



# **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

*1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida 32960*

## **Public Works Department Coastal Engineering Division**

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### **Sector 7 Beach and Dune Restoration Project Update: March 16, 2022**

Due to damages sustained from Hurricane Matthew (2016) and Hurricane Irma (2017), in January 2018 Indian River County procured professional coastal engineering and biological support services related to the management and nourishment of the Sector 7 beach project area. Extensive and costly efforts began at that point to design, monitor and permit a construction project that was slated to replace sand lost in Sector 7 due to the Tropical Storms. Prior to project permit issuance, Hurricane Dorian's (2019) impacts were felt along the Atlantic coastline, adding to the sand losses observed within Sector 7, increasing the amount of sand needed for the County's planned project.

The Sector 7 project area is made up of 82 properties from the Treasure Cove subdivision in the north down to the Floralton Beach subdivision in the south. Beach management easements are needed from each of the properties in order for the County to place sand within the permitted fill template on the property. At a regularly scheduled Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting in June of 2020, the BCC concurred that a 90% or greater number of signed easements would be targeted as the goal in order for the Sector 7 Beach and Dune Restoration Project to be deemed constructible and therefore move forward with construction.

This project was originally slated to undergo construction in the November 2020 to April 2021 construction window. Pre-construction monitoring was performed during the summer of 2020, along with bid documents being prepared and advertised on July 9, 2020 with the bid opening on September 9, 2020. County staff and project engineers reviewed the bid submittals in order to prepare a recommendation of award, but due to a lack of sufficient stakeholder support (41 easements obtained out of 82 properties, or 50%), at the September 22, 2020 BCC meeting, staff was instead directed to put the project on hold for a year in order to obtain the remaining easements, targeting November 2021 to April 2022 as the new construction window.

During this initial delay, County staff continued an outreach program utilizing various forms of communications to solicit easement agreements from the remaining properties. These efforts did produce some success, increasing the number of executed easements to 51 (62%) as of June 23, 2021. Prior to conducting another round of pre-construction monitoring in the Summer of 2021, staff returned to the BCC on July 6, 2021 to get direction on the project, knowing that the 90% easement agreement had not yet been attained. At that July meeting, Staff was directed to once again put the project on hold for another year while continuing efforts to try to obtain the necessary easements for the project to be deemed viable and constructible. Construction was then targeting the November 2022 to April 2023 construction window. Additionally, staff requested and received extensions to the funding that was being made available to assist the County in covering costs associated with this project.

On March 8, 2022, staff presented to the BCC an update on the status of the Sector 7 Beach and Dune Restoration project along with the current number of obtained easements. At that meeting, staff presented the BCC with several options for the project based on the current number of easements still failing to meet the 90% goal (54 easements recorded reflecting 66% of the project area easements). After lengthy discussions and acknowledgement that the targeted number of easements was still not met, staff was directed to delay project once again, now targeting construction during the November 2023 to April 2024 construction window. Staff was also directed to continue to pursue the remaining easements, as well as reach out to seek extension from the agencies providing funding to help defray County costs for the project (FEMA, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Division of Emergency Management).

To date, the County has invested well in excess of \$600,000 to date for the design, permitting and monitoring of the Sector 7 Beach and Dune Restoration project without a grain of sand being added. In addition, countless staff hours have been spent trying to secure the easements necessary for construction, while still falling short of the targeted 90%. The project now is slated for construction to begin in November 2023 should enough easements be obtained to move the project forward. This also assumes that the County's requests to extend the available funding into next year will be granted. There are risks associated with the County's request to extended funding, but staff will continue to work with those agencies to secure the extensions if possible. It is also important to note that we continue to see project costs increase over time. It was anticipated that this project, should it have gone to construction in the 2019/2020 timeframe as intended, would have cost approximately \$9.9 million. Based on costs in the market today, and expected increases prior to construction in 2023/2024, we anticipate the cost for this project to increase to over \$12 million dollars.

<b>Sector 7 Easements (82 properties total)</b>					
<b>Month/ Year</b>	<b>Jan 2018 (Project Start)</b>	<b>Jun 2020 BCC Meeting (Establish Target)</b>	<b>Sep 2020 BCC Meeting (1<sup>st</sup> Postponement)</b>	<b>Jul 2021 BCC Meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> Postponement)</b>	<b>Mar 2022 BCC Meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> Postponement)</b>
<b>Granted</b>	0	90% set as the Goal	41 (50%)	51 (62%)	54 (66%)
<b>In Process</b>	0		10 (12%)	8 (10%)	1 (1%)
<b>Pending</b>	0		26 (32%)	9 (11%)	12 (15%)
<b>Denied</b>	0		5 (6%)	14 (17%)	15 (18%)

County staff remain committed to obtaining the remaining easements necessary to deem the project as constructible, and continue to seek extensions for funding made available for this project. This update is to keep you informed as to the delayed status of the project.

Please visit [www.ircgov.com/easements](http://www.ircgov.com/easements) to view the status of the easements within the project area.

If you have any questions or need any additional information on the County's planned Sector 7 Beach and Dune Restoration Project, please reach out to Coastal Division Staff by email ([coastal@ircgov.com](mailto:coastal@ircgov.com)).