



STAFF REPORT

Town of Nags Head

Planning & Development Department

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Holly B. White, Principal Planner
Date: April 7, 2020
Subject: Discussion of FY 2020-2021 Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Grant Pre-Application

The Division of Coastal Management (“DCM”) has notified local governments in the 20-county coastal area that grant funding is available for Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access projects for the upcoming 2020-21 fiscal year. Local governments are invited to apply for funding for projects that are anticipated to begin after January 2021 and to be completed by July 2022. The application process has three (3) steps: the pre-application, invitation to submit a final application, and grant contract approval. DCM will review the pre-applications and select a number of proposals for further consideration based on available funding. DCM has extended the deadline for the 2020-21 Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant pre-applications to Friday, May 15, 2020.

The Town was awarded CAMA Public Access Grants in 2018 and 2019 to make improvements at the Jacobs Street and Islington Street accesses. Grant funding for the two projects totals approximately \$169,000, with local matching funds totaling \$96,103.

The Town has identified Huron Street Beach Access as the focus of a grant application for funding in this upcoming Fiscal Year. The pre-application grant package notes the following criteria used to prioritize and select projects to receive grant assistance:

- Lack of access opportunities in the area;
- Demonstrated need for the project due to high demand and limited opportunities;
- Project is identified in a local beach or waterfront access plan or certified CAMA Land Use Plan;
- Community has not received previous assistance from this grant program;
- The commitment of matching funds exceeds the minimum required local match;
- Project proposal includes multiple funding sources (in addition to DCM);
- Location includes donated land deemed “unbuildable” due to regulations or physical limitations and;
- The community has demonstrated its ability to complete previous projects and/or has demonstrated its ability to operate and maintain facilities previously funded.

Staff discussed the potential of a pre-application with DCM staff for the replacement of the beach access crossover at Huron Street. This access is currently not ADA accessible, but does have an improved parking area. DCM staff noted that in addition to the criteria listed above, applications for new beach accesses are given greater preference than those for replacement. It was also noted that there are situations where dunes are so high that ADA accessibility cannot be achieved, and this is understood. In these cases, replacement in kind would be acceptable. Staff has determined that replacement as an ADA access in this location would require the elimination of several existing parking spaces. Also, there are several ADA compliant access points in this vicinity. For these reasons, staff is recommending replacing the walkover as is. Staff is also recommending this project based on its small scope given that there may be limited funds available for a match.

While a local match was initially considered to be included as part of the Town's FY20-21 CIP (\$40,000), if available, a Tourism Impact Grant from the Dare County Tourism Board will be pursued to cover this amount. If no DCTB grant funds are available due to a reduction in revenue, the Board could decide later in the year if town funds are available to provide the match.

Staff would request the Board's feedback with respect to an application for improvement to the Huron Street access. Including the improvement of accesses, the following are examples of eligible projects provided by DCM:

- Land acquisition - purchase of land for future public access facilities.
- Land easement acquisition - purchase of easements for public access.
- Parking areas, restrooms and other facilities.
- Urban waterfront access sites - improved public access to deteriorating or under-utilized urban waterfronts through reconstruction or rehabilitation.
- Reconstruction or relocation of existing damaged public access facilities. Primarily for sites not originally funded by this program or for improvements to any sites at least fifteen (15) years old.
- Handicap facilities - Local governments are encouraged to submit proposals designed to enhance handicap accessibility at existing facilities.
- Boat Launch facilities- boat launch and ramp facilities, whether motorized or not, may be part of a project provided pedestrian access is still a major component of the project.