



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

City Manager

City Council Regular Meeting Date: November 12, 2024

To: City Council
From: Dana A. Souza, City Manager
Date: September 23, 2024

SUBJECT: 2025 Legislative Priorities Discussion

BACKGROUND:

The City Council is asked to begin discussion for Sanibel's Legislative Priorities for 2025. The Florida Legislative Session will begin in March 2025, giving the City Council time to discuss and finalize legislative priorities well in advance of the new session.

Sanibel's 2025 Legislative Priorities will likely continue to focus on the community's full recovery from the impacts of Hurricane Ian and any impacts from Hurricane Helene. Staff offers the following for 'initial' 2025 priorities for discussion purposes. Water Quality positions will be added to the November meeting. A copy of Sanibel's 2023 Legislative priorities is included in the agenda packet as a reference.

- 1. Forgiveness of the Florida Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan (Bridge Loan)** – Following Hurricane Ian, the City received a \$15,260,511 Bridge Loan from the State to assist the City with funding government operations. The loan is a 0% interest loan to the City with a repayment term of 10-years. City Council should consider asking the State to forgive the Bridge Loan to aid Sanibel's long-term recovery from Hurricane Ian.
 - **Legislative funding request: \$15,260,511**
- 2. Operating Revenue Recovery – Hurricane Ian** – In 2024, the Florida Legislature and Governor approved an appropriation of \$9.9 million in revenue replacement. City Council should discuss with staff the option of seeking either forgiveness of the Bridge Loan or Operating Revenue Recovery for the 2025 session. We do not yet know if there will be any further reduction of taxable property values to Sanibel properties due to the impacts on the real estate market from Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Estimated values for FY26 will not be available from the Property Appraiser prior to the start of the legislative session.

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3. **Police Department Building Construction** – The City experienced damage to City Hall’s 1st floor structures which includes offices for the Police Department, the Natural Resources Department, and the IT Department. The City plans to build a new Police Department building that is stand-alone from City Hall. This will provide a resilient structure that will serve as a Unified Command Center for first responders who are critical to Sanibel’s response and recovery following any natural or manmade disaster. The response efforts to Hurricanes Helene and Milton would have benefited from having a suitable Unified Command Center.

The new construction will also allow the City to reallocate 2nd floor space in City Hall since Sanibel has eliminated offices from the ground level following Hurricane Ian. A State appropriation provided the City with \$1 million in 2023; however, additional funding is required to construct the proposed Police Department building. Sanibel requested funding from Lee County’s CDBG-DR allocation but did not receive any funding for this project.

- **Legislative funding request: \$11 million**

4. **Repair the Shared Use Path System** – Sanibel’s shared use path system (26 miles) experienced significant damage from Hurricane Ian’s storm surge wash over and subsequent damage from debris placement on the ROW. Additional damage occurred from the storm surge flooding (salt water) of Sanibel from Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Sanibel is requesting state assistance to repair the shared use path system which is critical in supporting visitor and resident transportation during the busy tourist season. The City received a \$1 million appropriation from the State in 2023, however, additional funding is needed. Sanibel requested funding from Lee County’s CDBG-DR allocation but did not receive any funding for this project.

- **Legislative funding request: \$5 million**

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Discussion and direction.

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