



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

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May 21, 2026

Subject: Official Endorsement of the Ocala Rapid Response Aerial Pilot (RRAP) and a Commitment to Regional Fiscal Stewardship

To the SS4A Selection Committee,

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners views the Ocala Rapid Response Aerial Pilot (RRAP) as a cornerstone of our regional effort to modernize public safety infrastructure. As Marion County continues to experience rapid growth, our roadway networks require innovative and data driven solutions that go beyond traditional paving and signals.

This 60 month demonstration project is a necessary evolution of our Local Road Safety Plan framework. While the City's current implementation projects focus heavily on the physical engineering of safer roads, including major corridor modifications along the local High-Injury Network, upgraded intersection signal visibility, and targeted school zone safety enhancements, the RRAP uniquely addresses the critical, often overlooked pillar of post crash care. By deploying an autonomous aerial overwatch network that bridges the gap between physical prevention and emergency response, this initiative creates a complete and effective safety ecosystem for our residents. From a governance perspective, the RRAP project is built on sound fiscal and operational principles:

- **Proactive Fiscal Management:** The proposed budget structure demonstrates a commitment to long term fiscal clarity. By satisfying the local match through an upfront municipal capital investment, this approach ensures federal funds are maximized over the five year pilot without creating a recurring administrative burden on local taxpayers.
- **Asset Preservation:** By providing an automated, rapid "eye on scene" within three minutes, the system helps prevent the unnecessary deployment of heavy rescue apparatus and extra patrol units to minor incidents. This reduces vehicle wear, fuel consumption, and operational strain while preserving our countywide emergency fleet and aviation resources for true life threatening emergencies.
- **Economic Resilience and Inter Agency Cooperation:** Reducing secondary crashes and clearing major municipal arteries faster keeps our logistics, workforce, and visitor corridors moving, all vital components of the Marion County economy. This project also strengthens coordination between City and County first responders, which is essential for a modern, regional safety strategy.

The RRAP is an essential safeguard for the protection of our visitors and the nearly 400,000 residents we serve. We strongly advocate for the approval of this federal investment to establish Ocala as a national model for technology integrated roadway safety.

Sincerely,

Carl Zalak, III
Chairman, County Commissioners *Empowering Marion for Success*