

# **Siesta Beach Design - *Frequently Asked Questions***

**Issued 4/27/11**

**1. When will the plan be finalized?**

The current Preliminary Design Plan is an evolution of the County Commission approved Concept Plan (Dec 2009). Final design of the Plan is expected to continue through 2012 with phased construction anticipated to begin in 2013.

**2. How much is the project expected to cost?**

The County's engineering consultant has estimated the current design plan to be approximately \$18,000,000 to construct. There are several budget challenges facing the County Commission and this project will be discussed during the upcoming FY12-16 budget process.

**3. What are the new features of the project?**

- Multipurpose overlook/shelter structure on the west most side of the park for weddings, etc...(1)
- A pedestrian esplanade through the park from Avenida Del Mare to Midnight Pass Rd (3)
- Renovated and expanded restrooms in the existing restroom/concession building adjacent to the historic pavilion (6)
- A restored historic pavilion(7)
- A new public safety/concession building (9)
- New restroom and concession buildings on the east side of the park with a surrounding deck area for seating and viewing of the beach and below picnic and playground areas (14-16)
- Refreshed picnic and playground areas on the east side of the park within existing vegetation (Australian Pines) (18,19,20, 22,23)
- A festival lawn on the east side of the park with new multipurpose pavilion (21)
- A relocated and new maintenance facility (28)
- Streetscape improvements along Beach Road similar to those recently constructed in Siesta Village (36)
- ADA access to Siesta Beach from the historic pavilion (parallel to lifeguard stands) (37)
- Improved traffic circulation and parking with multiple two-way entrances and exits to Beach Road

**4. Why is this project being done?**

Many of the existing structures and features of the park have exceeded their service life, are dysfunctional and are in major disrepair. These improvements will provide a world class facility for the next 50+ years and an overall benefit to the park and its users. This Siesta Beach Improvements Project was a voter-approved Surtax III Economic Stimulus Program.

**5. How will multiple accesses impact traffic on Beach Rd?**

Traffic studies have indicated that it is anticipated that multiple entrance and exit points will distribute traffic along Beach Road and inside the park to shorten the time spent driving in these locations.

**6. Can a traffic light be installed at Beach Rd and Beach Way Dr?**

Multiple traffic studies have been completed to investigate the appropriateness of making this a lit intersection. Each study undertaken has failed to demonstrate that this intersection meets transportation criteria to install a traffic light at this intersection.

- 7. How many parking spaces are being added?**  
Approximately 100 spaces (~11% over existing) will be spaced throughout the park site.
- 8. Will added parking spaces create more traffic problems on Beach Road or inside the park parking lot?**  
Traffic issues on Beach Road or inside the park can be linked to difficulty entering and exiting the park and the inability to find available parking. The newly configured entrances and exits for the parking lot are anticipated to better distribute vehicles both along Beach Road and inside the park, thus reducing traffic problems in these areas.
- 9. What ADA features are included in the project?**  
A majority of the park improvements will be designed to meet ADA standards including: the esplanade, ramps, restrooms, concessions and access to the open beach.
- 10. What is happening to the historic pavilion?**  
It will be refurbished while maintaining or restoring many of its historic features.
- 11. What is happening to the existing public safety building?**  
It will be demolished and replaced with a new modern and efficient safety/concession building oriented perpendicular to the beach.
- 12. What is happening to the existing Australian Pines?**  
Much of the exotic and nuisance vegetation in the park will be removed. There may be opportunities particularly around the picnic and playground area for trimming or phased removal while planting native trees and plants that will provide shade. This would take place over a longer period of time to give new trees a chance to fill out.
- 13. Will the tennis courts be removed?**  
The tennis courts will remain.
- 14. Will the Maintenance area be relocated away from Gulf & Bay Condominium?**  
Yes, alternative locations will be reviewed to better consolidate, buffer, and relocate the maintenance facility.
- 15. How will the County address the complaints from the Gulf & Bay neighbors regarding impacts from additional parking areas?**  
The County will work with the neighbors at Gulf & Bay to address their concerns with the parking area.
- 16. Will the existing access easement with Gulf & Bay condominium be developed or planted as a vegetative buffer?**  
A meeting with the Gulf & Bay representatives will be scheduled to discuss the layout of the eastern side of the park.
- 17. How will the County protect the more natural areas that provide habitat to various animals?**  
Sarasota County values wildlife and natural areas as a public resource. Wildlife will be protected to the greatest extent practicable during construction. Non-native habitats have extremely limited value to wildlife and are therefore less desirable for preservation. Native habitats on the property are being preserved for the value and function that they provide to wildlife species.

- 18. Why is stormwater being directed into the Gulf of Mexico?**  
The stormwater improvements will include a modern treatment system for the stormwater runoff before it enters the Gulf of Mexico. The discharge pipe will be located about 2000 feet into the Gulf of Mexico.
- 19. Will there be an “event lawn” and concerts held at Siesta Beach?**  
There is a defined open area referred to as a “festival lawn” displayed on the preliminary design plan. The intent of this space is to create a defined landscaped picnic area where the public could gather for informal gatherings such as picnics or field games. This area could also be used for formal gatherings that occur at the park today, such as, art festivals, special events, central meeting area for beach races and possibly small concerts. Any large event would require permitting and would have to meet operational standards for the park.
- 20. Are there fewer trees in the design plan?**  
No, there are considerably more trees planned for the park, especially in the parking lot.
- 21. What are the long term maintenance effects of pervious surfaces for parking?**  
A detailed study was conducted on a variety of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques and specifically identified which techniques would be best suited for Siesta Beach. Recommendations from this report will be considered during the design.
- 22. Will the esplanade be constructed along with additional pedestrian sidewalks?**  
Yes, the esplanade will meander throughout the park and connect various recreational areas. There will also be a sidewalk along Beach Road.
- 23. If the County is concerned about their fiscal future, how can we propose to build such a facility?**  
There are designated funds allocated for this beach park project through the voter-approved Surtax III program. In order to be fiscally and practically responsible, the project construction will be phased as appropriate. Siesta Beach is one of Sarasota County’s top assets and should be maintained and improved to reflect this.
- 24. How are you addressing the parking issues on Siesta Key and at Siesta Beach?**  
The parking issues are relevant for all of Siesta Key. Sarasota County is an advocate for public transportation and will continue to support and provide incentives to bring alternative modes of transportation to the Key.
- 25. How will the renovated beach park be maintained?**  
By providing updated and modern facilities, there will be a desire from the public and visitors alike to use the beach and the associated facilities for additional activities. Today, there is a fee to reserve pavilions or open space areas for special events. With an increase in use and fees for these reserved areas, the business model would allow Siesta Beach to be self-sustaining.
- 26. Will there be additional opportunities for public input?**  
For more information on the latest design plan, upcoming meetings or to provide comments, please contact Curtis Smith (Project Manager) at 915-4111 or [crsmith@scgov.net](mailto:crsmith@scgov.net) or by visiting the project webpage at: <http://www.scgov.net/PublicWorks/CIP/Siesta.asp>.