

## **Turnbull Creek Initiative Updates and Clarifications**

September 1, 2022

The last Turnbull Creek Task Force meeting was on February 28, 2022. At that meeting, the Task Force suggested that a public relations effort be made to inform the citizens and property owners about the history and significance of the Turnbull canal system and the importance of protecting and improving its ecology. This is still to be determined.

The City Commission held a workshop on Tuesday August 30, 2022, and discussed the Turnbull initiative and the possibility of expanding the tasks of the Turnbull Task Force.

The City was working with the North Florida Land Trust to negotiate with owners whose properties have been identified for purchase or for acquisition of conservation easements. The North Florida Land Trust has indicated that they will no longer provide land acquisition services for this effort. They desire to focus their efforts in the northern part of the State. The City is taking over the solicitation and negotiation process. Letters of inquiry were sent to high priority properties last month.

Bond funds can be used to acquire property or Conservation Easements.

Protecting the purchased properties: The City shall own the properties and place deed restrictions upon them defining the conservation uses. The properties acquired by the State Grant have permanent restrictions placed upon them.

Properties that have been purchased can become designated as City passive parks.

Properties that have been or will be purchased through this bond initiative cannot become a tree farm to grow long living indigenous species that can be used to replace and expand our tree canopy. Conservation areas cannot be used for agricultural purposes.

The City will pursue any and all applicable grants for relevant Turnbull Creek projects.

The Turnbull Creek is under the ownership of the State of Florida. The City can coordinate with the State of Florida for permits and potential funding for maintenance and dredging of these properties. There are no dedicated easements for drainage only natural drainage ways. Drainage flowing from the roadways falls under the jurisdiction of the entity that has ownership of that roadway.

The City is currently working with Department of Agriculture on any possible grants to remove invasive species such as Brazilian Pepper from the Creek.

The southern portion of the Creek system is heavily overgrown. The City has received a proposal for the dredging of the creek south of 44. The cost of the proposal is \$500,000, which the City believes is excessive. The city is evaluating the options for obtaining new proposals and/or seeking grants to pay for the study.

The Flood Plain Study that was started in March of 202 is complete.

Because of the effects of climate change on private property, wetland areas may expand, and buildable areas may shrink impacting current zoning and permitted uses. The owners of the properties could sell Conservation Easements for portions of properties affected by higher ground water and expanded wetlands to the City to limit permitted uses.