



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a PD&E Study?

A Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study is an environmental and engineering process developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to determine social, economic, natural, and physical environmental effects associated with a proposed transportation improvement project. The process follows procedures set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and federal and state laws and regulations. It requires the combined efforts of professional engineers, planners, and scientists who collect and analyze project-related information to develop the best solution for transportation needs. An important component of the process is public and agency coordination. The basic activities of a PD&E study include:

Data Collection

The first major work effort is the collection of all available data pertaining to the study corridor including existing community characteristics, areas of historic and cultural significance, population demographics, locations of wetlands and habitat for listed and protected species, potential contamination sites, existing and future land uses, and drainage patterns.

Alternatives Development and Analysis

Once the data collection is complete and the needs of the corridor have been determined, various improvement alternatives will be developed. For a trail project, these alternatives include the alignments, street crossings, and trail heads. The environmental impacts, social impacts and costs of these alternatives will be quantified and summarized in a comparative matrix.

Public Involvement

Public Involvement began in February 2021 with charrettes (small group meetings). An In-person Public Workshop was held on January 27, 2022 and a Virtual Public Workshop was held on February 1, 2022. Another In-Person and Virtual Public Meeting will be held for the Southern Section in Spring 2025. A Public Hearing is anticipated in Summer 2025.

Final Acceptance

FDOT District One will submit the study to the FDOT Office of Environmental Management (OEM) for Location and Design Concept Acceptance after the study team receives and evaluates comments from the public hearing. The PD&E study phase of the project is completed once the project is accepted by OEM. The phases that follow the PD&E study are design of the project, right-of-way acquisition and construction of proposed improvements.

Schedule

The Palmetto Trails Network PD&E Study began in Spring 2020 and is estimated to be completed by early 2026. In 2023, the analysis of the Middle and Northern Sections was completed and a recommended alternative was proposed to move forward to the Public Hearing. At that point, FDOT secured additional funding through coordination with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO to include the Southern Section of the Palmetto Trails Network into this PD&E study. The project was then paused until the necessary paperwork was completed to include the Southern Section. The Southern Section was given final approval to proceed in Summer 2024.