

Plant City Transit Master Plan

Existing Conditions &
Travel Market Analysis

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Plant City Master Transit Plan Overview

The Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in partnership with the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART), is conducting a study to evaluate transit alternatives for Plant City. Currently, Plant City does not have public transit options for its nearly 40,000 residents and 17,000 workers¹. Previous transit service, which included a circulator to serve community trips and a commuter route connecting to Tampa, were cut in 2008 and 2017, respectively, due to budget cuts.

According to the Hillsborough MPO, Plant City is projected to be one of the fastest growing areas of Hillsborough County, by percent of population growth. With the potential influx of additional transportation funding through the All For Transportation surtax, it is time to re-evaluate the feasibility of implementing public transportation service.

This Master Plan is the first step towards implementing a public transit network to meet current and future unmet transportation and mobility needs in the study area. The goal of this Master Plan is to determine the needs and feasibility of implementing transit services that will allow residents to fulfill their daily needs which include work, medical, educational, shopping, recreational, and emergency travel commitments.

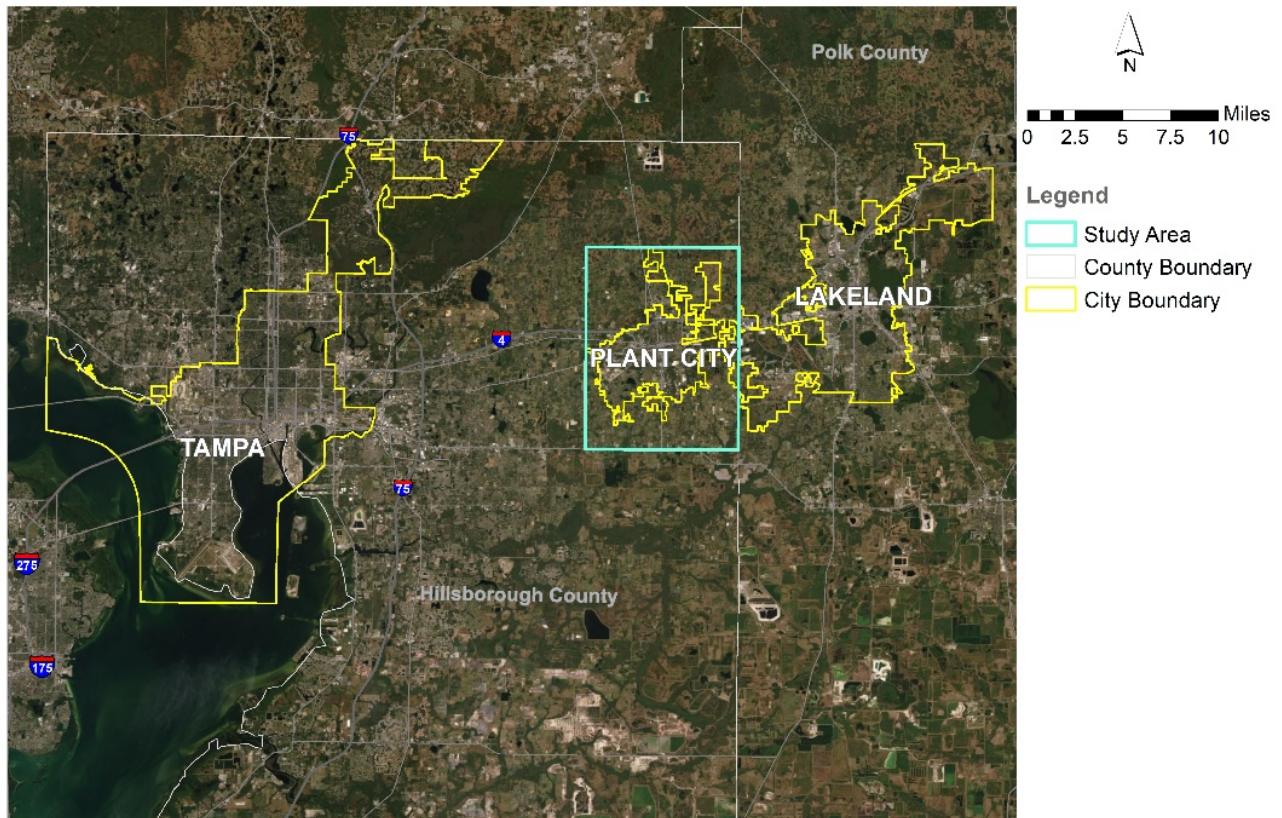


Figure 1: Plant City Travel Market Area

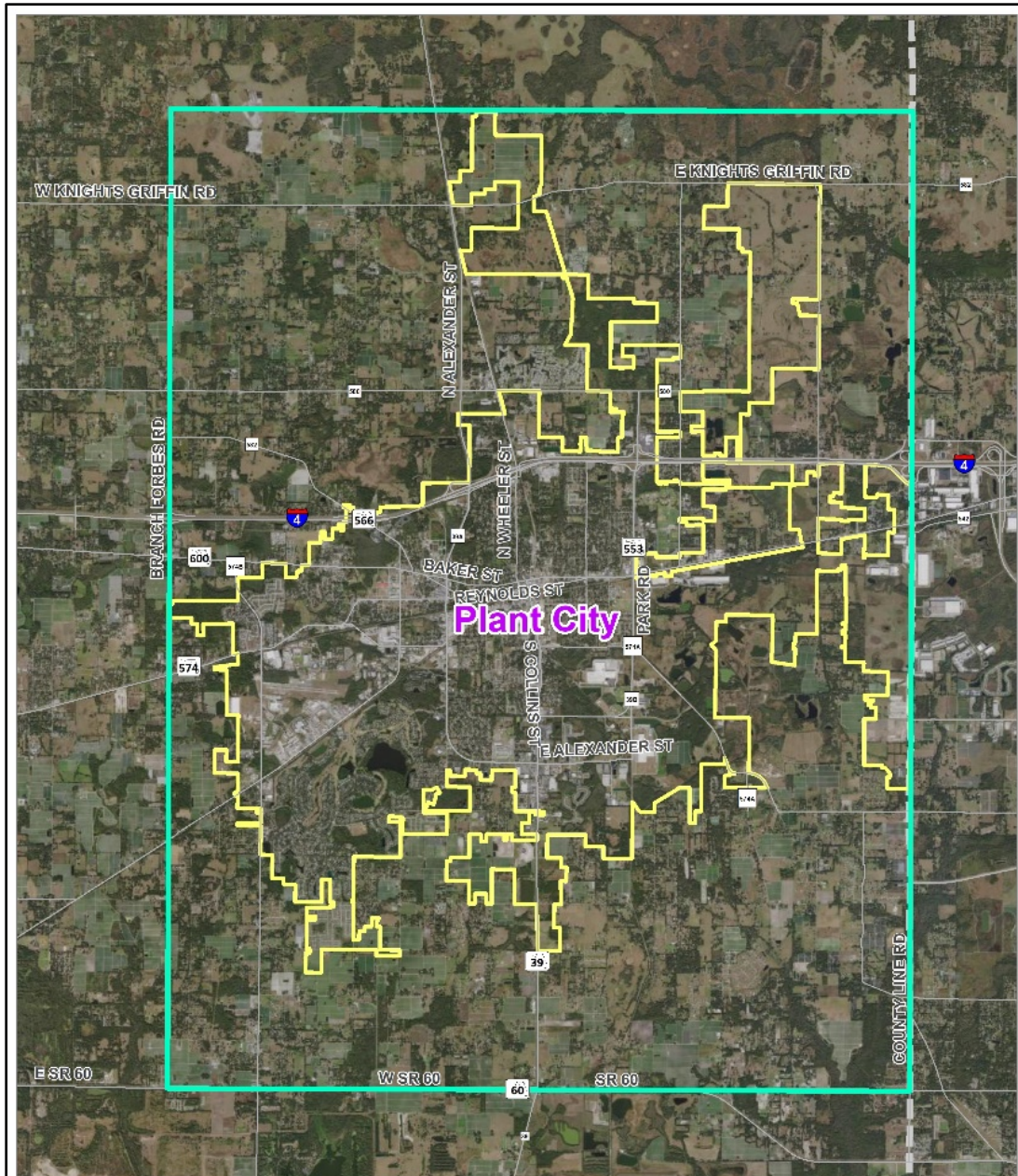
¹ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

Study Area

Plant City is located on the eastern border of Hillsborough County. It is located between the larger cities of Tampa (population: 392,890²) and Lakeland (population: 110,516³). This study uses the broader travel market area of Plant City, Tampa, and Lakeland (Figure 1) for understanding Plant City's local and regional travel and commuting needs. The roughly 70 square miles study area is bound by Knights Griffin Road to the north, Branch Forbes Road to the west, SR 60 to the south, and the Polk County Line (County Line Road) to the east, shown in Figure 2.

² U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 Population Estimate, Tampa, FL.

³ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 Population Estimate, Lakeland, FL.



Base Map

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Plant City
-  County Boundary

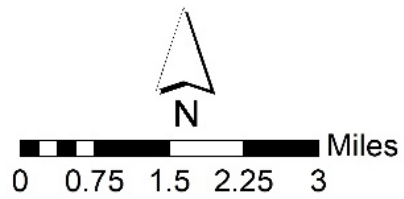


Figure 2: Plant City Transit Master Plan Study Area

Existing Conditions

In order to assess the demand for public transportation services, developing a clear understanding of the area's current demographics and travel conditions is needed. The following section presents an analysis of specific community characteristics, demographics, and employment characteristics as they relate to public transportation service in Plant City.

Existing Land Use

The existing land use in Plant City is primarily single-family residential and agricultural. Multi-family residential and light commercial land uses front the major roadways in the area. There are industrial uses between SR 574 and Sydney Road, near the Plant City Airport, and to the east and southeast boundary of Plant City. Major land use destinations likely to attract transit users include the South Florida Baptist Hospital, the business district and social services concentrated in downtown, the Plant City Shopping Center, and the South Collins Street commercial area. Figure 3 shows the existing land use in Plant City.

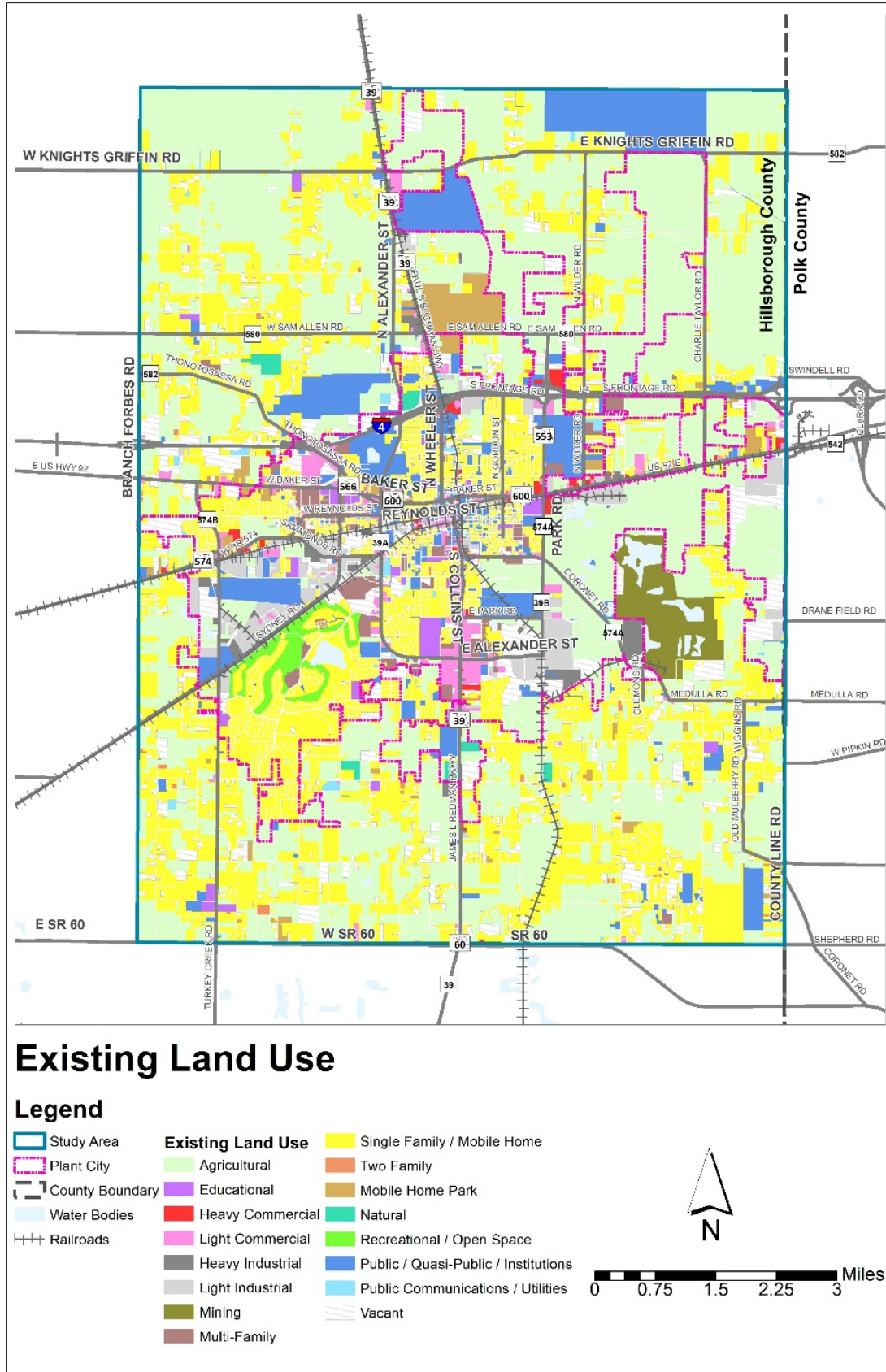


Figure 3: Existing Land Use

Existing Population

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Plant City has a population of 39,156 residents, as of 2018. Figure 4 shows the population density within the study area. Population density is one of the most important factors when determining the success of a public transportation system, as a majority of trips (both transit and non-transit trips) originate or end at home.

The residential population in the study area is mostly concentrated in the core of Plant City. The densest areas are in the areas immediately surrounding downtown. These areas each have population densities higher than 5 residents per acre. Downtown does not have many housing units available and as a result has a lower number of residents than other areas of Plant City. The population density in the downtown area ranges from 2.5 to 5 residents per acre. The major corridors connecting the higher density areas include Park Rd, S Collins St, Alexander St, Reynolds St, and Baker St.

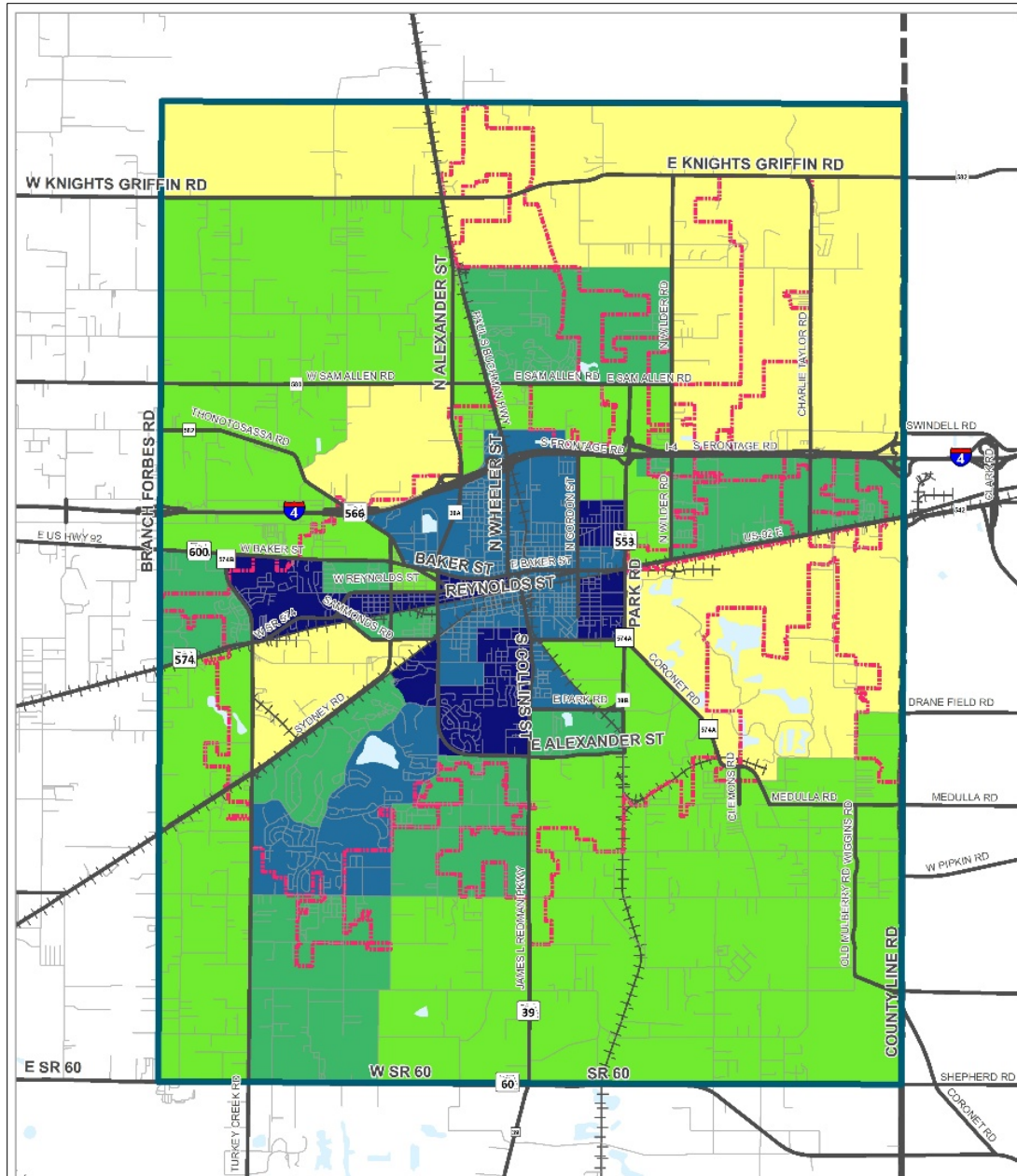
Beyond the core of the city, the surrounding areas, which are largely single-family residential uses, have population densities of less than 1.5 residents per acre. The northeast part of the city has the lowest population density with lower than 0.5 residents per acre.

Table 1 shows densities that support different transit modes and frequencies. The highest density areas in the study area meet the recommendations for Community Circulators.

Table 1: Transit Supportive Densities










Transit Mode and Frequency	Population Per Acre
Flex Bus	0.5
Community Circulator	2
Local Bus (60-minute headway)	8 – 16
Local Bus (30-minute headway)	16 – 31

Source: Transit Cooperative Research Program and Ohio Department of Transportation



Population Density

Legend

	Study Area	Residents per acre
	Plant City	 <0.5
	Water Bodies	 0.5-1.5
	Railroads	 1.5-2.5
		 2.5-5.0
		 5.0-10.0

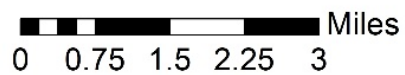


Figure 4: Population Density

Communities of Concern

The MPO developed a methodology for identifying residents who face unique and sometimes overwhelming obstacles related to transportation called Communities of Concern. Using an index of characteristics, the MPO identified Census Block Groups that measure more than one standard deviation above the county's median in two or more of the following characteristics:

- Low income
- Disability
- Youth
- Elderly
- Limited English proficiency
- Minorities
- Carless households

These communities are more likely than others to depend on public transportation to meet their daily needs. The Communities of Concern in the study area are shown in Figure 5. The darker blue areas have several characteristics present and are thus in need of greater attention. The area of highest concern in Plant City is south of Reynolds St and west of Collins St.

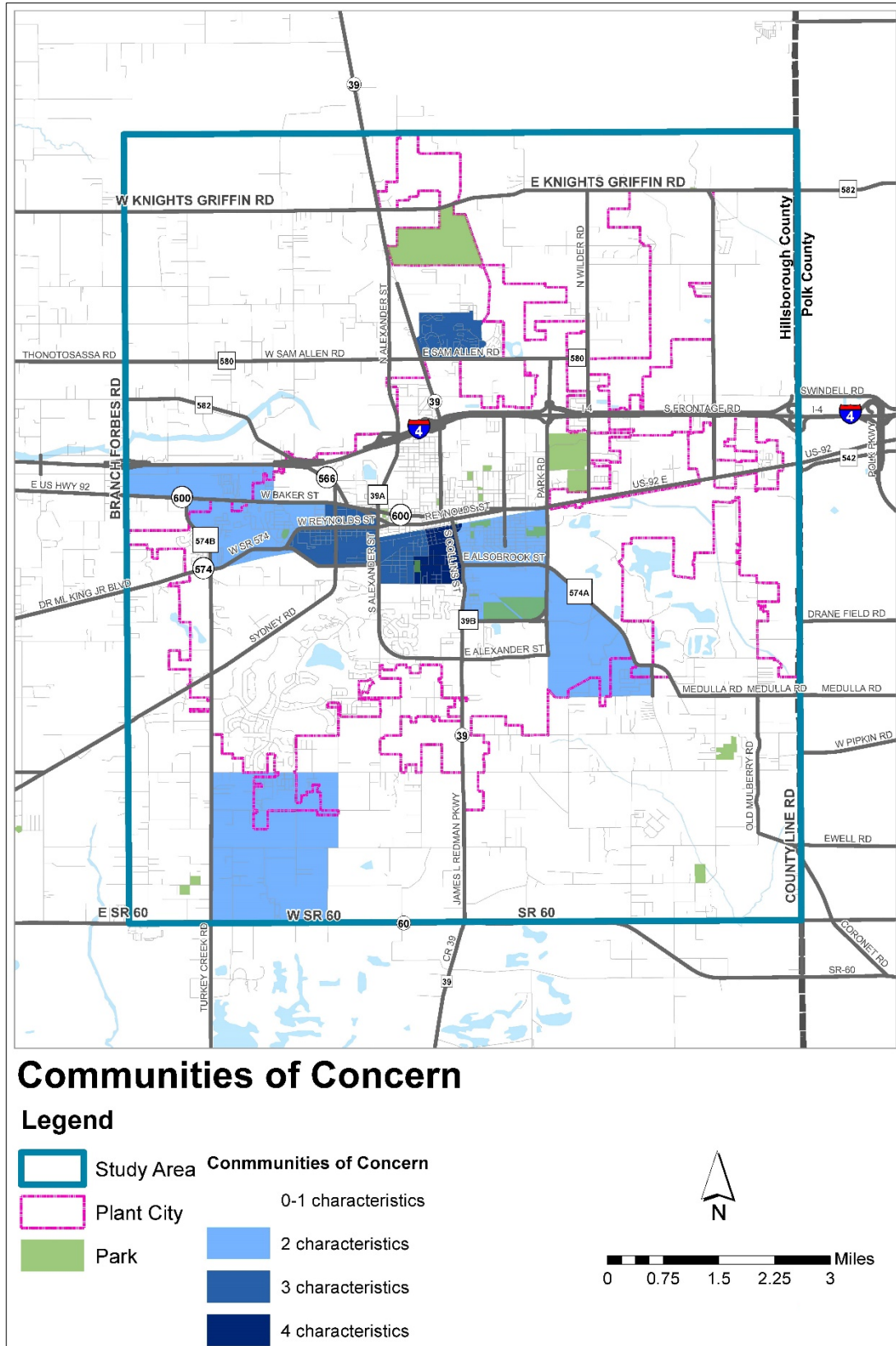


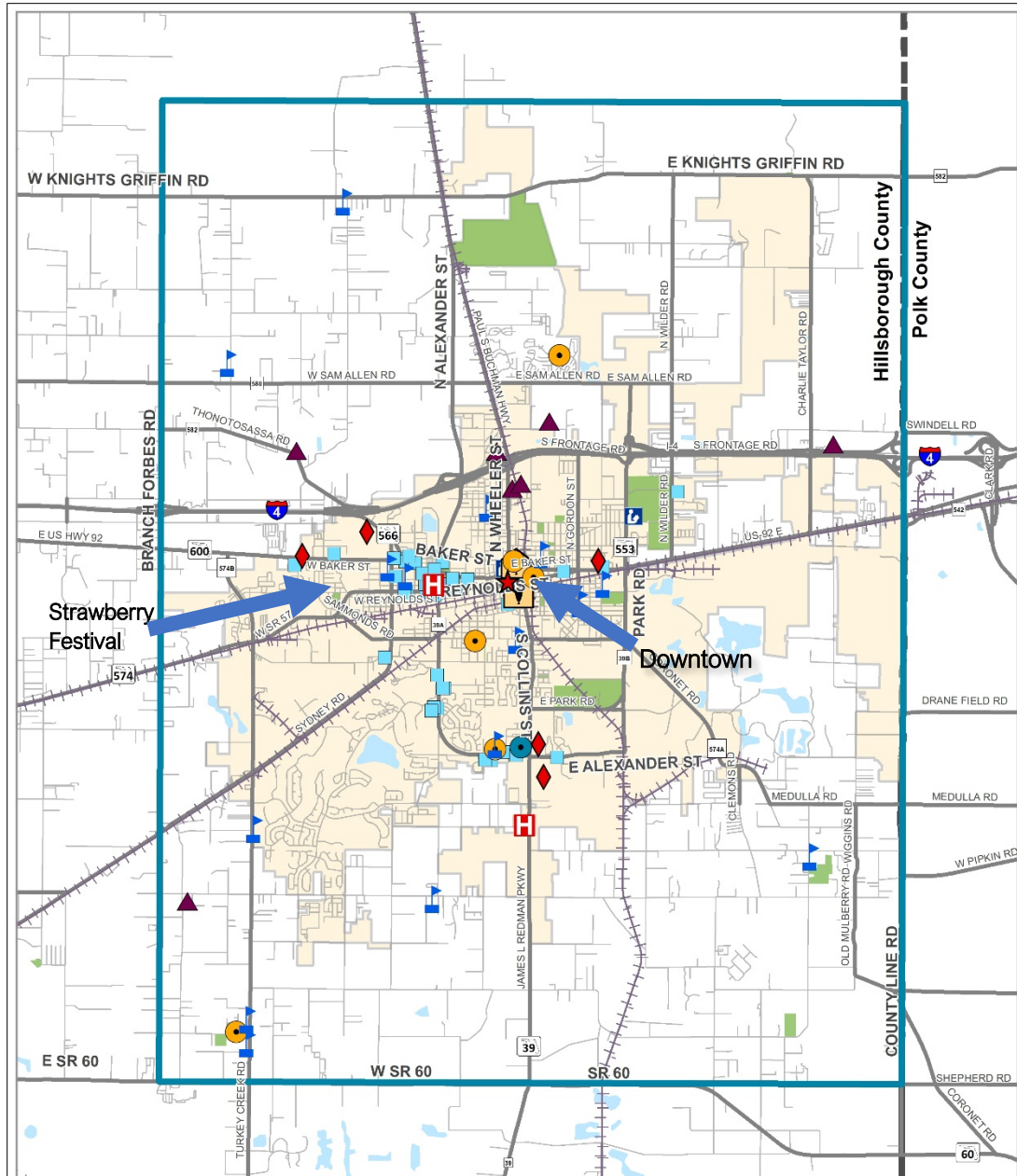
Figure 5: Communities of Concern

Transportation Generators

Transportation generators are locations within a community that act as generators of transportation trips and are frequent destinations within a community. Understanding these destinations is a critical step in the evaluation of existing services and determining future transit needs.

Existing Activity Centers

Major destinations and points of interest are shown in Figure 6. Health care facilities are clustered around South Florida Baptist Hospital on the western side of Plant City, near Alexander St and Reynolds St. Major grocery stores, such as Publix and the Walmart Super Center, are located on the periphery of town, necessitating the need for auto travel to reach them. Parks are clustered in the center of the study area, near Park Rd. The majority of the commercial shopping plazas are located along S Collins St and Redman Pkwy. Hotels are located near I-4, at the intersection with Thonotosassa Rd, and Park Rd.



Activity Centers and Points of Interest

Legend

- Study Area
- Plant City
- Railroads
- ★ City Hall
- ▲ School
- Hospital
- Health Care
- Community Center
- ◆ Grocery Store
- Library
- Theater
- Museum
- ▲ Cemetery
- Park

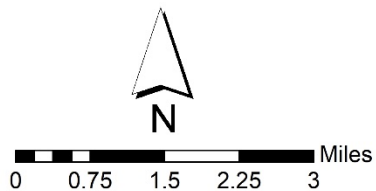
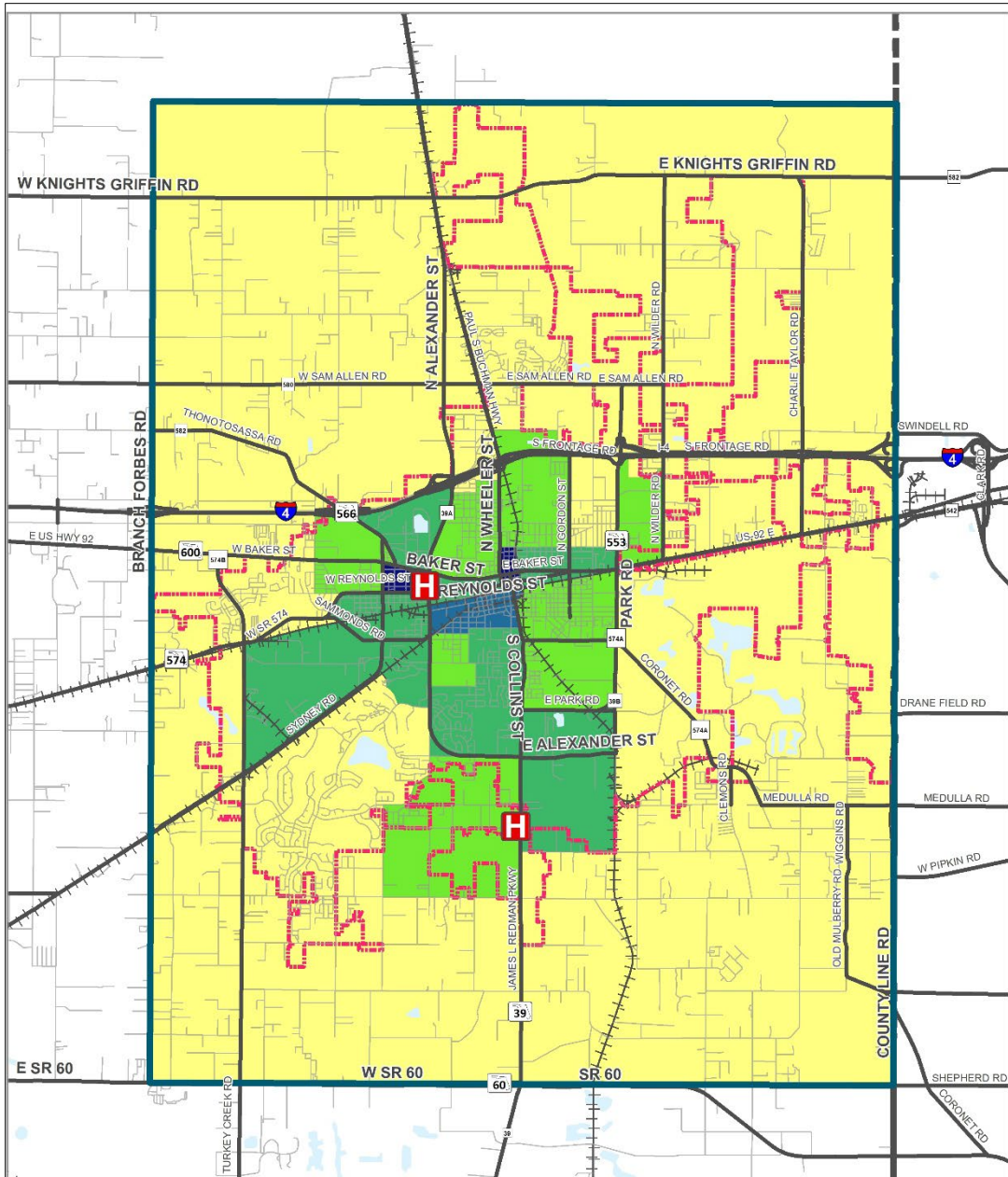


Figure 6: Existing Activity Centers & Points of Interest

Existing Employment











According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2017 Plant City has 17,477 primary jobs. The distribution of jobs in the study area is shown in Figure 7. Employment activities are concentrated in the center of the study area and the center of Plant City. The highest concentrations of jobs are along Reynolds Street, with the highest concentration at the South Florida Baptist Hospital, which is the biggest employer in Plant City. The employment density continues to decline towards the periphery of the study area. Almost all of the areas along the Plant City boundary have employment densities of less than 1 employee per acre.

There is a large cluster of warehouse employment activities on County Line Rd south of US 92. A Williams-Sonoma Distribution Center, Plastipak, Baker Distributing Company, and County Line Logistics Center are located near the intersection with Rice Rd. Further north on County Line Rd is a Save-A-Lot Distribution Center, which is across County Line Rd from Amazon's fulfillment center in Polk County. Publix and O-Reilly Auto Parts also have large distribution centers located across County Line Rd in Polk County.



Employment Density

Legend

	Study Area	Jobs per acre
	Plant City	 <1.0
	Water Bodies	 1.0 - 2.5
	Railroads	 2.5 - 5.0
	Hospitals	 5.0 - 10.0
		 >10.0

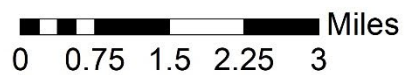


Figure 7: Employment Density

Commute and Travel Patterns

Knowing what modes of transportation people currently use can help develop effective transit improvements and programs that will better serve the residents and visitors of the study area. Plant City is the city of focus, and Lakeland and Tampa were included for comparison.

Means of Transportation to Work

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2013-2017), the vast majority (84%) of employees drive alone to work. A small percentage carpool (8%) and work from home (3.5%). Very few walk (1.8%), bike (0.3%), or take other means (2%). Collectively, these groups are potential transit riders, and comprise approximately 12% of commuters.

Table 2: Means of Transportation to Work

	Plant City	Lakeland	Tampa
Drove alone	84%	81%	78.1%
Carpooled	8%	9.5%	8.4%
Public Transit	0%	0.8%	2.5%
Walked	1.8%	2.2%	2.4%
Bicycle	0.3%	0.8%	1.3%
Taxi, motorcycle, or other means	2%	1.2%	1.2%
Worked at home	3.5%	4.6%	6.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2013-2017)

Travel Time to Work

Forty-seven percent of Plant City residents spend 10 to 29 minutes commuting to work. Eighteen percent spend less than 10 minutes commuting. Seven percent spend 60 minutes or more commuting. The mean travel time to work for workers living in Plant City is 23.6 minutes, 21 minutes for Lakeland, and 24 minutes for Tampa.

Table 3: Travel Time to Work

	Plant City	Lakeland	Tampa
Less than 10 minutes	18.1%	12%	12%
10-29 minutes	47.4%	63.2%	55.3%
30-59 minutes	27.3%	21%	27.2%
60 minutes or more	7.2%	3.8%	5.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2013-2017)

Vehicle Availability

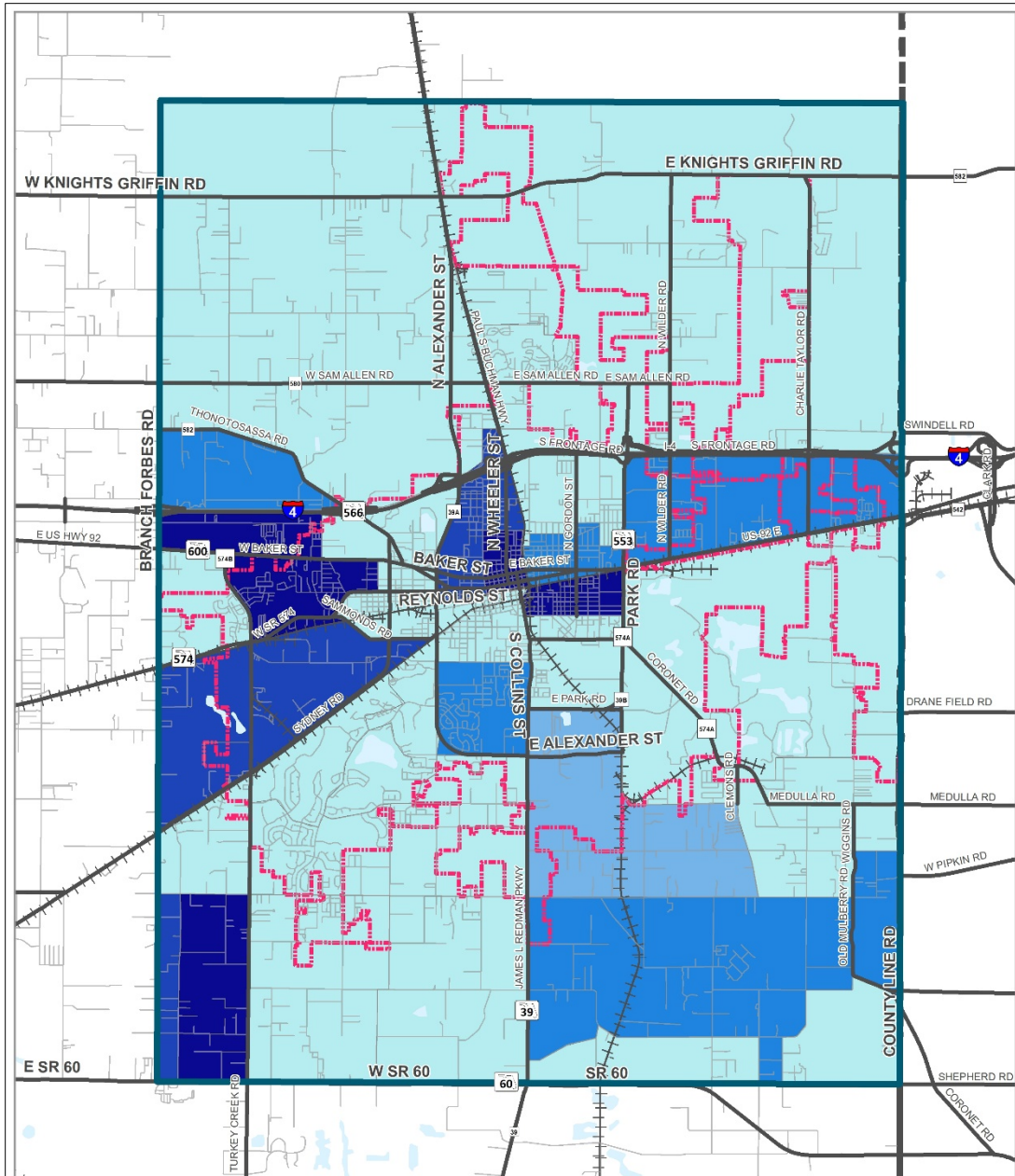
The availability of vehicles in a household is a predictor of the need for public transit options. For households in Plant City with at least one employee, 2.7 percent have no vehicle, 22.5 percent have one vehicle, 49 percent have two vehicles, and 26 percent have three or more vehicles.

The distribution of vehicles available in the study area is shown in Figure 8. The darkest blue areas show Census Tracts where 10 percent or more of households have no vehicle available. There are several of these Census Tracts, including:

- A large area on the western side of the study area south of I-4 and east of Turkey Creek Rd near the Strawberry Festival Grounds
- South of Reynolds St between S Collins St and Park Rd
- North of Baker St and west of Wheeler St
- On the southwest boundary of the study area west of Turkey Creek Rd

Table 4: Household Vehicle Availability

	Plant City	Lakeland	Tampa
No vehicle	2.7%	3.1%	4.3%
1 vehicle	22.5%	31.3%	32.1%
2 vehicles	48.7%	45.9%	43.4%
3 or more vehicles	26.1%	19.8%	20.2%



Zero Car Households

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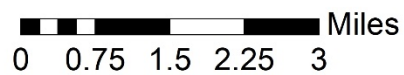
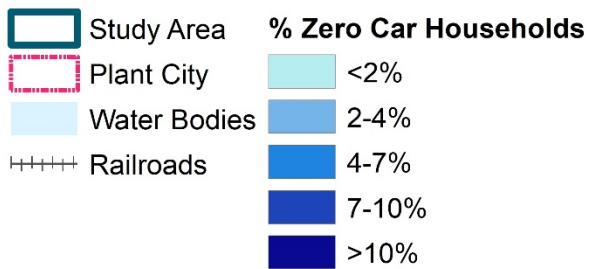


Figure 8: Zero Car Households by Census Tract

Commuting Patterns

The U.S. Census Bureau and Department of Labor's Longitudinal Employer- Household Dynamics (LEHD) data was used to help understand commuter trip patterns in the study area. The data was pulled from the Census Bureau's OnTheMap tool, which provides data on where workers are employed and where they live. The tool can be accessed here <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.

Of the 17,477 workers who work in Plant City, 16,064 workers come from outside of the city boundaries to work in Plant City. 2,435 workers both live in Plant City and work in Plant City. 13,709 workers live in Plant City and work outside of Plant City.

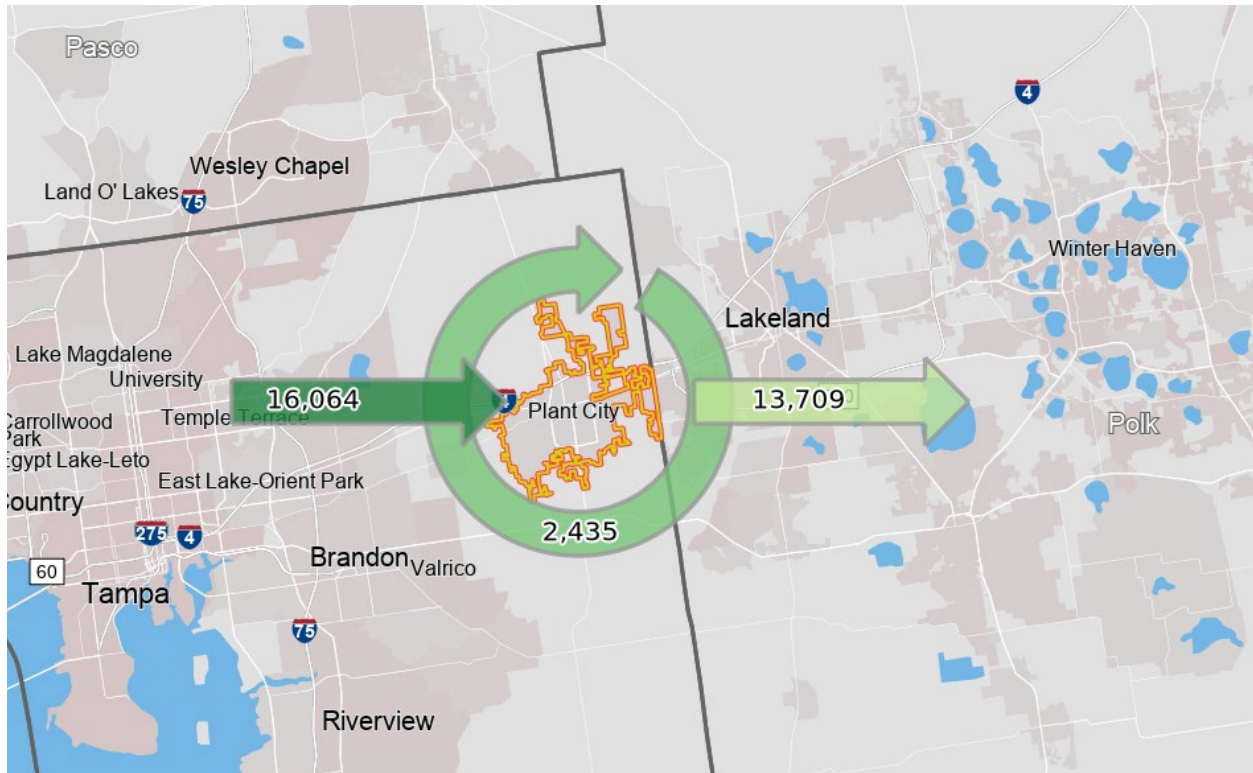


Figure 9: Employee Inflow/Outflow for Plant City

More Plant City residents work in Tampa than those who work in Plant City. The top 5 places where Plant City residents work are Tampa (17.8%), Plant City (15.1%), Lakeland (8.7%), Brandon (3.9%) and East Lake (3.7%). The distribution of work locations for Plant City residents is shown in Figure 9.

For people who work in Plant City the top five places they live are Plant City (13.2%), Lakeland (5.7%), Brandon (3.7%), Tampa (3.1%), and Riverview (1.9%). The locations where Plant City workers live are shown in Figure 10.

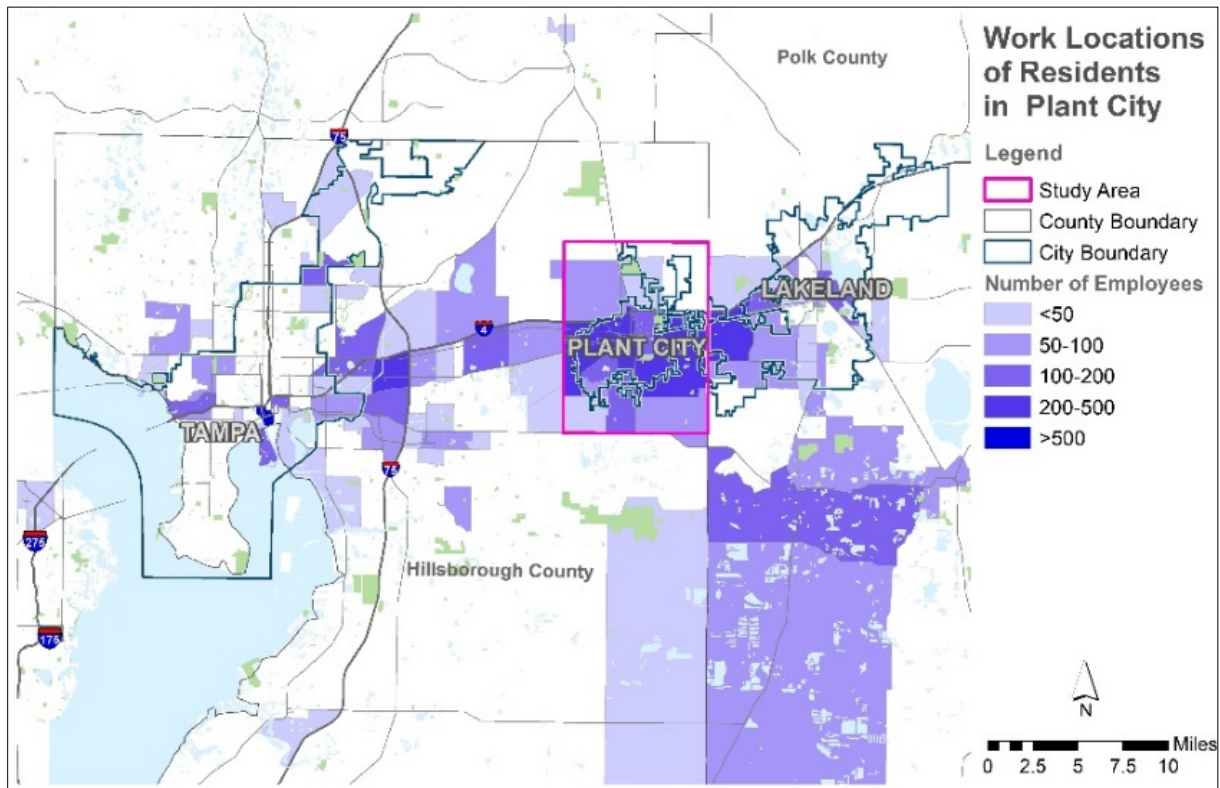


Figure 10: Work Locations of Plant City Residents

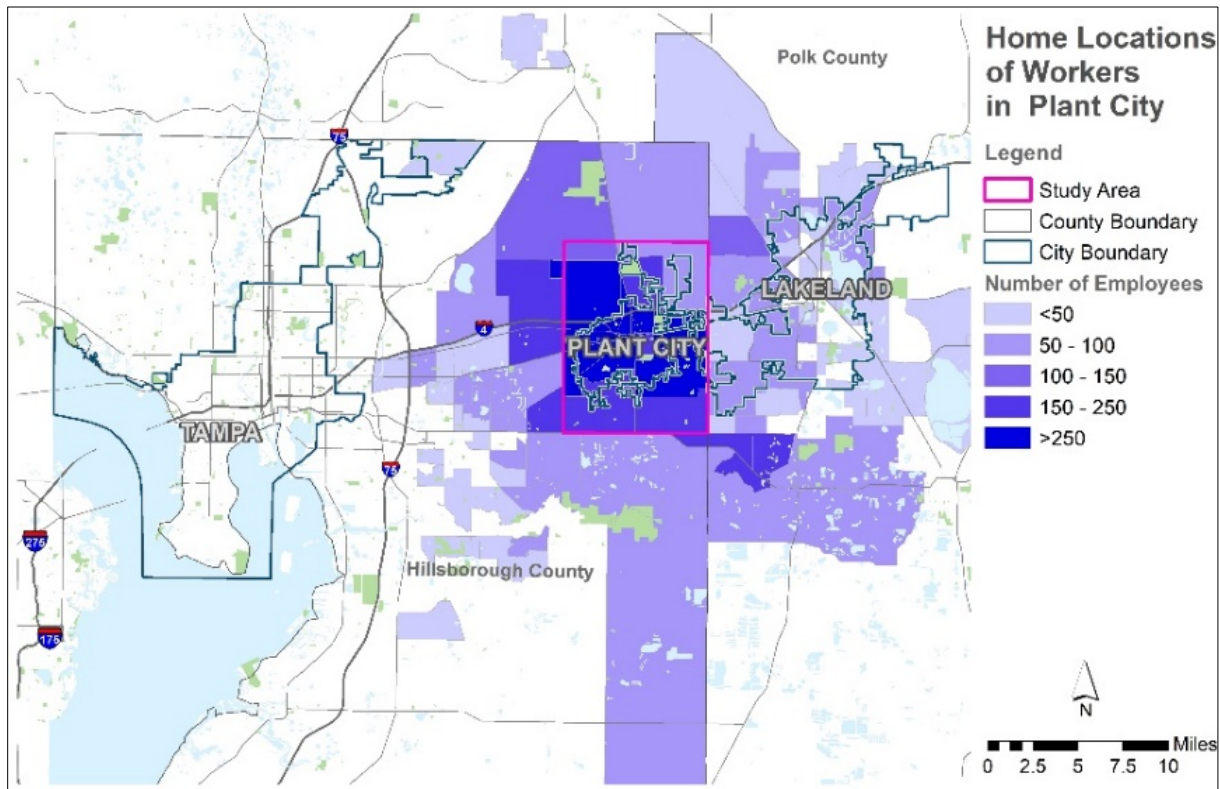


Figure 11: Home Locations of Plant City Workers

Active Transportation Conditions

Active transportation options include any self-propelled mode of transportation, such as walking, biking, skateboarding, scootering, or the use of assistive mobility devices. These modes are typically the first and last mile methods of accessing transit stops. Safe, easy access to transit stops encourages greater use of transit services. The Level of Traffic Stress and locations of bicycle and pedestrian crashes were reviewed to determine barriers to safe access to the major corridors that transit could operate on.

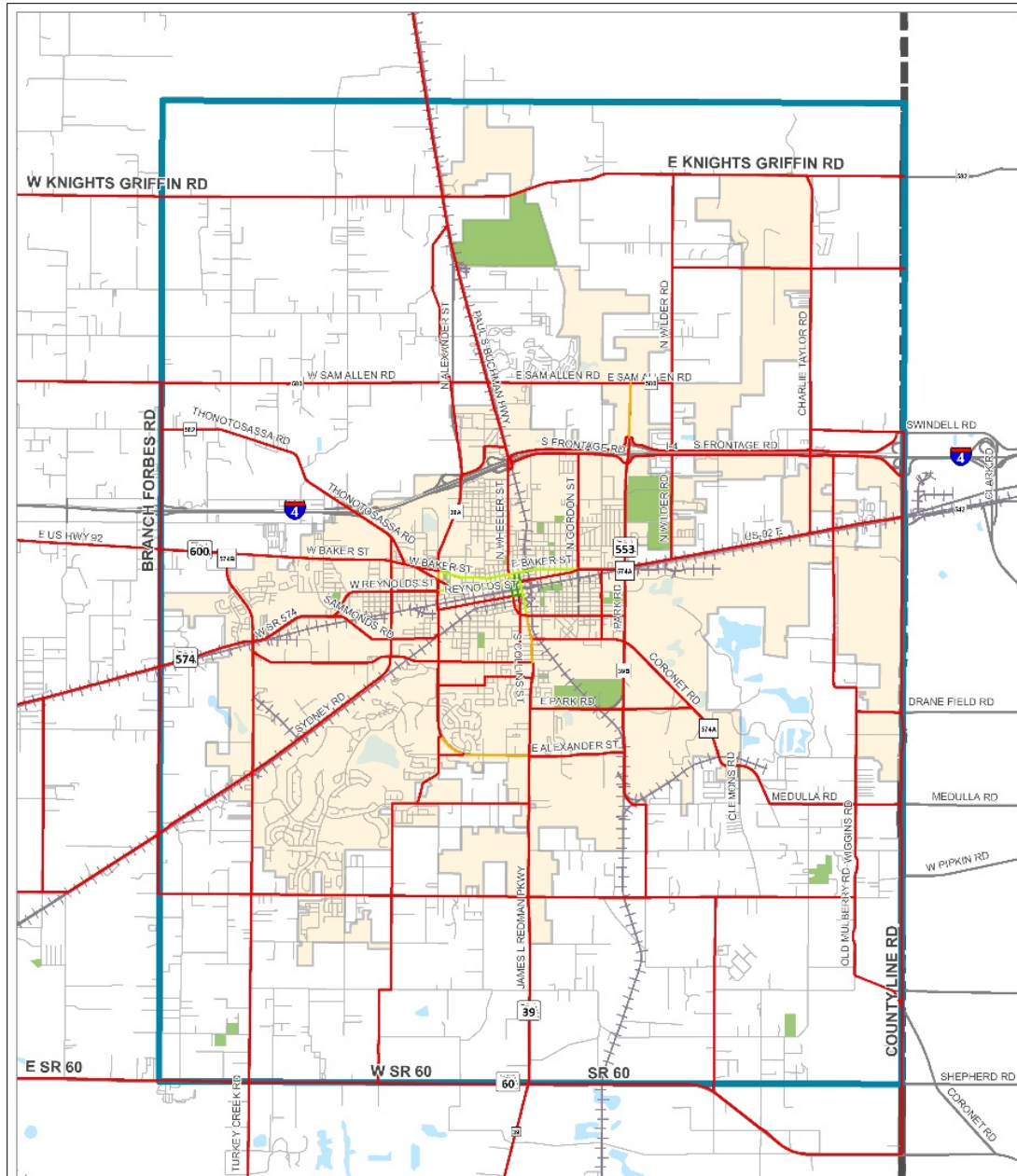
Level of Traffic Stress

In 2018, the Hillsborough MPO conducted a Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) study to evaluate various roadway characteristics to determine the level of stress or comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists on roads in Hillsborough County. LTS classifications range from 1 to 4: 1 is a level that most children can tolerate, 2 is a level that can be tolerated by the mainstream adult population, 3 is a level tolerated by American cyclists who are enthused and confident, and level 4 is tolerated only by those who do not fear cycling with traffic.

According to the Level of Traffic Stress analysis, most of the major roads in the study area are considered high stress for cyclists and pedestrians. The roadways that are friendlier for both groups are concentrated in the downtown area.










Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

Figure 13 shows bicycle and pedestrian crashes reported in the study area from 2013-2017. Over the span of five years, there were 65 bicycle crashes, which resulted in two fatalities. There were also 74 pedestrian crashes, which resulted in six fatalities. Four crashes involved both a bicyclist and pedestrian. Crashes are clustered along the major thoroughfares, including Baker St, Reynolds St, S Collins St, and Alexander St. These are likely the main corridors that transit would operate on, so it highlights the need for safety improvements in order to make transit an attractive option, and more likely to be successful.



Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress

Legend

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
|  | Study Area | Pedestrian LTS |
|  | Plant City |  1 |
|  | Park |  2 |
|  | County Boundary |  3 |
|  | Railroads |  4 |

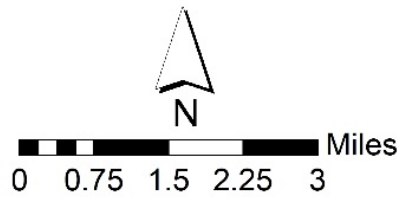
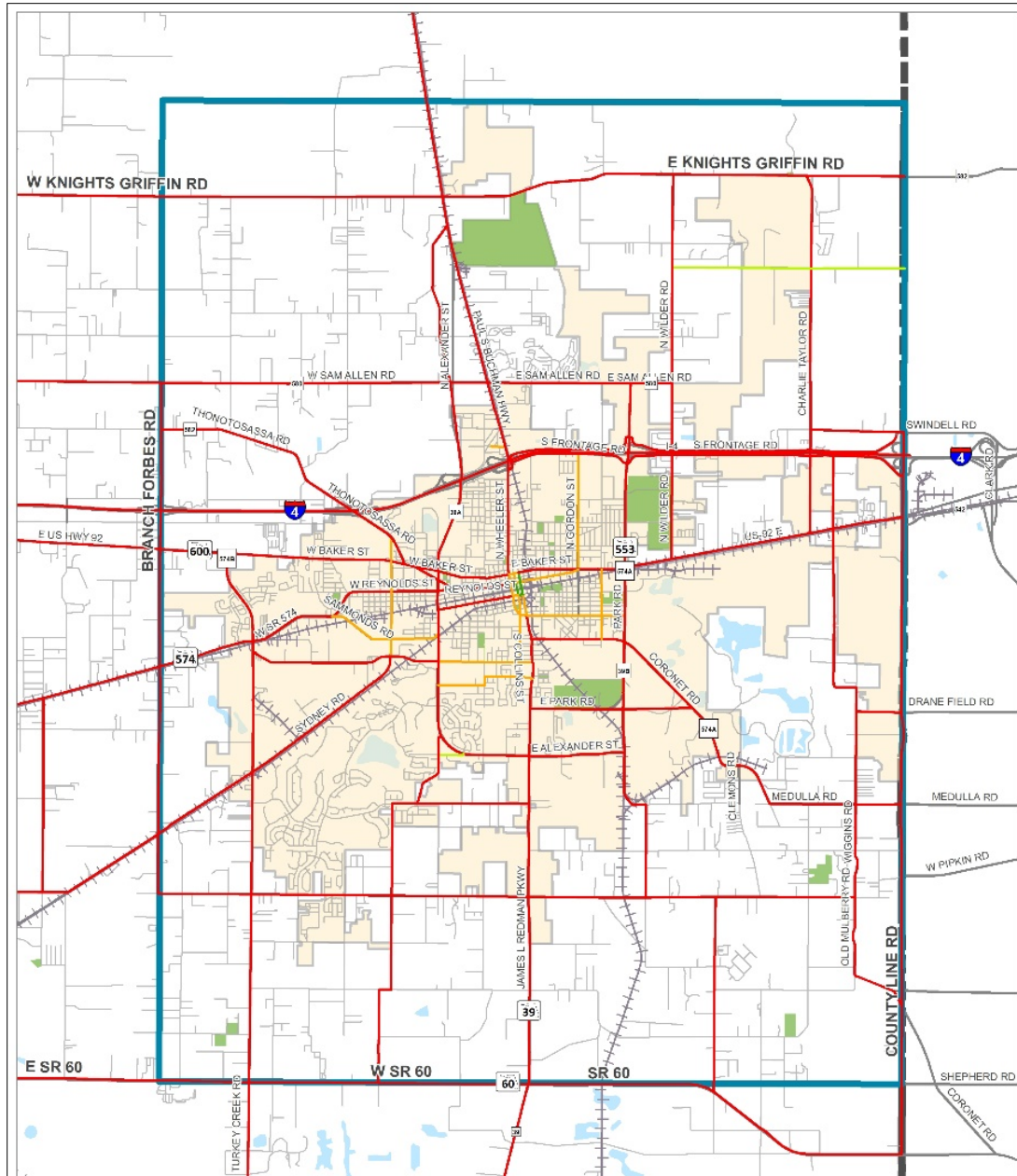







Figure 12: Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress



Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | Study Area |  | Bicycle LTS
1 |
|  | Plant City |  | 2 |
|  | Park |  | 3 |
|  | County Boundary |  | 4 |
|  | Railroads | | |

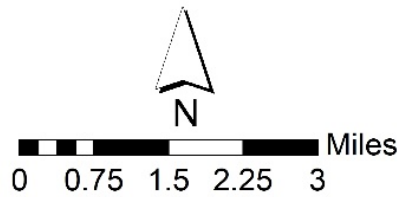
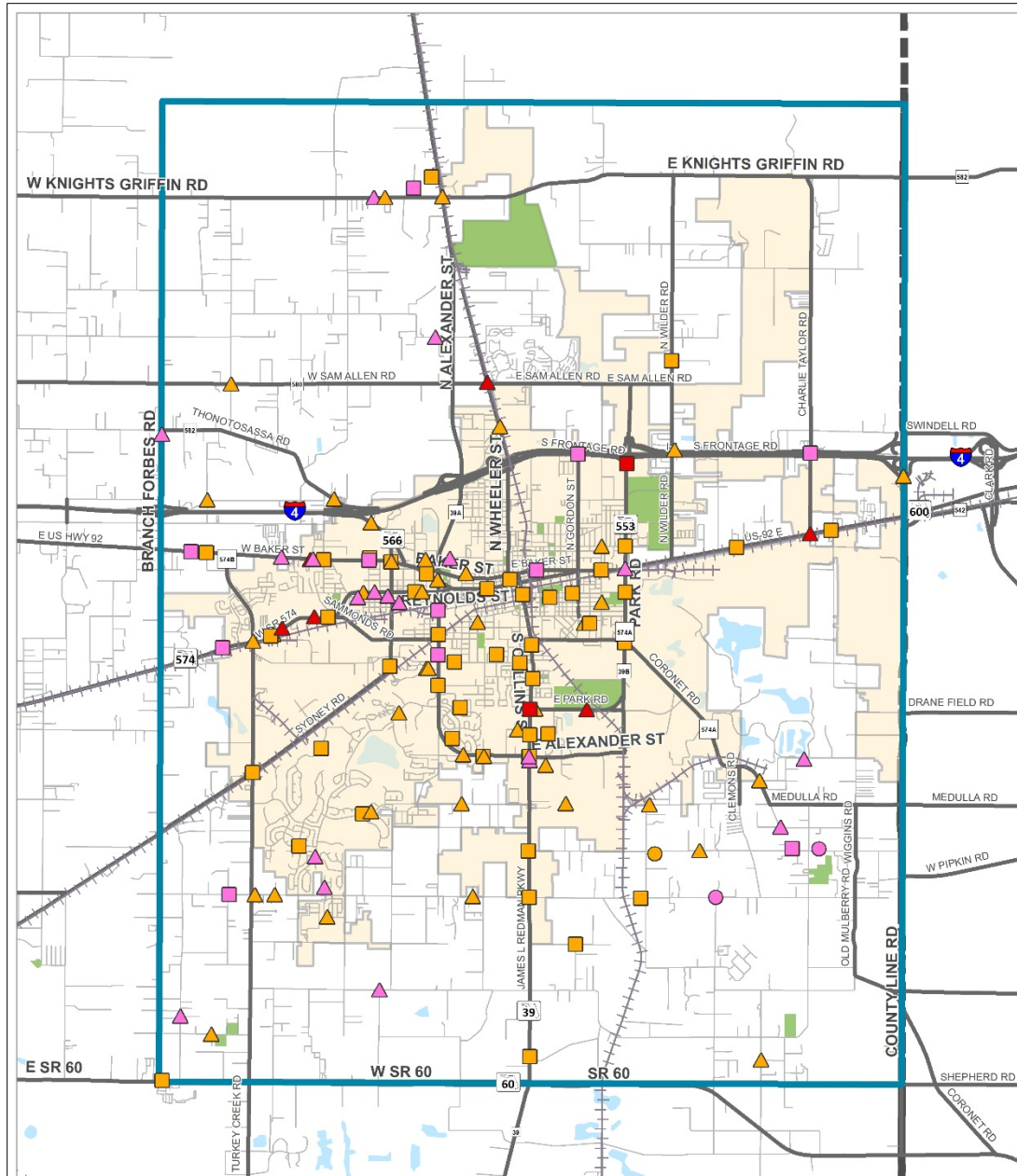


Figure 13: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress



Pedestrian/Bicycle Crashes (2013-2017)

Legend

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Study Area | Ped/Bike Crashes | Bicycle Crashes |
| Plant City | Incapacitating Ped/Bike Crashes | Incapacitating Pedestrian Crashes |
| Park | Fatal Bicycle Crashes | Fatal Pedestrian Crashes |
| County Boundary | Incapacitating Bicycle Crashes | Pedestrian Crashes |
| Railroads | | |

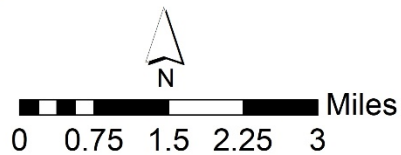


Figure 14: Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

Existing & Previous Transit Services

Understanding previous and existing transit service is necessary for identifying what worked or did not work in the past and how to develop transit options from those lessons. There were two services previously in Plant City: an express route connecting Plant City residents to Tampa (Route 28X) and a community circulator that connected residents to local destinations within Plant City (Strawberry Express). Existing transit service provided by Citrus Connection in Polk County operates on County Line Rd, which is the border between Hillsborough County and Polk County. These routes are shown in Figure 15. The Sunshine Line is an on-demand service provided by Hillsborough County that takes qualified individuals to medical appointments, grocery stores, and pharmacies.

Previous Transit Services

Route 28X

Route 28X was a commuter express service operated by HART from 2010 to 2017. It operated along I-4 and connected Tampa to the western edge of Plant City. It exited I-4 at Thonotosassa Rd to pick up and drop off passengers at a Park and Ride stop at the Mount Zion Assembly of God. The highest year of ridership was the first year of operation (2010), with 13,742 annual riders. Initially the service provided two pickups and drop-offs per day but was cut down to one pickup and drop-off per day in 2012. At the time of this change, it served 30 passengers per day, and 7,474 passengers per year. It was removed from service in 2017 during the Mission Max Comprehensive Operations Analysis in which service throughout Hillsborough County was scaled back due to budget restraints.

Strawberry Express

Plant City was previously served by the Strawberry Express, a community circulator that took residents to work, shopping, recreational, and other trips. Service began on March 19, 2001 through a mutual cooperation agreement between Plant City and HART. Funding for this service was provided by a grant under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), which was designed to promote the shift from single occupant vehicles (SOVs) to a fixed route transportation service. From 2001 to June 2005, the service was operated by HART. Plant City operated the service from June 6, 2005 to the end of operation in June of 2008.

Service hours and routes were revised several times over the years of service. For the first year of service, it operated on four routes in a cloverleaf pattern, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays every 30 minutes. In 2003, the number of vehicles was reduced to two and hours of operation were scaled back to 9 am to 5 pm. A third bus operated as backup and to provide on-demand paratransit service.

The Strawberry Express routes operated along major local corridors like Baker Street, Reynolds Street, Alexander Street, and South Collins Street, and to regional connectors like I-4. Observational data from James McDaniel, Plant City staff member in charge of the service, stated that Routes 70 and 71 experienced the highest ridership. These routes connected people from their

residences to the shopping plazas along JL Redman Pkwy. The Wal-Mart Super Center on JL Red Pkwy, just south of Alexander Street, was the most frequented stop. The top ten boarding and alighting stops are shown in Table 5.

The service also included a demand response program that provided deviations from the fixed route for pickup or drop off for groups. This was primarily used by day care centers and nursing homes for trips to the library, city hall, parks, and other recreational activities.

Table 5: Strawberry Express Top 10 Boarding and Alighting Stops

Top 10 Boarding Stops	Top 10 Alighting Stops
WALDEN WOOD VILLAGE @ WAL-MART	WALDEN WOOD VILLAGE @ WAL-MART
LAKE WALDEN WOOD @ KASH-KARRY	LAKE WALDEN WOOD @ KASH-KARRY
LAKE WALDEN WOOD @ K-MRT	LAKE WALDEN WOOD @ K-MRT
J.L. REDMAN PKWY & MAKI RD	MARYLAND AVE@ WARREN ST
KNIGHT ST @ ALABAMA ST	REYNOLDS ST@ THONOTOSASSA RD
MAKI RD @ LAKE WALDON HOMES	J.L. REDMAN PKWY & MAKI RD
BAKER ST & WHEELER ST	MAKI RD @ LAKE WALDON HOMES
WHEELER ST @ HILLSBOROUGH	WALTERS @ OAK
MARYLAND AVE @ ALABAMA ST	J. L. REDMAN PKWY & WALDEN WOODS
ALEXANDER ST & BAPTIST CHURCH	CHERRY ST @ PARK RD

Existing Transit Services

Though no public transit is provided in Plant City, there are some services that may inform the development of transit alternatives or complement potential new service.

Citrus Connection

Citrus Connection is the public transit provider for Polk County. It operates routes serving the major cities of Polk County, including Lakeland. The Red Line operates along County Line Road running from south to north, which is the eastern boundary of the study area, and the dividing line between Hillsborough County and Polk County. It operates from 5:45 AM to 6:35 PM on weekdays and does not operate on the weekends. The Red Line runs along the County Line Road, and it could be extended to connect Plant City and Lakeland.

Sunshine Line

The Sunshine Line is a service provided by the Hillsborough County Commission to help people without a car or access to public transportation. It provides door-to-door transportation for elderly, low-income, and disabled people to get to medical appointments, grocery stores, and other trips to meet daily needs. The service ranges from free to \$5 per trip.

The top origins (where trips begin) and top destinations (where trips end) for the Sunshine Line are shown in the tables below and in Figure 16.

Table 6: Sunshine Line Top Origins

Top Origins	Type
San Clemente Villas	Residential - Apartment
Park Spring Apartments	Residential - Apartment
Galaxy Mobile Home Park	Residential – Mobile Home Park
The Lake at Countrywood	Residential – Mobile Home Park
Plant City Towers	Residential - Apartment
Plantation at Walden Lake	Residential - Apartment
The Hull House	Residential - Apartment
Margaret B Apartments	Residential - Apartment
Tall Timbers Apartments	Residential - Apartment
Cynthia Gardens	Residential - Apartment
Village Mobile Home Park	Residential – Mobile Home Park
Rainbow Rock Mobile Home Park	Residential – Mobile Home Park

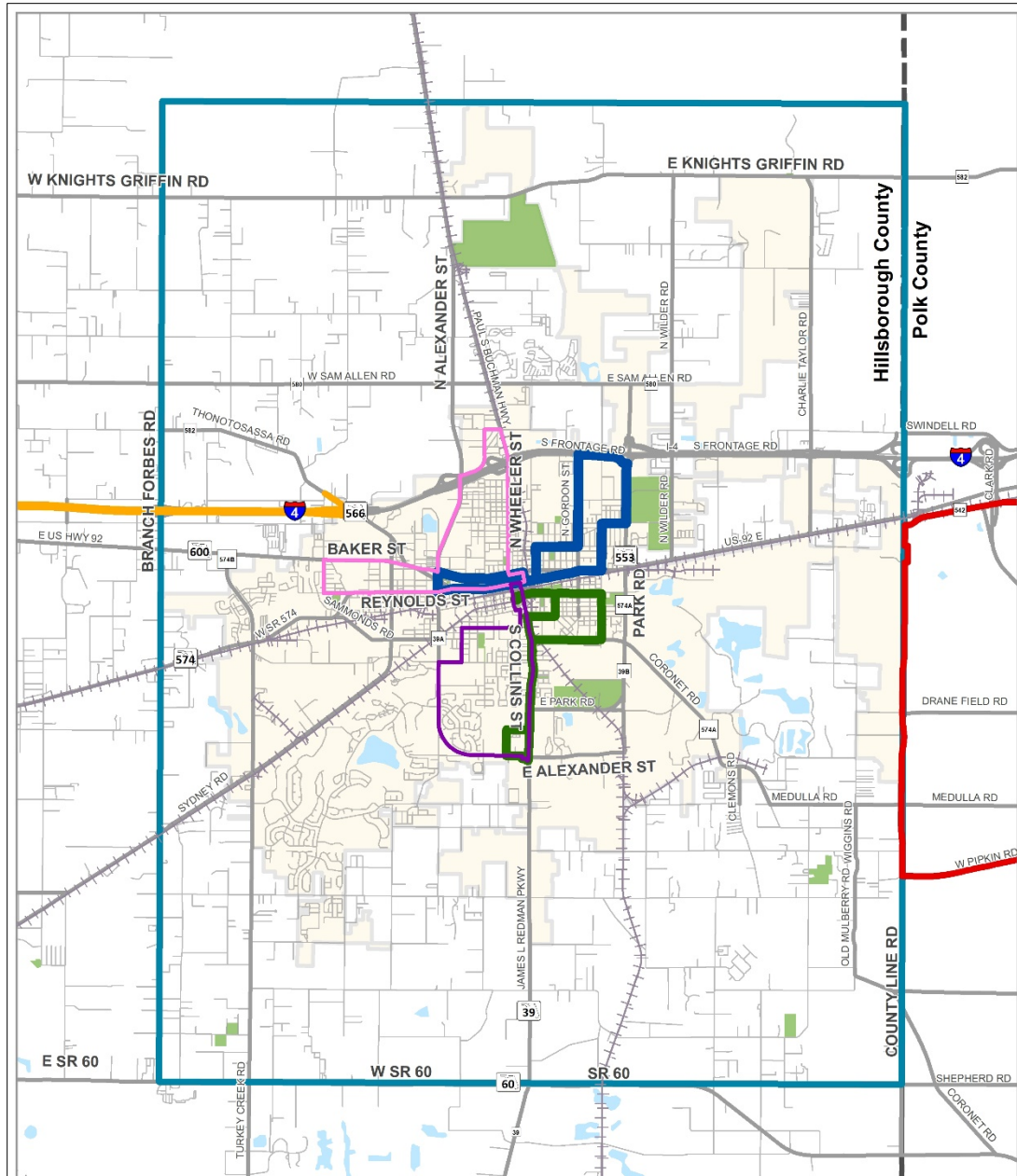
Table 7: Sunshine Line Top Destinations

Top Destinations	Type
Plant City Adult Day Care	Day Care
YMCA	Community Center
Lighthouse for the Blind	Rehabilitation Center
Davita Dialysis	Medical
South Florida Baptist Hospital	Medical
Walmart Super Center	Grocery/Shopping
Winn Dixie	Grocery
St. Clements Church & Food Pantry	Church/Food Pantry
Save-A-Lot	Grocery

Other Transportation Providers

- Uber & Lyft – Anecdotal conversations with Plant City staff demonstrated that Uber and Lyft services are popular methods of travel for visitors to the city.
- Taxi services – Taxi services also provide point-to-point transportation for visitors, similar to Uber and Lyft.
- Shuttles for farm workers – the large number of farms surrounding the Plant City area creates a need for farm workers to access their daily needs. Through anecdotal conversations with Plant City staff, it was understood that farm workers are typically provided shuttle service from their employer to the grocery stores, medical appointments, and recreational trips.

- Greyhound Bus – Greyhound Buses provide a daily service between Tampa and Plant City. The bus departs Tampa at 1:12 pm and arrives in Plant City at 1:52 pm. It departs Plant City at 3:57 pm and arrives in Tampa at 4:37 pm.
- TBARTA commuter services – The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority provides commuter services to residents of the Tampa Bay region. They provide vanpool services and connect carpool riders with one another.



Previous & Existing Transit Routes

Legend

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Study Area | Previous Routes | Existing Routes |
| Plant City | 028 East County Express | Citrus Connection Red Line |
| Park | Strawberry Connection Routes | |
| Railroads | Route 70 | |
| | Route 71 | |
| | Route 72 | |
| | Route 73 | |

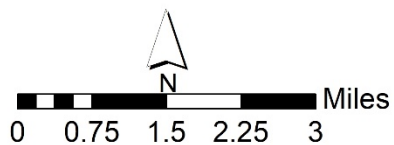
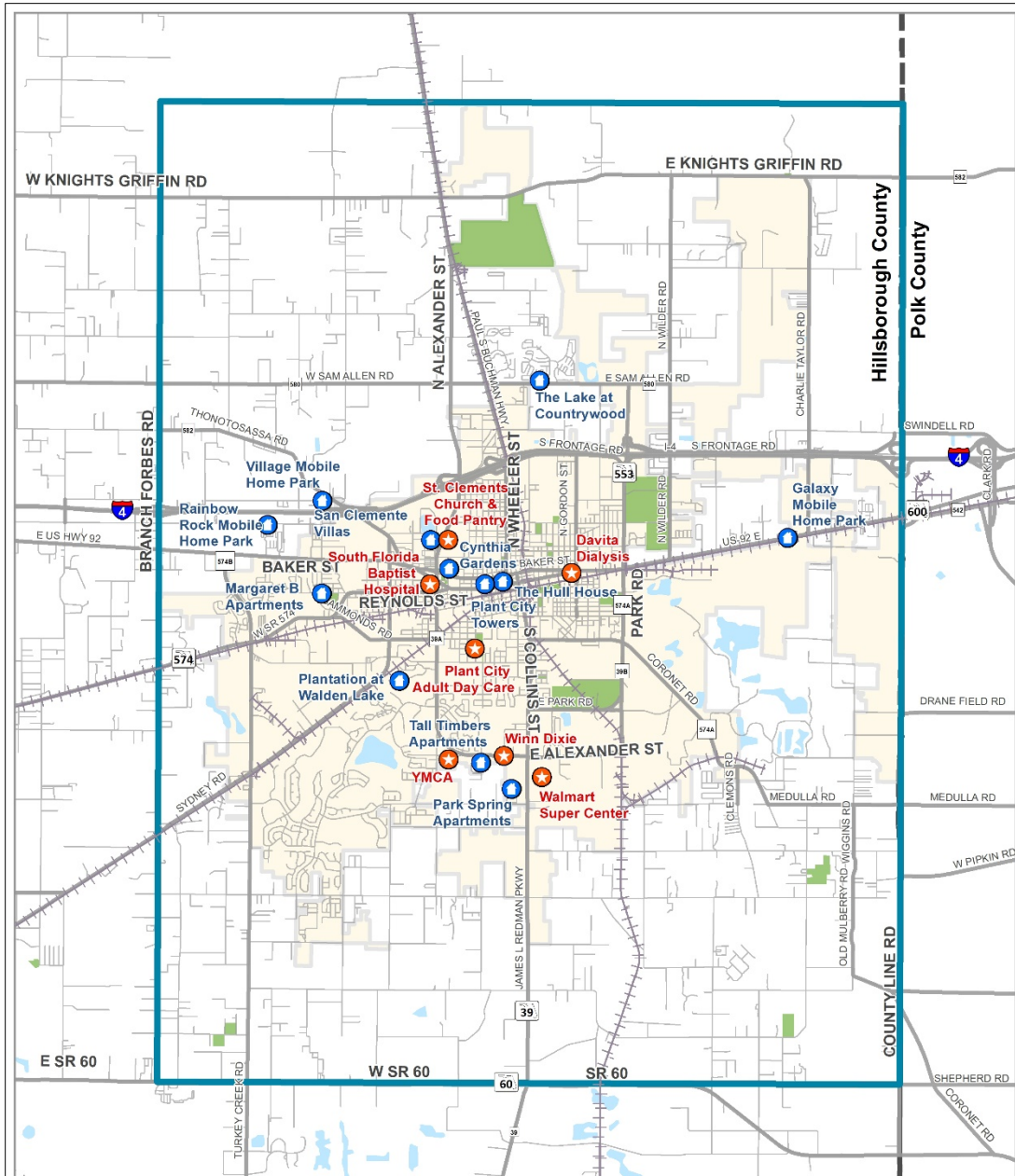


Figure 15: Previous and Existing Transit Services



Sunshine Line Top Destinations & Origins

Legend

- Study Area
- Plant City
- Park
- Railroads
- Top Destinations/Origins**
- ★ Destinations
- Origins

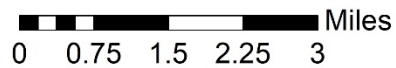


Figure 16: Sunshine Line Top Origins & Destinations

Areas of Growth & Emerging Destinations

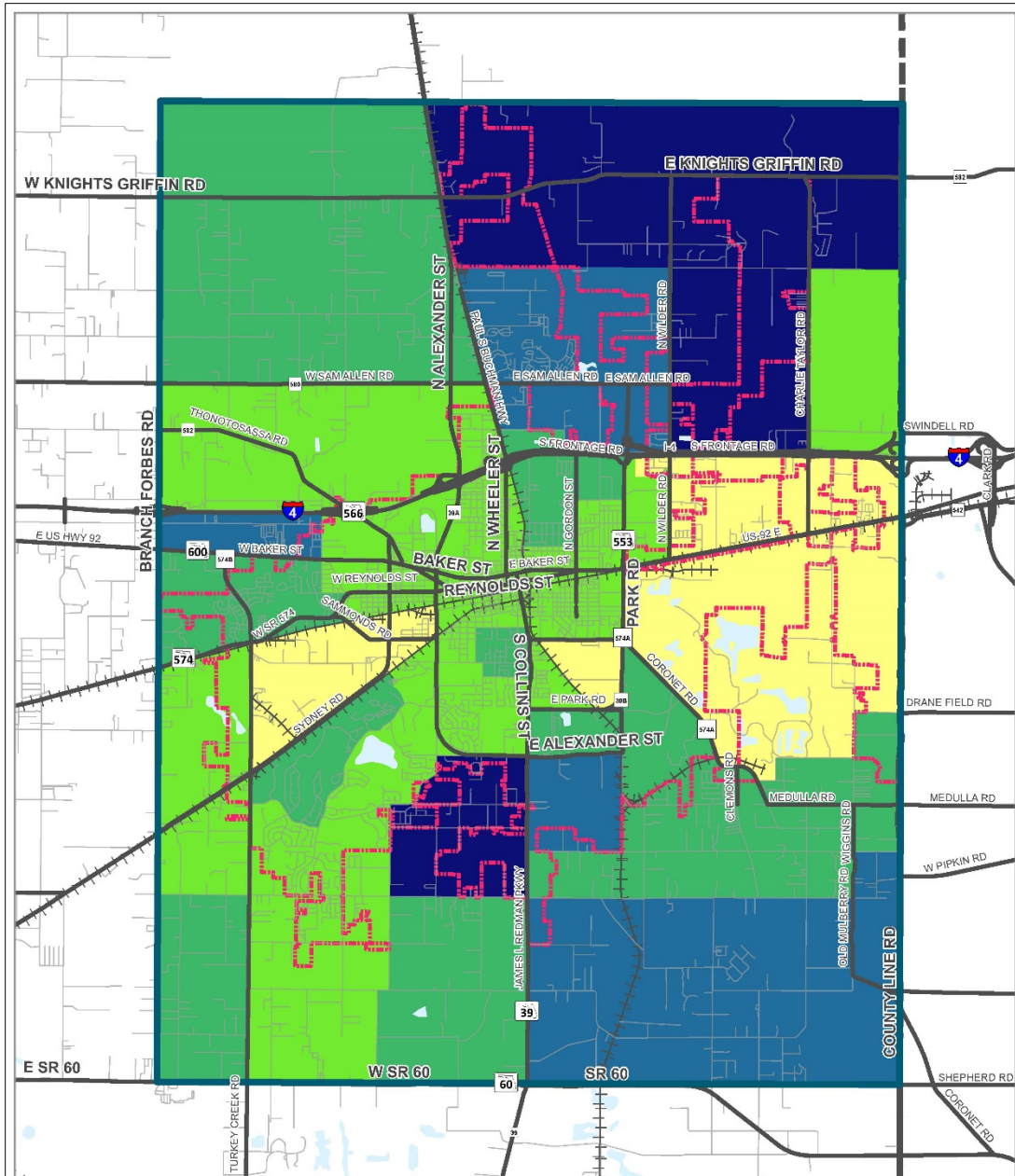
Population Growth

The Hillsborough MPO forecasts that by 2045, Plant City's population may reach 75,400 people, a nearly 50 percent increase over present day figures. Figure 15 shows that the northeast part of Plant City and one of the southern areas will see the largest growth with 5,000 more people from 2015 to 2045. Areas closer to downtown will experience a moderate growth of less than 2,500 people. The area near the airport and the area to the south of Plant City are expected to see negative population growth.

Employment Growth

The Hillsborough MPO forecasts that by 2045, Plant City's employment may reach 88,400, an 80 percent increase over present day figures. Much of the growth is concentrated along the eastern boundary of the study area, and the eastern border of Hillsborough County. An 800,000 square foot Home Depot distribution center is currently under construction. This will create 150 new jobs initially and is expected to reach up to 350 jobs within several years.

Most of the southern areas in the study area will see a growth of 2,500 to 5,000 employees from 2015 to 2045, while most of the western areas will experience moderate employment growth. The downtown areas will see a growth of less than 1,000 employees.



Population Growth (2015-2045)

Legend

	Study Area	New Residents per TAZ
	Plant City	 <0
	Water Bodies	 0 - 1000
	Railroads	 1000 - 2500
		 2500 - 5000
		 >5000

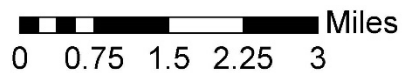
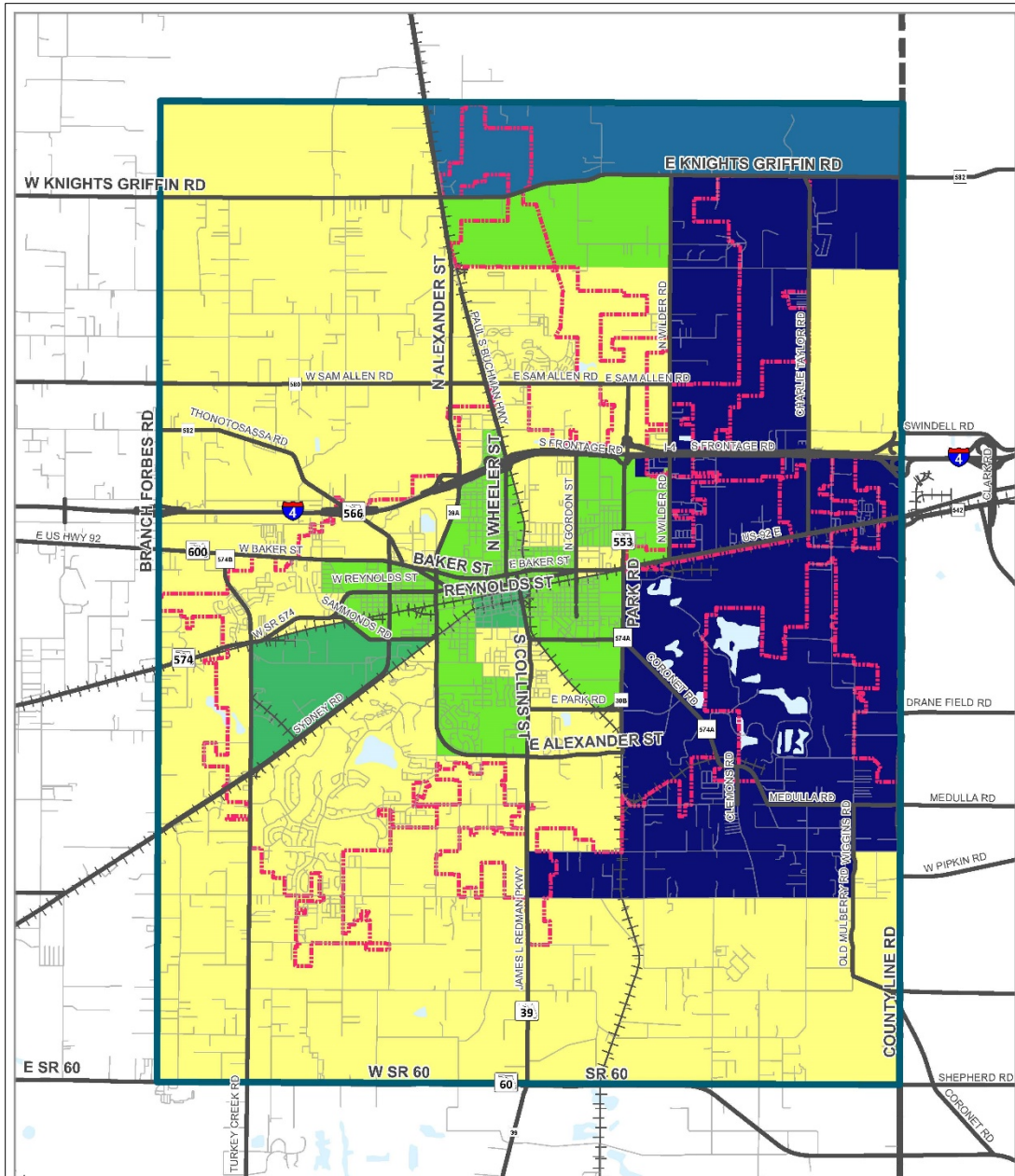


Figure 17: Population Growth



Employment Growth (2015-2045)

Legend

	Study Area	New Jobs per TAZ
	Plant City	<0
	Water Bodies	0 - 500
	Railroads	500 - 1000
		1000 - 2500
		2500 - 5000

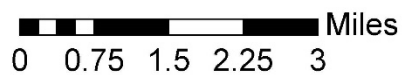


Figure 18: Employment Growth

Future Land Use & Emerging Destinations

The planned future land use shows a more concentrated pattern than the existing land use. The areas outside of Plant City are expected to be mostly agricultural with very few parcels of low-density residential uses. Within the Plant City boundary, the map shows higher-density residential uses in the southwest part of the City and the downtown area, heavier commercial uses along major corridors like Alexander Street, South Collins Street, Thonotosassa Road and the north end of Park Road.

The industrial land use along County Line Road is not expected to change, while the southeast and south end of the city are expecting larger and heavier industrial uses. The major change in land use is the increase in mixed-use land uses, particularly in the southeast area of Plant City.

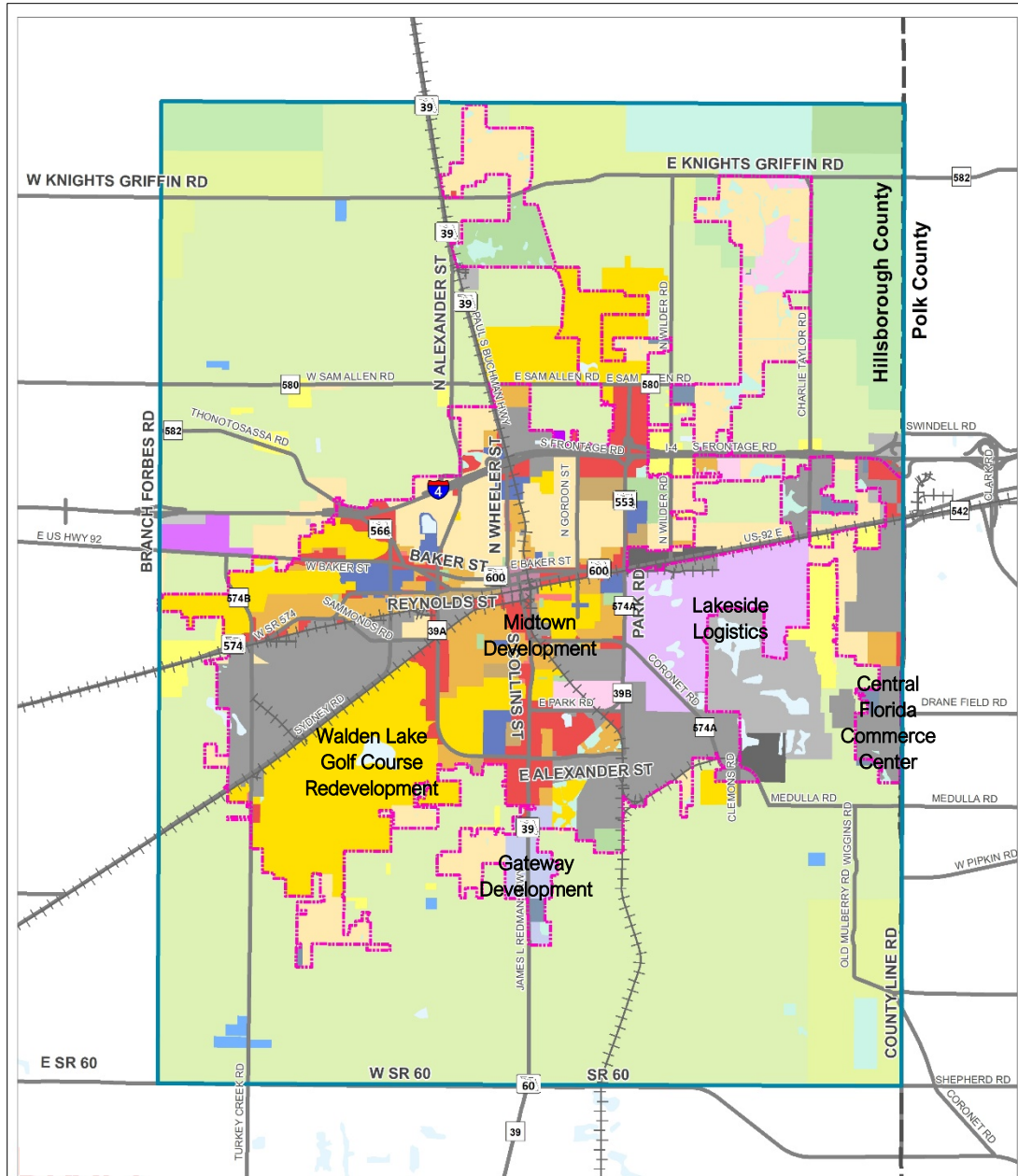
Figure 17 displays the future land use in the study area and notes emerging major destinations, including residential and commercial developments.

Residential Developments

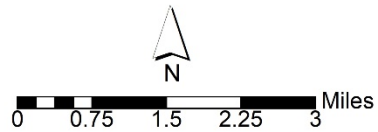
- **Midtown Development:** For several years, the city of Plant City has been exploring options for redeveloping a nearly 16-acre parcel located directly south of downtown Plant City. The property is owned by the city, who is in search for a developer to bring a multi-story, mixed-use development to accommodate potentially 1,000 new residents within walking distance of downtown.
- **Gateway Development:** The area south of Alexander St on State Road 39 is an area targeted for redevelopment. The Hillsborough County Planning Commission has been developing mixed use land development regulations to facilitate the redevelopment of this area primed for a mix of uses.
- **Walden Lake Golf Course:** The vacant Walden Lake Golf Course that sits in the middle of one of Plant City's largest suburban subdivisions has been purchased by developers for redevelopment. Plans are in the works to develop a mixed-use community, but final concepts have not been presented yet.

Employment Developments

- **Central Florida Commerce Center:** The Central Florida Commerce Center is a 72-acre business park that will serve industrial and office uses. When complete, the complex will include 1,350,520 square feet of space to be leased for industrial, warehouse, and office purposes.
- **Lakeside Logistics:** A new logistics center for freight distribution is under development between Park Rd and County Line Rd, south of US 92. When complete, it will occupy the 1,400-acre site with a 500,000+ square foot warehouse distribution facility during Phase 1, and 100,000 to 1,000,000 square feet of additional space in subsequent phases.



Future Land Use & Emerging Destinations



Legend

Study Area	Future Land Use	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL	PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
Plant City	AGRICULTURAL ESTATE	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PLANNED	PUBLIC/SEMI PUBLIC
County Boundary	AGRICULTURAL/MINING	MIXED USE - GATEWAY	RESIDENTIAL-1
Water Bodies	AGRICULTURAL/RURAL	MIXED USE - RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL	RESIDENTIAL-2
Railroads	COMMERCIAL	MIXED USE - RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL	RESIDENTIAL-4
	LIGHT COMMERCIAL OFFICE	SUBURBAN MIXED USE-6	RESIDENTIAL-6
	DOWNTOWN CORE	NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE-4	RESIDENTIAL-12
	HEAVY INDUSTRIAL	NATURAL PRESERVATION	RESIDENTIAL-20
	INDUSTRIAL	PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE	TRANSITIONAL AREA

Figure 19: Future Land Use and Emerging Destinations

Public Engagement

Stakeholder Focus Group – Meeting 1

The first of two focus group meetings with key local and regional stakeholders was held on February 19, 2020 at the Plant City City Hall.

Representatives from the following agencies and organizations attended:

- Hillsborough Area Regional Transit
- Hillsborough County Sunshine Line
- Citrus Connection
- TECO
- Polk TPO
- Plant City Main Street
- Hillsborough Community College (HCC)
- Plant City Chamber of Commerce
- City of Lakeland
- Plant City
- Hillsborough County Economic Development
- Improvement League of Plant City
- South Florida Baptist Hospital
- FDOT District 1

Benefits, Challenges, & Keys to Success

One of the activities held during the focus group meeting identified participants' thoughts on the benefits, challenges, and keys to success for transit in Plant City. Participants were given three color-coded notecards on which they answered the following questions. Responses received are summarized below.

Benefits

What are the biggest benefits of implementing transit here?

- Enabling low income and people with disabilities to become more mobile and be able to reach desired destination for employment, shopping and healthcare
- Make roads safer by getting unsafe drivers off roadway
- Less traffic
- People more active within community
- Smart growth
- Better for the environment
- Lower transportation cost
- Freedom to move
- Potential density increases
- Interactions that cross economic lines (class?)
- Hardship insurance
- Jobs
- Integration
- Connections to Polk County & Tampa
- More mobility choice
- Economic development
- Increase workforce in Plant City
- More access to city locations which can help businesses and quality of life

Challenges

What are the biggest challenges of implementing transit here?

- Lack of funding
- Overcome stigma that public transit is only for poor people
- Convincing people who want to drive to support transit. (Let them understand its benefits even if they don't use it)
- Getting a system that people can count on in place
- Getting support from county leaders to implement and properly fund it
- Perception
- Over emphasis on coverage
- Politics
- People expect reduced congestion
- Creating a more convenient and affordable system
- Identifying viable routes that will be outlined in a changing market
- Small and dispersed population
- Implementing and operating costs

Keys to Success

What is needed to make transit successful here?

- Routes that enable riders to reach destinations in a reasonable amount of time
- Consistency
- Community support & frequent service
- Implementing transit in stages as a progression to longer regional system like rail
- Call out people to get used to it and have confidence in the system
- Manage expectations - not all people in all areas will have access
- Focus on ridership
- Singles, not homeruns (translation: take baby steps toward a goal rather than achieve everything right off the bat)
- Focus on usefulness, not involving riders
- Care about the transit experience
- Outreach & education
- Good planning & partnerships
- Sidewalks
- Land/ agreement for Park and Ride lots
- D1/D7 FDOT coordination
- 'Buy-in'—who is your local transit champion
- Equal focus on commuter uses and no-vehicle households
- Connect to hubs
- Advertising & update
- Communication
- Low cost

- Choosing the right nodes
- Coordination with Polk county, the Citrus connection. Need a coalition to demonstrate support

Breakout Group Mapping Activity

A second activity conducted with the focus group was a mapping activity. There were three breakout group stations, each with its own map focused on a different topic area. These included mapping key corridors and activity centers that exist today, identifying the Communities of Concern and where they need to go, and areas where future growth is predicted. The high-level summary for each group is included below and the mapping results are included in the following pages.

Points of Interest & Key Corridors

Comments are shown in Figure 19 and summarized below.

- Community Circulator
 - The primary places that should be connected with transit include grocery stores, HCC, South Florida Baptist Hospital, hotels, and Strawberry Square.
 - The primary routes this service was recommended to operate on include Park Rd, Reynolds St, Baker St, and S Collins St/Redman Pkwy
- Express Route
 - This should primarily serve commuters working in Tampa or Lakeland
 - There was a preference for an express bus with limited stops between Tampa, Plant City, and Lakeland
 - Connecting this service through Brandon is generally not supported
 - The corridors suggested for this service to operate on include US 92/Baker St, SR 574/MLK Dr, and I-4
 - Park and Ride Locations included the football stadium, the downtown train station, and an FDOT-owned property on the southwest corner of the intersection between I-4 and Alexander St

Communities of Concern

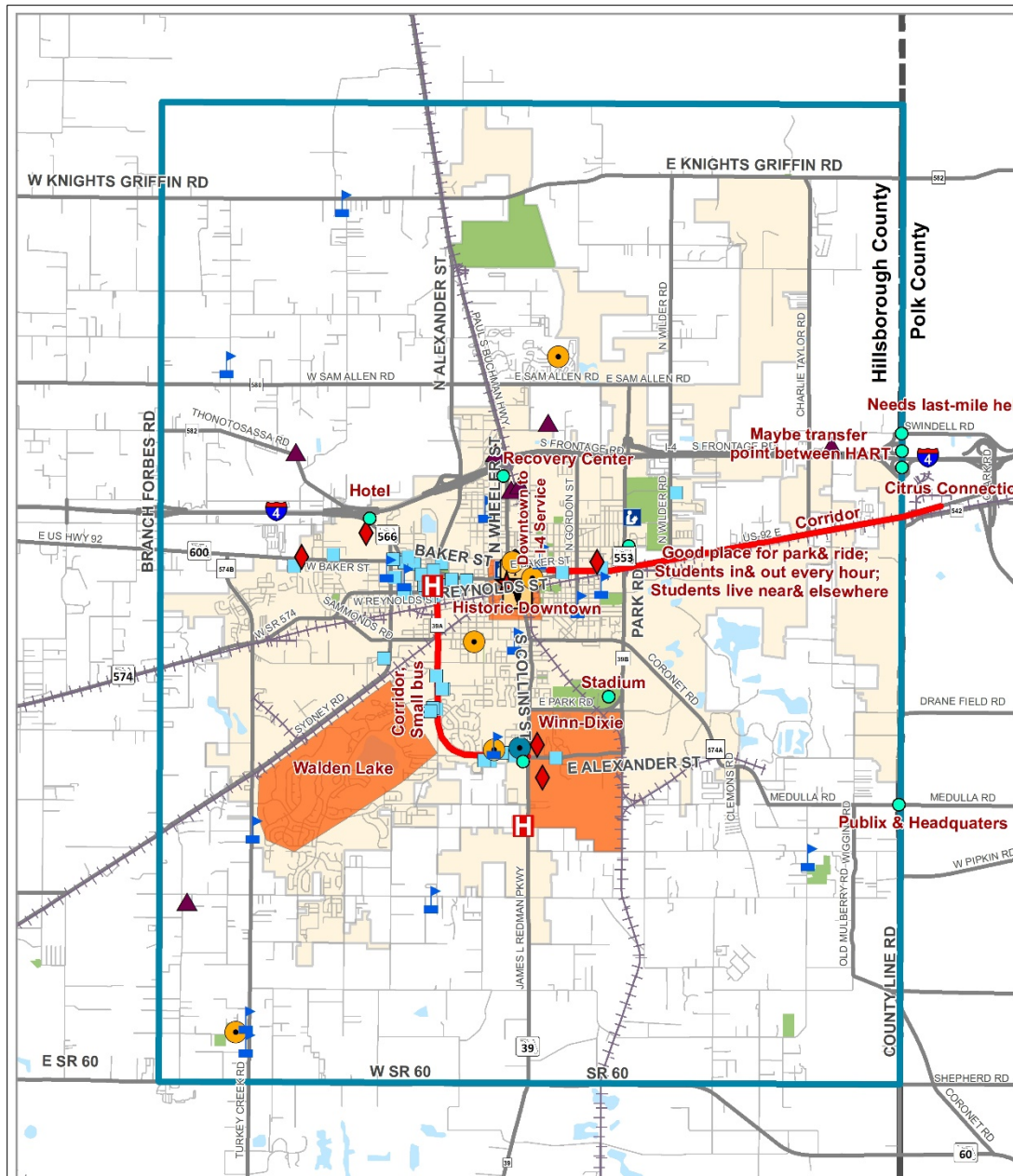
Comments are shown in Figure 20 and summarized below.

- The MPO's communities of concern generally capture the transit dependent populations. There is a 65+ community northeast of Trapnell Rd and Turkey Creek Rd that is not currently included.
- Popular destinations for Communities of Concern would include Plant City High School, Strawberry Square, the Wal-Mart shopping center, and the essential services in Downtown (e.g. health center, community service center).
- The migrant workers are typically enrolled in programs that provide transportation to and from work and at least one trip per week for food and other needs. They do have many options for recreational trips.

Areas of Future Growth

Comments are shown in Figure 21 and summarized below.

- Residential Growth
 - Some participants discussed the need for increased infill development to add more density in the core of Plant City rather than creating new, greenfield developments
 - Could use upper floors of downtown offices and commercial spaces for residences
 - More residential development is needed to support transit
- Employment Growth
 - The two biggest employers in Plant City (South Florida Baptist Hospital and HCC College) expect continued growth
 - Industrial, warehouse, and distribution services comprise a major portion of the expected commercial developments planned in the study area
 - Participants discussed the need for expanded roadway infrastructure to accommodate the growth



Activity Centers and Points of Interest

Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| ★ City Hall | 📖 Library | Input |
| 🏫 School | 🎭 Theater | ● POI_Added |
| 🏥 Hospital | 🏠 Museum | — Corridor |
| 🏥 Health Care | ⚰ Cemetery | 🟠 Areas of Interest |
| 🟡 Community Center | 🌳 Park | |
| 🔴 Grocery Store | 🚂 Railroads | |

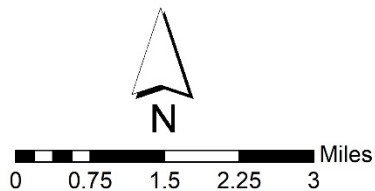
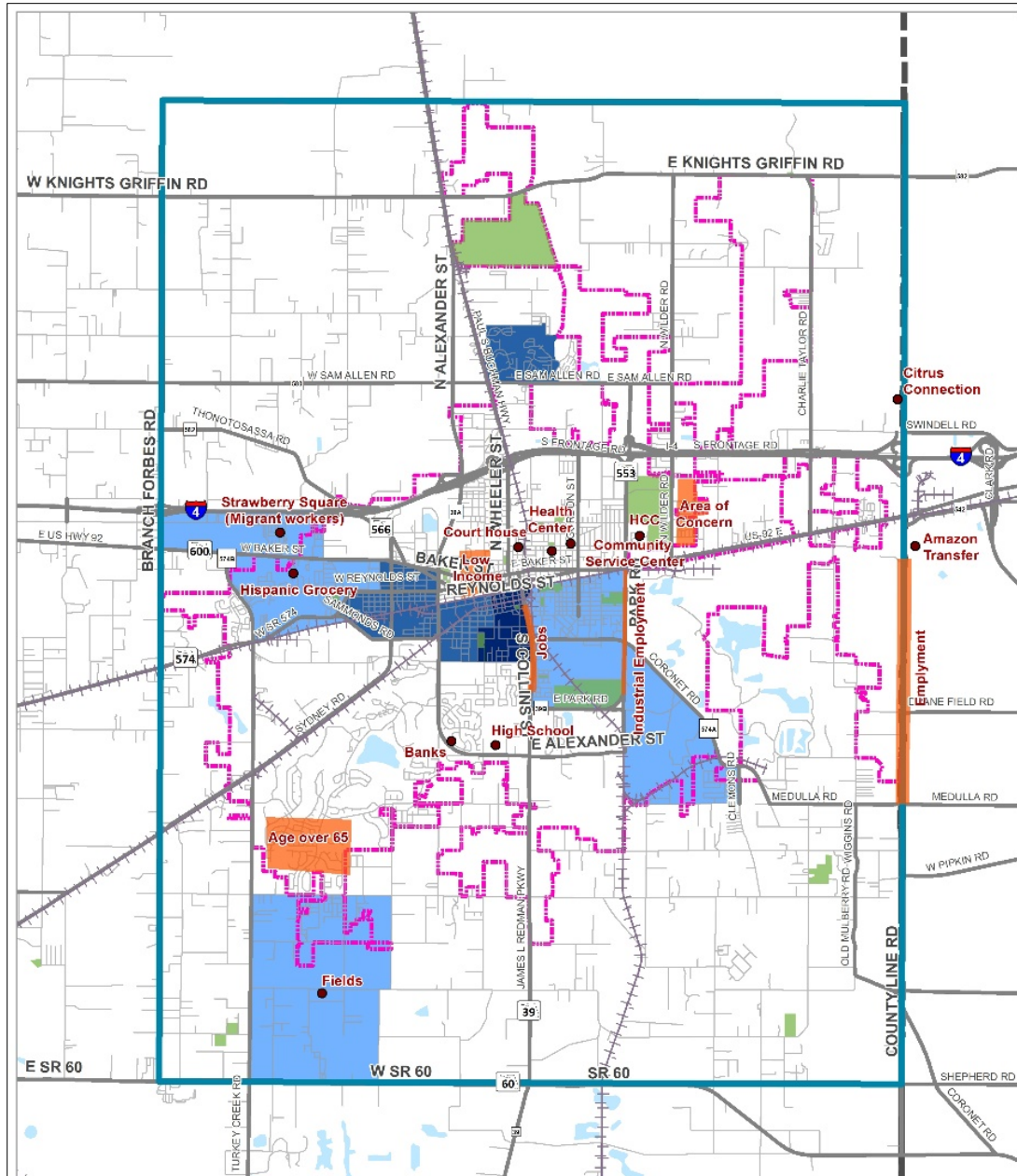










Figure 20: Stakeholder Focus Group – Points of Interest Results



Communities of Concern

Legend

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|  | Study Area | Communities of Concern |
|  | Plant City | 0-1 characteristics |
|  | Park | 2 characteristics |
|  | | 3 characteristics |
|  | | 4 characteristics |
|  | Railroads | |
|  | Key O&D Points | |
|  | Areas of Concern&Opportunity | |

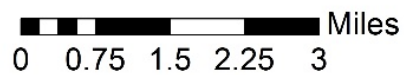
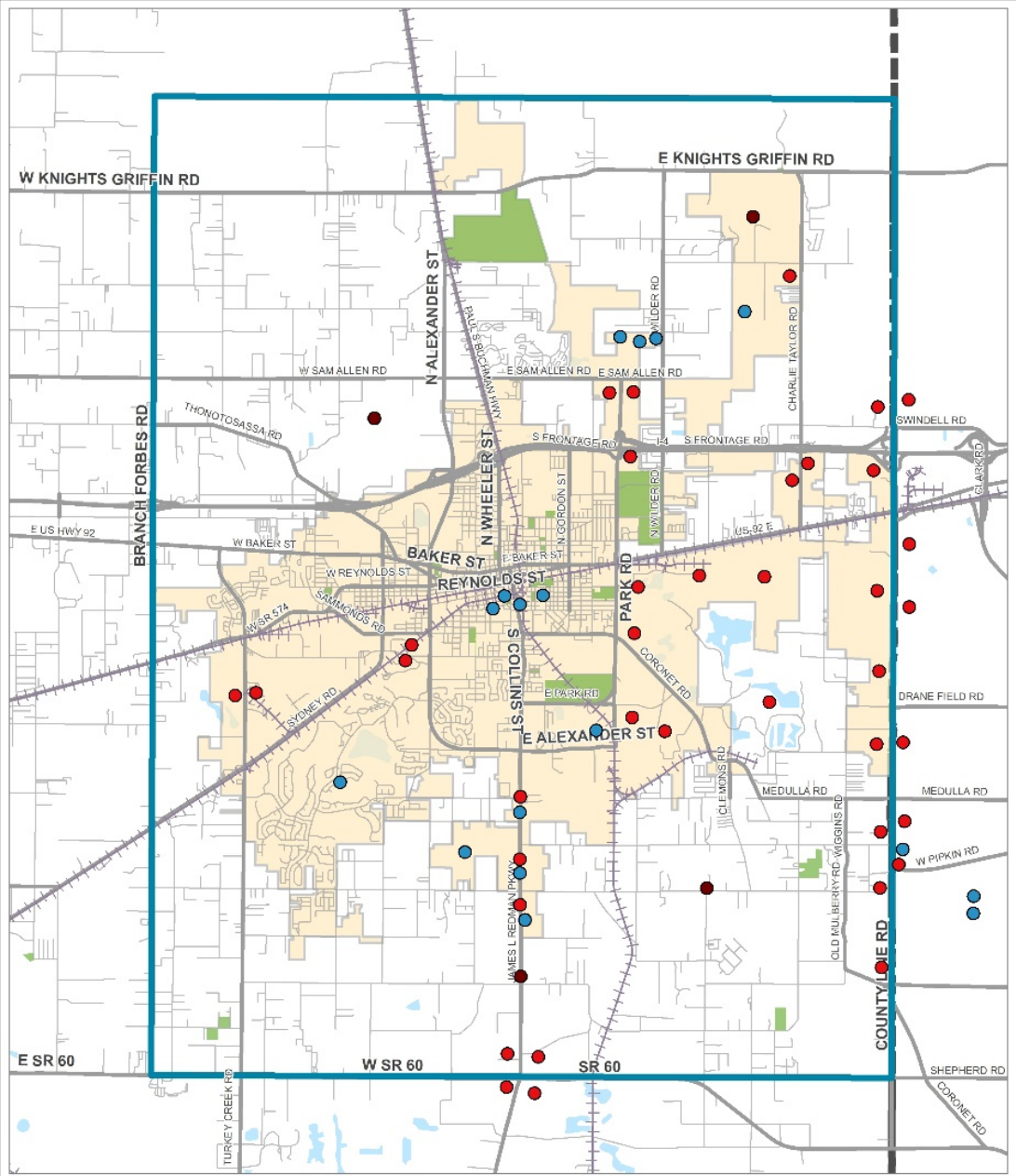


Figure 21: Stakeholder Focus Group – Communities of Concern Results



Future Growth

Legend

- Study Area
- Plant City
- Park
- County Boundary
- Railroads

- Future Growth**
- Employment
 - Residential
 - Other Notes

Miles

0 0.75 1.5 2.25 3

Figure 22: Stakeholder Focus Group – Future Growth Areas Results

Plant City Transit Master Plan Goals & Performance Measures

Based on the analysis of existing conditions and feedback from the focus group, the following draft goals for the Plant City Transit Master Plan were developed. Each goal is paired with a performance measure to assist in evaluating transit alternatives in the next phase of this project.

1. Implement useful and reliable service for people who need it most (Communities of Concern)
 - a. Potential Performance measures: Number of jobs & low-income residents within service area
2. Use transit to incentivize development downtown
 - a. Potential Performance measures: Number of people can get to/from downtown within specified time
3. Connect Plant City to Lakeland/Polk County and Tampa with transit
 - a. Potential Performance measures: Travel time compared vs. auto travel time

Challenges & Opportunities

The following challenges and opportunities summarize the information gathered through the existing conditions and travel market analysis and the public engagement efforts conducted so far. These considerations will inform the alternatives developed in the subsequent phases of this study.

Challenges

- First and last mile transit stop accessibility must be considered to facilitate safe, easy access for transit users.
- Public perception of public transit is a consistent challenge for transit agencies across the country.
- The low-density, auto-oriented nature of residential and employment developments throughout the study area are at the low end of the required densities to support transit.
- Vehicle ownership is high in the study area, posing a barrier to transitioning people from personal vehicles to public transit.
- Differences in population types, from students, visitors, and elderly, vary greatly throughout the study area (and over the course of the year) making it difficult to create a one-size-fits all service option.
- Service efficiency may be difficult given the long distances between the residential, employment and service centers.
- Significant walking distances off main roads, extreme weather conditions in the summer, and high-speed corridors make first/last mile connections to bus stops challenging.

Opportunities

- There is a need for transportation access for Communities of Concern. Initiating transit service may help this group access needed destinations.
- Plant City is a rapidly developing city, and transit may help to attract additional new businesses or residents. Land use policies can help to incentivize denser development closer to the core and create a more supportive landscape for transit.

- Fluctuations in part-time and seasonal visitors may provide opportunities for flex routing and scheduling options. Special event activities may also benefit from flex public transportation services to reduce parking and congestion issues.
- Numerous stakeholders support public transportation and are interested in developing options and choices within the study area and broader region. There may be opportunities to partner with local employers to fund marketing campaigns, advertisements, and passenger facilities.

Next Steps

The next phases of this study will identify potential transit alternatives based on the findings and feedback described in this document. These alternatives will be narrowed to a set that will be presented to the stakeholder focus group for evaluation. Following the second stakeholder focus group, a public open house will give an overview of the alternatives and ask for feedback from the public on which alternatives are preferred.