

Pinellas County Government 2023 Accomplishments



Our Vision: To be the Standard for **Public Service in America**

Board of County Commissioners

At-Large Districts



District 1 Janet C. Long 2020 – 2024 (727) 464-3365



District 2 **Brian Scott** 2022 - 2026(727) 464-3360



District 3 Charlie Justice 2020 - 2024(727) 464-3363



Single-Member Districts



District 4 Dave Eggers 2022 – 2026 (727) 464-3276



District 5 Chris Latvala 2022 – 2024 (727) 464-3278



District 6 Kathleen Peters 2022 – 2026 (727) 464-3568



District 7 René Flowers 2022 - 2024(727) 464-3614

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Message From Your Board

Your Board of County Commissioners is pleased to present the 2023 Accomplishments Report. It is a testament to how our team of leaders and County employees have partnered with you to serve our community needs, protect our natural resources and support our local economy. Every year, we deliver and redefine first-class services by fostering strong partnerships that offer innovative and fiscally responsible solutions.

In 2023, we brought together more than 120 elected officials, nonprofit leaders and housing advocates for the Homes for Pinellas Summit to empower more people to call Pinellas home. We also committed nearly \$35 million to support affordable housing as part of the Penny for Pinellas housing program.

This year, Pinellas earned a Class 2 rating from the National Flood Insurance Program, the highest rating ever achieved by any Florida community. Residents in unincorporated areas could see up to a 40% discount on eligible insurance policies.

In the pursuit of smart innovation, Pinellas County partnered with ARK Invest to construct the ARK Innovation Center, a state-of-the-art business

incubator to guide startups and ventures toward financial success.

We announced a prospective partnership between the County, the City of St. Petersburg and the Tampa Bay Rays to keep the team in Pinellas County thanks to our visitor-funded Tourism Development Tax.

Our first ever leadership summit series with Hillsborough and Pasco Counties helped to develop collective solutions and additional collaboration for regional issues.

We are proud to share these and many more accomplishments, all made possible with consistent leadership, dedication of our employees and input from our residents. Thank you for your trust in us as we continue to guide Pinellas County to be the standard for public service in America.





Top Accomplishments of 2023

Pinellas County employees and leadership continue to work toward our vision: to be the Standard for Public Service in America. We're proud of our top accomplishments from 2023 outlined here, as well as the key results on the following pages. These help us keep our economy prosperous, protect our residents' safety, care for our environment, strengthen our infrastructure and provide excellent service to our residents.



Restoring Our Shorelines

After Hurricane Idalia destroyed many of our sand dunes, County Commissioners swiftly allocated tourist development tax funds to fast track an emergency shoreline restoration project. The County trucked in more than 100 tons of sand and planted thousands of new sea oats to protect homes and businesses from future storms.



Keeping the Rays in St. Petersburg

Our work with the City of St. Petersburg and the Tampa Bay Rays is on track to keep the baseball team in Pinellas County and create



affordable housing, jobs, tourism and new revenues. This project is anticipated to be the biggest economic development initiative in the history of Pinellas County.



Enhancing 14 Miles of Sidewalks

Our sidewalk maintenance crews completed a two-year project of 587 needed sidewalk repairs months ahead of schedule. In just 22 months, they **completed nearly 1,200 service requests,** including the initial 587, so residents can walk more safely.

Completing a New Pier at Fort De Soto

With funds from the Penny for Pinellas and a \$1 million federal grant, we **completed the Fort De Soto Bay Pier** with new fishing stations and a new dock for the Egmont Key ferry.





Collaborating on a Housing Action Plan

We launched the Housing Action Plan in collaboration with our municipalities to set goals for the next 10 years to create and preserve attainable homes linked to transportation, jobs, schools and more. We also hosted more than 100 elected officials, nonprofit leaders,

advocates for a **Homes** for Pinellas Summit to work together toward potential housing solutions.

businesses and housing

Championing Houses that Everyone Can Afford

We're building a future where residents of all income levels can afford to call Pinellas their home. In the past year, Pinellas County hit the following milestones:

- More than 1,000 affordable and workforce housing units currently planned or under construction with support from the County going into 2024.
- **Expanded Down Payment Assistance Program**, increasing support up to \$75,000 in zero-interest loans to help residents fulfill the dream of homeownership; 14 families have taken advantage of the increased loan amount since August.
- Celebrated the 800th home developed by **Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas and West** Pasco as well as groundbreaking and grand openings for four other County-supported affordable housing developments.

Saving Residents on Flood Insurance

This year, Pinellas County improved from a CRS Class 3 rating to a Class 2, meaning residents could see up to 40% discount for eligible policies on renewals and new insurance policies come April 2024. This rating is the highest CRS rating a Florida community has ever achieved and is in the top 1% nationwide.

Laying the Groundwork for New County Offices

We purchased land that will be developed into a more convenient and efficient **County services headquarters** in Largo. The initiative will also create redevelopment opportunities in Clearwater.



Connecting with Communities:

We deepened our collaboration with many of our unincorporated communities through strong partnerships:

- The **Downtown Palm Harbor Advisory Group** focused on supporting long-term economic growth in the downtown area.
- The St. Petersburg Foundation public**private partnership** enhanced the Lealman Exchange tenant experience, expanded facility use, attracted new funding partners, launched a newsletter and activated lealmanexchange.org to increase communication with the community.
- The Lealman Engagement Committee comprising Lealman residents, community leaders and county staff planned events like the Honey & Arts Festival and the Independence

Day Celebration.







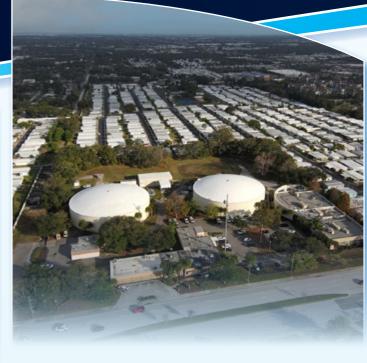


From introducing cutting-edge digital platforms to performing virtual tours and inspections, we explore innovative ways to enhance the quality of service for our residents.



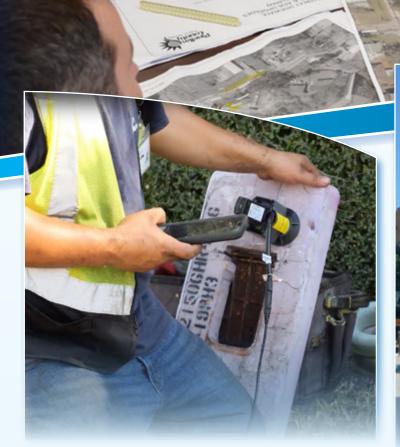
Improving Our Roadways

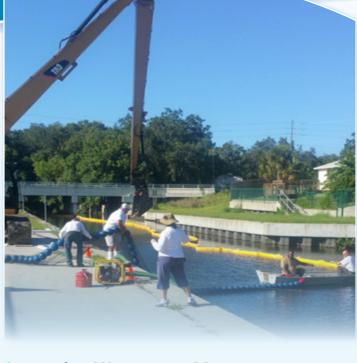
- Resurfaced more than 160 lane-miles as part of the Pavement Preservation Program.
- Repaired or replaced nearly 50,000 linear feet of sidewalk.
- Fixed nearly **100% of reported potholes** within three days of report.
- Responded to **nearly 1,300 emergency service requests** within 24 hours.



Providing Safe Water

- Provided more than 18 billion gallons of safe drinking water to our utility customers.
- Collected more than 7,000 drinking water samples and performed more than 57,000 drinking water quality tests.
- Installed nearly 200 new potable water service lines.
- Received reaccreditation from the state after a biennial audit of our water quality laboratory.





Encouraging Water Conservation

- Continued implementing the Advanced Metering Infrastructure project to upgrade more than 7,500 potable water and 1,900 reclaimed meters to digital meters for more precise readings.
- Launched new Utilities Customer Portal to provide every customer with water readings, bill comparison tools and water conservation information.
- Adopted a new, consumption-based rate structure that encourages water conservation by reducing water bills for customers who use a lower volume of water.

Improving Wastewater Management

- Treated 10.3 billion gallons of wastewater and produced 6.9 billion gallons of reclaimed water.
- Lined or replaced more than 36,000 feet of sewer pipe.
- Provided more than \$163,000 in Private Sewer Lateral rebates to enhance the Wastewater Collection System and reduce sanitary sewer overflows.
- Began implementing the Private Sewer Systems Program to reduce the risk of emergencies.

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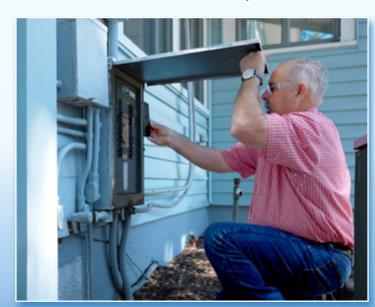


Leading the Way in Waste Management

- Recycled 52.8 million pounds of metal, turned 76.9 million pounds of yard waste into mulch and diverted 314,000 pounds of household chemicals from the municipal solid waste stream.
- Created a virtual tour of the Solid Waste Disposal Complex to show how we manage garbage to reach zero waste-tolandfill by 2050.
- Generated nearly 435,000 Renewable
 Energy Credits by selling power produced by the Waste-to-Energy Facility. The credits are then sold to multiple entities to balance their organizational carbon footprint.
- Educated **1,731 businesses** on proper solid and hazardous waste management.

Responding to Property Needs

- Launched the first phase of virtual inspections for the most commonly requested permit types, saving contractors and homeowners time.
- to strengthen the delivery of development services and streamline the development review process from beginning to end.
- Issued nearly 30,000 building permits and conducted more than 65,000 inspections to ensure building safety.
- Conducted more than 4,000 investigations and 14,000 inspections into code concerns to ensure the health and safety of residents.



Serving Veterans

- Helped approximately 7,000 local veterans and their families find benefits and support.
- Hosted four Honor Flights that transported military veterans from the St. Petersburg/ Clearwater International Airport to Washington, D.C., to visit war memorials.

Keeping Contractors Working

- Registered approximately 11,000 state contractors and more than 100 new, locally licensed contractors with an improved registration process.
- Education and enforcement of codes and standards contributed to a 37% reduction in formal complaints against licensed contractors.



Reaching Residents Online

- Answered nearly 10,000 live chat inquiries, more than 25,000 telephone calls and hundreds of Facebook messages from our residents.
- Approximately 3 million people visited the County website.
- Gained **nearly 45,000 followers** across the County's main social media accounts.





Making Pinellas Safer & Healthier

All year, Pinellas County staff works around the clock to protect our residents before an emergency, respond to help during an crises and support them through the recovery.



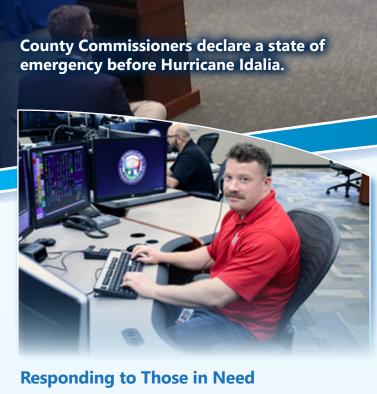
Responding to Hurricane Idalia

- Answered more than 6.500 resident calls and live chat inquiries.
- Distributed more than 160,000 sandbags to residents.
- Opened 10 community shelters that welcomed nearly 2,000 residents and their pets.
- Assessed more than 2,600 residences that were impacted by the storms.
- Supported opening of two Disaster Recovery **Centers** and a **Business Recovery Center**.



Preparing You for Emergencies

- Hosted an estimated 650 attendees at our annual Hurricane Preparedness Expo with Largo Fire Department.
- Hosted more than 400 attendees at a **Homeowners Association Hurricane Preparedness event** with Pinellas Park Fire Department and a Condominium Association Hurricane Preparedness event with Clearwater Fire Department.
- Hosted 140 attendees at our second annual Deaf Day to support hearingimpaired residents.
- Distributed 137,000 Hurricane Preparedness **Guides** in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- · Assembled and distributed more than **3,200 hurricane and hygiene kits** with the help of partners.



 Answered more than 875,000 calls to the Regional 911 Center with nearly 95% of calls answered guicker than the state's 10-secondanswer standard.

Alerting You to Potential Hazards

- Added Spanish language to the Ready Pinellas app.
- Sent **nearly 600** messages to residents and partners through Alert Pinellas, the County's emergency notification service.





- Distributed more than 2,600 safety devices and educational resources to vulnerable pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Fitted more than 200 free bike **helmets** for kids.

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mergency Board of

 Added 18 new Rectangular Rapid Flashing **Beacons** to increase crossing safety.

Responding to the Opioid Crisis

- Connected more than 400 residents who experienced an overdose to the Quick Response Teams Model, increasing their connections to treatment and recovery services.
- Implemented the County's first syringe exchange program to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases while **expanding** access to treatment and supportive community services.

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• Created **Pinellas Matters** to provide emergency departments with addiction professionals and to increase access to **medications** for opioid-use disorder.

Supporting Behavioral Health

• Continued development of the Coordinated Access Model (Care About Me) that will **better** serve Pinellas residents in need of behavioral health appointments.

Caring for the Unhoused

• Established 1,800 meaningful interactions to deliver essential lifesaving services to individuals experiencing homelessness.





Protecting Our Pets

- Conducted more than 11,000 field visits to ensure animal welfare and resident safety.
- Licensed more than 207,000 pets, increasing compliance rate among pet owners.
- Returned nearly 3,000 stray dogs and more than 200 stray cats to their families.

Controlling Mosquitoes

• Treated more than 190,000 acres to reduce mosquito populations.



Empowered more than 23,550 residents to control mosquitoes through community events, classes and presentations.

Addressing Consumer Needs

- Earned residents more than \$1.2 million in refunds and adjustments, and ordered restitution through investigation of more than 1,100 consumer complaints.
- Investigated nearly 600 complaints of unlicensed contracting and complaints against licensed contractors.



- Identified and removed more than 200 fraudulent rental advertisements from online sites to protect residents.
- Partnered with The Promise Network to help more than 900 water/sewer customers avoid service deactivation.





Protecting Our Environment

As a coastal community, our environment is our most precious resource. We must be sure that our infrastructure is resilient and comes with a commitment to environmental stewardship.



Keeping Our Community Clean

- Maintained vegetation from more than 500 permitted stormwater facilities, more than 600 miles of ditches and more than 14,000 acres of rights-of-way to improve drainage.
- Swept 18,418 miles of county streets to remove hazards and protect local waterways.
- Added four new Adopt-A-Pond communities to manage stormwater ponds and improve water quality, habitat restoration, drainage and flood protection.
- Wrapped nine traffic signal cabinets in murals by local artists through a partnership with Creative Pinellas.



Improving Our Parks

- Installed new exhibits and renovated amenities at many Pinellas County parks, such as:
- ▶ Turner Bungalow and new concrete pathways at Heritage Village.
- ▶ Mobi-mats at Fred Howard and Sand Key parks to make the beach more accessible.
- ▶ New playground and Born Learning trail at Ray Neri Park.
- ► Majeed Discovery Garden at the Florida Botanical Gardens.
- ▶ Brooker Creek Preserve boardwalk refurbishment.
- ▶ Ochs classroom 4-H facility refurbishment.
- Added mobile app payment options at some County parks and boat ramps.

Adapting to Our Changing Climate

- Launched the Resilient Pinellas Action Plan, which will help guide the County's sustainability and resiliency efforts.
- Launched the second phase of the Sea Level Rise & Storm Surge Vulnerability Assessment Tool to better understand risks from sea level rise and prepare for the future.
- Identified 200,000
 County-owned assets
 —from pipes to traffic
 lights to buildings—within flood vulnerability areas to evaluate for resiliency.



Getting Out in Nature

- Welcomed more than 20.6 million visitors to our 22 parks and preserves.
- County boat ramps allowed 1.8 million visitors to enjoy Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.
- Recorded more than 2 million people enjoying the Pinellas Trail.



Protecting Plants and Wildlife

- Completed a half-acre offshore oyster reef at Philippe Park to provide wildlife habitat, protect the shoreline and improve water quality in Old Tampa Bay.
- Developed an Injured and Nuisance Wildlife Management Policy for our park rangers to prevent destruction or abuse of wildlife.
- Trained 189 participants from Pinellas
 County and municipal agencies in industryleading, sustainable Integrated Vegetation
 Management Program.



Planting the Future of Pinellas

- Gave away **200 trees to Pinellas County residents** in celebration of Arbor Day.
- Planted 200 trees to enhance green spaces, improve air quality and support local biodiversity.
- Planted 400 pine trees and 15,000 sea oats at Fort De Soto Park.
- Planted 10 buttonwood trees as part of Take Your Kids to Work Day.





Conserving and Using Renewable Energy

- Sourced nearly 18% of the County's electricity use through renewable energy sources as a part of Duke Energy Florida's Clean Energy Connection Program.
- Saved more than \$12,000 in taxpayer dollars by earning Duke Energy rebates and the installation of more energyefficient equipment.





With record-breaking tourism and new, cutting-edge businesses coming to Pinellas County, our economy is on the rise.



Supporting Local Businesses

- 34 new businesses opened their doors and created more than 427 jobs.
- Generated \$159 million in capital investment through business assistance, expansion and relocation efforts.
- Consulted with businesses for more than 3,000 hours and facilitated more than \$2.7 million in loans and grants for businesses.
- Awarded more than \$38.5 million in contracts to 128 Small Business Enterprises.
- Hosted signature events to introduce small business owners to new opportunities such as the Department of Defense Roundtable, Hispanic Business Conference and Black Excellence Summit.



ARK Innovation Center

 Completed construction on the new regional incubator, the ARK Innovation Center, that will catalyze future startups and technology companies in the region.

Targeting New Business

- Completed 11 Employment Site Program
 Funding Agreements, totaling more than \$19
 million for new industrial, flex, manufacturing
 and office space.
- Partnered with City of St. Petersburg on the new Community Redevelopment Area Micro Fund Program, supporting business owners with direct grant payments of nearly \$100,000.

Record-Setting Tourism

- Set a County record with more than \$98
 million in hotel bed tax collections for
 fiscal year 2023.
- Visitors occupied nearly 6 million hotel room nights during fiscal year 2023.
- Generated nearly \$1.1 billion in local hotel revenue with overall destination accommodations revenue in fiscal year 2023 surpassing \$1.6 billion.
- Established "From Visitors with Love" campaign to help educate locals on the importance of the hotel bed tax to our local economy.

Travel Boom at the Airport (PIE)

- Served a **record-breaking 2.5 million passengers** in 2023, with July as the busiest month in PIE history with **nearly 280,000 passengers**.
- Continued serving over 60 non-stop destinations with one of the lowest average domestic airfares of the top 100 busiest airports in the U.S.
- Generated more than \$3.4 billion in economic impact and more than 20,000 jobs, according to an FDOT statewide study.

Accelerating Job Growth

- Created the One Pinellas Business
 Alliance to provide actionable guidance on workforce, redevelopment and economic development issues.
- The County-operated Young-Rainey Science Technology and Research Center provided a worksite for more than 1,700 private sector jobs, contributing more than \$157 million in wages to the economy.
- Awarded \$758,063 in workforce training grants for Pinellas companies.

Putting Pinellas in the Spotlight

- Attracted 17 feature films to shoot in Pinellas, generating more than \$8.8 million and 2,500 room nights while hiring 600 local film professionals in FY23.
- Booked nearly 400 conferences, generating nearly 150,000 room nights and direct spending of \$136 million for the county in FY23.
- Booked 125 sports events for the county, bringing in nearly 350,000 visitors, which generated over \$134 million in spending and 182,000 room nights in FY23.



Despite a competitive job market, we're able to hire and retain outstanding employees dedicated to the people of Pinellas County.



Giving Back to Our Community

 Provided 78 bikes and 67 helmets to children in our community for the holidays through the Annual Employee Bike Drive.





 Educated 35 middle schoolers about careers in public service through our Youth Summer Program at the Lealman and Asian Neighborhood Family Center.





- Continued implementation of career paths and ladders program in nine departments, representing about 1,200 employees.
- Implemented departmental recognition and incentive programs.
- Recognized outstanding service of employees at County Commission meetings.







Pinellas County staff are recognized at the local, regional, state, national and international levels as leaders in their fields.



Communications

- FPRA Tampa Bay Chapter recognized senior project manager Josh Boatwright as the region's 2023 Rising Star for industry leadership.
- The National Association of County Information Officers named the Pinellas County website the Best in Category for Electronic Communications - Websites in their annual awards competition.

Economic Development

- 2023 Economy & Energy Award for the Employment Sites Program from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's Future of the Region Awards
- **2023 Urban Deal of the Year Award** for Brooker Creek South, an Employment Sites Program project from the Florida Economic Development Council
- 2023 Honoree for the Tampa Bay Inno Awards
- Staff received the following honors and awards:
- Dr. Cynthia Johnson was honored in the Power 100: Tampa Bay's Most Influential Leaders of 2023 and as an Honoree for the First Ladies in African American History by the Woodson Museum.
- Suzanne Christman received the 2023 Eunice Sullivan Economic Development Professional of the Year from the Florida Economic Development Council.
- Daniel Dorian received the 2023 Regional Rising Star of the Year Award from the Florida SBDC Regional Awards.



Emergency Management

Health and Human Services Program
 Lead Adam Pedzich received the 2023

 Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference
 Rising Star Award.

Office of Management & Budget

Received the Distinguished Budget
 Presentation Award from the Government
 Finance Officers Association for the 18th consecutive year.



Public Works

 Retained American Public Works Association (APWA) accreditation as a Public Works Department that meets national bestpractice standards.



Urban Forestry secured the Tree City USA
 designation for the sixth consecutive year,
 the Growth Award for the fourth consecutive
 year and Tree Cities of the World for the
 fourth consecutive year, underscoring effective
 urban forest strategies and adherence to
 global standards.

Parks & Conservation Resources

 Designated as a Bee City USA Affiliate to recognize the commitment to the promotion and protection of pollinators.



Solid Waste

Received American Public Works
 Association (APWA) Accreditation for
 Solid Waste, demonstrating commitment
 to continuous improvement of solid waste
 operations and services to the community.

St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE)

 Recognized by TSA as the Airport of the Year among 333 airports of similar size.



Profiled in the Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum's "America by Air" exhibit in recognition of its tremendous growth and planned expansion.

Utilities

Bina Nayek received the Amercian
Water Works Association (AWWA)
Golden Spigot and the Allen B. Roberts
Award for her outstanding achievements
and service to the water industry.

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater

- Earned three Visit Florida Silver Flagler Awards for:
- ▶ Gulf to Bay Destination Magazine in the Resource/Promotional Material-Consumer Category.
- ▶ Unwind & Be Kind social campaign in the Sustainable Tourism Marketing Category.
- ► Travelzoo partnership in the Internet Advertising Category.
- The VSPC Travelzoo campaign also earned a **Destiny Award Winner for Best Digital Campaign** at the U.S. Travel Association's ESTO Conference.
- Selected by Smart Meetings for the Smart Meetings Platinum Choice Award.
- Awarded two Silver and two Bronze awards from the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI):
- ▶ Silver for Gulf to Bay Destination Magazine as well as the Barbiecore PR Campaign.
- ▶ Bronze for Like a Local Influencer Social Media Campaign as well as The Ultimate Cheat Meals of St. Pete social media video.
- Earned ConventionSouth's 2023 Readers' Choice Award as a top destination in the region for the second straight year.







Deliver First-Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

- **5.1** Maximize partner relationships and public outreach
- **5.2** Be responsible stewards of the public's resources
- **5.3** Ensure effective and efficient delivery of county services and support
- **5.4** Strive to serve the needs of all Pinellas County residents and customers



Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

- **2.1** Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to create and enhance a safe, secure, and healthy community
- **2.2** Be a facilitator, convener, and purchaser of services for those in need
- 2.3 Provide comprehensive services to connect our veterans and dependents to the benefits they have earned
- 2.4 Support programs that seek to prevent and remedy the causes of homelessness and move homeless individuals and families to permanent housing
- **2.5** Enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety



Practice Superior Environmental Stewardship

- **3.1** Implement green technologies and practices where practical
- **3.2** Preserve and manage environmental lands, beaches, parks, and historical assets
- **3.3** Protect and improve the quality of our water, air, and other natural resources
- **3.4** Reduce/reuse/recycle resources. Including energy, water, and solid waste
- **3.5** Foster a sustainable and resilient community that is prepared for sea level rise and a changing climate



Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

- **4.1** Proactively attract and retain businesses with targeted jobs to the county and the region
- **4.2** Invest in communities that need the most
- **4.3** Catalyze redevelopment through planning and regulatory programs
- **4.4** Invest in infrastructure to meet current and future needs
- **4.5** Provide safe and effective transportation systems to support the efficient flow of motorists, commerce, and regional connectivity
- **4.6** Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

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Create a Quality Workforce in a Positive, Supportive Organization

- **1.1** Recruit, select, and retain the most diverse and talented workforce
- **1.2** Leverage, promote, and expand opportunities for workforce growth and development
- **1.3** Make workforce safety and wellness a priority
- **1.4** Maintain a fair and competitive compensation package

