

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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Th9f

ADDENDUM

June 9, 2021

To: Commissioners and Interested Persons

From: California Coastal Commission
San Diego Staff

Subject: Addendum to **Item Th9f**, Coastal Commission Local Coastal Plan Amendment Application No. **LCP-6-19-0142-2 (Fiesta Island)**, for the Commission Meeting of June 10, 2021.

The purpose of this addendum is to add the City of San Diego's response to staff's recommendation as a new exhibit, as well as clarify aspects of the staff recommendation and address issues raised in public comments. Staff recommends the following changes be made to the above-referenced staff report. Deletions shall be marked by ~~strikethrough~~ and additions shall be underlined:

1. On Page 5 of the staff report, add a new Exhibit 7 (attached) as follows:

EXHIBIT 7: City of San Diego Response Letter

2. On Page 9 of the staff report, Suggested Modification No. 5 shall be changed as follows:

Section 12 North Fiesta Island

The Island's north subarea is a controlled habitat preserve area for the California Least Tern. In addition to sandy areas, this area includes mudflats, lower, mid and upper salt marsh and expanded wetland habitat. The existing mile-long paved roadway located around the perimeter of the subarea will be removed except for an approximately 1,600-foot long segment on the east side. The shortened roadway (to be regraded to drain inward, away from the coast, to promote wetland formation) shall be redeveloped into a two-lane road with turnaround to accommodate for bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles, allowing the public to access the beach areas on the east side of the peninsula. Gates provided at the western entry points to the northern area. Maintain visibly permeable fences with anti-perching features and interpretive signage around the Least Tern and salt marsh sites, with the interior space to be accessed only by

authorized individuals. Public access shall be maintained to the roadway and eastern beach areas year-round, and the remainder of the north subarea shall be closed to public access year-round to protect the Least Tern and salt marsh sites. Dredge a channel across the Island along with bridges at the western and eastern roadway points to create new habitat areas and improve water circulation. The habitat improvements to the least tern nesting site and new wetlands shall be prioritized in the overall redevelopment of Fiesta Island and shall be completed prior to full redevelopment of the Southeast Subarea.

3. On Page 23 of the staff report, a new paragraph shall be added after the last full paragraph as follows:

Because the new public shoreline recreation area would contain boat facilities, some members of the public are concerned that once the facility is constructed, it would become a privatized boat facility serving only members of competitive boating groups and closed to the general public. However, there are no policies or plans in the LUP that allow for the boat amenities such as the dock and boat storage to be privatized for use only by boating groups, and doing so would not be in conformance with the public access policies of the Coastal Act. All park facilities proposed along the southern shoreline would be open to general public use, and not exclusively for formal boating groups. Furthermore, the boat storage and dock is only a part of the southern shoreline park; the concept plan as modified calls for playgrounds, parking, restrooms, and a supervised swim area, meaning that the southern shoreline park would be conducive to use by a wide range of the public, such as families, and not just personal watercraft users. Existing boat storage spaces located elsewhere in Mission Bay Park, including Campland and De Anza, will be removed in the future as those areas are restored to wetlands or redeveloped, which has led some boating groups to call for long-term boat storage rental space to be included in the new park facility. However, any such development would be reviewed under a project-specific permit, with the final development being available to all of the public, not just members of a formal boating group.

4. On Page 23-24 of the staff report, the final paragraph shall be revised as follows:

Given the quarter-to-half mile distance between the south shore of Fiesta Island and the nearest parking, the south shore goes unused by a wide swath of the coastal visiting public who would otherwise be well served by its calm waters and wide beach. With the current distance between the nearest parking and the southern shore, even members of the public not participating in boating may find it difficult to carry their beach equipment to the shore and would be deterred from using this portion of the shoreline. Instead, they would be more inclined to go to the other, already crowded parts of Mission Bay Park. Given the substantial crowding of Mission Bay Park's beaches and insufficient parking capacity during the peak summer months and major holidays, the underutilization of almost half-mile of beach is not the most balanced use of coastal resources and is a substantial impact on the ability of the public to

recreate on the coast. Furthermore, USFWS has expressed support for the suggested modifications to the proposed LUP amendment, and with the recommended closure of a half-mile of beach at the northern end of Fiesta Island necessary to save the failing nesting area for the endangered California least tern, described in greater detail below and in the “Habitat” section of this report, it is important to ensure that the existing public uses there have sufficient viable options to relocate to without putting additional burden on other already crowded beach areas.

5. On Page 24 of the staff report, the first full paragraph shall be revised as follows and a new paragraph added afterward:

Proponents of Option B argue that the southern shore is utilized by the public who walk along the shoreline with their dogs, and this use would be adversely impacted by additional fencing associated with Option A. While this is a popular public use warranting of protection, that use is not mutually exclusive with the broader public access and uses that would be available as part of Option A. While Option A describes the new public recreational and boating areas as fenced off from the off-leash dog park area to ensure safety and minimize accidents between vehicles and off-leash dogs, the amendment is a concept plan only, with details to be determined once project-specific permits come forward. That means that the new shoreline park will not necessarily require fencing down to the water line, and dog walking along the water may still be able to occur depending upon the location of future fencing. In addition, the existing publicly accessible portions of the island, which is the majority of its 470 acres, allow dogs to be off-leash, and that will still remain under the plan as modified.

Proponents of Option B also argue that a segment of the California Coastal Trail (CCT), the statewide trail system designed to allow people to walk and bike along the coastline, is mapped around the perimeter of Fiesta Island, and that development of a shoreline park will inevitably include topographic changes to the upland berm backing the sandy beach, impacting its visual quality. While project-specific details of the eventual shoreline park will not be determined until a permit application is submitted by the City, it is true that grading will likely be required to provide public stairs and ramps to the beach. However, such features would further enhance access to the coast along this stretch of the CCT, not impair it, and the shoreline park will be substantially at-grade open space once it is developed, in line with the existing open space character of Fiesta Island.

6. On Page 28 of the staff report, the final full paragraph shall be changed as follows:

The modified amendment’s creation of wetlands next to the least tern nesting site within the eastern inland portions of the North Subarea would provide further foraging areas for the terns as well as other listed species, such as the federally endangered light-footed Ridgway rail. While the final design of the

wetlands will be determined through a project-specific permit, in order to ensure the long-term viability of any future wetland and maximize its benefit to Mission Bay's water quality, it will be important to ensure the wetlands have adequate hydrological connections, both through the proposed cross-island channel along its south and potentially through a northern channel connection across the beach at the tip of the island. Because the wetlands will be hydrologically connected to the bay waters and would be intended by the City and USFWS to serve as natural, undisturbed habitat, the new wetlands would also be closed to the public year round to ensure that human and off-leash dog activity do not adversely impact the habitat or disturb sensitive species making use of it. The separation would be enforced through a mixture of signage and low-scale fencing to dissuade perching by raptors that may prey on the least terns and other shore birds utilizing the area. Finally, because the wetlands would be a substantial improvement to both the habitat resources and water quality of Mission Bay Park, its benefit would be maximized if the construction of the wetlands was prioritized earlier in Fiesta Island's redevelopment rather than later. The City has indicated that they are amendable to prioritizing construction of the wetlands in the redevelopment of Fiesta Island, and the suggested modifications contain policy language prioritizing development of the wetlands over other development. Because most of the new recreational development on Fiesta Island, such as the new concession and primitive camping leasehold, will be located in the Southeast Subarea, a reasonable timing threshold is for the construction of the wetlands to be completed prior to the full redevelopment of the Southeast Subarea.

June 4, 2022

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City of San Diego LCP Amendment No. LCP-6-SAN-19-0142-2 (Fiesta Island)

Dear California Coastal Commission Commissioners,

The Planning Department appreciates staff's careful review of the Fiesta Island Amendment and is in general support of the staff's recommendations with the following comments. Regarding the proposed revisions to the Southwest Subarea, we would like to reiterate that the City Council adopted Option B to retain the larger off leash dog park area after reviewing public comments and testimony throughout the public hearing process. Based on the input received, and after careful consideration of the land use alternatives, the City Council determined that the most appropriate uses of the subarea are reflected in Option B.

We request that the Commission consider the immense and overwhelming public input that resulted in the land use plan adopted by the City Council, which we believe strikes a balance and provides public access in accordance with the public access and recreation policies in Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act.

Regarding the proposed modifications to the Northern Subarea, we are supportive of staff's recommendation to address ongoing impacts to the least tern habitat to ensure conformance with the habitat protection policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Specifically, we are supportive of the relocation of the 30-acre least tern site adjacent to the western beach, the closure of the nesting area to public access year round to protect the least terns and their nesting habitat, and the eastern half of the subarea becoming a wetland.

Regarding the removal of the portion of Fiesta Island Road in this subarea, we are supportive of the recommendation, with modifications. Specifically, the staff recommendation to retain the ¼ mile stretch of vehicular access via Fiesta Island Road to maintain year-round public access to the eastern beach area does not appear to be consistent with the habitat protection or public access and recreation policies in Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Specifically, better public access – coupled with a less impactful intrusion into the sensitive habitat – could be accommodated with a pedestrian only access area on this same stretch of roadway, which would better serve each of the applicable Coastal Act policies.

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Mr. Alex Llerandi
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Limiting vehicular access limits the impacts to the sensitive habitat and would result in a more enjoyable coastal access experience. With the removal of regular vehicular traffic, more people, including families with small children will be able to safely and actively enjoy this extraordinary beach access experience.

Sincerely,



Heidi Vonblum, Deputy Director, Planning Department

HV/kf

Cc: Mike Hansen, Director, Planning Department
Tom Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Planning Department
Andy Field, Director, Park and Recreation Department
Kristy Forburger, Development Project Manager III, Planning Department