

Kendal's Korner – April 2024

A lot of people have asked about the status of the beach nourishment project. So, I thought I would take this opportunity to talk about the entire history of the project as I understand it.

First, for those of you who like me are new to the term, Beach Nourishment is “the adding of sediment onto or directly adjacent to an eroding beach.” Why is that beneficial? A wide, “nourished” beach system absorbs wave energy, protects upland areas from flooding, and helps mitigate erosion. The beach provides a buffer between storm waves and landward areas, and it can prevent destructive waves from reaching the dunes and upland developments.

Officially our project is CEPR 1482 (Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act). According to the General Land Office (GLO) website, the project “will restore the beach site to pre-disaster condition by placing beach quality sand on Jamaica Beach.” Dune restoration is commonly carried out during a beach nourishment project as well. Our project originally included restoring the dunes. However, it was removed from the project scope sometime in the early 2000's.

I was very surprised to learn that this project began on December 3, 1993. The original project budget was \$2,181,120. Funding was slated to come from three sources; Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) \$1,963,008; State Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act (CEPR) \$73,354; Local City of Jamaica Beach \$142,758.

As you would expect, costs have increased over the project's 30-year time span. The engineer's current Opinion of Probable Construction Cost (OPCC) is \$3,710,080. Because this is a FEMA repair project, the GLO is working with the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) and FEMA to cover the increased project cost and are not currently seeking to increase the City's match.

Last week, the GLO provided us with their most comprehensive update. They explained that they were in the final stages of reviewing the 100% Plans and Specifications. The city has never been privy to those plans. However, I was told they call for adding 61,000 yd³ of sand to the beach. It was recommended that we move forward with the process of obtaining the GLO Beach and Dune Construction Permit. We were also told to expect that project bidding would begin in the August/September time frame, with a construction window of Fall/Winter of this year. We will not know more until contractors give their estimated construction time frames during the bidding process.

I hope this helps everyone to better understand the project. It has been a long time coming, but fortunately there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank you.

Kendal Francis City Administrator