



Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

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Administration
Michele L. Lieberman
County Manager

XXXXXXX(Date)

XXXXXXXXXX(Addressee)

Xxx

Xxx

To Whom It May Concern:

In June 2019, the Alachua County Commission has adopted the attached scoping document for the US 441 Linear Park Concept. This concept has been developed utilizing the input of several previous planning studies including the Old Florida Heritage Highway Master Plan and the US 441 Paynes Prairie Safety Study conducted by the Gainesville Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization. Like those documents, the US 441 Linear Park Concept identifies the inclusion of a multi-use path across the US 441 eco-passage as an important piece of infrastructure in providing access to and across Paynes Prairie for non-automobile modes of transport.

The Commission has directed that where other agencies may have funding available for or projects related to the US 441 Linear Park Concept, the County shall provide the attached concept and advocate for its construction and connection to the broader bicycle and pedestrian connection throughout Alachua County and north central Florida. Your agency is pursuing a project that could include the US 441 Linear Park or a portion of it. The County Commission requests that, as you look to design of your project, you consider including the US 441 Linear Park.

Should you have question, please feel free to contact [project contact].

Sincerely,

Robert Hutchinson, Chair
Alachua County Commission
Chr20.XX

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cc: Board of County Commissioners
Michele L. Lieberman, County Manager
Sylvia Torres, County Attorney

US 441 Linear Park Concept & Scoping

Prepared by Alachua County Growth Management
for Presentation to the Board of County Commissioners

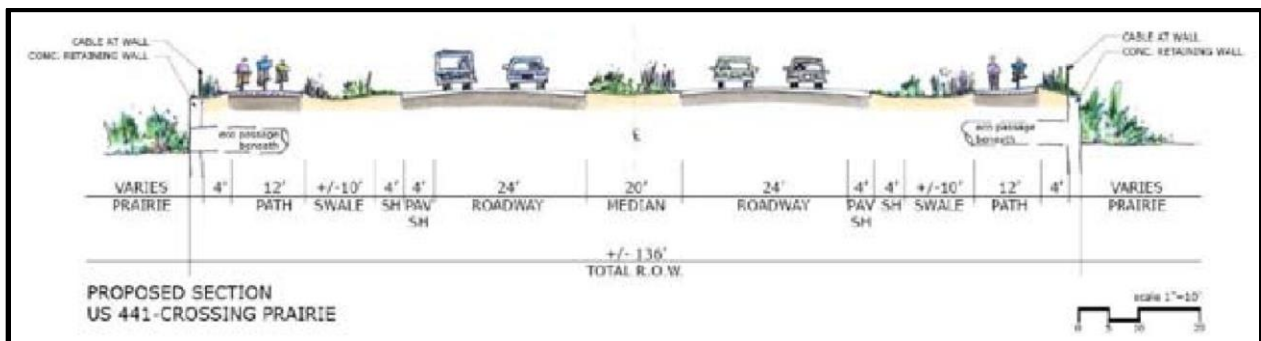
June 11, 2019

Background

Paynes Prairie, located in central Alachua County, Florida, is a unique natural resource for local residents and for visitors to the area. Alachua County, various State agencies and local advocacy groups have, for the last 20 years studied the potential for bicycle and pedestrian access across the Prairie. This document should serve as the Commissions guide to implementing a linear park and considers the conclusions of those various previous documents.

Since 2017, Paynes Prairie has had elevated water levels. The elevated water levels have produced a new ad hoc fishing site that is getting significant use. Additionally, the Commission has noted additional pedestrian traffic at sunset. In order to address this additional use, the Commission has revisited the Linear Park concept.

Guiding Documents



Old Florida Heritage Highway Master Plan

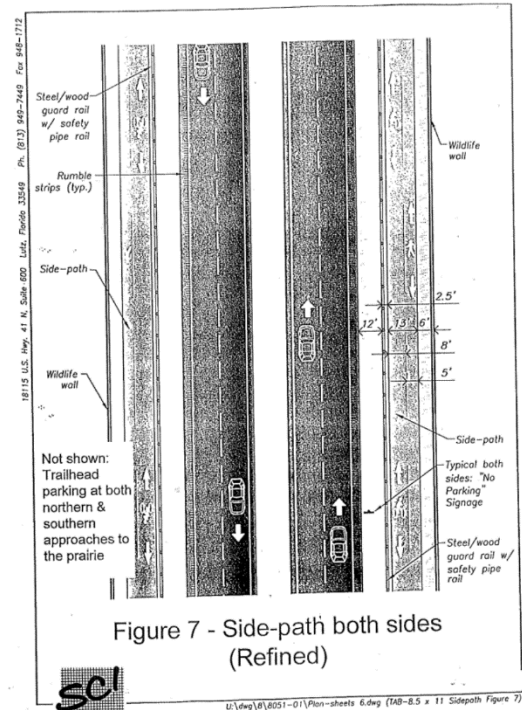
US 441 is included in the Master and Management Plans for the Old Florida Heritage Highway, a designated Florida Scenic Highway. The Master Plan includes a concept for the US 441 crossing of Paynes Prairie. That concept includes 12-foot paths on both the east and west side of the crossing located generally as far from the roadway as feasible. The plan also calls for wire/cable barriers along the eco-wall.

U.S. 441 / Payne's Prairie Bicycle Safety Study

Commissioned by the Gainesville Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) and conducted by Sprinkle Consulting, Inc. in 2002, this study attempted to identify alternatives for improving bicycle safety on US 441 across Paynes Prairie. The study included cost estimates for several alternatives. This Study identified the potential need for drainage improvements with the construction of a multi-use path due to the location of ditch bottom inlets. Additionally, the Study indicated that additional water quality treatment may be required by the water management district.

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park Unit Management Plan

Although the Unit Management Plan for Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park does not include a linear park or multi-use path as an identified project, the Plan does identify the US 441 overlook as a managed facility. The proposed Linear Park would provide a connection between the overlook and Bolen's Bluff. Initial conversations with State Park Staff indicated support for completion of the project.



US 441 Resurfacing Project

The Florida Department of Transportation is in the process of designing a resurfacing project (436157-1) on US 441 from the Marion County Line to Williston Road (SR 121). This project proposes to raise the level of the roadway across Paynes Prairie by 6 inches. Additionally, the project proposes the addition of guardrail at the edge of the current paved shoulder. The project is funded for construction in State Fiscal Year 2021, which begins July 1, 2020.

Linear Park Concept Plan



After several discussions, the Board of County Commissioners has identified a cross-section and associated infrastructure improvements. These include:

- A 12-foot wide multi-use path adjacent to the guardrail (illustrated above, looking north);
- Striping of parking at the existing overlook lot; and
- Expansion of the existing Bolen's Bluff parking area.

Initial analysis by Staff indicates that some additional spaces could potentially be located at the overlook lot by striping. However, substantial design will be required to ensure that safe parking can be provided such that cars are not backing up into the roadway. Additionally, in this area, the multi-use path would need to move away from the edge of the roadway.

It is possible that, during design, the location of the multi-use path would need to be adjusted in order to reduce construction costs. Preliminary estimates for design and construction of the project are \$3,000,000. This cost includes improvements to the existing parking area and expansion of the Bolens Bluff parking area in addition to construction of the trail and drainage improvements.