



PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

BOND FUNDING UPDATE – AUGUST 5, 2026



Topics for Discussion



Bond Funding

- Status of Bond Funding Initiative
- Project Prioritization
- Ballot
- Authorizing and Implementation Resolution Framework
- Next Steps

Status of Bond Initiative



Since Last Workshop

- Project Prioritization
 - Internal Prioritization
 - Meetings with Commissioners
- Nailing Down the Ballot Language
- Drafting Resolution
- Discussions with State Agencies and Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation

Status of Bond Initiative



Re-Cap on Why this Initiative is Important

- Meeting with Board since summer of 2024
- Explored several different funding opportunities
- Due to maintenance backlog and growth of the community, a substantial level of funding is needed
- Pursuit of voter-approved bond funding is essential to long term success
- Bond funding can be leveraged through over funding options as well
- This is a significant boost to our community's quality of life

Project Prioritization



Methodology – Metrics and Measures

Developed a system to assign ranking based on a mathematically sound approach of using eight metrics and measuring each one.

- **Health & Public Safety Deficit** (Weight: 20%)
- **Current Asset Condition & Depreciation** (Weight: 15%)
- **Economic Impact, Revenue Generation & Tourism Attraction** (Weight: 15%)
- **Policy Leverage & Resource Optimization** (Weight: 15%)
- **Population Density & Growth Need** (Weight: 15%)
- **Statutory & Regulatory Mandate Compliance** (Weight: 10%)
- **Service Co-Location & Duplication** (Weight: 5%)
- **Asset Life-Cycle & Operational Sustainability** (Weight: 5%)

Project Prioritization



Metrics and Measures & Commissioner Priorities

- Each project in each park was evaluated using Metrics & Measures
- Scores ranges between 1.4 and 8.8
- Ranking process and scoring system resulted in focused list of needs
- Each Commissioner provided their recommendations for projects

Prioritization



District 1

Shocker Park and Adjacent
Fort King National Historic Landmark
Baseline Road Trailhead

District 2

Independence Park – Land Swap
Southwest Regional Park
Land Acquisition

District 3

Bellevue Sportsplex
Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area
Rotary Sportsplex – Soccer Fields

District 4

Ray Wayside Park
Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat

District 5

Northwest Regional Park
Norm Westbrook Park
Land Acquisition

Countywide

Multi-Functional Facility
LED Lighting Conversion

Proposed Ballot Language



“MARION COUNTY GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND REFERENDUM FOR PARKS, TRAILS, CLEAN WATER PROTECTION, FARMS AND FORESTS” (15 words)

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 mills, with full public disclosure of all spending? (75 words)

Proposed Final Ballot Language



Breakdown of essential language:

- 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

Authorizing and Implementation Resolution



Authorization

- Calls for a countywide referendum on Tuesday, November 3, 2026
- Authorizes the issuance of General Obligation Bonds up to \$140M
 - May be issued in one or more tranches
 - Each tranche matures within 20 years of issuance
- Provides discretionary authority
 - Voters approve the bonds, yet does not force the County to issue them
 - May or may not issued bonds and can use pay-as-you-go using tax levy revenues

Authorizing and Implementation Resolution



Mandatory Program Implementation & Funding Allocations

- Spending “buckets”
 - Up to 10% for Project Management/Operations & Maintenance
 - 10% - 20% for Land Acquisition and Preservation
 - 70% - 90% for Capital Improvements

Authorizing and Implementation Resolution



Implementation Workflow & Timelines

- 180 Days: Board must approve Parks & Conservation Land Program Plan
- 120 Days: Add Citizen Accountability/Oversight role to PRAC
 - Remains as five Board-appointed Marion County residents
 - Member expertise: finance, construction, parks/recreation, conservation, general community representation
 - Advises on plans, millage classifications, quarterly reports and audits
- Include public ownership parameters
- Develop clear stewardship of acquired lands

Authorizing and Implementation Resolution



Financial & Accountability Mechanics

- Bond Proceeds
 - Dedicated to capital improvements, acquisitions-conservation
 - May not be used for Operations & Maintenance
- Millage
 - Provides an opinion to the Board of public support
 - Pay debt services first
 - Portion may be used for Operations & Maintenance
- Public transparency & reporting
 - Quarterly updates – online dashboard
 - Annual audits

Next Steps – Implementation Items



1. Finalize Resolution
2. Conduct 1:1s to review Resolution
3. Board action on Resolution – August 18, 2026
4. Transmit Ballot and Resolution to Supervisor of Elections
5. PAC/Non-Profit

Conclusion



Questions?