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Updated: 9:58 AM Jul 21, 2010


## Front Beach Road improvement plans presented; approval and grant requests next

Dozens of residents attended a public hearing Tuesday night in Panama City Beach to learn more about a \$144 million project that will change the face of Front Beach Road.

**Posted:** 9:42 AM Jul 21, 2010

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 Changing the Face of Front Beach Road

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Panama City Beach- Dozens of residents attended a public hearing Tuesday night in Panama City Beach to learn more about a \$144 million project that will change the face of Front Beach Road. Beach city council members plan to use money from the Community Redevelopment Area to make the improvements, but that won't be enough. They plan to ask for and receive state and federal funds.

The first segment of this project is already under construction on South Thomas Drive. But for many of the residents Tuesday night's public hearing was their first look at what the future could hold. It is an impressive plan. And it's also expensive.

A representative from PBS&J Design and Engineering, presented the firm's concept and plans for the Front Beach Road corridor, including 10-foot traffic lanes and sidewalks in each direction, turn lanes at major intersections, planted medians, and a lane for bicyclists and trolleys. The plans also include burying all utilities underground.

After the presentation, a few residents voiced concerns regarding spring break traffic and driveway right of way issues. Others acknowledged the project's power to draw visitors. "We have to have a world class destination to support the world class new airport that has just been put in. The types of people that are going to be coming here will expect no less than the best that this community can offer and I think this does that," said Eileen Burick who lives in West Bay. "It's beautifying, it's redeveloping Front Beach Road and it's bringing it into the 21st century. We are taking a road that has been functioning wonderfully for many years, but it's going to take it the next step," said Mario Gisbert, Assistant City Manager of Panama City Beach.

But Beach officials say they can't complete the project without requesting and receiving federal and state money. Tuesday's public hearing is part of that process. The public comment period will remain open for the next ten days. If you would like to make a comment, visit [www.pcbonthemove.com](http://www.pcbonthemove.com).

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