



CITY OF FORT PIERCE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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

To support 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. The City supports the continued funding of the Florida Job Growth Grant.

Qualified Targeted Industries Tax Refund

The Qualified Target Industry (QTI) Tax Refund is a tool available to Florida communities to encourage quality job growth in targeted high value-added businesses, such as life sciences, aviation/aerospace or financial/professional services. If approved, the applicant may receive refunds on the taxes it pays. This includes corporate income, sales, ad valorem, intangible personal property, insurance premium, communications services, and certain other taxes.

This economic tool allows the City to leverage our respective community when competing to obtain new or expanding businesses to our area, as well as assisting our existing businesses with retention. If this program is to sunset, it could jeopardize our performance in the marketing arena on a state, national or international level, placing our City in a difficult position economically.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, the bill to reauthorize this program failed and it has sunset on July 30, 2020. The City supports legislation in which will implement a similar program of the Qualified Targeted Industries Tax Refund.

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.

Visit Florida

The City *supports* continued funding of the program at a level that is productive for the organization and growth of tourism marketing on behalf of the County. Especially with the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism industry in Florida, it is imperative we continue to support this industry, which not only impacts revenues, but provides millions of jobs, and is considered one of Florida's top economic drivers.





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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 city cost shifts.

Local Fuel Tax Indexing

Local fuel tax revenues, also known as gas tax, have been constantly eroding as the costs of road construction and maintenance has increased as well as vehicles becoming more fuel efficient. Unlike local governments, the Florida Department of Transportation has the ability to index their motor fuel tax rate as it relates to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Without the ability for local governments to index, we are unable to keep pace with our growing transportation costs and needs.

The City of Fort Pierce **supports** legislation to allow counties and municipalities the ability to annually index the local fuel tax as it relates to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

LEVEL	TAX	AMOUNT
Federal		
(Not Indexed)	Fuel Excise Tax	Gasoline - 18.4¢/gal Gasohol - 18.4¢/gal Diesel - 24.4¢/gal
State (Distributed to FDOT)		
(Indexed)	Fuel Sales Tax	All Fuels - 13.4¢/gal
(Indexed)	SCETS Tax	Gas/Gasohol - 6.1¢ to 7.4¢/gal Diesel - 7.4¢/gal
State (Distributed to Local Gov'ts)		
(Not Indexed)	Constitutional Fuel Tax	All Fuels - 2¢/gal
(Not Indexed)	County Fuel Tax	All Fuels - 1¢/gal
(Not Indexed)	Municipal Fuel Tax	All Fuels - 1¢/gal
Local		
(Not Indexed)	Ninth-Cent Fuel Tax	Gas/Gasohol - 0 to 1¢/gal Diesel - 1¢/gal
(Not Indexed)	Local Option Fuel Tax	Gas/Gasohol - 0 to 11¢/gal Diesel - 6¢/gal

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.

Building Department Fees

The City **supports** legislation which will amend F.S. 553.80, to relieve the restrictions on the Building Enterprise Fund carryforward allocation as well as allowing more flexibility on the use of those funds.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Public Safety/School Resource Officers

Supports legislation in the continued effort to fully fund 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.

Support legislation that promotes the identification of potential sources of sufficient funding to address the documented need, as well as, the development of priority and science-based grant programs for the implementation of projects, programs, and studies identified by local governments, the water management districts and state agencies.

Support legislation requiring the assessment and evaluation of state agency efforts to address sea level rise and other weather impacts on the City. SUPPORT continued funding for research and mitigation for harmful algal blooms (HABs), including blue green algae, and red tide.

ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

Department of Environmental Protection – Beach Funding & Permitting

The Beach Management Funding Assistance Program is a Long-Range Budget Plan administered through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to assist eligible local governments with their beach erosion control projects. Each application request must include a detailed project description, cost estimate, and supporting resolution from the governing body. Individual projects then receive a priority ranking based upon several criteria.

Indian River Lagoon, Lake Okeechobee Basin & Everglades

Support continued dedicated funding for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and supports long-term funding commitments to finance the completion of the projects on the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS), with a priority given to the Indian River Lagoon-South (IRL-S) Project including funding for the C-23/24 and C-25 reservoirs and STAs.

The Indian River Lagoon-South Restoration Project, part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), was authorized to address the damaging effects of pollution and unnaturally large freshwater discharges and local basin runoff on our ecologically vital water bodies. The IRL-S Project employs a regional approach to address the Martin and St. Lucie County portions of the lagoon. The completion of this project will greatly reduce polluted discharges into the St. Lucie River and the Indian River Lagoon.

Comprehensive Water Reform

Support legislation intended to assess and regularly report the financial need to address Florida’s water infrastructure relating to water supply including conservation, the protection of water quality, stormwater, wastewater, water reuse, flood control and environmental resource protection and restoration.

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.

Project	Project Description	Requested Amount	Match
Fort Pierce Shore Protection Project	2020 FPB Emergency truck haul (R)	\$1,110,769	\$1,110,769
	Emergency truck haul design/monitoring/observation (R)	\$62,383	\$62,383
	2019 Post Dorian Beach Assessment (R)	\$9,226	\$9,226
	Construction	\$1,112,000	\$1,112,000
	Construction Oversight	\$25,000	\$25,000
	Physical and biological monitoring	\$150,000	\$150,000
	Design and report (Section 111/LRR)	\$50,000	\$50,000
Southern St. Lucie County Beach Restoration	2019 Post Dorian Beach Assessment (R)	\$10,361	\$13,463
Fort Pierce Inlet Management Plan	Sand Trap Phase 1 Construction (Budget Shortfall)	\$675,000	\$225,000
	TOTAL	\$3,204,739	\$2,757,841

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



The Port of Fort Pierce

In 2018, 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.

Micromobility Programs

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

Broadband

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disparities existing in broadband infrastructure. The City of Fort Pierce supports efforts to promote accessibility and affordability of broadband services. To combat the overreporting of connectivity, The City supports efforts to improve service mapping through data collection and a grievance processes to contest inaccurate maps.

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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 **support** 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

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.

EDUCATION

State Library Funding

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Indian River State College

The City *supports* IRSC's top legislative priority in 2021 - full funding to construct the Advanced Workforce Training Complex. IRSC is requesting \$10,637,108 in Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funding to build a state-of-the-art, 50,000+ square foot training facility on its main campus in Fort Pierce. The \$23.3 million project has received a combined \$10.7 million in previous legislative sessions (including \$4.2 million in 2019) and will have a local, private fund match of \$2 million from the IRSC Foundation.

The AWTC will expand IRSC's capacity to offer training in smart and additive manufacturing, and serve as home to important industrial skills programs such as HVAC, Automotive Technology, Welding, Electrical Systems, and more. The endeavor will provide new opportunities for industry partnerships, applied learning and apprenticeships, and K-12 engagement in Dual Enrollment, CAPE, and beyond. This modern educational facility will also be instrumental in supporting regional economic development efforts, including those in Fort Pierce with respect to the Port of Fort Pierce, and more.



