



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Parks  
Department No.: 052  
For Agenda Of: June 22, 2010  
Placement: Set Hearing for  
July 6, 2010  
Estimated Time:  
Continued Item: No  
If Yes, date from:  
Vote Required: N/A

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TO: Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Department Daniel C. Hernandez (568-2461)  
Director  
Contact Info: Erik Axelson, Deputy Director (681-5651)

SUBJECT: Set hearing for July 6, 2010 to receive recommendations regarding concept plan for Goleta Beach 2.0

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form:

**Other Concurrence:**

As to form: N/A

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form:

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors set a hearing for July 6, 2010 to:

- a) Review proposed concept plan "Goleta Beach 2.0" for recommendations for long term master plan for Goleta Beach County Park

**Summary Text:**

As directed by the Board of Supervisors at its October 6, 2009 meeting, County Parks has conducted an extensive concept planning process for Goleta Beach County Park. This was in response to the action of the California Coastal Commission on July 8, 2009 denying the County's application for a permeable pier addition to Goleta Pier. We have named this process *Goleta Beach 2.0* to underscore that this represents a fresh look at options for the park.

Since that time, County staff has performed a detailed analysis of existing conditions at Goleta Beach County Park, including a project by the County's Enterprise GIS unit to electronically map the entire park. Staff also conducted discussions and on-site meetings with representatives of utilities (high-pressure gas, reclaimed water, wastewater, etc.) that transit portions of the park, as well as with representatives of CalTrans and UCSB. Staff has also met with Coastal Commission staff on numerous occasions to inform them of the County's progress in this conceptual planning process.

Since August 2009, County staff has completed several major tasks:

1. Describe existing conditions in a format and visual scale that is readily comprehensible
2. Monitor regulatory environment and permitting process
3. Identify and define park management alternatives
4. Facilitate several public outreach initiatives and meetings (town hall information meeting, Park Commission and Planning Commission meetings)

In addition, in October 2009 the Board designated an *ad hoc* committee consisting of Supervisors Wolf and Farr to serve as the Board's liaison to this process. The *ad hoc* committee has met on several occasions with County staff since October 2009.

County Parks conducted four public forums about Goleta Beach 2.0:

- February 16, 2010: Public information meeting at County Administration Building
- March 25, 2010: Presentation to Park Commission at County Administration Building
- April 7, 2010: Presentation to Planning Commission at County Administration Building
- April 20, 2010: Presentation to Goleta City Council at Goleta City Hall

Public comment was welcomed at all of these meetings. For example, at the February 16 meeting eleven persons spoke about the concept plan and of these, eight strongly supported Goleta Beach 2.0.

A key determinant of Goleta Beach 2.0 is the presence in the park of a Prime Erosion Zone that affects the western-most area of the park. This area of approximately 600-700 feet of beach frontage is the portion of the park most subject historically to severe erosion. As the Coastal Commission suggested in July 2009, the concept plan focuses significant attention to moving infrastructure that transits that prime erosion zone. These include:

- Two parking lots with a total of 150 parking spaces (48,000 square feet of area)
- County-owned pressurized wastewater line
- Goleta Water District reclaimed water line
- Sempra Energy/Southern California Gas Company high-pressure gas line
- Portion of Coastal Trail bicycle-pedestrian path

Consistent with the informal recommendations made by some commissioners at the July 2009 Coastal Commission hearing, the Goleta Beach 2.0 concept plan recommends relocating the above structures farther away from the prime erosion zone. At the same time, the concept plan also recommends several other improvements to the park and the expansion of recreation and cultural programming. Our goal is to make the park more inviting to park visitors, which in a typical year measure about 1.5 million.

The goal of this concept plan is to provide a direction for more detailed engineering and environmental design and review. Should the Board adopt the concept plan recommendations, the next step would be to translate the concepts into designs for regulatory and environmental review.

The Goleta Beach 2.0 concept plan recommends the following actions:

1. **Parking lots.** Remove the two western-most parking lots and restore a beach environment on the 48,000 square feet that had been covered by asphalt. This will provide an expanded area for coastal processes such as erosion, and will also increase the area in the park for coastal-dependent recreation by over one acre.

2. **Satellite parking facility.** Develop a satellite parking facility to accommodate the 150 spaces lost in the park, and perhaps add additional parking spaces to replace spaces previously lost to past erosion. A facility of about 200 spaces could be developed on vacant land in the vicinity of Goleta Beach County Park. It should be noted that except for holiday and summer weekends the 150 spaces are not essential to serving park visitors; the 150 spaces represent 25% of the park's total of 604 spaces. Drop off area would be created in the park, and a shuttle van would bring visitors from the satellite facility to the park. Several potential locations also back up to parts of Goleta Slough, making it possible to provide an interpretive water taxi to convey visitors to the park. An interpretive trail along the slough is also a possibility.
3. **Wastewater line.** Relocate the County's pressurized wastewater line into a new utility corridor located within the CalTrans CA Route 217 right-of-way.
4. **Utility lines.** Work with Goleta Water District, Sempra Energy, and CalTrans to relocate the two utility lines into the same utility corridor within the Route 217 right-of-way.
5. **Bicycle path.** Relocate bike path away from its location adjacent to existing parking areas to about the Route 217 right-of-way.
6. **Utility and transportation corridor protection zone.** Along with the relocation of the utility lines and bike path, the plan recommends identifying a zone to the seaward of these relocated structures as a protection zone. This zone would host structures of a nature to be determined in the event that erosion activity or sea level rise are more severe than contemplated; these protective structures would be installed to protect the relocated infrastructure and Route 217. The protective structures would not be installed unless predetermined trigger points (new high-high tide line, for example) had been activated. We emphasize that a structural protective zone may not be necessary, but it is important to designate such an area for this contingency. County Parks staff is currently researching so-called "soft" protective structures as an alternative to hard structures like seawalls and rock revetments.
7. **Water taxi landing and interpretive trail.** Should a water taxi link prove feasible, establish a floating dock landing for this purpose just to the east of the park's maintenance yard. An interpretive access trail along Goleta Slough would enter the park at the location of the existing park access bridge.
8. **Auto and bicycle-pedestrian access.** The existing access bridge to Goleta Beach is structurally compromised and will need to be replaced in the next five years. County Parks is working with the Public Works Department to identify funding and options to replace the bridge. A new location approximately 500 feet to the west of the existing bridge would offer improved sight distance for vehicular traffic. The concept plan also proposes replacing the bridge at the existing location with a narrower, clear-span bicycle-pedestrian bridge. This would obviate the current conflict (and potential hazards) of mixing bike-pedestrian and auto traffic on the same bridge.
9. **Remove un-permitted rock revetment.** Approximately 840 linear feet of rock revetment was placed on the western edge of Goleta Beach in 2001 and 2005 under coastal permits that have since expired. The concept plan recommends the removal of this un-permitted rock after the utilities and other structures have been relocated from the prime erosion zone.
10. **Install protective structure at Goleta Sanitary District vault.** The plan recommends extending existing permitted rock or other structure approximately 470 feet to the west of the Beachside restaurant to protect the existing underground Goleta Sanitary District wastewater discharge vault.
11. **Expanded recreation programs.** The concept plan recommends expanding recreational programming in the park. County Parks plans to seek proposals for a kayak concession at Goleta Beach, and also to provide for the storage of small sailboats such as Hobie cats. County Parks

also plans to develop partnerships with private and non-profit recreational providers, so that additional recreational programming is offered in the park. These could include day and summer camps for children and youth, more recreation events, swimming, sailing and diving classes, and adult fitness programs.

12. **Expand activities on Goleta Pier.** The plan recommends expanding environmental education and fishing activities at the Goleta Pier Angler Center, operated in partnership with United Pier & Shore Anglers of California. We also plan to study the feasibility of refitting Goleta Pier to provide berthing locations for excursion boats, such as vessels for whale watching, sailing, sightseeing and other purposes. UCSB has indicated that it would be prepared to relocate its sailing education program from Santa Barbara Harbor to Goleta Beach if these upgrades can be accomplished. Excursions from Goleta Pier would also open up a more western range of the Southern California coast than is now typical of vessels originating in Santa Barbara.
13. **Expanded cultural activities.** Goleta Beach is already a destination for such activities as bird watching and outdoor painting. County Parks proposes to formalize existing relationships with arts, cultural, and interpretive groups, to expand the park's role as a center for such activities.

While several recommendations directly respond to the suggestions of the Coastal Commission that the County consider some form of managed retreat, it is important to emphasize that many new amenities and activities are proposed to be added to the park. Moreover, the relocation of some structures out of the prime erosion zone can be done in such a manner as to maintain the essential service to the public that has made Goleta Beach our most popular county park.

If the Board concurs with these recommendations, County Parks proposes to retain engineering and design consultants to translate these concepts into detailed engineering and environmental documents that can be submitted to regulatory agencies for review and approval. It is contemplated that a new environmental impact review (EIR) would be required, although much documentation already has been prepared. A new application to the Coastal Commission also is contemplated. Some 5.5 acres of the park is under the ownership of the State Lands Commission (and a new master lease is pending), and its review of activities on that acreage would also be required.

### **Background:**

The most appropriate long term management strategy for Goleta Beach County Park, a 29-acre public amenity that is owned in part by the State of California (approximately 5.5 acres) and Santa Barbara County, has been the subject of much discussion over the past decade. After a series of El Nino storms in the 20-year period between 1982 and 2001 had eroded a significant portion of the beach area, and a series of emergency stopgap measures had been viewed as undesirable by the Coastal Commission, the County convened a working group of park stakeholders to review a range of long-term options. Two options -- constructing a permeable pile pier structure along with initial beach nourishment, and a staged, or managed, retreat of park facilities in the wake of continued erosion -- were the subject of a subsequent environmental impact review and application to the Coastal Commission. After over a year of analysis, Coastal staff recommended approval, with many conditions, of the permeable pier project, but the commissioners rejected that recommendation on July 8, 2009. While the County has yet to receive written findings that informed the Coastal Commission's action, at the hearing several of the commissioners urged the County to consider some form of managed retreat or park reconfiguration.

Goleta Beach 2.0 was designed as an aggressive analytic and conceptual design process to yield an outcome that would be acceptable to the Board and permissible by the Coastal Commission. The project

is designed to pull together in a usable format a wealth of existing information about Goleta Beach, the stakeholders who use the park, the structures and features that support those operations, and the scope and details of essential regional utilities and infrastructure that transit the park. Based on a clearer understanding of existing conditions, services and constraints, the project identifies and describes potential reconfiguration alternatives.

The project was directed, on behalf of the Board, by an ad hoc Board Committee comprised of two Board members. County Parks managed the project and drew upon other staffing resources as necessary to assemble information and graphic exhibits and provide analysis of alternatives. An aggressive eight-month-long schedule of internal meetings, *ad hoc* committee briefings, public town hall-style forum, Park Commission and Planning Commission hearings, were held. The desired outcome identifies a concept plan that would be accepted by the Board, likely permissible by the Coastal Commission, and therefore forms the basis of future engineering, environmental review, and submission to the Coastal Commission.

The “client” for this project is the Board. The client’s representative will be the Goleta Beach 2.0 *ad hoc* Committee, comprised of the two Supervisors.

General executive oversight functions were provided by Assistant County Executive Office John McInnes, initially, succeeded by Assistant County Executive Officer Terri Maus-Nisich, and County Parks Director Daniel C. Hernandez.

County Parks Deputy Director Erik Axelson led the Goleta Beach 2.0 project. In this role, Mr. Axelson was responsible for project management, recruiting staff support from other agencies, executing the work plan, research, and staff-level coordination including facilitating briefings to *ad hoc* committee and workshops, and the development of pertinent documents and materials.

The Goleta Beach 2.0 Project Team included County departmental representatives, and technical support from staff and consultants.

### **Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Goleta Beach 2.0 is a concept plan, and therefore does not benefit from detailed engineering plans on which to base reliable cost estimates. However, County Parks staff have reviewed the scope of recommendations and assigned conceptual-level costs. In summary, hard construction costs for relocated and new facilities are expected to total about \$5.2 million (this compares with estimates of \$10-14 million for the permeable pier project). In addition, approximately \$2.2 million would be required to move the reclaimed water and high-pressure gas lines, though those costs would be incurred by their owners. The County would, however, take the lead in permitting and regulatory actions necessary for relocation of all three utility lines.

Further, the new features at Goleta Beach recommended by the concept plan would engender certain additional operating costs in addition to the current costs of operating the park as it currently exists. We estimate these total (new and current) costs would be less than new and expanded revenues generated within the park, so that Goleta Beach 2.0 would operate at a net positive cash flow.

We expect that the improvements to the park and the expanded recreational, cultural, and interpretive activities would tend to increase the numbers of annual visitors above the current level of 1.5 million. The ability to accommodate more visitors and the expanded scope of activities will have a strong

positive impact on customer service. Improvements to the park's infrastructure will also have a net positive impact on the park's facilities.

Budgeted:

**Fiscal Analysis:**

**Staffing Impacts:**

Full implementation of the Goleta Beach 2.0 recommendations will require augmenting County Parks staff to be successful. We propose adding a second full-time ranger assigned to Goleta Beach (bringing the permanent staff to 2.0 FTE) and the addition of 0.5 FTE in extra-help seasonal staffing. These additional staffing levels are accounted for in the conceptual cost estimates above.

**Attachments:**

**Authored by:** Erik Axelson, 681-5651

cc: Terri Maus-Nisich, Assistant CEO  
Mike Ghizzoni, Deputy County Counsel