

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluates the impacts of the proposed Beacon's Beach Access Project (project) to improve beach access and stabilize the bluff at Beacon's Beach, also known as Leucadia State Beach. The bluffs atop Beacon's Beach have a history of instability due to landslides and general bluff erosion. This erosion has caused temporary closures and re-routing of the beach access trail many times and has created a situation that requires remedial measures to maintain safe public access to the beach.

Following a series of public meetings and workshops, The City of Encinitas (City) developed the project composed of the following elements:

- Parking lot reconfiguration
- Bluff area stabilization and replanting
- Reestablishment of trail access to the beach area
- Shoreline protection structure
- Public shower
- Foundation piers for lifeguard tower
- Improved surface water drainage
- Utilities for shower and lifeguard tower

ALTERNATIVES

In addition to the preferred project, three alternatives are evaluated in this EIR.

Alternative A—Elevated Stairs and No Shoreline Protection

This alternative is similar to the proposed project except that there is no bluff protection wall and the beach access path is replaced by wood stairs.

Alternative B—ADA-Accessible Path and Shoreline Protection

This alternative is similar to the proposed project except that instead of a natural surfaced access path a concrete switchback path is included with a slope consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) criteria and a concrete stairway down the middle of the bluff providing access to the beach.

Alternative C—No Project

This alternative maintains the status quo and no parking, bluff, or shoreline protection is included.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

A summary of environmental impacts of the project and the mitigation measures proposed to reduce impacts is presented in Table S-1.

AREAS OF KNOWN CONTROVERSY

The primary area of controversy is the use of a bluff protection wall to control erosion at the base of the bluff at Beacon's Beach. The use of coastal protection structures, such as bluff protection walls, along the California coast is controversial because of the visual impacts caused by placing an engineered structure in a natural environment. The contrast between the engineered structure and the natural bluffs is viewed by some as a significant intrusion on the coastal landscape. There is also concern that the placement of a hard structure at the base of the bluff fixes the back of the beach and leads to beach erosion, thereby reducing or eliminating a public beach over time.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED BY THE LEAD AGENCY

Issues to be resolved by the City include whether to approve the project in light of the significant cumulative impacts that would result from construction of a bluff protection wall in combination with other past and reasonably foreseeable projects.

Table S-1: Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Category	Environmental Impacts	Mitigation
Geology and Soils	The project would result in potential end scour effects of the shoreline protection device (bluff protection wall).	GEO-1: Prior to grading permit issuance, the bluff protection wall plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Engineering Services Department to ensure that uniformly applied engineering standards are implemented to prevent end-scour effects associated with the bluff protection wall.
	The project would result in the potential long-term loss of beach width, or “passive erosion” and erosion of the tidal terrace.	GEO-2: The Parks and Recreation Department shall provide annual sand replenishment at the project site on an as-needed basis when eight feet or more of the shoreline protection structure is exposed. Sufficient sand shall be imported so that three to four feet of the shoreline protection structure would be exposed and the maximum grade of imported fill within the beach area shall be 5:1. The beach replenishment should occur prior to Memorial Day. The procedure used to replenish sand shall be in accordance with a Coastal Development Permit issued by the California Coastal Commission.
	Cumulative Impacts: In conjunction with other shoreline protection projects in the area, the potential incremental loss of beach width through passive erosion and erosion of the tidal terrace are considered cumulatively considerable impacts.	The significant cumulative impacts associated with passive erosion and erosion of the tidal terrace cannot be mitigated below a level of significance.

Table S-1 (Continued)

Environmental Category	Environmental Impacts	Mitigation
Visual Quality/Aesthetics	Aesthetics: The proposed bluff protection wall would result in a moderately adverse impact on the visual character of the site.	<p>VIS-1: Prior to grading permit issuance, the Engineering Services Department shall ensure that the following measures are provided on the bluff protection wall construction plans:</p> <p>(a) The top of the bluff protection wall shall naturally undulate across its length.</p> <p>(b) The incorporation of varied surface features that shall create a shadow line and variety to the surface of the wall must be included through the use of hand-sculpted shotcrete. The surface of the wall should vary as much as 1 to 2 feet outward and inward. The forms should match the adjacent bluffs and rock outcrops, similar to what was simulated in Simulation B (see Figure 2.2-10 in Chapter 2—Environmental Impact Analysis). The bluff protection wall shall simulate the natural surface characteristics of the adjacent geologic formations including texture, color variations, and random surface topography.</p> <p>(c) The treatments listed above shall be provided from the top of the bluff protection wall to +5 feet above mean sea level.</p> <p>(d) See Geo-2 above.</p>
	Neighborhood Character: The bluff protection wall would contrast with the natural topography and surrounding neighborhood character and would result in a moderately adverse impact on the visual character of the site.	See above mitigation measure VIS-1.

Table S-1 (Continued)

Environmental Category	Environmental Impacts	Mitigation
	<p>Development Features: The bluff protection wall is not completely within the goals and objectives of the resource element, the overlay zone, and the council resolution on the appearance of pre-emptive bluff protection walls because of the use of a bluff protection wall to stabilize the site. However, the proposed bluff protection wall design meets the aesthetic goals and policies of these documents as long as the mitigation measures stipulated in this section are implemented.</p>	<p>See above mitigation measure VIS-1.</p>
	<p>Cumulative Impacts: Bluff protection wall projects located along the City’s coastline would cause impacts to visual quality, including disruption of the natural line and form of the bluffs and a negative contrast with the natural topography and surrounding neighborhood character. The project, in combination with the other bluff protection wall projects in the City, would result in a significant cumulative impact.</p>	<p>This impact would be reduced through strict adherence to the City’s Bluff Pre-Emptive Measure Appearance Policy and standards contained in the Coastal Bluff Overlay Zone regulations. However, even with the imposition of these regulations on future bluff protection wall projects, the visual quality along the Encinitas coastline would be significantly altered, resulting in a significant cumulative visual impact.</p>
<p>Water Quality</p>	<p>The project may significantly impact water quality due to the increased potential for erosion during construction activity.</p>	<p>Mitigation measures described in Section 2.3.4 would require the implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP would ensure that significant water quality impacts are avoided during construction activities.</p>
<p>Recreation</p>	<p>The project would result in the potential long-term loss of beach width, or “passive erosion” and erosion of the tidal terrace.</p>	<p>See GEO-2 above.</p>
	<p>Cumulative Impacts: In conjunction with other shoreline protection projects in the area, the potential incremental loss of beach width through passive erosion and erosion of the tidal terrace are considered cumulatively considerable impacts.</p>	<p>The significant cumulative impacts associated with passive erosion and erosion of the tidal terrace cannot be mitigated below a level of significance.</p>

Table S-1 (Continued)

Environmental Category	Environmental Impacts	Mitigation
Public Safety	No significant public safety impacts would occur during project construction with the implementation of standard construction safety precautions described in Section 2.5.2.2.	Because no significant public safety impacts would result from the project, no mitigation measures are necessary.
Paleontological Resources	It is likely that construction of the bluff protection wall, and possibly the shower station and lifeguard tower, would result in excavations into the Santiago formation, a high-sensitivity geologic formation underlying the project site.	<p>PALEO-1: A paleontological monitoring program shall be provided during all soil excavation at or below the elevation of 30 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) per the following requirements:</p> <p>(a) Prior to issuance of a grading permit, a letter of verification shall be provided to the Planning and Building Department stating that a qualified paleontologist and/or paleontological monitor have been retained to implement the monitoring program. The requirement for paleontological monitoring shall be noted on the grading plan. All persons involved in the paleontological monitoring of the project shall be approved by the Planning and Building Department prior to the start of monitoring. The Planning and Building Department shall be notified of the start and end of construction.</p> <p>(b) The paleontologist or paleontological monitor shall be on-site full-time during the initial cutting of previously undisturbed areas at or below the elevation of feet 30 AMSL. Monitoring may be increased or decreased at the discretion of the qualified paleontologist, in consultation with the Planning and Building Department, and would depend on the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and the</p>

Table S-1 (Concluded)

Environmental Category	Environmental Impacts	Mitigation
		abundance of fossils.
		<p>(c) When requested by the paleontologist, the city engineer shall divert, direct, or temporarily halt construction activities in the area of discovery to allow recovery of fossil remains. The paleontologist shall immediately notify the Planning and Building Department of such finding at the time of discovery. The Planning and Building Department shall approve salvaging procedures to be performed before construction activities are allowed to resume.</p> <p>(d) The paleontologist shall be responsible for preparation of fossils to a point of curation and submittal of a letter of acceptance from a local qualified curation facility. Any discovered fossil sites shall be recorded by the paleontologist at the San Diego Natural History Museum.</p> <p>(e) Prior to the release of the grading bond, a monitoring results report, with appropriate graphics (i.e., location map and stratigraphic column with plotted fossil occurrences), summarizing the results, analysis and conclusions of the paleontological monitoring program shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning and Building Department.</p>

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