

REPORT OF THE BEACH DRIVING SUBCOMMITTEE

**Presented to the Round Table of Volusia County
Elected Officials
April 13, 2015**

Subcommittee Members;

Doug Daniels, Volusia County Council Member

Harry Jennings, Mayor, City of Daytona Beach Shores

Pam Woods, Commission Member, City of Daytona Beach

REPORT OF THE BEACH DRIVING SUBCOMMITTEE

At the December 1, 2014, meeting of the newly constituted Round Table of Volusia County Elected Officials, three individuals volunteered to serve on a Beach Driving Subcommittee: Doug Daniels, Harry Jennings and Pam Woods.

The subcommittee was given no charge. If anything, the subcommittee charged itself to gather information, make recommendations, pose questions and/or share information with the Round Table.

The beach is the most prized physical asset of Volusia County and it is constantly changing. Some residents remember being able to drive on the beach north of Granada Boulevard. This is no longer possible due to the migration of soft sand moving southward. In addition, the beach is much smaller than it used to be due to rising sea levels. According to Dr. Jason Evans of Stetson University, the ocean level has increased 7 inches from 1910 to 2000. The ocean rise is now 1.3 inches every ten years, or 13 inches by the year 2100 (See attached Anthony email and refer to the News Journal article of March 21, 2015 “Softer Red Sand Drifting South on Volusia Coast Could Impact Beach Driving” by Dinah V. Pulver).

BEACH MILEAGE

<u>City</u>	<u>Miles of Atlantic Shoreline</u>	<u>Miles of Beach Driving</u>	<u>Miles of Traffic Free Beach</u>
Ormond Beach	3.65	1.75	1.91
Daytona Beach	4.7	3.7	1.0
Daytona Beach Shores	5.25	4.9	.35
Ponce Inlet	3.6	.5	3.1
New Smyrna Beach	6.2	4.85	1.35

PROPERTY VALUES

One avenue which the subcommittee has pursued is to inquire about the relationship between beachfront property values and non-driving areas.

Comments from area real estate brokers and real estate appraisers:

1. 80% of our clients want a non-driving beach
2. Values for residential properties fronting on a traffic free beach are more desirable and more valuable than residential properties fronting a beach where driving is permitted
3. Ponce Inlet has higher real estate values because of the non-driving beach
4. Clients have expressly requested drive free beach areas and are willing to pay more for these locations. An indicated minimum amount was \$50,000 or more and as much as a 25% increase in Ormond Beach depending upon other location factors

To illustrate the points made by realtors and appraisers, the subcommittee compared vacant beachfront, single family zoned lots in Ormond Beach, Daytona Beach Shores and Ponce Inlet. Vacant, single family lots on the beachfront could not be identified in either Daytona Beach or New Smyrna Beach.

City	Beach Driving Yes/No	Property Size	Just Value \$	Price Per Sq. Ft.
Ormond Beach	N	100x267	\$800,400	\$30.00
Ormond Beach	N	100x240	\$768,000	\$32.00
Ormond Beach	N	100x250	\$858,000	\$34.00
Daytona Beach Shores	Y	100x385	\$645,750	\$16.77
Daytona Beach Shores	Y	100x342	\$617,400	\$18.00
Ponce Inlet	N	75x200	\$825,000 (sale price)	\$55.00

Since there is a correlation between higher property values fronting traffic free beaches, the obvious question must be asked:

- What would be the increase in tax dollars to both the county and cities if cars were eliminated from the beach?

This increase in ad valorem revenue could be used to accomplish the following:

- Purchase property on the west side of A1A, which is less expensive than oceanfront. There may be certain circumstances, however, where acquiring property on the east side is more prudent.
- Build parking lots for off-beach parking
- Install crosswalks so that beach goers can safely cross A1A
- Install drop off points on the east side for those who have physical challenges

SUGGESTED PLAN OF ACTION

Recently, the Coastal Communities Beach Access Round Table Committee (not to be confused with the Beach Driving Subcommittee) published a report requesting that beach driving be eliminated in the core area of Daytona Beach from Silver Beach to University. County Council Member Josh Wagner endorsed that report with added caveats. If cars are eliminated from the Daytona Beach core area where will they go? Referencing the mileage exhibit, the cars will go to Ormond Beach, Daytona Beach Shores and New Smyrna Beach. The question then becomes why solve one problem by creating three others?

Before the Coastal Communities Beach Access Round Table Committee report is endorsed, the following actions need to be undertaken by the County working in concert with each coastal city:

1. Determine the number of off-beach parking spaces that currently exist in each city.
2. Determine the number of off-beach parking spaces that are required in each city.
3. Identify properties on the west side of A1A that can be leased or purchased for off-beach parking. The suggestion is made to lease property until such time as the increase in ad valorem tax revenues generate sufficient funds in order to purchase. (Note: In certain circumstances there may be particular lots located on the east side of A1A that are suitable for off-beach parking.)
4. Determine the number of crosswalks that will be needed.
5. Identify the beach ramps that are conducive to unloading beach gear and that are suitable for those with physical challenges.
6. Identify beach ramps that need to be improved to handle #5 and estimate the cost.
7. Prioritize the information and move forward.

CONCLUSION

The question is not “if” cars are removed from the beach, the question is “when.” If it is decided to begin the process in Daytona Beach, or attack the problem simultaneously in all coastal cities, let us do so “now” before circumstances, i.e., the environment, state and/or federal governments, decide for us. No matter what course is selected, we must first address parking.

Documents Reviewed by the Committee

- Executive Summary of Volusia County Beach Conservation Plan
- Executive Summary of Volusia County Habitat Conservation Plan
- County of Volusia Incidental Take Permit
- Beach Vehicle Counts 2010 – 2014
- The Impact of Day Trips to Daytona Beach. Bradley M. Brown and Mark D. Soskin.
- Sea Level Changes in Southeastern United States, Past, Present and Future. Dr. Gary T. Mitchum, Professor and Associate Dean, College of Marine Science, University of South Florida.
- The Coming Reality of Sea Level Rise: Too Fast, Too Soon. Harold R. Wanless, Professor and Chair, Department of Geological Sciences, College of Arts and Science, University of Miami.

Persons Interviewed

- ReRe K. Anderson, Broker Associate, Adams Cameron & Co.
- Bob Davis, President/CEO, Hotel & Lodging Association of Volusia County
- Chris Dembinsky, Volusia County Beach Safety
- Dr. Jason Evans, Associate Professor, Stetson University
- Dr. Stephen Leatherman, Professor, Department of Earth & Environment, Florida International University
- Edwin Peck, Jr., Peck & Associates
- Dick Preston, Preston & Associates, Real Estate Appraisers
- Enis Qosja, Broker/Owner, Oceans Luxury Realty
- Jamie E. Seaman, Deputy County Attorney, Volusia County
- Carle Velie, Velie Appraisal

Daytona Beach driving

Monday, March 16, 2015 8:10 PM

From: "John T Anthony" <johntanthony@hotmail.com>

To: "Adam Barringer" <abarringer@cityofnsb.com> "Dave LaMont" <saltydogsurfshop@bellsouth.net>

"Evelyn Fine" <rsrchpro@me.com> "Evelyn Fine 2" <evelyn@fineresearchandmarketing.com>

"G. G Galloway" <ggalloway@cbcbenchmark.com> more ..

Cc: "Jim Cameron" <jim@daytonachamber.com>

Good Evening,

Here is another reason to look at driving on the beach. Please see the picture below. Visual examples such as this one are very helpful in explaining the extent of the problem. Look at the large expanse of sand and you can see the high tide line. Looking at the pic below just after high tide you see the width of the Beach. Today all those cars would be under water, the Beach is much smaller, and so there is a greater opportunity of problems between cars and pedestrians. Cars and kids do not go together so that is why Andy Romano Park up in Ormond is so popular. The idea here is safety, taking cars off the beach is beneficial to residents as well as tourists. Your recommendation of initially removing cars from the Daytona core area of University to Silver Beach is a good start.

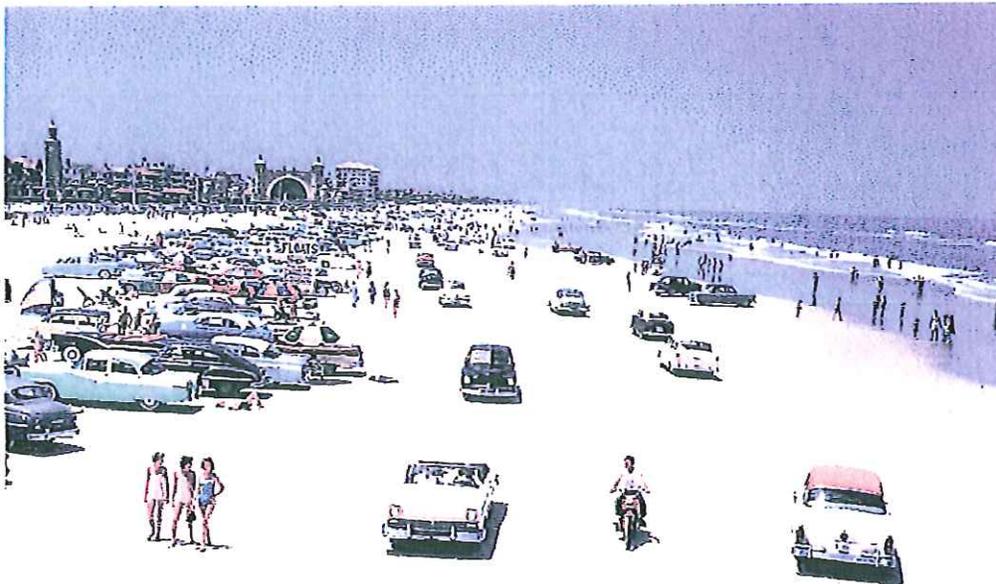
According to scientist Dr Jason Evans of Stetson the ocean level increased 7 inches from 1900 to 2000. The ocean rise is now at 1.3 inches every ten years or 13 inches by year 2100. Removal of the sand dunes and erection of sea walls have added to the erosion problem.

Something for you to consider. Just my opinion.

Best Regards,
John

John T Anthony
Govt Relations Vice Chair

Subject: Daytona Beach 1957



CARS ON THE BEACH
Presented by
Fine Research & Marketing, Inc.
And
Mid-Florida Marketing & Research, Inc.

We have lived in Daytona Beach for 40+ years...my family even longer...

Our children have grown up in Daytona Beach a block from the beach...

My husband and I had our very own magic moments on the beach in the moonlight!

But that was a long time ago

Now we have 8,300,000 visitors staying overnight in our hotels and with friends and relatives and in homes and condos they own...

And many thousands of day trippers from Central Florida and Ocala who come over to drive and park on the beach, bringing with them their food and beverages and their full tanks of gas...

We have been studying Daytona Beach and Volusia County for 34 years

Here's what we do to understand the visitors...

Visitor Profiles with existing visitors...that is people who spend money to stay in our hotels...

8-12 minute telephone interviews...

Why they come

What they do while here

Who they are...how old they are...do they travel with children or teenagers...

Do they travel with or meet friends and relatives

Levels of satisfaction with the destination and their accommodation

We ask several specific questions:

1. Do you drive on the beach?
2. Do you pay to drive or park on the beach
3. Have you paid to drive on other beaches
4. Have you paid to park at other beaches
5. Would the beach be improved without cars on it

First of all it's important to know walking on the beach is consistently the most popular activity of our overnight visitors...it is vastly more important than anything else they do while here...

Do they drive on the beach...

NO...the vast majority do not drive on the beach...

Do they pay to park or drive on the beach...

Again...NO...

Have you paid to drive on other beaches...

Again...NO

Have you paid to park at other beaches...

About a third say they have paid to park at other beaches

And...would the beach be improved without cars on it...

Interestingly, over the years they have been consistently split on this...

HALF SAY THE BEACH WOULD BE IMPROVED...

HALF SAY IT WOULD NOT BE IMPROVED...

We have NEVER had anyone tell us they came to Daytona Beach and stayed in a hotel so they could drive on the beach!

And...by the way...we have a pretty satisfied group of visitors...they come back over and over...

So...they have come to terms with the cars on the beach...or they stay in hotels on the car free beach...

But here's the problem...even the most loyal of guests...have good reasons why they don't come back every year...

Their families might pick another destination

They age and don't travel...

They are enticed by a good deal on a cruise or another destination package...

So...it's essential we get new visitors...

Over the years we have spoken to thousands of people who take beach vacations in Florida...to destinations from Fort Lauderdale to St. Petersburg to Cocoa Beach...

And...when we ask them about Daytona Beach...what they say is...

We cannot imagine how cars and people co-exist on a beach...

We would not risk our children on a beach with cars...

We don't want to lie out or play on a beach with vehicles going by...

A beach with motor vehicles by definition is dirty and bad for the environment...

So...though those who come here understand how cars and people co-exist...

and understand if they don't want to be on a trafficked beach...they don't have to...

BUT...those who haven't been here cannot visualize it...and won't pay good money for the privilege...

And...when we talk to those who spend time in Orlando and ask them if they've ever been to Daytona Beach; the response generally is they've gone over to drive on the beach...but not to stay there...

Now what about our residents...

For several years we accomplished the annual citizen's survey for the Volusia County Council...We analyzed the reported the findings by voting district...so the municipalities and sections of the county were reported separately...

Among the questions we asked were about the beach...

Was it important to drive on the beach...to park on the beach...and do so for free...

Now when we began asking the questions the conventional wisdom was those on the West Side would think it was important to maintain free beach driving and parking as their access to the beach...

And...of course, the Eastern coast residents would feel they were entitled to drive and park free on the beach...again providing their access...

Turns out...the majority of our citizens were unconcerned about these issues...some bought the annual passes; others paid the tolls on the occasion they went to the beach...

and those who didn't go to the beach didn't want to pay for those who did!

More recently we know what happened when the city of Ormond Beach opened that beautiful Andy Romano park...

You cannot get a spot there...it is crowded all the time...if it were two or three times as large it still would be filled...

You walk down to the beach in front of the park and it is loaded with families with children enjoying a beach where all they have to worry about are the rip-tides and jelly fish...

As I said...when we were a well kept secret we all enjoyed driving and/or parking on the beach...but

I understand the joy of driving on the beach...when there are very few cars around...

And I understand the convenience of parking on the beach...and having your stuff nearby...

However...as one of our presidents once said...

It's the economy....