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 2024 platform reflects the legislative priorities that will help Manatee County better achieve its mission and serve our residents and visitors.
Manatee County requests support in funding for construction of the second Fort Hamer Bridge. The second bridge which will be parallel to the existing bridge and will double the capacity of this essential North-South thoroughfare. It is a critical component of the Lakewood Ranch Boulevard, Upper Manatee River Road and Fort Hamer Road corridor that will span all of East Manatee County. This corridor plays an ever-increasing role as a parallel reliever for I-75 and provides regional connections between Manatee, Sarasota and Hillsborough Counties.

Manatee County is funding $30 million for construction of the bridge and requests a dollar-for-dollar Federal match.

FUNDING REQUEST

$30 million appropriation in Fiscal Year 2025 for construction of $60 million project of the Fort Hamer Bridge from Rive Isle Run to Upper Manatee River Road.

Fort Hamer Roadway

Fort Hamer is a primary reliever for I-75 congestion and critical to incident management capabilities. Add to this the continued strong growth East of I-75, and both the roadway and the interstate are being overwhelmed. This first Fort Hamer Road project intends to mitigate this situation by widening 3.0 miles of the existing two-lane road to four lanes. The limits of this project are from north of the Manatee River to Moccasin Wallow Road in Parrish.

Combined with ongoing projects on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard and Upper Manatee River Road, this first Fort Hamer Road project will provide the longest continuous North/South route East of I-75 in Manatee County. It is part of a corridor that will span the entire County and provide an important regional connection between Manatee, Sarasota, and Hillsborough Counties.

The second project extends from U.S. 301 to Moccasin Wallow Road. This 2.0-mile section was constructed as a two-lane road but designed and prepared for four lanes. This project adds the additional two lanes on this 2.0-mile section.

Manatee County is funding $50 million for land acquisition and construction of this corridor and requests a dollar-for-dollar Federal match.

FUNDING REQUEST

$50 million appropriation in Fiscal Year 2025 for construction of $100 million project of Fort Hamer Road from Rive Isle Run to Moccasin Wallow Road.
This project would construct a new 16" waterline to replace the existing subaqueous waterline that crosses the Manatee River adjacent to the Hernando DeSoto Bridge on US41N in Manatee County, FL. The waterline was installed in 1967 and has reached the end of its useful life. This line is a critical part of the County’s potable water distribution system. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has long planned but often delayed a project to replace the bridge; it is now scheduled for construction to begin in 2027. Replacement of the waterline has been on hold as the County waited to learn the alignment of the new bridge prior to designing the new waterline. With the bridge project entering design, the waterline project can now be completed. This project will construct ~4300 linear feet of 16” ductile iron waterline. The river crossing will be either subaqueous or aerial attached to the new bridge.

**FUNDING REQUEST**

- **$1.8 million appropriation** in State Fiscal Year 2025 for construction and planning of the $10.8 million water main replacement project that will be needed prior to the new bridge construction in 2027.

This project will serve an array of functions and address multiple needs of the Community. From a Veterans Resource and Counseling Center, to a parade ground for special events and training, to a highly educational field trip destination for all County students, to a beautiful space to honor Those Who Gave All in defense of our great Nation, this multi-phase project will be useable in each phase and provide a meeting place for Veteran and community organizations.

**FUNDING REQUEST**

- **$3 million appropriation** in State Fiscal Year 2025 design and initial construction of the $30 million project cost of the Park and the Resource and Counseling facility.
Manatee County requests support in funding for construction of the 15th Street East rebuild, including widening and multi-modal improvements. The project extends from 63rd Avenue East to 59th Avenue East; this is the old US Hwy. 301 corridor, which serves numerous commercial and industrial sites, and needs improved access points. The corridor also experiences heavy use by pedestrians and bicyclists and is currently an extremely unsafe roadway for these uses.

Manatee County is funding $7.5 million for construction of this roadway and requests a dollar-for-dollar Federal match.

This project requires $2.9 million for the completion of planning, design, permitting and construction for Gateway Greenway segments connecting Lincoln Park in Palmetto to Parrish along County Road right of way, Florida Power & Light utility corridors, and railroad track right of way. Only 1 in 3 residents in this HUD-designated area have access to an automobile and this trail investment provides safe access for those disadvantaged by lack of access to an automobile to gain employment. This trail segment will allow for an eventual dedicated off-road trail connection between Lincoln Park to Ola Mae Sims Park in Parrish, with connections to Parrish Community High School, State College of Florida - Parrish Campus, and the Florida Railroad History Museum. Local match funding for these appropriations requests comes from the Board of County Commissioners General Fund. The Rails with Trails project has been included in the MPO project priority list as part of the statewide Florida Gulf Coast Trails Network.

### FUNDING REQUEST

- **$7.5 million appropriation** in Fiscal Year 2025 for construction of $15 million project on 15th Street East from 63rd Avenue East to 59th Avenue East.

- **$2.9 million appropriation** in State Fiscal Year 2025 for planning, design, permitting and construction of the multipurpose regional Rails to Trails Gateway Greenway.
Manatee County is actively participating in the multi-county Gulf Coast Recreation Trail. The project will require **$1 million** to link to trails planned in Hillsborough County, to the segments of Legacy Trail in Sarasota County. Manatee County’s plans call for a multi-purpose recreational Gateway Greenway Trail extending from the Hillsborough/Manatee County line south along trail alignments crossing public utility easements, county and State-owned lands and additional developer agreement routes to reach northern Sarasota County with linkages to the Legacy Trail and points south into Charlotte County. This multi-year and multi-phased project will use funding from Manatee County sources; Suncoast Trail grants; grants from the Florida Greenways and Trails Council; and Federal funds, as available. Twenty-five percent of the Gateway Greenway Trail has already been constructed through the development communities of Lakewood Ranch.

**FUNDING REQUEST**

- **$1 million appropriation** in State Fiscal Year 2025 for construction to link trail segments from Hillsborough County to Legacy Trail in Sarasota County.
The Manatee County Board of County Commissioners is proud to support and work seamlessly with the County’s outstanding Sheriff, Rick Wells. The Board fully supports the Manatee Sheriff’s Office (MSO) in any appropriations request Sheriff Wells may make to expand and modernize the medical facility at our County jail. MSO has been providing mandatory, critical, and at times life-saving medical services to inmates in an antiquated and undersized facility for far too long. Improving and expanding these critical facilities is necessary at this time and will improve care, decrease potential liability issues, and improve the ability of the hard-working and dedicated professional medical staff to do great work.