



## **2023 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 greatly thankful for previous support of road reconstruction, beach renourishment, and other actions for the benefit of our citizens. The following needs have been identified by 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%. The next phase planned is to further increase the usable percentage of drawn water by introducing an enhanced membrane that will preserve 75% of the raw water entering the production plant. This advanced membrane design produces highly refined potable water with minimal loss of the natural raw water resource and minimal chemical use. The 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 design for the upgrade membrane system and seeks funding for the construction phase of the project.

### **Water Quality Treatment Project – Stormwater Management**

A Stormwater Outfall Monitoring and Water Quality Treatment Project was initiated in FY20. The multi-year project involves a systematic sampling of outfalls within the City by employing equipment that measures the discharge flow rate and incorporates subsequent water quality analysis. The project includes testing the numerous outfalls sites to the Gulf of Mexico to determine the most active discharge areas and subsequently sampling the most active outfalls during rain events to measure pollutant levels. Continuing project phases also includes the preliminary design of construction projects to provide water quality treatment prior to discharge. The overall project design is for seven phases. A primary project goal is to reduce pollutant loading from nutrients and bacteria discharging into the Gulf as a mitigation to red tide and No Swim advisories. The overall multi-year project goal is to improve this important water resource and protect the beaches as the No. 1 economic driver of Venice and surrounding areas.

The City respectfully requests the state’s continued support as we advance in the monitoring and evaluation phase and advance to infrastructure design to mitigate pollutant levels in system discharge.

## **Beach Renourishment**

Renourishing the beach serves to protect the safety and welfare of this Florida coastal community. Renourishment is important for storm protection, marine turtle nesting and as a tourism and 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 our 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.

## **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 include a focus on multi-modal transportation design and 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.

### **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 2023.**

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