

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



TO: Honorable Mayor, Commissioners, City Managers and Directors
FROM: Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
DATE: December 9, 2025
SUBJECT: Florida Legislative Trip and Revenue Cutting Proposals

During the legislative trip last week, I was able to meet with the key legislators listed at the end of this memo and the Lieutenant Governor. For our city's budgeting purposes, listed below are some of the issues discussed during those meetings and information we have received from other sources that have and will decrease city's revenues and increase expenses:

1. **Property Taxes:** It is abundantly clear that the Florida Legislature will be passing a proposal for property tax relief this year, and that Governor will call for Special Sessions if a proposal is not reached during the regular session. While some of the proposals exempt funding for "First Responders," the House Committee discussions reveal that some of the proposals only consider the police department as exempt. Stated differently, the Fire Department budget is not exempted from the revenue cutting proposals.
2. **TPO Funding:** Last year, the Florida Legislature cut the funding that funds our trolley and Freebie services.
3. **Business Tax Receipts:** As in past years, the Florida Legislature is considering proposals to cut city business tax receipts. I recently learned that there are proposals in both the House and Senate this year that will make that cut more likely in this legislative session.

Based upon the foregoing revenue cuts to our current and future budgets, I respectfully request that staff highlight the impact of these proposals upon every decision this Commission makes to increase expenses or decrease revenues to our city, and the long term impact of the reduction of revenue to our city services and capital improvements that residents expect the City to accomplish and maintain.

Below is the list of individuals that were met with during this past week's two day legislative trip:

1. Lieutenant Governor Jay Collins
2. House Speaker Danny Perez
3. Senator Bryan Avila
4. Senator Ileana Garcia
5. Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez
6. Senator Alexis Calatayud
7. Representative Alex Rizo
8. Representative Juan Carlos Porras
9. Representative David Borrero
10. Representative Fabian Basabe

Additional details regarding this legislative trip are highlighted in the December 8, 2025 memorandum from our Government Affairs Director, Chelsea Granell, a copy of which is attached hereto.

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



TO: Mayor and Members of the City Commission
City Manager, Peter Iglesias

FROM: Chelsea Granell, Governmental Affairs Director

DATE: December 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Summary of Legislative Trip to Tallahassee – December 2–3, 2025

Overview

This memorandum provides a summary of the City of Coral Gables' recent legislative trip to Tallahassee. Our delegation—Vice Mayor Anderson, Commissioner Lara, and myself (Chelsea Granell Governmental Affairs Director)—had a highly productive visit and advanced the City's appropriations, policy priorities, and strategic partnerships at the state level. The trip yielded meaningful discussions with key legislators, senior leadership in both chambers, and members of the executive branch.

The Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce attended the fly-in simultaneously and fully supported—and advocated for—our 2026 Legislative Priorities. Their alignment with our agenda and willingness to speak on the City's behalf created a strong, unified message to the Legislature. The synergy between the Chamber and the City was evident throughout the visit and significantly strengthened our advocacy efforts.

Meetings and Legislative Engagement

During our two-day visit, we met with a wide range of legislators in both the House and Senate, including:

- Lieutenant Governor Jay Collins.
- Speaker of the House Daniel Perez.
- Multiple House and Senate members representing key committees and priority districts.

Our discussions focused on the critical needs of Coral Gables, including our 2026 Appropriation Requests and the City's principal policy positions.

City Priorities Discussed

The legislative team advocated comprehensively on all City appropriation requests and advanced several high-priority policy topics, including:

- **Environmental and Water Quality Policies and Funding** – Emphasizing Biscayne Bay health, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure needs and resilience. We highlighted the need for the State to continue to provide grant funding for drainage and water quality projects, including rehabilitation of existing infrastructure and septic to sewer conversion.
- **Tree Canopy Protection** – Addressing fraudulent arborist reports and safeguarding mature, healthy trees within single-family districts, and to prevent stump grinding without providing cities a mechanism to prevent stump grinding that could impact utility services and cause significant damage to individuals or property.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure** – Including flood mitigation, safety improvements, and state support for mobility initiatives, including the restoration of funding to the Transportation Planning Organization for existing and pilot projects, such as the expansion of trolley services.
- **School Bus Safety** – Supporting statutory changes for private school buses to ensure uniform safety standards that will inform drivers that vehicles are transporting children and enable police to ticket individuals who illegally pass private school vans or buses. (Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez displayed an appetite to sponsor this legislation, we will be in correspondence with her office to share the legislation we proposed).
- **Micromobility & Electric Bike Safety** – Expressing the City’s strong interest in establishing stricter operational requirements for throttle-based electric bikes and micromobility devices. We highlighted the growing safety risks of these devices, particularly for children and young riders—and emphasized the need for consistent state-level regulations to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and road users. (Shared support among several legislators).
- **Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness** – Reinforcing the importance of protecting police and fire services in any statewide fiscal policy changes.
- **Property Tax Proposals** – The most widely discussed issue during the trip.

Property Tax Discussions

Property tax reform was consistently identified as a central statewide priority. Across meetings, there was strong acknowledgement that:

A decision will be made, as directed by Governor DeSantis.

- The Senate's perspective aligns with the Governor's, supporting the need for reform but emphasizing a phased and incremental approach.
- Senate leadership expressed a clear desire to ensure that public safety remains fully protected, with police and fire services expected to be exempt from any fiscal impacts of the proposed changes. Senate leadership praised the manner in which the city has managed its current budget and efforts to protect and maintain reserves and reduce pension debt.

We articulated the City's concerns regarding recurring revenue reductions and the potential long-term impacts on municipal operations, capital planning, and essential services, and noted several general budgetary items in other departments that impact the ability of first responders to perform.

Partnership with the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber's participation added significant value to this trip. They not only aligned their Legislative Agenda with the City's priorities but also echoed our advocacy positions in meetings with legislators. The unified presentation of business and municipal interests reinforced the credibility and urgency of Coral Gables' requests.

Their support represents a strengthened relationship that will benefit our long-term legislative strategy.

Conclusion

The legislative trip was highly successful and helped to solidify the City's presence during an important stage of the 2026 Session preparation. We conveyed our needs effectively, received productive feedback from legislative leaders, and strengthened our collaborative partnership with the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

We will continue monitoring developments closely and will provide updates as the legislative process moves forward. For your review and convenience, I am attaching the Chamber's 2026 Legislative Priorities, a copy of the City of Coral Gables' 2026 Legislative Priorities. Also, see attached for a copy of our schedule of meetings.

Next Steps

The 2026 Legislative Session begins on January 13, 2026. As the Session approaches, I will continue to:

- Monitor all policies, appropriation requests, and bills of interest to the City.
- Provide periodic updates to the Mayor and Commission as new developments arise.

- Work closely with legislative partners, state agencies, and the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce to remain aligned on shared priorities.
- Carefully and strategically evaluate any future trips to Tallahassee based on timing, need, and the potential impact on advancing the City's agenda.

These continued efforts will ensure Coral Gables remains actively engaged throughout the legislative process.

City of Coral Gables
Legislative Itinerary – Tallahassee Trip
December 1–3, 2025

Monday, December 1, 2025

6:34 PM – American Airlines AA 3966 departs Miami International Airport (MIA)

8:02 PM – Arrives in Tallahassee

— – Hotel Check-In: Aloft Hotel

Location: 200 North Monroe Street

8:30 PM – Dinner at Il Lusso

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

9:00 AM – Breakfast Briefing

Location: The Southern Group – Large Conference Room

10:30 AM – Meeting with Senator Ileana Garcia

Location: 314 Senate Building

8:30 AM–11:30 AM – House Property Tax Proposal – State Affairs Committee considers property tax reform bills (second committee stop; expected to advance to Ways & Means on Dec. 10).

12:00 PM – Lunch

2:00 PM – Meeting with Representative Alex Rizo

Location: 313 House Office Building

3:00 PM – Meeting with Senator Bryan Avila

Location: 309 Senate Office Building

7:00 PM-10:00- Dinner with Coral Gables Chamber Delegation

****Wednesday, December 3, 2025****

8:15 AM – Meeting with Chamber at Doubletree Breakfast Briefing

9:30 AM (CHAMBER MEETING) – Meeting with Speaker Danny Perez

Location: 420 Capitol

10:30 AM (CHAMBER MEETING)-Meeting with State Representative Fabian Basabe

11:00 AM (CHAMBER MEETING) – Meeting with Representative Alex Rizo

Location: 313 House Office Building

11:15 AM – Meeting with Representative Juan Carlos Porras

Location: 334 The Capitol

11:45 AM (CHAMBER MEETING) – Meeting with State Rep. Borrero

12:30 PM (CHAMBER MEETING) – Meeting with Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez

Location: 410 Senate Office Building

12:45 PM – Lunch

1:15 PM– Meeting with Senator Calatayud

Location: 305 Senate Building

2:15 PM (CHAMBER MEETING) – Meeting with Senator Avila

Location: 309 Senate Building

4:45 PM– Meeting with Lt. Governor Jay Collins

Location: Governors Office

5:30 PM – Dinner

8:41 PM – American Airlines AA 3966 departs Tallahassee

10:30 PM – Arrives in Miami