

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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February 21, 1997

TO: Coastal Commissioners, Interested Persons

FROM: Peter M. Douglas, Executive Director
Steven F. Scholl, Deputy Director
SFS

SUBJECT: **Strategic Plan: Draft Initial Components**

Attached is a discussion draft of the first four components of the Commission's Strategic Plan:

- I. **Mission Statement**
- II. **Vision Statement**
- III. **Principles and Values**
- IV. **Internal/External Assessment (Strengths and Weaknesses)**

These components will be the subject of a public workshop which will occur on:

Wednesday, March 12, 1997, commencing at 9:00 a.m.
Carmel Mission Inn
3665 Rio Road
Carmel, California

The public will have an opportunity to comment on the topics of the workshop after discussion by the Commission. A subsequent workshop, to occur at a future time, will address the remaining components of the Strategic Plan, including **goals, objectives, and strategies**.

Questions or comments, including written comments, may be directed to Steve Scholl, Strategic Plan Coordinator, at the Commission's San Francisco office (415-904-5260).

attachment

D R A F T

**Strategic Plan
California Coastal Commission
February, 1997**

I. The **Mission of the California Coastal Management Program administered by the Coastal Commission is to:**

- Alternative 1: Protect the resources and ensure the prudent use of the California coast and ocean for the benefit of current and future generations.
- Alternative 2: Ensure the conservation and prudent use of California's coastal and ocean resources for the benefit of current and future generations.
- Alternative 3: Protect, restore, and enhance the resources of the California coast and ocean for the benefit, enjoyment, and use of current and future generations.
- Alternative 4: Conserve the resources, manage the development, and promote the use of the California coast for the benefit of current and future generations.

II. Vision Statement

The Coastal Management Program's vision of the California coast in the future is one in which:

A. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

1. All Californians consider protection of the coast to be important.
2. Schoolchildren grow up learning about the values of marine life and the resources of the Coastal Zone.
3. Additional coastal and marine science research institutions and educational facilities are located along the coast to expand understanding and knowledge of coastal systems.

B. COASTAL ACCESS AND RECREATION

4. Accessways for the public to get to the shoreline are attractive, inexpensive, and abundant.
5. A continuous coastal trail extends from Oregon to Mexico and connects to inland public lands.
6. Hotels, restaurants, campgrounds, and other commercial facilities which serve coastal visitors are attractive, located near points of visitation, and accessible to those of all income levels.
7. Public sandy beaches and dunes are available to serve both recreational and habitat purposes.

C. BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

8. Ecologically viable tidepools, streams, wetlands, and the habitats of rare or endangered organisms are protected and restored, in order to maximize biological values.
9. Pure water in coastal streams, lagoons, and the sea supports a diversity of biological and recreation-oriented uses including fishing and water sports, as well as healthy populations of marine organisms.

D. COASTAL ECONOMY

10. Coastal tourism is robust and growing, while maintaining the quality of the visitor's experience and coastal environmental protection.
11. A robust aquaculture industry provides food for Californians and for export.
12. The agricultural economy in the coastal zone is strong and productive.
13. Commercial fisheries are restored to a healthy and sustainable state.

E. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

14. The natural beauty of the Coastal Zone and the unique character of historic and scenic coastal communities, are preserved for future generations.
15. Coastal communities having unique character that attracts visitors maintain their distinct identities and, in rural areas, are surrounded by open space.
16. Residential, commercial and other urban developments minimize energy use and facilitate alternative modes of transportation.

F. PORTS AND INDUSTRY

17. Port facilities are well-located, efficient, adapted to modern needs, and competitive with those in other states.
18. Coastal-dependent activities, including commercial fishing and industrial uses, are not precluded by other land uses on waterfront sites.
19. Refineries and other oil and gas developments are consolidated in only a few locations, and are designed to minimize the risk of spillage.
20. Offshore oil production utilizes pipelines rather than ships for transport.

G. HAZARDS

21. The potential for catastrophic damage and consequences to residents and visitors resulting from natural hazards in the coastal zone is minimized.

H. ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

22. The Coastal Commission works closely with other local, state, and federal agencies to maximize the efficiency of the coastal management program.
23. A stable source of funds exists to carry out the mission of the coastal management program.
24. Public participation continues to be a fundamental part of California's coastal management program.

III. Principles and Values of California's Coastal Management Program

The members and staff of the California Coastal Commission espouse the following principles and values:

We recognize and respect the humanity and individuality in each of us.

We strive to be responsible, honest, and cooperative in interactions with others.

We value excellence, efficiency, creativity, and integrity in all we do; we take pride in our work.

We are constantly mindful of the mission of the Coastal Commission.

Our double obligations as coastal managers are to carry out the Coastal Act and to serve the public interest.

We treat clients of our agency courteously and with respect for their time and costs.

We recognize that public service is a privilege, and not a right.

Personal and professional growth of all participants in the coastal program is of high importance.

We base our regulatory and planning decisions on full and accurate information.

Personal preferences do not bias our recommendations and decisions.

We recognize the diversity of perspectives on coastal management issues, and we are respectful of the views of others.

We strive for fair and balanced access to the planning process, for all interested parties; helping the general public to understand and participate in the coastal management program is of high importance.

We respect the legal and Constitutional rights of all persons, including the rights of private property owners, and the rights of the public to reach and use public trust lands and waters.

IV. Internal/External Assessment

This assessment includes a discussion of management policies, resource constraints, organizational structure, automation, personnel, and operational procedures, which together influence the success of the Coastal Commission in carrying out its mission. This section may also be thought of as addressing "strengths" and "weaknesses" of the coastal management program.

A. Legislative and Legal Framework

- 1) The Coastal Commission's area of jurisdiction is a designated portion of the land and water of the state, known as the Coastal Zone.
- 2) The California Coastal Act provides a statewide comprehensive approach to planning for the coastal zone which integrates regulatory activities, long-range planning (Local Coastal Programs, or LCPs), and educational efforts in order to preserve, protect and enhance coastal zone resources and public access to beaches and the ocean. California's Coastal Management Program provides a unique, multi-disciplinary statewide program, based on strong public participation, partnerships with local governments, strong resource protection policies, and the goal of balancing sound conservation of coastal resources with their use for the benefit of current and future generations.
- 3) No other agency has the broad authority to accomplish this mission, and this fact instills pride within the agency's staff.
- 4) The Commission was created by state law, the California Coastal Act, but also participates in the coastal management program established by federal law (Coastal Zone Management Act). The Commission has authority to review and either concur with or reject proposed federal projects or projects needing federal permits which are located within the coastal zone. This federal consistency authority is a **strength** for the coastal management program; it provides the only state regulatory review of offshore oil and gas activities in federal waters, military developments in the coastal zone, and other activities with federal licenses or permits.
- 5) There is uncertainty about the direction and consequences of judicial rulings regarding land use planning and regulatory decisions. Some

court decisions have eroded the ability of environmental agencies to protect natural resources.

- 6) There is uncertainty about the purpose and consequences of regulatory reform efforts.

B. Composition of the Commission

- 7) The Commission includes representatives of local governments, who are partners with the Commission in the Local Coastal Program process, as well as public members who represent a diversity of views and backgrounds. This composition is a **strength** for the program.
- 8) Frequent turnover of members on the Commission can impede long-range planning.

C. Staffing and Organization

- 9) The Commission staff is highly skilled, motivated, creative, professional, competent, and dedicated. Team work, critical thinking, and innovative problem-solving approaches are highly valued.
- 10) One statewide Commission makes decisions for the entire Coastal Zone, whereas the staff is distributed in five district offices. The district office structure is a **strength** for the program, as these offices are managed by knowledgeable staff members who live in the local communities and are able to take into account the special needs of each particular region of the Coastal Zone in carrying out the statewide policies of the Coastal Act.
- 11) The lack of a Coastal Commission office in the northern part of the state's coastal zone has hampered public service to the public and local governments in that area; this is a **weakness** for the program.
- 12) The Commission has been unable, for budgetary reasons, to provide adequate training for staff, in order to ensure that California is prepared to have innovative and creative problem-solving capabilities for the next century. This is a **weakness** for the program.
- 13) The Commission lacks technical and scientific expertise in specific areas, such as geology, water quality, transportation and wetlands biology. The increasing technical complexity of many environmental

management issues makes such expertise increasingly important; this is a **weakness**.

D. Budgetary Factors

- 14) The Commission relies on a mix of state and federal funds to carry out its program.
- 15) There is inadequate and unstable funding to support the Coastal Commission's program at the level necessary to carry out Coastal Act requirements. This key factor has been compounded by past budget cuts. In the last 15 years, the Commission staff has been reduced in size by approximately 40%.
- 16) The Commission has been very successful in identifying important and innovative approaches to address important coastal resource and use issues with support from state, federal, and private grants (such as grants addressing wetlands, cumulative impacts, non-point source water pollution, geographic information systems, shoreline erosion, public shoreline access, and public education). This innovative approach is a **strength** for the program, but it comes at the cost of sometimes diverting staff from core regulatory and LCP responsibilities.
- 17) Competition among public agencies for scarce fiscal resources is intense.
- 18) Uncertainties in the budget process affecting the Coastal Management Program sometimes have resulted in difficulty in attracting and retaining well-qualified staff. On the other hand, the Commission staff is adept at doing a lot on a "shoe string" budget through staff task forces, special projects, and volunteers. Examples include the Coastal Access Program, Adopt-A-Beach program, and Beach Erosion and Response Task Force.
- 19) Governor Wilson has proposed a Coastal Initiative for 1997-98, and there currently is strong support in the Legislature for the Commission's program.
- 20) The economy of California is strong, a fact which is a **strength** for the coastal management program in the long-run.

E. Public Participation

- 21) There is strong public support, involvement, and activism in California's coastal management program, and the Commission has a long history of encouraging broad public participation. These factors are **strengths** in the coastal management program.
- 22) The Commission's workforce and most active constituency do not adequately represent the cultural diversity of California; in the long-run, this fact may be a **weakness**.
- 23) Society seems less willing to find common ground in solving complex problems. There is widespread cynicism about the role of government in resource management.
- 24) Partisan politics introduce an unwelcome element into resource planning and management.

F. Public Education

- 25) The Commission has successfully promoted public stewardship of the coast through the Adopt-A-Beach program, Coastal Clean-up Days, *California Coastal Resource Guide* and *California Coastal Access Guide*, World-Wide- Web site on the Internet, and other public education programs.
- 26) The new "whale-tail" license plate program will enhance the Commission's resources for public education and related efforts.

G. Regulatory Program

- 27) The Commission successfully brokers solutions to complex development problems which frequently involve numerous federal, state, and local reviews and/or permits, and which often include a wide range of public opinions.
- 28) Review and monitoring capabilities have been inadequate to ensure that Commission-approved coastal development permits are carried out as intended. This fact is a **weakness** of the program.

H. Local Coastal Programs

- 29) The process of preparation of Local Coastal Programs by cities and counties has suffered without adequate funding.
- 30) There are no strong incentives or sanctions to encourage completion of remaining LCPs, resulting in the Commission having to remain involved in routine matters and to make "neighborhood" permit decisions in certain local jurisdictions.
- 31) Review and monitoring capabilities have been inadequate to ensure that certified Local Coastal Programs have been implemented as intended, or modified to suit changed circumstances. There is no legal mandate under the Coastal Act to require local governments to re-look at their LCPs or to make changes in them, when new information and changing circumstances warrant it. This a **weakness** of the program.

I. Coastal Access Program

- 32) The importance of public access to the shoreline is one of the core reasons that led to creation of the Coastal Commission. With very limited resources, the Coastal Commission (in cooperation with other agencies), has been very successful in securing and protecting opportunities for creation of new public accessways to the coast. Many such opportunities have been created in the form of "offers-to-dedicate" easements for public accessways.
- 33) There has been a slow rate of acceptance of offers-to-dedicate for accessways and of opening of such accessways to the public. This is a **weakness** of the program.
- 34) The *California Coastal Access Guide* and *California Coastal Resources Guide* have sold over 100,000 copies and are key tools in increasing the public's enjoyment and knowledge of the coast.

J. Long-Range Issues

- 35) Long-range planning efforts are typically deferred, due to time pressures and demands to meet short-term needs. This is a **weakness** of the program.

- 36) Continued population growth in California will increase the need for long-range planning. Furthermore, the natural resource base of the coastal zone continues to be depleted, agricultural lands continue to be converted to non-agricultural use, and commercial fishing continues to decline.
- 37) California is recognized among coastal states as a leader in coastal management and education. This is a **strength** of the program.

K. Information Technology

- 38) The Commission's information technology equipment and training is deficient, resulting in inefficient service to Commissioners, local governments, applicants, and the general public, as well as creating unnecessary and/or unproductive work for staff. Approximately 70% of the Commission's work is performed on antiquated Wang computer systems, due to a lack of modern networked personal computers.