



February 18, 2020

Dale Martin
City Manager, City of Fernandina Beach
204 Ash St.
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Dear Mr. Martin,

The Friends of the Amelia Island Trail want to thank you and the city staff for your generous support over the last 6 months to help us shape the Schools to Downtown Waterfront Trail proposal. We came away from the January 23, 2020 public meeting energized and reinforced that we are on the right path to help connect our community to its public resources and to provide safe passage through the neighborhoods to downtown. We hope we can present our case to the City Commission in the near future. Our goal would be to seek Commission consensus to move forward on grant applications as soon as reasonably possible.

The Schools to Downtown Waterfront Trail proposal is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, specifically Multi Modal Transportation Goal 2, Object 2.10 "to encourage and promote the safe integration and utilization of bicycle and pedestrian and low-speed alternative vehicle movement on the roadway network." The proposed trail will be another link in the East Coast Greenway connecting us to St. Marys, GA to the north and Duval County to the south.

On January 30, 2020 representatives of our group and Ms. Lorelei Jacobs met with Adrienne Burke, Nassau County Director of Planning and Economic Opportunity, and the County's consultant to talk about trail planning in the County. At that time, we discussed working together to develop and prioritize trail planning and construction grant applications. This collaborative and coordinated effort could help to assure success in the grant process.

For the near term we have identified two trail segments that we think merit immediate consideration as a matter of public safety. We ask that the city consider adding these projects to the fiscal year 2020-2021 budget process. We request that the city Department heads that oversee these locations assess the proposals and develop their best estimates of the costs.

Gum St. Multi-use Path

What: Plan, design and construct a multi-use path on the north side of Gum Street from S. 11th St. to S. 5th St. The segment from S. 8th to S. 7th has a sidewalk in good condition meaning we would need an additional 5 blocks of path. City construction of this segment would anchor the Schools to Downtown Waterfront Trail and help support the later grant application.

Rationale: Gum street is heavily traveled, has no sidewalks and is used by many pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles. The traffic light at 8th St. is a safe crossing point. Many pedestrian and cycling commuters are using Gum St. and S. 5th St. to get to downtown. This path would provide a safer passage from the neighborhood around the Peck Center to downtown.

Lime St. Connector and Sidewalk

What: Plan, design and construct a path through the city park at Lime St. and S. 8th to connect Lime St. to S. 7th St. Secondly construct a short sidewalk on the north side of Lime to connect the existing marked crosswalk across S. 8th St. to Clinch Dr.

Rationale for the Connector: Pedestrians and cyclists crossing Lime St. must now walk or ride on the 8th St. sidewalk next to heavy traffic to get to Kelp St. where access to S. 7th provides a safe path to downtown. A short path connecting Lime St. through the City Park would get commuters, cyclists and walkers off the road and heading toward downtown safely.

Rationale for the Sidewalk: A sidewalk on the north side of Lime St. would continue the existing sidewalk that brings pedestrians across 8th St. and provide safe egress to Clinch Dr.

Connecting S. 2nd St. and Ash St. to the Waterfront

Finally, we request that as part of the City Hall renovation that planning include a means to get cyclists and pedestrians safely from S. 2nd St. and Ash St. to the planned sidewalk on the east side of the railroad tracks connecting Ash St. to Centre St.

A final thought for your consideration: At our January 23, 2020 public meeting Gum St. resident Mr. Andy Rebholz testified "If this path saves one life it will be worth it." Last week Andy called to tell me his grandson had sustained a minor injury when a lawn care trailer ran over his foot while playing on Gum St. He encouraged us to move more quickly than our 5 to 10 year time frame.

Respectfully,

Michael Spino
Friends of the Amelia Island Trail

Attachments

Satellite Maps of Gum St. path, Lime St. Connector and Sidewalk, S. 2nd St. and Ash St.

CC:

Ms. Kelly Gibson, Director of Planning and Conservation
Ms. Nan Voit, Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Rex Lester, Streets Maintenance Director
Mr. Andre Desilet, Stormwater Manager
Ms. Lorelei Jacobs, Grants Administrator
Mr. John Mandrick, Utilities Director
Police Chief James Hurley
Fire Chief Ty Silcox



Gum St. Multi-use Path



Lime St. Connector and Sidewalk



One way to Connect S. 2nd St. and Ash St. to the Waterfront