



*Florida Department of Transportation*  
*Office of Inspector General*  
*Kristofer B. Sullivan, Inspector General*

Adopt-a-Highway Program Audit

Report No. 25P-005

DocuSigned by:

*Kristofer B. Sullivan*

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October 6, 2025

## What We Did

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The Office of Inspector General conducted an audit of the Florida Department of Transportation's (Department) Adopt-a-Highway Program. The purpose of this audit was to determine if the Department has sufficient policies and procedures related to the Adopt-a-Highway Program to meet the program requirements. Additionally, to determine if the Department is effectively monitoring the program. This audit was conducted as a part of our annual work plan for fiscal year 2024-25.

## What We Found

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The Department has an Adopt-a-Highway Litter Removal Agreement which requires specific detailed actions; however, **we determined** the Department's Office of Maintenance has not created any written policies or procedures that guide the Districts to ensure effective operation of the program.

**We determined** the Department and Districts lack sufficient monitoring of the Adopt-a-Highway Program to ensure organizations or groups participating in the program comply with Department goals. We did identify areas of limited monitoring, including training and safety, by the Department.

## What We Recommend

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**We recommend** the Office of Maintenance Director ensures appropriate coordination between the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators to:

- establish sufficient written policies and procedures for the Districts to ensure effective operation of the Adopt-a-Highway Program; and
- create and establish a sufficient monitoring program with specific written procedures to ensure effective monitoring in compliance with Section 403.4131, Florida Statutes (2024).

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**BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

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The Department of Transportation's (Department) Office of Maintenance coordinates and administers the Adopt-a-Highway Program statewide to help reduce the cost of litter removal and improve the appearance of highway right-of-way throughout Florida.

Since the program started in 1990, volunteers and organizations have entered into a two-year agreement with the Department. During that time frame, they agree to conduct litter removal at regularly scheduled intervals. Many miles of highway have been adopted statewide by various organizations, allowing civic-minded people to make a difference in their communities. This reduces the responsibilities of Department work crews in this area, enabling them to devote more time to other road maintenance and special highway projects. To participate in the program, volunteers agree to:

- "adopt" a two-mile section of a state highway;
- dedicate two years to the program;
- follow specified Department safety regulations; and
- remove litter a minimum of four times each year.

In return, the Department agrees to:

- assist with safety training;
- provide safety vests and litter bags;
- pick up litter at specified locations; and
- post Adopt-a-Highway signs recognizing the group at the beginning and end of their adopted highway section.

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## **RESULTS OF REVIEW**

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The purpose of this audit was to determine if the Department:

1. has sufficient policies and procedures related to the Adopt-a-Highway Program to meet the program requirements; and
2. is effectively monitoring the program.

The following findings address these objectives.

### **Finding 1 – Policies and Procedures**

The Department has an Adopt-a-Highway Litter Removal Agreement which requires specific detailed actions; however, **we determined** the Department's Office of Maintenance has not created any written policies or procedures that guide the Districts to ensure the effective operation of the program.

Additionally, five Districts have individually created Adopt-a-Highway internal guidance for their District that includes arranging safety workshops or videos for participating groups, providing signs at the beginning and end of the adopted section, providing safety gear/equipment for litter pickup, coordinating with the groups for litter removal, or assisting with safety meetings.

Section 403.4131, Florida Statutes (F.S.) (2024), Litter Control, states:

- “The Department of Transportation shall establish an “adopt-a-highway” program to allow local organizations to be identified with specific highway cleanup and highway beautification projects authorized under s. 339.2405.”
- “The department shall monitor compliance with the provisions of the adopt-a-highway program to ensure that organizations participating in the program comply with the goals identified by the Department.”

The Department's Adopt-a-Highway Litter Removal Agreement provides that organizations or groups that would like to participate in the Adopt-a-Highway Program:

- enter an agreement period for two years beginning on the last date of the agreement execution;<sup>1</sup>
- adopt a minimum of two miles along a state highway to remove litter;
- conduct and attend safety meetings not less than every six (6) months, which can consist of reviewing the online Adopt-A-Highway safety video, and hold pre-task briefings prior to each litter removal;
- arrange an appropriate litter removal schedule which will not conflict with Department mowing schedules with the District; and
- are required to perform litter pick up a minimum of four times a year, once a quarter is recommended.

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<sup>1</sup> When the agreement has received all appropriate signatures.

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The Adopt-a-Highway Agreement indicates that the Department shall:

- provide Adopt-a-Highway signs at the beginning and end of the adopted highway section for the term of the Agreement;
- provide approved safety vests, traffic control signs, and litter collection bags for use by the group during litter removal activities;
- remove litter collection bags from the adopted highway section when bags are placed in front of the Adopt-a-Highway signs; and
- remove certain litter when advised by the group that unusual circumstances exist (large, heavy, or hazardous items).

The Department's Adopt-a-Highway Program website<sup>2</sup> provides an overview of the program, information on becoming a volunteer, and a safety video that provides Department safety regulations. It also indicates that the Department agrees to assist with safety meetings, provide safety vests and litter bags, pick up litter at specified locations, and post Adopt-a-Highway signs commending the group at the beginning and end of their section.

All seven Districts have an established Adopt-a-Highway Program and have implemented the use of the Litter Removal Agreement. Additionally, we were provided internal guidance by five Districts containing information that can be used for best practices in developing an overall Department procedure; however, most of the guidance was incomplete and outdated.

**We recommend** the Office of Maintenance Director ensures appropriate coordination between the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators to establish sufficient written policies and procedures for the Districts to ensure the effective operation of the Adopt-a-Highway Program.

## **Finding 2 – Program Monitoring**

**We determined** the Department and Districts lack sufficient monitoring of the Adopt-a-Highway Program to ensure organizations or groups participating in the program comply with Department goals. We did identify areas of limited monitoring, including training and safety, by the Department.

Section 403.4131, F.S. (2024), Litter Control, states “The department shall monitor compliance with the provisions of the adopt-a-highway program to ensure that organizations participating in the program comply with the goals identified by the department.”

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fdot.gov/maintenance/aah.shtm>

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We reviewed documentation supplied by the Office of Maintenance and the Districts specific to monitoring the Adopt-a-Highway Program. We identified the following:

- The Office of Maintenance has provided the Districts with the Adopt-a-Highway Litter Removal Agreement but has not provided guidance on monitoring to ensure compliance with the agreement.
- Districts have not created sufficient internal procedures or guidance on how to effectively monitor and track all requirements for participating organizations or groups.
- The Office of Maintenance and Districts maintain Excel spreadsheets to track the number of agreements executed, but the spreadsheets provided were not current.
- All Districts provide safety measures which include safety signs, safety vests, trash bags, and a website link to an online safety video to program participants.
- Three Districts maintained safety meeting documentation indicating a participant had conducted safety meetings and the attendees; however, the documentation was not provided by and maintained for all District participants.

**We recommend** the Office of Maintenance Director ensures appropriate coordination between the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators to create and establish a sufficient monitoring program with specific written procedures to ensure effective monitoring in compliance with Section 403.4131, F.S.

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**APPENDIX A – Purpose, Scope, and Methodology**

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The **purpose** of this audit was to determine if the Department has sufficient policies and procedures related to the Adopt-a-Highway Program to meet the program requirements. Additionally, to determine if the Department is effectively monitoring the program.

The **scope** of this audit included:

- Section 403.4131, F.S. (2024), Litter Control;
- the Department's policies and procedures related to the Adopt-a-Highway Program; and
- the Districts policies and procedures related to the Adopt-a-Highway Program.

The **methodology** included:

- applicable state laws;
- Department policies and procedures; and
- District documentation on the Adopt-a-Highway Program.

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**APPENDIX B – Management Response**

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The Office of Maintenance Programs Manager, Dayna Dixon, provided the following response by email on September 24, 2025:

**Finding 1 – Policies and Procedures**

**Finding:** The Department has an Adopt-a-Highway Litter Removal Agreement which requires specific detailed actions; however, **we determined** the Department's Office of Maintenance has not created any written policies or procedures that guide the Districts to ensure effective operation of the program.

Additionally, five Districts have individually created Adopt-a-Highway internal guidance for their District that includes arranging safety workshops or videos for participating groups, providing signs at the beginning and end of the adopted section, providing safety gear/equipment for litter pickup, coordinating with the groups for litter removal, or assisting with safety meetings.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the Office of Maintenance Director ensures appropriate coordination between the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators to establish sufficient written policies and procedures for the Districts to ensure the effective operation of the Adopt-a-Highway Program.

**Response to Finding:** We concur with the finding and recommendation.

**Corrective Action:** The Office of Maintenance Director will ensure appropriate coordination between the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators to establish a sufficient written procedure for the Districts to ensure the effective operation of the Adopt-a-Highway Program. This procedure will include information regarding the Litter Removal Agreements, Safety Meeting Criteria, Litter Removal Reporting, etc.

**Estimated Completion Date:** Friday, January 30, 2026

**Finding 2 – Program Monitoring**

**Finding:** **We determined** the Department and Districts lack sufficient monitoring of the Adopt-a-Highway Program to ensure organizations or groups participating in the program comply with Department goals. We did identify areas of limited monitoring, including training and safety, by the Department.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the Office of Maintenance Director ensures appropriate coordination between the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators to create and establish a



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sufficient monitoring program with specific written procedures to ensure effective monitoring in compliance with Section 403.4131, Florida Statutes.

**Response to Finding:** We concur with the finding and recommendation.

**Corrective Action:** The Office of Maintenance Director will ensure appropriate coordination between the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators to create and establish a sufficient monitoring program with specific written procedures to ensure effective monitoring in compliance with Section 403.4131, Florida Statutes.

The Office of Maintenance is currently working on creating a GIS map that will also act as a database for all adopted and available highways within FDOT's jurisdiction. This GIS map will serve as a tool to support monitoring of the program. It is the Office of Maintenance's intent to store all Adopt-a-Highway agreements within the map allowing for a participant directory with an Excel report that can be produced at any time. The Office of Maintenance also intends to create Safety Computer-Based Training for all Adopt-a-Highway participants. Coordinators will verify the training is completed by the participating group prior to checking out the Adopt-A-Highway equipment (tongs, trash bags, safety vests, etc.) and record completion in the database. Litter Removal Reporting Forms will be submitted by the participants and recorded in the database. This information will be reviewed by the Central Office Adopt-a-Highway Program Manager and the Adopt-a-Highway District Coordinators quarterly to ensure that Adopt-a-Highway participants are completing litter removal requirements per the agreements.

**Estimated Completion Date:** Friday, March 27, 2026

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**PROJECT TEAM**

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The Department's mission is to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities.

The Office of Inspector General's mission is to provide independent and objective investigative and audit services that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency within the Florida Department of Transportation and its partners.

This work product was prepared pursuant to section 20.055, Florida Statutes, in accordance with the Association of Inspectors General *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General*, and conforms with The Institute of Internal Auditors' *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*.

Please address inquiries regarding this report to the Department's Office of Inspector General at (850) 410-5800.

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