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2525 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach, Fla. 33931

## **Town receives \$1 million federal grant for the redevelopment of Bay Oaks Recreational Campus**

**Town of Fort Myers Beach, FL** –The Town of Fort Myers Beach has been notified that it has been selected to receive a \$1 million grant for the redevelopment of Bay Oaks Recreational Campus.

The grant is from the National Park Service (NPS) - Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF provides funding to the federal agencies and the states. In the State of Florida, NPS/LWCF partners with the Department of Environmental Protection - Division of State Lands and its Land and Recreation Grants Program.

The funding will be available starting January 1, 2022 and is predicated by a match from the Town. The project and associated grant are slated to enhance the 15-acre Bay Oaks Recreational Campus. The planned project now includes both active and passive, indoor and outdoor recreation.

“Out of 25 county and municipal grant applications from across the state of Florida, our Bay Oaks project ranked eighth on the priority list,” said Town Manager Roger Hernstadt. “In addition, this is the first time that the LWCF has provided grants of \$1 million and we were one of four development applications to receive a grant of this magnitude due to the extraordinary efforts of Town staff.”

Plans to redevelop the Town’s largest park located at 2731 Oak Street have been under discussion by Town Council, the Bay Oaks Recreational Campus Advisory Board (BORCAB) and the local community since 2018. The design firm, DRMP, Inc., was contracted by Town Council in 2019

Project plans were enhanced in 2020 as initial designs had only been for renovations to the entryway from Estero Boulevard. Enhancements include a new building for the creation of programs for all ages to meet the current and future needs of the community, space for additional classes such as Yoga and Pilates, and an amphitheater.

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The Town of Fort Myers Beach, incorporated since 1995, is on Estero Island on the southwest Florida coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The beach stretches for seven miles and has sugar-white sand and spectacular shell finds and sunsets. The Town has a variety of unique cultural, parks, recreational and natural settings, as well as shops and restaurants.

Ball fields are now also part of the expanded project scope of work which includes but is not limited to:

- Two ball fields with lighting
- Improved entrance and exit for pedestrians and vehicles
- Outdoor basketball, pickleball, tennis courts
- Stage for concerts and events

Also included are improvements to the adjacent Lee County School site to enhance the mutually beneficial partnership of the adjoining parcels. The Town hopes to add additional amenities in a future phase as well. [See the current draft of the design plans.](#)

The redevelopment of Bay Oaks is being undertaken in conjunction with improvements to two other iconic areas in the Town - Bayside Park and Times Square. In November 2020, Town Councilors finalized a \$10 million loan secured through First Florida Integrity Bank to fund all three projects. Council approved the loan with the understanding that grants would be sought to contribute to the cost of these three large projects.

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