

BAY DRIVE PARK Questions and Answers

Q. How tall is the building near the beach and what will it look like?

A. The Park Amenity Building is a two-story metal-roofed coquina-faced building with a restroom on the first floor and an observation deck on the second floor. The overall building height is about 25-30 feet because of the roof pitch – effectively, the height of a typical two-story house. The observation deck height is 10 feet (the top of the first floor), allowing for an overlook of the large pond and the ocean. This building will not affect the privacy of adjoining property owners because of its two-story construction, the distance of the structure from the nearest homes, and the vegetation between the structures.

Q. Will the dunes be restored?

A. Yes, Flagler County staff members are working to get the dunes restored.

Q. Has construction already started? A skid-steer was observed on the property?

A. No, the skid-steer was being used to access locations for geotechnical sample collection. The pond material is being evaluated for its suitability as dune restoration material.

Q. Where will sanitary sewer and potable water service connections be made? Who will pay for it?

A. Flagler County plans to connect at its own expense (run lines, meters, etc.) to the existing wastewater and potable water systems within the Sea Colony Community. The County is obligated to pay for usage in the same way anyone else does.

Q. Will the Park cost taxpayers money to maintain?

A. Yes, as is the case at other County park facilities.

Q. Will connecting the Park utilities overload the utilities within Sea Colony? Will water pressure in local homes be affected?

A. On a typical day the water demand from the Park is expected to be less than for a single family home. When one of your neighbors goes out of town for the weekend you don't notice a change in water pressure; you won't notice this either.

Q. Will planned utility service connection lines impact dune vegetation?

A. No, the planned service connections will not cross dunes. Places where utilities are set will be replanted immediately after installation to prevent erosion and maintain the natural beauty of the area.

Q. Will the water in the pond be aerated for mosquito control and to prevent algal blooms?

A. The pond is not planned to be aerated at this time because a much more effective mosquito control method will be used. Rather, the pond will be stocked with fish which eat insect larvae, thereby helping to control the mosquito populations. There are preserved wetlands on site. In the final design phase, or in the future if not constructed initially, aeration will be considered for aesthetic reasons and to potentially increase oxygen levels for the fish and prevent algal blooms if needed.

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Q. Can the size of the pond be reduced?

A. The pond is a piece of a much larger stormwater management system. The pond was modeled and sized appropriately to accommodate stormwater and prevent flooding.

Q. Will the proposed pond and associated drainage improvements create additional flooding issues?

A. Just the opposite is true; the pond and other stormwater management system improvements were designed to mitigate flooding risks. The improvements will dramatically reduce the likelihood of flooding.

Q. What material will be used to construct the sidewalks and multi-use trails? Can the sidewalk be eliminated?

The multi-use trail will be made primarily of concrete; however, some sections are elevated boardwalk. The sidewalk will also be made of concrete and it will connect the Park to existing sidewalks along A1A. A safe pedestrian sidewalk connection is a requirement for the grant, so it cannot be eliminated.

Q. Will there be paved parking and roads? Will there be a dust problem for residences near the Park?

A. There will be paved handicapped parking spaces with the remainder as shell. In the future the roads and other parking areas could be paved, should it be desired or should dust become a problem.

Q. Is a deceleration lane needed on A1A for safety?

A. The traffic load for a passive Park with beach access is expected to be fairly low. At this time Flagler County does not anticipate the need for a deceleration lane. However, the need for additional traffic controls will be more thoroughly evaluated after the Park has been completed and actual traffic flow has been established.

Q. Can the County move the access road to set it against the north property boundary or make it a narrower one-way road that extends to Rollins Dunes Drive?

A. The access road was set along an existing storm water pond and arranged to minimize impacts to existing residences. Extending to Rollins Dunes Drive would require purchasing an additional lot and therefore would increase costs considerably.

Q. Why is the parking configured as it is?

A. The parking was reconfigured based on public feedback. Parking will be set as far away from residences as is practicable.

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Q. Will golf cart parking be available? Can golf carts be used on the multi-use trail?

A. Golf cart parking will not be provided. Motorized vehicles will not be allowed on the multi-use trail. By County Law Golf carts are prohibited on public streets and public trails.

Q. What will be the hours of operation at the Park?

A. Hours of operation have not been officially set. While most of Flagler County's oceanfront Parks are open 24 hours a day, that is not being considered for this Park. Flagler County is proposing dawn-to-dusk hours for the Bay Drive Park because of the proximity to neighborhoods. If specific Park hours are set (less than 24 hours), the entrance will be closed and the bathrooms locked. We are currently working on a way to either lock or cut off the showers.

Q. Will the County provide emergency vehicular beach access at the Park?

A. No vehicular beach access will be provided at the Park.

Q. Will traffic be increased?

A. Development of the Park will result in some increased traffic, but the increase in traffic is expected to be minimal.

Q. Will the Park be accessible for disabled people?

A. Yes, the Park's construction will conform to the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Q. Will dogs be allowed in the Park? Will leashes be required? Will a dog station be provided?

A. Yes, dogs on leashes will be permitted in the Park. Yes, a dog station will also be provided to make it convenient for dog owners to pick up after their pets.

Q. Will a locking gate be installed to provide access from Sea Colony to the Park?

A. Based on the feedback received, no gate between Sea Colony and the Park is planned.

Q. Will there be bicycle racks?

A. Yes, Flagler County wants to encourage the use of the Park by people riding on the A1A Scenic Byway Trail, as well as from the adjoining neighborhoods. Bicycle racks give riders the option to secure their bicycles while resting and enjoying the Park.

Q. Why was bocce ball selected as an activity for this Park?

A. No decision has been made about what lawn game will be accommodated, but it likely will not be bocce ball. As part of the grant application, an activity was required to earn points. In 2011 Flagler County submitted the grant with bocce ball as the activity. There is flexibility with the grant and suggestions are welcome.

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Q. Can exercise stations and distance markers be added to the trail system?

A. Exercise stations and distance markers can likely be added with a minimum number of changes. It will be considered as the Park design is completed or may be provided at a later date.

Q. Will kayaking and canoeing be allowed on the pond?

A. Flagler County does not have plans to prevent people from using the pond for canoeing or kayaking. This will be evaluated at a later date.

Q. Will trees be removed?

A. A number of trees will need to be removed for the stormwater pond and other amenities. The Park site has been disturbed many times, so it is not a pristine habitat. However, Flagler County did complete a tree survey that attempted to preserve the best coastal scrub oak and other natural communities within the site plan. The majority of the dune vegetation is in the best condition and it will remain intact. It should also be mentioned that Hurricane Matthew likely damaged many trees that may now be dead because of the salt water impacts. The health of the trees will be further evaluated this spring. Based on the survival of the existing vegetation, a final decision will be made in an attempt to maximize existing trees at the Park site. Supplemental plantings will occur as necessary for restoration and buffers/screening.

Q. Many people say that all of the trees are dead and many others say that all of the trees are alive.

A. As a result of Hurricane Matthew, the Park property was inundated with salt water. When the water receded a significant amount of salt was left behind in the soil which has stressed the vegetation. At this time some of the trees have died and some still show signs of life; some types of trees are better at tolerating higher salt levels than others. Because salt levels are still elevated, more trees are expected to die off and that will continue until there has been enough rainfall to flush salt from the soil. A certified arborist will assess the damage, although the extent of the damage cannot be fully ascertained until soil salt levels have returned to normal.

Q. Have environmental and ecological studies been conducted? Will the Park impact listed species and the environment?

A. Flagler County has and continues to coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), St Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC). The gopher tortoises will be relocated to suitable habitat. A detailed analysis was done of the property as part of the permitting process.

Q. Why not make the property into a nature preserve?

A. This stormwater management system upgrade is critical infrastructure for people who live in the flood-prone areas. The property was purchased by Flagler County specifically to mitigate flood risks for local residences and provide public beach access. Moreover, the isolated property was evaluated by FFWCC staff and was determined not

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to contain critical habitat, the property is not part of a larger wildlife corridor, and the property left as is presents a fire risk for local residences.

Q. Can the vegetative buffer size be increased?

The plan was updated to provide additional vegetative buffer where the proposed access road nears residences that do not back up to an existing stormwater pond. The Park was designed to minimize the effects on local residents.

Q. Will light pollution affect nesting sea turtles or light up the surrounding neighborhoods?

A. Proposed lighting at the Park is minimal. Light near the beach will be subdued to avoid sea turtle nesting habitat and will comply with turtle lighting standards. The County has many oceanfront parks that all have to meet turtle lighting standards. Since the Park is not planned for nighttime access, any lighting provided will be minimal and for general security.

Q. I am concerned about the security or safety.

A. While safety or security is often raised as a concern on new projects, the experience in Flagler County Parks has not been similar to what you might see in highly urbanized city/areas. All of our beachside parks are more remote, passive and generally surrounded by higher value properties and low crime neighborhoods. In our County, we have not heard of an instance where a park visitor has even jumped a fence, much less jumped a fence and committed a crime of theft or vandalism. In fact, typically, the opposite is true. A park with the visible presence of joggers, bicyclists and families tends to make those areas safer and shift vandals or the homeless away. Also, compared to the 91 multi-family, multi-story units that could have been placed on the property, the passive Park alternative is a much safer alternative.

Q. This Park is going to hurt the value of my property.

A. Actually the opposite tends to be true. A Park that offers new amenities to nearby residents that would otherwise be unavailable, increases property values. For Sea Colony, it may be more neutral since it is a gated community with many private amenities. For other non-private subdivisions in the area, Bay Drive Park will potentially add value by having access to local park amenities that may not otherwise be readily available.

Q. Can the County install a 10-foot fence?

A. Currently there is a 6-foot wood fence on the Sea Colony Property. The County is looking into the height of the fence and will seriously consider raising it in areas closer to an actual structure. The County is looking into what vegetation can be added to supplement the Sea Colony fencing.

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Q. Will the Park be noisy?

A. Passive Parks like this one are generally pretty quiet. When compared to the former land use and zoning for 91 residential units, it will be much quieter.

Q. Why does the County have to put a beach-front park at the end of Bay Drive?

A. The Park will provide all residents of Flagler County with recreational opportunities and replacement beach access lost when Sea Colony was developed.

Q. Will the showers and bathrooms attract transients to the Park?

A. This Park will be regularly patrolled and is not planned for 24-hour access, which is expected to discourage use by transients. The way the park currently exists may actually enable them to camp and evidence on site indicates this usage. We are looking at a number of ways to cut off any outside showers from after hours usage.

Q. What demographic data was evaluated to determine the need for this park?

A. The need for this Park was not determined based on demographic data. Beach access is very important to Flagler County residents. As Flagler County continues to grow and properties are developed, opportunities for beach access/parks will disappear and the costs for the remaining potential beach access/park properties are expected to increase accordingly. Ensuring the future quality of life and lower taxes for the residents of Flagler County requires a forward-looking approach. The need/demographic drivers for this park are stormwater, population growth/beach access, and lack of recreation amenities for hundreds of homes not in gated community with recreational facilities.