City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Date: June 20, 2019

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Patrick H. West, City Manager

Subject: **East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Study: 2019 Progress Report**

Introduction

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 is to restore and improve aquatic ecosystem for increased habitat biodiversity and ecosystem value within East San Pedro Bay. The Study involves extensive collaboration between federal agencies, local governments, and key stakeholders. The last update on the Study was provided on September 24, 2018. This memo provides an update on the Study since that time.

Background

In August 2018, the Army Corps and City released five draft alternatives that were identified using the Army Corps' Cost Effectiveness/Incremental Cost Analysis (CE/ICA). These five alternatives, plus one "no action" alternative, comprise the six draft alternatives to be evaluated in the Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR) for this Study:

- Kelp Restoration Alternative
- Reef Restoration Alternative
- Scarce Habitat Restoration Alternative
- Breakwater Western Notching Alternative
- Breakwater Eastern Removal Alternative

Progress to Date

Over the last year, the Army Corps and City have been evaluating Study alternatives through the lens of ecosystem restoration. The alternatives must avoid significant impacts to navigation as a result of ecosystem restoration measures. Balancing both considerations, public and other relevant stakeholders' feedback was solicited on navigation impacts between September 24 and October 15, 2018. This feedback has been critical to substantiating the need for an expanded scope of study on the western breakwater modification.

Status

Feasibility studies are complex, and, like all studies, iterative. The City and Army Corps are currently collaborating on a potential expanded scope of study for the western breakwater modification alternative beyond Army Corps' ecosystem restoration guidelines. The City is requesting additional studies of the western breakwater alternative to address local interests in ecosystem health, water quality improvements, and the recreational value of the City's beaches. The expanded study would consider data from the Army Corps' modeling results. To this end, the City has formally requested the Army Corps share models and data compiled for this Study.

Since the potential expanded scope of study for the western breakwater modification is still being developed, costs have not been finalized. The Army Corps has indicated the City will be responsible for 100 percent of increased Study costs related to any potential expanded breakwater modification study. Unmitigable risks to national security and maritime operational capabilities will render any breakwater modification infeasible. The City is committed to evaluating all Study alternatives while maintaining maritime safety and security.

Next Steps

The Study team is poised to move towards the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) milestone and release of the Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR) for public review. Major upcoming benchmarks:

Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP): The Army Corps identifies the National Ecosystem Restoration (NER) Plan. This becomes the TSP, unless the City requests a Locally Preferred Plan (LPP). The Army Corps and the City had hoped to bring a TSP forward to the City Council in early 2019. This milestone has been delayed allowing for additional studies of the western breakwater modification alternative.

Draft Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR): After the TSP milestone is reached, the next step will be to complete the draft IFR. The complete array of alternatives will be presented in the IFR, which includes the drafted Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This is the document that will be released for public review and comment.

Federal processes are on hold while the potential expanded scope of study for the western breakwater modification is being developed and costs are evaluated. Information resulting from this work will be critical to informing the Final Array of Alternatives and the Army Corps' selection of a TSP, as well as the City's decision on a potential Local Preferred Plan (LLP). All LPPs must be approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works for selection as the Recommended Plan. Any significant cost increases beyond the existing budget for the project would need to be approved by the Long Beach City Council prior to commitment.

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

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