

**8. What is the status of projects to improve intra-island transportation? Is this unique to Anna Maria or part of a collaborative effort with all 3 island cities? Are there any additional plans or projects underway related to decreasing the use of cars on the island?**

1. In January of this year, Manatee County in collaboration with the Cities of Anna Maria Bradenton and Bradenton Beach, began operating on a trial basis a water ferry service 3 days a week between the mainland and two of the island cities. This month the service was expanded to 4 days a week. The service is still on a trial basis, but the service will hopefully be expanded to 7 days a week and extended hours to accommodate service workers who commute to the island. In the meantime, the service runs at capacity or near capacity on each run made between the mainland and the Anna Maria City Pier.

**9. Please provide information on the following option for consolidation (Option 4): All three cities on Anna Maria Island become part of unincorporated Manatee County.**

**a. Please list any known or potential benefits of this option.**

**b. Please list any known or potential challenges of this option.**

• **OPTION 4-**

○ **Benefits-**

1. ***Lower tax rate.*** The current 2.05 milage rate paid by property owners would be discontinued resulting in lower property taxes for all property owners in the city.
2. ***Access to a wider range of Heavy Equipment-*** The County has a far greater range and inventory of heavy equipment used in Public Works, thus reducing the need to rent equipment or contract out work which requires specialized tools.
3. ***Uniform Building Rules & Enforcement-*** Instead of 3 sets of building permit codes and 3 enforcement mechanisms there would just be one, thus creating a more seamless process for building contractors and developers to follow.
4. ***Law and Code Enforcement-*** As with building codes, there would be just one set of law enforcement officers and one set of standards for such things as signs, parking, noise, etc., thus presenting a single set of laws and requirements for visitors and businesses.

• **Challenges-**

1. ***Increased Financial & Administrative Burden on the County and a Negative Impact on Tourism -*** As can be seen on Attachment 10, "Revenue Sources and Disposition", Manatee County only provided \$15,000 to the City of Anna Maria during the last budget year. The entire remainder of the City's expense budget \$11,400,000 last year came from city property owners and other revenue sources. For example, almost \$2,000,000 of ad valorem (property owner) tax dollars went to providing for city MCSO law enforcement. All the roads are owned and maintained by the city, portions of the storm water improvements and maintenance are also paid for by property owners. The cleanliness of the city, the maintenance and improvements to the parks, the operational costs of the City Pier are all funded by the city. Property owners pay the provider for their fire, water, sewer, trash and schools. Furthermore, community recreation and community events are all funded by property owner's taxes. If these elements which attract both

visitors and residents to the island are to remain, the County would need to find not only a new source of revenue but also methods and sources of expertise to administer the island on a local basis. There is currently an extremely high set of standards for cleanliness, safety, recreational opportunities, disaster recovery, crime prevention and cultural activities expected by the visitors and property owners on the island. Along with the high rent paid by the visitors comes a high expectation level of island facilities and services. These standards are much higher, broader and costly to provide than those currently provided by Manatee County to the unincorporated area residents and visitors.

N.B. For example, subsequent to hurricane Irma (which caused more extensive damage per square mile to the City of Anna Maria than any of the other 5 cities or the county), the streets were cleared and debris piles removed within 7 days of landfall. In unincorporated Manatee County debris piles remained awaiting pick up for over 2 months.

The 3 cities currently have the governmental knowledge, experience, independent financial wherewithal, sensitivity, and expertise to sustain these expectation levels. This gap would need to be closed if the island is to remain a destination of choice for visitors.

2. ***Loss of Environmental Safeguards-*** With the absence of a local government for observing and reporting purposes, environmental violations and issues would not be as easily and readily reported or responded to.
3. ***Loss of Diversity-*** Part of the island's historic charm has always been the diversity of the 3 cities. One is more culturally oriented, with theatre, symphony, art and museum as its focus. Another has an "Old Florida-Key West" atmosphere. While a third is more commerce oriented, with up-scale lodging, restaurants and residences. This diversity was achieved and is maintained and fostered through 3 distinct local governments composed of residents from each city. This is what makes Anna Maria Island unique from any other barrier island in the State of Florida. Furthermore, these 3 differentiating factors have been essential in attracting visitors and residents to the island for decades. The concept of incorporation into the county would water this unique quality down to one vanilla entity, similar to any other barrier island with only one single differentiator. The result would be both a cultural and economic loss to Manatee County and to the State.
4. ***Loss of Charter and Comprehensive Plan-*** Under this scenario there is the loss of the existing charters and comprehensive plans which establish strategy, density, structural heights, zoning, quality of life issues, etc... Loss of these plans has the potential to create a huge negative impact on the entire island community.
5. ***Legal Opposition-*** Property owners, annual visitors, tourists as well as the island elected officials have all publicly stated their opposition to this option. This scenario is almost certain to be met with strong legal opposition, thus making such an effort costly as well as time consuming and delaying any savings of taxes.
6. ***Loss of Jobs-*** Under this scenario the synergies generated would result in a loss of jobs for both island residents and those living on the mainland.