

**BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HALF MOON BAY**

**AGENDA REPORT**

For meeting of: **June 21, 2022**

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**VIA:** Bob Nisbet, City Manager

**FROM:** John Doughty, Public Works Director  
Maziar Bozorginia, City Engineer

**TITLE: SAN MATEO COUNTY HARBOR DISTRICT - SURFERS BEACH PILOT SAND  
REPLENISHMENT PROJECT**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a letter to the California Coastal Commission in support of a consolidated Coastal Development Permit (CDP) application for the Surfers Beach Pilot Sand Replenishment Project filed by the San Mateo County Harbor District (District) and further requesting the California Coastal Commission assume the lead agency role.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact with this action.

**STRATEGIC ELEMENT:**

The requested action supports the Infrastructure and Environment & Healthy Communities and Public Safety Elements of the Strategic Plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

Surfers Beach has suffered from significant beach and bluff erosion attributed, in large part, to the construction of the Pillar Point Harbor (PPH) East Breakwater, completed in 1961. This erosion of the beach and bluffs extending south of the harbor has been a source of concern over the past several decades. A recent Army Corps of Engineers study concluded that the bluffs along Surfers Beach eroded at an average rate of 1.64 feet per year between 1993 and 2012. This erosion rate was determined to be approximately seven times higher than the rate of erosion at a geologically similar stretch of shoreline further down the coast. Powerful storms during recent winter seasons have resulted in even more severe erosion, causing major threats to Highway 1, Mirada Road, the California Coastal Trail and other coastal infrastructure, and requiring emergency repairs by Caltrans and the County of San Mateo.

The need for a project to address coastal erosion at Surfers Beach has been long been acknowledged by community members as well as various State, federal and local regulatory agencies. The District met with City staff some years ago and have been updating staff as the project has progressed.

The Surfers Beach project is a recommended activity in the Coastal Regional Sediment Management Plan for the Santa Cruz Littoral Cell, which was developed for the California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW) by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with local stakeholders.

Additionally, Surfers Beach was identified as a Beach Erosion Concern Area within the CSMW's California Beach Erosion Assessment Survey, which attempts to identify coastal erosion locations of high priority to jurisdictional agencies.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The San Mateo County Harbor District (District) and their consultants have progressed the designs for the Surfers Beach replenishment project as well as the associated Eelgrass mitigation project. The District and design team have completed 30% Plans for permitting purposes.

The District held pre-application meetings with permitting agencies in July 2021 to discuss the details of the permitting process at an Army Corps of Engineers hosted Interagency Meeting. This meeting was held to discuss the permitting process for the project as well as the required eelgrass mitigation project. The District received feedback from staff from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), California Coastal Commission (CCC), Regional Water Quality Control Board, NOAA Fisheries, and Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. They also held several follow up meetings with agencies to discuss the project and the requirements and specifics of the permitting process and required studies, surveys, etc. Multiple discussions have been held with officials from the City of Half Moon Bay, County of San Mateo, and Caltrans, who will all benefit from the Project.

Permit applications for the project were submitted in February 2022 to USACE, CCC and Monterey Bay/Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries. The Coastal Development Permit application was deemed incomplete pending formal concurrence by City that permitting authority rests with the CCC. The beach area of Surfer's Beach is located within the City limits of Half Moon Bay. However, the City's jurisdiction under the Coastal Act is only areas above the mean high tide. Project design and related survey work has determined that the vast majority of work on Surfer's Beach will be at or below the mean high tide line which again is outside of the jurisdiction of the City. Given the split jurisdiction, concurrence on who is the "lead" permitting agency is needed. Given the expertise of the CCC in these types of matters, staff has

confidence that the CCC is the appropriate permitting agency for this type of restoration project.

**DETERMINATION OF JURISDICTION:**

Per the City's municipal code section 18.20.050, the City's jurisdiction over coastal development permits does not include tidelands, submerged lands, and public trust lands (aka lands below the mean high tide line) as described in Section 30519(b) of the Public Resources Code and described as areas of coastal commission permit jurisdiction, as delineated on the local coastal program post-certification permit and jurisdiction map as amended. As noted previously, a vast majority of the land involved in the projects falls on land outside of the City's permitting authority.

**SCHEDULE:**

The District is planning to commence phased work in spring 2023, first completing the eelgrass dredging/filling components of the project, followed by surfers beach dredging and beach placement and transplanting of eelgrass several weeks after the mitigation site is constructed, pending availability of Project funding and permits.

**CEQA:**

A draft CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was completed in February 2022 and will be filed with San Mateo County Clerk and the State CEQA Clearinghouse in Summer 2022. Once filed, there will be a 30-day public review period and the District will respond to any comments received and issue a Final IS/MND. For more project information, please visit the webpage: <https://smharbor.specialdistrict.org/surfers-beach-pilot-restoration-project>

**ATTACHMENT:**

Resolution