



WHERE WE STAND

As of February 2024

- Community Development*
- Economic Development & Tourism*
- Education & Workforce Development*
- Environmental*
- Governance*
- Health Care*
- Immigration*
- Infrastructure/Transportation*
- International/Trade*
- Manufacturing*
- Taxes/Regulation*
- Property Insurance*





COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber believes in a balanced approach in working with residents and other facets of the community in providing a diversified tax base and vibrant economy that benefits everyone.

- 1) *Intergovernmental Coordination* - The Chamber supports limiting the scope of the purview of the VGMC whereby it would no longer analyze small-scale projects and while they can bring forth concerns, local governments/elected officials will have the final say. The VGMC must now reply in a timely manner and appointed commissioners can be removed by their designated entity. As for citizen standing, residents or third parties, must now petition their own city/council government to have a public hearing on their behalf. Citizens are still able to comment on proposed land projects with their city planning boards and council/commissions who have standing.
 - **Historic Applications** - *Amendment to the Volusia County Charter (Volusia Growth Management Commission – VGMC) (2016)*
- 2) *Moratoriums* – The Chamber in general is hesitant about moratoriums by municipalities and will review each proposal case by case. Additionally, we encourage local governments to work directly with the key stakeholders to identify proactive solutions to concerns. (2023)
- 3) *Land Development Code* – The Chamber supports reasonable regulation of growth and development put forth by the Volusia County Association for Responsible Development (VCARD) when finalizing the rewrite of the City’s Land Development Code. (2014)
- 4) *City’s Review and Permitting Process* –The Chamber supports efforts to expedite the process. (2009)
- 5) *Home Ownership Incentives* — The Chamber supports the continued efforts to increase homeownership and affordable housing in Daytona Beach by using incentive packages to encourage builders to develop neighborhoods in the Mid-Town and Main St. redevelopment areas. (2008)
- 6) *Homelessness* - The Chamber seeks to maintain its community role to help provide adequate food and shelter for those in need. We support a central one-stop facility (330 North St, Daytona Beach) whereby homeless individuals can receive basic needs (food, clothing, medical care, counseling, job assistance, mail). As for shelter, the Chamber supports any facility that qualifies for funding under HUD’s new guidelines.
 - **Historic Applications** - *Options to Address Homelessness in Volusia County* - The Chamber currently supports a long- range plan to address the needs of homeless individuals in Volusia County that includes access to a “come as you are” facility or facilities that provide "temporary beds" and are available 24/7 for those needing shelter. These facilities should link case management and be considered as transitional housing as individuals are assessed and as more permanent housing is sought after in which to place the individual and believe that appropriate oversight and accountability for those providing services to the homeless should be a requirement for any operations managed or provided to the homeless that utilize public funds. (2016)

- **Historic Applications - First Step Shelter** - The Chamber supports the proposed Safe Harbor project as a *first step* to address homelessness in Volusia under the following conditions: Safe Harbor should be recognized a *jail diversion* program for individuals seeking a means to “get off the streets.” The proposed budget remains stable with *no more than a 5% increase in operations costs* over a 5-year period. The total budget must include a financial contribution from *a minimum of twelve cities* as well as the county. Governmental entities must *commit to a minimum of 5 years* and can only withdraw upon a 2-year notice. The project must have 25 % financial participation of the operating budget from non-profit entities that work with homeless individuals. All local government entities should have a consistent policy that declares how their police departments will address homeless individuals and uses Safe Harbor as a first resort. In addition to Safe Harbor, the Chamber recommends that attention be given to shelter for homeless families and adolescents. (2014)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Basic Philosophy: We envision Daytona Beach as a core city, providing a strong job base that serves as the economic hub for Volusia County. We believe that striving for a diverse economic base is imperative to the stability of the economy. We need to continue to promote a sound business climate that would encourage the retention and expansion of existing business and industry and the attraction of newly targeted business and industry. We need continued cooperation with private and public sectors to ensure continued, sound economic growth and the preservation of the quality of life. The Chamber supports state level economic development incentives, performance-based programs and those programs that benefit our community. The Chamber recognizes the crucial role travel and tourism play in our community and in our state’s economy. We support efforts to revitalize growth in all sectors of the industry. We advocate for a safe, clean, environmentally friendly beach that appeals to locals and draws tourists alike.

Small Business Bill of Rights – The Chamber supports the US Chamber’s Small Business Bill of Rights that encompasses protection against frivolous lawsuits, onerous regulations, government interference in the operations of business and the right for businesses to establish their own policies in relation to their workforce. (2023)

CRA’s — The Chamber believes productive reuse of existing urban land and space resources within *existing urban areas* is vital to addressing inner-city decay and maintaining the vitality of existing urban centers. Zoning and building code ordinances should be structured to accommodate and encourage this type of redevelopment which is driven by the economic and physical needs of the local community. Private/Public partnerships should be enabled and encouraged. (2013)

Space Volusia — The Chamber supports the efforts of Space Florida to help Florida maintain its top ranking as a viable site for commercial space launches. (2013)

Daytona Beach International Airport — The Chamber continues to support Airport officials in their efforts to secure additional airline service locally. (2011)

Daytona Beach E-Zone — The Chamber supports the plans for the E-Zone in the vicinity of the Ocean Center and to work with the County to assure its success. We encourage adequate parking and the attraction of quality hotel rooms and an improved image by upgrading businesses along A1A. (2011)

Economic Development Partners — The Chamber supports continued cooperation between the Daytona Beach Economic Advisory Board, Volusia Department of Economic Development, TEAM Volusia, CEO Business Alliance and Chamber of Commerce partners to attract and retain businesses in Volusia County. (2011)

Economic Development Incentive Programs — The Chamber supports incentive programs that reward employee growth and expansion. (Qualified Target Industry, Economic Development Transportation Fund/Road Fund, and the technical assistance in the Economic Gardening Program). (2010)

Public-Private Partnerships: The Chamber supports exploring creative public-private funding opportunities to retain and attract business in and to Volusia County. (2004)

- *Site-Specific Incentives* — The Chamber supports incentives that help sustain the local economy, improve the tax base, and can be publicly substantiated; when considering incentives, priorities should include business attraction, business retention/expansion and a strong workforce development effort to help provide a sustainable tax base and satisfactory quality-of-life. (2010)

Visit Florida – The Chamber supports funding for tourism advertising. (2014) and the continued funding of Visit Florida for tourism marketing (2023)

Regulation of Vacation Rental Units – We support regulation by city/county authorities regarding health, noise, fire code, zoning, as well as American Disabilities Act. Vacation rental units should also be responsible for collecting and remitting sales tax as well as Volusia's tourist development tax. (2019)

Bed Tax revenues – We believe that State-authorized bed tax revenues should go to advertising/marketing to generate sustained growth in the local tourism economy, and we oppose any expansion in how bed tax revenues may be used. (2014)

Compromise for Oceanfront Development and Beach Parking - The Chamber supports the concept of the proposed compromise plan regarding beach parking and oceanfront development and encourages the process to move forward. The Chamber also wants the plan to show specific economic development and tax benefits to Daytona Beach taxpayers. (2014)

- **Historic Applications - Beachside Redevelopment Committee (BRC) Recommendations** - the Chamber encourages Ormond Beach, Daytona Beach, and Daytona Beach Shores to adopt the recommendations of the Beachside Redevelopment Advisory Committee in helping to enhance this area for visitors and residents. In addition to improvements to Granada Blvd., Seabreeze Blvd., Oakridge Blvd, Main Street, International Speedway Blvd., Silver Beach Ave and Dunlawton Ave, the Chamber supports the BRC Recommendations. Additionally we support A1A Corridor improvements including coordinated lighting program for all bridges leading to the beach side and more pedestrian space along east and west sides of South Atlantic Ave; Redevelopment Projects to address the area from Seabreeze Blvd to Silver Beach Ave first; take advantage of economic conditions and availability of state and federal funding; Ocean Center/Main Street develop an RFP for a Public-Private Partnership whereby city/county-owned lands can be used for a mixed- use development that may include residential dwelling units, convention hotel, parking garage and public space; Update and improve streetscape; enhance code enforcement to improve marketability of Seabreeze Blvd./Oakridge Blvd area; provide incentives for residential development; and we increase code enforcement presence within Daytona Beach's core area and ensure homestead exemptions are properly awarded and strictly enforced. (2018)

Offshore Drilling — The Chamber supports allowing offshore energy exploration, with temporary drilling rigs no closer to shore than three nautical miles. (2010)

Law Enforcement on Volusia Beaches — The Chamber supports the incorporation of the Beach Patrol (and lifeguards) into the Sheriff's Department to maintain a seamless means of public safety and customer service for our beach visitors. (2006)

Beach Access Fees/Off-beach Parking — Annual vehicle access fees for non-county residents should be increased (as opposed to County residents) with additional revenue earmarked for land acquisition, construction of off-beach parking lots, in addition to maintenance of lots; The Chamber supports a daily set price for off-beach parking lots and that land be considered east and west of A1A. (2005)

Driving On Volusia County Beaches — The Chamber supports the implementation of traffic free zones on the beach, combined with designated driving areas to reflect the tradition of beach driving. (2003)

Volusia Beach Reorganization Plan — The Chamber supports efforts to improve efficiency in the delivery of beach services. We also support the Volusia County Long-Range plan for establishing extensive off-beach parking, safe walkways, ample directional signage, and beautification efforts to make the entrance to our beaches appealing. Security should be of ultimate concern in all plans for beach access and user amenities. (2002)

Timeshare Solicitation/Regulation Plan — The Chamber supports the licensing and regulating of timeshare solicitation with one central entity to issue licenses consistent between all beachside cities and the county. (1999)

Beach lighting Ordinance/Habitat Conservation Plan — The Chamber supports a good faith effort to adhere to beach lighting standards as recommended by the Fish & Wildlife Service, while taking into consideration that the safety of our visitors and local citizens are first and foremost. Beachside properties need to be properly informed of any changes in lighting standards in an efficient manner. (1996)

Beach Concessionaires/Appearance Standards — The Chamber supports a consistent appearance standard regarding concessionaires' vehicles on Volusia County beaches. (1996)

Notable Historic Applications -

American Space Commerce Act of 2020 – The Chamber supports the American Space Commerce Act which would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide bonus depreciation for certain space launch expenditures and for other purposes. (2020)

Motorsports Entertainment Complexes — The Chamber supports legislation that would allow a single certified motorsports complex to receive up to \$2 million per year of sales tax generated for up to 30 years provided that these funds are reinvested into the facility. This is the same benefit currently received by other professional sports facilities in Florida. (2012)

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber supports initiatives that provide our school system with the latest technology and prepares our students to compete in the workforce. Such an

education system, through a variety of choices, will provide excellent elementary and secondary education including access to post-secondary education and training in degree, certificate and continuing professional development programs in colleges, universities, career and technical institutes and other public and private providers. We believe that our community partners must be committed to developing a highly skilled, well-educated population that will have more opportunities, more job choices, and more job security. A partnership of action and cooperation between the public and private sectors is needed to ensure accountability and success.

Leadership – The Chamber believes strong leadership and collaboration will continue to move Volusia County schools in the right direction and add stability to our students, teachers, and the community.

- see Chamber letter on Dr. Fritz (2022)

Volusia School District Finances - The Chamber recommends that the Volusia School District exercise fiscal responsibility and discourage the use of reserve funds that take them below a 5% reserve fund balance, to balance its operating expense budget.

- Volusia School District officials should discuss defined benefit plans that reflect the present-day market, which commonly includes significant employee participation. (2016)
- The Chamber supports a study to review the state funding formula wages component of the District Cost Differential (DCD) to ensure fair and equitable funding for all school districts. (2004)

Higher Education Capital Projects — The Chamber supports State Funding for Capital projects on the campuses of Volusia’s College and University facilities based upon the approval of their own governing boards. (2014)

Florida Education State Standards — The Chamber supports efforts to increase Volusia County metrics in testing. (2013)

Outsourcing Custodial/Groundskeeping Services — The Chamber supports outsourcing district custodial/grounds maintenance jobs to a private firm provided that the new entity that is selected for this contract hires the displaced school employees. (2013)

Property Tax — The Chamber supports exploring revenue sources for Volusia Schools provided that an oversight committee of business leaders is established to ensure the money is spent as intended.

- One mill property tax proposal (2012)
- Half-Cent Sales Tax Extension for Volusia Schools (2014)
- *Raise the Wage Act* – The Chamber opposes federal HR 603 (Raise the Wage Act of 2021) based on Florida’s approval (2020) to raise the State’s minimum wage on an escalating scale through 2026. (2021)
- *Protecting the Right to Organize* – The Chamber opposes federal HR 842 (Pro Act) due to unneeded and unfair workplace labor laws harming both employees and employers. (2021)
- *Raising the Minimum Wage* – The Chamber opposes Amendment 2 to increase Florida’s minimum wage to \$15 an hour out of concern for our hospitality industry and small businesses. The opposition centers on our opposition to placing issues in the Florida Constitution that can be addressed through the legislative process. (2020)
- *Apprenticeships* — The Chamber supports education and training programs offered through Daytona State College/ATC, High School Academies and other local educational institutions provided they are industry driven, incorporate relevant industry certifications, and include cooperative education, internships as well as On-The-Job-Training programs

specifically leveraging the resources of Volusia-Flagler Career Source. The Chamber also urges all business as well as local construction-related companies to utilize and support these programs in that they can help create better trained and higher waged workers.

- The Chamber opposes any requirement or incentive for companies to have a State Certified Apprenticeship program on the grounds that there are limited programs in our area resulting in an exclusionary program that would tend to place small local business at a disadvantage, and work counter to the intent of the local bid preference. (2014)
- Additionally, we support the state's continued effort to provide manufacturing skills training to enhance the workforce as a career choice for middle and high school students. (2014)
- *Employee Free Choice Act (Union Card Check)* — The Chamber opposes Union Card Check or any “compromise” proposals that threatens to the protection of a private ballot or interfere with an employer's right to communicate with their workers. (2010)

ENVIRONMENTAL

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber seeks a balance between economic growth and protection of the natural environment. We believe that economic and environmental objectives can best be achieved through consensus building and cooperation between business, the general community, and the environmental community. The Chamber supports for continued success of environmental programs using voter approved initiatives for environmental conservation.

Volusia ECHO - a ballot initiative to levy an additional ad valorem tax not to exceed one-fifth mill for 20 years and the authorization to issue limited tax general obligation bonds not to exceed \$40 million which would finance acquisition, restoration, construction, and improvement of ECHO (Environmental, Cultural, Historical, Outdoor) projects. Supported the renewal of the referendum (2020)

Volusia Forever – support a ballot referendum allowing the Volusia County Council to levy an additional one-fifth mill ad valorem tax for an additional twenty years to fund the acquisition of water resource and environmentally sensitive land for conservation and public use. Supported the County's language to renew the referendum. (2020)

Climate Change/Cap & Trade — The Chamber opposes policies that jeopardize American jobs and create trade inequalities,-reduces price instability for consumers; protects global competitiveness; invests in renewable energy sources; takes advantage of nuclear power; streamlines the permit system; increases our own energy security/efficiency. (2010)

GOVERNANCE

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber believes that elected entities are the best ways and means to make the critical decisions affecting the entire community.

President Biden's Executive Order – Vaccine Mandate – The Chamber opposes the Biden plan until it is shown through the rulemaking process that employers will have the resources, guidance, and flexibility necessary to ensure both the safety of the employees and customers, without disruption to business operations. (2021)

General Budgets

- *City Budget* — The Chamber supports maintaining a competitive tax rate for the City to entice new business. We encourage the City to keep a watchful eye on the City's overall long-term debt and when possible, use savings from various sources to pay down unfunded liabilities. (2010)
- *County Budget* — The Chamber supports adopting a budget that is accountable to the needs of the community while continuing to review and minimize burdensome regulations. We encourage the County to keep a watchful eye on the County's overall long-term debt and when possible, use savings from various sources to pay down unfunded liabilities. (2010)

Daytona Beach Charter Review — While the Chamber believes that a city/county is best governed *when citizens elect officeholders to make policy decisions, we also support citizen involvement via a periodic charter review process whereby amendments are decided via referendum of citizens.* (2014)

First Responders

- *Fire/Rescue Services* — The Chamber supports the Halifax Civic League's recommendations to streamline overlapping Fire/Rescue services. In addition, continue to address unfunded pension liability issues and examine differences between defined benefit vs defined contribution plans particularly for new hires. (2010)
- *Local Government Pension Reform* — The Chamber supports pension reform legislation that would require that cities/counties move from defined benefit programs for police and fire pensions as well as other workers to defined contribution programs. (2009)

Notable Historic Applications -

Amendments to the Daytona Beach City Charter (2014)

The Chamber supports reducing the Planning Board from 11 to 7 members with at least one member from each commission zone. The Chamber supports requiring 10% of city voters to sign an initiative petition to place a referendum on the ballot, this brings the city in line with the state statutes, and the Chamber opposes authorizing a new position of City Auditor who may be hired by and report directly to the city commission due to excessive costs and duplicate services.

HEALTH CARE

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber believes that Floridians must have access to affordable healthcare. Government should build on the strengths of market-based employer-sponsored systems or purchasing pools to obtain stable premiums while enacting reform to lower costs, improve quality and access and build a more value-driven system. We are opposed to a government-run health care system that would impose mandates and cost shifting, hindering fair market competition.

Health Care Expansion — The Chamber supports Health Care expansion of Medicaid in Florida and encourages the State to accept federal funds available through the Affordable Care Act. (2013)

IMMIGRATION

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber supports policies to improve border security paired with policies that will improve the operation of our legal immigration system.

INFRASTRUCTURE/TRANSPORTATION

Basic Philosophy: We must improve our infrastructure and facilitate the free flow of goods and commerce along with the mobility of our citizens for business and recreational activities. We believe that we need to better plan for adequate infrastructure to accommodate anticipated growth in our region. Improvements and expansion of our transportation network will require significant investment of funding. In addition, improvements to and the expansion of our water and sewer systems to assure effective operations for our residents and businesses alike are critical to our competitiveness in the market.

Infrastructure/Half-Cent Sales Tax Referendum - the Chamber supports the proposed half-cent sales tax referendum to be used to fund infrastructure projects throughout Volusia County, provided that a clear and concise list of infrastructure projects based on the most critical needs in each city and the county (including the cost of each) is presented prior to the referendum; these infrastructure projects are to be completed within a designated timeframe and within budget and without “scope creep”; an oversight committee including stakeholders including representatives of each city, the County as well as the business community is enlisted to supervise the progress of infrastructure projects and their costs; the oversight committee shall meet quarterly in a public forum to hear from and comment to staff members involved with each project; a semi-annual update should be presented at the Elected Officials Roundtable meeting to update the public of progress from each project and a sunset provision is provided. (2018)

International Speedway Boulevard — The Chamber supports exploring the idea of roundabouts on International Speedway Blvd at Ridgewood Ave, Peninsula Dr and SR A1A to expedite traffic flow and enhance the aesthetics in these areas. (2014)

I-4/95 Interchange — The Chamber supports an I-4/I-95 interchange that is safe for travelers and serves as a hub from which to effectively be able to transport commercial loads from Volusia to other locations in Florida and elsewhere. (2014)

Technology Infrastructure — The Chamber supports working to enhance our Internet infrastructure and work with existing Internet providers to enhance our network connection capabilities to help attract new businesses to Volusia County. (2011)

SunRail — The Chamber supports Federal, State, and local funding to continue SunRail expansion to provide regional rush-hour commuter service from Kissimmee to Orlando to DeLand. (2007)

INTERNATIONAL/TRADE

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber recognizes the crucial role of international trade to support the prosperity of Volusia's manufacturing community.

U.S. - Mexico-Canada-Agreement - Support the proposed USMCA to facilitate trade between these countries. (2019)

Temporary Family Visitation Act - amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish a separate nonimmigrant classification under B visa category for family members of US citizens and permanent residents. (2019)

MANUFACTURING

Basic Philosophy: The Chamber recognizes the crucial role manufacturing plays in Volusia's economy in terms of wage base. We support efforts to revitalize growth in all sectors of the industry.

Manufacturing Development Programs — The Chamber supports authorizing local governments to establish local manufacturing development programs that provide for master development approval for certain sites and requires the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to develop a model ordinance that local governments may adopt. (2012)

Depreciation — The Chamber supports providing manufacturers with the ability to depreciate all capital assets over a 10-year period. Manufacturers should be provided a tax credit for research and development of products. (2006)

TAXES/REGULATION

Basic Philosophy: We advocate a broad-based review of the entire tax structure and oppose the adoption of burdensome reporting requirements, fees, and regulations.

Sales Tax on Commercial Lease Properties — The Chamber supports legislation to reduce sales tax on commercial leases by 1% starting in 2015. (2014)

Communication Services Tax — The Chamber supports reducing Florida's communication services tax rate. (2014)

Wholesale Taxes for Online Travel Companies — The Chamber opposes codifying the current practice of online travel companies (OTCs) paying taxes on the wholesale accommodations rate rather than the retail accommodations rate. (2009)

Florida's Property Tax System — The Chamber supports equity between Homestead properties (protected by an annual 3% Save our Homes Assessment cap) and Non-Homestead Properties (where assessments may increase up to 10% on commercial, residential rentals and vacation condominiums). (2009)

Internet Sales Tax — The Chamber supports protecting Florida's businesses by closing the Internet sales tax loophole. (2007)

Half-cent Sales Tax — The Chamber will support the proposed half-cent sales tax referendum to be used to fund infrastructure projects throughout Volusia County (2018) *details of support outlined in Infrastructure section.

Property Insurance

Basic Philosophy: We support a competitive and stable insurance market and a reduction of size and exposure to Citizens' Insurance.