

1. Campaign Contributions

How much affect do/should campaign contributions have, considering regular everyday citizens don't have the wherewithal to make significant contributions and how will you/have you balance(d) those interests?

Let me take this one head-on, because I know there's talk.

Contributions pay for signs, mailers, and reaching voters across a big county. Every dollar is capped by law and reported publicly. Look mine up I'd encourage it.

Yes, people in the building trades have supported me. Framers, electricians, roofers, local homebuilders. These are neighbors who live here and employ people here. In a county with one of the highest unemployment rates in Florida, those jobs matter. I'm not going to apologize for it.

But here's the real answer. If anybody's check bought my vote, they got a lousy return on their money.

I voted to nearly double impact fees paid directly by the people who build. I voted to stop the county from taking over new subdivision roads; developers used to build the streets, hand them off, and stick you with the repaving bill forever. Now, if they build it, they maintain it. I voted to strengthen the tree ordinance now a builder who keeps his trees pays nothing, and one who cuts them replaces them or pays into a fund the county plants with. As somebody who grows trees for a living, I was glad to vote for that.

Every one of those votes cost the people who build money.

That's public record. It's not the record of somebody who can be bought.

My door opens the same for everybody. The retiree with a drainage problem gets the same hearing as the fellow with a rezoning request and both get the same honest answer, which is sometimes no.

That's the job. My record is the receipt.

2. Serving Both Seniors and Younger Residents

Given the varied and changing Citrus County demographics, how will you oversee essential services for seniors while younger workforce residents are attracted?

People talk about this like it's a choice. It isn't. It's one job.

We're an older county, and I'll always protect the folks who built this place. That means the services that let people age in their own homes with dignity in-home care, Alzheimer's support, meals, help with the power bill, and rides to the doctor. This county has brought home millions in outside grant dollars for exactly that, and I fight for every one of them. Those aren't line items to me. That's somebody's mother staying in her house instead of a facility.

But here's what keeps me up at night. More than half our households are what United Way calls ALICE (Asset Limited, income constrained, Employed) working families earning above the poverty line who still can't cover the basics. Our kids graduate and leave, because there's nothing here for them to make a living at.

You can't hold a county together that way. Think about who we're really talking about. The nurse coming on for the next shift. The firefighter climbing onto the engine. The young deputy pinning on the badge. Those are somebody's kids and if they can't afford to live here, they won't be here when you need them.

That's not a young people's problem. That's a seniors' problem, and it's coming fast.

So, I push hard for real jobs; Inverness Airport Business Park, commercial development, an economy that isn't just rooftops. Every dollar of commercial tax base we build is a dollar that doesn't land on a fixed-income neighbor's bill.

Take care of the people who built this county. Build enough opportunity that the next generation doesn't have to leave. Those aren't two agendas. That's one, and I'm working both ends of it.

3. Protecting Foundational Taxpayers

How will you protect the interests of long-time taxpayers and residents as development accelerates throughout Citrus County?

Simple rule: the people who built this county shouldn't get stuck paying for growth they never asked for.

Before anything else, you should see where your money actually goes.

Six out of every ten property tax dollars in this county pay for public safety. Not roads. Not parks. Public safety. This year that's about \$88 million; deputies, the jail, fire rescue, ambulances, animal services, and code enforcement. Law enforcement alone is nearly \$50 million of it.

That's the first half of the box we're in.

Here's the other half. About 80 cents of every property tax dollar comes from somebody's house. Not from businesses. Houses. Take away the power company and the hospitals and there's almost nothing else out there. I look at the tax rolls every year myself. There's nobody else to send the bill to. It lands on you.

So that's the honest picture: a tax base that's almost all homeowners, funding a budget that's almost all public safety. Anybody who tells you there's an easy answer hasn't looked at the numbers.

Which is why I fight the way I do.

To make growth pay for itself, not you. I've laid out exactly how in Question 4

- A. Go get somebody else's money.** More than \$130 million since 2023, for roads, a new fire station, sewer projects, senior services, has been accomplished with money from Tallahassee and Washington instead of out of your pocket.
- B. Build a real economy.** We can't keep asking homeowners to carry a county this size. That means going after businesses that pay wages people can actually live on not just more rooftops and more retail. I've pushed hard for the Inverness Airport Business Park because that's where those jobs come from: light industry, aviation, skilled trades. Real paychecks. And every dollar a business pays in taxes is a dollar a retiree doesn't.
- C. Measure what we're getting.** Right now, this county budgets by asking what a department spent last year and adding to it. I want performance measures showing what that money bought, did it work, can we do it for less? That's how a business finds savings. It's how we ought to run a county.

4. Growth Management and Oversight

How should/could/will the BOCC improve oversight of planning and land-growth management to ensure residents' interests get earned consideration as long time foundational taxpayers?

The problem usually isn't that residents lose the argument. It's that they never got to make it. By the time most people hear about a project, it's been in the works for months and it's landing on our dais with a staff recommendation already attached.

That's what has to change.

- A. Tell people early, and tell them plainly.** If something affects a specific community, that community should hear about it directly, not buried in a legal ad, not on page nine of an agenda packet. I'd rather over-notify you and get an earful than have you find out after the vote.
- B. Make the applicant face the neighborhood first.** If somebody wants to change what happens next door to you, they ought to sit in a room and explain it to you *before* it reaches our dais, not after, when the plans are drawn, the money's spent, and everybody's dug in.
- C. Do the homework.** The staff report runs four hundred pages and the details are buried in it. That's where residents get hurt, in a line nobody read.

And apply the same two tests, every time. Does it fit the density and character of what's already there? Does it pay for the infrastructure it demands? If the answer is no, my answer is no. Hold me to that.

4.5 Growth Management and Oversight (Incumbents)

Explain why developers have been allowed to solicit Land Growth Management for whole sale changes to the Land Development Code thereby modifying community master plans?

Why is the Land Development Code, enacted by the BOCC predecessors to protect the interests of property owners, viewed as a document to work around?

Let me be honest rather than comfortable.

Why are developers allowed to ask?

Because Florida law says they can. Any property owner, you, me, a developer, has the right to petition the county to rezone their land. The Board can't refuse to hear it. And when a county denies a request it had no lawful grounds to deny, the taxpayers get sued and the taxpayers pay.

The Legislature has also steadily narrowed what counties can do on land use. That's the ground we're standing on. It's why I've put teeth in the tools we still have.

Anybody who tells you a commissioner can simply stop developers from asking is either misinformed or lying to you.

On developers going to Growth Management.

Anyone can walk into that office and ask questions, a homeowner building a barn, a business, a developer. Staff answers. That's their job.

But staff cannot change the code. Not one word. Only this Board can, and only in a public hearing where you have the right to stand up and speak.

That's the law. Here's the honest part. A properly noticed meeting isn't the same as people actually knowing. If changes get made that touch your community and you find out afterward, that's a real problem, even if every legal box got checked. Legal isn't the same as fair.

So here's my commitment: when a code change would affect a specific community, that community hears about it directly and early. Not buried in a legal ad. Not on page nine of an agenda packet. I'd rather over-notify you and get an earful than have you find out after the vote.

Is the code a document to work around?

It was heading that way. That's why I've spent four years putting teeth in it.

The Comprehensive Plan is the promise. The Land Development Code is how you keep it. And a code is only as strong as what it costs to ignore. So we changed the math:

- Nearly doubled impact fees.
- Stopped the county from taking over new subdivision roads.
- Strengthened the tree ordinance.

Every one of those made it more expensive to build carelessly here. That's not a code being worked around. That's a code growing teeth.

And when they come asking?

Same standard every time, hold me to it. Does it fit the density and character of the neighborhood around it? Does it pay for the infrastructure it demands?

If the answer is no, my answer is no.

When a proposal comes back reworked, fewer homes, more land preserved, protections recorded that no future board can undo, that isn't the code failing. That's the code doing exactly what it's built to do: forcing something better than what first walked in the door.

I haven't won every fight. But I read the fine print, I hold the line on density, and I make growth leave something behind for the people who were already here.

5. Increasing Traffic and Public Safety Issues

How will you/have you work(ed) with the Sheriff's Office to ensure enforcement and public safety in Pine Ridge, taking into account increasing traffic generated by Suncoast interchange as CR 486?

The Suncoast interchange at CR-486 cuts both ways. It connects this county like never before and it drops a lot of outside traffic right at your door. Cutting through Pine Ridge or running your residential streets at fifty is not acceptable. Keeping your roads safe for walking, biking, and riding is one of my highest priorities.

Here's what I've done and what I'll keep doing.

- A. More deputies, working closer to you.** I fought to fund new deputy positions, and the Sheriff's Office is using them to stand up a Third District which means more deputies working this side of the county, more consistently, nearer to Pine Ridge.
- B. Enforcement based on data, not guesswork.** The Sheriff's Office runs speed boxes and traffic counters right here in Pine Ridge. They know which streets, what times, how fast. That's how you put a traffic unit where it'll actually catch somebody instead of where it's convenient.
- C. Your complaints go somewhere.** When Pine Ridge residents report a problem street, the Sheriff's traffic unit reviews it and works it. Your eyes on the road are often the first alert we get.
- D. Sometimes the road is the problem.** Enforcement is half of it. The Sheriff shares data with our county engineers, and when a street has a real problem, we look at the street. There's a whole toolbox traffic calming, speed limits, striping, better signage at your entrances, and yes, roundabouts where they make sense. Some of those fit a horse community and some don't. I'd rather sit down with you and work out which is which than have somebody in an engineering office decide for you.

You can't ticket your way out of a badly designed street. But you also shouldn't get a fix imposed on you that doesn't fit how you actually live.

- E. And I pay for it the right way.** I don't just vote for public safety I go find the money. This county has brought in millions in outside dollars for fire and emergency response, including a new fire station paid for with state money. Safety shouldn't come only out of your tax bill.

A neighborhood isn't safe unless its streets are safe. I'll keep making sure the Sheriff has what he needs, and I'll keep the pressure on to keep Suncoast traffic moving *through* this county not through your neighborhood.

6. Equestrian Safety

Explain what collaboration between our State Representative and the BOVV looks like to improve safety at major equestrian crossings, especially on Pine Ridge and Mustang Boulevards?

Pine Ridge is a horse community. That's not a detail, it's the identity of this place, and your crossings ought to reflect that. Here's where things actually stand, and what I can do.

- A. First, what I found out.** I went and asked. I spoke with the Sheriff's Office about the crossings on Pine Ridge and Mustang Boulevards with a Major who has worked this area for twenty-two years. Two things came out of it. He's never seen a horse struck by a vehicle out here. And what his deputies see more of is ATVs, not horses.

I'm telling you that because you deserve straight information, not because I think your concern is overblown. The reason riders here have stayed safe is the culture of this community, drivers who slow down, neighbors who look out for each other. I'd rather act before that fails than after.

- B. On the electric signs.** I know the community has asked for them. A county study didn't produce the traffic counts needed to warrant that funding under current standards. I'm not going to pretend I can wave that away, and I won't promise you something I can't deliver.

But a warrant study is a snapshot, not a verdict. The CR-486 interchange has changed traffic on this whole side of the county, and it changed it *after* that study was done. I'll ask engineering to take a fresh count now that the interchange is open. If the numbers have moved, the answer moves with them.

- C. What I can pursue now, without waiting on anyone.** Repainting and re-marking the crossings themselves, and better, clearer signage at the entrances to Pine Ridge so a driver coming off the Suncoast knows exactly what kind of community he's entering before he's in it. That's real, it's achievable, and I'll push for it.

Now, what you actually asked: what does BOCC-legislator collaboration look like?

There are really two ways road money moves in Florida, and they are not the same thing.

- A. MPO and the one I work in.** A project gets studied. It gets prioritized through the Metropolitan Planning Organization, then programmed into the work program and it's funded through FDOT. That's how transportation projects actually get built in this state. It's slower, it's unglamorous, and it's durable.

I co-chair that MPO. I'm not promising you access to that table. I'm already sitting at it.

- B. The other way is a legislative appropriation.** That's when you go directly to your state representative and ask him to secure money in the budget for a specific project. It's a real tool. It's how we got a \$3 million appropriation for a new fire station this year. But it's a different door, and it works best when the project is already documented, already justified, and ready to go.

So, collaboration with Representative Grow looks like this: I bring him a project that's been counted, studied, and prioritized with the paperwork to back it and he carries an ask that can actually survive in Tallahassee. That's how it works. Anything else is theater.

- C. And one more option, because you should know it exists.** There's a path that doesn't require waiting on a warrant study or a state appropriation at all. Communities across this county have funded improvements they wanted through a special assessment where the dollars are fenced off for that one purpose, on your timeline, under your control. Citrus Springs has done it for roads.

I'm not pushing that on you. But I'd be doing you a disservice if I let you believe the only two choices are "the county pays" or "nothing happens." There's a third door, and Pine Ridge would be the one holding the key. If your board ever wants to explore it, I'll sit down and walk you through exactly how it works.

That's the whole picture. I'd rather give you the real one than an easy one.

7. Road Paving Improvement

Considering the Taxable Just Value attributed to Pine Ridge, how will you provide oversight to the county road paving process ensuring the current 'low density variable' is deprioritized?

You've asked how I'll make sure the low-density variable gets deprioritized.

Here's my answer: we already did it.

The county doesn't prioritize paving by density anymore. We brought in Mott MacDonald and put a laser survey vehicle over every road in Citrus County. It measures cracking, rutting, potholes, and how rough the ride is, and it scores each road on a Pavement Condition Index one to ten. That's engineering, not politics. Density isn't what drives the list. Condition is.

And here's what that data says about your roads specifically.

Pine Ridge sits on a soil-cement base. So does Citrus Springs. That's a structural condition, it's how these roads were built decades ago and it means your pavement cracks differently than pavement elsewhere in this county. Your roads need a specific treatment, an open-graded crack relief layer, which runs about \$340,000 a mile.

That has nothing to do with how many houses are on your street. It has everything to do with what's underneath it. And the county now measures that, road by road.

Why this matters more than the density argument ever did:

The whole point of the system is to catch a road *before* it fails. A rejuvenator treatment costs about \$15,000 a mile. Milling and paving costs \$230,000. Rebuilding a failed road from the base up costs \$1.2 million. Same road the price depends entirely on how long you waited.

So, the smartest thing this county can do for Pine Ridge, and for every neighborhood, is treat roads at the right time instead of the cheapest time. That's what the condition data lets us do, and it's what I'll keep fighting to fund.

The honest scale of what we're up against:

This county carries roughly \$700 million in resurfacing needs. Our entire five-year capital plan for every project, every department is smaller than that backlog. When I came back to this board, residential resurfacing was running about \$4 million a year. We've driven that up dramatically, and it's the largest resurfacing investment in the history of Citrus County.

I'm proud of it. It's still not enough. Both of those are true, and I won't pretend otherwise.

8. Preserving Pine Ridge Natural Resources, Bird Sanctuary and Ecosystem

Explain how to shape a collaboration with the Pine Ridge POA and the State of Florida to further identify and preserve unique natural resources and their protected status within this subdivision.

Let me start with something a lot of this county doesn't know.

In January 1991, the State of Florida designated all 9,206 acres of Pine Ridge Estates as a bird sanctuary. The entire subdivision. Hunting inside these boundaries is illegal. That's not a neighborhood tradition that's state law, and it exists to protect the wildlife that makes this place what it is.

And what lives here is genuinely rare. The gopher tortoise state-listed as threatened, and a keystone species, meaning its burrows shelter hundreds of other Florida animals. The Florida scrub-jay, the only bird found nowhere else on earth but Florida, dependent on exactly the ancient sand pine and scrub oak that runs through this corridor.

And here's what I can do at the county, right now.

- A. Put the sanctuary on our map.** The 1991 designation should appear in the county's own planning records so that when anybody walks into Growth Management with land inside these boundaries, the sanctuary status is the first thing on the page, not something a neighbor has to discover and raise.
- B. Survey the habitat.** Gopher tortoise burrows and scrub-jay territory carry real legal weight with FWC but only where they've been documented. A current survey turns a 1991 designation into an enforceable standard today.

- C. Go get state money.** Florida Forever and Florida Communities Trust fund land preservation and a property owners association generally cannot apply alone. They need a local government partner. That's the county. That's me.
- D. Protect what we've won.** Where land in this county is placed under permanent, recorded conservation easement, the county's job doesn't end at recording it. It stays functional habitat.

What I'll commit to:

Bring me your inventory of what's out here, where the burrows are, and what needs protection. I'll take it to staff, to FWC, and to our state delegation. And I'll tell you honestly which pieces have a real path, and which don't.

You've had this designation for thirty-five years. Let's make the law catch up to it.

9. Water Resources and Growth

How will you/have you exercise(d) you BMAP stakeholder role protecting aquifers, springs, and long-term water supplies (and how should developer impact fees be integrated)?

Water is the one thing you can't fix later. You can widen a road. You cannot un-pollute an aquifer.

Let me start with something I did long before I ever ran for anything.

Years ago, a piece of land in this county was headed for development. I knew the owner. I sat down with him, and we talked about what that ground actually was and what it would mean to lose it. I was part of the citizens' effort that helped raise money to save it.

That land is Three Sisters Springs.

It could have been houses. Today it's a manatee sanctuary that people travel from all over the world to see, and it will be there long after everyone reading this is gone.

That's what water means to me. Not a position on paper. A place you can go stand in.

Where I sit on this now:

I'm Vice Chair of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. I've served on the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority. I've worked alongside Save Crystal River and the Homosassa River Alliance on the coast and with the folks from Too Far working to restore the Tsala Apopka chain on the east side of this county.

Springs on one side, lakes on the other. This whole county runs on water, and I've been in the rooms on both ends of it.

I don't come to this from a briefing book.

What a BMAP really is and why it matters here:

The state's Basin Management Action Plans are cleanup plans for polluted water. Ours are about nitrogen, the nutrient feeding the algae that's choking our springs.

Here's the part nobody says out loud: **the biggest source of that nitrogen in Citrus County is septic tanks**. Thousands of them, sitting on sand, leaching into the same aquifer we all drink from.

So that's where I put the money.

What we've done. Not what I'm promising.

We brought in roughly \$31 million in outside dollars to get septic tanks out of the ground. Old Homosassa in five separate phases, Cambridge Greens, a new wastewater plant at Brentwood, and a countywide program that helps homeowners replace a failing septic system when they can't afford it themselves.

That's nitrogen coming out of the groundwater, paid for with state and federal money instead of your tax bill. It's the most consequential environmental work this county has done in a generation, and hardly anybody knows about it because it's buried underground and it isn't glamorous.

We also passed a summer fertilizer ordinance to cut the runoff feeding the algae. It wasn't popular with everybody. I voted for it anyway.

Now impact fees and water. You asked directly, so here's the direct answer.

Growth pays for its own water and its own sewer. Not you.

Every new rooftop drinks from the same aquifer you do and sends waste into the same ground. So the standard is simple: if a development can't show the water and sewer capacity is there and pay for the capacity it uses it shouldn't be approved.

And the money should follow the damage. If new homes add nitrogen to a basin, their fees ought to go into sewer connections and treatment capacity in *that* basin not into a general pot where it disappears. Impact fees can legally only build things, not run them. Fine. Then let's build the things that protect the water.

One more lever most people don't know about.

Big developments need a water withdrawal permit from the Water Management District. That's a separate approval from anything the county does, and it's where you find out whether a project will draw down the local water table or cut spring flow.

I've served on a water supply authority. I know how those permits work, and I know they deserve harder scrutiny than they usually get.

And here's the part nobody likes to hear.

We're drawing from a finite aquifer in a growing county. Every new home is one more straw in the same glass in Pine Ridge, in Beverly Hills, everywhere.

That's exactly why I fight the way I do on density, and on making the infrastructure exist *before* the rooftops do not after, when it's your problem and your bill.

Protecting our water isn't an environmental issue to me. It's an infrastructure issue, a property value issue, and in a county that runs on springs and wells, it's a survival issue.

10. Funding Essential Services

Given the expected Citrus population increase, how will the expansion of police, fire, EMS, healthcare, and education services be funded into the future (and what portion should come from taxpayers versus other sources)?

First, the honest map because these five things are funded five different ways, and two of them aren't mine.

Schools are separately elected, the School Board, and have their own tax rate and their own budget. Healthcare is mostly private, state, and federal. Police, fire, and EMS are the county's job. That's where I'll spend this answer.

Here's the number that governs everything. As I mentioned previously, six out of every ten property tax dollars in this county already go to public safety about \$88 million. And 80 cents of every property tax dollar comes from somebody's house, not a business. That's the box we're in.

And some of it isn't even our choice. The state requires us to pay \$3.1 million a year for Medicaid and another \$990,000 for mental health. Mandated by law. We don't get a vote.

What I'm proudest of:

The county took EMS in-house and we no longer subsidize it. That's a service that used to bleed money, and now it doesn't. We're cross-training firefighters as EMTs, so the same person who pulls you out of a wreck can keep you alive on the way to the hospital. Better care, better value for what you're already paying.

And this year we brought home a **\$3 million appropriation for a new fire station in Inverness** that's state money, not yours.

So how do we fund growth without funding it out of your pocket?

- A. Make growth pay for itself.** We nearly doubled impact fees. New rooftops pay for the capacity they consume.

- B. Go get somebody else's money.** More than \$130 million since 2023. Fire stations. Equipment. Sewer. Senior services. Bills that never landed on your tax roll.
- C. Build an economy.** Every dollar a business pays is a dollar a retiree doesn't.
- D. Spend what we have better.** This county budgets by asking what a department spent last year and adding to it. I want to know what that money actually bought before I ask you for more.

What share comes from taxpayers?

One-time costs - buildings, engines, equipment should come from growth and grants. Not you.

Ongoing costs - the deputy on patrol, the third firefighter on the engine, and the paramedic in the ambulance come from the tax base. Always have. A one-time impact fee doesn't pay a salary for twenty years, and anyone who tells you different is hoping you don't check.

I won't promise nobody ever pays another nickel. That'd be a lie and you'd know it. What I'll promise is the order of operations: the people moving in pay their fair share before I ever come asking the people already here.

One last thing, since you asked about other sources.

There's a tool this county has never used, and I'd rather name it than pretend I don't see it.

Sixty-seven counties in Florida. Roughly twenty-seven of them levy a local infrastructure surtax a penny at the register. Citrus may be the only county in this state that has never enacted one.

Here's what it actually is.

- A. It's not a property tax.** It's paid at the cash register which means tourists, snowbirds, and everybody coming off the Suncoast pays it right alongside us. Right now, your house carries this county. Under that, the whole economy would help.
- B. It can only build things.** Roads, buildings, capacity. State law prohibits spending it on salaries. So, it doesn't grow government it fixes what's broken.

And this Board cannot enact it. It takes a vote of the people. Period.

I'm not campaigning for it. I haven't asked for it, and I won't put it on a ballot without months of public numbers in front of you first.

But you asked me how we fund the future without breaking the backs of the people already here and we're sitting on a \$700 million road backlog with a tax base that's 80% houses. I'm not going to leave a tool off the table just because it's uncomfortable to say out loud.

If that conversation ever comes, it comes to you. Numbers on the page. Ballot in your hand. That's exactly where it belongs.

BONUS QUESTION

Once elected to office do you see yourself as an extension of the government you choose to oversee or an extension of your constituency?

I know the answer you want. And I could give it to you in four words: an extension of you.

But you've read ten answers from me by now, and you know I'd rather be honest than easy. So let me give you the real one.

- A. I am not an extension of the government.** I don't work for the county administrator. I don't work for staff. When I sit on that dais, my job is not to explain the county to you it's to hold the county accountable *for* you. I read the fine print. I pull the tax rolls myself. I ask the questions staff would rather I didn't. That's the job I signed up for and that's the job I do.
- B. And I am an extension of my constituency.** But I want to be precise about what that means, because it's where a lot of politicians get lazy.

I run in District 4, but every voter in Citrus County elects me and I serve every one of them. Pine Ridge. Beverly Hills. Citrus Springs. Homosassa. Inverness. The retiree on a fixed income. The young family that can't afford a house. The deputy who patrols your street. The kid who'd like to make a living here someday and not have to leave.

Sometimes those people want different things. And when they do, my job isn't to count the people in the room. It's to make the best decision I can for all of them and then come tell you honestly why I did it including when some may disagree with me.

So, here's my answer, plainly.

I work for you. And working *for* you means telling you the truth not telling you what you want to hear. Those are two different jobs, and only one of them is worth doing.