



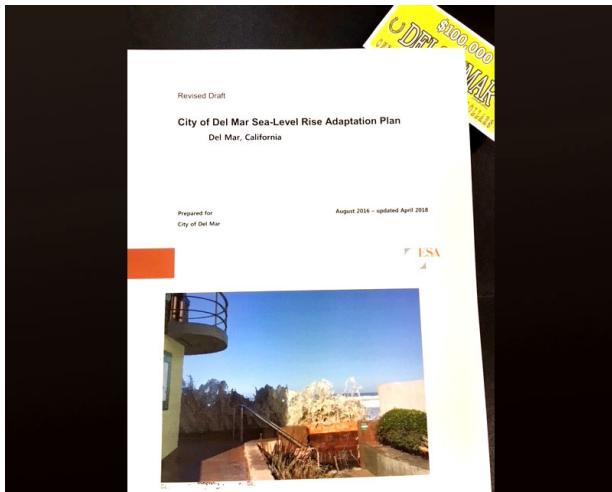
THE DEL MAR

WOODPECKER

SPOTLIGHT | 4.2018

Del Mar

Dwight Worden's Approach to Sea Level Rise



A Coastal Commission Grant of \$100K for an Adaptation Plan that puts **\$1.3 BILLION of Del Mar's private real estate and 1/3 of our town's landmass at risk.**

Cardiff, Encinitas, Solana Beach

North Coastal Cities Approach to Sea Level Rise



Applied for a \$19 Million Federal Grant to actively replenish their sand.



The Woodpecker strives for factually based newsletters to inform readers so they can make an informed decision. Sometimes we feel compelled to take a position on the facts when the City is proposing a totally crazy idea. The City's proposal to adopt Managed Retreat as a possible strategy meets that craziness test.

MANAGED RETREAT - WHY HAS IT NOT GONE AWAY?

(Managed Retreat: Removal of Seawalls and Destruction of 600+ Homes and 80+ Bluff Top Homes)

Who is behind this?

Against all recommendations of the Sea Level Rise Committee (STAC) and the Planning Commission, who both voted against Managed Retreat, the City Staff in April reinserted the Managed Retreat option back into the Adaptation Plan that is being presented to the City Council on April 16, 2018.

THE BIRTH OF MANAGED RETREAT

The City Council formed STAC over 3 years ago (March 2, 2015) to address projected sea level rise and the coastal flooding impact to Del Mar and formulate an Adaptation Plan with “tools”, or options, on how best to maintain a walkable beach. STAC is the **only** committee in our city where “residency is preferred but not required” hence the 4 **non-resident** voting members of which **2 represent associations (the Coastal Commission and the Surfrider Foundation) both of which Dwight Worden is embedded in.** Dwight Worden and Dave Druker are the City Council liaisons. **STAC voted against including Managed Retreat in this Adaptation Plan. Despite the STAC vote, the Surfrider and Coastal Commission continue to push for Managed Retreat.**

Who at City Hall continues to support Managed Retreat? Dwight Worden our Mayor who alone decided to go against STAC and the Planning Commission by insisting that Managed Retreat be included as an option in the Adaptation Plan! Worden successfully influenced the City staff to change the Adaptation Plan recommended by STAC and the Planning Commission. The result – the City Council will be presented with Dwight Worden’s Adaptation Plan, with Managed Retreat as an option.

So, why does Dwight Worden insist that Managed Retreat language remain?

- Could it be there is a quid pro quo with the California Coastal Commission? The Coastal Commission has strongly “encouraged” Del Mar to include Managed Retreat to set a precedent for the State. The Coastal Commission must approve Del Mar’s new short term rental ordinance and the Coastal Commission has gone on record as being against such ordinances. So could it be that Worden wants to keep Managed Retreat alive in exchange for the Coastal Commission’s approval of Del Mar’s new short term rental ordinance?
- Could it be that Worden does not want to lose face with the Surfrider and Coastal Commission who he feels beholden to?
- Could it be that Worden wants to serve the interests of other organizations outside of our community?

You be the judge.

The Impact of Managed Retreat

Managed Retreat is based on:

- Removing the ocean front homes on elevated lots that currently act as a barrier to protect lower houses in the Beach Colony from flooding
- Allowing the tide to flood out and destroy the Beach Colony homes due to **removal of existing seawall protection**
- Not taking any pro-active protection of the bluffs
- Razing the first three rows of bluff top homes from 4th to 15th Streets, in the name of bluff instability, roughly another 80 dwellings

The impact is frankly unbelievable. TerraCosta Consulting Group, the consultant for the Del Mar Beach Preservation Coalition, provided the following diagram showing the impact of Managed Retreat on the Beach Colony – it is totally wiped out.



Photo Courtesy of TerraCosta Consulting Group

MANAGED RETREAT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE in Del Mar. How can Surfrider, the Coastal Commission, Dwight Worden, Philip Posner (a Planning Commissioner who was the lone vote in favor of Managed Retreat) and all City Council members who back Dwight Worden not consider the facts of Del Mar?

- Del Mar beach has a unique land form where if you raze beach front properties, all other dwellings to the east at a lower elevation get destroyed (600 homes).
- Managed Retreat is NOT a one size fits all solution. Del Mar's coastal geology is very unique – only 9 communities along California's 1100 mile coastline have similar geology.
- Surfrider cites examples of where Managed Retreat has been used, but how with a straight face, can they believe that allowing Managed Retreat on an open land military base or the case of moving a bike lane and parking lot eastward is equivalent to destroying an established community? Another example they presented was the removal of 2 structures for less than \$2 million. Del Mar's prohibitive costs are in the **\$BILLIONS** versus these examples.
- TerraCosta Consulting Group indicates that only 3 communities in California are actively looking at Managed Retreat - San Francisco, Pacifica, and Ventura. However, Managed Retreat is only being suggested for open space areas, public infrastructure, and not specifically residential neighborhoods.
- **NO STUDY HAS BEEN PERFORMED** on the economics of purchasing homes then re-creating a beach berm to avoid the beach melding into the lagoon.
- **NO STUDY HAS BEEN PERFORMED** on the science of what happens when the homes are removed.
- **NO STUDY HAS BEEN PERFORMED** as to the impact of our city tax basis if 680 homes are razed.

Managed Retreat would result in the following:

- The Beach Colony would be destroyed and become an extension of the San Dieguito Lagoon
- Destruction of 600+ homes in the Beach Colony and 80+ bluffs top homes with an estimated value of \$1.3 Billion in the Beach Colony alone and hundreds of millions more on the bluff
- Decreased tax basis for Del Mar City
- Loss of existing beach access points
- Elimination of 15 blocks of Del Mar's current beach
- Destruction of the current infrastructure, office buildings as well as the racetrack
- Collapse of the bluffs with the loss of approximately 80 homes
- The inability to get a home loan (because why would a bank allow a loan on a home that could be required to be demolished?)
- Drop in property values with the uncertainty looming. Who buys a house that may be demolished by the City? Even houses off of the beach are impacted if the tax basis and city finances are depleted

The impact would be as if a tsunami hit Del Mar and the waters never receded.

Voting Record on Managed Retreat

On January 25, 2018 the STAC Committee voted 7-0-1 to recommend approval of an Adaptation Plan that did **NOT** include Managed Retreat. The approved plan addresses Managed Retreat as follows:

“STAC evaluated retreat as an adaptation option and determined it is too early in the process to include retreat as an adaptation strategy in Del Mar. At this time, retreat is intentionally not included as an adaptation option for private property. STAC recommends that the City prioritize beach nourishment in conjunction with sand retention.”

On February 13, 2018 the Planning Commission approved STAC's Adaptation Plan without Managed Retreat. The Commission also voted down Managed Retreat 4-1(Posner favored Managed Retreat) these are a few excerpts from that discussion:

Nate McCay, Planning Commissioner

2:12:54

“The term (Managed Retreat) isn't even clearly defined and if it is defined at all like I think it is meant, it is fundamentally illegal, it is fundamentally illegal on a constitutional basis, it is illegal under the Coastal Act and for the Coastal Commission to even propose it when it is clearly in contradiction to the (Coastal) Act, makes no sense to me at all.”

2:13:31

“I find the idea that a homeowner cannot protect their property fundamentally inappropriate.”

Ted Bakker, Planning Commissioner

2:15:30

“We are supposed to protect the residential character of Del Mar and that's a priority and we must maintain that.”

2:16:38

“I just don't see Managed Retreat as an alternative at this time at all and I don't think it should be discussed at all.”

Is Managed Retreat legally required to be included in any Adaptation Plan?

NO.

Here comes the legal stuff – get some coffee so you can stay with us on this part.

California law (Senate Bill 379) requires California cities and counties, to address climate change by adding a Vulnerability Assessment to the Safety Element of their General Plans (or in Del Mar's case, the Community Plan). Senate Bill 379 requires a set of “*goals, policies and objectives for the protection of the community*” and “*feasible implementation measures*.”

Managed Retreat is not mentioned anywhere in Senate Bill 379 and it is not required to be included in any Adaptation Plan.

Does the Coastal Commission require Managed Retreat to be included in the Adaptation Plan?

The answer: **NO.**

The Coastal Commission has provided a Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance <http://www.delmar.ca.us/>

[DocumentCenter/View/1878](#) for cities to develop adaptation plans. The Guidance is “advisory and not a regulatory document” and nowhere in the Guidance is there a requirement that Del Mar include Managed Retreat as a strategy in its Adaptation Plan.

Would the Coastal Commission like Del Mar to include Managed Retreat?

The answer is complicated: **Yes**...possibly because the Coastal Commission has tried to legislate a requirement for Managed Retreat. But the California legislature has denied the Coastal Commission this power. Trying another tactic, the Coastal Commission wants to influence cities to include Managed Retreat in their Adaptation Plans to be able to use the plans as a precedent that other cities should follow. Managed Retreat does not make sense in Del Mar but getting Del Mar to include it allows the Coastal Commission to use Del Mar as a showcase example which serves the Coastal Commission’s bigger purpose.

Does the Coastal Commission have special influence over Del Mar?

The answer: **VERY LIKELY**.

Del Mar accepted a \$100,000 grant from the Coastal Commission. In accepting the \$100,000, the City committed to develop a long-term Adaptation Plan. The Coastal Commission has made it very clear to the City that “managed retreat is a strategy that should be contemplated and discussed for all types of development in the adaptation plan” (February 8, 2018 letter from Coastal Commission to Dwight Worden). So in effect, the \$100,000 grant came with “strings” – namely **obligating** Del Mar to develop an Adaptation Plan that must include Managed Retreat as a strategy. While planning for climate change is wise, the City became obligated or beholden to the Coastal Commission when it accepted the \$100,000 grant.

Bottom line – despite what Dwight Worden says, there is no requirement to include Managed Retreat as a strategy in Del Mar’s Adaptation Plan.

Dwight Worden, the Coastal Commission and Surfrider Foundation are a small island favoring keeping Managed Retreat alive. Let’s look at the facts:

- 3 plus years and 1000’s of hours of STAC work with the committee finally INTENTIONALLY DELETING Managed Retreat
- The Planning Commission voting to NOT include Managed Retreat in any Adaptation Plan
- The opinion of local experts (TerraCosta Consulting Group) advising against Managed Retreat due to the fact that it DOES NOT make sense and will not work in Del Mar
- Virtually no resident support for Managed Retreat
- NO studies have been presented of why Managed Retreat makes sense in Del Mar or even how it would work
- No economic analysis conducted by the City to show the overwhelming financial impact to our community

Is Dwight Worden representing all of Del Mar?

NO.

City Council Must Kill Managed Retreat Once and For All

There is absolutely no basis for uttering the words “Managed Retreat” in Del Mar. It has no place in any Adaptation Plan, our Community Plan or any charter plan. To even identify it “...as one long term option to reduce risk that will be reevaluated if conditions warrant and if other strategies are unable to achieve community goals” (City Staff Report 4.16.2018) is **reckless, unwarranted** and results in uncertainty and disruption to our community.

ON MONDAY, APRIL 16th it is City Council's responsibility to do the right thing for everyone in Del Mar. Maintaining our beach is in everyone's best interest. There are viable options to preserving our beach WITHOUT including Managed Retreat. The City Council should make no mention of this "nuclear option" anywhere.

CAUTION: Dwight Worden and Ellie Haviland are campaigning to change Del Mar's Charter under the guise of increasing revenue from the Fairgrounds. Too much for one read.



HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD MONDAY, APRIL 6TH 2018

**By coming to tonight's City Council Meeting at 6:00 PM
and filling out a speaker slip**

or

**sending in a Red Dot by 12:00 Noon
to the City Clerk & City Council Members**

Please click on these links or copy and paste those addresses.

Send email to the City Clerk, the City Planning and Community Development Department & Del Mar City Council Members:

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tsinnott@delmar.ca.us; dworden@delmar.ca.us; ddruker@delmar.ca.us;
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