



DATE: October 19, 2022

TO: Responsible and Trustee Agencies  
Interested Parties and Organizations

FROM: Bonny O'Connor, AICP, Senior Planner  
City of Pacifica

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE  
PROPOSED 310-330 ESPLANADE DRIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PRESERVATION  
PROJECT**

**REVIEW PERIOD: October 19, 2022 to November 18, 2022**

The City of Pacifica ("City") is the lead agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed 310-330 Esplanade Drive Infrastructure Preservation Project ("Project"). The scope of the EIR has been proposed based upon a determination by the City. The City has directed the preparation of this EIR in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Once a decision is made to prepare an EIR, the lead agency must prepare a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform all responsible and trustee agencies that an EIR will be prepared (CEQA Guidelines Section 15082). The purpose of the NOP is to provide agencies with sufficient information describing both the proposed Project and the potential environmental effects to enable the agencies to make a meaningful response as to the scope and content of the information to be included in the EIR. The City is also soliciting comments on the scope of the EIR from the general public.

### **BACKGROUND**

The City is implementing a project to protect and maintain existing infrastructure along Esplanade Avenue, including the public street and some underground utilities, which are currently threatened by coastal bluff retreat. The residential structures previously located at 310 320 and 330 Esplanade Avenue were red-tagged between 2009 and 2010, and were demolished in 2016 – 2017. Technical studies indicate that if the base of the bluff is adequately protected from wave erosion with a seawall, the unsupported upper portion of the bluff above the seawall will experience raveling and erosion/bluff retreat until ultimately reaching equilibrium at a static inclination of approximately 40 to 50 degrees (CSA 2019). Therefore, the current design for the seawall provides wave erosion protection and allows for some retreat of the upper portion of the bluff.

The proposed project design includes several structural elements to mitigate wave related bluff erosion including a buried sheetpile wall at the toe of the bluff, a cap beam on top of the sheetpile wall, and a shotcrete (sprayed concrete) wall secured to the bluff face with tieback rods/tendons drilled into the bluff

face. The wall is estimated to be 650 feet long and extend to an elevation of 40 feet above sea level, or a height of about 26 feet above the toe of the bluff. The work would also include removing loose debris against the bluff and existing rip rap on the beach. Native plant landscaping is proposed on the bluff top where structures once stood.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of the project is to protect the City's infrastructure for the life of the seawall which is expected to be 30 years.

### **Project Location and Site Description**

The project site is located along the west side of Esplanade Avenue, between Manor Drive on the south and West Beaumont Boulevard on the north in the City of Pacifica. The proposed project extends from Esplanade Avenue westward to the shoreline of the Pacific Ocean, including the entirety of the properties located at 310, 320, 330, and portions of 340 and 350 Esplanade Avenue. The residential structures formerly occupying the properties at 310 - 330 Esplanade Drive have been removed and the lots have been cleared. There are two-story apartment buildings still standing at the 340, 350, and 360 Esplanade Drive properties, and a three-story apartment building at 380 Esplanade Drive. The proposed seawall construction would extend along the base of the coastal bluff adjacent to these properties and will abut the existing seawall to the north at Pacifica Esplanade Beach and the existing seawall to the south adjacent to the 360 and 380 Esplanade Avenue (see Figure 1 Project Location).

The project site is located within the City of Pacifica in the northern part of San Mateo County, approximately four miles south of San Francisco. The project site is located at the bluff face on the seaward side of Esplanade Avenue. The proposed seawall construction project extends along the cliff from the north side of the property at 310 Esplanade Avenue for a distance of approximately 650 feet. The northernmost end of the proposed seawall would abut the new seawall built to protect the residential development to the north known as OceanAire Apartment Homes (100 Esplanade Avenue; above Pacifica Esplanade Beach). The southernmost terminus of the proposed seawall would be tied into an existing seawall adjacent to the property at 360 Esplanade Avenue, known as The Bluffs at Pacifica Apartment Homes. The project site and proposed construction zone is shown on Figure 2. The areas seaward of the parcel boundaries shown on the map would be considered public trust land, consisting of beach and open water.

The bluff face in the proposed project area is approximately 85 feet tall and mainly composed of moderately cemented fine sand that is subject to extreme wave force scour, bluff failures, and erosion. The top of the coastal bluff between 310 and 330 Esplanade Avenue is relatively level and is roughly 60 to 70 feet wide between Esplanade Avenue and the bluff edge, comprising approximately 0.67-acre. Previously there were three, two-story apartment buildings located on these properties. The three structures were red tagged between 2009 and 2010, with all three being demolished in 2016-2017. The City has possession of 310 and 320 Esplanade Avenue by eminent domain and anticipates acquiring 330 Esplanade Avenue in the near future. This area will be revegetated, incorporate public amenities, and retained as open space by the project (see discussion of Conceptual Bluff Restoration Plan, below).

Based on California Coastal Commission Emergency Permit records, previous attempts to arrest the retreating bluff and protect the apartment buildings at 310 320, and 330 Esplanade Avenue were made

by the previous property owner and included the following: constructing a 20-foot long sand berm along the toe of the bluff in 2008; placing 8,000 tons of rip rap at the toe of the bluff in 2009; and constructing the upper portion of a soil-nail and shotcrete wall around 2010. Portions of the rip rap placed in 2009 remain visible at what was the toe of the bluff in front of 310 and 320 Esplanade Avenue. Rip rap continues along the existing toe of the bluff from 330 to 380 Esplanade Avenue. A remnant of a shotcrete and soil-nail facing wall is still visible near the top of the bluff face at 330 Esplanade Avenue.

### **Proposed Project**

The proposed project design includes several structural elements to fortify the toe of the bluff including a sheetpile wall that would extend below the beach to an approximate elevation of 10 feet below sea level, a cap beam on top of the sheetpile wall, and a shotcrete (sprayed concrete) wall secured to the bluff face with tensioned tieback rods/tendons drilled into the bluff face. The wall is estimated to be 650 feet long and would extend the seawall from the base of the bluff to an elevation of 40 feet (National Vertical Datum of 1988) (approximately 26 feet above the summer sand level). The wall would have tiebacks that go into the bluff to support the weight of the wall and protect the toe of the bluff from erosion. The work would also include removing loose debris from the toe of the bluff and the existing rip rap on the beach. Native plant landscaping along with public amenities are proposed on the bluff top where structures once stood. The wall would extend approximately 20 feet below the beach to protect against undermining scour from winter storms.

### Seawall Construction

Construction of the seawall is estimated to take 200 calendar days and would occur between spring and fall. Anticipated equipment includes large excavators, cranes on top of the bluff, heavy duty tieback drilling equipment, and heavy duty sheet pile driving equipment (vibratory or impact hammer). The sheet piles would be installed above the high tide line under dewatered conditions. No vehicles or heavy equipment would be operated in open water habitat. Access to the site by foot and small machinery may be gained through the public access trail at 100 Esplanade Avenue directly north of the site. Larger equipment would either be lowered from bluff top via crane or driven from the Manor Drive and Esplanade Avenue beach access ramp during low tides. Construction would occur seven days a week in order to complete the project in one season, with construction hours possibly extending into evening hours to take advantage of low tides.

### Crane Pad and Equipment Staging and Material Storage

Two equipment staging and material storage areas are designated for the project. The north staging area would be located on the bluff-top in the 310 to 330 block of Esplanade Avenue and would be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the bluff edge. The south staging area would be located on the City-owned bluff-top property south of 380 Esplanade, adjacent to the existing ramp that provides equipment access to the beach. Crane pads would be established in the north staging area. As the first part of site preparation, the staging and material storage areas would be fenced, and signage installed to identify the area as the staging and storage area and to keep the public from entering the area. The north staging area is currently fenced with chain link for public safety. The staging and material storage areas would have one ingress and egress from Esplanade Avenue. All concrete washout basins would be contained in designated locations within these areas. Light plants with generators may be used in these areas. A designated parking area for construction workers would also be established in these areas.

### Permanent Removal of Existing Rip Rap

Existing rip rap on the beach will be moved westerly from the proposed seawall alignment to allow construction access and protect the construction area from waves. Following construction of the proposed project, all rip rap on the beach (estimated 8,000 tons) that was moved from the construction area to near the access ramp would be removed within one year.

### Drainage

Following construction, the bluff top between 310 and 330 Esplanade Avenue would be recontoured to ensure that the bluff top slopes uniformly towards Esplanade Avenue to direct stormwater sheet flow, towards Esplanade Avenue and away from the bluff face. Recontouring is anticipated to require less than 50 cubic yards of grading. After construction of the seawall, during the early winter months (e.g., November through January), the top of the bluff would be revegetated with native, drought tolerant species suitable for bluff top habitat to protect the bluff from surface runoff and associated erosion. Native plantings would be hand watered only through establishment of the vegetation; an irrigation system would not be installed for the plantings.

### Conceptual Bluff Restoration Plan

The project includes a restoration plan that involves replanting the developed areas along the top of the bluff within the project site after the project is completed. The 0.67-acre restoration area is approximately 600 feet long and 60 to 70 feet wide and is currently covered with gravel, sand and eroding shotcrete with patches of non-native vegetation. This area would be used as a staging area during construction of the seawall, as noted above. Following the completion of seawall construction activities, the existing gravel, sand, eroding shotcrete, and any fill soils present will be removed, and a qualified restoration ecologist will ensure that the replacement soils meet appropriate requirements for soil and sediment characteristics for native northern coastal scrub restoration. If the soils are determined not to be suitable, the placement of a stable three-foot deep zone of horticulturally suitable soil may be required to facilitate long-term establishment of northern coastal scrub plantings. The objectives of the restoration include: (1) restoring upland native scrub habitat (northern coastal scrub); (2) increase runoff infiltration and control erosion; (3) provide habitat for native species; and (4) a minimum amount of long-term maintenance for establishment of plantings. The success of plant growth in the restoration area would be monitored for a minimum of three years.

### Bluff Monitoring Program

An annual monitoring of the condition and performance of the wall (shoreline protection) would be undertaken as part of the project. The monitoring would document whether significant eroding, undermining scour, overtopping, and/or damage has occurred that would adversely impact the integrity or future performance of the structure. As part of the annual monitoring, measurements of erosion between the bluff and the wall face, at the north and south ends of the wall, would be taken. In addition to the annual monitoring, a visual inspection of the seawall would be performed immediately after major wave events (as conditions permit) that may impact the wall or cause damage to the structure or nearby sections of shoreline, and after seismic events that create strong ground shaking in the Pacifica area.

## NEPA Status

Because the project will receive federal funding from FEMA, it requires environmental review under NEPA. Under NEPA, the project has been determined to be Categorical Excluded from the need to prepare either an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment in accordance with FEMA Instruction 108-1-1 and FEMA Directive 108-1-1 as authorized by DHS Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01, Revision 1. Categorical Exclusion N5 has been applied.

## **PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND SCOPE OF THE EIR**

The City anticipates that the EIR will contain the following chapters in accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and that the other impacts in Appendix G will not be found to be significant, as described in more detail below:

- Aesthetics
- Biological Resources
- Geology & Soils/Mineral Resources
- Land Use & Planning
- Parks and Recreation
- Utilities & Service Systems
- Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Cultural & Tribal Cultural Resources
- Hydrology & Water Quality (Drainage)
- Noise
- Transportation

Each of the aforementioned chapters of the EIR will include identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of project-level and cumulative impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies, as required. The EIR will also include chapters that discuss Statutorily Required Sections, Alternatives to the Proposed Project, as well as Effects Not Found to be Significant. The EIR will incorporate by reference the City of Pacific General Plan. In addition to this City document, Project specific technical studies are being prepared by various technical subconsultants.

## **SUBMITTING COMMENTS**

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed Project are addressed and all significant issues are identified, written comments are invited from all interested parties on the scope and content of the EIR. Written comments should be directed to the name and address below:

**Email (preferred):**      [boconnor@pacificacounty.gov](mailto:boconnor@pacificacounty.gov)

**Regular Mail:**            City of Pacifica  
Attn: Bonny O'Connor, Planning Dept.  
540 Crespi Drive (temporary)  
Pacifica, CA 94044

**Written comments are due to the City of Pacifica at the location addressed above by 5:00 p.m. on November 18, 2022.**

## **SCOPING MEETING**

In addition to the opportunity to submit written comments, a public NOP scoping meeting will be held to inform interested parties about the proposed Project, and to provide agencies and the public an opportunity to provide comments on the scope and content of the EIR. Because of current COVID-19 health emergency, the scoping meeting will be conducted as a teleconference meeting (no physical location).

**EIR Scoping Meeting on the 310-330 Esplanade Drive Infrastructure  
Preservation Project**

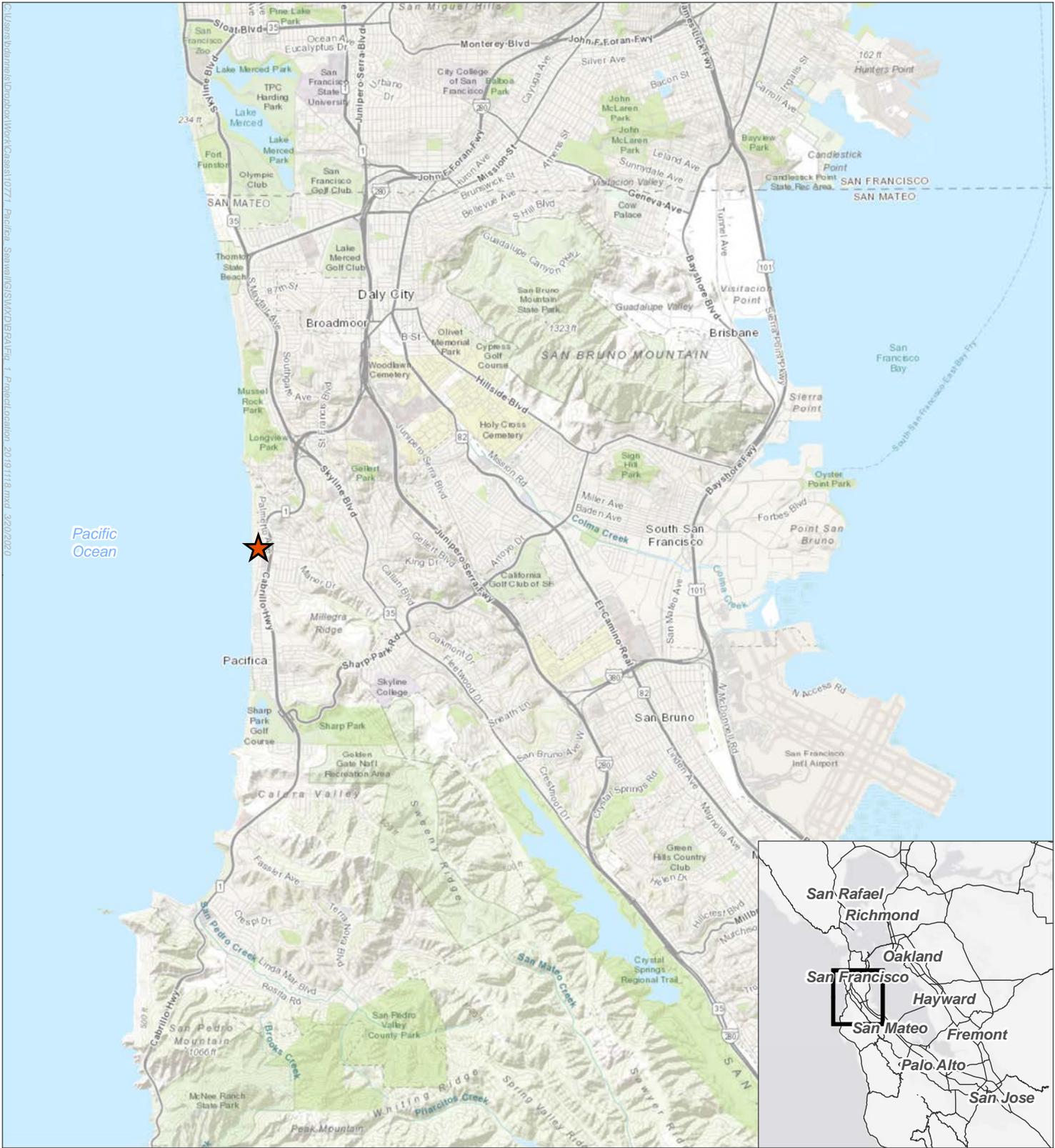
Thursday | November 3, 2022 | 6:00 p.m.

Teleconference Meeting (Online only – No physical location)

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81539634706>

Phone: 1-669-444-9171, 81539634706# | Webinar ID 815 3963 4706

This notice with a clickable link will be posted on the following webpage should you have any issue:  
<https://www.cityofpacific.org/departments/planning/environmental-documents>



Source: ESRI, 2019; MIG, 2020

 Project Location



**Figure 1 Project Location**



310-330 Esplanade Avenue Infrastructure Preservation Project, City of Pacifica





Source: Cotton, Shires and Associates, Inc, 2019; MME, 2019; Google Earth, 2019; MIG, 2020

- |                               |   |                               |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Project Features</b>       | <b>Tidal Lines</b>  | <b>Base Map Features</b>      |
| Study Area                    | High Tide Line (HTL) <sup>1</sup>                             | Parcel Boundary, Right of Way |
| Staging Area                  | Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) <sup>2</sup> , 7.32 ft NAVD88 | Contour lines <sup>4</sup>    |
| Temporary Construction Access | Mean High Water (MHW) <sup>3</sup> , 5.29 ft NAVD88           |                               |
| Proposed Seawall              |   |                               |
| Proposed Pile Cap             |   |                               |
| Proposed Tieback              |   |                               |



<sup>1</sup> MIG, 2019, 2020  
<sup>2</sup> MIG, 2020  
<sup>3</sup> From 380 Esplanade Ave northward: CSA Survey, January 29, 2019; From 380 Esplanade Ave southward: MIG, 2020  
<sup>4</sup> CSA Survey, January 29, 2019

**Figure 3 Site Plan**

