October 20, 2026 - Regular Meeting

Subject
SunTrail Funding for Manatee Avenue Trail Project – Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

Category
COMMISSIONER AGENDA/COMMENTS

Briefings
None

Contact and/or Presenter Information
Commissioner Siddique, 941-392-1740

Action Requested
Motion to direct:

The County Administrator, or designee, to evaluate available County funding sources and options to advance the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study for the Manatee Avenue SunTrail project, following the de-obligation and postponement of the previously scheduled $2 million in Fiscal Year 2027 funding by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The County Administrator, or designee, to coordinate with FDOT and other appropriate agencies to determine the feasibility, scope, estimated cost, and timeline for advancing the PD&E study using County funding or other available funding opportunities.

The County Administrator, or designee, to return to the Board of County Commissioners with funding recommendations and an implementation strategy to expedite the PD&E phase, advance project development, and position the project for future state and federal construction funding.

Enabling/Regulating Authority
N/A

Applicable Advisory Board
N/A

Background Discussion
The Manatee Avenue SunTrail project represents an important investment in Manatee County's transportation infrastructure, providing opportunities to enhance pedestrian and

bicycle connectivity, improve roadway safety, and expand recreational and multimodal transportation options for residents and visitors.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) previously scheduled approximately $2 million in Fiscal Year 2027 funding for the project's Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study. However, this funding has since been de-obligated and deferred until 2031.

This postponement creates significant concerns regarding the project's overall development timeline, potentially delaying completion until the late 2030s or early 2040s. Such a delay would substantially postpone critical transportation improvements and connectivity enhancements along the Manatee Avenue corridor.

Advancing the PD&E study through County funding or other available resources would allow the project to continue progressing rather than remaining dependent on the revised FDOT funding schedule.

Completion of the PD&E study would provide several important outcomes, including:

- Identification of necessary rights-of-way to support future property acquisition and project development;
- Development of preliminary design and engineering recommendations to establish the trail's preferred alignment and support final design;
- Identification of necessary intersection improvements to enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular safety along the corridor; and
- Advancement of the project toward shovel-ready status, positioning Manatee County to pursue future state and federal funding opportunities for final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

Directing County Administration to evaluate funding opportunities and coordinate with FDOT will allow the Board to consider a viable path forward to accelerate the project and ensure it remains competitive for future transportation infrastructure funding.

Attorney Review
Not Reviewed (No apparent legal issues)

Instructions to Board Records
N/A

Cost and Funds Source Account Number and Name
$2 million, TIF, de-obligation from current projects.

Amount and Frequency of Recurring Costs
One-time