

The Pinellas Trail Progress Energy Extension

A Landmark Agreement

On November 23, 1999, the Board of County Commissioners approved a historic lease agreement with the Progress Energy Corporation (now Progress Energy), allowing for the development of a north/south off-road bicycle and pedestrian trail facility in eastern Pinellas County. Under the terms of the agreement, Pinellas County assumes a 99-year lease of the trail easement, with Progress Energy responsible for constructing the facility. The project will be funded with Penny for Pinellas infrastructure sales tax revenue and federal funding as it is available.

Corridor Alignment

The 20.6-mile Progress Energy Trail Extension will compliment the existing Pinellas Trail, which follows the former CSX rail line in western Pinellas County (a complete [online guide](#) of the Pinellas Trail has been provided by the Pinellas County Park Department) The extension will provide unlimited opportunities for non-motorized travel with many trip destinations. Within a 1/4 mile of the extension alignment are several schools, employment sites, retail shopping centers, churches, recreational areas and public parks.

Trail Design

The extension will be constructed with an asphalt surface designed to accommodate inline skaters and joggers as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. Four intersections, where the easement crosses US Highway 19 in two places, Ulmerton Road and I-275, will require overpass construction. A master plan to guide the Trail Extension development is being prepared by Pinellas County.

The Plan

The [Progress Energy Extension](#) is a critical link in the planned bicycle and pedestrian network, which is identified in the Pinellas County MPO [Long Range Transportation Plan](#). This network includes on-road bicycle lanes as well as off-road trails. The purpose of this network is to enable these travel modes to be utilized as viable alternatives to personal automobile use.

Plan Implementation

While the MPO's Long Range Plan provides for the blueprint for the county's future trail and bicycle lane facilities, Pinellas County is the primary implementing agency responsible for bringing the plan to fruition. Consistent with its Comprehensive Plan policies, Pinellas County has already constructed over 44 miles of off-road trails, including the original alignment of the Pinellas Trail and the Dunedin Causeway and Fort DeSoto trails. Bicycle lanes are also being installed in the course of road re-construction projects.

Connecting Points

The northern end of the Progress Energy Extension will connect with the East Lake/Tarpon Springs section of the Pinellas Trail. The southern terminus will connect to the planned Weedon Island Trail. The MPO plan also calls for a connection between the Progress Energy Extension and the Friendship Trail (Old Gandy Bridge), a multi-use recreational trail spanning Tampa Bay with trail connections in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties.

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