



September 19, 2023

COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM 7B

**SR 267 SHARED-USE TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY**

TYPE OF ITEM: Action

**STATEMENT OF ISSUE**

The State Road 267 (SR 267) Shared-Use Path Feasibility Study was initiated in August of 2022. This study assessed the ability to construct a shared-use path along SR 267, also known as Bloxham Cutoff, between the Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park and the St. Marks Trail. The Project Team will be presenting the Feasibility Study, provide the futures steps with the project, and answer any questions by the CRTPA Committees.

**CRTPA COMMITTEE ACTIONS**

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

The CRTPA Technical Advisory Committee, at their September 5, 2023, meeting, voted unanimously to recommend the CRTPA approve the SR 267 Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study.

**Citizens Multimodal Advisory Committee (CMAC)**

The CRTPA's Citizen's Multimodal Advisory Committee did not have a quorum at their September 5, 2023, meeting. However, members that were present recommended the CRTPA Board approve the SR 267 Shared-Use Trail Feasibility Study.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- Option 1: Approve Alternative 1: Wakulla Park Service Road/North Side of SR 267 as the option to move into the design phase.  
(RECOMMENDED)
  
- Option 2: Adopt the SUN Trails Resolution of Support for the construction phase of the SR 267 Trail.  
(RECOMMENDED)
  
- Option 3: CRTPA Board Discretion.

## **BACKGROUND**

The SR 267 connection between Wakulla Springs State Park and the St. Marks Trail was first identified by the CRTPA in the Capital City to the Sea (CC2S) Master Plan and was one of the highest requested linkages along the system. As the CC2S moved into the prioritization phase, the Coastal Trail took precedence due to the linkage existing trail systems and the opportunity to garner funds from the newly established Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)/Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Shared-Use Non-Motorized Trail System (SUN Trails). As the Coastal Trail moves towards completion, other linkages in the CC2S system were reviewed to determine the best locations to initiate and the SR 267 corridor was chosen.

As with other trail projects, the CRTPA first initiates a feasibility study to evaluate the corridor for potential fatal flaws, environment issues, right-of-way availability, and coordination with major stakeholders. Phase two of this process includes the Public Engagement component to provide the opportunity for citizens to comment, suggest or ask questions regarding the existing conditions and the overall concept of the trail.

One of the most important components of the project is the coordination with Wakulla Springs State Park because the concept of the trail included a portion to be contained within the property of the state park. These efforts included meeting with the park administration, ensuring that the project was contained in the Unit Management Plan, and coordination throughout the process.

## **FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The [Feasibility Study](#) is divided into several chapters that follow the process that was taken to complete the study. These steps are outlined below.

### **Existing Conditions**

The major categories that include in the Existing Conditions chapter Transportation Conditions, Environmental Characteristics, and Existing Projects.

The major highlights of the Transportation Conditions (pages 5 through 18) include:

- SR 267 is a two-lane east-west road that connects to Leon County to the West and the Coastal Highway to the East with an average daily traffic of approximately 4,000 vehicles.
- The major roadway linkages of the corridor include Crawfordville Road, Woodville Highway, and the Coastal Highway.
- From a non-motorized perspective, the connection to the St. Marks Trail provides access to the Lighthouse Road (St. Marks Wildlife Refuge), Ochlockonee Bay Trail, Mashers Sands, Cascades Park at a minimum.
- Along the corridor there is 100 feet of right of way with the road centered in the middle of the right-of-way. The right-of-way has been cleared of trees so there won't be any tree impacts.

- There is one bridge along the corridor (McBride Slough Bridge) that will be further detailed in the Alternatives chapter.
- The Wakulla Springs service road is approximately 150 feet south of SR 267 and is approximately 1.5 miles in length.

The Environmental Characteristics (pages 19 through 24) include:

- Flood Zones and Wetlands – not anticipated to be impacted by the project.
- Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas & Rare Species Habitat.
- Cultural Resources – outside of the Wakulla Springs State Park, there are no cultural resources along SR 267. Inside of the park, the identified resources are not between SR 267 and the service road identified to be the shared-use trail.
- Wakulla State Forest – located on the north side of SR 267, the shared-use trail would provide access via Rosa Shingles Trailhead, identified on **Figure 25 – Trails** (page 23).

There are two existing projects within the corridor (pages 25 and 27):

- SR 267 Resurfacing from the Leon County Line to Woodville Highway (scheduled for FY 24). This project includes improvements to the intersection of SR 267/Shadeville Road/Old Woodville Road (shown on page 11 of the Feasibility Report). This intersection improvement will occur independent of the SR 267 Shared-Use Trail design but will be noted as the design phase moves forward.
- Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park Alternate Multi-Use Trail Route Study - The purpose of this analysis was to conduct a review of existing and future regional multi-use trail systems, evaluate the existing trails and pathways within the core area of the Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park and review potential alternatives for a primary accessway for visitors traveling on bicycles to enter the park.
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### **Design Criteria**

There are standards that apply to the design of trails, and these are outlined on pages 28 and 29. Additional discussion within the Design Criteria (pages 30 and 31) includes:

- Intersection Concepts
- Side Street Crossings
- Midblock Crossing
- Typical Section

### **Design Recommendations**

Following Design Criteria, there is a chapter for Design Recommendations (page 31) specific to the SR 267 project, including:

- Trail Width and Separation – the Feasibility Study recommendation is for a 12-foot-wide trail with as far away from the road as possible.

- Meandering Design – as with all the trails the CRTPA pursues, if there is the possibility to meander the trail, that is what will be pursued.

### **Alternatives Analysis**

There were four (4) potential alternatives developed for analysis. A common element for all four (4) is the use of the Wakulla Springs Park Service Road for approximately 1.5 miles. The variations then consider the north side or south side of SR 267, and the use of additional publicly-owner property for the SR 267 corridor. Each alternative is described below and can be found on pages 31 through 38).

Alternative 1: Wakulla Park Service Road/North Side of SR 267 – from the service road the trail would then cross SR 267 to the north side and connect to the Rosa Shingles Trailhead. From the Rosa Shingles Trailhead, the trail would continue east on the north side of SR 267 right-of-way until connecting to the St. Marks Trail.

Alternative 2: Park Service Road/South Side of SR 267 – From the service road the trail would then continue east along SR 267 right-of-way until connecting to the St. Marks Trail. This would require crossing Shadeville Road at the intersection with SR 267.

Alternative 3: Park Service Road/North Side Off-System – From the service road the trail would then cross SR 267 to the north side and connect to the Rosa Shingles Trailhead. The trail would then turn north and east with State Forest property until connecting back to the north side of SR 267 near the Wakulla State Forest Ranger Station. The trail would continue on the north side of SR 267 until connecting to the St. Marks Trail.

Alternative 4: Park Service Road/South Side Off-System - From the service road the trail would then continue east along SR 267 right-of-way until turning south and following the eastern perimeter of Wakulla Springs State Park property. The trail would then head east until reaching the Electric transmission easement where the trail would head north until reaching SR 267. The trail would then follow along the southside of the SR 267 until crossing Shadeville road and connecting to the St. Mark's trail.

Ultimately, the off-system options created circuitous routes (and potentially more environmental concerns and higher costs) as opposed to a more direct route. Therefore, alternatives three (3) and four (4) were not pursued as the option to recommend for the trail.

Based on input from the public (see Public Engagement), stakeholder engagement, engineering, environmental and constructability factors, the recommended alternative for the trail is Alternative 1: Wakulla Park Service Road/North Side of SR 267.

### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Public Engagement Chapter can be found on pages 39 and 40. After the development of the existing conditions and the alternatives, the CRTPA held a public meeting at the Wakulla Lodge to receive input and answer questions regarding the SR 267 project. Appendix D contains the sign-in sheets, comment sheets and comments left on the maps at the public meeting. The comments from the meeting are provided below:

- Please push this plan, I am not going to live forever.
- The bridge crossing needs special attention. A separate bridge would be best.
- Great project. This will be heavily used. Like the north alternative a bit better.
- Please finish the design fast and look for funds to get this constructed.
- The Friends of Wakulla Springs State Park fully support this trail project.
- The McBride Slough is an environmentally sensitive feature, please protect this area without disturbing its present use.
- Prefer bike trail on south side – keep traffic out of the neighborhoods.
- It is a great idea. I vote for the north side, ease of construction.
- I am all in, full speed ahead. I like the section that goes into the woods along the north side of Wakulla Springs Park.
- Prefer the north alternative. Plant trees after construction for more shade.
- I like the reconfigured SR 267/Bloxham Crossing intersection.
- I have studied the corridor many times and suggest the trail be located on the north side of the road until Rosa Parks and then cross over to state property.
- I believe in bicycle rights.

The meeting included a set of aerial maps that citizens could add sticky notes to for adding comments on the project and these comments are provided below.

- Want trail option that connects with Rosa Shingles Trailhead.
- 50-50 North or South. I vote for the quickest construction.
- Plant trees after trail is constructed.
- Slight preference for north alternative, less crossings and fewer driveways.
- There needs to be a separate bridge for bikes. No compromise please.
- Kudos to the designers for section of the path on service road.
- I like no power poles. Plant trees for north side route.
- I like shade and less intersections. I like the south side route.
- Please choose the side with the most shade.

### **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

In addition to the Feasibility Report there are several Appendices that include the following:

[Appendix A – Aerial Maps](#)

[Appendix B – Parcel Ownership](#)

[Appendix C – Environmental Maps](#)

[Appendix D – Resurfacing Plan](#)

[Appendix E – Wakulla Springs Management Plan](#)

[Appendix F – Public Meeting Materials](#)

### **NEXT STEPS**

The CRTPA has funded the design phase of the project which is scheduled to begin in January of 2024. Construction of the project is not funded. However, the project was added to the FDEP Priority Trail system earlier in 2023 and as the next funding cycle of SUN Trails is released (Fall of 2023) staff will be applying for the construction phase. To that end, CRTPA staff is seeking approval of a Resolution of

Support (**Attachment 1**) for the SUN Trails application seeking funds for the construction phase of the project.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - CRTPA SUN Trail Resolution of Support for construction of the SR 267 Trail.

**CRTPA RESOLUTION 2023-09-7B**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY (CRTPA) SUPPORTING A SUN TRAILS APPLICATION FOR FUNDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SR 267 TRAIL**

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**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) is to "Create an integrated regional multimodal transportation network that provides the most options for moving people and goods economically, effectively and safely while protecting the environment, promoting economic development and maintaining a high quality of life with sustainable development patterns"; and

**WHEREAS**, the SR 267 Trail (Wakulla Springs State Park to St. Marks Trail) is an integral link in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Greenways & Trails System Plan and is a Priority Corridor on the SUN Trails Network; and

**WHEREAS**, the development of the SR 267 Trail will continue the expansion of the regional trail system and provide significant economic benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, the SR 267 Trail is a priority on the CRTPA’s Regional Trail Priority Project List; and

**WHEREAS**, the CRTPA has completed the SR 267 Feasibility Study indicating the available right-of-way in which to construct a trail and strong public support of a trail; and

**WHEREAS**, the next step in the development of the SR 267 Trail will be to design the trail in Fiscal Year 2024.

**NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY (CRTPA) THAT:**

The CRTPA supports the submission of an application to the SUN Trails Program seeking funding for the construction of a trail connecting Wakulla Springs State Park to the St. Marks Trail along SR 267 in Wakulla County.

Passed and duly adopted by the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023.

**Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_

Rick Minor, Chair

**Attest**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_

Greg Slay, Executive Director