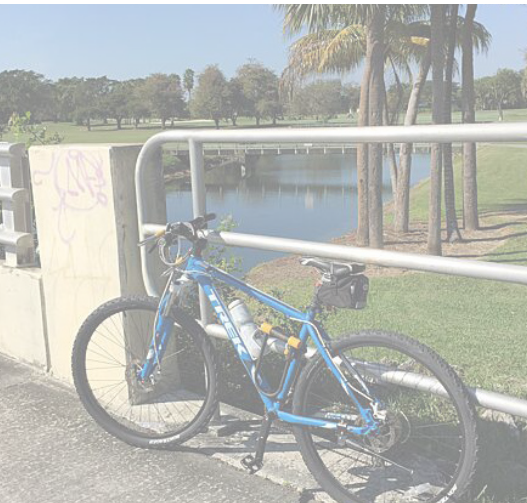


ENHANCING SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM ALONG THE SOUTH DADE TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY
MAY 2024



Miami-Dade Transportation
Planning Organization



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The purpose of this feasibility study is to review bicycle and pedestrian access needs for public schools in the South Miami-Dade area along the South Dade Trail from Dadeland to Florida City and assess the current “Safe Routes to School” (SRTS) program’s ability to address the identified needs.

Project Overview

At the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Governing Board meeting on February 23, 2023, the Board requested that the Miami-Dade TPO Executive Director, through Resolution #11-2023, create a framework for expanding and enhancing the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program to promote connections to the South Dade Trail in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) and area municipalities. The SRTS program is a funded program aimed at making walking and biking to and from school safe, practical, and enjoyable. The Miami-Dade TPO annually prepares SRTS infrastructure plans and funding application reports.

Alongside the South-Dade Transit Way, there is a 20-mile shared use path referred to as the South Dade Trail. The South Dade Trail runs along the South Miami-Dade Transitway between Florida City and Kendall Drive/ SW 88 Street just north of the Dadeland South Metrorail station. As showcased in **Exhibit 1**, the trail connects numerous municipalities which represent some of the fastest growing communities in Miami-Dade County. Some of them include the Village of Pinecrest, the Village of Palmetto Bay, the Town of Cutler Bay, the City of Homestead, and the City of Florida City.



The South Dade Trail is parallel to US-1 for most of its length and is largely used by urban commuters seeking relief from Miami’s heavy traffic congestion. The trail connects such points of interest as the Dadeland and Cutler Ridge shopping areas and commercial office spaces. The South Dade Trail connects communities from South Miami-Dade County with many parks and trails. Some of the parks and trails identified include:

- Evelyn Greer Park
- Suniland Park
- Perrine Wayside Park
- Palmetto Bay Park
- South Miami Heights Park
- Seminole Wayside Park
- J. D. Redd Park
- M-Path Trail/The Underline
- Black Creek Trail
- The Underline Trail

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The South Dade Trail in its current state, presents opportunities for enhancement, including improved bicycle and pedestrian features aimed at enhancing safety when accessing the facility. The trail connects communities in South Miami-Dade County with numerous nearby schools and parks.

Exhibit 1: South Dade Trail Location Map



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School Site Analysis

A desktop inventory of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) in the South Dade area was performed, and 72 schools were identified within the 3-mile radius of the South Dade Trail. To provide improvements to the South-Dade Trail infrastructure, the Project Team concentrated on improving connectivity to only those schools within the 0.5-mile radius of the trail. Twelve (12) schools and the corresponding SRTS were identified and listed in **Table 1** below:



Table 1: MDCPS within 0.5-mile radius of the South Dade Trail

NO.	SCHOOL	LOCATION	EXIT(S)
1	Vineland K-8 center Elementary School	8455 SW 119th Street, Miami, FL, 33156	SW 120th St
2	Robert Russa Moton Elementary School	18050 Homestead Avenue, Miami, FL, 33157	W Jessamine St
3	Bel-Aire Elementary School	10205 W 194th Street, Cutler Bay, FL, 33157	Marlin Rd
4	Arthur & Polly Mays Conservatory of the Arts	11700 W 216th Street, Miami, FL, 33170	SW 216 St and SW 220 St
5	Pine Villa Elementary School	21799 SW 117th Court, Miami, FL, 33170	SW 216 St and SW 220 St
6	Miami Douglas Macarthur South Senior High School	13990 S 264th Street, Homestead, FL 33032	SW 260 St and SW 264 St
7	South Dade Skill Center	28300 SW 152nd Avenue, Homestead, FL 33033	SW 280 St and SW 288 St
8	South Dade Technical College	109 NE 8th Street, Homestead, FL, 33030	NE 11th St, Campbell Dr, NE Civic Ct
9	Miami Dade College - Homestead Campus	500 College Terrace, Homestead, FL 33030	NE Civic Ct, S Krome Ave
10	Neva King Cooper Educational Center	151 NW 5th Street, Homestead, FL, 33030	NE 11th St, NE Civic Ct, S Krome Ave, SW 4th St, SW 6th St
11	Laura Saunders Elementary School	505 SW 8th Street, Homestead, FL, 33030	SW 328th St
12	Florida City Elementary School	364 NW 6th Avenue, Florida City, FL, 33034	NW 12th St, W Davis Pkwy, NW 4th St, NW 1st St, W Palm Dr

A gap analysis was performed to identify opportunities for enhanced connectivity to the South Dade Trail and evaluate each of the potential Safe Routes to School (SRTS).

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Concept Development

Crash data along the trail and intersections were also gathered as part of this effort to identify the critical locations, needs, and possible improvements to be recommended. The South Dade Trail is a 10-foot Shared Use Path, separated via a sodded area alongside the South Dade TransitWay. The trail is open for bike riding, running, and walking. The trail traverses major roadways and has numerous road crossings. The main goal of the study was to assess public space and identify safe means for all users to walk, bike, be active outdoors, and connect to existing schools and parks.



To that end, study objectives included the following:

- Review of bicycle and pedestrian existing conditions and amenities along the South Dade Trail,
- Review of bicycle and pedestrian access needs from public schools in the South Miami-Dade area for the South Dade Trail from Dadeland to Florida City,
- Assessing the current “Safe Routes to School” (SRTS) program’s ability to address any identified needs.
- Create an active transportation system that provides equitable access to schools, jobs, homes, improved mobility, and safe places to get active outdoors.

The Project Team performed bike audits along the trail corridor traversing several municipalities from South Dadeland to Florida City. Some of the findings include:

- Lack of shading along the South Dade Trail in different locations,
- Lack of maintenance of the existing landscaping at some locations along the trail, where overgrown Vegetation was found to be an obstruction at some locations along the trail,
- Some intersections along the trail require transitions from the trail to crosswalks,
- There is a lack of signage and wayfinding along the trail,
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements are recommended for existing and future infrastructure.

As a result of the findings, it was suggested that the trail be restructured in three phases to provide options where appropriate. Each proposed improvement is based on relevant trail design principles and best practices.

The improvements along the trail will be provided in the following three (3) phases:

- ◇ **Phase 1:** Short-Term Improvements (3-5 years)
- ◇ **Phase 2:** Mid-Term Improvements (5-7 years)
- ◇ **Phase 3:** Long-Term Improvements (10+ years)

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Phase 1: Short-Term Improvements

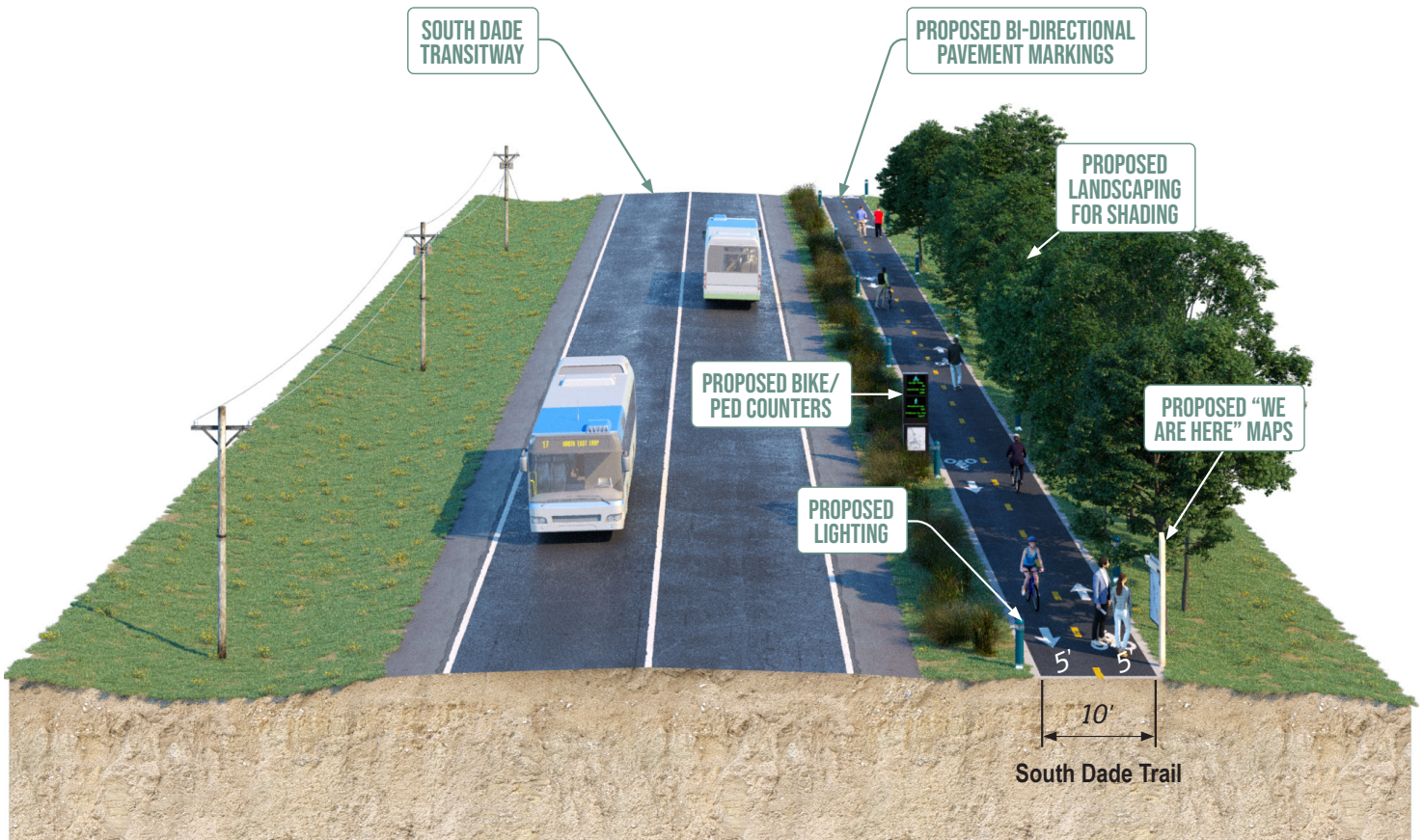
Short-Term Improvements are all improvements that can be implemented in the next 3-5 years. As part of this study, several short-term improvements were identified for the South Dade Trail. The proposed short-term improvements will maintain the existing shared use path width of 10 feet. The path will be striped to delineate two bi-directional lanes, 5 feet in each direction.

The Short-Term Improvements include the following:

- Milling, Resurfacing and Striping
- Landscaping for shading
- Improved Wayfinding and signage
- Location Maps
- Bicycle Stop Signs and Stop Bars
- Bike/Ped Counters

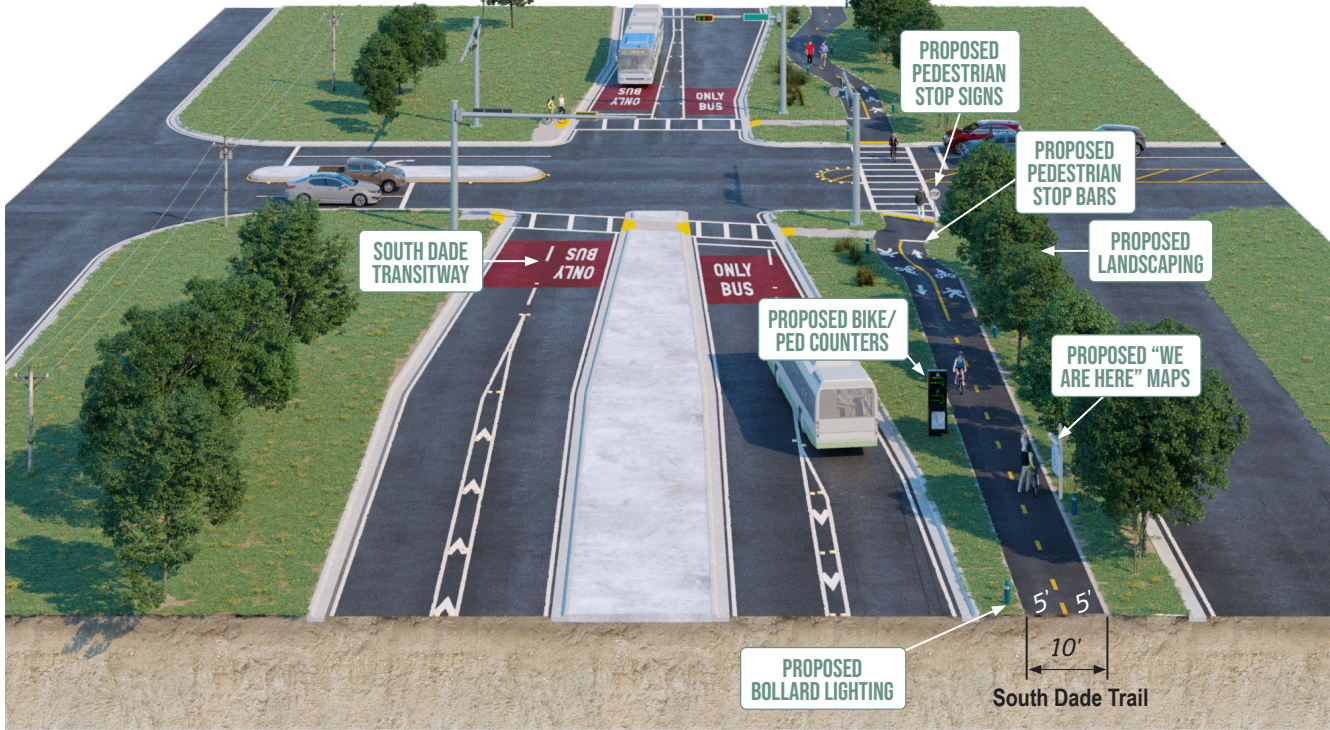
The typical section in **Exhibit 2** illustrates the proposed section of the shared use path relative to the TransitWay away from crossing intersections. **Exhibit 3** illustrates the proposed typical section near crossing intersections.

Exhibit 2: Proposed South Dade Typical Section 1



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Exhibit 3: Proposed South Dade Typical Section 2



The total cost to provide the short-term improvements is estimated at \$4,937,000. Refer to **Table 2** for short-term improvements cost breakdown:

Table 2: Short-term Improvements Cost Estimate Breakdown

SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS COST ESTIMATE (IN 2023 DOLLARS)	
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	ESTIMATED COST
Milling and Resurfacing	\$1,600,000.00
Pavement Markings	\$40,000.00
Landscaping	\$3,100,000.00
Wayfinding Signage	\$11,000.00
Location "You are here" Maps	\$16,000.00
Bicycle Stop Signs	\$50,000.00
Bike/Ped Counters	\$120,000.00
Total Estimated Cost	\$4,937,000.00

Phase 2: Mid-Term Improvements

Mid-Term Improvements are all improvements that can be implemented in the next 5-7 years. The Mid-Term Improvements include the following:

- Lighting along the full length of the trail
- Bi-direction Bike Path and separated Pedestrian Path
- Rest Areas along the Path with Benches
- Water Fountains
- Trash and Recycling Receptacles
- Bike Share
- Bicycle Repair Stations
- Bicycle Tracks
- Roundabouts/ Trail Heads

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The total cost to provide the mid-term improvements is \$35,679,859. Refer to **Table 3** for mid-term improvements cost breakdown:

Table 3: Mid-term Improvements Cost Estimate Breakdown

MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS COST ESTIMATE (IN 2023 DOLLARS)	
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	ESTIMATED COST
Water Fountains	\$44,800.00
Trash Bins	\$156,200.00
Rest Area Benches	\$84,000.00
Bike Share Stations	\$150,000.00
Bike Repair Stations	\$17,500.00
Roundabout/Trail Heads - Minor	\$750,000.00
Roundabout/Trail Heads - Major	\$3,000,000.00
Lighting - 18' Acorn Decorative Pole	\$13,870,000.00
Lighting - Bollard Lighting	\$14,784,000.00
South Dade Trail Widening	\$2,823,359.00
Total Estimated Cost	\$35,679,859.00

Phase 3: Long-Term Improvements

Long-Term Improvements are all improvements that can be implemented in the next 10+ years. The long-term Improvements include the following:

- On-Street Bike Lanes
- Dedicated facilities to provide East/West Connectivity
- Speed Tables on the streets that are on the SRTS
- Connection to The Underline at the South Dadeland Station
- Connectivity to schools within 3-mile radius

The total cost to provide the long-term improvements is \$56,198,700. Refer to **Table 4** for long-term improvements cost breakdown:

Table 4: Long-term Improvements Cost Estimate Breakdown

LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS COST ESTIMATE (IN 2023 DOLLARS)	
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT	ESTIMATED COST
On-Street Bike Lanes	\$12,827,039.00
East/West Connectivity Routes	\$4,000,000.00
Speed Tables	\$121,661.00
Connection to the Underline	\$750,000
Connectivity to Schools within 3-mi Radius	\$38,500,000.00
Total Estimated Cost	\$56,198,700.00

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Project Stakeholder Coordination

The Enhancing Safe Routes to School Program along the South Dade Trail Feasibility Study included stakeholder coordination throughout the course of the study. As part of the coordination efforts, the Project Team identified key stakeholders and partnering agencies who were invited to participate in Project Working Group (PWG) Meetings. The Project Working Group included representatives from key agencies and departments. The main goals for the PWG meetings were to:

- Involve key stakeholders and partnering agencies in the development of transportation improvements,
- Achieve acceptance of the proposed improvements,
- Provide project information to the group and receive feedback,
- Ensure the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users were fully considered in the coordination effort while balancing community values and mobility needs.

The input received during this coordination was instrumental in guiding the Study Team and identifying preferences and key concerns for the corridor.

Recommendations

The study identified a phased approach to addressing the deficiencies encountered. This phased approach consisted of Short-Term Recommendations, Mid-Term Recommendations, and Long-Term Recommendations:

- ◇ **Short-term recommended improvements (3-5 years)** were identified to include providing safe biking and walking paths, pavement markings/ striping, new green infrastructure to provide shading, increased wayfinding and signage, bicycle stop signs, crosswalk improvements, crosswalk transitions, midblock crossings, and bike/ped counters. The total estimated cost for these improvements is **\$4.94 Million (in 2023 dollars)**.
- ◇ **The mid-term recommended improvements (5-7 years)** were identified to include providing resting areas, water fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, bike racks and repair stations, bike share and roundabouts/ trailheads, to the extent deemed feasible via a future design effort, at entrances to the communities. The total estimated cost for these improvements is **\$35.68 Million (in 2023 dollars)**.
- ◇ **The long-term recommendations improvements (10+ Years)** were identified to include bi-directional bicycle paths and separated pedestrian paths, widening path, road bike lanes, dedicated facilities to provide east/west connectivity, speed tables on the streets that are on the SRTS, and connection to The Underline (Phase 3) at the South Dadeland Station. The total estimated cost for these improvements is **\$56.20 Million (in 2023 dollars)**.

The following is the general recommended framework for the further development and implementation of these improvements:

- ◇ **Additional Stakeholder Coordination and project sponsors** – It is recommended that additional coordination be conducted with the appropriate agencies to identify project sponsors who can take the recommendations identified in this study and further develop them through the identification of potential funding sources for the design and ultimate construction of these improvements.
- ◇ **Project Prioritization** – Once the relevant project sponsors are identified, improvements identified in this study can then be prioritized as part of the development of the TPOs List of Program Priorities (LOPP). The LOPP cycle for their inclusion will depend on various factors including the timing of the coordination with the various sponsors and the extent of the available funding anticipated.
- ◇ **Additional Design and Public Outreach** - Once the projects have been programmed in the work programs of the respective project sponsors, additional design of these improvements will need to be conducted to quantify constraints, mitigate potential impacts in preparation for implementation. Early public outreach is recommended as part of this phase to ensure the feedback from likely affected constituents is appropriately considered as part of the design of the improvements.