



Staff Report

TO: Board of Harbor Commissioners

FROM: John Moren, Director of Operations
THRU: James B. Pruet, General Manager

DATE: November 15, 2023

SUBJECT: Surfers Beach Restoration Pilot Project – Eelgrass Mitigation ESA Proposal

Requested Action/Issue:

Consider proposal from District consultant ESA for continued eelgrass mitigation efforts at Pillar Point Harbor.

Recommended Motion:

Motion: Approve an increase in Capital Expenditure Appropriations of \$50,000 to cover District consultant ESA's continued engineering and planning costs for the Surfers Beach Restoration Pilot Project and required eelgrass mitigation efforts at Pillar Point Harbor.

Policy Implications:

Consistent with the District's goal to use excess sediment build-up from within the Harbor for beneficial re-use on Surfers Beach and responsibility to conduct maintenance dredging in the East Basin of PPH.

Background:

The goal of the Surfers Beach Restoration Pilot Project is to remove sediment which has built up inside the PPH outer breakwater and move it to Surfers Beach for beneficial re-use. In addition to addressing coastal erosion and public access issues at Surfers Beach, this project would also address the impacts to vessel navigation and anchoring associated with the shoaling that has occurred inside of the Harbor since the outer breakwater was constructed. The anticipated outcome is that the project will address impaired public access/recreational impacts and damages from coastal storms.



Figure 1. Photo showing the proposed Surfers Beach placement area

The ESA team has prepared permitting-level and draft engineering design documents for the Project that were presented to a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of local, state and federal agency staff, including the District, City of Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Coastal Commission, California Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. The outcome was a preferred approach for design and construction of the project using a suction dredge and pumping system to transport a sand slurry via pipeline from the Pillar Point Harbor to Surfer's Beach. ESA then developed a permit-level design that was used by consultant Damitz for preparation of permit applications and consultations with the permitting agencies.



Figure 2. November 2019 PPH Harbor-wide Eelgrass Survey Results

Following the discovery of eelgrass, the ESA Project engineering team and consultant Damitz assessed options for dredging sand for the Surfers Beach project while avoiding the eelgrass habitat, however it was determined that it would not be possible to obtain anywhere near the target of 75,000 cubic yards of sand for the Project. Furthermore, with the continued shoaling in this part of the Harbor, if no action is taken, the eelgrass will likely continue to expand throughout the PPH east basin, making it much more difficult to obtain permitting approval for any future dredging in the east basin.

A Pillar Point Harbor Eelgrass Management and Mitigation Plan (Plan) was finalized in September 2020. Additional sediment sampling will need to occur at the ramps to assess the suitability of that material for use in constructing the mitigation platform.

Meetings were held with staff from Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Coastal Commission and National Marine Fisheries Service, to obtain input prior to the mitigation plan development process.

The District originally entered into a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with ESA in September of 2018 for \$105k and increased the funding to \$226,400 in October of 2020. The ESA team encountered significant unanticipated challenges related to the permitting agency requirements for eel grass mitigation, which have resulted in additional cost. Therefore, ESA has submitted the attached PSA Add-On contract medication proposal for an additional \$50k, which will cover costs associated with additional surveys and 5 year post project monitoring. See attached proposal for detailed continued scope of work.

Update on Permitting:

National Marine Sanctuaries Permit: Damitz/ESA provided the draft Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan on 10/13/23, this was the last thing that was requested. The GFNMS Permitting Coordinator was supposed to review and get back to me in a week or two and I followed up beginning of this week since we haven't heard back. I have relayed my concerns about the timeframe and need to get the permit issued so we can go out to bid soon and asked them to expedite. I expect to hear back soon and will provide update when I do. I think this permit should come soon. If I don't have any progress in the next 2 weeks I will discuss with GFNMS Superintendent Maria Brown who I know pretty well. If needed I will ask Jim to step in and put some pressure on them to issue permit.

Regional Water Quality Control Board Permit: This was the one that we submitted long ago but it got returned and they asked us to re-submit (see email from Tahsa Sturgis to Jim). The reason for this is that they have a new process in the past year or 2 that requires additional information (e.g. Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan (MAMP), Final Plans, CEQA NOD, etc.) BUT they now turn around the permit quickly once the complete app and attachments are submitted and the fee is paid. Damitz/ESA have been in contact with Tahsa and have provided him with all the necessary information, which he asked me to send him so he can review before we submit officially via their permit application email address. I provided the MAMP and also a figure that shows changes to mean high tide line (and depict waters of the U.S.) following the proposed fill placement at Surfers Beach once received by ESA. I spoke with Tahsa and have a meeting with him on Monday afternoon, he is aware of our timeline and has told me he will not cause delays for us.

Caltrans Encroachment Permit: Submitted and confirmed receipt but I have not heard from anyone. This is not something that we need before going out to bid and it will not delay construction of the process.

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Attachments:

- 1) [ESA 2020 PSA](#)
- 2) [ESA 2023 Add-On PSA Modification Proposal](#)