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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Approves Funding for County Road 121 Repairs

Nassau County, Florida, June 4, 2021 – County Road 121 (formerly State Road 121) is a 40-mile long roadway connecting US Highway 1 near the Florida-Georgia border, south to US Highway 90 in Duval County. Due to the amount of traffic, the current roadway conditions are fair to poor, depending on the segment. It is anticipated that it will cost approximately \$18.9 million to make all necessary improvements to this road.

In an effort to lessen the burden on County taxpayers, District 4 Commissioner and current Chairman, Thomas Ford, suggested that the County meet with the Florida Department of Transportation to see if they would be willing to take the former State road over again since it connects with two State highways and supports the goal of the State's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) to provide interregional connections across the State and close key connectivity gaps.

Commissioner Ford and other professional staff met with FDOT District Two Secretary, Gregory Evans, in early 2021. It was ultimately decided that the State would not be taking back over the road due to the cost and budgetary constraints.

However, while in discussions with FDOT, the Board simultaneously declared this road as a priority project to be considered for Legislative funding during the 2021 Legislative Session. The County submitted the required appropriations request to the Florida House of Representatives and a Funding Request to the Florida Senate, asking for funds to assist with this project.

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Before the Legislative Session began, Chairman Ford met with the President of the Senate, Wilton Simpson, and Senator Aaron Bean, who currently serves as the Senate President Pro Tempore, to express the importance of the project and its impact on the residents of Nassau County.

The 2021 Legislative Session ended on April 30, 2021. On Wednesday, June 2, 2021, we were notified that the Governor has approved a total of \$9 million for this project and has placed it in next year's budget which begins on July 1, 2021.

Chairman Ford stated, "County Road 121 has been a priority for me since I was elected in 2018 and I am excited to hear that the State sees the importance of this project as well. Knowing that the State has included funding in their budget to assist the County provides promise that this project will finally come to fruition".

So, even though the County was not successful in having County Road 121 turned back over the State, we were successful in obtaining funding to assist with the costs to repair the road, thanks to the outstanding negotiations led by Chairman Ford and Senator Bean.

The County won't be able to begin any work until we receive a funding agreement from the State and that likely won't be until January 2022. However, in the meantime, the County will begin preparing the necessary documents so we are ready to advertise bids for an engineering firm to begin the design process as soon as the funding agreement is signed.

We appreciate the efforts of Chairman Thomas Ford, Senator Aaron Bean and State Representative Cord Byrd for championing this project on behalf of the citizens of Nassau County.