

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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December 9, 2022

TO: California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

FROM: John Ainsworth, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report, December 2022

Non-Competitive LCP Local Assistance Grants

In October 2021 and November 2022, in conjunction with additional LCP Grant Program updates, the Commission approved a non-competitive grant application process by which grant proposals for up to \$500,000 could be approved by the Executive Director and announced at the following Coastal Commission meeting. The following non-competitive grants were approved over the past month:

City of National City, \$100,000: The City of National City is proposing to use LCP grant funding to complete targeted amendments to the Local Coastal Program (LCP) to update General Plan and Zoning Code references, strengthen coastal resilience and support environmental justice, and lay the groundwork for a later comprehensive LCP update. This will include review of completed and in-process technical, environmental, and planning studies to identify technical study gaps needed to prepare for sea level rise and increase coastal resiliency, as well as to improve coastal access and achieve other Coastal Act goals. Coastal resiliency policies will include (at a minimum) baseline sea level rise policies.

State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency (STEPPE) Taskforce Meeting and Revised Agency Partnership Agreement

Efforts to implement the 2020 multi-agency Transportation Permitting Task Force report recommendations continue, as prescribed by Assembly Bill 1282 (2017). The Taskforce includes the Secretaries of the California State Transportation Agency, Natural Resources Agency, and Environmental Protection Agency, the Chair of the California Transportation Commission, the Directors of Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, along with the Executive Directors of the Coastal Commission, the State Water Quality Control Board and two Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

On November 10th, Dr. Kate Huckelbridge, Tami Grove, Peter Allen, and I virtually attended a Taskforce meeting to review progress on this overall effort, rebranded as the “State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency” (STEPPE). A key outcome of the meeting was concurrence to renew a supporting Partnership Agreement between the California Transportation, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Agencies. Terms of the Agreement include the Agencies providing leadership in the ongoing development of effective early engagement processes so that transportation projects can be planned and designed to be consistent with resource agency mandates and thereby reduce permitting process delays. This includes recognition of the shared goals of completing transportation projects while also protecting and enhancing the state’s natural, historic and cultural resources and responding to changing climatic conditions. The Agreement also acknowledges the need to “*ensure availability and allocation of the appropriate level of staff resources among the representative agencies to support the Transportation Permitting Task Force, STEPPE working groups, and technical committees throughout the development and ongoing implementation of the new structured coordination processes.*”

The Commission’s Transportation Program staff continue to participate in the STEPPE Steering Committee, Implementation Management Group and a variety of Working Groups, along with representatives from Caltrans, CDFW and State and Water Boards. The Working Group areas of focus include: incorporating resource considerations into Caltrans cost/benefit analyses; expanding Caltrans’ Corridor Management Plan guidelines to address environmental factors, such as sea level rise; advancing cross-agency teams to improve treatment of aquatic resources and wildlife crossings; refining environmental components on Caltrans Asset Management Tool that influences selection and funding of projects; and, developing a structured process for early engagement of resource agencies with Caltrans during their project development process.

Coastal Counties Regional Association Meeting

On November 1, Dr. Joe Street gave a presentation at the Coastal Counties Regional Association Meeting at the 2022 CSAC Annual Conference, on the topic of the recent threats to the OCTA/Metrolink rail line in south Orange County, and the emergency work we’ve permitted to protect and stabilize this important rail corridor. The presentation focused on the Cyprus Shores landslide and OCTA’s efforts to stabilize the slide by placing large amounts of riprap on the beach seaward of the train tracks, but also covered some of the underlying causes -- especially the long-term narrowing of the beach due to declining sand supply -- and touched on the need to consider broader strategies for addressing sea level rise, ranging from beach nourishment and sand retention structures to inland relocation of the rail corridor.

SLR Presentation to State & Regional Water Board Leadership

On Tuesday, November 29 Deputy Executive Director, Madeline Cavalieri, Statewide Planning Supervisor, Kelsey Ducklow and I gave a presentation to the State and Regional Water Board leadership on the Commission’s efforts related to sea level rise adaptation planning. We highlighted the Commission Sea Level Rise Guidance document; the Critical Infrastructure Guidance document; LCP resiliency grants for local governments; the Local Government

Working Groups efforts to find common ground with our local government partners on SLR adaptation planning; and discussed the short and long term challenges related to adapting critical infrastructure to rising sea levels. We also agreed to begin a partnering effort to improve communications and collaboration between the Commission and the State Water Board and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

50th Anniversary of The Passage of Proposition 20

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of Proposition 20, the citizen-led initiative that created the Coastal Commission and established the framework for the Coastal Act passed by the Legislature four years later. To celebrate this landmark event, the Commission is working with historian Dr. Todd Holmes of the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley to produce a short documentary highlighting the history of the initiative. Told through the voices of those involved in the Prop 20 campaign, these personal narratives will be supplemented with archival material from 1972. The documentary, estimated at 30 minutes in length, will be completed by May 2023, and be available to high school teachers and college professors as an educational tool.

Public Education Program

King Tides

The public is invited to observe and document the highest tides of the year on December 23 and 24 and January 21 and 22 for the California King Tides Project. Find local high tide times, instructions for uploading photos, resources for educators, and past king tide photos at www.coastal.ca.gov/kingtides.

Emergency Permits

Central Coast

G-3-22-0033 (Monterey County). Emergency measures to manage the sandbar at Carmel River State Beach during the 2022-23 rainy season, including by cutting and managing a channel between the lagoon and Carmel Bay to reduce the water level in the lagoon so as to avoid/minimize flooding of existing residences and State Beach facilities upcoast and to the north of the lagoon fronting Carmel River State Beach, Monterey County.

South Coast District – Orange County

G-5-22-0035 (OCTA/SCRRA). Installation of two rows of 118 ground anchors (also called tiebacks) for a total of 236 tiebacks approximately 133-feet into the bluff face to stabilize the landslide and approximately 700 linear feet of two rows of buried grade beams occurring in phases: mobilization and vegetation clearing, earthwork, tieback installation, and slope restoration. Cyprus Shores residential area (within Metrolink ROW near milepost 206.8), City of San Clemente, Orange County.