



THE FLORIDA HEARTLAND REGIONAL TRAIL

Feasibility Studies

KICKOFF NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One is coordinating the development of feasibility studies for the Florida Heartland Regional Trail.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THIS PROJECT?

In 2024, FDOT completed a Master Plan to evaluate a paved, multi-use trail for bicyclists and pedestrians from Collier County to Polk County. The Master Plan included preliminary routing alternatives and associated recommendations to develop the project as a regionally significant trail within the Florida Shared Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network. The Master Plan set the stage to conduct feasibility studies for what is now called the Florida Heartland Regional Trail.

WHAT IS A REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT TRAIL?

The Florida Heartland Regional Trail has been identified and prioritized as a regionally significant trail by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council [Section 260.0142(4)(c), FS]. That means it is recognized for its potential to:

- ✓ Cross multiple counties
- ✓ Attract national and international visitors
- ✓ Provide opportunities for economic and ecotourism development
- ✓ Showcase the value of wildlife areas, ecology, and natural resources
- ✓ Serve as a main corridor for critical links and trail connectedness

WHY ARE MULTIPLE FEASIBILITY STUDIES BEING CONDUCTED?

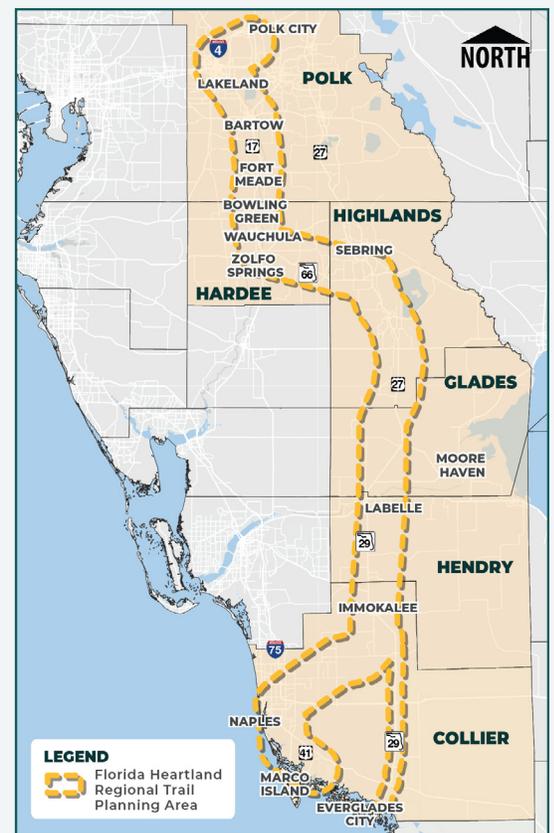
Because of the Florida Heartland Regional Trail's extensive length, separate feasibility studies are being conducted in each of the counties that are part of the trail planning area: Collier, Hendry, Glades, Highlands, Hardee, and Polk (see map). While each feasibility study will follow its own schedule, they are all expected to be completed in Spring 2027. *The next page of this newsletter provides specific information about the feasibility study being developed for the Glades County segment of the project.*

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT?

For general information, visit the project website at FloridaHeartlandRegionalTrail.com. For information about the Glades County segment feasibility study, see the project contact details on the next page.

WHAT IS A FEASIBILITY STUDY?

A feasibility study considers potential social, economic, and environmental effects, as well as constructability and costs, to determine project viability. The study helps FDOT determine how the project will move forward to future phases. The starting point for the Florida Heartland Regional Trail's feasibility studies will be the Collier to Polk Trail Master Plan's preliminary routing alternatives.

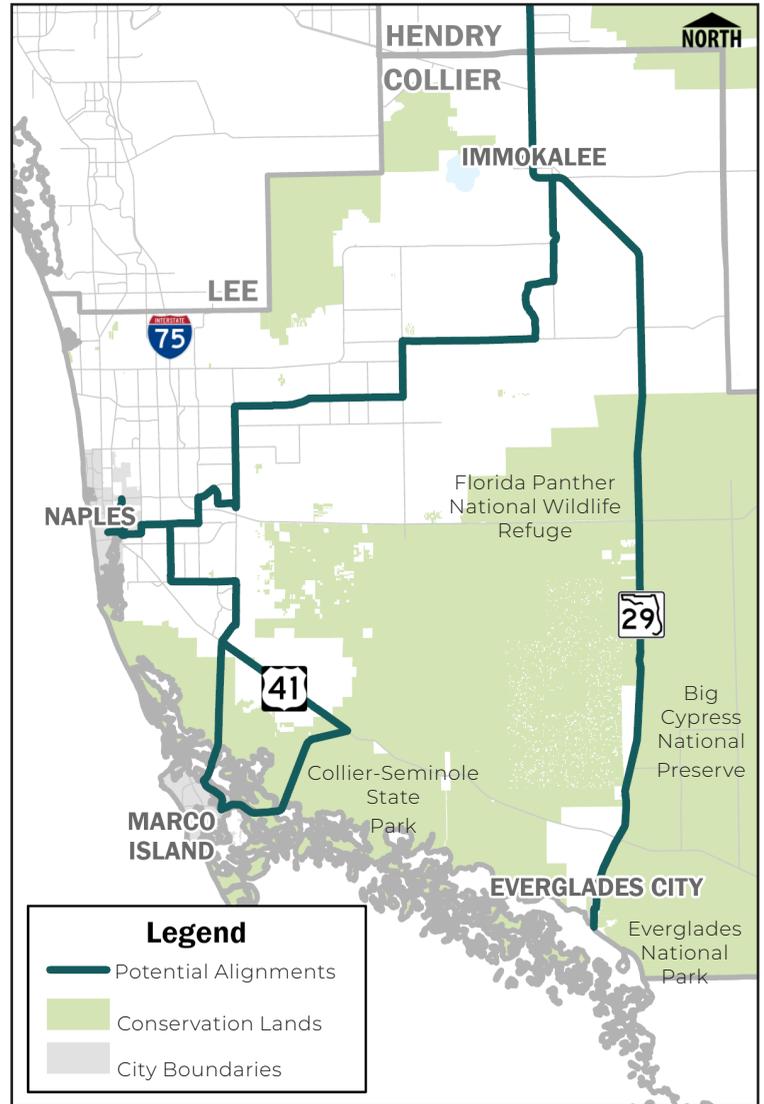


COLLIER COUNTY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Master Plan resulted in a defined trail corridor within Collier County which includes the recommendations from the Paradise Coast Trail Pathway Report and Feasibility Study and the Marco Island Loop Trail Feasibility Study, as well as a trail alignment along State Road (SR) 29 and County Road (CR) 29 from Everglades City to the Collier-Hendry county line. The purpose of this Feasibility Study is to further evaluate the trail corridor to establish the SUN Trail network for the Florida Heartland Regional Trail in Collier County, the largest and southernmost county in the study area. The trail is envisioned as a 12-foot-wide, paved, multi-use facility designed to meet SUN Trail criteria and remain safely separated from major roadways, providing a high-quality, accessible, and comfortable experience for all users.

Collier County is home to the communities of Naples, Golden Gate Estates, Marco Island, Everglades City, Immokalee, and Ave Maria, as well as major outdoor destinations such as Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, and Collier-Seminole State Park. The Florida Heartland Regional Trail in Collier County aims to connect these cities and natural resources through three specific trail corridors including the Paradise Coast Trail consisting of 75.2 miles, the Marco Island Loop Trail for 18.6 miles, and the SR 29 Trail consisting of 42.4 miles. The approximate total length of the trail network in Collier County is 136 miles.



GET INVOLVED TODAY!

Public involvement is an integral part of the feasibility study process. FDOT will engage interested parties throughout the study process and there will be opportunities for public comment, including a public information meeting. Please visit the project website at www.swflroads.com/project/455291-1 for more information. You can also contact the project manager using the contact information shown below.

FDOT PROJECT MANAGER:

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On behalf of Environmental Management Office
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PROJECT SCHEDULE



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

NON-DISCRIMINATION LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The Florida Department of Transportation may adopt this planning product into the environmental review process, pursuant to Title 23 U.S.C. § 168 (d) or the state project development process.

Para Materiales del Proyecto En Español: Por favor contacte a Karina Della Sera para información en español: Karina.DellaSera@dot.state.fl.us o 863-519-2750.



COLLIER COUNTY
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