



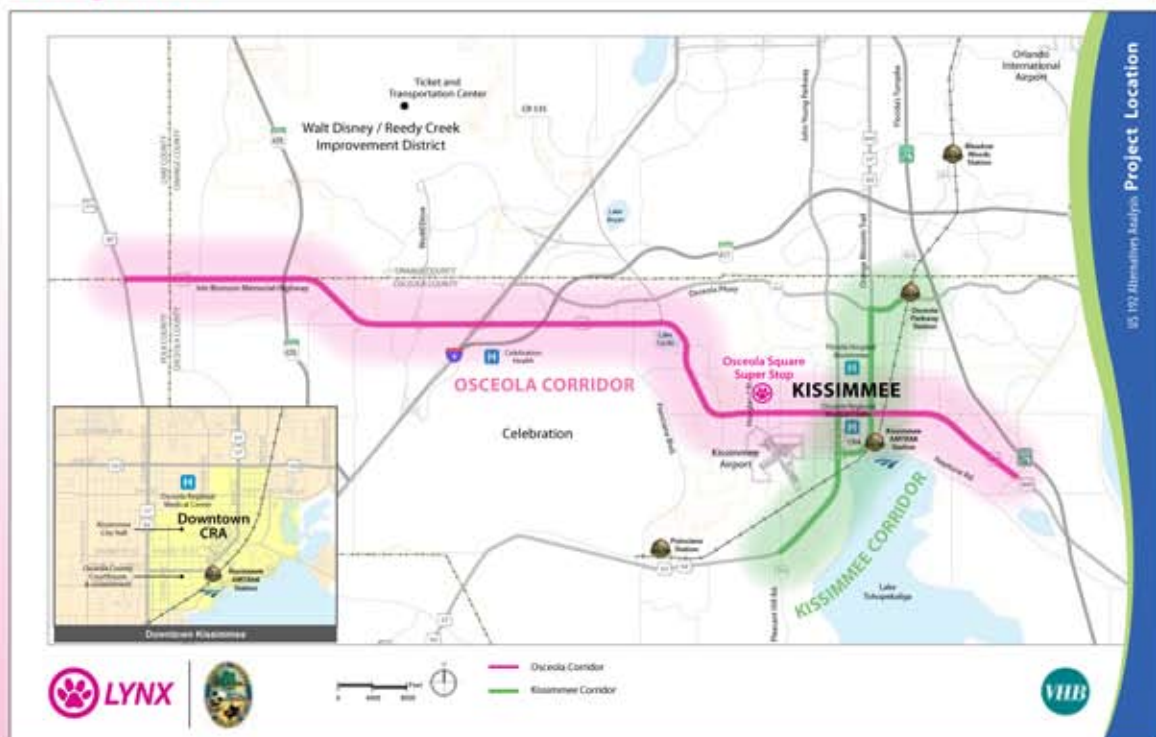
## Introduction

The purpose of the LYNX US 192 Alternatives Analysis study (US 192 AA) is to assess transportation needs and to develop alternative strategies for providing improved transportation service to, from and through two key corridors in Central Florida: the Osceola Corridor (US 192) and the Kissimmee Corridor (Orange Blossom Trail/ US 441/US 17-92 and John Young Parkway). This study focuses on the northwestern corner of Florida's Osceola County and also includes some sections of Orange, Lake and Polk Counties. The Study Area is located approximately 18 miles south of downtown Orlando

and is adjacent to Walt Disney World. The Study Area is depicted in Figure 1-1.

The US 192 Alternatives Analysis will expand upon the LYNX Vision 2030, the LYNX 5-Year Service Plan, the Osceola County Long Range Transit Plan and other relevant studies. Efforts will be guided by the Project Advisory Working Group (PAWG)-Steering Group comprised of representatives from Federal Transit Administration, LYNX, Osceola County, Florida Department of Transportation, MetroPlan Orlando,

## Study Area





the City of Kissimmee, the City of St. Cloud and the Lake-Sumter MPO. Input will be solicited from a PAWG-Community Liaison Group (CLG) and from the public at key project milestones.

To ensure eligibility for Federal funding, the US 192 AA will develop and evaluate alternatives in conformity with the requirements of the FTA's New Starts/Small Starts project planning process (per the FTA Procedures and Technical Methods for Transit Project Planning, Part II: Conduct of the Analysis, Section 1: Organization and Management, updated June 2007 and 49 CFR Part 611). In addition, the US 192 AA will develop alternatives that align with the Six Livability Principles developed through a partnership between the US Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection



### Study Area Roadway Infrastructure

The Study Area's road network is primarily comprised of a single, continuous east-west roadway (US 192) and several north-south roadways (US 27, SR 429, World Drive, I-4, US 441/US 17/US 92 and Florida's Turnpike). Parallel east-west roadways terminate in the west at I-4 and are tolled. In response to growing demand, sections of US 192 have been widened and improved since the 1990s, and these improvements continue to the east of the Study Area today. Similarly, US 441/US 17/US 92 has been improved. However, these and other roadways in the Study Area's Osceola and Kissimmee corridors have significant segments currently operating at unacceptable levels of service. Roadway level of service conditions are projected to further deteriorate throughout the Study Area as Osceola County continues to grow at an exceptional pace<sup>1</sup> and travel demand in the Study Area continues to exceed the capacity of the available infrastructure. Additionally, due to congested conditions, wide rights-of-way<sup>2</sup>, a lack of supporting bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and other issues the study corridor's roadways exhibit a high rate of crash frequency with associated fatalities.

<sup>1</sup> Population increased 55.8% from 2000-2010; US Census Bureau QuickFacts, quickfacts.census.gov  
<sup>2</sup> In some sections, US 192 is comprised of a four to six lane cross-section with added double turning lanes in each direction.

Agency (EPA), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

1. Provide more transportation choices;
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing;
3. Enhance economic competitiveness;
4. Support existing communities;
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment; and
6. Value communities and neighborhoods.

The US 192 Alternatives Analysis study will conclude with the identification of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).



## Project Needs and Opportunities

### Study Area Transit Service and Infrastructure

LYNX operates twelve fixed bus routes and one demand-responsive NeighborLink through or immediately adjacent to the Study Area as well as paratransit and transportation disadvantaged services. Operating primarily on US 192 and US 441/US 17/US 92 and John Young Parkway, these routes travel in congested roadway conditions that negatively affect their travel time, on-time performance and reliability. These conditions have also resulted in crowding. Limited to no technological transportation advancements have been implemented in the corridor to maximize the efficiency of the multi-modal transportation system. The LYNX routes in the Study Area are comprised primarily of local service with long headways (30-60 minutes) and long end-to-end travel times that are not competitive with auto travel times. The LYNX system is not unified throughout the Study Area, resulting in differing passenger amenities at stops and a lack of identity and visibility. Bus stops within the corridor are not optimally placed at/near signalized intersections which results in safety concerns and disincentives to choose transit due to poor accessibility. Additionally, there are poor linkages between transportation modes in the Study Area with only a single park-and-ride at the eastern end of the Osceola Corridor oriented primarily towards ridesharing, a

single bus transfer facility, few sidewalks at stops, limited ADA accessibility, and limited bicycle accessibility and storage at stops. The Study Area's residential land uses and significant employment centers are set back from the mainline transit system, resulting in poor direct access to the provided routes, most without defined walk or bike paths. LYNX support facilities are also not ideally located within the Study Area, resulting in operational inefficiencies and high operating costs for the Study Area's routes. Despite these deficiencies, the LYNX system has experienced sustained and significant growth in ridership, which has stretched the system's capacity.<sup>3</sup>

A single train station, served by Amtrak's Silver Star and Silver Meteor services, is situated central to the Study Area in Kissimmee. Overall there are few effective transportation alternatives to the automobile consistently available in the study area.

### Study Area Travel Demand and Land Use

The population in the Study Area is significantly transit-dependent, defined as environmental justice populations (including minorities and low-income persons), elderly persons and households with zero or one vehicles. These populations are projected to grow in the future. The Study Area population is experiencing higher than average unemployment, lower than average household incomes and increasing near-homeless and homeless individuals and families. Additionally, the Study Area is defined significantly by high tourist populations<sup>4</sup> which place significant, all-day, full-week, all-year demand upon the Study Area's roadways. Tourist usage of the transit system in the Study Area is low. The combined permanent and temporary populations have competing demands for short and long distance travel, express and local travel and transportation system connectivity related to work, recreational, school and retail trip-making.

While the Study Area is not uniformly dense in population or employment, there are locations within and adjacent to the Study Area with significant concentrations, including Walt Disney World, Celebration, Downtown Kissimmee, three regional hospitals, Valencia College, the Osceola Square Mall and major office centers. The density of development in some Study Area sections restricts the ability to add roadway capacity, and there is limited local and political support for additional roadway expansion for US 192. Additionally, there are large, undeveloped sections of the Study Area that are projected to add significant growth to the corridor, increasing both

population and employment density. These developments will be joined by the significant redevelopment of existing land uses within the Study Area that have deteriorated or become blighted. With significant constraints on the existing transportation system, this growth will result in further degradation of travel conditions in the Study Area. Furthermore, non-automotive connectivity between existing and planned developments is/will be limited or non-existent without improvements to the transportation network and operations. The Housing and Transportation Affordability index shows the households in the study area have a combined housing and transportation cost higher than the recommended 45% of income<sup>5</sup>.

### Study Area Opportunities and Challenges

While planned Study Area transportation improvements will provide new opportunities to serve the Study Area populations they also bring new challenges. Within and directly adjacent to the Study Area are three planned stations for the region's first commuter rail system, known as SunRail. The first phase of this north-south system is currently under construction, with a second phase (in the Study Area) slated for completion in 2016. While eagerly anticipated, these new stations will also create a need for connecting feeder and distributor transit services and direct routing to key corridor locations. A planned intermodal facility is committed for construction adjacent to the Kissimmee SunRail/Amtrak station but transit routing to serve this facility has not yet been defined. Provision of a coordinated transportation system in the Study Area will maximize the Federal and local investment in SunRail. The state-designated High Speed Rail corridor also runs along Interstate 4, with a potential station identified in the Study Area at the southwest quadrant of Interstate 4 and US 192.

Significant land use planning and zoning modifications within the Study Area have set the stage for developments that will be more transit-friendly, diversified and supportive of economic growth. However, economic growth and the livability of the Study Area's communities will be impaired by increasing congestion and insufficient transit alternatives unless transportation improvements are also carefully planned to support it.

<sup>3</sup> Two Study Area routes, Link 55 and 56, experienced an over 50% increase in ridership between 2006 and 2011.  
<sup>4</sup> Osceola County hosts between five and six million overnight visitors each year with approximately 100,000 visitors staying on a given night; Kissimmee Convention and Visitors Bureau, "Destination Osceola 2022-Strategic Planning for the Osceola County Tourism Industry", 2012  
<sup>5</sup> Center for Neighborhood Technology: www.htaindex.cnt.org



## Study Area Needs

Improved transit infrastructure and service is needed to address the following Study Area needs:

- Insufficient transportation infrastructure capacity to serve the projected travel demands;
- Insufficient implementation of technology to improve multimodal transportation efficiency;
- Congested roadways that lead to increasingly long trip times, unreliable bus service, and safety issues;
- Auto-oriented transportation system capacity that does not meet the objectives of local planning;
- Transit travel times that are excessively long and not competitive with auto travel times to key destinations or transfer points;
- Limited and inconvenient transfers between modes (auto to bus, bike/pedestrian to bus, bus to bus);
- Poor physical uniformity and identity of the transit system and minimal service levels that discourage choice rider usage;
- Insufficient transit stop infrastructure and amenities to support existing users or attract new riders;
- Inadequate placement of bus stops which results in limited accessibility, connectivity, transit attractiveness and safety issues;

- A lack of supporting facility infrastructure to optimize the financial performance of the transit system;
- Conflicting and diverse travel needs that are not well-served by the current transit system;
- A lack of robust and prominent transit service to support adopted, transit-oriented development land use policies and to encourage livability;
- A new commuter rail service that requires a supportive Study Area transit system,
- A lack of reliable and timely access to educational opportunities, services and to economically diverse employment opportunities
- A higher than recommended percentage of study corridor incomes spent on combined housing and transportation costs and;
- Insufficient transit capacity to support and connect existing land uses, future growth and revitalized development.

Additional transportation investment in the Study Area is needed to address these problems. The US 192 Alternatives Analysis study will develop alternative transportation improvements that could address these problems, evaluate those alternatives for their effectiveness, and provide sufficient information to the Study Area's stakeholders to recommend and advance a Locally Preferred Alternative.



Transportation improvements are needed in the Study Area to support existing and projected community travel demands that are resulting from continuous growth in population and employment, increased land use densities, and exceptional and consistent tourist travel. There is a need to address existing deficiencies in both the transit infrastructure and transit service (coverage, frequency, access and performance) to improve the attractiveness and effectiveness of the transit system so that travelers increasingly choose it over auto travel. Improvements are needed to better serve the highly transit-dependent population, to attract new riders so that congestion can be reduced, and to provide improved connectivity between existing and

## Purpose and Need Statement

proposed transit-supportive land uses and other modal transportation systems, including SunRail and future High Speed Rail. Transportation investments are needed that are cost-effective and utilize existing transportation rights-of-way to the maximum extent feasible by employing advanced and accepted transportation technology. An improved transportation system will enhance the livability of the study area by providing better access to employment opportunities and basic services; by providing a range of transportation options for all ages, incomes and abilities; by supporting the economic vitality of existing communities; and by reducing household transportation costs.