



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

*Natural Resources
Department*

City Council Regular Meeting Date: July 30, 2025

To: City Council
From: Rachel Rainbolt, Conservation Officer
Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director
Date: July 16, 2025

SUBJECT: “Community Park & Frannie’s Preserve Trail Restoration Project” Grant Award

BACKGROUND: In December 2024, the Natural Resources Department applied for funding through the Urban and Community Forestry – Hurricane Ian Recovery Grant program, managed through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). The purpose of this program is to improve and reestablish urban forests in the peninsular region of the state that were negatively impacted by Hurricane Ian.

The Community Park trail was originally designed to encourage visitors to explore the newly restored City-owned conservation lands. In 2012, coordination with the adjacent land-owner, the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF), expanded the trail system to include a southern and central trail option through SCCF’s Frannie’s Preserve, extending the trail to the Tarpon Bay shared use path (SUP). This area was selected for the grant application due to its economic and ecological benefits prior to Hurricane Ian, as well as the longstanding interagency partnership which positively contributed to the project’s evaluation ranking.

The primary goal of the “Community Park & Frannie’s Preserve Trail Restoration Project” is to revegetate the trails with tree species that demonstrated resilience to high winds, heavy rain and storm surge, qualities that also helped to minimize flooding, protect surrounding infrastructure, and provide habitat for species of native and migratory wildlife. The other components to the project are to perform corrective trimming of trees located the sections of the public trail system with a buttonwood canopy and to remove invasive exotic vegetation.

On May 19, 2025, the City was notified that the grant application was one of 5 projects awarded funding in the amount of \$44,825 for this grant cycle. The total project cost is \$55,995, with the local match of \$11,170. If approved by City Council, Natural Resources anticipates performing the listed scope of work prior to the end of FY25. The installation of new plantings during seasonal rains would optimize staff time and tree survivability. Once completed, the performance period for the grant is one year from the subrecipient agreement date, which is 6/1/2026.

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary

Grant funding will be used for the following activities:

- **Tree Planting** – Planting sites will be identified by City staff and determined based on adequate rooting space, proximity from other trees, trails, and other infrastructure. Species determination and planting schedule will be provided to contractors ahead of installation and they will be inspected by City staff during and after installation.
- **Initial Tree Maintenance** – City staff will inspect every tree after installation to be sure that planting locations and maintenance methods are adhered to. Soil type and weather conditions influence the demand for water, so initial irrigation frequency and timing will depend on seasonal rainfall and site conditions at the time of installation.

Grant matching will be provided through in-kind personnel costs:

- **Tree Trimming** – All tree trimming along the trail will be supervised by a certified arborist who is employed by SCCF. In addition to adhering to ISA guidelines, the activities will also incorporate USDA Forest Service best management practices.
- **Invasive Exotic Vegetation Removal** - Work will include the basal bark treatment of exotic vegetation including Brazilian pepper.

The grant application and award letter are attached for reference.

FUNDING SOURCE: Project expenses will be reimbursed and provided by the Florida Forest Service with an in-kind contribution from SCCF and the City, as well as contracted services funding which is available in the Natural Resources Department's FY25 operating budget.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approval of the \$44,825 grant award from the Florida Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry - Hurricane Ian Recovery grant program for native tree planting and corrective pruning at Community Park and Frannie's Preserve and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.