

BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Fort Myers Collaboratory

2031 Jackson Street,

Fort Myers, FL 33901

10:00 a.m.



AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call/Introductions**
3. **Public Comments on Items on the Agenda**
4. *Approval of the May 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes
5. School District of Lee County Update (Joel DeGuzman)
6. Discussion of SRTS Project Proposals (Ron Gogoi)
7. Immokalee Tiger Grant Presentation (Mike Tisch)
8. Rail Trail Study Public Meeting Report (Ron Gogoi)
9. Summary of April Florida Greenways and Trails Council Meeting (Scott Stryker)
10. FDOT/MPO/Local Agency Updates
11. Public and Member Comments on Items not on the Agenda
12. Announcements
13. Information and Distribution Items

Adjournment

*Action Items +May Require Action

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2031 Jackson Street,

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10:00 a.m.



Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order

The in-person meeting was called to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. by BPCCC Chair Teresa Lewis.

Agenda Item #2 - Roll Call/Introductions

MPO staff called and recorded the roll. There was a quorum. Those in attendance included:

From the BPCCC

Carl Karakos	City of Fort Myers
David Wagley	Lee County Department of Community Development
Diane Holm	Injury Prevention Coalition
Farhan Butt	Lee County Department of Community Development
Henry Burden	Member-at-Large/Vice-Chair
James Lear	Cape Coral Police Department
Jennifer Hagen	Member-at-Large
Jorge Puente	LeeTran
Lee Waller	Lee County Parks and Recreation
Rachel Pierce	City of Sanibel
Scott Stryker	Village of Estero
Sean Gibbons	City of Bonita Springs
Syndi Bultman	Lee Health Trauma Services
Teresa Lewis	Member-at-Large/Chair
Tracey Walton	Lee Health Trauma Services

Others in attendance included Ron Gogoi with the Lee County MPO; Thomas Marquardt with Lee County DOT; Jodi Walborn with the Blue Zones Project SWFL; Sanibel Councilmember Michael Miller; Bill Spikowski with Spikowski Planning Associates; Matthew Dockins with RK&K; Steven Andrews with FDOT; LCSO detail Deputy Mason Weiss.

Agenda Item #3 - Public Comments on Items on the Agenda

There were no public comments on items on the agenda.

Agenda Item #4 - *April 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Jennifer Hagen made the motion to approve the April 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes. Mr. Carl Karakos seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #5 - *BPCCC Bylaws Amendment

Mr. Ron Gogoi stated that he would not go over the changes again as they were presented at the April BPCCC meeting. But he noted that two of the additional changes that the committee had asked including

examples of emerging technology and correction of the reference to the number of municipalities have now been incorporated, and he showed those changes in a slide.

Mr. Henry Burden made the motion to amend the BPCC bylaws. Mr. Scott Stryker seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #6 - *TA & SU Multimodal Box and Carbon Reduction Program Priorities

Mr. Ron Gogoi presented this item for the review and approval. The priorities, rankings, and evaluation criteria were all attached to the agenda packet, [posted to the MPO website](#). He presented slides of the recommended priorities, total costs of projects, approximate MPO funds available for programming the projects over 7 years covering FY 2022 through FY 2028. He mentioned that evaluation criteria were used to rank only the bike ped projects. He also explained the prioritization process for the projects which included a mix of transit, bike ped and intersection improvement projects. Priority order for the projects were finally assigned after considering factors including whether any of the funding requests had a pre-construction phase already in the pipeline, the 30:50:20 spending ratio respectively that the MPO typically employs to spend available dollar among transit/bike ped/intersection improvements projects, and the ranking of bike ped projects. His presentation can be viewed as slides 3 through 12 at the following link: [PRIORITIES](#)

To a request regarding a clarification on the new Carbon Reduction Program and the projects that were eligible for such funds, Mr. Gogoi responded that staff was waiting on more information from FDOT on the funding strategy and the funding availability. Based on the BIL released directives, the funds can be spent on projects that reduce carbon emissions including purchase of transit buses especially fleet replacement with electric vehicles, bike/ped/trail projects, intersection projects that reduce idling time. There are already projects among the TA and SU multimodal priorities (such as the City of Fort Myers Carbon Reduction Project) that when FDOT make the funds available, staff will be able to work with FDOT to quickly program some projects.

Mr. Carl Karakos made the motion to approve the TA and SU Multimodal Box Fund Priorities. Mr. Henry Burden seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #7 - Old US 41 PD&E Study Presentation

Mr. Steven Andrews with FDOT introduced Mr. Matthew Dockins with RK&K who then proceeded to present the Old US 41 PD&E Study. Mr. Dockins presentation covered project goals and need, project alternatives, explanation of the new quadrant roadway that cuts across the Greyhound Track property, new traffic signals and roundabouts, evaluation matrix, project timeline, public workshop, comments, next steps, and contact information. The presentation can be viewed here: [OLD US 41](#). Mr. Stryker asked and received clarification on the bike lanes and shared use path width differences in the Collier and Lee County portions. Mr. Dockins also noted that the roundabout option at the intersection of the new quadrant roadway and Old 41 will result in four lanes on Old 41 from the quadrant roadway to Bonita Beach Road but three lanes only (two southbound and one northbound) if the option is a traffic signal. To a question by Mr. Karakos on the type of funds used to fund this study, Mr. Gogoi clarified that the project was funded with the state's (FDOT), Lee and Collier MPO's individual shares of federal allocated dollars.

Agenda Item #8 - Discussion of New SUN Trail Project Proposals

Mr. Gogoi presented this item. He mentioned that this item was in response to the D1 Bike Ped Coordinator's report at the April BPCC meeting regarding a call for new SUN Trail Program proposals either in the fall of this year or early spring next year. MPO staff wanted to have an early discussion

through this item regarding potential projects after looking into the status of the Lee County Sun Trail network in terms of completed and existing trails, gaps, constrained segments etc. He called out segments which could be looked into future proposals including a project on SR 80 east of Buckingham Road, the replacement of the 6' sidewalks in the existing JYLP Trail south of Daniels with at least 10' wide shared use path, replacing 6' sidewalk on the west side of Imperial Parkway where there seems to be available right of way with a shared use path, and considering the gap on Pine Ridge Road connecting San Carlos Road with Summerlin Road for a potential shared use path . In addition, there may be new SUN Trail projects that may come out from the ongoing Rail Trail Feasibility Study, the Ft Myers Downtown Alternative Study which is yet to be funded. He also called out the Kismet Pkwy shared use path east of Del Prado Blvd and the Estero Blvd shared use path west of Big Carlos to Hickory Blvd which have been already submitted for SUN Trail funds. Mr. Henry Burden mentioned that FDOT constructed the eight foot wide shared use path on the south side of SR 80 at 90 degree angles at a few locations where the shared use path alignment changed. He then asked for a motion that FDOT be notified and be asked to fix those angles or post safety signs as they will create unsafe situations for cyclists.

Mr. Scott Stryker made the motion to notify FDOT and ask them to fix the ninety degree turns on the newly installed 8' wide sidewalks on the south side of SR 80. Ms. Jennifer Hagen seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

The presentation can be viewed here: [SUN Trail](#). Mr. Gogoi called upon Bill Spikowski to provide a quick update on the Rail Trail Feasibility Study. Mr. Bill Spikowski announced a June 2nd public meeting to discuss the three alternatives of the study so that the input received can be used towards developing a preferred alternative. There was a discussion that followed on using the rail corridor for multimodal uses including rail and transit and a rail vision. Mr. Spikowski called attention to the Lee MPO conducted rail feasibility study that was from 2013 that already established a vision and rail options, and the resulting efforts from that study to preserve the rail corridor. This had resulted in including language in the individual local governments comp plans to preserve the rail corridor. Chair Lewis asked if the discussion on the rail corridor could come back as an agenda item at the next meeting to get post Jul 2nd public meeting comments. Mr. Gogoi said the committee will get a presentation from the consultant after the feasibility study is completed in October.

Agenda Item #9 - FDOT/MPO/Local Agency Updates

Ms. Jennifer Hagen reported on a Streets Alive of SWFL presentation to the MPO Board on May 13 requesting supplemental funding for a full time position Lee County bike ped. Ms. Syndi Bultman provided information on the progress of the MPO funded public service announcements (PSAs) completed by local high school students airing on WINK TV channels soon. Ms. Bultman said she would provide links to the PSAs once the production versions are finalized. Mr. Gogoi said Ms. Bultman would be providing a presentation at the June BPCC meeting. Ms. Bultman commented on the topics of her upcoming presentation and gave an example of recent poor driver behavior. Mr. Sean Gibbons reported on Bonita Springs project updates. Mr. Carl Karakos mentioned the upcoming conversions of First and Second Streets. The committee briefly discussed Fowler Street alignments.

Agenda Item #10 - Public and Member Comments on Items not on the Agenda

There were no public comments on items on the agenda.

Agenda Item #11 – Announcements

There were no announcements.

Agenda Item #12 - Information and Distribution Items

There were no information and/or distribution items.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m.

An audio recording of the meeting can be accessed at the following link: [May 24, 2022 BPCC Audio](#)

***Action Items *May Require Action**

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LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT PRESENTATION

INFORMATION ITEM:

At the June 28th BPCC meeting, Joel DeGuzman with the School District of Lee County will provide a presentation on existing and new anticipated student enrollment in Lee County, school infrastructure needs, proposed new schools and their potential locations, project updates on schools currently under construction, school reopening plan, etc.

DISCUSSION OF SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL PROJECTS

DISCUSSION ITEM:

At the June 28th BPCC meeting, MPO staff will initiate a discussion on the potential Safe Route to Schools (SRTS) projects in anticipation of the 2022 call for projects for SRTS Program funds. The BPCC members from local government agencies have already been contacted and are being asked to bring their proposals to this meeting for discussion and input, as part of the project vetting process.

Lee County School District Planning staff will help the local governments in undertaking essential tasks to assist in the application development process. The project applicants (local governments) will be responsible for completing and submitting their applications through FDOT's Grant Application Process (GAP).

MPO staff has reached out to FDOT to find out if anything is expected to change in the application process, like the funding that will be available, and staff will report this information at the June 28th meeting.

IMMOKALEE TIGER GRANT PRESENTATION

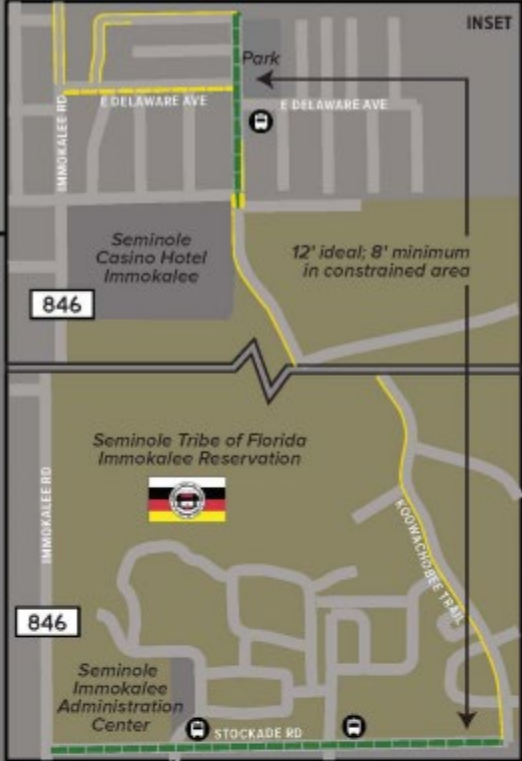
INFORMATION ITEM:

At the June 28th BPCC meeting, Collier County Transportation Services Department will provide a presentation on the Immokalee Complete Streets project. This is a Design/Build project that includes sidewalks, drainage improvements, CAT bus stops and a transfer station and lighting. The project is funded with a \$22,869,280 TIGER grant. **Attached** is a map from the application showing the proposed improvements.

Immokalee Complete Streets Project
TIGER Grant Application 2017

PROJECT AREA MAP

- Existing Sidewalk
- Proposed Sidewalk with Drainage Improvements
- Proposed Bike Boulevard
- Proposed Multi-Use Path
- Bus Stop
- Transfer Station
- Employment
- Education
- Health
- Community Center/Recreation
- Agricultural



RAIL TRAIL STUDY PUBLIC MEETING REPORT

INFORMATION ITEM:

The Lee County MPO held a public meeting on June 2, 2022, at the Estero Recreation Center for the Rail Trail Feasibility Study. Comments from the meeting and a summary report are **attached**. The MPO staff will provide a report on the results of the public meeting at the June 28th BPCC meeting.



PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMENT SUMMARY

Lee County MPO Rail Trail Feasibility Study

Written comments from:
June 2, 2022, Public Meeting
Comments received from website
Comments received by email

Public Information Meetings Comment Summary

Alternative #1 – Rail to Trail

Comment: #1 makes most sense, cost wise and location wise. This model has been successfully implemented in many areas of the country.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: I am an avid cyclist, walker, & wildlife lover. My view is our area is in high need of trails & parks. This is the perfect opportunity to create a destination.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: I am a resident at Mirasol at Coconut Point. Our community would support a path with appropriate security considerations for our development.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Buy the land make it happen!

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Safe biking- need #1 rails to trails.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative # 2 would be way to noise-prone and would devalue the pedestrian\bike trail experience. I would hate the noise of the trains. Also- the creosote contamination would be an on-going threat to health.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative # 1

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: This would improve Rails for trails safety, beautification, and athletic environment for all who appreciate the outdoors. Please make this happen to our community.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative 1 is less expensive to build and far less disruptive and far more inclusive – across on both sides. Let's do a deal with Sem Gulf and make this happen in our lifetimes.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Would love to see the rails taken up and lowered into a bike hiking trail the tracks go through our community.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Take up the hauls and make a bike hike trail.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Considering cost, accessibility and safety, option one is the only logical and practical choice. Option two is acceptable only if all means of track removal are exhausted without positive results. It will present hazards due to track crossings and debris. Option three is unacceptable.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: It may be advantages to get the state involved during the acquisition phase, with potential handoff to local municipalities for maintenance.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Get rid of rail and go with trail in Alt. 1

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Great use of these railroad tracks! Hoping this feasibility study leads to public support and implementation of Alternative 1.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: #3 Car path is a deal killer and dangerous unended. #2 path/rail – why? Expensive and who would use it? #1 is the way to go!

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: #1 best way to go, #2 is expensive and unnecessary, #3 is dangerous.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Linear Park idea is best.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: No 3 would be a hazard! Defeats the purpose of a nature trail. #2 is ridiculous. Would not be used and would cost a lot more money than #1. This trail runs through residential communities so #2 and #3 would greatly negatively affect those communities for safety and noise.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Great project! Let's figure out a way to make this happen!

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative # 1

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative # 1

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alt #1 s the most pedestrian friendly option. Alt #2 I do not want to walk by train track or road.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Ridden on multiple rails to trails in Illinois much safer than most trails next roads- some paved, some stone Illinois Prairie Park is one of the oldest rail to trail examples and joy to use. Suggest only considering rail to trail

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: A rails to trails on rails with trails would be the safest route with the least number of interactions with cars on roadways and should really be the only two options to choose from.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Safety #1 concern. It would be nice if the owners was also a benefactor and perhaps the trail would be named after the owner. Our community lost 2 people due to road accidents

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Whichever alternative there has to be markings for pedestrian (walkers)! Public transportation links to access. Native plants only on any landscaping. Permeable surface on any grading.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Two lanes going both ways one lane for bicyclers and one lane for walkers.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Pls avoid mixed use paths cement from biking enthusiast I know! I am on a mixed use and so is lady walking a dog on a leash. How do you think that turns out?? "Need separate 2-way paths for bikes only! Separate walking paths. Maybe we can entice the rec. cyclist off the highways.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Rail to trail is the best alternative. The cost to repair the tracks exceed any benefit to the area.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Cleanest – Best looking alternative. Best use of the property.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Allows the most space for walkers, bikers

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: A. #3 defeats the purpose. Bikers and walkers are trying to get away from roads, noise, pollution
B. E-bikes are here to stay. Based on recent experiences in Euro cities and rail to trail pathways in Delaware paths need to be wider to accommodate addition of e-bikes. Ideally, a separate pathway for walkers and family and a separate pathway for bikers.
C. if you do this do it right. Please don't fall into the trap of doing something because area has nothing, the pathway will not be used if it is not biker and walker friendly for all ages and physical capabilities. Thank you this is a great start!

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative 1 – rail to trail. Let's do it!

Benefits:

1. A rail to trail

- Safety- it super dangerous right now here. Three Oaks is dangerous, 41 is dangerous
- Added green space – 2009
- Benefit to community, mixed use
- Benefit of nature
- Value of our increase the overall community
- People who live close to the bike path your property values will definitely go up – this is an amenity people want

Alternative 1 combines green space and recreational which we lack
Light rail – now people are not using it
Sarasota Referendum –
Legacy trail trails to rails between Venice and Sarasota – the road crossing they put in a re brille.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Alternative #2 – Rail with Trail

Comment: We need more trails, and this trail needs to connect to the Paradise Coast Trail.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: I agree with the visionary plan for allowing future use for mass transit. We need these safe bike trails!! I also agree it should continue past Bonita Beach Rd to the actual Lee County and Collier County line Thank you I am in full support of this plan.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative # 2

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Additional Considerations #2

1. Resiliency – ability to use passenger rail to evacuate (population exceed current road capacity)-
2. Equity – passenger rail for people to work/ reduce costs of transportation
3. Risks to mitigate – mixed use conflict between people and trains
4. Keep a future for rail

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: A successful project requires a champion. Who is the champion? Where is the champion?

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: It is important to maintain N's right of way for long term planning. Not in favor of road only alternative both safety and lack of control of right of way. Only alternative that makes sense is #2 rail with trail. Think this would also improve funding.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Rail with trail gives the multiuse path a chance and keeps space for future light rail projects. Best of both.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: The project ROW issues of the #3 will make this a very difficult project and does not offer safety for users. #2 offer road for possibility of maybe using the railroad for future light rail; commute. The challenges of the matrix can be appressed with creativity. #1 is a great option but does not provide some of the great connectivity.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Thank you for trying to save bikers lives! Dedicated trails are the answer.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Save the rail

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Rail with trail makes sense for any future use or purchasing the rail in the future. This will be more scenic route with the rail. It seems like a good conservation issue to maintain the rail even it would need repair for future use.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Amtrak plans to reinstate the Florida from Chicago to Nashville Tenn. to Atlanta Ga to Savannah Ga to Jacksonville Fl to Palatka to Sanford to Orlando to Kissimmee to Lakeland Fl from the South as of Florida Area Tampa Sarasota to the Fort Myers Naples are new passenger station will be paved by Amtrak as well as track upgrades. Also, 1st 2 years by fare fox shortfall. ALSO, all RR crossings part improvements.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative # 2

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Much needed asset to Estero

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: I before this meeting would have picked Alt #1, have personally travelled the Pinellas trail, and trail in Venice, but if there was any chance of future passenger rail that would make Alt #2 my pick.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: We can get private funding/donors. We need this ASAP.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Keeping the rail line a possibility for future is the smart move. Hopefully we will eventually get a passenger train to service SWFL.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Alternative #1 – Rail to Trail or Alternative #2 – Rail with Trail

Comment: A safe bike trail is the thing I have missed most since moving here. Living in San Carlos I would bike this trail all the time! My dad is a very serious spandex biker and I know he would use the trail -daily- safety green space. I really support this. Option 1 or 2.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Alternative 1 and 2 are they only options that afford truly safe, healthy bike/ped experiences for local and visiting users beyond that the rail corridor is now on eyesore and blight that diminishes adjacent property values. I realize that corridor is not technically “abandoned” but functionally it is therefore for purposes of the greater good public acquisition and utilization is the only valuable option.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Plans 1 and 2 are the most viable options. Imperative we know what SGG wants for the sale of their RR Row. Also, taking into consideration the possible use of the RR Row for light rail commute service, is the ROW wide enough for dual use?

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: My initial thought, why alternative 3 even considered under a rail to trail concept? To me this goes against the idea of safe recreational bicycling without the noise, pollution and danger of a busy traffic clogged roadway. This is no different than the sidewalks along US 41, Ben Hill Griffin and other busy roadways in our area that see little bike and pedestrian use.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: I find alternative 1 and 2 to be very desirable. Without costs for ROW, utilities and any environmental costs it is impossible to make a decision

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: My adult son and I enjoy riding our bikes together. He has special needs and has to use a recumbent trike for his safety. But this leads to his safety or lack of safety when riding on street and public roads. No amount of flags and bright clothing can suppress the stress I feel with cars whizzing by and not moving over. We live close to Coconut Point Mall and would highly benefit from this trail and are over convinced this trail would help my son have a better quality of life. Thank you for your time.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Alternative #3 – Trail Alignment Adjacent to Road

Comment: Unless an elevated portion is developed to cross Vintage Tree Parkway – Design #1 and #2 aside a private gated golf community in half. Option #3 takes the trail away from my community. How will we keep our safe and private w pedestrians traffic crossing our roads? Safety – also folks being struck by golf balls? Who would be liable injury.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: My feelings are that a public path should not go thru a gated community. Alternatives are available and should be given the highest priority in order to not impact a community that is gated and fenced for security reasons. Homes where purchased.

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Being that I live in the vines, which is a gated community with a golf course, I do not support and version that comes int. our community. There would be concerns for security, safety, among others

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

Comment: Please don't put the trail; straight through the Vines community. It is a public community public community you would be opening up to the public. Thank you!

Public Meeting June 2, 2022

DRAFT

Email Comment Summary

Alternative #1 – Rail to Trail

N/A

Alternative #2 – Rail with Trail

Comment: Our team reviewed the 18 Month project plan and tasks for ALL three alternatives. We are interested in learning more details about the discovery made for these tasks about the other options. Not having and knowing the task details and postponing the discussion about costs, we made our assessment for each option and developed a position. Once we gather more task details, we will update our review and provide more feedback. Our team recommends **Alternative two (2)** as the best alternative for all residents, including pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities. **Alternative 2 – Rail-with-trail A rail-with-trail alignment parallels the Seminole Gulf Railway (SGLR) corridor rail line. The path would be built within the railroad right-of-way (ROW) on one side of the rail line. This allows the rail to continue to be operational.**

This alternative provides more flexibility and could address longer-term uses of the Seminole Gulf Railway (SGLR) corridor. Preserving the rail line while building a Bicycle/Pedestrian/Alternative multi-use vehicle pathway for recreation and commuting; making it a unique (iconic) feature/reason to visit the Greater Estero Communities.

Supporting Details for Each Alternative

Alternative One (1)

Rail-to-trail A rail-to-trail alignment is within the SGLR corridor. This alternative is a multiuse path converted to a trail from an inactive rail line.

This alternative is better than Alternative 3 as it gives pedestrians and bicyclists a viable option for using the existing roads. Our team believes that taking away the rail will eliminate the potential use of the railway for light rail use to move people between communities and cities. We believe light rail use can be created to benefit Lee County and Greater Estero Communities.

Alternative Two (2)

Rail-with-trail A rail-with-trail alignment parallels the Seminole Gulf Railway (SGLR) corridor rail line. The path would be built within the railroad right-of-way on one side of the rail line. This allows the rail to continue to be operational.

Our team recommends we start with this alternative. Alternative 2 offers the most versatile and long-term resolution, and it provides the best starting position for discussing viable solutions for using the Rail and Trails. Alternate transportation modes are required to address the growing population and benefit the region by attracting more cyclists for eco-tourism.

Visionary

- Creates a new platform that allows for future use of the rail system, whereas option one eliminates any help, and it is less expensive than Alternative 1 by not removing the rail system.
- By utilizing the existing railway right of way to incorporate a multi-use trail, the pathway can offer safe passage to cyclists, runners, and walkers without needing to purchase the whole railway. Leaving the existing railway allows for future transportation options, including a commuter train or high-speed rail. Creates potential intersections with local East-West trolleys operating in communities along the rail corridor.
- Builds connectivity with other communities and projects. Suppose Bonita Springs agrees to the Rails AND Trails option. In that case, this could connect to the Paradise Coast Trail project happening in Collier County, providing an opportunity for cross county and even cross-state bike tourism. The finished product may be more of a promenade with green space (120' width) and a pathway (20' width). It would be a buffer from the load road noise of the major roads.

Promotes a healthy and safe lifestyle

- The safest option for a proposed multi-use path (no automobiles)
- Creates potential intersections with local East-West trolleys operating in communities along the rail corridor. The best existing rails to trails have several trailheads (that could double as train stops) and connect places of interest; city centers, kiosks, etc.
- Potentially a significant step to becoming a "Blue Zones" branded community. A healthy place to live, work, play, and worship.

Maximizes user engagement of residents and visitors

- Serve residents, snowbirds, and visitors of all ages and abilities using the trails for walking and biking
- Provides a unique feature/reason to visit the Greater Estero Communities that this right-of-way traverses
- Delivers a project that could help residents in communities along the rail right of way connected
- Use of existing "front door" roadways for cars and commercial transportation already
- This is an opportunity to create an iconic feature about Greater Estero to add to its current culture

Alternative Three (3)

Trail Alignment Adjacent to Road A trail alignment runs parallel to the road within the existing ROW. This alignment, sometimes called a side-path, requires ample space between the road and the path for people to comfortably and safely use it.

This alternative on face value can be considered the default as it uses the existing roadways. Suppose the Study to analyze the long-term feasibility of a public multi-use trail within the Seminole Gulf Railway (SGLR) concludes that the rail corridor cannot be utilized. In that case, this alternative will need to be studied to make it safe to use for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities. Current pedestrian walkways/paths need to be reevaluated for long-term viability. Bicycle guardrails, landscaping buffers, intersection traffic signals, and other features will need to be reviewed for all roads and intersections to make it a safer alternative.

Received June 1, 2022

Alternative #1 or Alternative #2 – Rail to Trail

Comment: Prefer option 1 or option 2. Using the existing railroad easement instead of being next to a roadway.

Received May 23, 2022

Alternative #3 – Trail Alignment Adjacent to Road

N/A

General Comments

Comment: I moved here from Carmel Indiana where we had something similar to what is being proposed...it is a wonderful idea!! I have often said that I wish our non-used railways could be also transformed. It allows for safer and more pleasant biking, running and walking. Hope this plan is successful! BTW, Carmel Indiana is also a roundabout Mecca! If Mayor Brainard is available, he would be a good resource for you.

Received May 23, 2022

Comment: Great to meet you last night at the presentation on the potential rail to trail project. I am a sustainability consultant and architect with urban design background (not a planner hahaha), as an experienced MBE/WBE, you may find working synergies in the future. I also wanted to follow up on the private fund's idea of the trail, if that ever happens, I am the president and co-founder of Streets Alive of SWFL, shaping safe communities for pedestrians, and cyclists, and we have created a private fund at Collaboratory (previously known as the SWFL Community Foundation). This fund can be the depository of those private funds. Keep this in mind as the progress evolves; I am about to start promoting public input from our followers via social media. Have a great weekend!

Received June 3, 2022

DRAFT

Webpage Comment Summary

Alternative #1 – Rail to Trail

Comment: My husband and I who bike on the roads would love to see alternative 1. We are finding that the roads can be scary at times with the amount of drivers and distractions. We live in Pelican Landing, and we could access this path easily. Thank you for creating this plan.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: Love to see Alternative #1 happen. Railways not being used is a waste of the beautiful areas. I have been told (some?) communities specifically in Estero pay SLGR annual fees. I would like to know if this is true.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: My husband and I ride regularly within Pelican Landing and Bonita Bay. We ride on the multi-use paths on Coconut Rd and Three Oaks Rd. We avoid the streets outside the developments for safety reasons. There are so few bike paths in SWFL that it really limits us. We are very much in favor of alternative #1, as it will allow for two bicyclists to pass each other in opposite directions or to pass a Walker.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: (My input on Lee Co Rail Trail study alternatives) I became a Lee Co (Bonita Springs) resident this year and have been enjoying area bike rides multiple times a week. I've seen Three Oaks/Imperial, Coconut Rd, Estero Pkwy, Alico, etc. more times than I can count. :) The bike lanes on those roads are great to have -- but still nerve racking often as I keep an eye on my mirror for behavior of approaching rear traffic. It's EXCITING to see progress on this study and to know that Lee Co is willing to improve biking safety in the lower Lee Co area. Unfortunately, I cannot attend the June 6 public meeting. You present the alternatives in my most preferred order: 1 (strongly), then 2, then (if 1 & 2 not possible) 3.

Alt 1: Full conversion to a rail-to-trail a allows wider trail and better (eventual) shading of the trail in both morning and evening. A wider trail could lane allow marking to separate walkers' vs cyclists/skaters to improve safety during passes at larger speed differences. Alt 2: Much better (and less costly and disruptive I expect) than #3. But #2 is much less desirable to trail users than #1. Leaving the rail line probably limits the width of trail.... making it more dangerous for the heavy use it will quickly have. (There are LOTS of active biking groups in the communities in the study area.) The materials don't describe pros/cons of different options. What advantage does #2 even have over #1? Is there really any realistic future use of the old rails? Lower cost to not remove the rails? (Isn't that cost somewhat offset by rail salvage value?) I think it would be better to wait another year or two to gather more funds so #1 can be done instead of #2 if 2's benefit is lower

cost than #1. #3: Least desirable. #3 trail will mostly just get walkers and very slow individual cyclists -- both groups who safely use sidewalks today. I believe most riding pace groups (2-to-9 people with speeds from 13-20 mph) will keep using the (more dangerous) roadside bike-lanes which allow a steady pace to be maintained for longer distances -- AND better general visibility between drivers and bikers. Trying to ride 'at-pace' on road-side trails proposed in #3 will be MORE dangerous than bike-lanes because of the high number of driveway/road crossings --- where visibility is often poor, and drivers DO NOT look well for approaching bikers on such paths. (And other places I ride on similar paths frequently have path blocked by vehicles - causing more safety risks.) Thanks for your time and gathering public input! It's great that this project is occurring. I really hope that #1 (or #2 if not #1) is selected. Have a great summer of 2022!

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: I am avid bike rider. there have been to many bike accidents in our county. This bike (trail number 1) preferred would decrease accidents and deaths dramatically. I also feel it's great Tourist attraction

Received May 21, 2022

Comment: I am strongly in favor of alternative 1. The other options are either unsafe or loud and less attractive. It would be unfortunate to spend so much time to create a new path and wind up with something similar to the walking path along US41. I am a member of the rails to trails conservancy and provide the website below. I encourage u to contact people there get input from them on how to create a fantastic experience for the users of our new trail.
<http://www.railstotrails.org/>

Received May 21, 2022

Comment: Great to have this start option 1 is the best needs to be enough room to allow cyclists and walkers to go in both directions also need wider spaces along the trail for walkers to congregate and rest away from bike traffic. Once the concept is decided there needs to be some careful detail work to get this right. A great asset to the area.

Received May 21, 2022

Comment: I lived in Venice for 8 years before moving to Estero and was spoiled living a quarter mile from The Legacy Trail. I rode it several times a week! On weekends I would ride to Sarasota and back. I was shocked when I moved to Lee County in 2017 to find not only is there nothing similar but there is no where to ride my bike safely. The roads are not bike friendly and actually quite terrifying with distracted drivers. I vote for Alternative #1 because I enjoyed not having to worry about crossing streets except for a few times. There was a long stretch through Oscar Scherer Park where my mind could

escape and I could just enjoy the nature. I would love to have something similar here in Estero! Thanks for making this happen!

Received June 2, 2022

Comment: I submitted my comments by hand at the meeting in Estero in June 2 but I forgot to do my ranking. A lady told me to submit my ranks online.

Received June 2, 2022

Alternative #2 – Rail with Trail

Comment: I am in favor of Alternative #2 that would keep the existing rail lines in place. We never know what the future might bring as far as the need for rail service of some kind, and it would be a shame to eliminate the existing line and have to replace it in the future.

Received May 23, 2022

Comment: I'm glad to see progress on this very important initiative. I think that the area is growing at a rate that will continue to stress north/south transportation with a very few alternatives for relief. Consequently, the best use of the land will be as a rail with trail asset.

Received May 27, 2022

Alternative #1 or Alternative #2 – Rail with Trail

Comment: Any of the three alternatives would be wonderful. I would prefer one or two along the rail line.

Received May 21, 2022

Comment: Very good planning process ... very good. I like alternatives 1 or two very much. up here in the western suburbs of Chicago a number of rail beds have been converted very successfully. The biggest issue you will face as do the trails up here is street crossings. That said I appreciate your efforts and will happily enjoy the results of those efforts.

Received May 23, 2022

Comment: I would love to see alternative 1 or 2 chosen. The option to mirror the road is by far the least attractive. Using a trail that is either created from the unused train track, or at least mirroring the track, would make for a much more pleasant ride. Thank you.

Received May 26, 2022

Comment:

Hello,

My wife and I love to ride bike trails and we are glad to hear this project is moving forward here! We are originally from Minnesota and the trail options there are many and the trails are isolated from traffic and great to ride. We realize growth here has made trail design more difficult.

Our feedback on the designs - we MUCH prefer a rail trail option as it removes traffic as much as possible. So option 1 or 2 seem much better than option 3. I will say what was done last year on Terry street is not bad at all give it's a busy street. The path is wide and well done given it is in the city. The best bike path we have in the area is John Yarbrough - but it's only 6 miles long, so not enough length to get in a decent ride. We have also taken our bikes up to Venice to ride that trail with the connector to Sarasota - that trail is also well done.

So our feedback - please use the railway if possible. And no more Sharrows! They are dangerous to ride and we should not be mixing cars and bikes. If we are building this trail - please build it right - do not cut corners due to cost or difficult decisions. We have spent many weekends away from home to ride our favorite trails - so hotels, bars, restaurants - all get our business where the best trails are. Make this a destination and add to all that this area already has to offer!

Received June 3, 2022

Alternative #3 – Trail Alignment Adjacent to Road

N/A

General comments

Comment: The third option, trail alignment adjacent to road, seems like a very poor idea. The noise from the road would spoil the purpose of a quiet, nature ride/walk. And even with a distance between the trail and the road, it would still be a potentially dangerous situation. I love the idea and hope that it becomes a reality before I'm too old to use it.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: put me on your mail list

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: As a biker I love the idea of some type of trail we can ride on for good distance! So much safer! Thank you very much!!!

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: As a leader in the Pelican Landing Cycle Club (75-100 members), we are very interested in the riding trail proposals. Any configuration that is paved, safely away from main road traffic, and wide enough to accommodate bidirectional traffic of road bikes (15mph+), family bikes <15mph, joggers, and pedestrians will be a wonderful addition to the area. Each year a biker is seriously injured while riding on the roads, despite the good bike lanes. If you can reduce that risk in Bonita Springs and Estero, all will applaud your efforts. Contact me anytime.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: I also have a home in the Hudson Valley of New York, and I can tell you of the success of the Hudson Valley Rail trail. Also look at the Walkway Over the Hudson which connects trails. By using the actual rail bed and staying away from traffic there will be many more people using the trail and it will be much easier to add amenities that further enhance the trail.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: This would be a fantastic improvement to safety and recreational bicycling.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: Love the rail to trail.

Received May 20, 2022

Comment: As a resident of Mirasol, I would be very excited to see that land become a bike or walking trail. I would be vehemently opposed to a road or railroad due to the noise and safety factors. Mirasol is a very quiet residential community which is one of many reasons why we purchased our condo.

Received May 21, 2022

Comment: Why is Alternative 3 (Trail Alignment Adjacent to Road) even being considered under a "Rail-to-Trail" concept? To me, this goes completely against the idea of safe recreational bicycling without the noise, air pollution, danger, and chaos of a busy traffic-clogged roadway. I don't see how this alternative is any different than the sidewalks along 41, Ben Hill Griffin, and other busy roadways in our area that see little bike or pedestrian use? I suspect this alternative has been included by community leaders as an easy and inexpensive alternative, or "a way out", to what this area really needs (traffic-free bikeways) but does not want to pay for.

Received May 22, 2022

Comment: While I cannot attend the Estero meeting, I am interested in any virtual meeting on rail travel in the Southwest corridor. When I lived in Broward, I commuted by rail and really preferred it to driving.

Received May 23, 2022

Comment: North of Tampa there is a wonderful multi use trail. It's located adjacent to what was called the Veterans Highway. My wife and I always admired it. Thought something in Lee County would be a boon. Bikes, Roller Skaters, Skate Boarders, Walkers, Joggers all use this very safe facility. The trail is what would be considered a safe distance from the highway. Both sides of the trail are protected by an eight-foot-high chain link security fence. Access to the trail is at road crossings where parking is provided. Just a thought of what a true multi use trail would be like

Received May 23, 2022

Comment: Please keep me updated

Received May 23, 2022

Comment: Want to get on your mailing list - this is a good thing for Lee County

Received May 25, 2022

Comment: Hi - our HOA recently forwarded the e-mail about the meeting about the rail trail on 6/2. Unfortunately, we're at our home in NJ now and can't attend, but I just wanted to pass on what a GREAT idea this is! We are avid bike rider and rail trail users wherever we go, and having a safe car-free trail to use so close to our home in Shadow Wood would be amazing! Hope this project moves forward, and when it gets to the stage where you're looking for donations I will be happy to donate! Thanks for your hard work and help to make this a reality!
Laurie Brightly

Received May 25, 2022

Comment: I support this trail to be created in safest way possible. Please do not include bike lanes on existing roads. Instead build a stand alone trail. If it crosses a major road, please include an over or under pass for the trail.
Thank you!

Received May 25, 2022

Comment: Please move forward on this valuable Project which will save so many lives!!
Bike Lee to Collier Safely!!!!
Thank you!

Received May 26, 2022

Comment: Can all the alternatives continue beyond Bonita Beach Road. This extension would provide easy access for those who live in Spanish Wells.

Received May 26, 2022

Comment: We live in Heritage Palms on 6 Mile just south of Colonial Blvd.
We have traveled many times to Venice, Fl to ride the Legacy Trail. It is great. This is the model to use for Lee/Collier counties. Separate from any roads (except for crossings). Easy to access.
I speak for my wife and I plus a number of other couples in Heritage Palms

Received June 3, 2022

DRAFT



Rail Trail Feasibility Study Lee County, Florida

ABOUT THIS FEASIBILITY STUDY

In March 2021, the Lee County MPO in partnership with the City of Bonita Springs and the Village of Estero, commissioned a consultant team to begin the Study to analyze the long-term feasibility of a public multi-use trail within the Seminole Gulf Railway (SGLR) corridor south of Alico Road or alternatively in the adjacent surrounding areas. The Study is funded by a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Sun Trail Program with local matches from the City of Bonita Springs and the Village of Estero.

The study area boundaries include Bonita Beach Road (south), Alico Road (north), US 41 (west) and I-75 (east). The proposed trail will pass through south Lee County into north Collier County through the City of Bonita Springs and the Village of Estero. Concept alternatives will identify right-of-way (ROW) impacts, security measures, maintenance procedures, and environmental impacts. The preliminary analysis evaluated trail connectivity, project readiness, service, and the user experience. The study also collected data on ROW, planning-level costs, rail-trail crossings, and existing utilities. The three alternatives include a rail-to-trail alignment, a rail-with-trail alignment, and a trail alignment adjacent to existing roadways.



Rail Trail Feasibility Study Lee County, Florida

Public Involvement Summary

The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (Lee County MPO) began the project with seven stakeholder meetings to discuss alternatives to present to the public. The three alternatives decided upon include a rail-to-trail alignment, a rail-with-trail alignment, and a trail alignment adjacent to existing roadways.

The Lee County MPO and their partners asked the public for their input on a Rail-Trail Feasibility Study that is underway. The public was asked to provide input on three alternatives for a north/south public multi-use trail through south Lee County and into north Collier County. The trail alternatives are being studied as part of the regional efforts to plan and develop the Gulf Coast Trail from Pinellas County down to Collier County. The study team will use public input to help select a Preferred Alternative(s) to advance to the next project phase.

PUBLIC MEETING

The Lee County MPO held a public meeting on June 2, 2022, at the Estero Recreation Center, 9200 Corkscrew Palms Boulevard, Rooms 103 A & B for the Rail Trail Feasibility Study.

A newsletter announcing the public meeting was emailed as an attachment to elected officials, local agencies, stakeholders, and interested parties to notify them about the public meeting. An email with the newsletter as an attachment was sent to additional interested parties by the Lee MPO's Public Information Officer to notify them about the public meeting.

The meeting was advertised in the *News Press* on Friday, May 20, 2022. A media release was sent to all local media.

A total of 104 attendees signed in at the registration table. Members of the public were provided a meeting handout and comment form upon arrival. Displays of the Study were available for review and project representatives answered questions and discussed the project. There was a PowerPoint Presentation about the project and Q&A following the presentation.

Members of the public were provided comment forms at the meeting in order to have their opinion recorded as public record. The public is also able to submit their comments online or mail them in until October 31, 2022, to the email address and mailing address provided on the comment forms. 61 written comments were received at the meeting. 37 comments were received via email or website.

Public Meeting Summary

The public meeting was advertised consistent with federal and state requirements and was conducted consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

This meeting was held to give all interested people the right to understand the project and give their comments to the Lee County MPO. Public participation at the meeting was solicited without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or family status.

WEBSITE

A website was developed to keep the public informed about the project. The website allows for the public to submit comments.

COMMENT SUMMARY

There has been a total of 98 comments received as of June 3, 2022. The comment period ends October 31, 2022.

- 61 comments received at the June 2, 2022, Public Meeting
- 4 comments received by email
- 33 comments received through the website

Alternatives Chosen	Total Number of Comments Received
Alternative #1	44
Alternative #2	20
Alternative #3	3
Alternative #1 or 2	9
N/A	22

Alternative #1 – Rail-to-Trail: This alternative is a multiuse path that is converted to a trail from an inactive rail line was the alternative selected by the majority of public comments.

Majority of the general comments are in favor of some type of trail.

Public Meeting Comments Alternatives Ranking with 1 being the most important (Based on 61 comments)				
Alternative #1	Alternative #2	Alternative #3	Alternative #1 or 2	N/A
34	17	3	5	2

A Public Comment Summary with all comments is attached.

SUMMARY OF APRIL FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS COUNCIL MEETING

INFORMATION ITEM:

The BPC 6/28/22 member Scott Stryker was appointed by Governor DeSantis this year as a member in the Florida Greenways and Trails Council (FGTC). The FGTC held a meeting on April 6th in St. Petersburg which was attended by Mr. Stryker. Mr. Stryker will provide a brief summary of the meeting touching on the main topics.