



2024 CITY OF VENICE STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The City of Venice wishes to express its gratitude to the Florida State Legislature for its work to provide the best and highest quality of life for residents of the state and especially, residents of Venice. We are sincerely appreciative of the Legislature’s previous support of Venice projects including: road widening, beach renourishment, water main replacement and other appropriations benefiting of our citizens. The following contemporary needs have been identified by the Venice City Council. The City of Venice requests your help with these important projects:

Water Plant Production

The City of Venice Utilities Department is engaged in a decade-long project to improve potable water production. In 2013, a kick-off phase initiated the replacement of the water plant’s reverse-osmosis membrane with a higher efficiency model, designed to increase the usable percentage of raw water to 50%. Improvements in the reverse-osmosis process continue to further increase the usable percentage of raw water drawn to service our population. The membrane process is highly efficient and will result in an environmental benefit by reducing both the groundwater usage and the waste discharge rate.

The City is currently engaged in a major capital project to acquire a site to relocate the water plant. The current facility is located in a flood plain and vulnerable to adverse weather conditions. This major capital project will include the engineering design and construction of a new water plant, the simultaneous operation of the current plant and new facility during a protracted period of testing, and eventually a switchover of service from the existing plant to the new facility. The new plant will be engineered to incorporate the latest technologies in collecting, processing and distributing potable water to our customers. Legislative funding will be of critical value in the upgrading of the City’s major utility.

Water Quality Treatment Projects – Stormwater Management

Based on previous stormwater outfall monitoring, implementation of water quality treatment projects continues to be implemented on an annual basis. The primary goal for water quality projects is to reduce pollutant loading from nutrients and bacteria discharging into the Gulf as a mitigation to red tide and “no swim” advisories. The annual design and construction of water quality projects is essential to reducing pollutant loading of important water resources and protecting the beaches as the No. 1 economic driver of Venice and the surrounding areas.

Over the past five years, the City has systematically identified, tested and ranked the stormwater outfall discharging into the Gulf. The multi-year program is intended to identify the sites most favorable to treatments designed to reduce pollutant discharge. The City requests the state's continued support as we continue to implement infrastructure improvement projects to mitigate pollutant levels in system discharge.

Transportation Funding

With assistance from the state Legislature, the City of Venice implemented a multi-year roadway system improvement project. Over a two-year period, the City improved 70% of the roads within the City limits. The next phase of local roadway improvements includes a focus on multi-modal transportation design and an emphasis on enhanced safety for pedestrians and bike riders.

Venice supports legislation that preserves local control of transportation planning, provides equitable transportation funding among municipalities and counties, and provides opportunities for additional options for municipal transportation infrastructure projects. The City works with county and state partners in the plan and implementation of multi-modal road upgrades. The City currently is focusing on design of expansion and improvement of multi-modal projects in heavily used pedestrian/ biking corridors. Venice appreciates the continuation of legislative support enabling the City to undertake these projects.

Beach Renourishment

Hurricane Ian provided a clear reminder of the importance of beach renourishment to protect the safety and welfare of this Florida coastal community. Renourishment provides for critical storm protection and open beach for marine turtle nesting. The beach enhances tourism opportunities and acts as a regional economic driver. The City of Venice appreciates the funding that has been received to date, including annual physical monitoring that is currently funded under an active state grant agreement.

The City requests ongoing legislative support for the statewide beach renourishment and inlet management program, as this will provide funding availability as we move toward the next renourishment event in 2025. The City also continues to support the state as it seeks new methods to resolve erosion issues.

Affordable Housing

Area businesses including critical service providers like the local hospital have conveyed to the City that they have difficulty in hiring and retaining employees due to a lack of affordable housing. Additionally, local land and construction costs preclude developers from creating residential units at affordable prices for low and moderate-income workers. It should be possible for working families and our more vulnerable citizens to afford housing and still have enough money for basic expenses like groceries and gas.

The City of Venice supports state appropriations for programs that support acquisition of property and construction of housing units that are affordable to low and middle-income residents (lower strata income workers). The City also requests an increase in funding for CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) and HOME partnership programs to assist in these endeavors.

Support Home Rule

The City of Venice requests the support of legislation that provides for Home Rule authority for cities and counties to make decisions that reflect the unique needs of the community and the wishes of its citizens. It is imperative that the state not impose unfunded mandates or reduce the revenue of local governments by reducing tax-based revenues to cities, such as the Communication Services Tax and the Business Tax.

Incentives for Alternative Energy and Energy Conservation and Efficiency Improvements

The City of Venice encourages the Florida Legislature to provide any incentives possible to encourage citizens to retrofit their homes and businesses with energy efficient, energy production and alternative energy products; and to provide funding opportunities for local governments to use alternative energy products.

The City of Venice Supports the Florida League of Cities' Legislative Priorities for 2024.