The State of the Commute: Transportation in University North

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The State of the Commute:

Transportation in University North
The State of the Commute: Transportation in University North

The State of The Commute is a dynamic representation of University North, frequently updated and enhanced, as population, employment, land use, and traffic conditions in our community change with time.

Also available on the Internet, at www.commuterservices.com.

Prepared by the:

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UNTI is jointly funded through the Florida Department of Transportation
The City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, and the University of South Florida

September 1999
Acknowledgements:

The University North Transportation Initiative would like to thank the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Hillsborough County Planning Commission, the Florida Department of Transportation - District Seven, the Center for Urban Transportation Research, and in particular, the CUTR GIS staff, for their time and energy during the compilation of this report. The authors are solely responsible for any omissions or errors.
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Forward

The State of the Commute

Over the last decade, the northeastern regions of Tampa and Hillsborough County have seen the rapid expansion of residential neighborhoods, concurrent with the proliferation of commercial developments along both sides of the area's major transportation corridor, Bruce B. Downs Boulevard. In April 1999, it was reported the number of single-family and multi-family dwellings had nearly doubled in just a five year period. New Tampa has already surpassed the 10,000 mark for new residential units, and the 1999 Census track estimate for this region reflects a growth rate approaching 120% in just nine years. While new commercial and residential developments are indicators of positive growth conditions and a strong economic climate, they are also a source of traffic generation.

New developments stimulate the need for additional local trips, many of which are made by the single-occupant vehicle. As more vehicle trips are directed onto Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, this primary corridor will become increasingly congested. Such widespread development has already caused a ripple effect on the regional transportation network. Interstates 75 and 275 function as north/east-west boundaries for this region known as University North, although Bruce B. Downs Boulevard provides the only direct north-south access throughout the service area (See Map #1 University North Service Area). No major east-west corridors currently exist in University North, between the northern Hillsborough County line and Bearss Avenue/Skipper Roads to the south.

Channeling these additional vehicle trips onto one primary corridor only exacerbates current travel conditions in Northeast Tampa. Growing traffic volumes and resulting vehicular congestion could negatively affect this region in terms ranging from travel delays and worsened air pollution, to increased driver frustration or aggression, and diminished quality of life. The lure of an improved 'quality of life' has punctuated the growth of residential neighborhoods into northeast Hillsborough County, as developers promote the calm suburban New Tampa lifestyle as different and discrete from the bustling downtown activity centers. However, heavy traffic conditions, congested through-roads, and long commute times have even prompted Tampa's mayor to relocate from New Tampa to downtown, as reported in newspaper headlines. The quality of life sought by those moving to the suburban fringe is clearly dependent upon an effective and efficient, balanced transportation system.

What constitutes a balanced system, and who benefits from a range of transportation options? It depends on whom you ask. Residents of Tampa and Hillsborough County have shared their opinions with local elected officials and professional planners at different times, and in various public settings. Some prefer the private automobile to any other option on the market. Many elect to utilize public transportation or to commute by bicycle for their work and shopping trips; others endorse the construction
of commuter rail. Still others utilize the technological advancements of this generation, to telecommute from their home offices and eliminate vehicular trips entirely.

Transportation issues consistently pepper the front page of the newspapers in Tampa Bay. Public officials debate whether or not to approve new roadway construction or road-widening projects. Whether it's feasible to provide for sidewalks and bicycle lanes as new developments are approved. Whether to generate funding by increasing user-fees along new toll-roads. Or whether to increase the local tax base to generate revenue for transportation services. Identifying the problems and issues is easy; finding creative and reasonable solutions is the challenge.

Perhaps Albert Einstein summarized it best, when he said that, "problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them." Yet the transportation and land use cycle in which we consistently find ourselves, lends itself to the colloquial definition of madness: doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results.

We continue to widen our roadways to solve congestion, but we watch traffic volumes quickly rise to meet or exceed the additional capacity. We continue to four-lane residential neighborhoods, yet are concerned that children, young parents, and the elderly must traverse an expansive sea of pavement as pedestrians. We expect to reap the benefits of business relocations, economic development, and new capital enterprise in our community, while we experience that employees cannot reach their place of work, for lack of transportation options. The time has come to complement these traditional solutions with creative approaches and discover new solutions to the transportation problems that have come to define this century and this region.

As we approach the next millennium, we must forge ahead with balance and reason, recognizing that our role in creating a prosperous tomorrow, depends upon the decisions we make today and every day.

University North Transportation Initiative
Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida, Tampa

September 1999
Report Organization

The *State of the Commute* report is intended to provide readers with an overview of the commuter environment in University North, including current transportation conditions and options, employment figures, and population characteristics. The report is organized into four distinct parts.

The first presents readers with a look at the evolving relationship between transportation and land use over time, introducing the scope of transportation demand management and public/private-sector partnerships currently operating in this region.

In the second segment, readers will be introduced to the operational context of transportation planning in this region, and shown the manner in which our collective goals and ideas become tangible community improvements. This section also highlights the intended improvements planned for this region.

The third part of the report explains the many transportation alternatives available to commuters in University North.

The fourth focuses on the unique geographical and political parameters of the University North Transportation Initiative, a public/private partnership housed at the University of South Florida. It concludes with an analysis of the population, employment, and traffic conditions (volumes, roadway capacity, level-of-service) that define University North. Color maps and graphic displays of information make the *State of the Commute* understandable and readable by a non-technical audience.
Part One

Transportation in Society:

With the change of the millennium upon us, let us take an opportunity to contemplate our past and reflect strategically on the future of travel behavior. Demographic and land use changes over the past few years have heightened interest in the future of public transportation, both locally and nationally. Widespread media attention to our urban landscape has elevated the concept of sprawl to new heights. Political interest and combative strategies have emerged from as high as the Office of Vice-President. More people are concerned that rapid development over the last decade has jeopardized environmentally-sensitive undeveloped areas, as well as compromised our neighborhoods.

A strong economy has produced burgeoning congestion in numerous urban areas, increasing the potential for bus or rail transit to absorb some of the demand. Technological changes have enhanced expectations that alternative fuels, enhanced communications, and increased computing power can be leveraged to improve the performance of public transit. Positive signs include increases in transit ridership, successful new rail initiatives, evidence of growing interest in urban redevelopment and more livable urban design, and increased federal investment in public transportation emanating from the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.

A Changing Urban Landscape

Although there has been a decline in the portion of personal trips made via public transit in America, this decline has created a strong interest within the transportation profession, to improve our understanding of transit markets, both current and future. Future data collection must provide a more expanded understanding of travel behavior in America, providing knowledge—such as the public's attitudes regarding transportation—that can be used to shape the transit industry's understanding of customer needs and behavior. In understanding the ebb and flow of transit's share of overall trips, we may look to the role of transportation in our society's changing landscape.

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A review of geographic, social, and economic factors may help to explain the subordinate role of transit in today's society—one in which the automobile has evolved from its original luxury and convenience function, to become a rudimentary part of the American experience. Throughout the twentieth century, government policies and programs have sustained the American character—an expansionist mentality, with freedom to move, and its love affair with newness (see text box on Muller's five stages of urban growth).ii

Early in this century, Congress passed the National Housing Act of 1934, which stimulated home-buying, created new construction jobs, and enabled the creation of a secondary mortgage market. Ongoing technological advances in the auto industry resulted in more efficient private transportation, becoming widely available to larger markets. The 1956 Interstate Highway Act forged the connection between urbanized areas and suburban communities, linking people to outlying jobs and opening up entire new market areas for economic expansion. With the evolution and expansion of the suburban environment, however, came the increasing sense of disconnect between people and their communities, new dependence on the automobile for transportation, and traffic congestion like never before experienced or anticipated.

In what may be a desire to return to our traditional core, mixed use developments and newly created town-centers continue to crop up. Neotraditional villages, such as Seaside, or new towns like Celebration, Florida, offer residents a return to traditional neighborhood living, where work and shopping needs can be accommodated locally, enabling people to walk, bicycle, or utilize transit service, in lieu of the automobile.

An Evolving American Landscape

In his work on the evolution of the American Metropolis, Peter Muller describes five growth stages of the post World War II American spatial landscape:

- 1945-1955: The Bedroom Community, dominated by a massive postwar residential building boom and moderate expansion of commercial activity;
- 1955-1965: The Independence State, in which accelerated suburban economic growth followed a wave of industrial and office parks and later, regional shopping centers;
- 1965-1975: The Catalytic Growth phase, as regional shopping centers attracted office, hotel, and restaurant facilities to locate on adjacent lands;
- Early 1980s: The High-rise High-technology phase, in which suburban downtowns are increasingly dominated by high-rise office buildings and attract high-technological research and development facilities;
- Late 1980s: Mature Urban Centers continuing bennets of the early 1980s, as land use becomes more diverse, and perform more social, cultural, civic, and recreational functions.

One might expand upon Muller's urban centers phase, and categorize this into late 1980s by the proliferation of the New Towns.

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Planned communities in Northeast Tampa, including Tampa Palms, Hunters Green, and West Meadows, offer similar attributes on a somewhat different scale. These developments, which proliferate the suburban Tampa landscape, offer homeowners a wealth of residential amenities, including neighborhood schools, libraries, and proximate shopping opportunities. However, their expansive development styles, with wide, curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs, and spacious construction, require most trips to be made by auto, even for short trips. This style of development also falls short of achieving the desired between jobs and housing, which could reduce auto trip needs dramatically. Hence, large numbers of residents still leave their suburban housing developments each day, to travel via individual automobiles to their places of employment, shopping centers, or recreational venues. The result is traffic congestion and travel delay.

Balancing Jobs and Housing Location Decisions

The location of employment centers is just one variable in the profile of a region. When you overlay the location of residential areas with that of job centers, however, the picture starts to become more meaningful. When you further consider the type and nature of employment -- particularly those lower wage, second- or third-shift job demands -- and then consider the potential pool of employees seeking to fill those positions, the importance of a jobs/housing balance becomes more clear. To geographers in the 1950s, the disassociation of jobs to housing stock was known as spatial mismatch. Today, we may refer to the realities of spatial mismatch and its economic repercussions as loss of community. Under any name, the proximity of residential and employment sites is an important factor in assessing commute patterns and determining transportation needs.

Historically, the trends has been for jobs to leave the central cities and head for the suburbs. As a result, central business districts are no longer the primary destinations for many of today's employees. Technological advances, such as email and internet communications have enabled some people to work easily and comfortably from their homes, telecommuting or arriving at local telework sites, thereby minimizing or even eliminating lengthy commute times. However, while two-thirds of all new jobs may be locating in suburban communities around the country, three-quarters of welfare recipients live in outlying areas or central cities, and may lack personal transportation. Where public transportation is not abundantly available, these factors create new pressures for employers needing to hire people for lower-wage service sector positions. These pressures and hiring challenges are pervasive in University North, and are

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heightened by the currently strong job market and level of over-employment nationwide.

Changes in Travel, Changes in Traffic

In today's economy, the growth in service employment, flattening corporate organizational structures, work force empowerment, and the dramatic increases in communications and computing power, have challenged the need for dense downtown employment hubs that have been the foundation of past transit ridership. Population and employment continue to disperse, and auto ownership continues to increase, as energy costs hit new lows in real terms. From the stereotypical soccer mom to the single-parent, low-income service worker, concerns over time constraints reach all socioeconomic levels. This mentality may also contribute to an increase in the number of single occupant vehicle trips being taken, as they may be deemed more convenient and necessary to save precious travel time. Increased cellular phone usage in the last several years suggests that more people may be utilizing their travel times for business or personal needs, despite the potential safety risks due to phone usage while driving.

In Tampa, as in many other areas of the state and country, the 1980s and 90s saw the dispersion of residential populations and business activity away from the central downtown, and into the suburban fringe. The changing landscape, characterized by multiple residential neighborhoods and new pockets of commercial development, has changed the composition of the Northeast Tampa community, and with it, the composition of the traffic patterns.

New development indicates a strong economic climate and positive growth conditions, making the University North community viable to new businesses and employment opportunities. New residential and commercial land uses also generate traffic, however, as they stimulate the need for additional local trips, many of which are made by the single-occupant vehicle. Currently, in the region known as University North, residents and passers-by experience heavy roadway congestion and slow-moving traffic. Such conditions can have a negative impact on an area's economic development potential.

It's easy to focus on the frustration associated with sitting in traffic, especially considering that nearly 70 percent of peak-hour travel on the interstate system occurs under near stop-and-go conditions. But there are also cost considerations borne of congestion. When you consider the value of time spent stuck in traffic, we pay through the loss of both leisure and productive work.

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opportunities. We pay, too, through the degradation of our environment through automobile emissions, which contribute 50 to 90 percent toward diminished air quality. The U.S. Government Account Office has estimated that the annual cost of congestion, outside of the environmental and air quality considerations, is $130 billion.

Transportation problems can also affect the recruitment and retention of employees. Long travel delays have become the defining characteristic of portions of the area's primary transportation corridor, Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, particularly during the morning and evening hours, when traffic volumes peak. In a market that is flush with employment opportunity, and at a time when employers are struggling to find viable candidates for even lower-wage earning jobs, the adequacy of the local transportation system becomes a determining factor in peoples' job relocation decisions.

The University North area is dominated by service-sector employment, and its many hospitals and hospitality venues require second and third-shift workers. Traffic conditions and a lack of transportation options is currently an impediment to attracting and retaining employees. Bruce B. Downs provides the only direct north-south access throughout the University North service area and into the New Tampa region. No major east-west corridors currently exist in University North, between the northern Hillsborough County line and Bearss Avenue / Skipper Roads to the south (see Map #2, Major Road Network). In the northern portions of the county, there are no existing bus routes for public transportation.

Few transportation options means few alternatives to automobile congestion. As more vehicle trips are directed onto these few roadways, the existing corridors will become increasingly inaccessible. Without alternative methods of travel, such as bus transit, commuter-rail transit, or ridesharing, the need to get from here to there is typically met through the use of the single-occupant vehicle (SOV). By providing people with transportation alternatives, we can minimize SOV travel, reduce travel congestion, and improve regional air quality.

Members of the community benefit from a range of travel choices. Employers benefit from the resolution to their transportation problems. The strategy then, is to increase the availability of transportation options, while simultaneously controlling overall demand on the transportation system. The following information provides an introduction to the field of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and describes the various transportation agencies,

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*Carlson, D., At Road's End: Transportation and Land Use Choices for Communities, STPP, 1995: p6.*
Map 2: Major Road Network

LEGEND

UNT1 Boundary
City of Tampa
Temple Terrace
Unincorporated
Major Roads

Source: 1995 TIGER/Line
strategies, and alternatives currently in place throughout the Tampa Bay region, and in University North, in particular.

What is Transportation Demand Management?

Transportation demand management (TDM) includes a wide range of activities that are geared toward improving the efficiency of travel demand. TDM programs are designed to reduce the demand on the transportation system, particularly the demand for single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel, while ensuring a wide range of mobility options for those people wishing to travel. Most frequently, TDM efforts strive to increase the number of persons in a vehicle, or to influence the time of, or need to, travel. To accomplish these objectives, successful programs must shift peoples’ behavior and make alternative behaviors more attractive.

Using incentives—such as cost savings to carpool or vanpool versus driving alone (less wear and tear on the vehicle, lower individual fuel costs), or disincentives—such as higher toll charges for driving during morning or evening rush-hour, can be effective TDM strategies. Some of the alternatives to driving a single occupant vehicle, and the strategies to promote their use, are described in the following sections of this report.

Transportation Demand Management Agencies

Various types of TDM agencies function and operate in different ways, although most organizations share the common goal of reducing congestion and travel demand by expanding alternative-transportation options. Some agencies are known as commuter service-providers. They commonly promote ridesharing and establish convenient programs for people who seek to lessen the demands of their work commute. Other TDM agencies are oriented to provide technical assistance to those wishing to start their own agency or program; these providers offer training and education, as well as public outreach.

Another type of TDM agency is known as a transportation management association (TMA). These groups are proactive organizations, typically formed of that employers, developers, local government representatives, transit-providers, and others can work together to address local transportation problems. TMAs often collectively establish policies, programs, and hands-on solutions, by providing services directly to members of the public. TMAs can also serve as a vehicle for public/private sector cooperation in the transportation

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vi Implementing Effective Travel Demand Management Measures, ITE 1993: preface.

vii “Alternative transportation” is loosely defined as any alternative to the single-occupant vehicle.
planning and decision-making process. Some of the agencies, resources and organizations that currently operate in the Tampa Bay area, are described below.

Bay Area Commuter Services

Bay Area Commuter Services, Inc. (BACS), is a private, non-profit organization, founded and funded by the Florida Department of Transportation, to promote transportation alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle in the Tampa Bay area and its surrounding counties. Its mission is to operate a regional commuter assistance program, and to actively influence the demand on the roadway system through a program of support for commuter services to private businesses, individuals, and public entities.

Operational Vanpools

The following vanpools are currently in operation in the Tampa Bay area:

- Brandon to Downtown St. Petersburg
- Clearwater/Safety Harbor to the University of South Florida
- Temple Terrace to Brooksville
- St. Petersburg to Temple Terrace
- Lakeland to Downtown Tampa
- Orange Park Station to Downtown Tampa
- Carrollwood to St. Petersburg
- Town & Country to St. Pete-Shady

- Brandon to St. Petersburg
- Seminole to the University of South Florida
- Pinellas, Pinellas

Bay Area Vanpool

The Bay Area Vanpool program was begun in September 1995, for anyone working or living in Pinellas or Hillsborough Counties (see box on currently operational vanpools). In a vanpool, up to fifteen commuters whose residences and places of employment are in close proximity to one another, pay a nominal fee (to offset maintenance and insurance) and share the ride to work on a daily basis. The benefits to the vanpoolers include significant cost savings, reduced stress, and for the driver, personal use of the custom van during non-commute times. The resultant benefits to the community include reduced vehicular congestion and fewer air pollutants, as multiple individual vehicles are consolidated into one. The program is co-sponsored by the two local transit agencies, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), and is organized through Bay Area Commuter Services.

Center for Urban Transportation Research: TDM Clearinghouse

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has contracted with the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) to operate a statewide TDM Clearinghouse, which it has done successfully since 1993. The purpose of the Clearinghouse is to provide short-term technical assistance on Transportation Demand Management within the state of Florida to public and private
organizations. Such assistance ranges from research on specific transportation topics and providing assistance in forming new TMAs or regional programs, to providing opportunities for statewide training.

Through multiple channels, the Clearinghouse enables professionals to gain access to all of the available resources necessary to develop effective transportation demand management initiatives within their communities. Requests for information are answered promptly, whether from individual professionals, FDOT District offices, MPOs, transit agencies, the media, or other entities. Through site visits with the different state FDOT districts - including participation in individual TMA Board Meetings - and through other public outreach efforts, the Clearinghouse provides multiple opportunities for professionals to secure ongoing assistance.

Some of the outreach efforts involve the regular and systematic dissemination of information to transportation professionals. The Clearinghouse augments CUTR's existing resource center on transportation demand management, including the availability of a searchable database of existing resources and bibliographies. Annually, many of the activities and information requests are summarized for other professionals in a newsletter-style report. This information is mailed to professionals around the state, and is also included on a regularly updated Internet website that provides timely information and resources to the TDM community and to the public.

Some of the information sought by professionals comes through requests to a TDM listserv (or internet email bulletin-board service), to which subscribers can post questions to their professional peers, and receive prompt email responses. The TDM Clearinghouse provides, via e-mail or other means, prompt notification of changes in legislation, identification of resources, public and private funding opportunities, and other time-sensitive information that will help all TDM programs operate more effectively, with broadened financial support, and enhanced customer satisfaction.

Transportation Management Organizations

Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs), Associations (TMAs), or Initiatives (TMIs) are area-specific transportation groups that focus their professional expertise toward managing local demand on the transportation system. Most agencies strive to coordinate public and private sector efforts, often working with large-scale employers and large work sites to achieve a reduction in single-occupant vehicle travel. These organizations traditionally apply combinations of techniques to achieve their objectives (see text box on commute strategies).
In the Tampa Bay Metropolitan Area, there are several such organizations that coordinate their efforts to achieve reduced traffic congestion and improved air quality throughout the multi-county region (See Map #3, Transportation Management Associations). The Tampa Downtown Partnership TMO, the Westshore Alliance TMO, the St. Petersburg Downtown TMI, the newly forming Gateway TMI, and the University North Transportation Initiative (UNTI) function as the respective management agencies throughout the area's many business activity centers.

Each of the individual transportation organizations is further represented on the board of the Transportation Management Organization Coordinating Group (TMOCG), a voluntary advisory group which coordinates the individual TMAs' efforts to manage our region's transportation demands. Contact information for each of the Bay Area's TMOS is available at the end of this report.

*Tampa Downtown Partnership TMO*

The Tampa Downtown Partnership TMO was established in 1992, as a program of the Tampa Downtown Partnership, a consortium of businesses clustered in the core of the downtown activity center. The mission of the TMO is to decrease traffic congestion, improve mobility, and reduce the demand for parking in downtown Tampa, by providing a variety of transportation demand management programs and services.

Its services include operation of the Downtown Trolley and a free-bicycle program (the Orange-cycle Program), and operation of a downtown Commuter Center. Its outreach efforts include publication of a newsletter: “Parking and Transportation Fax;” provision of information on transportation subsidies and tax benefits; creation and distribution of Downtown transportation maps; and the completion of a Downtown Parking Inventory.
Map 3: Transportation Management Associations

Pasco County

Traffic Management Associations
- University North Transportation Initiative (UNTI)
- Westshore Alliance (WATMO)
- Gateway Transportation Initiative (GTI)
- St. Petersburg Downtown Transportation Management Initiative (SPDTMI)
- Tampa Downtown Partnership (TDTMO)
- Bay Area Commuter Services (BACS)

Source: 1999 Bay Area Commuter Services
**Westshore Alliance TMA**

The Westshore Alliance Transportation Management Organization (WATMO) provides transportation demand management and transportation systems management (TSM) programs and services, under the leadership of the Westshore Alliance business consortium. Since its inception in 1989, the TMO has grown significantly and taken on a number of transportation projects in the West Tampa region. Its goals include reducing SOV-commuting to help alleviate traffic congestion; educating area employers about commuter assistance programs and services; maintaining a transportation committee comprised of area employers; maintaining a network of Employee Transportation Coordinators, and operating a Commuter Assistance Center.

**St. Petersburg Downtown TMI**

In 1995, Florida Department of Transportation, the City of St. Petersburg, and St. Petersburg Progress, Inc. agreed to undertake the development, staffing, and operation of a Downtown Transportation Management Initiative (TMI). Its mission is to provide a private/public forum that will address transportation issues and concerns and collaborate to implement TDM programs that will help to enhance the image of St. Petersburg as an attractive, clean, and uncongested place in which to live, work, and do business. One of the TMI's recent accomplishments was reaching ridership of the 100,000th rider along the downtown Looper Trolley.

**University North Transportation Initiative**

The University North Transportation Initiative (UNTI) is a unique partnership among private sector businesses, community representatives, and public sector transportation professionals. Its primary goals are to reduce traffic congestion, reduce the demand for parking, and maximize the use of public transit to achieve air quality benefits throughout its Northeast Tampa service area. The UNTI develops, operates, and promotes transportation programs, to meet the specific needs of key commuter and traveler markets.

By working with local transit and rideshare agencies, such as HARTline, Bay Area Commuter Services, and Vanpool Services, Inc., the UNTI has been able to promote a diverse range of alternative transportation options, such as carpooling, vanpooling, bus transit, and circulator shuttle service. Some of the major employers and primary attractors in the UNTI service area include the University of South Florida, University Mall, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, the University Community Hospital, and the Veteran's Administration Hospital.
The UNTI works with these large local employers, to promote alternative transportation options for the many employees traveling to and from its major destinations (often during peak AM and PM travel times). For example, to alleviate noontime demand for transportation service between the University of South Florida and the University Mall, the UNTI helped to create and promote daily shuttle service between the two locations, operating from 11 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with ten-minute headways. The UNTI is currently exploring another commute option with the University of South Florida -- the installation of secured bicycle parking on the Tampa campus. Secured bicycle parking would enable more students, staff, and faculty to commute to school or work by bike, while enjoying a diminished risk of theft, and protection against inclement weather.

By providing employees with a range of commute options and by developing strategies for employers who wish to solve their transportation challenges, the UNTI is accomplishing its mission to achieve less SOV travel, reduce travel congestion on our roads, and improve regional air quality.

**Employee Transportation Coordinators**

To promote transportation alternatives, transportation management associations can utilize many individual techniques, or a combination of different strategies. They can opt to conduct special marketing events, engage in the dissemination of information to the public, and they can organize their efforts through designated appointees at employment locations. The latter approach, identifying an individual to help market the options, can be a valuable strategy for getting employees to rideshare or utilize a company's other transportation demand management offerings (such as telecommuting or flexible work environments, as described in Section Two of this report).

Employer Transportation Coordinators (ETCs) from Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties recently participated in independent focus groups, whose objectives were to assess information about current employer-based TDM efforts in the region. Their responses tended to corroborate those of individual commuters, and addressed both shortcomings of the existing transportation system as well as areas in which the systems could be improved to better serve business operations.

The transportation system is considered in adequate in many respects. The bus system is important to many downtown businesses, but is considered inadequate. More service and frequency, later hours, and faster times are desired. The most important information revealed is that there are locations
throughout the region where traffic and parking cause employers to have trouble hiring and retaining employees. It was determined through these groups that the parking and traffic problems that traditionally caused a migration from the downtown urbanized area to the suburban fringes, are now causing the same phenomenon in the more developed suburban areas.

Some of the commuter programs being offered by the participating employers (most with over 250 employees, both private and public) include:

- Subsidy of bus tickets and selling bus passes on site
- Distribution of ride-matching applications and other commuting information
- Vanpool start-up subsidy programs
- Designated parking spaces for vanpools
- Staggered work hours
- Telecommuting pilot projects
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Flexible work hours

The ETCs in the focus groups indicated that while many of the larger employment sites offer one or more of the aforementioned strategies, many of the programs do not seem widely supported by management or widely used by employees. Low- to no-cost incentives emerged as one of the most practical strategies to solicit greater support and encouragement from management. Some of the strategies for involving employers included designating preferred parking spaces for car-poolers and vanpoolers; securing a high-visibility location for the placement of a rack for brochures on commute alternatives; and getting management to become a role model for ride-sharing or alternative transportation.
Part Two

Overview of Transportation Agencies and Related Plans for University North:

This section is structured to give readers an overview of the different agencies with the greater Hillsborough County region that are involved with transportation decision-making. The primary agencies as well as the principal documents that they produce, are described in the following pages. Readers will be introduced to the manner in which collective goals and ideas translate into tangible improvements to our system.

Comprehensive Plan Policies

Chapter 163 of the Florida Statues, also known as Florida's Growth Management Act, establishes the requirements for local governments to develop and adopt a local comprehensive plan, and pass land development regulations which serve to implement the adopted plan. At the crux of the Growth Management Act is a mandate called concurrency. This requirement obligates local governments to ensure that public infrastructure, including transportation facilities, is in place concurrent with the impacts of development (F.S., Section 163.3177[10][h]).

The Capital Improvements Element of the comprehensive plan outlines the procedures for concurrency management and also identifies the various adopted levels of service for each of the regulated public facilities (transportation, stormwater, potable water, wastewater, solid waste, and parks). This element also requires that all final development orders be reviewed for their impacts upon these public facilities. Local governments are restricted from issuing a permit to a development project if it would overload available capacity on the affected system.

Land Development Codes

Each of the jurisdictions in Hillsborough County (City of Tampa, City of Temple Terrace, and Hillsborough County) has established standards, regulations and procedures for the approval of all proposed development within its political and geographic boundaries. These codes of regulations also provide for a development review process that comprehensively, consistently and efficiently
implements the goals, objectives, and policies in the respective comprehensive plans.

The following section seeks to highlight important development policies affecting the transportation system in University North.

- **Bicycle Facilities (LDC)**

In unincorporated Hillsborough County, developers are responsible for providing bicycle facilities on any major roadway identified on the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. This document, developed by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, is the plan that determines where bicycle facilities are needed. One of the developer advantages of providing adequate bicycle facilities and bicycle parking, is that a reduction in required vehicle parking spaces may be granted. By providing bicycle parking, developers are able to reduce their required parking spaces up to five percent. In order to promote bicycling as an alternative commute mode, the Land Development Code also recommends, but does not require, that shower facilities for both sexes be provided for all developments with fifty employees or greater.

- **Sidewalks (LDC)**

According to the land development code, sidewalks are required in all land use categories, where it is necessary to provide for safe pedestrian circulation. Unless the County has roadway improvements scheduled within two years, the developer is required to construct sidewalks on the subdivision side of an existing street or streets from boundary to boundary. The developer/builder is also responsible for the construction of sidewalks within the subdivision along all buildable lots. Sidewalks and curb ramps must also conform to the latest Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Certificates of Occupancy may not be issued until sidewalks are constructed.

- **Public Transit Facilities (LDC)**

The type of public transit facilities required, including pedestrian circulation systems and pathways to the facilities, depends upon the land use category and size of the development. For residential developments with over 1,000 units, a park-and-ride facility and separate bus loading/unloading areas that provide shelter suitable for waiting out of inclement weather is required. For residential developments of 500 to 1000 units and mixed-used development of 200,000 square feet, a bus bay and a transit accessory pad that includes shelter, seating, trash receptacles and a bicycle rack is also required.
For non-residential developments of 100,000 to 200,000 square feet, a transit accessory pad with a shelter, seating, trash receptacles and a bicycle rack must be provided. Any non-residential development of 50,000 and 100,000 square feet has the same requirements, except that a shelter is not required. Any non-residential development or single- or multi-tenant office building of less than 50,000 square feet requires only the construction of pedestrian and bicycle connections to the transit facilities.

**Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization**

The Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is a transportation policy-making board comprised of representatives from local government and transportation authorities. The MPO, operating under federal and state requirements, is responsible for establishing a comprehensive transportation planning process for the county. The board meets monthly to establish the travel needs for both the short-term (five years) and the long-term (twenty years) future of the county. This process culminates in the development of a *Long Range Transportation Plan*, and a *Transportation Improvement Program*. viii

Voting members on the MPO Board represent the City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, Plant City, Temple Terrace, the Expressway Authority, and HARTline. The non-voting members of the MPO include the Florida Department of Transportation, the Aviation Authority, the Port Authority, and the Hillsborough County Planning Commission.

**MPO Transportation Plans**

The *Long-Range Transportation Plan* identifies the broad goals and improvements that are needed in Hillsborough County, and strives to balance future investments in transportation, by mode. Highway improvements, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects are prioritized and evaluated against available funding sources (for reference, see Map #4, Major Construction Projects in University North). Each long-range plan must include only those projects for which funding is reasonably expected to be available. The plans are prepared and updated every three years.

The *Transportation Improvement Program* is what serves to implement the long-range plan. It is an annually updated list of priorities and funded projects that will be completed in a five-year time period. It is derived from the projects identified in the long-range plan. The MPO also develops the *Unified Planning Work Program*, which identifies all of the transportation planning activities that

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viii Excerpts derived from *The Citizens Guide to Transportation Planning* and the *MPO Handbook*, Hillsborough County MPO.
will be worked on in the upcoming fiscal year. The work program identifies the source of funding for each activity, as well as which agency will complete the work (see Map #5 Right of Way Projects in University North).

Other reports and plans produced by the MPO include those related to air quality, bicycle planning, public involvement procedures, services for the transportation disadvantaged, and a comprehensive pedestrian plan. The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is a committee within the Hillsborough County Planning Commission, whose mission is to make Hillsborough County a safer, more pleasant place for bicycling and walking. BPAC has listed in the county’s 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan several roadways in the University North that are in need of improved bicycle facilities.

While the University North area does have some bicycle lanes along several major roadways, there is a need to add more bicycle facilities to improve connectivity and encourage cycling as a viable commute alternative.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Hillsborough County is a list of projects that can be implemented using current and proposed revenue sources that are expected to be in place, at the time the transportation improvements are made. These revenues are the basis for the Florida Department of Transportation's work program, as well as the Capital Improvement Programs of the local jurisdictions' comprehensive plans.

Hillsborough County's TIP includes projects that will be implemented between 1999 and 2003, with the assumption that no new funding sources will be available during this period.

In order to identify projects for inclusion in the TIP, each jurisdiction within the MPO submits its list of project priorities. Individual groups outside of the local government jurisdictions are eligible to submit applications, but because each jurisdiction has to provide a matching share of project dollars, each application must be submitted through the local government. The project selection phase involves a series of public meetings and public hearings, to ensure adequate public participation in the process. As projects are prioritized, they are approved in cooperation and consultation with the state DOT office, according to federal requirements.
The projects within the TIP must also be consistent with the adopted short- and long-range master plans of different agencies and local governments within the MPO's jurisdiction, such as the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan, and HARTline's Transit Development Plan. The five year TIP becomes the basis for the FDOT's Adopted Work Program.

**Major Investment Studies**

A Major Investment Study (MIS) is periodically conducted by the MPO, to evaluate the cost, impact, and effectiveness of different regional transportation improvements. A Major Investment Study refines the long range transportation plan in a specific area or corridor, screening out unlikely alternatives before the extensive environmental analysis can begin. It also allows decisions to be made at the correct level of detail, and creates a forum for involving stakeholders at an early stage of the decision-making process. The MPO has the option of updating the long range transportation plan, with the recommendations of the MIS once it has been completed and approved.

Most recently, the Hillsborough County MPO completed the Mobility MIS, which sought to provide plans for a balanced transportation system for the next several decades, taking into account some highway improvements, some improvements to bus-transit, and the development of a commuter rail system for Hillsborough County and parts of adjacent Polk County. The current Mobility MIS involves three individual stages: the Early Action Plan, the 2015 Vision, and the Long Term Vision, for implementing transportation improvements throughout Hillsborough County (see text box on the Long Term Vision).ix

Within the MIS are commuter rail alternatives currently being studied for the Tampa Bay region. These alternatives, as well as the individual rail-legs proposed for the University North region, can be seen on the following map (See Map #6, Study Area with Alternative Options). The impact and influence on the

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Map 6: Study Area with Alternative Options

Legend
- Railroads
- Major Roads
- Hillsborough County Alignment in CSX Corridor
- Alignment Options
  - Station Studied in MIS Process
  - Station Added in EIS Process

Source: 1999 Mobility Project.
University North area, should a passenger rail system be implemented, is discussed in a later segment of this report.

**Levels of Service and Concurrency**

Within the transportation system, capacity is measured in terms of level-of-service (LOS), a qualitative measure used to describe the operational conditions of the road. There are six levels of service that indicate the quality of the traffic flow, as measured by a scale of driver satisfaction (see Table II-1). The designations, shown below, range from the best level of service (A), to the worse (F). LOS standards are established by local governments for individual roadway segments and intersections, and provide the basis for determining concurrency.

- **LOS A**: Characterized by the free flow of traffic. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream.
- **LOS B**: Characterized by the stable flow of traffic, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable.
- **LOS C**: Characterized by a stable flow of traffic, but the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by the presence of others in the traffic stream.
- **LOS D**: Characterized by high volumes and density, but a stable flow of traffic. Speed and the freedom to maneuver are severely restricted.
- **LOS E**: Operating conditions are at or near the capacity level. All vehicular speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform value.
- **LOS F**: Characterized by forced or broken-down flow. Represented by the condition that exists whenever the volume of traffic approaching a given point exceeds the volume of traffic that can traverse the point (gridlock).

The next section of this report describes different transportation strategies, which serve to reduce vehicle demand on the system. These alternative commute options are a less expensive mechanism for improving capacity, than are costly road-widening projects. Local governments may consider implementing TDM strategies to help meet concurrency requirements, particularly on corridors that are constrained or backlogged, which may be operating at a LOS-F.\(^x\) By removing vehicles from the peak-hour flow of traffic, roadways will be better able to operate at an acceptable level-of-service.

\(^x\) For more information, readers are encouraged to review, *The Role of Level-of-Service Standards in Florida’s Growth Management Goals*, part of the State Transportation Policy Initiative (STPI) series, Center for Urban Transportation Research, October 1993.

\(^xi\) "Backlogged" facilities are unconstrained roads on the State Highway System operating a LOS below the minimum acceptable standard for such a road, and not programmed for construction in the first three years of the FDOT adopted work program, or in the five-year schedule of improvements in the capital improvements element of the local government comprehensive plan.
Table II-1 - Roadway Levels of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Service</th>
<th>Technical Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flow Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Highest quality of service. Free traffic flow and densities. Little or no restriction on maneuverability or speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Stable traffic flow, speed slightly restricted. Low restriction on maneuverability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Stable traffic flow, less freedom to select speed, change lanes, or pass. Density increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Approaching unstable flow. Speeds tolerable but subject to sudden and considerable variation. Less maneuverability and driver comfort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Unstable traffic flow with rapidly fluctuating speeds and flow rates. Short headways, low maneuverability and low driver comfort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Force traffic flow. Speed and flow may drop to zero with high densities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FDOT Adopted Work Program**

The Florida Department of Transportation, District Seven's Adopted Work Program (Fiscal Years 1999/00-2003/04) includes the projects that have currently been funded, programmed for construction within the next five year
period, and assigned a project number. Several major roadway improvement projects that will impact the University North area (see Map #7: FDOT Work Program Improvements). In particular, the widening of I-275 and Bruce B. Downs Boulevard are two major projects that aim to reduce traffic congestion in the University North area. The following section describes the planned improvements to this region.

- **Interstate-275:** The widening of I-275 from 4 to 6 lanes from Busch Boulevard to SR 56 is divided into 4 sections: Busch Boulevard to Fowler Avenue, Fowler Avenue to Fletcher Avenue, Fletcher Avenue to US 41 and US 41 to SR 56. The sections from Busch Boulevard to Fowler Avenue and Fowler Avenue to Fletcher Avenue are currently in the construction phase. In regard to the section from Fletcher Avenue to US 41, the preliminary engineering (P.E.) phase is complete and the acquisition of right-of-way is underway. The section from US 41 to SR 56 is presently in the P.E. phase. The total project is expected to be completed by the fall of 2001.

Along with the widening of I-275, there will also be significant changes made to exit ramps and interchanges to ease traffic congestion. The Busch Boulevard exit will be completely redesigned, additional ramp lanes will be added to the Fletcher and Fowler exits, and at the Bearss exit an additional ramp lane will be added and the exit lanes will be lengthened.

All work will be done from 9pm to 6am in order to maintain traffic flow during daylight and peak traffic hours. During construction hours, traffic will be reduced to one lane. Furthermore, construction will take place on a six-day schedule to ensure on-time completion.

- **Interstate-75:** From Fletcher Avenue to Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, I-75 will undergo resurfacing in fiscal year 1999/00. The approximate cost of the resurfacing project is $2.3 million. Also, a second entrance ramp is scheduled to be constructed at the Fowler exit at a cost of $1.8 million.

- **Bruce B. Downs Boulevard:** The project development and environment (PD&E) phase of the widening of Bruce B. Downs Boulevard from 4 to 6 lanes is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2003/04. The total cost of the PD&E phase is approximately $1.5 million. At the present time, the PE and right-of-way acquisition phases are not funded. In addition, a bicycle path is scheduled to be constructed in 1999/00 from Amberly Drive to the northern City Limits at a projected cost of $75,000 and a traffic signal will be added at the Pebble Creek Drive intersection at a cost of $137,000.
• **Fowler Avenue**: From the Tampa Bypass Canal to US 301, Fowler Avenue is scheduled for resurfacing for the fiscal year 2001/02. The estimated cost of the resurfacing project is $850,000. Another project on Fowler Avenue is the construction of a pedestrian bridge that will provide a link between the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) and the University of South Florida. The PE phase is scheduled to begin in 2000/01 at a cost of $50,000 and construction is scheduled to begin in 2002/03 at an estimated cost of $1.3 million.

• **Bearss Avenue**: From Florida Avenue to Nebraska Avenue, Bearss Avenue is scheduled for resurfacing in the fiscal year 2001/02. The estimated cost of the resurfacing project is $1,060,000.

• **Fletcher Avenue**: From Florida Avenue to Nebraska Avenue, Fletcher Avenue is scheduled for resurfacing in the fiscal year 2002/03. The cost of the PE phase is estimated at $100,000 and the construction phase will cost approximately $250,000.

• **40th Street**: From Hillsborough Avenue to Fowler Avenue, 40th Street will be widened from 4 to 6 lanes. The PE phase is currently underway and right-of-way acquisition is scheduled for fiscal year 1999/00. The approximate cost of the PD&E and right-of-way acquisition is $11 million and construction cost is estimated at $28 million.

**Improvements within Pasco County**

• **SR 54**: The widening of SR 54 is divided into two sections. The first section to be widened from two to four lanes, expandable to six lanes in the future, begins at US 41 and ends where the new SR 56 begins. PE and right-of-way acquisition phases are underway and construction is scheduled for 1999/00.

  The second section begins at the North Suncoast Parkway and ends at US 41. This section will also be widened from two to four lanes, and can be expanded to six lanes in the future. The PE and right-of-way acquisition phases are underway and construction is scheduled to begin in 2002/03.

• **US 41**: US 41 from the Hillsborough County line to Bell Lake Road will be widened from two to six lanes. The PE and right-of-way acquisition phases have been completed and construction is currently underway.

• **I-75 and SR 56 Interchange**: With the construction of SR 56 underway, a new interchange is being constructed at the I-75/SR 56 junction. The new interchange is located one mile north of the Pasco County Line.
SR 56. SR 56 is essentially an extension of SR 54 from Cypress Creek to CR 581 (Bruce B. Downs Boulevard) that aims to reduce traffic congestion on CR 581 caused by the high number of Pasco County residents commuting to Hillsborough County for work. Construction of this 4 lane highway is currently underway.
Part Three

Transportation Commute Alternatives:

Public transportation can eliminate some of the stress generated by driving in traffic. Riding in a bus or vanpool can give employees an opportunity to relax, read the paper, catch up on office paperwork, or plan their work activities for the day. Commuters arrive at their workplace fresh and ready to face the day's challenges. Traveling via public transportation can also save commuters money. It can reduce employee/company parking fees, as well as vehicle maintenance and repairs, car insurance, and gas expenses. This section is intended to provide readers with a description of some of the primary alternative transportation options currently available to local commuters.

Carpool Programs

Area residents and commuters can sign up to participate in a rideshare program and receive a personalized computer matchlist of others, living and working in close proximity to the applicant. Bay Area Commuter Services then provides strategies on how to use that information to successfully form a carpool. Independent carpools are then developed by the interested parties.

One of the benefits of becoming a committed rideshare participant, is eligibility for enrollment in the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program. This program is a service provided to commuters to enable them to use transportation alternatives, such as public transit, carpools, or vanpools, in lieu of their single-occupant vehicle, without the added worry of being left stranded without a vehicle, in the event of an emergency, or an unexpected overtime work situation.

The Guaranteed Ride Home program offers up to eight free emergency taxi rides home from the commuter's place of employment. The Florida Department of Transportation currently contracts directly with Bay Area Commuter Services to provide all GRH program administration and pay the totality of the taxi fare.
Vanpool Programs

A vanpool is a group of up to 15 employees riding together in a van on their daily commute to and from work. One member of the group volunteers to drive. The driver transports other vanpool participants to and from work and their residences or a common pickup area, such as a Park-and-Ride lot. Vanpools are organized according to where commuters live and work, in order to most efficiently coordinate trips.

Each passenger pays a low monthly fare, which covers the cost of maintenance and insurance. The gas cost is shared by the vanpoolers. Cost savings accrue to riders through a reduction in wear and tear an maintenance on personal vehicles, and in some cases, a cost savings through the elimination of more than one car per household. The driver is responsible for keeping the van clean, collecting passenger fees and vehicle maintenance. As a reward for taking on added responsibility, the vanpool driver rides free and can use the van for personal use, up to 300 miles per month. A back-up driver is always available in case the regular driver goes on vacation or get sick.

People who vanpool to work tend to arrive more relaxed than commuters who drive alone. Instead of driving in traffic, riders can utilize their commute time to read, sleep, or catch up on paperwork. Vans are equipped with air-conditioning, individual reading lights, plenty of leg room and other features that make the commute more comfortable.

Vanpools help reduce the congestion on the roadways. Fifteen people in a vanpool means 14 fewer cars on the road. Vanpooling also contributes significantly to the preservation of our environment by helping to: reduce toxic auto emissions; improve overall air and water quality; reduce the need for additional highways and parking lots; and save wetlands and other wildlife habitats.

Bus Transit

The Hillsborough Regional Transit Authority (HART) operates the county's transit system, which is comprised of fixed-route bus service, express-bus service, and demand-response service. Nine individual routes service the University North region, one of which is an express route, and three of which provide direct access through the University of South Florida's campus (See Map #8, HARTline Route Network). The new University Area Transfer Center, which opened in September 1999, features a covered area where passengers can safely
Map 8: HARTline Route Network

Source: 1999 Hillsborough Area Regional Transit
The mission of the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) is to provide a safe, convenient and effective mass transit system that is a viable transportation alternative for all Hillsborough County residents, that increases the capacity of the surface transportation system and helps reduce air pollution. The following information describes the specialized programs it offers to citizens who seek a public transportation solution to their commuting challenges.

• **Bikes on Buses**

HARTline offers a commute alternative that is compatible with the active lifestyles of today's commuters. Each HARTline bus is equipped with a bike rack, and riders can opt to take their bike on any HARTline local and express route for more streamlined travel to work, school or shopping trips. HARTline Bikes on Buses permits are also valid on Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) buses. Bike-on-buses permits are issued to riders who have completed a training/orientation program. The nontransferable permit must be shown to the bus operator prior to loading and securing the bicycle on the front-mounted bike rack. A maximum of two bicycles can be loaded on buses.

• **Bus Buddy System**

HARTline offers a step-by-step instructional service for new transit riders. An authority representative will provide guidance on how to use the transit guide, read a passenger schedule, and how to ride the bus. Participants will receive route schedules, a transit guide and informational brochures to become better acquainted with HARTline, and receive their first bus ride free.

• **HART Share-a-Van Service**

HARTline offers trips to people who are disabled and cannot use the bus system, through its Share-A-Van service. This paratransit van-service is available to people whose disabilities prevent them from getting to a bus stop or using the HARTline buses. It operates in the same areas and during the same hours as regular HARTline bus service.
The cost of this special service ranges from $2.30 to $4.80 per trip, one-way, depending on the pick up and drop off locations. Disabled people who must travel with a caretaker are allowed to bring the caretaker free of charge. Upon applying to qualify to utilize this service, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with a transit agency representative. The entire certification process takes approximately 21 days from the date the application is received. With a certification card, trips can be scheduled up to two weeks ahead of time.

- **Park-n-Ride**

Park-and-ride lots are convenient meeting points for passengers who have signed up for a vanpool or who have secured carpool-matching, through Bay Area Commuter Services, or for those who wish to utilize other public transit options. HARTline offers a series of park-and-ride lots located throughout the county, enabling commuters to secure free parking for their vehicle when they ride to work on one of HARTline's transit services, or when they convene with others in a vanpool. Among the locations within University North, one lot offers direct access to express bus service (see Map #9: HARTline Route Network with Park-and-Ride Lots).

**University Area Circulator Service**

Among the commuter services being considered for the University of South Florida campus and vicinity are the recently submitted Pilot Circulator Study, (described in Part Four), and the proposed rail connections described in the Mobility Project's Early Action Plan. Currently proposed alignments in the USF Area would provide direct transportation from the downtown Tampa and Port Tampa areas and the University Community and major area employers (see Map #10 USF Area Alignment Options).

**Bicycle Commuting in University North**

By improving bicycle facilities in the University North area, the potential for a reduction in traffic congestion, is greatly improved, especially around the Tampa campus of the University of South Florida, since thousands of faculty, staff and students live within a five mile radius.

Implementing secured bicycle parking is a potentially very effective option for reducing the need for automobile parking on USF's rapidly expanding campus. Ten bicycle parking devices could be installed in the same area now consumed by three automobile parking spaces, effectively tripling existing parking capacity. Also, two individuals can share one bike parking-device, thus turning
Map 9: HARTline Route Network with Park-and-Ride Lots

Source: 1999 Hillsborough Area Regional Transit
Map 10: USF Area Alignment Options

LEGEND

- Existing Rail
- Major Roads
- USF Area
- Rail Alignment Options

Source: 1999 Mobility Project

Source: 1999 Mobility Project

Sources:

- 1999 Mobility Project
- Tampa Railroad Reference Map

Map Legend:

- Existing Rail
- Major Roads
- USF Area
- Rail Alignment Options
three car parking spaces into 20 bicycle parking spaces. Safe and protected bicycle parking would also enable residence hall occupants to keep bikes outdoors, and out of their rooms, reducing damage to the interior hallways of buildings on campus. Assigning bicycle parking spaces to incoming freshman, in lieu of allowing on-campus car parking during the first year of enrollment (as is the case at many universities around the country), might help the University of South Florida reduce the demand for future automobile parking, as the campus continues to grow.

**Flexible Work Environments**

Telecommuting refers to the option of an employee working at home or at an office close to home, on a full time or part time basis. Telecommuting is increasingly being embraced by more and more employers, as rapidly advancing telecommunications technologies enable people to work easily from home. The number of telecommuters in the US rose 15.7 million as of mid-1988, according to research conducted by Cyber Dialogue, a New York based research firm.

As a commute alternative, working from home offers many benefits and cost savings to both the employee and employer. For the employer, studies have shown increased employee productivity, reduced absenteeism, reduced employee turnover, and lower operating costs. Employees who telecommute report benefits ranging from increased job satisfaction and greater flexibility in meeting family commitments, to substantial cost savings from reduced drive distance and frequency of the work commute.

Another commute option available to some employees is the flexible work week, which refers to variations in the specific hours of the day, spent at the office. In lieu of relying on a consistent 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule of operation, many companies and employees are favorable to four day work weeks that allow employees to work longer hours each day, but fewer days per week. Another option is to allow starting and ending times to be staggered across certain work hours.

By staggering the acceptable work hours to avoid the peak hours of travel (for example, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.), employees can minimize the amount of time spent in traffic, further helping to reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality. Flexible work environments are favorable among employees who wish to maintain alternative ridesharing arrangements or transit schedules. They are also beneficial to those people juggling the variable demands of single-family households or other family responsibilities.
Legislative Benefits of Utilizing Transit

Employers now have an added tax-free benefit that they can offer their employees. Effective June of 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) made history, as the largest highway and mass transit bill ever passed. The Act provides more than $217 billion over six years. In the act are provisions which encourage employers to subsidize transit and vanpooling.

Under the previous highway bill, known as ISTEA, employers were allowed to give their workers either $65 a month for a transit pass or vanpool subsidy, or $100 a month for parking, tax-free, as part of a benefits package. TEA-21 continues that provision but also allows some new options (see Text Box on TEA-21 Transit Benefits). Employers may now allow employees to "cash-out" the value of employer-provided parking. The employee can decide between a maximum of $65 tax-free for transit fare or vanpool costs, or $100 taxable cash added to his/her paycheck. This gives employees the freedom of choice and tax savings while employers have a mechanism to reduce parking requirements.

**TEA-21 Transit Benefits**

Employers may provide up to $65 a month, $780 a year, to their employees as a tax-free benefit to commute by transit or vanpools. This money would be given in addition to compensation. To receive the tax benefit, the employer must simply keep receipts of money spent on the costs of subsidizing vanpools and/or bus passes.

Employers may now allow employees to use their pre-tax income to pay for transit or vanpool expenses up to the current tax-free maximum ($65/month). This would result in substantial tax savings to both the employee and employer. Employees would save on income taxes and employers would save on payroll taxes. If desired, the employer can also match a portion of what the employee has deducted.
Part Four

University North Transportation Initiative in Context:

This section is intended to illustrate the unique characteristics of the service area of the University North Transportation Initiative, and describe the overlying political, geographical, and employment conditions that make the transportation operations in University North somewhat more complex than in other TMA service areas.

**Political Jurisdictions**

Unlike many of the other TMAs in the Tampa Bay region, the UNTI is unique in its geographical and political complexity (See Map #11: Political Jurisdictions). Its service area overlays multiple government jurisdictions and houses several distinct activity centers. Land development and the ownership and maintenance of the transportation system is controlled in University North by a combination of the state of Florida, Hillsborough County, the City of Tampa, the City of Temple Terrace, and the University of South Florida. Land development and transportation service is also affected by activity in neighboring Pasco County. The UNTI has observed that from time to time, problems in the development of an efficient transportation system in University North result when there is a lack of communication and coordination among neighboring jurisdictions.

The diverse combination of land uses that define the UNTI service area includes agricultural, industrial, commercial, single-family, and multi-family residential uses, each of which generate discrete traffic

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**University North Conditions**

- Multi-jurisdictional area includes the City of Tampa, City of Temple Terrace, and Hillsborough County.
- Proximity to Pasco County line; affected by growth and development in adjacent county.
- Mixture of industrial, commercial and service employment sectors within region.
- Large and rapidly growing residential areas, ranging from low-income (University Community Area) to upper middle-class areas.
- Many large employment and traffic-generating W, UAB, Great Savannah, etc.
- Many highly congested roads; transit/truck route conflicts in the northern portion of the service area.
Map 11: University North Political Jurisdictions

Source: 1999 UNTI
patterns. Recent annexations by the City of Tampa in the northern regions of the UNTI service area and beyond have come on the heels of the rapid residential growth and commercial development along Bruce B. Downs Boulevard. These new developments, and the emerging network of civic and residential associations, add to the complexity of this region. Recent and planned expansions of some of the region's primary destinations (including the University of South Florida, the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, and Busch Gardens Tampa Bay) will continue to affect the transportation climate in University North.

Pasco County Influences

Geographic proximity to the Pasco County border has an effect on the traffic conditions in the UNTI service area. Few roads exist to disperse the volume of traffic generated in—or passing through—southern Pasco County and northeast Hillsborough County (See Map #12, Major Through Roads). As a result, much of the traffic is contained within four major north/south corridors: Interstates 275 and 75, and Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, and Livingston Avenue. The absence of any east-west arterial roadways in this region also contributes to the heavier volumes along the existing north/south roads. As the “New Tampa” community continues to grow, generating many more additional daily trips, the need to provide new avenues for travel, will intensify.

At the time the 1990 Census was tabulated, 16,445 Pasco County residents, or 17% of Pasco County residents, reported working in Hillsborough County. This compares to 3,867 Hillsborough County residents, or less than 1% of Hillsborough County residents, working in Pasco County. Since 1990, Pasco County has experienced a boom in residential development in the south central part of the county. As a result, the year 2000 Census may reflect more significant reliance by Pasco residents upon jobs in Hillsborough County, increasing the number and proportion of Pasco residents commuting to Hillsborough County each day.

The Hillsborough County 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan indicates that this growth in Hillsborough County traffic volumes will warrant the widening of several roads in the county, where they connect with Pasco County. This includes the widening of Bruce B. Downs Boulevard to six lanes and the widening of I-275 to six lanes.

Roadway Level-of-Service and Available Capacity on UNTI Roadways

Hillsborough County has compiled a list of major roadway segments as part of its Concurrency Management System Inventory (see Map #13: University North
Road Inventory). The list is designed to provide a description of traffic conditions, as they existed as of December 1998. The roadways identified on the list include those in the unincorporated areas of Hillsborough County, and those segments in the City of Tampa that are designated County Roads or are part of the State Road System. The road inventory includes each road segment, its daily operating capacity, the peak hour volume, and the average-annual daily trip volume (AADT), as shown on the following table (see Table IV-2 Level of Service Inventory Report). Peak hour volumes are important to note, because large volumes of traffic due to inadequate roadway capacity that accrue during a short period of time, may take long periods of time to dissipate. This results in longer periods of congestion during the morning and evening commutes (see Map #14, on Peak Hour Volumes).

Map #15, Level of Service Standard of Select Tampa Roadways, illustrates the current level-of-service for each road segment that traverses or impacts the UNTI service area (see also, Table IV-1: LOS Selected Segments). The Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element requires the County to maintain a minimum peak hour level of service standard that does not exceed a LOS-D, for arterials or collectors, or a LOS-E for roadways designated as Special Transit Corridors.

Table IV-2: LOS Selected Segments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th># of Lanes</th>
<th>1998 LOS</th>
<th>1998 Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bearss Ave.</td>
<td>Nebraska to Livingston</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce B. Downs</td>
<td>Fowler to 42nd Street</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce B. Downs</td>
<td>42nd Street to Cross Creek Blvd.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busch Blvd.</td>
<td>Nebraska to 40th Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Fletcher Ave.</td>
<td>Nebraska to 56th Street</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>126%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fowler Ave.</td>
<td>Florida to 30th Street</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fowler Ave.</td>
<td>30th Street to 56th Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>115%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56th Street</td>
<td>Harney Rd. to Fowler</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Special Transit Corridors are those roadways generally parallel to and within one-half mile of a rail or roadway lane reserved for multi-passenger vehicles which service large volumes of home/work trips during the peak travel hours.
Map 13: University North Road Inventory

LEGEND

UNTI Boundary
City of Tampa
Temple Terrace
Unincorporated

Existing Lanes and Road Type
2 lane/ Undivided
4 lane / Divided
6 lane / Freeway
8 lane / Divided

Source: 1999 Hillsborough County Planning and Growth Management
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Exist_Type</th>
<th>AADT</th>
<th>Daily_Capacity</th>
<th>Pk_Hour_Volm</th>
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<td>795</td>
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<td>15th St</td>
<td>131ST AVE</td>
<td>Fletcher Ave</td>
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<td>11,110</td>
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<td>Fowler Ave</td>
<td>Fletcher Ave</td>
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<td>Countyline Rd</td>
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<td>56th St</td>
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<td>2U</td>
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<td>927</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data was taken from Hillsborough County 1998 Level of Service Analysis Report

The Levels of Service have been generated using the current guidelines of the FDOT Level of Service (LOS) Generalized Tables and Highway Capacity Manual (HCM).
However, shown as the dark-red area on the map, it is clear that some of the primary roadways in University North are operating at a level of service F. For instance, from Nebraska (US 41) Avenue to Interstate 75, Fletcher Avenue is classified as a LOS-F, with the Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT) exceeding Daily Capacity for all segment links. The data for three segments of this roadway indicate the heavy volumes and congested conditions:

- From Nebraska Avenue to 30th Street, the daily capacity is 30,176; AADT is 43,690; and 3,976 vehicles travel this segment during peak hours.
- From 30th Street to 56th Street, the daily capacity is 30,176; AADT is 40,312; and 3,668 vehicles travel this segment during peak hours.
- From 56th Street to Interstate 75, the daily capacity is 34,648; AADT is 36,910; and a total of 3,359 vehicles travel this segment during peak hours.

East of Interstate-75, however, where Fletcher Avenue becomes Morris Bridge Road [outside of the UNTI service area], this facility begins to operate at a LOS-A. Along this two-lane undivided facility from the Interstate to the Pasco County line, the AADT is only 798 trips, with a daily capacity of 18,591. The peak hour volume is 74 vehicles. It is the only facility segment in the University North region that operates under these conditions.

Map 15 also indicates that Fowler Avenue, currently a six-lane divided highway, is operating at a LOS-F from 56th Street to 30th Street [or Bruce B. Downs Blvd.]. This primary arterial, which borders the University of South Florida and provides regional access to some of the major employment sites in the region, has a daily capacity of 48,582 but an AADT of 54,311 and a peak hour traffic volume of 4,942 vehicles. West of 30th Street and to Interstate-275, Fowler Avenue has been widened to an 8-lane divided facility, and currently operates at a level-of-service D. The capacity on this portion of the roadway is 59,242 although the AADT is currently 54,751 and the peak-hour traffic volume is 4,982.

This facility is not only a heavily traveled corridor, it is also a policy constrained corridor, which means that the Florida Department of Transportation's policy prohibits this road from being widened any further. As more jobs, educational opportunities, or residential trips are generated within this region, Fowler Avenue will continue to become increasingly congested, unless alternative measures are considered and implemented. Interestingly, this segment of Fowler Avenue is the only eight-lane divided highway in the University North region, including Interstates 75 and 275.

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xiv A facility is considered constrained when the FDOT will not widen it by two or more through-lanes because of physical, environmental, or policy reasons. Physical constraints include prohibitively expensive land immediately adjacent to a state highway; environmental and policy constraints include ecological, historical, archaeological, aesthetic, or social impacts that prevent the expansion.
Map 14: Peak Hour Volumes

Source: 1999 Hillsborough County Road Inventory
Map 15: Level of Service Standard Of Select Tampa Roadways
The Hillsborough County Concurrency Management System Annual Report (1997-1998) provides a list of remaining available roadway capacity, taking into account all developments that have currently been approved. The following map (see Map #16: Concurrency Management System (With Available Capacity and LOS) illustrates various roadway segments within and around the UNTI service area, including their capacity volumes after taking into account approved future developments. It is clear from the map that many of the primary roadways within University North are either at a level-of-service that indicates heavy congestion, or have already reached their upper limit on available capacity. Alternative transportation options for commuters throughout this area will become increasingly imperative as this portion of the city and county continues to grow (see text box on the Mobility Project's Early Action Plan).

**UNTI and Transit in University North**

Throughout the past few years, the UNTI has been active in advocating on behalf of HARTline, contacting HARTline concerning transit needs in University North, participating in HARTline workshops, including the Major Investment Study, and promoting and subsidizing vanpooling and the Guaranteed Ride Home program. The UNTI has supported transit development by conducting a survey to help improve the operations of the USF Bull Runner Shuttle. UNTI continues to promote transit service at a time when a great deal of public discussion is occurring, regarding financing a rail system, and in a setting where three percent of the Hillsborough community rides transit. This varies from 15% in neighborhoods of highest ridership to less than 1% in neighborhoods where greater affluence and more sprawling development may make SOV travel more convenient.

### Mobility MIS Early Action Plan

Among the improvements within the MPO’s Mobility MIS’ Early Action Plan are the following:

- **Bus** - Improvements in bus service coverage and frequencies so that most routes will operate every 15 and 30 minutes, with an increase in HART’s bus fleet from 173 vehicles to 330 vehicles.
- **Rail** - Passenger rail service from downtown Tampa to USF or from downtown Tampa to Port Tampa, with new Park and Ride facilities located at several rail stations along these two routes. The trains will travel in existing rail corridors, to insure minimal neighborhood disruption. The Tampa-Ybor City Electric Streetcar will be completed from Ybor City to the Tampa Convention Center and north through downtown Tampa.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian** - Several areas have been targeted for bike and pedestrian paths, bikeways, bike lanes and greenways, which will be made safer through the “police on bikes” program implementation by 2008.
Map 16: Concurrency Management System
(With Available Capacity and Level of Service)

Source: 1999 Hillsborough County Roadway Inventory and Level of Service Report
The UNTI has also sponsored individualized customer assistance for using public transportation through the University North Commuter Center, in which an average of over 900 documented interactions of customer assistance take place each quarter. The Commuter Center is one of the top pass outlets for the sale of HART passes, with over $4,000 worth of passes sold each month.

The UNTI Board has discussed the localized needs for restored and improved HART bus service, especially the needs for longer daily service duration to enable second and third-shift workers to use the bus. There is a pressing need for better fixed-route coverage to areas that currently have minimal or no service, and for express bus service from University North to other major destination centers throughout the county.

Express and Circulator Bus Service

The primary market for express bus service from residential areas in University North to other major destination centers are commuters who drive to work. In the late 1980's, HART implemented an express bus service from New Tampa to downtown Tampa. The service was discontinued due to low ridership; however, it is believed that the development conditions in New Tampa and elsewhere, which have changed dramatically over the last decade, warrant a renewed look at express bus service possibilities. Among these possibilities might be service that runs within the University North area to connect residential areas to shopping, medical, employment, school, and entertainment destinations.

Discussions within UNTI have included the concept of a transit circulator to serve major destinations within University North, in addition to greater coverage of service to major residential areas, such as those now located throughout New Tampa. Travelers in University North, including the elderly and youth, would be prime markets for this type of service. A recently completed proposal for a circulator system to service the University of South Florida was also funded and developed by UNTI, as described below.

University Circulator Shuttle Service (Proposed)

With thousands of faculty, staff and students living within a few miles of campus, the University of South Florida’s Tampa campus is a tremendous generator of traffic in the University North. It is estimated that 99% of university commuter travel to and from the campus is done by automobile and 84% are
The results of this pattern are traffic congestion on the major roads bordering the university and parking problems on campus.

Seeking a new solution to reduce traffic congestion around the university and lessen the parking demand on campus, the University North Transportation Initiative coordinated with the Center for Urban Transportation Research, USF Parking and Transportation Services, and USF Facilities Planning and Construction, to conduct a three-phase study that would determine the feasibility of operating an off-campus circulator shuttle service.

The goal of the Pilot Circulator Study was to achieve a balanced transportation system for the USF-Tampa campus by designing transit solutions that could accommodate future campus development with customer-oriented, viable mobility to and from campus. During the Pilot Circulator Study, three routes were identified (see Map # 17: Proposed University Circulator Service) to serve the greatest number of potential users. Over 2,000 students live within one-quarter mile of the three alternative routes and 3,163 students, who registered for classes in the fall of 1999, live within 3 miles of the university.xvi

- Route 1: North of campus, running on 42nd and 46th Streets and Skipper Road
- Route 2: East of campus, running on 50th and 51st Streets
- Route 3: West of campus, running on 131st Street, 22nd Street, Bearss Avenue and Bruce B. Downs Boulevard

The recommendation of the study, as endorsed by the UNTI Board, was to implement Route 1, which, among the three routes, reached the highest concentration of students—over 1,500 students within a quarter mile of the route. If it is successful, the other two routes would be implemented in the future as funding becomes available. The initial shuttle service is intended to be paid for by the University of South Florida through a fund provided to the City of Tampa to mitigate its impact on transportation in the University North area. Of the $6 million in the fund, $3 million is hoped to be earmarked for the shuttle service, with the other $3 million already allocated for road improvements to 40th Street. The UNTI study also recommended that the Pilot Circulator begin full implementation on August 1, 2000.

The next steps toward implementation of the Pilot Circulator service would include purchasing vehicles, developing a marketing campaign, identifying shuttle bus stops and refining routes and schedules. The Pilot Circulator Study is a prime example of UNTI’s efforts to reduce traffic congestion and improve air

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xv Pilot Circulator Tech Memo #1, Center for Urban Transportation Research: 1997.

xvi University of South Florida, Registrar’s Office, 1999.
Map 17: Proposed University Circulator Service

Source: 1999 UNTI & Center for Urban Transportation Research
quality in the University North through the provision of quality research and practical recommendations.

**Bicycle Needs in University North**

While the University North area does have bicycle lanes on several major roadways, there is a need to throughout this region for additional bicycle facilities to improve connectivity and encourage bicycling as a viable commute alternative (see Map 18, Bicycle Needs and Existing Facilities in University North). By improving bicycle facilities in the University North area, there is a tremendous potential to reduce traffic congestion, especially around the Tampa campus of the University of South Florida since thousands of faculty, staff and students live within a five mile radius.

In terms of on-road facilities, two types of bicycle facilities exist: 4ft. marked bike lanes and unmarked 14 feet or wider paved outside lanes. Marked bike lanes can be found on Fowler Avenue from 15th Street to US 301, 131st Avenue from Nebraska to 30th Street, 30th Street from Fletcher to Bearss Avenue, 42nd Street from Fletcher to Skipper Road, the entire length of US 301 in the University North area, and Morris Bridge Road starting from Fletcher Ave.

Fletcher Avenue from 30th Street to Nebraska Avenue and Nebraska Avenue from Fletcher to US 41 have an existing 14 feet or wider paved outside lane. Although there are no marked or identified bike lanes on these road segments, the wide outside lane does provide adequate space for bicyclists.

The University North is fortunate to have two excellent off-road bicycle facilities, Flatwoods and Morris Bridge parks. The Flatwoods bicycle facility is located between I-75 and Morris Bridge Road. There are 11 miles of paved paths, including a 7 mile loop, and several miles of unpaved, single-track trails through the woods. The paved paths and loops easily accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, and roller-bladers and have water coolers and shelters every few miles. Morris Bridge Park also provides several miles of off-road, single-track trails through the woods. Both parks provide a safe and motor vehicle-free bicycling environment.

According to Hillsborough County MPO’s 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan, several new bicycle facilities have been proposed for the University North. Already funded is a small project to continue the on-road bike lane on Fowler Avenue from US 301 to Harney Road. Other locations for on-road bike lanes include Livingston Avenue from Bearss Avenue to the county line, Bearss Avenue from Bruce B. Downs Boulevard to Nebraska Avenue, Bruce B. Downs Boulevard from I-75 to the county line, 50th Street from Fowler Avenue to
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY MPO
2020 LONG RANGE
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

BICYCLE NEEDS AND
EXISTING FACILITIES IN
UNIVERSITY NORTH AREA

- Urban Service Area
- MPO 2020 Roads
- FUTURE
- EXISTING
- Bicycle Facilities in Hillsborough County
- Existing 4 Ft Paved Shoulder/Bike Lane
- Existing 14 Ft (or wider) Paved Outside Lane
- Existing Off-Road Bike Facility
- Proposed Off-Road Facility
- Proposed On-Road Facility
- Funded Bicycle Facility
- Needed Bicycle Facility
- Jurisdictional Boundaries
  - Hillsborough County
  - Pinellas County
  - Plant City
  - Tampa
  - Temple Terrace
  - Hillsborough Bay

DATA SOURCES: Basemap, roads, water from Hillsborough County Engineering Services. Parcel lines and data from Hillsborough County Property Appraiser. Wetlands from SWFWMD, Significant Wildlife Habitat from Planning and Development Management based on satellite imagery. Only Wetlands greater than 40 acres depicted.

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ACCURACY: It is intended that the accuracy of this base map comply with U.S. national map accuracy standards. However, such accuracy is not guaranteed by the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission. This map is for illustrative purposes only. For the most current data and information, see the appropriate source.

Adopted Date: August 13, 1999
Map Printed: March 31, 1999
Author: Shelly Happel
Project: http://projects/shellyh/bikeneed.apr
Fletcher Avenue, 40th Street from Hillsborough Avenue to Fowler Avenue, 22nd Street from Hillsborough Avenue to Fowler Avenue, Bougainvillea Avenue from North Boulevard to 56th Street, Morris Bridge Road from Corey Lakes Boulevard to the Pasco County line, and Harney Road from Hillsborough Avenue to US 301/Main Street.

In terms of off-road facilities, in 1999-2000 construction of an off-road bike path along Bruce B. Downs Boulevard is scheduled to begin. The bike path will run parallel to the roadway but remain separated by a median. It will connect with the proposed bike lanes on Bruce B. Downs after the I-75 overpass.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler Ave.</td>
<td>15th Street</td>
<td>US 301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131st Ave.</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>30th Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th Street/BBD</td>
<td>Fletcher</td>
<td>Bearss Ave.</td>
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<td>42nd Street</td>
<td>Fletcher</td>
<td>Skipper Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 301</td>
<td>Entire Roadway Length</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris Bridge Road</td>
<td>Fletcher</td>
<td>County Line</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler Ave.</td>
<td>30th Street/BBD</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Ave.</td>
<td>Fletcher</td>
<td>US 41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV-5 Existing Off-Road Bike Facility

- Flatwoods Park
- Morris Bridge Park

Table IV-6 Proposed On-Road Facility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Livingston Ave.</td>
<td>Bearss Ave.</td>
<td>Pasco County line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Bearss Ave.</td>
<td>Bruce B. Downs Blvd.</td>
<td>Lake Magdalene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Bruce B. Downs Blvd.</td>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Pasco County line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40th Street</td>
<td>Hillsborough Ave.</td>
<td>Fowler Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd Street</td>
<td>Hillsborough Ave.</td>
<td>22nd Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Bougainvillea Ave.</td>
<td>North Boulevard</td>
<td>56th Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*50th Street</td>
<td>Fowler Ave.</td>
<td>Fletcher Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Morris Bridge Road</td>
<td>Cory Lakes Boulevard</td>
<td>Pasco County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Harney Road</td>
<td>Hillsborough Avenue</td>
<td>US 301/Main Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Listed on Bicycle Priority Needs: 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan
The Hillsborough County MPO has undertaken a needs assessment process to identify where pedestrian sidewalks are needed. As with many areas of Hillsborough County, the University North has a critical lack of sidewalks and connectivity between residential and commercial developments (see Map 19, Sidewalk Retrofits). The needed pedestrian facilities are ranked into five priority categories, as described below:

**Priority Level I:**

- Bearss Avenue from Skipper Road to Nebraska Avenue and from Bruce B. Downs Boulevard to Livingston Avenue,
- 131st Avenue from 15th Street to Nebraska Avenue,
- 22nd Street from 131st Avenue to Fletcher Avenue,
- Bruce B. Downs Boulevard (30th Street) from Fowler Avenue to Skipper Road,
- Skipper Road from Bruce B. Downs to 46th Street,
- Bougainvillea Avenue from 30th Street to McKinley Drive (40th Street),
- McKinley Drive from Busch Boulevard to Fowler Avenue,
- Fletcher Avenue from UCH to USF Recreation Area
- Fowler Avenue from 46th Street to 53rd Street and from Lettuce Lake Park to Hidden River Corporate Park, and
- 50th Street from Fowler to Fletcher Avenues
- 56th Street from Fowler to Fletcher Avenues

**Priority Level II:**

- Bruce B. Downs Boulevard from City of Tampa jurisdictional boundary to Tampa Palms City Plaza,
- Fletcher Avenue from the USF Recreational Area to I-75,
- Morris Bridge Road from Fowler Avenue to Fletcher Avenue,
- 46th Street from Bougainvillea Avenue to Fowler Avenue, and
- Fowler Avenue from existing sidewalk to Lettuce Lake Park
Priority Level III:

- Livingston Avenue from Bearss Avenue to Vandervort Road, and
- Bruce B. Downs Boulevard from Tampa Palms City Plaza to Tampa Palms Boulevard

Priority Level IV:

- Bruce B. Downs Boulevard from Tampa Palms Boulevard to Pebble Creek Boulevard

Priority Level V:

- Morris Bridge Road from Temple Terrace Highway to Fowler Avenue and from Fletcher Avenue to Morris Bridge Park.

University North Population Characteristics

Residential areas within the University North service boundary range from predominantly lower-income, rental communities in the vicinity of the USF Tampa Campus, to rapidly expanding upper middle class, owner-occupied gated communities. The Hillsborough County MPO estimates that by 2020 the population of the University North area will increase approximately 30 percent. The present and future expansion of the residential areas of the University North has and will continue to contribute significantly to increased levels of traffic congestion on main arterial roads. Currently, few public transit options are available to residents in the New Tampa area.

The 1995 population, based on Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) wholly within the UNTI service area, was 44,380. By the year 2020, it is estimated that the population will grow to 61,127, an increase of 37% (see Maps 20-23, Population). This addition of 16,747 residents will further exacerbate traffic congestion in the University North and highlight the need for both infrastructure improvements and commute alternatives.

Much of the population increase has occurred and is expected to occur in New Tampa, along Bruce B. Downs Boulevard. According to recent housing counts and information derived from the New Tampa Postal Station, New Tampa has surpassed the 10,000 mark for residential units. Nearly 1000 residential units
Map 20: Percent of Tampa Area Between the Ages of 18-24

Source: 1995 Census Population and Housing STF3A
Map 21: Percent of Tampa Area Between the Ages of 25-44

LEGEND

- UNTI Boundary

Percent of Tampa Population Between the Ages 25-44

- 37 to 100%
- 33 to 37%
- 30 to 33%
- 26 to 30%
- 0 to 26%

Source: 1995 Census Population and Housing STF3A
Map 22: Percent of Tampa Area Between the Ages of 45-64

Source: 1995 Census Population and Housing STF3A
Map 23: Percent of Tampa Area Aged 65 and Up

LEGEND
- UNTI Boundary
- Unincorporated
- Major Roads

Percent of Tampa Population Age 65 & Up
- 37 to 100%
- 16 to 37%
- 11 to 16%
- 8 to 11%
- 0 to 6%

Source: 1995 Census Population and Housing STF3A
have been added since October of 1998. The 1999 census tract estimate for New Tampa shows 27,150 people and a growth rate close to 120% in just nine years.xvii

Even with the proposed widening of Bruce B. Downs Boulevard taken into account, the traffic conditions are likely to worsen. Already traffic on the roadway is severely congested during peak hours, especially at the I-75 interchange. Currently, there are no HARTline routes that extend into the New Tampa area. As a result, single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel is the most prevalent commute mode, especially for the two-car, dual-income, middle-class families that characterize the area. Furthermore, the growth of adjacent communities in nearby Pasco County will also contribute to increased traffic congestion as more Pasco residents commute to Hillsborough County for work.

The University North area’s highest concentration of individuals under the age of 18 can be found in New Tampa and in the residential areas south of the University of South Florida. These numbers may represent higher needs for individual trips required by a non-driver aged population, whether for school activities, leisure, or work trips. There is a far higher percentage of individuals in the University North between the ages of 18 and 24. This is attributable to the presence of the University of South Florida in the heart of the region, as well as the residential areas south of the university and in New Tampa. According to the USF Registrar, there are currently 1,132 students living on campus, and there are in total, 3,163 students living in a 3 mile radius, and 5,680 within a five mile radius of the Tampa campus (see Map #24: USF Student Resident Location).

The University North area is also home to many individuals 65 and older who reside in the many retirement and nursing home facilities. An aging population may represent a need for additional transit service, should these citizens require special assistance to move about the area.

Within the UNTI service area, the distribution of gender is largely balanced, with 51% of the residents within the block groups being female, and 49% being male. Within the core areas that house more of the welfare-recipients, however, the percentages of women-headed-households are notably higher. This correlates to findings that the profile of the average Florida adult recipient of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) is a 30-year old single mother of two, with partial work experience but who may lack a high-school diploma.xviii

According to author Alan Pisarski, in a recent national compilation of data on commuting trends, women's daily trips have increased faster than men's, with

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xvii Neighborhood News, August 1999, Volume 7, Issue 8
Map 24: USF Student Residence Location within 5 Miles of USF

1 Dot = 1 Student

- Zipcode Boundaries
- 5 mile radius
- USF Tampa Campus
- UNTI Boundary

5,680 Students within 5 miles of USF

* It is important to note that the dots do not show the exact residential location of each student. Residential locations within each zipcode are represented by dots distributed randomly throughout that zipcode.

** Areas of no residential population were excluded in the dot density calculation. This includes golf courses, preservation areas, theme parks, and office/industrial parks.

Compiled by: University North Transportation Initiative
Source: USF Registrar, 1999 data
women making an average of 3.13 trips per day, versus 3.04 trips per day for men. Trip length for men was also found to be longer, on average, than the length of trips made by women. These two factors combined may mean that women are making more, and shorter trips, possibly associated with shopping trips, dependent care drop-off and pick-up, and other errands linked to the work commute.

Another special population found in the University North, are those who earn less than $10,000 per year. The highest concentration of these individuals can be found in the areas to the west and south of the University of South Florida. There are also many WAGES participants living in University North. This population is significant to the UNTI since a preponderance of WAGES participants lack access to an automobile, and sustaining employment is highly dependent on transportation to and from the work site and day-care facilities.

WAGES Populations

In recent program guidance for the WAGES (Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency) act, jointly developed by the US Departments of Health & Human Services, Labor, and Transportation, transportation was identified as one of the main challenges facing people making the transition from welfare to work. Nationally, the geographic disparity between location of entry-level jobs and the residences of most welfare recipients exacerbates this challenge: two-thirds of new jobs are in the suburbs, but three-fourths of welfare recipients live in rural areas or central cities. Often times, the entry-level jobs secured by people in a welfare-to-work environment, are second and third-shift positions, requiring evening or weekend work hours. Because many of these employees do not own their own automobile, they comprise a large segment of the transit-dependent population. Absence of public transportation service during the evening and nighttime hours or during weekends, further complicates their commute to and from employment sites.

In University North, the locations of WAGES residents who earn less than $10,000 are shown on the following map (see Map #25: WAGES Clients Locations). The numbers of employment sites employing WAGES recipients is also illustrated, to give a visual depiction of the distribution of these transit-dependent populations within the UNTI service area.

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xxi United States Department of Transportation, Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Labor: Use of TANF and WtW Funds for Transportation, May 4, 1998.
The challenge of securing a commute option to and from the employment site is not the only transportation issue facing this segment of the population. Often, it is a combination of transportation mode, job location, and training that combine to make securing employment an ongoing challenge. Additional challenges facing some areas within the UNTI service boundary are described below.

University Area Community

The Florida Center for Community Design, at the University of South Florida, concludes that the University Community Area (which lies to the west of Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, and falls within the UNTI service area, in part) has significant potential for revitalization and redevelopment because of its proximity to the University of South Florida, the University Mall, and both the VA and University Community Hospitals. Unfortunately, the lack of a long range plan and ad hoc zoning activities have left the University Community Area with incompatible land use adjacencies, many neglected and deteriorated apartment buildings and duplexes, and only remnants of a formerly vibrant residential community.\textsuperscript{xii}

A critical lack of sidewalks, curbs and other pedestrian amenities pose safety concerns serious for residents. However, land-owners and owners of housing complexes are reluctant to reinvest because of the perceived inability to generate rental revenue and perceptions of high crime.

The Master Plan calls for a physical and aesthetic renovation of the area in order to promote subsequent positive development, such as an improved community identity, reduced crime and economic development. Safety is a primary concern throughout the report, particularly in regard to the need for sidewalks for the pedestrian dependent population.

The general conclusions of the Florida Center has been divided into four main goals:

- build new community infrastructure, especially for the pedestrian commuter;
- eliminate economically obsolete land uses, as the majority of duplexes and small apartment complexes are poorly maintained;
- create community identity through physical improvements such as landscaping, gateways, sidewalks, signage, and street trees to help define community territory and discourage crime; and
- insure real community input.

\textsuperscript{xii} University Area Community: Master Plan for Physical Revitalization, Florida Center for Urban Design, 1997: xiii.
Redevelopment must be accompanied by substantial buy-in by area residents and property owners. Successful community revival can only occur when local participation takes place. Part of that input comes through local community agencies, like the University Area CDC, described below.

- **University Area CDC**

The mission of the University Area Community Development Corporation is to create a self-sustaining community, by helping to improve the quality of life for residents and businesses in the at-risk neighborhoods surrounding the USF Tampa campus. This agency was created in 1998, by the USF Area Community Civic Association, a nonprofit organization comprised of more than 4,000 area residents and other concerned citizens. The corporation funds, manages, and programs the University Area Community Center.

- **University Area Community Center**

   The Community Center is a 48,000 square-foot family facility, located between Fletcher Avenue and Bearss Avenue, on North 22nd Street. It is County-owned, and will house recreational programs for all ages, as well as literacy, GED and vocational educational programs for adults. The Center will offer parenting courses and pre-K day school, as well as classes on crime-prevention, self-development, conflict-resolution, small business-development, and arts and culture.

**University North Employment Characteristics**

A 1997 survey conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that many cities in America do not have available transportation services to get lower-wage earners to and from their places of employment. Among the issues noted were inadequate hours of operation along local bus schedules, unaffordable bus passes, the dearth of public transportation (bus) routes to principle center of employment, long commute times, and safety concerns in the vicinity of bus stops and transfer areas. The effects of inadequate transportation services extend throughout the community at large and have the potential to directly and negatively bear on an area's economic well-being.

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xxiii Ibid. xiv-xv.
The University North service area houses many service-sector employers operating specifically within the hospitality and entertainment industries (see Map #26: Major Employers). Encompassing one of the country's top universities, a major regional mall, four hospitals (including a veteran's administration hospital), multiple hotels and motels, and the internationally renown Busch Gardens Theme Park, the University North service area has a complex distribution of employment needs. While the presence of the University of South Florida attracts a higher-wage earning population to fill faculty and staff positions, the many service-sector jobs in the vicinity of the university are lower-wage positions, attracting a different population of employees with varying transportation needs.

The round-the-clock operations of the four local hospitals creates the need for employees to arrive for or depart from their hospital shifts at nontraditional work hours. Second- and third-shift employees who may also be transit dependent, may be unable to retain employment at these locations because they cannot get access to public transportation beyond the normal hours of transit operation. Employee retention during these shifts has been identified as one of the most significant personnel problems facing the local hospitals.

While the other TMO/TMIs in the Tampa Bay region operate in areas dominated by dense commercial and service land uses, the University North area contains industrial, commercial, service, and residential areas. The job density in this region, compared to the business districts in the county, however, is much lower (see Map #27, Hillsborough County Employment), attributable, in part, to its more suburban environment. The following table (IV-9) illustrates the growth in employment and job density (employees per square mile) within the UNTI, compared with that of the Westshore Business District and the Downtown Tampa area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Westshore Business District</th>
<th>Downtown Tampa Business District</th>
<th>University North Business District</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Density</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>70,793</td>
<td>14,209</td>
<td>27,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>99,940</td>
<td>56,752</td>
<td>52,290</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>142,560</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>172,350</td>
<td>99,904</td>
<td>94,330</td>
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Map 26: Major Employers in University North Service Area

Source: 1999 UNTI
Map 27: Hillsborough County Employment

WESTSHORE
Number of Jobs
1995  2010  2020
99,940  142,560  172,350

Density (Jobs per Square Mile)
1995  2010  2020
56,752  83,747  99,904
Density Change (1995-2020)
43,152

DOWNTOWN
Number of Jobs
1995  2010  2020
52,290  78,370  94,330

Density (Jobs per Square Mile)
1995  2010  2020
65,527  92,231  110,582
Density Change (1995-2020)
45,055

Legend
- Downtown
- Business District
- Westshore
- Business District
- University North
- Business District

Major Roads
UNTI Boundary

Data was collected from the Hillsborough County Planning Commission, by Census Tract. Current as of September, 1998.
In 1995, there were approximately 46,000 employees working in the UNTI region; 4,807 in the industrial sector, 8,268 in the commercial sector, and 32,851 in the service sector. Given the consistent percentages assumed for growth, it is estimated by the Hillsborough MPO that in 2020, there will be 80,677 employees working in the University North; 7,566 in the industrial sector, 15,510 in the commercial sector, and 57,601 in the service sector (see charts below).

A 75% increase in the number of total employees commuting to the University North could potentially negatively affect travel conditions throughout this region. As of 1998, sections of the major arterial roads in the University North, Bearss, Fowler, and Fletcher Avenues, 56th Street, and Busch Boulevard, are already operating at low levels of service and near maximum capacity (see table), although some of the road improvement projects along these roadways are already scheduled in the TIP and LRTP.

**Employment Strategies & Local Pilot Programs**

One of the most effective approaches to implementing ridesharing and promoting alternatives available to commuters, is through the place of employment. The following section describes some of the local initiatives that have been underway in University North to help solve the transportation challenges facing workers.

In 1998, the STAR pilot program was initiated by the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa (CDC). The program was developed to provide training for employees seeking employment in the hospitality industry. Participating employers included Busch Gardens, Best Western Comfort Center, Quality Suites, Embassy Suites, the University of South Florida, and others. Other project
partners included all local area hotels, Bay Area Commuter Van Services, the YMCA, Goodwill Industries, and the City and County.

The CDC spent several weeks at the program's onset, conducting community outreach activities in the regions throughout Northeast Tampa, and south throughout Temple Terrace and Sulfur Springs areas. Twenty-five applicants for the program resulted in a total of 12 participants attending the training, and a total of 10 people completing the 20-hour training program. A job fair was held at Busch Gardens to introduce participants to the corporations involved, and to provide them with an opportunity to interview for the positions for which they were interested. Transportation to and from the training programs and continuing classes was provided by BACS.

A survey conducted by the University North Transportation Initiative at the time that this pilot program was launched revealed an ongoing need among employers to secure and retain their entry-level employees. Among the larger area employers in need of entry-level employees were: USF, Busch Gardens, University Mall, University Community Hospital, the VA Hospital. Many medium-sized businesses (Target, La Quinta, Sleep Inn, Hampton Inns, Extended Stay, Marriott, Amerisuites), and smaller establishments (such as PetSmart, McDonalds, Wendy's, and Hardees) also indicated the need for such a training program to provide qualified workers.

Following the successful completion of the STAR Pilot Program, the organizing committee decided to further develop the pilot into an ongoing training program. The name was changed to H.E.L.P., which refers to the Hospitality Employment and Leadership Program, and which also reflects the target employers for whose jobs the participants are largely being trained. Due to the proliferation of hotels and motels throughout University North, it was decided that this area would be the first target location for the project. The project is currently in its second year, and is reporting high numbers of trained participants placed in employment sites throughout the North Tampa vicinity.
Moving Forward

The level of awareness of transportation options seems to be increasing, throughout society. Television commercials advertise computers and cellular service, by showing businessmen in their bathrobes who conduct meetings from their living rooms through telecommuting. New billboards for major auto manufacturers now promote carpooling among the useful functions of their sport-utility vehicles. But despite increased awareness, behaviors are often slow to change, and the challenge remains to continue on a campaign of education and ongoing advocacy for implementation of the many different transportation solutions to congestion.

Clearly for moving forward in today's economic climate presents real challenges for employers seeking to attract and retain qualified employees. In Northeast Tampa, an area categorized by rapid growth in residential and commercial development, a high degree of service sector employment, and ever-increasing congestion on its roadways, one of the primary strategies is by targeting our area's major employers and seeking their involvement in the push for transportation solutions. The University North Transportation Initiative continues to engage commuters and employers alike, to consider alternative transportation options, that they might help to improve the state of our commute.
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For More Information

Yes, I'm Interested:

Please send me more information about the following (check all that apply):

☐ Future road projects in Northeast Tampa and Hillsborough County
☐ Mobility MIS project plans and schedules
☐ HARTline services
☐ Rideshare alternatives for my employees.
☐ Free Zip Code Analysis for my company
☐ Federal tax incentives, to provide rideshare alternatives for employees
☐ Put me on the list to receive the monthly Transportation Information Services (TIS) Update, for information regarding transportation issues facing this community.

☐ I would like the University North Transportation Initiative to schedule a Transportation Presentation at my company.

Name: ________________________________
Title: __________________________________
Company: ______________________________
Address: _______________________________
Phone Number/Email: ____________________

Mail to:
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