

## **Input helps county develop plans and policies**

By Hector Flores

When my colleagues and I develop plans and policies to bring to the County Commission for direction, providing ample opportunities for public input is paramount. I've been encouraged by the way my fellow residents of Charlotte County have embraced these chances to participate in making our home better.

When we asked for input last year on the future of the former Cultural Center of Charlotte County property in Port Charlotte, nearly 3,000 people responded to an online survey and hundreds more attended four public input meetings to share their views. That input, along with recommendations from an engineering consultant and staff, will be brought to the board early this year.

We currently have three online surveys seeking input on flooding concerns, utility services and barrier island access and have scheduled two public input meetings on water quality and the Port Charlotte Beach Park recreation center design. The Facilities Department just completed an online survey and held a public input meeting on Thursday about bridgeless barrier island access issues.

The Community Development Department is seeking input on flooding concerns as it develops a new watershed master plan that was funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This input will help us identify additional areas of concern. The input will provide us with a better understanding of how and where stormwater and flooding occur after rain events.

To participate in the survey, visit [tinyurl.com/floodinput](https://tinyurl.com/floodinput). The survey closes at 5 p.m., Aug. 1, 2024.

As we develop our new One Charlotte, One Water plan to monitor and ensure water quality, residents can complete an online survey about utility services. Visit [www.surveymonkey.com/r/OneCharlotteOneWater](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OneCharlotteOneWater). The survey closes at 5 p.m., Jan. 19.

That survey will help county staff develop its presentation at the One Charlotte, One Water Town Hall scheduled for 9 a.m., Jan. 31 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St., in Punta Gorda. Attendees also will have opportunities to provide feedback on the county's water activities and direction of the plan.

A Port Charlotte Beach Park recreation center design meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m., Jan. 17, 2024 at Centennial Park located at 1120 Centennial Blvd., Port Charlotte. It will include a presentation of the approved design of the new recreation center and amenity options for master space planning of outdoor amenities.

The design engineer for the recreation center received public input from park patrons at three meetings in 2023. Further input came when the commission discussed design options at board meetings last year.

There are dozens of other ways to be an active member of the community. Residents may attend and speak at advisory board meetings scheduled throughout the year. The meeting calendar is on the county website at [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov). These boards provide recommendations to the commission on roads, utilities, parks, history services, stormwater, tourism and natural resources.

The county also makes it easy to comment on operations, policies, facilities and more using an online reporting feature. Submit a comment or report an issue by visiting the website and clicking on Contact in the menu at the top of the home page. You can also use this feature on your smart phone using the Charlotte County app, which is available in iPhone and Android app stores. Search for Charlotte County FL.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to share your input. I encourage anyone interested in helping us develop effective policies, plans and facilities to take advantage of all the ways you can participate.

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