



**PINELLAS TRAIL SECURITY TASK
FORCE (PTSTF) MEETING AGENGA**

April 9, 2024 - 9:00 a.m.

Pinellas County Emergency Services Center
12490 Ulmerton Road, Room 130
Largo, FL 33774
(Telephone: 727-582-2000)

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
3. **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF TARGETED ENFORCEMENT DAY**
4. **QUARTERLY REPORT FROM PINELLAS TRAIL PARK RANGER**
5. **LAW ENFORCEMENT AND AGENCY REPORTS**

- Sheriff's Office
- Belleair
- Clearwater
- Gulfport
- Largo
- St. Petersburg
- Tarpon Springs
- Animal Services
- Public Safety Services
- Pinellas County Risk Management
- Friends of the Pinellas Trail
- Volunteer Patrol Programs and Updates

6. **REPORT ON TRAIL USER COUNT DATA**
7. **REPORT ON TRAIL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY**
8. **OTHER BUSINESS**
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

- **Notice to Law Enforcement Representatives – If you are unable to attend the meeting, please e-mail your Incident/Offense Report to Kyle Simpson at ksimpson@forwardpinellas.org. If you would prefer, you can fax the report to the Pinellas County MPO at (727) 464-8212. *Thank You***

NEXT PTSTF MEETING – July 9, 2024

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Office of Human Rights, 400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Suite 300, Clearwater, Florida 33756; [(727) 464-4062 (V/TDD)] at least three days prior to the meeting.

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Pinellas Trail Security Task Force – April 9, 2024

2. Approval of Minutes



SUMMARY

The summary minutes of the January 9, 2024, Pinellas Trail Security Task Force meeting are attached.

ATTACHMENTS: Pinellas Trail Security Task Force Summary Minutes – January 9, 2024

ACTION: Approval of the April Meeting Summary

**PINELLAS TRAIL SECURITY TASK FORCE
MEETING SUMMARY
JANUARY 9, 2024**

The following is a summary of the January 9, 2024 Forward Pinellas - Pinellas Trail Security Task Force meeting, which was held in person in Largo. The Security Task Force meets at least quarterly during the year.

IN ATTENDANCE

Cpl. Anthony Boon, Chairman	Tarpon Springs Police Department
Detective A. Daniels	Belleair Police Department
Officer Jarred Stiff	Clearwater Police Department
Deputy Matthew Skypack	Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Chief Ranger Kent Cleveland	Pinellas County Parks, and Conservation Resources
James Abaka	Pinellas County Risk Management
Scott Rintz	Pinellas County Risk Management
Joan Rice	Pinellas County Public Works - Transportation
John Rieman	Pinellas County Public Works - Transportation
Elisabeth Staten	City of St. Petersburg - Transportation
Stuart Schwartzreich	Pinellas Trail Aux Ranger/Friends of the Pinellas Trail
Bill Romanski	Pinellas Trail Parks Volunteer
Phyllis Romanski	Pinellas Trail Parks Volunteer
Kaitlyn Nieman	Forward Pinellas Staff
Alex Hall	Forward Pinellas Staff
Kyle Simpson	Forward Pinellas Staff
Maria Kelly	Forward Pinellas Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Anthony Boone, Tarpon Springs Police Officer, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked members to introduce themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY – October 10, 2023

The summary from the October 10, 2023, meeting was approved with no corrections.

3. PINELLAS TRAIL COLLABORATION

Kyle Simpson, Forward Pinellas staff, shared staff wants to collaborate on the different concerns and projects happening on the Pinellas Trail.

1 – Enforcement Agencies Targeted Enforcement Day in February - The PTSTF decided on February 17th as a Targeted Enforcement Day from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm on the Trail. Pinellas County Public Works will be staffing a table in Dunedin and Forward Pinellas will be staffing a table in St. Petersburg to distribute safety info and materials. Tarpon Springs PD, Largo PD, Belleair PD, Clearwater PD, PCSO, and St. Pete PD will all be doing special details with bicycle officers on the trail and cruisers at major intersections. The Trail Rangers and Friends of the Pinellas Trail will also be involved. Tarpon Springs PD reported that they will be setting up message boards on the Trail and at high-volume

uncontrolled crossing locations to give advanced notice of the event. Forward Pinellas will work with law enforcement partners to broadcast on social media.

2 – Palm Harbor Roundabout – Kaitlyn Nieman, Forward Pinellas staff, shared a presentation on preliminary crash data before and after the construction of the Palm Harbor Roundabout. This is a single lane roundabout with a speed limit of 25mph, located at the Alt US19 and Florida Avenue intersection. The original project included drainage improvements, road resurfacing, new sidewalks and a realignment of the Trail. All construction was completed September 15, 2023. The crash data over the last five years included 13 crashes with two injuries. Moving forward, staff will be monitoring long-term changes in crash trends including anything that is Trail-related. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

Joan Rice with Public Works noted that Mr. Simpson reminded all the municipalities that FDOT did a study of every crossing of the Pinellas Trail to determine what type of stop control should be at the trail crossings, whether it should be a trail stop or a vehicle stop or both. Public Works followed up with a notice to the municipalities that if they would like to change a stop control at a Trail crossing, they should let Public Works know so that it can be recorded and the change can go forward.

3 – New Pinellas Trail Map - Mr. Simpson shared that the new Pinellas Trail map is out. This new map contains information on how to ride safely on the street or the trail. It includes the courtesy campaign flyers, basic bike safety and how to properly wear a helmet. It also shares informational resources on local, regional and statewide initiatives. The primary target with the new trail map is to show people who are new to the area, and tourists who ride the trail, where to find trail facilities, activity centers and trail connections. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

4. QUARTERLY REPORT FROM PINELLAS TRAIL PARK RANGER - 4th Quarter, October 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

Chief Ranger Kent Cleveland reported for the 4th quarter five significant incidences. Four of the five were heard of after the fact. On October 28, 2023, a subject was riding his bicycle, stopped at a bench near Orange Street and suffered a heart attack, which he subsequently passed away from. Pinellas County Sheriffs Office (PCSO) and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) responded. Friends of the Pinellas Trail were very instrumental in assisting. This incident was reported by Trail users via 911. On November 10, 2023, a dog attack occurred in the West Bay area where Largo Police Department and EMT's responded. The subject had minor injuries while the dog and its owner fled. On November 11, 2023, there was a report of roofing nails on the trail, made by a citizen/bike shop owner, between 9th Ave N and 69th Street. Eight cyclists experienced flat tires. A thorough sweep of the area was done on November 14th and no nails were found. On December 24, 2023, there was a report of a break-in at a storage facility at 7830 38th Avenue, where catalytic converters were stolen and the fence across the ditch from the Trail was cut. A police report was filed with St. Petersburg PD. On December 30, 2023, a lost child was reported on a St. Petersburg section of the Trail. Ranger Townsend, St. Petersburg PD, PCSO and Trail users were all involved in the search. The child was found farther north and unharmed. Regarding construction updates, construction along

the Duke Energy Trail continues with rolling closures north of Chesnut Park for the next six months. A guardrail is being installed along Keystone Road.

5. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND AGENCY REPORTS – 4th Quarter, October 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

A. Sheriff's Office

Deputy Matthew Skypak shared for the 4th Quarter, a total of 66 individual events on the Trail were reported. A majority were suspicious persons, the remaining calls were between directired patrols and low priority calls throughout the Trail. There were little to no calls for juveniles on bikes causing issues on the Trial.

B. Belleair

Detective Allison Daniels with Belleair PD shared 22 First Information Reports (FIRs) for being on the Trail after dark. There was a call for a stolen bike from a Belleair storage unit, which was shared with Largo PD. The Trail was used by the suspect to come into the City of Belleair and take the bike and the the person used the Trail to leave the area. Also working with Largo PD, a three year old escaped from his home three different times, at the Belleair Place Apartments which is in the Clearwater/Largo jurisdiction, and came out onto the Trail. Department of Child Services (DCS) is now involved.

C. Clearwater

Sgt. Jarred Stiff shared a mix of low priority calls, including 178 directive patrols, mostly park walks-talks. Four drug calls, with one resulting in an arrest in the area of Stevenson Avenue and the Trail, just south of Sunset Point Road. Also reports of people fishing from the bridge that goes over the inlet in that area. Warnings and citations were issued. Three reports of welfare checks of people that were either sick or injured on the Trail. Also reported, issues with homeless subjects in different parts along the Trail in Clearwater, mostly south of the downtown area. CSX Rail has an area just north of Lakeview, in a wooded area where the homeless set up campsites. Officer Stiffs' group has been working with CSX and Code Enforcement to address complaints from Trail users being harassed. In addition to the Targeted Enforcement Day, one of the Clearwater Community Problem Response (CPR) Teams will be doing a detail on January 19, 2024, on bikes, to address concerns from citizens who are reporting suspicious activity on the Trail at night. Sheriff's office has reported that the juveniles on the bikes harassing other riders has subsided. There are complaints of Trail users telling law enforcement that folks are not stopping on Court and Chestnut for the Rapid Flashing Beacons. Clearwater is addressing the complaints.

D. Gulfport

No report from Gulfport.

E. Largo

Officer Keith Bowling wasn't able to attend and sent over a report. Largo had ten calls for service this quarter. One assist with another agency, a crash near the West Bay Pinellas Trail Overpass. One citizen contact, one homeless contact, three traffic crashes in the vicinity of the Trail, one trespass and one welfare check.

F. St. Petersburg

Officer Juliet Savagean shared that St. Petersburg would be unable to attend today's meeting due to staffing needs for the upcoming inclement weather.

G. Tarpon Springs

Officer Anthony Boone reported not much activity for law enforcement on the Trail this quarter. Officer Boone will be sharing discussions with new recruits regarding enforcement on the Trail and working with Trail Rangers.

H. Animal Services

No representative from Animal Services

I. Public Safety Services

Ms. Lynn Abbott was unable to attend. She will email staff her report for distribution.

J. Pinellas County Risk Management

Mr. Scott Rintz shared the bi-annual Trail inspection was completed with no issues to report. The next Trail inspection is scheduled for April 2024.

K. Friends of the Pinellas Trail

Stuart Schwartzreich, filling in for Scott Daniels, shared that the next meeting will be held on January at the Largo Library from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Facebook page currently has 9,000 followers and Friends would be happy to share and promote any events on their Facebook page, just reach out to them. www.friendsofthepinellastrial.com .

L. Volunteer Patrol Programs and Updates

Chief Cleveland shares that the volunteer program is still very strong. There are 40 cart volunteers and upwards of 100 bike volunteers. There is a new Ranger coming on board, Ranger 3, Sean Kushnick. Mr Schwartzreich shared that regarding graffiti issues, there is still a problem, especially in the I-275 North or west area near Gibbs High School, where they are trying to get the graffiti cleaned up as quickly as possible.

6. AUTOMATIC TRAIL COUNTERS

Mr. Simpson shared the Trail users are still going strong, up around 2 million users. The counters have been out there for a little over six years and are beginning to wear. Instead of expanding the counter locations, Forward Pinellas will be replacing counters. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

7. REPORT ON TRAIL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

Joan Rice shared the construction sheet in the agenda packets are current. Harn Blvd. is not quite open yet. Look for the opening in February. One item to add, East Lake Road between John Chesnut and Keystone area, Duke Energy will be trimming trees, therefore spot areas of the Trail may be closed. Should take about six months.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Boone noted he will be introducing a ride on a Saturday in early March, with Tarpon High School kids, to ride their bikes on the Trail to see what they see, and to get another perspective. Other officers will accompany the kids and lunch is included.

John Rieman shared that Public Works is putting together a comprehensive map to show little bump outs on the Trail. It may not be useful to anyone except Public Works, but just so everyone knows it would be available.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Boone adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The next PTSTF meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2024.

Pinellas Trail Security Task Force – April 9, 2024

3. Roundtable Discussion of Targeted Enforcement Day



SUMMARY

On Saturday, April 6th enforcement agencies that participate in the PTSTF conducted a Targeted Enforcement operation along the Pinellas Trail in a method similar to the High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) program. To complement enforcement efforts, Forward Pinellas, Pinellas County, the City of Dunedin, and the Friends of the Pinellas Trail conducted public outreach concurrently. Preliminary results from the effort will be discussed, including any opportunities or challenges that could be addressed in future efforts.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required, informational item only

Pinellas Trail Security Task Force – April 9, 2024

4. Quarterly Report from the Pinellas Tail Park Ranger



SUMMARY

Pinellas County Park System is responsible for the care and maintenance of the County-owned parks and preserves, trails, campgrounds, boat ramps, rights of way and roads. This department also provides maintenance, operations, and oversight for the Pinellas Trail. Their role is vital to keeping people using the Pinellas Trail safe and informed. At each Pinellas Trail Security Task Force meeting, the Park Ranger provides an overview of any security topics which arose during the previous quarter. The information helps everyone attending understand any concerning behavior on the Pinellas Trail that can be addressed by the appropriate parties in attendance.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required, informational item only

- **Sheriff's Office**
- **Belleair**
- **Clearwater**
- **Gulfport**
- **Largo**
- **St. Petersburg**
- **Tarpon Springs**
- **Animal Services**
- **Public Safety Services**
- **Pinellas County Risk Management**
- **Friends of the Pinellas Trail**
- **Volunteer Patrol Programs and Updates**

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required, informational item only

SUMMARY

This item will include the monthly data summary reports for the automatic trail counters along the Pinellas Trail. Note that average hourly data has been included with the reports.

ATTACHMENT: Pinellas Trail User Count Data Summary Reports:

- January 2024
- February 2024

ACTION: None required, informational item only

Pinellas Trail Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection Period:
January 1st-31st

January 2024

31-Day Count Total: 171,861

Daily Average Count: 5,544

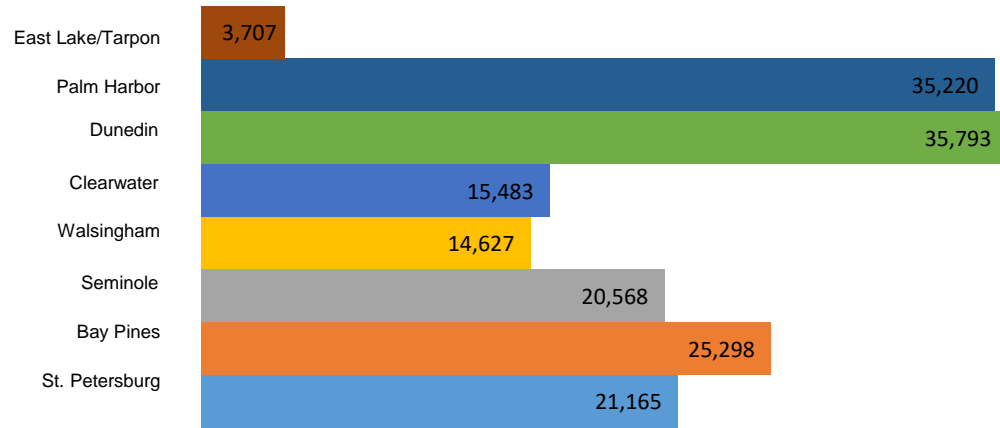
Highest Daily Totals:

#1 – Saturday, January 27th (Dunedin – 3,150)

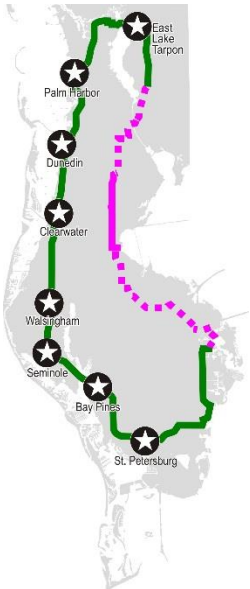
#2 – Saturday, January 27th (Bay Pines – 1,548)

#3 – Saturday, January 27th (St. Petersburg – 1,403)

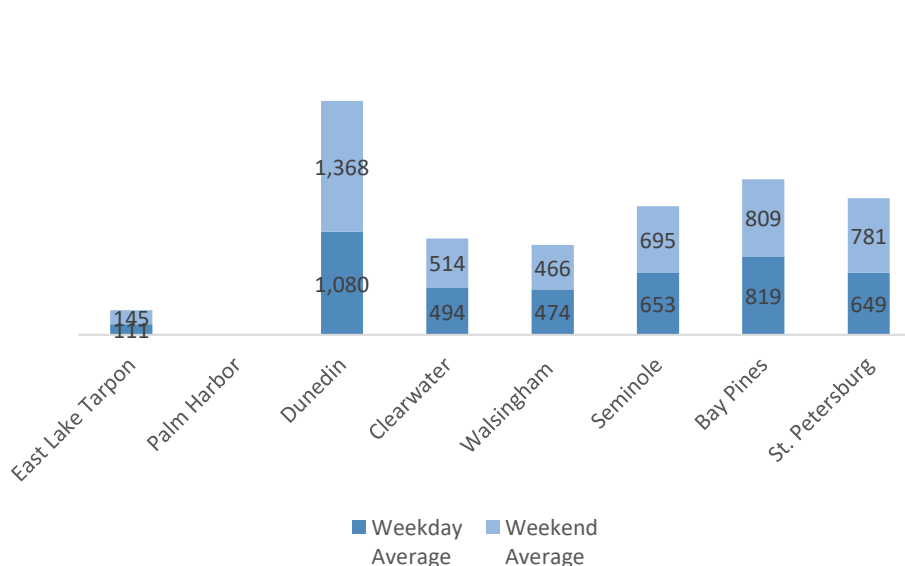
January Totals by Counter Location*



Counter Locations



Weekday & Weekend Profile*

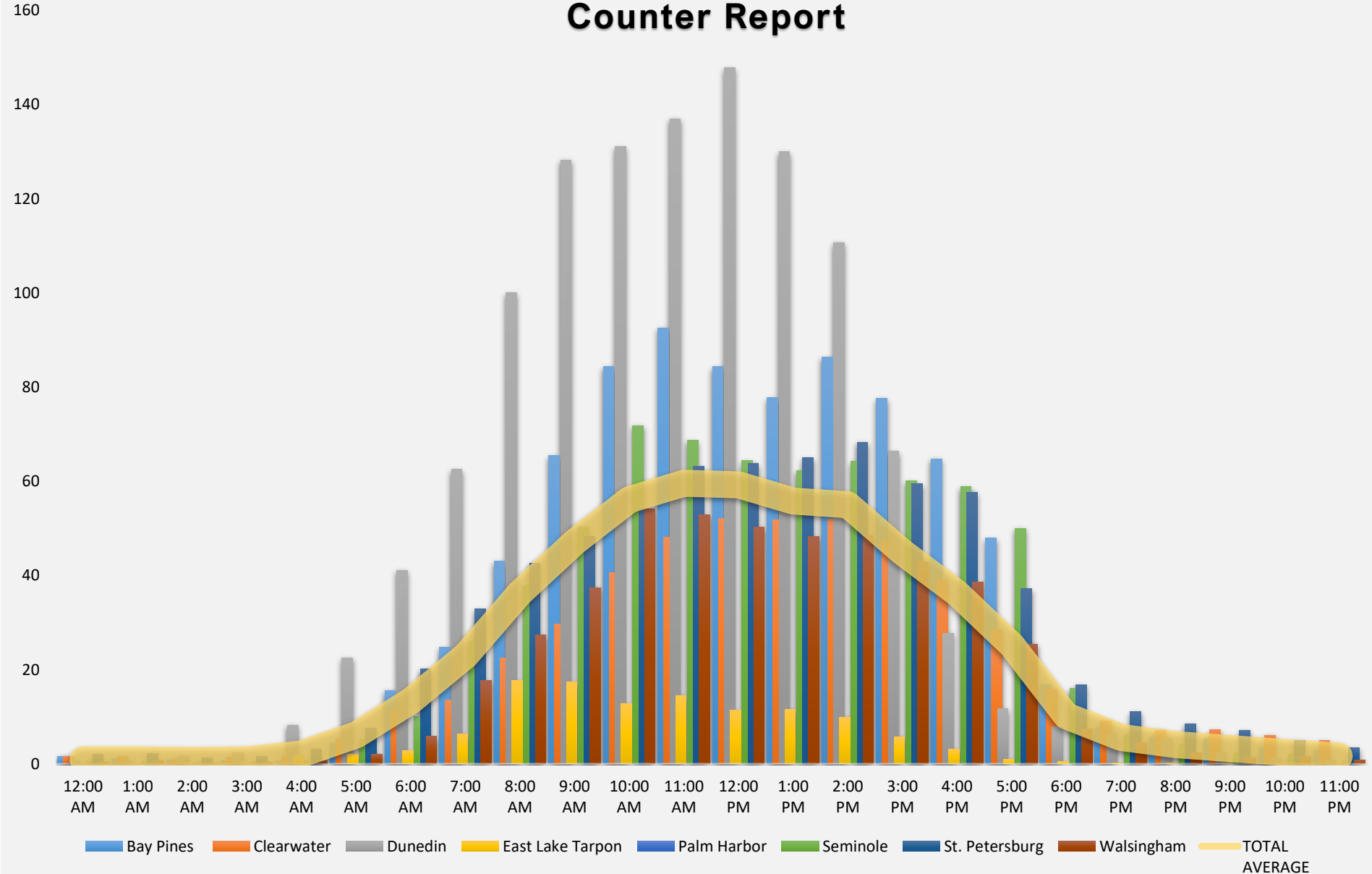


Trail User Mode Split*

Counter Location	Walking (Pedestrian)	Bicycling (Bicycle)
Palm Harbor	N/A	N/A
Dunedin	20%	80%
Clearwater	N/A	N/A
Walsingham	N/A	N/A
Seminole	25%	75%
Bay Pines	29%	71%
St. Petersburg	29%	71%
East Lake/Tarpon	7%	93%

Source: Forward Pinellas January 2024

January 2024 Average Hourly Counter Report



Pinellas Trail Count Data Summary

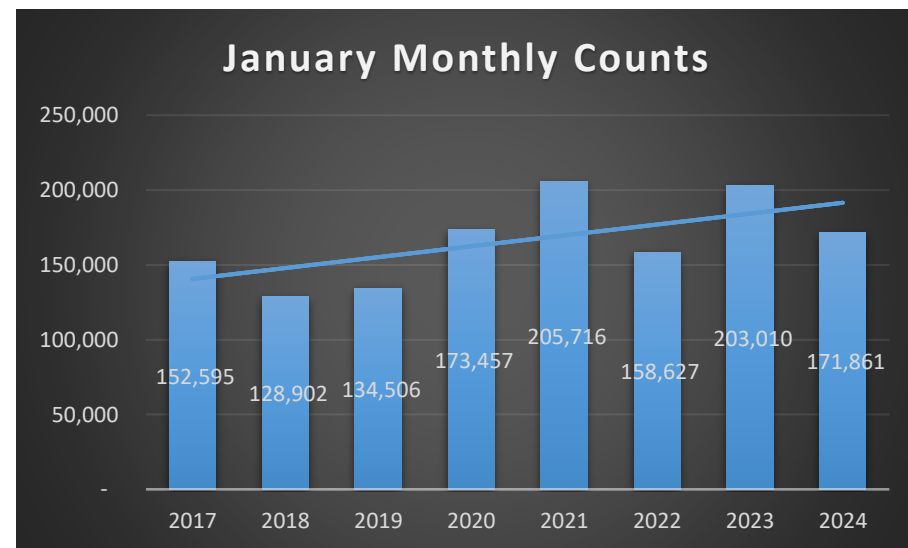
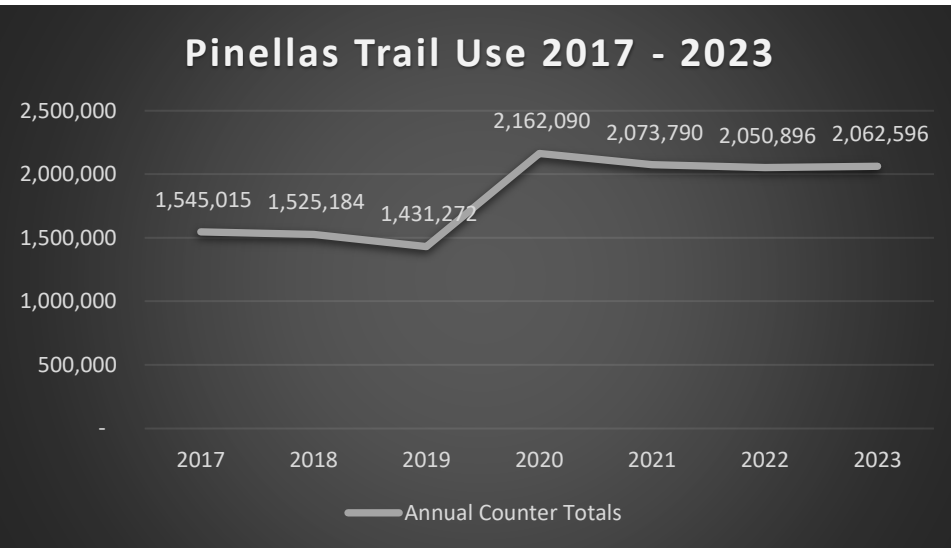
Automated Trail Counter Data Collection

Period: January 2017 – January 2024 Data



**2024 Total Count:
171,861**

January Monthly Trail Counts 2017 - 2024



Notes:

- *Due to technical issues with the Palm Harbor counter, a linear regression formula was used to generate an estimated count based on historical data. Daily, hourly, and mode split data is not available. Due to technical issues with the Clearwater, and Walsingham counters, mode split data is not available.
- Data in this report represents total counts from each count station located along the Pinellas Trail system. Each datapoint does not necessarily represent a unique trail user.

Pinellas Trail Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection Period:
February 1st-29th

February 2024

29-Day Count Total: 215,310

Daily Average Count: 7,424

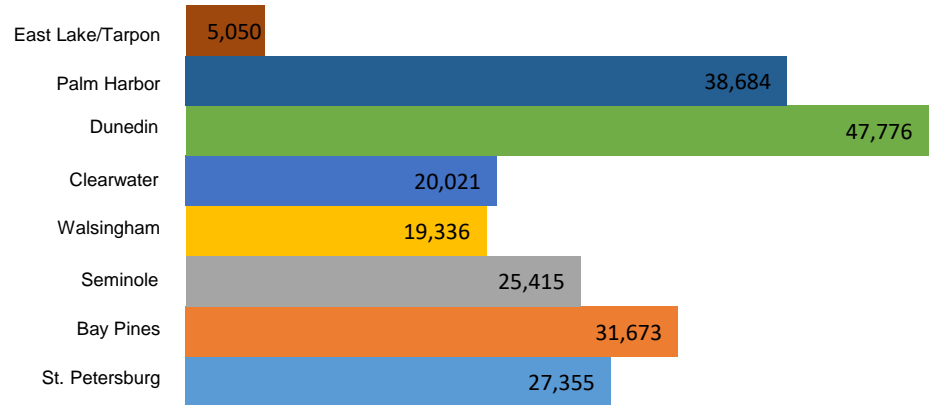
Highest Daily Totals:

#1 – Saturday, February 10th (Dunedin – 3,332)

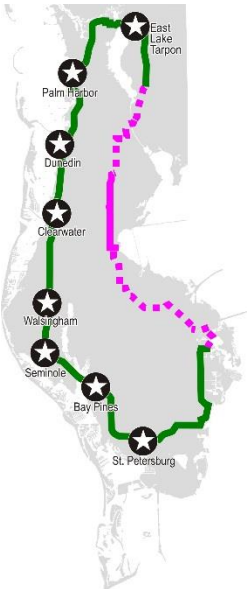
#2 – Saturday, February 10th (Bay Pines – 1,762)

#3 – Saturday, February 10th (St. Petersburg – 1,744)

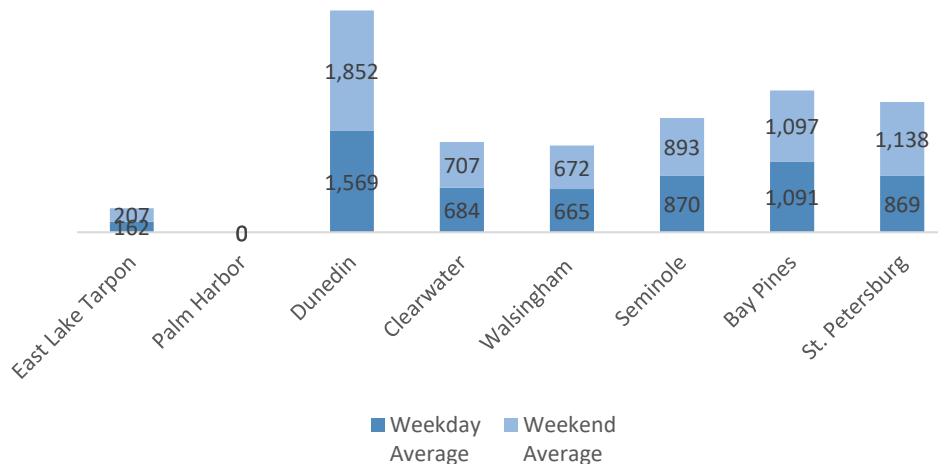
February Totals by Counter Location*



Counter Locations



Weekday & Weekend Profile*

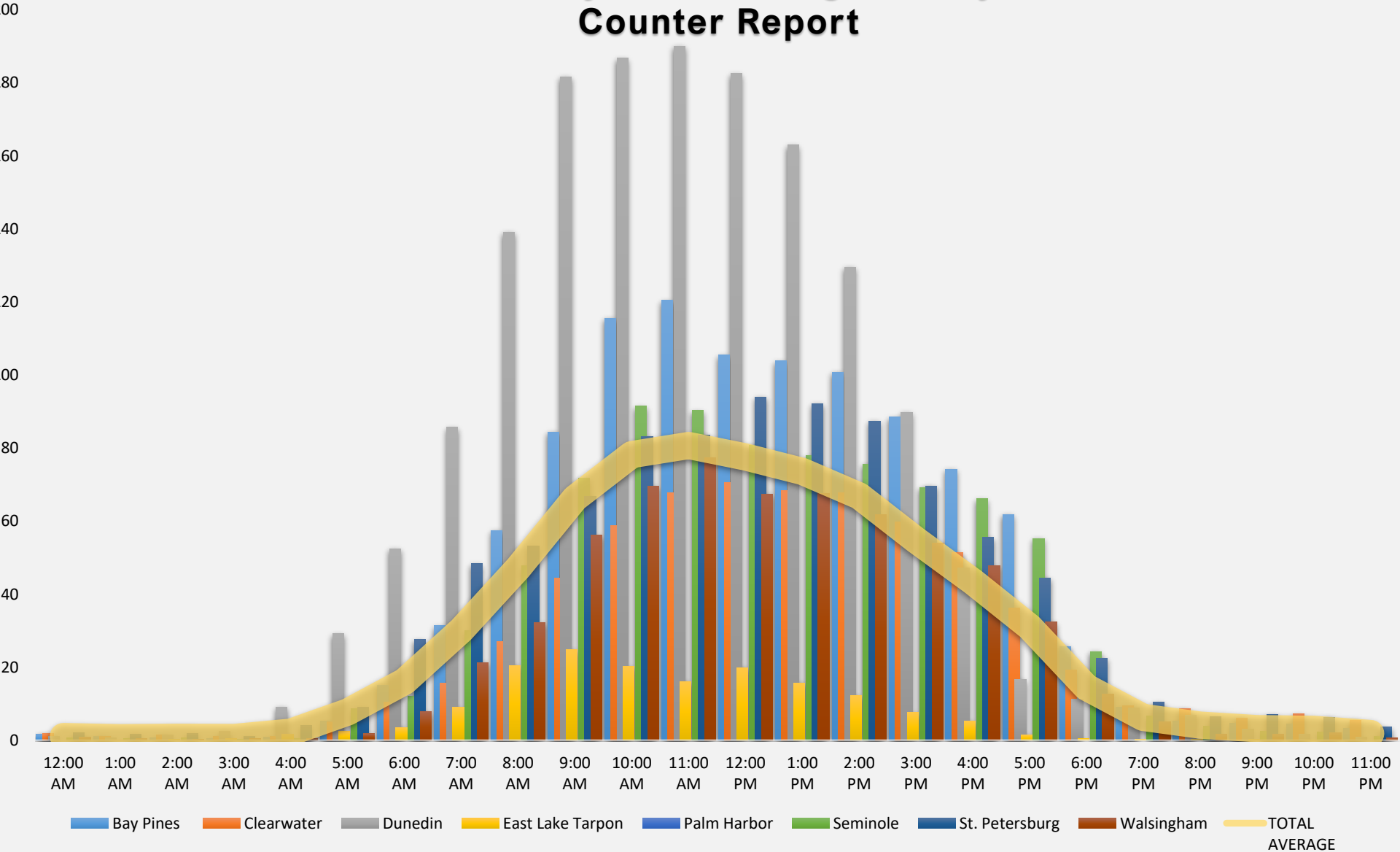


Trail User Mode Split*

Counter Location	Walking (Pedestrian Icon)	Bicycling (Bicycle Icon)
Palm Harbor	N/A	N/A
Dunedin	17%	83%
Clearwater	N/A	N/A
Walsingham	N/A	N/A
Seminole	22%	78%
Bay Pines	24%	76%
St. Petersburg	29%	71%
East Lake/Tarpon	5%	95%

Source: Forward Pinellas February 2024

February 2024 Average Hourly Counter Report



Pinellas Trail Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection

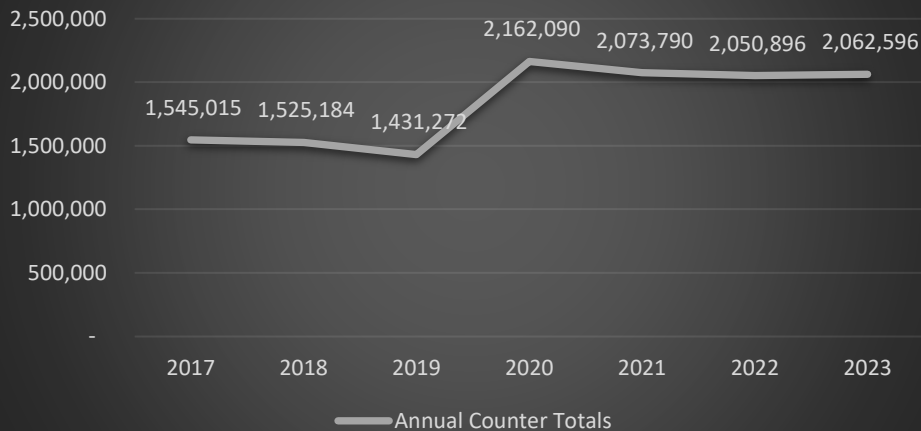
Period: February 2017 – February 2024 Data



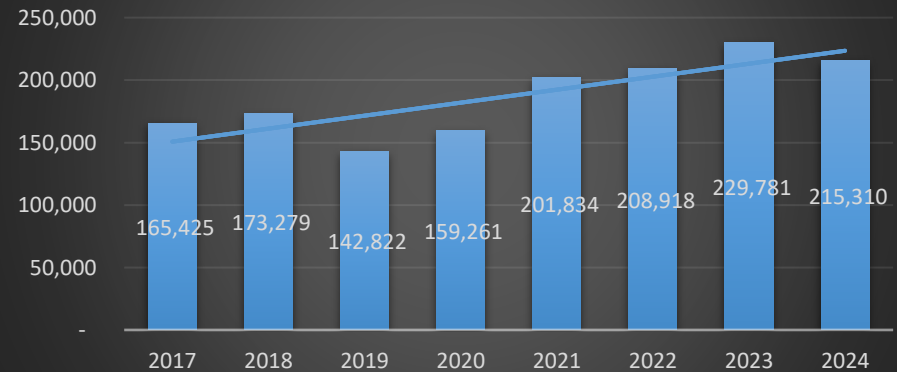
**2024 Total Count:
215,310**

February Monthly Trail Counts 2017 - 2024

Pinellas Trail Use 2017 - 2023



February



Notes:

- *Due to technical issues with the Palm Harbor counter, a linear regression formula was used to generate an estimated count based on historical data. Daily, hourly, and mode split data is not available. Due to technical issues with the Clearwater, and Walsingham counters, mode split data is not available.
- Data in this report represents total counts from each count station located along the Pinellas Trail system. Each datapoint does not necessarily represent a unique trail user.

7. Trail Construction Activity Report

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS April 2024

Pinellas Trail North Loop Gap Countryside	Bridge over Lake Tarpon Canal north of Tampa Road, construction has started (link)
Pinellas Trail South Loop Phase 3 & 4	Haines Bayshore to Ulmerton Rd to 126th Ave; Segment of South Loop has will receive SUN Trail and FDOT Funding; Design underway; Construction 2026 (link)
71st Street Trail Connector	Pinellas Trail to 38th Avenue N; Design underway, Construction 2024
San Martin Bridge & Trail connection	Bridge Replacement; Design 2023; Construction 2026
Courtney Campbell Trail Overpass	Trail Overpass at S.R. 60/Bayshore Blvd; SUN Trail; Design Underway; Construction Fall 2024 (437498-1-52-01 SR 60 Courtney Campbell Causeway Pedestrian Overpass (fdottampabay.com))
Howard Frankland Bridge Trail	FDOT include trail with new bridge construction; Design-Build Project; Construction underway; Est. completion late 2025 (link)
Gandy Bridge Trail	FDOT to include trail with new bridge construction; PD&E Study Underway
Harn Boulevard Overpass	Pedestrian Overpass; Construction is complete and it opened earlier this year (link)

8. Other Business

A. Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest

Pinellas Trail to get 'education and enforcement' blitz from cops – February 2024

B. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics

- Trail Planning
- Trail Operations
- Trail Enhancements

C. Other

If any member has other business to discuss, they may address it under this item.

Pinellas Trail to get 'education and enforcement' blitz from cops

Officials say they have seen an increase in concerns that have been raised about the trail, including the use of e-bikes and scooters.



Walkers and cyclists make their way along the Pinellas Trail last year. Local law enforcement agencies are planning an education and enforcement blitz on the trail soon. [CHRIS URSO | Times]

By

- **CARL DiORIO** *Tampa Bay Newspapers*

Published Feb. 16|Updated Feb. 16

For anyone wondering how Pinellas Trail rules are enforced, this news: Police from municipalities belonging to something called the Pinellas Trail Security Task Force, and Pinellas County Sheriff's Office deputies, are planning to stage an "education and enforcement" blitz in the near future.

A Targeted Enforcement Day was originally scheduled for Saturday, but officials from Forward Pinellas have decided to reschedule it to April 6 due to rain in the forecast.

The Task Force meets quarterly at the Pinellas County Public Safety Service at the Sheriff's Office headquarters. And at its most recent meeting in October, those in attendance decided some sort of public safety display might be needed, said Kyle Simpson, active transportation planner for Forward Pinellas.

“We’ve seen an increase in the number of concerns at the various intersections along the trail — things like drivers not yielding properly and such, general safety concerns — as well as people concerned about (transport devices) like scooters and e-bikes,” Simpson said.

So, at the latest Task Force meeting, participants decided to do “a targeted day to have a visible presence for trail users and motorists driving across the trail at intersections to reinforce proper behavior,” officials said.

For trail users, that means respecting the posted trail speed limit of 20 mph.

“That’s supposed to be the maximum safe operating speed,” Simpson said. “But when you’re passing people, you (may) need to be going slower than that.”

The Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail runs from downtown St. Petersburg to Tarpon Springs in a 67-mile route set to grow eventually to 75 miles. It’s used by bicyclists, e-bikers, pedestrians and joggers for recreational exercise and also as a convenient transit route by many commuters.

Forward Pinellas is responsible for county planning issues as they relate to transportation and land-use matters.

“While most users have a positive experience on the trail, there has been an increase in the number of complaints regarding trail user and driver behaviors,” Forward Pinellas said in announcing the targeted safety push.

No one factor prompted the task force to schedule its one-day educational push, so much as an aggregate of concerns including a big increase in trail traffic since pre-pandemic times, officials said. An estimated 1.5 million users in 2019 jumped more than 50% in the first year of the pandemic, when cabin-fevered residents took to the trail in bigger numbers, and Forward Pinellas says annual user traffic has remained at 2 million-plus ever since.

Police officers from departments in Belleair, Clearwater, Largo, St. Petersburg and Tarpon Springs are expected to participate in the educational blitz, along with Sheriff’s deputies.

The law enforcement officers “will be on the trail and at key roadway crossings to ensure motorist and trail users are complying with traffic laws,” officials said.

Representatives of Forward Pinellas, Friends of the Pinellas Trail and the Center for Urban Transportation Research also will be on hand at locations in downtown Dunedin — a hot spot for trail traffic incidents over the years — and downtown St. Petersburg “distributing safety materials and safety devices.”

Among the items set to be distributed are bike lights, bike bells and trail maps.

“This effort is in tandem with Pinellas County’s ongoing trail courtesy campaign, which reminds people how to share our trails in a courteous and safe manner,” Forward Pinellas said.

To date, the courtesy campaign mostly has featured the installation of temporary trail signage and occasional leafletting by Friends of Pinellas volunteers and others, encouraging courteous behavior and adherence to rules and regulations. Meantime, even the most basic

trail protocols, such as directional traffic flow, have been the source of confusion in recent months.

The situation came to a head last summer, when Forward Pinellas erected signs instructing both pedestrians and bike riders to use the same right-hand lanes going north and south along the trail. The longstanding practice of most trail users has been to keep the two groups separate, with pedestrians staying within a designated lane for walkers and joggers — a lane that was quietly eliminated several years ago yet remains much intact.

The stay-to-right campaign also will be publicized as part of the one-day educational blitz, Simpson said.

For additional information about the Pinellas Trail Security Task Force, visit [here](#).