



City of Manhattan Beach

CITY COUNCIL

August 9, 2018

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To: California Coastal Commission

RE: Item # Th13a
City of Manhattan Beach LCP Amendment No. 1-17
(LCP-5-MNB-17-0024-1 Downtown Specific Plan)

The City Council of the City of Manhattan Beach met on Tuesday night, August 7, 2018, to discuss the recommendations being made by the Coastal Commission staff to the Coastal Commission regarding the City of Manhattan Beach Downtown Specific Plan (MBDSP).

The MBDSP was adopted in December 2016, after an extensive, two-year public process by the Manhattan Beach community. Six community workshops and fifteen public workshops and hearings were conducted according to the value in our community for due process and transparency. The purpose of the MBDSP is to preserve the beach town character of the Downtown, which benefits residents, businesses and visitors alike. The document does not contain provisions that would negatively impact public access to the beach or coast or diminish the public access currently afforded to non-resident visitors.

Members of our Community Development staff met with Coastal Commission staff on July 12, 2018, to review the draft recommendations that are included in the agenda report for this item today. Manhattan Beach staff listened to the recommended changes and attempted to understand the rationale behind the changes. This information was presented to the City Council at its regular meeting on August 7. A majority of the recommended changes to the MBDSP are unrelated requirements that would take much longer than the six-month deadline to implement. We feel strongly that our Specific Plan, the result of a years long public process, is being held hostage due to unrelated policy requirements imposed by Coastal Commission staff.

In the "Summary of Staff Recommendation" on page 2 of the Coastal Commission staff report, Commission staff assert the following:

"The major issues raised by this LCP amendment request are:

- 1) The proposed change in land use designation and zoning of properties currently protected and preserved for commercial visitor serving uses (Downtown Commercial) to a residential designation;
- 2) The absence of policies to protect and provide for visitor serving and lower cost overnight visitor accommodations throughout the Downtown area, including short-term rentals of single-family residences;
- 3) The need to address prioritizing preservation of existing overnight visitor accommodations through appropriate policies to address Limited Use Overnight Accommodations;
- 4) The absence of policies addressing hazards, such as sea level rise and adaptation measures to protect coastal resources."

Regarding recommendations 2) and 3): the City of Manhattan Beach has been actively engaged in a public process to review our current short-term rental policy, not only in the Coastal Zone, but throughout the entire City. This is a matter of local control over which the Coastal Commission has no jurisdiction. Impacts to the housing stock, including multi-family and rental housing stock, to the quality of life in residential neighborhoods, and to the City's financial resources that result from the implementation of a short-term rental program are paramount concerns to our residents and business community, and require adequate oversight by the City Council. Short-term rentals are currently allowed in commercial zones in the City, and in commercial areas of the MBDSP specifically. We oppose any requirements by the Coastal Commission that a program to allow short-term rentals on residential property be addressed in any way in the MBDSP. Such requirements should be enacted as a separate City policy, if and when the City Council is ready to take such action.

Similarly, regarding 4): the City of Manhattan Beach has adopted an Environmental Work Program that includes a budget and resources for amending the General Plan and LCP to include policies regarding hazards, including sea level rise and adaptation measures to protect coastal resources. We have a full-time Sustainability Manager overseeing this effort, and funds appropriated in our two-year budget – half in 2018/19 and half in 2019/20 to get this work done. Again, we do not believe the MBDSP is the appropriate mechanism to conduct the thorough research required to make sound policy decisions on this matter, nor does the six-month time frame provide adequate time for community engagement and due process for the General Plan and LCP amendments.

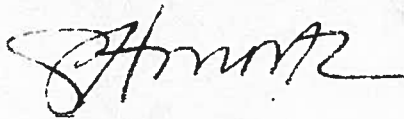
Finally, as to issue 1) regarding changes of use for specific properties in the land use map from commercial to residential, the City reserves the absolute and exclusive right to establish local zoning and land use designations in the City. The Coastal Act does not provide authority to the

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Coastal Commission to block a zoning map change to allow land uses that more adequately address the City's General Plan goals.

In summary, the City of Manhattan Beach believes that the MBDSP contains policies that are necessary to protect the character of the community for all. We disagree with the approach taken by Coastal Commission staff to require the policy issues of overnight accommodations, including short-term rentals, and sustainability policies to be adopted in order to enact our Downtown Plan. We ask that the Coastal Commission reject the staff's recommendation in its entirety and adopt a resolution approving the LCP Amendment and Implementation Amendment enacting the Downtown Specific Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Howorth', written over a horizontal line.

Amy Howorth
Mayor