



January 4, 2022

COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM 5 A

THOMASVILLE ROAD MULTI-USE PATH FEASIBILITY STUDY

TYPE OF ITEM: Presentation/Discussion/Action

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) staff and Kimley-Horn and Associates (the Project Team) will be making a presentation regarding the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Option 1: Recommend the CRTPA approve the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Feasibility Study.

INTRODUCTION

After the September 13, 2021 CRTPA Board meeting the Project Team began the two different tasks for the multi-use path. The first task was to initiate the second round of Public Engagement and the second task was to begin the development of the “alternatives” for the Feasibility Report. Both of these efforts are detailed below.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT (ROUND 2)

The second round of Outreach and Engagement continued to provide opportunities to receive feedback from citizens and organizations within Leon County. Below is a summary of the outreach. A description of the Outreach and Engagement can be found in the [Draft Feasibility Study Report](#).

Stakeholders

The following are the Stakeholders that the Project Team met with to discuss project opportunities and receive input:

City of Tallahassee Parks and Recreation
City of Tallahassee Underground Utilities
Leon County Public Works
Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency

Neighborhood Associations and Homeowner Associations

Like the first round of Public Engagement, the second round provided the opportunity for stakeholder, neighborhood association (NA) and homeowner association (HOA) meetings (virtually and in-person) with the project team to answer questions or for citizens to provide comments. The email offering to meet with the NA's and HOA's went out on September 28, 2021 with those that accepted listed below:

Woodgate NA – October 4, 2021

Waverly Hills HOA – October 7, 2021

Thomasville Trace HOA – November 1, 2021

Waverly Hills HOA – November 9, 2021

Citizen Committees/Advisory Boards

In addition to the stakeholders, NA's and HOA's, the Project Team meet with two citizen advisory committee/advisory groups which included:

Joint City-County Bicycle Working Group

City of Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Public Engagement

A variety of opportunities were provided to engage The Project Team above and beyond emails and phone calls. These scheduled events included both virtual and in-person events including:

StoryMap – This opportunity offered the public a more engaging way to interact with the project materials through interactive maps and graphics. This provided all relevant project background information and presented the evaluated alternatives to the public. The StoryMap offered opportunities to comment and contact the project team and continues to be active during the duration of the Feasibility Study. Since the StoryMap went online there have been over 1,555 views (as of November 11, 2021).

Live Question and Answer Sessions – These sessions allowed the public to access a virtual meeting with the project team and ask questions or provide input regarding the project. Live question and answer sessions typically had no time limit, and the project team answered questions and took comments until all participants were completed with their input. These events were held on:

- October 14, 2021 – 11 participants
- October 21, 2021 – 9 participants
- October 25, 2021 – 13 participants

Pop-Up Events – The pop-up events were intended to be informal and allow people with some interest and little knowledge on the project to interact with the project team. These were held at two locations within the project area, Waverly Pond (October 4, 2021) and Market District (October 19, 2021), to solicit public feedback and allow for an in-person opportunity. Attendance at the Pop-Up events included 34 citizens at Waverly Pond and 20 citizens at the Market District event.

Open House – The open house was intended to present the evaluated and preferred alternatives for each of the identified segments and allowed an additional in-person opportunity for the public to interact with the Project Team and give feedback. This meeting was held at the School of Arts and Sciences on Thomasville Road and had 72 citizens in attendance.

Contact Methods

The Project Team advertised public engagement opportunities through a variety of methods throughout the Feasibility Study. These methods included postcards, newsletters, virtual MailChimp newsletters, social media and website posts, and email. Several postcards were sent out at different times throughout the Feasibility Study. At CRTPA Board direction (September 13, 2101), the mailout area was expanded to 1,000 feet on both sides of Thomasville from the centerline for the Fall 2021 postcard mailout. This was then exceeded to ensure that postcards were sent out to any interested parties in the general vicinity. In total, there were 4,459 mail-out to property owners ([map of mail-out area](#)). The postcard that was sent out can be seen on page 45 of the [Draft Feasibility Study Report](#).

In addition to mailouts, the Project Team updated the CRTPA Facebook page, website, and responded to comments received via email and the website regularly throughout the Study. Emails were also sent to members of the CRTPA Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path mailing list (contains 122 unique email contacts) on several occasions to notify interested members of the public of upcoming engagement events, committee meetings, or board meetings. Lastly, the project was also noticed in the [Leon County Link](#) in October 2021.

Feedback

A considerable amount of feedback was received during public engagement opportunities as well as during stakeholder meetings.

Comments that were received via email, Facebook, StoryMap, or Website have been included in the [Comment Log](#) (the Comment Log also had "[Attachments](#)" submitted concurrent with the comment) and was categorized into the following themes:

- Support of the Project
- Support of the Project but in Opposition to the McCord Park Alternative
- Opposition of the Project because of the McCord Park Alternative
- Opposition of the Project
- General Inquiry or Question

In addition to the Comment Log, the Project Team received [written comments from the Pop-Up and Open House Events](#) as well as [electronic comments from the Open House](#). These comments are above and beyond those submitted and included in the Comment Log.

ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS

Following the existing conditions analysis, and further outreach and engagement, several alternatives were identified for the potential location of the multi-use path. As noted previously, the corridor was divided into three segments to streamline data collection, and the segments were carried forward into the alternatives analysis. An additional fourth area was also evaluated as the Market District Connection. This section will outline the evaluated alternatives and the data collected for each alternative.

All alternatives were evaluated with the assumption that existing gore areas and on-street bicycle lanes will be removed, and existing curb and cutter will be relocated and reconstructed to gain additional space for a wider path and buffer. To ensure a wide, safe path with adequate separation from vehicular traffic, this adjustment to the roadway will be necessary. Information regarding the additional right-of-way gained by retrofitting the road can be found in the tables associated with each alternative in the upcoming subsections.

Segment 1 – Betton Road to Armistead Road

This segment of Thomasville Road is heavily characterized by commercial uses on the southern end of the segment. Several curb cuts associated with businesses are located on both the east and west sides of the corridor. Guyte P. McCord Park and some residential communities are also located directly along Thomasville Road closer to Armistead Road. In addition to alternatives along the east and west side of Thomasville Road, the project team evaluated potential opportunities including:

- Trescott Drive in the Betton Hills Neighborhood.
- The Betton Hills Nature Center Trail along the McCord Ditch.
- Post Road to the covered McCord Ditch to Betton Road (added at the September 16, 2021 CRTPA Board meeting).
- Post Road “Loop” Option.

All six evaluated alternatives are shown in **Figure 1**.

Each of the options, including the preferred alternative, have varying degrees of challenges, however, were not outright “unfeasible.” The information below summarizes the challenges for each of the evaluated alternatives:

- Thomasville Road West is characterized by limited right-of-way to accommodate a multi-use path and buffer, and several curb cuts in quick succession. Even with the addition of gore areas and relocation and reconstruction of curb and gutter along this segment, the path would likely need to be narrowed to 8 feet with a minimal buffer, which is not considered safe along a corridor characterized by high speeds.
- Thomasville Road East has similar characteristics to Thomasville Road West, with several curb cuts in quick succession, as well as large oak trees within the right-of-way. However, Thomasville Road East has slightly more right-of-way, that in conjunction with the removal of the gore areas and relocation and reconstruction of curb and gutter, could support an adequate multi-use path and buffer.
- McCord Park/McCord Ditch presents challenges in that the feasibility of constructing a multi-use path on top of the future structure is still unknown. Additionally, the structure will only

cover a portion of the existing drainage ditch, and will not provide connectivity to McCord Park. This connectivity is also lacking on the southern terminus of the ditch where it intersects with Betton Road between pedestrian crossing locations at the intersection with Thomasville Road, and the rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) located on the east side of Trescott Drive connecting to Winthrop Park. Additionally, there was significant public opposition to the McCord Park/McCord Ditch option.

- Trescott Drive was omitted from consideration early in the alternatives analysis due to a high number of residential driveways along a short segment, which could contribute to path user and motorist conflict, negatively impacting safety. Additionally, there was significant public opposition to the Trescott Drive option.
- Post Road/McCord Ditch (covered portion) was added at the September 13, 2021 CRTPA Board meeting. The Project Team received and reviewed the plans for the construction of a box culvert along the McCord Ditch from Betton Road moving north approximately 1,500 feet, of which 1,200 feet would potentially be used for the connection from Post Road to Betton Road.
- Post Road “Loop” Option was proposed by the Betton Hills Neighborhood Association as an opportunity to avoid the McCord Ditch and McCord Park, both of which are highly opposed by the neighborhood association and many members of the public. This option includes limited available right-of-way behind existing businesses along Thomasville Road, and concerns were voiced by the owners of these businesses for locating a path along the access road.

The preferred alternative for Segment 1 is Thomasville Road East, as shown in **Figure 2** due to:

- Available right-of-way for a multi-use path and buffer with the removal of the existing gore areas and relocation and reconstruction of curb and gutter to gain additional space.
- Provides connectivity to recommendations from the Midtown Area Transportation Plan, which included a multi-use path on the east side of Thomasville Road from 7th Avenue to Betton Road.

Figure 1 – Segment 1 Evaluated Alternatives

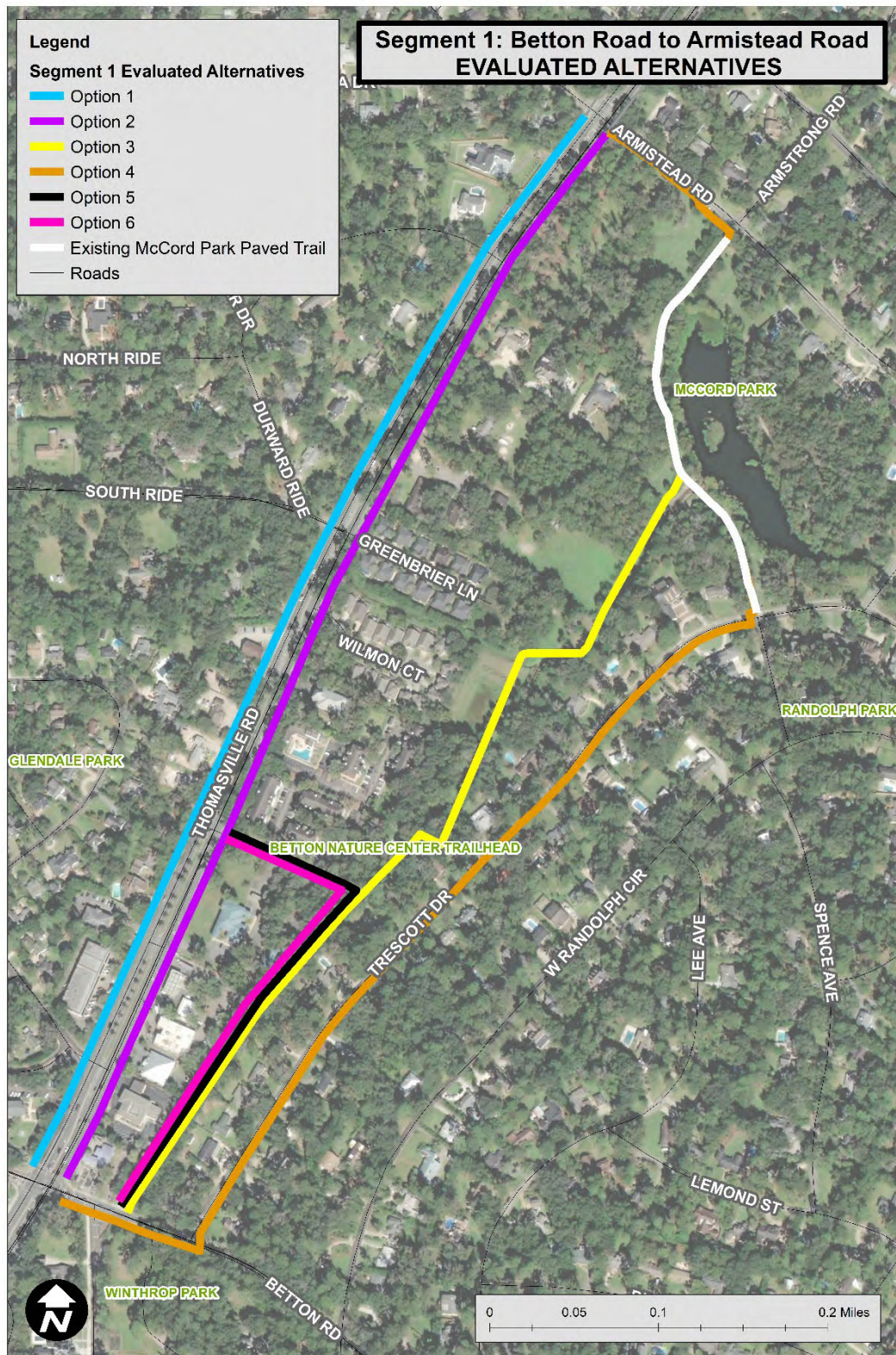
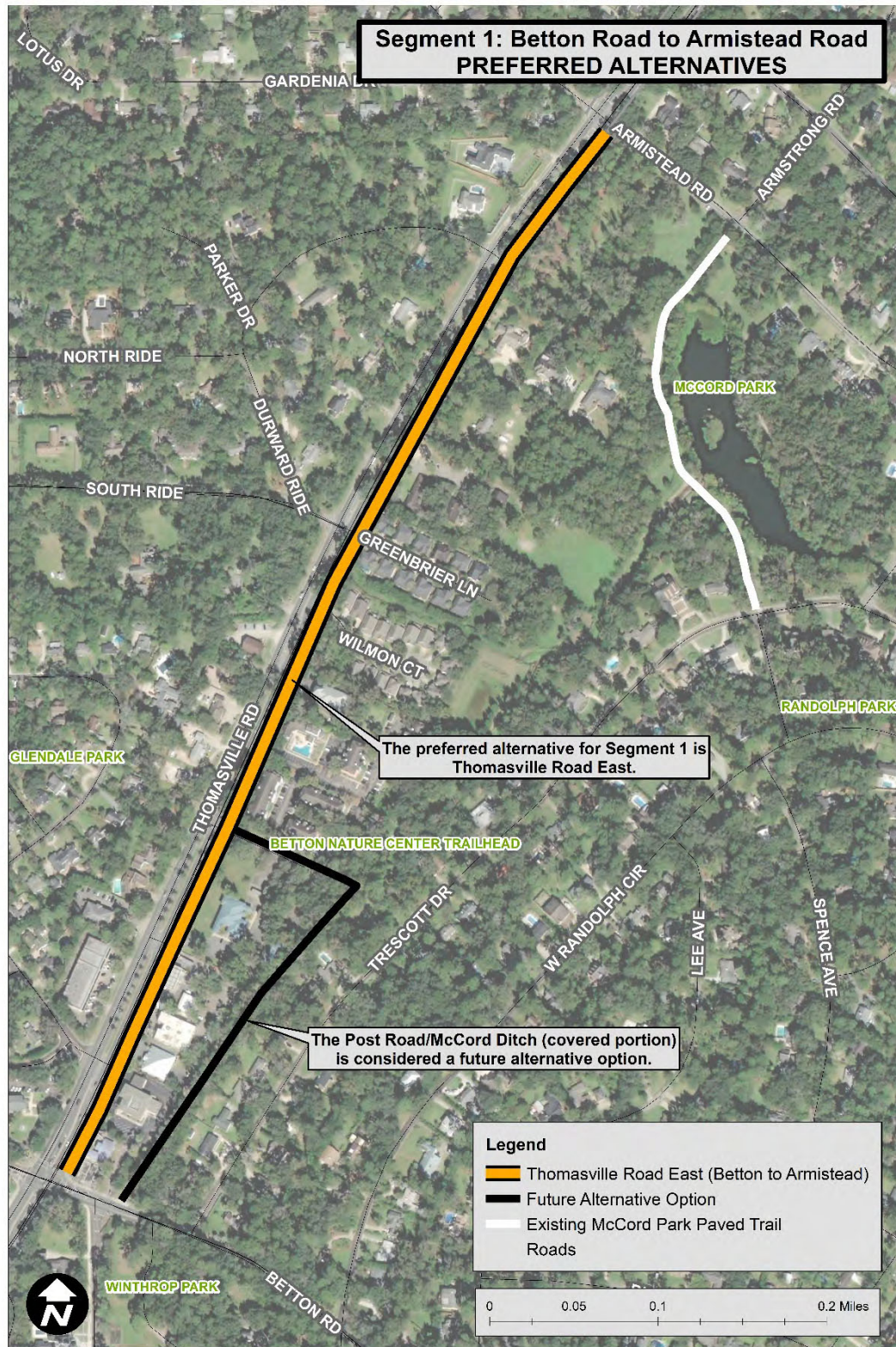


Figure 2 – Segment 1 Preferred Alternative



Segment 2 – Armistead Road to Woodgate Way

This segment of Thomasville Road is characterized by residential uses, with some commercial uses including a place of worship and Tallahassee Nurseries. Along Segment 2, 4-foot on-street bicycle lanes appear at Waverly Road and continue north along Thomasville Road. During the alternatives analysis, the project team looked almost exclusively at Thomasville Road east and Thomasville Road west within this segment due to lack of connectivity on direct and parallel routes.

The evaluated alternatives are shown in **Figure 3**.

The information below summarizes the challenges for each of the evaluated alternatives:

- Thomasville Road West presents challenges for a multi-use path in that it has limited right-of-way due to obstructions within the right-of-way, including several large oak trees and landscaping. There are also major changes in grade along this segment that would make ADA-compliance difficult when constructing a multi-use path.
- Thomasville Road East has sufficient right-of-way with the removal of the bicycle lanes relocation and reconstruction of curb and gutter to gain additional space for a multi-use path and buffer. Some areas along this segment have ample right-of-way which would allow the path to incorporate a meandering design. However, several curb cuts and large oak trees are located along this segment as well.

The preferred alternative for Segment 2 is Thomasville Road East, as shown in **Figure 4**, along with the inclusion of a sidewalk on the west side from Waverly Road to Woodgate Way.

Additionally, based on this analysis, Thomasville Road east is the recommended option for the construction of a multi-use path due to:

- Available right-of-way for a multi-use path and buffer with the relocation and reconstruction of curb and gutter to gain additional space.

Figure 3 – Segment 2 Evaluated Alternatives

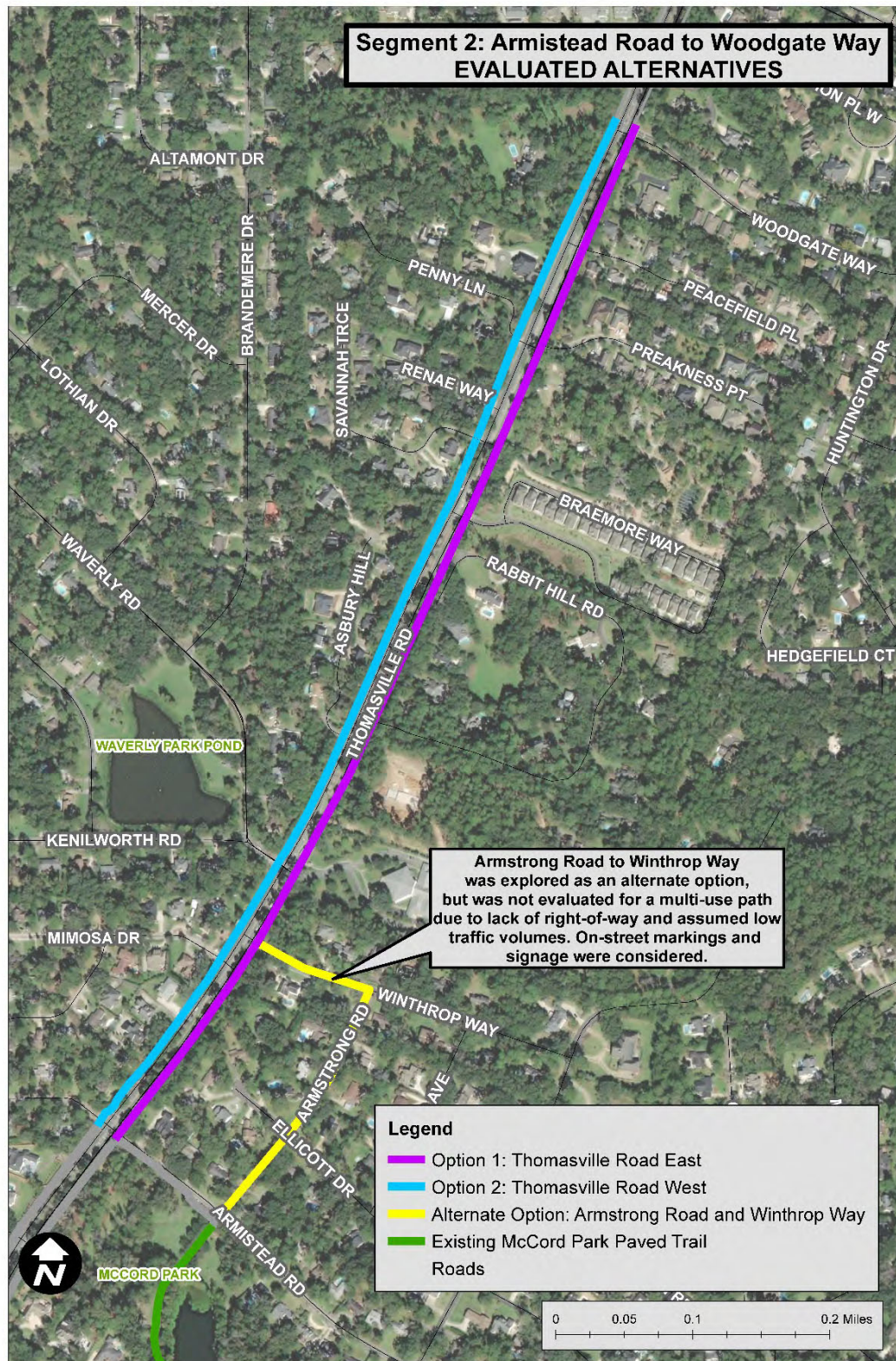
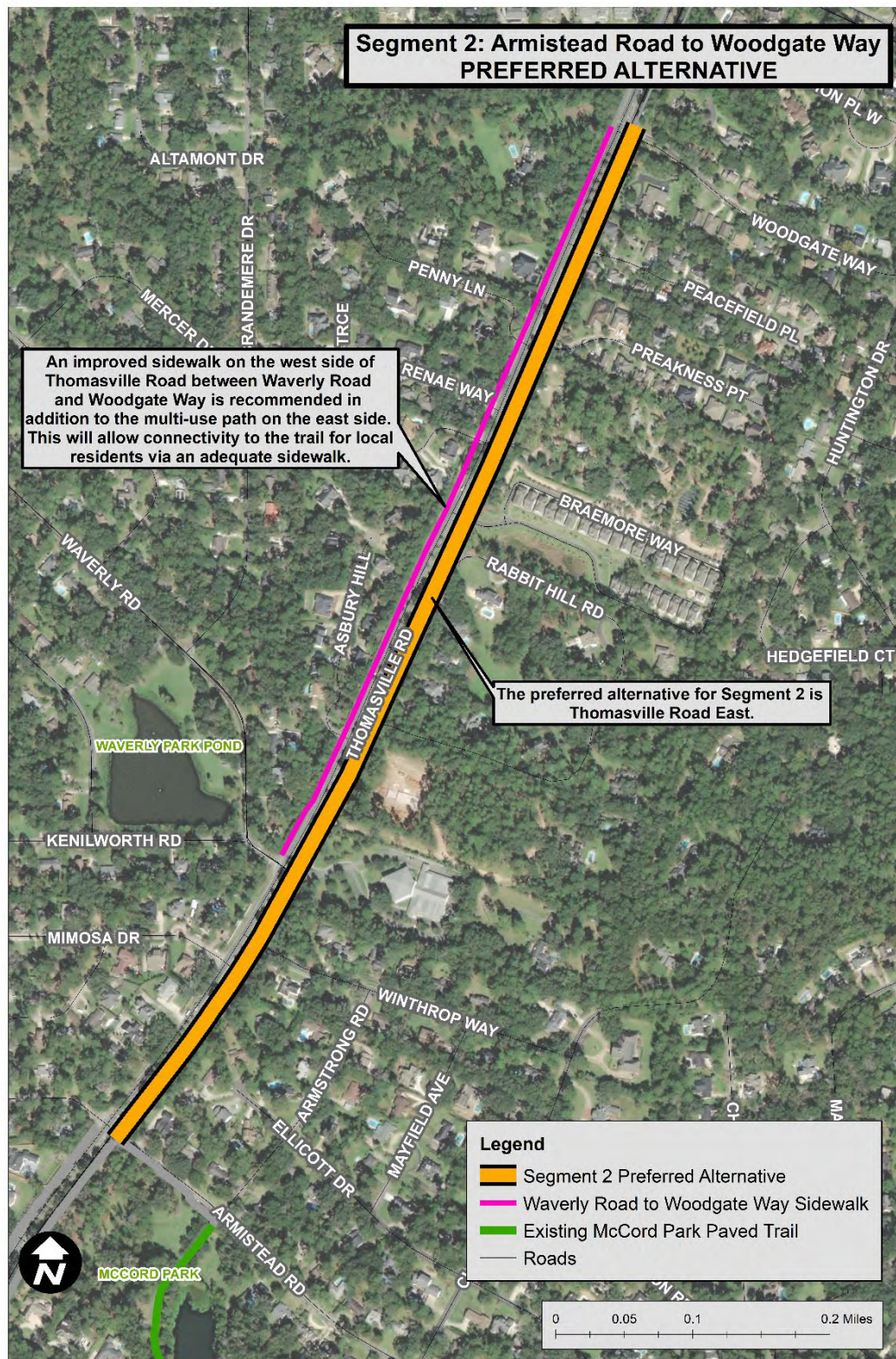


Figure 4 – Segment 2 Preferred Alternative



Segment 3 – Woodgate Way to Metropolitan Boulevard

Segment 3 along Thomasville Road is characterized by heavy residential land uses and some commercial land uses related to schools, places of worship, and limited businesses. During the alternatives analysis, the project team looked almost exclusively at Thomasville Road east and Thomasville Road west to accommodate the path. It was noted that the east side of the corridor provided connectivity to existing bicycle facilities on Hermitage Boulevard, allowing access to the Goose Pond Trail, while the west side of the corridor allows connectivity to existing bicycle facilities on Metropolitan Boulevard. Additionally, a “spur connection” along the drainage ditch on the east side of the corridor north of Hermitage Boulevard found in the Greenways Master Plan was noted as a potential opportunity for alternative connectivity to the Goose Pond Trail but was not evaluated as a potential alternative due to its lack of north-south connectivity.

The evaluated alternatives are shown in **Figure 5**.

The information below summarizes the challenges for each of the evaluated alternatives:

- Thomasville Road West is characterized by constrained right-of-way in some areas, however, allows opportunities for connectivity to the School of Arts and Sciences and the Live Oak Plantation Road, part of the Market District Connection. Few large oak trees are located along this segment; however, some constrained points do exist due to obstructions such as fences and utility poles.
- Thomasville Road East is similar to Thomasville Road West in that there are specific locations that have constrained right-of-way, including the front of Dorothy B. Owen Park and the fire station. Even with the removal of the bicycle lanes and relocation of curb and gutter, these areas would remain significantly constrained, limiting the width of the path, and therefore compromising safety.

The preferred alternative for Segment 3 is Thomasville Road West, as shown in **Figure 6**.

Thomasville Road West was selected as the preferred alternative because it allows for connectivity to the Market District while avoiding the Interstate 10 (I-10) Interchange on Thomasville Road, located north of Metropolitan Boulevard. It also avoids tree impacts and several areas of constrained right-of-way on the east side, such as in front of Dorothy B. Owen Park and the fire station. Constructing the multi-use path on the west side of Thomasville Road also allows opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians to access the School of Arts and Sciences on Thomasville Road. This alternative will ultimately continue through to Live Oak Plantation Road, which will likely be part of the Market District Connection in the future.

Improvements will be needed at the Live Oak Plantation Road intersection with Thomasville Road, which presents safety concerns for crossing path users. Ideally, users will not have to cross at Live Oak Plantation Road unless they wish to access Metropolitan Boulevard or destinations beyond that. To accommodate the path along this alternative, on-street bicycle lanes will need to be removed for additional space, and curb and gutter will need to be relocated and reconstructed to provide an appropriate buffer.

While a path on Thomasville Road east is not preferred, opportunities exist to continue the path from the terminus of Segment 2 to just north of Hermitage Boulevard to allow for a connection to the Goose Pond Trail. This would provide path users with opportunities to either continue north on Thomasville Road and access the Market District Connection via the west side, or to head north and then east via Thomasville Road east to access the Goose Pond Trail and further destinations, such as the multi-use path on Blair Stone Road or Tom Brown Park.

Figure 5 – Segment 3 Evaluated Alternatives

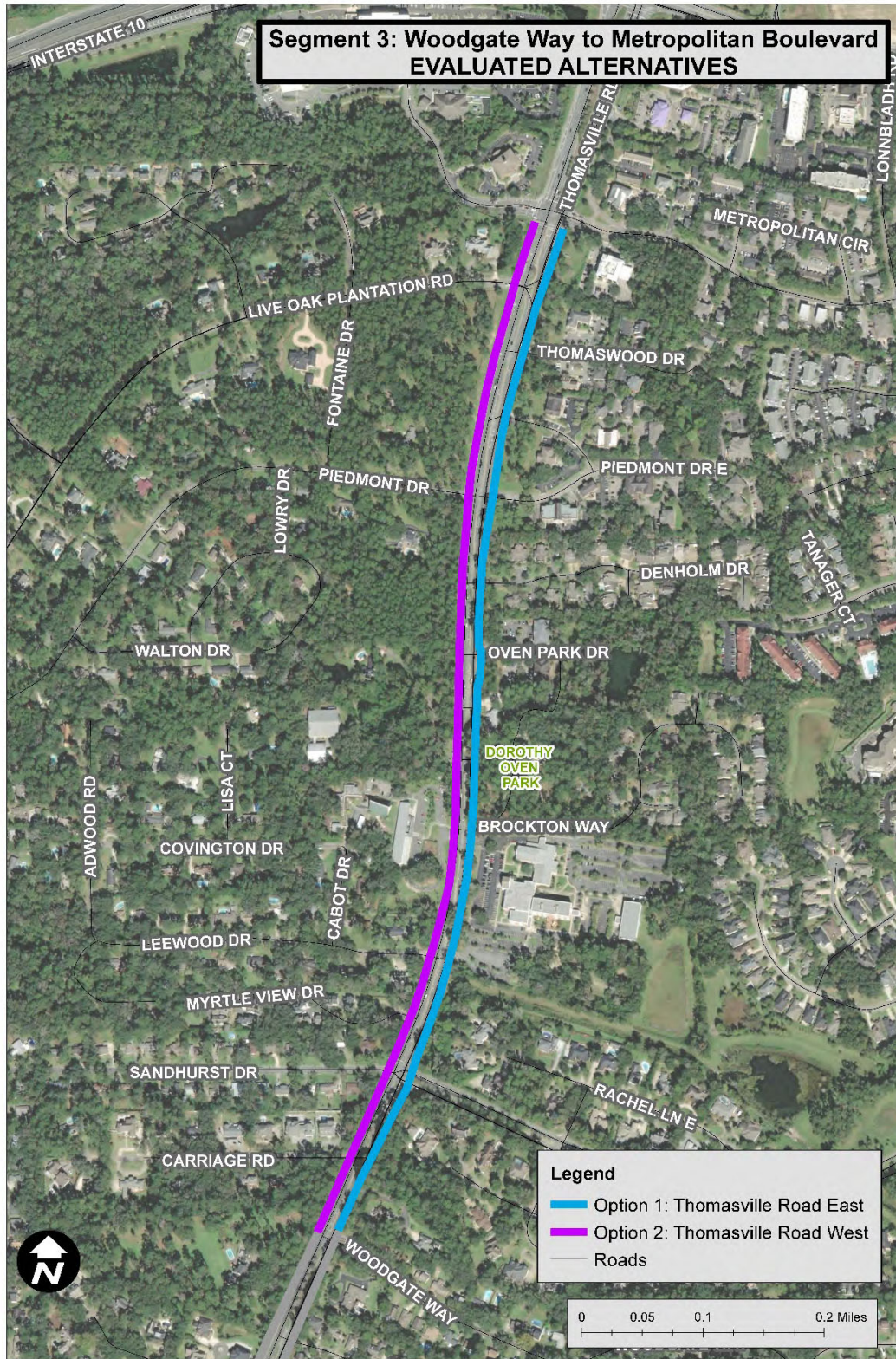


Figure 6 – Segment 3 Preferred Alternative



Market District Connection

The Market District Connection was evaluated separately the Thomasville Road alternatives. Trees and curb cuts were not evaluated for this segment and will be further studied if this project move forward in subsequent phases. If this project moves forward to the design phase, the Market District Connection will likely be pursued by local agency partner Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency.

Other options were briefly considering including the FDOT right-of-way along I-10 southbound behind Gilchrist Elementary, a gas easement near Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, a conservation easement near Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, and an easement heading north from Timberlane School Road into the Market District. These options were omitted for various reasons; FDOT right-of-way on the north side of I-10 was omitted because the school property limited the ability to connect the path to Martin Hurst Road. Additionally, the conservation and gas easements were omitted due to the fact that the City would not permit a paved trail on the conservation easements because of the presence of fragile natural ecosystems, and the gas company would not permit a trail on top of the gas line for which the easement was created.

The evaluated alternatives are shown in **Figure 7**.

The preferred alternatives for the Market District Connector is shown in **Figure 8**.

The preferred alignment focused on maintaining the path on existing roadways with available right-of-way that is already being used by bicyclists to access Market District or Thomasville Road. This alternative allows path users to avoid crossing the Live Oak Plantation corridor unless users prefer to continue traveling north on Thomasville Road. The preferred improvements are as follows:

- Live Oak Plantation Road: Multi-use path on the south side of the corridor, where right-of-way is available.
- Timberlane School Road: Multi-use path on the east side of the corridor, where right-of-way is available.
- Gilchrist Elementary Easement: Access private road to enter electric easement, where a multi-use path will be located on the western edge of the easement. Fences will be required to separate the path from the school.
- Timberlane Road: Widen sidewalk to accommodate a multi-use path. This will need to be explored further due to the location of trees and an existing sidewalk easement.
- Martin Hurst Road: 8 to 12-foot multi-use path on the west side of the corridor Based on the availability of right-of-way. Right-of-way appears constrained along this road due to the recent construction, which would limit path width.

At the terminus of Martin Hurst Road, the multi-use path will connect to planned facilities along Maclay Commerce Drive and Maclay Boulevard, projects being undertaken by Blueprint and the City of Tallahassee. Moving forward, additional analysis will be needed to determine the most appropriate location for a crossing on Timberlane Road. The project team briefly evaluated crossings at Martin Hurst Road and the Market Street Intersection, but further analysis is needed.

Figure 7 – Market District Connector Evaluated Alternatives

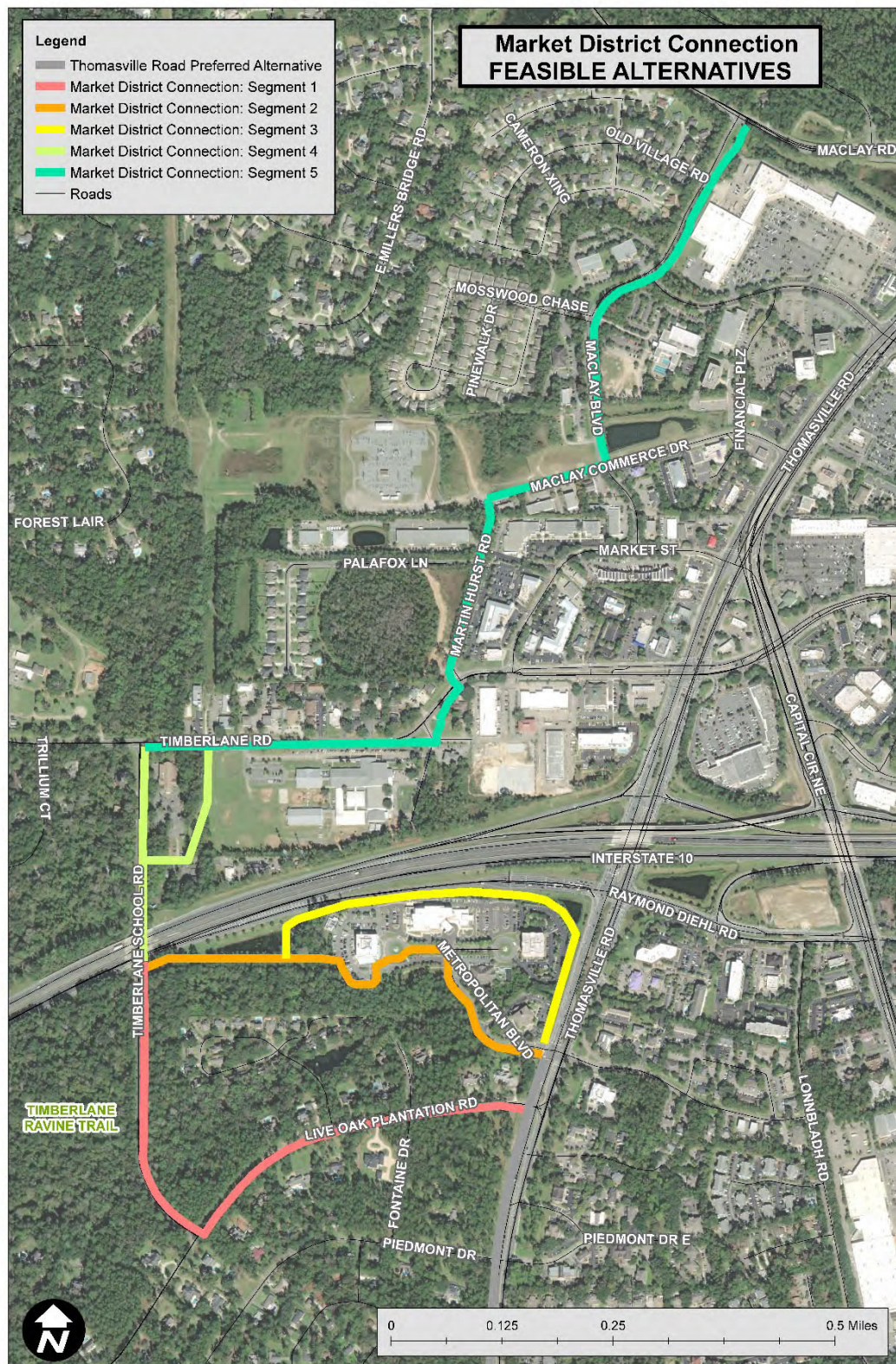
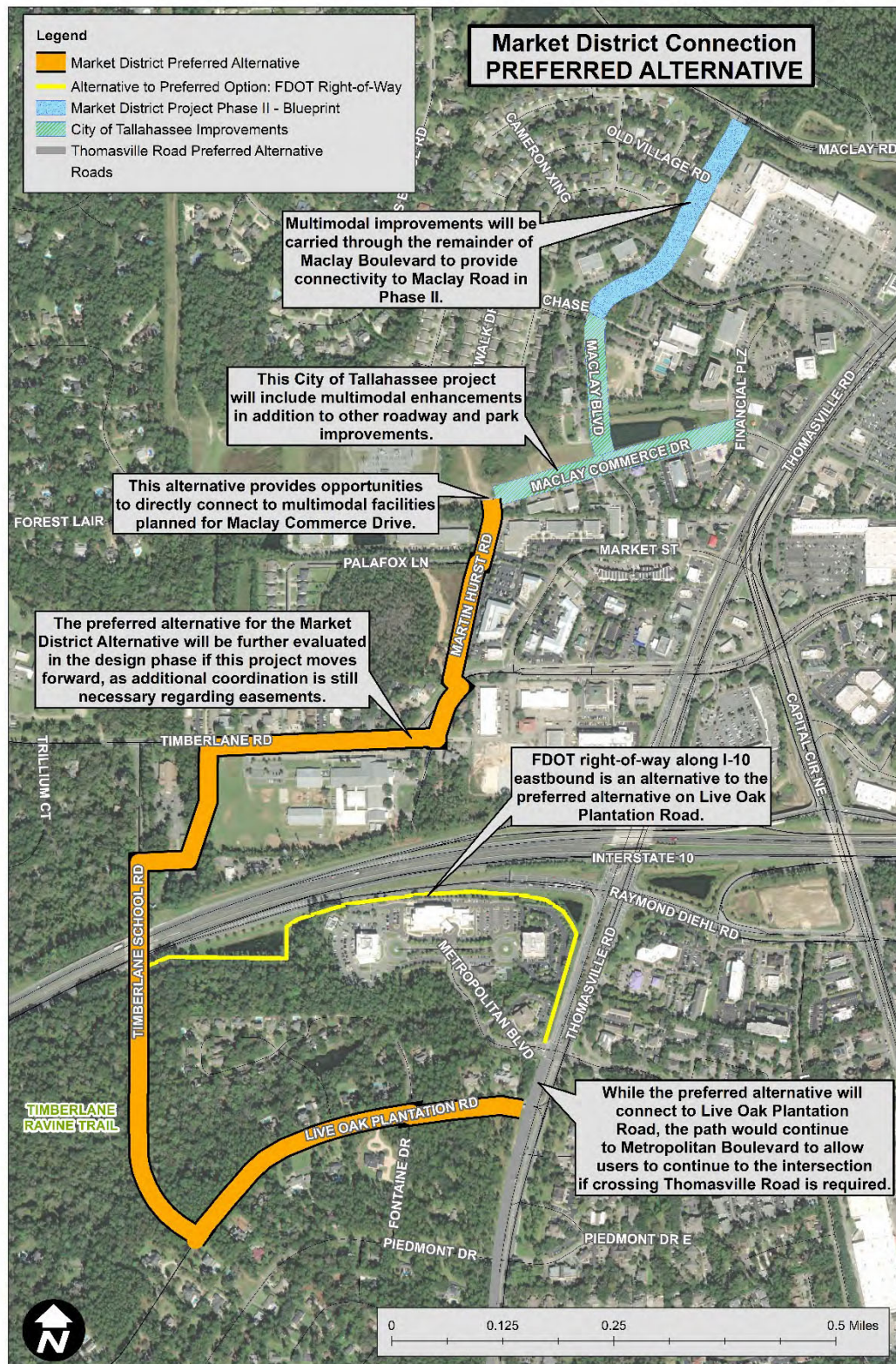


Figure 8 – Market District Connector Preferred Alternative



Thomasville Road at Woodgate Way

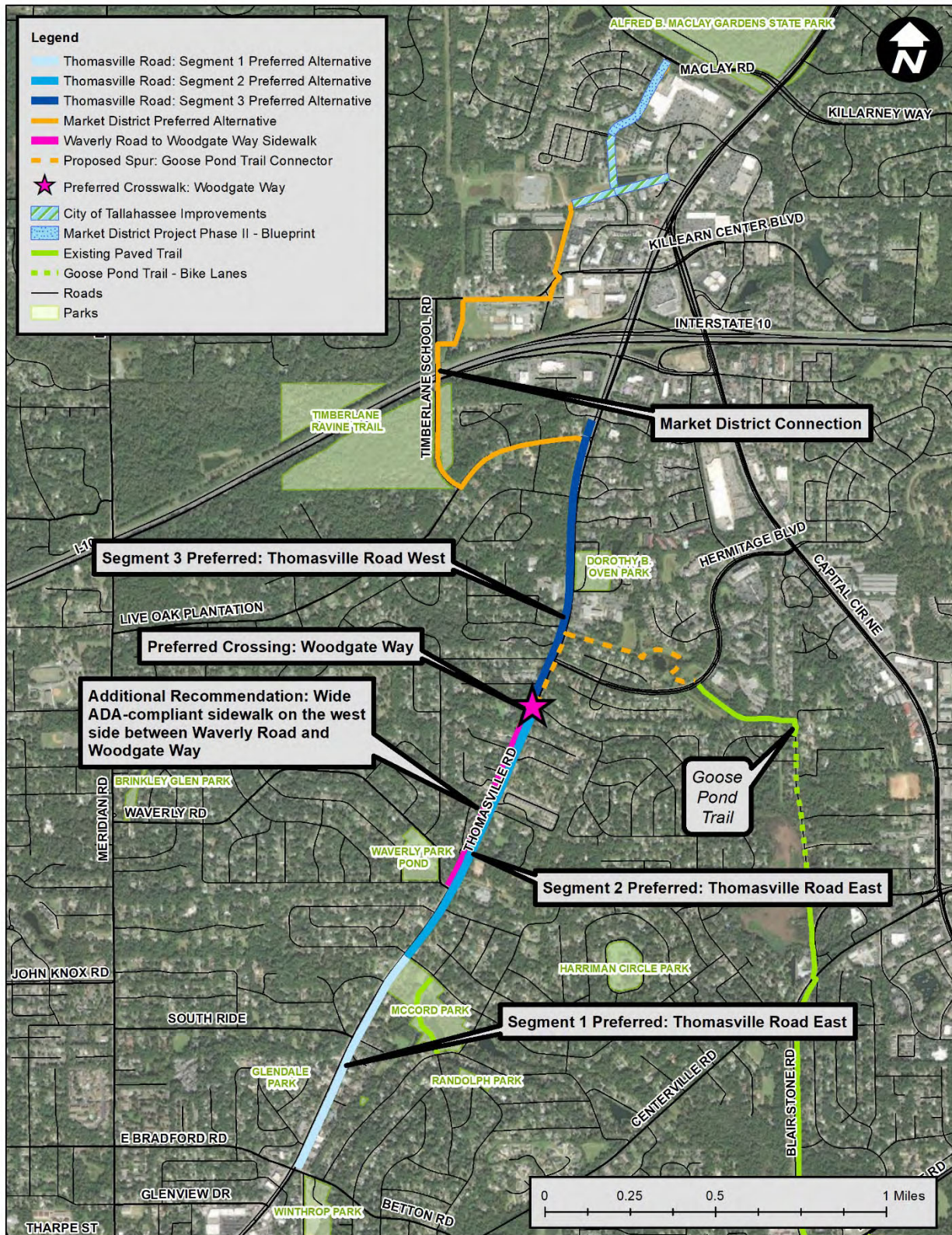
In order to traverse Thomasville Road from the east side to the west side between Segments 2 and 3, a crossing is required. Whether or not the path was on the east or west side, the project team anticipated a crossing being needed based on the topography of Thomasville Road and the eventual

need to access the west side of the corridor to get to Market District along an alternate route that did not include Thomasville Road north of Metropolitan Boulevard. This crosswalk is recommended for the south side of the intersection, where a crosswalk does not currently exist.

Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Preferred Alternatives

The preferred alternatives, when combined, are shown as **Figure 9**.

Figure 9 – Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Preferred Alternative



COST ESTIMATES

Preliminary planning-level cost estimates have been developed using Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Long Range Estimates with a cost per mile model to obtain a general understanding of costs associated with the preferred alternative and roadway reconfiguration. These cost estimates will be updated with more specificity in future design phases as appropriate.

Segment	Range of Costs
Segment 1 - Betton Road to Armistead Road (Thomasville Road East Side)	\$590,000 - \$767,000
Segment 2 – Armistead Road to Woodgate Way (Thomasville Road East Side)	\$620,000 - \$806,000
Segment 3 – Woodgate Way to Metropolitan Boulevard (Thomasville Road West Side)	\$1,019,000 - \$1,325,000
Market District Connector	\$2,601,000 - \$3,307,000
Total Cost	\$4,830,000 - \$6,205,000

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the existing conditions analysis and feedback received from the public, the following design guidelines are recommended if this project moves forward:

Meandering Design

A meandering design will allow the multi-use path to weave in and out of obstructions, such as large trees, and can aid bicyclists in slowing down when approaching intersections or driveways, while also improving the overall aesthetic and experience for path users. A meandering design along Thomasville Road would be beneficial as it addresses large oak trees, topography, and grade changes, and will add to the overall aesthetic of the corridor. Meandering should be incorporated in specific areas where right-of-way permits.

Crossing Treatments and Signage

Evaluation of every driveway and road crossing along the corridor will be completed in the design phase. However, some treatments that are recommended for these driveways include the following:

- Crosswalk markings that are highly visible and/or decorative to match the aesthetic of the Thomasville Road corridor.
- Stop bars and MUTCD appropriate signage at all driveway crossings, including private, to stop motorists before crossing the path.

- MUTCD appropriate signage on the path to stop path users before proceeding into the crosswalk, including yield signage detailing trail user etiquette, and trail speed limit signs. This would be addressed following construction to identify areas of high conflict.

As noted in the existing conditions section of this Study, there are numerous driveways along both sides of the corridor. In order to address this and maintain safety for both path users and motorists, it is important that crosswalk treatments are targeted and innovative. Crossing treatments may vary by driveway type but should remain generally consistent in the type of markings and signage provided.

Sight Distance

Throughout public engagement, several members of the public voiced concerns about sight distance when exiting their neighborhoods onto Thomasville Road. The majority of sight distance concerns along the corridor are related to overgrown foliage, landscaping, and topography that block motorist's views of oncoming traffic. The wider path and improving sight distance of the motorists will benefit path users while improving motorist's sight distance as well. Horizontal and vertical clearance along the path should also be maintained for the safety and comfort of path users and will also ensure adequate sight distance in certain situations. Sight distance analysis along the corridor is recommended to determine appropriate crossing treatments that benefit motorists and trail users.

Wide Buffers

Buffers of at least 4 feet are recommended between the inner edge of the multi-use path and the back of curb for the Thomasville Road corridor. According to the Florida Department of Transportation Design Manual, a minimum acceptable buffer for a multi-use path on a 45 mile-per-hour or higher road is 4 feet from the back of curb (FDOT Design Manual, 2021). Where feasible, buffers should exceed this 4-foot minimum separation from the travel lanes to accommodate the safety and comfort of path users.

Constrained Areas

Tallahassee is well known for wanting to protect trees for all projects, not just transportation efforts. In this report there is a section which discusses trees along the study area corridor, but this is not a complete list. A strong effort should be made to minimize the impacts to trees along the corridor should the project move forward. Areas of constrained right-of-way in association with large oak trees were identified along the preferred alternative route. These maps, shown as **Figure 10** and **Figure 11**, identify areas which should be further evaluated during the design phase to determine innovative solutions to preserve the tree canopy and reduce impacts.

Users

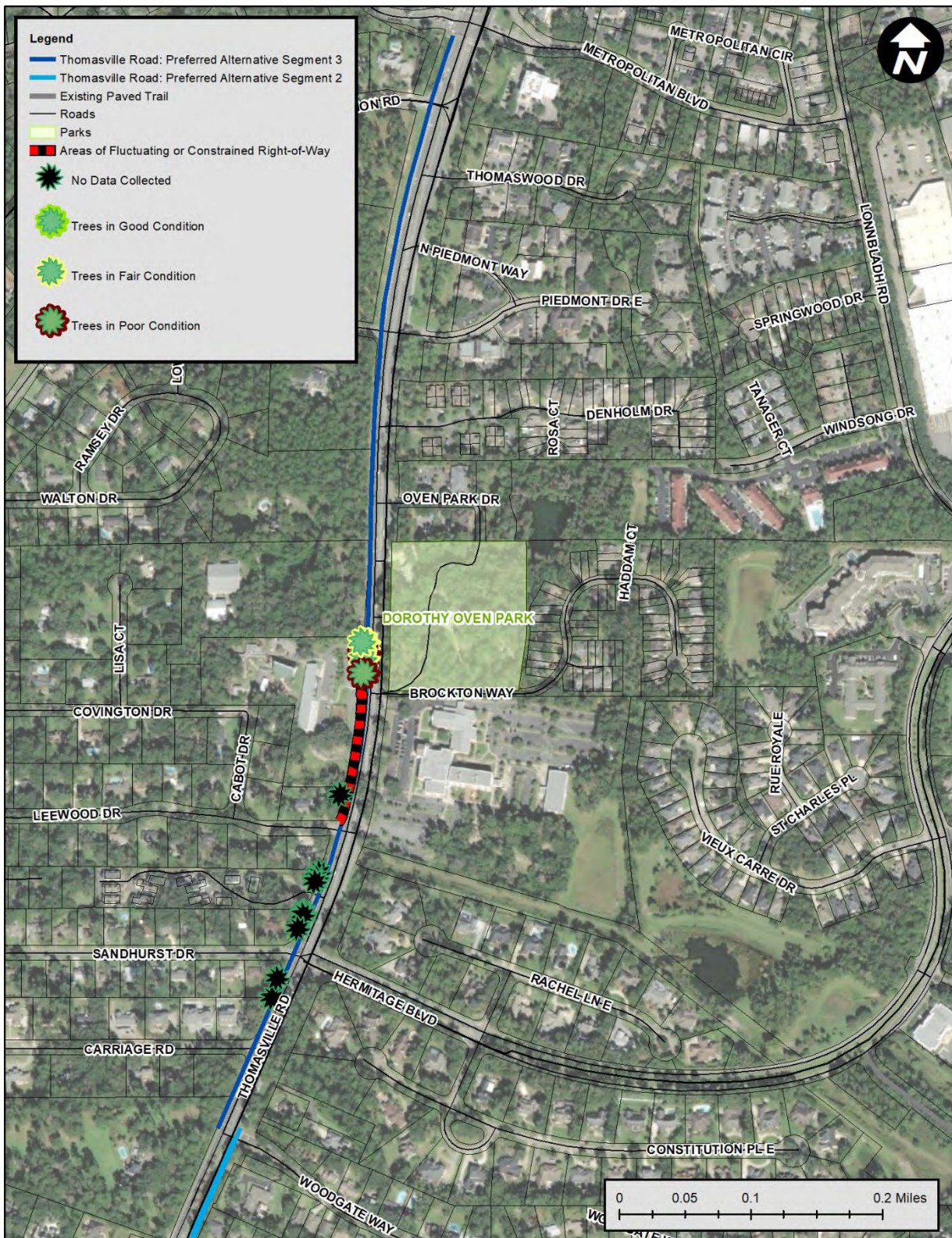
In the past, bicyclists and pedestrians have been the primary user types associated with multi-use paths in urban and suburban areas. However, in recent years, micro-mobility options including electric bicycles (e-bikes) and electric scooters (e-scooters) have become increasingly prevalent due to the convenience they provide. According to Florida Statute, e-bikes and e-scooters are permitted on sidewalks and multi-use paths. The statute allows local municipalities to regulate the operation of these micro-mobility options at their discretion, which Tallahassee and Leon County have begun to do. The City of Tallahassee has outlined rules of etiquette for e-scooters and have noted that e-scooters are to abide by the same rules as bicyclists when in use, which includes requirements for speed, passing, and parking. Signage should be installed on the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path that

indicates which users yield in each type of situation, and the appropriate use of both e-bikes and e-scooters on the path.

Figure 10 – Segment 1 Constrained Right-of-Way



Figure 11 – Segment 3 Constrained Right-of-Way



NEXT STEPS

After action by the CMAC the item will move to the CRTPA Board for consideration at their January 31, 2022 Board meeting.

OPTIONS

- Option 1: Recommend the CRTPA approve the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Feasibility Study.
 (Recommended)

- Option 2: Provide other direction.