

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

45 FREMONT STREET, SUITE 2000
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219
VOICE (415) 904-5200
FAX (415) 904-5400
WWW.COASTAL.CA.GOV

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Date July 5, 2019

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

FROM: John Ainsworth, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report, July 2019

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

LCP Program Status – San Luis Obispo County (SP Goal 4)

The Central Coast District (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 near the Guadalupe Dunes in the south, and constitutes nearly 300 miles of coastline. The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is located offshore of the majority of this coastline. The District has three coastal counties (Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo) and 12 incorporated cities (Santa Cruz, Capitola, Watsonville, Marina, Sand City, Seaside, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Morro Bay, Pismo Beach, and Grover Beach) each with a certified LCP, with the exception of the Cities of Monterey and Pacific Grove (see agenda item Th11a for the City of Pacific Grove's LCP Certification staff report and recommendation). There are also four major harbors (in Santa Cruz, 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's 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 District's LCPs within San Luis Obispo County are summarized below (Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties and their incorporated cities will be detailed in an Executive Director's report for a future Commission meeting held in the Central Coast District).

San Luis Obispo County

San Luis Obispo County is located along 107 miles of California's temperate Central Coast, between Guadalupe Dunes in Santa Barbara County to the south and the Big Sur coast area of Monterey County to the north. Several major unincorporated communities are located within the San Luis Obispo County coastal zone, including Cambria, Cayucos, Los Osos, Avila Beach, and Oceano. About 251 square miles out of the County's overall 3,616 square miles is located in the coastal zone. This coastal zone area is diverse, both varied in terrain and use, and includes significant beaches, dune areas, rocky headlands, and vast woodland areas mixing with recreational uses, agriculture, visitor-serving facilities and ports, such as Port San Luis in Avila Beach. The San Luis Obispo County LCP was originally certified in 1988. Although the County has no plans for a comprehensive

LCP update at this time, the County continues to pursue modifications to components of the LCP. Perhaps the most significant at this juncture is the County's ongoing development of an updated LCP Community Plan for the Los Osos community. Major resource issues in Los Osos include availability of water as well as the presence of significant environmentally sensitive habitat areas.

There are three cities within San Luis Obispo County with certified LCPs: Morro Bay, Pismo Beach and Grover Beach. Each of these is discussed below.

City of Morro Bay

The City of Morro Bay is located in San Luis Obispo County between the unincorporated areas of Cayucos and Los Osos. The City is approximately six square miles in size and includes large portions of the Morro Bay Estuary, Morro Bay State Park, and Atascadero Beach State Park. Almost all of Morro Bay is located within the coastal zone. Morro Bay provides a large number of important visitor-serving and recreational facilities, and is a popular visitor destination point along the Central Coast. Most of these facilities are concentrated along the bayfront area known as the Embarcadero, which abuts a commercial fishing and recreational boating harbor. Many significant coastal visual resources are located within Morro Bay including Morro Rock, the Morro Bay Estuary, and the surrounding foothills. Additionally, developed portions of Morro Bay, particularly the harbor facilities along the Embarcadero, constitute significant scenic aspects of the City. Morro Bay's LCP was first certified in October 1982, and it was last significantly updated in 1995. The City has recently been awarded several grants to help support a new LCP update effort, including to address coastal hazards, the development of a new wastewater treatment plant (see agenda item Th13a for the staff report and recommendation on the City's proposed Water Reclamation Facility project), potential reuse at and around the former Morro Bay Power Plant site, and continued enhancement of the visitor-serving and recreational areas at and along the Embarcadero. In particular, by leveraging grant funds from the Ocean Protection Council and two grant rounds from the Commission, the City has completed a sea level rise vulnerability assessment and technical studies related to environmentally sensitive habitat areas within the Morro Bay estuary, lateral access opportunities, an inventory of lower-cost accommodations, and the modelling and evaluation of possible sea level rise adaptation strategies. Commission staff continues to work closely with the City on this LCP update effort, including providing directive comments and edits on a draft LCP. City staff intends on locally adopting the LCP update later this year.

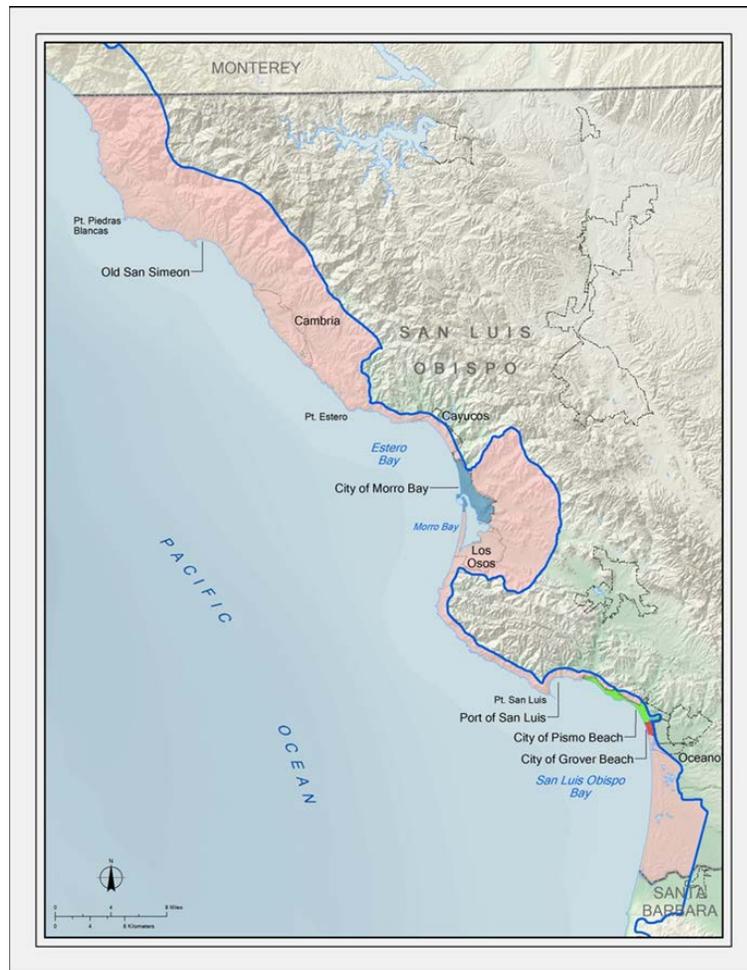
City of Pismo Beach

The City of Pismo Beach stretches along the shoreline for approximately seven miles, and most of the City lies within the coastal zone. The northwestern half of the City is generally confined by steep hillsides that rise to 1,000 feet in some areas and form a magnificent open-space backdrop to the City's northern neighborhoods and the beaches below. A series of recreational beaches stretch to the south, ultimately connecting to and including the beach and dune areas associated with the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area. Mobile home parks, RV parks, and camping areas extend along many of these beaches. North of the downtown, the shore is lined with steep cliffs up to 100 feet above ocean level. Much of this area nearest downtown is developed with larger hotels and restaurants. The remainder of the City is generally made up of the downtown area and residential neighborhoods with smaller beach oriented cottages and apartments in southern Shell Beach and the downtown area, and larger and newer homes and condos east of Highways 1 and 101 and in the northern Shell Beach and Palisades areas. Significant public access is available along much of the City's bluffs, with trail connections extending to the Avila Beach area to the north and to the City of Grover Beach to the south. Pismo Beach's LCP was first certified in 1984, and it was last

significantly updated in 1993. The City received a Round 4 LCP Grant in August 2017 to complete technical studies and to draft LCP provisions related to sea level rise, short-term rentals, and low-cost visitor-serving accommodations. This project is intended to be the first phase of a broader effort to update the City’s LCP, a process upon which the City is about to embark.

City of Grover Beach

The City of Grover Beach is located in southern San Luis Obispo County, just south of the City of Pismo Beach and north of the unincorporated community of Oceano. The City’s coastal zone is roughly one-half square mile in size. The coastal zone is generally bisected by Highway 1, with the beach, dunes, and visitor-serving facilities of Pismo State Beach on the west side of the highway, and urbanized residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods on the east side of the highway. The City’s LCP was originally certified in 1982. The LCP was updated in January 2000, and was recently comprehensively updated in August of 2014. The 2014 update included new protections for environmentally sensitive habitat, including wetlands and other sensitive habitats; new provisions to address sea level rise and flood hazards; and the re-zoning of parcels located within the urbanized portion of the coastal zone to accommodate additional visitor-serving development. After extensive collaboration between City and Commission staff, the comprehensive update was approved by the Commission as submitted by the City.



Meetings and Events

Coastal Commission Receives American Planning Association Planning Landmark Award

The American Planning Association (APA) Los Angeles section awarded the Coastal Act of 1976 with a Planning Landmark Award. APA recognized the Coastal Act’s landmark status, noting:

The Planning Landmark Award is for a planning project, initiative, or endeavor that is at least 25 years old and historically significant, having initiated a new direction in planning or impacts California planning, cities, or regions over a broad range of time. This year’s Award of Excellence goes to the California Coastal Commission for the California Coastal Act of 1976, which has protected the coastal environment and coastal access for millions of Californians. The creation of the Coastal Act by voters in 1972 represents a significant affirmation of the need for planning in California’s history and the history of environmental regulation.”

The award was accepted on behalf of the Commission by South Coast District staff Alex Yee and Zack Rehm.



Sunset Beach LCP Community Meeting (SP4.1 & 4.4)

On June 4, Commission staff participated in a community meeting hosted by the City of Huntington Beach to discuss the status of the Sunset Beach LCP segment. This is an example of the early coordination staff are prioritizing statewide to coordinate with local governments and community members on LCP updates. The meeting was well attended and included productive discussions on several topics of interest to the community. Commission staff provided a presentation on sea level rise science and the Commission’s Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance.

Marin County Tour and Reception for Commission’s North Central Coast District Staff

On June 24, Marin County Supervisor Dennis Rodoni hosted a welcome reception for North Central Coast District Staff in Marin with the local community. The trip included site visits around Point Reyes and Tomales Bay and a reception at the Point Reyes National Seashore Red Barn to meet and greet partners, stakeholders and residents.

New Pismo Beach Access Stairway (SP 1.1.4)

A new beach stairway set to open on July 4 in northern Pismo Beach, providing beach access for the Sunset Beach Estates neighborhood by connecting to the pre-existing Cliffs Hotel beach access stairway. Both stairways were required by a 2001 Commission permit. The Cliffs Hotel constructed and operates the public stairway on the south side of the arroyo; the new stairway is located on the north side of the arroyo and was constructed and will be operated by the adjacent property owners on behalf of the public. The new stairway is an important component in the City of Pismo Beach’s trail network which includes beach stairways, bluff top trails, parking areas and other public access amenities.



California Environmental Justice Alliance Third Annual State Agency Assessment Report for 2018

On June 21, several members of the Commission’s Government Alliance for Racial Equity and Environmental Justice teams travelled to Sacramento to attend the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) third annual state agency assessment report for 2018. CEJA recognized the progress made by the Coastal Commission in adopting the agency’s environmental justice policy, but noted that implementation efforts are still too early to assess.

Federal Programs Manager Participation in Rhode Island CZMA Section 312 Evaluation, June 18 – 20, 2019.

The Coastal Commission Federal Program Manager participated in the evaluation of Rhode Island’s Coastal Management Program June 18 – 20 in Providence and South Kingston, Rhode Island. Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) requires that NOAA evaluate the approved coastal management program for each state every 3-5 years and that a state representative participate in the evaluation to offer state perspective. The Rhode Island Coastal Management Program is similar to the California program in that both programs have an appointed decision-making body that provides a regulatory decision-making function over

coastal development in the state's coastal zone. The evaluation focused on Rhode Island's efforts related to coastal hazards and climate resiliency, ocean planning and program administration. This included discussion of Rhode Island's completion of a Beach Special Area Management Plan that provides innovative visualization and modeling tools for understanding risks to shoreline development from sea level rise and flooding and requires project applicants to complete a coastal hazards check-list for permitting new development or substantial redevelopment. The evaluation also reviewed the accomplishment of Rhode Island's Ocean Special Area Management Plan and how it is being used in the review and permitting of offshore wind development in both state and federal waters.

Commission Public Education Events (SP 7.3)

Plastic Free July is a campaign that encourages people to eliminate single-use plastic items from their life for one month (led by the [Plastic Free Foundation](#)). As part of our sustainability efforts around waste reduction, the Public Education Program is promoting Plastic Free July through social media. The Public Education Program blog post on Plastic Free July highlights the problem of plastic pollution and asks people to rise to the challenge and hopefully find actions that will fit into lives' long term. Here's a link to the blog with a short list of specific actions that you can take to reduce plastic pollution, while also reducing fossil fuel use (coal, oil, and natural gas), as well as landfill space.

<https://thecacoast.tumblr.com/post/147109398942/plastic-free-july>



Commission's Budget

Because of the length of the Commission's July agenda, we will provide a budget status report to the Commission at the August meeting.