



**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
*"Dedicated to Quality Service"*

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone: 941-861-5344 fax: 941-861-5987

March 22, 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

**Re: Florida Greenways and Trails Letter of Support**

Dear Council Members:

Sarasota County strongly supports the Southwest Coastal Regional Trail and urges the Florida Greenways and Trails Council to select our greater region as the next priority area for multi-use trail funding.

In 2016, the Sarasota County Commissioners recognized the expansion of The Legacy Trail as a top five priority project. The Commission has also invested significant resources to advance the Legacy Trail north to Payne Park in the City of Sarasota: in conceptual trail design, preliminary cost estimates and community outreach through the adoption of the county's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (October 2013) and The Legacy Trail Feasibility Study (April 2015). Sarasota County continues to strengthen its intergovernmental partnerships by supporting secondary trail projects that will extend the reach of The Legacy Trail into the county's comprehensive trail network. In conjunction with the South County Extension, Sarasota County is working in partnership with the City of North Port to construct a \$570,000 multi-use bridge that will act as a gateway into the city, and is actively supporting the City of Venice to finalize a critical gap piece through the construction of a multi-use trail along Edmonson Road. Sarasota County is in a strong position to act quickly on our local segments and have partnered with the Trust for Public Land to initiate correspondence with CSX to discuss potential next steps.

With over 120,000 users per year along the existing portion of The Legacy Trail, there is overwhelming support from our local residents, advisory boards and advocacy groups that support the selection of the Southwest Coastal Regional Trail as the next priority area. Expansion of this network will enhance the quality life of our residents and visitors by providing expanded multi-modal options, additional recreational choices and economic growth opportunities for local business owners. The establishment of the Southwest Coastal network will act as spine trail for Sarasota County's future planned local trail network and will provide direct access between three of our local municipalities (City of Sarasota, City of Venice and City of North Port) and neighboring inland counties to the east (DeSoto County).

Sarasota County 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. The Southwest Coastal Regional Trail would establish a continuous connection of the Coast-to-Coast Connector (C2C) which is currently under construction and nearing completion.

Sincerely,



Alan Maio  
Chairman

c: Sarasota County Commission  
Thomas A. Harmer, ICMA – CM, County Administrator