



2019



# CITY OF STUART LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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## CITY OF STUART CITY COMMISSION



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Becky Bruner  
Group II**



**Vice Mayor  
Eula Clarke  
Group V**



**Commissioner  
Mike Meier  
Group I**



**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**



# LEGISLATIVE FUNDING REQUEST

## ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLY PROJECT - \$16 MILLION

The City of Stuart owns and operates a water treatment plant (WTP), utilizing a lime-softening system with a permitted treatment capacity of 6 million gallons per day (mgd). The City currently treats raw water from the surficial aquifer system (SAS), which is threatened with pollution from various sources including local runoff, saltwater intrusion, and manmade synthetic and organic chemicals and compounds from historical industries. Much of this pollution is out of the scope of control of the City and would be impractical to mitigate directly. Due to these increasing threats to the existing water supply and potential for more stringent future drinking water regulations, the City needs to diversify its supply options by investing in the Floridian Aquifer System (FAS) as an alternate water supply (AWS). The City's Public Works Department, in collaboration with its consultants, has created a plan for an AWS which includes a Reverse Osmosis water treatment facility. The plan includes variability for capacity expansion well into the future, while providing the best modern water treatment technology for its users.

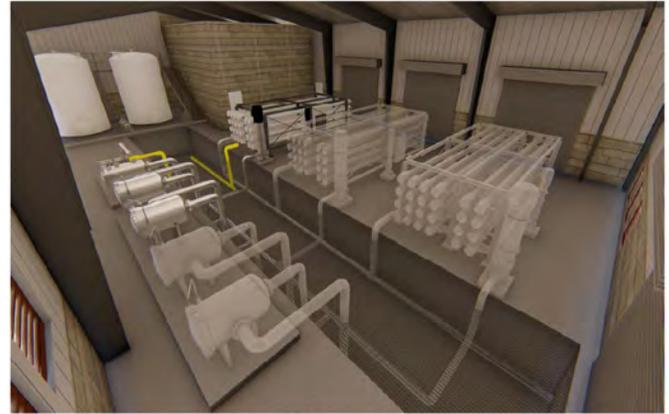


Figure 7-4B: Membrane Building Conceptual Interior View

**The City of Stuart REQUESTS state assistance in the form of non-recurring appropriations phased over multiple years for its Alternative Water Supply Project totaling more than \$16 million in capital costs.**



Figure 7-2: RO Conceptual Site Plan

# LEGISLATIVE POLICY ISSUES

## SEPTIC TO SEWER CONVERSIONS

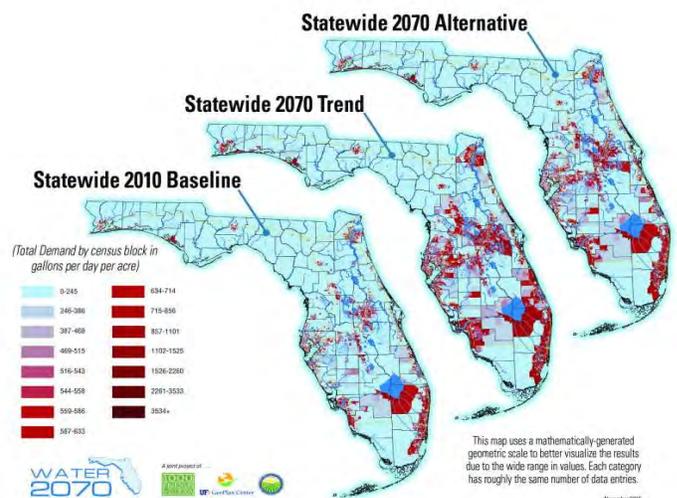


Florida's water quality problems are myriad; not solely a result of nutrient loading from freshwater discharges. Localized pollution is also a direct consequence of septage leaking into freshwater rivers and estuarial systems. As the water table elevation in Florida is inherently shallow, the impacts of septic tank leakage is problematic throughout. In order to curb this growing threat, State agency programs are needed to encourage homeowners to switch from septic tanks and instead, connect to sewer lines. The City of Stuart supports state investment in match grants and direct assistance for homeowners to incentivize new sewer connections wherever possible.

**The City of Stuart SUPPORTS providing annual appropriations for septic to sewer conversion programs to reduce localized pollution sources.**

## ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLY

As technology improves and the demand for potable water increases, public and private utilities will need to invest in new infrastructure. These capital projects will include investments in Reverse Osmosis technology, reuse of reclaimed water, and projects designed to mitigate saltwater intrusion. The City of Stuart has identified Reverse Osmosis as a viable and necessary component in meeting the future needs of its utility customers. The EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) advisories have only increased the urgency for local governments to invest in new technology. As a consequence, the City strongly supports bolstering State funding assistance.



**The City of Stuart SUPPORTS bolstering State funding for water quality and alternative water supply projects.**

# LEGISLATIVE POLICY ISSUES

## GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE



The City of Stuart supports a statewide legislative effort in reducing carbon emissions associated with industrial, agricultural, and consumer use. There are already dozens of coastal communities in Florida mitigating impacts resulting from sea level rise and saltwater intrusion. By 2045, tens of thousands of homes, particularly those in South Florida will be at risk for flooding nearly every other week. That number is expected to rise to around 1 million homes (or 1 in 10) by the end of the century. Similarly, the sudden surge in frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones has dramatically increased the need for infrastructural improvements and investment. Without taking bold steps to effectuate change at local and state levels by curbing carbon emissions, the probable future impacts will only strengthen over time and at a far greater cost.

**The City of Stuart SUPPORTS a statewide legislative effort in establishing measurable objectives towards reducing the overall carbon footprint of industrial, agricultural, and consumer sources within the State as a means of addressing the growing threat of global climate change.**

## COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Since 2017, legislation has been filed to both sunset CRAs, and to prevent future CRAs from forming. These preemptions were a direct response to criticisms of a few CRAs in the State, which have failed to follow best management practices. A "broad brush" approach to reforming CRAs should not be used as a means of punishing communities that have followed good management practices and whose projects have been well vetted by its community and stakeholders. The City of Stuart opposes any piece of legislation that would undo years of critical community redevelopment and undermine its local right to self-govern by allowing non-residents and state legislators alike to determine the future of development within that community.



**The City of Stuart OPPOSES any bill that undermines voter-derived Constitutional authorities of local self-government while urging the legislature to protect CRAs by not applying a "broad brush" to all programs for the shortcomings of a few.**

# LEGISLATIVE POLICY ISSUES

## REGULATIONS OF BUSINESSES & PROFESSIONS

Recent legislation has expanded similar measures in the past to deregulate businesses and professional occupations at the local level. Local governments across the State would also have no ability to manage their communities according to the wishes of their residents. Instead, a broad "general law" would need a proposal in the Legislature to be passed in order to change even the most minor of regulations. Not only would this process be entirely unviable, residents across the State would not have any input into the growth and development of their community. Local governments in the State have been granted governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers expressly outlined in the Florida Constitution for more than 50 years. As such, the City of Stuart opposes any legislation preempting its 'Home Rule.'



**The City of Stuart OPPOSES any legislative effort to diminish local management of businesses and professions by preempting such policy at the state level.**

## COMMUNICATION SERVICES TAX



The Florida CST includes both a state tax and a gross receipts tax for communication services and direct-to-home satellite services. Local governments may also levy a local CST at their discretion as provided by general law. In recent years, however, bills have been filed seeking to erode the total CST levied. The City of Stuart opposes any reduction or preemption of the local CST tax. Without this critically important levy, the City would lose over \$900k in revenue and be forced to reduce overall services to its residents. The City fully supports reforming the CST in a manner that is revenue neutral and that provides for a more broad and equitable tax base across the State.

**The City of Stuart OPPOSES any legislation that erodes the CST without providing for an equal and fair funding source to match lost revenue.**

# LEGISLATIVE POLICY ISSUES

## LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX



As revenue sources for municipalities continue to dwindle, new local taxing options are needed to maintain current service levels and expand for a growing population. Additionally, the State continues to hinder local government growth with unfunded mandates, further restricting each communities ability to respond to local economy dynamics. The Infrastructure Sales Surtax is an excellent revenue tool for local governments, but represents an inequity in revenue options for municipalities who cannot currently levy independently of the county. However, if the local portion of the telecommunication-user tax (CST) is eliminated, granting municipalities this taxing option could provide new revenue for all local governments while shifting costs from only 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 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

With the introduction of new high-speed passenger transit along existing railways, local governments are requesting new safety considerations at railway crossings. Currently local taxpayers are obligated to fund both the maintenance and capital costs associated with these safety improvements. With the advent of All Aboard Florida's high-speed passenger service between Miami and Orlando, the City of Stuart is under existing law, forced to cover both the capital improvement and maintenance costs of several crossroads within the city limits. In addition, the City will have to take extra measures in order to provide its downtown residents with a sealed corridor and quiet zone. While larger municipalities along the train route will surely benefit from this passenger transit, Stuart taxpayers will otherwise be burdened with the cost of maintaining crossroads without any benefit to the City unless new legislation is adopted to shift costs back to private industry.



**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 everyday lives of local residents.**



**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 17,000 and 21,000 with seasonal residents.

### **Municipal Finances**

The city tax rate is currently 4.75 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 sq 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 recently finished the Evans Crary Bridge, which leads to Stuart's Public Beaches.

WE THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

