



MICHAEL J. ELLIS SEAWALL

FAQ

PROPOSED MICHAEL J. ELLIS NORTH PADRE ISLAND SEAWALL PROJECT



Why is the City undertaking this project now?

There is an FY24 CIP Project to repair and upgrade the seawall. Before incurring significant cost on the project, City leadership wants to secure all necessary property rights for construction and maintenance of the seawall and to be administratively positioned to make a claim for FEMA Public Assistance should the seawall receive damage in a presidentially declared disaster.

What will the project change?

The changes are not going to be dramatic. The main purpose is to improve the condition of the seawall. Additionally, the City would like to include some amenities that will enhance the public's experience when visiting the Michael J. Ellis Seawall and Beach. Those amenities will likely include lighting, seating and some shade covers.

Why should I agree to provide the City an easement?

The seawall is currently a private asset for which the owners cannot restrict public access. That means that the adjoining property owners have responsibility for maintenance and repair. It also means that the owners could be potentially liable for claims from seawall patrons. Some owners have reported that the seawall is very difficult to insure.

Can I rebuild after a natural disaster?

This question is not significantly impacted whether the City assumes responsibility for the seawall or not. The 1995 revisions to Section 61.017c of the Texas Natural Resources Code helped clarify title issues relative to the landward boundary of the public beach. Any prohibition on rebuilding would likely originate with the State of Texas rather than the City of Corpus Christi. If the City has responsibility for the seawall, they would likely support rebuilding the seawall and/or any improvements landward of the seawall.

Will the project impact my use and enjoyment of the seawall?

Access to the seawall and use thereof by adjoining property owners will not be impacted. Amenities that are included in the upgrade project will also be fully available to the adjoining property owners.

Will property owners be compensated for granting easements?

In much the same way that public improvements are dedicated with easements as part of the platting process, the City is not proposing to purchase easements. The maintenance responsibility and relieving owners of liability is a significant benefit to the adjoining property owners. The general public already has full access to the seawall in perpetuity so that aspect is unchanged by granting maintenance easements to the City. **The City was originally seeking an easement extending 20' behind the seawall. That request has been reduced to 10'.**



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Why can't we give a 99-year lease on the seawall?

In theory, the City could probably accept a 99 year lease instead of a perpetual easement, however, the City's maintenance responsibility would have to be limited to the same term. Similar to other infrastructure projects where the City invests millions in taxpayer funds, the City prefers a perpetual easement. The benefit of a perpetual maintenance obligation would probably greatly offset the benefit to owners of granting a 99-year lease as opposed to a perpetual easement.

Will property owners have input into the design of the seawall improvements?

Yes, the City contemplates conducting public workshops to inform and solicit input on the proposed improvements.

What guarantees that if the seawall is damaged in a storm that the City will make repairs?

The seawall would be no different than any other physical infrastructure that the City maintains such as roads, bridges, water, wastewater, etc.

Why does the City want to do this project?

Many citizens and tourists will assume that the seawall is a public asset due to the public accessibility. The City has an interest in maintaining the asset in a good state of repair and having it be an attraction.