

TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

155 F Road Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470



PROPOSED 2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

County-Level Priorities:

Support the Palm Beach County League of Cities Legislative Agenda, With Minor Exceptions:

The Town will generally align with the policy positions advanced by the Palm Beach County League of Cities. However, we reserve the right to make minor exceptions when unique local conditions warrant a differing stance. At this time, the Palm Beach County League of Cities' legislative priorities for the 2025 legislative session (state and federal) have not yet been made available to the public. However, communication with the League's leadership indicates that the majority of their legislative priorities will align with the Florida League of Cities' Legislative Platform for advocacy.

- **Oppose Widening and/or Extension of Okeechobee Boulevard:**

Continue collaborating with TPA and the Western Communities to maintain current roadway conditions and prevent the widening and expansion of Okeechobee Boulevard through our Town as well as any western extension beyond Seminole Pratt.

- **Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (TPA) Grants & Projects (Local-Level Priority):**

The Town supports and advances projects in partnership with the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (TPA). Town staff has been in ongoing communication with TPA leadership and has scheduled a meeting to discuss these efforts further. These collaborative initiatives aim to secure funding and ensure successful project implementation, including:

- **Multi-Use Trail and Equestrian Crossings (A Road to F Road):** Develop a multi-use trail along Okeechobee Boulevard, incorporating pedestrian warning signals and horse-friendly crossings. This qualifies for the Federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program, enhancing safe, non-motorized travel.
- **Roundabout at Okeechobee Boulevard and B, D or F Road:** Construct a roundabout to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and enhance safety at a key intersection. This project has qualified in previous years for the Federal Local Initiatives (LI) Program.

- **Horse Arena Funding at Palm Beach County Loxahatchee Groves Park (Local-Level Priority):**

Support local or county-level appropriations and grants to develop or enhance a horse arena at Palm

Beach County Loxahatchee Groves Park. Such improvements honor the Town's rural, equestrian heritage, attract visitors, and enrich the recreational landscape for residents.

State-Level Priorities:

- **Support the Florida League of Cities Legislative Agenda, With Minor Exceptions:**

The Town endorses the Florida League of Cities' priorities to strengthen municipal governance, including the support of One Water policies aimed at enhancing integration between different water systems. The One Water concept values all water sources—fresh, brackish, ground, and stormwater—through a collaborative and integrated management approach. This approach benefits our community by providing resources for best management practices and funding sources to preserve and enhance the Town's water resources.

While the Town generally supports these initiatives, we reserve the right to make minor exceptions to address specific local interests. One such exception involves the push for integrated sewer systems. The majority of properties within the Town of Loxahatchee Groves utilize septic systems, which are compatible with the Town's rural character and environmental conditions. Integrated sewer systems are currently limited to businesses and properties along Southern Boulevard, and the Town does not support mandating residents to transition to integrated sewer systems at this time.

- **Rural Community Designation Extension:**

Seek legislative action to extend the Town's rural designation period from the current two-year minimum to at least five years. This acknowledges the Town's historically rural character, longstanding agricultural presence, and need to preserve its way of life. Such a designation will unlock additional federal and state resources for infrastructure improvements, economic development, and community projects that maintain the Town's rural heritage. The Town's drainage and roadway systems—originally built for horse-drawn carts—require modernization to safely serve heavier and more numerous vehicles, reinforcing the importance of maintaining rural protections and support.

- **FDOT-Funded Traffic Signal at C Road and Southern Boulevard:**

Advocate for legislation or appropriations directing the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to fund and expedite a traffic signal at this intersection, improving safety, reducing congestion, and supporting economic vitality.

- **Land Acquisition for Water Quality, Storage, Filtration, and Resiliency:**

With recent changes in the State Legislature regarding stormwater quality, the Town wishes to advocate for state funding to acquire strategically located land parcels that enhance local water quality, boost water storage and filtration, support storm water retention, and increase aquifer recharge. This multi-use approach includes implementing vegetative wetlands throughout the Town. By creating hydraulically connected wetlands, the Town can improve water quality through best stormwater treatment practices, expand surface water capacity, bolster groundwater recharge, integrate equestrian trails, and enhance flood protection and resiliency.

- **Stormwater Management and Drainage Improvements (Year 3 of a 3-Year Funding Request):**

Advocate for state-level appropriations, policy support, and systematic upgrades to the Town's stormwater management infrastructure, including major canal junctions, pump stations, control structures, Town-owned culvert crossings, swales, catch basins, and roadway drainage systems. This third year of a three-year funding request seeks \$750,000 annually to address high-priority repairs on major local roads and over 200 identified locations requiring future improvements. Additionally, culverts and swales on primary north-south connector roads need critical upgrades. This shovel-ready project builds resiliency by ensuring effective drainage, reducing flood risks, maintaining road integrity, protecting property values, and enhancing general public safety and access, flood response, emergency operations, and storm preparedness. Specifically, these improvements:

- Maintain residential access and flood protection.
- Protect municipal operations, assets, and the functionality of critical public infrastructure.
- Providing a method of water retention for the northern section of town through the use of adjustable weirs and pumps to move water to the north and enhance the ground water retention in those areas.
- Reduce flood-related safety hazards as well as the immediate costs of damages, injuries, repairs, and maintenance.

- **Canal System Rehabilitation Project:**

Advocate for appropriations to establish an annual canal rehabilitation program encompassing dredging, muck disposal, restoration and re-sloping and stabilizing of canal banks, surveying, and testing services. This initiative improves canal function, aesthetics, and resiliency; promotes native aquatic vegetation; reduces storm debris blockage; increases storage capacity; prevents flooding; and enhances public safety. Over time, it will serve as a comprehensive, long-term program ensuring the Town's water infrastructure remains viable and safe.

- **Trail System Enhancements, Connectivity, and Safety Measures (County-Level and State-Level Priority):**

Advocate for county and state support, grants, and legislation to develop a fully integrated, accessible trail network for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians. Efforts include:

- **Land Acquisition for Connectivity:** Acquire strategically located parcels and/or portions of parcels to connect trails from Wellington in the south to existing County trails in the north, fostering regional access and continuity.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Improve the base and condition of existing trails, install or upgrade fencing, and add signage and bollards for safety and clarity.
- **North Road Multi-Use Trail Improvements:** Implement the shovel-ready North Road multi-use project to link public greenways and trails to the Palm Beach Pines Natural Area, ensuring safe passage for the Town's northern population and aligning with the Town's Comprehensive Plan to preserve and enhance its rural character.
- **Safe Crossings and Access Points:** Establish safe crossings over Okeechobee Boulevard and secure greenspace areas for parking and easy entry into the trail system.

By pursuing these county-level, local-level, and state-level priorities, the Town of Loxahatchee Groves aims to secure essential funding, enact beneficial policies, and foster improvements that preserve its rural character, enhance public safety, protect the environment, and strengthen its sense of community.

2024 - 2025 IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE DATES

December 2024

- **2-6:** Legislative Interim Committee Meetings (House of Representatives only)
- **5-6:** Florida League of Cities (FLC) Legislative Conference
Location: Hilton Orlando, 6001 Destination Parkway, Orlando, FL 32819
 - FLC Policy Committee Meetings: December 5 (Round 3)
- **9-13:** Legislative Interim Committee Meetings (Senate only)

January 2025

- **13-17:** Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
- **20-21:** The Mayor, Councilmembers, and designated staff will meet with legislators and the Town's Lobbyist at the State Capitol in Tallahassee.
- **21-24:** Legislative Interim Committee Meetings

February 2025

- **3-7:** Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
- **4-5:** FAST Fly-in – Washington, DC
- **10-14:** Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
- **17-21:** Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
- **20:** FLC Legislative Session Preview Webinar at 2:00 p.m. ET

March 2025

- **4:** Regular Legislative Session Convenes
- **4-5:** Palm Beach County Advocacy Days – The Mayor, Council members, and designated staff will meet with legislators and the Town's Lobbyist in Tallahassee.
- **10-12:** National League of Cities (NLC) Congressional City Conference – Washington, DC
- **24-26:** FLC Legislative Action Days – Tallahassee, FL

May 2025

- **2:** Last Day of Regular Legislative Session
- **15:** FLC Post-Legislative Session Review Webinar at 2:00 p.m. ET