

CITY OF VENICE
Office of the City Manager

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Ed Lavallee
DATE: 7-12-2013
RE: Creation of a Master Parks Plan

Background

The City of Venice has been examining current and potential future uses of publicly owned properties, including: parks, passive and active recreation areas, and sites used to support various governmental services. The examination of current sites has revealed that demands for various uses exceed the currently defined available public space capacity. The development of a comprehensive strategic plan should be initiated that incorporates space needs for current and future planned governmental service delivery uses, current and future needs for sports, active and passive open space, various forms of individual and family recreation, and related community uses of public property.

The initiative incorporates two phases:

- Creation of a citywide parks plan. The plan would include an inventory of existing parks, recreation areas, ball fields and related public space. The plan would also include an initiative to develop a strategic model that includes identification of current and future space and amenity needs related to use of public sites for sports, recreation and related activities.
- Proposal to the Sarasota County Board of Commissioners to collaborate with Venice in the creation of a county-wide Master Parks Plan. This initiative would incorporate an identification of current and future sports and recreation needs on a countywide basis and potentially facilitate collaboration in the development of and use of publicly owned sites for sports, recreation, open space active and passive public uses, and overall balanced decision making in the development and use of public property.

Further, in support of efficient use of public resources, the inclusion of a countywide effort to produce the same strategic product of open space needs and uses could result in a number of direct public benefits including the creation of shared public spaces, coordinated capital planning and investment and shared maintenance and operational plans.

Recommendations:

1. Approve the creation and codification of a Master Parks Plan. Given the numerous current and potential uses of public space, the initiative should engage staff and stakeholders in the community that benefit from, rely on, use, maintain, and support public parks, recreation areas, and other public lands used for governmental service delivery. Broad-based stakeholder representation will provide needed perspective and ideas for creation of a comprehensive a strategic public property use model.
2. Propose to coordinate with Sarasota County policy makers and staff in the creation of a Countywide Master Parks Plan. Following the completion a local inventory, needs assessment and citywide concept, advance the strategic planning model to a countywide effort with goals; including the identification of opportunities for shared resource development and public space utilization.