

SPP Meeting 5.14.25 - Q&A Portion Transcript

Q: What happens if my neighbor doesn't want to sign the perpetual easement? Does this "kill" the project?

A: Yes, 100% perpetual easements are required for the project to continue. The project will not continue even if 1 property holds out.

Q: Why wouldn't someone want to sign a perpetual easement?

A: We have heard multiple reasons for not wanting to sign, but for every reason they give, there is perhaps a stronger counter-argument that can be given in support of signing. If you run into a neighbor who doesn't want to sign, and you don't know the answers, please send them to us with their questions so that we may provide answers for them. Signing an easement doesn't take anything away from you, but it will always give you sand and protection from potential future storms.

Q: Request for clarification because the map area shown is different from the layout of the dune in front of this person's property.

A: The nature of the dune can vary from property to property. We are happy to work with property owners on an individual basis to show where exactly the ECL and LLOF lines are to show the area of easement.

Q: When we bought our property, we were told the property line was the high-water line, but that changes as the beach is renourished.

A: The set line (ECL) is the established property line since this project started. The County has a .kmz file to show the ECL and LLOF on Google Earth for the project.

Q: Our beach access has stairs that are under the sand and buried for as long as I can remember.

A: Fortunate to be in that location, other locations have lost a lot of sand; erosion isn't always consistent across the coast.

Q: So the property line goes out to the dunes, but there will be a new line, and the difference between is the area of easement?

A: There is not any "new line". The project isn't changing drastically; the big change here is the duration of the easements. For the project template, except for adding the existing dune for an "insurance policy", nothing has changed. What you saw, with the last renourishment, is the same thing- it won't be a big change.

Q: So if I go on SJC online and look at the map, that is the property line?

A: That is not always 100% accurate, especially along the beach; the true property line is the ECL line. Sometimes the County shapefiles aren't consistent with that. From the overall perspective of the project, that isn't going to change. It's the duration of the easements. And we have to have 100% of the perpetual easements. Just to be clear, for Debbie, Helene, and Milton, there was a point that we looked at the beach because we thought there would be considered significant erosion for them to renourish again. But, there wasn't enough erosion for them to come back, but if there was, they told us they were not going to come back because we did not have the easements in place. It is a political battle we are fighting, but if we could just get the 100% perpetual easements now, there will be no question that they have to come back to renourish in the future.

Q: What is our homeowner responsibility? Out to the property line even though it's dunes? What if somebody falls on that land?

A: That would be like any normal property boundary, the easement only allows the placement of sand on the property. The normal property rights and all that goes along with property ownership remain the same.

Q: How long have they been seeking the 100% perpetual easements for?

A: The official letter was received less than a year ago, the Mayor has already gone to DC to fight this. Mayor Dylan Rumrell states- The USACE arbitrarily changed the law, the Supreme court said that's not right and it should be taken back, congressmen are fighting back on it. The problems is the USACE doesn't have a director- very fluid, ongoing political battle in DC. If we get 100% perpetual easements, there will be no question of them coming back to give us renourishment, instead of sitting back and seeing what is decided in Congress.

This is not just a SJC problem, it is a state- and country-wide problem. All future projects are required to have perpetual easements.

Q: For this project how many easements do we need?

A: Approximately 57 private property easements.

Q: How many have we gotten so far?

A: We have gotten 0 perpetual easements so far.

Q: Will this easement affect building a new walkover that doesn't exist right now?

A: It will not impact the ability to obtain a DEP permit for work in that area.

Q: It's not land we can do anything with as a body anyways, the easement just needs to be in place so that the USACE has permission to do this when they need to do this and doesn't need to seek any additional permissions to do so, causing delays. Correct?

A: That is 100% correct.

Q: One of the big concerns is we have a lot of older folks, and when we get down towards the beachline, is it going to end up looking like it does right now in front of Embassy Suites with a large drop-off we have to deal with scaling up and down?

A: We're working on addressing that right now in front of Embassy. As the placed sand equilibrates, the waves and storm action can cause escarpments. They are monitored and measured on a weekly basis. Prior to turtle nesting season we knock them down. During turtle season we are not permitted to go and knock them down without permission from other regulatory agencies.

Q: Is there a time limit to tell us we got the easements or not?

A: We will be in constant communication with the City of St. Aug Beach, we have a website. We can come speak at meetings and condo HOAs if needed. There is no time limit, it's more if we don't have it next month, we won't have a project. The biggest problem is getting a hold of people, it is difficult to find contact information for people who this is not their primary residence.

Q: How do people sign their easement?

A: Please contact the County- we will walk through the process, send individualized easements, coordinate in-person individual meetings to get it notarized, etc... we will work with anyone to get it done.