Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization

SMART STEP Assessment along NW 67 Avenue/ West 12 Avenue between West 68 Street and NW 169 Street

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study was to perform a multimodal and safety evaluation of NW 67 Avenue/West 12 Avenue from West 68 Street in the City of Hialeah to NW 169 Street in the Town of Miami Lakes to advance Complete Streets and pedestrian/bicycle/first- and last-mile network improvements in the area, illustrated in **Exhibit 1.**

PROJECT OVERVIEW

On January 25, 2024, the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Governing Board adopted resolution, #04-2024, to provide recommendations for the implementation of Complete Streets features, including aesthetics along NW 67 Avenue/West 12 Avenue as part of a SMART Street Transportation Enhancement Program (SMART STEP) study. The TPO has established the Urban Mobility Task Force and the Non-Urban Core Task Force to address bicycle and pedestrian mobility issues throughout Miami-Dade County. As a result, the SMART STEP was initiated to foster interagency coordination, innovation, and accelerated implementation of pedestrian and bicycle improvements to enhance safety and increase access and connectivity for non-motorized users.

The Miami-Dade TPO worked collaboratively with the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six, the City of Hialeah, and the Town of Miami Lakes to perform an assessment of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure needs to develop recommendations along the project corridor.

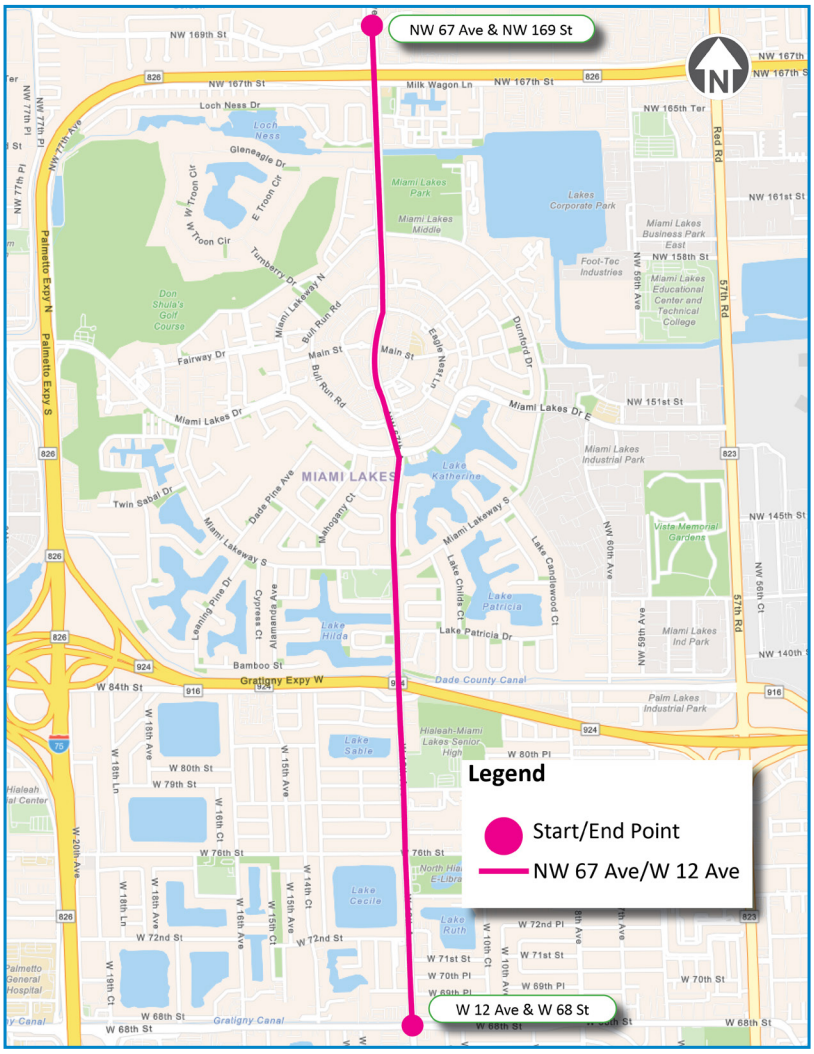


Exhibit 1: SMART STEP Study Limits

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing conditions along the study corridor were analyzed to identify issues, deficiencies, and needs to be addressed with recommendations developed in this study. A review of non-motorized traffic crash data from 2019 to 2023 revealed a total of twelve (12) bicycle and pedestrian crashes reported for various locations throughout the study corridor. A desktop inventory of corridor attributes, complemented by pedestrian and bicycle audits along the corridor, identified a plethora of deficiencies including:

1. **Lack of Crosswalks and Crosswalk Visibility** - Many intersections and pedestrian pathways within the area are either missing crosswalks or have poorly visible markings. The absence of designated crossing zones and low visibility at existing crosswalks poses a significant safety risk to pedestrians.

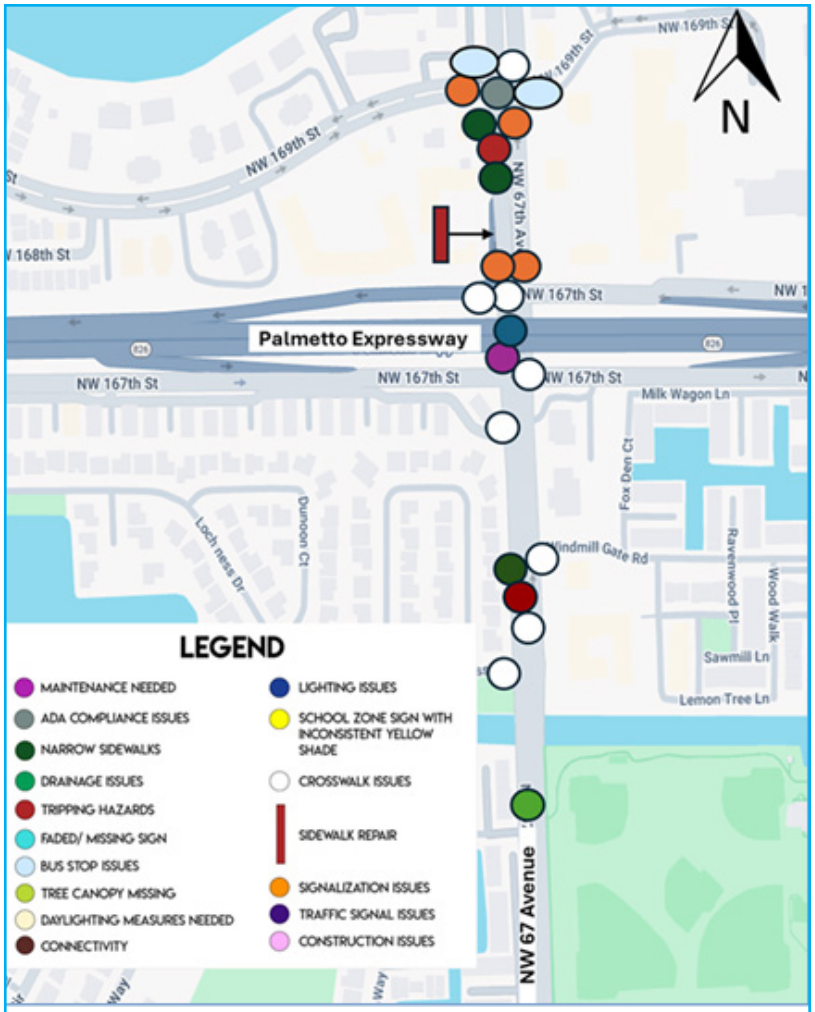
Crashes from West 68 Street to West 69 Place

2. **Lack of Pedestrian Signals at Signalized Intersections** - Several signalized intersections lack dedicated pedestrian signals. Without clear indications of when it is safe for pedestrians to cross, individuals are often left to navigate conflicting vehicle movements, leading to confusion and potential hazards.

3. **Inadequate Pedestrian Signal Timing** - At locations where pedestrian signals are present, the timing is insufficient for all users to safely cross the street. The short duration of pedestrian phases puts vulnerable pedestrians, including seniors and those with disabilities, at risk as they may not have enough time to cross the intersection.

4. **Lack of Midblock Crossings** - In several key areas, midblock crossings are absent. This forces pedestrians to walk long distances to the nearest intersection,leading to jaywalking or unsafe crossing behaviors, especially in segments with high-traffic volumes.

5. **Substandard Curb Ramps** – Curb ramps are frequently not compliant with accessibility standards, making it difficult for people with mobility challenges, such as wheelchair users or those with strollers, to navigate intersections safely.



Map of day audit of issues found along corridor segment near Palmetto Expressway

6. **Tree Roots and Vegetation Obstructions** – Overgrown vegetation and raised sidewalks due to tree roots obstruct pedestrian pathways and reduce the overall safety, comfort, and visibility for both pedestrians and drivers. These obstructions limit the available walking space and can obscure sight lines at intersections, further increasing the potential for crashes.

7. **Lack of Landscaping Routine Maintenance** - In addition to vegetation obstructions, the area lacks regular landscaping and maintenance at the bridge underpasses, which leads to the accumulation of debris and unkempt pedestrian environments. A lack of aesthetic and functional upkeep of landscaping detracts from the overall corridor appeal and militates against the safe pedestrian use within the corridor.

8. **Insufficient Street Lighting** - Insufficient street lighting, especially in pedestrian-heavy areas, creates safety concerns at night. Poor lighting reduces visibility for both pedestrians and drivers, increasing the likelihood of crashes, particularly in areas where pedestrians are jaywalking.

9. **Substandard and Lack of Signage** - The existing signage in the area is either substandard or nonexistent in many critical locations. The lack of clear pedestrian warning signs, directional markers, or regulatory notices further exacerbates safety risks and confusion for pedestrians and drivers alike.

10. **Lack of Routine Maintenance for Sidewalks and Curb Ramps** - Many sidewalks and curb ramps are not maintained regularly, leading to the deterioration of these essential pedestrian facilities. Cracked or uneven surfaces, worn-out markings, and failing ramps can be hazardous to users, especially those with disabilities or in vulnerable groups.

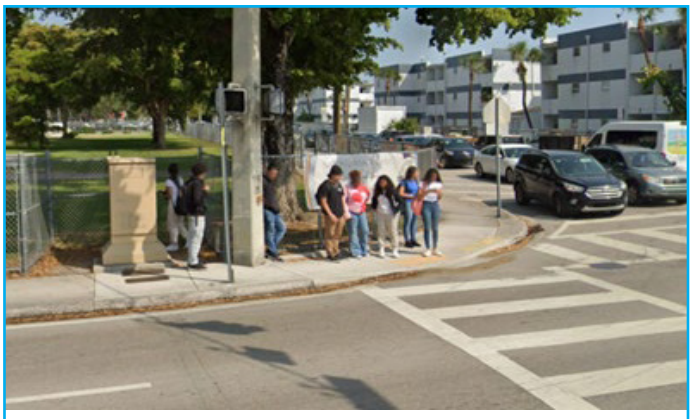
Lack of crosswalks on the east and south sides of NW 169 Street Intersection

11. **Waiting Areas for Transit Users and Student Crossings** - Transit riders often lack designated, safe waiting spaces. In many locations, students and passengers are required to wait in areas that are not clearly defined, which can lead to congestion, increased exposure to traffic,and general discomfort while waiting for buses or crossings.

12. **Narrow and Damaged Sidewalks** - Sidewalks throughout the area are often narrow, limiting pedestrian movement and accessibility. In many cases, the sidewalks are damaged, with cracks and uneven surfaces,creating tripping hazards. This deterioration increases the potential for pedestrian injuries.

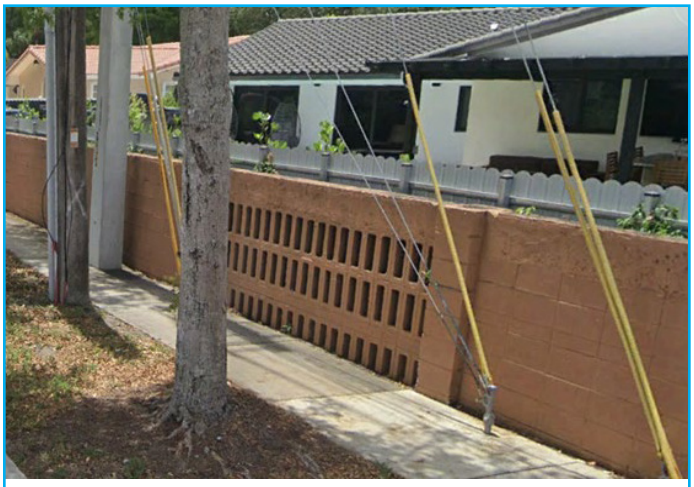
13. **Unsheltered Bus Stops** - Bus stops in the area are often unsheltered,leaving riders exposed to weather conditions. This lack of shelter can create discomfort and safety risks, especially during inclement weather. Providing adequate shelter would greatly enhance the transit experience for users, particularly those waiting for extended periods.

14. **Inadequate Drainage System** - The current drainage system is inadequate, leading to frequent pooling of water, especially during rainfall. This creates unsafe walking conditions, with the potential for slips, falls, and damage to infrastructure. An improved drainage system would help prevent these issues and contribute to a safer and more durable pedestrian environment



Lack of safe waiting spaces for students

Uneven sidewalk along Miami Lakes Drive creates potential trip hazard



Utility Pole obstructs the narrow pathway limiting pedestrian accessibility

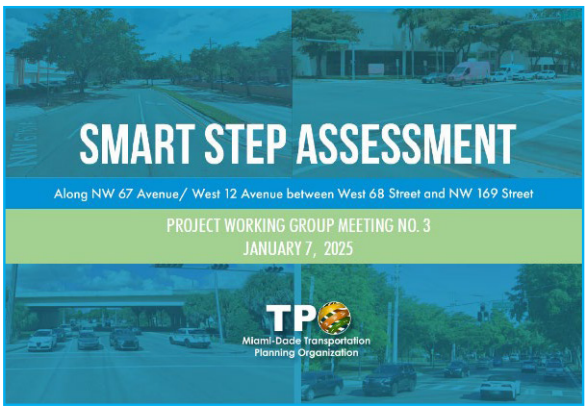
Unsheltered Bus Stops leaving riders exposed to weather conditions

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public Involvement was an important part of this study, as interested parties were provided with an opportunity to be involved in the development of improvement recommendations. The feasibility study included coordination with multiple stakeholders and partnering agencies. As part of the coordination, key stakeholders and partnering agencies participated in three (3) Project Working Group (PWG) Meetings. The PWG Meetings were held on:

- September 18, 2024
- October 16, 2024
- January 7, 2025

Daytime and nighttime walking audits were conducted with the municipalities as part of the coordination efforts.



PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations developed to address the aforementioned deficiencies focused on:

- Improving pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure along the corridor and at signalized intersections
- Improving connectivity along the corridor with adjacent communities
- Improving safety for pedestrians and bicycles along the corridor and at signalized intersections
- Improving lighting and aesthetics, particularly at the SR 924/Gratigny Parkway's and SR-826/Palmetto Expressway's underpasses

Potential improvements were identified and evaluated through a screening process to develop a prioritized framework for their implementation. The screening process considered various criteria like community input, available funding resources, benefits to cost ratios, available right of way, and feasibility of the project. Based on the outcome of the screening process, improvements were categorized as short-term or long-term improvements as summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Short and Long-term Recommendations

CATEGORY	SHORT TERM (0-5 YEARS)	LONG TERM (5-10 YEARS)
Safety	Install high visibility crosswalks	Widen the narrow sidewalk
	Upgrade pedestrian signals with Flashing Don't Walk (FDW) countdown timers	Relocate the existing utility poles within the sidewalks
	Install bus shelters at bus stops	Upgrade all traffic signals to have LPI option
	Install appropriate lighting	Provide bike lane separation
	Provide Lead Pedestrian Interval (LPI) at equipped traffic signals	
	Prune existing trees, shrubbery to improve visibility	
	Restripe the existing sidewalk	
Connectivity	Install and improve wayfinding signage for pedestrians and bicyclist	Improve bike, pedestrian and transit connections
	Add midblock crossing	Implementing Complete Street policy
Accessibility	Repair the damaged sidewalks and curb ramps	Upgrade all sidewalks and curb ramps to ADA compliance
	Add midblock crossing	
Lighting	Maintain existing decorative lighting throughout the corridor	Install standard FDOT 40-foot, conventional aluminum poles with 8-foot arm staggered 100 feet apart throughout the entire project to meet required lighting criteria
Education and Encouragement	Conduct public awareness campaign to encourage bike and pedestrian safety	Develop a comprehensive bike and pedestrian education program
	Encourage pedestrians and bikers to cross at designated areas and avoid violating pedestrian traffic laws and regulations	

PLANNING LEVEL COST ESTIMATE

Total improvements cost is approximately $6 Million. This includes $2.4 Million in lighting improvements and $3.6 Million in roadway, signalization, transit, and general recommendation improvements.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following is the general recommended framework for the further development and implementation of these improvements:

- Stakeholder Coordination and Project Sponsors: Further coordination with Miami-Dade County Public Schools,Miami-Dade Transit, Greater Miami Expressway, City of Hialeah, Town of Miami Lakes, and Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces is recommended to identify project sponsors who can champion the study's recommendations. This includes securing funding for design and construction.

- Project Prioritization: Once sponsors are identified, the recommended improvements should be prioritized for inclusion in the Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) List of Program Priorities (LOPP). The timing of LOPP inclusion will depend on coordination with sponsors, funding availability, and other factors.

- Project Development, Design, and Public Outreach: After projects are programmed in the sponsors' work programs,further project development and design are required to assess constraints and mitigate potential impacts. Proposed improvements like new mid-block crossings will require a pedestrian crossing study to be performed according to the FDOT Traffic Engineering Manual (TEM) in close coordination with Miami-Dade DTPW, Traffic Signals and Signs (TS&S)Division. Early public outreach will also be crucial during this phase to ensure community feedback is incorporated into the design process.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Implementing any project, especially one focused on bicycle and pedestrian improvements, often presents numerous challenges. These can include acquiring right of way for sidewalk widening or dedicated bike lanes, relocating utilities and coordinating efforts among various agencies and stakeholders while balancing the goals of promoting active transportation with the need to manage traffic congestion. There are new uncertainties for recent equity based federal funding programs like the Safe Streets and Roads for all (SS4A) grant and other related grant programs from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021, which in recent years provided a significant source of funding opportunities for local transportation improvement projects. Notwithstanding, various funding opportunities, such as the Highway Safety Improvement Program(HSIP) and other local agency funding opportunities, can provide other avenues for realizing recommended improvements, albeit the more modest budgets for those programs could result in longer durations for project implementation as funding may be deferred to balance allocations from year to year.