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2017 State Legislative Priorities

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

Countryside Sports Complex

- \$2.5 million
- Renovate restrooms and concessions for youth soccer, football, and lacrosse programs. Field renovations will also improve drainage. Complex will provide support facilities for Major League Soccer Spring Training (DC United) and out-of-market youth soccer and lacrosse events, strengthening sports tourism's economic impact in Pinellas County.

Sunshine Limitless Activity Area at the Long Center

- \$500,000
- Renovate the existing Sunshine Limitless Activity Area to include an expanded limitless playground, picnic facilities, and accessible hiking and exercise trail.

Ruth Eckerd Hall's Expanding the Experience Campaign

- \$2 million
- Transform lobby area into a grand lobby with a Cabaret Theatre where young students will perform for patrons prior to Ruth Eckerd Hall's main events. Renovations include reconfiguring the arrival/departure plaza, as well as patron concourses and galleries adjacent to the main auditorium.

Issues to Support

We will support legislation that is beneficial to Clearwater and other municipalities including:

- Maintain or increase funding for FRDAP, Land and Water Conservation, Southwest Water Management District Cooperative Funding, Cultural Affairs Facilities, State Aid to Libraries, Multi-type Library Cooperatives and Florida Forever.
 - Examples:
 - State Aid to Public Libraries, which aids and encourages the establishment of free library services throughout the State, was cut by \$5 million in 2015; Pinellas County will now receive \$785,000 (\$250,000 less than the year before)
 - Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program: City has had 2 highly-rated large projects (Countryside Sports Complex and McMullen Tennis Complex Expansion) not receive grant funding because the agency is only funding small projects.
- Provide full funding of the Florida State and Local Housing Trust Funds under the Sadowski Act.

- Repeal the state preemption of vacation rental property laws to allow local governments to regulate such properties to protect the health and welfare of their residents, visitors, and businesses.
- Support Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority’s FDOT grant funding request for the Clearwater Beach to Tampa International Airport Express Service. The project includes evaluating the multimodal transit options on SR 60 to address the congested corridor.
- Provide opportunities for increased and alternative revenue sources for municipal transportation infrastructure projects.
 - Much of the funding is generated through a tax on gasoline. As vehicles become more efficient, the gas tax revenue will continue to decrease. An example – allow municipalities the ability to hold a referendum to fund a local transportation project.
- Support public records reform to discourage or eliminate schemes designed to generate violations of public records laws or to disrupt agency operations.
- Support legislation that provides qualifying individuals a path to obtain a building code compliance certification through an accredited program approved by the Florida Building Commission.
- Renew the Entertainment Industry Financial Incentive Program to continue attracting film and television production to the State of Florida.
- Support funding to inspect and initiate repairs for residential sewer lateral pipelines.

Issues to Oppose

We will oppose legislation that is detrimental to Clearwater and other municipalities including:

- Preempts local government’s ability to regulate Airbnb rentals, or similar marketplaces, that allow individuals to rent out unused spaces in their homes for lodging.
- Unfunded mandates.
- Increased regulation of, or restrictions on, municipal operations and budgeting.
- Restriction or elimination of municipal revenues generated under the communications services and local business tax.
 - What the City has received in recent years:

	FY17 Budget	FY16 Budget	FY15 Actual	FY14 Actual	FY13 Actual
Communications Services Tax	\$ 4,965,400	\$ 5,066,700	\$ 4,918,612	\$ 5,061,031	\$ 5,470,390
Local Business Tax	\$ 2,135,000	\$ 2,135,000	\$ 2,028,722	\$ 2,111,269	\$ 2,111,906
Total	\$ 7,100,400	\$ 7,201,700	\$ 6,947,334	\$ 7,172,300	\$ 7,582,296

- Changes to existing laws related to offshore Oil Drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Imposed consolidation of municipal and county services.
- Reduced home rule authority of municipalities to regulate signage.

In addition, the City will support the Florida League of Cities in pursuing its legislative priorities.