

Annual Report



2017



Plan
Hillsborough

Message from the Executive Director



*Melissa Zornitta, AICP
Executive Director*

The accomplishments of the Plan Hillsborough staff in 2017 are many! We have much to be proud of and through this report offer just some of the highlights. Throughout the year, I have seen our staff continue to exemplify our agency values as we serve the Planning Commission, River Board, and Metropolitan Planning Organization as well as the four local governments.

Integrity and Trust – Several projects illustrate the goal of meeting the needs of the community while building relationships and trust. Vision Zero required numerous partnerships to create and begin to implement an action plan. Redistricting for the City of Tampa likewise necessitated building trust as we identified important needs within our community.

Innovation – We strive to think out of the box and have used technology to our advantage by creating an eCceptionist to replace our retiring receptionist and a Community Health Atlas to provide planners and citizens with a baseline profile of community health.

Transparency – Getting the community involved and having a clear understanding of our projects is vital to creating successful plans. This was illustrated throughout the transparent process and open communication we had in projects like the Brandon East-West Corridor Study and the Plant City Road Extension Studies.

Stewardship – With the aim of improving our existing plan amendment review process, we undertook an outside review by students at the University of South Florida to look for opportunities to do things more efficiently and to make better use of our resources.

Servant Leadership – We added on-site office hours at each of the three cities to better meet the needs of the jurisdiction and clients who seek our services. We have tried to lead by example in creating a Commuter Challenge and by giving back to the community through participating in Habitat for Humanity's Women Build and a community clean-up at Harvest Hope Park.

With these values at the foundation of what we do, I believe 2018 will see us produce even more positive plans that will serve our community well.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Zornitta".

2017 Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commissioners

Mitch Thrower, Chair
Bowen A. Arnold, Vice Chair
Gary Pike, Member-at-Large
Stephanie A. Agliano
Shaun Metzger*
Matthew D. Buzza
John Dicks*
Derek L. Doughty, PE

Theodore Trent Green, RA
Nigel M. Joseph
Karen Kress, AICP*
Michael Maurino*
Jaqueline S. Wilds
Tony Rodriguez, MacDill AFB Ex-Officio
Christopher Farkas, School District Ex-Officio
**Members for part of FY 2017*



46 Plan amendments

19 Unincorporated Hillsborough

18 Tampa

5 Temple Terrace

4 Plant City

361
Consistency reviews

27
Public project meetings

12
Planning & Design Awards presented



127 Meetings

20 Planning Commission meetings

13 River Board meetings

94 MPO meetings*

*Includes MPO committee meetings

4,021

Clients served



Total eNewsletters

20

- 6** Beyond Today
- 5** Connections to Tomorrow
- 2** River News
- 2** Hillsborough Rides
- 3** Rubber Meets the Road
- 2** Walk Bike News



1,890+

Facebook likes



10,380+

Twitter followers

16

Research reports for private sector and client governments

253,280 Web visits

7,107 Email subscribers

Vision Zero



Learning from established Vision Zero movements in other areas, we developed a Vision Zero Action Plan for Hillsborough County based on the common principle that death and injury on streets is preventable. The Vision Zero Action Plan for our county is centered around four action tracks: Paint Saves Lives (engineering), One Message/ Many Voices (education), Consistent and Fair (enforcement), and The Future Will Not Be Like the Past (design manuals and procedures). The strategies were developed over four workshops, with attendees participating in a demonstration of a strategy at each workshop.

Beth Alden, AICP, Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Director

Partners: Hillsborough County, Cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City, Hillsborough County Public School District, and Florida Department of Transportation

Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment

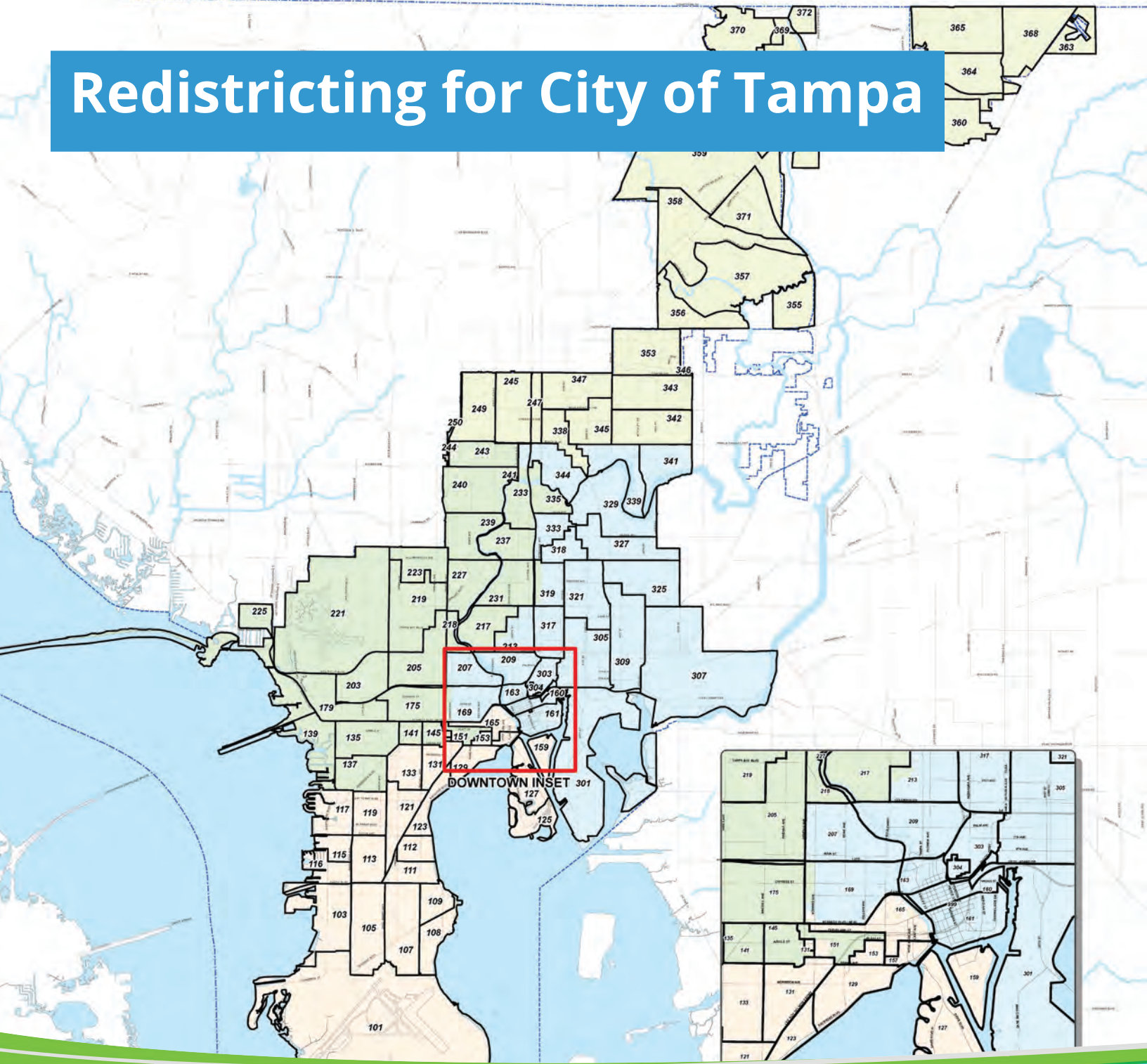


In 2015, the Florida State Legislature passed the Peril of Flood Act which placed new requirements for local coastal governments to address flooding, including flooding from sea level rise. Using the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Sea Level Change Curve Calculator, which includes NOAA's projections, we generated sea level change projections at the local level through the year 2040. Based on the data, the City of Tampa adopted comprehensive plan amendments addressing Sea Level Rise. In the spring of 2017, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council awarded the Project with a First Place Future of the Region Award for Community Preparedness, heralding this effort as a model that can be used throughout the state.

Shawn College, AICP, Team Leader, Environmental Planning, Research & Infrastructure



Redistricting for City of Tampa



We researched, planned, and prepared a series of redistricting maps for the City of Tampa single-member City Council districts. By April 1, in the year preceding the next City Council elections, the single-member districts must be re-divided based on Planning Commission population estimates. This is required by State Law and the City of Tampa Charter. A vigorous outreach campaign was conducted, soliciting comments from throughout the City. A decision by the Planning Commission will be made in early 2018.

Terry Eagan, Librarian

Brandon East West Corridor Study



The Brandon area has untapped potential with certain constraints. The Brandon East West Corridor Study comprehensively looked at the land use and transportation issues facing the area. Ten areas throughout the community were identified to be considered mixed-use centers with varying degrees of future development planned in each. The study found the centers must be better connected and encourage a mix of uses that reduce the need for vehicle trips and support other types of mobility. The study covered topics from development and redevelopment opportunities to transit and road improvements and looked at feasibility for a variety of projects.

Sarah McKinley, Principal Planner



FLiP Growing in Size



In May, we held our second annual Future Leaders in Planning (FLiP) student leadership development program. Designed to introduce high school students to urban planning as a potential career, the FLiP program expanded from nine to eighteen students and from a two-day to a three-day program in just its second year. FLiP offers a broad exposure to planning from both public and private sector perspectives across many fields. Students participate in field trips, presentations, and hands-on workshops to better understand how planning affects their daily lives.

Lynn Merenda, Community Relations Coordinator

Hillsborough County Health Atlas



The Hillsborough County Health Atlas is a web-based mapping tool that provides planners and communities a baseline profile of chronic disease as well as demographic, transportation, health care access, food environment, emergency preparedness, and environmental indicators in the City of Tampa. The tool helps visualize the interconnectedness of health, transportation, economic development, and the environment. Future phases will extend health indicators to Unincorporated Hillsborough County, Temple Terrace, and Plant City, and provide locations of community assets.

Jason Krzyzanowski, Programmer/Analyst



Office Hours at City Hall



Working along side our Hillsborough County counterparts is business as usual. As part of our effort to better connect with the community and be more accessible to the public, Plan Hillsborough staff can also be found at City Hall in Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City one day a week. Working alongside our local government counterparts has allowed Plan Hillsborough staff to build a better relationship with our local governments as well as provide a one-stop-shop for clients needing data or considering plan amendments and rezonings in the cities we serve.

David Hey, AICP, Principal Planner and City of Tampa Liaison

Plan Amendment Efficiency Review



We are always looking to streamline the Plan Amendment review process to improve recommendations for elected officials and the public. Led by students from the University of South Florida, staff participated in various exercises to distill the areas of potential improvement in the Plan Amendment review process as it relates to administrative, procedural activities, and staff report production leading up to the Planning Commission Plan Amendment Public Hearing. A number of recommendations have been developed aiming to save staff time, increase productivity, and create a better end product.

Krista Kelly, AICP, Executive Planner



Multimodal Safety Reviews



Multimodal safety reviews were conducted to identify potential safety improvements along Kennedy Boulevard from Westshore Boulevard to the Hillsborough River as well as Hillsborough Avenue from Memorial Highway to Himes Avenue. Both studies provide a feasibility review of recommendations identified in several existing MPO walk/bike and trail plans. The results will augment an existing access management/resurfacing project with design and operational practices consistent with the Federal Highway Administration's Pedestrian Safety Design Best Practices and Florida Department of Transportation's Complete Streets Implementation Manual.

Wade Reynolds, AICP, Senior Planner

Plant City Road Extensions Studies



Preliminary planning and technical analysis for potential alternatives to extend Sam Allen Road and Rice Road to the Hillsborough-Polk County Line were conducted. These extensions would provide new east-west routes between County Line Road and existing roads in Plant City such as Park Road and Coronet Road to accommodate anticipated residential development near Sam Allen Road and commercial/industrial development near Rice Road. This study addresses viable roadway alignments, environmental impacts, right-of-way, and construction costs as well as additional pedestrian and bicycle lanes.

Bud Whitehead, Senior Planner



Combined Agency Newsletters

Connections to Tomorrow

8.1.2017

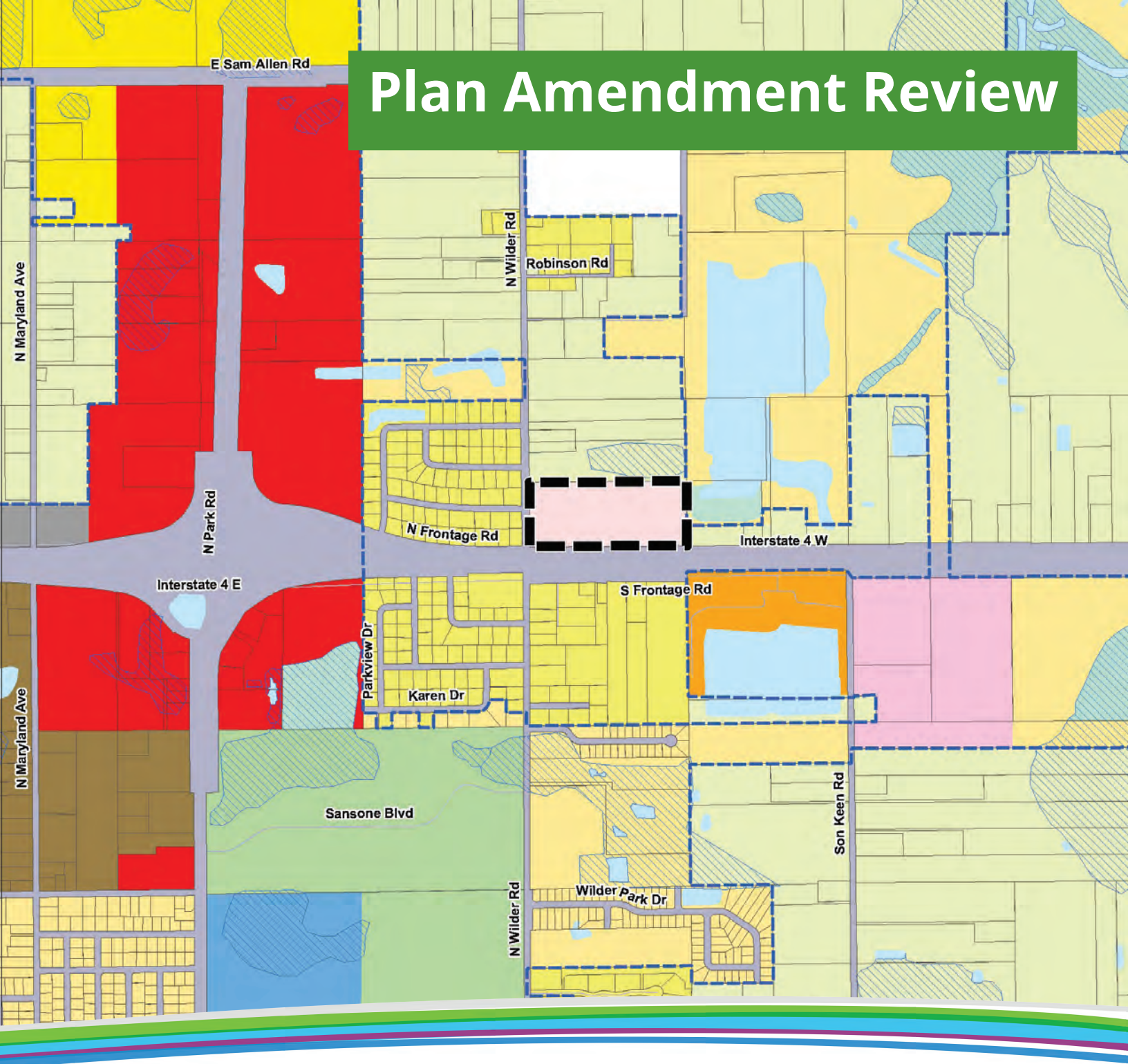
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As of August 2017, five agency newsletters from the Planning Commission, Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization, and River Board have been streamlined and consolidated. *Connections to Tomorrow* tells our story as we work together in our community towards a thriving future. This format puts focus on Plan Hillsborough news and reduces e-mail inbox clutter.

Christopher English, Webmaster

Plan Amendment Review



We processed 46 Comprehensive Plan Amendment consistency reviews in 2017. This included reviews related to Future Land Use map and text amendments for Hillsborough County, Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City. Review is important, as it ensures that proposed land use changes are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the adopted Comprehensive Plans and appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood. The reviews also give professional planning feedback to the applicants, which can serve as a valuable resource for improving future development.

Yeneka Mills, Senior Planner



Downtown Tampa Parking Studies



We continued working with the Tampa Downtown Partnership and the City of Tampa to look at ways to improve parking in Downtown Tampa. Our staff conducted an online survey of over 1,400 Downtown parking users including employees, residents, and visitors. Responses gave important insight on parking choices and needs in the growing urban core. We also conducted an analysis of public parking garages in Downtown Tampa and suggested improvements to make parking more user-friendly and safe.

Tony LaColla, AICP, Principal Planner and Temple Terrace Liaison

Bullard Parkway Study and Temporary Bikelane

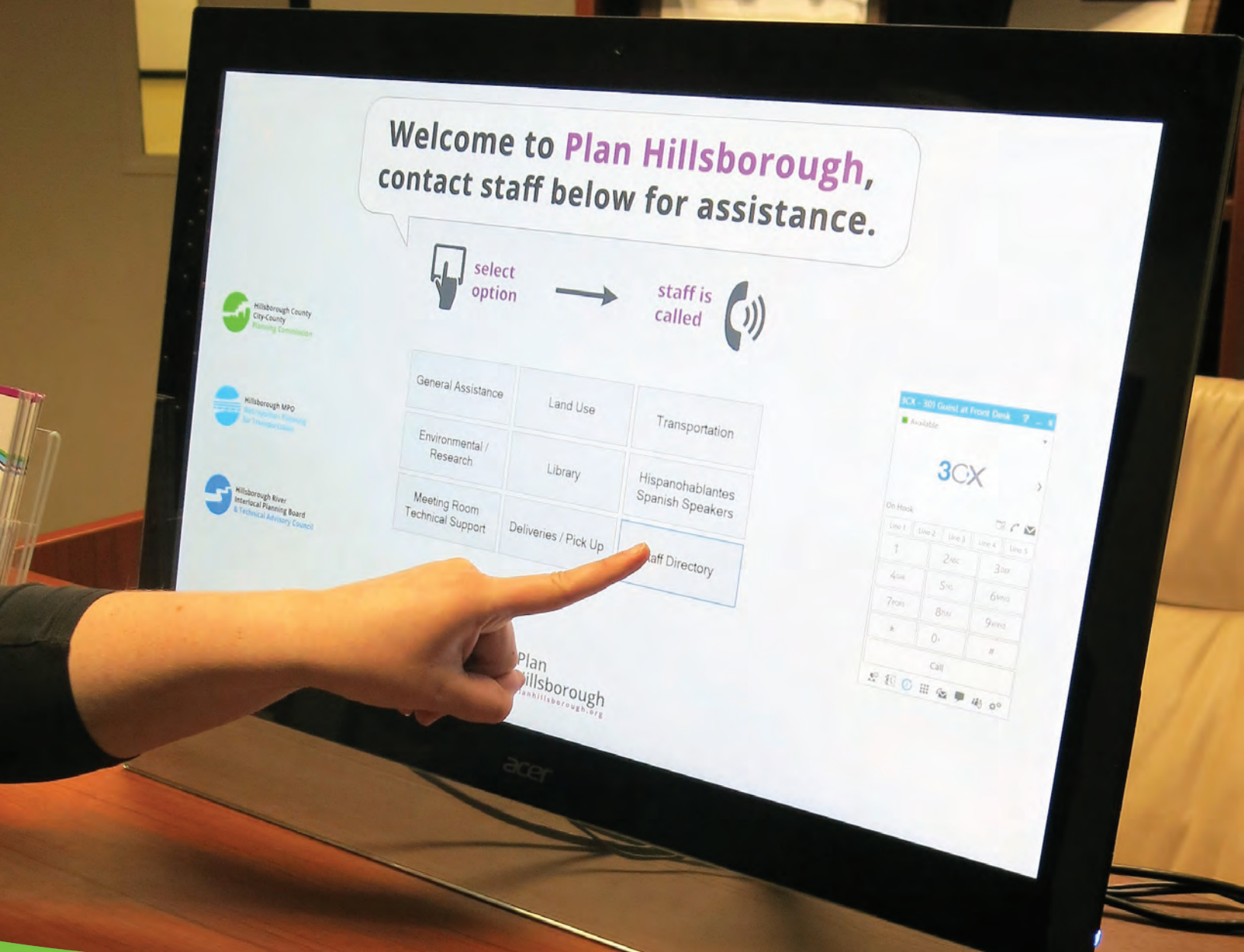


We studied ways of making walking and bicycling along Bullard Parkway more enjoyable and safe. One of the recommendations coming out of the study was to widen the narrow bike lane over the river by slightly reducing the motor vehicle lanes and then painting the bike lane green for added awareness. The idea came at a perfect time as the Vision Zero Action Plan was being developed. A strategy of Vision Zero is using low cost and quick solutions to improve safety. Painting the temporary bike lane on the 600-foot bridge along Bullard Parkway provided an opportunity to demonstrate a real-life application of this kind of pop-up treatment.

Gena Tores, Executive Planner



eCeptionist



Next time you visit Plan Hillsborough, you might be greeted, not by a human, but by our eCeptionist. Our eCeptionist is a program, written in-house, that retrieves staff names and extensions and creates an easy to use interface for the public to reach the correct person. The eCeptionist was created to replace a retiring staff member as a way to cut costs while still providing excellent customer service to our clients.

Michael Rempfer, Database & Network Administrator

Garden Steps



We were selected for a HealthyCommunity50 seed grant by the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association, and the National Association of Counties to focus on neighborhood access to fresh produce. Staff has identified food deserts and walkability as two of the City of Tampa's biggest problems. Garden Steps will create community gardens with easy pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access in identified food deserts. The goal is to improve health equity and population health by increasing easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Through Garden Steps, we aim to be a model for the other 26 Florida MPOs in collaboration with our diverse public and private sector partners.

Michele Ogilvie, Executive Planner



Commuter Challenge Week



We celebrated our first-ever Commuter Challenge Week between March 27 and March 31. Taking the challenge to use alternatives to driving alone to commute to work, travel to off-site meetings, or go to lunch, staff got into the friendly competition with the majority participating. Many of our staff went the extra mile by riding the bus, streetcar, walking, biking, and taking the Downtowner. An eye-opening experience, many of our planners now can say they literally have walked the walk.

Melissa Dickens, AICP, Senior Planner

Alexander Street Land Use Study

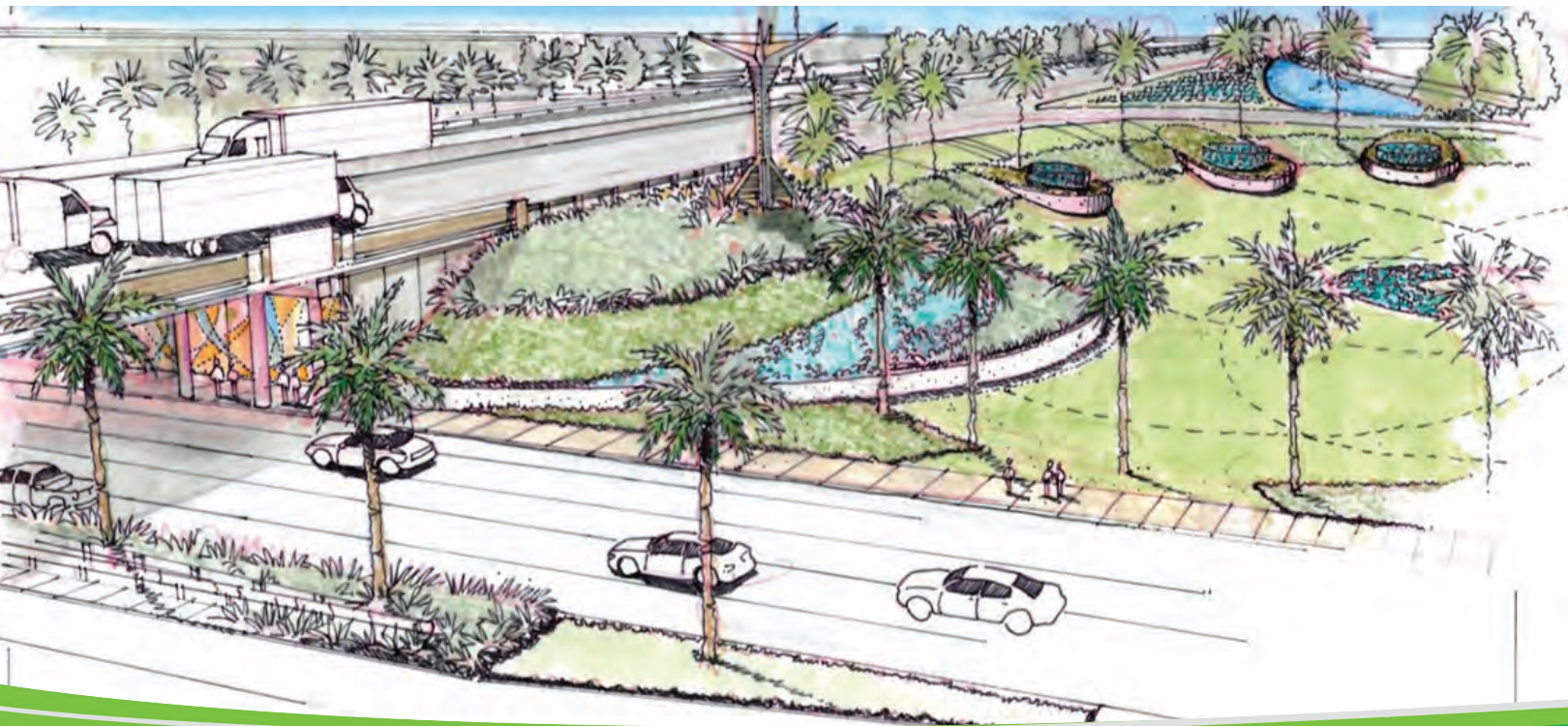
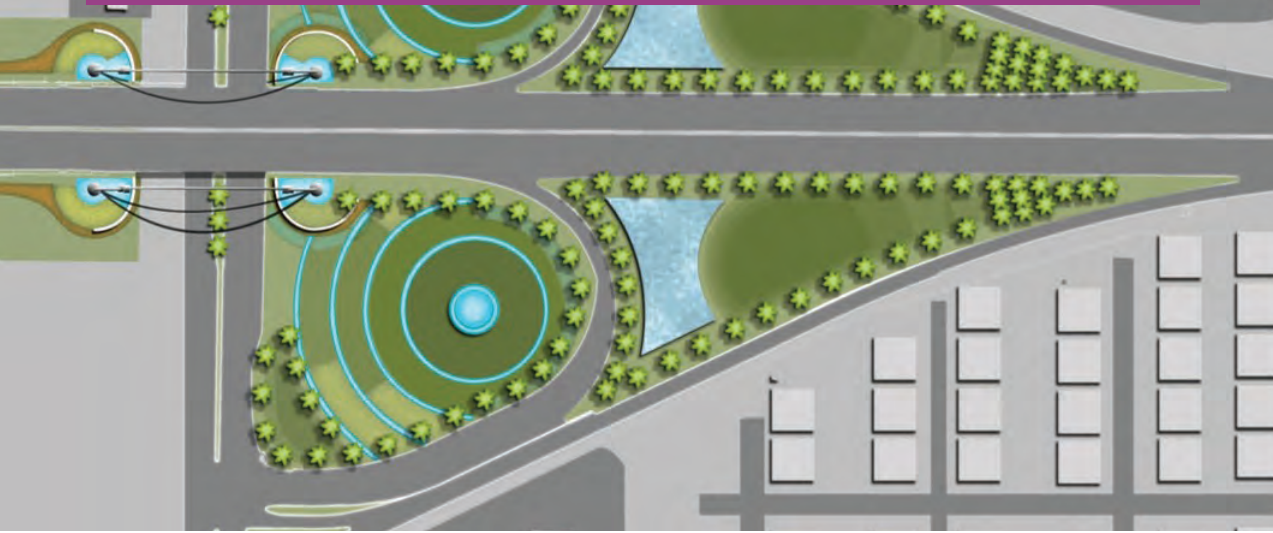


Completed in 2014, Plant City's North Alexander Street extension has created two miles of new road frontage. Properties along the new roadway are being studied in relation to the Northeast Plant City Area Master Plan and the Imagine 2040: Plant City Comprehensive Plan. The North Alexander Street Land Use Study will review what is the best future use of this land in response to the new roadway. A real estate market analysis was conducted, and potential future land uses will be mapped out in 2018.

Jay Collins, AICP, Senior Planner



Innovation Gateway Study



Partnering with !P (Innovation Place), we studied a makeover of I-275 interchanges at Fowler Avenue and Busch Boulevard in the Innovation Gateways. Work included preliminary design concepts as well as gathering stakeholder input and community outreach. The concept plan incorporates many elements, such as ways to address both aesthetic and safety enhancements including decorative fencing, street furniture, public art, lighting, street trees, shrubs, and ground cover. The plan also determined implementation steps consistent with available construction budgets and reflects the area's future plans.

Lisa Silva, AICP, PLA, Principal Planner

Health in Planning Policies Initiative



In cooperation with Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County, we completed work on the Department of Economic Opportunity Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant in the Terrace Park | University Square area in the City of Tampa. Staff identified existing policies related to health initiatives, researched food access policies in other jurisdictions, and continued research and data collection related to Health in All Policies, food access, and community garden locations. Findings and recommendations resulting from the Department of Economic Opportunity grant will eventually result in updates to the City's Imagine 2040 Comprehensive Plan in 2018.

Pedro Parra, Principal Planner



Partners: Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, City of Tampa, and University Area Community Development Corporation

Emerging Leaders in Planning



The Emerging Leaders in Planning program was developed to begin a succession process for Plan Hillsborough as many of the agency's current leadership will be retiring over the next few years. This 12-month program trained six selected staff members on the fundamentals of leadership, how the agency operates, and the dynamics of Hillsborough County's public and private sectors. Participants worked in classroom sessions on various leadership oriented topics, attended panel discussions with current and former leaders in government and the private sector, and worked with an assigned mentor.

Stephen Griffin, AICP, Strategic Planning Initiatives Team Leader

Big Data Working Group



We are currently developing a data portal to improve the management of mobility data. The shared data portal is a regional collaboration among the Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida to provide a centralized, electronic database of transportation data. Upon completion, the portal will facilitate the collection, archiving, and sharing of data for public agencies, academia, and the general public. Users will be able to visualize system performance through a series of performance widgets and query real-time datasets.

Johnny Wong, PhD, Senior Planner



Innovation District Planning



In an effort to provide assistance to Tampa's Innovation District, also known as Innovation Place, we have participated in projects related to Fowler Avenue landscaping, Community Safety Action Plan implementation, and the Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Area Wide Planning for USF Harvest of Hope. We began working on Fowler Avenue Corridor Land Use and Design Study to assist in planning for a robust mixed-use design with appropriate density along the corridor. We also provided sidewalk data, population and employment data, and mapping for projects in the area.

Allison Yeh, AICP Executive Planner and Sustainability Coordinator

Giving Back



In celebration of Earth Day, we rolled up our sleeves in April at Harvest Hope Park and Community Garden to pick up trash, build and paint planter boxes, and plant vegetables in the garden. Then in May, we donned our hard hats to make a difference for a very special family in Temple Terrace as part of Habitat for Humanity's Women Build program. In December, everyone came together to ring in the holiday season with Christmas carols and gifts for residents at Whispering Oaks Health and Rehab facility. These events were rewarding for staff, allowing us to give back to the community.

Tatiana Gonzalez, CNU-A, Senior Planner





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