



Staff Report

TO: Board of Harbor Commissioners

FROM: James B. Pruett, General Manager

DATE: October 19, 2022

SUBJECT: San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District (OneShoreline) Resiliency Plan for Pillar Point Harbor

Issue:
How to move sand from north of Pillar Point Harbor south for long-term shoreline protection?

Recommendation/Motion:
For information

Fiscal Implications:
Significant, removal and reconfiguration of the outer breakwater would destroy the purpose of the harbor and the access it provides.

Background/Discussion:
On November 9, 2021, the SMC Sea Level Rise Resiliency District presented to the Board Of Supervisors a slide deck entitled: “Measure K Contract.” See Enclosure (1) and (2). This presentation included a request to fund “a study of long-term solutions to address the inter-related issues facing unincorporated Princeton, Pillar Point Harbor, state & federal assets, and Surfers Beach.”

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors approved the budget request and executed “Measure K Grant Agreement Between the County of San Mateo and San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District”, including \$50,000 for the Pacific Coast Study. See Enclosure (3).

On September 7, 2022, the General Manager received a brief from the Chief Executive Officer of OneShoreline (also known as the San Mateo County Flood & Sea Level Rise Resiliency District) on the Pillar Point Harbor Area Shoreline Management Study. OneShoreline, in the brief, proposed:

1. relocating the west breakwater east and angle it towards Surfers Beach,

2. removal of the outer/east breakwaters,
3. removal and relocation of the launch ramp into the inner harbor, and
4. installation of artificial reefs south of the Harbor on waters and submerged lands owned or under the jurisdiction of the Harbor District.

On September 23, 2022, OneShoreline posted the agenda for their September 26, 2022 public meeting. The President of the Harbor Board called a special meeting to discuss Item 4.B of the OneShoreline agenda, which discussed the Pillar Point Harbor Plan. See Enclosure (4). This special meeting was scheduled to take place prior to OneShoreline's meeting at 4 pm September 26, 2022.

On Monday, September 26, 2022 prior to the Harbor District Special Meeting, the District was notified that Agenda Item 4.B (The Pillar Point Study) was going to be pulled from the OneShoreline agenda. As the reason to call the special meeting no longer existed, the Harbor District canceled the Special Meeting.

Per the staff report developed by OneShoreline and published with the September 26, agenda, the consultant conducting the study was given the following statement to guide their work:

“Multiple jurisdictions and key stakeholders share responsibility for an adaptable regional solution that addresses long-term future conditions by working with nature rather than fighting it, where possible.”

OneShoreline also set *“project performance objective that key built, recreational, and ecological assets may be modified but they must be sustained over the long-term.”* See Enclosure (5).

OneShoreline, under AB 825 (2019) has full authority to conduct the study concerning Pillar Point Harbor. See Enclosure (6).

History of the Harbor:

San Mateo County Harbor District is an Independent Special District established in 1933.

The District was originally formed to build a harbor at Redwood City, but the Great Depression intervened. Coastsiders then pushed to get a breakwater built at Pillar Point for a harbor of refuge for the fishing fleet. The Army Corps of Engineers began work on the breakwaters after World War II and finally completed them in 1961. The Johnson Pier, docks and 369 berths, and the inner breakwater were built during the 1970's and 1980's.

Today, Pillar Point Harbor hosts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year and supports:

Recreational boaters and fishing

Commercial Fishing

On and off water recreation
Charter fishing boats
Commercial shops
Off the boat sales
A Harbor of Refuge
An ecologically diverse area

Charter Boat Fishing
Restaurants
Equipment rentals
A 369 berth marina
Anchorage
Public Access to Marine Environment

Surfers Beach Replenishment Project:

The Harbor District’s Surfers Beach Replenishment Project and OneShoreline’s Pillar Point Harbor Area Shoreline Management Study are directed at the same task, but the Surfers Beach Replenishment Project accomplishes the task without removing or jeopardizing Pillar Point Harbor.

The main issue at stake, as discussed above, is “how do we move sand north of Pillar Point Harbor south to protect the Surfers Beach Shoreline and the beaches south of Surfers Beach, including Miramar Shoreline.”

OneShoreline’s efforts are based on returning to nature and the relocation and removal of the outer breakwaters to move the sand south.

The Harbor District’s plan will move sand from the north to Surfers Beach and the Princeton Shoreline, while maintaining Pillar Point Harbor.

The Surfers Beach Replenishment Project will mechanically move sand washed into the outer harbor from the north, and deposit it on Surfers Beach. The project is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2023. If successful, which the Harbor District believes it will be, it is the intent of the Harbor District to obtain a fulltime dredge vessel for Pillar Point Harbor. With a dedicated dredge, the Harbor District will be able to place sand on Surfers Beach annually, while also rebuilding and maintaining a beach at Princeton by the Sea, protecting that waterfront. The annual dredging will also ensure safety of navigation in the Harbor while maintaining a Harbor of Refuge.

The Replenishment Project will also include the creation of eel grass beds in the northwest corner of the harbor for improved fish habitat.

For more information on the Surfers Beach Replenishment Project, see:
<https://www.smharbor.com/surfers-beach-pilot-restoration-project>

Returning to OneShoreline’s Project Performance Objective: “that key built, recreational, and ecological assets may be modified but they must be sustained over the long-term.” “Pillar Point Harbor is a “*key built, recreational, and ecological asset.*” Removal and rearranging the breakwaters is not maintaining the Harbor “*well into the future.*”

Cooperation: Staff looks forward to working with OneShoreline in a more substantial and coordinated manner to address sea level rise and resiliency at Pillar Point. As

the lead agency with respect to Pillar Point Harbor, and the majority owner of both the shoreline and submerged lands, the Harbor District would add significant value to the study. This cooperation is in line with AB 825 (2019) which provides:

“... the district shall not, for the purposes specified in this subdivision, interfere with control or operation of any existing public park, playground, beach, swimming area, parkway, recreation ground, or other public property owned or controlled by any other district or municipality, except with the consent of the governing body of that district or municipality, and upon terms as may be mutually agreed upon between the board and the governing body of that other district or municipality.”

See Enclosure (6).

Positive discussion on this topic between the General Manager of the Harbor District and Chief Executive Officer of OneShoreline have already taken place.

Staff has been informed by OneShoreline that the Pillar Point Study will be presented at the next public meeting of the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District, currently scheduled for October 26, 2022.

Attachments:

1. [San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District Measure K Presentation.](#)
2. [Office of Sustainability Staff Report](#)
3. [Measure K Funding Agreement](#)
4. [OneShoreline Staff Report, Item 4.B on the September 26, 2022 Committee Meeting.](#) (<https://oneshoreline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OneShoreline-Board-Meeting-9.26.22-Agenda-packet.pdf>)
5. [OneShoreline Pillar Point Harbor Area Shoreline Management Study project page.](#) (<https://oneshoreline.org/projects/pacific-coastline-projects-in-development-with-other-partners/>)
6. [AB 825 \(2019\).](#)