



Annual Report 2019



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As you will see in this annual report, 2019 has been a year of progress and promises kept, innovation and investment in our community. Charlotte County adopted a new strategic plan focusing on four key categories: public services, economic and community development, infrastructure and efficient and effective government. We updated our mission, vision and values statements to ensure broad awareness and adoption by staff. The mission of



delivering exception service was evident from the range of awards county staff received, including recognition for floodplain management, a video exploring challenges facing our youth, development management, procurement, recreation programs, storm damage assessment and more.

Voters in 2014 approved a six-year extension of the 1% local option sales tax, trusting the county to deliver on investments in quality of life, public safety and infrastructure projects. In 2019, we completed the new Punta Gorda Charlotte Library, Piper Road North extension, a new recreation center and renovations to three existing recreation centers. The widening of Olean Boulevard in the Parkside Community Redevelopment Area began weeks after work on Harbor Boulevard was completed. Though Harbor Boulevard was not a sales tax project, it represented a major county investment in the CRA.

County staff initiated innovative projects throughout the organization, ranging from leadership development training to weather data collection to inform stormwater management decisions and investments. A major component of the County Commission's water quality initiative, the East/West Spring Lake septic-to-sewer program, was completed and testing sites are already gathering data on levels of pollutants and nutrients that degraded the quality of Charlotte Harbor as they leached from aging septic systems.

Thank you for taking some time to review this report. The work noted above is just a sample of the excellent work my colleagues have done on behalf of our community. We look forward to

capitalizing on fresh opportunities and meeting new challenges as we head into 2020.

Hector Flores
 County Administrator



Budget and Administrative Services

Real Estate Services

Surplus Property Sales

On a periodic basis the Real Estate Services Division reviews county-owned property and advertises surplus parcels for bid. During the past year we were able to successfully dispose of 137 parcels. The sale of these properties generated over \$600,000 in revenue and put these parcels back on the tax roll.

Burnt Store Road Phase II Widening Project



Real Estate Services has acquired all property interests the Burnt Store Road Phase II Widening Project. This allows Public Works to seek bids and select a contractor for the project. This project will create smoother access from Punta Gorda to Cape Coral and enhance the evacuation route during emergencies.

Habitat Conservation Plan

This year Real Estate Services has acquired over 132 acres, mostly in Prairie Creek Park for the HCP which now totals 178 acres.

Transit

Securing Capital Funding

Transit was awarded additional grant Federal funding for bus replacements this year. This allowed us to order 12 new vehicles in addition to the nine we replaced last year. Half of the fleet will have been replaced with smaller vehicles which are cost efficient to operate, under warranty and our customers are enjoying a more comfortable ride.

Purchasing

National Purchasing Institute – Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award

Charlotte County Purchasing Division earned the 2019 **Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement** Award. The AEP criteria are designed to measure state of the art in public procurement best practices. Charlotte County is one of only 26 agencies in Florida and 42 counties in the U.S. and Canada to receive the award and has done so 15 times. The **Achievement of Excellence** in Procurement recognizes organizational excellence in innovation, professionalism, e-procurement, productivity and leadership attributes of the procurement function.



Information Technology

Run, Grow, Transform

In 2019, Information Technology explored and initiated a new IT portfolio planning and resource budgeting model called Run, Grow, Transform. This model entails looking at resources in terms of whether they help the county Run (keep the lights on), Grow (expand existing capabilities) or Transform (utilize new technologies). This began by looking at our current state and ways to allocate more time towards Grow and Transform without reducing the operational readiness of the county's technology portfolio—with little or no cost and without additional staff. IT looked to automation of existing tasks and refreshing targeted systems that would return work-hours that could be re-invested in Grow and Transform areas. Collaborating with with Administration and departments, potential pilot projects were identified.

The findings were presented to the Board at a Focus Area Workshop on Efficient & Effective Government. Several technologies were already in progress, including workflow automation, electronic document management and electronic plans review. IT will also work to initiate pilot projects using AI, website chat bots and maximizing the value of the county's data through the use of data analytics.

Fiscal

Utility Cost Accounting

Fiscal Services continued to focus on process improvement this year. One of the areas identified for improvement was how the Utility's engineering labor is allocated to capital projects. Previously, Utility engineering staff had to manually enter their time into inconsistent Excel spreadsheets. Fiscal staff manually reviewed, scrubbed and consolidated the information into another complex Excel spreadsheet. That spreadsheet would convert the data into a journal entry to capitalize the labor. The entire process could take anywhere from 4-8 hours of Fiscal staff time to complete. Using SharePoint, Fiscal Services created a time logging system that allows Utility engineering staff to easily and consistently input their time worked on projects. SharePoint then consolidates the information into organized data. This improvement automates the process that previously had to be completed manually, saving Fiscal staff hours of work.

Community Development

Florida Floodplain Managers Association's Service Award

Assistant County Administrator Claire Jubb was honored as the Community Development Director with the Florida Floodplain Managers Association's Service Award at its 2019 annual conference March 28, 2019.

The award read, "In appreciation for your efforts and innovations toward advancing floodplain management." Since 2016, Claire has served as the association's policy champion, a volunteer position charged with raising the association's profile as experts in floodplain management and serving as a resource for the state and federal legislative delegation. She also serves as the association's associate director of legislation.

NACo (National Association of Counties) Awards

The National Association of Counties (NACo) granted Charlotte County multiple 2019
Achievement Awards. Community Development received two for its programs titled "Building and Property Damage Assessment in the Event of a Weather Emergency", and "Public Awareness and Outreach for New and Upcoming Development in Areas" in the category of Community and Economic Development. The department was also awarded 7th place in our county size in the Digital Communities Survey relating to our Damage Assessment Program which is a great honor.





NACo's mission is the strengthen America's counties and create a network of healthy, safe and vibrant counties across America. We are appreciative to be recognized for our accomplishments and the ability to share with neighboring jurisdictions.

Building Official of the Year

Building Official Ben Bailey was named Building Official of the Year by the Gulf Coast Chapter of the Building Officials Association of Florida. This is the second time Ben has been awarded this honor. He first received it in 2014. The BOAF represents building officials and building code professionals across Florida. The Gulf Coast chapter encompasses jurisdictions from Sarasota to Collier counties. Bailey has been the Charlotte County **Building Official for nearly** four years. Prior to that he was the Deputy Building Official.

Partnership with New Developments

The Springs of Port Charlotte

Another large development that Community Development has created a great working relationship with is The Springs of Port Charlotte. This development created 256 multi-family apartments on just over 22 acres developed by Continental Properties, Inc. The project is located at the intersection of Peachland Boulevard and Veterans Boulevard. The development has 11 buildings, a clubhouse with a large community pool, as well as, garages for rent depending on the apartment location. The buildings are three stories, with beautiful green natural space and various amenities.



Babcock

Babcock Ranch has been flourishing and we are proud to have a great business relationship with them. We meet monthly to update all divisions whether it be pre-permitting (site plan review), permitting, inspections, Fire & EMS, and others. Through this relationship, we have been able to easily answer questions and continue expanding our electronic document review process. In the past year, citizens moved into beautiful new homes, a school was completed, a sheriff substation established and the Lee Health Wellness Center was completed.



Increase in Applications

A dramatic increase in the number of permits and customers is being seen by the department.

For January 2019 - December 2019, the department has issued 29,195 permits, performed 100,388 inspections, served 29,691 customers in the lobby and had 3,897 code enforcement cases initiated. The department is out-performing most local jurisdictions in turnaround times for all application types and has not had to utilize external inspection or plans review services to maintain workload.

Community Services

Libraries and History

The Waterway Interpretive Signs Program was established in 2019 to recognize historical resources along the waterways that are significant in the areas of architecture, archaeology, Charlotte County history and traditional culture. As a coastal community, the



abundance and easy access to waterways has played a substantial role in shaping the history of our area. The first interpretative sign was dedicated in February on the Placida Trestle. The signs which are visible to boaters include a QR code that can be scanned with a smart phone to access further information.

Recreation

Based upon our commitment to the community, Community Services began offering fun opportunities this summer in parks with the new REC2U Mobile Program initiative. Games and activities such as street hockey, corn hole, obstacle course, parachute games, and ladder ball were provided at no cost for two hours to participants of all ages and abilities. The sites visited this year were South Gulf Cove Park, Lake Betty Park, Englewood East Park, Bissett Park, Rotonda Park, and Kiwanis Park. We will be continuing our REC2U mobile programming next summer with plans to visit more park locations.



Facilities Construction and Maintenance

Punta Gorda Charlotte Library

Funded by the 1% local option sales tax, the library replaced an undersized and maintenance-challenged facility. The new library provides meeting rooms, a Friends of the Library book store, an archive area and the standard library features.



The approximately 20,000 square-foot design and construction borrowed character and charm from the

surrounding neighborhood and displays the collective tastes and resources of the many community partners.

The library serves the extended South County community and was opened to the public on Aug. 26, 2019.

Recreation Center Renovation Projects

One of the 2014 1% local option sales tax-funded projects combined expansions with minor renovations at three locations into a single project for economy of scale and

standardization of the finished product. In 2018 renovations were completed at Harold Avenue Regional Park Recreation Center and South County Regional Park Recreation Center. The third and final location was completed in 2019 at Tringali Park Recreation Center. The administrative area was remodeled and storage added at the recreation center. The community center received an overhaul refresh including remodeled restrooms, a catering kitchen, and new sound system.

Event Center Generator Install

The Event Center was prone to power outages during storm season, having a dampening effect on the facility's event bookings. The new generator will provide critical power to the Event Center and ensure use of the facility during commercial power outages. Additionally, the project met all city ordinances provided a decorative wall while securing the generator and fuel tank above flood plain.

Ballfield Lighting LED Upgrade at South County Regional Park

The LED lighting upgrade is part of the countywide sports lighting program to retrofit five facilities this year with green and LED lighting. The LED lighting provides improved lighting levels and is the new standard for energy efficiency at the County's recreational fields, courts, and parking lots with annual energy savings of nearly \$75,000.

Human Resources

Leadership Development Program

Focusing on staff, this program creates a leadership pipeline to successfully manage the future of county government. It highlights the principles of servant leadership and instills them in program participants who are ready for managerial opportunities as part of succession planning. Graduates of the first class completed the year-long program in December 2019.

Career Pathways

In coordination with the Leadership Development Program, the Career Pathways project is the development of materials for communicating with employees and job applicants about career progression in a diverse organization such as government. Materials will be used internally for development plans with employees and externally as a recruitment tool for job/career events.

Workflow process for all HR Forms

Automating and creating an electronic workflow for all forms used by our internal customer had Human Resources staff working alongside IT programmers to create two interfaces for review and will soon be ready to launch our first form – the employee status change (ESC) form.

Public Safety

Fire/EMS

Live Fire Training

Firefighters become certified under the Florida Bureau of Fire Standards and Training in an effort to begin their careers. This training is considered a basic recruit academy and prepares them to evaluate fire growth and development, conduct searches, and use equipment. Continued training including live fire exercises allow staff to be better prepared on the job.



Marine Operations

Hours are spent honing their skills and seamanship. Through the efforts of Battalion Chief Matthew McElroy and Battalion Chief Chris Mott the department has been awarded the first ever Rapid Diver Program. This is a nationally recognized program that takes place over several weeks. It develops the skills needed to safely dive into shallow water and rescue a victim.

Special Operations

Throughout the year Special Operations mitigated dangerous incidents that could have negatively affect our community. One major incident was the hazardous materials situation on I-75. This closed the interstate



for almost 12 hours and was handled without any major injuries or damage. The effort seized all our resources and those of our surrounding counties.

To emphasize the need for such cooperation, the Special Operations Team held a training day with surrounding county agencies at the Cheney Brothers facility. This exercise allowed us to have the familiarity of each other's operations and equipment and to work as a team to meet common goals.

Emergency Management

Emergency Management, in cooperation with Community Services, updated Mass Care plans based on the best practices and lessons learned from the devastating storms of the 2017 and 2018 Atlantic hurricane seasons. Through planning efforts and an ambitious schedule of training and exercise scenarios, processes never in place previously in Charlotte County were developed and tested with respect to feeding, sheltering and the distribution of commodities.

Radio Communications

Babcock Ranch Tower

As part of the County's 1% local option sales tax, an additional seventh tower site was added to the new P25 digital radio communications system



network. This new site provides coverage in the southeast county area including Babcock Ranch. This seventh tower in the southeast portion of the county will also provide radio communications coverage where very little coverage exists today for public safety.

Human Services

Department Reorganization

Human Service recently completed the reorganization of the 211 Call **Center Operators and Family Services Program Specialist I position into** the Intake Coordinator classification. Intake Coordinators now serve as the central intake providers for the department. They provide assessment, short-term services, and referrals. The 211 database, Community Point, is now available to the public so that all residents have better access to services. The housing division was also realigned into the neighborhood services division for streamlined service delivery.

Public Works

Weather Stations

Public Works has installed a system of 24 weather stations throughout the county. This system provides live data concerning rainfall, rainfall rates, wind rates, wind direction and other weather data. This data is used to analyze hyperlocal weather conditions to determine how much rainfall occurred in a period of time and see how well the drainage is working or if there could be issues with the drainage system. When rainfall rates are extremely high, we use this information to respond to possible high-water issues.

Training

Public Works has offered 21 training courses including proper PPE, chainsaw safety, stormwater pollution prevention, understanding and preventing heat-related illness, OSHA powered industrial trucks, intermediate MOT and Florida stormwater operator 2 course. Public Works' bold training program has empowered our employees to manage and implement proper safety techniques and given them the tools strengthen their operational skills.



Asset Management

The implementation of an Enterprise-wide Asset Management System will provide real-time reporting of maintenance and repair activities, costs, and affected infrastructure. Facilities and Utilities departments will also benefit from improved accountability of efforts and resources, and the ability to plan work activities targeted to level of service goals or to various budget scenarios. This single platform for maintenance and work management will streamline the work order process and also enhances the departments' ability to coordinate work efforts and to accurately demonstrate cost splits on shared systems. It will help us know what the work costs and provide a mark to measure against for improving maintenance operations.

Oceanspray Boulevard Sidewalk

Oceanspray
Boulevard
sidewalk is a
1.5-mile sidewalk
running from Gulfstream
Boulevard to Sunnybrook
Boulevard. It was designed in the
year three 1% local option sales
tax program and construction was
funded by the Englewood East
Street and Drainage MSBU. This
is a very important sidewalk as it
is proximity to two west county
middle and elementary schools.

Paving Programs

In 2019, the FY17 and FY18 Paving Programs were completed. Public Works is tasked with maintaining more than 2,600 miles of MSBU and Gas Tax roadways throughout the County. These two-year paving programs successfully maintained approx. 282.7 miles of MSBU and Gas Tax roadways for the residents of Charlotte County to ensure the safety of the motoring public.

Piper Road North

Piper Road has been extended north from Henry Street to U.S. 17 at the existing Regents Road intersection.

The Airport Commerce Park has been identified as a priority for business development; and therefore, additional roadway and utility improvements were required to serve the airport and support new or expanding businesses within the corridor.

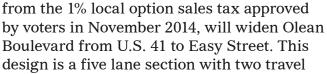
The project included a four-lane divided roadway from Henry Street to U.S. 17 for a total length of +/- 1.5 miles consisting of sidewalks, drainage improvements, installation of a new mast arm traffic signal at U.S. 17 (S.R. 35), street lighting and other associated improvements.



A Florida Job Growth Infrastructure Grant to install a 12-inch water main along Piper Road from U.S. 17 to Henry Street was also awarded to this project.

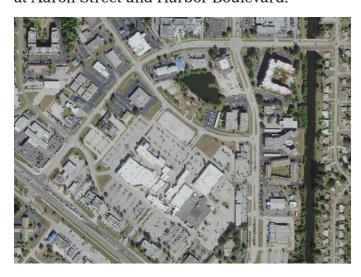
Olean Boulevard Widening

Construction of the Olean Boulevard widening project began in October 2019. The project, funded with revenue



lanes in each direction and a continuous center left/right turn lane in the middle.

The design also includes a sidewalks on both sides of Olean Boulevard from Aaron Street to Easy Street, LED decorative lighting and new traffic signal systems with pedestrian crossings at Aaron Street and Harbor Boulevard.



This project will also include multi-use paths and utility expansions on Aaron Street and Gertrude Avenue with LED decorative lighting.

Olean Boulevard is scheduled to be completed in summer 2021.

Harbor Boulevard Enhancements

The Parkside Community Redevelopment Agency Citizen's Master Plan had a vision to create a sense of community and celebration. The plan included canopy tree-lined trails, landscaping, lighting, and more.

To acheive this, the design included a fourlane divided roadway with a raised median to provide for safer turning movements, 10' multi-use paths on both sides, landscaping with irrigation, decorative street lighting, wayfinding signage and a gateway feature. Parkside CRA wanted the FPL overhead lines to be underground to provide a cleaner visual for the project, we worked with FPL to achieve the conversion.

Solid Waste

Solid Waste finalized negotiations for a new contract for sanitation services for a seven-year period beginning on Oct. 1, 2020 with a three-year extension option should both parties agree. The new contract enhances the services provided to the community by allowing up to four cubic yards of bulk waste every week on the normal scheduled service day. This will improve the overall curbside appearance throughout the county as residents will no longer be restricted to two collections per fiscal year with a maximum of 20 cubic yards. Additionally, the new contract eliminates the need for the costly rate case that was done every three years to review any price increases requested by the franchise hauler. Solid Waste achieved a 77% recycling rate making us number one in the state of Florida in traditional recycling.

Mosquito and Aquatic Weed Control

A landing zone along the Burnt Store corridor was acquired for larvicide activities and increased efficiency of operations.



Tourism

Sports and Events

Gideon's International State Convention (April 25-28, 2019)

Opening of the SpringHill Suites by Marriott was instrumental in attracting this convention. The event had 245 attendees for the duration of the conference and an additional 55 attendees at the event's banquet. These attendees spent an estimated \$162,000 while visiting Charlotte County.

Sugar Bert Boxing National Qualifier (June 7-9, 2019)

529 boxers competed this year in comparison to 301 last year. Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia were represented while 57 boxers came from outside the U.S. In addition, 167 coaches were in attendance.



Tourism Development Tax Collections Hits First Million Dollar Month

For the first time in the history, over one million dollars in tourist tax was collected in a single month. \$1,009,357 of TDT was collected during April for visitation in the month of March 2019.

Tourism Public Relations

Tourism focused on outreach with several beach/island stories. Our social media used real time photos and video to showcase our beached and waterways. Tours centered around the "Beach Ready" message were provided to influencers.

Utilities

East/West Spring Lakes Pilot Septic to Sewer Project Completion

The pilot program is the first project in the Utilities service area to utilize the vacuum sewer technology for the collection of waste water from properties. The project included two vacuum stations, over 24 miles of vacuum sewer to serve over 2,400 properties and replacement of existing storm drainage to increase percolation, infiltration and nutrient load removal which lead to improved water quality.

Water Quality Monitoring Program

To assess water quality in the East and West Spring Lake Septic to Sewer project boundary, Utilities began collecting surface and ground water samples throughout



the area. Storm event sampling was added to the monitoring network by Johnson Engineering and Tetra Tech to capture the changes in water quality pre- and post-project construction. The purpose of the project was to address the

health and safety of the citizens and reduce the levels of nonpoint source pollutants discharging into the Peace River from aging and failing septic systems, especially during large rain events. The results show that removal of the septic tanks, the replacement of deteriorated culvert pipes and the restoration of grassy swale areas to increase percolation, infiltration and nutrient load removal has had a positive impact on the water quality.

Best Tasting Drinking Water

Utilities won the annual Best Tasting Drinking Water Contest in Region X held by the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association (FSAWWA).



The County's water sample won the best-tasting out of the seven utilities that entered the contest. Region X represents drinking water utilities in a five-county region: Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota. Charlotte County purchases 95% of its water supply from the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority, which uses the Peace River as its source of supply. The County's public drinking water system distributes this potable water to more than 55,000 customers and maintains a large system of approximately 1,400 miles of water main lines, four booster stations and 5,700 fire hydrants.

Utilities Community Outreach

Utilities provided tours to residents at three of its water and wastewater treatment facilities, giving a behind-thescenes look at the process of providing water and wastewater treatment and reclamation services to the community. Utilities also coordinated a tour for Charlotte County residents to visit Peace River Manasota Regional Water Authority which supplies over 95% of



drinking water to Charlotte County. These tours showcase the county's Sewer Master Plan and importance of water quality.

Administration

Legislative Updates

Charlotte County received a record level of funding as a result of our state legislative efforts this year. We made multiple presession and during session advocacy trips to Tallahassee resulting in over \$14.1 million in appropriations and grants for Charlotte County and passage of a local bill to repeal obsolete provisions of state law pertaining to Charlotte County. We continued to build relationships within the new leadership of the House and Senate as well as the DeSantis administration.

At the federal level, we continued our efforts to advocate for funding of the Manasota Key beach renourishment project. Engaging our federal delegation, we led a series of meetings with the Army Corps of Engineers to position the project for the FY20 work plan. Additionally, we continued advocacy in support

of the county's federal priorities providing comment letters to federal agencies on subjects ranging from flood insurance reform to the management of Lake Okeechobee and energy exploration off the coast of Florida.

RESTORE

Our local RESTORE program is running efficiently and all projects in our Multi-Year Implementation Plan have received awards from the US Treasury. Staff worked with consultants from the Gulf Consortium to finalize Charlotte County's application for funding under Pot 3 of the RESTORE Act which was submitted to the Gulf Council in mid-June 2019. Staff met with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to explore project opportunities to improve water quality in Charlotte County under Pot 2 of the RESTORE Act.

Choices and Chances wins National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors Award

CC-TV earned the 1st Place Award of Excellence for its film Choices and Chances in the Children/Young Adult Category at the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors Government Programming Awards ceremony.

The film was produced and directed by Elizabeth Tracy, with videography and editing by Todd Dunn and Tom Lloyd.

Choices and Chances is a film that covers many youth issues including texting while driving, bullying, drinking, drugs, abuse, PTSD, survivor guilt and teen suicide by bringing the audience into the turbulent world of today's youth.





The film can be used by any community or organization to start a conversation about these difficult topics. View the trailer at www.youtube.com/CCTVcharlottecountyFL.

Water Quality Summit

The Charlotte County Water Quality Summit was held Jan. 29, 2019 at the Charlotte Harbor **Event & Conference Center** in Punta Gorda. The summit included scientists, researchers, engineers and elected officials discussing water quality issues in Florida, including harmful algal blooms, like red tide and blue-green algae, Everglades restoration and Lake Okeechobee. The summit featured three panels - policy, science and action and was attended by over 400 residents.



Strategic Focus Areas

The Charlotte County Commission earlier this year established four strategic focus areas: public services, economic and community development, infrastructure, and efficient and effective government. Commissioners also set numerous "bold goals," big ideas that may be difficult to achieve, but are worth the effort. These goals will require the county to encourage fresh thinking, identify ripe opportunities and forge new partnerships. To achieve these bold goals, county departments and special task forces will undertake strategic initiatives with measurable results linked directly to the goals and ultimately the focus areas.

Charlotte County ■ 2020 Strategic Plan

Bold Goals to Encourage Fresh Ideas, Identify Ripe Opportunities and Forge New Partnerships



The Charlotte County Commission has four Strategic Focus Areas: Public Services, Economic & Community Development, Infrastructure, and Efficient & Effective Government. Within this framework the commission set bold goals, ambitious but attainable targets to reach within the next five years.

Visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Strategic Plan under Popular Links

Public Services



BOLD GOALS

· Define levels of service by quantity & quality by 2020

Economic & Community Development



BOLD GOALS

- Add 3,650 affordable housing units by 2024
- Increase secondary education enrollment 5%
- Improve water quality 5%

Infrastructure



BOLD GOALS

- Fund & update capital needs assessment by 2024
- · Balance capital & operating budgets

Efficient & Effective Government



BOLD GOALS

- · Great place to work
- Ensure culture of continuous improvement

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