



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 25, 2017

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Santa Barbara Coastal Education and Outreach Project

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a report on the Santa Barbara Coastal Education and Outreach Project.

DISCUSSION:

Background

Development and protection of the coast in Santa Barbara has played a key role in the city's evolution from a largely isolated coastal community and destination for the wealthy, to a cornerstone for the oil industry, fisheries commerce, and in more recent times, for recreation and tourism. The City has 6.3 miles of shoreline in the coastal zone, of which 60% is in public ownership. Santa Barbara has a unique diversity of public coastal environments, from Arroyo Burro Beach and the Douglas Family Preserve to the west to East Beach and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge to the east. City managed coastal public spaces include more than 5 miles of beach, three coastal bluff beach access stair locations, twelve parks, a developed waterfront and working harbor, three major creeks and two estuaries, and significant recreational facilities, such as Los Baños del Mar Pool, Cabrillo Ball Field, and the Cabrillo Pavilion Arts Center and Bathhouse. Santa Barbara also has a rich Chumash Indian heritage and provides mainland access to the islands that encompass the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS).

Despite this diversity, and a more than 100-year history of land acquisition for coastal public access, there is a lack of readily available comprehensive coastal cultural and environmental information for the general public. Since Santa Barbara, similar to other communities, is beginning to address potential coastal impacts due to sea level rise and infrastructure damage from natural disasters, coastal education and outreach provides an opportunity to engage the public in the issues and identification of long-term management solutions. The growth of web-based information and use of smart phones has made it possible to provide this information in an easily accessible format and thereby engage a wide audience.

Introduction

In 2014, the Department was awarded a \$27,000 grant by the State Coastal Conservancy to develop web-based coastal education and outreach tools. The primary objectives of the project included: 1) broaden public awareness of the Santa Barbara coastal culture, history, ecology and land management as well as potential climate change impacts, and; 2) enhance visitor use by providing learning experiences through web-based information, podcasts, videos, interpretative signage, and a coastal walking map. Information will be linked into the State Coastal Conservancy's mobile web app once available. This new tool is designed to increase visitation and learning experiences to a broad audience across California.

Project Components

The project included literature research and interviews to development a video, seven podcasts and foldable pocket map. Literature research included files from UCSB, Santa Barbara Historical Museum, City internal files, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, NOAA/CINMS, and books by local experts. Interviews were conducted with local historians, City staff and staff from public and non-profit agencies. Aerial imagery was reviewed and acquired through CalCoast.org, UCSB, the Maritime Museum and in-house files. Research highlights points of interest along Santa Barbara's coastal trail and discuss some of the challenges (bluff erosion, sea level rise, coastal development and habitat loss) and opportunities (recreation, restoration, conservation and preservation) Santa Barbara faces. Historic and current photos help illustrate the discussion points.

The foldable pocket map was designed in-house and printed through ZCard North America. The two-sided map guides users to eleven stops along the coastal trail with brief descriptions of each stop. The map also features 3 walks to explore: 1) Arroyo Burro Estuary to Douglas Family Preserve and Mesa Lane Steps; 2) Waterfront Walk – Stearns Wharf, Harbor and Breakwater; and 3) Cabrillo Pavilion to the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge.

The roughly 12 minute video story highlights Santa Barbara's history, beginning with the Chumash Indians, and illustrates how important citizen participation and philanthropy were in securing an accessible public coastal zone. The video explores the ecological roles the coast plays, including potential changes to the coast as sea level rises. Interviews for the video story include local historians; Coastal Conservancy grant manager, Rachel Couch; Geologists and researchers from UCSB; City Department land managers; and others.

Podcasts were developed for seven sites including: Arroyo Burro Estuary, Thousand Steps, Shoreline Park, Beaches including Leadbetter, West and East Beaches, Harbor and Wharf, Ambassador Park, and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Podcasts provide users a unique audio experience while learning about the coastline. Podcasts are roughly 5 minutes long and can be listened to from nearly any device. Combined, the map, podcasts

and video provide visitors and residents with the tools needed for a self-guided audio-visual walking tour.

Public Outreach

An electronic version of the map, podcasts and the video are available on the “Explore the Coast” page of the Department’s website. Podcasts are also linked to the City’s Interactive Park Maps. Outreach efforts include promotion of the City’s updated website, press release, City newsletter, newspaper article, social media, and participation in community events such as Earth Day, Coastal Cleanup Day, and the Santa Barbara Harbor Festival. A slightly modified version of the video was made for public television and aired on local Channel 18, *Inside Santa Barbara*, during April and May, 2016.

Pocket maps are available at several public facilities including: Carrillo Recreation, Central Library, Westside Community Center, Franklin Neighborhood Center, Davis Center, Municipal Tennis Center, Cabrillo Pavilion and Bathhouse, Parks and Recreation administrative office, City Hall, the Waterfront Department, Santa Barbara Maritime Museum and Santa Barbara Visitor Center.

Next Steps

In addition to the above, the Department will provide information to local partners including Sansum and Cottage hospitals, and link similar programs such as Healthy People Healthy Trails. Interpretive signs will be designed and placed at several locations along the coastal trail. Signage will be completed as part of the Department Sign Replacement Project.

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