



Legislation Text

File #: 120722., Version: 10

Strategic Initiative 6.5: Recreation Master Plan (B)

This item provides the City Commission an update on the funding formula and master plan project list.
****ESTIMATED PRESENTATION 10 - 15 MINUTES****

At the November 15, 2012 meeting, the City Commission approved the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Master Plan and directed staff to return to the Commission at a later date with funding option scenarios. Since adoption of the master plan, staff and the Commission have worked to identify a funding source to implement the master plan.

On August 10, 2015, an overview of the Master Plan was presented at the Joint City/County Commission meeting. To further research, deliberate and make recommendations on the feasibility of a sales tax focused on funding parks, recreation, culture and conservation land acquisition, both commissions voted to establish a Joint Task Force consisting of two commissioners from each body and one representative from the League of Cities.

At the September 16, 2015 Meeting of the Joint Task Force, the County polling results were presented to gauge public interest on reauthorizing the Wild Spaces Public Places ballot initiative. After the presentation, all municipalities in Alachua County were asked to respond to proposed ballot language: *“Shall Alachua County be authorized to: extend the Alachua County Forever Program to acquire and improve environmentally sensitive lands to protect drinking water sources, water quality, and wildlife habitat; and to create improve and maintain park and recreational facilities in all cities and the County by a levy of one-half percent sales tax for ten years starting January 1, 2017.”*

On October 15, 2015, Mayor Braddy shared the letter from the County requesting input on the proposed ballot language whereby the City Commission recommended that the sales tax be proposed for five years rather than ten.

At the November 30, 2015 Meeting of the Joint City/County Task Force, the responses from the municipalities were discussed and the task force voted 4-1, the following language: *“To recommend to the Board of County Commissioners a Ballot initiative that says: Shall Alachua County be authorized to: extend the Alachua County Forever Program to acquire and improve environmentally sensitive lands to protect drinking water sources, water quality, and wildlife habitat; and to create improve and maintain park and recreational facilities in all cities and the County by a levy of one-half percent sales tax for eight years starting January 1, 2017. If passed, the funds will be shared under the State default formula unless and until a separate split is negotiated under an Interlocal Agreement.”*

On December 8, 2015, the Board of County Commission adopted the ballot language and discussed the topic again at the Florida League of Cities meeting on December 15, 2015. The timeline was presented and each municipality was asked to submit its prioritized project list by February 15, 2016 and if interested, to negotiate

with the County Manager a different formula than the state default formula.

The total cost of Master Plan projects is \$72,530,000 plus \$2,794,750 in ongoing maintenance costs for new facilities; \$3,389,900 for land acquisition and \$2,900,000 for Project Management to implement the plan for a total cost of \$81,614,650.

The Recreation, Cultural Affairs and Public Works Committee will discuss this item on February 11, 2016 and provide recommendations to the City Commission.

City staff has been meeting with County staff and will return to the City Commission at a later date regarding the distribution of funds from the sales tax.

The fiscal impact of the Master Plan's cost has been provided; the funding source has been identified and depends on voter approval for successful implementation of the Master Plan.

The City Commission approve the City's prioritized project list and the list of potential City/County partnership projects for transmission to the Board of County Commissioners after receiving recommendations from the Recreation, Cultural Affairs and Public Works Committee, based on their February 11, 2016 meeting.