



Date: November 21, 2017

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.H.W.*

Subject: **Status Update: East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) 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 structure and function 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.

Progress to Date

Over the past year, the Army Corps has made steady progress with the Study. The major accomplishments include:

Habitat Evaluation Model Workshop: The City hosted an internal two-day workshop with the Army Corps in November 2016 to develop the foundation of the Army Corps' pending habitat evaluation model (HEM). Subject matter experts from government agencies, academia and the private sector also participated in this critical workshop. The Habitat Evaluation Model will be the tool that determines habitat benefits of various measures and alternatives. The environmental outputs of this Study will be represented numerically as a Habitat Unit and used in a separate Cost Effectiveness/Incremental Cost Analysis (CE/ICA) model.

Preliminary Working Alternatives: A set of four preliminary baseline scenarios were developed, based on stakeholder input, for use in coastal and hydrodynamic modeling.

Wave Modeling: Wave energy, depth and substrate are parameters that depict essential ecosystem components of various habitat types. In addition, wave modeling assesses surface wave effects on infrastructure, navigation, recreation, and circulation. Upon completion in spring of 2017, the results were input into the hydrodynamic modeling.

Hydrodynamic Modeling: Early in 2017, the City successfully contracted with Everest International Consultants, Inc., to perform hydrodynamic modeling. This modeling enabled the City to conduct a numeric tracer tracking study to obtain a 3-D visualization of sediment transport and water quality from the Los Angeles and

San Gabriel Rivers into East San Pedro Bay. Upon completion in October 2017, the results were input into the Habitat Evaluation Model.

Conceptual Cost Estimates: Conceptual unit cost estimates for each measure have been completed. A measure is an individual restoration feature (e.g., a single patch of rocky reef, a single wetland, a single sandy island). Measures serve as building blocks for each Study alternative. The conceptual cost estimates are input into the CE/ICA model.

Schedule: While numerous benchmarks have been reached, there have been some delays over the past year. A schedule assessment has been completed by the Army Corps, and it was determined that an eight-month extension to the Tentatively Selected Plan Milestone (TSP) was warranted due to contracting delays, modeling complexities, inclusion of ample decision-making time, and ample time for the City to determine the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP). The original TSP date of September 2017 has been modified to May 2018.

Budget: Through advocacy efforts, \$275,000 in federal funding was received for expenditures incurred in FY 17, and for the continuation of the Study, without interruptions, into FY 18.

Next Steps

With these major achievements, the team is poised for the next steps towards the TSP Milestone. Major benchmarks for 2018 include:

Habitat evaluation modeling (HEM): Completion of the HEM model will enable the Army Corps to evaluate existing and future capacity of various habitats. Data from the completed HEM are needed to conduct the CE/ICA model.

Cost Effectiveness/Incremental Cost Analysis (CE/ICA): Once the HEM is complete, data from that modeling effort will be used to conduct the CE/ICA model. The CE/ICA model will provide the Army Corps and the City with an array of cost-effective plans and “best buy” plans. The CE/ICA model balances the results of the HEM and cost estimates for cost effective solutions for habitat restoration.

Array of Alternatives: Subsequent to the CE/ICA modeling, the team will evaluate the plans to identify the array of alternatives. The array of alternatives, shall include the National Ecosystem Restoration Plan (NER) and Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP).

Draft Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR): The array of alternatives will be presented in the IFR, which includes the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Public Outreach and Input:

Over the next few months city staff will be updating stakeholders and various community groups pertaining to the anticipated steps to be completed in 2018. Upon completion of the IFR, Stakeholder engagement and a public outreach meeting will be organized. We anticipate this meeting to take place the summer of 2018. Meetings will be held during the public comment period to ensure the community has adequate information and a forum to ask questions. Following the public review period, the team will review the public comments and address accordingly.

Budget: Federal funding allocations are to-be-determined as the project has not received full Federal funding. A total of \$194,000 has been budgeted for FY 18 and the team is anticipating confirmation of this funding in early 2018.

While the Army Corps has a dynamic planning process that must be followed, City staff has been closely involved with nearly all project discussions. The primary purpose for the City's involvement is to provide feedback into the Army Corps' process so that it continues to focus on Long Beach's interests, and the potential for a responsible reconfiguration of the Long Beach Breakwater.

If you have any questions, please contact Joshua Hickman, Program Manager, at (562) 570-5714.

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