



# *City of Tarpon Springs, Florida*

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## **PRESS RELEASE CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS TO HOLD COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS ON SPONGE DOCKS PROJECT**

The City of Tarpon Springs and the design and engineering team of Hoffman Architects, PA/ URS Corporation will be hosting two (2) workshops to obtain public input on a million dollar project for improvements to publicly owned land on the famous sponge docks and Dodecanese Boulevard. The sessions will be held:

Friday, November 4, 2011 at 9 AM  
and  
Monday, November 7, 2011 at 9 AM

Both Sessions will be held at:  
The Sponge Factory  
15 Dodecanese Boulevard  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

The primary focus of the November 4, 2011 workshop will be to gather feedback from the area merchants and restaurateurs on their vision for the future of the Sponge Docks. The primary focus of the November 7, 2011 workshop will be to gather feedback from the commercial and recreational boating community on their vision for the future of the Sponge Docks. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. A new website dedicated to this project has been set up at <http://www.imaginedocks.com/>.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Sponge Docks working waterfront tourist district is one of Florida's most unique attractions. The "Docks" are located on Dodecanese Boulevard, a two-lane road paralleling the Anclote River. The area features an assortment of shops, restaurants, bakeries and other gathering places. The Sponge Docks offers visitors an experience that is different from any other destination in the Tampa Bay area with a rich mix of Greek heritage, culture and old-world charm.

The City of Tarpon Springs owns a 17,802 square foot parcel of land along the south bank of the Anclote River that is used as a public gathering space and a working dock area for the local commercial sponge boats. The parcel has approximately 435 feet of frontage along Dodecanese Boulevard between Athens Street and west of Hope Street. The space is often used as a public gathering space for events such as the popular **Night in the Islands** festivals.

The City of Tarpon Springs has budgeted \$1,000,000 dedicated to improving the public space along the Sponge Docks and Dodecanese Boulevard. The objective of the project is to revitalize and beautify the Sponge Docks area, to enhance its sense of place, and to solidify its status as an international tourist destination. This objective will be accomplished through the replacement and/or refurbishment of existing hardscape infrastructure, installation of new amenities, and enhancement of pedestrian linkages to serve visitors and residents alike. The City is initiating this community-based planning process to identify improvements to streets, sidewalks and public spaces that will provide greater economic opportunities for area merchants, commercial fishermen, and recreational boaters. The boundaries of the project area are generally on Dodecanese Boulevard from Pinellas Avenue to Roosevelt Boulevard.

The City has hired the design and engineering team of Hoffman Architects, P.A. / URS Corporation to work with the community to develop a conceptual design and then use this design to generate construction documents. The primary focus of the November 4, 2011 workshop will be to gather feedback from the area merchants and restaurateurs on their vision for the future of the Sponge Docks. The primary focus of the November 7, 2011 workshop will be to gather feedback from the commercial and recreational boating community on their vision for the future of the Sponge Docks. However, any interested party is welcome to attend either or both of the workshops

How this money will be used to transform the area will be based on public input. All stakeholders are encouraged to participate in this community outreach project to help the City shape the future of the Sponge Docks for generations to come!

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