

2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

City of Naples

Adopted by the
City of Naples
Mayor Teresa Heitmann
Vice-Mayor Terry Hutchison
Councilor Ted Blankenship
Councilor Ray Christman
Councilor Mike McCabe
Councilor Paul Perry
Councilor Gary Price

THE CITY OF NAPLES LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Senator Kathleen Passidomo, District 28
Representative Bob Rommel, District 106

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2021 Legislative Priorities

Preface

The primary interest of the City of Naples is to meet the needs of the public through high-quality efficient governmental services.

The issues and comments reflected in the 2021 Legislative Program for Naples are intended to protect, promote, and benefit programs important to providing services to the citizens of Naples. The City of Naples is appreciative of all the support and efforts that will be provided on our behalf and pledge to give our best effort to stand with the Governor's Office and the Legislature.

Priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session

Naples submits the following Legislative Priorities and Policy Proposals for consideration by the Governor, Cabinet Members, Members of the Florida Legislature, the Leadership within State Agencies and, other local, state, and federal interests that might be supportive of Florida's communities.

Provide Support for Key Infrastructure –Water Quality, Wastewater and Stormwater Projects.

Naples recommends the following:

- Continued support of partnership opportunities and grants through the South Florida Water Management District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection to complete local water projects;
- Provide for additional funds for the projects already permitted and designed to improve the Caloosahatchee Waterway and corresponding watersheds that impact Naples Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.
- Support full funding of the Florida Forever Program.

Increase Local Involvement in State Actions Relating to Local Communities –

Naples requests that state agencies provide “Meaningful Local Involvement” when establishing rules or developing agency actions that impact the local community or its neighboring communities.

Meaningful local involvement includes:

- Notifying local officials of agency actions prior to implementation, including a comment period;
- Providing opportunity for local input from the initiation of a project, program or policy/rule/ordinance change;
- Provide for a “full cost disclosure” and a complete analysis of impacts for such changes;
- Provisions for local government to express support or opposition to proposed actions prior to the items being heard by the appropriate policy making body.

Provide Special Project Infrastructure Funding: Naples requests special funding to address local government infrastructure projects addressing Water, Wastewater and Stormwater improvements.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND FISCAL POLICY PROPOSALS

Cost Shifts and Increasing Costs

- Oppose the shifting of program costs to the local level.
- Oppose legislation that shifts administrative or un-funded responsibilities to local governments.

Affordable Housing

- Maintain and protect the existing state housing trust funds for affordable housing programs, specifically preserve the Sadowski Trust Fund to be used solely for building affordable housing.

Liability Issues

- Maintain Sovereign Immunity Limits and the current process for resolving claims.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY PROPOSALS

Water Projects

Provide funding for Sewer and Water Line Hookups and Storm Water Projects including Innovative Water Supply Initiatives and other local infrastructure project needs.

Consider increasing the amount of funding and the flexibility of the program to increase State partnerships with local governments to ease the burden of septic to sewer system conversions.

Septic-to-Sewer Grant Program Creation and Recurring Funding

Summary: Aging septic tank systems and their leaching of effluent are a threat to waterways, the habitats they sustain, and our drinking water quality. Even when conducted in phases, sanitary sewer construction and connection projects are expensive whether it be a densely populated area or a small and/or rural community with fiscal limitations. Residents often incur costly assessments to cover transition to a sanitary sewer system. The Clean Waterways Act of 2020 created a septic-to-sewer grant program - subject to appropriation by the Legislature - that *requires a 50% local match* that may be waived by DEP *only* for rural areas of opportunity. An annually funded, low-or-no local match septic-to-sewer conversion grant program is needed to expeditiously connect residents to sanitary sewer systems and facilitate proper abandonment of the septic tank.

Action: (STATE) – Advocacy for creation of a septic-to-sewer grant program *with a dedicated, recurring funding source* and applicable to *planning, design, construction, and connection costs* associated with conversion.

Water Quality and Quantity Management

Summary: Local water, wastewater, and stormwater system water quality improvement projects support the protection of our drinking water supply as well as our natural environment and fragile ecosystem. Counties/communities under 500,000 in population often have budgetary constraints that prevent them from covering the total costs for many needed improvements to aging water, wastewater, and stormwater system infrastructure.

Action: (STATE) – Support water quality and quantity management programs, including tiered, population-driven funding opportunities for water and public utility infrastructure (including fire hydrant systems), funding and incentives for stormwater system rehabilitation and measurable water quality enhancement, funding for technical and scientific studies to support water quality improvements, and continued funding of opportunities that reduce resident cost in moving from well water to potable water systems.

Coastal and Marine Impacts

Continue to support and increase funding for research and program initiatives that will ascertain the causes and provide for remedies relating to Red Tide, algae blooms, forms of water pollution and other related environmental degradation occurring in Florida's coastal waters.

Initiate comprehensive programs to offset the economic impacts that Red Tide, hurricane damage, and coastal water quality problems have on all elements of Florida's marine and tourism industries.

Growth Management

Ensure that growth management proposals are not one size fits all, overly burdensome and do not limit local control.

Oppose the pre-emption of local ordinances regulating short term vacation rentals.

Fully funding for the Florida Forever Program and encourage conservation of lands to enhance open space.

TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD POLICY PROPOSALS

State Road Capital Improvements

- US 41/Tamiami Trail right-of-way design to be fully vetted with the Naples community prior to any design amendments to number of travel lanes.
- The City of Naples believes further justification is needed for the M-Core new road construction projects including exhibiting the mitigation efforts to be taken to reduce impacts on the environment and water quality. The City of Naples requests to be included in discussion in the Southwest Florida region.

LEGISLATIVE MATTERS TO MONITOR

Community Redevelopment Agencies

Any legislation that restricts home rule authority to create, operate, or sunset county CRAs. Legislation was passed during the 2019 session that implemented limited reforms and enhanced ethical training and accountability. Onerous provisions such as requiring a county-wide vote to create a CRA were removed from the bill during consideration. **(STATE)**

Fuel Station Generators Any proposed legislation or regulatory efforts that strengthen the emergency generator requirement for commercial fuel stations near the interstate and inland multi-pump stations. **(STATE)**

Home Rule

Any proposed legislation that seeks to preempt or undermine local governmental authority, impose state preemption, creates unfunded mandates, or adversely impacts local funding streams. **(STATE)**

Lake Okeechobee and Everglades Restoration

Any proposed legislation or administrative action that impacts water storage, treatment, and reservoir conveyance; Everglades restoration and preservation via the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). **(STATE)**

Licensing & Permitting

Any proposed legislation or administrative action that impacts county licensing and permitting and may impact cost and/or time in obtaining. **(STATE)**

Medical Marijuana Dispensaries

Any proposed legislation that might provide more local discretion in dispensary location. **(STATE)**

Mental Health & Substance Abuse

Any proposed legislation, appropriation, grant, or program that could enhance Collier County's mental health and substance abuse programs, including the expansion of authority of county court judges to refer defendants for treatment. **(STATE)**

Millage Rates

Any proposed legislation that undermines local government discretion in establishing millage rates. **(STATE)**

Offshore Drilling

Any proposed legislation or future Executive action regarding the moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling within 125 miles of Florida's Gulf Coast. On September 8, 2020, President Trump signed an Executive Memorandum effectively extending the moratorium until June 30, 2032. The Memorandum also expanded protected areas to include the Atlantic coast of Florida, and the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. During the 2019 session, the Florida Legislature passed resolutions calling for an *indefinite* extension to the moratorium. In September of 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives passed Congressman Rooney's bipartisan legislation, HR 205, to *permanently* extend the moratorium on oil and gas drilling in the Gulf by a vote of 248-180. With the White House threatening a veto, the Senate did not take up the bill. **(STATE)**

School Resource Officer / Guardian Program Funding

Any proposed legislation or administrative action regarding funding of the School Resource Officer (SRO) and/or Guardian Program. **(STATE)**

Short Term Rentals

Any proposed legislation that preempts or otherwise restricts local laws, ordinances, or regulation regarding vacation rental frequency or duration. During the 2020 Regular Session, the House passed its version of the bill and the Senate had nearly completed their deliberations when Governor DeSantis made comments in the press about the bills "micromanaging" a local issue. As a result, the Senate bill died in its last committee assignment (Rules). **(STATE)**

APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

As grant applications are submitted, the requests will be added to this list.

City of Naples Septic to Sewer Phase II – Requested funds \$750,000

Florida Department of Environmental Protection through the Nonpoint Source Grant
Contact: Bob Middleton, Utilities Director

City of Naples Coastal Resiliency – Surveying of outfalls – Requested funds \$75,000

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Contact: Katie Laakkonen, Natural Resources Environmental Specialist

NAPLES SUPPORTS COLLIER COUNTY GOVERNMENT PROJECTS

Belle Meade/Golden Gate Canal Project:

Total Cost – \$32,000,000

Shoreline modifications and extensive canal construction for urban and agricultural drainage has changed the timing and quantity of freshwater inflows to coastal waters. These changes have dramatically affected water quality and quantity of many of Collier County's estuaries. Collier County and the City of Naples developed the Golden Gate Watershed Improvement Program Initiative with the goal of fostering the implementation of recommended projects based on environmentally sustainable management system strategies aimed at protecting, preserving, and restoring the resource in areas that have experienced the highest impact due to human activity, while encouraging efficient urban development in areas with the highest existing and potential urban development in the County.

Specifically, this project would build pump stations that would draw water from the Golden Gate Canal System and spread that water over several hundred acres of land within the Belle Meade region of the Picayune Strand State Forest, thereby rehydrating former wetlands and recharging the underground water supply aquifer. At the same time and equally critical, this project reduces pollutant loading and freshwater inundation of Naples Bay, thereby enhancing estuaries and wetlands.

CDBG-MIT – Paradise Coast Sports Complex Field House

Summary: In September, the County applied to the State Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) for \$11 million in Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds for the hardening of the planned Paradise Coast Sports Complex field house. If awarded, these funds would provide a structure that could accommodate over 800 individuals with special needs and/or general population during a storm event and provide electrical power for special medical equipment and food service during a disaster.

Action: (STATE) – Engage DEO and the legislative delegation on the local and regional need of this shelter facilitation project, its ability to serve a significant portion of the special needs population, and the Complex's overall ability to serve as a regional shelter during evacuation events, provide a continuity of operations center, and serve as a staging area for community response after a major storm.

NAPLES CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information regarding the items within the Naples 2021 Legislative Priorities please find the available contacts below:

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