



CITY OF VENICE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The City of Venice wishes to express its gratitude to the Congressional leadership supporting Florida's legislative priorities. Our leadership continues to work to provide the best and highest quality of life for residents of the state. We are greatly appreciative of previous support for beach renourishment, a critically important project to protect our shoreline and abutting properties. The following is a list of capital and policy-level projects that would greatly benefit from Federal legislative support. The City of Venice requests your help with these important endeavors:

Beach Renourishment

The City of Venice has a 50-year contract with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to renourish the beaches lining the Venice shoreline. The 10-year cycle is necessary to counteract shoreline erosion caused by natural tidal flow and exacerbated by the impacts from the Venice Inlet. 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 through a partnership with ACOE and looks forward to the next scheduled renourishment date. Given the impact of Hurricane Ian in September 2022, the City may be requesting a renourishment in advance of the original programmed date of 2025.

FY 24 Request: The City of Venice supports the continued allocation of Federal funds for shoreline renourishment and requests assistance from the ACOE for an early assessment of need for Federal support.

Reclaimed Water Production

The City's Utilities Department is using strategic system modeling to improve potable water and reclaimed water production. The water plant's reverse-osmosis membrane was replaced with an efficient model that increased the usable percentage of raw water to 50%. In the current phase, enhanced technology will increase the usable raw water percentage to 75%. The complement to the production of potable water efficiency is the processing of reclaimed water. The reuse of reclaimed water is a key element to environmentally friendly water management for irrigation and related purposes. The City is creating a master plan for the long-term expansion, collection and distribution of the reclaimed water system. The first phase will complete the master plan and construct deep-water injection wells to store stormwater for later use. The projected cost of phase 1 is \$5.5 million. Funding will be needed for phase 2, to expand the infrastructure to distribute the stored water to residential, commercial and industrial sites. The projected expense for the distribution system is \$6 million.

FY 24 Request: Funding is requested by the City of Venice in the amount of \$3 million to support 50% of the reclaimed water system distribution project cost.

Water Infrastructure Improvements – Potable Water Booster Station

The City of Venice water utility infrastructure is in excess of 50 years old. The necessity of systematic replacement of the mechanical processing and subterranean infrastructure is exacerbated by unprecedented rapid residential growth in the community. The forecast for 5,000-6,000 new homes in a 10-year period will increase the City's population by 40 percent. To accommodate the demand, a new potable water booster station and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) complex is under design for placement in the rapidly growing northeast section of the City. The new station will increase water production to a nearby fire station and newly opened regional hospital, as well as increasing needed water production for residential and commercial growth. The EOC will provide a hardened structure to protect the workforce in natural and manmade disasters, and will provide shared protective space for our Sarasota County utility partners. A noteworthy component of the project design is the inclusion of a solar array designed to power the plant's operation with "green energy." This energy plant is a pilot in the region and expected to be a model for replication. The estimated total project cost is \$21.3 million.

FY 24 Request: Funding support is requested by the City of Venice in the amount of \$5 million for the potable water booster station.

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.

FY 24 Request: The City of Venice respectfully requests Federal program initiatives, tax incentives and supplemental appropriations to facilitate the creation of workforce housing geared to providing residential opportunities for low- and middle-income residents.

Water Quality – Red Tide Research

The presence of *Karina Brevis*, commonly known as red tide, in local waters creates a significant public health risk and imparts a devastating blow to the area's economy. The continued prevalence of the algae impacting area beaches, shoreline activity local tourism, and public health generally, is a vivid indication that continued research is needed to more precisely identify causes and develop counter measures to prevent the proliferation of the algae in populated areas.

FY 24 Request: The City of Venice supports Federal initiatives to further the research and testing of methods to predict, counteract and control the unhealthy presence of red tide.

Human Services

The prevalence of homelessness in communities is, in part, an indication of the lack of adequate human services to identify and treat the various human conditions that contribute to this population. Notably, military veterans; those suffering from mental illness and/or drug and alcohol addiction; and those suffering from physical disabilities are among those classified as homeless. Homelessness in a community undermines the welfare of all residents. Developing jobs, reinstating clinics to test and service physical and mental disabilities, increasing opportunities for veterans to receive employment assistance, and generally creating programs offering opportunities for homeless individual to gain or regain a position of independence should be priority goals of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

FY 24 Request: The City of Venice requests Federal funding to create program support for veterans, through the Department of Veterans Affairs, to provide testing, clinical services, and related outreach benefits geared to restoring the capacity and reaffirming the dignity of our country's veteran population.