South Cove Sailing Basin Dredging Project and Seawall Replacement Study

Meeting Summary – Community Meeting #3

October 28, 2026 – 6:00-7:30pm via Zoom teleconference

Introduction

The City of Berkeley Parks Recreation and Waterfront group hosted the third community meeting regarding dredging and South Cove Seawall Replacement Project at the Berkeley Marina. Presentation focused on sediment analysis results and the status of the sinkhole at the seawall.

Summary of Key Themes

South Cove Dredging Study

Staff presented a summary of the last two community meetings. Reviewed the existing conditions in the basin and the preferred dredge depth and areas.

Staff reviewed sampling procedures and results and reviewed the suitability determination issued by the DMMO. Material from Areas A, B, and most of C will need to be disposed of at Montezuma Wetland Restoration Project as foundation material.

Volume and costs to dredge to the desired depth of -4.0 MLLW were presented and explained.

Staff reviewed the project flowchart and timeline. The project is currently funded by one-time general fund to take us through design and permitting; "shovel-ready". Given the magnitude of programming-level cost, and challenges in seeking construction funding in this climate, we will stop just shy of shovel ready. This approach allows the City to save money on annual permit fees but positions the City to apply for permits as soon as construction funding is identified.

Comments

- Why was sampling done in at Area C. Area is very infrequently used and not identified as a priority.
    - Area C was sampled to have a complete data set on the entire basin
- 172/CY going to Montezuma seems excessive.
    - The cost presented is based on bid items received for the inner harbor dredging project in 2023. Costs were updated to 2026 dollars with construction escalation, incorporated mobilization, BMPs, and inspection, and a 30% contingency due to the unknown construction start date.
- Was a gradient analysis conducted?
    - Jeff from PER, noted that a gradient analysis was not performed. DU 4 was the highest concentration likely due to the proximity of the Strawberry Creek storm drain outlet. Elevated PCBs have been found along the shoreline of the East Bay at the Emeryville Crescent and there could also be migration into the project area.

- Do we have to dredge the entire area? Depths are not really needed in area C.
    - Per Nelson, the City will focus on Areas A and B.
    - Taylor – Area C was sampled to get a complete data set of the basin.
- Requested for documents to be made available to review data
    - Presentation and meeting minutes will be available onsite at the project websites.
    - Full sampling reports are available at the DMMO website

South Cove Sailing Basin Seawall Replacement Study

Staff presented the current situation and status of the temporary repair and challenges with permitting the larger replacement project. Due to the fill generated by the new sheet pile wall and the vertical abutment not providing any habitat enhancement, the City is proposing compensatory mitigation at the nearby Shorebird Park Beach. Habitat improvement at the beach would include asphalt and concrete debris removal and potential gravel import. The City is still in negotiations with the permitting agencies on this solution.

Staff reviewed the project timeline and flowchart noting that the project is funded through permit approval and final plans, but construction funding has not been identified.

Comments

- Noted that this has been an ongoing issue.
    - City concurred and wants to address issues as quickly as possible.
- There is no other way to address this project and this is really a small fill for this and agrees with the proposed wall.
- Inquiry about SLR and noted that a cap beam will be required on top the wall to deter water from penetrating in on those days where king tides are present and storm surge happens.
- Noted that if riprap is placed, it would require more mitigation than what is currently being asked, especially since this would create more fill.

- Why not place riprap on the face of the wall?
    - City noted that riprap is not a viable solution in front of the wall due to the navigational hazards it would present to the boaters.
- If riprap is placed, what is the setback?
    - City noted riprap generally requires a 10:1 slope and there is not sufficient room inland and noted the navigational hazards to placing riprap near the hoist area and docks.
- Concerned about corrosion of wall if new wall is placed in front of it.
    - City clarified there will be a 6" gap where concrete/CDF will be placed and will sperate both walls.
    - City noted that the new wall will be coated to further aid corrosion loss.
- If the Bond Measure passes, what is the process for the project?

    - City noted that if the bond passes it will be need to go to council for ratification prior to funds being released; however, the seawall replacement project is on the bond measure.
- Inquired about SLR concerns
    - Both City/COWI noted that the new wall could possibility be adapted to integrate SLR concerns.

- Can the City do a temporary fix to help stabilize the sinkhole?
    - Yes, contractors will be mobilizing soon (depending on tides) to implement a temporary fix of the failed section of the seawall by excavating the void and backfilling with slurry. City noted that the intent of this repair is only to stop further loss of base rock material and damage to the asphalt, not to reopen the drive aisle.
- In support of the seawall replacement project and the shorebird park mitigation proposal
- At low tides, the beach is all gravel but soon turns into thick mud fast.
- The proposed mitigation would make the beach more functional and safe.
    - If the proposed mitigation is accepted, the City will do a more targeted study and survey of the intertidal area of the beach. The habitat enhancement will not impact the functionality of the beach, but its implementation is tied to the seawall project.