



citycounty insurance services
cisoregon.org

February 1, 2023

City of Yachats
Attention: City Manager Heide Lambert
501 Hwy 101 N.
Yachats, Oregon 97498

Dear Heide:

On January 20, 2023, I met with both yourself and CIP Coordinator Holly Hamilton, as well as CIS RMC Margaret Ryan. The purpose of our visit was to inspect two pocket parks known as North Sunset Park (aka Oceanview Walkway) and South Sunset Park (aka Wetland Park) along coastline located closest Ocean View Drive for safety and liability issues. It's our understanding city is considering taking on ownership from county of both parks and potentially developing each for increased community and tourist visitor's use.

The visit began with North Sunset Park, which can be accessed along short walkway headed west from Ocean View Drive. This park consisted of dirt walkway through native brush, opening into an area identified from wood sign as park with bench beside it, both of which were found in fair condition. From this ocean viewing area, several small and man-made trails veer in different directions down to the ocean. These routes are unmaintained and rustic at best, trail users are directed onto sharp rocks below for coastal access. There are several safety concerns noted with park area. No signage warns visitors about rough terrain ahead, nor that they enter at their own risk and what hazards exist by doing so. It seems likely during certain weather conditions these trails would be additionally slick and hazardous. The rocks below are sharp to navigate offering risk of fall/injury and exposure to sneaker waves concerning for those not familiar with area/exposure. If park area were encouraged use, it's recommended providing signage for hazards at both park entrance and at minimum, by the viewing area with bench. As well, cording off the area in front of bench, for visitors to have visual barrier they are leaving maintained/developed area into unmaintained trailway. The man-made bench should be replaced with safer option. This is not an ADA accessible park and should in no way be advertised as such for access. Sneaker waves do pose risk here and fatalities have occurred in the past locally.

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From North Sunset Park we travelled to South Sunset Park, also noted by signage. This stop was most concerning as access encouraged down to ocean access was both steep and rugged, with short and inadequate handrail found in disrepair. There's a bench located at this site for ocean viewing, although due to erosion it's become very close to an abrupt drop-off by cliff approximately 30-feet below. We recommend closing access off to coastline entirely here, removing handrail and moving both bench and park signage all the way back to paved walkway. This would maintain safe area for use while still allowing clear ocean views. As well, it's recommended adding native landscaping closest cliff side to discourage further coastline access. This is not an ADA accessible park either and should in no way be advertised as such for access.



South Sunset Park/Inadequate Handrail and Steep, Rugged Trail



South Sunset Park/Abrupt Drop-off Closest Bench

If it's decided formal park spaces should be created for both areas noted, signage should be added and include awareness of risks for use/exposures to visitors for coastline access. City should consider creation of marked/lighted pedestrian crosswalks to parks across Ocean View Drive and/or best option, to redirect users to the parking area within State Park eliminating crossing of old highway entirely. ADA access could then be extended along paved walkway only, so long as it's deemed truly accessible by qualified person and maintained as such. CIS would not insure any park areas extending past city limits, where ocean access enters State boundaries. If mitigation recommendations noted are not made to both park areas, we may reserve the right to charge additionally for the exposure, and up to potentially not insuring.

We greatly enjoyed our visit, meeting with city staff, and providing this service. It's our hope that the recommendations offered lend solutions to safer coastline viewing and accessibility by community members and visitors alike while still aligning with envisioned park development goals.