MANATEE COUNTY · FLORIDA

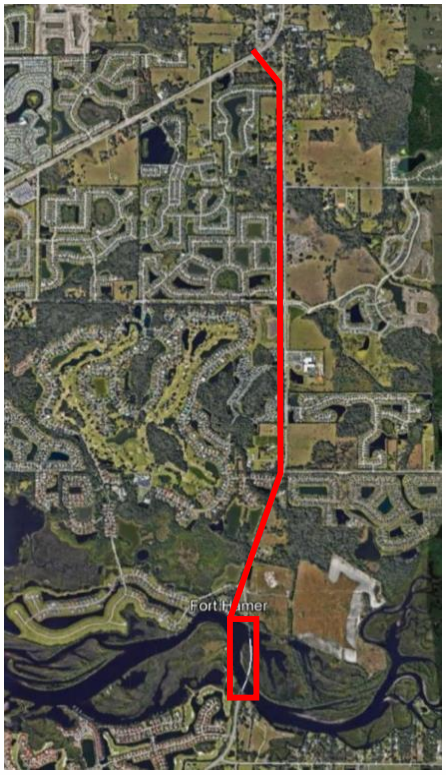
2022 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Manatee County Government's mission is to provide efficient, effective, responsive government that is always mindful of our sensitive natural environment while achieving the Commission's vision for the County: **a premier place in which to live and work and play.**

The Board's 2022 platform reflects the legislative priorities that will help Manatee County better achieve its mission and serve our residents and visitors.

Manatee County
FLORIDA

FORT HAMER BRIDGE & ROADWAY WIDENING



Fort Hamer Road Widening to 4 Lanes

- FY2023 RAISE Federal Grant Application
- Project Grant Funds Requested $38,961,793
- Project Non-Federal Manatee County Match Required $19,480,896
- Grant Applications due April 2023

Fort Hamer Road / Manatee River Bridge Project

- FY2023 RAISE Federal Grant Application
- Project Grant Funds Requested $39,022,343
- Project Non-Federal Manatee County Match Required $19,512,171
- Grant Applications due April 2023

The east and north Manatee County regions are experiencing tremendous growth in migration and corresponding residential development. To address pressures on transportation services and traffic movement, the County will continue traditional rebuilding and capacity widening projects, mostly rebuilding and widening existing 2-lane corridors to 4-lane corridors along existing throughfare roadways. Upon evaluation of the Federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework (BIF), specific project selection criteria priorities include such features as interstate movement of goods and services, hurricane evacuation routes, highway capacity improvements and state and local road relievers to the interstate highway system.

The federal BIF program provides for state transportation formula funding allocations to State Transportation Departments and competitive grants in aid directly to Counties and Cities. The competitive grant applications require extensive analysis and documentation and a goal match participation. The County's best potential project to score well in the anticipated infrastructure grant programs are future projects to widen Ft. Hamer Road from the Manatee River to US 301 and construct the second Ft. Hamer Road bridge parallel to the existing bridge adding another 2 travel lanes across the river. Both projects are expected to score well because of the regional impact the added capacity will have. Additionally, these projects work together as an improved hurricane evacuation route and a transportation alternative to I-75 for movement of interstate goods and commerce when backups/closures occur there.

Federal funds are structured under the BIF program to be delivered via grants over the next five years. It will be the County's intention to submit both the roadway and bridge project applications each year of the program.

VETERANS SERVICES & HOUSING

- FY 2023 General Appropriation Construction Request $15,000,000
- FY 2023 * Prioritization to direct long term operating costs of $3-4 million annually using Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) and Grant Per-Diem (GPD) funds

County leaders envision remodeling the old jail facility which abuts the Judicial complex to provide shelter for local homeless veterans who don't have anywhere else to go. The center is expected to provide temporary housing, mental health services, job training and other resources.

Transitional Housing Capital Project (MC jail conversion)

- General appropriations
- The conversation of general appropriation would fall within the realm of $15-20m to complete the buildout and furnish, but request an increase in the per day reimbursement rates (currently $58.55) and keeping the 30% maximum of Veteran's income to offset the daily care expenses, under The Grant Per Diem (GPD) program.
- Long Term Operating Cost Funding for Veterans Services as a One-Stop Offering Inside the Transitional Housing Renovation (Veterans Services VA dedicated funding stream).
- The long-term operating costs will fall within two areas; additional funding for the SSVF & GPD programs; these are the programs that individual agencies use to cover the cost of case management, homeless prevention, rapid rehousing, and initial deposits and the daily operational costs of the facility, to include linens, laundry services, food, daily necessities upon intake, etc. This is estimated at $3-4m annually.

PALMETTO TRAILS CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY PROJECT

- FY2022 RAISE Federal Grant Application
- Project Grant Funds Requested $14,685,600
- Project Non-Federal Match Required $3,964,464; Manatee County match estimate $874,867
- Grant Applications due April 14, 2022

Palmetto is the agriculture center of Manatee County and is a resilient community that has worked hard to rebuild since Hurricane Irma, in addition to overcoming other transportation hardships. US 41 bisects this established community and is travelled daily by seven times Palmetto's total population. **Palmetto's pedestrian and bicycle fatality rates are significantly higher than the national average.** Projected traffic increases of 46% over the next 20 years underscore the urgency to address these existing health and safety issues.

More than 30% of daily motorists traveling along US 41 and Business 41 travel through Palmetto as pass-by commuters, who do not add to the community's economic base**. Residents who can travel for work spend a quarter of their household income on transportation, with 11% zero-car households requiring public or multimodal options.** The Palmetto Trails Network Plan (PTCMP) emphasized economic stimulation to increase local business while providing an effective commuting benefit for local jobs and the neighborhood schools. **Most importantly, the Palmetto Trails Connectivity and Mobility Project (PTCMP) will create seven (7) multimodal connections between the local schools, parks, and community activity centers. Preconstruction activities will be finished before June 20, 2025. The entire program of improvements will be completed prior to September 2030.**

The local contribution for this RAISE grant represents a true partnership of leveraged resources. Manatee County, the City of Palmetto, the Palmetto Community Redevelopment Agency, Manatee County Area Transit, and the Florida Department of Transportation are providing the non-federal match. The total of $3,670,800 in unencumbered local matching funds also cover the preconstruction effort. **The rehabilitation and rescue of the Lincoln Tunnel under US 41, reconnecting the historic former Lincoln Memorial High School (now Lincoln Memorial Academy), revitalizes a cultural resource with significant value to the Palmetto minority community.**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also includes investments for a new program that will reconnect neighborhoods cut off by historic transportation investments and ensure new projects increase opportunity, advance racial equity and environmental justice, and promote affordable access. DOT also requested $110 million in its Fiscal Year 22 budget to create a new Thriving Communities program that would establish a new office to support communities while eliminating persistent transportation barriers and increasing access to jobs, school, and business. Staff will monitor this legislation to see what additional opportunities exist for the Palmetto Trails network.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Manatee County and much of Florida is experiencing a problem in the availability of affordable housing. The Florida Congressional delegation is urged to act in unity to support solutions to this crisis.

While the final FY22 Congressional spending bill recently signed into law provides meaningful increases for vital HUD and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs, far more resources are needed to address our growing affordable housing and homelessness situation. Manatee County has seen the immense benefits of the 4% and 9% Federal tax credit programs and supports legislation that expands the availability of Affordable Housing Tax Credits on a permanent basis. HR 2573, the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act is one bill before Congress that could potentially improve the situation for many.

Significant additional housing investments are needed to address a critical driver of inflation: skyrocketing rents. Targeted housing investments must be retained in any legislation and future budget reconciliation packages to help bring down housing costs for America's lowest-income and most marginalized households.

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PROTECTING OUR MANATEES

Reps Vern Buchanan (R-FL) has introduced legislation to grant manatees the highest level of federal protection available as manatee deaths reach historic levels.

The Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC) reports nearly 1000 manatees have died in 2021. That number is more than Florida's total number for any other year. Even more alarming is that by FWS' (the Fish and Wildlife Services') own estimates there are only around 6,500 West Indian manatees remaining in the southeastern United States.

The Manatee Protection Act, H.R. 4946, would officially upgrade the West Indian manatee from "threatened" to "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act. Upgrading their status to "endangered" under the ESA will not only require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to refocus their attention on manatee population rehabilitation, but also allow for increased federal resources including more funding and personnel.

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