

# SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## *Public Works*

**TO:** Sarasota County Commission  
**THROUGH:** Jonathan R. Lewis, County Administrator  
**FROM:** Spencer L. Anderson, P.E., Director  
**DATE:** February 28, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** Update on River Road Widening – U.S. 41 to Interstate 75

### **RECOMMENDED MOTION(S) OR ACTION(S):**

Update on River Road widening, U.S. 41 to Interstate 75.

### **BACKGROUND:**

River Road is a major arterial roadway and evacuation route that directly abuts properties within the unincorporated area of the County and within the City of North Port (City). River Road requires capacity-adding improvements in order to increase its ability to accommodate population growth in both the unincorporated southern portion of the County, within the City and from neighboring Charlotte County. Through a pending project agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the widening of River Road, from U.S. 41 to I-75, is planned to begin in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. Sarasota County's obligation for this project is \$24M to fund widening from U.S. 41 to West Villages Parkway.

In early February 2019, the County and City executed a local funding agreement in which the City committed to provide up to \$6M of funding for construction of River Road from U.S. 41 to West Villages Parkway. Coordination of the execution of project agreements with the FDOT is ongoing.

On October 9, 2018 the Board executed a Joint Project Agreement (JPA) for ~\$7M (\$3.5M County/\$3.5M FDOT) intended to fund the County's completion of a road design/permitting update, right of way acquisition (ROW) and final construction plans. In December 2018, the FDOT notified the County that they defined an option to fund construction from West Villages Pkwy. to I- 75 in 2021, they intended to complete the design/permitting update and final construction plans and the County would only be responsible for ROW acquisition. Therefore, the FDOT did not execute the original JPA, but rather made revisions consistent with the change in scope of the County's work. We received a copy of their draft revisions on February 1, 2019. The draft is under staff review and will be processed for Board consideration.

An agreed upon term of our partnership with the FDOT was the transfer of River Road (U.S. 41 to I-75) to FDOT ownership and S.R. 758 west of U.S. 41 (Stickney Point Road, Midnight Pass Road, Higel Ave., Siesta Drive, S. Osprey Ave. and Bay Road) to County ownership, excluding the bascule bridges on Stickney Point Road and Siesta Drive. Per the FDOT's newest plan to fund construction in 2021, rather than 2024 as originally planned, the FDOT has been working to develop a Road Transfer Agreement (RTA) for the County's consideration. The RTA is also expected to define terms for FDOT funding of River Road construction, improvements to the 90-degree turn on S.R. 758 at Higel/Siesta, timing of the transfer, permitting responsibilities and other associated details.

As of February 4, 2019, the FDOT has indicated they will provide an initial draft RTA to the County no later than February 28, 2019. If received as expected, staff will review the proposed agreement with the Office of the County Attorney, negotiate any necessary changes with FDOT and process a final RTA for Sarasota County Commission consideration in April 2019.

The River Road Regional Interstate Connector remains the County's number one ranked project priority for the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

**Goal:** Great Place to Live

**Objective:** Improve mobility and reduce traffic congestion

**Action Item:** River Road Agreements

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Presentation