

Crystal Village Beach Access – CUP

Staff Report: Andy Bauer
Application: ZA25-000053

COW Date: February 2, 2026
Applicant: Lieb Engineering
Company

Property Location: 957 West Beach
Blvd

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

Summary of Request

The applicant requests a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approval for a beach access at 957 West Beach Boulevard. The beach access is for the purpose of serving Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision located across the street at 975 West Lagoon Avenue. A beach access is only allowed by CUP.

Existing Conditions

The beach access is proposed to be located along the west property line of Ocean House I (957 West Beach Boulevard).

Surrounding Context

The following are the surrounding zoning districts and land uses:

- **North** – Tourist Business Zoning District (BT-3); Seabreeze Condominiums
- **South** – Gulf
- **East** – Tourist Business Zoning District (BT-4); Ocean House II Condominiums
- **West** – Tourist Business Zoning District (BT-4); Surfside Shores Condominiums

Background

August 12, 2024 – The City Council by Resolution 6865 approved the CUP for the beach access with nine conditions. The CUP expired because the applicant did not apply for a Building Permit for the beach access within one year of approval (Article 3-4, F. *Expiration.*, of the Zoning Ordinance).

Planning Commission

December 16, 2025 – The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the CUP to the City Council.

Zoning Ordinance

Article §6-9, *Water Access*, of the Zoning Ordinance stipulates new water access provided through similar zoned properties may be approved through the CUP process.

Proposed Beach Access

The applicant seeks CUP approval to have a deeded beach access along the western boundary of the Ocean House I Condominium property. Specifics of the beach access are as follows:

- Location – 975 West Beach Boulevard
- Easement Width – 10 feet
 - 4ft. landscape strip along the western property line of Ocean House I
 - 5ft. wide sidewalk from West Beach Boulevard to the seawall and then a dune walk.
 - 4ft. tall decorative fence on both sides of the beach access including locking gates.
 - Signage to prevent trespassing and use of only residents & guests of Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision.
 - Trash Receptacles
 - Turtle friendly lighting
 - Shower facility
- Maintenance - The beach access will be maintained by the Crystal Village POA via a property management company to ensure safety, good aesthetics, and proper usage in perpetuity.

ANALYSIS

Zoning

The proposed water access is zoned BT-4 High Density Tourist Business District and Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision is zoned BT-3. These are similar zoning classifications; therefore, a beach access may be approved via the CUP process.

Conditional Use Permit

The applicant has obtained approval from the home owners association of Ocean House I Condominium and prepared a draft easement document.

The proposed beach access is located approximately 250ft east of Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision. Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision will be linked to the beach access by an 10ft wide sidewalk within the West Beach Boulevard right-of-way. A crosswalk is to be provided across West Beach Boulevard. Signage will lead residents and visitors of Crystal Village to the beach access and to help prevent trespassing onto adjacent properties. West Beach Boulevard (State Highway 182) is a state roadway, and all work being proposed on the right-of-way must be approved by ALDOT.

The beach access displaces two parking spaces on the Ocean House property. The applicant plans to convert 19 standard parking spaces to compact car spaces (8ft x 19ft) to maintain 77 required parking spaces on Ocean House's property.

Beach access is only allowed by CUP on similar-zoned properties for the protection of adjacent property owners. City staff have spoken with the management company for Surfside Shores Condominium and discussed the details of the CUP application.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend approval of the CUP with the following conditions:

1. Prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, ALDOT shall provide approval of the proposed 10ft wide sidewalk within West Beach Boulevard and the pedestrian crosswalk across West Beach Boulevard.
2. Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the houses within Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision, the sidewalk and pedestrian crosswalk within West Beach Boulevard, and beach access shall be complete in accordance with the approved plans.
3. Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the houses within Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision, 19 parking spaces on Ocean House I's property shall be reconfigured and signed as "Compact Car Spaces".
4. The water access shall only be utilized by the approved 17-lot cottage subdivision. Any other development of the site which increases density shall render the water access approval null and void.
5. The Grant of Appurtenance Easement for the beach access shall be recorded and the recordation number denoted on the Subdivision Plat prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
6. The Declaration of Protective Covenants for Crystal Village Cottages shall be recorded and the recordation number denoted on the Subdivision Plat prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
7. Routine servicing of gates, fences and trash must be performed by the Crystal Village Home Owners Association and included in the covenants and restrictions.
8. A dune walkover is required for the beach access. It shall be constructed per Alabama Department of Environmental Management guidelines.
9. The four-foot wide landscape strip along the west side of the beach access shall be planted with 1 tree and 4 shrubs every 25ft prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the houses within Crystal Village Cottage Subdivision.
10. The dune walkover ramp landing shall be approved by ADEM and face towards the east.

Attachments: Location Maps, Beach Access Plans