

May 22, 2023



AGENDA ITEM 7 A

THOMASVILLE ROAD MULTI-USE PATH DESIGN UPDATE

TYPE OF ITEM: Presentation

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path Feasibility Study was completed in January 2022. The design phase funding was approved by the CRTPA Board in March 2022 and was initiated in April 2022. Since then, the design consultant, Mott MacDonald, has completed the Phase 2 Design Plan (also known as 60% plans) for the project and a public information meeting is scheduled for June 27.

BACKGROUND

After approval of the [Feasibility Study](#) by the CRTPA Board, design began in April 2022. Since that time the design of the project has included the corridor survey, Phase 1 Design Plan (30% plans) and Phase 2 Design Plan (60% plans). The Phase 1 Design Plan submitted (to FDOT) in December of 2022 with the Phase 2 Design Plan submitted in April 2023. Phase 3 plans (90% plans) are scheduled to be submitted later this summer.

Phase 2 Design Plan (60% Plan)

CRTPA staff has taken the plan document and divided into sections, including:

[Typical Section](#) – Provides a generalized cross section of Thomasville Road right of way including the improvements. As noted on the typical section, the path varies in width from 8' to 12' due to limited right of way and to protect trees.

[Selective Clearing and Grubbing](#) – This gives guidance regarding the clearing of the site for construction and includes a “Plant Protection Area” for special attention.

Detailed [Roadway Plan](#) – Shows the details of the engineering for the project.

CRTPA also requested the Roadway Plan to show the improvements with color and without the engineering annotations. This [Enhanced Roadway Plan](#) shows the shared use path and concrete improvements along the corridor as well as the grassed areas and the existing trees. Those access points that are asphalt improvements are shown on the detailed Roadway Plan.

[Signing and Marking](#) – Provides details on sign locations and the type of sign being placed at those locations. Between Hidden Oaks and Rabbit Hill Road (PDF page 9) there are directional signs for the path to negotiate users around the tree at that location.

Phase 1 Design Plan and Phase 2 Design Plan Review

CRTPA staff met with the Design contractor (Mott MacDonald) at the Phase 1 Design Plan and Phase 2 Design Plan levels to discuss and provide comments on the plans relating to the Feasibility Study to ensure comments, questions and concerns were fully addressed. These Design Recommendations (generalized) were outlined in the Feasibility Study beginning on PDF page 82. Additionally, other specific questions are addressed from the Feasibility Study comments after the Design Recommendations.

Feasibility Study Design Recommendations and Responses

Recommendation: Meandering Path

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.

Response:

Phase 1 Design Plan *Given the limited right of way, the path generally follows the same location as the existing sidewalk (east side) and asphalt path on the west side of Thomasville Road, North of Woodgate Way. Information regarding trees is discussed later under the “Constrained Areas” section.*

Phase 2 Design Plan *Reflected in Phase 1 Design Plan.*

Recommendation: 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 the Feasibility 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.

Response:

Phase 1 Design Plan *Not a component of the Phase 1 Design Plan.*

Phase 2 Design Plan *The cross treatments have been included. Notable changes include closing the middle entrance to Circle K (for safety) and asphalt reconstruction at Post Road, Wilmon Court, Greenbrier Lane, Armistead Road, Winthrop Way, Peacefield Place, Woodgate Way, Carriage Road, Myrtle View Drive, Leewood Drive, the entrance to the School of Arts and Sciences, Oven Park Drive (north of Fire Station #9), and Piedmont Drive. The [Signing and Marking Plan](#) for the project meets all MUTCD safety standards.*

Recommendation: Sight Distance

Throughout public engagement, several members of the public voiced concerns about sight distance when exiting their neighborhoods onto Thomasville Road. Most sight distance concerns along the corridor are related to overgrown foliage, landscaping, and topography that block motorists' 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.

Response:

Phase 1 Design Plan *Sight distances met current standards.*

Phase 1 Design Plan Comment (CRTPA Staff) *Access to Brockton Way will remain the same as it is now? Can the sidewalk on the east side be moved closer to the road since the bike lane is being removed to help provide better sight distance?*

Mott MacDonald Response: The sidewalk (shown on page 14 in the [Enhanced Roadway Plan](#)) will be moved in slightly with the current design, but the FDOT standard driveways dictate the offset of the sidewalk to meet ADA standards.

At the CRTPA's request Mott MacDonald has provided all [sight triangles](#) from stop bars for the Phase II Plan.

Phase 2 Design Plan *The sidewalk on Thomasville Road fronting Brockton Way was moved to provide better sight distance.*

Recommendation: 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.

Response:

Phase 1 Design Plan *The width of the buffer was not noted in the Phase 1 Design Plan.*

Phase 1 Design Plan Comments (CRTPA Staff) *Regarding the sidewalk on the west side of Thomasville Road. The CRTPA is interested in creating a buffer between the back of curb and the sidewalk with the available right of way, both from the removal of the bike lane and the existing right of way. The existing asphalt path is terrible but is a good distance away from the edge of the road. Is there a reason that can't be used as the location of the sidewalk? Is it because of utility relocation? Grade and slope? Gas Main? With other projects that the CRTPA has been involved with, through public engagement, people do not like walking on the edge of the road and Thomasville Road traffic isn't exactly moving slow. How can more space be provided between the back of the curb and the sidewalk? Is it possible to incorporate a sidewalk from Waverly Road south to Gardenia Drive?*

Mott MacDonald Response: The sidewalk was placed directly behind the curb to minimize the impacts that you outlined above. If we add a buffer, utility poles will need to be relocated, additional trees will be impacted, and gravity walls with handrails will be required in several locations. We agree adding the buffer would be a safer alternative for pedestrians, and we will evaluate adding a buffer before the next submittal.

Can the path in front of McCord Park add at least a five foot back of curb buffer and maintain the 10' path, or are the slopes to McCord Park too steep to accomplish this? Or are the trees the issue?

Mott MacDonald Response: The buffer space was reduced to 2' ([Enhanced Roadway Plan](#) PDF page 5 and 6) in this area for the trees to remain. We will review this area with the District Landscape Architect to evaluate additional alternatives.

Phase 2 Design Plan *The back of curb distance varies along the corridor with the minimum being 2' with the majority being 4.5' (shown in [Typical Section](#) on PDF page 1). In front of McCord Park the back of curb distance is 2' to protect the trees lining the path. The sidewalk on the west side of the corridor Waverly Road to approximately 200' south of Savannah Trace has a buffer of 2' from the back of curb. **Additionally, the sidewalk from Waverly Road to Gardenia Drive (shown on the [Enhanced Roadway Plan](#) PDF pages 6 and 7) was incorporated into the plan. The sidewalk will be 6' wide and the distance from the back of curb to the edge of the sidewalk will vary from 2' to 5'.** McCord Park remains with a buffer of 2'.*

Recommendation: Constrained Areas

Tallahassee is well known for wanting to protect trees for all projects, not just transportation efforts. In Feasibility Study 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. Shown in Figures 52, 53, and 54 of the Feasibility Study, areas of constrained right-of-way in association with large oak trees were identified along the preferred alternative route. These maps identify areas which should be further evaluated during the Design phase to determine innovative solutions to preserve the tree canopy and reduce impacts.

Response:

Phase 1 Design Plan Throughout the corridor, no significant trees were taken for the path mainly due to the utilization of the sidewalk area and the removal of the bike lane. The tree South of Rabbit Hill, trees in front of McCord Park, trees in front of Tallahassee Nursery, trees North of Preakness Point, and trees South of Savannah Trace all remain.

Phase 2 Design Plan Only trees 4” or less were removed for the path with no “significant” trees being removed. Mott MacDonald created a [Selective Clearing and Grubbing Plan](#) to address concerns regarding construction impacts to trees. In addition, field visits were conducted with FDOT District 3’s landscape architect to review potential areas of concern and identify techniques to minimize impact to existing trees.

There were three locations with significant trees that are shown below and how they were addressed in the Phase 1 Design Plan and Phase 2 Design Plan.

Location	Phase 1 Design Plan	Phase 2 Design Plan
Treatment of tree South of Rabbit Hill	Bifurcated path with asphalt.	Bifurcated path using concrete to protect tree. Path closest to road is 5' wide, behind the tree 6' wide. (Signing and Marking plan, PDF page 9)
Trees South of Savannah Trace	Sidewalk placed close to trees.	Sidewalk placed along fence to protect trees further. (Signing and Marking plan, PDF page 10)
Trees North of Preakness Point	Bifurcated path around trees. Both routes total 12'.	Path reduced to 8' and place behind trees. (Signing and Marking plan, PDF page 11)

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, micromobility 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 micromobility 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.

The legal users of the corridor include pedestrians, all non-motorized vehicles, motorized scooters, and e-bikes. No golf carts are allowed.

Additional Questions

There were additional questions that CRTPA staff asked Mott MacDonald about specific issues that were discussed during the Feasibility Study. These are presented below.

The citizens from Greenbriar Lane have landscaped their entrance and it looks like this will remain intact, is this correct?

Mott MacDonald Response: For the most part, yes, but there may be minimal impacts at the new curb returns.

Tallahassee Nurseries was also concerned about the landscaping in front of their business, and it looks like that will not be impacted, is this correct?

Mott MacDonald Response: The new asphalt path will not impact their landscape, but the tie slope will have a small impact to the flowerbeds. The mature landscape will not be impacted.

Is or can the crossing of Thomasville Road at Woodgate go through the median to provide for pedestrian refuge? Is that the intent?

Mott MacDonald Response: Yes, a pedestrian refuge will be included with future submittals.

NEXT STEPS

There will be a Hybrid Public Meeting held on June 27, 2023, from 5:30 – 6:30 at the Thomasville Road Baptist Church located at 3131 Thomasville Road.