



U.S 19 FRONTAGE ROAD STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

One-on-one interviews were conducted with regional and local stakeholders to discuss the multimodal issues and opportunities along the U.S. 19 frontage roads between 49th Street to north of SR 580. The interviews were conducted in two days between November 19, 2019 and November 20, 2019 at the City of Largo City Hall and the Forward Pinellas offices, respectively. A total of 17 interviews were conducted from the organizations listed below. A copy of the sign-in sheets and agenda are shown at the end of this document.

State:

- FDOT District 7

Regional:

- Pinellas County Planning, Public Works, and Economic Development
- Central Pinellas Chamber of Commerce
- Florida Highway Patrol
- Pinellas County Safety and Emergency Services
- Pinellas County School Board
- Forward Pinellas
- PSTA (Transit Authority)

Local:

- City of Largo Community Development & Engineering
- City of Pinellas Park Planning & Engineering
- City of Clearwater Planning & Engineering
- St Petersburg College (SPC) Clearwater Campus
- Pinellas Technical College
- City of Dunedin Planning

Local Stakeholder/ Property Owners

- Clearwater Neighborhood Coalition
- Bundle of Residential Developments – Focus Group
- Countryside Mall

The interviews were loosely structured to invite open conversation about the corridor. To start the conversation, an ice-breaker question asked the participants to describe their opinion or perception of the corridor in one word. Responses to this question were bundled in the following in the following themes/categories:

Travel Experience/Function

- Congested
- Necessity
- Function
- Functional
- Chaotic
- Hostile
- Multipurpose
- Busy
- Unsafe
- Dangerous
- Too fast/High-speed
- Walkable
- Deadly

Land Use Compatibility

- Shopping
- Autoland
- Opportunity
- Inconsistent

Aesthetics

- Ugly
- Claustrophobic
- Sterile

The following questions were used to initiate the discussion with the parties who joined us:

- ***What issues and challenges do we need to address to encourage better multi-modal mobility and access?***
- ***Are there areas within the study area where there should be a focus in growth or redevelopment to help achieve community vision plans?***
- ***What environmental constraints might we encounter during the study?***
- ***Are you aware of any effort that overlaps, or feeds into/ impacts this study?***

The interviews yielded some overarching themes outlined below:

Land Use

There are significant changes in land uses throughout the corridor, with special emphasis in the following areas:

CITY OF LARGO

- A special area plan is being established to create an Activity Center at US 19 and E Bay Dr/ Roosevelt Blvd, inclusive of updates to the comprehensive plan. This plan will focus on placemaking through compact development and increased density, along with an affordable housing component.
 - Plan to limit auto-oriented uses such as car dealerships. These sites may be sought for redevelopment depending on how established they are.
- The City is interested in exploring opportunities that may exist between intersections.
- City is interested in increasing employment in this area
- Key pedestrian generators include Publix, Walmart, and the transit transfer station.
- There's a need for new housing options
- A redevelopment site was discussed, providing new apartments for seniors 55+
- Pinellas Technical College has about 600-700 students on campus during the day. 70% of them are on federal financial aid. Many walk/bike/transit to the campus.
- City of Largo is open to explore the use of paint and special lighting at the underpasses to enhance aesthetically those intersections – for purposes of placemaking
- There are opportunities to enhance landscaping through Largo - There's precedent for the City to maintain landscaped areas on DOT facilities for beautification purposes
- The US 19 overpass walls (elevated) affect the viability (and visibility) of commercial properties on the frontage roads.

CITY OF CLEARWATER

- The entire corridor has been rezoned into districts: activity centers and residential centers
- Minimum density requirements are being considered

- Between SR 580 and Enterprise Dr a local transportation plan is being considered.
- Hotels around Drew Street have lost their flags (i.e. no longer match the prototype hotel of their brand and thus change names)
- Areas north of Sunset Point Rd are susceptible to change.
- Campus Walk (by Drew Street intersection) is redeveloping with a Hilton and other retail uses
- New development will dump traffic onto Harn Blvd., and residents are concerned of through traffic through the area.

CITY OF PINELLAS PARK

- The City has experienced a transition from commercial uses to light industrial and multi-family uses
 - See Gateway Master Plan
 - City houses final stop for Amtrak
 - Nodes of activity:
 - 110th - Shopping center is selling. This is a node that generates pedestrian activity.
The site that is for sale can redevelop into multifamily.
 - 49th - A multifamily project already under construction.
- Senior living communities (Springwood Living) are points of concern
- Homeless shelter on 49th Street is a pedestrian generator and pedestrians are sometimes intoxicated
- Not many land use changes to come in this area.

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- Allen's Creek and Long Branch Creek were noted as environmentally sensitive areas
- There are numerous mobile-home parks to be considerate of, noted as non-conforming
- Pinellas Hope is expanding, and more pedestrians are anticipated
- Elevation of U.S. 19 disrupts commercial activity along the frontage roads
- Many businesses went out of business when US 19 was converted to limited access. Businesses that have filled in the area are generally not drive-by businesses. There is light industrial, fleet storage, and reservation-based businesses along the corridor.
- Frontage roads also cut through corner parcels, affecting businesses along the corridor.
- Public Art and landscaping were suggested to improve walk environment. The Chamber could engage the business community to sponsor landscaping in front of their properties.

Access

CITY OF CLEARWATER

- Lincare was identified as a large employer who has noticed a difficulty in employees leaving in the afternoon due to peak hour traffic.

CITY OF PINELLAS PARK

- There is particular concern in the City of Pinellas Park, near the access for Springwood Senior Living Facility

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- The challenge of frontage roads is the inability for non-motorized users to cross from one side to the other.
- There are overlapping concerns among stakeholders regarding the number of access points to businesses that cause conflict along the frontage roads
 - Many of these conflicts are between local traffic and those exiting U.S. 19.
 - Explore opportunities to consolidate driveways on sites that can afford to reduce access points.
- Some aspirational intersections that limit access conflict were noted:
 - Semoran Boulevard (S.R. 436) and Colonial Drive (S.R. 50) in Orlando
 - Semoran Boulevard (S.R. 436) and Orlando Avenue (U.S. 17/92) in Casselberry
- Traffic regularly drives through parking lots to avoid frontage roads

Safety

CITY OF LARGO

- Continuity of bike lanes are of concern – considerable bike activity on Roosevelt Blvd.
- Operational and safety concerns at Ulmerton Rd.
- Operational and safety concerns at Roosevelt (Walmart entrance)
- Operational and safety concerns at Gulf to Bay Blvd. (U turns)

CITY OF CLEARWATER

- Drew Street and US 19 is a crash cluster. A roundabout was suggested
- Merging off of Drew Street heading north is also of concern - transitions are quick

CITY OF PINELLAS PARK

- Springwood Living residents express concerns with traffic speeds
- Bicycle, pedestrian, and motorist crashes were noted to be an issue at large intersections
 - Pinellas Park officials emphasized that crashes are most severe at large intersections
- The angles at the approaches / geometric design of intersecting driveways are of concern
- There are safety concerns (perceived issues) with the 102 Avenue intersection.

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- Several stakeholders noted a speeding problem along the corridor (as high as 70 mph)
 - Vehicle speeding on the frontage roads was identified as an issue that prevents opportunities for vehicles to enter the frontage road.
 - Vehicles are speeding through slip lanes provided for turn movements
- Merging movements between frontage road and mainline are an issue
- Florida Highway Patrol confirmed that there is no regular patrol in the unincorporated sections of the corridor

- There has been success in staging law enforcement offers in certain areas when there is an abnormal pattern in speeding or crashes, but this is only after a complaint is filed
- Bicycle, pedestrian, and motorist crashes were noted to be an issue at large intersection
- Some officials believe that the community at large would benefit from roadway safety education
- Motorists often fail to yield to stopped school buses, even passing the school bus on the side where students are boarding
- Lane markings were noted as an effective measure (improve signage, address weaving & safety)
- Reducing the frontage road to one lane in some areas was identified as a possible solution.
- Signs to communicate two-way bicycle/pedestrian traffic was identified as a possible solution.
- Public often doesn't know where they are when they call 911. Improved location signage was suggested.
- Reduce Conflict points by addressing driveway consolidation where possible
- Right Turn on Red (RTOR) restriction was suggested as a safety improvement for pedestrians.

Connectivity and Efficiency

CITY OF LARGO

- The Special Area Plan will serve to add connections to uses and bicycle/pedestrian trails in the area
 - 142nd Ave trail connector - study to look at crossing opportunities or enhancements to support the trail
- There is desire for a roadway connection to be explored at 150th street
 - Overpass at 150th was identified as an opportunity

CITY OF CLEARWATER

- Queuing is observed at SR 580 eastbound from Dunedin. Queues form in the right lane with vehicles headed towards US 19 south.
- There are also concerns with vehicles coming out of driveway and Enterprise Road onto SR 580 turning left or turning right to go to US 19.
- Enterprise Dr needs improved signage
- There's also concerns of vehicles weaving between Countryside and SR 580
- A pedestrian connection over US 19 at Harn Blvd was mentioned by several stakeholders
- Belleair intersection is misaligned causing reduced signal performance (Split Phasing)
- Gulf to Bay Blvd and Drew St – look at traffic capacity

CITY OF PINELLAS PARK

- The Gateway Master Plan & the 126th Street Connector will serve to add connections to uses and bicycle/pedestrian trails in the area
 - 126th – Biggest opportunity in this section as the new intersection will become an alternative to Ulmerton Rd.

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- Congestion is said to be due to the lack of connecting streets (dead ends) along the frontage roads
- There may be an issue with signal timing at major intersections
 - PSTA identified signal at the Largo Transit Center as priority, since the buses go through the light twice.
 - PSTA would be interested in TSP after testing on the Central Avenue BRT corridor.
- There are some areas where the roads seem functional and well connected, which may be a factor of the uses around it

- Elevating US 19 was identified as a possible solution to provide cross pedestrian access.
- Two Fire stations along corridor – Station 49 (Gulf to Bay) and E Bay Fire Station.
 - There are a lot of U Turns on the frontage road from Station 49.
- Wayfinding was suggested by several stakeholders to improve connectivity and travel on the frontage roads.
- There's a belief that there's excess capacity on the frontage roads. Consider right-of-way repurposing or lane width reduction
- Frontage Roads becoming more congested as development comes in. Intersections at Gulf to Bay, Drew St, and Roosevelt were cited most often.
- Congestion on the frontage roads is also attributed to vehicles getting off from the mainline and using the frontage roads when US19 is too congested.
- US 19 operates well for through-traffic.
- Interest on this study to explore: two-way frontage roads configuration, traffic calming measures, improved pedestrian crossings/connections, and limiting/reducing driveway cuts.

Multimodal

CITY OF LARGO

- Need to consider how the frontage road interacts with the Duke Energy trail - construction programmed for 2023-24
- At Ulmerton, buses stop away from the intersection. Many pedestrians end up crossing near the bus stop rather than walking to the signal (crosswalk).
- Desire for better transit service to support businesses.
- A quarter mile up the frontage road from the current bus transfer location (Walmart), the City is looking at another location for an enhanced transit shelter. The special area plan will try to establish this location. This Project can help support this effort in terms of safety and multimodal infrastructure, by focusing on crossing opportunities so that both sides (east and west) are connected.
- North of Ulmerton Rd is where multimodal improvements would have the most impact.
- Highpoint area (south of Roosevelt Blvd.) – people biking to work; facilities are substandard given the amount of activity.

CITY OF CLEARWATER

- Drew Street multimodal access to Brighthouse field should be improved. During the season, there is a large number of east-west pedestrian movements.
- Transit options to support SPC students are limited.

CITY OF PINELLAS PARK

- Pedestrian activity is expected to increase around 126th Avenue after the connection is completed to 49th St.
- Pinellas Trail Loop on 126th - biggest opportunity from a bike/ped infrastructure
- There are opportunities for landscaping in Pinellas Park

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- There are multiple bicyclist and pedestrian generators in the area, such as transit stops, the Pinellas Trail, and the Duke Energy Trail. There is also high pedestrian activity near SR 590, Drew St, and Sunset Point Rd.
- Better lighting
- The right-of-way (ROW) along the frontage roads is large, and one lane may be suitable enough to accommodate traffic

- Most stakeholders would like to see added facilities for pedestrians (sidewalks), bicyclists, and transit users.
- Many stakeholders believe that improved transit service is the only thing that's going to change mobility in the County
- Visibility of cyclists was identified as a challenge. Adding delineators for bike lanes may be a good idea to explore.
- Major intersections would benefit the most from multimodal improvements.
- Green paint for bike lanes and improved lighting were mentioned as a potential treatment.
- The Pinellas County School Board official mentioned that there are significant issues with buses needing to access residential areas (particularly multifamily) to pick up students
 - There are a large number of stops in this area, and more will be established as additional development is implemented
 - There are multiple buses utilizing each stop which can come frequently. There are two types of bus routes: zoned (local schools) and arterial (for magnet type schools)
 - Students inside of 2-mile buffer are not bussed, except for elementary students on opposite side of US 19.
 - No student has to cross US 19 to get to Bus Stop
- Students at bus stops present an added safety issue. Parents usually drop off their children, rather than letting them walk or ride a bike
- Bus transfers were identified as an issue
- Public Art and landscaping (beautification efforts) were suggested to improve walking environment. The Chamber could engage the business community to sponsor landscaping in front of their properties