



Attendance:

Rogers Beckett, South Apopka Safe Neighborhoods
Pat Brown, Healthy West Orange
Kelly Carson, City of Winter Garden
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
Stephanie Moss, Florida Department of Transportation
Theresa Myers, Nehrling Gardens
Victoria Naskale, Florida Department of Transportation
Regina Ramos, Orange County Parks & Recreation
Robert Smith, Town of Windermere
Gavin Bunton, Bike/Walk Central Florida
Erin Hearn, Bike/Walk Central Florida

Welcome and Introductions

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

Minutes from the previous meeting in May will be sent again to steering committee members for final approval and then posted on the Healthy West Orange Trails Connection web page.

Working Groups Reports

All working groups continue to make progress and gave updates with the group.

Safety – Stephanie Moss thanked steering committee for helping distribute the trails safety survey and presented a glance of the results. Highlights include:

- 531 people took the survey.
- 60% of respondents use the trail at least once a week.
- The majority of respondents use the trail between Winter Garden and Oakland Outpost
- The majority of survey respondents were cyclists. Runners & walkers combined were 36% of respondents.

- When asked how concerned they are with a set of issues when using the trail, the highest complaint was “Pedestrians not moving over, or allowing dogs to take up trail.” With combined responses of “somewhat or very concerned,” being struck by a motor vehicle was the highest (77%) concern.
- 74% of respondents have experienced people not moving over or taking up entire trail.
- Most people reported as very comfortable using the WOT.

The survey had ended only a few days prior to the meeting. The safety committee will spend more time analyzing the long answer responses and use the entire survey as they move forward with the safety study this fall.

Communications & Events – Barbara and Emily Hanna shared plans for the “Take over the Trails Day.

- The event will take place Saturday, October 1, 2022, from 9 a.m. to noon near the West Orange Trail at Town of Oakland Arts and Heritage Center.
- All steering committee member organizations are encouraged to participate. Erin Hearn has reached out and received affirmative responses from most members. If members haven’t responded, they should contact Erin.
- The working group is mapping out where partners will be set up.
- “Vendors” will mostly be partners to educate on trail etiquette and what each organization is doing to connect and activate trails. The communications & events working group is drafting a passport to encourage visitors to visit each vendor for a stamp and a chance to win prizes.
- Joe Dunn with FOLA and also invited the Oakland Nature Preserve to share a table with them.
- Theresa Nehrling hasn’t received emails, and Erin will send her more information. Nehrling is having their plant giveaway the morning of the Take Over the Trails event. They might have difficulty arranging for a volunteer to be there to represent Gotha. Emily offered to find a volunteer to share their information at a table in Oakland.
- Kelly Carson asked about tables and tents. Participants should provide their own tables and tents. Oakland can furnish a table if needed, but participants should notify them this week if needed.
- Pat Brown received a message from Danny DeSha at Orange County Parks and Recreation asking about the event and a permit. Regina Ramos will work with Danny, and Emily and Erin have been in touch with parks as well.

Trail Design & Connections – Emily reported that the design & connections working group has been doing mapping exercises, and Emily will send the maps out to the steering committee. The group is looking at where trails are existing, where opportunities are for protecting them, what should buffer widths be, etc.

- The working group will draft a trail design guidelines document for municipalities and developers.

- The group will also start to identify trail connections opportunities and set some standards. They are looking at designs and what we want to ultimately see in the west Orange trail network.
- Next meeting is in September. If interested, you are welcome to attend.
- Joe Dunn commented that he likes what the working group is doing with the map and guidelines projects. However, he doesn't want us to miss the opportunities of developments and would like us to figure out something to do in the short term before the designs of new projects are complete and it's too late.
- Theresa Myers commented that Orange County is planning to develop the green space across Nehrling Gardens with plans to change the zoning from agricultural 1 to commercial. Hannah Gutner added that Theresa is referring to a commercial property that has been operating out of compliance for 20 years, and it's a unique situation.
- Hannah offered that if the working group sends her questions about any partial of concern, she can help us address the issues.
- Emily stated that Orange County's Jim Ward is on the working group, and he can help flag any issues. She asked for steering committee members to bring any issues to them.

Enhancement & Restore – Joe Dunn shared updates on the initial four projects on West Orange Trail.

- Hennis Road – The group wanted to get out ahead of any commercial development on this section. We partnered with City of Winter Garden, Orange County Parks, Bloom & Grow and Healthy West Orange (HWO) and planted live oaks and fire bushes along the trail. HWO provided sponsorship funding for the project to purchase materials and signs. They will take a partner photo Monday, August 22 at 4:30 p.m. with unveiling of the signs.
- West Road, CFX property: Proposed 100 confederate jasmine plants to make the wire fence more vegetative. They will plant end of September.
- Corner of Ingram and WOT parking. Working with Orange County Parks, Commissioner Moore and Ocoee Mayor Johnson on the project to turn the lot into a mini- trailhead.
- City of Apopka parcel – working with Apopka and Orange County Parks to develop a small pocket park along the trail.

New OCPS Technical School on West Orange Trail

Committee members are meeting with OCPS officials on-site meeting Friday, August 19, 8:30 a.m. to discuss the design and buffer of the new OCPS technical college facility that will be built along the trail. In October, an OCPS representative assured the FOLA committee that there will be an adequate buffer. Emily acquired the design and found that the buffer would only be 10 feet with many trees to be removed. The working group is hoping to come to an agreement with OCPS to provide a wider buffer.

Theresa Myers shared a website with mathematical algorithms to show the benefits of trees that we can use for facts to back our ask. National Tree Benefits: www.treebenefits.com

Orange County Transportation Sales Tax

Emily stated that BWCF board has been actively involved in the meetings involving the transportation sales tax. She asked the steering committee if HWOTC should take a stance on the sales tax initiative.

Emily had asked the question to Orange County: “Can the funding be used for trails?” She learned the funding can only be used if the path is less than 12 feet wide. Greater than 12 feet, it would be considered a recreational trail. Orange County and MPO have identified needs but not any projects or designs.

The steering committee decided that members will individually advocate for this, but collectively HWOTC will not submit a letter of support.

Prioritization of HWOTC Funding

The next HWOTC executive meetings will be strategy working groups to prioritize where and when the HWOTC funding will be used. All steering committee members are invited to attend and participate. Voting members will decide the final outcome. The next meetings are September 21 and October 20.

Other

Safe Streets for All federal grant

Emily shared that MPO is applying for “Safe Streets for All” federal grant. They are asking municipalities to be part of this and take part in creating an action plan. They are identifying safety projects. There is a match component to the grant. Ocoee hasn’t applied yet, and Mark Johnson will talk to Ginger Corless today to assure they don’t miss deadline.

Mobility Week – FDOT week to explore other options for transportation: October 22- 28, 2022. Emily will send cities examples of proclamations for Mobility Week.

Bike 5 Cities takes place October 29. If partners would like to participate, contact Emily to register complimentary.

Next Steps

Important Dates:

- TAKE OVER THE TRAILS DAY – OCTOBER 1ST – OAKLAND
- Steering Committee – Thursday, November 17, 11 a.m. at HWO
- Safety Working groups , 2nd Thursdays at 4:30 p.m.
- Communications & Events, Wednesday, August 24, 3 p.m.
- Design & Connections, Tuesdays, 11 a.m., September 13, October 11, November
- Enhance & Restore, TBD
- Executive Committee, Third Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m., September 21, October 20, November 16