

MERIDIAN GREENWAY FEASIBILITY STUDY

Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency

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Introduction

As part of the Northeast Corridor Connector project along Bannerman Road, Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (Blueprint) completed a feasibility study to evaluate a multi-use trail along North Meridian Road from Forest Meadows Park to Bannerman Road, a distance of approximately 3.75 miles. The project study area is shown in

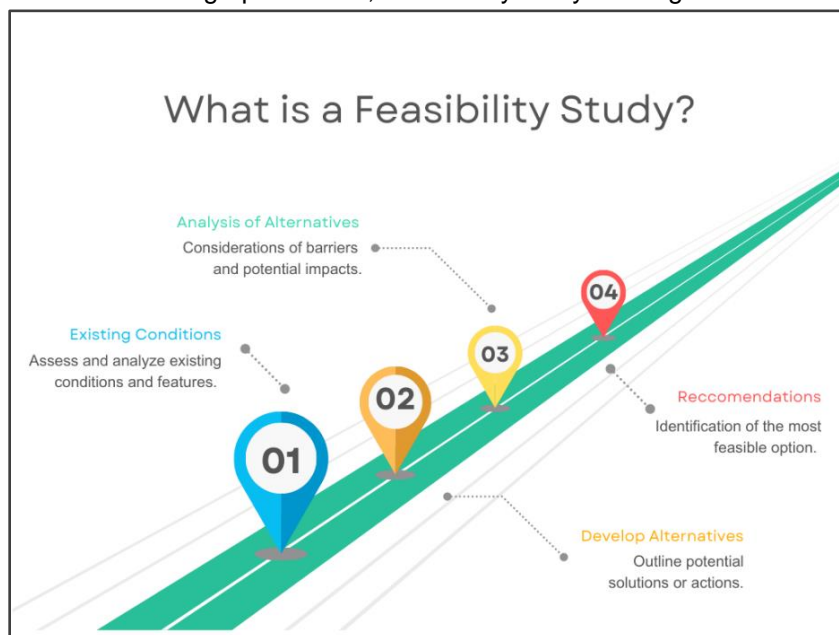
Figure 1. North Meridian Road is one of nine (9) protected canopy roads located in Leon County, and its scenic views and shade are highly valued by the local community. These qualities, along with several recreational amenities and neighborhoods located along the corridor, make North Meridian Road an obvious choice for multimodal connectivity that is currently lacking in this part of Tallahassee and Leon County. This route has been identified as a gap within the existing multimodal and trail networks in local planning documents including the [Tallahassee-Leon County Greenways Master Plan](#), and the [Tallahassee-Leon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#). A multi-



North Meridian Road

use trail along this corridor would provide much needed north-south connectivity and would expand the region's multimodal investments by connecting existing and programmed facilities in the northeast area of Tallahassee and Leon County, including the Orchard Pond Trail, Tallahassee to Havana Trail, the Bannerman Road Trail, and multimodal improvements in the Market District.

As shown in the graphic below, a feasibility study is designed to assess the practicality of a proposed

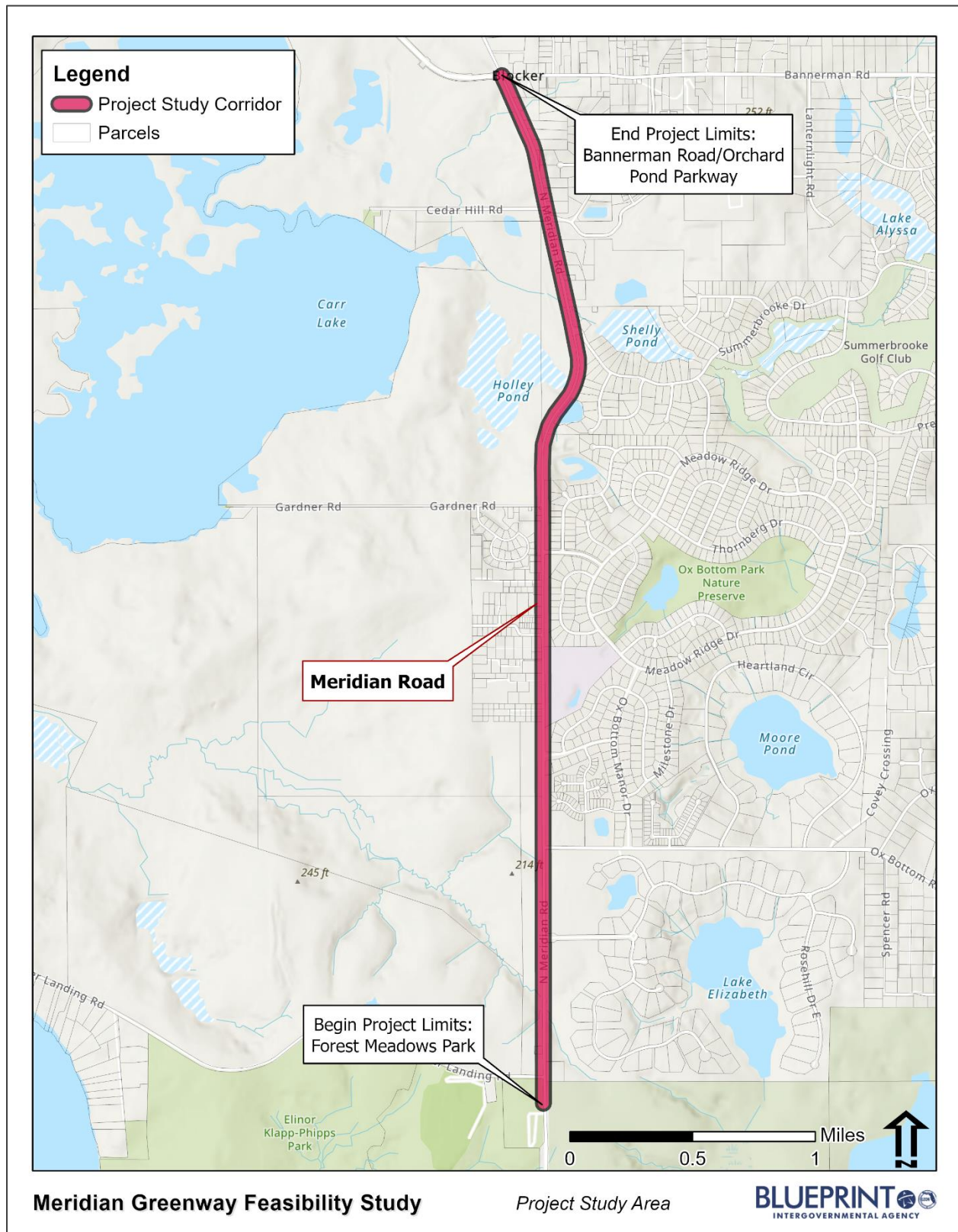


What is a Feasibility Study?

project, with consideration to various surrounding factors. This feasibility study included a thorough existing conditions assessment along North Meridian Road to determine project feasibility and identified route alignment alternatives for further study in subsequent phases. A technical analysis was conducted for all proposed route alignments, examining the specific opportunities and constraints associated with each. As part of this feasibility study, targeted stakeholder engagement with local agencies and representatives was also conducted.

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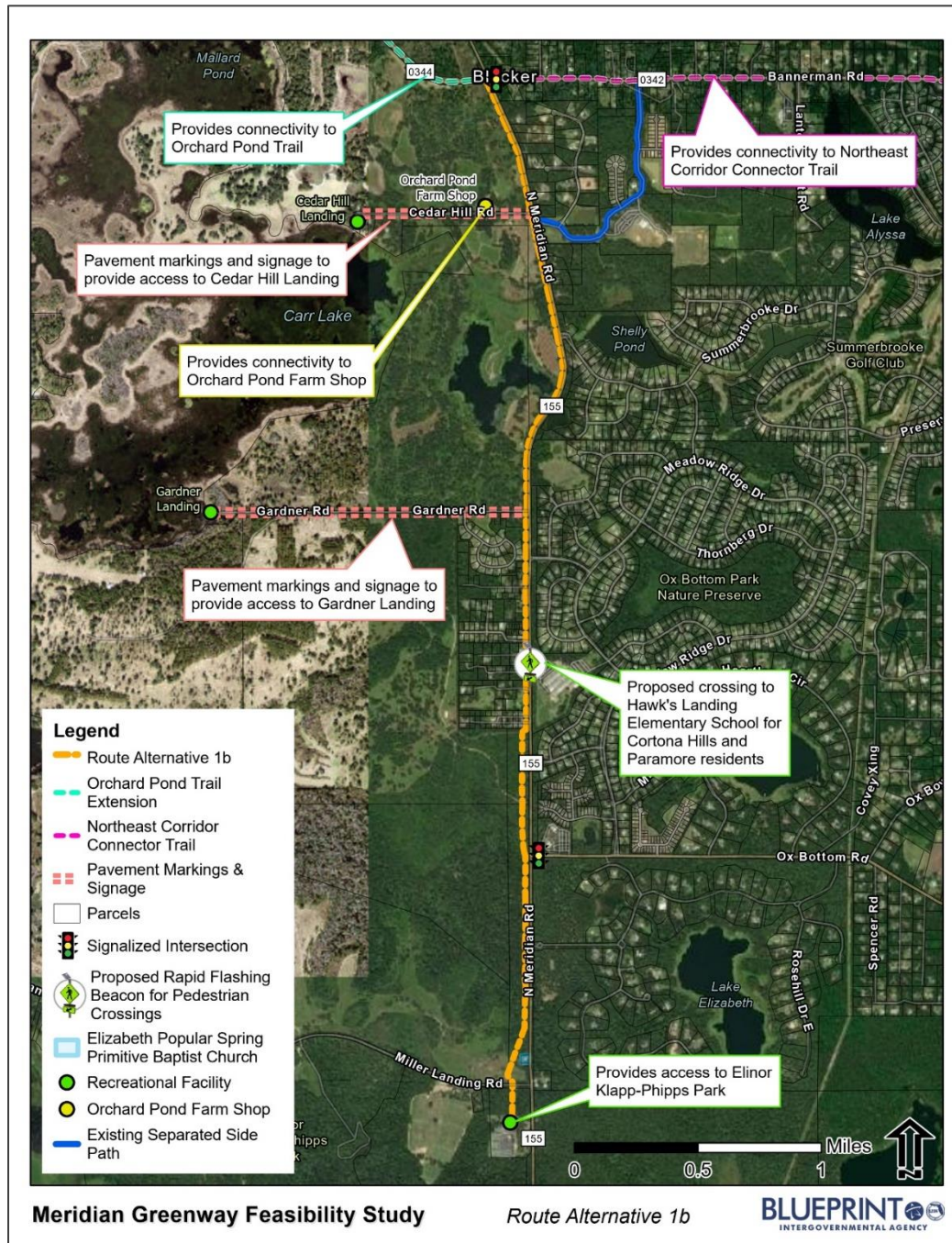
Figure 1. Meridian Greenway Project Study Area



Recommended Alternative

After evaluating the two main alternatives and their a and b variations, the project team recommends that Route 1b move forward as the preferred alternative. Route 1b provides the safest routing option by limiting crossings on North Meridian Road and facilitating connectivity to several recreational facilities and other amenities located on the west side of the corridor. Route 1b is discussed in more detail in the **Evaluated Alternatives** Section of this report and is shown below in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. Recommended Alternative 1b



Existing Conditions Assessment

As part of this feasibility study, an existing conditions assessment was initiated in the spring of 2022 to collect data and understand current conditions along North Meridian Road. This included a desktop analysis of existing conditions data, preliminary mapping of the corridor, and field verification through site visits. All collected information was then analyzed to determine project feasibility and outline route alignment alternatives. **Table 1** details existing spatial data that was collected and reviewed to complete this assessment.

Table 1. Project Data Sources

Data	Source	Year
Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), Truck AADT, Number of Lanes, Speed Limit, Functional Classification, Existing Multimodal Facilities	<i>Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)</i>	2021
Crash History	<i>Signal Four Analytics</i>	2018-22
Land Use	<i>Tallahassee-Leon County Geographic Information System (GIS) Data Portal</i>	2021
Preliminary Right-of-Way	<i>Leon County Property Appraiser, Google Maps</i>	2022-23
Wetlands	<i>National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)</i>	2022
Species	<i>Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</i>	Various Years
Flood Zones	<i>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) via Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL)</i>	2019
Easements	<i>Tallahassee-Leon County GIS Data Portal</i>	Various Years
Historic Structures, Resource Groups	<i>State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Data via FGDL</i>	2022
Bicyclist and Pedestrian Patterns near North Meridian Road	<i>Strava Metro</i>	2022-23

TRANSPORTATION

Roadway Characteristics

North Meridian Road is a two-lane, north-south minor arterial located in northwest Leon County. At varying locations along the corridor, center turn lanes are located to provide access to park, school, and neighborhood entrances. Three signalized intersections are located within the study limits along North Meridian Road and include:

- Miller Landing Road
- Ox Bottom Road
- Bannerman Road

Along this segment of North Meridian Road, the speed limit varies. The posted speed limit along a majority of North Meridian Road is 45 miles per hour. The speed limit decreases to 30 miles per hour near the entrance to Hawk's Rise Elementary School and reduces to 35 miles per hour north of Gardner Road, where lower speed is encouraged due to roadway design features such as curves. Currently, no multimodal facilities are located along the corridor due to constrained right-of-way and grade issues located on either side of the corridor. According to the Leon County Property Appraiser's online mapping tool, right-of-way within the project study area varies from 45 feet to 75 feet. However, due to canopy road protections and the presence of trees within the existing right-of-way, development opportunities are extremely limited. **Table 2** and **Figure 3** summarize the transportation characteristics of the corridor.



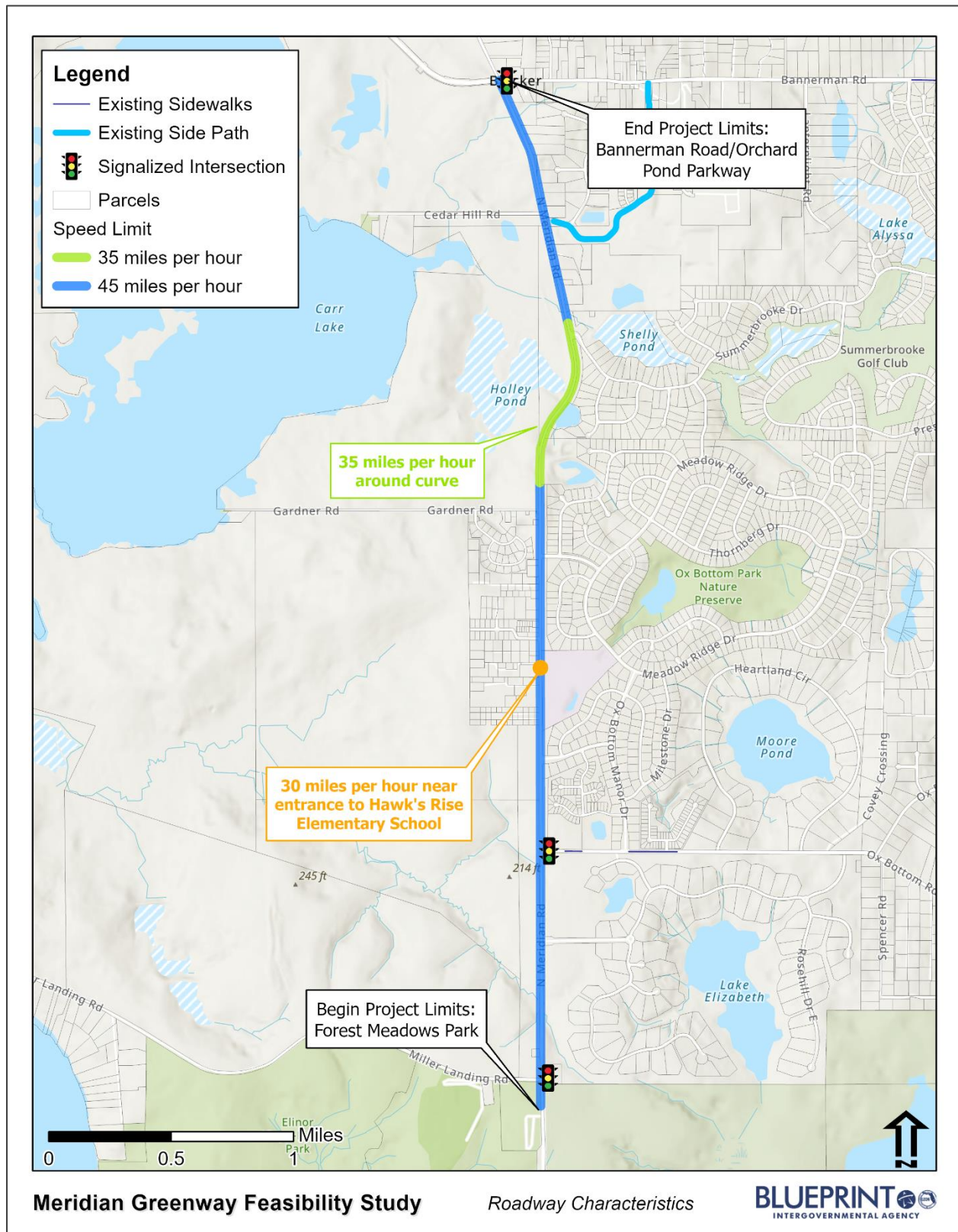
North Meridian Road

Table 2. *North Meridian Road Corridor Transportation Characteristics*

Transportation Characteristic	Classification or Count
Road Ownership	Leon County
Road Functional Classification	Minor Arterial
Number of Signalized Intersections	Three (3)
Speed Limit	Varies (30 to 45 miles per hour)
Number of Lanes	Two (2) with center turn lane
Multimodal Facilities	None
AADT	8,500
Preliminary Right-of-Way Width <i>(to be confirmed by survey in future design phases)</i>	45 to 75 feet (total)
Other Designations	Canopy Road

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Figure 3. Roadway Characteristics



Crash History

Crash data was obtained from Signal Four Analytics for the years from 2018-2022. During this five-year period, a total of 104 crashes occurred along North Meridian Road between Forest Meadows Park and



Curve in the road on North Meridian Road

Bannerman Road; crash locations are depicted in **Figure 4**. Of these 104 crashes, two (2) resulted in fatalities and 35 resulted in injuries, four (4) of which were incapacitating. Notably, none of the crashes involved pedestrians or bicyclists.

The two (2) fatal crashes that occurred along North Meridian Road both occurred in 2021 and were located near the curve north of Gardener Road. Both crashes occurred at night during clear and dry conditions, and in areas where conditions were dark and lacked street lighting. Both involved roadway departure and collisions with trees and ditches. Suspected contributing factors include lack of lighting, lack of retroreflective features,

and the sharp curve in the roadway geometry that drivers unfamiliar with the corridor may not anticipate. These crashes were heavily reported in the local news, raising concerns about the safety and visibility along the corridor. Leon County is pursuing safety improvements along this segment in an effort to reduce the occurrence of severe crashes in the future.

Strava Metro

Strava Metro is a tool that utilizes an aggregated dataset to analyze and understand mobility patterns. Strava has traditionally been used by athletes to track workouts, but this recorded data can provide valuable information about routes and movement patterns among cyclists, runners, and pedestrians. As part of this existing conditions assessment, Strava Metro data was reviewed to determine where cyclists are traveling throughout the area and how they are making connections despite the lack of direct north-south connectivity on North Meridian Road. **Figure 5** shows routes in the general vicinity of North Meridian Road via a heatmap, where routes with high activity are shown in dark blue, and those with less activity are shown in shades of red, pink, orange, and yellow. The Strava data from March 2022 to February 2023 shows that there is significant cyclist activity within local parks and neighborhoods, but travel and recreation along North Meridian Road is limited. Cyclists have identified alternative connections within the Ox Bottom and Summerbrooke neighborhoods east of North Meridian Road. Notably, more cyclists are accessing North Meridian Road north of Summerbrooke Drive to connect to Orchard Pond Parkway and the trail.

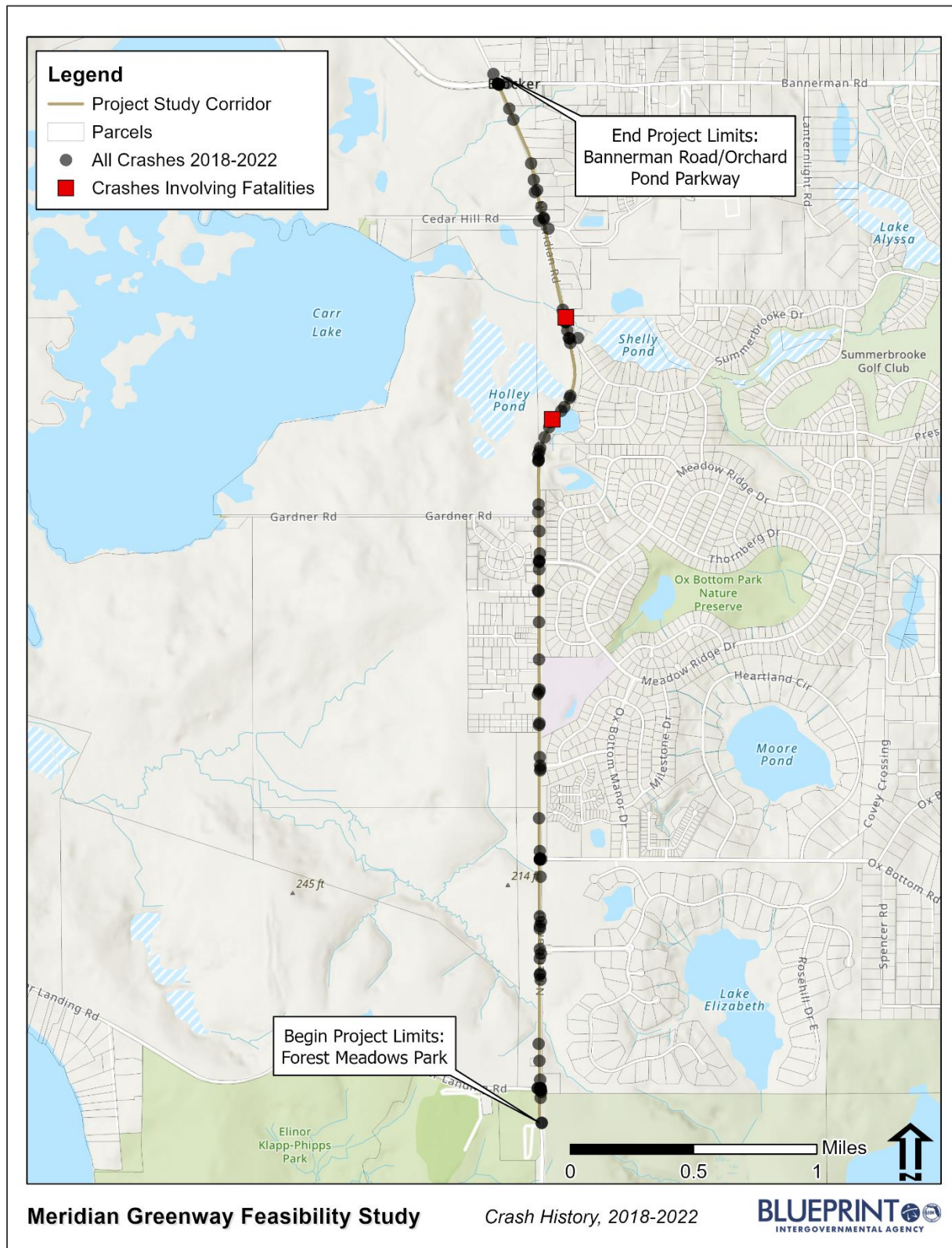


North Meridian Road

Strava Metro data for runners, walkers, and hikers was also reviewed and is shown in **Figure 6**. Movement patterns for pedestrians are similar to cyclists within neighborhoods and recreation areas, but data shows that there is negligible pedestrian activity along North Meridian Road within the project study limits, confirming the lack of pedestrian facilities along the corridor.

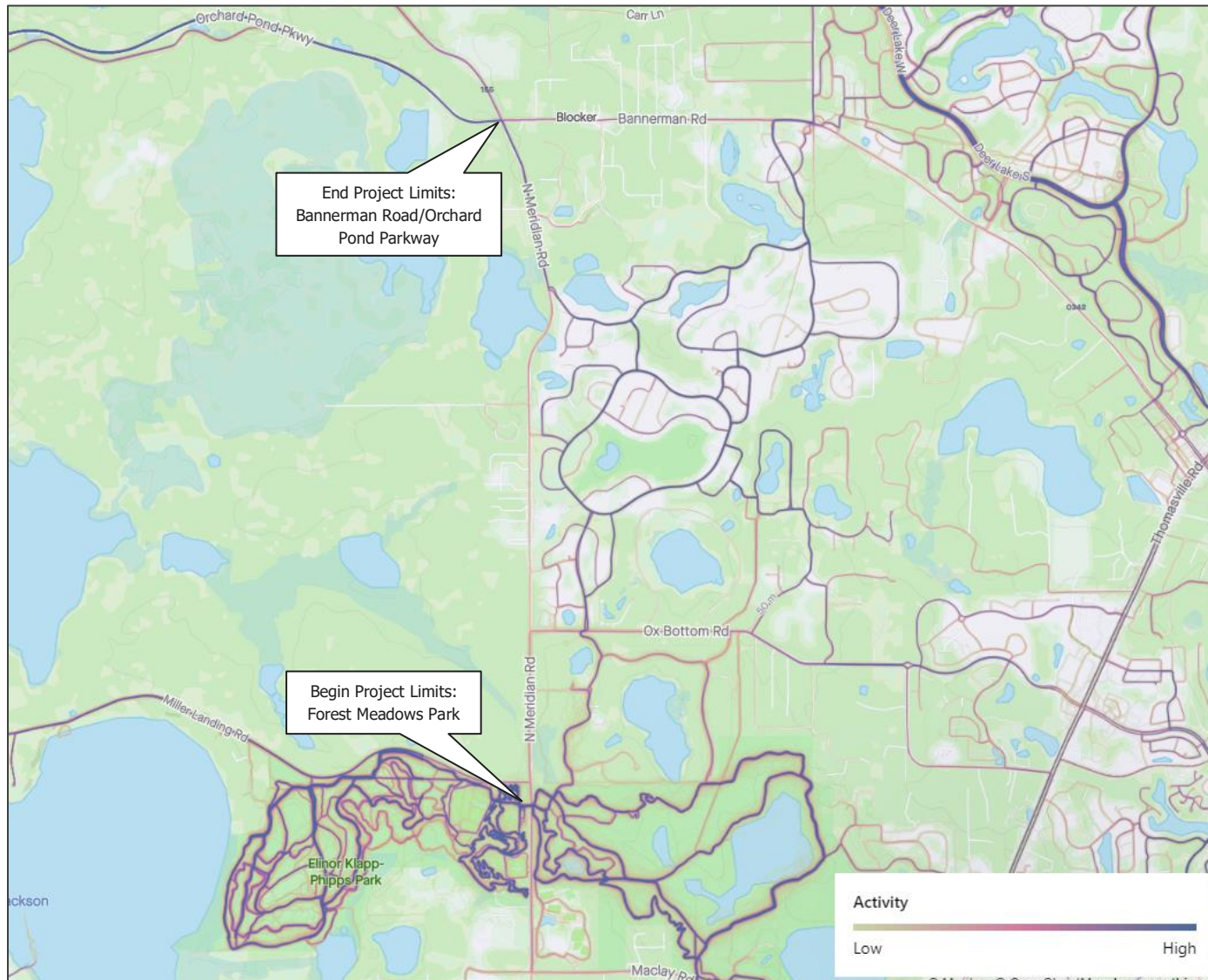
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Figure 4. Crashes along North Meridian Road, 2018-2022 (Signal Four Analytics)



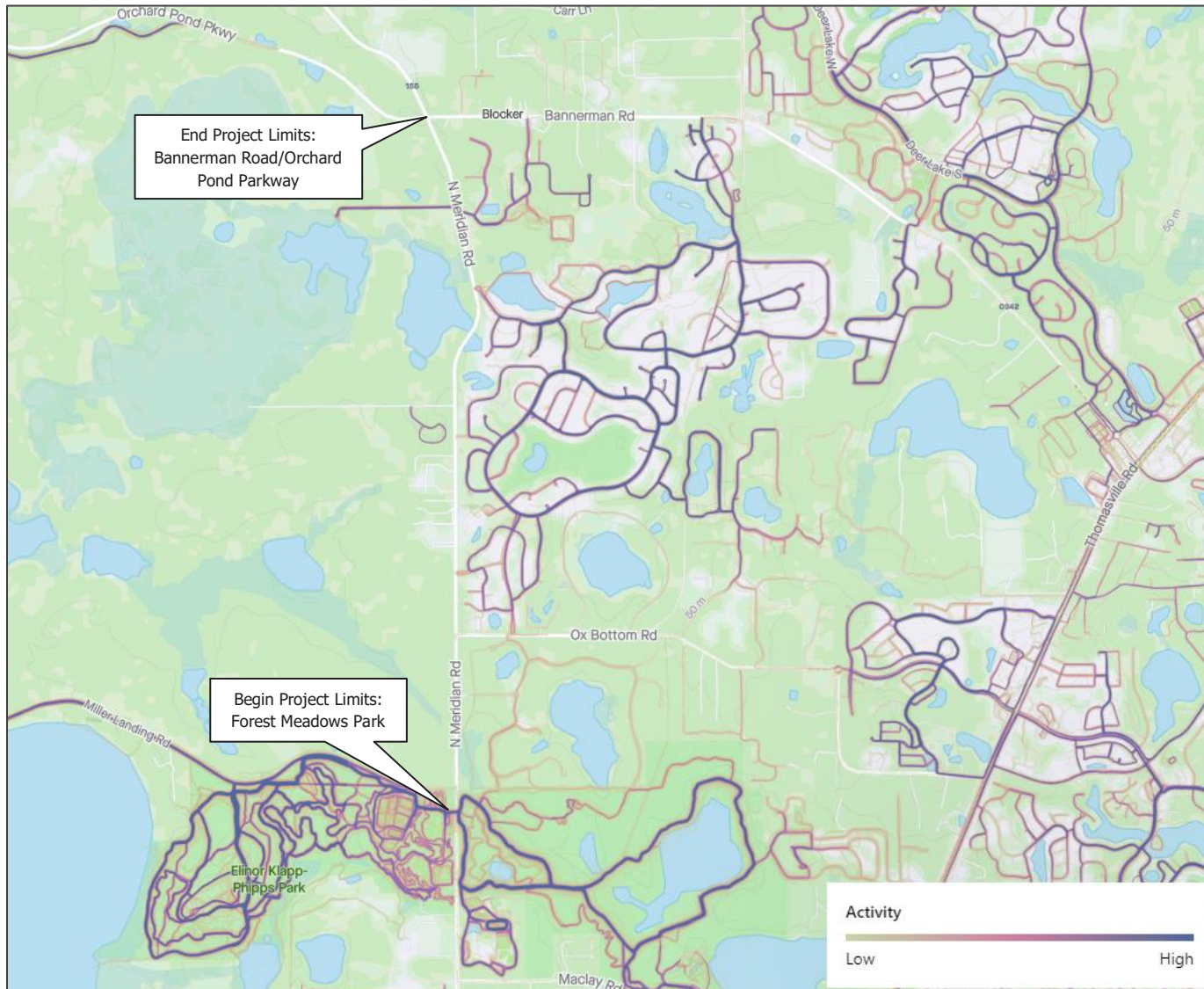
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Figure 5. Strava Metro - Bicyclist Activity



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Figure 6. Strava Metro – Pedestrian Activity



LAND USE

Existing land uses in the project study area were identified using the 2021 Existing Land Use dataset, which was obtained from the Tallahassee-Leon County GIS portal. With the exception of the land near the southern terminus of the study area, the majority of land uses within and surrounding the study area include residential, vacant, and open space. More specifically, these land uses include:

- Single Family Detached/Mobile Home
- Open Space Common Areas
- Open Space Resource Protection
- Open Space Recreation/Parks
- Vacant land uses
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

Existing vacant land uses are concentrated on the western portion of the study area, while the majority of residential and open space are located to the east of the corridor. Additionally, pockets of religious/non-profit land uses are located throughout the corridor on the eastern side of North Meridian Road.

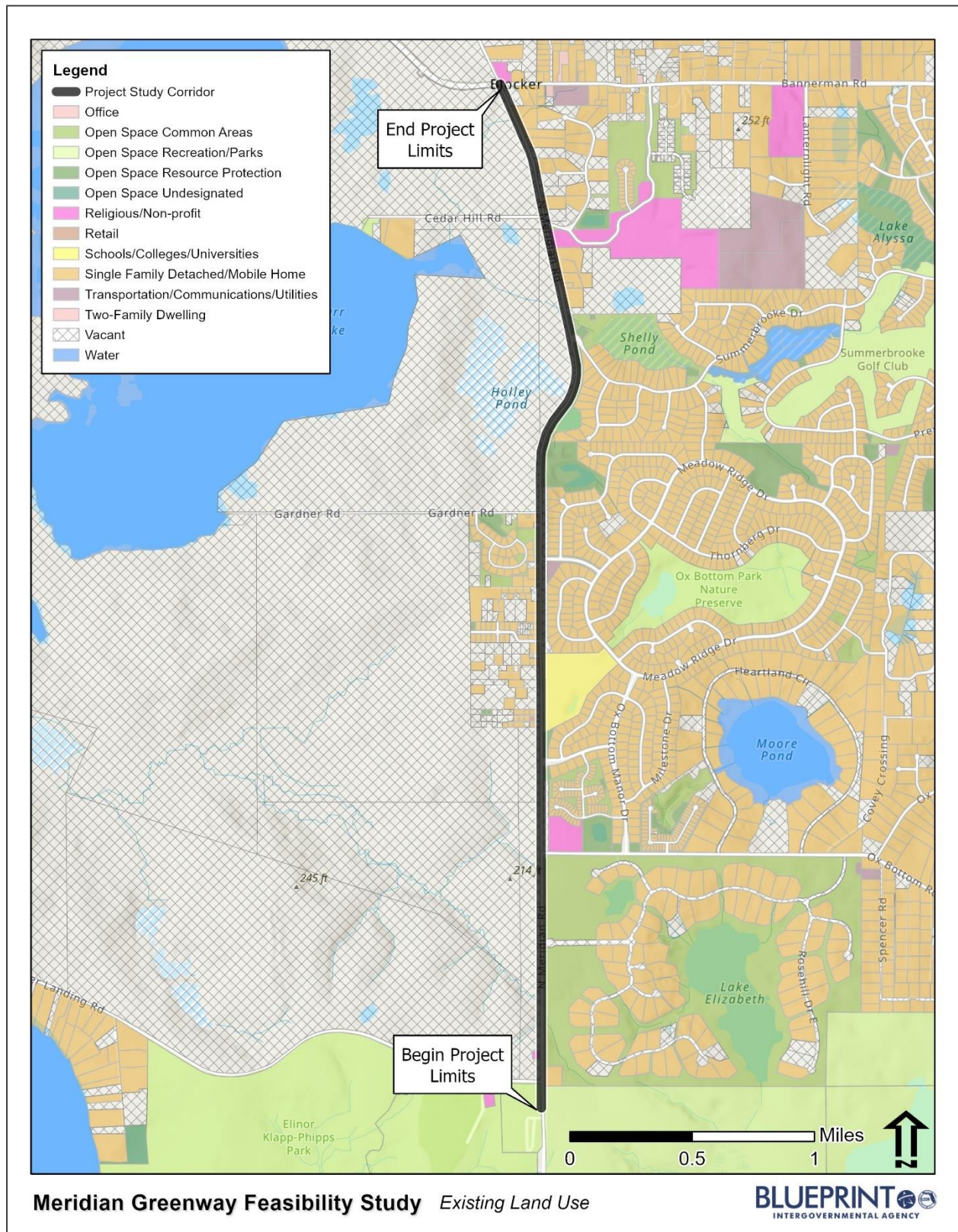
Figure 7 shows a map of the existing land uses in the project study area.



North Meridian Road at Summerbrooke Drive

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Figure 7. Existing Land Use Map



EASEMENTS

Several easements are located adjacent to North Meridian Road within the project study area. Most of the easements in this area are related to conservation, electric, and gas, and are located on both public and private property. The project team identified easements on both sides of the corridor as a potential opportunity for trail alignment; however, many questions remain about ownership and allowable uses in this area. If any of these easements fall within the canopy road zone of 100 feet from the centerline of North Meridian Road, they will also be subject to those requirements. These requirements are detailed in the following section titled “**Canopy Road Zones.**”

Information regarding each of the easements identified are shown in **Table 3** below starting from the southern terminus at Forest Meadows Park. These easements are also mapped by the Tallahassee-Leon County GIS map and can be found [here](#).

Table 3. Easements

City Record #	Easement Type	Location	Grantee
5024	Electric	West side of N. Meridian Road from south of Rosehill Lane to Ox Bottom Road	City of Tallahassee
5118	Access	East side of N. Meridian Road from Ox Bottom Road to south of Hawk Meadow Drive	City of Tallahassee
N/A	Conservation	East side of N. Meridian Road from Ox Bottom Road to edge of Wildwood Presbyterian Church property south of Sugar Plum Drive	City of Tallahassee
0	Gas	West side of N. Meridian Road from Cedar Hill Road to north of Bannerman Road	City of Tallahassee

CANOPY ROAD ZONES

Due to its formal designation as a *Canopy Road*, or *Canopy Road Tree Protection Zone*, both Leon County and the City of Tallahassee restrict development within 100 feet of the centerline on North Meridian Road. The City of Tallahassee requires a Canopy Road Tree Protection Zone Impact Analysis and Mitigation Plan to be developed for any impacts proposed to the land within a Canopy Road Protection Zone. An overlay of the Canopy Road 100-foot development buffer over North Meridian Road is shown in **Figure 7**.

Preliminary conversations with the City of Tallahassee Growth Management indicated that much of North Meridian Road and the project study area is located within the Lake Jackson Drainage Basin but outside of the Lake Jackson Special Development Zone elevation, potentially allowing for an environmental management permit or variance. However, based on the [Tallahassee Land Development Code \(TLDC\)](#), the trail would be limited to 10 feet in width and would require that all criteria in the current code be met. This criterion includes:

- A prerequisite natural features inventory ([NFI, TLDC Sec. 5-54](#))
- An environmental impact analysis ([EIA, TLDC Sec. 5-55](#))
- A environmental management permit ([TLDC Sec. 5-56](#)).
- Stormwater management including Lake Jackson retention ([TLDC Sec. 5-90](#)).

In addition to these requirements, the trail must also comply with canopy road zone regulations ([TLDC Sec. 5-81a2f](#)), which includes several requirements, among them a review by the Canopy Roads Citizens Committee.

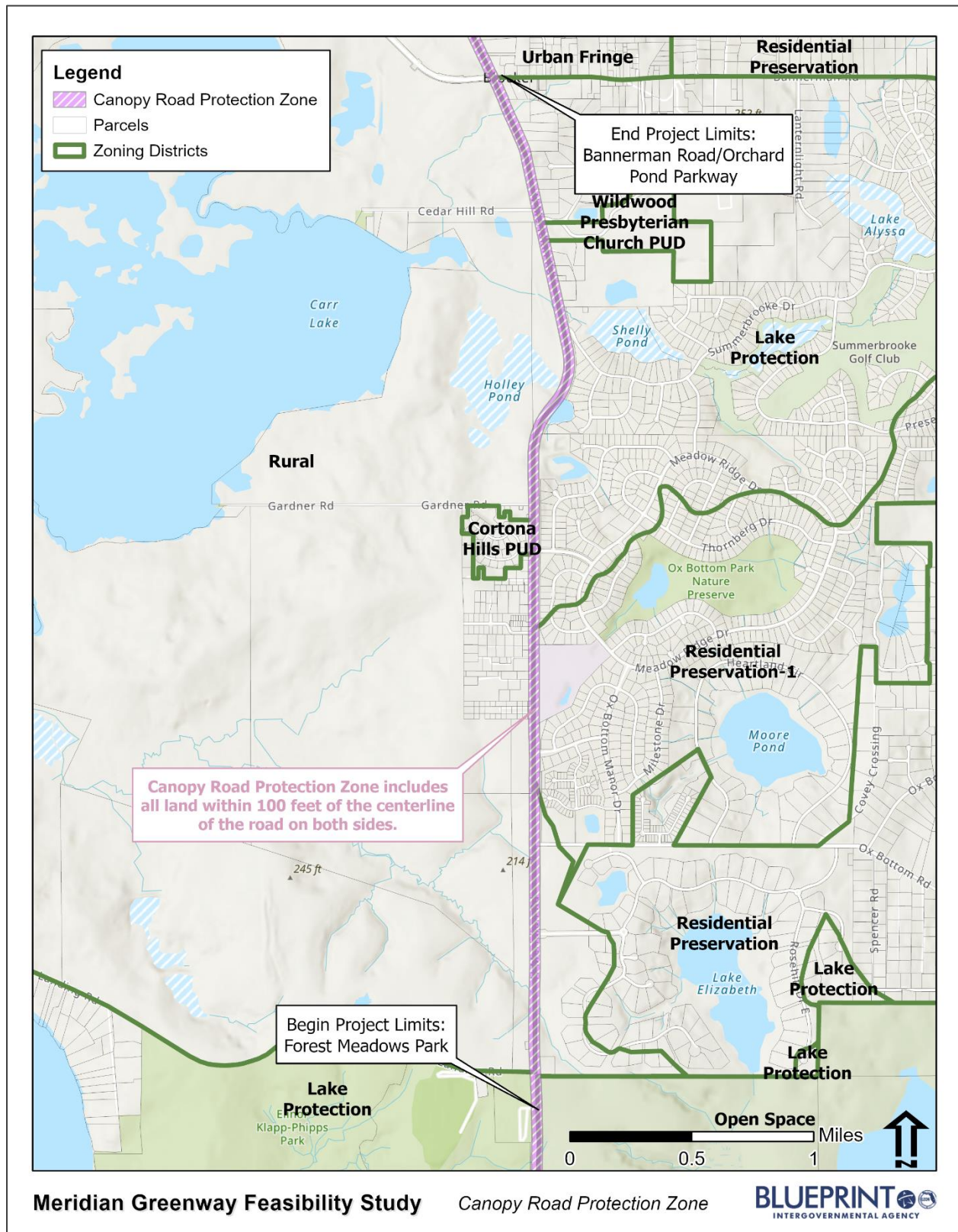
As this project moves forward to subsequent phases, ongoing coordination with City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and the Canopy Roads Citizens Committee will be needed to ensure all the intricacies of the code and zoning requirements are met. **Figure 8** shows the Canopy Road Protection Zone and the surrounding Zoning Districts.



Canopy Road Signage along North Meridian Road

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Figure 8. Canopy Road Protection Zone and Zoning Districts

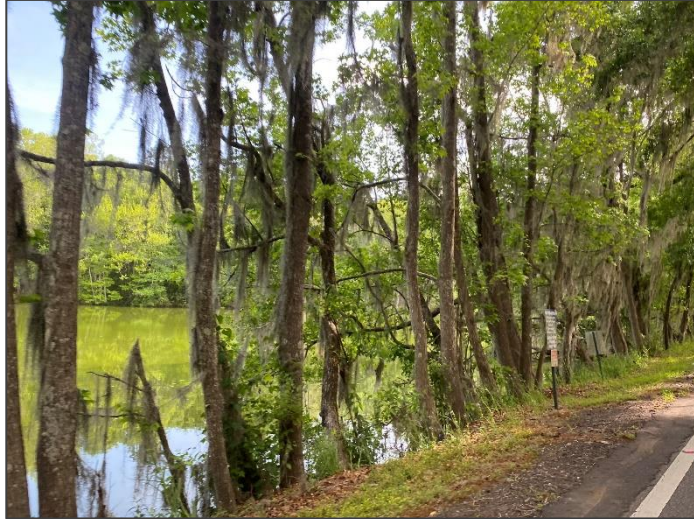


ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

As part of the existing conditions assessment, environmental characteristics including wetlands, species, and flood zones were evaluated to identify any preliminary constraints that would limit the feasibility of constructing a multi-use trail along the corridor. Environmental constraints and commitments will be further evaluated in more detail as this project moves forward to subsequent phases.

Wetlands and Flood Zones

National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data maintained by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was used to identify wetlands within and surrounding the project study area. Several wetland habitat types have been identified within the vicinity of the project study area, in addition to the presence of several ponds and lakes. The highest concentration of wetlands in the study area is in the southwestern portion, while numerous, isolated wetlands are present in the residential areas to the east of North Meridian Road. Lakes and ponds are located on both sides of the corridor, with the largest being Carr Lake located west of North Meridian Road.



Spring Pond, facing south from North Meridian Road

Along North Meridian Road, there are two (2) locations where wetlands appear to intersect with the proposed trail. These locations include north of Forest Meadows Park, and near Holley Pond and Shelly Pond at the northern terminus of this project. Although not crossing the corridor, Spring Pond also runs adjacent to North Meridian Road north of Summerbrooke Road, further constraining right-of-way in this area. To minimize potential impacts in these areas, boardwalks and other creative design initiatives should be considered in instances where the trail may traverse wetlands. Future project phases will further analyze impacts and develop mitigation efforts. **Figure 9** depicts all existing wetlands within the project study area and larger vicinity.

There are two (2) FEMA flood zones identified within the project study area. The flood zones include:

- Flood Zone A – 1% annual chance of flooding without base flood elevations established
- Flood Zone X – 0.2% annual chance of flooding

Locations where the corridor intersects with Flood Zone A coincide with wetland features.

Figure 10 shows the flood zones within the project study area.

Species

Along the project study area, GIS data maintained by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) indicated that no species of interest have been documented within the vicinity surrounding North Meridian Road. However, the project corridor overlaps with the following protected habitats:

- Wood Stork Core Foraging Habitat
- Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Habitat

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Portions of the corridor transverse wetlands, which are known habitats for wood stork nesting sites and core foraging. However, the corridor intersects with wetlands for short distances. Preliminary analysis indicates that no major impacts to wood stork habitat will occur as a result of the project.

The red-cockaded woodpecker forages in large swaths of dense pine forest with underbrush, which is found in areas west of North Meridian Road. However, sections of the proposed multi-use trail pathways follow a utility easement. Given the absence of trees within the easement area, tree removal will be minimal and will limit the impacts to the red-cockaded woodpecker's suitable habitat.

One (1) bald eagle's nest is located approximately two (2) miles west of North Meridian Road. There are



Sign for Orchard Pond Organic Farm, located on Cedar Hill Road and North Meridian Road

no anticipated impacts to the bald eagle's nest, as all construction associated with the proposed trail would be outside the federally designated buffer distances of 330 feet or 660 feet. **Figure 11** shows a map of North Meridian Road overlaid with the federally protected species habitats.

Historic and Cultural

The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) GIS data was reviewed to identify historic structures and resource groups within the project study area. Based on the analysis, three (3) historic structures and four (4) resource groups are located within the vicinity of the corridor and are described in **Table 4**. Two (2) of the sites are

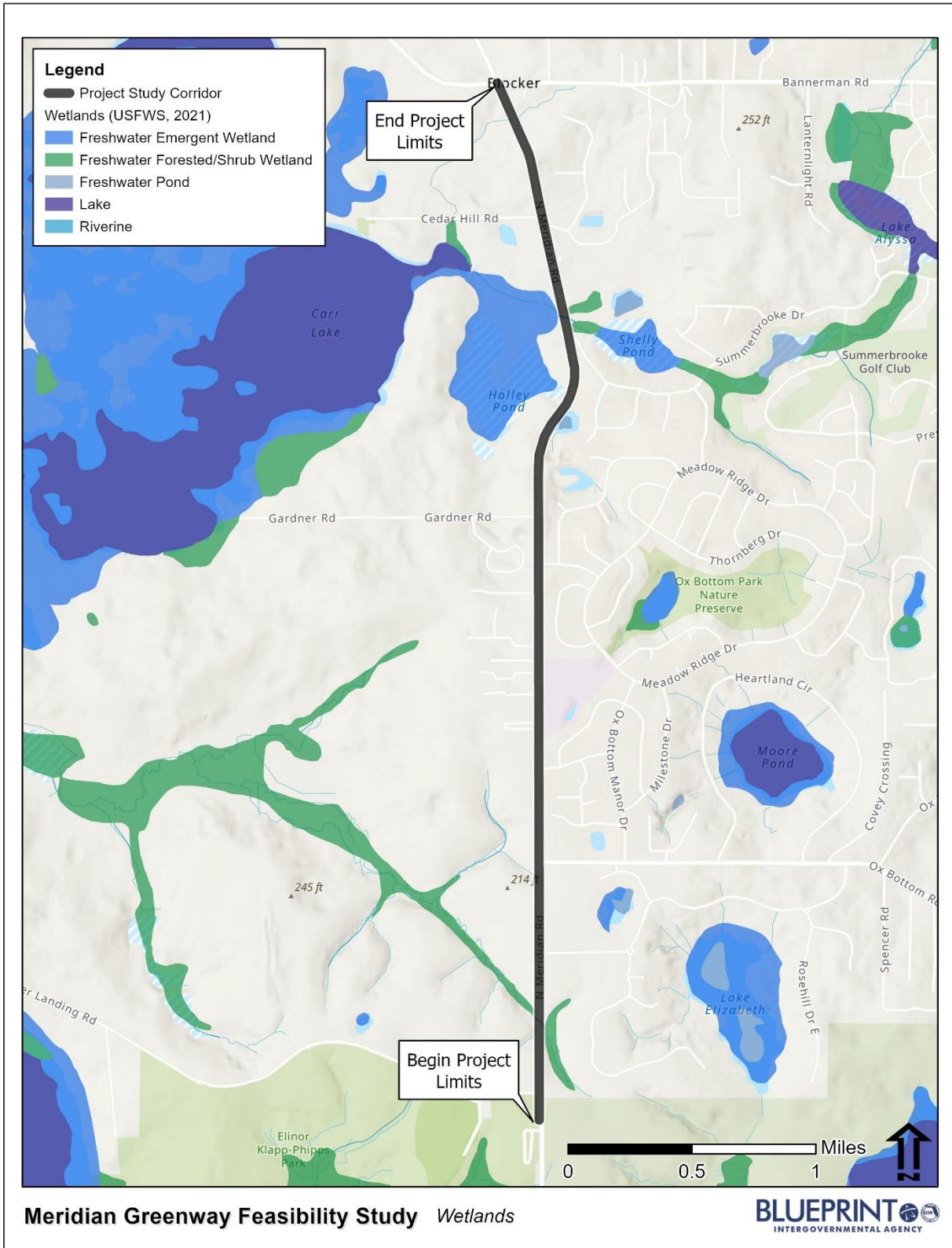
ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) while one location has yet to be evaluated for NRHP-listing. Only one of the four (4) resource groups that were identified has been evaluated and was determined to be eligible for NRHP-listing. None of these resources, outside of North Meridian Road itself, are located within the existing right-of-way or immediately adjacent to the corridor. **Figure 12** shows a map of the three (3) historic structures and four (4) resource groups.

Table 4. *Historic Structures in the Project Study Area*

Type	Site Number	Site Name	NRHP Eligibility
Structure	LE04982	Main House	Not evaluated by SHPO
Structure	LE05298	128 Carrie Carr Lane	Ineligible for NRHP
Structure	LE01670	Bannerman Road	Ineligible for NRHP
Resource Group	LEO5962	North Meridian Road	Not evaluated by SHPO
Resource Group	LEO5318	Rosehill – Walnut Hill	Not evaluated by SHPO
Resource Group	LEO4303	Alfred B. Maclay State Gardens	Eligible for NRHP
Resource Group	LEO5968	Red Hills Tram	Not evaluated by SHPO

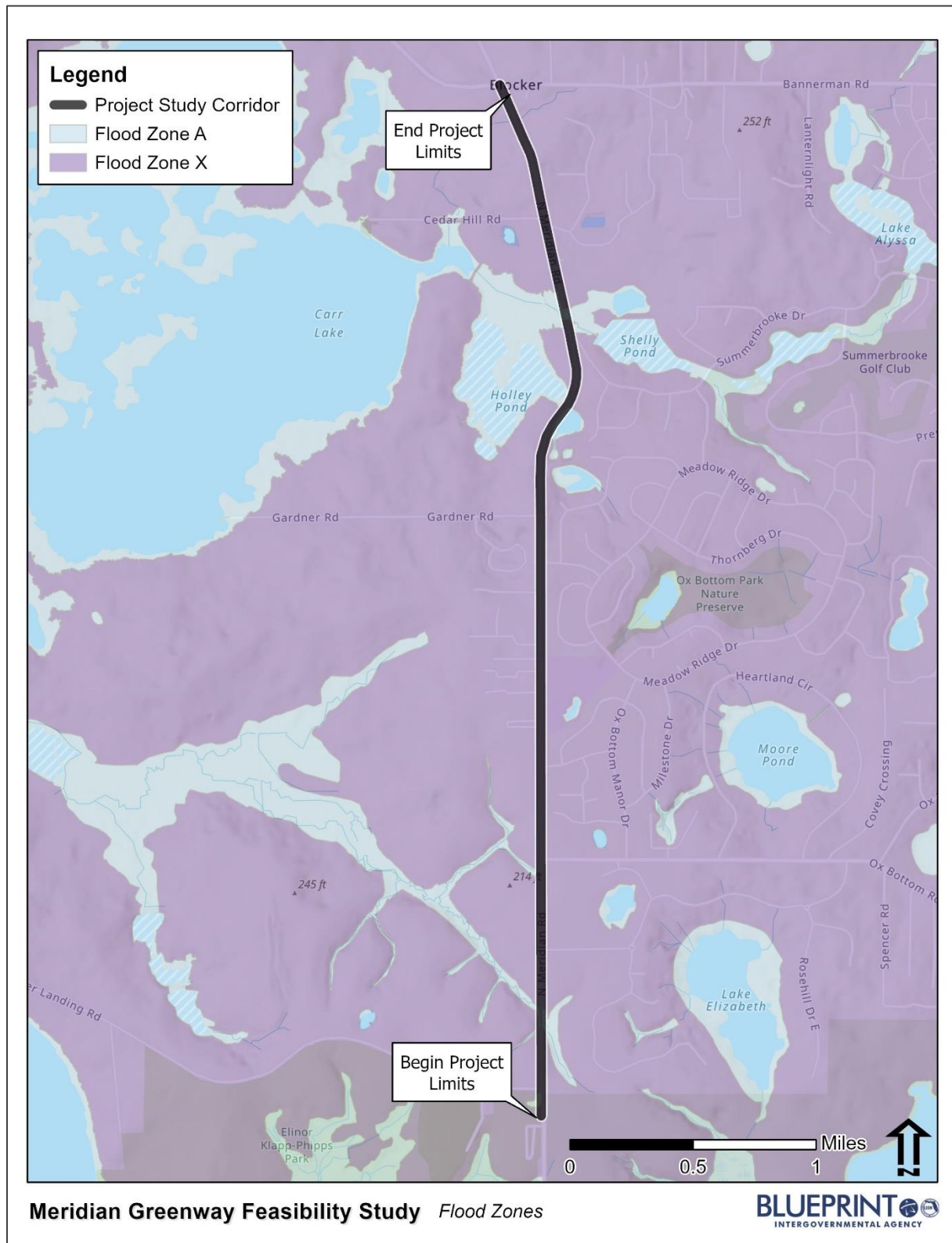
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Figure 9. Wetlands



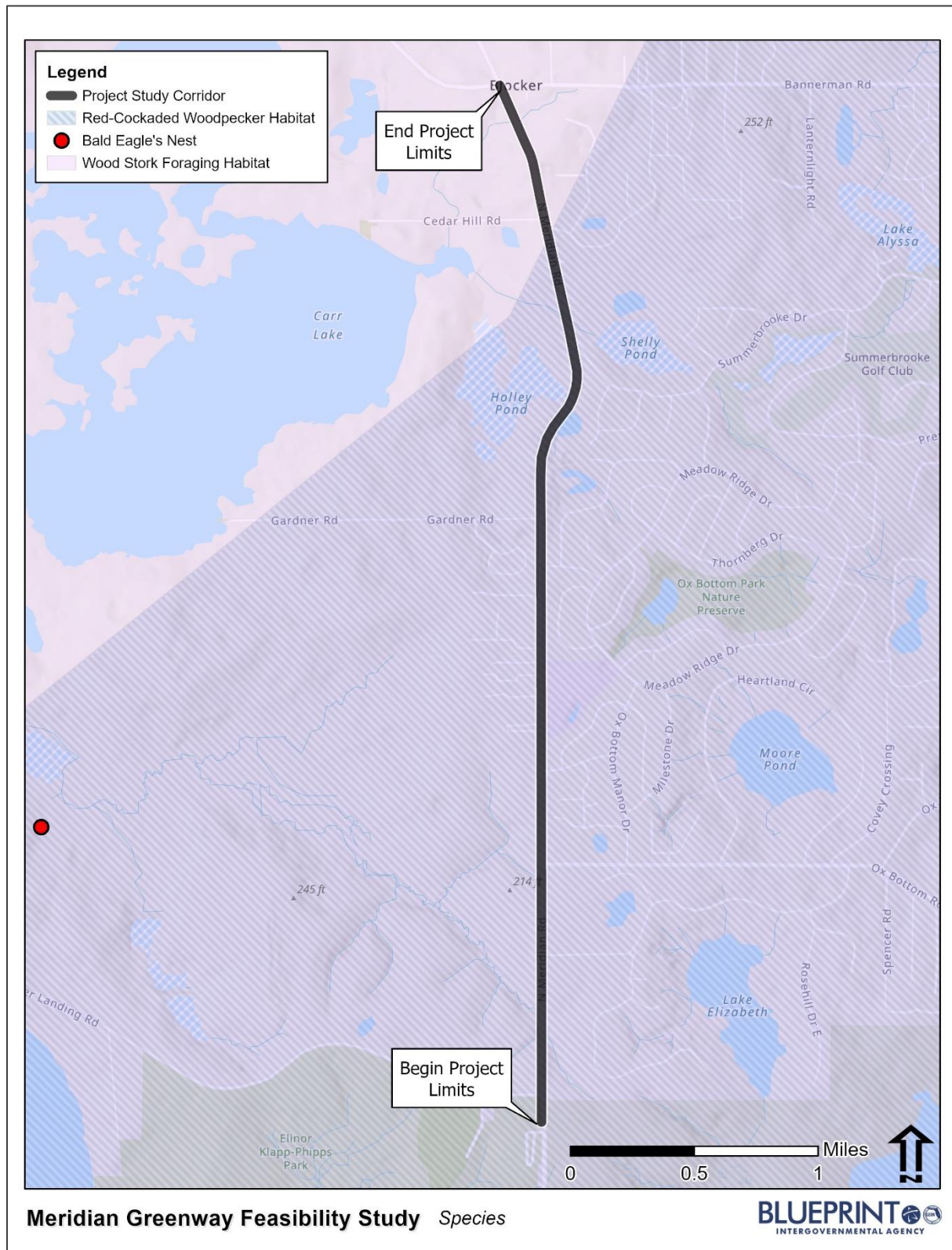
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Figure 10. Flood Zones



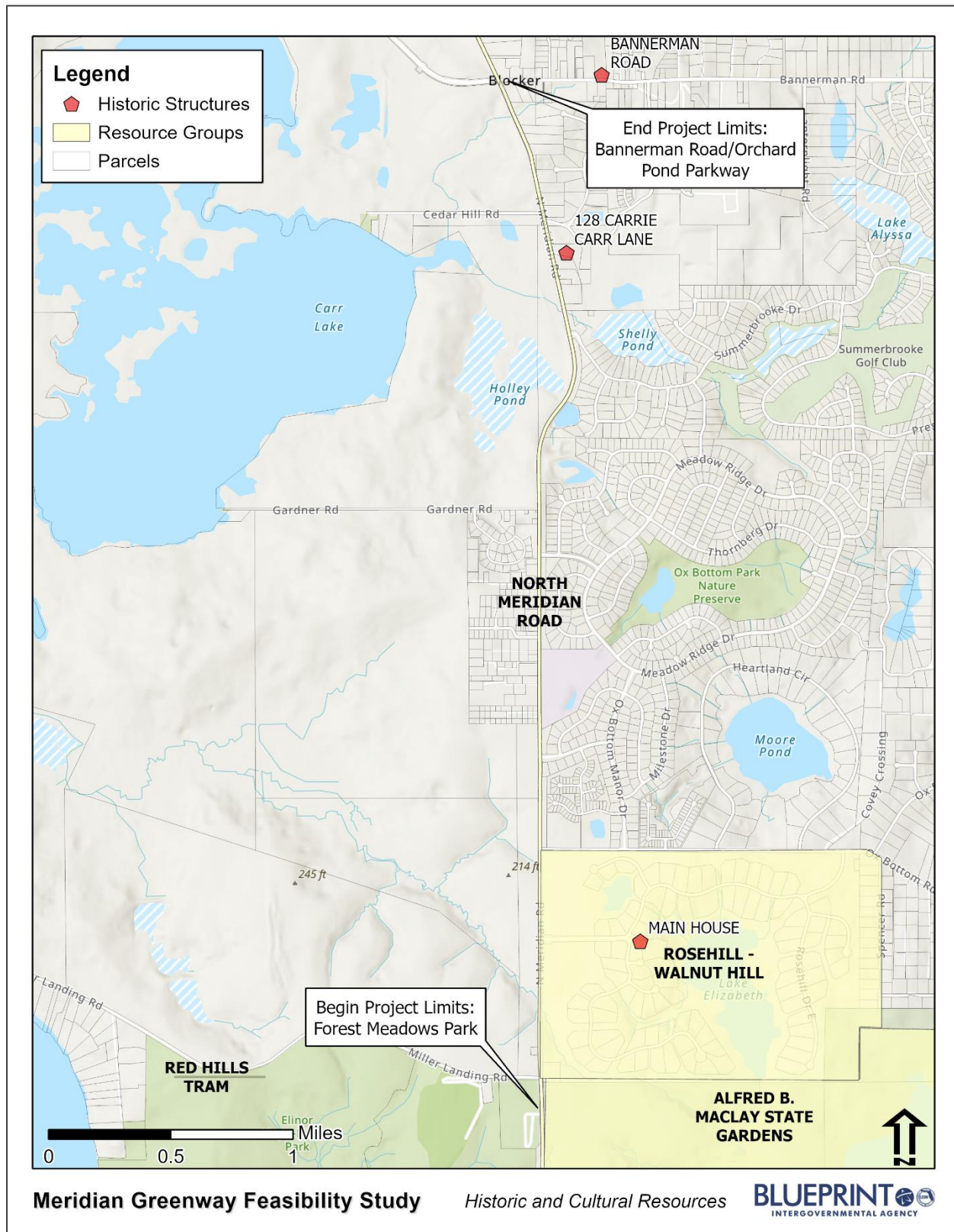
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Figure 11. Federally Managed Species Habitat



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Figure 12. Historic and Cultural Resources



COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

Existing community facilities within and near the project study area include parks, schools, and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The multi-use trail will provide opportunities to increase access and connectivity to these key community features.

Parks

Six (6) parks are located within the vicinity of the corridor, including Forest Meadows Park, Elinor Klapp-



Cedar Hill Landing on Carr Lake

Phipps Park, Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park, Ox Bottom Nature Preserve, Cedar Hill Landing, and Gardner Landing. All parks located within one (1) mile from points along North Meridian Road, as well as information regarding each, is shown in

Table 5.

The proposed multi-use trail would promote interconnectivity of the parks and recreational facilities in the area and facilitate enhanced residential access. Direct connections from the multi-use trail are proposed for Cedar Hill Landing, Gardner Landing, and Forest Meadows Park.

Table 5. Project Study Area - Parks

Park	Management	Type	Use	Acreage
Forest Meadows Park	City of Tallahassee	Neighborhood Park / Athletic	Community and Athletic Center	22
Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park	City of Tallahassee	Nature Park / Multi-Use Trail	Trails, Athletic Fields Picnic Area	670
Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park	Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)	State Park	Botanical Garden and Historic Site	1,176
Ox Bottom Nature Preserve	City of Tallahassee	Nature Park	Nature Preserve	86
Cedar Hill Landing	Leon County	Nature Park / Boat Ramp	Picnic Area and Boat Ramp	1.5
Gardner Landing	Leon County	Nature Park / Water Access	Boat Ramp	0.5

Schools

Two (2) schools are adjacent to North Meridian Road: Hawk's Rise Elementary School and Maclay School. Maclay School is approximately 0.75 miles south of the southern terminus of the project study area, while Hawk's Rise Elementary School is located east of North Meridian Road and centrally positioned between the southern and northern termini of the corridor.

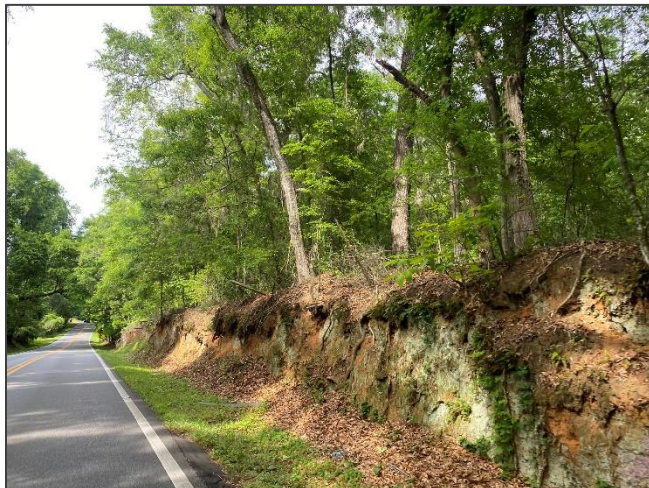
Hawk's Rise Elementary School is located directly on the corridor, providing an opportunity for connection to the multi-use trail. During stakeholder coordination, project team members indicated that residents from the Cortona Hills and Paramore neighborhoods had indicated concern about safely accessing Hawk's Rise Elementary School due to a lack of sidewalks and crosswalks in the area. A multi-use trail on either side of North Meridian Road could address this issue by providing pedestrian facilities and options for safely crossing the road, ultimately enhancing access for neighborhoods west of North Meridian Road. The proposed multi-use trail also assists in the FDOT, Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA), and Leon County initiative to promote the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.



Forest Meadows Park

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

North Meridian Road has been identified in both the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and the Tallahassee-Leon County Greenways Master Plan. These documents affirm the need and opportunity to expand the active transportation network and enhance north-south connectivity in this area of Tallahassee and Leon County. No sidewalks or bicycle facilities are currently located adjacent



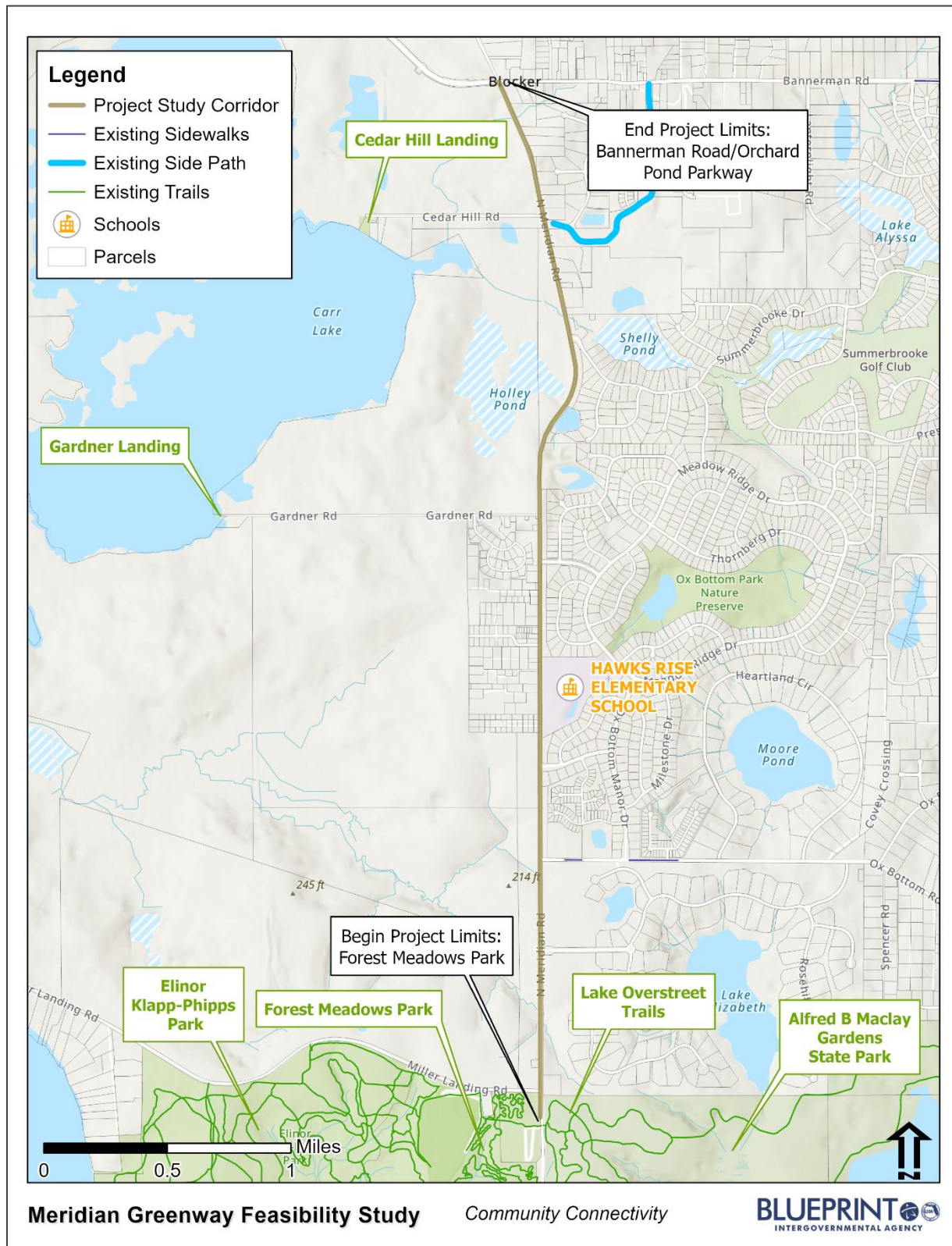
Grade concerns within right-of-way along North Meridian Road

to North Meridian Road, and few intersecting roads feature sidewalks besides Oak Grove Road. Connectivity between these neighborhoods and existing recreational facilities at parks such as Maclay Gardens State Park, Lake Overstreet Trails, Forest Meadows Park, and Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park is non-existent for multimodal user types. The completion of north-south connectivity is complicated by the corridor's status as a protected Canopy Road. In the past, new construction and development along the roadside or adjacent to it has been discouraged.

Figure 13 shows a map of the existing community facilities overlaid with the proposed route alternatives.

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Figure 13. Existing Community Facilities



Stakeholder Coordination

As part of this feasibility study, limited stakeholder coordination was conducted with key partners in Tallahassee and Leon County. This initial outreach included meetings with the City of Tallahassee Real Estate, Leon County, the City of Tallahassee Growth Management, Leon County Schools, and the Phipps Family representatives. These stakeholders provided valuable information that helped the project team refine the different route alternatives. **Table 6** lists each stakeholder and the purpose of the coordination.

Table 6. Stakeholder Meeting Details

Stakeholder	Coordination Purpose
City of Tallahassee Real Estate	Coordination to gain further information on parcels and easements within the vicinity of North Meridian Road.
City of Tallahassee Growth Management	Coordination to review the canopy road ordinance and determine any allowable uses on easements or within the canopy road zone.
Leon County Public Works	Ongoing coordination to update staff and receive any feedback.
The Phipps Family and Representatives	Ongoing coordination to keep majority landowners informed and receive any feedback.

Evaluated Alternatives

As noted previously, several trail alignments were evaluated as part of this feasibility study. Alignment locations considered for the multi-use trail included easements, public lands, private lands, and routes within the footprint of the existing corridor. Based on this analysis, two (2) route alternatives were developed for the Meridian Greenway within the project study area, with each of these alternatives being broken into an 'a' and a 'b' route. Alternatives 1 and 2 differ by which side of the corridor they are located



North Meridian Road facing south

on, and the sub-routes (a and b) have some variation but are largely similar. These routes were developed considering several factors outlined previously including existing conditions, stakeholder input, and private property owner coordination. Opportunities and constraints were identified for each alternative by analyzing trail width, private property needs, anticipated boardwalk distances, where wetlands or stormwater areas are located adjacent to the corridor, overlap with federally listed species, road crossings, and other relevant information. In addition to these characteristics, each of these alternatives would require significant coordination with the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and private property owners in order to move forward due to constrained

right-of-way, canopy road protections, and easements located on public and private property.

In addition to the evaluated route alternatives, two (2) additional opportunities were identified that would provide access to recreational facilities and boat ramps on Carr Lake, located west of the project study limits. These additional opportunities include pavement markings and signage on Cedar Hill Road and Gardner Road. They are included as part of each of the evaluated route alternatives.

Development of Route Alignment Alternatives for the Meridian Greenway



**Existing
Conditions**



**Stakeholder
Input**



**Private Property Owner
Coordination**

ALTERNATIVE 1: A AND B

Alternative 1 is located on the west side of the corridor and has two sub-routes (1a and 1b) related to a short variation in the alignment. This route is intended to follow existing electric and gas easements or utilize private property in a manner that is both acceptable and appropriate to the landowners. Alternative 1 begins at Forest Meadows Park on the west side of the corridor and continues north along the electric easement, which is located on Phipps family land. South of the Paramore neighborhood, the clearing associated with the easement turns west, where the variation occurs between routes 1a and 1b. Route 1a continues west and then north behind the neighborhood along the clearing until reaching Gardner Road, where it utilizes the street for a short distance before continuing north along the clearing again. Route 1b, by contrast, continues along North Meridian Road in front of the Paramore and Cortona Hills neighborhood before reconnecting with the gas easement clearing north of Gardner Road. Route 1b also includes a rectangular rapid flashing beacon to allow students and their families to safely cross North Meridian Road to access Hawk's Rise Elementary School. The route then continues along this clearing until terminating at the intersection of Bannerman Road/Orchard Pond Parkway.

An important point to note is that the specific alignment of the trail, especially along private property, has not been surveyed and is considered conceptual at this time. Both Alternatives 1a and 1b will require extensive coordination with private landowners, notably the Phipps family. Conversations with the Phipps family regarding the feasibility of Alternative 1 is ongoing. Additionally, both alternatives are located within the canopy road zone for at least 75% of the route or more based on preliminary analysis and would be subject to those requirements outlined previously in this document.

Alternatives 1a and 1b characteristics are included in **Table 7**, and the routes are shown in **Figure 14** and **Figure 15**, respectively.

Table 7. *Alternative 1 Opportunities and Constraints*

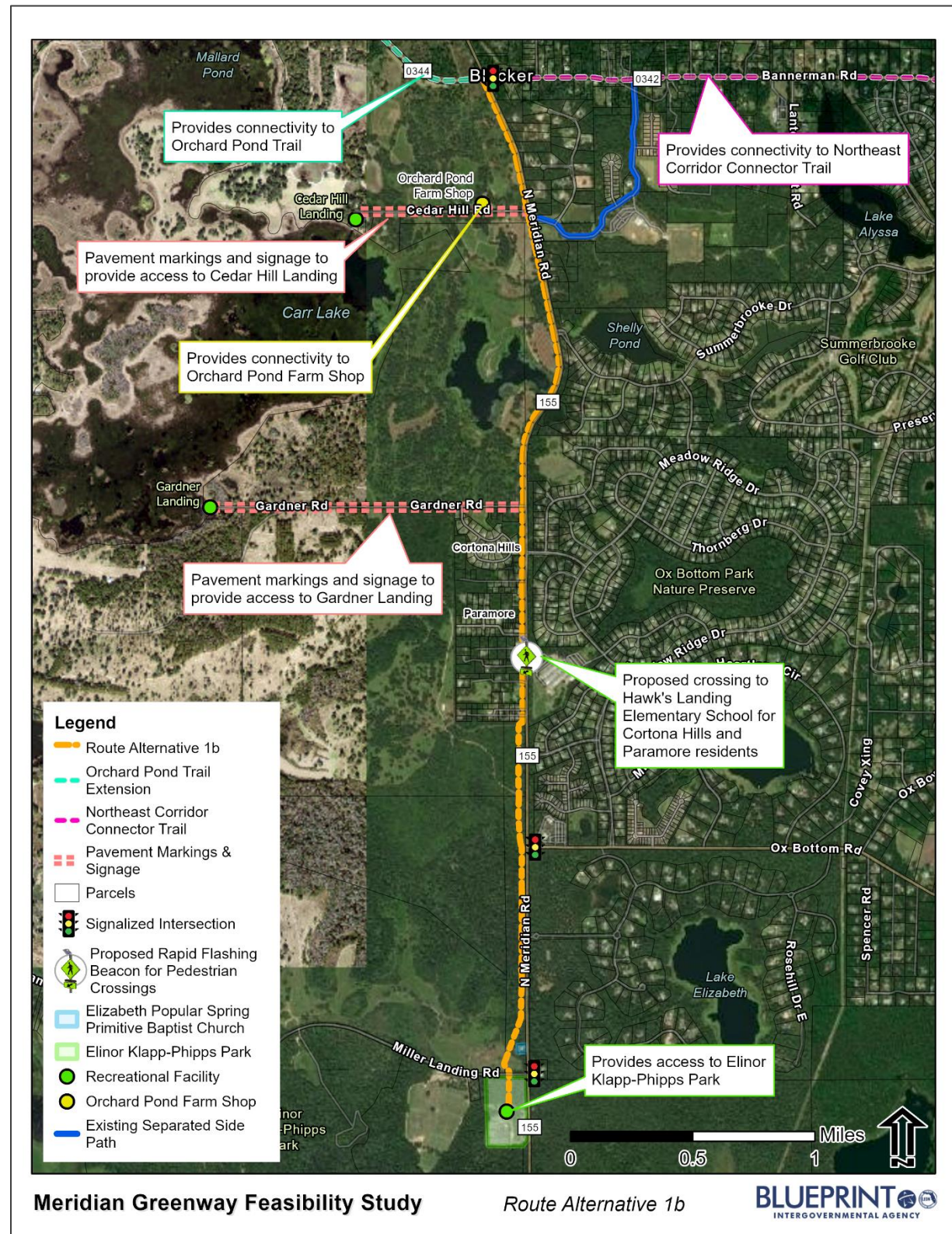
	Alternative 1a	Alternative 1b
Safety and Trail Experience		
Crossings - Total	3	3
Crossings Required on North Meridian Road	0	0
Trail Characteristics		
Private Land Needs	High	High
Anticipated Boardwalk Needs	845 ft	845 ft
Trail Width	8 - 10 ft	Less than 8 ft - 10ft
Located within Canopy Road Protection Zone?	Yes	Yes
Environmental Concerns		
Wetlands Impacts	Low	Low
Species Impacts	Low	Low
Social/Economic Considerations		
Households within 0.5 miles	775	840
Schools/Educational Facilities within 1 mile	2	2
Parks/Recreational Facilities within 1 mile	5+	5+

Figure 14. Route Alternative 1a



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Figure 15. Route Alternative 1b



ALTERNATIVE 2: A AND B

Alternative 2, conversely, is largely located along the east side of the corridor. Like Alternative 1, Routes 2a and 2b both have slight variations at the northern end of the project study area. Both alternatives begin at Forest Meadows Park and head north along the gas easement clearing that runs adjacent to North Meridian Road on the west side until Ox Bottom Road, where both routes cross the corridor to access an existing conservation easement on the northeast corner of this intersection. Both alternatives then follow a series of easements and run behind private properties until terminating at Oak Grove Road. At this location, Route 2a utilizes the existing separated side path on Oak Grove Road to terminate on Bannerman Road, approximately 0.5 miles east of the intersection of North Meridian Road and Bannerman Road/Orchard Pond Parkway. Alternatively, Route 2b continues west on Oak Grove Road to cross North Meridian Road via an RRFB since this intersection is not signalized. Route 2b then continues on the gas easement clearing associated with the Phipps family property north of Cedar Hill Road.

Alternative 2 routes will both require extensive coordination with the City of Tallahassee, utility and gas companies who maintain the easements, and private property owners. Additionally, a trail along the east side of the corridor would not be constructed to industry accepted standards (10 to 12 feet, which can be reduced to a minimum of 8 feet for short distances where right-of-way is constrained (FDOT - Florida Design Manual)). Route 2b will also require coordination with the Phipps family based on constrained right-of-way. Both of the routes associated with Alternative 2 are located within the canopy road protection zone for at least 75% of the route. Alternatives 2a and 2b characteristics are included in

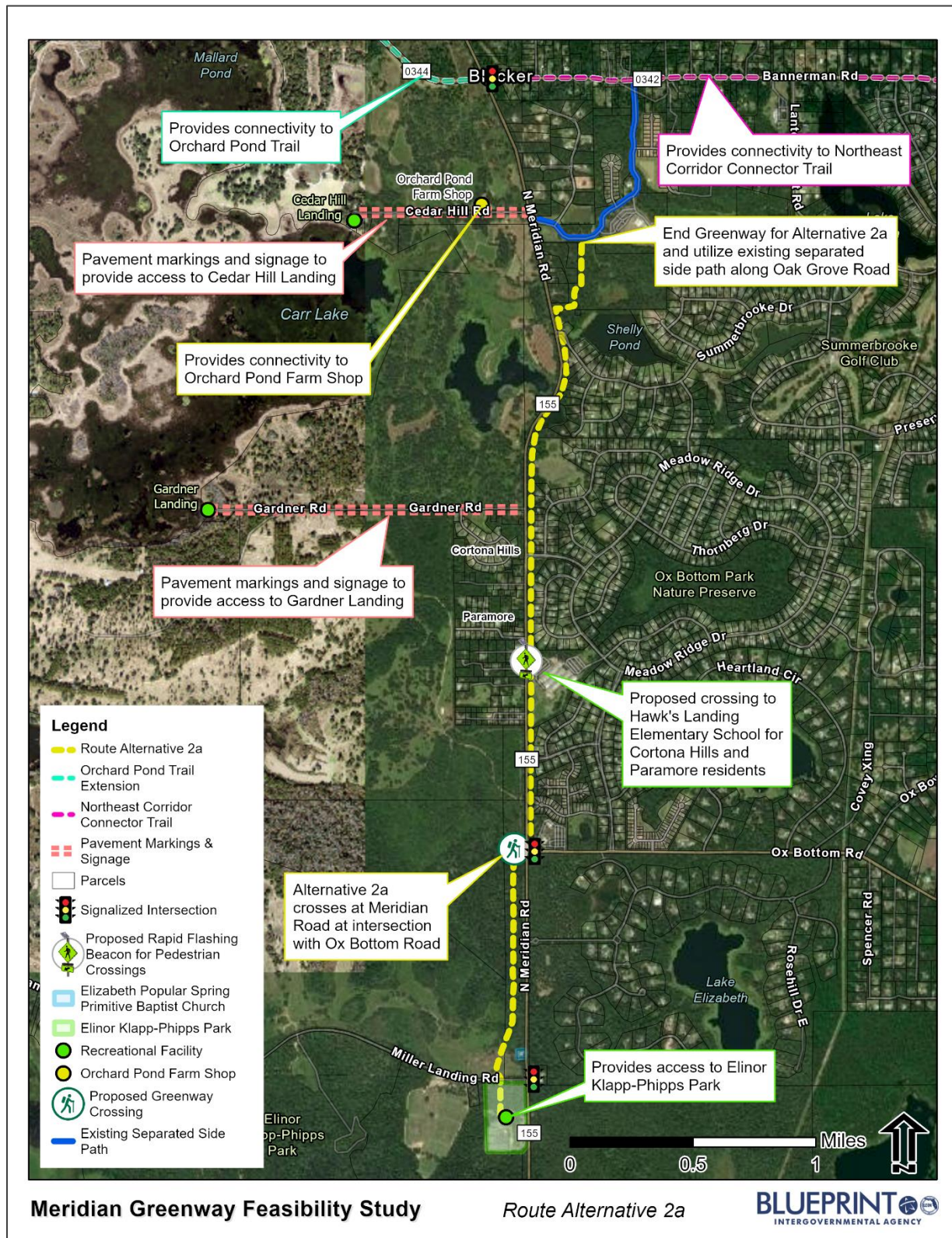
Table 8, and the routes are shown in **Figure 16** and **Figure 17**, respectively.

Table 8. Alternative 2 Opportunities and Constraints

	Alternative 2a	Alternative 2b
<i>Safety and Trail Experience</i>		
Crossings - Total	2	3
Crossings Required on North Meridian Road	1	2
<i>Trail Characteristics</i>		
Private Land Needs	Low	Low
Anticipated Boardwalk Needs	1109 ft	1109 ft
Trail Width	Less than 8 ft - 10ft	Less than 8 ft - 10ft
Located within Canopy Road Protection Zone?	Yes	Yes
<i>Environmental Concerns</i>		
Wetlands Impacts	Low	Low
Species Impacts	Low	Low
<i>Social/Economic Considerations</i>		
Households within 0.5 miles	845	855
Schools/Educational Facilities within 1 mile	2	2
Parks/Recreational Facilities within 1 mile	5+	5+

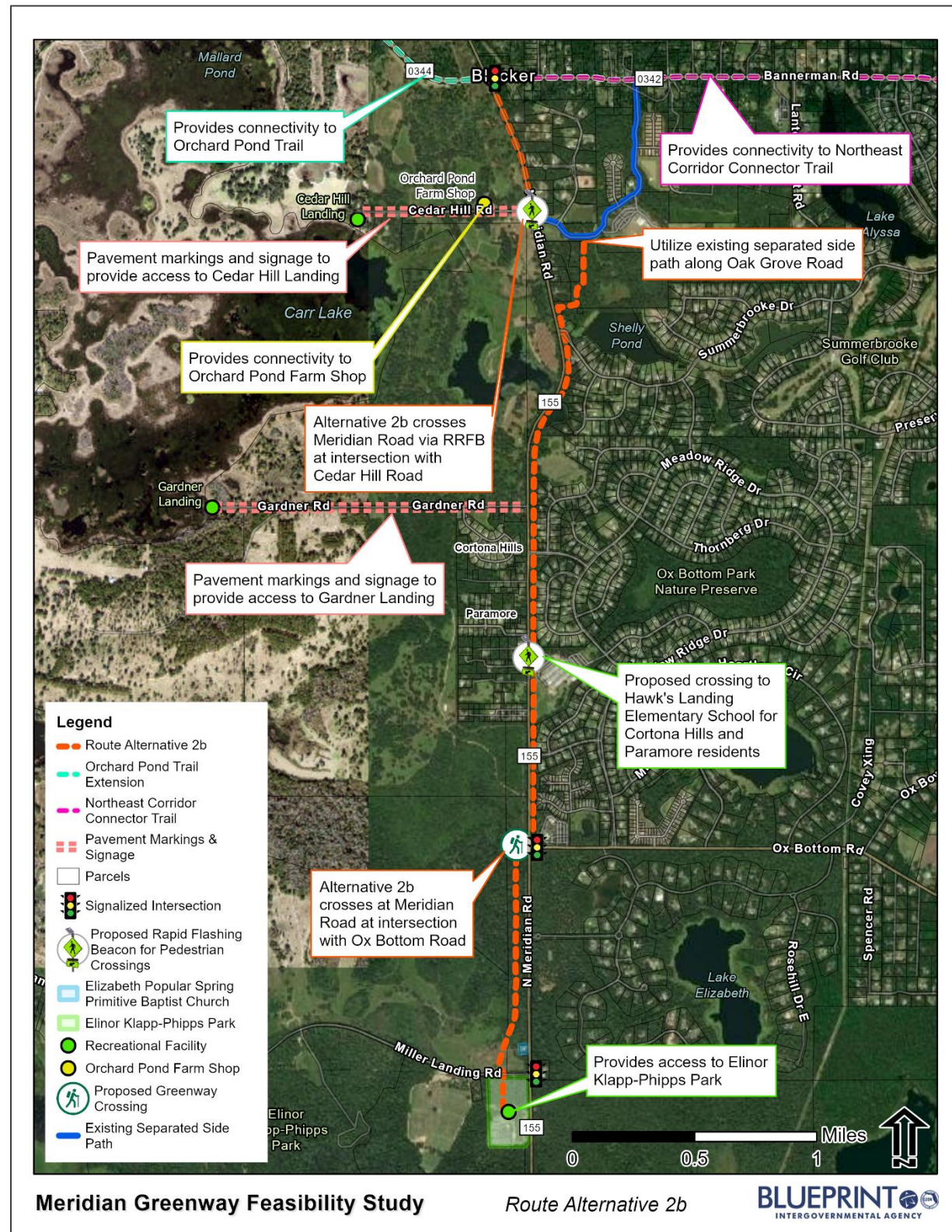
MERIDIAN GREENWAY FEASIBILITY STUDY

Figure 16. Route Alternative 2a



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Figure 17. Route Alternative 2b



Recommended Alternative

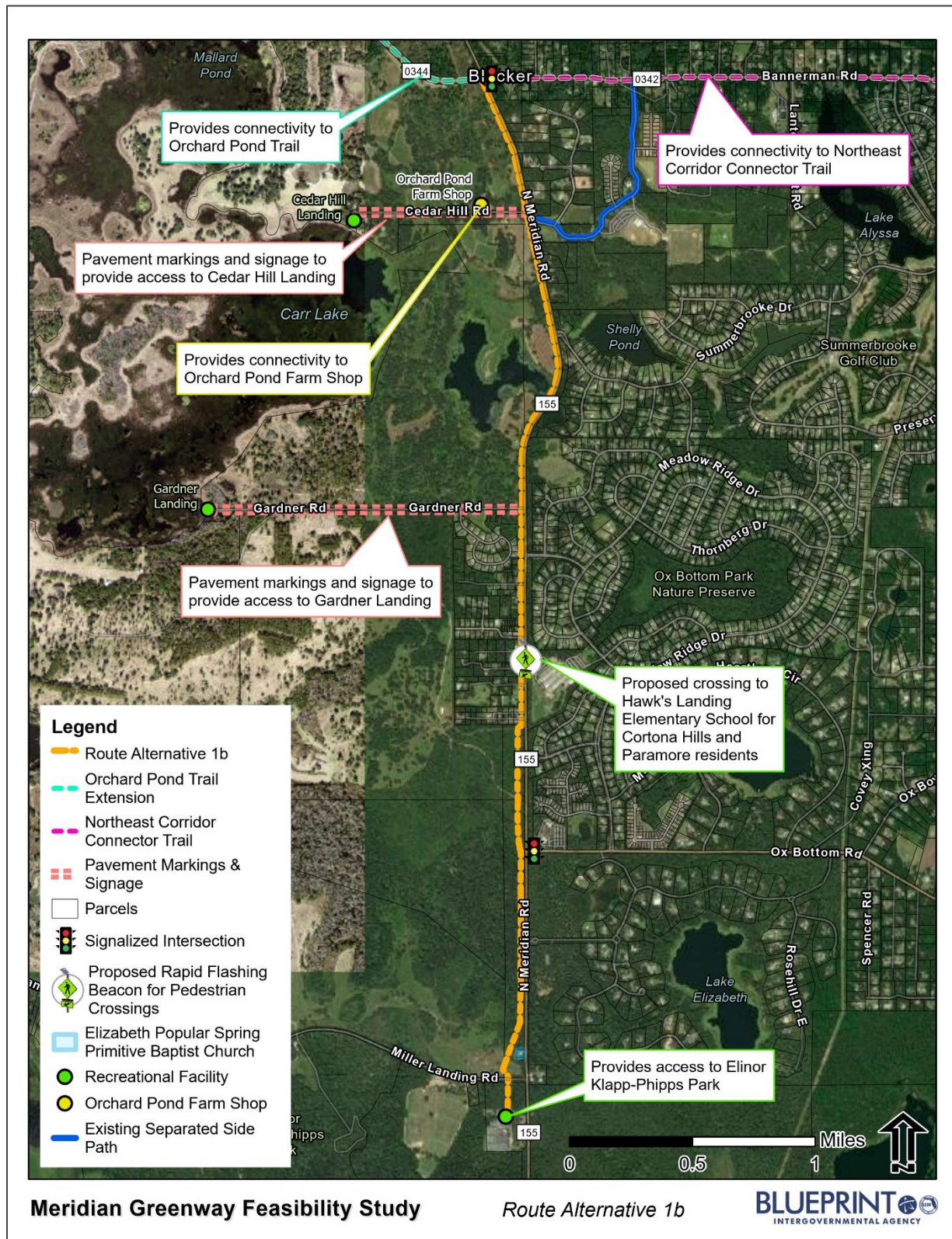
After evaluating the two main alternatives and their a and b variations, the project team recommends that Route 1b move forward as the preferred alternative. Route 1b provides the safest routing option by limiting crossings on North Meridian Road and facilitating connectivity to several recreational facilities and other amenities located on the west side of the corridor. This alternative utilizes easements and clearings located along the Phipps property most efficiently and significant coordination with the family and their representatives will be required as the project moves into subsequent project phases. **Table 9** below summarizes the opportunities and constraints related to Route 1b, and the alignment is shown in **Figure 18**.

Table 9. Opportunity and Constraints for Route Alternative 1b

Opportunities		Constraints	
	No crossings on North Meridian Road		High private property needs
	Provides connectivity to schools, parks, and other community amenities		Canopy Road Protection Zone constraints
	Coordination with one property owner versus several		
	Low environmental and species impact concerns		

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Figure 18. Recommended Alternative 1b



Additional Recommendations

In addition to the recommended alternative, the project team identified and developed other recommendations to support the trail. These recommendations were developed based on stakeholder feedback and to enhance connectivity and safety along the future Meridian Greenway. These recommendations should be considered as this project moves into subsequent design and construction phases.

FACILITY CONNECTIONS

As noted previously, the project team identified additional facilities on Cedar Hill Road and Gardner Road to facilitate connections to recreational amenities located on Carr Lake. These roads are scenic and offer direct connections to Cedar Hill Landing and Gardner Landing, which provide opportunities for picnicking and lake access. Facilities along these roads include pavement markings and signage, as these are residential, dead-end roads with low traffic volumes which are ideal for shared facilities between cyclists and pedestrians.

ORCHARD POND TRAIL EXTENSION

The Orchard Pond Trail is located along the Orchard Pond Parkway west of the Meridian Greenway northern terminus at the intersection with Bannerman Road. If this trail moves forward, there would be a gap between the end of the Meridian Greenway and the start of the Orchard Pond Trail of approximately 1.4 miles. To maintain connectivity, this gap is recommended to provide access between the trail systems. Conversations with the Phipps family and their representatives are ongoing regarding this topic.



Orchard Pond Trail Trailhead

SAFETY

In its current condition, Meridian Road is not comfortable nor safe for cyclists, pedestrians, or other users due to speeding concerns, sight distance issues, and roadway curves along the corridor. The project team recommends that proven countermeasures¹ associated with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Systems Approach² be considered in design and construction phases to make the corridor safer for a variety of user types. These countermeasures include the installation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons, or RRFBs, at strategic locations along the corridor. Other countermeasures for consideration include adequate approach signage, roadway design improvements at curves, rumble strips and stripes, and median barriers. Currently, Leon County is installing safety improvements along North Meridian Road, most of which are being installed between Gardner Road and Summerbrooke Road as a result of several serious car crashes along the curve in this area. The project team recommends that these safety initiatives be incorporated along the corridor where appropriate in conjunction with the trail and its proposed crossings.



Grade concerns and right-of-way constraints on North Meridian Road



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) in Midtown, Tallahassee

¹ U.S Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, "Prove Safety Countermeasures." - <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

² U.S. Department of Transportation, "What is a Safe System Approach?" - <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SafeSystem>

Conclusion and Next Steps

The Meridian Greenway Feasibility Study was conducted as part of the Northeast Corridor Connector project by Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency. This study included an existing conditions assessment, limited stakeholder engagement, and alternatives development. Following the review of alternatives, this study determined that this trail is feasible but will require significant coordination with the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and private property owners, notably the Phipps Family and their representatives. If approved, this project will move forward to the design phase, where the project team will use the existing conditions assessment to refine the alignment and determine design techniques for addressing some of the constraints outlined in this feasibility study. Blueprint may also consider public engagement opportunities to incorporate additional feedback regarding the trail, where appropriate.

The Meridian Greenway has long been identified in local planning documents and currently stands as one of the region's major north-south gaps in bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. With numerous parks, neighborhoods, and schools in this area, the Meridian Greenway will provide needed connectivity while also offering a safe and separated opportunity for recreational and alternative transportation.



North Meridian Road