

## **Estero Boulevard Lighting Project / Sea Turtle-Friendly Lighting**

**Why does the Town pay so much attention to sea turtle lighting, especially as it pertains to making lighting on Estero Boulevard safer for cars and pedestrians?**

- Sea turtles are important to a lot of our Town's residents and visitors.
- While they are protected federally and by the state of Florida, they also bring a lot of joy to people who see the baby turtle hatchlings or a mother laying eggs on the beach. These animals give people a tangible reason to take care of our beaches and the Gulf.
- We ask that people act responsibly toward these animals: keeping distance from them, not disturbing them in any way, and using the correct turtle-safe lighting on the beach and in their homes, condos, and businesses.
- We also want to illuminate Estero Boulevard so that it is safe for people to drive, bike and walk while doing our part to not disturb the nesting of the sea turtles.
- Technology has come a long way and it is important to understand that turtle safe lighting is not mutually exclusive to people's safety. We want to and can achieve both as a Town.
- Sea turtle babies can become disoriented when they hatch if there are unnatural lights visible from the beach coming from homes, condos, businesses and the road.
- Disorientations also occur if the beach environment is disturbed by holes or sandcastles created by beachgoers, or debris left behind.
- Disorientation will make hatchlings go toward Estero Boulevard instead of the Gulf and they will likely die.
- This is why sea turtle-friendly bulbs and fixtures in properties along the beach and Estero Boulevard are so important.
- Prior Town Councils and the Town's Public Safety Committee have been working to get this issue resolved for several years.
- It is a complicated fix due to the many factors and organizations that have a part in it:
  - Lee County owns Estero Boulevard
  - FPL has responsibility for a lot of the lighting on Estero Boulevard
  - Local organizations are heavily invested in the preservation of sea turtles

### **Grants through The Sea Turtle Conservancy for sea turtle lighting retrofitting**

- Beachfront property owners might be able to get the costs of retrofitting light fixtures and bulbs that comply with sea turtle regulations paid for by The Sea Turtle Conservancy's Beachfront Lighting Retrofit Program.
- The Sea Turtle Conservancy is a non-profit research, conservation, and education organization in Florida. The Conservancy has received grant funding designated for the lighting retrofit program through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environment Benefit Fund.
- To learn more about the lighting grants and the program, call The Conservancy at (352) 373-6441 or visit [www.conserveturtles.org](http://www.conserveturtles.org)