

# Coastal Commission pours cold water on fire station plans

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The Coastside Fire Protection District is hiring a consultant in hopes of proving that land bought for a new El Granada fire station would not be underwater in the case of a devastating tsunami.

The district was surprised by a July letter from the California Coastal Commission noting that the law does not allow public buildings to be built in the inundation zone. That is the area that, by virtue of location and topography, is at risk in the event of a foreseeable tsunami.

The notice represents a considerable monkey wrench in ongoing plans to replace the existing fire station at 531 Obispo Road with a new 10,000-square-foot, single-story station to be located on 2.5 acres at Obispo Road and Avenue Alhambra. The district has already purchased the land from the San Mateo County Harbor District.

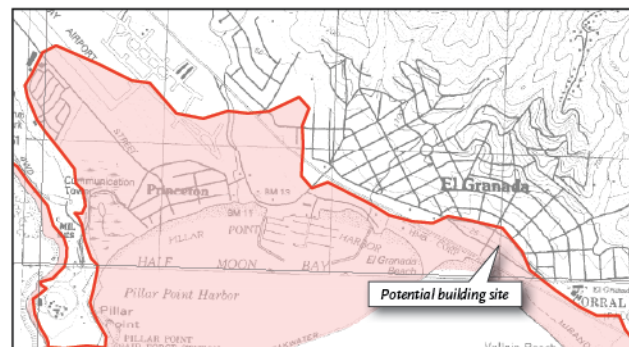
The Coastal Commission notice could also affect nascent plans for a community center adjacent to the planned fire station. The community center has been mentioned by members of the Granada Community Services District.

“It was news to the county and it was news to us,” said fire board President Gary Burke.

Burke said he was confident that an independent specialist studying the site would report that the land would be dry in any real emergency. He said that report was expected in six to eight weeks.

In the event that isn't the case, the district is exploring the possibility of trading land at Mirada Surf with San Mateo County.

The planned Obispo Road site has been the source of persistent complaints by some residents who say — in addition to the flooding concerns — that building there would exacerbate traffic in the area and create light and noise pollution for El Granada.



## Proposed fire station site

The site for the proposed new fire station is located inside the tsunami inundation zone shaded in pink. Source: San Mateo County 2009