



January 27, 2017

The Honorable Howard Wiggs, Mayor
City of Lakeland
228 S. Massachusetts Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33801

**SUBJECT: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SE7EN WETLANDS WATER
RESTORATION ASSISTANCE GRANT**

Dear Mayor Wiggs:

Through this letter, I am expressing my support for the City of Lakeland's Se7en Wetlands Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Division of Water Resources Assistance Grant.

The Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) recently completed a Trail Master Plan for this portion of Polk County which includes the City's Seven Wetlands property. The TPO's Master Plan documented the regional importance of Se7en Wetlands in terms of regional trails as it provides an important link between two adjacent conservation and recreation lands which have extensive existing trails systems, i.e., Lakeland Highlands Scrub and Loyce Harpe Park. These parks and their system of trails are very popular and regularly attract people from throughout Central Florida. Se7en Wetlands will link these two parks and ultimately provide an interconnected system of hiking, off-road bicycling and multi-use trails in excess of thirty miles. In addition to connecting the referenced parks with trails, the TPO's Trail Master Plan recommends a new regional multi-use trail corridor linking Seven Wetlands with the Cities of Bartow, Lakeland and Mulberry via Lakeland's Lake-to-Lake System of Greenways and Trails, the Fort Fraser State Trail, and Circle B-Bar Reserve. Several of these trail corridors comprise a portion of Florida's emerging SUNTrail Network.

The City's grant request for Se7en Wetlands will directly support the TPO's Trail Master Plan by helping implement this regional trail network.

Sincerely,

Ryan Kordek, Transportation Planning Administrator
Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)