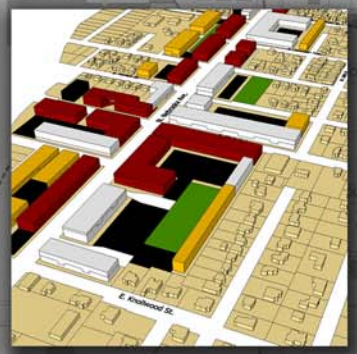
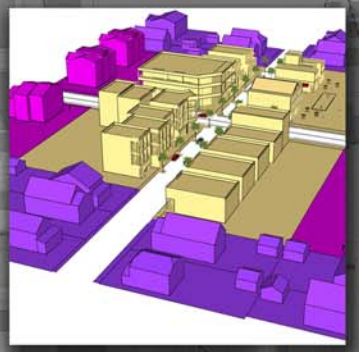
The Greater Seminole Heights Vision Plan

"Vision without action is a dream. Action without vision is simply passing the time.
Action with Vision is making a positive difference."
~Joel Barker, Corporate Trainer





Land Development Coordination - Growth Managment & Development Services - City of Tampa

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Mayor Pam Iorio

Mary Mulhern, City Council At-Large Member

Cynthia Miller, Director of Growth Management & Development Services

Gloria Moreda, Development Coordination Manager

Community Groups
Gary Ellsworth, President of South Seminole Heights
Sherry Simons, President of Southeast Seminole Heights
Susan Long, President of Old Seminole Heights
Sherry King, Business Guild of Seminole Heights

Core Project Team
Catherine Coyle, Program Lead & Project Manager
LaChone Dock, Charrette & Schedule Coordinator
Loralee Morrow, Urban Design/Lead Graphics
Abbye Feeley, Urban Planning & Policy Specialist
James Cook, GIS & Mapping Specialist
Larry Cesarsky, Graphics, GIS, & Animation

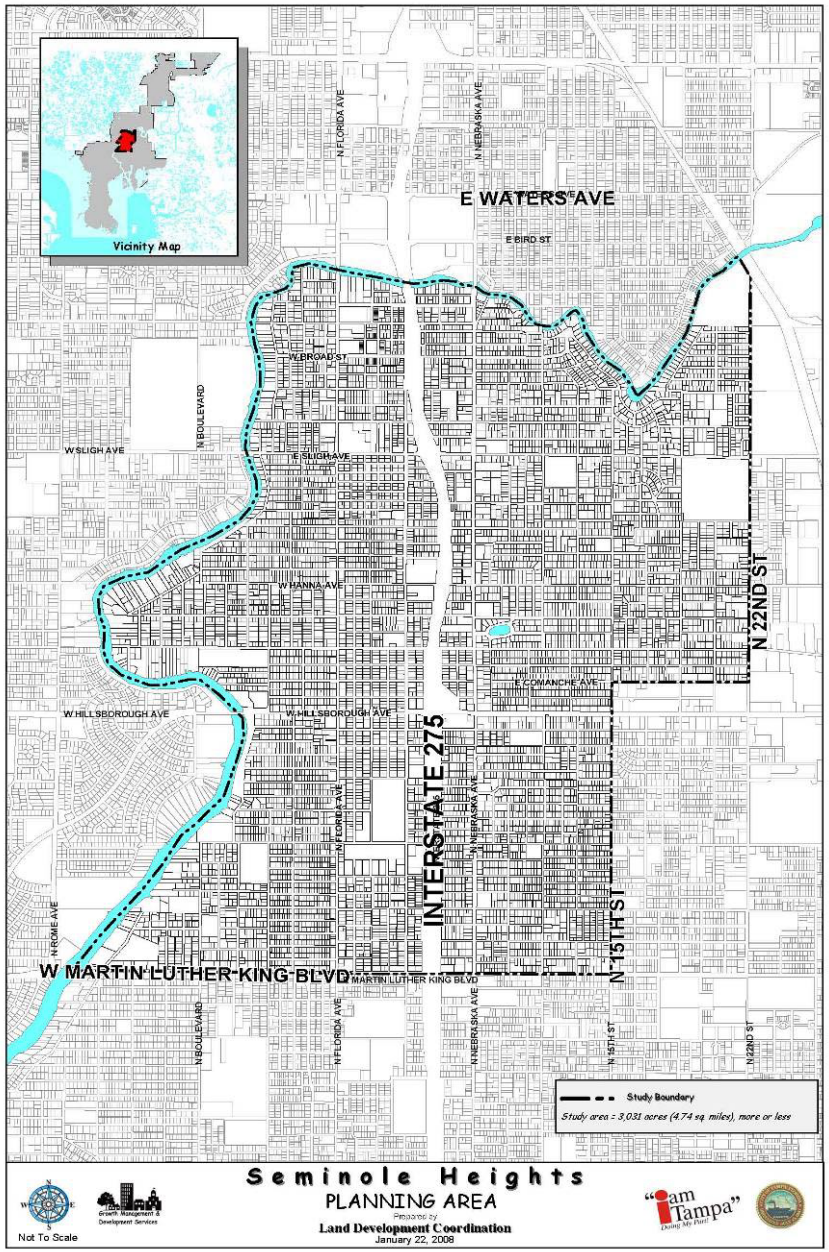
City of Tampa Support Staff
Eric Cotton, Development Services Coordinator
Towanda Anthony, Urban Planner
Roberta Curry, Urban Planner
Wilson Stair, Urban Design Manager
Dennis Hernandez, Historic Preservation Manager
Melanie Calloway, Engineer/Transportation
Vincent Rado, Plans Review/Solid Waste
Wanda Shay, Analyst/Solid Waste
Jim Corbett, Parking Division Manager
Timothy Ware, Engineer/Wastewater
Steve Seachrist, Engineer/Stormwater
Kathy Beck, Urban Forestry/Parks & Recreation
Ramiro Vega, Engineer/Water

External Agencies
Tony Garcia, Hills. Co. City-Co. Planning Commission
Andrikk Frasier, TECO
Brian Pessaso, FDOT
Linda Stachewicz, FDOT
Mary Shavalier, HART
Lorraine Duffy-Suarez, Hills. Co. School District

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Seminole Heights (GSH) planning area is comprised of three (3) neighborhood associations and one (1) business guild, all of which are well organized and engaged with City government. The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission completed a strategic business plan in 2005 in coordination with area businesses. This visioning process expands on the ideas of the 2005 study and encompasses the collective voices of these groups, further developed in concert with input and guidance from the public sector.

The planning area is a blend of several key components that make up the larger city form of Tampa. The area offers cultural and historical references, a diverse population, a defined and well-traveled street grid, multiple bus transit lines (including the planned Bus Rapid Transit), stable residential areas, eclectic architecture, an integrated parks system, significant natural resources, and linear commercial corridors. Its proximity to the City center coupled with the limited diversity in current commercial businesses along the corridors creates excellent redevelopment opportunity for neighborhood serving uses and the evolution of improved activity nodes.



TAMPA'S COMPREHENSIVE VALUES: CREATING A 'LIVABLE CITY'[1]

Tampa's comprehensive vision for the city at-large is founded on four (4) core values that will advance the long-term sustainability of the city and its citizenry.

The four values are derived from the set of collective community values. When balanced, they can lead toward a shared community commitment to being a Livable City. The values are:

- *Livability*: Tampa is a place where diverse people find it easy, safe, and enjoyable to live

- *Prosperity*: Tampa is focused on the quality of life for all its people and must be economically healthy, with a broad mix of good jobs

- *Respect*: The living systems that support us are revered and conferred to future generations in better condition than today

- *Resilience*: The ability of the systems that support our day to day living to recover from misfortune, handle uncertainty, and adjust easily to change

NATURAL RESOURCES[2]

The City receives almost 50 inches of rainfall in a typical year with frequent seasonal rainstorms during the months of May through November, which is more than enough to meet the needs of most landscapes. However, the timing of this rainfall can cause problems.

Unfortunately, most of the runoff from this period flows from rooftops onto driveways and lawns picking up fertilizer and other pollutants, which finds its way into ponds, rivers, and Tampa Bay. Through the use of various collection methods such as rain barrels, cisterns, rain gardens, and roadside swales to capture and store stormwater runoff, coupled with the planting of vegetation adapted to the seasonal rains, it is possible to severely reduce the amount of water that is used for irrigation. The benefits of these example methods are as follows:

- Rain barrels and cisterns limit stormwater runoff and reduce the amount of potable water used for irrigation and outdoor needs;

- Florida-friendly landscaping and the installation of rain gardens create a beautiful landscape, require less watering, and can generally tolerate both extreme drought and wet conditions.

- Roadside swales may not be as visually attractive as a rain garden; however, when maintained properly a swale can capture stormwater runoff and minimize the transport of pollutants onto adjacent property or water systems.

TAMPA'S URBAN DESIGN VISION[1]

Urban design encompasses multiple elements that can enhance the physical characteristics of both residential and commercial areas. Quality urban design promotes Livability by reinforcing a sense of city identity. Tampa has a defined vision for urban design, which translates well in this unique planning area. The building blocks for sound urban design include:

1. Economic Opportunity
2. A Sense of Place and Community
3. Attractive
4. A Choice of Lifestyles
5. Mobility Options
6. Feels Safe
7. A Mix of Uses
8. Retain Healthy Open Space

TAMPA'S URBAN VILLAGE CONCEPT[1]

A distinguishing characteristic of Tampa is the presence of a successful and diverse mix of neighborhoods in close proximity to each other. This variety of urban environments provides people with a choice of lifestyles, and retaining and enhancing these distinctive community characteristics will ensure that they remain vital and successful communities. Tampa has approximately ten (10) distinct Urban Villages, and Seminole Heights is within a 4-mile radius of nine (9) of them.

Urban villages are diverse and provide goods, services, housing, and employment to Tampa's residents and are the key to Tampa's livability. Urban villages contribute to a Livable City by supporting:

1. Diverse housing and employment growth;
2. Pedestrian and transit-oriented communities;
3. Provision of services and infrastructure targeted to support sustainable redevelopment; and
4. Enhancements to the City's cultural diversity.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY

HISTORY OF GREATER SEMINOLE HEIGHTS[3]

This historic area was born in 1911. T. Roy Young had 40 acres and a dream to develop Tampa's first suburb three miles north of downtown. He called it Seminole Heights. Ten years earlier, Tampa's total population had reached 26,000. A trolley line (streetcar) connected Sulphur Springs (north of Seminole Heights) to downtown, making travel to the suburbs inviting. The streetcar made it possible to live in one area of town and work in another. Young recognized this potential. His Seminole Development Corporation property encompassed a rectangle bordered by Hillsborough Avenue, Central Avenue, Wilder Avenue and Florida Avenue. The houses built here were mostly small single-family dwellings, oriented east-to-west and started at $5,000. Other developments quickly followed.

By 1912, the Mutual Development Company owned by Milton and Giddings Mabry and the Dekle Investment Company owned by Lee and James Dekle surveyed and platted land adjacent to Seminole Heights forming the Suwanee Heights subdivision. Bounded by Henry Avenue, Hillsborough Avenue, Central Avenue and Florida Avenue, Suwanee Heights was also a restricted subdivision. Like the original Seminole Heights, houses required the same east-to-west orientation but started at $1,400.

During the "Florida Boom" years (roughly 1919-1929) more development came to areas north and east of the original subdivisions. Of course, with this development came the merchants seeing an opportunity to provide welcome goods and services to the residents. Some of those early businesses have faded away. However, many current Seminole Heights businesses have been open for more than 50 years.

Seminole Heights is now considered one of Tampa's oldest and most stable residential areas. It is home to two (2) nationally designated historical districts and one (1) locally designated historic district: Seminole Heights and Hampton Terrace. The area has again attracted young professionals, families, and artists, who are very active in the community. "Porch parties" have become quite popular among residents, as well as two (2) annual home tours.

NEIGHBORHOODS

There are three (3) distinct Neighborhoods with Common Threads in their histories and development patterns. They are as follows:

- Old Seminole Heights *(pop. 15,062)*
- South Seminole Heights *(pop. 3,160)*
- Southeast Seminole Heights *(pop. 3,384)*

In comparatively recent history, these three (3) separate and distinct areas have united to form a collective voice to bring change and improvement to the area.

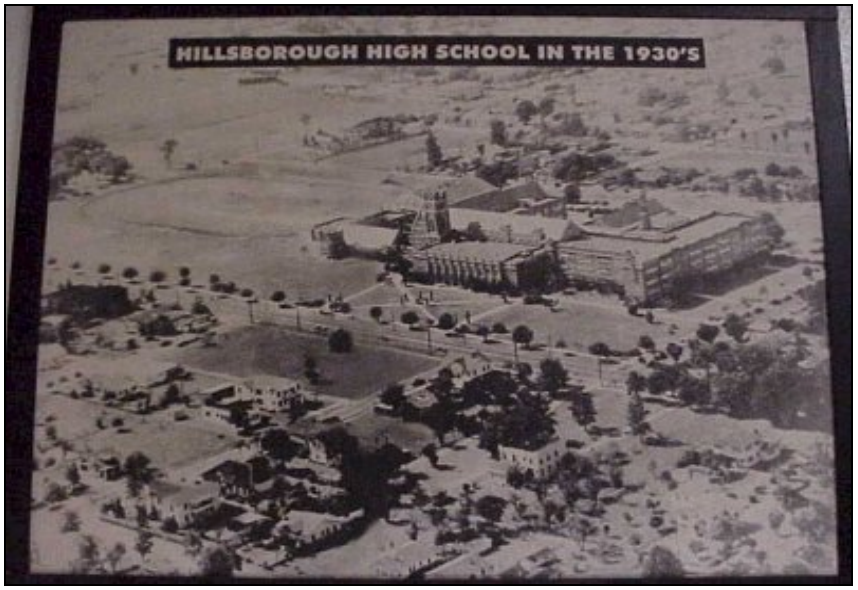
SCHOOLS / PUBLIC SPACES[3]

According to Hillsborough County School Board – there are 4 elementary, 2 middle, and 1 high school. The most notable historic school building, among the most notable building in all of Tampa, is Hillsborough High School.

Hillsborough High School is in the heart of the planning area and is the oldest high school in Tampa. It is home to the State of Florida's 1st High School Newspaper. The land for the school was purchased in 1925 and the cornerstone was laid January 28, 1927. This massive red brick building was designed in the Gothic Revival style by local architect Francis Kennard.

The stained-glass windows in the auditorium were added in the 1950's, and in 1976 the building was remodeled to allow for central air conditioning. The walls, buttresses, spires, and tracery of the arched stained-glass windows are decorated in cast stone.

In September 1928 the first classes were enrolled. It was dedicated in December of that year, and was one of the four largest high schools in the South.



CHRONOLOGY OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Structures in the area were built between 1883 and the present. The majority of buildings (67%) were constructed between 1900 and 1950. Thirteen percent (13%) of this majority were built in 1925 alone.

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Although over twenty (20) distinct architectural styles can be found throughout the planning area, the following are most prominent:

- *Craftsman:* Low-pitched, gabled roof with wide, unenclosed eave overhang; roof rafters usually exposed; decorative beams or braces commonly added under gables; porches, either full- or partial-width, with roof supported by columns; columns or pedestals frequently extend to ground level.

- *Minimal Traditional:* Simplified form omitting most traditional detailing.

- *National Folk:* A basic dwelling type that originated from the need for shelter with little regard for changing fashion (However, this 'style' of architecture has become extremely popular across the county and owes its design details more to its location than to any particular architectural fashion).

- *Spanish Eclectic:* Low-pitched to flat roof, usually with little or no eave overhang; red tile roof covering; typically with one or more prominent arches placed above door or principal window, or beneath porch roof; wall surface usually stucco; facade normally asymmetrical.

- *Ranch:* One-story houses with very low-pitched roofs and broad, rambling facades. Most have decorative shutters, porch-roof supports, loosely based on colonial precedents.

- *Contemporary Modern:* Occurs in two distinctive subtypes based on roof shapes: flat or gabled. The flat-roofed subtype is a derivation of the earlier International Style and house of this subtype are sometimes referred to as American International. The gabled subtype is more strongly influenced by the earlier modernism of the Craftsman and Prairie styles. It features overhanging eaves, frequently with exposed roof beams.

- *Neo-Colonial:* Free adaptations of English Colonial, French Colonial, Tudor, Mediterranean.

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INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

Communities are more than a collection of buildings and uses of property. The core of any community is people. The following data cover many key components of the community such as income, education, and land values:

LAND

- Hillsborough County Land Area: 1072 sq miles
- City Land Area: 178 sq miles
- Planning Area
    - 4.74 sq miles
    - 0.44% of County Land Area
    - 2.66% of City Land Area

PEOPLE

- Population: 22,026 (2007 Planning Commission estimate)
- Households: 9,884 (2007 Planning Commission estimate – household count)

MOBILITY

- Six (6) major bus transit routes
- # major stops with benches/shelters
- Primary intersection of new 'Bus Rapid Transit' lines intersects in center of planning area (Nebraska avenue & Hillsborough avenue)

INCOME

- 1999 Median Household Income Estimate by Census Block: $32,750 +\-
- 2006 Median Household Income Estimate by Census Block: $41,250+/-

SCHOOLS

- Four (4) Public Elementary Schools: 1774 Total Student Population
- Two (2) Middle Schools: 1681 Total Student Population
- One (1) High School: 1936 Total Student Population

US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

- Averages by Consumer Unit (dwelling) based on 2006 median income:
  - # of persons: 2.5
  - # of vehicles: 1.9
- 68% home ownership (42% with mortgages)
- 58% college educated
- Average annual expenditures by Consumer Unit (dwelling) based on 2006 median income:
  - Food: 13.5% ($5,330)
  - Alcohol: 1.1% ($427)
  - Apparel/footwear: 4.0% ($1,573)
  - Entertainment: 4.7% ($1,864)
  - Personal care products & services: 1.2% ($481)
  - Tobacco products & supplies: 0.9% ($364)
  - Miscellaneous: 1.5% ($584)

TABLES / GRAPHS

- Existing Conditions: Land areas by future land use

FLU	SF
R-10	74,343,125.57
R-20	3,811,812.52
R-35	900,455.11
SMU-6	23,125.77
CMU-35	3,096,636.89
CC-35	7,045,935.22
P/SP	4,242,304.81
R/OS	1,923,298.84
TOTAL:	**95,386,694.73**

- Assets / Attractors located within:
  - 2 miles: Lowry Park Zoo
  - 3 miles: Ybor City
  - 4 miles: Union Station
Busch Gardens
Raymond James Stadium
Legends Field
Central Business District
Channel District
University of Tampa
Univ. of South Florida
  - 5 miles: Tampa Internl. Airport
Florida State Fairgrounds

- 2007 Land Values & Sales Comparison

			Seminole Heights	City of Tampa	Hillsborough County
2007	Residential	Mean $/SF	$152.19	$189.89	$153.50
		Sale Count	350	5480	17686
		Avg Assessed Value	$136,604.00	$208,138.00	$190,947
		Total Assessed Value	$1,349,917,176	$26,022,608,002	$84,049,764,343
	Commercial	Mean $/SF	$188.62	$203.64	$217.00
		Sale Count	18	207	494
		Avg Assessed Value	$269,413.00	$1,000,102	$1,136,523
		Total Assessed Value	$150,332,249	$9,078,925,407	$22,089,465,869

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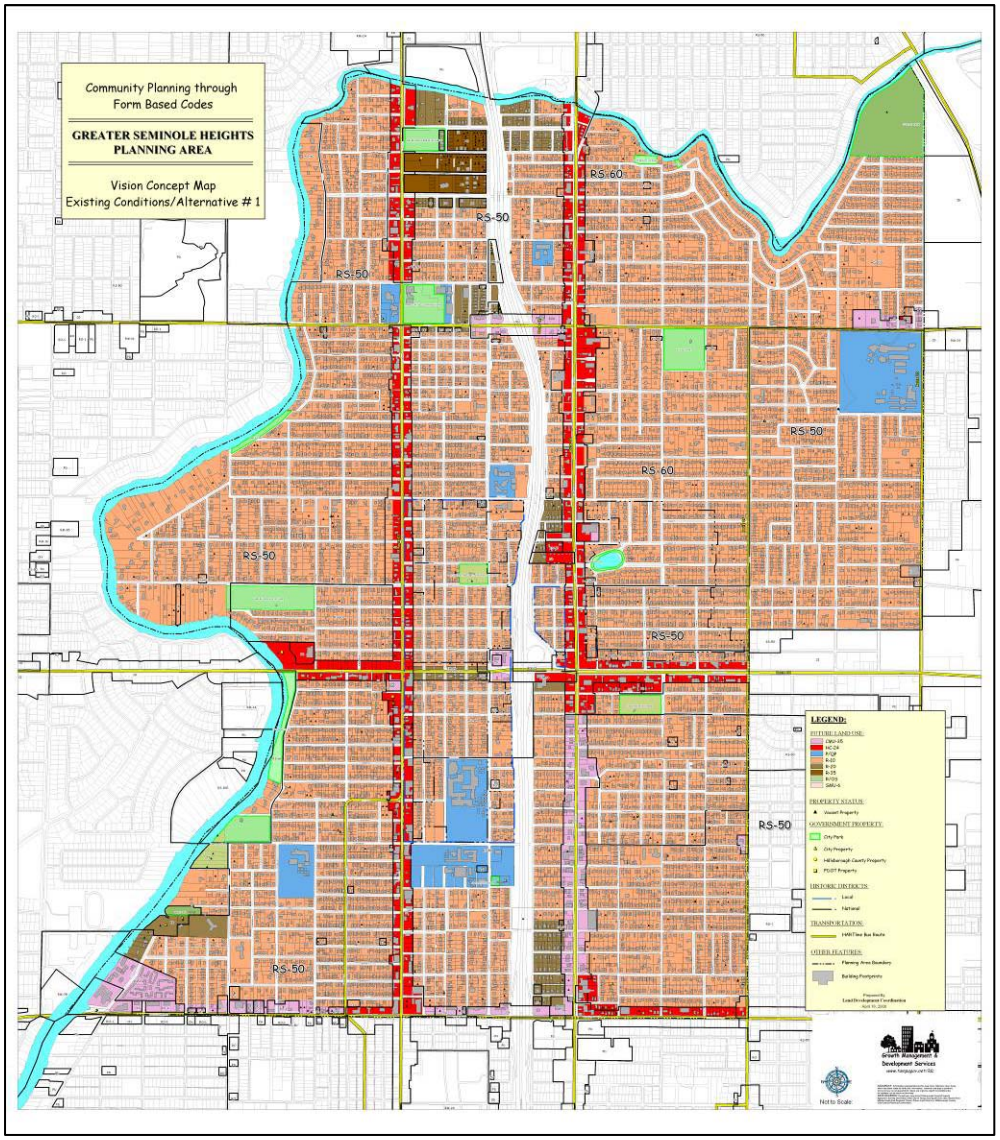
MAP OF AREA – EXISTING CONDITIONS

See Appendix B for large format map of Existing Conditions, including Future Land Use, Zoning / Historic Districts, Building Footprints, Transit Routes, Parks, and Schools.



GREATER SEMINOLE HEIGHTS AS A LIVABLE PLACE

KEY COMPONENTS OF A LIVABLE PLACE

- Feels safe
- Offers economic opportunity
- Is attractive
- Values its natural areas and areas of heritage
- Supports a choice of lifestyles
- Integrates a complete mix of uses
- Provides mobility options
- Fosters a sense of place and community

The vision and principles for this community were drawn from a series of interactive charrettes and working sessions with area residents, property owners, and industry experts.

VISION STATEMENTS

1. Create a neighborhood with an integration of land uses, serving both the immediate residents and surrounding City, which focuses on pedestrian connectivity and instills 'walkability' throughout design

2. Create attractive, multi-use destinations that attract people and keep them there

3. Protect/Capitalize on existing character of single family residential portions of the area (seen as the area needing the least amount of change, one of their greatest assets)

4. Develop mixed use corridors with centralized structured parking to move away from the approach that all zoning lots have to be self-contained and provide all parking on site; adopt creative parking strategies to serve the area

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Urban Form/Mixed Use Development (i.e. Commercial Redevelopment)

    - Focus on the maximization of uses/intensities along the identified commercial/mixed use corridors, including establishment of key intersections as community

and/or neighborhood activity centers

- Foster the development of mixed use projects including the integration of neighborhood serving uses
- Ensure the sensitive transition of uses from the core commercial areas into the surrounding stable neighborhoods
- 'Incentivize' the transition of single use corridors to mixed use/community-neighborhood serving uses

- Community Circulation (i.e. Transportation)
  - Strengthen and maintain existing street grid (strong community asset) including use and improvement of alleys
  - Pedestrian/Bicycle Environment as high priority, overall protection of pedestrian activity throughout community
    - Safe integration of pedestrian traffic (bicycle and on-foot)
    - Inclusion of ADA Accessibility
    - Improvement to street lighting
    - Establishment of bike lanes
  - Integration of on-street parking where feasible
  - Establishment of a multi-modal transportation system, consider establishment of trolley service
  - Improvement of bus service, including route locations, frequency of service, and adequate shelters
  - Implementation of traffic calming mechanisms
  - Restoration of brick streets

- Connectivity/Integration and the Public Realm
  - Establish a pedestrian friendly environment, including enhanced
  - streetscape, connected greenways and a complete sidewalk system throughout the area

- Environment/Natural Resources
  - Protect and enhance the area's tree canopy
  - Improve existing stormwater conditions through the installation of drains, curbing, etc.

- Incorporate sustainable design elements

- Historic Preservation

  - Maintain inventory of historic structures both residential and commercial

  - Develop more structured guidelines for residential and commercial properties with a means of enforcement

GENERAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

1. Use categories in the Vision Plan represent future development patterns. Each of the categories is generally described as follows:

   Detached Residential (all types)
   Single-family detached units, varying lot widths; riverfront estate lots created to preserve character of large lots along Hillsborough River. 'Granny-flats' may be permitted in areas where a predominant development pattern of such form occurs. *Development Height: 1 to 3 stories (35' max) for 40', 50', and 75' lots; 1 to 3 stories (45' max) for Riverfront Estate lots.*

   Attached Residential
   Single-family attached units; can be attached by side and/or rear walls; detached units may be built as well. This category has been introduced to create areas of transition from mixed use intensities to single-family detached areas. *Development Height: 1 to 3 stories (40' max).*

   Stacked Residential
   Dwelling units that are 'stacked' one on top of another and may have side and/or rear wall connections; detached and attached units may be built as well. This category has been introduced in moderate clusters to provide a mix of housing types near or in proximity to higher intensity areas; may have been introduced in lesser intensity areas to recognize existing developments as well. *Development Height: 2 to 4 stories (45' max).*

   Office/live-work
   Must be occupied as a residence and may be used as office space (up to 50% of the total floor area including accessory structures) by the resident(s) only, with no more than 2 employees not in residence; office uses include professional services such as architecture, accountancy, engineering, beauty salon (3 chairs maximum), educational (no more than 10 students per day), law, real estate, and mental health counseling (no more than 5 patients per day). Form of dwelling units may be detached or attached – not stacked. *Development Height: 1 to 3 stories (35' max).*

   Office/Institutional
   Business or medical office uses, private schools, daycares. *Development Height: 1 to 3 stories (40' max).*

*Mixed Use – Neighborhood Scale**
May contain a mixture of non-residential and residential uses. Non-residential uses are limited to neighborhood serving and general commercial uses, such as office, retail, and restaurant.
Development Height: 1 to 3 stories (45' max).

*Mixed Use – Community Scale**
May contain a mixture of non-residential and residential uses. Non-residential uses may be a broader range of commercial uses, such as office, retail, restaurant, and automobile related services.
Development Height: 2 to 4 stories (55' max).

*Village Center (Phase II 'B' Map only)**
Must contain a mixture of non-residential and residential uses. Non-residential uses are limited to neighborhood serving and general commercial uses, such as office, retail and restaurant.
Development Height: 3 to 6 stories (75' max).

*Those lands that are currently designated HC-24 or CC-35, which allows more intensive commercial use, shall retain those rights through and after the transition to either of the proposed Phase Maps.

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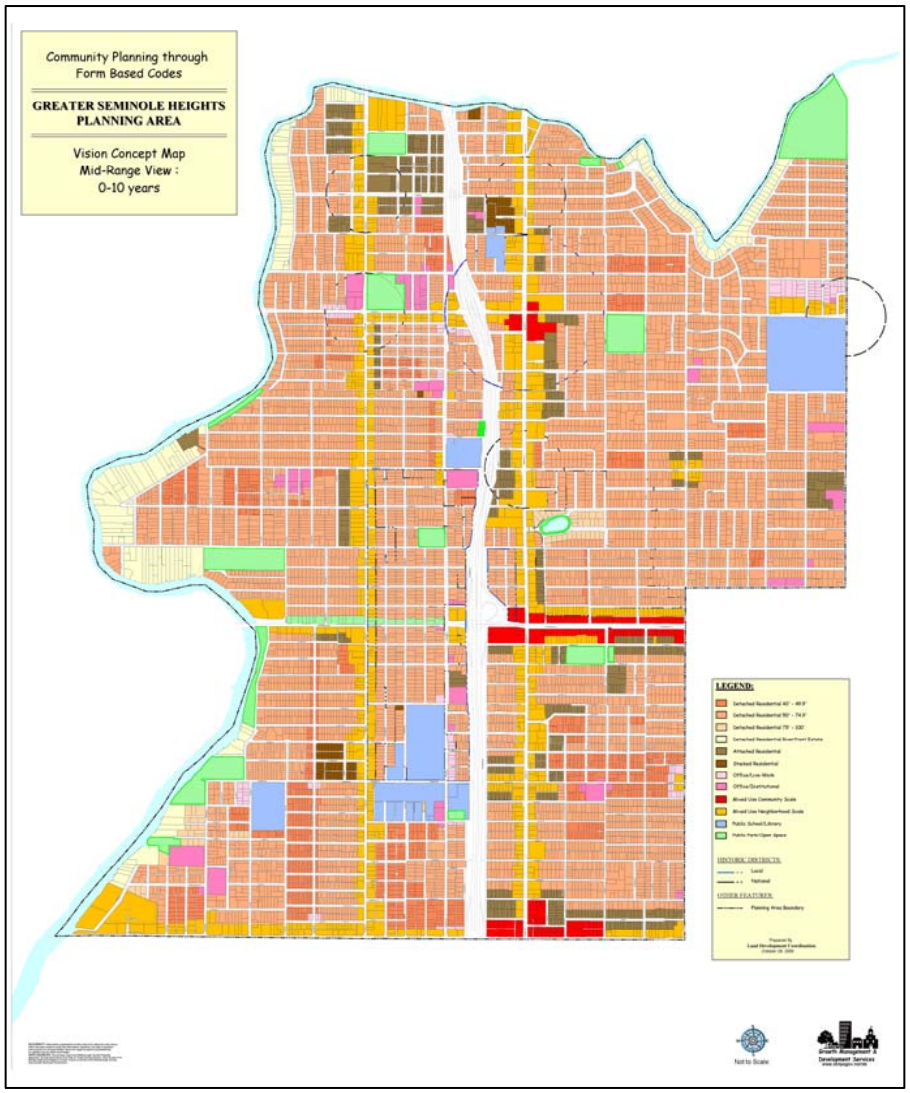
MAPS OF AREA – VISION CONCEPT MAPS

See Appendix C for large format of Vision Concept Maps, including Conceptual Land Use patterns for a mid-range (10 year) and long range (20 year) view and Connectivity (bicycle & pedestrian priorities). The final Conceptual Land Use pattern map was divided into two (2) versions, based on the input from the public.

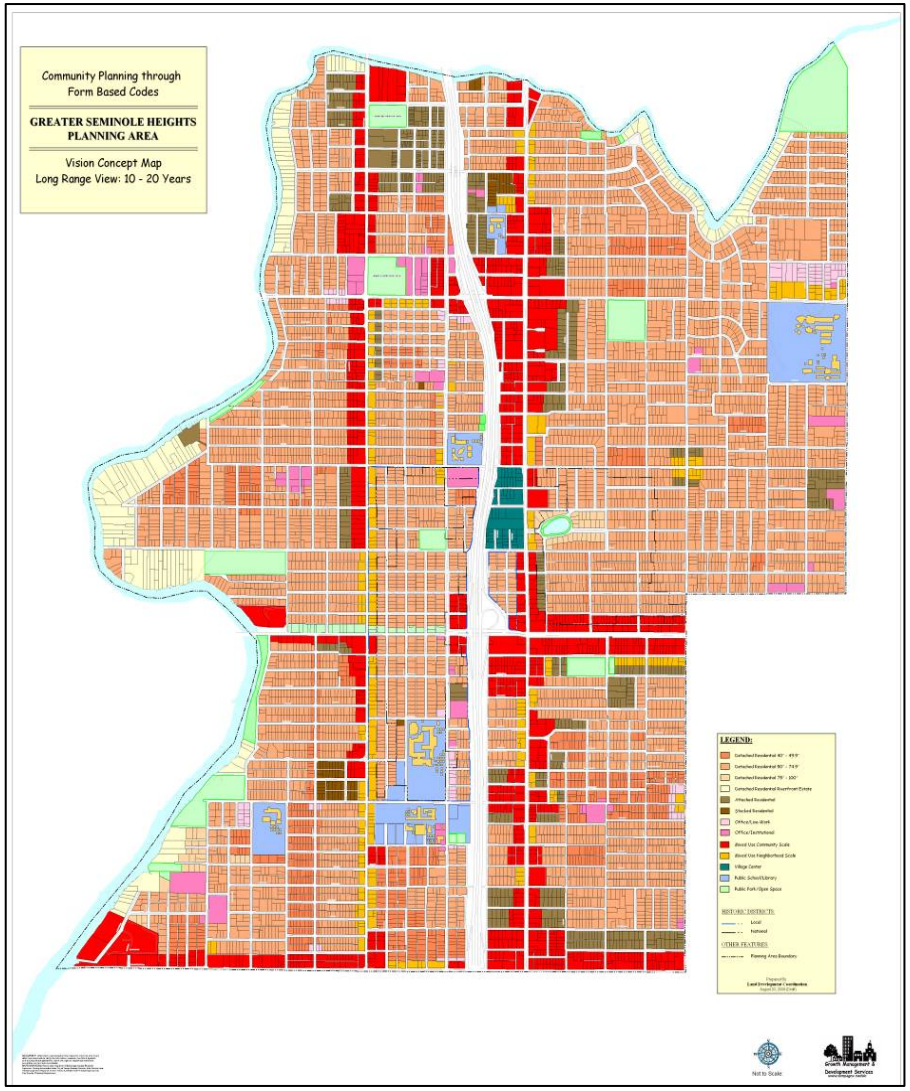
LAND USE PATTERN MAP (mid-range 10 years)

The 10-year map provides for a moderate change in land use patterns, by shifting 4% of the residential land use to a mixed-use land use category, which will provide for additional redevelopment opportunities at the three (3) major nodes along Nebraska Avenue, and several minor nodes along Florida Avenue.



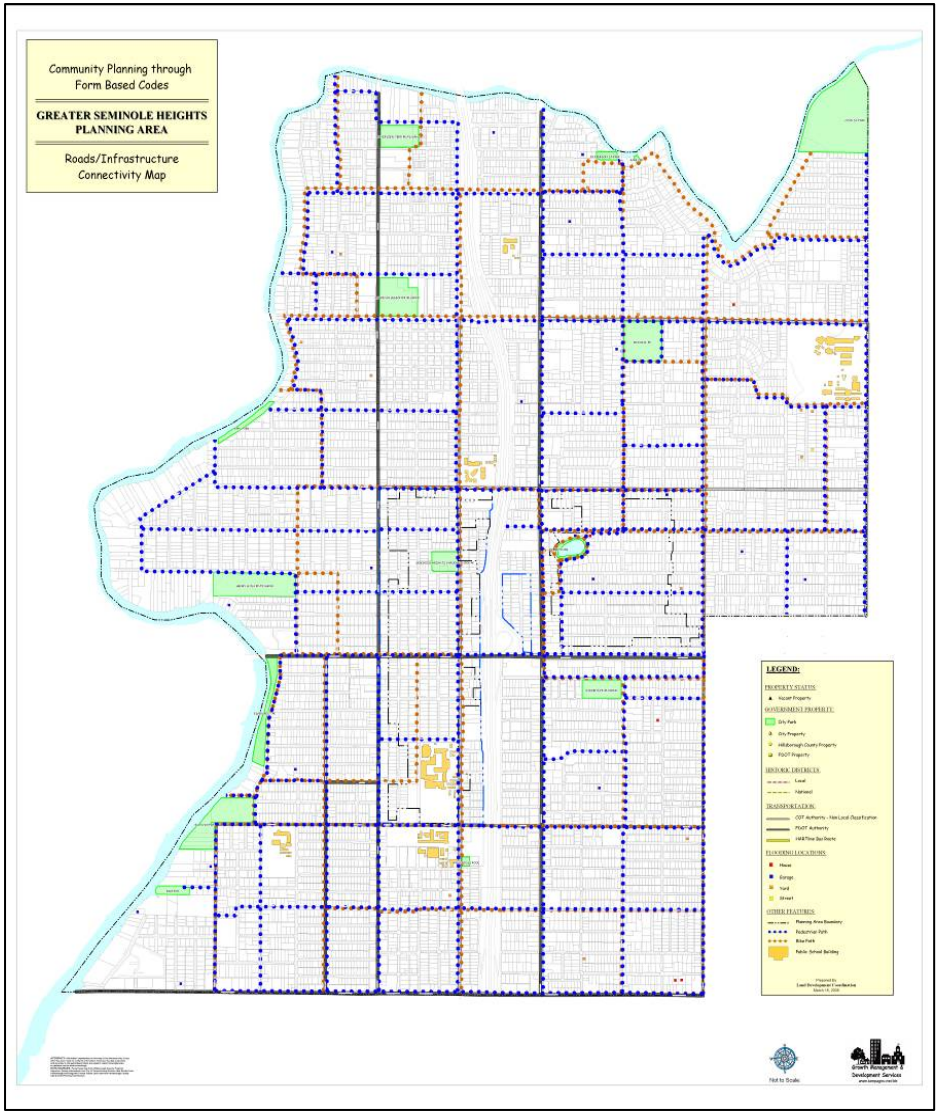
LAND USE PATTERN MAP (long-range 20 years)

The 20-year map provides for a more aggressive, long range change in land use patterns, by shifting 8% of the residential land use to a mixed-use land use category, adding a wider variety of residential densities, and intensifying portions of Florida Avenue and its nodes.



CONNECTIVITY MAP

While all paths are important, this vision concept focuses on providing vital pedestrian and bicycle connections between parks, schools, the waterfront, business areas, and to surrounding communities.

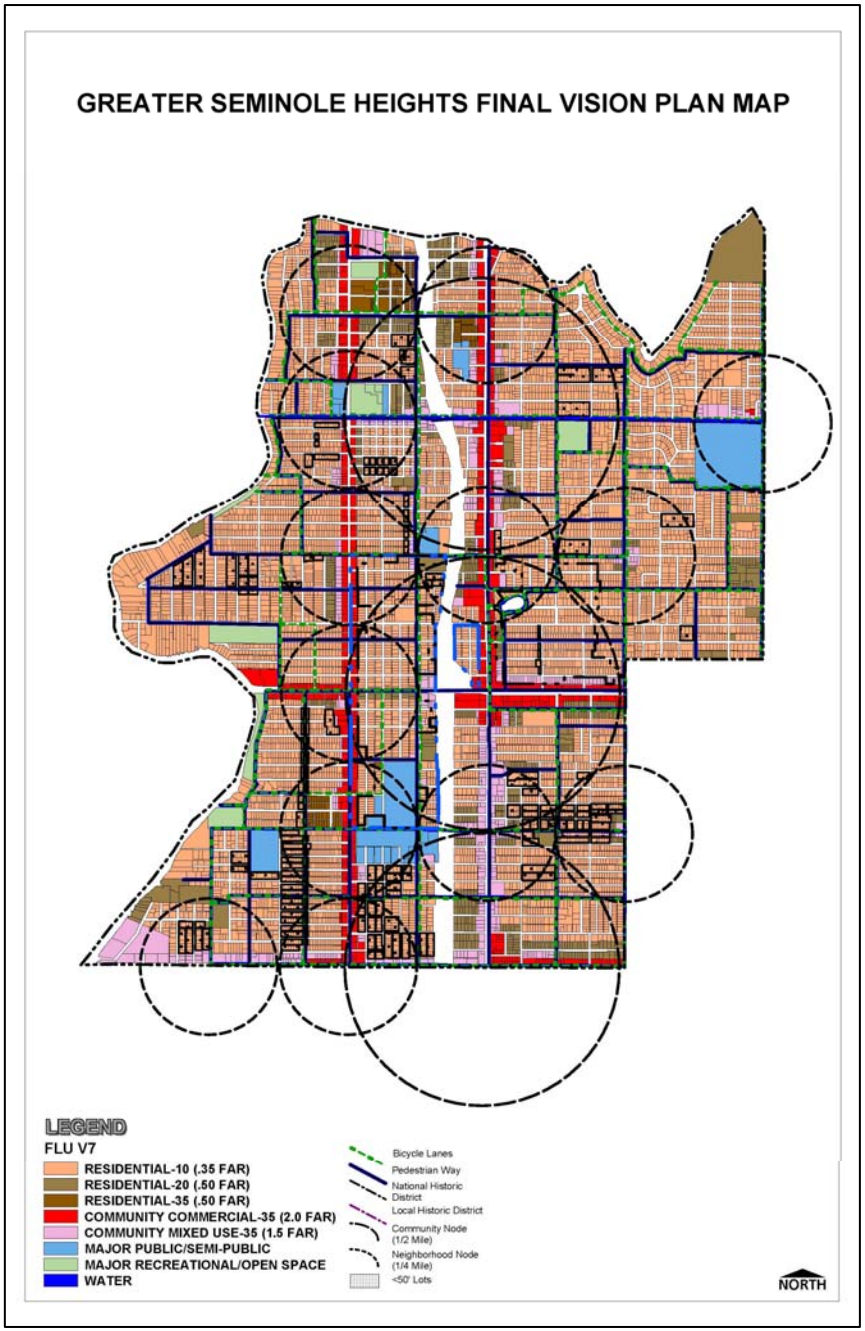


FINAL VISION CONCEPT MAP

Land use patterns and connectivity are blended in the final vision maps. This blended approach creates activity nodes, both neighborhood and community scale. These nodes are linked by roadways with planned pedestrian and bicycle connections. Visually, the connections create a "ladder" that bridge the divide caused by the interstate system and will ultimately reconnect residents and businesses both physically and socially.

Neighborhood Nodes maintain a radius of 1/4 mile for potential increased development intensities and densities. The influence of these nodes could reach up to 1/2 mile by providing a mixture of services and daily goods for residents in the immediate area.

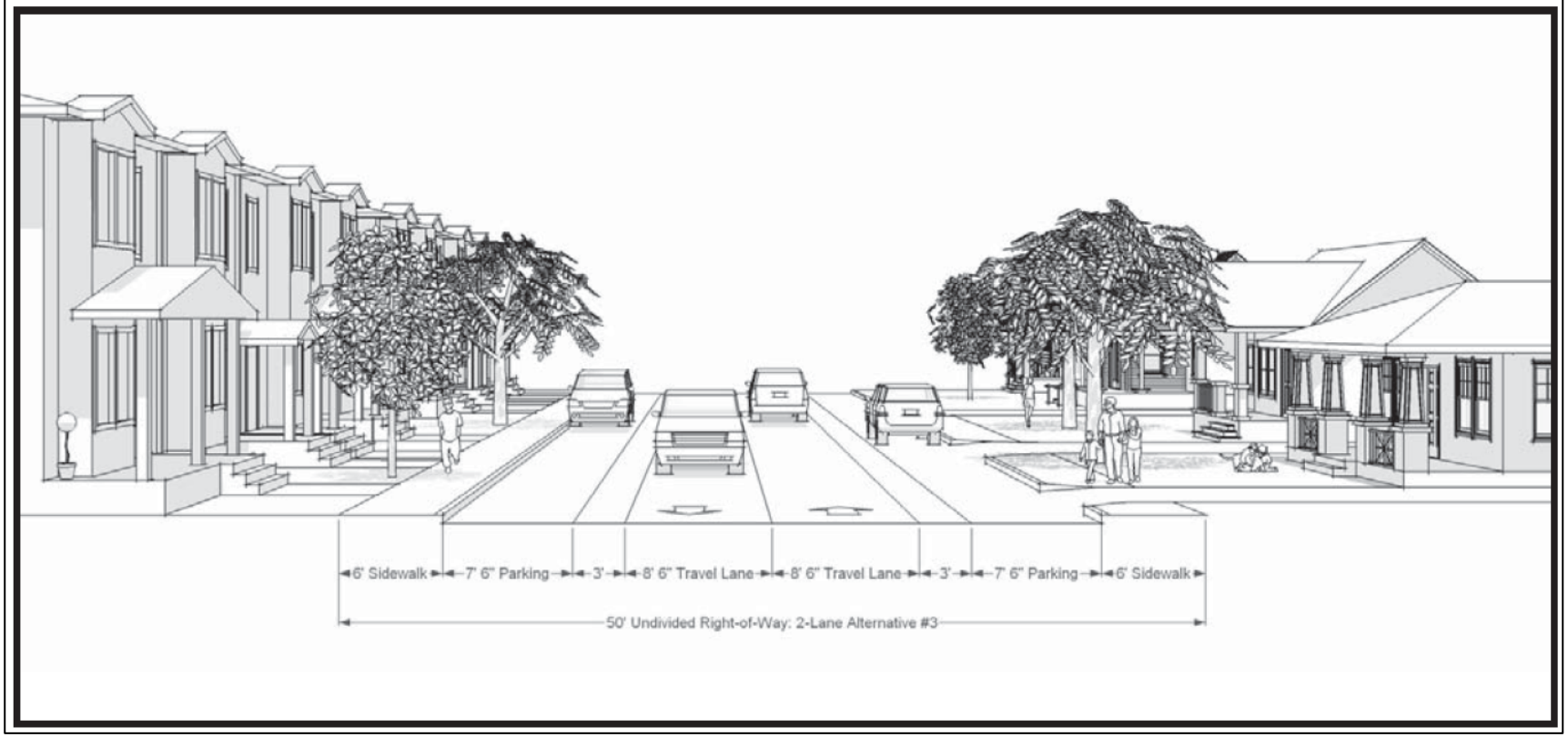
Community Nodes maintain a radius of 1/2 mile for potential increased development intensities and densities. The influence of these nodes could reach up to 2 mile by providing a mixture of services and goods for residents in the immediate area, as well as typical pass-through traffic via bicycle, transit, and passenger vehicle from the larger community.



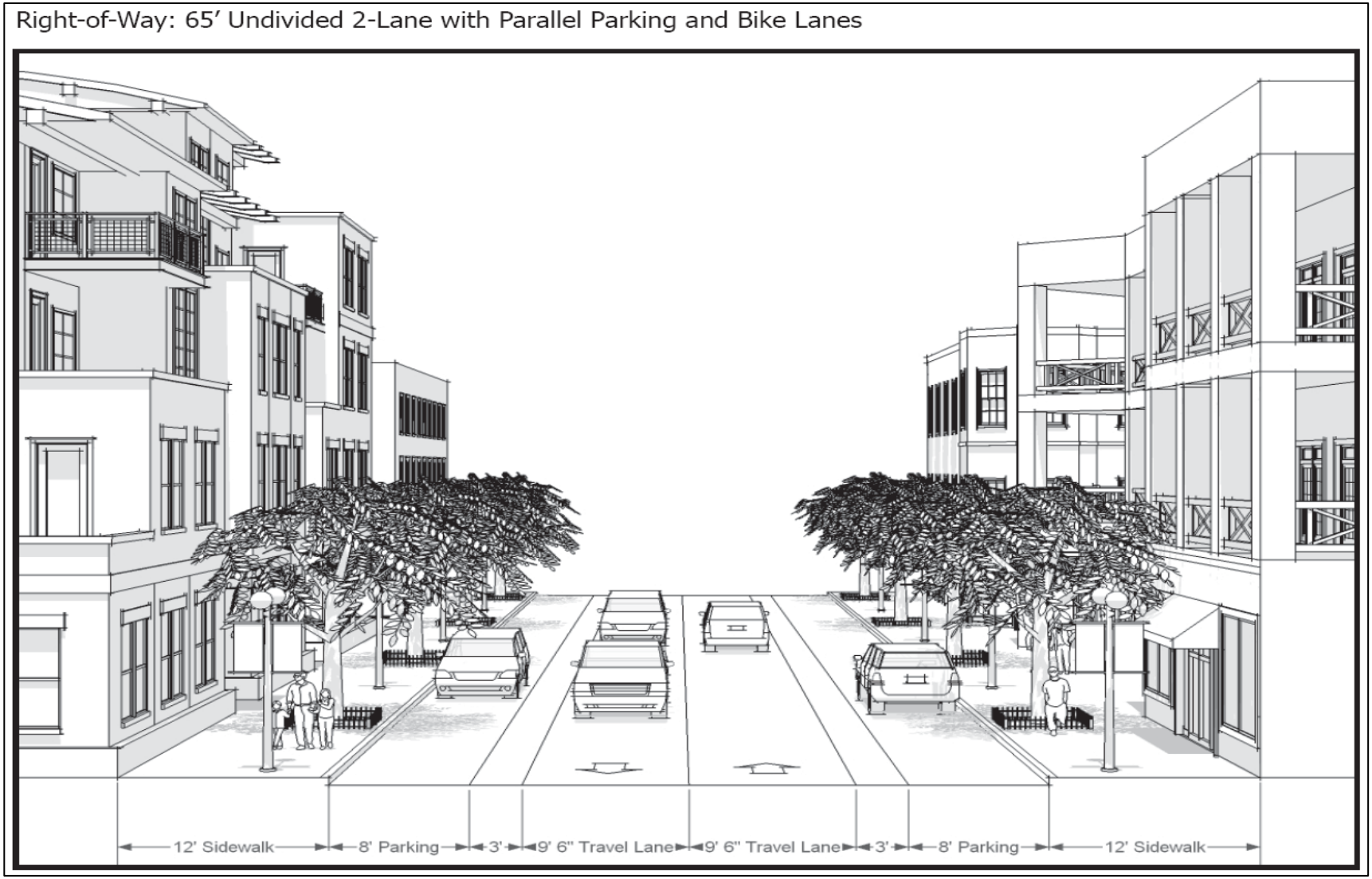
CONCEPTUAL STREET DESIGN GRAPHICS

- Typical Street Sections
    - 50′ Typical Street Cross Section

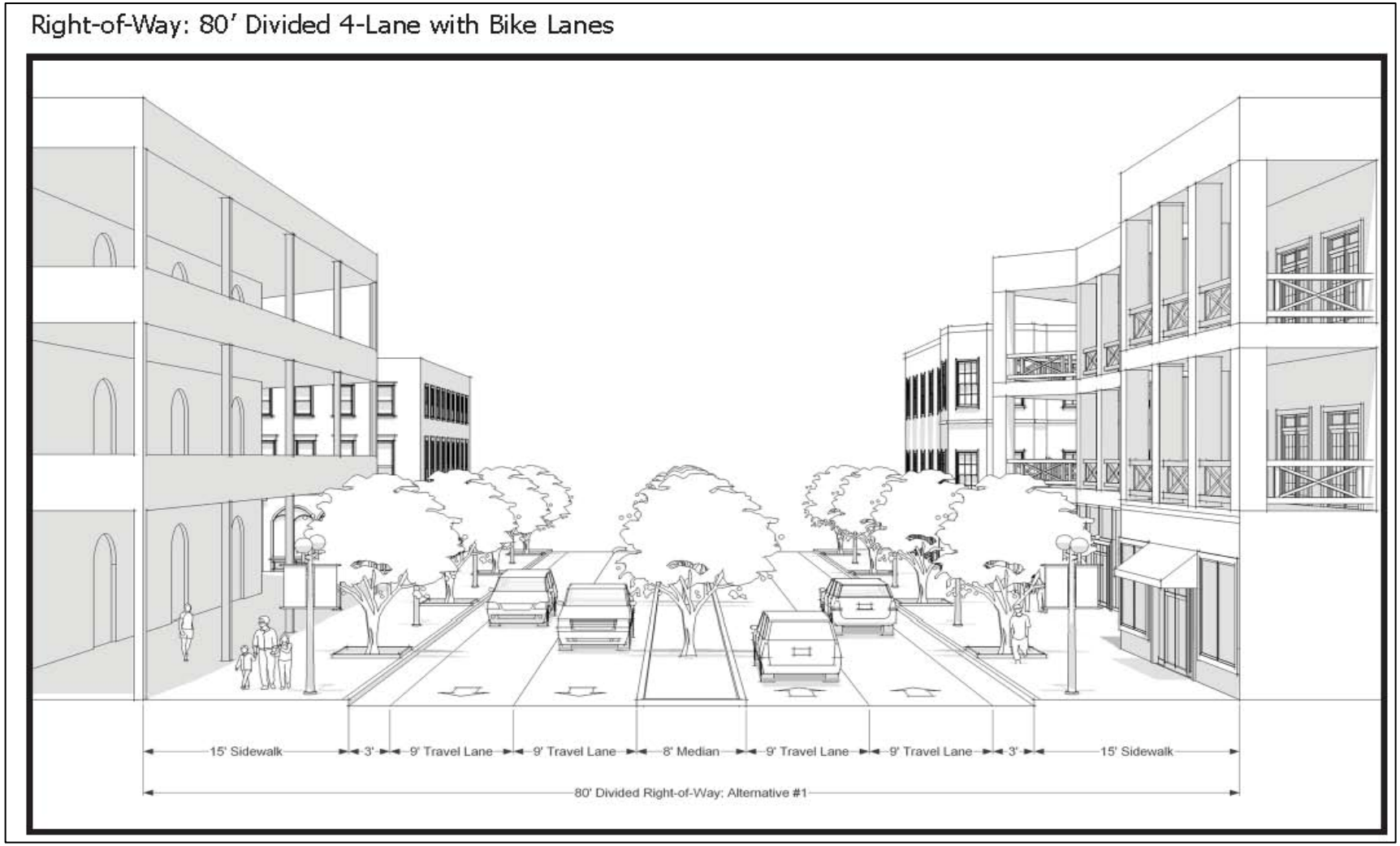
Right-of-Way: 50′ Undivided 2-Lane with Bike Lanes



- 65′ Typical Street Cross Section

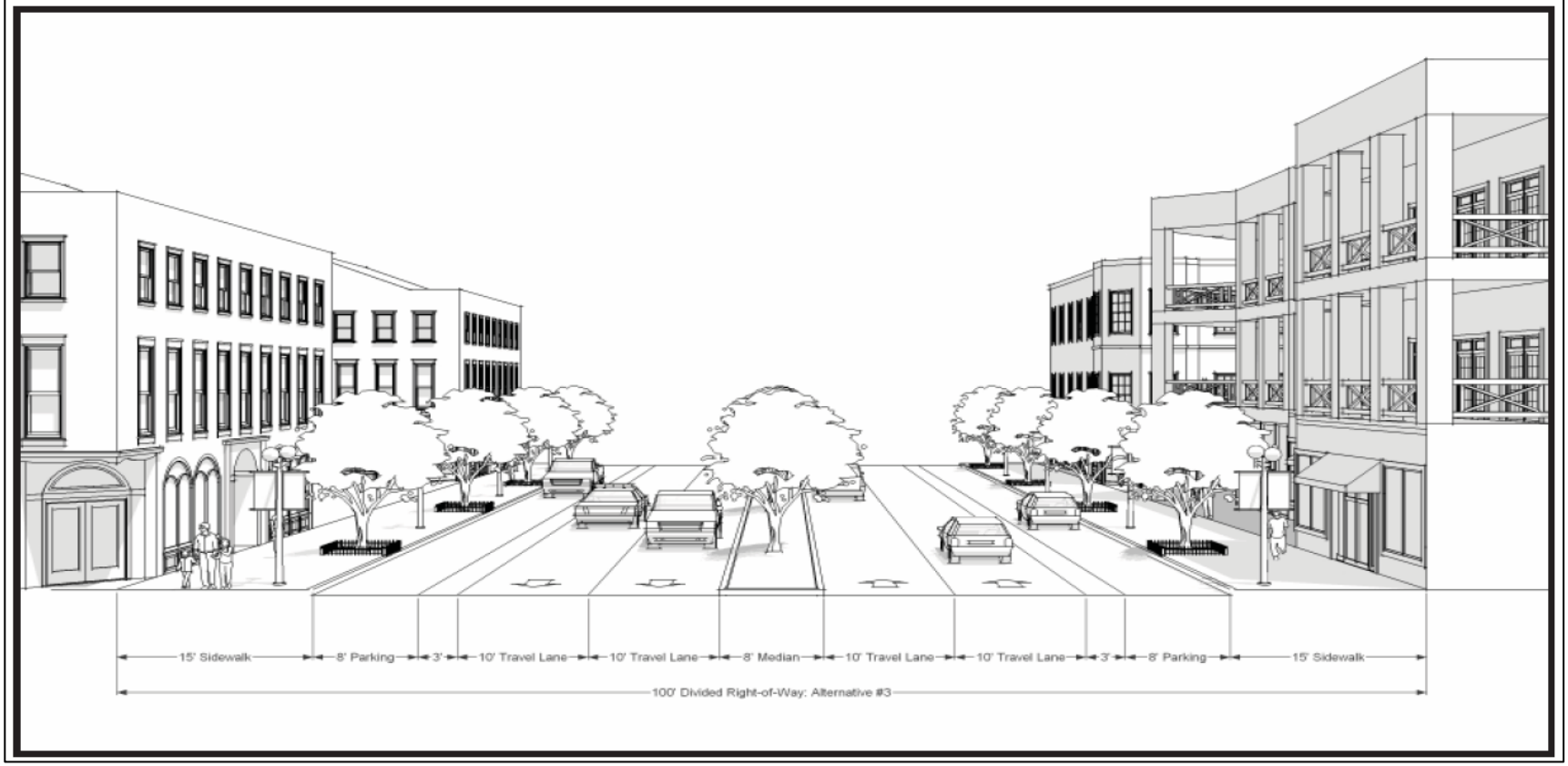


- 80′ Typical Street Cross Section



- 100′ Typical Street Cross Section

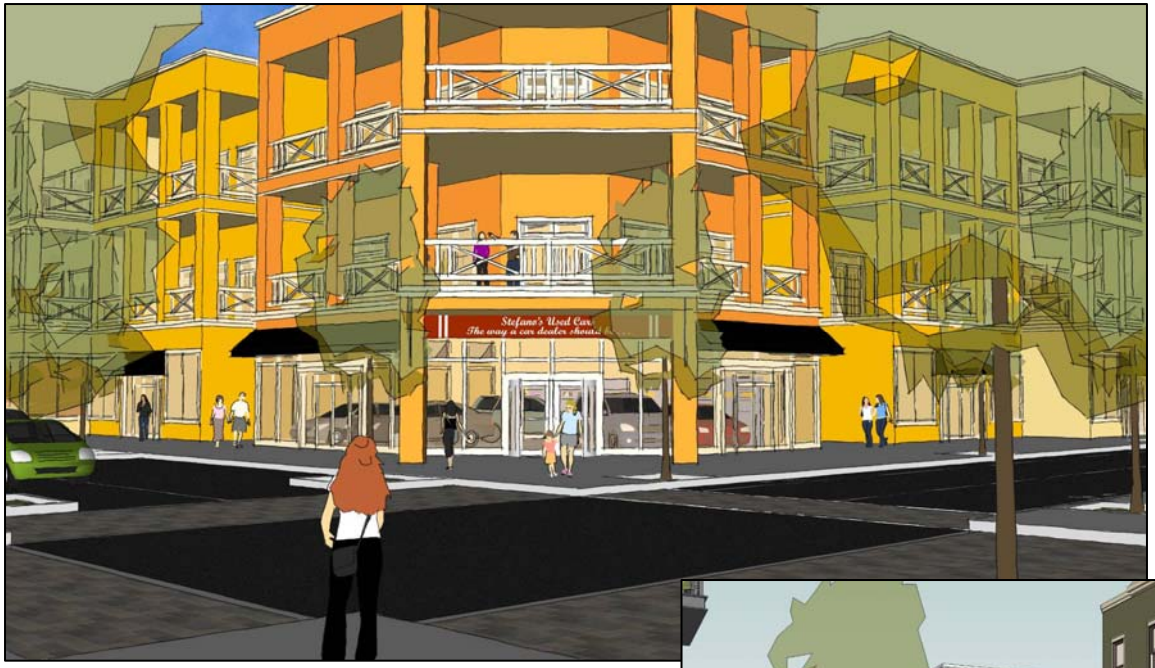
Right-of-Way: 100′ Divided 4-Lane with Parallel Parking and Bike Lanes



- Example Street Redesign (Osborne Avenue between Florida Avenue & Central Avenue):

- Conceptual Design Scenarios (Major Nodes)

- Conceptual Design Scenarios (Major Nodes)



- Example Redevelopment Scenarios (Osborne Avenue & Florida Avenue)

- Conceptual Design Scenarios (Osborne Avenue and Nebraska Avenue)

NEXT STEPS

Short Term Priorities (0-5 years)

1. Process amendments to Future Land Use Map
   - Submit Mid-Range Map (10-years) for August 2009 Cycle with Planning Commission
   - Tentative adoption by July 2010

2. Finalize new land development regulations for Planning Area
   - Complete and submit for January 2010 Cycle with City Council
   - Tentative adoption by July 2010

3. Explore special assessment districts for public realm improvements within City ROW's using design templates from Vision Plan

4. Explore options for capital improvement grants to secure proposed public realm improvements

5. Continue to coordinate with FDOT for public realm improvements within state controlled roads
   - Potential on-street parking on 1-way segment of Florida Avenue during off-peak hours to stimulate commercial redevelopment opportunities
   - Additional bicycle lanes on major corridors
   - Increased sidewalk widths on major corridors
   - Improved streetscaping on major corridors

Long Term Priorities (5+ years)

1. Review progress of Phase I Future Land Use Map

2. Review land development regulations

3. Continue to evaluate funding sources for public realm improvements

4. Continue to coordinate with FDOT for public realm improvements within state controlled roads

APPENDICES

A

A: Planning Area Map

B

B: Existing Conditions Map

- Future Land Use
- Zoning / Historic Districts
- Building Footprints
- Transit Routes, Parks, Schools

C

C: Visions Concepts Map

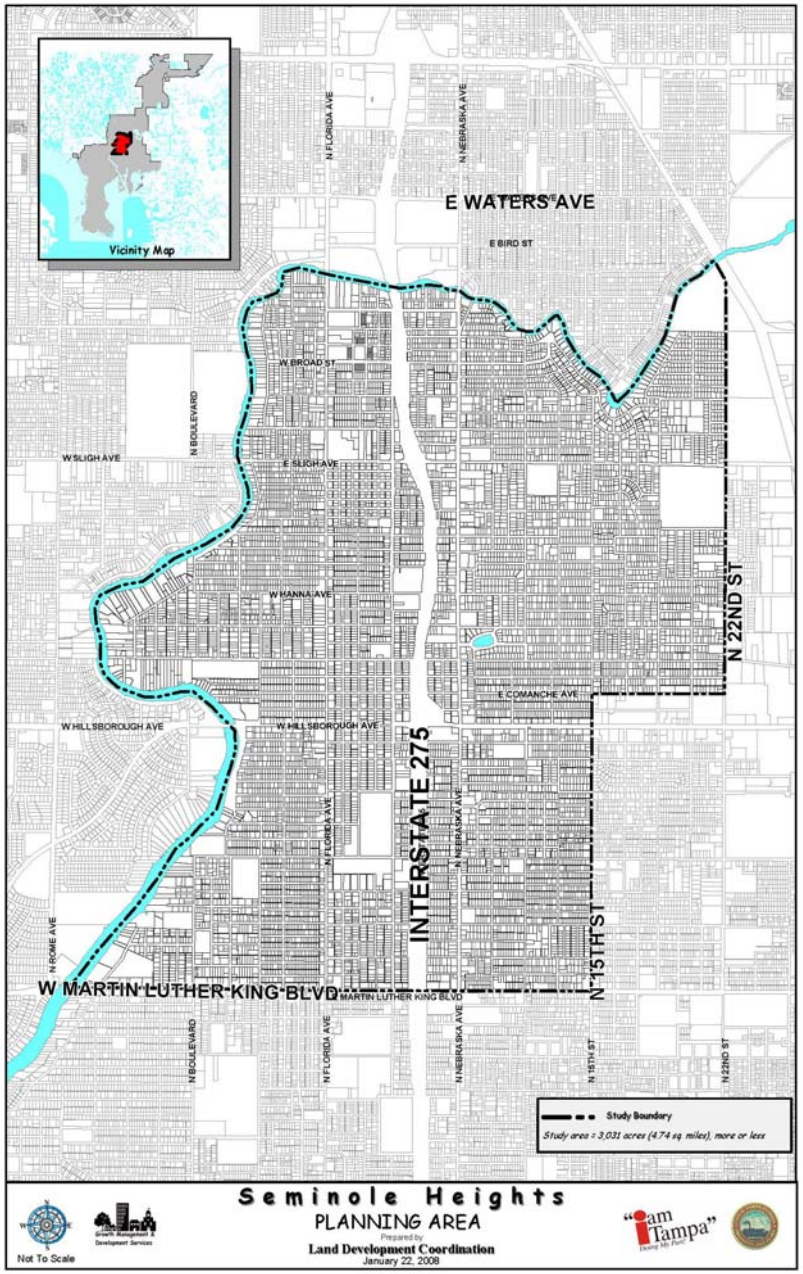
- Phased Approach to Changes in Land Use Patterns
  - C-1: Mid-Range View (0-10 years)
  - C-2: Long Range View (10-20 years)
- Roads, Infrastructure, Ped- & Bikeways
  - C-3: Connectivity/Infrastructure Map
- **Final Vision Plan Map (C-4)**

D

D: Resources

A

Planning Area Map



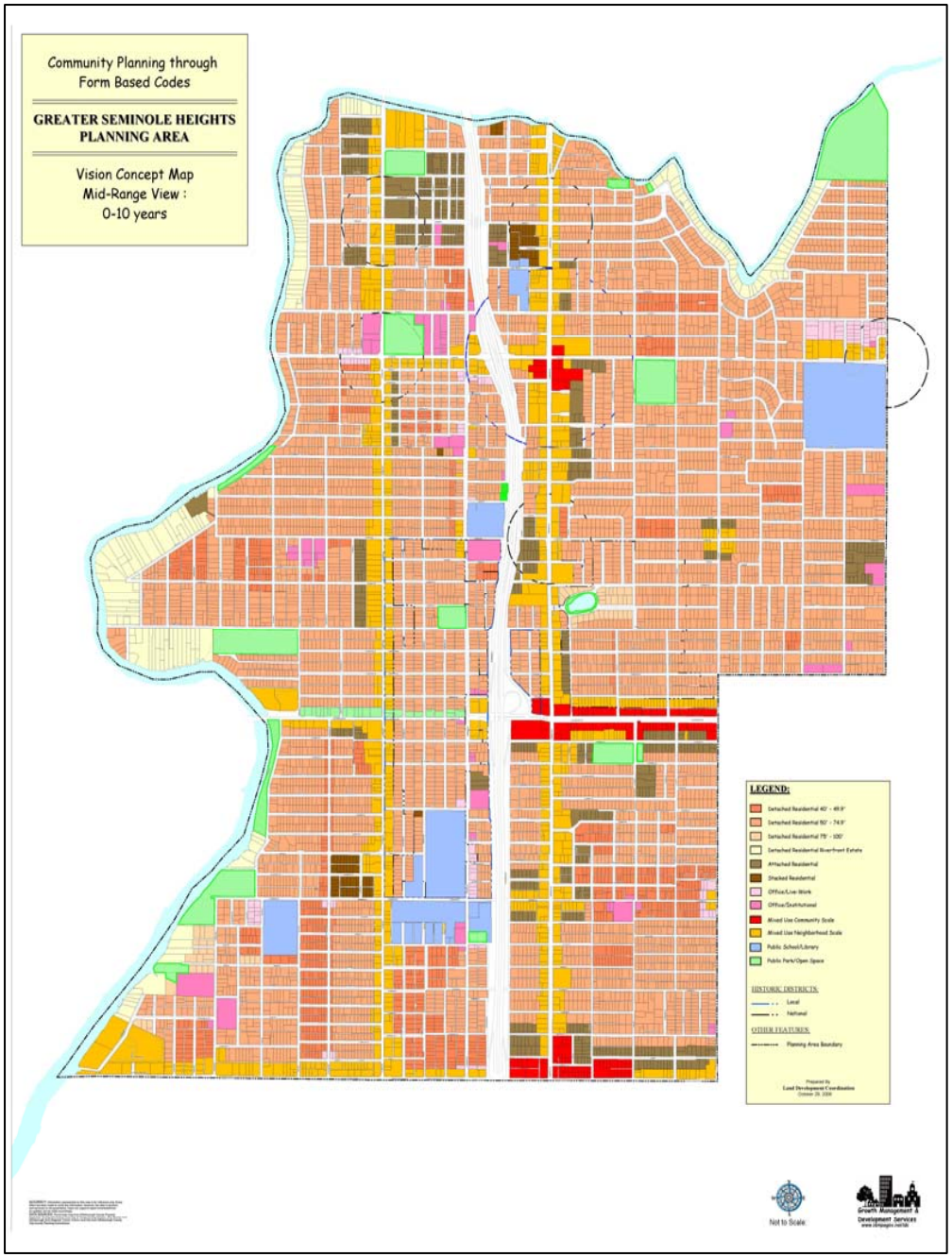
B

Existing Conditions Map

C-1

Vision Concepts Maps

C-1: Mid-Range View (0-10 years)



C-2

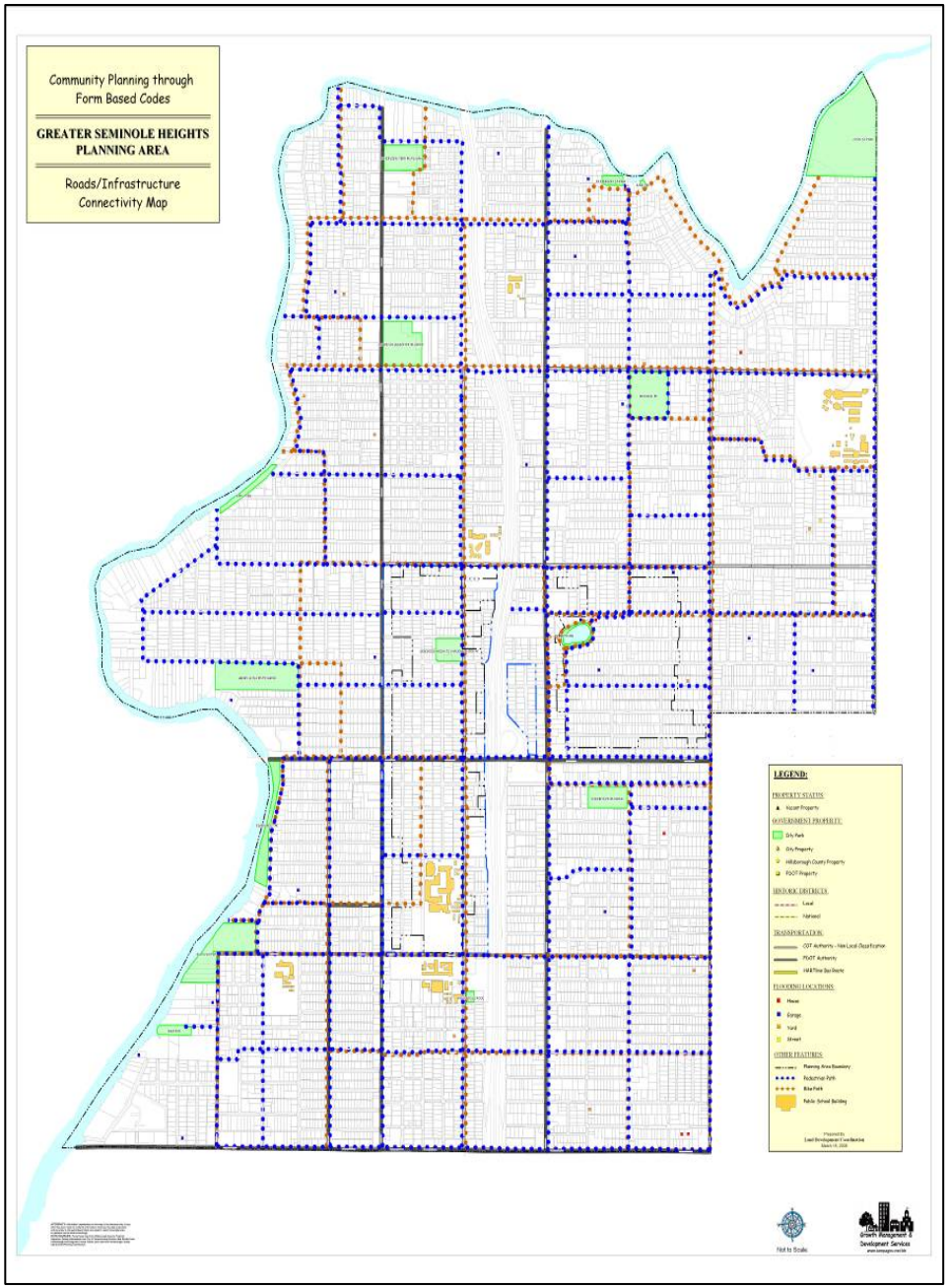
Vision Concepts Maps

C-2: Long Range View (10-20 years)

C-3

Vision Concepts Maps

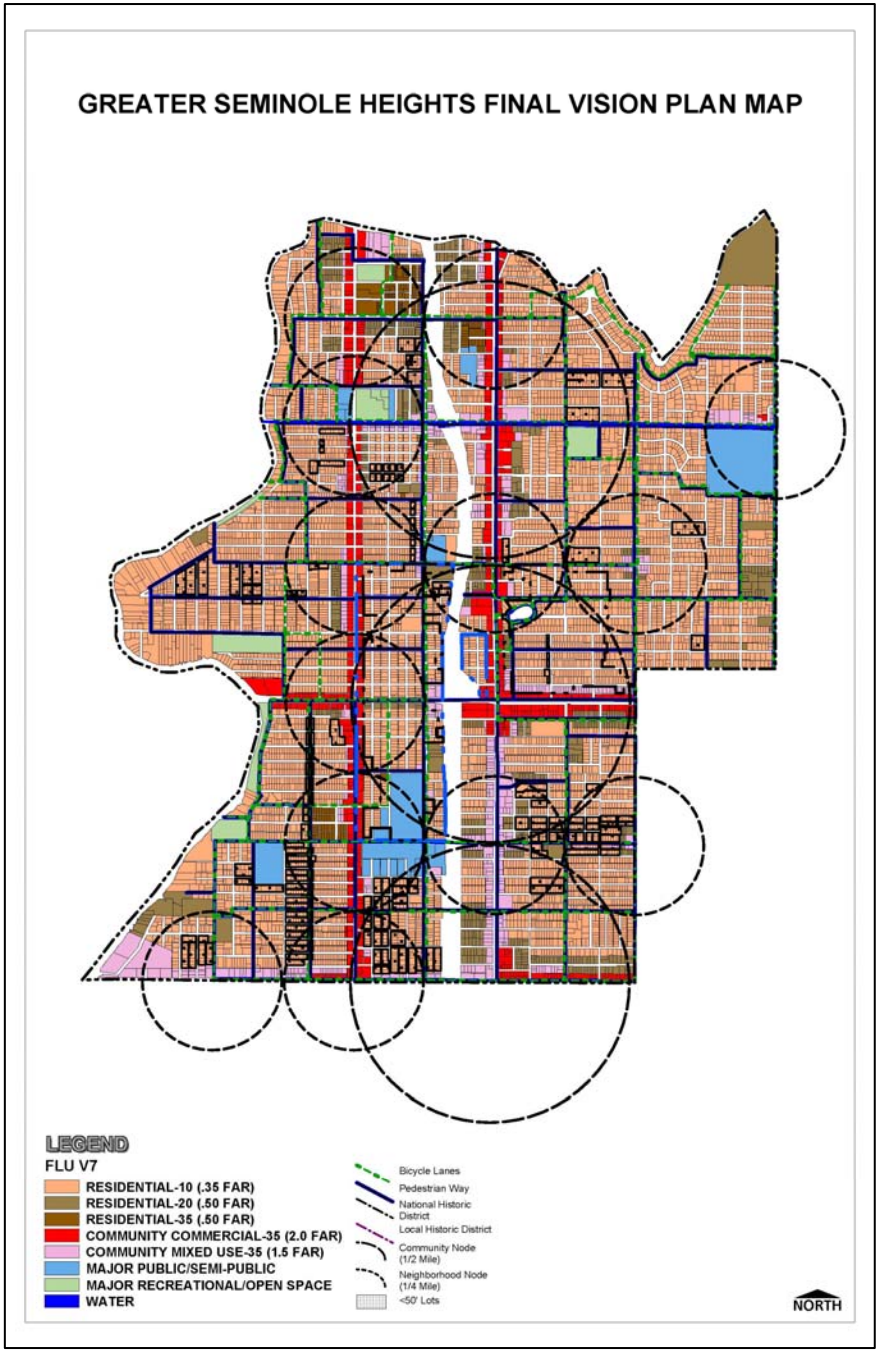
C-3: Connectivity/Infrastructure Map



C-4

Vision Concepts Maps

C-4: Final Vision Plan Map



D

Resources

[1] Tampa Comprehensive Plan – 2009 – Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission

[2] City of Tampa Water Department:
http://www.tampagov.net/dept_Water/
University of Florida Extension
http://hillsborough_fyn.ifas.ufl.edu

[3] [Source: About.com (http://tampa.about.com/od/ realestateapartments/p/seminoleheights.html)]

[4] Hillsborough County School Board