



155 F Road Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470

TO: Town Council of Town of Loxahatchee Groves
FROM: Francine Ramaglia, Town Manager
DATE: December 3, 2024
SUBJECT: Cost Sharing Policy Discussion

Background:

Attached is the existing Town Cost Sharing Policy adopted in 2017. Previous councils adopted cost sharing and road prioritization policies as well as an ordinance on assessments for cost shared projects. The policy and related ordinances were adopted prior to the consolidation of the Town and the District. There are different options available to the Town and the District that are not available solely to the Town. The policies and assessment ordinance were adopted in furtherance of the approved potential revenue bond for roadway improvements.

The previous focus was on roadway improvements and how to finance them, the current Town Council has identified different priorities than what are established in this policy. To carry out the current priorities of the Town Council this policy needs to be updated.

The Council is currently considering amendments to Chapter 46 of the Town's Code to provide, in part for the potential of voluntary assessments on properties to fund District projects in whole or in part. It is recommended the existing cost sharing policy be revised to explicitly allow for drainage works, not necessarily associated with roadway projects, to be eligible for cost sharing.

Direction will be sought on the petition process and whether it should be initiated solely by interested property owners or whether staff can initiate a project soliciting interest from property owners. Another issue to address is the timing of receipt of petitions and whether deadlines should be established for petitions to be considered and evaluated for award or that it be on a rolling ongoing basis. Eligibility standards should be established including the minimum and maximum amount of the funding to be considered. There is also the issue of whether (and this may be dependent on the size of the project) the match should be done based on a cash contribution from the property owner and/or assessments be considered as a method for a property owner to participate in the cost sharing program. The current policy does contemplate assessments as the primary mechanism for property owners to contribute their share of project costs and while cash contributions are not directly addressed, there is no reason to assume they are precluded by the



155 F Road Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470

present policy. If assessments are an acceptable methodology for property owners to provide the matching funds (as is the case with respect to the existing policy) what would the length of time of the assessments and the interest rates or would that be evaluated on an individual project basis.

Eligibility should necessarily include sufficient easement and/or right-of-way is available to complete the improvements which may require that sufficient interest in the affected property be dedicated to the Town/District through easement or deed. Projects would be implemented pursuant to the ordinance by a project-specific resolution, which will identify the improvement area, the cost share percentage, the assessment methodology and benefit unit, as required by Florida Statutes.

Staff proposes updating the cost sharing policy part of the ordinance to allow for projects to be cost shared by property owners from 50 to 100%. There will be stated exceptions to the policy, such as improvements pursuant to developer agreements or where funds are made available from other government agencies.

Staff will be proposing updates to the road classifications and standards and the cost sharing policy prioritization policy may be impacted by such roadway standards and classifications. Similarly, as the Water Control Plan is updated a prioritization policy on drainage projects may be included in the adopted plan.

Recommendations:

Town Council should discuss and give direction with respect to the policy changes and based on that direction staff will bring forward an updated cost sharing policy at a future meeting.