



2023 City of Cocoa Legislative Priorities

1. Funding for all phases of the State Road 524 and State Road 501 Capacity and Safety Projects:

This is a 4.2 mile stretch of roadway from the I-95/SR 524 intersection to the SR 501/Michigan Avenue intersection. These projects will help to provide the necessary corridor improvements that will be regionally significant for the City of Cocoa, Port Canaveral, Kennedy Space Center, and the Central Florida Region. Filling the funding gaps of these projects is critical for the possibility of a Brightline Station and the continued development along this corridor which will help to fill the current shortage of housing options in this area and citywide. Safety is also a major consideration for this stretch of roadway which has limited safety features leading to increased injuries and fatalities.

2. Additional state funding for the SHIP Program for Affordable Housing initiatives:

Each year the City of Cocoa receives one of the lowest allocations of SHIP funding in the state of Florida. The funds received are used to help low-income families with home rehabilitation. Currently there are over 70 families on the waitlist for this program and with the current allocation, the City is only able to assist about two families per year.

3. Supporting additional funding for the conversion of the former Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center located in the Diamond Square Community of Cocoa:

The Diamond Square RDA was created in 1998 to leverage the neighborhood's existing assets, remove the blight, improve existing conditions, and stimulate new development activity in one of the more underserved communities of Cocoa. The new Dr. Joe Lee Smith Community Center opened in 2020 allowing for recreational programming for youth and community assistance services through the County. The former recreational facility can now be used to serve the greatest needs within the Diamond Square community. However, the facility needs to be renovated to allow for these various functions. The City of Cocoa would like to work with community partners such as a healthcare organization or provider to assist with providing healthcare services to this community. Receiving the necessary funding to renovate this facility and repurpose it for continued use will allow the city to provide much needed services to a community where gaps in service exist.

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4. Additional funding for Sustainability and Resiliency Projects/Initiatives:

The City of Cocoa has limited stormwater funding but a great need to improve infrastructure to ensure resiliency and sustainability. There are great needs in the community when it comes to rising sea levels and flooding concerns. The City received a state grant for a project along Indian River Drive and Dixon Blvd. to help with flooding but will have a difficult time funding the match for this grant. Other similar projects such as the Fiske Blvd. and Broadmoor Acres drainage project have been priorities to assist with these types of concerns. Additional funding will allow us the ability to complete some of these much-needed projects.

5. Funding for the redesign and construction of day slips at Lee Wenner Park:

Following the recent devastating storms, Ian and Nicole, the City of Cocoa's day slips located at Lee Wenner Park were destroyed. These slips allowed boaters to dock for a short period and enjoy the Cocoa Village area, increasing economic development to the area. The City will seek FEMA reimbursement and work with the Florida Inland Navigation District to secure the necessary funds to replace these slips with a more resilient and sustainable option.

6. Funding for infrastructure improvements to facilitate the siting of a Brightline Station in Cocoa:

The Brightline Commuter rail is one of the most significant improvements this region has experienced over the last few years. The new system will make it easier for communities to tap into new markets and welcome visitors, workers and new business to the area. Currently the plan does not include a stop along the route from South Florida to Orlando. The City of Cocoa would like to secure that stop by ensuring the necessary infrastructure improvements that would facilitate the station in our community. A stop in the Cocoa community would be transformative for the city, the entire County and the region due to our central location, making it a multi-modal hub for the Central Florida region.

7. Protection of local Home Rule:

The City of Cocoa supports the right for local governments to maintain Home Rule and allow local governments the authority to conduct municipal government functions and provide local services to the community.

8. Continued funding of bonus and incentive pay for first responders:

First responders are at the heart of every community. First responders put their lives on the line every day to protect the members of this community. Recruitment and retention efforts for this profession are the hardest it has been in some time. We are continually having to find ways to remain competitive to recruit and retain qualified individuals to fill these vital roles in the community. The City of Cocoa supports bonus and incentive pay for first responders to further assist recruitment and retention efforts.

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