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**Southwest Florida Light-Rail and Bike/Pedestrian Pathway Organization**  
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**Naples to SW Florida International Airport - 35 Mile Project**



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March 15, 2019

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis  
State of Florida, The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

We are proposing the building of a futuristic solar powered light-rail and bike/pedestrian pathway with electric bike/car share transit stations that will be constructed along the unused Seminole/CSX railroad tracks that travel north and south through Bonita Springs and the Village of Estero. The main focus is to promote community and tourist transportation, economic development, and improving the health, fitness, and well-being of all our citizens. Our long-term goal will be to build an innovative 35-mile two-track transportation artery with 35 stations and park & ride lots from downtown Naples to Southwest Florida International Airport. This project will help to reduce our traffic and congestion and the light-rail will average 35,000 daily riders with ticket fares from \$1 to \$3. The total cost will be \$1.2 billion and we are requesting that the U.S. government pay 2/3 this amount = \$800 million.

The \$400 million balance will be paid from sources such as state and city municipal bonds, corporate sponsorship and advertising, donations, and revenue from sales of tickets and electric bike/car share usage fees. The expected return on our investment will exceed \$2 billion in economic development in the first 20 years and the market values of businesses and residential properties near the pathway will rise by 3-5% which will increase our community tax bases. We will finally have a fast, convenient, and low-cost light-rail system to travel through Lee and Collier County and a 35-mile tree-lined linear park that is safe for walking, running, and bicycling to experience our cities without having to share our time with thousands of cars and trucks that typically drive past us at 40-60 mph on our roadways.

Each light-rail transit station will have a one-acre park & ride lot with 100 parking spaces available including an additional 20 spaces dedicated to charging electric vehicles at zero cost. The parking lots will be on one level and built with 12" wide Category-5 hurricane concrete posts to support the roof where 2000 solar panels will be installed. Vertical wind power columns will be placed around the structure's exterior. The power created will exceed \$100,000 annually x 35 stations = \$3.5 million each year. The electricity produced will be used to power twelve light-rail electric trains that will be on ten-minute arrival/departure schedules during peak times so waiting times will be extremely low.

We will install 35 bike share sites along the rail line with 20 bikes at each transit station = 700 bikes. An additional 700 bikes will be installed at 35 stations at beach parking areas, hotels, malls, parks, schools, and public buildings, etc. The bikes will be easily reserved and rented by cell phones and credit cards by the hour, day, week, month or annually. Half the bikes (700) will be electric and they will be charged for free at stations. In addition, 20 electric cars will be available to rent/share and charged for free at each park & ride lot = 700 cars. Our area's population is expected to rise by 100% in the next fifty years, so now is the time to act and make a large investment in our transportation alternatives that provide better choices than driving our own gas vehicles wherever we need to go.

Southwest Florida is known for our warm and sunny winter weather and beautiful beaches and this has sustained us for decades. But now we have been hit with increasing red tide episodes and dead fish and marine life. This is having an effect on tourists' perceptions that is harming local economies. Our main man-made problems are heavy traffic and we lack safe and enjoyable pathways for biking, walking, and running. Tourists want to be outdoors to bike, walk, and run near their hotels and we must improve our communities to appeal to their interests because many cities in the U.S. focus on these healthy activities and they do not have our crowded roadways or occasional red tide issues.

The first phase for this vital community project would start at the old rail tracks from Bonita Beach Road near Old U.S. 41 and head north. It will pass through Bonita Springs near numerous businesses, hotels, golf courses, medical centers, schools, churches, parks, and large gated communities. It will continue through the Village of Estero and pass close to city landmarks including Coconut Point Mall, Hyatt Place, The Brooks Development, Hertz Corp. Offices, Estero High School, Koreshan State Park, and Estero Community Park, etc. The first phase of this urban pathway will stop at Estero Parkway.

The second phase will start with the construction of light-rail tracks and a pathway that heads east from the old railroad tracks along the south side of Estero Parkway. It will travel over the 75 Freeway and turn south to connect with Hertz Arena and Miromar Outlets. We will encourage corporations, businesses, and community leaders to become sponsors for this important effort which will benefit all retailers and businesses located near the tracks/pathway by bringing them additional customers.

The third phase would travel north from Hertz Arena along Ben Hill Griffin Parkway to Florida Gulf Coast University and Gulf Coast Town Center Mall. It will go north along Treeline Avenue to connect with S.W. Florida Int. Airport and head east on Daniels Parkway to JetBlue Park (Boston Red Sox). Additional routes can be created in the future including heading north along the old railroad tracks from Estero Parkway to Daniels Parkway to reach Hammond Stadium (Minnesota Twins), Gulf Coast Medical Center, and South Fort Myers High School and then travel east to S.W. Florida Int. Airport.

The final phase will head south from Bonita Beach Rd. along the old tracks to Wiggins Pass Rd. where they end. Then this solar powered light-rail and bike/pedestrian pathway with electric bike/car share transit stations can continue to Immokalee Rd. near Naples Community Hospital, Veterans Park, and Arthrex. It will go south along Airport-Pulling Rd., crossing Vanderbilt Rd. near Mercato Shops and luxury hotels. It will cross Pine Ridge Rd. and Golden Gate Pkwy. to Naples High School, Coastland Mall, Naples Zoo, and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. It will end at Naples Railroad Museum, Cambier Park, or Naples Pier. New routes can be added in the future such as Naples to Marco Island.

There are big benefits that will make this project successful. First, for many people it will be cheaper to ride the light-rail or bicycle to destinations along the route than to drive. Second, it will take less time to get to where people need to go. Third, it will be easier to go to a station with park & ride and bike/car share and get off at a station, than to drive a personal vehicle. Other benefits are that by using the system, people of all ages will become more active, fit, and happier by moving naturally, being independent, and meeting new people. This project also will reduce pollution and road wear.

We look forward to your response to our proposals.



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