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Economic Development

Community Redevelopment Agencies

The Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency (FPRA) was established in 1982 to guide the city in its redevelopment efforts. The purpose of the agency is to revitalize both the physical and economic environment of the redevelopment area. Prior to 1982 the Downtown Redevelopment Corporation was formed to study the issues of the declining downtown and was instrumental in the creation of the agency.

The City SUPPORTs legislation to improve municipalities' use of community redevelopment agencies to effectively carry out redevelopment and community revitalization in accordance with Home Rule.

State and Local Economic Development Partnerships

The City SUPPORTs legislation and appropriation that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the state and local government partnership in economic development through the greater use of targeted strategic investments to induce sustainable economic activity resulting in a consistent positive return on investment for both state and local governments.

Enterprise Florida/Job Growth Grant Fund

SUPPORT the continued funding of the Florida Job Growth Grant and the state's economic development toolkit in a manner that supports increased economic growth and development by incentivizing businesses to relocate to or expand in all regions of the state of Florida.

Public Record and Open Meeting Exemptions for Economic Development

SUPPORT changes to s.286.0113 and s.288.075, F.S., that would allow the City Commissioners to deliberate in private regarding an economic development proposal and preserve the confidentiality of confidential information in the possession of an economic development agency.

Budget & Taxation

Home Rule Authority

During the 2017 and 2018 Legislative Session, there were a significant number of legislative bills filed that proposed to preempt the Home Rule Authority of local governments thereby preventing the ability of local governments to respond in a timely manner to matters of local importance. It is imperative and critical that decisions and legislation regarding local government services be left to the form of government closest to the citizens. Therefore, the City OPPOSES any legislation which would preempt their Home Rule Authority.

Unfunded Mandates

The State Legislature has frequently passed legislation that compels local governments to provide a service, program, or benefit without providing the appropriate funding or a funding source. This compromises local governments' ability to provide services requested by their local communities by diverting resources to these state-directed, unfunded mandates or cost shifts. In addition, as more and more mandates are created, local governments are faced with the burden of using local tax dollars to finance functions that they have little control over.

The state must do a better job of truthfully identifying costs to local governments when passing new legislation and must provide funding or a funding source for every legislative initiative that imposes a cost on counties. City of Fort Pierce OPPOSES new unfunded mandates and unfunded state to county cost shifts.

Communication Services Tax

SUPPORTS legislation that protects general revenues collected from the local communications services tax. These revenues are used to provide essential municipal services, such as public safety, and constructing and maintaining roads, bridges, public parks and open spaces. Maintaining a diversified revenue base strengthens the fiscal stability of local governments and improves their ability to serve all citizens and businesses.

Sales Tax Equity

SUPPORTS legislation that reforms Florida's sales tax laws that apply to online sales from out of state retailers. Changes to these laws are needed to ensure that consumers and retailers are treated fairly and equitably.

Local Business Tax

SUPPORTS legislation that protects general revenues collected from the local business tax. Currently, the City imposes a local business tax for the privilege of engaging in or managing a business, profession or occupation within the City's jurisdiction. The local business tax revenues collected by the City is used to assist funding services critical to our businesses, such as zoning, permitting, code enforcement, and police.

Sales Tax on Commercial Leases

OPPOSES legislation that repeals or reduces the state sales tax and local option sales tax on commercial leases. Since 1969, Florida has imposed a sales tax on the total rent charged

under a commercial lease of real property. Commercial real property includes land, buildings, office or retail space, convention or meeting rooms, airport tie-downs, and parking and docking spaces.

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General Administration

Public Records

OPPOSEs legislation that prohibits cities from seeking clarification from the courts as to whether a record is public or exempt after a public records request has been received. During the 2018 Legislative Session, there were several bills filed which would have prohibited the City from seeking judicial clarification.

Public Safety/School Resource Officers

SUPPORTs legislation fully funding the mandated positions of School Resource Officers (SRO) in schools. This mandate has placed a heavy burden on local agencies to fund additional SRO's through ad valorem taxes. Funding of the recurring cost of SRO's through the requirement of this mandate is unsustainable, resulting in the necessity of cutting other public services and having a direct negative impact on the welfare and public safety of all local government entities in the state.

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Environmental & Natural Resources

Department of Environmental Protection – Beach Funding & Permitting

SUPPORTs the creation of a new dedicated and recurring statutory funding source for beach renourishment projects which accurately reflects the increase in participating programs and future beach and inlet project funding needs. The previous statutory commitment of \$30 million created in 1998 was repealed during Amendment 1 implementation. Since that time, the beach program has received just over \$30 million each year between Land Acquisition Trust Funds and General Revenue.

This amount is no longer sufficient to meet Florida’s needs. A simple adjustment for inflation would require \$55 million in 2018 dollars annually. This does not account for the fact that, since 1998, the number of miles participating in the program has increased by 50 percent. Funding half of the project requests over the last few years would require nearly \$50 million annually, and annualizing beach and inlet project funding needs over the next 20 years would require roughly \$70 to 80 million.

Indian River Lagoon, Lake Okeechobee Basin & Everglades

SUPPORT state funding for the construction of additional water storage and water quality treatment facilities within the Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee, St. Lucie, Indian River Lagoon and Everglades watersheds.

Vessel & Waterways

SUPPORT revised statutory authority and continued state funding for the enforcement and removal of derelict vessels, with emphasis on chronic offenders. SUPPORT local regulation of vessels, mooring fields, bulkheads and seawalls, floating vessel platforms, and seagrasses.

Transportation & Infrastructure

The Port of Fort Pierce

In 2017, the County invested in the purchase of a 12 acre site, known as the King Maritime Terminal, at the Port of Fort Pierce. Although the Port of Fort Pierce lies physically within the City of Fort Pierce limits, management falls under the jurisdiction of St. Lucie County, which comprised of the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners. Currently, there is an interlocal agreement between the City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County which clarifies roles and responsibilities and sets the framework for future collaboration and partnership in port development.

In 1990, the Florida Legislature created the Florida Seaport Transportation & Economic Development (FSTED), an on-port investment program, which is administered by the FSTED Council, consisting of the port directors of the 15 public seaports, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, and the Director of the Department of Economic Opportunity. This state and local investment entity is statutorily charged with accomplishing the state's seaport development mission of implementing capital improvement projects at the local level.

The City of Fort Pierce supports the full funding of all projects within the Florida Department of Transportation's Seaport Program and the Florida Seaport Transportation & Economic Development (FSTED).

Transportation Funding

Municipalities have limited revenue options for funding transportation projects. A major portion of transportation funding flows to municipalities through the county, state and federal governments. Much of that funding is generated through a tax on gasoline, and recent data has shown the purchase of gasoline has decreased significantly, in effect decreasing the available revenue to municipalities for transportation infrastructure. Transportation projects are often the catalyst for economic development and the result of growth within a community. As municipalities lack options to increase revenue and continue to struggle to fund local transportation projects, increased and alternative funding sources at the state level are a necessity. The City of Fort Pierce SUPPORTS legislation that provides opportunities for increased and alternative revenue sources for municipal transportation infrastructure projects.

Impact Fees

Impact fees and transportation concurrency are mechanisms used by local governments to ensure that new developments pay for the infrastructure needs they generate.

An impact fee is based on the proportionate share of the cost of the public facilities needed to serve new development. Florida law requires that calculation of an impact fee be based on the most recent and localized data. In addition, a city imposing an impact fee must provide for an accounting and reporting of impact fee collections and expenditures.

Transportation concurrency is a state law that requires each local government in Florida to adopt a comprehensive plan and implement regulations that require adequate basic

services and facilities be provided at the same time as, or concurrent with, any new development.

The City of Fort Pierce OPPOSES legislation which would preempt their authority to set impact fees or transportation concurrency.

Bicycle Sharing Programs

SUPPORTs the City's ability to effectively manage bicycle sharing programs. Local decision makers should retain the authority to enact appropriate regulations that protect public health, safety and welfare.

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Health & Human Services

Homelessness

SUPPORT State funding for establishing and maintaining local homelessness programs, housing for the homeless, and operating capital for the aid groups and statewide agencies that oversee them.

Foreclosures, unemployment rates, and lack of job opportunities have left communities nationwide devastated with an increase of homelessness. Statistics show that Florida ranked third highest nationally in the number of homeless individuals in 2012, with approximately 54,300 homeless individuals. Homelessness brings many complications to communities besides leaving thousands of people without a sustainable living environment. Having more affordable housing in the community can help individuals at risk of being homeless.

Affordable Housing

The State of Florida established the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund to create a source of funding for affordable housing. Funding comes from a dedicated tax on housing transactions. Recently, the trust fund has been swept by the State Legislature for other uses.

The City of Fort Pierce SUPPORTs allocating the full amount of dedicated documentary tax revenues for state and local affordable housing programs. As well as, SUPPORTs investing in affordable housing to create jobs in home repair, hardening homes, retrofitting and constructing affordable rental units, and lowering energy costs to make housing more affordable.

Mental Health/Substance Abuse Services and Funding

In the last two years over \$30 million in mental health funding had been lost to Florida's communities. Increased community funding is required to meet the needs of persons residing in the Treasure Coast who are mentally ill and often also have severe substance use disorders.

Additionally, the human and economic costs of untreated mental illness in our state continue to rise. Those costs include the criminalization of people with untreated mental illness, family erosion, substance abuse, job loss, domestic violence, homelessness, medical problems, crime and suicide. Florida must do more to invest and fund community-based and integrated mental healthcare.

The City Fort Pierce SUPPORTs efforts to increase supportive housing, jail diversion, and employment and education initiatives for people with mental health or substance abuse issues. SUPPORTs diverting, medically assisting, or treating mentally ill outside of the criminal justice process through alternative programs, such as Crisis Intervention Teams. SUPPORTs continued efforts to work through Medicaid reform initiatives to ensure that persons with substance abuse and mental health treatment needs are appropriately served.

Furthermore, the City SUPPORTs appropriate funding for core mental health and substance abuse services. SUPPORTs increased funding of the Criminal Justice Mental

Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program with recurring dollars in a trust fund. SUPPORTs sustainable matching state funds to counties that have received both planning and implementation Reinvestment Grant funds.

Healthy Families

The City of Fort Pierce supports a continuation of funding for the Florida Healthy Families program.

Early Steps Program

Treasure Coast Early Steps Program, within Children's Medical Services, serves families with infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months of age, who have developmental delays or an established condition likely to result in a developmental delay. Each child receives an Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) that meets his or her needs. Families and caregivers also receive support to develop the skills and confidence they need to help their children learn and develop. The City SUPPORTs continued funding of the program.

Education

State Library Funding

Local governments receive State support for libraries through three different programs: the State Aid program, the Regional Multi-type Library Cooperative Grant program, and the Public Library Construction Grant program. Continuation of these funding sources will ensure that the State will play an appropriate role in enhancing public library service by matching local library expenditures, enhancing consortia services to area libraries, and providing needed dollars for the construction of new public libraries.

Indian River State College

Support IRSC's top legislative priority in 2019 - full funding to construct the Treasure Coast Advanced Manufacturing Center. IRSC has requested \$14, 832,447 in Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funding to build a state-of-the-art, 55,000+ square foot training facility on its main campus. The \$23.3 million project has received a combined \$6.5 million in past legislative sessions and will have a local, private fund match of \$2 million from the IRSC Foundation.

The Advanced Manufacturing Center will expand IRSC's capacity to offer training in smart and additive manufacturing, and will also serve as home to important industrial skills programs such as HVAC, Automotive Technology, Welding, Electrical Systems, and more. The endeavor will additionally provide new opportunities for industry partnerships, applied learning and apprenticeships, and K-12 engagement in Dual Enrollment, CAPE, and beyond.

Support IRSC with increased operational funding for student success initiatives, workforce programs in high-skill, high-wage industries, and enhancing the institution's capacity to serve the community and grow the regional talent pipeline.