



DATE: January 4, 2021

MEMO TO: Terry Wilke, Chair
Planning Committee

FROM: James L. Anderson
Director of Natural Resources

RECOMMENDATION: Provide policy direction regarding the engagement of a professional engineering firm to assess solutions for sustainable coastal stabilization for the Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve Lake Michigan coastline.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Public Access and Connections; Conservation; Leadership; Organizational Sustainability

FINANCIAL DATA: If the Committee provides staff with policy direction to proceed, staff will endeavor to engage a coastal engineering firm for the services described below, at a price equal to or less than \$25,000.

BACKGROUND: Since taking ownership of Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve from the U.S. Army, the District has transformed the former military base and surrounding areas on that property into a preserve with public access and restored natural landscapes. A primary focus of District restoration efforts has been restoring the ravines, lake bluff and coastal areas at Fort Sheridan. Due to high Lake Michigan water levels, increase of northeastern storm events and significant wave action, the coastal areas at Fort Sheridan are being negatively impacted through erosion. Previous stabilization efforts including groins, rock revetment, sand nourishment and shoreline breakers have not stopped erosion of the coastline and lake bluff. If these conditions continue, coastal habitat and infrastructure including trails and access to Lake Michigan could be jeopardized.

Staff recommends that it be directed to engage a coastal engineering firm to provide a preliminary evaluation and assessment of current coastline erosion, a preliminary analysis of future conditions, preliminary potential recommendations for potential actions for the long-term stability of the Lake Michigan lake bluff and coastline at Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve, and preliminary estimates of cost ranges for implementing those actions. District staff would report such preliminary evaluation, analysis, recommendations, and estimates to the Committee. The contract for such services would be for \$25,000 or less and would be negotiated and executed by District staff.

In summary, if policy direction is given to move forward, the District will seek to engage a professional firm to ascertain the appropriate long-term solutions to current and future conditions along Lake Michigan and determine the estimated costs of various alternatives.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel.