



2020 Community Advocacy Agenda

Local Agenda Items

Municipality: Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs

Agenda Item: Beach Renourishment

*Local issue decided by state and federal government

Agenda Item Description: Over time our beaches suffer loss of beachfront as a natural result of storms and hurricanes. Renourishment projects in Pinellas County have been approved and secured proper permits, however, state and federal officials need to secure adequate funding. The county pays 20%, the state pays 20% and the Federal government pays 60%. The Army Corps of Engineers continuously assess the cost of renourishing the beaches after the damage is incurred. However, there is always a possibility that our beaches might not receive the necessary funding.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for state and federal funding towards beach renourishment including erosion mitigation projects. Beach renourishment and erosion mitigation projects are essential for protecting our award-winning beaches and maintaining a strong and prosperous local economy. The beaches are essential in our efforts to continue breaking tourism records year over year. Without our award-winning beaches, Pinellas County would not be the tourist destination it is today.

Useful Resources:

- More Information - www.VisitStPeteClearwater.com
- Pinellas County Coastal Management - www.pinellascounty.org
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Urge state and federal elected officials to secure adequate funding for our beach renourishment projects.

Municipality: Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs

Agenda Item: Business Development

Agenda Item Description: A growing number of businesses have had difficulty doing business due to burdening regulations. Business owners also receive conflicting information from municipal staff, commissioners and city managers. This can delay work or add additional work drastically increasing the time-frame and cost for the business owner. Furthermore, some regulations already on the book have unintended consequences that actually prevent business owners from updating or improving their property.

Current Status: The TBBCoC advocates for a streamlined, consistent process to open a business allowing business owners to invest in our community. Burdensome regulations that prevent business owners from upgrading or improving their property need to be reduced or eliminated.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Work with all forms of government to reduce burdening regulations, provide new business orientation and provide consistent messaging for city staff. Work with municipalities to include business input when updating regulations.

Municipality: St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island and Madeira Beach

Agenda Item: Economic Development

Agenda Item Description: A majority of our accommodations were built 50 years ago or more and are outdated (sewage, electrical, ADA, FEMA, room size, amenities, etc). Therefore, we need to redevelop properties to be competitive in the tourism market and remain a family friendly destination. Newer hotels offer larger rooms and other amenities that are only made possible by new construction.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for responsible redevelopment and is working with local municipalities to allow for redevelopment along the beaches. Current regulations may prevent hotel redevelopment due to height and density restrictions which prevent hotels from being profitable and competitive in the marketplace. If regulations are not updated to allow for adequate height and density, hotels will be replaced with condominiums and the area will lose the tourists that keep our taxes low.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Attend commission meetings and speak during the public comment period in favor of reducing restrictions on redevelopment to allow municipalities to be competitive in the marketplace. Also, be a part of the TBBCoC Economic Development Task Force.

Municipality: Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs

Agenda Item: Pedestrian Safety

Agenda Item Description: Pedestrian safety is a hot topic across the county. Florida is consistently recognized for the highest number of pedestrian fatalities per capita. Promotion and education of the crosswalk system along SR699 (Gulf Boulevard) is a major concern to businesses and leaders.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for the promotion and education of pedestrian safety including crosswalk & bicycle safety. The TBBCoC continues to work with Walk/Bike Tampa Bay on a campaign to educate the local community. The TBBCoC continues to offer educational material directed toward the people actually using the crosswalks along Gulf Boulevard; the visitors. The TBBCoC provides educational pieces to businesses along the beaches that direct residents and visitors on how to use the unique crosswalk systems.

Useful Resources:

- More Information - www.walkwisetampabay.com
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Word of mouth is the best way to educate. Also, distribute educational material available at the TBBCoC.

Municipality: Tierra Verde, South Pasadena, St. Pete. Beach, Treasure Island, Madeira Beach, Redington Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores & Belleair Bluffs

Agenda Item: **Transient Boat Docks**

Agenda Item Description: There is a lack of transient boat docking along the beaches. Additional transient docks will enhance the business climate and create a unique, prosperous tourist destination. Additional transient boat docks will allow visitors and residents to patronize local businesses and attractions. Such dock space is nearly nonexistent along the beaches and would meet a longstanding need.

Current Status: TBBCOC advocates for additional transient boat docks along our beaches. The addition of transient boat docks will not only enhance our economy and business climate, but also enhance our quality of life. Additional transient boat docks will help to build and revitalize the gulf economy by providing a high-amenity destination for recreational boaters and benefit local businesses by generating new revenue brought in by the additional customer base. Parking spaces are limited along our beaches and the additional transient boat docks are a good alternative to allow more residents and visitors to patronize our local businesses.

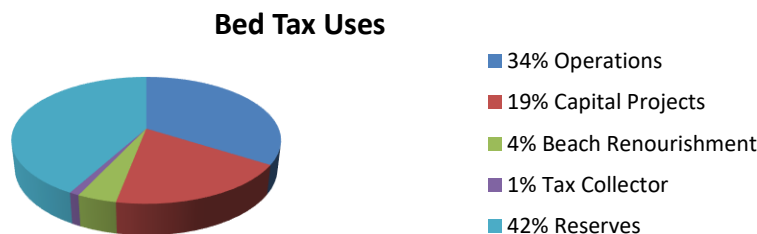
Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Attend commission meetings and speak during the public comment period in favor of reducing restrictions on redevelopment to allow municipalities to be competitive in the marketplace.

County Agenda

Agenda Item: **Tourist Development Tax: Preservation**

Agenda Item Description: Preserving the Bed Tax for its intended purpose is essential to promote our destination, attract visitors, and support the tourism Industry. Preserving the Bed Tax for its intended purpose will create fair and equitable funding opportunities for all. The Tourist Development Tax is a six percent tax collected on accommodations rented for less than six months. The tax is used to strengthen the local economy and increase employment through the ongoing promotion and development of tourism; Pinellas County's major industry.



Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for preserving the Tourist Development Tax for its intended purpose. Over the years, the tax has been expanded several times. Last year, the legislature expanded the use for infrastructure projects. County approval is needed before funds can be used for such projects. TBBCoC is opposed to the county approving the expanded use. Expanding the use of the Tourist Development Tax sets precedence for future changes and further expanded uses. This could result in funds being appropriated for things that don't meet the sufficient requirements which will take away from the intended purpose, attracting visitors to our area.

Useful Resources:

- More Information - www.pinellascvb.com
- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: TBBCoC is attending all Tourist Development Council Meetings to stay informed and is speaking with Pinellas County Board of Commissioners and state elected officials to guarantee they fully understand the preservation of these funds.

Agenda Item: **Transportation**

*County issue decided by state & federal government

Agenda Item Description: Navigating throughout Pinellas County is no easy task. Traveling to the beaches from our airports or attractions can be burdensome and may discourage tourists from returning. Additional roads, timed traffic signals and enhanced transit will support the millions of tourists and residents who travel on our roads every day.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for additional transportation options such as bus rapid transit, waterborne transportation, road infrastructure, etc. to ease congestion and make it easier to navigate the county. Specifically, obtaining funding from the state for the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's (PSTA) proposed express service to and from Tampa International airport and the beaches. We need to invest in all of our infrastructure to remain competitive. If you are not moving forward, you are moving backward.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: TBBCoC will work with area agencies, government entities, business and residents to enhance traffic flow.

Agenda Item: Water Quality

Agenda Item Description: The cleaner our waterways are, the more of an economic impact they generate. Millions of visitors, businesses and residents rely on clean waterways to sustain the quality of life that drew them here.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for the county and municipalities to enact solutions that contribute to cleaner waterways. The county is currently restoring Lake Seminole which drains into Boca Ciega Bay and Long Bayou, however, more can be done. For example, the changing geography around Tierra Verde Grand Canal and Shell Key is creating a devastating effect on our water quality. Additionally, stopping the continuous discharge of untreated sewage needs to be a priority for specific municipalities.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Urge your county and municipal elected officials to prioritize projects that enhance water quality.

Agenda Item: Workforce Development/Hospitality

Agenda Item Description: There is an influx in open positions along throughout Pinellas County. Many businesses are having difficulties finding individuals to fill open positions. Most individuals applying for jobs are unqualified. However, the bigger issue affecting businesses is that there are not enough people applying for the jobs to fill open positions.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for an enhanced pool of qualified workers. To remain competitive in a changing economy, Pinellas County needs to advance the economic well-being by developing and maintaining a quality workforce and by serving as the focal point for our workforce development initiatives. This is to be achieved through the co-location and integration of employment, training, education and economic development services for job seekers, workers and employers.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: The TBBCoC will work with community partners and surrounding institutions to initiate change.

State Agenda

Agenda Item: Carshare - Toro

Agenda Item Description: Toro is a carshare platform, similar to Airbnb. Instead of sharing houses, you share your car. The TBBCoC has worked to ensure Airbnb collects and remits taxes. Currently, carshare companies do not collect and remit sales tax.

Current Status: The TBBCoC advocates for the collection and remittance of sales tax from carshare companies. Ensuring sales tax is collected from these companies will help create a fair and level playing field with brick-and-mortar businesses. Supporting the collection and remittance of sales tax can make up the budget deficit when reducing other taxes.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy
- Track House Legislation - www.myfloridahouse.gov
- Track Senate Legislation - www.flsenate.gov

Action: Urge state elected officials to support legislation authorizing carshare companies collect and remit sales tax.

Agenda Item: E-Verify

Agenda Item Description: Legislation is being considered that would require businesses to use a federal database to verify the immigration status of new employees. This proposed legislation is also an unfunded mandate and would be a massive financial burden on all businesses; especially small business.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates against mandating businesses use E-Verify. This proposal violates federal immigration law. The federal government is granted the authority to handle immigration law, not the states. Imposing penalties upon a business through this proposal is a violation of the federal immigration law. E-Verify Would also place significant costs on business for little gain. E-Verify is far from perfect and consistently flags lawful employees. The compliance costs, and penalties associated with it, should not be based on this flawed system.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy
- Track House Legislation - www.myfloridahouse.gov
- Track Senate Legislation - www.flsenate.gov

Action: Urge state elected officials to oppose E-Verify mandate.

Agenda Item: Minimum Wage

Agenda Item Description: Florida voters will vote on a constitutional amendment that would arbitrary inflate minimum wage. Minimum wage should be set based on economic facts and increased based on inflation. A majority of Floridian's already voted and amended the Florida State Constitution for this reason. The amendment incorporated language requiring Florida's minimum wage to increase automatically annually. Any attempt to raise wages beyond that can have adverse consequences on businesses forcing them to raise prices or cut back on workforce.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for minimum wage to be set according facts and figures based on inflation, not an arbitrary number used as a political tool. Minimum wage is for entry level employees and is by no means meant to support a family. Policymakers should not force businesses to bear the burden of national socio-economic policies. Wage mandates ignore the principles of free market economics; they prevent businesses from making profits, growing, and hiring more workers; and they base wages on what the worker wants instead of on the value of work performed.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy
- Track House Legislation - www.myfloridahouse.gov
- Track Senate Legislation - www.flsenate.gov

Action: The TBBCoC will work with community partners and surrounding institutions to educate voters.

Agenda Item: Insurance Reform (Assignment of Benefits, Flood, Workers Compensation)

Agenda Item Description: Creating competitive and stable insurance markets will lower costs. Florida must continue initiatives like reforming flood insurance, property insurance and workers' compensation insurance by spreading risks, reducing fraudulent claims and allowing for creative solutions for the issue's homeowners and businesses face.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for insurance reform allowing alternatives for residents and business owners on the verge of bankruptcy. Fixing Florida's broken insurance system to reduce taxpayer risk in the event of a catastrophic storm and reduce inflated workers' compensation rates is a step in the right direction. Instead of short-term quick fixes, long-term solutions are the focus to grow the private-sector and help small businesses and families.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - <http://www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy.html>
- Track House Legislation - <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>
- Track Senate Legislation - <http://www.flsenate.gov>

Action: Urge state elected officials to support insurance reform.

Agenda Item: Short-Term Rentals

Agenda Item Description: All short-term rentals must be regulated the same as any property management company. Currently, property management companies and vacation rental platforms (i.e. Airbnb, homeaway, etc.) are on uneven playing fields. Both rent properties, however, only property management companies are regulated. This incentivizes people to bypass legitimate business practices and skirt the system.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for a fair and balanced playing field for all vacation rentals. Vacation rentals, either through property management companies or on website platforms, should be collecting and remitting taxes as well as regulated to ensure the health and safety of guests.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy
- Track House Legislation - www.myfloridahouse.gov
- Track Senate Legislation - www.flsenate.gov

Action: Urge state elected officials to create a level playing field for all vacation rentals.

Agenda Item: Tax Reform (Business Rent Tax, Online Sales Tax, Florida Corporate Income Tax)

Agenda Item Description: Florida, spurred on by a dedicated business community, has eliminated 4,500 outdated, duplicate regulations under the leadership of Governor Scott. While Florida already has one of the best tax climates in the nation, enacting smart and targeted tax reforms for job creators and consumers will produce greater economic growth.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for reducing business rent tax and corporate income tax. Driving a fair and equitable tax system is key to attracting and growing businesses in our state. Limiting burdensome taxes by enacting smart and targeted tax reforms helps place money back into the pockets of Florida's businesses and families. Florida must continue to push back against initiatives that make the state less competitive in comparison to other states and become the number one state for business. Additionally, supporting the collection and remittance of the online sales tax can make up the budget deficit cause but reducing other previously mentioned taxes.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy
- Track House Legislation - www.myfloridahouse.gov
- Track Senate Legislation - www.flsenate.gov

Action: Urge state elected officials to reduce Florida's business rent tax and corporate income tax while supporting the collection and remittance of the online sales tax.

Agenda Item: Tourism

Agenda Item Description: As the Sunshine State’s No. 1 industry, tourism was responsible for welcoming 126+ million visitors in 2018 and employing more than 1.5 million Floridians. According to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, for every \$1 the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA – the official tourism marketing corporation for the state of Florida – \$2.15 in tax revenue is generated. VISIT FLORIDA promotes tourism to Florida through sales, advertising, promotions, public relations and visitor services programs. Each decision the agency has made has been based on financial research that led to record tourism and, more importantly, record spending by visitors. As a public/private partnership, VISIT FLORIDA serves more than 11,000 tourism industry businesses.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for a fully funded reauthorization of VISIT FLORIDA. Adequate funding and resources for the tourism industry essential to stay competitive. Florida is a worldwide top travel destination with every 85 visitors creating 1 job and the TBBCOC advocates supporting and growing the industry. After VISIT FLORIDA increased marketing by \$50 million, \$30 billion in visitor spending was collected and Sales Tax collections are up \$1.6 billion. Florida is aiming to bring in \$100 billion in total tourism related spending by 2020, however, attracting more tourists isn’t the key strategy in driving up dollars. The influx will come from the experience rather than filling more hotel beds. The new strategy is less about bringing in more bodies and more about tapping into consumer markets that want to spend dollars in the state.

Useful Resources:

- TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy
- Track House Legislation - www.myfloridahouse.gov
- Track Senate Legislation - www.flsenate.gov

Action: Urge state elected officials to adequately fund VISIT FLORIDA and support [SB 362/HB 213](#) to reauthorize this vital organization for eight years.

Federal Agenda

Agenda Item: Canadian Snowbird Act

Agenda Item Description: Proposed legislation would extend the amount of time Canadian residents can stay in the U.S. by two months. Currently, Canadian residents can stay in the U.S. for 182 days or one day less than six months. Most recent numbers from US Travel show 20.2 million Canadian's visit USA annually resulting in a \$19.1 billion added to our economy.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for the Canadian Snowbird Act to allow more time for Canadian's to stay in our country and contribute to our economy. Proposed legislation would allow the the Department of Homeland Security to admit as a visitor a Canadian citizen. A Canadian citizen must be at least 50 years old, maintains a residence in Canada, own or rent a U.S. residence for the duration of the stay (not staying with a friend for free). They must not be inadmissible/deportable, engage in U.S. employment and seek U.S. assistance or benefits.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Urge federal elected officials to support the Canadian Snowbird Act.

Agenda Item: Infrastructure Funding (Airports, Bridges and Roads)

Agenda Item Description: Federal funding is needed to update and maintain our airports, roads and bridges. Rebuilding America's infrastructure is critical to promote job creation and our destination. America has fallen to 12th in the world in terms of infrastructure ratings. Increased infrastructure funding includes increasing the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) for airports. The PFC is a \$4.50 fee on every plane ticket and goes back to the airport for capital improvement. The PFC has not been raised since 2000 and should be between \$6 and \$8 due to inflation. The fee is currently set by congress and needs to be changed so individual airports can set their own rates.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for an increase in infrastructure funding in an effort to remain competitive as a top travel destination. TBBCoC supports an increase in federal funding as well as congressional approval for individual airports to have authority to increase their PFC. People travel from all over the world to visit our country. Many other countries have world class infrastructure while airports, road and bridges in the United States are decades old and dilapidating. The United States must not fall behind other countries and must remain competitive in an effort to support tourism and our economy.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: There is record funding for infrastructure. TBBCoC will work with federal elected officials to make sure funding comes to our area. TBBCoC will also work with our federal elected officials to allow individual airports to have authority to set their Passenger Facility Charge (PFC).

Agenda Item: Open Skies Agreement

Agenda Item Description: Federal legislation was introduced that would threaten our current Open Skies Agreements. Open Skies Agreements are agreements between the United States and other countries that create open, competitive markets for international air travel. Open Skies agreements have opened the door for increased travel to the Tampa Bay area. Open Skies framework that has led to increased flight options, lower flight costs. They promote competition in the aviation sector, increase choice, and reduce costs for consumers while also facilitating exports for U.S. businesses and enhancing U.S. national security. Since 1992 the United States has entered into more than 100 Open Skies agreements with countries ranging from Germany to Singapore to Chile.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates against legislation that would threaten our current Open Skies Agreements. Proposed legislation would lead to higher prices and fewer flight options for travelers. Due to Open Skies agreements, travelers benefit from an open and competitive air travel market, allowing customers to save \$4 billion on international travel every year. These agreements have resulted in new international services to travel destinations like the Tampa Bay Beaches. They have allowed foreign carriers to develop relations with U.S carriers to deliver passengers to smaller destinations all over the U.S. According to the International Trade Administration, 75 million international visitors spent over \$255 billion in 2018 alone, benefiting our members in the hotel, convention, and tourism industries.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Urge federal elected officials to oppose legislation that would threaten our current Open Skies Agreements.

Agenda Item: Reliable and Cost-Effective Energy Solutions

Agenda Item Description: Florida needs to achieve a stable, reliable and diverse supply of energy. Energy policy requires a stable, predictable regulatory and business climate while promoting energy resources that further fuel source diversification through the deployment of existing and alternative energy sources. Florida must renew its commitment to energy resources and technologies which result in the creation of new jobs within the state.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates against oil drilling in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and advocates for an energy policy that puts the long-term over the short-term and rests on reliable, cost effective energy sources to grow the economy. This type of policy will increase energy independence and promote the use of domestic energy sources. It would also include advanced technologies and pave the way for sustainable economic growth. We are working to make sure that Florida's needs are met with an energy policy that responds to new technology and changes in the market while bringing in new capital for investment and increasing energy security.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Urge Federal elected officials to support reliable and effective energy solutions as an alternative to drilling in our Eastern Gulf of Mexico.

**Agenda Item: Regulation Reform
(Business Bank Loans, Online Bookings, Hearing Small Business Act Etc.)**

Agenda Item Description: Over regulation can stifle job creation and innovation. The Small Business Administration recognizes that small businesses bear the brunt of dealing with approximately \$2 trillion of red tape emanating from Washington, D.C. Regulations have become way too complex, burdensome, duplicative, and sometimes pointless that make it hard for small businesses to compete with larger companies that have multiple floors of lawyers and lobbyists.

Current Status: TBBCoC advocates for regulation reform to ensure the success of small businesses. The \$2 trillion in costs for compliance and increased number of complex rules is only hurting our business community. Businesses deserve a working regulatory system that is fair for everyone, takes into account the views of communities and businesses, evaluates the impact rules will have on jobs and small business and protects our economic and personal freedoms.

Useful Resources: TBBCoC Advocacy Website - www.tampabaybeaches.com/advocacy

Action: Urge federal elected officials to support regulation reform.
