

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA  
WORKSHOP  
2022 State & Federal  
Legislative Priorities  
September 28, 2021**

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners met for a Workshop on the 2022 State & Federal Legislative Priorities on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Present were Chairman Rick Minor, Vice-Chairman Bill Proctor, and Commissioners Carolyn Cummings, Brian Welch, Jimbo Jackson, Nick Maddox, and Kristen Dozier. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, County Attorney Chasity O’Steen and Clerk to the Board Beryl H. Wood.

Facilitator(s): Andrew Johnson, Assistant to the County Administrator  
Nicki Paden, County Administrator Office, Management Analyst  
Miranda Hernandez, Management Intern  
Jeff Sharkey and Taylor Biehl, Capitol Alliance Group  
Sarah Vilms and Victoria Cram, Squire Patton Boggs (via Zoom)

County Administrator Long opened the workshop and asked Andy Johnson, Assistant to the County Administrator, to provide the initial presentation.

Mr. Johnson stated that the workshop is held annually to offer the Board an opportunity to develop its priorities for the upcoming legislative session. He indicated that the lobbying teams would provide the Board a synopsis of the upcoming state and federal legislative sessions. Staff then provided an overview of six legislative appropriation requests; twenty-two projects for potential grant funding; eleven state-level legislative policy issues, and seven federal policy issues proposed for the 2022 state and federal legislative sessions.

Chairman Minor paused for public comment.

- Mark Early, Leon County Supervisor of Elections, appeared for the Board seeking support on their legislative priorities.

Nicki Paden, Management Analyst, discussed the proposed priorities in 2022. Ms. Paden noted there are issues that the Board considers every year.

Table 1: Proposed 2022 Legislative Funding Requests Request: Amount Requested:

Request	Amount Requested	Project Phase
Backup Generators – Branch Libraries and Community Centers	\$500,000	Capital/Fixed Assets
Leon Works Expo and Junior Apprenticeship	\$50,000	Program Funding
Old Plank Road Drainage Project	\$500,000	Construction
Baum Road Drainage Project	\$450,000	Construction

Fords Arm/Timberlane Tributary Restoration	\$500,000	Design
Fred George Wetland Restoration	\$400,000	Construction

**Proposed Policy Requests 2022 State Legislative Session**

Ms. Paden stated like most legislation, Leon County’s policy requests are generally incremental in nature, focusing on issues specific to Leon County that are built upon over the course of several legislative sessions. Additionally, staff annually evaluates the trends and issues affecting all County programs and services to identify potential legislative policy priorities. Statewide significant substantive issues range from maintaining the County’s home rule authority to the state’s current fiscal challenges and efforts to further reduce the size and scope of state government.

Leon County’s lobbying team will monitor the budgetary and programmatic decisions made by the Legislature to determine their impact, if any, on local governments in the form of cost shifts or unfunded mandates. In addition to the substantive policy issues identified by the County, staff works closely with the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) to identify developing issues that affect counties throughout the state. In many cases, Leon County joins FAC to advocate for or against initiatives that would substantially impact counties. The following is a list of the proposed Leon County 2022 state legislative policy priorities. A brief overview of each issue was provided that includes the specific recommended legislative action.

Ms. Paden presented the following State Legislative Policy Issues:

- Protection of the State Workforce - *Support*
- County Health Department Structure - *Support*
- Remove the monument to Confederate Soldiers from the Leon County area at the Florida Capitol Complex - *Support*
- Establish Florida’s Emancipation Day as a State Holiday - *Support*
- Amtrak Passenger Rail Restoration - *Support*
- Medicaid Expansion - *Support*
- Public Safety on College and University Campuses - *Oppose*
- Support the FAC Legislative Program - *Support*

She presented three new issues for the Board to consider for this Legislative Session:

- Preemption of COVID-19 Mitigative Measures - *Oppose*
- Remote Public Meetings During Public Health Emergencies - *Support*
- Public Records Exemption for Election Workers - *Support*

Chairman Minor shared on the item for Public Records Exemption for Election Workers at last week’s FAC Innovation and Policy Conference Meeting, the Finance Tax and Administration Committee met on this item along with other issues. He stated the end result was to adopt a motion to support of the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections’ legislative priority on this item.

Commissioner Dozier asked if federal legislative priorities were going to be discussed next. Nicki Paden stated that they would be moving on to federal legislative priorities if there were no other comments or questions. Commissioner Dozier stated that she would like to discuss state legislative priorities before moving on to federal priorities.

Commissioner Dozier stated that Leon Works wanted to reach out directly to schools. One option suggested was a career day at area schools.

Commissioner Welch encouraged every student to take advantage work force development.

Commissioner Dozier noted she would like to see an increase in the amount of money for Leon Works.

County Administrator Long stated that this specific item could be brought back during the ratification vote that will take place at the October 12 Board meeting.

Commissioner Welch asked County Administrator Long if the county was currently using the Amtrak station building as an office for Tourism and if that affected the Amtrack restoration item.

- County Administrator Long stated that the county use of the office building would not affect a future depot for Amtrak. Additionally, if they do receive funding for Amtrak expansion, the Board would be able to revisit this item.

Chairman Minor stated that he is also interested in the restoration of the Amtrak Rail in Leon County. He asked about future prospects for Amtrack expansion.

- Mr. Sharkey stated that future prospects depend on congressional action. If Congress does pass funding for restoring railroad tracks, a more detailed plan can be brought to the Board in the future.

Commissioner Cummings spoke about public record exemption for county attorneys, relating to address and other information. She asked if this issue had been added to the list of priorities.

- Mr. Johnson stated that workshops include legislative priorities to support issue of record exemption.

Mr. Sharkey thanked the Board for allowing Capitol Alliance Group to represent the county and noted the amount of federal money received.

Mr. Johnson thanked the Board for their leadership. He stated that Commissioners would receive weekly legislative updates throughout session.

Vice-Chair Proctor asked about the status of gas tax revenue in the state and if there was a surplus of money from this source.

- Mr. Sharkey replied that he does not believe so. He acknowledged that currently, gas prices are high. He emphasized that there are more electric vehicle charging stations infrastructure being built and there is a push for electric vehicles.

Chairman Minor stated he would like to do more research on the Supervisor of Election's list of priorities before taking a stand on any of the items of the list.

Ms. Paden reported that the County has been working closely to propose earmark projects. The new issue the county is willing to support is the Federal Disaster Housing Stability Act of 2021. The County is proposing support for Federal Cannabis Legislation and other related cannabis legislation. There is support for the Tallahassee Foreign Trade Zone Application. It is recommended to continue the County's support of the NACo Legislative Program.

Victoria Cram, Squire Patton Boggs, spoke about the County's excellent team and thanked Mr. Johnson and Ms. Paden for their direction. She spoke on the success with American Rescue Plan and important highlights include \$57 million for COVID funding, sewer, and drinking water. She also discussed the additional \$7 million for emergency rental assistance.

Sarah Vilms, with Squire Patton Boggs, stated that there is a possibility of a government shutdown if Congress is unable to pass legislation for a budget extension. On September 30, 2021, the federal government will cease funding on several projects, this leaves Congress with a continuous resolution (CR) and it is used to provide additional time to Congress. She noted that complicating all of this is the debt limit that needs to be raised so that the US won't default on our debt. She shared that the US Currency is considered the *Gold Standard* in the world. She stated that there are 2 earmark projects for community funding requests currently pending: The two requests are \$1 million for the Concord School and \$1.6 million Lake Henrietta Restoration of the storm water facility insulation.

Mrs. Cram updated the legislative agenda on physical infrastructure. Congressman Lawson included a proposal for \$5 million for Magnolia Drive in the Invest in America Act. After bipartisan partnership to amend the bill, specific funding for local projects were removed and instead are in a pot to receive funding from the large pool of available funding. Available funding includes \$55 billion for energy efficiency, \$66 billion for the restoration of passenger Amtrak rails and new corridors rail service. They will not know until September 30<sup>th</sup> if this bill was approved. She stated that the reconciliation package will need more time before it will be passed. The reconciliation package is linked to the Invest in America Act. There are conversations between Congress and the White House about this legislation. She believes that both pieces of legislation will probably be voted on and passed in December.

Mrs. Vilms shared those provisions about climate change that had been removed from the Invest in America Act have been included in the reconciliation package. However, there has been discussion to reduce the amount of funding within the package which may cut some of these provisions.

Commissioner Dozier thanked Mrs. Vilms and Mrs. Cram for the update. She asked about the climate sustainability issues and marijuana legislation. She would like to track legislation for these issues and other legislation to assist farmers around the region.

Mr. Johnson stated that there will be more details to come about mental health issues and legislation in the weekly updates.

Chairman Minor stated that he would like an update when the passenger railroad funding is passed. He thanked the team for the reconciliation package explanation. He inquired about the push to reduce the package and what changes could be brought about by the decrease.

- Mrs. Cram stated that the Democrats were trying to prioritize the issues to determine what would be cut.

The 2022 Florida Legislative Session will be held from January 11 through March 11, 2022, with interim committee weeks beginning in September. The second session of the 117th U.S. Congress will convene on January 3, 2022. Staff recommends several policy and appropriations priorities for the 2022 state and federal legislative sessions, arranged as follows:

- 6 legislative appropriation requests;
- 22 County projects for potential state and/or federal grant funding;
- 11 state-level legislative policy priorities, including support of the FAC 2022 Legislative

- Priorities, for the 2022 Florida Legislative Session; and
- 7 federal legislative policy priorities, including support of the NACo 2022 Legislative Priorities, for the second session of the 117th United States Congress.

Table 2: Proposed Projects for 2022 Executive Agency Grant Requests

Request:	Amount:	Project Phase:
Capital Circle Southwest	\$100 million	Construction
Woodville Highway (Capital Circle to Paul Russell Road)	\$29.7 million	Construction
Northeast Gateway (Welaunee Blvd./Shamrock St.)	\$25 million	Construction
Miccosukee Road Bridge Replacement	\$2 million	ROW/Construction
Orange Avenue Widening & Beautification	\$1.9 million	Design
Old Bainbridge/Capital Circle NW Intersection Improvements	\$955,000	ROW/Construction
North Monroe Gateway	\$520,000	Construction
Tram Road Crossdrain Replacement	\$600,000	Construction
Veterans Memorial Drive (CR 59) Bridge Replacement	\$530,000	Design/Construction
Magnolia Drive Trail	\$5 million	Construction
St. Marks Headwaters Greenway Trails	\$800,000	Construction
Orchard Pond Greenway Trail, Phase II	\$350,000	Design/Permitting
Capital Cascades Trail Segment 4	\$2.5 million	Design
Lake Henrietta Renovation	\$1.5 million	Design/Construction
Concord School Restoration	\$1 million	Construction
Fred George Greenway Boardwalk & Observation Decks	\$650,000	Design/Construction
J. Lee Vause Park Boardwalk & Observation Decks	\$650,000	Design/Construction
Williams Landing Improvements	\$900,000	Design/Construction
Coe Landing Improvements	\$220,000	Design/Construction
Harbinwood Estates Septic-to-Sewer Project	\$2.5 million	Design/Permit/Land Acquisition
Centerville Trace Septic-to-Sewer Project	\$4.25 million	Design/Permit/Construction
Leon South Regional Water System	\$750,000	Design/Construction
Springs Protection Projects*	Several	All Phases
Hazard and Flood Mitigation Projects**	Several	All Phases

*\* The County has grant agreements in place with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to provide funding support for several additional septic-to-sewer projects in southside Leon County located in the Primary Springs Protection Zone to improve water quality for citizens.*

*\*\* The County has submitted several hazard and flood mitigation projects consistent with the County's Local Mitigation Strategy for potential funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Mitigation program. The Board adopted the most recent update to the Local Mitigation Strategy at the July 11, 2017, meeting.*

### **Proposed Policy Requests 117 United States Congress, Second Session**

Each year staff evaluates the trends and issues affecting all County programs and services to identify potential policy or substantive legislative issues at the federal level. Most substantive issues affecting the County at the federal level are coordinated through the County's National Association of Counties (NACo) representation. Squire Patton Boggs, the County's federal contract lobbying firm, works closely with staff on select federal policy issues that have been identified as Leon County priorities by the Board. Staff coordinates regularly with the County's federal lobbying team by phone and e-mail to strategize on key budget issues and to identify federal grant opportunities that could potentially fund Leon County projects. In addition, Squire Patton Boggs assists staff in preparing regular updates to the Board on federal legislative activities. A comprehensive update on federal legislative and regulatory actions compiled by Squire Patton Boggs is included as Attachment #2 to this agenda item.

The following are the proposed Leon County 2022 federal legislative policy requests for the second session of the 117th Congress:

- Concord School Restoration project - support
- Lake Henrietta Stormwater Facility project - support
- Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Member-Designated Projects -support
- Amtrak Passenger Rail Restoration- Support
- Federal Disaster Housing Stability Act of 2021-Support
- Federal Cannabis Legislation – Support
- Foreign Trade Zone Application – Support
- National Association of Counties (NACo) Issues -- Support

### **ANALYSIS OF MINORITY, WOMEN, AND SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (MWSBE) PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT LOBBYING CONTRACTS**

On June 8, 2021, the Board directed staff to provide an analysis exploring trends and best practices related to Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprises (MWSBE) participation in local government lobbying contracts. Leon County's MWSBE Program, managed and operated under the Office of Economic Vitality, is intended to promote equitable opportunities for minority, women, and small businesses to participate in local government purchasing and contracting.

The program ensures utilization of MWSBE firms in all aspects of the County's procurement activity, consistent with aspirational targets set forth in the County's purchasing policy.

Leon County has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to promoting minority participation through its contracted lobbying services. Since 2008, the County's contract with Capitol Alliance Group has included a minimum MWSBE participation level of 13.5 percent. In light of the upcoming expiration of the County's state lobbying contract, during the June 8, 2021, meeting, the Board authorized the County Administrator to execute a new contract for state lobbying services with Capitol Alliance Group. At that time, the Board approved increasing the County's contracted rate with Capitol Alliance Group from \$70,000 to \$85,000 for the purposes of increasing the MWSBE subcontractor participation requirement in the contract. Accordingly, the County's contract with Capitol Alliance Group beginning October 1, 2021, requires a minimum MWSBE participation level of 28.8%.

During the June 8 meeting, the Board also requested an analysis on the approaches of other localities across the state related to MWSBE participation in contracted lobbying services. In preparing this item, staff reviewed the state and federal lobbying contracts of other like-sized counties across the state (Alachua, Escambia, Lake, Osceola, St. Johns, and St. Lucie Counties) for comparative purposes. Although some of these counties have included MWSBE participation as an evaluation criterion in recent solicitations for lobbying services, none currently include a provision in their lobbying contracts similar to Leon County's contract with Capitol Alliance Group which affirmatively requires MWSBE participation.

This workshop item presents a slate of proposed legislative priorities for the 2022 Florida Legislative Session and the 2nd Session of the 117th U.S. Congress, including both legislative appropriation requests and substantive policy priorities. The Board may wish to approve the list of priorities as presented, or may wish to revise, add, or provide any additional direction. As always, the County's legislative team will continue to work closely with Capitol Alliance Group, Squire Patton Boggs, FAC, and NACo to advocate for the County's legislative priorities and to address other emerging issues affecting county governments. Status updates on legislative activity will be presented to the Board and senior County staff throughout the 2022 Florida Legislative Session through weekly Capitol Update newsletters. Following the adjournment of the 2022 Florida Legislative Session, a final report will be presented to the Board in late spring or early summer 2022 to provide a summary of the County's progress toward its legislative priorities and any other significant bills affecting county governments.

*Commissioner Dozier moved, seconded by Chairman Minor, to approve Options 1-2: Option 1. Approve the 2022 state and federal legislative priorities.*

*Option 2. Provide any additional Board direction on the County's 2022 state and federal legislative priorities. The motion carried 4-0 (Vice-Chairman Proctor, Commissioner's Jackson, and Maddox, not in the chambers).*



**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

**LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ATTEST:



*Bill Proctor*

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Proctor, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

*Gwendolyn Marshall*

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gwendolyn Marshall, Clerk of Court  
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida