

**Meeting Notes**  
**Cotee River Trail – Phase I Feasibility Study**  
**Stakeholders Meeting**

June 19, 2019 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

City of Port Richey Council Chambers, 6333 Ridge Road, Port Richey, FL 34668

**Welcome/Purpose of Workshop**

Meeting began at 4:05 pm due to long meeting registration line. Ms. Duke called the meeting to order. Elected officials were asked to introduce themselves. Ms. Duke thanked everyone for attending. This will be a working meeting. Please sit at the tables to participate.

Ms. Duke presented a PowerPoint presentation (attached). She described the project location as being the US 19 (SR 55) underpass area with trail connections to Baylea Avenue and River Gulf Road. The ultimate purpose of the plan is to connect the Cities of Port Richey Waterfront Park with the City of New Port Richey Sims Park. This feasibility study is for Phase I, the underpass area and connections. The primary purpose is to provide safe access between the City of Port Richey and the City of New Port Richey.

The goal is to implement adopted goals found in the City of Port Richey Comprehensive Plan, Waterfront District Intermodal Master Plan Phase II, and Waterfront Overlay District, the City of New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan and the County's Harbors West Market Area Redevelopment/Infill Plan. Ultimately, preferred routes will be determined and detailed cost estimates made by the study consultants, AECOM represented here today by Paul Kurtz, Sr. Landscape Architect and Paul Simpson, Landscape Architect.

Ms. Duke showed slides of each aforementioned plan goals related to the underpass trail concept. Ms. Duke also noted that the underpass trail, known as "River Gulf Road/James Clark Cotee River Bridge Crossing Alignment Study" is listed as the number 1 multi-modal project in the Pasco MPO's 2018 Priority Needs List.

Some background history on two other studies of this area was provided. The City of Port Richey conducted the "Feasibility Study for Multi-Use Crossing of Pithlachascotee River at U.S. 19 Bridge in February 2007 that studied 4 alternatives (timber bridge, fiberglass composite bridge, path at grade and floating concrete dock." The study recommended the Path at Grade as the most durable option and the Timber Bridge as a preferred alternative.

The MPO contracted another study "West Pasco Trails Feasibility Study" in November of 2009. This study did not include detailed cost estimates for the bridge underpass. Ms. Duke noted that these two studies were outdated and did not consider all construction types or new technologies available. So a new study was needed.

Jeff Starkey, City of New Port Richey Councilman and MPO Chair inquired if golf carts would be allowed on the trail. He noted that was the only reason the City of New Port Richey was involved was for improved golf cart access. Ms. Duke asked if others in the meeting wanted golf cart access. Approximately two-thirds of attendees were in favor of pursuing golf cart access. Ms. Duke passed out

an email from Alex Henry, FDOT regarding the use of federal or state funds for trails. She noted that motorized vehicles, such as golf carts, are not permitted on federally or state funded trails, with few exceptions. She noted that she had discussed this previously at prior MPO committee and/or Joint City-County Harbors Workshops.

Based on the citizen interest, an “exception” will be pursued, subject to elected officials authorization, and the trail will be designed of a width to accommodate golf carts, should FDOT’s and/or federal policy change and/or an exception is granted. Ms. Duke noted that the community may need to look at other potential funding sources (non- federal or state) in order to construct for golf cart access.

### **Project Overview / Project Area**

Mary Duke, Sr. Planner – Project Management, Pasco County Planning & Development Department, Long Range Planning Division

An aerial photo of the project study area was displayed that identified potential connectivity points and linkages to the east and west of the underpass area. It was noted that to the extent possible, existing FDOT and City of Port Richey right of ways would be utilized where possible.

Ms. Duke described the Feasibility Study – Phase I Scope of Work. The study will: document trail segment options, recommend preferred trail alignment alternative, provide illustrative sections/sketches, provide a narrative/process and include preferred alternative probable cost estimates.

The project is located within the Harbors West Market Area River District.

Project oversight and management is being provided by Pasco County. Why? Because neither the City of Port Richey nor the City of New Port Richey is LAP certified by FDOT and cannot serve as project managers for the project. Also, Pasco County is heavily invested in the implementation of the **Harbors West Market Redevelopment/Infill Plan**, which was adopted by the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners in June 2013. Ms. Duke explained the Millers Bayou area was identified in that plan as a major “regional node”.

Pasco County is responsible for contract management, project schedule, municipal input, data sharing, stakeholder meeting coordination, public workshop coordination, deliverable review and coordination of feedback to the consultants. The project timeframe is 6 to 9 months. The project budget is \$31,978.00 which is shared equally by Pasco County, the City of New Port Richey and the City of Port Richey via an Interlocal Agreement for the Cotee River Trail – Phase I Feasibility Study. Ms. Duke is the County’s project manager who will review invoices. The County’s Project Management Division will process invoices.

The project consultant, AECOM, is responsible for base map/site analysis; opportunities and constraints matrix, conceptual plan, speed management and traffic calming, bike lane and bike shared lane markings, trail conceptual design, conceptual drainage plan (Typical), trail typical cross section, crosswalk signage and marking conceptual design, trail amenities/wayfinding locations, concept trail

alignment site plan/conceptual plan, meetings, public workshop and presentation materials and the feasibility study report.

Slides were presented detailing different underpass construction types, boardwalk examples, trail types, furnishings examples and trail type considerations.

### **Opportunities / Constraints / Bicycle Facility Types**

Paul Kurtz, RLA, Senior Landscape Architect, AECOM

The Opportunities matrix, as depicted on a presentation board at the front of the room was presented. Opportunities identified include:

- Highlight and connect to the Waterfront District;
- Future Connection to Nick's Park;
- Future connection to Waterfront Park;
- Connect to the Bridge Street Pathway;
- Increase Public Access to the Waterfront and Waterfront View sheds;
- Scenic views along the river;
- Implement the Hike N' Bike Trail;
- Improve bicycle/pedestrian safety;
- Economic developments;

Mr. Kurtz then presented the constraints:

- Flooding;
- Height of bridge;
- High tides, storm surge and sea level rise;
- Private properties adjacent to the river;
- Lack of available public land;
- Steep slopes along US 19;
- Invasive vegetation along US 19;
- Lack of initial connectivity;
- Lack of parking;
- Limited width of public right-of-way;
- Narrow canal;
- Damaged retaining wall; and
- Bicycle/pedestrian safety.

Paul Kurtz then discussed signed routes, shared lanes, bike lanes, cycle tracks, side paths and separated trails as various types of bicycle facilities that might be utilized for the project. These are depicted on a presentation board that shows which have less separation and which have more separation between vehicles and bicyclists/pedestrians. For each bicycle facility type, a description was provided, with benefits and challenges posed by each.

## **Instructions/Parking Lot/Break into tables**

Mary Duke, Sr. Planner – Project Management, Pasco County Planning & Development Department, Long Range Planning Division

Ms. Duke provided instructions to each group and identified the table facilitators. She noted that any ideas outside of the trail should be put onto the “Parking Lot” sheet on the wall. There are sticky notes that you can write your individual ideas on. She explained you will be voting at your tables first. Then at the end you will be asked to vote again on all the ideas presented.

## **Brainstorm each question/Tables Draft Plan/Report Ideas/Consolidate Ideas**

Each table brainstormed each question. Then each table consolidated their plan onto the aerial and tracing paper via sticky dots and/or colored lines. Each table reported their ideas out to the full group. Like ideas/similarities were then consolidated and noted by the facilitator.

Question 1: What should the Waterfront District look like? (examples: Fishing Village like John’s Pass; Mediterranean Fishing Village; Hip/Modern; Rustic/Florida Cracker or Other (define))

- Table Idea Prioritization (Vote by sticky dot for each question)

Ms. Duke noted that in the past, during development of the Waterfront District plans, Port Richey residents noted a preference for an “Old Florida Fishing Village” feel.

Attendees were given 5 to 10 minutes to write their preferences on the sticky notes. Ms. Duke collected these and posted them onto the Question 1 sheet. Later in the meeting, these were organized and reported out. The Old Florida Fishing Village received the most votes.

Question 2: What type of trail? (Examples: boardwalk, Riverwalk, floating trail, bike lane, sharrows, off-road trail, combination) Define type of trail for entire project length. May be a combination.

- Table Idea Prioritization (Vote by sticky dot for each question)

Ms. Duke directed the group to look at each type of trail (wooden boardwalk, concrete boardwalk and floating boardwalk) and discuss which type they preferred for the underpass area. Tables used sticky dots on the photos on the table sheets to vote.

Each table was asked to report out their preference. Most reported “concrete boardwalk” as the preferred type.

Question 3: What trail alignment? Show your team’s preferred route(s).

- Table Idea Prioritization (Vote by sticky dot for each question)

Ms. Duke directed attendees to draw on tracing paper their preferred trail alignments. If more than one alignment is recommended by the table, they may report out more than one route.

Each table was asked to report out their preferences. A summary of the “Stakeholder Meeting Alignment Idea Maps is attached. This map includes all alignments presented by stakeholder meeting participants. Five routes were proposed, with various alignments.

- Route A roughly followed the Hike N Bike Trail route.

- Route B follows the Hike N Bike Trail route, except it utilizes Bridge Street and runs along the Cotee River to the underpass area. This route also runs along Weber Lane.
- Route C incorporates at grade crossings of US 19 at Grand Boulevard and River Gulf Road.
- Route D incorporates a trail along Treadway Drive, north to the canal along the waterfront, south in front of the fishing docks, Hooters, Nick's Park, Sun Cruz, around the seawall at High Tides Marina, along the waterfront at Whiskey Joe's, and in front of Paradise of Port Richey, Inc. to Bridge Street, along the waterfront in front of Catches Waterfront Grill and Rum Runners, under US 19, along Baylea Avenue, north along James Clark Street, east on River Gulf Road, south along Weber Lane, east along Queener Avenue and south on Grand Boulevard.
- Route E incorporates trails along the east and west sides of US 19 that provide bicycle/pedestrian access to parcels south of the Cotee River.

Each table reported out their ideas on vision, trail alignment, trail type and amenities. Each table's priorities were posted on the walls.

### **Vision:**

The following ideas were recorded in response to Question 1: What should the Waterfront District look like? (example: Fishing Village like John's Pass; Mediterranean Fishing Village; Hip/Modern; Rustic/Florida Cracker or Other)

- Old Florida Fishing Village
- Old Florida Fishing Village
- Fishing Village/Old Florida
- Old Fish Village
- Combine Old Florida Fishing Village with public art (i.e. murals related to the theme at Old Florida Fishing Village) (Could have open public contest, work with high schools, etc.) (Would only need to provide supplies).
- Old Fishing Village with artsy.
- Florida Fishing Village (PR Resident)
- Key West style tie in to existing businesses. Tin roofs, tiki bars, bright colors and lush landscape
- Key West type of island vibe – as it is already happening
- Let businesses decide their style but build the trail under the bridge and move forward.
- Other side (Connect to the other side of the river)
- East side transition to across canal. West side modern townhomes.
- Connect to south side trail along bridge
- Village... Hip/Modern Classic....Repurposed Materials
- Tie to boat slips
- Casino. Water sports theme. McCray's Homosassa (Macaw's, Homosassa?) Modern recreational

**Question 2: What type of trail? (Example: boardwalk, Riverwalk, floating trail, bike lane, sharrows, off-road trail, combination) Width? Define type of trail for entire project length. May be a combination.**

The following ideas were recorded

- All tables voted for a Concrete Boardwalk in the underpass area.
- Table 2 supported a wooden boardwalk in front of Catches and a bike/golf cart lane along the west embankment of US 19; a concrete boardwalk along the western waterfront facing Millers Bayou.
- Table 4 supported making Grand Boulevard one way to allow for bicycles and golf carts.

**Question 3: What Trail Alignment? Show your team's preferred route(s).**

The following ideas were recorded:

- Table 1: Recommended a golf cart crossing at Grand Boulevard. Encouraged potential use of pneumatic bollards at crossing of US 19. Recommended a bicycle pedestrian crossing at River Gulf Road. Did not recommend the underpass crossing area. Identified it as the least desirable option.
- Table 2: Recommended the trail run from River Gulf Road to the west embankment of US 19, south along the US 19 embankments to the Cotee River, underpass at US 19 bridge crossing, then connecting to Baylea Avenue. Also recommended another alignment that would connect the River Gulf Road section to Bridge Street, with connections to the southeast in front of Catches and to the north along the waterfront to Old Post Road. They recommended wide concrete at the underpass area, floating dock in front of Catches, a concrete boardwalk along the west waterfront.
- Table 3: Recommended the trail run from Treadway Drive, along the Hike N Bike Trail route to the western US 19 embankment (at the old street ROW), south to the Cotee River, then via an underpass at US 19, to Baylea Avenue, north to James Clark Street, then south along Weber Lane to Queener St.
- Table 4: Recommended the trail run from Old Post Road south to Treadway Drive, then south on Bayview Street, to the old ROW to the west embankment of US 19, then south to the Cotee River, then via an underpass, then east via Baylea Avenue, then north on James Clark Street, then either 1) south on Weber lane to Queener Street or 2) via River Gulf Road, then south on Grand Boulevard. It was noted that Grand Boulevard should be made one-way to accommodate bicycle facilities.
- Table 5: Recommended the trail run from the Hike N Bike Trail alignment south to the Cotee River, then east along Baylea Avenue, then north along James Clark Street, then east along River Gulf Road, then south along Grand Boulevard.
- Table 6: Recommended the trail follow the Hike N Bike trail, with an extension at Bridge Street, then east in front of Catches, with an extension across the Cotee River to the south bank on the west side of US 19, and the underpass of US 19, and an extension across the Cotee River to the south bank on the east side of US 19. From the underpass, east along Baylea Avenue, then

north on James Clark St, then south on Weber Lane, then east on Queener Avenue to Grand Boulevard.

Question 4: What amenities should there be? (Examples: lighting, fishing/viewing vistas; bicycle repair station; benches; public art; parking; bollards; fence rails' cultural/interpretative displays, etc.:

Table Idea Prioritization (Vote by sticky dot for each question)

Workshop attendees were instructed to vote individually for each type of amenity by placing sticky dots on the photo sheets.

Votes were received for:

- Viewing Areas:
- Railings: Are a given x 2. R1 x 1, R2 x 1, R3 x 1, R4 x 1. Total Votes: 4.
- Lighting: L1 x 6; L2 x 1; L3 x 5; L4 x 5; L5 x 2. Total Votes: 19.
- Seating: S1 x 4; S2 x 4; S3 x 4; No Seating x 1. Total votes: 12.
- Public Art: PA 1 x 1; PA 2 x 1; PA 3 x 1 -Lighting up the US 19 bridge – use solar to be “green”. Total Votes: 3
- Bike Facilities: BF 2 x 1; BF 4 x 5. Total Votes: 6.
- Shared Trails: ST - all
- Wayfinding: W1 x 3; W3 x 2; W4 x 1. Total votes 6.
- Bollards: B1 x 3 (Bollards with lighting at tops). Total Votes 3.

Lighting as an amenity received the highest number of votes.

**Final Idea Prioritization (Vote for top priority in each group)**

The meeting broke for 5 minutes.

When the meeting reconvened, Ms. Duke then instructed attendees that they could vote for their top priority on the large boards in the front of the room and the trail alignments on the left wall. Votes could be made for any of the alternatives shown.

Trail Type:

- Concrete Boardwalk. CB 1 x 3; CB 3 x 1; CB4 x 1. Total 5 votes.
- Cycle Track: CT 1: 1 vote; CT2: 1 vote. Total 2 votes.

Trail Amenities:

- Viewing Area. 0 votes.
- Railings: R1 x 1; R2 x 1. Total votes = 2.
- Lighting: L1 x 3; L2 x 1; L3 x 1; L4/5 x 3 votes. Total 8 votes.
- Seating: 0 votes.
- Public Art: 0 votes.
- Bike Racks: BF 2 x 1. Total 1 vote.
- Bicycle Repair Stations: BR 4 x 1. Total 1 vote.
- Shared Trails: ST 3 x 1. 1 vote.
- Wayfinding: W3 x1. 1 vote.

## **9. Next Steps**

Ms. Duke stated that the public comment period will be open through July 5, 2019. Consultants will take the feedback and priorities recorded at tonight are meeting to draft recommendations within the feasibility study. A public workshop will be held in late August/early September. Please monitor the Cotee River Trail webpage on the County's website for meeting dates. Meeting notes will be posted. Anyone with any questions is free to contact me at the County. Again, the public comment period will be open through July 5, 2019.

## **10. Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20pm. Staff stayed onsite until 7pm. One person came in after the meeting was over and was provided with a comment sheet.

## **Respectfully submitted:**

Mary Helen Duke, Sr. Planner – Project Management, Long Range Planning Division, Pasco Planning & Development Department.