

VILLAGE OF OCEAN BEACH
LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM
POLICY STATEMENT

Project: Fire Island Inlet to Moriches Inlet (FIMI) Stabilization Project

Applicant: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

Project Overview: The project will provide stabilization along the Fire Island Inlet to Moriches Inlet reach of the Fire Island barrier island. Although the project will not afford new public access to the waterfront, existing public access will be maintained and enhanced.

A more detailed description of the project is provided in the Environmental Assessment, which also includes a comprehensive assessment of potential environmental impacts from the project.

Applicable Policies: In accordance with the coastal management policies that apply to the Village of Ocean Beach Local Waterfront Revitalization Area (LWRA) that follow the 13 amended policies issued by the New York Department of State in June 1996, which have been refined from the original 44 State Coastal Policies. Upon completion of the Waterfront Assessment Form (WAF) 4 policies were identified as potentially applicable to the proposed project. These policies are presented below, followed by an explanation of project consistency.

POLICY 5 Protect and restore ecological resources, including significant fish and wildlife habitats, wetlands, and rare ecological communities.

All of Great South Bay and many adjoining marshes and natural areas are designated as Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat (SCFWH). All or portions of additional SCFWHs are within the project area; however, they are not within the Village of Ocean Beach.

Filling of shallows, grading, shoreline alteration and dredging are among generic activities most likely to affect protected habitats. These activities are integral to the proposed project which consists of dredging sand from offshore borrow areas for placement on the Atlantic shoreline of Fire Island from Fire Island Inlet to Moriches Inlet to create enhanced beach area and dunes for coastal storm risk management. No filling or grading will occur within marshes or wetlands; fill placement is limited to the Atlantic shoreline only. Fill placement along the Atlantic shoreline of Fire Island in the project area will create wider beaches and dunes to minimize breaching and overwashing and consequent damage to habitats and communities on the barrier island and along the south shore of Long Island. There will be no change in existing tidal exchange patterns, only a continuation of the non-storm induced conditions.

A comprehensive assessment of potential project impacts to threatened and endangered species and habitats was conducted and is presented in the Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the project. Refer to section Attachment D.

The proposed activities would be undertaken in a manner consistent with this policy.

POLICY 7 Minimize loss of life and damage to structures and natural resources from flooding and erosion. Protect the integrity of Fire Island, so as to ensure its continued function as an effective barrier against flooding and erosion for the Long Island mainland.

The Long Island south shore barriers and their associated beaches, dunes, and nearshore areas are natural “defenses” that help preserve coastal lands and property from damage and reduce the danger to resources and property resulting from flooding and erosion.

The proposed activities would be conducted in the nearshore littoral zone and on the south shore barrier island beaches. These properties and their associated coastal processes ordinarily provide varying levels of protection to the barrier island upland areas, the south shore bays, and Long Island south shore mainland. The natural physical functioning and integrity of the beaches, nearshore areas, and dunes immediately down drift are affected, resulting in increased vulnerability to storm damage to natural resources and property from coastal flooding and erosion. The purpose of the project is to implement temporary measures that will augment and restore the natural protective capabilities of the natural protective characteristics down drift of the inlet.

Sand obtained from the offshore borrow area would be pumped to the beach areas to restore the natural protective features of the barrier island. The nourishment of beaches and dunes with appropriate material is an allowable activity pursuant to the coastal erosion hazard area regulations contained in 6 NYCRR Part 505 and is a non-structural erosion control measure preferred over structural measures by the State in its tidal wetlands, erosion hazards, and coastal management program statutes and regulations. Restoring the natural protective characteristics of the barrier island (resulting in the protection of the barrier island itself, the bay-system and the mainland of Long Island) would be consistent with and further promote Policy 7, which is to minimize damage to natural resources and property by protecting the naturally occurring protective characteristics and the associated physical processes.

POLICY 11 Improve public access to and use of public lands and waters.

The beach areas in the proposed project area support a variety of public recreational activities. A temporary reduction in off-season, public access to the work site during the construction season would occur. However, this would be off-set over the longer term by the increased width of the nourished public beach and the continued protection and maintenance of the beach as a public resource that supports a high level of public access and use. Buffer areas approximately 1,000 feet in length will be closed during construction activities for safety reasons. As beach placement activities are completed within each 1,000-foot compartment, the buffer is shifted accordingly. Public use of the beach area would be restored at that time. Over the project life the proposed

activities would advance the policy to protect, maintain, and increase public access to and use of public water-related recreation resources and facilities. The project will be consistent with this policy by maintaining and enhancing the beaches within the Village

POLICY 12 Enhance visual quality and protect outstanding scenic resources.

The visual quality of the coastal zone is a major component of the overall character in the Village. The Village contains a variety of natural visual attributes, including the estuarine waters of Great South Bay, a complex land and water interface on the bay side, and a dynamic beach and dune system on the ocean side. The public recognizes that these features make an important contribution to the desirability of the community to live and recreate. The project will be consistent with this policy by maintaining and enhancing the beach and dune areas of the Village.