

LAKE COUNTY, FL
STATE
LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES

2018

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DEAR LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION,

On behalf of the Lake County Commission, I would like to request your consideration and support of several initiatives in our county for this upcoming legislative budget process.

Enclosed are details regarding 19 priorities that relate directly to the immediate and future needs of Lake County residents, with a focus on economic development, public safety, major roadway projects, parks infrastructure, utility needs, and veterans, to name a few.

We would like to thank the Florida Legislature for its continued support, and respectfully ask our esteemed delegation for consideration of these matters which are essential to improving the quality of life for our citizens.

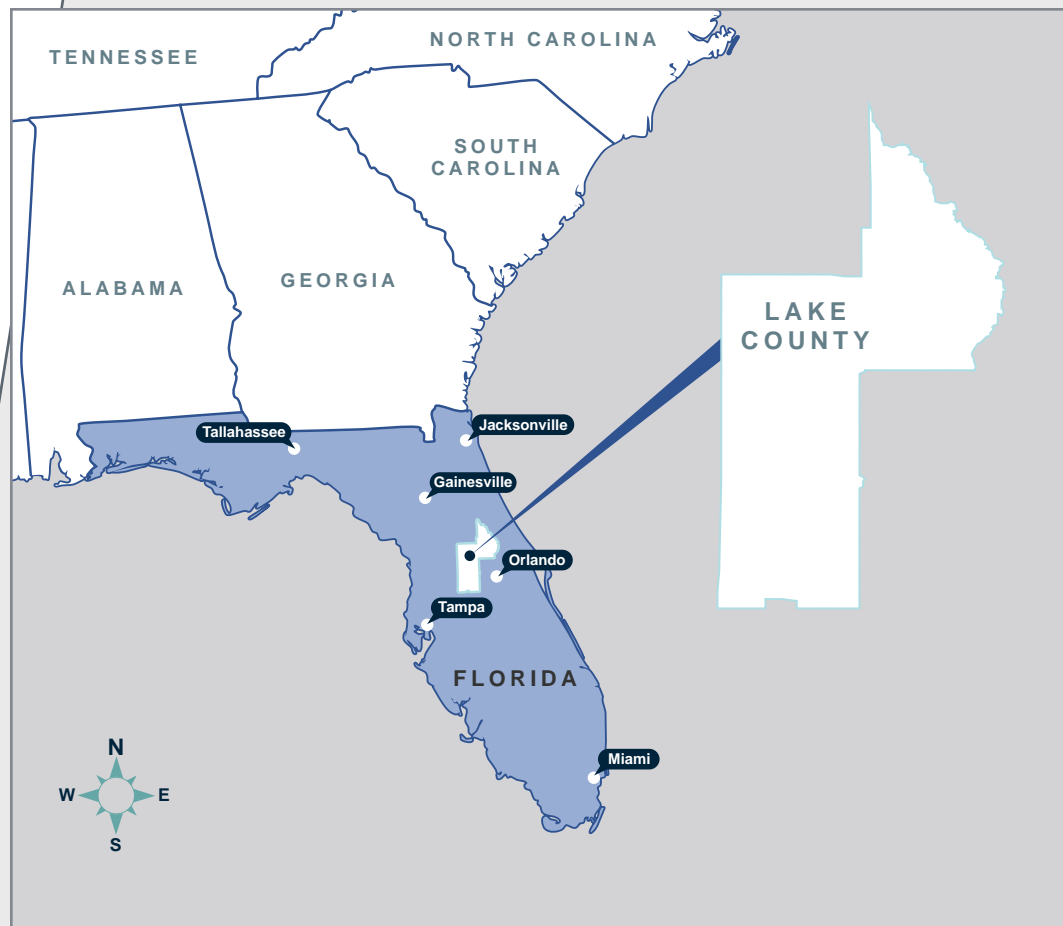
Sincerely,

Timothy I. Sullivan, Chairman
Lake County Board of Commissioners

WHERE WE ARE



Lake County is located almost directly in the center of the Florida peninsula, and just 35 minutes from downtown Orlando. The county has more than 1,400 named lakes, numerous hiking trails and the Ocala National Forest is situated in the northern part of the county. Perched atop the Lake Wales Ridge, Lake County is known for its rolling hills and elevation changes – as well as its many water bodies and nature preserves.



SMALL-TOWN CHARM OF DOWNTOWNS

Lake County is home to 14 municipalities, each with its own distinct downtown district that contain charming shops, art centers, community theaters and historic areas.



PARKS & RECREATION



With nearly 100 parks in the area, including one national forest, one state forest, one state preserve and three state parks, Lake County is blessed with many wide-open spaces for rest and relaxation. A vast trail network of paved, rural and waterway trails accommodate outdoor enthusiasts that travel by foot, boat or horseback.



With many tourists and residents attracted to Lake County's many waterways and open spaces, the area lends itself to numerous hunting and fishing opportunities, as well as sports and recreational prospects.

To learn more about what makes Lake County's unique in the state of Florida, log on to www.VisitLakeFL.com.





LAKE COUNTY'S
TOP LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES

PUBLIC WORKS

COUNTY ROAD 437 REALIGNMENT



REQUEST

\$7 MILLION

for right-of-way acquisition and construction of the realignment of County Road 437; a Complete Street project

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The Wekiva Parkway expansion will impact traffic on local roadways, including County Road 437 and Round Lake Road

.....

The realignment of County Road 437, along with corridor improvements, will address vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic in the Mount Plymouth and Sorrento communities

BACKGROUND

The County Road 437 Realignment Project will help improve the local road network and spur economic activity for the Mount Plymouth and Sorrento communities with the opening of the Wekiva Parkway. These communities will be redeveloped as a destination location and enhance the existing features of the local schools, parks, and trails in the area.

New commercial and retail locations with designated street parking, and the ability to bike and walk for pedestrians, will bring others to the community for business and tourism.

CONTACT

Fred Schneider, County Engineer

Lake County Public Works Department

352-253-6040

FSchneider@lakecountyfl.gov

PUBLIC WORKS

COUNTY ROAD 466A - PHASE III



REQUEST

\$7 MILLION

needed for construction of Phase III of County Road 466A

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

This would complete the four-lane project from U.S. Highway 27/441 west in Lake County to U.S. Highway 301 in Sumter County

BACKGROUND

County Road 466A is within the City of Fruitland Park and unincorporated Lake County, and provides regional traffic connectivity from U.S. Highway 301 in Sumter County to U.S. Highway 27/441 in Lake County.

The proposed improvement completes the construction of four-lanes of this important roadway link. This project will improve traffic flow and will support regionally significant employment centers in The Villages of Fruitland Park, the City of Fruitland Park, Town of Lady Lake, and Sumter County.

Phase I from U.S. Highway 27/441 to Century Avenue was completed by Lake County this year, and Phase II from the Sumter County line to Timber Top Lane was completed by the Villages. The Phase III segment from Timber Top Lane to Century Avenue is needed to complete the project improvement as a four-lane roadway.

CONTACT

Fred Schneider, County Engineer

Lake County Public Works Department

352-253-6040 • FSchneider@lakecountyfl.gov

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE CHRISTOPHER C. FORD COMMERCE PARK



REQUEST \$636,000

is needed for construction of a natural gas line extension into the Christopher C. Ford Commerce Park, located in the City of Groveland

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

There are currently about 230 acres of vacant buildable land left in the industrial park

.....

The ability to get a natural gas line extended to the industrial park will be an important step towards bringing diverse and high-quality jobs to the area

BACKGROUND

The Christopher C. Ford Commerce Park is one of the premier industrial parks in Lake County. The industrial park has attracted high-quality jobs and companies based on its access to major transportation corridors. It is strategically located on U.S. Highway 27, with access to Florida's Turnpike less than one mile away.

Currently, companies located in the industrial park must use propane or natural gas tanks to fuel their equipment. Over the last two years, Lake County has seen a number of prospects interested in locating to the park that require natural gas service for their manufacturing processes. The closest natural gas line to the industrial park ends 3.5 miles away.

The installation of this utility will make the vacant land in the park more desirable for future industrial development and will attract more companies to Central Florida.

CONTACT

Robert Chandler, Director
Lake County Agency for Economic Prosperity
352-742-3918 • rchandler@lakecountyfl.gov

PARKS & TRAILS



SOUTH LAKE REGIONAL PARK'S CENTRAL WASTEWATER, POTABLE, AND RECLAIMED WATER CONNECTION

REQUEST:

\$2.5 MILLION

to design, build and connect a wastewater, potable water and reclaimed water system inside the South Lake Regional Park; connecting to the City of Groveland's existing water systems

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Provides for the park's sanitary, potable and reclaimed water needs

.....

Provides improved protection of the water quality in the Green Swamp Area

BACKGROUND

The 141-acre South Lake Regional Park does not currently connect to a water system. The intent of this project is to design, build and connect a wastewater, potable water, and reclaimed water system inside the park to the City of Groveland's existing water systems.

This capital improvement project will provide a permanent solution to the parks sanitary, potable water and reclaim water facilities and provide improved protection of the water quantity and quality in the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern.

CONTACT

Bobby Bonilla, Director

Lake County Office of Parks & Trails

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PUBLIC SAFETY SUPPORT

FIRST RESPONDER WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY



REQUEST **\$15 MILLION**

for the replacement of land mobile subscriber (radio) equipment

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The current compatible radio equipment is used countywide by all municipal and county public safety personnel – law enforcement, emergency medical services, and fire rescue

.....

The existing equipment reached ‘end-of-life’ in 2014, and will not be supported by the manufacturer after January 1, 2019

BACKGROUND

The County has successfully utilized its land mobile radio investment since 2007, which has allowed for the coordination of emergency communication for Lake County’s police, fire, medical, and other public safety services. The equipment reached its end-of-life in 2014, with an end-of-support date of Dec. 31, 2018. Without replacement, Lake County emergency communications could become unreliable, incompatible and jeopardize its support with the majority of the surrounding jurisdictions.

Additionally, the use of standard equipment and system design will allow for direct communication with surrounding first-responder mutual aid local, state, regional and federal agencies. The new equipment will also allow for integration into a regional and national network, which is a goal of the State of Florida and of the Department of Homeland Security.

As evidenced by the recent Orlando Pulse shooting, and severe weather events such as tornados and hurricanes, having an interoperable system better equips Lake County public safety personnel to respond, as well as offer assistance to other local, state, and federal partners.

CONTACT

Gregory A. Holcomb, Communications Technologies Manager

Lake County Office of Public Safety Support
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PROBATION

VETERANS' TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM



REQUEST

\$200,000

for Lake County's Veterans' Treatment Court Program

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The Lake County Veterans' Treatment Court is a court-supervised program that provides eligible veterans an alternative to incarceration

.....

Includes funding for non-covered mental health or substance abuse treatment services and associated operational costs

BACKGROUND

The Lake County Veteran's Treatment Court (LCVTC) is a special division of the Lake County Court system. It is a court-supervised program for those arrested in Lake County who have a mental illness, substance abuse, or other mental health condition related to their military service. The program allows those who need treatment and other services to choose to participate in the LCVTC instead of having their case proceed through the regular court process.

The LCVTC is a problem-solving and hybrid court; meaning it will handle felony cases, cases in pretrial diversion and cases in which sentences have been imposed. There is a particularly high prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Major Depressive Disorder among combat and other veterans.

LCVTC was funded for one year during the last legislative session, but the Court Administration for the Fifth Circuit has asked for another year of funding to continue the program and help address the unique challenges facing these veterans.

CONTACT

Tony Deaton, Chief Probation Officer
Lake County Probation Division
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PUBLIC WORKS



MODIFY STATUTORY LANGUAGE PERTAINING TO CENTRAL FLORIDA EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY PROJECTS IN LAKE COUNTY

REQUEST

Remove language in F.S. 348.754 (1)(c) - Public Transportation Expressway and Bridge

Authorities - that requires FDOT approval for CFX projects in Lake County

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Current language: "...the authority may not, without the prior consent of the secretary of the department, construct any extensions, additions, or improvements to the expressway system in Lake County."

.....

Of the five counties CFX covers, Lake County is the only one with this restriction

.....

This modification is supported by CFX

BACKGROUND

Currently, of the five counties that the Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) covers, only Lake County must obtain prior approval by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for CFX projects.

Florida Statute 348.754 (1)(c) - Public Transportation Expressway and Bridge Authorities, should be modified to remove the requirement for FDOT approval for CFX projects in Lake County.

CONTACT

Fred Schneider, County Engineer
Lake County Public Works Department
352-253-6040 • fschneider@lakecountyfl.gov

INTERLOCAL SERVICE BOUNDARY AGREEMENT (ISBA) ISSUE



REQUEST

Amend Part II, Chapter 171, Florida Statutes to require a municipality to assume jurisdiction and maintenance of any county roads within the ISBA area once the municipality annexes around the roadway

Amend Section 335.0415, Florida Statutes, to provide for an automatic transfer of jurisdiction to a municipality when it annexes property through an ISBA

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The purpose behind the statute is to encourage intergovernmental coordination in planning and service delivery

.....

The statutes need to be clarified so that an automatic transfer of jurisdiction is allowed within the boundaries of the ISBA

BACKGROUND

Currently, when a municipality annexes property around a county-maintained road, the county continues to maintain the roadway.

Lake County is seeking to amend the Florida Statutes to require a municipality to assume jurisdiction and maintenance of County roads within the ISBA area once the annexation occurs around the roadway.

By providing municipalities the authority to maintain jurisdiction over the roadways within their municipal boundaries, it will encourage intergovernmental coordination in planning and service delivery.

CONTACT

Melanie Marsh, County Attorney
352-343-9787 • mmarsh@lakecountyfl.gov

INFRASTRUCTURE SALES TAX ALLOWABLE USES



REQUEST

Amend the statutory language that limits the uses of Infrastructure Sales Tax

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Florida Statutes Section 212.055(2) was amended to define the term “public infrastructure,” to include – Transportation, Drainage, Parks & Recreation, Health Systems, Sanitary Sewer, Potable water, Spoil Disposal Sites, Solid Waste, Educational, and Water Management & Control

.....

Noticeably absent from the definition was vertical construction

.....

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Section 212.055(2), Florida Statutes pertaining to Infrastructure Sales Tax, was amended to define the term “public facilities” for expenditures of the tax.

The new definition creates uncertainty in the use of the funds because it doesn’t address traditional types of vertical construction that governments use to provide needed services, such as libraries, fire stations, general governmental/office and animal shelters.

Lake County seeks to amend the statutory language to better define the use of the Infrastructure Sales Tax fund to address these other types of uses for public facilities.

CONTACT

Melanie Marsh, County Attorney
352-343-9787 • mmarsh@lakecountyfl.gov



LAKE COUNTY'S
ONGOING
PRIORITIES

LIBRARY SERVICES

STATE AID TO LIBRARIES OPERATING GRANT



REQUEST:

Support full-funding of State Aid to Libraries based on the current statutory formula that provides counties 25 cents for every local dollar spent on library operations and maintenance

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The State Aid to Libraries Operating Grant provides financial support for all 67 counties to provide freely-accessible public library services

.....

After an increase to \$27.4 million in FY 2014, the appropriation for the state was reduced to \$22.2 million in FY 2015

.....

Lake County received \$210,968 for FY 2015, and funding was reduced to \$201,152 in FY 2016

BACKGROUND

The State Aid to Libraries Operating Grant program is a continuing state grant program, authorized under Chapter 257, Florida Statutes. The State Aid Grants provide financial encouragement for all 67 counties to provide freely-accessible public library services. It fosters the growth and innovation of new ideas to the residents of Florida based on local service plans.

The law authorizes a match of up to 25 cents on each dollar of local expenditure for library services. The state match reached a high of 11 cents on the dollar in FY 98/99 and has declined since then. After an increase to \$27.4 million in FY 2014-2015, the appropriation for the entire state was reduced to \$22.2 million in FY 2015-2016 and remained at that rate for the current year. This resulted in a reduction in the allocation to Lake County, which received \$210,968 for FY 2015, \$201,152 in FY 2016, and an estimated \$193,737 for FY 2016/2017.

In Lake County, the State Aid grant funds are used to support system-wide technology infrastructure, including public access computers, subscriptions to online reference databases for public use, and county-wide literacy programs. This funding also supports education and reading, as libraries are a critical support for school-aged children and a resource for life success for learners of all ages. Public libraries also use State Aid Grants to help the local economy by providing economic development resources to small businesses and job seekers, and by implementing new technology and innovative solutions.

CONTACT

Ava Barrett, Director

Lake County Office of Library Services

352-253-6180 • abarrett@mylakelibrary.org

COMMUNITY SERVICES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHIP FUNDING



REQUEST

Support the retention of the full amount of dedicated Florida documentary stamp tax revenues to fund state and local affordable housing programs

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

SHIP was designed to use documentary stamp tax revenues to provide local governments a funding source to address affordable housing

.....

In recent years, a substantial portion of these funds were redirected to help balance the state's budget

.....

Lake County was allocated \$2.3 million for FY 2017 but is projected to only receive \$1.4 million for FY 2018

BACKGROUND

The State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP) is a state-funded affordable housing trust fund, designed to provide support to local jurisdictions in an overall effort to create and sustain affordable housing through the collection of Florida documentary stamp tax revenues. In recent years, a substantial portion of these funds were redirected to help balance the state's budget.

Lake County requests full restoration of the SHIP funds to provide adequately for its families in need. If the SHIP program was fully funded, Lake County could provide assistance to more families annually, as well as provide an economic boost to hundreds of contractors and laborers.

CONTACT

Dottie Keedy, Director
Lake County Community Services Department
352-742-6589 • dkeedy@lakecountyfl.gov



LAKE COUNTY'S
OTHER
PRIORITIES

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

CITRUS GROVE ROAD UTILITY REALIGNMENT PROJECT



REQUEST **\$700,000**

needed for relocating utilities along Citrus Grove Road to support future industrial and commercial development

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Citrus Grove Road is one of the two main arterial roads that connect to the newly opened Minneola Interchange on Florida's Turnpike

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The opening of the Turnpike Interchange in June of 2017 has served as the catalyst for the development, which will generate an estimated \$1 billion of new economic impact to Central Florida

BACKGROUND

Citrus Grove Road is one of the two main arterial roads that connect to the newly opened Minneola Interchange on Florida's Turnpike, and is the east/west connector that connects the Turnpike to U.S. Highway 27 in Minneola.

The opening of the Turnpike Interchange in June of 2017 has served as the catalyst for the development of the Minneola Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). Having the utilities in the correct location to serve this new development is critical for the future development of 1.4 million square feet of industrial development, 850,000 square feet of office development, over 2 million square feet of commercial / retail space and over 13,000 new homes to be built over the next 10-15 years. This new development will generate over 7,000 new jobs and well over \$1 billion of new economic impact to Central Florida.

The Minneola Interchange is a 22-minute drive to Downtown Orlando. Given its location, current traffic load and planned growth of the area, it is vital that the utilities along Citrus Grove Road be relocated with the construction of the realignment of the road to allow for the development to stay on schedule. The construction of the realignment is completely funded and is expected to commence in FY 2018.

CONTACT

Robert Chandler, Director
Lake County's Agency for Economic Prosperity
352-742-3918 • rchandler@lakecountyfl.gov

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

SUPPORT EQUIPMENT NEEDS FOR LAKE TECHNICAL COLLEGE'S CENTER FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING



REQUEST

Support Lake Tech's request for \$1.4 million needed to purchase manufacturing equipment for the Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CAM)

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Lake County businesses are in need of trained manufacturing employees

.....

The CAM, when fully operational, will enable Lake County to support local manufacturing and IT businesses, and attract new manufacturing employers to the region

BACKGROUND:

Lake Technical College (Lake Tech) is currently constructing its Center for Advanced Manufacturing, which will create a seamless strategy for providing workers with state-of-the-art training. The facility will also provide a skilled workforce for manufacturing and IT companies that already are established in the region, but who are searching for workers. The requested funding will allow for the purchase of the manufacturing equipment needed to complete the facility which is projected to open in the fall of 2018.

Florida manufacturers are a prevailing economic engine for the state's economy. The industry counts nearly 18,000 manufacturers who employ some 311,300 workers across the state. Many Florida manufacturing operations benefit from the presence of advanced research facilities at Florida's universities and colleges, military installations and NASA.

With the highest concentration of manufacturing employees in all of Central Florida, Lake County's economy is especially sensitive to the needs of the manufacturing sector, which currently accounts for almost six percent of Lake County's workforce, making it Lake County's second-largest industry sector. Manufacturing, machining, and welding are increasingly high-tech skills requiring the post-secondary training/certifications, and local businesses are in need of trained manufacturing skilled trade employees.

CONTACT

Robert Chandler, Director

Lake County's Agency for Economic Prosperity

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PUBLIC WORKS

SORRENTO AVENUE COMPLETE STREETS



REQUEST

\$850,000

for redesign of Sorrento Avenue, a Complete Streets project

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Sorrento Avenue, currently State Road 46, is anticipated to be transferred to Lake County as part of the Wekiva Parkway project

.....

The Mount Plymouth/Sorrento CRA has created a preliminary conceptual plan for improving Sorrento Avenue from Orange Street to Estates Ridge Drive

.....

The plan for the road improvements are four roundabouts, sidewalks, crosswalks, trail, on-street parking, curb and gutter, drainage improvements and turn lanes

BACKGROUND

Sorrento Avenue, currently State Road 46, is anticipated to be transferred to Lake County as part of the Wekiva Parkway project.

The Mount Plymouth/Sorrento Community Redevelopment Agency has created a preliminary Complete Streets conceptual plan for improving Sorrento Avenue from Orange Street to Estates Ridge Drive. The planned road improvements will enable safe access for bicyclists, motorist, and pedestrians in the area.

Included in the conceptual plans are four roundabouts, sidewalks, crosswalks, trail, on-street parking, curb and gutter, drainage improvements and turn lanes.

CONTACT

Fred Schneider, County Engineer
Lake County Public Works Department
352-253-6040 • fschneider@lakecountyfl.gov

PROBATION

OFFENDER REINTEGRATION PROGRAM (REENTRY)



REQUEST

\$228,000

for creation of a two-year program that will help coordinate services for individuals re-entering the community from incarceration

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The goal of the program will be to reduce the cost of incarceration of re-offenders by providing needed, stabilizing services so that they are able to sustain a crime free life

.....

The program will provide coordination of support services such as job training, transportation, employment, clothing, and healthcare provided by nongovernmental and governmental agencies

BACKGROUND:

The Lake County Offender Reintegration Program will coordinate services for individuals reentering the community from incarceration using the Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) model, which includes screening and assessment.

The focus is on reducing the tendency to re-offend and implementing evidence-based practices that enhance community safety with the target population. It will provide coordination of support services - such as job training, transportation, employment, clothing, healthcare and other services provided by non-governmental and governmental agencies.

The program is expected to reduce the cost of incarceration of re-offenders by providing needed, stabilizing services so that they are able to sustain a crime free life.

CONTACT

Tony Deaton, Chief Probation Officer

Lake County Probation Division

352-742-6567 • tdeaton@lakecountyfl.gov

PARKS & TRAILS

EAST LAKE COMMUNITY PARK CENTRAL SEWER CONNECTION



REQUEST

\$1 MILLION

to fund the connection of the East Lake Community Park in Sorrento, to the municipal wastewater system provided by the City of Eustis

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The East Lake Community Park is located within the Wekiva River Basin Watershed

.....

Connection to a central sewer system will help address current and future needs at the site, which could include a new fire station and public library

.....

This is a shovel-ready project and would be a one-time capital expense

BACKGROUND

East Lake Community Park is located in Sorrento and is within the Wekiva River Basin Watershed. The park provides active recreation venues for the East Lake County area. The site has also been identified as having the potential to house a fire station and community library.

The project, intended to protect water quality within the Wekiva River Basin Watershed, would include engineering, testing, and installation of a lift station to connect to the City of Eustis Central Wastewater System with a new four-inch force main. Preliminary estimates have been completed. This is a shovel-ready project and would be a one-time capital expense.

CONTACT

Bobby Bonilla, Director

Lake County Office of Parks & Trails

352-253-4950 • rbonilla@lakecountyfl.gov

PARKS & TRAILS

CANNON PROPERTY LAND ACQUISITION



REQUEST

\$4 MILLION

for land acquisition of approximately 31.26 acres
of the Cannon Property

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The property is adjacent to 12.24 acres currently in the process of being acquired by The Trust for Public Land for transfer to Lake County

.....

The request includes funding for design, engineering and construction costs of low-impact public access and park amenities (parking, pavilion, and restroom)

.....

The land contains threatened and endangered plant and animal species

BACKGROUND

The Cannon Property is approximately 43.5 acres that are privately owned within a highly-urbanized area in unincorporated Leesburg, north of U.S. Highway 441 in central Lake County.

In 2015, The Trust for Public Land coordinated with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Lake County and the Cannon Property owner to seek \$1.2 million in federal funding for acquisition of 12.24 acres of the 43.5 acres. In 2016, a \$1.2 million U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services grant was awarded to FDACS for the acquisition of the 12.24-acres.

The county is seeking funding to complete the land acquisition of the remaining 31.26 acres of the Cannon Property. The long-term goal is to design and build low-impact public access and park amenities (parking, pavilion, and restroom), and to protect the threatened and endangered plant and animal species on the land.

CONTACT

Bobby Bonilla, Director

Lake County Office of Parks & Trails

352-253-4950 • rbonilla@lakecountyfl.gov

PARKS & TRAILS

HELENA RUN PRESERVE SITE IMPROVEMENTS



REQUEST:

\$900,000

for design, engineering, and construction related costs

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Helena Run Preserve is an 18.6-acre conservation and restoration property south of Leesburg

.....

The project includes design and construction of low-impact amenities

.....

Site Improvements include a parking area, restroom, pavilion, boardwalk, overlook platform, fishing pier, and canoe/kayak launch

BACKGROUND

Helena Run Preserve is an 18.6-acre conservation and restoration property south of Leesburg in west Lake County. The preserve forms the northeast shoreline of Helena Run, a meandering stream that starts at Lake Denham and empties into Lake Harris.

The funding is needed to design and build low-impact public access and park amenities inside the Helena Run Preserve. Capital improvements includes a parking area, restroom, pavilion, boardwalk with overlook platform, fishing pier and a canoe/kayak launch.

Improvements to the preserve will provide increased opportunities for ecotourism-based recreation in the area, as well as provide an educational component addressing the conservation and restoration of the area.

CONTACT

Bobby Bonilla, Director

Lake County Office of Parks & Trails

352-253-4950 • rbonilla@lakecountyfl.gov

PARKS & TRAILS

FERNDALE PRESERVE



REQUEST

\$1.5 MILLION

to design and construct a one-mile trail at Ferndale Preserve to connect the park entrance to amenities being built on the western shore of Lake Apopka.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Lake County will be constructing additional lake-front amenities in FY 2018, including an observation tower, fishing pier, and canoe/kayak launch, but there is no connection from the park entrance/parking area (currently only accessible from the lake)

.....

Until a multi-purpose trail can be constructed to connect the park entrance and the lake front, these amenities will only be accessible from Lake Apopka

BACKGROUND

Lake Apopka is becoming a prime location for ecotourism-based recreational activities. Ferndale Preserve is a 196-acre conservation and restoration property on the western shore of Lake Apopka.

A Lake Apopka Summit was held in February 2013 to discuss the importance of the St. Johns River Water Management District's Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration property to the surrounding area, highlighting ecotourism opportunities.

Concurrently, the City of Apopka began a planning process which culminated in the completion of the "2014 Lake Apopka Ecotourism Concept Plan." The process included participation from more than a dozen state and local agencies, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders. The result was an outpouring of support for ecotourism planning in and around the North Shore Restoration Area and the recent formation of the Coalition for Lake Apopka Ecotourism. The Coalition has identified Ferndale Preserve improvements as a priority for funding and completion.

Lake County will be constructing additional lake-front amenities in FY 2018, including an observation tower, fishing pier, and canoe/kayak launch, but there is no connection from the park entrance/parking. Until a multi-purpose trail can be constructed to connect the park entrance and the lakefront, the amenities will only be accessible from Lake Apopka. Funding in the amount of \$1.5 million is needed to provide access to the lake from the entrance parking area.

CONTACT

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LAKE COUNTY
FLORIDA

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