

CRC Infrastructure Sub-Committee

Project Identification Template and Instructions

Project Identification Template

Instructions: Please complete all of the information requested with the best information you have available. Limited attachments are acceptable if necessary to adequately describe the project but the **total length should be limited to 6 pages** one-sided (including attachments). This Identification Template is intended as a preliminary mechanism by which proposals and projects to improve the resiliency of Coastal Alabama are solicited and captured with some consistency of format, scope definition, and project benefits and impact. **This is only a first step: proposals and projects will not be funded based upon this submittal. Further information and details will be solicited at such time as the screening and funding process is more fully defined.**

Responses should be received by **November 26, 2010**, to be included in the appendix the Coastal Recovery Commission Report to the Governor to be submitted **December 15, 2010**. Submittals after that date will be accepted for consideration but will not be included in the Project Appendix.

Completed Templates may be submitted:

- Electronically (.pdf preferred) to: crcalabama.templateresponse.com.
- By US mail to: Coastal Recovery Commission.

P.O. Box 881, Mobile, AL 36601-0881

I. What – Project Information/Basic Facts

1. Project Scope The scope of the suggested project is to construct two walking and biking trails along the Eastern Shore of Baldwin County; specifically a 5.2 mile trail along County Road 1 and completion of the Eastern Shore Trail from County Road 13 to County Road 27 along Scenic 98.
2. Project duration or schedule by phase and status of any work in progress The estimated project duration is 17 months; there is no work in progress at this time.

2.1. Conceptual and Feasibility Planning, Engineering, Construction

- Engineering & Design – 120 days
- Competitive Bid Process – 90 days
- Construction -300 days
- Total – 500 days or approximately 17 months

3. Estimated Cost (plus or minus 30%) \$2,500,000.00

3.1. Indicate level of confidence in accuracy of these estimates moderate

II. Why – Project Description relative to Impact and Criteria

1. Identify what need, threat or opportunity that this project, study, or recommendation will address This project will address *public perception outside the region and the attractiveness of the region as a destination.* The project expands the Eastern Shore Trail, which is a 36 mile multi-purpose trail for pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle use along the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, in Baldwin County Alabama. The trail traverses waterfronts, historic sites, wilderness, and small town areas, both off road and paralleling roads. The project will attract tourist (bicyclists, runners, bird watchers), increase the health and quality of life for users, and connect communities along the coast of Alabama.

2. How does this project or recommendation address and impact the recommended evaluation criteria:

2.1.1. Coastal Recovery This project will enhance and preserve the quality of life for residents and visitors of coastal Alabama by connecting them to the outdoors and providing recreational activities such as walking, biking, and bird watching. County Road 1 is home to seven public water accesses and two parks overlooking Mobile Bay. A portion of the proposed trail expansion will traverse The Meadows, a track of land purchased for conservation and preservation to protect the integrity of the Weeks Bay wetlands and greater watershed. Trail users will be exposed to unique environmental habitats. Such experiences can increase the public’s awareness of the natural coastal resources and the need to protect those resources.

2.1.2. Resiliency Coastal and waterfront communities offer a unique sense of place that attract homebuyers, developers, and tourists. Smart growth approaches should be implemented to accommodate the needs and demands of coastal land use. This project expands the Eastern Shore Trail, and smart growth elements to create walkable

communities, preserve open space, provide alternative transportation options, and connect (six waterfront) communities; all of which increase the resiliency of the area.

2.1.3. Transformational The Eastern Shore Trail was the vision of the Baldwin County Trailblazers to preserve and enhance quality of life through a network of trails that connect people to nature and community while educating citizens about the advantages and safe use of trails to promote healthy lifestyles. This project completes the originally planned 36 mile trail to the Weeks Bay Reserve and expands it to Pelican Point at the mouth of Weeks Bay.

2.1.4. Regionalism The proposed project can improve the quality of life, commerce and environment of the region. **Quality of Life** - The state of Alabama is the second most obese state in the United States. *The Surgeon's General's Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation 2010* states "... we must create neighborhood communities that are focused on healthy nutrition and regular physical activity where the healthiest choices are accessible for all citizens...Children should be having fun and playing in environments that provide parks, recreational facilities, community centers and walking and bike paths." This project is part of the solution to the obesity challenge that faces the entire Alabama region; it will provide recreational opportunities for a healthier lifestyle and improved quality of life including safety, comfort, and convenience. **Commerce** - The Eastern Shore Trail received the National Recreation Trail designation by the Department of Interior in 2010. The designation increases the visibility of the trail throughout the nation and has led to the trail being listed as a "featured trail" on American Trails Website. Furthermore, the Eastern Shore Trail connects several tourist attractions including the USS Alabama, Meaher State Park, Five Rivers Delta Center, and waterfront seafood restaurants; the completion/expansion will connect two additional parks, public accesses, and complete the connection to Weeks Bay Reserve. Trail users will spend money for trail gear (bikes, shoes, food, beverages) and users from outside the region will add to the local economy's lodging, rental, and lease tax revenues. **Environment** - The trail provides access to fishing piers, boat launches (for canoeing and kayaking), parks, campgrounds, and bird watching. As previously mentioned, trail users will be exposed to unique environmental habitats and such experiences can increase the public's awareness of the natural coastal resources and the need to protect those resources.

2.1.5. Economic Diversification The expansion and completion of the Eastern Shore Trail will leverage the existing economic strengths of the natural coastal environment (bays and beaches) which already attract home builders, developers, and tourist to the area. The trail is more than just a pleasant amenity; it provides walkability between neighborhoods and communities and translates to decreased transportation costs,

increased property values, and sustainable lifestyles. This in turn helps stabilize the economy through positive impacts on housing and rental properties. According to the US National Park Service, trails provide a 5 to 32 percent increase in property values.

3. Project Economics At this time, a dollar figure is not available for the project economics (cost benefit analysis). Supporters of the project are confident the short term economic impacts for the construction and engineering industries will benefit the local economy.

4. Identify Direct Project benefits to Coastal Alabama, including avoided costs, consequence of "No Build" alternative. Consequences of a no build alternative could include minimized access to the coastal parks and damage to the environment as people create their own walking and biking paths through environmentally sensitive habitats in the absence of a planned trail.

4.1. Impact on employment, job training and development, both short term and permanent The project will create short term employment for the engineering and construction industries. The tourism and property rental sectors could see enhanced employment opportunities as people from other regions come to visit for bird watching and athletic events (such as triathlons, bike tours, marathons) and contribute to the rental/lease tax revenue of Baldwin County.

4.2. Oil spill mitigation outside of claims process None identified

5. Identify Indirect benefits and costs

5.1. Collateral Benefits to the objectives of Healthy Environment, Healthy Economy and Healthy Society (subjective responses allowed) **Healthy Environment** - Trails provide an alternative to automobile commuting which reduces traffic congestion and pollution. **Healthy Economy** – The Eastern Shore Trail provides economic benefits associated to recreation and tourist attractions along the trail and increased property values (as previously mentioned). **Healthy Society** – Trails provide recreational opportunities and promote healthier lifestyles. As people become more active, health problems such as diabetes and obesity decrease along with associated health care costs. Trails also provide a safer means to walk and bike which leads to decreased pedestrian and bicycling accidents or mortalities.

5.2. Collateral Costs or impacts to the objectives of Healthy Environment, Healthy Economy and Healthy Society (subjective responses allowed) None noted

5.3. Connectivity and Linkage to other projects or initiatives: Does this project complement or compete with other projects? What other projects would be precluded if this project is funded? This project complements and completes the Eastern Shore

Trail, a 36 mile trail from the Mobile Bay Causeway to Weeks Bay. No other known projects would be precluded if this project is funded.

III. Who/How – General Information

1. Name and contact information for Entity, Collaboration or Person submitting project or recommendation nomination.

Baldwin County Trailblazers:

Walter Ernest wbrf@bellsouth.com 251-990-5004

Mike Henriksen mhcbuild@mchsi.com 251-209-5121

Entities and communities sharing a common threat or need are encouraged to collaborate for a joint/combined project submittal to raise the profile of the issue and solution to be addressed. Also please indicate the level of community support or resistance and hurdles to collaboration.

This project has tremendous support by the Y-Weeks Property Owners Association and the Baldwin County Trailblazers.

2. Identify Sponsoring Entity for oversight and accountability if different from above.
 - 2.1. Existing or to be created? Existing
 - 2.1.1. If to be created, what parties or interests must be involved and what level of effort is required to do so? _____
 - 2.2. Describe governance, organizational capacity, availability of skills, experience of sponsoring entity to implement the Project The Baldwin County Trailblazers have fifteen years of experience in sponsoring trails from development and beautification to organizing biking events. They are a non-profit and 100% volunteer based organization with approximately 300 supporters. The Executive Director of the Weeks Bay Foundation and the founder of the National Center on Bicycling and Walking preside over the twenty member board.
 - 2.3. Project complexity: Hurdles and barriers to project implementation, completion and sustainability. Identify regulatory issues. Identified hurdles include permitting and relocation of utilities along the proposed trail; both are achievable and will not prevent the project from being implemented, if funded.

3. Identify any known or anticipated administrative, regulatory, or legislative action that would be required at either the local, state, or federal governmental level. None known
4. Requested funding from Coastal Recovery Fund (CRF) 2,500,000
5. Identified potential funding sources other than the CRF Potential funding sources include private fund raising (from the efforts of the Baldwin County Trailblazers) and property owners along County Road 1.
 - 5.1. Leverage or multiplier on CRF investment: matching funds, public or private Private leverage is estimated at \$75,000 to \$100,000
 - 5.2. Public Private Opportunities, user fees, Federal funds, private foundation grants, bonding capacity, etc. The project has potential to receive Transportation Enhancement (TE) Funds from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) however, at this time, TE funds are not available and the Alabama Department of Transportation is not accepting applications for funding; TE funds could be a possibility in the future.
6. Forecast of ongoing maintenance or operating costs and source of funding if not self sustaining Maintenance costs are forecasted. Currently the Baldwin County Commission maintains several parks and trails throughout the County. The Trailblazers and property owners would assist in trail cleaning while the Parks and Highway Department would maintain the same level of commitment to the trail maintenance as they do for existing trails.