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BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC) MEETING AGENDA

April 20, 2020 – 8:30 a.m.
310 Court Street, 1st Floor Conf. Room
Clearwater, FL 33756
Virtual Meeting

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

1. **CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL** (8:30 – 8:40)
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – *Please limit comments to 3 minutes* (8:35 – 8:40)
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 24 & March 16, 2020** (8:40 – 8:45)
4. **FORWARD PINELLAS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – April 8, 2020** (8:45 – 8:50)
5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AMENDMENT** (8:50 – 9:00)
6. **18TH AVENUE SOUTH HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND CONCEPT PLANNING STUDY** (9:00-9:20)
7. **RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING BEACON (RRFB) LEGISLATIVE FOLLOW-UP** (9:25 – 9:40)
8. **TBARTA REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT** (9:35 – 9:50)
9. **TRAIL COUNTER DATA DURING A PANDEMIC – A LOCAL AND NATIONAL PRESECTIVE** (9:50 – 10:00)
10. **BPAC BUSINESS** (10:00 -10:10)
 - A. Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)
 - B. Bike Florida Mapping Initiative
 - C. Friends of the Pinellas Trail
 - D. Tri-County/TMA BPAC
11. **AGENCY REPORTS** (10:10 – 10:20)
12. **OTHER BUSINESS** (10:20 – 10:30)
 - A. SPOTLight
 - B. Membership
 - C. Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest
 - D. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics
 - E. Other
13. **ADJOURNMENT** (10:30)

NEXT BPAC MEETING – MAY 18, 2020

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 seven days prior to the meeting.

Appeals: Certain public meetings result in actions taken by the public board, commission or agency that may be appealed; in such case persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at a public meeting/hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee – April 20, 2020



3. Approval of Minutes

SUMMARY

The meeting summary for the February 24, and March 16, 2020 meetings are attached for review and approval.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- BPAC Meeting Summary – February 24, 2020
- BPAC Meeting Summary – March 16, 2020

ACTION: Approval of Meeting Summary

**FORWARD PINELLAS
BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
FEBRUARY 24, 2020**

The following is a summary of the Forward Pinellas Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held on February 24, 2020, in the Pinellas County Planning Department Conference Room, First Floor, 310 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

BPAC Members Present

Brian Smith, Chairman
Becky Afonso, Vice Chair
Julie Bond
Dr. Lynn Bosco
Kimberly Cooper
Lucas Cruse
Scott Daniels
Win Dermody
David Feller
Byron Hall
Edward Hawkes
Chip Haynes
Alan Johnson
Charlie Johnson
Paul Kurtz
Ron Rasmussen
Gina Harvey
Annette Sala
Michael Siebel
Bert Valery
Jim Wedlake
Georgia Wildrick
Robert Yunk

At Large Citizen Representative
North County Citizen Representative, Oldsmar
CUTR
At Large Citizen Representative
St. Petersburg Citizen Representative
St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator
Pinellas Trails, Inc.
Clearwater Citizen Representative
North County Citizen Representative, Oldsmar
Pinellas Park Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative
Clearwater Citizen Representative
South Beaches Citizen Representative
St. Petersburg Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative
Pinellas Park Citizen Representative
Pinellas County Public Works Traffic
At Large Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative
North Beaches Citizen Representative
Seminole Citizen Representative
Largo Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative

BPAC Members Absent

Daniel Alejandro
Felicia Donnelly
Lyle Fowler
Deputy Eric Gibson
Jacob Labutka
Caroline Lanford
Stephen Lasky
Lauren Matzke
Mike Milvain
Rick Perez
Derek Reeves

Largo Citizen Representative
City of Oldsmar
PC Parks & Conservation Resources (PCR)
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
PSTA
Pinellas County Planning Department
At Large Citizen Representative
City of Clearwater
St. Petersburg Citizen Representative
City of Largo
City of Pinellas Park

Others Present

Alex Henry
Jeff Gow
Cory Gray
Joy Hancock
Al Bartolotta
Chelsea Favero
Whit Blanton
Angela Ryan
Tina Jablon
Maria Kelly

FDOT
Commissioner, City of Dunedin
Pinellas County Planning
Bike Florida
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Brian Smith called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and the attendees introduced themselves.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments provided.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The summary from January 27, 2020 BPAC meeting was approved with no corrections.

4. FORWARD PINELLAS ACTIONS

Al Bartolotta, Forward Pinellas Planning Division Manager, reviewed the highlights of the Forward Pinellas Board meeting for February 12, 2020. The Board approved the Regional Transportation Priorities for the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area Leadership Group (TMA). The Board also approved the Safety Performance Measures that are adopted every year as part of the Transportation Improvement Program. The Board approved the Active Transportation Plan, as well as the documentation for the Long-Range Plan. The Board also received a presentation from FDOT looking at redesign alternatives for US 19 North intersections located north of Tampa Road. The Board also discussed several legislative bills currently in Tallahassee.

5. COMPLETE STREETS

Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas Staff, reviewed the Complete Streets Grant Program which provides federal funding to local governments for the development of concept plans and construction projects aimed at making roadways safer and more accessible for all users. Up to \$100,000 is awarded for concept plans and up to \$1,000,000 is awarded for construction plans on an annual basis. Members of Forward Pinellas staff, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Planners Advisory Committee (PAC) met to review the applications and recommended projects to be advanced for funding. The subcommittee recommended that the City of Pinellas Park application receive the \$100,000 grant to complete a concept plan for 78th Avenue and the City of Dunedin receive the \$1,000,000 grant for the construction of complete streets treatments along Skinner Boulevard. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

6. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PRIORITY LIST

Ms. Favero reviewed the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Priority List applications awards. Forward Pinellas staff worked with a subcommittee of Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory and Technical Coordinating Committee members to develop a new application process and new scoring criteria. A call for project applications using the new process and scoring was released in October 2019 with applications due in December 2019. Four applications were received and are listed below. The maximum possible score for an individual application was 95 points:

1. City of St. Petersburg requests \$1,941,347.36 for 28th Street North from the Pinellas Trail to 1st Avenue North (65 points)
2. City of St. Petersburg requests \$1,000,990.63 for Central Avenue from 34th Street to 31st Street (65 points)
3. City of St. Petersburg requests \$1,966,953.91 for 22nd St S from 5th Ave S to 1st Ave N (60 points)
4. City of Treasure Island requests \$557,698 for the East Treasure Island Causeway Trail (50 points)

A member of the City of St. Petersburg staff expressed concern regarding the planning project for Treasure Island. As such, BPAC members unanimously agreed to vote for each project separately. For "28th Street North from the Pinellas Trail to 1st Avenue North", Kim Cooper made a motion to recommend approval. This was seconded by Mike Siebel and the vote passed unanimously. For "Central Avenue from 34th Street to 31st Street", Charlie Johnson made a motion to recommend approval. This was seconded by Alan Johnson and the vote passed unanimously. For "22nd Street South from 5th Avenue South to 1st Avenue North", Ron Rasmussen made a motion to recommend approval. This was seconded by Scott Daniels and the vote passed unanimously. It was then agreed by the BPAC members to table the vote for the Treasure Island project until a representative of Treasure Island can come to the BPAC meeting to discuss their proposal. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

7. CENSUS UPDATE

Cory Gray with Pinellas County Planning shared a presentation with the committee on the 2020 Census Count in Pinellas County. Mr. Gray discussed the County's role in helping the Census Bureau to achieve a complete and accurate population count by formulating the Complete Count Committee made up of Pinellas County volunteers and partners. The 2020 Census will provide online forms for people to submit their information beginning April 1, 2020. Paper forms will be mailed beginning March 12, 2020. Citizens should receive a notification by mail, with a pin number and instructions on how to take the survey online. Mr. Gray also mentioned that if someone does not have access to the on-line census, by default, a paper census will be sent to the home address on file. Sixteen Census tracts in Pinellas County were undercounted in the 2010 Census. These tracts included lower income and disadvantaged neighborhoods. Through the Complete Count Committee, volunteers will canvas under counted neighborhoods, encouraging community members to take the survey and be counted. Mr. Gray asked committee members for their assistance in partnering with Pinellas County on the 2020 census by taking the census and spreading the word in their community. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

8. ANNUAL TRAIL COUNTER SUMMARY

Ms. Angela Ryan, Active Transportation Planner, addressed the committee regarding trail counter data collected through 2019. Trail counters provide essential data used to summarize trail usage by bicyclists and pedestrians. This information is used in various ways for planning purposes and to track economic activity. In 2013, three trail counters were installed along the trail to more accurately count trail user trips and to distinguish between user modes (pedestrians or bicyclists). In 2016, additional funding became available, and Forward Pinellas was able to procure five additional counters and expanding its coverage. The 2019 Year End Summary included in the agenda packet shows the total user trips at the different stations, monthly usage, mode types and weekday vs weekend profiles. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

9. ANNUAL TRAIL COUNTER SUMMARY

Ms. Ryan announced the 4th Annual Bike Your City Event, in conjunction with Florida Bike Month. This year's event will be hosted by the cities of Safety Harbor and Clearwater on March 13, 2020. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. with a 'meet and greet' and light refreshments, followed by an 8.9-mile ride that starts and ends in Waterfront Park in Safety Harbor. The ride begins at 8:00 a.m. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

10. BPAC BUSINESS

A. Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)

Vice-Chair Becky Afonso gave an update on the Florida Bicycle Association. A proclamation has been handed down by the Governor announcing March as Florida Bicycle Month. The 2019 FBA award winners will be announced on March 1st. Ms. Afonso provided updates pertaining to proposed State legislation. This included House Bill 445 and Senate Bill 308 addressing vulnerable road users. These two bills have been filed and given committee assignments but not on any subcommittee agenda, which indicates that these two bills have officially died. House Bill 971 and Senate Bill 1148, regarding electric bicycles, are now on the house floor. They will be heard in the last Senate committee meeting. House Bill 1371 and Senate Bill 1000, the Traffic and Pedestrian Safety bills, proposing the removal of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), or replacing them with HAWK signals, has passed all three house committees. Discussion has continued regarding adjustments to the RRFB bills while the move through the House. Information will be sent to the members on how they can reach out to the delegation to voice their concerns. The Florida Greenways and Trail Council announced the opening of the Starkey Gap and the ribbon cutting will be held Wednesday, April 15, 2020. More details to come.

B. Friends of the Pinellas Trail

Scott Daniels shared an update with the committee. A link for The Pinellas Trail Guide Book can be found on-line on the Friends of the Pinellas Trail Facebook page as well as the Florida Bicycle Association website. Discussion has been focused on the 30th Anniversary of the Pinellas Trail that will be held in December 2020 at John Taylor Park, in Largo. A picnic will be held Saturday, March

21st, for the Friends of the Pinellas Trail Auxiliary Rangers, also at John Taylor Park, shelter 4 in Largo.

C. Tri-County BPAC, January 29, 2020

Ms. Ryan shared an update on the Tri-County BPAC meeting with the committee. Both Pasco and Hillsborough counties brought up that there has been low attendance at the most recent Tri-County BPAC meetings. Therefore, the MPO's have been discussing changing the agendas to be more concise and having the frequency of the meetings changed to twice a year. The discussions have raised the idea of a spring meeting and a fall meeting. The spring meeting would be associated with the spring TMA Leadership meeting. The TMA Leadership group is comprised of the Pasco, Hillsborough and Pinellas MPO's. They meet four times a year to discuss various regional issues. It has been suggested that, at the TMA spring meeting, a round table discussion be held with BPAC members to discuss issues concerning the BPACs. In the fall, when the TMA deliberates the advancement of regional bicycle multi-use trail priorities, the Tri-county BPAC can participate in this discussion. The next TMA Leadership group meeting is scheduled for March 6th. An invite will be sent out for any BPAC members who would like to attend.

11. AGENCY REPORTS

• Pinellas Trail Loop/Duke Energy Trail (North & South Gaps)

Ms. Gina Harvey with Pinellas County Public Works Traffic provided an update on the North section of the Pinellas Trail Loop. Since the last BPAC meeting, the bridge over Alligator Creek is in, and they are continuing to work on the surrounding area. The next project is the section between Old Coachman and Sunset Point Road, which has already begun. The last section of the North Gap is the section between Enterprise Road up to John Chesnut Park. The next step is for the project to go before the Board of County Commissioners with the guaranteed maximum price, which will exclude the section between Northside and Meadow Wood. Regarding the South Gap, the money for construction is in 2022 – 2024, so design work is getting ready to begin.

• Clearwater Bicycle Pedestrian Program

Lauren Matzke with the City of Clearwater was not able to attend but sent in information that the City had a press release on soliciting public comment for the Ft. Harrison Avenue Complete Streets Concept Plan.

• Largo Bicycle Pedestrian Program

Ms. Diane Friel, City of Largo was unable to attend.

• St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Program

Mr. Lucas Cruse, St. Petersburg Transportation, provided an update on the City of St. Petersburg. A Ride with the Mayor is planned for MLK Street in March 2020. Friday, May 15th is scheduled as Bike to Work Day. Central Avenue BRT is in full swing and the project is currently focusing on making the station areas pedestrian friendly and safe. The 18th Avenue South study will get underway soon. Following the NACTO design training, the city's design standards will be updated to reflect the NACTO design guidance.

• FDOT District 7 Updates

Alex Henry with FDOT indicated the Starkey Gap Trail opening is scheduled. FDOT is currently studying the US 19 Frontage Roads for multimodal safety improvements. The next project advisory group meeting is scheduled for March 24th at the Ponce Library in Pinellas Park.

• Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF)

The next PTSTF meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

A. SPOTLight Emphasis Areas Update

Mr. Bartolotta gave an update to the committee. With regards to US 19, FDOT is conducting a Frontage Roads Study and analyzing design concepts for intersection improvements north of SR 580.

A. Membership

There were no comments regarding this item.

B. Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest

There were no comments regarding this item.

C. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics

Bert Valery made a comment regarding motorists not getting ticketed for pedestrian accidents. Scott Daniels made a comment about inadequate education on pedestrian laws in our municipalities, especially when it comes to right turns on red.

D. Other

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 10:22 am. The next BPAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2020.

**FORWARD PINELLAS
BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
MARCH 16, 2020**

The following is a summary of the Forward Pinellas Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held on March 16, 2020, in the Pinellas County Planning Department Conference Room, First Floor, 310 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

BPAC Members Present

Becky Afonso, Vice Chair
Daniel Alejandro
Dr. Lynn Bosco - by webinar
Kimberly Cooper
Lucas Cruse
Scott Daniels – by phone
David Feller – by webinar
Chip Haynes
Alan Johnson
Jacob Labutka – by webinar
Caroline Lanford – by webinar
Stephen Lasky
Charlie Martin
Ron Rasmussen – by webinar
Derek Reeves – by webinar
Joan Rice
Michael Siebel
Bert Valery
Jim Wedlake – by webinar
Robert Yunk

North County Citizen Representative, Oldsmar
Largo Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative
St. Petersburg Citizen Representative
St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator
Pinellas Trails, Inc.
North County Citizen Representative, Oldsmar
Clearwater Citizen Representative
South Beaches Citizen Representative
PSTA
Pinellas County Planning Department
At Large Citizen Representative
Dunedin Representative
Pinellas Park Citizen Representative
City of Pinellas Park
Pinellas County Public Works Traffic
At Large Citizen Representative
North Beaches Citizen Representative
Seminole Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative

BPAC Members Absent

Julie Bond
Win Dermody
Felicia Donnelly
Lyle Fowler
Deputy Eric Gibson
Byron Hall
Edward Hawkes
Charlie Johnson
Paul Kurtz
Lauren Matzke
Mike Milvain
Rick Perez
Annette Sala
Brian Smith, Chairman
Georgia Wildrick

CUTR
Clearwater Citizen Representative
City of Oldsmar
PC Parks & Conservation Resources (PCR)
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Pinellas Park Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative
St. Petersburg Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative
City of Clearwater
St. Petersburg Citizen Representative
City of Largo
At Large Citizen Representative
At Large Citizen Representative
Largo Citizen Representative

Others Present

Alex Henry – by webinar
Reid Powers – by webinar
Ashley Crow
Al Bartolotta
Whit Blanton
Angela Ryan
Maria Kelly

FDOT
PSTA
WGU College
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff
Forward Pinellas Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Vice-Chairman Becky Afonso called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and the attendees introduced themselves. As noted above, there were webinar attendees and one member by phone.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments provided.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The summary from February 24, 2020 BPAC meeting was not approved due to lack of a quorum.

4. FORWARD PINELLAS ACTIONS

Al Bartolotta, Forward Pinellas Planning Division Manager, reviewed the following highlights of the Forward Pinellas Board meeting for March 11, 2020. The staff received a clean Annual Audit Review which was approved by the Forward Pinellas Board. The Board received a presentation on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which they approved. The UPWP now moves onto the federal and state review committees and will then return to the board for adoption in May. The Board received presentations from Forward Pinellas staff on "Resilient Tampa Bay" and presentations on grant awards for both Complete Streets and the Planning and Place Making Grants. The Board also received a presentation on Transportation Oriented Development and Value Capture Study presented by Taryn Sabia, as well as the PSTA Transit Development Plan presented by Heather Sobush.

5. 18TH AVENUE SOUTH HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND CONCEPT PLANNING STUDY

Mr. Bartolotta announced that the presenter for this topic was injured and unable to present. This item will be rescheduled for a later date.

6. ST. PETERSBURG COMPLETE STREETS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PHASE ONE

Mr. Lucas Cruse, St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator, shared a presentation with the committee, giving an update on the St. Petersburg Complete Streets Implementation Plan, Phase One. In May 2019, the St. Petersburg City Council approved its Complete Streets Implementation Plan. The Plan serves as a guide for creating a safer and more accessible city for all transportation users, including bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users. The plan identifies future improvements including bike lanes, trails and greenways over a 20-year period. Phase one of the plan includes projects scheduled for implementation in the first year. These projects include neighborhood greenways, wayfinding, new city bike map, and focusing the infrastructure on crossings, as well as, continuing with NACTO training and looking at all city design standards. Phase two of the plan includes projects to be implemented in years two to five. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

7. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PRIORITIES

Mr. Bartolotta addressed the committee with an update on the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program priorities. At the last meeting, this group approved three of four TA Program applications and tabled the other one, submitted by Treasure Island, to give them an opportunity to come to a later meeting to discuss the project. Treasure Island has recently removed their application from consideration. As such, only the other three projects will be taken to the Board for approval. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

8. BPAC BUSINESS

A. Bike Your City Report

Ms. Angela Ryan, Active Transportation Planner, gave an update on the Bike Your City Event. Even though the event was well planned with more than 100 people planning to participate, Forward Pinellas has decided to follow the CDC guidelines in social distancing and postpone the event. We will bring information to the BPAC when it is rescheduled.

B. Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)

Vice-Chair Becky Afonso gave an update on the Florida Bicycle Association. On the legislative side, any bills that were not heard in all of their committees are considered dead with the closing of this part of the session. The RRFB bill, SB 1000, was not heard in its third committee on the Senate side, therefore it is considered dead. The electric bicycle bill was approved and will put the classifications of electric bicycles in line with current national statutes. The vulnerable road user bill was not heard in any of the committees. The FBA is currently working on a bill to strengthen the move-over law. Hopefully next year this bill can be heard. There are some federal bills going out to the FBA membership and the association delegates have decided to do 'in district meetings', and recruit members to volunteer to present the bills to their jurisdictions, city councils and MPOs for public comment.

C. Legislative Update

Mr. Whit Blanton, Executive Director, shared that a lot of bills died on the floor due to the legislature ending abruptly, because of the crisis and the budget issues that dominated the sessions. Mr. Blanton provided an update regarding Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1371 on RRFBs. Although the bills were not passed, there exists a need for enhanced education on RRFBs to increase public safety and avoid similar bills in the future.

D. Friends of the Pinellas Trail

Scott Daniels shared an update with the committee. The Trail Rangers Appreciation Picnic and meeting originally scheduled for March 21st at Taylor Park will be postponed to a later date.

E. Tri-County BPAC, January 29, 2020

Ms. Ryan shared a report on the TMA Leadership Group meeting held on March 6, 2020. Mr. Blanton provided an excellent presentation at the meeting focusing on RRFB's. There was a discussion with the Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas MPO's regarding the frequency of the Tri-County BPAC meetings. It was agreed that having a spring meeting associated with the TMA meeting at that time would provide a lot of transparency and opportunities to talk with some of the local political figures about important BPAC items. They also agreed that this would be followed by a fall Tri-County BPAC meeting. The fall meeting should be focused on discussing the regional trail bike/ped priorities. As of now, there has not been an official decision, but this is the idea that is going forward at this time. BPAC members Jim Wedlake and Dave Feller suggested a summit with the Tri-County BPAC on development of a regional trail map and guides.

11. AGENCY REPORTS

• Pinellas Trail Loop/Duke Energy Trail (North & South Gaps)

Ms. Joan Rice with Pinellas County Public Works Traffic provided an update on the North Gap section of the Pinellas Trail Loop. South of the Sunset Point corridor is coming along nicely and should be open later this year. As for as the North Gap between Enterprise Road and John Chesnut Park, the guaranteed maximum price for the contractors will be going to the BCC in early April so construction can begin this summer. The small section between Northside Drive and Meadow Wood Drive has not been assigned a corridor at this time but will be discussed at the BCC work session on April 16, 2020. Regarding the South Gap, there will be a public involvement component for the section between Haynes Bayshore and 126th Avenue that will be announced when the project is scheduled.

• Clearwater Bicycle Pedestrian Program

Lauren Matzke with the City of Clearwater was unable to attend.

• Largo Bicycle Pedestrian Program

Mr. Rick Perez for the City of Largo was unable to attend.

• St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Program

Mr. Lucas Cruse, St. Petersburg Transportation, provided an update on the City of St. Petersburg. Following up on the Treasure Island application, St. Petersburg has offered to continue to work with Treasure Island on bike/ped projects. In St. Petersburg along MLK Street, sections with buffered

bike lanes will have 250 flex posts added to help moderate vehicle speeds. The city BPAC meeting has been cancelled for March. Bike/Walk Tampa Bay is looking to have a fall summit, hosted by St. Petersburg.

- **FDOT District 7 Updates**

Alex Henry with FDOT shared an update on a Park Boulevard safety project in Pinellas Park. As of this week, three mid-block crosswalks are scheduled for construction in downtown Pinellas Park between 49th Street and 66th Street. Currently, there is about a mile and a half between pedestrian crossings. FDOT has an educational component to compliment this project. A request was made by Mayor Johnson of St. Pete Beach for reflectors to be placed on lines of the Gulf Boulevard bike lanes to help motorists who drive on the bike lane stripes to be aware they have crossed into the bike lane. He added that the worst offenders of this are the PSTA busses.

- **Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF)**

The next PTSTF meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

A. SPOTLight Emphasis Areas Update

Mr. Blanton shared that a request was made for FDOT to review the pedestrian/bicycle underpass plans for US 19 between SR 580 and Curlew Road. This section is included in the design plans for the US 19 and SR 580 interchange. These plans identify an underpass located directly south of Republic Drive to accommodate the Forward Pinellas request for half mile spacing of protected pedestrian crossings. After meeting with business owners in this area who expressed concern about the visibility impacts the planned underpass would have on their businesses, a request was made to FDOT to evaluate the pros and cons of moving the underpass to Republic Drive or another location. Forward Pinellas is also working with FDOT on Causeway Boulevard in Dunedin to address some of the safety and accessibility issues related to Honeymoon Island Park. The PD&E study is underway and is expected to be completed in June of 2020. The project is not currently funded for design or construction and Forward Pinellas has put together a request to FDOT for design and build of the project. The current design is considering a roundabout at the Park so vehicles can turn around, and implementation of advanced traffic management systems to include dynamic message signs and cameras to help manage the peak period congestion. Design ideas for the Causeway also include an all red pedestrian scramble at the intersection of Alternate 19 to reduce some of the conflicts that happen when people ignore the blackout right turn on red sign. FDOT has conducted analysis on the project and they should be ready soon with data on impacts and options to be considered.

A. Membership

There were no comments regarding this item.

B. Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest

There were no comments regarding this item.

C. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics

A presentation on the Florida Design Manual relating to bike lane treatments was suggested. This is due to a concern about installing bicycle lanes on corridors that are 45 mph or greater. Another suggestion was to address the treatment of trails at intersections that could be dangerous to bicyclists. More education for bicyclists is needed on this.

F. Other

13. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chairman Afonso adjourned the meeting at 9:55 am. The next BPAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 20, 2020.

SUMMARY

The Forward Pinellas Board meeting for April 8, 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None Required, Informational Item Only

5. Public Participation Resolution

SUMMARY

Following guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, a resolution has been drafted for action by the Forward Pinellas Board addressing public participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution supports the use of alternative public involvement strategies that allow for advisory committee meetings to be conducted virtually. It also supports the employment of these strategies to provide opportunities for public feedback on Forward Pinellas plans and programs. The resolution applies to the interim period while public safety directives associated with the COVID-19 virus are in effect. It will be presented to the Forward Pinellas Board at their next meeting on May 13.

ATTACHMENT(S): Proposed resolution regarding public participation activity in an emergency event

ACTION: Approve proposed resolution for Board action

FORWARD PINELLAS RESOLUTION NO. 20 –

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FORWARD PINELLAS TO CONDUCT VIRTUAL AND ELECTRONIC PUBLIC MEETINGS AND OTHER PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, the protection of public health, safety and welfare is a primary concern in the conduct of all Forward Pinellas activities;

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2020, the Florida Surgeon General and Florida Health Officer declared a Public Health Emergency exists in the State of Florida as a result of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, the Governor issued a State of Emergency effective across the State of Florida due to the result of COVID-19, and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, in conjunction with the activities of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as pursuant the emergency declarations issued by the Governor and the Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners declared a state of local emergency (LSE) pursuant to Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners Resolution 20-16 (Board Resolution 20-16); and

WHEREAS, in response to the threat of increased community spread within Pinellas County, on March 25, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 20-20, “COVID-19 – Safer at Home” Order (Board Resolution 20-20) requiring that businesses not defined as “Essential Services” operate in a manner consistent with the Order, the CDC guidelines on social distancing, and other applicable laws, and requiring individuals to comply with said CDC guidelines and limit non-essential activities; and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, Florida Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-69, which suspended any Florida Statute requiring a quorum to be present in person or local government body to meet at a specific public place and which authorized local governments to utilize communications media technology, such as telephonic and video conferencing, as provided in section 120.54(5)(b)2., Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2020, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-91 (“EO 20-91”) ordering all persons to stay at home unless participating in an essential service or activity; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has provided guidance to metropolitan planning organizations that they consider adopting a resolution addressing public involvement activity during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in order to meet the public health objectives and requirements pursuant to Pinellas County Board Resolutions 20-26 and 20-20, and the State of Florida Governor's Emergency Order 20-91, while allowing Forward Pinellas to carry out its federal and state-prescribed duties within federal and state-prescribed timelines, it is necessary to conduct meetings of Forward Pinellas, including all advisory bodies and committees thereto, utilizing virtual communications media technology (CMT) until such time when the local and state emergency directives related to COVID-19 are lifted; and

WHEREAS, significant measures will be taken to provide for public engagement and participation regarding said CMT meetings; and

WHEREAS, the public involvement strategies referenced herein are consistent with the Forward Pinellas Public Participation Plan's objective to ensure adequate public participation at all stages of the decision-making process ; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forward Pinellas Board, as brought forth by the Executive Director pursuant to the Executive Director's delegated emergency authority outlined in the Internal Control Structure Policy Manual, that:

1. No in-person live public participation will be available to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 to the greatest extent practicable.
2. The public will be given multiple avenues to comment on agenda items or other matters coming before the Board for a vote.
3. Given the complexities of the virtual platforms and the emergency situation under which we are operating, the "citizens to be heard" portion of the meetings will be suspended until the emergency conditions have abated. The public can comment on any item coming before the Board for a vote, and the public can always contact the Forward Pinellas Board members by visiting forwardpinellas.org for their contact information.
4. All virtual meetings will be noticed as a virtual meeting in the same manner as required for non-virtual meetings, and shall plainly state that such meetings will be conducted utilizing electronic and virtual communications media technology (CMT) and identify the specific type of CMT to be used. The notice shall describe how interested persons may attend and shall include instructions in the notice addressing the following
 - a. How to view the virtual meeting through live stream or broadcast.
 - b. The web address and phone number access where an interested person may go for the purpose of attending the meeting.
 - c. An address, e-mail address, and telephone number where an interested person may write or call for additional information.

- d. An address, e-mail address, and designated person to whom a person may submit written or other physical evidence which he or she intends to offer into the record during the CMT proceedings.
 - e. Instructions, or methods of accessing instructions, addressing how to comment prior to the meeting.
- 5. All other usual Forward Pinellas board meeting practices will be observed to the greatest extent practicable, subject to the discretion of the Chair.
- 6. Alternative public involvement strategies, which include the application of web conferencing and other online and digital media tools, shall be utilized to conduct public outreach activities associated with the operations of Forward Pinellas as deemed necessary.
- 7. The procedures outlined herein shall be applicable to the Forward Pinellas Board and all advisory and other committees thereto.
- 8. The procedures to conduct Forward Pinellas Board, advisory, and other committee meetings utilizing CMT shall be in effect for an interim period until such time when the public safety directives related to the COVID-19 virus are lifted and Forward Pinellas' operations return to normal.

This Resolution offered and adopted at the May 13, 2020 meeting of Forward Pinellas as hereinafter set forth:

_____ offered the foregoing Resolution, which was seconded by _____, and the vote was:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT AND NOT VOTING: ATTEST:

Whit Blanton, Executive Director Forward Pinellas

APPROVED AS TO FORM
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

BY: _____

Dave Eggers, Forward Pinellas Chair

6. 18th Avenue South Health Impact Assessment and Concept Planning Study

SUMMARY

One of the corridors the City of St. Petersburg is focusing its planning efforts on is 18th Avenue South. The corridor is a major east-west roadway within the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) that connects Bartlett Park on its east end to the City of Gulfport on its west end. The corridor serves a low-income community where there is a high concentration of households that do not own a vehicle. Adjacent land uses are mostly residential with some neighborhood commercial at the intersections. The section east of 34th Street is of particular concern from a transportation standpoint. This section is a four-lane undivided facility where motorists routinely exceed the speed limit. In addition, there are no bike lanes and there are gaps in the sidewalks.

The section from 35th Street to 14th Street was awarded a Complete Streets Program concept planning grant from Forward Pinellas in 2019. The main objective of this project is to identify safety and operational improvements that will improve the environment for non-motorized transportation options.

Prior to beginning the concept planning study, the city conducted a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the corridor to assess the potential health impacts of complete streets modifications. This was completed in 2019. The HIA focused on health impacts related to active transportation and physical activity in addition to the economic determinants of health, including evaluating the downstream health impacts of how complete streets improvements could impact existing businesses, future development, and employment opportunities. The HIA also produced a list of recommendations intended to enhance the health and economic benefits of the complete street improvements on 18th Avenue South through a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach.

In addition to the HIA, this item will address the 18th Avenue South Complete Street Concept Planning Study. The item will be presented by City of St. Petersburg staff.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None Required, Informational Item Only

[Presentation](#)

**7. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) Legislative
Follow-up**

SUMMARY

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) are traffic control devices typically installed at mid-block locations that provide significant safety benefits. They provide higher yielding for pedestrian rates as demonstrated by a study in 2016 conducted by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI). Factoring in appropriate design considerations as identified in the 2016 TTI study and compliance with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) design conditions, RRFBs can increase pedestrian safety at marked crosswalks by 98%. The City of St. Petersburg's initiative to employ RRFBs at uncontrolled marked crosswalks over the past three years has resulted in increased yielding for pedestrian rates from 2% to a current 90% yielding rate.

RRFBs provide an economical and highly effective traffic control countermeasure that slows traffic and saves lives. Two proposed bills in the most recent Florida legislative session, Senate Bill 1000 and House Bill 1371, effectively disallowed RRFBs in the State. Enactment of the bills would have forced the removal of most, if not all, of the over 400 mid-block crossings in Pinellas County, substantially reducing the safety of pedestrians while imposing significant costs on tax payers. Forward Pinellas, and many other MPOs throughout the State, as well as local governments and other organizations voiced their opposition to SB 1000 and HB 1371 during the Legislative Session. Although neither of the bills were passed, they underscored the need for increased citizen education and awareness on RRFBs statewide and locally. Forward Pinellas staff will provide a presentation on this item.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None Required, Informational Item Only

[Presentation](#)

8. TBARTA Regional Rapid Transit

SUMMARY

Since May 2019, the Tampa Bay Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) has been conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for the Regional Rapid Transit (RRT) project. The RRT is a planned 41-mile bus rapid transit system that will operate on I-275 in Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties with service from Wesley Chapel to downtown Saint Petersburg. In November 2019, the study reached its first milestone when the TBARTA Board approved 13 recommended station areas and directed WSP, the study consultant, to evaluate in greater detail five alignment alternatives. In March, TBARTA hosted a series of station charrettes where members of the public provided input on the preferred station typologies, features, and locations. The PD&E study is expected to be completed in the summer of 2021. A TBARTA representative will provide a presentation on the latest developments in the study.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item

[Presentation](#)

9. Trail Counter Data During a Pandemic - A Local and National Perspective

SUMMARY

The BPAC was provided with the 2019 Annual Report on the Trail Counters in February 2020. As explained, there are eight trail counters stationed along the Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail. They provide an accurate and consistent method of counting trail users. The counters differentiate between pedestrians and bicyclists, and log the day, time and direction of travel. Data is collected on a monthly basis at all eight Pinellas Trail count stations. Monthly summary reports include total user counts, daily averages, highest daily totals, totals per count station, average weekday and weekend use, and total distribution by mode (pedestrians/bicyclists).

Trail counter data has shown a drastic shift in the number of trail users in March. Assumedly, the recent pandemic of COVID-19 health precautions has resulted in a significant increase in people using the Pinellas Trail. Some Trail count stations have shown a 62% increase in trail users as compared to last year. Nationally, this trend has surfaced in other parts of the Country such as New York and Philadelphia where an increasing number of people have chosen bikes as their preferred mode of transportation. This presentation provides a perspective on the Pinellas County trail user trends and transportation choices that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None Required, Informational Item Only

10. A.-C. BPAC Business

A. Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)

Vice Chair Becky Afonso, who is also the FBA Executive Director, will provide an update on FBA activities. Information on the FBA is available at floridabicycle.org.

B. Bike Florida Mapping Initiative

A representative of Bike Florida will provide information.

C. Friends of the Pinellas Trails (formerly Pinellas Trails, Inc.)

A representative from Friends of the Pinellas Trail may take this opportunity to provide an update.

D. Tri-County/TMA BPAC Follow-Up

Forward Pinellas Staff will report on the Tri-County/TMA BPAC meeting.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee – April 20, 2020



11. Agency Reports

Updated information on the following programs or projects of interest to the BPAC will be provided at the meeting.

- Pinellas Trail Loop/Duke Energy Trail (North & South Gaps)
- Clearwater Bicycle Pedestrian Program
- Largo Bicycle Pedestrian Program
- St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Program
- FDOT District 7
- Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF)

The next meeting of the PTSTF is scheduled for April 14, 2020.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None Required, Informational Item Only

12. A.-E. Other Business

A. SPOTLight Emphasis Areas Update

Forward Pinellas staff will provide a brief update on the status of activities related to the three SPOTlight emphasis areas.

B. Membership

There is currently one vacancy on the BPAC membership list for a Pinellas County Health Department representative. There are no citizen vacancies.

ATTACHMENT: BPAC Membership List

ACTION: None Required, Informational Item Only

C. Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest

Advocates Call for Closing Streets Nationwide to Create Critical Space for Walking and Biking

As Trail Use Soars, Groups Push Opening Some Philly Streets to Just Walking, Biking

Investment in Local Open Space, Greenways and Trails

Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy Group Asks Tampa Mayor to Close Part of Bayshore

Pinellas Trail Usage Report – January Trail Usage Report

Pinellas Trail Usage Report – February Trail Usage Report

Pinellas Trail Usage Report – March Trail Usage Report

Pinellas County Fatalities Report – March 2020

D. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics

This item is provided to allow Committee members to suggest topics for future BPAC agendas.

E. Other

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

BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST**Voting****St. Petersburg Area (St. Pete/Gulfport/So Pasadena/Tierra Verde)**

1. Mike Milvain (06/13/18)
2. Kimberly Cooper (10/13/99) (reappointed 5/9/18)
3. Charles Johnson (06/14/17)

Clearwater Area

4. Chip Haynes (04/13/11)
5. Robert Yunk (02/09/05)
6. Win Dermody (03/12/14)

Dunedin Area

7. Charles Martin (04/08/09)

Pinellas Park and Mid-County

8. Ronald Rasmussen (12/13/06)
9. Byron Virgil Hall, Jr., (12/13/06)

Largo Area

10. Daniel Alejandro (10/12/16)
11. Georgia Wildrick (08/16/06)

North County Area (Tarpon Springs/Palm Harbor/Ozona/Oldsmar/Safety Harbor)

12. David Feller (07/11/18)
13. Becky Afonso (Vice Chair) (10/08/14)

At Large Area

14. Paul Kurtz (12/11/13)
15. Mike Siebel (03/14/12)
16. Brian Smith (Chairman) (12/12/12)
17. Lynn Bosco (11/14/12)
18. Steve Lasky (11/14/12)
19. Ed Hawkes (11/18/98)
20. Annette Sala (03/12/14)

Seminole Area

21. Jim Wedlake (05/12/10)

Beach Communities

22. Bert Valery (10/1983-10/1998) (reappointed 07/10/02)
23. Alan Johnson (05/09/18)

Technical Support

1. County Traffic Department (Joan Rice – representative; Gina Harvey and Casey Morse – alternates)
2. Pinellas County Planning Department (Caroline Lanford – representative)
3. PSTA (Jacob Labutka – representative; Heather Sobush and Reid Powers – alternates)
4. City of Clearwater (Lauren Matzke - representative)
5. City of St. Petersburg (Lucas Cruse – representative; Cheryl Stacks - alternate)
6. City of Largo (Rick Perez – representative; Diane Friel - alternate)
7. City of Oldsmar (Felicia Donnelly – representative)
8. City of Pinellas Park (Derek Reeves – representative)
9. Pinellas County School System (Joseph Camera- representative, Autumn Westermann- alternate)
10. Pinellas County Health Department (Vacant – representative)
11. Friends of the Pinellas Trails (Scott Daniels – representative)
12. CUTR (Julie Bond - representative)
13. Safe Routes to School (Rachelle Webb – representative)

Sheriff's Office /Police/Law Enforcement Representatives

1. Pinellas Park Police Dept.
2. St Petersburg Police Dept.
3. Largo Police Dept.
4. Sheriff's Office – Deputy Eric Gibson
5. Clearwater Police Dept.

Non-Voting Technical Support

14. FDOT (Alex Henry - representative)
15. County Parks and Conservation Resources (Lyle Fowler – representative; Spencer Curtis – alternate)

*Dates signify appointment

Advocates Call For Closing Streets Nationwide To Create Critical Space For Walking And Biking At A Social Distance During COVID-19 Crisis

Petition is among the resources Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is providing to inform communities and individuals about ways to maintain physical activity and wellness during time of extreme social distancing



NEWS PROVIDED BY

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy →

Mar 31, 2020, 16:19 ET

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is calling on the nation's mayors and local elected officials to close select streets to vehicle traffic to increase access to safe outdoor space for people to engage in physical activity at a social distance during the COVID-19 crisis.

RTC's efforts model the global "open streets movement" and amplify the success of current efforts around the world to dedicate more local infrastructure for walking and biking during this time of extreme social distancing. RTC launched a

petition calling for immediate action from local elected officials and will convene a webinar on Thursday, April 2, 2020, at 2 p.m. EDT, to share insights and expertise about how individuals can encourage their local elected officials to take immediate action.

The webinar, which is open to the press and the public, will be moderated by Liz Thorstensen, RTC's vice president of trail development, and will feature the expertise of advocates and local officials pursuing similar efforts: Sarah Clark Stuart, executive director, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia; Laura Leticia Bahamón Peña, bicycle manager, Ministry of Transportation, City of Bogotá (Colombia); Jodie Medeiros, executive director, Walk San Francisco; and representatives from the city of Duluth, Minnesota.

Trails and outdoor spaces are seeing major spikes in usage across the country as people look to these assets for daily physical activity and mental respite in the wake of COVID-19. Dramatic increases in visitation are being recorded across the United States; an analysis of 31 trail counters for the week of March 16–22 by RTC found a nationwide trail usage increase of nearly 200% from that same week in 2019. Surging demand for trails and outdoor places is making it increasingly difficult for people to keep 6 feet of space between each other, forcing some trails and parks to close, while others limit facilities and services.

As trails continue to serve as significant sources of health and wellness for Americans, RTC is urging everyone to practice safe and responsible trail use and self-care at all times. RTC continues to provide up-to-date resources and information at railstotrails.org/COVID19, offering:

1. Weekly articles with updates about physical activity and being outside during this time, including resources about efforts to close streets for walking and biking, staying active and outdoor safety during the pandemic. Articles are available for citation and reprinting upon request.
2. TrailLink is a free trail-finder resource with information on more than 37,000 miles of trails nationwide. The website and mobile app are a service provided by RTC that includes trail maps, as well as walking and biking directions to local trails, contact information for local trail managers, and status updates about trail facilities. RTC recommends that all trail users check the local guidance on outdoor activities and with local trail organizations to confirm status of facilities prior to visiting.
3. Weekly trail count updates providing an analysis of national trail usage gathered from RTC's 31 trail counters distributed across the country.
4. Webinars to address the biggest issues facing the trail and outdoor community in response to COVID-19. Details on the next webinar, April 2, at 2 p.m. EDT, are below. All are open to the press.

WHAT: Webinar calling for closing streets to create space for walking and biking during COVID-19 crisis

WHEN: Thursday, April 2, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. EDT

WHERE: Webinar
Register online.

To view RTC's petition, or for more information on RTC's COVID-19 resources, [visit RTC's website](#) or register online for the April 2 webinar.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation's largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

CONTACT: Patricia Brooks, patricia@matchmapmedia.com, 202.351.1757

SOURCE Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Related Links

<http://www.railstotrails.org>

As trail use soars, groups push opening some Philly streets to just walking, biking to help keep space

by [Patricia Madej](#), Updated: March 30, 2020

When Randy LoBasso, policy manager at the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, set out recently for a bike ride, he was stunned.

“I rode up to Schuylkill Banks, and it was like — mobbed,” he said. “... Nobody was getting six feet distance from each other.”

The Bike Coalition [spearheaded a successful effort](#) to [close Martin Luther King Drive](#) to vehicular traffic from East Falls Bridge to Eakins Oval so pedestrians and bikers have new space to get exercise or clear their heads during the coronavirus pandemic.

Now LoBasso and other advocacy groups want Philadelphia [to close even more streets to cars](#), such as the roads through the 2,052-acre Fairmount Park.

“There’s not much space in the city to get exercise,” he said, “and I think that especially now, physical and mental exercise is really important just because everyone I know is so stressed out.”

The idea has seen support from [Councilmembers Jamie Gauthier](#) and [Helen Gym](#), too.

“We have gotten requests,” city spokesperson Kelly Cofrancisco said last week, but the city has no other plans at the moment.

I love this idea! Getting outside is so important for mental and physical health, but we need to make sure people can stay safe while doing it.

An uptick on the trails

People are walking and biking on local trails in huge numbers, according to data from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Figures from trail counters along the Chester Valley, Delaware River, Schuylkill River, Wissahickon, and Schuylkill Banks trails are up between March 1 to March 24 this year, compared with the same time last year, by 52% to 96%.

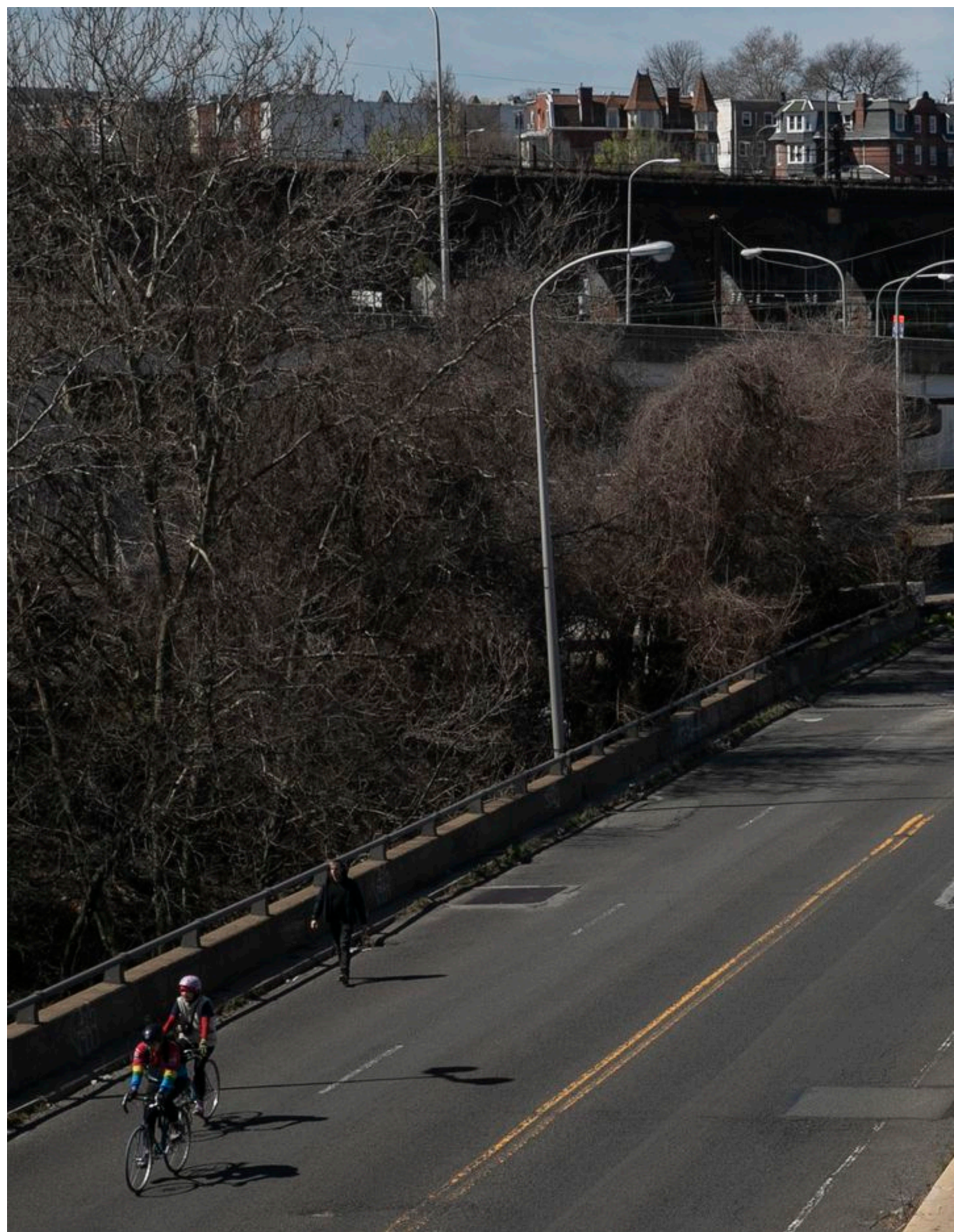
A nearly snowless winter contributed to soaring counts, said Shawn Megill Legendre, assistant manager of regional trail programs at the DVRPC. So did the coronavirus.

The Chester Valley Trail saw the highest spike of 96%, while recent weekday levels along the Schuylkill Banks look more like they would on a summery weekend.

“Just like inside, people using these facilities really do need to be following the guidelines that have been laid out by federal, state, and local officials in terms of physical distancing,” Megill Legendre said. “It’s just as important outside as it is inside.”

Pennsylvania officials are asking residents to stay inside unless necessary, though walks or outdoor activity are permitted, as [gyms](#) and [playgrounds](#) were ordered closed. New Yorkers over the weekend [saw a pilot program that shut four streets to traffic](#) in a move to make room for pedestrians to get exercise while staying far apart. But in Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot closed off its popular lakefront area [after swarms ignored social distancing calls](#).

Expanding beyond MLK Drive



HEATHER KHALIFA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

People make use of a wide open MLK drive on March 21. The roadway, normally for vehicular traffic, was closed for use by pedestrians and cyclists "in the interest of facilitating social distancing among trail users," according to the city.

Feet First Philly, a Clean Air Council-sponsored pedestrian advocacy group, is part of the open streets effort. The group is [circulating a petition](#) and is offering its own ideas, such as Kelly and Lincoln Drives, but also seeks input from others. Jennifer Dougherty, Feet First Philly steering committee chair, recognizes the importance of creating space in a city such as Philadelphia, where not everyone has a backyard and streets are often narrow. "As the weather gets more and more beautiful, it's going to be harder and harder for people to stay inside all the time, and demand is only going to increase," she said. "And we'd hate to see a kind of situation where our public parks or trails become so crowded that they become a vector."



Posted: March 30, 2020 - 5:00 AM

Patricia Madej | [@PatriciaMadej](#) | pmadej@inquirer.com

Investment in local open space, greenways and trails is critical

By

Guest Column

-

March 31, 2020

By Christopher G. Miller

In these emotionally and physically trying days of COVID-19 quarantines and social distancing, many people are increasingly turning to iconic parks, trails and green spaces for solace, exercise and restorative access to nature. And that's great news.

But our current situation is showing us, loudly and clearly, that we need more of them. In just two weeks, so many people have converged on the same popular spots that crowds have tipped past "social distancing" thresholds, and some of these places have been closed or severely limited to access as a result.

The value of open space, within each and every local community in Virginia, is now more evident than ever before. Today, communities are relying on their local parks and greenways to help combat the feeling of isolation, to get exercise and breathe fresh air, and to engage their children in life around them.

But the need for these places will far outlast the COVID-19 pandemic. For even under normal circumstances, every person needs and deserves the health benefits of places to walk and recreate within their own

community, places they can get to easily and quickly, regardless of means or mode available.

As we converge on our parks and trails like never before, we must remember that these places don't happen by accident.

Parks, open space, trails and greenways distributed throughout local communities must be a goal for every county and town and a regular, committed area of local and state capital investment. We must understand how critical these places are to health and wellness, and we must plan and budget for them in each and every comprehensive plan and county capital improvement plan.

Smart land-use policies will plan urban-rural development to include the creation of public access to parks and greenspaces. They are a key to thriving communities where people want to live and can live well. Moms and dads, kids and dogs, friends and family, runners and walkers and bikers alike will always benefit from local public access to trails, parks, and open spaces, close to home.

The Piedmont Environmental Council has for years advocated and actively partnered to create community-based parks, trails and open spaces in the northern Piedmont, including:

- [Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity](#) in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County;
- Multi-use trail access between the Town of Gordonsville and James Madison's Montpelier via the [Town to Trail](#) initiative;
- Interconnected linear parks and trails in Loudoun County via the [Emerald Ribbons](#) initiative, ranging from greenway links to Silver

Line Metro stations to access to the Potomac Heritage Trail and the Appalachian Trail;

- A national capital trails network throughout Northern Virginia;
- The [Warrenton Branch Greenway](#)
- Rappahannock Landing Park in Remington, with links to trails;
- Increased public access to the Rapidan River in Orange, Culpeper and Madison counties;
- Donation of public land for a pocket park near Orange High School in the Town of Orange;
- The new public access trail in Loudoun County along the Old Carolina Road, in partnership with NOVA Parks at Mt. Zion Church Park;
- Transfer of land to the Appalachian Trail next to the Sky Meadow State Park and hiking trail at the Piedmont Memorial Overlook;
- Integrated public access (sidewalks, trails, parks) to development projects like data centers and technology companies to provide new access opportunities for non-traditional commuters;
- Rural historic districts and scenic road designations highlighting community resources and providing pleasant drives to local parks.

Areas like these areas are needed throughout Virginia. The Piedmont Environmental Council supports state and local funding for parks, open space, trails, greenways and water access. We also deploy our own funding through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, local bond issues and private donations. We have donated land and invested financially toward national parks and trails that generate tourism revenue for local counties.

We are grateful to the many other organizations that also advocate for these locally-based places, including the many members of the Virginia United Land Trusts (VaULT) working throughout the Commonwealth.

And currently, Congress is considering The Great American Outdoors Act, which would provide federal matching funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to support recreational facilities in local communities across the country.

But local governments need citizens to stand up and make their voices heard, to ensure publicly accessible parks, trails and green spaces are prioritized at the local level. During this time of “social distancing,” please consider reaching out to your local elected officials to advocate with us for the creation, promotion, and protection of local, nearby parks and green spaces that you, your family and neighbors, and all in your community can easily access.

Christopher G. Miller is President of The Piedmont Environmental Council, a 501(c)3 nonprofit working to protect the natural resources, rural economy, history and beauty of the Virginia Piedmont. He is a founding member of both the Coalition for Smarter Growth and the Choose Clean Water Coalition,x and serves on the boards of the Virginia League of Conservation Voters, the Virginia Conservation Network, the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership.

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From the Tampa Bay Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2020/04/06/pedestrian-and-bicycle-advocacy-group-asks-tampa.html>

Pedestrian and bicycle advocacy group asks Tampa mayor to close part of Bayshore Boulevard

Apr 6, 2020, 11:13am EDT

Pedestrian safety advocacy group Walk Bike Tampa is urging Tampa Mayor Jane Castor to partially close the accident-prone Bayshore Boulevard.

The group, which wants to have the boulevard become safer for bicyclists and pedestrians, said shutting down part of the road couldn't come at a more needed time, reads the April 5 letter to Castor.

Walk Bike Tampa is asking Castor to immediately institute an open street policy on Bayshore Boulevard for the duration of the safer-at-home order due to coronavirus, by either closing all northbound lanes to vehicular traffic or closing the outer lane of each direction to vehicular traffic, according to the letter.



DAN SCHUMAN
Bayshore Boulevard

Bayshore has long been a main connector to MacDill Air Force Base, where thousands of residents work, but is critiqued as a roadway designed for speed while at the same time being a popular biking and walking destination as it boasts scenic views of the bay.

Emily Hinsdale, a Walk Bike Tampa board of directors member, told the Tampa Bay Business Journal that the group was intending to send the letter prior to a fatal bicyclist accident over the weekend, but the accident itself heightened the urgency.

"[Saturday's] horrific crash demonstrates (yet again) that Bayshore's wide travel space and lack of impediments such as traffic lights promotes poor driver behavior in an area with a large number of pedestrians," Hinsdale said in the letter.

"This conflict is currently exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis: many more pedestrians and fewer cars, allowing for higher rates of vehicular speed. Leaders all over the United States and the world have met this crisis by closing roads to vehicular traffic to reduce crashes and to allow for safe distances between walkers and bikers," she wrote, stating the hospitals are already dealing with the coronavirus crisis and do not need car accident victims.

Hinsdale said the lack of traffic encourages drivers to speed and that Bayshore Boulevard has a narrow area for bicyclists.

Castor has not responded to the letter directly but did issue a statement on the most recent fatal accident.

"I have directed our chief of police to launch a major citywide enforcement to crack down on speed and dangerous behavior," Castor said.

Earlier this year, a pedestrian died after being hit by a truck driver under the influence. In 2018, three racing teenage drivers caused a crash that killed a mother and her daughter.

The city has made multiple attempts to hinder speeding by reducing the speed limit and installing flashing beacons on the boulevard.

The city does hold the right to close Bayshore Boulevard if desired.

Veronica Brezina-Smith

Reporter

Tampa Bay Business Journal



Pinellas Trail User Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection Period:
January 1 – January 31, 2020 (31 days)

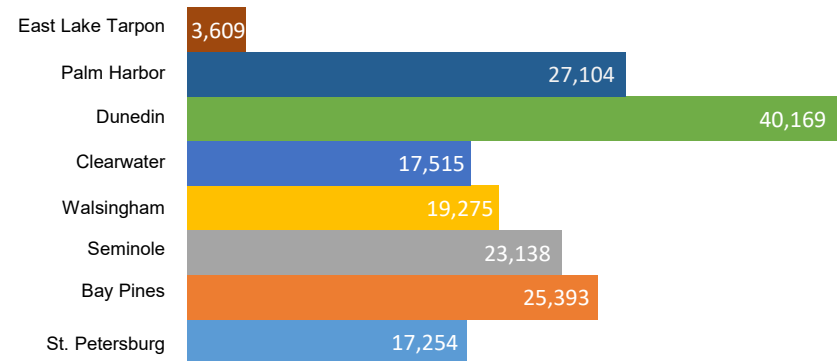
January 2020

31-Day Count Total: 173,457
Daily Average Users: 5,595

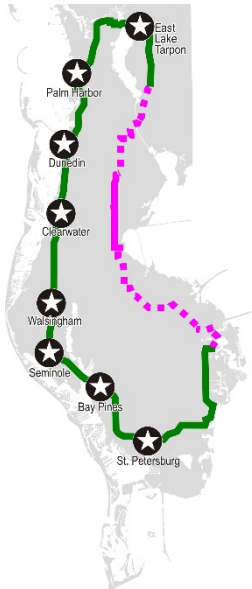
Highest Daily Totals:

- #1 – Saturday, January 18th (Dunedin - 2,534)
- #2 – Saturday, January 11th (Dunedin - 2,289)
- #3 – Sunday, January 12th (Dunedin - 2,089)

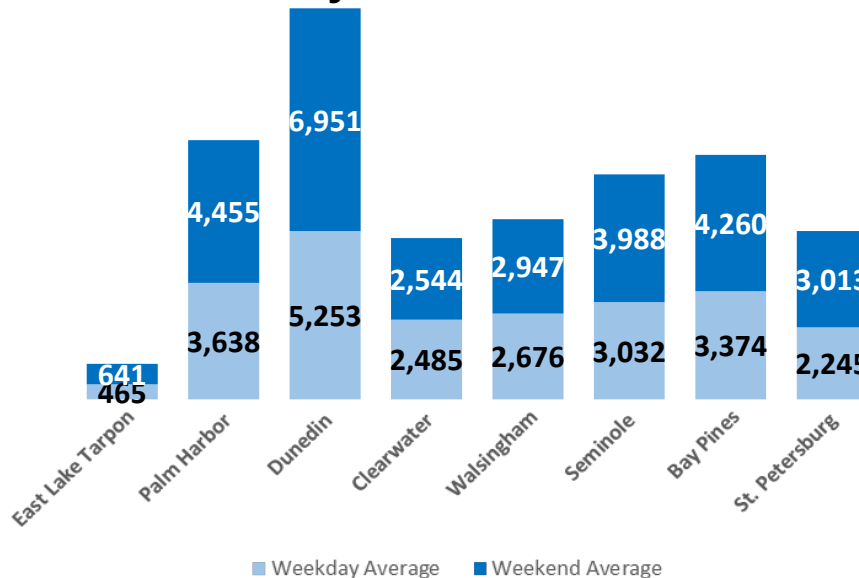
January Trail Users by Counter Location





Counter Locations



Weekday & Weekend Profile



Trail User Mode Split

		
East Lake Tarpon:	7%	93%
Palm Harbor:	16%	84%
Dunedin:	22%	78%
Clearwater:	30%	70%
Walsingham:	28%	72%
Seminole:	35%	65%
Bay Pines:	29%	71%
St. Petersburg:	25%	75%

Source: Forward Pinellas January 2020
National Weather Service: [January 2020](#)

160

140

120

100

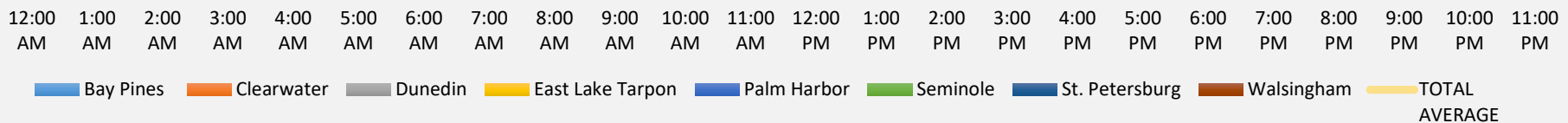
80

60

40

20

0



Pinellas Trail User Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection Period:
February 1 – February 29, 2020 (29 days)

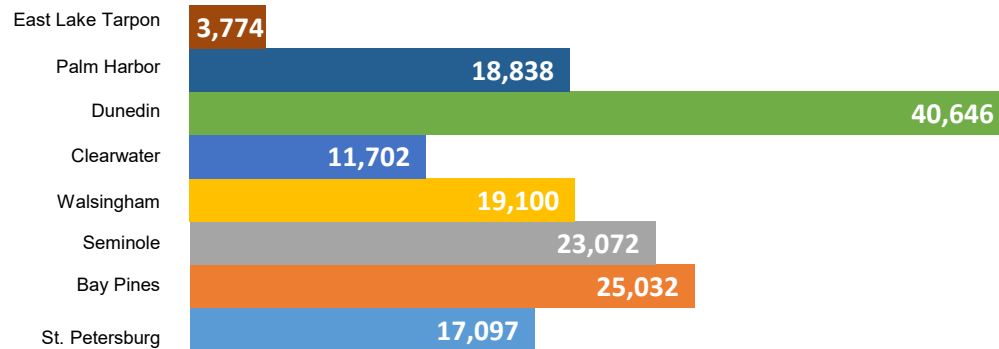
February 2020

29-Day Count Total: **159,261**
Daily Average Users: **5,137**

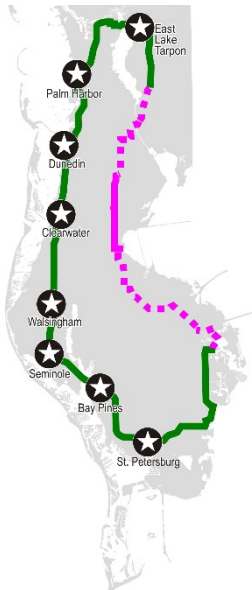
Highest Daily Totals:

- #1 – Sunday, February 16th (Dunedin - 2,578)
- #2 – Saturday, February 15th (Palm Harbor - 1,157)
- #3 – Sunday, February 23rd (Bay Pines – 1,476)

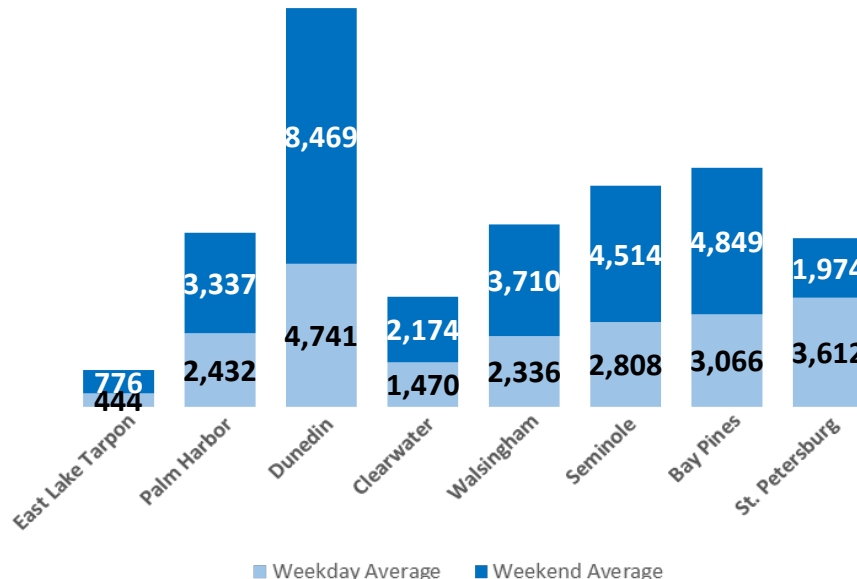
February Trail Users by Counter Location





Counter Locations



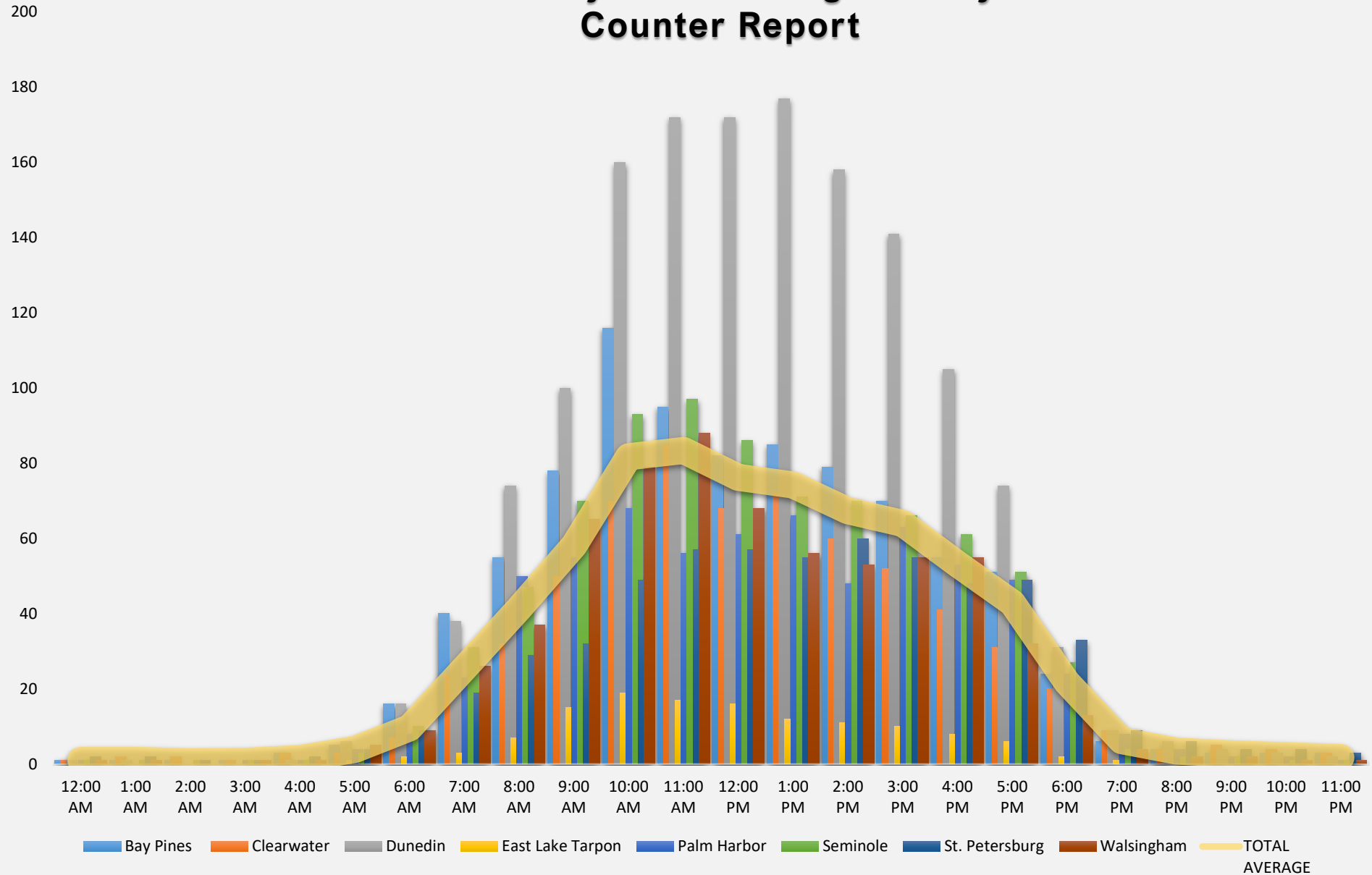
Weekday & Weekend Profile



Trail User Mode Split

		
East Lake Tarpon:	3%	97%
Palm Harbor:	16%	84%
Dunedin:	21%	79%
Clearwater:	26%	74%
Walsingham:	29%	71%
Seminole:	37%	63%
Bay Pines:	28%	72%
St. Petersburg:	26%	74%

Source: Forward Pinellas February 2020
National Weather Service: [February 2020](#)

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Pinellas Trail User Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection

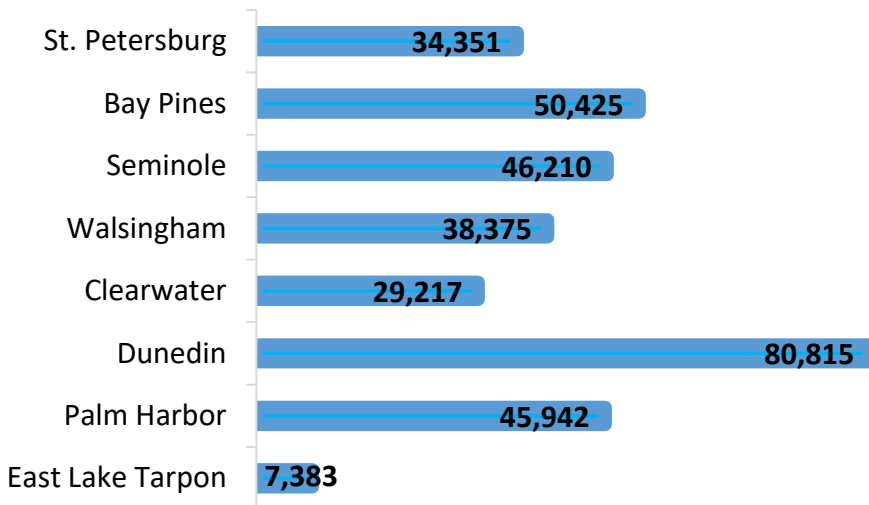
Period: January – February, 2020 Data*



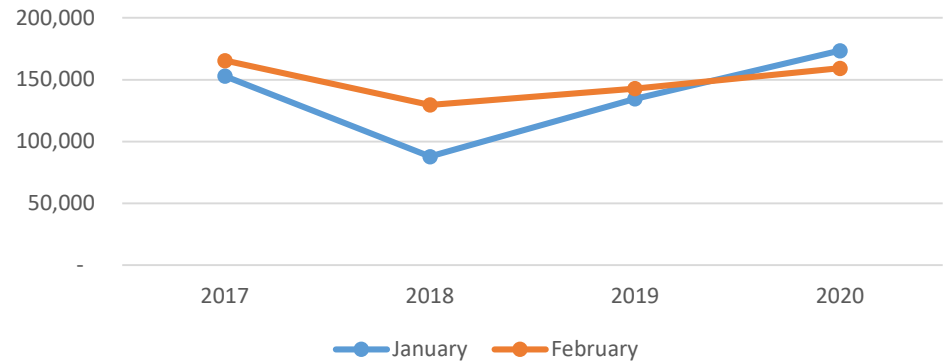
Jan-Feb, 2020 Total Count:
332,718

** Technical issues with the Clearwater Counter resulting in several missing days of data during 2020.*

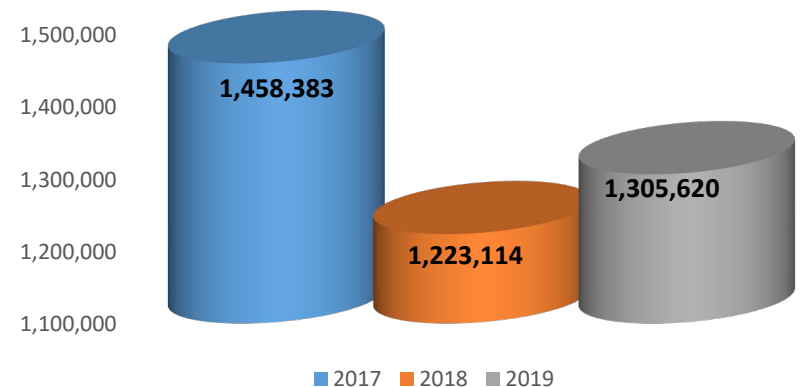
Year to Date Data Per Location



Monthly Trail Counts 2017-2020



Pinellas Trail Use 2017 - 2019



** 2010 – 2016 Survey Data & 2017-2019 Counter Data. Technical issues with several counters in 2019 resulting in several missing days of data during 2019.*

Pinellas Trail User Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection Period:
March 1 – March 31, 2020 (31 days)

March 2020

31-Day Count Total: **232,778**

Daily Average Users: **2,719**

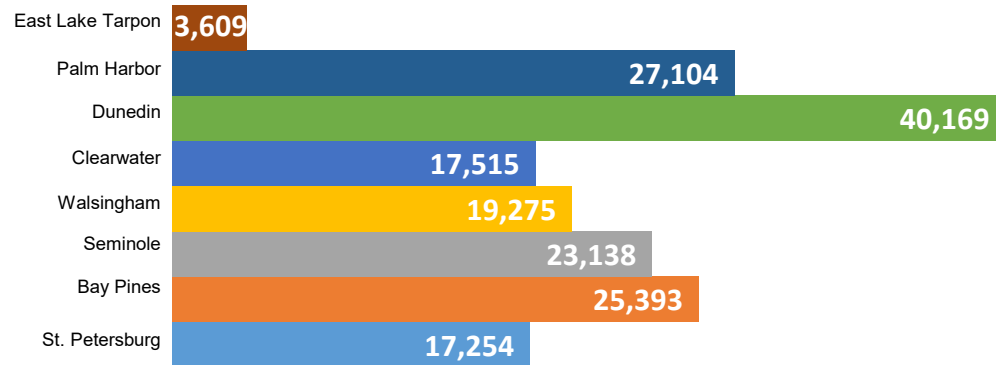
Highest Daily Totals:

#1 – Sunday, March 29th (Dunedin - 3,025)

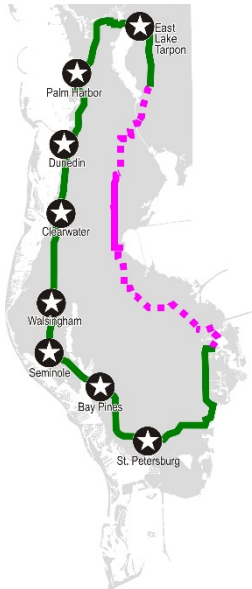
#2 – Saturday, March 21st (Bay Pines - 2,079)

#3 – Saturday, March 21st (Seminole - 2,046)

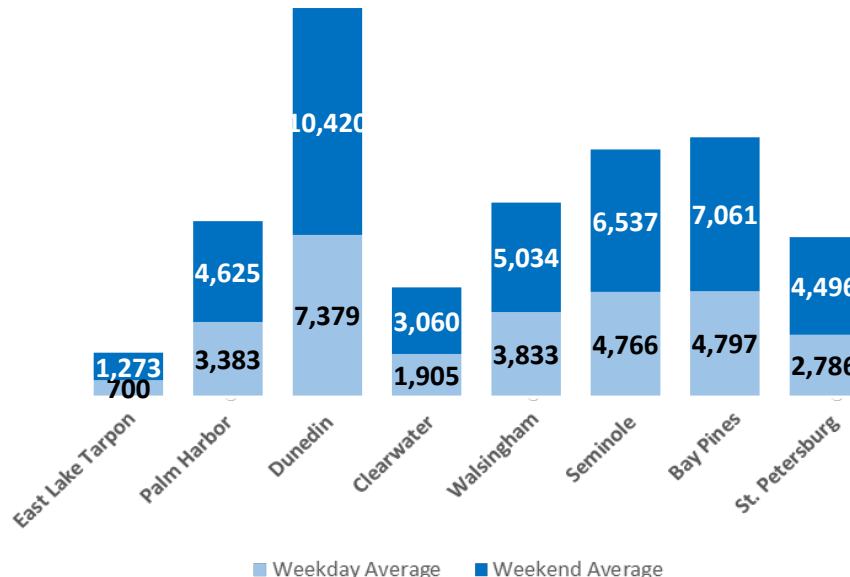
March Trail Users by Counter Location





Counter Locations



Weekday & Weekend Profile



Trail User Mode Split

		
East Lake Tarpon:	4%	96%
Palm Harbor:	14%	86%
Dunedin:	18%	82%
Clearwater:	20%	80%
Walsingham:	28%	72%
Seminole:	36%	64%
Bay Pines:	22%	78%
St. Petersburg:	20%	80%

Source: Forward Pinellas March 2020
National Weather Service: [March 2020](#)

Pinellas Trail User Count Data Summary

Automated Trail Counter Data Collection

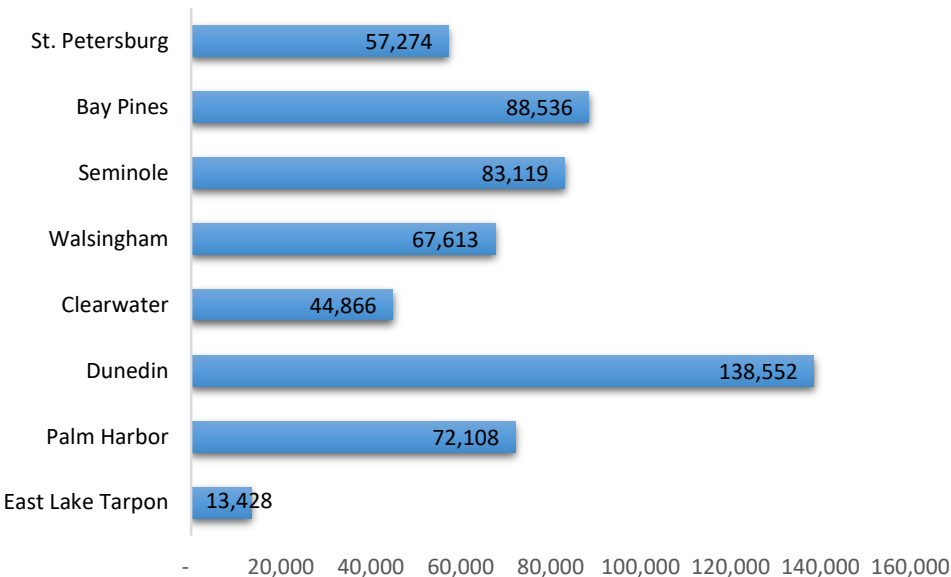
Period: January – March, 2020 Data*



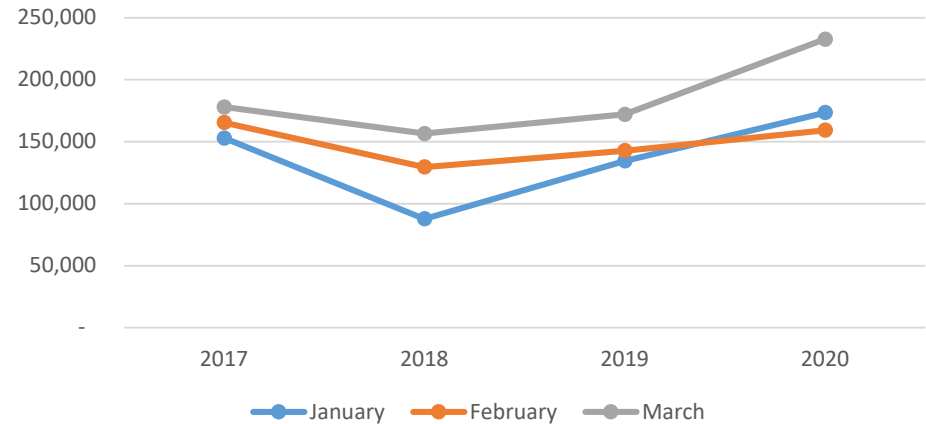
**Jan-Mar, 2020 Total Count:
565,496**

** Technical issues with the Clearwater Counter resulting in several missing days of data during February and March.*

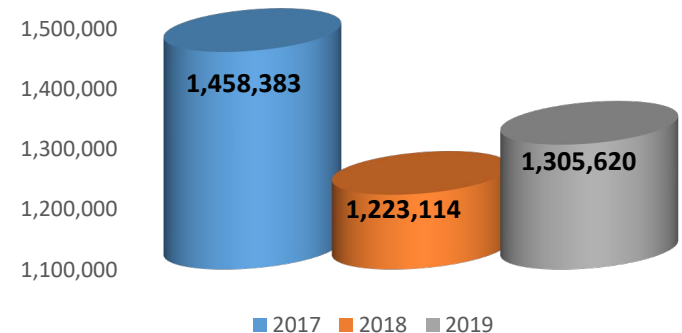
Counter Data Year to Date by Location



Monthly Trail Counts 2017-2020



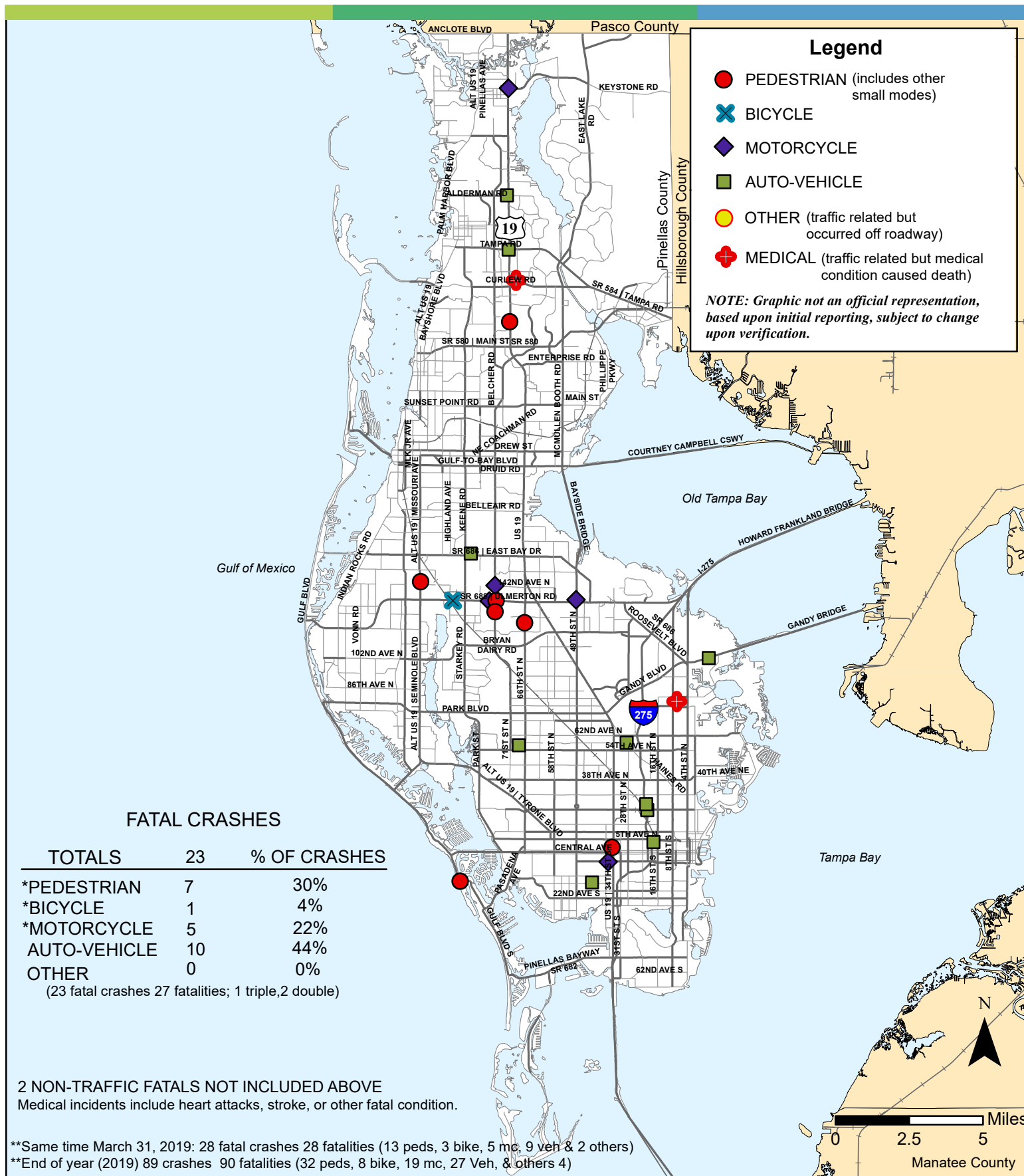
Pinellas Trail Use 2017 - 2019



** 2010 – 2016 Survey Data & 2017-2019 Counter Data. Technical issues with several counters in 2019 resulting in several missing days of data during 2019.*

YEAR 2020
(thru March 31st)

Locations of Reported Traffic Fatalities



Data Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2016. Map Produced: April 13, 2020.

\\pinellascounty-fl.gov\pcg\Plan_Dept\USERS\Autocadd\Apps\Sandra_MPO & PLN_afatalmapunofficial\2020fatalmap.mxd

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