



MEMORANDUM

City of Venice

Public Works Department

TO: Ed Lavallee, City Manager

FROM: James R. Clinch PE, Director of Public Works and Asset Management

DATE: February 25, 2021

COUNCIL APPROVAL: Yes

MEETING DATE: March 9th, 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL: Preserve the Venice Quality of Life through Proper Planning

SUBJECT: Parks Inter-Local Agreement Proposal between City of Venice and Sarasota County

Background:

The City of Venice continues to work in partnership with the Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Department to provide high quality park and recreational services to the users of our park facilities. The City has worked very hard over the past several years to build up a positive relationship with the County for the mutual benefit of our park users. The County currently maintains 17 of the City of Venice owned parks through the Inter-local Parks Agreement, at an annual cost to the County of \$2,677,460 (FY2020 Annual Report).

The City and County originally entered into an Inter-local Parks Agreement in 1992 as a requirement of a dual-taxation lawsuit settlement agreement. The goal of the inter-local agreement was to provide for consolidation of City and County programs, under direction of the County, with the common objective of providing park maintenance and recreational services in the most economical manner. The City's current Parks Inter-Local Agreement with Sarasota County was executed in 2011 (Contract No. 2011-421). The obligations of the dual taxation lawsuit had been fulfilled by the County and they entered into this agreement with the City voluntarily. This current Inter-Local Parks Agreement is scheduled for a 5-year automatic renewal on October 1, 2021, which would extend the contract to October 1, 2026, unless terminated for cause, or replaced by a new agreement as mutually agreed to by both parties.

Enclosed you will find a proposal with updated terms for a new Inter-local Parks Agreement between the City of Venice and Sarasota County (Attachment A). This proposal is the result of coordination with Sarasota County staff and City staff believes it is a mutually acceptable proposal for a new agreement. It is also consistent with the draft proposal which was presented to City Council at the special meeting on January 30, 2020. The goal of this proposal is to better align the agreement with the County's regional parks model while supporting the common objective of providing these important public services in the most economical manner. The intent is to include "regional" park facilities within the new agreement for

County operation and maintenance, and to transfer the “non-regional” facilities out of the agreement for operation and maintenance by the City.

There are several reasons City staff recommends entering into a new inter-local agreement effective October 1, 2021, rather than allowing the automatic 5-year renewal to occur. First, a new agreement would provide clear future planning direction for our City parks, for both fiscal planning and for completion of the Parks Master Plan. While there will be additional operational costs to the City due to this agreement, the costs will be well known and will give the City the ability to plan accordingly. Second, the commitment by the County to invest in Wellfield Park as a regional sports facility cannot be understated. This 80-acre athletics park is currently a large capital liability for the City. Most of the infrastructure is 40-50 years old, many facilities are in need of replacement and most do not meet current ADA standards. Even more importantly, this facility serves as the youth league support for the high-level sports programs that Venice has become known for. To truly bring this facility up to standard, Wellfield Park will need to be completely master planned and redesigned to provide a more efficient operational layout, including modern infrastructure and high-class sports field facilities. The County is best suited to provide the resources and planning necessary to implement these important improvements. Finally, if the City does not enter into an updated agreement now, the same situation will return in 5-years at the expiration of the current Parks Inter-local Agreement. There will no guarantee at that time, that the current commitments and regional park designations will still be in place and the County will have invested in a regional sports complex at a location other than Wellfield Park. Staff recommends submitting this proposal in good faith now, rather than waiting for the current agreement to expire in 5 years.

This proposal will require an increase in the FY22 General Fund operating budget for the Public Works, Parks and Maintenance divisions by approximately \$324,841.02 total (Attachment B) and the FY22 1-Cent Sales Tax Fund by \$30,000 for the vehicle purchase. This budget increase includes the addition of three (3) staff positions, the operational and equipment costs to maintain the five (5) additional local parks and a feasibility study for the Venice Community Center to prepare for operation in FY23. This proposal would result in a continued investment by Sarasota County into the Venice regional park facilities of well over \$2,000,000 per year in operational expenses, plus significant capital contributions to Wellfield Park and the east side of the Venetian Waterway Park. The City looks forward to continuing to support a positive relationship with Sarasota County and believes this new agreement proposal is an opportunity to create a solid foundation for many years to come.

Requested Action: Approve proposal for a new Inter-local Parks Agreement between the City of Venice and Sarasota County and direct staff to transmit proposal formally to Sarasota County.

City Attorney Review/Approved: Yes

Risk Management Review: Yes

Finance Department Review/Approved: Yes

Funds Availability (account number): FY22 Budget – Public Works, Parks & Maintenance

ORIGINAL(S) ATTACHED: Presentation and Attachments

Cc: Rick Simpson, Assistant Director of Public Works and Asset Management