

A green-tinted photograph of a park. In the foreground, a man in a dark shirt and shorts stands with his back to the camera, looking towards a large, thick-trunked tree. To the left, two wooden Adirondack chairs are visible. In the middle ground, a group of people, including children, are sitting on a bench or on the grass. In the background, a paved path leads to a wooden walkway or boardwalk area with railings. The overall scene is a public space with natural elements and people enjoying the outdoors.

# Increasing Access to Nature and High-Performance Public Spaces in Port St. Lucie, FL

**City Council**

01/21/2025

## *Agenda*

- **Putting Residents First: Residents Prioritization of Green Spaces and Places as an area of focus for innovation**
- **Introducing Naturally PSL Green Spaces & Places**
- **Naturally PSL in Progress**
  - Upcoming Green Spaces & Places
  - Green Spaces, Places and Trails Map
  - Keep PSL Beautiful - Conservation Corps
  - Naturally PSL Awards Launch

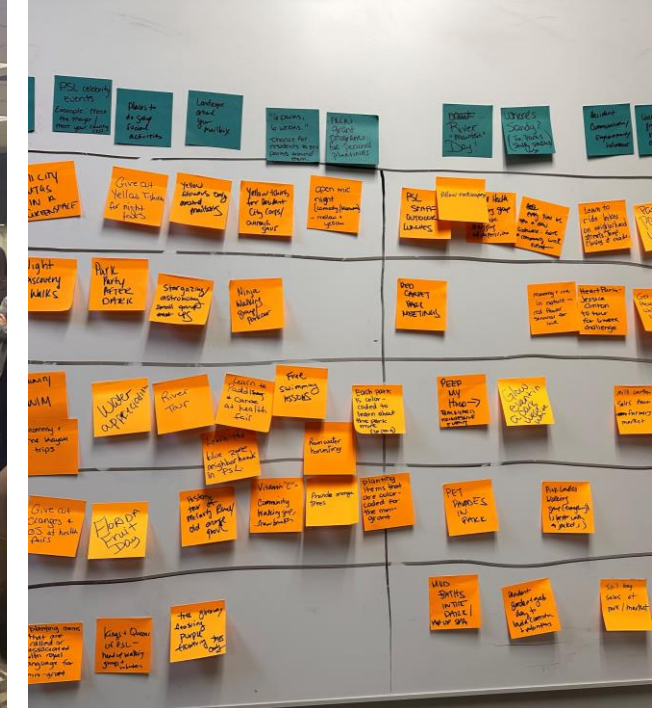
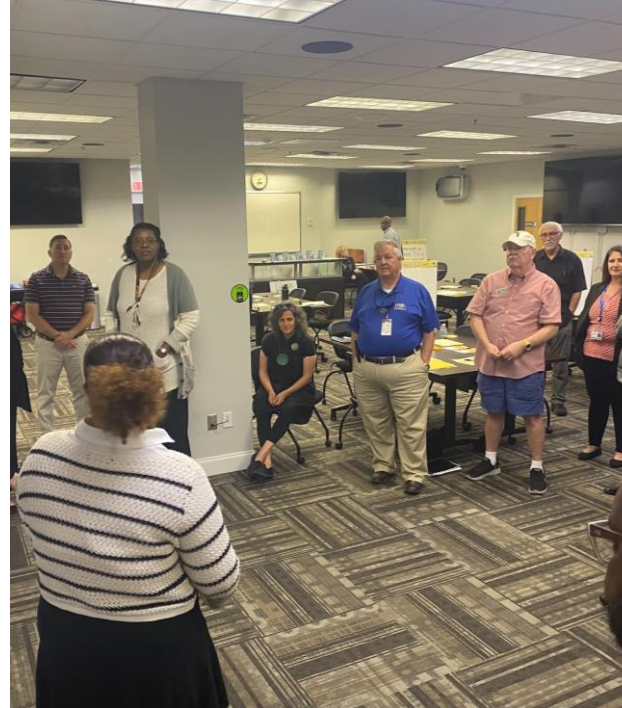


# The Need for High-Performance Public Spaces and Increased Access to Green Space in PSL

- **49,108 new residents** have moved to the City of Port St. Lucie since 2020 (2024 BEBR Estimate)
- At the 2023 Citizen Summit, residents prioritized Neighborhood Parks/Preserve Development for additional investment **as their #1 priority.**
- According to National Community Survey, **89%** of residents view city's natural environment **essential or very important**, yet residents' satisfaction of PSL open spaces **dropped from 62% to 45%** between 2021 to 2024
- In 2024, residents' rating of connection and engagement with community **grew from 37% to 42%**, but still **lower** than national benchmark







**UNDERSTAND**  
the problem

+

**GENERATE**  
and test new ideas

- Over 1,000 ideas
- 100+ people engaged and participated (plus 900 people from Citizen Summit)

Introducing



**A Communication Tool and Brand** to educate about the spaces we have, advocate to preserve green spaces, and inform upcoming improvements.

**A Funding Vehicle** for private, public and nonprofit partners to contribute to the "bank" for strategic land acquisition and improvements of existing spaces.

**A Conservation Corps** that provides engage opportunities to empower our residents to be the leader of this movement



## Under Naturally PSL Initiative:

**744.4 Acres** of land to be developed as Green Spaces and Places

**198 Acres** of city-owned natural preserves, out of a total of

**2,940.5 Acres** of natural areas within city limits

**3,097 Acres** McCarty Ranch Preserve, Recreation and Water Quality Project

**41.4 Miles** of trails available within city limit, with an additional

**20.3 miles** of trails in planning

**2 New Parks** opened in 2024, and **6 more** to be opened and improved

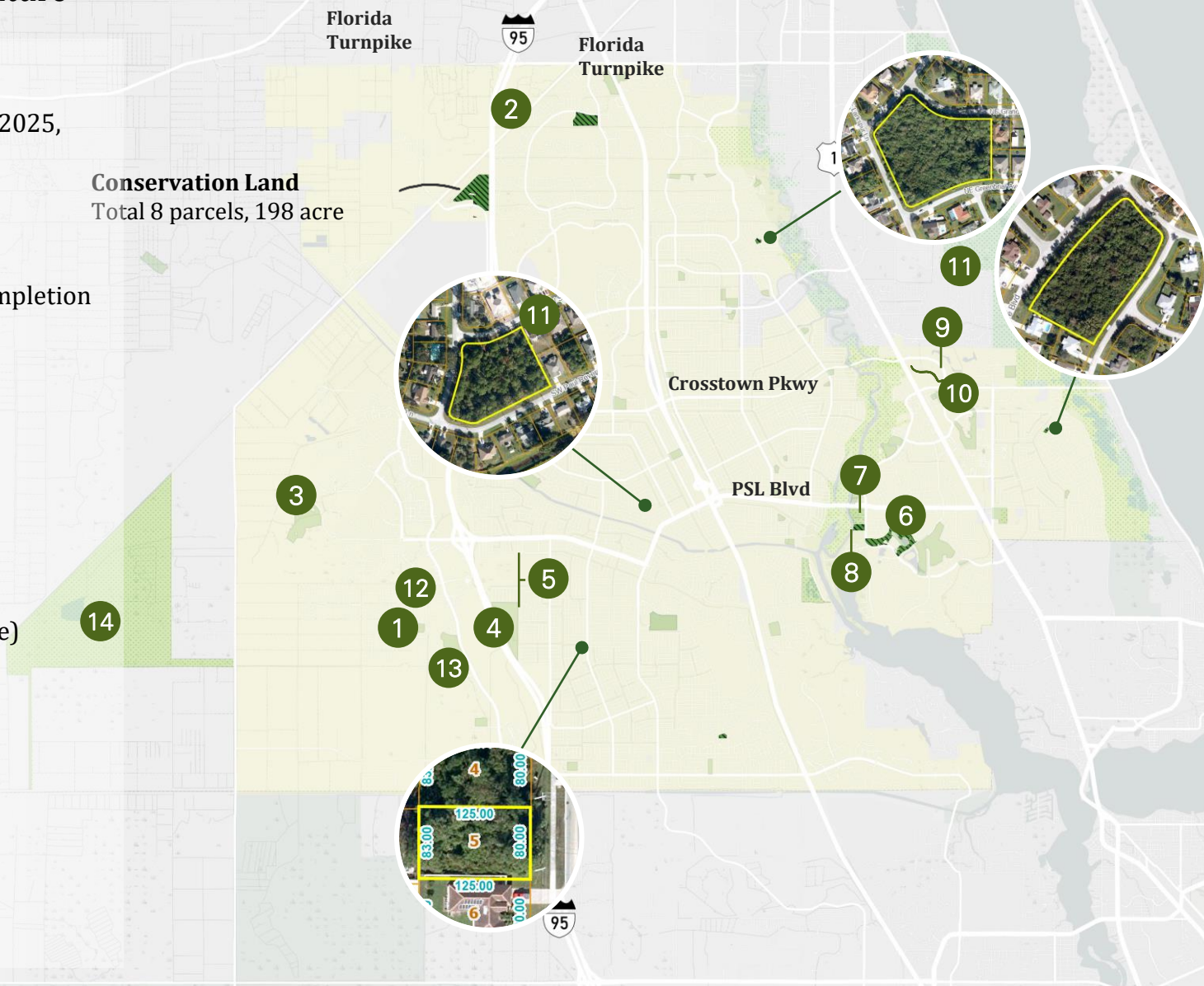


# Naturally PSL Green Spaces (Natural Areas & Places (Parks) in progress

+ 4 Neighborhood Greenspaces  
& 198 acres of Conservation Land

Upcoming Projects to enhance residents' access to nature

1. **Stars and Stripes Park** (Planned Opening 2025)
2. **Torino Regional Park and Nature Trails** (Design FY2024-2025, Construction estimate to start 2026)
3. **Tradition Regional Park** (Groundbreaking in 2024, planned completion 2026)
4. **O.L Peacock Sr. Park Improvements** (Phase 1 estimated completion in 2025-2026)
5. **Peacock Trail** (construction in FY2026-2027)
6. **Wilderness Trail** (Groundbreaking in 2025)
7. **The Port District Master Plan Phase 1** (restaurant to begin construction 2025)
8. **Port Preserve Trail** (Design Completed)
9. **Village Green Drive Complete Street** (Ongoing Design phase)
10. **Hog Pen Slough Boardwalk** (Ongoing Design phase)
11. **Florida SUN Trail – East Coast Greenway Extension**
12. **Paseo Greenway** (completed and open in 2024)
13. **Southwest Park** (conceptual, prioritized in Strategic Plan)
14. **McCarty Ranch Camping Enhancements** (conceptual plan approved, Phase 1A construction in 2030)



## *Naturally PSL in progress*

### Ongoing Grants and Policy Efforts

#### Success

- US Forest Service, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – **\$25,000 Tree Inventory Grant**
- U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program - **\$1 million Urban Forestry Grant**
- O.L. Peacock Park – **\$200,000 FRDAP Grant**
- Wilderness Park Cambridge Trail – **\$500,000 RTP Grant**
- The Port Preserve Upland Trails –River Boardwalk South Connection – **\$400,000 FIND Grant**

#### ••• Pending

- Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) – Oak Hammock Park
- Florida SUN Trail - Green River Trail Resurfacing
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection Protecting Florida – A-14 Land Acquisition and Stormwater Treatment Area

#### Ongoing Pursuits

- Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Initiatives
- Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program
- Parks and Open Space Florida Forever Grant
- Florida State Legislative Requests: High-Performance Public Space Grant Flexibility



**NATURALLY**  
**PSL** GREEN SPACES  
 AND PLACES

TEALUE HAMMOCK PRESERVE & TRAIL  
 PALED HAMMOCK PRESERVE & TRAIL



- CITY OF PORT ST. LUCIE PARKS AND RECREATION
- CITY OF PORT ST. LUCIE CONSERVATION LAND
- STATE/COUNTY NATURAL PRESERVES



TO EXPLORE TRAILS, PARKS AND LEARN MORE PLEASE VISIT  
[WWW.CITYOFPSL.COM/NATURALLYPSL](http://WWW.CITYOFPSL.COM/NATURALLYPSL)



## How Could **Residents** Participate in the **Naturally PSL** Movement?

### **Naturally PSL** Conservation Corp.

#### **Missions and Goals**

- **Activate** city-owned parcels to increase access to greenspaces for residents
- Provide volunteer opportunities to **engage** and **empower** community members to become the stewards of PSL's natural environment and greenspaces
- Establish and grow **partnerships** with community members, businesses and organizations to activate and maintain city's public spaces and greenspaces
- To be launched at Citizen Summit, a conservation site to be a clean up site at this year's Caring Community Clean Up.



Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful Community Cleanup Day 2024



## 3 ways to get involved with *Naturally PSL Conservation Corp.*

1

### KPSLB Volunteer Group Extension

#### Who?

Existing volunteer groups with established group leaders and contacts who wish to participate additional volunteer opportunities

#### How?

- Monthly cleaning of an assigned greenspace;
- Host additional beautification projects such as planting events, murals, educational workshops with partners at adopted greenspace;
- Activate the space with community walks/runs/workshops with partners

2

### Short-term Monthly Opportunities

#### Who?

Individuals, high-school teens, new residents who wish to participate one-time event to gain hours or socialize;

Corporate/organizations community events during holidays

#### How?

- Received monthly notice of beautification projects/clean-up events
- Sign-up as the extra-hands during monthly events
- Sponsor/lead an education session with residents

3

### Naturally PSL Environmental Experts

#### Who?

Individuals or groups who have specialized/expert knowledge, such as plants, birds, wildlife, art, and neighborhood contexts

#### How?

- Monitor and document the conditions of adopted neighborhood greenspace, discuss possible actions to maintain the areas
- Host education session such as themed guided hikes, bird-watching, natural photography workshops
- Advertise volunteer events, environmental educations, and hands-on field visits through schools and youth groups



*How Could Developers/Businesses/Philanthropy Participate in the **Naturally PSL** Movement?*

## **Naturally PSL Environmental Stewardship Awards Program**

- **Annual recognition event (Earth Day 2025)** to acknowledge positive contributions in preserving and protecting the natural environment of Port St. Lucie.
- Integrate with Naturally PSL environmental funds to recognize outstanding efforts that supports city initiatives that contribute to ecological and community well-being
- Partnership **acknowledgement** in communication materials
- Donation vehicle for residents/businesses/donors/philanthropists to donate towards **land acquisitions and park improvements**
- Inspire residents and organizations to be the active leaders of the Naturally PSL movement and foster a positive network to support community projects



2023 Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast, Adopt A Street Program



## 5 Ways to be recognized through *Naturally PSL Environmental Stewardship Awards*

1

### Naturally PSL Neighbors Award

#### Who?

Individuals, un-affiliated residents

#### How?

- Application submitted by residents for Florida friendly yards, # of trees planted in the neighborhood spaces, volunteer hours, or leaders of community projects

2

### Naturally PSL Green Spaces & Places Stewardship Award

#### Who?

Community Organizations, Volunteer Groups, Business, Developers

#### How?

Application submitted for

- outstanding environmental activities, based on number of clean-up events, volunteers brought together, miles cleaned, numbers of trash bag filled
- Top contributors to our Natural PSL fund, community event sponsors, land acres contributed
- Innovative and environmental projects that are impactful for the community

## 5 Ways to be recognized through *Naturally PSL Environmental Stewardship Awards*

3

### Emerging Environmental Leaders

#### Who?

high-school students and teens

#### How?

Application submitted or Nominated by volunteer groups and city departments based on volunteer hours, contributions on volunteer events such as guided walks, hours of education training

4

### Green Schools

#### Who?

Schools within Port St. Lucie

#### How?

Application submitted by schools within PSL boundary who carry out environmental projects and sustainability initiatives

5

### Public Innovation Award

#### Who?

Public Agencies

#### How?

Applications open to any public agencies committing to improve PSL's natural environmental, water quality, and community-based innovation projects



## *Other Actions to be brought forward as part of **Naturally PSL***

- **Activating Streets and Access to Nature Trails** through Village Green Drive & MIDFLORIDA Event Center Street Art/Festivals
- **Updated Parks & Recreation Master Plan** (which will incorporate our innovation research)
- **Launch of Land Acquisition Fund**
  - PSL Merchandise Store (% goes toward Acquisition Fund)
- **Environmental Policies Review**
- **Comprehensive Plan Update**
- Updated **Capital Improvement Plan** including signage
- **Future Funding Initiatives** (Potential Half-Cent Sales Tax Renewal)
- **Conservation Area Improvements** – opening access
- **New Trail Connections and Partnerships**
  - Indian River State College
- **Improved Alignment of City's Environmental Functions**
- **Vulnerability Assessment and Focus on Resiliency**
- **Youth Council Committee of HPPS** (Torino Park Teen-inclusive Programming)
- **Naturally PSL video** outlining areas of land conserved, what the City is doing to open access to green space, plant trees, etc.



## ***Putting Residents First through Citizen Summits***

### **2023 Citizen Summit:**

Residents Ranked Access to Nature/Neighborhood Parks as Top Priority

### **2024 Citizen Summit:**

Worked with residents to **co-design solutions** after taking this issue to the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative as one of 40 cities selected in the world.

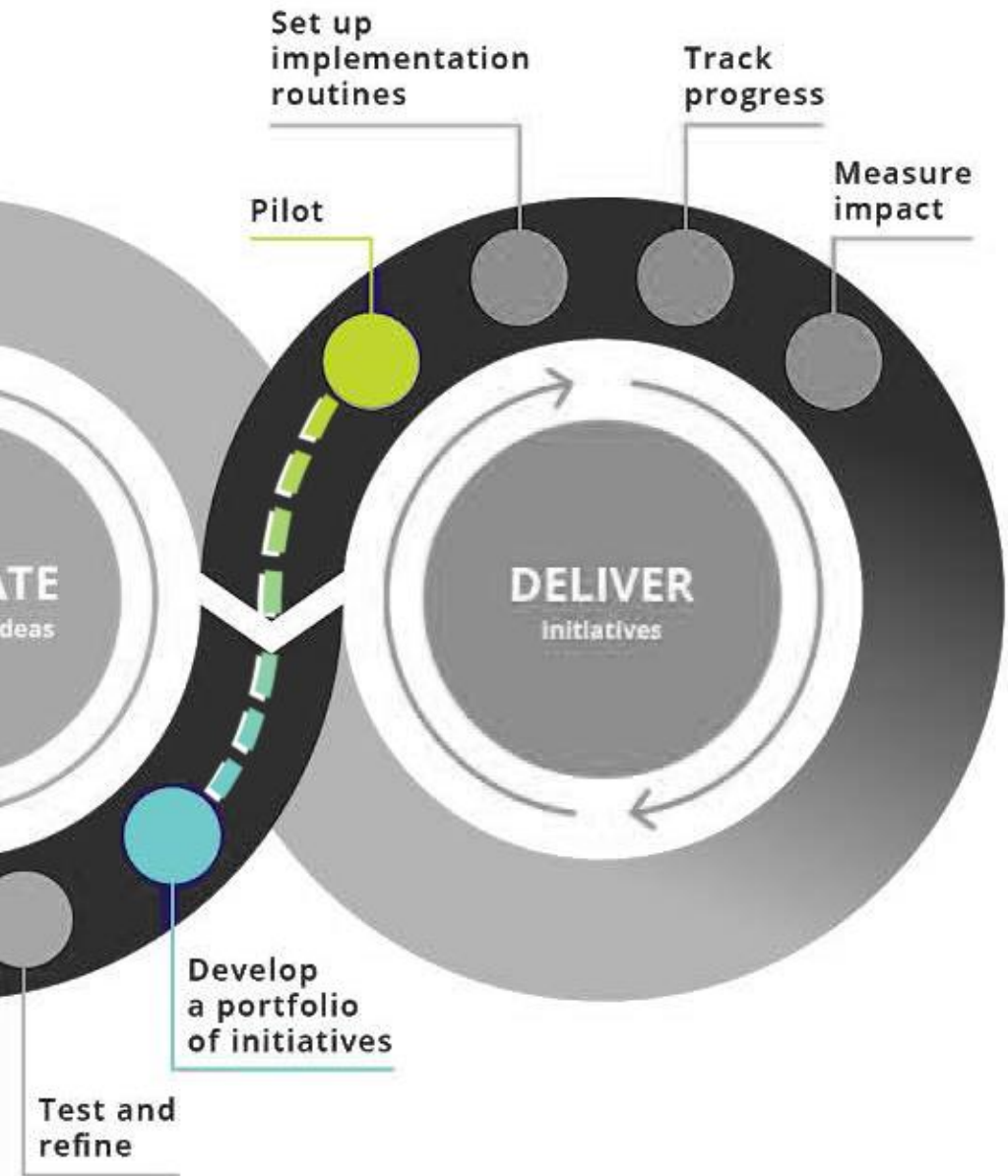
### **2025 Citizen Summit:**

**Launch Naturally PSL Program** including announcing park and conservation land improvements, launch of Trails map and website, Naturally PSL **Environmental Stewardship Awards**, Naturally PSL **Conservation Corps** and **Village Green Drive Green Street Festivals**.

**2025: Submit for All -America City Award (theme: Strengthening Environmental Sustainability through Inclusive Community Engagement) and \$1 million Mayors challenge for funding to continue growing the idea and implementation**







## The Portfolio of Initiatives





Questions?