



May 5, 2015

Honorable Commissioners of Sarasota County

Commissioner Carolyn J. Mason
Commissioner Paul Caragiulo
Commissioner Christine Robinson
Commissioner Alan Maio
Commissioner Charles D. Hines, Esq.

Sarasota County Commission
1660 Ringling Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 34236

The Board of Directors of the Downtown Sarasota Alliance (the "DSA") applauds your action in support of the extension of the Legacy Trail spur extending from Palmer Ranch into Payne Park in Downtown Sarasota. The Legacy Trail is a non-motorized multiple use recreational trail designed for walking, jogging/running, rollerblading and bicycling. The area has also been identified as a multimodal opportunity for a dedicated bus rapid transit line, which the DSA has previously supported. Combining these uses within the same corridor would not automatically be inconsistent with the DSA's enthusiastic support for extending this spur of the Legacy Trail.

When this spur is complete, the trail will connect Downtown Sarasota to Downtown Venice. The Legacy Trail is used over 100,000 times a year and we have seen the tremendous economic and social benefit that the South County has experienced since the trail opened in 2008.

Key benefits of the extension include:

- Increased access to the existing Legacy Trail, meaning over 2/3 of city residents and workers in the County Seat will be within 2 miles of the trail.
- The creation of safe and convenient ways for children to walk or bicycle to school, promoting daily physical activity. There are 27 schools within 1 linear mile of the Trail and 45 schools within 2 linear miles.
- Residents and workers from Downtown Sarasota's shopping districts and neighborhoods can safely ride to more rural areas, while rural residents will have safe and unimpeded access to the city's downtown amenities, shopping districts and neighborhoods.

- The promotion of healthy lifestyles by providing an attractive and safe place to walk, run, skate, cycle, explore local nature viewing opportunities, commute to jobs or run errands.
- The conversion of an unused, overgrown rail corridor to a highly used recreational and commuting trail, thereby realizing its potential to provide a non-vehicle alternative that could reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.
- Numerous studies have shown that multiuse trails promote local economic activity, stimulate tourism, raise nearby home values, promote healthy lifestyles for all ages, and reduce employee healthcare costs.

The DSA believes that the trailhead at Payne Park will greatly benefit Downtown Sarasota by increasing commuting options, business activity, tourism, and recreation in the Downtown's many unique shopping districts and neighborhoods. The completed Legacy Trail spur will be a tremendous asset for both residents and visitors to Sarasota, and its success will generate opportunities and incentives for needed links north (to Bradenton) and east (to SANCA, whose status as an international destination will be improved by the link to a world-class Downtown).

Thank you, again, for your forward-looking support for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Downtown Sarasota Alliance

Casey Colburn, Chairman
Board of Directors