



Project: Venice Library
Site and Development Plan Petition No. 17-01SP
Staff Report

Owner: City of Venice

Parcel IDs #: 0408-11-0004, 0408-13-0009, 0408-13-0011,
0408-13-0012

Addresses: 300 Nokomis Avenue S. **Parcel Sizes:** 465,975± sq. ft. (10.7± acres)

Agent: Kim Humphrey, Sarasota County Government

Existing Zoning District: Government Use/Venetian Theme (GU/VT)

Future Land Use Designation: Government Use and Island Professional Neighborhood
(Planning Area D)

Summary of Site and Development Plan Amendment: The applicant has submitted a site and development plan to allow for construction of a new 23,669± gross square foot Venice Public Library along with associated parking and landscaping. The new library will be located at the same location as the recently demolished library within the Venice Cultural Campus.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1963, the City of Venice and the Friends of the Venice Public Library (“Friends”) entered into a 99-year land lease agreement for 1.4 acres to build an 8,000 square foot public library. The library opened in 1965 at 300 Nokomis Avenue South on Venice Island. The original land lease agreement was terminated in 1978 and a new 99-year land lease between the City and Sarasota County was established when the County assumed responsibility for funding and operating the library. Between 1979 and 2005, several expansions/renovations were completed by the County and the Friends, increasing the overall library size to approximately 25,000 square feet.

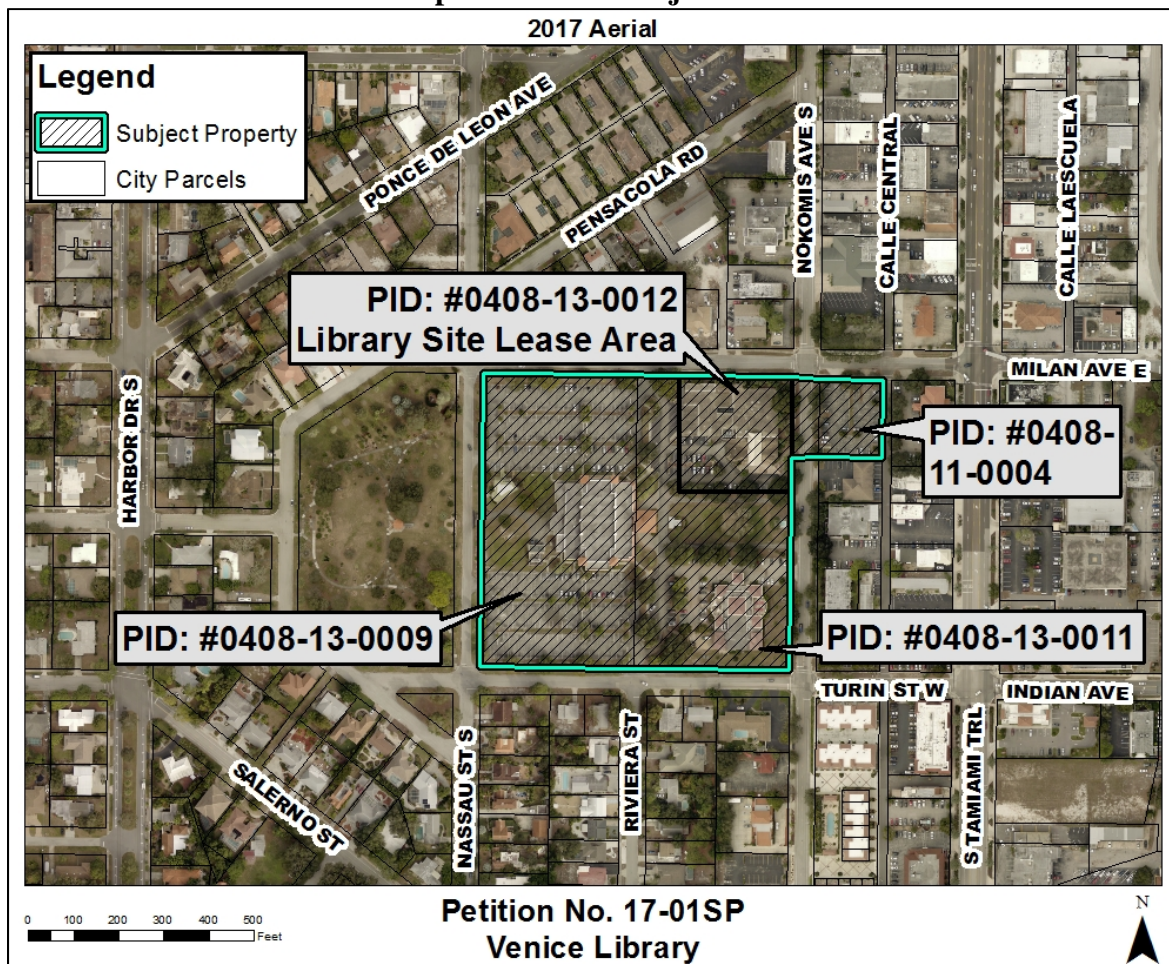
Beginning in 2010, Sarasota County staff identified elevated humidity levels with mold growth under the carpeted floor in the community meeting room and adjacent storage rooms. In June 2016, the architectural firm of Sweet Sparkman Architects (SSA) provided the County with a Site Evaluation Report that recommended the Venice Cultural Campus as the top priority for siting the new library, noting that the recommendation was consistent with the majority of feedback from participants of the workshops. The Board of County Commissioners approved the construction of the new library within the Cultural Campus on September 20, 2016.

II. SUBJECT PROPERTY / SURROUNDING AREA INFORMATION

On- and Off-Site Conditions: The applicant submitted a site and development plan for construction of a new public library and associated parking and landscaping modifications. The subject property includes the 10.14± acre Venice Cultural Campus, which is owned by the City of Venice, and the .55± acre parking lot across Nokomis Avenue owned by Sarasota County (see Map 1). The Venice Cultural Campus includes the Community Center, Art Center and historic Triangle Inn (Venice Museum and Archives).

The subject property includes the 1.4± acre land lease agreement area owned by the City of Venice and leased to Sarasota County as part of the 1978 land lease agreement. The agreement states that only a public library building can be built on site and the County is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the property and improvements thereon.

Map 1. Aerial of Project Location



The following photographs show on- and off-site conditions of the subject property and surrounding area.



View of cleared library site,
looking west.



Existing one-way access drives
off Nokomis Ave., looking west.



Existing two-way access drive
off Milan Ave., looking north.



View of adjacent overflow
parking lot, looking north.



Existing bus stop location along Nokomis Ave., looking west.



Adjacent uses along Nokomis Ave., looking southeast.



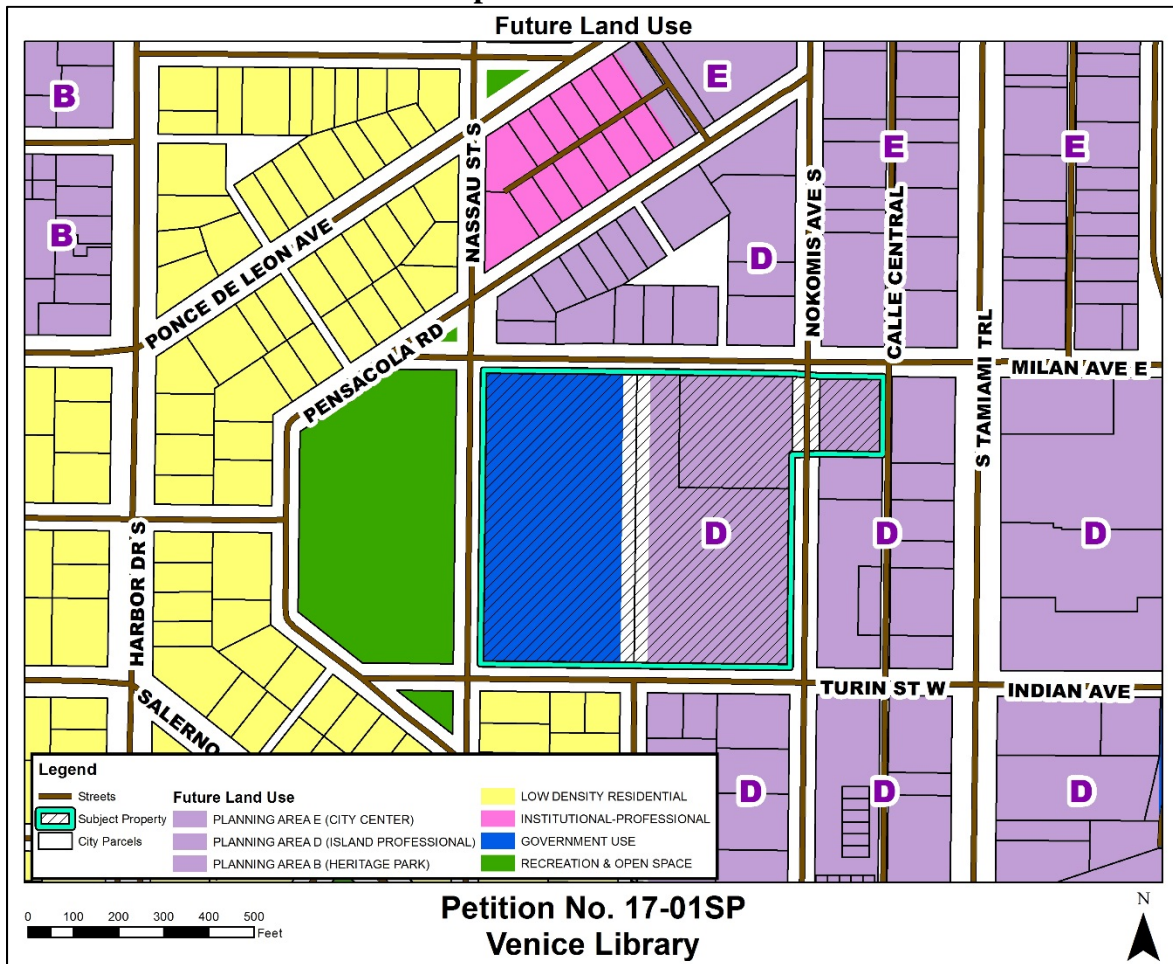
Adjacent land uses along Milan Ave., looking north.



Adjacent land uses along Milan Ave., looking north.

Future Land Use: Map 2 shows the future land use for the subject property and surrounding area. The eastern half of the subject property has a future land use designation of Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D), while the western half has a designation of Government Use. The property is bounded on the north by Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D) and City Center Sector (Planning Area E); on the east by Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D); on the south by Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D) and Low Density Residential; and on the west by Recreation and Open Space.

Map 2. Future Lane Use



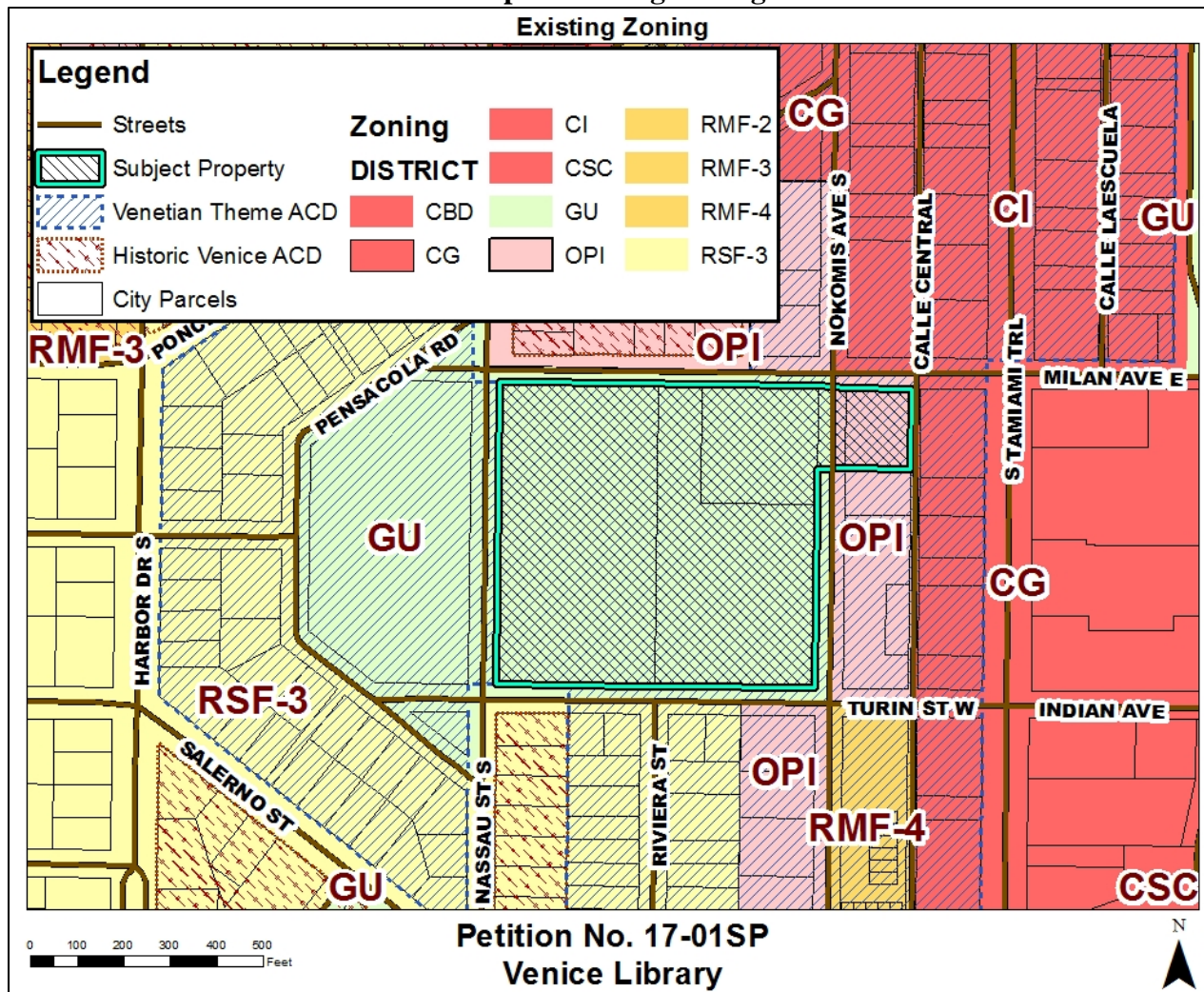
Policy 16.8 describes the planning intent of the Island Professional Neighborhood as to develop a mixed use area with medical facilities, professional and medical office space, multi-family residential areas, mixed use commercial areas, retail shops and services, and restaurants. Auto-centric uses would be discouraged in order to improve the neighborhood's pedestrian access, bike-ability, and transit opportunities.

Policy 13.4 states that Government land uses are intended to support existing and future government facilities and services. The city's government land uses are designed to provide necessary civic services, community resources and facilities in a manner easily accessible to residents. The government land use category includes government-owned properties that provide government-assisted housing, public or semi-government facilities (museums, cultural facilities, golf courses, piers, etc.), airports, natural resource areas, governmental operation buildings, schools, and infrastructure (utility stations, treatment plants, sidewalks, and roads).

Existing Zoning: Map 3 shows the existing zoning of the subject property and surrounding area. The subject property is zoned Government Use (GU) and Office, Professional and Institutional (OPI). The property is bounded on the north by single-family residential homes and several medical, professional, and commercial offices and is zoned Office, Professional and Institutional (OPI) and Commercial Intensive (CI). The area to the east of the subject property includes additional medical/professional

offices and is zoned OPI and Commercial General (CG). To the south of the property are additional single-family residential homes and professional offices zoned OPI and Residential, Single-Family 3 (RSF-3). West Blalock Park is located west of the property and zoned Governmental Use (GU).

Map 3. Existing Zoning



In addition to underlying zoning, the entire subject property area lies within the Venetian Theme (VT) architectural control district. The VT architectural control district requires new construction and substantial alterations to incorporate key design elements of the Northern Italian Renaissance style so as to allow a transition from the Historic Venice (HV) district to the remainder of the city.

Several surrounding properties are also within the VT architectural control district as well as within the HV architectural control district as depicted on Map 3. The HV architectural control district provides for the preservation and furtherance of the architectural heritage of the city by mandating that all new construction and alterations to existing structures be made in the Northern Italian Renaissance style. All new construction and alterations must comply with VT and HV architectural control requirements and be approved by the city's Architectural Review Board (ARB). The subject petition was approved by the ARB on April 27, 2017.

The table below presents a summary of the existing land uses, current zoning, and the future land use designation of the subject property and surrounding area.

Direction	Existing Use(s)	Current Zoning	Future Land Use Designation
North	Single-Family Residential, Professional Office, and Commercial	Office, Professional and Institutional (OPI) and Commercial, Intensive (CI), Venetian Theme (VT) and Historic Venice (HV) architectural control districts	Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D) and City Center Sector (Planning Area E)
West	West Blalock Park	Government Use (GU), VT architectural control district	Recreation and Open Space
South	Single-Family residential and Professional office	OPI and Residential, Single-Family-3 (RSF-3), VT and HV architectural control districts	Low Density Residential and Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D)
East	Medical/Professional office	OPI and Commercial, General (CG/), VT architectural control district	Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D)

Flood Zone Information: According to 2016 FEMA Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs), the subject property includes X, X-Shaded, and AE flood zones. X flood zones are considered to be low risk flood areas above the 500-year flood level and not identified as Special Flood Hazard Areas subject to base flood elevations. X-Shaded flood zones are moderate risk areas, usually between the limits of the 100-year and 500-year floods, and also not identified as Special Flood Hazard Areas. AE flood zones are high risk areas considered to be Special Flood Hazard Areas where flood insurance is mandatory for most mortgages that are secured by loans from federally regulated or insured lenders.

The majority of the subject property, including the 1.4± acre lease agreement area where the new library will be located, lies within the X flood zone. City of Venice regulations require that the minimum finished floor elevation be the higher of base flood elevation or 15 inches above the adjacent grade. A survey is required to establish the finished floor elevation and crown of road and an elevation certificate will be required for new construction. Redevelopment of the property will be subject to compliance with FEMA requirements.

III. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

New Library Building: The applicant is proposing to construct a new public library building at the same location where the previous library was located. The new library building will contain 23,669± gross square feet of space, which is slightly smaller than the previous library building at 25,494± gross square feet of space. The entrance to the new library will be located along the south side of the building facing the Venice Art Center. The entrance will lead patrons to a lobby that contains restrooms, a bookstore and a café. Adjacent to the lobby will be a new multi-purpose meeting room. Beyond the

lobby will be the main portion of the building which will contain the adult collections and seating area. To the rear of this area will be an outdoor garden separated by a large glass wall.

The right (east) side of the library will feature a children's collection and seating area, program area, and an outdoor children's porch. The left (west) side of the library will include a young adult's collection and seating area. The remainder of the new library will contain additional conference rooms, group study and tutor rooms, staff rooms and lounge, mechanical rooms, and storage.

The building is designed to be architecturally consistent with the Northern Italian Renaissance style, similar to other buildings within the Cultural Campus. The applicant has stated the design mimics classical Italian elements found on such famous northern Italian buildings as the Castelvecchio Castle in Verona and Doge's Palace in Venice. The overall design of the building was approved by the city's ARB on April 27, 2017.

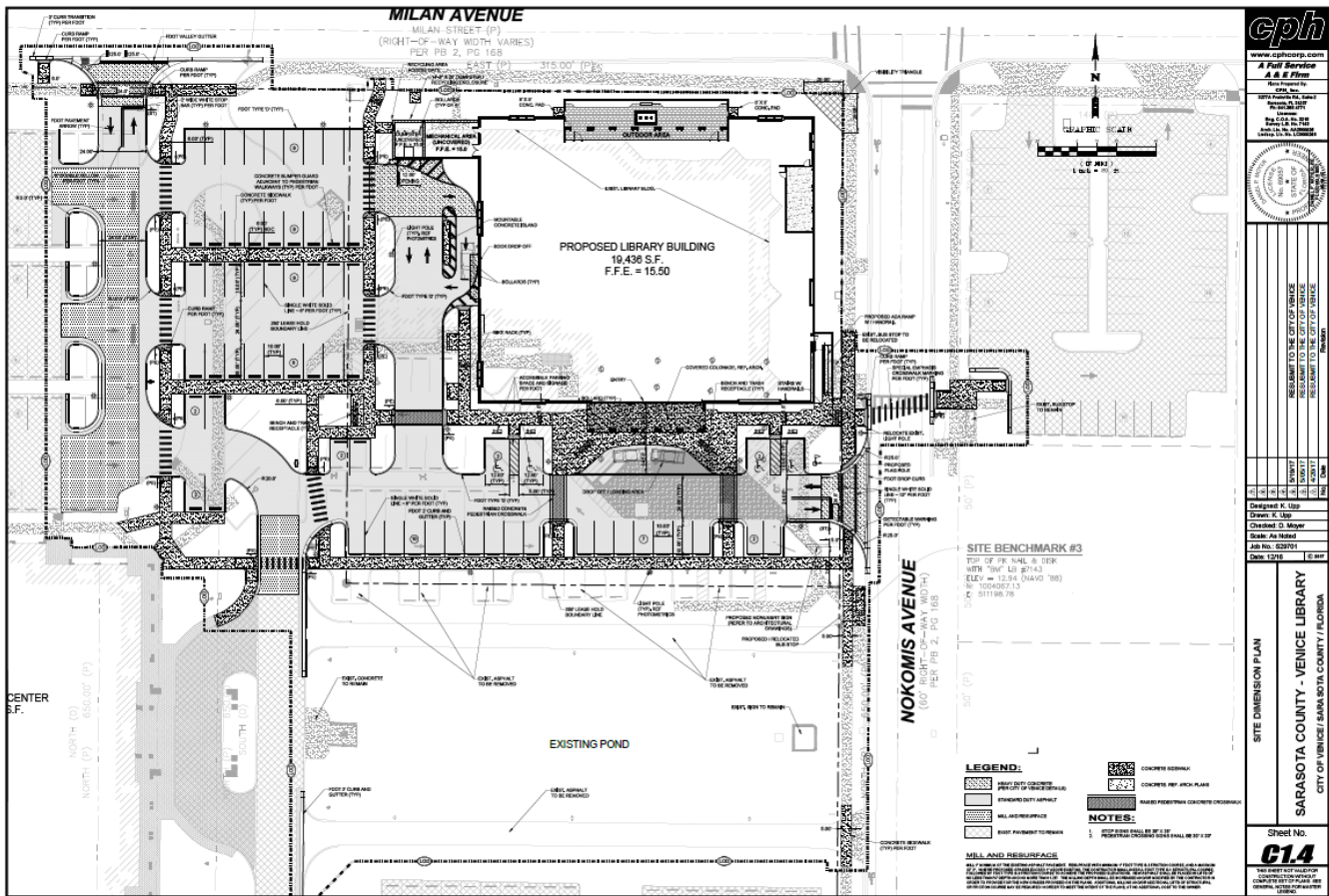
Access: Automobile and pedestrian access to the new library building will be modified as part of the project. The existing one-way access drives off Nokomis Avenue will be removed and replaced with a new, two-way access drive located along the southern portion of the building. The new two-way access drive will be relocated approximately 50 feet north of the existing one-way access drives to provide better access and circulation to the property. The existing crosswalk and sidewalk linking the library building and the overflow parking area will be maintained, but the design will be slightly shifted in order to allow pedestrians to safely cross Nokomis Avenue and access the library's new south entrance.

The existing automotive access drive off Milan Avenue will also remain, but will be relocated approximately 40 feet west to provide more efficient use of the parking areas and better circulation for the entire Cultural Campus. New sidewalk connections along Milan Avenue will provide enhanced access to the new library without requiring pedestrians to walk through the parking areas and behind vehicles.

Parking: The parking layout will also be altered as part of the project. The new library building will require a minimum of 128 parking spaces per City Code. Parking is shared across the Cultural Campus and a total of 441 parking spaces within the subject property will be provided. Fifteen (15) of the total parking spaces are handicap accessible with four handicap spaces being adjacent to the new library building. An overflow parking area located east across Nokomis Avenue provides an additional 58 parking spaces, if needed, but was not counted as part of the overall required parking spaces.

Landscaping: The site improvements will require the planting of 51.4 trees. The applicant proposes to plant 52 trees to satisfy this requirement. Additionally, hedges, accents and ground cover to satisfy buffering and interior landscaping requirements will be provided. The removed one-way access drives off Nokomis Avenue will be sodded to provide additional open space for patrons.

Map 4. Site Plan



IV. PLANNING STAFF ANALYSIS OF THE SITE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This section of the report evaluates the site and development plan petition for 1) consistency with the comprehensive plan, 2) compliance with the Land Development Code, and 3) compliance with the city's concurrency management regulations and the projects expected impacts on public facilities. For each of the three evaluations staff provides its finding.

1. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

As indicated in section II of this report, the library site is within the Island Professional Neighborhood (Planning Area D) and Government Use future land use designations. The new construction provides a use consistent with those identified land use designations and is designed consistent with the development standards provided in the Comprehensive Plan such as building height and architectural style. Other associated modifications to existing parking, access, and landscaping are being provided to improve access and circulation and to provide for a more visually attractive project.

The applicant also addressed Policy 8.2 of the Comprehensive Plan regarding compatibility in their project narrative. Regarding any questions of compatibility as provided in Policy 8.2, it is important to note that what is being accomplished on the subject property is the replacement of an old library with a new library on a slightly smaller footprint with very minimal impact to the surrounding area. In addition, the library is being replaced in the same location due to the majority of desires expressed by

the citizens of Venice to keep it where it is. In conclusion, there are no identifiable concerns regarding compatibility with the surrounding properties.

Staff Finding: *Based on the above information, and the fact that there is minimal change from the previous development, the submitted site and development plan can be found consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

2. Consistency with the Land Development Code

The subject property is regulated by standards of the GU/VT and OPI/VT zoning districts. The applicant has designed the new library building in compliance with the regulatory standards of the GU district and with the existing development pattern of the Cultural Campus. The project replaces the recently demolished library building and is compliant with the parking standards for libraries, community centers and recreational facilities. The City of Venice and Sarasota County have entered into a Shared Parking Agreement that confirms their mutual dedication to the sharing of parking facilities for the betterment of the Venice Cultural Campus and the library. All other code standards of the GU zoning district have been confirmed for compliance.

Staff Finding: *The submitted site and development plan is in compliance with the Land Development Code.*

3. Concurrency/Adequate Public Facilities

The applicant submitted a concurrency determination application and the concurrency review has been completed by staff. The table below shows the expected facility impacts and the status of the departmental concurrency reviews.

Department	Facility	Project's Estimated Impact	Status
Utilities	Potable Water	11.5 ERU's	Concurrency confirmed by Utility Department
Utilities	Sanitary Sewer	11.5 ERU's	Concurrency confirmed by Utility Department
Public Works	Solid Waste	N/A	There is no adopted level of service for non-residential uses
Public Works	Parks & Recreation	N/A	There is no adopted level of service for non-residential uses
Engineering	Drainage	Existing impervious	Concurrency confirmed by Engineering Department
Planning and Zoning	Transportation	No additional impact	Concurrency confirmed by Planning and Zoning staff
School Board	Public Schools	N/A	The project is non-residential and not subject to school concurrency

***Staff Finding:** Adopted minimum levels of service for the above facilities will be maintained after taking into account the estimated public facility impact of the proposed library building. Transportation concurrency was deemed to have been met due to the new library being built on a smaller footprint. If approved, staff will issue the project a concurrency certificate.*

V. PLANNING COMMISSION EVALUATION OF THE SITE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Planning Commission Findings of Fact for the Site and Development Plan: Section 86-23(n) specifies the Planning Commission's role in taking action on a site and development plan application and reads in part, "...the planning commission shall...be guided in its decision and exercise of its discretion to approve, approve with conditions, or to deny by the following standards."

To assist the Planning Commission, staff has prepared a comment on each of the following standards of findings by which the site and development plan application can be evaluated.

1. Sufficiency of statements on ownership and control of the development and sufficiency of conditions of ownership or control, use and permanent maintenance of common open space, common facilities or common lands to ensure preservation of such lands and facilities for their intended purpose and to ensure that such common facilities will not become a future liability for the city.

***Applicant Response:** The cultural campus and the property where the library structure is located are owned by the City of Venice, with a lease to the County for the library site. The offsite parking on the east side of Nokomis Ave. is owned by Sarasota County. The proposed library will be located on the parcel owned by the City of Venice, and the proposed site modifications will occur on the City owned parcel.*

***Staff Comment:** The applicant has provided a signed copy of the 99-year lease agreement between the City of Venice and Sarasota County confirming ownership and control of the 1.4 acre tract of land within the subject property. The Cultural Campus is owned by the City of Venice, while the overflow parking lot is owned by Sarasota County.*

2. Intensity of use and/or purpose of the proposed development in relation to adjacent and nearby properties and the effect thereon; provided, however, that nothing in this subsection shall be construed as granting the planning commission the authority to reduce residential densities below that permitted by the schedule of district regulations set out in article IV, division 2 of this chapter.

***Applicant Response:** The proposed development represents a decrease in intensity of the site. The proposed library is slightly smaller than the existing library. In addition, the site's impervious area will be reduced.*

***Staff Comment:** The intensity of the proposed project in relation to adjacent and nearby properties and the effect thereon is studied in detail in evaluation of the project's consistency the Comprehensive Plan (see Section IV of this report, Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan,*

beginning on pages 9-10). Analysis has been provided to evaluate this consideration and conclude that the project can be found to be compatible with adjacent and nearby properties.

3. Ingress and egress to the development and proposed structures thereon, with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety, separation of automotive traffic and pedestrian and other traffic, traffic flow and control, provision of services and servicing utilities and refuse collection, and access in case of fire, catastrophe or emergency.

Applicant Response: *Modification of the site's access is proposed to provide better circulation and efficiency of the site. Reducing the total number of driveways will provide for safer vehicular movements and reduce the number of potential conflicts with pedestrians.*

Staff Comment: *Ingress and egress to the development has been designed in compliance with Land Development Code standards. The replacement of the two one-way access drives with one two-way access drive will reduce conflict points along Nokomis Avenue and provide for improved safety. The Public Works Department has no concerns regarding solid waste collection, and the Fire Department has no issues related to access in case of fire, catastrophe or emergency.*

4. Location and relationship of off-street parking and off-street loading facilities to thoroughfares and internal traffic patterns within the proposed development, with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety, traffic flow and control, access in case of fire or catastrophe, and screening and landscaping.

Applicant Response: *The County will be readily working with the City to craft a shared parking agreement. Sidewalks have been provided in the new parking areas to avoid any conflicts with pedestrians and cars, as patrons will not have to walk through parking areas and behind cars to gain access to the Library and other uses in the campus.*

Staff Comment: *The design of the proposed off-street parking and loading facilities have been reviewed for compliance with applicable Land Development Code standards. The off-street parking will be altered to provide a more efficient use of the parking area, better circulation for the entire Cultural Campus, and provide less conflict points between automobiles and pedestrians as they move through the parking lot. Additionally, the main entrance to the new library will house an off-street loading/drop off zone for library patrons. The City of Venice and Sarasota County have entered into a Shared Parking Agreement that will allow the sharing of parking facilities for the betterment of the Venice Cultural Campus and the library.*

5. Sufficiency of proposed screens and buffers to preserve internal and external harmony and compatibility with uses inside and outside the proposed development.

Applicant Response: *The site is being designed to meet all applicable City requirements for landscaping and buffers.*

Staff Comment: *The applicant has provided interior landscaping and buffering to enhance the overall project. The landscaping and buffering were designed in compliance with all applicable Land Development Code standards.*

6. Manner of drainage on the property, with particular reference to the effect of provisions for drainage on adjacent and nearby properties and the consequences of such drainage on overall public drainage capacities.

Applicant Response: *The site is currently served by a stormwater pond, which will remain. The site will decrease impervious cover and provide a drainage collection system to divert runoff to the existing pond.*

Staff Comment: *The Engineering Department confirmed compliance with applicable drainage requirements.*

7. Adequacy of provision for sanitary sewers, with particular relationship to overall city sanitary sewer availability and capacities.

Applicant Response: *The site is currently served and will utilize an existing gravity sewer lateral onsite. The proposed library will not exceed the capacity of the previous use.*

Staff Comment: *The project will utilize an existing sanitary sewer service line. The Utilities Department in its concurrency review confirmed there is adequate sanitary sewer capacity to serve the proposed project.*

8. Utilities, with reference to hook-in locations and availability and capacity for the uses projected.

Applicant Response: *The site will connect to the existing water mains located along the north side of the site, and have available capacity for the development.*

Staff Comment: *The project will tie into an existing water line. The Utilities Department in its concurrency review confirmed there is adequate water capacity to serve the proposed project.*

9. Recreation facilities and open spaces, with attention to the size, location and development of the areas as to adequacy, effect on privacy of adjacent and nearby properties and uses within the proposed development, and relationship to community or citywide open spaces and recreational facilities.

Applicant Response: *The amount of open space will be increased with the redevelopment. The existing one-way driveways located next to the stormwater pond will be removed and provide for additional space.*

Staff Comment: *The removal of the two one-way access drives will provide additional open space for patrons.*

10. General site arrangement, amenities and convenience, with particular reference to ensuring that appearance and general layout of the proposed development will be compatible and harmonious with properties in the general area and will not be so at variance with other development in the area as to cause substantial depreciation of property values.

Applicant Response: *The site has been redesigned to provide for better use of the proposed parking areas and access to the cultural campus.*

Staff Comment: *The compatibility of the proposed project in relation to properties in the general area and the effect thereon is studied in detail in evaluation of the project's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan (see Section IV of this report, Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, beginning on pages 9-10). Analysis has been provided to evaluate this consideration and conclude that the project can be found to be compatible with adjacent and nearby properties. The proposed use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is generally expected to positively affect property values.*

- 11.** Such other standards as may be imposed by this chapter on the particular use or activity involved.

Applicant Response: *Acknowledged.*

Staff Comment: *There are no other development standards in the Land Development Code that specifically apply to the proposed project.*

- 12.** In the event that a site and development plan application is required, no variance to the height, parking, landscape, buffer or other standards as established herein may be considered by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission may consider modifications to these standards under the provisions and requirements for special exceptions.

Applicant Response: *Acknowledged.*

Staff Comment: *No code modifications are being sought by the applicant; the submitted site and development plan complies with the Land Development Code.*

Based upon the above analysis, staff has determined that sufficient information has been provided for the Planning Commission on which to base a determination on this petition.