



## Legacy Trail – Board of Directors Discussion Guide

Recently there was a change to the ballot language that states \$2 million *shall* be used for the North Port connector of Legacy Trail.

From the Friends of Legacy Trail Web Site – This is what happens if the referendum passes.

- It gives the county approval to borrow money needed to complete the project.
- It is estimated that it will be 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 on back)

**Pros** (from the Friends of the Legacy Trail website)

- **Popularity:** Already today, the existing trail hosts about 225,000 visitors each year.
- **Safety:** The trail is beneficial to cyclist/pedestrian and driver safety.
- **Health:** Trails and parks have demonstrated positive impact on public health indicators.
- **Accessibility:** The trail will enable access from many adjacent neighborhoods between Downtown Venice and Downtown Sarasota, with a planned connector to North Port.
- **Quality of Life:** We know that Sarasota County will always be among the most desirable places to live, and facilities like the Legacy Trail are iconic community resources that reinforce our competitiveness.
- **Property Values:** Numerous studies show that property values of both commercial and residential land increase adjacent to parks, trails, and natural lands.

**Cons** (from community discussions)

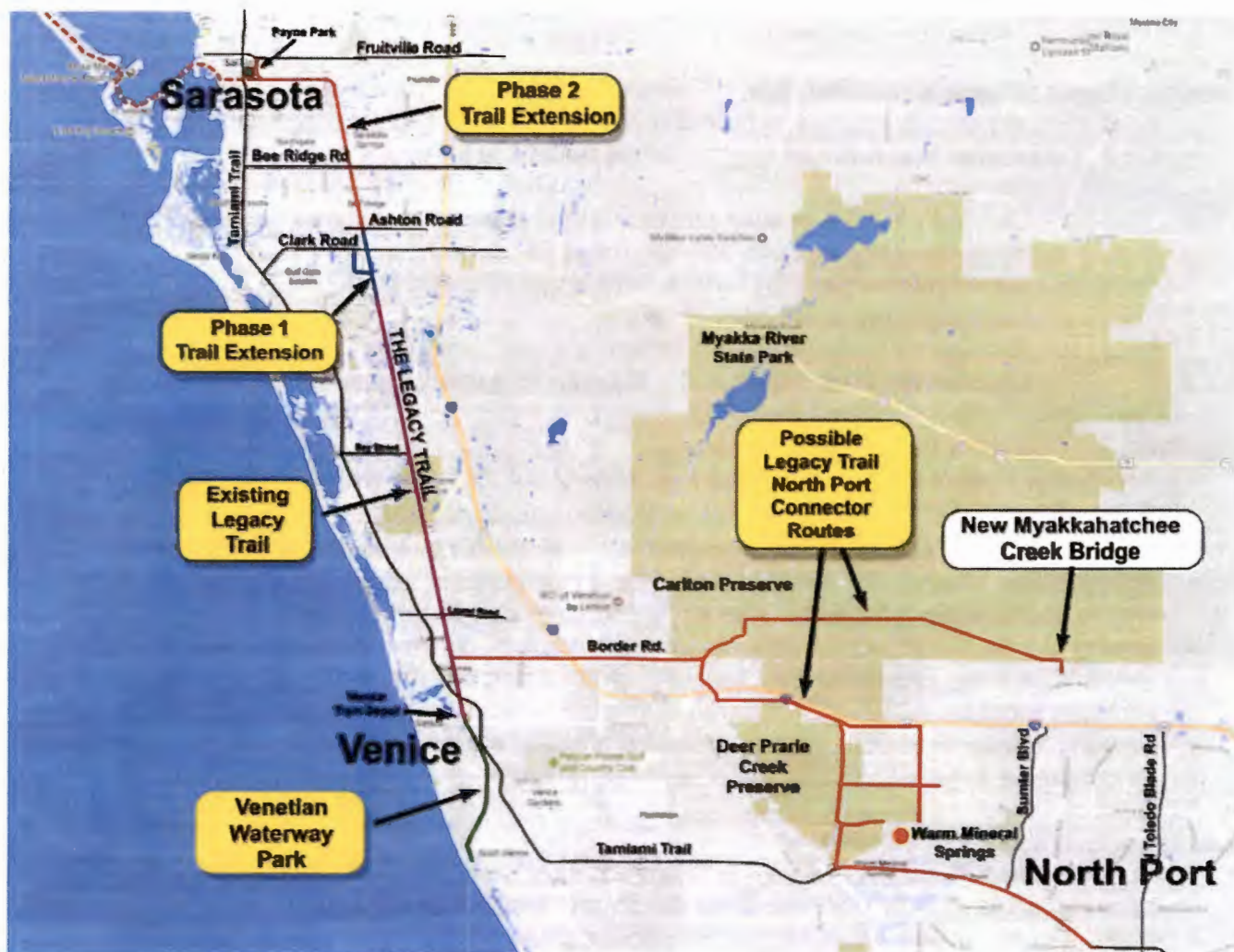
- **Concern About Perceived Pressure to Change Zoning:** Some have expressed concern that the property values of industrial land along the current abandoned rail bed will so escalate that we might lose our already limited industrially zoned properties as the demand to transition to residential or commercial uses increases (as is presently occurring around the celery fields).
- **Property Tax Impact:** Sarasota County projects that the millage rate increase necessary today to pay off the bonds would be 0.08 mills. That equates to \$8 per\$100,000 in assessed property value.
- **North Port Concerns:** Leaders in North Port, including the NP Chamber of Commerce, would like a reasonable assurance that the North Port leg(s) of Legacy Trail will be the next portion to be completed.
- **Alternative Needs:** Other needs for public funds, such as a hurricane shelter in Venice, have also been brought up. We understand and agree with this need. We do not believe the Legacy Trail to be at odds with meeting it, and in fact would suggest that the increases in property values from this and other public investments will enhance our ability to meet basic needs.

## Steering Committee

**Co-Chairs:** Dan Bailey and Gina Taylor (also Treasurer)

**Deputy Treasurer:** Louis Kosiba

**Committee Members:** Kevin Cooper, Jack Cox, Ron Cutsinger, Teri Hansen, Rod Hershberger, Steve Matthews, John McCarthy, Shaun Merriman, Wayne Roberts, Christine Johnson, Andrea Seager, Michael Saunders, Bill Spittler, Jon Thaxton, Bob Vedder



The approved ballot language reads as follows:

### 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?

Yes, for Bonds

No, Against Bonds