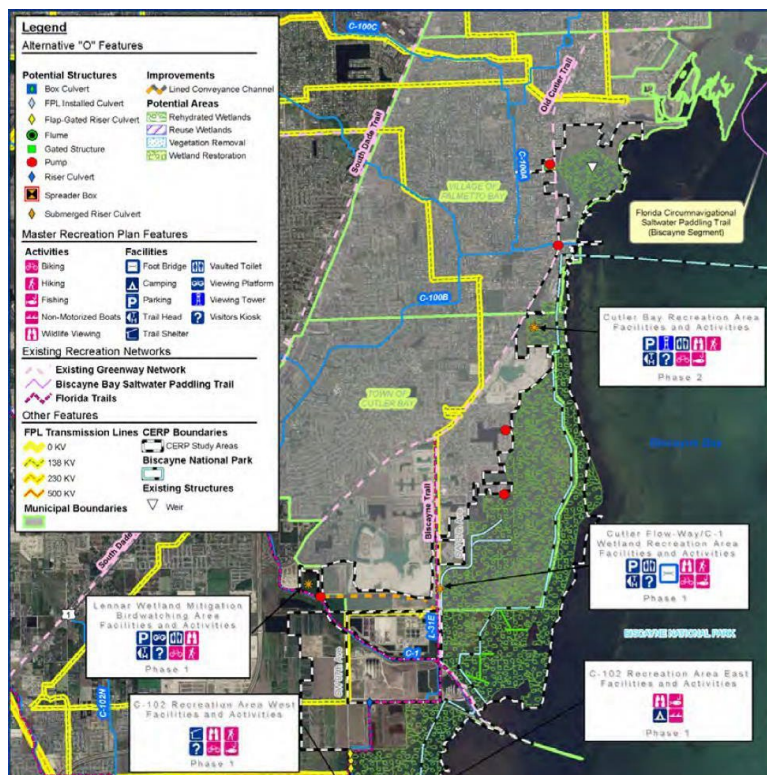




2021-03

# State Legislative Session Funding Request

## Project: Cutler Bay Conservation & Resilience Plan (FDEP Florida Resilience and Coastal Protection Grant Application)





## OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Rafael G. Casals, ICMA-CM, CFM

*Town Manager*

### Cutler Bay Conservation & Resilience Plan Project

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000.00 (50%)  
**Match funding available:** \$75,000.00 (50%)  
**Total Project Cost:** \$150,000.00

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#### Project Abstract:

The Town of Cutler Bay (the “Town”) is requesting \$75,000.00 to develop the Cutler Bay Conservation & Resilience Plan with a goal of mitigating flood hazards by limiting residential density in the Town’s coastal high hazard areas.

The Town has identified three (3) properties totaling nearly 85 acres that provide an opportunity for conservation, reduced density, and increased public awareness and is heavily invested in the conservation parcels that will be included in the plan. During the planning process, the Town will develop an implementation plan based on recommendations in its current Flood Mitigation and Green Master Plans to address flooding in Adaptation Action Areas. Activities include hosting a minimum of three (3) Public Involvement Meetings that will assist in developing an implementation plan for restoring the properties, engaging key public and private stakeholders, and identifying Goals, Objectives, and Policies (GOPs) for adoption into the Town’s comprehensive Plan for the designation of Adaptation Action Areas.

#### Project Summary:

The Town of Cutler Bay was incorporated in 2005 and is approximately 10 square miles located along Biscayne Bay in south Miami-Dade County. The Town is a member of the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System (CRS), and in 2019 the Town became the first municipality in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties to reach Class 4. In compliance with the Town’s Flood Plain Mitigation Plan, the Town established a Flood Plan Advisory Committee which consists of five (5) residents that meet quarterly with Town staff to review the Town’s progress in implementing the projects identified in the Mitigation Plan. The development of the Cutler Bay Conservation & Resilience Plan is consistent with the Green Master Plan Policy CC-6A: “The Town of Cutler Bay shall identify, and designate Adaptation Action Areas as provided by Florida Statutes, and develop policies for adaptation as required for the protection of areas and facilities in the Town that are vulnerable to the impacts of rising sea levels and climate change.”





## OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Rafael G. Casals, ICMA-CM, CFM

*Town Manager*

The Town seeks to identify the action items necessary to implement at least two (2) adaptation strategies during this project. The first strategy is the “avoidance” of new development by way of purchasing vacant land in high flood zone areas for the purpose of conservation, increasing coastal setbacks, and establishing partnerships with stakeholders (i.e. South Florida Water Management District, Miami-Dade County) to develop and install passive parks and educational signage to increase public awareness of the natural habitat and sustainability, and identify strategies to restore and utilize the vacant land to mitigate flooding and improve the water quality of Biscayne Bay. Secondly, the Town will implement “procedural” strategies to generate vulnerability and adaptation information, increase awareness of vulnerabilities and adaptation options or incorporate such information into plans or policies. Awareness activities will be incorporated into the Town’s community outreach activities, signage, and Comprehensive Master Plan.

In 2018, the Town Council began to explore the feasibility of purchasing the remaining vacant parcels of land east of Old Cutler Road to preserve its environmental value, and further the Town’s resiliency efforts. In 2019, the Town adopted Ordinance No. 19-13 establishing a temporary moratorium on development of properties east of Old Cutler Road. The ordinance allows time to study, recommend, and adopt regulations to address sea level rise and other environmental concerns to ensure sustainability and resiliency for the Town’s residents and future generations. The Town reached the first milestone in efforts to acquire vacant property in the target area by taking ownership of 16 acres, located north of SW 212 Street and east of Old Cutler Road in January 2020. By year’s end, the Town acquired an additional 8.435-acre parcel located southeast of Old Cutler Road and SW 184 Street designated by Miami-Dade County as an “environmentally endangered buffer land.” Finally, the Town has restored a 54-acre wetland track located at SW 224th Street and 97th Avenue that is owned by the South Florida Water Management District. This project cleared invasive vegetation to provide a permanent habitat for native and migratory birds – over 150 species have been observed on the property.

### **Project Benefits:**

At the conclusion of this project, the Town will have a plan that will assist in obtaining funding for implementation of the recommended strategies necessary to enhance natural flood mitigation and incorporate green infrastructure techniques (rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement) which help manage local and coastal flooding. The Town’s efforts to incorporate open space preservation into its floodplain management efforts prevents rain water from overwhelming the Town’s drainage systems and roadways, avoids flood loss, and protects the environmentally sensitive Biscayne Bay.

### **Match Funding Available:**

The Town commits \$75,000.00 (50%) of the total estimated cost of \$150,000.00 as match funding. This funding is obtained through the Town’s General Fund - Grants Budget.

