

# **Good Neighbor Trail Gap**

**Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study** 

From West of SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the Good Neighbor Trail

# **Comments and Coordination Report**

Hernando County, Florida

Work Program Item Segment No.: 437264-2

FAP Number: TBD

Prepared for:

Florida Department of Transportation

**District Seven** 

June 2020

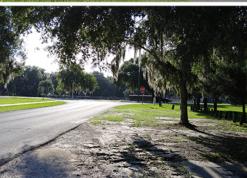












The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

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June 2020

Prepared by:

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Seven, has conducted a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study to evaluate alternative alignments for the extension of the Good Neighbor Trail through Brooksville, in Hernando County. The proposed Good Neighbor Trail through Brooksville will complete a gap in Florida's Coast to Coast Trail shown in **Figure 1-1**, which identifies existing segments and gaps in the system. A project location map is shown in **Figure 1-2**. The proposed "gap trail" will begin on SR 50/Cortez Boulevard, west of Cobb Road, and continue easterly through Brooksville, ending at the present Good Neighbor Trail near the intersection of Main Street and Russell Street a distance of approximately 3.2 miles. This project is a collaborative partnership between the City of Brooksville, FDOT and the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The objective of this PD&E study is to assist the FDOT in reaching a decision on the type, location, and conceptual design of the proposed trail to safely and efficiently accommodate future trail users. The study includes the evaluation of alternative trail alignments and typical sections, evaluation of trail bridge structures, analysis of environmental effects and a public involvement program. This PD&E study satisfies all applicable requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding and to continue to the design phase (already started in 2018).

The proposed shared use path ("trail") is expected to range in width from 10 to 12 feet, constructed mostly within existing state and local roadway right of way (ROW) Additional ROW will be required in several areas in order to complete the trail. Trail bridges are proposed at three locations. The trail surface is proposed to be asphalt for most areas. Required improvements to drainage conveyances will be determined during the design phase.

Subsequent coordination with agencies occurred through the submittal and review of various project reports. Agencies which commented on the proposed project included:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
- Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (SHPO)

In addition to reviewing the project reports, the following local agencies and groups participated in meetings and presentations to inform them about the project and solicit comments:

- Hernando Citrus MPO
- Brooksville Chamber of Commerce
- Main Street Program (Formerly Brooksville Vision Foundation)
- Good Neighbor Trail Advisory Committee
- City of Brooksville

A mailing list was developed which included 478 property owners located adjacent to or near the proposed project limits and interested individuals who requested to be added. This mailing list was used for the public hearing newsletter notice.

A project website was developed and maintained to make information about the proposed project readily available to the public and to offer a means for citizens to provide comments online to the study team at any time on any day of the week. This website was housed on the FDOT District Seven's website for all archived and active PD&E Studies. The address for this web study was: www.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/.

A public hearing was held for this project on March 14, 2019 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Jerome Brown Community Center in Brooksville. The hearing was held to inform citizens and interested parties about the project details and schedule. This hearing also included an opportunity to provide comments concerning the proposed "gap trail". The hearing consisted of an open house from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and a formal presentation and public comment period beginning at 6:30 p.m. followed by resuming the open house until 7:30 p.m.

A total of 29 people (non-staff) signed the attendance roster at the public hearing. The public hearing transcript is included in **Appendix C.** Three written comments were received and one verbal statement was made during the formal public comment period. Most comments expressed support for the project. One written comment expressed concern about the proposed trail going through the narrow space along Orange Avenue between the Brooksville Common and the First United Methodist Church. **Table 8-1** summarizes public hearing comments received. **Appendix D** contains copies of the written comments and responses. Copies of all public hearing displays and presentation materials are included in the *Public Hearing Scrapbook* that was prepared for this project.

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#### SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PD&E STUDY PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The objective of the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study process is to provide the documentation necessary to reach a decision on the type, conceptual design, and location of the proposed improvements identified as being needed. Factors considered include transportation needs, socioeconomic and environmental impacts, and engineering requirements. In general terms, the process involves the following steps:

- 1. The establishment of project need
- 2. The gathering and analysis of detailed information regarding the natural and cultural features of the study area
- 3. The development of a number of alternatives for meeting the project need
- 4. The selection of a Preferred Alternative, and
- 5. Documenting the entire process in a series of reports

During the process, communication with the affected public is accomplished directly, through public meetings, and indirectly, through interaction with elected officials and agency representatives.

The study includes evaluation of alternative trail alignments and typical sections, evaluation of trail bridge structures, analysis of environmental effects and a public involvement program. This PD&E study satisfies all applicable requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding and to continue to the design phase. *Note:* within the context of this report, the term **trail** refers to a paved shared use path (SUP), for exclusive use by people with and without non-motorized vehicles, and excluding equestrians.

#### 1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Good Neighbor Trail Gap — The proposed Good Neighbor Trail through Brooksville will complete a gap in Florida's Coast to Coast Trail (Figure 1-1) in the Brooksville area. A project location map is shown in Figure 1-2. The proposed "gap trail" will begin on SR 50/Cortez Boulevard, west of Cobb Road, and continue easterly through Brooksville, ending at the present Good Neighbor Trail near the intersection of Main Street and Russell Street a distance of approximately 3.2 miles. This project has been a collaborative partnership between the City of Brooksville, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This proposed connector trail gap will tie into the planned Good Neighbor Trail on SR 50 to the west of this proposed trail.

#### 1.3 STUDY OBJECTIVE

The Good Neighbor Trail Gap project is in the PD&E study phase of the FDOT's 5-step project development process. A PD&E study is a comprehensive study that evaluates social, cultural,

economic and environmental effects associated with the proposed transportation improvements. The objective of this PD&E study is to assist FDOT on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in reaching a decision on the type, location, and conceptual design of the Good Neighbor Trail Gap shared use path. The PD&E study satisfies all applicable requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding of subsequent development phases (design and construction).

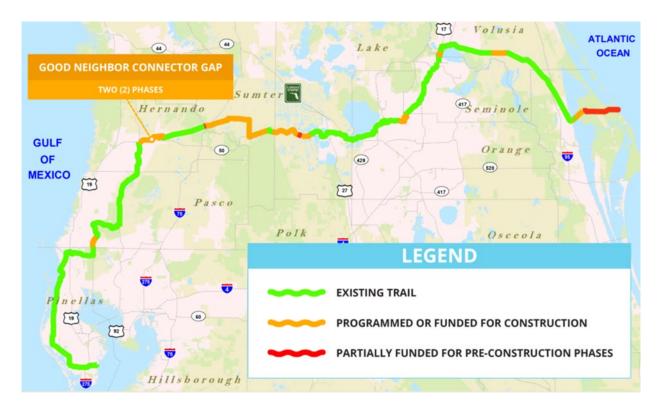
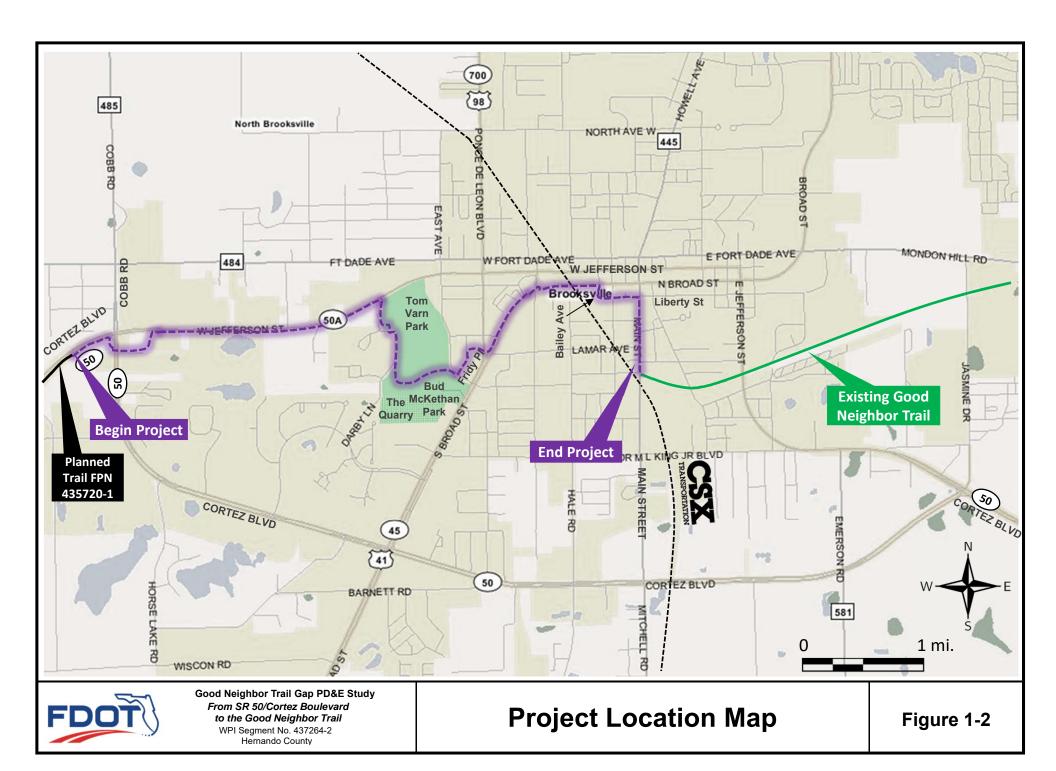


Figure 1-1 Coast-to-Coast Trail Map



#### 1.4 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for the project is based on the following criteria:

- System Linkage to complete a missing link in the statewide Coast to Coast Trail
- Modal interrelationships to provide safe, non-vehicular transportation and recreation to residents and tourists traveling around and through the study area.

The proposed trail is consistent with the following plans:

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Florida Greenways and Trails –
   Coast to Coast Connector Trail Plan
- Tampa Bay Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) 2040 and Longer Range Regional Trails 2015
   Master Plan Update
- Hernando/Citrus MPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- City of Brooksville Vision 2050 Plan
- Shared-Use, Non-motorized Trail (SUN Trail) Adopted Work Program [Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 thru FY 2023]

In addition, the proposed trail is consistent with the goals of the following plans:

- City of Brooksville Comprehensive Plan (2007)
- City of Brooksville Community Redevelopment Plan (2013)
- South Brooksville Reuse Planning South Brooksville Conceptual Project Plan (2015)
- Hernando County Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element (2018)

Potential benefits of the proposed trail include:

- Increased business activity
- Increase in tourism
- Improvements in quality of life
- Improvements in public health, and
- Increased property values, particularly in residential and retail areas.

#### 1.5 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed shared use path ("trail") is expected to range in width from 10 to 12 feet (12 feet in most areas), constructed mostly within existing state and local roadway right of way (ROW) including ROW dedicated through Tom Varn Park and Bud McKethan Park by the City of Brooksville. Additional ROW will be required in several areas. Trail bridges are proposed at two locations: across Cortez Boulevard south of W Jefferson Street (SR 50A), and over the CSX Transportation Railroad at Broad Street just west of uptown Brooksville. A culvert extension is proposed at Wombles Creek. The trail surface is proposed to be asphalt for most areas with concrete aprons on either side of a street crossing and required accommodations of drainage conveyances will be determined during the design phase. In addition to this ongoing PD&E study, the trail is also in the design phase, with design scheduled to be completed in February 2020.

#### 1.6 HISTORIC RESOURCES

Information related to Historic Resources was presented at the Public Hearing. The information provided at the Public hearing described the process and schedule for identifying and evaluating historic resources, determining significant historic properties, and evaluating potential impacts to significant historic properties. This project followed the requirements defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This process requires federal agencies to consider the effects of projects that they construct, approve, or fund on historic properties. There are four historic properties identified within the project's area of potential effect (APE) that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). These historic properties include: the Brooksville Overpass over the CSX Railroad, the Downtown Brooksville Historic District and its eight contributing resources, the residence at 140 Main Street, and the Brooksville Lumber building. The last two are also contributing resources to the historic district. The proposed project is anticipated to result in No Adverse Effect to these historic properties. A Section 106 Consultation Case Study Report was prepared and submitted to SHPO for review. SHPO provided concurrence with the findings on June 19, 2019. A copy of the concurrence letter is in Appendix A.

#### 1.7 REPORT PURPOSE

This *Comments and Coordination Report* is one of several documents that have been prepared as part of this PD&E study and documents the accomplishment of the *Public Involvement Plan (PIP)*, agency coordination efforts, public involvement activities, and comments received during the study.

#### SECTION 2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

In accordance with Part 1, Chapter 11 of the *FDOT PD&E Manual*, a comprehensive *PIP* was prepared for this study in September 2018 and updated in October 2018.

The purpose of this plan was to describe the public outreach approach that FDOT implemented to inform and solicit responses from interested parties, including local residents, public officials and agencies, and business owners. The PIP included agency coordination; small group meetings with local residents and business owners; agency stakeholder meetings, and a public hearing to date. The results of the program will be summarized in this *Comments and Coordination Report*. A brief summary of the program's activities follows. The PIP helped to identify stakeholders and affected communities and included the following:

- Project background;
- Project goals;
- Outreach activities; and,
- Evaluation of public involvement for the project.

The program included various techniques on how to notify the public of the proposed transportation improvements such as legal display newspaper advertisements, news releases to local media and invitational newsletters. The program included one public hearing newsletter and a final newsletter that was mailed on May 14, 2020, after the FDOT issued Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA) for the project on February 19, 2020. A final legal display ad was also published in the La Gaceta on Friday, May 15, 2020, and in the Tampa Bay Times on Sunday, May 17, 2020. See **Section 5** for more information regarding the project newsletters.

#### SECTION 3 **COORDINATION EFFORTS**

The FDOT coordinated with numerous federal, state and local agencies throughout the study process. This section summarizes the results of these coordination efforts.

#### 3.1 AGENCY COORDINATION

Much of the coordination for potential species occurrence was conducted electronically utilizing databases from USFWS, FWC, SWFWMD and FNAI. Agency comments were received based on the initial findings provided in the *Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE)* and coordination was conducted throughout the PD&E study process from NMFS on February 6, 2019, from FWC on February 19, 2019, from USFWS on February 26, 2019, and a City Council meeting took place on March 1, 2019, to coordinate with the City of Brooksville. The State Historic Preservation Officer also provided review and concurrence of the *Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS)* on September 28, 2018 and the Section 106 Case Study Report on June 19, 2019.

The FDOT coordinated with the following federal, state and regional agencies:

- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- City of Brooksville
- Hernando County Planning Department
- Florida Native Plant Society/Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
- City of Brooksville, City Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Brooksville Garden Club
- Hernando Historical Museum Association
- State of Florida Division of Forestry
- Hernando County Transit
- Hernando County School Board District
- Main Street Program (Formerly Brooksville Vision Foundation)
- Historic Hernando Preservation Society, Inc.
- USFWS
- Good Neighbor Advisory Committee
- FWC
- Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, SHPO
- Hernando Citrus MPO
- Hernando Chamber of Commerce

#### 3.1.1 Florida Department of State, Division of Historic Resources

A *CRAS* was prepared for the Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study to identify any archaeological sites and historic resources located within the project's APE and to assess their eligibility for listing in the NRHP. As a result of the CRAS, four historic resources were determined to be eligible for listing in the NRHP:

- The Brooksville Overpass over the CSX railroad
- The Downtown Brooksville Historic District
- A private residence at 140 Main Street, and
- The Brooksville Lumber building

The Office of Environmental Management (OEM) approved the recommendations and findings on September 12, 2018, and the SHPO concurred on September 28, 2018. Following preparation of the *CRAS*, a Draft *Section 106 Consultation Case Study Report* was prepared in December 2018 to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed project to the four historic properties listed above. The draft report's findings suggested "No Adverse Effect" to the four listed resources. The report was updated May 2019 with the results of the Public Hearing and submitted to SHPO. FDOT received concurrence from SHPO on the Section 106 Case Study Report on June 19, 2019. A copy of the letters is included in **Appendix A**.

#### 3.1.2 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The NRE was provided to the FWC for their review/comments. FWC staff review shows that "based on the design and location of the project area within the existing ROW, this project will have minimal effects on habitat and fish and wildlife resources including protected species, and we concur with FDOT's listed species impact determinations. Also, please note that the Sherman's fox squirrel has been reclassified as the southern fox squirrel (Sciurus niger niger) and removed from Florida's listed species list in Chapter 68A-27, Florida Administrative Code. Certain conservation measures for southern fox squirrels have been retained and are described in the Final Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for the Southern fox squirrels, available on the FWC website:

http://www.myfwc.com/media/4491531/southern-fox-squirrel-guidelines.pdf.

Federal Species: This site may contain habitat suitable for the federally listed species identified above. We recommend the applicant continue coordination with the USFWS Jacksonville Ecological Services Office (ESO) as necessary for information regarding potential impacts to these species. The Jacksonville ESO can be contacted at (904) 731-3336." These comments were received in an email dated February 19, 2019 which is included in **Appendix A**.

#### 3.1.3 National Marine Fisheries Service

The *NRE* was provided to the NMFS for their review/comments. NMFS staff has reviewed the *NRE* generated as part of the Project Development and Environment Study for the proposed Good Neighbor Trail Gap from west of SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the existing Good Neighbor Trail in Hernando County, Florida (Work Program Item Segment Number 437264-2). "NMFS believes that the descriptions and analyses contained in the *NRE* are accurate. NMFS agrees with the conclusion that no NMFS trust resources (i.e., Essential Fish Habitat) will be directly impacted by the project. It appears that any potential indirect impacts to downstream NMFS trust resources will be very minor at most." These comments were received in an email dated February 6, 2019 which is included in **Appendix A**.

Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study WPI Segment No.: 437264-2

#### 3.1.4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The *NRE* was provided to the USFWS for their review/comments. In a letter signed on February 26, 2019 (included in **Appendix A**), the agency stated that "The Service concurs with your effect determination(s) for resources protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). This finding fulfills the requirements of the Act."

#### 3.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATION

#### 3.2.1 Hernando Citrus MPO

The project was presented to the MPO staff on July 14, 2017, to discuss the study process and proposed alignment.

#### 3.2.2 City of Brooksville

The project was presented to the City of Brooksville on the dates listed below, to discuss the study process and proposed alignment.

- July 13, 2017 City Planning Department
- October 3, 2017 Parks and Recreation
- October 12, 2017 City Planning Department
- August 27, 2018 City Planning Department
- March 4, 2019 City Council
   \*Joint meetings are displayed in section 3.2.3

Additional coordination took place with the City of Brooksville concerning the proposed trail traversing through Tom Varn Park and Bud McKethan Park. FDOT prepared a Section 4(f) Determination of Applicability and Section 4(f) Exception/Exemption Determination which was concurred by FDOT Office of Environmental Management on February 15, 2019. During that process, the Brooksville City Manager as the Official with Jurisdiction of the parks, provided concurrence of the Section 4(f) exception on December 19, 2018 and again on September 24, 2019 for a temporary construction easement for harmonizing the trail to the existing ground line. Copies of the concurrence documents are included in **Appendix A**.

# 3.2.3 Joint Meetings (City of Brooksville, Hernando Citrus MPO, and Hernando County)

Joint meetings were held to ensure consensus and to discuss alignment variations as they were identified.

- April 19, 2017 City of Brooksville Planning and Hernando Citrus MPO Staff
- November 28, 2017 City of Brooksville Planning and Hernando Citrus MPO Staff
- April 23, 2018 City of Brooksville Planning, Hernando County Engineering Staff and Hernando Citrus MPO Staff

#### 3.2.4 Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study Meetings with Stakeholders

Throughout the course of the study, meetings were held with several stakeholders to discuss property impacts and the trail alignment.

- December 6, 2018 Grace Tabernacle Church
- January 17, 2019 Vineyard Christian Church
- March 26, 2019 First United Methodist Church

#### SECTION 4 MAILING LIST

A mailing list was developed for this project. The mailing list was updated throughout the duration of the project and contained:

- Those whose property lies, in whole or part, within 300 feet on either side of the centerline
  of each project alternative. Florida Statutes Section 339.155 states property owners within
  300 feet of the centerline of each alternative shall be notified about the project. The mailing
  list was based on information obtained from the property appraiser's database in Hernando
  County.
- Elected and appointed public officials.
- Individuals or groups who requested to be placed on the project mailing list.
- Public and private groups, organizations, agencies, and businesses and individuals that have an interest in the project.

The public hearing was scheduled, and took place in March 2019. The property owner mailing list included over 324 owners. The official, agency, and interested party mailing list contained approximately 478 people.

The mailing list was used to disseminate project information and announce the public hearing.

#### SECTION 5 **NEWSLETTER**

A newsletter was mailed to those on the project mailing list as noted in **Section 4**. A public hearing newsletter was distributed in March 2019 for the public hearing. The newsletter was sent to promote the public hearing and to encourage participation and comment. The newsletter presented the proposed trail gap to begin on SR 50, west of Cobb Road, and continue easterly through Brooksville, ending at the present Good Neighbor Trail near the intersection of Main Street and Russell Street, a distance of approximately 3.2 miles. Contact information and instructions for those needing special assistance or language support were also provided.

The final newsletter was mailed on May 14, 2020, after the FDOT issued Location and Design Concept Acceptance for the project on February 19, 2020. A copy of the newsletters are provided in **Appendix B**.

#### SECTION 6 WEBSITE

Public participation is an integral part of the transportation process. In an effort to engage and inform the public throughout the study process, a project website was developed (Figure 6-1).

The project website <a href="https://www.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail">www.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail</a> was used as an educational tool for the general public; explaining what a PD&E study evaluates and why, listing contact information for comments and questions, and providing links to other sites and projects.

In addition, the website was used as an information sharing tool. Site visitors could read about project details, review past and current newsletters, follow the project schedule, and peruse available project documents, information sheets, and FAQ's. The site was also one of several methods used to notify the public about stakeholder meetings and the public hearing.

Successful public participation is a continuous process that not only informs the public but also obtains meaningful input. As of March 2019, one project-related comment had been submitted and one person joined the mailing list.

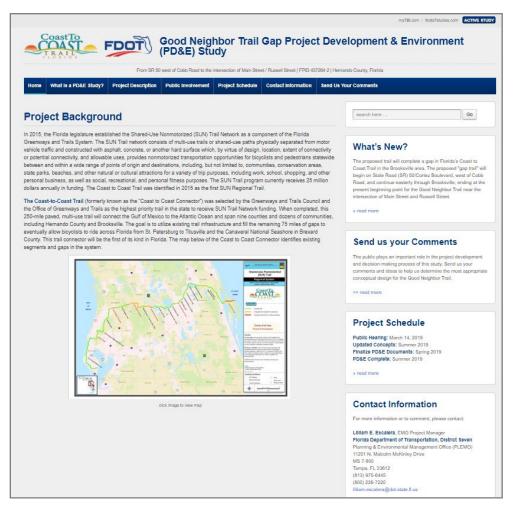


Figure 6-1 Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study Website

#### SECTION 7 PUBLIC HEARING

#### 7.1 PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was held in Hernando County at the Jerome Brown Community Center, 99 Jerome Brown Place, Brooksville, FL 34601 on Thursday, March 14, 2019.

The hearing was held to inform citizens and interested parties about the project details, anticipated schedule, and afford them the opportunity to express their views concerning the proposed Good Neighbor Trail Gap shared use path ("trail") (see **Figure 7-1**). The hearing consisted of an open house from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and a formal presentation and public comment period beginning at 6:30 p.m. Kirk Bogen, P.E., District Seven Environmental Management Engineer, presided over the formal portion. The proceedings were recorded by the court reporter that was on hand throughout the evening. Mr. Bogen welcomed the audience and discussed the purpose of the hearing. The next portion of the hearing was devoted to verbal comments.

After the public comment period, the open house resumed until 7:30 p.m.

Attendees were given the opportunity to provide comments in one of four ways:

- Make a verbal statement during the formal portion of the hearing;
- Make a verbal statement to the court reporter during the informal portion of the hearing;
- Complete a written comment form and place it in the drop box at the hearing; or,
- Mail comments to the Department by March 25, 2019 for the 2019 public hearing.

A total of 29 people (non-staff) signed in at Public Hearing, including: 3 local agency staff members representing (Hernando/Citrus MPO, City of Brooksville, and Hernando County Public Works). A total of 3 written comments were received and one verbal statement was made during the formal public comment period.

FDOT staff and its consultants were available at the public hearing to discuss the project and answer questions. A continuously-running PowerPoint presentation describing the project and the proposed Good Neighbor Trail alignment was shown during the open house portion of the hearing.

The public hearing Display boards were also available for review and consisted of:

#### PD&E Study:

- Welcome and List of Citations
- Project Schedule
- Evaluation Matrix
- Please Provide your Comments
- Coast to Coast Trail Map
- Cultural Resources & Section 106
- Map of Existing Good Neighbor Trail
- Steel Truss Bridge Color Options (2 displays)
- Aerial Plot of Proposed Trail

• Aerial Plot of Adjacent Design Project (Good Neighbor Trail Connector)

The study's supporting documents for the public hearing were available for public review from February 21, 2019 through March 25, 2019 on the project website as well as during normal operating hours at the following locations (**Table 7.1**).

Table 7-1 Locations the Study Documents were Available for Public Review

Location	FDOT District 7	Hernando County Public Library
Address	11201 N. McKinley Dr. Tampa, FL 33612	238 Howell Avenue Brooksville, FL 34601

As noted in Section 5, a newsletter advertising the public hearing was sent out February 12, 2019 via electronic mail to public officials and via direct mail to property owners within 300 feet of the project, as well as current tenants, agencies, and interested parties. A legal display notice advertising the public hearing was published in the Tampa Bay Times on February 17, 2019 and March 3, 2019, and also in La Gaceta on February 15, 2019 and March 1, 2019. An advertisement was also placed on the project website on February 11, 2019 as well as in the *Florida Administrative Register* on March 1, 2019. Copies of these advertisements are shown in the *Public Hearing Scrapbook*.

The materials shown at the 2019 public hearing were first posted to the project website (See Section 6) the day after the public hearing. General project information was also provided in a PowerPoint presentation which ran in a continuous loop during the hearing. In addition, details were provided on The Good Neighbor Trail Connector, which is the design project adjacent to the limits of the Good Neighbor Trail Gap project.

#### 7.2 PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT

The transcript for the Public Hearing is included in **Appendix C**. Copies of the public hearing materials, including the legal display advertisement, the sign-in sheets, display graphics, PowerPoint slides, and attendance rosters are included in the *Public Hearing Scrapbook* that was prepared for this project's PD&E study and are located in the project files.

Public hearing comments received during and after the public hearing are shown in Appendix D.

#### SECTION 8 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

The public hearing comment period ended on March 25, 2019. A total of 29 members of the general public attended the public hearing. A total of 4 comments were received. A total of 3 written comment forms and 1 verbal comment were received from the public hearing. Most comments expressed support for the project.

**Appendix D** contains copies of the written comments. **Table 8-1** Includes a summary of both the written and verbal comments received during the Public Hearing.

**Table 8-1 Summary of Public Hearing Comments** 

No.	Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study	Туре	Request to Add to Study Notification List
1	I would like to respectfully request that the Bailey & Lemon Street connections between Broad Street and Liberty Street be actively considered as alternatives to running the trail through the narrow space between the Brooksville Common and the First United Methodist Church. Thank you. I am excited about this project.	Comment Form	No
2	I am 100% in favor of completing the Coast-to-Coast Trail, and especially the Good Neighbor Trail Gap through Brooksville. It can be nothing but GOOD for the community. LET'S DO IT!!	Comment Form	No
3	YES, PLEASE! Looks Great and I'm eager to see it finished. Thank you for this a long last. And love the bridges. Don't care about the color, but durability is most important.	Comment Form	Yes
4	My wife and I are frequent bike riders of the Withlacoochee State Trail. Thank you for the public meeting. Great boards. Good information. Everybody did a great job on that. Just obviously, a lot of questions. How are you going to snake it through downtown and get it over there? I've got two comments and two questions. One comment you can point me to who I need to go to. First off, there's 14 sites listed as having some sort of hazardous waste. What kind of waste is it and how bad is it? My wife and I find that stunning that there's that many along I mean you're literally on the right-of-way and it's a little surprising. That's the first question.  The second one I'll say is a concern. When you are crossing 98	Verbal Comment	No
	and 41 on the southbound side, people fly around the corner.  Are you going to have warning lights that you can push that to tell people we're going to cross with the biking? We're not going to slow down in the middle of the road. I know that's been done up on the Withlacoochee on the upper end in one		

of the bigger roads. So I guess that's a question, because in my mind one of the reasons I came is that they are flying coming around there. And so, you know, let's don't be one of the statistics of being the worst bicycle places in the world.

The other comment has pushed me to write the DOT person. Are they going to install bathrooms? And where? Because it's a long ride, gang, I've got to tell you. So if there's somebody you can point me to, to ask that question, it's not related to this, I understand, but going from there, that's all I have.

As a result of comment number one above, the FDOT met further with church staff and adjusted the trail alignment to avoid Orange Avenue and instead run along Bailey connecting the alignment along Broad Street and Liberty Street.

# Appendix A

**Agency Coordination** 



RICK SCOTT GOVERNOR 11201 N. McKinley Drive Tampa, Florida 33612-6456 MIKE DEW SECRETARY

September 20, 2018

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D.
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Division of Historical Resources
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Attention: Alyssa McManus, Transportation Compliance Review Program

Re: Cultural Resource Assessment Survey

Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study from SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the

Good Neighbor Trail Hernando County, Florida

Work Program Item Segment No.: 437264-2

FAP No.: TBD

Dear Dr. Parsons:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Seven, is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study to evaluate alternative alignments for the extension of the Good Neighbor Trail through Brooksville, in Hernando County, Florida. The proposed Good Neighbor Trail through Brooksville will complete a gap in Florida's Coast to Coast Trail. The proposed "gap trail" will begin on State Road (SR) 50/Cortez Boulevard west of Cobb Road and continue easterly through Brooksville, ending at the present Good Neighbor Trail near the intersection of Main Street and Russell Street. The total distance is approximately 3.1 miles. This project is a collaborative partnership among the City of Brooksville, the FDOT and the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The proposed shared use path ("trail") is expected to range in width from 10 to 12 feet, constructed mostly within existing right of way (ROW), using a combination of state and local roads. Additional ROW will be required in several areas. The trail is proposed to run adjacent to Tom Varn and Bud McKethan Parks on a previously dedicated transportation ROW which is separate from the park properties. Trail bridges are proposed at three locations: across Cortez Boulevard south of W Jefferson Street (SR 50A), over Wombles Creek, and over the CSX Transportation Railroad at Broad Street just west of uptown Brooksville.

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., Director Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study Hernando County, Florida Work Program Item Segment No. 437264-2 September 20, 2018 Page 2 of 4

The purpose of the current Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) is to identify the presence of resources listed in or considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Enclosed is one (1) copy of the CRAS (September 2018) that was prepared for the project, 33 updated and newly prepared Florida Master Site File (FMSF) forms, a Survey Log Sheet, and a CD containing electronic versions of these documents.

On behalf of the FDOT District Seven, Archaeological Consultants, Inc. (ACI) conducted a cultural resource survey for the project in February 2018 that included both archaeological and historical field survey. The archaeological Area of Potential Effect (APE) consists of the areas proposed for trail construction (approximately 10-12 feet [ft] wide / 3-3.5 meters [m] wide), sidewalk construction, culvert replacement, bridge construction, and any other areas of subsurface disturbance. The historical APE includes the footprint of construction within the existing ROW, except in areas where new ROW is required, where immediately adjacent parcels were recorded. In addition, because there is potential for a historic district in downtown Brooksville, historic resources located on properties adjacent to the proposed trail along the south side of Broad Street and the west side of Main Street were recorded and evaluated. This APE and methodology was based on a discussion with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) that was held on March 15, 2018.

Based on the archaeological background research, two archaeological sites have been recorded within the archaeological project APE: Pierceville (8HE00326) and Melendez (8HE00337). Both sites were recorded as mid-19<sup>th</sup> century towns and had not been evaluated by the SHPO. The archaeological investigations consisted of surface reconnaissance combined with systematic and judgmental subsurface testing along the alignment. No archaeological sites were discovered within the project APE; nor was any evidence of the two previously recorded archaeological sites (8HE00326 and 8HE00337).

Historical/architectural background research indicated that 13 historic resources (8HE00081, 8HE00091, 8HE00097, 8HE00099, 8HE00170, 8HE00173-175, 8HE00178, 8HE00179, 8HE00185, 8HE00742, and 8HE00389) were previously recorded within the historic APE. These include one linear resource SR 50/Cortez Boulevard (8HE00742), one bridge the Brooksville Overpass/FDOT Bridge No. 080001 (8HE00389), and eleven buildings. The buildings and linear resource had not been evaluated by the SHPO; however, the bridge (8HE00389) was determined eligible in 2014 by the SHPO.

Historical/architectural field survey resulted in the identification and evaluation of 21 newly identified historic resources (8HE00826-8HE00845, and 8HE00854), and the identification and re-evaluation of 12 extant previously recorded historic resources (8HE00081, 8HE00091, 8HE00097, 8HE00099, 8HE00170, 8HE00173-175, 8HE00178, 8HE00179, 8HE00742, and 8HE00389). Of the 33 historic resources within the historic APE, there are 28 buildings, two building complex resource groups, one bridge, one linear resource; and one historic district. One previously recorded historic resource was confirmed as demolished. 316 S Main Street (8HE00185).

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., Director Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study Hernando County, Florida Work Program Item Segment No. 437264-2 September 20, 2018 Page 3 of 4

Of the 12 extant previously recorded resources, nine appear ineligible for individual listing in the NRHP. These include eight buildings along the south side of Broad Street and the west side of Main Street in downtown Brooksville (8HE00081, 8HE00091, 8HE00097, 8HE00099, 8HE00173, 8HE00174, 8HE00178, and 8HE00179). In addition, a segment of SR 50/Cortez Boulevard (8HE00742) runs through the historic APE. While the segment within the APE has not been evaluated by the SHPO, other segments outside the project area have been evaluated and determined ineligible. The segment within the APE does not appear eligible for listing in the NRHP. Out of the 21 newly identified historic resources, 20 appear ineligible for individual listing in the NRHP. These include 18 buildings and two building complex resource groups. These resources are common examples of their respective architectural styles without significant historical associations, and therefore, none appear individually eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The Downtown Brooksville Historic District resource group (8HE00854) was identified during this survey and appears eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria A and C in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Architecture, respectively. The proposed district contains a concentration of commercial buildings in the city dating from the period ca. 1900 to 1969. Eight buildings (six previously recorded and two newly recorded) appear to be contributing historic resources located within the historic APE. These are 8HE00091, 8HE00097, 8HE00170, 8HE00175, 8HE00178, 8HE00179, 8HE00839, and 8HE00840. A non-contributing building (8HE00841) is also located within the project APE within the proposed historic district.

A total of three previously recorded historic resources within the historic APE are listed, determined eligible, or appear potentially individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. Of these, one previously recorded historic resource was determined eligible by the SHPO, the Brooksville Overpass (8HE00389). The buildings at 140 Main Street (8HE00170) and Brooksville Lumber (8HE00175) are considered eligible for individual listing in the NRHP as part of the current study, as well as contributing resources to the potential Downtown Brooksville Historic District resource group (8HE00854)

This information is being provided in accordance with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), which are implemented by the procedures contained in 36 CFR, Part 800, as well as the provisions contained in the revised Chapter 267, Florida Statutes.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FDOT.

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., Director Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study Hernando County, Florida Work Program Item Segment No. 437264-2 September 20, 2018 Page 4 of 4

Provided you approve the recommendations and findings in the enclosed CRAS, please sign below for concurrence. If you have any questions, or if I may be of assistance, please contact me at (813) 975-6455 or nicole.selly@dot.state.fl.us or contact Rebecca Spain Schwarz at (813) 281-8308 or rebecca.spain-schwarz@atkinsglobal.com.

Sincerely.

Nicole Selly

Nicole Sell

**Environmental Specialist III** Cultural Resource Coordinator

#### **Enclosures**

CC: Robin Rhinesmith, FDOT

Justin Hall, FDOT

Roy Jackson, FDOT OEM

Rebecca Spain Schwarz, Atkins

Lilliam Escalera, FDOT

Thu-Huong Clark, FDOT OEM

Larry Weatherby, ACP Marion Almy, ACI

The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)/Florida Division of Historical Resources (FDHR) finds the Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) complete and sufficient and \_\_ concurs/ does not concur with the recommendations and findings provided in the CRAS for SHPO/FDHR Project File Number 2018-4703 \_\_\_\_\_ Or, the SHPO/FDHR finds the CRAS contains insufficient information. SHPO/FDHR Comments: Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., Director State Historic Preservation Officer Florida Division of Historical Resources



RON DESANTIS GOVERNOR 11201 N. McKinley Drive Tampa, Florida 33612-6456 KEVIN J. THIBAULT, P.E. SECRETARY

June 13, 2019

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D.
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Division of Historical Resources
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Attention: Alyssa McManus, Transportation Compliance Review Program

Re: Section 106 Case Study Report - Final

Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

**Good Neighbor Trail Gap** 

From West of SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the

Good Neighbor Trail Hernando County, Florida

Work Program Item Segment (WPIS) No.: 437264-2

FAP No.: Not available

SHPO/DHR Project File No.: 2018-4703

Dear Dr. Parsons:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Seven, is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study to evaluate alternative alignments for the extension of the Good Neighbor Trail through Brooksville, in Hernando County. The project study limits begin on SR 50/Cortez Boulevard, west of Cobb Road, and continue easterly through Brooksville, ending at the present Good Neighbor Trail near the intersection of Main Street and Russell Street. As part of the PD&E Study, a Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) Report was prepared in September 2018, to comply with federal and state regulations. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with the CRAS recommendations on September 28, 2018 (FDHR Project No. 2018-4703).

As a result of the CRAS, four historic resources were determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) located within the historic Area of Potential Effect (APE). The Brooksville Overpass (8HE00389) was previously determined NRHP-eligible by the SHPO in 2014; and the CRAS's research and field survey indicated three additional historic resources were eligible for listing in the NRHP. These significant historic properties include the Downtown Brooksville Historic District (8HE00854) and its eight contributing resources (8HE00091, 8HE00097, 8HE00170, 8HE00175, 8HE00178, 8HE00179, 8HE00175).



Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., Director Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study from SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the Good Neighbor Trail Hernando County, Florida WPIS No.: 437264-2 June 13, 2019 Page 2 of 3

Enclosed is one copy of the Final Section 106 Case Study Report (May 2019) that was prepared for the above referenced project. This final report is being submitted to update the previous draft (dated February 2019) that was submitted to your office on March 5, 2019 for preliminary review. This final report documents the results of the Public Hearing held on March 14, 2019 and the site visit on March 29, 2019 with Alyssa McManus from your office.

The objective of the Section 106 Consultation Case Study Report is to evaluate the potential effects (primary and secondary) of the proposed undertaking to the four historic properties located within the project APE. The report includes a description of the project and the effects to the significant historic properties. The FDOT has applied the Criteria of Adverse Effect found in 36 CFR Part 800.5 to these historic properties. This final report provides a finding of No Adverse Effect to the four historic properties (8HE00389, 8HE00854, 8HE00170 and 8HE00175), as described in the enclosed document.

This information is being provided in accordance with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), which are implemented by the procedures contained in 36 CFR Part 800, as well as the provisions contained in the revised Chapter 267, *Florida Statutes*.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

If you have any questions, or if I may be of assistance, please contact me at (813) 975-6637 or <a href="mailto:crystal.geiger@dot.state.fl.us">crystal.geiger@dot.state.fl.us</a> or contact Rebecca Spain Schwarz at (813) 281-8308 or <a href="mailto:rebecca.spain-schwarz@atkinsglobal.com">rebecca.spain-schwarz@atkinsglobal.com</a>.

Sincerely,

Crystal Geiger

Cuptal Sleiger

Environmental Specialist III
Cultural Resource Coordinator

**Enclosure** 

cc: Robin Rhinesmith, FDOT

Justin Hall, FDOT

Roy Jackson, FDOT OEM

Marion Almy, ACI

Lilliam Escalera, FDOT

Thu-Huong Clark, FDOT OEM

Larry Weatherby, ACP

Rebecca Spain Schwarz, Atkins

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., Director Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study from SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the Good Neighbor Trail Hemando County, Florida WPIS No.: 437264-2 June 13, 2019 Page 3 of 3

	The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (S Consultation Case Study Report complete and sufficient with the recommendations and findings provided File Number 2018-4703 C. Or, the SE insufficient information.	concurs does not			
	In accordance with the Programmatic Agreement among the FWHA, ACHP, FDHR, SHPO and FDOT regarding implementation of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Florida, if providing concurrence with a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for a project as a whole, or to No Adverse Effect on a specific historic property, SHPO shall presume that FHWA will proceed with a de minimis Section 4(f) finding at its discretion for the use of land from the historic property.  SHPO Comments:				
For	Timothy A. Parsons Ph.D., Director State Historic Preservation Officer Florida Division of Historical Resources	Date   10  19  2 519			

From: admin@fla-etat.org
To: fritz.wettstein@myfwc.com
Cc: Salicco, Christopher

Subject: Document Review Confirmation for Natural Resources Evaluation - GNT Gap

**Date:** Tuesday, February 19, 2019 5:12:19 PM

A review was received for the following:

**Event:** 437264-2: GNT Gap PD&E NRE

**Document:** Natural Resources Evaluation - GNT Gap

**Submitted By:** Fritz Wettstein

**Global:** Yes

**Comments:** 

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff have reviewed the Good Neighbor Trail Gap from West of SR-50 to the Good Neighbor Trail and provides the following comments and recommendations for consideration in accordance with Chapter 379, Florida Statutes, and Article 4, Section 9, Florida Constitution.

#### **Project Description**

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7 is conducting a Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E) for the Good Neighbor Trail Gap which runs from Cortez Boulevard on SR-50 through the City of Brooksville to the intersection of Main Street with Russel Street over a total distance of 3.1 miles. FDOT reports that the trail will be constructed mostly within the existing roadway Right-of-way (ROW), and the purpose of this reevaluation study is to assess the impacts of roadway stormwater management and floodplain compensation sites. FDOT relates that these studies will insure that the project meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, and other Federal and State laws, rules and regulations.

#### **Potentially Affected Resources**

FDOT relates that based on the Natural Resource Evaluation (NRE) which included field reviews, data collection, and evaluation of preferred habitat in the project area, along with coordination with state and federal agencies, an impact determination was made for the following species classified by the State of Florida as State Threatened (ST) or Species of Special Concern (SSC). A "no adverse effect" determination was made for the Florida burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia floridana*, ST), gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, ST), Florida pine snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*, ST), roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*, ST), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*, ST), tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*, ST), and Homosassa shrew (*Sorex longirostris eonis*, SSC). And finally, a no effect determination was

made for the protected Sherman's fox squirrel (*Scirus niger shermani* SSC), and the southeastern American kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus* ST).

#### **Comments and recommendations**

FWC staff review shows that based on the design and location of the project area within the existing ROW, this project will have minimal affects on habitat and fish and wildlife resources including protected species, and we concur with FDOT's listed species impact determinations. Also, please note that the Sherman's fox squirrel has been reclassified as the southern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger niger*) and removed from Florida's listed species list in Chapter 68A-27, Florida Administrative Code. Certain conservation measures for southern fox squirrels have been retained and are described in the Final Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for the Southern fox squirrels, available on the FWC website: <a href="http://www.myfwc.com/media/4491531/southern-fox-squirrel-guidelines.pdf">http://www.myfwc.com/media/4491531/southern-fox-squirrel-guidelines.pdf</a>.

#### Federal Species

This site may contain habitat suitable for the federally listed species identified above. We recommend the applicant continue coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Jacksonville Ecological Services Office (ESO) as necessary for information regarding potential impacts to these species. The Jacksonville ESO can be contacted at (904) 731-3336.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this project. If you need further assistance, please contact our office by e-mail at

#### FWCConservationPlanningServices@MvFWC.com

. If you have specific technical questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact FWC Biologist Terry Gilbert at (850) 728-1103 or by e-mail at

terry.gilbert@MyFWC.com

and

conservationplanningservices@myfwc.com

.

 From:
 admin@fla-etat.org

 To:
 David.Rydene@noaa.gov

 Cc:
 Salicco, Christopher

Subject: Document Review Confirmation for Natural Resources Evaluation - GNT Gap

**Date:** Wednesday, February 6, 2019 11:37:43 AM

A review was received for the following:

**Event:** 437264-2: GNT Gap PD&E NRE

**Document:** Natural Resources Evaluation - GNT Gap

Submitted By: David Rydene

Global: Yes

**Comments:** 

NMFS staff has reviewed the Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE) generated as part of the Project Development and Environment Study for the proposed Good Neighbor Trail Gap from west of SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the existing Good Neighbor Trail in Hernando County, Florida (Work Program Item Segment Number 437264-2). NMFS believes that the descriptions and analyses contained in the NRE are accurate. NMFS agrees with the conclusion that no NMFS trust resources (i.e., Essential Fish Habitat) will be directly impacted by the project. It appears that any potential indirect impacts to downstream NMFS trust resources will be very minor at most.



## Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS **GOVERNOR** 

11201

KEVIN J. THIBAULT, P.E.

FWS LOG NO 2019- TA-0472

Febr

Tai

The Service concurs with your effect determination(s) for resources protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). This finding fulfills the

requirements of the Act.

B. Herrington

Field Supervisor

RE:

**Endangered Species Act Section 7 Coordination** 

Good Neighbor Trail Gap from West of SR 50/Cortez Blvd to the Good Neighbor Trail

Hernando County, Florida WPI Segment No: 437264-2

Dear Ms. Williams:

Ms. Zakia Williams

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service U.S. Department of the Interior

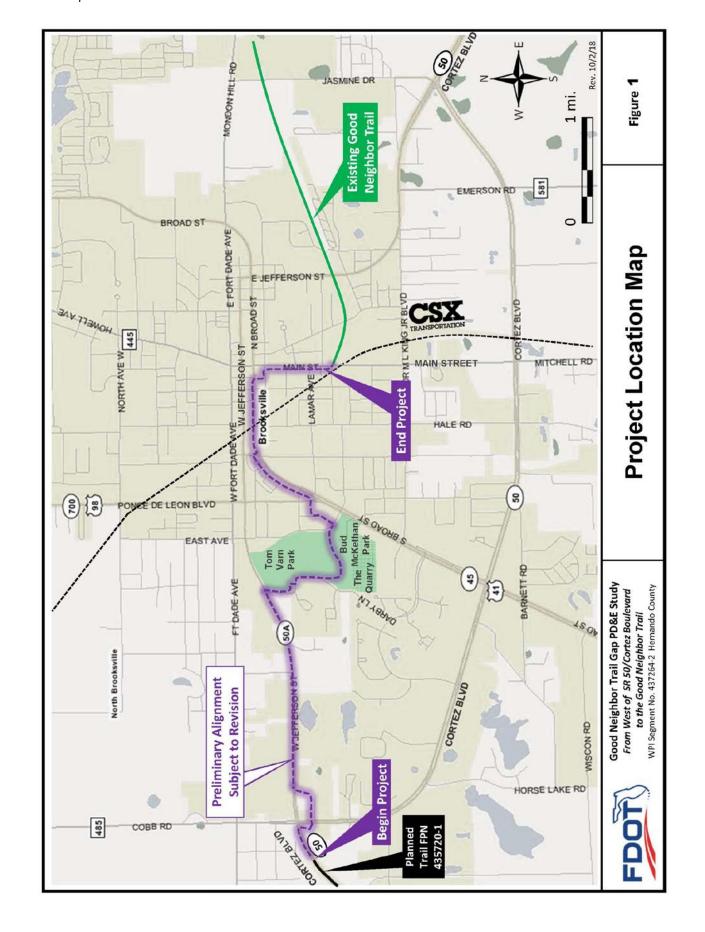
Jacksonville, FL 32256-7517

7915 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7 is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study for the Good Neighbor Trail Gap from State Road (SR) 50/Cortez Boulevard to the Good Neighbor Trail in Hernando County. The project involves the construction of a multi-use path (trail) that will range from 10-12 feet wide. The proposed trail will begin on SR 50, west of Cobb Road, and continue easterly through Brooksville, ending at the present Good Neighbor Trail near the intersection of Main Street and Russell Street, a distance of approximately 3.1 miles. The trail will be constructed mostly within existing roadway rights of way (ROW), using a combination of state and local roads; however, additional ROW will be required in several areas. The purpose of the reevaluation is to evaluate the stormwater management facilities (SMF) and floodplain compensation (FPC) sites. The PD&E study is being conducted in order to meet the requirements of the FDOT, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FDOT.

This Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE) was conducted to identify wetland and surface waters and evaluate potential threatened and endangered species utilization. The project study area included the proposed trail alignment and the adjacent land uses. The project location is shown on Figure 1.



Ms. Zakia Williams, USFWS WPI Segment No. 437264-2 GNT Gap from SR 50 to GNT

#### Wetlands and Surface Waters

There are no impacts proposed to wetlands. Surface water impacts are provided in **Table 1**.

#### Table 1

SW ID	NWI/ USFWS	FLUCCS	IMPACT ACREAGE
SW1	R5UB	510	0.01
SW2	R5UB	510	0.02
SW3	R5UB	510	0
SW4	R5UB	510	0
Total			0.03

#### Protected Species and Habitat

Impact determinations for federally-listed faunal and floral species are provided in **Table 2** and **Table 3**, respectively.

Table 2

SPECIES SCIENTIFIC NAME	SPECIES COMMON NAME	EFFECT DETERMINATIONS
Drymarchon corais couperi	Eastern indigo snake	MANLAA
Aphelocoma coerulescens	Florida scrub-jay	No effect
Leuconotopicus borealis	Red-cockaded woodpecker	No effect
Notophthalmus perstriatus	Striped newt	No effect
Mycteria americana	Wood stork	MANLAA

#### Table 3

SPECIES SCIENTIFIC NAME	SPECIES COMMON NAME	EFFECT DETERMINATIONS
Campanula robinsiae	Brooksville bellflower	No effect
Justicia cooleyi	Cooley's water-willow	MANLAA

The NRE is attached for your review. The FDOT respectfully requests a response from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within 30 days. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (813) 975-6496 or email me at robin.rhinesmith@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

Robin Rhinesmith

**Environmental Administrator** 

CS

cc: Crystal Geiger, FDOT
Kirk Bogen, FDOT
Thu-Houng Clark, OEM
Jennifer Goff, FWC

Randy Turner, ACOE Amanetta Somerville, EPA Monte Ritter, SWFWMD



Florida Department of Transportation

RICK SCOTT GOVERNOR

11201 North McKinley Drive Tampa, FL 33612

ERIK FENNIMAN SECRETARY

December 6, 2018

Mr. Mark A. Kutney, AICP, ICMA-CM Brooksville City Manager 201 Howell Avenue, Brooksville, FL 34601

Re: WPI Segment No. 437264-2 - Good Neighbor Trail Gap Study - Section 4(f)

Dear Mr. Kutney,

The Florida Department of Transportation has been working with city staff on a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study since May 2017, for the extension of the Good Neighbor Trail from west of SR 50/Cortez Blvd/Cobb Road to the existing Good Neighbor Trail beginning point on Main Street. Specifically, we have been closely coordinating with Bill Geiger and Mike Walker in addition to Cliff Manuel with Coastal Engineering.

As part of the federal study process we must address involvement with public park lands which are considered as potential Section 4(f) resources according to the U.S. DOT Act of 1966 (49 USC 303). In this case, we believe that potential impacts to Tom Varn and Bud McKethan Parks can be considered as an exception to the requirement for Section 4(f) approval due to the fact that the city has previously dedicated a proposed trail alignment right of way through these two parks.

Title 23 CFR Sec. 774.13, paragraph g, provides the following exception to the requirement for Section 4(f) approval:  $(OWJ = Officials \ with \ Jurisdiction)$ 

- g. Transportation enhancement projects and mitigation activities, where:
  - 1. The use of the Section 4(f) property is solely for the purpose of preserving or enhancing an activity, feature, or attribute that qualifies the property for Section 4(f) protection; and
  - 2. The OWJ over the Section 4(f) resource agrees in writing to paragraph (g)(1) of this section.

Mr. Mark A. Kutney Page 2 December 6, 2018

In order to obtain approval for this proposed exception, we need your agreement that Section g quoted above correctly applies to the proposed trail alignment which runs through the two parks noted above.

If you (or your designee) could sign below and return this letter (or a PDF scan of it) to my attention, it would facilitate the approval process and allow us to submit documentation to the FDOT's Office of Environmental Management for approval, on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration. Please contact me by email or phone if you have any questions, at <a href="mailto:kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us">kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us</a> or at (813) 975-6448.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

Sincerely,

Kirk Bogen, P.E.

FDOT District 7 Environmental Management Engineer

Concurrence

(Signature) (Date)

Mark A. Kutney

Mark A. Kutney

City Manager

Cc: Mike Walker, Parks & Recreation Director
Bill Geiger, Community Development Director
Justin Hall, District 7 GEC (Design Phase Project Manager)
Lilliam Escalera, District 7 PD&E Study Project Manager
Robin Rhinesmith, District 7 Environmental Administrator

#### Novotny, Jeffrey S.

From: Mark Kutney <mkutney@cityofbrooksville.us>
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2019 2:03 PM

**To:** Bogen, Kirk

Cc: Rhinesmith, Robin; Escalera, Lilliam; Novotny, Jeffrey S.

**Subject:** Re: 437264-2 - Good Neighbor Trail Gap - Coordination with City of Brooksville on TCE

for Section 4f documentation

#### Good Afternoon Mr. Bogen:

My Staff reviewed the information contained in your email below. Please allow this email to serve as the City's agreement with your findings relative to the temporary construction easement. Thank you for your efforts in coordinating this issue with the City. Should you need anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards, Mark Kutney

Mark A. Kutney, AICP, ICMA-CM City Manager City of Brooksville

201 Howell Avenue Brooksville, FL 34601 (352) 540-3810

mkutney@cityofbrooksville.us

**From:** Bogen, Kirk < Kirk.Bogen@dot.state.fl.us> **Sent:** Wednesday, September 11, 2019 4:04 PM **To:** Mark Kutney < mkutney@cityofbrooksville.us>

 $\textbf{Cc:} \ Rhinesmith, Robin < Robin. Rhinesmith @dot.state.fl.us>; Escalera, Lilliam < Lilliam. Escalera @dot.state.fl.us>; Jeffrey S.$ 

Novotny < jnovotny@ace-fla.com>

Subject: 437264-2 - Good Neighbor Trail Gap - Coordination with City of Brooksville on TCE for Section 4f documentation

Dear Mr. Kutney,

This email is to provide you with information as the Official with Jurisdiction to a temporary construction easement the FDOT has determined necessary to construct the Good Neighbor Trail through Tom Varn and Bud McKethan Parks. The temporary construction easement is required to harmonize the proposed trail with the existing ground line and to provide grading to maintain stormwater flows to existing collection or pond areas adjacent to the proposed trail. Attached is a set of maps showing the locations of the temporary construction easement and areas where the ground line would need to be harmonized to maintain existing drainage patterns. The area of easement is approximately 1 acre in Tom Varn Park and one-quarter acre in Bud McKethan Park. If you concur with the contents of this email, please email back a response that you concur with the findings.

The Florida Department of Transportation has been working with city staff on a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study since May 2017, for the extension of the Good Neighbor Trail from west of SR 50/Cortez Blvd/Cobb Road to the existing Good Neighbor Trail beginning point on Main Street. Specifically, we have been closely coordinating with Bill Geiger and Mike Walker.

As part of the federal study process we must address involvement with public park lands which are considered as potential Section 4(f) resources according to the U.S. DOT Act of 1966 (49 USC 303). In this case, we believe that even with the temporary construction easement, potential impacts to Tom Varn and Bud McKethan Parks can be considered as an exception to the requirement for Section 4(f) approval. There are no park amenities within the area of the temporary construction easement. See the attached set of maps showing the temporary construction easement (shaded area labeled as "TCE Area") and adjacent areas to maintain stormwater flows (hatched areas labeled as "Drainage or Pond Impacts") in relation to the proposed trail through both parks.

Title 23 CFR Sec. 774.13, paragraph g, provides the following exception to the requirement for Section 4(f) approval: (OWJ = Officials with Jurisdiction)

- g. Transportation enhancement projects and mitigation activities, where:
- 1. The use of the Section 4(f) property is solely for the purpose of preserving or enhancing an activity, feature, or attribute that qualifies the property for Section 4(f) protection; and
- 2. The OWJ over the Section 4(f) resource agrees in writing to paragraph (g)(1) of this section. In order to obtain approval for this proposed exception, we need your agreement that Section g quoted above correctly applies to the temporary construction easement for the proposed trail alignment which runs through the two parks noted above.

If you (or your designee) could email a response to this message to my attention, that you concur with the content of this, it would facilitate the approval process and allow us to submit documentation to approval. Please contact me by email or phone if you have any questions, at <a href="mailto:kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us">kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us</a> or at (813) 975-6448.

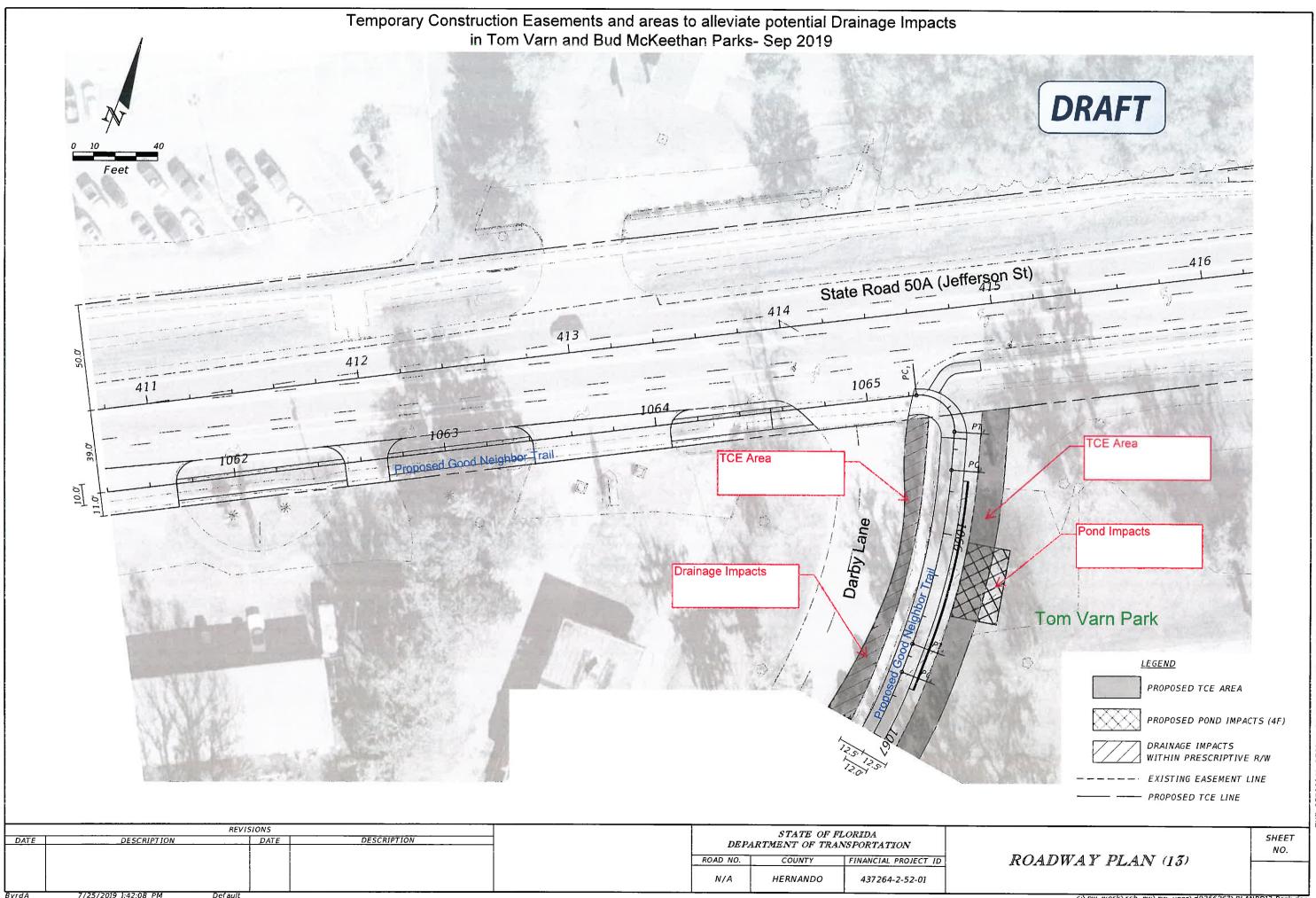
The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

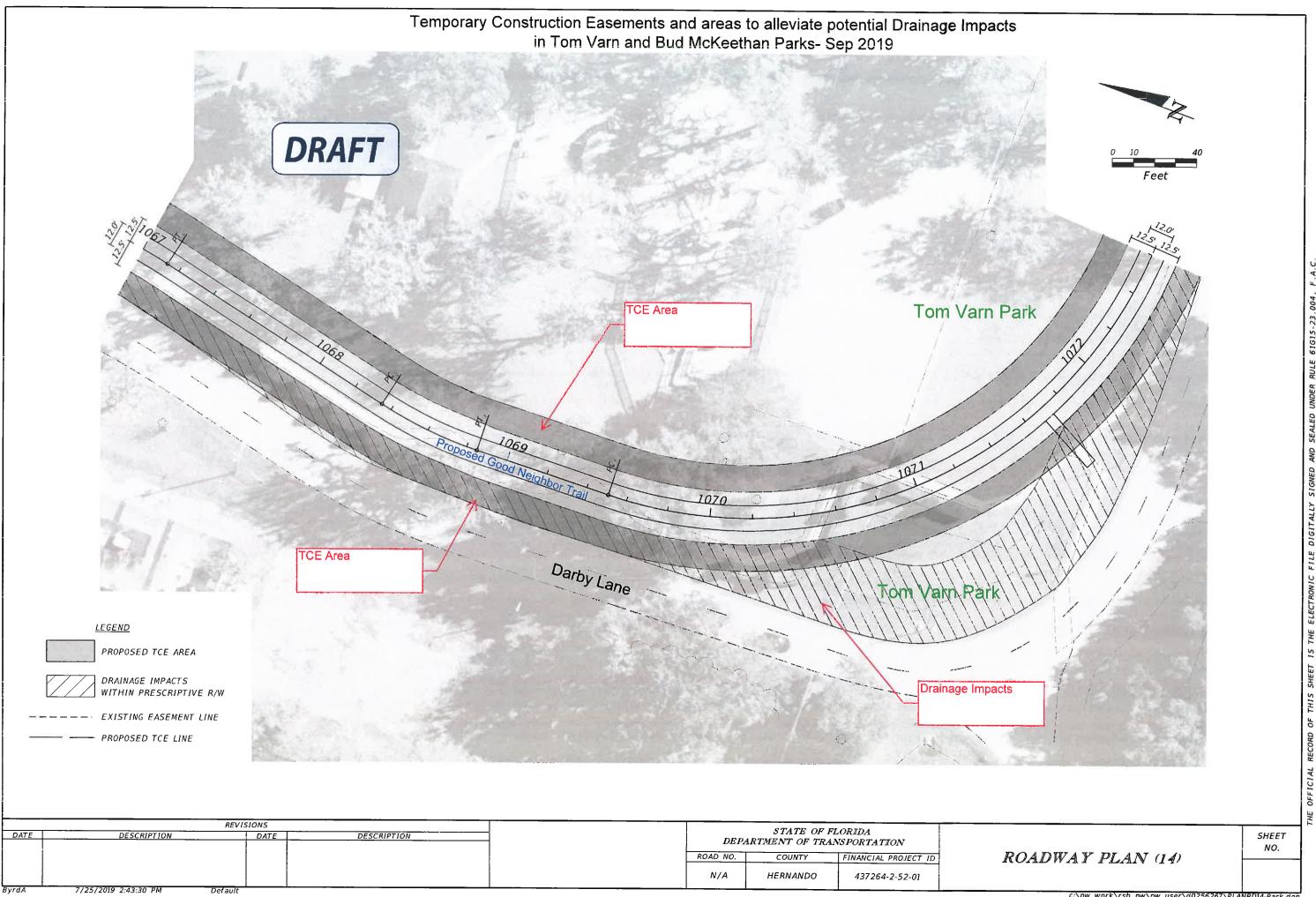
**Thanks** 

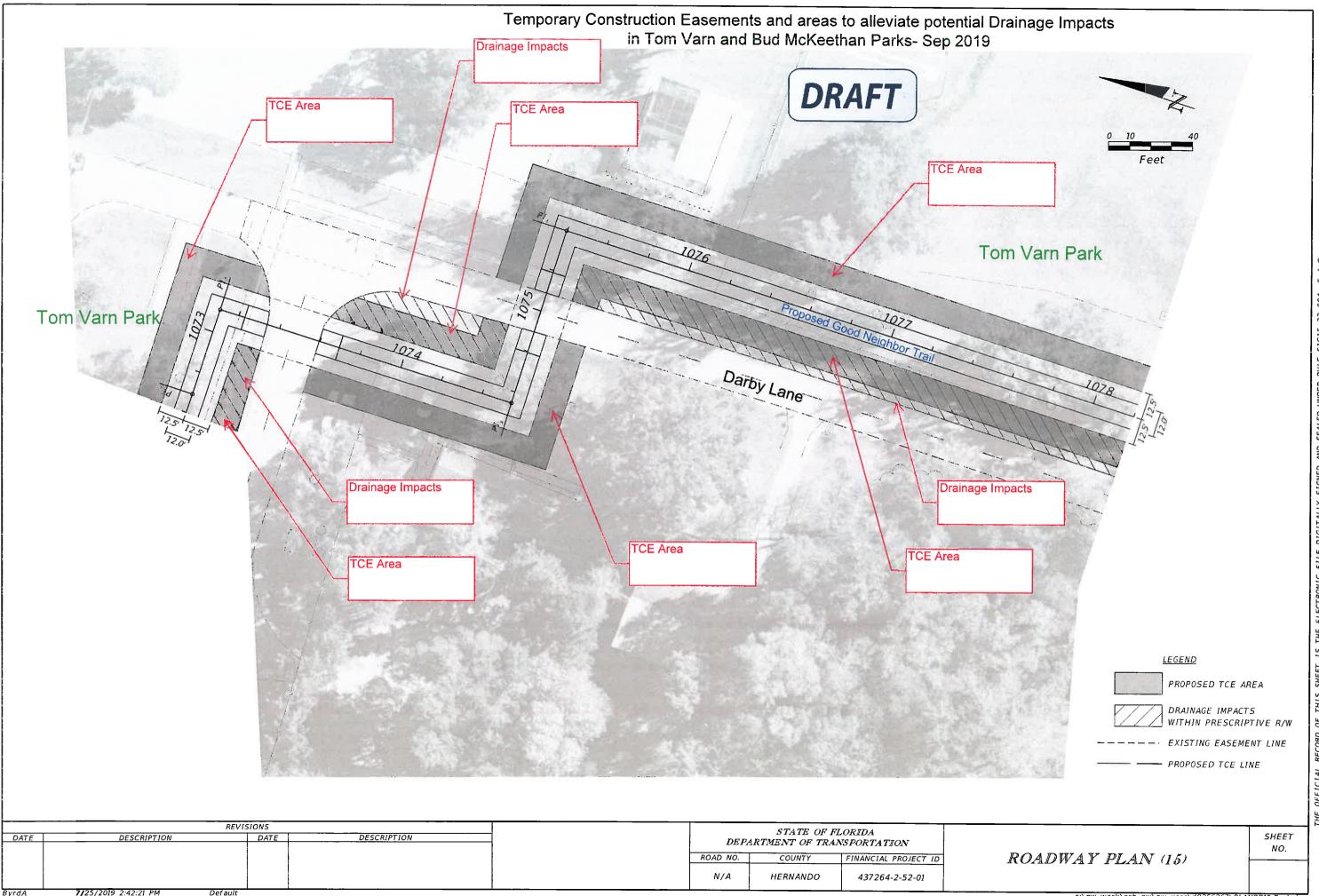
Kirk Bogen, P.E.
Environmental Management Engineer
FDOT District Seven
Planning & Environmental Management Office (PLEMO)
<a href="mailto:kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us">kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us</a>
(813) 975-6448 / (800) 226-7220 x6448

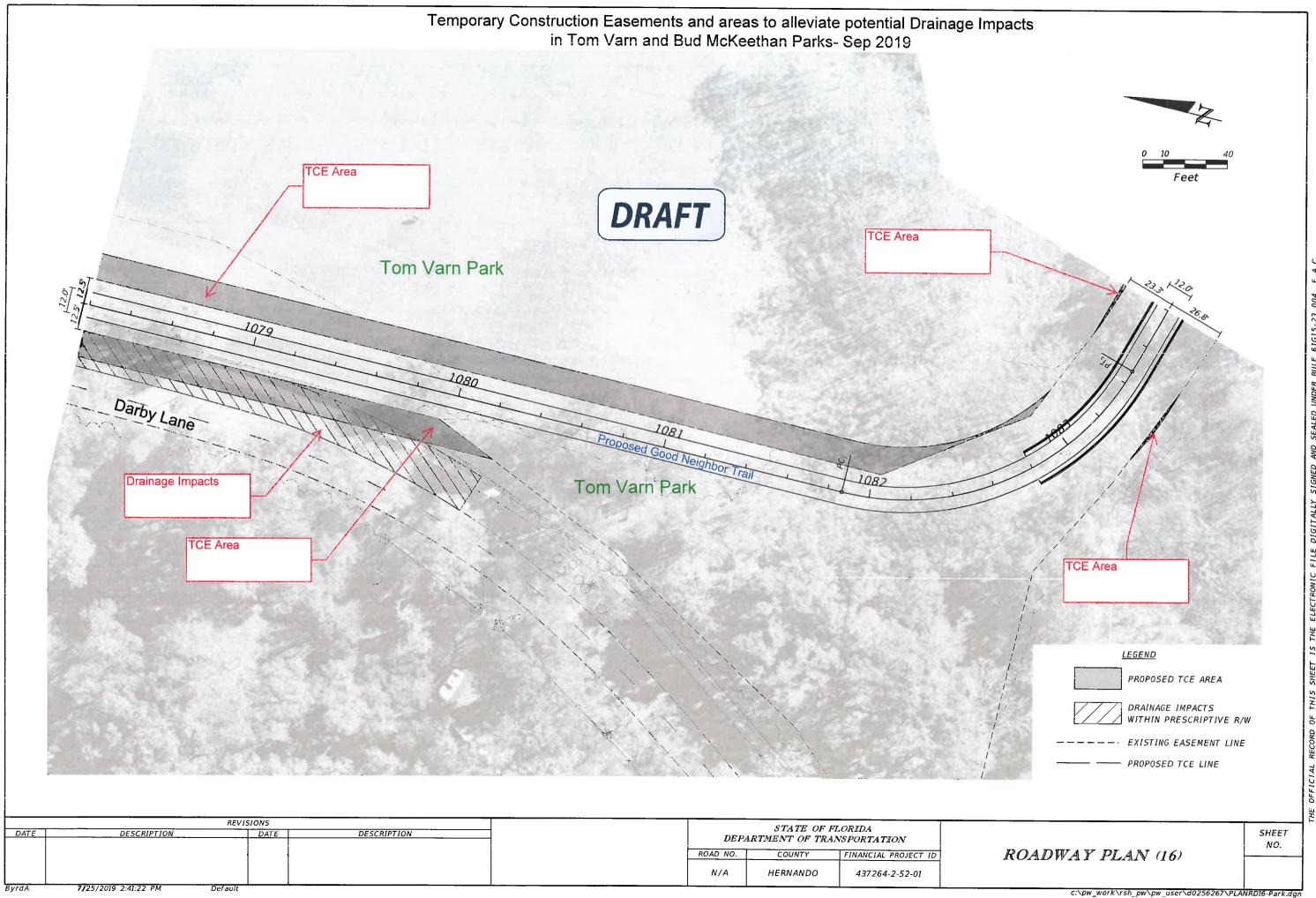
FAX: (813) 975-6451

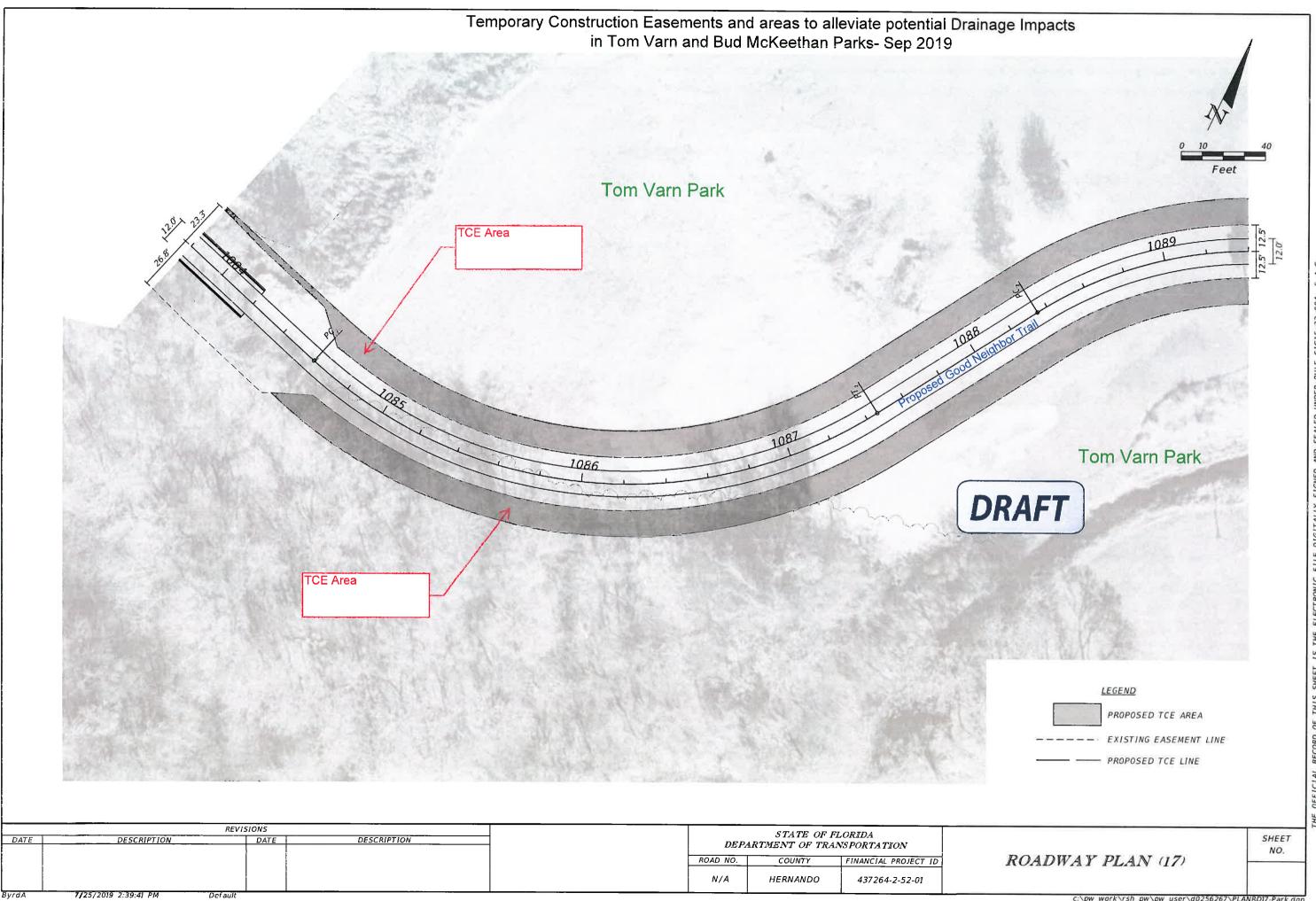
The information transmitted, including attachments, is intended only for the person(s) or entity to which it is addressed and may contain material that is confidential, privileged and/or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and destroy any copies of this information. Under Florida law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public-records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.

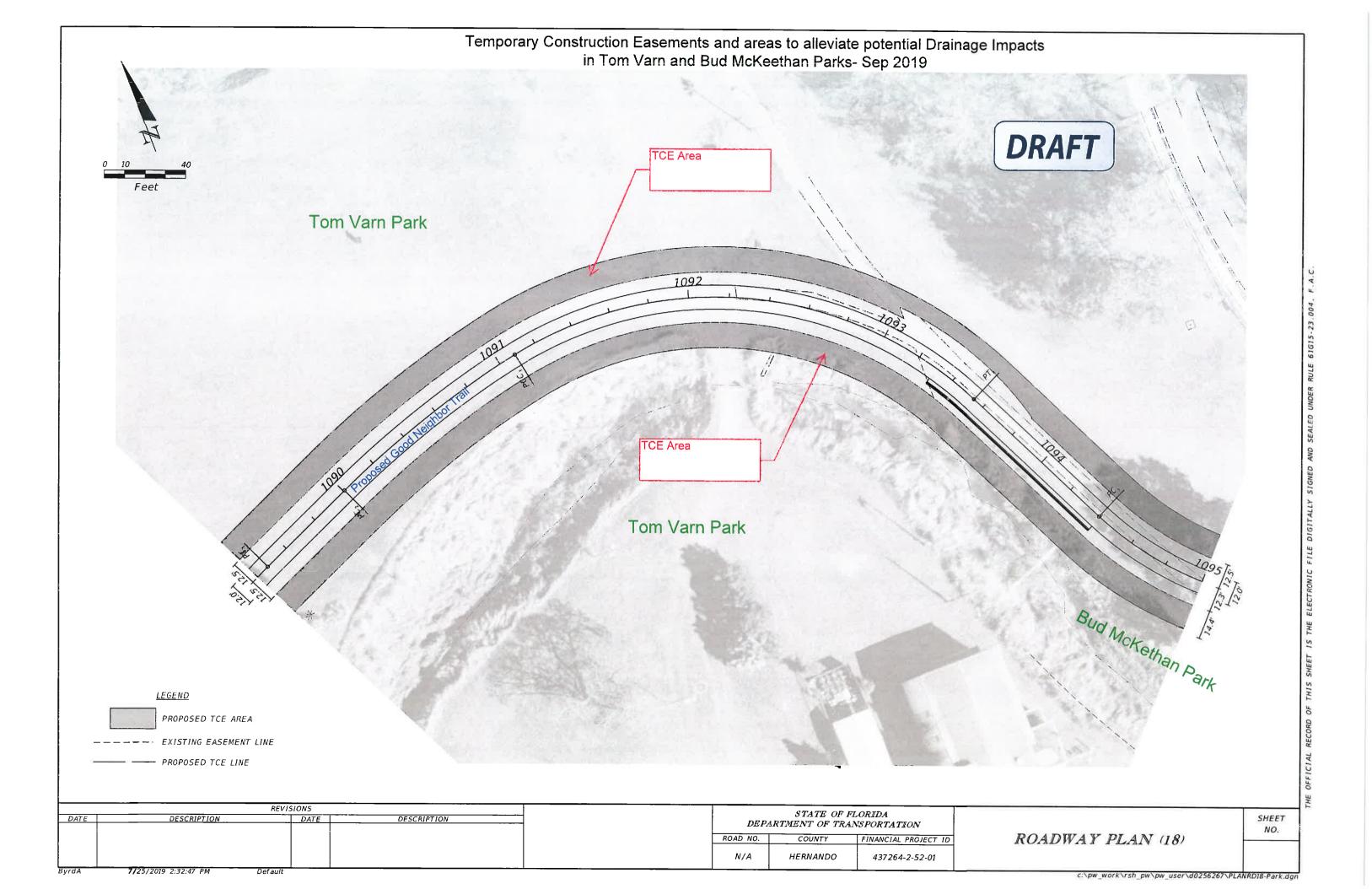


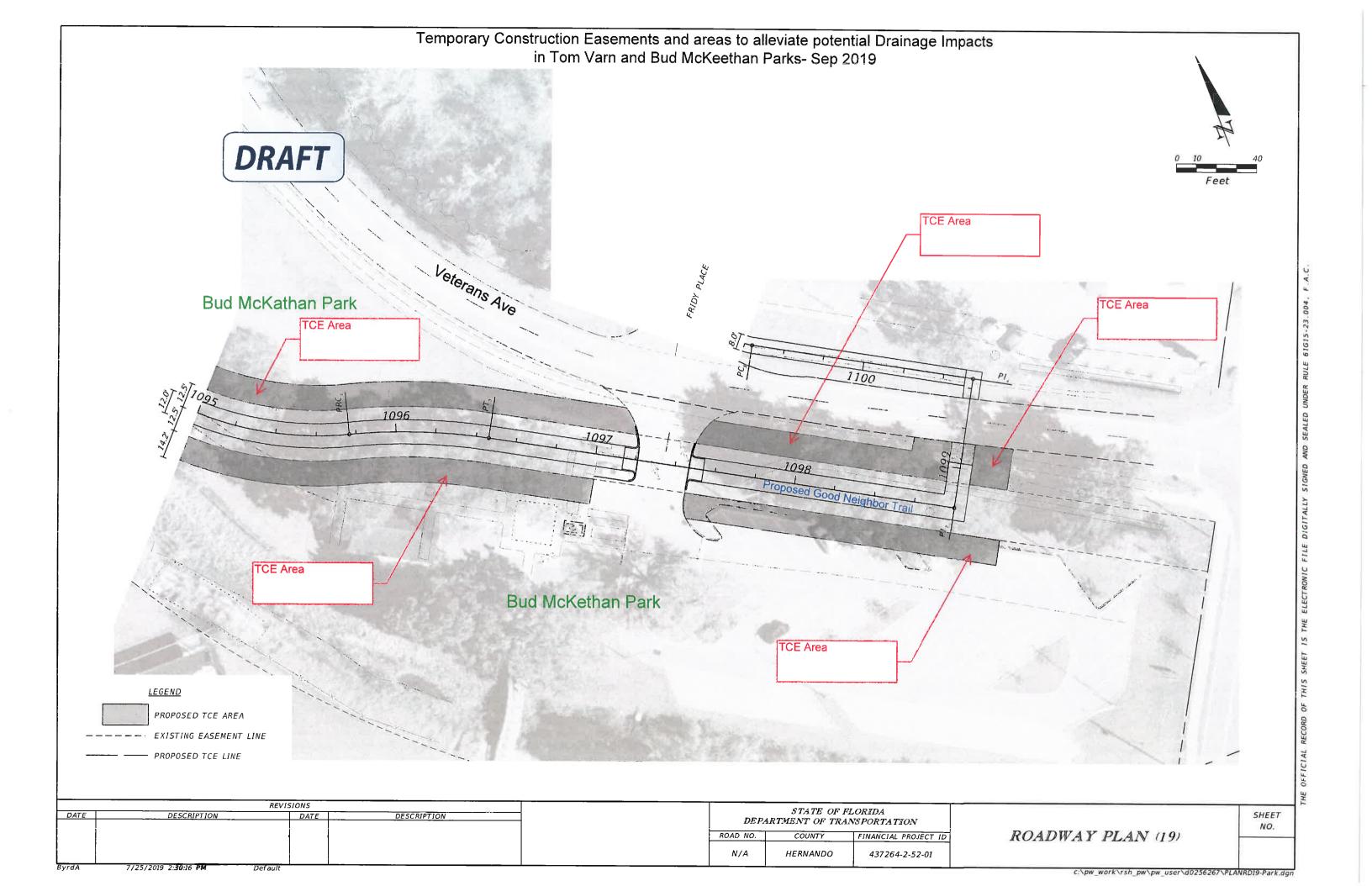












# Appendix B

**Newsletters** 



Florida Department of Transportation - District Seven
Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study
11201 N. McKiplay Drive MC 7, 500

11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-500 Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

# **Contact Information**

We encourage your participation in this Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study.

If you wish to discuss any issues related to this project, please contact **Lilliam E. Escalera**, Environmental Management Office Project Manager, at **(813) 975-6445** or **Kris Carson**, Public Information Officer, at **(800) 226-7220** or by email to: <a href="mailto:kristen.carson@dot.state.fl.us">kristen.carson@dot.state.fl.us</a>.

Written comments may be sent to: **Kirk Bogen, P.E.** 

Environmental Management Engineer Florida Department of Transportation, District Seven 11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-500 Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

### **Non-Discrimination**

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation service (free of charge) should contact Alex Henry, Public Involvement Coordinator, at (813) 975-6405 or by email to: <a href="mailto:alex.henry@dot.state.fl.us">alex.henry@dot.state.fl.us</a> at least seven (7) days before the public hearing.

# **Study Schedule**

The study will be completed by Fall 2019.

Project Begins	Summer 2018
Public Hearing	March 2019
Finalize PD&E Documents	Spring 2019
PD&E Study Complete	Summer 2019

# **Future Funding**

FDOT Five Year Adopted Work Program Fiscal Year 2018/2019 to Fiscal Year 2022/2023.

Phase	Fiscal Year(s)
PD&E	Ongoing
Design	Ongoing
Right of Way Acquisition	2019 and 2020
Construction	2022

For more information on this study, please visit our project website at: <a href="https://www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/">www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/</a>



This newsletter serves as notice to property owners (pursuant to F.S. 339.155) that all or a portion of their property is within 300 feet of the centerline of the proposed project. However, this does not mean that all properties will be directly affected. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. You are invited to attend and participate in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District



Seven public hearing regarding the Good Neighbor Trail Gap Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study in Hernando County, Florida. The hearing will be held on Thursday, March 14, 2019 to allow interested persons an opportunity to provide comments and express their views concerning the location, conceptual design, and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed project.

FDOT representatives will be available at the hearing beginning at 5:30 p.m. to answer questions. Exhibits and other project-related materials will be displayed showing the proposed improvements. A PowerPoint presentation will run continuously during the open house. At 6:30 p.m., FDOT representatives will begin the formal portion of the hearing, which will provide an opportunity for attendees to make formal oral public comments. Following the formal portion of the hearing, the informal open house will resume and continue until 7:30 p.m. You can attend at any time during the two hour meeting to review project information and talk one-on-one with study team members. A court reporter will be available to receive comments in a one-on-one setting. You may mail your comments to the address preprinted on the back of the comment form or enter them on the project website.

Comments may be provided in one of three ways: complete the form and place in the comments box, mail comments to the address on the back of the form, or visit our website at

www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/. All comments must be postmarked by Monday, March 25, 2019 to become part of the official public hearing record.

Draft study documents, and other pertinent information depicting the project's recommended alignment and proposed improvements will be available for review at the following locations from **Thursday**, **February 21**, **2019 to Monday**, **March 25**, **2019.** 

**Hernando County Public Library** 

238 Howell Avenue Brooksville, FL 34601 Mon-Fri 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Saturday & Sunday Closed

#### **FDOT District Seven**

11201 N. McKinley Drive Tampa, FL 33612 Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday & Sunday Closed

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S. C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT. FDOT welcomes and appreciates everyone's participation. If you have questions about the project or the scheduled hearing, please contact Lilliam E. Escalera, Environmental Management Office Project Manager at (813) 975-6445 or (800) 226-7220 or visit our project website at <a href="https://www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/">www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/</a>.

Kirk Bogen, P/E.
Environmental Management Engineer

# **PUBLIC HEARING**

Date: Thursday, March 14, 2019

Place: Jerome Brown Community Ctr 99 Jerome Brown Place Brooksville, FL 34601

**Time:** 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Open House 6:30 p.m. Formal Presentation

EL DEPARTMENTO DE TRANSPORTACIÓN DE LA FLORIDA TE INVITA A UNA AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA

el 14 de marzo de 2019

Comuníquese con nosotros:

Nos importa mucho la opinión
del público sobre el proyecto. Si
tiene preguntas o comentarios,
o simplemente desea más
información, por favor comuníquese
con nosotros. Nuestra representante
en español es: Lilliam E. Escalera,
EMO Project Manager,
lilliam.escalera@dot.state.fl.us
o (813) 975-6445.

Page 4 Page 1

# **PD&E Study Purpose**

In 2015, the Florida legislature established the Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail network as a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System. The SUN Trail network consists of multi-use trails or shared-use paths physically separated from motor vehicle traffic and constructed with asphalt, concrete, or another hard surface which, by virtue of design, location, extent of connectivity or potential connectivity, and allowable uses, provides nonmotorized transportation opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians statewide between and within a wide range of points of origin and destinations, including, but not limited to, communities, conservation areas, state parks, beaches, and other natural or cultural attractions for a variety of trip purposes, including work, school, shopping, and other personal business, as well as social, recreational, and personal fitness purposes. The SUN Trail program currently receives 25 million dollars annually in funding. The Coast to Coast Trail was identified in 2015 as the first SUN Regional Trail.

The Coast-to-Coast Connector Trail (formerly known as the "Coast to Coast Connector") was selected by the Greenways and Trails Council and the Office of Greenways and Trails as the highest priority trail in the state to receive SUN Trail Network funding. When completed, this 250-mile paved, multi-use trail will connect the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean and span nine counties and dozens of communities, including Hernando County and Brooksville. The goal is to utilize existing trail infrastructure and fill the remaining 75 miles of gaps to eventually allow bicyclists to ride across Florida from St. Petersburg to Titusville and the Canaveral National Seashore in Brevard County. This trail connector will be the first of its kind in Florida. The map on this page shows the Coast to Coast Trail which identifies existing segments and gaps in the system.

The Good Neighbor Trail Gap – The proposed Good Neighbor Trail through Brooksville will complete a gap in Florida's Coast to Coast Trail in the Brooksville area. The proposed "gap trail" will begin on State Road (SR) 50/Cortez Boulevard, west of Cobb Road, and continue easterly through Brooksville, ending at the present beginning point for the Good Neighbor Trail near the intersection of Main Street and Russell Street. The total distance is approximately 3.2 miles. This project is a collaborative partnership among the City of Brooksville, the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) . This proposed connector trail will tie into the planned Good Neighbor Trail on SR 50 to the west of this proposed trail.



An earlier corridor and alignment study was completed in 2016 for the Hernando Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This previous MPO study served as the foundation for the current PD&E study.

# **Study Implementation Process**

The Good Neighbor Trail Gap project is in the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study phase of the FDOT's 5-step highway development process. A PD&E study is a comprehensive study that evaluates social, cultural, economic and environmental effects associated with the proposed transportation improvements. The objective of this PD&E study is to assist FDOT on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in reaching a decision on the type, location, and conceptual design of the Good Neighbor Trail Gap shared use path. The PD&E study satisfies all applicable requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding of subsequent development phases (design and construction).

# **Project Purpose & Need**

The purpose and need for the project is to complete a missing link in the statewide Coast to Coast Trail, and is based on the following criteria:

- System Linkage to complete a missing link in the statewide Coast to Coast Trail
- Modal interrelationships to provide safe, non-vehicular transportation and recreation to residents and visitors traveling within and beyond the study area.
- Potential Benefits Increased business activity, tourism, improved quality of life, improved public health and increased property values.

#### The proposed trail is consistent with the following plans:

- Office of Florida Greenways & Trails Coast to Coast Connector Trail Plan
- TBARTA 2040 and Longer Range Regional Trails 2015 Master Plan Update
- Hernando Citrus MPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- City of Brooksville Vision 2050 Plan
- SUN Trail Adopted Work Program (FY 2019 thru FY 2023)

In addition, the proposed trail is consistent with the goals of the following plans:

- Brooksville Comprehensive Plan (2007)
- Brooksville Community Redevelopment Plan (2013)
- South Brooksville Reuse Planning South Brooksville Conceptual Project Plan (2015)
- Hernando Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element (2018)

# **Proposed Improvements**

The proposed shared use path ("trail") is expected to range in width from 10 to 12 feet, constructed mostly within existing roadway rights-of-way (ROW), using a combination of state and local roads. The proposed trail may be as narrow as 8 feet for short segments, including along Fridy Place. Additional ROW will be required in several areas. Trail bridges are proposed at two locations: across Cortez Boulevard south of W Jefferson Street (SR 50A), and over the CSX Transportation Railroad at Broad Street just west of uptown Brooksville. A culvert extension is proposed over Wombles Creek. The trail surface is proposed to be asphalt for most areas and required

improvements to drainage conveyances will be determined during the design phase. In addition to this ongoing PD&E study, the trail is also in the final design phase, with design scheduled to be completed in February 2020.

#### **Historic Resources**

Information related to Historic Resources will be presented at the Public Hearing. This will provide information to residents, local public officials, and interested persons and organizations relative to the process and schedule for identifying and evaluating historic resources, determining significant historic properties, and evaluating potential impacts to significant historic properties. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to consider the effects of projects they carry out, approve, or fund on historic properties. There are four historic properties identified within the project's area of potential effect (APE) that are eligible for the listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). These historic properties include: the Brooksville Overpass over the CSX Railroad, the Downtown Brooksville Historic District and its eight contributing resources, the residence at 140 Main Street, and the Brooksville Lumber. The last two are also contributing resources to the historic district. The proposed project is anticipated to result in No Adverse Effect to these historic properties.

# **Adjacent Design Project**

The Good Neighbor Trail Connector is a project located adjacent to the limits of the Good Neighbor Trail Gap project featured in this newsletter, and is shown with the blue line on the location map on the front page. The Good Neighbor Trail Connector will complete the portion of the Coast-to-Coast Connector Trail that extends from west of the Suncoast Parkway to west of the SR 50/Cortez Boulevard Intersection, a distance of approximately four miles. The Good Neighbor Trail Connector is currently in the design phase of project development, and includes a 12 foot bi-directional shared use path that ties into the Suncoast trail on its west end and the Good Neighbor Trail Gap project on its east end. It also includes some milling and resurfacing work, removal of the existing south side sidewalk, driveway reconstruction, shoulder widening, and drainage improvements along SR 50. The Good Neighbor Trail Connector design will also be on display at the public hearing for the Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study for public input.

# Rendering of Proposed Trail Overpass Over SR 50/Cortez Boulevard Just south of Jefferson Street



### **Existing Photo and Proposed Rendering of Bridge Over CSX Rail Line**



Broad Street at Hale Avenue - Looking East

Existing View Near Bridge Over CSX Rail Line



Broad Street at Hale Avenue - Looking East
Prefabricated Steel Truss Option for Trail Bridge

Page 2 Page 3

#### Who to Contact

The approved final Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study documents may be viewed on the study's website at:

https://www.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/

or for more information about the study, please contact FDOT's PD&E project manager Ashley Henzel at (813) 975-6433 or by email at: Ashlev.Henzel@dot.state.fl.us.

For more information about the design project, please contact the Design Project Manager or Public Information Officer.

Bronoris C. Pye, E.I., Design Project Manager

Florida Department of Transportation, District Seven 11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-600, Tampa, Florida 33612 Phone: (813) 975-6096 or (800) 226-7220

Email: Bronoris.Pye@dot.state.fl.us

**Kris Carson, Public Information Officer** 

Florida Department of Transportation, District Seven 11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-110, Tampa, Florida 33612

Phone: (813) 975-6091 or (800) 226-7220 Email: Kristen.Carson@dot.state.fl.us

### **Non Discrimination Laws & Regulations**

Public participation was solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons wishing to express their concerns may do so by contacting: Alex Henry, Public Involvement **Coordinator** Phone: (813) 975-6405 or (800) 226-7220 Email: Alex.Henry@dot.state.fl.us.

# **Comuniquese Con Nosotros**

Nos importa mucho la opinión del público sobre este proyecto. Si usted tiene preguntas o comentarios, o si simplemente desea más información sobre este proyecto, por favor ponerse en contacto con el señor Manuel Flores al teléfono (813) 975-4248, Departamento de Transportación de Florida, 11201 N. McKinley Dr., Tampa, FL 33612, o correo electrónico manuel.flores@dot.state.fl.us.

# **Right of Way Acquisition Procedure**

We understand that when a transportation project proposes the acquisition of private property, you may have questions and concerns.

To better inform you about the right of way acquisition process and your rights, the FDOT has created real estate acquisition and relocation brochures. Copies of the brochures may be found on our website: https://www.fdot.gov/rightofway/documents.shtm, or call (813) 975-6000 for information.

**3ronoris C. Pye, E.l., Design Project Manager** 



Florida Department of Transportation District Seven 11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-600 Tampa, FL 33612



# **GOOD NEIGHBOR TRAIL GAP**

Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

From SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the Good Neighbor Trail in Hernando County

Florida Department of Transportation District Seven WPI Segment Number: 437264-2

#### **Study Approval Notification**

On February 19, 2020, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), pursuant to 23 U.S. C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the FHWA and FDOT, granted Location Design Concept Acceptance for the Good Neighbor Trail Gap Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study from SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to the Good Neighbor Trail (see project location map inside). The project involves constructing a shared use path ("trail") which is expected to range in width from 10 to 12 feet (12 feet in most areas), constructed mostly within existing roadway right of way, using a combination of state and local roads. This project will now proceed to the next phase of development.

# **Public Hearing Results**

A public hearing was held for this project on March 14, 2019, at the Jerome Brown Community Center, 99 Jerome Brown Place, Brooksville, Florida 34601.

A total of 29 people signed in at the public hearing. Four comments were received. Three comments were written and one was a verbal statement during the formal portion of the public hearing. Based on input received, the trail alignment was adjusted to run along Bailey Avenue instead of Orange Avenue.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S. C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT. May 2020

#### **Project Location Map**



#### **Planned Improvements**

The project involves constructing a shared use path ("trail") which is expected to range in width from 10 to 12 feet (12 feet in most areas), constructed mostly within existing roadway right-of-way, along both state and local roads. Additional right-of-way will be required in several areas and will be acquired in accordance with applicable procedures and policies. Trail bridges are proposed at two locations: across Cortez Boulevard south of West Jefferson Street (SR 50A) and over the CSX Transportation Railroad at Broad Street just west of uptown Brooksville. The proposed path runs through both Tom Varn and Bud McKethan Parks and also connects to downtown Brooksville. The total length of the proposed trail is 3.2 miles. The trail surface is proposed to be primarily asphalt with concrete aprons on either side of a street crossing. Required accommodations of drainage conveyances will be determined during the design phase.

#### **Selected Alternative**

Following the public hearing, the Preferred Build Alternative was selected. This selection was based on a determination that the No-Build Alternative did not meet the purpose and need of the project, which is to complete a missing link in the statewide Coast to Coast Trail. This project will help provide safe, non-vehicular transportation and recreation to residents and visitors traveling within and beyond the study area. Potential project benefits include increased business activity and tourism, improved quality of life, and improved public health.

#### **PROJECT WEBSITE**

For more information on this study, go to <a href="https://www.fdot7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/">https://www.fdot7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/</a>

### **Trail Typical Sections**

Below is an example of rural trail typical section, which will be used along West Jefferson Street, east of Cobb Road, where the existing right-of-way is wider and drainage is handled by ditches.



#### **Bridge over SR 50/Cortez Boulevard**

The trail is proposed to cross Cortez Boulevard on an overpass south of the intersection of SR 50 and Cobb Road at Whitfield Avenue. The proposed trail bridge structure will carry the 12 foot wide trail over SR 50.



# FDOT Adopted 5-Year Work Program Fiscal Year 2020-2024

The design phase is currently underway. Right-of-way acquisition is funded to begin in this fiscal year (2020) and the construction phase is funded in fiscal year 2022.

Phase	Fiscal Year(s)
Design	Currently Underway
Right-of-Way	Funded to Begin 2020
Construction	Funded in 2022

#### Typical Section on Main Street South of Liberty Street

On Main Street south of Liberty Street, the existing parking lane on the west side of the roadway is proposed to be eliminated to accommodate a 10 foot trail.



#### **Steel Truss Bridge Structure**

Computer rendering of how a steel truss bridge structure might look at this location. (Proposed view looking east at South Broad Street and Hale Avenue).



# Appendix C

**Public Hearing Transcript** 

# **PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT CERTIFICATION**

Good Neighbor Trail Gap

Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study from West of SR 50/ Cortez Boulevard to the Good Neighbor Trail

Hernando County, Florida

Work Program Item Segment No.: 437264-2

I certify that a public hearing was conducted on March 14, 2019, beginning at 6:30 p.m. for the above project. A transcript was made and the document attached is a full, true, and complete transcript of what was said at the hearing.

Kirk Bogen

Environmental Management Engineer

Hearing Moderator

(Date)



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4	STATE OF FLORIDA
5	DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
6	GOOD NEIGHBOR TRAIL GAP
7	PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY
8	PUBLIC HEARING
9	
10	
11	
12	DATE: Thursday, March 14, 2019
13	TIME: 5:30 p.m 7:30 p.m.
14	PLACE: Jerome Brown Community Center 99 Jerome Brown Place
15	Brooksville, Florida 34601
16	REPORTED BY: CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, RMR, RPR NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA
17	NOTAKI TOBBIC, STATE OF FROKTDA
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#### FORMAL PRESENTATION

MR. BOGEN: Good evening. Today is Thursday,
March 14, 2019, and it is approximately 6:30 p.m. We
are assembled at the Jerome Brown Community Center in
Brooksville, Florida.

Welcome to the Public Hearing for the Good

Neighbor Trail Gap Project Development and Environment

Study, or PD&E study. My name is Kirk Bogen and I am

the Environmental Management Engineer for District Seven

of the Florida Department of Transportation.

This Public Hearing is being held relative to Work Program Item Segment Number: 437264-2. We are conducting the hearing this evening to provide you with an opportunity to discuss the project and to submit comments on the PD&E study.

This Public Hearing is being held in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and public participation is encouraged and solicited without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability or family status. The environmental review, consultation and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation pursuant to Title 23 of the United States

Code, Section 327, and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

This hearing was advertised consistent with federal and state requirements and is being conducted in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. This information is provided in the project brochure and can be found at the sign-in table as well.

This is your opportunity to receive information on the Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E study and officially provide your comments and to be included in the public hearing record for the PD&E study. The total distance is approximately 3.2 miles. The proposed shared use path, or trail, is expected to range in width from 10 to 12 feet in most areas, but may be as narrow as 8 feet along Fridy Place. The trail will be constructed mostly within existing roadway rights-of-way, a combination of state and local roads. Additional right-of-way will be required in several areas as shown on the concept plans on display at today's hearing.

Trail bridges are proposed at two locations:

Across Cortez Boulevard south of West Jefferson

Street, (State Road 50A), and over the CSX Transportation

Railroad at Broad Street just west of downtown

Brooksville. A box culvert extension is proposed over

1.3

Wombles Creek. The trail surface is proposed to be asphalt for most areas and required improvements to drainage conveyances will be determined during the design phase which is already underway.

Now I am going to give you some information about right-of-way acquisition and how you can make comments on the project.

On projects such as this, one of the unavoidable consequences is the necessary acquisition of properties and the relocation of families and businesses. On this project, however, we anticipate no relocations.

Informational brochures describing the acquisition process are available this evening at the right-of-way table.

In addition to the printed material, experienced right-of-way specialists who are familiar with the acquisition process are available this evening to answer your questions.

Daniel Mack, if you would, please stand so that anyone who is an affected property owner, displaced resident, or displaced business will know who to see to discuss these issues.

Thank you.

When you arrived this evening you should have received an informational newsletter and a comment form.

1.5

If you weren't able to sign in or did not receive an information packet, please stop by our sign-in table before leaving this evening. You should have also had the opportunity to view the video presentation that is continuously running throughout this public hearing.

Before I continue, I would like to recognize any elected officials or their representatives who are here tonight. I ask that you please stand and introduce yourself for the record.

Seeing none, anyone desiring to make a statement or present written views and/or exhibits regarding the location, conceptual design, social, economic, or environmental effects of the Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E study will now have an opportunity to do so.

If you have completed a speaker's card, please give them to a Department staff member. If you have not received a speaker's card and wish to speak, please raise your hand so that we can get you a card to complete.

In addition to making an oral statement during this portion of the hearing, you can also make a comment after this presentation to the court reporter who is here tonight.

You can also submit your comments to the Department in writing. Comment forms can be placed in one of the comment boxes this evening, or you can complete the form

at a later date and mail it to us at the pre-printed address on the back of the sheet. You can also email comments to us at the project website found on the front of the handout. Please keep in mind that comments must be postmarked or emailed no later than Monday, March 25, 2019, to be included in the official public hearing record.

At this time, we will begin taking public comments. I will call each speaker in the order in which their request was received.

Please limit your comments to the Good Neighbor
Trail Gap PD&E study and keep them to three minutes to
allow everyone an opportunity to speak.

Those who wish to provide additional comments may return to the microphone following the last speaker or you may present your additional comments related to the . PD&E study directly with the court reporter after the formal session has concluded.

As I call your name, please step to the microphone and state your name and address clearly into the microphone before making your comment.

If you represent an organization, municipality or other public agency, please provide that information as well.

The first speaker is Rob Nicholes. Please come to

2.0

the microphone.

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MR. NICHOLES: Do I need a microphone? I'm pretty loud.

Okay. My name's Rob Nicholes. I'm a resident of Brooksville. My wife and I are frequent bike riders of the Withlacoochee State Trail.

Thank you for the public meeting. Great boards. Good information. Everybody did a great job on that.

Just, obviously, a lot of questions.

You know, how are you going to snake it through downtown and get it over there?

So I think you did a good job. I've got two comments and two questions. One comment you can point me to who I need to go to.

First off, there's 14 sites listed as having some sort of hazardous waste. What kind of waste is it and how bad is it?

My wife and I find that stunning that there's that many along -- I mean you're literally on the right-of-way and it's a little surprising. That's the first question.

The second one I'll say is a concern. When you are crossing 98 and 41 on the southbound side, people fly around that corner. Are you going to have warning lights that you can push that tell people we're going to cross with the biking? We're not going to slow down in the

middle of the road. I know that that's been done up on the Withlacoochee on the upper end in one of the bigger roads.

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2.4

So I guess that's a question, because in my mind one of the reasons I came is -- and by that, they are flying coming around there. And so, you know, let's don't be one of the statistics of being the worst bicycle places in the world.

The other comment has pushed me to write (sic) the DOT person. Are they going to install bathrooms? And where? Because it's a long ride, gang, I've got to tell you.

So if there's somebody you can point me to to ask that question, it's not related to this, I understand, but going from there, that's all I have.

MR. BOGEN: You can see me after the -- I can answer most of those or I'll point you in the direction of Justin, our Design Project Manager, that can answer some of those questions also.

Is there anyone else who would like to make a statement?

Seeing none, the Public Hearing transcript,
written statements, exhibits and reference materials
will be available for public inspection at the District
Seven Office at 11201 North McKinley Drive, Tampa,

It is approximately 6:40. I hereby officially close the formal portion of the public hearing for the Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E study.

You may continue to view the material on display and speak with our project staff on behalf of the Florida Department of Transportation.

Thank you for attending. Remember to be alert today, alive tomorrow. Safety doesn't happen by accident.

Good night and drive safely.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION

The Florida Department of Transportation, or FDOT, welcomes you to the Public Hearing for the Project

Development and Environment or PD&E study of the Good

Neighbor Trail.

The purpose of today's hearing is to afford attendees the opportunity to express their views on the proposed Good Neighbor Trail Gap in Brooksville.

Public participation at today's hearing is solicited without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap or family status.

This public hearing is being conducted in accordance with all federal, state and local requirements. These regulations are listed on a citations board near the sign-in table.

The Good Neighbor Gap Trail is proposed to begin along State Road 50 west of Cortez Boulevard/Cobb Road and extend through Brooksville to the beginning of the existing Good Neighbor Trail located on South Main Street. The proposed path runs through both Tom Varn and Bud McKethan Parks and also connects to downtown Brooksville. The total length of the proposed trail is currently 3.2 miles.

The purpose of the project is to complete a missing

link in the state-wide Coast to Coast Trail. This
project will help provide safe, non-vehicular
transportation and recreation to residents and visitors
traveling within and beyond the study area. Potential
project benefits include increased business activity,
tourism, improved quality of life, improved public
health and increased property values.

The proposed trail will complete a 3.2 mile gap in the Coast to Coast Trail. When completed, the Coast to Coast Trail will be 250 miles long, spanning the state from Coast to Coast.

An earlier corridor and alignment study was completed in 2016 for the Hernando Citrus Metropòlitan Planning Organization or MPO. The study was conducted and approved and it serves as the basis for the PD&E.

The proposed alignment from the current PD&E study deviates slightly from the MPO's study preferred alignment in several areas. The deviations are at locations circled in yellow. These deviations were due to the result of the need to minimize right-of-way and business impacts and constructability issues. These differences are documented in the draft Preliminary Engineering Report which is on display at today's hearing.

Depending on the location along the trail, various

types of trail typical sections will be utilized. This is an example of an urban trail typical section, which will be used in many areas along the proposed trail where the existing roadway has curb and gutter.

These are examples of rural trail typical sections, which will be used along West Jefferson Street, east of Cobb Road, where the existing right-of-way is wider and drainage is handled by ditches.

The trail is currently proposed to cross Cortez Boulevard on an overpass south of the intersection of State Road 50 and Cobb Road at Whitfield Avenue.

This is a computer rendering of the recommended bridge over Cortez Boulevard looking north. There are stairs near the left side of the photo which connect the sidewalk on Cortez Boulevard to the trail bridge.

An overpass is also proposed to be constructed over the CSX rail line, adjacent to the south side of Broad Street just east of Hale Avenue.

The bottom image is a computer rendering of how a steel truss bridge structure might look at this location.

A trail spur is proposed on South Main Street between Broad Street and Liberty Street connecting the trail to downtown. The proposed trail would widen the existing sidewalk by removing the parking lane on the

west side of Main Street. A similar spur is proposed on Broad Street between North Orange Avenue and South Main Street.

On Main Street south of Liberty Street, the existing parking lane on the west side of the roadway is proposed to be eliminated to accommodate a 10-foot trail.

A Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (or CRAS)

Report was prepared to identify any archaeological sites and historic resources and assess their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

As a result of the CRAS, four historic resources were identified. These included the Brooksville Overpass over the CSX railroad, the Downtown Brooksville Historic District, 140 Main Street, and Brooksville Lumber.

In addition, a Draft Section 106 Consultation Case Study Report was prepared to assess the expected effects of the proposed trail project on these historic properties. The Draft report's findings suggest no adverse effect to the historic resources identified.

The federal study process requires addressing involvement with public park lands which are considered as potential Section 4(f) resources and protected by federal laws. Potential impacts to Tom Varn and Bud McKethan Parks were excepted from the requirement for

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Section 4(f) evaluation since the city previously dedicated a proposed trail right-of-way through these parks. In addition, transportation enhancement projects are excepted from Section 4(f) action for this type of project where the proposed improvement is intended to enhance the qualities of the park.

An evaluation matrix is on display at today's hearing. This chart shows the expected environmental effects portion of the matrix. Overall, the expected environmental effects of this project are very minimal, and potential benefits of the proposed trail could include improving safety, community connectivity and enhanced quality of life, economic development and increased property values through greater access and mobility.

Right-of-way acquisition will be required in several areas along the proposed trail alignment; these areas are outlined in yellow on the map shown here.

More detailed information is shown on the conceptual design plots on display as well as in the concept plans.

We are currently in the PD&E study and final design phases. Right-of-way acquisition is funded to begin in this fiscal year 2019. Construction is funded to begin in fiscal year 2022.

The recommended build alternative is currently

estimated to cost approximately 19.4 million in today's dollars.

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Following today's hearing, the Project Team will review all public input. They will document the preferred alternative, finalize the study documents, and complete the PD&E study. In the next few months, the final documents will be submitted to FDOT's Office of Environmental Management for review and approval on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration. We expect the PD&E study to be completed by late summer of this year.

This public hearing is an opportunity for you to ask questions and offer comments on this study. Project representatives are available to provide more detailed information and to address your questions.

There are several ways to comment as part of the public hearing record. All comments received will be reviewed and considered in the study analysis regardless of how they are submitted.

You can speak directly with the court reporter at this hearing. You may make a statement during the formal portion of today's hearing. You may complete the comment form provided and drop it in one of the comment boxes today. You may input comments onto the comment page of the project website, and you may mail written comments to

the address listed on the back of the form.

Please return this form postmarked by March 25, 2019, so your comments can become part of the PD&E study public hearing record.

Copies of today's hearing materials will be available on the project's website.

Draft study reports are available for review at this hearing and have been on public display at a public library in Hernando County and at the FDOT's District Seven Office.

The Florida Department of Transportation thanks you for your participation at this public hearing and for your interest in this planned project. For additional information visit the project website at www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail.

Remember to be alert today, alive tomorrow. Safety doesn't happen by accident.

1 STATE OF FLORIDA 2 COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH 3 4 5 I, CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, Registered Merit 6 Reporter, Registered Florida Reporter, and Notary Public 7 in and for the State of Florida at large, hereby certify 8 that the proceedings were recorded in Stenotypy by me and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and 9 10 correct transcription of my recordings thereof. 11 12 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither an 13 attorney nor of counsel for the parties to this cause 14 nor a relative or employee of any attorney or party 15 connected with this public hearing and that I have no 16 interest in the outcome of this action. 17 18 WITNESS my hand and seal this 26th day of 19 March, 2019, at Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida. 20 21 Cathy J. Johnson Messina CATHY J. JOHNSON MESSINA, RMR, FPR 22 Registered Merit Reporter Florida Professional Reporter 23 MY COMMISSION NO: GG 47870 24 NOTARY ID NO.: 276780 EXPIRES: December 17, 2020 25

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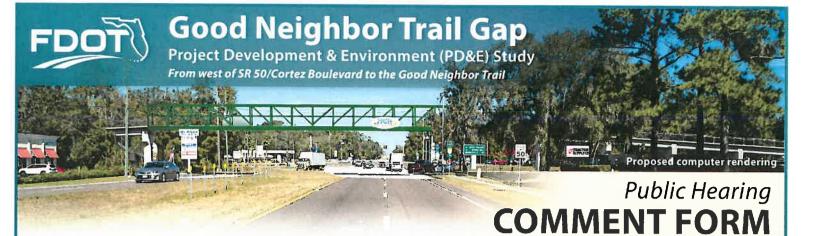
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# Appendix D

**Public Hearing Comments** 



Comments may be provided in one of three ways: complete the form and place in the "comments" box, mail comments to the address on the back of this form, or visit our website at www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/.

Comments must be postmarked by March 25, 2019 to become part of the official public hearing record.

between the postulative by march 25, 2015 to become part of the official public flearing fectors.
Comments on Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study (WPI Segment No. 437264-2)
I would like to respectfully request
that the Bailey 3' Lemon St connections
between Broad St. & Liberty St be
actively considered as atternatives
to running the trail through the
narrow space between the Brooksville
Common & the 1st United Methodist
Church, Thank you - I am excited about
Name (Print): Paula Whitaker this project.
Address: 1175. Brooksville Ave. City, State, Zip: Brooksville, FL 3460/
Reducille Til 241-51
City, State, Zip: JSOOKSVILLE, FL STOOT
Email: leen paula whitaker a gnail con
☐ Please add me to the study notification list.
Note: This is public record. Public participation is solicited without regard to race color national origin age sex religion disability or family status. You may submit comments at this quarter are set.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of

Comuníquese con nosotros: Nos importa mucho la opinión del público sobre el proyecto. Si tiene preguntas o comentarios, o simplemente desea más información, por favor comuníquese con nosotros.

Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S. C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

comments to: Alex.Henry@dot.state.fl.us and/or mail to Florida Department of Transportation, 11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-500, Tampa, Florida 33612.

Nuestra representante en español es: Lilliam E. Escalera, (813) 975-6445, lilliam escalera@dot.state.fl.us.



COMMENT FORM

Comments may be provided in one of three ways: complete the form and place in the "comments" box, mail comments to the address on the back of this form, or visit our website at www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/.

Comments must be postmarked by March 25, 2019 to become part of the official public hearing record.

Comments on Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study (WPI Segment No. 437264-2)
I AM 100% IN FAVOR OF COMPLETING
THE COAST-2-COAST TRAIL AND
ESPECIALLY THE GOOD NEIGHBOR TRAIL
GAP THROUGH BROOKBVILLE. IT CAN
THE NOTHING BUT SOOD FOR THE
COMMUNITY.
LET'S DO IT
Name (Print): DENNIS HEHLBE
Address: 508 JEWEL STRACT
City, State, Zip: 101280 1014 FL 34601-1211
Email: DHENIZE & AOL-COM
☐ Please add me to the study notification list.
Note: This is public record. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. You may submit comments at this event or email comments to: Alex.Henry@dot.state.fl.us and/or mail to Florida Department of Transportation, 11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-500, Tampa, Florida 33612.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S. C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

Comuníquese con nosotros: Nos importa mucho la opinión del público sobre el proyecto. Si tiene preguntas o comentarios, o simplemente desea más información, por favor comuníquese con nosotros. Nuestra representante en español es: Lilliam E. Escalera, (813) 975-6445, lilliam.escalera@dot.state.fl.us.



# **Public Hearing COMMENT FORM**

Comments may be provided in one of three ways: complete the form and place in the "comments" box, mail comments to the address on the back of this form, or visit our website at www.active.fdotd7studies.com/good-neighbor-trail/.

Comments must be postmarked by March 25, 2019 to become part of the official public hearing record.

Comments on Good Neighbor Trail Gap PD&E Study (WPI Segment No. 437264-2)
VES, PLEASE! COOKS GREAT & I'M  EAGER TO'SEE IT FINISHED.
THANK YOU FOR THIS AT LONG LAST
ELOVE THE BORIDGES - DONT CANE ABOUT THE COLOR, BUT DURABILITY MOST IMPORTANT
Name (Print): TNA HENIZE
Address: 508 DEWELST
City, State, Zip: Brooksvick PC 34601
Email: favenze ao . com
Please add me to the study notification list.
Note: This is public record. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. You may submit comments at this event or email comments to: Alex.Henry@dot.state.fl.us and/or mail to Florida Department of Transportation, 11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-500, Tampa, Florida 33612.
The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S. C. §327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14,2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.

Comuníquese con nosotros. Nos importa mucho la opinión del público sobre el proyecto. Si tiene preguntas o comentarios, o simplemente desea más información, por favor comuníquese con nosotros.

Nuestra representante en español es: Lilliam E. Escalera, (813) 975-6445, lilliam.escalera@dot.state.fl.us.