

# Sarasota County Bicycle Pedestrian Trail Advisory Committee

Report to the North Port City Commission

By: Thomas J. Noyes, BPTAC North Port Representative

October 4, 2018

# My Relevant Background

- Avid lifetime cyclist-road, mountain, commuting, trail and touring
- North Port resident since Summer 2016
- Active with BSA Troop 157 including taking troop cycling 2-3x/year, teaching safe cycling and Cycling Merit Badge counselor
- Father of two NPHS students
- My wife Victoria is on the transportation team for Sarasota County Schools

# How did I get here today?

Read newspaper posting for the empty seat on County BPTAC

Applied for North Port seat on BPTAC early 2017

Approved by City Commission and forwarded to BOCC

Approved by BOCC 5/23/17. Term expires 4/30/21

Attended first meeting as member on 6/20/17

Elected Vice Chair of the BPTAC in September 2017

# Current Make up of BPTAC

Michael Belle, Chair, at Large	Tom Noyes, V-Chair, City of North Port
Crystal Allred, at Large	Carol Conrad, at Large
Cheryl Gaddie, at Large	Darlene Culpepper, City of Venice
Darryl Lang, at Large	Daniel Ohrenstein, City of Sarasota
Kendra Newman, at Large	Sgt. Darrell Seckendorf, SCSO
Wendy Ying, at Large	Brian Xiao, STAR Representative
Jeffrey Shivers, at Large	Christina Pitchford, at Large

# Open seats and Liaison

There are presently two, soon to be three, open positions:

- Sarasota County School Board
- Town of Longboat Key
- At Large

The staff Liaison for the committee is Patrick Lui, Sarasota County

# What has BPTAC been up to this year?

- The Sarasota Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was presented and reviewed. The intent is for the plan to be reviewed and updated every three years.
- This plan provides a framework to promote and encourage efficient and safe bicycle and pedestrian travel integrated in the existing County transportation plan.
- The plan is an essential tool for the County to use when applying for grants from state, federal or nonprofit programs
- The plan will be used as a guide for ensuring the county makes improvements consistent with citizens' needs and desires

# Updated Plan Approved

- After submitting specific recommendations to include three popular routes/trails into the plan, BPTAC voted unanimously to approve the Plan and recommend approval by BOCC
- Sarasota County BOCC Approved updated Plan May 2018
- <https://www.scgov.net/government/public-works/bicycle-and-pedestrian-plans>

# On to More Specific Initiatives

- Under new leadership, the BPTAC turned our focus toward specific and actionable items we wanted to send up to the BOCC.
- Chairman Belle asked each member to submit 2-4 initiatives for consideration by the committee.
- The plan was to select three as a committee that we wanted to completely work through to a formal recommendation for action by the County.



# Initiatives Specific to North Port-What were my primary concerns and observations?

## **1) Safe routes to School.** Specifically HCMS and NPHS

So many students are coming down the Publix side of Price (or who live in Heron Creek) and trying to cross traffic in the area of the Heron Creek gates.

Crossing Price Boulevard to get to the NPHS side of the road anywhere between Sumter and the creek is very dangerous.

The speed limit is 45 mph.

School zones are great once you get to them and if it is the correct time of day for the lights to flash.

- **2) Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing US 41 and West Villages Parkway**

This could be something already in the plans with the development of the Spring Training site but I wanted it mentioned anyway. There could be a great number of people who will want to cycle to the baseball complex and retail locations on the south side of US 41. Safe bike/ped crossing should be in the works in this area.

- **3) Eliminate/reduce/connect “Sidewalks to no where”**

North Port has such a great system of multi use paths and sidewalks so this is somewhat of a general concept but there are some very specific instances where sidewalks dead end without warning. This relates back, in part, to the safe routes to school concept also.

# Additional suggestions by members

- Bike share programs
- Education for cyclists AND MOTORISTS on sharing the roads
- Clarification on various bike facilities and road cross sections
- Info in the FL drivers license test
- Coordinating the Trails Master Plan with the Parks Master Plan
- Clarify bicycle signage and markings, possibly lengthen crosswalk time
- More maps on county website and links to mobile devices
- Acknowledge equestrians as stakeholders
- Creation of an office of Bike, Ped, Trails specifically

# Top Three Initiatives agreed upon by BPTAC-at our June 2018 meeting

- 1) Bay Street Connector and Legacy Trail connection to the beaches
- 2) County Promotion of integrated bike and ped systems as well as education for cyclists and motorists with the ultimate focus on safety for all
- 3) Explore having a transportation “app” and/or map that allows users to locate multi use route options to travel around the county

# Legacy Trail Referendum

- The BPTAC is obviously very aware and supportive of the Legacy Trail extension proposals and the upcoming referendum.
- Thank you to the North Port City Commission for supporting the referendum encouraging North Port residents to vote “YES”.
- Specific reflection on what this means for North Port residents and our connectivity to other parts of the county.

# Legacy Trail Referendum

- In 2004, Sarasota County acquired first rails to trails corridor from Center Rd. to Culverhouse Nature Park, totaling 10.6 miles
- Trail was constructed in 2007 and named the Legacy Trail
- 2013 Friends of LT submitted request to BOCC to extend trail to Payne Park, an additional nine miles from Culverhouse Nature Park
- 2017 BOCC directed the County Administrator to negotiate with the Trust for Public Land and the railroad companies to acquire the property and to pursue funding options

# North Extension split into two phases

- Phase I is Culverhouse Nature Park to the intersection of Ashton Road which is approximately 1.7 miles-Main Line Parcel
- Also a spur of 9/10 of a mile which is called the Spur Parcel
- This phase was purchased for \$ 7.9 M using Impact Fees and the Neighborhood Parkland Program
- Phase II is from Ashton Road north to Fruitville Road (6 miles) and includes a spur of 5/10 of a mile. The purchase price is \$ 30.1 M and is contingent upon passage of the November 6, 2018 referendum



# What does it mean for North Port?

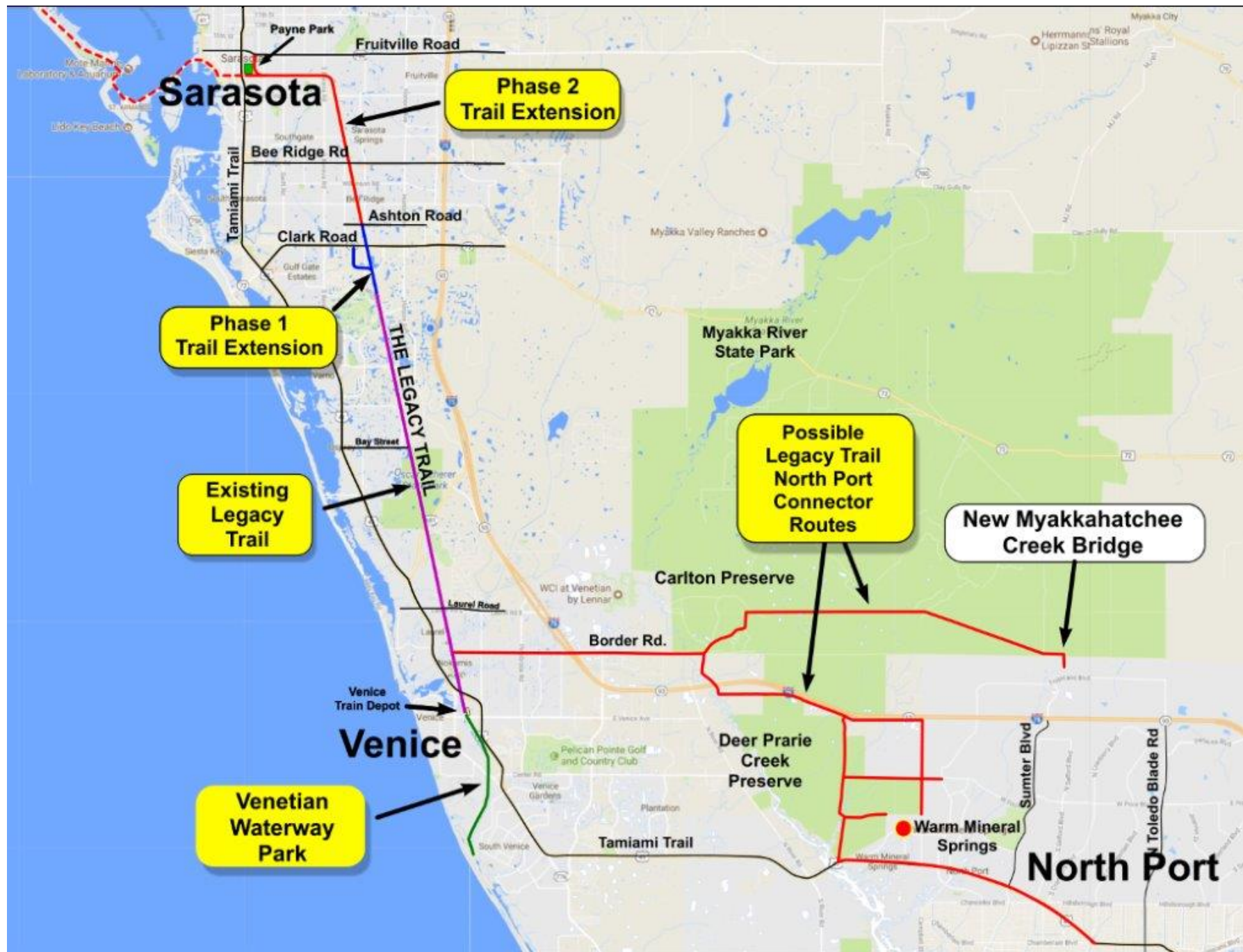
- To acquire and improve the Legacy Trail Extension railroad corridor as a safe trail for walking, running, and cycling **with enhanced connectivity from North Port through Venice to downtown Sarasota**, with additional improvements including safe crossings, overpasses, amenities, and increased accessibility
- On 8/13/18 the Board of Directors of Friends of The Legacy Trail passed the following resolution:
- **“Friends of the Legacy Trail supports and endorses efforts by the City of North Port to ensure connectivity from The Legacy Trail through the City of North Port.”**
- If the November 2018 referendum for funding The Legacy Trail extension passes, money will be available to improve the route connecting North Port to The Legacy Trail. There are on-going discussions between North Port officials, county officials, and members of Friends of The Legacy Trail to determine the best route.

- **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REFERENDUM**

- **ON THE BALLOT – GENERAL ELECTION  
NOVEMBER 6th**

- **Q: “Isn’t The Legacy Trail Extension a ‘Done Deal?’ When Will We Be Able to Use It?”**
- **No money is available to Extend The Trail. Approval of the referendum will provide funds to make The Trail Extension to downtown Sarasota and connection to North Port a reality.**
- **Q: “Why Extend The Legacy Trail?”**
- **Enhances Quality of Life and Property**
- **Promotes healthy lifestyles for all ages** by providing an attractive and safe place to walk, run, skate, cycle, explore local nature, commute to jobs or run errands.
- **Converts an unused, overgrown rail corridor** to a well-used recreational and commuting trail, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality.
- **Connects existing neighborhood trails** and other on-road bike lanes.
- **Promotes local economic activity** by stimulating tourism, raising area home values, promoting healthy lifestyles for all ages, and reducing employee healthcare costs as reflected in many studies.
- **Improves Safety for Cyclists, Walkers, Runners and Skaters.**
- **Supports the Safe Routes to School National Partnership**, creating safe and convenient ways for children to walk or bicycle to school and promotes daily physical activity. There are 27 schools within one linear mile of the Trail and 45 schools within two linear miles.
- **Provides nearly 30 miles of continuous non-motorized, paved, multi-use trail links** between communities and amenities.

- **Q: “How Will the Extension Be Paid For if The Referendum Passes?”**
- **County will borrow money** in the form of bonds that will be paid back over 20 years.
- **Cost per household is just \$8 / year for each \$100,000 assessed home value** (not market value) for up to 20 years, assuming County bonds for the max \$65M. Availability of non-county funds (e.g. FDOT) would reduce the need for borrowing and lower household cost.
- **Q: “What Will Happen Once the Referendum Passes?”**
- It gives the county approval to borrow money needed to complete the project.
- It is estimated that it will be just 5 years before the trail extension is completed.
- The County will:
  - Buy and pave the existing railroad right-of-way to Payne Park / Fruitville Road
  - Build Bridges over Clark and Bee Ridge Roads
  - Add Parking Areas / Trailheads, Rest Stops / Rest Rooms
  - Landscape the Trail (Trees / Flowers)
  - Add Connector to North Port / Warm Mineral Springs via Deer Prairie Creek Preserve (exact route to be determined – [see map](#))
- **Funds from Referendum may be used only to extend The Trail & connect to North Port.**
- **Q: “What Is The \*Exact\* Wording of the Referendum That Will Be on The Ballot November 6? “**
- **SARASOTA COUNTY LEGACY TRAIL EXTENSION WITH ENHANCED SAFETY AND CONNECTIONS GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS** To acquire and improve The Legacy Trail Extension railroad corridor as a safe trail for walking, running, and cycling with enhanced connectivity from North Port through Venice to downtown Sarasota, with additional improvements including safe crossings, overpasses, amenities, and increased accessibility, shall Sarasota County issue General Obligation bonds, not exceeding the maximum lawful interest rates, maturing within 20 years from each issuance, not exceeding \$65 million payable from ad valorem taxes restricted to these purposes?



- Thank you for your time today. Please contact me with any questions or concerns related to Bicycles, Pedestrians or Trails in or around North Port or Sarasota County.
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