

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 23, 2021

PILLAR POINT SURFER’S BEACH PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Project No. 21-050-01
Project Manager: Hilary Hill

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$212,812 to San Mateo County Harbor District to construct new public restrooms, realign a small segment of the California Coastal Trail, reconfigure the parking lot and install other visitor-serving amenities at Pillar Point Harbor adjacent to Surfer’s Beach in San Mateo County.

LOCATION: Pillar Point Harbor adjacent to Surfer’s Beach, San Mateo County.

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)
Exhibit 2: [Site Photos and Project Designs](#)
Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)
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RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

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

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes a grant of an amount not to exceed two hundred twelve thousand eight hundred and twelve dollars (\$212,812) to San Mateo County Harbor District (“the grantee”) to construct new public restrooms, realign a small segment of the California Coastal Trail, reconfigure the parking lot and install other visitor-serving amenities at Pillar Point Harbor adjacent to Surfer’s Beach in San Mateo County.

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy and Coastal Commission funding.

4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. In addition, to the extent appropriate, the grantee shall incorporate the guidelines of the Conservancy's 'Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development'.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding System of Public Accessway.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a \$212,812 grant to San Mateo County Harbor District to construct new public restrooms and other visitor-serving amenities at Pillar Point Harbor adjacent to Surfer's Beach in San Mateo County. In addition to restrooms, the project will provide improved day-use public parking, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant upgrades, outdoor shower, drinking fountain, benches, greenspace and open use area, and realignment of the Coastal Trail.

Pillar Point Harbor's Surfer's Beach, located just north of the City of Half Moon Bay, is a very popular coastal recreation destination for visitors from across the region. Currently however, there are very few public amenities to serve the hundreds of beach-goers, surfers, and Coastal Trail pedestrians and bicyclists that visit the area. No restrooms are easily accessible to the parking area or stairway to Surfer's Beach. In addition, there are few places for visitors and trail users to stop and rest, fill up a water bottle, lock up a bike, or wash off a child or pet's feet.

The proposed project will greatly enhance visitor experience to this heavily-used coastal area. A new restroom structure will be constructed with four all-gender accessible stalls, drinking fountains, and an outdoor shower. A forecourt leading from the restroom to the Coastal Trail will provide space for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely pull off the trail with room to gather without impeding trail traffic, and will include educational signage, benches, bicycle racks, and trash and recycling receptacles. An outdoor meet-up and greenspace will allow small groups such as surf schools or educational field trips to gather, and a new van drop-off spot in the parking area will accommodate such groups.

The proposed project will greatly enhance accessibility for people with physical disabilities or limited mobility. The project location is one of the few areas along the mid-coast of San Mateo County that visitors can get very close to the shoreline without steep bluffs or wide sand dunes. This project will reconfigure the existing parking area to increase the number of ADA parking

spaces and include an ADA-compliant path of travel that will lead from the parking lot to the new accessible restrooms, paved Coastal Trail, and benches that provide sweeping views of the ocean and surfers, increasing accessibility of this location to all visitors.

The reconfigured parking lot will be free to use for the public and will include 7 ADA parking spaces, 6 day use parking spaces, 2 public EV-charging spaces, 1 ride-share parking space, and 1 van drop off, for a total of 17 parking spaces. To accommodate the proposed design, the overall number of day-use parking spaces will be reduced from 21 to 17 spaces and will utilize a small portion of Pillar Point Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park (6 out of the current 49 RV spaces), which is property owned by the San Mateo County Harbor District and leased to the RV Park.

As part of the project, approximately 200-feet of Coastal Trail will be re-located inland, increasing the resiliency of the Coastal Trail to hazards from coastal erosion, extreme storm events, and sea level rise. The trail will be retreated 10-20 feet inland from its current alignment, varying by location.

The City of Half Moon Bay and the San Mateo County Harbor District collaborated in the development of this project, with an aligned vision for providing these much-needed public amenities to the area. Two community meetings were held to elicit feedback on project designs and the project has significant community support. Once, constructed, daily operations and maintenance will be provided by San Mateo County Harbor District staff. The visitor-serving amenities that will be created by this proposed project will improve coastal access and recreation opportunities for a wide and diverse range of user groups from across the region.

Site Description: Surfer's Beach is one of San Mateo County's most popular beaches, drawing visitors from across the region to visit the beach, surf in the ocean, or walk and bike the Coastal Trail. The beach is located adjacent to Highway 1 at the northern end of the City of Half Moon Bay, just south of Pillar Point Harbor. A segment of paved Coastal Trail traverses the blufftop above Surfer's Beach, connecting the City of Half Moon Bay to Pillar Point Harbor. The trail is located at a bend in the coastline and is protected from erosion by rip rap. An existing day-use public parking area is located directly adjacent to the bluff-top Coastal Trail, and accommodates 23 day use parking spots (including 2 ADA-compliant parking stalls).

The San Mateo County Harbor District, which manages Pillar Point Harbor, maintains the Coastal Trail segment in this area and owns the parcel the existing parking lot is located on. This 4-acre parcel is leased to a private developer that operates the Pillar Point Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park on the northern end of the site, and provides the day-use public parking at the southern end of the site as part of its lease. The San Mateo County Harbor District is collaborating with the RV Park operator as well as the City of Half Moon Bay on the project, and the San Mateo County Harbor District will take over operation of the day-use public parking once the project is constructed.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: The San Mateo County Harbor District has extensive experience in completing large-scale capital improvement projects. San Mateo County Harbor District has successfully completed a number of capital projects addressing public access facilities and environmental protection and has experience receiving state funding, including over \$1 million

in recent grants from the California Natural Resources Agency and California Department of Parks and Recreation.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section below.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section below.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:**
 - Coastal Act (1976), Public Resource Code Section 30210 on public access and recreation for "maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse"
 - Completing the California Trail (2003), Objective #1, which calls for providing a continuous trail as close to the ocean as possible; Objective #4, which seeks to assure that the location and design of the California Coastal Trail is consistent with the policies of the Coastal Act and Local Coastal Programs; and Objective #5, to design the California Coastal Trail to provide a valuable experience for the user by protecting the natural environment and cultural resources while providing public access to beaches, scenic vistas, wildlife viewing areas and other points of interest
4. **Support of the public:** The project is supported by San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley and City of Half Moon Bay Mayor Robert Brownstone. The project was also supported at public meetings by representatives of the Half Moon Bay Surf Club, the Surfrider San Mateo County Chapter, and the Pillar Point Surf School. The project is consistent with local plans including the City of Half Moon Bay's 2019 Parks Master Plan, 2019 Final Draft Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan, and the 2013 Plan Bay Area.
5. **Location:** See the "Project Summary".
6. **Need:** As one of Half Moon Bay's most popular beaches, the proposed public restrooms and other amenities proposed by the project are badly needed due to the high levels of visitation. This project location is especially in need of the proposed ADA improvements, as it is one of very few areas along the mid-coast of San Mateo County that does not have high bluffs and can provide near-beach access for those with physical limitations.

7. **Greater-than-local interest:** Surfer's Beach, the Coastal Trail, and Pillar Point Harbor, with its plethora of restaurants, hotels, and activities, makes the project site a very popular coastal recreation destination of regional significance. As such, restrooms and other visitor-serving amenities proposed by this project would be highly utilized and improve the coastal experience for visitors to the area.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The project location is located at an elevation of +18.0 feet (NADD 88). Due to the existing revetment at the shoreline, Our Coast Our Future modeling shows that the restroom site will be impacted from flood inundation at 5.7 feet of sea level rise under a 100-year storm scenario. The project's Coastal Development Permit conditions include that if the Coastal Trail segment becomes regularly impassible due to sea level rise and/or wave action, a study will be done to assess if relocation of the restroom structure is needed in order to be safe from these coastal hazards. In addition, the restroom facility has been designed so that during extreme conditions of rare wave up and surge events, it can be protected using items such as sand bags and can be easily repaired and cleaned out following these events if any minor damage occurs.

Additional Criteria

9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section below.
10. **Readiness:** Project construction is anticipated to begin in Winter 2022 and be completed in Summer 2022.
11. **Cooperation:** The project has been developed in coordination between the San Mateo County Harbor District, City of Half Moon Bay, and the RV Park lessee that operates the existing public day-use parking area.
12. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The project is designed for low energy in its building design with restroom skylights and building orientation, as well as low water through use of drought tolerant native plants in landscaping. The project will include an EV charger, van-pool space, and a car-share parking space in order to diversify the types of parking options and encourage lower emission trips. The project will also improve the Coastal Trail user experience, thereby supporting alternative modes of transportation that do not produce greenhouse gas emissions.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$212,812
San Mateo County Harbor District	\$385,289
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (Priority Conservation Area Grant Program)	\$298,000
Project Total	\$895,101

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the Violation Remediation Account, in particular, funds paid pursuant to a settlement from a coastal development permit violation in Princeton-by-the-Sea, San Mateo County (Case name: Furmanski/Mickelsen; Violation Number: V-1-99-005). The Coastal Act establishes the Violation Remediation Account within the State Coastal Conservancy Fund to hold penalties paid as a result of violations of the Coastal Act. (See Public Resources Code section 30823.) Violation Remediation Account funds must be expended for purposes of the Coastal Act in close proximity to the geographic location of the violation. The proposed project addresses the public access and shoreline protection violations that occurred by improving public access amenities and implementing managed retreat of the Coastal Trail at a location approximately 1 mile from where the violation occurred. Consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Coastal Commission and Conservancy regarding the Violation Remediation Account, this proposal has been discussed and agreed upon by Coastal Commission Enforcement Staff as an appropriate project for use of these VRA funds.

San Mateo County Harbor District will be providing \$385,289 in matching funding from their budgeted working capital. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission will be providing \$298,000 from the Priority Conservation Area Grant Program (Round 2), which the Conservancy recommended for funding at its October 17, 2019 meeting. These matching funds are provided as estimates. The Coastal Conservancy does not typically require matching funds nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders. Typical grant conditions require Grantees to provide any funds needed to complete the project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31400-31410), regarding public access to and enjoyment of coastal resources. Public Resources Code, Section 31400 states that it is the Legislature's intent that the Conservancy play a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state's coastline. Through the proposed project, the Conservancy will improve public access to the state's coastline by constructing new restroom facilities for coastal visitors, improving accessibility to the coast for those with physical disabilities, and increasing the longevity of the Coastal Trail by retreating the trail inland further from coastal erosion and sea level rise impacts.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective A** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will expand or enhance opportunities for access for people with disabilities to and along the coast and coastal trails.

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective D** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will construct visitor-serving amenities on the San Mateo coast including restrooms, parking lot, and other access improvements for beachgoers and Coastal Trail users.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to the Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301, which exempts the minor alteration of existing public facilities because it involves the minor alteration of an existing trail and parking lot and does not expand their existing use, and Section 15303, which exempts the new construction of small structures because the proposed project involves a small restroom facility and small structures such as benches and bicycles racks.

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