



# City of Sanibel

## Planning Commission

### Planning Department Staff Report

**Planning Commission Meeting:** July 22, 2025

**Application Number:** DP-2025-020806

**Applicant:** Dana Dettmar, Department of Natural Resources, on behalf of the City of Sanibel

**Address:** Sanibel River from Junonia Street/Main Street east to the Beach Road weir

#### **PUBLIC HEARING DESCRIPTION**

Consideration of an application for a Development Permit filed pursuant to Land Development Code Chapter 82, Article IV, Division 2, Subdivision III - Long Form, Section 82-421(1) and Section 82-422 - Scheduling and notice, to request a maintenance dredge of the Sanibel River from Junonia Street east to the Beach Road Weir. The application is submitted by Dana Dettmar, Natural Resources Department, on behalf of the City of Sanibel.

**Application No. DP-2025-020806.**

#### **PROJECT LOCATION**

The proposed dredge activities are located within the Sanibel River and adjacent lots between Beach Rd. and proceeding west to Main St., Tax Parcel ID (STRAP) number(s) 30-46-23-T2-U9622.2518, 19-46-23-T3-00013.0000, 30-46-23-T2-00016.0080, 30-46-23-T2-00016.0090, 30-46-23-T2-00500.0050, 30-46-23-T2-00018.0040, 30-46-23-T2-00018.0000, 30-46-23-T2-00018.0010, Sanibel, Florida 33957, in Section 30, Township 46 South, Range 23 East, in Lee County.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Hydraulically dredge approximately 77,666 square feet of Sanibel River to an average depth of -6.0 feet NAVD 88 (-5.11 feet MLW) by removing approximately 5,500 cubic yards of muck material. The dredged material will be dewatered/stored in adjacent uplands and then hauled off-island to a disposal location that will be approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection prior to commencement.

#### **ISSUES**

Pursuant to Sanibel Code Section 82-424. – Action on application, the subject application has been referred to the Planning Commission to make the following findings:

1. The application is complete.
2. The proposed development is consistent with the requirements of the following:
  - a. The Sanibel Plan
  - b. The Land Development Code
3. That concurrency requirements of general law are met; and
4. The proposed development can be implemented in accordance with the standards contained in this section.

A development order approving the application may be issued, which imposes reasonable restrictions or conditions or which modifies the relief requested in order to ensure consistency with the Sanibel Plan and Land Development Code.

## ATTACHMENTS

A	Maintenance dredge plans
B	Geotechnical evaluation
C	Protected species survey
D	FDEP permit
E	ACOE application authorization
F	Ownership map and temporary construction easements
G	Natural Resources Department memorandum

## BACKGROUND

The City of Sanibel is proposing a maintenance dredge along approximately 1,000-linear feet of the Sanibel River between Junonia Street/Main Street and the Beach Road weir (Figures 1 and 2; Attachment A). The purpose of the maintenance dredge is twofold: to remove organic muck to improve water quality and to increase stormwater capacity. Tierra, Inc. conducted a geotechnical evaluation of the Sanibel River within the proposed project boundary (Attachment B) as background for Johnson Engineering to design the maintenance dredge (Attachment A). A protected species survey was conducted within the project area (Attachment C).



Figure 1: Project Location

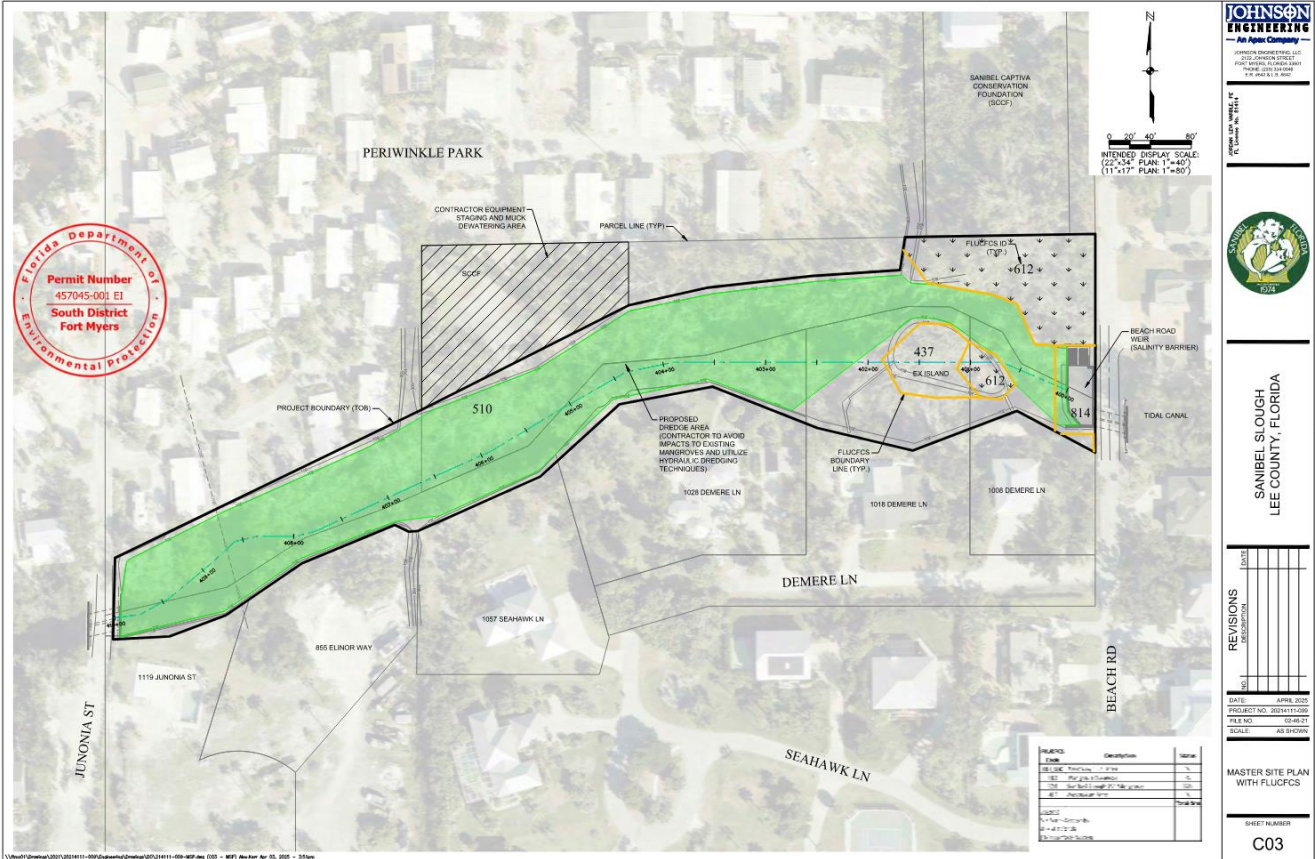


Figure 2: Project Location Detail of Dredge Area

## PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing a maintenance dredge of the Sanibel River between Junonia Street/Main Street and the Beach Road weir to remove the muck material that has accumulated within the riverbed. The dredge material will be hydraulically dredged and pumped into geotextile dewatering tubes located at the FDEP approved upland location within the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) Preserve (STRAP #30-46-23-T2-U9622.2518) labeled as "Contractor Equipment Staging and Muck Dewatering Area" in Figure 2 (above). The muck will be hauled off island to an appropriate recipient site or disposal facility after dewatering.

## ANALYSIS

The *Sanibel Plan* addresses dredge activities within the Coastal Protection Element (Section 3.2.1) through Policy 1.4 which states "Ensure that dredge and fill activities are undertaken in compliance with Land Development Code requirements, as well as the requirements enforced by the Department of Environmental Protection, the South Florida Water Management District and the Army Corps of Engineers." The *Sanibel Code* does not contain standards to evaluate proposed dredge projects. City staff relies on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) permit issuance for conditions of approval. The FDEP Environmental Resource Permit has been issued (Attachment D) with 20 conditions of approval. The ACOE permit application which includes the same plans as in the FDEP permit is currently under review. The ACOE application authorization is Attachment E.

Additionally, the Plan for Surface Water Management (*Sanibel Plan*, Section 3.2.2 Conservation Element) establishes a Goal to safeguard human health and welfare and to maintain and improve the wetland system of the Sanibel River and its tributaries, in order to enhance and promote water quality as well as vegetative and wildlife habitat diversity. Removing the accumulated muck from the riverbed is an important component of enhancing water quality within the Sanibel River basin.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment has been received.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS

Staff have made the following findings in support of its recommendation:

1. The proposed maintenance dredge of the Sanibel River is consistent with the *Sanibel Plan* Coastal Protection Element (Section 3.2.1) and Plan for Surface Water Management (Conservation Element Section 3.2.2).
2. The FDEP Environmental Resources Permit has been issued with conditions of approval to ensure compliance with State wetland and water quality standards.
3. The ACOE permit application has been submitted to ensure compliance with Federal regulations.
4. Temporary Construction Easements (Attachment F) have been secured for all privately owned properties within the project boundary.

Staff, therefore, recommend approval of application DP-2025-020806 subject to the following conditions:

1. A copy of the ACOE permit must be submitted to the city prior to commencement of the dredging project.
2. The project must be conducted in a manner that maintains compliance with all conditions of the FDEP Environmental Resources Permit and ACOE permit.
3. If any unanticipated impacts occur to the shoreline and/or vegetation, the impacts will be mitigated in accordance with FDEP grant agreement deliverable requirements: The Slough banks will be restored through contouring/grading and native vegetation installation as needed.
4. Dredge activities shall not cause disturbance to active waterbird nests.

Conditions contained herein are in addition to the requirements of the Sanibel Code. The applicant is required to comply with all regulations of the City of Sanibel. Some conditions stated herein reflect the current code requirements applicable at the time of approval of this permit. After the issuance of the completion certificate for this development or upon expiration of the development permit, any subsequent development must comply with the regulations in effect at that time.