Manatee County, Florida Conservation Finance Program Recommendations

Casey Bauer, Florida Conservation Finance Director

Manatee County Board of County Commissioners

June 16, 2026

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

We Believe Everyone Should Have Access to the Outdoors

We create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

What is the Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance Program?

We create and protect new public funding for land conservation, parks, and restoration through the research, design, and passage of ballot measures and legislation and serve as thought leaders in the field.

OUR TRACK RECORD

Across the country, Trust for Public Land has demonstrated deep expertise and a strong track record of success.

682
WINS

84%
PASSAGE RATE

OVER
175 million
"YES" VOTES

$112 Billion
CREATED

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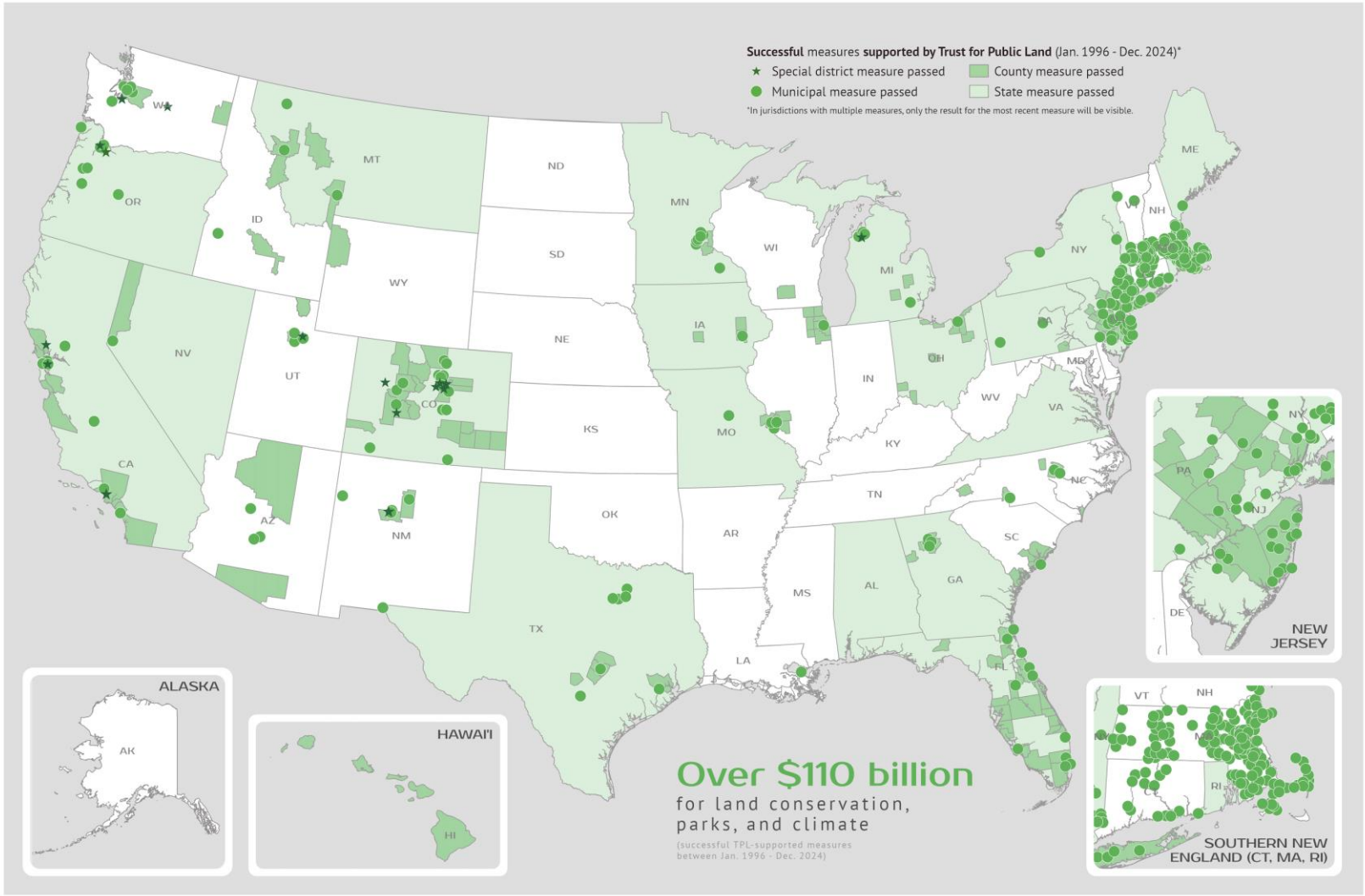

Over 25 years of conservation finance

SUCCESSFUL STATE, COUNTY, MUNICIPAL, AND SPECIAL DISTRICT MEASURES SUPPORTED BY TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND (1996-2024)

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LandVote
www.LandVote.org

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TPL Ballot Measures in Florida: 45 of 52 of (87%)

Jurisdiction Name	Date	Mechanism	Result	% Yes	Funds Approved
Clay County	11-05-2024	Bond	Pass	73%	$45,000,000
Lake County	11-05-2024	Bond	Pass	80%	$50,000,000
Martin County	11-05-2024	Sale tax	Pass	64%	$183,000,000
Osceola County	11-05-2024	Bond	Pass	84%	$70,000,000
Indian River County	11-08-2022	Bond	Pass	78%	$50,000,000
Alachua County	11-08-2022	Sales tax	Pass	52%	$245,573,575
Nassau County	11-08-2022	Bond	Pass	68%	$30,000,000
Polk County	11-08-2022	Property tax	Pass	58%	$200,000,000
Miami Lakes	11-08-2022	Bond	Fail	41%	$0
Brevard County	11-08-2022	Property tax	Pass	70%	$159,000,000
Collier County	11-03-2020	Property tax	Pass	76%	$287,000,000
Volusia County	11-03-2020	Property tax	Pass	76%	$146,781,980
Volusia County	11-03-2020	Property tax	Pass	72%	$146,781,980
Manatee County	11-03-2020	Property tax	Pass	71%	$108,000,000
Sarasota County	11-06-2018	Bond	Pass	71%	$65,000,000
Doral	11-06-2018	Bond	Pass	53%	$150,000,000
Cape Coral	11-06-2018	Bond	Pass	54%	$60,000,000
New Smyrna Beach	11-06-2018	Bond	Pass	75%	$15,000,000

*Since 2018

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Manatee County Results by Precinct

County Commission Districts Precincts

Registered Voters: 273,427
Ballots Cast: 218,317
Voter Turnout: 79.84%

	Election Day	EV	Mail	Total	%
Donald J. Trump (REP)	28,849	48,797	47,341	124,987	57.47%
Joseph R. Biden (DEM)	10,767	22,940	56,459	90,166	41.46%

For Bonds (NPA)	24,002	43,542	74,563	142,107	71.34%
Against Bonds (NPA)	12,288	22,177	22,627	57,092	28.66%

Uncontested Race for At-Large County Commissioner

District 1

For Bonds:	**35,480**	**67.65%**
Against Bonds:	**16,965**	**32.35%**

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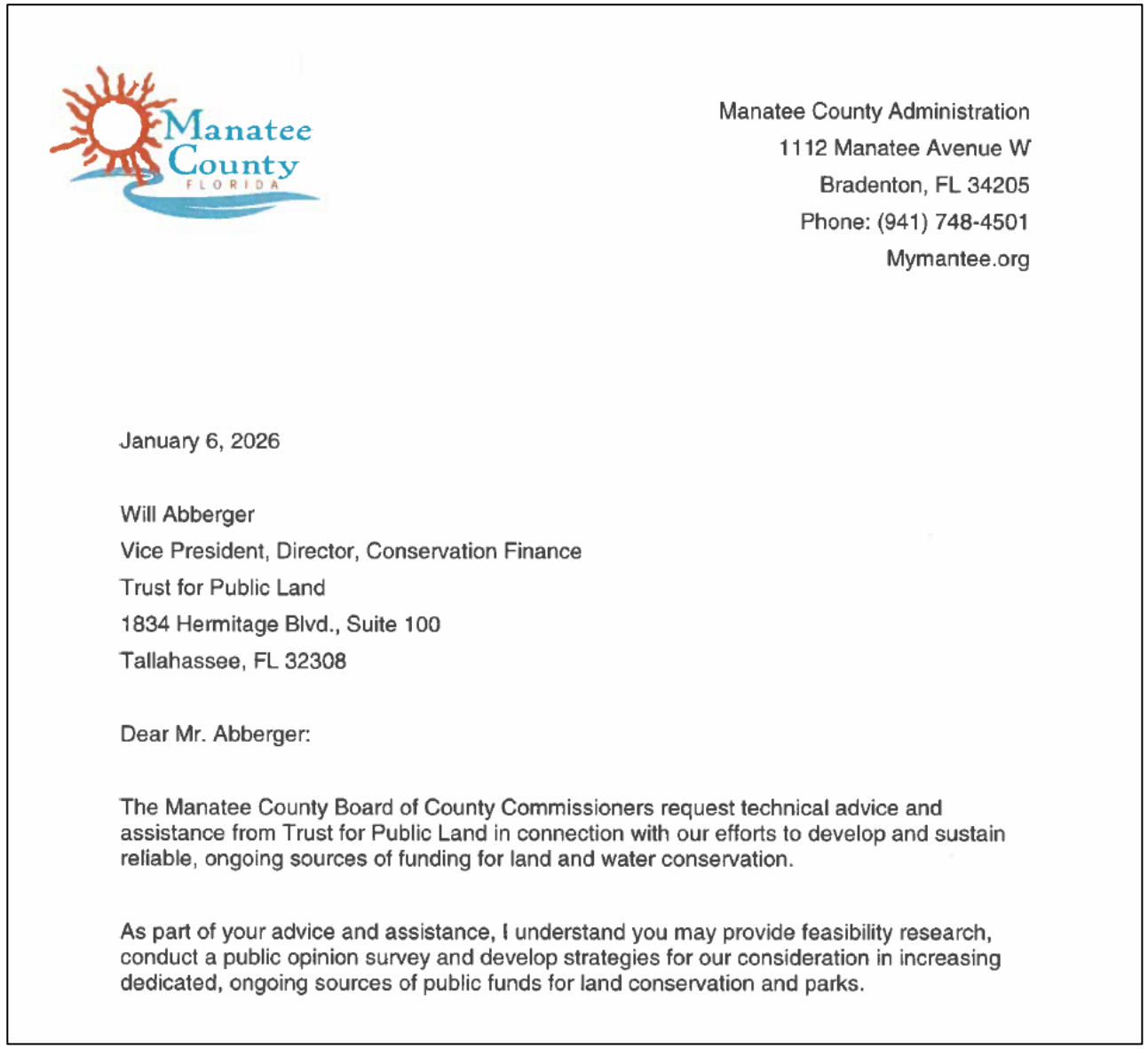
Manatee County Technical Assistance Request



Manatee County Administration
1112 Manatee Avenue W
Bradenton, FL 34205
Phone: (941) 748-4501
Mymantee.org

January 6, 2026

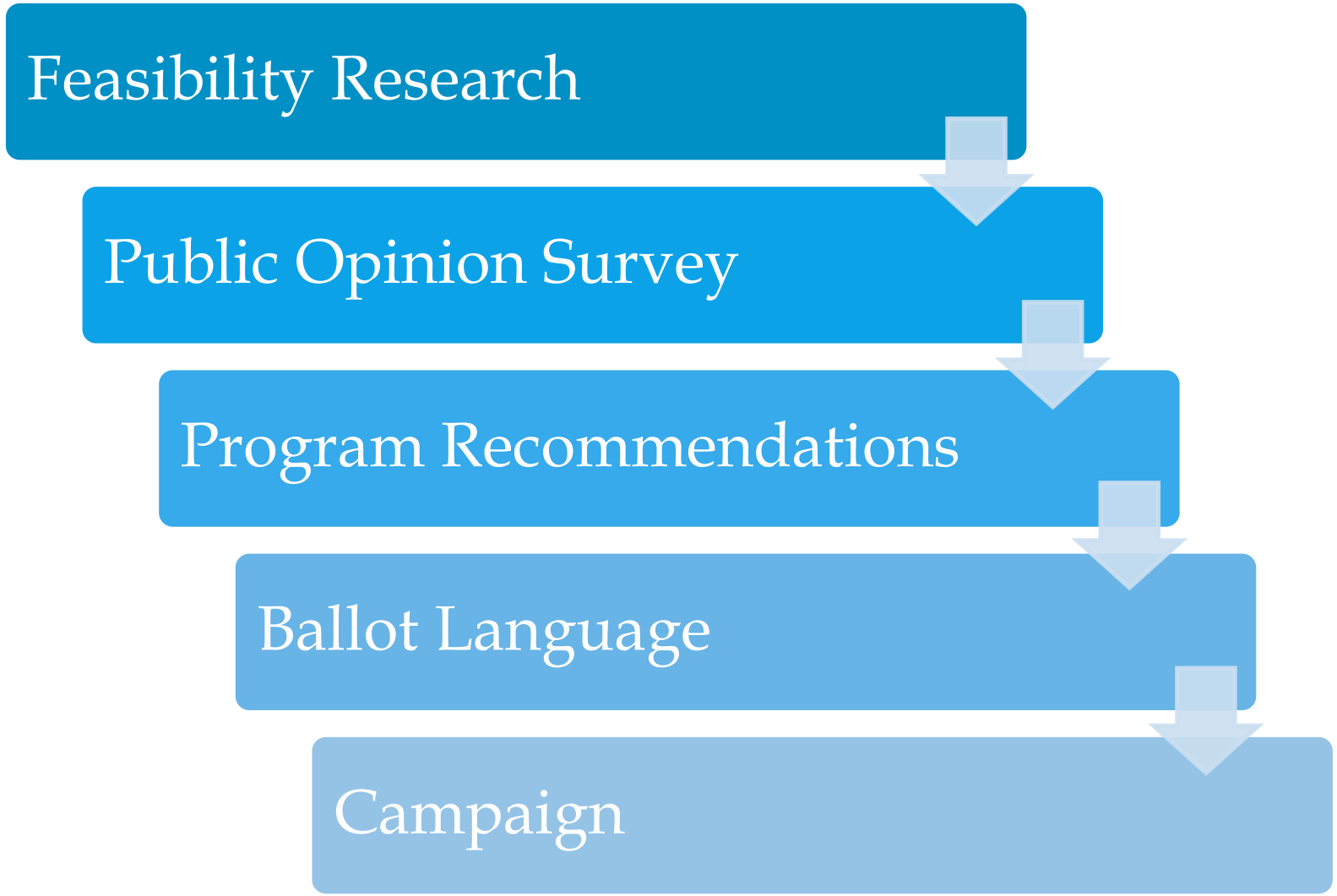
Will Abberger
Vice President, Director, Conservation Finance
Trust for Public Land
1834 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 100
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Dear Mr. Abberger:

The Manatee County Board of County Commissioners request technical advice and assistance from Trust for Public Land in connection with our efforts to develop and sustain reliable, ongoing sources of funding for land and water conservation.

As part of your advice and assistance, I understand you may provide feasibility research, conduct a public opinion survey and develop strategies for our consideration in increasing dedicated, ongoing sources of public funds for land conservation and parks.

Key Steps for Successful Ballot Measures



Step 1: Feasibility Research

Finance options
Conservation priorities
Fiscal capacity
Election requirements
Ballot language requirements
Pathways to ballot
Best practices
Election history

Manatee County Feasibility Study

Bonds “If” Constitutional Amendment Passes

HJR1 - Year 2

Manatee County Bond Financing Estimates							
Bond Issue	**Interest Rate**	**Maturity (Years)**	**Annual Debt Service**	**Total Taxable Value Est. FY28-29***	**Millage**	**Annual Cost for Median Homestead****	**Annual Cost per $100K Taxable Value**
$50,000,000	5.0%	20	$4,012,129	$56,117,400,623	0.0715	$1	$7
$75,000,000	5.0%	20	$6,018,194	$56,117,400,623	0.1072	$2	$11
$100,000,000	5.0%	20	$8,024,259	$56,117,400,623	0.1430	$2	$14
$125,000,000	5.0%	20	$10,030,323	$56,117,400,623	0.1787	$3	$18
$150,000,000	5.0%	20	$12,036,388	$56,117,400,623	0.2145	$3	$21
**FAC HJR1 estimates*							
***Assumes median homestead taxable value $14,787*							

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Bond with Additional Property Tax

Current

Manatee County Property Tax and Bond Financing Estimates									
Millage	**Total Taxable Value***	**Annual Revenue**	**Annual Cost for Median Homestead****	**Annual Cost per $100K Taxable Value**	**Bond Issue**	**Interest Rate**	**Maturity (Years)**	**Annual Debt Service**	**Remaining Annual Revenue**
0.16	$74,873,967,941	$11,979,835	$34	$16	$25,000,000	5.0%	20	$2,006,065	$9,973,770
					$50,000,000	5.0%	20	$4,012,129	$7,967,706
					$75,000,000	5.0%	20	$6,018,194	$5,961,641
					$100,000,000	5.0%	20	$8,024,259	$3,955,576
**Florida Department of Revenue Ad Valorem Valuation and Tax Data Book, Parcel Count Report, 2025*									
***Florida Association of Counties, Median Homestead Taxable Value $214,787, includes current homestead exemption*									

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Bond with Additional Property Tax "If" Constitutional Amendment Passes

HJR1 - Year 2

Manatee County Property Tax and Bond Financing Estimates									
Millage	**Total Taxable Value Est. FY28-29***	**Annual Revenue**	**Annual Cost for Median Homestead****	**Annual Cost per $100K Taxable Value**	**Bond Issue**	**Interest Rate**	**Maturity (Years)**	**Annual Debt Service**	**Remaining Annual Revenue**
0.16	$56,117,400,623	$8,978,784	$2	$16	$25,000,000	5.0%	20	$2,006,065	$6,972,719
					$50,000,000	5.0%	20	$4,012,129	$4,966,655
					$75,000,000	5.0%	20	$6,018,194	$2,960,590
					$100,000,000	5.0%	20	$8,024,259	$954,525
**FAC HJR1 estimates*									
***Assumes median homestead taxable value $14,787*									

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Other Potential 2026 Conservation Finance Measures

Jurisdiction	Election Date	On Ballot	Finance Mechanism	Amount
Bonita Springs, FL	Aug. 18	Yes	Bond	$35 million
Brevard County, FL	Nov. 3	Yes	Sales tax	$670 million
Charlotte County, FL	Nov. 3		Bond	$50 million
Highlands County, FL	Nov. 3		Bond	$30 million
Marion County, FL	Nov. 3		Bond	$150 million
St. Johns County, FL	Nov. 3		Bond	$100 million
Santa Rosa County	Nov. 3	Yes	Sales tax	$14 million
Sarasota County	Nov. 3	Yes	Bond	$250 million

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Step 2: Public Opinion Survey

- Methodology: random, sample, voters, telephone
- Why poll?
    - reality test
    - perspective
    - messages and messengers
- Polling goals
    - affordable proposal
    - compelling purposes
    - accountability provisions

Step 3: Program Recommendations

Funding Mechanism: Bond with additional property tax

Amount: 0.16 mills, $75 million bond, with $2.9 million/year for maintenance; approximately $34 per year for median homestead

Purposes: To acquire, improve, and manage land to protect drinking water sources, water quality, natural areas from overdevelopment, the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams, including the Manatee, Myakka, Little Manatee, and Braden Rivers, preserve environmentally sensitive lands, Fish and wildlife habitat, provide natural floodwater storage, protect working farms and ranches, and prevent stormwater runoff pollution

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Step 3: Program Recommendations

Accountability Measures: full public disclosure of all project spending; annual public audit; seek matching funds from federal, state, and private funds

Election Timing: November 3, 2026 general election.

Next Steps - Manatee County Timeline

January 6 – TPL's technical assistance requested

March 13 – Feasibility Study complete

May 4 – TPL presents Feasibility Study to ELMAAC

May 5 - TPL presents Feasibility Study to Board of County Commissioners

May 18 - 22 - TPL conducts public opinion survey (privately funded)

June 16 - *TPL presents recommendations to Board of County Commissioners; County Commissioners directs staff to draft resolution and ballot language*

July 28 - Board of County Commission considers resolution referring measure to the ballot

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Questions?

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