

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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April 22, 2022

**SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Norman Mundy  
Environmental Supervisor II, City of Los Angeles

Subject: Re: Re: Status of Potrero Canyon Park Project

Dear Mr. Mundy,

Thank you for your letter detailing the status of the Potrero Canyon Park project.<sup>1</sup> We understand that these projects are extremely complex and multifaceted, and we appreciate you gathering the materials necessary to answer the various inquiries surrounding this undertaking. It is encouraging to see the project's progress to this point, and we hope to ensure that the City reaches their end goals, including those laid out in the CDP,<sup>2</sup> one of these goals being the public's access to one of California's unique and popular coastal destinations.

1) Construction of the Lateral Trail is Required

Section 30210 requires that maximum access to the coast is provided. This goal was recognized in the proposed trail system that would connect Potrero Park to Temescal Canyon and to Will Rogers State Beach. The Commission is glad to hear about the new funding dedicated to building a bridge over the Pacific Coast Highway, connecting Potrero Park to the beach below, however, that is not an alternative to what is required in the CDP.

According to the Commission's records, the City's construction of the lateral trail to Temescal Canyon is required. Following the City's plans, a vertical trail is being built from Potrero Canyon Park at the Palisades Recreation Center "to the mouth of the canyon at a point just landward of Pacific Coast Highway."<sup>3</sup> Further, from that same trail system, a lateral trail is proposed to connect the park to Temescal Canyon, and the beach on the other side of the Pacific Coast Highway.<sup>4</sup> These plans were approved by the Commission because of their conformance to the CDP. Anything less, would not comply with the CDP currently issued for the project.

The City's letter also makes a point that the trail connection to Temescal Canyon crosses Caltrans property; however, this is not a new development and has been known since the project was initiated. Thus, the property ownership of the site of the lateral trail should not be an excuse to delay construction of the trail, and the City must proceed with securing whatever permissions are necessary

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Norman Mundy (Apr. 1, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> CDP No. 5-91-286 (A1-11).

<sup>3</sup> Staff Report for CDP No. 5-91-286-A11.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at pg. 15 ("From that point, a lateral trail, separated from Pacific Coast Highway by a berm, would lead to the intersection of Temescal Canyon Road and Pacific Coast Highway, approximately 0.5 northwest from the bottom of Potrero Canyon.").

from Caltrans to construct the trail. As you know, we have offered to coordinate these discussions with Caltrans and remain happy to do so to move construction of the lateral trail along expeditiously.

2) Submission of an Annual Report is Required

In 2010, the Commission approved an amendment to the CDP, and included the following condition:

“The applicant shall agree in writing, prior to issuance of this amendment for the review and approval by the Executive Director, to submit an agreement, commencing one year from the date of Commission approval of this amendment, an annual report detailing the progress of the Portrero Canyon Restoration Project and an accounting of the expenditure and projected expenditure of funds from the Portrero Canyon Trust Fund.”<sup>5</sup>

As of the date of this letter, the Commission has yet to receive, for this year or recent years, a report with updates on the overall project, along with explanations of the expenditure of funds so far and plans that will need further funding. While the City’s letter was informative, it is ultimately insufficient because it does not explain the expenditure of funds so far, the future expenditure of funds for the remaining pieces of the project, the reasons behind the slowdown in construction of the lateral trail, and the reasons for the construction of the new trail to Friends Street.

3) Unpermitted Construction of the new trail to Friends Street

In addition, as the City has described in its letter, there is a new trail connection to Friends Street.<sup>6</sup> This trail connection is not depicted on the approved plans for the project and is therefore unpermitted development and construction of this trail construction should stop unless and until it is authorized by the Commission. If the City wishes to retain this connection, the City must request an amendment to the current CDP to reflect this new trail connection at Friends Street.

4) Irrigation Installation & Live Oak Tree Removal

The Commission appreciates your thorough explanation of the irrigation system currently in place at Potrero Canyon Park. Based on your response letter, and community reports, you have currently installed a below-grade irrigation system, which you intend to abandon upon establishment of plants at the project site. Commission staff is reviewing the consistency of this irrigation system with the terms and conditions of the CDP and will follow up once a determination has been made.

In addition, Commission staff is reviewing community reports of native live oak tree removal. Both the CDP and the 2016 Landscaping Plans discuss the necessary procedures and policies to be followed for potential live oak tree removal during the project. Commission staff will continue to investigate these reports and will follow up once a determination has been made. Please be sure to provide the agency with any updates in the meantime.

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<sup>5</sup> CDP 5-91-286-A8 at page 6.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Norman Munday on April 1, 2022 (“As noted above, on order to provide public access from Friends Street, a pedestrian gate and a decomposed granite path that connects to the main interior park trail have been constructed.”).

Next Steps

To summarize what immediate steps are necessary for the City to be in compliance with the components of the CDP noted above, **within 30 days of the date of this letter**, please:

- 1) Recommence construction of the lateral trail to Temescal Canyon;
- 2) Submit an adequate annual report summarizing the expenditures and future expenditures of the park project; and
- 3) Apply for an amendment to the CDP for the new trail connection to Friends Street.

Again, we appreciate your attention to this matter, and look forward to coordinating with you in the future. Please feel free to reach out via email at [nicholas.tealer@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:nicholas.tealer@coastal.ca.gov) or you can always give us a phone call at (562) 590-5071.

Sincerely,

*Nicholas Tealer*

Nick Tealer  
District Enforcement Officer

cc:

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