

CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA
FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020
FEDERAL PRIORITIES
FACT SHEET

1. ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE & PROTECTION: Harmful Algal Blooms

The City of Venice is deeply concerned about the effects of algal blooms that occur when colonies of algae grow out of control while producing toxic or harmful effects on people, fish, shellfish, marine mammals, and birds. The unusual high intensity and long duration of the 2018 *Kerenia brevis* algal bloom suggests that much research and experimentation still needs to be done. These harmful algal blooms have a devastating effect on wildlife, ecosystem, economy, and quality of life.

FY 2020 Request: The City of Venice supports the allocation of Federal resources for research, implementation of mitigation strategies, and infrastructure upgrades – such as conversion of septic tanks to domestic sewer systems, outfall monitoring, and other water quality improvements – to help decrease the occurrence and effects of this harmful algae.

2. ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Beach Renourishment & Preservation

The City of Venice has a 50-year contract with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to renourish the beach every 10 years due to erosion impacts from the Venice Inlet. The City is most appreciative of the current support from the ACOE, and looks forward to the next renourishment which is scheduled to be completed in 2025. Maintaining a healthy beach profile is critical for protecting structures during storm events, reducing flooding impacts and for supporting tourism which is a primary economic revenue source for the region.

The City of Venice proposes to discuss with the Army Corps of Engineers the prospects for implementing alternative methods to not only restore, but to also preserve and protect, the area's beaches during the next scheduled restoration project.

FY 2020 Request: The City of Venice respectfully requests continued support of beach renourishment projects as important storm protection, nesting habitat restoration and recreational opportunities. Additionally, the City proposes to discuss alternative means to protect beaches as opposed to the traditional reactive process of sand restoration.

3. HUMAN SERVICES: VA Dept. Initiative to Assist in Homelessness and Treat Mental Illness in Veterans

Because a lack of social services increases problems for society, especially for the homeless, those with mental illness, and those with alcohol and drug addictions – particularly veterans battling these issues – more ways of helping vets in need of these services must be identified and implemented. Many veterans face challenges throughout their lives that may lead them to lose their home and become homeless, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs states. Having homelessness in a community undermines the welfare of all residents. Developing jobs, reinstating mental health care clinics, increasing opportunities for vets and others to receive help and employment assistance to be able to become independent and self-sufficient are examples of ways to improve society now and in the future.

The City asks that the VA Dept. create an initiative to assist with homelessness and mental illness in vets locally.

FY 2020 Request: The Department of Veterans Affairs formulate an initiative of viable alternatives to reduce homelessness and to treat mental illness in veterans needing these services.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES & EDUCATION: Training Building Inspectors

The City of Venice, Sarasota County and other governmental institutions are enduring a building inspector shortage that has been recognized as a statewide issue. A reduction in the shortage of qualified and skilled workforce of building inspectors is needed at the local government levels to ensure compliance with the Florida Building Codes, laws and regulations, and for the safety and welfare of the general public.

The Florida Legislature and the Governor has signed into law House Bill 1021, which requires the Department of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Economic Opportunity, to develop a plan with Construction Industry Workforce Taskforce to address the skilled workforce shortages.

FY 2020 Request: The City of Venice respectfully requests federal funding to support the state's initiative in providing training programs to local educational institutions in support of providing and/or augmenting training programs to attract and develop future building inspectors and other construction trades.

5. HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: 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.

FY2020 Request: The City of Venice respectfully requests Federal 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).

6. TRANSPORTATION & QUALITY OF LIFE: Ribbons of Venice

The City of Venice has once again been designated a Silver Bicycle Friendly Community. There is community momentum to continue improvements to make Venice a safe and healthy place to ride bicycles for recreation and transportation purposes. The City has been working with a nonprofit agency to identify sidewalks, bicycle lanes and connections, and other opportunities to extend the existing Legacy Trail system by connecting it with parks, centers of commerce, and other destinations throughout the City and County. The connections in Venice have been identified and the city is seeking funds to construct them.

FY 2020 Request: The City of Venice respectfully requests \$500,000 to construct multi-use trail connection points and bicycle lanes within the city to facilitate the regional trail system.

7. HISTORIC PRESERVATION: Explore the Relocation of the Federal Post Office from Downtown Venice

Currently, a federal post office facility occupies space in a key downtown location in the City of Venice. The facility provides conventional customer services and also includes a distribution center. Collectively, the composite facility consumes more than half a city block of precious, historical downtown space. It would be preferable that the post office's retail feature remain on the island in another location convenient for customers, while the distribution center be relocated to a similarly convenient site in the Venice area. Additionally, there is a vision by the City to provide opportunities for restoring this site to the original design as developed during the City's early period as part of the John Nolen Plan, possibly as a hotel.

FY 2020 Request: That the Federal Government explore the possibility of moving the distribution component of the post office to a different site in the Venice area, while relocating the customer service feature to another location on the island. The City could then investigate opportunities for restoring the post office site to a use more consistent with the John Nolen Plan.

8. ECONOMIC & AVIATION: Maintain Congressional Oversight of the Air Traffic Control System

The City of Venice owns and operates Venice Municipal Airport, which serves General Aviation and is an economic engine for Venice and the surrounding area. Congressional oversight ensures that communities of all sizes have access to air transportation and all airports get a fair share of the money in the Aviation Trust Fund disbursed to airports as grants for capital and planning projects to insure that we maintain a viable system of airports.

Our network of airports drives business growth and commerce, and facilitates access to emergency services, medical care, disaster relief, firefighting, and many other critical services. Businesses, especially small- and mid-size ones, rely on these airports and general aviation aircraft to access rural markets, transport parts, tools and personnel between branches, and reach multiple locations in one day. Privatization would threaten this important economic activity and lifeline to our communities.

FY 2020 Request: The City of Venice respectfully requests continued support of maintaining Congressional oversight of the Air Traffic Control System to maintain General Aviation as a healthy segment of the aviation industry.