

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO DISTRICT OFFICE
7575 METROPOLITAN DRIVE, SUITE 103
SAN DIEGO, CA 92108-4402
VOICE (619) 767-2370
FAX (619) 767-2384



Th21b

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STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

Application No.: 6-24-0480

Applicant: City of Del Mar

Agent: Ashley Jones

Location: Camino Del Mar Bridge across the San Dieguito River in the City of Del Mar, San Diego County

Project Description: Application of City of Del Mar to replace the 2-lane Camino Del Mar bridge over the San Dieguito River. The new bridge will include bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the bridge, two pedestrian overlooks on the west side, two biofiltration tree wells, coastal access trail connections. The project also includes temporary access roads and trestles, reconfigured roadway approaches and embankments, and offsite coastal sage scrub mitigation in the City of Del Mar, San Diego County.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The City of Del Mar (City) proposes construction of the Camino Del Mar Bridge Replacement (project). The project area is located along Camino Del Mar, south of Via de la Valle, where the bridge crosses the San Dieguito River at the outlet to the Pacific Ocean. The primary purpose of the project is to replace a functionally obsolete, aging, and seismically unsound two-lane bridge with a bridge built to modern structural and

seismic standards, while creating multimodal public access opportunities within this scenic coastal setting. The new bridge will not increase vehicular capacity.

The project would construct a five-span cast-in-place pre-stressed concrete box girder bridge with a length of 624 feet between abutments and a width of 68.5 linear feet, located along the same alignment as the existing bridge. In anticipation of sea level rise the new bridge is slightly longer, wider, and higher and the number of columns in the channel will be reduced from ten to four. The Camino Del Mar roadway approaches and sidewalks would require modifications to the new design.

In addition to replacing the bike lanes on the bridge and the sidewalk on the west side, the proposed design increases multimodal public access benefits through a new sidewalk along the east side of the bridge and two new pedestrian view overlooks along the west sidewalk, offering panoramic viewing opportunities of the Pacific Ocean and beaches. **Special Condition 10** protects public access during construction ensuring adequate public parking, pedestrian and cyclist access, and ongoing beach and trail access.

Located within the ecologically important San Dieguito River, the project site area generally includes sensitive habitat. Although construction will temporarily impact open water and benthic habitat beneath the bridge, the new bridge design will reduce the amount of fill within the channel, increasing open water habitat by more than 2,000 square feet, which is anticipated to enhance tidal exchange and habitat functions. Several Special Conditions enhance protections for sensitive biological resources within the project area through various BMPs and avoidance measures. Special Conditions also ensure the protection of potential tribal resources of the Kumeyaay Nation.

The bridge location epitomizes the highly valued Southern California coastal landscape, featuring views of the Pacific Ocean, San Dieguito River mouth, sandy beaches, and protected coastal bluffs. The proposed bridge railing is designed to replicate the existing railing. The City of Del Mar has agreed to **Special Condition 1** that requires a revised railing design featuring horizontal members to open up more panoramic views and to enhance the visual harmony between the new bridge and the natural landscape within this coastal viewshed. To further visually deemphasize the roadway infrastructure within this coastal setting, **Special Condition 1** also requires application of integrally colored concrete throughout the project. All proposed concrete project elements will be "Mesa Buff" color to ensure the new bridge and its approaches are aesthetically compatible with the coastal bluffs and sandy beaches that visually dominate this important coastal viewshed.

In conclusion, the proposed bridge replacement is necessary and appropriate to provide safe public access to and along the coast; it has been designed and conditioned to minimize adverse impacts to riparian habitat, marine resources, and water quality; it ensures long-term resilience of the bridge; it will create multimodal public access; and it will protect visual resources, archaeological resources, and other coastal resources to the maximum extent feasible. Thus, Staff recommends that the Commission

conditionally approve CDP 6-24-0480. The motion and resolution for this recommendation can be found on page 4.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION	4
II. STANDARD CONDITIONS	4
III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS	5
IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS	13
A. Project Description and Background	13
B. Public Access and Recreation.....	15
C. Biological Resources.....	17
D. Coastal Hazards, Air Quality, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions.....	23
E. Cultural Resources and Tribal Consultation	27
F. Visual Resources	29
G. Local Coastal Planning	31
H. California Environmental Quality Act.....	31
APPENDIX A – SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS	33

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit 1 – Project Vicinity Map](#)

[Exhibit 2 – Project Location Map](#)

[Exhibit 3 – Existing Bridge Looking West](#)

[Exhibit 4- Existing and Proposed Bridge Profiles Looking East](#)

I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

Motion:

I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit 6-24-0480 pursuant to the staff recommendation.

Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the foregoing motion. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of Commissioners present.

Resolution:

The Commission hereby approves the Coastal Development Permit for the proposed project and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

II. STANDARD CONDITIONS

1. **Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment.** The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the applicant or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
2. **Expiration.** If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
3. **Interpretation.** Any questions of intent of interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
4. **Assignment.** The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
5. **Terms and Conditions Run with the Land.** These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the applicant to bind

all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. **Revised Final Plans.** PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit, for the review and written approval of the Executive Director, revised Final Plans that conform to the plans submitted to the Commission, titled, "Project Plans for Construction of Camino Del Mar Bridge Replacement Project" Final plans, and shall be revised to include the following:
 - A. Revised concrete specification to include "Mesa Buff" integrally colored concrete to minimize visual resource impacts for all concrete elements.
 - B. Revised vehicular and pedestrian guardrail designs to minimize visual impacts of the new bridge through implementation of a more visually permeable railing design featuring corrosion-resistant marine-grade horizontal rail members.
 - C. Revised Landscape Plans for tree well plantings including tree species, sizes, and locations.
2. **Construction Lighting Impact Minimization.** Permanent project lighting is prohibited. All temporary construction lighting shall be minimized and directed toward active work sites. All temporary construction lighting shall be shielded down and away from the shoreline, natural areas, and adjacent properties. Night work requiring construction lighting shall avoid fish spawning (February-September) and bird nesting (March-September) seasons to the greatest practicable extent.
3. **Hydroacoustic Monitoring and Mitigation Plan.** PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Director, a Hydroacoustic Monitoring and Mitigation Plan that provides estimates of the sound pressure field generated by the planned pile driving, identifies areas where fish may be at risk of injury, and provides a real-time monitoring plan to document actual underwater sound pressure levels. To be protective of marine resources, peak sound pressure levels generated by the pile driving activities shall not exceed 206 decibels at 10 meters from source and accumulated sound exposure levels shall not exceed 187 decibels.
4. **Grunion Monitoring & Avoidance Plan.** PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit to the Executive Director for review and written approval, a Grunion Monitoring and Avoidance Plan that provides for the following:
 - A. The Permittee shall avoid impacts to mature and spawning grunion and to grunion eggs during possible grunion spawning periods. The annually published California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) expected grunion runs shall be used to determine possible grunion spawning periods, as well as the period between March 1 and August 31 of any year.

- B. The plan shall include a monitoring plan for grunion runs beginning at least two weeks prior to commencement of construction activities. Monitoring is not necessary in areas where there is no sand, such as areas supporting 100% cobble, rock slope protection, or sheet piles.
- C. Grunion monitoring shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for 30 minutes prior to, and two hours following, the predicted start of each daily spawning event. Sufficient qualified biologists shall be employed to ensure that the entire proposed work site is monitored during the predicted grunion run. The magnitude and extent of a spawning event shall be defined in 300-foot segments of beach using the Walker Scale. Every individual fish (males and females) shall be counted to determine the Walker Scale value (e.g. 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) of each 300-foot segment within the proposed work area.
- D. In the event of a grunion run occurs during construction, construction activities shall be modified according to the following plan:
 - 1) If a grunion run consisting of 0-100 individual fish per 300-foot segment (Walker Scale 0 or 1) is reported within two weeks prior to, or during, construction work, the Permittee does not need to take any avoidance action for grunion eggs. No mature grunion may be buried or harmed as a result of construction.
 - 2) Within two weeks prior to proposed work, if a grunion run consisting of 100 or more individual fish per 300-foot segment (Walker Scale 2, 3, 4, or 5) is reported, the Permittee shall avoid work on the respective beach segment and shall avoid a 100-foot buffer on either side of the segment(s), for a minimum of two weeks, to ensure that no grunion eggs are buried or disturbed. These areas shall be memorialized through multiple GPS coordinates and marked with irrigation flags for a minimum of two weeks or when the next scheduled grunion run will be monitored. The Permittee shall adapt the construction schedule to avoid operations on such beach segments and their associated buffers. No mature grunion may be harmed as a result of construction.
 - 3) If construction has already commenced, and a grunion run consisting of 100 to 500 individual fish, in one or more 300-foot segment (Walker Scale 2) in the work area is reported, the Permittee shall avoid impacts to grunion eggs to the greatest extent feasible.
 - 4) If construction has already commenced, and a grunion run consisting of 500 or more individual fish per segment (Walker Scale 3, 4, or 5) is reported, the Permittee shall avoid work on the respective beach segment(s) and a 100-foot buffer on either side of the segment(s), for a minimum of two weeks, to ensure that no grunion eggs are buried or disturbed. These areas shall be memorialized through multiple GPS coordinates, and marked with irrigation flags for a minimum of two weeks when the next scheduled grunion run will be monitored. The Permittee shall adapt the construction schedule to avoid operations on such beach segments and their associated buffers. No mature grunion may be harmed as a result of construction.

- 5. Final Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.** PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit the Final Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and proof of a Water Quality Certification to the Executive Director for review and written approval. The SWPPP shall include all housekeeping, source control, and treatment control best management practices (BMPs) that will be used during construction and shall be updated as needed to reflect progression and phasing of the project. The Permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approved SWPPP and Water Quality Certification. Minor adjustments to the approved SWPPP may be allowed by the Executive Director if such adjustments: (1) are deemed reasonable and necessary by the Executive Director; and (2) do not adversely impact coastal resources.
- 6. Construction Plan.** NOT LESS THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit two copies of a Construction Plan to the Executive Director for review and written approval. The Construction Plan shall, at a minimum, include the following:
- A. **Construction Areas.** The Plan shall identify the specific location of all construction areas, all staging areas, and all construction access corridors in site plan view. All such areas within which construction activities and/or staging are to take place shall minimize impacts on coastal resources to the maximum extent feasible. This Plan shall include any actively managed stream diversions beyond passive flow of waters through the construction site, around coffer dams, pile casings etc.
 - B. **Construction Methods.** The Plan shall specify the construction methods to be used, including all methods to be used to keep construction areas separated from public use areas and to ensure uninterrupted public use, and including verification that equipment operation and equipment and material storage will not significantly degrade public views during construction, all to the maximum extent feasible.
 - C. **Construction Traffic Controls.** The Plans shall include identification of all measures to be taken to limit lane closures to the maximum extent feasible and be in substantial conformance with such limitations proposed in the application. All one-way traffic lane closures shall provide for full and continuous access for pedestrians and cyclists through the work corridor, except during identified limited complete closures. The Plans shall also provide for emergency services to cross through construction work areas, including during any one-way traffic lane or full road closures. Updated versions of construction duration traffic controls shall be provided after any substantial changes. Other than guardrails approved by this CDP or temporary fencing or K-rail fencing/barriers, no new fencing or permanent K-rail fencing/barriers shall be allowed under this CDP.
 - D. **Construction BMPs.** The Plan shall identify the type and location of all construction best management practices that will be implemented during construction to protect coastal resources, including at a minimum all of the following:

- 1) **Runoff Protection.** Silt fences, straw wattles, and equivalent apparatuses shall be installed at the perimeter of the construction site to prevent construction-related runoff and/or sediment from discharging from the construction area, and/or entering into storm drains or otherwise off-site and/or towards adjacent habitat areas. Special attention shall be given to appropriate filtering and treating of all runoff, and all drainage points, including storm drains, shall be equipped with appropriate construction-related containment and treatment equipment. Tarps or similar such devices shall be used to capture debris, dust, oil, grease, rust, dirt, fine particles, and spills. Excess construction debris and materials, excess fill, vegetation spoils, and waste material shall be disposed of at an authorized disposal site(s) capable of receiving such materials.
 - 2) **Erosion and Sediment Controls.** All erosion and sediment controls shall be in place prior to the commencement of construction as well as at the end of each workday.
 - 3) **Equipment.** Equipment washing, refueling, and/or servicing shall take place at an appropriate off-site and inland location away from riparian habitat on an existing hard surface area (e.g., a road) or an area where collection of materials is facilitated. All construction equipment shall also be inspected and maintained at a similarly sited inland location to prevent leaks and spills of hazardous materials at the project site.
 - 4) **Good Housekeeping.** The construction site shall maintain good construction housekeeping controls and procedures at all times (e.g., clean up all leaks, drips, and other spills immediately; keep materials covered and out of the rain, including covering exposed piles of soil and wastes; dispose of all wastes properly, place trash receptacles on site for that purpose, and cover open trash receptacles during wet weather; remove all construction debris from the project site; etc.).
 - 5) **Construction Material Storage.** All construction materials and equipment shall be stored in non-habitat areas, except for necessary erosion and sediment controls and/or construction area boundary fencing area allowed where such controls and/or fencing are placed as close to the work area, and are minimized in their extent, both to the maximum extent feasible.
7. **Nesting Bird Monitoring and Avoidance Plan.** NO LESS THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit for Executive Director's review and written approval, a Nesting Bird Monitoring and Avoidance Plan that shall include, but not be limited to, the following provisions:
- A. If project activities occur during bird nesting season (i.e., January 15 through September 15 for raptors, or February 15 through September 15 for non-raptors), a qualified biologist, with experience conducting nesting surveys for the sensitive species previously found on the project site, shall survey for active nests no greater than 72 hours prior to commencement of project activities, and once a week thereafter during construction, to detect any bird nesting activity within 500

feet of the project area. If an active songbird nest(s) is located within 300 feet of construction activities (500 feet for raptors), the qualified biologist shall halt construction activities to enable the Applicant to employ best management practices (BMPs) to ensure that construction activities do not disturb or disrupt nesting activities. BMPs shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) No nests shall be removed or disturbed.
- 2) The permittee's qualified biologist shall visually mark the location of any active bird nests within 300 feet of construction activities (500 feet for raptors). Nest markings shall be removed once the nest is no longer active.
- 3) The permittee's qualified biologist shall monitor bird behavior and construction noise levels. Noise levels at active nest sites shall not exceed 60 dBA LEQ (one hour average) unless a noise study has determined that ambient noise in the immediate area exceeds that level. If this is the case, noise levels at the nest site must not exceed the ambient noise level measured. Noise reducing measures may include using alternative equipment, equipment noise buffering, sound blankets or shields, minimizing the use of back-up alarms, etc. and must be demonstrated to be effective at reducing the noise levels to the above threshold at the nest sites. Alternatively, construction activities and schedules may be adjusted to avoid active nest areas until the qualified biologist confirms there are no active nests within 300 feet of construction activities (500 feet for raptors).
- 4) The permittee's qualified biologist shall be present onsite during construction activities to (a) enforce any necessary buffers and (b) monitor active nests and breeding birds for signs of distress or abnormal behavior. The biologist shall have the ability to halt construction at any time if deemed necessary to protect nesting birds.

B. Results of nesting bird surveys, ambient noise surveys, and any follow-up construction avoidance measures shall be documented in monthly reports by the qualified biologist and submitted to the Executive Director within 30 days of the survey or implementation of avoidance measures. Survey results shall include a map that depicts the location(s) of any active nests identified, the associated buffer zones, and a narrative that describes the survey details (e.g., dates, methods), survey results, outcomes of bird nesting efforts within the buffer areas (e.g., hatch, fledge, failure, unknown) and measures proposed to avoid disturbance of nesting birds.

8. Pre-construction Eelgrass Survey. NO LESS THAN 60 DAYS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION, The Applicant shall conduct a pre-construction eelgrass survey in accordance with NOAA Fisheries California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy (CEMP) and Implementing Guidelines. A report that includes the survey date(s), names and qualifications of the surveyors, parameters, maps, and results of the survey shall be submitted to the Executive Director for approval prior to construction.

A. If the pre-construction survey demonstrates eelgrass presence within the 100feet of the construction footprint, then a mitigation plan to achieve no net loss in

eelgrass function shall be developed and implemented in accordance with the CEMP. The mitigation plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director in consultation with NOAA Fisheries, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board prior to project impacts to eelgrass. The mitigation plan shall be consistent with the following terms:

- 1) In-kind compensatory mitigation shall be required. Compensatory mitigation consisting of the creation or substantial restoration of eelgrass shall be implemented at a ratio of 1.38:1 and shall meet a ratio of at least 1.2:1 at the end of the required monitoring period.
- 2) Compensatory mitigation shall occur within the Coastal Zone and on-site compensatory mitigation is preferred. If the mitigation cannot occur on site, the applicant shall include a narrative in the final mitigation plan explaining why compensatory mitigation cannot occur on-site and reasons for selecting the submitted mitigation site.

9. Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resource Protection. The Permittee shall undertake the approved project in compliance with the following measures to protect archaeological and/or tribal cultural resources to the maximum extent feasible:

- A. Notification. AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY GROUND-DISTURBING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, the Permittee shall (1) notify Kumeyaay Tribal Representatives; (2) invite Kumeyaay Tribal Representatives to be present and to monitor ground-disturbing activities; and (3) arrange for a qualified Archaeological Monitor and a Kumeyaay Tribal Monitor to be present to observe ground disturbing activities.
- B. Monitoring. A qualified, locally experienced archaeologist and a Kumeyaay tribal monitor, approved by relevant tribes shall be on site to monitor all activities with the potential to impact archaeological and/or tribal cultural resources, including all ground disturbing activities. The monitors shall have experience monitoring for archaeological resources of the local area during excavation projects, be competent to identify significant resource types, and be aware of recommended tribal procedures for the inadvertent discovery of tribal cultural resources, archaeological resources, and human remains.
- C. Discovery Protocol. If any tribal cultural deposits are discovered during the course of the project, all construction within 200 feet of such deposits shall cease and shall not re-commence until a qualified cultural resource specialist in consultation with the relevant tribes, analyzes the significance of the find and, if deemed significant, prepares a supplementary archaeological plan for the review and approval of the Executive Director that evaluates and provides suggested measures related to the discovery. The Executive Director shall review the plan and either: (1) approve it and determine that its recommended changes to the project or mitigation measures do not necessitate an amendment to this CDP, or (2) determine that the changes proposed therein necessitate a CDP amendment. The location of any and all identified archaeological and tribal cultural resources

shall be kept confidential, and only those with a “need to know” shall be informed of their locations.

- D. Human Remains. Should human remains be discovered on-site during the course of the project, immediately after such discovery, the on-site archaeologist and/or tribal monitor shall notify the San Diego County Coroner within 24 hours of such discovery, and all construction activities shall be temporarily halted until the remains can be identified. If the County Coroner determines that the human remains are those of a Native American, the Coroner shall contact the NAHC within 24 hours, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5. The NAHC shall deem the Native American most likely descendant (MLD) to be invited to participate in the identification process pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The Permittee shall comply with the requirements of Section 5097.98 and work with the MLD person(s) to discuss and confer with the descendants all reasonable options regarding the descendants' preference for treatment. Within five (5) calendar days of notification to NAHC, the Permittee shall notify the Coastal Commission's Executive Director of the discovery of human remains. The Executive Director shall maintain confidentiality regarding the presence of human remains on the project site.

10. Public Access Plan. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit, for the review and written approval of the Executive Director, a Public Access Plan. The Public Access Plan shall include, at a minimum, the following components:

- A. Construction worker parking/shuttle plan during the peak beachgoing months.
- B. Prohibition of overnight storage of equipment or materials outside of the designated work area.
- C. Continuous public access around the construction site on Del Mar Beach and North Beach (Dog Beach) must be maintained at all times for the duration of construction.
- D. Access corridors shall be located in a manner that has the least impact on public access to and along the shoreline of the project site.
- E. Signage shall be installed directing pedestrians at the beach to the temporary pedestrian walkways.
- F. Permanent signage discouraging public access to the sensitive habitat on the east side of the bridge.
- G. The Permittee shall submit evidence that the approved public access plan has been incorporated into construction bid documents.

11. Assumption of Risk, Waiver of Liability & Indemnity. By acceptance of this permit, the Permittee acknowledge and agree, on behalf of themselves and all successors and assigns, to all of the following: (a) that the site may be subject to coastal hazards, including, but not limited to, episodic and long-term shoreline retreat and coastal erosion, high seas, ocean waves, tsunamis, tidal scour, coastal

flooding, bluff and geologic instability, liquefaction and the interaction of some, many of which may worsen with future sea level rise; (b) to assume the risks to the Permittees and the property that is the subject of this permit of injury and damage from such hazards in connection with this permitted development; (c) to unconditionally waive any claim of damage or liability against the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees for injury or damage from such hazards; and (d) to indemnify and hold harmless the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees with respect to the Commission's approval of the project against any and all liability, claims, demands, damages, costs (including costs and fees incurred in defense of such claims), expenses, and amounts paid in settlement arising from any injury or damage due to such hazards.

- 12. Other Agency Approvals.** PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit to the Executive Director for review a copy of a valid permit, letter of permission, or evidence that no permit is necessary from all other entities with review authority over the proposed project, including at a minimum the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Permittee shall inform the Executive Director of any changes to the project required by any other such authorizations. Any such changes shall not be incorporated into the project until the Permittee obtains an amendment to this CDP, unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.
- 13. Authority to Implement CDP.** PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF CDP No. 6-24-0480, the Permittee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Director evidence that clearly demonstrates the legal right, interest, and/or entitlement to carry out the development authorized by this CDP subject to all of its terms and conditions, including but not limited to evidence that the Permittee has acquired all necessary right-of-way and/or temporary construction easement(s) for properties on which the CDP-approved development would be located.
- 14. Minor Changes.** The Permittee shall undertake development in conformance with the terms and conditions of this CDP, including with respect to all Executive Director-approved plans and other materials, which shall also be enforceable components of this CDP. Any proposed project changes, including in terms of changes to identified requirements in each condition, shall either (a) require a CDP amendment, or (b) if the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required, then such changes may be allowed by the Executive Director if the Executive Director determines that such changes: (1) are deemed reasonable and necessary; and (2) do not adversely impact coastal resources.

IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

A. Project Description and Background

Project Background

The City of Del Mar (City), with financial and technical support from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is proposing to replace the Camino Del Mar Bridge over the San Dieguito River (project) in the City of Del Mar ([Exhibit 1](#)). The project area is located along Camino Del Mar, south of Via de la [Valle \(Exhibit 2\)](#).

The existing 600-foot bridge was constructed in 1932 ([Exhibit 3](#)) and Caltrans determined the bridge to be structurally and seismically deficient in 2012. The new bridge would be built to modern seismic and safety standards.

The existing bridge serves as an important north-south connection for coastal residents and visitors in the vicinity and the greater San Diego region, and is frequently used by motorists, bicyclists, hikers, and pedestrians. The route through this location is essential for access to numerous coastal access points up and down the coast. The Camino del Mar roadway becomes Highway 101 north of Via de la Valle within the City of Solana Beach, about one-quarter mile north of the bridge.

Jurisdiction

The proposed project includes components that are located within the City of Del Mar (LCP) jurisdiction, as well as components within the retained jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission. Section 30601.3 of the Coastal Act authorizes the Commission to process a consolidated CDP application (when certain criteria are satisfied) for the entirety of a proposed project that would otherwise require separate CDPs from both a local government with a certified LCP and the Commission when the City of Del Mar, the local government, and the Commission agree, and when public participation in review of the application is not impaired. In this case, the City of Del Mar submitted an email to Commission Staff dated November 18, 2024, requesting that the Commission assume jurisdiction over all activities associated with the proposed project. The standard of review for a consolidated CDP application submitted pursuant to Section 30601.3(a) is the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act (commencing with Section 30200), with the City of Del Mar LCP used as guidance.

Additionally, approvals from other agencies may still be required by other state or federal permitting authorities. Therefore, **Special Condition 12** requires the Permittee to obtain all other Local, State or Federal permits that may be necessary for any aspect of the proposed project.

Project Description

The existing bridge is 600-feet-long and 61-feet-wide, and includes two vehicular lanes, two bike lanes, and a pedestrian walkway on the west side. The proposed design of the replacement bridge consists of a five-span cast-in-place pre-stressed concrete box girder bridge with a length of 624 feet between abutments and a width of approximately

68.5 linear feet ([Exhibit 4](#)). The replacement bridge would be located along the existing alignment, but would be slightly longer, wider, and higher and would not increase vehicular capacity. Tidal circulation would be enhanced by reducing fill within the channel through the reduction of the existing 10 piers to 4 sets of oblong column footings. The additional bridge width of 7-feet, 5 inches is needed to accommodate a new sidewalk along the east side of the bridge. Public access will be further enhanced through the addition of two pedestrian overlooks along the western sidewalk. The Camino Del Mar roadway approaches and sidewalks, from Sandy Lane to 300 feet north of the existing bridge, would require modifications to accommodate the raised elevation of the bridge and to meet the proposed pedestrian sidewalks on both sides. This work would require the removal of seven mature landscape trees including two Torrey Pines and five lemon bottle brush.

Construction

New piers would be constructed of cast-in-drilled-hole piles, which may be constructed using cranes, drill rigs, oscillators and/or rotators, vibratory hammers, forklifts, and concrete boom trucks. Common earthwork equipment such as loaders, excavators, backhoes, and dump trucks will be used for earthwork. Existing pier footings will be removed via saw cutting and/or excavators with concrete breaking attachments.

Bridge replacement would occur one half of the bridge at a time, beginning with the east side followed by the west side. During the demolition and replacement of each side of the bridge, the opposite side would be used to re-route both lanes of traffic, bicycle lanes, and the sidewalk. The project is estimated to be constructed using five construction stages: 1) Site preparation; 2) East side bridge replacement; 3) West side bridge replacement; 4) Center median closure; 5) Demolition, site restoration, and final improvements. This staged construction methodology allows the existing bridge to remain in use until the new bridge is built. During Stage 2, both lanes of vehicular and bicycle traffic would be shifted to the west side of the bridge while the east side of the new bridge is built. During Stage 3, vehicular and bicycle traffic would be moved to the new eastern half, and the western half of the new bridge would be constructed. Temporary construction easements will allow for movement of equipment and materials outside of the roadway. Construction access for bridge construction and demolition will require the construction of two temporary 50-foot-wide elevated work platforms that span the entire floodway from each existing abutment, on both sides of the existing bridge, one side at a time.

Dewatered cofferdam systems would be installed for removal of existing piers and installation of the new bridge foundations and column. Temporary falsework would be installed to form and construct the bridge foundations and bridge spans. Cofferdams are generally constructed of steel sheet piles or other shoring materials and would be installed and removed by crane with an attached vibratory hammer. Cofferdams may be dewatered as needed using pumps to perform demolition and/or new construction activities. The temporary trestle may be installed and removed via crane, vibratory hammer, impact hammer, and forklifts. Tidal flows will be maintained through the construction site at all times.

Construction Staging Areas

Due to limited on-site construction staging areas, the contractor is anticipated to need additional off-site staging areas for materials, equipment, and office purposes. Areas that have been identified for potential staging uses include the State Fairgrounds and the City's Public Works Yard. The Public Works Yard is a city-owned area that is unpaved and relatively flat. This area is typically used for overnight storage of construction equipment and is located at the intersection of San Dieguito Drive and Jimmy Durante Boulevard, just southeast of the bridge. Temporary construction worker parking is anticipated to occur at the City's Public Works Yard.

B. Public Access and Recreation

Section 30210 of the Coastal Act states:

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Section 30212(a) of the Coastal Act states:

Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where: (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources, (2) adequate access exists nearby, or, (3) agriculture would be adversely affected. A dedicated accessway shall not be required to be opened to public use until a public agency or private association agrees to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability of the accessway.

Section 30213 of the Coastal Act states, in part:

Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.

Section 30223 of the Coastal Act states:

Upland areas necessary to support coastal recreation uses shall be reserved for such uses, where feasible.

The City of Del Mar's Land Use Plan also contains a number of applicable provisions, including:

Goal IV-A states:

Provide physical and visual access to coastal recreation areas for all segments of the population without creating a public safety concern, overburdening the City's public improvements, degrading the City's natural resources, or causing substantial adverse impacts to adjacent private properties. The Camino Del Mar bridge provides coastal north-south access for 20,000 vehicles per day and provides critical public safety access to the residents of Del Mar and Solana Beach. The bridge also provides public shoreline access to Del Mar Beach, North Beach (Dog Beach), and the Riverpath Del Mar trail along the San Dieguito River.

Collectively, the proposed changes represent permanent public access improvements by providing a safe bridge structure built to modern safety and seismic standards. Safe access through here is essential for coastal access up and down coast of the area. Designated bicycle lane access will be maintained or improved and pedestrian access will be improved by adding a new sidewalk on the east side of the bridge, offering views of the San Dieguito River inlet. Further, the western pedestrian sidewalk will include two new view overlooks of the beaches and Pacific Ocean.

To accommodate larger abutments and wider sidewalk approaches, 0.36 acre (15,682 square feet) of beach area will be permanently impacted. Because impacted areas are located adjacent to the existing roadway and subject to traffic noise, the loss does not represent a reduction of recreational access. The incremental loss of beach area will be offset by the provision of multimodal public access amenities in the form a new eastern sidewalk, two new Pacific Ocean view overlooks, and replacement of the bike lanes and western sidewalk.

The project does have some temporary impacts from construction. Construction will require 14 nighttime bridge closures over the 36-month construction calendar. With the exception of the 14 nighttime closures, the bridge will remain open to vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians, with cyclists sharing the road with vehicles in a "sharrow" configuration. In accordance with the City of Del Mar Land Use Plan Goal IV-A, four beach access points and the trail connection for the Riverpath Del Mar will be maintained at all times throughout construction. The City of Del Mar will implement standard traffic management specifications, which are a suite of measures designed to maintain traffic access within the project area while keeping the traveling public separated from construction activities. Examples of these measures include reduction of speed limits to reduce potential for traffic incidents, installation of construction warning signs to inform the public of construction ahead, and advance publication of construction activities and roadway closures in local news media.

The project will result in the temporary loss of up to 65 parking spaces and the permanent loss of four parking spaces. To assess the project impact on public beach parking, the City of Del Mar conducted a parking study that demonstrated that even on busy summer weekends, there was sufficient public parking within one mile of the beach to meet the demand despite the temporary parking loss. Commission Staff raised concerns regarding the potential temporary parking impact induced by construction worker vehicles. In response, the City of Del Mar has agreed to shuttle workers during

peak summer months from the street knuckle located at Border Avenue and Sierra Avenue.

To ensure these various aspects of construction do not impact parking or public access generally, **Special Condition 10** requires submittal of a comprehensive Public Access Plan for review and written approval by the Executive Director to ensure safe and effective implementation of public access commitments.

In conclusion, the Commission finds that the proposed project will provide necessary public safety improvements for a route that provides access to the coast and will continue to provide cycling access through the buffered bike lane in both directions and coastal access via the widened sidewalk on the east side. Although the project will have temporary traffic impacts, the City of Del Mar has committed to implementing measures to minimize these impacts. Given that vehicular, cycling, and pedestrian access will be maintained throughout construction, multimodal public access will be permanently enhanced, temporary parking impacts will be minimized, and permanent parking impacts are not substantial, the Commission finds that the project will not impact public access to and along the coast, and will enhance such access when complete.

Therefore, the Commission finds that, the proposed development, as conditioned, will not have an adverse impact on public access to the coast or to nearby recreational facilities and is consistent with Sections 30210, 30212, 30213, and 30223 of the Coastal Act and Goal IV-A and Goal III-D of the Del Mar Land Use Plan.

C. Biological Resources

Section 30230 of the Coastal Act states:

Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. Uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

Section 30231 of the Coastal Act states:

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of wastewater discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with the surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

Section 30233 of the Coastal Act states:

(a) The diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes shall be permitted in accordance with other applicable provisions of this division, where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, and where feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects, and shall be limited to the following:

...

4. Incidental public service purposes, including but not limited to, burying cables and pipes or inspection of piers and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines.

...

Section 30240 of the Coastal Act states:

a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas.

b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

The City of Del Mar's certified Land Use Plan also contains an applicable policy. Policy III-2 states, in relevant part:

Conserve the natural character of land, water, vegetation and wildlife resources within the community by ensuring that future development minimizes the disturbance of existing or natural terrain and vegetation, and does not create soil erosion, silting of lower slopes, slide damage, flooding problems and/or cutting or scarring.

Background

The proposed project is located 400 feet east from where the mouth of the San Dieguito River outlets to the Pacific Ocean. Located to the north of the project lies the community of Solana Beach, North Beach (Dog Beach) and the Scripps Bluff Preserve; located to the south lies the community of Del Mar and Del Mar Beach, and located to the east lies the State Fairgrounds, the Interstate-5 corridor, and the recently restored San Dieguito River Lagoon State Marine Conservation Area. The San Dieguito River has historically supported a range of habitats, including vegetated salt and brackish marsh, tidal embayments, sloughs, and mudflats along its course to the Pacific Ocean. The San Dieguito River and the associated lagoon area are mapped as a Biological Core Area in the Final San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Plan, and defined as areas supporting high concentrations of sensitive biological resources. Further, the San Dieguito River and the upstream San Dieguito Lagoon provide regionally important feeding and resting areas for migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway, as well as tidal, open water, mudflat, and salt marsh habitats that support a variety of birds, fishes, and invertebrates.

The project temporarily impact open coastal waters within the San Dieguito River inlet channel. Work will occur within the inlet channel, but will not take place within the upstream San Dieguito Lagoon itself or otherwise directly within wetlands or Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA). Open water habitat will be increased through the replacement of existing footings with new bridge footings that occupy a smaller footprint within the river, and removal of 18 linear feet of existing roadway embankment. Open water habitat will be increased by more than 2000 square feet, which is anticipated to improve tidal and habitat functional capacity within the San Dieguito River inlet channel.

Wetland buffers

Although the project will not directly impact the southern coastal salt marsh located along the northeastern bridge approach embankment, improved sidewalk work will occur within 30 feet of the marsh. The Commission considers a 100-foot buffer to be the minimum distance necessary to protect wetland habitat from adverse impacts related to development such as polluted runoff from developed areas, construction-related erosion and sedimentation, and disturbance from noise, light, traffic, debris and other activities related to increased human and domesticated animal use, and development. Past Commission actions have allowed for a reduction of a 100-foot wetland buffer in cases where the type and size of the development proposed; mitigation measures provided (such as planting of vegetation or construction of fencing); and/or elevation differentials between the proposed development and wetland boundaries will serve to contribute to the purposes of a wetland buffer area. In this case, the existing roadway facility is located within the 100 feet of the wetland, the grade separation created by the elevated roadway embankment will buffer indirect impacts, any disturbance caused by construction will be temporary and disturbed ground will be restored with application of a coastal sage scrub seed mix. Further, the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan required by **Special Condition 5** and the robust suite of required by BMPs required by **Special Condition 6** will adequately minimize potential impacts resulting from the project.

Project Impacts to Water Quality

The project site is located at the downstream end of the 345-square-mile San Dieguito Watershed, within the Solana Beach Hydrologic Area. The project area accounts for approximately 0.156 percent of the local San Dieguito watershed area and is located within the Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region Basin Plan area, which regulates stormwater and construction-related discharges. Potential impacts related to water quality could occur during construction, when the potential for erosion, siltation, sedimentation, and accidental release of hazardous materials would be the greatest. Accordingly, standard temporary water pollution control, permanent design pollution prevention, and post-construction treatment BMPs will be implemented to prevent degradation of surface and groundwater quality.

The new bridge would increase impervious surface areas by 6,700 square feet compared to the existing bridge, and sufficient runoff management would be provided within the bridge and approach roadway such that project would not result in flooding.

Deck drains are required along the bridge to remove water from the surface of the bridge during rainstorm events. Drains would be placed along the edge of the walkway adjacent to the pedestrian railing. To provide stormwater treatment two tree wells are proposed, one at the northwestern side and another at the southeastern side of the bridge approach.

The City of Del Mar Hydraulics and Sediment Transport Report evaluates stream hydraulics, sediment transport, and channel changes that may be attributed to the project (Chang 2020). The proposed bridge has been designed to address potential long-term erosion or siltation from project implementation. The proposed abutments would be constructed behind the existing abutments and portions of the existing abutments would be retained in place as additional scour and erosion protection. Rock slope protection would be placed at the abutment slopes to protect the abutments from surficial erosion and scour. Rounded piers were chosen for their hydrodynamic benefits, further reducing potential scour. These design features will contribute to the minimization, or avoidance, of erosional and siltation impacts within the channel.

Potential temporary impacts to water quality that can be anticipated during construction include sediments from grading and excavation operations, soil compaction, trash from workers and construction waste, petroleum products from construction equipment and/or vehicles, concrete waste, sanitary wastes from portable toilets and any other chemicals used for construction such as coolants used for equipment and/or concrete curing compounds. Therefore, **Special Condition 5** requires a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and proof of possession of a Water Quality Certification prior to construction. To ensure the City of Del Mar implements the proposed erosion and sediment control plan and construction-phase BMPs, **Special Condition 6** requires robust implementation of BMPs designed to protect water quality and aquatic resources. The Commission finds that the project, as conditioned, will maintain and enhance the biological productivity, quality, and functional capacity of coastal waters consistent with the requirements of Sections 30230, 30231, and 30233 of the Coastal Act.

Aquatic Species Impacts and Habitat Protections

Construction impacts would occur to primarily unvegetated soft-bottom river habitat. Construction would result in 0.40 acre of temporary impacts and 0.05 acre of permanent impacts to intertidal open water habitat and mudflat. Substantial impacts to tidal flow are not anticipated and tidal circulation would be enhanced by reducing fill within the channel through the reduction of the existing ten pier structures to four sets of oblong column footings. Further, to accommodate the new longer spans, the existing roadway embankments will be shortened to accommodate longer spans, increasing the tidal prism by 18 linear feet. The proposed reduction of fill within the channel will increase open water habitat by 0.047 acre, thereby enhancing tidal exchange. Overall, the project is expected to result in a long-term net ecological benefit to the San Dieguito River.

The City of Del Mar contacted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries) in June 2022 to request an Endangered Species Act Species List for

the project area. NOAA Fisheries responded in July 2022 that no aquatic species listed for protection pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act occur in the project area, however, the San Dieguito River mouth is considered Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for multiple common fish species managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service Pacific Fishery Management Council. These fish species include northern anchovy (*Engraulis mordax*); California grunion (*Leuresthes tenuis*); and Pacific Coast groundfish species such as California halibut (*Paralichthys californicus*), California skate (*Raja inornate*), leopard shark (*Triakis semifasciata*), and speckled sanddab (*Citharichthys stigmaeus*).

California grunion is a sardine-sized fish species known to spawn on sandy Southern California beaches and is identified by CDFW as a Species of Special Concern. Accordingly, **Special Condition 4** requires that grunion monitoring be conducted between March 1st and August 28th within sandy habitats, below the high tide line, within the project site. Monitoring would include a pre-construction survey to determine potential suitability for grunion spawning. If the habitat is judged unsuitable for grunion spawning, construction could proceed without the need for additional monitoring. Should the construction dates overlap an anticipated grunion run (based on CDFW calendar) at a site with suitable conditions, grunion monitoring within the specific work area would be conducted. If grunion occur within the project area, their location would be mapped and number present would be estimated. An appropriate protective measure would be implemented and the qualified biologist would communicate monitoring results and action taken to the resource agencies.

To further evaluate potential impacts to fish movement and habitat, waters within 150 feet of the Camino Del Mar bridge were surveyed by Merkel & Associates in September 2018 for the presence of eelgrass (*Zostera marina*). Eelgrass within the survey area consisted of narrow marginal eelgrass beds extending along the shoreline between the deeper water areas and the beach and shoreline northwest and southwest of the bridge (Merkel & Associates 2018). Eelgrass identified during the surveys was located outside of the areas to be impacted. However, because eelgrass is a dynamic habitat type that is continuously changing in density, biomass, and distribution and has the potential to occur within the project footprint, **Special Condition 8** requires a pre-construction eelgrass survey be conducted and mitigation implemented per the Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy to achieve no net loss of eelgrass.

The following measures designed to minimize biological resource impacts may be implemented: installation of turbidity curtains; installation of exclusionary fencing to prevent grunion entry into work areas; installation of temporary cofferdams or berms; use of a bubble curtain or cushion block devices on pile-driving, hammering, and drilling machinery to reduce vibrations, sound pressure levels, and channel bottom disturbances; limiting the use of hammer-style or pile driver machinery; wrapping pile and hammer drivers with sound blankets; installing vibratory dampeners on driver/hammer heads; using electrically powered equipment instead of pneumatic or internal-combustion powered equipment; and scheduling aquatic work during low tides.

The following measures designed to control sediment and protect water quality during construction will be implemented: installation of erosion and sediment control devices such as silt fences, fiber rolls, mulching or soil binders, plastic covers, and gravel bags in appropriate locations; placing temporary filters at storm drain inlets; designating containment areas for material storage; providing containment areas for solid waste storage and concrete washout; limiting fueling/maintenance of equipment to designated areas outside and away from waters; and installing material containment devices for refueling or fixing equipment that is not easily movable away from waters. **Special Condition 5** further ensures preservation of water quality and aquatic resources through the requirement of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for review and written approval by the Executive Director while **Special Condition 6** requires the robust implementation and maintenance of construction BMPs.

Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub

The Camino Del Mar roadway approaches and sidewalks require modifications to accommodate the raised elevation of the bridge and to tie in with the proposed pedestrian sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. These modifications will occur from Sandy Lane to approximately 300 feet north of the existing bridge. The roadway reconfiguration will permanently impact 0.18 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub. Diegan coastal sage scrub at the project site is described generally as dominated by California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) and California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*). The permanently impacted coastal sage scrub lies in the northeast area of the project footprint between sand volleyball courts and street parking, with walking paths through the vegetation. The frequency of foot traffic, the adjacent roadway, and the size and geographic location of the habitat render it of little ecological value, and the Commission's Ecologist has determined the area is not ESHA under Section 30240. Still, the applicant has proposed mitigation for the loss of vegetation at a 2:1 replacement ratio on multiple parcels owned by the City of Del Mar and the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy property located .5-mile upstream in the San Dieguito Lagoon as detailed in the Camino Del Mar Bridge Replacement Project Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (June 2024).

Protection for Birds

The proposed project is located adjacent to destination beaches which are heavily used for recreation and as climate refuges by the local and visiting public. North Beach is known locally as Dog Beach because it is used as a year-round off-leash dog beach. Although existing bridge signage advises the public to stay out of habitat areas on the east side of the bridge, people and their dogs cross under the bridge to explore the quieter eastern beaches on daily basis.

The City conducted a review of literature and biological databases to identify the existence or potential occurrence of special-status biological resources in and within the vicinity of the project area. Focused surveys were conducted for Belding's savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi*), California least tern (*Sterna antillarum browni*), light-footed Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus levipes*), and western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) in 2012, 2013, and 2022 within the project vicinity

by a USFWS-permitted biologist. Additionally, between March 8, 2018, and April 27, 2018, focused surveys for Belding's savannah sparrow, coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*), and light-footed Ridgway's rail were conducted at the project site. Three Belding's savannah sparrow territories were mapped due east and northeast of the project footprint within southern coastal salt marsh habitat that will not be disturbed by project activities. However, these territories are within 300 feet of the project footprint and Belding's savannah sparrow nests within that area may be disturbed by construction noise.

The project is not anticipated to directly impact any special status bird species or their habitat. Additional avoidance and minimization measures will adequately protect special status bird species from indirect impacts from construction. To ensure Belding's savannah sparrow protection during construction **Special Condition 7** requires a qualified biologist to conduct pre-construction avian surveys. Additionally, if construction noise generating activities are not completed prior to the breeding season for Belding's savannah sparrow (March 15 through June 30) and this species is found present during pre-construction surveys, then the project shall reduce construction noise levels at the edge of occupied habitat to below 60 dBA LEQ (one hour average equivalent sound level). Additionally, **Special Condition 2** prohibits installation of permanent project lighting and requires minimization of construction illumination impacts during night work.

Habitat Connectivity

Habitat connectivity will be maintained throughout project construction to allow for wildlife movement along the San Dieguito River corridor. San Dieguito River flows shall be protected and maintained through the construction site at all times. Any flow diversion shall be accomplished in a manner that prevents pollution and/or siltation, and which provides flows to downstream reaches. Flows to downstream reaches shall be provided at all times that the natural flow would have supported aquatic life. Flows shall be of sufficient quality and quantity and of appropriate temperature to support fish and other aquatic life both above and below the diversion.

Through the implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures described herein, the Commission finds that the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the biological resource policies of Section 30230, Section 30231, 30233, and Section 30240 of the Coastal Act.

D. Coastal Hazards, Air Quality, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Section 30253 of the Coastal Act states, in applicable part, that new development shall do all of the following:

- (a) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.
- (b) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs...

- (c) Be consistent with requirements imposed by an air pollution control district or the State Air Resources Board as to each particular development.
- (d) Minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled.

Section 30270 states that the commission shall:

Take into account the effects of sea level rise in coastal resources planning and management policies and activities in order to identify, assess, and, to the extent feasible, avoid and mitigate the adverse effects of sea level rise.

The City of Del Mar certified Land Use Plan also contains a number of applicable policies, including the following:

Goal III-D states:

Minimize risks to life and property associated with flooding and flood waters

Coastal Hazards

A 75-year service lifespan is applied to roadway bridge structures, therefore, the bridge service life is currently planned to end in the year 2103. As part of the preliminary design process, the City of Del Mar evaluated National Research Council Sea-Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington: Past, Present, and Future (2012) to determine appropriate sea level rise scenarios to inform the new bridge design. It was determined that an increased water surface elevation of 3.16 feet, corresponding to a mid-range sea level rise scenario for the year 2100 in their analysis, is the highest elevation where the bridge remains serviceable during a 100-year flood event. In scenarios where the projected sea level rise exceeds an increased water surface elevation of 3.16 feet, the bridge would cease to be connected to a functional roadway system due to flooding of the connecting roadway to the south during these 100-year flood events. In other words, the proposed design would accommodate a mid-term (years 2050-2100) amount of sea level rise, but not extreme sea level rise conditions where the southern roadway connection would be submerged underwater, rendering the bridge obsolete.

In November 2024, the Commission adopted an updated Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance with updated projections based on more recent Ocean Protection Council findings (OCP 2024). Under the Commission's new guidance, the most appropriate projections would consider the amount of sea level rise projected at the San Diego tide gauge for the year 2100, which is the most appropriate year considering the projects lifespan. The new guidance, and the new OPC guidance, utilize projections labelled "Low," "Intermediate-Low," "Intermediate," "Intermediate-High," and "High." Most transportation infrastructure will be reviewed at Intermediate or Intermediate High given it is most appropriate for critical infrastructure. In 2100, the new projections would be 3.2 for Intermediate and 4.9 for Intermediate-High at the San Diego tide gauge.

As discussed above, the city concluded that the bridge would not see impacts until a 100-year flood event at 3.16 feet of sea level rise. Thus, the project would be generally safe from sea level rise for its design lifespan under the Intermediate projections. Under

the Intermediate-High projections, however, the new bridge could see impacts as early as 2080 (the year projections reach 3.1 feet), during 100-year flood events.

In most circumstances, a design that addresses sea level rise through the intermediate high scenarios and through a project's lifespan is the most appropriate design, however this is not always the case. Here, designing a bridge to fully withstand 4.9 feet of sea level rise would require a much larger bridge structure, as well as significant changes to roadway approaches, with significantly greater impacts to ESHA and wetlands, as well as to public access and coastal views. Thus, a bridge design accommodating a high sea level rise scenario would result in an over-designed facility and increased coastal resource impacts. Additionally, the impacts cited by the city at 3.16 feet are during 100-year flooding events. These will generally be rare and temporary events, even if such events increase with climate change, as is anticipated, and could be managed to some degree by temporary measures. Moreover, this is a bridge replacement project that cannot be extracted from its larger setting. Here sea level rise will bring a whole host of changes to the surrounding areas, especially the public access beaches and trails and some of the adjoining residential areas before the bridge or adjoining roadway are threatened. Designing this bridge to address more than 3.16 feet of sea level rise would require a whole host of changes to the surrounding roads, as well as connections to existing public access points.

Based on these considerations and through early planning coordination between the City of Del Mar and Commission Staff, it was determined that the bridge design should propose to accommodate an intermediate sea level rise scenario through the year 2103, but not a future more extreme sea level rise scenario where connecting roadways would be submerged underwater. This avoids a much larger structure, while avoiding substantial impacts to coastal resources, and preserving public access points. In the meantime, the longer and higher new bridge will better accommodate SLR than the existing structure and therefore represents an improvement in terms of SLR resiliency. Accordingly, the proposed additional 28 feet, 2 inches in bridge length and additional 7.7 feet in bridge height would accommodate an intermediate sea level rise scenario through the year 2100 during a 100-year flood event, while maintaining a safe roadway design and coastal access points.

Although the bridge deck and roadway may be resilient up to that level of sea level rise, the bridge sits on piers that are in the waterway. Therefore, in addition to the proposed project plans, Commission Engineering Staff reviewed the Geotechnical Design Report, Foundation Report, Hydraulics Report and Sea Level Rise Analysis and conclude that the bridge piers would be safe from scour and other coastal hazards under the modeled sea level rise scenario of 3.16 feet within the 75-year bridge design life.

Although the project as designed is resilient up to the Intermediate-Low sea level rise scenario, the Coastal Act recognizes that certain types of development, such as the proposed project, may involve some risk. As such, the Commission finds that due to the unforeseen possibility of erosion and flooding, the City of Del Mar shall assume the risks of development in a hazardous location as a condition of approval. Therefore, **Special Condition 11** requires the City of Del Mar to waive any claim of liability against the

Commission for damage to life or property, which may occur as a result of the permitted development. The Commission further finds that the City of Del Mar has appropriately identified and assessed the impacts of the mid-range sea level rise scenario, and that the proposed design avoids, minimizes, and mitigates the impacts of sea level rise, to the extent feasible, and also can be found consistent with Coastal Act Section 30270. For the foregoing reasons, the Commission finds that the subject project, as conditioned, is consistent with Coastal Act Section 30253(a) and 30253(b).

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Transportation projects have an obvious potential to increase greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the transportation sector is the largest emitter of GHG emissions in California. As the lead agency under CEQA, and consistent with federal and state law, the City undertook a study of climate-change impacts of the subject project consistent with CARB's requirements. Under existing CEQA guidelines related to climate change, a project's implications for climate change should be analyzed not only as individual contributions, but also as cumulative impacts.

As required by Coastal Act section 30414(a), the Commission follows the standards set by the agencies responsible for air quality standards. The project site is located within the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB). The San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) and San Diego Association of Governments are responsible for developing and implementing the regional clean air plan to attain and maintain ambient air quality standards and compliance with other requirements of federal and state laws in the SDAB. As required by the California Clean Air Act, the SDAPCD has published various air quality planning documents to address requirements to bring the SDAB into compliance with the federal and state ambient air quality standards. The SDAPCD has prepared the San Diego County Regional Air Quality Attainment Plan, demonstrating how the region will further reduce air pollutant emissions to attain the current National Ambient Air Quality Standards and California Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Construction of the project would not result in pollutant emissions in excess of applicable thresholds. Because construction emissions would be below the applicable thresholds, and because the project would not result in population or employment increases with the replacement of an existing bridge, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the San Diego County Regional Air Quality Attainment Plan for the SDAB.

Project emissions would not exceed SDAPCD thresholds and would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant. Once operational, the new bridge would not result in an increase in traffic or associated changes to emissions compared to existing conditions.

Construction of the project would result in diesel particulate matter (DPM) associated with operation of construction equipment. The amount to which the receptors could be exposed, which is a function of concentration and duration of exposure, is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Current models and methodologies for conducting

cancer health risk assessments are associated with longer-term exposure periods. These assessment models and methodologies do not correlate well with the temporary and highly variable nature of construction activities. The total construction period would be approximately 36 months. The most intense use of heavy equipment is anticipated to occur around the bridge and would not occur adjacent to any individual residence for extended periods of time. In addition, the prevailing ocean breezes would rapidly disperse emissions. Due to the variable and sporadic nature of construction activity, and the relatively short, anticipated construction schedule, the project's construction activity would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of DPM. Therefore, project construction activities would not result in the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

The project could produce odors during construction activities resulting from heavy diesel equipment exhaust and volatile organic compounds released during application of paint or asphalt. Standard BMPs minimize equipment idling and maintain equipment would minimize the odor emissions from equipment exhaust and their associated impacts. The increase of construction odors would be minimal, as vehicle exhaust is already prevalent in the area due to vehicle traffic on Camino del Mar. Furthermore, odors emitted during construction activities would be temporary, short-term, and intermittent in nature, and would cease upon completion of construction. In addition, the prevailing ocean breezes would rapidly disperse odors. Operation of the project is not anticipated to result in emissions of objectionable odors.

The proposed project would not increase vehicular capacity and will therefore not incur capacity inducing GHG emissions. The primary purpose of the subject project is to improve public safety, update aging infrastructure, and create multimodal public access. The proposed bike lanes, sidewalks, view overlooks, and trail connections will improve multimodal public access to and along the coast, which may in turn reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled and GHG emissions. For the aforementioned reasons, GHG emissions are not expected to increase as a result of the project relative to the existing conditions. Therefore, the project is consistent with Section 30253(c), 30253(d), and 30270.

E. Cultural Resources and Tribal Consultation

Section 30244 of the Coastal Act states:

Where development would adversely impact archeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required.

The Commission acknowledges Tribal sovereignty and understands that California's Tribes and their members have long served as stewards of the state's important coastal resources, and possess unique and valuable knowledge and practices for conserving and managing these resources in a sustainable manner, and in a manner consistent with the spirit and intent of the Coastal Act.

Site history

The Kumeyaay (formerly referred to as Diegueño) who inhabited the southern region of San Diego County, western and central Imperial County, and northern Baja California, are the direct descendants of the early Yuman hunter-gatherers. Kumeyaay territory encompassed a large and diverse environment, which included marine, foothill, mountain, and desert resource zones. Their language is a dialect of the Yuman language, which is related to the large Hokan super family.

The Kumeyaay were organized by patrilineal, patrilocal lineages that claimed prescribed territories, but did not own the resources except for some minor plants and eagle aeries. Some lineages occupied procurement ranges that required considerable residential mobility, such as those in the deserts. In the mountains, some of the larger groups occupied a few large residential bases that would be occupied biannually, such as those occupied in Cuyamaca in the summer and fall, and in Guatay or Descanso during the rest of the year. Many Eastern Kumeyaay spent the period of time from spring through autumn in larger residential bases in the upland procurement ranges, and wintered in mixed groups in residential bases along the eastern foothills on the edge of the desert (i.e., Jacumba and Mountain Springs). This variability in settlement mobility and organization reflects the great range of environments in the territory. Acorns were the single most important food source used by the Kumeyaay. Their villages were usually located near water necessary for leaching acorn meal. Other storable resources such as mesquite or agave were equally valuable to groups inhabiting desert areas, at least during certain seasons. Seeds from grasses, manzanita, sage, sunflowers, lemonade berry, chia and other plants were also used along with various wild greens and fruits. Deer, small game and birds were hunted and fish and marine foods were eaten. Houses were arranged in the village without apparent pattern. The houses in primary villages were conical structures covered with tule bundles, having excavated floors and central hearths. Houses constructed at the mountain camps generally lacked any excavation, probably due to the summer occupation. Other structures included sweathouses, ceremonial enclosures, ramadas and acorn granaries. The material culture included ceramic cooking and storage vessels, baskets, flaked lithic and ground stone tools, arrow shaft straighteners, stone, bone, and shell ornaments.

Hunting implements included the bow and arrow, curved throwing sticks, nets and snares. Shell and bone fishhooks as well as nets were used for fishing. Lithic materials including quartz and meta volcanics were commonly available throughout much of the Kumeyaay territory. Other lithic resources, such as obsidian, chert, chalcedony and steatite, occur in more localized areas and were acquired through direct procurement or exchange.

Kumeyaay culture and society remained stable until the advent of missionization and displacement by Hispanic populations during the eighteenth century. The ethnohistoric period refers to a brief period when Native American culture was initially being affected by Euroamerican culture and historical records on Native American activities were limited. Cultural activities within San Diego County between the late 1700s and the

present provide a record of Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and American control, occupation, and land use.

Consultation and Avoidance Measures

The Commission's Tribal Consultation Policy (adopted on August 8, 2018) recognizes the importance of efforts to protect Tribal Cultural Resources and improve communication and coordination with Tribes, and it sets out a tribal consultation process that is fully consistent with, and complementary to the nature of, the Commission's goals, policies (including Section 30244), and mission statement. Tribal cultural resources can be sites, features, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value and can also qualify as archeological, paleontological, visual, biological, or other resources that the Commission is tasked with protecting pursuant to the Coastal Act.

Consistent with the Commission's tribal consultation policy, Commission Staff reviewed the tribal consultation undertaken by the City. On August 27, 2024, Commission Staff wrote to the tribal representatives identified by the Native American Heritage Commission to inform them of the project's CDP application and the Commission's upcoming hearing on the project, to share the proposed cultural resource avoidance and minimization measures, to offer consultation, and to advise them of the opportunity to provide comments for the CDP hearing. To date, no conversations or meetings were requested by the tribal representatives contacted by Commission staff.

Construction activities that disturb soils (e.g., grinding, tilling, disking, and digging/excavating) can damage archaeological, cultural, or paleontological resources. Although potential impact to known cultural resources within the subject project has been identified through preliminary investigations, there could be previously unidentified cultural resources buried within the subject project area. Therefore, **Special Condition 9** requires that during ground disturbing activities, a Qualified Archaeologist shall be present and a Native American monitor from the Kumeyaay Nation shall be invited onsite to inspect and monitor the excavation work. Prior to the start of any work that requires monitoring, a Native American monitor will attend preconstruction meetings to review and approve an archaeological monitoring plan for the project. If cultural materials are discovered, all earth-moving activities within and around the immediate discovery area would be diverted until a Qualified Archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the discovery.

Based on Commission Staff review of the tribal consultation performed by the City of Del Mar, as well as the cultural resource monitoring protection protocols required by **Special Condition 9**, the Commission finds that the proposed development is consistent with Coastal Act Section 30244.

F. Visual Resources

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states in part:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.

The bridge crosses over the San Dieguito River inlet channel, providing highly valued coastal views to residents and visitors. The visual context at the bridge location includes the Pacific Ocean, sandy beaches, coastal bluffs, and riverine habitats.

In many ways, the proposed bridge represents a visual enhancement compared to the existing condition. As shown in **Exhibit 4**, the new bridge deck would be higher and the four bridge supports would be fewer than the existing bridge thereby reducing the visual obstruction presented by the roadway infrastructure. Rounded columns and larger arching spans would create more open views upstream and out to the beaches and ocean.

The proposed bridge railing is designed to replicate the existing railing thereby minimizing changes to the existing views within the scenic corridor. However, the existing and proposed pedestrian railings are dominated by vertical members which limit visual permeability through the railings from most vantage points. Commission Staff recommend a revised vehicular and pedestrian railing design featuring horizontal members to create a more panoramic viewing experience through the railings. This revision will reduce the visual impact of the bridge within the scenic coastal setting, and the City of Del Mar has agreed to the design change. Utilizing corrosion-resistant marine-grade metal horizontal railing elements would enhance the visual harmony between the bridge and the naturally occurring horizontal lines that make up the landscape within this coastal viewshed. To minimize visual impacts from the proposed bridge railing design, **Special Condition 1** requires submittal of revised vehicular and pedestrian railing design details for review and approval by the Executive Director.

To further enhance the views within this the coastal corridor, Commission Staff recommend deemphasizing the bridge appearance through the implementation of integrally colored concrete of a sandstone hue, to better blend with the adjacent coastal bluff and sandy beaches that dominate the viewshed. The City of Del Mar has also agreed to this design change. **Special Condition 1** requires all proposed concrete project elements including, but not limited to the bridge superstructure, columns, abutments, walls, median, and roadway approach sidewalks be colored with integrally colored "Mesa Buff" concrete as was required by the Commission-approved Caltrans Interstate-5 North Coast Corridor Public Works Plan (Caltrans, 2015), to reduce visual impacts from roadway projects within the coastal zone.

The project requires the removal of five non-native landscape trees and two Torrey Pine trees. To offset the visual impact of the removed trees, two new trees will be planted as part of the proposed stormwater infrastructure improvements. The trees would be

planted in tree wells that include biofiltration soil, providing both aesthetic and stormwater treatment benefits. **Special Condition 1** requires Executive Director approval of the tree species and tree sizes to ensure minimization of the visual impact from the loss of the existing trees within this scenic coastal view corridor. In addition, purchase credits will be applied to the City of Del Mar Public Tree/Landscape Management program to ensure project compliance with Del Mar Municipal Code. Temporary visual impacts will occur to existing vegetation until the proposed native landscape plantings are installed and established.

The aesthetic revisions conditioned herein will ensure that the new bridge design will minimize visual impacts within this scenic coastal setting. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the proposed development is consistent with Coastal Act Section 30251.

G. Local Coastal Planning

Section 30604(a) requires that a coastal development permit shall be issued only if the Commission finds that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP) in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. In this case, such a finding can be made.

The City of Del Mar has a certified LCP and will approve any necessary CDP within their jurisdiction. The proposed project is located on state tidelands; therefore, Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act is the standard of review, and the certified LCP has been used as guidance. As conditioned, the proposed development is consistent with the public access, recreation, and environmental protection policies in Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and with the City of Del Mar Certified LCP. Therefore, approval of the proposed development will not prejudice the ability of the City of Del Mar to continue to implement its certified LCP.

H. California Environmental Quality Act

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. Public Resources Code, Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect that the activity may have on the environment.

The City of Del Mar, acting as the lead agency under CEQA, certified the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project in February 2023, finding the project will not have a significant environmental impact (State Clearinghouse No. 2022050089.) The Coastal Commission's review and analysis of land use proposals has been certified by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency as being the functional equivalent of environmental review under CEQA (Section 15251(c)). The Commission has reviewed the relevant coastal resource issues with the proposed project and has identified appropriate and necessary modifications to address adverse

impacts to such coastal resources. All above findings are incorporated herein in their entirety by reference.

As such, there are no additional feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse environmental effects which approval of the proposed project, as conditioned, would have on the environment within the meaning of CEQA. Thus, if so conditioned, the proposed project will not result in any significant environmental effects for which feasible mitigation measures have not been employed consistent with CEQA Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A).

APPENDIX A – SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS

Camino Del Mar Bridge Replacement Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration,
City of Del Mar, February 2023

Camino Del Mar Bridge Replacement Project Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan,
Helix Environmental Planning, June 2024.