



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** PARKS

**File #:** 21-1022

Board Meeting Date: 12/14/2021

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Nicholas J. Calderon, Parks Director  
**Subject:** Certification of the Tunitas Creek Beach Improvement Project's Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution certifying the Tunitas Creek Beach Improvement Project's Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, dated October 2021.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Tunitas Creek Beach Property ("Property"), located approximately eight miles south of the City of Half Moon Bay in unincorporated San Mateo County, totals approximately 58 acres in size and includes almost one mile of sandy beach, steep coastal bluffs, and the mouth of Tunitas Creek. The Property has sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean to the west and is framed by sandstone cliffs to the north. Numerous special status and protected plant and animal species, including the Western Snowy Plover, can be found on the Property.

Beginning in April 2020, the Project Advisory Team-comprised of representatives from the San Mateo County Parks Department ("Department"), the County's Department of Public Works, Peninsula Open Space Trust ("POST"), and the California State Coastal Conservancy-initiated a robust community engagement process consisting of paper and online surveys, online learning modules and videos, and virtual public workshops. Throughout this process, members of the public provided input regarding their vision and preferred uses for the future county park. The Department made all outreach materials available in English and Spanish, and co-hosted its first all-Spanish language public workshop on October 22, 2020 with its community partner, CARON. As a result of the public engagement process, the Department received almost 1,300 survey responses, and 2,100 views of videos posted to the Department's website. Throughout the process, the public advocated for improved access for people of all abilities and for limiting development to maintain the Property's natural character.

The Preferred Plan was prepared based on: (i) the core values identified by the Community Advisory Committee, (ii) data collected during the public engagement process, (iii) impacts to natural and cultural resources, (iv) environmental permitting requirements, (v) known Property constraints, and

(vi) the Department's ability to efficiently and effectively manage the Property for coastal access and recreation and habitat restoration and preservation.

On February 23, 2021, this Board approved the Preferred Plan for the Tunitas Creek Beach Improvement Project and directed the Department to proceed with the preparation of Plans, Specifications, and Estimates, and a California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") review. The Preferred Plan is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Preferred Plan includes amenities that enable the public to safely access and recreate at the Property while also minimizing impacts to natural resources and wildlife. To address public concerns regarding the built environment, the Preferred Plan sites amenities with the highest level of development on the upper-bluff, amenities requiring medium level of development on the mid-bluff, and minimal development on the beach.

*Upper-bluff* amenities include an improved parking area with space for approximately 65 vehicles and overflow parking potential which can be utilized by larger vehicles and RVs, a scenic overlook with bench seating, and an accessible pedestrian pathway to the mid-bluff with rest stops and overlooks. A loop trail leading to the beach begins at the south end of the parking area.

*Mid-bluff* amenities include public restrooms, tiered amphitheater style seating and a gathering space, picnic tables, interpretive displays and signage, and improved beach access via the existing service road. For added site security, a ranger residence is also proposed at the mid-bluff. At this time, no source of potable water has been identified. If a water source is not identified, the ranger residence will be removed from the Preferred Plan.

The *Beach* has minimal development, and instead offers park users opportunities for passive recreation. A wildlife viewing boardwalk adjacent to the Western Snowy Plover habitat is included in the Preferred Plan. The boardwalk will allow guests to observe the plover habitat and creek corridor without causing disturbance to this threatened species.

Consistent with CEQA requirements, the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration ("IS/MND"), which was completed in October 2021 and is attached hereto as Exhibit B, assessed the Preferred Plan's potential environmental impacts on the following categories: Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forest, Air Quality, Biological and Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use, Mineral Resources, Noise and Vibration, Population and Housing, Public Service, Recreation, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire.

According to the Department's analysis, there is the potential for adverse environmental impacts to occur during construction of the project, however, those impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels through the implementation of specific mitigation measures as identified in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan ("MMRP"). The IS/MND was released for a 30-day public review/comment period between September 2, 2021 and October 1, 2021, during which time, three comments were received; a response to each comment has been prepared. The MMRP and responses to comments received are attached as Appendices "B" and "C" respectively to the final IS/MND.

Should this Board certify the IS/MND, the Department will apply for all regulatory permits necessary to construct the Preferred Plan. The Department estimates the 100% Design Plans, Specifications,

and Estimates will be completed in early 2022. This will allow a contract for construction services to be awarded Spring 2022, with construction anticipated to commence Summer 2022. The new park is estimated to open to the public Summer 2023.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

**Fiscal Impact:**

There is no Net County Cost associated with accepting the recommendation.