

## Sarasota ponies up with River Road funding

With plans in place for the state to begin improvements to River Road in 2021, Sarasota County commissioners began to take steps Tuesday to comply with their requirements under a road transfer agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation.

Without discussion, commissioners unanimously agreed to appropriate \$24.8 million toward the River Road widening project as required by another agreement with FDOT.

Those funds will pay for the county's share of the widening and overall improvements to River Road from U.S. 41 to just north of West Villages Parkway.

The state will be responsible for all costs over \$24.8 million and will shoulder all costs for the improvement project from West Villages Parkway to Interstate 75.

The county's \$24.8 million contribution will come from South County Mobility fees, South Roads Construction Funds, the North Port Road Impact Capital Fund, and a pending loan from the State Infrastructure Bank.

Tuesday's action came despite objections from a group of Siesta Key residents who, at a meeting on the Key with FDOT officials in December, raised objections to the road transfer agreement. In return for the state taking over North River Road, that agreement

transfers responsibility for two state roads on Siesta Key absent the bridges, to the county.

Tuesday, County Public Works Director Spencer Anderson confirmed that the road transfer agreement, which commissioners approved last October, remains operational, although it is unknown what action, if any, FDOT will take regarding the concerns raised at the Siesta Key meeting.

Most of those comments concerned congestion on Stickney Point Road, one of the state routes the county will take over, and the related Siesta Promenades project by Benderson Development at the intersection of Stickney Point Road and U.S. 41.

In a related action, as part of their consent agenda, commissioners also approved eight resolutions of necessity that will allow staff to initiate eminent domain proceedings on eight properties essential to the River Road widening project.

In a memo to commissioners, Anderson wrote that negotiations with the landowners are ongoing, but the county does face an April deadline to acquire the properties pursuant to the road transfer agreement. Once the county has ownership, it must send maps to FDOT showing the full right of way for the widening project.

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### About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



### About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with FDOT as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program. We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

# The Purpose of the Estimate

Construction estimating is the process of forecasting a project's costs. However, true project costs are only known once the project is completed. There are several types of construction cost estimates. There are two main ones: preliminary (budget) cost estimates and detailed cost estimates. Many times, an architect will solicit budget estimates from contractors or independent estimating firms to help their client determine if the project can move forward. A good estimate prevents the contractor from losing money and helps the customer avoid overpaying.

The purpose of an estimate has a different meaning to different people involved in the process. To the owner, it provides a reasonable, accurate idea of the costs. This will help him or her decide whether the work can be undertaken as proposed, needs to be modified, or should be abandoned. To the contractor, it must provide the cost of materials and labor to install the project as well as make a profit.

Accurate estimating is the foundation of profitable contracting. Accuracy must be based on several factors. The estimator must understand the type of construction, the project schedule, availability of skilled workers, and the construction sequence to produce an accurate estimate.

The product of estimating is the estimate. The product of the estimate is a project contract. The product of the

project contract is profit. The skilled estimator must understand the purpose of the estimate to produce an accurate estimate. Before we dive into the purpose, let's consider the key ingredients that make up a successful electrical estimate:

1. Selection of materials — Residential, commercial, and industrial projects require uniquely different materials. A receptacle designed for a residential home cannot be installed in an industrial hazardous location, and the cost difference in these two types of receptacles can reach several thousand dollars. The estimator must select the proper materials that meet the requirements of the contract specifications, the National Electrical Code (NEC), and the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

2. Required quantity of materials — Accuracy is key to the estimating process. Quality detailed installation drawings should provide the estimator with the ability to determine accurate quantities of materials required for the project.

3. Material pricing at market levels — The contract technical specifications provide the product manufacturers and model numbers for materials to be installed. It is paramount that the specified materials are installed as outlined in the documents. Substituting specified materials with non-specified products can be costly to the contractor.

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CEI is an educational organization providing the highest quality construction training in the industry. Over 100,000 owners, estimators, project managers, field supervisors, office support staff, foremen, laborers, and key management personnel have attended courses that are offered nationwide. The courses provide students with construction skills training and the critical information needed to be effective within their companies and organizations.