



2022 State Legislative Program

Guiding Principles



1. *Maintain the integrity of home rule power which allows the development and implementation of community-based solutions to local problems, including the priorities of our partner organizations and agencies.*
2. *Oppose unfunded mandates that impact local government's ability to control its budget.*
3. *Support adequate state funding for constitutional officers required to perform duties on behalf of the state.*
4. *Support fully funding the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund.*
5. *Support a dedicated recurring source of funding for beach nourishment.*
6. *Support the development of a Statewide Climate Resiliency Plan and a funding source to assist local communities who have implemented plans to combat sea level rise.*
7. *Support the continuation of policies that protect Florida's natural resources and scenic beauty, including the prohibition of any and all oil drilling or exploration efforts in state waters.*
8. *Support maintaining the integrity of Tampa Bay Water as the regional water supplier.*
9. *Support state funding for the Arts and cultural institutions.*
10. *Support the prioritization of state funding to assist with local and regional infrastructure improvements, including transportation, septic to sewer conversion, damaged sanitary sewer laterals, and wastewater systems.*
11. *Support innovative funding strategies that address the declining revenue source of transportation funding to adequately address future transportation needs.*

Priorities

East Lake Tarpon Community Special Act

SUPPORT legislation that extends the Special Act requiring non voluntary annexations of property within the East Lake Tarpon Community to be approved by a majority vote of electors within the community voting in a referendum.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons

SUPPORT the continued use of RRFBs at pedestrian crossings to ensure the safe crossing of pedestrians on our roadways.

Private Sanitary Sewer Laterals

SUPPORT legislation that allows local governments to create local solutions to identify, inspect, and repair damaged private sanitary sewer laterals.

Waste-to-Energy Facilities

SUPPORT efforts by the Florida Waste-to-Energy Coalition that affords local governments that own WTE facilities the opportunity for additional revenue to offset solid waste enterprise expenses and capital costs.

High Point Community Park

REQUEST funding for the High Point Community Park, a partnership between Pinellas County and the Pinellas County School District to provide recreational access to students at High Point Elementary and residents of the High Point community.

Dunedin Causeway

REQUEST state support of the County's efforts to secure federal funding for the construction of Dunedin Causeway.

East Lake Tarpon Community Special Act

Issue

In 2012 a Special Act was created by the legislature to require a referendum of the entire community to annex parcels within the boundary of the East Lake Tarpon Community. If approved, the entire community within the boundary would be annexed. Residents of the community may still voluntarily annex if they desire. The Special Act is set to expire in September of 2022.

Additionally, since the Special Act became law various properties have been voluntarily annexed into the cities of Tarpon Springs and Oldsmar. These properties need to be removed from the legal description of the boundary in order to keep the legal description up to date.

Recommendation

SUPPORT legislation that extends the Special Act requiring non voluntary annexations of property within the East Lake Tarpon Community to be approved by a majority vote of electors within the community voting in a referendum.

Additional Support

East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District
Council of North County Neighborhoods

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons

Issue

During the 2020 and 2021 Sessions legislation was introduced to remove Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at certain pedestrian crosswalks at certain pedestrian crossings. The use of RRFBs would have been limited to crosswalks on roads with no more than two lanes and a speed limit of 35 mph or less. All RRFBs currently in use at pedestrian crosswalks on roads with speed limits above 35 mph or more than two lanes would be required to be removed.

There are currently over 320 RRFBs within Pinellas County, 90 of which are within the County's jurisdiction. RRFBs are widely used along Gulf Blvd and have played a key role in increasing pedestrian safety along the County's beaches, which are heavily traveled by residents and visitors alike. RRFBs are also widely used at Trail crossings throughout Pinellas County.

Removing existing RRFBs at these locations would have a severe negative impact on pedestrian and bicyclist safety with Pinellas County. Additionally, the removal of these devices would have a significant negative fiscal impact to Pinellas.

Recommendation

SUPPORT the continued use of RRFBs at pedestrian crossings to ensure the safe crossing of pedestrians on our roadways.

Additional Support

Florida Association of Counties
Forward Pinellas
Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

Private Sanitary Sewer Laterals

Issue

During the 2021 Session legislation was introduced that would have prohibited local governments from implementing their own private sanitary sewer lateral inspection and repair programs. The legislation would have required local governments to bare the entire cost of inspecting and repairing damaged private laterals.

Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) is currently in the process of evaluating local solutions to identify, inspect, and repair damaged private sanitary sewer laterals. In addition, PCU is exploring additional ways to identify and repair damaged private sanitary sewer laterals through the Florida Building Code.

Recommendation

SUPPORT legislation that allows local governments to create local solutions to identify, inspect, and repair damaged private sanitary sewer laterals.

Waste-to-Energy Facilities

Issue

The Florida Waste-to-Energy Coalition is made up of the municipal governments in Florida that depend on WTE as an alternate to the landfilling of municipal solid waste. WTE is critical infrastructure for the state of Florida. Our state has 10 WTE facilities, more than any other state. The communities in which WTE is the primary method of solid waste disposal account for 48 percent of Florida's population and more than half of Florida's economy. In Florida, WTE avoids landfilling more than 6.5 million of tons of solid waste annually. By doing so, Florida WTE facilities annually reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 5.4 million tons of CO₂. That is the equivalent of taking 989,000 passenger vehicles off the road every year. In addition, Florida's WTE facilities produce 544 megawatts of electricity of baseload power. On a 24/7/365 basis, our facilities produce enough electricity to power 288,100 homes for a year. And there's a bonus, Florida's WTE facilities recycle 212,000 tons of metal a year, enough to build 156,000 cars.

At the State level, the FWTEC will pursue legislation to net meter power generated from their WTE Facilities to other city/county facilities and provide a new basis for calculating individually operated utility capacity cost avoidance.

If net metering is passed, Pinellas could see \$24M in revenue, which is \$17M more than having to accept standard offer contract in 2024. Energy costs to the County could be reduced by 30-50%.

Recommendation

SUPPORT efforts by the Florida Waste-to-Energy Coalition that affords local governments that own WTE facilities the opportunity for additional revenue to offset solid waste enterprise expenses and capital costs.

Additional Support

Florida Waste-to-Energy Coalition

High Point Community Park

The High Point community is a low to moderate income community that has been identified as one of the County's five areas of poverty. Currently the community lacks access to recreational opportunities and has no recreation facilities.

The need for recreation has been identified as a priority by the residents of High Point in the High Point Community Plan that was recently completed. In 2020 Pinellas County entered into a joint use agreement with the Pinellas County School District to construct a community park on the former site of High Point Elementary. Students at High Point Elementary will utilize the facility for recreation during school hours. Area high schools will also have access to the facility for lacrosse practices. Residents of the community will be able to access the facility during evenings and weekends.

The facility will include two multipurpose fields, two basketball courts, playground, multi-use path, picnic shelter and restrooms. The project is currently in the design phase and construction is proposed for FY23.

Dunedin Causeway

The Dunedin Causeway is nearing the end of its useful life and is in need of replacement. The current cost estimate of replacement is \$80M. The causeway is located just west of SR 586 and is the only access point for Honeymoon Island State Park. Honeymoon Island is the state's second most visited park in its system.

Congress is poised to pass a bipartisan infrastructure package that will reauthorize the federal Discretionary Bridge program which was discontinued in 2005. The highly competitive program will fund up to 80% of off system bridges. Two projects will be selected from each state, each of the five years the program is in place.

The County will work with the Florida Department of Transportation to best position the Dunedin Causeway for federal funding.