



Developing a Legacy Trail

Learning objectives

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1. Identify the planning components associated with development of a rails to trail project.
2. Summarize a case study overview of a Countywide rails to trails project from referendum to the race to completion.
3. Recognize the vision to transform a rail corridor from a simple trail to a linear park.



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History

- Original Trail
- Friends of Legacy Trail
- Feasibility Study for Extension
- Trail Users



Rail Corridor Acquisition – Historical Use

- **1903** SAL service to Sarasota
- **1911** Service extended to Venice
- **1924** 1st passenger train to Sarasota
- **1927** Venice Train Depot Opens
- **1960** Circus from Sarasota to Venice
- **1971** Passenger services ends
- **1992** Circus use ends



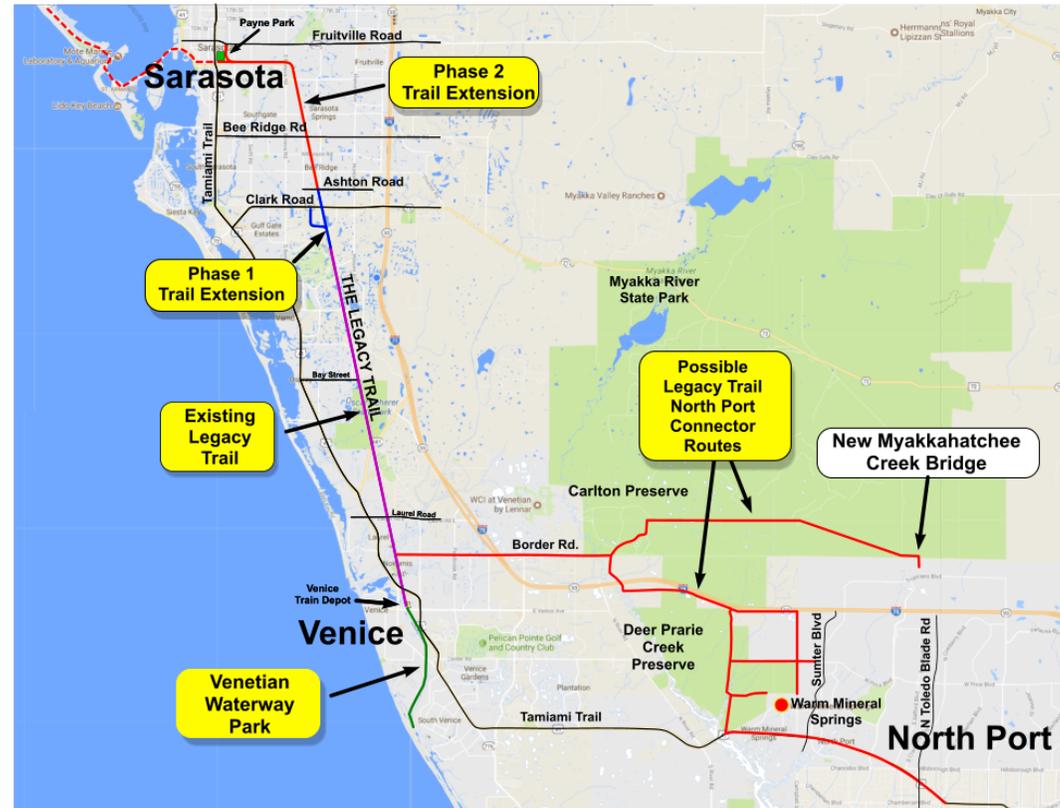
The Trust for Public Land's Role

- Acquisition
- Ballot Measure



Acquisition Feasibility

- Identifying the Property
- Support and Opposition
- Budgeting and Funding
- Ripeness
- Principle Parties
- Project Design



The Property

- Inactive
- 9 Miles
- Two bridges
- \$45M Value
- Owner CSX, Lessee SGRL
- Reversionary Interests
- 200+ Encroachments
- 100+ licenses & leases
- Environmental Contamination
- City of Sarasota, Sarasota County, North Port



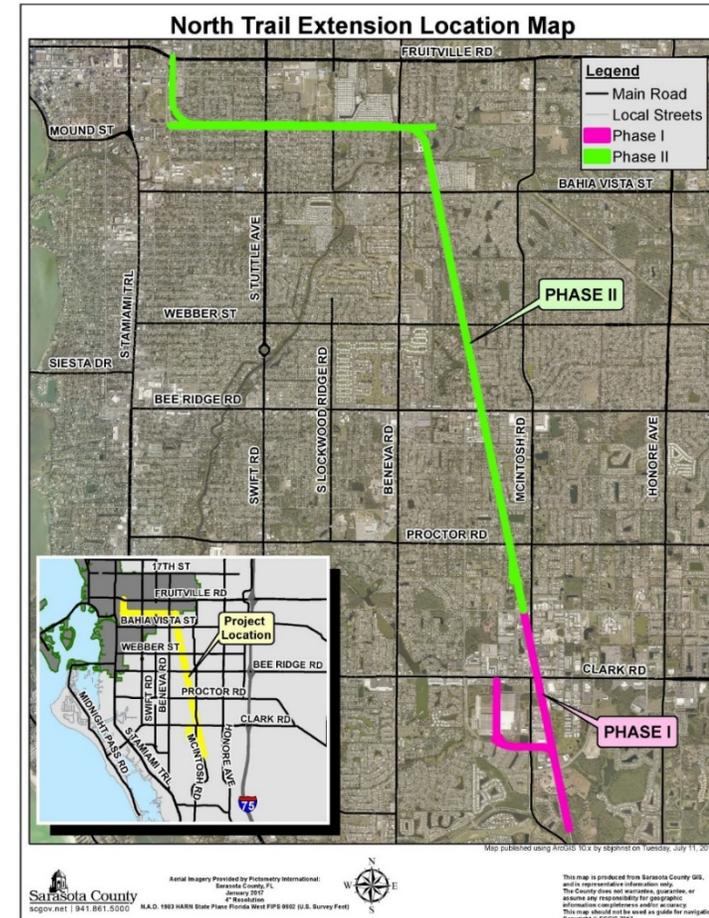
Demonstrable Community Support

- Florida OGT Priority Trails Map
- Friends of the Legacy Trail
- Sarasota County Trails Master Plan
- City of North Port Parks & Rec Plan
- Feasibility study jointly by County and FLT
- Sarasota Parks & Connectivity Master Plan
- Sarasota-Manatee MPO Bike/Ped Master Plan
- Private Business and Foundation Support
- South-North County Political Dynamic



The Purchase Contract

- Negotiated Purchase Price
- Railbanking
- Property acquisition in two phases.
 - First utilizing existing Parkland Acq. Funds
 - Second dependent on Ballot Measure
- Deed Restrictive Language
- Indemnification
- Due diligence



5 Key Steps for Successful Ballot Measures

Feasibility Research

Public Opinion Survey

Program Recommendations

Ballot Language

Campaign

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Message Triangle

Extend The Legacy Trail

- Funds can *ONLY* be used to build the trail from Venice through North Port to Sarasota and for no other purpose
- State and federal matching funds are available



- In this digital age, The Legacy Trail is an opportunity for people of all ages to exercise and experience nature
- Improves quality of life, enhances property values
- Makes Sarasota an even better place to live, visit and invest

- Safe crossings and overpasses at Clark and Bee Ridge Roads will reduce crashes with cars
- Safety is improved by providing walkers, runners and cyclists with a separate trail on the old railroad corridor, instead of roads



Ballot Measure Language

SARASOTA COUNTY GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR LEGACY TRAIL EXTENSION WITH ENHANCED SAFETY AND CONNECTIONS

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



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Campaign Budget and Expenditures

Total C4 Cash Raised: \$84.6K (spent \$78.5k) Total C4 In-Kind: \$88.5K

- Mail (C4) - \$47,262 to design/mail 120,240 pieces
- Mail (C3)* - \$43,939 to design/mail 159,922 pieces
- Paid Social Media (C4) - \$5,000 for over 200,000 views
- Paid Social Media (C3) - \$5,000 for over 200,000 views
- Palm Cards - \$4,900 for 45,000
- Magnets, Signs, Stickers, Buttons, Website... - \$6,500
- Texts - \$2,400 to reach 10,500 young voters
- Telephone Town Hall - \$6,537 to call 27,540
- Radio (At end - Donated)
- Events - \$3,526 for Kickoff, \$1,442 for Victory



IF APPROVED BY VOTERS, The Legacy Trail Extension will IMPROVE SAFETY¹ by:

- Creating safe crossings
- Building overpasses for walking and cycling
- Providing a safe trail for walkers, runners, and cyclists

IF APPROVED BY VOTERS, The Legacy Trail Extension will INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY¹ by:

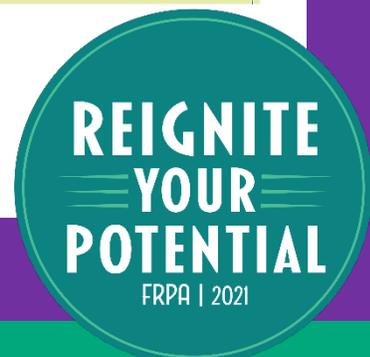
- Adding amenities to the Legacy Trail
- Connecting downtown Sarasota to downtown Venice, and creating a connector into North Port
- Acquiring 6 more miles of the railroad corridor and converting 7.7 miles into a trail

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND RESTRICTED USE OF FUNDS¹
The proposal specifies funds can ONLY be used for the trail, and for no other purposes. Voluntary agreements with the railroad have already been signed and the land will be purchased for LESS than current fair market value. Sarasota county funds WILL be supported by funds from state and private sources.

THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND **CONSERVATION FOUNDATION of the Gulf Coast**

THE LEGACY TRAIL EXTENSION IS ON YOUR BALLOT **NOV. 6**

This information is provided at no public expense by Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast and the Trust for Public Land, privately funded 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, as part of their educational mission.
¹ Sarasota County Commission Resolution 2018-046, March 14, 2018.



Election Results

★ Bond Referendum Legacy Trail (Vote For 1)		Contest Detail	
Precincts Reporting: 100%		Percentage	Votes
NON	Yes, for Bonds	70.58%	139,613
NON	No, against Bonds	29.42%	58,199
			197,812

★ United States Senator (Vote For 1)		Contest Detail	
Precincts Reporting: 100%		Percentage	Votes
REP	Rick Scott	53.76%	113,612
DEM	Bill Nelson	45.88%	96,961
NON	WRITE-IN	0.36%	758
			211,331

6.4% ballot drop-off from top of ticket (US Senate) Race



- Referendum passed in November 2018



Development of the Project

- FDOT funding and changes
- Broke project into segments where order was based on speed of construction
- Decision to go to a Construction Manager At-risk type of contract



THE LEGACY TRAIL EXTENSION

EXISTING TRAIL

CLARK RD

PROCTOR RD

BEE RIDGE RD

BAHIA VISTA ST

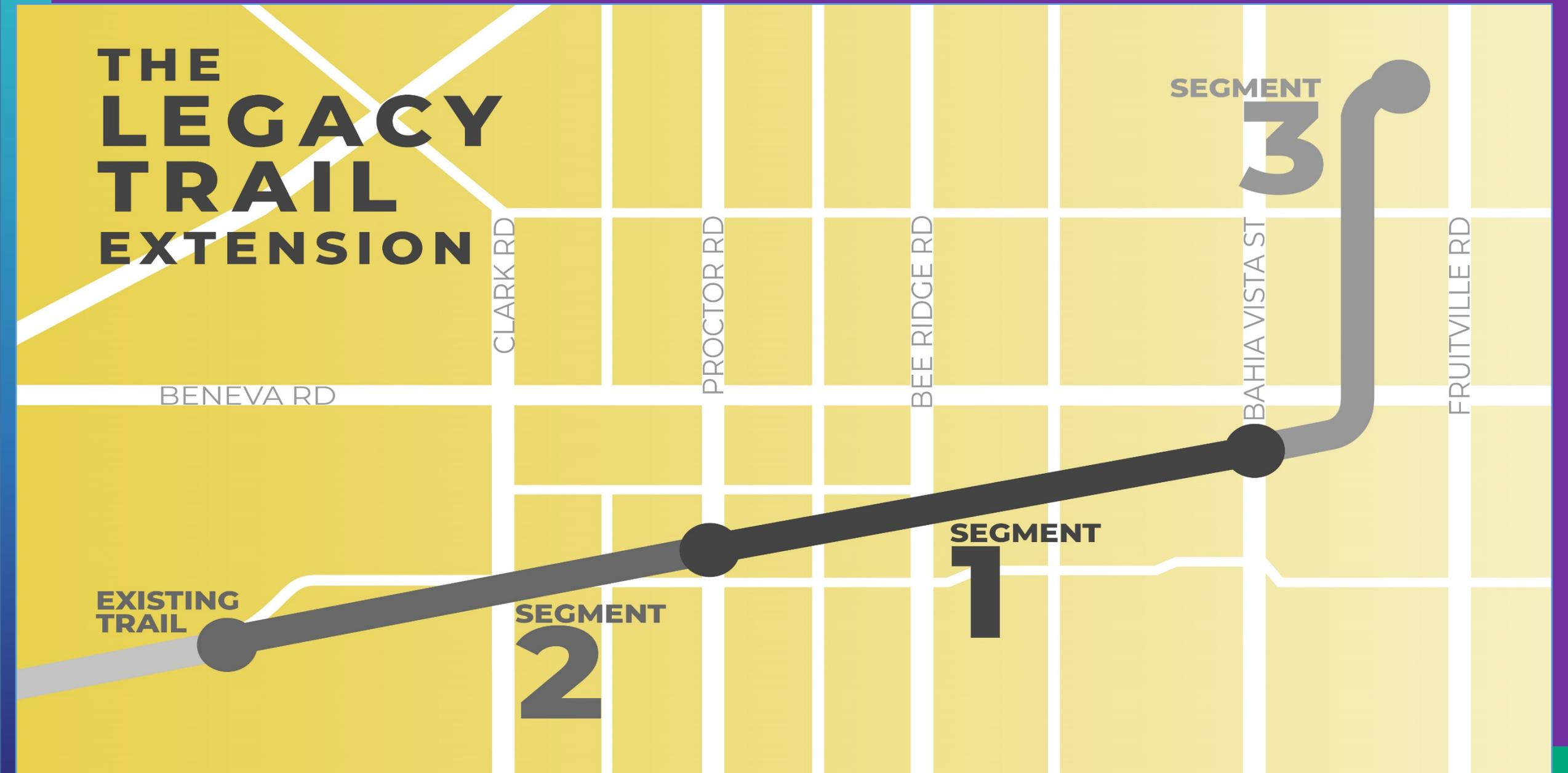
FRUITVILLE RD

BENEVA RD

SEGMENT
2

SEGMENT
1

SEGMENT
3



Management of the Project - Encroachments

- Multiple tiers of contact
 - Certified letters
 - Door hangers
 - Stickers
 - Door knocking
- Different approaches
 - Owner removal
 - Contractor removal
 - License agreements



Communication and Community Involvement

- Biweekly newsletter, FAQs, Friends of Legacy Trail
- Public meeting at 30% Design to allow input on design.
- Held in multiple locations to accommodate scope of project
- DOT exercises
- Diverse Neighborhoods
- Pandemic - Second round of public meeting in online format



Expansion of Project Scope

- Pompano - Pickleball
- Trailheads
- Community Park Development
- Economy of scale allowed other funding sources and cost savings.
- CONP – 2 mil – 7 mil
- Bifurcated/Parallel Trail



Lessons Learned

- Comment tracking
- Internal commitment to project from the county was excellent.
- You can never start on permitting too early.
- Identify external partners early and involve them in the project.
- Too much project oversight (duplication of efforts) added to costs.
- Engage the Potential Opposition
- Diplomatic management of the cooks



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Questions

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