

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: June 16, 2009

Date Submitted: May 29, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Lindsay Stevens, Assistant County Administrator
Melissa Corbett, Planner II

Subject: Request Board Ratification of Submission of Transportation Enhancement Project (Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan) to CRTPA for Inclusion in the FDOT 2011-2015 Work Program

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item asks the Board to ratify the submission by staff of a Transportation Enhancement Project (Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan) to the Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) for inclusion in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) 2011-2015 Work Program.

Background:

The Office of Sommer & Williams notified Wakulla County staff on May 8, 2009 that CRTPA was accepting applications for Transportation Enhancement Projects funded with recent federal funding from the Federal Transportation Act known as SAFTEA-LU. At the May 19, 2009 public hearing of the Board of County Commissioners, the Board voted to submit a grant application for improvements to the Upper Bridge property for this CRTPA grant cycle. At the same time this was being considered by the Board, Kimley-Horn and Associates were investigating the applicability of a County wide Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan (The Plan) for Wakulla County to be submitted through this grant application cycle. Ultimately, The Plan was determined to be an eligible project, but this was learned too late for the potential grant application to be heard by the Board before the May 27th grant deadline date.

Staff determined that applying for a grant to create The Plan was a worthwhile project that could benefit the entire County and one that should be pursued. Therefore, Kimley-Horn and Associates, on behalf of the County, prepared the grant application in conjunction with Planning Division staff. The application and letters of support for the project from local citizen groups were submitted to CRTPA by the May 27, 2009 deadline.

Analysis:

Due to the fact that the Board previously voted to submit a grant application for the Upper Bridge project, County staff listed the priority of The Plan as second in nature to other County projects received under this grant cycle. It is important to note that should this grant receive funding, the FDOT Enhancement Funds will cover one hundred percent of the \$120,000 planning project and the County will not have to provide matching funds.

The proposed activities to be completed as part of The Plan include planning for County-wide bicycle and pedestrian facilities in conjunction with safety and educational activities for citizens. Also, preservation of abandoned railway corridors will be incorporated where applicable through conversion of these facilities into pathways to be utilized by bicyclists and pedestrians. The proposed plan will result in a very specific list of capital improvement projects and policy recommendations to be considered for incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code. Heavy emphases on public involvement throughout the planning process will allow the desires of the citizens to be incorporated into the plan. Should The Plan be created, this will allow the County to potentially leverage FDOT funds in the future to fulfill the projects included in The Plan. In addition, The Plan will greatly support the eco-tourism, economic development goal that Wakulla County has emphasized.

As stated previously, Kimley-Horn and Associates submitted the grant application for The Plan on behalf of the County. Due to the timing of the notification, staff was unable to obtain the Board's direction on this project prior to application submittal. Therefore, staff is now requesting that the Board ratify staff's decision to submit the grant application for The Plan.

Options:

1. Vote to ratify the submission of a Transportation Enhancement Project (Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan) to CRTPA for inclusion in the FDOT 2011-2015 Work Program.
2. Vote not to ratify the submission of a Transportation Enhancement Project (Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan) to CRTPA for inclusion in the FDOT 2011-2015 Work Program.
3. Board Direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1. By supporting the submittal of a grant application for the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan, the County shows its commitment to providing its citizens with healthy life-style amenities. In addition, this Master Plan has the potential to support the eco-tourism movement in the County.

Attachment(s):

1. State of Florida Department of Transportation Application for Transportation Enhancement Projects