



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH WATER QUALITY/COASTAL TIDELANDS COMMITTEE AGENDA

Crystal Cove Room (Bay 2D)

Thursday, March 6, 2025 - 3:00 PM

Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee Members:

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

Staff Members:

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

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

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

NOTICE REGARDING PRESENTATIONS REQUIRING USE OF CITY EQUIPMENT

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

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

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

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

Recommendation: Approve minutes as presented

[WQCT Draft Minutes 02062025](#)

- 5) **CURRENT BUSINESS (55 min)**

(a) **Committee Goals/Objectives Workshop (Bob Stein) (30 min) Review and update of the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee Goals.**

Recommendation: Committee Discussion/Approval

(b) **Newport Peninsula Dunes Restoration (Bob Stein) (15 min) Update on the Newport Peninsula Dunes restoration project.**

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

(c) **Newport Bay Trash Interceptor - Trash Characterization (Ellis Peterson) (10 min) Update on the Newport Bay Trash Interceptor trash characterization project.**

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

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

(a) **Coastal Resiliency (April 2025 - Charles Fancher)**

(b) **Total Maximum Daily Load for Copper (Cu) (April 2025 - TBD)**

(c) **San Gabriel River Trash Interceptor Project (May 2025 - John Wadsworth)**

(d) **Newport Beach Trash Interceptor Public Outreach Campaign (Spring 2025 - John Pope)**

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

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

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

Recommendation: April 3, 2025

9) **ADJOURNMENT**

Date: February 6, 2025
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: Crystal Cove Conference Room, Newport Beach Civic Center
Meeting Minutes prepared by:

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

Mayor/Vice Chair Joe Stapleton
Committee Member Peter Belden

Staff Present: John Kappeler, Senior Engineer
Karen Gallagher, Administrative Assistant
Jim Houlihan, Deputy Director of Public Works
Bob Stein, Assistant City Engineer
Ellis Petersen, Associate Engineer

Guests Present: Dennis Baker, SPON
Jim Mosher, Resident
Paul Blank, Harbormaster
Nancy Skinner, SPON
Nancy Gardner, Orange Coast River Park
Nancy Scarbrough, SPON, Resident

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Jim Mosher, Newport Beach resident, questioned how this became a 10-minute item. He noted on the draft minutes from the January 9 WQCT meeting Harbor Commissioner Svreck is erroneously listed as part of the staff. He added there is confusion over the recent Committee field trip as it happened in November and not December. He added it qualifies as an Agendized meeting and should have minutes available from the proceedings. A Committee Member agreed.

4. Review and approval of minutes

Motion: A motion was made by Committee Member Fancher to approve the January 9, 2025, minutes with amendments recommended by Mr. Mosher, seconded by Committee Member Robertson. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Current Business

a. Committee Goals/Objectives Workshop (Bob Stein)

Review and update of the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee Goals.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion/Approval

Assistant City Engineer Bob Stein presented the Committee's goals, encouraging each Committee Member to share their suggestions. He stated the list could be augmented as needed. He added the Committee Members will then be asked to vote on their top three to five which will be ranked to help come up with a final priority list.

Senior Civil Engineer John Kappeler added this is the procedure from past Workshops, noting there has also been interest in both short and long-term goals. He noted the last goal sheet proved to be too long and unwieldy.

Chair Barto recommended two to three and agreed with Mr. Kappeler's call for a good short-term goal which can be easily accomplished.

Committee Member Black clarified the difference between goals and objectives which are supposed to include a schedule and metric. He encouraged including a short-term goal and objective. In response to an inquiry, he noted the separation of water quality objectives and those involving the protection of beach sand, structures, and other areas. He called for quarterly progress updates.

Committee Member Fancher noted if they have too many goals and objectives, they cannot properly focus on accomplishing them, adding this has been a problem in the past. He noted this can lead to a lack of discipline about pursuing the goals and objectives. He encouraged the Committee to agree to two or three focused objectives, broken down into a couple components.

Chair Barto stated water quality improvement should be the main objective.

Committee Member Black reported the Committee's definition leads to a two-pronged purpose – advising and making recommendations on policies related to water quality and to advise the City Council on tidelands infrastructure regarding sea-level rise impacting the ocean beaches, sand replenishment impacting the ocean beaches, tideland issues not covered by other committees, and other areas. He noted this is a broad scope and added the beaches fall between three committees with this one being the most vocal on matters of sand replenishment and beach protection.

Mr. Kappeler noted the City used to have a dedicated Tidelands Committee 10 years ago which was folded into the Water Quality Committee by the City Council.

Still Protecting Our Newport (SPON) Treasurer Dennis Baker reported several items on the list are dependent on other agencies, citing the proposed objective of capturing trash in the Santa Ana River. He added the reliance on other agencies must be considered in prioritizing the list because the Committee cannot perform all these objectives by itself.

Chair Barto referenced the Dunes Pipe Project which required the active and enthusiastic participation of Orange County Supervisor Kristina Foley. She added this is a great time of year to reach out to other agencies as they are currently formulating their Fiscal Year 2025-26 budgets.

Committee Member Fancher stated his three priorities are anything to do with the Santa Ana River, San Diego Creek, and the beach. He added he would like to see how each of the proposed goals and objectives fall under each of these three areas, noting some of them touch multiple areas.

Mr. Stein reported pollutants into the Santa Ana River and San Diego Creek come from upstream and not from Newport Beach with the Santa Ana River being a much more difficult issue.

Committee Member Black stated the Santa Ana River issues require collaboration and the Committee cannot accomplish its goals unilaterally. He added it is the Committee's most obvious opportunity for success. He called for the Committee to make a stand and do something about the Santa Ana River, cautioning it will be challenging and require political will and regional leadership.

He added this is a good subject for phone calls to Supervisor Foley and others. He noted the City's beach cleanup efforts often peak after large storms and mainly remove trash flowing down the Santa Ana River with the increased water levels.

Committee Member Wadsworth reported he is on a Working Group around the trash interceptor project on the San Gabriel River, led by Assemblymember Diane Dixon with representatives from a dozen agencies. He reported the Working Group received a grant for about \$500,000 to start the project with a consultant and the project is about halfway through its Environmental Impact Report. He added the project should be ready to move to the design phase by the end of the calendar year.

In response to Deputy Director Jim Houlihan's inquiry, Committee Member Wadsworth added they are still working on matters such as technology with guidance from the consultant. He added this decision is still a few months away but will provide a roadmap for a similar trash capture project on the Santa Ana River. He added consultant Shane Silsby has agreed to present to this Committee about the process and lessons learned. He added this would be a long-term matter for their list but one of critical importance.

Committee Member Black reported on his submission regarding beach projection objectives, adding it is an existing goal he copied over. He added he would like to refine it to focus on sand replenishment and natural protection of beaches with less focus on a rising sea level. He added protecting infrastructure and coastal homes objectives he also listed are inspired by the restoration work in Big Canyon. He added other agencies are still involved but the City has more ability to act unilaterally so infrastructure protection could make for a good short-term goal.

Committee Member Fancher noted he had already stated his interests lie with everything to do with San Diego Creek and the Santa Ana River. He suggested the Committee focus on four major topics as they relate to these waterways – pollutants, water flows, trash, and the organic environment referring to invasive species, oxygen depletion, and algae blooms. He added the beach would be his third main area of concerns after San Diego Creek and the Santa Ana River.

Chair Barto noted these are not areas where the Committee could fix all the problems in one year. She suggested coming up with a series of steps to meet such large goals and objectives.

Mr. Baker noted San Diego Creek, and the Santa Ana River have been grouped together multiple times in this discussion. He added there has yet to be a mention of the Santa Ana River's Delhi Channel which is more manageable and akin to San Diego Creek.

Chair Barto clarified this exercise is to determine the world of goals the Committee can choose with the list to be narrowed down as the discussion progresses.

Orange Coast River Park Conservancy member Nancy Gardner stated the Santa Ana River's issues are mindbogglingly large but agreed with Committee Member Black it is up to them to start the process.

Committee Member Robertson stated trash, climate changes, and species of concern have been commonalities for the Committee. He lamented some trash-based concepts are not within the City's purview and stressed these goals have to be things they can actually accomplish as an advise and consent Committee. He encouraged projects the City can implement and control. He noted capturing first flush storms is already on the list. He stated the City cannot solve issues about microplastics, climate change, or rising sea levels but the Committee can recommend a response from the City to these impetuses. He noted the City can help prepare residents for coincidental inland flooding due to rising sea levels through its communication channels. He added preparation for invasive species also falls into this realm, along with informing recreational fishers about likely changes to the City's fish population due to future water temperature increases.

Chair Barto stated there will likely be some overlap in what the top choice of Committee Members will be and they will have to group things from there to determine what the City can control enough to set goals around and establish a plan with measurable outcomes.

Committee Member Wadsworth stated most of what is being discussed are defensive measures. He encouraged making a statement to Newport Beach and other cities by encouraging the restaurant community to partake in alternatives to single-use plastic items. He reported the majority of what ends up as trash on beaches is from restaurant take-out orders and stated they should encourage restaurants to become more sustainable. He commended the City of Irvine's plastic-free zone and water bottle refill stations at City Hall. He added this is a good publicity opportunity for Newport Beach to have a similar policy at City Hall to show the City is making a stand against single-use plastics and raising community awareness for the issue. He cited the Lido House hotel as an example of the benefits of eliminating single-use plastics and increasing sustainability. He called for more community buy-in similar to the Lido House.

Committee Member Fancher lauded Committee Member Wadsworth's comments and cautioned against focusing on the hardships of addressing problems and thus convincing themselves not to address the problem. He added it would be a disservice to get too deep into the weeds so soon and encouraged identifying opportunities. He added single-use plastics is just a small part of a much larger trash problem but something which can be addressed.

Committee Member Hudson noted there used to be a larger trash issue at Sunset Beach in the City of Huntington Beach so trash cans were added generating good results with a simple action. He lamented a general lack of trash cans on the City's beaches, encouraging beachgoers to leave their trash behind for lack of a suitable receptacle.

Mr. Baker reported it has been years since the City has had a harmful algae bloom because the City eliminated nurseries. He stated this item should thus be removed from the preliminary list.

Chair Barto stated all Committee Member submissions were included in this preliminary list but the inclusion of any item does not ensure a place on the final list. She instructed Committee Members to list their top three issues in order of importance and non-Committee Members in attendance to list their single most important priority. She called for submissions from all in attendance.

Chair Barto determined protecting ocean beaches is clearly receiving the most traction, followed by trash capturing on the Santa Ana River, and Upper Bay restoration.

Committee Member Black noted the items may need some rewording as multiple concepts are folded into them. He stated these are all longer-term objectives and there are possibilities of subcategories which can be executed on a shorter-term basis, creating a series of small victories.

Committee Member Fancher stated they should have five focal points – trash, pollution, flows, organic settings, and the beach. He added the three broader areas listed by Chair Barto must incorporate elements of these five points to be successful.

Chair Barto clarified these five are the Committee's mission and items like pollution, trash, and flows, can all fall under the category of Santa Ana River and be goals towards meeting the higher-arching objective.

Ms. Gardner called for linguistic changes, noting the ultimate objective is not merely to capture trash but to eliminate it and this will keep focus on the longer-term goals. She noted the trash interceptor on San Diego Creek is an immediate need's solution and not an ultimate solution of having less trash to collect.

Committee Member Black commended the more specific goals for being audacious and forcing them to think in incremental plans.

Mr. Stein stated the first step would be to have a consultant present some viable ideas for concepts like trash interception on the Santa Ana River, creating a first-step educational process for the Committee Members. He added the City is also looking at some sand capture options in the Santa Ana River creating a potential confluence of ideas which can come together quickly.

Chair Barto added these subcategories can help generate metrics for success in the identified areas of concern, such as the Upper Bay.

Ms. Gardner emphasized the need to identify others involved in reaching their goals, citing the City's upriver neighbors.

Mr. Baker added the canyon project established a good, templated model for the City partnering with non-profits and other agencies like SPON leading to successful results. He added this can increase the likelihood of receiving funding.

Committee Member Fancher noted this discussion raised an issue of definitively ranking the projects because establishing one item as the most important congruously implies another area on the list is less important. He stated he cannot agree with this perceived notion.

Committee Member Wadsworth noted some of the other five items are subparts of the three proposed objectives.

Committee Member Fancher noted there is a subdivision on the Santa Ana River for flows.

Committee Member Robertson clarified number one is trash collection and not the Santa Ana River.

Chair Barto clarified the intent of trash collection is the Santa Ana River.

Committee Member Fancher noted trash collection only speaks to one part of the Santa Ana River's issues.

Mr. Houlihan clarified it can be worded differently because the first flush trash capture is important, but it applies to both the Santa Ana River and other watersheds, adding the Santa Ana is only a flowing river during the first flush.

Chair Barto acknowledged things could be reworded to reflect how first flush and dry weather flows impact multiple areas of larger concern.

Committee Member Fancher recommended staff perform this clarification ahead of a presentation at the next meeting.

Committee Member Robertson noted these are artificial distinctions separating trash into dry weather flows and first flush, adding this concept then applies to San Diego Creek and others. He observed the Committee Members are all saying the same thing but there is a need for consolidation in their comments.

Mr. Stein stated staff will draft a document to circulate for the Committee Members for comment and revision. He added capturing trash is a more generally attractive concept as it relates to capturing the City Council's attention.

Committee Member Black noted they only meet 12 times a year so it would be beneficial to focus across topics.

Mr. Houlihan noted from his experience running the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) there are many related projects in progress like the Balboa Island Sea Wall and others. He added many things the Committee is discussing now will become new CIP projects in the future, adding they may also have to involve the County but the City has to be the driver.

Committee Member Fancher added they should focus on an objective's importance and not its level of difficulty.

Committee Member Wadsworth added the Public Works Department has often indicated to him they are all for solutions but cautioned it will take the City to drive the train on County-level projects.

Ms. Skinner recommended analyzing what has already been attempted and its level of success.

Mr. Kappeler reported attempting to solve a Santa Ana River matter involving a rubber inflatable dam a few years ago in collaboration with the City of Costa Mesa. He cited this as an example of what Newport Beach can accomplish locally.

In response to an inquiry, Mr. Kappeler could not report if the temporary dam is still in use and offered to investigate its status.

Chair Barto stated this discussion is a good start and thanked staff in advance for organizing the Committee's collective thoughts.

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

- a. San Gabriel River Trash Interceptor Project (March 2025 – John Kappeler)
- b. Coastal Resiliency (March 2025 – Charles Fancher)
- c. Total Maximum Daily Load for Copper (Cu) (April 2025 – TBD)
- c. Newport Beach Trash Interceptor Public Outreach Campaign (Spring 2025 – John Pope)

Committee Member Wadsworth reported he is attempting to get Mr. Silsby to present to the Committee about the San Gabriel River Trash Interceptor Project and added this may need to be moved to a future meeting. He added he will work with Mr. Kappeler on a date.

Mr. Kappeler added there will be an Agenda item at the next meeting about the interceptor.

In response to Committee Member Black's inquiry, Mr. Kappeler reported the City planted additional native plant seeds by the dunes last month and expressed hopes they start to bloom.

Committee Member Fancher reported correspondence is ongoing about coastal resiliency to be ready for March.

Chair Barto stated the report on the total maximum daily load for copper will come in April.

Ms. Skinner noted there are concerns about trash interception in the winter should there be additional rains causing an overload.

In response to Ms. Skinner's inquiry, Mr. Kappeler reported boons will break away during storm flows but added they are designed for 25-year storms. He confirmed the City is looking for everything but major storms.

In response to Committee Member Wadsworth's inquiry, Mr. Kappeler clarified the boons would detach on their own.

In response to Committee Member Robertson's inquiry, Mr. Kappeler reported the boons have collected two dumpsters' worth of trash, including large items like a mattress.

Chair Barto reported sharing this information at a City Council meeting.

In response to Mr. Houlihan's inquiry, Mr. Stein reported it took 50 people four hours to clear all the material. He added this was a first attempt and the efficiency should improve with time.

In response to Committee Member Fancher's inquiry, Associate Engineer Ellis Petersen reported staff is looking into where the collected trash originated. He added information is sparse and expressed hopes of having more information at the March meeting.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

In response to Mr. Baker's inquiry, Mr. Stein reported the Watershed Executive Committee will look at the interceptor in March. He added any collection data will be shared with upstream neighbors in hopes of starting discussions. He noted there is a cost for it and added the City would rather not use General Fund dollars to run it.

Mr. Baker expressed concerns about life after the interceptor and contemplated redirecting the flow of San Diego Creek to better capture pollutants before reintroducing the water back into the channel.

Mr. Stein confirmed the City is heading in this direction, adding it has been discussed for 10-15 years. He added creating awareness for how large and voluminous the trash being collected is will serve as an impetus towards taking the correct long-term step of a full-capture system.

Mr. Baker expressed concerns about the loss of institutional knowledge about older concepts like this one if the City's staff changes.

Mr. Stein noted a process like this can go on for generations.

Mr. Mosher stated modest goals for the City could include having public trash cans for use by bus riders and bicycle riders. He added in the past every City bus stop had a bench and shade structure but lamented their removal. He added the trash cans remained at the bus stops for a while but have been removed from several of them. He reported a resident near a Bayside Drive stop has even resorted to putting out a personal trash can for the benefit of bus riders. He requested formal encouragement for the City to bring back the bus station trash cans.

Mr. Kappeler reported there is a new State mandate requiring trash cans at bus stops, adding cities must comply with it by December of 2030.

8. SET NEXT MEETING DATE

Recommendation: March 6, 2025

The next meeting was set for March 6, 2025.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Chair / Michelle Barto