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UPCOMING GULF COAST TRAIL SUMMIT TO FORM REGIONAL ALLIANCE, COLLABORATE FOR BUILDING 300 MILE MULTI-USE CORRIDOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tampa, FL. (January 19, 2017) – On Monday, January 23, 2017, the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA), in partnership with Lee Health and the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation, will hold the Gulf Coast Regional Trail Summit at the Venice Community Center in Sarasota County. The Summit will bring together a total of eleven transportation organizations across seven counties to discuss and build consensus on the name and branding for the planned 300-mile corridor, as well as provide guidance on securing federal funding, obtaining political and community support, and formalize an alliance to continue coordination and communication among all involved parties. The Summit is open to the public and expected attendees include elected officials, transportation planners, local and regional government employees, private organizations, and non-profit advocacy groups.

Once complete, the Gulf Coast Trail will be a paved, multi-use trail connecting over a dozen urban and rural areas, including the cities of St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Tampa, Palmetto, Bradenton, Sarasota, Venice, North Port, Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Naples. The Trail will utilize the existing paved segments along the corridor and fill in local and regional gaps to link existing trails into a continuous corridor.

“The importance of recognizing this collective effort is underlined by the fact that the number of pedestrians and cyclists that have lost their lives on our roadways presently ranks the region as one of the most dangerous metro areas to walk and bike in the United States” said TBARTA Executive Director, Ramond Chiamonte. “Recognizing the collective year-round efforts of agencies and organizations dedicated to spreading awareness on the importance of bicycle and pedestrian education and safety, obtaining the funding and support necessary to complete this regional project will be a major milestone in reversing this alarming and dangerous trend.”

Since mid-2016, TBARTA has been coordinating support across the regional community to make the Gulf Coast Trail a priority investment within the Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network. SUN Trail is a Florida Department of Transportation program with \$25 million in funding available per year for completing the gaps between existing off-road trails in effort to create a statewide interconnected network to eventually be designated as the Florida Greenways and Trails System. Following these efforts, over \$9 million was allocated to fill in gaps along the Gulf Coast Trail corridor in October 2016. The Summit and resulting Alliance is intended to build on these efforts through to the project’s completion.

The Summit is free to attend. Event details and registration are available here: [Eventbrite Gulf Coast Regional Trail Summit](#)

Complimentary lunch will be provided by Lee Health at 11:30 AM

Event Location:

Venice Community Center
326 Nokomis Avenue South
Venice, FL 34285

[View Map](#)

Date and Time:

Mon, January 23, 2017
11:30 AM – 3:00 PM EST

TBARTA was created by the Florida Legislature in 2007 to plan and develop a multimodal transportation system that will connect the seven counties of the Tampa Bay region – Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota. For more information, visit www.TBARTA.com.