

**AGENDA FOR REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
INVERNESS, FLORIDA, CITY HALL, 212 WEST MAIN STREET
November 4, 2025 - 5:30 PM**

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Any person who decides to appeal any decision of the Governing Body with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to provide that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based (Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).

Accommodation for the disabled (hearing or visually impaired, etc.) may be arranged with advance notice of seven (7) days before the scheduled meeting, by dialing (352) 726-2611 weekdays from 8 AM to 4 PM.

ENCLOSURES*

- 1) PLEASE SILENCE ELECTRONIC DEVICES**
- 2) INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3) ROLL CALL**
- 4) ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA**
- 5) PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES / RECOGNITIONS**
 - a) CCSO Quarterly Report
 - b) Festival of the Arts 2025
 - c) Cootertober Chili Cook Off Awards
- 6) PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOPS**
- 7) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

*The public is invited to speak. (Speaking time limit: Individual - 3 minutes;
Group/Organization - 5 minutes)*
- 8) CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**
- 9) CONSENT AGENDA**
 - a) Bill Listing*
 - b) Council Minutes* - 10.21.2025

**AGENDA FOR REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
INVERNESS, FLORIDA, CITY HALL, 212 WEST MAIN STREET
November 4, 2025 - 5:30 PM**

10) CITY CLERK'S REPORT

11) CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) School Zone Photo Enforcement Program
- b) Citrus County BOCC Legislative Priorities Request for Letter of Support
- c) City of Crystal River Legislative Priorities Request for Letter of Support
- d) John Deere Wheel Loader Purchase - Public Works
- e) Project and Program Update
 - Cootertober Recap
 - Small Town Saturday Night
 - Veteran's Day Parade
 - WPP New Entrance Groundbreaking
 - Other

12) MAYOR & COUNCIL SUBJECTS / REPORTS

- a) Mayor Plaisted
- b) Councilwoman Bega
- c) Councilwoman Hepfer
- d) Councilwoman Lizanich
- e) Councilman Davis
- f) Councilman Craig

13) NON-SCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENT

(Speaking time limit: Individual - 3 minutes; Group/Organization - 5 minutes)

14) ADJOURNMENT

a) **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Movie Night in the Park – A Minecraft Movie
Friday, November 7, 2025 @ 6:00pm
Liberty Park

Small Town Saturday Night

**AGENDA FOR REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
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November 4, 2025 - 5:30 PM**

Saturday, November 8, 2025 from 5:00pm – 9:00pm
Downtown Inverness

Mopar Car Show
Saturday, November 8, 2025 from 7:00am – 4:00pm
Wallace Brooks Park

Veteran's Day Parade
Tuesday, November 11, 2025 @ 10:00am
Downtown Inverness

Market at the Depot
Saturday, November 15, 2025 from 9:00am – 2:00pm
Depot Pavilion

Festival of the Arts
Saturday, November 15 and Sunday, November 16, 2025 from 10:00am –
4:00pm
Downtown Inverness

Inverness City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 18, 2025 @ 5:30pm
IGC – Council Chambers

Agenda Memorandum - ***City of Inverness***

November 4, 2025

TO: Elected Officials
FROM: Eric Williams, City Manager
SUBJECT: Festival of the Arts 2025
CC: Susan Jackson, City Clerk
Enclosures:

CASH REQUIREMENTS REPORT

VENDOR DOCUMENT	INVOICE	VOUCHER	DESCRIPTION	DUE DATE	DUE 09/30/26
			TOTALS FOR AMERICAN MARINE CONTRACTORS LLC		46,093.00
			TOTALS FOR CITRUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONER		224,969.50
			TOTALS FOR COFFMAN, VESTA M		8.18
			TOTALS FOR CONSOLIDATED STORES/BIG LOT		864.37
			TOTALS FOR DAN ENTERPRISES TEAM, LLC.		7,264.30
			TOTALS FOR DUKE ENERGY		6,466.60
			TOTALS FOR GFL SOLID WASTE SOUTHEAST LLC		218.00
			TOTALS FOR SUMTER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC		14,834.76
			TOTALS FOR SYSCO USA I, INC.		4,547.55
			TOTALS FOR THE ESTATE OF CLIFFORD LAVECK		44.59
			TOTALS FOR LEAH TINSLEY		2,125.00
			TOTALS FOR WALSH MARINE PRODUCTS, INC.		4,649.42
			TOTALS FOR WHEELER CONSTRUCTION		47.38
			REPORT TOTALS		312,132.65

** END OF REPORT - Generated by Stacey Iddings**

***Please note: Redacted items are credit balances owed to COI by Vendors - thus not payable and not included on report

October 21, 2025
5:30 PM

The City Council of the City of Inverness met on the above date in Regular Session at 212 W. Main Street, with the following members present:

President Davis – *(Absent)*
Vice President Lizanich
Councilwoman Bega
Councilwoman Hepfer
Councilman Craig
Mayor Plaisted

Also present were City Manager Williams, City Attorney Hartley, Staff Members, and City Clerk Jackson.

The Invocation was given by Mayor Plaisted and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the City Council.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Bega. The motion carried.

PRE-SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

5)a) Downtown Business Partnership Hay Bale Award Winners with Downtown Business Partner Alicia Schafer announcing the winners for the 4th Annual event: Best Overall Fall Decoration – Invibe Nutrition; 3rd Place – Office of Melisa Militello; 2nd Place – City of Inverness; and 1st Place – Cumbie Jewelers. Mayor spoke of being a judge and all the entries made is a very hard decision.

PUBLIC HEARINGS / WORKSHOP

None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

Karen Esty spoke of Bryant Park and acknowledged the City and Rotary for the plan to make the park all inclusive.

John Labriola thanked the City for Cootertober being more family friendly. Referenced the Citrus County's ban on additional medical marijuana dispensaries.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Hartley provided an update regarding 912 Meadow Lane foreclosure. It was sold at a tax deed auction and the City will receive the fines due for code compliance and utility service for approx. \$68,000.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Bill Listing*
 - Recommendation – Approval
- b) Council Minutes* – 10/07/2025
 - Recommendation - Approval

Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilwoman Bega. The motion carried.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

None

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

11)a) Bryant Park Improvement Project – Professional Services* with City Manager Williams stating Bryant Park has been a fixture of open space and recreation within the Heights Subdivision for over 50 years. Throughout the decades, the park has had neighborhood activities, outdoor recreation, and organized sports with very minor upgrades/changes. The park is beginning to show its age and has been involved with a multi-year plan of revitalization with the Rotary Club of Inverness. The Rotary Club of Inverness has secured funding and volunteer support to begin the next phase that will bring about an inclusivity-focused playground and bathroom facility. Kimley-Horn has completed 30% design of the project under the previously accomplished Task #1 Scope of Services. Task #2 Scope of Services with Kimley-Horn will bring about the next phase of design and secure permitting for the mentioned elements. The proposal has at a total cost of \$94,100, which includes design, permitting, and construction review services for the project. It was noted there were representatives from Rotary in the audience. Councilwoman Bega questioned shade and it was noted there are many trees to provide adequate shade. Councilman Craig questioned the underground utilities and it was noted those can be worked around. Vice President Lizanich spoke of the wonderful partnership with Rotary and the goal to help all have access to the facilities. **Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to approve the Task #2 Scope of Services from Kimley-Horn for the Bryant Park Improvement Project as presented and authorize the City Manager to execute the document. Seconded by Councilwoman Bega. The motion carried.**

11)b) RFQ 2025-01 Continuing Services Agreements for Professional Services* with Assistant City Manager Calascione provided an overview stating the City issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in August through the Consultant's Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA), a Florida Legislature public procurement method to utilize certain professional services on a continuing basis. The nine responses were evaluated in early September and deemed qualified in one or more of the required disciplines. The contracts are structured to provide the City with the necessary expertise and flexibility to address our projects and continuing operations. The responding firms included: Infrastructure Consulting & Engineering, Michael Baker International, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Lochner, Wantman Group, Burrell Engineering, Florida Technical Consultants, COMAL Engineering Design, and Goodwyn Mills Cawood. Councilwoman Hepfer noted it was great to receive several submittals. City Manager Williams explained the thought process in contracting with all companies that had submitted. Councilwoman Bega confirmed that each company would be "on call" when services were needed. Councilman Craig noted each had specific specialties. **Councilwoman Hepfer motioned to accept the Continuing Services Agreements for each of the nine firms. Seconded by Councilwoman Bega. The motion carried.**

11)c) Vehicle Purchase – Parks & Rec* with Parks & Rec Director Worley stating the Parks and Recreation department has a 2007 Chevy Silverado that needs to be replaced. Local company, Nick Nicholas Ford, who has been able to offer competitive government concession

pricing and offer quick delivery times has a 2026 Ford F-350 utility body truck, in the amount of \$59,864.50. The proposed purchase will provide a truck capable to transport the City stage to the different locations for events, transport the reel mower and other heavy equipment needed for jobs associated with everyday department demands. Should that purchase proceed, the 2007 Silverado will be recommended for surplus once the replacement truck has been delivered. **Councilwoman Bega motioned to approve the purchase of a 2026 Ford F-350 truck in the amount of \$59,864.50 through Nick Nicholas Ford and keeping with the state government pricing. Seconded by Councilwoman Hepfer. The motion carried.**

10)d) Project/Program Updates (*Verbal*)

- Whispering Pines Park Lease has a lot of history and it was suggested a public workshop be scheduled to clarify the City's concepts for the future of the park, as there has been much misinformation being said. Councilwoman Bega agreed that was a great idea and to welcome questions. Councilwoman Hepfer stated a workshop would make transparency evident. Councilman Craig spoke of a few people that has approached him and how people of opinions but no solutions. Mayor Plaisted stated the options are planned and research with due diligence. City Manager Williams stated the difference of a State Park campground and a commercial campground. Suggested possibly in December for a workshop. Vice President Lizanich stated a workshop is about educating the public and December would be a good time. Noted the BOCC decided to move forward with a sales tax referendum.
- Cootertoiber update was provided by Parks & Rec Director Worley and provided a visual presentation to recap the many events. Noted we are 3 weeks in and it has gone by fast. Noted the Cooter Carnival was the biggest ever with great partners and many vendors. Spoke of Valerie events, Movie in the Park, Small Town Saturday Night, and more. There has been such overwhelming attendance. 10 days left and will end with Cooterween on October 31. It was noted that Small Town Slam is scheduled for this upcoming Friday, not Saturday.
- Festival of the Arts will be November 15 – 16 and there will be a full presentation at the next Council meeting. The City has received lots of interest.
- Other included an announcement of the 5th Annual Students Feeding Veterans Food Drive beginning November 3 through December 12, 2025. Various locations were noted including the Inverness Government Center.

COUNCIL/MAYOR SUBJECTS

Councilwoman Hepfer praised the tireless staff especially during October. Cootertoiber has been great and it helps families enjoy City events because they are free to attend.

Councilwoman Bega had also enjoyed Cootertoiber and looks forward to Cooterween.

Councilwoman Lizanich stated Small Town Saturday Night was amazing, as well as all the events recently. She will be attending the CCCF meeting tomorrow and noted the Dates to Remember.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

None

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

City Clerk

Council President

Agenda Memorandum - *City of Inverness*

November 4, 2025

TO: Elected Officials
FROM: Eric Williams, City Manager
SUBJECT: School Zone Photo Enforcement Program
CC: Susan Jackson, City Clerk
Enclosures: 1. City of Inverness PPT Speed CAMS

Previously, the Council received a presentation and gave consideration to the concept of red light camera enforcement within certain intersections of the City. From much discussion, there was not a consensus to pursue the concept further. However, as part of that discussion there was a mention of a similar enforcement concept/approach for school zones within the City.

The Florida Legislature, by the way of HB 657 (2023), provides municipalities with an ability to enforce speed regulations in designated School Zones by way of photo/camera detection systems. The Sheriff and City Administration have discussed the concept and the differentials between a red light type program and a school zone program. This evening, representatives are here from the Citrus County Sheriff's Office to present the concept for potential next step consideration by the Council.

For the program to move forward, the next step would be the drafting of an enabling/controlling ordinance in concert with an interlocal agreement with the Sheriff. It is recommended that Council receive the presentation and deliberate the matter. Should Council desire to take the aforementioned next steps, a vote to give direction to the City Manager to proceed would be required.

Recommended Action –

1. Motion and second to give the City Manager direction to proceed with the presented next steps to develop an enabling/controlling ordinance in concert with an interlocal agreement with the Sheriff to be presented for consideration at a future meeting of Council.
2. Deliberate the matter
3. Vote on the matter

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at your convenience.

Eric C. Williams

CITRUS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



CITRUS COUNTY
SHERIFF

INTEGRITY ★ ACCOUNTABILITY ★ SERVICE

Speed Detection Systems School Zones

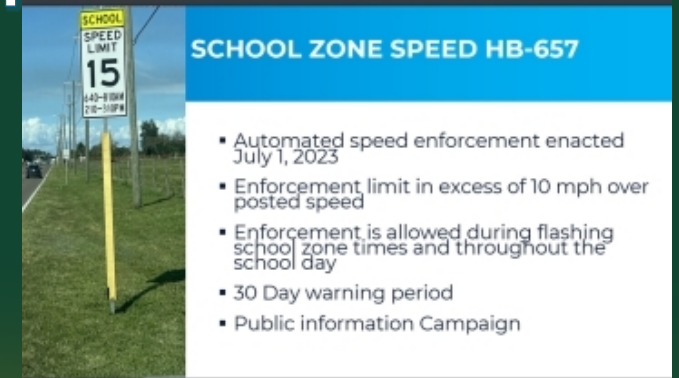


CS/CS/HB 657
July 01, 2023



Bill summary analysis

- Bill allows for counties and municipalities to use speed detection systems to enforce speed limits in school zones.
- Requires an ordinance to be adopted by county and/or city.
- Violations are for 10 mph over the posted limit.
- \$100.00 penalty for violation.
 - No points and no insurance impacts.



Process Overview

- Ordinance / Public Hearing
- Vendor contract
- Initial Public Awareness Campaign
- Signage installed with time periods of enforcement
- 30-day warning(s) campaign



Notice of Violation

After the 30-day warning campaign concludes

- If a violation occurs, it is reviewed first through the vendor's processes, then forwarded for a second review by law enforcement.
- If it is clear violation after reviewing video and still photo's, a Notice of Violation will be sent to the registered owner for payment.
- Processes exist to forward / contest / or request dismissal.



\$100.00 Fine Breakdown

- \$20.00 Department of Revenue (DOR) – General Fund
- \$3.00 DOR – Criminal Justice Training Trust Fund
- \$12.00 County School District
- \$5.00 School Crossing Guard Program (Recruit/Retention)
- \$60.00 County/City

Each of these distributions are limited in use and require reporting



Closing

- Failing to pay the \$100.00 fine could result in the violation turning into a uniform traffic citation.
- No cost , violator funded.
- Goal is safety and gaining compliance.
- Success rates average 75% and better in reduction of violations within first year.



KNOW THE FACTS

ABOUT SCHOOL ZONE CAMERAS

Citations will only be issued when a vehicle travels within a work zone more than 10 miles per hour over the posted speed limit.

The cameras actively enforce the speed limit on school days when classes are in session. Enforcement begins one hour before the start of school until one hour after dismissal.

All speed limits are marked with signs. Flashing lights near a school zone are an indicator of the reduced speed limit. Photo speed enforcement signage will be present in school zones with cameras.

Citations will be \$100.



Questions ?



EMERGENCY 9-1-1 ★ NON-EMERGENCY 352-249-2790

Agenda Memorandum - *City of Inverness*

November 4, 2025

TO: Elected Officials
FROM: Eric Williams, City Manager
SUBJECT: Citrus County BOCC Legislative Priorities Request for Letter of Support
CC: Susan Jackson, City Clerk, Frank Calascione, Assistant City Manager
Enclosures: 1. BOCC 2026 Legislative Priorities Packet (Draft) (002)

The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has assembled their list of legislative priorities for the 2026 Session of the Florida Legislature. The identified priorities are grouped into three categories: Appropriation Requests, Policy Proposals, and Requests for Special Consideration. There are four appropriation requests, and they include the Floral City Septic-to-Sewer Expansion, the Halls River Multi-Use Path, a Regional Public Safety Training Center, and the Septic-to-Sewer Incentive Program. The BOCC has asked Council to consider submitting a letter of support for some or all of these identified items.

Attached for the Council's review is a document which outlines the BOCC's rationale for requesting funding and support through the legislative process. Additionally, BOCC staff are in attendance to answer any questions.

Recommended Action:

1. Allow Staff to Present
2. Motion and second to approve a letter of support for the presented Citrus County BOCC legislative priorities.
3. Deliberate the Matter
4. Vote the Matter

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at your convenience.

Eric C. Williams



CITRUS COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2026 SESSION



L-R: 2nd Vice Chair Janet Barek, Commissioner Holly Davis, Chairman Rebecca Bays, Commissioner Jeff Kinnard, and 1st Vice Chair Diana Finegan.

Citrus County, located on Florida's Nature Coast, is home to more than 160,000 residents and some of the state's most unique natural resources, including world-class springs, rivers, and the largest population of West Indian manatees in the United States. Our location along U.S. 19 and the Suncoast Parkway provides direct access to Tampa Bay, Orlando, and Gainesville, while allowing us to preserve the charm and character of a smaller community.

The Board of County Commissioners is focused on building for the future through smart infrastructure investments, protecting our environment, and creating new opportunities for businesses and families. From expanding utilities and transportation corridors to supporting economic development at our industrial and airport business parks, we are positioning Citrus County as a place where Floridians can live, work, and thrive.

Ensuring our voice is heard.



Citrus County, Florida

Foundations for a Competitive and Sustainable Future

Citrus County stands at the forefront of Florida's next phase of economic development—an increasingly significant region on the Nature Coast that presents exceptional opportunities for strategic investment. With a steadily increasing population, substantial commercial expansion, and unparalleled natural resources, Citrus County is not merely participating in Florida's growth; it is actively shaping it. Historically renowned for its environmental assets and small-town quality of life, the county has evolved into a dynamic center of opportunity, characterized by thoughtful infrastructure development, a flourishing tourism sector, and a diversified economic base. Its appeal lies in the unique integration of preserved natural landscapes, modern amenities, and a community deeply committed to sustainable, forward-looking progress.

Tourism remains a foundational pillar of the local economy. Premier destinations such as Crystal River and Homosassa attract over a million visitors annually, offering unique experiences unparalleled elsewhere in the nation—including the rare opportunity to observe and swim with the endangered West Indian manatee in its natural habitat. Additionally, the county offers world-class outdoor recreation opportunities, including spring-fed rivers, nationally recognized trails, and culturally significant heritage sites that underscore its rich history. Beyond tourism, the county's economic momentum has been notably enhanced by the recent extension of the Suncoast Parkway (State Road 589), which provides direct, high-speed connectivity to the Tampa Bay metropolitan area and Central Florida. This critical infrastructure improvement has unlocked significant potential for industrial and commercial development, with designated enterprise zones and ready-to-develop sites attracting interest from manufacturing, logistics, and distribution sectors.

The county's leadership has been deliberate in managing this growth—investing in utility modernization, expanding broadband access, upgrading infrastructure, and fostering collaboration with educational institutions to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce. Equally paramount is Citrus County's steadfast commitment to environmental conservation. As development progresses, local policies continue to prioritize the preservation of sensitive ecosystems, springsheds, and wildlife habitats, ensuring that economic advancement is achieved without compromising the region's natural heritage. Through comprehensive land preservation efforts, rigorous environmental standards, and active community engagement, Citrus County exemplifies the harmonious balance between growth and stewardship.

In alignment with its motto, "Where Nature and Community Thrive," Citrus County is also distinguished as a region where business prospers. The county provides a competitive and business-friendly environment that encourages innovation, attracts investment, and supports sustainable economic development. As Florida continues to experience robust growth, Citrus County represents one of the state's most strategic opportunities—a locale where environmental integrity coexists with economic vitality, and where prudent investment can yield enduring benefits. For stakeholders seeking to promote impactful growth and secure Florida's long-term prosperity, Citrus County offers a compelling and well-founded proposition.



Citrus County, Florida

Guiding Principles for our 2026 Legislative Priorities

Community-Centered Governance

- Support policies that improve quality of life, safety, and well-being for all Citrus County residents.

Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency

- Promote efficient use of public funds, transparency, and accountability in government spending.

Sustainable Growth and Development

- Encourage balanced growth that preserves natural resources and community character.

Infrastructure and Public Services

- Prioritize investment in transportation, water, public safety, and broadband to meet current and future needs.

Collaborative Partnerships

- Build strong relationships with state, federal, regional partners, and community groups to maximize resources.

Protection of Local Authority

- Defend local decision-making authority and oppose unfunded mandates.

Economic Opportunity and Workforce Development

- Attract diverse industries, support small businesses, and foster workforce training aligned with local needs.

Health and Human Services Support

- Ensure access to quality healthcare, mental health, and social services for vulnerable populations.

Environmental Conservation and Resilience

- Protect natural environments and promote resilience against natural disasters.



Citrus County, Florida

Appropriations Requests, Policy Proposals, and Other Requests

Section 1: *Appropriations Requests*

1. Floral City Septic-to-Sewer Expansion
2. Halls River Road Multi-Use Path
3. Regional Public Safety Training Center
4. Septic-to-Sewer Incentive Program

Section 2: *Policy Proposals*

1. Anonymous Code Enforcement Complaints
2. Authorizing Body-Worn Cameras for Code Enforcement
3. Electric Vehicle Registration Fees
4. FRS Special Risk Classification for Code Officers
5. Records Exemptions for Local Government Officials
6. Transportation Concurrency

Section 3: *Requests for Special Consideration*

1. Housing Stability for Homeless Schoolchildren Grant
2. Invasive Plant Management Section
3. Local Government Cybersecurity Grant Program
4. Nitrogen-Reducing Septic Systems
5. Sadowski Housing Trust Fund
6. Small County Outreach Program (SCOP)
7. Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
8. Withlacoochee River Restoration & Protection



SECTION ONE

APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS



APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST: FLORAL CITY SEPTIC-TO-SEWER EXPANSION

ISSUE SUMMARY

The proposed expansion of septic-to-sewer infrastructure in Floral City represents a critical environmental and public infrastructure priority for Citrus County. This initiative directly supports nutrient reduction goals outlined in the Homosassa/Chassahowitzka Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) and will significantly benefit the Homosassa River, an Outstanding Florida Waterway and home to a First-Magnitude Spring.

The project's primary objective is to reduce nutrient loading into the Homosassa Springshed by redirecting wastewater flows from multiple aging and noncompliant wastewater treatment plants to the City of Inverness Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The Inverness facility produces public access reclaimed water and operates in full compliance with BMAP requirements, thereby ensuring a higher standard of wastewater treatment.

Key components of the project include the interconnection of five existing package plants—Singing Forest Mobile Home Park, Stoneridge Landing MHP, Moonrise Resort MHP, Ensigns Oasis MHP, and Aunt Vera's Antiques—into the centralized sewer system. Additionally, it encompasses a major septic-to-sewer conversion effort for residential properties located north of E. Orange Ave., extending to Floral City Elementary School (FCE).

This segment of the project will enable sewer connections for up to 320 additional homes.

The success of this initiative is contingent upon approval of the County's Springs Grant request for FY 25–26, which seeks \$4,000,000 in funding to support the construction of a main transmission line—the FCE Wastewater Interconnection—that will serve as the backbone of the overall sewer expansion.

In addition to the environmental benefits, this project will result in increased reclaimed water availability from the Inverness WWTP and supports broader regional water reuse goals. Furthermore, the absence of centralized wastewater infrastructure has historically limited economic development opportunities in the Floral City area. By expanding sewer capacity, this project is expected to encourage commercial and residential growth, thereby enhancing the economic vitality of the community.

COMMITTED LOCAL FUNDING

None Identified

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners requests \$6,227,894 to expand septic-to-sewer infrastructure in the Floral City area, advancing environmental protection, public health, and economic development through the reduction of nutrient loading to the Homosassa Springshed.



APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST: HALLS RIVER MULTI-USE PATH

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Halls River Road Multi-Use Path (MUP) project proposes the construction of a paved asphalt path, varying in width from 6 to 12 feet, to run parallel to Halls River Road. The proposed facility will extend approximately 3.2 miles, beginning at South Riverview Circle and terminating at U.S. Highway 19.

The project corridor follows a two-lane roadway with flush shoulders and is situated within an existing right-of-way that ranges from 100 to 120 feet in width. The alignment is subject to several environmental and right-of-way constraints, which are being carefully considered as part of the project development process.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is currently responsible for the design and permitting phases of the project. Contingent upon the availability of funding, FDOT will also oversee and manage the construction phase. Construction is tentatively scheduled to commence in December 2027, with a projected duration of approximately one year.

This multi-use path is intended to provide a safe, accessible, and dedicated facility for pedestrians and bicyclists, thereby enhancing multimodal connectivity within the region.

It will serve as a critical linkage between multiple residential communities and key local destinations, including restaurants, retail centers, and commercial establishments located along the corridor.

Importantly, the Halls River Road MUP will connect to the recently constructed multi-use path along U.S. 19, a major regional transportation facility that traverses nearly the entire length of Citrus County.

The project is expected to deliver substantial benefits to the County's approximately 160,000 residents—as well as its visitors and tourists—by promoting active transportation options, improving roadway safety, and fostering economic development through improved access to local businesses.

COMMITTED LOCAL FUNDING

\$1,210,000

APPROVED STATE FUNDING

\$5,200,000

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners requests an appropriation of \$2,500,000 to support the construction of the Halls River Road Multi-Use Path (MUP), a critical infrastructure project designed to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety, improve multimodal connectivity, and support economic growth within the County.



APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST: REGIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER

ISSUE SUMMARY

The current Citrus County Fire Rescue training facility is aging, functionally limited, and increasingly incompatible with the evolving demands of modern public safety training. Its location—soon to be surrounded by expanding residential and commercial development—poses additional challenges, particularly for conducting high-risk, high-intensity training exercises essential to maintaining readiness. These constraints underscore the urgent need for a new, purpose-built Regional Public Safety Training Center that can adequately support the multifaceted training requirements of fire, law enforcement, and emergency services personnel.

A new regional training center would serve as a centralized hub for advanced, multi-disciplinary training across all public safety sectors. This facility would not only support Citrus County's fire and law enforcement agencies but also provide a valuable resource for surrounding counties, including Sumter, Hernando, Levy, and Marion. By fostering regional collaboration, the center would promote joint training exercises, enhance interoperability among agencies, and strengthen emergency response capabilities across jurisdictions.

The proposed site could accommodate co-located facilities such as a firearms range and driver training course to meet the long-term operational needs of the Citrus County Sheriff's Office and reduce reliance on out-of-county resources.

Additionally, the facility presents a valuable opportunity for partnership with the Citrus County School Board in support of public safety career pathways and technical education. Incorporating a conference center and classroom complex would further enhance the center's utility, with the added benefit of serving as a resiliency and emergency shelter during large-scale incidents or disasters.

This initiative aligns with Citrus County's strategic goals of enhancing public safety, strengthening regional partnerships, and investing in resilient, future-ready infrastructure. It also reflects the County's broader commitment to workforce development, professional excellence, and community preparedness. A modern facility will ensure that emergency personnel across the region receive high-quality, consistent training—equipping them to respond effectively to increasingly complex emergencies and protect the safety and well-being of the communities they serve.

COMMITTED LOCAL FUNDING

\$250,000

- *Fire Impact Fees*

\$250,000

- *2025 Schools Appropriation*
-

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners requests an appropriation of \$1,500,000 for the construction of a Regional Public Safety Training Facility. This new facility will replace the existing outdated structure and provide advanced training opportunities for both local and regional public safety agencies.



APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST: SEPTIC-TO-SEWER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

ISSUE SUMMARY

Citrus County has previously partnered with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to implement a reimbursement program providing up to \$4,000 per homeowner to offset the costs associated with connecting to central sewer infrastructure. These reimbursements covered plumbing connection costs and utility connection fees for residents within designated septic-to-sewer project areas. On May 24, 2021, the County was awarded Grant LPF 0902 in the amount of \$703,000 to reduce the financial burden on homeowners participating in these essential water quality improvement initiatives.

However, under current FDEP policy, grant funding is limited to costs directly related to septic tank abandonment and physical sewer connection. The exclusion of utility impact fees from eligible expenses has resulted in significantly higher out-of-pocket costs for property owners, particularly those in rural and economically vulnerable areas. As a publicly funded utility, Citrus County is unable to waive impact fees due to financial obligations and bond rating considerations, which further compounds the financial challenge for affected homeowners.

To address this gap, Citrus County proposes that funding be allocated specifically for the payment of sewer connection and capacity fees for existing developed residential properties impacted by ongoing and future septic-to-sewer conversion projects. Based on the current scope of active projects, an initial appropriation of \$925,000 would provide critical support to residents transitioning to central sewer service in the near term. Citrus County anticipates submitting additional appropriation requests in future fiscal years, consistent with project-specific demands and the pace of residential conversions.

Restoring financial assistance for impact fee costs will promote greater participation in septic-to-sewer programs, reduce nutrient loading to impaired waterbodies, and help ensure that the burden of environmental stewardship is equitably shared among all residents.

COMMITTED LOCAL FUNDING

None Identified

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners requests an appropriation of \$925,000 to fund sewer connection and capacity fees for existing residential properties impacted by ongoing septic-to-sewer conversion projects, thereby alleviating financial burdens on homeowners and advancing the County's water quality improvement objectives.



SECTION TWO

POLICY PROPOSALS



POLICY PROPOSAL: ANONYMOUS CODE ENFORCEMENT COMPLAINTS

ISSUE SUMMARY

Code enforcement proceedings are typically initiated following the receipt of a complaint or tip from the public—either submitted via telephone, online platforms, or based on direct observation by a code enforcement officer in the course of routine duties. Given that code enforcement is inherently a local government function, the methods for receiving and processing complaints have historically varied across jurisdictions. In many communities, anonymous complaints were permitted and served as a means for residents to report potential violations without fear of retaliation. In others, complainants were required to disclose their identity as part of the submission process.

However, with the enactment of Section 162.06(1)(b), Florida Statutes, during the 2021 Legislative Session through CS/SB 60, individuals submitting a code violation complaint must now provide their full name and address before a local government may initiate enforcement proceedings. The legislative analysis accompanying the bill did not cite a specific problem or rationale necessitating the statutory change.

Nonetheless, the apparent legislative intent was to prevent the misuse of the code enforcement process as a tool for personal harassment or retaliation.

Despite this well-meaning objective, the mandatory disclosure of personal information introduces a significant deterrent for individuals wishing to report legitimate concerns. Complainants may now face the risk of retaliation, harassment, or intimidation by the subject of the complaint, particularly in close-knit or rural communities.

As a result, many residents are now unwilling to come forward with code enforcement concerns, which has led to a measurable decline in reported violations. This decline may undermine the ability of local governments to proactively address threats to public health, safety, and welfare, thereby weakening the overall effectiveness of code enforcement systems throughout the state.

POLICY REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners advocates for the amendment of Florida law to reinstate the authority of county and municipal code enforcement agencies to initiate investigations based on anonymous complaints, thereby restoring the enforcement discretion that existed prior to the enactment of Chapter 2021-167, Laws of Florida.



POLICY PROPOSAL: AUTHORIZING BODY-WORN CAMERAS FOR CODE ENFORCEMENT

ISSUE SUMMARY

There is currently no provision in Florida state law that authorizes Code Enforcement Officers to wear or utilize body-worn cameras (BWCs) in the performance of their duties. While law enforcement agencies across the state have long used BWCs as a tool to promote transparency, accountability, and officer safety, Code Enforcement—despite often working in the field and engaging directly with the public—lacks similar statutory support. As a result, local governments interested in equipping their Code Enforcement personnel with body cameras face legal uncertainty. Although Citrus County does not currently have plans to pursue the use of BWCs for its Code Officers, there is growing interest from other local governments across the state in moving this concept forward.

To meet this emerging need, a change in state law is required to explicitly authorize Code Enforcement Officers to use body-worn cameras. This statutory framework should make clear that authorizing the use of BWCs does not expand the authority of Code Enforcement personnel, nor does it deputize them or confer law enforcement powers.

Rather, the cameras would serve a narrow and clearly defined purpose—primarily documentation of interactions, increased officer safety, and enhanced public transparency. Any enabling legislation should also establish baseline standards for data management, including how footage is stored, who has access to it, and how long it must be retained. Privacy protections should be built in to safeguard both the public and employees, and all use must remain compliant with Florida's public records and Sunshine Laws.

This proposal does not advocate for a statewide mandate; it simply seeks to provide the legal foundation for local governments that wish to implement this tool based on their unique needs. By allowing local governments to decide whether and how to implement BWCs for Code Enforcement, the state can support safer, more accountable operations while respecting the differing capacities and priorities of each community. Establishing this authority now ensures that as interest continues to grow, there is a clear and consistent framework in place to guide responsible adoption.

POLICY REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners requests the Florida Legislature to amend state law to authorize local governments to permit Code Enforcement Officers to use body-worn cameras under a clearly defined legal and regulatory framework.



POLICY PROPOSALS: ELECTRIC VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

ISSUE SUMMARY

Local governments across Florida are experiencing a steady decline in fuel tax revenues as advancements in automotive technology have led to increased fuel efficiency and a growing market share of electric and alternative-fuel vehicles. While this shift reflects positive progress in environmental and energy efficiency goals, it has simultaneously undermined the financial mechanisms traditionally used to support the construction, maintenance, and operation of roadway infrastructure. Fuel taxes—historically levied on a per-gallon basis—are no longer generating sufficient revenue to meet the increasing costs associated with roadway improvements, thereby eroding the purchasing power of these critical funds.

This growing disparity is further compounded by the proliferation of electric vehicles (EVs), which do not contribute to fuel-based tax systems at all. As the share of EVs in the vehicle fleet continues to grow, the imbalance between infrastructure needs and available funding will become even more pronounced. The inadequacy of the current revenue model threatens the long-term sustainability of local road systems and the safety and mobility of Florida's communities.

Recognizing this challenge, past legislative efforts—such as Senate Bill 1070 (2023)—proposed the introduction of supplemental registration fees for electric and hybrid vehicles as a method of equitably distributing the costs of road usage among all drivers. This policy approach has been widely considered across the nation, as documented by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), with many states moving toward alternative funding mechanisms that reflect the realities of the evolving transportation landscape.

To ensure long-term fiscal sustainability and fairness in transportation funding, Florida must adopt modern, equitable, and technology-neutral strategies. These solutions should preserve the integrity of the state's transportation infrastructure while adapting to emerging trends in vehicle efficiency and fuel source diversification.

POLICY REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners urges the Florida Legislature to enact legislation that establishes a fair and equitable framework requiring electric and alternative energy vehicles to contribute appropriately toward the costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the state's roadway infrastructure, thereby addressing the decline in local fuel tax revenues.



POLICY PROPOSAL: FRS SPECIAL RISK CLASSIFICATION FOR CODE OFFICERS

ISSUE SUMMARY

Code Enforcement Officers in Florida are currently excluded from the Special Risk Class within the Florida Retirement System (FRS), despite performing work that often places them in hazardous and high-stress environments. These officers routinely interact with hostile individuals, inspect unsafe structures, respond to public health and safety violations, and work in the field under unpredictable conditions. However, under existing law, their job classification does not qualify for the retirement benefits available to other public safety professionals whose roles carry similar risks.

For years, the idea of including Code Enforcement Officers in the Special Risk Class has been proposed and consistently rejected, largely due to concerns about cost and scope. However, this proposal does not seek a mandate. Instead, it aims to address the first and most critical barrier: the lack of recognition of Code Enforcement Officer as a job classification eligible for Special Risk designation. By updating state statute to recognize this job title as eligible, the state can provide local governments the option—not the obligation—to classify their Code Officers under Special Risk if they determine it is appropriate for their workforce.

This change would not require local governments to alter their compensation structures, nor would it impose any new costs unless they voluntarily choose to opt in. It would simply establish the eligibility needed to allow flexibility and fairness in retirement planning for a profession that has evolved significantly in both responsibility and risk exposure. Additionally, it would align with the broader goal of supporting public employees who serve on the front lines of community safety and health.

By recognizing Code Enforcement Officers in statute as eligible for Special Risk Retirement, Florida can give local governments the discretion to extend these benefits based on their own operational needs, workforce challenges, and fiscal capacity. It is a practical and equitable first step that respects local control while acknowledging the real-world demands of the job.

POLICY REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners respectfully requests the Florida Legislature to revise the Florida Retirement System statute to recognize Code Enforcement Officers as an eligible classification for inclusion in the Special Risk Class, allowing local governments the option to participate.



POLICY PROPOSAL: RECORDS EXEMPTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

ISSUE SUMMARY

Local government executives and elected officials—including County Administrators, Deputy County Administrators, City Managers, and Town Managers—are often required to have their personal information, such as home addresses, personal phone numbers, and email addresses, disclosed under existing public records laws. While transparency and public access to government information are fundamental to accountability, the mandatory disclosure of sensitive personal data raises significant privacy and security concerns.

These officials frequently face increased exposure to harassment, threats, and intimidation due to the public availability of their personal contact details. Such risks extend beyond the officials themselves and can impact their families and private lives. The potential for misuse of this information has become a growing concern, particularly in an era marked by heightened political polarization and targeted harassment.

Balancing the public's right to access government information with the need to protect the personal safety and privacy of local government leaders presents a complex challenge. Current laws do not sufficiently differentiate between official records and personal information, leaving individuals vulnerable.

As a result, there is increasing discussion around the need to reconsider existing public records policies to better safeguard sensitive personal data without compromising governmental transparency and accountability.

POLICY REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners urges an amendment to Section 119.071, Florida Statutes, to incorporate an exemption protecting the personally identifiable information of County Administrators, Deputy County Administrators, City Managers, Town Managers, and their immediate family members from public disclosure.



POLICY PROPOSAL: TRANSPORTATION CONCURRENCY

ISSUE SUMMARY

Transportation concurrency was originally established through Florida's Growth Management Act of 1985, which required local governments to ensure that adequate infrastructure—including roadways—was in place to accommodate the impacts of new development. Under this framework, development approvals were contingent upon consistency with adopted level of service (LOS) standards. In 2005, the Legislature amended the Act to strengthen these requirements, mandating that transportation improvements be included in the Capital Improvements Element (CIE) of the local government's Comprehensive Plan, be financially feasible, and be scheduled for construction within a defined timeframe.

In 2009, the Florida Legislature adopted the Community Planning Act, which made transportation concurrency optional and allowed local governments greater flexibility in determining how to manage the relationship between growth and infrastructure capacity. In 2011, the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners formally exercised this option and designated concurrency as optional within the County, effectively eliminating the mandatory requirement to maintain transportation concurrency as a condition of development approval. To reestablish concurrency, Citrus County would be required to amend its Comprehensive Plan to remove the optional concurrency designation and establish clearly defined minimum LOS standards for its roadway network.

These standards must be accompanied by specific strategies and implementation timelines and incorporated into the County's Capital Improvements Element. In accordance with Florida Statute 163.3180, transportation improvements listed in the CIE must be scheduled to achieve the adopted LOS within a five-year period. Once those standards are met, a formal concurrency management system would need to be implemented to evaluate and schedule infrastructure improvements for future development, thereby ensuring that roadway capacity keeps pace with projected growth.

While reinstating concurrency may offer long-term benefits for infrastructure planning and growth management, it also presents several challenges. Financially, the County would need to allocate sufficient resources to meet the LOS standards, which may require identifying new funding sources under constrained fiscal conditions. From a planning perspective, existing development that has occurred without concurrency oversight may present mismatches between infrastructure capacity and demand, complicating future compliance efforts. Reestablishing concurrency would also require updated data and advanced traffic modeling to ensure accuracy in projecting future needs—efforts that could demand additional staffing or outside technical assistance.

POLICY REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners urges the Florida Legislature to amend the Community Planning Act to provide a streamlined and more practical process for local governments to reinstate transportation concurrency, enabling more effective growth management and mitigation of traffic congestion



SECTION THREE

REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: HOUSING STABILITY FOR HOMELESS SCHOOLCHILDREN

ISSUE SUMMARY

Homelessness among school-aged children in Citrus County is a pressing and multifaceted issue that profoundly affects the educational, developmental, and emotional well-being of our youth. According to the local McKinney-Vento Liaison, a significant and growing number of students currently face housing instability, which creates numerous barriers to their academic success and overall health. The lack of stable housing often forces children to change schools frequently, disrupting their learning continuity and social connections, leading to lower academic achievement and increased dropout rates. Homeless children are disproportionately impacted by developmental delays and learning disabilities, conditions that are exacerbated by the instability and stress of their living conditions.

In addition to academic challenges, these children are at higher risk of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders due to exposure to trauma, violence, and the uncertainty of their living conditions. The stress of homelessness also compromises physical health and nutrition, further impairing their ability to focus and succeed in school. The cycle of homelessness perpetuates socioeconomic disadvantage, as children who struggle academically and emotionally are less likely to graduate and more likely to experience continued instability into adulthood.

Families experiencing homelessness face significant obstacles in accessing affordable housing, employment, and supportive social services. Without targeted interventions, these families remain trapped in unstable living environments such as shelters, motels, or overcrowded housing. This instability not only affects the children but also places additional burdens on schools and community resources, which often lack the capacity to fully address the complex needs of homeless students.

Addressing the root causes of homelessness among schoolchildren by providing stable, affordable housing is critical to breaking this cycle. Stable housing creates a foundation for children to attend school consistently, access health and social services, and engage in learning and development in a safe and supportive environment. By prioritizing housing stability, Citrus County can significantly improve educational outcomes, promote emotional and mental well-being, and foster long-term self-sufficiency for vulnerable families.

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners calls for continued funding for the Housing Stability for Homeless Schoolchildren Grant to expand support services and housing assistance for homeless students and their families.



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT SECTION

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Invasive Plant Management Section of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is charged with the oversight and control of invasive plant species within Florida's freshwater ecosystems. Species such as hydrilla, water hyacinth, and Brazilian pepper present significant challenges by disrupting native habitats, degrading water quality, diminishing biodiversity, and hindering recreational uses. This section is dedicated to preventing the proliferation of invasive plants, restoring impacted ecosystems, and mitigating their detrimental effects on the state's aquatic environments.

The management approach employed by the Invasive Plant Management Section is multifaceted, incorporating mechanical removal, targeted herbicide applications, biological controls, and habitat restoration initiatives. The section collaborates extensively with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private stakeholders, to develop and implement the most effective and coordinated management strategies.

These ongoing efforts are critical to the preservation of Florida's aquatic ecosystems, the protection of biodiversity, the enhancement of recreational opportunities, and the safeguarding of the long-term sustainability of the state's water resources. For over thirty years, Citrus County has benefited from financial support provided by the FWC's Invasive Plant Management Section, which has been essential in managing aquatic vegetation within the county's waterways. This enduring partnership has played a vital role in maintaining the ecological integrity of Citrus County's freshwater systems.

REQUEST: Citrus County respectfully urges the Florida Legislature to ensure full and sustained funding for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Invasive Plant Management Section to safeguard and maintain the health of our waterways and critical ecosystems.



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: LOCAL GOVERNMENT CYBERSECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Local Government Cybersecurity Grant Program is a state-administered initiative established to assist local government entities in strengthening their cybersecurity defenses. This program allocates funding to municipalities, counties, and other local agencies to enhance the security of their digital infrastructure and safeguard sensitive data from evolving cyber threats. Recognizing the critical nature of the information managed by these entities—including personal records, financial data, and essential infrastructure systems—the program seeks to improve the overall cybersecurity posture of local governments, which are increasingly targeted by cybercriminal activity.

In response to the rising incidence of cyberattacks, ransomware, and data breaches that threaten the continuity of government operations and the protection of citizen information, this grant program provides necessary financial support for a wide range of cybersecurity enhancements.

Eligible uses of the funds include the deployment of advanced security technologies, comprehensive cybersecurity training for personnel, system upgrades aligned with industry best practices, and the implementation of robust data protection protocols.

This program constitutes a key component of the state's broader strategy to reinforce the cybersecurity resilience of public sector entities. Its primary objective is to equip local governments with the resources required to effectively counter sophisticated cyber threats, thereby preserving public confidence and ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of critical government services.

REQUEST: Citrus County respectfully urges the Florida Legislature to maintain and support continued funding for the Local Government Cybersecurity Grant Program to enhance the cybersecurity capabilities of local governments, safeguard critical infrastructure, and ensure the protection of sensitive data amid escalating cyber threats.



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: NITROGEN-REDUCING SEPTIC SYSTEMS

ISSUE SUMMARY

Adequate funding for local nitrogen-reducing septic system conversion programs across Florida is essential to safeguarding the state's water quality and overall environmental health. Conventional septic systems contribute significantly to nitrogen pollution by releasing excessive nitrogen into the soil, which then leaches into nearby water bodies. This process exacerbates harmful algal blooms, deteriorates water quality, leads to fish kills, and causes biodiversity loss. Florida's freshwater springs, lakes, and coastal ecosystems—highly sensitive to nutrient pollution—stand to benefit substantially from the widespread adoption of nitrogen-reducing septic technologies. Addressing nitrogen runoff through these conversions is critical to preserving Florida's delicate environmental equilibrium.

Citrus County's Septic Upgrade Incentive Program offers an innovative and effective approach to reducing nitrogen pollution by providing financial assistance to residents for upgrading from conventional septic systems to advanced nitrogen-reducing technology. These upgraded systems are specifically designed to minimize nitrogen discharge into soil and groundwater, thereby preventing further contamination and contributing to the restoration of surface water bodies.

The program has demonstrated significant success and strong, sustained community interest, reflecting public recognition of the vital importance of protecting water resources. By reducing nitrogen loads entering the environment, this initiative helps maintain biodiversity, supports healthier aquatic ecosystems, and ensures compliance with state and federal water quality standards.

Expanding this program will enable more residents to participate, amplifying its positive impact on water quality, public health, and environmental sustainability. Continued and increased funding is critical to ensuring that Citrus County can comprehensively address nitrogen pollution and safeguard natural resources for current and future generations.

Local governments, which often lead these efforts, require sufficient financial support to implement effective septic system upgrade programs. Without adequate funding, many property owners—especially those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas—may face prohibitive costs associated with necessary upgrades. A well-funded program promotes equity by making environmentally sustainable technologies accessible to all residents.

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners urges the Florida Legislature to provide continued funding for local septic system conversion programs ahead of the proposed mandate requiring the adoption of nitrogen-reducing systems.



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: SADOWSKI HOUSING TRUST FUND

ISSUE SUMMARY

Established in 1992, the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund serves as a vital mechanism for addressing Florida's affordable housing needs. Funded primarily through documentary stamp taxes collected from real estate transactions, the Trust Fund provides a reliable and recurring source of revenue dedicated to housing programs across the state. It supports key initiatives such as the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), which delivers critical services including down payment assistance, emergency home repairs, and the development of affordable rental housing. In addition, the Fund enables the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to expand and preserve affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families, helping ensure access to safe, stable, and affordable homes.

As Florida continues to experience population growth and a sharp rise in housing costs, the need for sustained and robust investment in affordable housing infrastructure has never been more urgent. Without full funding of the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund, Florida risks deepening its housing affordability crisis, leaving many working families, seniors, and vulnerable residents unable to secure adequate housing. Restoring and protecting the full allocation of Trust Fund revenues for their intended purpose is essential for preventing homelessness, increasing housing availability, and enhancing quality of life throughout the state.

Consistent investment in affordable housing not only stabilizes families and communities but also helps reduce long-term public expenditures on emergency services, health care, and social safety nets.

Beyond its social impact, the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund also delivers significant economic benefits. Funds invested in affordable housing generate employment in the construction, real estate, and home improvement industries—contributing to local economies and creating ripple effects in related sectors. Leveraging these resources as originally intended promotes economic vitality, community resilience, and inclusive growth.

Continued commitment to fully utilizing the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund reflects Florida's dedication to building thriving communities where all residents have the opportunity to live in safe, affordable, and dignified housing. In the face of mounting housing pressures, preserving and strengthening this critical funding source is essential to meeting the state's current and future housing needs.

REQUEST: Citrus County respectfully urges the Florida Legislature to maintain and support continued funding for the Local Government Cybersecurity Grant Program to enhance the cybersecurity capabilities of local governments, safeguard critical infrastructure, and ensure the protection of sensitive data amid escalating cyber threats.



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: SMALL COUNTY OUTREACH PROGRAM (SCOP)

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Florida Department of Transportation's Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) is specifically established to assist counties with populations below 200,000 in enhancing their transportation infrastructure. Recognizing the unique challenges these smaller jurisdictions face in securing adequate funding and maintaining road networks, SCOP serves as a critical financial resource to support essential projects such as roadway resurfacing and reconstruction. The program is instrumental in addressing the transportation requirements of these communities by promoting improvements in road safety, mobility, and overall infrastructure quality.

Funding under SCOP is distributed to local governments through a competitive application process, enabling counties to prioritize projects that address vital roadways integral to residents' daily travel, emergency response access, and regional economic activity. Eligible projects may include surface rehabilitation as well as more comprehensive reconstruction efforts aimed at optimizing traffic operations and enhancing safety standards.

The Florida Department of Transportation administers SCOP to ensure the equitable allocation of funds in compliance with state construction guidelines and safety regulations. Through this program, the state fosters effective partnerships with smaller counties, thereby supporting local economic development through improved transportation connectivity. SCOP is essential in guaranteeing that all areas of Florida, irrespective of population size, have the necessary resources to sustain safe, reliable, and efficient transportation networks for their communities.

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners requests continued funding for the Florida Department of Transportation's Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) to support critical transportation infrastructure improvements, ensuring safe and efficient road networks that foster equitable development and economic growth in smaller counties.



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Water Quality Improvement Grant Program, administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), is a vital funding mechanism that enables local governments across Florida to implement projects aimed at reducing nutrient pollution and improving water quality. This program provides critical financial support to counties, municipalities, and other governmental entities for infrastructure projects that address nutrient loading from key sources such as wastewater (including septic-to-sewer conversions), stormwater runoff, and agricultural activities. To qualify for funding, projects must be located within impaired waterbodies that do not meet nutrient or nutrient-related water quality standards, or within designated Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) basins, Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) areas, Reasonable Assurance Plan areas, Alternative Restoration Plan areas, or Rural Areas of Opportunity as defined in section 288.0656, Florida Statutes.

Historically, this grant program has played an instrumental role in assisting communities like Citrus County in advancing water quality restoration projects aligned with state and regional environmental priorities.

These efforts are particularly important in areas such as the Homosassa and Chassahowitzka Springsheds, where nutrient reduction is necessary to protect Outstanding Florida Waterways and fragile spring ecosystems.

However, for Fiscal Year 2025–2026, eligibility for funding under the Water Quality Improvement Grant Program was limited exclusively to projects located within the Indian River Lagoon and Biscayne Bay. While those areas are undeniably in need of restoration, this restrictive funding approach has significantly hindered progress in other parts of the state, including many rural and environmentally sensitive regions that are actively engaged in nutrient reduction planning and implementation.

Reestablishing broader eligibility will ensure that all communities with qualifying projects—regardless of geographic location—have equitable access to the resources needed to protect water quality, comply with regulatory mandates, and preserve Florida's natural environment for future generations.

REQUEST: Citrus County urges the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Legislature to restore a statewide scope for the Water Quality Improvement Grant Program in future funding cycles.



REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER RESTORATION & PROTECTION

ISSUE SUMMARY

Once a thriving, ecologically rich waterway, the Lower Withlacoochee is now experiencing severe degradation due to decades of hydrologic alteration, unchecked nutrient pollution, and habitat loss. The State of Florida, despite the river's designation as Outstanding Florida Waters and its federal recognition as a navigable waterway, has not sufficiently protected this valuable resource.

Over time, urban, commercial, and agricultural development in the region has led to significant reductions in base and spring flows. These reduced flows have fundamentally altered the river's ability to sustain aquatic life and flush out sediments and nutrient accumulations. Elevated nitrate-nitrogen levels have triggered recurring algal blooms and proliferation of invasive aquatic species, leading to the near-complete loss of native submerged vegetation. These conditions threaten the river's biodiversity and have significantly degraded its recreational and economic value.

Several feasible engineering paths exist to restore natural flows, including the modification or addition of structures to redirect flows from Lake Rousseau back into the lower river, and the use of spillways to control outflows between the barge canal and the river itself. Another viable option would be to utilize the existing Lock structure at Inglis Dam to facilitate controlled discharges through the Rock Dam, restoring natural flushing events.

These interventions would improve habitat conditions, reduce algal buildup, and support fishery recovery while lowering long-term maintenance costs.

Beyond flow restoration, basin-wide efforts are needed to reduce nutrient pollution, upgrade aging wastewater infrastructure, and rehabilitate natural aquatic habitats. This includes prioritizing septic-to-sewer conversions, enforcing minimum flow and level standards, upgrading wastewater treatment systems to remove nitrogen more effectively, and reducing pollution through improved land use practices. Special attention should be given to regulating fertilizer and herbicide use in buffer zones and along Lake Rousseau, where past chemical treatments have contributed to habitat loss and water quality impacts.

The long-term restoration of the Lower Withlacoochee River will not only benefit Citrus County but also neighboring counties and the broader state economy. Enhanced ecological function, increased recreational use, and restored fisheries will support regional tourism and reduce costly reactive maintenance efforts currently borne by state and local governments. This effort should be viewed not merely as the restoration of a single component, but rather as the improved, integrated management of an entire riverine system.

REQUEST: The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners requests legislative support and state funding to restore ecological flows and improve water quality in the Lower Withlacoochee River and its connected spring systems, safeguarding biodiversity, recreational value, and regional economic benefits.

Agenda Memorandum - *City of Inverness*

November 4, 2025

TO: Elected Officials
FROM: Eric Williams, City Manager
SUBJECT: City of Crystal River Legislative Priorities Request for Letter of Support
CC:
Enclosures: 1. 2026_Legislative_Agenda_-_Crystal_River_102725

The City of Crystal River Council has assembled their list of legislative priorities for the 2026 Session of the Florida Legislature. The identified priorities are funding of a new storm resilient City Hall, Septic to Sewer and Water Projects, and Golf Cart Crossings on US Highway 19. The City of Crystal River has asked Council to consider submitting a letter of support for some or all of these identified items.

Attached for the Council's review is a document which outlines the City of Crystal River's rationale for requesting funding and support through the legislative process. Additionally, City of Crystal River staff are in attendance to answer any questions.

Recommended Action:

1. Allow Staff to Present
2. Motion and second to approve a letter of support for the presented City of Crystal River legislative priorities.
3. Deliberate the Matter
4. Vote the Matter

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at your convenience.

Eric C. Williams



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2026

CITY OF CRYSTAL RIVER



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INTRODUCTION

During the workshop held August 25, 2025, Council directed staff to document and present several legislative priorities for 2026. This document includes those priorities, along with cost estimates and appropriations requests. It also includes an overview of the 2025 Legislative Session and the results for Citrus County and Crystal River.

OVERVIEW OF 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Citrus County recently summarized County Projects included in the state's fiscal year 2025-26 General Appropriations Act as follows:

Education:

- \$1,040,000 for the expansion of the Health Careers Academy at Crystal River High School
- \$120,000 for facility maintenance and repairs at the Academy of Environmental Science, a public charter school in Crystal River

Public Safety and Behavioral Health:

- \$2,500,000 for the construction of a public safety training annex and indoor firing range serving Citrus County Schools
- \$1,000,000 for development of a new Baker Act facility to be operated by LifeStream Behavioral Center in Lecanto
- \$200,000 for the expansion of Jesse's Place, a child advocacy center located in Lecanto

Infrastructure and Environmental Restoration:

- \$2,900,000 for the development of a multiuse path along Halls River Road in Homosassa
- \$500,000 for the expansion of the Citrus Memorial Health Foundation YMCA
- \$3,500,000 for the construction of a new fire station at Inverness Airport, where a county business park is also under development
- \$350,000 for construction of a new seawall at Hunter Springs Park in the City of Crystal River

- \$5,000,000 for continued sediment removal in King's Bay and adjacent canals, administered by Save Crystal River
- \$2,000,000 for the Homosassa River Restoration Project
- \$81,000 for the restoration and preservation of the historic Crystal Memorial Gardens Cemetery

APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST 1

CITY HALL RESILIENCY / RECONSTRUCTION

During 2023, the City experienced the devastating effects of Hurricane Idalia, during which its city hall facility (~13,000 sq ft) and the law enforcement substation it contained was flooded and severely damaged. City and law enforcement operations were moved to a temporary leased location. The city hall had previously flooded during the "No-Name" storm of 1993, and also during Hurricane Hermine in 2016. Subsequently, it flooded again in 2024 when Hurricane Helene impacted the west coast of Florida. The city counts its blessings because city operations were still being conducted from a temporary location when Helene struck. However, as a result of the repetitive and extensive damage from flooding, the decision was made to demolish the damaged building and reconstruct an elevated, resilient city hall in its original location in downtown Crystal River.

The city was allocated a \$1,350,000 legislative appropriation in 2023 for the "Crystal River Government Center Project" to include design and permitting of a new city hall and emergency operations center. The city procured architectural and engineering services which are underway - a space needs analysis, geotechnical work and surveys have been completed. Preliminary space needs and design concepts have been reviewed and approved by the City Council. The facility will consist of a two-story structure with the first floor only used for parking and/or such uses which would be able to be suspended in advance of a large coastal surge. (Elevation must be above the 100 year, 2070 projected coastal surge elevation - a minimum of 9 feet above the current grade of the existing city hall). In addition, the project includes replacement of the Creative Playground in the surrounding Little Springs Park which was demolished along with all related infrastructure. The final site and building design concept is scheduled to be approved by City Council during Fall 2025 at which time final architectural design will commence for construction purposes. A construction manager at risk (CMAR) has been procured and has joined the design team to bring this project forward in an expeditious manner.

The estimated cost of the new building and attached infrastructure is \$8.488 million. Replacement of the playground and park area improvements are not included in the building cost, but will bring the total to at least \$10 million per our architect's estimates. The city's insurance proceeds of approximately \$2 million will be part of the city's committed local funding. We anticipate borrowing to be our only source of funding outside of those insurance proceeds. The city is hopeful the state may dedicate resiliency funding to assist with the reconstruction of this critical city infrastructure and its public safety component, especially in light of the need to elevate the structure (\$467,500) and harden the facility (\$266,020) included in the total above. The city's request for this legislative session is \$5,000,000 towards construction.

APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST 2

SEPTIC TO SEWER CONVERSION & WATER PROJECTS

The city is planning to construct a sewer collection system in the southern part of the city to remove 276 septic tanks from service and connect these properties to the City's central sewer system. The primary purpose of this project is to reduce nitrogen pollutants from Kings Bay (project is less than 0.75 miles from Kings Bay/Crystal River waterway) per our adopted BMAP, while secondarily providing reliable water and sewer to an underserved neighborhood. Project cost is anticipated to be \$13,344,500 with \$1,800,000 (13.5%) contributed by the city and \$11,544,500 (86.5%) requested from the state via application to the FY2025-26 Springs Restoration Grant Program.

A similar project is also planned for the northern end of the city, resulting in Phase II (Phase I is nearing completion at this time) of the Indian Waters Septic to Sewer conversion project, resulting in the removal of another 81 septic tanks from service. The estimated cost of this project is \$3,916,320.

The state appropriation request for both of the septic to sewer projects will be \$6,000,000 with the possibility of splitting the project into two separate requests at \$2,000,000 for the South Expansion and \$ 4,000,000 for the Indian Waters Project,

APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST 3

GOLF CART CROSSINGS – STATE ROAD 19

The City of Crystal River (the City) has adopted an ordinance (Ordinance number 11-O-18) authorizing and regulating the use of golf carts on certain designated streets within the City. An assessment of the City streets for suitability of golf cart use was performed by Kimley-Horn in November 2017, at which time the City adopted a network of City-owned streets where golf cart use is allowed.

Two Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) maintained roadways are located within the City limits: SR 44 and SR 19. Roadways that are designated for golf cart use that intersect either SR 44 or US 19 currently have signs designating "NO CARTS BEYOND THIS POINT" placed 150 to 200 feet from the intersection of SR 44 or US 19, prior to reaching the state roadway. Crossing of US 19 is desired to allow for golf cart interconnectivity within the City along roadways already designated for golf cart use.

The City requested Kimley-Horn prepare an evaluation to support golf cart crossings of the state roadways. The following intersections are included within this study:

- NW 19th Street/N Turkey Oak Drive at US 19 (signalized, milepost 16.465) - estimated cost \$750,000-\$1,000,000
- NE 3rd Avenue/Three Sisters Springs Trail at US 19 (signalized, milepost 14.826) - estimated cost \$50,000-\$100,000
- W Fort Island Trail/SE 8th Avenue at US 19 (signalized, milepost 13.513) - estimated cost \$50,000-\$100,000
- Crosstown Trail at US 19 (pedestrian/bicycle trail crossing, approximately at milepost 14.98) -FDOT verbally stated this is least likely to be approved due to inherent pedestrian & business access conflicts; no cost estimate formulated by the engineers

The City of Crystal River desires crossing at all four locations; however, the top priorities for implementation are the intersection of NE 3rd Avenue/Three Sisters Springs Trail at US 19 & the W Fort Island Trail/SE 8th Avenue at US 19.

This information and study recommendations were transmitted to the Florida Department of Transportation on September 8, 2025 for consideration. The city's engineering firm estimates the cost of each of preferred initial crossing to be a maximum of \$100,000; work may be completed by city with permits issued through the Florida Department of Transportation. We request consideration of funding by the legislature for this initiative at \$200,000.

Agenda Memorandum - *City of Inverness*

November 4, 2025

TO: Elected Officials
FROM: Eric Williams, City Manager
SUBJECT: John Deere Wheel Loader Purchase - Public Works
CC: Frank Calascione, Assistant City Manager, Susan Jackson, City Clerk, Alexis Koter, Finance Director, Rob Pell, Public Works Director
Enclosures: 1. Inverness loader

In keeping with the City's adopted purchasing policy, purchases more than \$25,000 must receive Council approval. The City's Public Works Department has leveraged the Cooperative Purchasing Sourcewell Contract# 0011723-JDC, to garner pricing for a 2025 John Deere 544G Wheel Loader with a Multipurpose Bucket and a Grapple-Rake attachment.

The requested equipment will replace the following DPW equipment:

Year, Make, Model: 1989 John Deere 544D Wheel loader with MP Bucket.

Using the Sourcewell Contract, we have obtained a favorable price of \$221,994.00 inclusive of selected options. This purchase is part of our current CIP and within the appropriated budget therein. This equipment is in stock at Beard Equipment Company located in Ocala, Florida and will be delivered within 4–6 weeks upon purchase.

Recommended Action:

1. Allow staff to present
2. Motion and second to approve purchase of the 2025 John Deere 544G-Wheel Loader and attachments from Beard Equipment Company utilizing the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Program at a price of \$221,994.
3. Deliberate the matter.
4. Vote the matter.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at your convenience.

Eric C. Williams

Quote Summary

Prepared For

CITY OF INVERNESS
820 PLEASANT GROVE RD
INVERNESS, FL 34452
Business: 352-726-2321

Prepared By

CHAD DIXON
Beard Equipment Company
4539 Nw 44th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34482
Phone: 352-732-4646
cdixon@beardequipment.com

Quote Id: 33542096
Created On: 20 October 2025
Last Modified On: 28 October 2025
Expiration Date: 27 October 2025

Equipment Summary	Suggested List	Selling Price	Qty	Extended
JOHN DEERE 544 G-Tier Wheel Loader	\$ 313,288.00	\$ 221,994.00	X 1 =	\$ 221,994.00
Equipment Total				\$ 221,994.00
Trade In Total				\$ 0.00

Quote Summary

Equipment Total	\$ 221,994.00
Trade In	
SubTotal	\$ 221,994.00
Est. Service Agreement Tax	\$ 0.00
Total	\$ 221,994.00
Balance Due	\$ 221,994.00

Selling Equipment

Quote Id: 33542096

Customer: CITY OF INVERNESS

JOHN DEERE 544 G-Tier Wheel Loader

Suggested List
\$ 313,288.00

Hours: 0
Stock Number: 592976

Code	Description	Qty
3010YN	JOHN DEERE 544 G-TIER WHEEL LOADER 3010YN	1

Standard Options - Per Unit

183E	JDLink	1
0202	United States	1
0259	English	1
0351	Translated Text Labels	1
0400	Standard Loader	1
0451	Standard ZBAR	1
0602	Level 2 Trim	1
0652	Level 2 Performance	1
0951	Rear Camera	1
4021	John Deere PowerTech Engine	1
4251	Standard Fuel Filter with Water Separator	1
5174	MAXAM – 20.5R25 L3 2STAR RADIAL TIRES w 3 PC RIMS	1
7054	Three Function Hydraulics with Joystick Controls	1
7403	Hydraulic Coupler JRB 416 Pattern	1
7458	Bolt On Cutting Edge	1
7876	3.00 YD 2.30 CM General Purpose	1
8042	Axle Oil Cooling and Filtration	1
8501	Debris Package	1
8503	Auxiliary Equipment Package	1
8505	Guards Transmission Bottom	1

Dealer Attachments

MP Bucket Pin On	1
Grapple Rake Pin On	1
Deduct Coupler and Coupler Bucket	1

Selling Equipment

Quote Id: 33542096

Customer: CITY OF INVERNESS

Agenda Memorandum - *City of Inverness*

November 4, 2025

TO: Elected Officials

FROM: Eric Williams, City Manager

SUBJECT: Project and Program Update

- Cootertober Recap
- Small Town Saturday Night
- Veteran's Day Parade
- WPP New Entrance Groundbreaking
- Other

CC: Susan Jackson, City Clerk

Enclosures:
