

Imagine

M A N A T E E

The Manatee County Vision Implementation Update

2006





Implementing the Vision

Since the Manatee County Vision process was brought before the community over two years ago, much work has been done to turn this future vision into a reality.

The purpose of this booklet is to update the public on the progress being made towards realizing the seven implementation drives outlined by Imagine Manatee:

- ◆ GREEN
- ◆ BEAUTIFUL
- ◆ ACCESSIBLE
- ◆ EQUITABLE
- ◆ PROSPEROUS
- ◆ COLLABORATIVE
- ◆ EDUCATED



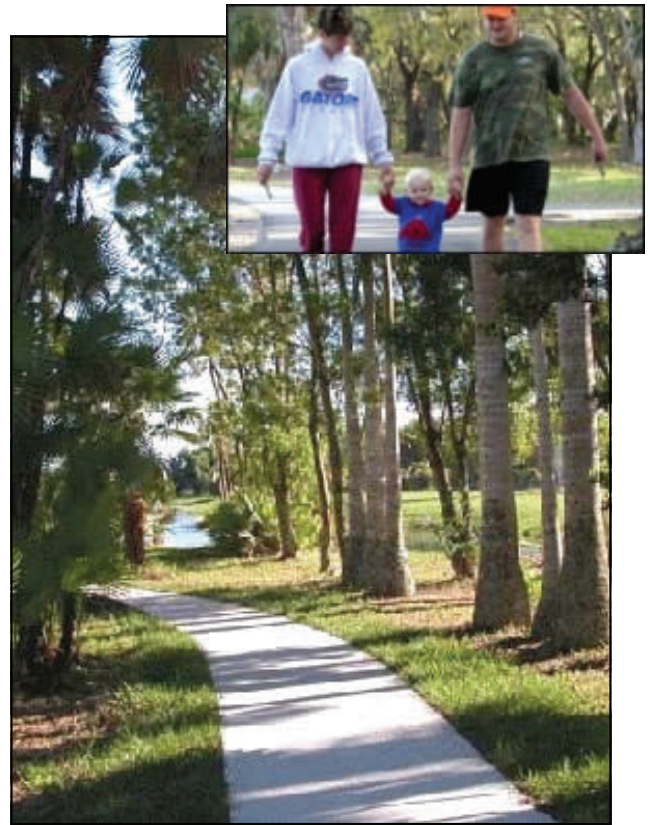
The following is a list of specific actions that have been undertaken since 2004.

A Green County: *Manatee County will be known as a green county through actions and ethics.*

- Manatee County has adopted a revised mining ordinance. These new regulations are considered the most stringent in the state, and among the toughest nationwide.
- Manatee County has initiated a Rural Lands Stewardship Program for our agricultural areas. This effort will develop growth management strategies to protect rural lands.
- Zoning code changes are being processed to require additional recreational acreage in new developments.
- The County has purchased close to 1,500 additional acres of land since 2004 for environmental protection and recreation.
- In budgeting for the protection of environmentally sensitive lands, 47¢ of County millage tax money is being leveraged for every dollar of grant funds.



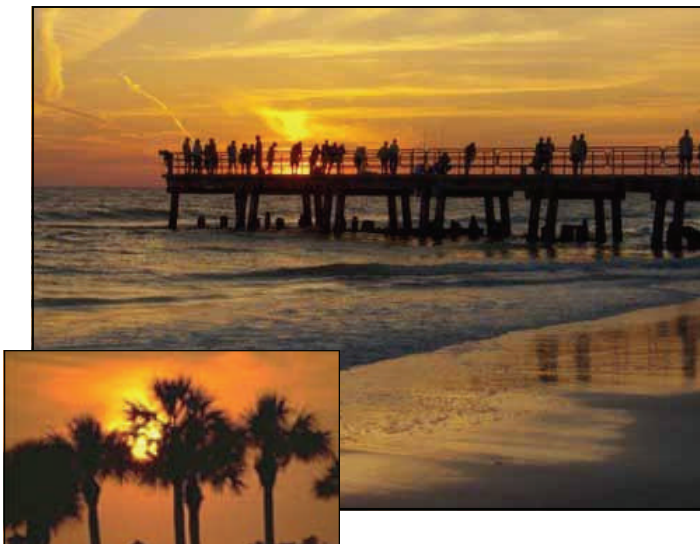
- Changes to the County’s Comprehensive Plan are being processed in order to support greater upland habitat protection.
- Manatee County is a member of the Tampa Bay Nitrogen Reduction Consortium, which is devoted to restricting the nitrogen loads released into Tampa Bay.
- The zoning code has been amended and the County has added staff to increase tree protection.
- Manatee County has initiated the development of a Parks Master Plan.
- The County has added a new staff position dedicated to implementing the county-wide Trails Master Plan.



- A new “Friends of the Trail” non-profit group has recently been formed in the County.
- The County has contracted for environmental education services to be conducted on the County’s environmental preserves.

A Beautiful County: *Manatee County will be a beautiful place.*

- The Code Enforcement Division of the Public Safety Department has established a citation system to streamline the enforcement process and accelerate the compliance rate.
- Two Scenic Highway systems have been designated in Manatee County since 2004—the Palma Sola Byway and Tamiami Trail.



- Bradenton has adopted Comprehensive Plan amendments that encourage mixed-use projects downtown and along 14th Street West.
- A U.S. 41 Revitalization Plan is now being developed in the South County Community Redevelopment Area .
- A new neighborhood plan is being developed for Samoset.



- A streetscape beautification plan for the 14th Street West Redevelopment Area has been adopted.
- Manatee County is pursuing certified local government status for historic preservation.
- The renovation of the 1912 Cortez School House has been completed.

An Accessible County:

Manatee County will have a multi-modal transportation system maximizing accessibility while minimizing congestion.

- Manatee County is in the process of implementing an Intelligent Transportation System with Sarasota County and the Florida Department of Transportation. Funding sources have been identified, and a host building is being permitted.
- Seamless mass transit service has been established with Sarasota County along the U.S. 41 corridor.
- Manatee County has established additional transit service in the urban area of South County.
- Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) is installing bus shelters and updating vehicle markings.
- The 5¢ option gas tax has been passed to fund local transportation improvements. Twenty percent of these revenues are dedicated to alternative transportation.
- An Ultimate Roadway Needs Plan is under development. This will focus on limiting trip durations and distances, including provisions for alternate forms of transportation.



An Equitable County:

Manatee County will be a fair and just community.

- An Indigent Health Care Task Force, led by nine CEOs of local health centers, has been formed to help increase the efficiency of current health services. The Task Force makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners to enhance access to cost-efficient, fundamental, life sustaining health care for persons who do not have the means to secure such care.
- The “Whole Child Project” has been implemented. The Project works with many local partners to ensure that all children receive the care they need to become healthy, contributing members of society.
- A new Emergency Operations Center is being permitted.
- A new County Judicial Center is under construction.
- New community centers at Buffalo Creek and Pride Park are in design.
- A Senior Resource Center is under construction.
- The Arts Council now has a full-time executive director.
- The Art League has more than doubled its membership in two years.
- The Suncoast Partnership has been established to address homelessness issues in Manatee and Sarasota Counties.



- Manatee County has established an Emergency Housing Assistance Program to assist people who have been evicted from their premises due to poor structural conditions.

- The County is leading the development of a 10-Year Plan to end chronic homelessness.
- A Community Land Trust has been established by the Jump Start Foundation.
- Manatee County has established a “Workforce Housing Resolution Team” to assist in the development of workforce housing.

- An Affordable & Workforce Housing Coordinator position has been established by Manatee County.



- An Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing was completed for Manatee County and the City of Bradenton. This study is being used to develop strategies and solutions for eliminating these impediments.

- An incentive program has been created to encourage the development of more affordable and workforce housing. The program includes:

- Density Bonus System
- Fast track permitting
- Fee waivers
- Conveyance of County-owned property for affordable/workforce housing development

A Prosperous County: *Manatee County will have a thriving, diverse economy.*

- The Manatee County Chamber of Commerce has adopted workforce employment and housing as its #1 priority for the upcoming year (2007).
- A new parking garage was constructed in the Bradenton downtown core.
- Manatee Players broke ground for its new theater in downtown Bradenton.
- Palmetto has adopted a downtown waterfront plan.



- Bradenton recently adopted revitalization plans for the downtown and 14th Street West areas.
- The boundaries of the Palmetto/North County Enterprise Zone have been amended to extend the zone's designation.



A Collaborative County:

Manatee County will be a place where residents and governments proactively communicate and share ideas.

- The Manatee Council of Governments – representing the County, Bradenton, Palmetto, and the island municipalities – now hold monthly meetings.



- All the local governments are working together to develop base design guidelines to help protect the character of neighborhoods.

- Manatee and Sarasota Counties have jointly adopted the 211 “call for help” program through United Way as a guide for connecting to local community services.



- A number of advisory boards and task forces have been established for senior services, health care, migrant issues, and indigent care projects.

- The Suncoast Partnership has been established to address homelessness issues in Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

- All the local governments in Manatee County have improved and increased the information on their websites.

- The County is working in partnership with the City and County of Sarasota, Florida State University, New College, the University of South Florida, and the Ringling Museum and School to implement a redevelopment plan along U.S. 41 south of Bowlees Creek.

An Educated County:

Manatee County will have a school system known for excellence and efficiency.

- The Manatee County School Board is implementing a comprehensive long-term strategic plan called “EdVantage”, which involves district planning, policy, and program evaluation. EdVantage is focused on ensuring and improving the personal development of students in years to come.



- All new elementary schools are being designed with the ability to double as community centers.

- The School Board and County have committed to co-locate school and park facilities where feasible.

- Since the end of 2003, six new schools have been built, four schools replaced, and three schools completely renovated.
- The School Board is setting aside surplus land for the purpose of housing teaching staff.
- Palmetto's downtown library is being completely rebuilt and expanded.
- Bradenton's downtown library has been approved for expansion and renovation.

Imagine Your Future—Imagine Manatee

While a substantial amount has already been accomplished, we look forward to greater achievements in the future, as we strive to make Manatee County an even better place to live.

Above all, it is essential to keep in mind that Imagine Manatee cannot improve Manatee County without citizen involvement. Broad cooperation will be necessary to continue the realization of our Vision for the future. *Imagine Your Future—Imagine Manatee.*



1112 Manatee Avenue West, 4th Floor
Bradenton, Florida 34205

941/749-3070
941/708-6154 Fax

www.imaginemanatee.org