



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the project proposed to do?

The project proposes to construct a 12-foot-wide multi-use sidewalk on West Beach Drive from Frankford Avenue to West 6th Street. The goal is to build a scenic waterfront sidewalk along West Beach Drive that increases pedestrian and bike riding connectivity and safety for its users between Downtown Panama City and Historic St. Andrews.

2. If the City moves forward with the project, when will construction start and how long will it take to build?

If the City Commission moves forward with this project, the current schedule is for a construction bid to go out in the fall of 2024. Construction is proposed to begin in late 2024. A one-year construction timeline is anticipated, which would result in a late 2025 completion date.

3. Can the funds be reallocated to another project within the City?

It is not possible for these funds be allocated to another project within the City without going back to the Legislature to make the request because the project scope and limits were very specific in the appropriations application and the executed grant agreement. Based on this, these funds cannot be reappropriated or reassigned. This project is not included in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) 5-Year Work Program and it is not an FDOT project. Rather, FDOT was a "pass through" state agency for the Legislative funding to get to the City for this specific project.

4. Does the City intend to utilize eminent domain to acquire property for the project?

The City has no desire to acquire property through the eminent domain process. However, the City may consider a donation or the sale of parcels and/or easements from individual property owners if there is a willing seller/donor. The City intends to utilize the FDOT Maintenance Claim limits and may choose to utilize part of the City owned right-of-way.

5. Will the speed limit be changed?

More than likely, the speed limit will be reduced to calm traffic and to encourage pedestrian safety.

6. Will there be parking along West Beach Drive?

The City intends to add minimal parking to alleviate overflow parking at Asbell Park. Each concept will provide parking options.

7. Are any local funds being used to complete this project?

No. There are no local matching funds required. Under the terms of the grant agreement, the project has \$8 million.

8. Why does the current project estimate show the City paying \$1.4 million?

The \$9.4 million project estimate shown in the grant agreement was produced by City staff last year when attempting to calculate the total cost of the project. This estimate was very conservative, given the preliminary design had not started, and the local construction prices were continuing to increase at unprecedented levels. At the time this estimate was generated, there were no preliminary design documents to help frame the cost calculations. Because of this, the estimate included a 15 percent contingency on top of much higher anticipated construction costs the City experienced at that time. As the project continues to move forward with the planning process, construction price increases have slowed down and the City is starting to get a better sense of the specifics of the design parameters. With more information there is less risk, and the City is now comfortable the entire project can be completed within the \$8 million grant funding. Assuming this happens, the City will not have to contribute any funds to the project cost, except for advancing funds in-between reimbursement cycles.

9. Does the City get the grant funds in advance?

No. The City does not get advance funding. Under the terms of the grant agreement, the City pays in advance for project expenses, and then periodically requests reimbursement after specific portions of the work (task orders) are completed and invoiced. The reimbursement cycle is approximately 60 days from the time the reimbursement is requested.

10. Are non-construction related costs reimbursable through the grant, such as engineering, surveying, and public outreach costs?

Yes. The terms of the grant agreement allow for reimbursement to the City for non-construction related costs of the project. Engineering, surveying, environmental assessments, geotechnical investigation, public outreach, and property acquisition were included in the estimate prepared during the grant application process.

11. What is the timing of the U.S. 98B becoming a City-owned road?

Based on our recent communication with FDOT, the formal transfer of U.S. Business 98, including portions of Beck Avenue, West 10th Street, Chestnut Avenue, West 9th Street, Frankford Avenue, and West Beach Drive in this area should be a quick process. City officials have been in regular communication with senior FDOT staff. These communications are current with the last one being conducted the last week of September 2023.

12. Is there any impact to endangered species such as the beach mice, Panama City crayfish, or others?

No. An environmental assessment has been completed for this project and the formal report is being finalized. Based on initial findings, no endangered species were found and there are no issues of environmental concern identified by the assessment. Once the report is finalized, it will be available to the public.

13. What if the project is terminated early? Does the City still get reimbursed for expenses incurred to date?

Yes. The details of the grant confirm if the project is terminated prior to completion of the project, the City will be paid for work satisfactorily performed for costs which can be substantiated.

14. How will the comments received during the open house and through the City website be used? Will there be additional opportunities to provide input in the process if the project moves forward?

All comments will be considered as the City moves through the project's design phase process. An additional public meeting is planned in December to present the final concept(s). Commissioners may approve moving forward with Phase 2 of the project, specifically the engineering design, during a City Commission meeting in January. If Phase 2 is approved, there will be multiple opportunities for citizens to review project plans and comment during the engineering design process. If the Commission then approves moving forward to construction of the project, an additional public meeting will be scheduled in late 2024 to provide an opportunity for citizen input prior to the start of construction.

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Project Length:

1.6 miles

Estimated Completion:

December 2025