



## **US 90 Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study – Live Question & Answer Session #1**

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 5:30-7:30 PM

*Some comments and questions were reworded for clarity*

Kate Widness, Kimley-Horn: Everyone knows they're being recorded.

Greg Burke, CRTPA: So why don't we go ahead and get started? Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us. As many of you know, I am Greg Burke with the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency. We are here today with the project team, including other staff from the CRTPA, as well as Kimley Horn and Associates who are assisting in this study's development.

Now we're here today to provide you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have regarding the US 90 Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study. The study is the first step of many that will need to occur prior to the project actually being constructed. That includes additional phases not yet funded, that will involve more detailed analyses and further opportunities for your public input. So that said, let's get started with your questions about the study. Since your microphone is unmuted, why don't you go ahead, and we can hopefully provide some responses for you.

Mary Kay Falconer: On the virtual room I think what was difficult for me was actually seeing some detail on the trail regarding parking that was going to be available along the trail as it extended from Tallahassee to Monticello. And also going through those options, those three options, I don't know Kate, if you plan to cover each of those options, maybe discussing the number of times crossing the road. That type of stuff, but just the spots along the trail where somebody might be able to park their car and get on the trail for the trip.

Greg Burke: Mary Kay, that's a great question, and about a month and a half ago or so we met with Lafayette Oaks Neighborhood Association on the corridor, and we gave them a presentation on this, and they asked a bunch of questions. One of them actually was a concern about how folks would be able to park and access. I think it was coming from some of the neighbors thinking that there would be an issue with people trying to park along the road or park in their neighborhood. Although I know that's a gated one. We are in the feasibility study phase for this project right now. Any level of detail such as that would come further in subsequent phases of this project. But this comment will be included in the project record. A trailhead and some shelters are very important for cyclists along the trail. We haven't done any further analysis at this point. It's too soon in the project process for that. However, there may be some property near the I-10 Interchange that I believe the Department owns and there might be an opportunity to look at some parking for folks for the trail.

Mary Kay Falconer: OK well you definitely want to avoid people having to park on the road or right next to the road, that would be awful. So parking is going need to be considered for sure but not just at the trailhead. As you go down the trail some people are not going to want to go the whole 21 miles, so there's going to need to be some consideration. The Hilltop Country Store might be another good place to have a little bit of parking. When you talked to the businesses, was there any discussion about that?



Greg Burke: We have had several conversations with Hilltop Country Store, but not about using that site for parking. One good thing you mentioned this project starts in the West at Pedrick, but if you go down that road to the Greenway, there is parking and connectivity to other trails as well as to the Leon County Library site where folks could potentially utilize that parking. Those are things that those are great questions and good considerations, but something that we will certainly be refining when further phases for this project are funded. Kate, do you have anything you think would be good to add?

Kate Widness: This project is in the feasibility study. We've really been trying to determine where the alignment, with the preferred alternative, will be at the end of this. And right now, there's a couple opportunities looking at things like the available right of way. What would the impacts be to some of the crape myrtles, existing businesses, things like that that were taken into consideration to determine if it should be on the south side of the road? Where should it cross over to possibly go to the north side of the road to avoid some of these things? The trailheads tend to come after that because we don't want to coordinate and find a location maybe on the northern side of the road and then the preferred alternative is on the south side, because that just wouldn't complement each other. But the way we've always looked at trailheads is there are major trailheads which would have something like what you see off of Capital circle for the Saint Marks Trail, with a ton of parking, there's bathrooms, there's shelters. I would say those are located about every 10 miles along a long-distance trail, so maybe we would see one close to Pedrick Pond Park, one in Monticello, and maybe one in between. Then typically you would have something called a minor trailhead which would have very few parking spaces. Maybe water fountains, not necessarily bathrooms, every five miles. Then you would have these weather shelters that are about everyone to two miles that somebody could stop and take a rest if we get one of those wonderful unexpected Florida thunderstorms, to get some protection. But we haven't really looked at those locations yet, but if people have recommendations based on their familiarity along the trail on US 90, we would love to hear those. But none are identified right now.

Mary Kay Falconer: Currently a lot of cycling goes on now in that particular area, not following US 90 necessarily, but between Miccosukee and Monticello. I submitted my comments to Greg, which you guys can go back to and look at. But the design of the trail itself, like what I'm comparing it to, is the Capital City to the Seas trail, which is an extension of Saint Marks. I ride Saint Marks a lot, but that extension has been very nice. We've ridden it several times. You cross US 98 twice and it's really not that bad. I don't find that to be annoying or anything. What is problematic for me as far as the desirability of being on the trail is how close it is to the highway. So, when you're thinking about US 90, how close are you going to have to be to the actual traffic? My guess is in some sections you might have to be relatively close. In others you might be able to swing a little bit away, and it would be nice to go into some wooded areas which are really nice and away from the traffic, which makes it a much more desirable in pleasant experience. From the women that I ride with that is echoed over and over and over again. It has to be away from the actual traffic to the extent that it can be, and you're going to be limited on that, probably with right of way and property ownership. I'm asking what your criteria is as far as design of that trail and the distance from the highway.



Greg: I think you mentioned a few good things with regards to that. A lot of this has to do with staying within the right of way. In some areas we have more right of way than others. So, the plan is to make the trail as wide as we can, but at certain locations we'll have to narrow it. However, with regards to its placement, where we have the ability to keep it more so in the trees and then meander it a little bit. A great example, as you mentioned, is the Coastal Trail and Jack was very much involved in that. And Jack worked with the design of that and with the district. So, Jack, if you have any input with regards to your experience with that project and how you got that, which turned out quite well.

Jack: Sure. When you have 200 feet of right away, you can just about build a landing strip so you're not anywhere near traffic. That was one of the advantages of that trail and still is an advantage of that trail, we have not had to purchase any right of away for that project. So, in this situation it's a lot different. You don't have 200 feet of right of way. The availability of that space just isn't there, so I would imagine that in the long run, in order to try to make it work, spots that came close to the road on 98 were a result of drainage issues and not necessarily an issue of right of way. It would have cost a lot more money in order to make those drainage issues work. So, as they kind of meandered around they went into the foliage as much as they could, and when it does come close, it's because of other features that are out there. But I think with the US 90 trail, the same approximate thing can be done just on an appropriate scale. You're not going to be hidden way back in the woods for miles and miles like the Coastal Trail. I will say that when it comes to parking and trailheads and things like that, that's a separate project. If we are able to get this project on the Sun Trails Program, the trailheads and other parking facilities will have to be done through a separate grant process through FDEP, or having a separate entity help provide those funds. Maybe a sponsorship or something like that because the funds that we have for some trails can't be used for the construction of parking lots and restrooms. So, that's typically why those things come afterward, to see where the best spot to locate those are, or if the County, City, or appropriate organization has a lot of property out there that they're willing to donate for these amenities. That happened with Wakulla County, and so we are making those concessions in order to make the project work.

Mary Kay: So, you're not going to have the same leeway as far as the 200 feet of right of way that you had with the Coastal Trail. Even if you don't have restrooms, maybe in one spot along the way. That's probably enough, but having some stop or pause or respite stations or whatever you want to call them along the way might be helpful. I haven't driven US 90 recently, so I'm not remembering the changes in elevation. But I think the placement of some of those little respite spots might need to consider where you're going up or down, or the changes that way. People, even those that are experienced cyclists, don't like climbing a lot, so a lot of them have E bikes now and that helps. But with beginner riders or those that are just starting off and trying to enjoy the ride, changes in elevation can be problematic. I don't know if you've considered that or if you have it in your maps, know where there's hills, where there's changes in elevation. I would've assumed you know that with the design maps that are currently available.

Greg: Yeah, we'll get more into that detail in the next phases. This trail could be an amazing addition to the regional trail system, ultimately providing connectivity. But what is also so interesting is if you look



at the Saint Marks Trail, if you look at the Coastal Trail, I mean all of this is in the CRTPA four-county region. But it's so different. The topography, the visuals, the vegetation. So, US 90 could definitely be a really beautiful special trail that looks like nothing else that we have with regards to the regional trails currently. The terrain will look nothing the vegetation on the Saint Marks Trail or the Coastal Trail, which are gorgeous, but so will be US 90. It's nice to have a little bit of diversity and connectivity, to the CRTPA region or Capital Region, more of a destination for regional trails and all the good types of economic development that could come out of this.

Mary Kay: I see protecting the crape myrtles reflected a lot in your presentation. I think as long as the trail is on the other side from the highway as the crape myrtles, that's great. And they can provide shade. The trail is not going to be located on the roadside where the crape myrtles are located, right?

Greg: Our intention and desire is to be as far away from the road as possible. Ultimately, when this project goes to design and PD&E, we will determine the environmental issues and right of way issues. At some points the trail will have to be located closer to the road and be narrower in areas to address some issues. But the intention is to avoid impacts to the crape myrtles.

Mary Kay: I don't mind it being narrower. There's probably not going to be so much traffic that trail users can't avoid each other. Getting away from the traffic as much as possible is going to be important.

Greg: Great, yeah.

Kate: And like Greg said, that really comes during the design phase. The way I like to look at it is that with the feasibility right now, we're flying over the road maybe 20,000 feet above looking around and seeing what's there and determining what really is feasible along this corridor. Can we actually do this? What side of the corridor does it work on, and then we start the PD&E. Now, we're walking along the road and we can get some more details. And the design phase is basically laying on the road and looking at every little contour and everything else related to the physical road. But absolutely the goal of this project is to get the trail as far away from the road as possible while avoiding or minimizing any impacts.

Greg: Kate, if we can take just a moment, we may have other people who joined. If anyone is on here and they wish to provide any comments or ask any questions right now, please go ahead.

Brian Bachman: Hey, I don't mind jumping in for a second. My name is Brian Bachman. I live in Monticello, but I drive US 90 twice a day to work and back in Tallahassee. So, I'm a relatively new resident to Monticello but I live right on US 90 on Washington Street. I just wanted to make you are all aware that about the last half mile from the courthouse in Monticello runs along a lot of the historic homes in Monticello. From a design point of view, I wanted to make you all aware of that for consideration of how the bike trail would interact with that residential section coming in. It's actually a really beautiful section and I really believe this could be a real plus to the area. We have a ton of bicyclists come through the area on their own. I think it could be a great thing, but just wanted from a design point of view to throw that out as a consideration.



Greg: Thanks for that input. Once we get into downtown Monticello, it's a completely different situation. Obviously, it's a historic area with beautiful homes, and we'll have to be looking at different types of treatment for the trail when it goes through. There could potentially be sharrows, where based upon the speed of the roadway, there could be certain points where bikes will be sharing the road. We could also take it off to a parallel facility. We haven't gotten to that level of specificity, but we're working on addressing that because we're not going to have the ability to construct a twelve-foot trail through downtown Monticello.

Brian: Right. I took a look at the PowerPoint that was put together and you had discussed a sidewalk that runs from Crooked Creek neighborhood on into Monticello and that is correct, but at about 1/2 mile point from the courthouse that sidewalk actually becomes elevated and is located closer to the homes. And there is a street level at that point. But it's about a four- or five-foot elevation off the road height, but does move it closer to the homes. I'm sure they wouldn't appreciate a ten- or twelve-foot strip of asphalt running right in front of their homes. But typically, the local constables do a really good job of making sure people drive very slowly through Monticello. I think there's a lot of opportunity to share the road there.

Greg: Good point. We actually feel the same way, and we've met with City of Monticello and they see the value of this project as well.

Brian: Good. I appreciate it. I just wanted to throw that out for my two cents, and I do have to run, but I appreciate all of you and your efforts and I will look forward to staying tuned with more updates.

Greg: Thank you and we appreciate your input very much.

Kate: Thank you.

Brian: Thanks.

Eric: Hey guys, real quick Eric at Hilltop, are we going to be doing more talks because we had a situation come up at the store. We just want to know if we're going to meet up again before the next phases of this trail begin. As of right now, I'm not inclined to have any of my parking lot taken up. The neighbor across the street put signs up that doesn't allow anybody to park over there, so it's jamming me up big time with my parking. If my parking gets taken, I'm going to be messed up big time here.

Greg: Yeah, definitely. We can always meet with you individually and we would love to again. Our intention would never be to use private property parking.

Eric: Yeah, I understand. And the crepe myrtles that was an interesting comment coming up because I would hate to see them go, but my biggest thing is with the traffic. The speeding down US 90 is tremendous. Especially here right in front of the store, the trail will be very close to the road. When we talked, we talked about putting some buffers in. Really, the only thing that's going to do is slow the traffic down on US 90 so bad that it's going to back up and cause accidents.



Greg: Yeah, we can definitely meet with you again and talk about some potential opportunities for a location at your store. I know we had met with you a couple of times before and had some ideas and would love to get some more input on that. And as you saw, there are a few different opportunities for where the trail could go, as far as at that location on the North side or the South side of Mahan there of US 90. The location has not been determined yet, and some of your concerns obviously would come into play with what we would ultimately recommend to the Board as we proceed with the next phases of this study.

Eric: Alright guys, we appreciate it. Right across the street from us is Dixie Paving Hill, maybe we can all get together with him here too so we can discuss the trail location. I know Border to Border also had some concerns. Mac brothers have some concerns too. You know, with the area right in front of the business and traffic. My main concern is the safety because it is highly unsafe, they already come by here at 70-80 miles an hour. And coming up over that hill is so dangerous. But we'll get together, I would like to sit down with everybody again and talk it over. I don't want to nix this whole thing, I think it is a good thing, but I don't want it to damper my business. I know some have said that we'll get a lot of bikers in here. Well, really, they're going to be buying water and using my bathroom, which means I have to have my septic pumped twice as much, but that's a whole other thing.

Greg Slay: You mentioned somebody put a sign up that said "no parking" on the other side of the road.

Eric: Yeah, Dixie Paving put that up because all the big trucks were parking over there. And now they're not. Traffic right here and the parking, you know, you've seen the store. Sometimes I got 80 people in here trying to pull out of the parking lot when they're coming up this Hill. I've been trying to get with FDOT to slow them down right here on this hill, because it's a blind hill. And nothing happens. Unfortunately, somebody's going to have to get killed before they put a light up or something. But anyway, I got to get back to it. Let's get together again.

Greg Burke: Yep, we will facilitate something and get back with you.

Eric: Yes, Sir. Appreciate you guys.

Greg: Thank you.

Kate: Thanks Eric.

Mary Kay: Those are good points, by the way.

Greg: Very much so.

Mary Kay: Downtown Monticello is beautiful, as that gentleman that was talking about the historic columns that are right along there. Currently, we ride our bikes right on the road there. There might not be a need to do much as far as additional pavement or anything like that. It could just be sharrows or moving in with the traffic, the direction of the traffic.

Greg: And Mary Kay, you know, speed is the issue for comfort and safety.



Mary Kay: Yeah but the traffic there has been pretty reasonable. As he was saying, around that center of downtown and going through that section. Just my observation. I don't know what Commissioner Barfield would think.

Greg: Well, she's been a big proponent of this project.

Mary Kay: Yeah, most of the people I talk with are very supportive. But you're going to have to work out all these details. You know, the specifics about where there is going to be crossings and how that's going to be affected with the traffic and the speed. The safety issues, they're really important.

Greg: Yeah, and I know you're aware of this, but obviously as we go forward, whatever recommendations come out with regards to the trail and where it will be placed or can be placed, we will try to minimize those crossings on US 90. It would be great if it could all be on the on the same side, but doesn't look like that's going to happen given some limitations. The distance is 21 miles, so crossing twice in that distance is not too bad.

Mark Kay: No, that's what I was saying, the coastal trail crosses twice and it's not bad. It might help with reducing speed, but you don't want your traffic backed up. That was what that gentleman was talking about. Is there anything else you guys need from me on any of these thoughts? I did send my comments in an email, I'm just trying to think about current routes that are used to get out to Monticello that are not on US 90. But I definitely see some people using the trail for some distance and then veering off and using another road to get around Lake Miccosukee and over to Monticello for part of it. So, there's a lot of options and possibilities there. It sounds like parking is going to be an issue for different locations along the trail. You don't want to use private property.

Greg: Yeah, if you think of the Saint Marks Trail there are not that many parking locations. There's the trailhead just south of Capital Circle where people can park, but I haven't really seen parking along other locations would necessarily be a problem. People park in the town of Saint Marks. So, for this trail, people may park in Monticello, it just all depends. But that's a good concern and again something that that will be addressed in the future as this goes forward.

Mary Kay: Saint Marks Trail has the J.R. Lewis Park and also Wakulla Station which is really excellent as a multipurpose stop there. It has a big children's playground, there's some real benefits of combining purposes. That Wakulla Station is very popular to park there and then head down the trail and go over to the Coastal Trail. There might be some opportunities that you really haven't even thought of at this point for US 90. Maybe someone wants to donate some land for a mini park or something. Is there anything else you want me to consider?

Greg: We appreciate your questions and comments that we've got in writing and through this meeting today. As I mentioned, we'll be sending out another email reminder. To the extent that you wish to share, that's always a great thing. A lot of people were notified for this project. We're just going to get word out again about the virtual room and inform the public that it has been extended another 30 days to get as much input as we can.



Mary Kay: Yeah, OK, well I'll keep encouraging people to respond.

Greg: Great.

Mary Kay: Submit what their thoughts are on it. I'm going to go ahead, are you guys going to stay on in case somebody else shows up?

Greg Burke: Correct. We're here until 7:30.

Mary Kay: Alright

Kate: You can join in and check on us in 45 minutes if you want to.

Greg: Come back.

Mary Kay: Alright, OK.

Kate: Thank you Mary Kay.

Mary Kay: Thank you. Good luck

Suzanne Lex: Bye, Mary Kay.

Greg Burke: And if anybody else that's on has any questions or wants to share their thoughts or opinions or anything please do because that's what we're here for.

Eric: Hey guys, it's Eric again at Hilltop. Brett (from Dixie Paving) put the signs up. He had FDOT put them up because people were parking there and coming across the street. With the people behind their house or behind his property, parking there and going down on that road that you just talked about. I am talking with Brett though and he said that if those signs affect my store at all, he will have them taken down, so that's not a problem.

Greg Slay: Yeah, OK. Good to know because that's actually state right of way. But if FDOT put them up then that makes more sense.

Eric: Yeah, but he's good about it and he said that if it does affect the business, he will have them taken down.

Greg Burke: Yeah, that's great, and Eric, as you know, we met with Brett last summer, and he seems much like you and Misty. He seems very amenable and good people to work with. So, we're very appreciative of that.

Eric: Yes Sir. Like Misty and I said, we can't afford to lose any of our parking lot, but we are open to suggestions and if you guys come up with something, I'd like to see it happen too.

Greg Slay: I think we knew from the get-go it was going to be a challenge with the way your lots configured and what was next to you to get a trail through there and make it safe. Since they're not in cars, and trying to get in and out of your parking lot.



Eric: Yes, the biggest thing is the safety. And I know we talked about putting some islands, two islands I believe that was. And we started thinking about that. You know, then they try to pull out and pull in and with the trail, I'm in a 50/50 spot here, as the trail jumps across the right side of the road, then the big trucks are going to park here anyway and then as they're trying to get out, they're going to be crashing into each other. So, I think slowing the traffic down somehow has to happen especially right here on this blind hill. Other than that, I'm sure we'll make it happen. That's why y'all get paid the big bucks. Alright guys, I got to get back to it, but you can call the store. I did hear that you can call the store, that's fine and we'll set up a meeting.

Greg Burke: Excellent, will do.

Eric: Alright guys y'all have a good night

Kate: Thanks

Greg: Thanks

Suzanne: Thank you for joining us.