

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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July 10, 2017

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

FROM: John Ainsworth, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report, July 2017

Significant reporting items for the month. [Strategic Plan](#) (SP) reference provided where applicable:

LCP Program Status – Monterey, Santa Cruz Counties (SP Goal 4)

The Central Coast district stretches from the San Mateo/Santa Cruz County border near Año Nuevo State Reserve in the north to San Luis Obispo County's southern border with Santa Barbara County near the Guadalupe Dunes in the south, nearly 300 miles of coastline. The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary lies offshore for much of this length. The district has three coastal counties (Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo) and twelve incorporated cities (Santa Cruz, Capitola, Watsonville, Marina, Sand City, Seaside, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Morro Bay, Pismo Beach, and Grover Beach), each with certified LCPs with the exception of the cities of Monterey and Pacific Grove. There are also five major harbors (in Santa Cruz, Moss Landing, Monterey, Morro Bay, and Port San Luis), numerous State Parks' Public Works Plans, and one coastal long range development plan (for the University of California at Santa Cruz's Marine Science Campus).

The Central Coast district coastal zone is diverse, with both rugged and more pastoral rural areas interspersed between population centers. Planning issues include protecting agriculture and scenic rural areas and responding to coastal erosion and sea level rise in the more urban parts of the district. The district also has significant public park lands and popular visitor destinations, intensifying the need to provide visitor-serving facilities and opportunities. Each of the Central Coast District LCPs within Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties are summarized below.

Santa Cruz County

Santa Cruz County totals approximately 607 square miles, 113 square miles of which are located in the coastal zone, and contains approximately 45 miles of shoreline. The physical environment of Santa Cruz County is beautiful and diverse. With a spectacular coastline, accessible beaches, and wooded mountains all in proximity to several northern California metropolitan areas, Santa Cruz County is an important vacation and recreation area. Within its borders are several State Parks (including portions of Big Basin State Park) and a number of State Beaches (including Twin Lakes, Seacliff, Sunset, and Manresa). The County also contains a large stretch of Highway 1, including the incredibly scenic area located north of the City of Santa Cruz to San Mateo County. The topography of the County is varied in character, containing such features as agricultural lands and the forested Santa Cruz Mountains in the north and northeast, the mid-County coastal terraces (where a large portion of the County's population is located), and the alluvial south County, which is predominately in agricultural use. The central California coast location and the County's topographic features contribute to the ideal Mediterranean climate of Santa Cruz County. Due to this climate and the variety of landscape types, the County contains a diverse economic base which is often natural resource-based and includes visitor-serving and service industries, agriculture and manufacturing. The dominant economic activities are generally

centered in the agricultural and food processing of the south County and services and tourism in the North County. Other economic activities include quarrying, forestry, wood products, fishing, and other manufacturing. The County's LCP was originally adopted in 1983 and was last comprehensively updated in 1994. A primary task the County is currently working on is updating the coastal hazards components of the LCP and Commission staff is working actively with the County on this update.



City of Santa Cruz

The City of Santa Cruz has about eight miles of shoreline and occupies a picturesque location along the banks of the San Lorenzo River, between the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Cruz Mountains. The majority of the City's coastal zone is urbanized, but open space and natural areas (e.g., Natural Bridges State Beach, Moore Creek Preserve, and UCSC's Terrace Point lands) are also found within the City's coastal zone. Steamer Lane, a famous surfing spot, is located just off of Lighthouse Point along scenic West Cliff Drive. The Santa Cruz Harbor is located in the City and is an important harbor facility for recreational and commercial fishing in Monterey Bay. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, adjoining commercial establishments, and the City's Municipal Wharf are located on and adjacent to the City's Main and Cowell Beaches. These areas together form an extremely popular beach and general visitor destination with an estimated one million visitors annually. The City is also home to many historic structures, including many buildings designed in a variety of Victorian architectural styles. The Commission certified the original LCP in 1981 and approved a major update of the LCP in 1995. The City is currently pursuing a full LCP update, and Commission staff continue to work closely with the City on that effort.

City of Capitola-by-the-Sea

The City of Capitola-by-the-Sea has about two miles of shoreline along Monterey Bay. Even though Capitola is highly urbanized, the City has many natural features, including New Brighton State Beach, several monarch butterfly groves, and Soquel Creek. The Esplanade in Capitola Village is a vibrant commercial visitor-serving district located adjacent to Capitola Beach and the mouth of Soquel Creek. The unarmored cliffs of Depot Hill located downcoast of Capitola Beach contain a rich assemblage of well-preserved marine fossils. The Commission certified the City's LCP in 1990, and certified three areas of deferred certification (Rispin Mansion, Shadowbrook, and El Salto parcels) in 2005. The City is currently working on an IP update, and Commission staff is working closely with City staff on this effort.

City of Watsonville

Only a small portion (less than 10%) of the City of Watsonville lies within the coastal zone. This coastal zone area constitutes approximately 300 acres and is mostly made up of undeveloped farmlands and sensitive habitat areas. Developed areas in the City's coastal zone include the City's wastewater treatment facility located on the Pajaro River, the City's landfill, and Pajaro Valley High School. The Commission certified the City's LCP in 1988, and at this time, no LCP update is planned.

Monterey County

Monterey County is located on the southern half of Monterey Bay along the central California coast. The Monterey County coastline extends approximately 136 miles from the flat coastal plain south of the Pajaro River to the rugged mountainous shoreline of Big Sur just south of the town of Gorda. Coastal estuaries, bays, and rivermouths add another 56 miles of shoreline to the coastal zone. Monterey County has four Land Use Plans (LUPs) for specific defined areas: North County, Del Monte Forest, Carmel Area, and Big Sur. There are three Areas of Deferred Certification in the County, at Fort Ord Dunes State Park, Mal Paso Beach, and Yankee Point.



North County segment: The North County portion of the LCP was first certified in 1982. The North County coastal zone encompasses the unincorporated area of the county from the Pajaro River to the Marina city limit. This LCP segment includes roughly nine miles of shoreline and associated coastal dune habitat, thousands of acres of prime agricultural lands, rural and low-density residential development, and also includes Elkhorn Slough, which is one of California's principal estuaries and wetland features and a National Estuarine Research Reserve. Moss Landing Harbor and the Dynegy power plant are located in the unincorporated town of Moss Landing. The Harbor lies at the western edge of the Elkhorn Slough watershed and supports approximately 155 recreational motor and sail boats, and approximately 455 commercial, research, and recreational boats, including commercial fishing and oceanographic research vessels. Commission staff has been working with the County on updates to the North County portion of the LCP, including the Moss Landing Community Plan, that addresses additional protections for agricultural lands, groundwater resources, ESHA, wetlands, and other sensitive habitats; new provisions to address sea level rise and flood hazards; long-term planning for Moss Landing Harbor; and a General Development Plan for the reuse of the former National Refractories site at Moss Landing.

Fort Ord Dunes State Park (Area of Deferred Certification): Fort Ord Dunes State Park is a new, roughly 990-acre State Park located west of Highway 1 in northern Monterey County. The park encompasses roughly four miles of shoreline and currently provides for limited day use. These lands were transferred from the federal government to State Parks in 1994. In 2004, the Fort Ord Dunes State Park General Plan was approved by the State Parks and Recreation Commission, which contemplates specific park improvements, including the establishment of campsites. Commission staff has worked collaboratively with State Parks on a new campground, dune restoration, and public access enhancement project which will be heard before the Commission at this hearing.

Del Monte Forest segment: The Del Monte Forest portion of the LCP was first certified in 1984. This area extends inland three to four miles in places and is located along roughly 7 miles of central California shoreline on the Monterey Peninsula (occupying much of the peninsula landform) and is bounded roughly by the cities of Pacific Grove and Monterey to the north and northwest, and Carmel to the south. State Highway One skirts the Del Monte Forest a couple of miles inland. A circuitous private road system (commonly known as "17-mile Drive") winds through the Del Monte Forest. The Pebble Beach Company owns the roads and almost all of the undeveloped land in the Forest. The Del Monte Forest has long been recognized for its natural beauty and is well known for its mostly craggy shoreline that extends through the bluff platform and large areas of dunes up through and into a sloped landform mantled by native Monterey pine and cypress forest. The Del Monte Forest is home to a variety of plant and animal species, including some that are exceptionally rare. This LCP segment was the subject of a partial update in 2012 that also provided for a final build out and preservation plan for the Pebble Beach Company's remaining undeveloped landholdings in the Del Monte Forest.

Carmel Area segment: The Carmel Area portion of the LCP was first certified in 1983. The Carmel Area of unincorporated Monterey County follows roughly seven miles of rugged shoreline south of the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea. South of the Carmel River, the Carmel area coastal zone encompasses a variety of habitat types and land uses including Monterey pine forest habitat, river, estuarine, and wetland habitats, chaparral, creeks and riparian habitats. Land uses include low-medium density residential, agricultural lands, commercial visitor-serving, and watershed protection areas. Primary issues are the preservation of agricultural lands and sensitive habitats, regulation of vacation rentals, addressing flood and sea level rise impacts, development and alignment of the California Coastal Trail, and expanding access into recently acquired public lands.

Big Sur segment: The Big Sur coast area of unincorporated Monterey County is over 70 miles in length and stretches from the Carmel area in the north, south to the San Luis Obispo county line just south of the town of Gorda. As the largest planning area in Monterey County (some 150,000 acres), the Big Sur region is also the most geographically distinctive. The Big Sur coastal zone stretches well inland and encompasses a variety of habitat types including chaparral, redwood forest, oak woodland, coastal scrub, river and estuarine, to name a few. The Big Sur coast is world famous for its dramatic scenic shoreline vistas and landscapes, with sweeping undeveloped views of the Santa Lucia Mountains, coastal bluffs, rocky coastline, beaches, and the ocean from Highway 1. The County is in the process of updating this LCP segment and has held public workshops to gather input on a range of issues from identification and protection of sensitive habitats, vacation rental rules, fire protection and fuel modification, California Coastal Trail planning, and provision of water and other public services. Commission staff is working actively with the County on this update.

City of Marina

The incorporated City of Marina is a small coastal community in North Monterey County and is situated roughly between the Salinas River mouth and the Fort Ord Dunes State Park. The City has about three miles of shoreline fronted by restored coastal dune habitat, most of which is in public ownership. The last remaining sand mining plant on the Monterey Bay operates just above the surf line in the northern portion of the City. A consent cease and desist order for that plant's operations is also scheduled to be heard by the Commission at the July 2017 hearing. The coastal zone inland of Highway 1 is limited to roughly 60 acres that includes commercial retail development, visitor-serving overnight accommodations, coastal dunes, and three significant vernal ponds/coastal wetlands. The LCP was certified in 1982 and there have been relatively few amendments. The City is in the early process of comprehensively updating its LCP.

City of Sand City

The Sand City coastal zone extends from the southern boundary of Fort Ord Dunes State Park to the City of Seaside on the south. West of Highway 1, Sand City has approximately 1.5 miles of shoreline and is comprised primarily of sand dunes. The coastal zone area includes the entire areas west of the highway and a strip of land 200 feet in width inland and adjacent to the highway right-of-way. In addition, the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way and 100 feet on the western side of the right-of-way are also located in the coastal zone. Inland areas are developed at urban intensities with residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The LCP was certified in 1982. No updates are planned currently.

City of Seaside

The City of Seaside coastal zone encompasses roughly 90 acres of land that extends from the shoreline inland of the highway to the terminus of Canyon Del Rey Creek. The Seaside coastal zone includes 500 feet of shore frontage west of Highway 1. A former estuarine complex comprised of Robert's Lake and Laguna Grande makes up the vast portion of the coastal zone inland of the highway. Land uses within the coastal zone include residential, commercial, and park/open space. Habitats found in the Seaside coastal zone include sand dune, estuarine, emergent wetland, and coastal oak woodland. The Seaside LCP was certified by the Commission in 2013.

City of Monterey

The City of Monterey has divided its Land Use Plan (LUP) into five segments: Cannery Row, Harbor, Del Monte Beach, Skyline, and Laguna Grande (the Laguna Grande LUP remains uncertified). The City does not have a certified Implementation Plan. The Commission awarded the City a Round 2 LCP grant (\$235,000) to help support an LCP certification process. Commission staff continues to work closely with the City to support development of its comprehensive LCP. The City is about halfway through the scheduled work program and has made significant progress on the planned tasks, including

outreach, an Existing Conditions Report (including an analysis of sea level rise vulnerability), and a Vision, Goals, and Objectives Report. Future tasks include development of an Alternatives Report and the LCP. Currently, the LCP is divided into five subareas as described below, but the intention of the grant is to update, consolidate, and adopt a single Land Use Plan and Implementation Plan for the City.

Cannery Row LUP: The Commission certified the Cannery Row LUP in 1981. The Cannery Row coastal zone is narrow and primarily extends only to the inland portion of Cannery Row itself. Cannery Row is a popular tourist destination, which contains many shops, restaurants, several hotels, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The Cannery Row coastline is generally rocky but there are two accessible beaches: McAbee Beach and San Carlos Beach. Public and visual access to the coastline is blocked in many locations by development, but there are seven public access areas along the 0.7-mile stretch of Cannery Row. A popular recreational trail (part of the California Coastal Trail (CCT)) passes through the Cannery Row coastal zone.

Harbor LUP: The Commission certified the Harbor LUP in 2003. The Harbor LUP segment is comprised of shoreline property along Monterey Bay and is located west of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School Property and southeast of Cannery Row. This segment is a hub of the tourist and fishing industry and includes the recreational Fisherman's Wharf (Wharf No. 1), the commercial fishing facilities on Wharf No. 2, and two marinas. Window-on-the-Bay Park, the recreational trail (a segment of the CCT), and a portion of Monterey State Beach all lie within this segment. The area contains many of the historic sites of the Monterey State Historic Park.

Del Monte Beach LUP: The Commission certified the Del Monte Beach LUP in 2003. This area abuts the Harbor planning area to the west and the Seaside City limit to the east. Major properties in this area include: the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School; an abandoned wastewater treatment pump station; the Del Monte Beach Tract 2 subdivision (the Commission approved a re-subdivision of this area in 2002, which reduced the number of developable parcels from 60 to 11); the Del Monte Beach Tract 1 subdivision; the oceanfront Ocean Harbor House condominium complex; City and State Parks beach properties; the CCT recreation trail; and the shorefront Monterey Beach Hotel at the Seaside City limit. The Del Monte Beach LUP area contains significant sand dune resources. The Naval Postgraduate School has restored portions of its property with native vegetation. The Commission required four-and-a-half acres of dune habitat to be restored as part of the Del Monte Beach Tract 2 re-subdivision. Portions of the State Parks properties have been restored, with plans for additional restoration in the future.

Skyline LUP: The Commission certified the Skyline LUP in 1992. The most important environmental element of the Skyline planning area is its significant stands of native Monterey pine forest, which shelters unique and sensitive plant associations and endemic species. Existing development in this planning area includes Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and the U.S. Army Presidio.

Laguna Grande LUP: This LUP was never certified, and an Implementation Plan was not developed.

City of Pacific Grove

The City of Pacific Grove is a relatively small coastal city in Monterey County, located immediately west of the City of Monterey and upcoast of the unincorporated Del Monte Forest area. The city's coastal zone is 458 acres, stretching from the Monterey Bay Aquarium to the Asilomar Conference Grounds. The coastal zone includes numerous land use types, including residential and commercial development near its downtown core, as well as restored dune habitat located within Asilomar State Beach. The Land Use Plan was certified by the Commission in 1991, but no Implementation Plan has been approved. As such, the Commission continues to issue coastal development permits in Pacific

Grove's coastal zone. The Commission approved a Round 1 LCP Grant in 2013 (\$130,000) for the city to complete its LCP. This grant period ran from April 2014 to April 2016, and resulted in extensive public outreach on core coastal resource issues and a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, both of which helped form the basis for an updated LUP and a new IP which are currently being heard by the City's City Council and are expected to be submitted to the Coastal Commission shortly. Commission staff continues to work closely with City staff on its LCP update, which will ultimately result in a fully certified LCP for the City.

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

The City of Carmel is located west of Highway 1 and south of the Monterey peninsula between the Del Monte Forest and the Carmel planning area of Monterey County. The City is renowned for its mile-long stretch of white sand beach and quaint residential dwellings nestled among a forest of Monterey pine and oak trees. Land uses within the City are primarily residential, commercial, and open space recreation. The central core of the village is commercial and is comprised of a mix of restaurants, art galleries, and shops that attract visitors from around the State and beyond. Beyond the commercial core are residential uses and visitor serving accommodations, with the remaining area consisting of predominantly open space and parklands. Carmel's LCP was certified in 2004 and contains specific measures to protect the unique village character including historic residences, forest resources, public views, and the spectacular white sand beach.

Sea Level Guidance Implementation Outreach (SP 3.1)

Commission staff have been providing regular outreach and training sessions to support implementation of the Commission's Sea Level Rise (SLR) Guidance and in support of LCP Grant work. In June staff participated in several events:

San Diego Safeguarding California Plan Workshop

On June 12th, Commission staff participated in the San Diego Safeguarding California Plan workshop hosted by the California Natural Resources Agency as a part of efforts to update the State's Climate Adaptation Strategy. Also, as a second part of this meeting, Commission staff contributed at the public input workshop focused on updates to the Ocean Protection Council's Sea Level Rise Guidance document.

San Diego Living Shorelines Workshop

On June 20th, Commission staff attended a regional meeting on Living Shorelines hosted by the San Diego Climate Collaborative; this workshop focused on the potential for implementation of various living shoreline adaptation strategies along the Southern California coastline.

Coast and Ocean Climate Action Team Working Group

On June 28, 2017 Coastal Commission Sea Level Rise Team members participated in the Coast and Ocean Climate Action Team Working Group discussion to receive a status update and provide input to the Ocean Protection Council on the update of the State Sea Level Rise Guidance. As previously reported, the OPC is leading an effort to update the State's Sea Level Rise Guidance based on the sea level rise science and projections contained in the *Rising Seas in California* report, released in April 2017. Commission staff also participated in a smaller coastal state agency group meeting with OPC, BCDC, State Coastal Conservancy, and State Lands Commission staff on June 29, 2017 to further discuss how the current State Sea Level Rise Guidance is being used, and recommendations for the updated guidance.

Meetings and Events

Coastal Commission Webinar on Coastal Agriculture

On June 2nd, Commission staff conducted a webinar on coastal agriculture. The one-hour webinar provided an opportunity for local governments, resource agencies, landowners, and members of the public to learn about the permit process and emerging issues related to coastal agriculture. There were presentations on four topics, with draft supplementary materials, which are posted to the Commission's Agriculture Webpage. The materials include:

- An overview of the permit process for agricultural activities in the coastal zone;
- An overview of the Commission's past actions related to supplemental uses on agricultural lands;
- A fact sheet on managing public access on agricultural lands; and
- A fact sheet on opportunities for carbon storage on active rangelands.

There were nearly 50 participants at the webinar. Commission staff will be finalizing the draft documents and posting them to the Commission's website this fall.

Dedication of the Peter Douglas Accessway in La Conchita

On June 22, 2017, the Peter M. Douglas Coastal Accessway was dedicated in the La Conchita area of Ventura County. The accessway was created pursuant to an [Assembly Resolution](#) introduced by (former) Assemblyman Das Williams (now a Santa Barbara County Supervisor) in 2015 to recognize Peter's unique contributions to the Ventura Highway 101 widening and HOV project.

Highway 101 in the La Conchita area runs directly adjacent to the ocean, providing outstanding views of the beach and ocean. Pre-project conditions were not conducive to either bicycling along or pedestrian access to the beach, but given the beauty of the area many people could not resist the pull of the sea and would bicycle ride alongside high speed traffic delineated only by a simple white stripe along the Highway shoulder. Pedestrians would illegally park along the edge of Highway and climb over a pile of rip rap to reach the beach.

When Caltrans applied to the County to widen the Highway and install HOV lanes, the initial plans included a bike/pedestrian path inland of the new widened Highway (and the parallel rail lines), thus pushing the California Coastal Trail segment well inland - far from the sight, sound and smell of the ocean. Through Peter's persistence, the project was modified to locate the 4.1 mile CCT segment on the ocean side of the Highway, plus significantly upgrade the former drainage culvert that the La Conchita community had been using to get under the railroad and highway to the beach beyond. This new pedestrian underpass is now the Peter Douglas Coastal Accessway.



Coastal Trail Videos (SP 1.4)

The Coastal Commission funded a series of short videos about segments of the California Coastal Trail along California's coast. The videos are produced by Rigler Creative with support of a Commission Whale Tail grant to the International Documentary Association. This series of videos about the coastal trail originally started at the San Diego border and the producers are working their way up the coast. Last year the series focused on the central coast. This year the video series continues north from San Francisco up through Sonoma County. The new videos have now just started to be posted at <https://www.kcet.org/shows/california-coastal-trail>. The new videos are also available through the Commission's website, the Public Education YouTube channel, and on social media.

This month we are highlighting the video featuring the Monterey Bay segment of the Coastal Trail:

<https://www.kcet.org/shows/california-coastal-trail/monterey-bay-sanctuary-serengeti-of-the-sea>

Budget Update

Commission staff will provide a budget update for the Commission at the July meeting. A written report will be posted on the website and copies will be provided to the Commission at the meeting. Commission staff is pleased to be working on budget issues with the Commission Budget Sub-Committee consisting of Commissioner Carole Groom and Commissioner Mary Luevano.