

Colorado Lagoon Restoration Project

Frequently Asked Questions – Project and Construction Activities

Purpose/Goal

This document addresses questions regarding the overall restoration project and ongoing construction activities.

The Colorado Lagoon (Lagoon) is an 18-acre saltwater tidal lagoon located at 5119 East Colorado Street. The Lagoon has in more modern history been hydraulically connected to Alamos Bay and the Pacific Ocean through a 900-foot underground concrete box culvert located under Marina Vista Park. The Lagoon serves three primary functions: it hosts estuarine habitat, provides public recreation (including swimming), and it retains and conveys storm water. The Lagoon site was formerly part of the vast Los Cerritos Wetlands and was naturally connected to what is now Marine Stadium. Over the course of several decades, an accumulation of contaminants resulting from stormwater runoff, in combination with the muting of the tidal exchange, contributed to the listing of the Lagoon on the Federal Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list of impaired water bodies.

Restoration of the Lagoon has been an on-going and multi-phased effort that began with the Colorado Lagoon Feasibility Study and Restoration Plan (2005) intended to improve water quality and restore the ecological value of one of Southern California's last remaining coastal lagoons and is now at its final stages of restoration with restoration of an open tidal channel.

Environmental

Q: What is the Open Channel?

A: The open channel will daylight an existing underground connection between the Lagoon and Marine Stadium, known as a culvert. The existing culvert is only about 8' tall and 12-15' wide which limits natural tidal exchange. The open channel will create 3.35 acres of new subtidal habitat with natural features and includes two reinforced concrete box bridges with openings that are about three times larger than the existing culvert to allow full tidal exchange.

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Q: What types of hazardous materials were encountered that necessitated abatement?

A: Some utilities that must be removed and relocated for this project contained asbestos materials. Abatement activities are in compliance with all regulatory requirements including material and soil testing, use of personal protective equipment, and specific procedures for handling materials that contain asbestos to prevent release into the environment.

Q: Is the current standing water in the channel footprint salt, fresh, or brackish?

A: The water is brackish which is a mix of saltwater and freshwater.

Q: How has the construction impacted the overall health of the Lagoon? Has it improved, is it staying the same?

A: The project goal is to improve the health of the Lagoon. Environmental controls, phasing, and monitoring have been implemented to mitigate impacts during restoration activities. The Lagoon continues to benefit from earlier phases of restoration and the existing tidal connection to Marine Stadium will be maintained throughout construction with limited and short duration interruption that is carefully monitored. The Long Beach Department of Health & Human Services performs regular recreational water monitoring at the Lagoon and additional monitoring associated with restoration work continues to demonstrate the success of restoration to date.

<https://www.longbeach.gov/health/inspections-and-reporting/inspections/recreational-water-samples/>

Q: Will there still be flat open park/grass space available?

A: Yes, there will be flat open space areas with irrigated turf that will serve as a multi-purpose recreation space and will include facilities for Softball/Baseball. All new grass will be tolerant to a marine environment.

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Operational

Q: Why were streets closed at the same time? (Colorado & Eliot)

A: The baseline construction schedule demonstrated that constructing both bridges simultaneously would shorten the overall duration of the project. This required closure of both streets at the same time.

Q: Which roads will be used by trucks removing soil?

A: The approved haul route avoids the community to the extent feasible via Colorado Street or Eliot Street to access Bellflower Blvd. Side streets will not be utilized or permitted for hauling purposes.

Q: Will concerts in the park be able to resume once the project is finished? It appears that the concert area may be affected by some of the new features.

A: Park concerts have been temporarily relocated and their return is currently being discussed. Meanwhile, other areas within the city are currently hosting concerts in the park for residents to enjoy.

Q: What is the anticipated economic impact of the project to the City once the project is completed? What is the total cost of the project (grants, government funding, etc.)?

A: The project will positively impact recreational and natural features in the City. The Open Channel project total costs are approximately \$35 million funded primarily through the sale of mitigation credits to the Port of Long Beach as stipulated in a Memorandum of Understanding. Tidelands funds and grant funds from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy also contribute to the Lagoon restoration budget.

Q: Once the project is completed, is there going to be a path for pedestrians or bicycles?

A: Yes, the project includes a pedestrian path along the Open Channel. Additional road and sidewalk improvements are also included to restore and improve access for pedestrians and bicyclists. The City continues to maintain a pedestrian path during construction, this location may change as construction progresses.

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Q: Where is parking allocated for Marina Vista Park and the baseball field?

A: The current parking facilities located by the tennis court and the street parking on Eliot St. will be maintained.

Q: Is the open channel going to be navigable by boats from Alamitos Bay?

A: No, recreational boating will not be allowed.

Schedule

Q: What is the projected timeframe for reopening of Eliot St.?

A: Eliot St. is expected to reopen at the end of 2024.

Q: Why did construction come to a halt for 2 months?

A: Construction schedule delays occur when undocumented underground utilities are encountered as they must be evaluated for safe removal and relocation. There was a significant amount of unexpected utility work required for this project. Rain also impacts the construction schedule and significant rainfall over the past two winters has impacted several construction projects throughout the region.

Q: How many rain impact days were included in the original schedule?

A: Rain days are not included in the baseline schedule for this Project, the City evaluates the impact of rain days through regular schedule updates as the work progresses.

Q: What could impact the current updated schedule?

A: Construction schedules may be impacted by weather, utility relocation, and other unforeseen conditions.

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Fire Station

Q: Was the decision to close Fire Station 14 necessary?

A: Yes. The project involves a comprehensive renovation of the fire station, this is necessary to provide adequate administrative areas, rest areas, restrooms and other personnel areas to support first responders. Additionally, the scope of work includes installing a new roof, air handler unit, and other improvements throughout the facility. All of these activities required the temporary closure of the fire station.

Q: With Fire Station 14 closed, how is the community being serviced?

A: Operations have been relocated to peripheral Fire Stations, specifically Belmont Shore Station 8, Station 4, and Station 19.

Q: Have the funds from Colorado Lagoon been reallocated to the fire station rebuild or any other City project?

A: No, these are two distinct projects with separate sources of funding. This phase of the Colorado Lagoon Restoration Project is funded primarily through the sale of mitigation credits to the Port of Long Beach as stipulated in a Memorandum of Understanding with the Port. Tidelands funds and grant funds from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy also contribute to the Lagoon restoration budget. The Fire Station 14 Project is funded through Measure A and General Funds.