



London N. Breed, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: October 19, 2023

To: Recreation and Parks Commission

Through: Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager
Stacy Radine Bradley, Director of Capital and Planning
Yael Golan, Deputy Director of Planning

From: Monica Scott, Project Manager
Brian Stokle, Planner

Subject: Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project (OBCCAP) –
CEQA, Conceptual Design, Roadway Recommendation and MOU with SFPUC

Agenda Wording

Discussion and possible action to: (1) Adopt findings and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program under the California Environmental Quality Act for the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project (OBCCAP); (2) Approve a conceptual design for the OBCCAP, including creation of a multi-use trail, new restroom building, beach access stairway and parking lot; (3) Recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt an ordinance restricting vehicles on a 0.6 mile long segment along the Great Highway between Sloat Boulevard to a point approximately 3,317 feet south and approximately 728 feet west of Skyline Boulevard, to allow for the multi-use trail and to improve shoreline resilience; and (4) Approve the terms of an MOU with the SFPUC regarding OBCCAP construction and operations.

Strategic Plan

Strategy 1: Inspire Place: Keep today's parks safe, clean, and fun; promote our parks' historic and cultural heritage; and build the great parks of tomorrow

Objective 1.1.: Develop more open space and improve access to existing facilities to address population growth in high-need and emerging neighborhoods

Objective: 1.2.: Strengthen the quality of existing Parks & Facilities

Strategy 2: Inspire Play: Promote active living, well-being and community for San Francisco's diverse and growing population

Objective: 2.2.: Strengthen and promote the safety, health, and well-being of San Francisco's youth and seniors

Strategy 4: Inspire Stewardship: Strengthen the City's climate resiliency by protecting and enhancing San Francisco's precious natural resources through conservation, education, and sustainable land and facility management practices.



- Objective: 4.2.: Increase biodiversity and interconnectivity on City parkland
b: Support implementation efforts for coastal access from Sloat to Skyline for the SFPUC's long-term climate adaptation project
- Objective: 4.3.: Enhance the connection of children and nature

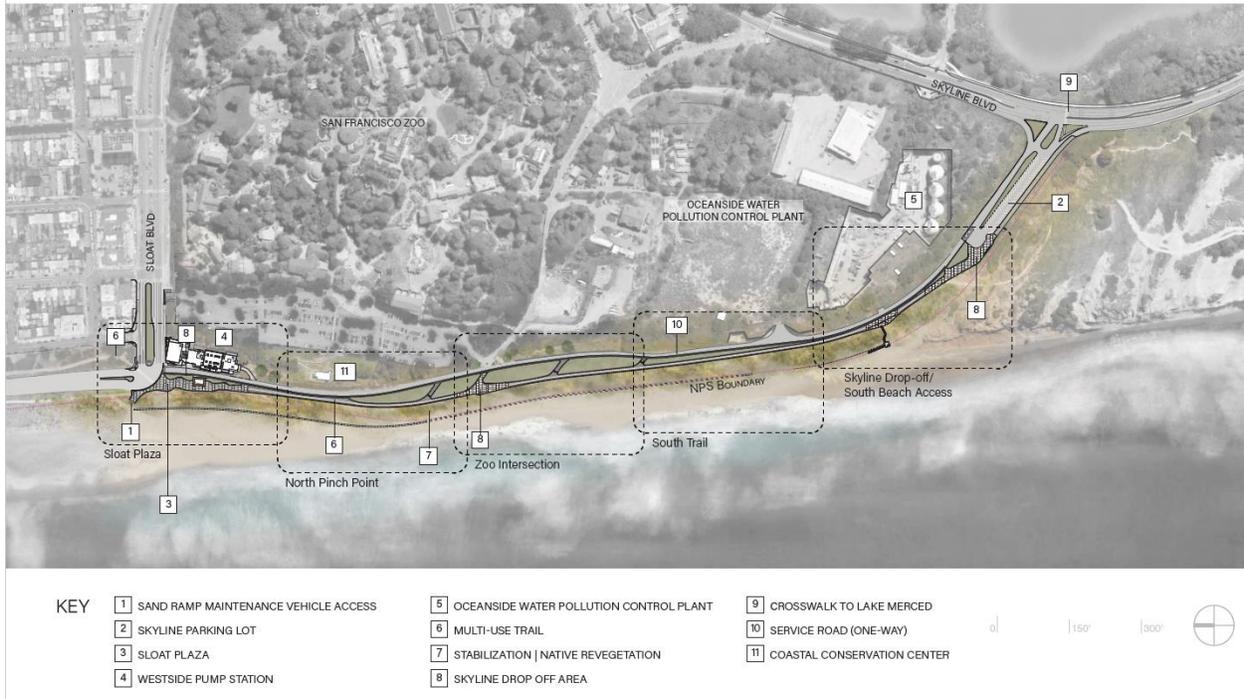
Background Information

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) is coordinating with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), which is leading efforts to implement the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project (Project) at Ocean Beach, south of Sloat Boulevard. Other partner agencies include the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and the San Francisco Public Works (PW). The Project is one of the City's first large scale, cross-agency infrastructure projects meant to address the long-term impacts of climate-induced sea level rise in San Francisco.

Ocean Beach comprises a 3.5-mile stretch of sandy beach that forms the western boundary of San Francisco. It is influenced by complex coastal processes, including an intense wave climate, strong tidal currents, and irregular offshore underwater features. Chronic erosion of the beach and bluffs by climate-related sea level rise and episodic coastal storms occur at South Ocean Beach, which is the portion of Ocean Beach south of Sloat Boulevard. This erosion undermines and damages beach parking lots, stormwater drainage facilities, and the Great Highway Extension, the portion of the Great Highway between Sloat and Skyline Boulevards. The erosion also threatens existing underground SFPUC wastewater infrastructure and constrains public shoreline access and recreational opportunities.

Ocean Beach is within the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS) and managed as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The Great Highway follows the length of Ocean Beach, immediately east of the beach and is under the jurisdiction of RPD. From Point Lobos Boulevard at the north end to Skyline Boulevard at the south, various recreational trails, paths and promenades follow the Great Highway to create the Coastal Trail and provide pedestrian access to Ocean Beach. However, south of Sloat Boulevard, there is a gap in this trail network, with the only existing connection for pedestrians on South Ocean Beach or along Sloat Boulevard to Skyline Blvd before reconnecting with the Coastal Trail at Fort Funston.

The boundary between NPS and RPD jurisdiction in the South Ocean Beach area is roughly along the western edge of the Great Highway Extension (See Map 1 below). The SFPUC's Lake Merced Tunnel lies underneath the Great Highway Extension near the RPD/NPS boundary. To the east of the Great Highway Extension, RPD jurisdiction continues to Skyline Boulevard and Zoo Road where the San Francisco Zoological Society leases the space and where the SFPUC operates the Oceanside Wastewater Treatment Plant. In addition, SFPUC's Westside Pump Station lies to the east of Great Highway Extension, at Sloat Boulevard on land under SFPUC's jurisdiction.



Map 1: Project area, and design elements.

Since the 1990s, the City responded to the erosion with hard shoreline armoring (e.g., construction of rock and rubble revetments) and soft shoreline protection measures (e.g., beach nourishment and sandbag revetments).

In the intervening period, the City also began planning initiatives aimed at developing a long-term strategy for this area. Notably, the City partially funded and participated in the preparation of the 2012 Ocean Beach Master Plan. Led by the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), the master planning process brought together community members, elected officials, agency representatives, and other stakeholders to develop a sustainable, long-term vision for Ocean Beach, addressing public access, recreational use, environmental protection, and infrastructure needs in the context of erosion and climate-related sea level rise.

The Ocean Beach Master Plan presented six key moves that are organized by geographical reaches and are designed to be implemented incrementally by the responsible agencies over a period of decades. This Project is focused on implementing two of the six key moves at South Ocean Beach (Ocean Beach between Sloat Boulevard and Fort Funston):

- Key Move 1 (partial implementation): Closure of the Great Highway Extension to vehicles; and
- Key Move 2: Introduction of a multipurpose coastal protection/restoration/access system, including a new recreational trail.

The terms of a 2014 legal settlement agreement between the City and County of San Francisco and the California Coastal Protection Network and a 2015 California Coastal Commission permit, which received subsequent time extensions for a total of 2.5 years with a current expiration date

of June 30, 2024, both establish timelines for developing and implementing a long-term strategy for shoreline management at South Ocean Beach.

In 2018, the City amended its local coastal plan, the Western Shoreline Area Plan, to adopt policies that advance the Ocean Beach Master Plan's general vision for South Ocean Beach. The policies in the Western Shoreline Area Plan cover managed retreat, beach nourishment, and shoreline armoring strategies to preserve and enhance public access, coastal recreation, and scenic resources at South Ocean Beach while protecting critical wastewater system infrastructure from damage due to coastal hazards. The Project represents the City's long-term strategy for shoreline management at South Ocean Beach.

The Project is necessary to protect the integrity of the SFPUC's wastewater assets built to protect public health and the environment, including the Lake Merced Tunnel, the Westside Pump Station, and the Oceanside Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Lake Merced Tunnel has a storage capacity of up to 10 million gallons for combined sewage and stormwater flows and is located closest to the section of South Ocean Beach most severely impacted from, and most vulnerable to continued bluff erosion. The tunnel could become structurally compromised if sudden bluff retreat is experienced, resulting in significant environmental and public health impacts. This Project will implement a comprehensive shoreline management and protection plan in partnership with relevant stakeholders and regulatory agencies to provide a long-term solution to the erosion issue along South Ocean Beach, and to mitigate potential impacts to the Lake Merced Tunnel and other critical wastewater assets at this location.

The Project contemplates the Great Highway Extension roadway closing to non-permitted vehicles. RPD has jurisdiction of the roadway and recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt an ordinance restricting non-permitted vehicles on a 0.6-mile-long segment along the Great Highway. The segment includes the Great Highway between Sloat Boulevard and the edge of the new parking lot close to the new parking lot proposed close to Skyline Boulevard, to allow for the multi-use trail and to improve shoreline resilience as part of the Project.

On behalf of the City, the SFPUC is leading the effort to plan, design, and construct climate change adaptation improvements at South Ocean Beach, which is being implemented in three sequential phases:

(1) **Short-term Improvements:** soft shoreline protection measures conducted between 2015-2023 under a Coastal Development Permit set to expire June 30, 2024. The improvements include moving sand from North Ocean Beach to South Ocean Beach and placing large sandbags to temporarily protect the Great Highway Extension and SFPUC wastewater infrastructure while the long-term Improvements are developed;

(2) **Army Corps of Engineers' Beneficial Use of Dredged Sand:** in 2021, the Army Corps placed 380,000 cubic yards of sand dredged from the Main Shipping Channel at South Ocean Beach in partnership with SFPUC and the National Park Service, which is needed for the long-term management of the area; and

(3) **Long-term Improvements:** long-term components to address climate-induced erosion described as the Project.

The approval being sought today is for the Long-term Improvements (the Project), the third phase of the City’s overall approach to climate change adaption at South Ocean Beach. Phase 1 is on-going until the long-term project begins and Phase 2 is complete. RPD was not a part of Phases 1 and 2.

Community Process

RPD, SFPUC and SFMTA staff implemented a community process in 2020 to inform stakeholders of the factors engendering the Project, the Project scope, and the impacts and benefits of the Project for the community and the City. Regular updates have been provided via email, partnership with members of the Ocean Beach Master Plan steering committee and other agency communications, including social media and local newspaper coverage.

Community Engagement Overview

- Public meetings (August 2019, Summer 2020, December 2020, February 2021, February 2022, April 2022)
- Attended/tabled at Community Events (including World Ocean Day at San Francisco Zoo several years, Sunday Streets on the westside)
- Participation in District Events – Spring 2022 Supervisor Town Hall
- Ongoing coordination with the Ocean Beach Steering Committee Members (from the Ocean Beach Master Plan)

The Project Team has engaged with the following Community Groups:

- Office of Supervisor Myrna Melgar
- Office of Supervisor Gordan Mar
- Office of Supervisor Joel Engardio
- Friends of Great Highway Park
- Kid Safe SF
- Outer Sunset Neighbors
- People of the Parkside Sunset (POPS)
- Planning Association for the Richmond
- San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
- San Francisco Estuary Institute
- SPUR
- Surfrider Foundation
- Walk San Francisco

RPD distributed meeting notices through mail and flyer postings at the project site, e-mails to stakeholders, social media and announcements in the RPD eNews. RPD also maintains a dedicated webpage on the RPD website.

Project Scope

To address the climate-related shoreline erosion challenges, the City proposes this Project based upon the guiding principles of the 2012 Ocean Beach Master Plan and the adopted policies of the Western Shoreline Area Plan, as amended in 2018. The Project would involve a combination of managed retreat, beach nourishment, and shoreline protection strategies. Through these measures, the City aims to preserve and enhance public access, coastal recreation, habitat, and scenic resources at South Ocean Beach, while protecting critical wastewater system infrastructure from damage due to coastal hazards. The overarching purpose of the Project is to implement a long-term coastal management strategy for South Ocean Beach that addresses shoreline erosion and climate change-related sea level rise.

Project Objectives

- Implement the City's local coastal program policies for the long-term management of South Ocean Beach, including managed retreat, beach nourishment, and sea level rise adaptation;
- Preserve and enhance coastal public access as well as recreation, habitat, and scenic quality at South Ocean Beach;
- Protect the Lake Merced Tunnel and related wastewater system infrastructure from damage due to shoreline erosion, storm and wave hazards, and sea level rise to maintain current operational capacity and meet regulatory permit requirements; and
- Maintain vehicle access for:
 - SFPUC wastewater facility operations;
 - San Francisco Zoo visitor parking lot via Sloat Boulevard;
 - Emergency response personnel;
 - Maintenance of public access trail; and
 - Long-term beach nourishment.

Project Components

- Permanently close the Great Highway Extension between Sloat and Skyline Boulevards to non-permitted traffic, reconfiguring affected intersections and San Francisco Zoo parking access (see SF Zoological Society Access Improvements below), and maintaining a service road to SFPUC Wastewater facilities;
- Construct a buried wall to protect existing wastewater infrastructure from shoreline erosion;
- Remove pavement, rock and sandbag revetments, rubble, and debris from the beach, reshaping the bluff, and planting native vegetation;
- Construct a multi-use trail, beach access stairway, coastal access parking, and restrooms; and
- Provide long-term beach nourishment (sand replenishment; from North Ocean Beach, Army Corps of Engineers, or purchased material).

Departmental Jurisdiction

The SFPUC and RPD have primary jurisdiction over the Project area. Future use of the Project area will continue to be shared by the two departments and will include both recreational and

utility uses. SFPUC and RPD will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between the two departments to confirm the following project elements:

- (1) Memorialize ownership and maintenance obligations for Project improvements,
- (2) Set forth the terms and conditions under which the SFPUC will construct and install the Project improvements,
- (3) Memorialize the process and respective responsibilities for obtaining permanent easement rights from the National Park Service for certain Project improvements,
- (4) Provide the terms and conditions for SFPUC's use of RPD property for installation or construction of Project improvements, and
- (5) Provide the terms and conditions for each department to use the lands of the other department for ongoing operation, maintenance, and repair of its respective Project improvements.

The attached Letter of Agreement (see Attachment F) identifies the details of the terms noted above. With approval from each Commission, the General Managers of RPD and SFPUC would finalize and execute a Memorandum of Understanding based upon these Commission-approved terms.

SF Zoological Society Access Improvements

The Project includes the following San Francisco Zoological Society (SFZS) Access Improvements:

- a. Modify the Zoo parking lot by removing the vehicular access to/from the Great Highway Extension. Except for emergency egress to the new SFPUC access road, all vehicular ingress/egress will be from Sloat Boulevard.
- b. Modify the Zoo parking lot driveway entrance on Sloat Boulevard to support both ingress and egress. Replace any parking spaces lost due to the driveway modification, within the parking lot.
- c. Design and install SFZS branded signage to clearly showcase where and how to enter the Zoo parking lot due to the loss of the Great Highway entrance/exit. Branded signage to be installed on Sloat Boulevard plus other branded signage and traffic signage, as appropriate, along Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard.
- d. Design and install landscape improvements at the Sloat Boulevard entrance and median.

The SFZS and RPD raised concerns to the SFPUC about the sufficiency of vehicle access to the Zoo's patron parking lot under the Project, which would remove the southern entrance and exit to the Zoo lot and require vehicles entering the Zoo parking lot to perform a U-turn at the end of Sloat Boulevard. The Environmental Impact Report considered access to the San Francisco Zoo under the Project and concluded that such access would not result in significant impacts related to hazardous conditions or inadequate emergency access. The SFPUC, in coordination with the SFMTA, RPD, Planning Department, and PW, will evaluate vehicle access to the Zoo parking lot, and will consider whether any subsequent project is necessary to provide enhanced vehicle access, subject to any environmental review necessary at that time.

Funding

Estimated Total Project Cost: \$221.5 million; construction estimate is approximately \$152 million.

RPD will be contributing \$8 million toward the construction cost of this Project, from the 2020 Health and Recovery Bond.

Schedule

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Start</u>
Permit/Bid/Award	Spring 2024
Construction	Fall 2024
Phase 1 - intersection	September 2024
Phase 2 - buried wall, coastal amenities	Summer 2025
Phase 3 - plantings	Summer 2027

Environmental Review

On September 28, 2023, the Planning Commission certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project (Case No. 2019-020115ENV) prepared pursuant to the CEQA by Motion No. M-21398.

The Final Environmental Impact Report (which consists of the Draft Environmental Impact Report and the Responses to Comments Document), Planning Commission Motion M-21398, CEQA Findings, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/OceanBeachCEQA>

In determining to approve the Project the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission (SFRPC or “Commission”) makes and adopts the same findings of fact and decisions regarding mitigation measures and alternatives that are included in the Public Utilities Commission “*California Environmental Quality Act Findings: Findings of Fact, Evaluation of Mitigation Measures and Alternatives, and Statement of Overriding Considerations*” found in Attachment E. The findings of facts and decisions are based on substantial evidence in the whole record of this proceeding and under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq., particularly Sections 21081 and 21081.5, the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA (“CEQA Guidelines”), 14 California Code of Regulations Sections 15000 et seq., particularly Sections 15091 through 15093, and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code.

The Commission action of recommendation to the Board of Supervisors is not an approval of the Program for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Environmental review, consistent with CEQA, has been conducted on the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project and will be reviewed by and relied upon by the Board of Supervisors if and when it considers the Project.

The Final Environmental Impact Report is attached so that the public and the SFRPC, have the full information available at this time.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission: (1) Adopt findings and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program under the California Environmental Quality Act for the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project (OBCCAP); (2) Approve a conceptual design for the OBCCAP, including creation of a multi-use trail, new restroom building, beach access stairway and parking lot; (3) Recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt an ordinance restricting vehicles on a 0.6 mile long segment along the Great Highway between the Sloat Boulevard to a point approximately 3,317 feet south and approximately 728 feet west of Skyline Boulevard, to allow for the multi-use trail and to improve shoreline resilience; and (4) Approve the terms of an MOU with the SFPUC regarding OBCCAP construction and operations.

Supported By:

Friends of Great Highway Park
Walk San Francisco
Kid Safe San Francisco
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
SPUR
Walk San Francisco

Opposed By:

None known

Attachments

Attachment A - CEQA findings (EIR)
Attachment B – Draft Recreation and Park Commission Resolution
Attachment C – Draft Board of Supervisors Ordinance
Attachment D – Relevant Guiding City Documents
Attachment E – California Environmental Quality Act Findings
Attachment F – Letter of Agreement on MOU between RPD and SFPUC