

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

NORTH CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT
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Prepared March 25, 2022 (for April 7, 2022 Hearing)

To: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Persons

From: Dan Carl, North Central Coast District Director

Subject: North Central Coast District Director's Report for April 2022

The following coastal development permit (CDP) waivers, immaterial CDP amendments, immaterial CDP extensions, emergency CDPs, and local government acceptance of modifications for LCP certification for the North Central Coast District Office are being reported to the Commission on April 7, 2022. Pursuant to the Commission's procedures, each item has been appropriately noticed as required, and each item is also available for review at the Commission's North Central Coast District Office in San Francisco. Staff is asking for the Commission's concurrence on the items in the North Central Coast District Director's Report and will report any objections received and any other relevant information on these items to the Commission when it considers the Report on April 7th during the virtual online hearing.

With respect to the April 7th hearing, interested persons may sign up to address the Commission on items contained in this Report prior to the Commission's consideration of the Report. The Commission can overturn staff's noticed determinations for some categories of items subject to certain criteria in each case (see individual notices for specific requirements).

Items being reported on April 7, 2022 (see attached)

CDP Waivers

- 2-22-0192-W, Caltrans Pescadero Creek Bridge Railings (Pescadero, San Mateo County)

CDP Amendments – None

CDP Extensions – None

Emergency CDPs – None

LCP Certifications – None

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NOTICE OF PROPOSED PERMIT WAIVER

Date: March 23, 2022
To: All Interested Parties
From: Stephanie Rexing, North Central Coast District Manager
Rainey Graeven, Coastal Planner
Subject: Coastal Development Permit (CDP) Waiver 2-22-0192-W
Applicant: Caltrans

Proposed Development

Replacement of aging concrete bridge barriers and metal beam guard rails with new more see-through bridge rails and Midwest guardrail system (MGS) respectively; minor repairs of bridge approach slab surfaces; and, in partnership with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), restoration/enhancement of approximately 5,800 square feet of dunes, all on or adjacent to Pescadero Creek Bridge (at postmile 14.0) along Highway 1 in the Pescadero area of unincorporated San Mateo County.

Executive Director's Waiver Determination

Pursuant to Title 14, Section 13252 of the California Code of Regulations, and based on project plans and information submitted by the Applicant regarding the proposed development, the Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission hereby waives the requirement for a CDP for the following reasons:

The proposed project was developed in response to multiple inspection reports that revealed structural and related problems (e.g., delaminations, spalls, deteriorating concrete, rusting railings, and exposed rebar) in the bridge barriers and approach slabs on and adjacent to the Pescadero Creek Bridge. To protect the structural integrity of the bridge, and of the highway corridor of which it is a critical part, Caltrans will replace the existing aging bridge barriers and related guard beams and make minor repairs to the approach slabs. Specifically, the existing concrete bridge barriers will be replaced with standard Type 85 barriers, which the Commission has often approved because they are more visually permeable than other barriers, and the exterior western pedestrian railing of concrete and rusting metal will be replaced with a new custom see-through galvanized steel railing. The new bridge railings will offer significantly more through views and visual connectivity with the surrounding natural areas compared to the existing bridge barriers, thus improving public views and the public viewshed. Similarly, the new bridge railings will protect existing public access across the bridge, including by maintaining both the existing separated pedestrian walkway and bicycle shoulders without any reduction in space. Finally, existing metal beam guardrail will also be replaced with MGS, the updated standard guardrail system currently used by Caltrans

CDP 2-22-0192-W (Pescadero Creek Bridge Railings)

and regularly approved by the Commission, and all construction will take place from the bridge and highway right-of-way and will employ numerous BMPs to protect resources, including maintaining public pedestrian access across the bridge during construction.

Further, Caltrans has partnered with State Parks for a project to restore and enhance Pescadero Creek habitat resources on State Park property near the bridge site as well. The restoration and enhancement project would be part of broader interagency efforts over many years that have been designed to enhance/improve the Pescadero Lagoon and Marsh area (areas that have been artificially manipulated by agricultural uses and the highway alignment for over a century). The project is primarily intended to help minimize the size, extent, and duration of the 'inverted delta' (i.e., where an excess of sand in the lagoon limits ocean connectivity most months of the year). The restoration/enhancement project would restore/enhance approximately 5,800 square feet of the dune area below and adjacent to the bridge, including through removal of non-native invasive species and planting of native dune species to help stabilize the dune and minimize the sand transport/inverted delta phenomenon.

In summary, the proposed project will result in aesthetic improvements to the bridge barriers themselves; will improve public views of the ocean and marsh (and the viewshed overall); will improve highway safety; will protect public access; will restore/enhance dune areas adjacent to the bridge; and will include a series of construction BMPs to protect coastal resources during construction. Accordingly, the project appropriately protects against significant coastal resource impacts, and leads to enhancement of certain coastal resource values, consistent with Coastal Act Chapter 3 and the certified San Mateo County Local Coastal Program.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Section 13096 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations requires that a specific finding be made in conjunction with coastal development permit applications showing the application to be consistent with any applicable requirements of CEQA. CEQA Section 21080.5(d)(2)(a) prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives and/or feasible mitigation measures available that would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect that the development may have on the environment. Caltrans, acting as lead CEQA agency, adopted a Negative Declaration for the project in October 2020.

The Commission's review, analysis, and decision-making process for CDPs and CDP amendments has been certified by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency as being the functional equivalent of the environmental review required by CEQA (CCR Section 15251(f)). Accordingly, in fulfilling that review, this report has discussed the relevant coastal resource issues with the proposal and has concluded that approval of the proposed CDP waiver is not expected to result in any significant environmental effects, including as those terms are understood in CEQA.

Accordingly, it is unnecessary for the Commission to suggest modifications (including through alternatives and/or mitigation measures) as there are no significant adverse environmental effects that approval of the proposed CDP waiver would necessitate.

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Thus, the proposed CDP waiver will not result in any significant adverse environmental effects for which feasible mitigation measures have not been employed, consistent with CEQA Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A).

Coastal Commission Review Procedure

This waiver is not valid until the waiver has been reported to the Coastal Commission. This waiver is proposed to be reported to the Commission on Thursday, April 7, 2022, during the hybrid Coastal Commission meeting taking place in person at the Ventura County Board of Supervisors Chambers and via teleconference. If three or more Commissioners object to this waiver at that time, then the application shall be processed as a regular CDP application.

If you have any questions about the proposal or wish to register an objection, please contact Rainey Graeven (Rainey.Graeven@coastal.ca.gov) in the North Central Coast District office.