

Outlook

"Your project. Our passion."

A quarterly publication by:

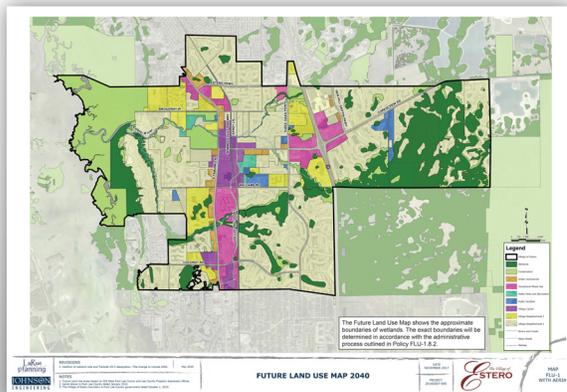


Winter 2019/20

IT TOOK A VILLAGE, TO BUILD THE VILLAGE OF ESTERO

After 33 community meetings, determining a boundary, and obtaining legislative approval of a ballot question, voters went to the ballot box in November 2014 and approved a referendum to incorporate the Estero area of Lee County as a Village. On December 31, 2014, the incorporation became effective, and much more work began.

Once incorporated, the formula for Villagehood required rapid formation of a government. In quick fashion, an election for a seven-member Village Council was organized, and the inaugural Council meeting was held in March 2015. New Councilmembers faced some basic challenges of starting a new government, such as: Where will public meetings and offices be accommodated? Who will serve as staff to manage, budget, and maintain records? Answers came quickly with the renting of space from the Estero Fire District Headquarters, and the contracting and hiring of an Interim Manager and a Village Attorney immediately, followed by a Clerk and a Community Development Director in June 2015.



The Village of Estero's Comprehensive Plan is now effective and available online at estero-fl.gov.

Another set of obstacles for the new Village leaders was the establishment of governing plans and regulations. Florida Statutes allow for the transition to occur from a County to a municipal comprehensive plan over a three-year period for newly incorporated jurisdictions. The Estero community's longtime commitment to planning for its future earned it the nickname the "Village with a Vision," and with the clock ticking, it

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FGCU Breaks Ground on AB9



PEOPLE & PROJECTS: ON THE MOVE



Alfredo Perez, PE, PSM project engineer on the water resources team, has successfully earned his Professional Surveying & Mapping license from the Florida Board of Professional Surveyors & Mappers.



Abe Elizarraraz environmental scientist, has recently obtained his FAA remote pilot license. Our drone services include aerial photography, videography, mapping & data collection.



Chris Barrett (left) development technician was recognized as the 2019-20 recipient of the Johnson Engineering Endowed Scholarship at this year's FGCU President's Scholarship luncheon.

was critical for the Village to craft its own comprehensive plan to establish the community's state-mandated blueprint for its future.

In 2016, the Village selected our team of planners, ecologists, mappers, and engineers along with LaRue Planning to prepare the Village's first Comprehensive Plan. Made up of nine elements, the Comprehensive Plan guides the future development patterns, transportation networks, housing, infrastructure, conservation and coastal management, recreation and open space, intergovernmental coordination, capital improvements, and public school facilities within the Village for the next twenty years.

To prepare Estero's first Comprehensive Plan, we needed to know where the community is going, and where it has been. We performed a full evaluation of the Lee County Comprehensive Plan before crafting a new document suited for the smaller scale municipality. Public engagement, visioning, and surveys kicked off in early 2017 to inform the guiding principles of the plan. Through these efforts, we learned that parks, open space, central city development, community character, walkability, and environmental protection are keys to the Village's identity. Also important to Village leaders was the quality of its comprehensive plan in form and function. Not for gathering dust on a shelf, this Comprehensive Plan is designed to be an understandable, user-friendly, and useful tool for its citizens.

Our GIS staff, engineers, landscape architects, and planners helped engage in community visioning, prepare maps, formulate data and analysis, and develop goals objectives and policies to make the vision workable and adaptable for the future. In keeping with Estero's tradition of engagement with the citizenry, dozens of workshops were held before the Planning and Zoning Board and Village Council to review the themes and content of each element of the Plan. Final adoption hearings were in 2018.

Following adoption by the Village, the State Department of Economic Opportunity reviewed and issued its Notice of Intent to find the Plan "In Compliance" with state regulation. A petition for administrative hearing was then filed challenging the Comprehensive Plan. A compliance agreement and zoning amendment for the petitioner who filed the challenge was adopted by Village Council on September 25, 2019. With the issuance of a final order determining compliance by the State, this Comprehensive Plan is now effective.

Effectiveness of its plan and the fifth anniversary of incorporation gives the Village with a Vision a lot to celebrate as this decade ends and a new one begins. For more information, contact Laura DeJohn, AICP at (239) 280-4331 or ldejohn@johnsoneng.com. ■



Johnson Engineering Planning Director, Laura DeJohn, AICP, presented the comprehensive plan to the Village of Estero council.

BREAKING GROUND FOR GATEWAY HIGH SCHOOL

The Lee County School District recently broke ground on the new Gateway High School. The 55.7-acre campus is located east of I-75 at the corner of State Road 82 and Griffin Drive.

This will be the County's 15th high school built to help educate our teens in this fast growing community. The school will feature cyber security, construction, veterinary, and culinary academies as part of the curriculum.

Johnson Engineering was selected as the civil engineer and will assist the lead architect, BSSW, with the overall site design for the complex, which include a stormwater management plan, environmental assessments, utility infrastructure, roadway and parking areas, and permitting. Working closely with Lee County School District staff, BSSW and the rest of the design team, we will help to make sure the school is on track to be ready for students in the fall of 2021.

For more information, contact Dana Hume at (239) 461-2471 or dhume@johnsoneng.com. ■



(Rendering courtesy of BSSW Architects)

SUPPORTING LEE COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY'S AVIATION DAY

Johnson Engineering was a proud sponsor of Lee County Port Authority's (LCPA) 2019 Aviation Day held in November. The annual event held at Page Field airport is a free family friendly aviation-themed affair to help highlight the value brought to our community by aviation and LCPA airports - Southwest Florida International Airport and Page Field. Among the aircrafts on display, plane and helicopter rides, local airport police and fire department personnel provided demonstrations to show how they continue to keep us safe in the skies. ■



JOHNSON ENGINEERING PRESENTS FINDINGS AT THE ICOET CONFERENCE

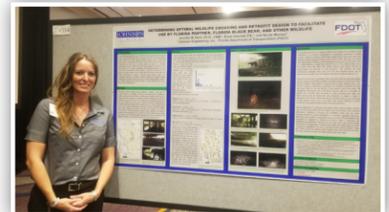
This past September, Johnson Engineering's wildlife biologist, Dr. Jennifer Korn, attended the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation (ICOET) in Sacramento, California. There she presented the results from the project Johnson Engineering recently completed for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One. The study used remote cameras to monitor wildlife crossings and existing bridge structures for use by wildlife, especially Florida panther, Florida black bear, and white-tailed deer. This data was then analyzed in an effort to determine optimal structural design that is also the most cost-effective for future wildlife crossings and retrofitted bridges.

The conference included presentations from wildlife and transportation professionals across the globe discussing topics such as structural design of wildlife crossings, policy, and monitoring methods. The conference location was of special importance as California attempts to build a new wildlife overpass

(at Liberty Canyon) near Los Angeles where mountain lions struggle with loss of habitat connectivity due to large highways. Insights gained from this conference will supplement our own information gathered about wildlife usage of existing bridge structures in Florida, as Johnson Engineering continues to assist on transportation projects and future design/placement of roads and wildlife crossings.

Jennifer also provided a viewing of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition mini-trek film titled "The Last Green Thread". This film featured her with the expedition members on location at the Reedy Creek Bridge on I-4. The film is available to view online at <https://youtu.be/chjolliforw>.

For more information, contact Dr. Jennifer Korn, Ph.D. at (817) 829-0453 or jkorn@johnsoneng.com. ■



Dr. Jennifer Korn presented the results of a project Johnson Engineering recently completed for FDOT District One at the ICOET conference.



Shown above is a display of the male mountain lion known as P-22, infamous for crossing two major highways to make it to Griffith Park where he has stayed for the past 8 years. Griffith Park is home to the famous Hollywood sign and is only about 5,000 acres in size. P-22 has the smallest home-range size of any known mountain lion and is an excellent educational animal about the urban-wildlife interface and transportation ecology.



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FGCU BREAKS GROUND ON NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING #9

Florida Gulf Coast University's newest academic building is underway. The team broke ground on Academic Building 9 (AB9), the future home of Integrated Watershed and Coastal Studies, nicknamed "The Water School," which is slated to open for students the fall semester of 2021.

The new building will be the largest on campus, located in the main campus area near the existing Cohen Center. Academic studies will focus on environmental sciences, STEM (science, technology, environmental and mathematics), and integrating water resource and coastal studies into existing programs. This facility will also provide additional space for research and teaching labs, as well as classroom space.

Working together with RG Architects, Johnson Engineering will provide the overall site design, stormwater management plan, environmental, utilities, and parking areas, as well as associated permitting.

Our long-standing history with the University started in August of 1997 with the first groundbreaking. Many FGCU students have interned at our firm during their summer breaks and most were hired as full-time employees once they graduated. Today, 15% of our employees are FGCU alumni and interns. We look forward to the potential graduates this new academic program will produce and bring to us in the future.

For more information, contact Dana Hume, P.E. at (239) 461-2471 or dhume@johnsoneng.com. ■



Johnson Engineering civil engineer Dana Hume, PE, attends the Water School groundbreaking with his daughter Lauren, a first-year student at FGCU. Dana has been the Engineer of Record for Johnson Engineering's FGCU projects for the past 10 years and now his daughter will walk the halls of many buildings he was instrumental in making happen.

(Rendering courtesy of
RG Architects, P.A.)

