

SUMMARY SHEET
VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING
December 18, 2024

Agenda Item:

Resolution No. 2024-24 Seminole Gulf MOA (Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Support of Continuation of BERT project planning and grant application process and related Village support)

Motion to adopt Resolution 2024-24

Background:

As the Council knows, for many years, the Village of Estero has been a major proponent of the Bonita Estero Rail Trail (BERT) initiative, which proposes to convert some 15 miles of an unused railroad corridor into an improved recreational trail for bikers, walkers and joggers. The BERT is envisioned to eventually connect with and become part of a larger Florida Gulf Coast Trail network and, ultimately, part of the larger Florida Gulf Coast Trail from Collier County to Tampa.

While various planning and lobbying initiatives have occurred already on behalf of the project, both through the effort of supportive government entities including the Village, as well as non-profit organizations and grass roots citizen support, the Village has now been presented with a Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Bonita Estero Rail Trail, along with a request that the Village adopt the Agreement and provide additional support to help keep the initiative progressing forward.

The Agreement, which is to be between the Trust for Public Land, Collier County, the City of Bonita Springs, and the Village, memorializes the framework and responsibilities of the parties in moving the project forward, with particular focus on efforts to obtain the necessary grant funding from state and federal sources. The Agreement is in substantially final form. However, due to the timing of meetings, legal counsel for all the partners have not completed their reviews of the draft. Therefore, the Resolution also authorizes the Village Attorney and Village Manager to accept minor revisions requested by the other partners based on their respective legal reviews, so long as such revisions do not alter the core terms of the Agreement or increase the Village's financial support.

While the Agreement does require the Village to expend funds related to the development of grant applications to the state and federal governments, and to certain other study/survey-related costs, these costs must under the Agreement be pre-

approved by the Village on a case-by-case basis, and the parties will be jointly sharing in these costs which for the Village will be limited to \$10,000 (as set forth in the Resolution).

The Resolution also authorizes the Mayor and Manager to send correspondence on behalf of the Village in support of the MPO's grant application efforts, to submit a grant application for SUN Trail funding as a lead agency, and prioritizes the receipt of grants and other funding awards from the state and federal governments as a top legislative priority of the Village.

Action Requested:

Motion to adopt Resolution 2024-24

Process and Timeline:

Once the participating parties have all approved the Agreement, they will continue to work together to obtain the site survey and to develop and submit the grant applications seeking state, federal, and any other funding sources which might be identified as available to help make the project a reality. While this process will take time, should grants be received which would allow the participating parties to advance to next steps, the Village Council will be asked at that time to provide additional direction.

Financial Impact:

The "not to exceed" level of support is established in the Resolution at \$10,000. Should further support be requested by the parties, such request will be presented to the Council for consideration.

Prepared by: Steve Sarkozy, Village Manager

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 2024-24
2. MOA Bert
3. Certificate of Willing Manager Form
4. Village of Estero Letter of Support December 19, 2024