

St. Johns County Civic Roundtable State Legislative Priorities

2021

Funding for Florida Forever

Support a minimum of \$300 million in funding for Florida Forever, the state's premier conservation and recreation lands acquisition program. Extend the bonding authority for Florida Forever to maximize the impact of funding. Six years ago, 75% of Floridians voted to Constitutionally mandate one-third of the real estate document stamp revenue to fund land conservation.

Support Repeal of HB 7103 Provisions & Restore Citizen Rights to Participate in Local Planning

Amend legislation passed in 2019 to target frivolous challenges to development orders and restore citizens' right to file legitimate challenges without the fear of financial ruin should they lose in court. HB 7103 passed in the final hours of the session without the benefit of public hearings or normal committee consideration.

Funding for Preservation Agricultural Land

Support legislation to assist counties in the purchase of "Development Rights" which will ensure farmland will remain in permanent agricultural use and reduce regulations restricting farmers' ability to market products. Agriculture has been a vital economic contributor to St. Johns County, yet the acreage devoted to agricultural crops is rapidly declining.

Funds for Expansion of St. Johns County Public Transit System

Support legislation that will increase funds to the Transportation Trust and oppose efforts to divert funds from the trust fund. The county's growing population dictates expanding public transportation to employment areas and collaborate on more regional routes.

Protection of Local Government Revenues and Statutes

Oppose any legislation which would further erode local governments from capturing revenue in the form of ad valorem values, impact fees, concurrency compensation and user fees. This revenue is critical to provide necessary programs and services for residents and to meet unfunded mandates.

Local governments should be allowed to regulate Short-term and Vacation Rentals and Plastics

Opposes any legislation which preempt cities and counties from regulating short-term and vacation rentals because local governments know what is best for their communities. Local control is best when it comes to the ability to enact local zoning provisions to ensure quality of life of its citizens, including the use of plastics.

Open Meeting Exemption for Economic Development Purposes

Opposes efforts to so broadly amend Florida's Government in the Sunshine statute to allow local governments to meet and deliberate in private on economic development issues. These amendments as currently proposed could allow almost any non-residential development proposals to be negotiated in private without public disclosure and input. This exemption should be more narrowly cast to apply only to those rare instances where confidentiality is adequately justified by findings, and that these findings are publicly disclosed prior to any official action on the subject matter being taken.

Program funding for the Vilano Beach/Ponte Vedra Beach Trail

Supports funding for the completion of the pre-construction engineering for the initial phases of the multi-use Vilano Trail/Ponte Vedra Trail along State Road A1A between the City of St. Augustine, Vilano Town Center and Ponte Vedra Beach.

Support Meaningful & Comprehensive Legislation to Further Limit Water Pollution

Enact legislation and increase funding to address the sources of nutrient pollution, especially from septic tanks, biosolids, sewage spills, fertilizer and other runoffs which seep into groundwater and water tables. Nutrients are widely recognized as the major driver of algae proliferation.

Sea Level Rise Infrastructure Funding

Support funding to assist coastal communities in assessing vulnerabilities and risks associated with sea level rise and help develop plans and approaches for mitigation.