

WORKING WATERFRONT



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The Fairhope Municipal Pier and Park are getting an almost \$10 million upgrade thanks to funding by the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act) from the U.S. Department of Treasury.

The main purpose of the project is to make safe and user-friendly improvements to the 10-acre South Beach Park area (Municipal Pier) to enhance citizens' use of the waterfront park facilities while ensuring the park's long-term resiliency and sustainability. One of the major structural components is the repair of the 50 year old bulkhead/seawall. Years of storms, especially Hurricanes Sally and Zeta, have threatened the structural integrity of the anchoring hardware allowing portions of the wall to shift. In other spots, water intrusion behind the wall has eroded the soil supporting the walkway.

In 2020, City of Fairhope was awarded \$6.2 million RESTORE Act grant for the *Fairhope Working Waterfront and Greenspace Project*. The RESTORE Act was passed in 2012 as the U.S. government's response to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The act established the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to oversee the distribution of funds and grants that aim to restore the natural resources and ecosystems of the Gulf Coast. This specific grant is State of Alabama's RESTORE Act Direct Component funds that promote economic development and tourism.

Goodwyn, Mills, and Caywood, the contracted engineer, presented the initial design rendering in April 2020. Public comment was requested and after receiving suggestions the decision was made to go back to the drawing board. In 2021 the redesigned Plan was released (below). The new design addresses the structural bulkhead/seawall issues as well as the aesthetics of the Fairhope Pier area and includes major components such as:

- Bulkhead/seawall repair and improvements at South Beach Park and Pier Landing;
- Pedestrian safety, including improving and upgrading existing facilities and traffic flow to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Fountain repair and upgrades;
- Pier upgrades to include restrooms, handrails and decking; and
- New restroom facility at South Beach Park.

After several unsuccessful bid advertisements, one bidder submitted a bid with a cost estimate that was higher than the grant funded amount. The City requested and received an additional \$3.5 million from the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council (which administers the RESTORE Act money) to cover 75% of the overage.

On April 22, 2024 Rolin Construction Inc. (an Alabama-based construction company) was awarded the construction contract. A notice to proceed was issued on August 13, 2024 and work will begin within the next few weeks. While portions of the Park will be closed and parking will be limited, the plan is to maintain access to the pier during construction. Follow this site and the City's Facebook page for weekly updates on progress and potential closures. If you have any questions or concerns email workingwaterfront@fairhopeal.gov (<mailto:workingwaterfront@fairhopeal.gov>).