



Date: March 17, 2016
To: Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Patrick H. West, City Manager *PH West*
Subject: **East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Study Kick Off**

Introduction

Long Beach has worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) for over seven years to advance a feasibility study to restore the East San Pedro Bay. This study is known officially as the East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Study (Study). The first public meeting, which will also be the Army Corps' official Public Scoping meeting in compliance with NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act), will be held twice on Thursday April 7, 2016 from 2:00-4:00 pm. and 6:00-8:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is for the Army Corps to explain the plan formulation process, as well as feasibility Study problems, objectives, opportunities and constraints.

April 7, 2016 @ 2:00-4:00 p.m. and 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Bixby Park Community Center

130 Cherry Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90802

**The same information will be presented at each meeting. Participants only need to come once.*

The next opportunity for public comment will be on April 18 from 3:30– 6:30 p.m. This follow up meeting is intended to be a participatory workshop to elicit viewpoints on various habitat restoration measures, including breakwater modifications, with key stakeholder groups including residents, ports, marine biologists and surfers. The public's input will provide valuable insights into the measures screening and alternatives formulation steps.

April 18, 2016 @ 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Seaport Marina Hotel

6400 E. Pacific Coast Hwy, Long Beach, CA 90803

Background

This Study, while formerly known as the Long Beach Breakwater Study, has not been called that for the last six years. Upon completion of the Federal Long Beach Breakwater Reconnaissance Report (Reconnaissance Report) in June 2010, an official determination of "federal interest" was made to continue onto an ecosystem restoration feasibility study. The Reconnaissance Report also recommended changing the study name to the East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Study to more accurately reflect the desired ecosystem restoration improvements to the bay, with a focus greater than simply the Long Beach Breakwater.

Federal budget constraints prevented the Army Corps from receiving federal funding to begin the Feasibility Study in 2010. In 2012, the Army Corps revised feasibility study guidelines to the current SMART Planning approach, which follows the "3x3x3"

guidelines to complete the Study and with three tiers of Army Corps Vertical Team (Headquarters-Division-District) alignment. With public interest in the Study still strong, the Long Beach City Council budgeted \$1.5 million in City Tidelands funding for the City's portion of Study costs, and voted to contribute \$750,000 of City Tidelands funding to the Army Corps for a portion of federal Study costs. Because this funding approach deviated from the traditional 50/50 cost share model that called for the local sponsor, the City, and the Army Corps to spend equally and concurrently, reviews at the highest levels of the Army Corps were required. After years of negotiations, an amendment to the original Federal Cost Share Agreement was adopted in January 2016 to allow the Study to begin.

Purpose

The purpose of the Study is to develop and select a project alternative that will provide a path forward for restoring and improving the aquatic ecosystem structure and function for increased habitat biodiversity within East San Pedro Bay. The Study has two primary objectives: (1) Restore aquatic habitat such as kelp, rocky reef, coastal wetlands and other types of sufficient quality and quantity to support diverse resident and migratory species, and (2) Improve water circulation sufficient to support and sustain aquatic habitat within East San Pedro Bay.

Current Situation

The Study is believed to be the first open ocean ecosystem restoration Study to be conducted by the Army Corps under the 3x3x3 feasibility study guidelines. The team recently kicked off the Study and is working towards the first major milestone which is the Alternatives Milestone. Currently the team is actively gathering existing data to establish the baseline conditions for the bay and gearing up to brainstorm and evaluate restoration measures.

The primary problem the Study seeks to solve is the degraded habitat. The argument used to substantiate this Study is that habitat historically present in San Pedro Bay, including coastal wetlands associated with the historic mouth of the Los Angeles River, kelp, seagrass, and rocky reef, has been lost, degraded and reduced due to development of infrastructure in the 19th and 20th centuries. The most significant alterations come from the development of the Port of Long Beach complex, Long Beach Breakwater and channelization of the mouth of the Los Angeles River. Infrastructure development along and off the coast of East San Pedro Bay either directly eliminated habitat through construction (e.g., draining of wetlands or dredging of channels) or resulted in altered conditions that affect the viability of complex and diverse habitats (e.g., created barriers to tidal circulation, introduced concentrated stormwater discharges). Without coastal wetlands functions (e.g., nursery and reproductive functions) needed to sustain healthy populations of marine species, it is highly likely a decline in populations or diversity of species has taken place in the vicinity of East San Pedro Bay. Therefore, further analysis to determine more specific impacts to species types and population will be undertaken as part of this Study.

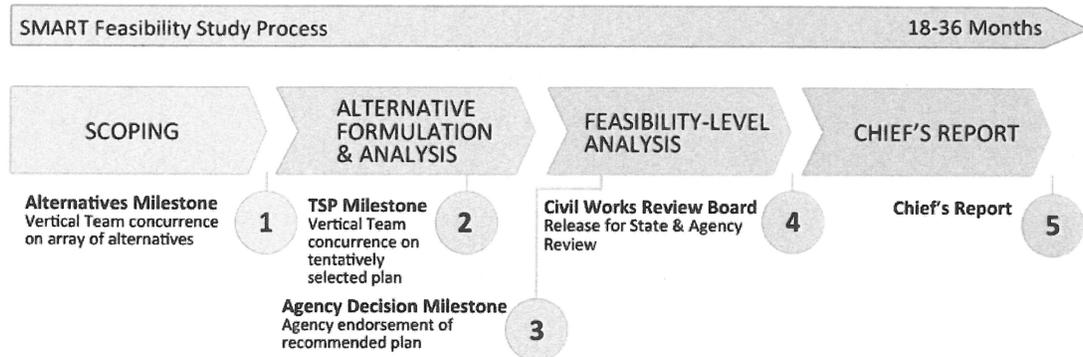
Solution

Measures and alternatives proposed by the Study must achieve the Study's purpose, while maintaining the level of maritime operational capacity in the East San Pedro Bay that is currently available to the Port of Long Beach, United States Navy, and THUMS oil

islands. Study measures will not increase shoreline erosion, wave-related damages, and coastal flooding to existing residences, public infrastructure, marinas, other structures, and recreational beaches. The Study will seek to minimize impacts to flood risk management operations on the Los Angeles River, and incorporate sea level rise adaptations.

Process

The Army Corps' feasibility study process is illustrated below:



Next Steps

The next step is preparing for the Army Corps' first major milestone, the Alternatives Milestone, which is scheduled to take place July 2016 (subject to change). To get to the focused array of alternatives, the Study team (City and Army Corps staff) must accomplish several major tasks. In addition to establishing the problems, opportunities, objectives and constraints, the team will establish baseline existing conditions using existing data. The team will also compile restoration measures or actions such as constructing rocky reef habitats, building sandy islands, establishing a kelp bed, etc. These measures will come from a variety of sources, including past and current public meetings, discussions with stakeholders, subject matter experts, and the Study team. These measures will be screened using set criteria from Army Corps guidance. The measures must: *effectively* achieve planning objectives, *efficiently* provide cost effective net habitat benefits, be *implementable* from a technical, environmental and economical perspective, and be *satisfactory* or socially acceptable by key stakeholders who will have an opportunity to provide feedback at public meetings, as mentioned earlier in this memo.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Diana Tang, Manager of Government Affairs, at 562-570-6506.

cc: Charles Parkin, City Attorney
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