



Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

801 N Broadway Avenue
Bartow, FL 33830

JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

September 12, 2024

Cody McGhee, Director
Parks and Recreation Department
City of Auburndale
119 West Park Street
Auburndale, Florida 33823

**RE: Lake Ariana Park
Section 4(f) Statement of Significance / Recommended Determination of Applicability
Old Dixie Trail Project Development and Environment Study from Auburndale to
Haines City
Polk County, Florida
Financial Project ID 435391-1-22-01**

Dear Mr. McGhee:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District One is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide regional connectivity, contribute to safe multimodal access to community and recreational destinations, enhance quality of life and foster economic development in the vicinity of the proposed Old Dixie Trail (ODT). The proposed improvements will generally include the construction of a shared use path, varying in width from 10 to 12 feet with 4- to 5-foot sodded buffers on both sides between the Auburndale Trail to the Haines City Trail in Polk County, for a distance of approximately 13 miles (see **Attachment 1**). Improvements will include crosswalks and pavement markings as needed to facilitate safe usage.

Through its use of federal funding, the ODT project is required to address the provisions of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966. This legislation requires USDOT agencies (and their legally authorized designees) to make specific findings when a USDOT-funded or approved transportation project requires the use of land from a Section 4(f) protected property. These properties typically include publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or land of a historic or archeological site of national, State, or local significance.

The FDOT has identified the existing Lake Ariana Park adjacent to this project, as publicly owned, officially designated, and managed by your agency, as a Section 4(f) resource. Lake Ariana Park provides various public outdoor recreation functions including community events, picnic pavilions,

walking paths, a playground, and access to water sports including swimming, boating and paddle boarding. Based on the current conceptual design, a portion of the ODT (10-foot-wide shared use path) will be constructed within the western boundary of the City's Lake Ariana Park adjacent to Ramsgate Road. **Attachment 2** provides a graphic showing the proximity of this facility to the proposed ODT.

As part of the Section 4(f) process, the FDOT coordinates with the official(s) with jurisdiction (OWJ) to obtain a determination of significance for an applicable resource. In this context, "significance" means that in comparing the availability and function of Lake Ariana Park with the recreational, park and trail objectives of the City of Auburndale and Polk County, this facility plays an important role in meeting those objectives. Based the clear investment of resources in acquiring, constructing, and maintaining the park and its amenities, the FDOT understands that Lake Ariana Park is a significant recreational resource.

Although there will be minor improvements associated with trail construction (i.e., limited clearing/grubbing, pavement installation, lighting relocation, and drainage ditch modifications) within the existing park property, public access to the park will be maintained during the brief period needed for trail construction at this location. As such, the proposed trail improvements will require the FDOT Office of Environmental Management's (OEM) approval of a Section 4(f) Exception in accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 771.13(g) on the following basis:

- 1) The use of the Section 4(f) property (i.e., the Lake Ariana Park) is solely for the purpose of preserving or enhancing an activity, feature, or attribute that qualifies the property for Section 4(f) protection; and
- 2) The OWJ over the Section 4(f) resource (i.e., City of Auburndale) agrees in writing to bullet (1) above.

With this letter, the FDOT is requesting the City of Auburndale's concurrence with 1) the FDOT's determination that Lake Ariana Park meets the Section 4(f) definition of a significant resource, and 2) the FDOT's findings that the proposed improvements will result in an enhancement relative to the public's ability to use this resource. There will be no adverse effects to the activities, features and attributes that qualify the Lake Ariana Park for protection under Section 4(f).

If you concur, please sign and date the concurrence block (next page) and return it to me at the address shown in the letterhead or preferably by e-mail to Emily.Barnett@dot.state.fl.us as soon as possible, or by **September 26, 2024**. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the findings of this letter, please contact me at (863) 519-2805 or at the email address listed above. Thank you in advance for your review and assistance with this request.

Sincerely,



Emily Barnett
Environmental Project Manager
Florida Department of Transportation, District One

EB/gsm

CC: Steven Andrews, FDOT D1
Nicole Selly, KCA (on behalf of FDOT D1)
Michelle Rutishauser, Earth Resources Inc. (on behalf of FDOT D1)
Matt Dockins, HNTB
Gordon Mullen, HNTB

Concurrence for Lake Ariana Park

(Signature)

City of Auburndale Parks and Recreation (or designee)

(Date)

Attachments: 1) Old Dixie Trail Project Location Map
2) Proximity of Lake Ariana Park to the proposed Old Dixie Trail

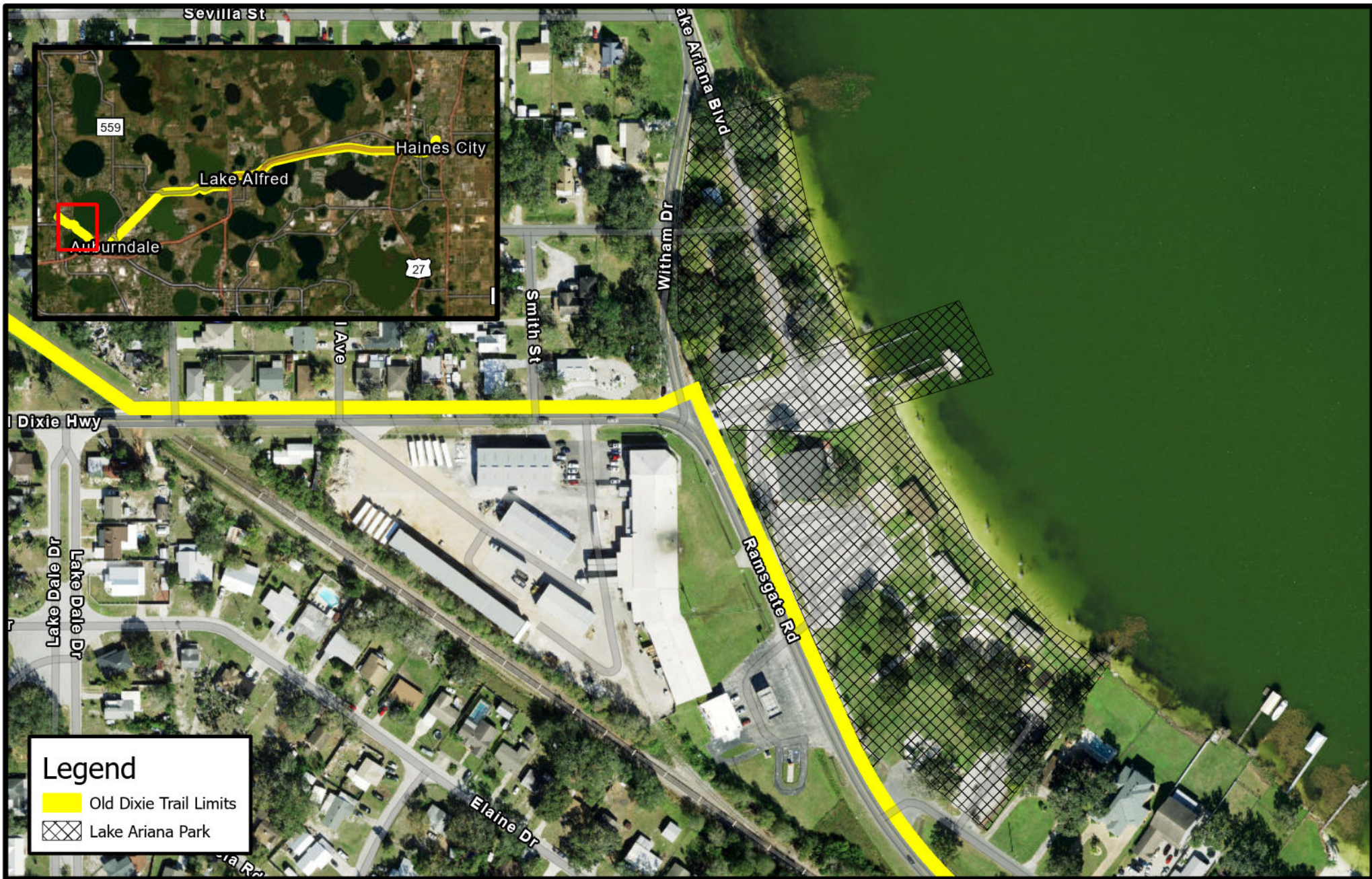
ATTACHMENT 1.

Old Dixie Trail PD&E Project Location Map



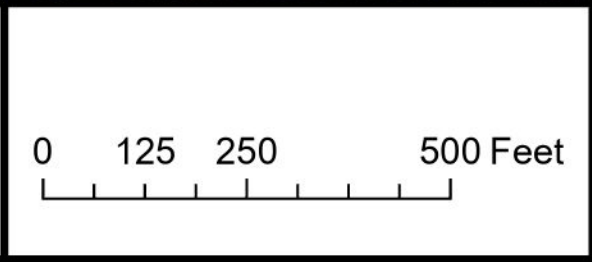
ATTACHMENT 2.

**Proximity of Lake Ariana Park to the proposed Old Dixie
Trail**



Legend

- Old Dixie Trail Limits
- Lake Ariana Park



Lake Ariana Park
(City of Auburndale)

Old Dixie Trail PD&E
FPID: 435391-1-22-01
Polk County, Florida

