



**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY**  
**SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD MEMORANDUM**



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**Date:** January 13, 2017

**To:** Jason E. Brown, County Administrator

**From:** Vincent Burke, P.E., Director of Utility Services

**Prepared By:** Himanshu H. Mehta, P.E., Managing Director, Solid Waste Disposal District

**Subject:** Update on Brownfields Redevelopment Process for the Former South Gifford Road Landfill Site

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**DESCRIPTIONS AND CONDITIONS:**

On December 3, 2013, the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) authorized the submittal of an application for a United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant from the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) for the former South Gifford Road landfill site (Gifford Landfill). The entire Gifford Landfill covers approximately 115 acres with the northern 55 acres owned by Indian River County and the southern 60 acres owned by the City of Vero Beach.

On July 15, 2014, the BCC approved the 2014 Gifford Neighborhood Plan which identified Action 13.6 as *"By 2016, the County will prepare plans, seek FDEP/EPA approval, and seek funding for redevelopment of the 41<sup>st</sup> Street Old Landfill Site for community and/or recreational uses."*

From March 2014 to March 2015, Brownfields assessment activities for the county-owned portion of the Former Gifford Landfill were completed with funding from a TCRPC Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant and the Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD) Board approving the use of the one cent sales tax fund. Overall, the goal of these assessment activities was to focus on current site conditions that could potentially impact the health and safety of the community and to support evaluation of this site for public use.

A primary element of any redevelopment consideration is community input. Therefore, on July 7, 2014 and March 2, 2015, staff and representatives from Geosyntec attended Gifford Progressive Civic League meetings and presented the findings of the redevelopment assessment activities, answered questions and listened to community concerns.

An overall summary of the 2014-2015 Brownfields assessment activities was presented to the SWDD Board on March 3, 2015. In addition to providing the update, the purpose of the presentation was to obtain direction from the SWDD Board on the redevelopment for the site.

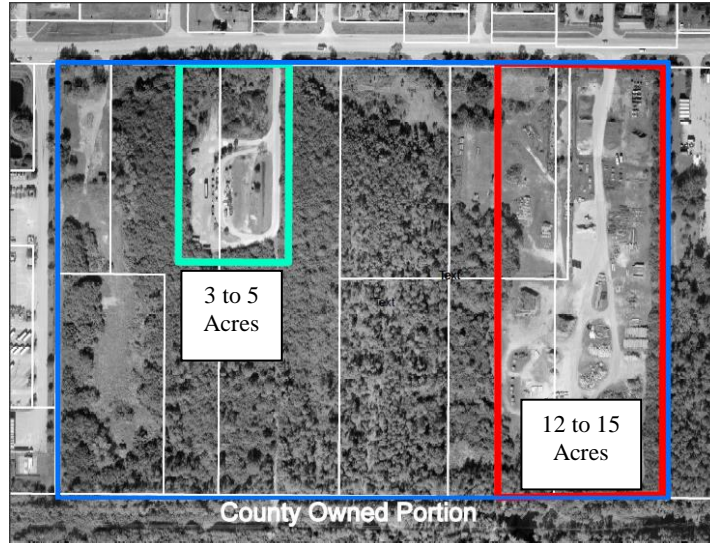
The SWDD Board directed staff to do the following:

- (1) Acquire community input and support for redevelopment planning of the former South Gifford Road Landfill site;
- (2) Direct the County Administrator to meet with Public Works, Utilities, and SWDD staff to discuss their long term needs for the landfill property;
- (3) Authorize staff to contact the City of Vero Beach, to discuss the Vero Beach Municipal Airport property to the south of the County's parcel at the former landfill; and
- (4) Authorize staff to meet with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) to discuss the permitting requirements and funding opportunities for moving forward with site redevelopment planning and engineering.

### **ANALYSIS:**

#### **EXISTING COUNTY USES:**

In terms of existing county/SWDD uses for the parcel, the Gifford Customer Convenience Center (CCC) occupies approximately 2.2 acres and the Road and Bridge Storage Compound utilizes approximately 12.3 acres. Due to the estimated high cost of relocating either of these facilities (estimated to be greater than \$2M), staff recommends that the existing locations remain reserved including an overall buffer area of approximately 3 to 5 acres for the Gifford CCC and a buffer area of 12 to 15 acres for the Road and Bridge compound. This would leave approximately 35 to 40 acres as a net usable area for redevelopment considerations.



#### **CITY OF VERO BEACH AIRPORT:**

On April 13, 2015, staff had a meeting/conference call with Eric Menger, Executive Director, Vero Beach Regional Airport and John Teneyck, City of Vero Beach Water and Sewer Department, to provide them an update from the SWDD Board on the redevelopment direction, and to obtain their input on the city parcel. The city/airport did not have any specific opposition to recreational plans we are considering and reported that they might be interested in piggybacking off a county-led project. They requested that the County keep them updated as the redevelopment project progresses. The city may be interested in some passive

redevelopment of their portion of the former landfill, such as nature trails; however, they were not interested in a project that would require long-term maintenance costs. Staff scheduled a follow-up call with Eric Menger on January 17, 2017, to provide an update and to get further input. Mr. Menger informed us that the Airport Master Plan has been approved both by the City Council and the Federal Aviation Administration and includes three Future Sustainability Development sites with potential consideration to be used for a solar farm.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:

A conference call is scheduled on Monday, January 23, 2017, with Art Torvela, FDEP, regarding both the permitting requirements and funding opportunities for the Former Gifford Road Landfill site.

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL & COMMUNITY INPUT:

On May 28, 2015, TCRPC was awarded another Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant utilizing the Gifford Landfill as one of the sites in their grant application. From June 2015 to August 2016, TCRPC completed USEPA administrative requirements under the grant, completed the request for proposal (RFP) process and selected Geosyntec as one of the consulting firms to assist with execution of activities under the grant, finalized contracts with the consultants, and strategized with Geosyntec and SWDD staff regarding specific activities to complete using grant funding at the Gifford Landfill. In August 2016, TCRPC authorized Geosyntec the following tasks:

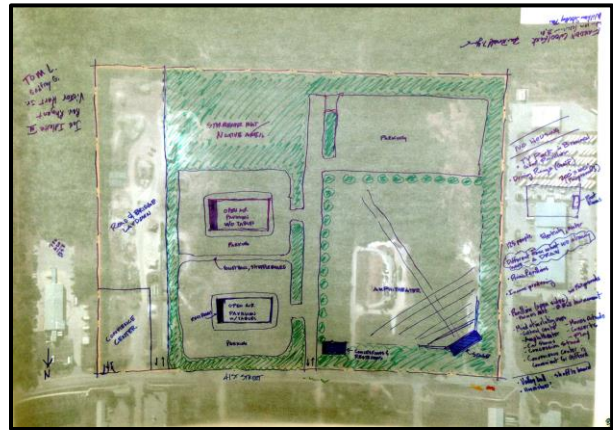
- Task 1. Community Stakeholders Meeting #1 – This initial workshop-style meeting (Meeting #1) is to solicit ideas from the community stakeholders with the goal to identify two to four redevelopment alternatives (or perhaps a combination of those) to move forward with for further evaluation in the next steps.
- Task 2. Development of conceptual designs – The initial versions of the alternatives will be prepared by TCRPC staff. Artistic drawings for these options will be prepared by TCRPC’s designated urban designer to capture the key concepts of each alternative. Geosyntec will prepare redevelopment costs, evaluation of environmental challenges, and the cost of ongoing maintenance.
- Task 3. Community Stakeholders Meeting #2 – A second workshop will be held for a selection of a redevelopment option for the site. The objective of this meeting is to propose a final redevelopment alternative that is amenable to as many of the involved parties as possible, and is considered a viable alternative for subsequent redevelopment at the site. Once a firm direction has been determined, TCRPC will develop a “before and after” aerial perspective computer rendering illustrating the preferred site design and program.
- Task 4. SWDD Board Meeting #3 – Provide an update to the SWDD Board for review and consideration of the selected redevelopment alternative with an estimate of associated expenses and environmental considerations. Opportunities for grant funding as well as public/private partnerships will also be provided. Input from the SWDD Board will be utilized to finalize a Former Gifford Road Landfill Redevelopment Plan.

Meeting #1 was held at the Gifford Community Center on December 10, 2016. The goal of the workshop was to engage the community attendees in brainstorming ideas for potential redevelopment uses for the former

landfill site. We expected a bigger turnout; however, there were enough in attendance to form two separate groups. The following is a depiction followed by a description of the ideas that the two groups came up with.



- Green Solar Farm
- Arboretum & Nature Trail
- Farmer's Market, Greenhouse, Community Garden (raised beds)
- Cultural Arts Center (Music, Visual Arts, African American Historical Exhibits, Wedding Destination)



- Amphitheater (concession & restrooms)
- Open-air Pavillions w/ tables
- Open-air Pavillions w/out tables
- Volleyball / Shuffleboard
- Parking / Native Area / Stormwater

TCRPC staff has emphasized that such ideas are common at the first meeting and that their next step is critical in guiding the process to a viable alternative that combines the desires of the community with practical consideration of environmental factors, redevelopment costs and on-going maintenance costs.

County staff has concerns with some of the conceptual plans related to large enclosed buildings, the public perception of community gardens on a former landfill site, the operating and maintenance costs, and to point out that an amphitheater is already planned at the Indian River County Fairgrounds site. The overall funding and the impacts to taxpayers for such improvements needs to be carefully planned. Staff recommends cleaning up, beautifying County frontage to be good neighbors and delaying other improvements.

We would like to get input from the SWDD Board Prior to proceeding.

### **FUNDING:**

This agenda item is for a project update to the SWDD Board and does not require funding.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff is requesting input from the SWDD Board on the preliminary ideas that have been generated from the first community meeting. Below are some items to consider:

1. What vision does the Commissioners have for this property?
2. What concerns do the Commissioners have for this property?

3. Approve staff recommendation that approximately 3 to 5 acres be reserved for the Gifford CCC and 12 to 15 acres be reserved for the Road and Bridge Compound and these uses remain at their current locations as shown in the map above.
4. Staff recommends: cleaning up and beautifying County frontage to be “good neighbors” in the initial phase. Staff recommends that the Board consider tabling other improvements for consideration at a future date.
5. Staff is requesting input on the following two options:
  - a. Direct TCRPC to cease the redevelopment planning efforts in order for staff to consider other options.
  - b. Authorize TCRPC to continue with the redevelopment planning efforts as outlined in the above Tasks 2, 3 and 4 with direction from the SWDD Board.