



RETREAT AGENDA ITEM

THARPE STREET (CAPITAL CIRCLE, NW TO OCALA ROAD)

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

This item provides a background on the 2-lane section of Tharpe Street (Capital Circle, NW to Ocala Road) including a history of planning efforts for this roadway conducted by both the CRTPA and its transportation partners.

BACKGROUND

Tharpe Street is a local roadway under the jurisdiction of Leon County (County Road 158) and is classified as an urban minor arterial and. The western end (Capital Circle, NW to Ocala Road) contains 2-lanes and is approximately 2.7 miles in length. Along the majority of this segment of Tharpe Street, there are minimal sidewalks and no bike lanes.

Roadway Design

Key features of the Tharpe Street corridor related to the roadway's current configuration include:

- Absence of Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities: Currently, 82% of the corridor lacks to sidewalks or bicycle facilities. Due to the lack of these facilities, pedestrians and cyclists frequently traverse the corridor using grass ditches as may be seen in presence of desire lanes.
- Limited Transit Accessibility: StarMetro, the City of Tallahassee's transit agency, operates two (2) routes (Evergreen, Forest) along this segment of Tharpe. Given the transit needs of corridor residents (discussed below) and the roadway's lack of pedestrian facilities, access to the existing ten (10) transit stops on the corridor is difficult.

Corridor Demographics

An analysis* of this segment of the Tharpe Street corridor reflects significant burdens and disparities experienced by residents along the corridor.

- Poverty – 39.36% of households withing the corridor are below the poverty level within the 500-foot project buffer area;
- Median Income - The Tharpe corridor has a lower median household income (\$31,458) in comparison to Leon County's median household income of \$54,675;
- Renters – the corridor contains a large presence of rental units on the corridor (607 rental units versus 190 owner occupied units within the 500-foot project buffer area);

- Minority Population – the corridor is more diverse than other areas of Leon County and contains a minority population of 58.6% within the 500-foot project buffer area;
- People with Disabilities – approximately 11% of the population within the 500-foot project area is disabled.

*Source: Information generated through the creation of a 500-foot project buffer area using Census 2016 - 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) data.

The corridor's lack of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations present barriers to community connectivity for residents by limiting access to daily destinations such as employment, healthcare, grocery stores, and schools.

Existing Right-of-Way

Right-of-way along the corridor varies from approximately 66' to 123' as identified below*:

Tharpe Section (Capital Circle, NW to Ocala Road)	Number of Travel Lanes	Lane Width (Feet)	ROW Width (Feet)
Industrial (East of Capital Circle NW to Mission Road)	2	12	100
Residential (Mission Road to Ivan Drive)	2	12	66
Sheridan (Ivan Drive to Devra Drive)	2	12	123
Residential (Devra Drive to West of Ocala Road)	2	12	76

*Source: CRTPA Tharpe Street Operational Analysis (2019)

Planning Efforts

Over the years, a number of plans and initiatives have identified the need to improve this segment of Tharpe Street. These efforts, listed below, include those by the CRTPA and its transportation partners:

Leon County

- Tharpe Street Corridor Study - Accepted by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners in 2005, the final engineering design continued to 2009 and was terminated at 60% completion. Preliminary typical sections for this study identified widening the roadway to 4-lanes with sidewalks and bike lanes. Due to lack of funding, no further actions were taken.

Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (BPIA)

- [Northwest Connector: Tharpe Street](#) – Planned Improvements to Tharpe Street corridor were approved by the voters of Leon County in 2014. The proposed project notes the importance of enhancing the vibrancy of the western portion of Tallahassee as well as promoting multimodal transportation and regional connectivity.

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)

- [Tharpe Street Operational Analysis](#) – Adopted in 2019 by the CRTPA, this study was developed by the CRTPA's planning consultant RS&H and documented the corridor's multimodal challenges. The analysis identified potential projects to improve mobility and efficiency without major capacity expansions. The identified recommendations, which maintained the roadway's existing 2-lanes, included the addition of a sidewalk along *one* side of the roadway, the addition of a median in certain segments, and the addition of shared lane ("sharrow") markings. The following provides a summary of general recommendations from the analysis:
 - Addition of sidewalks and curb and gutter
 - Addition of sharrows (addition of bike lane along the residential portion)
 - Addition of a pedestrian bridge over central drainage ditch
 - Reconfiguration of Blountstown Street and Tharpe intersection
 - Addition of median between Mission Road and Trimble Road

Specific recommendations were developed for different segments of the corridor:

Industrial Section Recommendations (*East of Capital Circle NW to Mission Road*)

Install 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalk;
Add shared lane markings (Sharrows);
Convert Blountstown Hwy and Tharpe Street to a "T" Intersection;
Install a Linear Park on Blountstown Hwy; and
Install an 8-foot-wide concrete sidewalk (curb and gutter) along the east side of Blountstown Hwy.

Residential Section Recommendations (*Mission Rd to Ivan Drive; Devra Dr to W of Ocala*)

Add 8-foot-wide concrete sidewalk, culvert system, and curb & gutter along north side of Tharpe Street;
Add 8-foot-wide pedestrian bridge over central drainage system;
Widen 10 feet along the south side of Tharpe Street for addition of medians;
Add two Jug handle U turns;
Install turnout bay; and
Re-stripe east side of Tharpe Street near Ocala Road to include bike lanes.

Sheridan Section Recommendations (*Ivan Drive to Devra Drive*)

Add 8-foot-wide concrete sidewalk, culvert system, and curb & gutter along north side of Tharpe Street.

- Long Range Transportation Plan (“Regional Mobility Plan”) – The CRTPA’s most recent long range plan (“Connections 2045 RMP”), adopted in November 2020, identifies Tharpe Street improvements within the Cost Feasible Plan (the addition of lanes to a 4-lane facility).
- Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program – Recently, the CRTPA, *in partnership with BPIA, Leon County and the City of Tallahassee*, applied for a planning grant (October 2022) to fund a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for Tharpe Street. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established this new [RCP discretionary grant program](#) which is funded with \$1 billion over the next 5 years (which includes \$50 million annually for planning projects). The purpose of the RCP program is dedicated to reconnecting communities that were previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure.

The coordinated application submitted in October detailed the barriers to community connectivity presented by Tharpe Street’s current design. The application seeks \$2M (the maximum amount that may be sought for RCP planning grants) for the development of a PD&E Study that is proposed to include the development of 30% design plans for the project. A 20% non-federal match is required and this match was provided by the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency. RCP grant awards are scheduled to be announced in early 2023.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Draft Presentation

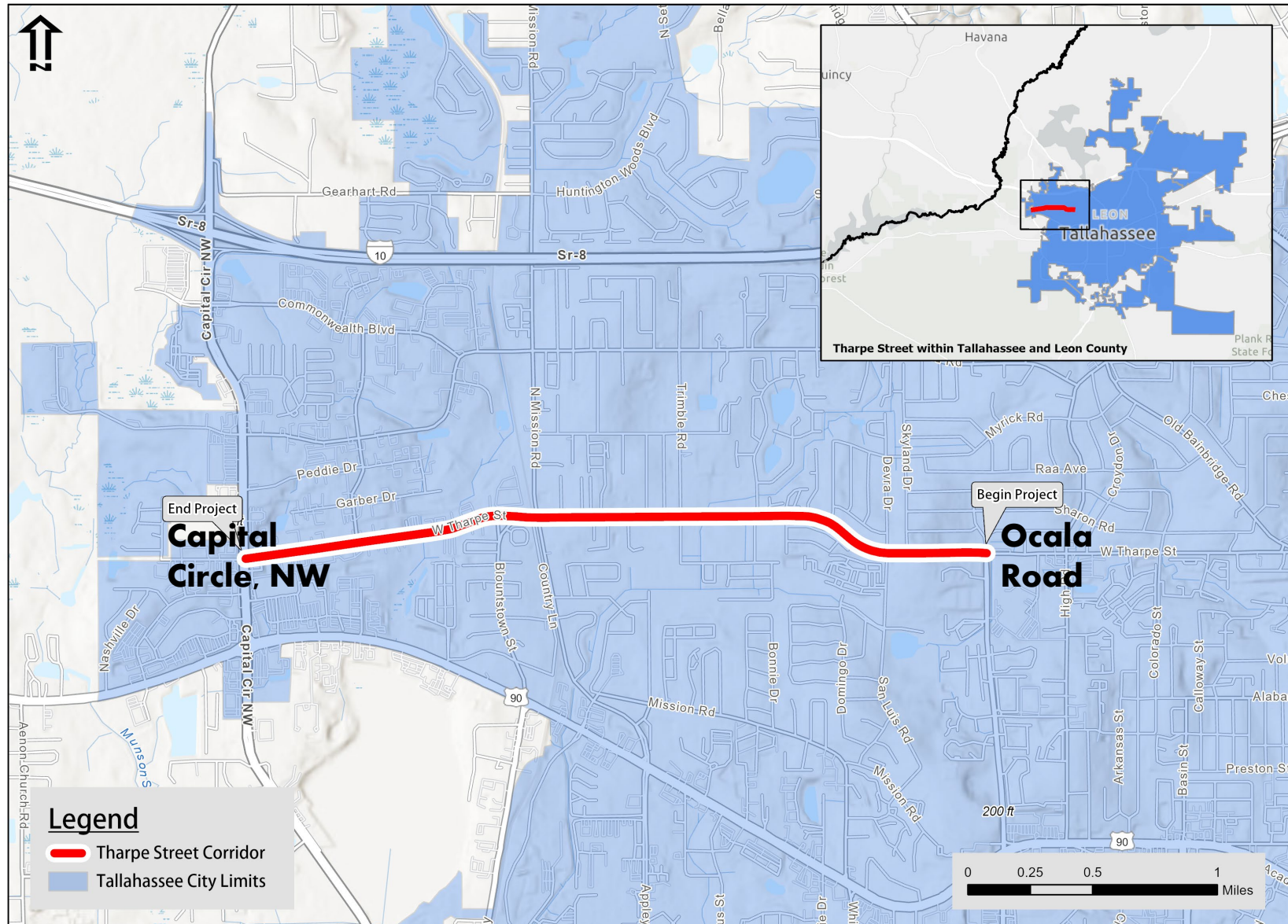


DRAFT

**Tharpe
Street
(Capital Circle, NW
to Ocala Road)**

January 17, 2023

Tharpe Street



THARPE STREET – Existing Conditions

- Local road (under the jurisdiction of Leon County (County Road 158))
- Roadway's western segment is 2-lanes (Capital Circle, NW to Ocala Road) and is approximately 2.7 miles.
- **Absence of Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities:**
 - Currently, 82% of the corridor lacks sidewalks. Due to the lack of these facilities, pedestrians and cyclists are placed in an unsafe environment and frequently traverse the corridor using grass ditches as may be seen in presence of desire lanes.
 - StarMetro, the City of Tallahassee's transit agency, operates two (2) routes (Evergreen, Forest) along this segment of Tharpe and there are ten (10) transit stops. Given the transit needs of corridor residents and the roadway's lack of pedestrian facilities, access to the transit stops on the corridor is difficult.

THARPE STREET – Corridor Demographics

This segment of Tharpe Street contains a population with significant burdens and disparities. Within a 500-foot buffer of this segment, Census block data* reflects:

- Poverty - 39.36% of households withing the corridor are *below the poverty level* within the 500-foot project buffer area;
- Median Income - The Tharpe corridor has a lower median household income (\$31,458) in comparison to Leon County's median household income of \$54,675
- Renters – the corridor contains a large presence of rental units on the corridor (607 rental units versus 190 owner occupied units within the 500-foot project buffer area);
- People with Disabilities – approximately 11% of the population within the 500-foot project area is disabled.

*Source: The Census 2016 - 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) data reflecting the approximation of the population based on the area of the 500-foot project buffer area intersecting the Census block groups along the project corridor.

THARPE STREET – Planning Efforts

Plans and initiatives have identified the need to improve this segment of Tharpe Street. These efforts include those by the CRTPA and its transportation partners and are listed as follows:

Leon County

- Tharpe Street Corridor Study - Accepted by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners in 2005, the final engineering design continued to 2009 and was terminated at 60% completion. Preliminary typical sections for this study identified widening the roadway to 4-lanes with sidewalks and bike lanes. Due to lack of funding, no further actions were taken.

Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (BPIA)

- Northwest Connector: Tharpe Street – Planned Improvements to Tharpe Street corridor were approved by the voters of Leon County in 2014. The proposed project noted the importance of enhancing the vibrancy of the western portion of Tallahassee as well as promoting multimodal transportation and regional connectivity.

THARPE STREET – Planning Efforts (continued)

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)

- Tharpe Street Operational Analysis – Adopted in 2019 by the CRTPA, this study documented the corridor's multimodal challenges and identified potential improvements to enhance the corridor's mobility while staying largely within the roadway's existing right-of-way. Identified general recommendations from the analysis include:
 - Addition of sidewalks and curb and gutter
 - Addition of sharrows (addition of bike lane along the residential portion)
 - Addition of a pedestrian bridge over central drainage ditch
 - Reconfiguration of Blountstown Street and Tharpe intersection
 - Addition of median between Mission Road and Trimble Road

THARPE STREET – Planning Efforts (continued)

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)

- Long Range Transportation Plan (“Regional Mobility Plan”) – The CRTPA’s most recent long range plan (“Connections 2045 RMP”), adopted in November 2020, identifies Tharpe Street improvements within the Cost Feasible Plan (the addition of lanes to a 4-lane facility).
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