

# 2024 | State Legislative Program



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**



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### Introduction and Strategic Goals

The 2023 Legislative Priorities reflect the general position of the City Commission pertaining to upcoming legislation that would impact operations. Most importantly, this Program integrates the Commission's Strategic Goals: *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024*, which brings focus and coordination to what we do every day as we make this community a place to live, work, play, and invest.

#### **Infrastructure**

**GOAL 1:** Build a sustainable and resilient community.

**GOAL 2:** Build a multi-modal and pedestrian friendly community.

#### **Public Places**

**GOAL 3:** Build a healthy and engaging community.

#### **Neighborhood Enhancement**

**GOAL 4:** Build a thriving and inclusive community of neighborhoods.

#### **Business Development**

**GOAL 5:** Build an attractive global and local economic community marketplace.

#### **Public Safety**

**GOAL 6:** Build a safe and well-prepared community.

#### **Internal Support**

**GOAL 7:** Build a values-based organization dedicated to developing and retaining qualified employees.

**GOAL 8:** Build a leading government organization that manages all resources wisely and sustainably.

## Fundamental Principles

The City *opposes* legislation that infringes on the basic human and civil rights of Floridians. An integral portion of the advocacy effort by the Commission focuses on the Resolution process. Resolutions provide staff, advocacy teams, and state Executive and Legislative Branches with the City's position regarding proposed legislation during Legislative Session.

### **BROADBAND/CYBERSECURITY**

The Commission *supports* legislation dedicating state resources for the development and enhancement of municipal cybersecurity and broadband services.

### **HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Commission *supports* legislation and funding for municipalities to address homelessness and the creation of housing opportunities. This includes the evaluation of activities and initiatives that can address the root cause of homelessness while identifying ways to create additional housing opportunities in the City.

The Commission *continues to support* full funding for the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP); and other housing programs which aid income eligible residents, including individuals with disabilities.

### **FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES**

*Supports* the Florida League of Cities (FLC) Legislative Priorities and Policy Statements, unless specific issues conflict with the City's approved Legislative Priorities.

### **SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY**

*Oppose* legislative efforts to increase or eliminate the monetary limits on the waiver of sovereign immunity in current law.

### **TAXES AND FEES**

*Oppose* legislation that modifies, restricts, or eliminates a municipality's ability to levy and collect or spend franchise fees, communications service taxes, local business taxes, or other revenues.

### **UNFUNDED MANDATES**

*Oppose* legislation which shifts the financial burden from the state to local government, specifically municipalities.

### **\*NEW\* LOCAL AUTHORITY (HOME RULE)**

The most precious powers a city contains is – Home Rule powers. The ability to establish its form of government through its charter, and to then enact ordinances, codes, plans and resolutions without prior state approval is a tremendous authority. To further be able to enforce them “at home” and to make necessary changes as a city grows is a great reflection of the trust that citizens have in their respective city leaders.

The Commission *opposes* legislation infringing on local home rule authority. The Commission further *opposes* legislation that effectively preempts local government from enacting ordinances, rules, regulations to protect its residents.

**WORKFORCE EDUCATION/EARLY LEARNING**

*Support* funding for early learning education; and full funding for workforce readiness programs.

## Commission Legislative Priorities

### CITY ATTORNEY

The Commission *supports* legislation:

- That would change the date for the non-ad valorem assessment roll public hearing from September 15<sup>th</sup> to September 25<sup>th</sup> to avoid a special meeting of the City Commission regarding the budget.
- To amend Sec. 286.011, Florida Statutes allowing closed-door meetings on pre-suit liability claims.

### HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATIONS

The Commission *supports* legislation:

- Allowing local government to regulate short-term rental properties, vacation rentals, and sober homes.
- Allowing municipalities to create a program for seniors to subsidize the costs incurred as a result of the new condominium legislation.
- ~~That would change the date for the non-ad valorem assessment roll public hearing from September 15<sup>th</sup> to September 25<sup>th</sup> to avoid a special meeting of the City Commission regarding the budget.~~
- ~~To amend Sec. 286.011, Florida Statutes allowing closed-door meetings on pre-suit liability claims.~~

Commented [DS1]: Clean up language. Confer with legal.

### **FIREARM REGULATIONS**

The Commission *opposes* the Legislature's attempt to preempt local government from prohibiting firearms in government buildings, schools, and other critical infrastructure areas.

### **\*NEW\* FINANCE (FRS)**

FRS retirees initially re-employed on or after July 1, 2010, are not eligible for renewed membership in FRS. However, the city is still required to contribute to FRS on their behalf without a corresponding benefit to the employee. . . The City of Fort Lauderdale is requesting that this provision of FRS be amended to allow the re-employed retiree to participate in the FRS investment Plan or to waive the required contribution. Approximately 10-20 employees are adversely affected. Effective July 1, 2023 this contribution was 46.23% for Elected Official Class and 6.78% for Regular Class

### **INFRASTRUCTURE, RESILIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

Examine and address infrastructure needs related to water, wastewater, and stormwater. Integrate resilience in all decisions relating to current and future City operations, so that the city can effectively plan for, respond to, and quickly recover from disruptive events. Develop programs and implement strategies to improve traffic flow and evaluate new solutions that will alleviate congestion within the city.

The Commission *supports* legislation and funding for transportation enhancements focused on greenways, complete street initiatives, pedestrian safety, improving traffic flow, and mass transit development. The Commission further supports legislation that:

- Requires flood disclosures upon the sale of a property;
- Promotes energy conservation and alternative energy development; and
- Supports the inclusion of municipalities in the state environmental permitting process.

#### **\*NEW\* Progressive Design Build**

The City primarily uses Design-Bid-Build or Design-Build, and there are some other methods that may work better overall. For the new infrastructure projects, where time is of the essence, Progressive Design build may be a more practicable way to timely complete critical infrastructure and/or infrastructure projects. Currently the state limits when and how it is available as a tool for government entities.

**Commented [DS2]:** New concept needs to be phrased with more detail.

#### **Plastic Bag & Styrofoam Bans**

The Commission *supports* the repeal of state regulations prohibiting local governments from banning the use or sale of polystyrene products.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Commission *supports* initiatives that focus on a fair and equitable justice system, which can be achieved through statewide comprehensive criminal justice reform. The Commission further *supports* legislation that modifies the Law Enforcement Trust Fund's (LETf) evidentiary standard in a forfeiture proceeding and use of future forfeitures, which may result in an increase in amounts collected.

#### **Blue Light Initiative**

The Commission *supports* the expansion of blue emergency light use to fire rescue and EMS by amending s. 316.2397(2) and (3), Florida Statutes.

**Commented [DS3]:** Is this still a concern?



## Appropriation Requests

### ARTS AND CULTURE

The Commission *supports* increased funding for historic preservation, and the restoration of full funding for the cultural arts. As a city known for its arts and culture, Fort Lauderdale supports all efforts to restore state funding to pre-recession levels.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Commission *supports* funding for Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport capital projects, and the collaboration between the marine and aviation industries to promote economic development and tourism.

#### *Tourism Marketing*

The Commission *supports* VISIT Florida and the transfer of the spending authority of the Tourism Development Tax to municipalities based on tourism activity.

#### *Business Tax Incentive Programs*

The Commission *supports* the reauthorization of the statewide Qualified Target Industry Tax Incentive (QTI) Program by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. The QTI Tax Refund was a tool available to Florida communities to encourage quality job growth in targeted high value-added businesses. Actual awards could be a maximum of:

- \$1,000 per job for businesses paying at least 150 percent of the prevailing average annual wage or \$2,000 per job for businesses paying at least 200 percent of the prevailing average annual wage;
- \$2,000 per job if the business falls within a designated high impact sector OR if the business increases exports of its goods through a seaport or airport in the state by at least 10 percent in value or tonnage in each year of receiving a QTI refund;
- \$2,500 per job (Brownfield Bonus) if project is located in a designated Brownfield area with BSRA (Brownfield site rehabilitation agreement); and
- \$1,000 per job if the local financial support is equal to the base QTI award.

#### *Film and Tax Credits*

The Commission further *supports* the reauthorization of Film Tax Credits/Incentives, which would give credits to filmmakers that meet certain requirements. Since the state's previous film rebate program ended, productions moved to states like Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, and North Carolina.

### NEIGHBOR SUPPORT SERVICES

There are 780 unsheltered individuals living on the streets of Fort Lauderdale on any given night (Point-In-Time Count, January 2023). One of the root causes of homelessness is mental health illness.

#### ***\*NEW\* Homeless Mental Health Housing Program | \$100,000 (requested amount not determined)***

Recent data has shown an increase in homeless cases with individuals suffering from mental illness. The Homeless Mental Health Housing Program will result in a gradual decrease of mental health

related homelessness cases throughout the city. Funding will be used to provide comprehensive wrap around services, including food and case management; and move-in costs for permanent housing.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

Support full funding for existing parks infrastructure projects. Specifically, the Commission supports:

### **Carter Park Improvements | \$272,500**

As a result of recent cost escalations, many much-needed planned park improvements were either removed or deferred leading to a significant reduction in the community's expressed desired elements and park needs. Funding will be used to resurface the Orange Bowl Football Field at Carter Park, which would result in an increase in usage by residents and visitors. Funding will also provide continued outdoor fitness opportunities in support of the city's initiative to encourage its residents to live a healthy lifestyle.

**Commented [DS4]:** This project was vetoed; may try to get it again.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### **\*NEW\* Four Fire Rescue Ambulances | \$232,000 (requested amount not determined)**

Currently Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue utilizes three reserve medical rescue units to staff special events which are held within the City of Fort Lauderdale. The units have exceeded their life expectancy and have become unreliable with mechanical issues. The four new Special Events Ambulances will correct this issue and allow for Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue to adequately provide emergency services to the City during special events.

### **\*NEW\* Fire Rescue Boat | \$1,286,157.53 (requested amount not determined)**

The current reserve fireboat is an open water fishing vessel which was converted into a fireboat and has limited abilities in the open water.

The benefit of replacing the reserve fire boat with a new vessel will improve the capabilities of the marine team by having two both with the same ability to deploy with full advanced life support and a patient treatment compartment, advanced navigation, and communications, forward looking infra-red night vision (FLIR), radar and underwater side scan sonar.

### **\*NEW\* Fire Rescue Station 13 | (Requested amount not determined)**

Information for this project is pending.

## RESILIENCE & INFRASTRUCTURE

Support full funding for infrastructure projects that fight sea level rise. Specifically, the Commission supports:

- The identification of adequate funding for water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure improvements.
- Maintaining, at minimum, \$50 million recurring for beach re-nourishment, revitalization, and enhancement efforts.

**\*NEW\* Roadway Resurfacing Improvements | \$2,500,000 (requested amount not determined, concerns about spending the amount within the fiscal year)**

Roadways throughout the city need improvements. The total cost ~~total \$5~~ is \$12.5 million, not including future maintenance. Funding will be used for citywide roadway asphalt overlay and/or milling and resurfacing to restore pavement for those streets with a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score between 36 and 70. The purpose is to maintain and improve streets affected by uneven and bumpy pavement, irregularities like ruts, potholes, or multiple utility repairs, and any other damage that compromises the pavement. By restoring the surface before the roadway requires reconstruction, will save the taxpayer from bearing the burden of the cost. Waiting would make restoration four times more costly.  
~~Funding will be used to repave roads, fill large potholes, reseal exposed pipelines, and more.~~

**\*NEW\* Fortify Lauderdale | \$1,000,000**

Fort Lauderdale continues to experience significant flooding challenges following heavy rainfall that exceeds the drainage capacity of the existing stormwater system, most recently on April 12, 2023 when a National Emergency was declared following a 26" rainfall event. While the City has already committed more than \$200M to complete stormwater improvements in eight highly vulnerable neighborhoods, continued flooding demands prompted the City accelerate efforts and move forward with a much broader Stormwater/Resilience program.

Funding will be used to initiate planning and design for a second tranche of seventeen neighborhood improvement projects and a companion program to assist private property owners/residents in taking complimentary measures to increase their personal property Resilience to a changing climate.

**\*UPDATED AMOUNT NEW\* Galt Ocean Mile Street Safety Improvement Project Breakers | \$25,000,000 (requested amount not determined)**

This project will create an iconic corridor providing a safe, accessible, attractive, climate-resilient public space serving neighbors and visitors in Fort Lauderdale. Proposed improvements include streetscape elements such as pedestrian lighting, landscaping, shared used street design, and underground water and sewer utility upgrades. There is a \$13.6 million funding gap due to inflation and supply chain challenges to construct the project. The requested amount will reduce the cost burden on Ft. Lauderdale taxpayers.

~~This project is designed to improve and enhance Galt Ocean Drive—also known as the Galt Mile. Specifically, funding will be used to design the resurfacing of the roadway, widen the sidewalk, implement bike lanes, improve the roadway's landscaping, and add street trees, streetlights, decorative pavers, and various safety improvements at crosswalks.~~

**Stormwater Pump Station Redundancy | \$700,000**

During storms and power outages, the pump-station is not operational, causing flooding downtown and on abutting properties. Two gas generators will ensure that the station remains operational during power outages, increasing the resilience in the downtown area, which significantly reduces flooding impacts.

**\*NEW\* Sidewalk Repairs | \$1,500,000**

The city has approximately 420 miles of sidewalk to maintain; and several throughout the city need improvements. Presently, there are several damaged sidewalks throughout the City. The City is requesting \$1.5 million to repair sidewalks, by constructing or reconstructing existing sidewalks within

**Commented [DS5]:** This project came close to being funded; may try to get it again.

the City's right of way. The result of these repairs will most likely reduce pedestrian accidents caused by damaged sidewalks and provide ADA access. Further, reconstruction will improve mobility and compliance with the American with Disability Act (ADA) standards.

#### **Sanitary Sewer System Rehabilitation of Basin B-14 | \$1,500,000**

The rehabilitation and replacement of the sanitary sewer collection mains, manholes, and laterals is required to reduce inflow and infiltration, which can adversely impact system capacity to transmit and treat wastewater. The rehabilitation will increase the lifecycle of all assets and reduce such flows within PS B-14 Basin.

**Commented [DS6]:** More information is needed about this project; may not resubmit.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation in any city is a critical component to stability and growth. The Commission *supports* full funding for all transportation projects within the FDOT Workplan.

**Commented [DS7]:** Do we want to go after these projects again?

#### **Riverland Road Traffic Calming Project | \$1,000,000**

The City of Fort Lauderdale identified the need to install traffic calming devices on Riverland Road to mitigate cut-through traffic and increase pedestrian and bicycle safety. The proposed project would install raised intersections and crosswalks to mitigate dangerous conditions.

#### **LauderTrail Project | \$900,000**

In order to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, create additional transportation options, and mitigate vehicle trips, the City Commission accepted a masterplan for LauderTrail. The 42-mile network is estimated at \$92M and City staff has intentions to implement and construct segments over the next two decades. The City has an existing greenway (Flagler), and this proposed segment will connect to Holiday Park.

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