

December 2024

# CHARLOTTE COUNTY- PUNTA GORDA

## COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY ACTION PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) sets a path forward for the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (CC-PG MPO) to work with their partners and the community to reach the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries due to traffic crashes by the year 2045.

The CC-PG MPO developed this CSAP due to above-average traffic fatalities and injuries. Funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, the plan sets a roadmap for local agencies to work together to create the necessary change to save lives on the roads in Charlotte County and Punta Gorda.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The CSAP was developed following a **Build - Listen - Apply** approach, creating a data-informed, community-driven framework to reduce traffic-related fatalities and injuries. The process included both quantitative and qualitative assessments to identify the most hazardous roads, laying the groundwork for targeted safety interventions in the near (2030), medium (2040), and long-term (2045).

In the **Build Phase**, the project team utilized a data-driven approach to identify the top 14 corridors in Charlotte County and Punta Gorda for future safety improvements. This process involved an in-depth analysis of crash data to pinpoint areas with the highest incidence of traffic-related fatalities and injuries. By examining variables such as crash frequency, severity, and patterns, as well as considering demographic factors, the CC-PG MPO now has a list of prioritized interventions. This strategic focus will help ensure resources are allocated efficiently to the most hazardous corridors, maximizing the impact of targeted safety measures and ultimately enhancing road safety across the region.

In the **Listen Phase**, robust public outreach was conducted, engaging residents and stakeholders through surveys and community meetings. These efforts highlighted significant concerns, such as aggressive and distracted driving, and a need for improved infrastructure, including better lighting, clearer signage, and more pedestrian-friendly pathways. The insights gathered were instrumental in aligning the plan's strategies with the community's lived experiences and expectations.



In the **Apply Phase**, the project team worked with key stakeholders including Charlotte County, City of Punta Gorda, and FDOT staff to make specific recommendations on the most dangerous corridors, as well as changes in policy and educational needs. Pulling from nationally recognized FHWA guidance and other resources on recommended safety countermeasures, infrastructural improvements include an array of solutions to protect vulnerable road users. The plan also promotes stricter enforcement of traffic laws and educational campaigns to foster safe driving behaviors across all age groups.

Overall, the CSAP's multifaceted approach, backed by federal funding from the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, underscores a holistic and proactive commitment to improving road safety. Through infrastructural enhancements, rigorous traffic law enforcement, and targeted educational initiatives, the plan aims to reduce road incidents and ensure the safety and well-being of all road users in Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda.



## CRASH TRENDS HIGHLIGHTS

The CSAP was developed using a data-driven approach, leveraging Signal 4 Analytics data to identify the top 14 corridors most dangerous for future safety improvements. The analysis also included the identification of crash trends, examining factors such as crash frequency, severity, modes of transportation involved, and behavioral contributions. By scrutinizing these variables, the CC-PG MPO has pinpointed the most hazardous areas requiring intervention. This strategic focus ensures the efficient allocation of resources to address the most critical safety issues and enhance road safety across the region. The following pages reflect key takeaways from the data analysis.

### KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

With a high percentage of residents aged 65 and older (42.3%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau), it was crucial to develop tailored safety measures for older drivers. Moreover, recognizing the rapid growth in areas like Babcock Ranch and future needs along the US 41 (Tamiami Trail) corridor, the CSAP incorporates adaptive planning to meet the evolving demands associated with high-growth regions. Enhanced road safety measures in these growing areas will be critical to accommodate new residents, reduce traffic congestion, and prevent crashes.

# KEY FINDINGS

The following summarizes key findings from the crash analysis:

Between 2018 and 2022, approximately 29 people on average were killed per year in traffic crashes on roadways within the CC-PG MPO, and another 144 people on average were severely injured per year in traffic crashes. This means more than 3 people each week are killed or severely injured (KSI) on roadways in Charlotte County.

Fridays have the highest number of crashes, but Saturdays have the most KSI crashes, regardless of mode, except for bicyclists. Most bicycle crashes, including KSI, occur on Tuesdays. It is important to note that given the limited dataset of bicyclist crashes, this finding may not be statistically significant.

Drivers in their 20s were most likely to be involved in speeding related KSI crashes, while drivers in their 30s were most likely to be involved in impairment related (e.g., alcohol or drug involved) KSI crashes.

Overall, motor vehicle crashes comprise most of the crashes in the MPO, but crashes involving people walking, biking, or riding a motorcycle have a disproportionately higher chance of a crash resulting in a KSI.

Rear end crashes are the most common, but off road and right angle crashes most commonly resulted in a KSI.

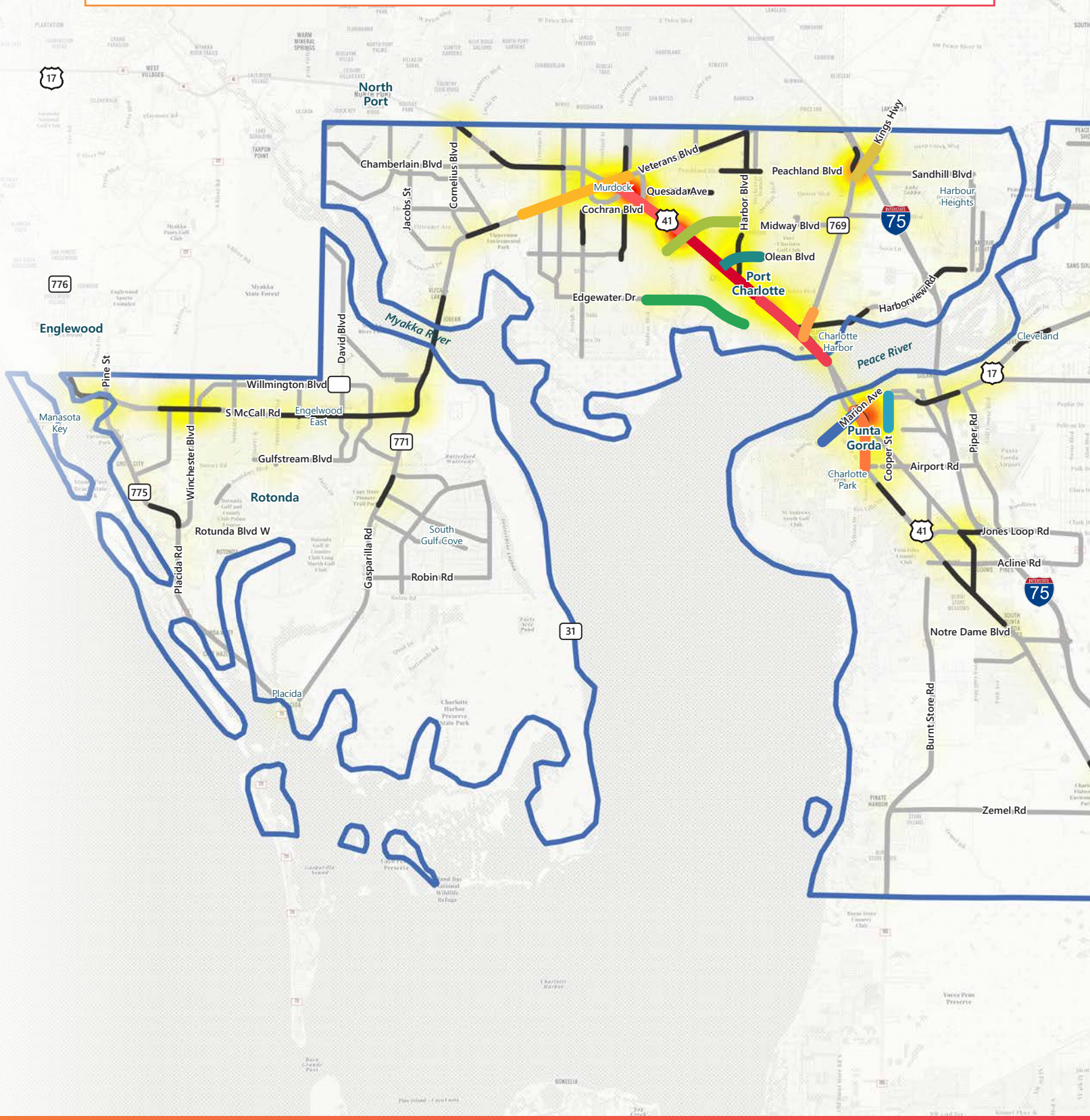
## CSAP HIN OVERVIEW

The region contains about 2,830 centerline miles of non-limited access roadways, 52 miles of which are on the CC-PG MPO HIN. Crashes that occur on the HIN segments account for 54 percent of all KSI crashes in the region. 56 percent of pedestrian KSI, 51 percent of bicyclist KSI, and 65 percent of motorcyclist KSI crashes also occur on these roadways. The City of Punta Gorda contains about 148 local centerline miles, 3 of which are on the city's HIN. Crashes that occur on the City of Punta Gorda HIN segments account for 45 percent of all KSI collisions on the city's roadways. The ranked corridors are highlighted below and shown on the map to the right.

<b>01</b> <b>US 41 (Tamiami Trail)</b> from Midway Blvd to Conway Blvd	<b>5</b> <b>Kings Highway</b> from US 41 to Palmetto Mobile Park	<b>09</b> <b>Edgewater Drive</b> from Midway Blvd to Conreid Dr NE
<b>02</b> <b>US 41 (Tamiami Trail)</b> from Conway Blvd to Melbourne St	<b>6</b> <b>6A. El Jobean Boulevard/6B. Veterans Blvd</b> from Centennial Blvd to E of Paulson Dr	<b>10</b> <b>Olean Boulevard</b> from US 41 to Key Ln
<b>03</b> <b>US 41 (Tamiami Trail)</b> from Veterans Blvd to Midway Blvd	<b>7</b> <b>Kings Highway</b> from Veterans Blvd to E of Sandhill Blvd	<b>11</b> <b>Cooper Street</b> from Olympia Ave to Burland St
<b>04 &amp; 13</b> <b>US 41 (Tamiami Trail)</b> from W Retta Esplanada to Airport Rd	<b>8</b> <b>Midway Boulevard</b> from Lakeview Blvd to Harbor Blvd	<b>12</b> <b>Marion Ave</b> from Henry St to Chasteen St



In terms of Transportation Disadvantaged Communities, crash trends generally align with or are slightly less than countywide trends related to crash by mode and injury severity, alcohol and drug involved crashes, hit and run, and commercial vehicle involvement except for pedestrian-involved crashes. Pedestrian-involved crashes have a higher rate of fatality (26.3%) within Transportation Disadvantaged Communities compared to countywide pedestrian-involved fatal crashes (17.4%).





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

A crucial component of the CSAP development was extensive public outreach designed to engage the community and gather valuable input on road safety concerns. The CSAP included creating a dedicated Task Force comprising diverse subject matter experts such as transportation engineers, city planners, public health officials, law enforcement representatives, and community advocates. This Task Force convened regularly to provide critical insights and guide the development of the plan. Additionally, various public outreach methods were deployed, including pop-up events, public surveys, and workshops, to directly interact with residents and stakeholders. These engagements were instrumental in identifying the community's top safety concerns and opportunities for improvement. By incorporating local knowledge and experiences, these outreach efforts ensured the CSAP recommendations were well-informed and community-driven.

## KEY FINDINGS

The following summarizes key findings from the public feedback survey:

- High Usage of Personal Automobiles:** An overwhelming majority of survey participants use personal automobiles several times a week, if not daily. This indicates a heavy reliance on cars for transportation.
- Moderate Usage of Walking & Bicycling:** Nearly half of the respondents (49.48%) walk several times a week, while 27.08% use bicycles, showing a significant portion of the respondents engage in these modes of transportation, which may be indicative that these modes of transportation are important to the population at-large as well.
- Road Perceptions:** Midway Boulevard and Piper Road are considered the most comfortable roads while U.S. 41 and S.R. 776 are considered the most dangerous.
- Traffic Congestion:** Public perception is that certain streets in Charlotte County experience significant traffic congestion due to high traffic volumes, poorly timed traffic lights, and inadequate road design.
- Transportation Improvement Priorities:** Respondents find resurfacing and road upgrades are the highest priority, followed closely by intersection upgrades. Speed management as well as better trail, sidewalk, and bike lane connectivity also ranked high.
- Top Transportation Concerns:** Regardless of the mode of transportation, automobile conflicts are the biggest concern for respondents. The lack of safe pedestrian or bicycle facilities, speeding, and distracted driving are also top concerns.
- Top Pedestrian Project Priorities:** Respondents ranked building more sidewalks and off-road multiuse trails and enhancing traffic enforcement as the highest priorities for pedestrian projects in their neighborhood.
- Top Bicycle Project Priorities:** Respondents ranked traffic enforcement, building off-road multiuse trails, and safe-riding educational programs as the highest priorities for bicycle projects in their neighborhood.
- Popular Destinations:** Besides work and home, respondents frequently travel to restaurants, shops, parks and beaches.



## RECOMMENDED COUNTERMEASURES

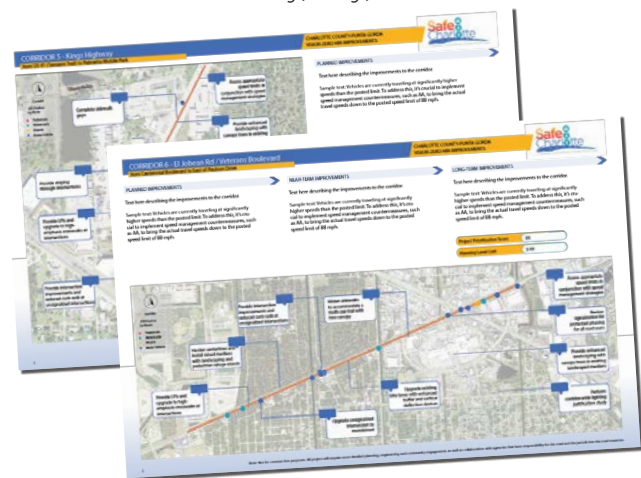
The suite of final recommended countermeasures were identified through an iterative process to recognize already-planned improvements, correlation of best practices to crash factors, and conversations with state, county, and city staff. This allowed for the confirmation of near-, mid-, and long-term strategies vetted by professionals and provided a holistic assessment of effective countermeasures tailored to the unique conditions of each high-risk corridor within Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda.

### Education, Policy, Enforcement, And Emergency Response Countermeasures

The CSAP includes a variety of countermeasures across education, policy, enforcement, and emergency management to enhance road safety. Educational initiatives aim to increase public awareness about safe driving practices and include programs like AARP's Driver Safety course for older drivers. Policy measures focus on updating infrastructure standards to incorporate better lighting, clearer signage, and more pedestrian-friendly pathways. Enforcement strategies involve stricter application of traffic laws to combat aggressive and distracted driving. Additionally, emergency management measures ensure quick response times and efficient resource allocation in the event of accidents. By integrating these multifaceted approaches, the CSAP aims to reduce traffic incidents and enhance the safety and well-being of all road users in the region.

### Planned Engineering Countermeasures

The following tables offer a proposed implementation plan for the recommended engineering improvements for each of the top 14 most dangerous corridors in the CC-PG MPO region. Recommendations identified on these tables reflect already planned and programmed improvements for each corridor, as identified in review with county, city, and FDOT staff.



### Near-Term Improvements (by 2030)

Near-term solutions focused on quickly implementable, cost-effective measures such as updating worn pavement markings and crosswalks, improved signage, and temporary speed reduction initiatives. These interventions can be executed to provide immediate safety benefits while longer-term solutions are being developed.

### Mid-Term Improvements (by 2040)

Mid-term strategies encompass more involved projects like the implementation of dedicated bike lanes and enhancements to pedestrian walkways to including pedestrian signalization, and intersection and roadway improvements to improve the safety of left-turn maneuvers. These projects, although requiring more time and resources, aim to significantly reduce crash risks through infrastructural improvements that address the specific factors contributing to crashes. For example, reconfiguring roadways and offering oversized signage to better accommodate the aging population and seasonal traffic fluctuations can considerably improve safety.






















### Long-Term Improvements (by 2045)

These comprehensive strategies might include the deployment of advanced traffic management systems, road realignments, and the construction of off-road improvements such as shared use paths with tree canopy. Additional recommendations have been made to offer long-range land use planning to consolidate driveways and offer a mix of uses to reduce local vehicular trips and promote active transportation. These far-reaching initiatives are designed to fundamentally transform the traffic landscape, reducing crash occurrences and severity by addressing root causes systematically.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN CORRIDOR RANK  
(PRIORITIZATION SCORE)

SAFETY SCORE RANK /CORRIDOR CUT SHEET

NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (IMPLEMENTATION BY 2030)

-  Appropriate speed limit assessment
-  Speed feedback signs
-  Wider edge lines
-  Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs)
-  Review of signal phasing, timing, and yellow change intervals
-  Backplates with retroreflective borders on signal heads
-  Flashing Yellow turn phase / Advance Dilemma Zone detection at signalized intersections
-  Oversized advance intersection and lane use signage
-  Signal coordination analysis
-  Striping through intersections for all left-turn movements
-  Interchange Operations Analysis Report Study
-  Refresh of faded pavement guidance markings
-  Sight distance analysis
-  Refresh of intersection crosswalks and pavement markings
-  Gateway feature with low-cost, quick-build pedestrian safety improvements
-  High-emphasis crosswalks on all legs of intersections
-  Sidewalk and trail connectivity study
-  Bicycle signage
-  Bicycle pavement markings such as sharrows
-  Enhanced bicycle buffer (green pavement) and green conflict striping in high activity zones
-  Residential street tree program
-  Road Safety Audit

2030 Planning Level Cost











## MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (IMPLEMENTATION BY 2040)

-  Lane narrowing
-  Re-assessment of appropriate speed limit following implementation of other countermeasures
-  Rumble strips
-  Mast arm design at signalized intersections
-  High-friction surface treatment
-  Access modifications to reduce left-turn conflicts
-  Dedicated left turn lanes
-  Directionalization or closure of full access median openings
-  Realignment of intersection or cul de sac
-  Extend raised median / median nose
-  Evaluation of left-turn lane offsets at intersections
-  Reduced curb radii at unsignalized intersections / driveways
-  Access management evaluation
-  Road upgrades to include paved shoulders and drainage improvements
-  Mid-block crossings with high-emphasis crosswalks, crosswalk lighting, and/or pedestrian signalization (PHB or HAWK)
-  Shared-use path with tree canopy
-  Completion of sidewalk gaps
-  Pedestrian crossing study
-  Raised crosswalk
-  New buffered bike lanes
-  Enhanced buffer for existing bike lanes
-  Vertical separation of bike lanes
-  Enhanced landscaping with canopy trees in existing raised medians
-  Hardened centerlines and raised medians with landscaping and pedestrian refuge islands
-  Signalize intersections with LPIs and high-emphasis crosswalks
-  Lighting justification study

## LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (IMPLEMENTATION BY 2045)

-  Roundabout or signalization of intersection(s)
-  Conversion of channelized right turns to improve sight distance
-  Assessment of SUN Trail facilities for additional safety treatments
-  Elimination of on-street bike lanes
-  Multiuse trail or Shared-use path with tree canopy
-  Future Land Use and Zoning revisions



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	VETERANS BLVD from US 41 (Tamiami Trail) to East of Paulson Drive	US 41 (TAMIAMI TRAIL) from Midway Boulevard to Conway Boulevard	US 41 (TAMIAMI TRAIL) from W Retta Esplanada to Carmalita Street	US 41 (TAMIAMI TRAIL) from Conway Boulevard to Melbourne Street	US 41 (TAMIAMI TRAIL) from Veterans Boulevard to Midway Boulevard	KINGS HIGHWAY from US 41 (Tamiami Trail) to Palmetto Mobile Park	SR 776 (EL JOBEAN ROAD) from Centennial Boulevard to US 41 (Tamiami Trail)	US 41 (TAMIAMI TRAIL) from W Retta Esplanada to Airport Road	MIDWAY BOULEVARD from Lakeview Boulevard to Harbor Boulevard	KINGS HIGHWAY from Veterans Boulevard to East of Sandhill Boulevard	EDGEWATER DRIVE from Midway Boulevard to Conreid Drive NE	COOPER STREET from E Olympia Ave to Burland Street	OLEAN BOULEVARD from US 41 (Tamiami Trail) to Key Lane	MARION AVENUE from Henry Street to Chasteen Street
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