

2020 Legislative Priorities

City of Coral Gables
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Coral Gables City Commission

- Raúl Valdés-Fauli: Mayor
- Vince Lago: Vice-Mayor
- Pat Keon: Commissioner
- Michael Mena: Commissioner
- Jorge L. Fors, Junior: Commissioner

Policy Issues

PRESERVATION OF HOME RULE & PREEMPTION OF LOCAL REGULATIONS

- Oppose legislation that would preempt local governments from legislating, regulating and acting on matters of local concern and in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of their communities.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TAX AND LOCAL BUSINESS TAX PROTECTION

- Support legislation that protects general revenues collected from the communications services tax and the local business tax.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA AND CBD

- Support legislation that provides greater local control over the zoning of medical marijuana treatment centers, cultivation, processing facilities, and dispensing facilities. Support legislation that provide greater local control over the zoning of CBD retail establishments.

ASSAULT WEAPONS AND HIGH CAPACITY MAGAZINES

- Support legislation that would ban the sale of semi-automatic assault weapons in the State of Florida.
- Roll back the arduous penalty provisions in Section 790.33, Florida Statutes including but not limited to, the declaratory judgement provision, civil fine provision, limitation on the use of public funds, termination of employment provision and personal cause of action provision.
- Amend Section 790.33, Florida Statutes to allow municipalities to enact common-sense zoning regulations that encompass firearms businesses.

PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

- Support legislation that promotes principles of inclusion, including but not limited to, respect for the inherent dignity of individuals, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, accessibility, equality between men and women, respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

POLYSTYRENE AND SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

- Support the amendment of Section 403.7033, Florida Statutes and Section 500.90, Florida Statutes to eliminate preemptions of local law relating to the regulation of auxiliary containers, wrappings, disposable plastic bags and polystyrene.

SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICTS AND ANNEXATION

- Amend Florida Law to allow “property owners” as well as “resident electors” or “qualified electors” to vote in special elections for the creation and transfer of special taxing districts and in annexation referendums.

TRANSPORTATION

- Support legislation that preserves local control of transportation planning and provides for a more equitable transportation funding formula between municipalities and counties, including additional dedicated revenue options for municipal transportation infrastructure and transit projects. Support legislation that allows municipalities to receive transportation infrastructure grants and moneys directly from the State, bypassing distribution on a County level. Support legislation and appropriations to fully fund the Underline Project, support fully funding the Miami-Dade SMART plan, and reject efforts to extend SR-836, known as the “Kendall Parkway”.

SMALL CELL WIRELESS

- Support legislation that preserves the City’s ability to exercise its home rule authority to control use of its rights-of-way for communications facilities including small cell facilities, and supports the City’s ability to exercise authority over City-owned poles in the rights-of-way. The City opposes any legislation that would expand the preemption of City home rule authority already within the Advanced Wireless Infrastructure Deployment Act.

SOLAR

- Support the rights afforded under the Florida Solar Rights Act (Section 163.04, Florida Statutes).
- Oppose legislation that would limit the City’s ability to regulate aesthetics as it pertains to the installation of solar panels.
- Support a private property owner’s right to produce, provide, and sell, renewable energy generated on private property, under certain circumstances.

RISK PROTECTION ORDERS

- Support legislation that preserves the City’s ability to enhance public safety by restricting firearm and ammunition possession by a person who poses a significant danger to himself or herself or others, and support legislation that requires persons under Risk Protection Orders to demonstrate there is no further significant danger to himself, herself, or others before a Risk Protection Order is terminated.

PROTECTION OF CITY'S TREE CANOPY

- Support repealing F.S. 163.045 as it is an attempt to preempt the City's efforts to preserve its lauded and historic tree canopy and prevents the City from mitigating losses to the City's tree canopy, the preservation of which is a priority of City residents and the City Commission.

CLARIFICATION OF "BEST EFFORTS" TO SUPPORT THE ENFORCEMENT OF FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAW

- Support the repeal of Chapter 2019-102 Laws of Florida, codifying SB 168 from the last legislative session, or in the alternative supports legislation that clarifies Chapter 908, Florida Statutes regarding "best efforts" of a local law enforcement agency.

COMMISSIONER NICOLE 'NIKKI' FRIED'S LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

- Support Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried's legislative package of bills aimed at addressing energy efficiency, climate change, resiliency, and clean energy research.

M-DCPS'S POLICY PRIORITIES

- Support Miami-Dade County Public School's School Board's top priorities including, increasing the Base Student Allocation by given percent, implementing a revised District Cost Differential that takes into account cost differences, extending the authorization of the locally-voted levy for operating purposes from four years to 10 years, funding select student programs beyond the 1.0 FTE cap or 24 hours a week, and amending the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Safety Act to expand the pool of allowable options and the pool of candidates that can serve as school safety security officers at public schools.

ATTORNEY'S FEES

- Support repealing the provision in F.S. 163.3215 that allows for a prevailing party in a challenge to a development order to recover attorneys' fees and costs.

BUILDING DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Oppose any legislation that preempts a local government's authority to regulate and oversee building design elements for structures of any kind, including one-or two-family dwellings.

ENVIRONMENT

- Support legislation that provides adequate funding for Everglades restoration, and support legislation that makes restoration of the Everglades a funding priority.

Appropriation Requests

CANAL DREDGING PROJECT

The City is seeking \$735k for a canal dredging project that consists of the removal of vegetation and sediment from the navigable portions of the C-3 waterway within the City of Coral Gables. Flushing the vegetation and sediment from the waterways will lead to improved water quality and drainage and will aid navigation of the City's waterways. The proposed dredging of the C-3 waterway will start at the city limit (SW 57th Avenue / Red Road) and will follow the C-3 to its ultimate discharge point at Biscayne Bay. The City has committed to a 100% match of any state funds received up to \$735k. The project will result in enhanced navigability for both recreational vessels and emergency response vessels, such as

police and fire, and improved water quality in the waterway and Biscayne Bay. Sediment in waterways contribute significantly to nutrient levels that support algae blooms in fresh and saltwater (nutrient regeneration). Whether you live on the waterway, enjoy the beauty of Biscayne Bay, or traverse the waterway by boat, kayak, or paddle board, Coral Gables residents and residents of Miami-Dade County at large will benefit from this project.

CORAL GABLES PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ON COLLECTOR STREETS

The City is seeking \$500k to construct safe and accessible pedestrian paths on collector roads that serve the entire City and beyond. Collector roads have been prioritized because they serve the greater community and also carry more traffic, creating the greatest conflict between pedestrians and motorists. The City is committed to matching any state fund received 100% up to 500k. Pedestrians are the most vulnerable users of the public rights-of-way. Where safe and accessible pedestrian paths of travel are absent, pedestrians are often forced to walk alongside vehicles on travel lanes. Pedestrian paths provide a safe path for those on foot and mitigate the peril of sharing the road with motorists. Safe and accessible paths also offer a transportation alternative, for short trips, to driving. 46% of the City's greenhouse gas emissions (ghg) are due to transportation and walking is ghg free. The health benefits of walking are proven and safe and accessible pedestrian paths are an important components of age-friendly communities

CORAL GABLES COMPREHENSIVE INFLOW AND INFILTRATION PROJECT

The City is seeking \$500k for a comprehensive inflow and infiltration (I&I) project to "shore up" the City's sanitary sewer system. The City owns and maintains a sanitary sewer system that provides service to approximately half the City. The City's sanitary sewer system is comprised of clay pipes that convey flows through gravity, manholes, pump stations, and ductile iron or PVC pipe force mains. The vast majority of stormwater and groundwater that infiltrates the system occurs along segments of clay pipes where joints have deteriorated due to their age, have been damaged by roots, or by vibrations from vehicles and contractors working in the area. The additional flow created by the infiltration of the groundwater and stormwater significantly increases the volume of flow sent for treatment and the corresponding amount paid to Miami-Dade County. Furthermore, the additional flow from groundwater and stormwater increases the frequency of sanitary sewer overflows which adversely affect public health and inconvenience the traveling public due to road closures. The proposed improvement will address clay pipes that are in need of rehabilitation, thus preventing infiltration from groundwater and stormwater and preventing effluent flows from escaping and contaminating the groundwater and adjacent water bodies. This project offers financial, environmental, and public health benefits to both city and county residents.

WATERWAY CONVEYANCE AND WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

The City is seeking \$800k for a project focused on improving waterway conveyance and water quality in the City's canals. The project will facilitate stormwater conveyance from western portions of the County and the City to Biscayne Bay, while improving water quality in the Coral Gables Waterway and Biscayne Bay due to the reduction of nutrient levels that support algae blooms. The project will also provide sufficient depth in the waterway for navigability including the navigation of recreational vessels, Police and Fire vessels, and maintenance barges. The anticipated benefits are a reduction in the frequency and severity of flooding in the County and City, less frequent algae blooms in the waterway and Biscayne Bay, and less frequent instances of vessels bottoming-out in the waterway.