

Citizen Charter Review Committee

July 16, 2026

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Leon County Main Library

Programming Room

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

Call to Order and Opening

Mary Ann Lindley,
Chair

Consent

- Approval of June 30, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- Receipt & File of Written Public Comments

Public Comment

Public Hearing

- Agenda Item #1: Second of Three Public Hearings to Consider the Proposed Charter Amendment Language to Provide for Community Impact Assessments

*The next public hearing of the Citizen Charter Review Committee
will take place on Thursday, July 30, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.
upon approval by the Committee.*

**LEON COUNTY CITIZEN CHARTER REVIEW
COMMITTEE**

APPROVAL OF JUNE 30, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Citizen Charter Review Committee
Public Hearing
June 30, 2026
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Leon County Main Library
Programming Room

The Leon County 2025-2026 Citizen Charter Review Committee (CCRC) met on June 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the Leon County Main Library with Committee Members Mary Ann Lindley, Joey Davis, Linda Bond Edwards, Max Herrle, Darryl Jones, Henry Lewis, III, Heidi Otway, Ryan Ray, Shamarial Roberson, Temple Robinson, Bruce Strouble, Jr., Jarrett Terry, Katrina Tuggerson, and Barry Wilcox in attendance. Also present were Assistant County Administrator Ken Morris, County Attorney Chasity O'Steen, Assistant to the County Administrator for Legislative and Strategic Initiatives Nicki Hatch, Management Analyst Cameron Williams, and Clerks to the Board, Beryl Wood and Daniel J. Antonaccio.

Absent Members: Chauncy Haynes, Liz Ellis, Anita Favors, Howard Kessler, Slaton Murray, Sean Pittman, and William Smith.

Call to Order and Opening Mary Ann Lindley, Chair

Chair Lindley called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Consent:

Ryan Ray moved, seconded by Darryl Jones, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

The motion carried 12 – 0 with Vice Chairman Chauncy Haynes, Liz Ellis, Anita Favors, Max Herrle, Howard Kessler, Slaton Murray, Sean Pittman, Shamarial Roberson, and William Smith not present.

Approval of May 28, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Receipt & File of Written Public Comments

- *Shamarial Roberson and Max Herrle arrived at this juncture of the meeting.*

Public Comment:

- Melanie Andrade, 3349 Argonaut Drive, spoke in support of advancing the proposed amendment to be considered by the Board of County Commissioners, stating that public policy decisions have long-term impacts and the proposed amendment language would preserve accountability across administrations and political cycles.
- Delilah Pierre, 3303 Ty Cobb Road, spoke in support of the proposed amendment. She cited disparities in infrastructure, schools, access to resources, and economic conditions among Tallahassee communities.
- Thomas Speirs, 123 Locke Street, spoke in support of the proposed amendment, stating that it represented a concrete step toward addressing historic harms.
- Stephanie McMillion, a resident of 32301, spoke in support of the proposed amendment. She stated that long-term assessment, transparency, and accountability are appropriate Charter functions and cited urban renewal projects, including Smokey Hollow, as examples of lasting impacts.

- Julie Meadows Keefe, 3256 Appleton Drive, spoke in support of the proposed amendment. She stated that the amendment does not mandate spending or preferential treatment but requires a transparent assessment of lasting public harms from past governmental decisions.

Public Hearing:

Agenda Item #1: First of Three Public Hearings to Consider the Proposed Charter Amendment Language to Provide for Community Impact Assessments

Nicki Hatch introduced the proposed charter amendment addressing adverse community conditions related to historic County laws, policies and governmental practices. She noted that the proposed amendment would require periodic community impact assessments, publicly available findings, the Board of County Commissioners' public review and consideration of each assessment, and adoption of an implementing ordinance by April 1, 2027.

She stated that the ordinance would establish the operational procedures such as geographically based assessment criteria. Placing these details in an ordinance would provide flexibility to respond to changing community needs, legal requirements, and restrictions without requiring future Charter amendments. She clarified that the draft amendment was a starting point, reminding the Committee that they may revise it or provide additional direction during any of the three public hearings before recommending it to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) for consideration in August 2026.

Bruce Strouble, Jr., moved, seconded by Ryan Ray, for approval of Option #1: Conduct the first of three public hearings to consider a proposed Charter Amendment to provide for Community Impact Assessments (Attachment #1), and advance the proposed Charter Amendment for consideration at the Committee's second of three public hearings on July 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The motion carried 14 – 0 with Vice Chairman Chauncy Haynes, Liz Ellis, Anita Favors, Howard Kessler, Slaton Murray, Sean Pittman, and William Smith not present.

Max Herrle raised questions regarding public participation and notification of the proposed amendment. He asked how the public would be informed as the item moved forward and inquired about a presentation explaining the proposal.

Nicki Hatch responded that meetings are publicly noticed through standard channels and social media. She added that an agenda item would be presented to the Board during its public hearing in August. That agenda item would summarize the proposal and its development. She also confirmed that a comprehensive final report documenting the Committee's actions would be presented to the Board at a later date.

Max Herrle suggested holding a public meeting or one of the upcoming public hearings in other locations, such as Frenchtown or Southside.

Nicki Hatch noted that moving a formal hearing would involve significant logistical considerations, including accommodating the 21-member committee, public participation, and broadcasting requirements.

Darryl Jones encouraged Committee members to participate in future public discussions as private citizens after the Committee is dissolved. He noted that community organizations, such as the NAACP, would likely hold public discussions if the proposed amendment advances to the ballot.

County Attorney O'Steen stated that after the Committee submits its recommendation, the Board may only approve or reject the proposed amendment. The Committee's final public hearing is the last time that proposed language can be modified.

Joey Davis asked for clarification on when Sunshine Law restrictions will no longer apply to Committee members.

Nicki Hatch clarified that following its final public hearing, the Committee will dissolve, and members will no longer be subject to the Committee's Sunshine Law restrictions. Once the measure is placed on the ballot, the County will be subject to additional legal restrictions regarding how it communicates about the proposal.

Adjournment:

Darryl Jones moved, seconded by Bruce Strouble, Jr., to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried 14 – 0 with Vice Chairman Chauncy Haynes, Liz Ellis, Anita Favors, Howard Kessler, Slaton Murray, Sean Pittman, and William Smith not present.

Chair Lindley reminded the Committee that its next public hearing would be on July 16, 2026, and adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mary Ann Lindley, Chair
Leon County Citizen Charter Review Committee

Beryl Wood, Clerk to the Board for
Gwen Marshall Knight, Clerk of Court

**LEON COUNTY CITIZEN CHARTER REVIEW
COMMITTEE**

**RECEIPT AND FILE OF WRITTEN PUBLIC
COMMENTS**

(To be electronically distributed Wednesday before the meeting)

LEON COUNTY CITIZEN CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

NOTES FOR AGENDA ITEM #1

Citizen Charter Review Committee

Agenda Item #1

July 16, 2026

To: 2025-2026 Leon County Citizen Charter Review Committee

From: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator

Title: Second of Three Public Hearings to Consider the Proposed Charter Amendment Language to Provide for Community Impact Assessments

Review and Approval:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Department / Division Review:	Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator Shington Lamy, Assistant County Administrator
Lead Staff / Project Team:	Nicki Hatch, Assistant to the County Administrator for Legislative and Strategic Initiatives Cameron Williams, Management Analyst

Summary:

This item seeks to conduct the second of three public hearings on the proposed Charter Amendment to add an article to the Leon County Home Rule Charter. The proposed Charter Amendment would provide for the periodic assessments, public reporting, and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners' review of adverse community conditions in historically underserved and vulnerable populations related to the County's historic laws, policies, and practices.

Staff Recommendation:

Option #1: Conduct the second of three public hearings to consider a proposed Charter Amendment to provide for Community Impact Assessments (Attachment #1), and advance the proposed Charter Amendment for consideration at the Committee's third and final public hearing on July 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Report and Discussion

Background:

At the Citizen Charter Review Committee's (Committee) Special Meeting held on May 28, 2026, the Committee voted 14-3 to advance a proposed Charter Amendment addressing adverse community conditions related to historic public policies and governmental practices to the public hearing process. This item seeks to conduct the second of three public hearings on the proposed Charter Amendment to add an article to the Leon County Home Rule Charter (Attachment #1). The proposed Charter Amendment would provide for the periodic assessments, public reporting, and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners' (Board) review of adverse community conditions in historically underserved and vulnerable populations related to the County's historic laws, policies, and practices.

Three public hearings have been scheduled for the Committee's consideration of proposed Charter Amendment language on June 30, July 16, and July 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Leon County Main Library Program Room. At the Committee's first public hearing on June 30, 2026, proposed Charter Amendment language was presented as a general starting point based on the Committee's prior direction. At that time, the Committee advanced the proposed Charter Amendment for consideration at its second of three public hearings.

Analysis:

If the Board adopts an ordinance to place the proposed Charter Amendment on the ballot, and if approved by a majority of electors voting in November, an article would be added to the Leon County Home Rule Charter (Charter). As reflected in Attachment #1, the proposed Charter Amendment would require Leon County to conduct a periodic assessment of adverse community conditions in historically underserved and vulnerable populations related to the County's historic laws, policies, and practices, subject to appropriation and funding availability. The County would be required to publish the findings of such assessments in a publicly accessible format. The Board would also be required to review the findings of each Community Impact Assessment during a public meeting. Accordingly, the Board would be authorized to consider the findings of Community Impact Assessments when exercising its legislative authority provided by the Charter and in compliance with applicable state and federal law.

The proposed Charter Amendment does not mandate specific policy outcomes, funding allocations, or preferential treatment for any individual or group. The proposed Charter Amendment further provides that nothing in the article shall be construed to authorize any program, policy, or action inconsistent with applicable state or federal constitutional provisions or statutes, rules, or regulations or applicable court order. The Charter Amendment would require the Board to adopt an Ordinance for implementation no later than April 1, 2027. The Ordinance would set forth additional detail – such as providing definitions for key terms (i.e., “historically underserved” and “vulnerable populations”) and neutral, geographically based criteria for selecting areas for assessment – necessary for implementation of the proposed Amendment if approved for inclusion in the Charter. This implementation approach is consistent with all previous Charter Amendments advanced through the Citizen Charter Review Committee process.

As previously reported to the Committee, the proposed language in Attachment #1 provides a general starting point based on the Committee's prior direction. Based on the County's legal review of the proposed language advanced to date, the following revisions have been incorporated for the Committee's consideration to provide additional consistency and clarity:

- Periodic Community Impact Assessment Process: The terms "periodic" and "recurring" were previously utilized interchangeably in the proposed language. For consistency, the proposed language has been revised to reflect the term "periodic" throughout the amendment.
- Review of County Laws, Policies, and Practices: The proposed language has been revised to require the County to conduct periodic community impact assessments related to historic County laws, policies and practices ("and" rather than "or") to clarify that each are subject to review.

These recommended revisions to the proposed Charter Amendment language are reflected in Attachment #1.

The draft ballot language approved by the Committee at the May 28, 2026, special meeting is provided in Table #1 below. The ballot title is limited to 15 words, and the ballot language is limited to 75 words. Following approval of the proposed Charter Amendment language, the Committee will have the opportunity to further amend the proposed ballot language and title at its third and final public hearing scheduled to take place on July 30, 2026.

Table #1. Proposed Ballot Title and Ballot Language

Proposed Ballot Title
Affirmation Of County's Commitment To Historically Underserved And Vulnerable Populations
Proposed Ballot Language
Shall the Home Rule Charter of Leon County, Florida, be amended to provide for a recurring Community Impact Assessment process, public reporting, and Board of County Commissioners' review and response regarding adverse community conditions related to historic public policies or governmental practices?

Next Steps

This item provides the Committee with the opportunity to conduct the second of three required public hearings to receive public input and consider the proposed Charter Amendment. The third and final public hearing is scheduled for July 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the Leon County Main Library Program Room.

The Committee may consider and approve further revisions to the proposed Charter Amendment during any of its public hearings. A Committee vote is required at each public hearing to continue advancing the proposed Charter Amendment through the public hearing process.

Title: Second of Three Public Hearings to Consider the Proposed Charter Amendment Language to Provide for Community Impact Assessments

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Following the Committee's three public hearings, any proposed Charter Amendment recommended by the Committee will be presented to the Board for consideration at a public hearing on August 17, 2026. If approved by the Board, the proposed Charter Amendment would be placed on the November 3, 2026, General Election ballot for consideration by the Leon County electorate. If approved by a majority of electors voting on the referendum, the Charter Amendment would become effective January 1, 2027.

Options:

1. Conduct the second of three public hearings to consider a proposed Charter Amendment to provide for Community Impact Assessments (Attachment #1), and advance the proposed Charter Amendment for consideration at the Committee's third and final public hearing on July 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
2. Conduct the second of three public hearings to consider a proposed Charter Amendment to provide for Community Impact Assessments, and do not advance the proposed Charter Amendment for consideration at the Committee's third public hearing.
3. Committee direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1

Attachments:

1. Draft Charter Amendment to be Titled "Community Impact Assessments"
2. May 28, 2026 Agenda Item on Revised Charter Amendment Proposal on Addressing Historic Harmful Public Policy Decisions

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ARTICLE #. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Sec. X.1. Purpose.

Sec. X.2. ~~Recurring~~ Periodic Community Impact Assessment Process.

Sec. X.3. Board of County Commissioners Review and Response.

Sec. X.4. Implementation and Legal Compliance.

Sec. X.1. Purpose.

- (1) The purpose of this article is to provide for the periodic assessments, public reporting, and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners' review of adverse community conditions in historically underserved and vulnerable populations related to the County's historic laws, policies, ~~or~~ and practices. This article is intended to inform County decision-making in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal laws.
- (2) By April 1, 2027, the Board of County Commissioners shall adopt an ordinance for implementation of this article, consistent with applicable state and federal laws.

Sec. X.2. ~~Recurring~~ Periodic Community Impact Assessment Process.

- (1) Leon County shall conduct a periodic community impact assessment of adverse community conditions within geographic areas of the County related to historic County laws, policies ~~or~~ and practices, subject to appropriation and funding availability.
- (2) The County shall publish the findings of such assessments in a publicly accessible format.

Sec. X.3. Board of County Commissioners Review and Response.

- (1) The Board of County Commissioners shall review and consider the findings of each Community Impact Assessment during a public meeting.

Sec. X.4. Implementation and Legal Compliance.

- (1) This article establishes a ~~recurring periodic~~ -process for assessment, public reporting, and the Board of County Commissioners' review and does not mandate specific policy outcomes, funding allocations, or preferential treatment for any individual or group.
- (2) Nothing in this article shall be construed to authorize any program, policy, or action inconsistent with applicable state or federal constitutional provisions or statutes, rules, or regulations or any applicable court order.

Citizen Charter Review Committee

Agenda Item #1

May 28, 2026

To: 2025-2026 Leon County Citizen Charter Review Committee

From: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator



Title: Consideration of Advancing a Proposed Charter Amendment Addressing Historic Harmful Public Policy Decisions

Review and Approval:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Department / Division Review:	Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator Shington Lamy, Assistant County Administrator
Lead Staff / Project Team:	Nicki Hatch, Assistant to the County Administrator for Legislative and Strategic Initiatives Cameron Williams, Management Analyst

Summary:

As requested by the Board of County Commissioners at its May 12, 2026 meeting, this item seeks the Citizen Charter Review Committee's consideration of whether to advance a Charter Amendment addressing historic harmful public policy decisions based on geographical areas in the community rather than race, gender, ethnicity, or any other protected class, that is compliant with state and federal laws, and in a manner that does not jeopardize state or federal funding.

Staff Recommendation:

Committee direction.

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Report and Discussion

Background:

As requested by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) at its May 12, 2026 meeting, this item seeks the Citizen Charter Review Committee's (Committee) consideration of whether to advance a Charter Amendment addressing historic harmful public policy decisions based on geographical areas in the community rather than race, gender, ethnicity, or any other protected class; compliant with state and federal laws; and in a manner that does not jeopardize state or federal funding.

On January 22, 2026, the Committee received an analysis of the County's ongoing efforts to reduce poverty and inequity in the community. The item included an analysis of Dr. Bruce Strouble's proposal to amend the County Charter by creating a new section that would require the County to establish programs and funding targeted to communities that have experienced historic racial discrimination. As presented in that item, adopting a Charter Amendment to establish programs and funding based on historic racial disenfranchisement could create legal challenges and jeopardize federal and state funding due to recent and ongoing state and federal actions to prohibit diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) related activities. Despite these considerations, the Committee requested a proposed Charter Amendment and corresponding ballot language to be prepared for consideration requiring the County to assess and address persistent disparities resulting from historic public policy decisions.

On February 19, 2026, the Committee received the proposed Charter Amendment and ballot language. Due to recent and ongoing state and federal actions to prohibit diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) related activities as well as the County's ongoing efforts to address poverty and inequities in the community within the Board's existing authority, the Committee did not advance the proposed Charter Amendment. Throughout the process, the Committee expressed strong support for the County's ongoing efforts to address poverty and inequities in historically underserved areas and support vulnerable populations in the community.

Subsequently, at its March 20, 2026 meeting, the Board requested an item on the proposed Charter Amendment considered, but ultimately not recommended, by the Committee related to persistent disparities resulting from historic public policy decisions based on certain occurrences including slavery and segregation. It is important to note that on that same day, the Florida Legislature also approved SB 1134 which prohibits local governments from adopting and implementing DEI-related activities such as those proposed in the Charter Amendment considered by the Committee. Additionally, on March 26, 2026, President Trump issued another executive order, Executive Order (2026 EO), that requires all recipients of federal funding to agree that they will not engage in racially discriminatory DEI activities.

The requested item on the proposed Charter Amendment not recommended by the Committee was presented to the Board at its April 10, 2026 meeting. The item provided a comprehensive analysis on the proposed Charter Amendment as well as the recent state and federal actions that prohibit local governments from adopting and implementing DEI-related activities such as those proposed in the Charter Amendment. Recognizing these considerations, the Board requested a revised framework to address historic harmful public policy decisions that could be provided to the Citizen

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Charter Review Committee for further consideration as a Charter Amendment that examines the following:

- Public policy decisions enacted by the Board;
- Focuses on geographic areas and does not consider race, gender, ethnicity or any other protected class (i.e., sexual orientation, etc.);
- Complies with state and federal laws; and
- Does not jeopardize state and federal funding requirements.

At its May 12, 2026 meeting, the proposed framework was presented to the Board which included important context regarding the County's comprehensive and ongoing efforts in alignment with the criteria above by addressing the needs in geographic areas through investment and engagement in underserved areas and vulnerable populations. As detailed in that item, these existing efforts align with best practices, are consistent with state and federal laws, and do not jeopardize state and federal funding awarded to the County. Notwithstanding the County's existing ongoing efforts, as requested by the Board, the item presented an option for consideration to revise the Charter Preamble to affirm Leon County's commitment to addressing the needs of underserved areas and vulnerable populations in our community. At that time, the Board voted to reconvene the Committee for its consideration of whether a Charter Amendment should be advanced addressing historic harmful public policy decisions based on geographical areas in the community rather than race, gender, ethnicity, or any other protected class, that is compliant with state and federal laws, and in a manner that does not jeopardize state or federal funding.

Analysis:

Leon County comprehensively addresses the long-standing and evolving needs of historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations (i.e., homeless, low-income, etc.) through countless policies, innovative programs, ongoing partnerships, and active engagement – all of which are data-driven, strategically implemented, and consistent with best practices. With this approach and focus, the County regularly addresses the highest and most challenging needs that historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations often experience.

Based on empirical data such as U.S. Census and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the common challenges of historically underserved areas include economic inequities that are often highlighted by persistent and disproportionate high poverty and unemployment rates; the lack of public infrastructure that prevents access to basic and essential services; the degradation of natural and environmental resources that adversely affect health and welfare; and limited access to social services that are critical to enhancing quality of life.

As presented to the Board at its May 12, 2026 meeting, the following analysis details the numerous policies, programs, partnerships, and investments the County is actively implementing in historically underserved areas to:

- Reduce Economic Inequities;
- Expand Infrastructure for Access to Basic and Essential Services;
- Protect the Environment for Health, Safety, and Welfare; and
- Deliver Critical Social Services to Enhance Quality of Life.

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Consistent with the Board's direction, these efforts align with best practices that address historic harmful policy decisions, comply with state and federal laws, and do not jeopardize state and federal funding. Additionally, these efforts have been implemented within the Board's existing authority and without any change to the County Charter.

Reduce Economic Inequities

The County has actively spearheaded efforts to reduce economic inequities and private sector disinvestment in historically underserved areas. Aligned with best practices, the County utilizes empirical data developed by the U.S. Census and Florida Office of Economic & Demographic Research to identify neighborhoods and communities with persistent and disproportionate levels of high poverty and unemployment rates. Subsequently, programs, partnerships, initiatives, and investments are adopted and implemented in collaboration and coordination with residents and stakeholders to increase economic prosperity and private sector investment. Although not exhaustive, significant examples of the County efforts include:

- Establishment of the Downtown and Greater Frenchtown-Southside Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs) in partnership with the City of Tallahassee (City) to increase economic growth in areas that for years experienced slum, blight, and private sector disinvestment. Through the CRAs, the County has invested more than \$56 million in property tax revenue that has improved public infrastructures (roads, sidewalks, stormwater, etc.); constructed new affordable housing including Goodbread Hills, Columbia Gardens, and Magnolia Oaks; and invested in local businesses to spur private sector investment in housing, retail, and restaurants.
- Adoption of the Southside Action Plan (SAP) within the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan to promote balanced and equitable growth in southern Leon County neighborhoods, including Bond, Providence, and South City. This has resulted in more than \$1.13 billion in public and private investment within the SAP boundaries including more than \$125 million in direct County funding.
- Development of Sense of Place Plans that intentionally engage residents to strengthen the unique identity of local neighborhoods and rural communities while enhancing public investment. Sense of Place plans developed by the County include:
 - *Miccosukee Community Sense of Place* – led to \$5.9 million in County and federal investment for the redevelopment of the Old Concord School into the new Miccosukee Community Center.
 - *Lake Jackson Town Center Huntington Sense of Place* – transformed a traditional shopping center into a cohesive public gathering spot that resulted in the expansion of the Lake Jackson Branch Library, a new community center, and enhanced retail space for greater private sector investment.
 - *Woodville Community Sense of Place* – adopted as a County Strategic Initiative by the Board, this plan focuses on activating and enhancing the rural town center through placemaking and infrastructure investment. It prioritizes the revitalization of Woodville and Robinson Road Parks alongside the development of a new trail hub on the St. Marks Trail, all supported by landscaping and gateway signage to

strengthen community identity. These aesthetic improvements are paired with critical infrastructure projects, including streetscaping, expanded pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, roadway safety enhancements, and the ongoing septic-to-sewer conversion program. Ultimately, the plan drives economic vitality by promoting trail-oriented development and updating zoning to foster compatible, small-scale business opportunities.

- Adoption of land use and zoning tools under the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan — including the Land Use and Mobility Element adopted in December 2025 — to protect existing neighborhoods from incompatible development and guide growth in a manner that preserves neighborhood character. These tools include low-density residential zoning classifications that prevent the conversion of single-family neighborhoods to high-density multifamily or large-format retail, and the Neighborhood Boundary land use category developed in partnership with the Bond Neighborhood to allow small-scale mixed uses — such as corner stores, daycares, and small cafes — while prohibiting strip malls, apartments, and big box retail that would alter the neighborhood's scale and character.
- Administration of the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) program through the Office of Economic Vitality (OEV) to provide business support to qualifying small businesses based on size and revenue, ensuring local enterprises in underserved areas can compete for and benefit from public investment opportunities.
- Partnership with the Small Business Development Center at FAMU to provide technical assistance to new and existing small business owners at every phase of the business lifecycle, preparing them to take advantage of economic opportunities generated by new public and private development in their communities.
- Implementation of robust public engagement on all public projects — including stakeholder meetings, online and in-person surveys, and public open houses — to ensure residents in historically underserved areas are informed of and have meaningful input into investments being made in their communities. For private development proposals, public engagement includes direct mailed notifications, legal advertisements, on-site signage, citizen committee review, and public hearings, ensuring that residents have a voice in the development occurring in their neighborhoods.
- Availability of urban area opportunity incentives to attract jobs and private investment to the urban core, directly benefiting residents of historically underserved neighborhoods.

Expand Infrastructure for Access to Basic and Essential Services

The County has been steadfast in its commitment to infrastructure improvements in historically underserved areas that expand access to basic and essential services. These improvements include paved roads, sidewalks, and traffic lights that connect underserved neighborhoods to the broader community. Through a combination of data evaluation, extensive planning, active community engagement, and strategic investments, the County's efforts have included:

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- The establishment of the *Livable Infrastructure for Everyone (L.I.F.E.) funding* through the one-cent infrastructure surtax — a dedicated mechanism designed to direct resources toward communities that have long been overlooked. Through this initiative, Leon County has been able to translate policy commitments into tangible, on-the-ground improvements, including:
 - *Rural Road Safety Stabilization Program* – addressing road conditions in rural corridors to improve safety and accessibility for all residents.
 - *Rural Broadband* – expanding high-speed internet access to underserved rural communities, bridging the digital divide and connecting residents to economic and educational opportunities.
 - *Fire Hydrants* – extending fire suppression infrastructure into rural areas that previously lacked adequate protection, improving public safety for residents historically outside the reach of essential services.
 - *Intersection Street Lighting* – illuminating key intersections in underserved areas to enhance safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.
 - *School Bus Lighting* – improving visibility and safety at school bus stops, protecting children in rural communities who were previously without adequate lighting infrastructure.
- Dedication of \$319 million through the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (Blueprint) on infrastructure investments in high poverty neighborhoods that equates to approximately 62% of Blueprint funding including:
 - More than \$1.5 million for the development of the South City Transit Center and improvements in the South City neighborhood.
 - Approximately \$9 million in Blueprint funding for the Orange-Meridian Placemaking project for construction of a new park and investment in the South City Transit Center.
 - Planned construction of Segment 4 of the Capital Cascades Trail in the amount of \$20 million for stormwater improvements, multi-use trail, and community gathering spaces connecting the Bond, Callen, Liberty Park, Lee Manor, and Providence neighborhoods.
 - Construction of the Magnolia Drive Trail, including underground electric utilities adjacent to the South City neighborhood in the amount of \$23.6 million.
- Adoption of the Family Heir Policy to support intergenerational land use and help families in underserved areas retain and utilize property that might otherwise remain undevelopable under standard regulations.
- Investment in multimodal transportation infrastructure, including new sidewalks and trail connections to the St. Marks Trail, to expand access to affordable non-motorized transportation — including walking, bicycling, and micro-mobility — for residents in historically underserved areas, reducing transportation costs and improving connectivity to employment, services, and recreation.

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- Adoption of two Neighborhood First Plans — for the Greater Bond Neighborhood and the Providence Neighborhood — containing infrastructure investment components that expand mobility options, improve public spaces, and strengthen connectivity within and between neighborhoods in historically underserved areas of the incorporated community.

Protect the Environment for Health, Safety, and Welfare

For much of the twentieth century, a combination of public policies and private sector activities prioritized development and economic growth that adversely impacted the environment. This included the direct discharge of effluent and untreated wastewater into surface waters, development within designated flood hazard areas, and the systematic filling of floodplains and wetlands. According to the Environmental Law Institute, a research-based organization in Washington, D.C. that focuses on environmental policies, local governments address public policies and private activities that have adversely impacted the environment in their communities through integrated strategies of regular testing and observation, remedial projects, and community engagement. Through rigorous evaluation and monitoring of scientific data, the County has incorporated similar strategies with the adoption policies, plans, and programs aimed at reversing decades of environmental degradation while improving health, safety, and welfare in historically underserved areas. These efforts have resulted in the following:

- Adoption of the Leon County Environmental Management Act (EMA) to establish rigorous local standards for the protection of property and the natural environment that takes into consideration the unique ecology of natural resources within geographic areas. In underserved areas, the County's EMA standards is mitigating flooding, protecting waterbodies, and reducing pollution.
- Adoption of the Primary Spring Zone Protection to safeguard groundwater quality within neighborhoods in Southern Leon County where the Florida Aquifer is most vulnerable while to protecting the water quality and biological health of Wakulla Springs.
- Establishment of Woodville Septic to Sewer Program to convert septic tanks to central sewer system, eliminating decades of groundwater and surface water contamination. The program provides homeowners in the Woodville area up to \$12,000 in grant funding. Thus far, the County has invested \$63 million and expanded sewer services to 709 properties.
- Adoption of the Lake Munson Action Plan to restore Lake Munson to address the legacy of pollution and nutrient loading that degraded the lake over generations with algal blooms, fish kills, and invasive plant growth. The plan includes:
 - Advancement of the \$1.6 million Munson Slough Embankment Repair Project to stabilize eroded banks, reestablish native vegetation, and reduce sediment transport into Lake Munson;
 - An initial drawdown to facilitate sediment drying and nutrient reduction;
 - Periodic routine drawdowns to sustain long-term water quality improvements;
 - Post-Drawdown Water Quality Study from May 2024 through April 2026, including monthly water quality and flow data collection at four monitoring locations;
 - Enhanced water quality monitoring;

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- Aerial topographic surveys of the lake bottom; and
- Expanded invasive exotic vegetation and algal bloom management programs.
- Investment in the Lake Henrietta stormwater management facility project to address decades of polluted stormwater runoff that has contributed to the degradation of Lake Munson. This Lake Henrietta Project includes:
 - Construction of Lake Henrietta as a regional stormwater management facility to intercept polluted stormwater runoff upstream of Lake Munson, capturing sediment, floating debris, and nutrient-rich material before it can enter the lake.
 - Investment of over \$1 million in the Lake Henrietta facility, which has captured over 53,000 cubic yards of sediment and debris from flowing downstream into Lake Munson since construction in the early 2000s.
 - Receipt of a \$2 million U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant for the Lake Henrietta Sediment Removal Project to remove the accumulated sediment the facility was designed to capture, restoring the facility's stormwater treatment capacity and reducing nutrient loading into Lake Munson, with design anticipated in Summer 2026 and construction to follow in 2027.
 - Development of the Anita Davis Preserve at Lake Henrietta, which serves the surrounding community as a public park featuring a walking trail and outdoor recreational amenities, providing dual environmental and quality-of-life benefits to residents in the area.

Deliver Critical Social Services to Enhance Quality of Life

In order to deliver critical social services, the County has adopted and implemented numerous programs consistent with best practices that are data driven, strategically implemented, and community-focused to improve the quality of life for the residents in historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations. The County's recent and ongoing efforts include:

- Hosted the 32304 Summit in March 2026 to highlight the efforts of the County and community partners to reduce poverty in 32304 neighborhoods including Frenchtown and Griffin Heights which has resulted in an 8% decrease in the 32304 poverty rate since 2019 (more than the 2% Countywide reduction during the same period).
- Establishment of the Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP) Promise Zone in partnership with the City which invests \$1.1 million each funding cycle to provide direct services such as food, legal aid, and healthcare to high poverty neighborhoods.
- Hosted nine (9) *Breaking Bread* Dinner series in the neighborhoods with the highest food insecurity rates to identify barriers to food access with more than 200 participants.
- Establishment of the Trusted People Neighborhood Engagement Committee (Trusted People Committee) comprised of leaders of the neighborhoods with high food insecurity rates that meet bi-monthly to work with the County and partners to engage and connect residents to available resources in the community.

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- Installation of temperature-controlled food lockers available 24/7 in Frenchtown, South City, and Providence neighborhoods that have distributed over 17,000 meals to more than 3,200 residents.
- Strengthened partnership this year (2026) with Farm Share to increase fresh produce distribution capacity in neighborhoods with the highest food insecurity rates which will serve over 1,000 households annually.
- Partnership with the City to implement the City's Neighborhood First Plans to improve the quality of life and spur economic growth in high poverty neighborhoods which has resulted in more than \$1.1 million in County funding for the construction of 16 homes in Bond, Griffin Heights, and Providence.
- Implementation of the Home Rehabilitation and Replacement Program to perform emergency home repairs, rehabilitate projects, and/or replace the homes of low-income families in rural and underserved regions of the County.
- Partnership with the City and Tallahassee Housing Authority to create and provide seed funding for the establishment of the South City Foundation to revitalize the neighborhood through engagement, economic development, healthcare, and affordable housing.
- Establishment of the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Program in partnership with Tallahassee State College and Leon County Schools to create a career path at the Leon County Emergency Medical Services for students at Godby High School which is the primary high school for the 32304-zip code and neighborhoods with the highest poverty rate in the County.

In addition to neighborhood specific programs, initiatives, and investments, the County's communitywide efforts to deliver resources to the most vulnerable populations include:

- Investment of \$1.4 million annually to prevent and reduce homelessness in the community through dedicated funding to the five (5) emergency homeless shelters, street outreach initiatives, and Leon County Sheriff HOST deputies.
- Investment of more than \$1.75 million annually through the Healthcare Services Program (i.e., CareNet) to provide primary care, dental care, mental health services, assistance with prescription medications, and specialty care to low-income, uninsured residents.
- More than \$500,000 annually in County funding to support food pantries, mobile food distributions, senior nutrition services, and child meal programs.
- Distribution of over 4,000 summer meals through the Summer BreakSpot program at the Leon County Main Library and branch locations for kids during summer 2025.
- Expanded partnership with 2-1-1 Big Bend to invest more than \$100,000 annually in the 2-1-1 Lyft program that provides County residents free transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, and employment interviews.
- Investment of \$5.8 million in direct funding and more than \$198 million in bonding for affordable housing rental projects that have or will build more than 1,200 units within the next 12 to 18 months for low-income households.

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- Investment of \$500,000 annually in affordable rental development for very-low and extremely-low income households.
- Secured \$100 million in bonds through the Housing Finance Authority of Leon County (HFA) for the development of future affordable rental housing projects for low-income renters.
- Adoption of the local option property tax exemption to incentivize market rate rental development projects to dedicate units for low-income households at affordable rates.
- Establishment of the Tallahassee-Leon County Community Land Trust (CLT) in partnership with the City and Tallahassee Lenders' Consortium to construct new homes for low-income households that will remain affordable in perpetuity. The County donates properties to the CLT to construct new homes (eight homes completed thus far).
- Partnership with Legal Services of North Florida to provide legal assistance to help low-income families clear title and resolve heirs' property issues.
- Partnership with FAMU Federal Credit Union to establish the SmartSteps Microloan Program to provide financial capital to historically marginalized entrepreneurs to build their businesses. The County allocated \$2.5 million, and to-date SmartSteps has distributed over \$1 million in microloans to 51 small local businesses.
- Partnership with the Capital City Chamber of Commerce (Capital City Chamber) to support the Bank On Tallahassee Initiative which improves access to banks and credit unions for low-income households and helps reduce barriers for households with previous credit issues.

As extensively detailed, the County is actively addressing historic harmful public policy decisions in geographic areas utilizing best practices to adopt policies, implement programs, strengthen partnerships, enhance community engagement, and make significant investment in historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations. The County's efforts are reducing economic inequities; providing public infrastructures essential to health, safety, and welfare; protecting the environment; and delivering critical social services to enhance the quality of life of historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations.

Consistent with the Board's direction, the County's approach addresses historic harmful public policy decisions in geographic areas, complies with state and federal laws and does not jeopardize any state and federal funding requirements. These targeted efforts align with best practices that address historic harmful policy decisions, comply with state and federal laws, and do not jeopardize state and federal funding. Furthermore, these efforts are strategically planned, annually funded by the Board, and carried out on a day-to-day basis by staff, community partners, and key stakeholders. Most importantly, the County's efforts have been successfully implemented within the Board's existing authority and without the need for an amendment to the County Charter.

Further Consideration by the Citizen Charter Review Committee

As previously reported to the Committee, there are no county charters in Florida that include language related to disparities from historic public policies. County charters generally address large organizational issues focused on the authority, structure, and power of county government.

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Operational detail or program-specific policy, such as the establishment of programs or targeted resource allocation, is more appropriately implemented through the Board's strategic planning process, budgetary priorities, or policy and ordinance adoption. In fact, the Board currently has the statutory authority and has been active in addressing the long-standing and evolving needs of historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations through policies, programs, and investments – all of which have been done without amending the County Charter.

In light of the Board's existing authority and ongoing actions, a Charter Amendment is not necessary and could be limiting. Specifically, creation of policy and programmatic mandates in the Charter would reduce the County's flexibility to respond to evolving community needs, funding opportunities, and legal requirements, and may not be consistent with the County's data-driven approach to addressing the most pressing issues and investing in time-sensitive needs in the community.

Potential Amendment to Revise the Preamble of the County Charter

Should the Committee wish to consider a proposed Charter Amendment, an option for consideration is to amend the Preamble of the County Charter to affirm County's commitment to addressing the needs of historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations in our community. As noted previously, this option was presented to the Board at its May 12th meeting, which the Board did not advance and instead voted to reconvene the Committee to consider whether a Charter Amendment on this issue should be advanced.

As previously reported to the Committee, the Preamble sets forth broad community values which emphasize the importance of home rule, local decision making, and the role of residents in shaping their local government. As an introduction to what the Charter seeks to achieve, the Preamble does not delineate specific structures, authorities, policies, or provision of services for County government. Rather, it is intentionally broad to allow the County to adapt and respond to emerging challenges as determined by the elected County Commission.

The Committee previously recommended to the Board a proposed amendment revising the Charter Preamble to reflect the esteemed humanity of all residents of Leon County. Similarly, the Committee may wish to consider revisions to the Preamble that would reflect the County's long and ongoing efforts to invest and engage in historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations.

As shown in Table #1, the proposed language (underlined) could be incorporated to affirm the County's commitment to addressing the needs of underserved areas and vulnerable populations in our community. The proposed amendment, as drafted below, would not conflict with existing state and federal law.

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Table #1. Proposed Amendment to the Charter Preamble
(Proposed language underlined)

PREAMBLE We, the citizens of Leon County, Florida, united in the belief that governmental decisions affecting local interests should be made locally, rather than by the State, and that County government should be reflective of the people of the County and should serve them in achieving a more responsive and efficient form of government and in order to empower the people of this County to make changes in their own government, do ordain and establish this Home Rule Charter for Leon County, Florida. <u>We further affirm Leon County's commitment to addressing the needs of historically underserved areas and vulnerable populations in our community.</u>
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In addition, potential ballot language has been prepared for the proposed Charter Amendment as reflected in Table #2 below. The proposed ballot title and ballot language reflected in Table #2 would meet the statutorily required word count limit. The ballot title is limited to 15 words, and the ballot language is limited to 75 words.

Table #2. Proposed Ballot Title and Ballot Language

Proposed Ballot Title
Affirmation of County's Commitment to Historically Underserved Areas as proposed by Citizen Charter Review Committee
Proposed Ballot Language
Shall the Preamble of the Leon County Home Rule Charter be amended to affirm Leon County's commitment to addressing the needs of historically underserved geographic areas and vulnerable populations in our community, while preserving the Charter's existing framework for local self-governance, community values, and citizen empowerment?

The Committee also has the opportunity to propose its own charter amendment as an alternative or any additional direction specific to this issue. Should the Committee not wish to further consider or advance this issue, it may also table the issue at this time.

Next Steps

As directed by the Board, this item provides the Committee with information and analysis for consideration in evaluating whether to advance a Charter Amendment addressing historic harmful public policy decisions based on geographical areas in the community rather than race, gender, ethnicity, or any other protected class, that is compliant with state and federal laws, and in a manner that does not jeopardize state or federal funding.

A simple majority is needed to advance a Charter Amendment to the Committee's three required public hearings to take public input and formally consider the proposed Amendment. The public hearings have been tentatively scheduled to take place June 30, July 16, and July 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. The Committee may consider and approve further revisions to the proposed Amendment during any of its public hearings. Any proposed Charter Amendments, as recommended by the

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Committee during its public hearings, will be presented for final consideration by the Board at its public hearing on August 17, 2026.

Options:

1. Accept this report and take no further action.
2. Advance a proposed Charter Amendment addressing historic harmful public policy decisions for consideration at the Committee's first of three public hearings on June 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Recommendation:

Committee direction.