COMMUNITY & URBAN AFFAIRS

Florida's counties experience continued growth most directly as population gains translate into new demands for infrastructure, public services, housing, and neighborhood planning. The state's 67 counties serve communities with distinct needs, development patterns, and priorities, and each must manage change without losing the character that attracts residents and businesses. Effective growth policy depends on locally adopted plans, meaningful public participation, intergovernmental coordination, and accountability between officials who make development decisions and the communities that bear their consequences. Counties need flexible tools to develop economic strategies that target local strengths, maintain adequate infrastructure, and address the housing, transportation, and growth impacts that shape local quality of life. FAC supports a coherent state-local framework in which counties participate in growth decisions, retain authority to address local conditions, and have the resources necessary to build communities that remain livable, resilient, and economically strong.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

A. State and Local Coordination: Florida's Community Planning Act establishes the statewide framework within which counties plan for future growth, while preserving the central role of local governments in guiding development and the state's role in protecting resources and facilities of statewide importance. State housing, infrastructure, land-use, and permitting policies interact with one another and can affect local plans, infrastructure obligations, and implementation responsibilities. FAC supports policies developed in partnership with counties and evaluated collectively for their cumulative effect on growth management with consistency between state policy and locally adopted plans.

B. Comprehensive Planning and Land Use: Comprehensive planning gives communities an integrated framework for land use, infrastructure, and long-term development decisions. Without locally adopted plans, communities can face congestion, infrastructure deficits, and uncertainty for residents, businesses, and property owners who rely on those plans. FAC supports preserving the locally adopted comprehensive plan, developed through public participation, as the controlling instrument for land-use decisions as opposed to measures that render adopted plans merely advisory or allow their provisions to be overridden without action by the government that adopted them.

C. Zoning (Density and Intensity): Counties make zoning decisions, including density and intensity choices, under locally adopted plans and land-development regulations. These decisions require balanced consideration of applicants and the people and properties directly affected by development. FAC supports preserving local governing bodies as the appropriate authorities to establish administrative or ministerial procedures

for these decisions, with statewide processes that are efficient, effective, and consistent with locally adopted standards.

D. Property Rights and Local Decision-Making: Land-use decisions often require counties to balance the rights of property owners seeking to develop or intensify use with the equally legitimate rights of neighbors and communities that relied on the adopted plan. Locally adopted plans and regulations give residents, businesses, property owners, and applicants a common framework for weighing those competing interests. FAC supports policies that respect private property rights and preserve local governments as the appropriate venue for weighing land-use decisions under locally adopted plans and regulations.

E. Public Participation and Development Review: Public participation is most effective when a community establishes or amends its comprehensive plan and the land-development regulations that implement it. Once a community adopts those standards, applicants, residents, and local governments need a clear process that applies the rules consistently to individual development applications. FAC supports predictable and timely review for applications that comply with adopted standards and supports preserving judicial and administrative proceedings as the appropriate forums for applying those standards.

F. Fiscal Impact and Infrastructure: Growth creates immediate demands for roads, water and wastewater capacity, stormwater management, and public safety before it generates the tax base needed to fund those services. Requiring new development to pay its proportionate share protects existing residents from subsidizing growth while providing the development community with clear, predictable obligations from the outset. FAC supports preserving county authority to require new development to bear its proportionate share of the infrastructure costs it creates, with impact fees and other exactions based on actual local cost conditions.

G. Regional Impacts of Large-Scale Development: Large-scale development can generate traffic, stormwater, and service demands beyond the county in which it is approved. Counties expected to absorb a project's costs and service demands need a meaningful role in evaluating and mitigating those effects before development approval. FAC supports mechanisms that identify and address extrajurisdictional impacts before development approval, including impacts arising from projects authorized through pathways established in state law.

H. Regional Coordination: Regional Planning Councils help counties, municipalities, and state partners coordinate growth, planning, infrastructure, and resilience issues that extend beyond a single jurisdiction. Greater-than-local issues can affect neighboring communities, regional infrastructure, and local service demands, and many local

governments need technical assistance to evaluate and address those impacts. FAC supports policies and funding that preserve the role of Regional Planning Councils in coordinating intergovernmental solutions to greater-than-local growth problems and providing technical assistance to local governments.

I. Building Permitting and Regulatory Review: Counties enforce the Florida Building Code within their jurisdictions. Private-provider review and state permitting timelines can affect county accountability, life-safety plan responsibilities, and the complexity of local regulatory review. FAC supports preserving the responsible county's authority to verify and act upon private-provider building plan review or inspection services and supports permitting and regulatory requirements, including review timelines, to reflect that complexity and life-safety risk of the work under review.

TRANSPORTATION

A. County Road Authority and Transportation Funding: Counties exercise authority over county roads and related structures, including the establishment, modification, discontinuance, and maintenance of local roadways. County transportation systems move people and goods, support economic competitiveness, and connect local roads to regional and statewide transportation networks. FAC supports state transportation funding and authority that reflect counties' substantial share of the transportation network, reach every mode within the state and local system, and preserve State Transportation Trust Fund revenues for transportation purposes.

B. Regional Transportation Solutions: Regional transportation solutions help counties coordinate mobility needs that cross local boundaries and affect roads, transit, freight, and other modes. Transportation problems rarely stop at jurisdictional lines, and regional coordination can improve efficiency, reduce duplication, and better connect communities and economic centers. FAC supports funding that encourages and facilitates efficient and effective regional transportation solutions.

C. Strategic Intermodal System Flexibility: Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) congestion can affect local roads and other transportation facilities that support the broader state transportation network. Allowing SIS funds to address off-system improvements that relieve SIS congestion can improve statewide mobility while recognizing counties' role in the connected transportation system. FAC supports policies that allow Strategic Intermodal System funds to be used on roads and other transportation facilities not designated on the SIS network when the improvement relieves congestion on the SIS.

HOUSING

A. Affordable Housing Trust Funds: Florida's affordable housing trust funds provide dedicated revenue for state and local affordable housing programs. Sweeps, diversions, or redistributions of those revenues reduce resources available to address local housing needs. FAC supports full appropriation of Florida's affordable housing trust funds for their statutory purposes and opposes sweeping, diverting, or further redistributing the documentary stamp tax revenues dedicated to them.

B. SHIP and Local Flexibility: Counties use the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program to align funding with local housing assistance plans, incentive strategies, priorities, and market conditions. Local flexibility improves housing availability and affordability for essential service personnel; very low-, low-, and moderate-income households; and residents with special housing needs in a manner that reflects local infrastructure capacity and housing markets. FAC supports policies that preserve flexibility within the SHIP Program and ensure state housing initiatives account for local housing plans, infrastructure capacity, priorities, and market conditions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. Economic Development and Tourism: Counties and community partners use economic development and tourism to create quality jobs, strengthen Florida communities, and improve national and global competitiveness. Targeted infrastructure and program investments generate sustainable economic activity, support local and state economic returns, and strengthen state-local partnerships. FAC supports legislation, appropriations, and resources that empower local governments and community partners to strengthen economic development and preserve and enhance Florida's tourism industry. ***FAC also calls for more investment and training in the crucial skilled trade jobs (construction, marine industry, aviation and other mechanics, etc.) including apprenticeships.***

FEDERAL

A. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Counties are local delivery partners for federal workforce and community development programs. Sustained federal workforce funding helps counties connect residents and employers to local workforce services that support economic opportunity. FAC supports reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and sustained, adequate funding for local workforce services.

B. Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization: Counties carry major infrastructure responsibilities within the national transportation network. Delayed or insufficient federal surface transportation funding can undermine local planning, maintenance, and mobility. FAC supports timely federal surface transportation

reauthorization and funding that sustains counties' role in the national transportation network and the infrastructure responsibilities they carry.

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