12	**AGENDA ITEM** **ST. JOHNS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**
	Deadline for Submission - Wednesday 9 a.m. – Thirteen Days Prior to BCC Meeting

12/1/2026

BCC MEETING DATE

TO: **Joy Andrews, County Administrator** **DATE:** **October 2, 2026**

FROM: **Christine Valliere, Director, Economic Development & Intergovernmental** **PHONE:** **904 209-0541**

SUBJECT OR TITLE: **Consideration of the proposed 2027 St. Johns County Legislative Action Plan and Legislative Advocacy Policy**

AGENDA TYPE: **Business Item, Report, Resolution**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The St. Johns County Legislative Action Plan (LAP) is a focused list of priorities for which the County seeks financial assistance and other support from our State and Federal representatives, and also identifies legislative policy priorities. Administration presents this list of recommended items from County staff for the Board to consider adopting as the 2027 LAP. The County then presents the approved LAP to the public and submits it to the County's Legislative Delegation and other public agencies for consideration. Additionally, the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs is proposing a Legislative Advocacy Policy to serve as a companion governance framework alongside the annual LAP. The policy would establish standing legislative priorities and advocacy principles and authorize the County Administrator, or designee, acting through the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, to engage in legislative advocacy on behalf of the County. Such advocacy would be carried out in accordance with the policy's protocols guidelines and standing principles, as well as the priorities identified in the annual LAP.

1. IS FUNDING REQUIRED? No **2. IF YES, INDICATE IF BUDGETED.** No

IF FUNDING IS REQUIRED, MANDATORY OMB REVIEW IS REQUIRED:

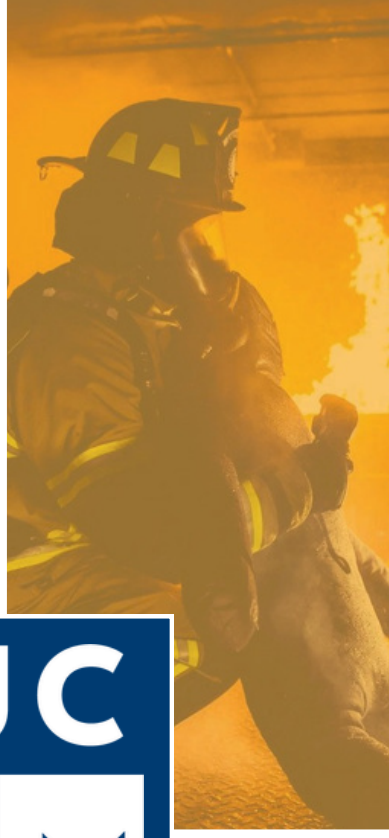
INDICATE FUNDING SOURCE:

SUGGESTED MOTION/RECOMMENDATION/ACTION:

Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-_____, approving and adopting the St. Johns County Legislative Advocacy Policy; establishing standing legislative advocacy principles; authorizing implementation of board-established legislative policy; providing for board oversight; and providing an effective date. Motion to adopt the 2027 St. Johns County Legislative Action Plan.

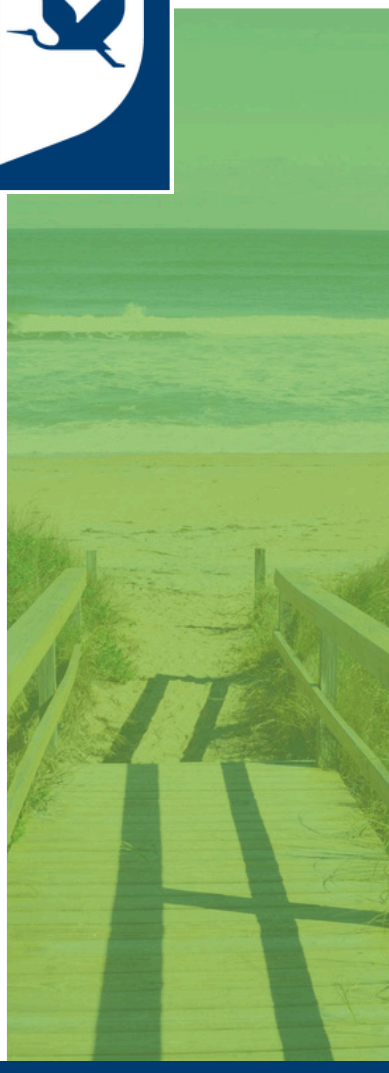
For Administration Use Only:
Legal: Kealey West 11/13/2026 **OMB: Christopher Thompson 11/13/2026** **Admin: JDD 11/23/2026**





LEGISLATIVE ACTION PLAN 2027

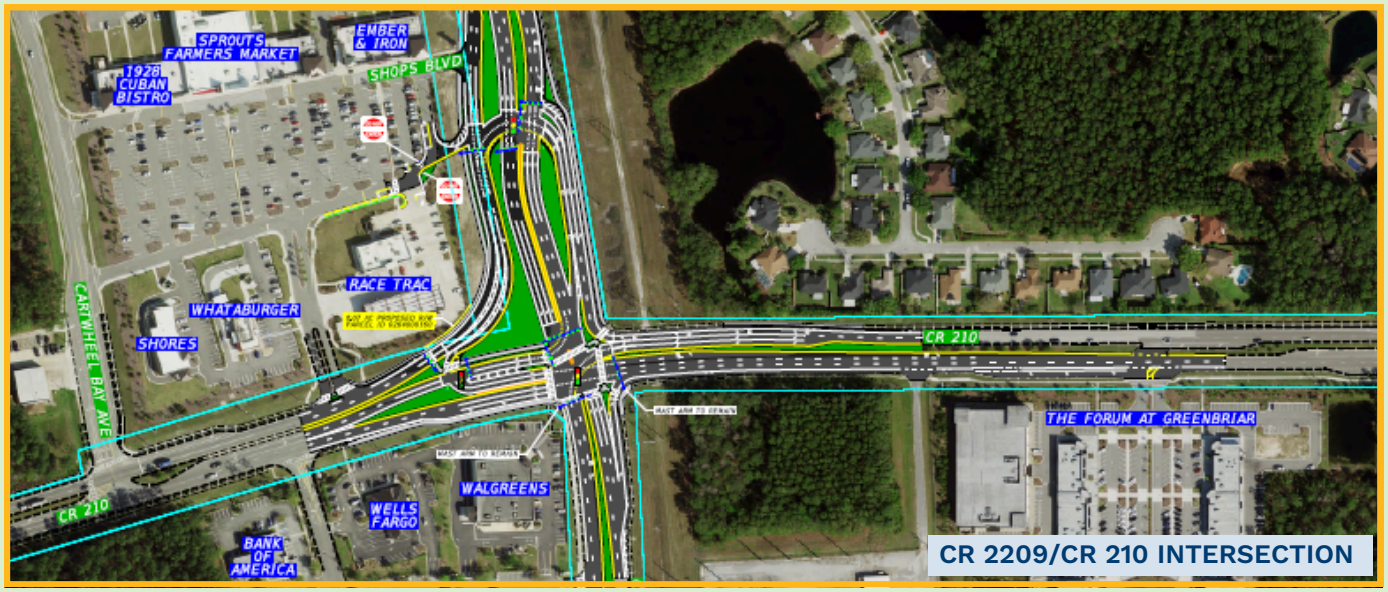




ST. JOHNS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

Transportation Infrastructure



CR 2209/CR 210 INTERSECTION

County Road 210

Request funding to widen County Road 210 at the western terminus, from CR 16A to Greenbriar Road, and along the central section, from I-95 to Beachwalk. As identified in the North Florida TPO's *Traffic Assessment of the Impacts of the First Coast Expressway in Northwest St. Johns County*, increased traffic associated with the First Coast Expressway, State Road 16 improvements, and the build-out of Greenbriar Helow, River Landing, SilverLeaf, and Shearwater will place additional demands on CR 210. Widening these segments will help accommodate anticipated growth and support improved traffic flow throughout the corridor.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding

LEGEND

State | **Federal** | **Partnerships & Collaboration**

Immediate Priorities

Long-Term Priorities

County Road 2209

Upgrading the roadway from State Road 9B to Silverleaf Parkway. Critically, this project will overhaul the CR 2209/CR 210 intersection and add capacity to an alternative north-south route that parallels I-95. This also includes the segment of CR 2209 and the interchange with the First Coast Expressway.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
FDOT Work Program

International Golf Parkway at I-95

This project will improve the safety, capacity, and traffic flow of the existing interchange, which is insufficient to support regional growth and the additional traffic from the First Coast Expressway and I-95.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
FDOT Work Program

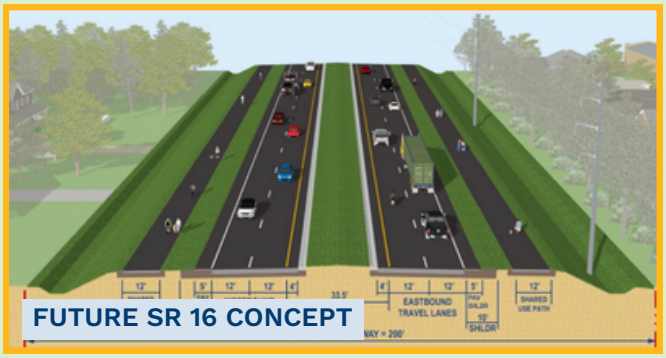
Transportation Infrastructure

State Road 16 Widening

Building on previous years' funding, this project will widen a vital gateway corridor with connections to I-95 and the future First Coast Expressway. The existing two-lane high-speed arterial from International Golf Parkway to I-95 will be upgraded to a four-lane divided highway, greatly improving safety, mobility, and St. Johns County's economic competitiveness.



EXISTING SR 16 AERIAL



FUTURE SR 16 CONCEPT

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
FDOT Work Program
Partnerships & Private Capital

US-1 and FEC Corridor

Request matching funds from USDOT to complete projects along a critical north-to-south freight corridor, such as the US-1/CR 210 interchange and the US-1/Race Track Road intersection improvements.

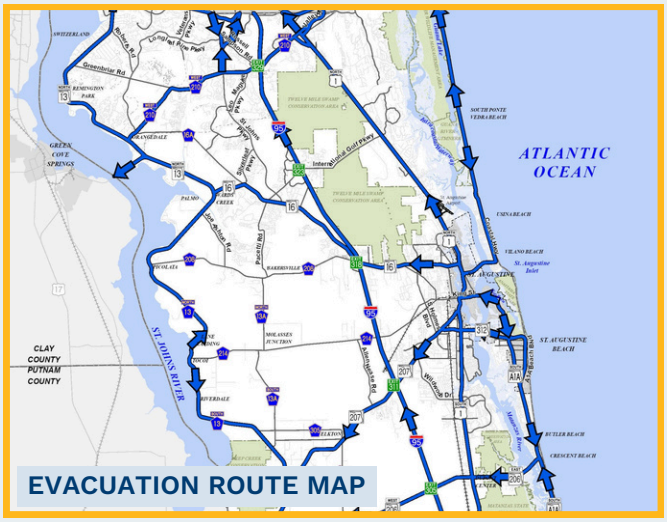
These projects eliminate or upgrade dangerous railroad crossings, such as the crossing at Alternate County Road 210, where a train collision occurred most recently in September 2024.



ALTERNATE COUNTY ROAD 210
VEHICLE -TRAIN COLLISION

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding

Transportation Infrastructure



EVACUATION ROUTE MAP

Evacuation Routes

Request that FDOT provide greater priority to upgrade evacuation routes, such as State Road 206, and to complete the PD&E process to evaluate options to improve the capacity and safety of the State Road 206/I-95 Interchange.

Strategy:
Appropriations
FDOT Work Program

Signal Optimization

Improve traffic flow and reduce congestion by retiming signals, upgrading traffic detection devices and signal controllers, and coordinating multiple signals along major corridors. Signal optimization allows traffic to move more efficiently through intersections, reducing travel time and fuel consumption. These improvements are highly cost-effective and can generally be implemented without roadway construction or significant traffic impacts during installation.

Strategy:
Grant Funding

Trails and Greenways

Pursue state and federal resources to implement projects consistent with the statewide priority trail corridors, such as the Orangedale to Mickler Trail, and the North A1A Trail to the Duval County Line.

Strategy:
Grant Funding
FDOT Work Program

Other Priority Corridors

Identify opportunities to relieve traffic congestion on US 1 and improve north- south regional connectivity.

Expedite planned capacity and/or safety improvements to State Road 207, State Road 312, County Road 210, County Road 208, Race Track Road, Holmes Boulevard, and other primary connectors or minor collectors.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
TPO Collaboration


ST. AUGUSTINE TO PALATKA TRAIL

Community Resilience

Hastings/Deep Creek Flood Control Mitigation System

The County supports the creation of an interagency flood mitigation task force, comprised of local, state, and federal partners, to coordinate technical evaluation, environmental review, project development, funding strategies, and implementation priorities for the Hastings/Deep Creek Flood Control Mitigation System.

Phase 1: Implementation of near-term priority projects and system improvements identified through the task force evaluation process.

Phase 2: Advancement of long-term regional flood mitigation, drainage, and conveyance improvements identified through the task force planning and engineering process.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Interagency Collaboration



FLAGLER ESTATES FLOODING

Guana Flood Mitigation System

The project reconstructs the system to provide an increased level of protection and mitigation capacity through the replacement of weirs, modification of existing conveyance channels, and the addition of erosion control measures.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding

Guana Water Quality

Coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to address water quality issues in the Guana Estuary, with FDEP leading the assessment and development of appropriate solutions. St. Johns County will support and coordinate with FDEP throughout the process to help protect and improve water quality within the Estuary.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Policy Change



GTM NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

Nutrient Water Management

Collaborate with FDEP leadership and local assets to better understand the application and interpretation of current statutes related to Nutrient Management and work with State partners to protect state-regulated environmental areas/lands.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Partnerships & Collaboration

Community Resilience

Coastal Easements

Request that the St. Johns County Federal Delegation facilitate a more collaborative implementation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' coastal easement guidance.

Strategy:
Policy Change

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Projects

Request that Congress appropriate funds in an amount equal to the federal cost share for the planning, engineering, design, and construction of the Ponte Vedra Coastal Storm Risk Management Project.

Strategy:
Appropriations


PONTE VEDRA BEACH


SUMMER HAVEN


MATANZAS INLET & SUMMER HAVEN RIVER

Summer Haven Estuary Protection Area

Designate the Summer Haven and Old Matanzas River as a Regional Estuary Protection Area to coordinate with regional, state, and federal partners in developing comprehensive protection and restoration plans that preserve the area's ecological integrity and resilience.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Partnerships & Private Capital

Beach Restoration Mandates

The Florida Legislature should oppose new regulations related to contracting that may increase permit processing times and monitoring costs for beach restoration projects.

Strategy:
Policy Change

Community Resilience

Septic to Sewer & Water Projects

Secure funds to expedite projects identified in the countywide septic-to-sewer plan, such as the St. Augustine South, Treasure Beach, Dolphin Cove, and Vermont Heights communities. In partnership with the City of St. Augustine, prioritize West Augustine water and sewer projects that may facilitate economic development.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding

Other Critically Vulnerable Assets

Secure funding to implement projects that enhance the resiliency of vulnerable assets, such as the International Golf Parkway realignment, the shoreline stabilization of Porpoise Point, the elevation of Jack Wright Island Road, County Road 13, and other resiliency related projects.

Strategy:
Grant Funding



STATE ROAD 207 WATER RECLAMATION FACILITY

World Golf Village Stormwater Harvesting

St. Johns County Utilities is evaluating a project to capture excess stormwater currently discharged from the World Golf Village stormwater pond system. The harvested water would be treated to reclaimed-water quality standards through tertiary filtration and disinfection, then introduced into the County's existing reclaimed water distribution system for irrigation of golf courses, common areas, community landscaping, and residential yards. A 2022 feasibility study estimated the project could provide an average of approximately two million gallons per day of additional water to the County's reclaimed water system.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Partnerships & Private Capital

Community Resilience



Florida Museum of Black History

Request the Legislature fund the planning, design, and construction of the museum campus in St. Johns County and codify into law a governance plan for the state museum, to include the establishment of a board of directors to oversee the commission, construction, operation, and administration of the museum.

Strategy:
Legislative Advocacy
Appropriations
Partnerships & Private Capital

Programming for Economically Disadvantaged Communities

Secure funding to support recreational programming, staffing, and transportation services to improve access to recreational opportunities.

Waldron Family Park & Boat Ramp

The 31-acre site located on the San Sebastian River will include a regional public boat ramp, public safety water access, and passive recreational elements. The Master Plan is complete, initial work is underway to establish limited public access and support staff operations. Over $1 million has been raised for initial design and permitting.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Partnerships & Private Capital



PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMMING


WALDRON FAMILY PARK & BOAT RAMP RENDERING

Agriculture and Conservation



AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION IN HASTINGS

Water First North Florida

Request the Legislature provide phased funding for this aquifer recharge project with regional and statewide significance.
Long-term benefits of the project include restoring flows to protect the region's rivers and springs and ensuring a sustainable and affordable water supply for the region's current and future needs. The project will also augment wetlands that support wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Regional Collaboration

Protecting Working Lands

Request the Legislature and the U.S. Congress prioritize funding for the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. As a participating partner in the conservation of working lands, the County supports opportunities to expand the utilization of the programs to preserve generational family farms.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Partnerships & Collaboration

Florida Communities Trust

Advocate for dedicated funding for FCT and the restoration of a separate program for resource-based parkland acquisition. Dedicated funding would help ensure that passive parkland acquisition can compete effectively with other priorities, such as mitigation and resiliency, and support the acquisition of properties identified through St. Johns County's Land Acquisition Management Program (LAMP).

Rural Renaissance

St. Johns County supports legislation that prioritizes the improvement of infrastructure and quality of life in rural communities. Further, the County encourages the Legislature to revise the statutory definition of rural community to include the farming communities of St. Johns County.

Florida Forever

Request the Department of Environmental Protection apply a more comprehensive approach to conservation and restoration efforts for Summer Haven, the Summer Haven River, and the Matanzas River Estuary, including opportunities to extend the boundary of the Northeast Florida Blueway.

Strategy:
Legislative Advocacy



ALPINE GROVES PARK

Government Operations

Long-Term Health Care

Support legislation establishing a state-funded health care premium assistance program for eligible first responder retirees between retirement and Medicare eligibility. Financial assistance should be provided directly to retirees through a state retirement benefit programs and should not create additional costs or administrative obligations for counties.

Confidential Information

Request the Legislature create a new public records exemption to protect the personal information of child welfare staff. Current law provides a public records exemption for Guardian Ad Litem and investigators in the Department of Children and Families.

Unfunded Mandates

Request the Legislature oppose policies that require local governments to expend funds providing information, reports, documents, etc. to State agencies without a dedicated funding source for development of responses to new requirements.

Strategy:
Legislative Advocacy



WEST AUGUSTINE HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER

Community-Based Care Lead Agencies

Revise HB 7089 (2024), Transparency in Health and Human Services, to clarify that local government agencies are exempt from certain requirements for entities that provide more than 40% of direct services.

Strategy:
Policy Change
Partnerships & Collaboration

St. Johns County Fire Rescue Regional Training Facility

Request the Legislature fund Phase II of the St. Johns County Fire Rescue Regional Training Facility, currently under construction at a centrally located site west of I-95. The facility will serve as a regional training resource, providing St. Johns County and neighboring counties with expanded opportunities for first responder training and professional development.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding


ST. JOHNS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Government Operations

Tri-County Medical Examiner Equipment

Request the Legislature to fund a replacement X-ray machine for the Florida Medical Examiner District 23, which serves St. Johns, Flagler, and Putnam Counties. The replacement X-ray machine will ensure imaging can be performed for all decedents, including large and morbidly obese decedents who cannot currently be accommodated by existing equipment.

St. Johns County Courtroom Expansion

Request the Legislature to fund the expansion of the Clerk of Courts facilities to include two Civil Courtrooms, a new Jury Assembly area, and Judges' Chambers with adjacent judicial assistant offices. The expansion will increase court capacity and provide additional space to support the County's growing judicial needs.

Strategy:
Appropriations



RICHARD O. WATSON JUDICIAL CENTER



ST. JOHNS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOKMOBILE

Libraries

Request Congress and the Florida Legislature to continue to invest in programs critical to public libraries, such as operations and maintenance, materials acquisition, and technical assistance.

Strategy:
Advocacy
Grant Funding
Partnerships & Private Capital

Replacement Sports Lighting

Seek funding to replace aging sports field lighting infrastructure installed during the 1990s and 2000s with modern, energy-efficient technology to improve energy efficiency, reduce long-term operating costs, and support the sustainability of the County's recreational facilities.

Strategy:
Appropriations
Grant Funding
Partnerships & Private Capital

Growth Management Policy Advocacy

SB 686 (2026) Agricultural Enclaves

Request that the Legislature either repeal SB 686 or enact a technical "glitch bill" to address ambiguities and unintended consequences within the agricultural enclave provisions. Amendments should clarify statutory language, establish clear and consistent implementation standards, provide greater certainty regarding eligibility and certification criteria, and promote uniform application by local governments, property owners, and reviewing agencies throughout the state.

Senate Bill 180 (2025)

Request that the Legislature conduct a thorough review of the provisions of Senate Bill 180 and consider modifying current law to provide local governments with more flexibility to better align post-disaster recovery with the unique needs and challenges of each community.

Strategy:
Policy Change

Live Local Act (2023)

Request that the Legislature revise the Live Local Act to restore local government authority over land use and development decisions, allowing St. Johns County to ensure development is consistent with local comprehensive planning, infrastructure capacity, and community needs. Advocate for greater local flexibility in evaluating proposed developments and addressing their impacts on County services and resources.

Blue Ribbon Bill (2026)

Request that the Legislature conduct a thorough review of the Blue Ribbon Bill if it is reintroduced. Many implications, open-ended questions, and unintended consequences lead to an erosion of Home Rule.

Introduction of any bill will require sponsorship by a member of the Florida House of Representatives and a member of the Florida Senate. Advancement of any bill proposals will depend upon securing legislative sponsorship and support.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-_____

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE ST. JOHNS COUNTY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY POLICY; ESTABLISHING STANDING LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES; AUTHORIZING IMPLEMENTATION OF BOARD-ESTABLISHED LEGISLATIVE POLICY; PROVIDING FOR BOARD OVERSIGHT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida (the "Board"), annually adopts a Legislative Action Plan identifying legislative and policy priorities and priority projects for which appropriations, grants, or other governmental funding may be pursued; and

WHEREAS, proposed legislation and amendments affecting the County may arise after adoption of the annual Legislative Action Plan and may require timely communication or advocacy before the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to establish continuing legislative advocacy principles addressing recurring matters of County interest and to provide for coordinated implementation of those principles and the annual Legislative Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Board intends to authorize timely advocacy within Board-established policy while reserving to itself decisions requiring a new or materially different County policy position, and further intends to retain full authority to consider, discuss, and provide direction on any legislative matter at any time, whether or not such matter is addressed in the Legislative Action Plan or the Legislative Advocacy Policy; and

WHEREAS, the proposed St. Johns County Legislative Advocacy Policy, attached hereto as Exhibit A, establishes such principles, implementation authority, coordination and review procedures, Commissioner communications, and circumstances warranting further Board direction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, as follows:

Section 1. Recitals. The foregoing recitals are incorporated herein and adopted as findings of the Board.

Section 2. Adoption of Policy. The Board hereby approves and adopts the St. Johns County Legislative Advocacy Policy attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference, including the Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles set forth therein.

Section 3. Implementation and Delegated Authority. The County Administrator, or designee, is authorized and directed to implement the Policy and coordinate the County's legislative advocacy, including the activities of the Office of Intergovernmental

Affairs and contracted legislative representatives. Advocacy undertaken pursuant to this authority shall be consistent with either the applicable Board-adopted Legislative Action Plan or the Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles contained in the Policy. Separate Board action is not required solely because a particular bill or amendment is not identified in the annual Legislative Action Plan, provided the advocacy is within such Board-established policy and otherwise complies with the Policy.

Section 4. Reservation of Board Authority. Nothing in this Resolution or the Policy authorizes the County Administrator, County staff, or contracted legislative representatives to establish a materially new or inconsistent County policy position. Matters requiring such a position or otherwise requiring Board consideration under the Policy or applicable law, shall be referred to the Board for direction. The Board retains its legislative policymaking authority and may, at any time, consider, discuss, provide direction regarding, or take action on any legislative matter, regardless of whether the matter is addressed in the Legislative Action Plan, the Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles, or any other provision of the Policy. The Board retains authority to amend, supersede, or repeal the Policy and to provide specific direction on any legislative matter.

Section 5. Non-Substantive Corrections. Typographical or administrative errors in this Resolution may be corrected without further Board action, provided such corrections do not alter its substance, intent, or effect.

Section 6. Effective Date. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption. The Policy shall remain in effect until amended or repealed by the Board.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, this _____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST: Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller	BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
By: _____ Deputy Clerk	By: _____ Ann Taylor, Chair

Rendition Date: _____

EXHIBIT A — ST. JOHNS COUNTY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY POLICY

ST. JOHNS COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY POLICY

Background and Relationship to the Legislative Action Plan

St. Johns County annually adopts a Legislative Action Plan (LAP) with a dual purpose. The LAP identifies specific legislative and policy priorities and also identifies priority County projects for which legislative appropriations, grants, or other governmental funding opportunities may be pursued.

The LAP is focused on the County's affirmative priorities and funding needs. Because most legislation for an upcoming session has not been filed when the LAP is adopted, the LAP cannot anticipate every bill that may materially affect County authority, finances, operations, infrastructure, or services. This Policy therefore establishes a separate, standing governance framework for responding to legislation and other governmental policy proposals as they develop. Nothing in this Policy limits existing County authority or processes for pursuing grants or other funding opportunities identified in the LAP.

Purpose

This Policy establishes: (1) standing legislative advocacy principles for recurring matters of County interest; (2) delegated authority for timely advocacy consistent with those principles or the annual LAP; (3) procedures for monitoring, evaluating, and communicating significant legislative developments; and (4) a framework for determining when legislative matters require Board consideration or direction. The intent is to permit timely, constructive advocacy while preserving the Board of County Commissioners' authority to establish County policy.

Section 1. Sources of Board-Established Legislative Policy

County legislative advocacy is guided by:

A. The annual Legislative Action Plan (LAP); and
B. The Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles established in this Policy.

A specific bill need not be identified in the annual LAP for delegated advocacy authority to apply when the proposed advocacy is reasonably supported by a Standing Legislative Advocacy Principle in this Policy.

Section 2. Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles

A. Home Rule and Local Decision-Making. Preserve constitutional and statutory county home-rule authority and local decision-making and oppose or seek modification of legislation that unnecessarily preempts County authority or materially restricts the County’s ability to address matters of local concern.

B. Unfunded Mandates and Cost Shifts. Oppose or seek modification of legislation that imposes material new responsibilities, service requirements, administrative obligations, or costs on the County without an adequate and sustainable funding source, or that shifts state responsibilities or costs to county government.

C. County Revenues and Fiscal Flexibility. Preserve the County's ability to responsibly fund services and infrastructure, including existing revenue sources, taxing and fee authority, state-shared revenues, and appropriate fiscal flexibility; and oppose or seek modification of legislation that materially reduces County revenues, restricts local fiscal authority, or shifts costs to local taxpayers without corresponding resources.

D. Land Use and Growth Management. Preserve appropriate local authority over comprehensive planning, zoning, development review, concurrency, infrastructure planning, impact mitigation, and other growth-management functions; and oppose or seek modification of legislation that materially impairs the County's ability to plan for and manage growth consistent with local conditions and infrastructure capacity.

E. Environmental Protection, Conservation and Resiliency. Preserve the County's ability to protect and responsibly manage natural resources, water resources, conservation lands, coastal resources, and environmentally sensitive areas; support measures that enhance resiliency and environmental quality; and oppose or seek modification of legislation that materially impairs appropriate local environmental protections, shifts environmental responsibilities or costs to the County without adequate resources, or adversely affects the County's ability to address environmental and resiliency needs.

F. Legal Authority, Liability and Litigation Exposure. Preserve appropriate governmental protections and enforcement authority and oppose or seek modification of legislation that creates significant new County liability, private causes of action, attorney-fee exposure, penalties, reduced governmental immunity, restrictions on lawful County enforcement, or other material litigation risk.

G. Economic Development and Community Competitiveness. Preserve appropriate County tools and flexibility to attract, retain and support businesses, employment, investment, tourism, redevelopment, workforce development, and strategic infrastructure; and oppose or seek modification of legislation that materially impairs locally adopted economic-development strategies or the County's economic competitiveness without a compelling statewide justification.

Section 3. Delegated Authority

A. Legislative Advocacy Authority

The County Administrator, or designee, acting in coordination with the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (OIA), is authorized to coordinate legislative advocacy concerning:

1. Matters specifically identified in the Board-adopted annual Legislative Action Plan; and

2. Legislation, amendments, regulations, or other governmental policy proposals reasonably determined to materially implicate one or more Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles established in this Policy.

Within that authority, OIA, affected County staff, contracted legislative representatives, and Commissioners may communicate support, concerns, or opposition; provide technical and factual information; seek, develop, or negotiate amendments; coordinate with governmental and association partners; provide testimony or written comments; and take other reasonable advocacy actions consistent with Board-established policy.

Separate Board approval is not required solely because a specific bill or amendment was not identified in the annual Legislative Action Plan, provided the advocacy position is reasonably supported by this Policy or other established Board policy.

B. Legislative Appropriation Authority

Following adoption of the annual Legislative Action Plan, the County Administrator, acting through OIA and in coordination with affected departments, contracted legislative representatives, and members of the legislative delegation as appropriate, is authorized to prioritize, prepare, and submit legislative appropriation requests supporting projects and funding priorities identified in the annual Legislative Action Plan. The County Administrator may determine appropriation request amounts and modify project descriptions, supporting documentation, and related submission materials based on legislative guidance, sponsor input, funding opportunities, program requirements, project readiness, and other relevant considerations.

C. Limitation

Delegated authority implements Board-established policy. It does not authorize staff to establish a materially new or inconsistent County policy position.

Section 4. Legislative Impact Screening and Strategy Review

OIA will monitor and evaluate legislation and other governmental policy proposals that may have a material effect on St. Johns County and will coordinate with Administration, the Office of the County Attorney (OCA), County departments, governmental partners, and other appropriate sources regarding matters that may affect County interests. The LAP and Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles provide policy direction and delegated advocacy authority when a material County issue is identified.

The nature and extent of legislative review, analysis, coordination, and communication should be proportionate to the reasonably anticipated significance of the issue to St. Johns County and available resources. OIA will coordinate a collaborative review process involving Administration, OCA, affected departments, legislative representatives, and others as appropriate to evaluate potential impacts, identify advocacy opportunities, consider potential

amendments, and determine whether existing Board policy provides a reasonably clear basis for advocacy or whether additional Board direction may be warranted.

Section 5. Implementation of Board-Established Legislative Policy

The annual Legislative Action Plan and the Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles establish the County's legislative policy positions and priorities. When a legislative or governmental policy matter is reasonably determined to support, adversely affect, or otherwise materially relate to those Board-established priorities and principles, the County Administrator, acting through OIA and appropriate County staff, may undertake advocacy activities consistent with those positions without additional Board action.

Board consideration is required when the annual Legislative Action Plan, the Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles, and other established Board policy do not provide a reasonably clear basis for the County's advocacy position, or when additional Board direction or formal Board action is otherwise required.

Section 6. Time-Sensitive Legislative Action

When a committee hearing, amendment deadline, floor action, conference process, agency action or other legislative deadline requires action before the next regular Board meeting, the County Administrator or designee may authorize advocacy consistent with the LAP, the Standing Legislative Advocacy Principles, or other established Board policy without awaiting additional Board action. Significant legislative developments or advocacy actions will be communicated to Commissioners through regular legislative updates, or other appropriate communication.

Section 7. Constructive Amendment Strategy

Constructive engagement is an advocacy method under this Policy rather than a separate Standing Legislative Advocacy Principle. When legislation presents significant County concerns, Administration, OIA, OCA and the County’s legislative representatives should, when practicable, identify the specific provisions causing the concern and determine whether amendment language or another practical solution can mitigate the impact. They may work directly with sponsors, delegation members, committee staff, legislative leadership, agencies, FAC, regional partners, and other stakeholders when consistent with Board-established policy. Opposition to a bill does not preclude simultaneous efforts to secure mitigating amendments.

Section 8. Commissioner Communications

During the legislative session and at other appropriate times, the County Administrator, acting through OIA, will provide Commissioners with information regarding significant legislative and governmental policy matters affecting St. Johns County. Communications may include periodic updates, issue summaries, analyses, or other information concerning proposed legislation, advocacy activities, legislative developments, and potential County impacts. Additional communications may be provided when time-sensitive matters or significant developments warrant more immediate awareness.

Section 9. Department Participation and Legislative Coordination

OIA will serve as the County's central coordinating point for legislative review, analysis, communications, and advocacy conducted pursuant to this Policy to promote consistency, accuracy, and effective use of governmental relationships. Because assessment of legislative impacts often requires subject matter expertise from affected service areas, County departments are expected to provide timely assistance in identifying, evaluating, and communicating the potential operational, financial, legal, service-delivery, and policy impacts of proposed legislation and governmental policy proposals affecting their operations, responsibilities, services, programs, finances, or regulatory functions. OIA will coordinate, as appropriate, with Administration, OCA, affected departments, contracted legislative representatives, FAC, and regional or governmental partners.

Section 10. Board and Commissioner Roles

Nothing in this Policy limits an individual Commissioner’s ability to communicate his or her individual views concerning legislation. However, unless the Board has established a position on the matter or otherwise authorized the communication, the Commissioner should not represent that he or she is speaking on behalf of the Board. Commissioners may participate in legislative advocacy activities consistent with Board-established policy, including communications with legislators and other governmental officials and participation in legislative meetings, delegation hearings, committee hearings, and related governmental forums. Commissioners should coordinate such activities with OIA when practicable to promote consistency, effective advocacy, and appropriate follow-up.

Section 11. Reporting and Accountability

OIA will maintain appropriate records related to legislative matters addressed pursuant to this Policy. Following each legislative session, OIA will provide the Board with a summary of significant legislative outcomes and developments affecting St. Johns County.

Section 12. Relationship to Funding and Grant Priorities

The annual LAP may identify County projects for legislative appropriations, grants, or other governmental funding opportunities. This Policy does not alter or limit existing County authority, grant-management procedures, or administrative processes for identifying, applying for, accepting, or administering grant funding. Legislative advocacy related to appropriations or funding priorities identified in the annual LAP may be conducted pursuant to this Policy when appropriate.

Section 13. Continuing Effect and Relationship to Board Direction

This Policy is intended to serve as a standing companion to the annual Legislative Action Plan and to remain in effect until amended or repealed by the Board. It does not supersede specific Board direction. If a conflict exists, the specific Board direction controls. The Board may modify or withdraw delegated advocacy authority at any time.

2027 Legislative Action Plan And Advocacy Policy

Christine Valliere, Director
Economic Development & Intergovernmental Affairs





Legislative Action Plan

Purpose
Serves as the County's roadmap for pursuing legislative priorities and governmental funding opportunities.

The Plan:

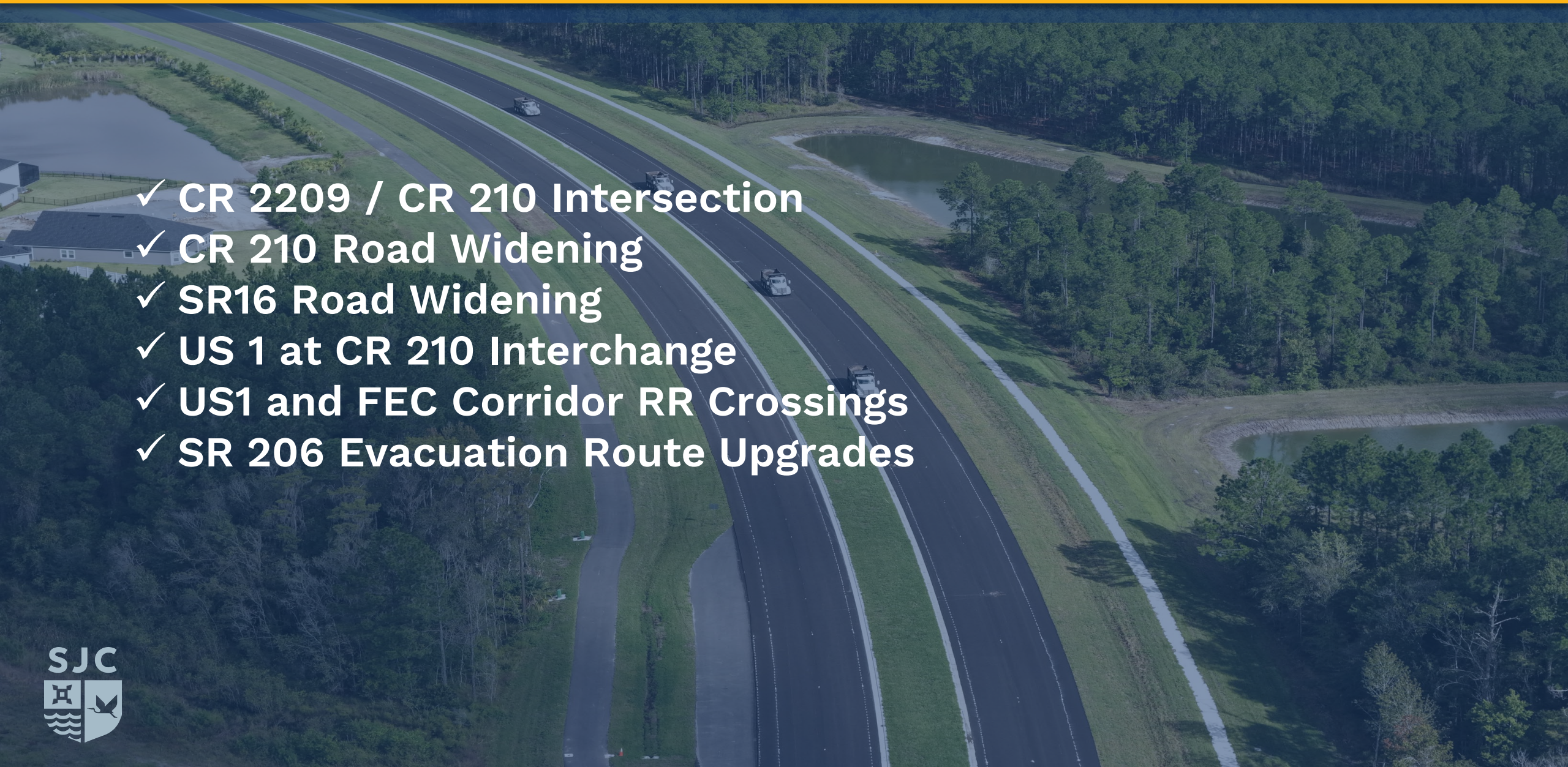
- Identifies specific legislative and policy priorities.
- Establishes priority County projects for legislative appropriations, grants, and other governmental funding opportunities.
- Provides direction for coordination and advocacy with the County's legislative delegation and governmental partners.
- Establishes the foundation for subsequent actions needed to advance the Board's priorities.

2027 Legislative Priorities

- Transportation Infrastructure
- Community Resilience
- Agriculture & Conservation
- Government Operations
- Growth Management Policy Advocacy



Transportation Infrastructure



- ✓ CR 2209 / CR 210 Intersection
- ✓ CR 210 Road Widening
- ✓ SR16 Road Widening
- ✓ US 1 at CR 210 Interchange
- ✓ US1 and FEC Corridor RR Crossings
- ✓ SR 206 Evacuation Route Upgrades

Community Resilience – Florida Museum of Black History



Community Resilience

- ✓ Waldron Family Park & Boat
- ✓ Beach Restoration
- ✓ Hasting/Deep Creek Flood Control Mitigation System
- ✓ Guana Water Quality
- ✓ Guana Flood Mitigation System
- ✓ Summer Haven Estuary Protection Area
- ✓ World Golf Village Stormwater Harvesting

Agriculture & Conservation

- **Water First North Florida** - phased funding for aquifer recharge to restore flows and ensure long-term water supply.
- **Protecting Working Lands** - expand conservation easement programs to preserve family farms.
- **Rural Renaissance** - prioritize rural infrastructure and quality of life; update rural community definition.
- **Florida Forever** - broaden restoration efforts for Summer Haven and Matanzas River Estuary; extend Blueway boundary.
- **Florida Communities Trust** – advocate for dedicated grant funding for resource-based, passive park acquisition.



Government Operations

- **St. Johns County Regional Fire Rescue Training Facility** – request funding for Phase II.
- **Tri-County Medical Examiner Equipment** – request funding for enhanced x-ray machine.
- **St. Johns Courtroom Expansion** – request funding for civil court and jury assembly area to meet growing judicial needs.
- **Libraries** - continue federal and state investment in critical library programs.
- **Unfunded Mandates** - oppose reporting requirements without state funding support.
- **Confidential Information** - create records exemption to protect child welfare staff data.



Growth Management Policy Advocacy

- **SB 686 (2026) Agricultural Enclaves** – consider repeal or glitch bill to address statutory ambiguities and unintended consequences.
- **SB 180 (2025)** – modifications to provide more flexibility for local land development needs.
- **Live Local Act (2023)** – amendments to ensure development is consistent with local comprehensive plan, infrastructure capacity and community needs.
- **Blue Ribbon Bill (2026)** – advocate for maintenance of Home Rule authority if refiled in 2027.
- Bills will require sponsorship by a member of the Florida House of Representatives and a member of the Florida Senate.



St. Johns County Legislative Advocacy Policy

Purpose

Establishes a consistent framework for responding to legislation and governmental policy proposals throughout the year.

The Policy:

- Establishes standing advocacy principles addressing recurring matters of County interest.
- Authorizes timely advocacy consistent with the Legislative Action Plan or standing principles, without requiring separate Board approval for each bill.
- Provides for coordinated legislative review, constructive engagement, and communication with Commissioners.
- Preserves the Board’s authority to establish new policy positions and provide additional direction when needed.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