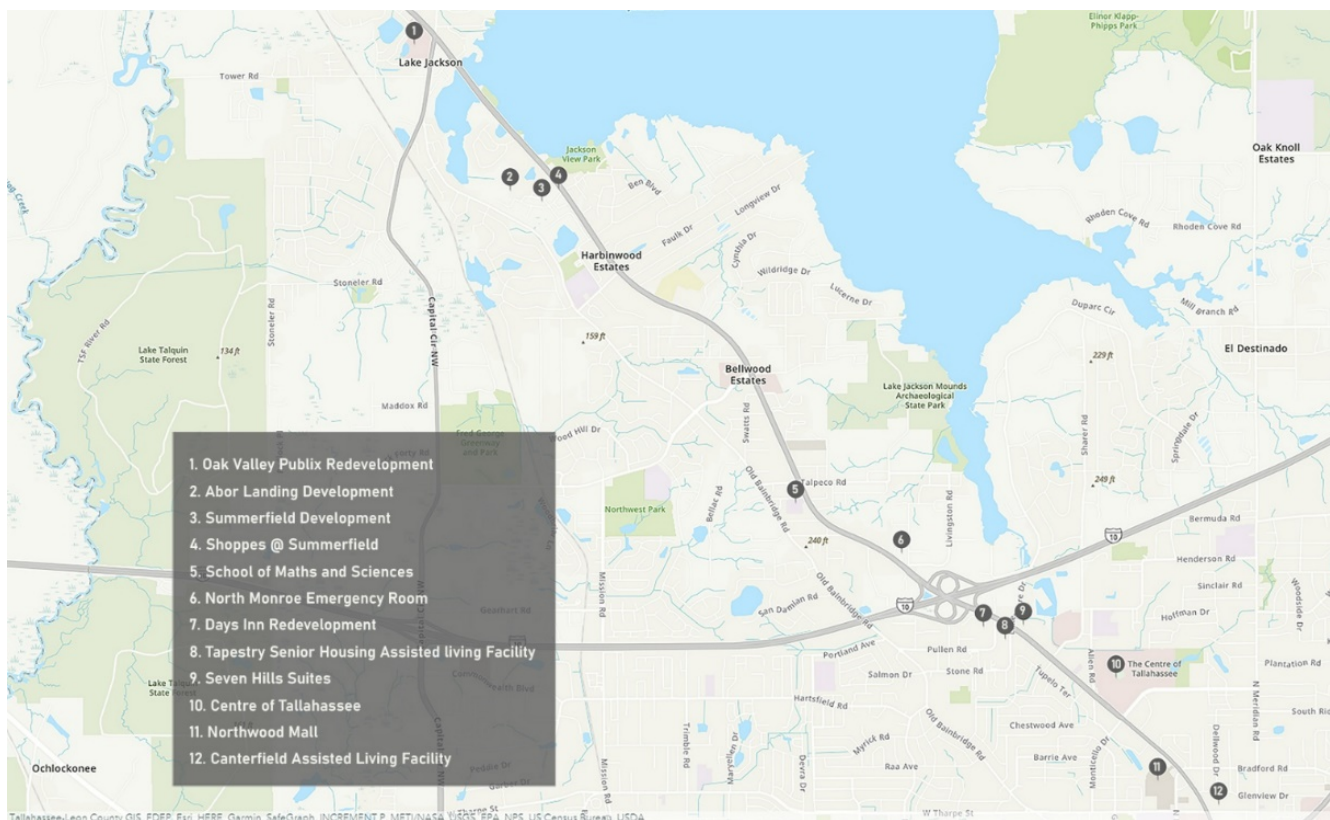


The proposed Improvements include adding a dedicated turn lane, converting existing through/right lane to a through lane only, extending the existing left turn lane, adding more signal heads for added lanes, rebuilding the sidewalk on the north side of Crowder Road to the CVS entrance, and building an enclosed drainage system. The County has finished design and is in the process of right-of-way acquisition.



Recent Private Investments

There have been several development projects that have been approved in or near the US 27 corridor of study. These may be new projects or redevelopment of existing sites.



Oak Valley Publix Redevelopment: Following a Comprehensive Plan amendment and concurrent rezoning during the 2020 amendment cycle, the completion of this redevelopment project in 2021 resulted in a new 66,000 square foot Publix store and significant improvements for stormwater and open space.



Summerfield Development: The Summerfield development includes the construction of 134 new single-family detached homes. 72 units are completed, 58 additional homes are permitted/under construction as of July 2021.



Shoppes @ Summerfield: The proposed retail project is a commercial center of retail and restaurant uses consisting of five buildings totaling 42,050 square feet. The project is currently under review by Leon County Development Support.



03 | Renders for Site Plan Review

Hoy+Stark
Architects

#20.106
the shoppes at
Summerfield
Tallahassee, FL

03
7/30/21

Arbor Landing Development: The Arbor Landing at Lake Jackson is an apartment complex and includes 120 new multi-family units in 2020.

Lake Jackson Emergency Room: The Capital Regional Medical Center's Lake Jackson Emergency Room, consisting of a one-story, 10,800 square foot free standing emergency room operated by the Capital Regional Medical Center, was opened in 2019. A new five-foot sidewalk was constructed as part of the project along North Monroe Street including a landscape buffer with street trees including up to Okeeheepkee Road. The development includes stormwater and conservation areas in the rear of the site.



Days Inn and Suites by Wyndham Redevelopment: Formerly a Ramada Inn, the property was refurbished in 2017 including interior renovation, and was reopened as a Days Inn and Suites Hotel and Conference Center.



Northwood Mall: The Northwood Center opened in 1969 as Tallahassee's first indoor mall and was home to the community's first Publix. Until 2016, the Northwood Centre housed various state offices. In 2019, the City of Tallahassee purchased the 34.5-acre site for \$6.8 million. Identified as the future home of the Tallahassee Police Department in October of 2019, the City is in the process of a public input and planning effort to finalize its redevelopment plans. The site is currently undergoing demolition. Additional information about the redevelopment of the Northwood Mall is available at <https://www.talgov.com/projects/northwood.aspx>.



Canterfield Assisted Living Facility: The three-story, 72,000 square foot assisted living facility features memory care, assisted living and independent living units. The facility was constructed between 2018 and 2019 and was opened in the summer of 2019.



Recent Human Services Investments

The scope of the Task Force moves beyond physical aspects of the corridor and into a number of service issues for vulnerable populations. In particular, the impact and service needs of people experiencing homelessness and others makes the available and invested housing and human services programs important along the corridor. The following descriptions are intended to be pertinent to the Task Force issues and not exhaustive of non-profit social services. Where possible investments have been related to the area of study but should be recognized as generally available to the community.

Leon County Human Services and Community Partnerships: The dedication of \$6.272 million in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding is to address homelessness. In addition, at the Joint Workshop on Homelessness, Affordable Housing, and the Residential Real Estate & Construction Market workshop, it was recommended that the County and City partner with the Big Bend Continuum of Care (BBCoC) to use \$1.410 million for coordinated street outreach, rapid rehousing, permanent support housing, diversion, and capacity building; and distribute another \$3.075 million through a new Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP) Homelessness Services Category in addition to the existing \$797,193.

Housing Production Investment: Leon County and the City of Tallahassee have invested in housing production through several local entities including the Big Bend Continuum of Care. In 2020, there was \$2.1 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to homeless shelter service providers provided, and \$12.25 million in housing and utilities through the Leon CARES Individual Assistance Program. Leon CARES includes a set of community support programs with the Individual Assistance Program providing eligible households with funding for assistance with rent, rental arrears, utilities, and utility arrears. Making housing or keeping housing available, and contributing to producing a variety of housing types for different needs, remains a top priority in the community.

Homeless Services Investments (source: Report on Homelessness in Tallahassee-Leon County July 13, 2021): Both Leon County and the City of Tallahassee have invested in programs and services to reduce the impacts of homelessness throughout the community. Since 2019, the investments have included directing \$2.1 million in CARES Act funding to homeless shelter service providers; providing \$12.25 million in housing and utilities through the Leon CARES Individual Assistance Program and City CARES program to prevent evictions and utility interruptions for more than 4,900 County residents; and launching the Leon CARES Emergency Rental Assistance Program for rent and utility assistance to prevent evictions and utility interruptions (more than 1,700 households assisted and over \$7 million award thus far).

Activities for support services include convening the COVID-19 Local Homeless Task Force to coordinate emergency response and mitigation; partnering with the Salvation Army to open an emergency Community Relief Center for unsheltered individuals; establishing and funding non-congregate sheltering for individuals and families experiencing homelessness diagnosed with COVID-19 or awaiting testing; creating the Tallahassee-Leon County Homeless Dashboard through Geographic Information System (GIS) bringing situational awareness and performance data across dozens of agencies; establishing Street Outreach Teams to fill service gaps and increase access to housing resources; establishing the Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund to increase access to affordable housing for vulnerable tenants; and establishing and funding a new Landlord Liaison position within the Big Bend Continuum of Care.

Summary of Previous Corridor Investments and Improvements

These investments and improvements noted above represent a concerted effort by various levels of government, the private sector, and the human services sector to improve the North Monroe Corridor. These investments and improvements provide a history of forward momentum upon which the 2021 Citizen North Monroe Task Force would work and a foundation for the Task Force to conduct their findings of fact and identification of opportunities.

Citizens North Monroe Task Force (2021)

At their January 25, 2021, Annual Retreat, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved pursuing the creation of a Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force, staffed by Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, with the purpose of identifying opportunities to reduce crime and improve overall conditions along North Monroe Corridor between Fred George Road and Tharpe Street. The Board of County Commissioners formally established the Citizens' North Monroe Task Force at the April 13, 2021, meeting via Resolution 21-12 (Appendix A).

Members

The County appointed 12 members to the Citizens North Monroe Task Force in June 2021:

- Six (6) citizens or citizen group representatives
- Four (4) business or business sector representatives
- Two (2) nonprofit or service organization representatives

The following members were appointed to the Citizens North Monroe Task Force:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Chuck Adcock | • Piyush Patel (withdrew) |
| • Johnna Coleman | • Jo Laurie Penrose |
| | • Jordan Scott |
| • Ron Goldstein | • Roger Rankin |
| • John McNeill | • Marcus Thompkins |
| • Cathy McMillon (withdrew) | • Robin Hassler Thompson |

Scope of the Task Force

The Citizens' North Monroe Task Force was charged with holding three to five immersive sessions that consider reducing and preventing crimes in the area associated with commonly occurring offenses including human trafficking and addressing blight and aesthetics. The goal of each session was to present information from field expert(s), receive input from Task Force participants, and identify specific findings and guidance (or further exploration) to be compiled into a report to be presented to the Board in December 2021.



The Task Force was charged with identifying opportunities to reduce crime and improve conditions along the North Monroe Corridor between Fred George Road and Tharpe Street. To this end, the Task Force examined:

- Corridor Improvements
- Crime Reduction and Human Trafficking Responses
- Impacts of Homelessness and Homelessness Issues

Task Force Meetings

The Citizens' North Monroe Task Force held five immersive sessions and three follow up sessions.



Immersive Sessions

The following immersive sessions included presentations from field experts and a "deep dive" discussion of the topic:

- Session 1: June 24, 2021 – Welcome, Introduction, and Overview of Available Data
- Session 2: July 22, 2021 – Crime and Human Trafficking
- Session 3: August 5, 2021 – Housing and Homelessness
- Session 4: August 26, 2021 – Corridor Improvements
- Session 5: September 21, 2021 – Review of Findings and Opportunities

Follow Up Sessions

Following the Immersive Sessions, the meetings identified below were held to refine the Task Force Findings and Opportunities.

- Follow Up Meeting 1: September 30, 2021
- Follow Up Meeting 2: October 7, 2021
- Follow Up Meeting 3: November 4, 2021

These meetings provided a framework for the Citizens' North Monroe Task Force to identify findings of fact, opportunities, and potential strategies for attainment.

Findings

Facts, evidence, and anecdotes that are known by citizens, businesses, and staff

Opportunities

Available or attainable programs, activities, or resources to address identified issues

Attainment

Potential pathways and time frames to move items forward

Findings of Fact and Opportunities

The Task Force's final report details the findings, opportunities, and strategies for each of the three topic areas. The topic areas include:

- **Making Corridor Improvements**
- **Response to Crime and Human Trafficking**
- **Response to Homelessness**

A number of the Task Force's findings and strategies rely on existing public resources. For instance, the proposed scope for the Blueprint North Monroe Gateway Project aligns with the general aesthetic enhancements sought by the Task Force. As a result, Task Force members found that gateway signage could be emphasized or elevated within that existing project resource.

Topic 1: Corridor Improvements

On August 26, 2021 the Task Force held an immersive session on past, present, and future corridor improvements and received input from the public. Infrastructure investment and information was provided by Leon County Public Works, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA), Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (Blueprint), Office of Economic Vitality (OEV), Leon County Department of Development Support and Environmental Management (DSEM), and the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department (TLCPD).



Credit: WCTV News June 2021 (<https://www.wctv.tv/2021/06/25/citizens-north-monroe-corridor-task-force-meets-hopes-clean-up-one-tallahassee-most-traveled-roads/>)

Following the presentations and public input, the Task Force coalesced around a priority to make the North Monroe Street Corridor more aesthetically pleasing for visitors arriving by way of I-10. Several findings and opportunities were identified to improve the physical condition of the corridor which serves as a state roadway. Most of these corridor improvements fall under the purview of FDOT and will be considered as part of the Blueprint 2020 North Monroe Gateway Project.

Current Efforts Underway

There are several efforts underway by FDOT and various local agencies to affect corridor improvements. These efforts are detailed in this section of the report. FDOT is a key partner since it is the primary entity responsible for maintenance and improvement of North Monroe Street, and its future improvements can be enhanced. Previous enhancements in conjunction with FDOT resurfacing on North Monroe street have included bike lanes and sidewalk improvements on the east side of North Monroe Street at an investment level of approximately \$3 million. Together with other improvements including intersection improvements at Talpeco Road, median improvements at Lake Ella, a lane addition and bicycle lanes at John Knox Road, and landscaping to the Gadsden County line, FDOT has invested about \$10 million in the corridor over the last 10 years.

Highlights of efforts for physical improvements include Blueprint's North Monroe Gateway Project which is planned for an approximately \$11 million investment and includes items like landscaping and signage. Some investment as mentioned has been coordinated and occurred through FDOT improvements. Blueprint is also in the design stage for the Lake Jackson to Lake Ella Greenway which will provide beneficial trail connection from the northwest to the center of Tallahassee at Lake Ella. Additionally, there are CRTPA and FDOT projects on North Monroe Street and Midtown. The Midtown medians,

planting and pedestrian crosswalks represent a completed \$1 million project. The North Monroe sidewalk project will bring a key \$1 million project placing a sidewalk on the west side of North Monroe Street from John Knox Road to Lakeshore Drive in the near future. Leon County Public Works is also investing in sidewalks and intersections with the completion of the \$103,000 sidewalk system at Crowder Road and the planned \$480,000 intersection project at Crowder Road that will bring much needed roadway realignment and attention to stormwater and pedestrian infrastructure.

Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency

The Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) is the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO). The CRTPA is responsible for coordinating transportation planning within Florida's Capital Region (Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon and Wakulla counties). The CRTPA is instrumental in funding projects in concert with FDOT through the cost feasible and Long-Range Transportation Plan including millions of dollars in roadway, transit, pedestrian and bicycle projects. CRTPA has been instrumental in facilitating 2 projects of interest to the corridor.

In 2010, the CRTPA engaged the Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning to produce a study to serve as the foundation for the community's improvements along North Monroe from Tharpe Street to First Avenue. The goal of this project was to identify pedestrian and bicycle improvements along the North Monroe corridor and urban design recommendations to create a "Sense of Place". This study included a Roadway Safety Audit which identified several low-cost solutions to make the area both Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. At the time of this study the Roadway Safety Audit was the first of its kind in Tallahassee and included a Traffic Engineer from the City of Tallahassee, two Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinators from the FDOT, an FDOT Safety Program Manager and an FDOT Safety Engineer. This study helped to lay the foundation for future placemaking improvements in the Midtown area.

Midtown Placemaking: Phase I Transportation Improvements - CRTPA, working with FDOT and Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency, proposed and made improvements to the area near Thomasville Road and North Monroe Street including better crosswalks and sidewalks. The Connections 2040 Regional Mobility Plan (adopted on November 16, 2015) identified Five Points (Thomasville Road/Meridian Road/Seventh Avenue intersection) for improvement. The project was included on Regional Mobility Plan (RMP) Roadways Priority Project List. The FDOT conducted the "Thomasville Road (Midtown) Safety Study" on Thomasville Road from Monroe Street to Betton Road. This study was presented to the CRTPA on September 19, 2016 and identified potential pedestrian safety improvements along the corridor.

After extensive public involvement, on October 19, 2020, the CRTPA adopted Phase II of the Midtown Area Transportation Plan. Phase II focuses on implementation of the multi-modal improvements identified in Phase I in a manner that reduced impacts (such as the need to purchase right-of-way) while maintaining the character of Midtown. The Plan includes projects listed by short or mid-term and lists the implementing agency.

North Monroe Gateway: The North Monroe Gateway project will create a northern entrance into Tallahassee that clearly identifies and brands Tallahassee from Interstate 10 to Seventh Avenue. The project goals include improving safety through pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, promoting reinvestment, and improving the quality of life for residents and daily commuters. Since 2014 FDOT has invested \$7.67 million in improving the corridor, with most investment supporting the Blueprint 2020 project goals. The North Monroe Gateway Project is expected to be funded at approximately \$11 million.

The adopted FDOT FY 2022 –2026 Work Program includes \$78,070 in funding for the preliminary engineering of a sidewalk on the west side of North Monroe from John Knox to Lakeshore Drive. Blueprint is coordinating with FDOT and the City to explore opportunities to enhance landscaping as part of this project. Pedestrian use along the roadway includes StarMetro transit users; there are three StarMetro bus routes located on the corridor (Big Bend, Hartsfield and San Luis routes) with 3 StarMetro transit shelters on the west side of North Monroe Street. Blueprint IA continues to collaborate with FDOT for the design and construction of landscaping improvements in the medians from Interstate 10 to John Knox Road. Blueprint IA has submitted a request letter for landscaping improvements to 8 existing medians in this area along North Monroe Street.

The FDOT has also identified funding for a lighting retrofit project along N. Monroe Street, from Thomasville Road to Fred George Road. Blueprint IA, along with the City of Tallahassee Electric Utilities Department, are coordinating with the FDOT to upgrade the fixtures to a style similar to the Gaines Street light fixtures and consistent with the goals Midtown Placemaking project. Blueprint IA staff is currently evaluating the cost, budget impacts, and leveraging amount from FDOT.

Lake Jackson Greenway: Implementing the adopted Greenways Master Plan, Blueprint is currently managing the Lake Jackson Greenway to provide connectivity from Lake Ella to Lake Jackson. The Lake Jackson Greenway was approved as part of the 2015 Leon County Greenways Master Plan and the Blueprint 2020 sales tax extension. The Greenway Plan provides connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists from Lake Jackson to Lake Ella along a variety of trails and roads. Blueprint IA completed a route feasibility study in November 2020 and facilitated community engagement in March 2021. The project is currently under design with anticipated design and construction cost of \$2.44 million.

Strategies for Corridor Improvements

Strategies for corridor improvements identified by the Task Force are as follows:

Welcome Signage and Welcome Center - The Task Force found there to be an opportunity to make the North Monroe Street interchange more aesthetically pleasing to visitors. This strategy included the installation of welcome signage at or near the I-10 interchange along with directional/wayfinding signs to guide visitors of the corridor to the downtown, the universities, and other visitor destinations. Signage on a state roadway requires planning, coordination, and approval of FDOT. It should also be consistent with other wayfinding initiatives throughout the community. Further, the Task Force expressed support for establishing a Visitor Welcome Center along the North Monroe Street corridor to welcome tourists and provide community information.

The Leon County Tourist Development Council has approved a draft strategic plan that will be included in the Board's Annual Retreat materials on January 24th and presented for formal approval at the Board meeting the following day. One of the draft strategic initiatives for the Division of Tourism include exploring the feasibility of opening and operating a Welcome Center near I-10. The draft strategic initiative does not specify which I-10 interchange in order to allow for a market-based analysis at the appropriate time.

Given that the selected study area of North Monroe Street includes both County and City jurisdictions on a state roadway, and Blueprint has project funding programmed specifically for gateway enhancements, staff does recommend specific signage enhancements to the corridor at this time. However, this report can be submitted to Blueprint for consideration as part of the planning and design process for the North Monroe Gateway Project given the shared goals and desired enhancement.

Staff Recommendation: *Provide Blueprint staff the Task Force's Final Report for future consideration as part of the North Monroe Gateway Project.*

Staff Recommendation: *Evaluate a new strategic initiative for the County to explore operating a Welcome Center near I-10 (not specific to any interchange).*

Pavement Marking and Striping – The restriping of pavement markings is an example of where relatively low-cost improvements can have a large impact. Specific areas for restriping were identified both in the City and unincorporated Leon County.

- The bike lane markings and approach pad near the North Florida Animal Hospital, just north of Sharer Road (City)
- The markings at Lakeshore Drive and Callaway Road (City).
- The turn lane markings on Sharer Road near the approach to North Monroe Street (County).
- The markings on both sides of the road just north of Fred George Road (County).

Staff Recommendation: *Direct staff to coordinate with the City and FDOT to schedule the necessary restriping and pavement markings along the North Monroe Corridor.*



Photo: Marcus Thompkins 2021, North Monroe, next to the Lake Jackson Animal Hospital

Landscaping – The Task Force valued the ongoing efforts to encourage and support FDOT’s installation of landscaping along the corridor and believes future landscaping projects would significantly enhance the corridor. More specifically, the Task Force suggested focusing on areas near the Centre of Tallahassee, on the west side of North Monroe Street near the I-10 interchange and along the sidewalks on the east side of North Monroe Street just north of I-10.



In coordination with the CRTPA, Blueprint has already submitted a request to FDOT for landscaping improvements for eight medians along the North Monroe Street corridor from John Knox Road to Lakeshore Drive.

Staff Recommendation: *Continue to encourage and support efforts by FDOT to install landscaping along the North Monroe Street corridor.*

Lighting – The Task Force raised concerns about inoperable streetlights along the North Monroe Street corridor. FDOT has an on-going project to upgrade street lighting along corridor from 3rd Avenue to Fred George Road. FDOT has a Local Agency Program agreement with the City of Tallahassee to address lights at these intersections including I-10, Sessions Road, and Fred George Road. These intersection street lighting improvement projects are under design by City Electric.

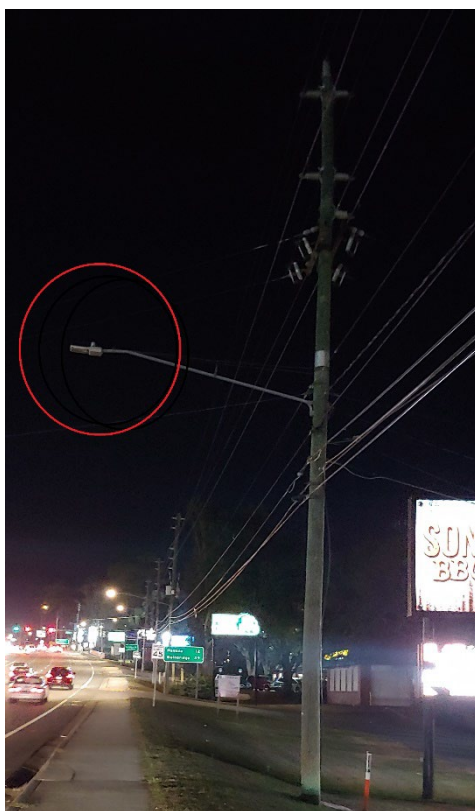
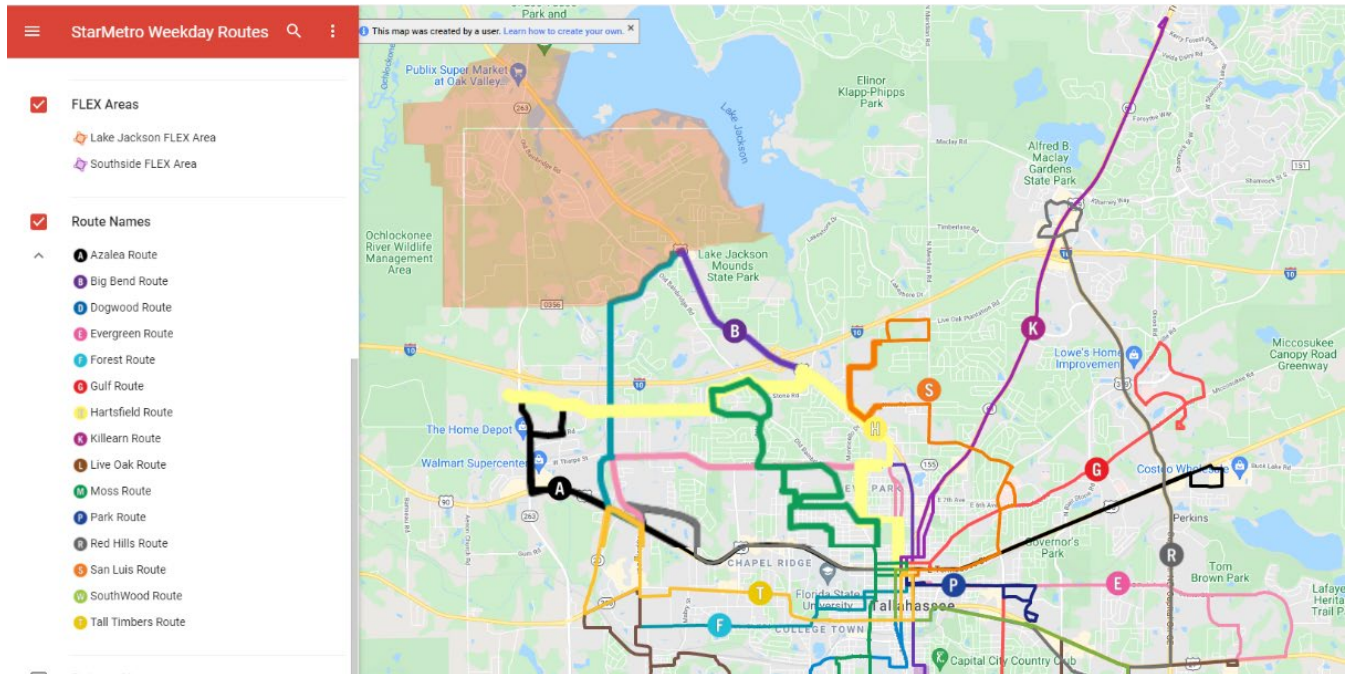


Photo: Example of malfunctioning streetlight on North Monroe Street near the I-10 Interchange

Given the ongoing efforts by the City to install new streetlights, in partnership with FDOT, staff does not have any recommendations on this issue.

Improved Transit Stops – There are four StarMetro fixed routes and the Lake Jackson Flex service area that service the North Monroe Street corridor from Tharpe Street to Fred George Road.



The Task Force was supportive of opportunities to upgrade bus stops along the corridor including bus shelters and dedicated pick-up lanes. More specifically, the report details opportunities for the improvement of bus stops along the west side of North Monroe Street from John Knox Road to Lakeshore Drive as part of the planned sidewalk improvements, upgrades to the bus stop in front of the Tallahassee School of Math and Sciences as part of FDOT's safety considerations, and the stops north of I-10 that contain only poles or poles receptacles.



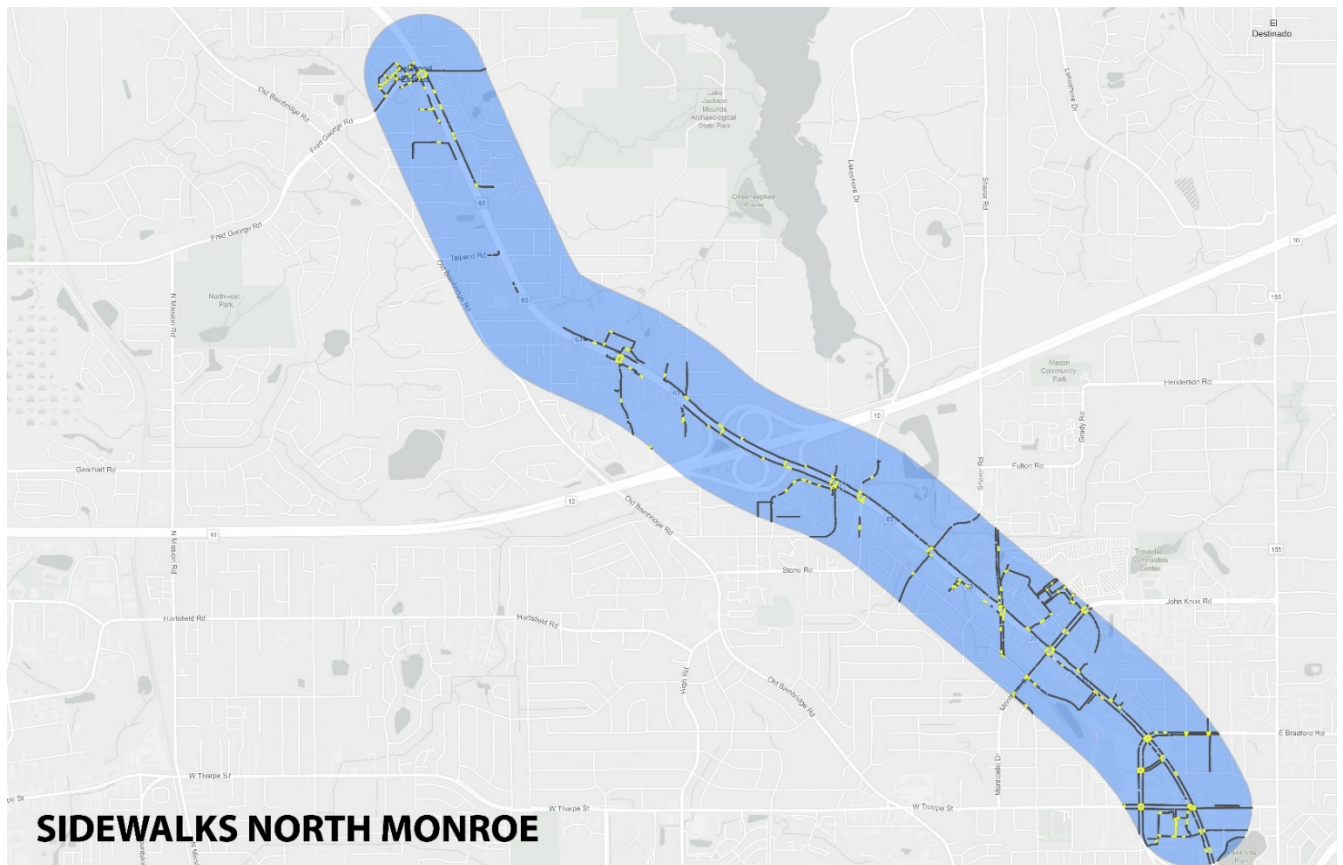
Image of Transit Stop at Sessions Road

Staff Recommendation: Support FDOT's existing request of StarMetro to slightly relocate the bus stop at the School of Math and Sciences on North Monroe Street to preserve sight distance for the school entrance/exit and upgrade the bus stop to include a bench and shelter.



Staff Recommendation: Encourage StarMetro to incorporate other North Monroe Street bus stops north of I-10 in its Capital Improvement Program for upgrades including shelters and benches.

Sidewalks and Shared Use Paths – The Task Force found that sidewalks, sidewalk connections, and trails would offer opportunities for improvements to the corridor that are very tangible and visible. The corridor has approximately 5.5 miles of sidewalks on the east and west sides of North Monroe Street.



In the unincorporated area, there is a sidewalk from Fred George Road to Wigginton Road at the U.S. Post Office site. South of the U.S. Post Office, the sidewalk intermittently picks up again at Walmart and area retail establishments but is not continuous to I-10.

Segment	Existing Sidewalks	Sidewalk Gaps	Notes
I-10 to Fred George – East Side of Monroe	1.11 miles	0.8 miles	Two gaps: Spaulding Road to south of Ray Road (approximately 0.68 mile) North of Northmont Drive (approximately 0.12 mile)
I-10 to Fred George – West Side of Monroe	0.76 mile	1.2 mile	Various small gaps: Between Fred George and Swatts Road (approximately 0.03 mile) Directly north of McKee Road (approximately 0.08 mile) Between McKee Road and Talpico Road (approximately 0.39 mile) Between Talpico Road and the Tallahassee School of Math and Sciences (approximately 0.08 mile) Between the Tallahassee School of Math and Sciences and Cottage Grove Court (approximately 0.12 mile) Between Cottage Grove Court and north of Sessions Road (approximately 0.30 mile) South of Sessions Road to Graves Road (approximately 0.20 mile)
I-10 to Tharpe – East Side of Monroe	2.18 miles	None	Continuous sidewalk on this segment
I-10 to Tharpe – West Side of Monroe	1.34 miles	0.8 mile	Gap from John Knox to Lakeshore currently being evaluated by FDOT and CRTPA

As a state roadway, the County can request FDOT to mitigate the gaps in continuous sidewalk access in support of local residents and businesses. Except for the sidewalk currently being designed between John Knox Road and Lakeshore Drive, FDOT has no sidewalk projects currently planned in the study area. Regarding shared-use paths and trails, the Lake Jackson Greenways Project current in the design phase parallels North Monroe Street and will connect to Lake Ella Drive in midtown.

Staff Recommendation: *Direct staff to request FDOT to mitigate the gaps in continuous sidewalk access along North Monroe Street in support of local residents and businesses.*

Examine Retail Land Uses North of I-10 - In evaluating land uses along the corridor, the Task Force identified challenges to developing new commercial uses and redeveloping retail north of I-10 associated with the Lake Protection Node. The Lake Protection Node is intended to accommodate compact, commercial, and mixed-use development at designated major intersections along North Monroe Street. The Lake Protection Zoning District allows for pre-existing commercial uses to continue to exist outside the nodes but limits the future commercial re-use of those properties. The intent is to limit increases in intensity for commercial activities outside of the nodes. For example, a florist can sell their business to be operated as florist but reconstruction of the site into an auto parts store would not be permitted outside of the node.

Given the scheduled update to the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan, the Task Force identified an opportunity to analyze the Lake Protection Future Land Use Map category, non-conforming uses, redevelopment, and potential for use of temporary land use strategies, such as placemaking, within this context.

Staff Recommendation: *Direct staff to work with the consultant selected for the Land Use Element Update to examine retail land uses and possible amendments to the Lake Protection Land Use Map along the North Monroe Street corridor.*

Mixed-Use Development - During one of the immersive sessions, there was a presentation and information provided about Community Land Trusts (CLT) and their potential to provide mixed-use projects. A (CLT) is a non-profit organization that helps makes homes and other lands (such as community gardens, commercial space, housing) affordable and accessible. The CLT can build and preserve affordable housing and can stabilize neighborhoods by reducing the negative impacts of gentrification.

The County does not have any public lands for development along the North Monroe Street corridor to support additional mixed-use commercial or residential activity. This does not prevent a CLT from securing property on its own for future development. As documented in this Final Report, there continues to be significant commercial and residential investment throughout the corridor. This suggests that there is no need for the County to engage in this type of activity at this time.

A number of the corridor improvement strategies rely on existing public resources. For instance, the scope for the Blueprint North Monroe Gateway Project was designed to achieve many of the corridor improvements identified by the Task Force. As a gateway project from I-10 to 7th Avenue, there will be an emphasis on the continuity of signage and welcoming of visitors to the community. The project will not increase vehicle capacity but will improve safety through pedestrian and bicycle enhancements and promoting reinvestment within the urban core. Approximately \$11.9 million in total is anticipated in future Blueprint funding for the North Monroe Gateway during fiscal years 2028 to 2032.

A Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is another potential tool that could support infrastructure investments and community enhancement projects. Created by local governments, CRAs can provide a long-term source of tax-increment financing to help address the physical, social and economic issues within blighted areas of a community. The Task Force acknowledged the potential benefits of a CRA to fund improvements but did not provide further guidance to pursue the establishment of a CRA along the corridor.

Should the Board wish to consider the creation of a CRA, a study is required to determine if the designated area meets the statutory conditions of blight. Then a community redevelopment plan must be adopted which establishes the redevelopment priority areas, goals, and objectives of the plan. Given that the selected study area of North Monroe Street includes both County and City jurisdictions on a state roadway, both local governments would have to approve the

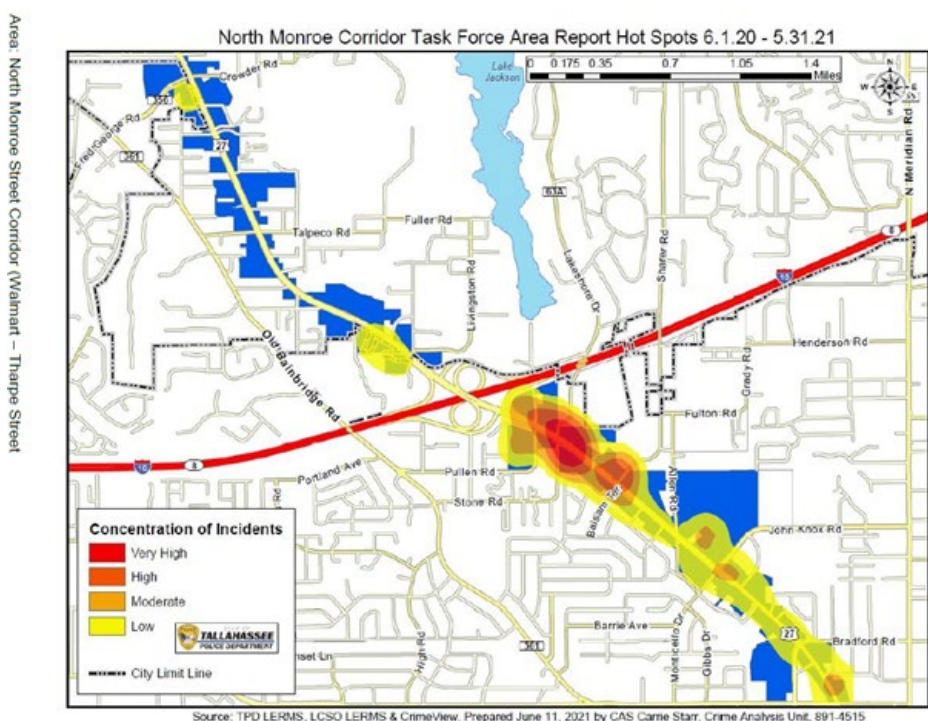
creation of a CRA. If a CRA was established only in unincorporated portions of the study area, only County approval would be needed.

It is important to note that the tax increment generated from the creation of a CRA may require several years to accumulate enough funds to support infrastructure projects.

Topic 2: Response to Crime and Human Trafficking

On July 22, 2021, the Task Force held an immersive session to review crime and human trafficking information and to hear from the public. The session was informed by the Leon County Sheriff's Office, the Tallahassee Police Department, and the Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center (STAC) discussing the importance of Human Services Street Outreach Teams for a varied of human service needs. Task Force members noted the overlapping concerns related to homelessness as social service and quality of life issues that often become intertwined with the criminal justice system due to trespassing, panhandling, and littering. While these matters greatly affect the perceived condition of the corridor, the Task Force separated its homelessness findings into a separate topic so that it could focus on broader criminality and human trafficking issues.

From the crime statistics report provided by LSCO and TPD, the number of crime incidents have increased along North Monroe Street from 2019 to 2020. Trespassing increased by 23%, Baker Acts of mentally ill persons increased 29%, simple assault increased 19%, and larceny increased by 40%. Some of the community partners have identified human trafficking as an issue along the corridor however the data for this is difficult to come by. Robin Hassler Thompson with STAC, reported that in 2020, in one single case, there were more than 170 human trafficking arrests. Data collection is a challenge because typical law enforcement data collection does not always report or identify when arrests and prosecutions are trafficking-related. Also, trafficking survivors usually do not self-identify as being trafficked and go unrecognized as trafficked by service providers, healthcare professionals, and many others who do not recognize the signs.



Beginning January 1, 2021, section 509.096, Florida Statutes, required all public lodging establishments in the State to provide annual training on human trafficking awareness for employees who perform housekeeping duties or who work at the front desk or reception area where guests ordinarily check in or check out. All public lodging establishments regulated by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), Division of Hotels and Restaurants, must provide such training within 60 days of employees beginning their employment. In addition, these public lodging establishments must a human trafficking public awareness sign in an area accessible to employees as prescribed in Florida Statutes.

On July 13, 2021, the Board approved a proposal to contract with the Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center (STAC) to develop training materials and a certification program for businesses to learn how to identify human trafficking victims and offenders. Anticipated to begin in 2022, this pilot training program would be beneficial to areas near interstates and concentrated with hotels like the North Monroe Street corridor. Working with law enforcement partners, this new program will provide vital resources for businesses in understanding the risk factors for potential victims of human trafficking; recognizing common physical indicators of victims; identifying other nonphysical signs of human trafficking activity; and reporting suspected human trafficking activities.

Current Efforts Underway

There are several existing on-going programs available from the Leon County Sheriff's Office and the Leon County Community and Media Relations Office. These programs are available to businesses and residents at no cost, and include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), LCSO Business Emergency Decal Program, LCSO Neighborhood Crime Watch, and the Leon County Citizens Academy.

Crime Prevention and Education Programs

Programs that are available to businesses and residents include:

- The Leon County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) spoke at the July 22, 2021, Crime Reduction Task Force meeting about different resources that the LCSO employs to help reduce crime in Leon County. The resources that are available in Leon County are: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
 - The purpose of CPTED is to modify and efficiently use the environment to lead to a reduction in crime. This can be done through four strategies: Natural Surveillance, Natural Access Control, Territorial Reinforcement, and Maintenance.
 - The LCSO offers audits that can help identify ways the incorporate CPTED principles into the landscaping and site design to help deter crime.
- LCSO Business Emergency Decal Program
 - Establishes a partnership between the local businesses in Leon County and law enforcement. The program helps provide a method of contact in case of an emergency after normal business hours.
- LCSO Neighborhood Crime Watch
 - The Neighborhood Crime Watch is a tool that helps prevent crime and reduces fear among citizens. It helps forge bonds between the community and law enforcement in Leon County.
- Leon County Citizens Academy



Citizen Police Academy: The "Citizen Police Academy" concept started in England. It was first adopted in this country by the Orlando, Florida Police Department in 1985. The Leon County Sheriff's Office version is simply called the "Citizen's Academy." It is modeled after the Orlando academy and is designed to promote better understanding between the Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Leon County.

The Leon County Sheriff's Office Citizen's Academy offers a different and exciting program unique to our area. Typically, the students attracted to the academy are a culturally diverse group of people including bankers, businessmen and women, judges, housewives, schoolteachers, media representatives, retirees and citizens from all walks of life.

Participants in the academy meet one evening a week for 10 weeks. The participants learn about virtually every aspect of a deputy's job including recruiting, administration, patrol operations, traffic enforcement and communications, criminal law, SWAT and hostage negotiations, crime scene investigations, corrections, and many other areas.

The Citizen's Academy doesn't limit participants to classroom training. Students are given the opportunity to:

- Ride-a-long with a deputy
- Tour of the Leon County Courthouse
- Tour of the Public Safety Complex
- Attend a SWAT demonstration at our local training facility
- Shoot some of the high-powered weapons used by officers

Although graduates of the Citizens Academy are not qualified for daily street duty, they do acquire a better understanding of the Leon County Sheriff's Office operations and responsibilities, as well as a greater awareness and appreciation of the difficult challenges and decisions a deputy sheriff faces every day, leading to a better understanding between citizens and law enforcement.

Emergency Decal Program: The "Emergency Decal" program establishes a vital partnership between local merchants and law enforcement. This program is designed to provide a method to contact merchants in the event of an emergency after normal business hours without asking local merchants to post personal and private information on the front of their business. It also allows us to contact local merchants for situations that are not normally monitored by an alarm system (ex: graffiti, loitering, theft, etc.).



The Sheriff's Office maintains an electronic record of the information the local merchant provides and makes it available only to other local law enforcement agencies, firefighters and EMS, not to the general public. Participants involved in the Emergency Decal Program can also request a new or replacement decal, as well as update or change your decal information.

Neighborhood Crime Watch: Neighborhood Crime Watch is an effective method of preventing crime and reducing fear among citizens. It can forge bonds between residents and improve relations between law enforcement and our community. The activities of the program are to:

- Maintain the following positions: Chairperson, Block Captains (number is based on size of neighborhood) and regular residence members.
- Report suspicious activity or persons or crimes accurately and immediately to local law enforcement.
- Mutually assist and encourage the accomplishment of home security inspections, and target hardening.
- After completing the 4 basic training meetings, maintain a continuing system for the dissemination of educational materials relative to self-protection and criminal awareness and adjust program emphasis in accordance with the most current of this information. It is recommended that the continuance of these meetings be on a monthly basis.
- Assist any victims of crime in your neighborhood after an incident. Assist elderly or debilitated citizens and children with a basic understanding of how to protect themselves against criminal victimization such as keep valuable property indoors, always lock your vehicle, keep your home well-lit outdoors, trim bushes and hedges so they don't cover windows, etc.; and
- Encourage citizens to come forward as witnesses.



Human Trafficking Awareness and Training

At the July 13, 2021 meeting, the Board of County Commissioners received a status report on the Survive & Thrive Advocacy Center's training proposal, authorized staff to amend Policy No. 96-1, "Purchasing Policy", and related procurement documents to require County vendors to attest that they do not utilize human trafficked labor in compliance with Section 787.06, Florida Statutes, and approved the funding request in the amount of \$59,000 from the General Contingency Fund to support the Survive & Thrive Advocacy Center's training proposal.

These actions of the Board of County Commissioners build upon previous County efforts to bring awareness to the issue of human trafficking. In 2016, the County Administrator connected with representatives from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to organize training sessions for frontline County staff to recognize and report signs of human trafficking. Leon County Human Resources subsequently hosted training sessions engaging nearly 260 employees from Leon County Emergency Management Services (EMS), Public Works, Facilities Management, Development Support and Environmental Management, Animal Control, and Human Resources. The training, facilitated by subject matter experts from FDLE, trained County staff on how to define human trafficking and the various forms it takes; understand the risk factors for potential victims of human trafficking; recognize common physical indicators of victims; identify other nonphysical signs of human trafficking activity; and report suspected human trafficking activities.

In addition, at the May 10, 2016, meeting, the Board of County Commissioners adopted an ordinance requiring certain types of businesses to post public awareness signs alerting employees and patrons to remedies and protections related to human trafficking.

Strategies for Responding to Crime and Human Trafficking

Following the expert presentations and public input, the Task Force identified the following strategies for reducing crime, improving safety, and responding to human trafficking.

Responding to Human Trafficking - The primary strategies identified by the Task Force to address human trafficking include monitoring, training, and education, and use of the Human Service Street Outreach Team. The Human Services Street Outreach team is implemented by the Big Bend Continuum of Care through the Leon County Human Services and Community Partnerships Department to assess and survey the needs of individuals and to identify and connect the individuals to needed services. Specifically, the strategies include enforcing human trafficking training and signage requirements, providing toolkits for businesses, implementing the County-approved and supported training, recognizing and actively participating in Human Trafficking Awareness Month starting in January 2022, and training the Human Services Street Outreach Team to recognize and respond to human trafficking.

Staff Recommendation: *Direct staff to prepare a Proclamation in support of Human Trafficking Awareness Month (January) to be signed by the Chairman and to identify opportunities for County engagement next month.*

Staff Recommendation: *Continue to support the Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center pilot program to educate and train business owners and residents to recognize and respond to human trafficking.*

Staff Recommendation: *Encourage the Human Services Street Outreach Team to participate in STAC's human trafficking awareness training.*

Signage and Training for Public Lodging Establishments – After nearly one year since the implementation of the new statutory requirement, the Task Force finds that the County should request DBPR to assess compliance for signage and training of staff at public lodging establishments along the North Monroe Corridor.

Staff Recommendation: *Request the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation assess the compliance of public lodging establishments in Leon County for meeting state requirements for human trafficking awareness training and signage.*

Responding to Panhandling and Mental Health/Behavioral Calls - Major strategies identified to address panhandling and mental health calls including the employment of the Human Services Street Outreach Team and use the Mental Health Services Team which are being monitored by partner agencies.

Responding to General Crime - The general strategies to address crime include the use of the Street Outreach Team and available or emerging crime prevention programs. Business and residents may improve safety on a case-by-case basis using LCSO and TPD programs, including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Emergency Decal and Neighborhood programs, LCSO Neighborhood Crime Watch, and Leon County Citizens Academy. While these programs are effective in deterring crime, many Task Force members and the citizens in attendance at the meetings indicated that they were unaware of the programs.

Staff Recommendation: *Direct staff to identify tactics to help educate and inform citizens and businesses on the North Monroe Street corridor of the programs offered by local law enforcement agencies and encourage use of these programs to deter crime.*

Topic 3: Responding to the Impacts of Homelessness

On August 5, 2021, the Task Force held an immersive session to review information associated with homelessness and housing. This session was informed by staff from the Big Bend Continuum of Care (BBCoC), the Salvation Army, the Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center (STAC), and Leon County Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships.

The Big Bend Continuum of Care's 2020 Point in Time Data for January 27, 2020 noted a total of 764 individuals in Leon County who indicated that the individual/household was experiencing homelessness by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition, which is the generally accepted definition of homelessness. Of those 764 individuals, the data indicates that 87% were sheltered (661 people) and 13% unsheltered (103). The Kearney Center experienced a 54% reduction capacity (as did other emergency shelters) due to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for COVID-19. Before COVID-19, the Kearney Center had capacity for 375 people, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, the center had capacity for 187 people. The Kearney Center began housing its population in local hotels on North Monroe Street in mid-2020. Between 188 and 200 people required additional housing that was provided in area hotels. On April 1, 2021, the Kearney Center reopened with limited capacity and began phasing clients out of hotels into its primary center and other housing options. That capacity limitation continues to exist due to the COVID-19 pandemic but the capacity is increasing as overall local conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to improve.

Part of the discussions on homelessness included better responding to and assessing needs of individuals on the corridor, particularly those engaged in trespassing and panhandling. An effective resource was identified as the Human Services Outreach Team, implemented by the BBCoC through the Leon County Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships Department. This outreach team provides "boots on the ground" to identify and connect services to individuals on the street. One important aspect of the outreach team is the ability to assess and survey individuals' needs.

Following the presentations and public input, the Task Force was encouraged by the planned deployment and capacity increases for the Human Services Street Outreach Team through the BBCoC. The BBCoC shared its plans to recruit additional trained and experienced staff for the Street Outreach Team which will aid in understanding the needs of the homeless population.

On December 14, 2021, the Board will consider the reallocation of approximately \$491,000 from the County's disbursement of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to the Leon County Sheriff's Office budget for the purpose of supporting two Homelessness Outreach Street Team (HOST) Deputies. The HOST Deputies would be responsible for focusing on connecting individuals and families to available housing and services.



Photo Credit: Tom Flanigan, WFSU News

Current Efforts Underway

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, there was an increase in the unsheltered homeless population on the North Monroe corridor as noted previously. The Salvation Army's facility on Allen Road served as a Community Relief Center from May 2020, offering sleeping accommodations, hot meals, showers, and case management to families experiencing homelessness and food-insecurity during the pandemic. In July 2020, the Community Relief Center suspended overnight shelter accommodation when the Kearney Center increased its use of hotels and apartments for emergency overnight shelter. In addition, some of the hotels on the corridor served as temporary shelters for the people experiencing homelessness when the Kearney Center needed to move clients to alternative housing to meet CDC guidelines.

The Joint Workshop on Homelessness, Affordable Housing, and the Residential Real Estate & Construction Market that was held on July 13, 2021, itemized existing and upcoming efforts involving the dedication of \$6.272 million in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to address homelessness. In addition, the workshop recommended that the County and City partner with the BBCoC to use \$1.410 million for coordinated street outreach, rapid rehousing, permanent support housing, diversion, and capacity building; and distribute another \$3.075 million through a new Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP) Homelessness Services Category in addition to the existing \$797,193. Some of the actions that the County and City have taken to support homeless services include:

- Convened the COVID-19 Local Homeless Task Force to coordinate emergency response and mitigation.
- Partnered with the Salvation Army to open an emergency Community Relief Center for unsheltered individuals.
- Established and funded non-congregate sheltering for individuals and families experiencing homeless diagnosed with COVID-19 or awaiting testing.
- Created the Tallahassee-Leon County Homeless Dashboard through Geographic Information System (GIS) bringing situational awareness and performance data across dozens of agencies.
- Established Street Outreach Teams to fill service gaps and increase access to housing resources.
- Provided \$2.1 million in CARES Act funding to homeless shelter service providers.
- Provided \$12.25 million in housing and utilities through the Leon CARES Individual Assistance Program and City CARES program to prevent evictions and utility interruptions for more than 4,900 County residents.
- Established the Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund to increase access to affordable housing for vulnerable tenants.
- Established and funded a new Landlord Liaison position within the Big Bend Continuum of Care.
- Launched the Leon CARES Emergency Rental Assistance Program for rent and utility assistance to prevent evictions and utility interruptions (more than 1,700 households assisted and over \$7 million award thus far)
- Approved \$6.272 million in ARPA dedicated to homelessness

Strategies for Responding to the Impacts of Homelessness

Following the expert presentations and public input, the Task Force identified the following strategies for responding to the impacts of homelessness:

Minimizing encampments on Private and Public lands – As COVID-19 impacts abate and the existing CDC guidelines are revised, the capacity at emergency shelters can be maximized and returned to pre-COVID capacities. The Leon County Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships requested that information about encampments be referred to their office to initiate outreach efforts at the campsite. Based on prior experiences working the homeless individuals, the Task Force found that some people prefer the independence of campsite to congregating in a shelter.

Staff Recommendation: *Continue to support the Street Outreach Teams efforts to provide housing to unsheltered individuals and families including emergency shelter, hotel vouchers, and diversion services.*

BBCoC and Salvation Army Resource Guides - The Task Force supported strategies to use and develop distributable resource cards to all businesses, developing a quick one-page resource guide as soon as possible, establishing a contact for businesses and residents on the various outreach teams, posting resource links on public websites and at bus stops, and coordinating with STAC to include human trafficking resources.

Staff Recommendation: *Direct staff to facilitate the creation of a one-page shareable resource guide for businesses and residents through coordination with Big Bend Continuum of Care, Big Bend 211, Salvation Army, and Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center.*

Coordination Between Law Enforcement, Housing Providers, & County/City Services - The Task Force emphasized the benefit of County and City staff meeting with law enforcement and service providers to address nuisance related homelessness complaints.

Staff Recommendation: *Consider funding the two Homelessness Outreach Street Team Deputies, as provided in a separate agenda item, to address homeless individuals that are disrupting businesses or trespassing and camping in neighborhoods.*

Conclusion

In order to maintain the vibrancy of North Monroe Street and respond to issues raised by residents and business owners along the corridor, the Board created the Citizens' North Monroe Street Corridor Task Force to identify opportunities to enhance overall quality of life conditions. Over the course of six months, the Task Force met eight times to review local data, hear from experts in their respective fields, and discuss its finding and strategies for targeted investments along the corridor, reducing crime and human trafficking, and addressing the impacts of homelessness.

The County continues to prioritize investments along the highly traveled North Monroe Street corridor, particularly the unincorporated portion north of I-10 to Fred George Road. For the purpose of capital improvements to the roadway infrastructure, North Monroe Street is a state-maintained thoroughfare managed by FDOT which has been supportive of County-requested improvements related to traffic safety and sidewalks.

As detailed in this report, the County supports law enforcement programs designed to reduce crime and has invested in a pilot program to provide training to area businesses that will help them identify the signs associated with human trafficking. The County has also been a leader in dedicating and distributing COVID-10 relief funds to our most vulnerable populations and working with mental health providers and social services agencies to reach clients where they are.

This Final Report is reflective of the volunteer 12-member Task Force and its ardent deliberations to enhance North Monroe Street. The report acknowledges the vast amount of work that has already been performed along the corridor, summarizes public and private sector efforts currently underway, and identifies planned investments which provides the framework and context for the findings identified in this Final Report.

Appendix A: Resolution 21-12

LEON COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 21- 12

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE WHICH SHALL BE NAMED THE CITIZENS' NORTH MONROE CORRIDOR TASK FORCE, AND WHICH SHALL OPERATE AND FUNCTION AS A FOCUS GROUP.

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida (the Board) recognizes and acknowledges that the North Monroe Corridor requires examination of issues related to quality of life and economic health to maintain the high quality of service and development standards of the County;

WHEREAS, Leon County wants to address issues along the North Monroe Street corridor from Fred George Road to Tharpe Street including crime, indigent populations, and gateway and corridor improvements; and

WHEREAS, Leon County identifies benefits in collaborating with the City, and with examination and input from stakeholder participants along the corridor, the Board wishes to establish and appoint a task force to function and operate in accordance with Board Policy No. 03-15, "Board-Appointed Citizen Committees."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LEON COUNTY, that:

1. The Board hereby establishes a task force, to be named the Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force, that will focus on the North Monroe Street corridor from Fred George Road to Tharpe Street.
2. The purpose and intent of the Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force is to serve as a fact-finding source of community input and resources from community stakeholders and examine 3 priority issues including crime, indigent populations, and gateway and corridor

improvements; and to identify in a final report, short-term and long-term opportunities to reduce crime, and improve safety and overall conditions, including economic conditions and aesthetics, along the North Monroe Street corridor between Fred George Road and Tharpe Street.


3. The Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force shall function and operate as a Focus Group in accordance with Board Policy No. 03-15, "Board-Appointed Citizen Committees."
4. The Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force shall have 12 members. The members shall all be residents of Leon County and shall be to be appointed as follows:
 - a. Six (6) Citizens or Citizen Group representatives, three (3) to be appointed by the County Administrator and three (3) to be appointed by the City;
 - b. Four (4) Business or Business sector representatives, two (2) to be appointed by the County Administrator and two (2) to be appointed by the City; and
 - c. Two (2) Nonprofit or Service Organizations representatives to be appointed by the County Administrator.
5. The City shall inform the County Administrator of its appointments no later than May 13, 2021. If the City fails to notify the County of its appointments by this date, the County Administrator shall appoint the remaining vacancies on behalf of the City.
6. The terms of the members shall be for the life of the Task Force. Any vacancies may be filled by the County Administrator or his designee for the remainder of the term.
7. Staff from the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, with support from pertinent County Departments, shall assist the Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force.
8. The members of the Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force shall not be subject to full and public disclosure of financial interests.
9. The Citizens' North Monroe Corridor Task Force shall be dissolved or extended

by agreement of the Board upon the completion of the task force report, but no later than January 31, 2022.

10. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.



DONE, ADOPTED, AND PASSED by the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County,
Florida, this 13th day of April, 2021.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: 
Rick Minor, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners


ATTESTED BY:

Gwendolyn Marshall, Clerk of Court
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida

By:  

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Leon County Attorney's Office

Chasity H.
By:  O'Steen
Chasity H. O'Steen, Esq.
County Attorney

Digitally signed by Chasity H. O'Steen
DN: cn=Chasity H. O'Steen, o=Leon
County Board of County Commissioners,
ou=County Attorney's Office,
email=osteenc@leoncountyfl.gov, c=US
Date: 2021.04.20 10:11:58 -04'00'

Appendix B: Letter from Commissioner Minor



Leon County Board of County Commissioners

301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301
(850) 606-5300 www.leoncountycl.gov

Commissioners

RICK MINOR
District 3
Chairman

BILL PROCTOR
District 1
Vice Chairman

JIMBO JACKSON
District 2

BRIAN WELCH
District 4

KRISTIN DOZIER
District 5

CAROLYN D. CUMMINGS
At-Large

NICK MADDOX
At-Large

VINCENT S. LONG
County Administrator

CHASTITY H. O'STEEN
County Attorney

Letter from the Chairman

On behalf of the Leon County Board of County Commissioners, I would like to thank the members of the Citizens North Monroe Corridor Task Force for volunteering their time, commitment, and energy toward identifying areas of improvement in our community. Composed of residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations, the task force was charged with identifying the challenges and opportunities for enhancement along the North Monroe corridor with an emphasis on the prevalence of homeless and indigent populations, the reduction of crime and human trafficking, and priority capital and aesthetic improvements.

The North Monroe Street corridor, from Fred George Road to Tharpe Street, serves more than 12,000 Leon County residents who live, work, and patronize businesses along this vital roadway. It offers a thriving business landscape, provides access to vibrant and established neighborhoods, and serves as a gateway to our community that welcomes so many visitors each year. The creation of the task force demonstrates the County's commitment to ensure that North Monroe Street exemplifies all the things that make our community exceptional.

Since the Board's establishment of the task force in April 2021, it has been immersed in public policy discussions with the support of subject matter experts. The task force has done an exceptional job in taking input from the public, analyzing data on crime and human trafficking, homelessness, and physical improvements planned for the corridor, and shedding light on very difficult topics that must be addressed in our community. From my personal observations of the task force meetings, I understand and appreciate the complexity of the issues along North Monroe Street and the earnestness for which the task force has sought viable solutions.

The County appreciates the efforts of the task force along with the supporting agencies and subject matter experts that assisted in this examination of the North Monroe Street corridor. I look forward to reviewing the final report of the task force and considering its findings at a future meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

Sincerely,

Rick Minor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Minor".

Leon County Board of County Commissioners Chairman

People Focused. Performance Driven.