



Maintenance Dredging in Newport Beach: Challenges and Solutions

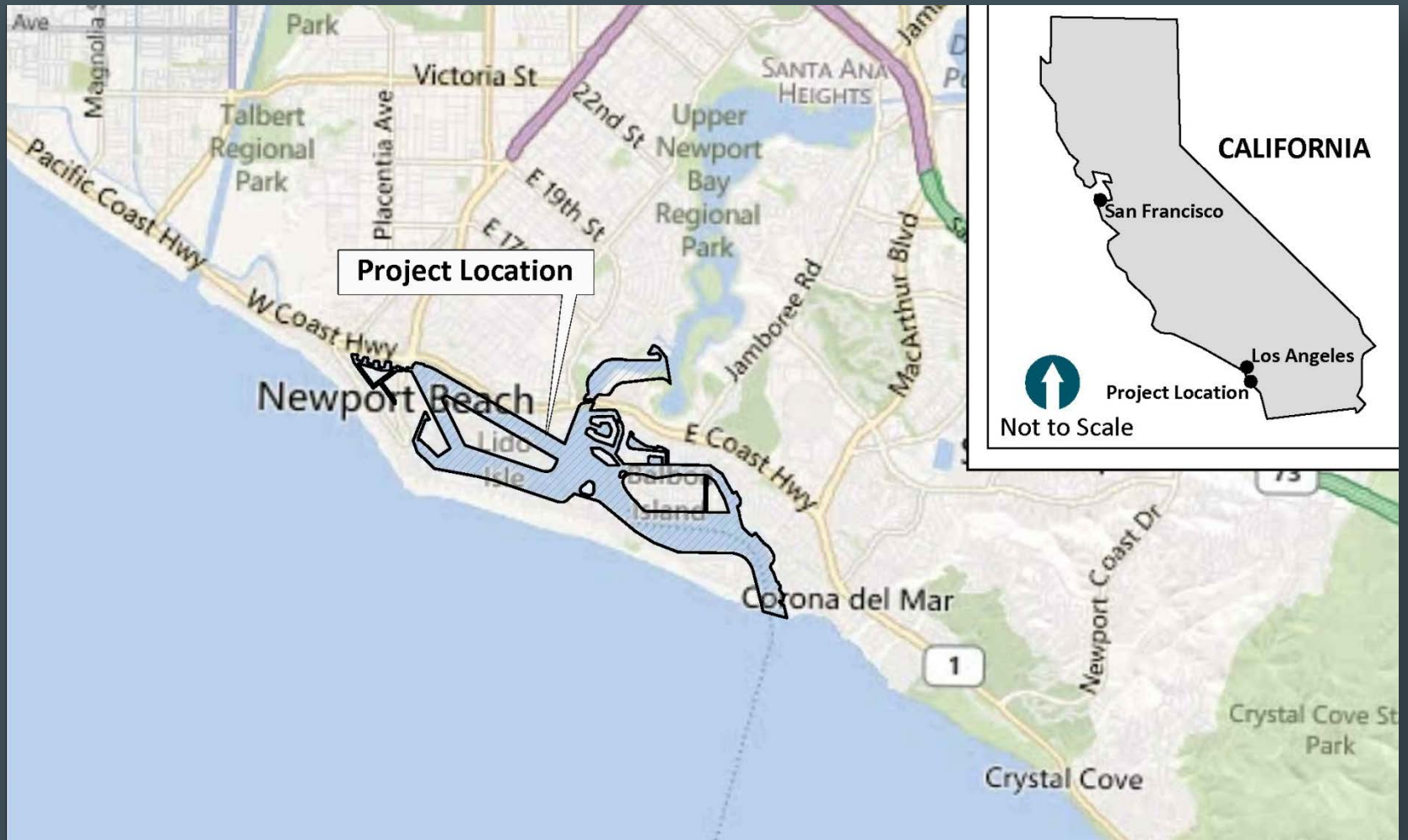
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Project Goals

- Develop a more effective and useful dredging permit approach
- Complete baywide sediment characterization sampling
- Implement an ecosystem-based approach for eelgrass management

Lower Newport Bay



The Need for Maintenance Dredging



WRA, October 2013

What is an RGP?

- Regional General Permits (RGPs) “are developed to avoid unnecessary regulatory control over activities that do not justify individual control or which are adequately regulated by another agency (33 CFR 320.1(a)(3))”

History of RGP 54

- Permit originated in 1974
- Known as the Blanket Dredging Permit
- Evolved into RGP-18 in 1989 and RGP-54 in 2000
- Renewed every 5 years

Harbor Commission Dredging Subcommittee

- Key members
 - The public, including private residents and business owners
 - Anchor QEA
 - Harbor Commission staff
- Forming approach for new and better RGP 54

RGP 54 Elements and Rationale for Change

	Existing RGP 54	2014 Proposed RGP 54
Annual Maximum Volume	20,000 cy	100,000 cy
Individual Project Volume Limit	1,000 cy	10,000 cy
Maximum Dredge Depth	Maximum of -7 feet MLLW plus 1 foot of overdredge	Maximum of -10 feet MLLW plus 2 feet of overdredge (1 paid and 1 unpaid) (based on authorized depth of harbor)
Sediment Testing	Periodic baywide characterization (5 years)	Periodic baywide characterization (5 years)
Eelgrass	No impacts allowed	Impacts permitted and will be mitigated pursuant to the SCEMP or any future applicable policy
Structures	No maintenance allowed	Repair or replace docks, bulkheads, and piles with similar structures; reconfiguration of existing docks to meet modern standards and boater needs will be allowed

Notes:

cy = cubic yard

MLLW = mean lower low water

SCEMP = Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy

Baywide Sediment Sampling

- Sampling conducted in July 2013
- Sediment cores collected at 58 stations within Newport Bay via an electrically powered vibracore
- Sampling and analysis results discussed at DMMT



Baywide Sediment Sampling Results



Eelgrass

- Nursery for juvenile fish species
- Support both commercial and recreational fisheries
- Habitat for fish and bird foraging ground
- Minimizes and slows coastal erosion



EcoMarine, 2012

Eelgrass Regulatory Requirements

- Eelgrass is considered a sensitive resource by state and federal agencies
- Federal agencies are required to consult with NMFS on all actions or proposed actions authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agencies that could adversely affect eelgrass
- Mitigation requirements per the SCEMP

How is the City Protecting Eelgrass?

- Commitment to agencies to address eelgrass with an ecosystem-based plan
- Consistent with the City's Harbor Area Management Plan to protect and enhance eelgrass in the harbor
- Documenting eelgrass population with biannual surveys
- Committed to public education and outreach

Goals of the Newport-Specific Plan

- Protect and promote eelgrass habitat on a harbor-wide basis (shallow waters only)
- Establish thresholds for total eelgrass population (based on biannual surveys)
- Allow 1.5 acres per year of temporary impacts to eelgrass from dredging to -12 feet MLLW or other development activities
- Reduce burden for individual mitigation

Goals of the Newport-Specific Plan

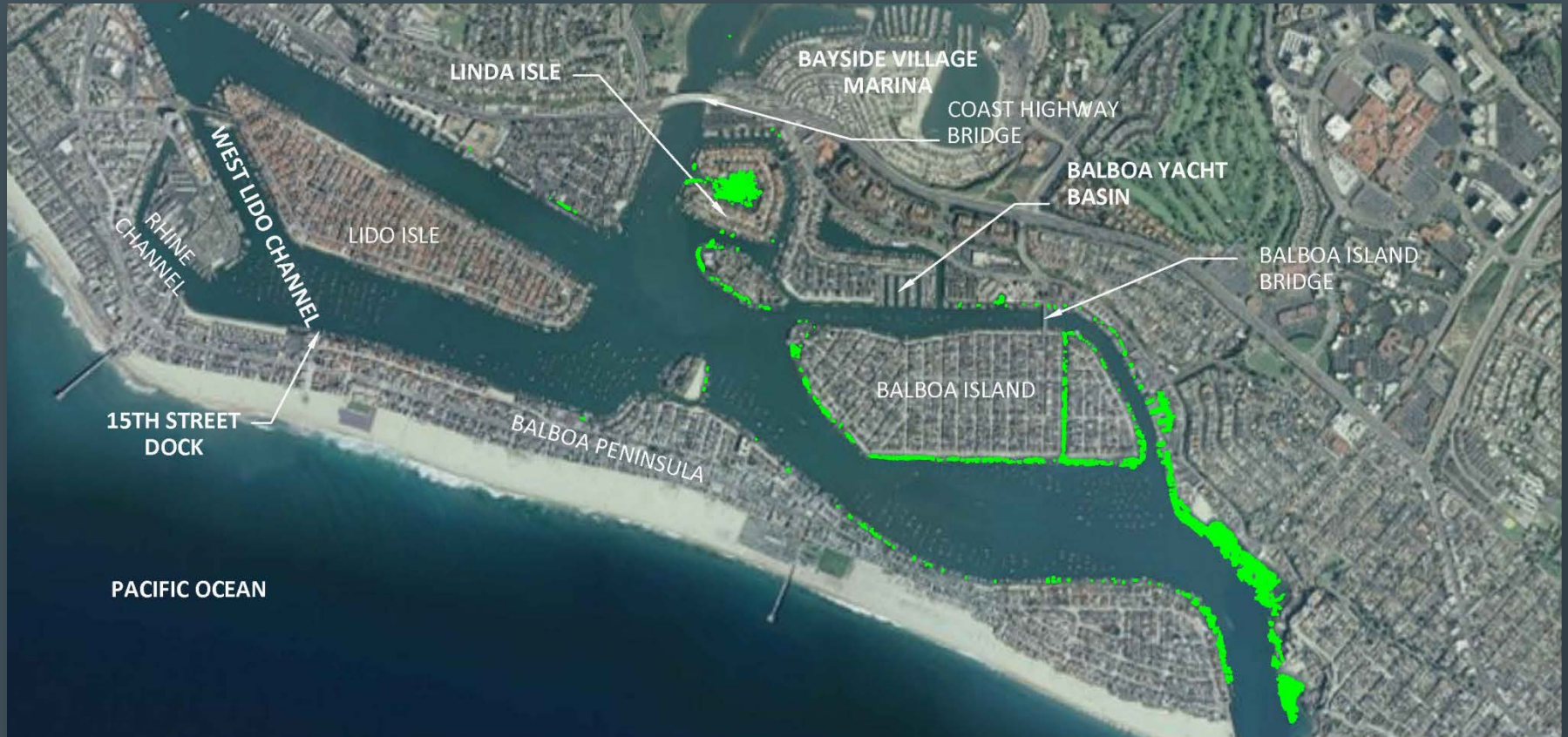


Buoy-deployed seed bags



Transplant eelgrass restoration frames

Biannual Surveys



Eelgrass Survey Results

Zone	Plan Area (acre)	Eelgrass (acres)			
		2003 - 2004	2006 - 2007	2009 - 2010	2012 - 2013
Stable	67.5	16.84	16.20	14.76	18.91
Transition	103.9	7.67	2.67	1.44	3.45
Unvegetated	63.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	234.5	24.51	18.87	16.20	22.37

Summary

- Once implemented and approved, the new RGP 54 and the Newport-Specific Eelgrass Plan will allow the following key activities:
 - Maintenance dredging to -10 feet MLLW (plus 2 feet of overdepth)
 - Cumulative annual dredging limit up to 100,000 cy
 - Maximum 10,000 cy per project limit
 - Allow up to 1.5 acres per year of direct impacts to eelgrass

Questions

