

## Proactive Plan Required to Preserve the Historic Character of Downtown Fernandina Beach



**Email To:** Mayor Arron Bean, Vice-Mayor David Sturges, Chip Ross, James Antun, Darron Ayscue

**Date:** September 5, 2023

### To Our City of Fernandina Beach Commissioners:

A large group of concerned citizens gathered this past Saturday, September 2, to share concerns and review the facts as we know them regarding the sidewalk closure along the south side of Atlantic Avenue, from the corner of 8th to 10th Streets, in downtown Fernandina.

It's clear that FDOT will be addressing the fragile canopy of majestic landmark trees as they develop their solution to the degradation of the historic hex paver sidewalk. Hence, we are imploring you to insert yourself, as stewards of this community, early in the FDOT planning. We see this as not purely an engineering and legal problem, but as a potential disaster to the efforts we have all made to preserve the **historic and unique character of our city**.

Specifically, we request the following assurances from you:

1. The root systems of our landmark trees should not be disturbed **in any way** as part of the ultimate FDOT plan. Any shaving, cutting, or paving-over of the roots is potentially fatal to our trees.
2. The visual design, materials, and permeability of the sidewalk base needs to be preserved to historical standards as sidewalks are reconstructed.
3. Please consider ensuring that the Fernandina Beach Historic District Council and other concerned citizen groups will be included in the planning and installation phases to verify the plan criteria 1 and 2 above.

We ask you to join us in taking proactive steps so that we can all take part in the preservation effort, and so that no one has to worry that our inaction and/or missteps ultimately lead to an unexpected, undesirable result for the City of Fernandina Beach.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sierra Nassau County Sierra Group, Executive Board  
Amelia Tree Conservancy, Board of Directors  
Conserve Nassau, Board of Directors  
Keep Nassau Beautiful  
Members of the Public