



POLICY 2016-4

REGIONAL TRAILS POLICY

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The Lake~Sumter MPO (MPO) will enhance safety, mobility, accessibility and convenience for regional trail users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, by planning a network of regional trails. This objective is consistent with regional transportation goals and visions set forth in TRANSPORTATION 2040, the MPOs long range transportation plan.

2. BACKGROUND:

Trails contribute to a community by providing people of all ages with an attractive, safe, and accessible place for recreation and transportation. The ultimate goal of a trail is to connect people to destinations.

Regional Trails are characterized by their interconnection to regional destinations and other statewide trails including the SUNTrail statewide network and trails identified in FDEP, Office of Greenways & Trails, Land Trail Opportunity Map and the Lake County Trails Masterplan. In addition to their ability to provide long distances of travel for recreational users by connecting major trail systems, these trails connect destinations, such as schools, parks and downtown areas, to communities. They are considered the backbone of larger state-wide trail systems. Regional Trails are designed to also attract users from other areas of the state or country and are the "showcase" of the area.

Regional trails are restricted to non-motorized modes of transportation and intended for a variety of user types to share. Typical uses include recreational and commuter purposes such as bicycling, in-line skating, roller skating, pet walking, pedestrians, exercising, nature walks, etc. The most common trail would be an asphalt or concrete surface of 12-14 feet in width with travel in both directions. The Regional Trails would be expected to connect regionally significant destinations or trail systems and would provide trailheads, rest stops, wayfinding and an overall user experience of the surrounding environment.

3. DEFINITION:

The MPO's definition of a regional trail is a trail that is separated from motor vehicle traffic and serves transportation, recreation, and health purposes for non-motorized transportation. Trails are regional in nature when they connect communities and serve the region as a whole. These trails are commonly called shared-use paths, multi-use paths, or bike paths and all have a paved surface. Regional trails are intended to be universally accessible for all users. Hiking and mountain biking trails are not considered regional trails in this plan because they do not serve a significant transportation purpose and are less accessible. A regional trail would provide non-motorized access to hiking and mountain biking trails, serving as a backbone to a larger trails network. Regional trails also provide non-motorized access to community centers and other developed areas as well as open space and other trails.

4. GOALS:

- a. Provides a foundation to advance the regional and statewide trail network in our planning area and identifies sources of funding;
- b. The establishment of clear priorities for coordinating, directing and focusing resources.
- c. Advances a framework for systematically "closing gaps" and connecting priority corridors within our planning area to establish a fully connected and integrated regional trail network.
- d. Supports linkages between policy and complementary state and regional trail planning efforts
- e. Develop consensus on priorities for regional trails development
- f. Act as an information clearing house for regional trails stakeholders
- g. Promote awareness of existing and developing trails

5. POLICY

The MPO will promote the Regional Trail network throughout the region and recommends that all member governments adopt Regional Trail policies, consistent with this policy. The MPO will seek incorporation of the Regional Trail network and policy into the development of all transportation projects where applicable.

6. CRITERIA:

The following categories of Trails are considered Regional Trails and are eligible for funding under the Regional Trails Policy for the Lake~Sumter MPO.

- a. **SUNTrail** eligible funding projects as identified in 339.81, F.S., and depicted on the SUNTrail Network Map in or adjacent to the Lake~Sumter MPO Planning area.
 - i. Coast to Coast Trail
 - ii. Heart of Florida Loop Trail
 - iii. St. Johns River to Sea Loop Trail

- b. Trails included on the **FDEP, Office of Greenways & Trails - Land Trails Opportunity Map.**

The Land Trails Opportunity Map represents the existing, planned and conceptual non-motorized trails that form a land-based trail network of state and regional importance. This map is a synthesis of trail planning efforts being conducted by cities, counties, transportation planning organizations and other agencies and non-profits throughout Florida. This map does not include all existing, proposed and conceptual trails in Florida, but focuses on linear trails of state and regional significance to form a comprehensive connected system. The Land Trails Opportunity Map is the state companion to community greenways and trails and bicycle and pedestrian master plans, and encompasses a combination of multiple and single-use trails to accommodate uses such as: walking, hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, skating and wildlife viewing.

- c. The **Lake County Trails Master Plan** was developed with the intent of providing not only a long-term vision, but bringing that vision into short-term focus with a realistic and practical approach to connectivity between schools, parks, neighborhoods, town centers, libraries, and the surrounding counties. The Master Plan identified 322 miles of shared-use trails, both regional and local trails, developed design standards, and created an implementation plan for the next 20 years. This plan serves as a guide to the location, design, prioritization, implementation, and maintenance of a comprehensive trail network within Lake County. The Plan also provides the information needed by Federal, State, County, municipality, and private stakeholders to preserve right-of-way and focus the funding necessary to implement the trail network. The identified Regional Trail network in the 2008 Lake County Trails Masterplan, are listed below:
 - i. Sugar Loaf Mountain Trail
 - ii. South Lake Trail
 - iii. Lake-Wekiva Trail
 - iv. Tav-Lee Trail

- v. Tav-Dora Trail
- vi. North Lake Trail
- vii. Lake Denham Trail
- viii. Gardenia Trail
- ix. Leesburg To Wildwood Trail
- x. Southlake - Citrus Ridge Trail
- xi. West Lake Trail
- xii. Black Bear Scenic Trail
- xiii. Van Fleet Trail

7. REQUIREMENTS

- a. Project sponsors must complete and submit a Project Information Application and Maintenance Agreement covering the long term operation and maintenance of the trail facility.
- b. Each project should use the most appropriate design standards and procedures. For projects using MPO attributable federal funding, it will be necessary to meet or exceed standards and procedures acceptable to the Florida and U.S. Departments of Transportation.
- c. Designs shall include accommodation of all users and be sensitive to the context of the project category, i.e. SUNTrail network, Office of Greenways & Trails Land Trails Opportunity Network and the Lake County Trails Masterplan regional trail design standards.
- d. The project sponsor shall provide the local transit agency the opportunity to participate throughout the entire process and require the involvement of the local transit agency in the design process to ensure that sufficient accommodation of transit users and access to transit facilities is provided.

8. APPEALS

When a member government is not in agreement with the MPO's decision regarding regional trails in projects subject to the Transportation Improvement Program Selection Process, the jurisdiction may introduce a formal appeal by means of a resolution adopted by their local governing body. The resolution must be submitted to the MPO and proceed through the established transportation planning process. As such, the

resolution will be subject to review and comment by the Technical Advisory Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The MPO Governing Board, after considering comments from the other three committees, will make the final decision on the appeal.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

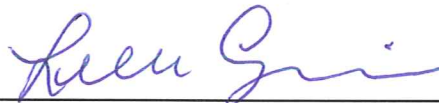
Upon approval and adoption of this Regional Trail policy, it will become part of MPOs planning process and project selection for state and federal funding. The principles of this policy will also guide MPO staff in preparation of MPO planning documents and regional transportation planning efforts to which it contributes. TRANSPORTATION 2040 will be amended to incorporate this policy in accordance with the requirements of the plan at adoption. A list of Regional Trail projects meeting the requirements of this policy will also be included in the amendment of TRANSPORTATION 2040. Also, the List of Priority Projects will be amended as necessary in order to seek funding for projects as the result of the completion and resolution of support of a Regional Trail Project Information Application.

10. EVALUATION

The MPO, at a minimum, will evaluate this policy and the documents associated with it on an annual basis. This evaluation may include recommendations for amendments to the Regional Trail Policy, including the development of prioritization criteria, design guidance, and subsequently be considered for adoption by the MPO Governing Board.

Policy Approved on: June 22, 2016

Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization



Leslie Campione, Chairman

Approved as to form and legality:



Melanie Marsh, MPO Attorney