

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
November 21, 2024

SANTA CRUZ WHARF RESILIENCE IMPROVEMENTS – AUGMENTATION

Project No. 23-074-01
Project Manager: Erin Gravley

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,766,000 to the City of Santa Cruz to augment the Conservancy funding previously authorized on February 15, 2024, to expand the scope of the Santa Cruz Wharf Resilience Improvement project to include construction of additional resiliency improvements along the eastern edge of the Wharf.

LOCATION: Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, City of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [February 15, 2024 Staff Recommendation](#)

Exhibit 3: [Context Diagram](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an additional one million seven hundred sixty-six thousand dollars (\$1,766,000) to the City of Santa Cruz to augment the grant authorized by the Conservancy on February 15, 2024, for a total authorized amount of eight million six hundred fifty-nine thousand, seven hundred dollars (\$8,659,700), to expand the scope of the Santa Cruz Wharf Resilience Improvement project to include construction of additional resiliency improvements along the eastern edge of the Wharf, subject to the conditions of the February 15, 2024 authorization.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization remains consistent with Chapter 3 (Section 31113) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Climate Ready Program.
2. The proposed project remains consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize the disbursement of an additional \$1,766,000 to the City of Santa Cruz to augment the grant authorized by the Conservancy on February 15, 2024, for a total authorized amount of \$8,659,700, to expand the scope of the Santa Cruz Wharf Resilience Improvement project to include construction of additional resiliency improvements along the eastern edge of the Wharf, subject to the conditions of the February 15, 2024 authorization.

The February 15, 2024 authorization defined the scope of the project as construction of improvements in the East Parking Lot and Wave Crash Zone areas of the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf and to further the planning for future improvements for increased resiliency to the effects of climate change (See Exhibit 2 for further details). The scope of the project is expanded to construct resiliency improvements to approximately 30 additional feet along the eastern edge of the Wharf (Exhibit 3). The expanded project scope includes reinforcing infrastructure elements such as paved decking, joists, and caps; removing failing infrastructure; repaving the area; and as funds allow, repairs to the adjacent roadway to provide a gentler slope into the eastern edge reinforcement work area (the “expanded scope”). Construction has not yet begun on the previously authorized work, and thus the expanded scope will be added to the project. The Santa Cruz Wharf Resilience Improvement project now consists of (1) construction improvements in the East Parking Lot and wave crash zone areas of the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, (2) planning for future improvements for increased resiliency to the effects of climate change, and (3) the expanded scope (collectively, the “project”). The project will strengthen the lateral resilience of the Wharf for over 1,100 linear feet of its outer and most vulnerable reaches to help the Wharf resist shear forces from large waves. Additionally, the work constructed under this project will connect with separately funded rehabilitation work at the ocean-end terminus of the Wharf, which has been closed since storms in December 2023 and February 2024 caused major damage. Finally, the expanded scope is required before the East Promenade and South Landing elements of the Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan can be constructed. The planning component for the East Promenade and South Landing is part of the February 15, 2024 authorization for the project, and the expanded scope to implement additional resiliency repairs and improvements to the eastern edge of the Wharf will help reduce the cost and streamline future construction of the East Promenade and South Landing.

Site Description: See Exhibit 2.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: See Exhibit 2.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, as described in the February 15, 2024, staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy (proposed authorization)	\$1,766,000
Coastal Conservancy (previous authorization)	\$6,893,700
City of Santa Cruz	\$1,633,900
Project Total	\$10,293,600

Conservancy funding is anticipated to come from a Fiscal Year 2023/24 appropriation from the General Fund to the Conservancy to address "urgent sea-level rise adaptation and coastal resilience needs using nature-based solutions or other strategies" (The Budget Act of 2023, Chapter 12, Statutes of 2023 (SB 101) as amended by Chapter 38, Statutes of 2023 (AB 102)). The proposed project is consistent with this funding source because it will implement structural improvements to the Wharf to increase its resiliency to sea level rise and other effects of climate change, including protection against shear forces from large waves.

The City of Santa Cruz will contribute \$1,633,900 to the project cost.

Unless specifically identified as "Required Match," the other sources of funding and in-kind contributions described above are estimates. The Conservancy does not typically require matching funds or in-kind services, nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders or of in-kind services. Typical grant conditions require grantees to provide any funds needed to complete a project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation as described in the February 15, 2024, staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#):

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan as described in the February 15, 2024, staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The environmental impacts of the Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan (SCWMP) were evaluated in the SCWMP Final Environmental Impact Report Volume 2 (Final EIR), which was certified by the City of Santa Cruz on January 9, 2024, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA). In its February 15, 2024 grant authorization, the Conservancy made findings under CEQA regarding the environmental impacts of the SCWMP as identified in the Final EIR. The expanded scope of the project as defined in this authorization remains within the scope of the SCWMP and Final EIR. The SCWMP remains substantially unchanged from its description in the Final EIR, and no new environmental information or change in circumstances require a re-evaluation of the potential environmental effects of the project (14 Cal Code. Regs. Section 15162(b)).

Upon approval of the project, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Determination.