



# Rock Springs Road Study and West Orange Trail Extension Studies Recommended Alternatives Community Meeting

September 22, 2022

## Question and Answer Forum (Q&A)

Below is a summary of questions received during the live question and answer session of the Rock Springs Road and West Orange Trail Extension Studies public meeting held on September 22, 2022, along with answers from the MetroPlan Orlando study team. For background information, please see the recommended alternatives community meeting materials available for download at [www.MetroPlanOrlando.org/RockSprings](http://www.MetroPlanOrlando.org/RockSprings).

### Questions regarding the Rock Springs Road Corridor Study:

**Q:** How long will the proposed new lanes extend from the Rock Springs Road and Welch Road intersection?

**A:** The proposed southbound left turn lanes from Rock Springs Road onto Welch Road extend north of the intersection approximately 740 feet, to just north of the Wekiva Plaza South Entrance on the east side of the roadway. The proposed westbound dual right turn lanes from Welch Road onto Rock Springs Road extend east of the intersection approximately 670 feet.

**Q:** Do the proposed designs include a concrete separator on Rock Springs Road between the proposed new signal at the Publix North Entrance and the proposed mid-block crosswalk? Will vehicles have the ability to make a U-Turn at Tanglewood Drive?

**A:** A concrete traffic separator is proposed on Rock Springs Road from the Publix North Entrance until just south of Tanglewood Drive, where vehicles will have the ability to make a U-Turn.

**Q:** What will be done to address the capacity at the Publix North Entrance intersection?

**A:** To address capacity at the Publix North Entrance intersection, MetroPlan Orlando is proposing a signalized intersection that includes a dedicated southbound left turn lane with a raised traffic separator along Rock Springs Road. The dedicated southbound left turn lane will provide vehicles turning left into the Publix North Entrance a designated turning phase of the signal that is separated from through traffic. The proposed design also includes westbound right and left turn lanes out of the Publix North Entrance onto Rock Springs Road. Our traffic analysis shows this intersection configuration is anticipated to operate at a Level of Service (LOS) C or better through the year 2045.

**Q:** Will there be any provisions, such as a raised traffic separator, on Rock Springs Road at Vista Crest Drive (Wekiva Park Townhomes)?

**A:** The proposed traffic separator ends just south of Tanglewood Drive. Residents of the Wekiva Park Townhomes will maintain the ability to make left turns in and out of the subdivision.

**Q:** Has MetroPlan Orlando considered the possibility of a traffic signal at the Wekiva Park Townhomes subdivision?

**A:** The traffic volumes at this location would not meet the requirements to install a traffic signal. These requirements, or warrants, are based on existing and future traffic volumes as well as crash history at this location.

**Q:** Will this project affect the proposed widening of Welch Road east of Rock Springs Road?

**A:** This project is not directly related to the widening of Welch Road; however, it was considered during the concept development for these projects. The concepts were developed so that the future widening can tie into the proposed improvements of this project. According to the MetroPlan Orlando 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), there are a few transportation needs identified on Welch Road:

- Welch Road from Vick Road to Rock Springs Road
  - Project type: Complete Streets / Safety / Operations Study
  - Funding Status & Planning Period: Unfunded
- Welch Road from Rock Springs Road to Thompson Road
  - Project Type: Widen from two to four lanes
  - Funding Status & Planning Period: Planning Study is cost feasible in Plan Period II 2031-2035
- Welch Road from Thompson Road to Wekiwa Springs Road
  - Project Type: Widen from two to four lanes
  - Funding Status & Planning Period: Planning Study is cost feasible in Plan Period I 2026 – 2030
- Welch Road from Rock Springs Road to Orange/Seminole County Line
  - Project Type: Complete Streets / Safety / Operations Study
  - Funding Status & Planning Period: Planning Study is cost feasible in Plan Period I (2026-2030)

The 2045 MTP can be viewed at <https://metroplanorlando.org/plans/metropolitan-transportation-plan/>.

**Q:** Does this project include any enhancements to bike lanes on either side of Rock Springs Road?

**A:** Bike Lane improvements have not been considered as part of this study. The proposed trails along Rock Springs Road, Ponkan Road, and Welch Road are designed to serve the needs of cyclists and pedestrians.

**Q:** Do the estimated project costs include land acquisition costs?

**A:** The estimated project costs include construction costs only. Right-of-way acquisition costs have not yet been determined.



**Q:** What is the construction timeline for the Rock Springs Road Study project?

**A:** The planning phase of this study is anticipated to conclude in December 2022. The selected alternatives will then move into the design phase. To date, several phases of the design for this study have not yet been funded, however, the City of Apopka has planned to advance the construction of selected components of the study.

- The intersection improvements at the intersection of Sandpiper Street and Park Avenue are currently in design by the City of Apopka. Funding for construction has been allocated by the City of Apopka in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.
- A portion of the proposed traffic along the north leg of the Rock Springs Road and Welch Road intersection will be constructed to restrict left turns in and out of the Wekiva Plaza Entrance. This is an interim step to enhance safety and reduce congestion before funding becomes available for additional improvements at the intersection of Rock Springs Road and Welch Road.

**Q:** Dual westbound right turn lanes have been implemented at the intersection of Rock Springs Road and Welch Road in the past, proving to be ineffective. How will this recommendation be made better this time around?

**A:** Previously, dual westbound right turn lanes were provided at the Rock Springs Road and Welch Road intersection through roadway striping only by converting the westbound through lane to a shared through-right turn lane. That improvement experienced issues due to driver behavior and improper use associated with the shared configuration. This study proposes dedicated dual westbound right turn lanes, separating the right turns from the through traffic. Additionally, modifications to the curb radius will assist with the safety and efficiency of drivers maneuvering the dual right turns.

## Questions regarding the West Orange Trail Extension Study:

**Q:** Will the recommended Welch Road trail spur alignment have any impact on Wekiwa Springs State Park?

**A:** The study team has maintained coordination with Wekiwa Springs State Park representatives throughout the entirety of the study. The Welch Road trail spur includes an anticipated 50-foot easement along the Wekiwa Springs State Park boundary, part of which is within the existing fire break, where the trail would be located. The exact easement width (likely to be within 20-50 feet) and location will be determined during the future design phase, which is not yet funded. The recommended Welch Road trail spur alignment would provide a scenic route to the entrance of Wekiwa Springs State Park.

**Q:** Will a barrier be provided along the trail to keep trail users out of the state park?

**A:** If the recommended Welch Road trail spur alignment (Alternative 2) is selected to move forward to the design phase, a fence that separates the trail from the park would be included in the design in accordance with the requirement of the easement within Wekiwa Springs State Park. Details about the type of fencing will be determined during the design phase of the study in coordination with Wekiwa Springs State Park representatives.



**Q:** Will a buffer be provided between the recommended Welch Road trail spur alignment and adjacent Sweetwater Park Village homes?

**A:** If Alternative 2 (the trail option that wraps around Sweetwater Park Village running along the forest edge) is selected, an anticipated 50-foot-wide easement would be obtained to construct the trail. This easement would allow for a 12-foot-wide trail and a buffer between the trail and adjacent homes. Fencing similar to the wire mesh fence currently being used as a barrier for Wekiwa Springs State Park would be considered in between the trail and adjacent homes. These details, the exact easement width (likely to be within 20-50 feet), and other options for fencing will be determined during the design phase of the study.

**Q:** Is MetroPlan Orlando still considering selecting Welch Road Trail Spur Alternative 1, which continues east along Welch Road to Wekiwa Springs Road, as the recommended alternative?

**A:** When looking to select a final recommendation, MetroPlan Orlando is looking to provide a positive trail experience for all trail users away from the roadway and that provides interconnectivity with other trails in the area. During the study, both alternatives were analyzed and compared on a wide range of evaluation measures including the length of trail along a roadway, number of street or driveway crossings, and anticipated right-of-way needs and estimated costs. When compared with the Welch Road Trail Spur Alternative 1, Alternative 2 provides nearly a half mile less trail along a roadway, 16 fewer driveway crossings, one less street crossing, and anticipated right-of-way impacts to 11 fewer privately owned parcels. Additionally, the construction cost for Alternative 2 is estimated to be \$800,000 less than Alternative 1. For these reasons, along with local agency input, Alternative 2 was selected to move forward for public input. Alternative 1 is still a viable option in the study. The final recommendations will be determined once the survey closes allowing all feedback to be reviewed and considered with local agency input.

**Q:** What will the end of the Welch Road trail spur look like?

**A:** The Welch Road trail spur would travel east along Welch Road, ending at the Wekiwa Springs State Park Entrance on N Wekiwa Springs Road at Wisteria Street. This trail is intended to provide interconnectivity with other trails throughout the region.

**Q:** What is the Wekiva River Blueway Trail?

**A:** The Wekiva River Blueway Trails are a network of trails throughout Seminole County that provide opportunities to observe Central Florida's native wildlife and scenery. The Wekiva River Blueway Trails are outside of the project study area.

**Q:** Will the Welch Road trail spur connect to the Wekiva River Blueway Trails?

**A:** The Welch Road trail spur does not make a direct connection to the Seminole Wekiva River Blueway Trails, however, there is an existing 8-foot concrete path named the Wekiva Springs Pathway that is located just east of the Welch Road trail spur. The Wekiva Springs Pathway will provide a connection to the Seminole Wekiva Trail, a nearly 14-mile paved recreational trail that runs west of the I-4 trail overpass to the Seminole County line at the Wekiva River and is also a designated part of the Florida National Scenic Trail.



**Q:** What barriers, berms, and retention areas are proposed to block runoff into the park from the Welch Road trail spur?

**A:** Typical trail sections within the Orange County Trails network include a drainage easement that captures, slows, and provides treatment to runoff water. Due to drainage impacts associated with the recommended Welch Road trail spur alignment, necessary adjustments will be determined during the design phase of the project to provide an adequate stormwater system.

**Q:** What is the need for the Welch Road and Wekiwa Springs Road trail spur?

**A:** The Orange County Trails Master Plan identifies a gap in the regional trail network between the northern terminus of the existing West Orange Trail (at the intersection of Rock Springs Road and Lester Road) and the southern terminus of the Wekiwa Trail (at the interchange of SR 429 and Mount Plymouth Road). The Welch Road and Wekiwa Springs Road trail spur will provide a connection from the existing West Orange Trail at Rock Springs Road to the Seminole County Wekiwa River Blueway Trail that is just east of the Wekiwa Springs State Park entrance. The proposed Welch Road trail spur is anticipated to enhance the community by providing access to recreational facilities as well as the local community with an alternate mode of transportation.

**Q:** How much traffic is anticipated on the Welch Road trail spur?

**A:** A trail traffic analysis was not conducted as part of this study.

**Q:** Is MetroPlan Orlando planning to provide additional access to Wekiwa Springs State Park along the recommended Rock Springs Road or Welch Road trail alignments?

**A:** This study is not considering any new access points to Wekiwa Springs State Park. The park has agreed to provide an easement along the park boundary only if there are no new entry points to the park along the trail. Park representatives have indicated they do not have the resources available to monitor safety at additional access points. The Welch Road Trail Spur will lead to the existing park entrance along Wekiwa Springs Road.

**Q:** Was equestrian access considered as part of this study?

**A:** Due to limited right-of-way within the study area, equestrian access was not analyzed as part of this study.

**Q:** Can MetroPlan Orlando make considerations for adding shade trees to the West Orange Trail extension alignment along Rock Springs Road in between the roadway and trail to provide a buffer from traffic as well as protection from the sun?

**A:** Due to right-of-way constraints along Rock Springs Road, opportunities for amenities will be limited in the area. MetroPlan Orlando, along with project partners City of Apopka and Orange County, will explore opportunities to determine which trail amenities may be implemented to provide a pleasant trail experience for all users.



**Q:** How will the trails benefit “true cyclists”?

**A:** MetroPlan Orlando’s intent for the trail is to provide a separate facility for bicyclists to travel safely along Rock Springs Road, Ponkan Road, and Welch Road, providing connections to nearby community features. The recommended trail alignments will provide a safe space for cyclists of any age or experience level. The study team has also made considerations to ensure the trail is accommodated at the intersection of Rock Springs Road and Welch Road. During the design phase, a leading pedestrian crossing will be considered to provide a prioritized crossing for trail users at the intersection.

**Q:** Will the study include any trailheads or parking for enhanced access to the proposed trail routes?

**A:** Locations for trailheads and parking have not yet been identified. During the design phase, MetroPlan Orlando and project partners City of Apopka and Orange County will determine locations for parking, trailheads, and amenities that will be implemented along the trail.

**Q:** What are MetroPlan Orlando’s plans for providing safety to homeowners along the Welch Road trail spur in addition to protecting trail users from wildlife in the area?

**A:** MetroPlan Orlando is committed to providing safety to both homeowners adjacent to the recommended Welch Road trail spur as well as trail users. Keeping the physical environment maintained allows users to be easily seen by other users, staff, or anyone passing the trail, who may report an emergency if necessary. Emergency location markers are also considered for the proposed trails to improve safety. Additionally, the Orange County Trails Master Plan implements a program named Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), which is rooted in the belief that environmental factors affect the perceptions of all trail users and proper design reduces the incidence of crime and changes the perceptions of the possibility of criminal activity.

**Q:** Will MetroPlan consider selecting a West Orange Trail Extension alignment along Rock Springs Road to run along the Wekiwa Springs State Park boundary?

**A:** Over the course of the study, it was discovered that an Orange County Resolution is in place that would prevent any trail from being constructed along the park boundary in this area. At this time, an alternative trail alignment that runs along the park boundary is not an option MetroPlan Orlando can consider.

**Q:** Along with the proposed trail alignments, does MetroPlan Orlando plan to make improvements to the existing West Orange Trail along Rock Springs Road?

**A:** The existing northern West Orange Trail terminus is located at Rock Springs Road and Lester Road. This study does not include improvements to the existing trail alignment, however, MetroPlan Orlando can pass the word along to project partners to encourage enhanced maintenance along the trail.

**Q:** What amenities will be implemented to provide safety along the trails?

**A:** Orange County Trails has a safety program in place that installs call boxes along the trail in addition to emergency trail markers that provide information on how to report emergencies if necessary.



**Q:** Will MetroPlan Orlando provide accommodations for wildlife along the proposed trail routes?

**A:** During the design phase of the study, MetroPlan Orlando and project partners City of Apopka and Orange County will make considerations for wildlife corridors and fencing along the trail.

**Q:** Are there plans to complete the connection of the Coast-To-Coast Trail?

**A:** Orange County is working in coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to contribute to the completion of the Coast-To-Coast Trail. For more information about this trail system, visit <https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/florida-coast-coast-trail>.

**Q:** Are there plans for a trail that will provide a connection from SR 429 at Mt Plymouth Road to Kelly Park?

**A:** This connection is part of the proposed Wekiva Trail, included in the Orange County Trails Master Plan. The proposed Wekiva Trail would connect the proposed West Orange Trail Extension along Rock Springs Road to the existing trail near SR 429. The proposed Wekiva Trail route would run from Kelly Park along the Wekiwa Springs State Park boundary until connecting with Mt Plymouth Road and SR 429. This project is not currently funded.

**Q:** Does this study include a connection to the Wekiva Trail via Lake County's Neighborhood Lakes Trail and Trailhead?

**A:** This study does not include a connection to the Neighborhood Lakes Trail. The proposed Wekiva Trail is a separate trail project identified in the Orange County Trails Master Plan. This project would connect the proposed West Orange Trail Extension on Rock Springs Road (from Lester Road to Kelly Park Road) to the existing Neighborhood Lakes Trail.. This project is not currently funded.

**Q:** What is the timeline and coordination effort for the West Orange Trail extensions?

**A:** Orange County, in coordination with MetroPlan Orlando, works to list, prioritize, and fund projects. With the completion of the West Orange Trail Extension Study, MetroPlan Orlando will be looking for opportunities to fund the design phase of the study. The design phase may last two years, and construction would be expected to begin no sooner than five years in the future. MetroPlan Orlando and project partners City of Apopka and Orange County are eager to hear your feedback on the recommended alternatives before moving into the next phase of the study.

**Q:** Who is funding the West Orange Trail Extension Study?

**A:** Funding for the West Orange Trail Extension Study is identified in the MetroPlan Orlando Metropolitan Transportation Cost Feasible Plan (MTP 2045). Funding for the planning phase of this project is sourced federally as well as locally. Future phases of the study have not yet been funded, however, MetroPlan Orlando is looking for opportunities for funding from federal, state, and local sources.



## Questions regarding both studies:

**Q:** Will there be another chance for the public to provide input on the recommended alternatives?

**A:** The purpose of this public meeting and survey is to present the recommended alternatives for both studies and receive feedback from the public so the recommendations can be refined and finalized before the studies move into the design phase. At this time, no future phases are funded. These future phases will likely be conducted by Orange County. The survey was available for one month following the public meeting to allow stakeholders to provide feedback on the project prior to the conclusion of the studies. We also encourage you to voice your concerns with your local Orange County Commissioner so that your opinions can be considered during future phases. At the conclusion of both studies (anticipated December 2022), final study reports will be uploaded to the study website at [www.MetroPlanOrlando.org/RockSprings](http://www.MetroPlanOrlando.org/RockSprings) for more information.

