



**Entity Information**

**Name of Entity:** Levy County Board of County Commissioners

**Owner:** Levy County

**County:** Levy

**FEIN:** 59-6000717

**Proposal Name:** Locke Infrastructure

**Record Type:** Public Infrastructure

**Proposal Status:** Proposed

**Stage:** Design phase

**Primary Contact Information:** Tisha Whitehurst, Economic Development and Tourism, Division Director  
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**RAO:** Yes

**Necessary Permits:** Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Utility Permit, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) General Permit to construct a Domestic Wastewater Collection/Transmission System, and a local jurisdiction electrical permit.

**Permits Secured:** No. Permits are to be obtained before construction.

**Program Requirements**

**Detailed Description:** With your invaluable support, the initial phase of this project is expected to generate a minimum of 120 jobs, including 100 full-time positions within the grocery store and an additional 20 jobs from the out-parcel. When including part-time roles, we anticipate providing a total of 150 job opportunities.

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Furthermore, the second phase of the project aims to double this impact by adding a retail anchor and more commercial out-parcels. This grant will remove the final obstacle preventing the development from moving forward. Through countless hours of collaboration among the city, county, developer, and grocer, we have successfully addressed all remaining challenges for Phase 1. Your support is crucial for the success of this project.

This ambitious project will cover 155 acres, with approximately 45 acres dedicated to commercial and retail components, also addressing the current lack of retail employment in the area. The remaining land will be developed for residential use. Concept plan attached.

The market analysis conducted within a 25-mile trade area indicates that this project presents an opportunity to revitalize an area that has experienced stagnant growth. By investing in infrastructure, this project will enable a number of companies and community support services to better serve their customer base, both within the trade area and beyond.

The project is strategically located in the center of a trade area with a county population exceeding 45,000. The growth in municipal revenues generated by this project will serve as a catalyst for both the city and county, enabling increased investment in infrastructure and community services.

Situated along US 19, this project will serve as a central hub for the community, providing essential services not only to the city but also to a substantial portion of the county. The roads that intersect with the project are primary thoroughfares, and the proposed investment in infrastructure improvements will ensure safe and enhanced access to these key routes. The additional infrastructure improvements are estimated to require an investment of \$4.3 million from the developers.

The project adheres to the requirements outlined in Florida Statute 288.101. The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was established to enhance economic opportunities by improving public infrastructure and workforce training. It cannot benefit a single entity exclusively. The department can identify projects, solicit proposals, and recommend funding to the Governor, who has the authority to approve projects aimed at promoting economic recovery and diversification in specific regions of Florida.

It's important to note that Levy County faced significant economic challenges in 2024, primarily due to an active hurricane season, particularly from Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton. We are experiencing revenue losses due to business closures, infrastructure damage that limits operations, and agricultural crop losses. Additionally, a decline in tourism and consumer activity is further exacerbating our financial struggles, which we continue to navigate.

The Levy County Board of County Commissioners has prioritized economic development. Our goal is to support strategic initiatives that bring essential jobs, services, and infrastructure to meet the needs of our communities. The Chiefland area serves as an economic anchor, boasting numerous thriving businesses; however, there is a need to further develop the infrastructure's capacity.

By addressing the needs of the community and enhancing our ability to attract targeted businesses and industries, we can maintain Levy County as a vibrant place for families to live, work, and thrive. The

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proposed grocery project is one such initiative that can improve access to essential goods and create quality employment opportunities for our residents.

In 2024, Levy County faced economic challenges due to an active hurricane season, leading to revenue losses from business closures, infrastructure damage, and reduced tourism. The Levy County Board of County Commissioners is prioritizing economic development, particularly in Chiefland, to create jobs and improve infrastructure. A proposed grocery project aims to enhance access to essential goods and provide employment opportunities. This initiative aligns with the Florida Job Growth Grant and the state's strategic economic development plan, with funding designated to connect utility infrastructure, thereby facilitating crucial community development.

**Public Use/Benefit:** Yes. This infrastructure will serve the public and benefit the mixed-use development, enabling future expansion and further enhancing the well-being of both the public and the community.

**Current Property Owner:** City of Chiefland (sanitary force main) and the Florida Department of Transportation (roadway)

**Benefit a Single Entity:** No. Infrastructure improvements for this development will benefit all citizens within the county and the tri-county area.

**Location:** Water line along NW 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Force-main crossing Hwy19/98 along NW 120<sup>th</sup> Street, Lift Station at termination onto property at the corner of US 19-98 and County Road 320, City of Chiefland, Levy County, FL - (29.5048832, -82.8720106).

**Description of Economic Benefits:** We are excited to report significant interest from various potential tenants for our development project in Chiefland named "Shoppes at Locke Crossing." Currently, we have initial interest from a diverse range of businesses, including a grocer, a dental group, a liquor store, a gas/convenience store, several fast-food establishments, a sit-down Mexican restaurant, multiple car washes, and auto maintenance services. Regarding inline spaces, there's interest from various businesses, including nail salons, hair salons, pizzerias, Chinese food restaurants, a pool supply store, a smoothie shop, a cell phone retailer, and a small gym, among others.

For Phase II, we are negotiating with a home improvement store similar to Home Depot, which will also feature a hotel, as well as several soft goods retailers, such as Marshalls, and a shoe store. The expected cost for the hotel is approximately \$20 million for both horizontal and vertical construction. In comparison, the soft goods stores would require roughly \$180 per square foot for vertical construction and \$500,000 per acre for horizontal work.

The Chiefland tri-county area comprises Levy, Dixie, and Gilchrist counties, with Chiefland serving as the central hub for these neighboring communities. Chiefland represents the largest city within this region and is strategically located in the northwest corner of Levy County, where the three counties converge.

Historically, this area was predominantly reliant on agriculture, timber, and aquaculture; however, it has transitioned towards a service-oriented economy. The region is distinguished by various outdoor

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recreational attractions, including Manatee Springs State Park, the iconic Suwannee River, and the Chiefland Farmers' Flea Market.

The local economy is bolstered by a combination of small businesses, national retail chains such as Walmart Supercenter, and several correctional facilities, which provide the majority of employment opportunities. The proposed development aims to introduce a retail anchor that will serve as the sole full-sized grocery store within this tri-county region. At present, neither Gilchrist nor Dixie counties hosts a full-sized grocery store. This development is expected to yield economic benefits for Levy County while simultaneously catering to the needs of residents in the surrounding areas. An economic impact analysis was prepared using Lightcast's input-output model to determine the effect a new grocery store will have on Levy County. Input-output models measure the impact of changes in one industry on other industries.

### Levy County Grocery Store Impact Analysis

#### Assumptions

- 100 Full time equivalent (FTE) jobs
- Average FTE wage of \$40,600 per job
- Construction spending of \$10,000,000
- \$4,000,000 for equipment with 20% purchased locally

#### Industry Impacts

These are annually recurring economic impacts to the community

NAICS 445110 Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores				
	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Jobs	100.0	15.0	9.3	124.3
Earnings	\$4,060,000	\$770,182	\$609,812	\$5,439,994

#### Construction Impacts

These are temporary benefits spread over the life of the project's construction.

	Jobs	Sales	Earnings
Construction	69.5	\$12,364,000	\$5,008,656
Equipment	4.2	\$1,130,960	\$358,288
Total	73.8	\$13,494,960	\$5,366,945

This ambitious project will encompass 155 acres, with the commercial and retail component utilizing approximately 45 acres. The remaining land is intended for residential development. The residential market in Chiefland, Florida, as of 2025, is marked by a decline in listing prices, despite the median sale price remaining comparatively elevated. The region is experiencing an annual population growth rate of 1.22%. However, the homeownership rate stands at 40.5%, which is considerably below the national average. This low rate can be attributed to a shortage of affordable housing available on smaller lots that are connected to utility services for water and sewer, which is part of Phase II of this development.

The area offers an affordable cost of living compared to both national and Florida averages, as it is 15% less expensive than the national average and 22% cheaper than the average city in Florida. The median

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listing home price decreased by 5.8% year-over-year as of July 2025. While Chiefland has lower median property values and a slower pace of life, residents enjoy good access to nature and essential amenities, albeit with fewer employment options.

Trailwinds Development has conducted a comprehensive market analysis within a 25-mile trade area, revealing that the development of this project represents a significant opportunity to revitalize an area that has experienced stagnant growth. The proposed infrastructure investment will enable multiple businesses to enhance their services for customer bases within the trade area and beyond.

Situated in the heart of the tri-county region with a county population exceeding 45,000, this project is poised to generate substantial growth in municipal revenues. This financial boost would serve as a catalyst for the city and county, enabling further enhancements to their infrastructure and community services.

Located along US 19, the project aims to become a central hub for the community, fostering a sense of place while providing essential services not only for the city but also for the county and a significant portion of the tri-county area. The roads surrounding the project form critical transit routes, and with the proposed infrastructure improvements, we will ensure safe and improved access to these key thoroughfares.

In terms of employment opportunities, we anticipate that the first phase of the project, with your support, will create at least 120 (100 full-time equivalent positions through the grocer and 20 full-time positions through the outparcels). Including part-time employees, this initiative is expected to generate jobs for 150 individuals. Phase II is projected to double this employment impact.

TARGET INDUSTRY JOB CREATION				
PHASES	NAICS CODE	FULL-TIME JOBS	PART-TIME JOBS	TOTAL JOBS
Phase I (Anchor)	445110	100	15	115
Phase I (Out parcels)	445310, 722513, 722511, 811192, 621498, 441310, 812113, 812112	20	15	35
Totals		120	30	150
Phase II (Anchor)	444110	120	10	130
Phase II (Out parcels)	423990, 451120	10	10	20
Total		130	20	150
Phases Total		250	50	300

Through extensive collaboration among the city, county, developer, and grocer, we have successfully addressed all remaining challenges for Phase 1 of the development. Both phases are being marketed as investment opportunities and are supported by market analysis within a 25-mile trade area. This analysis combines a qualitative and quantitative assessment to understand market dynamics, customer needs, and opportunities, ultimately enabling businesses to make informed decisions about their products, strategies, and overall viability.

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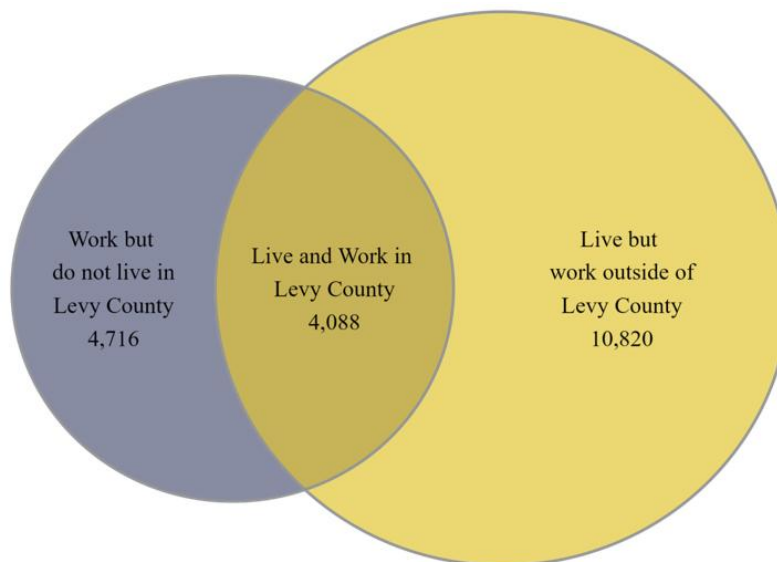
The creation of these jobs generates a ripple effect, boosting economic activity beyond the grocery store itself. The jobs and their associated wages provide a direct financial boost to the local economy. Furthermore, the indirect impact of this investment will support jobs in other sectors. For example, the new store will require local suppliers for maintenance, utilities, and various services. The construction phase of the project will also generate income for the construction industry.

The new employees will spend their income on housing, food, and services from other local businesses, further stimulating the local economy. In addition to measurable financial metrics, this investment brings several valuable but intangible benefits to the community. A new, high-quality grocery store offers residents more choices, better prices, and a more convenient shopping experience. The emergence of new businesses and a stronger job market make a town more appealing, leading to increased property value over time. Moreover, the presence of a major retailer can signal a healthy local economy, attracting other businesses and new residents to Levy County.

Levy County experiences a significant outflow of its workforce, with 72.6% of its residents employed outside the county. This statistic places Levy County 14th out of 67 counties in Florida in terms of the highest worker outflow. This highlights the critical importance of economic development in the County.

According to the report from the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER) dated July 2024, an analysis of workforce and demographic characteristics, along with community patterns within Levy County, was undertaken to furnish comprehensive economic data regarding the population and labor force residing and working in the county.

This comprehensive analysis of commuting patterns in Levy County reveals a net outflow of 6,104 workers. Among the 8,804 individuals employed within the county, 4,088 (46.4%) both reside and work here, while 4,716 (53.6%) commute from outside Levy County. Meanwhile, of the 14,908 residents living in Levy County, 10,820 (72.6%) are employed outside the county. This data highlights significant commuting trends and the reliance of residents on external job markets.



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### Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment

	February 2024				February 2023			
	LABOR	EMPLOY-	UNEMPLOYMENT		LABOR	EMPLOY-	UNEMPLOYMENT	
	FORCE	MENT	LEVEL	RATE (%)	FORCE	MENT	LEVEL	RATE (%)
Workforce Region 10	219,900	210,384	9,516	4.3	217,480	209,815	7,665	3.5
Citrus County	49,803	47,237	2,566	5.2	49,703	47,661	2,042	4.1
Levy County	17,644	16,967	677	3.8	17,423	16,859	564	3.2
Marion County	152,453	146,180	6,273	4.1	150,354	145,295	5,059	3.4
Florida	11,079,000	10,731,000	348,000	3.1	10,857,000	10,563,000	294,000	2.7
United States	167,285,000	160,315,000	6,970,000	4.2	166,178,000	159,713,000	6,465,000	3.9

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

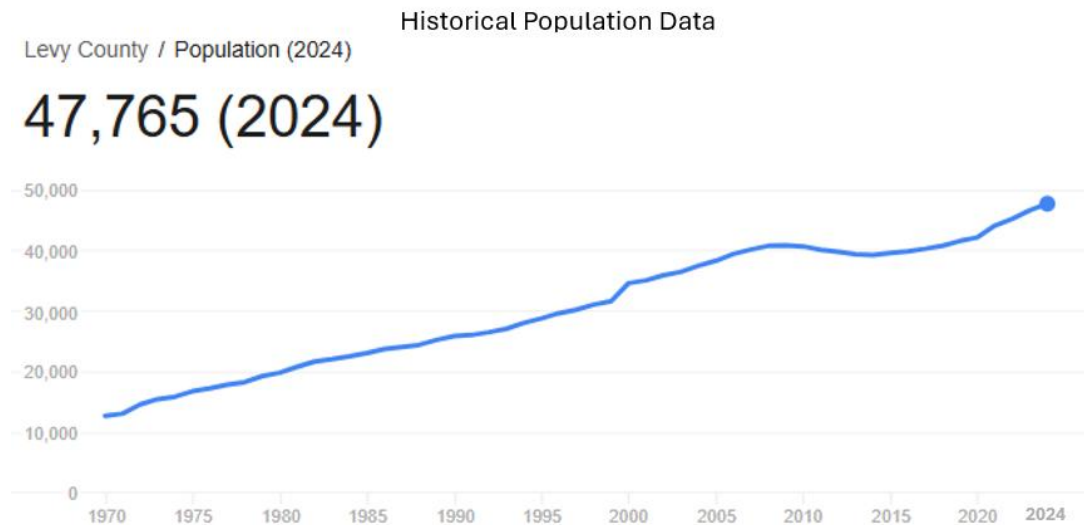
Levy County's employment was 16,967 as of February 2024. This represents an over-the-year change of 108. In February 2024, Levy County's unemployment rate was 3.8%, representing a 0.6 percentage point over-the-year change.

### Population

	Population Estimate (as of July 1)							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Workforce Region 10	530,110	539,030	547,542	556,739	575,099	587,458	604,198	623,200
Citrus County	142,804	145,415	147,682	149,657	154,568	158,167	162,508	166,696
Levy County	39,837	40,276	40,798	41,503	43,059	44,156	45,253	46,545
Marion County	347,469	353,339	359,062	365,579	377,472	385,135	396,437	409,959
Florida	20,613,477	20,963,613	21,244,317	21,477,737	21,591,299	21,830,708	22,245,521	22,610,726
United States	322,941,311	324,985,539	326,687,501	328,239,523	331,526,933	332,048,977	333,271,411	334,914,895

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

Levy County's population was estimated at 46,545 in 2023. This represents an over-the-year change of 1,292. By population, Levy County represents 7% of Workforce Region 10.



The "Shoppes at Locke Crossing" development in Chiefland, situated at the convergence of Levy, Dixie, and Gilchrist counties, is drawing interest from various retailers, including a grocery store, and fast-food options. Phase II plans include a home improvement store, soft goods retailers, and a \$20 million hotel.

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The project aims to address the lack of full-sized grocery stores, spanning 155 acres. Approximately 45 acres will be dedicated to commercial development, while also incorporating residential spaces to address the area's low homeownership rate of 40.5%. The project is expected to generate 150 permanent jobs in Phase I, with the potential for this number to double in Phase II, thereby revitalizing the community and enhancing local services through economic growth and job creation.

Developer investments totaling \$70 million represent the direct costs associated with the "Shoppes at Locke Crossing" development. This amount covers all related expenses for labor, tools, and necessary services. Additionally, infrastructure improvements are estimated to cost an extra \$4.3 million, and the County plans to apply for further grant funding to cover these costs.

Outparcel Vertical Costs	\$12,500,000
Car Wash	\$5,000,000
7-Eleven	\$5,000,000
Self-Storage	\$7,500,000
Hotel	\$18,000,000
Home Improvement Store	\$6,000,000
	<hr/>
	<b>\$54,000,000</b>

**Project Start Date:** Phase I - Second quarter of 2026

**Duration:** 180 days

**Land Use and Zoning:** The Future Land Use designation for this area is Commercial, with a Zoning classification of Highway Commercial District (C-2). In this context, "commercial establishment" refers to any location or place of business where commercial activities are conducted or permitted on the premises. This includes a variety of companies that operate within the parameters defined by the zoning regulations.

**Will an amendment to the local comprehensive plan or a development order be required?** An amendment to the local comprehensive plan or a development order is not needed. No amendments to the local comprehensive plan are necessary because the infrastructure is located within the designated road rights-of-way for the commercial development connection. Instead, Development Orders will be issued as right-of-way permits from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Additionally, there is no proposed change in ownership of the land where these improvements will be made.

**Is the project ready to commence upon grant fund approval and contract execution?** Yes, with the design phase moving right into construction.

**Local Match:** No



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### **Project Budget**

**Total Requested:** \$1,500,000

#### **Public Infrastructure Project Costs:**

Construction – \$1,200,000

Design & Engineering – \$225,000

Other – \$75,000

Specify Other – Contingency

Total – \$1,500,000

### **Timeline**

Action	Time
<b>Design and Permitting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data collection and analysis</li><li>• Engineering design development</li><li>• 30%, 60%, 90%, 100% plans design review</li><li>• Permit application submittal and approval</li></ul>	3 months
<b>Construction Procurement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of the construction bid package</li><li>• Advertisement for construction bids</li><li>• Pre-bid meeting</li><li>• Bid opening</li><li>• Recommendation to BOCC &amp; approval</li><li>• Contract development</li><li>• Notice to proceed</li></ul>	3 months
<b>Construction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construction commencement</li><li>• Processing payments</li><li>• Construction inspection</li><li>• Construction completion</li><li>• Final inspection</li></ul>	6 months
<b>Grant Close Out</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final payment</li><li>• Final reimbursement request and report</li></ul>	2 months
<b>Total Timeline</b>	<b>14 months</b>

### **Approvals and Authority**

**Approval:** Approval is required from the Levy County Board of County Commissioners to accept the grant funds.

**For Board approval, provide regular meeting schedule and special meeting information:** Board meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month at 9:00 a.m. The Board is willing and able to hold Special meetings with two weeks' notice.

**Attach Evidence:** The undersigned has all the authority to execute this proposal. See attached designation of signatory authority.

## Attachments

### **Attachment A:**

Utility Extension Map  
Development Concept Plan  
Land Use and Zoning Maps

### **Attachment B:**

Support Letters

### **Attachment C:**

Levy County Grocery Store Impact Analysis  
Tailwinds Profile  
Marketing Material  
Trade Area Report  
Florida Commerce Levy County Report  
Levy 2040 Report

### **Attachment D:**

Authority

### **AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE**

On behalf of Levy County, I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have express authority to sign this proposal on behalf of the above-described entity and to the best of my knowledge, that all data and information submitted in this proposal is truthful and accurate, and no material fact has been omitted.

Name of Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title of Authorized Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_