

**CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION
LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY**



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Bill Type and Number: Ordinance 2020-251

Introducer/Sponsor(s): Council President Wilson

Date of Introduction: May 12, 2020

Committee(s) of Reference: NCSPHS, F, R

Date of Analysis: May 14, 2020

Type of Action: Appropriation; CIP amendment; TDC budget amendment; Ordinance Code waiver; approval of a TDC recommendation regarding a downtown visitor information center; designating oversight agency

Bill Summary: The bill appropriates \$785,000 from the Reserve for Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts Downtown Visitor Center Project to the Tourist Development Council's Operating Account to recapture funds previously allocated for a capital project and return them to the TDC budget for reallocation. The bill amends the City's 2020-24 Capital Improvement Program to reduce the funding amount for the Downtown Visitor Center Project by \$785,000 and amends the TDC's annual budget (Schedule W of the City budget ordinance) to reflect the return of that amount to the TDC operations budget. The bill waives a provision of Ordinance Code Chapter 666 – Duval County Tourist Development Plan – to provide that any portion of the \$785,000 not expended by the end of the fiscal year is not required to be swept into the TDC Development Account during the year-end closeout. The bill expresses the City Council's approval of the TDC's recommendation that a downtown visitor information center not be constructed in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts as previously planned and that a new downtown visitor center site be leased in a different location. The Tourist Development Council is designated as the City's oversight agency for the reallocated funds.

Background Information: Via Ordinance 2018-837-E the Council appropriated \$850,000 from the Tourist Development Council's Development Account to a capital expenditure account for construction of the new visitor information center in the southeast corner of the T-U Center in conjunction with other capital improvements being made to the building. A portion of that funding has been expended on architectural design work for the new facility, leaving \$785,000 in that account. Via Ordinance 2019-854 the City Council appropriated the funds to a downtown visitor center capital project reserve account and put a hold on the construction. Given the economic havoc caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on tourism and bed tax revenues, the TDC requests that these funds be released from the visitor center project reserve and allocated back to the TDC for operational purposes to help cushion the blow from lost revenues. The Ordinance Code waiver is requested so that, should some of the funds be unexpended at the end of the fiscal year, they will not be swept into the TDC Development Account but will instead be deposited into the TDC's Contingency Account for future reallocation.

Policy Impact Area: Cancellation of downtown visitor center construction; reallocation of TDC funding to operations

Fiscal Impact: Reallocation of \$785,000 of TDC funds from a capital to an operating account.

Analyst: Clements