



October 18, 2022

AGENDA ITEM 10 C

CORRESPONDENCE

TYPE OF ITEM: Information

The following correspondence has been sent or received by the CRTPA subsequent to the last CRTPA meeting:

- Correspondence from Phillip Gainer, PE, Secretary, FDOT District 3 to Ms. Lori Guido, Tallahassee citizen, dated August 30, 2022, regarding the design of the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path (provided as ***Attachment 1***).

From: Scurlock, Adam <Adam.Scurlock@dot.state.fl.us>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 5:02 PM
To: Slay, Greg <Greg.Slay@talgov.com>
Subject: FW: Thomasville Road Shared Use Path (W061858)

*****EXTERNAL EMAIL*****

Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information.

Below is the response to Mr. Guido and I also attached his comments.

Adam J. Scurlock, P.E.

*District Design Engineer
FDOT District 3
(850) 330-1400*

From: Vickery, Greg <Greg.Vickery@dot.state.fl.us>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 2:29 PM
To: loriguido@gmail.com
Cc: Perdue, Jared <Jared.Perdue@dot.state.fl.us>; Watts, Will <Will.Watts@dot.state.fl.us>; Gainer, Phillip <Phillip.Gainer@dot.state.fl.us>; Smith, Tim <Tim.Smith@dot.state.fl.us>; Peters, Jason <Jason.Peters@dot.state.fl.us>; Holley, Gail <Gail.Holley@dot.state.fl.us>; Hollingsworth, Lora <Lora.Hollingsworth@dot.state.fl.us>; Hurtado, Dan <Dan.Hurtado@dot.state.fl.us>; Cleveland, Colby <Colby.Cleveland@dot.state.fl.us>; Scurlock, Adam <Adam.Scurlock@dot.state.fl.us>; Williams, April <April.Williams@dot.state.fl.us>; Kirkland, Ray <Ray.Kirkland@dot.state.fl.us>; sjustice@moffattnichol.com; Ricky Branton <ricky.branton@mottmac.com>; james.johnson@mottmac.com; whowell@moffattnichol.com
Subject: Thomasville Road Shared Use Path (W061858)

Florida Department of Transportation
District Three Administration Building
Office of the District Secretary
Post Office Box 607
Chipley, Florida 32428-0607

August 30, 2022

Ms. Lori Guido
1328 Peacefield Place
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

Subject: Thomasville Road Shared Use Path

Dear Ms. Guido:

Thank you for your recent e-mail to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regarding the Thomasville Road Shared Use Path. FDOT welcomes input from citizens on all our projects.

The Department values the needs of all transportation users and the design criteria used on our projects ensures they are considered. Accordingly, the Thomasville Road Shared Use Path will be designed using the latest edition of the Florida Design Manual (FDM), which sets design criteria for all projects on the State Highway System. The FDM provides sight distance criteria for uses of the path and for motorists traveling adjacent to the path. This safe sight distance criteria will be used to reduce or eliminate obstructions that could impact line of sight for both motorists and shared path users. The conflict points at unsignalized intersections and driveways can be of concern, but by providing clear lines of sight at these locations, motorists will have a much better view of pedestrians and cyclists on the shared use path. In addition, the designer will review the crash history along the corridor and make recommendations to the Department for improvements.

As part of the design effort, both daytime and nighttime site visits will be conducted by the projects' designers throughout the design process. These site visits will allow the designer to identify potential conflict points along the project, specific to interactions between motorists on Thomasville Road and shared use path users. Both the FDM and FDOT's designers consider users of all ages when designing shared use paths. For example, pedestrian crossing timings at signalized intersections can be adjusted to allow more time to cross side streets and Thomasville Road. Also, signage may be utilized along the path to make all users aware of conflict points.

Moving the roadway curb toward the center of Thomasville Road will allow a wider buffer between motorists and the shared use path. Additionally, the increased buffer between path users and traffic lanes could also lower traffic noise levels for path users. The targeted width for the Thomasville Road Share Use Path is 12-feet per the FDM. While design efforts will be made to provide clear areas on the back side of the path, fences or railings may be required adjacent to drop-offs.

FDOT will make efforts to avoid impacts to trees and other vegetation both within and adjacent to the shared use path. The designer will consider construction limits and other work activities to minimize or eliminate impacts to existing trees and their root systems. In addition, heritage oaks and other protected trees will be given special consideration regarding root avoidance.

As you know, electric bicycles (E-bikes) are increasing in popularity and use. While the State of Florida affords E-bikes and their operators all the rights and privileges of those operating traditional bicycles, additional signage may be used alerting users that E-bikes could be present on the shared use path.

Again, thank you for your interest in this transportation project and taking the time to share your concerns. If our team can assist you further, schedule a meeting or if you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact April Williams, P.E., District

Consultant Project Management Engineer, at 850-330-1612 or via e-mail at april.williams@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

/s/ Phillip Gainer

Phillip Gainer, P.E.
District Secretary

TS/AS/AW/gv

As homeowners who live along the CRTPA's recommended route of the Thomasville Road Multi-Use Path (TRMUP), we have conducted extensive research into the suggested design elements for such facilities.

As the project enters the design phase, we encourage FDOT to recognize our concerns and to design a path that ensures the safety of path users, commuters that travel Thomasville Road, and especially residents who will navigate across the path on a daily basis.

By our estimate, there are 200+ homeowners who live along the route proposed by CRTPA and have single access points to TR. That is 200+ homeowners with no alternative route to or from their homes except across the multi-use path and directly onto TR, no traffic light to assist in entering or exiting the 4 lane, divided, 45 mph highway, no right turn lanes for safe harbor if a full stop is required when exiting TR, and several streets with a break in the median for a left turn exit off of TR but no actual left turn lane. Further, the comparable roadways in the Safety Study (conducted by Kimley Horn so not an independent analysis) also retained on-road bike lanes in conjunction with the multi use path and/or enough excess easement to provide space for pulling a car off the main roadway before crossing the adjacent multi-use path.

Due to this lengthy list of shortcomings, Thomasville Road presents daunting challenges.

A high percentage of Senior citizens reside along the path

One criteria used by CRTPA to rank the project was "Serves an area with a high number of citizens aged 65+". We look to FDOT's Safe Mobility for Life initiative with the stated purpose of 'designing roadways and communities to benefit an aging road user' to ensure that the design recognizes that this corridor's census blocks report 27.15% of residents are 65+. Per www.census.gov the percent of citizens 65+ for the entirety of Florida is 20.9%.

FHWA Highway Design Handbook for Older Drivers and Pedestrians includes many applicable concerns. These concerns for drivers can also be applied to aging residents who will be pedestrians along the proposed path and to drivers who will face navigating the multi-use path along Thomasville Road. As an example:

The difficulties that aging drivers are likely to experience making right turns at intersections are a function of their diminishing gap-judgment abilities, reduced neck/trunk flexibility, attention-sharing deficits, slower acceleration profile, and their general reduction in understanding traffic control devices compared with younger drivers. Right-turning drivers face possible conflicts with pedestrians, and restrictions in the visual attention of aging drivers may allow pedestrian and vehicular traffic to go unnoticed. The fact that pedestrians may be crossing the side street, where they enter the path of the right-turning vehicle, places a burden upon the driver to search the right-turning path ahead. The result is the need to share attention between oncoming vehicles approaching from the left and pedestrians in the path to the right. Limitations in the range of visual attention, frequently referred to as "useful field of vision," further contribute to the difficulty of aging drivers in detecting the presence of pedestrians or other vehicles near the driver's path. Aging drivers, who may have greater difficulty maintaining rapid eye

movements and associated head movements, are less likely to make correct judgments on the presence of pedestrians in a crosswalk or on their walking speed (Habib, 1980).

We ask that FDOT design to accommodate the high percentage of seniors impacted by the TRMUP in accordance with Safe Mobility for Life and the FHWA Highway Design Handbook for Older Drivers and Pedestrians.

Excessive number of intersections

The 2.2 mile route has 40+ intersections crossing the path. Those include 3 school driveways, 3 church driveways, 15 commercial driveways, 5 intersections with traffic lights, 1 apartment complex with 102 units, 20 residential streets.

300+ homeowners (200+ single family homes plus 100+ apartment units) have no alternative route to leave their home except to cross the bi-directional path while exiting or returning to their homes.

Topic #625-000-002
FDOT Design Manual

January 1, 2018

224.1.2 Considerations

Shared use paths are not replacements for on-street bicycle lanes. They serve different functions and different users.

Shared use paths may be considered when all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The path is separated from the roadway.
- (2) There are few access points or roadways crossing the path.
- (3) There is adequate access to local streets and other facilities along the path.
- (4) There is a commitment to provide path continuity with other bikeways throughout the corridor.

CRTPA's own report (excerpt below) suggests that a path along TR is not safe (first highlighted bullet)

CRTPA deemed that 23 driveways along Trescott Dr, a 25 mph residential street, rendered a multi-use path unsafe. (second and third bullet points)

FDOT is expected to make the same multi-use path safe for 300+ homeowners along a 45 mph, 4 lane, divided highway.

Please see excerpt from CRTPA report below:

- This route is much safer than placing the path along Thomasville Road when considering the target users being more of beginning to intermediate bike riders and walkers being young children to the elderly.
- The sidewalk adjacent to Armistead Drive would be reconstructed to become ADA compliant.

Disadvantages to this option:

- Residents in Betton Hills, in particular, along Trescott Drive, do not want a path due to concerns regarding safety, difficulties entering and leaving their property, crime, and an increase in bike and pedestrian traffic in their neighborhood.
- Residents feel that there will be impacts to McLeod Park mostly associated with speeding bicyclists mixed with elderly residents, children and pets utilizing the path that may not be able to react fast enough to avoid conflicts.
- There are 23 properties that will require driveway cuts along the path.

The sidewalk adjacent to Armistead Drive would require property from McLeod Park.

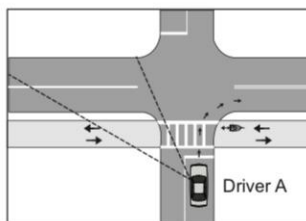
While this option is feasible, the number of driveways cuts will make the installation of the path difficult and has the potential to create safety issues on Trescott Drive. Therefore, the Project Team has removed this option from consideration.

We ask that FDOT design with the safety of all homeowners along the path as a priority equal to those of Betton Hills/Trescott Drive residents as recognized by CRTPA.

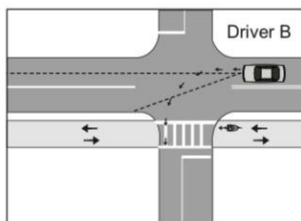
Navigating on and off of Thomasville Road

Thomasville Road traffic counts are in excess of 30,000 cars per day, ongoing development will continue to increase traffic, the speed limit is 45mph but traffic routinely travels at higher speeds.

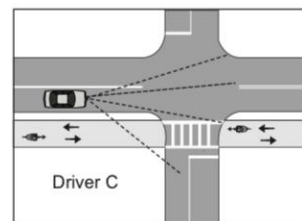
AASHTO, Design of Shared Use Paths:



Right turning Driver A is looking for traffic on the left. A contraflow bicyclist is not in the driver's main field of vision.



Left turning Driver B is looking for traffic ahead. A contraflow bicyclist is not in the driver's main field of vision.



Right turning Driver C is looking for left turning traffic on the main road and traffic on the minor road. A bicyclist riding with traffic is not in the driver's main field of vision.

We ask that FDOT design with these facts and field of vision limitations in mind.

Elevation changes along proposed route

TRMUP includes significant hills which add to the safety challenges.

- Sight distance at some entry/exit points are restricted because of hills
- Downhill segments will result in faster speeds of bicycles, scooters, skateboards, etc.
- Uphill segments will result in some bike riders walking bicycles

AASHTO, Design of Shared Use Path, 5.2.7:

Options to mitigate excessive grades on shared use pathways include the following:

- ➡ Use higher design speeds for horizontal and vertical curvature, stopping sight distance, and other geometric features.
- ➡ When using a longer grade, consider an additional 4 to 6 ft (1.2 to 1.8 m) of width to permit slower bicyclists to dismount and walk uphill, and to provide more maneuvering space for fast downhill bicyclists.
- ➡ Install the hill warning sign for bicyclists (W7-5) and advisory speed plaque, if appropriate, per the MUTCD (7).

We ask that FDOT design the path with extra width and other features to mitigate elevation changes along TR.

Trees

While not a design concern from an engineering point of view, it is very much a concern from an aesthetic point of view. Thomasville Road is a gateway to Tallahassee. Thomasville Road to the north of I-10 has lost so many trees due to development and is not nearly as attractive as in the past. Thomasville Road south of I-10 has managed to retain the beauty afforded by the trees.

We ask that FDOT make all efforts to preserve the trees along the TRMUP.

Noise

The traffic noise along the path is quite loud, especially during morning and evening rush hour. At these loudest times, it will be difficult for path users to hear other path users approaching from the rear. This is especially true with the high percentage of age 65+ population with possible hearing impairments living within the adjacent census blocks. It is also true that with limited mobility and slower reflex times, senior users cannot be expected to avoid harms way quickly. Likewise, children may not be able to hear directions from parents.

We ask that FDOT conduct a study on the noise levels along the TRMUP and design in accordance with those findings.

The rising popularity of E-bikes

There is little data related to the consequences of the increase in E-bikes due to their recent popularity. However, common sense indicates that there will be E-bikes on the TRMUP, they will travel at faster speeds than manual bicycles, and they are heavier than manual bicycles. Higher number+higher speeds+more mass = more risk to path users.

We ask that FDOT design the TRMUP with consideration to the almost certain additional risk posed by E-bikes. Please be forward thinking since there is little guidance on this growing trend.

Building within the right of way

Considering the high speed, high volume characteristics of Thomasville Road, the large number of seniors living along the path, the hills, the growing popularity of E-bikes, and the high number of intersections; a wide path with generous separation from Thomasville Road and an ample clearance on the backside of the path is warranted.

224.4 Widths

The appropriate paved width for a two-directional shared use path is dependent upon context, volume and mix of users. Widths range from a minimum 10 feet to 14 feet, with a standard width of 12-feet. SUN Trail network facilities that are less than 12-feet require approval by the Chief Planner. For shared use paths not in the SUN Trail network:

- 10-feet wide may be used where there is limited R/W.
- Short 8-feet wide sections may be used in constrained conditions.

Consider the accommodation of emergency and maintenance vehicles or management of steep grades when selecting the width of the path.

224.12 Separation from Roadway

Place as close to the R/W line as possible or outside the clear zone. At a minimum, provide a separation between the shared use path and the roadway. This demonstrates to both path users and motorists that the shared use path is a separate facility. Minimum separation is as follows:

- On flush shoulder roadways with design speed 45 mph or less, the edge of the path is to be at least 5 feet from the edge of the paved shoulder.
- On flush shoulder roadways with design speed 50 mph or greater, the edge of the path is to be at least 5 feet from the shoulder break (see **FDM 210.4**).

224-Shared Use Paths

- On curbed roadways, the edge of the path is to be at least 5 feet from the face of curb, with consideration of other roadside obstructions (e.g., signs and light poles).

Where the minimum separation cannot be obtained:

- Consider installation of a pedestrian channelization fence at speeds of 45 mph or less to limit incursion of path users onto the roadway.
- Consider installation of a crashworthy barrier at speeds greater than 45 mph to limit incursion of motorists onto the path, although this type of barrier can be used at lower speeds as well.

For Urban Side Paths, place as close to the R/W line as possible, but no closer than 2 feet from the back of curb. Do not place Urban Side Paths adjacent to uncurbed roadways.

Commentary: Criteria provided are minimum values only. As motorist speeds increase, the amount of separation between the traveled way and path should also increase to manage the level of traffic stress for path users.

224.7 Horizontal Clearance

Provide a 4-foot clear area adjacent to both sides of the path, including placement of signs. Maintain a 2-foot-wide graded area with a maximum 1:6 slope adjacent to both sides of the path. For restricted conditions, bridge abutments, sign columns, fencing and railing may be located within 4 feet of the edge of pavement.

We ask that FDOT design the TRMUP for safety with a minimum width at:

14 foot path to allow for bikes to be walked up hills

5 feet between TR and path to avoid danger from on-road traffic

2-4 feet on backside to accommodate path users to step off path as needed to avoid collisions.

Total path width plus clearances of 21-23 feet.

Additional considerations

As residents who sometimes walk along the east sidewalk after dark (especially true during winter month's short days) we are alert to a danger that needs to be addressed. When walking the east sidewalk in a southbound direction towards oncoming traffic, the headlights of northbound cars render pedestrians (and future bikers) blind. Our solution is to hold a hand in front of our eyes to shield the beam of light but as walkers we can hesitate momentarily if needed. Keep in mind that bikes will be traveling at a faster pace and the recommended "meandering" path makes visibility even more critical.

Along those same lines, residents attempting to cross the path to enter Thomasville Road may also find it difficult to distinguish oncoming bicycles from oncoming dual lanes of car headlights after dark.

We ask that FDOT conduct a nighttime visit along the proposed path to experience the effect of the oncoming headlights and devise a safe solution when developing a design.

Thank you for considering our concerns and for taking steps to address the dangers expressed. We understand they are not easy challenges but know there are guidelines that mitigate them. Please keep homeowners, commuters, and path users safe.

Thank you,

Bob and Lori Guido
1328 Peacefield Place