

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT
725 FRONT STREET, SUITE 300
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
PHONE: (831) 427-4863
FAX: (831) 427-4877
WEB: WWW.COASTAL.CA.GOV

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED PERMIT AMENDMENT**

Date: November 25, 2020

To: All Interested Parties

From: Susan Craig, Central Coast District Manager
Alexandra McCoy, Coastal Planner

Subject: Proposed Amendment to Coastal Development Permit (CDP) 3-17-0335
Applicant: City of Pacific Grove

Original CDP Approval

CDP 3-17-0335 was approved by the Coastal Commission on July 12, 2017 and provided for the reconstruction of a 31-foot-long by 5-foot-tall section of an existing 150-foot-long seawall and installation of additional public access improvements along the coastal bluff adjacent to the Pacific Grove Recreational Trail, which is a component of the California Coastal Trail, across from 701 Ocean View Boulevard and downcoast of Lovers Point Park in the City of Pacific Grove, Monterey County.

Proposed CDP Amendment

CDP 3-17-0335 would be amended to continue to authorize the previously approved and constructed seawall section beyond the initial three-year term granted by Special Condition 1. The Commission's reference number for this proposed amendment is **3-17-0335-A1**.

Executive Director's Immateriality Determination

Pursuant to Title 14, Section 13166(b) of the California Code of Regulations, the Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission has determined that the proposed CDP amendment is immaterial for the following reasons:

Special Condition 1 of CDP 3-17-0335 limited authorization of the reconstructed section of seawall to three years as a means to compel the City to prepare a study covering at least the shoreline of the general project area (i.e., the area extending about 1,500 feet downcoast from Lover's Point), and preferably the entire Pacific Grove shoreline, designed to identify how a continuous coastal trail can be provided in this project area (and ideally along the entire City's shoreline) over the long term while best protecting coastal resources. The condition's genesis was that the City had failed to prepare such a shoreline management plan as required by past CDPs, and the Commission wanted to compel the City to at least develop such a plan for this project area, including so it could also help jump-start City efforts for a Citywide shoreline management plan that could potentially be added to the then-under-development (and now certified) Local Coastal Program (LCP).

In meeting this condition, the City decided to prepare a plan for the full City shoreline

3-17-0335-A1 (Pacific Grove CCT Armoring)

area, referred to by the City as the “Pacific Grove Shoreline Management Plan” (or SMP). The SMP addresses the various issues relative to this site from the CDP (e.g., mitigations, monitoring, etc.), but it is also far more comprehensive in terms of its Citywide scope. In preparing the SMP, the City held multiple public hearings over the course of two years to solicit public input and involvement in the effort, particularly given the importance of the recreational trail and the shoreline area, which acts as a linear park along the full length of the City.

The objective of the SMP is to continue to provide continuous recreational trail access along the shoreline while minimizing the need for armoring, while also providing for additional recreational amenities (e.g., additional parking spaces, enhanced landscaping, etc.). The SMP was ultimately adopted by the City Council and includes ten management strategies for the shoreline that aim to maximize public utility of the shoreline area (e.g., reconfiguring parking areas to better support park/trail uses) while reducing conflicts between different types of users (i.e., pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers). These are all conceptual ideas that will require further analysis through their own CDP review processes. Because the LCP has since been certified, and now includes detailed provisions with similar objectives for the City’s shoreline, the City will evaluate whether the SMP (or some variation of it) would make sense to be incorporated into the LCP in the future, or whether it will simply be used for now by the City as a means of direction for future potential projects. Either way, the existing LCP provides appropriate detail to help resolve these shoreline issues in future project proposals, and the SMP can only help in that regard to guide the City’s shoreline management efforts moving forward.

With respect to project-specific mitigation requirements, the Commission found in its initial approval that impacts would be minimal for multiple reasons, including because the project was partly self-mitigating as it served to protect public recreational access amenities, but also because the sand supply impacts in this area and for this small project were limited. Nevertheless, there were some impacts, and as mitigation for the three-year authorization of CDP 3-17-0335 for the 31-foot-long stretch of shoreline armoring, the Commission required additional public access improvements (i.e., a park bench, an interpretative sign, and reconstruction of a public overlook area). To mitigate for impacts for retaining the 31-foot-long section of seawall beyond three years, and in addition to retaining the public access improvements previously required, the City is now committing to create an app that would allow visitors and residents to take a virtual coastal walking tour of the shoreline. Specifically, the app will take users to 14 stops along the shore, including Perkins Park where the project is located. Each stop on the tour would include information or a story about that location, engaging photos and/or videos, history, and links to educate users about the environmental, cultural and historical significance of the Pacific Grove coastline. The tour is intended to enhance and increase use of interpretive signs, as well as increase both awareness and stewardship of the City’s spectacular shoreline resources. The City’s proposed package of public recreational access enhancements (i.e., the app, the bench/overlook, the partially self-mitigating nature of the project itself, etc.) appropriately and adequately mitigate for coastal resource impacts for the first 20-year mitigation term (where

3-17-0335-A1 (Pacific Grove CCT Armoring)

subsequent analysis then will dictate if additional mitigations are necessary at that point).

Thus, having met the Commission's CDP requirements in this case, the City is now asking that the duration clause be modified, namely until the time when the improvements being protected are no longer present or no longer require armoring, which is typical of the type of duration conditions that the Commission's places on armoring projects. Staff believes that this change is appropriate.

In sum, the City has taken the Commission's directives seriously in terms of visioning and managing its shoreline, including as evidenced by the City's commitment to prepare a forward-thinking shoreline management plan as well as preparing and adopting a newly certified LCP for the first time. The proposed amendment provides for continued authorization of a portion of a seawall that protects the existing coastal trail and provides for public recreational access opportunities consistent with the Commission's original CDP approval, as well as consistent with the Coastal Act and the certified City of Pacific Grove LCP.

Coastal Commission Review Procedure

The CDP will be amended as proposed if no written objections are received in the Central Coast District office within ten working days of the date of this notice. If such an objection is received, the objection and the Executive Director's response to it will be reported to the Coastal Commission on Friday, December 11, 2020 at the virtual online meeting. If three or more Commissioners object to the Executive Director's determination of immateriality at that time, then the application shall be processed as a material CDP amendment.

If you have any questions about the proposal or wish to register an objection, please contact Alexandra McCoy in the Central Coast District office at Alexandra.McCoy@coastal.ca.gov.