



CITY OF PORT ST. LUCIE



2020-2021 City/County Legislative Program

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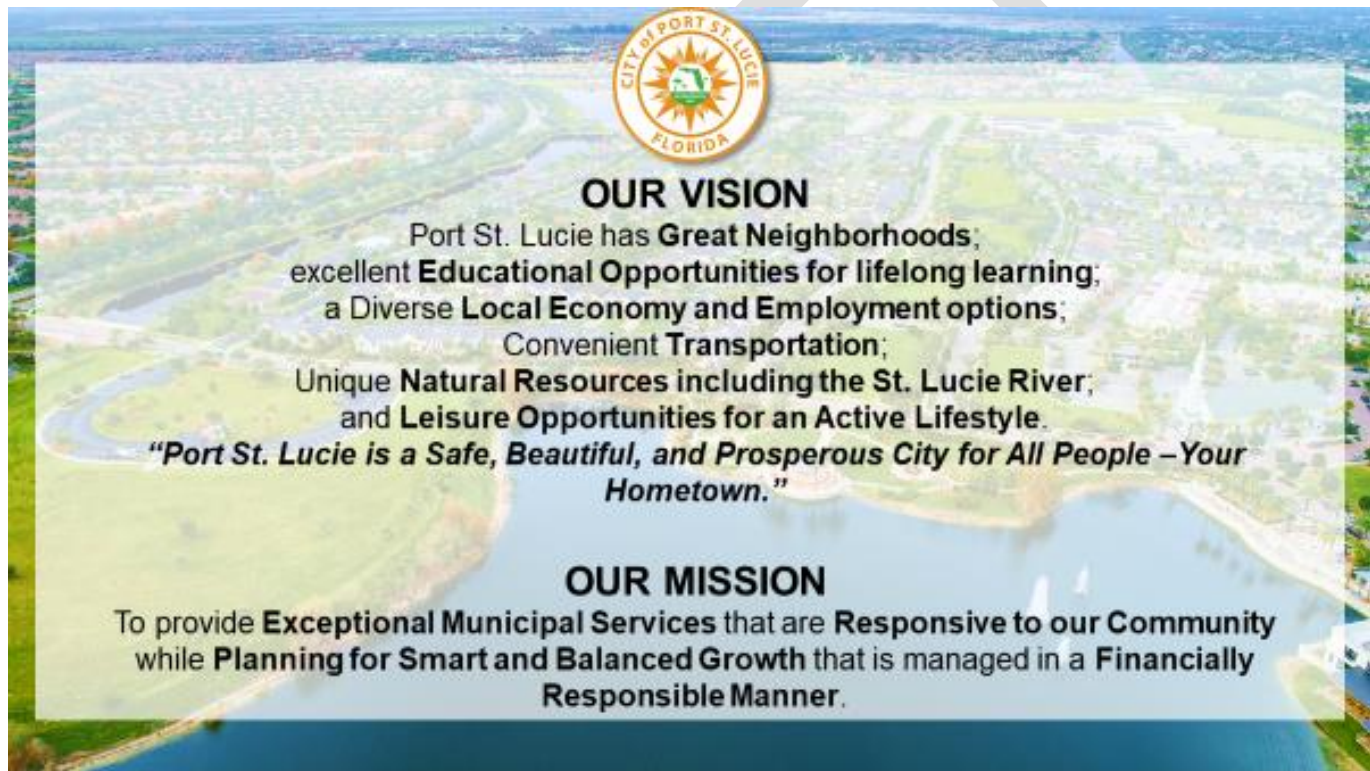


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County Legislative Program

A Proposed Shared Agenda to advance Port St. Lucie's Vision and Mission



The City of Port St. Lucie is the largest municipality in St. Lucie County with a population of 201,846 (according to the most recent U.S. Census estimates as of July 1, 2020) and encompasses approximately 61% of the population of St. Lucie County (population 328,297). The City of Port St. Lucie plays an integral role in the growth and development of St. Lucie County. At the 2020 Strategic Planning Session in June 2020, the Mayor and Council identified the need for an annual legislative program to encompass and articulate the areas where partnership are critical to the sustained growth and development and effectiveness of the City of Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie County.

About the City of Port St. Lucie's Strategic Plan

The City of Port St. Lucie's Strategic Plan is an action-oriented road map that will help the City achieve its vision. It defines who we are, where we want to go, and how we plan to get there. The plan's foundation are seven goals: Safe, Clean and Beautiful; Vibrant Neighborhoods; Quality Education for All Residents; Diverse Economy and Employment Opportunities; High Quality Infrastructure and Facilities; Culture, Nature and Fun Activities and High Performing Government Organization.

This plan, developed through the leadership of the Mayor and City Council, reflects priorities of Port St. Lucie residents, businesses and community partners as identified through the 2020 Community Survey, Citizen Summit and other community engagement efforts.

The goals, strategic initiatives and priority projects provide focus to our City's annual budget and the increasingly data-driven services we provide, which helps ensure we are tracking and continuously improving the efforts that make the most impact on our residents and community. And the plan provides the structure for more conversations and ideas on how we can continue to improve our services and the quality of life of the citizens of Port St. Lucie.

In this year's update to the Strategic Plan, the Mayor and Council identified the need for a County Legislative Program in order to further advance our goal of a High Performing Government Organization. Through increased partnerships and coordination with St. Lucie County, the City of Port St. Lucie can continue to grow as one of Florida's premiere cities in the coming years and serve as a vital economic engine for St. Lucie County and the region. The following issues have been identified for increased intergovernmental focus and resolution.



Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding

Background:

The Coronavirus Relief Fund established under the CARES Act provided direct funding to states and local governments with a population over 500,000. Governors have maximum flexibility to allocate resources from the fund as they see fit. Governor Ron DeSantis announced in June that up to \$1.275 billion in federal CARES Act money will be disbursed to 55 Florida counties that were too small to be eligible for local aid money in an earlier round of relief payments from Washington. The federal government earlier sent just under \$2.5 billion to Florida to go to the 12 counties in the state with populations over 500,000. The largest disbursement under the first round was nearly \$475 million to Miami-Dade County. The latest disbursement will go to the rest of the counties to use to cover expenses incurred responding to the COVID-19 pandemic that weren't picked up by the state. The Florida Department of Emergency Management will distribute the money starting with an initial disbursement of 25 percent of each county's allocation.

St. Lucie County's allocation is \$13,885,922. The counties are not allowed to use the money for other purposes unrelated to coronavirus response. St. Lucie County distributed an allocation to all municipalities within the County.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie requests the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners provide an equitable distribution of funds to the City of Port St. Lucie should additional stimulus be allocated to St. Lucie County and provide the local flexibility to implement programs in a manner that best meets the needs of the citizens of Port St. Lucie.

Impact Fees

Background:

In general, impact fee expenditures are for capital improvements such as acquisition of land, construction of facilities, purchase vehicles or equipment to fund the total or partial cost of providing public services for new development. Impact fees are not used to cure existing deficiencies or costs associated with operation or maintenance activities. Developments within the City are subject to both City and County impact fees. City impact fee legislation is codified in the City Code of Ordinances Chapter 159 while County legislation is codified in the County Code of Ordinances Chapter 24. Both the City and County levy impact fees for Law Enforcement, Parks, Public Buildings, and Roads. The County also levies impact fees for Education (School Board), Fire/Emergency Services (Fire District), and Libraries. For developments within the City, the City collects impact fees for the City and County. As allowed by code, an administrative fee is provided to the City for collecting and transmitting the County fees.

An Interlocal agreement for the City to collect County Road Impact Fees started in Fiscal Year 11/12. For the past ten years, total fees collected and remitted to the County through the end of 18/19 are \$24,275,016.79. Since 1994, St. Lucie County has completed \$64.5M of projects in and around the City limits. County documentation shows that approximately \$32.3M of this work was funded by impact fees.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie requests the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners ensure equitable distribution of impact fee funding, reevaluate project priorities to ensure a rational nexus and evaluate its current impact fees.

Transportation

Background

Investment in multi-modal forms of transportation such as roads, sidewalks and bike paths are critical for the safety, economic development and quality of life of the residents of Port St. Lucie. The City is seeking assistance from the County to continue capacity, safety and beautification improvements on corridors within the City limits. This includes planning, designing, and constructing safe, clean, and sustainable roadway, drainage, and green space infrastructure. Specifically, the City seeks improvements through increased investment in County owned roads within the City Limits: Prima Vista, Walton, Midway, St. James and Glades Cut Off Road. This investment can be achieved through:

- Maintenance of county roads and areas of interest regarding landscaping, lanes, traffic lights, traffic safety
- Development of the Walton Road Concept Plan – tree canopy, raising the road at Savannas State Park
- Coordination of Overall Beautification Standards
- Transportation Planning Organization – opportunities to receive reimbursement when projects are accelerated by the City

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie requests the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners increase the maintenance, appearance and condition of County roads within the City and its periphery and provide equitable distribution of transportation funding to the City.

Water Quality

Background

For many of us living on the Treasure Coast, the idea that there is something special about living on or near the water is a self-evident truth. We understand the value of the water and know that it is not just essential to life, it is essential to our way of life. Here in Port St. Lucie, we are blessed to have waters of all sorts (lakes, rivers, lagoons and ocean) and especially the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

For a place with “Port” in its name, our City Council and citizens recognize that we should always strive to ensure the River is a core part of our community’s identity and one of the shared experiences that bind our 120 square miles and diverse population of 200,000 (and growing). Accordingly, here at City Hall, we’ve been hard at work on a number of strategic priorities relating to our River and other natural resources.

The City of Port St. Lucie has historically been a leader, partner, and advocate for comprehensive, local solutions to the problems that plague our regional waterways. This advocacy started decades ago when our leaders recognized the impacts of septic systems and stormwater runoff on PSL’s natural resources. The City of Port St. Lucie had a vision for the rapidly growing community, even before acquiring its utility assets in 1994, and developed a plan of action to expand the once-limited water and sanitary sewer utility services. The Sewer Expansion Program would ensure that failing septic systems could be taken out of service to avoid further contamination of the shallow water supply and that newly constructed homes and businesses would be required to connect to City sewer. The City’s low-pressure wastewater collection system has grown to be the largest of its kind in the nation and quite possibly, the world. The innovative program has also become a model for other utilities across the globe.

Since then, the City has successfully embarked on key projects aimed at finding local solutions to protect our natural resources, while also reducing flooding, creating recreational opportunities and securing our future water supply. These projects, in addition to joining our regional partners in advocating for Everglades restoration projects such as the Indian River Lagoon-South project, help us fulfill our vision to be a safe, beautiful and prosperous City for all people – your hometown.

In 2020, the City is moving forward with a pilot Septic to Sewer incentive grant program in the Sagamore areas, designated as a hot spot according to the most recent Microbial Tracking Study. Additional impact is possible through partnership.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie requests the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners to jointly pursue and advocate for funding for water quality initiatives as regional partners. In addition, the City requests the County support and advocate for the voluntary septic to sewer connections of residents within unincorporated St. Lucie County with proximity to the City’s municipal sewer system, particularly in areas near waterbodies.



The St. Lucie River/C-23 Water Quality Project provides significant benefit to regional water quality. Area 1 exceeded estimated fresh water storage by 8%. Predicted storage: 974.8 million gallons with actual storage of 1,053.06 million gallons

County Parks Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU), Trails and Land Preservation Collaboration

Background

In July 2019, the City of Port St. Lucie adopted a 10-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan includes priority projects such as the development of Torino and Tradition Regional Parks, the Port and Pioneer Park and others that will continue to provide increased parks and recreation opportunities and an improved quality of life. One source of funding to implement this plan is the County-issued Parks Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU). This assessment will expire in 2022 if not renewed. The 10-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan also outlines the need to preserve land and develop a citywide trails system which are ideal partnership opportunities between County and City governments.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie requests the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners **SUPPORT** the renewal of the County Parks MSTU in order to fund continued investment in City and County park and recreational opportunities. The City of Port St. Lucie requests the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners jointly pursue land preservation and recreational trail partnerships where feasible, in order to advance recreational opportunities for all County and City residents, preserve environmentally sensitive land, advance water quality goals and provide increased access to conservation land throughout St. Lucie County.

Tourist Development Council Tax

Background

The Tourist Development Tax (also referred to as tourist tax, bed tax or resort tax) is a 5% charge on the revenue from the rentals of living quarters for six months or less. In St. Lucie County, the funding is allocated in the following manner:

- **First & Second Cents** - Operation and maintenance of St. Lucie County's Sports Complex
- **Third Cent** - Promote Tourism
- **Fourth Cent** - Pay debt service on bonds used to finance the reconstruction and renovation of the St. Lucie County Sports Complex
- **Fifth Cent** - 67 percent of the 5th cent tax is allocated to pay debt service on bonds issued to finance the renovation and reconstruction of the St. Lucie County Sports Complex. ***The remaining 33 percent of the 5th cent tax is allocated for capital facilities that promote tourism located north of Midway Road***

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie requests the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners **SUPPORT** reconsideration of the current formula for distribution to ensure greater equity to the City of Port St. Lucie.

Transit: opportunities to improve access to transit

Background

The City of Port St. Lucie began prioritizing enhancing public transit services in its Strategic Plan in 2019, following feedback from the annual Community Survey. Ratings for the ease of travel by public transportation and the quality of bus or transit services fell below the national benchmark and this rating decreased in 2020, with only 34% of residents rating as excellent or good.

The City appreciates the efforts of St. Lucie County's Transit Division to expand services in the past year and wishes to continue to collaborate moving forward, in order to meet the following specific requests.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie continues to advocate for the following changes in St. Lucie County transit in order to better meet the needs of Port St. Lucie residents and specifically advocates for:

- **Half hour headways**
- **Additional transit stops to provide greater coverage within the City of Port St. Lucie.**
- **Additional bus shelters or shade structures along fixed bus routes within the City.**
- **Require waste receptacles at all bus stops.**

Emergency Management: Intergovernmental Coordination

Background

Emergency management is the nexus of individual, community, and multiple levels of government preparation, response and recovery to emergencies and disasters. Shared responsibility is a staple across all levels of government. The emergency management function is federally funded, state managed and locally executed.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie encourages continued effective intergovernmental coordination with the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners.

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Ordinances: Consistent approaches to ordinances concerning dogs, backyard chickens

Background

The Florida Constitution and Florida Statutes provides for the establishment of local government at the county and municipal levels, granting each the ability to create ordinances. There are instances when uniformity in drafting ordinances at the county and municipal level is beneficial to the general public. Benefits of this uniform approach include ability to reach consensus on how services are delivered; innovation through the exchange of ideas; and improved working relationships between local government staff. The City of Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners have previously worked jointly to develop a uniform approach to the Alarm Ordinance and Anti-Tethering of Dogs.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie seeks implementation of a process for achieving uniformity in ordinances of mutual interest with the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners.

County-wide Aggregate Tax Rate

Background

Millage rate is the rate of tax per \$1,000 of taxable property value. The City of Port St. Lucie has prioritized reducing its millage rate in its Strategic Plan for the past five years. The City of Port St. Lucie Operating Millage rate is 5.0047 per thousand for FY 20/21. The proposed overall total millage is 5.9000. This was the fifth year that the millage has been reduced.

Despite the following five years of steady reductions, Port St. Lucie residents have not experienced decreases in their overall taxes due to increases by other St. Lucie County taxing authorities. In order to provide tax relief to Port St. Lucie residents, the City requests the County consider a potential decrease in its tax rate.

Request/Position Statement

The City of Port St. Lucie requests St. Lucie County consider reducing its tax rate in order to provide coordinated tax relief to Port St. Lucie residents.

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Pictured Left to Right: Councilwoman Morgan, Councilman Carvelli, Mayor Oravec, Vice Mayor Martin, Councilwoman Caraballo

The City of Port St. Lucie is proud to be a hometown where people live, learn, work, play, and celebrate all of life's opportunities. With over 195,000 residents, Port St. Lucie is Florida's seventh largest city by population (South Florida's 3rd largest city) and ranked 4th safest city in America. The City occupies an area of 120 square miles in St. Lucie County on Florida's east coast, about 50 miles north of West Palm Beach, half way between Miami and Orlando. The City provides most traditional municipal services including law enforcement, parks and recreation, water and sewer, and public works.

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