



LEGISLATIVE ACTION AGENDA, 2018

In addition to the priorities below, the Town of Belleair supports the Florida League of Cities and the Suncoast League of Cities in their fight to support strong local government.



PRIORITY 1. THE PROTECTION OF HOME RULE

“The essence of home rule is self-governance. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all form of governance when it comes to the hundreds of city and county governments in Florida.”

PRIORITY STATEMENT

The Town of Belleair **OPPOSES** any efforts to impede the constitutional right of self-governance under home rule powers. The Town **OPPOSES** the Legislature’s intrusion into local finance, which is necessary to provide financial stability and essential services uniquely required by municipal residents and local businesses. The Town further **OPPOSES** any reduction in municipal taxation powers. The Town **OPPOSES** unfunded mandates. The Town **OPPOSES** the preemption of local regulation of businesses, professions, commerce, and trade.

OVERVIEW

In Florida, local self-government is not a gift of the State Legislature - it is the expressed will of the people. It was added to the Florida Constitution nearly 50 years ago by a statewide vote of the electorate. Floridians voted to empower themselves with the right of local self-government, or “Home Rule.” As the only form of voluntary government, Florida’s municipalities are the embodiment of this right.

The Florida Constitution states in Article VIII, Section 2(b) for municipalities:

“Municipalities shall have governmental, corporate and proprietary powers to enable them to conduct municipal government, perform municipal functions and render municipal services, and may exercise power for municipal purposes except as otherwise provided by law.”

The most precious powers a municipality in Florida has are its 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 municipality grows is a great reflection of the trust that citizens have in their respective city leaders. Strong Home Rule powers ensure that government stays responsive to the people it serves. The desires and expectations of residents cannot be met if municipal officials do not have the authority to respond to local needs and preferences or to address them in a timely manner.

We join the Florida League of Cities in asking the Florida Legislature to **LET CITIES WORK**.

PRIORITY 2. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Belleair funds nearly all of its roadway improvements directly. The legislature should consider increasing grant funding opportunities, low-cost loan programs, and cooperative funding of critical infrastructure upgrades.

PRIORITY STATEMENT

The Town of Belleair **SUPPORTS** legislation that preserves local control of transportation planning, provides for a more equitable transportation funding formula between municipalities and counties, and provides for additional dedicated revenue options for municipal transportation infrastructure and transit projects. The Town **SUPPORTS** legislation and funding efforts that will assist cities and counties in addressing aging infrastructure concerns. The Town **SUPPORTS** efforts to further mitigate effects of natural disasters on Florida's transportation infrastructure.

OVERVIEW

The Town of Belleair is unique in that there are no state roads and less than 2,400 feet of county roads with its borders. This leaves the Town to fund nearly all of its roadway improvements directly. Belleair heavily relies on ad valorem funding, discretionary sales surtaxes (i.e. Penny for Pinellas), motor fuel taxes, and municipal public services taxes. While the federal, state and county governments have a variety of tools available to them to address transportation funding, municipalities have limited revenue options for funding transportation projects. The legislature should consider increasing grant funding opportunities, low-cost loan programs and cooperative funding of critical infrastructure upgrades.

PRIORITY 3. WATER FUNDING

A conversion to reverse osmosis will ensure that long-term treatment options provide safe drinking water for residents. Reverse osmosis is capittally intensive, and the Town needs help from the State to achieve this goal.

PRIORITY STATEMENT

The Town of Belleair **SUPPORTS** legislation to provide long-term, recurring, and adequate State funding equitably distributed throughout the State for local government water resources, water quality improvement projects, and infrastructure, including but not limited to, projects that: reduce nutrient and pollutant loading from wastewater sources, mitigate stormwater and flooding impacts, and increase available water resources and supplies. In addition, the Town **REQUESTS** financial and technical assistance in its efforts to utilize alternative water sources as a sustainable potable water supply. A reverse osmosis water plant conversion can supply the Town of Belleair and surrounding residents with clean and potable water from an increasingly-brackish source for at least the next 30 years.

OVERVIEW

Florida's water quality and water supply challenges are myriad. Current conditions result from decades of pollution and overuse from multiple sources – urban, rural, agricultural, residential and industrial. All of these sources, their stakeholders, and their state and local governments have a shared responsibility for addressing water supply, water quality, and associated infrastructure problems. Resolution of these issues will require both long and short-term strategies that are coordinated, are based on sound science, and make effective use of limited public funds and resources. In Belleair, the Town's drinking wells are becoming increasingly brackish. The current method of filtration and treatment will not be adequate enough to treat the groundwater as the levels of salts and dissolved solids increase. A conversion of our process over to reverse osmosis will ensure that long-term treatment options provide safe drinking water for the Town's residents. RO (as it's called) is capittally intensive, and the Town needs help from the State to achieve this goal.