



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LFIR # 2859

1. **Project Title**

2. **Senate Sponsor**

3. **Date of Request**

**4. Project/Program Description**

Fernandina Beach is a 200-year-old city located on Amelia Island between the Atlantic Ocean and the Amelia River. The City's Downtown Historic District consists of a flourishing commercial district bustling with shops, restaurants, breweries, cultural sites, and 60 blocks of expertly preserved Victorian-era homes. In 2024, 78.7% (815,174) of Amelia Island's 1,035,800 visitors ranked the Historic District as a "Top Activity Enjoyed," scoring higher than even the Island's beaches. The Historic District borders the Amelia River which periodically and with growing frequency overflows onto downtown streets, flooding the railroad and the Port. Even heavy rain now creates standing bodies of water throughout the Historic District. Fernandina Beach needs \$4,000,000 in state funding to continue to construct a seawall prioritized in the City of Fernandina Beach City-Wide Vulnerability Assessment to improve shoreline stabilization, flood protection and to protect the thriving local economy.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**

**State Agency contacted?**

**6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

Type of Funding	Amount
Operating	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	4,000,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>

**7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (including matching funds available for this project)**

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	4,000,000	21%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	15,000,000	79%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2025-2026</b>	<b>19,000,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?**

If yes, provide the most recent instance:

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		
2024-25	0	2,000,000	1732A	No

9. **Is future-year funding likely to be requested?**

a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**

b. **Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.**



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General Revenues and/or Bonds

### Complete questions 10 and 11 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

#### 10. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning    
  Design    
  Construction    
  N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)? No

c. What is the estimated start date of construction? 05/01/2026

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction? 12/31/2027

e. What funding stream will be used for ongoing operations and maintenance of the project?

City General Revenues

#### 11. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

All properties which will receive construction improvements through the Fernandina Beach Historic Downtown Resiliency Seawall Construction Project Phase 3 are owned fully by the City of Fernandina Beach.

#### 12. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs</b>		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	Phased-in construction of a sea wall to protect the Historic Fernandina Beach Downtown, an economic driver for the State and Nassau County.	4,000,000
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>4,000,000</b>

#### 13. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?



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Travel publications consistently rank Amelia Island one of best island and beach destinations in the U.S. In 2023, Amelia Island tourism contributed over \$1.2 billion in economic impact, employed over 25% of Nassau County, FL residents, and provided almost \$453 million in wages to Amelia Island employees. Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach, a business and residential district populated with Victorian-aged business structures and homes, was ranked a favorite activity by 78.7% of Amelia Island visitors (2023 data.) The City hosts cultural events and festivals that attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. The Downtown is also home to the Port of Fernandina, the CSX railroad, and WestRock and Rayonier Mills, which generate over 1,000 good paying jobs. The Fernandina Beach Historic Downtown Resiliency Seawall Construction Project Phase 3 project will protect Fernandina Beach as a tourist, cultural and employment center going into her next 200 years.

**b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?**

Fernandina Beach's Historic District is bounded by the Amelia River and consists of 60 blocks of Victorian Era buildings, and other critical community assets including the Fernandina Port, two major paper production plants, and CSX railroad. More than 800,000 visitors visit the historic Fernandina Beach downtown annually. The Historic District experiences some of Amelia Island's most severe flooding due to high tides and storm surge, periodically flooding downtown streets and causing shut-down and repairs to the downtown railroad. A seawall will protect Fernandina Beach and Nassau County's economic vitality, business operations, and the lives and property of its citizens.

**c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?**

This project will provide physical protection of persons and property. Additionally, this project will preserve specific immediate job opportunities for local residents. Tourism is Nassau County's largest job creator, creating over 25% of all jobs and paying 38% of all sales taxes. Given that 78.7% of Amelia Island visitors ranked visiting the historic Fernandina Beach downtown as one of their favorite activities when visiting, protection of the Historic District by construction of a sea wall to protect against flooding will benefit residents and visitors alike.

**d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?**

Residents, visitors, businesses and workers are the target population. Fernandina Beach has 13,647 residents. Amelia Island, on which Fernandina Beach is located, attracted 1,035,800 visitors in 2024 and of those, 815,174 reported visiting the Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach was a favorite activity, even more than local beaches. Beyond annual seasonal tourism, Fernandina Beach hosts recurring cultural events and festivals that bring hundreds of thousands of additional visitors - and tourism revenue. In 2024, visitors who live outside of Nassau County spent \$11.5 million during the City's Shrimp Festival; \$6.6 million during the Concourse; \$4.46 million during Dickens on Centre. The Downtown is also home to the Port of Fernandina, CSX railroad, WestRock and Rayonier Mills, which generate over 1,000 local jobs. Protection and preservation of Fernandina Beach's Historic District translates directly into Nassau County economic vitality, benefiting tourists, residents and business.

**e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?**

The Fernandina Beach's Historic District is bounded by the Amelia River on Amelia Island which is a barrier island against the Atlantic Ocean. Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach consists of 60 blocks of Victorian Era buildings, and other critical community assets including the Fernandina Port, two major paper production plants, and CSX railroad. More than 800,000 visitors visit the historic Fernandina Beach downtown annually. The Historic District experiences some of Amelia Island's most increasingly-severe flooding due to high tides and storm surge. A seawall will protect tourism, businesses, property and the lives of residents of Fernandina Beach and Nassau County. The outcome of this impact can be measured through pre-and-post comparative flooding data.

**f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for in the contract?**

Failure to fully-satisfy each deliverable of the the Fernandina Beach Historic Downtown Resiliency Seawall Construction Project Phase 3 would make Fernandina Beach ineligible for reimbursement from the State of Florida.

14. Is this project related to mitigation, response, or recovery from a natural disaster?  Yes

**a. If Yes, what phase best describes the project?**

- Mitigation (reducing or eliminating potential loss of life or property)



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- Response (addressing the immediate and short-term effects of a natural disaster)
- Recovery (assisting communities return to normal operations, including rebuilding damaged infrastructure)

**b. Name of the natural disaster (or Executive Order # for events not under a federal declaration):**

2019-Hurricane Dorian; 2022-Hurricane Nicole; 2024-Hurricane Helene

**15. Has the entity applied for or received federal assistance for this project?**

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

**a. If yes, provide the FEMA project worksheet ID#:**

**b. Provide the total project cost listed on the FEMA project worksheet:**

**16. Has the entity applied for or received state assistance for this project (other than this request)?**

- Yes, Applied
- Yes, Received
- No
- No, but intends to apply

**a. If yes, specify the program and state agency (ex. Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan, Department of Commerce):**

The appropriation for Phase 2 of this project was awarded in last year's 24-25 budget, line 1732A.

## Please complete questions 17 through 21 for Water Projects only.

**17. Have you been awarded or applied for alternative state funding for this project?**

- Water Quality Improvement Grant Program
- Resilient Florida Grant Program
- Wastewater Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant



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Other (please specify, ex. Alternative Water Supply Grants)

N/A

**18. What is the population economic status?**

Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)

Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)

Rural Area of Economic Concern

Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)

N/A

**19. What is the status of construction?**

Phase 1 was completed. Phase 2 funding has been awarded but construction has not commenced.

**20. What percentage of the construction has been completed?**

10%

**21. What is the estimated completion date of construction?**

December 31, 2027

**22. Requester Contact Information**

**a. First Name** Lorelei **Last Name** Jacobs

**b. Organization** City of Fernandina Beach

**c. E-mail Address** ljacobs@fbfl.org

**d. Phone Number** (904)310-3104 **Ext.**

**23. Recipient Contact Information**

**a. Organization** City of Fernandina Beach

**b. Municipality and County** Nassau

**c. Organization Type**

For Profit Entity

Non Profit 501(c)(3)

Non Profit 501(c)(4)

Local Entity

University or College

Other (please specify) municipality



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d. First Name  Last Name   
e. E-mail Address   
f. Phone Number  Ext.

#### 24. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name   
b. Firm Name   
c. E-mail Address   
d. Phone Number

*The information provided will be posted to the Florida Senate website for public viewing if sponsored by a Senator.*