

### Land Acquisition Options

The first step towards implementing the greenway program is a sustained long-term commitment towards land acquisition. Substantial tracts of land and easements are essential to the success of this program. This section represents a composite of various implementation strategies used by other jurisdictions around the country. Some are currently in use in St. Johns County, while others are restricted at this juncture. Should these strategy restrictions change in the future, it will enhance the ability to implement the Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan. Five methods of acquiring and dedicating lands include: fee-simple purchases, multi-objective properties, donations, easements and regulatory means.

#### *Fee Simple Purchases*

Fee simple ownership of land gives the County clear title to property. It provides the simplest, and sometimes the most feasible, approach towards acquiring land. Greenway lands are often marginally developable and unsuitable for most development activity. The liability of these lands from a real estate tax perspective creates an opportunity for some developers to reduce their tax burden by selling or deeding the property to the County. Some fee simple purchase options are detailed below:

- **Purchase/Lease Back** - These public land acquisitions are leased back to the seller, or another party, for use during a specific period of time or until it is needed. Properties may be purchased well in advance of their need as a park or greenway and may contain restrictions regarding the use and development of the property.
- **Bargain Sale** - A property owner can sell property at a price less than the appraised fair market value of the land. Sometimes the seller can derive the same benefits as if the property were donated. Bargain sales are attractive to sellers when the seller wants cash for the property, the seller paid a low cash price and thus is not liable for high capital gains tax, and/or the seller has a fairly high current income and could benefit from a donation of the property as an income tax deduction. The lost capital gain, which is the appraised value less the sales price, is taken as a tax deduction.
- **Option/First Right of Refusal** - A local government agency or private organization establishes an agreement with a public agency or private property owner to provide the right of first refusal on a parcel of land that is scheduled to be sold. This form of agreement can be used in conjunction with other techniques, such as an easement, to protect the land in the short term. An option would provide the agency with sufficient time to obtain capital to purchase the property or successfully negotiate some other means of conserving the greenway resource.
- **Easement Purchase** - This mechanism is the fee simple purchase of an easement. Full title to the land is not purchased, only those rights granted in the easement agreement. Therefore the easement purchase price is less than full title value.
- **Tax Foreclosures** - Occasionally lands suitable for parkland, greenways and open space may be foreclosed due to failure of the private landowner to pay property taxes, enabling the County to purchase the land at a very low price.

### *Multi-Objective Properties*

Opportunities to implement greenway and trail facilities on existing public lands should be examined as the first alternative prior to acquiring property. Recreational greenways can be accommodated on many schools, parks, water and sewer easements, utility corridors, railroad and highway right-of-ways, and other public facilities without compromising their original purpose. The benefit of integrating multiple programs and objectives on the same land is environmentally beneficial and fiscally responsible. When practical, newly acquired lands should be surveyed with multi-objective programs in mind.

### *Donations*

Donations typically include full transferal of property to a municipality or land trust for a specific use or purpose that may be simple or complicated by extensive conditions. Financial incentives in the form of tax credits are available in most cases. A local government agency agrees to receive full title to a parcel of land at virtually no cost. In most cases, the donor is eligible to receive federal and state deductions on personal income, as described under conservation easements. In addition, property owners may be able to avoid inheritance taxes, capital gains taxes, and recurring property taxes. Other gift methods include:

- *Reserved Life Estate*- are gifts of land that provide the donor with a tax benefit plus the use of the property during the remainder of their lifetime.
- *Partial Donations*- gives the owner some compensation as well as limited tax benefits.
- *Right-of-Way or Easement Donations*- are where the owner receives a tax benefit by allowing a limited use of the land.
- *Estate Donations*- includes wills, estates, and trusts that may be dedicated to the appropriate agency for use in developing and/or operating the greenway system.

### *Easements*

The purpose of greenway easements is to establish legally binding contracts for the conveyance of interest in land based on a mutual understanding of the specific use, treatment, and protection that greenway lands will receive. Property owners who grant easements retain all rights to the property except those that have been granted by the easement. The property owner is responsible for all taxes associated with the property, less the value of the easement granted. Easements are generally restricted to certain portions of property, although in some cases an easement can be applied to an entire parcel. Easements are usually transferable through title transactions, thus the easement can remain in effect in perpetuity. Three types of greenway easements, which may be appropriate for use in St Johns County, are:

- Conservation Easements - One technique for preserving private land other than fee simple acquisition is through establishing a conservation easement. This type of easement generally prevents development and establishes permanent limits on the use and development of land in order to protect the natural resources of that land. Dedicated conservation easements usually qualify for both federal income tax deductions and state tax credits. Conservation easements, depending on how they are written, may or may not grant the public the right-of-access to the property.

Conservation easements have been successfully used to protect a variety of environmentally sensitive lands, including barrier islands along our coasts, mountain canyons in the Rockies, hunting preserves along river corridors and prairie grasslands of our central states. They may be used as the sole preservation technique or they may be adapted to provide protection of a buffer area around the core of a preserve where the central area is held by a conservation owner in fee title. Conservation easements can also accommodate low impact outdoor recreation.

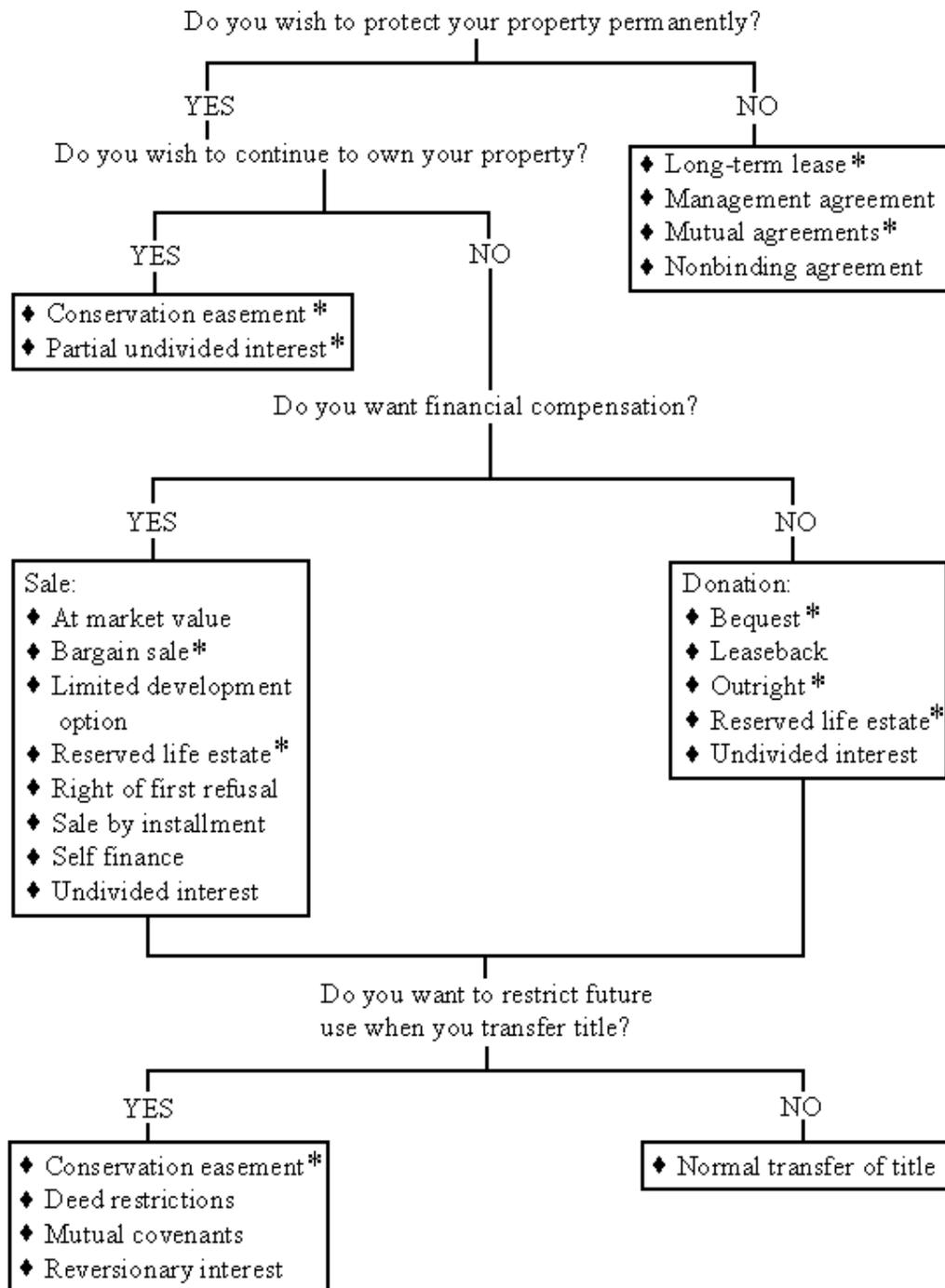
With a conservation easement, the landowner gives up certain uses and developmental rights to the land by way of a series of restrictions. It also grants certain affirmative rights, including the right to enforce these restrictions, to a second party, usually a non-profit conservation organization or a government agency involved in park or natural area protection.

A conservation easement is similar in effect to restrictive covenants in a subdivision, which also restricts land use, but differs in several significant ways. First, a conservation easement is intended to provide benefits to the public at large, not just the individual landowners within a private subdivision. Second, subdivision restrictions set forth a framework for future development of the property. Conservation easements, on the other hand, are designed to preserve property primarily in its natural, undeveloped condition. Like subdivision restrictions, conservation easements are tailored to the particular characteristics of the land. Prior to drafting the easement, a complete natural resource inventory including maps, photographs of existing improvements, species lists, etc. should be undertaken. Properly done, the inventory will identify sensitive areas, land use patterns, and those areas where limited development may occur, and thus will provide the conceptual framework for drafting the easement itself.

While all of these easements specifically provide for public access and use of the land, conservation easements may also be placed on private land to protect a viewshed or open space. Easements are very flexible tools and do not require public access, therefore allowing a private owner to permanently protect their property without necessitating either public ownership or access. Such use of easements could allow continued private ownership and enjoyment while increasing the protected viewshed.

- Cooperative Agreements - A less official but effective way to protect land is through a cooperative agreement or memorandum of understanding. This is less complicated and most effective when the landowners are public agencies with similar missions. This is a less permanent solution since these types of agreements usually contain an escape clause that will allow any or all of the signatories to pull out with reasonable notice.
- Preservation Easements - This type of easement is intended to protect the historical integrity of a structure or important elements of the landscape by sound management practices. Preservation easements may qualify for the same federal tax deductions and state tax credits as conservation easements.
- Public Access Easements - Right-of-public-access easements provide the general public with the right to use a specific parcel of property.

When considering land acquisition options (fee-simple vs. non fee-simple) the following questions should be considered.



\* In most cases. The amounts of income tax and estate tax reduction depend on a number of factors. Note: For property best kept in private ownership, the land trust may place a conservation easement on the property to protect it, and sell it to an appropriate buyer. For non-conservation property donated to generate income to the land trust, the land trust will sell the property. Cash from the sale in either case will be used to support the land trust's conservation programs. Source: *Land Protection, A Washington State Handbook, 1992, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation.*

## Funding Mechanisms

The most common method for funding greenways is to combine local, public-sector, and private-sector funds with state and federal resources. Many communities involved with greenway implementation are choosing to leverage local money as a match for outside funding sources, in essence multiplying their resources. In future greenway development, the County should rely on local advocates and government staff to pursue a variety of funding sources for land acquisition and greenway construction. A greenway program that relies on limited funding sources may one day come to a grinding halt should these funding sources dry up. The funding sources cited below represent a few of the major greenway funding opportunities that have been pursued by other communities. This list provides an outline to help organize various means of funding for greenway and trail implementation.

## Federal Funding Sources

Several federal programs offer financial aid for projects that aim to improve community infrastructure, transportation, housing and recreation programs. Some of the federal programs that can be used to fund greenways include the following:

### Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)

The primary source of federal funding for greenways is through the Transportation Equity Act of 1998 (TEA-21), formerly the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). ISTEA provided millions of dollars in funding for bicycle and pedestrian transportation projects across the Country, and will provide millions more as TEA-21. There are many sections of TEA-21 that support the development of greenways, bicycle and pedestrian transportation corridors.

Contact: Local FDOT Representative for additional information.

### Recreational Trails Program

A component of TEA-21, the Recreational Trails Program is a funding source for the development of non-motorized and motorized recreational trails. The Program uses funds generated from fees on non-highway recreational fuel used by off-road vehicles. Program money can be spent on easement acquisition, property acquisition, trail development, construction and maintenance. Local government or a non-profit entity can be a project sponsor. This competitive grant program requires a 100 percent match, and the maximum grant award is \$50,000.

Contact: Local FDOT Representative for additional information.

### Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants

This federal funding source was established in 1965 to provide park and recreation opportunities to residents throughout the United States. Money for the fund comes from the sale or lease of nonrenewable resources, primarily federal offshore oil and gas leases and surplus federal land sales. LWCF funds are used by federal agencies to acquire additions to National Parks, Forests, and Wildlife Refuges. In the past, Congress has also appropriated LWCF moneys for so-called "state-side" projects. These "state-side" LWCF grants can be used by communities to acquire and build a variety of park and recreation facilities, including trails and greenways. The program requires a 100 percent match of non-federal funds or in-kind match, and project sponsors must be

a local unit of government. Appropriations vary from year to year. The maximum grant award is currently \$75,000, which may change with increased funding levels.

Contact: [collier.clark@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:collier.clark@dep.state.fl.us)  
Web:<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/bdrs>  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 795  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

#### Conservation Reserve Program

The USDA, through its Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, provides payments to farm owners and operators to place highly erodible or environmentally sensitive landscapes into a 10-15 year conservation contract. The participant, in return for annual payments during this period, agrees to implement a conservation plan (approved by the local conservation district) for converting these sensitive lands to a less intensive use. Individuals, associations, corporations, estates, trusts, cities, counties and other entities are eligible for this program. This program can be used to fund the maintenance of open space and non-public use greenways along water bodies and ridge lines.

Contact: USDA  
Malcolm Henning, National Program Manager  
202.720.1872

#### Historic Landscape Initiative

The Historic Landscape Initiative promotes responsible preservation practices that protect historic landscapes, including farms, parks, gardens, rural villages and industrial sites. Preserving these landscapes provides scenic, economic, ecological, social, recreational, and educational opportunities to understand ourselves as a nation. The program provides technical assistance, workshops, and publications to professional planners, landscape architects, historic property managers, homeowners, academics, and students to help communities preserve historical landscapes.

Contact: Charles Birnbaum  
National Park Service  
Heritage Preservation Services, NC330  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
202.343.9597

#### American Greenways DuPont Awards Program

The Conservation Fund in partnership with DuPont and National Geographic provides small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways at the community level. Awards are selected based on their importance to community efforts.

Contact: The Conservation Fund  
1800 North Kent Street, Suite 1120  
Arlington, VA 22209  
705.525.6300  
[www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org)

### The Kodak American Greenways Awards

A partnership project of Kodak, The Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society, provides small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout America. The annual awards program was instituted in response to the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors recommendation to establish a national network of greenways. Made possible by a generous grant from Eastman Kodak, the program also honors groups and individuals whose ingenuity and creativity foster the creation of greenways.

- Develop new, action-oriented greenway projects
- Assist grassroots greenway organizations.
- Leverage additional money for conservation and greenway development
- Recognize and encourage greenway proponents and organizations

Contact: Denise Swol, Coordinator  
American Greenways Program  
The Conservation Fund  
1800 North Kent Street, Suite 1120  
Arlington, VA 22209  
705.525.6300  
[www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org)

### Phillips Petroleum Environmental Partnership Awards

This program gives grants between \$500-\$5,000 to community organizations doing environmental projects like stream restorations. Grants tend to be given to educational projects with schools or groups working with schools. Matching funds are required.

Contact: Patricia Marshall, 918.661.5139

### Coors Pure Water 2000

They provide non-profit groups nationwide with small grants for water quality improvement projects such as river cleanups, restoration projects and educational programs.

Contact: Coors Pure Water 2000  
Dave Taylor  
311 Tenth Street  
Golden, CO 80401  
800.642.6116

### Compton Foundation

This program offers grants for public education, fish habitat, and public policy in natural resource management, with a focus on watershed protection and long-term habitat and ecosystem preservation and restoration. These grants are awarded to incorporated 501(c)(3) organizations only.

Contact: 415.328.0101

### The Harder Foundation

This program is a small foundation that funds environmental action projects in support of habitat protection, especially prime habitat areas facing immediate threats on public lands. Some of the

Harder Foundation's grants involve acquisition of natural areas, especially when they are of regional biological significance. 40% of their grants in aggregate are made to grantees in the states of Washington and Oregon. Write for "Guidelines for Grant Proposals."

Contact: Del Langbauer, President  
401 Broadway  
Tacoma, WA 98402  
253.593.2121  
HARDERFNDN@aol.com

#### Give to the Earth Foundation

This program funds a variety of small environmental projects. Applicant organizations must have minimal administrative overhead and results must be tangible. Typical grant size is \$2,500.

Contact: Ellen Liberatori, 800.933.9628

#### The Bikes Belong Coalition

This program awards grants of up to \$10,000 each to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facilities projects that will be funded by TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Contact: Bikes Belong Coalition  
1368 Beacon Street, Suite 116  
Brookline, MA 02446  
617.734.2800  
[mail@bikesbelong.org](mailto:mail@bikesbelong.org).

### *Florida Funding Sources*

#### Florida Forever (formally Conservation and Recreation Lands) Program

The Florida Forever Program is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands and is designed to protect large land parcels identified as having statewide or regional significance. Lands that may be acquired for conservation purposes and lands that would provide non-consumptive outdoor recreation opportunities are also eligible through this program.

Contact: Mark Glisson 850.487.1750

#### Florida Communities Trust Program

The purpose of the Florida Communities Trust's Program is to assist local governments to implement the conservation, recreation and open space, and coastal management elements of local comprehensive plans through grant awards to local governments for land acquisition for the purposes of natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation.

The Florida Legislature requires the Florida Communities Trust Florida Forever Program to:

- Emphasize funding projects in low-income or otherwise disadvantaged communities

- Direct at least 30 percent of its funding to projects in Metropolitan Areas and half of that amount within the built-up urban area
- Use no less than 5 percent to acquire lands for recreational trail systems

Contact: Florida Department of Community Affairs  
 Florida Communities Trust  
 2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100  
 850.922.2207  
<http://www.dca.state.fl.us/ffct>

#### Florida Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federally funded competitive grant program that provides financial assistance to agencies of city, county, state or federal governments, and organizations, approved by the State, or state and federally recognized Indian tribal governments, for the development of recreational trails, trailheads and trailside facilities.

RTP is a competitive program which provides grants for projects that provide, renovate or maintain recreational trails, trailhead and trailside facilities. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 included the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA) and established the National Recreational Trails Funding Program (NRTFP). The National Highway System Designation Act (NHS Act) of 1995 amended and revived the NRTFA. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) amended the previous legislation and provided for six years of funding.

Contact: FDEP Office of Greenways and Trails  
 3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 795  
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000  
 850.488.3701  
[Alexandra.weiss@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Alexandra.weiss@dep.state.fl.us)  
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt>

#### Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program:

In 1979, the Florida Recreational Trails Act (Chapter 260, Florida Statutes) created the Florida Recreational Trails System to establish a network that allows responsible public access for recreation, scenic and historic trails connecting state, federal and local parks, forests, recreation areas and historic sites. Abandoned railroad corridors and additions to the Florida National Scenic Trail could be purchased through this program. In 1996, the act was amended to include the acquisition of other linear facilities and open space connectors. Approximately \$3.9 million is available each year for greenway acquisitions.

Contact: FDEP Office of Greenways and Trails  
 3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 795  
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000  
 850.488.3701  
[Alexandra.weiss@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:Alexandra.weiss@dep.state.fl.us)  
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt>

### Florida Boating Improvement Program

These funds are targeted for channel marking, boat launching facilities, other public boating-related activities, and manatee protection and recovery projects.

Contact: Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Division of Fresh Water Fisheries  
620 South Meridian Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600  
950.488.0331  
Roberts@gfc.state.fl.us

### National Recreational Trails Funding Program

The Federal Highway Administration provides funds for projects that provide or maintain motorized and non-motorized trails, or mixed use projects. Funds are also available for trail user education. The grant is implemented through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks.

Contact: FDEP  
Division of Recreation and Parks  
850.488.5372

### Florida Department of States Division of Historical Resources

The Division of Historical Resources provides grants to support the preservation of important historic/archaeological sites as well as the creation of historic and cultural trails. The Division can provide technical assistance and information about sites and areas that could be incorporated into greenways and trails. The National Register of Historic Places Program, administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Officer with the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, assists local governments and nonprofit organizations in preparing nominations and provides funding for protecting historic and cultural resources through the Florida Historic Preservation Grants Program.

Contact: [www.flheritage.com](http://www.flheritage.com)  
850.245.6300

### Florida Coastal Management Program Grants

The Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) receives a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) each year to support coastal management activities. Since the statutes of the FCMP are already administered by each of the networked agencies, much of the grant is passed on to local governments and state and regional agencies for the Coastal Partnerships Initiative. These projects develop, plan or implement specific improvements to manage natural or cultural resources

The Florida Coastal Management Program intends for the Coastal Partnerships Initiative to inspire community action and to promote the protection and effective management of Florida's coastal resources.

This initiative is designed to support innovative local-level coastal management projects in four program areas: public access, remarkable coastal places, working waterfronts, and community stewardship. Governmental, educational, and non-profit entities can apply, and the Florida

Coastal Management Program offers technical assistance and training along with the more traditional funding support. Projects can be extremely diverse, ranging from dune revegetation projects to citizen water quality monitoring efforts to community-wide waterfront revitalization projects.

Contact: Florida Coastal Management Program  
Department of Community Affairs  
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100  
850.922.5438

#### Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program

FRDAP is a competitive program that provides grants for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreation use or to construct or renovate recreational trails. Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers the program according to Florida Statute and Administrative Code. The Bureau of Design and Recreation Services in DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks has direct responsibility for FRDAP.

Contact: FDEP Office of Greenways and Trails  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 795  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000  
850.488.3701  
[terri.messler@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:terri.messler@dep.state.fl.us)  
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt>

#### Florida Inland Navigation District Grant Program

The Florida Inland Navigational District Program offers two assistance grant programs --- the Cooperative Assistance Program and the Waterway Assistance Program. Each program is a grant program established by the Florida Legislature and the District for the purpose of cooperating with local governments to alleviate problems associated with the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and associated waterways within the District.

Eligible projects include navigation channel dredging, channel markers, navigation signs or buoys, boat ramps, docking facilities, fishing & viewing piers, waterfront boardwalks, inlet management, environmental education, law enforcement equipment, boating safety programs, beach re-nourishment, dredge material management, environmental mitigation, and shoreline stabilization

Contact: Mark Crosley, Assistant Executive Director  
Florida Inland Navigation District  
1314 Marcinski Road  
Jupiter, Florida 33477-9498  
561.627.3386

## Other ways to supplement funding

### Potential Uses

Other potential uses for the greenway trail system can be money savers for St. Johns County and a potential revenue source to help support the overall trail system. As the trail system is planned, consideration will be given to utilizing publicly owned corridors including drainage easements, telephone cable easements, fiber-optic communication cable easements, gas pipeline easements, parking areas, storage areas, private trail connectors, mitigation sites, subdivision buffer areas and open space; sanitary sewer and water transmission lines; overhead electric transmission and distribution lines; low traffic volumes access ways (i.e. driveways and /or agricultural access); and existing road crossings. Each of these publicly owned corridors must be considered on a case-by-case basis for their dual anticipated usage. These potential uses may not be compatible in all situations and under all environmental conditions. When considering additional potential uses for trail corridors, the character of the trail (rural vs. urban) will be considered along with the principal objective of the trail system as a recreation corridor. The environmental sensitivity will be given the highest priority in balancing all dual usage for trails.

### In-Kind Contributions

Many grant programs require a local match to help demonstrate the community's commitment to the project. Often this 'match' requirement can be met with what is referred to as an 'in-kind' contribution. In-kind contributions are non-monetary donations of labor, equipment and materials to the overall cost of completing a project that can be translated to a dollar value used to meet the matching requirement. Volunteer labor for tasks such as clearing, grading, and construction can go a long way towards meeting local match requirements when applying for grants.

Business leaders must also be recruited to support this plan. Businesses may be able to provide in-kind support through trail building, financial contributions or possibly adopting sections of trail. Businesses are a key part of the community fabric and should be included in building and maintaining the greenways and blueways trail system. Trails add to desirability of a community and can enhance a business' ability to attract customers to an area.

### Interdepartmental and Intergovernmental Coordination

There are several aspects to the initial identification of the long-term management of Greenways throughout the County.

The initial effort of the greenways planning and identification has been the responsibility of the St. Johns County Planning Division. First, through the 2015 Comprehensive Plan's Conservation/Coastal Management Policy E.2.2.23 which states, *"the County shall establish a Greenways Program in coordination with DEP's Greenway Office by December of 2002. The greenways shall protect and enhance natural, cultural and historical resources of the County while providing interconnecting access ways between public conservation areas and parklands."*

The Planning Division has been the primary agency of the county responsible for helping guide the preservation of greenways. First through their role as reviewers and coordinators of all development in the County, especially the Development Regional Impact (DRI) process, and secondly, the Sector Planning efforts in the Northwest portion of the County.

In addition, the Planning staff has had a key role in identifying suitable tracts for acquisition by the County as well as several state agencies including the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Department of Environmental Protection's. The Planning Division's staff liaison has also worked with several of the other county departments (Recreation and Parks, GIS and Real Estate) in the preparation of the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) Grant Applications.

The Planning Division is also responsible for administering the County's Land Development Code, the County's 2015 Comprehensive Plan, the County's various Community Interest Boards (LAMP), "Scenic and Historic A1A" Corridor Management Council (CMC), William Bartram Scenic Highway Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG), Ponte Vedra Overlay District Architectural Review Board, South Anastasia District Architectural Review Board, Mid Anastasia Overlay District Design Review Board, Northern Coastal Corridor Overlay District Design Review Board, Coastal and Mainland Visioning Groups, Historic Resource Review Board and the Waterfronts Revitalization Initiative) in addition to initiating and implementing various projects such as, but not limited to, the Northeast Florida Blueway Phase II, the St. Johns River Blueway Phase I, the St. Johns County Wildlife and Vegetation Survey; the Scenic Highways Eligibility Applications and Corridor Management Plans; the Northwest Sector Plan, the Wetland Buffer Study, the Historic/Archaeological Surveys Studies, the North South Corridor Study, the Affordable Housing Market Study, the West Augustine Redevelopment and Tax Incentive Program, the Coastal Habitat Conservation Plan, the Coastal Area Plan, the Water Dependent Uses and Marine Study and the St. Johns County Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan.

Because the Planning Division is intimately involved in reviewing various land use comprehensive plan changes and future development proposals according to the land development code regulations, they will continue to play an important role in the planning, management and implementation of the County's Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan.

The Recreation and Parks Department has also had a significant role in furthering recreational opportunities in the county and they actively participate with the LAMP Board members in identifying future lands the county needs to acquire for future recreational purposes. In addition, the Recreation and Parks Department has played a significant role in working with other departments in the preparation of the FCT grant applications. They were also responsible for the preparation of the SR 207 Rails to Trails Plan and coordination with other agencies. Together these existing local agencies will continue to play an important role in the further development of the County's Greenways, Blueway & Trails Master Plan.

Currently, the Planning Division initiates and coordinates with the Development Services Group in the review of all development proposals for consistency with the land development code and concurrency. In the early stages of a land development review, (i.e.: land use plan amendment, PUD / PSD rezoning or DRI pre- applications) several county staff persons from different departments need to be assigned the task of reviewing all the development proposals for consistency with the County's Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan to insure provision of adequate consideration.

It is recommended that the greenway committee consist of the following county staff members:

- Environmental Manager- Planning Division, Growth Management Services Dept.
- Land Use Planner - Planning Division, Growth Management Services Dept.
- Land Management Coordinator- Real Estate Division, Public Works Dept.
- Environmental Coordinator - Engineering Division, Public Works Dept
- Recreation and Parks Manager- Recreation and Parks Dept.

Although it is recommended that several county staff members review development projects for greenways suitability and consistency with the County’s Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan, it is also recommended that one division/department take the lead in coordinating the county’s Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan with the surrounding cities, counties (local) as well as various other state (including but not limited to SJRWMD and DEP), federal agencies and private developments.

The county’s Land Acquisition and Management Program (LAMP) Board members play an important role in promoting public awareness of land acquisition needs (including Greenways and Blueways) and pursuing federal and state grant funds. This board makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on lands the county should acquire in the future; however according to the adopted ordinance 99-3 this board is not involved in the reviewing developers development proposals. The LAMP Board is strictly an advisory board to the BCC and its function is to assist the BCC and other agencies in identifying, reviewing, evaluating and ranking lands to be acquired for conservation, preservation, green corridors, water resources, outdoor recreation, historical and educational/scientific activities.

## **Recommended GOP Changes**

After establishing land acquisition techniques and identifying various funding sources, implementing the long-term recommendations of the plan may be accomplished in several ways. First, through the development review process where projects are evaluated with respect to their impact on the environment and their furtherance of the goals, objectives and policies of the county’s Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code. Secondly, through implementing grants for construction and development.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan’s Greenway, Blueway and Trails Master Plan objectives and policies will be handed out separately at the Board of County Commissioners meeting. These proposed objectives and policies (with recommended changes) will be included within the St. Johns County Comprehensive amendment package, occurring twice this year.