



COALITION OF CITY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

677 N Washington Blvd Ste 52 · Sarasota, FL 34236

April 28, 2021

Governing Board
Southwest Florida Water Management District
2379 Broad Street
Brooksville, Florida 34604

RE: Sarasota Created wetlands System Grant Application

Dear Governing Board Members:

We are writing on behalf of The Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations of Sarasota (CCNA) Executive Committee regarding the City of Sarasota's grant application for a wetland restoration project, "Sarasota Created Wetlands System." Its crucial purpose is to build an 18-acre wetland treatment system to improve the quality of water that enters Phillippi Creek and then Robarts Bay.

The project will cleanse nitrogen, phosphates, and other contaminants from the water, provide for a vibrant wildlife habitat, and offer the public the opportunity to experience nature all within an urban environment.

This vision for improving water quality developed over several years with a new imagining of how restoration of much needed wetlands would contribute to storm water management and water quality, benefiting the entire area. As an essential part of the Phillippi Creek Watershed, this wetlands restoration would collect polluted waters from 5,800 acres to the north and cleanse approximately 2.6 billion gallons of water per year before entering Phillippi Creek and the Bay.

SWFWMD's staff of scientists and environmentalists rated this project as High Priority, found it to be cost effective, and in line with the Governor's directive to prioritize projects that help mitigate the harmful effects of red tide. When a subcommittee made the decision not to recommend the project, the staff asked that it be brought to the entire Governing Board for consideration because of its importance to the entire region. As you are aware, your subcommittee declined to request full board consideration and suggested reapplying on 2022.

With respect, the timeliness of this important conservation and restoration effort concurrent with the upcoming restoration of surrounding golf facilities is now. Deferring even a year might jeopardize the window of opportunity we have at hand. As the Executive Committee of CCNA, an organization of more than 30 city neighborhood associations, we respectfully request that you

reconsider the “Sarasota Created Wetlands System” grant application at the Governing Board level and approve the project for its benefits to the entire county and region as part of your 2021 initiatives.

Sincerely,

/s/ The CCNA of Sarasota Executive Committee

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