

Proposed AV Kiosk at
Seal Cove Stairs
Fitzgerald Marine Reserve

MCC 9/28/22

MCC Received Planning Referral 9/12/22

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

CDP for a stand alone solar-powered, Audio/Visual Kiosk (9' in height, 54" wide, and 10" in depth; redwood material) located near the top of the Seal Cove stairway. New AV kiosk and existing kiosk would have solar panels (40.5" x 20" each) on their roofs. Approx. 38 feet from the bluff. Appealable to CCC.



Figure 2 - Site is located at the top of the Seal Cove stairs at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve



Figure 1b - Site Location for AV Kiosk (kiosk to be located where stick is shown)

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Location of New AV kiosk
(will face west towards
beach; away from homes)

Location of Seal Cove
stairwell (not shown)

Figure 3 - Proposed AV Kiosk to be located where stick is shown. Kiosk will look like existing kiosk shown in photo but will contain an AV screen.

MCC Proposed Response Letter

Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar
PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 midcoastcommunitycouncil.org*

Claire Toutant | Gregg Dieguez | Michelle Weil | Len Erickson | Jill Grant | Dave Olson | Dan Haggerty
Chair Vice-Chair Treasurer Secretary Asst Secretary

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

Existing Television at Ranger Station / Parking Lot

- There is an existing television a 7-minute walk from the proposed kiosk, adjacent to the parking lot and Ranger Station.
- In recent visits, the television was not working or the metal gate was closed.
- Funds would be better used toward maintaining existing television.



Electricity Needs Likely Insufficient

- There is no electricity to this section of the park, so solar panels are proposed.
- However, frequent fog and extensive tree cover would likely result in downtime or a plan to add an electric connection.



Not What Park Visitors Want

- 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.
- It conflicts with what park-goers said they wanted in a 2004 survey.
- It would cause light and noise pollution to visitors and nearby residents.

“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 DRAFT interpretation.”

–2004 Conceptual Plan for Interpretation at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve

Inadequate Infrastructure at Seal Cove Entrance

- No dedicated parking and narrow streets with already significant congestion.
- Neighbors already complain of blocked driveways and fire and safety concerns.
- Adding attractions without infrastructure will make the problem worse.

Existing Signage is Overwhelming

- There is already a plethora of signs at the Seal Cove Stairwell.



Conclusion

- The MCC 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.
- 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.