



Steering Committee Meeting February 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Kurt Ardaman, West Orange Healthcare District
Lesa Boettcher, Foundation for a Healthier West Orange
Rogers Beckett, South Apopka Safe Neighborhood Program
Kelly Carson, City of Winter Garden
Krista Carter, West Orange Chamber
Ginger Corless, City of Ocoee
Joe Dunn, Friends of Lake Apopka
Barbara Giles, Bike/Walk Central Florida
Hannah Gutner, Orange County District 1
Emily Hanna, Bike/Walk Central Florida
Mark Johnson, City of Ocoee
Stephen Koontz, Town of Oakland

Sarah Larsen, MetroPlan Orlando
Cedric Moffett, Orange County Parks Planning
Theresa Myers, Gotha Rural Settlement and Nehrling Gardens
Elisha Pappacode, Town of Oakland
Lee-Alyse Perry, Orange County District 1
Regina Ramos, Orange County Parks
Robert Smith, Town of Windermere
Matt Suedmeyer, Orange County Parks
Tracy Swanson, Foundation for a Healthier West Orange
Commissioner Nicole Wilson, Orange County District 1
Jim Ward, Orange County Planning

Welcome & Introductions

Barbara Giles welcomed and thanked members for their participation in the Healthy West Orange Trails Connection (HWOTC) Steering Committee. Introductions were made.

Barbara said the formation of HWOTC was formally announced after last Thursday's Winter Garden town council meeting. Winter Garden and Ocoee passed resolutions of support of HWOTC at their council meetings. Similar resolutions are on upcoming agendas for Oakland next week and Windermere in March. The Gotha Rural Settlement Association, MetroPlan Orlando and Orange County Parks & Recreation Division have also submitted letters of support and participation.

Recap of Initiative Report and Progress

Emily Hanna gave a recap of the Trails Initiative Report prepared during the last year of work and research from many of the steering committee members, facilitated by Ginger Corless and the West Orange Healthcare District. (Initiative Report Attached).

During her recap, Emily asked each municipality for an update on projects identified in the report. Those updates are as follows:

Oakland:

Steve Koontz reported that the Sadler Fitness Trail is a little behind their schedule, but in the works. Once the trail is complete, work can begin on the dog park and playground.

Winter Garden:

Kelly Carson reported that Winter Garden's #1 priority is the Dillard Street project.

- The Dillard project is at 100% design. As soon as a few right-of-ways are resolved, they are ready to send out for bids, hopefully this year.



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- The Butterfly Garden is near completion.
- The Plant Street realignment phase near City Hall is on hold until the Dillard Street project is complete because they don't want two major street projects with closures and detours happening at the same time. The phase near Tildenville is a smaller project with one crosswalk. Emily will reach out to Kelly about the crosswalk project and offer some Best Foot Forward insight.
- The Tucker Wellness Hub is a distant project.

Ocoee:

Ginger reported on multiple projects underway in Ocoee.

- The Wellness Park will break ground on March 10.
- The Downtown Connector construction will start this summer.
- The Bluford Multi-use path is under engineering.
- She believes they will have a state grant for the Lakefront restroom facilities.
- And it looks like Ocoee will get the remaining funding for the multi-use paths on Clarke Road from AD Mims Road to Clarcona Ocoee Road.

Windermere:

Mike Woodward and Robert Smith reported on Windermere's Ward Trail project.

- The Ward Trail is at 60% design for phase 1 from North Drive to Park Avenue. They are looking at how to best preserve the trees.
- The next phase would be from North Drive south to 6th Avenue.
- They have asked for state funding for phase 1. Construction schedule will be based on funding.

Gotha:

Theresa Myers reported that Gotha's ultimate goal is to have a path from Old Winter Garden Road down the west side of Hempel Ave. - preserving trees on the east side of Hempel - and across 6th Street and Park Ridge to Maguire.

Volunteers will build a wildflower corridor along Gotha Road toward the historic schoolhouse.

Gotha has been able to secure some signage to help identify the Rural Gotha Settlement. The area is at risk of losing its identity to the Windermere zip code. It is the first German American community in the state of Florida.

Orange County Parks:

Regina Ramos reported that they are at 60% design for the Lake Apopka connector and are initiating design on the Horizons West Trail. Parks is actively moving on both of those projects.

MetroPlan Orlando Mapping Project and Orange County Transportation Sales Tax

Emily discussed the MPO mapping project of future bicycle/pedestrian routes and trails throughout Central Florida. This is the first part of MPO's feasibility study for the region's 2045 Vision, and they are



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starting with bike/ped needs. The bike/ped study will explore if there is a need and can it be done. The project will start in March or April. Emily explained the benefits of allowing MPO to complete this network analysis project before HWOTC commits to trails connection projects.

Commissioner Wilson gave information on the Orange County Transportation Open House in District 1 at Windermere High School on February 28 at 6:30 p.m. (flier attached).

Goals from the Initiative Report and Next Steps

Emily recapped the goals from the initiative report and emphasized that we continue to collaborate, connect and enhance the trails system in West Orange County.

Lee-Alyse Perry wanted to make sure we are including underserved communities, considering equity and identifying areas that can be reconnected.

Establishing the following working groups was discussed. Some members expressed interest in participating on these groups and other members should let Barbara know on which group they can help.

Safety Working Group:

Members work towards improving trail safety (education, engineering, etc.)

Hannah Gutner

Communication + Events Working Group:

Members work towards supporting events and activation for the Connection

Lesa Boettcher, Elisha Pappacode

Trail Design + Connections Working Group:

Members work towards creating trailside development guidelines and help determine appropriate routes for each jurisdiction to prioritize for future trail development.

Emily Hanna, Jim Ward, Cedric Moffet, Sarah Larsone, Rogers Beckett

Enhancement Working Group:

Members work towards enhancing the existing trail infrastructure by reviewing needs and aid with making those improvements.

Joe Dunn (beginning with FOLA's current four projects)

Kick-off Event

Barbara reviewed some kick-off event ideas and asked the group for input. The committee decided that any event would be geared toward the general public and not leadership.

Ginger wanted to make sure that we continue to take advantage of existing events for communication and education opportunities such as the HWO Fresh Festival in Oakland and to continue those events. She also emphasized that whatever signature event we might do should include other components than just bicycling.



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The communication and events working group will flesh out some of the ideas discussed and come up with a plan.

Action items

- All steering committee members: Complete the HWOTC prioritization survey. [Link here.](#)
- All steering committee members let Barbara know on which working group you can help. Barbara, Emily or Lesa will be in touch about working group meeting dates.
- Barbara will send out a calendar invitation for steering committee meetings for the remainder of the year. Steering committee meetings will be held at **Healthy West Orange at 11 a.m.** on:
 - May 19, 2022
 - August 18, 2022
 - November 17, 2022
- Share and attend the Orange County D1 Transportation Open House on February 28. (flier attached)
- [Register for the FOLA 40!](#) Choose from 8, 16, 32, 40 miles. Share with others. (flier attached)