



2020

City of Stuart

Legislative Priorities



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City of Stuart City Commission



Mayor
Mike Meier
Group I



Vice Mayor
Eula Clarke
Group V



Commissioner
Becky Bruner
Group II



Commissioner
Merritt Matheson
Group III



Commissioner
Kelli Glass Leighton
Group IV

City of Stuart Federal and State Delegation



U.S. Senator
Marco Rubio
Florida



U.S. Senator
Rick Scott
Florida



U.S. Representative
Brian Mast
18th District FL



Senator
Gayle Harrell
District 25
Florida Senate



Representative
MaryLynn Magar
District 82
Florida House
of Representatives



Representative
Toby Overdorf
District 83
Florida House
of Representatives



Funding

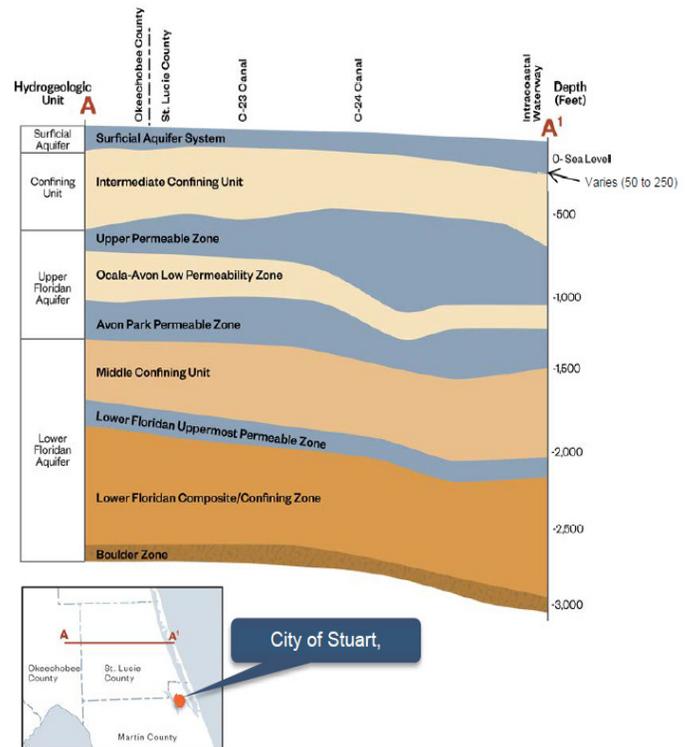
Alternative Water Supply Project - Phase II - \$1 Million

As a result of increasing concerns regarding a long-term sustainable water supply in the City of Stuart which is susceptible to saltwater intrusion, contamination from per-fluorinating compounds, and other emerging contaminants, the Stuart City Commission authorized City Staff to move forward with an alternative water supply project by adopting Resolution 115-2017 authorizing the rate schedules identified in the Water, Wastewater and Sanitation Rate Study dated August 14, 2017. This study included additional debt service for the City's Alternative Water Supply Project.

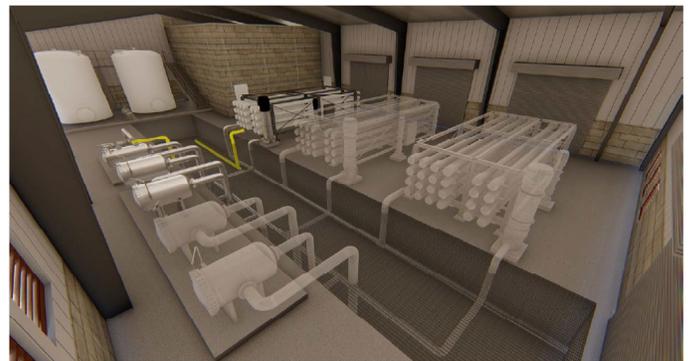
The 1st phase of the Alternative Water Supply Project included the design and construction of a 1.0 million gallon per day Florida Aquifer Supply Well. The design has been completed and the City is currently accepting bids for the construction of the supply well.

The 2nd phase of the Alternative Water Supply Project includes the design and construction of the RO Facility, including the wellhead for the Floridan well, raw water main, pre-treatment, membrane system, post-treatment, chemical systems, concentrate disposal pipeline, electrical/standby power, supervisory control and data acquisition system. The engineer's opinion of probable construction cost for the RO Facility Phase 2 project is \$12,212,000.00. Construction is expected to commence in February 2021 with completion anticipated in August 2022.

This request is for \$1,000,000.00 representing 8% of the probable construction cost.



Source: SFWMD 2018 Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan Update, Figure 1-2.



The City of Stuart REQUESTS state assistance in the form of a \$1 million, non-recurring appropriations for Phase II of its Alternative Water Supply Project.

Water Quality & Water Supply

In order to curb the harmful impacts of freshwater discharges, state resources and funding is desperately needed for capital projects designed to retain and treat billions of gallons of freshwater, from wherever it may originate. These resources are also needed on an annual basis in order to incentivize septic users to convert to municipal sewer systems, mitigating any further local pollution impacts to the waterways. Additionally, as new science and discoveries open the way for more restrictive pollution standards, utilities like the City of Stuart will look to alternative water sources like the lower Floridan Aquifer. Funding for a new generation of water supply projects and programs will be required in order to manage these increasingly complex issues.



The City of Stuart SUPPORTS enhanced levels of State funding for water quality and supply related projects and programs, including appropriations for septic to sewer conversions and alternative water supply.

Coastal Resiliency

As Florida's coastal communities continue to grow, natural infrastructural improvements and systems will be needed to buffer shorelines, reduce wave action caused by tropical systems, and improve overall floodplain management. Although grants have traditionally been utilized as a means for communities to identify and discuss local challenges and areas for improvement, few resources have been committed towards capital infrastructure. These projects will be essential in achieving the goals and objectives identified in each community's coastal resiliency plan.



The City of Stuart SUPPORTS state-bolstered funding for coastal resiliency and flood mitigation projects that may limit the negative impacts of sea level rise and future storm damage.

Environmental Sustainability

Natural resources are a precious commodity and are not in infinite supply. Efforts within the State should be made to invest in renewable sources of energy while addressing existing pollution sources. In addition, future land and growth management must prioritize considerations for long-term environmental impacts caused by human population growth and urban sprawl. Commercial industries will need both incentives for switching to sustainable alternatives coupled with the imposition of economic deterrents to disincentivize ongoing, environmentally devastating practices. Similarly, commercial businesses and other industries must switch to alternative materials for packaging products that are more environmentally friendly than plastic and polystyrene. Traditional plastics do not biodegrade at the molecular level and are therefore, enduring pollutants that cannot be easily removed once they fragment into smaller particles.



The City of Stuart SUPPORTS establishing measurable statewide objectives towards reducing the overall carbon footprint of industrial, agricultural, and consumer operations within the State as a means of addressing the growing threat of global climate change. The City of Stuart also SUPPORTS policies that will reduce or eliminate single-use plastics and polystyrene materials as a means of curbing the overall contribution of pollution into the environment.

Local Self-Government

For more than 50 years, local governments in the State have been granted governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers expressly outlined in the Florida Constitution; enabling them to conduct municipal government, perform municipal functions, and render municipal services. Additionally, by law or resolution, each governing body has the Constitutional authority to transfer to or contract with another local government, any of its functions or powers as approved by its voters. These provisions were codified with the belief that the best government is the one closest to the people. In recent years, hundreds of bills were filed in the Legislature without regard or respect for the establishment of local self-government and the principle of “home rule.” Among these measures were broad attempts to disassemble community redevelopment agencies and preempt local governing regulations over businesses and professions, including the levying of local business taxes.



The City of Stuart OPPOSES any effort to undermine voter-derived Constitutional authorities of local self-government. The City also OPPOSES any legislative effort to diminish local management of businesses and professions by preempting such policy at the state level.

Reforming Revenue Sources

The Communication Services Tax (CST) currently accounts for more than \$900k in annual revenue for the City of Stuart. And like many small municipalities, Stuart has few options to raise additional revenue. The City of Stuart supports tax reform, but in a manner that is fair and equitable across the state. One potential reform could include eliminating the local portion of the CST altogether. To compensate for the lost revenue the state could levy another half or full cent sales tax – with funds to be almost entirely distributed to local governments. By eliminating the local portion of the telecommunication-user tax (CST) and providing a statewide half or full-cent increase in sales tax with all funds earmarked for local governments, costs would be shifted from residents, to tourists and residents alike. This change would allow for a more equitable and broad tax-base, benefitting all Florida residents.



The City of Stuart OPPOSES any legislation that erodes the CST without providing for an equal and fair funding source to match lost revenue. The City SUPPORTS tax reform by providing local governments with a more fair and equitable funding source via a statewide half or full-cent sales tax increase, with all funds from the additional tax, less administrative costs, to be earmarked for local governments.

Railway Safety Infrastructure

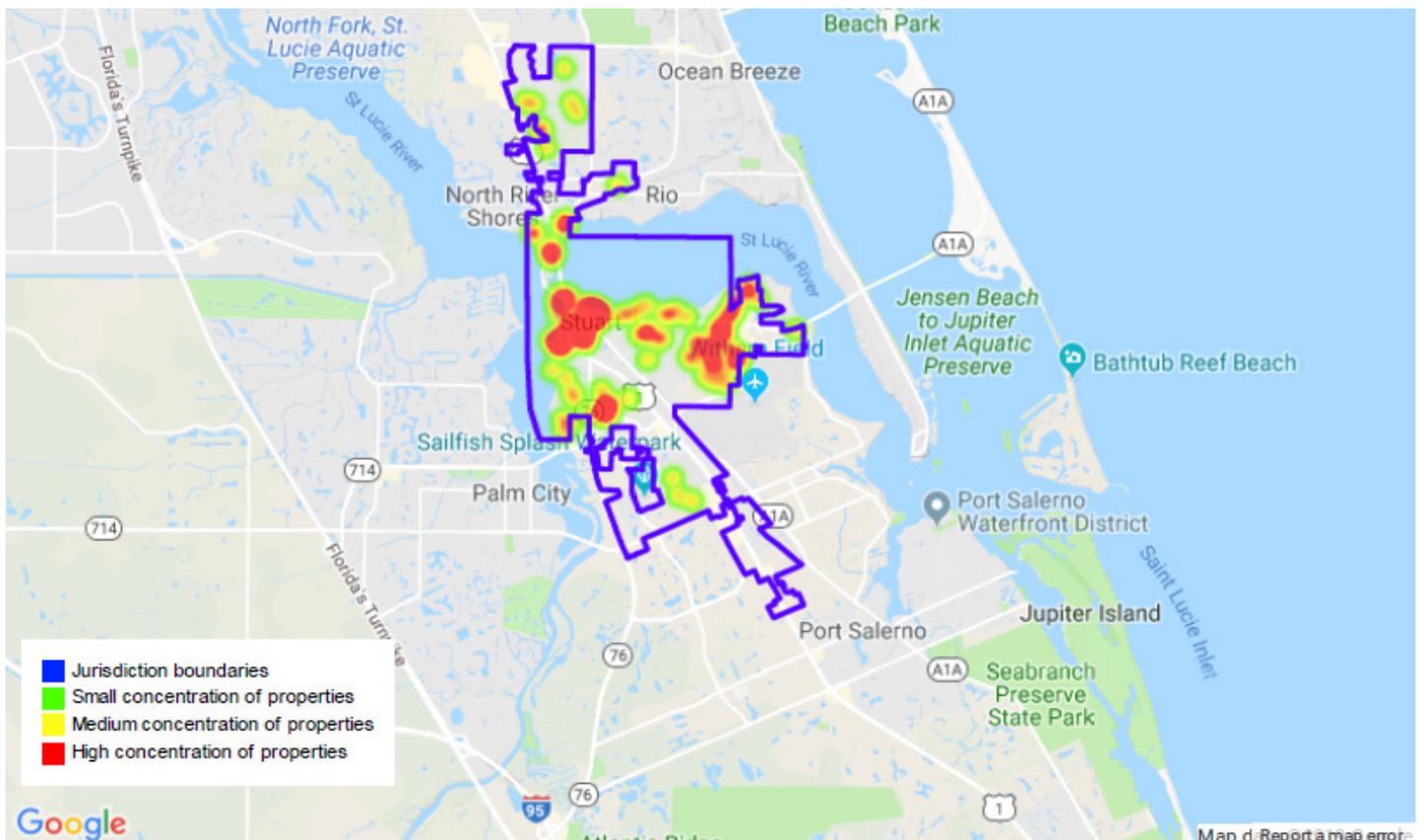
With the introduction of new high-speed passenger trains and rail lines, local governments are requesting new safety considerations at existing railway crossings. Currently local taxpayers are obligated to fund both the maintenance and capital costs associated with these critically important safety improvements, which are necessary to mitigate impacts from commercial enterprise. And while the federal government maintains legal supremacy over the approval of new railway traffic and infrastructure, the State of Florida can save its citizens the burden of covering these unplanned public impacts incurred by private industry by shifting such costs away from taxpayers and back to the companies from which they originate.



The City of Stuart SUPPORTS legislation that would improve railway safety requirements while shifting all or a portion of those costs to the originating companies whose operations impacts the quality of life and safety of residents.

Short-Term Rentals

The State of Florida has struggled to define the limitations of local government control over short-term (vacation) rentals for more than a decade and the problem has only been exacerbated by industry lobbying. The vacation rental industry is a non-traditional market designed in part to purposefully evade existing licensing and regulatory standards and practices tied to commercial business. Consequently, traditional residentially zoned areas in many communities have experienced an increase in commercial-like activity. Single-family residential areas with history of quiet enjoyment also experience more frequent disturbances and quality-of-life hardships with little means of holding responsible parties accountable – vacationers who have neither stake in the community nor pay local taxes.



The City of Stuart SUPPORTS legislation that provides local governments with more regulatory powers over short-term rentals. The City also SUPPORTS any statewide policies that establish equitable commercial standards of licensing and accountability for non-traditional vacation rentals and the hotel and motel industry alike.



Stuart, Florida is located on Florida's East Coast, which borders the St. Lucie River and West of the Indian River. The climate is pleasant with mild winters and warm summers. The annual average temperature is 72°. Annual rainfall averages 70.44 inches. Stuart is famed for Sailfishing and all other types of sport fishing. You can enjoy Ocean fishing, river and bay fishing, and fresh water fishing. The North and South forks of the St. Lucie River are tropical wonderlands for cruises. Stuart has quaint older neighborhoods in the downtown area. There is a mixture of town homes and condominiums. Stuart's successful revitalization program has made the Downtown area a pleasant ambiance, lined with shops and restaurants.

Population

Stuart's population typically varies between 16,000 and 21,000 with seasonal residents.

Municipal Finances

The city tax rate is currently 5.00 mils.

Industry

The top major employers are, Martin Memorial Hospital, Vought Aircraft, Municipal Government, and thousands of successful small businesses. The economy is driven by retail service, hospitality, construction and government sectors located throughout the city.

Growth

At the present time Stuart is a growing community, annexing new properties north and south of the city, currently 6.25 square miles. Revitalization is in progress in the Potsdam section of the downtown area as well as North of the new Roosevelt Bridge. The new Roosevelt Bridge was completed in 1996, and the Department of Transportation constructed the Evans Crary Bridge, which leads to Stuart's Public Beaches.

WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT



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