

City of Fort Myers Legislative Priorities 2021

Appropriations objectives:

1. \$3.25M for continuance of a citywide septic tank abandonment program to reduce potential groundwater infiltration sources impacting Caloosahatchee water quality by abandoning 94 permitted septic tanks in the city and connecting the properties to sanitary sewer. In addition, the city seeks to improve the utility infrastructure in an underserved enclave to the south of downtown containing 242 septic systems, connecting those residential areas to the city's sanitary sewer system. \$100,000 was appropriated by the FL legislature in 2020 to begin planning work on the project.
2. \$2M facility renovation for Police Athletic League. Improvement of the city-owned recreation facility will facilitate the youth engagement activities of the city's Police Athletic League and expand participation of at-risk youth in a growing, underserved area of the city. Proposed changes include renovation of the existing building, refurbishment of multi-purpose field, addition of a soccer field, and extension of community violence reduction early intervention and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) programming to reach at-risk youth in the Fort Myers community.
3. \$1.5M for Caloosahatchee Basin Water Quality and Resiliency Improvements. Provide water quality improvement structures and shoreline stabilization to direct outfalls to the Caloosahatchee River. This includes installing inline check valves to stop backflow will help prevent water from flooding catch basins, as experienced recently with Hurricane Eta (most visibly at the intersection of First Street and Evans Avenue). This project helps protect an environmentally sensitive area with runoff impacts to the Caloosahatchee, and encourages urban infill development from the east (Dean Park, Velasco Village) and south (Midtown) of downtown, minimizing impervious development. In addition, the city is in the process of identifying the most critically needed seawall repairs. A portion of the funds would go towards the seawall resiliency repairs identified in the 2020 engineering study already in progress.
4. \$2M for Midtown Phase 2 Urban Infill Development Water Quality Design-Build Initiative to develop modern stormwater infrastructure while encouraging attainable housing and mixed-use development. With the increase in density, the city aims to preserve water quality through low impact development practices and ground recharge. Funds would go towards green infrastructure including but not limited to permeable surfaces and pavements, rain gardens, green roofs, storage of runoff for irrigation, and enhancement of the water table through an exfiltration system. \$250,000 was appropriated by the FL legislature in 2020 to begin planning work on the project.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

General and Fiscal Policy

- Oppose legislation that shifts administrative or unfunded mandates to local governments
- Maintain and protect allocation of funds in the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund for the intended purpose of attainable housing
- Support preservation of Home Rule authority allowing municipalities to run government through charter, ordinances, codes and plans without prior approval of the state

- Oppose efforts to sunset Community Redevelopment Agencies
- Support statewide funding of public arts and culture programs
- Support statewide funding of community-based youth enrichment and recreational programs

Resource Management

- Support statewide funding for water quality improvement initiatives, and infrastructure projects
- Support efforts to streamline process for removal of abandoned and derelict boats from waterways in order to prevent environmental hazards and threats to public safety
- Maintain comprehensive programs to offset the economic impacts of hurricane damage to municipalities, businesses and residents

Transportation and Growth Management

- Support full funding of the Florida Forever program
- Ensure growth management proposals are scalable and do not limit local land use control
- Support full funding of multimodal transportation initiatives (such as public transit upgrades, traffic calming, improved connectivity, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and programs), therefore increasing safety and providing more mobility options for citizens
- Support funding for urban infill development and community beautification efforts, preserving our 'City of Palms' 29-year-long designation as a Tree City USA community

Health and Public Safety

- Support state funding of School Resource Officer positions to foster positive relationships with law enforcement professionals and provide safe learning environments and mentoring to students
- Support statewide funding for the delivery of community mental health services
- Support efforts to establish a Community Justice Center, bringing together local government entities, private sector partners, non-profit organizations, education and health organizations, community groups and faith-based organizations
- Support adequate funding of fire and emergency services and promotion of fire safety and prevention programs within our communities, including the availability of grants for this purpose
- Support continued funding for county programs to address homelessness and continuum of care services