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TO: California Coastal Commissioners and Interested Public

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SUBJECT: **2021 - 2025 Strategic Plan Implementation Update. Discussion only. No Commission action.**

[Exhibit 1: 2021-2025 Strategic Plan Action Implementation Dashboard](#)

Summary

This staff report presents a status update on Commission staff progress in implementing the Coastal Commission's 2021 – 2025 [Strategic Plan](#) (Plan) since its adoption in November 2020. The summary report is followed by Exhibit 1, which includes a dashboard for all of the action items for each of the Plan's nine goals. Implementing the Plan has been very successful to date, with some action items complete and many action items that are underway or on-going. Major highlights and other Plan implementation accomplishments since the Commission's last status update in December 2023 are discussed below. The report concludes with a brief discussion on next steps and areas of focus for the next year of implementing the Plan, including the development of a 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Background

In November 2020, the Commission adopted a new five-year Strategic Plan that reorganized and built on the success of the Commission's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan. The 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan provides a framework of nine goals, 50 objectives, and 199 specific actions to guide the agency's work through 2025. Development of the Plan included proposed actions and objectives provided by all programs and units within the Commission; a review of the status of the actions under the 2013 – 2018 Strategic Plan for inclusion of items that were ongoing, incomplete or deferred; and significant public input including through an online portal on the Commission's website, through a dedicated Strategic Plan email address, and through testimony at the public hearings on the Draft and Final Strategic Plan.

All objectives and actions in the Plan are important for improving the overall function of the organization and benefiting the core mission and implementation of the policies of the Coastal Act. The Plan's objectives and actions are not listed in order of priority and each

action is intended to be addressed during the Plan's five-year time horizon. Many of these actions are undertaken simultaneously during the five-year timeframe, as the tasks are carried out by the relevant staff in the Commission's program departments and district offices. The Plan also specifically acknowledges that implementation of many of the actions is contingent on securing additional funding and staffing. Nonetheless, the Commission is committed to achieving the goals identified in the Plan.

Highlights of Accomplishments & Progress to be Made

The Commission has made significant progress with Plan implementation since November 2020, despite interruptions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the resulting uncertain economic times, and agency capacity constraints. The status of all Plan actions is provided in Exhibit 1 (the "dashboard"). As summarized in the table below, some actions have been completed ("complete") or have entailed completion of major actions but have additional work to be done ("completed/on-going"). Many actions are noted as "in progress" if major objectives are yet to be completed, or "on-going" if the action is intended to be continued over the coming years (e.g., on-going coordination actions). Finally, some actions are "deferred" because they have not yet been initiated and/or the Commission does not have the resources necessary to undertake them.

Action Status	Number
Complete	9
Complete/On-going	11
On-going	144
In Progress	17
Deferred	18
TOTAL Actions	199

Below are highlights of some of the major Plan accomplishments since the Commission's last status update in December 2023 and highlights of areas of improvement or progress that need to be made by the end of the Plan's timeframe. All accomplishments and statuses for each action are summarized in Exhibit 1. Additional accomplishment highlights can be found in the Commission's annual Year in Review summaries which are published annually on the Commission's February agenda.

Goal 1: Enhance Agency Capacity and Maintain an Effective and Diverse Workforce

Goal 1 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	3
Complete/On-going	0
On-going	12
In Progress	2
Deferred	0
TOTAL Goal 1 Actions	17

Goal 1 Accomplishments

The Commission has made significant strides with enhancing agency capacity and maintaining an effective and diverse workforce over the past year. Noteworthy highlights include multiple new staff positions, salary increases, implementation of the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Plan, and additional training and professional development opportunities.

First, the Commission had the opportunity to expand agency capacity with the help of new funding sources for additional staff positions to support sea level rise planning, wildfire resilience, offshore wind energy, and housing work. This has or will result in additional positions in the Energy, Ocean Resources, & Federal Consistency unit, Statewide Planning unit, and district offices. The Commission also welcomed its 2024-2026 NOAA Coastal Management Fellow, who will be focusing on offshore wind energy planning.

The Commission is in the process of recruiting strong, diverse candidates for these new staff positions with the support of the conversion to online exams and interviews and the on-going work of the Commission's Environmental Justice (EJ) unit and implementation of the JEDI plan. In 2024, the EJ Unit advanced the Commission's JEDI work through a quarterly staff meeting series and formation of JEDI action groups to make progress on specific JEDI actions, including those related to staff recruitment and retention (i.e., establishment of a mentoring program, see below). This work is expected to continue through the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan timeframe and beyond.

Another noteworthy highlight of 2024 was the signing of a new contract for the California Association of Professional Scientists (CAPS) bargaining unit, which includes the state's Environmental Scientist series. This resulted in special salary adjustments, longevity pay, and geographical pay for all state employees in this series, including those at the Commission.

The Commission also continued its dedication to staff training and professional development opportunities in 2024. This included the continuance of monthly "Welcome Aboard" meetings for new staffers and a monthly all-staff training hour on a variety of agency topics including LCP analysis, new sea level rise science, and environmental justice. Commission staff also launched a Coastal Commission Mentoring Program in 2024, which provides a place for experienced staff and retirees to share knowledge and career advice with new and early-career Commission staff while building a stronger sense of community between staff overall. The first session of this new program came to a successful conclusion in Fall 2024 and a second session is planned for early 2025.

Goal 1 Progress to be Made

The Commission does not have any fully deferred action items for Goal 1, but there are still several areas for improvement that are primarily contingent on the state budget. Notably, while the Commission has been actively pursuing salary increases and geographic pay increases, these efforts have only been partially successful for the Coastal Program Analyst and State Environmental Scientist series (Actions 1.1.2 and 1.1.3). Additional progress on these actions will help to achieve Objective 1.2, Increase Staff Satisfaction and Retention.

Goal 2: Maximize Public Access and Recreation for All

Goal 2 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	1
Complete/On-going	2
On-going	21
In Progress	2
Deferred	1
TOTAL Goal 2 Actions	27

Goal 2 Accomplishments

The Strategic Plan provides several objectives and actions that implement a pillar Coastal Act mandate to maximize public access and recreation opportunities for all people. While this is a core part of the Commission's daily work, there were several noteworthy highlights in 2024.

The Commission approved a number of significant public access projects over the past year that advance Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan. Particular highlights include a new 1.25-mile formalized segment of the California Coastal Trail connecting a critical gap between the City of Morro Bay with the community of Cayucos (CDP No. 3-24-0020); an extension of the multi-use Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail along with a new approximately 4.3-mile two-lane bus road between the City of Marina and Sand City (CDP No. 3-23-0288/Appeal No. A-3-MRA-24-0026); and a new network of approximately five miles of public access trails across the Estero Americano Coast Preserve in Sonoma County (CDP No. 2-24-0867).

The Commission also continued its interagency partnership efforts with State Parks, which included on-going Explore the Coast Overnight coordination meetings with State Coastal Conservancy staff to discuss lower cost overnight accommodation projects and opportunities, facilitated managers meetings to build relationships and communication, site visits, and establishment of regular district and executive-level coordination meetings.

The Commission made strides to address access barriers and support access for underserved communities in 2024. Commission staff finalized and published a guidance document titled [Resources for Addressing Environmental Justice through Local Coastal Programs](#), which includes recommendations for addressing barriers to equitable coastal access through land use policies and meaningful engagement practices. The Commission also finalized and adopted guidance on how to consider environmental justice communities in sea level rise planning and adaptation efforts through its [Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance 2024 Update](#), which was supported by an eight-member EJ Advisory Group and broader community engagement. The Commission also supported passage of AB 2939 (Rendon, 2024), which streamlines and equalizes use of public parks for nonprofit groups through elimination of special permit and fee requirements.

Relatedly, the Commission made notable progress in its work related to lower cost overnight accommodations in 2024, including the launch of a new [Lower Cost Coastal Lodging page](#) on the Commission's public website and an [informational briefing](#) for the Commission and public at the July 2024 hearing. The Commission also acted on several significant coastal development permits (CDPs) and local coastal program (LCP) amendments that will provide for additional lower cost overnight accommodations and improved access for underserved communities in the coastal zone, including the American Tin Cannery Hotel (CDP No. A-3-PGR-22-0004 – 18 lower-cost standard double rooms, 16 hostel rooms, and programming for underserved communities), Cruz Hotel (CDP No. A-3-STC-24-0016 – 20 lower-cost standard double rooms, programming for underserved communities and hotel workers, and in-lieu fees), Dana Point Harbor Hotels (LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-DPT-21-0079-2 – 136 replacement and 33 new lower-cost standard double rooms, plus programming for underserved communities), and Magnolia Tank Farm (LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-HNB-24-0003-1 – 54 lower-cost standard double rooms).

Goal 2 Progress to be Made

There are several deferred and in-progress actions under Goal 2 where additional staff capacity and funding are needed for full implementation, including development of guidelines for local parking programs (Action 2.2.3) and development of guidance on mitigation strategies and land use policies that support lower cost overnight accommodations (Action 2.4.2). These action items are important to the Commission but are only able to be handled by staff on a case-by-case basis at this time, rather than through the more holistic and coordinated approach called for in the Strategic Plan. The Commission can continue to support the importance and prioritization of these actions through CDP decisions and LCP policies.

Goal 3: Protect and Enhance Coastal Resources

Goal 3 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	1
Complete/On-going	1
On-going	23
In Progress	5
Deferred	4
TOTAL Goal 3 Actions	34

Goal 3 Accomplishments

While many of the Commission’s activities revolve around protecting and enhancing coastal resources, several important advancements were made on this front over the past year. The first action of note is the inaugural year of coordinated permitting for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP) projects. Under the California Natural Resources Agency’s “Cutting Green Tape” initiative, CDFW and Coastal Commission staff have been working together to identify opportunities to streamline CDP approval of funded projects located within the coastal zone. The FRGP specifically funds projects that restore, enhance, or protect anadromous salmonoid habitat in the state’s watersheds. The Commission approved a single consolidated CDP for two FRGP-funded projects located in unincorporated Santa Barbara County and Del Norte County in November 2024 and anticipates annual consolidated CDP applications from CDFW for future FRGP projects located within the coastal zone.

The second accomplishment of note for Goal 3 is the Commission’s continued efforts to advance wildfire resiliency in the coastal zone. Over the past year, the Commission adopted a wildfire resilience and forest health-related Public Works Plan (PWP) for Tomales Bay State Park that will help to facilitate the planning, review, and authorization of vegetation treatment projects; began work on a similar PWP effort with the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority; certified a comprehensive Land Use Plan (LUP) amendment for the County of Sonoma that provides additional fire prevention policies; and continued coordination with public agencies including State Parks, Caltrans, and other special districts. These efforts all also align with the “Cutting Green Tape” initiative as they provide state and local agency partners with improved understanding on how to meet Coastal Act requirements and the opportunity for streamlined permitting processes.

This was also a significant year for offshore wind planning efforts. In 2024, the Commission contributed to the California Energy Commission’s AB 525 Offshore Wind Energy Strategic Plan (adopted July 2024); worked with BOEM to confirm three federal

consistency concurrences for seafloor survey efforts; issued one CDP for seafloor surveys in state waters; held four meetings of the Offshore Wind and Fisheries Working Group; and participated in the Ocean Protection Council (OPC)-funded Offshore Wind Environmental Monitoring Guidance Project. These efforts will continue with the support of additional funding for expanded staff capacity and the Commission’s 2024-2026 NOAA Coastal Management Fellow.

Finally, the Commission continues to make progress in its coastal resource protection and enhancement work through interagency coordination and working groups. Examples over the past year include Commission staff’s participation in advance mitigation priority identification discussions with AB 1282 (Mullin, 2017) workgroups to improve permitting efficiency for transportation projects; coordination with OPC and other state agencies on development of a Statewide Aquaculture Action Plan; participation in the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project’s Regional Monitoring Program Core Team to advise on approaches for more efficient and coordinated wetland monitoring; and the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with nine state and federal agencies to work on monarch butterfly conservation issues.

Goal 3 Progress to be Made

Several deferred or otherwise delayed action items within Goal 3 are due to the departure or reassignment of key staff in the Statewide Planning Unit and Technical Services Unit, lack of dedicated funding, and associated lack of staff capacity. Staff have been able to backfill some but not all of these vacated positions and thus have had to deprioritize some of the longer-term planning efforts in favor of workload with statutory deadlines for Commission action. These deferred or delayed efforts include development of a coastal habitats compendium (Action 3.1.1), updated ESHA and agricultural LCP guidance (Actions 3.1.2 and 3.3.1), tracking and reporting wetland mitigation (Action 3.2.6), an evaluation of agricultural land protection strategies (Action 3.3.2), outreach to the agricultural community (Action 3.3.3), and development of sediment management guidance (Action 3.6.1).

Goal 4: Support Resilient Coastal Communities in the Face of Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

Goal 4 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	0
Complete/On-going	3
On-going	20
In Progress	2
Deferred	0
TOTAL Goal 4 Actions	25

Goal 4 Accomplishments

The Commission’s responsibilities for hazard planning, coastal resource protection, and public access preservation have become increasingly critical in the face of climate change and sea level rise. Over the past year, in the wake of the passage of SB 272 (Laird, 2023), the Commission coordinated with OPC and the California Sea Level Rise State and Regional Support Collaborative to develop and finalize its [Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance 2024 Update](#). This updated guidance document now addresses the new best available sea level rise science consistent with OPC’s 2024 State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance,

guidelines and best practices for fulfilling SB 272's sea level rise planning and adaptation requirements, and integration of environmental justice considerations and principles.

Additional noteworthy accomplishments towards this goal over the past year include the approval of five LCP Local Assistance Grants to the Cities of San Clemente, Seal Beach, Monterey, Morro Bay, and Ventura for a total of approximately \$4.9M to support their sea level rise and climate change planning efforts; coordination with OPC on their complementary SB 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant Program; and a productive Commission workshop with the Local Government Working Group on innovative sea level rise adaptation strategies. The Commission also published the [California Coastal Armoring Database](#) on the Commission's public website to support permitting and planning decisions; conducted on-going coordination with Caltrans on an initial set of projects to carry out their 2023 State Highway System Management Plan that address sea level rise; and approved a comprehensive update for Sonoma County that, with suggested modifications, includes forward-thinking policies that anticipate sea level rise and focus on non-armoring alternatives that also protect and improve sensitive habitat.

On the greenhouse gas reduction strategies front, the Commission continued work to carry out its 2023 Sustainability Principles through a number of additional public resources. These include new guidance memorandums on [Smart Growth Planning & Permitting](#) and [Electric Vehicle Charging Station Planning & Permitting](#), an updated [Climate Change page](#) on the Commission's public website with a new "[Understanding Greenhouse Gases](#)" [story map](#), and a new [Sustainability subpage](#) with resources for local governments to improve climate change resiliency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through planning and permitting efforts in the coastal zone.

Goal 4 Progress to be Made

Additional staffing and funding are necessary to successfully implement a number of actions under Goal 4 by the end of the Strategic Plan's timeframe. These actions include developing guidance on evaluating shoreline management adaptation options in light of sea level rise (Action 4.3.5), and collaboration with state agencies to better understand climate change vulnerabilities of the state's public infrastructure systems (Action 4.1.3). Beyond the challenges of staffing and funding constraints, several actions under Goal 4 including advancement of the [Residential Development Sea Level Rise Adaptation Policy Guidance](#) (Action 4.3.1) and progress on LCP updates to address sea level rise hazards (Action 4.1.1) face complex hurdles related to land ownership, land values, and land use management strategies that vary by the local context. This last action will be especially important with the passage of SB 272 (Sea Level Rise: Planning and Adaptation).

Goal 5: Advance Diversity, Equity, Environmental Justice, and Tribal Relations

Goal 5 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	2
Complete/On-going	4
On-going	15
In Progress	3
Deferred	1
TOTAL Goal 5 Actions	25

Goal 5 Accomplishments

The Commission continues to make significant progress in advancing diversity, equity, EJ, and tribal relations since adoption of the Strategic Plan. Notably for 2024, the Commission emphasized its commitment to meaningful public engagement by updating its [Meeting Procedures and Definitions webpage](#), updating its [Public Participation Procedures guidance document](#) with a corresponding [Spanish translation](#), creating new FAQs and Commission hearing briefs in English and Spanish, expanding the Commission's Spanish Program staff by two additional certified bilingual staff members for a total of four program staff, and continuing to provide live Spanish translation services for hearing items with significant public interest and participation. The Commission also published the [Coastal California Environmental Justice mapping tool](#) on its public website which, paired with the Commission's 2024 [Resources for Addressing Environmental Justice through Local Coastal Programs](#), is intended to foster meaningful engagement with environmental justice communities and ultimately minimize development and land use policy decision impacts on such communities.

Staff recommendations are increasingly including provisions to help address structural inequities that affect EJ or tribal communities, as informed by extensive staff research and outreach. For instance, in 2024, staff reports for the City of Huntington Beach's Magnolia Tank Farm LCP amendment (LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-HNB-24-0003-1), the City of San Diego's CDP for temporary services for unhoused individuals (CDP No. 6-24-0300), and several new high-cost hotel projects included extensive EJ review, discussion, and findings in the respective staff report. In the case of Magnolia Tank Farm, which was a particularly high-profile project, the Commission included suggested modifications to ensure that a portion of the on-site affordable housing would be made available to income-qualifying employees of the on-site hotel on a first right of refusal basis.

The Commission is also continuing to improve its understanding of systemic equity issues through staff research and trainings. Efforts on this front over the past year include a series of special meetings with community groups and other interested parties on how the Commission can affirmatively further fair housing through its permitting and planning work; an informational session for the Commission on the environmental justice updates to the Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance and the related public engagement process ; a new mandatory staff training on tribal consultation and engagement through CalHR with an additional consultant-led staff training planned for early 2025; and the equity analysis conducted for the FY 23-24 Whale Tail Grants Program. Affecting meaningful change in equitable coastal access and stewardship for all people requires an understanding of historical inequities and present barriers, and this research and training will help to inform the Commission's decision-making and programming going forward.

Staff have also continued to conduct formal tribal consultations on proposed projects to ensure that tribal voices are considered in the process. For example, the Commission worked closely with the Wiyot Tribe and other cultural and environmental representatives to process a material amendment for phased cultural and ecological restoration work on Tuluwat Island in Humboldt Bay, which is considered the spiritual center of the Wiyot Tribe's universe (CDP No. 1-08-017-A2). This involved significant coordination with the Wiyot Tribe as the project applicant to understand the cultural resource issues associated with the project and work towards Coastal Act consistency, outreach to other tribes in accordance with the Commission's Tribal Consultation Policy, and waiving of the permit application fee. The Tuluwat Restoration Project will result in site cleanup, remediation,

and hosting of ceremonial and interpretive events that will provide a public service for tribal members and other members of the community.

Goal 5 Progress to be Made

Deferred or otherwise delayed progress for actions under Goal 5 is primarily due to vacant positions in the Commission's Environmental Justice Unit and Tribal Coordination Program and the associated lack of staff capacity where those positions have not been filled yet. Fortunately, the Commission has made recent hires in the Environmental Justice Unit and plans to hire a full-time Tribal Affairs Coordinator in the next several months. Deferred or delayed actions include exploring legislative changes to strengthen the cultural resource protection requirements of Coastal Act Section 30244 (Action 5.6.1).

Goal 6: Continue to Enhance the LCP Planning Program and Refine Implementation of the Regulatory Program

Goal 6 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	0
Complete/On-going	0
On-going	12
In Progress	0
Deferred	5
TOTAL Goal 6 Actions	17

Goal 6 Accomplishments

Goal 6 includes many on-going actions as the Commission continually seeks to enhance the LCP planning program and refine implementation of the regulatory program. Much of this on-going work is made possible through the FY 2021-2022 budget augmentation for the Commission's LCP grant program.

One particular effort to implement this goal is driven by the Local Government Working Group, which has worked together since July 2019 to explore challenges and develop solutions to better address sea level rise planning for California's coastal communities. The group consists of representatives from the California State Association of Counties, the League of California Cities, and a Coastal Commission subcommittee (Commissioners Harmon and Wilson). Over the past several years, the group has demonstrated their growing commitment to work collaboratively and provide a path forward for both the Commission and local governments to advance work on sea level rise planning through a joint statement, a set of products that lay out a framework for a phased approach to LCP updates for sea level rise, and multiple workshops before the Commission at public hearings. In 2024, these efforts continued with a workshop at the Commission's September hearing to discuss "[Neighborhood-Scale Approaches to Adaptation Planning](#)." The workshop involved hearing from an academic researcher and local governments about opportunities to pursue neighborhood-scale adaptation planning, gathering Commission and stakeholder feedback, and identifying next steps for the Local Government Working Group. This collaboration will be critical in successfully completing climate change-related LCP updates, including the sea level rise planning LCP updates now required by SB 272.

The Commission also made notable progress towards Goal 6 on the housing front in 2024. In response to the on-going housing crisis and new state housing legislation, the

Commission enhanced its coordination efforts with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and produced guidance materials with corresponding staff trainings to facilitate local housing planning and permitting efforts. This specifically included a new interagency coordination process with HCD for LCP amendments related to SB 9 and ADUs, a [memorandum on how SB 423's streamlined ministerial approvals process applies in the coastal zone](#), and new staff resources and bi-monthly staff housing calls. The Commission also initiated a project to understand and enhance affirmatively furthering fair housing through Commission planning and regulatory programs, which involved significant outreach with stakeholders including local governments, housing developers, community organizations, and tribal representatives. This project is anticipated to result in recommendations to the Commission for consideration in early 2025.

Goal 6 Progress to be Made

There are several deferred action items under Goal 6 including establishing collaboration expectations on the LCP amendment pre-submittal process with local government partners (Action 6.1.3), updating CDP application materials to improve user-friendliness and smooth processing (Action 6.3.1), evaluating options to improve the recorded document process (Action 6.3.2), and updating federal consistency program information with additional process guidance (Action 6.3.3). Additional agency capacity is required to implement these action items.

Goal 7: Expand and Enhance the Enforcement Program

Goal 7 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	1
Complete/On-going	0
On-going	12
In Progress	1
Deferred	2
TOTAL Goal 7 Actions	16

Goal 7 Accomplishments

The Commission's ability to expand and enhance the enforcement program took a giant leap forward thanks to SB 433 (Allen), which took effect on January 1, 2022. Previously, the Commission could only assess penalties for violations relating to public access. This new law extends the Commission's administrative penalty authority to apply to all types of Coastal Act violations, providing both a significant incentive for violators to quickly resolve existing violations, as well as a strong deterrent for creating new ones. Although the Commission will need additional staff to bring the full effect of this policy to bear on many of the unresolved violations in the nearly 3,000 case backlog, the ability to assess administrative penalties will help resolve high priority enforcement cases going forward. Over the past year, the Commission was able to use its administrative penalty authority to resolve two long-standing public access and ESHA violations in Los Angeles ([File No. V-5-19-0119](#)) and Big Sur ([File No. V-3-18-0038](#)).

Goal 7 Progress to be Made

In general, the Commission's Enforcement Program has a large backlog of enforcement cases. With funding received through SB 433, the Commission has filled several enforcement staff positions and is making steady progress on addressing the case

backlog, with a focus on cases in southern California. Specific action items under Goal 7 are also deferred due to lack of funding, including pursuing information gathering authority (Action 7.1.3) and obtaining modern enforcement tools to better verify on-the-ground circumstances (Action 7.1.4).

Goal 8: Continue to Develop and Maintain Partnerships and Enhance Public Presence

Goal 8 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	0
Complete/On-going	0
On-going	15
In Progress	0
Deferred	0
TOTAL Goal 8 Actions	15

Goal 8 Accomplishments

The Commission has continued to develop and maintain partnerships and enhance its public presence over the past year. Particular highlights include the continued success of the Whale Tail Grant Program and California Coastal Cleanup Day, a renewed interagency agreement with Caltrans, and the filling of the Commission's Public Information Officer staff position.

As described in the [FY 2023-2024 Equity Analysis](#), the 2023/24 Whale Tail grant cycle was one of the largest in the program's history in terms of funding available (specifically, with the support of a significant General Fund budget augmentation in FY 21/22 that must be encumbered by the end of FY 2025), grant proposals received, and grants awarded. The 2023/24 Whale Tail Grants cycle saw the greatest number of applicants in the program's history at 219 proposals. Of the 219 proposals, 60 projects totaling \$2,286,875 were approved for funding, which is expected to support engagement of approximately 1,062,205 participants. The awarded grants include 50 projects that focus on low income communities, 43 projects that focus on the inclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, 24 that support dual language learners, six that engage people who identify as having a disability, eleven that engage newcomers and migrant communities, six that engage unhoused communities, two that engage carceral system impacted people, two that engage LGBTQ+ youth, four that primarily engage teachers, and three that engage youth in the foster system.

The annual California Coastal Cleanup Day celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2024 and was another resounding success. The 40th annual event included approximately 766 cleanup sites with over 47,493 volunteers. The Commission also continued to encourage the neighborhood cleanup model that began in response to Covid-19, conducted a significant traditional and social media-focused outreach campaign, and partnered with Caltrans' Stormwater Program to further promote statewide participation in this event.

Another important 2024 highlight for Goal 8 was the renewal of the interagency agreement between the Commission and Caltrans. The renewed Caltrans interagency agreement represents the conclusion of a multi-year negotiation process between Commission and Caltrans staff. These renewed agreements have allowed the continued enhancement of the Commission's Statewide Transportation Program with additional staffing and coordination efforts. This resulted in approximately 34 coastal development permits,

emergency permits, and waivers processed for Caltrans projects in 2024. Commission staff also participated in a number of Caltrans' state planning efforts over the past year, including a workshop on nature-based adaptation strategies and sediment management concepts, coordination on an initial set of projects to address sea level rise and carry out the 2023 State Highway System Management Plan, and discussions on advance mitigation priorities through the State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency pursuant to AB 1282 ("1282/STEPPE"). The Commission also continued its special partnership effort between Caltrans and the California Department of Technology to implement the statewide Middle-Mile Broadband Network project, which over this past year included consolidated permit and waiver approvals for project segments in Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, and San Mateo Counties and the City of Los Angeles.

The Commission was able to make notable advancements towards Goal 8 in 2024 with the filling of its Public Information Officer (PIO) position. With the help and capacity of the Commission's new PIO, the Commission launched a monthly "Coastal Currently" newsletter that highlights the key actions of each month's Commission meetings. This newsletter is sent to key coastal legislators and staff, Committee staff and Administrative staff, and members of the public who sign up to receive the emails as well (available at [this link here](#))—all in effort to enhance meaningful engagement, public relations, and public education of the Commission's work. The PIO continues to provide timely responses to press inquiries and expand the Commission's communications and media presence.

Commission staff also continue to develop and maintain its partnerships through participation in multiple interagency and other coastal-focused working groups. This on-going coordination allows the Commission staff to provide technical and policy input on upcoming projects and studies, improve the efficiency of permitting processes, enhance relationships with agency partners and other stakeholders, and achieve better outcomes in our work to protect the California coast and ocean. Of note for 2024, the Commission continued to strengthen its relationship with HCD through bi-monthly coordination meetings, establishment of a new interagency review process for LCP amendments related to SB 9 and ADUs, and coordination on general policy guidance and specific planning efforts and projects related to Housing Element implementation. The Commission also commenced a partnering effort with UC Davis students in the Environmental Policy and Management graduate program where the Commission will act as a client for a 20-week capstone project. The project itself will begin in early 2025 and will be focused on examining the relationship between ecological restoration and environmental justice in the coastal zone, with an interdisciplinary team of Commission staff providing mentorship along the way.

Goal 8 Progress to be Made

All actions under Goal 8 are designated as "on-going" as the Commission will continue to maintain and improve its public presence and partnerships over the course of the Strategic Plan and beyond. Staff continue to participate in coastal working groups, coordinate with legislative offices, and collaborate with non-governmental organizations and academic institutes on coastal issues as feasible.

Goal 9: Enhance Information Management and E-Government

Goal 9 Action Statuses	Number
Complete	1
Complete/On-going	1
On-going	14
In Progress	2
Deferred	5
TOTAL Goal 9 Actions	23

Goal 9 Accomplishments

The Commission continued its many efforts to enhance information management and e-government over the past year. Particular highlights include internal staff trainings on the Coastal Data Management System, coordination with the Legislature to amend the Coastal Act to allow local governments to submit Final Local Action Notices to the Commission electronically, securing a contract for a digitization pilot project (anticipated completion by the end of 2025), publishing of the Commission's GIS Open Data Portal on its public website, and integration of the GIS Open Data Portal with the California Natural Resources Agency to increase visibility and access to the Commission's authoritative data for the public, local governments, and state agency partners.

Goal 9 Progress to be Made

There is still much progress to be made on Goal 9 related to converting the Commission's digital records into ADA-compliant format (Action 9.3.3), developing systems for receiving planning and permitting information electronically (Action 9.5.1), enhancing and expanding the online permit process (Action 9.5.2), and developing and maintaining the digital LCP Library (Action 9.5.6). Each of these special projects requires a significant investment of staff time, and some are likely to take years from development to rollout. However, ISU and records management staff remain dedicated to the core responsibilities of protecting and maintaining the Commission's data and network as its highest priority. Longer-term projects will be prioritized as feasible.

Conclusion/Next Steps

The Commission has made strong progress on the Strategic Plan's goals, objectives, and actions since adoption of the Plan in November 2020. The Commission will continue these efforts through the planning horizon of 2025. Anticipated priorities for 2025 include (in no particular order):

- Pursuit of creative opportunities to enhance staffing resources and improve staff retention, including assembling for an all-staff conference in 2025.
- Prioritization of LCP development and updates, including proactive and collaborative LCP grant work and development of internal and external training resources.
- Expansion of access to Commission meetings, workshops, and other events including through building out the Commission's Spanish webpage and resources, pursuing relationships with Spanish-speaking community organizations, and providing additional engagement support through FAQs and communications.

- Expanded engagement with California Native American tribes, environmental justice communities, and other stakeholders including through regularly scheduled meetings and staff trainings and expanded staff capacity.
- Continued coordination and collaboration with state agency partners, including:
 - Continued coordination with the Ocean Protection Council and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission on implementation of SB 272.
 - Further collaboration with the State Lands Commission on management and protection of California's Public Trust resources.
 - Reinvigoration of partnership efforts with the Coastal Conservancy and State Parks to increase access to lower cost overnight accommodations in the coastal zone.
 - Continued coordination with the Department of Housing and Community Development on planning for housing in the coastal zone.
- Progress on offshore wind, including engagement with lessees and stakeholders on surveys and project development, interagency work on California's Strategic Plan for Offshore Wind and further development of a statewide strategy for addressing impacts to fishing, an environmental monitoring and adaptive management framework and engagement with Tribes, underserved and local communities and stakeholders.
- Efforts to streamline critical wildfire resilience work, including completion of a wildfire resilience Public Works Plan for the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority.
- Progress on building the agency's digital archives for efficient and improved responsiveness.
- Exploration of new funding streams to augment existing Commission programs.

As the planning horizon of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is coming to a close, the development of a 2026-2030 Strategic Plan will also be a significant priority for the Commission in 2025. This process will involve significant stakeholder outreach and engagement, public participation opportunities, and Commission input opportunities. A tentative timeline for this process is shown below.

Tentative Timeline for 2026-2030 Strategic Plan Development	
Commission Staff initial review of outstanding/on-going 2021-2025 Strategic Plan actions	Winter-Spring 2025
Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement	Spring 2025
Commission Staff drafting	Summer 2025
Commission hearing on public draft	Fall 2025
Public comment period	Fall 2025
Commission hearing on final draft	Winter 2025

Commission staff will announce the details for specific stakeholder outreach and public engagement opportunities as they arise next year.