

# Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar  
P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248*

**Bill Kehoe**  
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April 25, 2012

Supervisor Don Horsley  
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
400 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063

Subject: **Princeton Shoreline Erosion and Unpermitted Armoring**

Dear Supervisor Horsley,

Pillar Point Harbor is the heart of the Midcoast, and the Princeton shoreline, within the harbor, is an important part of this valuable coastal resource. The picturesque harbor views from this shoreline make Princeton a desirable destination, as anyone knows who has visited the conference center or the yacht club. What used to be a walkable sandy beachfront, has disappeared due to neglect and armoring. The prime visitor attractions of Surfer's Beach and harbor docks are now separated from Pillar Point marsh, bluff trails, and Mavericks beach by the industrial streets of Princeton. The CA Coastal Trail has been routed through this area, but no trail improvements have as yet been provided.

In recent years, development has been permitted so close to the Princeton shoreline that emergency armoring without permits routinely occurs only a few years after construction. Access to the beach is hindered by haphazard concrete rubble placed at street ends. Private property armoring ranges from sandbag embankments to concrete walls to rocks piled onto the remaining beach blocking lateral access along the shoreline. Wave and tidal action have moved the limited amount of beach sand just offshore hindering boat launching and leaving much of the beach walkable only at low tide.

Studies have been done on Princeton beach and shoreline erosion, shoreline protection measures<sup>1</sup>, shoreline access plans<sup>2</sup>, and harbor dredging suitability for beach replenishment<sup>3</sup>. The Coastal Commission has requested development of a regional solution addressing the various shoreline armoring violations and incorporating a pedestrian trail. Yet conditions continue to worsen and not be addressed. The Army Corps of Engineers is studying the effects of the breakwater on erosion at Surfer's Beach but Princeton shoreline erosion is missing from the conversation.

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<sup>1</sup> Shoreline Protection Feasibility Study for Princeton, Pillar Point, Half Moon Bay, CA, prepared for San Mateo County Harbor District by Moffatt & Nichol Engineers, Sept. 2001

<sup>2</sup> Coastal Access Improvement Plan, Callander Associates Landscape Architecture, Inc., Oct. 2002. Approved by San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

<sup>3</sup> Report: Initial Dredge Material Evaluation for the Construction of a New Boat Basin in Pillar Point Harbor, prepared for San Mateo Harbor District by Kinnetic Laboratories Inc, June 2007.

The MCC requests your support for remediation and restored coastal access along the Princeton shoreline. We would greatly appreciate your taking the lead to convene the relevant agencies and other stakeholders to address this problem.

Sincerely,

s/Bill Kehoe, Chair  
Midcoast Community Council

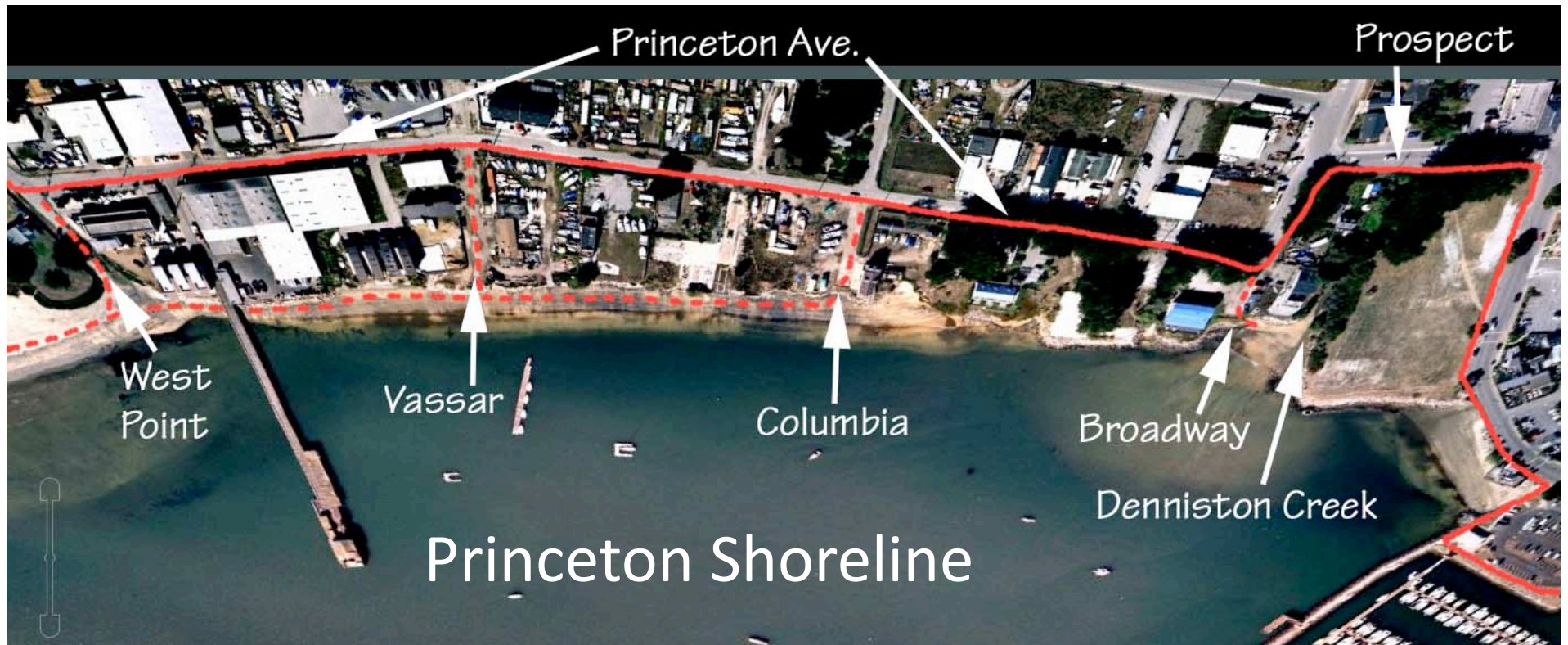
enc. Princeton Shoreline Erosion & Unpermitted Armoring 4/25/12 MCC pdf presentation

cc. Madeline Cavalieri, North Central District Manager, California Coastal Commission

## Princeton shoreline erosion & unpermitted armoring



4/25/12 MCC presentation  
by Lisa Ketcham



3 blocks long: from WestPoint Ave. on the west, to Denniston Creek on the east. Princeton Ave. is the CA Coastal Trail (in red).

Four short road stubs connect Princeton Ave. to the shoreline for views and possible beach access: West Point, Vassar, Columbia, & Broadway.

The beach is walkable at medium or low tide along the two western blocks, but access is impeded by haphazard rip-rap at the end of Vassar & Columbia.

## 2001 - Shoreline Protection Feasibility Study for Princeton

prepared for Harbor District by Moffatt & Nichol Engineers, includes:

- Shoreline erosion analysis (averaging from 7 to 17 inches per year)
- Detailed protection measures:
  - Breakwater with boardwalk for eastern block
  - Beach replenishment with geo tubes for western two blocks

“Much of the shoreline has already been armored with rock and concrete rubble that has been randomly dumped... If shoreline improvement plans are not implemented it is expected that little to no beach will remain in the near future.”

## 2003 - Princeton Shoreline Improvement Project

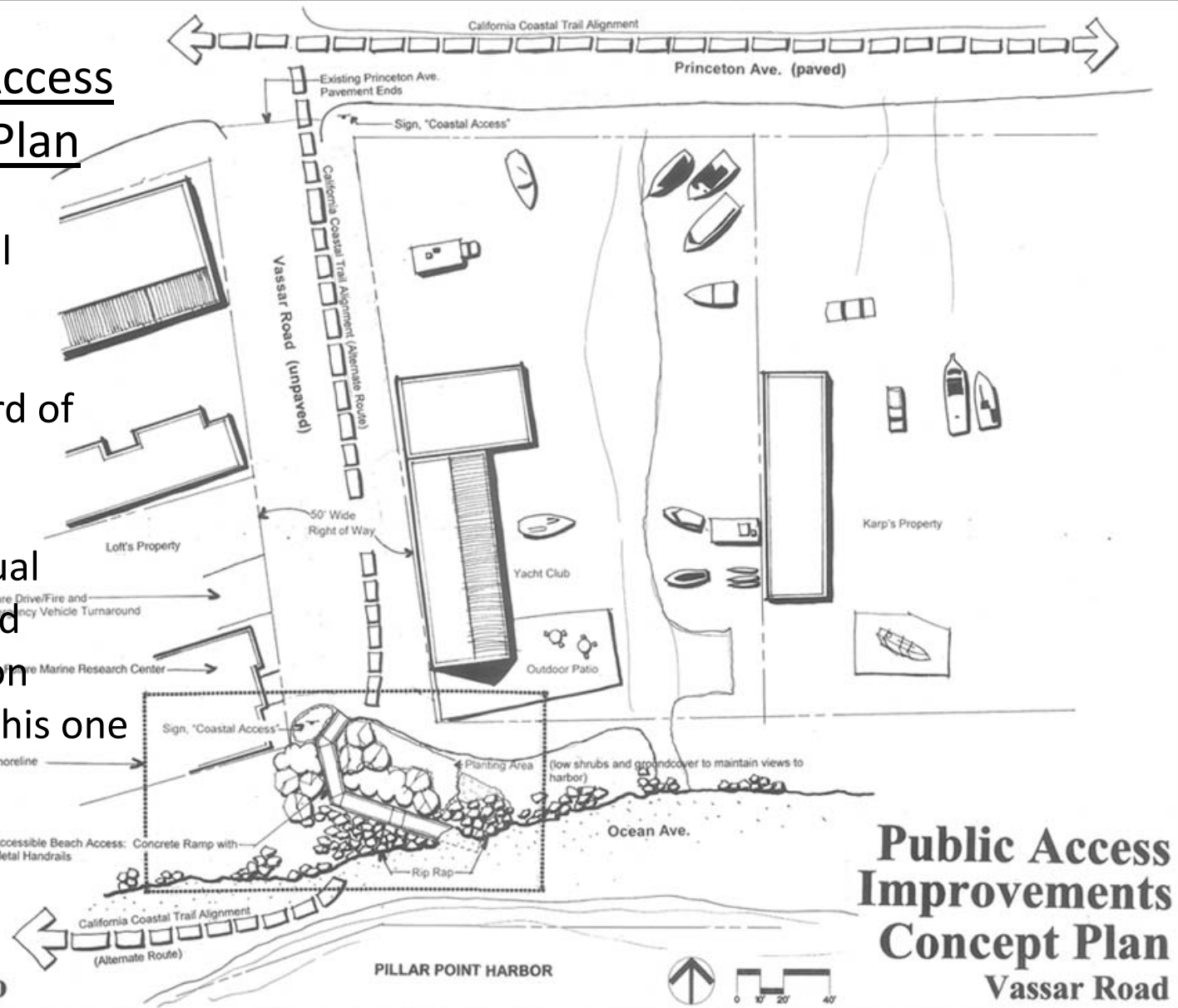
--a report to the Coastal Conservancy by Moffatt & Nichol Engineers:  
Assessment of potential shoreline protection measures and pedestrian access along Princeton shoreline.

# 2002 Coastal Access Improvement Plan

Funded by Coastal Conservancy

Approved by Board of Supervisors

Includes conceptual plans for improved access to Princeton beach, including this one at Vassar.



## Public Access Improvements Concept Plan Vassar Road



County of San Mateo

Callander Associates

02.09 11/01

Five Coastal Sites

Vassar shoreline access - 2010



2004 emergency unpermitted armoring less than 3 years after construction





## Shoreline erosion and unpermitted armoring

Sept. 2007: Supervisor Gordon convened meeting with staff from

- Coastal Commission
- Coastal Conservancy
- Planning Dept
- Dept. Public Works
- Harbor District

Coastal Commission considering a broad Princeton shoreline solution to remediate all rip-rap/sea wall violations, restore the beach & accommodate the Coastal Trail. Harbor District maintenance dredging spoils could be used.

*No follow up, no progress. Who will take lead agency responsibility?*

Spring 2012: Harbor District plans maintenance dredging with spoils placed on inner harbor Perched beach which has no erosion problem.

2008: removal of 2800 cu/yds of illegal rip-rap, mandated by Coastal Commission – rocks piled on site at 380 Princeton Ave.

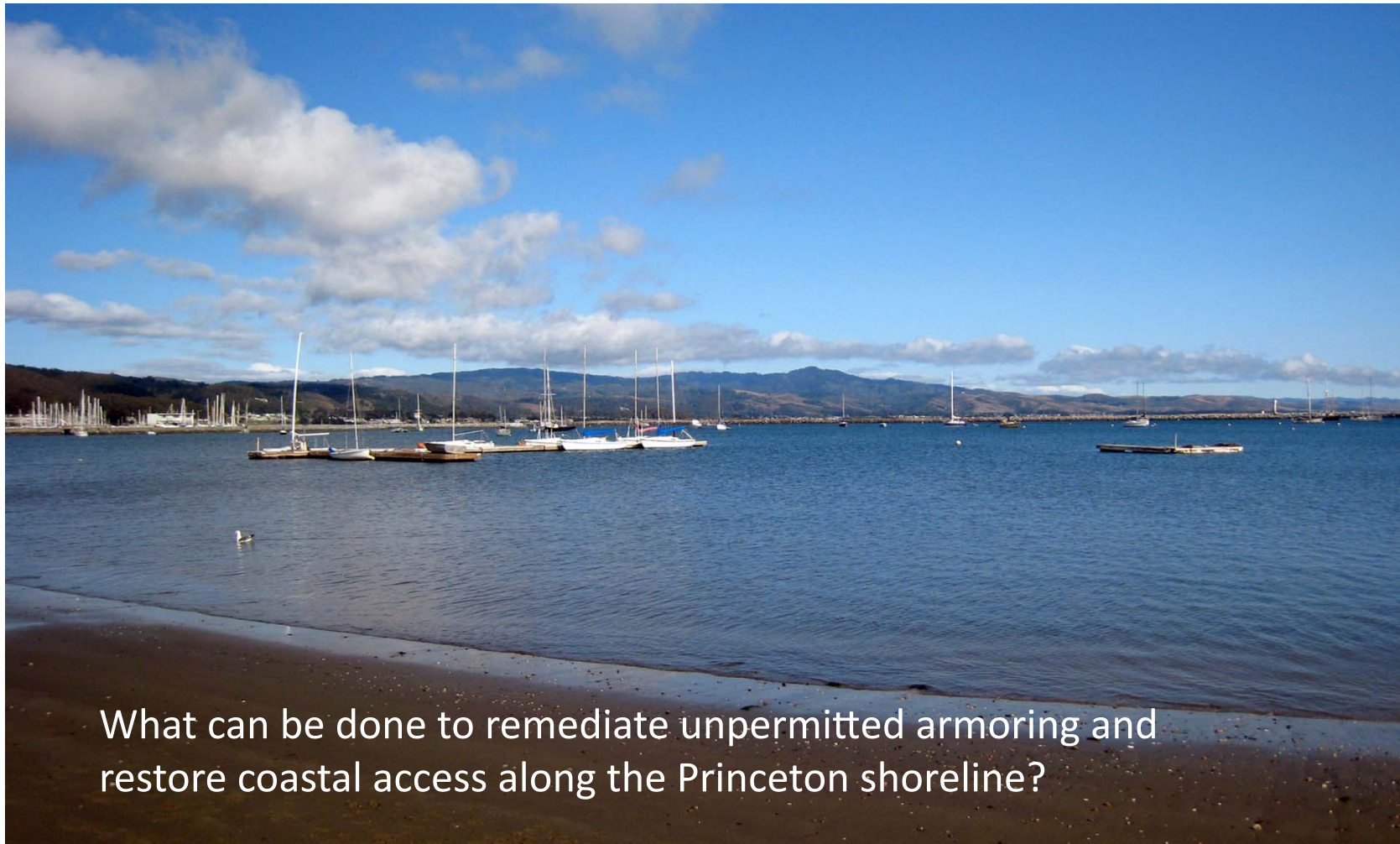


2009: truckloads of rocks from 380 Princeton Ave. moved down the street and added to rip-rap blocking beach at Romeo Packing and new houses next door to the west.



3 houses with unpermitted armoring installed by 2009, only 6 years after construction





What can be done to remediate unpermitted armoring and restore coastal access along the Princeton shoreline?

- Supervisor Horsley - convene relevant agencies & stakeholders.
- County - take lead agency responsibility.
- Coastal Commission - propose a solution.
- County - stop allowing building so close to the shore.