



**College of Arts & Sciences
School of Public Affairs**

New Tampa: Community Engaged Project

A study of New Tampa's Business Climate



Welcome to New Tampa: “Something for Everyone”

(Potential community sign, discussed on pg.16)

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1. Background

This project originated from a chance encounter with a USF Masters in Urban Regional Planning (MURP) student and then mayoral candidate at the time, Jane Castor. In discussion, she explained that when meeting with community members in New Tampa they expressed concern about the poor business climate that seemed to be affecting big box and local shops alike. Also, that some cause could be attributed to the adjacent development in Wesley Chapel with its growing economic footprint, or having only one main ingress, egress (Bruce B. Downs), but that doesn't explain the whole story. So as mayoral candidate at the time - with no urban planning experience, she thought New Tampa would make a great study for urban planners, especially at the university just down the road from the researched community. The intention was for this to lead to the discussion about what was needed to bring a strong sense of community to New Tampa, and it began with a direct call to form a group of local stakeholders that would guide the students on the ins and outs of New Tampa.

The student group had an initial phone call in March of 2019 where the stakeholder group was established including: John Iwanicki, Councilmember Luis Viera, Karen Tillman-Gosselin, and Karen Frashier from North Tampa. During this same time, Sam Becker, the student who first encountered Mayor Castor, and faculty including School of Public Affairs Director Ron Sanders and Urban and Regional Planning Director Mark Hafen, worked on developing a course called “Community Engaged Project: New Tampa” that would attract students to help in the business climate analysis. With both stakeholder groups established, representatives from organizations like the North Tampa Bay Chamber and New Tampa Rotary gave a detailed briefing on the business state of affairs in the community. This included discussions that formed some of our early assumptions going into our research; including that Wesley Chapel has stunted some growth in New Tampa due to developments along SR 52 and SR 54, the finished widening of Bruce B Downs has not led to the departed big box stores returning, and that there's a lack of community identity as people seem to just drive by and fail to recognize what New Tampa is. The USF MURP student group took these as starting points to the introductory phase of the research, beginning with background information on the development history of the area, New Tampa's demographics, and what current City/County plans say about future development. At the same time, scheduling an essential public participation event with the New Tampa residents that took the form of a Town Hall, organized by project stakeholder John Iwanicki.

1A. Development History

North Tampa's ascendancy in development since the late 1990's is remarkable. Aside from various dips in the economy, its population and economic impact to the county has increased virtually every year. Anchored by the ever-growing University of South Florida, the business district on W. Bruce B. Downs has attracted both big box stores and small businesses alike creating a unique environment for business growth. Therefore, it is curious to the students and faculty of the Urban Planning Department of USF, that this business district recently experienced numerous business closures. When put into the larger economic context of the University Area, the City of Tampa, and Hillsborough County, this seems to be an anomaly as all three areas seem to continually thrive. When comparing it to an even larger context, at the national scale, many communities are facing similar experiences with big box stores closing down as new age consumers buy what they need online, and these large, grey shells of space become expensive to re-lease, reuse, or redevelop.

As mentioned previously, the University Area, the City of Tampa, and Hillsborough County, in general, are growing economically. Therefore, it is odd that the area of Bruce B. Downs has experienced a surprising amount of business closures over the last five years. Many of these businesses happen to be considered "big-box." Stores such as H.H. Gregg, Staples, Sweetbay Supermarket, Bed Bath and Beyond, are just a name a few. In addition, smaller restaurants, such as those that replaced the Romano's Macaroni Grill, have struggled to keep their doors open. On a positive note, during the almost year long process of this study, the New Tampa community has seen the arrival of companies filling in some spaces that desperately needed commercial tenants. Some examples of this are Aldi's coming in to the former Ruby Tuesday's, the Brunchery's arrival, Trampoline Center taking place of HH Gregg, and new developments coming soon at the old BB&T bank. The biggest example of reinvestment back into New Tampa is the much anticipated arrival of The Village at Hunters Lake mixed use project, with a Sprouts market along with 12 more businesses to complete the new shopping center. We believe this establishes a new and exciting commercial development for a community that has been wondering about the business climate and asking for a rejuvenation. The article on this subject by New Tampa & Wesley Chapel Neighborhood News lists a few trendy eateries that will be tenants in this new project including a local brand, Grain & Berry. Grain & Berry has seven locations already in the Tampa Bay area (the nearest being on E. Fowler Ave.) and specializes in acai bowls and healthy bowls and juices, this arrival is in line with our recommendations for establishing a local brand culture in New Tampa that defines a neighborhood like South Tampa.

1B. Demographics

A snapshot of New Tampa’s demographics can be discovered using 2017 American Community Survey data. New Tampa has an estimated population (2017 ACS 5-Year Population Estimate) of 66,380 people with a median age of 34.5, median household income of \$81,693, 25,924 total housing units, 8.6% of the population is below poverty level and 95.5% of the population have a high school diploma or higher degree (United States Census Bureau, 2019). The community’s race and hispanic origin demographics are as follows:

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	33,706
Black or African American alone	9,426
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	254
Asian alone	10,225
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0
Some Other Race alone	1,695
Two or More Races	2,314
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	11,238

-Table of race and hispanic origin for New Tampa (United States Census Bureau, 2019)

1C. Local Planning Documents

When scanning the local documents of planning agencies that guide the development of the county, city, and specific neighborhoods, we found some that relate to New Tampa and set a blueprint for potential opportunities to develop. We can use these guiding documents and studies done on the area to leverage existing and future projects to fit into the desired image of New Tampa that is established by residents through this project. First, we looked at the [City of Tampa Adopted 2040 Comp Plan \(2018\)](#) which builds an outline for a collective vision of sustaining and enhancing an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion, and a sense of belonging – a city where everybody cares about the quality of life. The Plan also focuses on growth and change to specific parts of the city while strengthening and protecting residential neighborhoods from development pressure. Using innovative strategies and planning techniques, the Plan ensures Tampa will prosper well into the 21st century. The comprehensive plan mentioned New Tampa specifically when discussing district types, it groups New Tampa and the

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South Tampa districts as, “two districts that are predominantly traditional single family detached neighborhoods that share one or more of the following characteristics: Environmental qualities that would be compromised by increased urbanization; Limited access to transportation facilities, which would be resource inefficient to improve; Limited opportunities to create more community facilities, open spaces or services to meet increased demand; Unstable or flood-prone land. These two districts contain many of the City’s residential neighborhoods. Approximately thirty-six percent (36%) of the City’s residents live in these two districts and 18% of the City’s employment is found here. These characteristics clearly show that there are limited growth opportunities in these two districts, which is why they are defined as being areas of stability.” (14).

The comprehensive plan also describes how The New Tampa and South Tampa Districts offer the following opportunities to becoming a more livable and sustainable part of the City in the Maintaining Neighborhood Stability section. (15). Based on the ever changing demographics and impending environmental concerns, the need will increase to have safe, affordable and convenient mobility for housing and commercial options. A more sustainable mix of uses that provide goods and services within walking distance of residents along commercially designated corridors is another way to enhance neighborhood livability and stability. Next mentioned is fostering compatible infill to improve mobility and sustainability, as its an essential part of achieving more sustainable and livable neighborhoods that better offer accessibility to goods and services, because residents are likely to resist perceived encroachment on the edges of neighborhoods unless they are confident it will not disturb the quality of life. Applying this to our project, we believe the city agrees in New Tampa focusing on improving the main commercial corridor along Bruce B Downs and achieving a sustainable mix of development there before worrying about small retail pockets on the outskirts of the neighborhood.

Finally, we outline the Land Use and Recreation Open Space objectives and policies offered in the Comprehensive Plan 2040 that give a detailed, specific look into how the city views its change over the next 20 years, specifically in New Tampa.

- **LU Goal 1:** To build a livable city that enhances the unique attributes of Tampa’s diversity where heritage is appreciated and celebrated creating diverse communities and neighborhoods interconnected through walking, bicycling, and transit, through excellent Urban Design, with Public Spaces that are beautiful and functional, all supported by a thriving economy.
 - **Policy 1.1.8:** Provide diverse housing opportunities that are efficiently served by transit in the New Tampa and South Tampa districts while maintaining the character of established residential neighborhoods.

- **ROS (Recreation and Open Space Objective 2.4):** By 2025, expand the greenways corridor to include a coordinated system of greenways throughout the City and along the City’s waterfront areas.
 - **ROS Policy 2.4.8:** Provide a Greenway along Bruce B. Downs Boulevard and connect into the state property and the Hillsborough County Bike Trail along Bruce B. Downs Boulevard.

Our research team also wanted to identify any current projects being undertaken by the County, so we used the Hillsborough County Capital Improvement Viewer tool and searched by, “New Tampa”. Our (1) result was for the [New Tampa Performing Arts Center](#), which is currently in the design phase with design complete in early 2020, construction beginning in late 2020, and construction complete in late 2021. This new 20,000 sf civic building (expandable to 30,000 sq ft in the future) will be built in order to serve as a cultural/community center as part of the New Tampa Community Park.

Finally, in our background research of New Tampa we came across a city funded plan conducted by a local planning agency called, “[City of Tampa Walk Bike Plan Phase III- New Tampa](#)”, from 2013. This plan provides an outline of suggested bikeability/walkability measures, as well as pictures of specific projects at select intersections in the New Tampa area that could improve the local facilities for vulnerable users. This plan will be referred to in discussions with the City to better understand which projects were implemented and what opportunities there are for future improvements. After, our qualitative analysis portion of our work, our research team heard access and safety issues from residents regarding both neighborhood connectivity and crossing a major road like Bruce B Downs or New Tampa Blvd.

2. Business Climate Study

2A. Qualitative Analysis

Once our research team talked and met with New Tampa stakeholders, we had a baseline of understanding regarding the local issues facing the community. We also found that these were not issues unique to New Tampa, many suburban residential communities dominated by a single ingress/egress experienced a similar loss in larger chain retail due to e-commerce. This local example was exacerbated because of Wesley Chapel’s role in being development friendly, different development practices by Pasco County, and accepting big box retail and commercial outlets once stationed in New Tampa. Then, we deliberated that our main focus of studying this area and it’s business climate would require the residents perspective on the local assets and

deficits, business openings/closures, and transportation and accessibility concerns surrounding those businesses.

I. Town Hall

The first community engaged aspect of this project came on July 16th, 2019: New Tampa Community Meeting at Compton Park that was organized by our project stakeholders to kick off the project with a packed meeting of active and participating residents. The New Tampa Business Climate meeting was mentioned in a local publication by Gary Nager:

<http://ntneighborhoodnews.com/2019/04/usf-school-of-public-affairs-to-study-new-tampa-business/>



In attendance seated at the table of speakers was (starting left to right) Commissioner Ken Hagan, Councilman Luis Viera, Rep Fentrice Driskell, USF SPA Director Ron Sanders, Karen Frashier of Rotary, and Randy Myhre from Oliver’s Cycle Sports, with John Iwanicki , local resident and business person, at the podium moderating the session. Also, not pictured was a packed room with a diverse set of residents interested in the study and willing to give community input to launch the research. We heard during this listening session that New Tampa identifies as family-oriented, well-educated, entrepreneurial, and appreciative of its green space and quiet neighborhood settings. The panel also noted that these characteristics of New Tampa make for a favorable business climate, especially due to the high disposable income of the community, but the transient nature of driving along Bruce B Downs in passing could be part of the problem. The main concerns echoed by multiple residents included a lack of community gathering space and no “main street”, empty spaces left by big box departure, high commercial rent, need for

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placemaking and branding of New Tampa's desired image, a lack of connectivity between neighborhoods and across Bruce B Downs, and the want of more cultural activities that bring people together and out of their respective neighborhoods. Addressing these concerns, the panel of speakers and residents themselves offered initial solutions to these problems that could alleviate their worries. The solutions included small business incubators, adding multi-use paths to connect the neighborhoods, and conducting Tactical Urbanism events in unused parking lots of closed big box stores (Farmers markets, placemaking events). This Town Hall was a great first step in research, especially getting the unique perspectives of several different types of New Tampa residents, thus launching the next phase of our work that would be headlined by resident interviews.

II. Interviews

Based on the feedback we heard during the town hall, we decided to conduct a small sample of stakeholder interviews. We interviewed 10 people based on recommendations of the chief stakeholders of this project and used what we learned in the town hall to create an Interview Protocol that included the question headings:

- Assets & Deficits
- Business Openings, Closings
- Placemaking & Tactical Urbanism
- Access & Transportation

Our interviews took place in person and via phone, and included New Tampa residents from different neighborhoods and ranging in occupation and lifestyle. Their names were provided to the USF student group by members of the chief stakeholder group.

We first started by asking basic *background questions* about where the interview participant lived, worked, if they took Bruce B Downs to work or local amenities, and what were the perceived assets and deficits existing in the community. We learned that our interviewees lived in neighborhoods ranging from Hunters Green to Tampa Palms, yet had similar experiences when it comes to traveling to work and amenities offered in the area. They expressed in multiple interviews that Bruce B Downs construction seen in years past slowed commercial spending and economic virality. The residents felt relief post Bruce B Downs road widening traffic-wise, but they noted that the period during construction accelerated business loss and they haven't seen that revival or commercial comeback yet. Some other valuable information was gained while asking the subsequent *assets and deficits* questions that garnered responses that discussed

inaccessibility along Bruce B Downs to commercial locations, and mainly national trends that led to E-commerce becoming an easier and preferred option.

The next round of questions was the basis of our study, *Business Closures and Openings* that included specific questions about what type of businesses would thrive in New Tampa and what should people be excited about bringing here? We discussed how New Tampa separates itself from Wesley Chapel and encroaching Pasco County development, and specific areas and plazas within New Tampa that needed improvement because of dead, unused commercial space. This led to talking about how the modern urban areas in the community should be developed and what potential they saw for New Tampa and for whom, and if the future of New Tampa sees a favorable business climate, and why. The majority of respondents noted that they have seen the trend and have begun to participate in it as well by starting to shop in Pasco County and Wesley Chapel at their big box stores because of the loss of places like Staples, HH Gregg, Bed Bath and Beyond in New Tampa. They all agreed that online shopping has led to less of a need for brick and mortar stores for things like home goods or even groceries, but also noted that even entertainment options like movies and snacks are provided online using apps like Netflix and Uber Eats. When discussing potential new commercial options, they remained adamant that we reuse and adapt to the built environment in place and that a business solution wouldnt come in the form of a brand new development that could affect the aesthetically pleasing green space that exists in the community. Ideas came forward of local brands that could establish themselves in the area, something that Tampa residents, not just in New Tampa, know and appreciate, places like Buddy Brew or Blind Tiger Cafe. We also heard a lot about restaurant availability and that a successful brunch meeting place could be an asset in one of the plazas or commercial strips that has current successful stores, repeated was the hope for a First Watch, or Daily Eats (Ciccio's Restaurant Group). One important note we learned from some of our interviews with people involved in the business community was the notion of a higher commercial leasing rate that exists on this side of County Line Rd and may attribute to some of the fleeing retail stores. A limitation of our research is that we didn't interview a leasing agent in the area that specializes in commercial property, they could provide insight on how certain types, or priced leases can lead to empty stores for years lead to blight and a feeling of undesirability in the community. We would like to find out more information on if such leases should be restricted by county ordinances and city ordinances. Either the landlord makes the space productive within a certain amount of time or the lease is terminated.

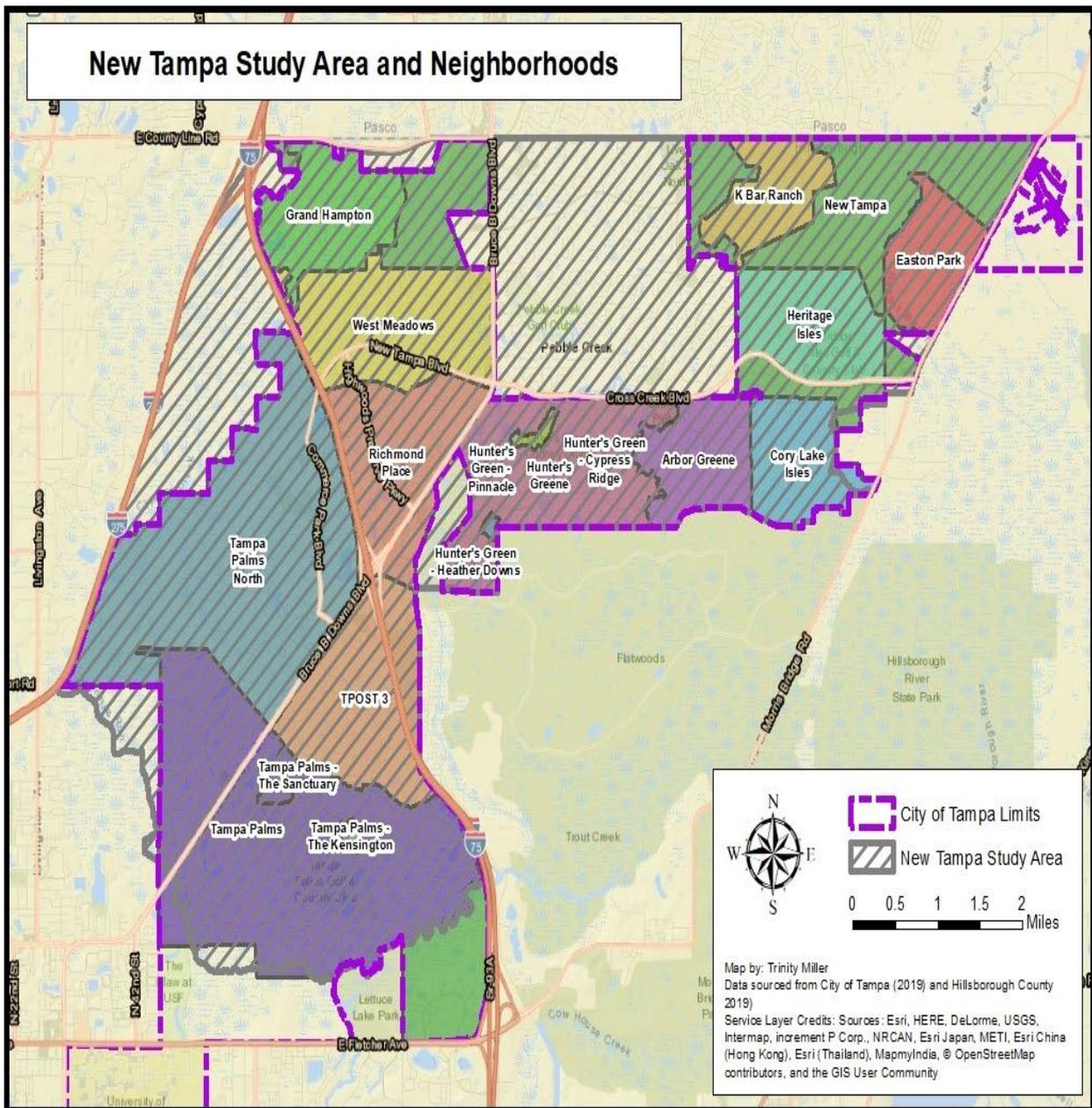
The interviews then led to asking more about how people interact with and travel to their local amenities, not limited to retail and commercial spending, and reusing currently underutilized space with events and placemaking tactics. We defined these interview sections as *Access & Transportation and Placemaking & Tactical Urbanism*. Questions included; gathering

space identification, asking about empty spaces in the community and what could be done to spruce them up and attract members of the communities to this underused space, and what opportunities exist to connect people throughout different New Tampa neighborhoods to encourage a live-work-play element to the community lifestyle. One of our main takeaways from these talks with residents is that the majority would support adding biking and walking features with neighborhoods, as well as secondary multi use facilities that were connected to Flatwoods or any other central, community gathering space. Tampa Palms was considered to be a strong candidate for interconnected paths that were multi use (bikes, walking, etc.), but it was noted that would require working with the neighborhood CDD and gaining approval for a project of that scale. Another key takeaway on the subject of placemaking was the proposal of a New Tampa community sign, the location would be dependant on the area where residents would want to locate this. We surmised it would be along Bruce B Downs, the main ingress/egress of the community, but could be located at different places in the median, depending on the median size and makeup (grass, concrete, etc.) and based on surrounding aesthetics as you want a community sign that people would take a picture and it includes a nice background. A mock up of this community sign is attached to the front page of this report, donned with a slogan provided during an interview session, “New Tampa: Something for Everyone”. We also heard from many people that certain tactical urbanism techniques we assumed would be helpful in encouraging community activity and gathering, were not extremely desired by respondents. The interviewees mentioned that things like Farmers or Craft Markets are destinations where they will travel outside of the community to attend and are okay with that travel, as New Tampa cant have every type of amenity but can remain a quieter, cleaner place to live. Overall, we took an urban planning perspective into these interviews and specifically into this transportation session, and realized there was a divide in our ideas and assumptions versus the residents. We asked questions about potential BRT and bus or light rail expansion that would make New Tampa more accessible for public transportation in the future, and received mixed results with some advocating for the multimodal vision and others expressing concern that their population base wouldn't use those services at a high rate.

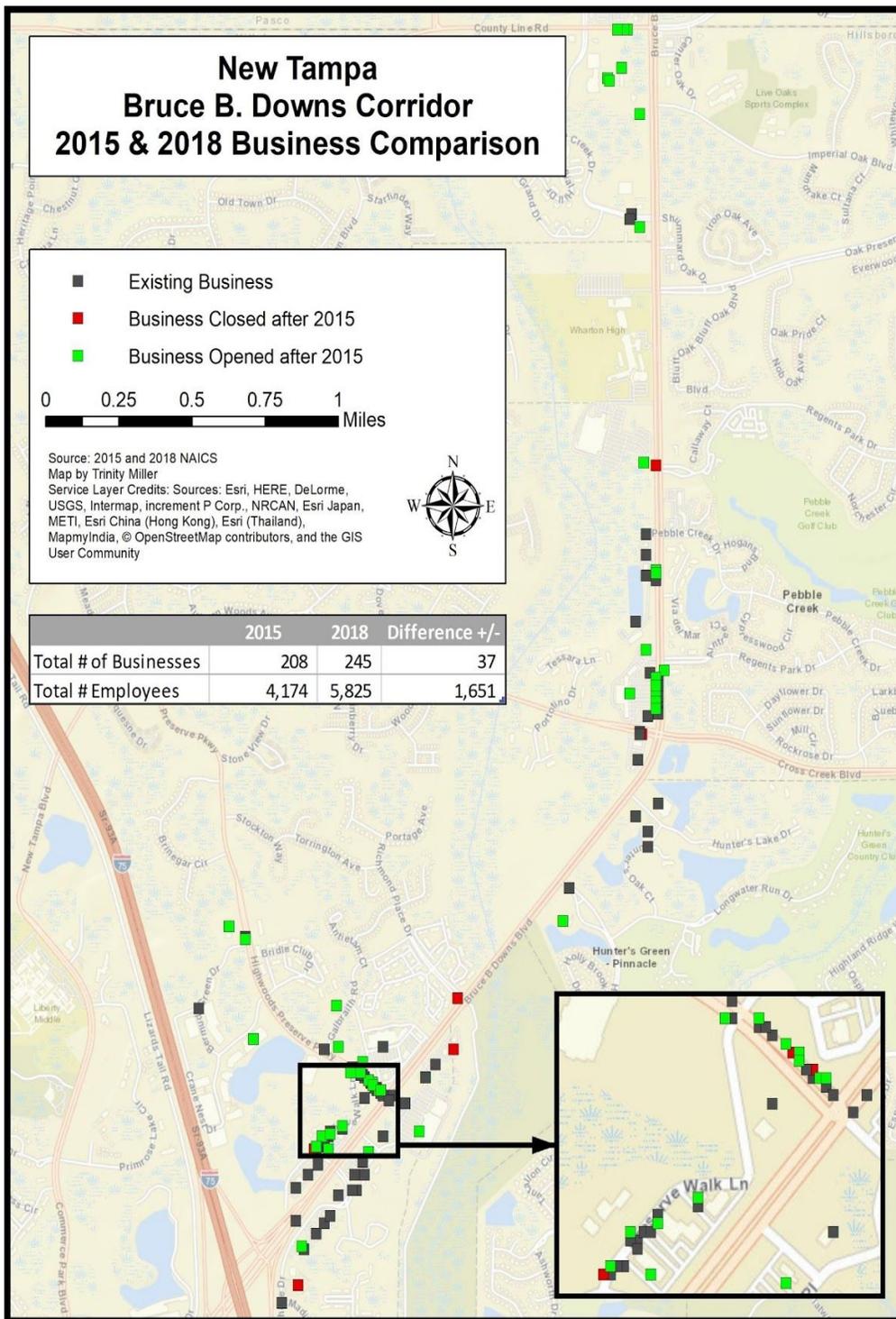
2B. Quantitative Analysis

For the business comparison analysis, we used 2015 and 2018 North American Industry Coding System (NAICS) data to study business operations within the study area. Business data analysis is focused on commercial businesses along Bruce B. Downs road within Hillsborough County. We were only able to analyze businesses that reported data to NAICS. For example, some businesses did not report sales volume or number employees to NAICS. These businesses were excluded from analysis. Additionally, home businesses were excluded from analysis.

Through preliminary analysis, we determined that including the home businesses were often transient and diluted the average and skewed the sum of studied variables.



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Between 2015 and 2018, 57 businesses closed within the study area. The businesses that closed reported annual sales volume of \$121,685,000. However, during the same time period, 94 new businesses opened. These new businesses generated \$180,921,000 in annual sales volume. Therefore, there was a net positive increase in total businesses (37), total employees (1,651), and total sales volume (\$59,236,000) between 2015 and 2018. Of the business closures, 23 (42.6%) were NAICS SQ FT Code B (Table 4). Of the business openings after 2015, 26 (31.7%) were NAICS SQ FT Code 3 (Table 5).

NAICS SQ FT Code	Example of Business (by SQ FT Code)	Total Business Closures	Total Employees	Total Sales Volume (in thousands)
A	WING ZONE	21	75	6,418
B	ROMANO'S MACARONI GRILL	23	273	54,735
C	PIER 1 IMPORTS	8	69	25,320
D	WINN-DIXIE	2	162	38,143

Table 4 Business closures by NAICS SQ FT Code category

NAICS SQ FT Code	Example of Business (by SQ FT Code)	Total Business Openings	Total Employees	Total Sales Volume (in thousands)
1	PURE NAIL BAR SPA INC	4	7	963
2	CHINA WOK	13	37	3,507
3	HUNGRY HOWIE'S PIZZA	26	94	14,327
4	BACKYARD POOL SUPPLIES INC	17	108	14,063
5	OPTICAL OUTLETS	9	37	3,860
6	54 REALTY GROUP	11	78	12,872
7	PIER 1 IMPORTS	4	79	10,952
8	WINN-DIXIE	8	1035	120,377

Table 5 Business openings after 2015 by 2018 NAICS SQ FT Code category

In 2015, the top employers within the study area were Syniverse Technologies, Walmart Supercenter, and Home Depot. These businesses employed 1,500 people, which is 35.9% of the total employees of businesses in the study area. In 2018, the top employers in the study area were Syniverse Technologies, Marathon Health Care Service of Florida, and Walmart Supercenter. These businesses employed 1,900 people. In 2018, Home Depot became the 6th largest employer in the study area, behind Keller Williams Realty and SFL Investments.

Overall, we believe that the GIS maps and the accompanying data points shed light on our earlier research assumptions that the overall business climate is bleak. Since 2015, our data actually shows an increase in employers, employees, and sales volume, but why does the feeling of business loss linger? We concluded that the constant passing of large, vacant parcels by residents along the only main route of the community, Bruce B. Downs, creates a sense of urgency among residents. They have seen the same empty stores so long that they become fixtures and even worse a waste of valuable space and opportunities. We also conclude that the widening of Bruce B Downs and the congestion that normally comes during the process of road construction, led to a stagnant feeling among commercial spenders- who along national trends turned to online shopping, while at the same time the adjacent community was seeing residential and commercial development exponentially grow. This was a perfect storm of challenges for a community like New Tampa to face, but with a better understanding of the number of business closures from 2015-2018, the types of businesses that departed and arrived, and their economic footprint (employees, sales volume), we hypothesize that New Tampa's business loss may be overstated. The future of the New Tampa business climate is dependent on factors that include but are not limited to more localized options that would attract not only New Tampa residents but consumers from surrounding communities like USF and Wesley Chapel. We imagine an easy win for the community could be something local like within the Ciccio's restaurant group, Buddy Brew, Bling Tiger Cafe, as these are all local brands that have name recognition from Tampanians and make themselves an instant destination. Grain & Berry coming to the much anticipated Village at Hunters Lake project is a great example of gaining an already recognized brand as an asset to your community and the eating options of the area, people from both inside the community and from surrounding areas (USF) will frequent an option like this because its trendy, well-known, and establishes the idea of supporting local product.

3. Recommendations

After understanding the background of New Tampa and using various research methods to identify weaknesses and opportunities, we can then provide recommendations to reach a sustainable New Tampa. The overarching goals are to increase business activity and to create a community identity.

Although these goals are interconnected, increasing business activity usually involves its own set of objectives. The major issue in New Tampa is the lack of business retention. Large box stores and small businesses alike are having trouble staying in New Tampa. The reasons could include everything from commercial leasing rates right down to low business. One solution is to create a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Committee (Purdue University , n.d.). BR&E committees can help organize local stakeholders to further identify specific problems and address them accordingly. Local stakeholders for New Tampa could include the Chamber of Commerce, retired business executives, government officials, education entities like USF, and local business owners.

Other goals to increase business activity include attracting new business with an emphasis on small business. In a recent report, the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City found that in four of the five studied cities, small businesses made up most of the jobs and in all cities, only small percent growths in small business would almost eliminate unemployment levels (Initiative for a Competitive Inner City , 2016). To grow small businesses, ICIC recommends creating a comprehensive small business plan, expanding contracting opportunities for small businesses and governments and creating workforce programs for these businesses.

Through interviews and community meetings, we found that one concern for residents is to develop a community identity. Residents feel that New Tampa has no significant culture or landmarks. One urban planning concept to solve this problem and others is to create locality development goals. Through various voices within the community, local decision makers can decide how to improve the area. For New Tampa, this could emphasize town scaping- creating one, identifying visual appearance that may draw on the area's history or future. It also includes preserving and protecting existing sensitive land areas. Shop steading- or the purchasing and procurement of abandoned or inexpensive commercial real estate- for future, public use- might also be useful for New Tampa. What might be useful is creating a community slogan and increased wayfinding signs throughout the area with a new logo.

Ultimately, some of New Tampa's biggest problems include business retention and lack-of-identity. Few solutions were suggested and further research could find specific problems and therefore specific solutions to those problems.

4. Limitations

While this study found that New Tampa has fluctuating concerns, it is not conclusive or comprehensive. There are multiple limitations that impact the findings within this study. For this reason, the findings shall be considered a stepping stone to further research for which a greater understanding can be achieved. The results of this study were achieved over the course of six months in which students volunteered their time by enrolling in a zero credit hour course. The study team consisted of six students who attended a town hall meeting, conducted interviews,

and completed background research, as well as faculty support. Due to time and manpower limitations, only incomplete results could be achieved. Additionally, limitations in the survey population, further exacerbated by the lack of a survey instrument, resulted in a non-representative survey sample. The small representative population showcases a selection bias for which future research shall consider when implementing the community survey tool. This is due, in part, because of the restricted population for which the data was collected. The interviewees were specifically selected thereby creating similar results when the interviews were transcribed. Since the community survey tool is a result of this study, the study team was unable to utilize the tool to collect data that could be generalized to the greater New Tampa community.

5. Summary

In today's world where people and businesses are more mobile than ever, it is important to understand that truly great places are the result of integrating local business within the existing community fabric. It is suggested that New Tampa prioritize incremental development by layering infrastructure, connecting existing streets and neighborhoods, and creating public spaces for gatherings. All of which will help create a new identity for New Tampa that can compete on a regional and national level. To go even further, New Tampa has the ability to become a destination for which residents, visitors, and prospective businesses will flock to. Priorities must be established for which the varying communities can mobilize within themselves and with each other to create a New Tampa that has something for everybody.

6. Future Research Opportunities

After the original outreach methods (town hall, interviews, contacting local planning agencies), we determined that the research could be advanced by conducting a community survey of New Tampa's residents. The USF planning research team partnered with Dr. Stephen Neely's Masters in Public Administration students to create a survey tool that would measure both community preferences and community perceptions of residents.

Community Preferences:

To better understand the preferences of New Tampa residents regarding amenities like: parks, restaurants, retail and grocery shopping, and social gathering spaces. In our initial conversations with residents, we heard different preferences from different residents including some saying that they love the green space available in the community and it entices them to bike, walk. We also heard from some that the community wants to pride itself in more localized products in the commercial space, especially since the current business climate trend has left them disheartened by the large retail stores departure across county line to the nearby Wesley Chapel area. Our initial assumptions are that these are preferences of a small segment of the

community and may not properly represent the community as a whole. We wanted to gain a clearer image by opening up our research to a larger, more representative sample size. Part of the intention of this community surveying tool is to test our basic assumptions, and to paint a fuller picture of how the community prefers to interact within their own space. Asking questions like: Where do you most often go to enjoy outdoor recreation activities, or shop for groceries? Eat out for dinner with family? And what form of transportation do you prefer to use to do these activities? This will help inform us on what the community is geared towards regarding the preferred quality of life, and how they should position themselves for future development and investment.

Community Perceptions:

Another focal point in our discussions had been around how the community self identifies New Tampa now, and what image they want to build for the future. Wesley Chapel, the adjacent community, has adopted New Tampa's former big-box stores and franchise chain restaurant identity, leaving New Tampa feeling a need in establishing selling point to its current and future commercial, and housing residents. A surveying tool to better understand how people perceive the community can shed some light on what the area means to people, and how these perceptions can form the future of the area. Asking questions about how people perceive New Tampa regarding its accessibility, future developments, and family friendliness, are some of the questions we wanted to be answered.

We then went through a deliberation process after the students presented their survey tools, and under the guidance of Professor Neely, we selected the best survey questions that would measure how the community perceives the quality of life and identity of New Tampa and how they prefer it develop in the future. We named it the Community Preferences Survey.

[USF Community Preferences Survey](#)

Methodology:

The preferred method will be to distribute through the mail using postcards that are customized to show the City of Tampa logo with an introduction message to the survey and a note indicating the anonymity of the process. The link will be provided and residents can then access on the computer and from there we can digitally analyze the results as they come in. (Dr. Neely will help finish this section)

A secondary option, put the Qualtrics survey link on an accessible website so it can be accessed by the community through the internet - possibly on the City website with an added press release or email outreach. Another consideration, is that putting this survey link on a created website could improve search optimization in general for New Tampa. Throughout this process, our research team learned that when searching "New Tampa" on Google you are given

inaccurate information like the Wesley Chapel zip code of 33544, images of the Shoppes at Wiregrass Mall (also, Wesley Chapel), and this can be confusing for people that already can't differentiate between the adjacent communities.

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