



SARASOTA COUNTY
"Dedicated to Quality Service"

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236
phone: 941-861-5344 fax: 941-861-5987

August 24, 2016

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Water Resource Management
Attn: Mr. Greg Garis
2600 Blair Stone Road – MS3500
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Email: Gregory.Garis@dep.state.fl.us

Dear Mr. Garis:

On August 23, 2016, the Sarasota County Commission unanimously voted to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reverse its draft Finding of No Significant Impact for the Lido Key Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Project, Sarasota County, Florida and formally pursue an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). This request is based in our mutual desire to obtain a full understanding of potential environmental impacts from the project, including those that may occur within the overall coastal system, to barrier island shorelines, and those applicable to the county-owned Ted Sperling Park at South Lido Beach. As the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and City of Sarasota undertakes this complex project within the dynamic coastal system, there may be possible unintended consequences associated with moving forward. Those consequences should be clearly understood by decision-makers and citizens in advance, thereby informing decisions at local, state, and federal levels.

Though the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) process for reviewing the project's Joint Coastal Permit is separate from that under NEPA, they are related. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will not finalize the draft Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact until the FDEP Joint Coastal Permit is issued. Therefore, it is timely to share this information with you now as the FDEP reviews materials submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address the second request for additional information, received on August 1, 2016.

With the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers August 1, 2016 submittal of materials to the FDEP, it has come to the County's attention that a construction staging area for the project is proposed at county-owned property at Ted Sperling Park at South Lido Beach. Neither the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers nor City of Sarasota has contacted the County to seek authorization for this use. It is the County's expectation that the FDEP evaluation of the materials submitted on August 1, 2016 will include a requirement for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or City of Sarasota to obtain authorization for such use prior to moving the submittal for the Joint Coastal Permit forward in the review process.

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Both the construction staging area and project design, including groin structures north of Ted Sperling Park at South Lido Beach pose possible near and long-term impacts to the operations, maintenance, and management of the park. Understanding those possible impacts during mobilization, construction, and in the years following is essential to decision-making at all levels related to this project. It is our goal to ensure that public property at Ted Sperling Park and both the public and private property along the entire proposed project area are protected to the greatest extent possible from future storm impacts and changes within the coastal system. Therefore, County staff will be reaching out to your office to review measures that the FDEP plans to incorporate into the permit process to ensure that Ted Sperling Park at South Lido Beach is adequately protected. Carolyn Brown, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources is the point of contact and may be reached at (941) 861-5483 or cnbrown@scgov.net. The County appreciates the opportunity to work with the FDEP to address these concerns.

Sincerely,



Alan Maio
Chairman

c: Sarasota County Commission
Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator
Jonathan E. Evans, Assistant County Administrator
Matthew Osterhoudt, Interim Director, Planning and Development Services
Rachel Herman, Environmental Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services