

Completing the ▶

Pinellas Trail Loop



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Pinellas County MPO's adopted Trailways Plan includes a 75 mile trail loop that connects numerous neighborhoods with major employers, institutions of higher education and vocational training, public, private and charter schools, hospitals and many other community resources. A majority of this alternative transportation network is complete and as a result Pinellas County has reduced household transportation costs, improved accessibility, physical health and air quality. However, despite the popularity of the current Trail Loop, two gaps remain. The "North Gap" and the "South Gap" are two crucial breaks on the eastern side of the Loop and are in close proximity to significant commercial, educational and employment centers. Furthermore, these areas of eastern Pinellas County currently lack safe, accessible pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop will provide a much needed safe bicycle and pedestrian connection along the eastern side of Pinellas County, connecting high density residential and high intensity commercial areas, employment and educational centers to neighborhoods, many of which have significant low-income and minority populations. Once complete, the Loop network will provide a bicycle and pedestrian network that is unprecedented in Florida. This will enhance the current economic, health and safety benefits provided by the Loop and expand Pinellas County's multi-modal transportation network in a robust and sustainable manner.

Creates a reliable multi-modal network – improving the efficiency of the road network, while providing an option for movement of non-motorized travelers.

Improves economic mobility – bringing an estimated 380,000 residents and 260,000 jobs within one-half mile of the 75-mile, uninterrupted, non-motorized transportation facility. More than half of the county's population will live within one-mile of the completed Loop.

Provides economic opportunities – enhancing economic competitiveness by connecting residents with employment, commercial and recreational destinations, drawing tourists to the area, and attracting new businesses along and near the corridor.

Increases community transportation choices – benefiting low-income and minority neighborhoods with direct access to this multi-modal transportation facility and enhanced connections to transit, schools, commercial centers, employment and recreational facilities.

Avoids adverse environmental impacts on air quality – providing bicyclists and pedestrians with a reliable transportation alternative.

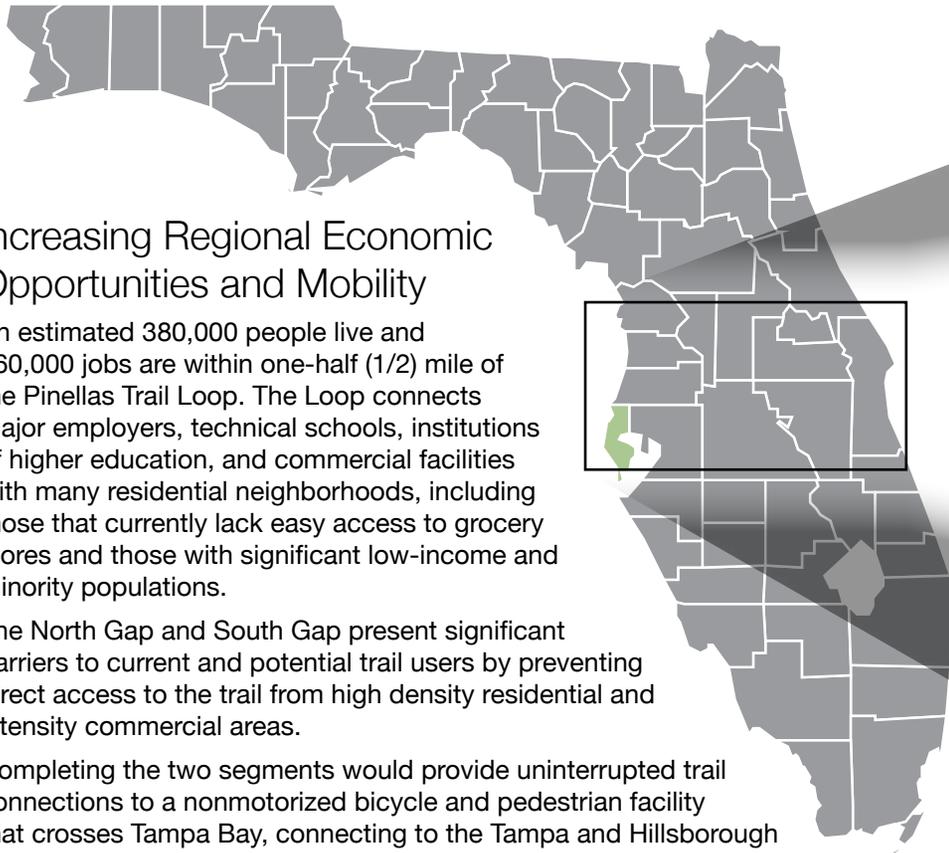


Fosters a safe, connected and accessible transportation system – through a 75-mile uninterrupted multi-modal transportation facility that connects to over 84 schools and 169 major employers (within one half mile).

Access to Safe Transportation Alternatives

Pinellas County is unique in the State of Florida. It is one of the smallest counties in the State and, at 3,309 persons per square mile, has densities unlike any other county in Florida (Broward, having 1,445 persons per square mile is the next most dense). Pinellas County experiences high levels of pedestrian and bicycle crashes, due largely to the current transportation network's reliance on the personal automobile to access nearby land uses. In 2015 alone, Pinellas County experienced 995 pedestrian and bicycle crashes. 35 of these were fatal (*Pinellas County MPO Crash Data Management System, 2015*).

Pinellas County has a legacy of roadways that fail to account for the safety of people on foot and on bicycle. The urgent need to act is compounded by projected demographic changes as well. The County's older population will grow rapidly as the "Baby-Boom" generation ages and the number of racial and ethnic minorities rises. These groups, along with children, are disproportionately represented in pedestrian deaths. The completion of the Pinellas Trail Loop will help drive down these statistics by taking automobiles off the road and providing a safe haven for pedestrian and bicycle travel.



Increasing Regional Economic Opportunities and Mobility

An estimated 380,000 people live and 260,000 jobs are within one-half (1/2) mile of the Pinellas Trail Loop. The Loop connects major employers, technical schools, institutions of higher education, and commercial facilities with many residential neighborhoods, including those that currently lack easy access to grocery stores and those with significant low-income and minority populations.

The North Gap and South Gap present significant barriers to current and potential trail users by preventing direct access to the trail from high density residential and intensity commercial areas.

Completing the two segments would provide uninterrupted trail connections to a nonmotorized bicycle and pedestrian facility that crosses Tampa Bay, connecting to the Tampa and Hillsborough County trail networks. In addition, the Pinellas Trail Loop will connect to the proposed Florida Coast to Coast Connector Trail, an uninterrupted trail facility that will traverse the entire width of the State of Florida and link St. Petersburg to Titusville, in Brevard County on the east coast of Florida.

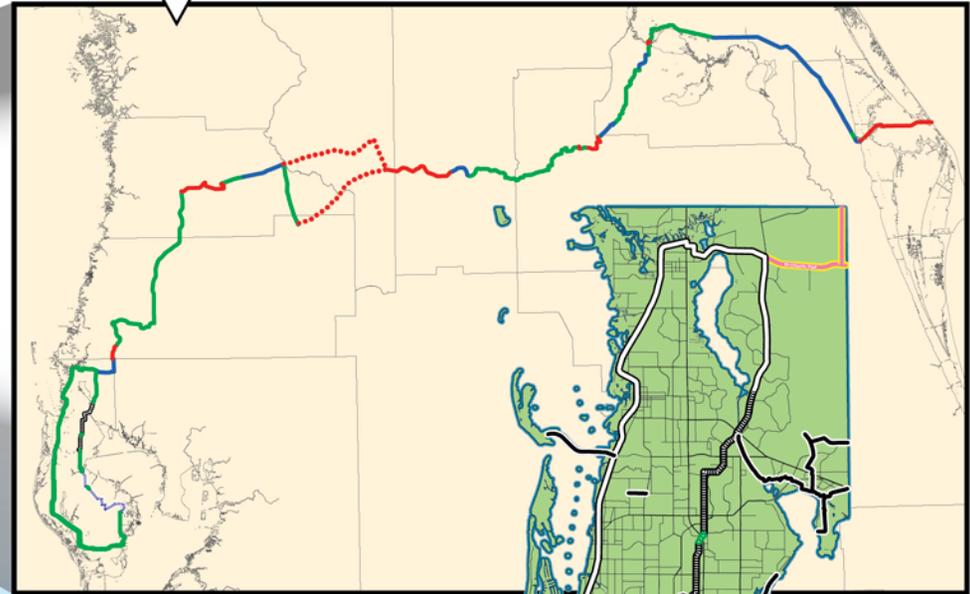
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Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop will finish a 75-mile multi-modal transportation facility that will safely accommodate alternative travel modes and enhance access to and from employment, retail services, and residential areas. This project is not only prudent, it is a much-needed regional transportation connection.

Florida Coast to Coast Connector Trail

- Existing Trail
- Programmed / Funded Segment
- Segment Gap
- Segment Gap, Alignment Undetermined



NEED for the Pinellas Trail Loop

Pinellas County, Florida

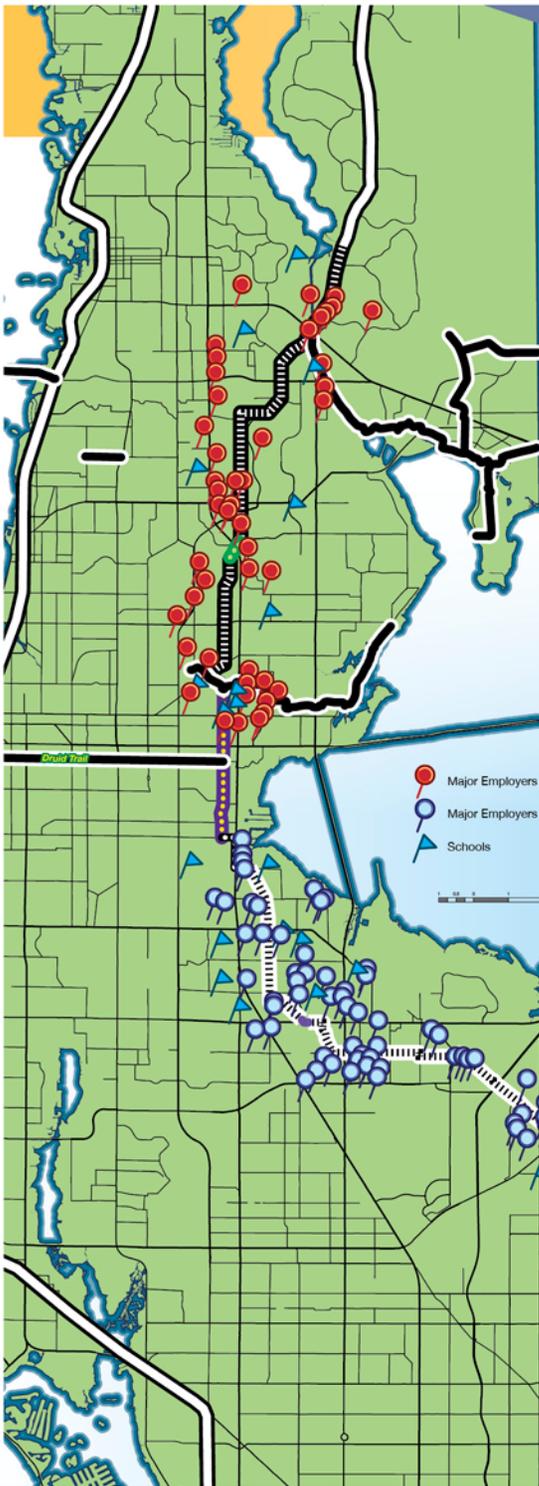
- ❑ Most densely populated County in the State
 - 3,270 persons/sq. mi.
- ❑ Over 95% built-out
- ❑ Constrained roadway network
- ❑ Demand for transportation alternatives



COMPLETING the Pinellas Trail Loop

- Closes 2 remaining gaps in 75-mile Pinellas Trail Loop
 - North Gap: ~ 7 miles
 - South Gap: ~ 9 miles
- 4 phase, design-build project
- Project ready
 - Design-build contract, simultaneous contractors (2014)
 - Complete by 2019
- Supported by all Pinellas County municipalities
- Categorical exclusion (NEPA) – eligible

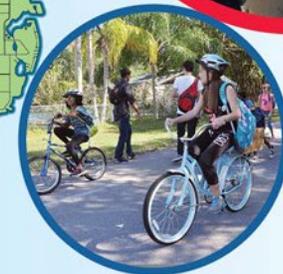
- Increasing transportation choices
- Improving economic mobility
- Within one-half mile of the Pinellas Trail Loop:
 - 260,000 jobs
 - 380,000 residents
 - 79 schools



Major Employers are those with more than 100 employees.

53 Major Employers are within one mile of the North Gap

91 Major Employers are within one mile of the South Gap



PROJECT READINESS

Technical Feasibility

Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop will involve the utilization of unconventional construction techniques (through design-build) in existing right-of-way. The North Gap will use both existing Duke Energy utility corridor right-of-way and right-of-way along state, county and municipal roadways. The South Gap will utilize existing Duke Energy utility right-of-way for the majority of its extent, in addition to utilizing state and county rights-of-ways. An existing overpass on U.S. Highway 19 will be utilized, as well as an underpass at Ulmerton Road.

Alternative alignments using public and private properties and rights-of-ways are available and feasible. Cost estimates were based on mileage, and also allowances for engineering, design, project administration and management, and potential cost overruns.

Each segment of Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop has independent utility, but as the final pieces of the Pinellas Trail Loop, these segments function as part of a complete, multi-modal transportation facility.

Financial Feasibility

Local funding for Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop is being provided by the Penny for Pinellas infrastructure sales tax. The Pinellas County Capital Improvements Program includes the local funding match being used to leverage this project.

Local dollars will be used to construct a portion of the Trail segment in the North Gap, extending from the Brighthouse Networks Field baseball facility in Clearwater, north to the existing Trail overpass at U.S. Highway 19. Local match dollars will also be spent on the South Gap, paying for the reconstruction of the San Martin Bridge. This bridge facility is in need of replacement and does not currently safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. Local funds will be utilized to contribute to the redesign and reconstruction of this bridge to accommodate a designated Trail facility, providing a critical missing link in the Pinellas Trail Loop system.

Operating revenue for the County Loop components will be provided by the Pinellas County Department of Parks and Conservation Resources.



ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT RISKS & MITIGATION STRATEGIES

During the design of the projects associated with Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop, it may be determined that an alternative alignment is more advantageous. If this should occur, alternative alignments using public and private property and rights-of-ways are available and feasible.

Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop utilizes primarily existing right-of-way so environmental delays are not anticipated.



Bicycle & Pedestrian SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS



- Pinellas County: 995 pedestrian and bicycle crashes in 2015.
 - 38% of all fatal crashes involve bicyclists or pedestrians
- #2 Most dangerous place for pedestrians in the country. Dangerous by Design 2014, large metro areas (Tampa Bay) www.smartgrowthamerica.org



PROJECT COST & BENEFITS

The total project cost to Complete the Pinellas Trail Loop is estimated at \$29,000,000. Pinellas County has included local funds totaling approximately \$12,250,000 in its Capital Improvement Program, but additional revenue has declined for transportation improvements in the foreseeable future.

The table below shows the benefit-cost ratio of Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop, broken out by North and South Gaps. The full benefit-cost analysis is available upon request. Overall, both segments have high benefit to cost ratios, nearly \$40 in the North Gap and \$55 in the South Gap of economic benefit for every \$1 spent, at best estimate.

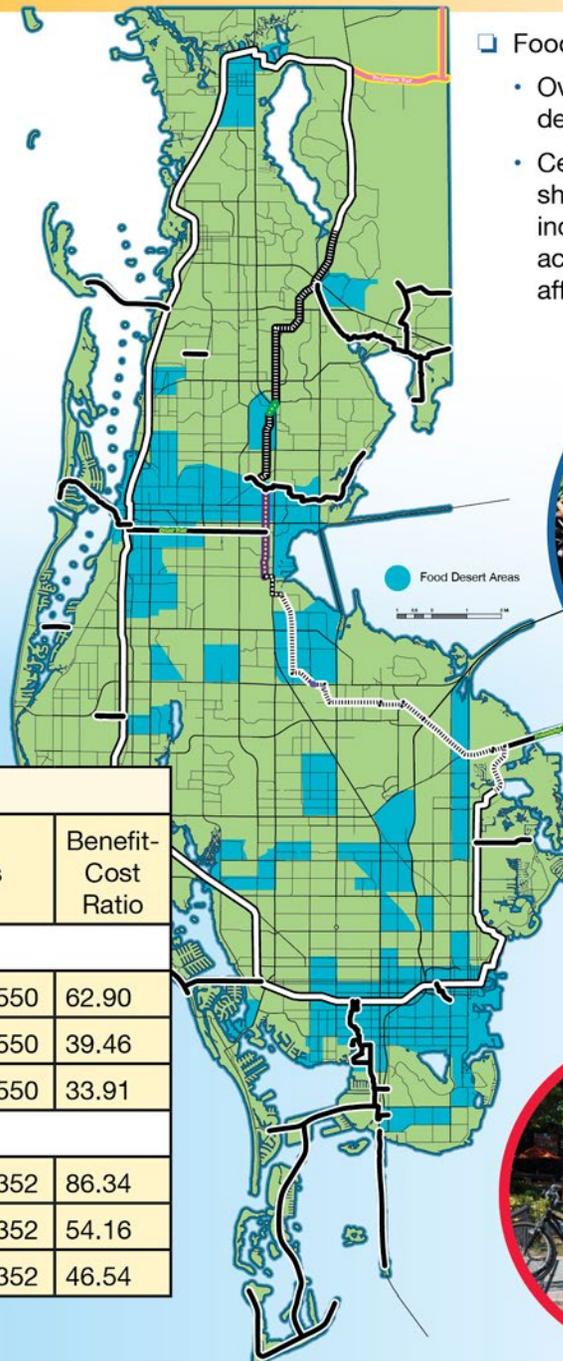
In addition to the information analyzed for the benefit-cost analysis, there is an estimated benefit of over \$68 million in direct medical benefits from construction. This is estimated based on a study in Lincoln, Nebraska, which found that for every \$1 spent on trails, \$2.94 is gained in direct medical benefits. Completing the Loop will result in over \$23 million in trail investment, including design and construction (*Health Promotion Practice, "A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity using Bike/Pedestrian Trails" 2004*).

NORTH GAP				SOUTH GAP		
Benefit-Cost Analysis	Net Present Value of Benefits	Costs	Benefit-Cost Ratio	Net Present Value of Benefits	Costs	Benefit-Cost Ratio
Benefits with 7% Discount Rate						
High Estimate	\$893,829,574	\$12,137,520	73.64	\$1,287,705,789	\$20,471,550	62.90
Best Estimate	\$426,753,089	\$12,137,520	35.16	\$807,784,307	\$20,471,550	39.46
Low Estimate	\$316,211,960	\$12,137,520	26.05	\$694,190,661	\$20,471,550	33.91
Benefits with 3% Discount Rate						
High Estimate	\$1,201,435,197	\$12,569,156	95.59	\$1,807,129,521	\$20,931,352	86.34
Best Estimate	\$573,617,383	\$12,569,156	45.64	\$1,133,621,422	\$20,931,352	54.16
Low Estimate	\$425,034,245	\$12,569,156	33.82	\$974,207,344	\$20,931,352	46.54

IMPROVE ACCESS to Healthy Food Choices

Food Desert:

- Over 241,000 individuals live in food deserts (by census tract)
- Census tracts with a substantial share of residents who are low-income and have low levels of access to a grocery store or healthy, affordable food retail outlet



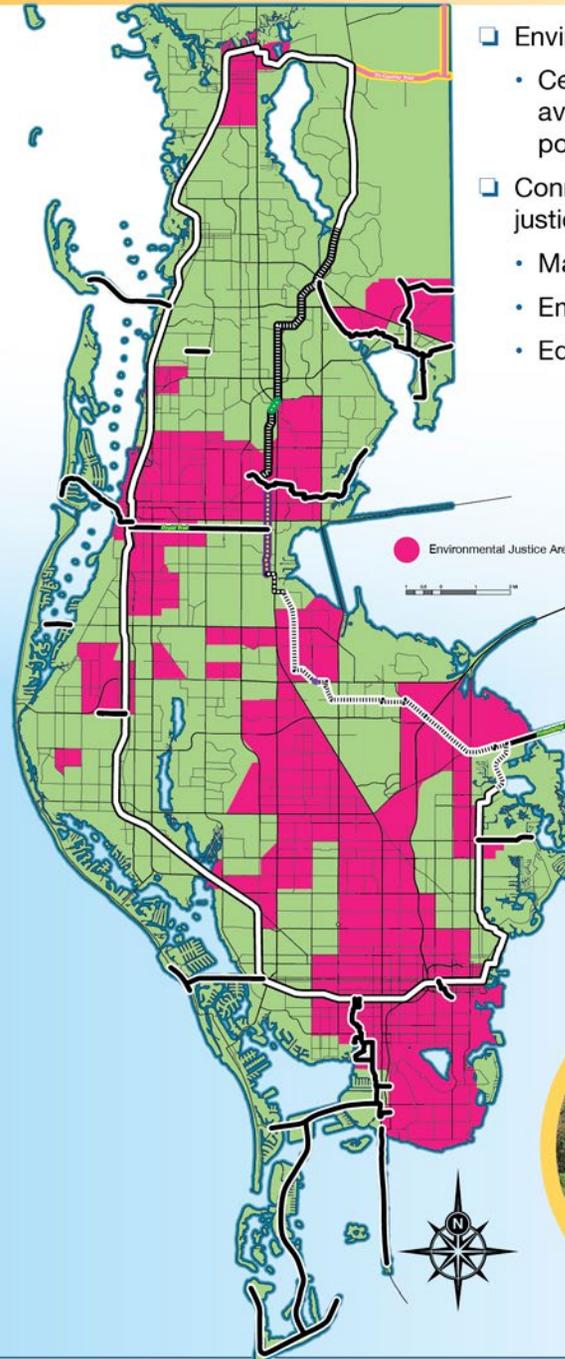
OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS & APPROVALS

The County and MPO are anticipating the receipt of a Categorical Exclusion from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for this project. Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop will be constructed in existing right-of-way and is not anticipated to have any significant environmental impact. The project will not induce significant impacts to planned growth or land use for the area, will not require relocation of significant numbers of people; will not have a significant impact on any natural, cultural, recreational, historic or other resource; will not involve significant air, noise, or water quality impacts; will not have significant negative impacts on travel patterns; and will not otherwise, individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impact.

No state or federal legislative approvals are necessary for the projects associated with Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop to move forward.



INCREASED MOBILITY for Minority & Low Income Populations



- Environmental Justice Areas:
 - Census tracts with higher-than-average minority and low-income populations
- Connects transit and environmental justice areas to:
 - Major destinations
 - Employment
 - Educational opportunities



PROJECT PARTIES

The Pinellas MPO and Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners are committed to Completing the Pinellas Trail Loop. Both organizations have been strong proponents of multi-modal transportation, including support for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The MPO periodically conducts a survey, with the assistance of Pinellas County, of Trail users to better determine who is using the trail and for what purposes.

Pinellas County maintains the current trail facilities. The Pinellas Trail Loop and its various components are one of the most popular in the County, experiencing an average of 70,000 users per month (Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resources Department).

There is extensive support for the project throughout the region, as evidenced by the numerous letters of support received from all of Pinellas County's 24 municipalities, local agencies, elected officials, among other organizations. The list of partners and supporters is available upon request.



Multi-Modal CONNECTION IMPROVEMENTS

- ❑ Enhances multi-modal connections, including bikes on buses
- ❑ Within one-half mile of the Pinellas Trail Loop:
 - 42 bus routes
 - 1,548 bus stops
 - Nearly 7,000 bikes on buses per month on routes serving Countryside Mall
- ❑ 67% of current Pinellas Trail users walk/ride the Trail for non-recreational transportation purposes

(utilitarian trips to work, school, restaurants, social activities, etc.)



SUMMARY

Why fund the Pinellas Trail Loop?

- Provides safe, accessible modes of transportation.
- This project completes 30 years of trail planning!
- The Pinellas Trail connects to an intra-state trail system that traverses the state of Florida!
- The Pinellas Trail Loop is regional, connecting to other counties including Hillsborough and Pasco.
- This loop connects 24 municipalities within Pinellas County!
- The Pinellas Trail is a destination.
- This project provides direct connection for residents, tourists, and businesses in the most densely urbanized county in Florida.
- Provides affordable modes of transportation.
- Accessible to everyone, including disabled.
- Reduces traffic exposure to vehicular traffic on high volume streets.
- Avoids adverse environmental impacts on air quality.
- This project improves economic mobility and provides economic opportunity.
- Provides recreational opportunity to improve health and well-being.
- Leverages partnerships and taxpayer investments.
- Trail system helps reduce vehicle miles traveled which helps maintain a state of good repair on surrounding transportation facilities.
- Improves community cohesiveness and creates ladders of opportunity.
- Provides a key non-motorized connection that helps mitigate the effects of climate change on the region.

• This project as part of the Pinellas Trail Loop ties brownfields, CRA's (Community Redevelopment Areas), Revitalization Areas, economically disadvantaged populations, disabled, minority populations and the general public to:

Employment	Police Stations	Golf Courses
Businesses	Parks, Preserves & Greenways	Campgrounds
Health Services, Clinics & Hospitals	Museums, Arts, Cultural & Historic Facilities	Shopping Malls
Schools	Stadiums	Botanical Gardens
Colleges	Grocery Stores & Farmer's Markets	Transit Stops
Vocational Training	Pharmacies	Utilities
Libraries	Restaurants	Residences
Fire Stations	Playgrounds & Ball Fields	Other Community Resources

Pinellas Trail Loop PROJECT FINANCIALS

- Total Project Cost: \$29,000,000
 - Local Match \$12,250,000 (42.24%)
- Benefit, for every \$1 spent
 - Nearly \$40 in the North Gap
 - Nearly \$55 in the South Gap
- 377 Jobs Created (construction)





Completing the
**Pinellas
Trail Loop**



For More Information:
www.pinellascounty.org/MPO

*Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
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