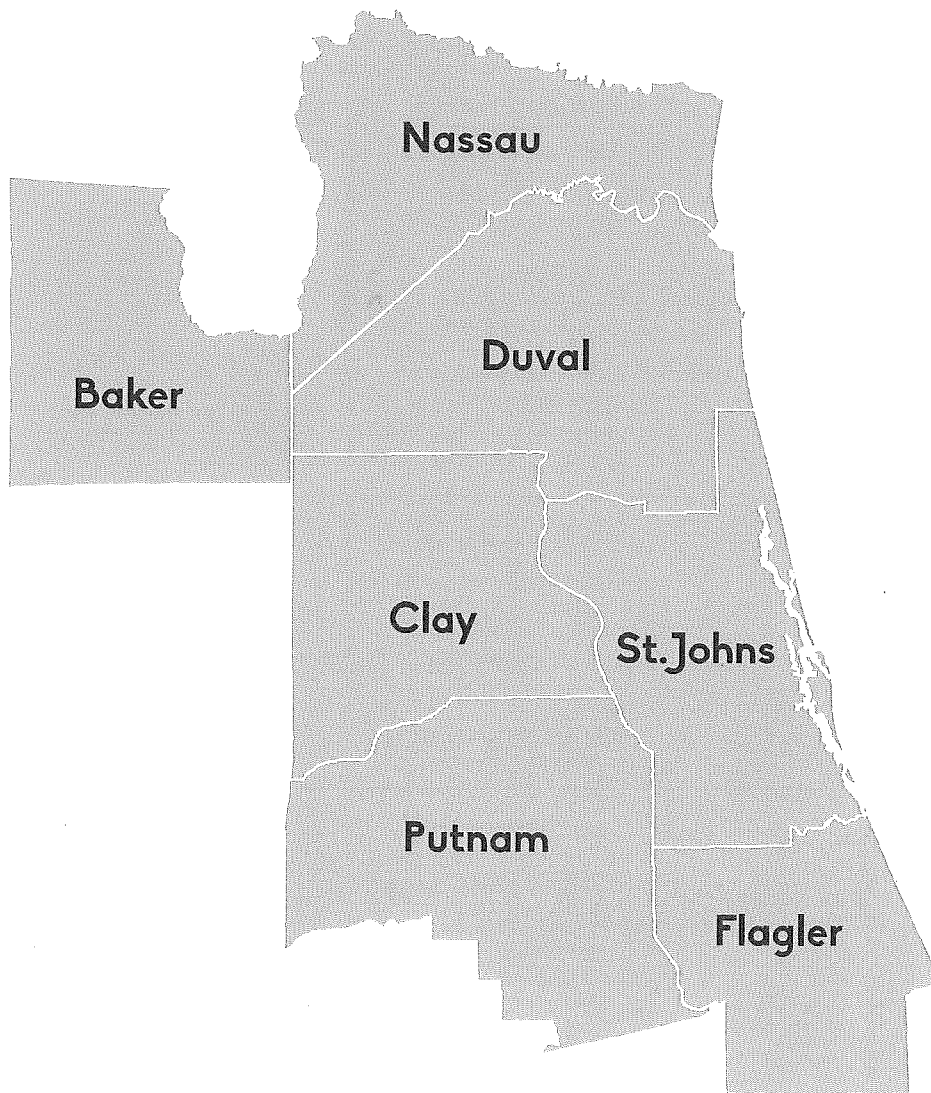


NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL

2018

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



"BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER"



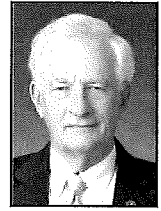
2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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Committee Purpose:

"Work collectively and promote regionally."

Committee Philosophy:

This committee is guided by the Home Rule Philosophy to develop and implement community-based solutions.

Committee Responsibilities:

To serve as the forum for the Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors to collect its local governments' legislative priorities to promote a regional agenda.

*Florida Regional Councils Association Representative

2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES OF THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL

The following Regional Legislative priorities were determined by a consensus of the Legislative Committee. The Committee was guided by the Home Rule philosophy to develop and implement community-based solutions.

Infrastructure

- ★ Support economic prosperity and environmental protection through increased funding for water, wastewater, (including septic tank reductions) and stormwater infrastructure projects, understanding the regional and statewide importance of these initiatives to provide for the increasing needs of our citizens.

Home Rule

- ★ Support the preservation of existing home rule powers and oppose any attempt to preempt local government home rule authority.

Beach Restoration and Re-nourishment

- ★ Support enhanced funding for beach restoration and re-nourishment.

Transportation

- ★ Support transportation funding for essential local government transportation projects and programs, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian modes that improve the economy and quality of life.
- ★ Support funding for the Small County Road Assistance Program, the Small County Outreach Program, Transportation Regional Incentive Program and the Transportation Disadvantaged Program.

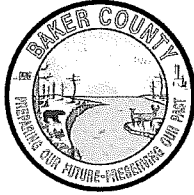
Affordable Housing

- ★ Support use of the Local Government Housing Trust Fund only for affordable housing programs and oppose any attempts to sweep the Trust Funds for other purposes.





2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

**SMALL COUNTY ROAD PROGRAMS**

Background: The Small County Road Programs are critical to meeting Baker County's Transportation needs. The Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), Community Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) and the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) provide necessary transportation funding for road improvements.

Requested Action: Support continuation and increase monies generated by statewide gas tax collections to the State Transportation Trust Fund to provide essential transportation programs such as SCRAP, SCOP, CIGP and TRIP. Prohibit the creation of any legislation that would restrict these types of funds due to comprehensive plan amendments adopted by small counties.

Effect: Continuation of these vital programs will enable counties to make much needed road improvements, create jobs, correct environmental problems created by runoff, and stimulate the local economy.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS/SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER

Background: Baker County has two hurricane shelters and a population of 27,000. The County is a "recipient county" for urban Duval and other nearby coastal communities. The County has daily needs for facilities to serve senior citizens. Property has been acquired and plans prepared for a building that can meet both needs. Matching funds assistance from the State would allow the construction of a facility that will meet local and regional needs.

Requested Action: Support funding for a dual purpose facility.

Effect: Will provide a multi-purpose building for our senior citizens and also provide a shelter for evacuees and their pets for local and regional residents in the event of a major hurricane.

OPPOSE EFFORTS TO PRIVATIZE THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA STATE HOSPITAL (NEFSH) AND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (DOC) FACILITIES

Background: NEFSH and DOC are important employers in Baker County. Baker County's economy is heavily dependent on the jobs generated by these facilities.

Requested Action: Oppose legislation mandating privatization and contracting procedures without giving the affected facilities an opportunity to achieve similar savings internally.

Effect: A factually motivated decision should be made regarding the effectiveness of outsourcing NEFSH or DOC services. The current public provider of service should have an equal opportunity to continue to providing the level of service.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES: STATE AID TO LIBRARIES & MULTI-LIBRARY COOPERATIVES

Background: The State Aid to Libraries grant program benefits all libraries in our State.

Requested Action: Fund the State Aid to Libraries program at least at the minimum maintenance of effort level.

Effect: State Aid pays for many activities in our public libraries; State Aid also brings \$8 million in federal funds to Florida through the Library Services and Technology (LSTA) program. LSTA funds keep our State Library open, pays for the Florida Electronic Library (databases for all residents), and funds our Multi-Library Cooperatives (MLC's). The minimum maintenance of effort (MOE) level will ensure the funding for our local MLC's and ensure that Florida receives its full share of federal dollars through LSTA.

REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION

Background: Ad valorem taxes have been insufficient and an inequitable source of revenue for small counties. Counties need to have the flexibility to levy additional sales tax at their discretion.

Requested Action: Allow counties the option to levy an additional sales tax.

Effect: The additional sales tax will create additional revenue for local governments that will affect the community as a whole and not limit the burden solely to property owners.

2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

Background: The City of Jacksonville and JEA formed a partnership in 2016 to reduce septic tanks in Duval County. In order to effectively prioritize areas of need, the Jacksonville City Council unanimously approved a matrix system, ranking 35 neighborhoods identified by the Duval County Health Department for septic tank removal when funding is available. The matrix considers environmental, health and welfare concerns together with community considerations, such as median home value, providing for a matrix which evaluates a wide range of factors. Although Jacksonville has upwards of 65,000 septic tanks throughout the County, and several thousand near natural waterbodies or drainage facilities that discharge to waterways, the neighborhoods represented on the priority matrix will remove or properly abandon about one third of the septic tanks in Duval County.

Realizing infrastructure investment requires community engagement; the program requires that 70% of the property owners in a designated neighborhood agreed to connect into the utility system before the project can move forward. In early 2017, the City of Jacksonville and JEA commenced outreach efforts in the highest ranked neighborhood, Biltmore C. Community meetings, phone calls, door-to-door visits, and mailings were all utilized to ensure every property owner was made aware of the program. Per program requirements, the 70% participation threshold must be achieved within six months of the official notification of the project to property owners. Diligent outreach efforts resulted in a greater than 70% community participation within the 6-month timeframe for Biltmore C.

Requested Action: To complete this project, the City requests additional funding in the Department of Environmental Protection budget to assist with water and wastewater infrastructure expansion and septic tank reduction.

Effect: By allowing for additional funding to expand water and wastewater infrastructure and eliminate septic tanks, the City of Jacksonville will positively impact the St. Johns River and its tributaries as well as stimulate economic growth and development, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas.

FLOOD MITIGATION AND URBAN GREENWAY PROJECT

Background: McCoy's Creek, a navigable waterway of the state, is prone to frequent flooding from rain events and saw severe flooding from several recent storm events. The surrounding roadways, residential and commercial properties are located in a flood zone. A master storm water plan was prepared in 2007 and several projects have been locally funded since that time. The most cost effective flood mitigation option for this area, and one that provides the most beneficial long term solution for the community, is the closure of McCoy's Creek Blvd. and raising several bridges that cross the creek, restoring the natural floodplain. The project thereby removes McCoy's Creek Blvd and the adjacent residential and commercial properties from the 100 year flood plain while maintaining the character of the community, restoring wetlands and habitat and providing for recreational uses and connectivity.

Requested Action: Duval County requests funding opportunities in the Florida Department of Transportation's budget to assist cities and counties with the flood remediation and bridge elevation.

Effect: By assisting with funding, the State will help Jacksonville achieve its goal of turning this flooded road into a pedestrian and bicyclist greenway along the creek bank and revitalize the economic viability of the area for development as well as connect the area to downtown.

STREET PUMP STATION

Background: The LaSalle Street drainage basin is located in the historic San Marco area to the south and east of the St. Johns River. Development in this area dates back to the early 1900s. The river is both the community's signature feature and the primary receiving water body for the area's storm water runoff. However, this makes the neighborhood particularly susceptible to flooding during rain events, which is exacerbated during high tide. The flooding has been an issue in this area for decades. The most recent storm required that Search & Rescue units be sent into the area. Those teams rescued 100 people.

When the neighborhood floods, the quality of life for the residents is diminished: residents are stuck in their homes and regularly featured dining, historic destinations and local businesses are unable to remain open slowing economic activity and the collection of sales tax revenues. In addition, flooding in this area blocks citizens' access to one of the city's largest hospital. Citizens of Jacksonville are unable to travel through the area and the flooding is hazardous for vehicles and pedestrians.

Requested Action: Funding is sought to assist the City in completing a storm water pump station within the LaSalle Street basin, along with associated collection system upgrades to improve drainage and minimize flooding.

Effect: Receiving additional funds from the State will help Jacksonville permit and construct the pumps necessary for the resolution on the flooding problem and decrease the debris and other environmental/landscaping chemicals that flow into the St. Johns River decreasing the concern for water quality.



DUVAL COUNTY 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



HOME RULE

Background: Local Government is closest to the people and the daily provider of the majority of public services Floridians rely on. In providing these various services, local leaders must determine how best to deliver services in their community while staying within their financial means. While there is no denying that the State Legislature plays an important role in standardizing some issues across the third largest state in the Country, we ask that issues coming before the Legislature be viewed through the lens of constitutionally granted "home rule" for local governments. It is imperative that local leaders are given the opportunity to lead and avoid a local dispute in one community from becoming the burden of every other City and County in the State.

Requested Action: Seek local government input on possible legislative matters that have the potential of impacting local communities.

Effect: Better communication with local governments to avoid negative legislative impacts on local services that may also have unintended consequences, avoid negative impacts on local property taxes and/or not reverse decisions that have been vetted on a local level.

ENHANCE FUNDING FOR WATER, WASTEWATER, AND STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Background: Florida local governments must be equipped with the adequate funding and tools necessary to protect State natural resources and citizens living within these areas from development impacts and fallout from weather related incidents. The funds recently allocated by the Legislature for these types of infrastructure projects has been growing, but not at the pace necessary to address the rapidly growing regional needs and environmental challenges throughout the State. Statewide problems with springs, algae blooms, and other environmental disasters will require State and local leaders action on regional and local projects to avoid future disasters and reversal of the current ones. Projects require money and while local leaders are coming to the table, state financial partnership is needed with grant assistance.

Requested Action: Continue to increase funding levels for water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure projects understanding the local, regional and statewide environmental importance of these initiatives.

Effect: Empowering local governments with grant funds to ensure safe drinking water and proper treatment of wastewater and stormwater, which will in turn protect and restore critical natural resources throughout the State.

MAINTAIN AND FUND BEACH RESTORATION AND RE-NOURISHMENT

Background: There are 18 miles of sandy beaches along the Flagler County coastline. The beaches of Flagler attract millions of visitors each year and are also enjoyed by residents of the entire north Florida region. Not only do beaches support tourism and the local economy, they also help protect property and provide critical habitat for sea turtles, shore birds, and other marine wildlife. The long-term management of the County's shoreline involves shore protection projects, dune enhancements, and regional sediment management with extensive partnerships with State and Federal agencies. The beach along the oceanfront in Flagler County provides shore protection for erosion caused by waves and other coastal processes. The back to back hurricanes, (Matthew-2016 and Irma-2017) has caused severe beach erosion.

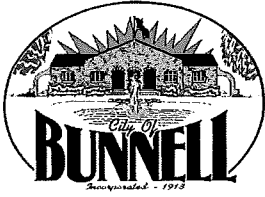
Requested Action: Continue to maintain and fund beach restoration and re-nourishment projects. As communities come to the table with resources, state finance partnerships are needed to provide assistance. The local and state partnership in the allocation of resources demonstrates on a federal level the importance of the beaches and the need for funding on a federal level.

Effect: Healthy beaches are one of Florida's most valuable assets. They are essential to the tourism revenues of coastal communities across Florida.

2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



BUNNELL 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



HOME RULE

Background: 166.021 Powers. (1) As provided in s. 2(b), Art. VIII of the State Constitution, municipalities shall have the governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers to enable them to conduct municipal government, perform municipal functions, render municipal services, and may exercise any power for municipal purposes, except when expressly prohibited by law.

Requested Action: Support home rule powers to ensure control of local government.

Effect: A large majority of legislation creates unfunded mandates. Economically challenged and distressed cities do not have a funding mechanism for these mandates. The proposed expansion of the homestead exemption further limits the local government in its ability to serve the needs of the citizens. Local governments will be required to either reduce services or increase taxes of businesses and residential owners. Any state imposed limitation on impact fees will further jeopardize home rule. These fees are crucial for local governments to fund infrastructure created by new developments. And finally, bills such as CS/CS/HB 687, which preempts local government from regulating the placement of wireless facilities within our right of ways is an outright assault on home rule.

UTILITY PROJECT FUNDING

Background: The City of Bunnell faces a problem of aged, outdated and failing utility infrastructure.

Requested Action: Funding is sought to construct and update utility infrastructure and build stormwater systems to mitigate potential property losses.

Effect: This funding will assist smaller Cities to offset large capital outlays and help them maintain accepted levels of services.

MAINTAIN AND FUND BEACH RE-NOURISHMENT

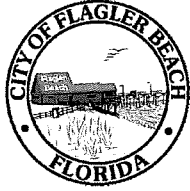
Background: The City of Bunnell recognizes the economic-impact of the Florida beaches as they attract visitors, support businesses and sustain jobs. In addition, beaches are a recreational resource for local residents, and provide protection for private and public properties adjacent to the ocean.

Requested Action: Request that the State of Florida cooperate with local governments and agencies to ensure adequate funding to assist with federal and local beach re-nourishment.

Effect: Beach re-nourishment will ensure adequate opportunities for residents and visitors alike to have a quality beach experience.



2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



WATER QUALITY AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE:

Background: Many communities continue to rely on decades-old water and wastewater infrastructure. In coastal communities, potable water lines are subject to saltwater intrusion. Corroding metal sewer system pipes and deteriorating lift stations pose a constant threat to the environment. Some communities still allow private septic systems because of the financial burden of extending sewer lines and putting the onus on its residents to pay impact fees. New wells need to be drilled to keep up with population growth and to provide the necessary water pressure for fire hydrants.

Requested Action: Increase both the number and the dollar amount of grants offered by federal and state agencies to small and rural communities in order to improve their water and waste water facilities. Provide the needed resources for communities to implement new technological improvements that will lower energy demands while meeting a higher demand.

Effect: Encourages local governments to plan their budgets properly and seek additional funding opportunities. This reduces the probability of a local facility becoming a burden to the State.

FLAGLER BEACH RESTORATION

Background: Flagler Beach has a tourist-dependent economy. In 2002, House Resolution 2676 provided for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a Feasibility Study of Flagler County's coastline for Beach Re-nourishment. The recommendation from that study was to provide shoreline protection to 2.6 miles in Flagler Beach to extend the dune 10 feet and protect S.R. A1A. A Joint Participation Agreement between Flagler County and Florida Department of Transportation was to provide \$1 Million for the design phase and \$3.8 Million for the construction phase. Additional funding is being sought from FDOT, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (which will help fund construction up to 50%), the Tourist Development Council, and federal funds.

Requested Action: That the State of Florida promotes the funding of beach re-nourishment programs through partnerships with state agencies and local governments.

Effect: The preservation of a vital recreational resource and a section of scenic highway State Route A1A that through local, national, and international tourism has a high-impact, positive effect on the City's and County's economy.

CONSIDERATION TO ENSURE HOME RULE AND NO UNFUNDED FINANCIAL MANDATES TO LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES:

Background: The Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) will meet in 2017-2018 and will recommend changes to Florida's Constitution that may appear on the 2018 general election ballot. Municipalities are the only form of government, created to serve the needs and desires of its citizens. Local self government is the keystone of American democracy and constitutional municipal home rule authority should be protected and preserved. Unexpected financial directives issued by legislators can have a negative impact on local governments. Unfunded mandates takes money away from programs intended to support or improve the quality of life of our citizens. An alternative would be to engage local governments in program-specific partnerships with state and/or federal agencies in order to provide a level of service above and beyond the basic necessities.

Requested Action: Urge the CRC to adopt proposals that strengthen municipal home rule authority and further restrict unfunded state mandates.

Effect: Program-specific partnerships with cost-share budgets help cities direct funding to projects particular to the local economy.

2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



PALM COAST 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



PROTECT HOME RULE

Background: In 1968, Florida voters amended the state constitution to confer broad "home rule" powers on municipal government. This change was an unequivocal expression of support for local self-government by the people of the State of Florida and the right of the people to access government to address local needs and problems. Unfortunately, each session, bills are proposed that contradict the will of the people and usurp local control, where the local elected officials are more accountable and responsive to their concerns.

Requested Action: Oppose legislation and initiatives that eliminate municipal home rule powers.

Effect: Allow local government to operate without interference from state government and provide its citizens with better access and response from local elected officials.

ENHANCE WATER AND WASTEWATER FUNDING

Background: The City of Palm Coast doubled in population from 2000 to 2010. By 2035, our population is expected to once again double. In addition, the amount of regulatory requirements from both the State and Federal government has increased in order to provide safe drinking water and properly treat wastewater. In the last few years, the City has and will continue to spend millions of dollars on projects directly related to State and Federal regulatory requirements (e.g. Zero Liquid Discharge \$11.4 million, wellfield expansion projects \$2.75 million).

Requested Action: Enhance and provide additional funding for water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

Effect: Ensure safe drinking water and proper treatment of wastewater in a cost-effective manner.

PROVIDE BEACH RENOURISHMENT FUNDING

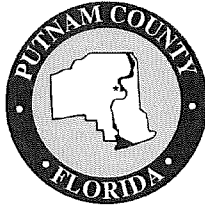
Background: Tourism and its economic impact helps diversify the economy in Palm Coast. Tourists visit Palm Coast not only for our outdoor activities, sporting events, and cultural activities, but also to enjoy the wonderful beaches in Flagler Beach and Flagler County.

Requested Action: Promote and provide funding of beach renourishment programs through partnerships with state agencies and local governments.

Effect: Ensure that the City's economy is vibrant and diverse through continued visitor spending.



2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NECESSITIES

Background: Putnam County has been struggling to stimulate economic growth, and has been deterred by the depressed economic environment for the past several years. The County is in dire need of the economic resuscitation that is being realized in all of our surrounding counties. There are several factors which must be mitigated in order to achieve the results necessary to grow and sustain this County. Assistance from both the State and Federal governments is absolutely necessary for success. To date, we have received some assistance, but a more intensive effort by both parties is necessary to achieve success.

Requested Action: There are several actions that are necessary to achieve a modicum of success for our economic development.

- Monetary assistance is necessary to continue to expand our infrastructure in East Putnam.
- Continue the multi-laning efforts for U.S. Highway 17 S. and S.R. 20. These are major corridors through Putnam County and are vital to our Economic Development plans.
- The Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP) and the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) provide necessary transportation funding for continued road improvements.
- Increase the height of the Shands Bridge (located on SR16, connecting St. Johns and Clay Counties).

Effect: The opportunity to achieve immediate growth through housing development, expansion of current businesses, the ongoing paving initiatives and the revitalization of new and existing industrial concerns will increase employment and expand County tax revenues.

PRESERVATION OF RODMAN RESERVOIR (LAKE OCKLAWAHA) AS A FUTURE WATER SOURCE

Background: Rodman Reservoir (Lake Ocklawaha) stores, at normal levels, approximately 21 billion gallons of water. More than 646 million gallons of water flow over the Kirkpatrick Dam into the St. Johns River per day. This volume of water makes Rodman a potential source of surface water that could provide potable water. Rodman Reservoir (Lake Ocklawaha) protects the St. Johns River from an overload of nutrients by filtering the water that flows into Rodman before it flows over the Kirkpatrick Dam into the St. Johns River.

Requested Action: Continue to support the preservation of Rodman Reservoir (Lake Ocklawaha) as a wildlife refuge, potential water resource and a filter of excessive nutrients for the citizens of Putnam County. Support the traditional drawdown of reservoir water levels.

Effect: The preservation of Rodman Reservoir (Lake Ocklawaha) will enable Putnam County to evaluate its viability as a water source when planning for a central water system to serve parts of Putnam County west of the St. Johns River and to protect the St. Johns River from excessive nutrients. Also, Rodman Reservoir serves as an economic engine driven by recreational and competitive fishing.

SMALL AND RURAL COUNTY DISASTER DEBRIS REMOVAL (1) and WASTE/RECYCLING FUNDING (2) ASSISTANCE

Background:

1. Putnam County is in a critical budget year which is exacerbated by the long delays in FEMA reimbursements for disaster debris removal. We are a rural financially constrained county with limited taxing options with which to mitigate this crisis.
2. Although small and rural counties have been previously funded for small county solid waste management grants, Putnam County's solid waste and recycling efforts are in crisis. This is largely due to the inadequate solid waste intake for disposal.

Requested Action:

1. Putnam County needs immediate funding assistance for disaster debris removal. FEMA reimbursements are years behind, and we are still awaiting reimbursement for Hurricane Matthew from 2016. With Hurricane Irma, we will have to withdraw funds from both the sanitation budget fund for debris removal and general fund for emergency repairs and overtime.
2. Putnam County would like to have increased continued assistance for recycling, white goods, tire removal funding, and consideration for grants to stimulate innovative programs that would resolve the current solid waste and landfill issues.

Effect:

1. Special funding will facilitate the county in returning to a normal operational status of solid waste and debris removal which would help lessen our critical budget constraints.
2. Funding would allow Putnam County to continue our recycling efforts of increasing recycling goals and participation, thereby increasing the life of our current landfill.

RESTORE MAXIMUM FUNDING OF THE STATE HOUSING INITIATIVES PARTNERSHIP (SHIP)

Background: There is a need in rural communities for housing assistance for rehabilitation and new construction for low and moderate income persons. Waiting lists continue to increase even though the Legislature has redirected funding previously established by the Sadowski Act under the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP).

Requested Action: Restore maximum funding of each County's SHIP allowance as projected prior to the funding reduction by the Legislature.

Effect: Restoration of maximum SHIP funding amounts will immediately increase the number of individuals receiving SHIP assistance, thereby creating a positive effect on Putnam County's ad valorem revenues.

2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



TRANSPORTATION

Background: Past growth has resulted in continued needs for transportation network improvements. The lack of improvements impacts desired quality of life projects, causes increased traffic congestion and hampers economic development potential. Increased traffic network demand with a reduced revenue stream has stressed state and local government's ability to meet regional/community needs and protect quality of life and economic development needs.

Requested Action: Support transportation funding legislation that improves economic development, quality of life, the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) and Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP).

- Replenish the Transportation Trust Fund and use the fund for transportation projects only. Don't use that revenue fund as a bill payer for unrelated budget line items. Initiatives such as TRIP and the Transportation Disadvantaged programs are beneficial to both the state and local government and need to be fully funded.
- Request FDOT provide full funding for the US 301 and Crawford Road Rail Overpass.

Effect: A fully funded FDOT allows local governments to effectively work with and leverage local and regional projects benefitting the citizens.

WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Background: In order to promote both economic development and to reduce the impact of septic systems and individual wells on the environment, it is necessary to provide additional grant funding for the expansion of water and sewer infrastructure. By providing additional grant funding this will allow for lower income areas to more easily take advantage of programs to implement central water and sewer and to reduce the impacts of septic tanks and individual wells. Additional grant funding for system expansion(s) and fast track permitting of water and sewer system expansion will also allow for enhanced economic development. Having the ability to quickly get water and sewer to sites already approved for industrial development will increase Florida's economic competitiveness in attracting industry.

Requested Action: Provide additional grant funding in both the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Economic Opportunity for the expansion of funding sources to provide water and sewer to eliminate septic systems and individual wells and also for Economic Development purposes.

Effect: By allowing for additional funding sources to expand water and sewer for economic development purposes and to provide for the elimination of well and septic systems in environmentally sensitive areas, this will have a direct positive impact on economic development and reduction in environmental impacts in environmentally sensitive areas.

PURCHASING POLICY

Background: As part of the preparation of the Capital Improvement Program, staff is required to include updated cost estimates. According to Florida Statute 337.168, The Florida Department of Transportation is not required to provide final cost estimates as a project is being prepared for bid. By not providing updated information as part of the Capital Improvement Program, this would provide more incentive for contractors to give their best bid as opposed to "bidding the cost estimate."

Requested Action: Support Legislation that would amend Florida Statute 337.168 to include local governments in the exemption of providing finalized estimated costs for projects.

Effect: Enhanced competitive bids to be received.



NASSAU COUNTY 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

**TRANSPORTATION**

Background: St. Johns County's road network has not kept up with the County's rapid growth, resulting in severe congestion on several key roadways.

Requested Actions:

- **State Road 312, including the State Road 313 Bypass** – Request \$95 million for the proposed State Road 313 Extension/Bypass from State Road 207 to State Road 16; and request \$30 million for Design, Right-of-way Acquisition and Construction from State Road 16 north to Woodlawn Road.
- **State Road 16 and International Golf Parkway Intersection Improvements** – Request \$4 million for the purpose of improving the State Road 16 and International Golf Parkway intersection to enhance traffic safety and capacity. Construction includes travel lanes, turn lanes, and signal improvements.
- **County Road 2209 / International Golf Parkway to State Road 16** – Request \$5 million for the purpose of constructing a new four-lane roadway segment to improve traffic safety and congestion. The construction includes travel lanes, turn lanes, sidewalks, and signal improvements. This will also improve safety and alleviate congestion at the nearby intersection of State Road 16 and International Golf Parkway.
- **County Road 2209 / County Road 210 to State Road 16** – Request \$90 million for the proposed County Road 2209 from County Road 210 to State Road 16; and ensure maximum eligibility of State, Federal, and regional funding sources for County Road 2209 by designating it as a Strategic Intermodal System Facility from State Road 9B Extension to the First Coast Expressway.
- **County Road 2209 and County Road 244 Intersection Improvements** – Request \$1.5 million for the purpose of improving traffic safety and congestion at this intersection of two major collector roads. Construction includes turn lanes, directional islands, and signal improvements. This major intersection is immediately south of the new State Road 9B Interstate connection to County Road 2209.
- **County Road 244 Widening from Roberts Road to Oxford Estates** – Request \$2.5 million for the purpose of improving traffic safety and roadway capacity. This project will widen a section of County Road 244 from the existing four-lane section up to the Oxford Estates development. Construction includes adding two travel lanes, turn lanes, and signal improvements.
- **County Road 5A Safety Improvements** – Request \$8.5 million for the purpose of improving traffic safety and congestion, pedestrian and bike safety, and water quality on County Road 5A. Construction includes turn lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, and stormwater ponds.
- **First Coast Expressway** – Include in the FDOT Work Program adequate funds to move this critical project of the First Coast Expressway from I-95 to U.S. 17 to construction at the earliest possible date; ensure the highest funding prioritization for this critical First Coast Expressway segment eligible for the greatest possible range of funding resources.
- **County Road 210 Overpass at U.S. 1** – Request \$32 million in State funds for construction of a full interchange, including ramps, for the County Road 210 overpass over U.S. 1 as phase two of this interchange project.
- **Expansion of St. Johns County Public Transit** – Improve Medicaid transportation by moving it back to the coordinated system under Chapter 427, F.S.; expand transit service provided by St. Johns County to include decreasing transit headways and expand operating time; and ensure maximum eligibility of State, Federal, and regional funding sources to provide funds to expand transit service in St. Johns County.
- **County Road 305 Extension from County Road 13S to State Road 206** – Request funding for the construction of a segment of County Road 305 to connect County Road 13S and State Road 206.

Effect: Funding these transportation improvements will relieve traffic congestion, clarify transportation authority, and reduce associated risks to the health, safety, and well-being of the users of those roadways.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Background: In many circumstances, new businesses who are seeking a site for relocation or expansion request financial incentives by local, regional, and statewide entities as an inducement to make a final location selection. Providing local governments with additional confidentiality, funding mechanisms, and educational opportunities would give Florida a competitive advantage when competing for economic development and job creation.

Requested Actions:

- **Public Record and Open Meeting Exemptions for Economic Development Agencies** – Amend Sections 286.0113 and 288.075, Florida Statutes, to enhance the confidentiality of economic development activities by allowing the Board of County Commissioners to deliberate in private regarding an economic development proposal and allow confidential information in the possession of an economic development agency to be provided to a member of the Board of County Commissioners without such communication being considered a disclosure, which would terminate the confidential nature of the information.

2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



ST. JOHNS COUNTY 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



- **Funding of State-level Economic Development and Workforce Education and Training Programs** – Enhance funding for the State-level Economic Development Incentive Toolkit and Workforce Education and Training Programs, including the reinstatement of the Quick Action Closing Fund or similar performance-based program to allow Florida to be more competitive with other states to attract high-impact projects, diversify our economy, and create jobs.
- **University Recruitment and Development** – Request funding for the recruitment and development of public and private universities within St. Johns County.

Effect: Having the ability to negotiate in the “shade” would allow St. Johns County and other public agencies throughout the state to be more competitive with other states when vying for large-scale economic development projects, and additional funding would allow local entities to expand job creation programs and educational opportunities.

WATER QUALITY/WATER CONSERVATION

Background: Water quality, water distribution, and wastewater services remain high priorities in St. Johns County due to a variety of environmental factors. Due to record growth, the County remains in a continual state of planning, construction, and maintenance of water and wastewater facilities. In addition, St. Johns County was impacted by both Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Irma within a 12-month period, bringing to light drainage concerns throughout a variety of communities within the County's boundaries. As a result of these dynamics, funding for water quality, water conservation, wastewater services, and drainage improvements remains one of the County's highest priorities.

Requested Actions:

- **Sustainable Florida and Water Conservation** – Support legislation that encourages research, policies, and best practices associated with appropriate water conservation and Sustainable Florida measures:
 - Reinstatement of the annual State funding for alternative-water-supply development and water-quality improvement and make it a recurring source of annual State funding.
 - Support regional partnerships, incentives, and cooperative approaches to address long-term water sustainability in Florida.
 - Set a per capita target or goal for water use and quantifiable best management water practices and provide a stable funding base for the Conserve Florida program.
 - Support Florida-specific research on climate change and water management interrelationship to better understand the State's water vulnerabilities and make appropriate, effective adaptations to water-planning regulatory and financial programs.
 - Encourage regional visioning and support sustainable community design.
 - Strengthen Florida's buildings to address issues of hurricane protection, insurance rates, water conservation, and energy conservation.
 - Continue the identification of Florida's critical lands and waters and pursue new conservation methods.
- **Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Regulations** – Request \$60 million in State funds over the next five years to assist in complying with the existing unfunded mandates for TMDL's contained within the County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit to preserve and protect the St. Johns River and its tributaries, the inter-coastal waterways, and other regional bodies of water. This funding could come from a specific and dedicated revenue source, authorized by the Florida Legislature, which is not currently available to local government jurisdictions.
- **Storm Water Trust Fund Pilot Program** – Request the Florida Legislature support legislation that establishes a pilot program for small coastal cities to improve resiliency to sea level rise.
- **City of St. Augustine Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Infrastructure Funding** – Support appropriations to increase funding for increasing resiliency in water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure in the City of St. Augustine.
- **Town of Hastings Water Infrastructure Funding** – Request \$1.1 million for the repair and replacement of water infrastructure in the Town of Hastings.
- **Deep Creek Channel Drainage** – Request \$1 million for the design and permitting of the Deep Creek Channel Project to alleviate significant flooding in St. Johns County and minimize future damage to state roads, agricultural commerce, commercial businesses, public facilities and residential homes in conjunction with the creation of a programmatic long-term maintenance mission.
- **Ponte Vedra Boulevard Drainage Improvement Funding** – Request \$2 million for stormwater drainage improvements and pavement rehabilitation along Ponte Vedra Boulevard between Corona Road and Miranda Road.

Effect: Funding for water quality, water conservation, wastewater services, and drainage improvements would allow the County to address the service needs of an exponentially-growing community, as well as ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the residents who call St. Johns County home.



2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



VACATION RENTALS

Background:

- Current statutory preemption of local zoning regulations directly and adversely affect the quality of life of residents.
- Local governments are best qualified to balance the needs of residents with those of commercial short-term rentals.
- Zoning regulations have traditionally been a local matter.

Requested Actions: Support legislation to promote home rule for vacation rentals.

Effect: Support home rule on zoning matters and limit the use of state preemption of vacation rental regulations.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Background:

- Community redevelopment areas provide opportunities for growth and economic development to blighted areas and are a benefit to local governments.
- Enacting any changes that limit or dismantle existing CRAs would have a negative impact to the communities they serve.

Requested Actions: Defeat any legislation that limits or dismantles existing community redevelopment areas (CRA).

Effect: Because limiting CRAs would have a negative impact to the communities they serve, recommend to defeat any legislation that might limit or dismantle CRAs.

WATER QUALITY/SEPTIC TANK ELIMINATION

Background:

- West Augustine area is a residential low-lying area with poor drainage and documented history of failing septic tanks.
- Low income areas need financial assistance to propagate public sewers and offset costs to connect to public sewer.
- Lack of public sewer has been a deterrent to economic growth and development of the West Augustine area.
- Failing septic tanks negatively impact public health and safety and surface water bodies.

Requested Actions: Support appropriations to low income areas to assist with cost effective public sewers and grants to qualifying families to offset connection costs. Support appropriations to increase funding aimed towards eliminating septic tanks, specifically in West Augustine, aimed towards improving water quality and public health.

Effect: Public sewer availability aid in economic growth and overall water quality and public health. Support appropriations to provide financial assistance to eliminate septic tanks in the West Augustine area.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Background:

- Local governments need additional support for greater resiliency and mitigation from flooding and coastal threats and inundations.
- Continue utilization and expand funding for water resource and flooding mitigation projects through cost share programs such as the water management districts.
- Support Storm Water Trust Fund Pilot program to seed planning and infrastructure funding to assist local governments with adapting to threats from rising tides.

Requested Actions: Support appropriations to increase funding aimed towards increasing resiliency in water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure.

Effect: Florida's coastal communities are threatened by rising tides without technical and financial resources to plan, manage and adapt to the threats. Critical infrastructure must become more resilient to continue to provide safe water supplies and treatment to the public. Support legislation that provides the much-needed support to communities to aid in maintaining critical infrastructure.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Background:

- The gas tax rate needs to be raised, current rate is not sustainable source to fund the growing transportation needs and cannot keep pace.
- Support alternative or innovative methods for collecting and apportioning transportation user fees such as vehicle miles travelled (VMT), congestion fees or tolls as an aid to reduce single vehicle occupancy.
- Support greater percentage of transportation revenue to go towards mass transportation, car sharing and greater technology aimed towards reducing emissions and congestion and funding other transportation modes.

Requested Actions: Support increased revenue for transportation.

Effect: The current model of gas tax and formulas for distribution are insufficient to keep up with transportation needs. Greater apportionment to alternative modes, reduction of single occupancy vehicles and increase the gas tax rate.

2018 NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



DEVELOPMENT OF THE INITIATIVES FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE



The Legislative Policy Committee of the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) was created to address critical concerns within the member counties that comprise the Region. It is composed with the aim of having at least one delegate from each county (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns), which includes the current President of the NEFRC.

This Committee is guided by the *Home Rule Philosophy* to develop and implement community-based solutions.

The legislative priorities of each county within the Northeast Florida Regional Council's membership and other regional stakeholders were collected. Each entity was requested to determine at least three priorities that most significantly represented the critical needs and concerns of their communities and constituents. The cumulative list total **22** priorities.

Through the gathering and analysis of all priorities submitted by each county individually, the Legislative Policy Committee collectively determined the top **5** "Regional priorities," which represented the most common critical concerns of the Northeast Florida Region.

All priorities were reviewed to include background, requested action and effect.

Additional information regarding all legislative priorities for the counties is available upon request.



Hon. John Drew
Chair - NEFRC Legislative Committee
Nassau County

"I believe in the power of cooperation and that we are never stronger than when we pool our resources for the betterment of our Regional community.

Serving as Chairman for this committee has allowed me to see first hand that although we come from different counties with unique perspectives, we embrace many of the same critical issues that affect the quality of life in our communities and our Region.

The resources and expertise of the Northeast Florida Regional Council affords us a greater opportunity to work collectively and promote Regionally."



About the Northeast Florida Regional Council

The Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) is a regional government agency serving seven counties—Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns—and their 27 municipalities. Formed in 1977 by an interlocal agreement pursuant to Florida Statutes, Chapter 163, it is one of 10 regional planning councils statewide.

The NEFRC is governed by a 35-member Board. Two-thirds are elected officials and one-third are gubernatorial appointees.

The NEFRC provides a wide scope of services and programs including strategic planning, Development of Regional Impact reviews, economic development, regional transportation, natural resources, affordable housing, emergency preparedness and technical assistance.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council is committed to continuing its regional initiatives in support of shared visions, values and goals.

Our Mission

To be a dynamic network of local governance, providing visionary leadership, advocacy, and coordination between counties and local, state and federal governmental agencies to preserve and enhance the quality of Northeast Florida's economic, natural, built and social environment.



For additional information:

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