

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

NORTH CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT OFFICE
45 FREMONT STREET, SUITE 2000
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105
PHONE: (415) 904-5260
FAX: (415) 904-5400
WEB: WWW.COASTAL.CA.GOV



January 28, 2015

Mike Schaller, Project Planner
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, California 94063

Re: San Mateo County Planning Case Number PLN2015-00302

Dear Mr. Schaller,

Thank you for forwarding the project referral form for the County's Planning Case Number PLN2014-00302, dated January 15, 2015, received in our San Francisco office on January 20, 2015. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with comments. San Mateo County Department of Public Works is requesting a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) to obtain authorization to conduct development in an area located between the sea and Highway 1. The issuance of CDPs for development in this area is appealable to the Coastal Commission. The proposed development entails the installation of two 28-inch tall, 30-foot long, metal-beam guard rails and removal of a portion of a wooden fence that was constructed within the County's right-of-way. The following Commission staff comments are preliminary and may not be comprehensive with respect to the proposed project.

Project Description: San Mateo County Department of Public Works proposes to install 2 metal guard rails and remove existing wooden fencing located at the west end of 7th Street in Montara. The project description (dated August 18, 2014) attached to the application, however, also includes a description for the installation of 4 bollards as part of the proposed project (see pages 4 and 6, and Figure 2 of the submittal). We suggest that the project description clearly identify and describe all elements of the proposed development consistently throughout the application. Any items that are no longer part of the proposal should be deleted from any project description contained in the application.

Fence Removal and Public Access: We recognize and appreciate the County's attempt to re-open the public view corridor that previously existed at the west end of 7th Street. The existing wooden fence, however, is located within the County's right-of-way (r-o-w) and although the project proposes to remove a portion of it, Commissions staff recommends that the entire wooden fence be removed from the r-o-w. Complete removal of the fence is warranted because as constructed it interferes with the public's ability to laterally access the bluff top public property, specifically Marine Walk that extends along the top of the bluff parallel and seaward to the Westerfield private property. Marine Walk is an existing public access path that extends in a north to south direction within the public r-o-w along the top of the bluff. This walkway/path is identified in the County's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) as a shoreline destination, see LCP Table 10.1. Further, LCP Table 10.6 calls for improvements to Marine Walk, including

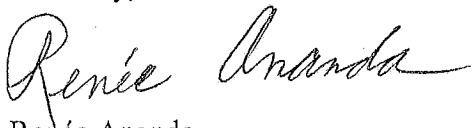
Mike Schaller, San Mateo County
PLN2015-00302 (San Mateo County DPW)
January 28, 2015
Page 2

posting a warning of hazards. The LCP also includes special consideration to keep the end of the residential street, e.g., 7th Street, open to develop as a public view point. The existing wooden fence as currently constructed inhibits the public's ability to access the street end and Marine Walk along the bluff. The applicant must therefore remove the entire fence in order to ensure that opportunity for the public to access the existing Marine Walk is provided. We recommend that as a condition of approval all unpermitted obstructions to public access within the public right-of-way must be removed, including but not limited to non-native plants, such as the non-native myoporum shrubs described in the application attachment, the fence, outdoor furniture, and gravel/rock material that may have been installed by the Westerfields.

Consistency with the LCP: The proposed project must be consistent with the LCP policies under its Visual Resources Component, in particular, LCP Policies 8.4 for cliffs and bluffs, 8.10 vegetative cover, and 8.32 scenic corridors in urban areas. It must also be in conformity with the Shoreline Access Component as provided in LCP Policies 10.1 (Permit Conditions for Shoreline Access), 10.2b (Definition of Development), 10.3 (Definition of Shoreline Access on bluff), 10.4 (Designation of Shoreline Access), 10.23 (Access Trails), 10.23d (Refer to Site Specific Recommendations in Table 10.6), 10.23e (Post Caution signs on difficult access trails), and 10.29 (Protection of Trails from Closing and Encroachment).

We also note that in addition to this project referral from County Planning, regarding the subject CDP application, a project referral has also been submitted to Commission staff for review and comment on a CDP application (Planning Case Number PLN2015-00020) seeking authorization to construct a new fence within the public r-o-w, also at the west end of 7th Street, in the vicinity of this proposed guard rail and fence removal project. Commission staff will provide comments on PLN 2015-00020 under separate cover, however we strongly recommend that both of these proposed projects be planned and considered in concert because they overlap and involve the same property and a very important issue of public access to the street end and to and along Marine Walk.

Sincerely,



Renée Ananda
Coastal Program Analyst
North Central Coast District

CC: Steve Monowitz, San Mateo County
John Nibbelin, San Mateo County
Dan Carl, Coastal Commission
Nancy Cave, Coastal Commission
Jeannine Manna, Coastal Commission
Robin Mayer, Coastal Commission