



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH HARBOR COMMISSION AGENDA

City Council Chambers-100 Civic Center Dr, Newport Beach CA 92660

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 - 5:00 PM

Harbor Commission Members:

Marie Marston, Chair
Steve Scully, Vice Chair
Bob Miller, Secretary
Sabrina Kerr, Commissioner
Thom McElroy, Commissioner
Rudy Svrcek, Commissioner
Gary Williams, Commissioner

Staff Members:

Paul Blank, Harbormaster
Cynthia Shintaku, Management Analyst

The Harbor Commission meeting is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act. Among other things, the Brown Act requires that the Harbor Commission 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 Commission and items not on the agenda but are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Harbor Commission. 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 Paul Blank, Harbormaster, 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) 270-8158 or pblank@newportbeachca.gov.

Questions and comments may be submitted in writing for the Harbor Commission's consideration by sending them to harborfeedback@newportbeachca.gov. To give the Harbor Commission adequate time to review your questions and comments, please submit your written comments no later than 5 p.m. the day prior to the Harbor Commission meeting. All correspondence will be made part of the record.

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 Harbor Department 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

- 1) **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
- 2) **ROLL CALL**
- 3) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Public comments are invited on non-agenda items. Speakers must limit comments to three (3) minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Harbor Commission has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on agenda or 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.

- 5) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

5.1) Draft minutes of the July 8, 2026 Harbor Commission Regular Meeting

[7.8.2026 Harbor Commission Meeting Minutes Draft](#)

[7.8.2026 Harbor Commission Draft Meeting Minutes- Vice Chair Scully](#)

6) CURRENT BUSINESS**6.1) Create and Appoint Members to a Proposed State Lands Ad-Hoc Subcommittee**

At the Harbor Commission meeting on July 8, 2026, the Harbor Commission requested consideration of establishing a subcommittee to review and discuss State Lands Commission directions related to Newport Harbor. Once convened, the subcommittee will provide recommendations and updates during future Harbor Commission meetings.

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. Establish a subcommittee and appoint Harbor Commissioners to review, discuss and recommend items from the State Lands Commission. Identify up to three Harbor Commissioners to serve on the subcommittee.

[Staff Report](#)

6.2) Ad Hoc Committee Updates

Several ad hoc committees have been established to address short term projects outside of the Harbor Commission objectives. This is the time the ad hoc committees will provide an update on their projects

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

[Staff Report](#)

6.3) Harbor Commission 2026 Objectives

Each ad hoc committee studying their respective Objective within the Commission's 2026 Objectives, will provide a progress update.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

[Staff Report](#)

[Attachment A- 2026 Harbor Commission Objectives](#)

6.4) Harbormaster Update - July 2026 Activities

July 2026 was an extraordinarily busy month for the Harbor Department, with calls for service running significantly above normal levels. The challenge was compounded by the absence of anticipated new staff at Balboa Yacht Basin (BYB) due to delays in the recruiting process. Despite being short-handed, the entire team rose to the occasion, pitching in across all functions to ensure that expectations were met for every harbor stakeholder and that Newport Harbor remained clean, safe, and well-enjoyed. The overwhelming focus for the month was on safety, driven by the high volume of vessels and recreational traffic on the harbor during peak summer season. Notable incidents included the termination of a dangerous voyage involving unsupervised minors, the successful deployment of a new patrol boat tracking system, multiple vessel rescues and assists, and the continued pursuit of an unpermitted commercial charter operator who was arrested twice - once in June and again on July 31 after skipping a second court appearance, resulting in a \$15,000 bench warrant. On the "Well-Enjoyed" front, the Department completed a full inspection of BYB, tested new customer self-service technology, and continued to demonstrate the operational advantages of managing both Marina Park and BYB under a single management structure.

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. Receive and file.

[Staff Report](#)

[Attachment A - Harbor Department Statistics Infographic](#)

7) **MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION**

A motion to reconsider any action taken by the Harbor Commission must be made at the same meeting or the subsequent meeting at which the action was taken and may only be made by one of the Harbor Commission members who voted with the prevailing side.

8) **COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)**

9) **MATTERS WHICH COMMISSIONERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE
AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEMS)**

10) **DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING: September 9, 2026 at 5 p.m.**

11) **ADJOURNMENT**

NEWPORT BEACH HARBOR COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
City Council Chambers – 100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach
Wednesday, July 8, 2026
5 p.m.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Marie Marston, Vice Chair
Steve Scully, Secretary
Sabrina Kerr, Commissioner
Thom McElroy, Commissioner
Bob Miller, Commissioner
Rudy Svrcek, Commissioner
Gary Williams, Commissioner

ABSENT: None

Staff Members: Paul Blank, Harbormaster
Chris Miller, Public Works Administration Manager
Cynthia Shintaku, Management Analyst

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Williams

Vice Chair Marie Marston welcomed newly appointed Commissioners Sabrina Kerr and Thom McElroy to the Harbor Commission and invited each to introduce themselves and share their interest in serving on the Commission.

Commissioner Kerr stated that she previously worked on the water and has experience in the maritime environment, including yacht operations, engine maintenance, navigation, and situational awareness. Although she now works in an office setting, she expressed her desire to remain connected to Newport Harbor and viewed service on the Harbor Commission as an opportunity to continue contributing to the waterfront community.

Commissioner McElroy shared that his connection to Newport Harbor began at age ten through boating and fishing. He explained that he is now an avid prone paddler and has paddled throughout every channel in the harbor, giving him a broad perspective on both its strengths and challenges. Encouraged by conversations with current and former Harbor Commissioners, he expressed enthusiasm for serving the City and helping support the harbor's continued success.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Recommendation:

1. Find this action exempt from 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, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Elect Chair; and
3. Elect Vice Chair; and
4. Elect Secretary.

Vice Chair Marston opened nominations for the position of Chair.

Secretary Steve Scully nominated Vice Chair Marston to serve as Chair. Seconded by Commission Williams. No additional nominations were received.

Ayes: Kerr, McElroy, Miller, Svrcek, Williams, Scully, Marston
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Chair Marston opened nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Commissioner Miller nominated Secretary Scully to serve as Vice Chair. Seconded by Chair Marston. No additional nominations were received.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Kerr, McElroy, Miller, Svrcek, Williams, Scully, Marston
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Chair Marston opened nominations for the position of Secretary.

Vice Chair Scully nominated Commissioner Miller to serve as Secretary. Seconded by Chair Marston. No additional nominations were received.

Vice Chair Scully nominated Commissioner Miller to serve as Secretary. Seconded by Chair Marston.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Kerr, McElroy, Svrcek, Williams, Miller, Scully, Marston
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Chair Marston thanked the outgoing officers for their service, and congratulated the newly elected officers.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Sandy Manich introduced herself as a legal liveaboard permit holder of more than 15 years, a school teacher in the Orange Unified School District, and an administrative credential candidate. She noted that she had applied to serve on the Harbor Commission and wished to share her perspective as a longtime harbor user. She discussed changes to harbor management beginning in 2017, stating that the transition from the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol to the City's current harbor management model resulted in the loss of a continuous armed law enforcement presence in the harbor. She expressed her view that the Sheriff's Harbor Patrol had provided highly trained personnel and enhanced harbor security.

Ms. Manich further stated that, as a liveaboard resident who had been encouraged to serve as the "eyes and ears" of the harbor, she has submitted more than 100 reports of code violations to City staff in an effort to improve harbor safety and appearance. She expressed disappointment that her reports had not

been well received and cited a deteriorated piling at the Washington Street Public Dock as an example of a maintenance concern she intended to document and share with the Commission.

Adam Leverenz referenced comments made at a previous Harbor Commission meeting regarding positive recognition the City had received from The Log maritime publication. He also presented editorial cartoons previously published by The Log that criticized past Harbor Commission actions related to the harbor mooring realignment program.

Mr. Leverenz encouraged the Commission, including its newly appointed members, to carefully consider factual information when evaluating future harbor issues. He expressed concern that significant public funds had been spent pursuing initiatives that were ultimately unsuccessful, noting that the California Coastal Commission denied the proposed mooring realignment. He stated that he hopes future discussions will be more collaborative and fact-driven and cautioned that future harbor policy decisions could have significant impacts on yacht clubs, affordable recreational boating, residential mooring permit holders, homeowners, and commercial boating interests. He concluded by encouraging the Commission to discuss these issues proactively in an effort to avoid unintended consequences.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Draft Minutes of the June 10, 2026, Harbor Commission Regular Meeting

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Jim Mosher addressed the Commission regarding the draft minutes from the previous meeting. He explained that after leaving the prior meeting early to attend another event, he later reviewed the meeting minutes and noticed a reference to the Ben Carlson paddle crossing from Catalina Island to Newport Beach.

Mr. Mosher stated that the draft minutes identified former Mayor Will O'Neill as having completed the crossing with Commissioner McElroy. After reviewing the meeting video, he noted that the former Chair had referred only to a "former mayor" without identifying the individual by name. He suggested that, for accuracy, the minutes should either refer only to a "former mayor" or identify the individual as former Mayor Joe Stapleton, whom he believed was the person being referenced.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

Vice Chair Scully moved to approve the June 10, 2026 Harbor Commission Regular Meeting minutes, as amended. Seconded by Secretary Miller. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Svrcek, Miller, Scully, Martson

Nays: None

Abstain: Kerr, McElroy, Williams

Absent: None

7. CURRENT BUSINESS

7.1 Progress Update - Small Vessel Rental Customer Safety Program: City-Produced Safety Video, Knowledge Quiz, and Certification Process

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. Receive and file; or

3. Provide direction to staff and/or the Newport Harbor Safety Committee regarding the implementation of the City-produced safety video, knowledge quiz, and certification process as a strong suggestion or potential requirement for all single-day small vessel rental concession operators and their customers in Newport Harbor.

Vice Chair Scully presented an update on the Safety Committee's proposed Water Rental Safety Program, which has been under development for more than a year. He explained that the proposal was developed in response to the exemption that allows single-day rental customers to operate rental vessels without obtaining a California Boater Safety Card. He noted that the program is intended to improve boater safety by providing renters with an online educational resource before arriving at a rental concession.

Vice Chair Scully demonstrated a prototype website featuring the City's existing harbor safety video followed by a 10-question online quiz. He explained that participants who achieve a passing score of 80 percent would receive a certificate that could be printed or emailed to both the renter and the rental concessionaire as verification of completion. He played the Safety Video for those in attendance.

Vice Chair Scully demonstrated how users would complete the proposed online safety training. He explained that the website could be accessed from a smartphone, tablet, or computer and completed before arriving at the rental concession, allowing participants to complete the training at their convenience without delaying the rental process. He walked the Commission through the ten-question safety quiz, which covers topics including life jacket requirements, the harbor speed limit, channel navigation, pre-rental safety briefings, vessel operation, emergency procedures, trash disposal, safe boating practices, and emergency response.

Vice Chair Scully demonstrated the quiz by answering each question, resulting in a perfect score. He explained that upon successful completion, users can enter their name and email address to receive a completion certificate electronically. He noted that the certificate may also be emailed directly to the rental concessionaire or printed and presented when picking up the rental vessel. He stated that the online training, quiz, and completion certificate together provide a convenient method for renters to complete the proposed safety education program before arriving at the rental facility.

Vice Chair Scully reported that preliminary discussions with several rental concessionaires had been generally positive. He noted that suggestions received included modifying the program to reflect that personal watercraft renters are required to wear life jackets at all times and considering separate educational tracks for powered and human-powered vessels. He recommended expanding outreach by meeting with all Marine Activities Permit holders to review the proposal, gather additional feedback, and discuss implementation strategies.

Commissioner Svrcek expressed strong support for the concept and stated that an educational program is needed to improve safety on Newport Harbor. He suggested identifying one individual as the responsible operator for each rental party, adding information about avoiding mooring fields to prevent propeller entanglements, providing clearer guidance on the location of public restrooms, and incorporating additional harbor operating rules into the educational materials so renters receive that information before arriving.

Commissioner Williams supported the proposal and recommended adding a drop-down list of approved rental concessionaires so users could easily identify the vendor receiving their completion certificate. He also suggested providing a downloadable map or graphic identifying public restrooms and businesses offering restroom access, and emphasized the importance of establishing a practical method for rental operators to verify that customers completed the training before receiving a vessel. Later in the discussion, he suggested offering incentives, such as a small rental discount, to encourage customers to provide feedback on the program and identify information that may have been missing from the training.

Secretary Miller complimented the Safety Committee's work and stated that the proposal was moving in the right direction. He recommended expanding the educational content to include additional "rules of the road" and navigation scenarios commonly encountered in Newport Harbor, such as interactions with sailing regattas. He also asked whether participation in the safety program could become a condition of Marine Activities Permits and inquired about vessel maintenance requirements in light of recent public comments concerning rental vessel safety. He suggested that renters who already possess a valid California Boater Safety Card should be permitted to satisfy the educational requirement without completing the online quiz.

Commissioner McElroy commended Vice Chair Scully for developing the program and stated that it would improve safety and cleanliness throughout the harbor. He recommended requiring the individual completing the quiz to verify their identity by uploading a driver's license or similar identification so rental operators could confirm that the certificate matched the person operating the vessel.

Commissioner Kerr expressed support for the proposal and asked why rental customers are exempt from the California Boater Safety Card requirement. After receiving clarification that the exemption is established by state law, she stated that she supported the recommendations offered by the other commissioners.

Secretary Miller asked whether individuals who already possess a California Boater Card could be allowed to bypass the online safety quiz, noting that they have already completed a state-approved boating safety course.

Vice Chair Scully agreed that presenting a valid California Boater Card would be an appropriate alternative to completing the proposed online training and quiz.

Chair Marston supported moving the proposal forward and suggested incorporating information about the City's harbor application.

Vice Chair Scully noted that there is a QR code system to help visitors locate public restrooms and public docks. He noted that the City was having difficulty with operators promoting the QR code in the boat.

Commissioner Svrcek suggested that, in addition to the QR code linking to the harbor map and safety information, rental vessels should also include a printed hard-copy map. He noted that having the map readily available in the vessel would make information such as restroom locations and other harbor amenities immediately accessible without requiring users to locate and scan a QR code.

Vice Chair Scully acknowledged the suggestion for consideration as the program continues to be refined.

Commissioner Williams noted that Newport Beach public restrooms are already listed in Apple Maps. He suggested that the proposed safety program include a reminder that users can locate nearby public restrooms by searching Apple Maps, providing an additional navigation option for visitors unfamiliar with the harbor.

Chair Marston supported meeting with the rental concessionaires to gather their feedback before finalizing the program. She noted that because most customers reserve rentals by phone or email, concessionaires could notify renters in advance about the safety training requirement. She explained that doing so would allow participants to complete the training before arriving, minimizing any impact on the rental process. She also recommended adding information regarding prevailing wind conditions, particularly for operators of human-powered watercraft, to reduce situations in which renters are unable to return safely.

Vice Chair Scully stated that the next step is to engage the rental concessionaires by holding a meeting to gather their feedback and encourage their participation in the proposed safety program. He acknowledged that new requirements may not initially be well received, but emphasized the importance of

explaining the program's purpose and its goal of improving safety throughout Newport Harbor. He indicated that the Commission's comments could be incorporated into the quiz, while noting that revisions to the instructional video would likely require additional production costs. He also expressed uncertainty about the extent to which participation in the program could be required under current law, observing that the existing proposal may need to begin as a voluntary program. He concluded that even voluntary participation would encourage renters to think more intentionally about safe boating practices before operating a rental vessel.

Secretary Bob Miller suggested incorporating a mechanism for collecting customer feedback after completion of the safety program. He proposed partnering with rental concessionaires to offer a small incentive, such as a discount on a future rental, in exchange for participant feedback. He noted that even experienced boaters can overlook important details and stated that feedback from first-time renters could help identify information that was missing or unclear, allowing the safety program to be refined over time.

Harbormaster Blank responded to several questions raised during the Commission's discussion. In response to Secretary Miller, he explained that Marine Activities Permits do not currently require rental operators to provide a formal safety briefing. He noted that the Commission could recommend adding such a requirement as a condition of future Marine Activities Permit issuance or renewal. Addressing additional questions regarding vessel maintenance and recent public comments, he stated that rental vessels are required to either maintain a valid U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection or comply with applicable manufacturer specifications. He explained that the City conducts inspections of vessels not subject to Coast Guard inspection requirements and noted that prior concerns involving additional battery systems on electric rental boats had been eliminated through the City's inspection and enforcement process.

In response to Commissioner Kerr's question regarding why single-day rental customers are exempt from obtaining a California Boater Safety Card, Harbormaster Blank explained that the exemption was established during the State's legislative process following advocacy by the California Chamber of Commerce, which argued that requiring a Boater Safety Card for one-day rentals would create an undue burden on rental operators. He noted that changing the exemption would require action at the state level.

Vice Chair Scully responded to comments regarding vessel maintenance by stating that the proposed rental safety program should remain focused on educating renters rather than addressing the condition or maintenance of rental vessels. He noted that vessel maintenance and inspection responsibilities are more appropriately addressed through the management of the Marine Activities Permit (MAP) program and the oversight of rental businesses, rather than as part of the renter education program.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Ms. Manich, a liveaboard resident in Mooring Field A, expressed concern that the proposed program relies heavily on input from rental concessionaires. She stated that she has previously reported numerous code violations involving commercial rental operators, including more than 20 reports submitted to Code Enforcement. She described an incident in which she observed a commercial rental vessel backing a large vessel without providing the required horn signals, creating what she believed to be a dangerous situation. She questioned whether rental operators who do not consistently comply with existing harbor regulations should be relied upon to administer or oversee the proposed safety program.

An unknown speaker complimented the harbor safety video and suggested adding more basic navigation rules, including information on sailboat right-of-way.

Mr. Leverenz commended the Safety Committee for its work on the proposal and thanked Harbormaster Blank for explaining the legislative history behind the California Boater Safety Card exemption. He reiterated the importance of providing information about public restroom locations and recommended supplementing the safety video with simple educational materials explaining basic boating concepts unfamiliar to first-time operators. He cited examples such as the fact that boats do not have brakes, do

not maneuver like automobiles, and are affected by tides, currents, and wind. He encouraged the Commission to provide renters with practical guidance that would help improve safe vessel operation.

Bud Coomans expressed support for the proposed online safety training program and noted that he had previously suggested a similar concept based on the California Boater Safety Card. He stated that allowing renters to complete the training before arriving at the rental facility was a practical improvement that would reduce burdens on concessionaires. He questioned how last-minute renters would be accommodated and observed that rental operators may not have sufficient staff to administer lengthy in-person training sessions. He agreed with comments emphasizing the importance of teaching basic "rules of the road," particularly right-of-way and channel navigation, noting that he regularly observes rental boat operators who appear unfamiliar with safe boating practices around sailboats and youth sailing programs. He suggested placing greater emphasis on navigation rules within the educational materials while describing the existing video as a positive foundation for the program.

Chair Martson closed public comments.

Chair Marston asked the Commission to provide direction on the proposed rental safety program.

Vice Chair Scully recommended incorporating the comments received from both the Commission and the public into the proposed safety quiz where appropriate. He also recommended convening a meeting with the rental concessionaires to obtain their feedback and perspectives before finalizing the program. He noted that gathering input from all stakeholders would help strengthen the proposal and recommended returning the revised program to the Harbor Commission for further review and consideration following completion of that outreach.

There was no further action taken on this item.

7.2 Ad Hoc Committee Updates

Recommendation:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc – Commissioners Scully, Svrcek and McElroy (05-10-2023)

Vice Chair Scully provided an update on the Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc Committee. He explained that although the Commission had previously discussed dissolving the committee, he recommended keeping it active because substantial work remains before electric ferries become operational. He reported that funding for the project appears secure, but progress has been slowed by delays in marine architectural design work and planning for the electrical charging infrastructure. He stated that he recently met with Joe Beek to discuss the project and facilitated a connection with Troy Heideman of the Balboa Bay Club to share experience with installing marina electrical infrastructure. He explained that once the marine architect completes the design, the project can proceed to a request for proposals for ferry construction. While optimistic that the project is moving forward, he cautioned that implementation remains several years away.

Chair Marston asked whether the electric ferries could be operational by 2027.

Vice Chair Scully responded that he did not believe that timeline was realistic given the design and construction process, and indicated that 2028 would be a more likely target, although the exact schedule remains uncertain.

Chair Marston noted that former Commissioner Don Yahn had previously served on the Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc Committee and asked whether the committee wished to appoint an additional commissioner to fill the vacancy or continue with its current membership.

Vice Chair Scully indicated he was comfortable either continuing with the existing membership or adding another commissioner if there was interest.

Chair Marston then invited interested commissioners to volunteer for the committee.

Commissioner McElroy volunteered to serve, and with no objections from the Commission, he was added to the Ad Hoc Committee.

Chair Marston opened public comments. Hearing none, Chair Marston closed public comments.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Harbormaster Blank noted that discussion had occurred regarding the possible formation of an additional ad hoc committee and suggested the topic be addressed while public comment could still be received.

Chair Marston proposed establishing a State Lands Ad Hoc Committee to review issues related to the City's use of State tidelands and the direction recently provided by the California State Lands Commission regarding harbor operations and compensation.

Vice Chair Scully supported the proposal, noting that recent correspondence between the City and the State Lands Commission specifically referenced the Harbor Commission. He recommended agendaizing formation of the committee for the next regular meeting so the Commission could better understand its role and begin addressing the issues raised by the State.

Commissioner Svrcek agreed with the proposal and supported moving forward with consideration of the new ad hoc committee.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Ms. Manich encouraged the Commission to include a liveaboard resident in the State Lands Ad Hoc Committee, noting that representatives of the California State Lands Commission had encouraged collaboration with liveaboard residents during a previous public meeting. She stated that this was one of the reasons she had sought appointment to the Harbor Commission.

Mr. Leverenz expressed concern that an ad hoc committee composed solely of commissioners would limit public participation because such committees are not subject to the same public meeting requirements as larger bodies. He suggested the Commission consider a process that would allow greater public involvement while still addressing the issues identified by the California State Lands Commission within the required timeframe.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

7.3 Harbor Commission 2026 Objectives

Recommendation:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and

2. Receive and file.

Chair Marston announced that she would serve as chair for Functional Area 1 and invited commissioners to participate.

Commissioner Kerr volunteered to join the functional area.

Vice Chair Scully also offered to assist, particularly with Objective 1.2.

Chair Marston reported that there were no substantive updates for Functional Area 1 but stated that she had spoken with Harbormaster Blank about reviewing previously identified sections of Title 17 that have not been updated to determine whether amendments should be prioritized. She indicated that the group expects to meet within the next month to begin that review.

Vice Chair Scully, chair of Functional Area 2, invited commissioners to participate.

Commissioner Williams volunteered to participate, noting that there is significant overlap between Functional Areas 2 and 3.

Commissioner McElroy expressed interest in Objective 2.1.

Chair Marston asked whether future updates should be organized by the individual objectives (e.g., Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3) or presented as a single report for the entire functional area.

Vice Chair Scully explained that the original framework envisioned individual commissioners leading each functional area while collaborating on the associated objectives. He observed that the objectives, as currently written, are intentionally broad and suggested that the ad hoc committee develop more specific and measurable goals beneath each objective to better guide future work.

Chair Marston indicated she would assist with Objectives 2.2 and 2.3.

Commissioner Svrcek expressed particular interest in Objective 2.1 regarding public access and public docks.

Vice Chair Scully agreed that specific goals could be assigned under that objective, with Commissioner Svrcek taking a leadership role on those efforts.

Chair Marston inquired if there were any updates for Functional Area 2.

Vice Chair Scully reported that there were none at this time.

Commissioner Williams, chair of Functional Area 3, stated that although he had been assigned the role while absent from a previous meeting, the subject aligns well with his professional experience analyzing financial and operational data. He invited interested commissioners to participate.

Vice Chair Scully volunteered to assist, observing that Functional Areas 2 and 3 naturally overlap and should be coordinated.

Commissioner Williams reported that there were no updates for Functional Area 3.

Secretary Miller, chair of Functional Area 4, reported that considerable work is underway, with Harbor Department staff and Harbor Safety Officers developing ideas for future safety and modernization initiatives. He identified several concepts currently under consideration, including improving the effectiveness of the Trash Rover, evaluating potential privatization opportunities, and exploring the use of

privately operated drones to assist with harbor monitoring and enforcement. He noted that the objectives would continue to be refined as the work progresses and invited additional commissioners to participate.

Vice Chair Scully volunteered to join the functional area, noting that the Water Rental Safety Program falls within this area of responsibility.

Commissioner Kerr and Commissioner McElroy also volunteered to participate.

Chair Marston noted the strong interest in Functional Area 4.

Commissioner Svrcek, chair of Functional Area 5, reported that there were no updates because the Water Quality Board had not met since the Commission's previous meeting.

Secretary Miller volunteered to participate, expressing interest in the harbor's environmental sensing technology and noting that the City's monitoring capabilities are an important resource that deserves greater public awareness.

Commissioner McElroy also volunteered to join the functional area.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Mr. Mosher suggested that the Commission consider adding an additional objective under Functional Area 2 – Harbor Infrastructure, Public Access & Capital Planning to better define and document the characteristics of Newport Harbor. He noted that the recently adopted General Plan incorrectly describes the harbor as encompassing 21 square miles and referenced City materials that state the harbor contains approximately 4,300 boats. He explained that the 4,300-boat figure appears to be derived from adding together the number of residential piers, moorings, and commercial slips, which he believes understates the actual number of vessels because many residential piers accommodate multiple boats.

Mr. Mosher recommended conducting a more comprehensive inventory of vessels in Newport Harbor using aerial photography or similar methods to establish a more accurate baseline of the number, location, and characteristics of boats in the harbor. He suggested that documenting this information would enable the Commission to better understand current harbor conditions, support future planning efforts, and measure long-term trends such as changes in vessel size and occupancy over time. He recommended that this effort be considered as a future objective under the Commission's infrastructure planning initiatives.

Secretary Miller responded to the public comment by noting that the concept aligned well with Functional Area 4, which includes the use of emerging technologies to improve harbor management. He explained that technologies such as drones and artificial intelligence could be used to rapidly map Newport Harbor, inventory vessels and slips, and collect data to support planning and decision-making. He expressed support for incorporating those ideas as a specific objective within Functional Area 4 and welcomed the public's continued input as the committee develops its recommendations.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

7.4 Harbormaster Update – June 2026 Activities

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) Receive and file.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller presented the monthly update on the Newport Harbor Dredging Project. Using the project's progress map, he explained that the map identifies the current dredging footprint, with green indicating completed dredging, yellow showing active dredging areas, and blue representing areas where work has not yet begun.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller reported that dredging of the Newport Harbor Yacht Club mooring field was substantially completed just prior to the Fourth of July, describing it as a significant milestone due to the amount of material removed and the extensive coordination required to temporarily relocate moorings. He recognized the Harbor Department for its assistance throughout that effort. He reported that final verification with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is underway, after which the displaced moorings are expected to be returned to their original locations. He stated that dredging operations have now shifted to the access channel along the southeastern edge of Lido Isle leading toward Marina Park. He noted that crews are completing work in that channel before advancing into the remaining under dredged portions of the project.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller reported that, as of the meeting date, the project had loaded 262 scows of dredged material and removed approximately 541,000 cubic yards of sediment, representing approximately 60% of the project's estimated 900,000 cubic yards of dredging. He stated that the project remains on schedule for completion in October 2026. He added that the project has now transitioned into a more efficient phase of "production dredging," with fewer obstructions to slow progress. He noted that work is currently focused on the access channel adjacent to the F Mooring Field, followed by the H and portions of the J Mooring Fields. He explained that once those areas are completed, dredging operations will move into the remaining areas of the harbor that have not yet been started.

Chair Marston also asked where vessels displaced from dredged mooring fields had been relocated.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller explained that the Harbor Department temporarily reassigned vessels to available vacant moorings throughout Newport Harbor until they can be returned to their permanent locations.

Secretary Miller asked when the displaced moorings associated with the Newport Harbor dredging project would be reinstalled, noting that many vessels had been temporarily relocated to the A, B, and C Mooring Fields during construction.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller responded that the temporary relocations primarily involve several moorings in the F Mooring Field and a row of moorings in the H Mooring Field that were moved to accommodate dredging operations. He stated that work on the access channel is expected to be completed by the end of the month, after which the temporarily relocated moorings will be returned to their original locations.

Commissioner Svrcek asked about the cost of the City's dredging program.

Public Works Administration Manager Chris Miller explained that the current dredging effort is the third major phase of Newport Harbor dredging. He stated that the initial harbor dredging project in 2012 cost approximately \$6–7 million, followed by the entrance channel and east jetty dredging project, which was also in the \$6–7 million range. He reported that the current harbor dredging project is valued at approximately \$14–15 million, reflecting the larger scope of work being completed.

Harbormaster Blank presented the Harbor Department's monthly activity report for June, including highlights from the July 4 holiday weekend. He organized the report around the Department's mission of keeping Newport Harbor clean, safe, and well enjoyed.

Harbormaster Blank reported that Harbor Department personnel responded to numerous incidents involving fuel, oil, and other contaminants in the harbor, including deploying containment booms and absorbent materials when necessary. He also highlighted significant improvements in the cleanliness of

Balboa Yacht Basin (BYB) following the City's early assumption of marina management responsibilities, noting that long-standing mold accumulation on dock boxes and pile caps has largely been eliminated. He also discussed repeated incidents of illegal dumping at the 15th Street Public Dock and 19th Street, explaining that video surveillance has shown many of the discarded items originated from the landside rather than harbor users. He reported that the department has also improved management of the used oil recycling facility at Balboa Yacht Basin to discourage improper disposal of hazardous materials. He shared video of an octopus observed at Marina Park, noting that the presence of healthy marine life reflects improving water quality throughout Newport Harbor.

Harbormaster Blank reported continued enforcement efforts against unpermitted charter operations, including the arrest of an individual with an outstanding criminal bench warrant following coordination with the Newport Beach Police Department and Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol. He also reported that Harbor Department staff corrected an unsafe electrical extension cord running from private property to a vessel in the Grand Canal, eliminating potential fire and electrocution hazards. Harbormaster Blank further reported that the Department is developing new safety procedures for contractors and independent service providers working at the Balboa Yacht Basin. He explained that numerous vessel cleaners, mechanics, and maintenance providers perform work at the marina, but there is currently no formal process requiring them to check in with the marina office or establish appropriate liability protections for the City. He noted that staff are working with the City Attorney's Office and Risk Management to develop procedures that improve safety while recognizing that these individuals are service providers hired by slip tenants rather than City contractors.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the City is participating in Operation Chill, which rewards children observed practicing safe boating with complimentary Slurpee certificates donated by a local retailer, and responding to several paddleboard rescues during periods of strong afternoon winds. Lastly, he described the successful rescue of a kayaker suffering from low blood sugar, noting that Harbor Safety Officers safely brought the individual ashore and aided until he recovered.

Harbormaster Blank highlighted improvements in customer service following the City's assumption of management responsibilities at Balboa Yacht Basin. He described an incident in which Harbor Safety Officers restored electrical service to a tenant's vessel within minutes after receiving a report late in the afternoon, contrasting the Department's extended office hours and hands-on response with the previous management company's practices. He noted that the extended Harbor Department office hours enabled staff to quickly resolve a tenant issue that previously would not have received an immediate response. He also stated that tenants have recognized the improved cleanliness and overall condition of the facility. He also reported that staff successfully returned a previously reported stolen dinghy to its owner, temporarily reopened the East Anchorage to accommodate increased demand during the July 4 holiday weekend, and addressed unauthorized commercial use of public docks.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the Department assisted Animal Control with an investigation involving a displaced gull nest. He reported continued discussions with a harbor permittee interested in providing water taxi and shore boat services in Newport Harbor. He explained that another commercial operator has expressed interest in establishing a water taxi and potential shore boat service in Newport Harbor. He stated that Harbor Department staff have met with the proposer to discuss the concept, regulatory considerations, and potential implementation. He further reported that he contacted a harbor permittee who had previously expressed interest in shore boat service and invited that individual to collaborate directly with the proposer. He reported the following email was sent on May 26, 2026 at 8:37 a.m.

"I hope you're doing well. I'm reaching out because I'd like to put you in touch with a commercial marine service provider who is interested in providing water taxi service and potentially shore boat service in Newport Harbor. Given your interest and involvement in harbor-related issues, I think this could be an excellent opportunity for you to engage directly and contribute constructively to a potential improvement in the harbor. If you're open to it, please let me know and I'll make the introduction by e-mail. Best regards."

Harbormaster Blank reported that he had not received a response.

Harbormaster Blank addressed misinformation circulating on social media regarding Harbor Department code enforcement activities. He explained that while the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol did not issue City harbor code citations before creation of the Harbor Department, the Department has maintained an active enforcement program since 2019. He reported that Harbor Department code enforcement actions totaled 367 in 2019, 509 in 2020, 511 in 2021, 866 in 2022, 965 in 2023, 886 in 2024, and 957 in 2025. He noted that through June 2026, the Department had already completed approximately 400 code enforcement actions.

Harbormaster Blank provided an update on the September 11, 2025, vessel theft in which a large vessel was stolen from the Fernando Condominiums, traveled through the A, B, and Balboa Yacht Club Mooring Fields, sank one vessel, and damaged seven others. He explained that the incident was investigated by the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol, with support from the Harbor Department, and that the Sheriff's Department has been responsible for the criminal investigation and case disposition. Harbormaster Blank stated that he has received numerous inquiries from members of the public regarding the status of the case and has consistently shared the information available to him. To ensure the public record accurately reflected the case status, he read into the record, verbatim, an email response he sent to a member of the public regarding the investigation and its disposition.

Harbormaster Blank read the following email into the record to document the Harbor Department's response to inquiries regarding the September 11, 2025 vessel theft and collision incident:

"Thank you for your follow-up and for continuing to share your perspective. I understand your frustration, particularly regarding the limited amount of publicly available information associated with the vessel theft and collision incident you referenced. It was a serious event, and I recognize how concerning it may have been for those in close proximity, especially given the damage and safety risks involved.

I am aware that a suspect connected to the incident remains in custody. As this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol and the District Attorney's Office, the investigation, prosecution, and any public release of information are exclusively within their authority.

Given your interest in obtaining additional information or expressing concerns about the handling of the case, it may be worthwhile for you to contact Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley, who represents the district and has oversight responsibilities related to County operations, including the Sheriff's Department.

I do understand and take seriously your broader concerns regarding code enforcement and safety on public docks. As I mentioned previously, I will be reviewing the history of these issues with our Harbor Code Enforcement team to determine what additional steps may be appropriate to improve compliance and safety.

Thank you again for your continued outreach and for your commitment to safety in the harbor."

Harbormaster Blank stated that the Harbor Department provided the individual with all information available to the City within hours of receiving the inquiry. He noted that, despite those responses, the individual has continued to publicly assert that the City has been unresponsive regarding the incident. He further reported that, according to court records, the suspect arrested in connection with the September 11, 2025, vessel theft and collision incident subsequently pled guilty to seven charges and is currently serving a 16-month state prison sentence.

Harbormaster Blank described the Harbor Department's response during the July 4 holiday weekend, including an unattended vessel that dragged anchor in the East Anchorage and was impounded after colliding with other vessels. He reported Harbor Safety Officers safely towed the vessel to Marina Park despite difficult conditions. He noted that during the incident, the vessel owner boarded the impounded

vessel while it was under tow but was safely removed, and after the impound process was completed ultimately became a customer by renting a City mooring for the remainder of the holiday weekend.

Harbormaster Blank reported that Harbor Department personnel responded to 2,324 calls for service through June, including 2,017 that were geographically mapped, demonstrating broad coverage throughout Newport Harbor. He reviewed utilization statistics for the Harbor amenity map and noted that additional opportunities exist to promote its use, including through the proposed rental safety program. He also reviewed year-to-date permitting activity, reporting that permit volumes are on pace to exceed the previous year's totals in most categories, and concluded with an overview of June anchorage utilization statistics.

Harbormaster Blank reported that on July 4 the Harbor Department issued two citations—one for public urination and one for illegal fireworks—and impounded one vessel. He also described the significant transportation challenges faced by Harbor Department personnel after their shifts due to widespread congestion on the Balboa Peninsula. To improve future operations, he stated that staff parking locations will be adjusted before future holiday events to allow personnel to leave the area more efficiently.

Vice Chair Scully commended the Harbor Department for its work and shared an experience from the previous Sunday afternoon when he observed two young paddleboarders struggling against strong winds. He stated that one of the children appeared to be in distress as the wind pushed both paddleboarders down the channel. He explained that he flagged down a Harbor Safety Officer responded after being flagged down, quickly recognized the situation, recovered both individuals and their paddleboards, and transported them to safety. He praised the officer's quick response and professionalism, noting he was very impressed with how efficiently the situation was handled.

Secretary Miller asked Harbormaster Blank to investigate an apparent oil discharge near the Jiffy Lube location that he believed continued to flow into the harbor.

Harbormaster Blank responded that the matter had already been addressed.

Secretary Miller also recognized Deputy Harbormaster Matt Cosylian and other Harbor Safety Officers for assisting boaters experiencing anchor issues in the East Anchorage during windy conditions over the holiday weekend. He asked when the City officially assumed management responsibilities for Balboa Yacht Basin.

Harbormaster Blank replied that the Harbor Department took operational responsibility on June 1, one month ahead of the planned July 1 transition, resulting in an estimated savings of \$35,000 for the City.

Secretary Miller further shared comments from a Balboa Yacht Basin slip tenant who stated the marina had been noticeably cleaner during the past month than at any time in the previous five years. He congratulated the Harbor Department on the improved appearance and maintenance of the facility.

Secretary Miller also asked whether the reported total number of harbor moorings included yacht club moorings.

Harbormaster Blank confirmed that it includes the yacht club moorings as well as approximately 25 county-managed moorings.

Secretary Miller promoted the upcoming Ben Carlson Memorial Pier Jump fundraiser and concluded by thanking Harbormaster Blank and the Harbor Department for their outstanding work over the Fourth of July holiday. He remarked that, in his opinion, Newport Harbor was one of the safest places in Newport Beach during the holiday weekend and commended the Department for its professionalism and dedication.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Ms. Manich asked whether her comments would be limited to three minutes and confirmed with the Chair that the time limit applied specifically to the Harbormaster's report. She questioned whether the Harbor Department's permit activity statistics included permits issued for residential pier owners renting private slips. She stated that she had observed several residential piers advertised for rent online, including one marketed as a liveaboard slip, and asked under which permit category those activities would be reported. She also questioned whether the Department's code enforcement activities were being applied consistently, referencing the California State Lands Commission's observation that mooring permittees may be treated differently than residential pier permittees. She requested additional information regarding the types of code enforcement actions being taken.

Ms. Manich also discussed the September 2025 stolen vessel incident, stating that approximately one month before the theft she had submitted photographs to Harbor Code Enforcement showing individuals fishing from a no-fishing public dock and climbing over the fence into the adjacent marina. She stated that she did not receive a response to her report and described the impact of the subsequent vessel collision on the nearby mooring field, noting that a neighboring vessel sank and that a legally permitted liveaboard resident assisted in rescuing its occupant. She concluded by stating that she possesses additional evidence related to the incident.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

8. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION

None.

9. COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

None

10. MATTERS WHICH COMMISSIONERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

Chair Marston summarized the Commission's direction from the meeting and stated that the proposed State Lands Ad Hoc Committee should be agendaized for consideration at the next regular meeting.

11. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 5 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 12, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business coming before the Harbor Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

NEWPORT BEACH HARBOR COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
City Council Chambers – 100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach
Wednesday, July 8, 2026
5 p.m.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Marie Marston, Vice Chair
Steve Scully, Secretary
Sabrina Kerr, Commissioner
Thom McElroy, Commissioner
Bob Miller, Commissioner
Rudy Svrcek, Commissioner
Gary Williams, Commissioner

ABSENT: None

Staff Members: Paul Blank, Harbormaster
Chris Miller, Public Works Administration Manager
Cynthia Shintaku, Management Analyst

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Williams

Vice Chair Marie Marston welcomed newly appointed Commissioners Sabrina Kerr and Thom McElroy to the Harbor Commission and invited each to introduce themselves and share their interest in serving on the Commission.

Commissioner Kerr stated that she previously worked on the water and has experience in the maritime environment, including yacht operations, engine maintenance, navigation, and situational awareness. Although she now works in an office setting, she expressed her desire to remain connected to Newport Harbor and viewed service on the Harbor Commission as an opportunity to continue contributing to the waterfront community.

Commissioner McElroy shared that his connection to Newport Harbor began at age ten through boating and fishing. He explained that he is now an avid prone paddler and has paddled throughout every channel in the harbor, giving him a broad perspective on both its strengths and challenges. Encouraged by conversations with current and former Harbor Commissioners, he expressed enthusiasm for serving the City and helping support the harbor's continued success.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Recommendation:

1. Find this action exempt from 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, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Elect Chair; and
3. Elect Vice Chair; and
4. Elect Secretary.

Vice Chair Marston opened nominations for the position of Chair.

Secretary Steve Scully nominated Vice Chair Marston to serve as Chair. Seconded by Commission Williams. No additional nominations were received.

Ayes: Kerr, McElroy, Miller, Svrcek, Williams, Scully, Marston
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Chair Marston opened nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Commissioner Miller nominated Secretary Scully to serve as Vice Chair. Seconded by Chair Marston. No additional nominations were received.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Kerr, McElroy, Miller, Svrcek, Williams, Scully, Marston
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Chair Marston opened nominations for the position of Secretary.

Vice Chair Scully nominated Commissioner Miller to serve as Secretary. Seconded by Chair Marston. No additional nominations were received.

~~Vice Chair Scully nominated Commissioner Miller to serve as Secretary. Seconded by Chair Marston.~~

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Kerr, McElroy, Svrcek, Williams, Miller, Scully, Marston
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Chair Marston thanked the outgoing officers for their service, and congratulated the newly elected officers.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Sandy Manich introduced herself as a legal liveaboard permit holder of more than 15 years, a school teacher in the Orange Unified School District, and an administrative credential candidate. She noted that she had applied to serve on the Harbor Commission and wished to share her perspective as a longtime harbor user. She discussed changes to harbor management beginning in 2017, stating that the transition from the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol to the City's current harbor management model resulted in the loss of a continuous armed law enforcement presence in the harbor. She expressed her view that the Sheriff's Harbor Patrol had provided highly trained personnel and enhanced harbor security.

Ms. Manich further stated that, as a liveaboard resident who had been encouraged to serve as the "eyes and ears" of the harbor, she has submitted more than 100 reports of code violations to City staff in an

effort to improve harbor safety and appearance. She expressed disappointment that her reports had not been well received and cited a deteriorated piling at the Washington Street Public Dock as an example of a maintenance concern she intended to document and share with the Commission.

Adam Leverenz referenced comments made at a previous Harbor Commission meeting regarding positive recognition the City had received from The Log maritime publication. He also presented editorial cartoons previously published by The Log that criticized past Harbor Commission actions related to the harbor mooring realignment program.

Mr. Leverenz encouraged the Commission, including its newly appointed members, to carefully consider factual information when evaluating future harbor issues. He expressed concern that significant public funds had been spent pursuing initiatives that were ultimately unsuccessful, noting that the California Coastal Commission denied the proposed mooring realignment. He stated that he hopes future discussions will be more collaborative and fact-driven and cautioned that future harbor policy decisions could have significant impacts on yacht clubs, affordable recreational boating, residential mooring permit holders, homeowners, and commercial boating interests. He concluded by encouraging the Commission to discuss these issues proactively in an effort to avoid unintended consequences.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Draft Minutes of the June 10, 2026, Harbor Commission Regular Meeting

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Jim Mosher addressed the Commission regarding the draft minutes from the previous meeting. He explained that after leaving the prior meeting early to attend another event, he later reviewed the meeting minutes and noticed a reference to the Ben Carlson paddle crossing from Catalina Island to Newport Beach.

Mr. Mosher stated that the draft minutes identified former Mayor Will O'Neill as having completed the crossing with Commissioner McElroy. After reviewing the meeting video, he noted that the former Chair had referred only to a "former mayor" without identifying the individual by name. He suggested that, for accuracy, the minutes should either refer only to a "former mayor" or identify the individual as former Mayor Joe Stapleton, whom he believed was the person being referenced.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

Vice Chair Scully moved to approve the June 10, 2026 Harbor Commission Regular Meeting minutes, as amended. Seconded by Secretary Miller. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Svrcek, Miller, Scully, ~~Martson~~Marston
Nays: None
Abstain: Kerr, McElroy, Williams
Absent: None

7. CURRENT BUSINESS

7.1 Progress Update - Small Vessel Rental Customer Safety Program: City-Produced Safety Video, Knowledge Quiz, and Certification Process

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. Receive and file; or
3. Provide direction to staff and/or the Newport Harbor Safety Committee regarding the implementation of the City-produced safety video, knowledge quiz, and certification process as a strong suggestion or potential requirement for all single-day small vessel rental concession operators and their customers in Newport Harbor.

Vice Chair Scully presented an update on the Safety Committee's proposed Water Rental Safety Program, which has been under development for more than a year. He explained that the proposal was developed in response to the exemption that allows single-day rental customers to operate rental vessels without obtaining a California Boater Safety Card. He noted that the program is intended to improve boater safety by providing renters with an online educational resource before arriving at a rental concession.

Vice Chair Scully demonstrated a prototype website featuring the City's existing harbor safety video followed by a 10-question online quiz. He explained that participants who achieve a passing score of 80 percent would receive a certificate that could be printed or emailed to both the renter and the rental concessionaire as verification of completion. He played the Safety Video for those in attendance.

Vice Chair Scully demonstrated how users would complete the proposed online safety training. He explained that the website could be accessed from a smartphone, tablet, or computer and completed before arriving at the rental concession, allowing participants to complete the training at their convenience without delaying the rental process. He walked the Commission through the ten-question safety quiz, which covers topics including life jacket requirements, the harbor speed limit, channel navigation, pre-rental safety briefings, vessel operation, emergency procedures, trash disposal, safe boating practices, and emergency response.

Vice Chair Scully demonstrated the quiz by answering each question, resulting in a perfect score. He explained that upon successful completion, users can enter their name and email address to receive a completion certificate electronically. He noted that the certificate may also be emailed directly to the rental concessionaire or printed and presented when picking up the rental vessel. He stated that the online training, quiz, and completion certificate together provide a convenient method for renters to complete the proposed safety education program before arriving at the rental facility.

Vice Chair Scully reported that preliminary discussions with several rental concessionaires had been generally positive. He noted that suggestions received included modifying the program to reflect that personal watercraft renters are required to wear life jackets at all times and considering separate educational tracks for powered and human-powered vessels. He recommended expanding outreach by meeting with all Marine Activities Permit holders to review the proposal, gather additional feedback, and discuss implementation strategies.

Commissioner Svrcek expressed strong support for the concept and stated that an educational program is needed to improve safety on Newport Harbor. He suggested identifying one individual as the responsible operator for each rental party, adding information about avoiding mooring fields to prevent propeller entanglements, providing clearer guidance on the location of public restrooms, and incorporating additional harbor operating rules into the educational materials so renters receive that information before arriving.

Commissioner Williams supported the proposal and recommended adding a drop-down list of approved rental concessionaires so users could easily identify the vendor receiving their completion certificate. He also suggested providing a downloadable map or graphic identifying public restrooms and businesses offering restroom access, and emphasized the importance of establishing a practical method for rental operators to verify that customers completed the training before receiving a vessel. Later in the discussion, he suggested offering incentives, such as a small rental discount, to encourage customers to provide feedback on the program and identify information that may have been missing from the training.

Secretary Miller complimented the Safety Committee's work and stated that the proposal was moving in the right direction. He recommended expanding the educational content to include additional "rules of the road" and navigation scenarios commonly encountered in Newport Harbor, such as interactions with sailing regattas. He also asked whether participation in the safety program could become a condition of Marine Activities Permits and inquired about vessel maintenance requirements in light of recent public comments concerning rental vessel safety. He suggested that renters who already possess a valid California Boater Safety Card should be permitted to satisfy the educational requirement without completing the online quiz.

Commissioner McElroy commended Vice Chair Scully for developing the program and stated that it would improve safety and cleanliness throughout the harbor. He recommended requiring the individual completing the quiz to verify their identity by uploading a driver's license or similar identification so rental operators could confirm that the certificate matched the person operating the vessel.

Commissioner Kerr expressed support for the proposal and asked why rental customers are exempt from the California Boater Safety Card requirement. After receiving clarification that the exemption is established by state law, she stated that she supported the recommendations offered by the other commissioners.

Secretary Miller asked whether individuals who already possess a California Boater Card could be allowed to bypass the online safety quiz, noting that they have already completed a state-approved boating safety course.

Vice Chair Scully agreed that presenting a valid California Boater Card would be an appropriate alternative to completing the proposed online training and quiz.

Chair Marston supported moving the proposal forward and suggested incorporating information about the City's harbor application.

Vice Chair Scully noted that there is a QR code system to help visitors locate public restrooms and public docks. He noted that the City was having difficulty with operators promoting the QR code in the boat.

Commissioner Svrcek suggested that, in addition to the QR code linking to the harbor map and safety information, rental vessels should also include a printed hard-copy map. He noted that having the map readily available in the vessel would make information such as restroom locations and other harbor amenities immediately accessible without requiring users to locate and scan a QR code.

Vice Chair Scully acknowledged the suggestion for consideration as the program continues to be refined.

Commissioner Williams noted that Newport Beach public restrooms are already listed in Apple Maps. He suggested that the proposed safety program include a reminder that users can locate nearby public restrooms by searching Apple Maps, providing an additional navigation option for visitors unfamiliar with the harbor.

Chair Marston supported meeting with the rental concessionaires to gather their feedback before finalizing the program. She noted that because most customers reserve rentals by phone or email, concessionaires could notify renters in advance about the safety training requirement. She explained that doing so would allow participants to complete the training before arriving, minimizing any impact on the rental process. She also recommended adding information regarding prevailing wind conditions, particularly for operators of human-powered watercraft, to reduce situations in which renters are unable to return safely.

Vice Chair Scully stated that the next step is to engage the rental concessionaires by holding a meeting to gather their feedback and encourage their participation in the proposed safety program. He acknowledged that new requirements may not initially be well received, but emphasized the importance of

explaining the program's purpose and its goal of improving safety throughout Newport Harbor. He indicated that the Commission's comments could be incorporated into the quiz, while noting that revisions to the instructional video would likely require additional production costs. He also expressed uncertainty about the extent to which participation in the program could be required under current law, observing that the existing proposal may need to begin as a voluntary program. He concluded that even voluntary participation would encourage renters to think more intentionally about safe boating practices before operating a rental vessel.

Secretary Bob Miller suggested incorporating a mechanism for collecting customer feedback after completion of the safety program. He proposed partnering with rental concessionaires to offer a small incentive, such as a discount on a future rental, in exchange for participant feedback. He noted that even experienced boaters can overlook important details and stated that feedback from first-time renters could help identify information that was missing or unclear, allowing the safety program to be refined over time.

Harbormaster Blank responded to several questions raised during the Commission's discussion. In response to Secretary Miller, he explained that Marine Activities Permits do not currently require rental operators to provide a formal safety briefing. He noted that the Commission could recommend adding such a requirement as a condition of future Marine Activities Permit issuance or renewal. Addressing additional questions regarding vessel maintenance and recent public comments, he stated that rental vessels are required to either maintain a valid U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection or comply with applicable manufacturer specifications. He explained that the City conducts inspections of vessels not subject to Coast Guard inspection requirements and noted that prior concerns involving additional battery systems on electric rental boats had been eliminated through the City's inspection and enforcement process.

In response to Commissioner Kerr's question regarding why single-day rental customers are exempt from obtaining a California Boater Safety Card, Harbormaster Blank explained that the exemption was established during the State's legislative process following advocacy by the California Chamber of Commerce, which argued that requiring a Boater Safety Card for one-day rentals would create an undue burden on rental operators. He noted that changing the exemption would require action at the state level.

Vice Chair Scully responded to comments regarding vessel maintenance by stating that the proposed rental safety program should remain focused on educating renters rather than addressing the condition or maintenance of rental vessels. He noted that vessel maintenance and inspection responsibilities are more appropriately addressed through the management of the Marine Activities Permit (MAP) program and the oversight of rental businesses, rather than as part of the renter education program.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Ms. Manich, a liveaboard resident in Mooring Field A, expressed concern that the proposed program relies heavily on input from rental concessionaires. She stated that she has previously reported numerous code violations involving commercial rental operators, including more than 20 reports submitted to Code Enforcement. She described an incident in which she observed a commercial rental vessel backing a large vessel without providing the required horn signals, creating what she believed to be a dangerous situation. She questioned whether rental operators who do not consistently comply with existing harbor regulations should be relied upon to administer or oversee the proposed safety program.

An unknown speaker complimented the harbor safety video and suggested adding more basic navigation rules, including information on sailboat right-of-way.

Mr. Leverenz commended the Safety Committee for its work on the proposal and thanked Harbormaster Blank for explaining the legislative history behind the California Boater Safety Card exemption. He reiterated the importance of providing information about public restroom locations and recommended supplementing the safety video with simple educational materials explaining basic boating concepts unfamiliar to first-time operators. He cited examples such as the fact that boats do not have brakes, do

not maneuver like automobiles, and are affected by tides, currents, and wind. He encouraged the Commission to provide renters with practical guidance that would help improve safe vessel operation.

Bud Coomans expressed support for the proposed online safety training program and noted that he had previously suggested a similar concept based on the California Boater Safety Card. He stated that allowing renters to complete the training before arriving at the rental facility was a practical improvement that would reduce burdens on concessionaires. He questioned how last-minute renters would be accommodated and observed that rental operators may not have sufficient staff to administer lengthy in-person training sessions. He agreed with comments emphasizing the importance of teaching basic "rules of the road," particularly right-of-way and channel navigation, noting that he regularly observes rental boat operators who appear unfamiliar with safe boating practices around sailboats and youth sailing programs. He suggested placing greater emphasis on navigation rules within the educational materials while describing the existing video as a positive foundation for the program.

Chair ~~Martson-Marston~~ closed public comments.

Chair Marston asked the Commission to provide direction on the proposed rental safety program.

Vice Chair Scully recommended incorporating the comments received from both the Commission and the public into the proposed safety quiz where appropriate. He also recommended convening a meeting with the rental concessionaires to obtain their feedback and perspectives before finalizing the program. He noted that gathering input from all stakeholders would help strengthen the proposal and recommended returning the revised program to the Harbor Commission for further review and consideration following completion of that outreach.

There was no further action taken on this item.

7.2 Ad Hoc Committee Updates

Recommendation:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc – Commissioners Scully, Svrcek and McElroy (05-10-2023)

Vice Chair Scully provided an update on the Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc Committee. He explained that although the Commission had previously discussed dissolving the committee, he recommended keeping it active because substantial work remains before electric ferries become operational. He reported that funding for the project appears secure, but progress has been slowed by delays in marine architectural design work and planning for the electrical charging infrastructure. He stated that he recently ~~met~~-spoke with Joe Beek to discuss the project and facilitated a connection with Troy Heideman of the Balboa Bay Club to share experience with installing marina electrical infrastructure. He explained that once the marine architect completes the design, the project can proceed to a request for proposals for ferry construction. While optimistic that the project is moving forward, he cautioned that implementation remains several years away.

Chair Marston asked whether the electric ferries could be operational by 2027.

Vice Chair Scully responded that he did not believe that timeline was realistic given the design and construction process, and indicated that 2028 would be a more likely target, although the exact schedule remains uncertain.

Chair Marston noted that former Commissioner Don Yahn had previously served on the Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc Committee and asked whether the committee wished to appoint an additional commissioner to fill the vacancy or continue with its current membership.

Vice Chair Scully indicated he was comfortable either continuing with the existing membership or adding another commissioner if there was interest.

Chair Marston then invited interested commissioners to volunteer for the committee.

Commissioner McElroy volunteered to serve, and with no objections from the Commission, he was added to the Ad Hoc Committee.

Chair Marston opened public comments. Hearing none, Chair Marston closed public comments.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Harbormaster Blank noted that discussion had occurred regarding the possible formation of an additional ad hoc committee and suggested the topic be addressed while public comment could still be received.

Chair Marston proposed establishing a State Lands Ad Hoc Committee to review issues related to the City's use of State tidelands and the direction recently provided by the California State Lands Commission regarding harbor operations and compensation.

Vice Chair Scully supported the proposal, noting that recent correspondence between the City and the State Lands Commission specifically referenced the Harbor Commission. He recommended agendaizing formation of the committee for the next regular meeting so the Commission could better understand its role and begin addressing the issues raised by the State. No committee was formed at this meeting. By consensus, the Commission directed staff to agendaize consideration of a State Lands Ad Hoc Committee for the next regular meeting.

Commissioner Svrcek agreed with the proposal and supported moving forward with consideration of the new ad hoc committee.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Ms. Manich encouraged the Commission to include a liveaboard resident in the State Lands Ad Hoc Committee, noting that representatives of the California State Lands Commission had encouraged collaboration with liveaboard residents during a previous public meeting. She stated that this was one of the reasons she had sought appointment to the Harbor Commission.

Mr. Leverenz expressed concern that an ad hoc committee composed solely of commissioners would limit public participation because such committees are not subject to the same public meeting requirements as larger bodies. He suggested the Commission consider a process that would allow greater public involvement while still addressing the issues identified by the California State Lands Commission within the required timeframe.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

~~There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.~~ By consensus, the Commission directed the Safety Committee and staff to incorporate the Commission and public comments where appropriate, meet with rental concessionaires to obtain additional feedback, and return the revised program to the Harbor Commission for further consideration

7.3 Harbor Commission 2026 Objectives

Recommendation:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

Chair Marston announced that she would serve as chair for Functional Area 1 and invited commissioners to participate.

Commissioner Kerr volunteered to join the functional area.

Vice Chair Scully also offered to assist, particularly with Objective 1.2.

Chair Marston reported that there were no substantive updates for Functional Area 1 but stated that she had spoken with Harbormaster Blank about reviewing previously identified sections of Title 17 that have not been updated to determine whether amendments should be prioritized. She indicated that the group expects to meet within the next month to begin that review.

Vice Chair Scully, chair of Functional Area 2, invited commissioners to participate.

Commissioner Williams volunteered to participate, noting that there is significant overlap between Functional Areas 2 and 3.

Commissioner McElroy expressed interest in Objective 2.1.

Chair Marston asked whether future updates should be organized by the individual objectives (e.g., Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3) or presented as a single report for the entire functional area.

Vice Chair Scully explained that the original framework envisioned individual commissioners leading each functional area while collaborating on the associated objectives. He observed that the objectives, as currently written, are intentionally broad and suggested that the ad hoc committee develop more specific and measurable goals beneath each objective to better guide future work.

Chair Marston indicated she would assist with Objectives 2.2 and 2.3.

Commissioner Svrcek expressed particular interest in Objective 2.1 regarding public access and public docks.

Vice Chair Scully agreed that specific goals could be assigned under that objective, with Commissioner Svrcek taking a leadership role on those efforts.

Chair Marston inquired if there were any updates for Functional Area 2.

Vice Chair Scully reported that there were none at this time.

Commissioner Williams, chair of Functional Area 3, stated that although he had been assigned the role while absent from a previous meeting, the subject aligns well with his professional experience analyzing financial and operational data. He invited interested commissioners to participate.

Vice Chair Scully volunteered to assist, observing that Functional Areas 2 and 3 naturally overlap and should be coordinated.

Commissioner Williams reported that there were no updates for Functional Area 3.

Secretary Miller, chair of Functional Area 4, reported that considerable work is underway, with Harbor Department staff and Harbor Safety Officers developing ideas for future safety and modernization initiatives. He identified several concepts currently under consideration, including improving the effectiveness of the Trash Rover, evaluating potential privatization opportunities, and exploring the use of privately operated drones to assist with harbor monitoring and enforcement. He noted that the objectives would continue to be refined as the work progresses and invited additional commissioners to participate.

Vice Chair Scully volunteered to join the functional area, noting that the Water Rental Safety Program falls within this area of responsibility.

Commissioner Kerr and Commissioner McElroy also volunteered to participate.

Chair Marston noted the strong interest in Functional Area 4.

Commissioner Svrcek, chair of Functional Area 5, reported that there were no updates because the Water Quality Board had not met since the Commission's previous meeting.

Secretary Miller volunteered to participate, expressing interest in the harbor's environmental sensing technology and noting that the City's monitoring capabilities are an important resource that deserves greater public awareness.

Commissioner McElroy also volunteered to join the functional area.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Mr. Mosher suggested that the Commission consider adding an additional objective under Functional Area 2 – Harbor Infrastructure, Public Access & Capital Planning to better define and document the characteristics of Newport Harbor. He noted that the recently adopted General Plan incorrectly describes the harbor as encompassing 21 square miles and referenced City materials that state the harbor contains approximately 4,300 boats. He explained that the 4,300-boat figure appears to be derived from adding together the number of residential piers, moorings, and commercial slips, which he believes understates the actual number of vessels because many residential piers accommodate multiple boats.

Mr. Mosher recommended conducting a more comprehensive inventory of vessels in Newport Harbor using aerial photography or similar methods to establish a more accurate baseline of the number, location, and characteristics of boats in the harbor. He suggested that documenting this information would enable the Commission to better understand current harbor conditions, support future planning efforts, and measure long-term trends such as changes in vessel size and occupancy over time. He recommended that this effort be considered as a future objective under the Commission's infrastructure planning initiatives.

Secretary Miller responded to the public comment by noting that the concept aligned well with Functional Area 4, which includes the use of emerging technologies to improve harbor management. He explained that technologies such as drones and artificial intelligence could be used to rapidly map Newport Harbor, inventory vessels and slips, and collect data to support planning and decision-making. He expressed support for incorporating those ideas as a specific objective within Functional Area 4 and welcomed the public's continued input as the committee develops its recommendations.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

7.4 Harbormaster Update – June 2026 Activities

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) Receive and file.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller presented the monthly update on the Newport Harbor Dredging Project. Using the project's progress map, he explained that the map identifies the current dredging footprint, with green indicating completed dredging, yellow showing active dredging areas, and blue representing areas where work has not yet begun.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller reported that dredging of the Newport Harbor Yacht Club mooring field was substantially completed just prior to the Fourth of July, describing it as a significant milestone due to the amount of material removed and the extensive coordination required to temporarily relocate moorings. He recognized the Harbor Department for its assistance throughout that effort. He reported that final verification with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is underway, after which the displaced moorings are expected to be returned to their original locations. He stated that dredging operations have now shifted to the access channel along the southeastern edge of Lido Isle leading toward Marina Park. He noted that crews are completing work in that channel before advancing into the remaining under dredged portions of the project.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller reported that, as of the meeting date, the project had loaded 262 scows of dredged material and removed approximately 541,000 cubic yards of sediment, representing approximately 60% of the project's estimated 900,000 cubic yards of dredging. He stated that the project remains on schedule for completion in October 2026. He added that the project has now transitioned into a more efficient phase of "production dredging," with fewer obstructions to slow progress. He noted that work is currently focused on the access channel adjacent to the F Mooring Field, followed by the H and portions of the J Mooring Fields. He explained that once those areas are completed, dredging operations will move into the remaining areas of the harbor that have not yet been started.

Chair Marston also asked where vessels displaced from dredged mooring fields had been relocated.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller explained that the Harbor Department temporarily reassigned vessels to available vacant moorings throughout Newport Harbor until they can be returned to their permanent locations.

Secretary Miller asked when the displaced moorings associated with the Newport Harbor dredging project would be reinstalled, noting that many vessels had been temporarily relocated to the A, B, and C Mooring Fields during construction.

Public Works Administration Manager Miller responded that the temporary relocations primarily involve several moorings in the F Mooring Field and a row of moorings in the H Mooring Field that were moved to accommodate dredging operations. He stated that work on the access channel is expected to be completed by the end of the month, after which the temporarily relocated moorings will be returned to their original locations.

Commissioner Svrcek asked about the cost of the City's dredging program.

Public Works Administration Manager Chris Miller explained that the current dredging effort is the third major phase of Newport Harbor dredging. He stated that the initial harbor dredging project in 2012 cost approximately \$6–7 million, followed by the entrance channel and east jetty dredging project, which was also in the \$6–7 million range. He reported that the current harbor dredging project is valued at approximately \$14–15 million, reflecting the larger scope of work being completed.

Harbormaster Blank presented the Harbor Department's monthly activity report for June, including highlights from the July 4 holiday weekend. He organized the report around the Department's mission of keeping Newport Harbor clean, safe, and well enjoyed.

Harbormaster Blank reported that Harbor Department personnel responded to numerous incidents involving fuel, oil, and other contaminants in the harbor, including deploying containment booms and absorbent materials when necessary. He also highlighted significant improvements in the cleanliness of Balboa Yacht Basin (BYB) following the City's early assumption of marina management responsibilities, noting that long-standing mold accumulation on dock boxes and pile caps has largely been eliminated. He also discussed repeated incidents of illegal dumping at the 15th Street Public Dock and 19th Street, explaining that video surveillance has shown many of the discarded items originated from the landside rather than harbor users. He reported that the department has also improved management of the used oil recycling facility at Balboa Yacht Basin to discourage improper disposal of hazardous materials. He shared video of an octopus observed at Marina Park, noting that the presence of healthy marine life reflects improving water quality throughout Newport Harbor.

Harbormaster Blank reported continued enforcement efforts against unpermitted charter operations, including the arrest of an individual with an outstanding criminal bench warrant following coordination with the Newport Beach Police Department and Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol. He also reported that Harbor Department staff corrected an unsafe electrical extension cord running from private property to a vessel in the Grand Canal, eliminating potential fire and electrocution hazards. Harbormaster Blank further reported that the Department is developing new safety procedures for contractors and independent service providers working at the Balboa Yacht Basin. He explained that numerous vessel cleaners, mechanics, and maintenance providers perform work at the marina, but there is currently no formal process requiring them to check in with the marina office or establish appropriate liability protections for the City. He noted that staff are working with the City Attorney's Office and Risk Management to develop procedures that improve safety while recognizing that these individuals are service providers hired by slip tenants rather than City contractors.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the City is participating in Operation Chill, which rewards children observed practicing safe boating with complimentary Slurpee certificates donated by a local retailer, and responding to several paddleboard rescues during periods of strong afternoon winds. Lastly, he described the successful rescue of a kayaker suffering from low blood sugar, noting that Harbor Safety Officers safely brought the individual ashore and aided until he recovered.

Harbormaster Blank highlighted improvements in customer service following the City's assumption of management responsibilities at Balboa Yacht Basin. He described an incident in which Harbor Safety Officers restored electrical service to a tenant's vessel within minutes after receiving a report late in the afternoon, contrasting the Department's extended office hours and hands-on response with the previous management company's practices. He noted that the extended Harbor Department office hours enabled staff to quickly resolve a tenant issue that previously would not have received an immediate response. He also stated that tenants have recognized the improved cleanliness and overall condition of the facility. He also reported that staff successfully returned a previously reported stolen dinghy to its owner, temporarily reopened the East Anchorage to accommodate increased demand during the July 4 holiday weekend, and addressed unauthorized commercial use of public docks.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the Department assisted Animal Control with an investigation involving a displaced gull nest. He reported continued discussions with a harbor permittee interested in providing water taxi and shore boat services in Newport Harbor. He explained that another commercial operator has expressed interest in establishing a water taxi and potential shore boat service in Newport Harbor. He stated that Harbor Department staff have met with the proposer to discuss the concept, regulatory considerations, and potential implementation. He further reported that he contacted a harbor permittee who had previously expressed interest in shore boat service and invited that individual to collaborate directly with the proposer. He reported the following email was sent on May 26, 2026 at 8:37 a.m.

"I hope you're doing well. I'm reaching out because I'd like to put you in touch with a commercial marine service provider who is interested in providing water taxi service and potentially shore boat service in Newport Harbor. Given your interest and involvement in harbor-related issues, I think this could be an excellent opportunity for you to engage directly and contribute constructively to a potential improvement in the harbor. If you're open to it, please let me know and I'll make the introduction by e-mail. Best regards."

Harbormaster Blank reported that he had not received a response.

Harbormaster Blank addressed misinformation circulating on social media regarding Harbor Department code enforcement activities. He explained that while the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol did not issue City harbor code citations before creation of the Harbor Department, the Department has maintained an active enforcement program since 2019. He reported that Harbor Department code enforcement actions totaled 367 in 2019, 509 in 2020, 511 in 2021, 866 in 2022, 965 in 2023, 886 in 2024, and 957 in 2025. He noted that through June 2026, the Department had already completed approximately 400 code enforcement actions.

Harbormaster Blank provided an update on the September 11, 2025, vessel theft in which a large vessel was stolen from the Fernando Condominiums, traveled through the A, B, and Balboa Yacht Club Mooring Fields, sank one vessel, and damaged seven others. He explained that the incident was investigated by the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol, with support from the Harbor Department, and that the Sheriff's Department has been responsible for the criminal investigation and case disposition. Harbormaster Blank stated that he has received numerous inquiries from members of the public regarding the status of the case and has consistently shared the information available to him. To ensure the public record accurately reflected the case status, he read into the record, verbatim, an email response he sent to a member of the public regarding the investigation and its disposition.

Harbormaster Blank read the following email into the record to document the Harbor Department's response to inquiries regarding the September 11, 2025 vessel theft and collision incident:

"Thank you for your follow-up and for continuing to share your perspective. I understand your frustration, particularly regarding the limited amount of publicly available information associated with the vessel theft and collision incident you referenced. It was a serious event, and I recognize how concerning it may have been for those in close proximity, especially given the damage and safety risks involved.

I am aware that a suspect connected to the incident remains in custody. As this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol and the District Attorney's Office, the investigation, prosecution, and any public release of information are exclusively within their authority.

Given your interest in obtaining additional information or expressing concerns about the handling of the case, it may be worthwhile for you to contact Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley, who represents the district and has oversight responsibilities related to County operations, including the Sheriff's Department.

I do understand and take seriously your broader concerns regarding code enforcement and safety on public docks. As I mentioned previously, I will be reviewing the history of these issues with our Harbor Code Enforcement team to determine what additional steps may be appropriate to improve compliance and safety.

Thank you again for your continued outreach and for your commitment to safety in the harbor."

Harbormaster Blank stated that the Harbor Department provided the individual with all information available to the City within hours of receiving the inquiry. He noted that, despite those responses, the individual has continued to publicly assert that the City has been unresponsive regarding the incident. He further reported that, according to court records, the suspect arrested in connection with the September

11, 2025, vessel theft and collision incident subsequently pled guilty to seven charges and is currently serving a 16-month state prison sentence.

Harbormaster Blank described the Harbor Department's response during the July 4 holiday weekend, including an unattended vessel that dragged anchor in the East Anchorage and was impounded after colliding with other vessels. He reported Harbor Safety Officers safely towed the vessel to Marina Park despite difficult conditions. He noted that during the incident, the vessel owner boarded the impounded vessel while it was under tow but was safely removed, and after the impound process was completed ultimately became a customer by renting a City mooring for the remainder of the holiday weekend.

Harbormaster Blank reported that Harbor Department personnel responded to 2,324 calls for service through June, including 2,017 that were geographically mapped, demonstrating broad coverage throughout Newport Harbor. He reviewed utilization statistics for the Harbor amenity map and noted that additional opportunities exist to promote its use, including through the proposed rental safety program. He also reviewed year-to-date permitting activity, reporting that permit volumes are on pace to exceed the previous year's totals in most categories, and concluded with an overview of June anchorage utilization statistics.

Harbormaster Blank reported that on July 4 the Harbor Department issued two citations—one for public urination and one for illegal fireworks—and impounded one vessel. He also described the significant transportation challenges faced by Harbor Department personnel after their shifts due to widespread congestion on the Balboa Peninsula. To improve future operations, he stated that staff parking locations will be adjusted before future holiday events to allow personnel to leave the area more efficiently.

Vice Chair Scully commended the Harbor Department for its work and shared an experience from the previous Sunday afternoon when he observed two young paddleboarders struggling against strong winds. He stated that one of the children appeared to be in distress as the wind pushed both paddleboarders down the channel. He explained that he flagged down a Harbor Safety Officer, who quickly recognized the situation, recovered both individuals and their paddleboards, and transported them to safety. ~~He explained that he flagged down a Harbor Safety Officer responded after being flagged down, quickly recognized the situation, recovered both individuals and their paddleboards, and transported them to safety.~~ He praised the officer's quick response and professionalism, noting he was very impressed with how efficiently the situation was handled.

Secretary Miller asked Harbormaster Blank to investigate an apparent oil discharge near the Jiffy Lube location that he believed continued to flow into the harbor.

Harbormaster Blank responded that the matter had already been addressed.

Secretary Miller also recognized Deputy Harbormaster Matt Cosyion and other Harbor Safety Officers for assisting boaters experiencing anchor issues in the East Anchorage during windy conditions over the holiday weekend. He asked when the City officially assumed management responsibilities for Balboa Yacht Basin.

Harbormaster Blank replied that the Harbor Department took operational responsibility on June 1, one month ahead of the planned July 1 transition, resulting in an estimated savings of \$35,000 for the City.

Secretary Miller further shared comments from a Balboa Yacht Basin slip tenant who stated the marina had been noticeably cleaner during the past month than at any time in the previous five years. He congratulated the Harbor Department on the improved appearance and maintenance of the facility.

Secretary Miller also asked whether the reported total number of harbor moorings included yacht club moorings.

Harbormaster Blank confirmed that it includes the yacht club moorings as well as approximately 25 county-managed moorings.

Secretary Miller promoted the upcoming Ben Carlson Memorial Pier Jump fundraiser and concluded by thanking Harbormaster Blank and the Harbor Department for their outstanding work over the Fourth of July holiday. He remarked that, in his opinion, Newport Harbor was one of the safest places in Newport Beach during the holiday weekend and commended the Department for its professionalism and dedication.

Chair Marston opened public comments.

Ms. Manich asked whether her comments would be limited to three minutes and confirmed with the Chair that the time limit applied specifically to the Harbormaster's report. She questioned whether the Harbor Department's permit activity statistics included permits issued for residential pier owners renting private slips. She stated that she had observed several residential piers advertised for rent online, including one marketed as a liveaboard slip, and asked under which permit category those activities would be reported. She also questioned whether the Department's code enforcement activities were being applied consistently, referencing the California State Lands Commission's observation that mooring permittees may be treated differently than residential pier permittees. She requested additional information regarding the types of code enforcement actions being taken.

Ms. Manich also discussed the September 2025 stolen vessel incident, stating that approximately one month before the theft she had submitted photographs to Harbor Code Enforcement showing individuals fishing from a no-fishing public dock and climbing over the fence into the adjacent marina. She stated that she did not receive a response to her report and described the impact of the subsequent vessel collision on the nearby mooring field, noting that a neighboring vessel sank and that a legally permitted liveaboard resident assisted in rescuing its occupant. She concluded by stating that she possesses additional evidence related to the incident.

Chair Marston closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

8. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION

None.

9. COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

None

10. MATTERS WHICH COMMISSIONERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

Chair Marston summarized the Commission's direction from the meeting and stated that the proposed State Lands Ad Hoc Committee should be agendaized for consideration at the next regular meeting.

11. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 5 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 12, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business coming before the Harbor Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

Harbor Commission Staff Report

August 12, 2026
Agenda Item No. 6.1

TO: HARBOR COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: Cynthia Shintaku
Cshintaku@newportbeachca.gov
(949) 270-8168

TITLE: Create and Appoint Members to a Proposed State Lands Ad-Hoc Subcommittee

ABSTRACT:

At the Harbor Commission meeting on July 8, 2026, the Harbor Commission requested consideration of establishing a subcommittee to review and discuss State Lands Commission directions related to Newport Harbor. Once convened, the subcommittee will provide recommendations and updates during future Harbor Commission meetings.

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. Establish a subcommittee and appoint Harbor Commissioners to review, discuss and recommend items from the State Lands Commission. Identify up to three Harbor Commissioners to serve on the subcommittee.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

DISCUSSION:

The Harbor Commission typically sets up Ad-Hoc Committees or Sub-committees to review various policies within the harbor. Based on recent discussions at a Harbor Commission meeting, the Commissioners requested a new ad hoc subcommittee be convened to review and discuss items that impact Newport Harbor from the State Lands Commission.

The purpose of the subcommittee is to review, discuss and recommend relevant topics presented by the State Lands Commission. The subcommittee will also develop and consider potential new recommendations.

The subcommittee will return to the full Harbor Commission and report on its efforts and any recommendations. The public will also have the opportunity to review and comment on any recommendations provided by the subcommittee.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council 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, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in 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 City Council considers the item).



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

Harbor Commission Staff Report

August 12, 2026
Agenda Item No. 6.2

TO: HARBOR COMMISSION

FROM: Paul Blank, Harbormaster, 949-270-8158
pblank@newportbeachca.gov

TITLE: Ad Hoc Committee Updates

ABSTRACT:

Several ad hoc committees have been established to address short term projects outside of the Harbor Commission objectives. This is the time the ad hoc committees will provide an update on their projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

DISCUSSION:

The Harbor Commission has established ad hoc committees at this time to provide further review of issues that have arisen outside the adoption of the Harbor Commission Objectives or at the request of City Council. This is the time the Ad Hoc Committees will update the Harbor Commission on their progress.

The Ad Hoc Committees are:

- Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc – Commissioners Scully, Svrcek and McElroy (05-10-2023)
- ~~General Plan Update to the Harbor and Bay Element Ad Hoc – Commissioners Scully, Marston and Yahn (10-09-2024) completed 1-14-26.~~
- ~~Harbor Commission Objectives Ad Hoc – Commissioners Beer, Scully and Miller (8-13-2025) completed 5-13-26~~
- ~~Public Dock Utilization Ad Hoc – Commissioners Beer, Svrcek and Williams. (04-10-2024) completed 6-11-2025.~~

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 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).



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Harbor Commission Staff Report

August 12, 2026
Agenda Item No. 6.3

TO: HARBOR COMMISSION

FROM: Paul Blank, Harbormaster, 949-270-8158
pblank@newportbeachca.gov

TITLE: Harbor Commission 2026 Objectives

ABSTRACT:

Each ad hoc committee studying their respective Objective within the Commission's 2026 Objectives, will provide a progress update.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

DISCUSSION:

The Harbor Commission periodically prepares objectives and devises workplans to accomplish those objectives. The cycle for objective setting is roughly each calendar year. The Harbor Commission adopted objectives for 2026 at their meeting on May 2026. They also agreed to assignments of responsibility for the objectives in various functional areas. This is the time when Commissioners will report progress against their objectives.

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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

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).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Harbor Commission 2026 Objectives

Harbor Commission

Annual Objectives 2026 - 2027

Five Functional Areas of Focus – No more than 3 commissioners may be assigned to each Objective

Functional Area 1 Harbor Regulations & Operational Readiness

Chair: Commissioner Marston

Matters pertaining to Operations, Policies, Codes, and Enforcement

Objectives

1.1 Review and recommend targeted updates to Title 17 to reflect modern harbor use, operational needs, and Public Trust requirements

Additional Commissioner Assigned: Kerr

1.2 Evaluate Harbor Department operational readiness, including service delivery, staffing, and emergency response capability, and provide recommendations for improvement.

Additional Commissioner Assigned: Scully

Deliverables

1.1 Recommended Title 17 revisions for the current fiscal year end (FYE)

1.2 Operational readiness assessment with prioritized recommendations

Functional Area 2 Harbor Infrastructure, Public Access & Capital Planning

Chair: Commissioner Scully

Matters pertaining to Moorings, Docks, Dredging, Navigation, Public Access and Capital Improvements

Objectives

2.1 Develop a prioritized Harbor Infrastructure and Public Access Plan addressing:

- Mooring field configuration, utilization, and long-term planning
- Public access points, including docks, dinghy facilities, and launch areas
- Navigation and safety-related infrastructure

Additional Commissioners Assigned: McElroy, Svrcek

2.2 Capital improvement needs and alignment with the Tidelands Capital Improvement Plan

Additional Commissioners Assigned: Marston, Williams

2.3 Monitor & support ongoing harbor dredging activities

- Support staff efforts for upcoming agency renewals of Regional General Permit (RGP54) shallow water dredging permit
- Provide input and public updates, as appropriate, until completion of the federal channel dredging project

Additional Commissioner Assigned: Marston

Deliverables

2.1 Actionable Harbor Infrastructure and Public Access Plan (12–18 month horizon)

2.2 Identification of priority capital projects and funding considerations

2.3 Ongoing support for agency renewals or shallow water dredging under

RGP54, including future maintenance considerations and any recommended actions needed, and periodic public updates to the Harbor Commission on dredging status, if appropriate, and until project completion

Functional Area 3 Harbor Financial Sustainability

Chair: Commissioner Williams

Matters pertaining to Tidelands Fund, Revenue, and Long-Term Funding Strategy

Objectives

3.1 Evaluate the Tidelands Fund, including revenue sources, expenditures, and long-term financial outlook.

Additional Commissioner Assigned: Scully

3.2 Provide recommendations to improve financial sustainability and align funding with harbor infrastructure, operations, and Public Trust obligations.

Additional Commissioner Assigned: Scully

Deliverables

3.1 Financial analysis and recommendations

3.2 Strategic framework to support long-term harbor funding and investment

Functional Area 4 Harbor Safety & Modernization

Chair: Commissioner Miller

Matters pertaining to Safety, Compliance, and Emergency Response

Objectives

4.1 Evaluate and enhance harbor safety systems, including:

- Safety standards and educational tools for rental operators and harbor users
- Emergency response capabilities, including evaluation of City fire boat needs

Additional Commissioners Assigned: Kerr, Scully

4.2 Evaluation and integration of technology and tools to improve safety, monitoring, and enforcement

Additional Commissioners Assigned: McElroy

Deliverables

4.1 Harbor safety improvement recommendations

4.2 Technology and operational enhancement strategy

Functional Area 5 **Interagency Coordination & Policy Alignment**

Chair: Commissioner Svrcek

Matters pertaining to Coordination with City Commissions and External Stakeholders

Objectives

5.1 Coordinate with relevant City Commissions, Committees, and staff on harbor-related matters, including water quality, land use, and General Plan updates, to ensure alignment with Harbor Commission priorities.

Additional Commissioners Assigned: McElroy, Miller

Deliverables

5.1

- Coordinated policy input and recommendations for the current FYE
- Ongoing updates to the Harbor Commission



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

Harbor Commission Staff Report

August 12, 2026
Agenda Item No. 6.4

TO: HARBOR COMMISSION

FROM: Paul Blank, Harbormaster
pblank@newportbeachca.gov
(949) 270-8159

TITLE: Harbormaster Update – July 2026 Activities

ABSTRACT:

July 2026 was an extraordinarily busy month for the Harbor Department, with calls for service running significantly above normal levels. The challenge was compounded by the absence of anticipated new staff at Balboa Yacht Basin (BYB) due to delays in the recruiting process. Despite being short-handed, the entire team rose to the occasion, pitching in across all functions to ensure that expectations were met for every harbor stakeholder and that Newport Harbor remained clean, safe, and well-enjoyed. The overwhelming focus for the month was on safety, driven by the high volume of vessels and recreational traffic on the harbor during peak summer season. Notable incidents included the termination of a dangerous voyage involving unsupervised minors, the successful deployment of a new patrol boat tracking system, multiple vessel rescues and assists, and the continued pursuit of an unpermitted commercial charter operator who was arrested twice — once in June and again on July 31 after skipping a second court appearance, resulting in a \$15,000 bench warrant. On the "Well-Enjoyed" front, the Department completed a full inspection of BYB, tested new customer self-service technology, and continued to demonstrate the operational advantages of managing both Marina Park and BYB under a single management structure.

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) Receive and file.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

DISCUSSION:

The Harbor Department's monthly activity reports to the Harbor Commission are organized around the Department's core mission: keeping Newport Harbor clean, safe, and well-enjoyed. This framework has been consistently applied in prior reports and provides the Commission with a structured view of operational priorities and outcomes. July 2026 was defined by an exceptionally high volume of calls for service — significantly above normal — at a time when the Department was operating without the additional staffing anticipated at BYB due to delays in the recruiting process. 1 The entire team demonstrated remarkable dedication, pitching in wherever needed to ensure that the harbor remained clean, safe, and well-enjoyed for all stakeholders. The overwhelming operational focus for the month was on safety, given the extraordinary volume of vessel and recreational traffic on the harbor.

Clean

Significant efforts were expended to maintain and improve the cleanliness of Newport Harbor during July 2026.

Significant maintenance and improvements were made to the pumpout facility at the Balboa Yacht Basin (BYB), ensuring this critical environmental infrastructure remains operational and accessible for boaters. A commercial vessel was found blocking the BYB pumpout dock and was relocated to the BYB guest dock to restore access

Fishing education and enforcement were conducted throughout the month. The many young anglers encountered were respectful, complied with all requests, and there were no issues

A discharge/pollution report was received at the Balboa Bay Club near a storm drain. Investigation determined the source appeared to be methane gas from an upland construction project; the matter was referred to upland Code Enforcement, which is handling the case.

A moored vessel created an oil sheen due to an accidental bilge discharge. While the amount of oil discharged was small, the resulting sheen was quite widespread before dissipating. All required notifications were made, and the owner has committed to preventing any further discharge. HSOs did an outstanding job identifying both the spill and its source.

Significant improvements were made to the oil recycling room at BYB, including adding capacity and implementing better measures to deter people from leaving materials the Department cannot collect, such as other hazardous liquids and batteries. This builds on a matter identified in the June report, when the Department first noted that a significant amount of hazardous material other than used motor oil was being improperly deposited at the BYB used oil recycling station.

Staff continued to participate in the oyster restoration project, including bi-weekly oyster sun baths — an ongoing initiative supporting natural water filtration in the harbor.

Construction activity at 1440 W. Bay was stopped due to debris entering the water.

Safe

Significant efforts were expended to maintain and improve the safety of Newport Harbor during July 2026. With the overwhelming focus of the month on safety given the high volume of harbor traffic, the Department responded to a remarkable number of urgent calls for service.

Dangerous Vessel Operation by Minors. The most alarming safety incident of the month involved a rigid hull inflatable (RHI) with a 70 HP motor being operated by three 12-year-old youths who were intentionally harassing female paddleboarders, speeding, and committing other violations. The voyage was terminated, and the matter was referred to Code Enforcement with very comprehensive documentation of the incident. The vessel owner and parent of one of the youths was cited and ultimately took responsibility for the incident.

Patrol Boat Tracking System. After a long effort and several previous attempts that were either not approved or not robust enough, the Department now has an approved method for tracking the real-time location of all four patrol boats. The public can access this information as well. This tool is tremendously helpful when evaluating what resources to assign to the many calls for service that come in daily.

Vessel Rescues and Assists:

- A dinghy was dewatered at the Fernando St. public dock
- HSOs assisted a stand-up paddleboard (SUP) with no lights across the East Anchorage at peak firework show time on July 4
- A disabled dinghy drifting toward trouble was assisted to safety
- A situation involving two vessels arguing in the West Anchorage was de-escalated by HSOs
- A medical emergency aboard M/V *Endless Dreams* was responded to; the Sheriff handled the medical response while Harbor staff remained on-scene for perimeter control
- A disabled 60-foot motor vessel was towed from outside the West Anchorage to the East Anchorage and handed over to a commercial tow service

- Two kids on paddleboards struggling in the wind were assisted back to the Balboa Bay Club
- A vessel dragging anchor in the East Anchorage, nearly hitting other boats, was impounded and towed by crew. The vessel was subsequently released from impound with \$658 in fees paid, and a mooring rental was set up with a mooring assist provided. This incident is further described in the “Odds and Ends” section of this report
- Improper anchoring in the East Anchorage was corrected on multiple occasions; boaters were compliant and were directed to the best spot to anchor and given a quick lesson on proper scope
- Navigation light education contacts were made on multiple occasions
- A sport fishing vessel at Lido Village Marina appeared to be protruding significantly farther than the beam of the vessel. Further contact with the marina management and vessel owner corrected the situation
- A vessel in distress near the harbor mouth was assisted and towed to safety
- Another disabled vessel at the mouth of the harbor and headed for the rocks was towed by HSOs to the OCSD public dock

PWC Speeding Enforcement. HSOs observed a personal watercraft (PWC) with two occupants speeding near the East Anchorage. The speed was documented via video, and a siren and PA were used in an attempt to slow the watercraft. Immediately after the siren was activated, the PWC accelerated further, getting on plane and heading toward the Back Bay. After losing visual contact under the PCH bridge, the HSO trailed behind and met the PWC at the launch ramp as their vehicle was about to pull it from the water. The owner claimed to believe the speed limit was 10 knots, and the operator claimed not to have heard the sirens despite aggressively speeding up after lights and sirens were initiated. The operator was educated on the rules, and a citation was issued

Nitrous Oxide System. A full canister of a Nitrous Oxide System for a jet ski was found on the 15th Street Public Dock and was handed over to NBPd

TikTok Takeover. The TikTok Takeover event scheduled for Sunday, July 26 did not materialize, but the Department participated in the public safety briefing with City partners. Marina Park renters were briefed on the situation in advance.

Well-enjoyed

Significant efforts were expended to maintain and improve the enjoyment of Newport Harbor during July 2026.

BYB Marina Inspections. The Department completed a full inspection of the entire Balboa Yacht Basin. Renters have been very receptive and have commented that they appreciate seeing management on the docks, paying attention to the details, and being actively engaged throughout the marina. Several tenants also expressed surprise that staff would be back out working the docks regularly, which reinforces the value of maintaining a consistent presence.

Integrated Marina Management. Having direct control over both Marina Park (MP) and BYB, the Department can now better manage inventory and occupancy at both facilities. This has created opportunities for mariners to use short-term slips at BYB when Marina Park is full, and for BYB tenants to be accommodated at Marina Park for various reasons. As an example, a visiting vessel was coordinated from a slip at BYB to a slip at Marina Park during a busy weekend, with staff managing the transition to avoid overlap with an incoming vessel. This level of coordination was not possible under the prior management arrangement.

Customer Self-Service Technology. IT has completed development of new customer self-service functionality. These functions will be available to the public — both new and existing customers — to help them better manage their slip and mooring sub-permit reservations with the Department.

Youth Supervision Concerns. Participants in a youth summer sailing program who were behaving badly and poorly supervised were addressed

First Aid Assistance. Staff assisted a BYB slip renter with the removal of a Sabiki hook that had become embedded in his finger. Two HSOs and another slip renter worked together to safely remove the hook using pliers while taking extra care to avoid causing nerve damage. The barb was particularly difficult to extract and required patience to remove successfully; fortunately, the hook was removed without further incident.

Anchor Retrieval. Staff assisted with the retrieval of an anchor for a boat with no windlass. The captain was very appreciative.

Odds and Ends

Significant efforts were expended to address harbor-related matters that do not fit neatly within the clean, safe, and well-enjoyed framework.

Constituent Praise. A constituent who witnessed an encounter between an HSO and an unpleasant permittee who had been asked not to speed in the mooring fields wrote in with praise for the professionalism and composure of the officer.

Mooring Realignment Project Costs. Public comments at a recent meeting suggesting the City spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on the mooring realignment project were inaccurate. The Department was budgeted to spend up to \$400,000 on the project. Actual expenditures were approximately \$70,000 (\$50K on engineering and \$20K on permit applications). The engineering is being reused for the mooring specs modernization project. When the permit was not approved, \$330,000 of budget was contributed back and reflected in the Department's financial reports.

Shoreboat/Water Taxi Service. Following the discussion at the July meeting, the Harbormaster was able to connect the permittee interested in shoreboat services with the individual working on a proposal to bring water taxi service to the harbor. This represents a constructive step forward on a matter that has been the subject of prior constituent interest and frustration, as noted in the June report.

Lower Bay Dredge Program. A fully loaded scow associated with the lower bay dredge program became stuck at a particularly low tide and had to wait for the tide to come back in before proceeding. This incident serves as a clear example of why dredging is important for the safety of navigation in the harbor.

Combatting Misinformation. A significant amount of the Harbormaster's time continues to be devoted to combatting misinformation shared via social media and in public comments, including responding to allegations of wrongdoing and illegal uses in the harbor. Example: a waterfront property owner reported that there was a "Bimini too high" on a vessel assigned to a shore mooring. The reporting party was dissatisfied with the response received from the Harbormaster explaining that there were length and beam limits associated with vessels assigned to shore moorings but no such limits on height. Another example involved the Harbormaster explaining to an angry constituent that the City is not actively engaged in redesigning the harbor and rebuilding slips to accommodate larger and wider vessels.

Public Records Act Requests (PRARs). The Department has requested IT assistance in reducing the effort required to respond to PRARs, some of which have recently been overwhelming. As Finance noted, one recent request of the Harbor Department was "the biggest request Finance has ever seen." The Department is working to make more records easily accessible to the public, reducing the effort necessary to collect, package, and publish them for specific requests, and improving overall transparency.

Other Administrative Matters. Another waterfront resident has complained several times about vessels assigned to shore moorings on North Bay Front. Significant effort has gone into responding to the requests and educating the resident about mooring

permit conditions, the Harbor Code, and how it can be amended. In another example, a slip renter at BYB was dissatisfied with the explanation of terms and conditions associated with her slip agreement and the absence of a provision for prorating the final month of rent.

Media/Public Appearance — Harbor Rules That Surprise People. While delivering a public address, the Harbormaster was asked, "What's one harbor rule that surprises people the most when they learn about it?" The Harbormaster responded with the top two answers:

1. Children 13 and younger **must** wear life jackets at all times when on a moving vessel.
2. A mariner cannot extend a time-limited stay at one of the public docks by simply moving the vessel to another spot on the dock. The vessel must leave the dock for at least 24 hours before the clock resets.

Community Appreciation. The Newport Beach Foundation (not the Newport Harbor Foundation) brought refreshments by the office to show appreciation for the hardworking and dedicated Harbor Team. It was a great interaction between the Harbor team and members of the public.

Consistent Matters at BYB. Ongoing daily priorities at BYB continue to include maintenance and cleaning, deterring fishing at the facility, addressing unauthorized use of empty slips and side ties, and curbing misuse of the oil recycling facility.

Emerging Recreational Technology. As the Harbormaster frequently notes, people stay up late at night devising new ways to enjoy the harbor — and the Department is all for it, as long as those ways are clean, safe, and enjoyable for all. The latest application with the potential to be very unsafe is an underwater scooter capable of significantly exceeding the harbor speed limit. The device can be operated by swimmers underwater or on the surface.

Theft of Impounded Vessel. A vessel impounded for overstaying its welcome at the Fernando Street Public Dock was stolen from the Marina Park dock. A case was opened with NBPd, and the Department provided video footage, a description, and registered owner information. Staff was advised not to engage directly, given NBPd's knowledge of the suspect, who is a local resident.

Note of Praise from a BYB Tenant:

"I'd like to highlight the helpfulness and service of one of your employees; Ryan, who manages the basin now. I've been working on my boat, the Viking 56 Spectacular Bid on C dock over the last month and he has been EXCEPTIONAL. He knows what he's doing, has introduced himself to everyone on the dock in the short time the city has managed the basin, and as

far as I'm concerned is an asset to the Harbor Department — and the harbor as a whole. If he's ever up for a promotion or anything, I hope he gets the recognition he has earned and very well deserves.

He also helped me put the outriggers back on my boat after my work crew failed to show up.

Absolutely love everything that's going on in the harbor. Have lived here my whole life and this is the best I've seen it run."

From an On-the-Water Observation. A constituent observed an interaction between a permittee and a Code Enforcement Officer and wrote in with praise for the professionalism displayed.

*“(referring to an accompanying photo image) This guy deserves a raise. You train your guys well. He stopped a guy for speeding through the moorings then the guy he stopped lit him up about someone’s generator use at night. Was calm the whole time and listened even though the other guy was a total (*expletive deleted*)”*

Update on Unpermitted Commercial Charter Operator

The unpermitted commercial charter operator who was arrested in early June for skipping his arraignment related to offering charters in Newport Harbor without a Marine Activities Permit (MAP) had another arraignment scheduled for July 28. The operator chose to skip the hearing, which resulted in the court issuing a \$15,000 bench warrant. Our colleagues at NBPD agreed to locate and arrest the operator. On July 31, NBPD officers located and arrested the operator. Interestingly, the operator was receiving a \$500 Venmo payment at the time of his second arrest. While not yet confirmed, the arresting officers believe the payment may have been related to an unpermitted charter. This matter has been ongoing since 2023, and the City filed a misdemeanor complaint on March 18, 2026, alleging 12 counts. We are grateful to NBPD for their continued collaboration on this matter.

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).

ATTACHMENTS:

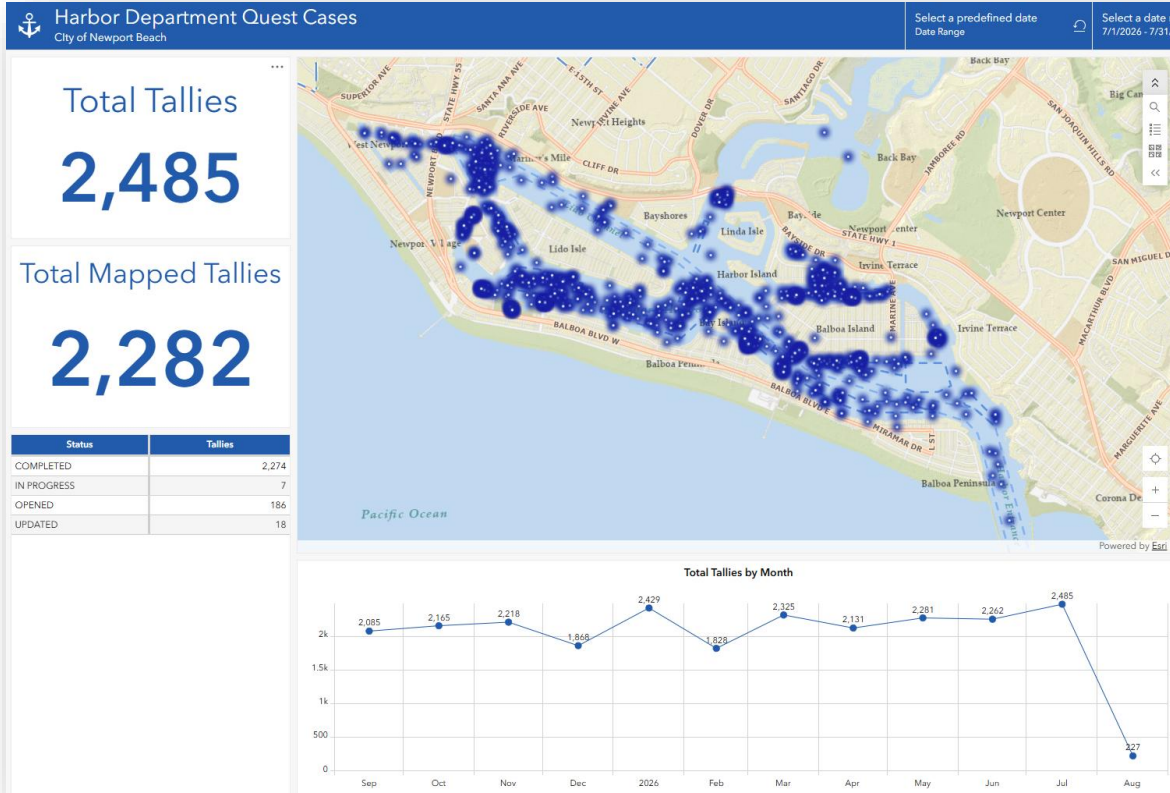
Attachment A – Harbor Department Statistics Infographic

Attachment A

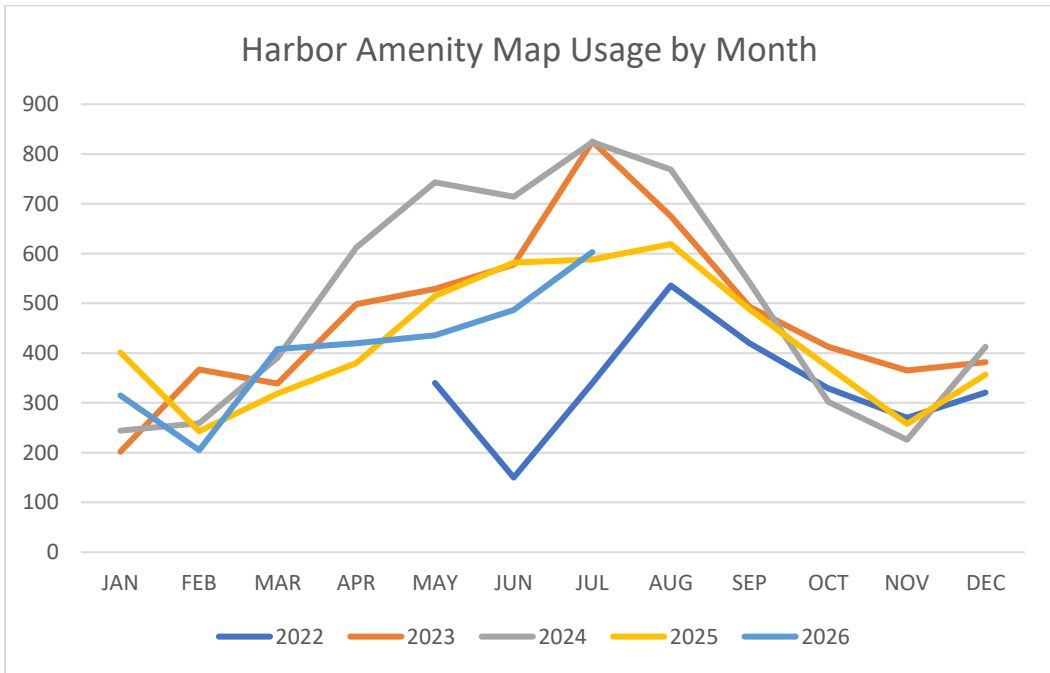
Harbor Department Statistics Infographic

HARBOR DEPARTMENT STATISTICS INFOGRAPHIC

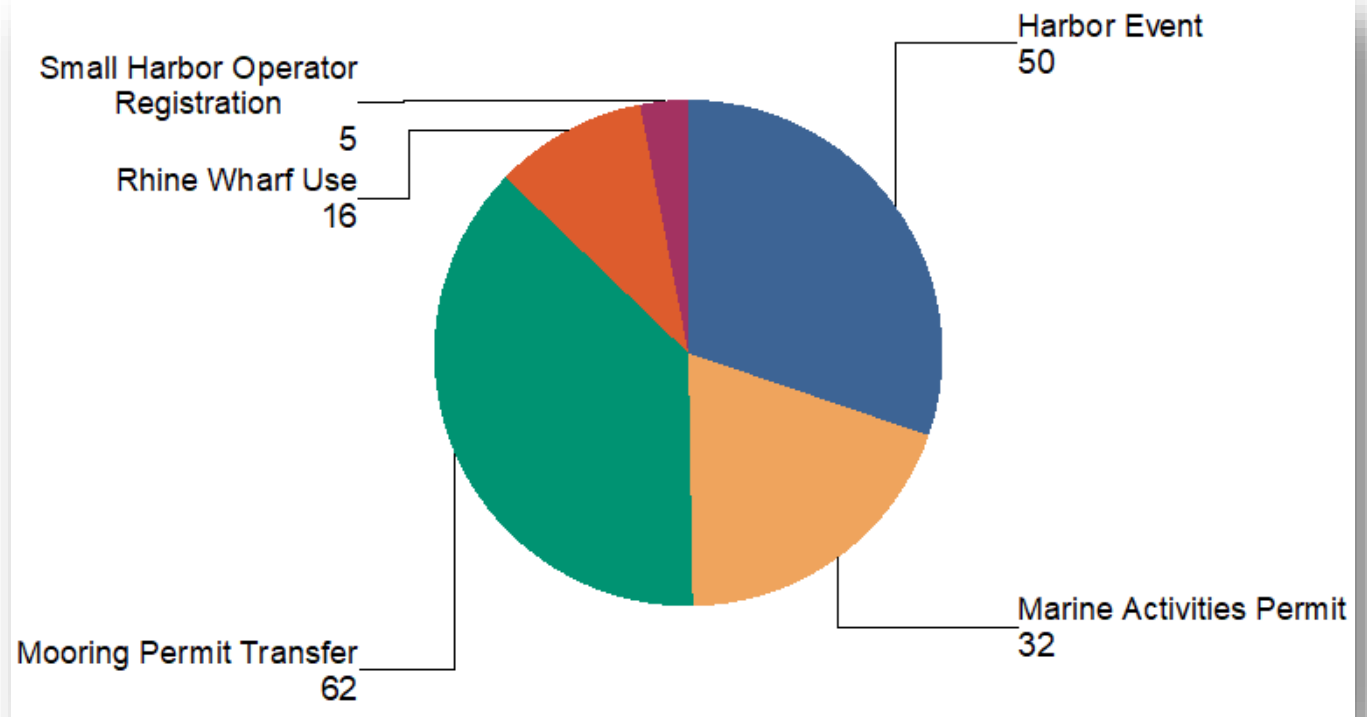
Heatmap of Harbor Service Requests – For the Month



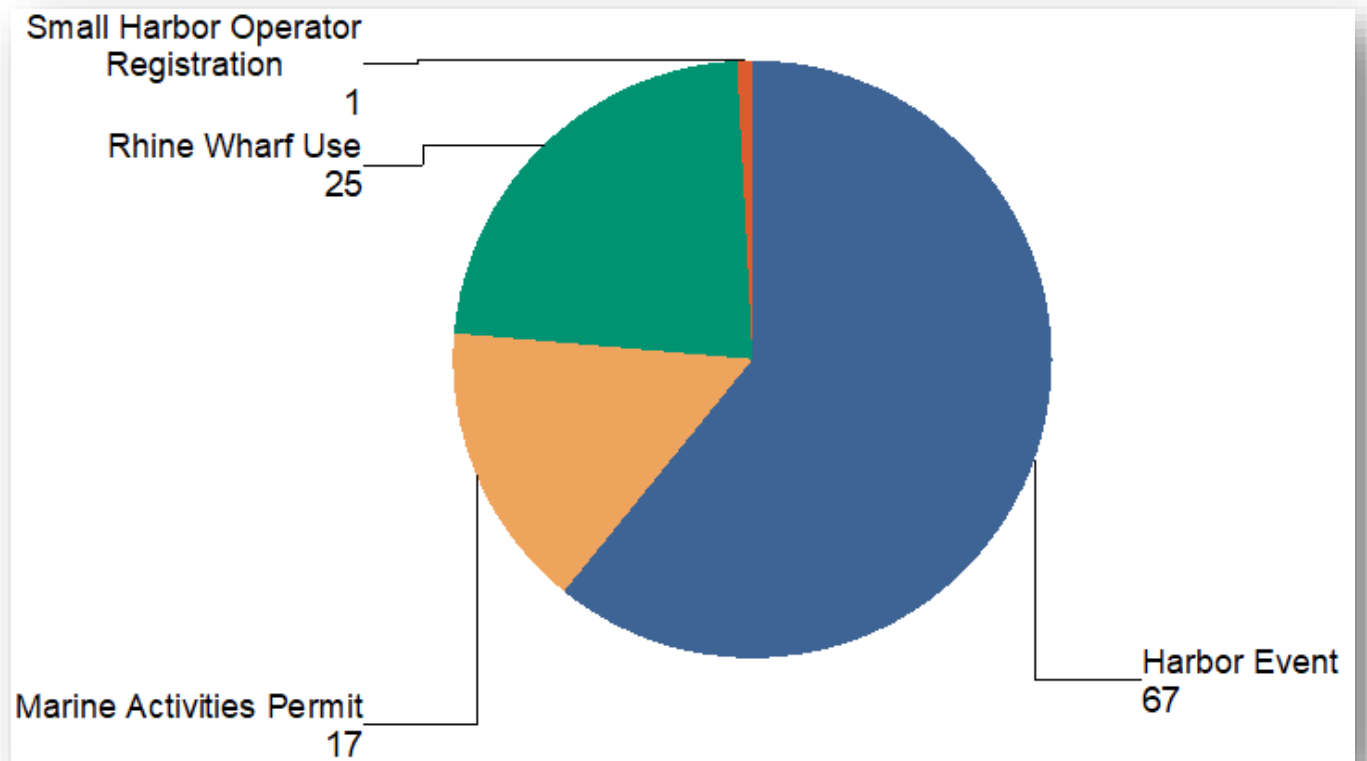
Harbor Adjacent Public Amenity Map Usage



Permit Activity in 2026



Permit Activity in 2025



Permit Activity by Status Year to Date

Harbor Event Permits		
	Issued	50
	Denied	3
	Cancelled	4
	Pending	
	Total Applications	57
Marine Activities Permits		
	Issued	32
	Denied	1
	Cancelled	5
	Pending	11
	Total Applications	49
Mooring Permit Transfers		
	Issued	62
	Denied	
	Cancelled	
	Pending	48
	Total Applications	110
Rhine Wharf Permits		
	Issued	16
	Denied	
	Cancelled	
	Pending	
	Total Applications	16
Small Harbor Operator Registration Permits		
	Issued	5
	Denied	
	Cancelled	
	Pending	
	Total Applications	5

Anchorage Usage for the Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	1 Jul	2	3	4
Juana B 6/27/2026 - E	Cocokai 6/29/2026 - E		SOUVENIR 7/5/2026 - W			
			CIEN ANOS - W			Savassana 7/4/2026 - W
				Bee Working 7/2/2026 - W		
				Liana Maria 7/2/2026 - W		
				Incognito 7/2/2026 - W		
				more...	more...	more...
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
SOUVENIR 7/5/2026 - W					Soirée tabbed 7/10/2026 - W	
Bee Working 7/2/2026 - W			RED BARON 7/8/2026 - W			
Liana Maria 7/2/2026 - W			J SLOOP 7/8/2026 - W			
Incognito 7/2/2026 - W			AMADUES 7/9/2026 - W			Baja bandito 7/11/2026 - W
Pour Choices 7/2/2026 - W					Life Aquatic 7/10/2026 - W	
more...	more...				more...	more...
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
RED BARON 7/8/2026 - W		Daydream 7/14/2026 - W				Rebel - W
Soirée tabbed 7/10/2026 - W		Silvia's Bravo 7/14/2026 - W		Wind Dancer 7/17/2026 - W		
Baja bandito 7/11/2026 - W					Incognito 7/17/2026 - W	
Koa 7/11/2026 - W					Anejo 7/17/2026 - W	
						Offshore 7/18/2026 - W
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Wind Dancer 7/17/2026 - W	Paradigm shift 7/21/2026 - W			FELIX 7/23/2026 - W		La Paz - W
Rebel - W					Fish and chips 7/24/2026 - W	
Offshore 7/18/2026 - W	Amnesia 7/20/2026 - W	Gigspaceh20.com 7/21/2026 - W			Piliikia 7/24/2026 - W	
		Rebel 7/22/2026 - W				Ameta IV 7/25/2026 - W
						Changes in latitude 7/25/2026 - W
						more...
26	27	28	29	30	31	1 Aug
La Paz - W			MOLA - W		Serendipity III 7/31/2026 - W	
Ameta IV 7/25/2026 - W			FREEDOM 7/29/2026 - W		Helios 7/31/2026 - W	
Changes in latitude 7/25/2026 - W			PILIKIA - W			Agra Azul 8/1/2026 - W
Escapade 7/25/2026 - W						Viggo 8/1/2026 - W
Pacific Dog 7/25/2026 - W						