



ANTHONY J. DELGADO
City Manager
863.834.6006

March 17, 2016

Ms. Britney Moore
Office of Greenways and Trails Council
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 795
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

SUBJECT: City of Lakeland Staff Letter of Support for "Nature Coast to Peace River Greenway Connector"

Dear Ms. Moore:

Through this correspondence, the City of Lakeland staff expresses its support for the Nature Coast to Peace River Greenway Connector (Connector) that will be considered for a high-priority ranking by the Office of Greenways and Trails Council at its March 31st meeting in Tallahassee. This route will connect the Fort Fraser, General Van Fleet State and Withlacoochee State Trails with other premier trails that are currently under development in Lakeland and Polk County.

In Lakeland, the design phase has begun for the Tenoroc Trail Segment One and an alternatives study has recently been completed for the west side of Lake Parker, which recommends the development of a 10-foot wide asphalt trail along the lakefront. Both of these corridors are components of the Connector and will be the subject of future funding requests through OGT, the Polk Transportation Planning Organization and the Florida Department of Transportation. Other components of the City's Lake-to-Lake Bikeway Network have also been recently completed to connect the regional trail network to our residential, employment and recreational centers, including the Bella Vista Trail, Three Parks Trail and Lake Beulah Trail. Investments in our bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure helped Lakeland to be designated a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists in 2012.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Chuck Barmby at (863) 834-6011.

Sincerely,


Anthony J. Delgado
City Manager

Cc: Mayor Howard Wiggs; Lakeland City Commission; Jim Studiale, AICP, Community Development Director; Greg James, CPM, Interim Public Works Director; Thomas Deardorff, AICP, Executive Director, Polk TPO; Patricia Steed, Executive Director, CFRPC

TPO RESOLUTION 2016-04

RESOLUTION OF THE POLK TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (TPO) REQUESTING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION'S GREENWAYS AND TRAILS COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THE NATURE COAST TO PEACE RIVER GREENWAY TRAIL CORRIDOR AS A HIGH PRIORITY TRAIL CORRIDOR FOR SUN TRAIL FUNDING:

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes, Chapter 339, Section 81 established the Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail Network and funding for the implementation of the trails that comprise the SUN Trail Network; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) Greenways and Trails Council establishes priority corridors for the consideration of SUN Trail funding; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Greenways and Trails Council has selected the Nature Coast to Peace River Greenway (NCPR) Trail Corridor as one of seven regional priority trail corridors throughout the state eligible for consideration of SUN Trail funding; and

WHEREAS, the proposed NCPR Trail will connect 14 or 20% of Florida's 67 counties with a trail from Bartow to Tallahassee that uses existing and planned trails through Polk, Lake, Sumter, Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Marion, Levy, Dixie, Gilchrist, Taylor, Jefferson, Wakulla and Leon Counties; and

WHEREAS, seven of these counties (Polk, Lake, Sumter, Pasco, Hernando, Citrus and Marion) are represented through their metropolitan/transportation planning organizations (MPOs/TPOs) on the West Central Florida Chairs' Coordinating Committee (CCC) and Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA) through interlocal agreements and prepare regional transportation plans and priorities; and

WHEREAS, the existing and planned trails that comprise the proposed NCPR Trail are reflected in the regional multi-use trail plans for the CCC and the CFMPOA; and

WHEREAS, the Coast-to-Coast Trail is currently the State's top regional trail priority and will extend from St. Petersburg to Titusville when completed; and

WHEREAS, the proposed NCPR Trail will connect to and utilize a portion of the Coast-to-Coast Trail in Lake, Sumter, Pasco and Hernando Counties; and

WHEREAS, the proposed NCPR Trail will connect to several other regional trail corridors in West Central Florida in addition to the Coast-to-Coast Trail, including the Southwest Coastal Trail and Heart of Florida Loop Trail; and

WHEREAS, approximately 40% (nearly 150 miles) of the proposed 347 mile

NCPR Trail corridor is comprised of many prominent existing trails including the Fort Fraser Trail, Chain of Lakes Trail, Lakeland's Lake-to-Lake Greenway and Trail System, Auburndale-TECO Trail, Van Fleet State Trail, Withlacoochee State Trail, Nature Coast State Trail, and St. Marks State Trail; and

WHEREAS, Polk County is a trail destination with nearly 400 miles of existing paved and unpaved multi-use trails, hiking trails, bicycling (off-road and on-road) and canoe trails; and

WHEREAS, these trails provide access to 286,170 acres of public/private conservation and recreation lands in Polk County including the Green Swamp, Peace River Greenway, Lake Wales Ridge, and Upper Kissimmee River/Everglades Headwaters; and

WHEREAS, Polk County's Adopted 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan (*Momentum 2040*), contains existing and planned trail projects (including portions of the proposed NCPR trail) that connect Polk County's communities, parks, neighborhoods, schools, lakes and natural areas, and are intended to provide non-motorized transportation and recreation for Polk County residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, in adopting *Momentum 2040*, the Polk TPO Board established a performance target to develop a regional multi-use trail network linking all of Polk County's 17 municipalities and providing access to at least 80 percent of Polk's residents by 2040; and

WHEREAS, within Polk County the proposed NCPR Trail will travel through the heart of the Lakeland and Winter Haven Urbanized areas which have a combined population of nearly 500,000;

WHEREAS, a significant portion of the proposed NCPR Trail within Polk County will traverse the City of Lakeland which is a designated bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community, a bronze-level Walk Friendly Community, a Road Runners Club of America Runner Friendly Community and a Florida Department of Health Healthy Weight Community Champion; and

WHEREAS, for many years the Polk TPO, Polk County's local governments, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways and Trails and other entities have been actively planning and implementing segments of the SUN Trail/NCPR Trail in Polk County; and

WHEREAS, the Polk TPO has prioritized and requested funding through the FDOT in support of the incomplete portions of NCPR Trail Corridor in Polk County; and

WHEREAS, within Polk County over 50% (nearly 40 miles) of the proposed NCPR Trail is comprised of existing trails with a remaining trail gap of approximately 35 miles; and

WHEREAS, nearly 20 miles of the trail gap in Polk County has been studied (Master Plan or Project Development and Environmental Study), or will be in the next few years for future trail development and includes the Fort Fraser Trail crossing of the Polk Parkway (State Road 570), the Old Dixie Trail, and the Tenoroc Trail; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Polk Transportation Planning Organization at its regular meeting on April 14, 2016:

1. The Polk TPO supports the Nature Coast to Peace River Greenway Trail Corridor between Bartow and Tallahassee; and
2. The Polk TPO requests the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Greenways and Trails Council to consider the Trail Corridor as a high-priority for future SUN Trail funding.

ADOPTED THIS 14th Day of April, 2016.

Signed:

Commissioner Don Selvage, Chairman
Polk Transportation Planning
Organization (TPO)

April 14, 2016

Date

ATTEST:

Thomas M. Deardorff, AICP
TPO Executive Director

Approved by the TPO Attorney as to
form and legal sufficiency:

Randy Mink, TPO Attorney



Hernando/Citrus MPO

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March 28, 2016

Florida Greenways and Trails Council
Office of Greenways and Trails
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3800 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 795
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

Dear Council Members,

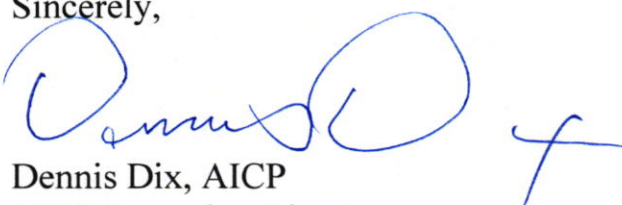
As the Executive Director of the Hernando/Citrus MPO, I support the Nature Coast to Peace River Greenway Connector and recommend the Florida Greenways and Trails Council to select this trail as the next priority portion for multi-use trail funding.

The Nature Coast to Peace River Greenway Connector will provide tourists and state residents a safe, alternative transportation network that serves as a resource for leisure and exercise, while also providing for commuters and consumer destinations.

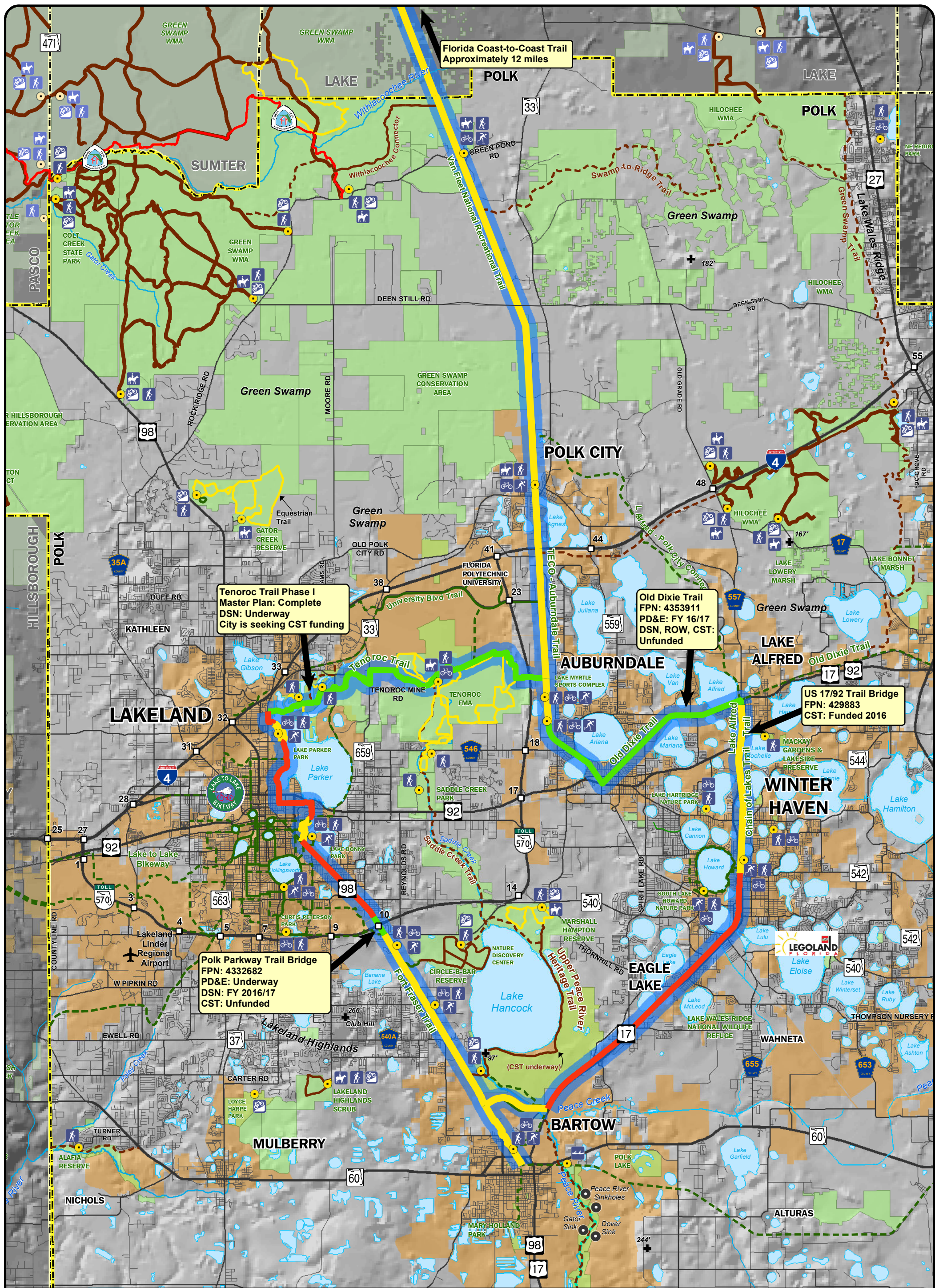
The Nature Coast to Peace River Greenway Corridor would stretch from Tallahassee to Bartow. It will encompass sections of the Coast-to-Coast Connector (C2C) trail; and would serve as a northern extension to the Southwest Coastal Regional Trail. Once all segments are completed, it will be part of a network that would extend almost the entire west coast of Florida and a part of the nation's largest system of locally connected trails.

Our organization welcomes the opportunity to work alongside all the governmental and advocacy partners in this regional effort to invest in Florida's eco-tourism, economic development, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and sustainability.

Sincerely,



Dennis Dix, AICP
MPO Executive Director



Florida Coast-to-Coast Trail
Approximately 12 miles

Tenoroc Trail Phase I
Master Plan: Complete
DSN: Underway
City is seeking CST funding

Old Dixie Trail
FPN: 4353911
PD&E: FY 16/17
DSN, ROW, CST:
Unfunded

US 17/92 Trail Bridge
FPN: 429883
CST: Funded 2016

Polk Parkway Trail Bridge
FPN: 4332682
PD&E: Underway
DSN: FY 2016/17
CST: Unfunded

Map Legend

SUN Trail Status

- Existing Trail (38.8 miles)
- Trail Gap - PD&E Study/Master Plan (18.8 miles)
- Trail Gap - Planned/Not Funded (16.1 miles)
- SUNTrail Network (73.7 miles)

Other Trails - Trail Type

- Existing Multi-Use Trail - Paved
- Planned Multi-Use Trail - Paved
- Existing Multi-Use Trail - Unpaved
- Planned Multi-Use Trail - Unpaved
- Existing Hiking Trail - Natural Surface
- Trailhead



March 29, 2016

SUN Trail Status Polk County

