



HANCOCK COUNTY PEDESTRIAN ACCESS STUDY ALONG BEACH BLVD FROM HWY 90 TO THE SILVER SLIPPER

**PREPARED FOR
THE HANCOCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**PREPARED BY
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**FINAL REPORT
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STUDY BACKGROUND

On June 19, 2017, the Hancock County Board President, Blaine Lafontaine, executed a contract with James J. Chiniche, PA Inc. Engineering & Surveying (CES) to prepare a Pedestrian Access Study along Beach Blvd from HWY 90 to the Silver Slipper Casino. The study was funded through a grant from the Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) with a federal MPO Surface Transportation Program allocation to cover 80% of the study costs.

STUDY SCOPE OF WORK

The main emphasis of the study was to develop a need-based pedestrian improvement plan for the Beach Blvd area. Over the past several decades, great strides have been taken by the County to develop one of the premier bicycling and pedestrian areas along the Gulf Coast. However, there are currently some gaps in connectivity and ADA improvements that need to be addressed. Existing obstructions along the current route which impede the continuous flow of pedestrian traffic also require corrective measures.

We were tasked with providing a review and analysis of existing pedestrian access areas. The goal of the study is to determine what improvements could be made in order to provide a safer and more efficient pedestrian route and to close any existing gaps in the current pedestrian access route for pedestrian and bicyclists alike.

Deliverables include: opinions of probable costs, renderings, and study/report.

Specific details required for submittal shall include the following elements as part of the study:

- Recommendations on possible utility improvements;
- Recommended enhancements for lighting, landscaping, etc.
- Recommended conceptual layout to develop a plan to complete pedestrian access along Beach Blvd;
- Recommended corrections for damaged sections of existing walkways;
- Recommended locations for ADA access to the shoreline;
- Recommended possible pedestrian access improvements;
- Review of existing “gaps” along the proposed study area which currently prohibit continuous pedestrian access along the water front;
- Identify damaged areas along existing pathways and develop conceptual repair recommendations which will allow for continuous and safe pedestrian access;
- Develop conceptual plans and/or permitting for proposed pathways in coordination with State and Federal Agencies;
- Identify convenient points of access for disabled individuals to allow for ADA access and enjoyment of the water front amenities;



- Review existing pedestrian access conditions along Beach Blvd. including existing utilities and collect all data;
- Identify and develop conceptual recommendations for any necessary utility improvements needed to allow for pedestrian access pathways;
- Develop recommendations for pedestrian access improvements for areas with utility conflicts, damaged sections of existing walkways, and ADA routes (in conformance with PROWAG);
- Provide topographic survey of existing conditions (all surveying will be in accordance with the MDOT Survey Manual);
- Prepare budget worksheets;
- Coordinate with local municipalities, public input sessions, and state agencies for proposed pedestrian access improvements. Anticipate approximately 5 – 7 meetings.
- Prepare final report detailing recommendations, exhibits, funding sources, etc.

SHAREHOLDER INPUT SESSIONS

As part of the data gathering portion of the study, meetings were scheduled with City and County Personnel, Regulatory Agency Personnel, Park Directors, MDOT Personnel, etc. to discuss specific needs within the study area and to review potential obstructions that may prohibit achieving the ultimate goal of continuous pedestrian access from HWY 90 to the Silver Slipper Casino. The following information is a summary of those sessions.

CITY OF BAY ST. LOUIS

- Additional ADA accessible parking along Beach Blvd near Demontluzin Ave.
- Additional ADA accessible walkway at Demontluzin Ave to provide access from Beach Blvd sidewalk to the Rutherford Fishing Pier and Harbor
- Enhance Pedestrian Crossings and Lighting to provide safe crossing points across Beach Blvd near Main St.
- Connection at the south end of the COE Seawall Scour Pad walkway near Washington St. to existing concrete walk and bike path which terminates at the Comfort Station.
- Additional parking along the water side of Beach Blvd.

CITY OF WAVELAND

- Cross walks near Coleman Ave. and Terrance Ave. to provide safe pedestrian crossing to beach side amenities such as Garfield Pier and Memorial Park.
- Additional parking near popular beach visiting areas such as Nicholson Ave, St. Clare Catholic Church, etc.



HANCOCK COUNTY

- Improved ADA access from existing walking path to shore line
- ADA parking and accessibility to American Legion Pier
- Pavilion near American Legion Pier
- Low level walkway along the existing seawall at locations which historically have not been permittable for sand beach construction.
- Implementation of sand beach construction near the Gulf Side Assembly Center
- Implementation of sand beach construction near Forrest Ave
- Development of procedures for Sand Beach stabilization methods to reduce migration of sand from beach area to walking path
- Continuation of existing concrete walkway/bike path to City of Waveland.

BUCCANEER STATE PARK

- Coordinate with park personnel on proposed pedestrian access improvements to insure any potential conflicts with park expansion plans are taken into consideration and avoided if possible.

PATHWAY OBSTRUCTIONS

During the topographic survey phase of the project, we were able to identify several obstructions along the existing walking and bike path which obstruct or hinder pedestrian access. This section of the report will address these issues and offer repair recommendations for the obstacles.

BAY OAKS Dr. – The existing concrete walking/bike path in the vicinity of Bay Oaks Dr. and the drainage canal has experienced severe damage and cracking due to settlement. This damaged area should be repaired to avoid impacts to pedestrians and ensure appropriate ADA routing.

BIENVILLE Dr. - Poor drainage is present for long periods of time after significant rain fall events near Bienville Dr. This is primarily attributed to the higher elevation of sand near the dunes preventing surface water run off from sheet flowing across the sand to the shoreline. Relief could be achieved for these areas which hold water by installing small perforated piping systems which would allow the surface water to drain into a near by catch basin or culver.

There was also significant evidence of sand accumulation and build up inside drain inlets which prevents storm water from traveling through the proper systems for discharge to the Mississippi Sound.



BALLENTINE St. – Sand accumulation was very prevalent near Ballentine St. primarily due to higher sand beach elevations compared to other areas along Beach Blvd.

LAKESHORE Rd. – The existing concrete walk/bike path currently terminates near Lakeshore Road and Dane St. preventing continuous access for walking pedestrians and bicyclists.

PATHWAY/ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

The following improvement recommendations will provide concepts and general descriptions for potential pedestrian pathway enhancements toward continued access along Beach Blvd.

Improvement projects will be identified beginning from HWY 90 and Beach Blvd and proceeding south towards Silver Slipper Casino.

1. Increase cross walk striping for intersection near Service Road, Beach Blvd and HWY 90 to allow for safer crossing zones for pedestrians utilizing the existing HWY 90 Bridge walking path and existing sidewalks adjacent to Beach Blvd.
2. ADA accessible parking areas in Down Town Bay St. Louis near Demontluzin St. Currently, the only areas which include ADA accessible parking spaces are near Main St. and at the City owned parking lot near Court St. ADA accessible parallel parking spaces should be added to the existing parallel spaces near Demontluzin St. This would require removal of existing sidewalk to allow for loading aisles at grade.
3. Crosswalk striping and signage at the end of the Bay St. Louis Harbor Pedestrian Access Ramp.
4. Continuation of concrete walkway to connect the end of the concrete Seawall to the Washington St. to allow continuous access across Washington St. to the Comfort Station.
5. Placement of an ADA ramp from Washington St. cross walk routing pedestrians on the west side of the Comfort Station and connecting to the existing concrete walk/bike path.
6. Low Level Concrete Knee-wall – This structure could be utilized in areas which experience severe sand migration and accumulation. Other coastal cities have installed these types of structures to assist with keeping sand off of pedestrian walk ways. They can also serve as benches or rest stops for pedestrians.
7. ADA access points in various locations along Beach Blvd to provide safe access from the existing walk/bike path to the waters edge. These structures could be designed in a manner that would minimize impacts to sand beach maintenance requirements. The amenities would also be long lasting and weather storm surge and impacts from



tropical events. The proposed decking should be a fiberglass or aluminum grating which is ADA compliant and allows the free passage of water during a heavy storm or tropical system. The following link provides video of a similar system on a pier in Louisiana: https://www.dropbox.com/s/rh195f65a2a30g9/IMG_6959.mov?dl=0.

8. Additional parking should be provided in areas of high beach use such as near Whispering Pines Dr, Nicholson Ave, Mollere Dr, St. Claire Catholic Church, Gulfside Assembly Center, Forrest Ave, Pointset Ave, and Lakeshore Dr. These parking areas should be placed on the water side of the county right of way and can be constructed to eliminate impacts to existing walk/bike path, traffic curbing, sand beach areas and dunes. The south bound travel lane could be rerouted to the west, inside existing county right of way which would allow the newly designated parking areas to be placed in the existing north bound lanes. This "lane shift" would be a cost effective method to add safe parking in areas of high use for beach goers and the fishing community. A couple of potential obstructions that should be considered are the placement of existing utilities and adequate county right of way that would allow for the "lane shift".
9. Low level walkway could be considered and placed in the area adjacent to Beach Blvd which currently has no sand beach (approximately from Dane Road to Pointset Ave.). This would allow continuous access in line with the existing concrete walk/bike path and should be constructed in a similar manner to the proposed ADA accessible structures with grating to allow for the free passage of wave's during high tides or tropical systems. These walkways could be sized to allow for multiple use for pedestrians, bicyclists and fisherman.
10. Place sand beach in the vicinity of Ioor Ave. northwest approximately 2,000 LF. This would allow for additional sand beach and provide structural support to the existing seawall. Sand beach renourishment should also be considered for the area between Dane Rd. to the southwest approximately 2,000 LF. This would allow for the continuation of the concrete walk/bike path to serve the Gulfside Assembly area.
11. Raised crosswalks or cross walk striping and signage should be installed at all high traffic areas to allow for safe, designated crossing for pedestrians.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

See attached Public Comments submitted during review period.

