



# NEWPORT BEACH

## Harbor Commission Staff Report

March 11, 2026  
Agenda Item No. 6.3

**TO:** HARBOR COMMISSION

**FROM:** Paul Blank, Harbormaster  
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**TITLE:** Review and Discuss Proposed Elimination of Mooring Length Adjustment Process

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Several applications to adjust mooring lengths are received by the Harbor Department annually. Some desire to eliminate the process of mooring length adjustments has been expressed. The Commission will discuss whether mooring length adjustments should be considered going forward.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- 2) Review and discuss the proposed elimination of mooring length adjustments
- 3) Provide direction to staff regarding the adoption of a recommendation to eliminate mooring size adjustments.

### **FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:**

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Harbor Department continues to evaluate several applications for mooring length adjustments annually. Evaluating the applications involves surveys of the field conditions around the applicant's mooring, review of the mooring length history, and a general plan to improve the layout, safety, and navigability of the mooring fields.

Some desire has been expressed to eliminate the ability to file an application requesting a mooring length extension. Commissioners will discuss the process and effects of granting or denying size adjustment applications. Commissioners will discuss whether the current process and practices should continue, be amended, or be eliminated.

The relevant sections of the City Municipal Code are 17.60.040 (M), which reads:

M. Request to Extend Mooring Length.

1. General. Mooring permittees shall not moor vessels that exceed their permitted maximum mooring length. If an offshore mooring permittee wishes to moor a vessel that requires an extension in mooring length, they may request an extension up to the established length of their mooring row. A request for an extension that would exceed the established length of their mooring row shall require the permittee to relocate to a larger mooring row. In no case shall mooring lengths exceed the established mooring row lengths.
2. Application.
  - a. Filing and Review of Request. An offshore mooring permittee shall file a written request for extension of mooring length with the Harbor Department on a form prescribed by the Harbormaster, together with the filing fee required by the City's fee schedule adopted by resolution of the City Council.
  - b. Application Requirements. An application for extension of mooring length shall include the following information in addition to such other information as may be required by the Harbormaster:
    - i. The full identification of the applicant and the vessel for which the extension of mooring length is sought, certifying that the applicant and the assigned vessel have complied with (or in the event the vessel identification is unknown, applicant will certify that such unidentified vessel prior to occupying the mooring space will comply with) all of the applicable United States Coast Guard license, inspection, and certification requirements, and certifying that the applicant has read and is otherwise familiar with all of the applicable rules and regulations promulgated by the City, including, but not limited to, the provisions of this title;
    - ii. Such plans and specifications as may be required by the Harbormaster for such mooring to accommodate the proposed longer vessel; and
    - iii. Detailed information regarding the vessel including make, model, year, LOA, beam, dimension, vessel ID, and if the vessel identification is not known at the time of making an application, the LOA and adjusted LOA (including bowsprits, swim steps, or stern-mounted dinghies) of the proposed vessel for which the applicant seeks approval. The LOA as published by the manufacturer of a particular vessel shall be used to determine the required mooring size of a particular vessel, and the size of the specification for the chains, weights, and tackle necessary to secure a vessel on a particular mooring for a permittee. Adjusted LOA shall be used to determine the maximum vessel length that can fit in any particular slip, side-tie, or mooring row.
3. Action on Extension Request. For extension requests that require relocation to a larger mooring, a mooring of appropriate size must be available within the

same mooring field. The H and J fields shall be considered as one field for the purpose of relocations. As used herein, an available mooring includes one that is occupied by a permittee whose permitted maximum mooring length is shorter than the established length of its mooring row by five feet or more. The Harbormaster may approve the extension request only after making the findings set forth in Section [17.05.140](#)(D)(1) and making the following findings:

- a. There have been no changes in the conditions or circumstances of the existing offshore mooring permit so that there would have been grounds for denial of the original offshore mooring permit or grounds for revocation thereof at the time an application for extension of mooring length is filed;
  - b. The proposed extension of mooring length will not:
    - i. Impede or obstruct the fairways or channels or prevent or obstruct the passage of other vessels between the rows;
    - ii. Impede, obstruct or prevent other mooring permittees from safely navigating in and out of adjacent moorings or moorings in other rows connected by the same fairway to the row of the permittee's vessel;
    - iii. Result in vessel(s) encroaching into the fairway or extending beyond the outer boundaries of the mooring area or row; or
    - iv. Violate the established length of the row or mooring area in which the vessel will be moored;
  - c. The applicant and the assigned vessel have complied with all of the appropriate United States Coast Guard license, inspection, and certification requirements for the assigned vessel and all of the applicable rules and regulations promulgated by the City, including, but not limited to, the provisions of this title.
    - i. Example of relocation to an available mooring. Permittee A wishes to upgrade their vessel "Atlantis" (forty (40) foot LOA), which is in a forty (40) foot row, with "Atlantis II" (forty-two (42) foot LOA). A will need to relocate to a mooring in a longer row since the mooring length cannot be extended at its current location. Permittee B's vessel "Barnacle" (forty-one (41) foot LOA) is in a forty-five (45) foot row. Permittee C's vessel "Calypso" (forty (40) foot LOA) is in forty-five (45) foot row. Permittee D's vessel "Doldrums" (forty (40) foot LOA) is in a forty-five (45) foot row. B has a permitted mooring length of forty-one (41) feet; C's permitted mooring length is forty (40) feet; and D's permitted mooring length is forty-one (41). All four moorings are in the same mooring field. C's mooring is the only available mooring to which A can relocate.
4. Conditions of Approval. If the Harbormaster approves a request for extension of mooring length, such approval shall be conditional and contingent upon the following requirements:
- a. The mooring permittee must occupy the approved mooring with their vessel within twelve (12) months following the date of approval;
  - b. Transferable mooring permits shall not be sold or transferred for a period of twelve (12) months following the date of occupancy of the

- approved mooring. The sale or transfer of said permit shall comply with the requirements of subsections (B)(3), (E) and (F) of this section; and
- c. The requestor shall cover all costs associated with modifying the length of their mooring, or in the case of a relocation moving their vessel to the available mooring and moving the displaced vessel from the available mooring. The costs shall include, but not be limited to, the moving of mooring anchors and tackle and resizing of mooring tackle to meet applicable mooring standards (e.g., chain size).
5. Noncompliance with subsection (M)(4)(a) or (b) of this section shall result in rescission of the approval to extend mooring length. Within thirty (30) days of the rescission, the permittee who requested the extension shall at its sole expense return the mooring to its prior maximum length or in the case of a relocation return their vessel and the displaced vessel to their prior assigned mooring locations or other mooring locations as deemed appropriate by the Harbormaster. Violation of subsection (M)(4)(b) of this section shall be grounds for revocation of the mooring permit. (Ord. 2023-22 § 767, 2023; Ord. 2023-8 §§ 6—11, 2023; Ord. 2022-9 §§ 7, 8, 2022; Ord. 2022-4 § 2, 2022; Ord. 2020-5 § 1 (Exh. 1) (part), 2020; Ord. 2018-17 § 58, 2018; Ord. 2017-7 § 3, 2017; Ord. 2013-11 § 175, 2013; Ord. 2010-26 § 5, 2010; Ord. 2008-2 § 1 (part), 2008)

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Staff recommends the Harbor Commission find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

#### **NOTICING:**

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Harbor Commission considers the item).