

# What is an Infrastructure Surtax?

Under Florida state law, counties may impose a discretionary sales surtax to invest in local infrastructure improvements. Such surtaxes must be approved by a majority of voters in a referendum. In three successive referendums, Sarasota County voters have authorized a 1% sales surtax, on top of the 6% state sales tax, to invest in capital improvement projects for the County, School District and municipalities. The one-cent sales surtax applies to the first \$5,000 of any purchase that is subject to the state sales tax. Proceeds from the surtax may only be used to invest in public infrastructure projects such as parks, roads, sidewalks, libraries and schools; it may not be used to pay for general operating expenses.

Revenue from the infrastructure surtax is shared by the County, the School District and the municipalities. 25% of the revenue is allocated to the School District. The remaining 75% is distributed among the County and the municipalities based on population.

## **Surtax I - 1989 to 1999**

Sarasota County's infrastructure surtax was first approved by voters in 1989.

## **Surtax II - 1999 to 2009**

The infrastructure surtax was renewed again by voter referendum in 2007.

## **Surtax III - 2009 to 2024**

The current surtax program, Surtax III, has a term of 15 years and will expire on Dec. 31, 2024.

## **November 2022 – Potential Surtax IV Referendum**

Potential term of 15 years and expire on Dec. 31, 2039.

The following pages are a preliminary list of Possible Projects for the Surtax IV Referendum. The City will be scheduling public workshops in the near future to request citizens' input on any desired project ideas for the City of Venice.

**ONE CENT SALES SURTAX  
POSSIBLE PROJECTS**

Color Coding - Department Sponsors:

Engineering and/or Planning

Planning

Fire/EMS

Information Technology

Public Works

Utilities

PROJECTS BEING CONSIDERED (Alphabetical Order):

A. Public Safety

- 1) **Fire Station #2 – Relocate for Improved Response (Transfer existing facility to Utilities).** Estimated Cost \$7,000,000. Acquire land and relocate Fire Station #2 for an enhanced level of service by relocating the station to a more centralized location.
- 2) **New Regional Fire Training Academy.** Establish a ground training facility to reduce travel expense by having in-house training. The City may build a facility or with Sarasota County on a shared basis. Coordinate funding with Sarasota County Fire Department and South County Departments.

B. Transportation

- 3) **Expand Number and Location of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.** Estimated Cost \$50,000 Annually. As electrical vehicle ownership and demand continue to rise, it is important that the City be able to provide the charging infrastructure necessary to support these vehicles. Electric Vehicle charging stations will continue to be installed within the City of Venice public parking lots, city facilities and city parks based on the community demand. The City should plan to provide a reliable grid of electrical charging stations to support the demand of the community.
- 4) **New Roads/Lane Miles.** Estimated Cost \$500,000 Annually. Motor vehicle operation and alternative transportation options, including bicycles, create a broad spectrum of mobility choices for residents and visitors. Maintenance and improvement of our existing infrastructure is a critical need. In addition, as the City continues to expand through the annexation of land and increase in population, spirited by its reputation as a desirable tourist and relocation destination, the roadway system experiences increased wear and stress on capacity. To continue to protect the City's quality of life while welcoming increasing numbers of new residents, seasonal occupants and vacationers, external funding support is needed. The mix of Sarasota County-owned, state-controlled and City-owned roads within the community's 16.8-mile geography challenges the City to acquire adequate funding for roadway expansion, improvements, and ongoing support. Funding for these projects has historically come from Sarasota County road or mobility fees collected on new construction within the City, but supplemental funding may be needed.

- 5) **Parking Lot Resurfacing Program and ADA Project.** Estimated Cost - \$1.5M. The City has several large public parking areas within its city parks which provide public access to the downtown district, beaches, and other city amenities. These public parking areas will need to be resurfaced and upgraded to current ADA standards. These parking areas include Centennial Park, the Community Center, Brohard Park, Hecksher Park, Marina Park Boat Ramp and Service Club Park.
- 6) **Road Pavement Sealing and Restoration Program – Supplement existing Gas Tax Funding.** Estimated Cost - \$500,000 annually. Periodic milling/paving and restoration sealing of City-owned roads within public rights-of-ways. Includes pavement markings. During mill/pave event, sidewalk replacement, ADA ramps and curb/gutter replacements will be evaluated and constructed as needed.

C. General Government/Community

- 9) **Government Owned Buildings – Facility Upgrades and Major Maintenance.** Estimated Cost \$500,000 Annually. The City of Venice owns and maintains numerous governmental buildings which provide critical services to the public. These buildings include City Hall, three fire stations, a new Public Safety facility, a Public Works facility, the Venice Community Center, the Venice Museum and the archives building. These facilities are maintained on a regular basis using the annual operating budget, however they do require major upgrades and maintenance periodically to ensure they remain safe and functional for the public. These major upgrades can include replacement of HVAC mechanical systems, generators, fueling equipment, elevators, fire protection, electrical, plumbing, roofing, windows and flooring.
- 10) **New City Fleet Maintenance and Fueling Facility - Relocated from Seaboard Area.** Estimated Cost \$3,000,000. The City owns and maintains over 380 fleet assets (vehicles and equipment) which are used to provide critical services to the public. These fleet assets include police cars, fire engines, ambulances, garbage trucks, work vehicles, heavy equipment, rider mowers, boats, generators and trailers. It is very important that these assets are maintained regularly and properly so that they can continue to serve the public effectively and ensure they last through the design life of the units. The current Fleet Maintenance facility is located at 221 Seaboard Ave, and is run by a third-party contractor. This facility is in very poor condition. The current site could be converted for an economical and suitable purpose. It would be operationally advantageous, and benefit the public, to relocate the fleet operations function to the east side of Venice, closer to the Knights Trail landfill. The new fleet maintenance facility could be operated by City staff to provide improved service and value at a lower cost. This project will include the procurement of a site, design and construction of a new Fleet Maintenance facility to better serve the entire City fleet.
- 11) **New PW Solid Waste and Recycling Facility - Relocated from Seaboard Area.** Estimated Cost \$3,000,000. The City operates the Solid Waste and Recycling services out of the current location at 221 Seaboard Ave. This facility is in very poor condition. The current site could be converted for an economical and suitable purpose. It would be operationally advantageous, and benefit the public, to relocate this facility to the east side of Venice,

closer to the Knights Trail landfill. This project will include the procurement of a site, design and construction of a new Solid Waste and Recycling facility to serve the public.

- 12) **Expand Fiber Optic Infrastructure – “Smart City” Improvements.** Estimated Cost \$250,000 per phase, seven phases. Venice is more than just the downtown and part of Venice Avenue so getting the infrastructure in place around the other parts of the City could pave the way for citizen services such as: informational boards for public outreach, environmental sensors, emergency beacons, wayfinding for autonomous vehicles, vehicle and person counters (would help Public Works and Police during season), and possible small cell locations. The added infrastructure would make it easier for additional cameras around the City that are similar to what is in the downtown area. Extend fiber and power:
  - From Laurel Rd to Border Rd along Jacaranda Blvd
  - From Laurel Rd to Tamiami Trail along Albee Farm Rd
  - Along Tamiami Trail from the North Bridge to the South Bridge
  - Along Venice Ave from Harbor to the beach
  - Along Miami and Tampa Aves from 41 to Harbor
  - Along The Esplanade N to Tarpon Center Drive (to the Jetty)
  - Along Harbor Drive South to the Brohard Paw Park
  
- 13) **Utilities Project: Water Plant – New Water Booster Pump Station.** Estimated Cost - \$12,200,000. Construction of a new water booster pump station and storage located east of I-75 to enhance water quality and meet future water demands. This project will consist of a booster pump station, a 2 MG storage tank, solar farm, and a Utilities Emergency Operations Center. Supplemental funding will come from Utilities operating revenues.
  
- 14) **Utilities Project: Wastewater Collection - Second Sanitary Sewer Force Main under I-75.** Estimated Cost - \$4,000,000. Construct a new wastewater force main under I-75 via directional drill. No redundant crossing exists to transfer the majority of the City's flow to the City's Eastside Water Reclamation Facility (EWRF). As stated in the City's wastewater master plan, should the existing 20 inch force main fail and/or require maintenance, this wastewater flow to the EWRF would be cut off. A 24 inch force main is recommended for system reliability, to lower peak velocities, and improve the overall operation of the system.
  
- 15) **Utilities Project: Water Reclamation Facility – Energy Conservation and Efficiency (Floating Solar Farm).** Estimated Cost - \$4,000,000. The City of Venice owns and operates a complex system of facilities to provide water, wastewater and reclaimed water service to its residents. Operation of these facilities accounts for a large portion of the City's overall energy use (the WRF is the largest) and therefore represents a substantial operational cost. In order to reduce electrical costs with credits from FPL, the Utilities Department is proposing the construction of a floating photovoltaic system on the reclaimed water storage pond at the WRF.
  
- 16) **Workforce Housing – Public/Private Partnership Incentive Payments.** Estimated Cost \$250,000 annually to offset permitting cost and impact fees for affordable housing projects (projects would need to qualify as affordable housing under the City's

Comprehensive Plan). Funds could also be applied to new construction under public/private partnerships.

D. Parks and Recreation

- 17) **Beach Renourishment – Annual Set Aside.** Estimated Cost - \$300,000 annually. Maintaining a healthy beach profile is critical for protecting structures during storm events, king tides, reducing flooding impacts and for supporting tourism which is a primary economic revenue source for the region. 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 with the next event scheduled for 2025. The City provides a local share of funding to match federal and state funding obtained through grant and local funding agreements. Over \$3.7 million is on hand currently, but additional reserves would be prudent.
- 18) **New Parks in Northeast Venice.** Estimated Cost \$3,000,000. The City is working to provide additional park locations within the Northeast Venice area. This area is currently underserved by City parks and extensive public outreach has been performed to determine the community park interest in this area. This project will include the procurement of a site, design and construction of new park sites in the Northeast Venice area. Supplemental funding could come from Sarasota County parks impact fees collected within the City.
- 19) **Government Owned Parks – Facility Upgrades and Major Maintenance.** Estimated Cost \$250,000 Annually. The City of Venice owns 40 park facilities throughout the City for the enjoyment of the public. These parks are maintained on a regular basis using the annual operating budget, however they do require major upgrades and maintenance periodically to ensure they remain safe and functional for the public. These major upgrades can include the replacement of restroom facilities, walking trails, boardwalks, fencing, sports courts, playgrounds, lighting, fountains, picnic shelters and gazebos.
- 20) **Park Upgrades, e.g., Chuck Reiter, etc.** Estimated Cost - \$2,500,000. The Chuck Reiter baseball field park located on the south side of the island of Venice will need to be upgraded. It is anticipated that the baseball fields will be relocated in the future to a brand new facility, and this 9 acre park could be redeveloped into a neighborhood park or other public facility. There are not currently any neighborhood parks in this area and this would be a great asset to serve the southern side of the island.
- 21) **Upgrade Beach Accesses – Repair/replace boardwalks, ADA access, etc.** Estimated Cost \$1,000,000. The City has seven beach access parks which all use pedestrian boardwalks to provide access to the beach for park users. In total there are 12 pedestrian boardwalks, half of which will need to be replaced and upgraded over the next ten years. Additionally, there is a wooden lifeguard office at Venice Beach which will need to be replaced.

E. Water Quality, Flood Protection & Resiliency

- 22) **Flood Mitigation/Resiliency – Relocate/Shore up City-Owned Infrastructure.** Estimated Cost TBD. Identify critical properties or projects to remove public infrastructure from areas prone to or shown to be in peril of sea level rise. City owned infrastructure (buildings, lift stations, historical resources, etc., that will begin experiencing flooding during king tides and sea level rise).
- 23) **Utilities Project: Water Plant – Relocate Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant.** Estimated cost TBD. This is a critical facility that is currently located in a floodplain and is vulnerable to storms and sea level rise. The City’s water treatment facility is located at a low elevation near the coastline to minimize the cost of discharging treatment by-product, which makes it particularly susceptible to coastal flooding. This critical infrastructure component is at risk of flooding, which could cause significant service disruptions that extend beyond the flooded zone. Thus, its relocation out of the flood zone will enhance the overall resilience of the City’s Utility system.
- 24) **Utilities Project: Water – Deep Injection Well.** Estimated Cost - \$11,500,000. The Reverse Osmosis (RO) process and other membrane filtration processes are now widely used for groundwater treatment and desalinization facilities. These water purification processes generate high solids concentration brine. Managing such concentrated by-products is critically important for the City of Venice. Properly designed and operated, deep well injection provides a highly cost-effective means for RO brine management, with significant environmental advantages over alternative options. Furthermore, with more stringent standards from the state environmental agencies and a requirement attached to the City's latest NPDES permit the City must look to change our current RO concentrate disposal method to a new deep injection well.
- 25) **Seaboard Area Redevelopment – Add Parking, Stormwater Improvements, Drainage and Retention** – Estimated Cost > \$10,000,000. Targeted infrastructure improvements for the City to reinvest into this area including: use of existing City property for stormwater (collection and quality/treatment), public parking (on-street and off-street), and landscaping and lighting improvements. A key component of this project would be to use the existing City owned properties (old public works) for the purpose of stormwater, parking, and landscaping to create a greenspace in the seaboard area and to provide supplemental parking for the surrounding area. Project costs include environmental remediation activities and removal of any existing site contaminants.
- 26) **Stormwater Infrastructure Replacement and Upgrade.** Estimated Cost \$400,000 annually. Installing new linings inside existing stormwater pipe throughout the City’s stormwater collection and discharge system can reduce leaks, prevent major damage, and extend the overall life of the pipes.
- 27) **Water Quality Infrastructure Projects, e.g., Beach Outfalls.** Estimated Cost - \$500,000 annually to supplement stormwater fund revenues. Specified projects at beach outfalls to reduce the impact of flooding and improve water quality prior to discharge into the Gulf of Mexico. The City of Venice is deeply concerned about the effects of elevated bacteria that impact the beaches and 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 and elevated bacteria concentrations have a devastating effect on wildlife, ecosystem, economy, and quality of life. Improving water quality for stormwater discharging by replacing aged infrastructure and adding water quality treatment projects are critical to reducing these negative impacts.