

**CITY OF NICEVILLE  
SAFE STREETS  
ACTION PLAN**

2024





Dear Members of the Community,

Since 2014, 14 people have been killed and 284 people have suffered incapacitating injuries in traffic collisions within the City of Niceville and nearby areas. We know from Statewide statistics that, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists are much more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a crash than those traveling in an automobile. We are also finding that our youth and senior populations may be disparately impacted. Fatal and severe traffic collisions are preventable. Safe Streets Niceville is focused on making the roadways in our City safer for everyone, no matter how they travel.

We recognize that people make mistakes and our transportation system should be designed to minimize the consequences of these errors.

This Safe Streets Niceville Action Plan is based on a data-driven analysis to identify a High Injury Network and Hot Spot locations. It includes a toolbox of engineering countermeasures and has non-engineering countermeasures, like education and enforcement.

The City recognizes that this requires a significant commitment from our organization, but also our partners. In developing this Action Plan, we considered input from citizens, the school district, law enforcement, emergency services, and our regional transportation planning organization to incorporate input from a wide range of stakeholders impacted by this serious problem in our community. This Action Plan provides a path for the City and its partner agencies to work towards zero deaths and injuries by 2045. I hope you'll join us in this critically important mission!

Mayor Daniel L. Henkel

Chair, Safe Streets Niceville Task Force

**RESOLUTION NO. 24-04-01**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NICEVILLE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A GOAL TO REDUCE TRAFFIC-RELATED FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES IN THE CITY; SUPPORTING THE CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFE STREETS NICEVILLE ACTION PLAN; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS AND SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

**WHEREAS**, statistics show that, tragically, that 4 people were killed and 24 people were seriously injured in traffic-related accidents during 2023 in Niceville, (the “City”); and

**WHEREAS**, statistics show that, tragically, 5 serious injuries during 2023 were bicycle and pedestrian related; and

**WHEREAS**, minority and low-income communities face a disproportionate risk of serious injuries and fatalities in connection with traffic-related accidents; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Niceville, Florida (the “City”) strongly believes that fatalities and serious injuries caused by traffic-related accidents are unacceptable and a serious public safety issue that necessitates public action; and

**WHEREAS**, providing safe and reliable transportation is a priority for the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City recognizes that traffic fatalities and serious injuries are preventable and not inevitable, and commits to working collaboratively with the County, and partner transportation agencies to identify and implement projects and programs that reduce the potential for serious traffic injuries and fatalities in our community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NICEVILLE, FLORIDA, THAT:**

Section 1. The above recitals are true, correct, and incorporated by reference as the findings of the City Council as if set forth fully herein.

Section 2. The City of Niceville supports the creation and implementation of the Niceville Safe Streets Action Plan and a “Vision Zero” goal, which commits to a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries in the City by the year 2055.

Section 3. The City will create a Safe Streets Niceville Working Group (as shall be established under the Safe Streets Niceville Action Plan) to: (i) coordinate safety improvements, (ii) advance local priorities that will make streets safer for the traveling public, (iii) access technical assistance, and (iv) support in reducing, and ultimately eliminating, fatal and serious injury collisions.

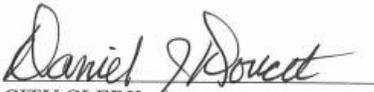
Section 4. All resolutions or part of resolutions in conflict with any of the provisions of this Resolution are hereby superseded and repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 5. This Resolution shall become effective upon adoption and approval in accordance with the City Charter.

ADOPTED in regular session this 9<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2024.

  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
CITY CLERK

## Introduction and Executive Summary

### Introduction

Since the year 2014, 14 people have been killed and 284 people have suffered incapacitating injuries in traffic collisions within the City of Niceville and nearby areas. Unfortunately, the rate of serious injuries continues to climb and in 2023, 4 people were killed on our roadways -well above the previous year's average of one death per year. This is a plan of action to eliminate these unnecessary deaths and injuries within the City of Niceville and some of its surrounding areas. To accomplish this, data on crashes is provided to identify the areas where serious crashes are occurring. These areas make up the high injury network (HIN) of roadways and intersections where people are losing their lives or becoming seriously injured. This Plan is based on a Vision Zero approach, with strategies identified to work towards eliminating deaths and injuries.<sup>1</sup>

Vision Zero is a multidisciplinary approach, bringing together diverse and necessary stakeholders to address this complex problem. In the past, meaningful, cross-disciplinary collaboration among local traffic planners and engineers, law enforcement officials, policymakers, and public health professionals has not been the norm. Vision Zero acknowledges that there are many factors that contribute to safe mobility—including roadway design, speeds, enforcement, behaviors, technology, and policies—and sets clear goals to achieve the shared goal of zero fatalities and severe injuries.

### Executive Summary

#### Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting

In early April of 2024, the Niceville City Council adopted Resolution 24-04-01 setting a Vision Zero goal for the City by the year 2055. Mayor Daniel Henkel also serves as the Chairman of the Safe Streets Niceville Task Force, with traffic safety identified as one of his target issues.

#### Planning Structure

The Safe Streets Niceville Task Force has been established and tasked with the development, implementation, and monitoring of this Plan. This Task Force is led by Mayor, Daniel Henkel and consists of representatives from the Okaloosa County School Board, the City of Niceville Fire Department, the Niceville Police Department, and representatives from City Administration, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Public Works, Grants Management, Engineering, Community Redevelopment Agency, and Planning. Plans for this Task Force include, local business owners and the City of Niceville Youth Advisory Council.

#### Safety Analysis

The high injury network (HIN) for the City of Niceville and nearby areas consists primarily of College Boulevard, Hwy 85, Palm Boulevard, Cedar Avenue and State Road 20 (John Sims Pkwy).

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Traffic Engineers - <https://toolkits.ite.org/visionzero/>

State Road 20 (John Sims Pkwy) is by far the highest injury facility within the City. The high injury network (HIN) is identified on Maps 3 through 6 for various road users including automobile drivers, pedestrians and bicyclist.

In addition to the identification of the high injury road network, several high injury intersections have been identified as follows:

- College Boulevard and SR 85
- SR 85 and SR 20 (John Sims Pkwy)
- SR 20 (W John Sims Pkwy) and Government Avenue (SR 85)
- Cedar Avenue and SR 20 (John Sims Pkwy)
- Cedar Avenue and SR 285 (Partin Drive)
- Palm Boulevard and SR 20 (John Sims Pkwy)
- Palm Boulevard and SR 285 (Partin Drive)

#### Engagement and Collaboration

This Plan builds on the work of several Nation and State level initiatives, including the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Safe Systems Approach and the Florida Department of Transportation’s Target Zero initiative. This Plan is also intended to work cohesively with the Safe Streets Action Plan currently being developed by the Okaloosa Walton Transportation Planning Organization through a “Safe Streets for All” implementation grant (Federal Highway Administration). This larger regional Action Plan will identify some of the same high injury network roads that are identified herein, specifically the higher volume, higher speed State road facilities. This larger regional action plan should provide recommendations for the City’s high injury network that are consistent and compatible with the recommendations of the City’s Plan through coordination and collaboration. It is intended that this Plan will “inform” this larger regional plan and aid in coordination of State and Okaloosa County efforts.

#### Equity Considerations

For the City of Niceville, this means:

- ✓ Addressing the needs of ALL members of our population, including younger people, aging populations, and our disabled population;
- ✓ Ensuring that employees and parents from surrounding areas can safely travel through and around the City of Niceville to employment and schools;
- ✓ Encouraging safe walking and biking to help with cost burdens; and
- ✓ Encouraging affordable housing close to employment and education centers through infrastructure development.

### Policy and Process Changes

This Plan includes the following recommended policy and process changes:

- ✓ Adopt a Complete Streets Policy and Approach
- ✓ Carrying out Speed Management Strategies
- ✓ Prioritization of Low-Cost Safety Treatments

### Strategy and Project Selections

This Plan includes the following recommended strategies:

- ✓ Perform road safety audits for the HIN, particularly SR 20
- ✓ Support and create safe driving campaigns with students
- ✓ Continuing to make sidewalk and bike network improvements
- ✓ Enhancing Transit
- ✓ Creating Safe Routes to School
- ✓ Education Initiatives
- ✓ Data Collection, Monitoring and Analysis

In addition, the Plan recommends the following projects for funding as funds become available:

**SR 20 / Government Avenue (SR 85) Intersection** – Recommend intersection safety audit and access study. This intersection has been identified as a high injury intersection. Such audit or intersection study should consider innovative design changes, improved delineation, and advanced warning.

**Cedar Avenue from 21<sup>st</sup> Street to College Boulevard** – Complete Streets and major intersection safety audits / Improvements. Cedar and Palm are the two main north south spines for the urbanized area of the City. Cedar and Palm both terminate at the Northwest Florida State College, a growing college campus.

- ✓ Special consideration should be given to the intersections of Cedar and SR 20 and SR 285 (Partin Dr). Intersection analysis should consider innovative design changes, improved delineation, and advanced warning.
- ✓ The section of Cedar Avenue between SR 285 and SR 20 should receive special design consideration since this section of the high injury network is heavily traveled by students and school users. This section also features inadequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure and dangerous front end 90-degree parking.

**Palm Boulevard from Bayshore Drive to College Boulevard** - Complete Streets and major intersection safety audits / Improvements. Cedar and Palm are the two main north south spines for the urbanized area of the City. Cedar and Palm both terminate at the Northwest Florida State College.

- ✓ Special consideration should be given to the intersections of Cedar and SR 20 and SR 285 (Partin Dr). Special consideration should be given to the intersections of Palm and SR 20 and SR 285 (Partin Dr). Intersection analysis should consider innovative design changes, improved delineation, and advanced warning.
- ✓ The section of Palm Boulevard between SR 285 and SR 20 should receive special design consideration since this section of the high injury network is heavily traveled by students and school users. This section also features inadequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure and dangerous front end 90-degree parking.

**Crossings Boulevard Connector** – Recommend construction of the “missing link” in the alternative route to SR 20 that extends from Rocky Bayou Drive to Palm Boulevard. This would include a new two-lane road with multi use path and traffic circle at Juniper Avenue. This roadway is a parallel facility to SR 20, alleviating local traffic on SR 20. SR 20 has been identified as the facility within the City that has the highest injury rate. This parallel facility is prioritized for walking, biking and local access removing trips from the most dangerous HIN roadway, SR 20.

**Bayshore Drive from SR 20 to 11<sup>th</sup> Street** – Recommend complete streets improvements to include bike and pedestrian facility improvements. This route links large residential areas with the CRA.

#### Progress and Transparency

The City has created a webpage related to this Plan and will update this Plan annually to report progress on strategies and outcomes. Each of the identified strategies contain performance measures for the purposes of analyzing success. The City of Niceville Safe Streets Task Force will meet as necessary, but at least annually to update this Plan or discuss potential projects and progress.

## About the City of Niceville

### Military Community

The City of Niceville along with its sister cities, the City of Valparaiso, the City of Crestview, the City of Freeport, and the City of Fort Walton Beach are bedroom communities to two very large Air Force bases, Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field AFB. These military installations have an estimated economic impact of \$9.2 billion and support almost 74,000 jobs in Okaloosa County. Eglin AFB is the largest base in the world encompassing over 724 square miles of land across three counties, 134,000 square miles of overland air space, and hosts multiple military service units and the Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range<sup>2</sup>. According to a recent housing study conducted by the consulting firm TPMA, the shortfall of suitable housing for military members in Okaloosa County increased by 67% between the years 2009 and 2022<sup>3</sup>. It is estimated that approximately 26% of the population in the Niceville/Valparaiso area are either active duty or retired military<sup>4</sup>.

### Transportation HUB

The main transportation corridors that feed into and move people around the City are SR 293, SR 285, Hwy 85, and SR 20, College Boulevard, Forest Road, Rocky Bayou, Bayshore Drive, Palm Boulevard, and Cedar Avenue (Map 1). These corridors bring workers and goods



The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County nominated the Eglin/Hurlburt community for consideration as an inaugural designee of this prestigious award. With demonstrated long-standing and unwavering support and innovative initiatives benefiting military personnel and families, the Eglin-Hurlburt Community received the Great American Defense Community designation. Community evaluation criteria included:

- Community Building and Integration: provides an environment in which service members, their families and veterans are welcomed and integrated into the community fabric
- Support and Collaboration: has a formal military-community support organization that includes advocates from local governments, non-profit organizations and area businesses to form installation-community partnerships that enhance services to service members, their families and veterans
- Educational and Employment Opportunities: provides a wide range of job opportunities for
  - service members and their families; and ensures quality educational opportunities for military children, spouses, service members and veterans
- Family Support: offers a range of support to service members and their families before, during and after deployments, and as they transition from the military.

Source: <https://florida-edc.org/military-support/defense-support-initiatives-committee#DSI>

<sup>2</sup> Florida Military and Defense Economic Impact Summary, 2022. Enterprise Florida.

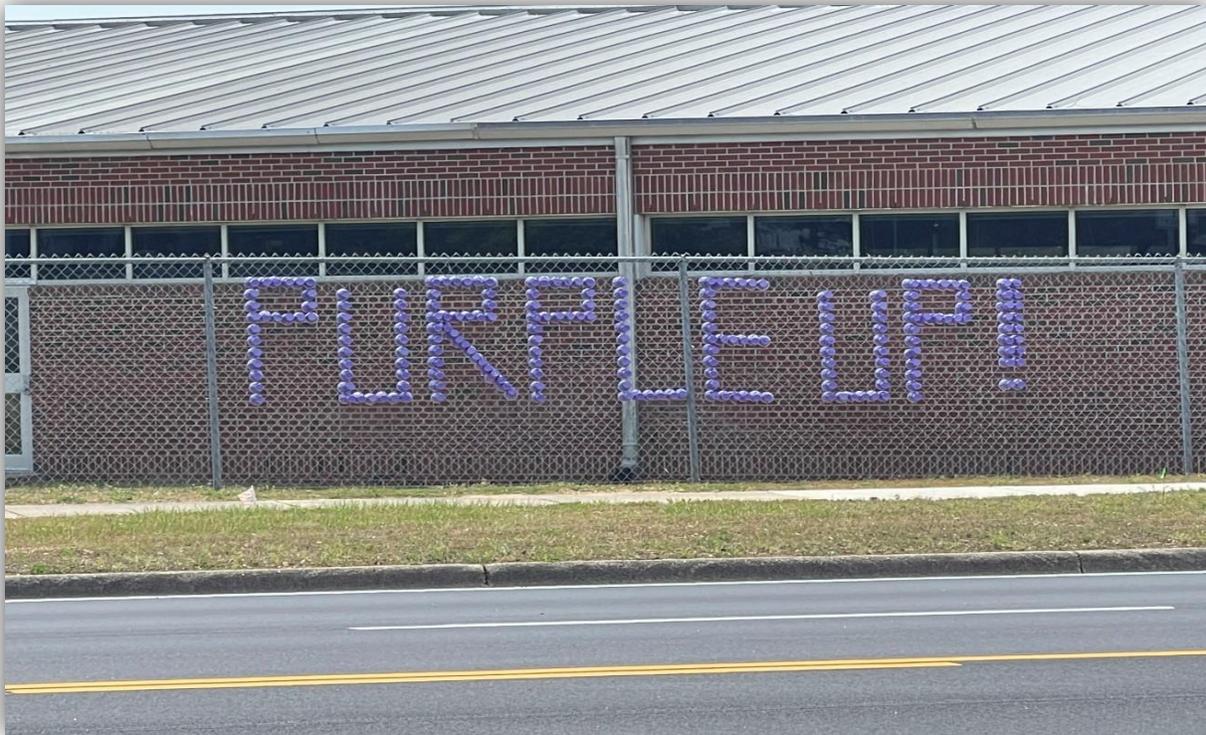
<sup>3</sup> Attainable Workforce Housing Strategic Plan, Okaloosa County, March 2024. TPMA Inc.

<sup>4</sup> US Census Bureau

from surrounding areas through the City of Niceville to Eglin Air Force Base. SR 20 is a four-lane facility and SR 285 is also four lanes (Partin Drive) partially within the City limits- before narrowing to a two-lane facility as it travels north through the Eglin AFB range to Interstate 10 and US Highway 90.

### Divided City

SR 20 (John Sims Parkway) serves not only as a major transportation corridor, but as a dividing feature. The roadway is high speed and high volume, making it inhospitable for walking and biking. Crossing on foot or by bicycle is dangerous. There is one pedestrian overpass located at Niceville High School that is used during peak times associated with school functions but is underutilized by the general public due to its landing on school property. SR 20 cuts off the southern portion of Niceville from civic and educational uses and cuts off the northern portions of the City off from waterfront uses including what was once the City's historic downtown. While the City has invested heavily in sidewalk facilities, this barrier high speed "stroad" still represents a significant safety and connectivity challenge.



Ruckel Middle School displays support on Partin Drive for wearing purple during the Month of the Military Child

## Okaloosa County Transit

Transit in the City of Niceville is provided by EC Rider (Map 2), which offers reduced fare options for elderly and disabled riders. Several agencies sponsor customer transportation needs, paying all or most of the cost. For those who are not sponsored, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) provides cost-sharing assistance for qualified individuals<sup>5</sup>. Service operates seven days per week during the daytime hours. In compliance with Code of Federal Regulations 49 CFR Part 37, EC Rider's Dial-A-Ride Program (Paratransit Service) is available to Individuals with disability who are unable, as the result of physical or mental impairment, and without the assistance of another individual, to board, ride, or disembark public transportation for access to life sustaining activities, healthcare, employment, education, shopping, leisure, recreation, or general ventures.

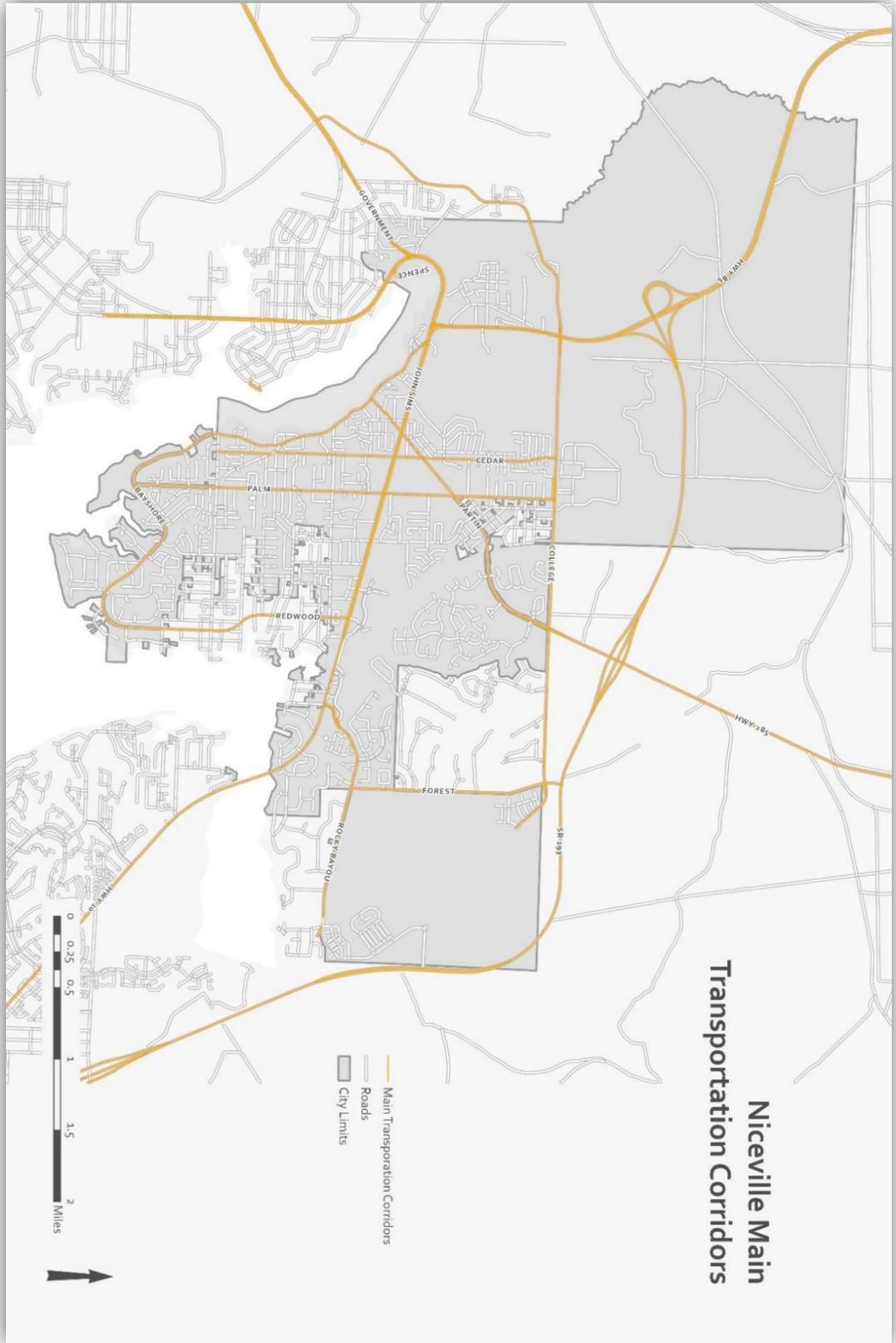
- Persons with disabilities, either physical or mental, preventing independent transportation Individuals who are economically disadvantaged (Transportation Disadvantaged Program Only)
- Children before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and adults over 60 (Transportation Disadvantaged Program Only)
- Reside within Okaloosa County limits (Transportation Disadvantaged Program Only)<sup>6</sup>

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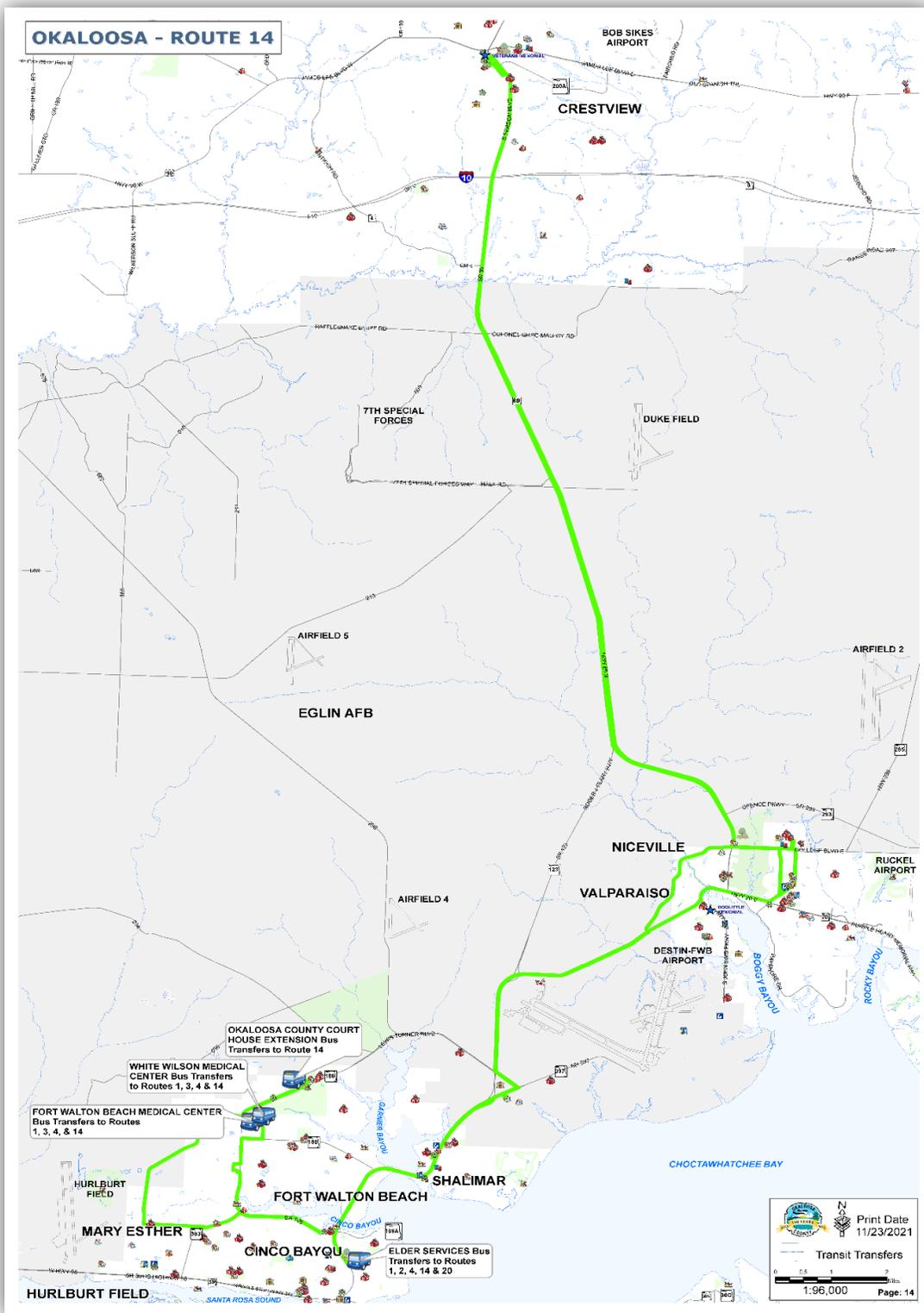
<sup>5</sup> Okaloosa Walton TPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

<sup>6</sup> Emerald Coast Rider <https://www.ecrider.org/dial-a-ride/>

MAP 1



MAP 2



MAP 2: Okaloosa County, <https://www.ecrider.org/routes/route-14/>

## PLANNING STRUCTURE

### Safe Streets Niceville Task Force

The Safe Streets Niceville Task Force has been established and tasked with the development, implementation, and monitoring of this Plan. This Task Force is led by Mayor, Daniel Henkel and consists of representatives from the Okaloosa County School Board, the City of Niceville Fire Department, the Niceville Police Department, and representatives from City Administration, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Public Works, Grants Management, Engineering, Community Redevelopment Agency, and Planning. Plans for this Task Force include, local business owners and the City of Niceville Youth Advisory Council.



Members of the Safe Streets Niceville Task Force Meet at Niceville City Hall

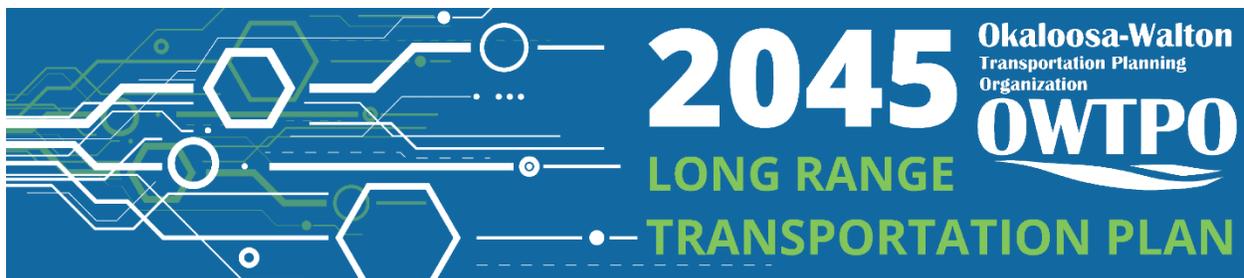
## ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

This Plan, is one of many implementation steps necessary to achieve a vision zero goal along with other local, regional, and national efforts. For example, the Florida Department of Transportation, included strategies identified in the Florida Strategic Highway Safety Plan that introduces the Safe System Approach which is promoted by the Federal Highway Administration and described in more detail later in this Plan. This statewide plan thinks beyond the traditional approaches or four “E’s” of Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Emergency response to include the four “I’s”... information intelligence, Innovation, Insight into communities, and Investments and policies.

More and more local governments across the nation are increasingly taking the pledge to become Vision Zero communities. The City of Niceville is not alone in the challenge to eliminate all fatal and serious injury collisions, and resources are widely available. The following describes some of these efforts that inspired this Plan. These efforts also inform the recommended strategies found later in this Plan.

### Regional Planning Efforts

This Plan is intended to work cohesively with the Safe Streets Action Plan currently being developed by the Okaloosa Walton Transportation Planning Organization through a Safe Streets for All Program Implementation Grant (Federal Highway Administration). This larger regional Action Plan will identify some of the same high injury network roads that are identified herein, specifically the higher volume, higher speed State road facilities. This larger regional action plan should provide recommendations for the City’s high injury network that are consistent and compatible with the recommendations of the City’s Plan through coordination and collaboration. It is intended that this Plan will “inform” this larger regional plan.



The City of Niceville participates in the Okaloosa Walton Transportation Planning Organization, with one City Councilman appointed to this Board and City staff appointed to the Technical Coordinating Committee. The Okaloosa Walton Transportation Planning Organization’s 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, envisions a transportation network that provides safe multimodal transportation options for all residents and visitors to Okaloosa County.

During the last Long-Range Transportation Plan major update process in 2022, Niceville citizens participated in surveys and participated as members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). This overall public input resulted in the capacity project on SR 285 from I-10 to SR 293 (A-152), being added in response to public concern for safety of drivers and bicyclists travelling along SR 285 due to lack of passing opportunities.

Results of the public outreach conducted during this time are summarized below. Public participant rating of project importance was nearly equal for five categories. While traffic and congestion remain top concerns in the region, undoubtedly due to the regions high volume of seasonal visitors in part, complete streets, bike/ pedestrian facilities, and transit are increasingly seen as important.

- Complete Streets (23%)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements (23%)
- Capacity (19%)
- Intersections (18%)
- Transit (17%)
- The most reported transportation concern for the TPO region over the next 20 years was “Increased traffic/congestion/delay” (44%)

### County Planning Efforts

Okaloosa County is currently working towards implementation of a Mobility Plan. It is intended that the projects identified within this Plan be consistent and compatible with this County planning effort. City and County coordination is key on this important vision zero approach as systems and jurisdictional boundaries are interrelated.

### State of Florida Target Zero Behavioral Approach

FDOT Target Zero is a statewide initiative to reduce the number of transportation-related serious injuries and deaths across Florida to zero, Target Zero builds upon the Vision Zero goal by focusing on influencing dangerous driver **behaviors** before serious and fatal crashes occur.

Target Zero aligns resources and establishes actions for all safety partners to take evolutionary steps to improve how Florida connects, interacts, plans, designs, operates, and maintains its transportation system.

Through this program, FDOT has created music playlists to help driver’s relax during commutes or “vibe out” when encountering a stressful drive. The program also shows drivers how to use the auto-replay feature on their smartphones so that they can turn on “do not disturb” with style.



The program has created a plethora of do not disturb messages that are fun and include tones and emotions. The program even has shareable memes and shareable images such as those included below.



Images courtesy of the Florida Department of Transportation Target Zero Program

## National Planning and Design Efforts

### U.S. DOT Safe Systems Approach

The U.S. Department of Transportation has adopted a Safe Systems approach, as a method to address roadway safety.

This approach incorporates several key principles:

- *Humans make mistakes.* People will inevitably make mistakes and decisions that can lead or contribute to crashes, but the transportation system can be designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes, and avoid death and serious injuries when a crash occurs.
- *Humans are vulnerable.* Human bodies have physical limits for tolerating crash forces before death or serious injury occurs; therefore, it is critical to design and operate a transportation system that is human-centric and accommodates physical human vulnerabilities.
- *Responsibility is shared.* All stakeholders—including government at all levels, industry, non-profit/advocacy, researchers, and the general public—are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.
- *Redundancy is crucial.* Reducing risks requires that all parts of the transportation system be strengthened, so that if one part fails, the other parts still protect people<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation - <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem>

According to the Federal Highway Administration, “The Safe System Approach is being applied with great success in a growing number of nations and cities around the world and has now taken hold in the United States. The Safe System Approach has origins in Sweden through its Vision Zero program and with the Sustainable Safety program in the Netherlands. These early adopters experienced impressive decreases in road traffic fatalities—each with at least a 50-percent reduction in fatalities between 1994 and 2015. The concept has spread to other countries in Europe and beyond with notable success in Australia and New Zealand”<sup>8</sup>. The key principles and elements of a Safe System approach, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), are presented on Figure 1.

Figure 1



Source: U.S. Department of Transportation

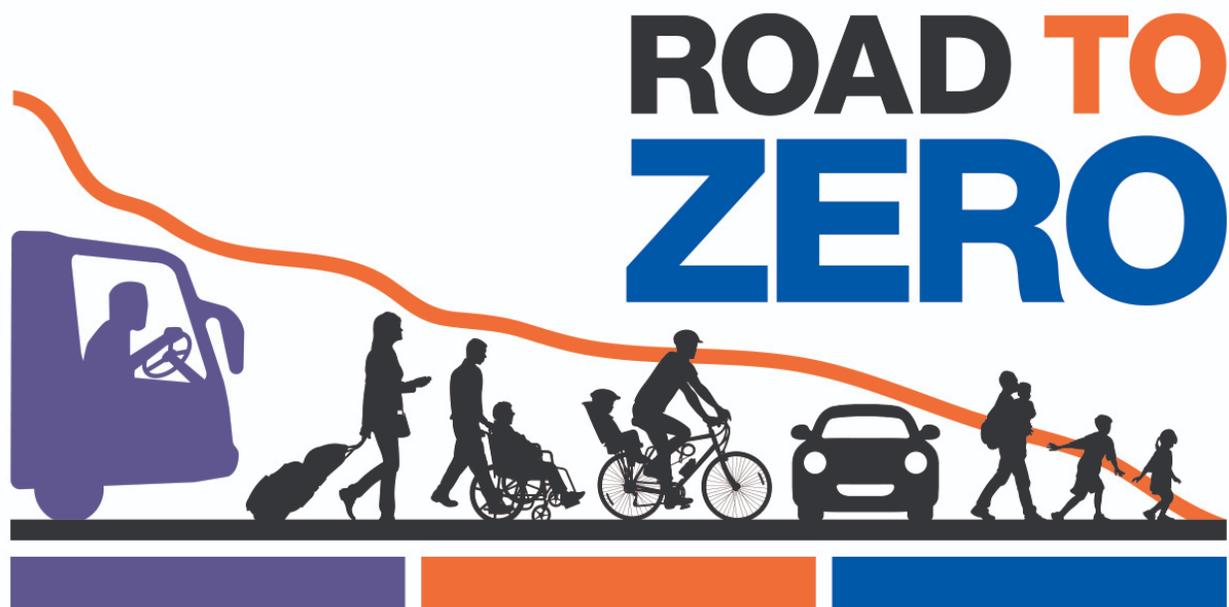
<sup>8</sup> U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration: Making Our Streets Safer through a Safe System Approach by Mark Doctor and Chimai. Winter 2022. Ngo. <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/winter-2022/01>

### National Safety Council Road to Zero

The National Safety Council’s Road to Zero Coalition, released a comprehensive report laying out strategies to end roadway deaths in the U.S. by 2050. This report identified three main initiatives:

- 1) Double down on what works through proven, evidence-based strategies;
- 2) Advance lifesaving technology in vehicles and infrastructure; and
- 3) Prioritize safety by adopting a safe systems approach and creating a positive safety culture.

This important work in ongoing, the 2023 Road to Zero annual meeting was held in February at the National League of Cities in Washington, D.C. The meeting connected Road to Zero members, who heard from leading experts in traffic safety and were inspired by innovative case studies, new research and advances in policy. Members also received updates on the Coalition’s Working Groups and learned how to better engage with the Coalition in 2023. The Road to Zero coalition has developed a “Doubling Down on What Works Clearinghouse” which includes speed management as one of the seven topic areas <sup>9</sup>

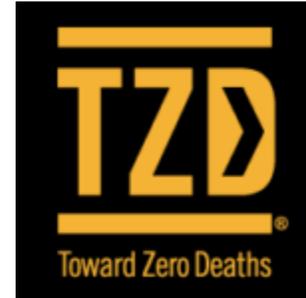


Source: National Safety Council

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nsc.org/roadtozero>

## American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Towards Zero Deaths (TZD)

Towards Zero Deaths (TZD) is a national strategy that advocates for highway safety strategies for eliminating serious injuries and deaths on our nation's roadways. The strategy calls for all stakeholders to champion the idea that one death on our nation's roadways is too many, and we must all work together to bring the annual number of roadway deaths down to zero. The National Strategy document is AASHTO's official strategic highway safety plan (SHSP).



TZD emphasizes six key areas:

- ✓ Safe Drivers and Passengers – emphasizes driver behavior with the understanding that being unbuckled, driving while impaired, using hand held devices, age of driver, and speeding can be significant sources of driver error that contributes to up to 94% of crashes;
- ✓ Safer Vulnerable Users – pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclist are vulnerable users that lack physical protection;
- ✓ Safer Vehicles – vehicle technologies and help prevent and lessen the severity of crashed
- ✓ Safer Infrastructure – roadway changes must consider all users and how they interact with the roadway and safety should be a consideration throughout design processes;
- ✓ Enhanced Medical Services – EMS must partner in a comprehensive system and we must focus on the technologies and systems necessary to advance collaboration and save lives;
- ✓ Improved Safety Management – focusing on how to better collaborate and use data <sup>10</sup>

### Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE)

In 2016, the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) created a Vision Zero Committee for the purposes of advancing Vision Zero concepts and implementation. The following information was developed by the ITE and explains how a Vision Zero safety approach is different from traditional practice.

According to ITE, "Vision Zero acknowledges that traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable and sets the goal of eliminating both in a set period with clear, measurable

"One person dies every 16 minutes in a traffic crash in our country. Over a lifetime, nearly everyone is touched by consequences of traffic crashes. Toward Zero Deaths is the highway safety vision for the United States. It is the only acceptable target." (National Strategy on Highway Safety)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.towardzerodeaths.org/>

strategies. This is a major shift for most North American communities by establishing clear accountability to ensure safe mobility. History has shown, with campaigns to reduce drunk driving and initiatives to increase recycling, that changing cultural attitudes and ensuring political accountability make a dramatic difference—and increase success. Vision Zero is a multidisciplinary approach, bringing together diverse and necessary stakeholders to address this complex problem. In the past, meaningful, cross-disciplinary collaboration among local traffic planners and engineers, law enforcement officials, policymakers, and public health professionals has not been the norm. Vision Zero acknowledges that there are many factors that contribute to safe mobility—including roadway design, speeds, enforcement, behaviors, technology, and policies—and sets clear goals to achieve the shared goal of zero fatalities and severe injuries.”<sup>11</sup>

ITE is working to train young engineers by sponsoring the first ever “Sandbox Competition” in 2020 on Urban Micro-mobility. In 2021, this competition focused on Vision Zero Data Analytics.  
<sup>12</sup>

Achieving the vision of eliminating deaths and serious injuries from the Nation’s roads may seem daunting with traffic fatalities in the United States stubbornly remaining between 32,000 and 39,000 annually. (Source: U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration, 2022)

<sup>11</sup>Institute of Traffic Engineers - <https://toolkits.ite.org/visionzero/>

<sup>12</sup> Institute of Traffic Engineers - <https://www.ite.org/membership/sandboxcompetition/>

## SAFETY ANALYSIS

### Existing Conditions and Historical Trends

This section presents an analysis of existing conditions and historical trends to provide a baseline level of crashes involving fatalities and serious injuries within the City and its surrounding communities. For this Plan, City staff analyzed data from the Niceville Police Department as well as Signal Four Analytics (University of Florida GeoPlan Center) for comparison purposes. City Police report data was well correlated to the data provided by Signal Four Analytics as expected. This work focused on the period of time between calendar years 2017 and 2021 which is the specified analysis time frame for a Safe Streets 4 All grant, and including the years 2022 and 2023, for the purpose of identifying trends.

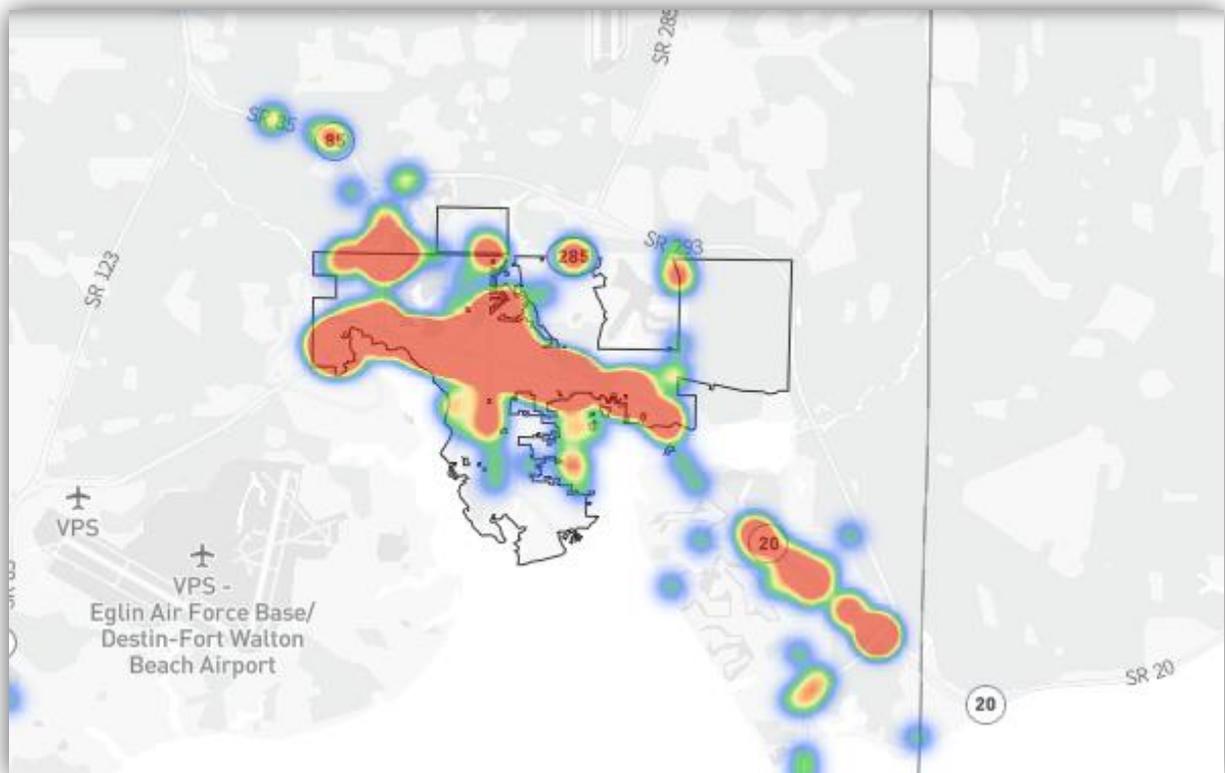


Figure 2: Death and Injury Heat Map (2017-2021) Showing the City Limits Highlights SR 20 Signal Four Analytics (University of Florida GeoPlan Center)

## City of Niceville Crash Data for the Years 2017-2022

Figure 3: Overall Persons Data 2017-2012

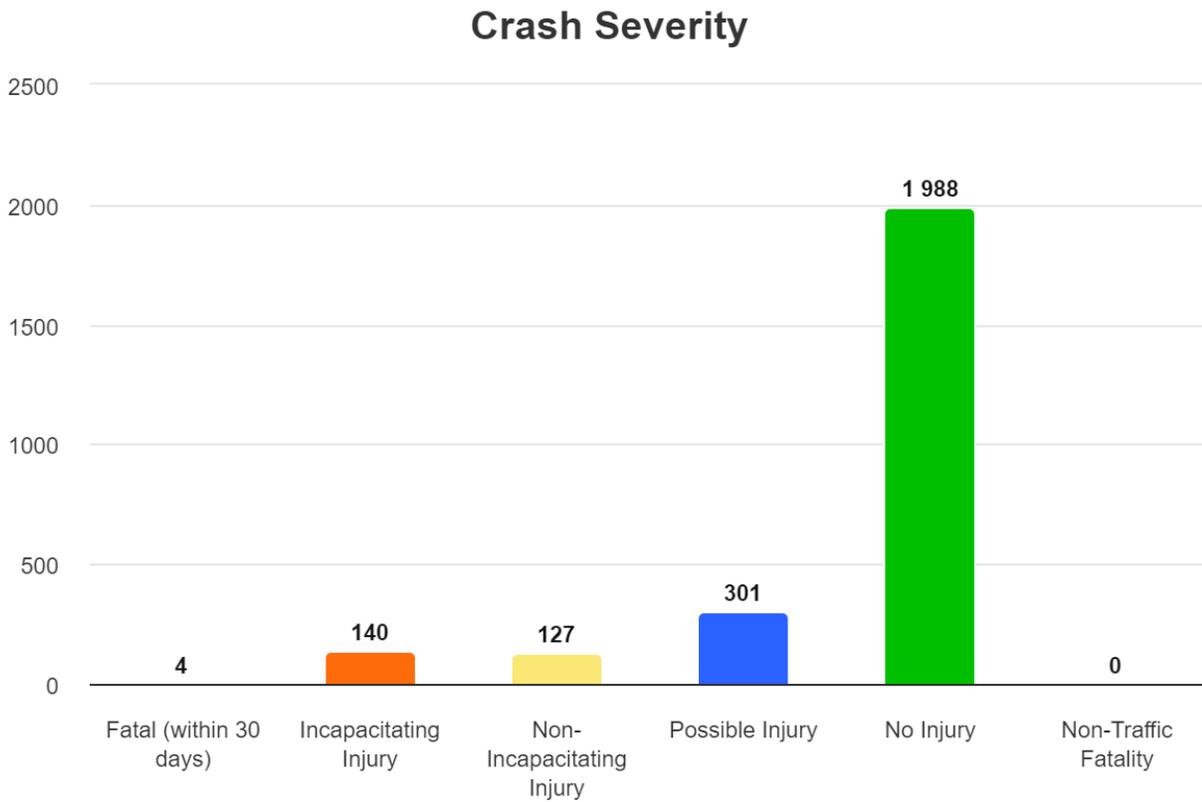


Figure 4: Involvement of Alcohol in Serious Crashes 2017-2021

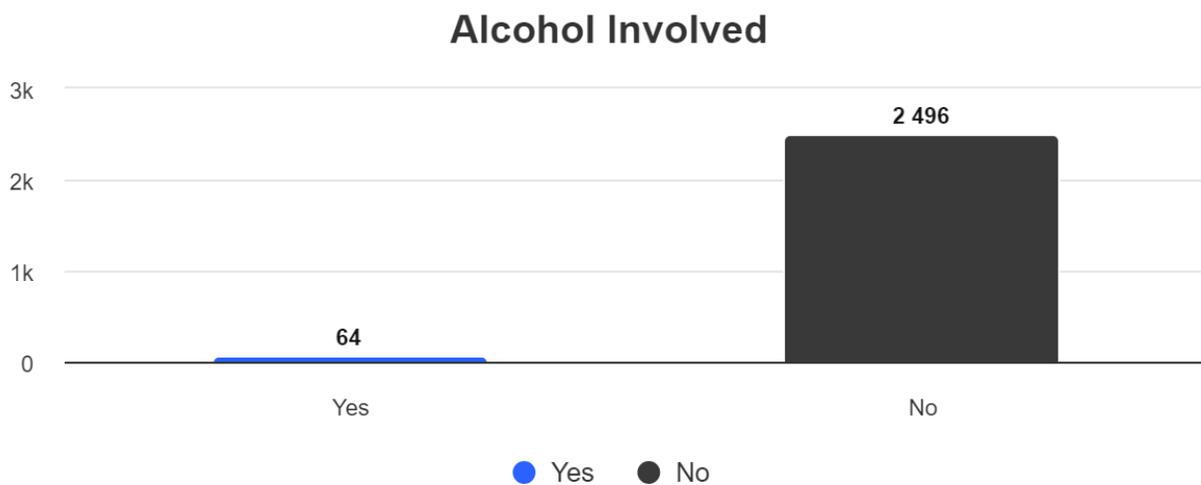
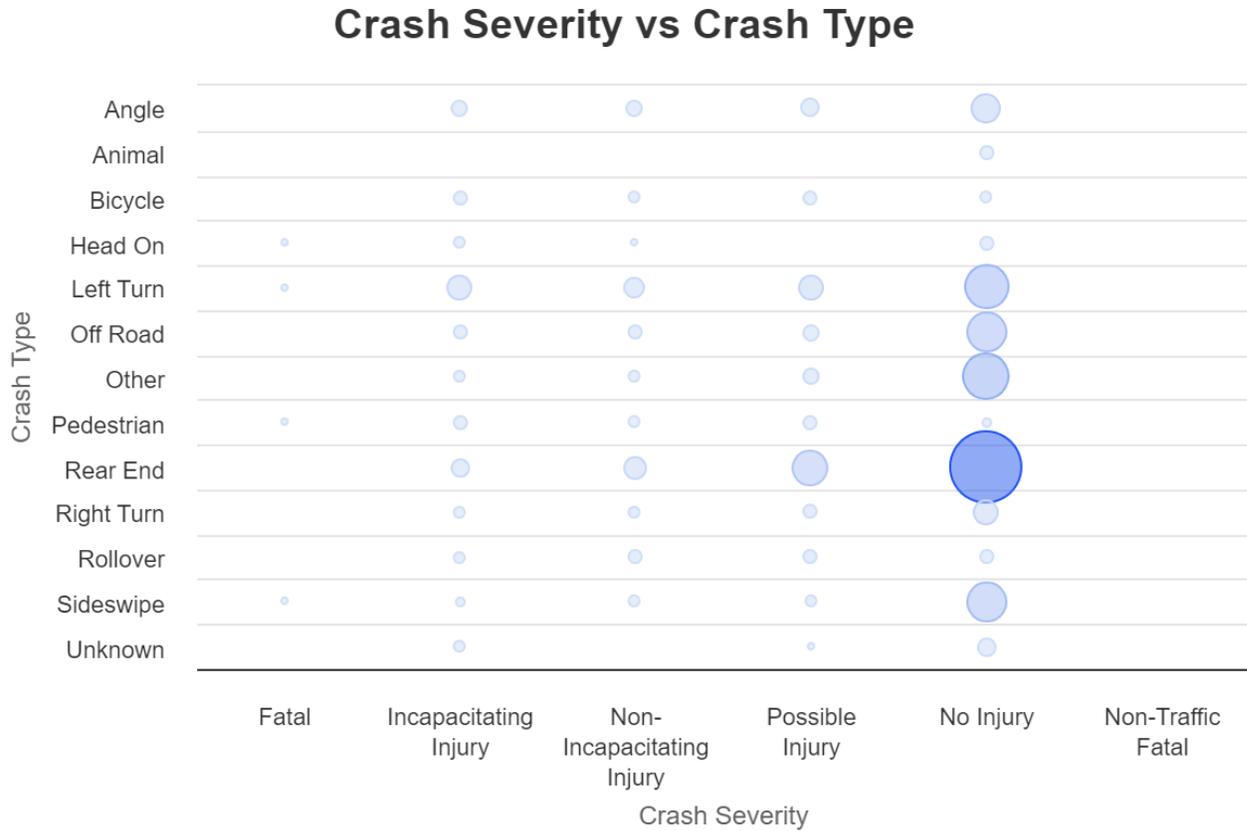
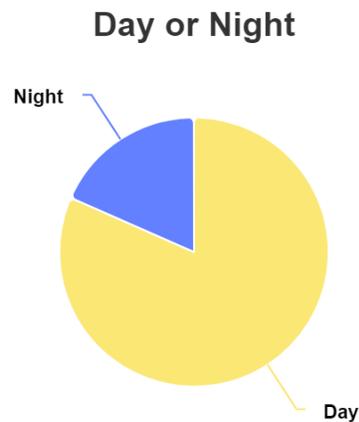


Figure 5- Crash Severity vs. Crash Type 2017-2021



For the calendar years 2017-2021 the majority of crashes tended towards no injury, however 4 persons were killed and 140 suffered incapacitating injury (Figure 3), alcohol does not appear to play a significant role in crashes (Figure 4) and most crashes occur during daytime hours (Figure 6). The data above (Figure 5) indicated left turn and rear end accidents are the most prevalent accident type resulting in serious injuries. Left-turn collisions occur when the person driving, or a vulnerable roadway user, is making a left-turn at an intersection.

Figure 6: Time of Crashes 2017-2021



The table below (Table 1) summarizes crash data for the years 2017-2021. Maps 2 and 3 provide this data graphically for the purposes of visually identifying the High Injury Network (HIN) based on data. During this time period there was one fatal bicycle accident and 7 additional accidents involving bicycles or pedestrians that resulted in incapacitating injuries, 4 of which were on Cedar Avenue and Palm Boulevard (Map 3). SR 20 remains, the most dangerous facility for both automobiles and other users.

For this dataset, non-Incapacitating injury means the number of persons in the crash who were injured, but did not require transport to a medical facility. Incapacitating injury means the number of persons who were injured and did require transport to a medical facility. Possible injury count means the number of persons in the crash who were possibly injured. The fatality count represents the number of persons in the crash who died as a result of injuries sustained in the crash, within 30 days of the crash. Crashes in the table below represents crash events whereas other data presented is persons (more than one person is typically involved in crash event).

Table 1: City of Niceville Crash Data Summary 2017-2021

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Fatal Crashes</b>	<b>Serious Injury Crashes</b>	<b>Injury Crashes</b>	<b>Property Damage Crashes</b>
<b>Crashes</b>	<b>2560</b>	4	140	428	1,988
<b>Fatalities (Within 30 Days)</b>	<b>4</b>	4	0	0	0
<b>Persons with Incapacitating Injuries</b>	<b>180</b>	3	177	0	0
<b>Persons with Non-Incapacitating Injuries</b>	<b>172</b>	0	20	152	0
<b>Persons with Possible Injuries</b>	<b>420</b>	0	29	391	0
<b>Persons with No Injuries</b>	<b>5501</b>	5	178	642	4,676

Source: Signal Four Analytics - University of Florida GeoPlan Center

The following table (Table 2) summarizes crash data for the years 2022-2023. Maps 5 and 6 provide data for this time period graphically. During this time bicycle and pedestrian accidents resulted in 7 incapacitating injuries and 8 non-incapacitating injuries, 4 of which occurred on Cedar Avenue and Palm Boulevard (MAP 5). The accident rate involving bicycles and pedestrians more than doubled during this time period of two years when compared to the previously analyzed time period of five years (2017-2021).

Table 2: City of Niceville Crash Data Summary 2022-2023

	Total	Fatal Crashes	Serious Injury Crashes	Injury Crashes	Property Damage Crashes
<b>Crashes</b>	1,053	3	63	135	852
<b>Fatalities (Within 30 Days)</b>	5	5	0	0	0
<b>Persons with Incapacitating Injuries</b>	77	0	77	0	0
<b>Persons with Non-Incapacitating Injuries</b>	59	0	5	54	0
<b>Persons with Possible Injuries</b>	145	0	8	137	0
<b>Persons with No Injuries</b>	2,376	2	73	264	2037

In looking at historical trends for the same study area, the rate of serious injuries has increased steadily since 2014, see table and graph below. Over this same time period for the same study area fatalities have averaged around one per year, with the exception of 2023 which saw 4 fatalities. Graph 1 below shows the unfortunate trend upward for serious injuries by year since 2014 and Table 3 provides this same data including deaths per year since 2014.

Graph 1: Historical City of Niceville Serious Injury Summary Crash Data April 2024 through 2014

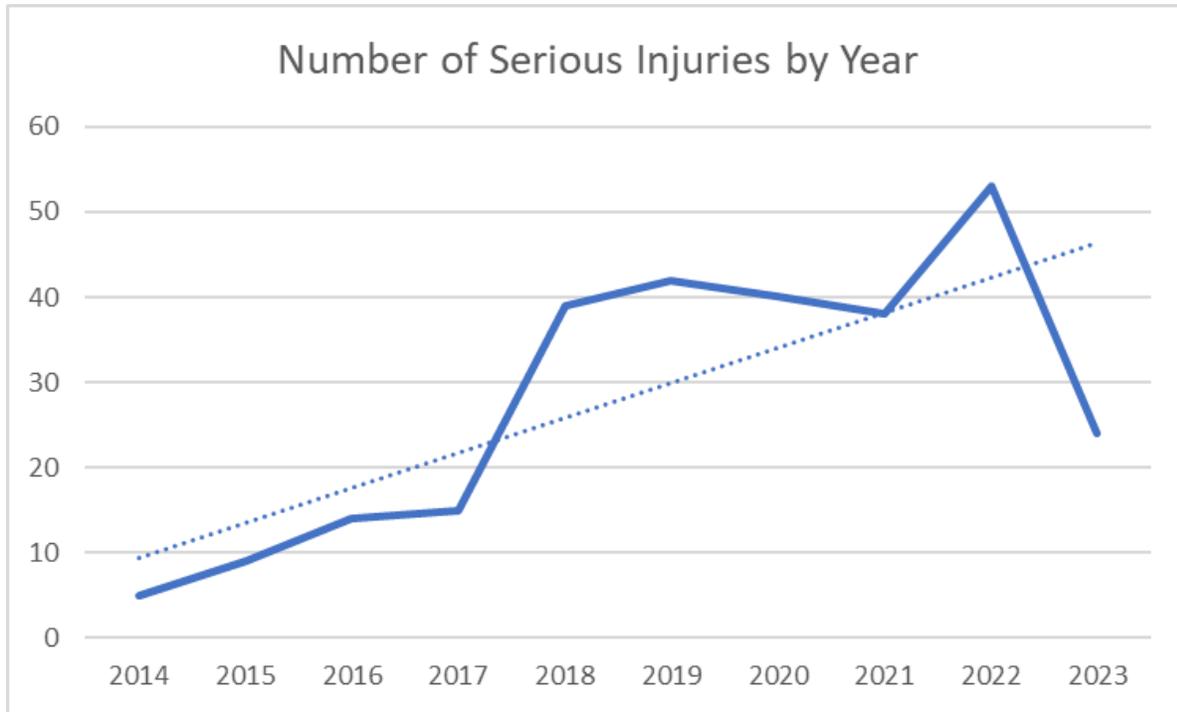


Table 3

Year	Total Crashes	Serious Injuries	Fatalities
Apr-24	95	5	0
2023	592	24	4
2022	609	53	1
2021	588	38	1
2020	470	40	1
2019	642	42	1
2018	677	39	0
2017	649	15	0
2016	548	14	2
2015	517	9	2
2014	430	5	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5817</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: Signal Four Analytics  
University of Florida GeoPlan Center

### City of Niceville Speed Study Results

During August of 2023, All Traffic Data Services (ATD), conducted a four-day long speed study on John Sims Parkway (SR 20) near Niceville High School, Partin Boulevard (SR 285) near Ruckel Middle School, on SR 85, and on Palm Boulevard that runs in between both schools. All of these roadways have been identified as HIN roadways. As shown in the results below (Tables 4-6), on all four days approximately 70-80% of drivers exceeded the school zone speed limit by at least 11 miles per hour over the posted school zone speed limit.

Table 4

<b>SR 85 SB</b>						
8/28/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	6,855		749		6,106	
Violations	679	10%	510	68%	169	3%
Pass	6,176	90%	239	32%	5,937	97%
8/29/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	7,180		848		6,332	
Violations	695	10%	544	64%	151	2%
Pass	6,485	90%	304	36%	6,181	98%
8/30/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	7,382		826		6,556	
Violations	770	10%	560	68%	210	3%
Pass	6,612	90%	266	32%	6,346	97%
8/31/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	7,077		826		6,251	
Violations	684	10%	523	63%	161	3%
Pass	6,393	90%	303	37%	6,090	97%
<b>TOTAL SB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	28,494		3,249		25,245	
Violations	2,828	10%	2,137	66%	691	3%
Pass	25,666	90%	1,112	34%	24,554	97%
<b>SR 85 NB</b>						
8/28/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	5,859		583		5,276	
Violations	122	2%	113	19%	9	0%
Pass	5,737	98%	470	81%	5,267	100%
8/29/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	6,017		599		5,418	
Violations	198	3%	193	32%	5	0%
Pass	5,819	97%	406	68%	5,413	100%
8/30/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	6,160		624		5,536	
Violations	231	4%	225	36%	6	0%
Pass	5,929	96%	399	64%	5,530	100%
8/31/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	6,136		624		5,536	
Violations	190	3%	225	36%	6	0%
Pass	5,946	97%	399	64%	5,530	100%
<b>TOTAL NB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	24,172		2,430		21,766	
Violations	741	3%	756	31%	26	0%
Pass	23,431	97%	1,674	69%	21,740	100%
<b>TOTAL NB + SB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	52,666		5,679		47,011	
Violations	3,569	7%	2,893	51%	717	2%
Pass	49,097	93%	2,786	49%	46,294	98%

Table 5

<b>CW Ruckel MS - Palm NB</b>						
8/28/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	4,131		441		3,690	
Violations	514	0	332	75%	182	5%
Pass	3,617	1	109	25%	3,508	95%
8/29/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	4,541		471		4,070	
Violations	546	12%	346	73%	200	5%
Pass	3,995	88%	125	27%	3,870	95%
8/30/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	4,345		419		3,926	
Violations	546	13%	330	79%	216	6%
Pass	3,799	87%	89	21%	3,710	94%
8/31/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	4,700		459		4,241	
Violations	439	9%	265	58%	174	4%
Pass	4,261	91%	194	42%	4,067	96%
<b>TOTAL NB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	17,717		1,790		15,927	
Violations	2,045	12%	1,273	71%	772	5%
Pass	15,672	88%	517	29%	15,155	95%
<b>CW Ruckel MS - Palm SB</b>						
8/28/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	5,028		532		4,496	
Violations	545	11%	440	83%	105	2%
Pass	4,483	89%	92	17%	4,391	98%
8/29/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	5,416		590		4,826	
Violations	534	10%	468	79%	66	1%
Pass	4,882	90%	122	21%	4,760	99%
8/30/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	5,247		574		4,673	
Violations	566	11%	472	82%	94	2%
Pass	4,681	89%	102	18%	4,579	98%
8/31/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	5,558		614		4,944	
Violations	511	9%	436	71%	75	2%
Pass	5,047	91%	178	29%	4,869	98%
<b>TOTAL NB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	21,249		2,310		18,939	
Violations	2,156	10%	1,816	79%	340	2%
Pass	19,093	90%	494	21%	18,599	98%
<b>TOTAL NB + SB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	38,966		4,100		34,866	
Violations	4,201	11%	3,089	75%	1,112	3%
Pass	34,765	89%	1,011	25%	33,754	97%

Table 6

<b>NICEVILLE HS EB</b>						
8/28/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	15,434		1,638		13,796	
Violations	1,773	11%	1,374	84%	399	3%
Pass	13,661	89%	264	19%	13,397	97%
8/29/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	15,668		1,683		13,985	
Violations	1,429	9%	1,119	66%	310	2%
Pass	14,239	91%	564	34%	13,675	98%
8/30/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	16,139		1,698		14,441	
Violations	1,830	11%	1,492	88%	338	2%
Pass	14,309	89%	206	12%	14,103	98%
8/31/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	16,686		1,814		14,872	
Violations	1,939	12%	1,600	88%	339	2%
Pass	14,747	88%	214	12%	14,533	98%
<b>TOTAL EB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	63,927		6,833		57,094	
Violations	6,971	11%	5,585	82%	1,386	2%
Pass	56,956	89%	684	10%	55,708	98%
<b>NICEVILLE HS WB</b>						
8/28/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	17,647		2,645		15,002	
Violations	3,179	18%	2,053	78%	1,126	8%
Pass	14,468	82%	592	22%	13,876	92%
8/29/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	17,080		2,338		14,742	
Violations	3,074	18%	1,852	79%	1,222	8%
Pass	14,006	82%	486	21%	13,520	92%
8/30/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	17,602		2,643		14,959	
Violations	3,130	18%	1,964	74%	1,166	8%
Pass	14,472	82%	679	26%	13,793	92%
8/31/2023	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	18,367		2,712		15,655	
Violations	3,558	19%	2,155	79%	1,403	9%
Pass	14,809	81%	557	21%	14,252	91%
<b>TOTAL WB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	70,696		10,338		60,358	
Violations	12,941	18%	8,024	78%	4,917	8%
Pass	57,755	82%	1,828	18%	55,441	92%
<b>TOTAL WB + EB</b>	All Hours	%	School Hours	%	Non-School Hours	%
Vehicle Count	134,623		17,171		117,452	
Violations	19,912	15%	13,609	79%	6,303	5%
Pass	114,711	85%	2,512	15%	111,149	95%

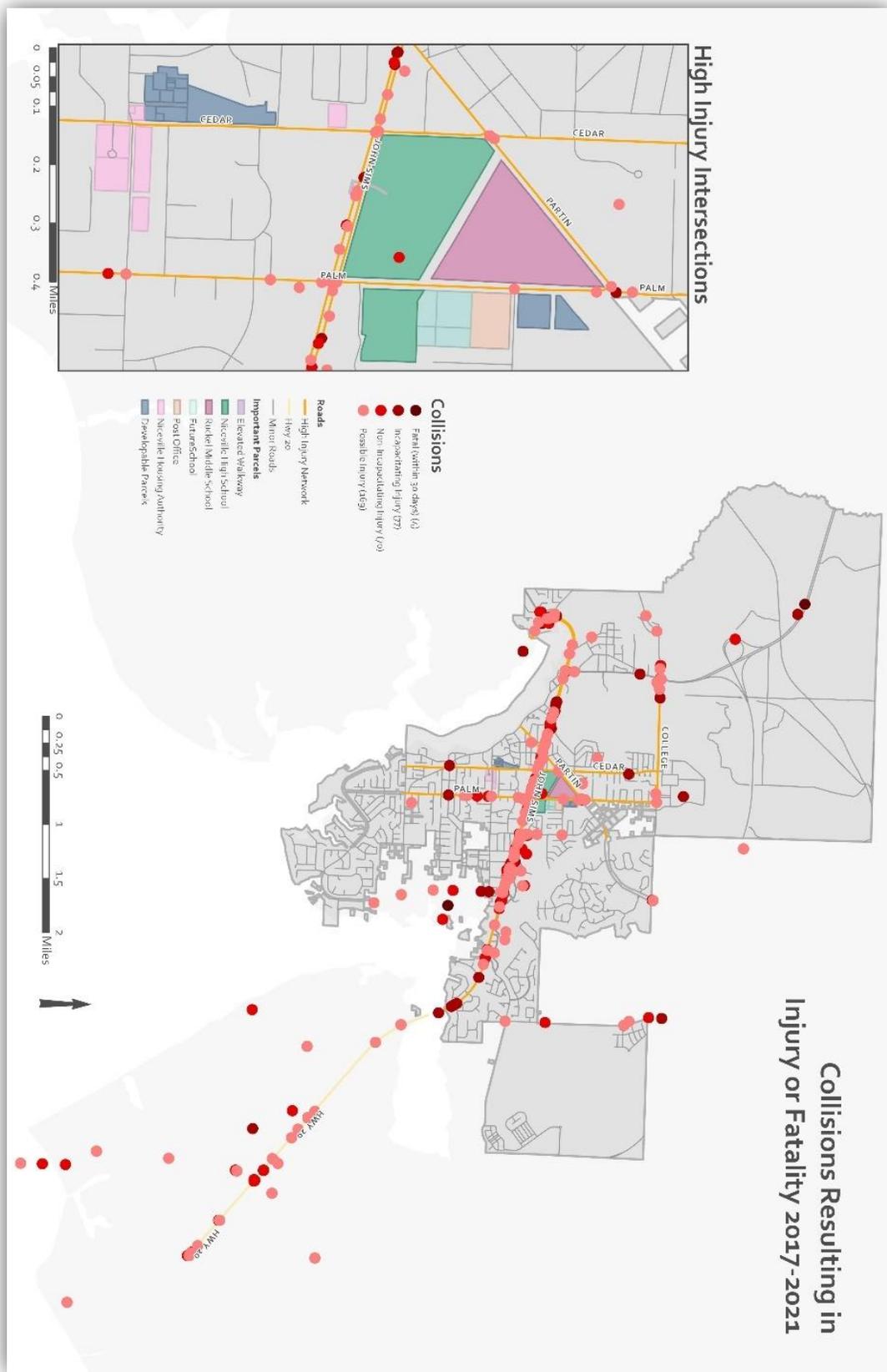
### Identification and Geospatial Representation of the City's High Injury Network

The high injury network (HIN) for the City of Niceville and nearby areas consists primarily of College Boulevard, Hwy 85, Palm Boulevard, Cedar Avenue and State Road 20 (John Sims Pkwy). State Road 20 (John Sims Pkwy) is by far the highest injury facility within the City. The High Injury Network is identified on Maps 3 through 6 for various road users including automobile drivers, pedestrians and bicyclist.

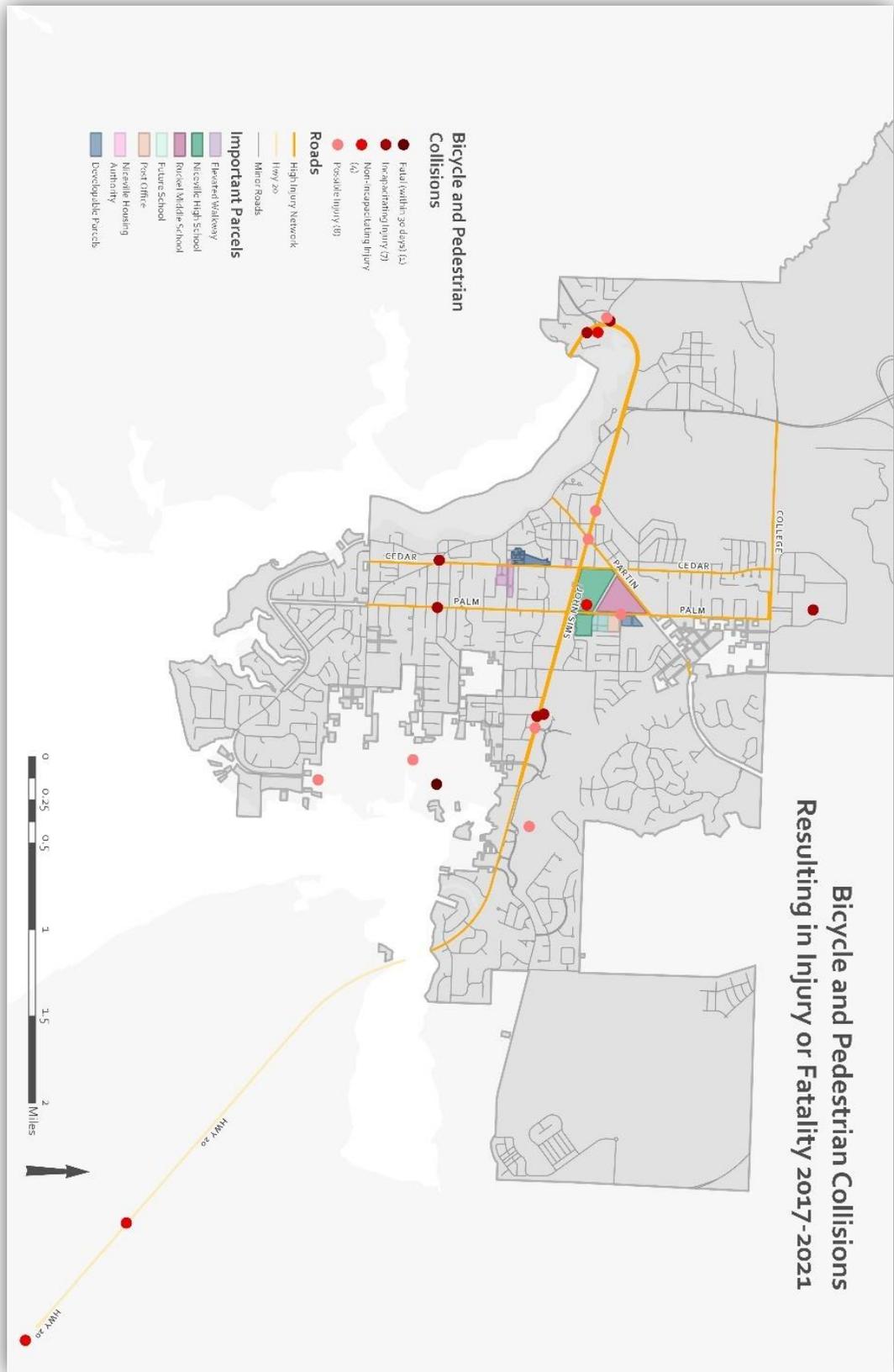
In addition to the identification of the high injury road network, several high injury intersections have been identified as follows:

- College Boulevard and SR 85
- SR 85 and SR 20 (John Sims Pkwy)
- SR 20 (W John Sims Pkwy) and Government Avenue (SR 85)
- Cedar Avenue and SR 20 (John Sims Pkwy)
- Cedar Avenue and SR 285 (Partin Drive)
- Palm Boulevard and SR 20 (John Sims Pkwy)
- Palm Boulevard and SR 285 (Partin Drive)

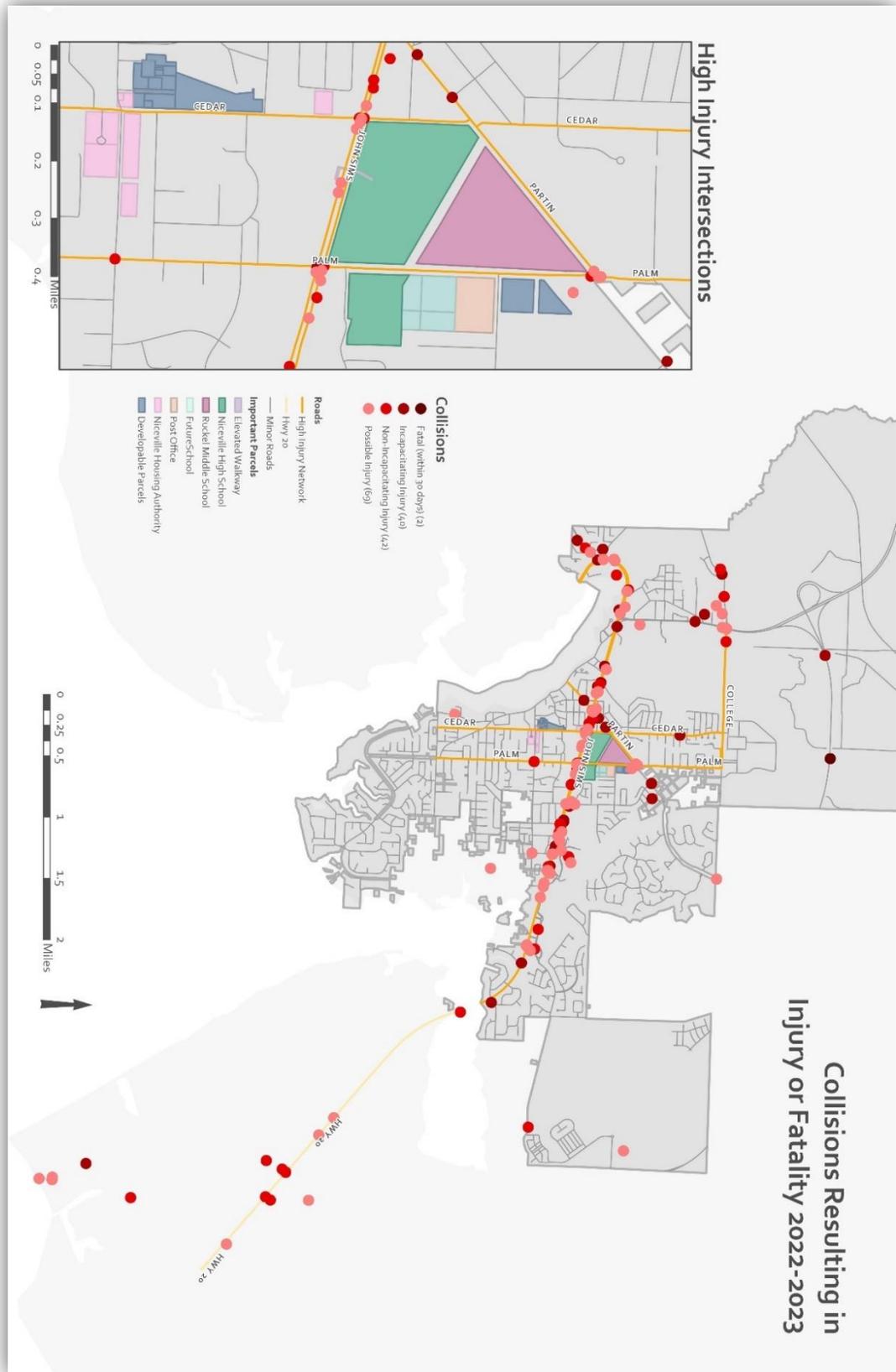
MAP 3



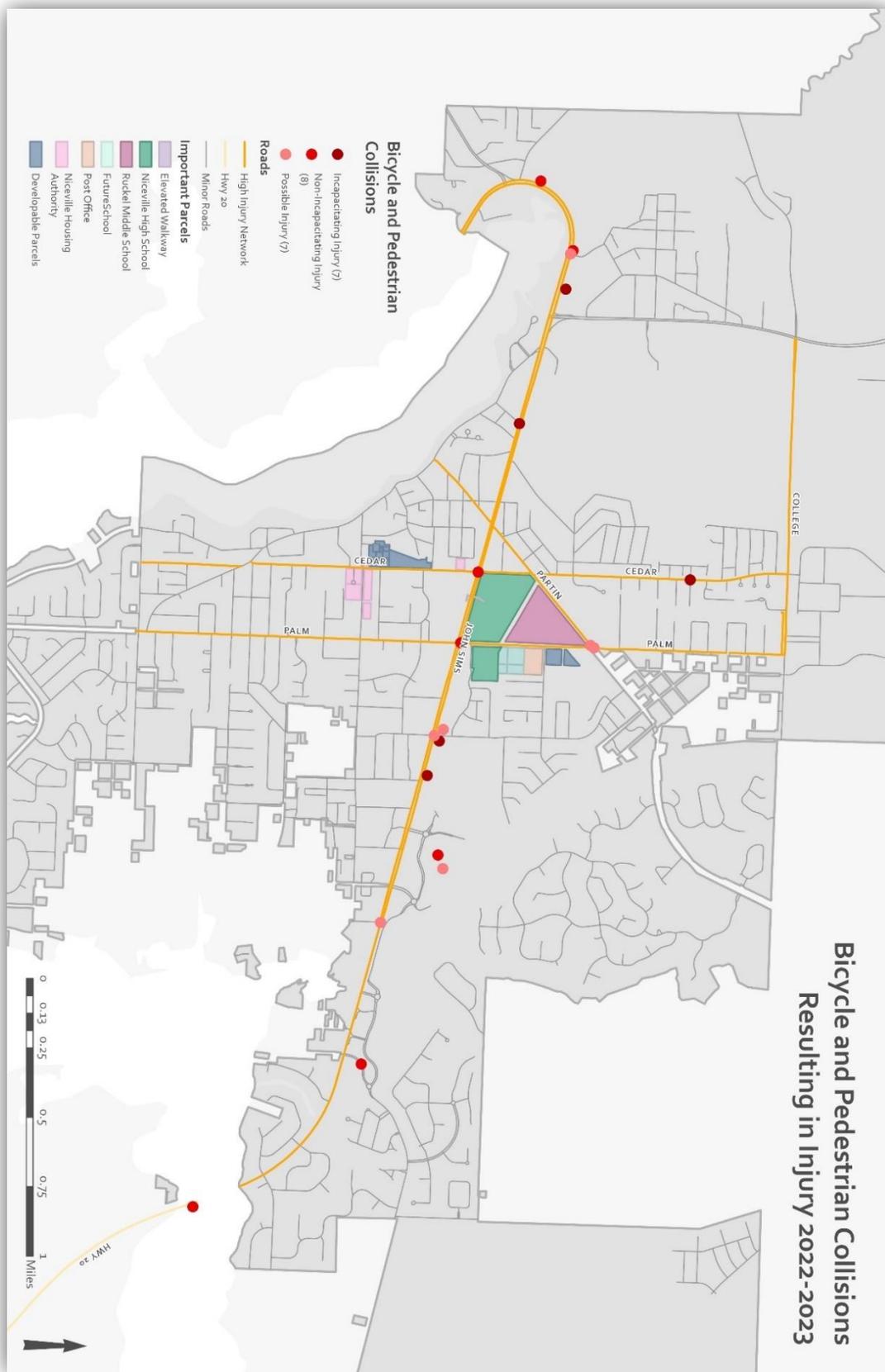
Map 4



Map 5



Map 6



### Land Use Considerations - Systemic and Specific Safety Needs

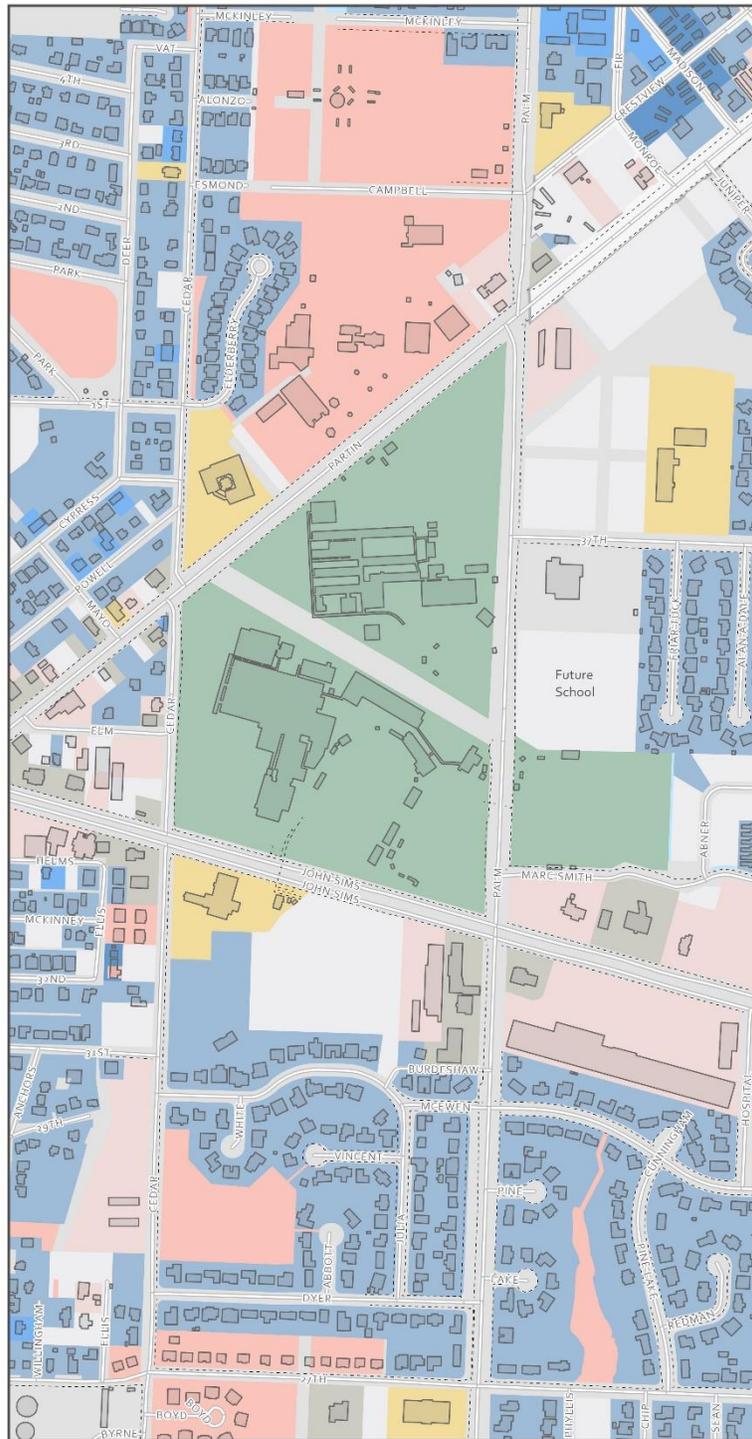
Niceville High School and Ruckel Elementary school are directly adjacent to the high injury network (HIN) as well as the Northwest Florida State College, resulting in a large proportion of school trips traveling on a portion of the HIN. This indicates potential safety challenges and concerns for students walking or bicycling to school and resulting in more people choosing to drive their student to school. As more people opt to drive a vehicle for trips that could be made by walking or bicycling, the potential for congestion increases, especially at peak school times. This in turn increases the likelihood of conflicts between those driving and those walking or bicycling to school. The block of land between Palm Boulevard and Cedar Avenue, south of Partin Avenue and north of SR 20, is where the previously mentioned two very large public schools are located. Both Niceville High School and Ruckel Middle School occupy most of this space. Unfortunately, these intersections are all four identified as high injury intersections. Palm Boulevard in this area is heavily trafficked by students moving from classrooms to ball fields. Students also routinely walk and bike to both of these schools traversing the high injury intersections identified above. Map 7 depicts the land uses in these areas.



A “wall” of parents and local law enforcement protect band members from high speed SR 20 traffic on a high school game night.

MAP 7

# Niceville City Core Land Use



- Sidewalks
- Roads
- Building Footprints
- Land Use**
- Single Family
- Multi-Family
- Mobile Home
- Res. Common Area
- Schools
- Churches
- Government
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Utilities
- Vacant



The southern lands lying in between Palm Boulevard and Cedar Avenue to the South of SR 20 contain relatively less expensive housing and is also where the Niceville Housing Authority is located, housing disabled individuals. Palm and Cedar represent the highest number of accidents resulting in serious injury for local streets within the study area for this Plan.



Niceville Housing Authority Located on the High Injury Network Road, Cedar Avenue



Student Bicycles in Front of Ruckel Middle School, the only access to this School is by using a HIN roadway.

### High Injury Network Traffic Volumes (Annual Average Daily Trips)

Figure 5 and Table 7 provide Annual Average Daily Trip (AADT) data for the high injury network. AADT is the total volume of vehicle travel on a road for an entire year divided by 365. Of note, AADT is showing an increasing trend along Palm Boulevard from SR-20 (John Sims Parkway) to SR-285 (Partin Drive). Other volumes are normalizing in the timeframe following the COVID pandemic.

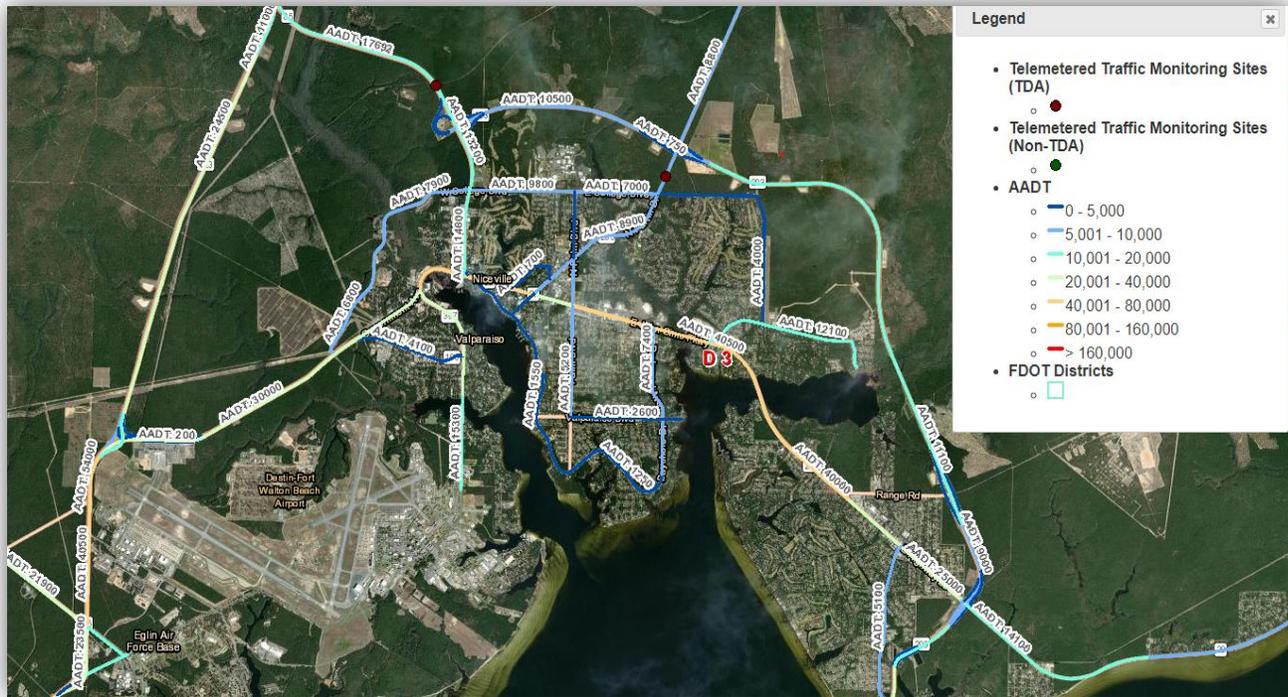


Figure 5: Source Florida Department of Transportation – Florida Traffic Online

Table 7: AADT Data for the HIN

Roadway	From	To	2019 AADT	2020 AADT	2021 AADT	2022 AADT	2023 AADT
<b>Palm Boulevard</b>	SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)	SR-285	8,500	8,500	8,100	10,000	8,400
<b>Palm Boulevard</b>	SR-285	College Blvd	4,600	3,700	3,800	3,800	3,600
<b>Palm Boulevard</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> Street	SR 20	8,600	7,200	10,000	9,200	8,900
<b>Palm Boulevard</b>	Valparaiso Blvd	27 <sup>th</sup> Street	4,800	5,300	5,800	5,200	5,100
<b>SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)</b>	SR-397	SR-85	47,500	40,000	45,000	47,500	43,500
<b>SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)</b>	SR-85	Davis Drive	44,000	39,000	45,000	45,000	42,500
<b>SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)</b>	Davis Drive	CR-285	43,000	37,500	44,000	44,500	41,000
<b>SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)</b>	CR-285	Palm Boulevard	38,000	32,500	37,500	38,000	37,000
<b>SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)</b>	Palm Boulevard	Redwood Avenue	42,000	35,500	39,500	42,000	40,000
<b>SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)</b>	Redwood Avenue	Edgewater Drive	38,500	35,500	41,500	40,500	37,500
<b>SR-285 (Partin Drive)</b>	SR-20	Palm Boulevard	7600	6,700	7,600	7,900	8,000
<b>SR-85</b>	SR-20 (John Sims Pkwy)	College Boulevard	14,600	13,400	12,800	14,600	14,000
<b>SR-85</b>	College Boulevard	Palm Boulevard	8,000	7,900	8,700	8,900	8,900
<b>SR-85</b>	College Boulevard	Spence Pkwy Ramp	13,600	12,900	13,500	13,200	12,600
<b>College Blvd</b>	SR-85	Palm Boulevard	10,900	8,700	9,700	9,800	10,900
<b>College Blvd</b>	Palm Boulevard	SR-285 (Partin Drive)	6,600	5,900	6,700	7,000	9,700
<b>College Blvd</b>	SR-285	Rocky Bayou Dr	4,100	3,400	4,700	4,000	4,100

Source: Florida Department of Transportation – Florida Traffic Online

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

According to the US Department of Transportation, “Equity in transportation seeks fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all community members. A central goal of transportation is to facilitate social and economic opportunities by providing equitable levels of access to affordable and reliable transportation options based on the needs of the populations being served, particularly populations that are traditionally underserved. An equitable transportation plan considers the circumstances impacting a community’s mobility and connectivity needs, and this information is used to determine the measures needed to develop an equitable transportation network.”

*For the City of Niceville, this means:*

- *Addressing the needs of ALL members of our population, including younger people, aging populations, and our disabled population;*
- *Ensuring that employees and parents from surrounding areas can safely travel through and around the City of Niceville to employment and schools;*
- *Encouraging safe walking and biking to help with cost burdens; and*
- *Encouraging affordable housing close to employment and education centers through infrastructure development.*

### Demographics

#### Age of Population

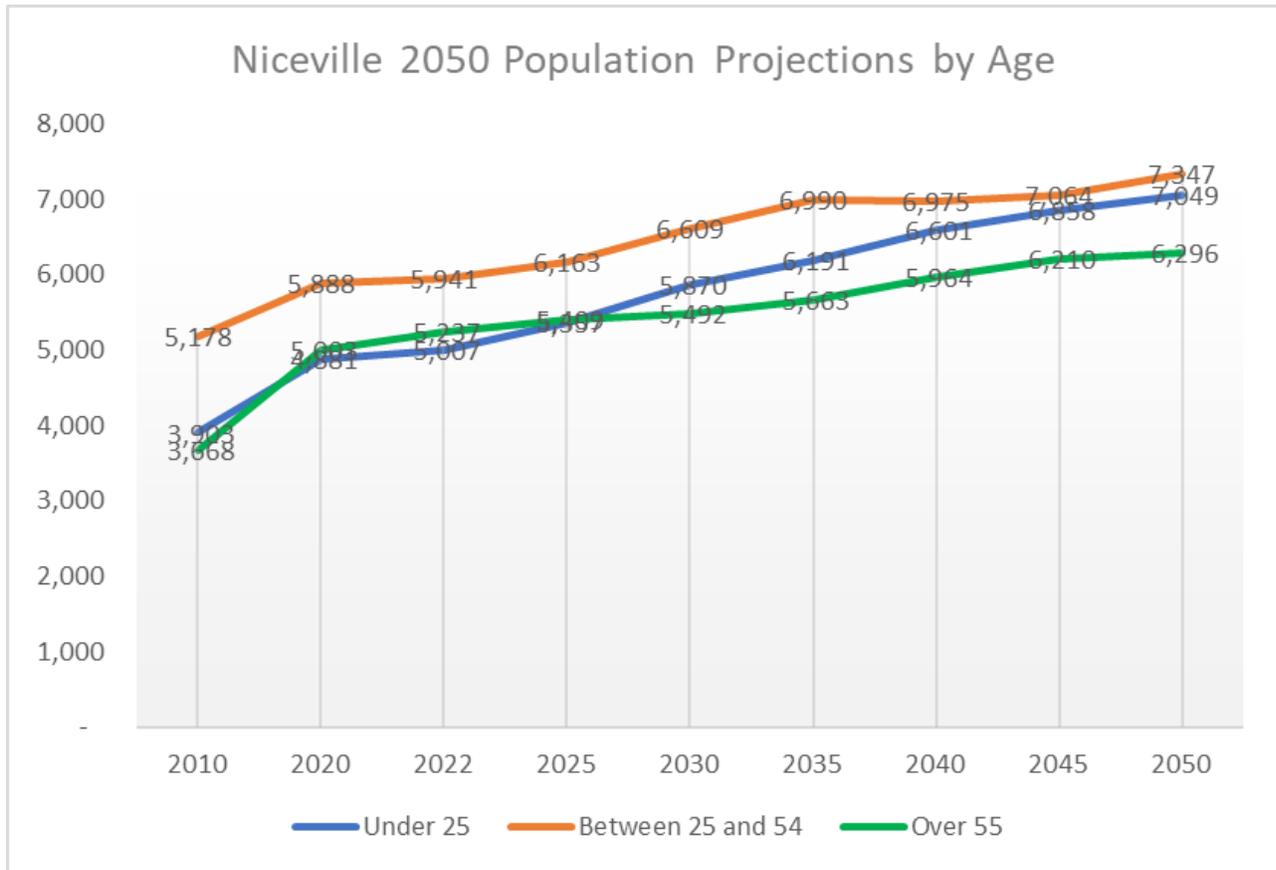
The 2022 population for the City of Niceville and nearby surrounding areas including the City of Valparaiso and the unincorporated Bluewater Bay area was estimated at 36,559<sup>13</sup>. The City of Niceville incorporated population is expected to increase to 20,692 in the next 25 years.

Approximately 64% of this population will either be under the age of 25 and over the age of 55 which is important data for transportation safety planning (Graph 2).

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<sup>13</sup> 2022 American Community Survey 2022: ACS 5-year estimates by Census Tract, United States Census Bureau

Graph 2: Population Projections by Age



Source: Shimberg Center University of Florida

### Walking and Biking Population

Currently 81.6 % of the City’s population commutes by automobile alone, with just a little over 1% walking or biking less than 1% using public transportation. <sup>14</sup>

### The Affordable Housing Connection

Okaloosa County has a two-pronged economy centered on tourism and the significant military presence, including those industries associated with the areas military installations. The tourism economy requires housing for seasonal and lower income workers. This is coupled with the relatively higher wages provided by the military and its associated industries which can drive prices upwards, particularly in very proximal areas like the City of Niceville. Okaloosa’s residents and Niceville’s residents depend on low to middle income earning occupational workers also such as teachers, EMT’s, police, public works employees, and nurses. The housing supply needs to accommodate these divergent needs close to employment and education

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022

centers and infrastructure plays a key role in this. <sup>15</sup> Safe infrastructure is not only a good policy for reducing deaths and injuries but also for potentially making housing more affordable or within reach. Densities and intensity of development necessary to support a mixture of housing types requires infrastructure, including safe transportation infrastructure. Not having a long commute can also provide more time for health and family life – or quality of life.

Access to work by other means, including walking, biking or public transit can reduce household expenses. When households are able to decrease or eliminate vehicle maintenance and fuel as a portion of overall household cost and affordable housing is placed so that travel to work is possible without a vehicle by policy it is far more effective. <sup>16</sup>

### High Veteran Population including Disabled Veterans in Niceville

According to the Florida Department of Veteran’s Affairs there were approximately 1,430,000 veterans in the State of Florida in 2023. This makes Florida the State with the third largest veteran population in the nation behind California and Texas. There were 22,610,726 persons living in Florida in 2023, making the veteran population equal to approximately 6% of the total population. *The veteran population living in the City of Niceville and close by areas is estimated to be around 18%, or three times the Statewide average.* Table 8 below provides data for the veteran population within the City of Niceville and close by areas by census tract. *The average percentage of Niceville area veterans with a disability rating greater than 50% is estimated at 25% for the year 2022.*

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<sup>15</sup> Attainable Workforce Housing Strategic Plan for Okaloosa County, Florida March 2024; TMPA Inc.

<sup>16</sup> Smart Growth America – Providing Well Placed Affordable Housing in Rural Communities, April 2017

Table 8: Service Connected Disability Rating Niceville and Surrounds 2022

<b>Census Tract</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Veteran Population</b>	<b>Percent Total Population who are Veterans</b>	<b>Number of Veterans WITHOUT Service Connected Disability Rating</b>	<b>Number of Veterans WITH a Service Connected Disability Rating</b>	<b>Percent Veterans WITH Disability Rating</b>	<b>Percent Veterans WITH Disability Rating Greater than 50%</b>
209	7,267	1,359	19%	759	600	44%	26%
210.01	6141	959	16%	450	509	53%	27%
210.02	5573	1061	19%	539	522	49%	24%
211.01	3257	576	18%	377	199	35%	18%
211.02	8210	1721	21%	1046	675	39%	13%
212	6111	1017	17%	329	688	68%	39%

Source: 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimate Service Connected Disability Rating Status for Civilian Veterans 18 Years and Older, US Census Bureau

## SAFE STREETS STRATEGIES

The last section of this Plan, identifies proposed strategies and projects to address the issues identified in previous sections. These strategies range from low cost strategies aimed at behavioral change to higher cost construction projects. Performance measures are also included for the purposes of tracking and reporting progress towards reducing roadway serious injuries and fatalities.



### Perform Road Safety Audits for the High Injury Network, Particularly SR-20

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) is the formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary team. It qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users.

The aim of an RSA is to answer the following questions:

- What elements of the road may present a safety concern: to what extent, to which road users, and under what circumstances?
- What opportunities exist to eliminate or mitigate identified safety concerns?

These audits are different from traditional safety reviews in that they are performed by a multi-disciplinary team, consider all potential road users, account for road user capabilities and limitations, and are performed by independent teams.

*Performance Measures: Number of safety audits performed.*



### Prioritize Low-Cost Safety Treatments

Road safety audits or just general operations may help identify low cost safety treatments City-wide, such as left- and right-turn lanes at intersections, centerline and shoulder rumble strips/stripes, wider edge lines, high-friction surface treatments, and enhanced delineation of curves through better signage along the high injury network. Identifying and correcting common risks across a network, such as improving pedestrian crosswalks by adding high-visibility pavement markings, lighting, and, in a designated neighborhood, or along a busy route is a strategy that can be accomplished normally with existing budgets.

*Performance Measures: Number of low cost safety treatments per year.*



City Public Works Crews Installed Low Cost Stop Bars at a Difficult Neighborhood Intersection, Before and After



### Adopt a Complete Streets Policy and Approach

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing and building streets that enables safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. This approach also emphasizes the needs of those who have experienced systemic underinvestment, or those whose needs have not been met through a traditional transportation approach, such as older adults, people living with disabilities, people who don't have access to vehicles. Cedar and Palm within the City are perfect examples where populations of youth travel by bike or by walking but have historically lacked significant investment.

While Complete Streets are a process and approach to street design, there is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets. Each one is unique and responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders, frequent and safe crosswalks, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more.<sup>17</sup> For the City of Niceville a complete streets strategy could include policies such as:

- ✓ Advocating wide shoulders and striping for bicycles when resurfacing a City Street

<sup>17</sup> <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/what-are-complete-streets/>

- ✓ Advocating for complete streets when reviewing FDOT projects occurring within the City limits
- ✓ Requiring a complete streets approach for new development

*Performance Measures: Development and application of completes streets policies.*



### Support and Create Safe Driving Campaigns with Students

The City can partner with local schools to support existing safe driving programs and to create Safe Streets Niceville related programs. These programs should include items or activities designed to raise awareness of the high injury network among the vulnerable student population. The city should collaborate with the public school district and interested private schools to provide additional transportation safety resources, and targeted engagement for middle and high school students, with a focus on empowering youth leadership to promote safe transportation in their own school communities, prioritizing the schools on our HIN. Some examples include:

- ✓ Safe Streets Niceville Art Contest
- ✓ Safe Street Niceville Design Competition for Students interested in City Planning or Engineering
- ✓ Test Your Streets Smarts Programs

*Performance Measures: Number of engagements or programs implemented in target schools around the HIN.*



### Project Selections

There are five recommended projects based on the data included within this Plan:

**SR 20 / Government Avenue (SR 85) Intersection** – Recommend intersection safety audit and access study. This intersection has been identified as a high injury intersection. Such audit or intersection study should consider innovative design changes, improved delineation, and advanced warning.

**Cedar Avenue from 21<sup>st</sup> Street to College Boulevard** – Complete Streets and major intersection safety audits / Improvements. Cedar and Palm are the two main north south spines for the urbanized area of the City. Cedar and Palm both terminate at the Northwest Florida State College, a growing college campus.

- ✓ Special consideration should be given to the intersections of Cedar and SR 20 and SR 285 (Partin Dr). Intersection analysis should consider innovative design changes, improved delineation, and advanced warning.
- ✓ The section of Cedar Avenue between SR 285 and SR 20 should receive special design consideration since this section of the high injury network is heavily traveled by students and school users. This section also features inadequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure and dangerous front end 90-degree parking.

**Palm Boulevard from Bayshore Drive to College Boulevard** - Complete Streets and major intersection safety audits / Improvements. Cedar and Palm are the two main north south spines for the urbanized area of the City. Cedar and Palm both terminate at the Northwest Florida State College.

- ✓ Special consideration should be given to the intersections of Cedar and SR 20 and SR 285 (Partin Dr). Special consideration should be given to the intersections of Palm and SR 20 and SR 285 (Partin Dr). Intersection analysis should consider innovative design changes, improved delineation, and advanced warning.
- ✓ The section of Palm Boulevard between SR 285 and SR 20 should receive special design consideration since this section of the high injury network is heavily traveled by students and school users. This section also features inadequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure and dangerous front end 90-degree parking.

**Crossings Boulevard Connector** – Recommend construction of the “missing link” in the alternative route to SR 20 that extends from Rocky Bayou Drive to Palm Boulevard. This would include a new two-lane road with multi use path and traffic circle at Juniper Avenue. This roadway is a parallel facility to SR 20, alleviating local traffic on SR 20. SR 20 has been identified as the facility within the City that has the highest injury rate. This parallel facility is prioritized for walking, biking and local access removing trips from the most dangerous HIN roadway, SR 20.

**Bayshore Drive from SR 20 to 11<sup>th</sup> Street** – Recommend complete streets improvements to include bike and pedestrian facility improvements. This route links large residential areas with the CRA.

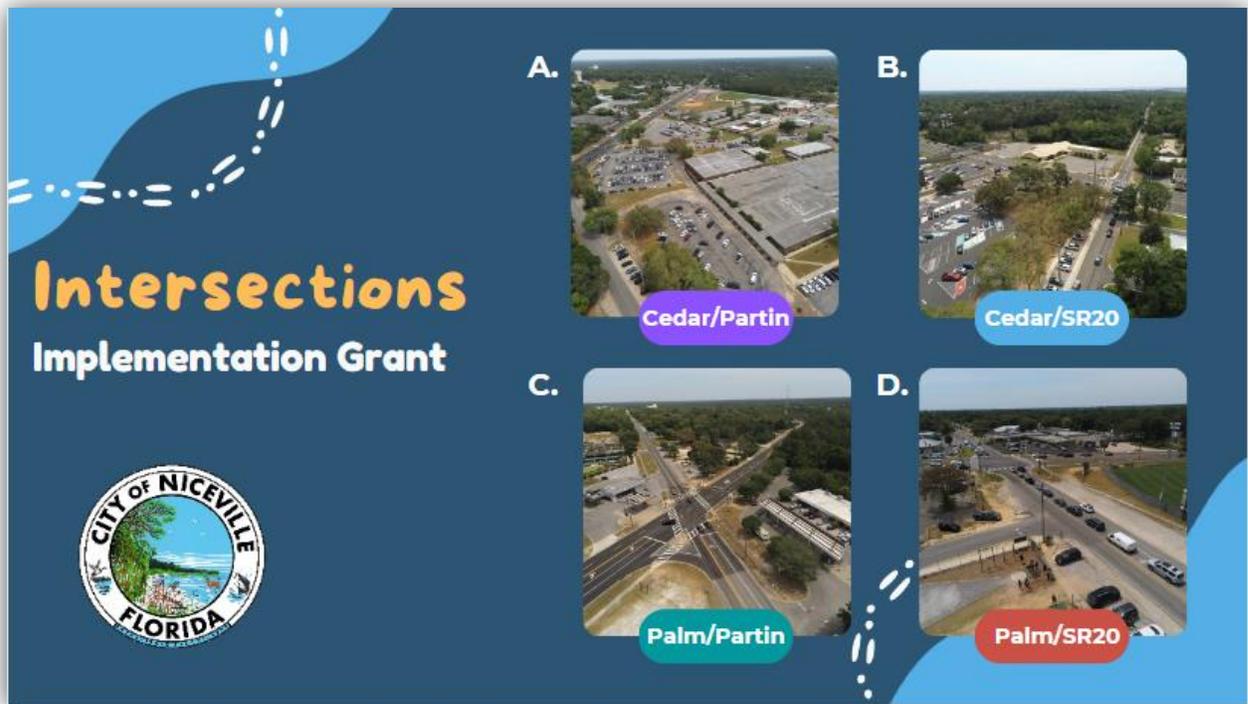
*Performance Measures: Obtaining funding for project selections, number of grant applications, moving project selections forward through the Okaloosa Walton Transportation Planning Organization funding processes, coordinating with State DOT and County Engineering on necessary steps.*



Palm Boulevard Near Ruckel Middle School and Niceville High School



Cedar Avenue  
Adjacent to  
Niceville High  
School



A Slide from a Safe Streets Niceville Task Force Discussing Key High Injury Networks and Potential Grant Funding Intersections



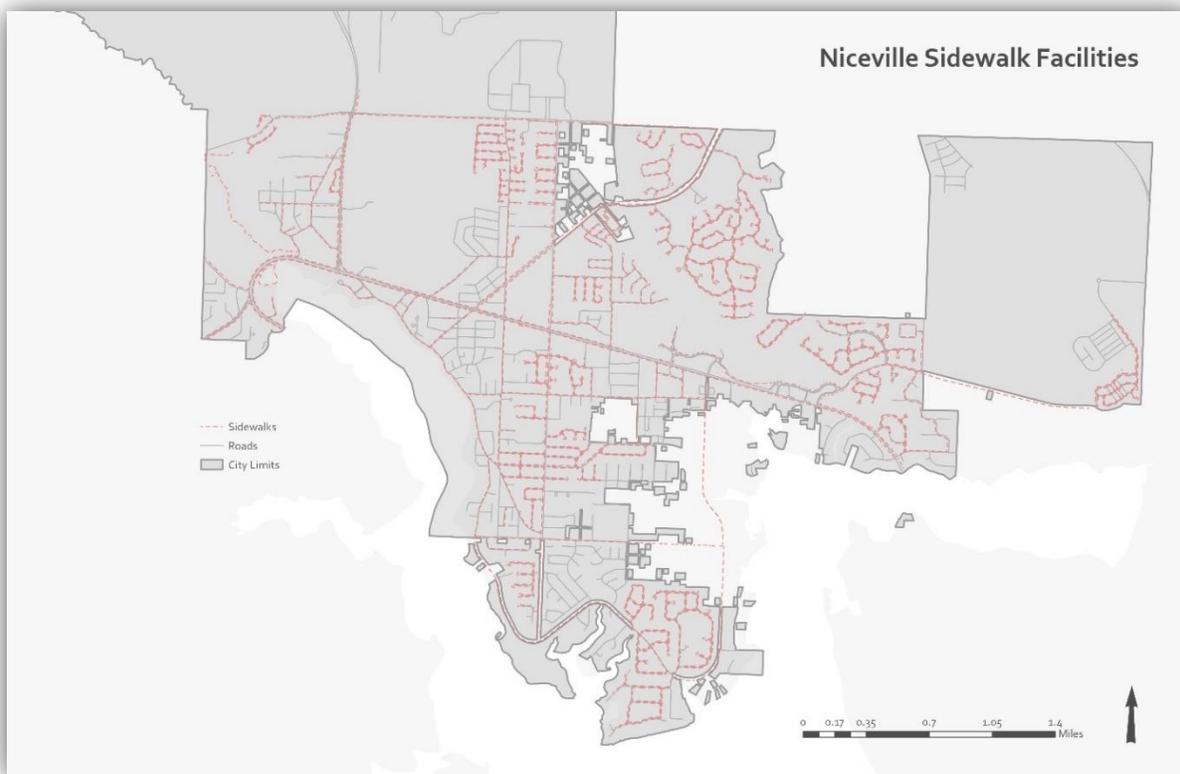
### Continue to Make Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Enhancements

The City of Niceville has made great strides in closing gaps in sidewalk facilities and maintains a robust sidewalk network (**Map XX**). A safe streets approach requires continuing to make these improvements. Such improvements can be installing pedestrian safety enhancements and closing network gaps with sidewalks, crosswalk visibility enhancements, rectangular rapid-flashing beacons, pedestrian hybrid beacons, refuge islands, road diets, raised crosswalks, signal improvements including leading pedestrian intervals, and audible pedestrian signals for people walking, rolling, or using mobility-assisted devices.

Similarly, the City can support and advocate the development of a robust bike network. Bike networks with bicycle lanes for different roadway volumes and speeds that are safe for people of all ages and abilities is a recommended strategy. This includes trails and the off-street facilities.

*Performance Measures: Miles of additional sidewalk and bike network development.*

#### MAP





### Carrying out Speed Management Strategies

The relationship between speed and crashes, has long been studied. This research is completely in line with the real local data described previously in this report showing that the higher speed roadways result in higher incapacitating injuries and deaths. According to a paper by the Institute for Road Safety Research, “The exact relation between speed and crashes depends on many factors. However, in a general sense the relation is very clear: if on a road the driven speeds become higher, the crash rate will also increase. The crash rate is also higher for an individual vehicle that drives at higher speed than the other traffic on that road. As speeds get higher, crashes also result in more serious injury, for the driver who caused the crash as well as for the crash opponent. The injury severity of the vehicle occupants in a crash, for example, is not only determined by the collision speed, but also by the mass difference between the vehicles and by the vulnerability of the vehicles/road users who are involved. In a crash between a light vehicle and a heavier one, the occupants of the lighter vehicle generally are considerably worse off than the occupants of the heavier vehicle. Even more so this is the case for pedestrians, cyclists and moped riders in crashes with (much) heavier motor vehicles.”<sup>18</sup>

This strategy involves carrying out speed management strategies such as implementing traffic-calming road design changes; addressing speed along key corridors through infrastructure; conducting education, enforcement activities, and outreach; setting appropriate speed limits; and making strategic use of speed safety cameras.

The City has two ongoing initiatives along these lines, speed safety cameras and enforcement activities.

#### *School Zone Speed Camera Installation*

The Niceville City Council recently passed a resolution (2024) authorizing the installation of speeding enforcement cameras in three school zones that are on the High Injury Network. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this system in reducing speeds will occur over the next years.

#### *Operation Save the Day*

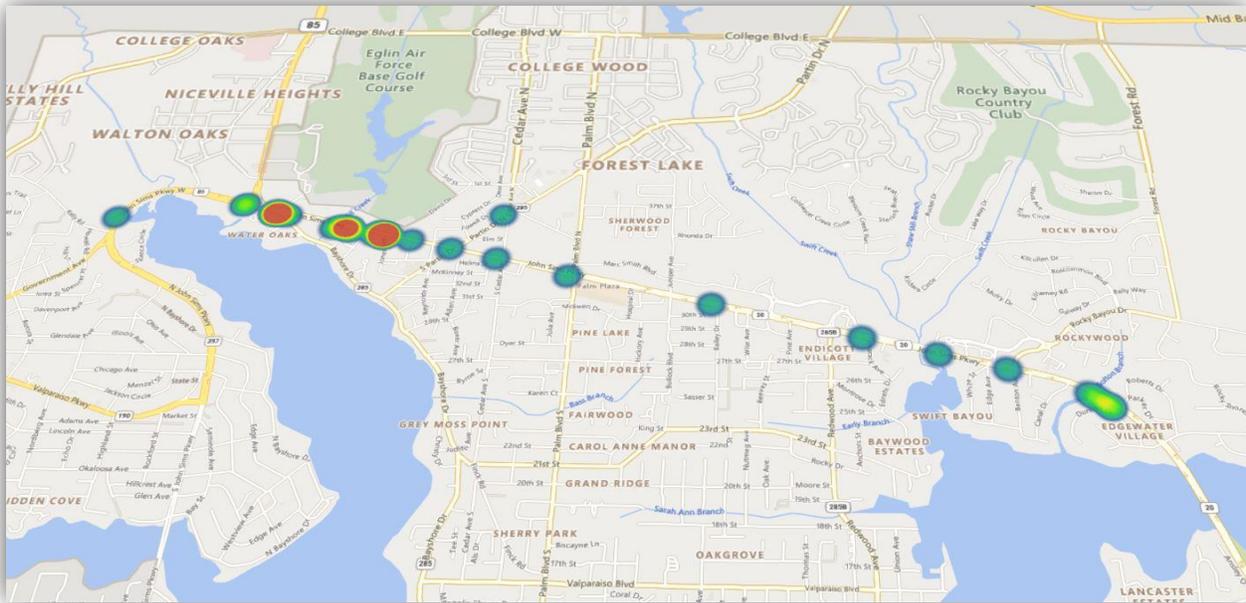
The Niceville Police Department recently completed a targeted speed enforcement effort aimed at promoting safer driving practices along the roadway with the highest injuries, SR 20 (John Sims Parkway). This effort resulted in the issuance of 77 citations, of which 67 were

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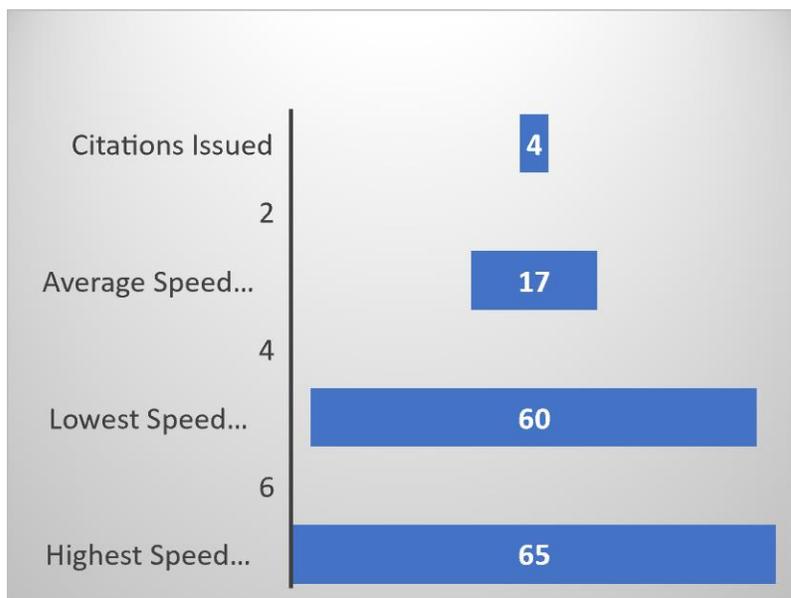
<sup>18</sup> SWOV Fact Sheet: The Relation Between Speed and Crashes, Institute for Road Safety Research Netherlands April 2012

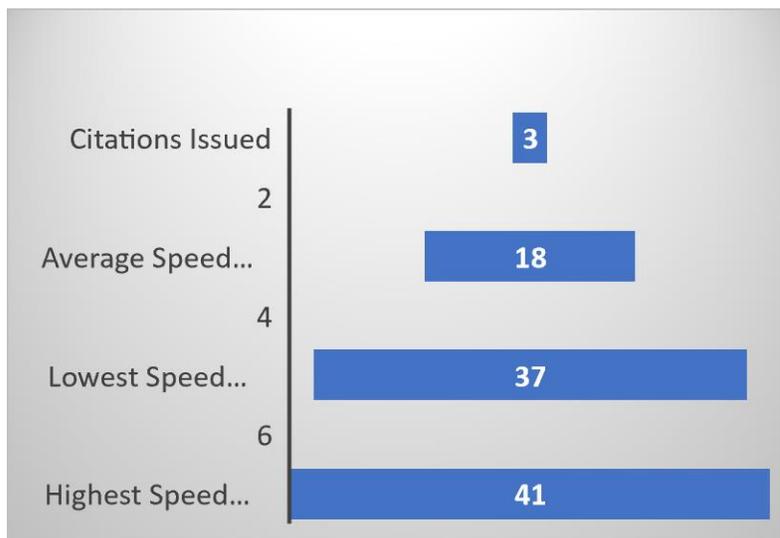
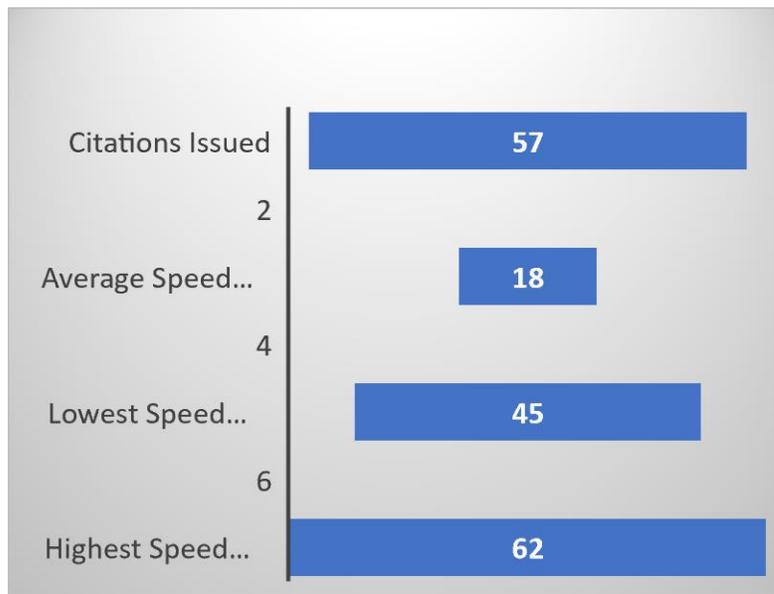
directly related to speeding (at least 9 miles per hour more than the posted limit). The following information summarizes this effort.

### Operation Save the Day Violation Heat Map



### Operation Save the Day Data by Posted Speed Limit





*Performance Measures: Number of traffic-calming road design changes; instances of addressing speed along key corridors through infrastructure; number of education initiatives and enforcement activities; setting appropriate speed limits; and speed safety cameras usage resulting in less instances of speeding.*



### Enhancing Transit

Transit is an effective means to reduce the number of vehicles on the roadways. The City also has an above average number of disabled veterans as well as an aging population that would benefit from better transit. Transit also benefits the service working population that would benefit financially from having a robust transit option to access employment. Specific strategies here are:

- ✓ Continuing to support EC Rider service in the City and advocate for enhanced route service.
- ✓ Continue to advocate at the TPO for express bus service to Destin

*Performance Measures: Enhanced transit routes, funding for express bus service.*



### Ensuring Safe Routes to School

Safe routes to school features heavily in this action plan due the location of educational facilities on the high injury network.

*Performance Measures: Number of Safe Routes to School projects implemented around the HIN or hot-spot locations.*



### Education Initiatives

Utilize the City's Public Involvement Officer to conduct education campaigns to accompany more innovative infrastructure, such as roundabouts, reverse angle parking, or pedestrian hybrid beacons.

Create Education campaigns that can also utilize the materials developed by the Florida Department of Transportation's Target Zero initiative described earlier.

Provide information and resources and offer educational opportunities to media outlets and to member governments about Vision Zero to promote consistent messaging and crash reporting language.

*Performance Measures: Number of social media posts on innovative infrastructure, number of safety focused news articles, reduction in the use of the word “accident” in the reporting of collisions, number of transportation safety related social media posts.*



#### Data Collection, Monitoring and Analysis

Conduct and prepare annual crash analysis, including preparing crash profiles and comparison of various time periods to better identify trends and progress toward Vision Zero. Analysis should layer available demographic data. Periodically update the HIN and Action Plan to reflect progress being made or develop new strategies if current actions are not achieving desired results.

*Performance Measures: Report to the Safe Streets Niceville Task Force on safety improvements constructed on an annual basis, and progress toward Vision Zero; Reduction in injuries or deaths from prior year.*