



**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** continued funding of the Florida Job Growth Grant. In 2018, the City was successful in securing funding through this program to assist in the expansion and relocation of Natalie's Orchid Island Juice Company. Furthermore, 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.

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 City. 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 2021 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.

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.



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.



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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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	County Match
Fort Pierce Shore Protection Project	Post Construction Monitoring	\$150,000	\$150,00
Fort Pierce Inlet Management Plan	Sand Trap Phase 1 Construction	\$1,080,000	\$360,000
	2023 Post Construction Monitoring	\$27,500	\$27,500
	TOTAL	\$1,257,500	\$537,500

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 will allow cities to have greater local decision making and flexibility on transportation funding to ensure we meet our ever-changing transportation demands.

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 process to contest inaccurate maps.



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 2019, 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





