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May 15, 2023

via email

Planning Commission
City of Pacifica
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RE: Planning Commission May 15, 2023, Agenda Item No. 3: File No. 2022-007 – Site Development Permit PSD-857-22, Coastal Development Permit CDP-435-22, Use Permit UP-130-22, and Parking Exception PE-194-22

Dear Chair Berman and Honorable Commissioners,

The North Coast County Water District (District) is submitting these comments in response to the materials published on May 11, 2023 regarding the item above filed by the District, which is generally referred to as the District Headquarters Upgrade Project (Project).

Summary

The District agrees with the main point in the Planning Commission Staff Report - the District's Project as originally presented in the District's application is consistent with the City's General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and other applicable City laws.

In addition, the District agrees with many, but not all, of the 50 proposed conditions of approval. The District disagrees with only a few of the proposed conditions as follows:

* Conditions #12 and #13, Angled Parking and All Way Stop. The Staff Report omitted the District's traffic study and response to the City consultant peer review, and we attach these documents so the Planning Commission has the full picture. As explained in more detail below, the District's traffic consultant has demonstrated that angled parking and the all way stop do not create a hazardous or inconvenient vehicular or pedestrian traffic pattern, and therefore these two conditions are not needed for this Project and should be deleted. See Exhibits A & B.

* Condition #11, Relocation of the Temporary Safe Parking Program (TSPP) Spot. The District fully agrees that the TSPP must be relocated for the health and safety of the people residing in this TSPP spot. However, the City, not the District, has the sole authority to relocate this TSPP spot, and therefore this condition should be modified to state that the City

will relocate the TSPF spot no later than July 31, 2023. The District will work with the City as needed to help with the relocation of the TSPF spot.

* Condition #24, Three Driveways on Clarendon Road. The third driveway on Clarendon Road is for a new drive-through recycled water fill station that will provide multiple benefits to the community and increased safety and security of the District's facility. This condition was raised at the last minute by City staff without a detailed explanation. The benefits of this third driveway are significant and therefore this condition should be deleted.

The District disagrees with a few other conditions as set forth below, and the District provides a more detailed explanation for why Conditions #12, #13, and #24 should be deleted and Condition #11 should be modified.

Proposed Motion for Planning Commission

The District urges the Planning Commission to approve the permits set forth in the staff report with all the conditions set forth in Exhibit A to the Resolution, except for the deletion of Conditions #12, #13, #22, #24, #28-30, and #32, and with modifications to Conditions #11, #21, and #26 as described further below.

Introduction

It is the mission of the North Coast County Water District to serve our customers by delivering a sufficient quantity of high quality water in the most cost-effective, reliable, and environmentally sensitive manner. As you know, the District serves the residents of the City of Pacifica: so the City and the District serve the same people.

The North Coast County Water District Headquarters facility on Francisco Boulevard has served the community of Pacifica since the early 1960's, but with the passing of time, it is aging, undersized, inefficient, and seismically vulnerable. Given that the administration and maintenance buildings are over 60 years old and have not undergone any major renovations since they were originally constructed, these buildings are outdated in many ways and need significant accessibility, structural, and safety improvements.

The District Headquarters facility is the sole hub for the operation of the water system in the City of Pacifica and provides key civic services to all of the residents of the City. The administration building houses the customer service and field operations departments, as well as the District's water quality laboratory, public meeting room, and emergency operations center. The maintenance building and corporation yard include equipment, supplies, and materials that enable the District to maintain and repair the District's water system, both for planned system maintenance and unexpected emergency repairs, such as water main breaks.

The District's goals for the Headquarters facility upgrade project are to improve the safety of its employees and customers, to provide a modern up-to-date work environment and expanded public meeting space, to improve the efficiency and functionality of all aspects of the District operations, and to enhance the ability of the District staff to interact with its customers in a safe and welcoming manner.

The District's Headquarters facility is located at the gateway to the Sharp Park area and civic center area of Pacifica with the new City Hall just blocks away on Francisco Boulevard. As such, the external components of the Headquarters facility upgrade project are just as important as the internal elements of the buildings and corporation yard. The District's proposed design of the external components of the project is a significant improvement to what exists today. A key element of the external improvements is the inclusion of diagonal parking in the design -- diagonal parking will provide more parking for the public and make it easier and more convenient for customers to come to the District's Headquarters to conduct business and attend public meetings, as well as visit local neighborhood businesses.

We urge the Planning Commission to approve the permit for the District's Headquarters facility upgrade project as presented, including with the diagonal parking. This project will provide a new Headquarters facility that is safe, energy-efficient, versatile, and customer friendly that enables the District to continue to provide round-the-clock water service to all of Pacifica for generations to come.

In designing this Project, the District has been extremely respectful to the surrounding neighborhood, including moving the entrance of the Headquarters from residential Brighton Rd to the more commercial Francisco Blvd frontage. The design also removes a driveway/yard entrance from Francisco Boulevard, which is important to facilitating increased parking along the Francisco Blvd. frontage and also increasing pedestrian safety. The design also strives to match the scale and character of the street and neighborhood, including beautifying the neighborhood with attractive plantings and diagonal parking to invoke a "downtown" feel. Exterior renderings of this Project are provided in Exhibit C.

Planning Application Process

The District has been very proactive to reach out to the City both leading up to and throughout the Planning Application submittal process. Prior to submitting the Planning Application, District staff and consultants met with multiple City departments to understand what requirements might be imposed. We shared the goals and the scope of the project early on and tried to understand any issues at hand from the City's perspective. During the Planning Application process, we provided detailed responses during multiple rounds of review from the City and made ourselves available to answer questions at any time. We generated requested reports with little to no standard criteria provided by the City when requested. Finally, this Project has been delayed and complications have arisen due to Planning Department staffing shortages and changes in City staff and leadership. A letter was sent from the District to the City Manager on October 28, 2022 regarding this matter.

In reviewing some of the conditions imposed on the District in the Resolution attached to the Planning Commission item, it is unclear that the City performed a review of materials that were submitted by the District in September 2022 (third submittal of District's Planning Application). Additionally, the Plans attached to the Staff Report as Attachment B are an outdated set of plans that the District submitted in March 2022. The District submitted detailed, revised plans in both the June and September Planning Application submittals. The District contacted the Planning Department on Friday, May 12, 2023 upon review of the materials uploaded for this hearing to inform them that incorrect drawings had been included for this Project. The District

has not received a response from the Planning Department regarding this error. The District is attaching the correct set of plans that was submitted on September 9, 2022 to the Planning Department as a part of the third submittal of its Planning Application for the District Headquarters Upgrade Project (see Exhibit D). These are the plans that should be referenced in the discussion around the Headquarters Project.

Diagonal Parking – Conditions #12 and #13

As the District has been planning this project for many years, the District made a point to contact the City early on in the process to share information about our project with the City staff. We first met with Planning in May 2021, followed by meetings with the Building Department and then Engineering. District staff and our architect team first spoke with the former City Engineer, Sam Bautista, on October 4, 2021. We shared information about the project, including the proposed diagonal parking. Mr. Bautista expressed his support for the diagonal parking but requested that the District perform a traffic study to determine speeds along Francisco and to study the need for a stop sign at Brighton Rd to increase safety.

The District first sent in the Headquarters Project to the Planning Department on March 20, 2022. The District received an Incompleteness Determination letter on April 20, 2022, and requested to meet with Planning to understand why some of the requests in that letter had been made. In the April 25, 2022 meeting with Planning Department staff, the District was first informed that the City had designated a Temporary Safe Parking Permit program parking spot in the same location as the planned diagonal parking along Francisco Blvd. At that meeting, Planning staff told District staff that we would need to speak with Engineering Department staff to discuss the diagonal parking design, as the response provided in the Incompleteness Determination was vague. District staff met with Engineering Department staff on May 5th, 2022, seeking an explanation for the City's comments on diagonal parking.

During that meeting, Engineering Department staff stated that one of the reasons that diagonal parking would not be allowed is that a spot had been designated for the TSPP in the exact location that the diagonal parking was planned. They also stated if the TSPP spot were to move, such that diagonal parking could be accommodated in that location, they would need the District to complete a study of the safety of the diagonal parking for the City to be able to approve the diagonal parking. The District subsequently completed the traffic safety study, including collecting data on traffic patterns along Francisco Blvd, studying the safety of diagonal parking, and looking into the possible need for a stop sign on Francisco at Brighton to slow down traffic prior to the block with diagonal parking. That study is attached here as Exhibit A. The study showed that diagonal parking can be implemented safely along Francisco Blvd, and it also showed that implementation of a stop sign on Francisco at Brighton can increase traffic safety around the District Headquarters.

The District received the peer review of the aforementioned traffic study on February 22, 2023 in an email communication from Planning Department staff. Subsequently, on March 20, 2023 the District received the letter from City Engineer Roland Yip, *RE: NCCWD Headquarters Project Proposed Angled Parking* that is Attachment D to the City's staff report on this item. The District's traffic consultant provided the attached letter response regarding the peer

review, which the District is now providing to the City as Exhibit B to this letter. It should be noted that the City's peer review of the District's traffic study does not contradict the conclusions that are in the District's study.

In his letter Mr. Yip's letter states that "Engineering Department provided comments on the Project on April 5th, July 11th, and September 22nd 2022." The District was in receipt of Engineering Department comments that were included in Incompleteness Determination letters dated April 20, 2022 and July 15, 2022. The District never received a response back from the Planning Department after its third Planning Application submittal (submitted September 14, 2022). Instead, the District received an email notification on November 15, 2022 from the Planning Director that the District's application was deemed complete due to the failure of the Planning Department to respond within the required 30-day timeframe by the Permit Streamlining Act. The District did not receive comments dated April 5th, July 11th, and September 22nd from the Engineering Services Department. The Planning Department did not include detailed comments from the Engineering Services Department in their Incompleteness Determination letters, but the Incompleteness Determination letter dated July 15, 2022 included a Department of Public Works plan check sheet dated June 24, 2022 authored by CSG Consultants that included C.3 stormwater-related comments. However, on February 22, 2023, the Planning Department sent a list of 16 comments from the Engineering Department dated February 21, 2023. Some of the comments were specifically about the diagonal parking proposal, but others were about other aspects of the project and were comments that had never been communicated to the District about the project.

The proposed diagonal parking does not interfere with the City's recently-adopted General Plan, as suggested by Mr. Yip's letter. There is no basis for this claim. Francisco Blvd. currently supports multi-modal transportation, and the addition of diagonal parking will not hinder that. Additionally, as with many other parts of the City, cars and bicycles share the road on Francisco Blvd. As an example, diagonal parking in Rockaway Beach neighborhood is successful and bikes and cars share the road. Diagonal parking can be implemented safely, looks better, and provides areas for incorporating landscaping along the street.

The City adopted a Bicycled and Pedestrian Master Plan in February 2020. The District researched this document during the design phase, making sure that the block between Brighton and Clarendon on Francisco was not included in the designated bike routes. It is not included in the "Recommended Bicycle Facilities" for the Sharp Park neighborhood. It is not included as an "existing" or "proposed" bikeway in this plan. Instead, Oceana, parallel to Francisco on the east side of Highway 1 is being appropriately prioritized as a proposed Class II bicycle lane.

Exhibit C provides several renderings of what the District Headquarters will look like when completed, including the proposed diagonal parking. The District is providing a neighborhood friendly facility with parking designated along the Francisco Blvd business corridor. The angle parking will increase the amount of parking available to the public who visit the District, the beach and the adjacent businesses. The corridor created by diagonal parking will create a destination for the neighborhood, like the business corridor in Rockaway Beach that includes diagonal parking.

Work completed by the District showed that adding a stop sign at the intersection of Brighton and Francisco will increase the safety of the 240-ft block between Clarendon and Brighton Rd, where diagonal parking is more expected. Therefore, deleting Condition #13 would allow for a more controlled block with a short distance between intersections.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission delete Conditions #12 and #13.

Relocation of TSPP Spot – Condition #11

As the staff report states, with the construction of the Project and any pre-construction activities, there is a health and safety risk for anyone residing at the TSPP spot located on Francisco Boulevard immediately adjacent to the Project. The District agrees with a condition that this TSPP spot be relocated before any Project pre-construction activities begin. However, the District does not have the authority to relocate this TSPP spot. The City has the authority to relocate the TSPP spot under its TSPP regulations, under the Operations Agreement between the City and the Pacifica Resource Center, and under the Settlement Agreement with the American Civil Liberties Union. Because this authority rests with the City, the condition needs to be revised to specify that the City will relocate this TSPP spot by July 31, 2023 so that the District can proceed with its pre-construction activities after that date.

Recycled Water Drive-Through (Third Driveway on Clarendon) – Condition #24

A key feature of the District Headquarters Project is the inclusion of a new drive-through Recycled Water Fill Station, which would increase public access to this unique water supply that is offered free of charge to Pacifica residents trained and certified to use this recycled water.

The District has operated a Residential Recycled Water Fill Station at its Headquarters since 2015. Currently, during the dry season, the District operates the Fill Station several days per week for a limited time window. To provide the recycled water, the District must open the gate to its corporation yard and provide a staff member to serve the recycled water to customers. This creates a burden on the District by taking away a staff member from other critical water operations tasks. There is also a security risk to District property by opening its gates for several hours per week and allowing access to the District corporation yard.

The new drive-through Fill Station would provide a way for customers to access recycled water at any time during normal business hours, when the gates to this drive-through are unlocked. By creating a one-way drive aisle to serve the public, the corporation yard can remain secure and the public kept outside of maintenance operations. Not only would this increase the public's access to this water supply, it would also free up District staff for other critical tasks.

However, according to Condition #24 of Resolution attached to this staff report, the City is telling the District to reduce the number of driveways from three to two along Clarendon Rd. This would eliminate the District's ability to provide this recycled water drive-through and has not been communicated directly to the District since the District first submitted its' plans in March 2022. The District discussed this recycled water drive-through with the City in several meetings with Engineering staff, including the meetings on October 4, 2021 and May 5, 2022.

The City never communicated this request/requirement to the District in the written materials received by the District in response to the Planning Application or in conversations with Engineering staff. During our meeting with Engineering staff on October 4, 2021, Engineering staff requested that we make the driveway one-way, with the entry in the eastern driveway (existing) and the exit in the western driveway (the newly proposed driveway) and signage to indicate that only right turns are allowed from that exit. The District agreed to this and the drawing PL.A2.01 in the plans shown in Attachment B to the staff report for this item show the one-way plans, with the bus stop also noted. The District has been in touch with SamTrans who can accommodate this curb length.

The initial rounds of Engineering Department comments that were included in Incompleteness Determination letters dated April 20, 2022 and July 15, 2022 did not provide any direction to the District to eliminate this third driveway or that this driveway was unacceptable to the City. This only came to light when we received the list of 16 comments/conditions from the Engineering Department dated February 21, 2023 (mentioned above) that was addressed to Planning, but sent to the District on February 22nd, 2023 along with the traffic study peer review.

The District told Planning and Engineering that this was a new list of conditions to us, and these items were not included in any previous emails directly to the District nor were they included in the two Incompleteness Determination letters as items the District needed to address upon resubmission of its plans.

On March 1 and March 2, 2023, the District communicated to the Planning Department that we wanted to meet with the Engineering Department to get explanations for each of the conditions that were listed in the February 21 communication. The District also requested that Engineering provide specific City policies and/or design standards that lead to these conditions being imposed by the District. The District has not received a response to date from Planning or Engineering responding to this request.

To address the specific "site distance conflict" concern that the City has pointed out in the staff report as the reason to delete the recycled water drive-through, the District would add signage to the drive-through prohibiting drivers from exiting the drive-through when a bus is present at the bus stop. It should be noted that this is a very low volume program that includes 68 users of recycled water. These users need to be certified to access the Recycled Water Fill Station (complete training and pass a test). Additionally, the District keeps detailed records of use of the Fill Station, and there are approximately 20 regular users. The District regularly communicates with the Recycled Water Fill Station user group and can communicate this prohibition to the users via regular letters and emails to those customers.

Making a redesign of a main feature of the Headquarters Upgrade Project a condition of approval is an unacceptable hardship that will not only delay this project, causing cost increases, but also thwarts the District's ability to provide recycled water safely to the community members who rely on this unique supply. We respectfully request that the Planning Commission delete Condition #24.

Condition #21

The condition to pave all frontage areas from curb to curb along Francisco Blvd, Clarendon Rd, and Brighton Rd with a grind and overlay existing asphalt with minimum 2-inch AC is extreme. Is this a requirement on all redevelopment projects within the City? Again, the District received this condition with the list of 16 conditions from the Engineering Department on February 21, 2023, and the City has not responded to the District regarding its request for an explanation as to why the District is being required to complete Condition #21. What is the specific City policy or design standard for this condition?

In looking at the conditions imposed on the Pacifica School District for their recently-approved housing project on Oddstad Blvd, there was not a similar condition recommended by the Engineering Department. The condition imposed on the School District on 3/20/23 was as follows:

“The Applicant shall repair and/or replace additional areas of street pavement, sidewalk, curb, and gutter, street lights, manhole, catch basins, or any other public infrastructure within the right-of-way damaged by construction activities associated with the project (utility installation, etc.) as required by the City Inspector during construction.”

This seems like a more appropriate condition to apply to this Project, as well. We respectfully request that the Planning Commission modify condition #21 on the District to be the same condition as imposed on the Pacifica School District.

Condition #22

Similarly to Condition #21, this condition is not appropriate for this Project, which is simply replacing and improving the current infrastructure. There is no new development proposed on this site. This condition seems like one that would be imposed on a new housing or commercial development in the City, not a redevelopment of an existing public agency administration and operations facility. Again, in looking at the conditions imposed on the Pacifica School District for their recently-approved housing project on Oddstad Blvd, there was not a similar condition recommended by the Engineering Department. The costs of performing these kinds of improvements should rest with the City and not with the Water District.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission delete Condition #22

Condition #26

The District agrees that the new, third driveway approach from Clarendon into the District Headquarters corporation yard should comply with this condition. However, the two existing driveways on Clarendon are not planned to be demolished and reconstructed as a part of the Project.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission modify condition #26 to apply only to the newly installed third driveway on Clarendon.

Condition #28-30

Conditions #28-30 were included in the second Incompleteness Determination letter (dated July 15, 2022) on the Department of Public Works plan check sheet dated June 24, 2022 authored by CSG Consultants that included C.3 stormwater-related comments (also mentioned above). The District responded to these comments on stormwater drainage in its third submittal of its Planning Application, submitted on September 14, 2022. The District revised the Headquarters plans in response to the June 24, 2022 comments (Exhibit D) and also responded to those comments (Exhibit E).

For Conditions #28 and #29, drawing C5.00 in Exhibit D shows the revised Drainage Management Areas and provides a table comparing planned treatment area versus required treatment area. In lieu treated area is provided in certain drainage management areas that addresses the required treatment area that is not provided in other drainage management areas, which is provided per Chapter 9.2.3 of San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program C.3 Regulated Projects Guide. Exhibit E provides an explanation and response to the City's previously provided comments.

For Condition #30, drawing C2.00 in Exhibit D shows the concrete valley gutter along Francisco Blvd frontage. Exhibit E provides an explanation and response to the City's previously provided comments.

Because the District has already addressed stormwater drainage per the City's previously provided comments, we respectfully request that the Planning Commission delete Conditions #28, #29 and #30.

Condition #32

The District has repeatedly told the City that this fuel station is an existing facility and is specifically excluded from the Project area. No changes are being made to the fuel station, and this requirement for covering the fuel station is outside of the District's Project, so we respectfully request that the Planning Commission delete Condition #32.

Inaccuracies in Resolution

On page 8 of the Resolution included with the Staff Report for this item, there is a discussion about the District's property. The District would like to point out that there is only one APN for the parcel that is owned by the District, so the statement that "site is not a single legally created lot" is false. There is one lot, but it does contain two zoning designations. The City is responsible for rezoning, so when the District consolidated its two lots in the 1970s, the City should have taken action to rezone the portion of the District's property that is zoned R-3.

Conclusion

The District is asking the Planning Commission to approve the Project as submitted, including with the diagonal parking and the recycled water drive-through. Therefore, the District is asking the Planning Commission to delete Conditions #12, #13, #22, #24, #28-30, and #32. The District is also asking for changes to Conditions #11, #21, and #26. The Planning Commission has the discretion to approve the permits with these modifications based on the information submitted by the District.

In reviewing the materials, it is evident to the District that the City staff has been disorganized in their communication internally and to the District throughout the entire process. The District first submitted its plans on March 20, 2022, and these plans have not substantially changed since the first submittal. Additionally, the District has responded to all incompleteness comments and provided all reports and studies as requested by the Planning department during these reviews. It is perplexing that it took so long for this project to move its way through the City's approval process, especially since this project is for another public agency that serves the exact same constituents as the City itself. Instead, the District has been treated like an out-of-town developer, being thrown continual roadblocks and obstructive requirements. This project has suffered from the City's staffing shortages and staffing changes and demonstrates the City's disorganization in considering this project. The City's disorganization has created confusion and has ultimately increased the cost of the District's project, which is leading to higher costs being passed along to the residents of the City of Pacifica.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at acarr@nccwd.com, or 650-355-3462. Otherwise, the District will supplement this letter during the May 15 public hearing for this item.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Carr
General Manager

List of Exhibits

- A: NCCWD Traffic Evaluation, dated January 10, 2023
- B: Response to Traffic Evaluation Peer Review, dated March 24, 2023
- C: Exterior Renderings of the Proposed NCCWD Headquarters Project, dated May 3, 2023
- D: NCCWD Headquarters Planning Application Resubmittal Drawings, dated September 5, 2022
- E: NCCWD Headquarters Resubmittal Response dated September 13, 2022