RAIL-TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY

BRIEFING REPORT

October 7, 2021

LEE COUNTY MPO
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

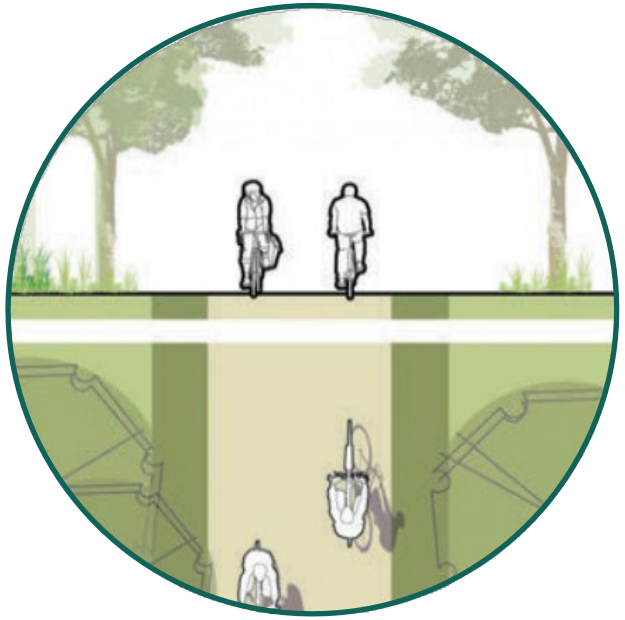
LEE COUNTY MPO RAIL-TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY

AGENDA

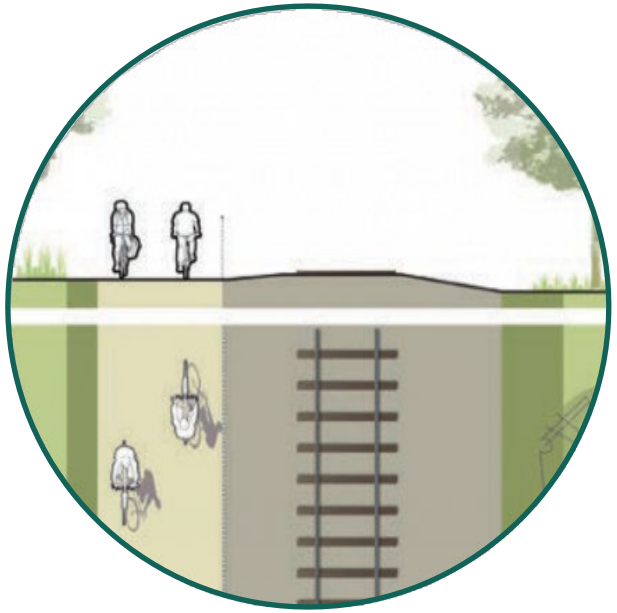
- Study Team
- Schedule
- About the Feasibility Study
- Alternatives:
  - **Alternative 1:** A rail-to-trail alignment within the SGL corridor
  - **Alternative 2:** A rail-with-trail alignment within the SGL corridor
  - **Alternative 3:** A trail alignment within the road right-of-way (ROW
- Next Steps and Questions

ABOUT THIS FEASIBILITY STUDY

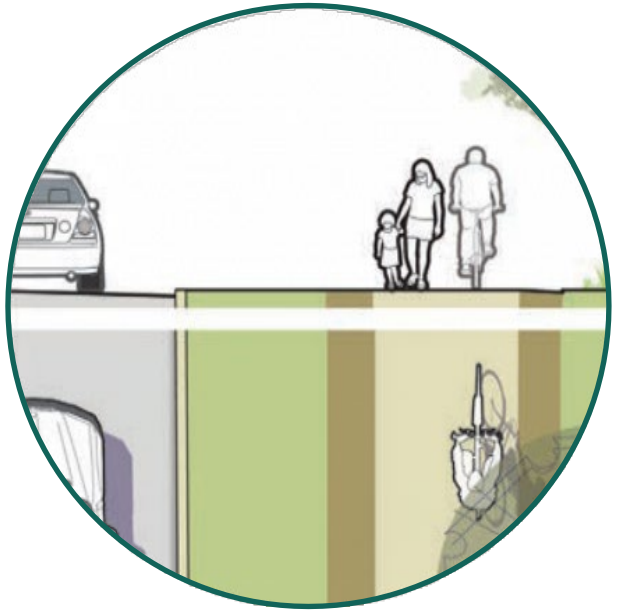
The three alternatives being studied include:



Alternative 1
A rail-to-trail alignment within the SGL corridor



Alternative 2
A rail-with-trail alignment within the SGL corridor



Alternative 3
A trail alignment within the road right-of-way (ROW)

STUDY AREA

- 12 mile rail corridor between Alico Road on the north and Bonita Beach Road on the south
- Study area extended to I-75 on the east and US-41 on the west

LEE COUNTY MPO RAIL-TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY ORG CHART

LEE COUNTY MPO RAIL-TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY ORG CHART

VOLKERT TEAM	TASK NUMBER															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Volkert, Inc.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
❶Alta Planning + Design, Inc.	✓									✓		✓	✓	✓		
❷Spikowski Planning Associates	✓															✓
❸Cella Molnar & Associates															✓	
❹Cardno	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓							
❺RMI Evaluation			✓											✓		
❻TSFGEO							✓									
❼TerraXplorations						✓										

18 – Month Schedule

★ = Milestone Event ● = Progress Item	2021										2022							
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Notice to Proceed	★																	
Task Management (Monthly Progress Meeting with PM; Kickoff Meeting and Management Plan)		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●★	●★	●★	
Task 1 (Kickoff Meeting)		★																
Task 2 (Data Collection)																		
Task 3 (Title Search)																		
Task 4 (Survey)																		
Task 5 (Trail Corridor Review and Mapping)																		
Task 6 (Environmental Assessment)																		
Task 7 (Geotechnical)																		
Task 8 (Stormwater Analysis)																		
Task 9 (Utility Impacts)																		
Task 10, 11 (Roadway Crossings/Bridges)																		
Task 12, 13, 14 (Trail Concept Planning and Analysis)																		
Task 15 (Public Involvement and Consensus Building)								●	●							●★	●★	

LEE COUNTY MPO RAIL-TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY UPDATE

PROJECT PROGRESS:

Began:

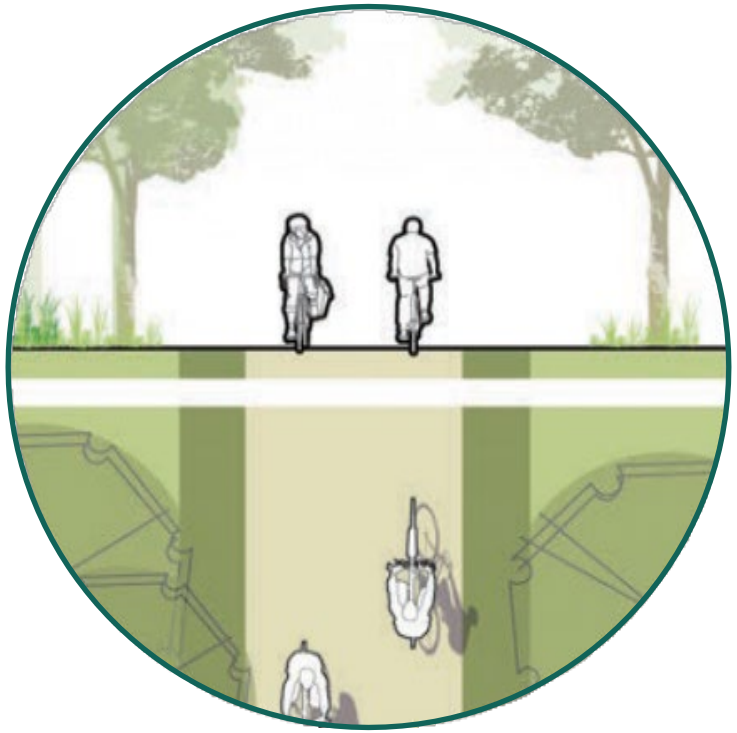
- Bridge inventory analysis
- Environmental assessment
- Documentation/Tech Memos
- Public presentations

Completed:

- Kickoff meeting (April 6)
- Collected data and GIS mapping
- Utility inventory
- Roadway crossing inventory
- Evaluation of initial alternatives and reduced to top three alternatives
- Monthly progress meetings with MPO and municipal staff
- Briefing report

The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Trail in Lehighton, Pennsylvania

ALTERNATIVE #1: RAIL-TO-TRAIL



A Rail-to-Trail is a multiuse path that is converted to a trail from an inactive rail line.

The Michigan Airline Trail in Wixom, Michigan

ALTERNATIVE #1: RAIL-TO-TRAIL

QUICK FACTS:

Planning Level Construction Costs:
$4-6 Million per mile

Right-of-way:
Requires agreement with railroad for fee simple purchase

Road-Trail Crossings:
20

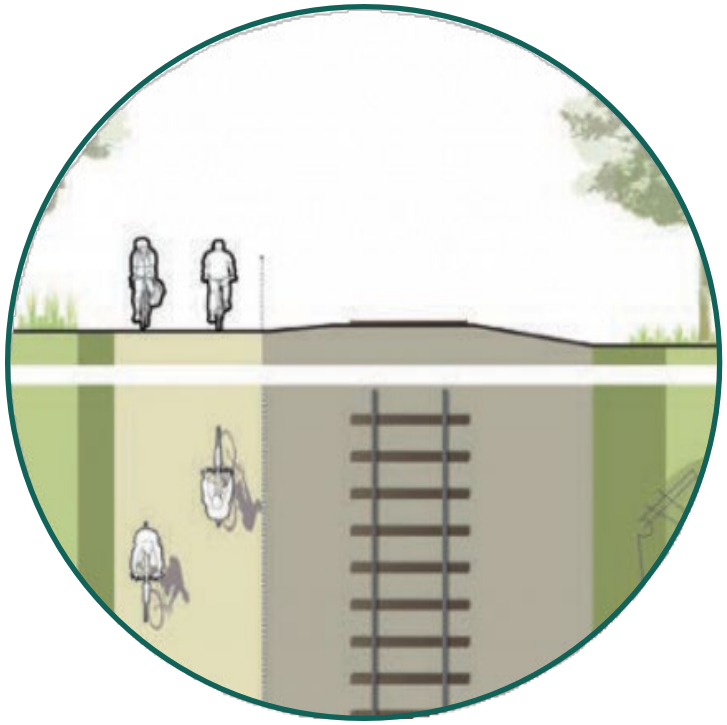
Utility Providers:
Florida Power & Light, TECO Gas, Lee County Utility, Bonita Springs Utility (predominantly at road crossings)

ALTERNATIVE #1: RAIL-TO-TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

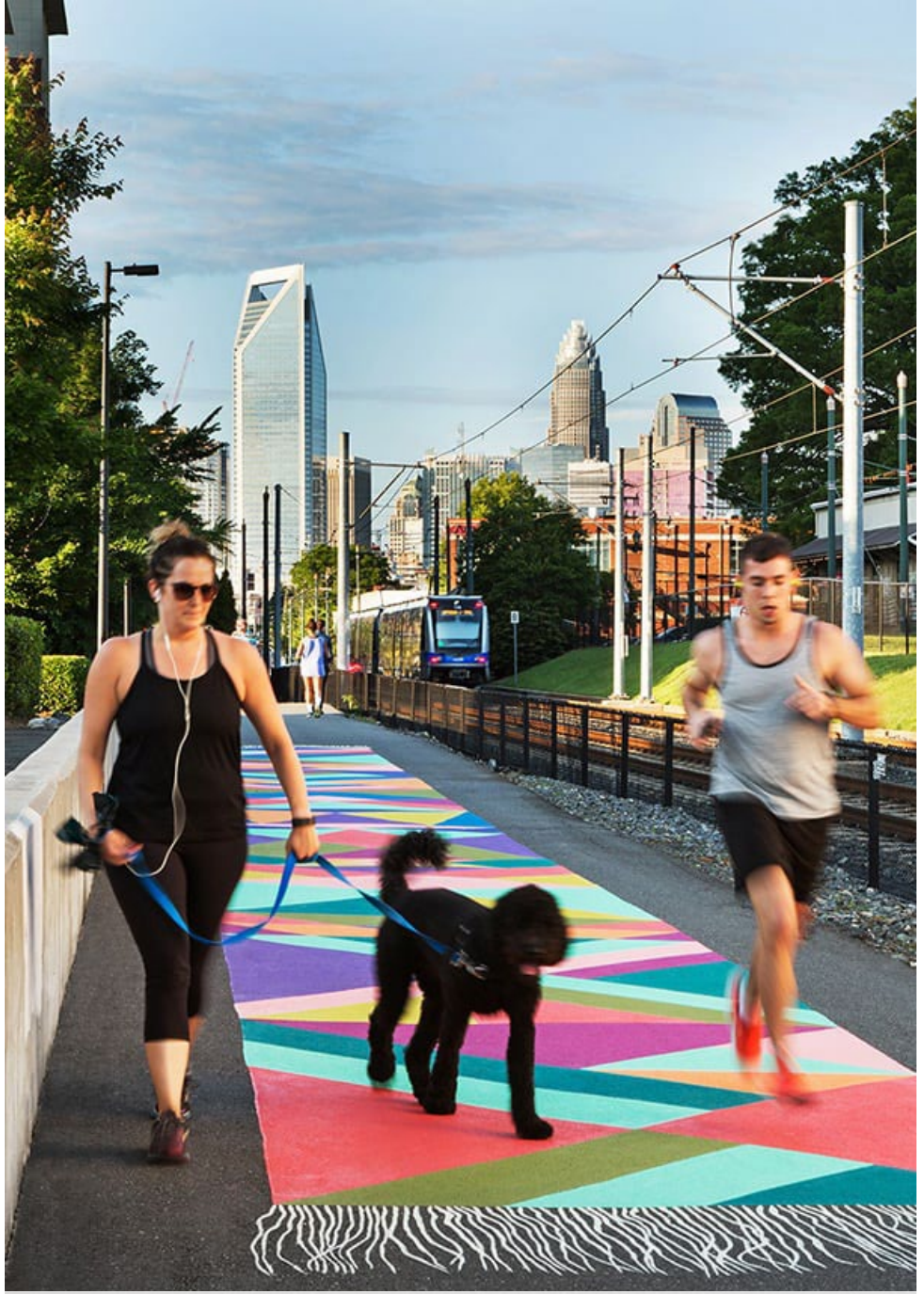
	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
CONNECTIVITY	• This alignment creates connections to local businesses, parks, schools, and other civic spaces	
PROJECT READINESS	• Existing bridges may be used	• May require utility relocation and retrofit existing bridges. • Will require agreement with railroad for fee simple purchase of right-of-way
SERVICE	• Provides equal access opportunities to residents from both the east and west side of the corridor	
USER EXPERIENCE	• Creates more of a linear park opportunity and is a low-stress facility completely separate from the roadway	• Estero Parkway, Corkscrew Road, and Coconut Road are potential locations for overpass crossings

West Fork Trail in West Virginia

ALTERNATIVE #2: RAIL-WITH-TRAIL



A Rail-with-Trail alignment is parallel to the 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.



A Rail-with-Trail in Charlotte, NC

ALTERNATIVE #2: RAIL-WITH-TRAIL

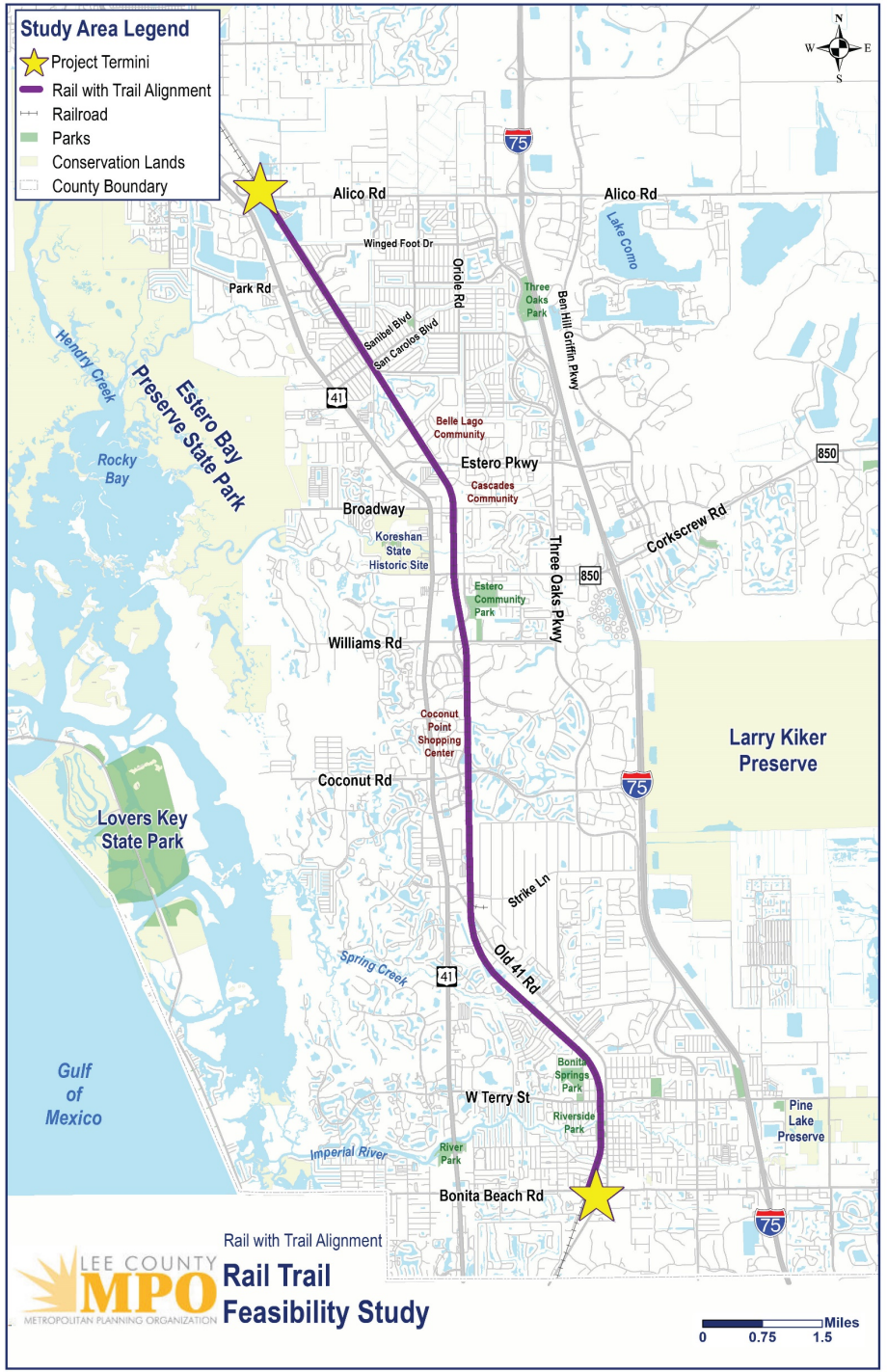
QUICK FACTS:

Planning Level Construction Costs:
$7-10 Million per mile

Right-of-way:
Requires agreement with railroad for fee simple purchase or lease for partial corridor (With lease option, alternative #2 capital improvements will not be eligible for SUN Trail funding)

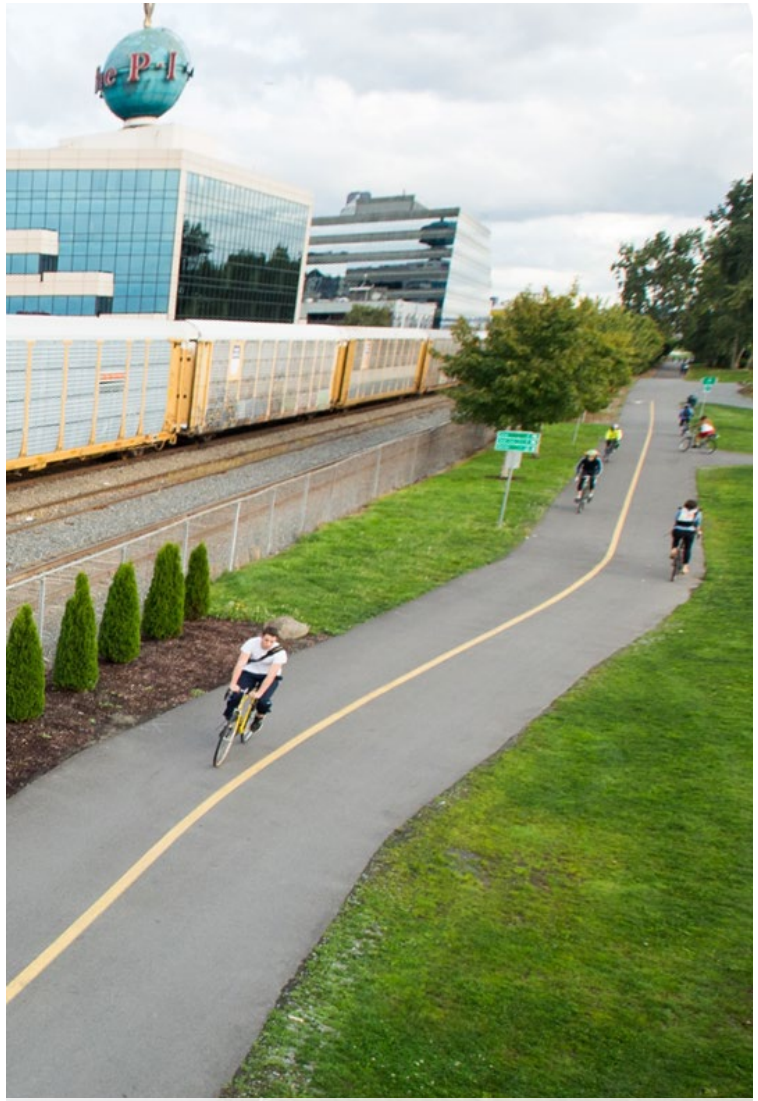
Road-Trail Crossings:
20

Utility Providers:
Florida Power & Light, TECO Gas, Lee County Utility, Bonita Springs Utility (predominantly at road crossings)



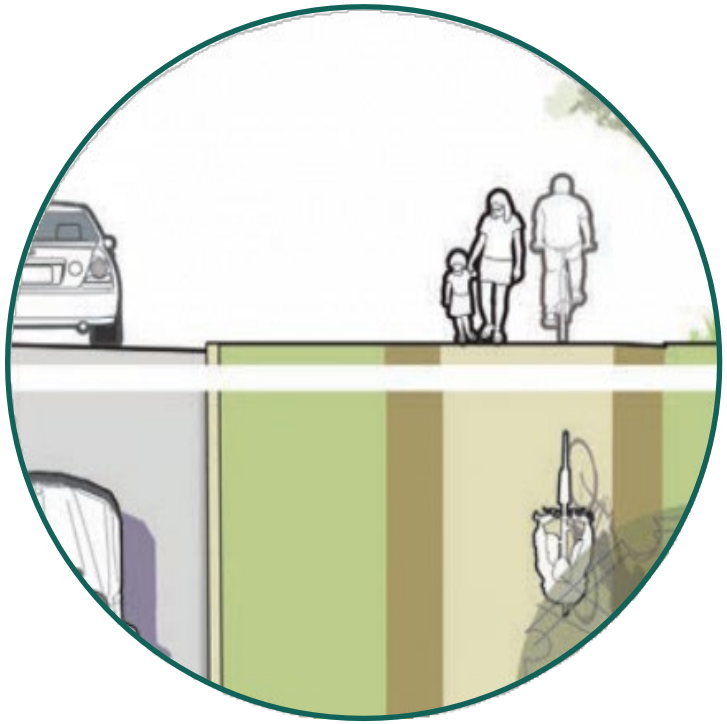
ALTERNATIVE #2: RAIL-WITH-TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
CONNECTIVITY		• This alignment will require selecting either the east or west side of the rail, which could limit connectivity for secondary access points
PROJECT READINESS		• May require utility relocation, new bridges, and modification to stormwater features. Estero Parkway, Corkscrew Road, and Coconut Road are potential locations. • Will require agreement with railroad for lease agreement for 30’ right-of-way
SERVICE		• Since the rail exists, it is not as accessible from all directions
USER EXPERIENCE	• This alignment is a low-stress facility completely separate from the roadway	

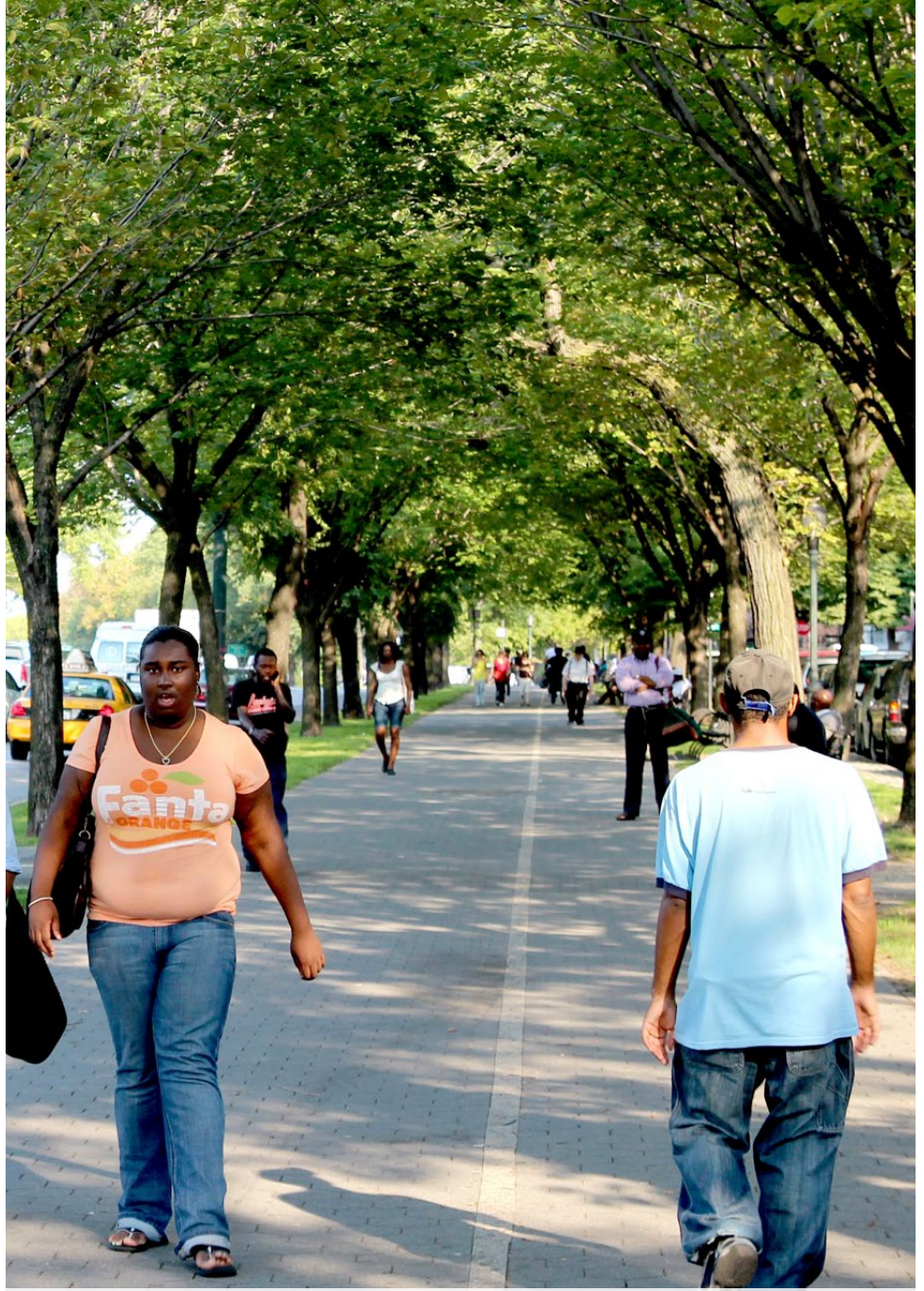


A rail-with-trail in Cambridge, MA

ALTERNATIVE #3: TRAIL ALIGNMENT ADJACENT TO ROAD



A trail alignment that runs parallel to the roadway and is typically within the road right-of-way. Also referred to as a sidepath, these types of trails require ample space between the road and path for people to comfortably and safely use it.



A trail adjacent to the roadway in New York City

ALTERNATIVE #3: TRAIL ALIGNMENT ADJACENT TO ROAD

QUICK FACTS:

Planning Level Construction Costs:
$13-18 Million per mile

Right-of-way:
The alignment cannot be built entirely within existing roadway ROW and will require acquisition of property

Road-Trail Crossings:
96 (includes roadway/ driveway crossings)

Utility Providers:
Florida Power & Light, TECO Gas, Lee County Utility, Bonita Springs Utility throughout the corridor

ALTERNATIVE #3: TRAIL ALIGNMENT ADJACENT TO ROAD OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
CONNECTIVITY		• This alignment has less connectivity at the north part of the project because it is further from 41 and closer To I-75
PROJECT READINESS	• Parts of the corridor are ready for construction	• This alignment will require additional purchase of ROW • installation of new bicycle and pedestrian bridges, and upgrades to 96 crossings. Estero Parkway, Corkscrew Road, and Coconut Road are potential locations.
SERVICE		• Does not provide as much accessibility
USER EXPERIENCE		• This alignment is a high stress facility along a high-volume multi-lane road, with many driveway and roadway crossings (Alico Rd)

A trail adjacent to the road in Austin, TX

Next Steps and Questions