FROM: Dino Pick, Deputy City Manager, Plans and Public Works  
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SUBJECT: Hold Joint Study Session with the Planning Commission on the Local Coastal Plan (Exempt from CEQA per Article 18, Section 15265(a)(1))

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council hold a Joint Study Session with the Planning Commission on the Local Coastal Program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The Local Coastal Program (LCP) sets goals and policies that implement the California Coastal Act, which requires protection of the state’s coastal resources and public access to the coastline.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

On July 1, 2014, the City Council adopted Resolution 14-128 authorizing the Financing Director, or designee, to appropriate $150,000 in grant funding from the California Coastal Commission and Ocean Protection Council; and $25,000 from the General Plan Update reserve. The resolution also authorized a professional services contract with EMC Planning Group for a not-to-exceed amount of $260,000 and the expenditure of staff time as in-kind services estimated at $50,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The City of Monterey determined that a proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act per Article 18, Section 15265(a)(1).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

The Council could decide not to hold the study session or continue to another meeting.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this study session is to introduce the City Council and the Planning Commission to the City’s Local Coastal Program (LCP) planning process.

The objective of this process is for the City to obtain State certification of its LCP, which will be developed through this planning process. A significant advantage that the City will derive from having a certified LCP is that the City will have local permitting authority over coastal development permits. Currently any project in the coastal zone requires the City to apply to the Coastal Commission for a coastal development permit, adding months to the development timeline.
A portion of the City is within the coastal zone, an area that is defined and regulated by the State of California under the California Coastal Act. The California Coastal Act requires the City to adopt, certify with the State, and implement a LCP that sets goals and policies for its coastal zone, consistent with the California Coastal Act.

The LCP goals and policies address how the City will protect the state’s coastal resources and public access to the coastline. The LCP consists of two parts: a Land Use Plan (LUP), consisting of goals and policies, and an Implementation Plan (IP), consisting of zoning regulations.

In 2014, the City received $250,000 in grant funding from the California Coastal Commission and the Ocean Protection Council to prepare the LCP. In 2015 the City Council authorized a contract with EMC Planning Group to work with City staff to prepare the plan.

To date, staff and EMC Planning Group have initialized an outreach process and collected data for an Existing Conditions Report for the LCP. Two public workshops and a site visit along portions of the coastal zone potentially susceptible to sea level rise provided opportunities for the community to engage in the planning process.

For the Study Session, the City Council and Planning Commission will receive a presentation from staff and EMC Planning Group on the initial findings of the draft Existing Conditions Report. This report will be finalized over the next month and posted on the LCP Update website later this month: http://monterey.org/en-us/Departments/Plans-Public-Works/Planning/Planning-Projects/Local-Coastal-Program-Update

The main topics of the report include:
- Existing Development
- Physical Setting (climate, geology, flooding, erosion, etc.)
- Climate Science
- Vulnerabilities

Next steps for the LCP update include:
- Developing a vision and goals (March 2016)
- Public meetings with the Planning Commission and City Council on the vision and goals (March – April 2016)
- Developing alternative adaptation strategies for sea level rise (April 2016)
- Public meetings with the Planning Commission and City Council on the alternatives (April 2016)
- Draft LCP (May 2016)
- Public meetings with the Planning Commission on the draft LCP (September-October 2016)
- Final LCP for adoption (January – April 2017)

EC/jl

c: LCP Outreach List