



## BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC) MEETING AGENDA

February 27, 2017 – 8:30 a.m.  
310 Court Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conf. Room  
Clearwater, FL 33756

### THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

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1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS** (8:30 – 8:35)
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 30, 2017** (8:35 – 8:40)
3. **FORWARD PINELLAS ACTIONS – FEBRUARY 8, 2017** (8:40 – 8:45)
4. **COAST TO COAST RURAL TO URBAN OVERLAY STUDY** (8:45 – 9:00)
5. **ORANGE STREET OVERPASS** (9:00 – 9:10)
6. **JOE'S CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL ALIGNMENT STUDY** (9:10 – 9:30)
7. **NATIONAL BIKE MONTH, MAY 2017** (9:30 – 9:35)
8. **SPOTlight EMPHASIS AREAS UPDATE** (9:35 – 9:40)
  - A Vision for U.S. Highway 19 Corridor
  - Gateway Area Master Plan
  - Enhancing Beach Community Access
9. **BPAC BUSINESS** (9:40 – 9:45)
  - A. Complete Streets Program Recommendations
  - B. Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)
  - C. Pinellas Trails, Inc.
10. **AGENCY REPORTS** (9:45 – 10:00)
11. **OTHER BUSINESS** (10:00 – 10:15)
  - A. Membership
  - B. Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest
  - C. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics
  - D. Other
12. **ADJOURNMENT** (10:15)

### **NEXT BPAC MEETING – MARCH 20, 2017**

### **NEXT TRI-COUNTY BPAC MEETING – MAY 25, 2017**

Dr. William E. Hale Senior Activity Center, 330 Douglas Avenue, Dunedin FL 34698

*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.*

**BPAC – February 27, 2017**

**2. Approval of Minutes**



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**SUMMARY**

The meeting summary for the January 30, 2017 meeting is attached for review and approval.

**ATTACHMENT:** BPAC Meeting Summary – January 30, 2017

**ACTION:** Approval of Meeting Summary

**PINELLAS COUNTY**  
**BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**  
**January 30, 2017**

The following is a summary of the Forward Pinellas Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) held on January 30, 2017 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  
Daniel Alejandro  
Lynn Bosco  
Valerie Brookens  
Megan Carmichael  
Lucas Cruse  
Kimberly Cooper  
Win Dermody  
Felicia Donnelly  
Tom Ferraro  
Lyle Fowler  
Byron Hall  
Edward Hawkes  
Chip Haynes  
Paul Kurtz  
Charles Martin  
Casey Morse  
Jim Parent  
Ron Rasmussen  
Michael Siebel  
Bert Valery  
Jim Wedlake  
Georgia Wildrick

At Large Citizen Representative  
North County Citizen Representative, Oldsmar  
Largo Citizen Representative  
At Large Citizen Representative  
City of Largo  
Department of Health – Pinellas  
St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator  
St. Petersburg Citizen Representative  
Clearwater Citizen Representative  
Clearwater Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator  
North County Citizen Representative  
PC Parks & Conservation Resources (PCR)  
Pinellas Park Citizen Representative  
At Large Citizen Representative  
Clearwater Citizen Representative  
At Large Citizen Representative  
Dunedin Citizen Representative  
Pinellas County Public Works  
South Beaches Citizen Representative (St. Pete Beach)  
Pinellas Park Citizen Representative  
At Large Citizen Representative  
North Beaches Citizen Representative (Indian Rocks Beach)  
Seminole Citizen Representative  
Largo Citizen Representative

BPAC Members Absent

Julie Bond  
Eric Gibson  
Steve Lasky  
Anthony Matonti  
Tom McGinty  
Annette Sala  
Jacob Labutka  
Robert Yunk

CUTR  
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO)  
At Large Citizen Representative  
TBARTA  
School System Representative  
At Large Citizen Representative  
PSTA  
At Large Citizen Representative

Others Present

Zain Adam  
Christopher Speese  
George Hunt  
Bob Young  
Greg Brown  
Dr. Jan Hirschfield  
Chelsea Favero  
Rodney Chatman  
Whit Blanton  
Susan Miller  
Maria Kelly

Clearwater Planning and Development Department  
FDOT District 7 Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Specialist  
Citizen, Auxiliary Ranger  
Citizen, Auxiliary Ranger  
City of Largo Parks and Recreation  
Pinellas Trails, Inc.  
Forward Pinellas Staff  
Forward Pinellas Staff  
Forward Pinellas Staff  
Forward Pinellas Staff  
Forward Pinellas Staff

**1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS**

Vice-Chair Becky Afonso, North County Citizen Representative, Oldsmar, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Those in attendance introduced themselves.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The summary from the November 21, 2017 BPAC meeting was approved as provided in the agenda packet.

**3. FORWARD PINELLAS ACTIONS**

Mr. Rodney Chatman, Forward Pinellas (FP) Division Manager, reviewed the actions from the Board's December 14, 2016 and January 11, 2017 meetings as provided at the meeting. The Board recognized outgoing and incoming board members for the New Year as well as electing a new Executive Committee for 2017. Mr. Brian Beaty with FDOT presented the department's Draft Tentative Work Program for fiscal year 2017-2018 through fiscal year 2021-2022, which included the design for the Harn Boulevard to First Street overpass; the Tierra Verde Bridge replacement to include the Bayway South Trail and the Honeymoon Island State Park bike path. The Forward Pinellas Board will be holding a work session on March 31, 2017 to discuss SPOTLight Areas. Six Applications were received for the Complete Street Project program. New DOT District Seven Director of Transportation, Bill Jones stopped by to introduce himself and talked about a new approach. Additional information can be found on the [forwardpinellas.org](http://forwardpinellas.org) website.

**4. FDOT BICYCLES ON LIMITED ACCESS FACILITIES PILOT PROJECT**

Mr. Chatman introduced Mr. Christopher Speese, FDOT, District 7 Liaison, who sharing a presentation on the results of the Bicycles on Limited Access Facilities Pilot project. This 2012 project began as a 2 year pilot program that identified three limited access highway bridges over water and permitted temporary bicycle use to study the safety of such accommodations. Bicycle usage data and before/after comparisons of traffic crash information was collected and analyzed on each corridor. The study found that bicyclists consistently displayed safe behaviors, and motor vehicle drivers reduced speed and yielded as necessary. Mr. Speese said that the time frame of the study was insufficient to obtain reliable usage and crash statistics, and that it was recommended that the pilot project be extended an additional two years to gather additional data. He added that he would keep the BPAC updated.

**5. COMPLETE STREETS PROGRAM APPLICATIONS**

Ms. Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, updated the committee on the applications received by the local governments wanting to be considered for the Complete Streets program funding. A total of six applications were received, four of those requested planning/design and two projects were for construction. Ms. Favero reviewed each application as to its named project, matching funding and details. Questions were taken and answered appropriately. Project selection will be brought before the committee upon completion.

**6. SPOTlight Emphasis Areas Update**

Mr. Chatman updated the committee on the SPOTlight Emphasis Areas. In terms of enhancing beach community access, we are continuing to work on S.R. 60/Gulf to Bay Boulevard multimodal implementation strategies. Community meetings and workshops have been held looking at multimodal improvements along S.R. 60, including dedicated bus service from Tampa International Airport (TIA) to Clearwater Beach. A final drafting of a model ordinance on how local governments might work with waterborne transportation in terms of ferry service should be completed soon. In the next couple of months we will cover the challenges and best practices in terms of how beach communities are requiring bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in local land development regulations. In terms of U.S. Highway 19, staff is working with Pinellas County on expanding the scope of their economic assessment picking up Tarpon Springs in the north and Largo to the south.

**7. BPAC BUSINESS**

**A. Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)**

Vice Chair Afonso who is also the FBA Executive Director, provided an update. The FBA is celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and BPAC members were all issued 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary pins. Legislature efforts are underway to include people in the "Move Over Law" and continued efforts to improve policies for cyclists. Please see the FBA website, [floridabicycle.org](http://floridabicycle.org), for more information. There were no other comments.

**B. Pinellas Trail Inc.**

Dr. Jan Hirschfield, Pinellas Trails, Inc. (PT Inc.) President, provided a brief update on the activities of the PT Inc. including noting that benches have been donated. The group is also working on locating and identifying all of the donated benches that have been installed. He added that the annual Auxiliary Appreciation Picnic would take place at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at Taylor Park, shelter No. 3.

**C. Gulf Boulevard Crosswalks in Indian Rocks Beach (IRB)**

Mr. Bert Valery, North Beaches Citizen Representative (Indian Rocks Beach), Mr. Chatman and Paul Lent met to discuss the statistics behind the need for a crosswalk for Gulf Boulevard in Indian Rocks Beach. Mr. Chatman, Tom Washburn, Pinellas County Public Works Traffic, and the city's public works director for IRB will meet to discuss the next steps for this project and relay the findings at the next meeting.

**D. Gulf Coast Regional Trail Summit, January 23, 2017**

Chairman Smith discussed recognizing (Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority) TBARTA as the facilitating entity for the Gulf Coast Regional Trail. The committee will vote in support of this recognition and recommend the Forward Pinellas Board recognize TBARTA as the facilitating entity as well. Jim Parent made the motion to request the Forward Pinellas Board recognize TBARTA as the facilitating entity for the Gulf Coast Regional Trail. Daniel Alejandro seconded and the vote passed unanimously.

**E. Tri-County BPAC 2017 Meeting**

Chairman Smith shared his preview adventure of the Tri-County Trail corridor. The corridor is currently under construction and should be completed by June 2017. The Pasco County gap in the trail is expected to be completed in about one year, after which bicyclists will be able to ride from Pinellas County to the Suncoast Trail.

Ms. Susan Miller, Forward Pinellas staff, expressed her gratitude to BPAC members for participating in the Tri-County meeting on January 11, 2017 in Hillsborough County. Pinellas BPAC continues to be very well represented at these regional meetings. The next Tri-County BPAC meeting will be held on Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, at the Dr. William E. Hale Senior Activity Center, 330 Douglas Avenue in Dunedin. Additional information will be provided as we approach that date.

**8. AGENCY REPORTS**

Updated information was provided for the following items:

- **Tri-County Trail / Starkey Wilderness Trail & Brooker Creek Trail**  
Chairman Smith previously covered this item, and there was no further discussion on this topic.
- **Court Street / Chestnut Street Railroad Crossing**  
The rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) installed at the Court and Chestnut Street crossings for the Pinellas Trail are working properly. After brief discussion, the BPAC requested the equipment be modified slightly to allow users on the Trail to see when the lights, directed towards the motorists, are flashing.
- **Elfers Trail Spur**  
Mr. Chatman reported that work is underway with Pinellas County and the City of Tarpon Springs to stabilize the Trail at Elfers Spur. The work is going well and should be completed in the next couple of months.
- **Belleair Road / U.S. Highway 19 Trail Crossing**  
Mr. Speese agreed to check on the design plans to improve the safety of Trail users at the intersection of Belleair Road and U.S. Highway 19. He also agreed to check on the crosswalk timing and when the crosswalks should be moved.
- **Orange Street Overpass**  
Ms. Miller relayed information from the project manager to the BPAC regarding the Orange Street overpass for the Pinellas Trail. The spans for the overpass will be replaced as recommended by a structural evaluation. Construction is not expected to be scheduled for about five months after the project is advertised and bid. The BPAC members requested a presentation on this project.

- **St. Petersburg Bike Share Program**

Mr. Lucas Cruse, St. Petersburg Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator, updated the committee on the Bike Share program in St. Petersburg. He said there will be 30 hubs, 450 racks and 300 bikes available for public use. Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> is Localtopia (<http://localtopia.keepsaintpetersburglocal.org/>) in St. Petersburg and the official launch of Bike Share. The morning of February 15<sup>th</sup> will be the Mayor's Bike/Ped Advisory Committee and other bike/ped activities. Mr. Cruse added that there will be a public workshops the week of March 20<sup>th</sup> for Complete Streets. Mr. Cruse will update the committee with times and location.

## 9. **OTHER BUSINESS**

### A. **Membership**

There are currently two vacancies for St. Petersburg Area members. The St. Petersburg Area includes Gulfport, South Pasadena and Tierra Verde as well as St. Petersburg. Mr. Cruse indicated he has a potential candidate for one of the vacancies. A few additional names were discussed some members agreed to reach out to interested persons.

### B. **Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest**

There were no comments regarding the correspondence, publications and articles of interest.

### C. **Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics**

Dr. Hirschfield requested that the Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF) agenda be included in the BPAC packet. Mr. Chatman mentioned that Mr. Whit Blanton, Forward Pinellas Executive Director, would be presenting additional information regarding the impact of consolidating the local MPO's into a regional organization at the April meeting. A collaborative workshop is scheduled for May 12, 2017.

### D. **Other**

Chairman Smith asked Jim Parent if the corridor on the Bayway Trail North from St. Petersburg to St. Pete Beach (on the south side of S.R. 682/Pinellas Bayway) was completed. The Bayway Trail South, from S.R. 682 to East Shores Boulevard to connect to Fort DeSoto Park and Trail, is scheduled to be constructed along with roadway resurfacing and replacement of the bridge (Structure E) as a design-build project in FY 17/18.

Mr. Chatman provided a brief update on the preliminary engineering study recommendations for replacing the drawbridge on the Dunedin Causeway. The Board of county Commissioners (BCC) received a presentation from the consultants working on the project at their January meeting that offered two additional options to consider for bridge rehabilitation. One of those options may add another 25 years to the existing structure. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

Ms. Felicia Donnelly, Clearwater Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator, formally introduced Mr. Zain Adam, who was recently hired by the City in the Planning and Development Department. She also announced that the Druid Trail would begin construction in April 2017. The Druid Trail will complete an east-west connection between the Pinellas Trail and the Duke Energy Trail.

Ms. Kimberly Cooper, St. Petersburg Citizen Representative, said that attended an excellent Bike Smart bicycle safety class conducted by Ms. Julie Bond of CUTR (Center for Urban Transportation Research). She encouraged others to utilize this valuable, but free, educational resource.

Mr. Bob Young, Auxiliary Ranger, suggested that all RRFB's for the Pinellas Trail be installed with actuation buttons on both sides. The Trail crossing at Mehlenbacher was discussed.

## 10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 10:15 am. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

**BPAC – February 27, 2017**

**3. Forward Pinellas Actions – February 8, 2017**



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**SUMMARY**

The February 8, 2017 Action Sheets are provided for your information. A staff member will review actions taken by the Forward Pinellas Board at those meeting.

**ATTACHMENT:** Action Sheets – February 8, 2017

**ACTION:** None Required, Informational Item Only



## ***Executive Summary, 2.8.17 Board Meeting***

*The full agenda for the meeting, the meeting video, and a short list of actions that the board took this month are all on [our website](#).*

- **Clearwater Vice Mayor Bill Jonson presented the PSTA Activities Report**
  - PSTA's board recently approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the agency and HART
    - The MOU is intended to formalize existing and future regional cooperation but not to be the start of a merger
    - The PSTA board also approved an MOU for a regional fare collection system of Flamingo Fares Tampa Bay
  - PSTA continues to pursue Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from downtown St. Petersburg to South Pasadena/St. Pete Beach
    - Staff at PSTA asked for more time to investigate alternatives for funding the project, as St. Pete Beach is not a member of the transit authority at this time
      - Looking to get the project into the fiscal year 2019 federal budget, with operations beginning in 2021
    - Commissioner Ken Welch expressed his strong support for this BRT option as the first transit project to have momentum and greatest potential for success
  - Chairman John Morroni asked about the funding source for installing electric charging stations for buses in downtown St. Petersburg, which Jonson indicated may be paid by the County as a one-time expense
  - There was also discussion of PSTA analysis for a busway from downtown Clearwater to the beach
    - An FDOT study indicated that there was capacity to use the median of the Memorial Causeway Bridge to the beach for a bus lane
- **HART staff and Jacobs Engineering presented on the regional premium transit plan**
  - The plan, a collaboration between HART and PSTA, seeks to identify a regional corridor for premium transit, a plan that could be federally funded through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
  - The evaluation of potential transit projects will be based on three questions:
    - Where are the top performing corridors? (April 2017)
    - What are the best projects? (June 2017)
    - How and when are projects built? (September 2017)

- The board requested a list of the projects regionally that had been submitted over the years for FTA funding but had not been advanced
  - Only one project in the three-county area has ever received FTA funding, according to the consultant
- Board members affirmed a request made at the Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group meeting to keep the public in the loop throughout the entire project
- **Pinellas County Public Works staff and consultant Ayres Associates presented alternatives for changes to Belcher Road at State Road 60 - one of the most congested, saturated intersections in the county**
  - The study was prompted by pedestrian fatalities at that intersection
  - Five alternatives were presented: a roadway widening left, roadway widening center, roadway widening right, an overpass, and a no-build alternative
    - Each of the widening alternatives involved adding left- and right-turn lanes
  - Chairman John Morroni encouraged the County to pursue the non-overpass alternatives that involved adding turn lanes, as the overpass would cost about \$80 million, whereas the other alternatives were estimated at between \$15 million and \$18 million
  - County requested that Forward Pinellas add the to-be selected alternative to its priority list
- **The board discussed upcoming plans for U.S. 19, including a transit concept plan and whether to continue building interchanges in the north part of the corridor**
  - The City of Tarpon Springs has indicated its non-support for an interchange at Tarpon Avenue
  - The board expressed support for safety-related measures that could be in place prior to construction of or in lieu of future interchanges.
    - The Tampa Road interchange is not yet funded for construction, but the Curlew Road interchange is funded for construction in 2021
- **Forward Pinellas staff discussed the update to the multimodal impact fee**
  - Staff explored potential costs of the update and referenced the ordinance requiring a review of the formula every two years
  - Board members directed staff to take the item to the TCC
  - In addition, board members asked to see a comparison of cumulative impact fees for the County and adjacent jurisdictions
- **Forward Pinellas staff updated the board on the Gulf Coast Trail Alliance, which recommends taking a cooperative approach to secure funding for design and construction of individual segments of one Gulf Coast Trail winding through many counties**
  - Pinellas County has two unfunded segments of the Gulf Coast Trail, formerly known as the Southwest Coastal Regional Trail
  - Board members approved using TBARTA as the facilitator for the Gulf Coast Trail Alliance
- **Dates to remember:**
  - Forward Pinellas Board Work Session March 31
  - Pinellas Economic Leadership Symposium April 20-21

#### **4. Coast to Coast Rural to Urban Overlay Study**

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##### **SUMMARY**

The Florida Coast to Coast (C2C) Trail is an effort by various state and regional stakeholders to provide a safe and continuous shared use trail from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean through Central Florida. This statewide trail system will total 275 miles, and span nine counties. More than 75%, or over 200 miles, of the trail already exists and is open to the public. The Connector will link communities between Pinellas County and Brevard County and establish a major bicycle-pedestrian route to allow residents and visitors to explore Central Florida.

In 2014, the Florida State Legislature provided \$50 million in funding over a 5-year period to complete the "gaps" between existing trails to form this continuous multi-use trail across the state. The C2C is part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System plan, recognizing the economic impact to communities along trails, the growing popularity of eco-tourism, and public support for trails.

In FY 2016, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC), in partnership with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC), received funds through the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) Technical Assistance Grant Program to develop a framework for design continuity for the C2C. The study recommended a unifying color scheme, wayfinding signage options, and design standards for amenities such as railings, fencing, landscaping, overpasses, etc.

In FY 2017, the TBRPC and the ECFRPC received another technical assistance grant from DEO to develop a marketing toolkit and implementation guidebook for the C2C. This project will build on the work performed by the Regional Planning Councils in developing the C2C Design Overlay and Asset Inventory developed during FY 2016. Outcomes of the project include: Marketing Tool Kit; Implementation Guidebook; C2C Website; and Economic Impact Analysis.

The Urban-Rural Design Overlay Study, dated May 2016, can be found at the link below:  
[http://c2cconnector.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/C2C\\_Overlay\\_Report\\_May\\_2016\\_web2.pdf](http://c2cconnector.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/C2C_Overlay_Report_May_2016_web2.pdf)

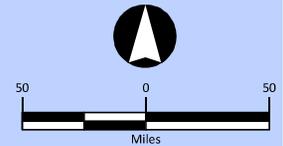
**ATTACHMENT:** Coast to Coast Connector Trail Map

**ACTION:** None required; informational item

# Regional Priority Trail Connectors



Legend	
	Coast to Coast Regional Connector - 250 miles
	Heart of Florida Regional Connector - 135 miles
	Northeast Coast Regional Connector / East Coast Greenway - 200 miles
	Southwest Coast Regional Connector - 225 miles
	Nature Coast Regional Connector - 175 miles
	Old Florida Regional Connector - 100 miles
	Great Northwest Coast Regional Connector - 275 miles
	River of Grass Regional Connector - 100 miles
	Tropical Terminus / East Coast Greenway - 250 miles
	Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail - 100 miles
	St Johns River to Sea Regional Connector - 90 miles
	Capital City to the Sea Trails - 85 Miles
	Northeast Florida Regional Connector - 130 Miles



Data Source: FDEP OGT  
 Prepared Date: March 15, 2016  
 This map is for display purpose only. Any other use is not advised.

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**SUMMARY**

When first segments of the Pinellas Trail were constructed 27 years ago, potential conflicts between trail users and motor vehicles were addressed at three major cross streets with overpasses. Since that time, additional overpasses, pedestrian bridges, and underpasses have been constructed specifically for the Pinellas Trail across busy streets or waterways.

One of the first overpasses to be constructed was for Orange Street and Alternate U.S. 19, north of Curlew Road. This two-span overpass allows trail users to easily cross both Orange Street and Alt. 19 with one structure, with no vehicular conflicts. Since this structure is located very close to the salt waters of the Gulf of Mexico, it is particularly susceptible to corrosion and requires regular maintenance. A structural evaluation of the overpass recommended the replacement of the metal spans would be most cost effective, according to information received at the June 2015 BPAC meeting.

Please welcome Mr. John Linton, P.E. with Pinellas County Public Works Engineering as he provides additional information regarding the Orange Street overpass for the Pinellas Trail.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

**ACTION:** None required; informational item

## **6. Joe's Creek Greenway Trail Alignment Study**

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### **SUMMARY**

Under the Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) grant program, Forward Pinellas received funds through the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County for specific projects designed to encourage physical activity and more active lifestyles that will reduce obesity and other chronic diseases. The initial projects to increase walking and bicycling included improved wayfinding, bicycle repair stations, and automatic trail counters.

This year, the Department of Health in Pinellas County has granted Forward Pinellas funds to determine a preferred trail alignment study for Joe's Creek Greenway Trail as identified in the Forward Pinellas Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan (<http://forwardpinellas.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/BikePedFacElement.pdf>). The alignment study will be documented in a final trail alignment report with trail alternative plans, illustrative sections/sketches, narrative, and an opinion of probable construction costs for the preferred alternative. The proposed paved trail shall be 12 feet wide and meandering to the greatest extent possible unless otherwise dictated by unavoidable constraints, in which case a trail width of less than 12 feet may be used but in no case shall the trail width be less than 8 feet. A trail that is 8 feet in width is highly undesirable but may be necessary due to the physical constraints along the study corridor. Based on the nature of the existing conditions it is possible that the shared use trail design may include a combination of on-road and off-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

This study will be an integral part of our multimodal transportation planning process that aims to achieve a healthy and safe route for bicycle and pedestrian travel from Joe's Creek Neighborhood Greenway to the Pinellas Trail and surrounding communities. Forward Pinellas is coordinating this study with the Pinellas County Planning Department that is contributing nearly \$35,000 in funding for a total project cost of about \$88,000. The project is scheduled to be completed by May 31, 2017.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

**ACTION:** None required; informational item

**7. National Bike Month, May 2017**

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**SUMMARY**

Across the United States, National Bike Month is recognized in May of each year. Along with National Bike Month, cyclists in Florida can also enjoy an additional month of celebration in March, as Florida Bike Month.

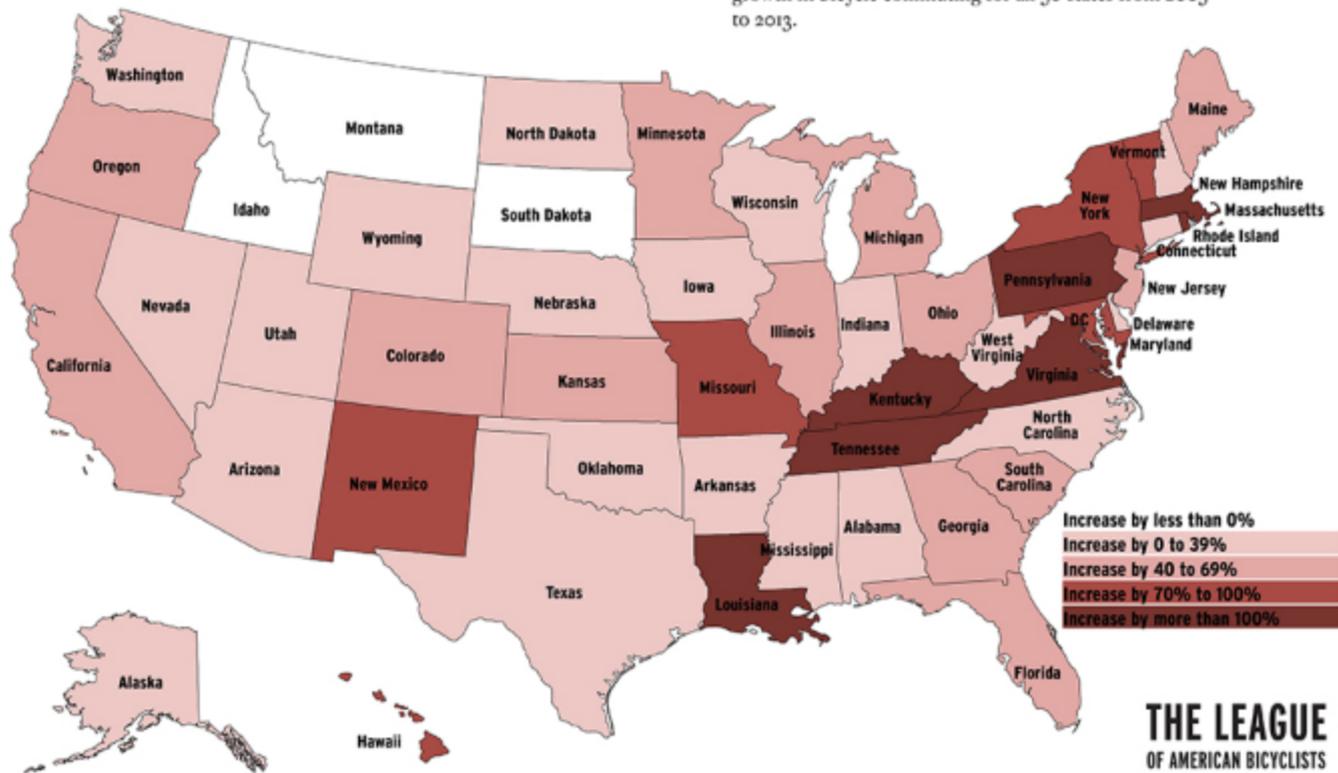
National Bike Month was established in 1956 by the League of American Bicyclists ([bikeleague.org](http://bikeleague.org)), to encourage bicycling as a viable and responsible transportation choice. Raising awareness of bicycling includes safety education and infrastructure improvements. The health benefits of bicycling inspires and motivates the public and engages health professionals and active transportation proponents. An infographic mapping bicycle commuting, developed by the LAB is provided for your information. Riding a bicycle benefits everyone from individuals to the entire Tampa Bay community as bicycle commuters save money and gas, stay fit and reduce traffic congestion.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Bicycle Commuting Growth by State, League of American Bicyclists 2005 - 2015

**ACTION:** Brainstorm Activities for National Bike Month May 2017

# BICYCLE COMMUTING GROWTH BY STATE

**NATIONALLY**, since 2005, states have seen, on average, a 46% increase in the share of people commuting by bike. But an average is just that – there are many states that have seen tremendous increases in cycling, including some that might not be expected. This map shows the growth in bicycle commuting for all 50 states from 2005 to 2013.



Increase by less than 0%  
Increase by 0 to 39%  
Increase by 40 to 69%  
Increase by 70% to 100%  
Increase by more than 100%

**THE LEAGUE**  
OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS  
*since 1880*

**BPAC – February 27, 2017**

**8. SPOTLight Emphasis Areas Update**



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**SUMMARY**

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

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Water Taxi Eyes Gulfport-St. Pete Beach Route News, February 9, 2017

**ACTION:** None required; informational item

# WATER TAXI EYES GULFPORT-ST. PETE BEACH ROUTE

by Bob McClure, Tampa Bay Newspapers  
February 9, 2017

**ST. PETE BEACH** – Tampa Bay Ferry and Water Taxi is seeking approval from city leaders to use a landing off a 55th Avenue seawall to drop off passengers for a proposed water taxi route from Gulfport Municipal Marina to St. Pete Beach.

The proposed route would be used primarily to transport employees to the city's hotel district in an effort to cut down on the number of vehicles on the island. Employees would park their cars at a remote parking lot near the marina, get transportation from the parking lot to the water taxi embarkation point, take a 20-minute ride over to St. Pete Beach and disembark next to the seawall on 55th Avenue, just east of Gulf Boulevard.

When employees get off work in the late afternoon, they would be transported back to the Gulfport marina and transported from that point to their cars. The plan is to target employees of the TradeWinds Island Grand Resort, Guy Harvey Outpost and the Sirata Beach Resort.

The service would also be used during the day to ferry tourists from the hotels to Gulfport and back.

"They (hotels) have a lot of problems parking their employees," said Bob Myers, a spokesman for Tampa Bay Ferry and Water Taxi, during a meeting Jan. 24 at City Hall. "A space that is now used for an employee is a space that can accommodate a visitor."

Myers said the firm's boats would pull into the seawall bow first, drop off passengers and pick up others.

"Typically, we're looking at an eight- to 15-minute operation," he said.

Myers said the current plan would not require Florida Department of Environmental Protection approval or a submerged land lease.

City Commissioner Melinda Pletcher suggested using a commercial area, such as Dolphin Village or Pass-A-Grille, as a landing point.

"I think because of the close proximity to residential (on 55th Avenue), it might be nice to see if we have other options to consider," Pletcher said.

"I think it would be appropriate to explore how the residents feel on it," said Myers. "I'd like for them to take a look at it with an open mind. Would it be better to have a boat come by a couple times a day or more traffic on the road?"

Commissioner Ward Friszolowski, who supports the concept, reminded everyone that ferry transportation from Gulfport was the original way people got to St. Pete Beach before bridges were built. That route took visitors to the Merry Pier in Pass-A-Grille, which he said might be a better destination point than 55th Avenue.

"I feel the invasion of a residential area is going to be a problem," said Commissioner Rick Falkenstein. "It could be addressed by Corey Avenue (as a destination point). Then you've got Dolphin Landings and Pass-A-Grille, which are not residential areas.

Interim Mayor Deborah Schechner agreed.

"I think you might be better served to look at some of the commercial areas because it's going to be a hard sell," she said. "I would be interested to see what the comments are when you visit those residential properties. I think the idea of a taxi is good. I know how well it works in Clearwater."

The idea received support from the Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce.

In a brief statement to the City Commission, TBCC Government Affairs specialist Doug Izzo said "the chamber supports alternate modes of transportation."

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**A. Forward Pinellas Complete Streets Program Recommendations**

Through collaboration with its committee's and board, in 2016 Forward Pinellas developed an incentive program to assist local governments in planning, designing and constructing Complete Streets projects, particularly those with the potential to serve as a catalyst for transformative redevelopment within a corridor or activity center. The program will award up to \$100,000 annually for planning projects, beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2017/18, and up to \$1 million annually for construction projects, to be programmed in the Five Year Work Program.

Between October 3<sup>rd</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Forward Pinellas called for local governments to submit applications for funding Complete Streets projects in their communities. Six applications were received - four for planning and two for construction. At the January committee meeting, the TCC received presentations from each of the applicant agencies, providing an overview of each project seeking funding. A subcommittee comprised of members of both the TCC and the Planners Advisory Committee, as well as Forward Pinellas staff, met this month to review each application and to develop a recommendation for funding. The subcommittee recommended that Forward Pinellas provide \$50,000 in funding to the City of Clearwater for the Drew Street Complete Street application, \$50,000 in funding to the Pinellas County Lealman Complete Streets project, and \$1 million to St. Petersburg for the construction of the 34<sup>th</sup> St. S. sidewalk improvements.

**B. Florida Bicycle Association (FBA)**

The Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) was created in 1997 as an advocacy organization focused on protecting and improving the bicycling environment and policies in Florida. The FBA actively supports legislative efforts in Tallahassee that improve policies for cyclists, and partners with FDOT and many other agencies with safety education for all roadway users. For more information, see the website, [floridabicycle.org](http://floridabicycle.org). Vice Chair Becky Afonso, who is also the FBA Executive Director, will provide an update regarding FBA for the BPAC.

**C. Pinellas Trails, Inc.**

A representative from Pinellas Trails, Inc. may take this opportunity to provide updated information for the BPAC.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

**ACTION:** None required; informational item

## **BPAC – February 27, 2017**



### **10. Agency Reports**

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The BPAC is tasked with reviewing and advising Forward Pinellas on bicycle and pedestrian-related system development, and related issues and priorities. The Committee also may assist communities with development of bikeway and pedestrian facilities, recommend safer bicycling and walking provisions, and promote a safer roadway environment.

At the January 30, 2017 meeting, the BPAC requested that the Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF) agenda and minutes be provided to the Committee. The PTSTF is a collaborative of law enforcement agencies responsible for patrolling sections of the Pinellas Trail. The PTSTF meets quarterly to coordinate effective strategies to improve the safety and security of Trail users. The January 10, 2017 PTSTF agenda is attached for your information.

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

- Tri-County Trail Project – Starkey Wilderness Trail and Brooker Creek Trail
- Court Street / Chestnut Street RR Crossing and Trail Crossings
- Elfers Trail Spur
- Belleair Road / U.S. Highway 19 Trail Crossing
- St. Petersburg Bike Share Program
- Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF)

**ATTACHMENT(S):** FDOT update BPAC February 14, 2017  
Julia Tuttle Causeway I-195  
Pineda Causeway SR 404  
William Lehman Causeway SR 856  
Notice Miami Today Re: Lehman Causeway  
Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF) January 10, 2017 agenda

**ACTION:** None Required, Informational Item Only

Please see below for the follow-up information requested at the January 30, 2017 BPAC meeting:

### **FDOT BICYCLES ON LIMITED ACCESS FACILITIES PILOT PROJECT**

- 1. Request for information if any additional safety modifications were made to the 3 locations in this pilot study.**  
*I have corresponded with each of the Districts (5 & 6) and both indicated that no additional safety improvements have been made.*
  
- 2. Request for demographic information adjacent to these 3 locations relating to land use, end-point destinations.**  
*No demographic information was utilized to select the locations. The criteria was for beach access, and there could be no facilities with beach access within 2 miles.*
  
- 3. How was the public notified that the facilities were available for cyclists?**  
*Newspaper articles (see attached for example) were published as well as fact sheets (also attached) were provided to MPO's as well as informational workshops with local cycling groups and shops.*

### **AGENCY REPORTS**

#### **Belleair Road & U.S. Highway 19 Update**

- a) Final plans were released for construction on 11-14-16. Construction should be completed by the end of May.
- b) Relocates the crosswalk, equipment, and curb ramp on the SW side of US 19 and Bellaire closer to the corner to increase visibility of pedestrians in the crosswalk (see diagram attached).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

#### **Christopher B. Speese**

District Seven Public Involvement & Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator  
Florida Department of Transportation-District 7  
11201 North McKinley Drive  
Tampa, FL 33612  
(813)-975-6405  
[christopher.speese@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:christopher.speese@dot.state.fl.us)



**WHEN DRIVING, WALKING, OR BICYCLING...  
PAY ATTENTION.  
READ THE SIGNS.  
LEARN THE RULES.**

**AVOID DISTRACTIONS**   
 **STOP BEFORE TURNING RIGHT ON RED.**  
 **USE THE SIDEWALK AND CROSSWALKS.**  
 **BICYCLE PREDICTABLY, WITH TRAFFIC.**



INTERCEPT EXISTING LV AND MV CONDUIT AND PULL MV AND LV CONDUITS BACK TO PROPOSED PULL BOXES

- 2 NMS x 12 LF 630-2-11
- 2 BA 630-2-11
- 2 BA 640-2-11
- 1 BA 640-2-11

BELLEAIR RD.

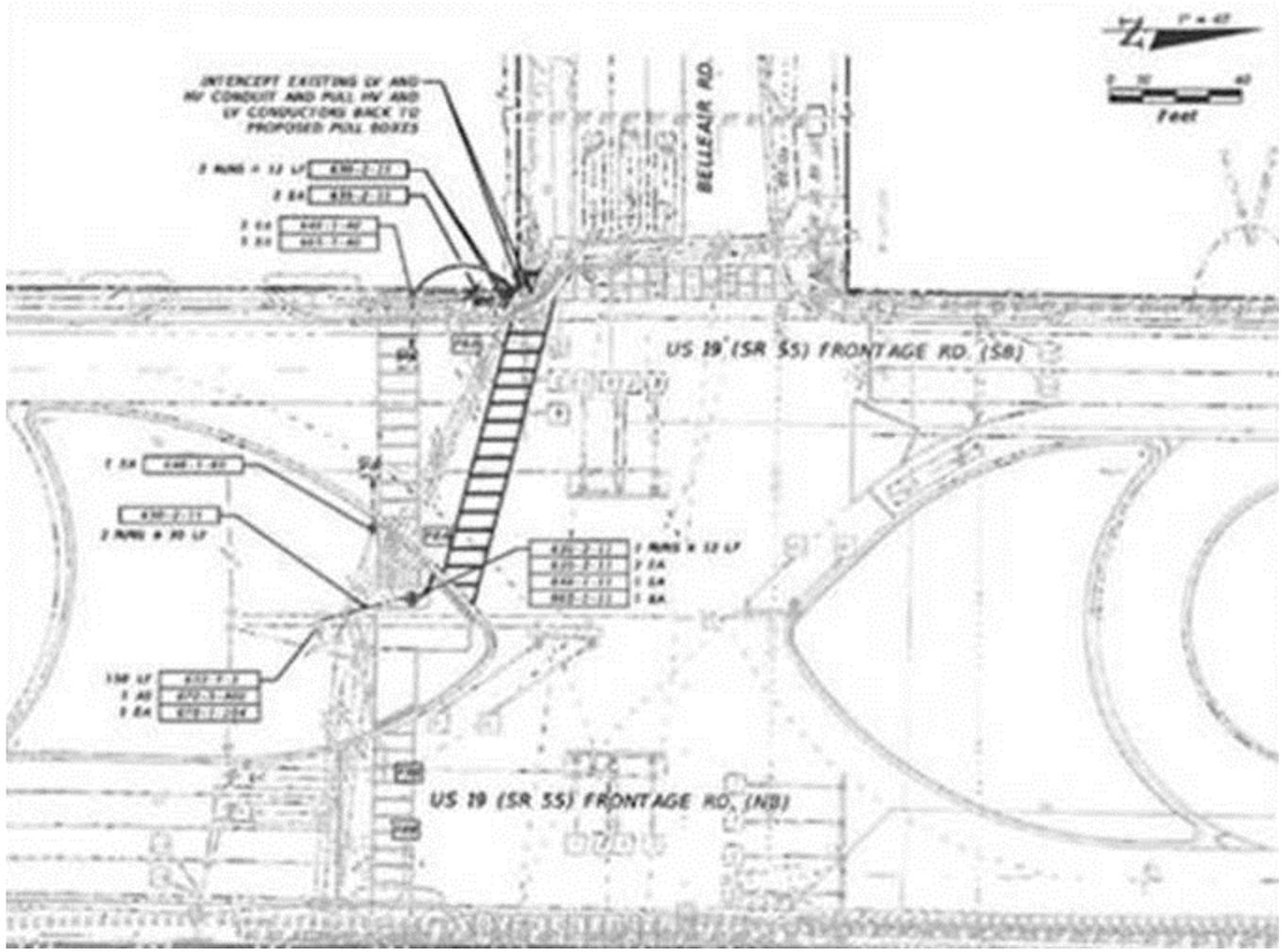
US 19 (SR 55) FRONTAGE RD. (SB)

- 1 BA 640-2-11
- 630-2-11
- 2 NMS x 20 LF

- 630-2-11 1 NMS x 12 LF
- 630-2-11 1 BA
- 640-2-11 1 BA
- 630-2-11 1 BA

- 100 LF 630-2-11
- 1 BA 630-2-11
- 1 BA 630-2-11

US 19 (SR 55) FRONTAGE RD. (NB)





## Bicycles on Limited Access Facilities PILOT PROGRAM

### I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway FROM US1/BISCAYNE BOULEVARD TO SR 907/ALTON ROAD

- Program established by State Legislature under House Bill 599 in 2012.
- Permits bicyclists (not pedestrians) to travel on selected limited access facilities.
- Two (2) sites selected in Miami-Dade County: I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway and SR 856/William Lehman Causeway.
- Improvements include signing and pavement markings, new crossings, bridge railing, and minor roadway widening.
- Facilities proposed to be open to bicycle traffic by March 2013.
- Study examining safety, operations, and demand will be conducted throughout the two (2) year period with a final report due in September 2015.
- Signing and pavement marking scheme will include shared lane markings (sharrows) from Biscayne Boulevard to the Julia Tuttle Causeway along NE 36th Street (Eastbound) and NE 38th Street (Westbound) and at the SR 907/Alton Road interchange, a marked crossings at the SR 907/Alton Road off-ramp, a green colored bicycle lane at the Mt. Sinai Hospital exit ramp, and designated bicycle lanes along the Causeway.
- Initially, eastbound cyclists will be encouraged to utilize the existing shared use path along the south side of the Causeway near the SR 907/Alton Road eastbound off-ramp to access SR 907/Alton Road southbound. Once the widening of the eastbound off-ramp is complete, cyclists will be encouraged to utilize the bicycle lane on the new paved shoulder.
- Cyclists traveling from points south and east of the SR 907/Alton Road interchange will be encouraged to travel north on Alton Road (E) to Sullivan Drive, left (southbound) onto Alton Road (W) to the westbound I-195 on-ramp. See the attached map for more information.
- Cyclists will be directed to enter/exit the Causeway via US 1/Biscayne Boulevard. Bicyclists will not be permitted to travel on I-195 west of US 1/Biscayne Boulevard ramps.
- For additional information, please contact Ken Jeffries, the District 6 Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, at 305-470-5445 or at [ken.jeffries@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:ken.jeffries@dot.state.fl.us).



Example of marked bicycle lane on a causeway.



Example of shared lane markings (sharrow) with "bikes may use full lane" signage.





**Bicycles on  
Limited Access Facilities  
PILOT PROGRAM**

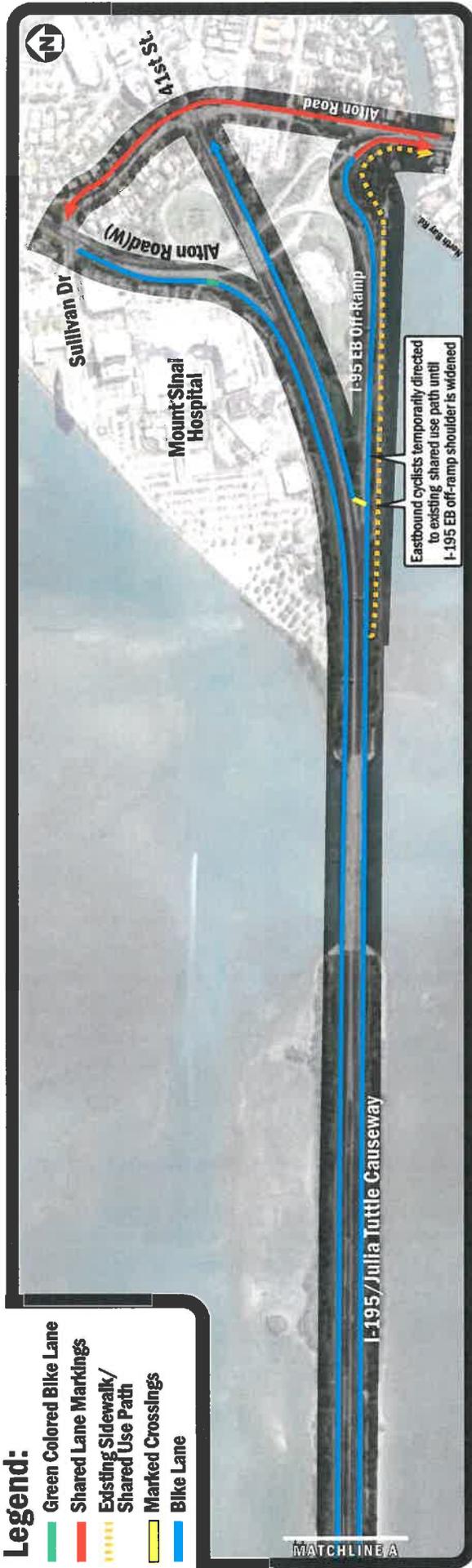


# I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway

FROM US1/BISCAYNE BOULEVARD TO SR 907/ALTON ROAD

## Legend:

- Green Colored Bike Lane
- Shared Lane Markings
- Existing Sidewalk/  
Shared Use Path
- Marked Crossings
- Bike Lane





# NOTICE OF FDOT BIKE LANES PILOT PROJECT

For Pineda Causeway/State Road (S.R.) 404  
From US-1 to SR A1A

**Pineda Causeway  
State Road (S.R.) 404 Bicycle Lanes  
From US-1 to SR A1A  
Pilot Project: Bikes on  
Limited Access Facilities  
Financial Project ID: 432300-1-52-01**

Changes are coming soon to the Pineda Causeway/State Road 404. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting pilot projects, statewide, to allow bicyclists to use specific sections of select, limited access facilities. Pineda Causeway is one of the sites selected.



As part of the pilot project, the guard railing on the Pineda Causeway is being retrofitted—making it higher, the roadway restriped, and drainage inlets replaced. **Green** stripes (above) are being used on the roadway to alert bicyclists and motorists that cyclists are crossing through areas of vehicular traffic. Grated inlets are being replaced with those that have smaller openings, to lower the risk of bike tires slipping in.

The addition of bicycle lanes will not affect the lane width or access for vehicular users on the roadway, nor is any road widening anticipated at this time. No additional right of way is needed. The speed limit will remain the same.

Bicycle lanes are planned for use in March of 2013. The project cost is estimated at \$862,000 and is covered by state transportation funds.

Table 1: Project Schedule

Design Begin	May-2012
Design Complete	June-2012
Project Awarded to Contractor	September-2012
Facility Open to Bike Traffic	March-2013

For additional information concerning the project, please contact Jeremy Dilmore, the FDOT Project Manager at (386) 943-5544 or via email at: [Jeremy.Dilmore@dot.myflorida.com](mailto:Jeremy.Dilmore@dot.myflorida.com), or log onto [www.cflroads.com](http://www.cflroads.com).

- Program established by State Legislature under House Bill 599 in 2012.
- Permits bicyclists (not pedestrians) to travel on selected limited access facilities.
- Two (2) sites selected in Miami-Dade County: SR 856/William Lehman Causeway and I-195/Julia Tuttle Causeway.
- Improvements include signing and pavement markings, new crossings, bridge railing, and minor roadway widening.
- Facilities proposed to be open to bicycle traffic by March 2013.
- Study examining safety, operations, and demand will be conducted throughout the two (2) year period with a final report due in September 2015.
- Signing and pavement marking scheme will include shared lane markings (sharrows) along the SR 856 Frontage Roads, marked crossings at the on-/off-ramps, and marked bicycle lanes on the Causeway.
- Cyclists will be encouraged to utilize the Frontage Roads to enter/exit the Causeway in the City of Aventura. Cyclists will not be permitted to travel on the Causeway between the Frontage Road exit/entrance ramps and US 1/Biscayne Boulevard.
- Eastbound Cyclists will be encouraged to transfer to the sidewalk as they travel southbound on SR A1A/Ocean Boulevard in Sunny Isles Beach to NE 189th Street.
- For additional information, please contact Ken Jeffries, the District 6 Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, at 305-470-5445 or at [ken.jeffries@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:ken.jeffries@dot.state.fl.us).



Example of marked bicycle lane on a causeway.



Example of shared lane markings (sharrow) with "bikes may use full lane" signage.

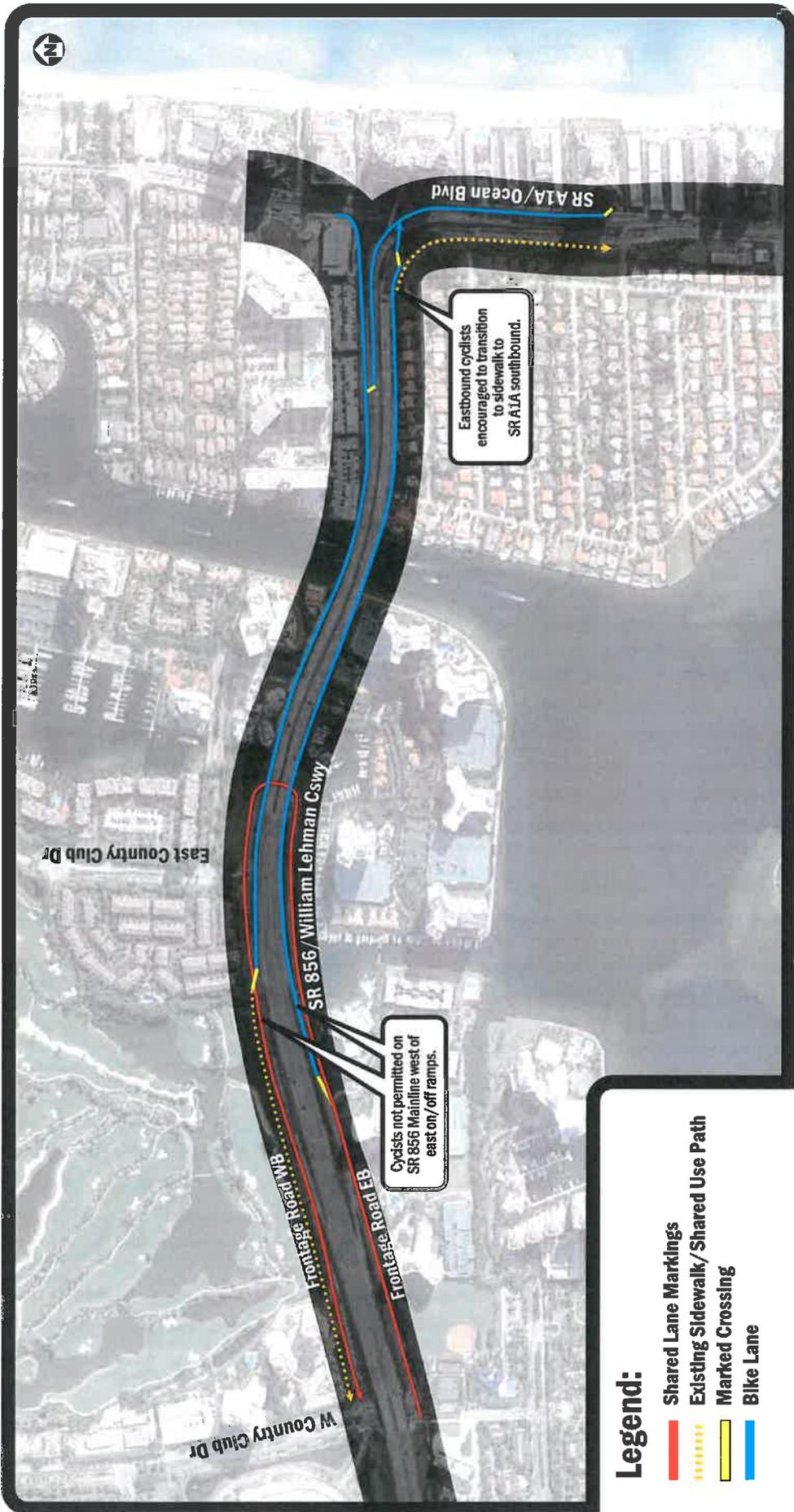




**Bicycles on**  
Limited Access Facilities  
PILOT PROGRAM



**SR 856/William Lehman Causeway**  
FROM WEST COUNTY CLUB DRIVE TO SR 856/ COLLINS AVENUE



**Legend:**

-  Shared Lane Markings
-  Existing Sidewalk/Shared Use Path
-  Marked Crossing
-  Bike Lane

# 30 Years MIAMITODAY

WEEK OF THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2012

WWW.MIAMITODAYNEWS.COM

\$4.00

INVESTIGATIONS, TURMOIL LEAVE MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER GRAND PLANS ON HOLD, pg. 2



## REGION'S TRANSPORTATION FUTURE:

The Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization Governing Board is teaming up with Broward and Palm Beach counties to spend \$900,000 for the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Florida. The three organizations each agreed to contribute \$300,000 toward the study for long-range transportation planning. The 22-member Miami-Dade organization is the lead agency in the project and is to

advertise and seek a study consultant and ultimately award the contract. The three organizations coordinate regional transportation planning through the Southeast Florida Transportation Council, which was created in 2005. The Miami-Dade group on July 19 approved the procurement process for the 2040 plan. Since the plan is funded equally among the three counties, Miami-Dade's local preference ordinance doesn't apply to the study contract.

**BIKERS SPOKEN FOR:** A state pilot project that allows bicyclists access to "limited access freeways" will include the Lehman Causeway between Aventura and Sunny Isles Beach, as recommended by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, according to a report to the Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization Governing Board. The Florida Department of Transportation [FDOT] District Six Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator's office reviewed the bike access. According to the report, modifications are being designed to reduce conflicts on and off the causeway. "More miles of bike facilities are being designed on FDOT roads," the report said. Bicycle magazine has ranked Miami 34th on its list of bike-friendly cities. A bike share program is coming to downtown Miami, and three new bike parking corrals will be installed in the Wynwood neighborhood, the report said. Northwest and Northeast 29th streets between Northwest Seventh and Northeast Second avenues are expected to be reduced from four to two lanes with bike lanes.

**NEW BOSS:** Marcum LLP, a national accounting and advisory firm, has named **Cecelia Garber** partner-in-charge of the Florida region. She will

## THE ACHIEVER



## Zoo's lures may snare hotel target

BY LOU ORTIZ

After nearly 14 years, ZooMiami is close to gaining a multi-million-dollar entertainment and lodging facility and handing south Miami-Dade County an economic boost, officials said Tuesday.

In September, the county will solicit proposals through an invitation to negotiate to develop a hotel and motel, or a hotel and campgrounds, along with retail stores, restaurants and a family entertainment center, officials said.

"We're marching ahead," said county Commissioner Dennis Moss. "We've got some interest that we think is promising at this time and we're going to pursue those individuals."

The drive to lure a major devel-



**PINELLAS TRAIL SECURITY TASK FORCE  
(PTSTF) MEETING AGENDA  
January 10, 2017 – 9:00 a.m.**  
Pinellas County Emergency Services Center, Room 130  
12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL 33774  
(Telephone: 727-582-2000)

**THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY**

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1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 11, 2016**
3. **PRESENTATION: STATEWIDE MULTIUSE TRAIL PROGRAM**
4. **LAW ENFORCEMENT AND AGENCY REPORTS**
  - Sheriff's Office
  - Belleair
  - Clearwater
  - Gulfport
  - Largo
  - Pinellas Park
  - St. Petersburg
  - Tarpon Springs
  - Animal Services
  - Public Safety Services
  - Pinellas County Risk Management
  - Volunteer Patrol Programs and Updates
5. **REPORT ON TRAIL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY**
6. **REPORT ON TRAIL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES**
7. **OTHER BUSINESS**
8. **ADJOURNMENT**
  - **NOTICE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT REPRESENTATIVES - IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING, PLEASE E-MAIL YOUR INCIDENT/OFFENSE REPORT TO SUSAN MILLER [smiller@forwardpinellas.org](mailto:smiller@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 – APRIL 11, 2017**

*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.*

**PINELLAS TRAIL SECURITY TASK FORCE**  
**MEETING Summary**  
**October 11, 2016**

The following is a summary of the October 11, 2016 Forward Pinellas - Pinellas Trail Security Task Force meeting, which was held in the Pinellas County Public Safety Services Department, Room 130, 12490 Ulmerton Road, Largo, Florida 33774. This Committee meets at least quarterly during the year.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Officer Ron Wolfson, Chairman	St. Petersburg Police Department & Volunteer Coordinator
Carol Gray	Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) Chief Ranger
James Abaka	Pinellas County Risk Management
Dep. Eric Gibson	Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Officer Mike Christian	St. Petersburg Police Department
Caroline Lanford	Pinellas County Planning Department
Dr. Jan Hirshfield	Pinellas Trails, Inc. /Volunteer Pinellas County Parks
Officer John Ulrich	Tarpon Springs Police Department
Casey Morse	Pinellas County Public Works
Cheryl Stacks	City of St. Petersburg Transportation and Parking
Lyle Fowler	PC Parks & Conservation Resources (PCR)
Craig Queen	Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration
Officer Michael Fritz	Belleair Police Department
Susan J. Miller	Forward Pinellas staff
Maria Kelly	Forward Pinellas staff

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chairman Ronald Wolfson, St. Petersburg Police Officer, called the meeting to order at 9 o'clock a.m. Self-introductions were provided.

**2. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY – JULY 12, 2016**

The summary from the July 12, 2016 meeting was approved as provided in the agenda packet.

**3. ELECTION OF THE 2017 CHAIRMAN**

Ron Wolfson was voted in as chair for the 2017 calendar year with a unanimous vote.

**4. PRESENTATION: PINELLAS TRAIL ACCESS AND AMENITIES**

Susan Miller, Forward Pinellas staff, gave a presentation on the Partnership to Improve Community Health (PICH) through which the City of St. Petersburg and Forward Pinellas received grant awards from the Florida Department of Health. These funds were used to focus on removal of barriers to Pinellas County parks and the Pinellas Trail by installing Wayfinding signs to local parks and bike repair stations and trail counters along the Pinellas Trail. Additional funds received aided in creating educational materials to promote healthier lifestyles and physical activity.

**5. QUARTERLY REPORT FROM PINELLAS TRAIL PARK RANGER**

Chief Ranger Carol Gray, Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR), reported that the air pump in Tarpon Springs has been repaired. At the end of July, the PCR worked with the Clearwater Police Department (CPD) to conduct cleaning service projects in conjunction with community efforts, to clean the trail from Marshall Street to Myrtle Avenue. Ms. Gray thanked the CPD for their service. Pinellas Trail staff readied the section from 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets in St. Petersburg for the Shine Mural Event and the mural looks great. Trail staff, with the assistance of law enforcement, addressed seven illegal dumping issues. Ms. Gray explained the trimming guideline information is available to the public to show what can and cannot be done with the foliage along the Trail. Trail staff, with the assistance of the St. Petersburg Police Department, cleaned up the underpass tunnel area just west of Tropicana Field. Trail Rangers have been directed to monitor this area. Auxiliary Rangers have had a more prominent presence on the Trail, utilizing the use of the carts provided and this should increase with the return of the snowbirds.

**6. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND AGENCY REPORTS****A. Sheriff's Office**

Pinellas County Sheriff Deputy Eric Gibson provided an update: in this most recent quarter, only a few ordinance violations with regards to trash occurred. Because of the cooler weather, bike patrol rides along the Trail have increased to monitor suspicious activity on the trails after dark.

**B. Belleair**

Police Officer Michael Fritz had nothing to report for the past quarter.

**C. Clearwater**

No report was provided from the Clearwater Police Department.

**D. Gulfport**

No report was provided from the Gulfport Police Department.

**E. Largo**

Largo Officer Julie Williams provided an update which was read by Chairman Wolfson: One citizen contact, one missing person, one narcotic drugs, two patrol checks, one patrol check for suspicious activity, one stolen property, three traffic complaints, one traffic crash, one traffic detail and four traffic stops. Total of 16 incidents. Chairman Wolfson stated that more than likely these were not specifically Trail related in so much as the Trail was a location reference point. A request was made to look into whether the tracking could be changed so that the Trail is not referenced unless it is a Trail incident.

**F. Pinellas Park**

No report was provided from Pinellas Park Police Department.

**G. St. Petersburg**

St. Petersburg Police Officer Mike Christian provided an update: 16 incidents in which 14 were officer initiated and no criminal activity. Chairman Wolfson provided additional information regarding the cameras and Eagle Eye. Eagle Eye is a partnership between the St. Petersburg police department and local businesses who use cameras. The local businesses register their camera with the police department and are able to provide camera footage of the area if an incident occurs and it was recorded.

**H. Tarpon Springs**

Officer John Ulrich had nothing to report for the past quarter.

**I. Animal Services**

No representative and no report was provided by Pinellas County Animal Services.

**J. Public Safety Services**

Craig Queen, Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration, attending his first meeting and provided an EMS incident report to the committee. There were 46 incidents reported, but unknown if the incidents occurred on the Trail or if the Trail was only referenced. Mr. Queen will check on the PTST number appearing correctly on the report to identify Trail related incidences.

**K. Pinellas County Risk Management**

Risk Management Specialist James Abaka reported a safety tour of the Trail was done for two days, a couple of weeks ago. Day one was a tour from Largo to Tarpon Springs and day two was Largo to Tropicana Field. Mr. Abaka reported that the Trail is in remarkably good shape. Cracks in the Trail, whether ecology/weather related or damaged have been notated and repairs will be scheduled.

**L. Volunteer Patrol Programs and Updates**

Chairman Wolfson provided a brief update on the St. Petersburg Police volunteers and that they are doing well using the new electric carts. Chief Ranger Gray reported there are 75 active volunteers with the Auxiliary Rangers using the carts to patrol the Trail.

**7. REPORT ON TRAIL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY**

Ms. Susan Miller, Forward Pinellas staff, reviewed the Trail Construction Activity report with the Security Task Force. The Duke Energy Trail between Sunset Point and the Enterprise overpass is now under construction, and Phase II, the gap from NE Coachman Road to Sunset Point Road is currently in the design/construction phase. The construction schedule to be determined for the Duke Energy Trail segment from Haines Bayshore Rd to Ulmerton Road. The Tri-County (Coast to Coast) Trail project that runs from Keystone Road at East Lake to Brooker Creek Preserve has been funded and is currently under construction with an estimated completion in 2017. Pinellas Trail Loop Connection at NE Coachman is currently under design and is expected to begin construction in 2017. The Bayway Trail South project suffered project delays to late 2016 due to permits, next meeting will be provided with updates. Roosevelt Blvd Trail is under construction scheduled to open in late spring 2017. Pinellas Trail Erosion Control/Repair/Maintenance: Elfers Spur is under construction. 49<sup>th</sup> Street has been completed. Orange Street overpass at Alternate 19, the design/bid phase is underway. Two Bridge connections for Pinellas Trail Loop, preliminary design phase schedule to be determined (PD & E study still a couple of years out). Construction scheduled for FY16/17 on Druid Trail Phase IV, FY 17/18 Northern Route /Michigan Trail and FY 18/19 Oldsmar Trail. The Tierra Verde Bridge Structure E, is scheduled for PE in FY 19/20. The Treasure Island Causeway Connection construction is underway and scheduled for completion by Jan '18. An overpass for the Courtney Causeway Trail at Bayshore Boulevard is unfunded, but appears on the transportation alternative list. FDOT will be adding this project the SUN Trail funding list.

**8. REPORT ON TRAIL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Cheryl Stacks with St. Petersburg Transportation and Parking expressed her gratitude to the PCR for cleaning up the underpass tunnel area just west of Tropicana Field and that it looks great.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Wolfson adjourned the meeting at 9:48 am. The next PTSTF meeting is scheduled for January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

**11. A.-D. Other Business**

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**A. Membership**

There are currently two vacancies on the BPAC membership list for the St. Petersburg Area (St. Petersburg, Gulfport/South Pasadena) geographical area.

**ATTACHMENT:** BPAC Membership List – February 2017

**ACTION:** None Required, Informational Item Only

**B. Correspondence, Publications, Articles of Interest**

*Florida Bike Tour News, January 19, 2017*

*Regional Trans Plans News, January 23, 2017*

*60 Minutes Hidden Motors ProCycling, CBS News, January 29, 2017*

*Dunedin Causeway Bridge News, January 30, 2017*

*Driving Safety Laws, CBS News January 31, 2017*

*Self-Driving Problem, January 31, 2017*

*Bike Share Launch St. Petersburg, February 24, 2017*

*NSC 2016 Traffic Deaths Increase, February 15, 2017*

*2017 CNU Florida Summit*

*Cyclists Drivers Florida Law News, February 20, 2017*

*Reported Traffic Fatalities 2017*

**C. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics**

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

**D. 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. Vacant (11/01/16)
2. Kimberly Cooper (10/13/99)
3. Vacant (01/01/17)

**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. Tom Ferraro (04/09/03)
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. Jim Parent (04/13/16)

**Technical Support**

1. County Traffic Department (Tom Washburn – representative, Gina Harvey and Casey Morse – alternates)
2. County Parks and Conservation Resources (Lyle Fowler – representative, Spencer Curtis – alternate)
3. PSTA Chris Cochran (Chris Cochran – representative; Heather Sobush and Kristina Tranel – alternates)
4. City of Clearwater (Felicia Donnelly - representative)
5. City of St. Petersburg (Lucas Cruse as representative and Cheryl Stacks as alternate)
6. City of Largo (Valerie Brookens as representative and Christine McLachlan as alternate)
7. Pinellas County School System (Tom McGinty - representative)
8. TBARTA (Anthony Matonti – representative; Michael Case 1<sup>st</sup> alternate and Ramond Chiramonte 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate)
9. Pinellas County Health Department (Megan Carmichael - representative)
10. CUTR (Julie Bond as representative and Richard Hartman as alternate)
11. Sunstar Paramedics (**Vacant** - representative, Community Outreach Coordinator)

**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**

(Chris Speece – FDOT)

\*Dates signify appointment

# GET A WORKOUT AND EXPLORE THE SCENIC SIDES OF FLORIDA ON A BIKE TOUR

by Sharon Kennedy Wynne, Times Staff Writer  
January 19, 2017

Hopping on your bike can be an invigorating way to see parts of Florida, engaging your legs while being easy on your joints. But Florida is a state with a terrible reputation for keeping cyclists safe.

A good compromise can be finding a scenic bike ride away from traffic. Studies have shown that a bike ride, versus a tour in the car through the countryside, can decrease stress, increase muscle tone and may even improve the immune system.

Now a company that specializes in guided bicycle trips around the world, Escape Adventures, has made its first foray into Florida, expanding opportunities for local cyclists. Escape Adventures has set up seven tours in some underappreciated gems around the state, like the Withlacoochee Trail, about an hour north of Tampa, and the hills of Clermont.

Taking a bicycle out while on vacation is a popular side trip out West or in the lovely countryside of New England. But Florida has consistently led the nation in bicycle deaths, so bicycle tours are rarely offered even with record tourism.

Two years ago, a National Complete Streets Coalition report named the Tampa Bay region one of the worst metropolitan areas for bicyclists and pedestrians. The same report dubbed Florida the most dangerous state for riding a bike.

The metropolitan areas are making baby steps, even earning kudos recently from *Bicycling* magazine for adding more bike lanes and trails in recent years.

Meanwhile, there are some jewels in Florida that Escape Adventures thinks are worth exploring on two wheels. Tours, designed to suit any speed, cater to both locals and tourists looking for a day trip.

Cyclists pedal new specialized road bikes with extra wide tires that offer smooth and stable rides. They are delivered in a tricked-out minivan and guided by Alan Snel, a former Tampa Tribune reporter who has been an avid bicyclist for more than 20 years.

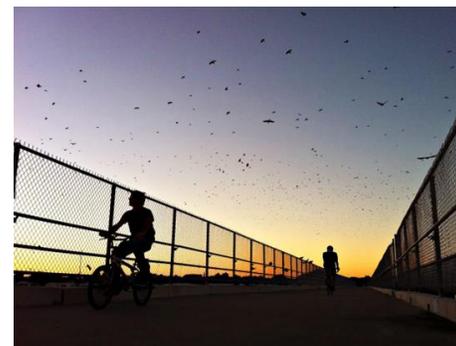
Snel was a longtime Tampa Bay bicycle advocate who co-founded the Seminole Heights Bicycle Club. He quit the Tribune in 2006 to create SWFBUD (South West Florida Bicycle United Dealers), a bicycling advocacy group.

After a three-year return to journalism in Las Vegas, he met Jared Fisher, who owns an international bike tour business and bike shop. Snel persuaded him to expand east, and Escape Adventures Florida was launched in early December.

"These are my favorite bike rides that I've cherry-picked from years in Florida," Snel said.

## The trips are:

- The "Alps of Florida," what Snel calls the rolling scenery outside Clermont northwest of Orlando. At its peak, Sugarloaf Mountain Road reaches 312 feet.
- The Withlacoochee Trail ride is a paved and shady trail, a 46-mile ribbon that is the longest rails-to-trails path in Florida. The mostly flat path begins in north Pasco County and ends near Dunnellon in Citrus County. "It has a beautiful tree canopy, and you have small towns like Inverness and Floral City every 10 miles or so to take a break," Snel said. "You have this beautiful canopied kind of wilderness scenery, and you don't have to worry about vehicular traffic."
- **You can take a 20-, 40- or 60-mile trip on the Pinellas Trail. One of the most scenic stretches of this trail is the quarter-mile-long Cross Bayou Bridge that spans Boca Ciega Bay.**
- The Vero Beach A1A ocean ride pedals along the Atlantic Ocean to the Sebastian Inlet bridge that offers a perch for spectacular views of the ocean and the Indian River Lagoon.
- The Ormond Loop offers 25 paved miles about 90 minutes northeast of Orlando pedaling through a tunnel of oak and swamp maple tree foliage.
- Lake Okeechobee puts riders on a paved trail atop a 30-foot earthen berm that encircles one of America's biggest freshwater lakes.
- The Jungle Trail is a hard-packed dirt road that runs along the Indian River Lagoon north of Vero Beach, about two hours north of Miami, and leads to the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, the nation's first national wildlife refuge featuring stunning bird life.



When Scott Sofferman was visiting his sister in Boca Raton in December, the retired veterinary surgeon and cycling enthusiast booked Escape Adventures for its tour of A1A.

"I've ridden all over Europe and California, but I do know Florida has that dangerous reputation," Sofferman said. "I didn't have that much time and I wanted a relaxing ride."

Sofferman said he liked that Snel had a local's eye for knowing the less-traveled but scenic spots.

"I think people are surprised to find such beautiful rides here," Snel said. "The people who are in charge of promoting tourism in Florida really need to show off that bicycling element."

Contact Sharon Kennedy Wynne at [swynne@tampabay.com](mailto:swynne@tampabay.com). Follow @SharonKWn.

### **Bike tours in Florida**

*Escape Adventures: With seven tours around the state, tours run approximately five hours for \$189.99 per person. They include transportation, specialized bike, helmet, water and tour guide. (702) 596-2953; [info@escapeadventures.com](mailto:info@escapeadventures.com); [escapeadventures.com](http://escapeadventures.com).*

*Sunday Bicycle Rides: It's free to meet up with this group that plans bicycle rides every Sunday in scenic spots all over the Tampa Bay area, from Davis Islands to downtown St. Petersburg to sprawling parks. This week there's a 25-mile ride through Pasco's scenic Starkey Park in Trinity. Meet at 8 a.m. at Havana Dreamers, 3104 Town Ave., Trinity, then ride the Wilderness Trail through Starkey Park to the Suncoast Parkway. The ride is free and helmets are required. (813) 236-8119. For a list of upcoming Sunday rides, go to [tampabaysundaybicycle.blogspot.com](http://tampabaysundaybicycle.blogspot.com).*

*Doo's Amazing Tours: The sightseeing company has a bicycle tour of Boyd Hill Nature Preserve along Lake Maggiore in south St. Petersburg. Tours are \$40 per person and include a tour guide (if desired), transportation if needed, a bike, helmet and admission to the preserve. Tours take about three hours and are offered between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. (727) 642-5133; [doosamazingtours.com](http://doosamazingtours.com).*

*Tampa by Bike: Guided tours of Tampa's Riverwalk and scenic neighborhoods (\$41.95) and a Brew Loop tour (\$49.95) with stops at three of Tampa's local craft breweries. Both start at Channelside Bay Plaza and take about three hours. (813) 358-4087; [info@tampabybike.com](mailto:info@tampabybike.com); [tampabybike.com](http://tampabybike.com).*

*Bike Florida: A nonprofit formed in 1994 to promote bicycle tourism. Its main fundraiser is a weeklong bicycle touring adventure every spring. It costs \$200 to \$650 at [bikeflorida.org](http://bikeflorida.org).*

*Florida tour calendar: The Florida Bicycle Association posts monthly calendars of rides sponsored by bicycling organizations at [floridabicycle.org](http://floridabicycle.org).*

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Tampa Bay Times

# OFFICIALS TAKING CLOSER LOOK AT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

by Suzette Porter, Tampa Bay Newspapers  
January 23, 2017

**CLEARWATER** – Pinellas County Commissioners spent part of the first meeting of 2017 listening to presentations about the future of transportation in Tampa Bay.

Katharine Eagan, CEO of Hillsborough Area Regional Transit, talked about a planning effort that begins this year by the Transit Coalition, made up of HART, Pasco County Public Transportation and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, with guidance provided by the Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group.

She said the effort was a Florida Department of Transportation initiative that would include a multi-county view of past studies, as well as modern alternatives, such as ride sharing and autonomous vehicles.

"It's not just about buses, it's anytime you're not driving yourself," she said. "Let's be beyond the bus when we talk about transit. We've been studying transit for 20 years."

Work to create the plan is divided into two years – the first year described as a technical "quiet period" and a second year of consensus building or the "loud period." Information for the public will be posted on a website so people can see what is happening from the beginning, she said. But, during the "loud period," all means of communication will be utilized including social media and community meetings.

"It's good to engage the public before making important decisions," Commission Dave Eggers said.

The goal is to come up with three priority projects supported by all parties that will meet Federal Transit Administration's requirements for capital and/or operations funding. The goal is to complete work on the plan by September 2018. The plan will include coming up with a consensus about who will build the projects, who will run them and how they will be paid for. Eagan said the purpose of the evaluation plan was to determine the most competitive projects for federal funding.

Commission Chair Janet Long said a lot of talk was going on about merging local Metropolitan Planning Organizations so the region could "come together as one voice."

Rick Homans, president and CEO of Tampa Bay Partnership, said his organization was founded in 1994 as a regional platform for economic development. The goal is "One vision. One Voice. One Region."

He listed four major issues that "must be addressed on a regional level to achieve real results." Those issues include transportation and infrastructure; workforce and education; and brand and marketing.

He pointed out that local interests, such as existing county and municipal structures could "create a barrier to progress." He said regional leaders could address these issues, adding, "Communities are most effective when the region's most powerful and influential leaders are personally engaged and involved."

He also listed five common success factors: CEO leadership, private funding, public sector engagement, philanthropic alignment and community benchmarking, which involves monitoring and measurement of progress towards shared community goals.

He advocates use of a transportation working group that "shapes, supports and advances a regional transportation vision and public policy agenda."

The top transportation issues he listed include rideshare, transportation planning, transit operations and Tampa Bay Express, which is a "system of express toll lanes that will be built as an addition to existing interstate routes. These new lanes give drivers a choice of paying a toll in order to enjoy a better commute," according to information found at [www.tampabayexpress.com](http://www.tampabayexpress.com).

Homans said with a "regional mindset, issues were easier to solve."

Commissioner Ken Welch asked which regions would come together to form a partnership area. Homans replied that decision would be something to make going forward. He said it made sense to include Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas and to consider contiguous counties such as Citrus and Sarasota.

Eggers said he concurred with that thinking but made it clear that input from local sources was critical to a regional approach.

Long said it made sense to use Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas as the "core" and then perhaps offer an incentive for other counties to join versus looking at a "whole big area."

"We need to go through the process and make a decision," Homans said. "But Janet's (Long) thinking is supported."

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# 60 MINUTES INVESTIGATES HIDDEN MOTORS AND PRO CYCLING



Bill Whitaker investigates whether pro cyclists have used secret bike motors to win races -- like the Tour de France -- in a sport notorious for its culture of cheating



HIDDEN MOTORS -- THE NEXT BIG CHEAT IN CYCLING?

CORRESPONDENT Bill Whitaker  
January 29, 2017



Engineer Istvan "Stefano" Varjas and 60 Minutes correspondent Bill Whitaker CBS NEWS

The sport of cycling is notorious for its culture of cheating—made most famous by the rise and fall of Lance Armstrong and his use of performance-enhancing drugs. Now when cycling hopes to be cleansed of the dopers there's a surprising new twist—riders enhancing the bike's performance. Some professional racers aren't putting steroids and blood boosters in their veins they're hiding motors in their bike frames. We followed a lead to Budapest, Hungary, and met an engineer who said he built the first secret bike motor back in 1998. And he told us motors have been used in the Tour de France. Our story tonight is not about the latest drugs the riders are using to cheat...it's all about enhancing the bike.

Bill Whitaker: Where is the motor in here?

Stefano Varjas: It's in here.

In a bike shop in Budapest, Hungary, we met Istvan Varjas. Stefano, as he's known, is a former cyclist, a businessman and a scientist. His most important invention he placed inside this bike. The frame is fitted with a small motor he designed. Add to it a lithium battery that powers it and a secret button that he installed.

Stefano Varjas: This is first speed.

Bill Whitaker: Uh. Huh.

Stefano Varjas: Try to keep the pace.

Bill Whitaker: Wow!

The sound is mostly the chain and the wheels. He said you can't hear it on the road and all of his motor designs use brushless motors and military-grade metal alloys.

Bill Whitaker: And how does this work?

This is now the latest version of his hidden motor design.

Bill Whitaker: Unbelievable...

It can be connected to a heart rate monitor by remote control. When a riders heart beat gets too high it sends a signal for the motor to kick in.

We took his hidden motors for some test rides up in the hills above Budapest.

Bill Whitaker: This is like I'm on flat ground.

It was hard to believe it's real until I put my feet on the pedals. Harder to believe when I took them off the pedals...

Bill Whitaker: "Hello."

And still beat the local talent. As you can tell it's not like a moped. There's no exhaust pipe or revving engine noise. It's designed to give a short but powerful boost to the rider's own effort.

Bill Whitaker: So this is a lower gear or a higher gear?

Stefano Varjas sells complete motorized bikes to wealthy recreational riders for about \$20,000. But we went to Budapest to find out who else might have bought a silent, hidden motor for a racing bike.

Bill Whitaker: Do you know, are professionals using bikes like these on a professional tour?

Stefano Varjas: This one, no. This on --

Bill Whitaker: But bikes with motors?

Stefano Varjas: Yes. I know-- I know this.

Bill Whitaker: They are?

Stefano Varjas: They use, yes.

Suspicions of hidden motors are fueled by videos of riders crashing in races. This bike seems to move by itself without the rider.

And the first time anyone suspected they were looking at a motor was in 2010 when a famed Swiss racer sped ahead of the pack at unnatural speeds.

These riders all denied they were using motors and no one had ever been caught until last year. Race officials suspended this Belgian rider after they found a motor inside her spare bike.

Jean-Pierre Verdy is the former testing director for the French Anti-Doping Agency who investigated doping in the Tour de France for 20 years.

Bill Whitaker: Have there been motors used in the Tour de France?

Jean-Pierre Verdy: Yes, of course. It's been the last three to four years when I was told about the use of the motors. And in 2014, they told me there are motors. And they told me, there's a problem. By 2015, everyone was complaining and I said, something's got to be done.

Verdy said he's been disturbed by how fast some riders are going up the mountains. As a doping investigator, he relied for years on informants among the team managers and racers in the peloton, the word for the pack of riders. These people told Jean-Pierre Verdy that about 12 racers used motors in the 2015 Tour de France.

Bill Whitaker: The bikers who use motors, what do you think of them and what they're doing to cycling?

Jean-Pierre Verdy: They're hurting their sport. But human nature is like that. Man has always tried to find that magic potion.

He now thinks that magic potion is a motor like the one designed by Stefano Varjas.

Bill Whitaker: Are you selling your motors to pro peloton now?

Stefano Varjas: Never, ever.

Bill Whitaker: Never, ever?

Stefano Varjas: Never, ever. But I don't know, if a grandfather came and buy a bike and after it's go to finishing his grandson who is racing, it's not my problem.

Bill Whitaker: It sounds like plausible deniability, which means my fingerprints aren't on this when it ends up in the bike of a professional. I just sold it to a client. What the client did with it--

Stefano Varjas: Is their problem.

Bill Whitaker: --I don't know--

Stefano Varjas: It's not my problem.

Bill Whitaker: So if someone came to you and said directly, "I wanna use your invention to cheat. I'll pay you a lot of money for it," would you sell it to them?

Stefano Varjas: If the money is big, why not?

He said he got his first big money in 1998 when a friend saw his hidden motor prototype and thought he could sell it to a professional racer.

Bill Whitaker: So your friend said, "With all this doping going on, you're-- you're crazy not to try to sell your invention--"

Stefano Varjas: Exactly. And--

Bill Whitaker: "--to these professional--"

Stefano Varjas: He proposed me--

Bill Whitaker: "--racers"?

Stefano Varjas: He proposed me, "Give me this bike and I fix it up, your life." And it's happened.

He told us his friend found a buyer in 1998 and Stefano swears he has no idea who it was. He gave us this bank record that shows that he had about \$2 million at the time. We also know that he spent time in jail for not paying a substantial tax bill in Hungary. He said whoever paid him all that money wanted an exclusive deal—he couldn't work on the motor, sell it or talk about it for 10 years.

Bill Whitaker: And you were OK with that?

Stefano Varjas: For 10 years. \$2 millions-- if you are in Hungary, if you live in Hungary, if you-- they offer you \$2 million to don't do nothing—

Bill Whitaker: You couldn't refuse it?

Stefano Varjas: Can you refuse it? I don't think.

Bill Whitaker: So you believe that hidden motors have been used by professional cyclists since as far back as 1998?

Stefano Varjas: I think, yes.

In France, where cycling is a religion, the newspaper Le Monde said this past December that the timeline of Stefano's story might implicate Lance Armstrong. Armstrong won his first of seven Tour de France victories in 1999, just a year after Stefano Varjas' said he sold his first motor. Armstrong denied to the paper ever meeting Stefano in person or putting a motor in his bike.

We asked Armstrong too through his lawyer and he denied ever using a motor and declined an interview.

We contacted Armstrong's former teammate Tyler Hamilton who has admitted to being part of all the chemical doping by members of the U.S. Postal team. And Tyler told us he never knew of any motors on the team back then.

In order to demonstrate the motors existed as far back as 1998, Stefano Varjas suggested to us that we find a carbon fiber 1999 U.S. Postal Service team bike, the same bike the U.S. Postal team used in the 1999 Tour de France. We bought this bike off the Internet and he installed a motor based on his first design into the bike. He charged us \$12,000, saying that covered his costs for the parts and labor.

We then asked Hamilton to test out the bike.

Bill Whitaker: You could feel the difference?

Tyler Hamilton: Oh yeah, oh, yeah. It's not super obvious. You know, you-- all of a sudden, you're just like, "Ah."

Bill Whitaker: It seems easier?

Tyler Hamilton: It feels a little bit smoother, yeah. Yeah.

Bill Whitaker: So you could see how somebody could get away with it?

Tyler Hamilton: I could see how teams are doing it. Yeah. I could.

The motor gives a limited boost of power for about 20 minutes. Tyler Hamilton said that much motorized assistance during a race on a mountain road could be a game changer for a professional rider.

Bill Whitaker: What kind of benefit could this motor give a cyclist?

Tyler Hamilton: That's the difference between winning and losing for sure. For sure.

"I guess we shoulda known this was coming, you know? 'Cause, I mean, there's more pressure in today's cycling world than ever to win."

Tyler Hamilton

Few riders know that better than Tyler Hamilton. When he spoke to 60 Minutes in 2011, he was one of the first to talk openly about chemical doping in the sport. He said riders have always looked for ways to stay ahead of the authorities.

Tyler Hamilton: They'd find-- you know, for a while, they didn't have an EPO test. EPO increases your red blood cell production. When the new tests came out, you'd figure out new ways around them.

Tyler Hamilton: I guess we shoulda known this was coming, you know? 'Cause, I mean, there's more pressure in today's cycling world than ever to win.

During this car ride in Hungary with Stefano Varjas we listened as he talked on the phone with one of his clients about delivering some new motorized bikes. He said he was speaking to this man, Dr. Michele Ferrari. Ferrari is the man behind the doping programs of Lance Armstrong and other top cyclists. He has been banned from the sport of cycling.

Still Stefano Varjas told us that Ferrari bought bikes with hidden motors in the past three years. We spoke to Dr. Ferrari by phone and he denied buying motorized bikes from Stefano but said he has tested one.

Three-time Tour de France winner Greg LeMond and his wife Kathy first learned about hidden motors in 2014 when Greg met Stefano Varjas in Paris and took a test ride. Greg was outspoken about chemical doping and now has the same level of concern about the motors.

Greg LeMond: I've watched-- last couple years-- and I'm going I know the motor's still in the sport and--

Bill Whitaker: You know it is still in the sport?



Former U.S. Postal Service team cyclist  
Tyler Hamilton CBS NEWS



Three-time Tour de France winner  
Greg LeMond and his wife,  
Kathy CBS NEWS

Greg LeMond: Yeah. Yeah. There's always a few bad apples and-- because it's a lotta money.

He is so concerned about it that while working as a broadcaster at the Tour de France he and his wife worked secretly with the French police investigating the motors. His best source it turns out was Stefano Varjas.

Kathy LeMond: I asked Stefano if he would please come and talk to the French police.

Bill Whitaker: Did he? Is he cooperating with the police?

Kathy LeMond: Completely.

Stefano said he told the French police that just before the 2015 Tour de France he again sold motorized bikes to an unknown client through a middleman. He said he was directed to deliver the bikes to a locked storage room in the town of Beaulieu Sur Mer, France.

Stefano Varjas told us that in addition to the motors in the bike frames, he's designed a motor that can be hidden inside the hub of the back wheel seen here in a video he gave us.

Kathy LeMond: Stefano had said, "Weigh the wheels. You'll find the wheels. The wheels are in the peloton."

According to Varjas the enhanced wheels weigh about 800 grams—or 1.7 pounds more than normal wheels.

Bill Whitaker: You could detect it by weight?

Greg LeMond: Yeah. Cycling weight is everything. Your body, your bike. If your bike weighs a kilo more, you would never race on it.

"This is curable. This is fixable. I don't trust it until they figure out how to take the motor out. I won't trust any victories of the Tour de France." Greg LeMond

In the 2015 Tour de France, bikes in the peloton were weighed before one of the time trial stages. French authorities told us the British Team Sky was the only team with bikes heavier than the rest—each bike weighed about 800 grams more. A spokesman for Team Sky said that during a time trial stage bikes might be heavier to allow for better aerodynamic performance. He said the team has never used mechanical assistance and that the bikes were checked and cleared by the sports governing body.

A heavy bike doesn't prove anything on its own but to Greg LeMond the weight difference should have set off alarm bells. In this case, sources told us, the sport's governing body would not allow French investigators to remove the Team Sky wheels and weigh them separately to determine if the wheels were enhanced. LeMond said not enough is being done by the International Cycling Union to prevent cheating with motors.

Greg LeMond: This is curable. This is fixable. I don't trust it until they figure out how to take the motor out. I won't trust any victories of the Tour de France.

*The script is from "Enhancing the Bike," which aired on Jan. 29, 2017. Bill Whitaker is the correspondent. Michael Rey and Oriana Zill de Granados, producers.*

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## SEA LEVEL RISE ADDED TO SCOPE OF DUNEDIN BRIDGE PROJECT

*Pinellas commissioners also consider no-build approach for immediate future*

by Suzette Porter, Tampa Bay Newspapers  
January 30, 2017

**CLEARWATER** – As Pinellas County Commissioners continue to weigh pros and cons of alternatives for a new Dunedin Causeway Bridge, the issue of sea level rise has now been added to the mix.

The approximately 2 mile-long project runs from Honeymoon Island State Park, west of Royal Steward Arms Parkway east to the intersection of Gary Place/Gary Circle on Ward Island.

Commissioners agreed unanimously Jan. 24 to spend another \$40,000 in consultant fees to try to determine the impact of sea level rise on a new bridge with a projected 75-year lifespan.

Currently, three choices are on the table for the main bridge – a high level, non-movable bridge; a mid-level, movable bridge; and a low-level, movable bridge. Cost is a big factor. The estimate to construct a high-level bridge is \$60 million with an annual operations and maintenance budget of \$25,000. Cost for a mid-level bridge is \$81 million and the estimate for the low-level alternative is \$77 million. The annual operations and maintenance budget for the mid-level and low-level alternatives is \$205,000.

Construction of the high-level bridge would require the most land and would have the greatest effect on recreational space (Rotary Park). The low-level requires less land and would have a lesser negative effect on current recreational space around the bridge.

The public and the city of Dunedin favor a mid-level bridge. County staff prefers the high-level alternative due to the reduced cost of operations and maintenance. However, the high-level would have a greater effect on recreational opportunities and bigger environmental impact, which could affect the amount of federal funding available for the project.

Historically, federal funding has paid for up to 80 percent of bridge projects like the Dunedin Causeway; however, staff now says that funding could be limited to only \$3.75 million. However, that could change between now and when construction could start, an estimated four to eight years in the future.

Ken Jacobs, Traffic Division manager, told the commission there was another alternative that had not been discussed much and that was a no-build scenario. Staff believes that it is possible to extend the life of the 53-year-old structure, which was rated to last 50 years. He said the no-build had been least favorable with the public because people see the need for the replacement.

Jacobs said the commission could decide to spend \$8 million to help extend the life of the bridge by 10-15 years – barring any major equipment failure. An expenditure of \$26 million for a major renovation could extend the life for 25 years.

He explained that the major renovation would include leaving the existing structure in place and replacing the existing equipment that controls the opening and closing of the bridge. Work would be done on the piers and underside of the bridge to maintain structural integrity.

Funds to pay for the bridgework with any of the alternatives would come from a combination of federal, state and Penny for Pinellas dollars. Operating and maintenance costs would be paid for from gas tax funds and general revenue dollars.

Jacobs said the lifespan of a new bridge would be 75 years, which brought up the subject of possible impact of sea level rise and staff's request to increase the consultant's scope of work to consider that factor for a cost of an additional \$40,000. Jacobs said the extra work should not delay the completion of the PD&E study, which must be done to qualify for any federal funding.

The initial contract for work with the consultant for the study was for \$1.3 million. Approximately \$300,000 is left on that contract.



Photo courtesy of PINELLAS COUNTYThe public prefers a mid-level Florida Vernacular style bridge, similar to the one in this photo, to replace the aging main bridge on the Dunedin Causeway.

County Administrator Mark Woodard said the consultants would consider the viability of Honeymoon Island and the approaches to the bridge in relation to possible sea level rise scenarios. He pointed out that it would be “no good” if the approaches were under water or if there were no destination (Honeymoon Island) at the end of the bridge.

He said it would likely be 10 years before bridge construction would begin plus another 75 years of the life of the bridge.

“I don’t know what sea level rise will be, but the best science shows there will be impacts,” he said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has provided some guidance with four potential scenarios projected out to the year 2100. The low estimate is for a sea level rise of .93 feet, 1.97 feet for intermediate low, 4.26 feet for intermediate high, and 6.89 feet is the high estimate.

At 7 feet, there would be significant impact to Honeymoon Island and the bridge approaches, as well as the Dunedin shoreline, Woodard said.

Jacobs said the effect of sea level rise could mean that the bridge would need a larger footprint than is in the current plans for the high-level alternative, which has the largest footprint now.

Staff will continue to work with the consultant to finish the PD&E study with the inclusion of consideration of sea level rise. The commission still needs to make a decision on the recommended alternative: high-level, mid-level or low-level bridge. Staff will bring back an amended contract with the consultant for approval within 30 days.

Meanwhile, staff also will keep an eye on funding trends at the state and federal level.

“With less state and federal funding, there will be more reliance on Penny money,” Woodard said.

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# ARE POOR DRIVING SAFETY LAWS RESPONSIBLE FOR SURGE IN TRAFFIC DEATHS?

by Kris Van Cleave, CBS News Correspondent  
January 31, 2017



Play VIDEO

Rise in traffic deaths becomes an "immediate crisis"

A new study shows a lack of driving safety laws could help explain the surging number of people killed in accidents.

The report ranks driving safety laws nationwide. It found Rhode Island, Delaware, Washington state, Washington D.C., Louisiana and Oregon as the best states for driving -- with Rhode Island at the top of that list. South Dakota, Wyoming, Arizona, Missouri and Montana are accused of having the [worst record](#).

In Virginia -- one of the states the group says needs to do more to make the roads safe -- seat belt use is required, but you can't be pulled over for not buckling up. According to the new report, the measure would save lives. This report comes out as regulators are trying to understand why traffic deaths are surging nationwide, reports CBS News correspondent Kris Van Cleave.

James Shaffer's wife, Emma, and their 12-year-old daughter were driving in Denton, Texas last April when they were struck head on by a 24-year-old mother who had her young daughter in the car. Police believe she was texting. All four died in the crash.

"Our lives have been drastically changed and shattered," James Shaffer said.

Shaffer said he will never forget telling his young son the news.

"Sitting him down and having to explain to him that his mother and sister were gone and they died was probably the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life," Shaffer said.

Texas state law only bans drivers under 18 from texting. An all-driver texting ban is among 15 safety laws the new report says every state should have. The measures range from primary enforcement of seat belts to graduated driver licenses for teens, and ignition locks for DUI offenders.



Play VIDEO

New guidelines released to restrict drivers from using their phones

The report gave low marks to 17 states for being "dangerously behind" in adopting "optimal laws." South Dakota scored at the bottom, with just two of the 15.

The Mount Rushmore State governor's office blamed the legislature.

"Several states didn't do very well on this report card -- is there a resistance to traffic safety laws?" Van Cleave asked.

"Yes, and we need to change that," said Jackie Gillan, president of the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.

The annual roadmap report has resulted in nearly 235 state laws being passed over the last 14 years, but many measures stalled last year.

"I think there's resistance in state legislatures to tell people to buckle up or put their kids in a proper child restraint and we need to change that," Gillan said.

Earlier this month, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimated nearly 28,000 people died in crashes during the first nine months of 2016. That number is up about eight percent from 2015, which saw the biggest rise in deaths in 50 years.

Since the April crash, Shaffer helped convince the city of Denton to pass a hands-free law and is working on a similar statewide measure.

"It's astonishing how many people, especially young people, we're losing due to something as simple as distracted driving," Shaffer said.

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety argue there's also an economic cost that comes with the crashes. According to the report, motor vehicle accidents cost about \$242 billion a year. That so-called "crash tax" boils down to nearly \$800 dollars per person in the U.S.

## THE SELF-DRIVING CAR'S BICYCLE PROBLEM

*In a perfect world, motorists and bicyclists would be able to share the road without anyone ending up under anyone else's tires. But we're not there yet. The hope, however, is that robotic cars, which are great at monitoring other cars, and getting better at noticing pedestrians, squirrels, and birds, will be able to identify and avoid the lightest, quietest, swerveiest vehicles on the road. Researchers are developing methods by which computer systems will train themselves to avoid collisions with bikes by spotting them quickly and predicting when riders will zig when they should zag.*



Photo: iStockphoto

by Peter Fairley  
January 31, 2017

Robotic cars are great at monitoring other cars, and they're getting better at noticing pedestrians, squirrels, and birds. The main challenge, though, is posed by the lightest, quietest, swerveiest vehicles on the road.

"Bicycles are probably the most difficult detection problem that autonomous vehicle systems face," says [UC Berkeley research engineer Steven Shladover](#).

[Nuno Vasconcelos](#), a visual computing expert at the University of California, San Diego, says bikes pose a complex detection problem because they are relatively small, fast and heterogenous. "A car is basically a big block of stuff. A bicycle has much less mass and also there can be more variation in appearance — there are more shapes and colors and people hang stuff on them."

That's why the detection rate for cars has outstripped that for bicycles in recent years. Most of the improvement has come from techniques whereby systems train themselves by studying thousands of images in which known objects are labeled. One reason for this is that most of the training has concentrated on images featuring cars, with far fewer bikes.

Consider the [Deep3DBox algorithm](#) presented recently by researchers at George Mason University and stealth-mode robotic taxi developer [Zoox](#), based in Menlo Park, Calif. On an industry-recognized benchmark test, which [challenges vision systems with 2D road images](#), Deep3DBox identifies 89 percent of cars. Sub-70-percent car-spotting scores prevailed just a few years ago.

Deep3DBox further excels at a tougher task: predicting which way vehicles are facing and inferring a 3D box around each object spotted on a 2D image. "Deep learning is typically used for just detecting pixel patterns. We figured out an effective way to use the same techniques to estimate geometrical quantities," explains Deep3DBox contributor [Jana Košecká](#), a computer scientist at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

However, when it comes to spotting and orienting bikes and bicyclists, performance drops significantly. Deep3DBox is among the best, yet it spots only 74 percent of bikes in the benchmarking test. And though it can orient over 88 percent of the cars in the test images, it scores just 59 percent for the bikes.

Košecká says commercial systems are delivering better results as developers gather massive proprietary datasets of road images with which to train their systems. And she says most demonstration vehicles augment their visual processing with laser-scanning (ie lidar) imagery and radar sensing, which help recognize bikes and their relative position even if they can't help determine their orientation.

Further strides, meanwhile, are coming via high-definition maps such as Israel-based [Mobileye's Road Experience Management system](#). These maps offer computer vision algorithms a head start in identifying bikes, which stand out as anomalies from pre-recorded street views. Ford Motor says "highly detailed 3D maps" are at the core of the 70 self-driving test cars that it plans to have driving on roads this year.

Put all of these elements together, and one can observe some pretty impressive results, such as the [bike spotting demonstrated last year by Google's vehicles. Waymo](#), Google's autonomous vehicle spinoff, [unveiled proprietary sensor technology](#) with further upgraded bike-recognition capabilities at this month's Detroit Auto Show.

Vasconcelos doubts that today's sensing and automation technology is good enough to replace human drivers, but he believes they can already help human drivers avoid accidents. Automated cyclist detection is seeing its first commercial applications in automated emergency braking systems (AEB) for conventional vehicles, which are expanding to respond to pedestrians and cyclists in addition to cars.

Volvo began offering [the first cyclist-aware AEB in 2013](#), crunching camera and radar data to predict potential collisions; it is rolling out similar tech for European buses this year. More automakers are expected to follow suit as European auto safety regulators begin scoring AEB systems for cyclist detection next year.

That said, AEB systems still suffer from a severe limitation that points to the next grand challenge that AV developers are struggling with: predicting where moving objects will go. Squeezing more value from cyclist-AEB systems will be an especially tall order, says Olaf Op den Camp, a senior consultant at the Dutch Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO). Op den Camp, who led the design of [Europe's cyclist-AEB benchmarking test](#), says that it's because cyclists movements are especially hard to predict.

Košecká agrees: "Bicycles are much less predictable than cars because it's easier for them to make sudden turns or jump out of nowhere."

That means it may be a while before cyclists escape the threat of human error, which contributes to 94 percent of traffic fatalities, according to U.S. regulators. "Everybody who bikes is excited about the promise of eliminating that," says Brian Wiedenmeier, executive director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. But he says it is right to wait for automation technology to mature.

In December, Wiedenmeier [warned that self-driving taxis deployed by Uber Technologies were violating California driving rules](#) designed to protect cyclists from cars and trucks crossing designated bike lanes. He applauded when California officials pulled the vehicles' registrations, citing [the ridesharing firm's refusal to secure state permits for them](#). (Uber is still testing its self-driving cars in Arizona and Pittsburgh, and it recently got permission to put some back on San Francisco streets strictly as mapping machines, provided that human drivers are at the wheel.)

Wiedenmeier says Uber's "rush to market" is the wrong way to go. As he puts it: "Like any new technology this needs to be tested very carefully."

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# ST. PETERSBURG LAUNCHES NEW BIKE SHARE PROGRAM



by Trevor Pettiford, Reporter  
February 04, 2017

**ST. PETERSBURG --** St. Petersburg officials have launched a new bike share program in an effort to get more people on two wheels.

Blue bike stations have been popping up throughout the city as a way to get visitors and residents to see the city from a different perspective.

"Our hope is that every area of the city, there are opportunities to get out of your car, get onto a bike, take advantage of bike share and really enjoy living the life of being a healthy St. Petersburg," said Mayor Rick Kriseman.



[Click here](#) for info on bike share program

There are 300 bikes located at more than a dozen stations around the city.

The stations are located every couple of blocks. For example, there is one on 24th and Central, and one on 27th and Central.

City leaders said the objective is to make them serve as sort of a thread, weaving their way in and out of different parts of the city.

That way, as an example, you can lock your bike at a station and jump on the ferry to Tampa, where the same bike share program picks up.

The bikes are even equipped with GPS tracking. And if there are any malfunctions, you can trade it out at the next station.

The city has invested \$1.5 million into the program, but Mayor Kriseman says that's a small price for the return local businesses could see from people pedaling from place to place.

Kriseman said, "It gives everyone an opportunity to get out of their car and to get onto a bike. It fits with our vision statement of being a city of opportunity where the sun shines on all."

Visitors Michael and Pasemans Brittingham are in town from Luxemburg and they plan to take in St. Pete on two wheels.

"Apparently you just put in your code and your PIN and you're good to go. We're gonna ride around town, check out the different murals. I think they call it shine St. Pete. We're gonna give ourselves a mural tour," the Brittingham's said.

That kind of pedal power could turn into a profit driver for any business along the way.

Rates to use the bike share is from \$8 an hour to monthly and annual plans.

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## 2016 TRAFFIC DEATHS JUMP TO HIGHEST LEVEL IN NEARLY A DECADE

by Joan Lowy, Associated Press  
February 15, 2017

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A jump in traffic fatalities last year pushed deaths on U.S. roads to their highest level in nearly a decade, erasing improvements made during the Great Recession and economic recovery, a leading safety organization said Wednesday.

Fatalities rose 6 percent in 2016, reaching an estimated 40,200 deaths compared to 37,757 deaths the previous year, according to the National Safety Council. The group gets its data from states. The last time there were more than 40,000 fatalities in a single year was in 2007, just before the economy tanked. There were 41,000 deaths that year.

The increase came as Americans drove more last year — a 3 percent increase in total miles. The council cited continued lower gasoline prices and an improving economy as key factors.

Following an increase in fatalities in 2015, the United States has had the sharpest two-year increase in traffic deaths in 53 years, the council said.

Americans have come to accept large numbers of traffic deaths as inevitable instead of than taking actions that would prevent them, said Deborah Hersman, the council's president.

"Motor vehicle fatality numbers have been ringing the alarm for two years," she said. "Unfortunately, we have been tone-deaf to the data and the carnage on our roadways. If we fail to take action, the death toll will continue to rise."

Jonathan Adkins, executive director of the Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents state highway safety offices, said state officials continue to point to three predominant factors in traffic deaths — "belts, booze and speed."

In the last three years, 13 states have raised speed limits on at least some portion of their interstate highways.

"Additionally, driver distraction and our society's addiction to electronic devices is likely playing a role in the increase in deaths," Adkins said.

The estimated annual mileage death rate last year was 1.25 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles, an increase of 3 percent from the 2015 rate.

Traffic deaths began dropping in 2008 and reached their lowest point in six decades in 2011 at 32,000 deaths. They fluctuated slightly over the next two years, but started climbing in the last quarter of 2014.

As the economy recovered, people not only began driving more, but they also increased more risky types of driving "like going out on the weekends or taking long trips on unfamiliar roads," said Adrian Lund, president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Teens, who have the highest fatal crash rates, are also back on the road after the recession when many of them couldn't afford to drive as much, he said.

The surge in fatalities comes as cars and trucks have more safety features than ever. Nearly all new cars and light trucks now have electronic stability control and rearview cameras, for example. Automakers are also beginning to equip more cars with sophisticated safety technology like adaptive cruise control, automatic emergency-braking and blind-spot monitoring that are designed to prevent crashes rather than merely make them survivable.

Other important safety advances are also on the horizon, including vehicle-to-vehicle communications that allow cars to wirelessly warn each other of their movements in time to avoid collisions and self-driving cars that hold the potential to eliminate human error, a factor in more than 90 percent of crashes.

The council's fatality estimates differ slightly from those of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The government counts only deaths that occur on public roads, while the council includes fatalities that occur in parking lots, driveways and private roads.

Last month, NHTSA reported that traffic deaths surged about 8 percent in the first nine months of 2016.



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## **TRAFFIC INBOX: CYCLISTS CONSIDERED DRIVERS UNDER FLORIDA LAW**

by Chuck Henson, Real Time Traffic Expert  
February 20, 2017

We all know that bike lanes help create a safe space for cyclists to ride with traffic.

But are they right for every road?

A Bay News 9 viewer asked Real Time Traffic Expert Chuck Henson to look at a busy Pinellas County roadway where it seems bikes may not be welcome.

- Data says more cyclist crashes occur on sidewalks
- Cyclists have 'rights and responsibilities' of other drivers
- [Have a Traffic Inbox question for Chuck? Click here](#)

The question was specifically about 66th Street North in St. Petersburg.

It's three lanes, plus turn lanes in each direction. It doesn't seem safe for bikes, even though there is a bike lane on both sides.

"Cyclists have the rights and responsibilities of any other vehicle," said Stephen Benson, a bike safety expert with the Florida Department of Transportation.

"They're considered to be a vehicle under Florida law, which means that they can operate out in the road unless it's a location where it specifically says otherwise, like the interstate, where it's obvious they shouldn't really be up there," Benson said.

Bike lanes are designed as safer spaces for those on two wheels, but would it be safer to ride on the sidewalk?

"They're considered to be a vehicle under Florida law, which means that they can operate out in the road unless it's a location where it specifically says otherwise, like the interstate, where it's obvious they shouldn't really be up there." - Stephen Benson, DOT

"When you actually look at the data, riding on the road and riding in the lane is a safe thing to do," Benson said.

"Most of the crashes that happen, happen when bikes that really should be riding in the road are trying to get from point A to point B, are riding on the sidewalk and they're acting like a pedestrian," he said.

Drivers can see bikes on the road or in the bike lane. They're not looking for bikes on the sidewalk.

"As long as you stay in the bicycle lane, I kind of keep to the right in the bicycle lane you know, and I've had no problem at all," said a cyclist who identified himself as Cowboy.

"I get to a light. I stop at a light, you know, and you go when you're supposed to go. There's no problem at all," he said.

Here's the bottom line according to Henson: Drivers, bikes are vehicles and have a right to the road. Cyclists, when in the road, using the bike lane is the safest place for you. But if you ride on the sidewalk, you must stop as any pedestrian at the crosswalks and wait for the signal to cross.

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CRASHES	DATAID	ROADWAY	LOCATION	DESC	DATE	FATAL
1	004F17	5TH AVE N	34TH ST N	MC	1/17/2017	1
1	005F17	113TH ST N	9000 BLOCK	MC	1/19/2017	1
1	008F17	COURT ST	CHESTNUT ST	MC	1/27/2017	1
1	010F17	SR688   WALSINGHAM RD	137TH ST	MC	1/31/2017	2
1	002F17	42ND AVE N	4TH ST N	PED	1/9/2017	1
1	003F17	49TH ST N	3500 BLOCK	PED	1/9/2017	1
1	009F17	US 19 HWY	S OF TAMPA RD	PED	1/25/2017	1
1	001F17	US19 HWY	ROYAL BLVD	VEH	1/4/2017	1
1	006F17	I-375	WB EXIT RAMP TO I-275	VEH	1/25/2017	1
1	007F17	SNELL ISLE BLVD NE	NB AT CURVE	VEH	1/25/2017	1

# PINELLAS COUNTY

## INITIAL REPORTING

of Traffic Fatalities  
thru February 1, 2017

**11 FATALITIES INCLUDING MEDICALS**

**11 FATALITIES EXCLUDING MEDICALS**

**10 CRASHES (fatal) INCLUDING MEDICALS**

**10 CRASHES (fatal) EXCLUDING MEDICALS**

**0 OTHER TRAFFIC RELATED FATALITIES BUT NO  
IMMINENT CRASH REPORT**

**3 AUTO-VEHICLE FATALITIES**

27.3% (medical crashes not included)

**3 AUTO-VEHICLE CRASHES (fatal)**

### VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

**5 MOTORCYCLE FATALITIES**

45.5% of all traffic fatalities

**4 MOTORCYCLE CRASHES (fatal)**

**0 BICYCLE FATALITIES**

0.0% of all traffic fatalities

**0 BICYCLE CRASHES (fatal)**

**3 PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES**

27.3% of all traffic fatalities (includes other small modes)

**3 PEDESTRIAN CRASHES (fatal)**

**8 VULNERABLE USER FATALITIES**

**7 VULNERABLE USER CRASHES (fatal)**

**72.7% Vulnerable/total fatalities**

(medical crashes not included)

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#### NOTE

Table not an official representation,  
based upon initial reporting,  
subject to change upon verification.

Forward Pinellas

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