



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH WATER QUALITY/COASTAL TIDELANDS COMMITTEE AGENDA

Crystal Cove Room (Bay 2D)

Thursday, November 6, 2025 - 3:00 PM

Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee Members:

Councilmember Michelle Barto, Chair
Mayor Joe Stapleton, Vice Chair
Peter Belden, Member
Curtis Black, Member
Charles Fancher, Member
Craig Hudson, Member
Sharon Ray, Member
George Robertson, Member
John Wadsworth, Member

Staff Members:

Jim Houlihan, Deputy Public Works Director/City Engineer
John Kappeler, Senior Engineer
Bob Stein, Assistant City Engineer
Karen Gallagher, Administrative Assistant

The Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee meeting is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act. Among other things, the Brown Act requires that the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee agenda be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of each regular meeting and that the public be allowed to comment on agenda items before the Committee and items not on the agenda but are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee. The Chair may limit public comments to a reasonable amount of time, generally three (3) minutes per person.

The City of Newport Beach's goal is to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all respects. If, as an attendee or a participant at this meeting, you will need special assistance beyond what is normally provided, we will attempt to accommodate you in every reasonable manner. Please contact John Kappeler, Water Quality Enforcement Manager, at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is feasible at (949) 644-3218 or jkappeler@newportbeachca.gov.

NOTICE REGARDING PRESENTATIONS REQUIRING USE OF CITY EQUIPMENT

Any presentation requiring the use of the City of Newport Beach's equipment must be submitted to the Public Works Department 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

- 1) **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
- 2) **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 3) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (10 min)**

Public comments are invited on agenda items. Speakers must limit comments to five minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Committee has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers. As a courtesy, please turn cell phones off or set them in the silent mode.

- 4) **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES (5 min)**

Recommendation: Approve minutes as presented

[100225 NPB WQCT Draft](#)

- 5) **CURRENT BUSINESS (70 min)**

(a) Committee Goals/Objectives Sub-Committee Final Reports (Committee Members) (50 min) Final reports/presentations from each subcommittee.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

(b) Committee Goals/Objectives Final Committee Recommendations (Councilmember Barto) (20 min) Committee members to vote on final projects for City Council consideration.

Recommendation: Committee Approval

6) **COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM) (10 min)**

(a) Santa Ana River Trash Mitigation Project Field Trip Report (Winter 2026 - TBD)

(b) Draft Copper Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Winter 2026 - TBD)

(c) Newport Bay Trash Interceptor - Trash Characterization (Winter 2026 - Ellis Peterson)

(d) Newport Beach Trash Interceptor Public Outreach Campaign (Winter 2026 - TBD)

7) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (5 min)**

Public comments are invited on non-agenda items generally considered to be within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee. Speakers must limit comments to three minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Committee has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on non-agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers. As a courtesy, please turn cell phones off or set them in the silent mode.

8) **SET NEXT MEETING DATE (5 min)**

Recommendation: January 8, 2026

9) **ADJOURNMENT**

Date: October 2, 2025

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Location: Newport Coast Conference Room, Newport Beach Civic Center

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember/Chair Michelle Barto
Committee Member Curtis Black
Committee Member Charles Fancher
Committee Member Craig Hudson
Committee Member Sharon Ray
Committee Member George Robertson
Committee Member John Wadsworth

Committee Members Absent:

Mayor/Vice Chair Joe Stapleton
Committee Member Peter Belden

Staff Present: Karen Gallagher, Administrative Assistant
Bob Stein, Assistant City Engineer
Ellis Petersen, Associate Civil Engineer
Kayla Nyberg, Management Analyst
Chris Miller, Administrative Manager

Guests Present: Jim Mosher, Resident
Nancy Gardner, Orange Coast River Park
Nancy Scarbrough, SPON
Nancy Skinner, SPON
Dennis Baker, SPON
Mark Ward, Help Your Harbor
Rudy Svreck, Harbor Commissioner
Adam Leverenz, Resident

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

4. Review and approval of minutes

Recommendation: Approve minutes as presented

Motion: A motion was made by Committee Member Fancher to approve the September 4, 2025, minutes as presented, seconded by Committee Member Robertson. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Current Business

- a. Committee Goals/Objectives (Bob Stein)
An update from each of the three Ad Hoc Subcommittees.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

Assistant City Engineer Bob Stein presented on the progress of the three subcommittees looking at different goals and objectives for the Committee.

Committee Member Hudson reported that he regularly cycles down the trails near Irvine Ave., and the area needs some refreshing. He added that it would be a manageable project, allowing the Committee to show that it is making progress. He stated that they would need \$10,000 to \$20,000 for a concept proposal so that City staff can write a grant proposal. He added that there would be an aesthetic goal where the area's openness is maintained while improving the vegetation with native shrubs and flowering plants with an improved irrigation system. He stated that shade trees would be beneficial but cautioned that there would have to be a balance with residents. He noted that representatives from the Boy Scouts offered to volunteer to improve the trails. He called for more informational plaques discussing the area's history, wildlife, and vegetation, stating that refurbishing work at Castaways Park can serve as a model.

Committee Member Hudson called for restoration work on Upper Newport Bay Preserve, where Orange County has not prioritized the area.

Chair Barto stated that this would be a great project because there is an opportunity for partnership with the Newport Bay Conservancy.

In response to Orange Coast River Park's Nancy Gardner's inquiries, Committee Member Hudson clarified that there is only an irrigation system for the median. Staff members reported that the water is most likely potable.

Ms. Gardner stated that, if the Snug Harbor Surf Park is approved, it will strain the City's water budget.

Committee Member Hudson noted that the Colorado River is drying up as well.

In response to Committee Member Black's inquiry, Assistant City Engineer Stein reported that the grant application for work on the St. Isabel Channel has already been submitted twice and failed. He added that the application will be recycled and resubmitted. He added that the project being discussed is probably better as a separate project from the St. Isabel Channel work, as opposed to combined, because the St. Isabel Channel project is much larger in scale and cost.

Committee Member Black added that it can be confusing when walking the trails, what areas are part of the trail and what areas are not. He agreed that the City would benefit from cleaning up the trails.

In response to Committee Member Fancher's inquiries, Committee Member Hudson could not state whether the trails in question are worse than others but added that the trails are gems in need of polish in a manner that will be inexpensive. Assistant City Engineer Stein reported that the Mayor has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for work at Lower Castaways Park.

Dennis Baker of Still Protecting Our Newport (SPON) encouraged the Committee to study the history of Upper Castaways Park and Back Bay View Park so that they do not make the same mistakes. He inquired if this proposal had been presented to the Orange County Parks Department, as it is their property.

Assistant City Engineer Stein clarified that a portion of the land is owned by the City.

In response to Committee Member Baker's inquiry, Mr. Baker reported that the irrigation system at Upper Castaways Park was not operated correctly, leading to the death of native plants. He noted how much effort must go into Back Bay View Park to maintain its beauty. He agreed with the concept of a study but cautioned to be realistic about nurturing these areas properly.

In response to Committee Member Hudson's inquiry, Mr. Baker agreed to help the Committee and added that others have even more historical knowledge than he does.

SPON's Nancy Skinner stated that it is important to remove non-native plants in this process.

SPON's Nancy Scarbrough reported that she and others spoke with the Irvine Ranch Water District years ago about purple pipe water in this area, with the company indicating it would be happy to sell its excess water to the City. She stated that they offered a good price. F

Chair Barto clarified that the proposal is to have a more formally drafted concept with a biologist and grant writers. She stated that this could be a good plan worthy of being presented to the City Council.

In response to Committee Member Hudson's inquiry, Assistant City Engineer Stein clarified that the next meeting is when the Committee will be formally recommending items such as this. He lauded the feedback received on the proposal.

Committee Member Wadsworth reported that his proposal looks at ways to reduce trash flows into the Santa Ana River that end up on Newport Beach's beaches, bay, and harbor. He called for the City to lead by example while also studying upstream offenders with a focus on reducing single-use plastic. He added that mandates have a history of failing, so a softer approach is necessary.

Committee Member Wadsworth reported that Assembly Bill 1276 requires restaurants to provide single-use items only upon request. He stated that Orange County will begin enforcement next year, along with launching a campaign to raise awareness, adding that it will help reduce trash cleanup costs incurred by the City and reduce landfill usage. He recommended hiring a consultant to help the City design an AB 1276 awareness campaign.

Committee Member Ray recommended including the Chamber of Commerce in outreach efforts to restaurants.

Committee Member Wadsworth agreed and noted that there is also a local Restaurant Association.

Ms. Gardner reported that the City's Styrofoam ban occurred after work in conjunction with the Restaurant Association, as its agreement helped convince the City Council to approve the ban.

Chair Barto stated that this is a great idea with things the City can realistically do.

SPON's Dennis Baker reported that a similar effort against single-use plastic was made 4-5 years ago, receiving good buy-ins from the restaurants.

Assistant City Engineer Stein recalled that the efforts Mr. Baker discussed eventually hit a wall. He agreed with Committee Member Wadsworth's call for a softer approach.

Ms. Gardner recommended signage for restaurant windows like those for ocean-friendly restaurants.

Ms. Skinner recommended encouraging similar efforts by upstream neighbors.

Committee Member Wadsworth stated that this is where Newport Beach can lead by example.

In response to Committee Member Hudson's inquiry, Committee Member Wadsworth agreed that local fast-food chains generate a large portion of the trash but lamented that large corporations are difficult to penetrate.

Associate Engineer Ellis Petersen reported that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Starbucks Coffee Company, Brian Niccol, lives in Newport Beach and endorsed speaking with Mr. Niccol as trash from Starbucks is regularly seen on the beach.

Chair Barto reported that Starbucks is doing a campaign for reusables in its stores, so Mr. Niccol may be a good resource.

A Committee Member noted that Chipotle Mexican Grill CEO Scott Boatwright also lives in Newport Beach.

Harbor Commissioner Rudy Svrcek recommended extensive photographing and categorizing of the trash found, so the City can be specific in discussions with those CEOs.

Committee Member Wadsworth added that pictures and collection data from the Newport Beach Trash Interceptor can also be useful evidence.

Committee Member Ray reported that North Star Beach has been overtaken by scrub and invasive plants, adding that it is also prone to flooding. She called for restoration work on the area, reporting that Coastal Quest helps fund fellow non-profits on environmental projects and may have an interest in the project for a small amount of startup funding. She added that Coastal Quest could be used for other future projects if they prove to be a good funding partner.

In response to Ms. Gardner's inquiry, Committee Member Ray confirmed that the area is vulnerable to sea level rise.

Mr. Baker added that the area could also be a migration path.

In response to Committee Member Fancher's inquiry, Committee Member Ray confirmed that Coastal Quest has a good reputation with State officials for doing projects around California.

Committee Member Ray stated that the goals of this project would be the removal of invasive species, the enhancement of intertidal areas, and the restoration of native plants with irrigation. She recommended having Coastal Quest prepare a \$1 million preapplication for Proposition 4 funding, cautioning that Coastal Quest would probably want to retain about \$10,000 for administrative work.

In response to Committee Member Hudson's inquiry, Mr. Baker reported that the Newport Bay Conservancy conducts tours through the area, providing an overview of the native and non-native species in the area. He added that there is a large, elevated drain in the area, leading to large downhill water flows during storms and modifying the terrain. He agreed that the area has great potential but will take some planning by a knowledgeable consultant.

In response to Associate Engineer Petersen's inquiry, Committee Member Ray reported that consideration is being given to adding a walkway through the area. Mr. Baker added that there are walking paths, and the area is also a popular fishing spot.

In response to Chair Barto's inquiry, Assistant City Engineer Stein clarified that Senior Engineer John Kappeler was considering Prop 4 funding for projects like this. He added that Committee Member Hudson's earlier proposal would also fall under Prop 4 as a potential funding source.

- b. City of Newport Beach's General Plan – Harbor, Bay and Beaches Element Subcommittee (Curtis Black)
Update from the Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

Committee Member Black reported that the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) is looking for insertion-ready language from the Committee that reflects its recommendation on beaches, governance, coastal resilience, and sea level rise. He noted that the recent presentation to the Committee had some gaps in the Draft Harbor, Bay, and Beaches Element and recommended highlighting the importance of the beaches as an economic driver for the City, generating 9.5 million day-trip visitors annually.

Committee Member Black stated that there needs to be more clarity over who in the City is ultimately responsible for the beaches, as multiple groups share oversight. He recommended there should be a new Committee whose sole work is overseeing the beaches.

Committee Member Fancher stated that nourishment of the beaches should be an important aspect of the General Plan.

Committee Member Hudson added that access to the beaches is also an important component.

Mr. Baker noted that there are different administrative dynamics within Newport Harbor and outside of it.

Committee Member Black added that it is not their job to clarify the administrative gaps, but only to be focused on the beaches.

Committee Member Fancher stated that the City's beaches are part of an economic machine.

In response to Committee Member Ray's inquiry, Administrative Manager Chris Miller confirmed that the City is responsible for Balboa Island's maintenance. He noted that some of the beaches within Newport Beach's City limits are the responsibility of Orange County.

Ms. Scarborough noted that the beach costs the City money to maintain, whereas the harbor generates a surplus. She added that beach maintenance costs more than the City receives in direct revenue from parking and other sources.

Chair Barto cited Prado Dam as an example of a resource where the City must work with multiple agencies, not all of which include it as a high priority. She added that if there was a committee devoted to the beaches, it would have to coordinate with many parties as a goal.

Mr. Baker noted that the Committee has often acquired additional responsibilities.

Committee Member Black stated that managing the beaches economically can create tension, and it does not fall into the Committee's scope of work.

Mr. Baker stated that this is a decision for the City Council to make and encouraged returning the discussion to the General Plan.

Committee Member Black called for a nature-based strategy to beach management.

Committee Member Fancher stated that if Mr. Baker (a member of the GPAC) and Ms. Gardner (Chair of the General Plan Update Steering Committee) adopt the changes to the General Plan, then they can advocate for the Committee's wishes before the City Council.

Committee Member Black reported that the City is ahead of its State mandate of having a formal Sea Level Rise Plan by 2032 and is hoping to set a completion target date of 2029.

Associate Engineer Petersen stated that staff will be looking to add sea walls, acknowledging there is a question of funding.

Committee Member Black called for efforts to reduce the City's trash footprint to be included.

Committee Member Wadsworth urged a softer approach than the City has taken in the past to counteract the mass distribution of single-use plastics.

Committee Member Black encouraged feedback on the drafts so the Committee can put it together in a single document for the GPAC.

Ms. Gardner added that the City will be hosting a pair of open houses in October to gather public input on the drafts.

Committee Member Fancher expressed concerns that the Committee has not had enough time to fully review the drafts and encouraged submitting any feedback to Committee Member Black.

Motion: A motion was made by Committee Member Wadsworth to approve the Draft Harbor, Bay, and Beaches Element as written by one week from the meeting, seconded by Committee Member Black. The motion passed.

- c. Newport Beach Trash Interceptor Viewing Platform (Mark Ward)
Presentation on a proposed (future) viewing platform.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

Help Your Harbor Founder Mark Ward reported on his group's efforts to collect trash in Newport Beach, adding that 85% of the trash entering Newport Harbor comes down San Diego Creek. He reported on his organization's work with the City to help fund the trash interceptor, adding that it should not be hidden but rather a conversation piece to help educate people upstream about their trash. He added that it is time to work on the education phase, citing the publicity and webpage for the City of Baltimore, Maryland's trash interceptor, and calling for a viewing platform at Newport Beach's trash interceptor, with a focus on school groups. He proposed working with the City through a public/private partnership and requested a formal plan for a viewing deck that he can present to potential corporate sponsors who have helped his group in the past.

Committee Member Ray reported that the Coastal Corridor Alliance has a strong relationship with the City of Costa Mesa and recommended using neutral parties, such as Coastal Corridor, as opposed to having the City approach other jurisdictions about their trash flows. She added that Councilmember Robyn Grant may have governmental contacts upstream.

Chair Barto clarified that Councilmember Grant is involved with the Association of California Cities - Orange County (ACC-OC), adding that she herself serves on the Orange County Watershed Executive Committee. She added that they are working with the Coastal Corridor Alliance on the Randall Preserve.

In response to Committee Member Fancher's inquiry, Mr. Ward reported that Help Your Harbor has initial funds for what the viewing deck may cost but does not yet have a concrete cost estimate.

Chair Barto recommended the potential use of General Fund dollars for the project.

Assistant City Engineer Stein lauded Help Your Harbor's fundraising abilities.

Mr. Baker expressed concerns about the potential parking options at the site, noting that school buses would be anticipated.

Mr. Ward stated that a plaque explaining the trash interceptor's purpose and operations would likely be necessary.

Associate Engineer Petersen reported that he recently toured the trash interceptor with marine biologist Nancy Caruso, and all the parking spaces were occupied by Fletcher Jones Motorcars. He added that he communicated with Fletcher Jones on this matter, and they are flexible with parking.

Mr. Baker recommended continuing the discussions with Fletcher Jones.

6. COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

- (a) Committee Goals/Objectives Sub-committees Final Reports (November – TBD)

- (b) Santa Ana River Trash Mitigation Project Field Trip (November 2025 – TBD)
- (c) Draft Copper Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Winter 2026 – TBD)
- (d) Newport Bay Trash Interceptor – Trash Characterization (Winter 2026 – Ellis Peterson)
- (e) Newport Beach Trash Interceptor Public Outreach Campaign (Winter 2026 – TBD)

Mr. Ward reported that 100-150 divers will be volunteering for an upcoming underwater harbor cleanup event and encouraged all to attend.

Chair Barto commended Mr. Ward on Help Your Harbor's work to help identify invasive species.

Assistant City Engineer Stein reported that Administrative Manager Miller will be the staff lead starting in January, adding that he will be a great asset.

Adam Leverenz reported on work at the Rhine Channel.

Mr. Baker encouraged all to attend the upcoming Newport Beach Film Festival.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

8. SET NEXT MEETING DATE

Recommendation: November 6, 2025

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Chair / Michelle Barto