



Seawalls on Sanibel Island

Overview Presented to
Land Development Committee

February 9, 2021



Brief history of seawalls on Sanibel

- Prior to the City incorporation, seawalls were constructed on both natural bodies of water and human-made bodies of water
- Human-made canals for residential development present by 1958 on east end
- The development regulations following incorporation did not include seawalls as an allowed use
- Seawalls became an allowed use in 1988 limited to man-made canals within Shell Harbor, Sanibel Harbors, Sanibel Isles, Water Shadows and Sanibel Estates Unit IV
 - Lawfully existing seawalls outside of these areas are nonconforming uses
 - Lawfully existing seawalls within these areas became nonconforming structures
 - **New seawalls** where seawalls are allowed use **require a Conditional Use Permit**
- ***Seawalls are not required anywhere within the City of Sanibel***
- Seawalls are not an allowed use on most human-made canals or human altered waterways on Sanibel

1-18-58



Figure 1: 1958 Aerial
Human-made canal creation and dredging
of the Sanibel River

Figure 2: Private Canal Locations where Seawalls are Permitted Use through Conditional Use Approval within the City of Sanibel




Land Development Code

Seawalls

- Chapter 78 Definitions
- **Section 126-101. Seawalls as accessory structures. Establishes Allowed Use. Conditional Use Permit. Construction Standards.**
- Section 126-152. Nonconforming uses exceptions and prohibitions.
- Section 126-172. Nonconforming structures improvement, reconstruction or relocation prohibited; exceptions.
- Section 126-211. Standards for Building Back (reconstruction) of Structures Substantially Damaged by a Natural Disaster. Nonconforming Uses.
- Section 126-212. Standards for Building Back (reconstruction) of Structures Substantially Damaged by a Natural Disaster. Nonconforming Structures.
- Section 126-885. Accessory Marine Structures. Materials.
- Section 126-890. Accessory Marine Structures. Turbidity screening.
- Section 126-891. Accessory Marine Structures. Compliance with state and federal requirements.

Alternatives to Seawalls

- Revetments. Sections 126-911 and 126-912
- Erosion Control Structures. Section 126-99

An aerial photograph of a coastal residential area. The image shows a network of greenish-brown canals winding through a neighborhood of houses with various roof colors (white, grey, orange, red). The houses are surrounded by lush green trees. On the left side, a road runs parallel to the canals. At the top of the image, the canals meet a larger body of water. Two white arrows point from a blue text box at the top right to specific areas in the water near the shore. A central blue text box is overlaid on the canals. The bottom right corner contains geographic coordinates.

Seawalls Prohibited along Bay Beach Zone
Non-conforming Seawalls Present

Seawalls Allowed Use in
Sanibel Isles and
Water Shadows
Human-made Canals

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26°27'47.04" N 82°03'16.6



Sanibel Isles
Seawalls an Allowed Use Variety of Shorelines Existing





Shell Harbor

Seawalls an Allowed Use Variety of Shorelines Existing



Sanibel Harbors



Shell Harbor



Shell Harbor
(Mariner Pointe)

Seawalls an Allowed Use vs. Seawalls Not Allowed / Existing Nonconforming Use



Nonconforming Use Seawall



Seawalls Not Allowed Use East End of Sanibel Island



Bay Beach Zone Seawalls Prohibited Existing Nonconforming Use Seawalls



Sanibel Estates



Sanibel Harbors



Sanibel Estates

Existing Erosion Control Structures and
Nonconforming Use Seawalls
West End of Sanibel Island



Nonconforming Use Seawalls West End of Sanibel Island



Seawalls Not Allowed Use West End of Sanibel Island



Blind Pass Area
Natural bay



Caloosa Shores
Canal



Del Segra Neighborhood Canal



Dinkins Bayou
Natural waterbody

Current issues

- What materials are acceptable for seawall construction and repair to meet the *Sanibel Plan* and LDC standards?
- Is placing a replacement seawall waterward of an existing seawall consistent with the *Sanibel Plan* and current LDC standards?
- Many existing seawalls (primarily concrete) are deteriorating, reaching a point for the need to repair or replace (with new seawall or alternative shoreline stabilization)
- LDC standards needs to be revised to clarify and update seawall construction standards
- LDC standards need to be revised to include repair and replacement standards



Examples of deteriorating seawalls



Stressed and Failing Seawalls



Seawall Repairs



Mariner Pointe Canal Entrance



Seawall Cap and Reinforcement Pilings Shell Harbor



Vinyl Seawall Shell Harbor

Timeline

- Mayoral inquiry on the permitting of vinyl seawalls within the City of Sanibel and other jurisdictions within southwest Florida. Department of Community Services memorandum provided to Mayor Ruane dated January 9, 2020.
- City Council initiates the consideration to add provisions to LDC to allow use of vinyl seawalls waterward of mean high water as an alternative means of repairing/replacing existing seawalls. (May 6, 2020)
- Planning Commission discusses potential LDC amendments to allow for the installation of vinyl seawalls waterward of the mean high water line as an alternative means of repairing/replacing existing seawalls. Planning staff presents report on LDC regulations for vinyl seawalls in southwest Florida, and potential benefits and detriments of allowing a new seawall waterward of existing seawall to Planning Commission. Planning Commission passes a request to City Council to authorize Planning Commission to review all the rules and regulations related to repair and replacement of seawalls, not just waterward extensions related to vinyl seawalls, and forward to City Council any recommendations for amendments to the Code. (June 9, 2020)
- City Council directs Planning Commission to have Planning staff review the current LDC regulations pertaining to seawalls and evaluate whether any revisions to the seawall regulations is warranted at this time to ensure the code is current with technologies and alternatives while maintaining consistency with the Sanibel Plan. Natural material alternatives are to be considered in lieu of "grey structures" with guidance from Natural Resources staff. (July 14, 2020)
- LDC Subcommittee. Planning staff presents report on the Evaluation of the LDC pertaining to seawalls. (22 September 2020)
- LDC Subcommittee continued discussion on the Evaluation of the LDC pertaining to seawalls. (13 October 2020)
- LDC Subcommittee. Planning staff memorandum "Comparison of Seawall Materials" presented. LDC Subcommittee recommends allowing use of PVC, composite material, concrete, and metal for seawalls based upon staff memorandum. (10 November 2020)
- **LDC Subcommittee. Planning staff presents overview of Seawalls on Sanibel and memorandum "Analysis of Placing Replacement Seawalls Waterward of Existing Concrete Seawalls." (February 9, 2020)**
- LDC Subcommittee. Planning staff to present draft amendments to LDC. (March tbd)
- Planning Commission. Planning staff to present draft amendments to LDC with any revisions recommended by LDC Subcommittee. (April tbd)
- City Council. Planning staff to present draft amendments to LDC with any revisions recommended by Planning Commission. (May tbd)