



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Partnership of Northeast Florida Clubs of Rotary International Commits \$250,000 to Emerald Trail

**(Jacksonville, Fla. 1/13/2023)** Today, the Partnership of Northeast Florida Clubs of Rotary International, representing 1,400 members locally, announced their commitment of \$250,000 to support the design of the planned Emerald Trail Riverside Link. During a tour of the Emerald Trail and McCoys Creek, leaders from several clubs presented Groundwork Jacksonville with \$50,000 toward the commitment.

The Rotary Clubs' Partnership will be the presenting sponsor of a half-mile section of the Riverside Link from the Riverside Arts Market (RAM) to Memorial Park. Dedicated on Christmas Day 1924, Memorial Park also was made possible by the Rotary Clubs to honor those who gave their lives to protect American freedom.

The 2.3-mile Riverside Link will connect the Emerald Trail to the Southbank Riverwalk and San Marco, via the new Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) shared use path across the Fuller Warren Bridge, the Northbank Riverwalk, Riverside Park and McCoys Creek.

According to past District Governor Tommy Grimes, the Emerald Trail's goals align with each Rotary focus area: Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution; Disease Prevention and Treatment; Water and Sanitation; Maternal and Child Health; Basic Education and Literacy; Economic and Community Development; and Protecting the Environment.

"The Emerald Trail has the potential to be a singularly transformational project for all of us who live, work and retire in the Jacksonville area. Rotary's goal of 'doin' good in our community and in the world,' and our legacy of leadership will set an example for others to join in supporting the Emerald Trail," says Grimes.

According to Kay Ehas, CEO of Groundwork Jacksonville, the city's nonprofit partner in building the Emerald Trail, the Riverside Link will be the third trail segment to be built, linking RAM to McCoys Creek. The design process is expected to begin early next year. "We are delighted that area Rotary Clubs have come together to support the Trail in such a significant way. Private support like Rotary's generous gift not only strengthens our momentum toward completion by the end of the decade, but also helps to



ensure the integrity of design, and funds enhancements that will create a world-class experience,” said Ehas.

The Emerald Trail will provide safe pedestrian and biking trails complete with shade trees, native plants, public art and amenities and connect to the existing S-Line Rail Trail, and planned trails in San Marco and along McCoy's Creek. The result will be a 30-mile contiguous urban trail and linear park system from Brentwood to San Marco, and Lackawanna to Historic Eastside. It will link 16 schools, two colleges, three hospitals and 21 parks among other destinations like restaurants, shopping and other businesses. The first segment of the Emerald Trail, the LaVilla Link, will open in early 2023. The design of segment two, Hogan Street, is well underway with construction expected to begin in late 2023.

Like other trail systems across the country, Groundwork anticipates the Emerald Trail to be a catalyst for significant investment, job creation, and economic opportunities. “The investment that other cities have made in urban trail systems have shown remarkable returns on investment,” says Grimes. “From a business point of view, the Emerald Trail is a winner. From a Rotarian’s point of view, this is what we want to do - to leave the Northeast Florida area and its citizens in a better place.”

#### **About Groundwork Jacksonville**

Groundwork Jacksonville, Inc., was formed in 2014 by the City of Jacksonville in partnership with Groundwork USA, along with support from the US National Park Service and US Environmental Protection Agency.

Groundwork was specifically created to clean and redevelop degraded urban waterways and restore contaminated land into parks, playgrounds, trails, and other public spaces. Jacksonville is one of 21 Trusts across the country and the only Trust in Florida. Visit [www.groundworkjacksonville.org](http://www.groundworkjacksonville.org) or follow @GroundworkJax on social for more information.

#### **About the Rotary Clubs of Jacksonville**

Rotary International and its worldwide membership of 1.5 million professional and business leaders is dedicated to leadership and community service and is the first service club in the world. For 40 years Rotary has promised to eradicate Polio from our planet and is close: 99% of our world is Polio free with only two countries reporting cases. Learn more at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org). To learn more about the 24 Rotary clubs in the Jacksonville area, call 904.626.5029.

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