



CITY OF BROOKSVILLE
GOOD NEIGHBOR TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
201 HOWELL AVENUE, BROOKSVILLE, FL 34601-2041
PH 352.540.3810 ♦ FAX 352.544.5424

July 29, 2020

Mr. Bill Bibby, Project Planner
Florida Communities Trust
Department of Environmental Protection
3800 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 585
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

**RE: 2020 Annual Stewardship Report for the Good Neighbor Trail
FCT Project #95-029-P56**

Dear Mr. Bibby:

This letter is in transmittal of the above-referenced Annual Stewardship Report (ref. Rule 9K-4.013, F.A.C.). In addition to the Stewardship Report a copy of the Priority Timeline Report is also included.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (352) 540-3832.

Sincerely,

Angie Whisnant

ANGIE WHISNANT, Director
Parks & Recreation Director
awhisnant@cityofbrooksville.us

pc: Mark Kutney, City Manager
Linda Reeves, FDEP Manager
Publish Online - <http://www.cityofbrooksville.us/>
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Enclosures

Sent via Email Service – 7/29/2020



CITY OF BROOKSVILLE
ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT
GOOD NEIGHBOR TRAIL AND TRAILHEAD COMPLEX
FCT Project 95-029-P56
July 29, 2020

Cover Picture: "Good Neighbor Trail (GNT) Inaugural Bike Ride 2018"

During FY 2020, the Good Neighbor Trail Advisory Committee (GNTAC) met two times, January 17, 2019, and July 18, 2020, to discuss project goals and objectives. The City continues to work with FDOT on implementing the plans and construction management of the trail.

During the Worldwide Covid-19 Pandemic, the City of Brooksville is adjusting to this fluid situation. The trails have remained open; however, most organized events and activities have been canceled or postponed to follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, including social distancing.

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Good Neighbor Trail and Trailhead Complex

2019-2020 Project Summary

The following paragraphs summarize the accomplishments over the last few years in the implementation of the *Good Neighbor Trail and Trailhead Complex Management Plan* [Management Plan]. The City and the Good Neighbor Trail Advisory Committee [GNTAC] are very proud of the accomplishments with what has been built to date. During FY 2020 a major milestone occurred with the completion of the Good Neighbor Trail's (GNT) connection to the Withlacoochee State Trail (WST), which occurred in October 2018. The City continues to work with the FDOT on the design plans for constructing the trail from the GNT trailhead heading west to connect with the Suncoast Trail (construction scheduled for FY2021-22).

Within the past few years, the City and County have worked together in a solid relationship that's led to a high energy focus on seeing the vision of the Good Neighbor Trailhead and Trail come to fruition. Construction of the trailhead, including over 3,000 linear feet of a 12-foot wide multi-use trail, a restroom facility, a 6-sided gazebo with access to potable water for the recreational enthusiast and security lighting, was completed in October of 2009. The first leg of the 12-foot wide Good Neighbor (multi-use) Trail was also completed in 2009 from the trailhead (at Russell Street) to Jasmine Drive (5,800+ linear feet). In 2011, additional segments of the trail from Jasmine Drive to Mondon Hill Road (2,145± linear feet) and from the eastern edge of the Majestic Oaks property to Weatherly Road (2,727± linear feet) have been constructed. The then missing link (7,072± linear feet), the portion of the trail going through the Majestic Oaks property, was built with construction being completed in June 2013. In 2017-18, Phase III of the trail was completed, extending it from Weatherly Road east along the north side of Richbarn Road to the Withlacoochee State Forest (12,875± linear feet). Phase IV, the last link to connect the GNT with the Withlacoochee State Trail (WST) was constructed and completed during FY 2019 (October 2018), and extends 21,810± linear feet from the eastern terminus of Richbarn Road through the Withlacoochee State Forest to the WST. The completion of this link connects the City of Brooksville with the 46-mile WST running north and south between Levy, Marion, Citrus and Pasco Counties.

The Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization [MPO] allocated Enhancement Project Priority Funding (currently known as Transportation Alternative funding) for the construction of the existing GNT sections, which when combined with the trail at the Brooksville trailhead, totals 10+ miles of improved trail network. Funding in the amount of \$2,745,000 for the design and construction of the recently completed section of trail (approximately 6.6 miles) to connect the Good Neighbor Trailhead with the Withlacoochee State Trail was secured through the FDOT 5-Year Transportation Improvement Program. The connection of the Good Neighbor Trail to the Suncoast Trail is a planned link in the Coast-to-Coast (C2C) Trail network, which will provide a safe and continuous multi-use trail from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. The State Legislature and Governor are committed to funding the C2C Trail and related projects that will help design/construct these missing links of the State's regional trail network. Brooksville strongly urged the MPO and FDOT to bring the connecting route for the Coast-to-Coast trail through the City, connecting it with the now existing GNT Trailhead Complex. The Hernando/Citrus MPO commissioned a \$180,000 study to evaluate alternatives for connecting between the Suncoast Trail and the GNT Trailhead. This study was completed in May, 2016,

with the Consultant's and City's recommendation for a preferred route going through a portion of the downtown area and connecting to the existing GNT Trailhead Complex at Main Street. The Hernando/Citrus MPO approved the report recommendations in September, 2016 and forwarded the same to the FDOT. The FDOT is committed to the design and programming of the Project for funding and construction, and have included it in the plan to be completed within FY 2022.

The City and the Hernando Historical Museum Association, Inc. continue to have a collaborative partnership as a portion of the trailhead includes the 1885 historic train depot. A historic railcar has been restored and is located on tracks adjacent to the Depot. The Train Depot itself continues to be owned and maintained by the Museum Association and is used as a site for meetings and genealogy recordkeeping and research. In May 2012, the Museum Association presented their plan to construct a replica one-room school house at the trailhead on its property adjacent to the 1885 train depot. The Association broke ground for building the structure on January 4, 2014 and completed it in May 2014. A dedication ceremony was held for the grand opening of the building in December 2014. Since then, the Association has been providing educational programs at this featured structure. Pictures of this years' Arbor Day celebration adjacent to the Museum Association's 1885 Train Station, as well as other events, may be found on pages 12-14 of this report.

Community outreach and educational opportunities continue with activities and annual and sometimes monthly events. This year the City hosted Bike Florida, an organization that brought over 600 bicycle enthusiasts from around the State to camp over a 4-day weekend in the City's park and enjoy the City's many trails and amenities. Other events include the Brooksville Cycling Classic, Market on Main Street (which began in July, 2016), Leadership Hernando, Brooksville Christmas parade, Hernando County Heritage Day Festival, Founder's Week celebrations, Downtown Cruise-in Car/Bike Shows, Junior Service League's 5-10K and one-mile fun run and Brooksville's Arbor Day Tree City celebration. The Brooksville Blueberry Festival held its' event on April 27-28, 2019, featuring a fun-filled weekend with a venue located in the uptown area. This Festival was a huge success bringing over 30,000 people into our community over the weekend. Planning for next year's Festival is already underway. The GNTAC continues to promote, communicate and provide dialogue with the public.

Great accomplishments have taken place during recent reporting periods. Projects outlined in the Management Plan have been constructed. People from all levels of the public and private sectors have celebrated the major achievements and construction activity that came to fruition in recent years. Best of all is the reward of seeing people enjoy and use our recreational amenities daily.

These past few years have seen a strong focus on project connectivity implementation. A combination of cooperative agency partnerships including Florida Communities Trust [FCT], City of Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida Department of Transportation [FDOT], Florida Department of Environmental Protection [FDEP], the National Parks Service (Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance [RTCA] Program), the Hernando County Native Plant Society and the Hernando Historical Museum Association have made it possible to get to this point in executing the Management Plan.

Specific activities that have occurred since the last stewardship report include:

- The Good Neighbor Trail Advisory Committee (GNTAC) met two times since the last reporting cycle (1/17/19 & 7/18/19).
- The Junior Service League sponsored their sixth annual Freedom Fun Run (formerly called the Masquerade Run) 5K, 10K and One-Mile Run on the trail on 11/10/2018.
- The Museum Association and Hernando Preservation Society hosted its fourth annual “Heritage Day” event at the trailhead on 2/16/2019.
- The City sponsored the annual Tree City Arbor day event on 4/24/2020, was canceled due to COVID-19. Virtual Arbor Day activities were offered instead.
- The GNTAC continues to monitor various grant programs with the intent to build amenities and maintain infrastructure at the Trailhead and on the Trail itself. Grants that have been researched that might assist with improving features of the trail and trailhead property include People for Bikes, SWFWMD Cooperative funding, FRDAP, MPO Transportation Alternatives Program, etc.
- The City continues to participate with the Division of Forestry in the use of a biological control beetle to help eradicate the air potato plants at the trailhead (The control beetles were released in the park around June 2013. Ongoing efforts continue to ensure their survival and success in eradicating the potato vine plant).
- A Stormwater Master Plan was completed in January 2014 by the Brooksville Community Redevelopment Agency, and was used in part to address design for creek restoration and pond detention/retention at the trailhead site (a regional stormwater pond improvement at the Trailhead site was constructed in 2016-17). Coordination with the County and the SWFWMD continues as it relates to improving and maintaining the stormwater system that travels in and through the Trailhead.
- The Recreation Master Plan was completed in January 2014 by the Brooksville Community Redevelopment Agency, and provides for planning connectivity between the Trailhead and the City’s uptown district. A component of this plan led to the construction of an uptown bicycle/pedestrian friendly park built around the City’s Liberty Street water tower site. This amenity was completed in January 2019 and includes a pavilion, brick pavers, bike racks, a bike fix-it station, a watering station and landscaping. Wayfinding signage will direct trail users at the Trailhead to amenities at the water tower site and downtown.
- The Community Redevelopment Agency completed a Wayfinding Signage project in September of 2017 to install informational/directional signage at the Trailhead and at various locations in the Downtown area.

Site Development

Physical Improvements - Construction of the Trailhead was completed in October 2009, including over 3,000 linear feet of a twelve-foot wide, multi-use trail and 130 linear feet of wooden foot bridges, a restroom facility, parking, a six-sided gazebo with access to potable water for the recreational enthusiast, signage and security lighting. The first leg of the twelve-foot wide Good Neighbor (multi-use) Trail was completed at the same time from the trailhead to Jasmine Drive (5,800+ linear feet). Phase 2 of the trail from Jasmine Drive to Weatherly Road totaling over 11,944 linear feet was initiated in 2011 and completed in June 2013. An information kiosk, bike racks, picnic table and trash receptacles were installed at the Trailhead between April & June 2012. With the completion of Phase II of the trail, the total improved (paved) trail network was nearly 4-miles in length. A replica one-room schoolhouse was constructed as an additional amenity at the Trailhead, with the dedication ceremony for said facility being held December 6, 2014. A \$1,115,612 regional stormwater system was constructed on the South side of the Trailhead area in FY 2016-17, utilizing funds from the City/County MSTU and Cooperative funding from the SWFWMD. In 2017-18, Phase III of the trail was completed, extending it from Weatherly Road east along the north side of Richbarn Road to the Withlacoochee State Forest (12,875± linear feet). Phase IV, the last link to connect the GNT with the Withlacoochee State Trail (WST) was constructed and completed in October 2018, and extends 21,810± linear feet from the eastern terminus of Richbarn Road through the Withlacoochee State Forest to the WST. At this time, the GNT Trailhead in Brooksville is connected to the 46-mile WST running north and south between Levy, Marion, Citrus and Pasco Counties.

Easements, Concessions or Leases – There is no activity to report for this period.

Key Management Activities

Natural Resource Protection – The City designed the trailhead project in a manner which minimized impact to trees and vegetation on the property. Appropriate safeguards were taken to protect natural resources on the property during the construction phase of the trail project (i.e., silt fencing for erosion control, no major cut or fill required, etc.). Past tree, plant and animal surveys have been incorporated into design of improvements in order to protect natural resources to the greatest extent possible.

Resource Restoration and Enhancement - The City has partnered with the County and the Water Management District to restore portions of the creek and stormwater system that traverses the Good Neighbor Trailhead site. The Trailhead project initially proceeded independent of the creek restoration. A portion of the creek stormwater system improvement project was completed in FY 2016-17 in partnership with and utilizing revenue sources from the City of Brooksville, Hernando County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District [SWFWMD]. A primary effort of the GNTAC in recent years has also been to provide input to the MPO and the FDOT on the best route to close the C2C Trail Gap between the GNT trailhead and the Suncoast Parkway. Also of importance for the GNTAC during this time has been to offer recommendations for amenities for a water tower pedestrian/bicyclist friendly site improvement project that was completed in January of 2019. Signage at the GNT Trailhead Complex will direct trail users to this facility. The GNTAC has been actively involved in the efforts to complete the Good Neighbor Trail connection to the Withlacoochee State Trail. This link was completed in October 2018.

Educational Programs - Education programs related to resource protection, the environment, recreation and other related topics are being provided on an ongoing basis. Examples of educational programs provided include the annual event sponsored by the City and the Division of Forestry commemorating Arbor Day. This year's celebration was on May 28, 2018, and included the planting of additional Oak trees at the Trailhead adjacent to the 1885 Train Station. Additionally, information related to the Trailhead and property is being posted in the information kiosk that was installed in April 2012. The goal in producing the Good Neighbor Trail brochure has been and continues to be to educate the public about the project and anticipated benefits. Five thousand brochures were published with financial assistance from the Hernando County Tourist Development Council and technical assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Many of the brochures have been distributed by GNTAC members as they have spoken to public groups, committees and individuals interested in the project, as well as being provided at community events such as the Hernando County Fair and the Hernando Leadership Program. The Adopt-A-Trail program is also being used as an educational youth-at-risk program providing buy-in and respect for the environment and community amenities. Educational programs are also being provided at the one-room school house, where the Museum Association instructors take students (young and old) back in time to an era past, to a day before computers, cell phones and other electronic devices, teaching an appreciation for the ways of life in the early pioneering days of our Community and Country.

Maintenance and Security – Maintenance and security responsibility for the constructed improvements lie with the City's Parks and Recreation Department, with support from the City's Public Works and Sheriff Departments. Maintenance funding for a portion of the existing Good Neighbor Trail has been applied for through the MPO's Transportation Alternatives Program.

A major maintenance issue for the City in recent years has been the 3 (total of 130 linear feet) wooden bridges located within the GNT Trailhead area. The bridges are approximately 9-years

old and made of pressure treated lumber that traverse very shallow swale areas within the Trailhead property. The wood is becoming very weather-worn and a railing on one of the structures was subject to recent vandalism. Constant and vigilant maintenance is associated with these structures to keep them in a safe condition. City staff are in the process of evaluating options to the bridging that may be more maintenance friendly and cost effective.

Revenues

No revenues were collected or produced by the City in conjunction with the Good Neighbor Trail project for this reporting period.

Implementation Timeline

The following table represents the current status of the implementation activities and provides for an updated estimate on task completions where applicable:

ACTIVITY	Original Estimated Date	Current Status as of 07/31/2020
Draft Management Plan to FCT	June 1, 1998	Completed.
Management Plan	November 1998	Completed; Adopted 11/18/03. Updated and submitted to FCT with the 2005 Stewardship Report; further updated and resubmitted to FCT for approval on 2/16/10 with a final revision and submittal on 12/20/10.
Meet with SWFWMD for comments and strategies to begin to develop Creek Restoration Plan	May 1999	Initiated in May 1999. Communication with County and WMD on flood plain improvements in this general area is ongoing. Implementation of a regional stormwater improvement project was completed during FY 2016-17
Monitoring	May 1999 and annually thereafter 90 days prior to Annual Report due date.	Monitoring is an ongoing activity on an annual basis. The City monitors its' Parks daily. FCT performed a monitoring site visit on 4/20/12.
Stewardship Annual Report (Project Plan approved August 27, 1998)	July 27, 1999, and annually thereafter (submit to FCT approximately 30 days prior to anniversary date of project plan approval)	Ongoing on annual basis.

ACTIVITY	Original Estimated Date	Current Status as of 07/31/2020
Annual Vegetative/Exotic Pest, Animal, Natural Resources/Ecosystem Survey, including a Specimen Tree Survey	September/October 1999, and annually thereafter	Master site survey completed 1/14/2002; Vegetative/Exotic Pest Plant Survey (Surveys completed 2/2/02, 8/10/02, 10/26/02); Bird Survey (Surveys completed 2/2/02 and 4/18/02); Specimen Tree Survey (completed 6/6/02); GIS Tree survey mapping completed 3/27/09. Property is monitored annually for any significant changes (none to report at this time).
Project Approval Agreement	November 1999	Project plan approved by FCT Governing Board on 8/27/98 and FCT staff on 12/18/98.
Historic Survey	November 1999	Site was reviewed in conjunction with design to ensure that potential historic features are not disturbed. Survey work is ongoing as-needed as of this date.
Restoration Plan Development (For Parson's Creek)	December 1999	Plans and construction for a regional stormwater improvement were completed in FY 2016-17.
Future Land Use Amendment to Comprehensive Plan	January 2000	Completed April 22, 2004, when the State approved the City's Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)-based Comprehensive Plan Amendment.
Exotic vegetation removal	March-July 2000	Hernando County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society sponsored an invasive exotic plant removal day at the site on 1/22/00. A major clean-up occurred in 2006-07 prior to an event held at the property. Two additional major clean-up dates occurred during the 2009/2010 fiscal year. Another major clean-up occurred during the months of March-April 2011. In 2013, the GNT Advisory Committee coordinated with the DOF to use a biological control beetle to eradicate the "air potato," an exotic pest plant existing on the property. Exotic vegetation removal is an on-going maintenance activity. The City's Parks and Recreation Department provides thorough and vigilant maintenance for all aspects of this property.
Pave Trail within City limits	2001/2002 Budget	Construction of trailhead and Ph. 1 to

ACTIVITY	Original Estimated Date	Current Status as of 07/31/2020
and Construct Trailhead	Cycle, beginning in October 2001	Jasmine Dr. was completed October 2009. Ph. 2 to Weatherly Rd. completed June 2013. All of the paved trail heading east towards the WST has been constructed at this time.
Place appropriate signage at trail head	Upon completion of trailhead renovations	Installed as planned. Preliminary signs announcing the project were posted in 2001. New signs were erected upon construction completion in September/October 2009. Signage is maintained by the City's Parks & Recreation Department.
Begin maintenance of Trail and Trailhead	Upon completion of trail	City Parks & Recreation Department is providing maintenance oversight.
Restore Streambed (SWFWMD assistance)	2002/2003 Budget Cycle, beginning in October 2002	Plans and construction for a regional stormwater improvement on the Trailhead property were completed in FY 2016-17.
Develop Educational, Recreational and Youth-at Risk Programs	By completion of paved trail	Continual, ongoing outreach is provided to keep the community engaged and informed about the benefits of this project. The City will reach out for participating partners to provide applicable programs consistent with what is discussed in the management plan. Educational programs have been coordinated with the Museum Association using the replica one-room school house as a venue. Also instituted the Adopt-A-Trail program in 2012 that provides for youth-at-risk educational opportunities.

Funding

In 1999-2000, FCT provided the funds to purchase large portions of the trail and trailhead property. Additional funding for trail and trailhead construction and related amenities was provided through the City of Brooksville, the FDEP through the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, Hernando County and the FDOT through the MPO Enhancement Projects Priority (aka Transportation Alternatives) Program and local organizations such as the Brooksville Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.

Management Plan Changes

The GNTAC updated several components of the “Good Neighbor Trail to Russell Street Management Plan” in 2004. This plan, which is now known as the “Good Neighbor Trail and Trailhead Complex Management Plan” was updated and submitted to the FCT for approval with the 2005 Stewardship Report to more accurately reflect anticipated improvements. An additional update was coordinated with and submitted to FCT staff for review and approval in February 2010. After consultation in coordination with FCT staff, a final version of the 2010 update of the “Good Neighbor Trail and Trailhead Complex Management Plan” was transmitted for approval to Florida Communities Trust on December 20, 2010.

Attachment(s): 1) Priority Timeline

ATTACHMENTS



PEOPLE ENJOYING THE NEWEST SECTION OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR TRAIL THROUGH THE WITHLACOOCHEE STATE FOREST



PICTURE OF THE FCT AND FRDAP SIGNS AT THE TRAILHEAD (TAKEN JUNE 3, 2019)

EXHIBIT VIII-B.6. (Management Plan)

Priority Timeline

Project Number: 95-029-P56

Project Name: Good Neighbor Trail and Trailhead Complex

Grant recipient: City of Brooksville

Instructions: Check the **Done** column for completed items. Write in the month that each task will be completed. **Add and delete items as needed. N/A indicates items that are not included within the Management Plan.**

	Done	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Design –Trailhead Trail, Gazebo, Trail to Jasmine Dr.	X									
Permitting	X									
Public meetings/comment	X									
Interagency coordination/comment	X									
Demolition of existing structures	N/A									
Amend Future Land Use Designation	X									
Amend Zoning Designation	X									
Structures and Improvements: (add or delete structures as needed)										
Entrance sign with FCT recognition (required)	X									
Parking	X									
Fencing	N/A									
Restrooms	X									
Trash cans	X									
Bike racks	X									
Benches	X									
Interpretive kiosk	X									
Interpretive signs										Delayed Due to COVID-19
Museum	N/A									
Nature center	N/A									
Neighborhood Recreation Center	N/A									
Stormwater facilities	X									
Picnic Tables	X									
Resource-based facilities:										
Fishing pier	N/A									
Observation pier	N/A									
Observation deck	N/A									
Observation tower	N/A									
Boat launch - ramp and pier	N/A									
Canoe launch - pier	N/A									
Camp ground	N/A									
Picnicking pavilion	X									
Nature trail	X									
Horse trail	N/A									
Off-road bike trail	N/A									
Paved bike trail	X									

Wildlife observation platform	N/A										
	Done	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Dog park (fenced)	N/A										
User-oriented facilities:											
Playground											Delayed Due to COVID-19
Trail/Trailhead	X										
Boundless Playground	N/A										
Tether Ball	N/A										
Tennis courts	N/A										
Baseball field	N/A										
Softball field	N/A										
Handball courts	N/A										
Racquetball courts	N/A										
Basketball court	N/A										
Swimming pool	N/A										
Shuffleboard courts	N/A										
Exercise/par-course trail - exercise stations	N/A										
Volleyball courts	N/A										
Skateboard / roller-blade park	N/A										
Roller hockey rink	N/A										
Bocci ball courts	N/A										
Horseshoe pits	N/A										
BMX bike track	N/A										
Equestrian rink	N/A										
Archery range	N/A										
Frisbee golf course	N/A										
Remote control car track	N/A										
Key Management Activities:											
Archeological survey	N/A										
Archeological protection measures	X										
Landscaping	As Needed										
Upland restoration	N/A										
Wetland restoration	N/A										
Prescribed burn plan	N/A										
Plant survey/ monitoring	X	JAN									
Wildlife survey/ monitoring	X	JAN									
Photo-monitoring	X										
Exotic plant removal - Ongoing	X	FEB									
Feral animal removal program	N/A										
Educational programs – Ongoing Quarterly	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Water quality or hydrological improvements	As-Needed										
Annual Stewardship Report (Required)	Ongoing	AUG									