

# Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors*

*representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*

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**Date:** September 28, 2022  
**To:** Nicholas Calderon, Director, San Mateo County Parks  
Camille Leung, Planner, San Mateo County Planning & Building  
San Mateo County Planning Commission  
**From:** Midcoast Community Council  
**Subject:** AV Kiosk at Seal Cove Stairwell (PLN2022-00156)

Thank you for the referral for the proposed AV Kiosk at the Seal Cove Stairwell of the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

The Fitzgerald Marine Reserve is enjoyed by locals and visitors alike as a place to enjoy the natural beauty of the coast, and as a protected environment for seals, birds, and other wildlife. We feel that a television with audio is not appropriate at this location for a number of reasons.

There is already a television at the Ranger Station near the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve parking lot, a 7-minute walk from the new proposed location. In a recent visit to the Ranger Station, the television was out of order. Funds would be better used toward maintaining the existing resources rather than building a new audio-visual kiosk that would be subject to the same maintenance issues and risk of theft or vandalism.

There is no electricity running to this section of the park, so solar panels are proposed to power the kiosk. However, the frequent fog and extensive tree cover would prevent direct sunlight from reaching the solar panels much of the time, likely resulting in downtime for the television and a plan to add an electric connection.

The audio and visual aspects of the proposed kiosk would be a distraction to visitors trying to enjoy the natural beauty and serenity of the preserve. The [2004 Conceptual Plan for Interpretation at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve](#) states "Clearly, people come to Fitzgerald for a personal experience of 'the real thing' in a wild and natural setting. Most notable were the repeated pleas from a majority of visitors to limit development and take low-key approaches to

interpretation.” Not only is the proposed kiosk antithetical to what park-goers want, it will also cause light and noise pollution to visitors and neighboring residents.

The Seal Cove entrance to the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve has no dedicated parking, and narrow streets already result in significant congestion for the area. Neighborhood residents have complained of visitors blocking driveways and fire and safety concerns. Adding more attractions to the Seal Cove entrance to the park without accompanying infrastructure improvements will only make the existing problems worse.

The Midcoast Community Council supports the addition of educational tools for park visitors, however, it needs to be done in a responsible and unobtrusive manner that preserves the park’s reason for being: the enjoyment and preservation of nature. There is already a plethora of distracting signage at the top of the Seal Cove stairs, which would be better consolidated into a single summary of the park’s rules and regulations. Perhaps a QR code can be used so people can access video on their own devices. We welcome creative solutions that educate and inform people while maintaining the peaceful nature of the park.

s/Claire Toutant  
Midcoast Community Council



Image 1: Television at Ranger Station off during midday (9/21/22)



Image 2: Signs at Seal Cove Stairwell entrance