

EMERALD TRAIL SYSTEM

Jacksonville, Florida

Connecting Communities Across Jacksonville

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Emerald Trail is a 30-mile bicycle/pedestrian trail and linear park system in Florida that will connect 14 historic neighborhoods and downtown Jacksonville to local and regional trails, parks, schools, businesses, transit and other destinations. The nonprofit Groundwork Jacksonville, in partnership with the City of Jacksonville, is developing the trail network, with construction anticipated to be completed in the next nine years (sooner, if funding allows).

The trail is being designed and constructed in nine segments; the design of segment one, the LaVilla Link, was completed in August 2020.

Interest in the trail has already spurred trail-oriented development, which is expected to drive business and entrepreneurial opportunities. The trail system will provide new safe access for walkers and bicyclists to public transportation options, including the Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center, which is located along the LaVilla Link in the historically Black LaVilla neighborhood.

Designed to encourage recreation and create new off-road neighborhood connections, the Emerald Trail has the potential to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, while reducing health-care costs and increasing work productivity. Currently, 70% of residents living within the urban core are considered low income and rank in the lower third and fourth quartiles for chronic illness.

The trail is included in the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization's Northeast Florida Regional Multi-Use Trails Master Plan as a connection to the planned Core to Coast trail, and is part of the 3,000-mile developing East Coast Greenway.



Network map of the developing Emerald Trail System

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

LEAD AUTHORITY:	City of Jacksonville, Groundwork Jacksonville
TOTAL PROJECT COST:	\$81,000,000
FUNDING PLEDGED TO DATE:	\$39,000,000
FEDERAL:	\$0
STATE:	\$0
LOCAL AND PRIVATE:	\$39,000,000
SHOVEL-READY:	Segments vary; 1 to 4 years
TYPE:	Urban

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

JOB CREATION

1,156 jobs will be directly created by the trail extension project.¹

TRANSPORTATION

The Emerald Trail will connect to 16 schools, two colleges and 21 parks, among other destinations like businesses, cafes, shops, festivals and events, with an additional 13 schools and 17 parks nearby within three blocks of the trail.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Emerald Trail will be a boon to the local economy, promoting neighborhood revitalization, entrepreneurial opportunities and tourism. The trail has already spurred trail-oriented development and local revitalization projects along the planned pathways.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Emerald Trail includes environmental remediations of contaminated lands and the restoration of both Hogans Creek and McCoys Creek, which travel through the network. Once complete, the trail will include hundreds of new trees, bioswales and native plants to help address stormwater runoff and provide wildlife habitats.

SOURCES

¹ Estimated at 17 jobs per \$1 million spent, according to a study commissioned by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) job creation; jobs in terms of full-time equivalents.