

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
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TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rick Wheeler
Director of Parks

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SUBJECT: Goleta Beach County Park Long Term Master Plan; Second Supervisorial District

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive a report on the community based Goleta Beach Long Term Master Planning Process, including the final outcome of the working group process and Santa Barbara County Park Commission recommendations.
2. Direct staff to initiate environmental review of a long term project application for Goleta Beach that provides for a recreation beach and park, and that also considers and addresses sand nourishment and managed retreat options as required by the California Coastal Commission.
3. Direct staff to return with a budget revision authorizing \$100,000 from General Fund Contingency as additional funds required for the preparation of the environmental impact report.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan: The recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal No. 5, A High Quality of Life for All Residents.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

Introduction

Goleta Beach County Park, visited by more than 1.5 million visitors each year, is the most heavily used County park within Santa Barbara County, including the County's Lake Cachuma and Jalama Beach.

This 29 acre park is a full service facility similar to other beach parks along the Santa Barbara County coastline, and includes group and family picnic facilities, children's play ground, restrooms, ranger residences, the Goleta Beach fishing pier, horse shoe pits, food and beverage service provided by the Beachside Bar & Café and parking to accommodate visitation for approximately 590 cars. The Atascadero Bikeway, an important part of the De Anza Coastal trail which travels through Goleta Beach Park, also provides access to the park. The goal of this staff report is to provide your Board with a comprehensive strategy to stabilize and preserve the park, and enhance the sandy beach for both recreation and protection purposes through implementation of a long term plan.

Recent and Historical Erosion and Activities

An attached summary, Attachment A, of activities at Goleta Beach has been provided that summarizes events between 1945-2005. More recently, over the last 15 years, Goleta Beach County Park has experienced incremental loss of facilities and infrastructure due to the loss of sandy beach area from El Nino type storm and wave activity. Since 1998, the park has suffered severe damage involving loss of sandy beach area, critical beach access parking and park facilities and infrastructure. Parking on the west end of the park has been lost and underground utilities have been threatened. In response to the storms, emergency rock revetments have been constructed and beach nourishment has occurred to protect the park. A more detailed accounting of the loss that the park has suffered to date includes:

- **Beach Access Parking**

Approximately 9,100 square feet of paving comprising 34 beach access parking spaces has eroded away completely. These spaces are permanently lost. With damages that occurred during the January 2005 El Nino event, Parks and Public Works received FEMA funding to repair and reconstruct the remaining parking area.

- **Lawn Area**

Approximately 41,000 square feet of lawn has been lost and an additional 13,000 square feet is closed to public use during severe storm episodes. Portions of the reclaimed water irrigation system, installed in the mid-1990's, has also been lost and, until such a time that it can be replaced, will effect the remaining lawn due to the loss of lateral and interconnecting irrigation lines. Several trees are also in jeopardy of being lost to erosion.

- **Family Picnic Sites**

Eight of twenty-one family picnic sites have been lost completely. In 2000, 3 picnic sites and an accessible viewing area were lost completely due to the erosion experienced during that storm season. These tables were permanent structures (ie; non-removable) and have since been replaced with removable tables in other areas of the park.

- Utilities

Several utilities traverse through the park that are either park serving or are utility company owned (Goleta Water District, Goleta Sanitary District, So. Cal Gas). County Parks continues to monitor the proximity of potential erosion as it may encroach closer to adjacent critical utilities; the pressure sewer line serving the entire park, the 18" Goleta Water District Reclaimed waterline, and the metering and cathodic protection utility vault for the Goleta Sanitary District sewer outfall line. Due to the encroaching erosion a portion of the park pressure sewer line was within 10' of the eroded area and was relocated in Spring 2005, however, the remaining portion of this line as well as other utilities mentioned above are still threatened during severe storms that cause the loss of the sandy beach.

To protect these utilities as well as other park facilities, the emergency rock revetments placed along the beach in late 2002 and early 2005 were granted Coastal Development Permits from the California Coastal Commission (CCC) with the understanding that the master planning process was underway and several technical studies would be prepared in the interim (e.g., kelp and sand transport studies). A deadline of July 2006 was given for the County to complete the planning process and submit a preferred project to the CCC for approval. The permit approved by the CCC to allow the emergency rock revetments to remain are specific about the study of alternative projects for shoreline protection and specifically state that:

“Long-term alternatives analyses shall consider and address sand nourishment and managed retreat options in lieu of placement of hard protective structures.”

Planning Efforts

To begin to address the erosion issues at Goleta Beach, in 2002, at the Board's direction, County Parks had Moffatt & Nichol Engineers prepare a report titled *Goleta Beach County Park Long-Term Restoration and Shoreline Erosion Management Plan* that studied a range of man-made structures that could be placed at the park to reduce erosion. Moffatt & Nichol also recommended that beach nourishment be pursued as a short-term solution to erosion problems. Managed Retreat, the removal of the park facilities within a determined erosion area that would be allowed to retreat naturally, was not an option that the Board was willing to consider at that time. The Plan was received by the Board of Supervisors, and the final recommendation at that time was to apply for permits to repair the east and west end revetments and to work cooperatively with BEACON (**B**each **E**rosion **A**uthority for **C**lean **O**ceans and **N**ourishment) to monitor the effectiveness of beach nourishment that BEACON had planned for Goleta Beach County Park. BEACON is a California Joint Powers agency established to deal with coastal erosion and beach problems on the Central Coast of California. The agencies making up BEACON are Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties and the cities of Port Hueneme, Oxnard, San Buenaventura, Carpinteria and Santa Barbara. If the BEACON project at Goleta Beach proved unsuccessful then County Parks would be back before the Board with additional solutions to reach the goal of protecting Goleta Beach County Park from coastal erosion.

The next year, 2003, after repeated storm erosion and additional losses at the park, the Board directed staff to work with the 2nd District to begin a long-term community master planning process. The focus of this process was to address a broad range of solutions that would protect the park with the focus on solutions that

are attainable and sustainable over the long-term. Solutions would not only include those previously included in the 2002 Moffatt & Nichol plan but would include a managed retreat option as well. Funding for this long-term planning effort has been provided by the Coastal Conservancy, Goleta Land Trust and the County's Coastal Resources Enhancement Fund.

Community Visioning Process and Working Group

The community visioning process and master planning process began with two community meetings held in Goleta on September 20th and October 15th, 2003. Educational materials and a web site were developed to keep the general public informed along the way. A working group was established that had representation from the Cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta, UCSB, utility companies, Beachside Bar and Café, Surfrider Foundation, Friends of Goleta Beach, Park Commissioners, Coalition to Save Goleta's Beaches, Goleta Chamber of Commerce, and several public-at-large members. The working group met 12 times over a period of 20 months, from December 2003 through July 2005. During this time, many hours of critical thought and discussion regarding the issues and problems that face Goleta Beach occurred with key professionals in the field of California coastal processes.

Key to the working group process was the development of the following goals and objectives:

***Goal and Objectives** - Create a plan for Goleta Beach County Park [including lawn, sandy beach, amenities, parking, pier, etc.] which is sustainable over more than 20 years taking into account long-term environmental change. The objectives were:*

- ***Recreation** – Maintain and enhance active and passive recreational opportunities for all segments of the community.*
- ***Natural Resources** – Protect and enhance natural resources at the park and in adjacent area.*
- ***Access** – Provide adequate vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access to the park and beach for all current and future users.*
- ***Educational Opportunities** – Provide educational opportunities for visitors to learn about resources at the Park, beach and adjacent areas.*

The solutions under consideration by the working group also attempt to meet the goals of the Board's strategic plan and key coastal policies regarding coastal access as well as County Parks' mission and task to provide accessible park and recreational facilities to all aspects of the community including the elderly and disabled.

The working group reviewed the issues and proposed solutions from technical studies that provided information about the County Park and adjacent area. The group considered several projects for a long term plan for the park, assisted by two facilitators and a group of scientists with specific knowledge about the physical coastal processes, beach ecology, and hydrology of the area. The County Parks Department staff provided information on recreational issues and resources to the working group. Initially it was envisioned that a single project would be developed out of the working group process, however, the group was split between two methods for meeting their goals and objectives.

All within the working group agreed on the following:

- Save and protect the park (including lawn, sandy beach, amenities, etc.).
- Maximize beach nourishment as needed as an effective way to protect park (although recognize that this is expensive and a temporary solution in the long run).
- Retain existing number of parking spaces to the extent possible.
- Protect restaurant at east end given that the existing lease coincides with the time frame of plan. This would involve reinforcing the existing revetment at the restaurant.
- Protect Goleta Sanitary District (GSD) utility vault at east end with rock revetment that should be placed shoreward and westward to the existing GSD vault.

The major *unresolved* question within the group was how to protect the remainder of the park. There were two basic approaches taken by the working group:

Approach A. -Rock revetment or similar hard structures that can withstand winter storm wave action. Rock revetments or other types of structures or approaches could possibly serve the same purpose, e.g., geotubes, offshore reefs, groins, etc., along with ongoing beach nourishment.

While a formal vote was not taken at the final meeting in July 2005, a majority of the working group expressed strong support for holding the existing line where the lawn and sandy beach currently meet. They did not want the lawn area to diminish any more in size due to wave action and erosion. If a rock revetment is necessary to provide the protection needed, that's appropriate. If there's a better way, that would be acceptable also. It was generally agreed that rock revetments be buried in sand through ongoing beach nourishment when feasible, acknowledging that this can be costly. Most believe that rocks will inevitably be what are necessary to hold the line. This group believes that the alternatives outlined in the Moffatt & Nichol report of 2002 are most viable and likely to achieve the goal and objectives of the working group. This portion of the working group's support for this approach is based on:

- Experience has shown that rock revetments are effective at protecting the lawn area and amenities behind the rocks.
- This alternative would not require the immediate relocation of utilities or restrooms out of harm's way. The group acknowledged that some of the temporary rock revetments placed in recent years would need to be re-engineered and maintained in the long term.
- The proposed revetment would provide protection for utilities, lawn, amenities, etc.
- The other alternative, Managed Retreat, is seen as uncertain in its effectiveness and would result in periodic and permanent loss of lawn which is not acceptable.
- This portion of the working group believed that this option was consistent with Coastal Act policies relating to beach access and protecting public recreation opportunities.

Approach B - Managed retreat approach, allowing for relocation and reconfiguration of some park facilities, would require fewer hard structures and a “buffer zone” would be established which would fluctuate between sandy beach and lawn depending on the season and severity of winter storms.

This minority portion of the working group believed that rock revetments were not a viable long-term solution to erosion and loss of lawn and recreation areas at Goleta Beach Park, and that the revetments can cause an *increase* in erosion seaward from the revetment. They believed that the managed retreat approach best achieved the goal and objectives of the working group and County. This group believes that the managed retreat alternative developed by Phillip Williams and Associates was the best solution. This group’s support for this approach is based on:

- While a new concept, managed retreat has been shown to accommodate coastal processes by allowing the beach to grow and recede on a seasonal and annual basis.
- The proposed “backstop” rock revetment would provide a last line of defense for utilities, lawn, amenities, etc.
- This option is more self-sustaining and cheaper in the long run.
- This group believes that this option is more consistent with Coastal Act policies and more likely to get approved.

Depending on the Board of Supervisors decision relating to one or two preferred projects, it appears that both of the working group’s recommendations will require additional technical review as part of the environmental review process.

Santa Barbara County Park Commission

The Santa Barbara County Park Commission held 3 public meetings at the conclusion of the working group process and on September 29, after hearing technical presentations from consultants, working group facilitators, and park staff, provided the following recommendation for your Board’s consideration:

- Seek permits to retain, re-engineer, and replace revetments as required in current configuration.
- Seek permits for revetments in unprotected portions of the park.
- Initiate dune planting and permanent walkways.
- Install an engineered sand retention capability at the western end of the park as an attached breakwater to the bluff.
- The EIR should look at alternative devices to add to sand retention if device (i.e. headland) originally installed does not function.

Cost, Facility Impact, and Policy Review of Long Term Plan Alternatives

Key to any decision on a final plan for Goleta Beach are costs, facility impacts and coastal policy consistency i.e. what any project would mean in regards to these issues if we propose to change Goleta Beach from what we know it as today.

For purposes of discussion of alternatives reviewed through the working group process and Park Commission, the attached spreadsheet, Attachment B, has been developed that shows anticipated changes to the park, costs to construct, estimated annual costs and project life costs – shown in terms of a 20 year period for comparison purposes. The spreadsheet also shows those funds currently available towards implementation of the plan.

Policy consistency for any project within the coastal zone carries authority in the review process not only here locally but at the California Coastal Commission level. The following initial review of relevant policies has been completed by County Counsel so that considerable resources would not be spent in developing a project that may not meet key coastal policies.

The County's Local Coastal Plan (LCP) Policy 1-1 adopts the resource protection policies of the Coastal Act found in Public Resources Code (PRC) §§ 30210 through 30263. The key policy relevant to the development of revetments, breakwaters, groins and seawalls is found at §30235. It provides:

Revetments, breakwaters, groins, harbor channels, seawalls, cliff retaining walls, and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes shall be permitted when required to serve coastal-dependent uses or to protect existing structures or public beaches in danger from erosion and when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply. Existing marine structures causing water stagnation contributing to pollution problems and fish kills should be phased out or upgraded where feasible. (Emphasis added.)

Goleta Beach Park contains coastal-dependent uses, principal existing structures and public beaches that qualify for protection under §30235 if the relevant findings required by that section can be made. The park contains a public beach in danger from erosion. The beach park is also a priority use under the Coastal Act (PRC §30213), which provides:

“Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.”

This preference for the Goleta Beach Park is further reflected in §30221, which states that oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development. Goleta Beach Park is zoned REC (Recreation District, CZO §35-89 et seq.). Principal permitted uses in this zone district include outdoor public recreational uses, including public parks and the structures and facilities required to support recreational activities within them, e.g. parking areas, and water and sanitary, boat launching, and concession facilities. Thus, these facilities within Goleta Beach Park are existing principal structures within the meaning of LCP 3-1, which authorizes seawalls to protect them under certain circumstances.

Finally, as set forth above, the lawn (fill material) and parking areas constitute preferred, priority development within the meaning of the Coastal Act. Because of their unique location at the beach park, it

may be argued that they are also coastal dependent uses that enable and enhance activities that require a coastal location in order to occur, such as ocean swimming, surfing, scuba diving, fishing, boating, beach activities and nature study. Previous emergency permits for revetments protected the lawn area under findings that treated that area as the functional equivalent of a principal structure given its location in the REC zone district and its status as a principal permitted use allowed within it.

County Counsel has advised that the determination whether a particular project that includes construction that alters natural shoreline processes satisfies §30235 and other coastal policies and development standards must await environmental analysis. However, as a threshold matter, none the options to be studied must be disqualified at this preliminary point.

County staff has discussed the issues facing County Parks and the project alternatives that have been considered by the working group and Park Commission with California Coastal Commission (CCC) staff. As CCC may be the lead approval agency for most of the permits that will be required, it was key to receive their input as early as possible in the planning process. Early in the community process, CCC staff spent an entire evening with park staff and the community discussing the role of the CCC. We have kept the CCC in the process through noticing and invitation to key meetings, including the Park Commission meeting and your Board meeting of December 6, 2005.

In summary, the CCC staff expects that the environmental review process will help to determine a project that is protective of the resources as well as continuing to provide for public recreation. They made it very clear that the environmental review process must include a full analysis of a managed retreat alternative in addition to any other project that may be considered.

Environmental Review and Recommended Approach

Any long term project for Goleta Beach will require an analysis through the CEQA process and in compliance with the requirements of the CCC permit, alternative projects will need to be considered also. In order to adequately review these alternatives, staff recommends the initiation of a project and alternatives for environmental review. Per conditions of the CCC permit, a managed retreat option must also be included in the overall analysis. If the Board determines that the project to move forward with for full environmental analysis should be based solely on cost, it is recommended that:

- 1) either a groin(s) or breakwater system, including a headland at the western end if deemed compatible, with revetment as may be required to protect key critical facilities, i.e. parking, restrooms, pier, restaurant **and**,
- 2) managed retreat with a rock revetment as a means of a last line of defense along the landward buffer 'line',

be reviewed within an environmental impact report (EIR) at equal levels of review.

The following project alternatives would also be reviewed in the EIR as well as any that may be deemed responsive during the EIR public scoping process.

1. Groin or Breakwater (depending upon what is chosen as a project for full review)
2. Full Rock Revetment with ongoing beach nourishment
3. Removal of all rock revetment with no beach nourishment

Mandates and Service Levels: The Coastal Commission permit to retain the emergency revetments at Goleta Beach requires that an alternatives analysis be completed, that includes managed retreat, for a long term solution at Goleta Beach that will address the erosion and impact of such to park facilities.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Costs expended to date (1999-2005) for permits and permit monitoring, park protection measures (rip rap and sand berming) and associated technical studies is approximately \$886,000 and is comprised of \$499,800 from General Fund funds and \$386,200 in grant funds, see Attachment C for more detailed funding breakdown.

Attachment B includes the available funding at this time. Based on the costs to prepare an environmental impact report, estimated at \$300,000, County Parks is requesting that the Board authorize staff to return with a budget revision, in the amount of \$100,000 utilizing General Fund Contingency, as a match to the existing funds for completion of the environmental review process. Funding to implement the long term plan, other than that shown on the table ranges from \$3.1 mill to \$19.3 mill over a 20 year horizon. There are not readily apparent funding sources for dollars of such magnitude. A potential on-going revenue source from a parking fee program at Goleta Beach is estimated to generate \$531,200 the first year and \$564,000 every year thereafter (timeframe to implement would be 16 months).

ATTACHMENT A

Summary of Events 1945 - 2005

1945	Goleta Beach constructed with non-select fill.
1949	Federal Government grants Goleta Beach to Santa Barbara County.
1953	State leases Goleta Beach park area to County.
1960s	Portion of east end revetment installed.
1970	State grants Goleta Beach to the County of Santa Barbara.
1985/86	Revetment repaired at east and west ends of parks for shoreline and facility protection.
1994	Development of Carrying Capacity Study commences.
2000	Carrying Capacity study draft initiated by Board of Supervisors.
2000	February - Emergency rock revetment placed 1000 lineal feet of park.
2000	Goleta Beach designated as site for beach nourishment program by BEACON board.
2000	December - Removed emergency rock revetment placed in February, 2002.
2001	Sought and received funding to develop long-term plan.
2002	March - Board of Supervisors receives Moffatt and Nichol report on Shoreline Erosion and Management - Board of Supervisors directs staff to pursue a long term permit for winter berm, address revetment issues at east and west end of the park boundaries and work in concert with BEACON on beach nourishment program at Goleta Beach.
2002	November – Beginning of El Nino type storm events, remaining berm destroyed by El Nino event.
2002	November - December - Loss of parkland - Hauling of sand and continued berming to stop loss of parkland.
2002	December - 600 lineal feet of emergency rock revetment placed at far west end of park - emergency permits received.
2003	January - Community meeting. Approximately 200 attend.
2003	Board of Supervisors directs staff to take steps to begin a long term community master planning process to determine future of Goleta Beach.
2003	Board of Supervisors authorizes Parks Department to submit permit applications to allow December emergency rock to remain for two years. Coastal Commission approves permit with condition that County must return by July 2006 with a plan that includes an alternatives analysis for long term protection of park and beach area.
2003	March - New dredging site for BEACON beach nourishment program approved by BEACON board. Coastal Commission approves BEACON demonstration project.
2003	Funding awarded from Coastal Conservancy and Goleta Land Trust to begin Master Planning process; Formation of stakeholders group; begin meeting with stakeholders group. September - October 2003 - Implementation of BEACON beach nourishment at Goleta Beach.
2004	Continue with stakeholder meetings through May 2004; Contract with Philip Williams & Associates to begin resting shoreline analysis.
2005	Winter storm requires placement of 350 lineal feet of rock revetment to protect portion of park developed area; Coastal commission approves retention of this rock to July 2006 in order to complete Master Planning process; Stakeholder group meets in June and July to hear final presentations on resting shoreline, managed retreat; stakeholders provide discussion on long term plan alternatives. Park Commission and Board of Supervisors provide recommendations and direction for pursuing long term plan.