

# IMPLEMENTING FLORIDA'S SHARED-USE NONMOTORIZED (SUN) TRAIL PROGRAM



## Table of Figures

FIGURE 1: SUN TRAIL Statewide Network Map .....	3
FIGURE 2: Regional Trail System, Coast to Coast Trail .....	5
FIGURE 3: Regional Trail System, St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop.....	5
FIGURE 4: Florida Department of Transportation District Map .....	24

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Programmatic Framework</b> .....	2
<b>Funding Structure</b> .....	4
Eligible Project Phases.....	6
Ineligible Project Attributes .....	8
<b>Project Identification</b> .....	10
Eligibility Criteria .....	11
Selection Criteria .....	11
<b>Evaluation, Prioritization and Selection of Projects</b> .....	15
<b>Project Implementation</b> .....	19
Project Administration.....	19
Operation and Maintenance .....	20
<b>Closing</b> .....	22
FDOT Staff Contacts .....	23
District Trail Coordinators .....	24
<b>Resources</b> .....	25
Additional Resources.....	26
Florida Statutes .....	26
<b>Suggestions and Comments for the SUN TRAIL Handbook</b> .....	28

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT or Department) primary statutory responsibility is to coordinate the planning and development of a safe, viable, and balanced state transportation system serving all regions of the state, and to assure the compatibility of all components, including multimodal facilities. Furthering the state's commitment to improving mobility, the Florida Legislature passed measures in 2014 and 2015 to fund and develop multi-use trails. Specifically, [Section 339.81, Florida Statutes](#) (F.S.), established the Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail program.

The SUN Trail program provides funding for the development of a statewide system of paved multi-use trails (SUN Trail network) for bicyclists and pedestrians, physically separated from vehicular traffic. FDOT defines a multi-use trail as a paved, shared-use path, which is typically 12 feet wide, but may vary from 10 feet to 14 feet wide, or larger, depending upon physical or environmental constraints, or usage. In some areas of extreme constraints, such as at bridges or in environmentally sensitive lands, a multi-use trail may be as narrow as eight feet wide. In general, development of SUN Trail funded projects will be 12-foot wide, asphalt, multi-use trails.

The Department works with partners to advance the SUN Trail network by closing gaps between existing multi-use trails. By enhancing infrastructure and increasing the reliability of all modes of Florida's transportation system, the implementation of projects within the SUN Trail network has the ability to reduce incidents with vulnerable road users and enhance safety. Through these partnerships improvements to interregional connectivity ensures the SUN Trail network functions as a transportation system rather than standalone trails. Further, closing gaps in the SUN Trail network has the ability to increase connectivity among destinations frequented by both residents and visitors. These connections link urban uses (e.g. employment centers, transportation hubs, and cultural opportunities) to rural/natural resource uses (e.g. springs, recreational, historical, and forestry lands) as well as suburban uses (e.g. neighborhoods, schools, and shopping). While increasing mobility, multi-use trails can enhance economic development opportunities. Research shows that trails increase the value of nearby properties, generate spending at local businesses, influence the location and relocation of businesses, provide area revitalization, provide sustainable tourism opportunities, and support the creation of jobs.

This Handbook provides guidance for implementation of the SUN Trail program. It includes an overview and the programmatic framework; the funding structure, including eligible and ineligible aspects of projects; the identification of projects, including the program's eligibility and selection criteria; evaluation, prioritization and selection of projects by the Department; the implementation of projects, including administration, operation and ongoing maintenance; and, key contacts and resources. By consolidating information related to the SUN Trail program into a single reference document, this guidance serves as a resource for stakeholders.

[Section 335.065, F.S.](#), bicycle and pedestrian ways along state roads and transportation facilities, authorizes FDOT to use the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) to develop a statewide system of nonmotorized, paved trails for bicyclists and pedestrians as a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS) Plan, created pursuant to [Chapter 260, F.S.](#), the Florida Greenways and Trails Act. The \$25 million annual allocation is from the redistribution of new vehicle tag revenues pursuant to [Section 320.072, F.S.](#), Motor Vehicle Licenses. These Wheels on the Roads (TLWR – fund code) revenues are deposited into the STTF for use by FDOT for funding through the SUN Trail program.

Administration of the SUN Trail program is by FDOT's Central Office (CO), Strategic Development Division, Systems Implementation Office, namely the SUN Trail Program Manager. This manager works with stakeholders to develop and implement the SUN Trail program, and to provide input for other trails developed by FDOT. In addition to the statewide SUN Trail Program Manager, there is at least one Trail Coordinator in each of FDOT's seven Districts and the Turnpike Enterprise, collectively referred to as the Districts. The Trail Coordinators are the District's primary point-of-contact. They assist with coordinating aspects of SUN Trail planning and implementation. These activities may include project identification, evaluation, prioritization, programming, mapping, administration, and program compliance.

The development of multi-modal transportation systems that fit within the context of a community's vision, land uses, and environmental settings requires successful partnerships of public, and private and non-profit entities throughout Florida. As demonstrated by FDOT's purchase of 16-miles of abandoned rail corridor from Tallahassee to St. Marks for the creation of the state's first rail-trail in 1984, the agency's role to implement multi-use trails is not a new concept. Ongoing statewide planning, coordination, and leadership to establish, expand, and promote the FGTS continues to be provided by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) [Office of Greenways and Trails](#) (OGT). OGT's process includes guidance from the [Florida Greenways and Trails Council](#) (FGTC), who operates in accordance with [Section 286.011, F.S.](#), the Florida Sunshine Law. Among its duties, the FGTC serves to advise the FDEP on greenway and trail related issues, promote intergovernmental cooperation and private partnerships for developing the greenways and trails system, and to recommend priorities for critical links in the system. Among other public agencies and private stakeholders, FGTC's membership includes FDOT. Currently the SUN Trail Program Manager represents FDOT.

The FGTS Plan establishes Florida's vision for a statewide trail network and the framework for systematically closing the trail gaps and connecting priority corridors through coordinated planning efforts of both public and private partners. This statewide trail network includes existing, planned and conceptual trails (on both land and water), and ecological greenways.

The FGTS Opportunity Land Trail Map is the state companion to community greenways and trails and bicycle and pedestrian master plans. It encompasses a combination of multiple and single-use trails for a variety of trail users. The FGTS Priority Land Trails Network encompasses the most important corridors and connections within the FGTS Opportunity Land Trails Network. The SUN Trail network, see Figure 1, is aligned to the FGTS Priority Land Trail Network and serves as the basis for determining eligibility of funding through the SUN Trail program. For additional information, see the “Project Identification Section” of this Handbook. FDOT works with OGT to maintain information about the statewide (mapped) network. As projects progress from preconstruction to construction, corridors may be refined to reflect the final alignment. Likewise, statuses will change as funding to develop the “gaps” into “existing” trails becomes available. These administrative changes are ongoing. Non-administrative changes to the Network, such as the addition of corridors, require approval of the FGTC. Changes to the FGTS Priority Land Trail Network may result in modifications to the SUN Trail network.

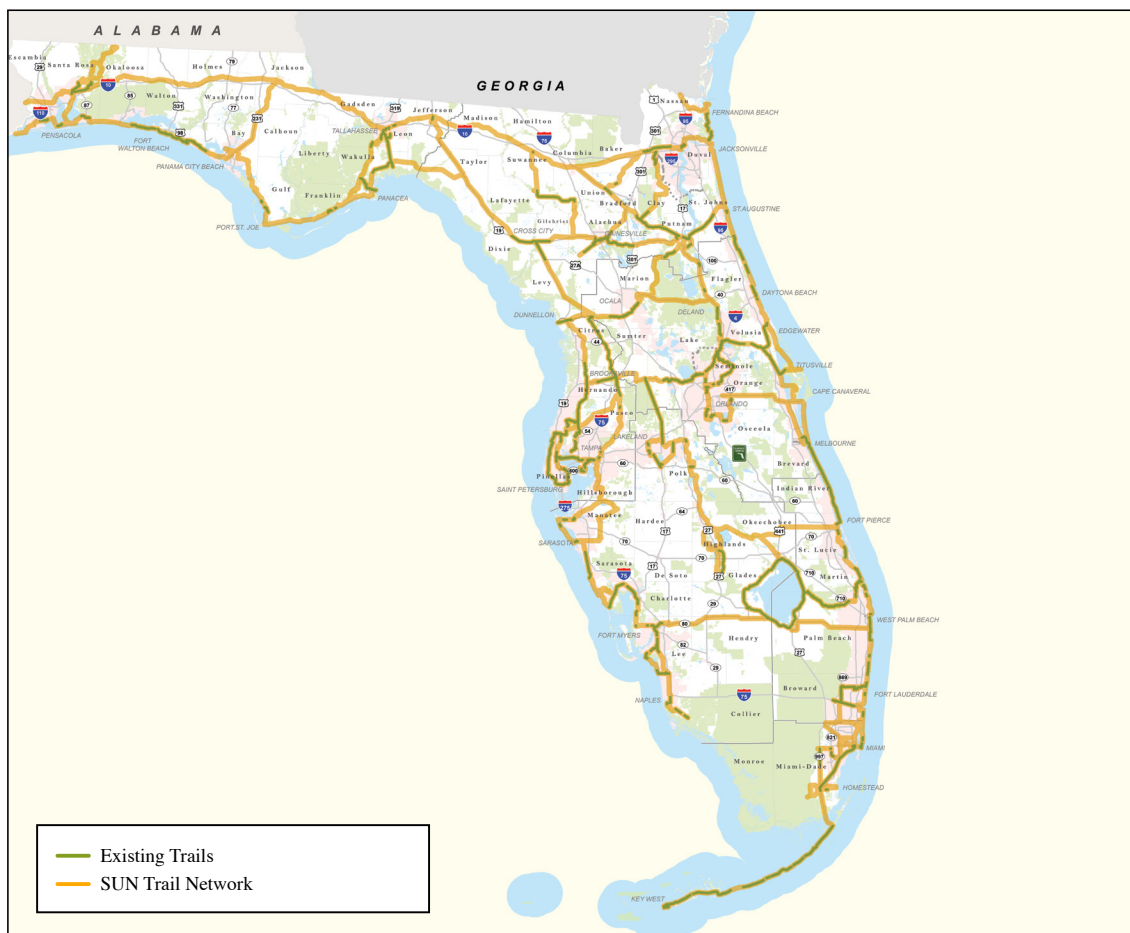


Figure 1: SUN Trail Statewide Network Map

Multiple funding options are available from federal, state, local, and private sources for the development of multi-use trails. For example, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds trails through a variety of programs, FDOT and FDEP administer several of these federal programs. Additionally, Department of Interior's National Park Service provides funding for trails through the Public Lands Highway program. Like other types of transportation systems, the needs for improving multi-use trails may exceed available funding and SUN Trail funding alone is inadequate to fund all phases of developing trail projects. Therefore, SUN Trail investments must be strategic, effective, and efficient. The "Evaluation, Prioritization, and Selection of Projects" section of this Handbook provides additional information about FDOT's focus for closing gaps in the existing trail system to increase the length of the statewide network by building on previous investments. Some local governments utilize additional funding sources for trails, including the creation of tax referendums and fiscal allocations from local budgets. In addition to public funding, some trails also rely on non-governmental support. This establishment of non-governmental partnerships with various conservation and public interest groups may provide long-term advantages. Non-governmental entities may become emissaries, create opportunities for private funding, foster local commitment, and may assist agencies in maintaining and operating multi-use trail networks. Where these non-governmental partnerships exist, their agreement is with the non-FDOT governmental entity that is formally committed to the operation and maintenance of the project (long-term trail manager) rather than with FDOT.

FDOT will advance the development of the SUN Trail network by programming TLWR allocations through a two-tier funding structure. One tier is providing approximately two-thirds of the total allocation over the period of the Five Year Adopted Work Program (AWP) to funding the top two Regional Trail Systems identified by the FGTC. On December 15, 2015, the FGTC identified the [Coast to Coast Trail \(C2C\)](#), as the first regional trail system (see Figure 2). On March 31, 2016, the FGTC selected the [St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop \(SJR2C\)](#), as the second regional trail system (see Figure 3). The other tier provides approximately one-third of the total allocation over the period of the Five Year AWP to Individual Trail segments that close gaps in the SUN Trail network. The "Evaluation, Prioritization, and Selection of Projects" section of this Handbook provide additional information about the AWP.

# FUNDING STRUCTURE

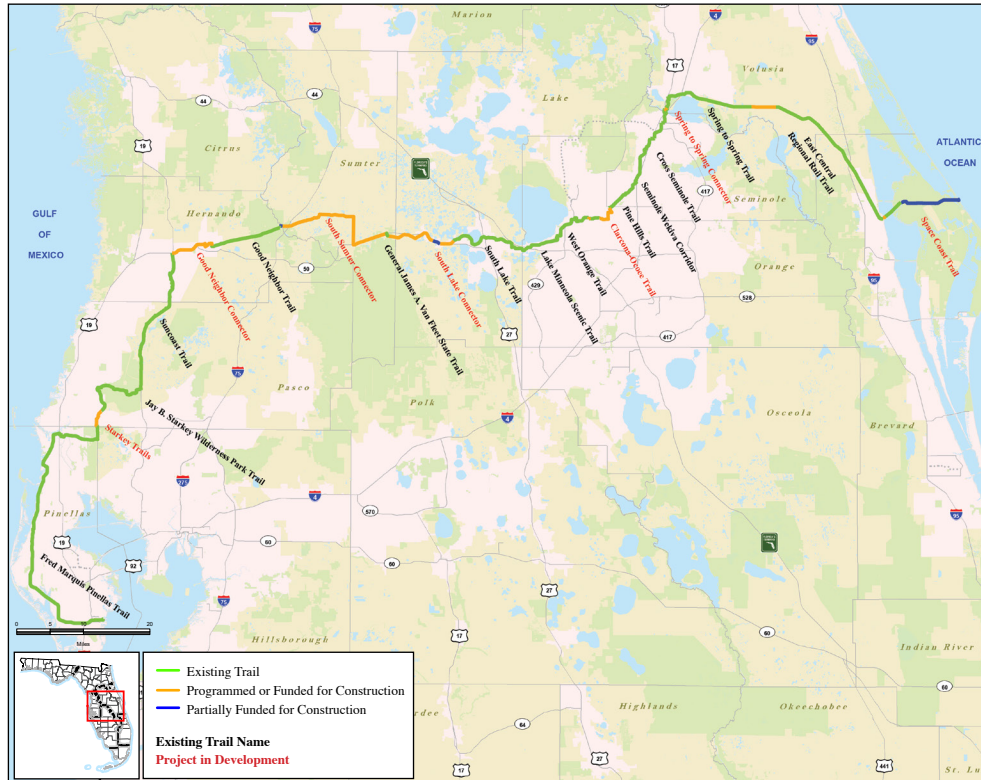


Figure 2: Regional Trail System, Coast to Coast Trail

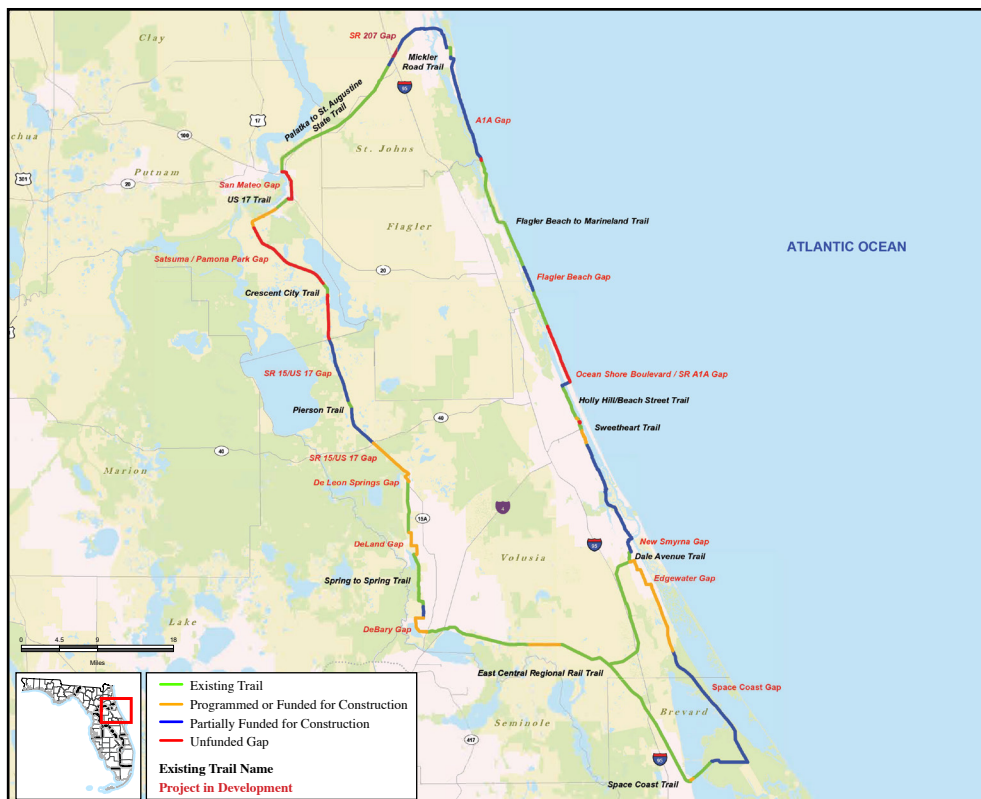


Figure 3: Regional Trail System, St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop

## Eligible Project Phases

The SUN Trail legislation, [Section 339.81, F.S.](#), allows the allocation of TLWR funds to all phases of project development, including preliminary and environmental planning; design; acquisition of real property/land/right-of-way (ROW); new construction, or reconstruction of trail surfaces and bridges; and maintenance. It is important to maintain awareness of programmatic requirements through all phases of project development. Below are details of the eligible phases.

## Feasibility Study

A Feasibility Study, also referred to as a planning or corridor study, includes the development of a purpose and need; an evaluation of existing conditions in the study area; the development and evaluation of trail routes, also known as corridors or alternatives; identification of logical termini; an agreed upon course of action; public involvement and agency coordination.

*Key considerations:* prior planning efforts; inclusion of a diverse group of stakeholders (i.e. trail users and non-trail users, neighboring property owners, business owners in the general vicinity, and public entities); the recognition of and buy-in for the maintenance agreement requirements by a government agency; potential for multiple jurisdictional involvement; ROW minimization, and avoidance; a focus on one preferred corridor or viable alternative to be carried into the Project Development and Environment (PDE) Study or Preliminary Engineering/Design (PE) phase; cost estimates; and, clear and concise documentation. The Feasibility Study may not be required.

## Project Development and Environment Study (PDE)

The PDE is an environmental and engineering process to determine social, economic, natural, and physical environmental impacts associated with a proposed improvement project. It includes the development and evaluation of trail concepts, known as alternatives; environmental evaluations; and additional public involvement and agency coordination. The PDE follows procedures found in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as well as federal and state laws and regulations. The PDE team includes professional engineers, planners, and scientists who collect and analyze project related data, together with other interested stakeholders who collaboratively develop the best alternative to meet the identified transportation need.

*Key considerations:* continued inclusion of stakeholders; ongoing discussion with local/state/federal governments regarding maintenance agreement requirements; awareness of SUN Trail requirements, ROW minimization, and avoidance; cost estimates; and, clear and concise documentation. The PDE frequently picks up where the Feasibility Study leaves off.

## **Preliminary Engineering/Design and Permitting (PE)**

After the PDE study is complete, the next step is the PE, which consists of the analysis and design work to produce construction plans, specifications, and cost estimates. PE components may include trail alignment specifics; trail design including any drainage needs; coordination with regulatory agencies such as water management districts and federal agencies (for permits); engineering surveys; developing a finance plan; confirming the local role in trail construction and future responsibilities; as well as refining construction schedules and costs.

*Key considerations:* continued inclusion of stakeholders; ongoing discussions with local/state/federal governments regarding maintenance agreement requirements; and public information office awareness of key dates/milestones.

## **Right-of-Way Acquisition (ROW)**

Planned multi-use trail routes may be within existing public lands, while others may be on private land. For projects not in public ownership, the acquisition of the real property/land or ROW will be necessary for the construction of the facility funded through the SUN Trail program. Although it is possible that another government entity will negotiate acquisition of SUN Trail funded properties, particularly if it is outside of FDOT's ROW, typically, the FDOT Office of ROW will be responsible for acquiring ROW with SUN Trail allocations. If the land acquired expands ROW along a FDOT maintained facility, FDOT may maintain ownership. Otherwise, FDOT may purchase land, separate from the existing FDOT ROW, on behalf of the managing agency or transfer title upon completion of construction.

FDOT conducts negotiations for the purchase of private property in strict compliance with both federal and state law. Only the properties identified as necessary for the qualified project are eligible for SUN Trail allocations. Previously acquired lands that are already in public ownership are not eligible for reimbursement with SUN Trail funds. Lands being developed with SUN Trail funds, must be acquired in accordance with the laws and rules applicable to FDOT and be available for public use for the lifespan of the improvement.

*Key considerations:* FDOT is not planning to exercise eminent domain to acquire ROW for building standalone trail projects. If there are not willing sellers, the result may be an inability to close a trail gap; FDOT's ROW process; provisions in the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act requirements; and, public information office awareness of current milestones. ROW acquisition may not be required.

## **Construction (CON)**

CON and Construction Engineering Inspections (CEI) phases comprise the actual building phase for the trail facility. SUN Trail allocations are for building the interconnected non-motorized transportation facility. FDOT is obligated to fund only new construction or

reconstruction of trail surface and bridges: pavement, drainage, land stabilization, and safety controls. Additional items are ineligible for SUN Trail funding. If other funding sources are available for additional improvements, construction may occur at the same time as the SUN Trail funded elements or may occur with another project. As appropriate, local agencies should coordinate with their respective District no later than the PE phase if other funds are available for use in tandem with the TLWR allocation.

**Key considerations:** signed maintenance agreements; ribbon cutting opportunities and public information office awareness of key dates/milestones.

*Note: In an effort to reduce costs and expedite construction, projects may be combined into a single contract and conducted as Design-Build. Authorized under [Section 337.11, F.S.](#), Design-Build contracting is conducted in accordance with applicable design criteria, specifications, and contract administration practices. Contractors and consultants interested in these projects will find information on these procurements on the [Design-Build web page](#).*

## Ineligible Project Attributes

Pursuant to the SUN Trail legislation, [Section 339.81, F.S.](#), components funded through the SUN Trail program will not include:

- Sidewalks; nature trails; loop trails wholly within a single park or natural area;
- On-road facilities, such as bicycle lanes of routes other than on-road facilities that are no longer than one-half mile connecting two or more nonmotorized trails, if the provision of non-road facilities is infeasible and if such on-road facilities are signed and marked for nonmotorized use; an exception is made for on-road components of the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail.

Allocation of TLWR funds will not include the development of amenities associated with trail projects, including but not limited to the following elements:

- Benches, trail furniture or seating areas;
- Bicycle racks, air stations or lockers;
- Buildings, restrooms, wayside structures or overlooks, shelters or picnic pavilions;
- Kiosks (regulatory and safety signage permitted);
- Landscaping (trail stabilization permitted);
- Litter or recycle receptacles, and doggie bag dispensers;
- Parking areas or trailheads;
- Playgrounds, fitness equipment or structures;
- Promotional, marketing or educational materials;
- Sculptures, fountains or art; and
- Water fountains, splash zones, water features, spigots, showers, or irrigation equipment.

Other applicable federal, state, or local dollars may fund improvements in tandem with the SUN Trail funded aspects. For trails to accommodate the safe and sustainable placement of non-SUN Trail funded improvements, including trees and other landscaping elements, trail design should be closely coordinated with the landscape design. Before landscape plans are prepared, the District will identify the non-FDOT agency that will be responsible for landscape maintenance. This non-DOT agency must accept responsibility and sign a written agreement for maintenance of the landscape elements. As appropriate, the local agencies should coordinate with their respective District.



Port Charlotte Gateway-Harbor Walk, SUN Trail Program Funding 429820-2

Identifying and establishing priorities may require the coordination of planning efforts from the local to the federal level. A single trail project alone can require significant effort to complete. Combining multiple trail projects into an integrated statewide system requires coordination and a concerted effort to achieve the greater whole. The planning, evaluation and prioritization process for creating a multi-use trail varies depending upon the needs, policies, procedures, substantial goals, and values of the organization's representation. The community involvement process is essential to planning and implementing successful projects. Identifying stakeholders, proponents of the project, and potential concerns of carrying out the project are all important elements of the planning process. Additionally, strong local leadership, that fosters support and maintains momentum, is essential for successful projects. Prioritization of projects at multiple levels occurs for numerous funding sources. Priority projects should be consistent with the community's vision, their comprehensive plan, long-term land management plans, and Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP). Although the long-range plan may not specifically identify trail and/or bicycle-pedestrian projects, a determination must document plan consistency. Local governments are encouraged to develop trail and/or bicycle-pedestrian master plans to aid with the identification and prioritization of projects. Adopting such a plan will allow the community to prioritize and fund projects in well defined increments rather than relying on an ad hoc approach.

The FGTS Plan provides guidance for communities initializing and prioritizing their trail vision, the final section of this Handbook provides other helpful resources. Although the District Trail Coordinators may be more directly involved in the identification of projects in the two Regional Trail systems, they are available to provide stakeholder assistance for all eligible projects.

For trail projects proposed for SUN Trail funding within the boundary of a Metropolitan/Transportation Planning Organizations (MPO), prioritization from the applicable MPO must occur. Typically, the MPO's member municipalities and counties identify and prioritize trail projects for consideration by the MPO. MPOs select and prioritize these candidate projects with a consideration of a range of criteria. For some projects, the MPO may conduct a feasibility study to identify and evaluate candidate projects before final prioritization. Some MPOs have separate ranking processes for bicycle, pedestrian, and trail projects while others simply group all nonmotorized projects into a single category. Regardless, the prioritization of projects should be included during public discussion and documented as actions on the TIP for the use in developing the AWP. Every five years, MPOs prepare an updated Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) with a 25-year outlook. Updates to LRTPs should document projects of regional significance. For trail projects proposed for SUN Trail funding outside of MPO boundaries, the project must be an identified priority of the applicable county (inclusive of their municipalities), tribal government, federal or the state managing agency, and have consistency with the local comprehensive plan. Some counties may pass resolutions or provide a similar mechanism to vet public input and document the prioritization of projects. After

identification and prioritization of all projects by the applicable jurisdiction, the entity transmits the documentation in the “Request for Funding”.

In some areas, it may be advantageous for more than one MPO to establish partnerships for systematically closing gaps in regionally significant trail systems. Although the MPO alliances may not have a formal role in the prioritization process with FDOT, these agencies have proven to be successful in building consensus on regional transportation issues. As appropriate, Regional Transportation Plans may include the trail systems.

To receive consideration for SUN Trail funding FDOT must receive a separate and complete “Request for Funding” for each eligible Regional or Individual Trail project within the announced solicitation period. All applicable information as well as the prioritization and the required signatures must be included within the Request for Funding. Transmittal of each request occurs through the Grant Application Process (GAP – online system).

For more information, visit: [www.flgap.com](http://www.flgap.com).

For GAP System Support contact: (888) 238-9707 or [flgap@blackcatsupport.com](mailto:flgap@blackcatsupport.com).

## Eligibility Criteria

1. Documentation that the project will be developed as a paved multi-use trail within the [SUN Trail network](#), which is aligned to the FTGS Priority Land Trail Network; at minimum, this will include transmittal of a map of the project limits within the SUN Trail network and applicable “Request for Funding” information.
2. Documentation provided that the project is a priority of the applicable jurisdiction; at minimum, this will include transmittal of an adopted prioritization list of projects and the applicable “Request for Funding” information:
  - a. If the project is within a boundary of a [Metropolitan/Transportation Planning Organization](#) (MPO), it must be a MPO priority.
  - b. For areas outside of MPO boundaries, the project must be a priority of the county (inclusive of their municipalities), tribal government, federal or state agency.
3. Documentation that a non-FDOT governmental entity is formally committed to the operation and maintenance of the project (long-term trail manager), this will include applicable “Request for Funding” information; and
4. Documentation that the project is consistent with the applicable comprehensive plan(s), transportation plan(s), or the long-term management plan(s), this will include applicable project concurrency information.

## **Selection Criteria**

Strengths of individual projects may be difficult to quantify and vary significantly from system to system. Recognizing the unique features of trail projects, stakeholders developed additional criteria related to the enabling SUN Trail legislation and FDOT's mission and priorities, for evaluating SUN Trail projects. This Selection Criteria includes improvements to safety, economy, mobility, and the preservation and enhancement of the surrounding environment. The Selection Criteria also relates to project significance, funding sources/matches, multi-modal improvements, construction readiness, measurable public support, immediacy of impact, environmental enhancement, system gap closure, safety, and cost savings. Projects may not meet all of the Selection Criteria, or the identified factors, nor will FDOT use the Selection Criteria to calculate a numerical score for the projects. Rather, projects with the greatest strengths will advance more quickly.

**Project facilitates a system of interconnected trails by closing a gap between existing trails in the [SUN Trail network](#):**

- Project connects two or more existing trails within the SUN Trail network.

**Project enhances the safety of bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists:**

- Project includes a safety component.
- Project is located within an area identified as a hazardous biking/walking zone or an area with significant numbers of safety concerns.
- Project implements bicycle and pedestrian safety action plan.

**Project is recognized as having regional, state or national importance:**

- Project is a component of a Regional Trail System prioritized by the [Florida Greenways and Trails Council](#).
- Project is a component of a [National Recreation Trail](#), [East Coast Greenway](#) or a trail that has other national importance.
- Project implements an adopted regional bike, pedestrian or trail master plan.

**Construction Readiness:**

- Project is ready for immediate construction. All preconstruction phases are complete.
- Project is capable near term development. The design is nearly complete and permitting is underway. This project includes preconstruction.
- The project proposal is feasible but construction will occur in the future.

**Additional financial contribution committed to the project:**

- Project funds are leveraged by multiple public/private sources of investments dedicated to this specific trail segment (i.e. contributions from federal, state, tribal local, non-profit, and/or private landowners).

- Project funds are leveraged by at least one additional public/private source of investment dedicated to this specific trail segment (i.e. contributions from federal, state, tribal, local, non-profit, and/or private landowner contributions).

**Project blends transportation modes by completing, improving or enhancing existing facilities to improve mobility:**

- Project implements [Complete Streets](#) objectives and initiatives.
- Project implements [Safe Routes to Schools](#) objectives and initiatives.
- Project provides a direct connection to regional transit systems, including rail stations, express or local bus routes.
- Project is located within a designated multi-modal district.
- Project has the potential to reduce vehicular congestion.
- Project improves access in a Bicycle Friendly Community or Bicycle Friendly University, as designated by the [League of American Bicyclists](#).
- Project improves access in a designated Walk Friendly Community, as designated by the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#).

**Project has a high level of documented public support:**

- There is measurable public support and community involvement.
- The greater community supports the project as demonstrated by recently adopted proclamations or resolutions expressing commitment.
- Demonstration of support is consistent across multiple entities representing the greater community, rather than a select few interest groups.
- Recent community surveys provide indication of need and support.

**Project has a significant immediate impact to the quality of life by enhancing economic opportunities and providing connectivity to destinations:**

- Project connects to or through federal, state, or local conservation/recreation areas.
- Project connects people to jobs, businesses, or civic resources.
- Project is located along or connects to a [Florida Scenic Highway](#).
- Project is part of a public/private partnership where developers, linear corridor owners, small businesses, corporations, foundations, and/or private sector partners are directly supporting the project.
- Project is located within a [Rural Economic Development Initiative](#) (REDI) community defined pursuant to [Section 288.0656, F.S.](#)
- Project is located within a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) defined pursuant to [Section 288.0656, F.S.](#)

**Project enhances or preserves environmental resources:**

- Project ensures the Florida Ecological Greenway Network (FEGN) maximizes protection of high priority linkages; and the location of the project is within a Priority 1 or 2 Critical Linkage as identified by the FEGN.
- Project restores or mitigates impacts of environmental degradation.
- Project incorporates water quality or drainage improvements.
- Project incorporates conservation initiatives to restore or maintain connectivity by reducing vehicle-caused wildlife mortality.
- Environmental impact assessment or statement does not identify specific issues.
- Environmental approval and permitting process is complete.

**Project includes cost-saving elements:**

- Potential for overall cost savings for completing the project in conjunction with another project (i.e. new/resurfacing roadway, redevelopment/new development project, trail phase/ extending trail project).



Palatka to Lake Butler State Trail, SUN Trail Program Funding 428202-3

# EVALUATION, PRIORITIZATION & SELECTION OF PROJECTS

In compliance with State statute, FDOT maintains an AWP that includes the tentative list of all financially feasible transportation projects for implementation during the next five years. The Five Year Work Program (WP) is the result of an ongoing process that prioritizes and funds upcoming transportation system improvements scheduled for the next five years. It is prepared in accordance with [Section 339.135, F.S.](#) The development of the WP involves extensive coordination with local governments, including Metropolitan/Transportation Planning Organizations (MPO), municipalities, counties, and input from other stakeholders. The first year of the AWP authorizes FDOT to expend funds to complete activities and projects. The last four years of the work program are included for planning purposes. The AWP provides clear direction on where, when and how FDOT will build and fund projects.

The identification of projects and the development of implementation schedules are based on priorities and the allocation of funds. The AWP details and commits funding to localities for the included projects. During the annual revision cycle, projects in the AWP are considered for advancement or deferral, a new fifth year is added, and the first year drops off as projects are completed. The annual revision is known as the development of the Tentative Work Program (TWP). Annually FDOT conducts public hearings to give stakeholders an opportunity to learn about and comment on the TWP. Then, FDOT submits the final draft of the TWP to the MPOs and County Commissions. After incorporating changes, it is submitted to the Florida Legislature, the Executing Office of the Governor (EOG), the Florida Transportation Commission (FTC), and the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) for consideration during the Legislative Session. In July, the TWP becomes the AWP after approval of the appropriations by the Florida Legislature, budget authorization by the Governor, and signature of the FDOT Secretary. The first year of this AWP becomes the current WP year. Pursuant to [Section 216.179, F.S.](#) if the Governor vetoes a specific appropriation, authorization of expenditures (state, federal, or local funds) or implementation may not occur. Therefore, it is possible the AWP would not reflect projects in the TWP.

Each phase of a project generally takes two years to complete. Therefore, projects could take over ten years from initiation to completion and would cycle through the WP several times. The WP is inherently subject to a significant number of factors that are beyond FDOT's control. Therefore, it may be difficult to transfer all project phases from the second year of the previously AWP to the first year of the current TWP. Factors such as changing MPO priorities, difficulty in obtaining real property/land or ROW to develop the facility, environmental factors and the availability of funds will influence development of the WP. FDOT is committed to completing the C2C and the SJR2C and will continue to program project phases in those trail systems that meet the Eligibility Criteria. Like other types of transportation systems, the needs for the development and improvements of multi-use trails exceed available funding. Therefore, in the Individual Trail category an allocation to one project phase is not a guarantee of commitment to allocations for future project phases.

# EVALUATION, PRIORITIZATION & SELECTION OF PROJECTS

At the state level, FDOT Districts play an integral role in the evaluation, prioritization, and selection of projects for inclusion in the AWP with SUN Trail funding. The District Trail Coordinator conducts the initial evaluation of the project and facilitates review and concurrence of project “Request for Funding” proposals. The District will evaluate proposals meeting the Eligibility Criteria based on the Selection Criteria to identify the strengths of projects rather than employing a numerical comparison of projects. During this process, the District team evaluates and confirms the accuracy of the cost estimates for the project phases; if the proposed phase is able to proceed within the timeframe established by the applicable entities; and, the overall project viability. It is imperative that recommendations and timelines are set-forth to CO in coordination with the District WP staff. The prioritization scenario of the District will build on previous investments and project viability, with the overall focus on projects that significantly advance closing gaps in the existing trail systems to increase the length of the trail network.

Like other funding sources FDOT administers, staff may conduct field visits to the project area for evaluating feasibility. District staff may also consult with project sponsors about how to cost share the funding of a project or how to phase a project for funding incrementally over time. Through the funded project phases, it is important to maintain transparency, consistency and for information to be readily available/understandable to the public. As trail visioning occurs, it is important for planners to understand statutes relating to naming facilities on state property and the erection of honorary or memorial markers. [Section 334.071, F.S.](#), legislative designation of transportation facilities, is the operative statute for the naming requests and to note the definition of “transportation facility” in [Section 334.03\(30\), F.S.](#), which is the definition that would apply to the statute that controls memorial designations of transportation facilities. Likewise, it is important to have an understanding of [Section 267.062, F.S.](#), for the naming of any state building, road, bridge, park, recreational complex, or other similar facility. Naming SUN Trail projects occurs in accordance with the provisions of the law. As applicable, the District Trail Coordinator will resolve any naming conflicts.

After the District evaluates the proposals, the District Trail Coordinator will provide the draft prioritization scenarios to District senior management for input and approval. Once approved they will transmit a prioritized list of Individual Trail Projects, and as applicable a prioritized list of projects within the Regional Trail Systems to the Manager of the SUN Trail program for assessment. They will also transmit the standardized Excel workbook summarizing the funding needs for every eligible project phase to the SUN Trail Program Manager. Prior to transmittal of the District prioritization list(s) for the statewide assessment, the District must create WP candidate items in Financial Management (FM) for every eligible project. At the state level, this becomes the Needs Plan.

## EVALUATION, PRIORITIZATION & SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Creating the candidate items in FM also ensures communication between the District Trail Coordinator and the WP team. Upon creation of the candidate item in FM, FDOT has the ability to track the project and to determine the timing of funding needs for each project phase. It also provides the mechanism for maintaining transparency, consistency, and for the information to be readily available and understandable to stakeholders. District Trail Coordinators will provide specific information to the District WP staff for creating the candidate project files into FM. The District WP should use the naming conventions and project information provided by the District Trail Coordinator. If the District WP has a concern about the information provided (i.e. similar project already in the AWP with a different name), they will talk to the District Trail Coordinator, who will discuss it with the statewide SUN Trail Program Manager. A course of action will be developed so all related projects files remain consistent.

The development of the statewide draft prioritization scenario by the statewide SUN Trail Program Manager occurs in regards to the availability of funds, timing of projects, district priorities, project tiers, and project viability. Overall, the statewide focus will build on previous investments for the significant advancement of closing gaps in the existing trail systems to increase the length of the statewide network. During the evaluation, the statewide SUN Trail Program Manager works closely with the CO WP staff and the District Trail Coordinator to verify the feasibility of phased programming. Following the evaluation, the SUN Trail Program Manager provides the funding scenario to CO senior management for input and approval. Upon approval of the prioritized project list, the statewide SUN Trail Program Manager notifies the CO WP staff and District Trail Coordinators of the decision. Then the district WP staff will enter FM programming information of the project(s) into the appropriate fiscal year during the WP development cycle. Unselected eligible projects will remain in the Needs Plan for future funding consideration.

Changes to proposals received by FDOT, including project names, limits, descriptions, FM numbers, or costs are not made in isolation. The District Trail Coordinator must coordinate and communicate to the SUN Trail Program Manager and the District WP team the need for changes to projects, which may include mapping, timelines, and funding needs. The course of action will be determined; then the District WP staff will enter appropriate information in the FM system. If there are any necessary changes to projects in the AWP, the CO WP staff should provide concurrence that changes to the AWP are appropriate and whether the changes can occur with or without a WP amendment. See [WP Instructions](#).

# EVALUATION, PRIORITIZATION & SELECTION OF PROJECTS

SUN Trail allocations adhere to the FDOT's selection process for projects described in this Handbook. The first year of programming SUN Trail funds presented programmatic challenges because the WP was adopted before the first year of projects were identified.

Therefore, the initial funding cycle encompassed two fiscal years, and \$50 million in available funds. Projects identified for the first year of funding were approved by an amendment to the AWP. In October 2016, FDOT made the first announcement of SUN Trail funded projects included in the AWP (Fiscal Years [FY] 2016/17). On November 18, 2017, the City of Edgewater hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony of the first completed trail segment constructed with SUN Trail funds. In July 2017, the AWP included SUN Trail funded projects through FY 2020/21. Subsequent to the adoption of the WP, FDOT announces the projects.

SUN Trail funded projects are included in the annual TWP development process. When FDOT announces a call for new "Request(s) for Funding" (e.g. applications), the primary focus will be the new fifth year of the WP. The development of the WP ensures stability and the successful implementation of the SUN Trail program. Minor funding adjustments may occur to match advertisements of projects programmed in the WP and projects may be under contract for less than the award amount. Likewise, Districts may request funding to be available in the next fiscal year for awarded projects not under contract by June 30. When approved, these funding adjustments and timelines may result in final allocations that differ from the original award. Districts may maintain funds and budget up to \$100,000 for TLWR funded projects in the AWP. Funds and budget in excess of up to \$100,000 will be returned to CO on a quarterly basis for programming at the state level. CO WP documents the variances through a monthly report. For SUN Trail specific information, see [WP Instructions](#).



City of Edgewater, Dale Avenue Trail, SUN Trail Program Funding 439863-1

Successful trail projects depend on partnerships. The primary role of FDOT is to program, fund and develop projects based on MPO and/or local priorities. The day-to-day maintenance will be by an entity other than the FDOT.

## Project Administration

Generally, FDOT will administer allocations on projects within the existing FDOT ROW for phases funded through the AWP. As such, the District office will assign a project manager for funded project phases. Administration of the funded project phases may occur by another agency if it would be more practical, expeditious, and economical for them to perform the project. This would most likely occur on projects that are located outside of FDOT's ROW.

For non-FDOT managed projects, the local agency will act as the administering body, and serve as the project manager, with the District providing necessary oversight. The District will facilitate execution of the Florida Department of Financial Services Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) Number 55.038 cost-reimbursement (grant) agreement with another government entity. This legal instrument will describe intergovernmental tasks to be accomplished and funds to be paid between government agencies. As with all state agreements, they are subject to the Florida Single Audit Act (FSAA) and [Section 215.97, F.S.](#) The District will assign a point of contact to provide necessary oversight, assist recipients and sub-recipients in complying with the FSAA, and ensure that its duties as a pass-through entity (as defined in the FSAA) are accomplished for the successful implementation of the awarded funds.

Pursuant to [Section 255.0525, F.S.](#), projects that cost more than \$200,000 shall be publicly advertised at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the project is located 21 days prior to the established bid opening, and at least five days prior to any scheduled pre-bid conference. Funded projects that cost more than \$500,000 shall be published at least 30 days prior to the established bid opening, and five days prior to any scheduled pre-bid conference. FDOT performs negotiations in public meetings, but local agencies are not required to conduct vendor negotiations in a public meeting. If local agencies do not perform vendor negotiations in a public meeting they are required to be recorded and must adhere to [Section 286.0113, F.S.](#) Regardless of funding source, if a project has received federal funds or is eligible to receive federal funds for future phases it must comply with federal requirements. The project would require NEPA review and approval by the FDOT District or the Office of Environmental Management as described in the FDOT PD&E Manual and pursuant to the NEPA Assignment Memorandum of Agreement signed between FDOT and Federal Highway Administration effective December 14, 2016.

When FDOT administers construction projects of trails in the SUN Trail network, as part of the project closeout process the project manager will provide mapping information to

the District Trail Coordinator. This mapping information may be derived from Geographic Information System (GIS) shapefiles, the As-Built documentation, or Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD) files. The District Trail Coordinators will provide the data to the SUN Trail Program Manager to facilitate updating FDOT resources and mapping tools. During the closeout process of non-FDOT administered construction projects, the District Coordinator will receive similar mapping information and provide it to the SUN Trail Program Manager. The SUN Trail Program Manager will coordinate with OGT and ensure updates to the mapping sources including: I-View; Resource Characteristics Inventory (RCI); external online mapping tools; and the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL), occur annually or on an as-needed basis.

### Operation and Maintenance

It is important to identify the party responsible for trail operation and maintenance early in development of a project. This ensures the appropriate agency is aware of its various responsibilities and has the authority to maintain the project long-term. Typically, long-term managers are local or regional governmental entities, tribal governments or other public land agencies with the responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails. Projects traversing multiple jurisdictional boundaries may have multiple managers. The managing entity ensures a quality level of service on the facility by providing both routine and remedial maintenance. Routine Maintenance involves the day-to-day upkeep of a trail. Activities may consist of litter pick-up, trash removal, debris removal, soil and weed control, maintenance of drainage, graffiti removal, mowing, sweeping, sign replacement, shrub trimming, and other regularly scheduled maintenance activities. Remedial Maintenance involves repairing, replacing, or restoring major components that may have been damaged or destroyed. Minor repairs such as sealing asphalt pavement or repainting may occur every five to ten years, while major repairs may occur approximately every 20 years. An FDOT constructed multi-use trail that has reached the end of its pavement or bridge structure lifecycle shall be prioritized by the local government for funding consideration. Trail reconstruction should be prioritized by the MPO or applicable local government/agency. Alternatively, the District, at its discretion may reconstruct a trail in FDOT ROW in coordination with a road-resurfacing project.

As previously discussed in this Handbook, Eligibility Criteria for SUN Trail funding requires a non-FDOT governmental entity provide for the operation and maintenance of the project (long-term trail manager). Communication of this willingness occurs upon submittal of the “Request for Funding”. If the project is funded the District will enter into standardized Maintenance Memorandum of Agreement (MMOA) with another governmental agency to ensure their commitment to long-term trail maintenance prior to the final obligation of program funds for all construction projects, both within and outside of FDOT ROW. If another agency is administering funding of the project, then the MMOA obligations are included in the [CSFA Number 55.038](#) Agreement for non-FDOT administered contracts.

***Trails constructed inside of FDOT ROW*** – FDOT will maintain the pavement and any bridge structures for a trail in its ROW, and will apply normal roadway maintenance standards such as mowing and litter control to the entire ROW inclusive of the trail. Beyond this, a local sponsor/agency will enter into a maintenance agreement with the Department to undertake all other trail maintenance. The area of responsibility will be the footprint of the trail within FDOT ROW as defined by the District. The local sponsor/agency will be responsible for any mowing and litter control above FDOT roadway standards and maintenance of trail specific facilities, drainage, and features such as ornamental landscaping, wayside areas, benches, litter receptacles, and restrooms.

***Trails constructed outside of FDOT ROW*** – shall be maintained by an entity other than FDOT. The Department will enter into an agreement or other form of documented commitment to ensure that a local sponsor/agency is committed to long-term trail maintenance. The local sponsor/agency will be responsible for all trail operation and maintenance needs which includes routine pavement and bridge structure repair, drainage, litter control, sweeping, vegetation management, and the maintenance of trail specific facilities and features such as ornamental landscaping, wayside areas, benches, litter receptacles, and restrooms.



Debary, Spring-to-Spring Trail, Phase 3A, SUN Trail Program Funding 439039-5

FDOT developed this Handbook to serve as a reference document for implementation of the SUN Trail Program. It is not a comprehensive guide for trail planning and development. Updates to this Handbook may occur as the SUN Trail program evolves. FDOT would like to thank you, the reader, for your interest in this legacy program that continues the State's commitment of improving mobility, by continuing to fund the development of a statewide, connected system of trails.

Recognizing the need for ongoing coordination and the likelihood for additional questions, the remaining sections of this document include key FDOT staff members, at the District level, and CO in Tallahassee. Stakeholders should contact the District Trail Coordinators for information about the SUN Trail program. The District Trail Coordinator will provide guidance and coordinate with the SUN Trail Program Manager. Following the staff contact section, a series of resources and links provide the reader with additional information.

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# DISTRICT TRAIL COORDINATORS

## District 1

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## District 2

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## District 3

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**Alternate: Maria Showalter**

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(850) 330-1232

## District 4

**Wibet Hay**

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## District 5

**Heather Garcia**

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## District 6

**Tiffany Gehrke**

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(305) 470-5308

## District 7

**Alex Henry**

[alex.henry@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:alex.henry@dot.state.fl.us)

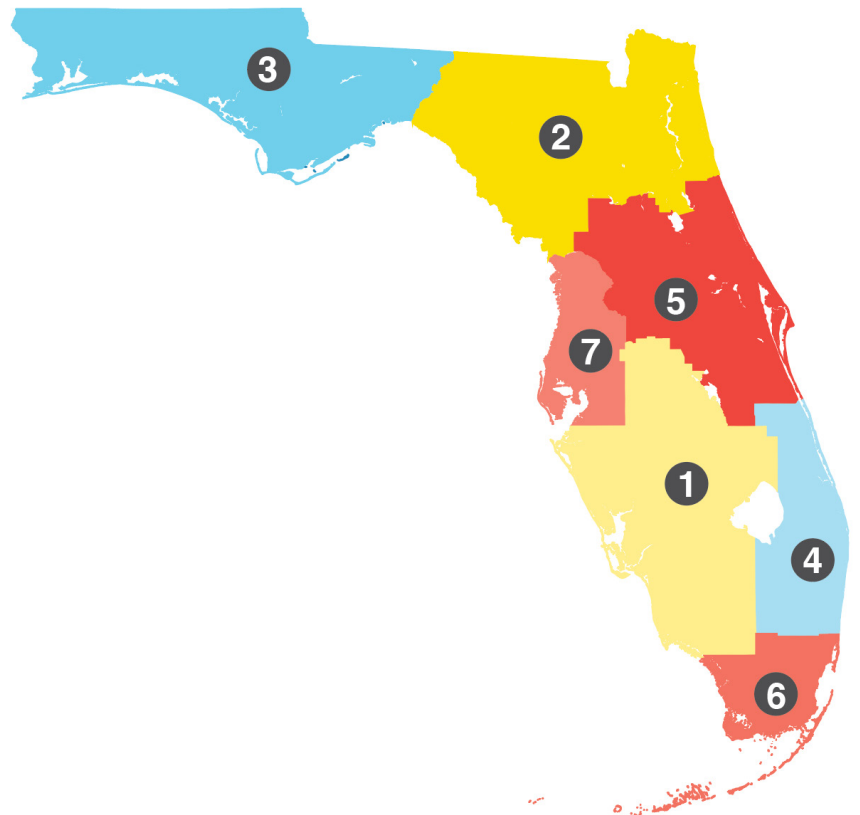
(813) 975-6405

## Florida Turnpike Enterprise

**Daniel Kastelic**

[daniel.kastelic@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:daniel.kastelic@dot.state.fl.us)

(407) 264-3478



## Primary Resources

**Florida Department of Transportation:** [www.fdot.gov](http://www.fdot.gov)

**Transportation Development:** [www.fdot.gov/planning](http://www.fdot.gov/planning)

- Systems Implementation Office, SUN Trail (primary website site): [www.FloridaSunTrail.com](http://www.FloridaSunTrail.com); *FDOT Internal [Multi-Use Trails SharePoint](#)*; and *FDOT Internal [SUN Trail Portal](#)*
- Office of Policy Planning, see programs: [www.fdot.gov/planning/Policy](http://www.fdot.gov/planning/Policy)  
Transportation Data Analytics Office, see Roadway Characteristics Inventory: [www.fdot.gov/statistics/rci](http://www.fdot.gov/statistics/rci)

### Office of Construction:

- Design-Build: [www.fdot.gov/construction/DesignBuild/Design-Build.shtm](http://www.fdot.gov/construction/DesignBuild/Design-Build.shtm)

### Office of Design: [www.fdot.gov/design](http://www.fdot.gov/design)

- Office of Roadway Design: [www.fdot.gov/roadway](http://www.fdot.gov/roadway)
- FDOT Design Manual (FDM): [www.fdot.gov/roadway/fdm](http://www.fdot.gov/roadway/fdm)  
*This manual sets forth geometric and other design criteria, as well as procedures, for all FDOT projects.*

Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction, and Maintenance for Streets and Highways (the Florida Greenbook) (2016): [www.fdot.gov/roadway/FloridaGreenbook/FGB.shtm](http://www.fdot.gov/roadway/FloridaGreenbook/FGB.shtm). *This manual establishes uniform minimum standards and criteria for the design, construction, and maintenance of all public streets and highways, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, underpasses and overpasses.*

- Scope of Services: [www.fdot.gov/designsupport/Scope](http://www.fdot.gov/designsupport/Scope)
- Complete Streets: [www.flcompletestreets.com](http://www.flcompletestreets.com)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Rights of Way: [www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards](http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards)

### Office of Environmental Management: [www.fdot.gov/environment](http://www.fdot.gov/environment)

- Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM): [www.fdot.gov/environment/ETDM.shtm](http://www.fdot.gov/environment/ETDM.shtm)

**Program Management Office:** [www.fdot.gov/programmanagement](http://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement)

• Local Programs: [www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/lp/Default.shtm](http://www.fdot.gov/programmanagement/lp/Default.shtm)

**Office of Right-of-Way:** [www.fdot.gov/rightofway](http://www.fdot.gov/rightofway)

**State Safety Office:** [www.fdot.gov/safety](http://www.fdot.gov/safety)

**Traffic Engineering and Operations Office:** [www.fdot.gov/traffic/TrafficServices/MUTCD.shtm](http://www.fdot.gov/traffic/TrafficServices/MUTCD.shtm);

• Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2009 edition with Revisions 1 and 2, May 2012, Chapter 9 (for signs see Chapter 9B—shared use paths, for crosswalk markings see Chapter 3B): [mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/mutcd2009r1r2edition.pdf](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/mutcd2009r1r2edition.pdf). *Adopted by FDOT, this manual is the national standard for traffic control devices on all roads open to public travel. Traffic control devices are signs, signals, markings, and other devices used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic, placed on, over, or adjacent to a street, highway, pedestrian facility, bikeway.*

**Office of Work Program and Budget:** [www.fdot.gov/workprogram/aboutOWP.shtm](http://www.fdot.gov/workprogram/aboutOWP.shtm);

FDOT Internal Work Program and Budget: [SharePoint](#)

## Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

- Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, AASHTO: [www.bookstore.transportation.org/collection\\_detail.aspx?ID=116](http://www.bookstore.transportation.org/collection_detail.aspx?ID=116)
- Manuals and Guides for Trail Design, Construction, Maintenance, and Operation and for Signs: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm)
- Shared-Use Path Level of Service Calculator: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/05138](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/05138)

## Additional Resources

FDEP, Office of Greenways and Trails: [www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://www.FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com)

American Trails: [www.AmericanTrails.org](http://www.AmericanTrails.org)

Coast to Coast Trail: [www.c2ctrail.com](http://www.c2ctrail.com)

East Coast Greenway Alliance: [www.greenway.org](http://www.greenway.org)

Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL): [www.fgdl.org/metadataexplorer](http://www.fgdl.org/metadataexplorer)

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): [ceq.doe.gov](http://ceq.doe.gov)

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org)

St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop Alliance: [www.sjr2c.org](http://www.sjr2c.org)

**Florida Statutes**

[Section 339.81, F.S.](#), Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail Network

[Section 335.065, F.S.](#), Bicycle and pedestrian ways along state roads and transportation facilities

[Section 320.072, F.S.](#), Motor Vehicle Licenses

[Section 334.03\(30\), F.S.](#), Definitions—When used in the Florida Transportation Code

[Section 334.071, F.S.](#), Legislative designation of transportation facilities

[Chapter 337, F.S.](#), Contracting; Acquisition, Disposal, and Use of Property

[Section 339.135, F.S.](#), Work Program

[Chapter 260, F.S.](#), Florida Greenways and Trails Act

[Section 215.97, F.S.](#), Florida Single Audit Act, and Catalog of State Financial Assistance Number 55.0538

[Section 216.179, F.S.](#), Reinstatement of vetoed appropriations

[Section 255.0525, F.S.](#), Advertising for competitive bids or proposals

[Section 267.062, F.S.](#), Naming state buildings and other facilities

[Section 286.011, F.S.](#), Public meetings and records—the Sunshine Law

[Section 286.0113, F.S.](#), General exemptions from public meetings

[Section 288.065, F.S.](#), Rural Economic Development Initiative—REDI

# SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS FOR THE SUN TRAIL HANDBOOK

Name of Agency or  
FDOT Department:

Name of Person responsible  
for suggestions or comments:

Email Address:

Telephone Number:

Physical Address:

Suggestions or Comments:

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Comments or suggestions may be attached as marked up copies of pages from the SUN Trail Handbook. Please complete the requested information on a copy of this sheet and return to:

Florida Department of Transportation  
SUN Trail Program  
Systems Implementation Office  
605 Suwannee Street, MS 19  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

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*Updated August 2019*