City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Date: September 24, 2018

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Patrick H. West, City Manager

Subject: East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Update

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) and the City of Long Beach (City) initiated the East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study (Study) in February 2016. The goal of the Study is to restore and improve aquatic ecosystem for increased habitat biodiversity and ecosystem value within East San Pedro Bay. The Study process involves extensive collaboration between federal agencies, local governments, and key stakeholders. The last update on this Study was provided via a memorandum on June 14, 2018. This memo provides an update on the Study since that time.

Progress to Date

Over the past couple months, the Army Corps and City team have made steady progress. Major accomplishments include:

Stakeholder Outreach and Input: Various stakeholder meetings and presentations have been conducted, ensuring a collaborative effort to include all pertinent information in the Study. Outreach efforts will continue through the remainder of the Study.

Draft Array of Alternatives: The Cost Effectiveness/Incremental Cost Analysis (CE/ICA) has been completed and modeling efforts have identified five "best buy" plans, which represent the most cost effective solutions for habitat restoration. These five plans, plus one "no action" plan comprise the six draft alternatives selected to be evaluated in the Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR) for this Study.

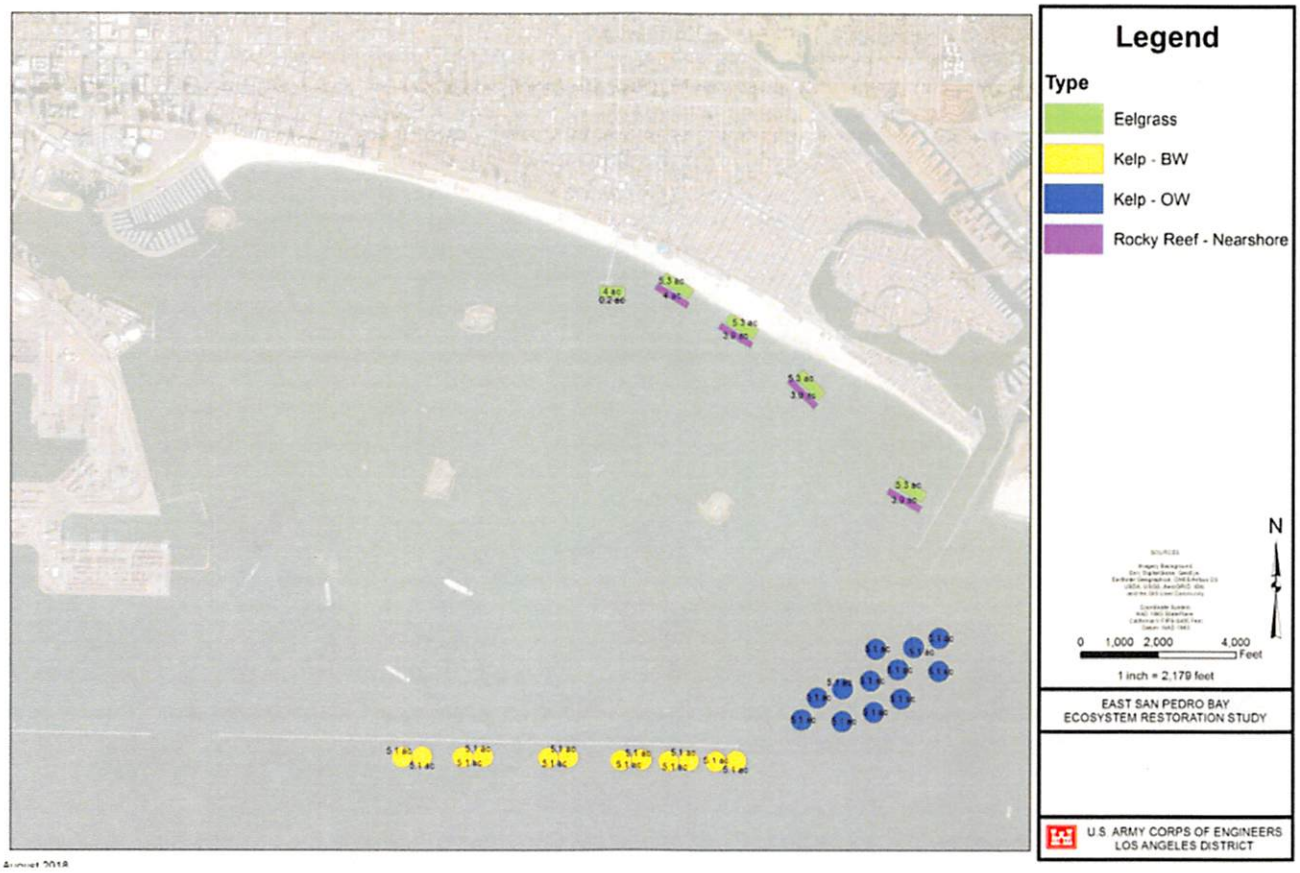
The alternatives describe the addition of various physical structures such as rocky reefs, wetlands and kelp beds, as well as breakwater modifications. All five "best buy" plans were developed to provide a range of ecosystem improvements that may be possible in the East San Pedro Bay.

The Army Corps has completed all modeling efforts with respect to wave activity, ecosystem restoration, sediment movement and cost effectiveness. While those models are complete, the Army Corps still needs additional information related to navigation to move forward with this Study. It is with this need in mind that the draft alternatives are being released for public feedback.

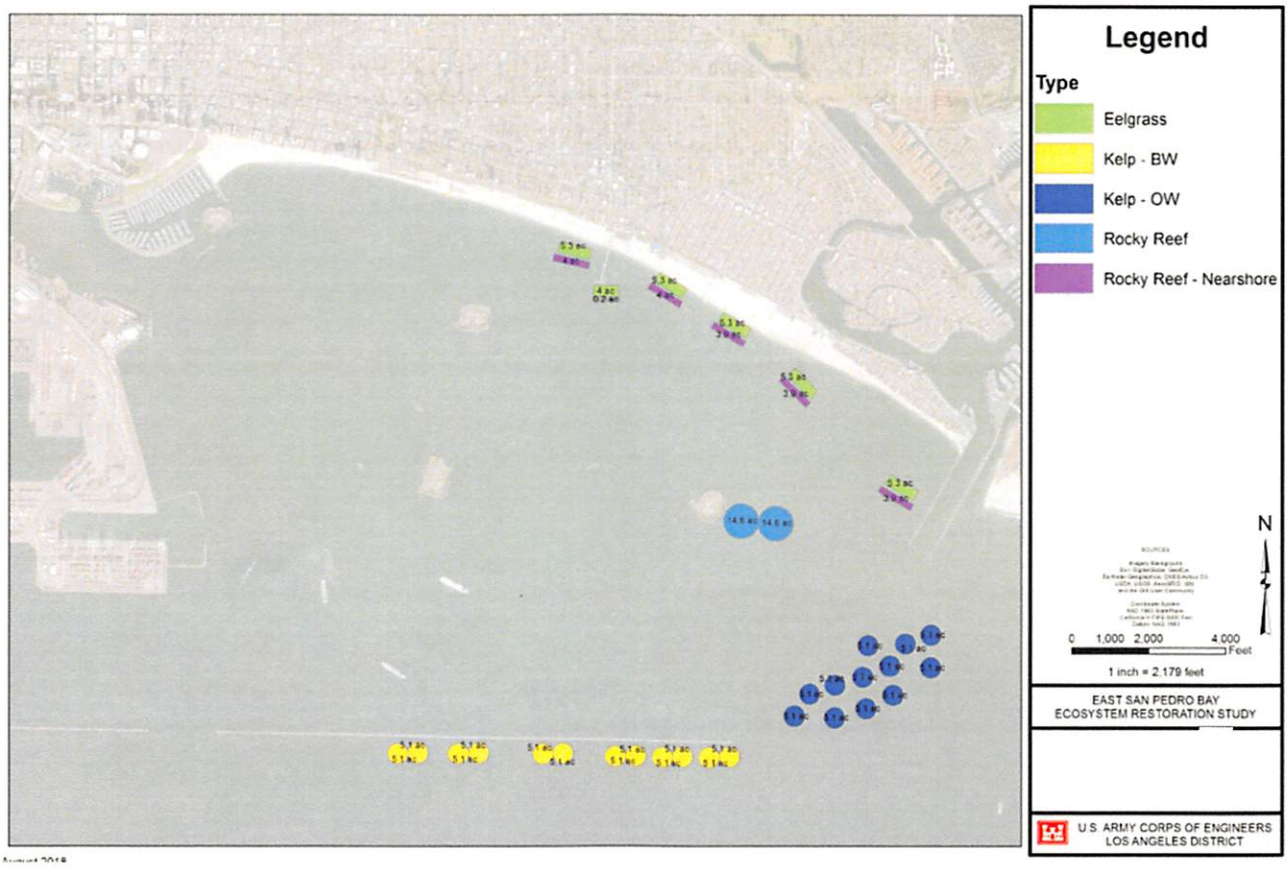
All six selected alternatives will be evaluated equally and presented fully within the IFR in 2019. All but the "no action" alternative, are described below, and subject to change prior to the development of the IFR.

Alternatives Summary

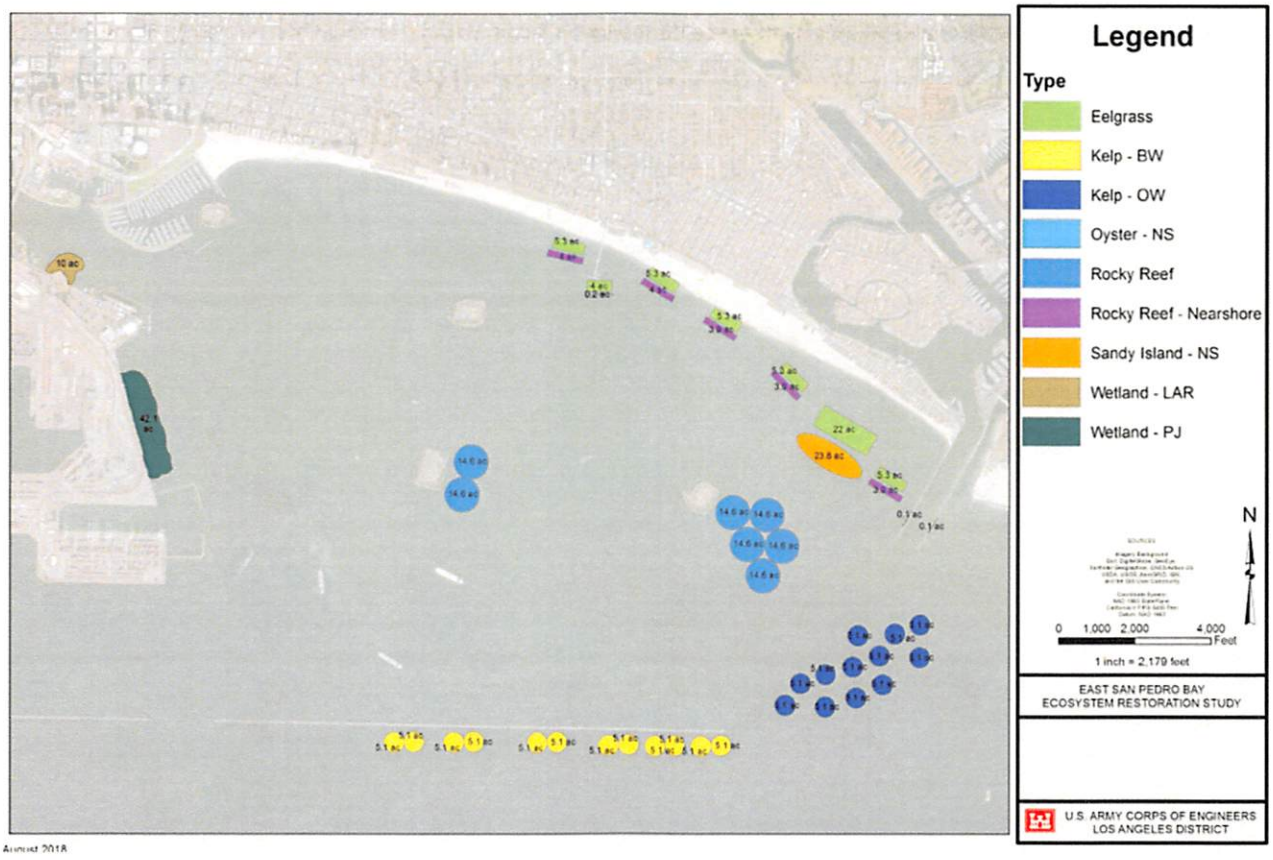
Kelp Restoration Alternative. This is the least-cost "best buy" action plan. It minimally meets the Study's established planning objectives and introduces three habitat types: eelgrass, nearshore rocky reef in about 15 feet of water, and kelp reef in about 30 feet of open water by the Long Beach Breakwater at a relatively low cost.



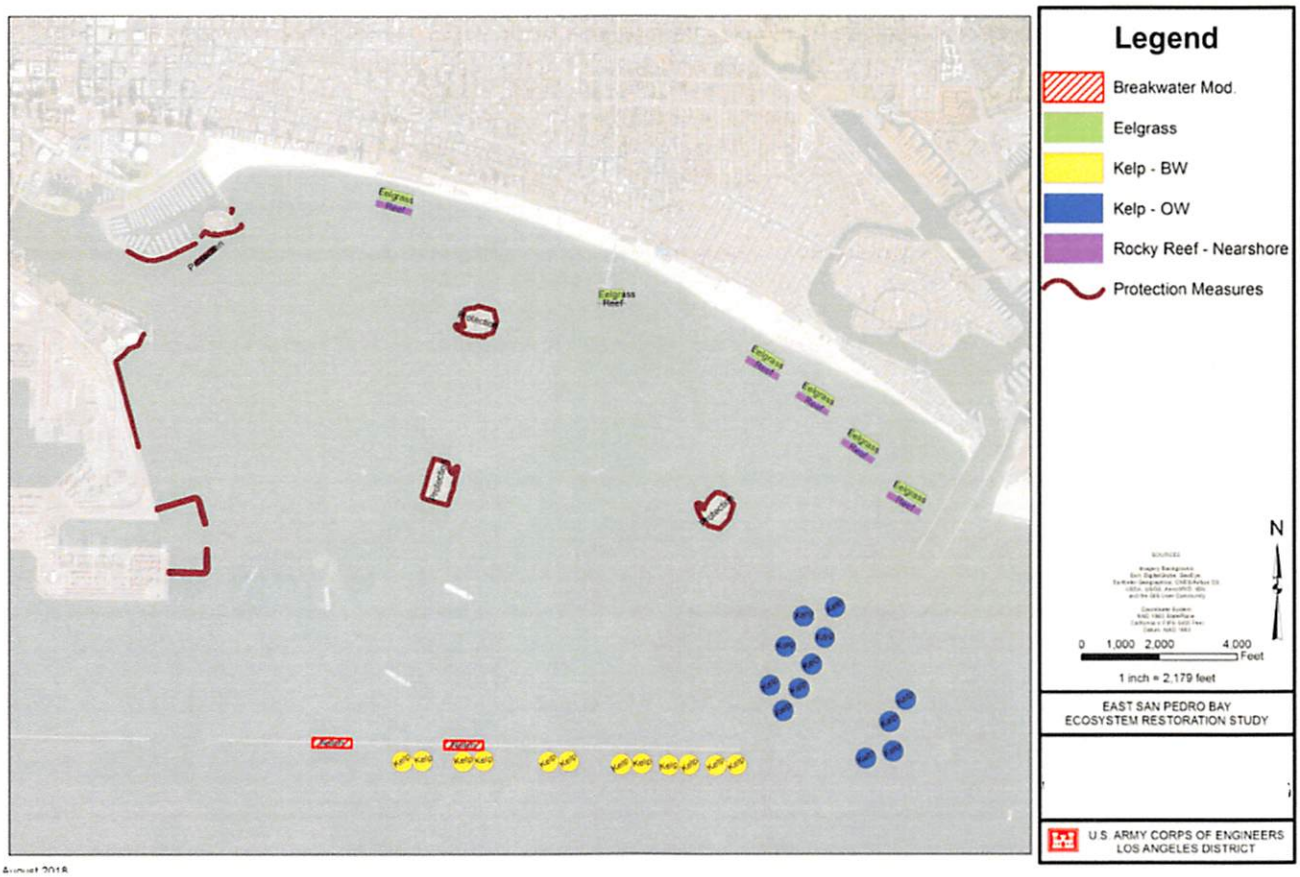
Reef Restoration Alternative. This alternative builds upon the Kelp Restoration Alternative and introduces two open water rocky reef patches with high habitat value due to the ability of rocky reef to support a wide variety of aquatic species. Constructing two adjacent rocky reefs provides connectivity between the reefs and increases habitat complexity within the reef patches, which is seen as desirable in ecosystem restoration projects.



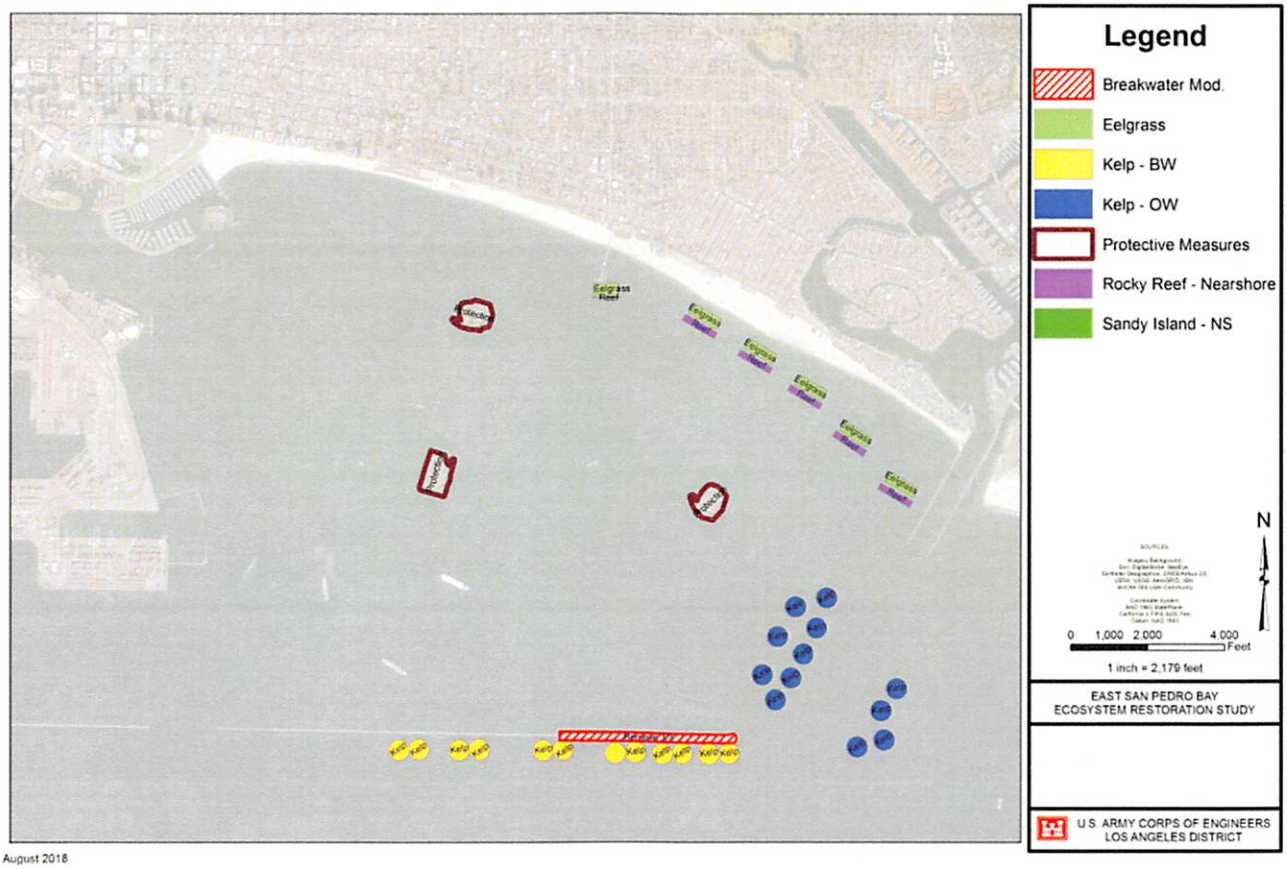
Scarce Habitat Restoration Alternative. This alternative builds upon the Reef Restoration Alternative and includes restoration features throughout the East San Pedro Bay. It includes a 24-acre sandy island near the Peninsula, two new coastal wetlands (a 10-arce wetland near the mouth of the Los Angeles River; and a 42-acre wetland just outside the Port of Long Beach), and a small oyster bed (0.03 acres) by the Alamitos Bay jetties. The proximity of the proposed wetlands within this alternative to the existing Golden Shores wetland would facilitate exchange of species and support nursery function.



Breakwater Western Notching Alternative. This alternative builds upon the Kelp Restoration Alternative and includes two 1,000-foot notches along the western portion of the Long Beach Breakwater (Breakwater) to allow for increased flushing and enhanced recreation. Preliminary wave modeling shows this alternative would result in increased swell events impacting the oil islands, Pier J and the Carnival Cruise Terminal. Stones removed from the Breakwater would be reused to build mitigation measures, including protective structures around the Oil Islands, Pier J, and parking lot near Cherry Beach and the Junipero Beach Parking Lot.



Breakwater Eastern Removal Alternative. This alternative builds upon the Kelp Restoration Alternative and includes one-third (24-arces) removal of the eastern portion of the Breakwater for increased flushing and enhanced recreation. Preliminary wave modeling shows this alternative would impact oil islands, the Belmont Pier, and reduce the Navy's capacity to provide military readiness at the Explosives Anchorage. Stones removed from the Breakwater would be reused to build mitigation measures, including: protective structures around the Oil Islands and Belmont Pier, as well as higher elevation nearshore rocky reefs to mitigate impacts to the peninsula beach and adjacent infrastructure.



Wave Modeling

Each of the alternatives described above has been evaluated through a wave modeling process, once without breakwater modifications, and once with breakwater modifications. This process enables an evaluation of the surface wave effects on infrastructure, navigation, operation, recreation, and circulation. This data is essential to developing feasible Study alternatives that include mitigation components, ensuring there is no overall impact to maritime operations, or damage to existing homes and infrastructure.

Next Steps

With the draft alternatives ready for public review from a navigation perspective, the Study team is poised to move forward towards the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) Milestone and release of the IFR for public review. Major benchmarks for the remainder of 2018 and early 2019 include:

Community Meeting: The City and the Army Corps will conduct a public meeting on October 10, 2018 at 5:30 p.m., at the Bixby Park Community Center. The purpose of this meeting will be to provide the community with an update on the Study's progress, as well as next steps. Staff will present the six draft alternatives and explain the need for technical input related to navigation, to ensure there is no overall impact to maritime operations. This will also be an opportunity to affirm the City's commitment to ensuring existing homes and infrastructure will be protected.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Review: With the completion of the draft alternatives and wave modeling information, navigation technical experts can provide additional research and technical input related to port uses, navigation, and maritime operations. Navigation is a core Army Corps mission, as is ecosystem restoration. In order to move forward, the Army Corps must demonstrate that navigation will not be impeded. TAC review is anticipated to be complete in fall 2018.

Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP): Upon completion of the TAC review, the Army Corps will seek concurrence with the City on the array of alternatives, and specifically a TSP. This will include a presentation to the City Council, which is anticipated in early 2019.

Draft Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR): The complete array of alternatives will be presented in the IFR, which includes the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This is the document that will be released for public review and comment in spring 2019.

Public Outreach and Input: A subsequent community meeting will be scheduled for fall 2019 to provide a further project status update and anticipated steps to be completed. Additional public outreach efforts will be scheduled upon release of the IFR. The meetings will be held during the formal environmental review public comment period to ensure the community has adequate information and a forum to ask questions.

The City's continued purpose for involvement in the Army Corps' process is to protect the City's interest and remain true to the objectives of considering improvements to ecosystem health, water quality improvements, and the recreational value of the City's beaches within this Study.

If you have any questions, please contact Diana Tang, Manager of Government Affairs, at (562) 570-6506 or Diana.Tang@longbeach.gov, or Joshua Hickman, Program Manager, at (562) 570-5714 or Joshua.Hickman@longbeach.gov.

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