RESOLUTION NO. __________

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING, SUBJECT TO VOTER APPROVAL, THE ISSUANCE OF NOT TO EXCEED $140,000,000 IN AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS IN ONE OR MORE TRANCHES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RELATED COUNTYWIDE AD VALOREM TAX LEVY NOT EXCEEDING 0.35 MILL TO FINANCE PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, CLEAN WATER PROTECTION, AND LAND CONSERVATION PROJECTS; PROVIDING THAT THE BOARD MAY FINANCE THE PROGRAM THROUGH BONDS, PAY-AS-YOU-GO REVENUES, OR A COMBINATION THEREOF; CALLING A BOND REFERENDUM TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026; APPROVING THE BALLOT TITLE AND SUMMARY; DIRECTING THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS; ESTABLISHING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, FUNDING ALLOCATIONS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Marion County, Florida (the "County"), through its Board of County Commissioners (the "Board"), is authorized to provide parks, trails, recreational facilities, water-resource protection, and land-conservation improvements that serve a public purpose and benefit County residents; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that acquiring and improving lands and conservation easements for parks, trails, and recreational facilities; preserving and protecting the quality of drinking-water sources, springs, rivers, and lakes; and protecting natural lands, farms, and forests will promote public health, safety, recreation, environmental stewardship, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds it necessary and in the best interests of the County to finance all or a portion of such capital projects through general obligation bonds, pay-as-you-go use of Program Millage Revenues, or a combination thereof, so that financing may be matched to project readiness, market conditions, and the interests of County taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, any Bonds issued will mature within twenty (20) years after the issuance of each tranche, bear interest at a rate not exceeding the maximum legal rate, and be payable from countywide ad valorem taxes levied at a rate not exceeding 0.35 mill, as more particularly provided in this Resolution and subsequent bond resolutions; and

WHEREAS, Section 200.181(3), Florida Statutes, authorizes a county to levy voted millage at the maximum rate approved by referendum even when the levy produces revenue in excess of the amount necessary for debt service, permits that surplus revenue to be used for any lawful purpose solely related to the approved capital project, including operations and maintenance, and requires the debt-service portion and surplus portion to be classified and accounted for as provided by law; and

WHEREAS, the Board intends that voter approval will authorize, but will not require, issuance of the Bonds, and that the Board may issue all, a portion, or none of the authorized Bonds and may implement the Program on a pay-as-you-go basis using Program Millage Revenues, subject to the annual budget and millage process and applicable law; and

WHEREAS, Article VII, Section 12 of the Florida Constitution and applicable Florida law require approval by the electors before the County may issue the Bonds described herein; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to call a countywide bond referendum to be held in conjunction with the General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, and to direct that the ballot title and summary contained in this Resolution be placed before the qualified electors of Marion County; and

WHEREAS, Section 101.161, Florida Statutes, requires the ballot title and ballot summary to be embodied in the enabling resolution and limits the ballot title to fifteen (15) words and the ballot summary to seventy-five (75) words; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to establish binding program-allocation parameters so that no more than ten percent (10%) of Available Program Funds may be used for program and project management and operations and maintenance directly attributable to the Program, with ordinary recurring operations and maintenance paid only from Surplus Millage Revenues or other legally available non-Bond revenues; not less than ten percent (10%) and not more than twenty percent (20%) may be used for land acquisition and preservation; and the balance will be dedicated to capital improvements, including design, permitting, and construction; and

WHEREAS, the Board further desires to ensure full public disclosure of all spending through separate accounting, regular public reporting, independent audit, and citizen oversight; and

WHEREAS, the Board intends that this Resolution constitute a declaration of official intent for reimbursement of eligible capital expenditures from Bond proceeds to the extent permitted by applicable federal tax law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida:

1. **Authority and Findings.** This Resolution is adopted pursuant to Article VII, Section 12 of the Florida Constitution; Chapters 100, 101, 125, 130, and 200, Florida Statutes, including Section 200.181(3), Florida Statutes; and other applicable provisions of law. The recitals stated above are true and correct and are incorporated into this Resolution as the findings of the Board.

2. **Definitions.** For purposes of this Resolution, the following terms have the meanings stated below.

   (a) **Available Program Funds.** The net proceeds of the Bonds and earnings on those proceeds that are available to pay Program costs after payment or provision for costs of issuance, capitalized interest, debt-service reserves, and other financing costs authorized by law and approved by bond counsel, together with Surplus Millage Revenues and any other Program Millage Revenues lawfully available for pay-as-you-go Program expenditures after payment or provision for debt service. Allocation percentages in Section 9 shall be measured cumulatively over the life of the Program and across Bond-financed and pay-as-you-go expenditures, and are not required to be met within each individual project, fiscal year, or Bond tranche.

   (b) **Bonds.** The Marion County general obligation bonds authorized by this Resolution, in an aggregate principal amount not exceeding $140,000,000, issued in one or more tranches after voter approval.

   (c) **Construction Improvements.** Capital improvements and directly related professional services for parks, trails, recreational facilities, water-quality protection, and land-conservation purposes, including planning, programming, surveying, environmental review, architecture, engineering, design, permitting, bidding, construction, reconstruction, renovation, rehabilitation, expansion, site work, utilities, accessibility, safety, resiliency, commissioning, and equipment or furnishings integral to a capital facility.

   (d) **Land Acquisition and Preservation.** Acquisition of fee-simple or lesser interests in real property, including conservation easements, development rights, and other interests that protect parks, trails, drinking-water sources, springs, rivers, lakes, natural lands, farms, or forests, together with appraisals, surveys, title work, environmental due diligence, closing costs, land-management planning, and initial restoration or stabilization directly related to the acquired interest.

   (e) **Program.** The countywide parks, trails, clean water protection, farms, forests, and land-conservation capital program financed in whole or in part with Available Program Funds.

   (f) **Program Millage Revenues.** The proceeds of the countywide ad valorem tax levy approved by the electors and imposed annually by the Board at a rate not exceeding 0.35 mill, including the portion required for debt service on the Bonds and the portion lawfully available for pay-as-you-go Program costs.

   (g) **Surplus Millage Revenues.** The portion of Program Millage Revenues in any fiscal year that exceeds the amount necessary to pay or provide for principal, interest, reserves, and other debt-service requirements on outstanding Bonds. Pursuant to Section 200.181(3), Florida Statutes, Surplus Millage Revenues shall be treated as general millage, included within the County's 10-mill limitation, and used only for lawful purposes solely related to the Program. If no Bonds are outstanding, Program Millage Revenues levied for pay-as-you-go implementation shall be classified and accounted for in the manner required by Section 200.181(3), Florida Statutes, and other applicable law.

3. **Authorization of Bonds, Millage, and Financing Methods Subject to Voter Approval.** Subject to approval of the referendum called by this Resolution, the County is authorized to issue the Bonds and to implement the related Program Millage Revenue levy. Voter approval authorizes, but does not require, issuance of any Bonds. The Board retains the discretion to select the financing method or combination of financing methods that best serves the Program and the public interest, subject to this Resolution and applicable law.

   (a) Bond Financing. The Board may issue all or any portion of the Bonds in one or more tranches. The Bonds shall be general obligations of the County, payable from countywide ad valorem taxes levied at a rate not exceeding 0.35 mill in any fiscal year, and shall otherwise be structured in accordance with the Florida Constitution and applicable law. Each tranche shall mature within twenty (20) years after issuance and shall bear interest at a rate not exceeding the maximum rate permitted by law at the time of sale. The final terms, sale method, redemption provisions, security, and other details of each tranche shall be approved by one or more subsequent bond resolutions adopted by the Board.

   (b) Annual Levy and Debt-Service Priority. Through the annual budget and millage process, the Board may levy the rate it determines appropriate for the Program, not exceeding 0.35 mill. Nothing in this Resolution requires the Board to levy the full 0.35 mill in any fiscal year. In each fiscal year in which Bonds are outstanding, the amount necessary to pay or provide for debt service and other Bond requirements shall have first priority and shall be treated as debt-service millage. Any portion of the levy above the amount necessary for debt service shall constitute Surplus Millage Revenues, shall be treated as general millage within the County's 10-mill limitation, and may be used only for lawful Program purposes, including pay-as-you-go capital costs and the project management, operations, and maintenance category established in Section 9(a).

   (c) Pay-As-You-Go Financing and No-Bond Option. After voter approval, the Board may defer Bond issuance or elect not to issue any Bonds and may finance all or a portion of the Program on a pay-as-you-go basis using Program Millage Revenues and other legally available revenues. When no Bonds are outstanding, the amount levied may be appropriated for pay-as-you-go Program costs, subject to Section 9, the County's annual budget and millage process, the statutory classification and 10-mill limitation applicable to such revenues, and other applicable law. Approval of the referendum does not, by itself, obligate the County to incur debt.

4. **Referendum Called.** A countywide bond referendum is hereby called and shall be held in conjunction with the General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, for the purpose of submitting the issuance of the Bonds and the related maximum countywide ad valorem tax rate described in the ballot measure to the qualified electors of Marion County. All qualified electors residing in Marion County shall be entitled to vote in the referendum.

5. **Election Administration.** The Marion County Supervisor of Elections is hereby requested and directed, as provided by law, to place the ballot measure stated in Section 7 on the

November 3, 2026 General Election ballot and to take all actions necessary to conduct the referendum. The County Administrator, Clerk of Court and Comptroller, County Attorney, and their designees are authorized to coordinate with the Supervisor of Elections, execute routine election documents and agreements, pay the County's lawful share of election costs, arrange any translation required by law, and take other ministerial actions necessary to implement this Resolution.

6. **Notice of Bond Referendum.** Notice of the referendum shall be published as required by Section 100.342, Florida Statutes, substantially in the form attached as Exhibit A. The notice shall be published at least twice, once in the fifth week and once in the third week before the week of the referendum, with at least thirty (30) days' notice, by a method authorized by law.

7. **Official Ballot.** The ballot title and ballot summary for the referendum shall be presented substantially in the following form, subject only to non-substantive formatting, voting-system, and legally required translation changes that do not alter the chief purpose or legal effect of the measure:

OFFICIAL BALLOT

MARION COUNTY GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND REFERENDUM FOR PARKS, TRAILS, CLEAN WATER PROTECTION, FARMS AND FORESTS

To acquire and improve lands and conservation easements for parks, trails, and recreational facilities; preserve and protect quality of drinking water sources, springs, rivers and lakes; and protect natural lands, farms, forests; Shall Marion County issue bonds up to $140 million principal amount, maturing within 20 years of each issuance, bearing interest not exceeding the maximum legal rate, payable from countywide ad valorem taxes not exceeding 0.35 mils, with full public disclosure of all spending?

YES - FOR BONDS
NO - AGAINST BONDS

The ballot title contains fifteen (15) words, and the ballot summary contains seventy-five (75) words. A vote of "YES - FOR BONDS" shall constitute approval of the issuance of the Bonds and the related countywide ad valorem tax pledge described on the ballot. Following approval, the Board may exercise the financing discretion provided in Section 3, subject to applicable law. A vote of "NO - AGAINST BONDS" shall constitute rejection.

8. **Referendum Results.** The officials responsible for canvassing the General Election shall canvass and certify the referendum results as required by law. If a majority of votes cast are "YES - FOR BONDS," the Bonds and the related countywide ad valorem tax pledge are approved, and the Board may implement the Program using Bonds, pay-as-you-go Program Millage Revenues, or a combination thereof, subject to this Resolution and applicable law. If a majority is not obtained, no Bonds shall be issued and no Program Millage Revenue levy shall be imposed pursuant to this Resolution.

9. **Program Funding Allocations.** Subject to legal eligibility, federal tax requirements applicable to Bond proceeds, and the Bond documents, Available Program Funds, whether derived from Bond proceeds or pay-as-you-go Program Millage Revenues, shall be allocated and tracked cumulatively over the life of the Program as follows:

   (a) **Program Management, Operations and Maintenance - Up to 10%.** Up to ten percent (10%) of Available Program Funds may be used for program and project management and for operations and maintenance directly attributable to the Program. Eligible costs may include owner representation, project controls, scheduling, cost estimating, procurement, contract administration, public engagement, financial management, audit, reporting, directly attributable County staff or consultant services, commissioning, startup, warranty-period services, capital maintenance, major repair, and ordinary recurring operations and maintenance of Program facilities. Bond proceeds may be used only for costs that bond counsel determines in writing are legally payable from Bond proceeds and consistent with federal tax requirements and the expected useful life of the Bonds. Ordinary recurring operations and maintenance shall be paid only from Surplus Millage Revenues or other legally available non-Bond revenues. Any portion of this category not used shall be added to Construction Improvements.

   (b) **Land Acquisition and Preservation - 10% Minimum; 20% Maximum.** Not less than ten percent (10%) and not more than twenty percent (20%) shall be used for Land Acquisition and Preservation. Real-property interests may be acquired for parks, trails, public access, water-resource protection, natural-land conservation, or preservation of farms and forests. Each acquisition remains subject to separate Board approval and all appraisal, due-diligence, title, environmental, and closing requirements imposed by law or County policy.

   (c) **Construction Improvements - Balance of Funds; 70% Minimum.** The balance of Available Program Funds, and in no event less than seventy percent (70%), shall be dedicated to Construction Improvements. This category expressly includes design, engineering, permitting, and construction, as well as the other directly related capital costs included in the definition of Construction Improvements.

   (d) **Allocation Compliance.** Projects containing costs in more than one category shall separately identify and account for each category. The County shall monitor both commitments and actual expenditures, and final Program closeout shall comply with the percentage ranges in this Section. The Board shall not amend this Section to authorize a use outside these ranges without approval of the electors at a subsequent referendum, except as required by a final court order or a mandatory change in law.

10. **Program Plan and Project Selection.** Within one hundred eighty (180) days after certification of a favorable referendum result, the Board shall adopt, at a public meeting, an initial Parks and Conservation Program Plan. The Program Plan shall identify each proposed project or project category, location, purpose, estimated budget, funding-allocation category, anticipated financing method, anticipated schedule, and expected recurring operating and maintenance impact. The Plan shall also identify the projected use

of Bond proceeds, Program Millage Revenues, and other legally available non-Bond revenues to acquire, design, construct, operate, and maintain Program lands and facilities.

(a) **Prioritization.** Projects shall be prioritized using transparent criteria that may include public health and safety; community need; reasonable geographic access and countywide benefit; project readiness; condition of existing assets; accessibility; water-quality or conservation benefit; lifecycle cost; resilience; partnership or grant leverage; and consistency with adopted County plans.

(b) **Amendments and Substitutions.** The Board may amend the Program Plan or substitute eligible projects at a public meeting when a project becomes infeasible, materially changes in cost or scope, or is superseded by a higher-priority need, provided that every substitute remains within the purposes approved by the electors and the allocation requirements of Section 9.

(c) **Public Ownership or Control.** Program-financed improvements shall be located on property owned or controlled by the County or another public entity under an agreement that protects the public investment, provides appropriate public access, and extends for at least the useful life of the financed improvement, unless the County Attorney and, when Bonds are involved, bond counsel approve another legally permissible structure.

11. Land Protection Requirements. No specific property is approved for acquisition by this Resolution. Before approving an acquisition, the Board shall receive the due-diligence materials required by law and County policy and shall make a finding that the acquisition advances an approved Program purpose. Conservation easements and preservation interests should be structured for long-term or perpetual protection when appropriate. Property acquired primarily for preservation shall not be sold, transferred, or converted to an inconsistent use unless the Board, after a noticed public hearing, finds that the action is legally permissible, necessary, and accompanied by replacement protection of reasonably equivalent value and public benefit.

12. Program Financing, Bond Issuance, Millage Administration, and Fiscal Controls. The Board shall determine, based on project readiness, cash-flow needs, interest rates, debt capacity, and taxpayer impact, whether to use Bond financing, pay-as-you-go financing, or a combination thereof. Bonds, if issued, shall be sized and timed to minimize interest expense, carrying costs, and unnecessary tax levies. Pay-as-you-go financing may be used to reduce or avoid borrowing costs and align expenditures with project readiness. Bond proceeds and investment earnings and Program Millage Revenues shall be deposited in one or more separate funds or accounts, separately tracked by source and statutory classification, and used only for authorized Program and financing costs. The County shall comply with all arbitrage, rebate, private-use, continuing-disclosure, budget, millage, and other requirements applicable to the selected financing method.

(a) **Annual Millage Adoption and Classification.** Each annual budget and millage resolution implementing the referendum shall identify the Program millage rate, not exceeding 0.35 mill; the portion necessary to pay or provide for debt service on outstanding Bonds; and the portion, if any, classified as general millage and available for Program expenditures under Section 200.181(3), Florida Statutes. Surplus Millage Revenues shall remain restricted to the Program and shall not be transferred to unrelated County purposes.

(b) Pay-As-You-Go Appropriations. Before expenditure of pay-as-you-go Program Millage Revenues, the Board shall approve the applicable annual and project appropriations. The Program may proceed without issuance of Bonds. Unspent pay-as-you-go revenues shall be carried forward in a restricted Program fund or account and shall remain subject to the allocation requirements of Section 9.

(c) Reimbursement Intent. The Board declares its official intent under Treasury Regulation Section 1.150-2 to reimburse the County from Bond proceeds for eligible capital expenditures paid before issuance, subject to the timing, documentation, and other requirements of federal tax law.

(d) No Premature Commitment. Except for lawful preliminary and reimbursable expenditures, this Resolution does not award a contract, approve a specific acquisition, or authorize expenditure of Bond proceeds or Program Millage Revenues before voter approval and completion of all required procurement, budget, and Board actions.

13. Full Public Disclosure and Accounting. To implement the ballot commitment of full public disclosure of all spending, the County shall maintain separate, auditable accounting for the Program by financing source, statutory millage classification, tranche, project, and allocation category. At least quarterly, the County shall publish an online report or dashboard showing the annual Program millage rate; Program Millage Revenues collected; the amounts classified as debt-service millage and general millage; Bond proceeds and investment earnings; debt issued, outstanding, and remaining authorization; pay-as-you-go revenues and expenditures; project budgets, encumbrances, expenditures, payees, and purposes; contracts and change orders; project status and anticipated completion; allocation percentages; and other information reasonably necessary for the public to follow the receipt and use of Program funds. Disclosure remains subject to exemptions required by law.

(a) Annual Report and Audit. The County shall prepare an annual Program report and obtain an annual independent financial and compliance audit or agreed-upon-procedures review addressing the use of Bond proceeds and Program Millage Revenues, the classification of the annual levy under Section 200.181(3), Florida Statutes, compliance with Section 9, and the accuracy of public reporting. The report and audit shall be presented to the Board at a public meeting and posted online.

(b) Records. Program records shall be retained and made available in accordance with Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and the County's records-retention requirements.

14. Parks and Recreation Advisory Council. Within one hundred twenty (120) days after certification of a favorable referendum result, the Board shall establish by revision of Marion County Resolution 03-R-180 (Establishing the Parks and Recreation Advisory Council), guidelines for the Parks and Recreation Advisory County (PRAC) to include Program accountability. The PRAC currently consists of five (5) Marion County residents and through revision shall provide for the addition of two (2) additional members to serve as Members at Large. The membership shall collectively provide experience in public finance or audit; engineering, construction, or project management; parks or recreation; water resources, conservation, agriculture, or forestry; and community representation. The Committee shall review the Program Plan, financing methods, millage classifications, quarterly reports, annual audit, and compliance with Section 9 and shall report its findings to the Board at least annually. The Committee is advisory only and has no authority to bind the County, award contracts, direct employees, or manage projects. Its meetings and records shall comply with applicable open-government laws.

15. **Use Limited to Voter-Approved Purposes.** Available Program Funds, including Surplus Millage Revenues, shall not be used for purposes unrelated to the ballot measure or for routine County expenses that are not directly attributable to the Program. Surplus Millage Revenues and pay-as-you-go revenues shall remain restricted to lawful purposes solely related to the Program and shall not be transferred to unrelated general County purposes. The Board may allocate funds among eligible projects and may use grants, partnerships, impact fees, donations, or other legally available revenues to supplement the Program, but such supplemental revenues shall not reduce the percentage commitments imposed on Available Program Funds by Section 9.

16. **Severability.** If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or provision of this Resolution is held invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder shall not be affected and shall remain in full force to the greatest extent permitted by law.

17. **Effective Date.** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

DULY ADOPTED in regular session this ____ day of ___________________, 2026.

MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, by its Board of County Commissioners

By: ______________________________
Carl Zalak, III, Chairman

ATTEST:

____
Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk of Court
and Comptroller

For use and reliance of Marion County only,
approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

____
Matthew G. Minter, County Attorney

EXHIBIT A

NOTICE OF MARION COUNTY GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND REFERENDUM FOR PARKS, TRAILS, CLEAN WATER PROTECTION, FARMS AND FORESTS TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a countywide bond referendum will be held in Marion County, Florida, on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, in conjunction with the General Election, pursuant to Resolution No. __________ adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida, on ____________________, 2026.

The referendum will determine whether Marion County may issue general obligation bonds in one or more tranches in an aggregate principal amount not exceeding $140,000,000 to acquire and improve lands and conservation easements for parks, trails, and recreational facilities; preserve and protect the quality of drinking-water sources, springs, rivers, and lakes; and protect natural lands, farms, and forests. Each tranche will mature within twenty (20) years after issuance, bear interest at a rate not exceeding the maximum legal rate, and be payable from countywide ad valorem taxes levied at a rate not exceeding 0.35 mill.

After voter approval, the Board may issue all, some, or none of the Bonds and may use the levy for pay-as-you-go Program costs, subject to law. Debt service has first priority. Excess or no-bond levy revenue shall be treated as general millage within the County's 10-mill limitation and used only for the Program, including authorized project management, operations, and maintenance.

The official ballot for the referendum will be substantially as follows:

OFFICIAL BALLOT

MARION COUNTY GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND REFERENDUM FOR PARKS, TRAILS, CLEAN WATER PROTECTION, FARMS AND FORESTS

To acquire and improve lands and conservation easements for parks, trails, and recreational facilities; preserve and protect quality of drinking water sources, springs, rivers and lakes; and protect natural lands, farms, forests; Shall Marion County issue bonds up to $140 million principal amount, maturing within 20 years of each issuance, bearing interest not exceeding the maximum legal rate, payable from countywide ad valorem taxes not exceeding 0.35 mils, with full public disclosure of all spending?

YES - FOR BONDS
NO - AGAINST BONDS

The referendum shall be conducted by the Marion County Supervisor of Elections in accordance with Florida law. All qualified electors residing in Marion County may vote. Polling places, voting hours, vote-by-mail procedures, early-voting information, and other election details shall be those established and published by the Supervisor of Elections for the November 3, 2026 General Election.

By order of the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida.

____

Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk of Court
and Comptroller