



Innovation Award Application 2014



Esther Street Beachfront Park

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Describe the Program/project/ product/ service innovation:

This beachfront park is the culmination of eight years worth of work – from acquisition to ribbon-cutting. Originally intended for condominium development, the City assembled the two parcels between 2005 and 2007. Nestled in a residential neighborhood, design of the park required several months of work with the residents of three surrounding condominium associations, in order to finalize park improvements. The City leveraged CRA, Stormwater Fund and General Fund monies, in addition to an FDEP 319h grant. The park improvements include an “off-the-grid” restroom facility, picnic pavilions, playground equipment, fitness trail, surfboard racks, showers and 45 off-beach parking spaces.

Short description of the importance, internal impact, and community benefits:

The Esther Street Beachfront Park project is indicative of the efforts the City of New Smyrna Beach makes to provide a sustainable environment for its residents and visitors and the steps taken to empower residents and invite them to take an active part in their community.

What makes this a quantum leap of creativity?

Because of the park’s location within a residential oceanfront neighborhood, on-going communication and negotiations with surrounding property owners was required. The park is surrounded on three sides by condominium and townhome units, which required staff to work with representatives from four different associations. Staff met with residents from each association to obtain input on desired park improvements and amenities. Park plans were then redesigned to accommodate residents’ input. Fiscal innovation was also a hallmark of this property. The City obtained Florida Communities Trust (FCT) grant funding of \$2.88 million to assist in the purchase of the parcels. Additional funds from the Community Redevelopment Agency, the City’s general fund and the City’s stormwater fund were also utilized. The City also obtained DEP 319h grant funding to design and construct stormwater improvements not only for the park but, also to address recurring flooding issues along all of North Atlantic Avenue, between Flagler Avenue and Crawford Road. A new pump system was installed as part of the park improvements, with the sand volleyball court acting as a large stormwater retention pond.

Who benefits?

Residents and area visitors not only benefit from the popular park amenities. They also no longer are inconvenienced by flooding. The stormwater improvements constructed as part of the project, have functioned as designed, alleviating significant flooding areas in front of the 7-11 store, and along the segment of North Atlantic Avenue, between Flagler Avenue and Crawford Road.

How was the program/project/product/service initiated and implemented?

The Esther Street Beachfront Park was officially opened in April 2013. Since that time, the park has accommodated residents and visitors throughout the summer beach season. No complaints or concerns have been raised by surrounding residents regarding negative activities or impacts associated with the park.

What risks were taken?

Due to right-of-way challenges that limited the park's proposed entryway, staff attempted to purchase a portion of land from a private condominium – which was denied initially. The City continued negotiations and needed to create density variances to meet the condominium's negotiation requirements. Without a successful outcome, the beachfront park would've had an 11-foot-wide entryway making ingress and egress difficult for two-way traffic.

What, if any were the costs and/or savings?

As previously mentioned, fiscal innovation was a hallmark of this project. A variety of funding sources were obtained. The City obtained Florida Communities Trust (FCT) grant funding of \$2.88 million to assist in the purchase of the parcels. Additional funds from the Community Redevelopment Agency, the City's general, the City's stormwater fund and a DEP 319h grant also were utilized.

What are the lessons learned that other local governments can learn from?

Based upon the groundwork done by staff to incorporate resident input, the park project moved forward with minimal opposition. Only one resident continued to express opposition to the park improvements.

What department and/or individual(s) championed the innovation? If a contractor was used, please list the name and their contact information.

City personnel involved in this project included the City Engineer, Parks and Recreation Director, Assistant City Manager, planning staff, and construction contractor. The City's staff contact for this project is Pam Brangaccio, city manager, (386) 424-2108.

Any additional information you would like to share?

Please see before/after below.



ESTHER STREET BEACHFRONT PARK BEFORE CONSTRUCTION

ESTHER STREET BEACHFRONT PARK AFTER CONSTRUCTION

