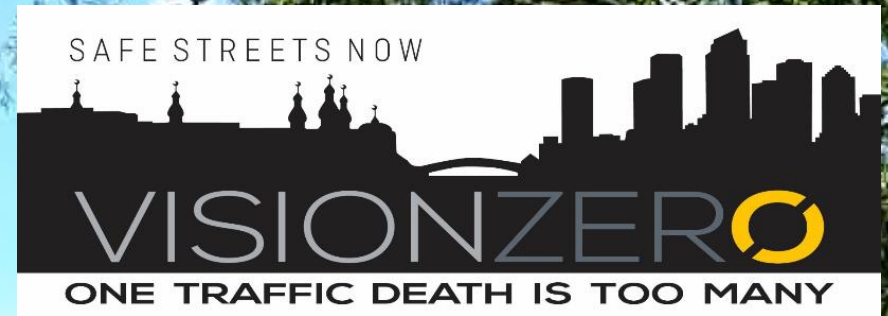




## Safe Access to Parks

### Upper Tampa Bay Trail Linear Park Pilot Final Fix-It Ideas

*December 2021*



Hillsborough TPO  
Transportation  
Planning Organization





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## I. Introduction

The Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is conducting a Safe Access to Parks pilot project to develop a process that can be replicated throughout the County to implement safety countermeasures that improve access to parks with a focus on speed management. A toolbox of safety countermeasures, building on the 2019 *Speed Management Action Plan*, was developed as part of this process. This pilot project includes three different types of park facilities in Hillsborough County (local, regional, and linear) whose contexts and transportation safety issues broadly represent other facilities in the region, such that the findings from this pilot project can be applied elsewhere in the County. The project scope includes the following tasks:

1. Identify parks to include in the pilot project
2. Conduct a detailed existing conditions assessment of each park location
3. Solicit public feedback
4. Develop a toolbox of safety countermeasures
5. Apply countermeasures to each park location

This report documents the results of Task 3 and Task 5, including a summary of the public feedback process and results, as well as the safety countermeasures identified for each park location. Project materials are available on the TPO's website:

<https://planhillsborough.org/park-study/>.

The process to conduct this study is summarized at the end of this document to aid other agencies in Hillsborough County in identifying safety improvements to other parks in the county.

### A. Park Selection Process

A quantitative process was developed that primarily considers equity and transportation safety metrics to identify candidate parks within

Hillsborough County. There are few linear parks in Hillsborough County; the Upper Tampa Bay Trail was selected as it traverses a variety of contexts and findings from the pilot can be applied to a wide variety of other parks and trails within the County.

Additional details are provided in a technical memorandum dated May 3, 2021, that can be found on the TPO's website. Other parks selected for inclusion in the pilot are the Sulphur Springs Park/River Tower Park (local and passive regional), and Copeland Park (active regional), with separate existing conditions assessments prepared for those parks.



Upper Tampa Bay Trail Trailhead Monument



### B. Existing Conditions Assessment

An existing conditions assessment was prepared for each park to document the key characteristics of the park and the surrounding transportation context, including the following information for the roadway network that provides primary access to the park facility:

- Description of transportation network for all travel modes, with a focus on the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks
- Assessment of the speed of people driving on roadways around the park
- Collision assessment for all travel modes with a focus on vulnerable roadway users (people walking and bicycling)

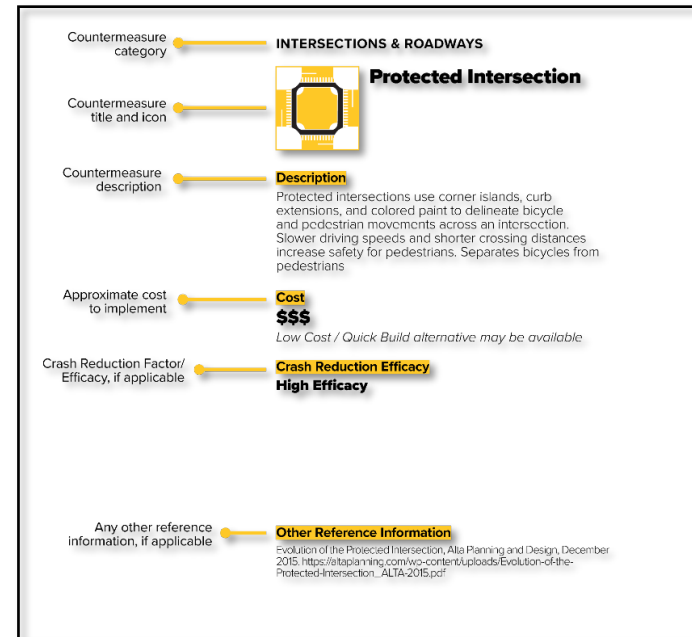
Based on the existing conditions assessment, areas where specific community feedback was desired were identified to include in the public outreach campaign and preliminary opportunities to improve transportation connections to the park were developed. More details can be found in the existing conditions report available on the project website, available at <https://planhillsborough.org/park-study/>.

### C. Countermeasure Toolbox

A toolbox of engineering countermeasures was developed to aid in the selection of potential transportation system enhancements that could be considered around each park area with the following categories:

1. Bikeway Facilities
2. Intersection and Roadway Design
3. Walking Facilities
4. Signals
5. Signing and Striping
6. Other

Over 90 countermeasures were identified with an example shown to the right.



Example Countermeasure

Where data is available, **Crash Reduction Efficacy** is also provided. For the crash reduction efficacy, some measures include a qualitative range of low, medium, or high when limited information is available. For others, a crash reduction factor (CRF) from the Federal Highway Administration’s Crash Modification Clearinghouse is provided for illustrative purposes only to illustrate a potential range. More details are provided in the Toolbox available on the project website.

The remainder of this report provides an overview of the public engagement process, with a summary of the specific feedback related to Upper Tampa Bay Trail as well as the initial potential improvements, or fix ideas, developed for the roadways surrounding and connecting to the trail.



## II. Public Outreach Process and Results

Public outreach for the Safe Access to Parks pilot project was conducted in several ways, including collaboration with an agency stakeholder group, online public outreach, and in-person public outreach. Additionally, regular presentations were made to the Hillsborough TPO committees to provide updates on the project and to receive feedback. Each of these outreach elements is described in more detail below.

### A. Public Outreach Process

#### 1. Stakeholder Group

A project stakeholder group was established during the scoping process for the project to provide input on the overall scope of work and to help inform the overall project goals. This stakeholder group consists of staff from Hillsborough County, the City of Tampa, and the Hillsborough TPO, and includes staff from multiple departments, including planning, engineering, outreach, technology, and parks and recreation. The goal was to establish a group with a diverse background to provide unique insights into the project.

In addition to the scoping meeting, the group met three times, including a project kick-off meeting, a meeting to review and discuss the existing conditions assessment, and a meeting to review and discuss the countermeasure toolbox and application of the toolbox to each park.

Feedback from the stakeholder group was overwhelmingly positive and their ideas have been incorporated into this final document, including a change of name for the project and nine additional fix ideas around Upper Tampa Bay Trail (no fix ideas were removed based on feedback). The project was initially called the Park Speed Zone Pilot Study. However, the project evolved and some of the strategies identified go beyond only speed management. The project was renamed Safe Access to Parks to better reflect that the overall purpose of the project is to

improve transportation safety on roadways surrounding and connecting to parks, which includes speed management strategies, but other improvements as well.

In addition to project stakeholder group outreach, the project was presented to the following committees and their feedback was incorporated into the overall process. Members of these committees also assisted with sharing information about the project and public outreach with their networks.

- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Livable Roadways Committee
- Policy Committee

#### 2. Online Public Outreach

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic conditions at the time this study was prepared, including the Delta surge in late summer/early fall, much of the early public engagement was conducted through online tools. Numerous neighborhood groups in the vicinity of all park locations were contacted and information about the project provided. Social media was extensively used to promote the project.

A website to share project information was developed, with links to an online web map and an online survey. The web map and survey were developed in both English and Spanish and were open to the public from mid-August through early November 2021. Between the three parks, there were over 95 unique responses to the online survey and over 115 comments on the web map. The results for Upper Tampa Bay Trail are discussed in Section 3. To help inform people who use the park on a regular basis about the outreach, yard signs and flyers were placed around the park and distributed to people who have connections to the park.



Do *you* feel safe traveling to your Park?



## PARK SPEED ZONE STUDY

Tell us the issues that are most important to you, so together we can improve safety on roadways near our parks.

Please place your comment on the interactive map or fill out a quick survey by scanning the code below or visiting: [planhillsborough.org/park-study](http://planhillsborough.org/park-study)



Got Questions? Contact Lisa Silva at: 813.665.1329 or [silval@plancom.org](mailto:silval@plancom.org)

*Yard Signs and Flyers that were Placed Around Each Park*



3. In-Person Public Outreach

In-person outreach events were conducted at all three pilot locations on Friday, October 29, 2021. The Upper Tampa Bay Trail event was held at the Channel Park Trailhead from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM, while concurrent events took place at Sulphur Springs Park and Copeland Park from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. At all events, team staff discussed the background and purpose of the project with participants and explored ideas to make access to the parks safer by all modes of travel. This feedback focused on reactions to initial concepts previously identified by the team and new ideas generated by participants.

Approximately 20 members of the public, primarily trail users, provided input at the Upper Tampa Bay Trail site, including comments solicited at the adjacent Northwest City Dog Park and the Northwest Transfer Center. These participants indicated general agreement with nearly all presented conceptual improvements, with particularly strong interest in completing the two-mile gap between Peterson Road Park and Van Dyke Road. Many of the new ideas generated during the event also related to connectivity. Connections of interest included the adjacent Northwest County Dog Park, the HART Northwest Transfer Center, and the Double Branch Road area. Trail facility improvements (e.g., widening and bridge replacement) and enhanced enforcement monitoring and activities (primarily as related to motorized vehicle trail use and loitering/personal security) are also significant topics of interest. More details are presented in Section 3.

COME TO THE PARK BY BROOM, BIKE, OR FEET  
FOR A QUICK SURVEY AND

# TRICK OR TREAT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29  
RAIN DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9-11 AM	3-5 PM	3-5 PM
<b>Upper Tampa Bay Trail</b> Channel Park Pavilion 9201 W. Waters Ave.	<b>Copeland Park</b> Copeland Pool Area 11001 N. 15th St.	<b>Sulphur Springs Park</b> Sulphur Springs Pool 701 E. Bird St.

Candy and giveaways! But sorry, no tricks!  
We just want to come up with a fix.  
Slow down traffic? Fix crosswalks? Add sidewalks too?  
We can't make plans without you!

Hillsborough TPO  
Transportation  
Planning Organization

SAFE STREETS NOW  
VISIONZERO  
ONE TRAFFIC DEATH IS TOO MANY

For more info, visit [planhillsborough.org/park-study](http://planhillsborough.org/park-study)  
Got Questions? Contact Lisa Silva at: 813-665-1329 or [silval@plancom.org](mailto:silval@plancom.org)

In-Person Public Outreach Invitation

# VISIONZERO

## SAFE ACCESS TO PARKS - UPPER TAMPA BAY TRAIL



*In-Person Public Outreach*  
*October 29, 2021*





### B. Online Public Outreach Results

The online public outreach yielded 29 unique comments from the online map and 62 responses from the online survey questions. An additional six people provided feedback for all parks.

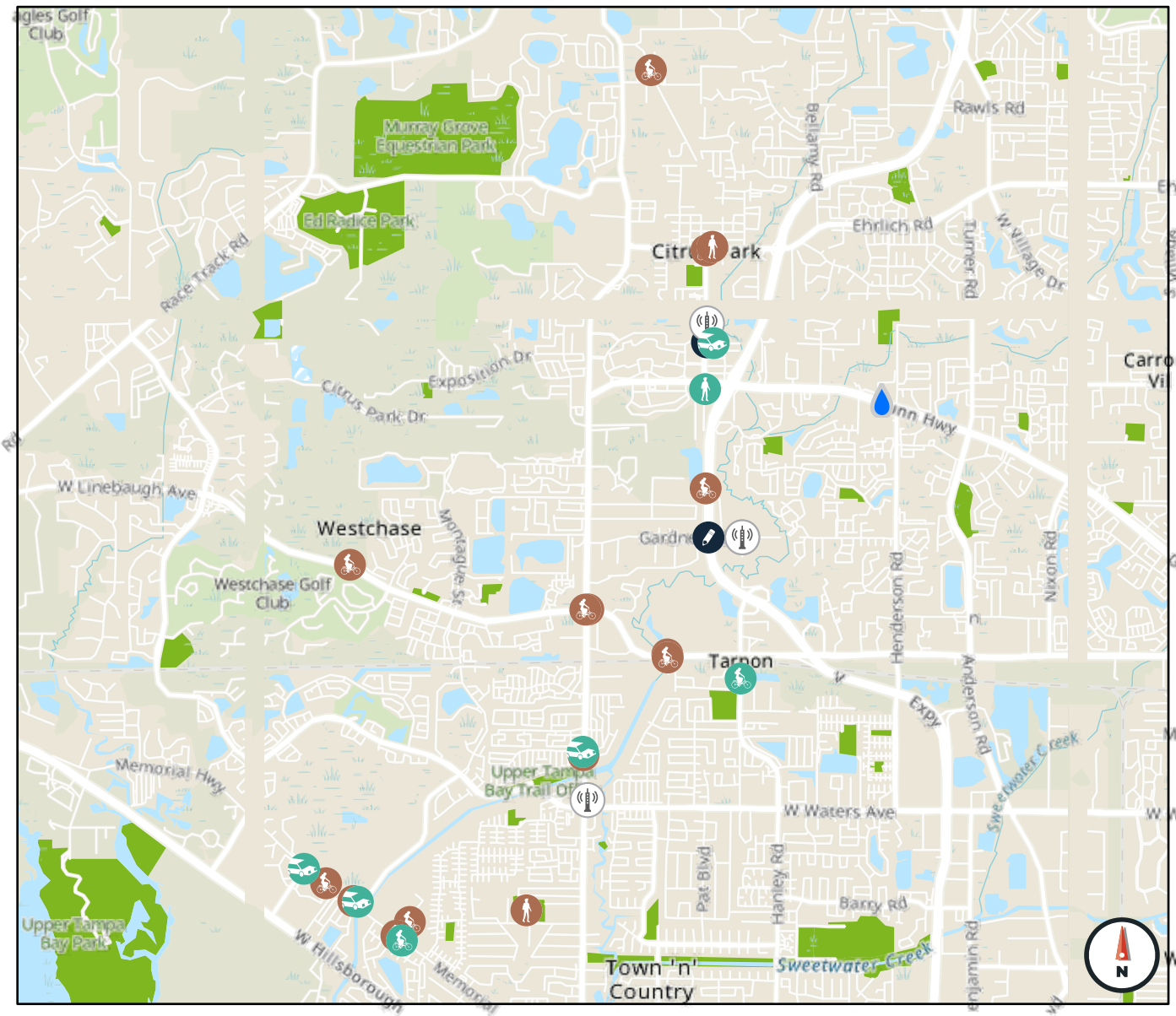
Links to the online map were provided on the TPO’s project website as well as through social media. People were able to identify comments related to different aspects of the transportation system, as well as other specific issues. The location of each comment is shown on **Figure 1** with a summary of the comments provided in **Table 1**. All the comments by issue type are provided at the end of this report in **Table 2**, with some highlights below:

- The trail needs to be expanded to connect to the Upper Tampa Bay Trail trailhead near Van Dyke Road. Riding on Gunn Hwy between Peterson Road and Van Dyke Road is way too dangerous with no shoulder or bike path.
- Because the cars speed along the roadway, and the roads are so wide: we need to have a nice, buffered bike lane to ensure our safety when using connections to get to the Upper Tampa Bay Trail.
- We need more bike lanes in general. A lot of us use bikes to get around but it is very dangerous; roads like Memorial and Hillsborough make me fear for my life when I ride my bike.
- Consider having stop sign for road traffic, or at least increased signage for vehicles to yield to pedestrians at this crossing where I’ve seen several hard stops and near misses (comment is referring to Gardner Road).
- Wilsky Blvd from Linebaugh to Donaldson is very dangerous to use a bicycle on the road and the sidewalk is too small to ride on. It is a no passing zone and the lane is not wide enough to support both a bicycle and car safely. Motorists pass too close to bicyclists and refuse to yield.

**Table 1: Online Map Comment Type Summary**

Comment Type	Number of Comments	Percent of Comments
Roadway Operations – People drive too fast	4	14%
Walk – Inadequate, missing, or unsafe crosswalks	3	10%
Lighting – Insufficient Street lighting that makes it uncomfortable to walk or bike at night	4	14%
Transit – The bus does not come frequently enough/There is not a place to wait for the bus	0	0%
Another issue – please explain	2	7%
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc.)	15	52%
Drainage - Drainage issues create a barrier to walking, biking or taking transit during and after rain	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2021



**Comment Type**

-  Another issue – please explain
-  Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)
-  Bike – Vehicles not sharing the road with bikes
-  Drainage - Drainage issues create a barrier to walking, biking or taking transit during and after rain
-  Lighting - Insufficient street lighting that make it uncomfortable to walk or bike at night
-  Roadway Operations – People drive too fast
-  Roadway Operations – Traffic signal cycle is too long
-  Transit – The bus does not come frequently enough
-  Transit – There is not a direct route from the bus stop to my destination
-  Transit – There is not a place to wait for the bus
-  Vehicles – Hard to turn from this location
-  Walk – Inadequate or missing sidewalks
-  Walk – Inadequate, missing, or unsafe crosswalks
-  Walk – People driving not yielding to people walking

Figure 1  
**Upper Tampa Bay Trail  
 Public Outreach Comments**



The survey was developed to ask more direct and open-ended questions of park users, including asking about typical travel modes to the park, ease of access, specific locations where people feel unsafe walking or bicycling to the park, and specific ideas for improvements. Some key highlights of this feedback are summarized below, with all responses provided as an attachment.

- *How do you typically get to the park or trail?*
  - Of the 62 people who answered this question specifically related to Upper Tampa Bay Trail (UTBT), 11 percent walk, 47 percent bicycle and 42 percent drive a car.
- *How easy or difficult is it for you to get to/from parks and trails, with 0 being the hardest and 10 being the easiest?*
  - Respondents generally have an easy time accessing Upper Tampa Bay Trail, with an average response of 7.3. People who drive had an easier time (7.8) than people who bike (6.5). People who walk ranked ease of access the highest (8.3).
- *When thinking about going to the park or trail, where do you feel unsafe walking or bicycling and why? There were 44 responses to this question for UTBT. Common roads identified include:*
  - Peterson Road, Sheldon Road, Montague Street, Linebaugh Avenue, Wilsky Boulevard, Gunn Highway, Waters Avenue, and Ehrlich Road
- *Does the behavior of people driving, like speeding or not paying attention, make you not walk or bike to the park or trail?*
  - Of the 50 people who answered this question specifically thinking about UTBT, 32 percent responded “Yes,” 40 percent responded “No,” and 28 percent responded “Sometimes.”
- *Are there specific locations where you would like to see marked crosswalks connecting to the park or trail? Here are some specific responses related to Upper Tampa Bay Trail:*
  - Across Wilsky Boulevard to access the trailhead
  - Enhanced crosswalk at Ehrlich Road crossing. I stop traveling north at that point given long delay and safety concerns crossing Ehrlich.
  - At roads that cross the trail and add the markers on the trail for emergency.
- *Would you walk, bike, or take transit more to the park or trail if it was safer?*
  - People would be more likely to walk or bike to parks and trails if access is easier. Improved transit would not result in a lot of additional trips to the park or trail.
- *Are there specific locations where more street lighting is needed? Please tell us where.*
  - Memorial/Montague approaching the park, from Waters Ave west it is very dark.
  - Gunn Hwy and Peterson Rd light is needed!
  - Along Wilsky Rd.
  - Gardner Road
- *Are there drainage issues that affect your travel during and after periods of rain? Where?*
  - Near the pond by the dump.
  - The trail has standing water around the landfill area between Gardner and Linebaugh Avenue
  - South of Citrus Park Lane along the trail
- *Please share other suggestions for improvements that would help you access parks and trails in your neighborhood. (Sample on next page, all provided at end of report)*



## Please share other suggestions for improvements that would help you access parks and trails in your neighborhood.

Dedicated Bicycle lanes on Memorial Hwy from Hillsborough Ave to Dana Shores to support access to Courtney Campbell Causeway.

Widen pedestrian path along Gunn Hwy

More signs about keeping dogs leashed and cleaning up their poop

U/k

. If left unchecked this could become a hazard

Bike trails are needed on Gunn Hwy so that bikers can bridge the gap between the upper and lower portions of the UTBT. Better yet, the Trail should be completed to close the gap between Van Dyke Rd & Peterson Park!

A network of trails throughout the region that connects the parks.

Finish the extension of the Upper Tampa Bay Trail to connect it to the Suncoast trail please!

Complete the sidewalks on the southbound side of Memorial Highway so that we can bike to the Skyway Park and thw Cypress bike trail. There is about 2 miles without sidewalks. You can see where people ride through the grass but it is not safe.

*Suggestions to Improve access to Upper Tampa Bay Trail*

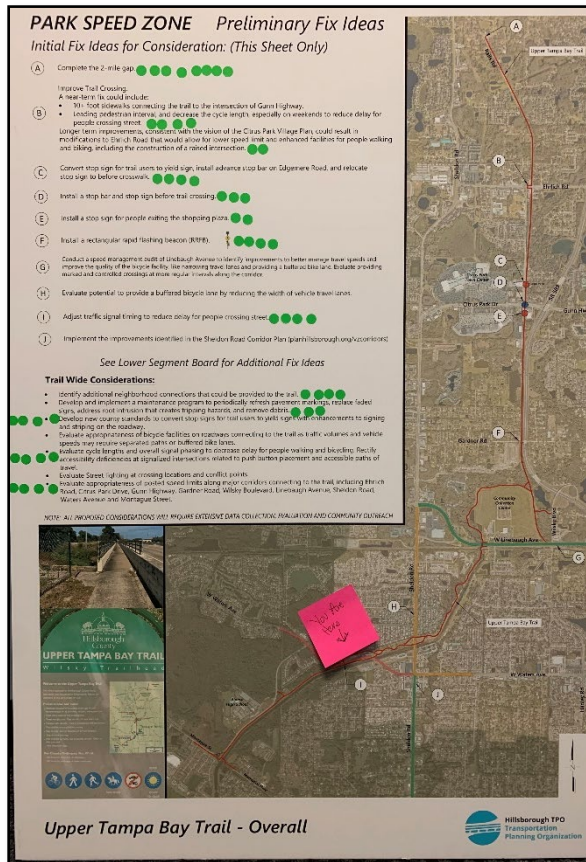




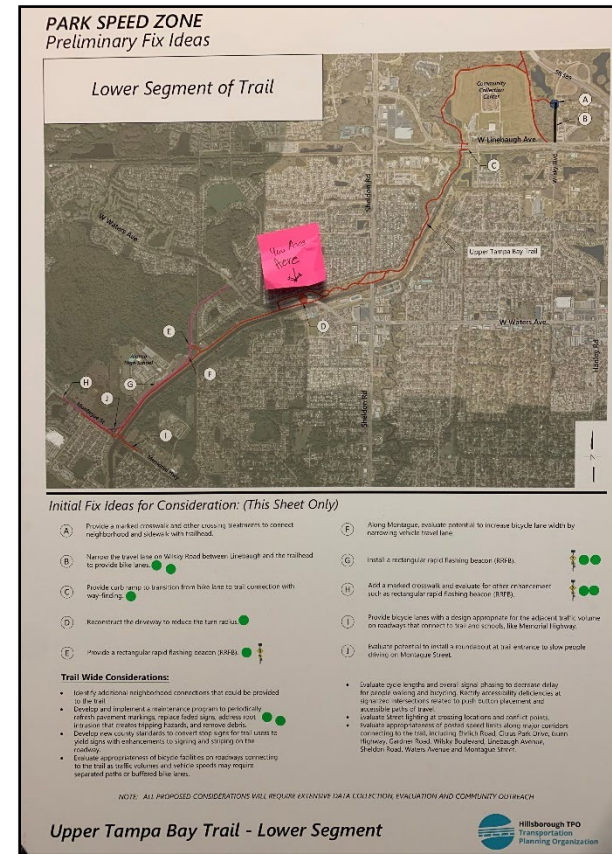
### III. Countermeasure Toolbox Application

This chapter details the application of the countermeasure toolbox to Upper Tampa Bay Trail based on the existing conditions assessment and feedback provided from the Community during the online and in-person public outreach. The image below shows the initial reaction to the application of the countermeasures. Participants were provided with

red and green dots to denote ideas that they were supportive of (green) and ideas that they did not support (red). In the discussion of specific countermeasure ideas, the initial level of public support is indicated. No ideas received a “no” vote, and an absence of a vote does not mean community support was lacking, rather participants preferred other ideas. In the following discussion, these ideas will be denoted by “●” in the same quantity as the public noted.



Public Preference on Initial Fix-Ideas



Public Preference on Initial Fix-Ideas – Lower Trail



### A. Overview

The countermeasure toolbox described previously was applied to the roadway network surrounding and connecting to Upper Tampa Bay Trail, as presented on **Figure 2** for the entire trail and **Figure 3** for the southern portion of the trail. Potential transportation system improvements are shown for specific locations, as well as areawide considerations. It is the intent that the appropriate agency will consider the various ideas in their planning and capital improvement processes, and that this document will serve as a starting point to identify potential projects for further evaluation. In the UTBT area, projects could be undertaken by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Hillsborough County, Hillsborough County School District, and Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART). For the ideas shown on **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**, they are organized below by the most applicable countermeasure category, as some fix ideas could fall into several categories. The agency that would be responsible for further planning and implementation is also shown. Most strategies fall under the Bikeway Facilities, Intersection and Roadway Design, and Walking Facilities categories. For conciseness, some strategies identified on the figures were combined with like strategies for the discussion below.

Overall, people who provided feedback at the in-person public outreach event were supportive of improving infrastructure for people walking and bicycling. Concerns were also noted related to overall maintenance of the area and illegal activities that are a deterrent to people walking and bicycling to the park and within the surrounding areas.

### B. Bikeway Facilities

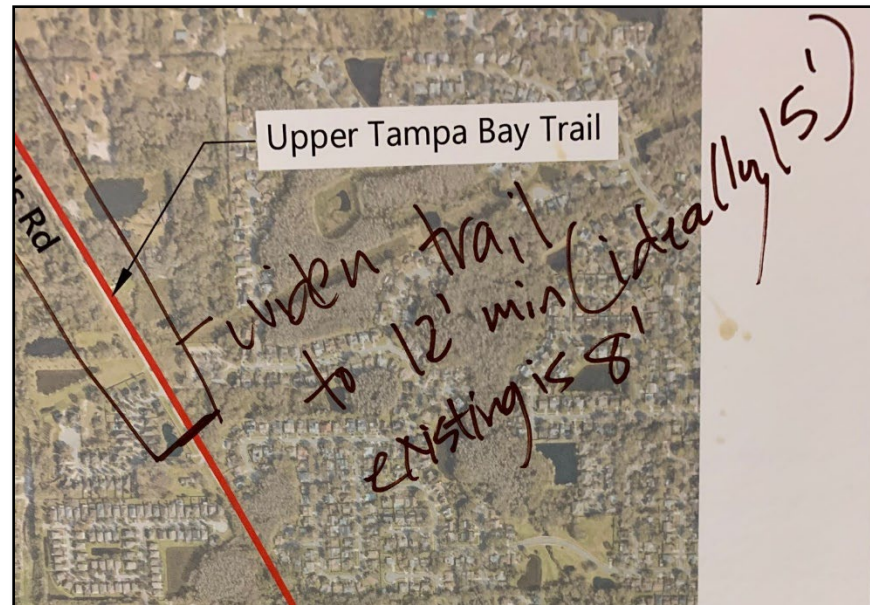
There are numerous roadways within the area that have bicycle facilities; opportunities to improve the transitions from the on-street to off-street network were identified.

**1. Complete the 2-mile gap (Idea A** on Figure 2). Closing the gap between Peterson Park in the south to Van Dyke Road would connect

the region to the Suncoast Trail. There is currently not a connection for people walking or bicycling. (Hillsborough County) ●●●●●●●●

**2. As a part of the implementation of the Sheldon Road Corridor Plan (planhillsborough.org/vzcorridors), evaluate potential to provide a buffered bicycle lane by reducing the width of vehicle travel lanes. (Ideas H and J** on Figure 2). Several transportation safety improvements have been identified for Sheldon Road. As the project progresses, design plans should be reviewed to determine if there are opportunities to provide a buffer between the travel lane and the bike lane. (Hillsborough County and the TPO)

**3. Widen portion of the trail to 12-foot minimum, ideally 15-foot (this portion of trail is currently 8-foot) (Idea K** on Figure 2) and widen the wooden bridge north of the Community Collection Center (**Idea M** on



Feedback from Public Outreach



Figure 2). This Safe Access strategy was added in response to community feedback. Congestion on the trail can lead to collisions between people using the trail in a variety of modes, and substandard trail width can discourage people from using the trail during perceived busy times. (Hillsborough County)

**4. Evaluate appropriateness of bicycle facilities on roadways connecting to the trail as traffic volumes and vehicle speeds may require separated paths or buffered bike lanes and provide bicycle lanes with a design appropriate for the adjacent traffic volume on roadways that connect to trail and schools, like Memorial Highway.**

**(Area Wide Idea on Figure 2 and Idea I on Figure 3 ).** Many bicycle facilities on roadways around the UTBT are not appropriate for the speed and volume of vehicle travel based on latest guidance from FHWA. (Hillsborough County and the TPO)

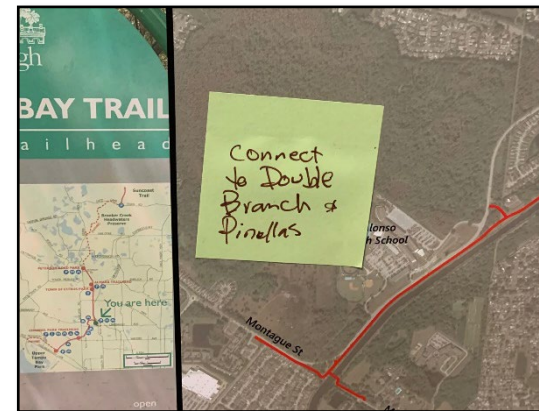
**5. Narrow the travel lane on Wilsky Road between Linebaugh and the trailhead to provide bike lanes (Idea B on Figure 3).** There may be sufficient pavement width to narrow the travel lane on Wilsky Road to provide a marked bicycle lane. The visual narrowing of the travel lane may also promote slower speeds. (Hillsborough County) ●●

**6. Where W. Linebaugh Avenue crosses the trail, provide a curb ramp to transition from bike lane to trail connection with wayfinding (Idea C on Figure 3).** To transition between the roadway and the trail, people bicycling have to travel out of direction to reach a curb ramp. Wayfinding is not present to help guide people to the trail. (Hillsborough County) ●

**7. Along Montague Street, evaluate potential to increase bicycle lane width by narrowing vehicle travel lane (Idea F on Figure 3).** Along portions of Montague Street, there appear to be opportunities to widen the bicycle lane with a narrowing of the vehicle travel lane. This visual narrowing of the travel lane would also promote slower speeds for people driving and would benefit the school zone. There is not a high

density of signalized intersections along the corridor, so this improvement could be accomplished when the roadway is resurfaced or lane lines refreshed, as they are faded along the corridor. (Hillsborough County)

**8. Identify opportunities to connect to the Double Branch Trail and Pinellas Trail System (Idea L on Figure 3).** This Safe Access Strategy was added in response to in-person community feedback. UTBT ends west of the Montague Street trailhead so providing connections to other trail facilities would expand the reach of the trail system. (Hillsborough County and the TPO)



Feedback from Public Outreach

**9. Provide advisory bike lanes (Area Wide)** on low volume neighborhood streets to prioritize bicycle travel where the community wants it. (Picture bike lanes on both sides of the road with vehicles sharing the middle at low speeds.) This idea was added based on the stakeholder group feedback.

The concept of an advisory bike lane is relatively new in Florida. It is a striping configuration which provides for two-way motor vehicle and non-motorized traffic using a center lane and edge lanes on either side.



The center lane is dedicated to, and shared by, motorists traveling in both directions. Vulnerable road users including cyclists or pedestrians have right-of-way in the edge lanes, but motorists can use the edge lanes, after yielding to people there, to pass other vehicles. This type of configuration can be appropriate on low volume, low speed streets, especially ones without sidewalks or other dedicated right-of-way for people bicycling, similar to some of the neighborhoods surrounding Upper Tampa Bay Trail. As this type of treatment has not been implemented in the Tampa Bay area, extensive outreach and education would be needed for a successful implementation. There may be some



*Example of Advisory Bike Lane on Residential Street*

opportunities for a temporary pilot of this treatment with low-cost materials to demonstrate proof of concept for the residents and decision makers. (Hillsborough County)

### C. Intersection and Roadway Design

Much of the roadway infrastructure in the area was designed and constructed at a time when design standards prioritized the expedient movement of vehicles over the movement of people. Since this area was built, design standards have evolved and there are opportunities to reconstruct intersections to balance the travel of all roadway users,

slow the speed of people driving, and implement more effective traffic calming measures than those already in place.

**10. Improve the trail crossing at Ehrlich Road (Idea B** on Figure 2). A near-term fix could include:

- 10+ foot sidewalks connecting the trail to the intersection of Gunn Highway.
- Leading pedestrian interval, and decreased cycle length, especially on weekends to reduce delay for people crossing the street.

Longer term improvements, consistent with the vision of the Citrus Park Village Plan, could result in modifications to Ehrlich Road that would allow for a lower speed limit and enhanced facilities for people walking and biking, including the construction of a raised intersection. (Hillsborough County) ●●●●●●

**11. At the entrance to the Channel Park Pavilion Trailhead on W. Waters Avenue, reconstruct the driveway to reduce the turn radius. (Idea D** on Figure 3). The crossing distance of the 2-lane driveway (one lane in/one lane out) is approximately 80 feet, which allows people driving to enter the park at a high speed. Reducing the turn radius would slow the speed of people driving into the parking area. (Hillsborough County) ●

**12. Evaluate potential to install a roundabout at trail entrance to slow people driving on Montague Street (Idea J** on Figure 3). Some people reported near-misses and a few collisions at the curve on Montague Street around the trail entrance. A roundabout could slow people through the turn and improve access to the trailhead. (Hillsborough County)





### D. Walking Facilities

Many of the Safe Access Strategies fall under the Walking Facilities category, as the focus of providing safe access to parks is improving facilities for people to walk or bicycle to area parks. As many walking facilities can also double as bicycling facilities, especially for children and families, some of the strategies also accommodate bicycle travel.

#### **13. Several trail crossing locations were identified as candidates for installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon:**

- Gardner Road (*Idea F* on Figure 2) ●●●●
- Town N Country Nature Preserve on Montague Street (*Idea E* on Figure 3) ●
- High School Crossing on Montague Street (*Idea G* on Figure 3) ●●

The final location for RRFBs shall be based on a more detailed study and consider other co-benefits such as access to transit (Hillsborough County and the TPO).

**14. Provide a marked crosswalk and other crossing treatments to connect Wimpy Lane neighborhood and sidewalk with trailhead (*Idea A* on Figure 3).** With the trail access in close proximity to a freeway interchange, providing a designated crossing with high visibility crosswalks and other treatments could improve access to the trail for this neighborhood. (Hillsborough County)

**15. Add a marked crosswalk and evaluate for other enhancement such as rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) at the Champions Forest entrance (*Idea H* on Figure 3).** This Safe Access Strategy was added in response to in-person community feedback. There is not a marked crosswalk between the subdivision entrance and the trailhead, requiring

people to walk out of their direction to cross the street and access the trail. (Hillsborough County)

**16. Increase lighting levels in the area to provide a consistent level of lighting along streets,** with a focus on intersections and roadway crossing locations (*Area Wide*). Insufficient lighting for overall safety and transportation safety was identified as a concern by many people. (Hillsborough County)

**17. Upgrade all transportation facilities for accessibility (*Area Wide*).** Many of the transportation facilities in the area do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Required upgrades to the facilities provide opportunities to provide additional enhancements that not only benefit those with disabilities, but everyone who lives in the area. Curb ramp improvements benefit those in a wheelchair, but also help people who might have small children in strollers or using other mobility devices, like scooters. (Hillsborough County)

**18. Identify additional neighborhood connections that could be provided to the trail (*Area Wide*).** There are numerous neighborhoods where the trail backs to the neighborhood, but there is no direct access provided to the trail. This may discourage some people from accessing the trail. (Hillsborough County) ●●●●

### E. Signals

Traffic signal strategies were identified. It is also expected that as Safe Access Strategies are refined, signal strategies would be incorporated, including considerations for reduced cycle lengths along major corridors, especially during off-peak travel times.

**19. Adjust traffic signal timing to reduce delay for people crossing street on Waters Avenue at the mid-block trail crossing (*Idea I* on Figure 2).** Excessive delays were noted for people waiting to cross the street, especially on weekends when vehicle traffic is low, and the signal remained green when no vehicles were present. (Hillsborough County)



**20. Evaluate cycle lengths and overall signal phasing to decrease delay for people walking and bicycling. Rectify accessibility deficiencies at signalized intersections related to push button placement and accessible paths of travel (Area Wide).** The evaluation of cycle lengths and signal timings should also consider strategies to reduce red light running and implement no right-turn on red prohibitions where warranted. (Hillsborough County) ●●●●

### F. Signing and Striping

Some opportunities to improve signage and striping were identified. It is also expected that as Safe Access Strategies are refined, signing and striping strategies would be incorporated, such as advance stop bars at controlled locations to increase visibility of people crossing the street, upgraded roadway striping to enhance visibility, and improved wayfinding to help people navigate the area.

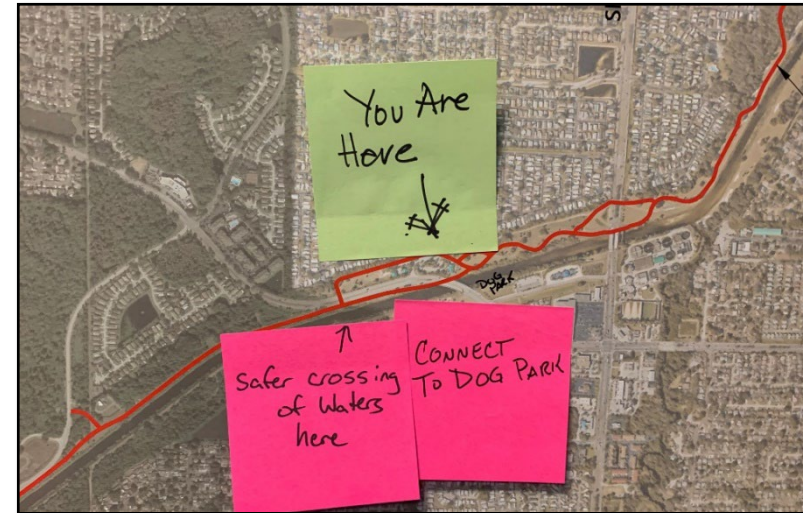
**21. Convert stop sign for trail users to yield sign, install advance stop bar on Edgemere Road, and relocate stop sign to before crosswalk (Idea C on Figure 2).** For people driving on Edgemere Road, there is not a stop bar in advance of the trail crossing. Typically, when vehicles are required to stop, it is before the crossing for people walking and bicycling, not after. (Hillsborough County) ●●●●

**22. Install a stop bar and stop sign before trail crossing (Idea D and E on Figure 2).** People driving and exiting the shopping places along Citrus Park Lane are not required to stop before proceeding across the trail. (Hillsborough County) ●●

**23. Add wayfinding signage and trail enhancements to connect UTBT to the Dog Park, Park and Ride Lot, and Bus Transfer on the other side of the river (Idea N on Figure 2).** This Safe Access Strategy was added in response to in-person community feedback. (Hillsborough County)

**24. Paint Conflict Zones (Area Wide).** This Safe Access Strategy was added in response to community feedback. Evaluate the use of green

paint in bicycle lanes and conflict zones with a special emphasis on roadways with bike lanes connecting to the trail and other area parks and schools. (Hillsborough County, TPO and FDOT)



Feedback from Public Outreach

### G. Other

Several strategies were identified that fall into the “other” category.

**25. Conduct a speed management audit of Linebaugh Avenue to identify improvements to better manage travel speeds and improve the quality of the bicycle facility, like narrowing travel lanes and providing a buffered bike lane (Idea G on Figure 2).** Evaluate providing marked and controlled crossings at more regular intervals along the corridor. (Hillsborough County and the TPO)

**26. Improve maintenance of the Ehrlich Trailhead to improve visibility of the parking area from trail and surrounding businesses (Idea L on Figure 2).** This Safe Access Strategy was added in response to in-person community feedback. (Hillsborough County)



**27. Develop and implement a maintenance program to periodically refresh pavement markings, replace faded signs, address root intrusion that creates tripping hazards, and remove debris (Area Wide).** (Hillsborough County) ●●●

**28. Develop new county standards to convert stop signs for trail users to yield signs with enhancements to signing and striping on the roadway (Area Wide).** All trail crossings along The UTBT require trail users to stop and yield the right of way to people driving. While most people walking and bicycling do not come to a complete stop, the current configuration can result in conflicts between roadway users and does not reflect how the transportation system is being used. In locations where stop control for the trail is appropriate, consideration should also be made to provide stop control for people driving. (Hillsborough County) ●●●●

**29. Evaluate appropriateness of posted speed limits along major corridors connecting to the trail, including Ehrlich Road, Citrus Park Drive, Gunn Highway, Gardner Road, Wilsky Boulevard, Linebaugh Avenue, Sheldon Road, Waters Avenue and Montague Street (Area Wide).** (Hillsborough County, TPO and FDOT) ●●●●


**30. Add and enforce a 15 mile per hour speed limit on the trail.** This Safe Access Strategy was added in response to community feedback **(Area Wide)**. There are many people who bicycle in excess of 20 miles per hour along the trail as they train for various cycling events. These competitive riders can create conflicts with recreational users of the trail. (Hillsborough County)

**31. Develop Shared Parking Process with Retail Centers Along Trail.** This Safe Access Strategy was added in response to feedback from the Stakeholder Group **(Area Wide)**. Due to the popularity of the trail, there can be a shortage of parking at designated trailheads during time periods of peak trail use. Developing a shared parking program with retail centers that might have excess parking available could help

promote additional business within the retail centers as well as provide additional parking resources to trail users. (Hillsborough County)

# SAFE ACCESS TO PARKS

## Preliminary Fix Ideas for Consideration: (This Sheet Only)

- (A) Complete the 2-mile gap.  
Improve Trail Crossing.  
A near-term fix could include:
  - 10+ foot sidewalks connecting the trail to the intersection of Gunn Highway.
  - Leading pedestrian interval, and decrease the cycle length, especially on weekends to reduce delay for people crossing street.
- (B) Longer term improvements, consistent with the vision of the Citrus Park Village Plan, could result in modifications to Ehrlich Road that would allow for lower speed limit and enhanced facilities for people walking and biking, including the construction of a raised intersection.
- (C) Convert stop sign for trail users to yield sign, install advance stop bar on Edgemere Road, and relocate stop sign to before crosswalk.
- (D) Install a stop bar and stop sign before trail crossing.
- (E) Install a stop sign for people exiting the shopping plaza.
- (F) Install a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB). 
- (G) Conduct a speed management audit of Linebaugh Avenue to identify improvements to better manage travel speeds and improve the quality of the bicycle facility, like narrowing travel lanes and providing a buffered bike lane. Evaluate providing marked and controlled crossings at more regular intervals along the corridor.
- (H) Evaluate potential to provide a buffered bicycle lane by reducing the width of vehicle travel lanes.
- (I) Adjust traffic signal timing to reduce delay for people crossing street.
- (J) Implement the improvements identified in the Sheldon Road Corridor Plan ([planhillsborough.org/vzcorridors](http://planhillsborough.org/vzcorridors))
- (K) Widen portion of the trail to 12-foot minimum, ideally 15-feet (this portion of trail is currently 8-feet).
- (L) Improve maintenance of the Ehrlich Trailhead to improve visibility of parking area from trail and surrounding bushiness.
- (M) Consider widening bridge to reduce conflicts.
- (N) Add way-finding signage and trail enhancements to connect UTBT to the Dog Park, Park and Ride Lot, and Bus Transfer on the other side of the river.

See Lower Segment Board for Additional Fix Ideas

### Trail Wide Considerations:

- Identify additional neighborhood connections that could be provided to the trail.
- Develop and implement a maintenance program to periodically refresh pavement markings, replace faded signs, address root intrusion that creates tripping hazards, and remove debris.
- Develop new county standards to convert stop signs for trail users to yield signs with enhancements to signing and striping on the roadway.
- Evaluate appropriateness of bicycle facilities on roadways connecting to the trail as traffic volumes and vehicle speeds may require separated paths or buffered bike lanes.
- Evaluate cycle lengths and overall signal phasing to decrease delay for people walking and bicycling. Rectify accessibility deficiencies at signalized intersections related to push button placement and accessible paths of travel.
- Evaluate Street lighting at crossing locations and conflict points.
- Evaluate appropriateness of posted speed limits along major corridors connecting to the trail, including Ehrlich Road, Citrus Park Drive, Gunn Highway, Gardner Road, Wilsky Boulevard, Linebaugh Avenue, Sheldon Road, Waters Avenue and Montague Street.
- Add and enforce a 15 mile per hour speed limit on trail.
- Evaluate the use of green paint in bicycle lanes and conflict zones with a special emphasis on roadways with bike lanes connecting to the trail and other area parks and schools.
- Provide advisory bike lanes on low volume neighborhood streets to prioritize bicycle travel where the community wants it. (Picture bike lanes on both sides of the road with vehicles sharing the middle at low speeds.)
- Develop Shared Parking Process with Retail Centers Along Trail.
- Review and adjust signal timing and phasing at all intersections on major corridors with a focus on reducing red-light running. Consider no right-turn on red prohibitions at major intersections around the park.

NOTE: ALL PROPOSED CONSIDERATIONS WILL REQUIRE EXTENSIVE DATA COLLECTION, EVALUATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

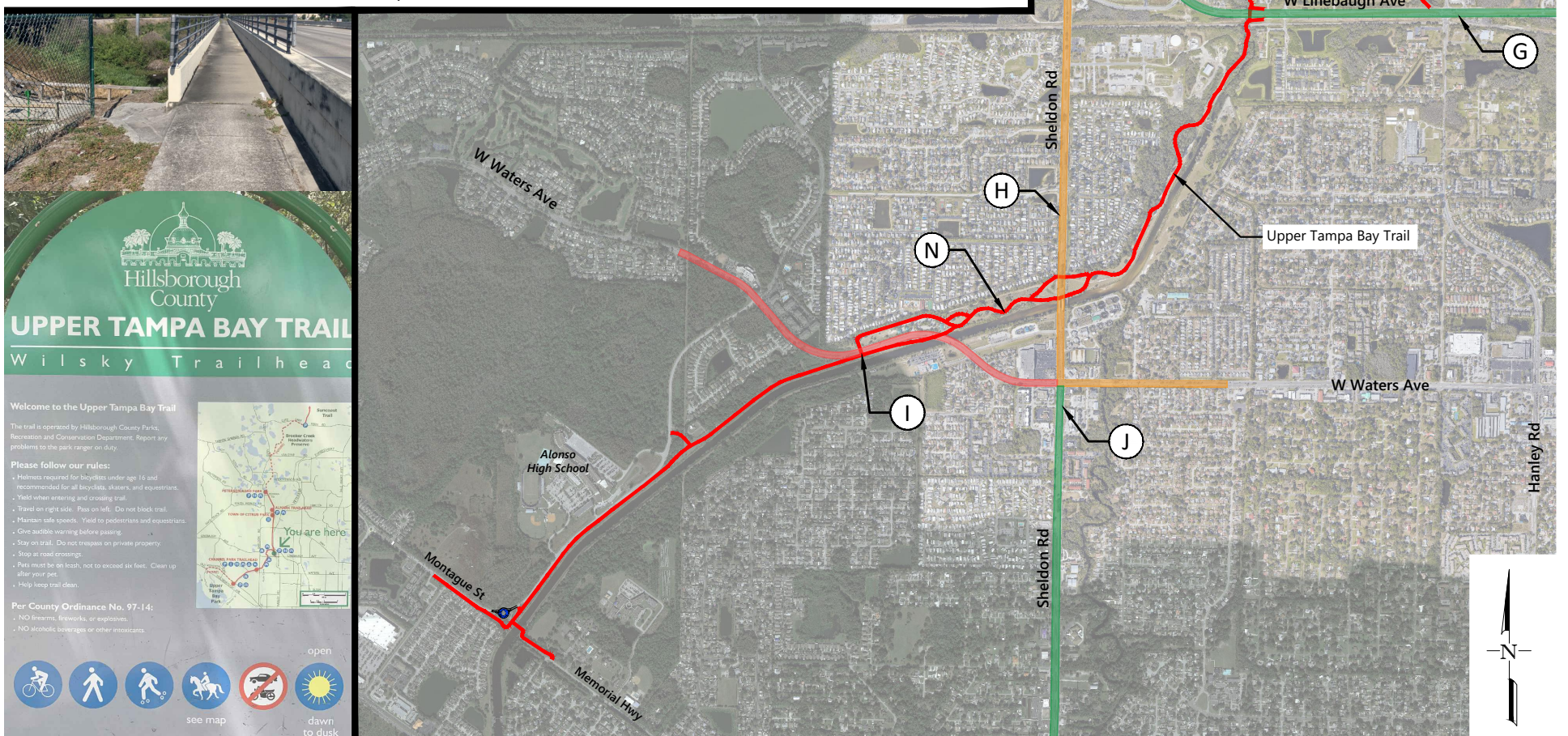
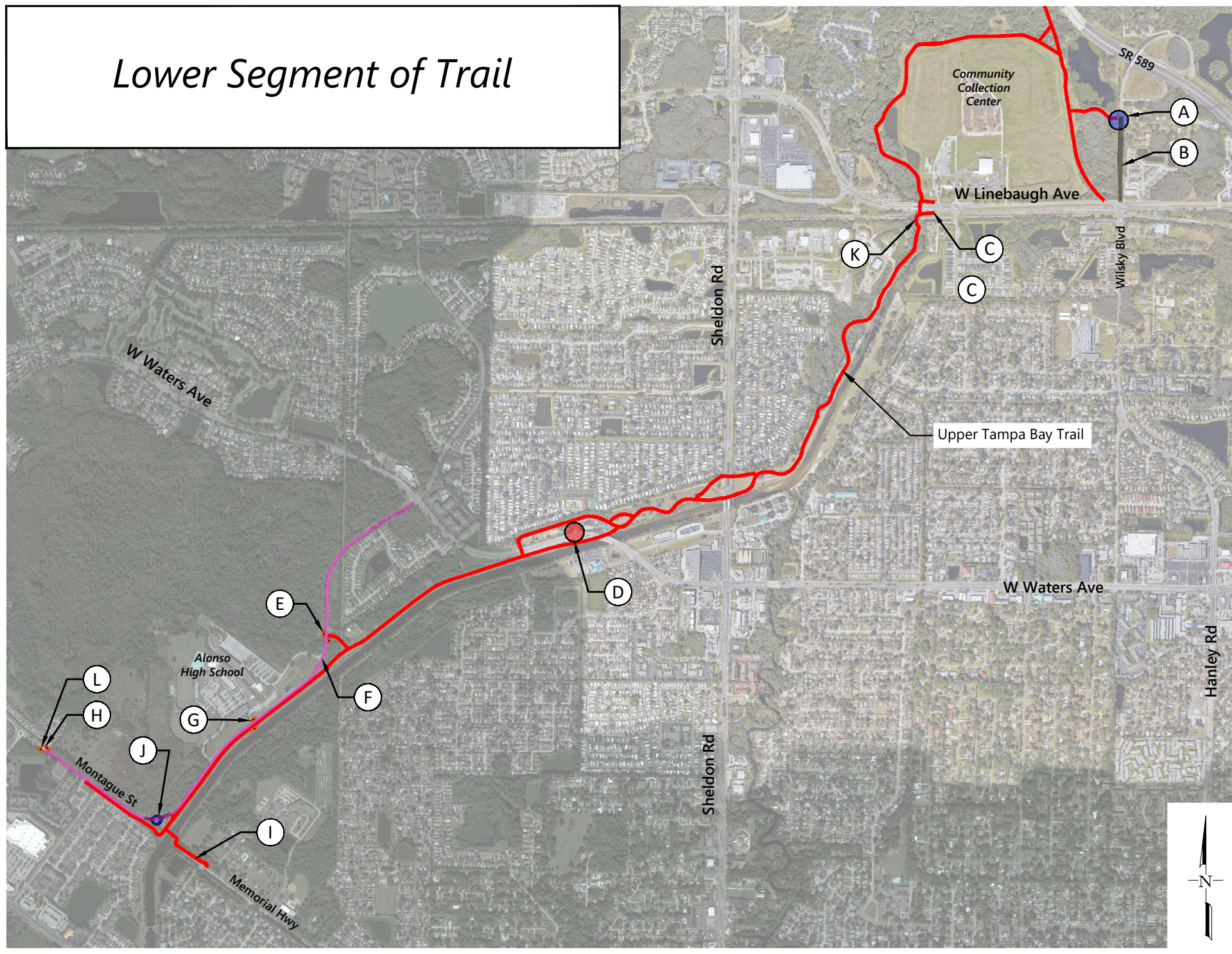





Figure 2  
Upper Tampa Bay Trail - Overall

# SAFE ACCESS TO PARKS



## Preliminary Fix Ideas for Consideration: (This Sheet Only)

- (A) Provide a marked crosswalk and other crossing treatments to connect neighborhood and sidewalk with trailhead.
- (B) Narrow the travel lane on Wilsky Road between Linebaugh and the trailhead to provide bike lanes.
- (C) Provide curb ramp to transition from bike lane to trail connection with way-finding.
- (D) Reconstruct the driveway to reduce the turn radius.
- (E) Provide a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB). 
- (F) Along Montague, evaluate potential to increase bicycle lane width by narrowing vehicle travel lane.
- (G) Install a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB). 
- (H) Add a marked crosswalk and evaluate for other enhancement such as rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB). 
- (I) Provide bicycle lanes with a design appropriate for the adjacent traffic volume on roadways that connect to trail and schools, like Memorial Highway.
- (J) Evaluate potential to install a roundabout at trail entrance to slow people driving on Montague Street.
- (L) Identify opportunities to connect to the Double Branch Trail and Pinellas Trail System.

### Trail Wide Considerations:

- Identify additional neighborhood connections that could be provided to the trail.
- Develop and implement a maintenance program to periodically refresh pavement markings, replace faded signs, address root intrusion that creates tripping hazards, and remove debris.
- Develop new county standards to convert stop signs for trail users to yield signs with enhancements to signing and striping on the roadway.
- Evaluate appropriateness of bicycle facilities on roadways connecting to the trail as traffic volumes and vehicle speeds may require separated paths or buffered bike lanes.
- Evaluate cycle lengths and overall signal phasing to decrease delay for people walking and bicycling. Rectify accessibility deficiencies at signalized intersections related to push button placement and accessible paths of travel.
- Evaluate Street lighting at crossing locations and conflict points.
- Evaluate appropriateness of posted speed limits along major corridors connecting to the trail, including Ehrlich Road, Citrus Park Drive, Gunn Highway, Gardner Road, Wilsky Boulevard, Linebaugh Avenue, Sheldon Road, Waters Avenue and Montague Street.
- Add and enforce a 15 mile per hour speed limit on trail.
- Evaluate the use of green paint in bicycle lanes and conflict zones with a special emphasis on roadways with bike lanes connecting to the trail and other area parks and schools.
- Provide advisory bike lanes on low volume neighborhood streets to prioritize bicycle travel where the community wants it. (Picture bike lanes on both sides of the road with vehicles sharing the middle at low speeds.)
- Develop shared parking process with retail centers along trail.
- Review and adjust signal timing and phasing at all intersections on major corridors with a focus on reducing red-light running. Consider no right-turn on red prohibitions at major intersections around the park.

NOTE: ALL PROPOSED CONSIDERATIONS WILL REQUIRE EXTENSIVE DATA COLLECTION, EVALUATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Figure 3  
Upper Tampa Bay Trail - Lower Segment



## IV. How to Guide

The Hillsborough TPO conducted this Safe Access to Parks pilot project to identify a process that can be replicated by other agencies in Hillsborough County. The following provides information related to the process with an estimate of the expected level of effort per park location. Some of the materials prepared as a part of the pilot process can support additional park locations, such as the ranked list of park locations and the countermeasure toolbox.

### A. Select Park Location

As a part of the pilot process, evaluation criteria that focused on transportation safety and equity were developed and a numerical score was assigned to each park location in the County. Understanding who would benefit from park access improvements and determining if there have there been area improvements recently can help in the finalization of a study park. Other factors to consider include community feedback and ability to combine with other projects to maximize potential benefit.

### B. Existing Conditions Assessment

Understanding the transportation context around and connecting to the park location is important to understand barriers to park access. The existing conditions assessment should include the following elements:

- Description of the park and any passive or active uses
- Description of the surrounding transportation system, including connecting roadways, transit, presence/absence of facilities for people walking and bicycling, barriers to park access
- Transportation system assessment including collision review and if available, traffic volumes and vehicle travel speed data
- A field review should be conducted, preferable with multiple members of the evaluation team to gain additional insights

### C. Public Outreach

Public outreach can include a variety of approaches, including establishing a Stakeholder Group to provide feedback at various project stages, soliciting feedback from members of the public in-person and online, and sharing project information with elected officials. Engaging with the community can help identify challenges that are not readily apparent in the data and help to refine potential countermeasures such that there is confidence that they could be supported for implementation.

### D. Identify Potential Countermeasures

Based on the existing conditions assessment and feedback from the public, the countermeasure toolbox developed as a part of this project should be used as a starting point to identify potential Safe Access to Parks strategies. A range of potential improvements is likely to be identified, with some that could be implemented in the near-term, such strategies that include enhanced paint and signs. Many strategies that will be the most effective, such as constructing new sidewalks, and adding separated bicycle facilities, will likely take time to design, secure funding, and construct.

### E. Next Steps

This pilot project ends with the identification of countermeasures for each of the park locations selected for inclusion in the study. As the Hillsborough TPO does not have the jurisdiction to implement identified improvements, the next steps include working with the appropriate jurisdiction or agency partner to advance some of the fix-it ideas into more detailed planning studies and ultimately a capital improvement plan/work program. This pilot process and supporting documents can also be used to help secure additional funding, such as grants, that could be used to advance specific fix-it projects.



#### F. Level of Effort

It is expected that future Safe Access to Parks evaluations would be advanced by the Hillsborough TPO, Hillsborough County, City of Tampa, City of Temple Terrace and City of Plant City. Some agencies may opt to lead the studies in-house while others may opt to use outside support. Depending on the type of park, extent of the study area, and availability of data, the level of effort for outside support is estimated in the range of 100 to 200 hours per park, with some potential for economies of scale should multiple parks be included in a single study.



**Table 2: Online Map Comments**

Comment Type	Votes <sup>1</sup>	Comment
Walk – People driving not yielding to people walking	1	People leaving the business cross the trail without stopping.
Walk – Inadequate or missing sidewalks	4	Sidewalks should be as wide as possible to match the UTBT in this segment between Gunn and the Veterans.
Walk – Inadequate or missing sidewalks	1	We need sidewalks on Hamilton Ave
Roadway Operations – People drive too fast	2	People speed along this road! It is dangerous to ride your bike alongside such fast cars
Roadway Operations – People drive too fast	2	The stretch of Montague Street from the traffic circle I marked on the map all the way to Waters Avenue is a fatality waiting to happen due to speeding vehicles some of which pass over a double yellow line. There is FAR too much activity on this road to not have speed bumps or something to enforce the speed limit.
Roadway Operations – People drive too fast	2	People speed on the side streets and are not looking for bicyclists or pedestrians.
Roadway Operations – People drive too fast	2	This is a dangerous blind curve. People accelerate coming into and out of this curve and pass each other over the double yellow line. This is more dangerous because there are a lot of people that use the path and there is a fire station that could have vehicles pulling in and out at any time.
Lighting - Insufficient street lighting that make it uncomfortable to walk or bike at night		Roads need to be repaired, and we need more lighting for safety.
Lighting - Insufficient street lighting that make it uncomfortable to walk or bike at night		Lighting would make it safer. Gardner Rd is a high crime area. Wish there was a way to alert trail users. A convicted sexual predator lives right next to the trail according to county maps and an offender lives farther down Gardner.





**Table 2: Online Map Comments**

Comment Type	Votes <sup>1</sup>	Comment
Lighting - Insufficient street lighting that make it uncomfortable to walk or bike at night	2	This part, in particular, should be lit as many use it to get to and from work, restaurants, shopping or running in pre-dawn or after dark. Due to Florida heat, runners/cyclists are forced to exercise early and late, in the dark.
Drainage - Drainage issues create a barrier to walking, biking or taking transit during and after rain		Sidewalk frequently floods
Bike – Vehicles not sharing the road with bikes	1	Wilsky Blvd from Linebaugh to Donaldson is very dangerous to use a bicycle on the road and the sidewalk is too small to ride on. It is a no passing zone and the lane is not wide enough to support both a bicycle and car safely. Motorists pass too close to bicyclists and refuse to yield.
Bike – Vehicles not sharing the road with bikes	1	Memorial Hwy from the trailhead east is not wide enough for a car & bicycle to share the road at the same time. This causes cars to pass too close to cyclist.
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	1	We need more bike lanes in general. A lot of us use bikes to get around but it is very dangerous; roads like Memorial and Hillsborough make me fear for my life when I ride my bike
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	2	We need proper bike lanes, most here are very narrow or covered in glass
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	2	Because the cars speed along this road, and the roads are so wide: we need to have a nice, buffered bike lane to ensure our safety when using connections to get to the Upper Tampa Bay Trail
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	7	The trail needs to be expanded to connect to the Upper Tampa Bay Trail head near Van Dyke Road. Riding on Gunn Hwy between Peterson Road and Van Dyke road is way too dangerous with no shoulder or bike path.



**Table 2: Online Map Comments**

Comment Type	Votes <sup>1</sup>	Comment
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	8	Needs an overpass. crossing light is offset from the trail, and cars pay little attention to those crossing the road. Especially in the morning around school drop off / commute times. Which is the cooler part of the day when may run, walk, or ride.
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	3	Tree roots are causing raised speed bumps dangerous to cyclists. Please grind them down
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	2	there is no curb relief from the bike lane on the street to the access sidewalk to the UTBT.
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	1	the bike lane westbound on Linebaugh at the sheldon intersection is trashed / unsafe. When I try to use the crosswalk, I have 2-3 run ins with vehicles that do not stop at the southbound sheldon turning right onto westbound linebaugh. It's unsafe either way.
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	2	Bike lane paint is missing because the cars just veer into the lane. please put down BOTS dots to provide drivers active feedback as they deviate from their lane.
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)		add crosswalk
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	2	No Turn on red heading south on Sheldon onto Linebaugh is needed to make the intersection safer for pedestrians and bikers heading to and from Upper Tampa Bay Trail. I've almost been hit several times by autos that barely pause and ignore pedestrians while turning from Sheldon onto West Linebaugh.
Bike – Inadequate or missing bikeways (trails, bike lanes, etc)	2	Need bike lane or sharrow, or at a minimum higher emphasis signage to slow drivers along Memorial and Longboat.



**Table 2: Online Map Comments**

Comment Type	Votes <sup>1</sup>	Comment
Another issue – please explain	1	Cyclists on trail do not look to see if cars are turning onto the street.
Another issue – please explain	3	Consider having stop sign for road traffic, or at least increased signage for vehicles to yield to pedestrians at this crossing where I've seen several hard stops and near misses.

Notes:

1. Users were given the option to vote for, or agree with, other users' comments.

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2021