

# SUMMARY

## Project Overview Public Meeting

December 8, 2022

### North Lake Trail Phase 3 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study



**LOCATION** Cadwell Community Center  
1 Cassady Street  
Umatilla, Florida 32778

**TIME** 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 pm.

**ATTENDEES** 26 Signed in Participants  
Fred Schneider, Lake County  
George Gadiel, Lake County  
Jeff Earhart, Lake County  
Gallus Quigley, Lake County  
Luis Diaz, Stantec  
John Moore, Stantec  
Mike Drauer, Stantec  
Alex Holtkamp, Stantec  
Kylie Casazza, Stantec  
Laura Turner, Laura Turner Planning Services

**PREPARED BY** Laura Turner **Date:** January 3, 2023

In August 2022, Lake County began the North Lake Trail Phase 3 Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. The study limits extend from E. Altoona Road to State Road (SR) 40. This corridor is located in unincorporated Lake County, the Ocala National Forest, Altoona, and Astor Park. The project is approximately 16 miles in length.

The purpose of the PD&E Study is to evaluate the potential impacts of the trail alignments proposed in the Corridor Planning Study (completed by the Florida Department of Transportation in 2019), resulting in a preferred trail alignment. The study will consider engineering analysis, environmental review, and public input as these alternatives are evaluated. It is anticipated that this study will be completed by Spring 2024.

The Project Overview Public Meeting was held on December 8, 2022 to introduce the North Lake Trail Phase 3 PD&E Study to the public. This summary provides the highlights of the notification process, information shared at the public meeting, received comments, and the next steps.

## Meeting Notification

Several notification techniques were used to publicize the public meeting, which are summarized here.

<b><i>Sent Out or Posted</i></b>	<b><i>Notification Activity</i></b>
November 8, 2022	Project website ( <a href="http://www.NorthLakeTrail.com">www.NorthLakeTrail.com</a> ) went live; including information about the Project Overview Public Meeting
November 8, 2022	Letter and Newsletter Issue 1 emailed to 5 Lake County BCC members
November 9, 2022	Letter and Newsletter Issue 1 emailed to 32 elected officials
November 9, 2022	Letter and Newsletter Issue 1 emailed to 84 agencies
November 14, 2022	Letter and Newsletter Issue 1 emailed to 660 property owners and tenants – 1 <sup>st</sup> class mail via USPS
November 14, 2022	Letter and Newsletter Issue 1 emailed to 20 stakeholders – 1 <sup>st</sup> class mail via USPS
November 15, 2022	Hand delivered 203 copies of Newsletter Issue 1 to gathering places within project corridor
November 27, 2022	Newspaper display ad in <i>Orlando Sentinel – Lake Extra</i>
November 28, 2022	Ad in <i>Florida Administrative Register</i> , Vol. 48/229
November 30, 2022	Lake County PIO emailed news release emailed to local media outlets
December 5, 2022	Project Overview Public Meeting materials posted to project website ( <a href="http://www.NorthLakeTrail.com">www.NorthLakeTrail.com</a> )

## At the Meeting

As individuals signed in, copies of the comment form and Newsletter Issue 1 were available. Individuals could share input by submitting a completed comment form at the meeting or by sending it to the study team afterwards through December 19, 2022. Throughout the evening, the following display boards were available for review.

- Welcome
- Title VI
- Lake County Trails Master Plan
- Purpose and Need
- Project Background
- Corridor Planning Study (2018 – 2020)
- Project Development Process
- PD&E Study Schedule
- Ways to Share Comments

In addition, the following area projects had information displays: the Lake County Trails Master Plan and the North Lake Trail Phase 3 design project (from E. Collins Street to E. Altoona Road). Meeting information was posted to the project website ([www.NorthLakeTrail.com](http://www.NorthLakeTrail.com)) on December 5, 2022.

### **Comments Received**

This summary of comments includes those received from November 8, 2022 through December 19, 2022. During this comment period, 28 written comments were submitted; 8 completed comment forms submitted at the public meeting and 20 emails submitted before and after the public meeting (17 were comments submitted through the project website and 3 were email submittals).

The following description summarizes the comments that were shared. The number in parenthesis indicates the number of times a comment was made. Note that the number in parenthesis does not match the number of submitted comments as several different topics could be covered in one submittal.

#### ***General Project Comments***

- Requested to be added to Project Contact List (17)
- Interested in PD&E Study Segment (15)
- Interested in Design Segment (11)
- Questions about the Project (5)

#### ***Support for the Project*** (16)

- General trail support (3)
- Prefers CR 445 - Option C (11)
- Prefers SR 19 - Option A (1)
- Prefers CR 445A – Option B (1)

#### ***Against the Project*** (2)

- Waste of taxpayer dollars (2)
- Don't take homes to build the trail (1)
- Instead focus on: livable wages, more affordable housing, mental health services, substance abuse services, and educational assistance (1)
- Priority should be keeping Lake County beautiful and rural (1)

#### ***Factors to Consider as Trail Options are Evaluated***

- Trail options
  - Alignment along SR 19 is dangerous, hot, and unattractive/not in nature; go through woods and not along the side of the road (2)
  - If CR 445 option is not feasible, consider CR 445A with a spur to Alexander Springs, Paisley Trail, Florida Trail, without crossing Alexander Springs Creek (1)
  - Prefers trail along CR 445A; likes the CR 445 option but concerned about environmental impacts of CR 445 option, especially to Alexander Springs Creek (Outstanding Florida Water) and longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem (1)
  - CR 445 option is preferred since it has less housing development, more room for trail, less likely have speeding (1)
  - CR 445 option is preferred since it's more scenic and has lower speeds (1)

- Include a connection to Paisley Woods Bike Trail (6)
- Include a connection to Florida Trail (5)
- Trail Elements
  - Have the trail go 50 feet to 100 feet into the Forest (8)
    - Physical safety (not next to road), health safety (shade), and general enjoyment (7)
    - Most conducive to recreational trail users; next to road would discourage riders (1)
  - Keep experience in mind as environmental and engineering aspects of each alignment are evaluated (1)
  - Not along the roadway; trail will be more enjoyable and used (1)
  - Trail in the woods provides more additional eyes and ears on Forest property (1)
  - Having the trail go through the Forest (rather than next to roadway) helps user get acquainted with Ocala National Forest and its features (1)
  - Keep the canopy of trees located south of Lakeview Terrace (1)
  - Concerned about potential of motorized vehicles using the trail (1)
  - Turns in trail need to be gentle enough for bicyclists to take smoothly (1)
  - Trail should be 14 feet in width; the Eustis to Umatilla sidewalk is too narrow (1)
- Look at Other Trail Examples
  - Look at St. Marks Trail (Tallahassee) as an example for the North Lake Trail Option C; scenic, aesthetically pleasing, maintain curves for safe travel (1)
  - Look at other successful trails in state forests, like the Cross Florida Greenway (1)
  - Look at other successful trails in national forests, like St. Mark's Trail, Munson Hills, and Twilight Trail (1)

#### **Other**

- FDOT should remove the existing rumble strips from road for a more enjoyable trail experience (1)
- Need to four-lane SR 19 in the next 8 – 10 years instead of the trail

#### **Verbal Comments Shared During Hand Delivery of Newsletters** (November 15, 2022)

- How will the trail affect hunting in the Ocala National Forest?
- Favors the trail; it's cool
- Wants to see the trail happen
- Make sure the trail is not next to the road (to be safer for users)
- CR 445 would be the best location due to less traffic

#### **Next Steps**

This public input has been shared with the project team for consideration as data collection activities are completed and as the trail alignments are studied and evaluated. The results of this work will be presented at the next public meeting to be held in May 2023.