



# US 27 CLEWISTON Corridor Vision Plan



MARCH 2021

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# I. Executive Summary

The purpose of this vision plan is to develop an integrated land use and transportation 50 year vision for a 6.5-mile stretch of US 27/SR 80 extending from County Road 720 to the Hendry/Palm Beach County line through the City of Clewiston.

The City of Clewiston is a quaint, small town settled in the early twentieth century on the shores of Lake Okeechobee. John Nolen, a nationally renowned landscape architect, developed the growth plan for the community in 1925. The plan was intended to ensure that early and prospective settlers would be able to enjoy the area's natural amenities, preserve land for agricultural activity, and also allow for residential and nonresidential development. The City's recognizable form has largely been preserved since the plan was completed in 1926. The City has successfully maintained the area's natural amenities, agricultural activity, and supported new development while maintaining the community's small town charm nearly 100 years later.

Clewiston was planned and built with US 27 crossing it from east to west. The Nolen Plan envisioned the land along the highway as a commercial corridor. As the State of Florida grows, and the role of US 27 in the economy of the state gets stronger, it is important to consider the fate of the City of Clewiston if and when future roadway improvements (widening) are needed. The Airlignes Airport expansion has also created more opportunities for growth in the immediate area, adding to the urgency of planning the future of the US 27 corridor. This Corridor Vision Plan looks into that future to devise solutions to those inevitable growing pains.

The preparation of this Corridor Vision Plan included substantial public input. Residents and business owners had an opportunity to express

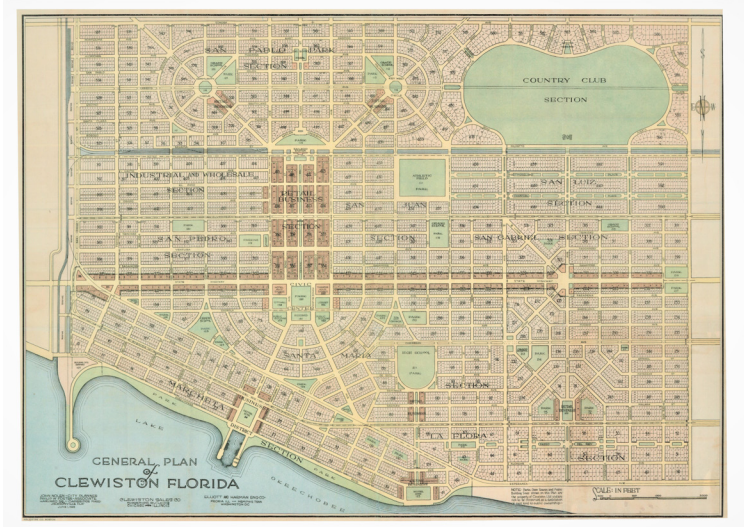
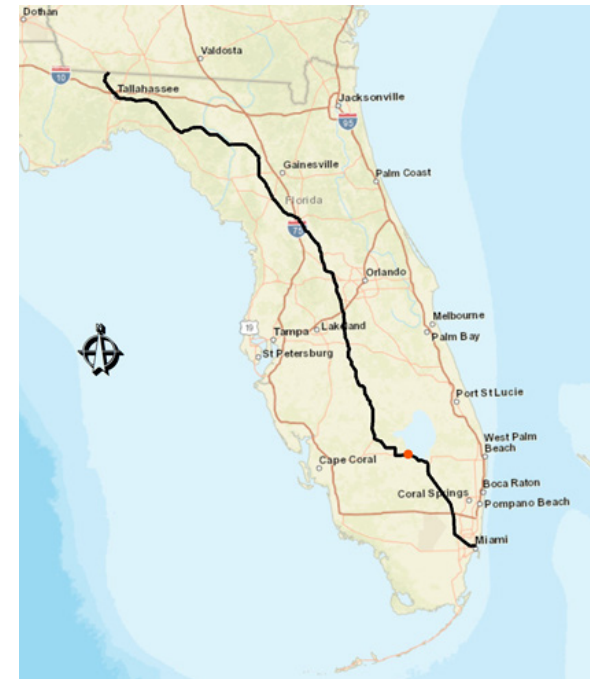
their ideas through online surveys, a walk-about, and public workshops. Based on information provided by the public, as well as technical research and review of existing data and information, the team concluded that the main priorities in the area are to:

- Make US 27 safer by reducing the speed of traffic and upgrading the roadway and intersections to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Protect the character of the City of Clewiston, especially as it expands to the west.
- Study the possibility of establishing an alternative route to reduce the amount of heavy trucks driving through the City
- Highlight the presence of the Waterfront and regionally significant L.O.S.T. trail by providing clear access and wayfinding from US 27
- Define the city's east and west gateways
- Revitalize the city core into a vibrant downtown

This document contains the US 27 Clewiston Corridor Vision Plan and the Action Plan. Refer to the US 27 Clewiston Existing Conditions Report for detailed background information and maps.

*"The expansion of the airport is expected to create more than 10,000 jobs during the construction phase and the establishment of the Airlignes International Airport will create 1,700 long-term jobs for Hendry County and surrounding communities." Ajot.com*

US 27 in Florida



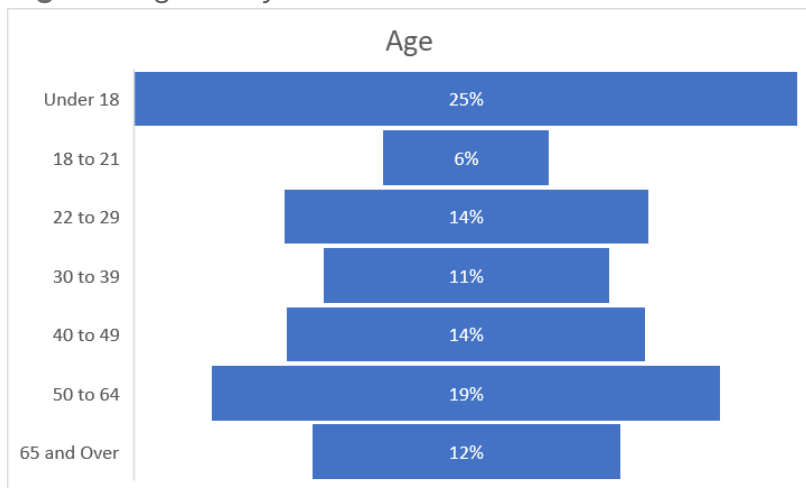
John Nolen's Plan for the City of Clewiston

# II. Existing Conditions Summary

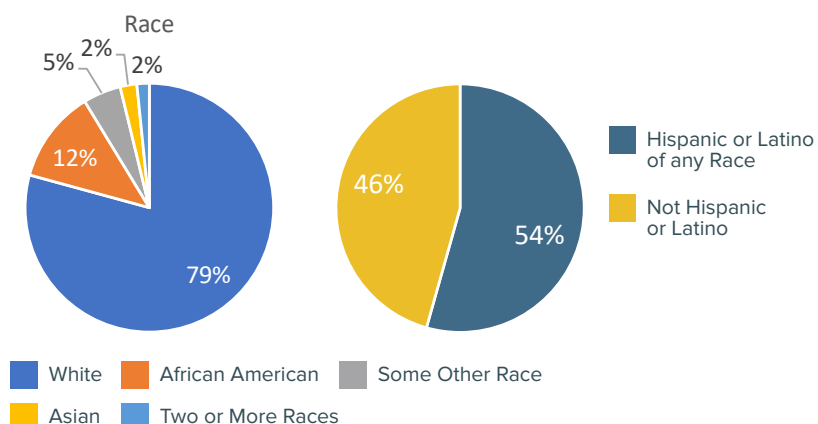
## SOCIODEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Clewiston has a population of 8,021 (2020), but the study area as a whole amounts to more than 10,000 residents. The graphics on this page provide a glimpse of the population within the study area.

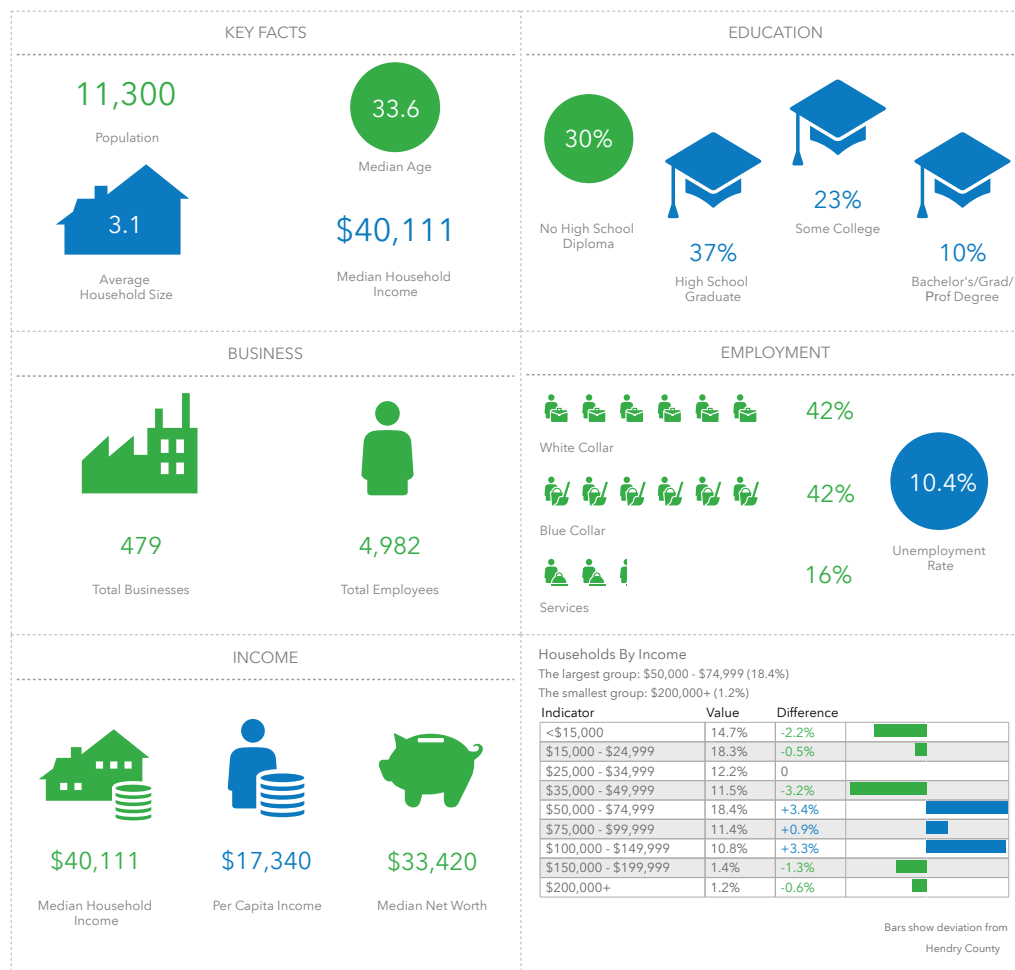
**Figure 1 Age Analysis**



**Figure 2 Race and Ethnicity Analysis**



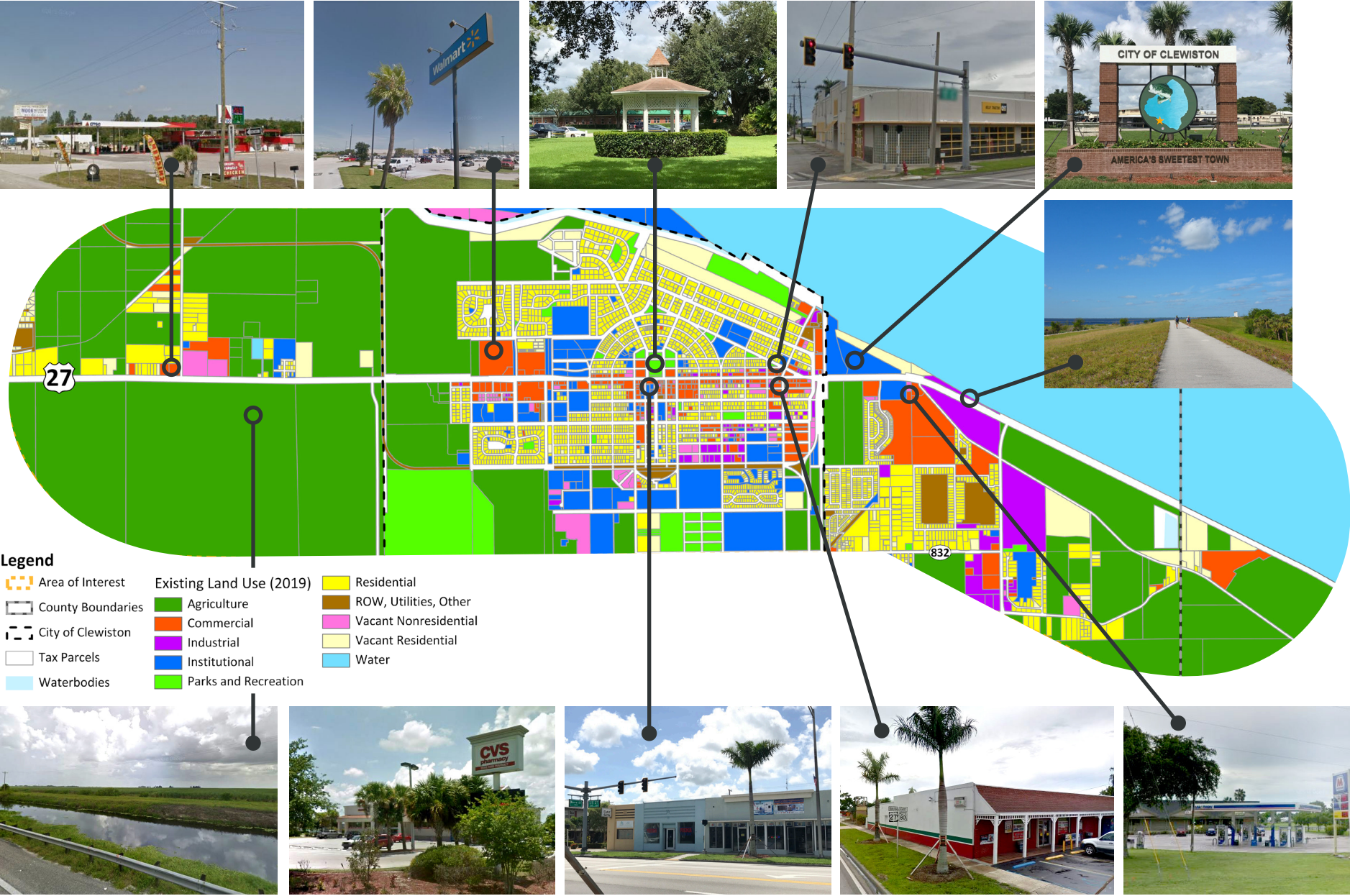
**Figure 3 Key Demographic Facts**



The Hispanic population has grown significantly between 2000 and 2018 (from 27.99% to 54.37%). The rapid growth of this group has helped change the demographics of the Study Area into a minority majority community.

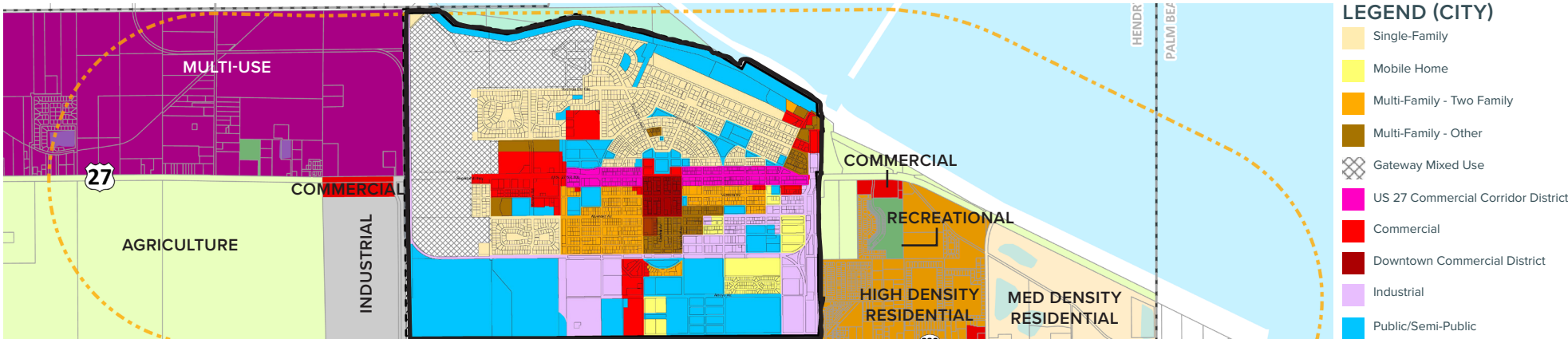


# EXISTING LAND USE

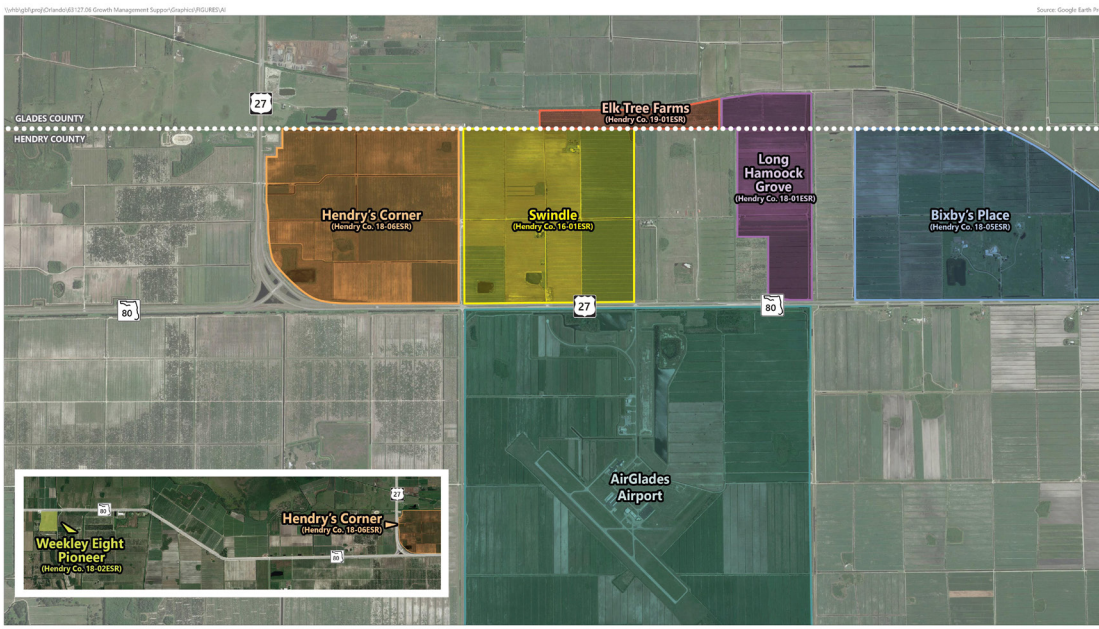




# FUTURE GROWTH



The City of Clewiston Future Land Use Map classifies the land along US 27 as Gateway Mixed-Use from the west city limits to Flagler St, Commercial from Flagler St to Lopez Sr, US 27 Commercial Corridor District from Lopez St to WC Owen Av and from Deane Duff Av to San Diego St, Downtown Commercial District from WC Owen Av to Deane Duff Av on the south side and Public and Commercial on the north side.



The Airglades Airport began construction on a new US Customs and Border Protection facility for the purpose of sending and receiving international perishable cargo. Several sites in the vicinity of the airport have begun seeking entitlements for residential, commercial, and industrial development trying to capitalize on the economic growth expected to come with the expansion of the Airport.

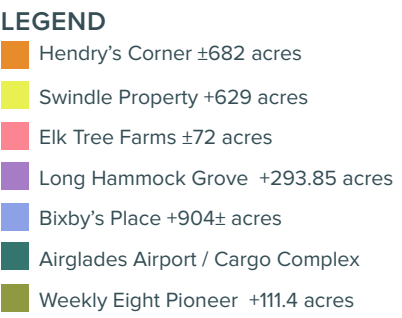
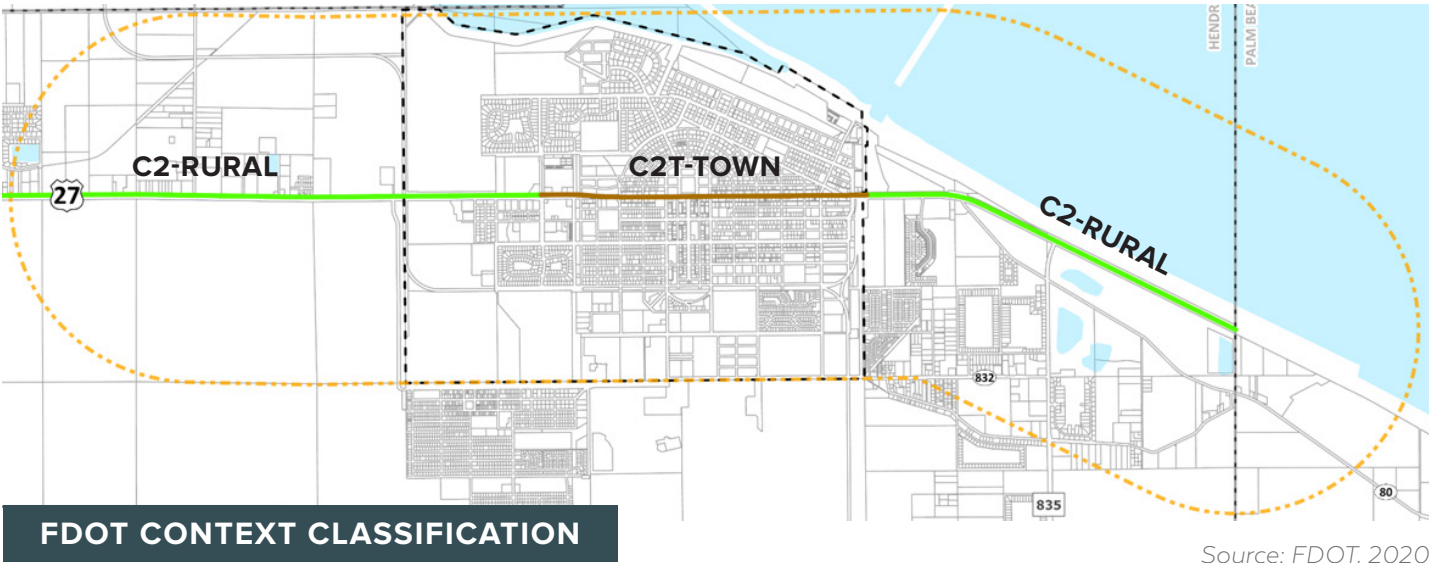


Figure 1  
East Hendry County/Glades County  
Potential Future Development

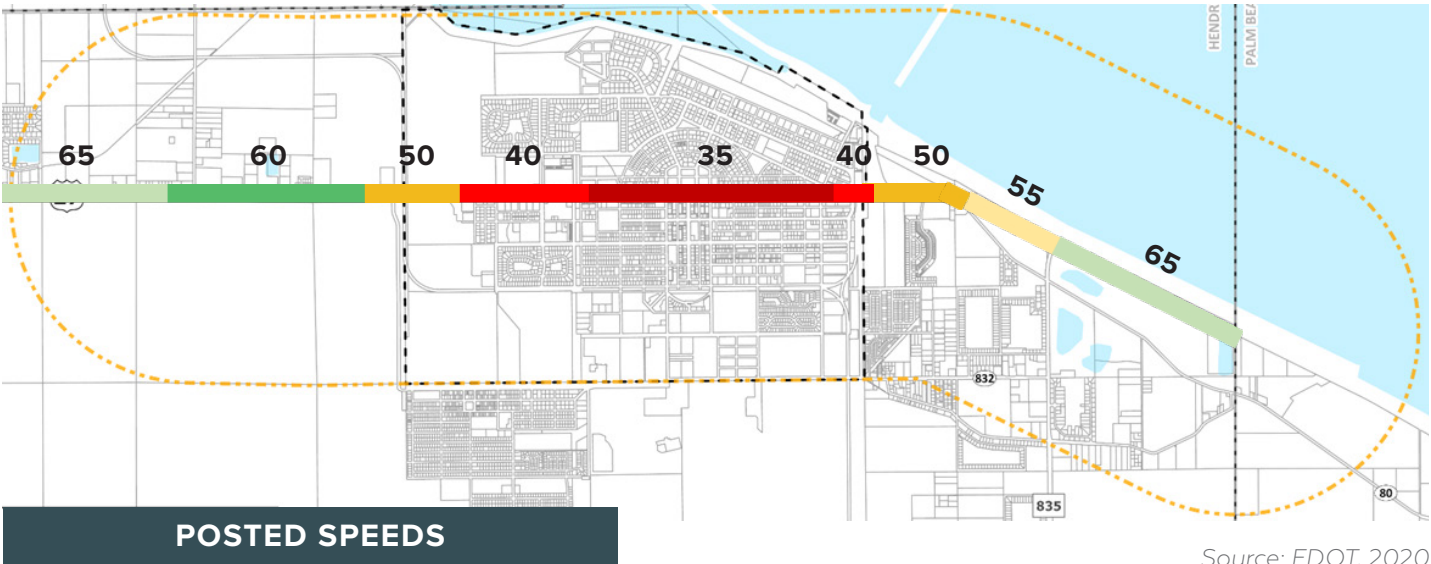


# TRANSPORTATION



Source: FDOT, 2020

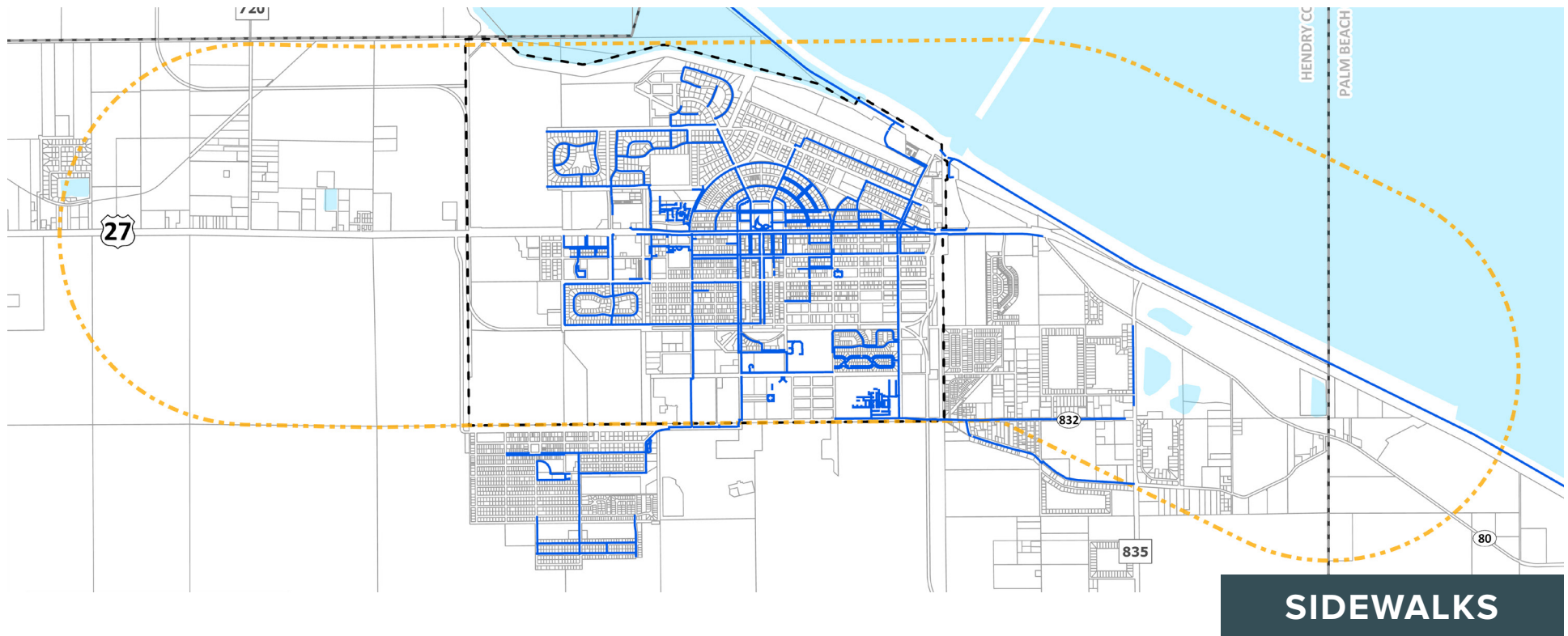
The current and future context classification\* assigned by FDOT to US 27 is C-2 (Rural) west of Berner Rd and east of the city limits, and C2T (Town) from Berner Rd and the east city limits. While most of the development along the corridor perfectly matches the classification, the area west of Olympia Rd has seen a transformation into a suburban/auto-oriented character (similar to C3C). The city has seen the effects of that type of development on the safety of pedestrian traffic and the traffic speed. Even though the posted speeds gradually decrease as traffic enters into the town, the roadway design does not significantly change, which does not encourage reducing travel speed.



Source: FDOT, 2020

\* Context classification is explained in detail in the FDOT Design Manual

## PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE FACILITIES



Source: FDOT, 2020

Along US 27, the sidewalks on both sides of the street begin just west of Lopez St and extend to San Diego St on the north side and past to the junction of SR 80 and US 27 on the south side.

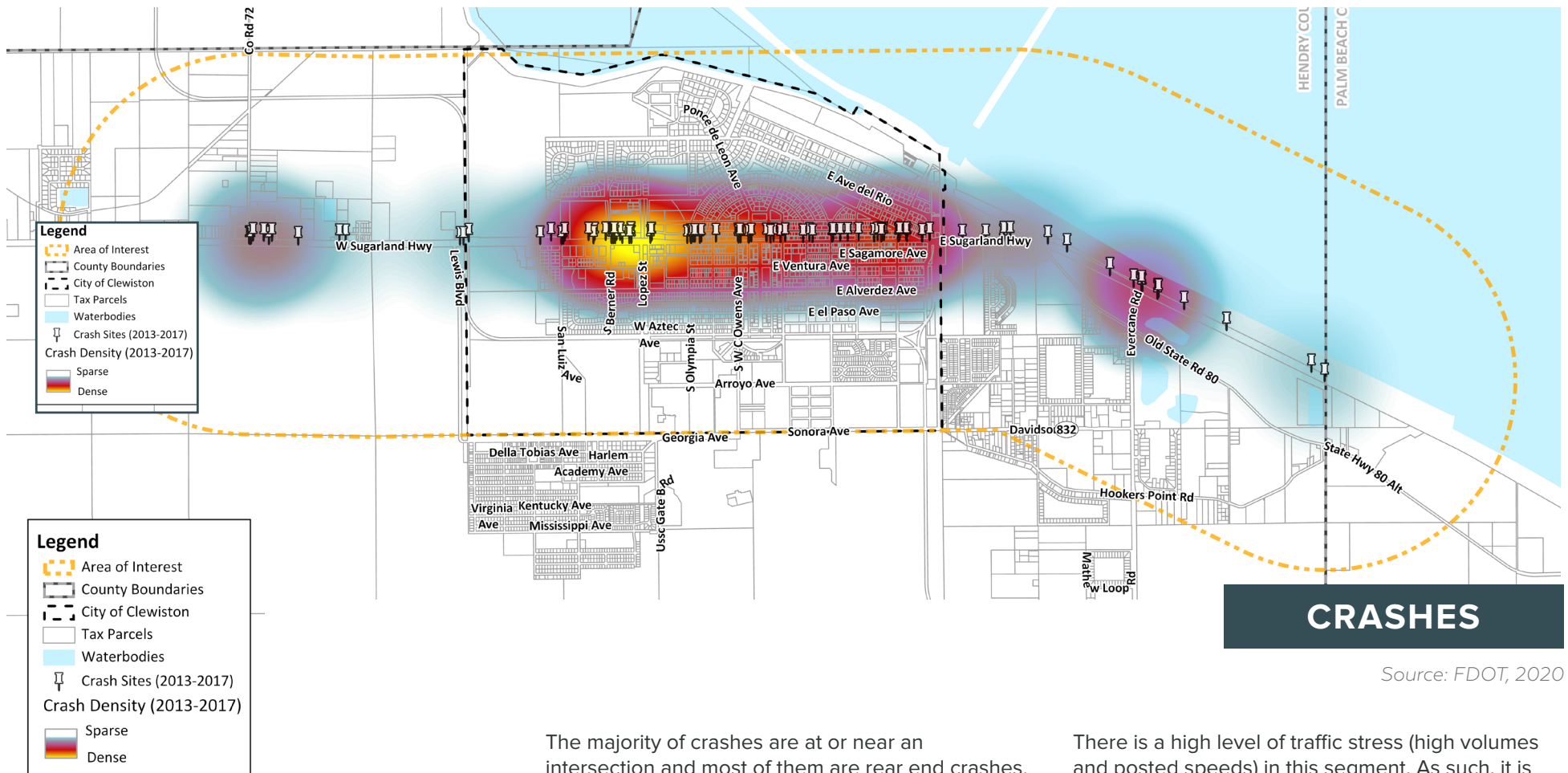
Bicycle facilities are present within the rural segments of the corridor west of the City, extending from CR 720 to West Circle Drive/Olympia Street. However, they are not completely dedicated bicycle facilities as they serve a dual purpose as roadway shoulders.



### US 27 CLEWISTON Corridor Vision Plan



# CRASHES



## CRASHES

Source: FDOT, 2020

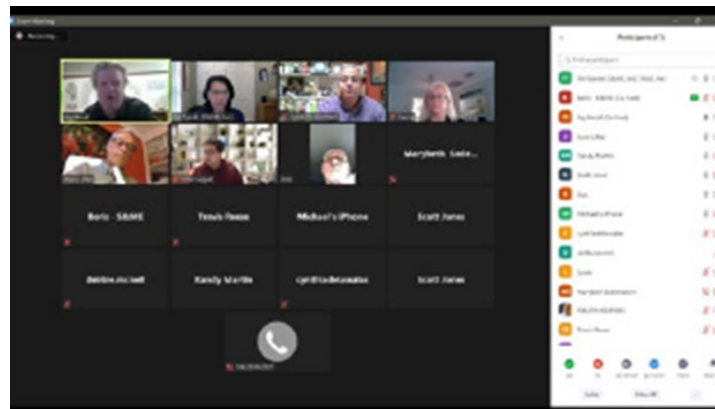
The majority of crashes are at or near an intersection and most of them are rear end crashes, which can be an indication of speeding. The segment between Berner Rd and Olympia St has particularly experienced the most accidents. The Berner Rd intersection is surrounded by suburban shopping center sites. Olympia St functions as the the main access to the Middle School. Both intersections experience heavy pedestrian traffic and numerous vehicular turns.

There is a high level of traffic stress (high volumes and posted speeds) in this segment. As such, it is unlikely that this facility gets much use, as many cyclists would not consider this a comfortable or safe facility. Under current FDOT Design Manual (FDM) guidance, the bicycle markings on the paved shoulders would not be recommended due to the speed, shoulder width, and corridor context classification.

# III. Public Engagement

A robust public engagement strategy was used for the creation of the US 27 Clewiston Corridor Vision Plan. Activities included kick-off meetings with local agencies, several meetings with stakeholders, a field review (walk-about and biking tour) with the public, two online surveys and a public workshop. The first survey gathered 154 responses; the second one was completed by 7 people. The following is a summary of the comments received during this process:

- US 27 goes through the heart of the City. Traffic has increased over the years and is a challenge for pedestrians or bicyclists. The truck traffic is heavy and loud. Many participants expressed the need for an alternative road for trucks.
- The Circle Dr/Olympia St intersection by the middle school in particular can get hectic during school dismissal.
- There is a need to slow down traffic in town and particularly as it enters the Town from the east and the west.
- Residents see a need to accommodate golf cart crossings as an important mobility option.
- The City and the County are working together to extend infrastructure west of the City to accommodate anticipated growth. The area population could double in the not so distant future. Local streets may be stressed as US 27 gets busier with trucks as a result of the airport expansion.
- Most participants expressed a preference for a center left turn lane in the town to allow easy access to businesses. If medians are used, they should be spot medians.
- Ventura St has potential to become a “Main Street” with businesses serving the local community.
- There is a need for a wayfinding program to guide residents and visitors around town and to the waterfront. Also banners to create a local theme and add to the sense of place.
- Would like color pavers at intersections in the Town core. Helps with traffic speeds and create a sense of place.
- Francisco St serves as a gateway to the waterfront and should have a more prominent design.
- Need a network of bicycle facilities throughout town to offer more mobility options.





IV. Vision Plan

CORRIDOR VISION PLAN

One of the key opportunities of this Corridor Vision Plan (CVP) is the prospect to realize key tenants of John Nolen’s original town plan for Clewiston; to expresses **civic virtue** and **connection to nature**. To accomplish this the team has embraced the following strategies:

- Create a **Vibrant Core**
- Define the **City Gateways**
- Connect to the **Waterfront** and **Civic Spaces**
- Utilize streets and trails as building blocks for **Civic Placemaking**, i.e. boulevards, parkways, plazas and squares (or roundabouts)

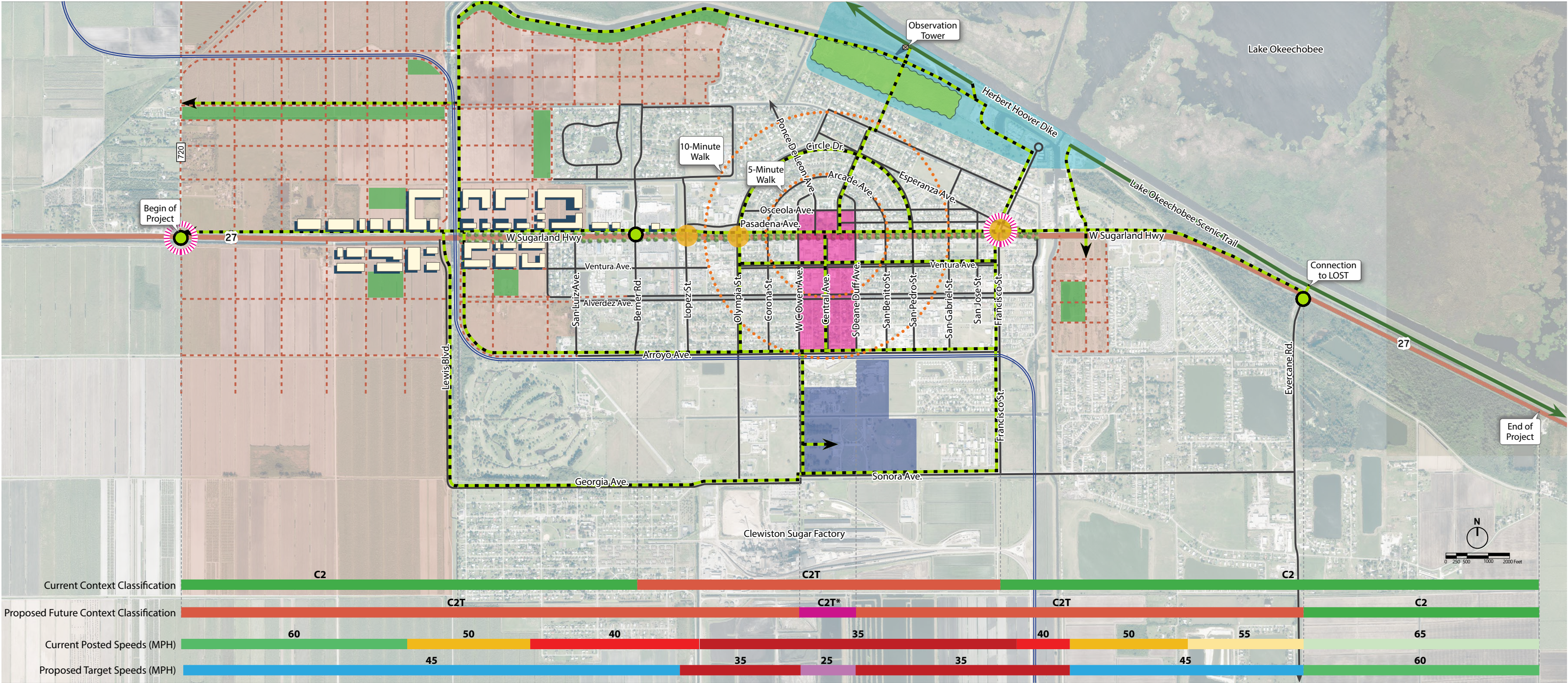
As designs for the CVP were developed, it was important to keep the following project goals in mind for as design decisions were made:

- Achieve **safety** for all travel modes (peds, bikes, transit, cars and trucks)
- **Protect the character** of the City of Clewiston, especially as it expands to the west
- **Maintain the function** of US 27 as an important transportation route in the state

Legend

- US 27 Improvement
- Existing Major Street Connection
- Existing Bike Trail
- Proposed Bike Facility
- Railroad
- Proposed Gateway
- Proposed Roundabout
- Intersection Improvement
- Downtown Core
- Waterfront District
- Schools / Sugarland Park
- Future Development Area
- Future Network Connection
- Public Green Space
- Wetlands Park
- Potential Building Layout

Disclaimer: The information, concepts and options in this document are for planning purposes only and subject to change. The Corridor Vision Plan (CVP) does not express a commitment to construct any proposed improvements and does not reflect the final design of the project. The information in the CVP does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.



US 27 CLEWISTON Corridor Vision Plan

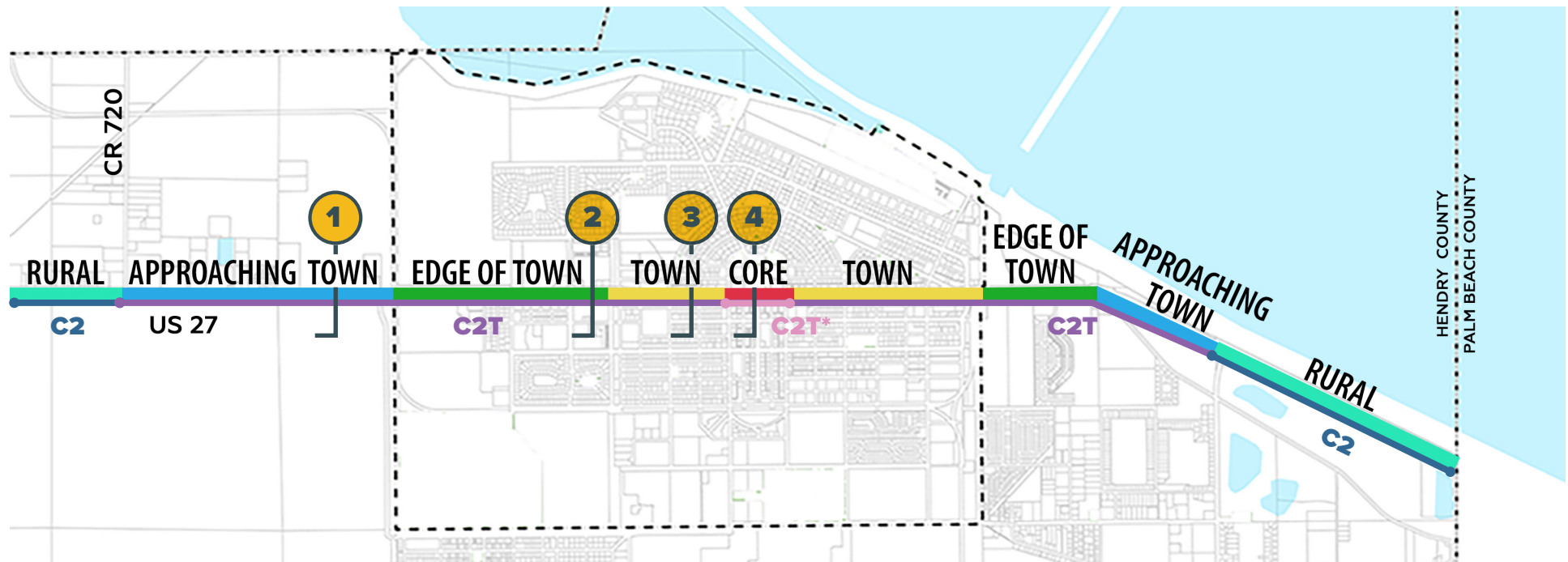


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## CORRIDOR CHARACTER

The Vision Plan calls for improvements in both the public and private realm to ensure traffic speeds are reduced as drivers enter into town. The combination of roadway design improvements and future development that provides a pedestrian-friendly interaction with the road will provide adequate enclosure, engagement and deflection outlined in FDOT Design Manual to naturally cause vehicular traffic to slow down. The following page includes the proposed cross-sections for the 4 character districts.



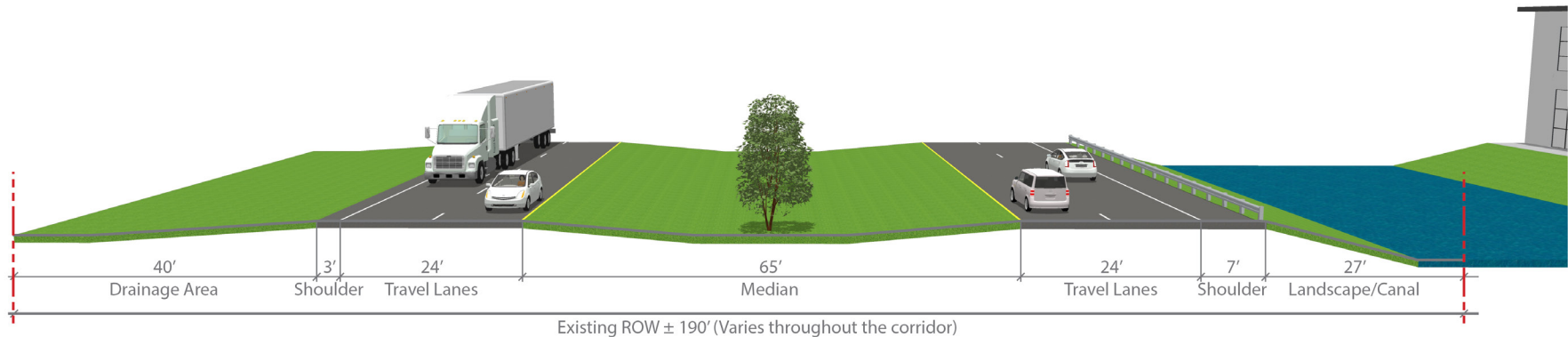
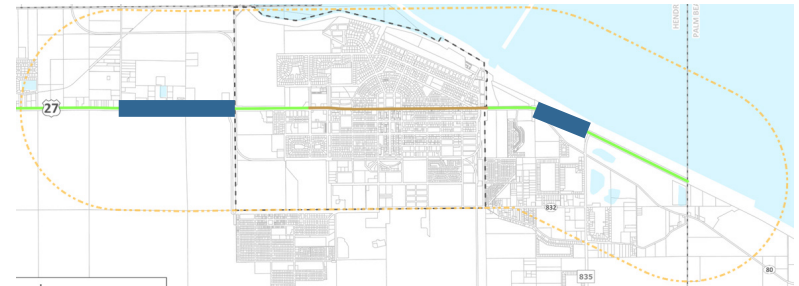
Building placement and orientation are critical to enhancing the character of a community and defining the degree of walkability along thoroughfares. Buildings placed close to the public sidewalk promote pedestrian activity along the street, help define the public realm, and influence how the area is perceived by motorists and pedestrians. They also affect safety, not just for traffic, but also crime as the buildings become “eyes on the street.”

### US 27 CLEWISTON Corridor Vision Plan

EXISTING

60 MPH

C2 RURAL



The “Approaching Town” segment west of the City limits is currently flanked by rural uses. However, the County has designated the north side of the west segment for mixed-use development, and the City plans to do the same on the south side as properties are annexed. The east segment is flanked by conservation lands, but it represents the entrance to the City.



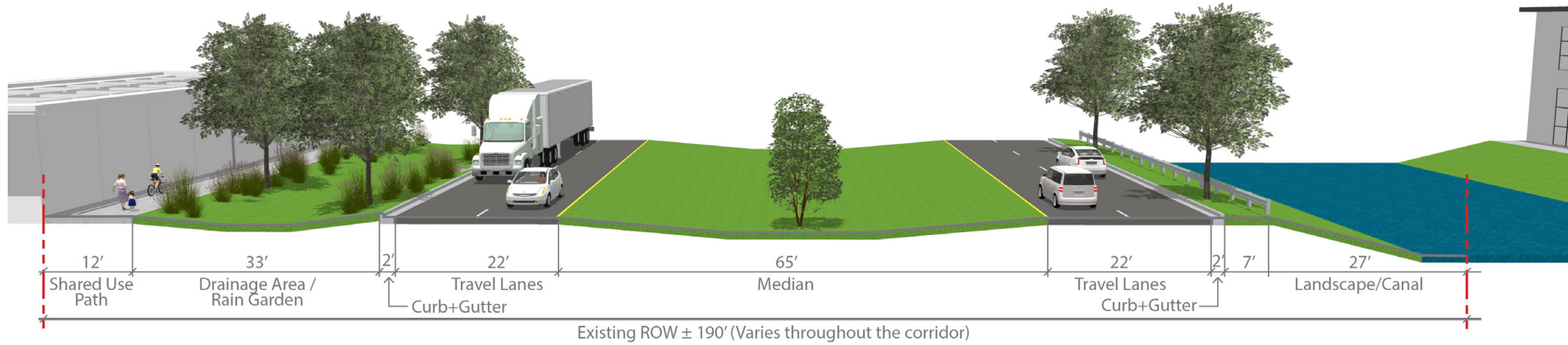
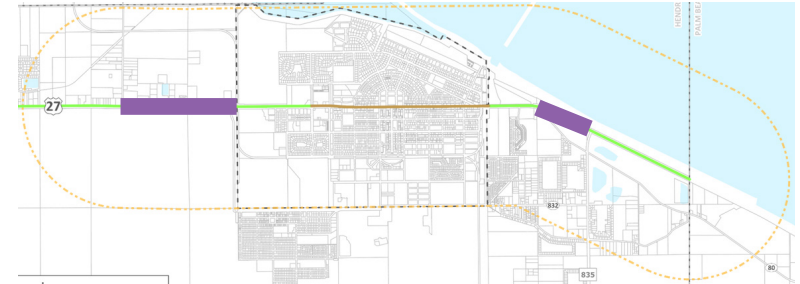
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RECOMMENDED

45 MPH

C2T TOWN



The vision plan calls for the following improvements along the segments labeled “approaching town:”

1. A shared-use path on the west segment only as the east side will continue to be flanked by conservation lands
2. Buildings close to the street

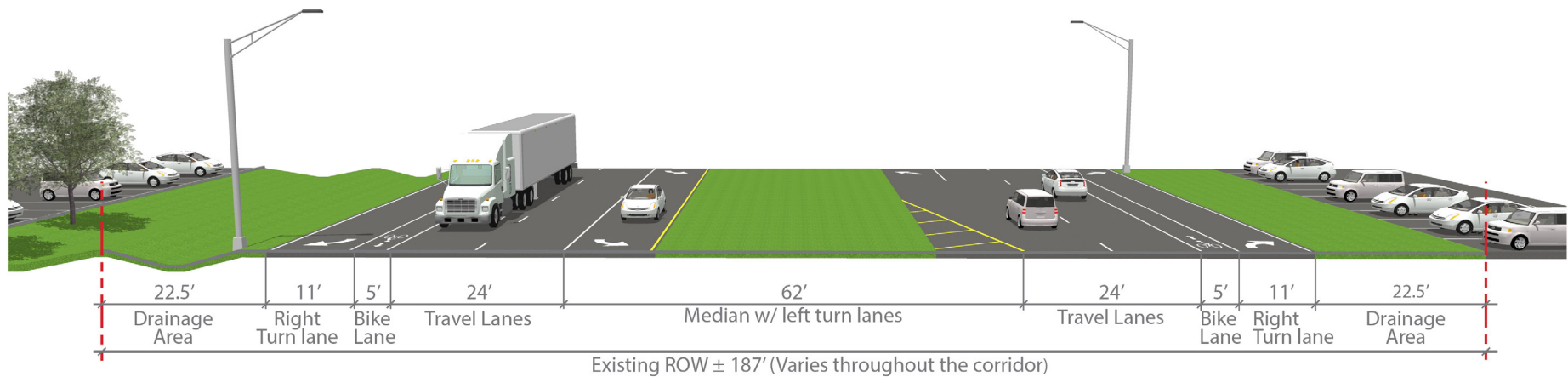
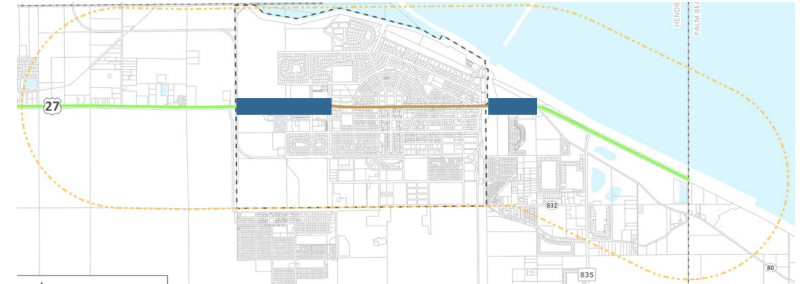


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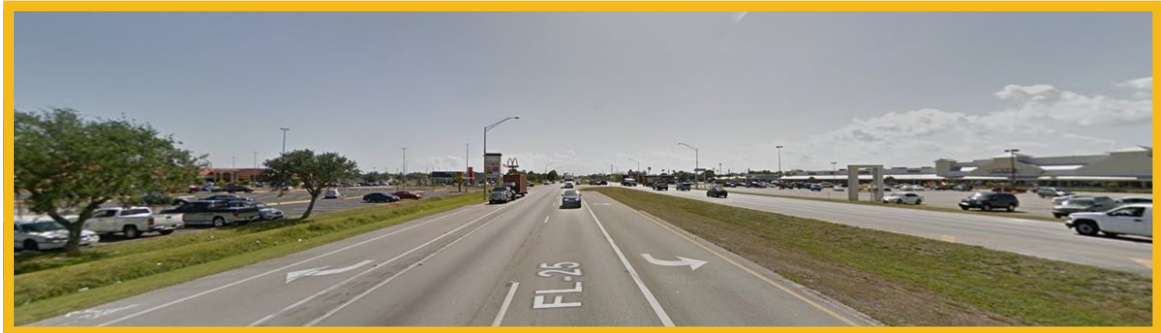
EXISTING

40-50 MPH

C2 RURAL



The “Edge of Town” segments, east and west of the City limits, currently feature a mix of suburban (building on the rear of the site/parking in front) and urban sites. As properties redevelop or expand, the City expects them to respond better to the street and help create a safe environment for all modes of transportation, particularly pedestrian and bicycle modes.



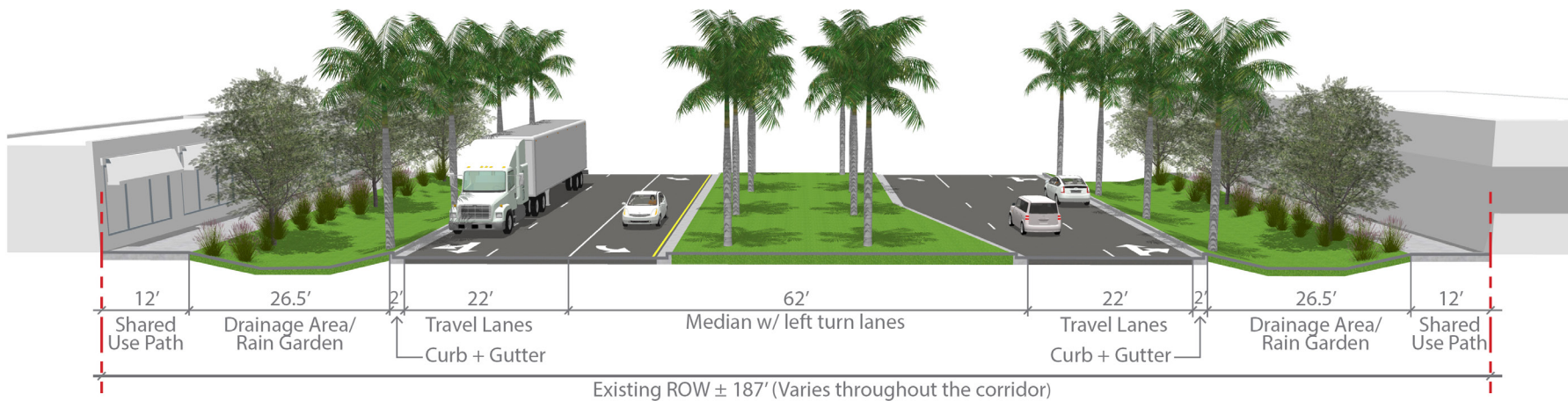
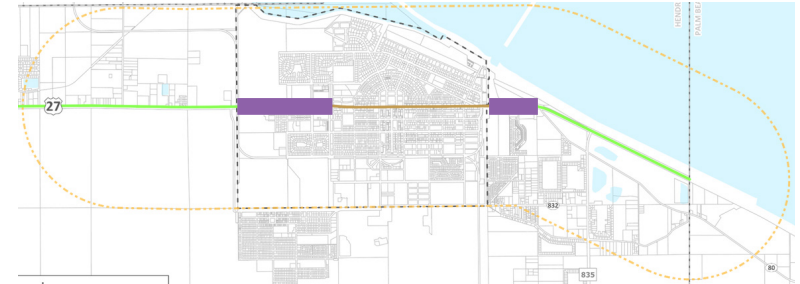
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RECOMMENDED

45 MPH

C2T TOWN



The vision plan calls for the following improvements along the segments labeled "edge of town:"

1. Buildings closer to the road
2. A sidewalk on the south side
3. A shared-use path on the north side

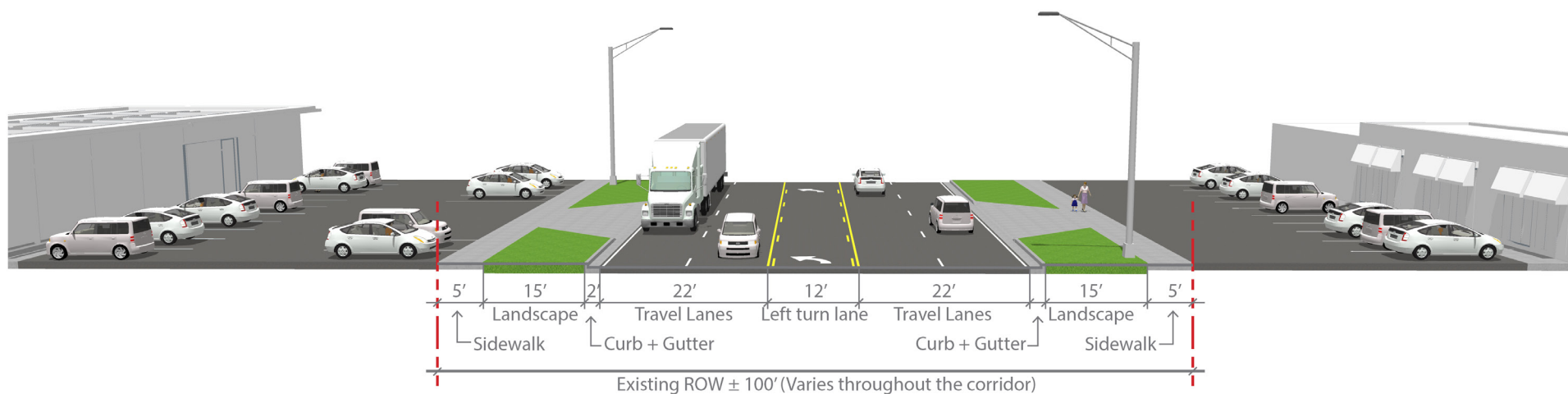
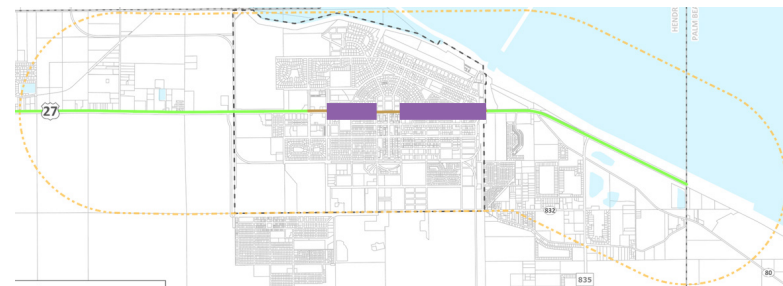


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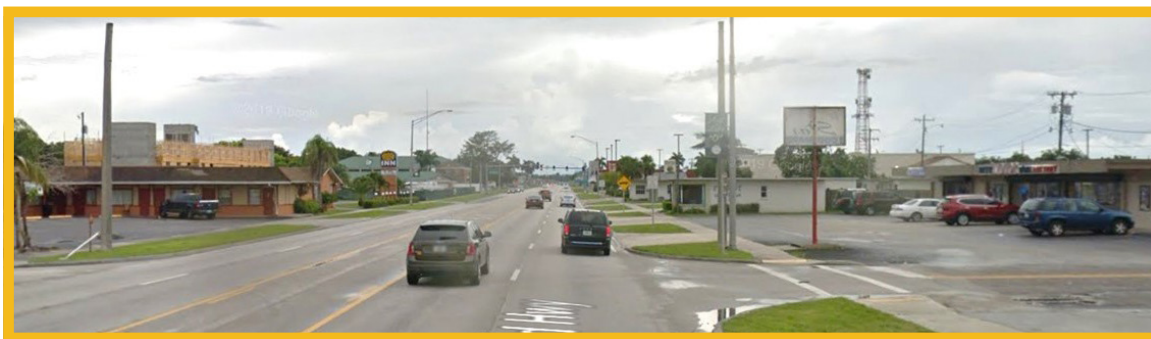
EXISTING

35-40 MPH

C2T TOWN



The “Town” segments, east and west of the town core, are currently flanked by commercial uses and feature buildings close to the street interspersed by a few sites where there is a small amount of parking in the front. As properties redevelop, the buildings will respond better to the street by locating closer to the road.



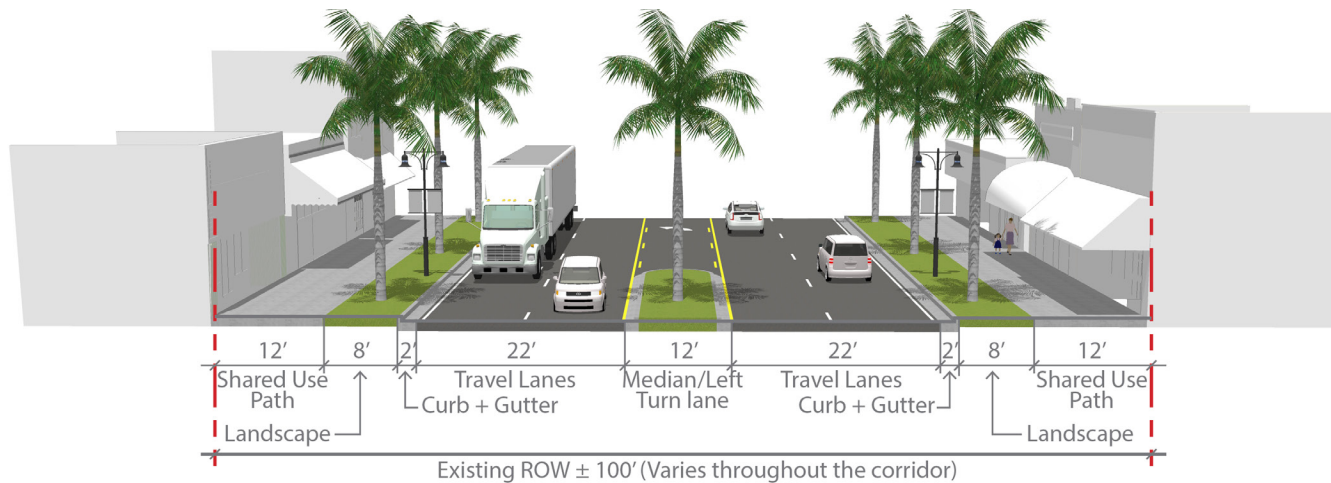
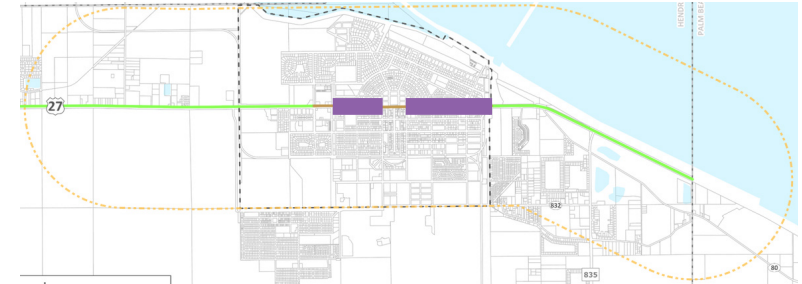
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RECOMMENDED

35 MPH

C2T TOWN



The vision plan calls for the following improvements along the segments labeled “Town:”

1. Share use paths on both sides of US 27
2. Buildings close to the street



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Existing





Proposed (Daytime)





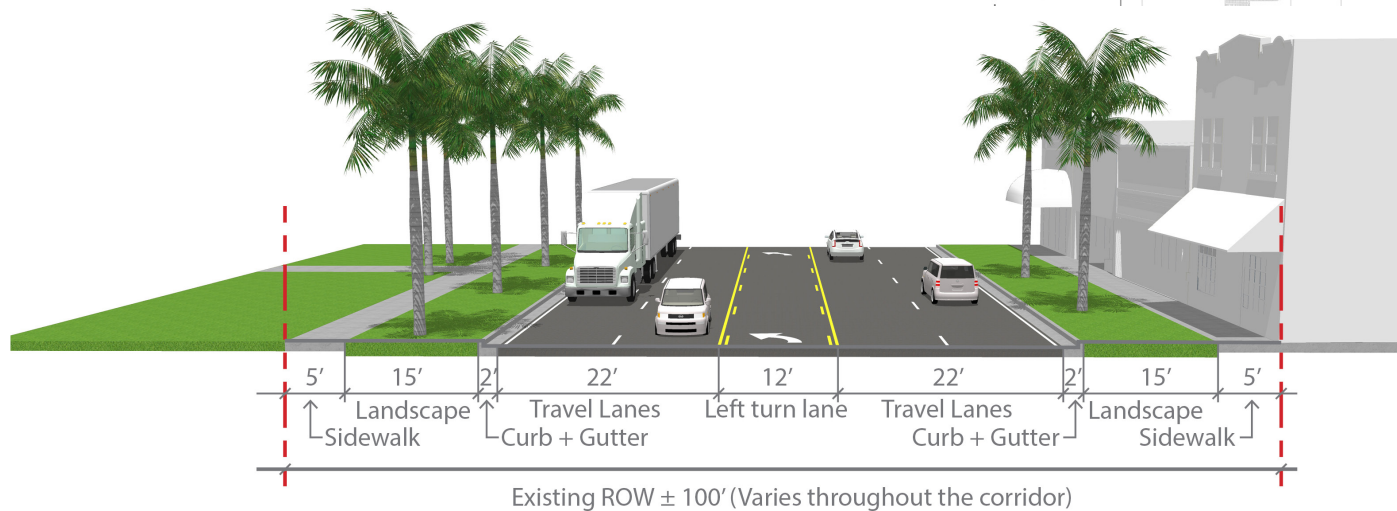
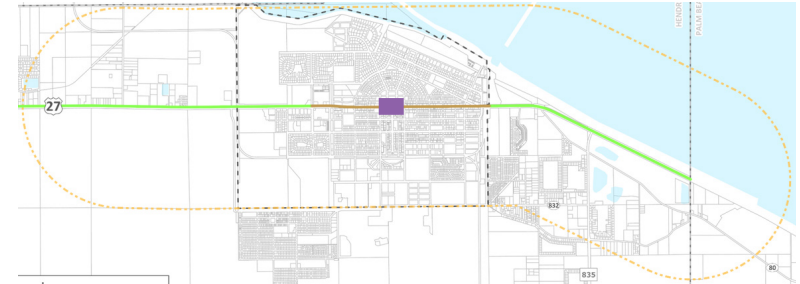
Proposed (Nighttime)



EXISTING

35 MPH

C2T TOWN



The “Town Core” segment currently features a main street character on the south side, where commercial and public uses are located, and a public park and recreation facilities on the north side. US 27 represents a barrier to pedestrians. The City desires to provide safer connections between north and south uses.

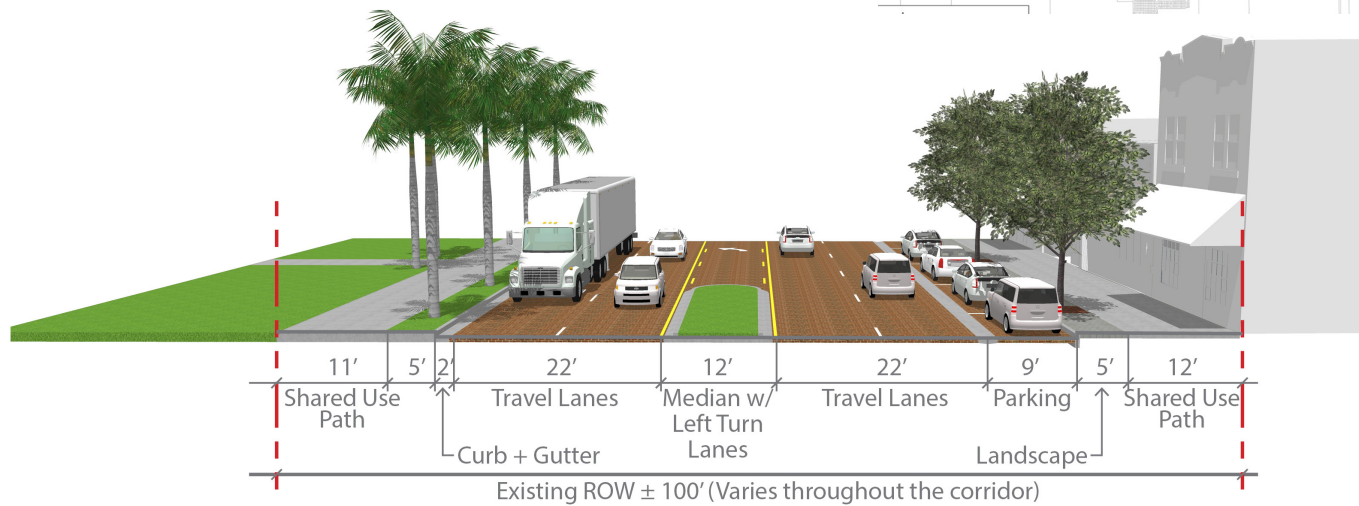
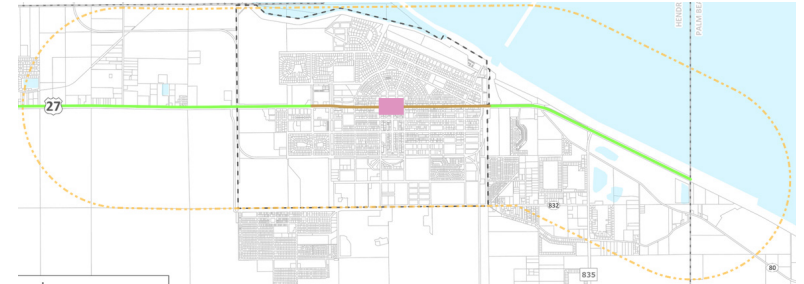


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RECOMMENDED

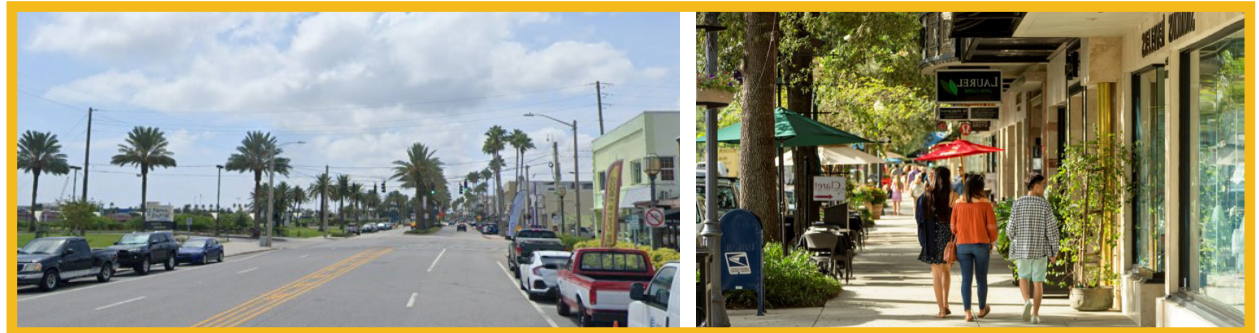
25 MPH

C2T\* CORE



The vision plan calls for the following improvements along the segments labeled “Town Core:”

1. Parallel parking instead of center turn lane, only in front of the park
2. A shared-use path on the north side
3. Buildings close to the street
4. Stamped concrete or similar treatment



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## EXISTING



## RECOMMENDED

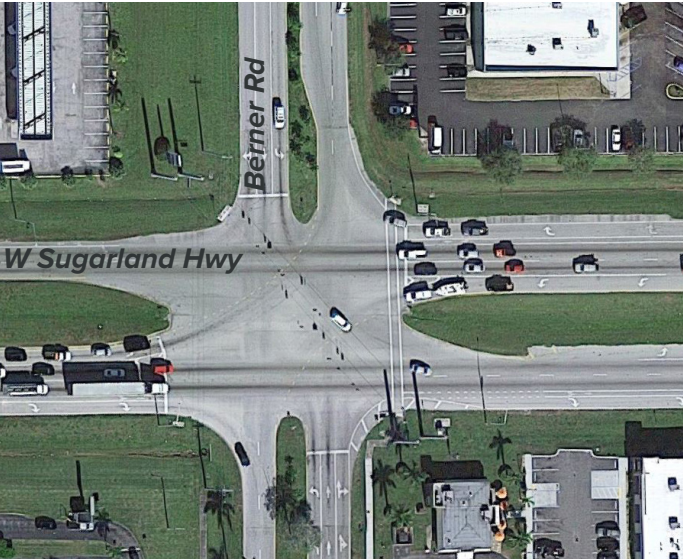




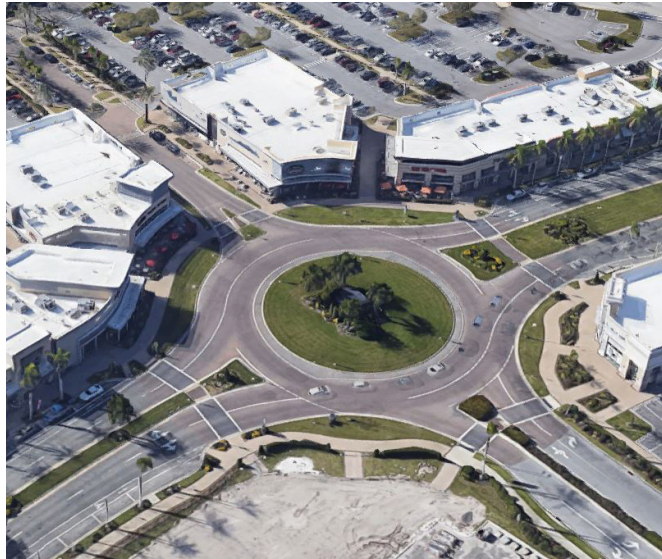
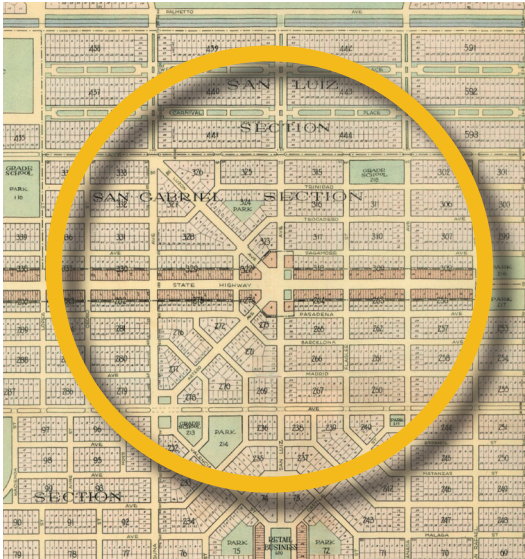
# KEY INTERSECTIONS

## BERNER ROAD

This intersection currently includes only one crosswalk across US 27 and one sidewalk along S Berner Rd. Golf carts are currently prohibited along S Berner Road and from crossing US 27. The Corridor Vision Plan calls for a roundabout at this intersection. A roundabout would serve as a gateway into the City (as originally intended by John Nolen), slow down traffic, and ensure the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and even golf cart users.



Current design of the Berner/US 27 intersection



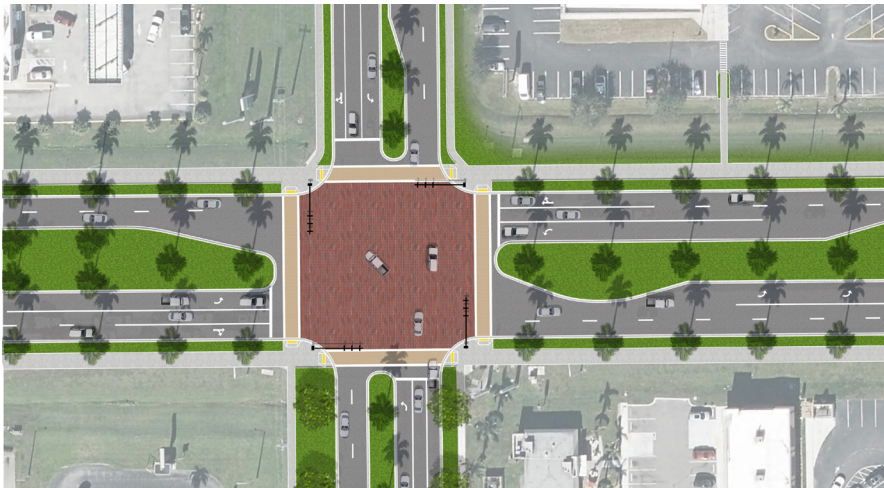
Option #1 Roundabout (Reference Graphic Only)

The Berner Rd intersection presents the highest rate of crashes along US 27 within the study area. A roundabout at this intersection will help improve safety for all users.



As the Berner Road intersection is improved in the future, the feasibility of allowing/accommodating a golf cart crossing at this location should be considered.

\*Access management study needs to be conducted prior to any median and driveway improvements



Option #2 Protected Intersection



# KEY INTERSECTIONS (CONT)

## LOPEZ STREET

Lopez St serves as a secondary access point to the middle school and also to the private school north of the middle school. This intersection, however, is not signalized. The Corridor Vision Plan calls for a study to determine if the intersection should be reconfigured to accommodate a traffic signal, if warranted.



Existing Intersection Design

\*Access management study needs to be conducted prior to any median and driveway improvements

## US 27 CLEWISTON Corridor Vision Plan

## INTERSECTION BETWEEN BERNER RD AND LOPEZ ST

There is an “intersection” between Berner Rd and Lopez St that should be redesigned. The situation was created when the driveways to the shopping centers on the north and south sides of US 27 were aligned and a median cut provided between the two. The recommendation for this intersection is to modify the median cut to only allow left turns (Restricted Crossing U-Turn Intersection, or RCUT).



Existing Intersection Design



Proposed Intersection Improvements



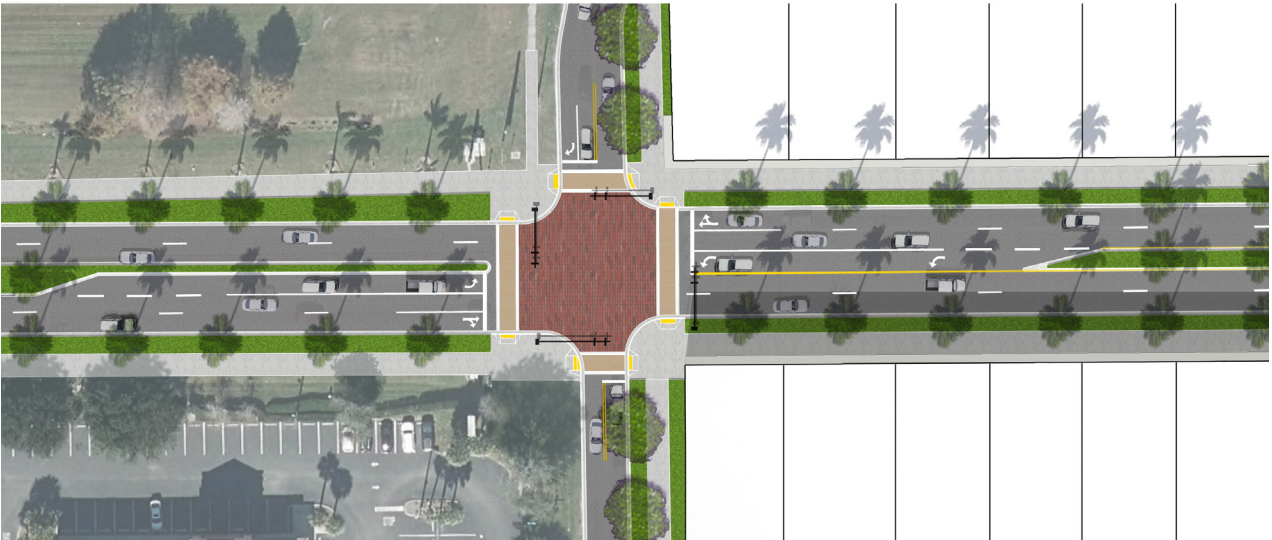
# KEY INTERSECTIONS (CONT)

## W CIRCLE DR/OLYMPIA ST

This intersection provides the main access to the Clewiston Middle School. It currently includes crosswalks on three sides (one across US 27, one across W Circle Dr and the third one across Olympia St). The Corridor Vision Plan calls for an upgrade of the intersection to accommodate safer pedestrian and bicycle traffic.



Current design of the W Circle Dr/Olympia St intersection



Proposed design of the W Circle Dr/Olympia St intersection

*\*ICE analysis needs to be conducted prior to any intersection improvements*



As the Circle Dr/Olympia St. intersection is improved in the future, the feasibility of allowing/accomodating a golf cart crossing at this location should be considered.



## KEY INTERSECTIONS (CONT)

### FRANCISCO STREET/ ESPERANZA AVENUE (EAST GATEWAY)

The Francisco St and Esperanza Av intersections provides the main access to the waterfront for traffic coming from both sides on US 27. It currently includes a signal at Francisco St and an angular intersection at Esperanza Av. The Corridor Vision Plan calls for an upgrade of the intersection to create a gateway. The design includes a chicane to slow down traffic entering the city, a landscape median that could be used to erect a monument, and a multi-use trail on the north side of US 27 providing a connection for bikers coming from the east on the LOST trail trying to connect with the west segment.



#### Proposed Design of Francisco St/Esperanza Ave Intersections

*\*ICE analysis needs to be conducted prior to any intersection improvements*



As the Francisco Street intersection is improved in the future, the feasibility of allowing/accommodating a golf cart crossing at this location should be considered.



# KEY INTERSECTIONS (CONT)

## FRANCISCO STREET/ ESPERANZA AVENUE

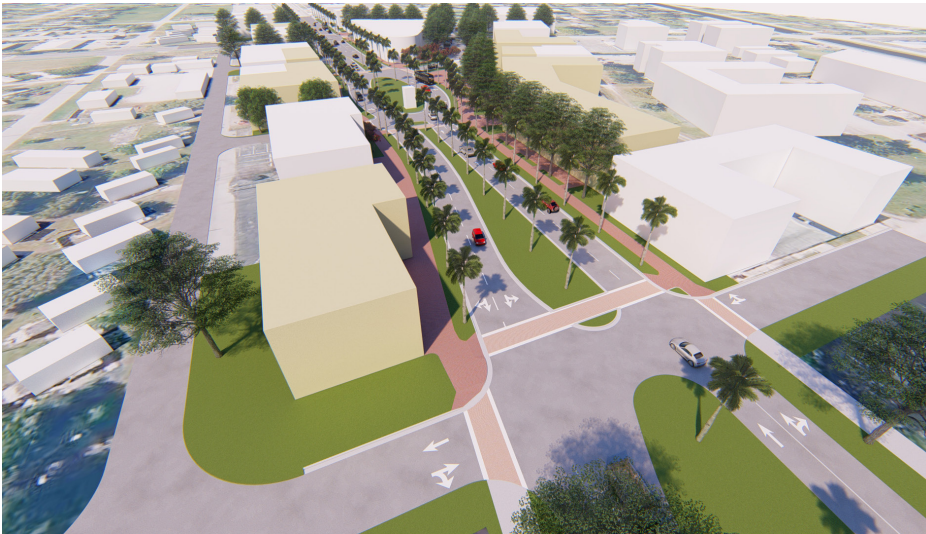
*\*ICE analysis needs to be conducted prior to any intersection improvements*



Looking North



Looking West



Looking West from San Diego S



Looking East



## KEY INTERSECTIONS (CONT)

*Aerial depicting current intersection configuration*



*\*ICE analysis needs to be conducted prior to any intersection improvements*

*Example of a roundabout (Dublin, Ohio)*



### EVERCANE ROAD

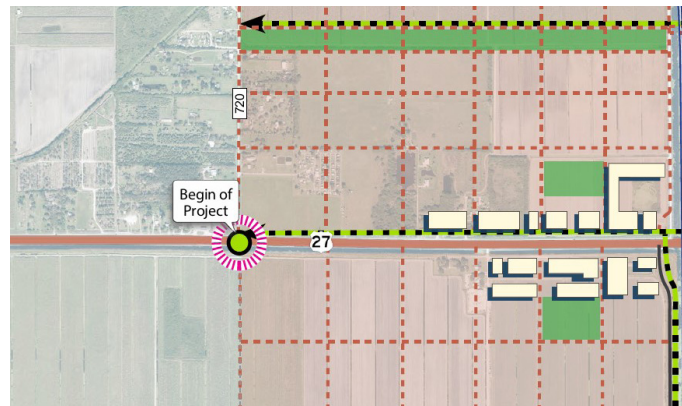
Evercane Rd (CR 835) provides a connection to Everglades Parkway (I-75/Alligator Alley). The intersection with US 27 provides an opportunity to create the first indicator that the drivers are entering a city. The Corridor Vision Plan calls for a roundabout at this intersection. It also shows a connection from the proposed multi-use trail on the north side of US 27 to the LOST trail.

*Aerial depicting current intersection configuration*



*\*ICE analysis needs to be conducted prior to any intersection improvements*

*Proposed*



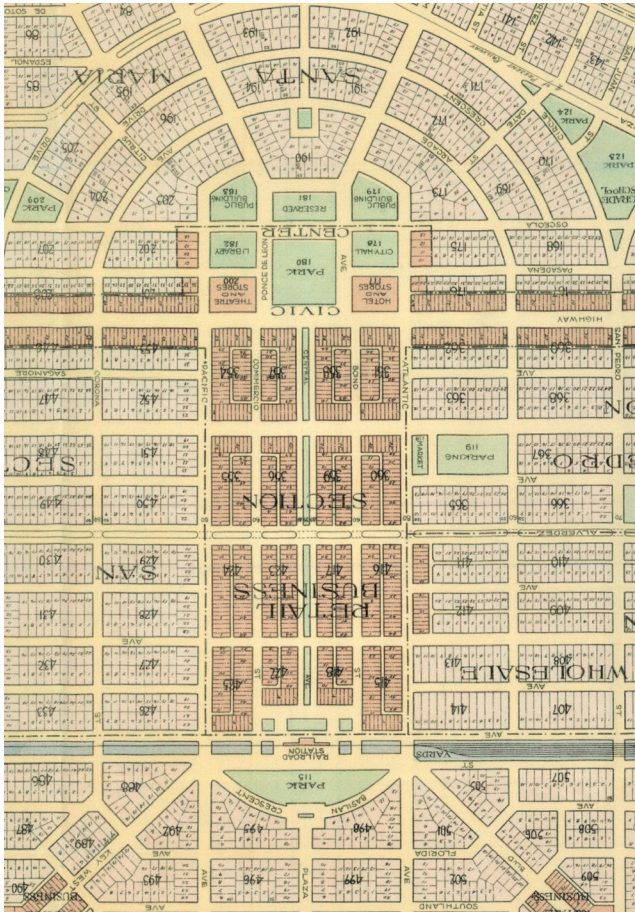
### WEST GATEWAY

The Vision Plan graphic also shows a gateway roundabout at the US 27/CR 720 intersection or another location just east of that, marking the transition from rural highway to a developed area.



## TOWN CORE

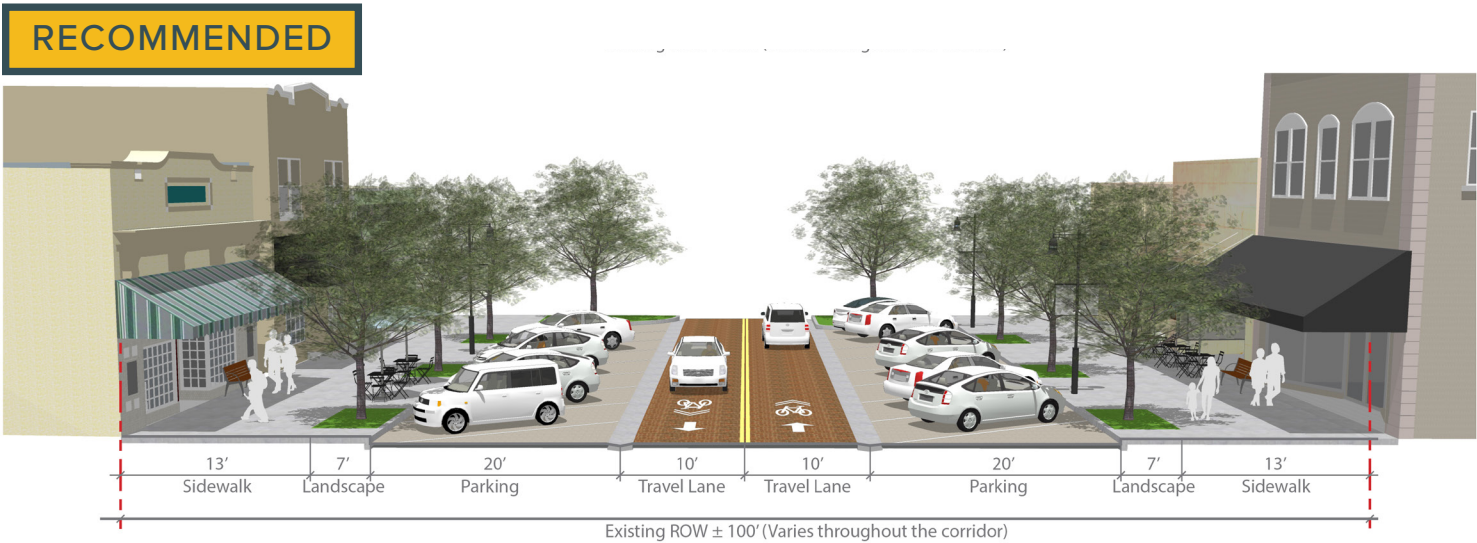
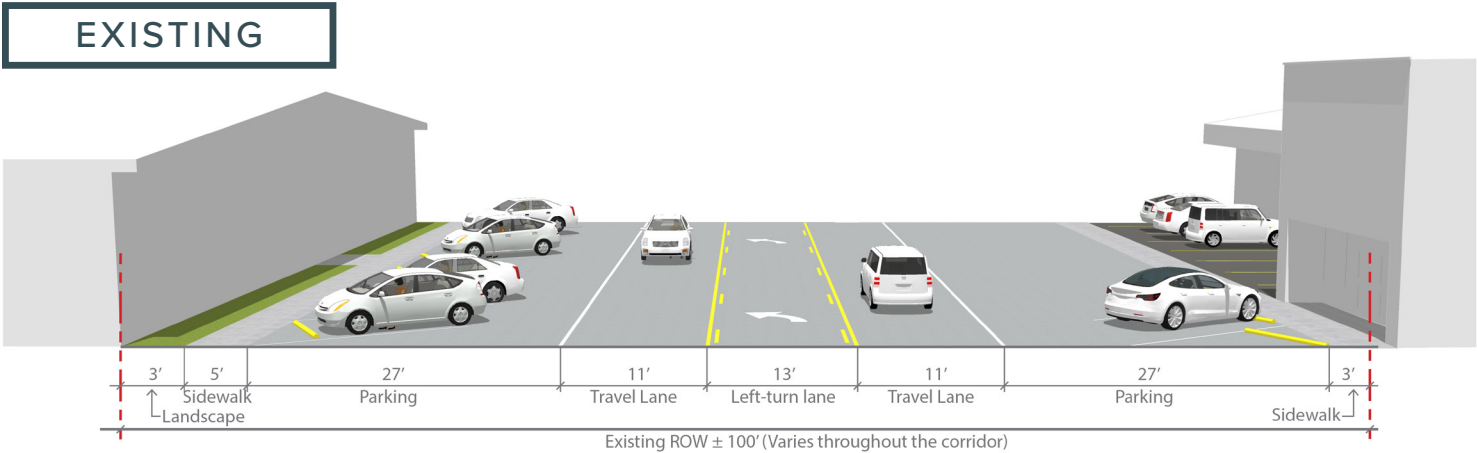
The John Nolen plan defined a “retail business section” in the heart of the city, with a civic park on the north end, a smaller green space and train station on the south end, and a boulevard with a central landscaped median running north-south through the area. Many of these features are still present today. The Vision Plan calls for the section of US 27 in front of the Civic Park to be designed to slow down traffic to 25 mph in an effort to reconnect the downtown area to the park (see page 19). Other improvements include revitalizing the area along Ventura St. (see next page)





# VENTURA ROAD

Ventura Rd is parallel to US 27, extending from S San Diego St to Flagler St but interrupted by the hospital site. The City's Community Redevelopment Plan calls for this street to be improved in an effort to create a local "Main Street." There are a few local businesses already present on this road. Some streetscape improvements have been implemented, between the hospital site and WC Owen Av. The portion of the street east of WC Owen, however, is in bad need of improvements. This right-of-way is 100 feet wide, but the street components (travel lanes, sidewalks, on-street parking) are not well defined. The Vision Plan call for a redesign of the street to include a two-lane cross-section, diagonal on-street parking, landscaping strips between the parking and the sidewalks, and wide sidewalks. The nature of this roadway would allow for a sharrow (bicycles sharing the right-of-way with vehicles).



## WAYFINDING/GATEWAYS

US 27 carries a substantial amount of through traffic and some of those drivers passing through do not realize the interesting sites and landmarks that the Town has to offer. Lake Okeechobee, the largest freshwater lake in the state, for instance, is not visible or easily accessible from US 27 in Clewiston. Visitors and those passing through may also miss the fact that the largest sugar producer in the country is located in the area. A wayfinding program would invite those passing through to stop and visit local businesses, enjoy the local natural and manmade features, and learn about Clewiston's history. Wayfinding may include signs welcoming visitors and residents as they enter the City (already present east and west of the city limits), art/monuments in key locations, directional signs pointing to local landmarks/sites, theme banners to help liven the atmosphere along US 27, and business directories in the downtown. This page shows some signs that already present and others to use as inspiration when the City prepares a wayfinding master plan.





# V. Action Plan

STRATEGIES		TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME			PARTNERS			
		SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	FDOT	TPO	HC	CC
CONCEPT & DESIGN PHASE	TRAFFIC, SPEED AND SAFETY STUDIES							
	US 27 alternative route study							
	US 27 corridor safety study							
	US 27 signal timing study							
	US 27/Evercane Rd roundabout study							
	Francisco St/Esperanza Av intersection/gateway study							
	West side roundabout study							
	US 27/Berner Rd intersection study							
	Directional Median Between Berner Rd and Lopez St							
	CONTEXT CLASSIFICATION							
	Update Context Classification							
	Corridor speed study							
	MOBILITY ACCESS STUDY							
	Golf Cart Crossings							
	Sidewalk Gap analysis							
	Multi-use Trail Feasibility							
	INTERSECTION FEASIBILITY STUDIES							
	US 27/Lopez St							
	Circle Dr/Olympia St							
US 27 IMPLEMENTATION	US 27 RESURFACING, RESTORATION & REHABILITATION (3R)							
	Contract design plans							
	Bid for construction							
	US 27 construction implementation							
AREA ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS	OTHER STUDIES (INCORPORATE CVP RECOMMENDATIONS)							
	Waterfront Master Plan							
	Trails Master Plan (ongoing)							
	Corridor Landscaping Master Plan*							
	Wayfinding Master Plan							
	CRA Plan Update							
	Downtown Master Plan							
	Master Stormwater Master Plan							
	LAND USE POLICY AND REGULATIONS							
	Amend LDC to require transportation connectivity							
	Establish joint driveway standards							
	Establish urban form standards (building/parking location)							

TPO - Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization | HC - Hendry County | CC - City of Clewiston

The implementation of the US 27 Clewiston Corridor Vision Plan will take coordination between the City of Clewiston, Hendry County, the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization and the Florida Department of Transportation. The recommendations presented in the Plan will need to be vetted in more detail by the appropriate agencies to determine feasibility, cost and funding. The Action Plan table presented on this page is intended to delineate the general steps that the agencies involved will need to follow and it indicates whether the actions are a priority (short term), or if they can/should wait (mid-term or long-term).

*\*The City of Clewiston does a superior job of maintaining the landscape enhancements within the public realm of the City. In order to realize the full potential of the CVP, landscape and hardscape maintenance agreements should be put in place between the District and the City and/or County to provide clear maintenance responsibilities for the hardscape, landscape and other design elements within the FDOT/Public right of way to assure long-term viability of the corridor.*



