

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING**

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September 10, 2015

Paul Cole, Assistant Chief
Coastside Fire Protection District
1191 Main Street
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Dear Chief Cole:

SUBJECT: Summary of Major Development Pre-Application Public Workshop (pursuant to Zoning Regulations Section 6415) held on July 16, 2015 for the construction of a new 10,000 sq. ft., single-story, three-bay fire station (to replace the existing El Granada Fire Station 41) with access via Obispo Road; on-site parking for staff and the public; an emergency generator and above-ground fuel tank within secured areas; landscaping; and other associated site improvements, including 4,300 cubic yards (c.y.) of excavation, of which 2,000 c.y. will remain on-site to be used as fill and the balance exported off-site. The project would involve the removal of several significant sized trees, including Monterey pine, Acacia, and Blue gum eucalyptus. The project is proposed on the eastern portion of an undeveloped 2.5-acre legal parcel (APN 047-261-030) bounded by Avenue Alhambra, Coronado Street, Obispo Road, and Avenue Portola, in the unincorporated area of El Granada; approximately 600 feet southwest of the existing El Granada Fire Station 41.

County File Number: PRE 2015-00029

Thank you for your participation in the subject pre-application public workshop, which was combined with the applicant's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) scoping meeting, pursuant to Section 15083 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The comments and input received were instrumental in fostering understanding of the surrounding community's concerns and comments about the project. The purpose of this letter is to summarize the comments received at the workshop and include comments received from the County and other reviewing departments and interested parties.

Besides those representing the project, there were about 25 people in attendance at the workshop (20 of which signed the meeting "Sign-In" sheet).



SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were 10 public speakers at the workshop who provided general comments on the proposed project, as well as comments on the scope and content for the EIR. Comments from public speakers are summarized below:

- The Fire Department provides a great service to the community and response ratings should be maintained at a high level. Assessing environmental impacts is important; however, the community should not lose sight of the most important thing – Fire's ability to respond to emergencies.
- Fire stations are built in neighborhoods to achieve the most efficient response to emergencies as possible, where rural locations would not achieve this purpose.
- The preliminary conceptual plans do not reflect reality of existing conditions, such as existing utility lines and additional utilities that would be installed for the new fire station.
- Many in the community support the fire station, but not at this location. The site is very close to homes and several schools. The new fire station would be out-of-place in the residential area.
- A new fire station at the proposed location would expand the otherwise confined central commercial area in El Granada that is located several blocks away from the proposed site.
- The project parcel is zoned open space (El Granada Gateway) with height and setback standards for a reason. The County should not grant a Use Permit, Variance and exceptions given the zoning inconsistencies.
- What would Daniel Burnham say about this development in an open space area? As much open space as possible should be left for future generations to determine its best use.
- It should be clear that the project is not just to relocate the existing fire station but will include an expansion of the existing fire station in square footage and potential capacity.
- The community needs more detailed plans to review, including roadway elevations and building heights.
- The grade elevations of Obispo Road and Avenue Alhambra need to be identified.
- If the ridgeline of the proposed building could be reduced, it would make a big difference on views from across Avenue Alhambra.

- It would be helpful to the community if story poles were erected now, even though they are not required. At a minimum, story poles should outline the highest ridgeline of the proposed building.
- The Facilities Condition Assessment prepared by CH2M Hill should be made available to the public.
- How will egress be managed during heavy traffic periods, such as weekends, when traffic is gridlocked on Highway 1?
- The District should consider keeping and renovating/rebuilding the fire station in its current location. During renovation/reconstruction, a temporary facility could be utilized.
- Since the property at Capistrano Road at Highway 1 is so closely aligned with the Fire District needs, cannot this location be used?

Response from Coastside Fire Protection District's Assistant Fire Chief, Paul Cole: The District did pursue the property at Capistrano Road at Highway 1 as a primary site location; however, ultimately the District could not come to an agreement with the private landowner on a purchase price.

- The proposed project will result in a private nuisance to the neighborhood and a lawsuit should be anticipated. Has the Fire District's Board looked into and factored in the legal costs that would be incurred if faced with a legal challenge? What would be the legal costs (in dollar amount) if the District were faced with a lawsuit?

Response from Coastside Fire Protection District's Assistant Fire Chief Paul Cole: The District has had preliminary consultation with their legal counsel and understands that there is always a potential for lawsuit for a project of this nature. There has not been an assessment of any specific legal costs if a lawsuit were filed.

The following is a list of impacts that were raised by the public as needing to be addressed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
 - Glare, dark sky impacts.
- Noise
 - Noise from training practices, vibration of sounds from fire trucks, sirens.
- Air Quality
 - Impact of air pollution, including diesel fuel, to residents.

- Biological Resources
 - Impacts to wildlife habitat on-site.
 - Riparian corridor impacts, including runoff from project site to riparian corridor associated with the drainage way across Obispo Road.
- Traffic
 - Ingress/egress impacts on roadways and residential neighbors.
 - Traffic count numbers need to be included in the EIR to make a determination of whether there will be an increase in traffic patterns.
 - Obispo Road is very narrow. The EIR needs to evaluate whether this road needs to be widened to accommodate bigger fire trucks. It seems bigger fire trucks would not be able to make turns on the street at its current width.
- Land Use Impacts
 - Need to analyze loss of parkland on the Coastside, excluding beaches.
- Tsunami Impacts
 - The project site is shown on the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Tsunami Inundation Map; therefore, development impacts relative to tsunami hazard must be evaluated.
 - Justification that the existing fire station sits below the established tsunami inundation level is not sufficient reasoning for concluding there is no impact for building a new fire station below the tsunami inundation level.
 - It is believed that all alternative locations identified, except for the property at Capistrano Road at Highway 1, are within the Tsunami Inundation Area.
- Alternative Locations
 - The EIR must include analysis of alternative site locations for the project.
 - Evaluate the former "Comcast" site as an alternative location, at 525 Obispo Road.
 - Cost should not be a mitigating factor for not seeking an alternative location.

COMMENTS FROM REVIEWING AGENCIES

A. County Planning Department

The project would be subject to compliance with all applicable requirements of the Zoning Regulations, General Plan, Local Coastal Program, Grading Ordinance, and Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

Should the applicant move forward with the proposed project, a formal application, fees, and all application submittal requirements shall be submitted to the County Planning and Building Department and shall include the applications for a Local Coastal Program Amendment (as applicable), Coastal Development Permit (CDP), Use Permit, Variance, Grading Permit, and Design Review (not subject to Coastside Design Review Committee review). The CDP is appealable to the California Coastal Commission. Application processing would include a completeness determination within 30 days of

application; review by all relevant agencies; and consideration by the Midcoast Community Council. The project would require at least one public hearing before the San Mateo County Planning Commission. It is Planning staff's understanding that the Coastside Fire Protection District (CFPD), assuming the role of lead agency pursuant to Section 15367 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, would prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed project, with San Mateo County acting as a responsible agency. All County sponsored public meetings would include notification to property owners within 300 feet and residents within 100 feet of the project site.

Compliance with the El Granada Gateway (EG) Zoning District Regulations

1. While the El Granada Gateway (EG) Zoning District allows for a variety of public or community serving uses, it does not specifically allow fire stations as a permitted use. However, Section 6500 (*Use Permits*) of the County Zoning Regulations allows public service uses to be located in any zoning district subject to the issuance of a Use Permit. Therefore, a Use Permit is required for the proposed project.
2. The proposed building, as described, would have a building height of 30 feet where the maximum building height allowed in the EG Zoning District is 16 feet. The approval of a Variance would be required to deviate from the maximum height limit.
3. At a minimum, the EG Zoning District requires a 50-foot front setback, 20-foot side setbacks (or 25 feet along street sides), and a 20-foot rear setback. Although setbacks for the proposed building are not identified on the preliminary plans, the conceptual site plan appears to indicate that the proposed building would not meet the minimum side setbacks. Pursuant to Section 6531 of the County Zoning Regulations, the approval of a Variance would be required to deviate from the minimum setback requirements.
4. The EG Zoning District Regulations for "Impervious Surface Area" limits the amount of parcel area covered by impervious structures (less than 18 inches in height) to 10% of the parcel size. The Community Development Director may grant an exception to this limit when off-site project drainage will not exceed that amount equivalent to 10% (parcel size). Should an exception be needed, a professionally prepared site plan showing topography, drainage and calculations, which demonstrate this finding can be made, must be submitted as part of the Planning application for review and approval.
5. The EG Zoning District Regulations requires that all buildings and structures be screened with sufficient landscaping to obscure and soften their appearance when viewed from Highway 1. All landscaping shall be drought-tolerant, and native and non-invasive plant species. A landscape/tree replacement plan shall be submitted as part of the Planning application and shall include the location, size and type of all proposed landscape species and trees to be planted. Removal of any

significant sized trees (i.e., 38-inch circumference or greater measures at 4.5 feet above ground) shall be replaced at a 1:1 ratio.

6. Plans for all proposed signage including location, size, and design shall be submitted as part of the Planning application. The EG Zoning District Regulations allows one (1) sign with a maximum sign display area of 20 sq. ft. on each sign face.
7. Please be aware that grading activity would be prohibited during the wet season (October 1 through April 30), unless specifically authorized by the Community Development Director.

Compliance with the Local Coastal Program (LCP)

8. Compliance with applicable policies of the Sensitive Habitats, Visual Resources, and Hazards Components of the County's LCP will be required including, but not limited to, the submittal of a biological report prepared by a qualified professional pursuant to Policy 7.5 of the LCP; ensuring development is least visible from the County scenic corridor and public viewpoints; compliance with the design standards contained in Section 6565.17 of the County Zoning Regulations and the design criteria set forth in the Community Design Manual; and compliance with the Tsunami Inundation Area Criteria pursuant to Policy 9.3 of the LCP and Section 6326.2 of the County Zoning Regulations.
9. The proposed project site is within the tsunami inundation hazard area of the Natural Hazards Map of the County General Plan and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) Tsunami Inundation Map for Emergency Evacuation Planning. At a minimum, a site-specific tsunami hazard study will be needed to pursue the proposed project on the subject 2.5-acre property. The study should include study of coastal flood hazard with storm surge and sea level rise. Policy 9.3(a) of the County's LCP applies the Resource Management (RM) zoning regulations to designated geological hazard areas, including Section 6326.2 of the RM regulations for Tsunami Inundation Hazard Areas. This section prohibits publicly-owned buildings intended for human occupancy, other than parks and recreational facilities, in tsunami inundation hazard areas. Therefore, should the site-specific study show the project area being inundated, a proposed fire station would not be permitted, as it is a publicly-owned building intended for human occupancy.

The County's review and acceptance of a site-specific tsunami hazard study will include review of the scope and methodology of the study. Therefore, to help ensure there is agreement among all parties on what the study will cover and the standard of review, it is recommended that you share with County Planning and California Coastal Commission staff the scope and methodology that will be used before the study is conducted.

Should a site-specific tsunami study show the project area being inundated, an LCP Amendment would be necessary to modify the provisions prohibiting the fire station to locate in a tsunami inundation hazard area in order to pursue the project on the intended 2.5-acre parcel. The Planning Department would offer to initiate the LCP Amendment based on broader interests in such an amendment. An LCP Amendment would require County Board of Supervisors approval and certification by the California Coastal Commission. It is staff's estimate that this process may take 12-16 months for local processing (i.e., does not include the certification process by the California Coastal Commission). The amendment would need to be approved prior to the issuance of a CDP by the County.

10. The *Riparian Setback Analysis – Obispo Road Property*, dated August 7, 2014, prepared by TRA Environmental Sciences, Inc., identifies Drainage 2, running through the project parcel, as a perennial stream requiring a 50-foot setback buffer pursuant to LCP Policy 7.11. However, the *Preliminary Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas Assessment at the Proposed Coastside Fire District Project in El Granada, San Mateo County, California*, dated April 16, 2015, prepared by WRA Environmental Consultants, identifies the same drainage as intermittent and therefore requiring a 30-foot setback buffer pursuant to LCP Policy 7.11. The full biological report, submitted as part of any Planning application, must reconcile this discrepancy in order to appropriately establish minimum required riparian setbacks.
11. The applicant shall include photo simulations as part of the Planning application which depict direct line-of-sight views of the proposed fire station as seen from southbound and northbound Cabrillo Highway, as well as a viewing point from the intersection of Cabrillo Highway and Coronado Street. The photo simulations shall take into consideration existing and proposed vegetative conditions within each line-of-sight.
12. The applicant shall submit as part of the Planning application the manufacturer's details and/or plans of all exterior lighting fixtures; site and security fencing, including the proposed rolling gate; generator and its enclosure; and trash enclosure design.
13. Color copies of exterior colors/materials shall be included as part of the Planning application for the building and any fences, walls, exterior enclosures, including exterior walls, trim, windows, doors, roof, patio coverings, exposed retaining walls, and fences.
14. A completed C.3/C.6 Development Review Checklist shall be submitted as part of the Planning application.
15. The applicant should coordinate with CalTrans to understand the potential Highway 1 re-alignment options being considered by CalTrans under CalTrans' conditional Coastal Development Permit Amendment approval granted by the

California Coastal Commission for Surfer's Beach and how these options may impact the proposal.

B. County Department of Public Works (DPW)

In addition to the comments provided below, please see DPW's Plan Review Checklist, included as Attachment 1.

1. The applicant shall have prepared, by a registered civil engineer, a drainage analysis of the proposed project and include it as part of the Planning application submittal for review and approval by the Department of Public Works. The drainage analysis shall consist of a written narrative and a plan. The flow of the stormwater onto, over, and off of the property shall be detailed on the plan and shall include adjacent lands as appropriate to clearly depict the pattern of flow. The analysis shall detail the measures necessary to certify adequate drainage. Post-development flows and velocities shall not exceed those that existed in the pre-developed state. Recommended measures shall be designed and included in the improvement plans and submitted to the Department of Public Works for review and approval.
2. The applicant shall include a driveway "Plan and Profile" as part of the Planning application submittal for review and approval by the Department of Public Works. The plan shall show the driveway access to the parcel (garage slab) complying with County Standards for driveway slopes (not to exceed 20%) and to County Standards for driveways (at the property line) being the same elevation as the center of the access roadway. When appropriate, as determined by the Department of Public Works, this plan and profile shall be prepared from elevations and alignment shown on the roadway improvement plans. The driveway plan shall also include and show specific provisions and details for both the existing and the proposed drainage patterns and drainage facilities.
3. No proposed construction work within the County right-of-way shall begin until County requirements for the issuance of an encroachment permit, including review of the plans, have been met and an encroachment permit issued. The applicant shall contact a Department of Public Works Inspector 48 hours prior to commencing work in the right-of-way.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant will be required to provide payment of "roadway mitigation fees" based on the square footage (assessable space) of the proposed building per Ordinance No. 3277.
5. The applicant shall submit a traffic control plan for permanent ingress and egress onto Obispo Road as part of any Planning application. If required, the applicant shall provide traffic legends, markings, and signs as needed for safety.

C. County Geotechnical Section

1. The project will require a geotechnical investigation report as part of the Planning application submittal.

D. Coastside County Water District (CCWD)

The following preliminary project comments from CCWD do not constitute an approval for this proposed development by CCWD:

1. The project must comply with the CCWD's Indoor Water Use Efficiency Ordinance which includes regulations on water metering and water use efficiency specifications for plumbing fixtures and appliances.
2. The project must comply with CCWD's Drought Regulations.
3. CCWD staff must perform inspections to verify compliance with all CCWD regulations during and after construction.
4. The severity of multi-year drought continues to have an impact on water supply conditions. Mandatory water use restrictions and prohibitions are in place and are being expanded, as water conditions worsen. These water use standards, restrictions and prohibitions are impacting new development, including new single-family homes. Any mandatory water use standards, restrictions and prohibitions will be enforced as they are adopted. CCWD recommends that developers sign up for the CCWD's electronic newsletter on the CCWD's website (www.coastsidewater.org) to stay up to date on new regulations within the CCW's service area.
5. It is recommended that the applicant contact CCWD before the project design is complete to get information on current CCWD regulations.
6. CCWD water records confirm that there are no installed or uninstalled water service connections assigned to APN 047-261-030 at this time. The applicant will need to acquire sufficient water capacity for the proposed project.
7. The only water main line available for connection is in Avenue Portola. A possible water main line extension may be required if connection is not to Avenue Portola.
8. Before issuance of a building permit, CCWD will need to evaluate a complete set of building plans to determine if the water service capacity available is adequate for the development and complies with all CCWD regulations.

E. Granada Community Services District (GCSD)

1. The applicant shall comply with all requirements from the Granada Community Services District for sanitary sewer service to the project site.

F. Other Reviewing Agencies

Referrals for this Major Development Pre-Application were also sent to the California Coastal Commission and Midcoast Community Council (MCC). Comments were received from the California Coastal Commission and are included as Attachment 2.

Before submittal of a formal application, including all plans and materials cited earlier in this letter, please consider the comments discussed above. If you have any questions regarding this summary or need assistance with application requirements, please feel free to contact me at 650/363-1815 or by email at sburlison@smcgov.org.

Sincerely,



Summer Burlison
Planner III

SSB:fc – SSBZ0601_WFN.DOCX

Attachments

1. Department of Public Works Plan Review Checklist, dated June 2, 2015
2. Comment Letter from California Coastal Commission, dated June 30, 2015

cc: Board of Supervisors, via email
Planning Commission, via email
Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director, via email
Lisa Aozasa, Deputy Community Development Director, via email
County Building Inspection Section
County Department of Public Works
County Geotechnical Section
Coastside County Water District
Granada Community Services District
Midcoast Community Council
Planning Director, City of Half Moon Bay
California Coastal Commission
Committee for Green Foothills
Workshop Attendees (those who signed the "Sign-In" sheet)

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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June 30, 2015

Summer Burlison, Project Planner
County of San Mateo – Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1665

RE: PRE2015-00029 (Paul Cole, Coastside Fire), APN047-261-030

Dear Ms. Burlison:

Thank you for the County's Planning Permit Application Referral for PRE2015-00029 that we received on June 5, 2015. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Coastside County Fire Protection's proposal to construct a 10,000-sq.-ft., single-story, fire station with 18 parking spaces located on a vacant 2.5-acre (108,900 square-foot) parcel located at Obispo Road and Avenue Alhambra in El Granada. The proposed project is for replacement of the existing 4,000-sq.-ft. facility located at 531 Obispo Road. The proposed project raises concerns with respect to coastal resource issues that include, visual, biological (sensitive habitat and species), and land use. Our comments are provided below.

Jurisdiction

The proposed project site is located within the Coastal Zone, east of Highway 1 in the community of El Granada. The proposed project would potentially be conducted within 100 feet of a stream, a sensitive coastal resource area, and is not a principally-permitted use. Therefore, the proposed project is appealable to the Commission.

Permitted Use and Future Land Use

The area is located in the Coastal Zone within the El Granada Gateway District (EG) zone; therefore development must adhere to applicable regulations contained in Chapter 12.6 of the certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) zoning regulations. The proposed fire station is not included in the list of permitted uses allowed to locate in the EG district as provided in Section 6229.3. Section 6500(b) allows for the issuance of a use permit for the location of, among other things, public service uses or public buildings in any district when found to be necessary for the public health, safety, convenience, or welfare. Under this section, thus, the relocated fire house may be an allowable use. However, Section 6500(f) requires that approved uses shall be consistent with all the policies and standards of the LCP, and the proposed relocation is not consistent (see additional comments below).

Re-alignment of Highway 1 is a permitted use under Section 6229.3 in the EG district. Caltrans is currently required to consider future re-alignment of Highway 1 in close proximity to the proposed project area as an option to address erosion problems along the coast, particularly at

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Surfer's Beach located westerly of the proposed project site. Looking ahead it would be prudent to locate a new facility where it can remain in place for the long-term. A facility at the proposed project site may potentially conflict with future plans to re-locate Highway 1 further inland. We respectfully suggest that Coastside County Fire Protection consider alternative locations for the replacement fire station that will not conflict with the need to re-align Highway 1 or any other assets due to sea-level rise and or erosion of the coast in proximity to the project area.

Development Criteria and Standards

Section 6229.4 provides development criteria and standards for the EG zoning district. All new development must meet the criteria and standards therein that include a 3.5-acre minimal parcel size, 16-foot maximum building height, and a maximum of 10% coverage of the parcel. The proposed fire station would be: 1) constructed on a 2.5-acre parcel, 2) 30 feet in height, and 3) 10,000 square feet (that exceeds the required 10% maximum parcel coverage), inconsistent with the LCP requirements.

Biological

There is a drainage area with riparian habitat located in the central portion of the undeveloped parcel. This drainage and habitat are to the west of the area where the fire station is proposed for construction. The referral, however, indicates that the entire project site and surrounding area is flagged as possible monarch butterfly and San Francisco garter snake habitat. Approximately six to nine mature trees would be removed as part of the project. LCP Policy 7.1 defines sensitive habitats as any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable and any area that contains or supports rare and endangered species (as defined by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife). Sensitive Habitats are protected by the provisions of LCP Policy 7.3 that prohibits any land use or development that would result in a significant, adverse, impact on sensitive habitat areas. Policy 7.3 requires that development in areas adjacent to sensitive habitat shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts that could significantly degrade the sensitive habitat. The proposed use must also be compatible with maintenance of the biologic productivity of the resource/habitat, as required by Policy 7.3. Policy 7.4 permits only resource-dependent uses in sensitive habitats. LCP Policy 7.36 requires that development be prevented from occurring where it is known to be a riparian location for San Francisco garter snake. The proposed development is a facility for fire protection purposes and it could potentially interfere with maintenance of the riparian habitat and result in an adverse impact on these San Francisco garter snake and monarch butterfly. The impacts of the proposed fire station on sensitive habitats must be fully evaluated; and the project must be designed consistent with LCP policies 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, and 7.36 that protect sensitive habitats. We suggest that the applicant have a qualified biologist survey the biological resources on the parcel and an assessment of habitats. Based upon the results applicable LCP policies for riparian corridors and wetlands must be applied to the proposed project. These include riparian policies 7.7, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, and 7.12. Applicable LCP policies for the protection of wetlands include 7.14, 7.16, 7.17, and 7.18.

Visual

The proposed project site is an undeveloped 108,900 square-foot (2.5-acre parcel) located to the east of State Highway 1 within the Cabrillo Highway/Highway 1 County Scenic Corridor. The proposed project includes grading of the site comprising excavation of 4,300 cubic yards of

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material and 2,300 cubic yards of fill. The proposed project would result in the removal of six to nine mature trees. LCP Policy 8.5 requires that development on urban parcels larger than 20,000 square feet be located on a portion of the parcel that is least visible from State and County Scenic Roads. The LCP requires that proposed development best preserve the visual and open space qualities of the parcel overall. LCP Policy 8.9 requires that new development be located and designed to minimize tree removal. LCP Policy 8.13 sets design guidelines for coastal communities that include El Granada. Policy 8.13 requires that structures be designed such that the proposed construction does not require extensive cutting, grading, or filling. LCP Policy 8.32 requires that the design criteria of the Community Design Manual be applied to development including the design guidelines for El Granada. The proposed project must be consistent with the LCP policies 8.5, 8.9, 8.13, and 8.32 that protect visual resources within the Coastal Zone.

We support the County's plan to replace its obsolete fire station with a new, modern one; however the proposed location presents inconsistencies with the requirements of the certified LCP. Above all the proposed project raises concerns as it may potentially conflict with the need to re-locate Highway 1 further inland in order to protect coastal access in this area. We encourage Coastside County Fire Protection to identify alternative sites for a new fire station and are available to review those locations and provide comments.

Please feel free to contact me via e-mail at rananda@coastal.ca.gov or call me at 415-904-5292 if you have questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,



Renée Ananda, Coastal Program Analyst
Coastal Commission
North Central Coast District