



2019

**FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES**  
**LEGISLATIVE ACTION AGENDA**

# Table of Contents

- 2 ..... Introduction
- 4 ..... Florida’s Cities: Home Rule = Local Control
- 6 ..... Communications Services Tax Protection  
**Staff Contact: Amber Hughes**
- 9 ..... Community Redevelopment Agencies  
**Staff Contact: David Cruz**
- 11..... Water Supply & Water Quality  
**Staff Contact: Rebecca O’Hara**
- 14..... Transportation Funding  
**Staff Contact: Jeff Branch**
- 16..... Short-Term Rentals  
**Staff Contact: Casey Cook**
- 20..... FLC Legislative Affairs Team
- 21..... Key Dates
- 22 ..... Legislative Policy Committees
- BC..... FLC Officers

The Florida League of Cities, Inc. was founded on the belief that local self-government is the keystone of American democracy.

# Introduction

Each year, municipal officials from across the state volunteer to serve on one of the League’s five legislative policy committees. These committees develop the League’s Legislative Action Agenda, which addresses priority issues most likely to have a statewide impact on daily municipal operations and governance.

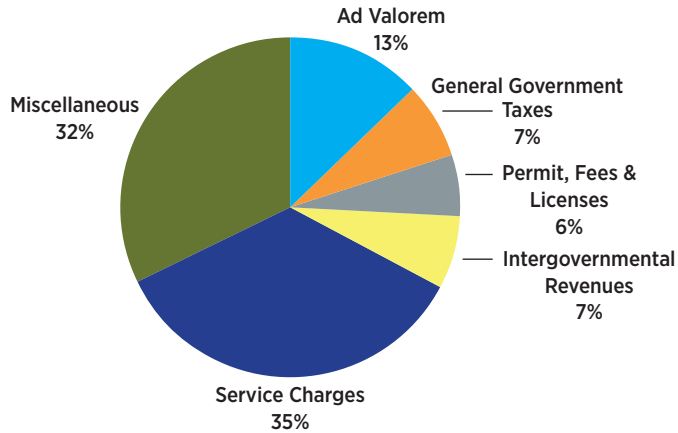
This year, there are five priorities – one developed by each of the policy committees. The priorities were considered and approved by the full League membership on November 16, 2018.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

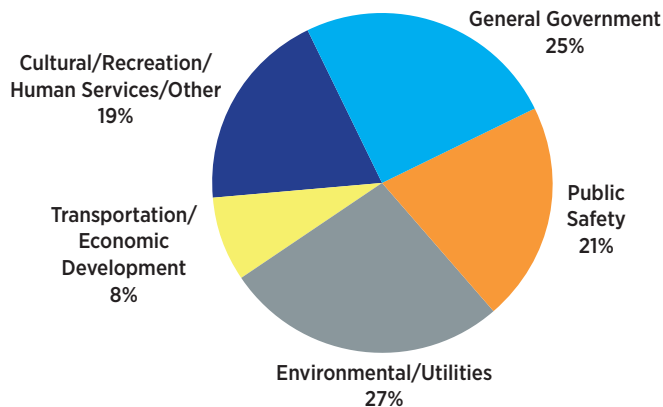
Just as no two cities are alike, each city’s menu of services is also different. The most important aspect of municipal services is that the services are created to meet the demands of the residents. Each city offers those services desired by its own citizenry. ■

# City Budgets At-A-Glance

## MUNICIPAL REVENUES FY 2017



## MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES FY 2017



## MUNICIPAL SERVICES (IN-HOUSE AND CONTRACTED)

Beach Access: **24%**  
 Cemetery: **35%**  
 Charter School: **6%**  
 City-Run Public Transportation: **17%**  
 Library: **39%**  
 Marina: **16%**  
 Parks: **88%**  
 Recreation Centers: **57%**

## UTILITY SERVICES

Electric: **8%**  
 Water: **67%**  
 Waste Water: **61%**  
 Storm Water: **59%**  
 Reclaimed Water: **26%**  
 Natural Gas: **7%**  
 Residential Solid Waste Collection: **35%**  
 Non-residential Solid Waste Collection: **26%**  
 Curbside Residential Recycling: **23%**

## SAFETY SERVICES (IN-HOUSE AND CONTRACT)

Police Services: **88%**  
 Fire Services: **83%**  
 Emergency Medical Services: **66%**

Source: FLC CityStats Statewide Regional Trends, 2017.



# FLORIDA'S CITIES

## Home Rule = Local Control

Florida's cities, towns and villages are centers of economic, social and cultural energy. Each city is a catalyst for the quality of life enjoyed by its residents.

### WHAT IS A CITY IN FLORIDA?

Under Florida's Constitution, municipalities are corporations – vested with broad governmental and proprietary powers. Each city is a corporation with a board of directors (council or commission) elected by the people (stockholders) to provide services and self-determination. Each city in Florida has a charter detailing its elections, administrative structure and scope of services. Details are found in policies, ordinances and administrative codes.

### HOME RULE

Since 1968, Floridians have recognized the need for cities to have Home Rule powers, as included in the Constitution (Article VIII, Section 2(b)) and ratified by the Legislature

in 1973. This right gives each city the flexibility to craft its laws specifically to its own unique needs. After all, with 412 cities ranging in size from Westlake (pop. 5) to Jacksonville (pop. 891,207), one size does not fit all. This right means any city can adopt its laws so long as the law doesn't conflict with state or federal law. Cities in Florida are not "of" the state, but "in" the state; an important distinction between municipal authority and other local governments.

### WHY CITIES ARE CREATED

Services and self-determination. Cities provide their residents with essential services, such as water, wastewater, storm water utilities, police, fire prevention and EMS, road building and maintenance, parks and recreation, land-use codes, planning and code enforcement, animal control, solid waste and recycling, neighborhood services, libraries and cemeteries.

ILLUSTRATION@GETTY.COM



## FLORIDA POPULATION

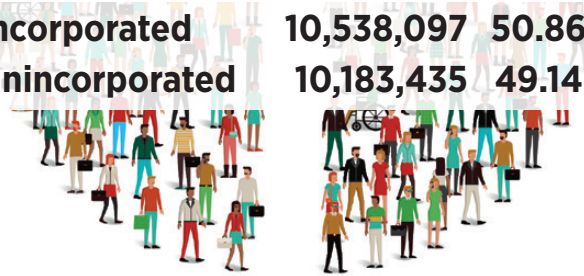
20,721,532

Incorporated

10,538,097 50.86%

Unincorporated

10,183,435 49.14%



**Source:** Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2018 population estimate.

## QUICK FACTS

Number of municipalities: **412**

Number of elected municipal officials: **2,252**

Largest city: **Jacksonville: 891,207**

Smallest city: **Westlake: 5**

Median municipal population: **5,864**

Percentage of Floridians living in a city, town or village: **50.6%**

**Source:** Populations from BEBR December 2017 population estimates.

## A BREAKDOWN OF FLORIDA CITIES BY POPULATION

**46%** <5,000 population (190 cities)

**21%** 5,000-15,000 population (87 cities)

**22%** 15,000-60,000 population (90 cities)

**11%** >60,000 population (45 cities)

**Source:** Populations from BEBR December 2017 population estimates.

Self-determination is the ability to make local decisions locally. Cities are citizen-driven representative democracies with citizen engagement, citizen input and citizen leadership.

## CATALYSTS FOR ACTION

A city is a key player in economic development, business retention and regional commerce. City leaders work with county, state and federal resources to help provide new business incubators, workforce placement, affordable housing, educational and technical needs, and public transportation. City leaders also help with redevelopment when an area is faced with blight or struggles to overcome other challenges.

## REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Florida's cities receive an average of half of their revenues from user fees and charges for service. The largest sources

of tax revenue come from the property tax; state shared revenue, which includes a portion of the state sales tax and gas tax; and the public service tax, also called utilities tax. Cities also rely upon intergovernmental revenue, grants, license fees and permit fees.

## FOCUSED ON EXCELLENCE

Cities are the only optional level of local government in Florida. Cities must provide their services as cost effectively as possible. Councils and commissions know their success often rests upon that bottom line and achieving their key goals with a balance of efficiency, effectiveness and innovation to create a city that residents are proud to call their hometown.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

[floridaleagueofcities.com](http://floridaleagueofcities.com) ■

Rev 12/2018



## Communications Services Tax Protection

### **PRIORITY STATEMENT:**

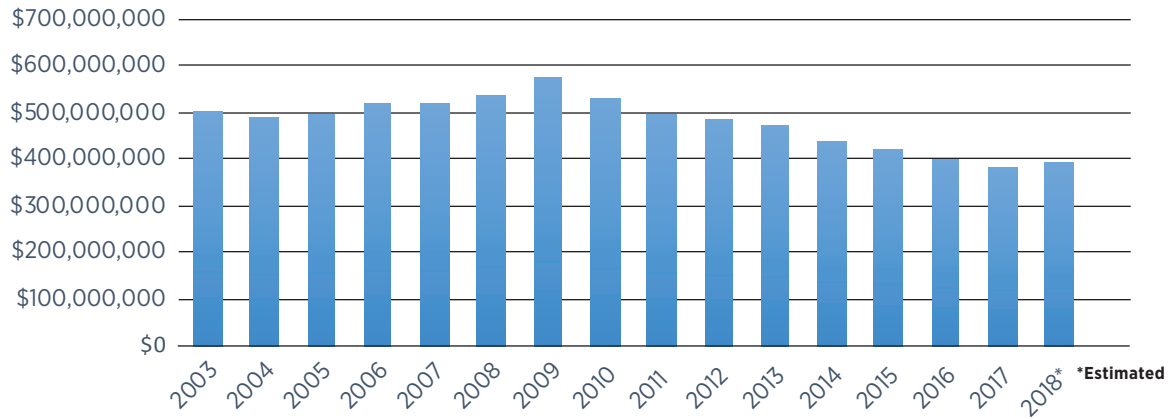
The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation to reform the Communications Services Tax in a manner that is revenue neutral; provides for a broad and equitable tax base; provides for enhanced stability and reliability as an important revenue source for local government; and provides a uniform method for taxing communication services in Florida. Reform should promote a competitively neutral tax policy that will free consumers to choose a provider based on tax-neutral considerations.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2000, the Florida Legislature restructured taxes and fees on telecommunications, cable, direct-to-home satellite and related services under the Communication Services Simplifications Act. This act replaced and consolidated seven different state and local taxes and fees into a single tax that has two centrally administered parts, the state and the local communications services tax (CST). The intent of this legislation was to provide a fair, efficient and uniform method for taxing communications services

ILLUSTRATIONS@GETTY.COM

## COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TAX



**Data Source:** Florida Department of Revenue, Communication Services Tax Distribution Data and the Florida Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

sold in Florida, including a competitively neutral tax policy for consumers. The local CST is one of the main sources of locally levied general revenue for municipalities, providing them with almost \$400 million annually. Counties collect more than \$200 million a year. The State of Florida collects approximately \$687 million, including direct-to-home satellite, and shares a portion of those revenues with cities through the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program and Local Half-Cent Sales Tax Program. These revenues may be used for any public purpose, including pledging the revenues to secure bonds.

The CST applies to telecommunications, video, direct-to-home satellite and related services. The definition of communications services encompasses voice, data, audio, video, or any other information or signals transmitted by any medium. Examples of services subject to the tax include local, long distance and toll telephones; voice over internet protocol telephones; video services;

video streaming; direct-to-home satellite; and mobile communications. The tax is imposed on retail sales of communications services that originate and terminate in Florida or are billed to an address within the state. A county or municipality may authorize the levy of a local CST. The local tax rates vary depending on the type of local government. In addition to the local CST, any local option sales tax that a county or school board has levied is imposed as a local CST.

Over the past few years, the economy, legislation and changes in technology have eroded the tax base for the CST. Additionally, there has been a movement by the Florida Legislature to reduce the total tax rate, both on the state and local CST. The Florida League of Cities recognizes that because technology has evolved over the past two decades, it is important to take a comprehensive look at how Florida taxes communication services and how to best modernize the revenue stream. ■





# Community Redevelopment Agencies

## **PRIORITY STATEMENT:**

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation to protect and improve municipalities' use of community redevelopment agencies to effectively carry out redevelopment and community revitalization in accordance with Home Rule.

## **BACKGROUND:**

There are 222 active community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) in Florida. They were established to encourage new investment and job creation in urban areas that were

blighted as a result of substantial growth moving away from the urban core.

For many years, residential development and commercial and governmental facilities were being built outside central urban areas. As these central urban areas became vacant or underutilized, high crime rates followed, creating a decline in the economic and social vitality of many municipalities. Faced with these challenges, municipalities, working with their respective counties, have exercised their discretion to establish a CRA as a means for economic recovery in these areas.

ILLUSTRATION@GETTY.COM



Under Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III), local governments are able to designate areas as CRAs when certain conditions exist. These conditions include: the presence of substandard or inadequate structures, a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways and inadequate parking. To document that the required conditions exist, the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a “Finding of Necessity.”

If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the local government may create a CRA to provide the tax increment financing tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area, and to spur job growth. This redevelopment tool is used by Florida counties and cities of all sizes, from Miami-Dade County, Tampa, Orlando and Jacksonville, to Hernando County, Madison and Apalachicola, to improve their targeted areas.

The tax increment used for financing projects is the difference between the amount of property tax revenue generated before the CRA designation and the amount of property tax revenue generated after the CRA designation. Monies used in financing CRA activities are, therefore, locally generated. CRA redevelopment plans must be consistent with local government comprehensive plans. This makes CRAs a specifically focused financing tool for redevelopment.

This financing system is successful because it provides specific public services without increasing or levying any new taxes. Both residents and business owners favor this system because the taxes they pay on their investment are rewarded with direct benefits from the CRA. Also, unlike a city or county government, a CRA may utilize tax increment financing as a way to leverage these local public funds with private dollars to make redevelopment happen in public/private partnerships.

## **ADDITIONAL POINTS:**

- 1.** The state should be wary of attempts to restrict the use of tax increment financing, particularly if the debate is over money and control and not about the merits of revitalizing blighted areas. CRAs have demonstrated that the use of the funding dramatically improved the economic and social outcomes within the targeted areas. These outcomes benefit cities, counties and, more importantly, the taxpayers.
- 2.** CRAs and tax incrementing financing have been integral tools for municipalities to provide improvements to run-down urban cores for more than 30 years. It is not in the state’s best interest to restrict municipalities’ ability to revitalize and redevelop areas that are struggling the most. This is especially true, given the sunset of the state funded Enterprise Zones program and the lack of alternative programs that address slum and blighted areas in Florida.
- 3.** Redevelopment of an area can take different twists and turns to accommodate shifting circumstances, requiring the need for flexibility. Any attempt to increase bureaucratic or political interference would hinder the ability of the CRA to respond nimbly and comprehensively in implementing redevelopment initiatives.
- 4.** On February 3, 2016, the Miami-Dade County Grand Jury filed a report titled “CRAs: The Good, the Bad and the Questionable” that asserts the highest priority of Florida’s CRAs should be affordable housing. This view of CRAs incorrectly reduces and mislabels their value and core mission as versatile revitalization engines. The Grand Jury report asserts CRAs are not held accountable for their spending and, therefore, public tax dollars are being abused by city officials. This is incorrect. The use of TIF funds must be consistent with the redevelopment plans agreed to by the citizens in a community.

5. Overall, the comprehensive community redevelopment plans that are created and implemented by CRAs are uniquely designed to address that area's specific needs for revitalization. Creating affordable housing is just one of the many roles that CRAs may play, and it should be part of a balanced economic development strategy. There are a variety of community, state and federal programs with the primary mission of providing affordable housing and CRAs consistently partner with and invest in these programs. The Florida Redevelopment Act, which governs CRAs, is designed to be adaptable to Florida's widely diverse communities.
6. Local governments create CRAs to respond to local needs and concerns to address slum and blight. CRA boards act officially as a body distinct and separate from the governing body of a city or county, even when it is the same group of people. By allowing elected officials to serve as CRA board members, CRAs provide knowledgeable representation to taxpayers from individuals who are familiar with community needs. Ultimately, elected city officials are held accountable by their decisions.
7. At times, some county governments have been critical or uncooperative in the creation and expansion of CRAs by municipalities. These intergovernmental disputes have led to unnecessary conflicts between local governments. In some instances, questions regarding the interpretation of certain provisions of the Community Redevelopment Act are being disputed. ■





## Water Supply & Water Quality

### **PRIORITY STATEMENT:**

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation to address the state's critical water resource and water quality deficiencies to mitigate the negative economic impact of these deficiencies through priority corrective actions and funding. The legislation should include:

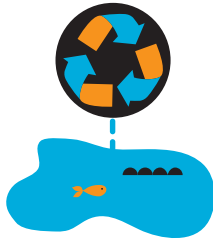
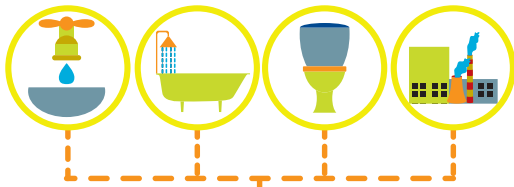
- ▶ establishment of a dedicated and recurring source of state funding to meet current and projected local government water supply and water infrastructure needs;
- ▶ annual assessment by the State of the state, regional and local water resource and water quality infrastructure improvement needs; and

- ▶ development of regional plans to prioritize actions and schedules for addressing integrated water quality and water supply needs based on objective criteria.

### **BACKGROUND:**

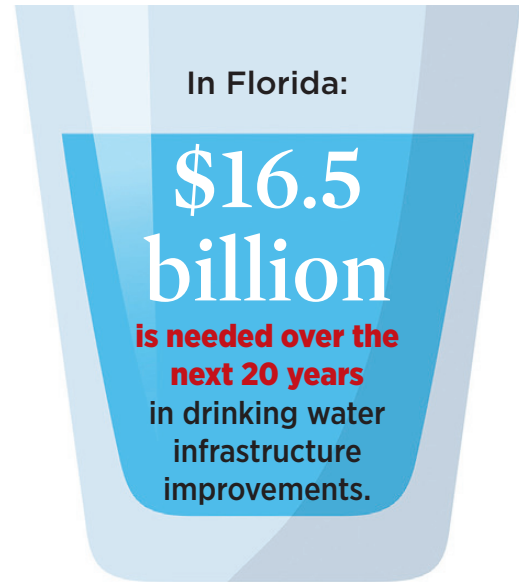
Florida's ability to meet the water needs of its growing population, industries and natural environment exceeds available supply and infrastructure. It is estimated that \$48.71 billion will be needed over the next 20 years to meet needs for drinking water and wastewater, flood control, nutrient pollution, Everglades restoration, and beach and inlet erosion. Florida does not have a dedicated long-term, recurring source of funding for water supply, water quality and associated infrastructure.

ILLUSTRATION@GETTY.COM



There are over  
**1900**  
**water body segments** throughout Florida  
**impaired for water quality**

**Source:** 2016 Report Card for Florida's Infrastructure, American Society for Civil Engineers.

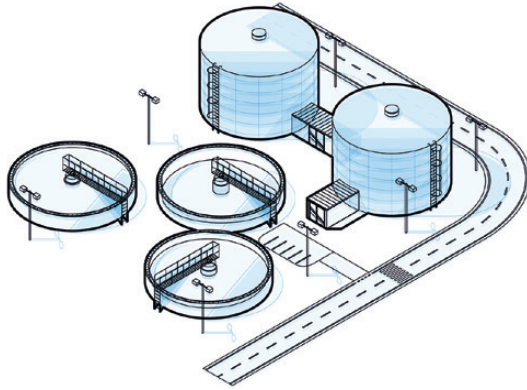


**Source:** EPA Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment - Fifth Report to Congress, September 2015.

ILLUSTRATIONS@GETTY.COM

In 2005, the Florida Legislature took initial steps to establish a dedicated source of funding for water quality and water supply projects by creating and funding the Water Protection and Sustainability Program. Local funding matches and transparent grant criteria were hallmarks of the program. The program was funded with \$100 million in recurring revenues – an amount that represented less than 1 percent of the state's total budget. During the program's first three years, the state and water management districts contributed \$423 million for alternative water supply development that funded 344 local projects. These projects were anticipated to generate 842 million gallons of new water per day. The program was drastically cut in 2008, and funding to the trust fund was eliminated in 2009.

Other than the brief success of 2005's SB 444, Florida's history of water project and infrastructure funding has been one of band-aids and crisis management. Dying springs and algae-choked estuaries prompted the passage of SB 552 and HB 989 in 2016. Among other things, these bills required septic tank remediation plans for certain spring sheds and provided dedicated percentages of Amendment 1 money for the benefit of the Everglades and surrounding estuaries, Lake Apopka and springs. Continued algae blooms in South Florida estuaries prompted passage of SB 10 in 2017, which provided a \$1.5 billion plan for water storage needed to combat nutrient pollution in these areas. These bills were critically needed, but problems persist throughout the state and continue to grow.



# \$18.5 billion

**is needed for wastewater infrastructure improvements by 2020**

**Source:** EPA Clean Watersheds Need Survey 2012, Florida.

# \$69 billion

**in coastal property in Florida that is not at risk today could flood at high tide by 2030**



**Source:** "Come Heat and High Water: Climate Risk in the Southeastern U.S. and Texas," July 2015, Risky Business Project.

ILLUSTRATIONS@GETTY.COM

The extent and nature of the state's water and infrastructure problems vary among regions and communities. For some local governments, their most acute need is finding resources to mitigate nutrient pollution from septic tanks. Others are desperately seeking ways to increase available water supply through the creation of alternative water supplies, including reuse of reclaimed water. Still others grapple with the enormity of retrofitting their communities against increasing tidal and storm flooding.

SB 552, passed in 2016, created Section 403.928, Florida Statutes, to require the state Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) to conduct an annual assessment of Florida's water resources and conservation lands. The assessment is required to include an analysis

and estimates of future expenditures by federal, state, regional and local governments and utilities based on projected water supply and demand data, and historical, current and projected revenue and expenditure data. The EDR assessment report should be refined and enhanced to identify future needs over the short, intermediate and long term. This needs assessment and identification will assist policymakers in prioritizing and maximizing efficient use of state funds. ■





# Transportation Funding

## **PRIORITY STATEMENT:**

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that preserves local control of transportation planning. The legislation should create an equitable transportation funding formula among the state, municipalities and counties, while providing for additional transportation revenue to support innovative infrastructure and transit projects to meet the surging transportation demands driven by dramatic growth throughout Florida.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Transportation infrastructure is paramount to the prosperity of all cities. It greatly affects quality of life by influencing peoples' decisions about where to live, work and spend their free time. In many Florida cities, roads have reached capacity and cannot be widened anymore.

As the number of cars on Florida's roads increases, there needs to be a greater focus on alternative transportation.

With over a million visitors each year and more than 900 people moving to Florida each day, the state's transportation infrastructure is rapidly declining. Congestion is a growing problem, and the added wear and tear on our roads means more frequent and more costly repair or replacement. At the same time, highway construction costs continue to escalate. Some of this increase is directly attributable to technological advancements that are necessary to implement a "smart transportation infrastructure" where train stations, bus stops, airports, and car- and bike-sharing stations become integrated parts of one big open high-speed connected communications network.



ILLUSTRATION@GETTY.COM

Only **3%** of Floridians use some form of public transit — **virtually unchanged since 2013.**

**Source:** Florida Department of Transportation.

To compound the problem, the federal gas tax was last increased in 1997, the state gas tax in 1943, the county gas tax in 1941 and the municipal gas tax in 1971. The Fuel Sales Tax and the State Comprehensive Enhanced Transportation System Tax, which are the State of Florida's portion of the motor fuel tax rates, are adjusted once a year to account for inflation. A major portion of transportation funding flows to municipalities through county, state and federal taxes on gasoline. Allowing municipalities the ability to index their local motor fuel tax rates is one way to provide greater flexibility to fund their unique transportation needs.

While the federal, state and county governments have a variety of tools available to address transportation funding, municipalities have limited revenue options for funding transportation projects. For example, charter counties may currently hold a referendum on whether to impose up to a 1 percent sales tax to fund transportation infrastructure projects. Recently, voters in Hillsborough County passed such a tax that will be in effect for 30 years and raise about \$9 billion over that time period. Giving municipalities the same transportation revenue options would create a new funding mechanism.

Transportation projects are often the catalyst for economic development and the result of growth within a community. As municipalities lack options to increase revenue and continue to struggle to fund local transportation projects, increased and alternative funding sources at the state level are a necessity. ■





## Short-Term Rentals

### PRIORITY STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that restores local zoning authority with respect to short-term rental properties, thereby preserving the integrity of Florida's residential neighborhoods and communities. The Florida League of Cities **OPPOSES** legislation that preempts municipal authority as it relates to the regulation of short-term rental properties.

### BACKGROUND:

In 2011, the Florida Legislature prohibited cities from regulating short-term vacation rentals. A short-term vacation rental is defined as a property that is rented more than three times a year for less than 30 days at a time. The legislation passed in 2011 included a provision

that "grandfathered" any ordinance regulating short-term rentals prior to June 1, 2011. Since that time, a number of cities, both "grandfathered" cities and those that did not have an ordinance in place, have experienced problems with these properties. The effect of the 2011 law is that two separate classes of cities were created respective to short-term rentals, those with Home Rule authority and those without.

In 2014, the Legislature passed SB 356 (Thrasher), which diminished the preemption on short-term rentals. The 2014 law allows local governments to adopt ordinances specific to these rentals so that they can address some of the noise, parking, trash and life-safety issues created by their proliferation in residential neighborhoods. Unfor-

ILLUSTRATIONS@GETTY.COM

Unfortunately, SB 356 left in place existing statutory language stating that cities cannot “prohibit” short-term rentals or regulate the duration or frequency of the rental.

Those cities fortunate enough to have had an ordinance in place prior to the 2011 preemption are still allowed to regulate short-term rentals, but the question remains whether these ordinances will continue to be valid if amended. Some city attorneys believe these ordinances are “frozen” and any future amendments would cause a loss of the “grandfather.” The problem with this is twofold. First, with the rise of popular rental websites like Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) and AirBnB making it easier to advertise and rent these properties, the number of properties used as short-term rentals in Florida has exponentially increased in the last four years. Second, as a result of this enormous growth in the rental market, the scope of the problem has changed and ordinances adopted before 2011 may no longer be effective.

It is important to note that many of Florida’s larger cities (with a larger professional staff) fell into the grandfathered category. They have retained the ability to regulate these properties through zoning and may have duration and frequency requirements. Some of these cities may want to amend their ordinances to adjust to a changing problem. They are reluctant to do so out of fear of losing their existing ordinance and with it their Home Rule authority relating to short-term rentals. Recognizing that the ordinances on the books are no longer effective, cities want the ability to come up with solutions that work for their respective community, but because of the potential loss of the “grandfather,” they are unable to do so. It is important to note that any potential amendments to existing ordinances would be vetted through numerous public hearings that allow neighboring homeowners, short-term rental owners, property managers and local businesses to weigh in on proposed legislation.

Cities without short-term rental regulations in place prior to June 1, 2011, have had their zoning authority stripped and are now seeing these rentals completely overtaking residential neighborhoods. Long-time residents are moving out as a result, and the residential character of traditional neighborhoods is slowly being destroyed.

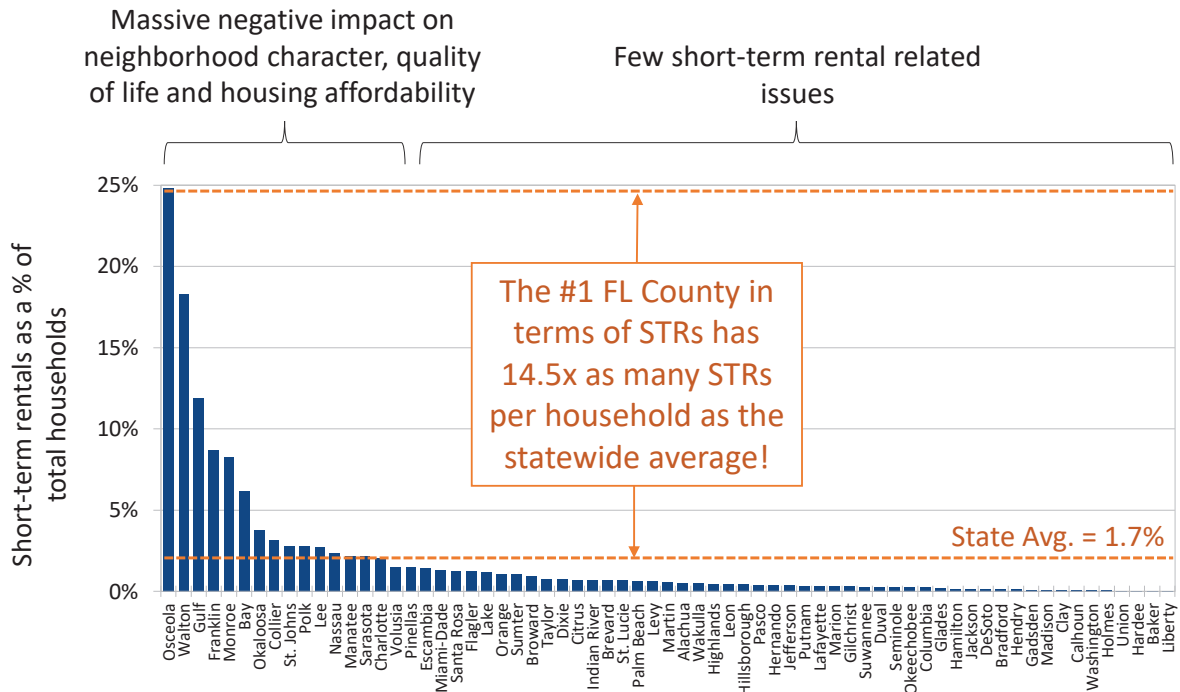
The impacts of problematic short-term rentals on neighboring residents are felt in a number of ways:

### **The Hotel Next Door – Commercial Activity in Residential Neighborhoods**

Houses that sleep 26 people are now present in what were once traditional neighborhoods. Because of the inability to regulate the duration of a renter’s stay, these houses could experience weekly, daily or even hourly turnover. Obviously, the constant turnover of renters creates a number of issues for cities and neighboring property owners. Prior to the preemption, local governments were able to regulate this activity through zoning. Short-term rentals have become increasingly popular in the last five years. Because a city cannot “prohibit” these properties, they are powerless to exclude them from residential neighborhoods. As a result, investors, many of whom are located out of state or even in a different country, have purchased or built single-family homes with the sole intent of turning them into short-term rentals.

Cities use zoning as a tool to prepare for their future growth and also use it to control where commercial and residential properties are located. Hotels have different infrastructure needs than single-family residential properties. As residential neighborhoods are developed, the infrastructure installed is designed for the future use of the properties. Many neighborhoods have infrastructure in place with capacity for up to eight people per house. Now there are houses in these very same neighborhoods that sleep more people than the number originally planned

## RATIO OF SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL RENTALS TO PERMANENT HOUSEHOLDS



Source: Host Compliance; Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

for, placing a significant strain on existing infrastructure. Commercial properties like bars, hotels and restaurants typically need more parking than a single-family property, as well as have different operating hours and experience greater noise levels. The current law removes important land use and zoning tools that will impact how a city plans for future growth and levels of service.

### Noise Complaints

In areas where short-term rentals are situated, many neighboring residents complain of the noise generated by the vacationing renters next door. When people go on vacation, often their behavior changes. They may stay awake later, consume more alcoholic beverages throughout the day, or participate in recreational activities that

they would not participate in while at their own homes, such as swimming at midnight with music blaring. For those homes located near water, a lake or the ocean, it is important to note that sound travels easily over water – and residents located hundreds of yards away may be the ones calling and complaining to the police and their local elected officials.

Some cities have noise ordinances, but these have proved problematic to enforce. One such example is Lighthouse Point. Its ordinance requires sustained noise over a certain decibel threshold for 10 minutes. Many times after the police arrive at a residence, the noise dies down. These renters may leave the next day with new ones replacing them. The new renters are often unaware of the noise

ordinance or past complaints and may cause the same problems. The out-of-state property owner may not even be aware of the problems created by their renters and with the constant turnover. The problem ends as one renter leaves and begins again as new renters arrive. This causes a significant drain on law enforcement resources. When law enforcement officers are called to respond to noise complaints, one less officer is on the street either preventing or solving crimes.

### **Parking**

Many short-term rentals are located in single-family neighborhoods. In most cases, the driveway was built to accommodate two or three vehicles. When you now have a renovated house that acts as a small hotel, there will be more than three cars needed to get these renters to the property. This leads to cars that are parked on the street, making it difficult for emergency vehicles to respond to emergencies and causes increased response times in these neighborhoods. Cities have begun to adopt ordinances creating parking standards for short-term rental properties. Unfortunately, these ordinances only solve the parking issue but fail to address any of the other issues created by this commercial activity in residential areas.

### **Revenue Issues**

As stated earlier, a property rented more than three times a year for less than 30 days at a time meets the vacation rental definition and should be licensed by the state. The Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) is tasked with investigating unlicensed vacation rentals but lacks the resources needed to fully investigate every complaint. Unlicensed vacation rentals could be costing Florida millions of dollars each year from lost licensing revenue.

Licensed short-term vacation rentals and hotels are also required to charge a sales tax to renters and then remit this back to the state. Many licensed and unlicensed vacation

rentals are not doing this. The Florida Department of Revenue (DOR) has limited resources and cannot adequately monitor these transactions, costing the state millions of dollars in lost revenue. Similarly, short-term rental owners in some counties are required to collect and remit the tourist development tax to the state. DOR is often unable to track down the vacation rental owners who are not paying the tourist development tax.

The Legislature began the conversation on short-term rentals in 2014, and the Florida League of Cities supported both HB 307 (Hutson) and SB 356 (Thrasher). The bills were a step in the right direction, but they only partially restored Home Rule to Florida's cities. Cities are still prevented from regulating the duration and frequency of the rentals, and local zoning does not apply to these properties. Without the ability to regulate these key areas, local governments will not be able to adequately address the problems associated with these properties. ■

# Other Issues of Importance

## Affordable Housing

### STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that requires all money from the Sadowski State and Local Housing Trust Fund be used only for Florida's affordable housing programs.

## Annexation

### STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that facilitates the municipal annexation of unincorporated areas, while protecting private property rights and respecting municipal boundaries.

## Local Business Tax Protection

### STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that protects general revenues collected from the local business tax. These revenues are used to provide essential municipal services such as public safety and constructing and maintaining roads and bridges, public parks and open spaces. Maintaining a diversified revenue base strengthens the fiscal stability of local governments and improves their ability to serve citizens and businesses.

## Medical Marijuana

### STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation restoring municipal authority to regulate medical marijuana facilities within municipal boundaries.

## Sales Tax Fairness

### STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation to reform Florida's sales tax laws that apply to online/e-commerce sales from out-of-state retailers. Changes to these laws are needed to ensure retailers are treated equitably.

## School Resource Officers Funding

### STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that creates a dedicated and recurring state revenue stream to offset any impacts on those cities providing School Resource Officers (SROs) to schools.

## Sober Homes

### STATEMENT:

The Florida League of Cities **SUPPORTS** legislation that requires businesses classified as "Day or Night Treatment with Community Housing" to comply with current statutory requirements for certified recovery residences. In addition, the League **SUPPORTS** legislation clarifying the fire-safety standards that can be imposed on sober homes to ensure compliance with federal fair housing laws. ■

# 2019 Florida League Of Cities Legislative Affairs Team



## **SCOTT DUDLEY**

**Legislative Director**  
*sdudley@flcities.com*

- » State and Federal Legislative Issues
- » Governmental Relations



## **JEFF BRANCH**

**Legislative Advocate**  
*jbranch@flcities.com*

- » Affordable Housing/Foreclosures
- » Building Codes/Construction
- » Charter Counties
- » Charter Schools
- » Emergency Management
- » Homelessness/Mental Health
- » Special Districts
- » Transportation/Highway Safety/Aviation
- » Veterans Affairs



## **CASEY COOK**

**Senior Legislative Advocate**  
*ccook@flcities.com*

- » Economic Development
- » Gaming
- » Medical Marijuana
- » Ordinance/Code Enforcement
- » Procurement
- » Public Records/Public Meetings
- » Public Safety



## **DAVID CRUZ**

**Deputy General Counsel  
Legislative Counsel**  
*dcruz@flcities.com*

- » Annexation
- » Community Redevelopment
- » Eminent Domain
- » Growth Management
- » Insurance – Except NFIP
- » Land Use
- » Property Rights
- » Tort Liability/Sovereign Immunity
- » Workers' Compensation



## **AMBER HUGHES**

**Senior Legislative Advocate**  
*ahughes@flcities.com*

- » Finance and Taxation
- » National Flood Insurance Program
- » Personnel and Collective Bargaining
- » Retirement/Pension Issues
- » Revenues and Budgeting
- » Telecommunications



## **REBECCA O'HARA**

**Deputy General Counsel**  
*rohara@flcities.com*

- » Energy
- » Environmental
- » Ethics and Elections
- » General Utilities
- » Rights-of-Way
- » Solid Waste
- » Stormwater
- » Water Quality/Wastewater
- » Water Supply/Policy



## **ALLISON PAYNE**

**Manager, Advocacy Programs and Federal Affairs**  
*apayne@flcities.com*

- » Local/Regional Leagues
- » Key Contact Program
- » Advocacy Programs/Regional Teams
- » Federal Affairs/NLC Liaison



## **MARY EDENFIELD**

**Legislative Coordinator**  
*medenfield@flcities.com*

- » Legislative Policy Committees
- » Legislative Action Days



## **TARA TAGGART**

**Administrative Assistant**  
*ttaggart@flcities.com*



## **KATHERINE DUNN**

**Administrative/Legal Assistant**  
*kdunn@flcities.com*

# 2019 Key Dates

(Dates subject to change)

**JANUARY** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

House/Senate Interim Committee Week

House/Senate Interim Committee Week

**FEBRUARY** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

House/Senate Interim Committee Week

House/Senate Interim Committee Week

Federal Action Strike Team (FAST) Fly-in  
*Washington, D.C.*

Legislative Session Convenes

**MARCH** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

NLC Congressional City Conference  
*Washington, D.C.*

FLC Legislative Action Days  
*Tallahassee, FL*

**MAY** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Last Day of Regular Session



# Legislative Policy Committees

The following city officials served as chairs and vice chairs of the Florida League of Cities legislative policy committees. We thank them and the hundreds of municipal officials who participated in the development of these legislative priorities.

## FINANCE, TAXATION AND PERSONNEL

*Chair:* **Mayor Bill Partington**, City of Ormond Beach

*Vice Chair:* **President Pro-Tem Paul R. Shalhoub**, Town of Lake Clarke Shores

## LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Chair:* **Mayor Kathy Meehan**, City of Melbourne

*Vice Chair:* **Councilwoman Jolien Caraballo**, City of Port St. Lucie

## MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

*Chair:* **Councilmember Cal Rolfson**, City of Mount Dora

*Vice Chair:* **Commissioner Jamie Robinson**, City of Largo

## TRANSPORTATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

*Chair:* **Mayor Hazelle Rogers**, City of Lauderdale Lakes

*Vice Chair:* **Councilman Elvis R. Maldonado**, City of Homestead

## UTILITIES, NATURAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC WORKS

*Chair:* **Councilmember Helen Miller**, Town of White Springs



The Action Agenda reflects the priorities of 412 municipalities, as prepared by the Florida League of Cities' five legislative policy committees and adopted by the full membership at the League's 58th Annual Legislative Conference, November 16, 2018, in Orlando.

## 2018-2019 Officers



### **PRESIDENT**

**Mayor Leo E. Longworth**  
Bartow



### **FIRST VICE PRESIDENT**

**Councilman Isaac Salver**  
Bay Harbor Islands



### **SECOND VICE PRESIDENT**

**Commissioner Tony Ortiz**  
Orlando

The Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida's municipal governments. Its goals are to serve the needs of Florida's cities and promote local self-government.

Florida's city officials formed as a group of municipal governments for the first time in 1922. They wanted to shape legislation, share the advantages of cooperative action, and exchange ideas and experiences. Growing from a small number of cities and towns, our membership now represents 412 cities, towns and villages in the Sunshine State.

The League is the premier provider of many products and services developed especially for Florida's cities. Our strength and success are dependent upon the support and participation of our members.



For more information on the League's legislative initiatives, please contact:

Florida League of Cities  
P.O. Box 1757  
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1757  
Phone: (850) 222-9684  
[floridaleagueofcities.com](http://floridaleagueofcities.com)