

2026 State Legislative Priorities

Funding Requests

The city will seek funding through grants and other sources to assist in implementing projects to meet the needs of our citizens and improve their quality of life.

Elevate Bayshore Boulevard - \$1 million

Design an elevated road and adjacent bike/pedestrian trail to minimize flooding during high storm surges and intense rain events. Stormwater improvements are planned to help mitigate adjacent property flooding and water quality improvements as area discharges into Old Tampa Bay, which has known high nutrient loading.

Backup Emergency Power Generator Connection for Lift Stations - \$800,000

Bolster hurricane resiliency of the critical wastewater infrastructure by upgrading 78 lift stations with standardized generator connection boxes. The project will prevent widespread sewage backups, protecting public health, and private property immediately following a natural disaster.

Lift Station Rehab Program - \$3 million

Construct and refurbish five aging lift stations. This critical work will ensure the reliable operation of essential wastewater infrastructure and prevent sanitary sewer overflows to protect public health and the environment.

Issues to Support

The city of Clearwater supports legislation and programs that benefit municipalities and assists in implementing services to meet the unique needs of our citizens and improve their quality of life, including:

Attainable Housing

- Ensure all Sadowski State and Local Housing Trust Funds are used exclusively to finance affordable and workforce housing programs and rental assistance programs.
- Preserve the authority of local governments to manage growth consistent with each community's capacity to safeguard public safety, resilience, and financial stability.
- Continue property insurance reform that encourages stabilization of the market and protects consumers from rising home insurance costs.

Education

- Support the expansion of the VPK program to include children at a younger age, allowing parents to return to the workforce sooner.

Local Governance

- Allow local governments to regulate vacation rental properties to protect the health and welfare of their residents, visitors, and businesses.
- Preserve municipal government authority over equitable property tax decisions that fund essential programs and services, such as public safety, infrastructure, parks, and libraries, which define a community and support residents' quality of life.
- Maintain municipal authority to establish reasonable extraterritorial surcharges that reflect the actual cost of providing services outside of city limits, protecting municipal residents from subsidizing outside customers.

Public Safety

- Prohibit the carrying of weapons or firearms into specified locations, including government buildings, educational institutions, and public government meetings.
- Provide additional funding to local governments to address requirements of unauthorized public camping/sleeping (HB1375), which requires local governments to address the problem with law enforcement as a compliance tool.

Sustainability & Resiliency

- Provide additional funding to My Safe Florida Home, assisting eligible homeowners with free wind mitigation home inspections and matching grants to fortify homes against hurricane damage.
- Continue funding the State's beach renourishment program.
- Increase funding for the Resilient Florida Grants Program to assist municipalities with implementing climate-resilient infrastructure.

Issues to Oppose

- Erosion of local self-government (Home Rule), a constitutional right Floridians supported in a statewide vote 57 years ago.
- Increased regulation of, or restriction on, municipal operations and budgeting.
- Deterioration of existing laws related to offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Restriction or elimination of Community Redevelopment Agencies.
- Imposed consolidation of municipal and county services.

In addition, the city will support the Florida League of Cities in pursuing its legislative issues. The city will strive to inform residents of legislative initiatives that will impact the city and their quality of life and encourage citizen engagement with state legislators.