

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

July 16, 2007

**SANTA MONICA BAY RESTORATION PLAN:
WILSHIRE STORM DRAIN BMPS**

File No. 00-117

Project Manager: Mary Small

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$500,000 to the City of Santa Monica for installation of an urban runoff treatment system at the Wilshire Drain adjacent to Santa Monica beach in Los Angeles County.

LOCATION: Santa Monica, Los Angeles County (Exhibits 1).

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement and Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Regional location map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Site map and project diagram](#)

Exhibit 3: [SMBRC Resolution](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution, pursuant to Sections 31220 and 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the City of Santa Monica for installation of an urban runoff treatment system at the Wilshire Drain to implement the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan, approved by the Conservancy on August 2, 2001. This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to the disbursement of any funds, the City shall submit for the review and written approval of the Conservancy’s Executive Officer a work program, budget, and schedule and the names of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the work.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria of Chapters 5.5 and 6 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code regarding the enhancement of coastal resources and protection of integrated coastal and marine resources.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$500,000 to the City of Santa Monica (the City) to help fund installation of a Continuous Deflection Separation unit and sanitary sewer diversion near the intersection of Wilshire Blvd. and Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica. The goal of this project is to reduce the pollutants in urban runoff carried to the Santa Monica Bay through the Wilshire Watershed. This project will be located near the end of the Wilshire Boulevard storm drain, which currently discharges on the beach and into the Bay. This project is expected to reduce the days that the beach is posted for water quality impairment and to help the City achieve the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standards. Both of these goals are priorities of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (SMBRC) and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan (Bay Plan), approved by the Conservancy in August 2001.

The project will involve installation of a structural Best Management Practice (BMP) to treat urban runoff pollution and a secondary diversion to the sanitary sewer for additional treatment. During dry weather months and in between rain events, a vortex-type, separation-screening BMP device will remove trash, debris, sediments and free hydrocarbons. The filtered runoff will then enter a diversion-pump box, which will divert runoff from the existing storm drain into the adjacent sanitary sewer line, taking the runoff to the City of Los Angeles' Hyperion treatment facility. During wet weather flows, the primary filtering system will continue to operate; however, flows too large for the diversion system will bypass the diversion and flow from the filtering system directly to the Bay.

This project also includes a monitoring program to gather data before the implementation of the project and post-project data, allowing conclusions on efficiency and effectiveness.

This project is part of the City's comprehensive, long-term urban runoff management program. As part of this program, the City Council has consistently supported efforts to implement urban runoff projects to better protect our coastlines and aquatic environments. The City Council is a strong advocate of environmental stewardship, demonstrated by the City's Sustainable Cities Program, a commitment to using and reusing renewable and local resources as efficiently as possible, and to reducing pollution. Urban runoff is one such local natural resource and pollution source. The City has demonstrated its commitment to long-term protection of water quality of the Bay through a decade of urban runoff improvement projects and maintenance of those projects. The construction of the first urban runoff treatment and recycling facility is an example of the City's long-term commitment to improving water quality and restoring beneficial uses of the Bay. The City has also committed to maintain this project through its ongoing storm drain

system maintenance program.

By SMBRC Resolution 05-20, the Governing Board of the SMBRC approved a total of \$500,000 from the Proposition 12 funds administered by the Coastal Conservancy for projects within the Santa Monica Bay watershed (see Exhibit 3).

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The Santa Monica Bay watershed encompasses approximately 400 square miles subdivided into 28 separate sub-watershed drainages. It includes two major topographic areas: the Los Angeles coastal plain and the Santa Monica Mountains. The Santa Monica Bay watershed is one of the nation's most highly urbanized regions. It encompasses residential areas, commercial and industrial areas and undeveloped open space lands, primarily within the Santa Monica Mountains. The project is located within the watershed, in the City of Santa Monica (Exhibit 1).

This project will be installed in the City of Santa Monica, near the intersection of Wilshire Blvd. and Ocean Avenue. The project will be in and adjacent to Palisades Park, on the bluff above Pacific Coast Highway and the Santa Monica Beach (Exhibit 2). This project will be located near the end of the Wilshire Boulevard storm drain, which empties on the beach and into the Bay. The watershed served by this unit is highly urbanized. The pollution in the urban runoff of the Wilshire Storm Drain comes from roads, and residential and commercial land uses within its watershed.

The Santa Monica Beach is a wide sandy beach that gets an estimated 4,500,000 visitors each year.

PROJECT HISTORY:

In recognition of the need to protect Santa Monica Bay and its sub-watersheds, in May, 1988, the State of California and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) nominated and included Santa Monica Bay in the National Estuary Program (NEP). Established under the Water Quality Act of 1987 and managed by the US EPA, the NEP includes more than two dozen significant estuaries and coastal water bodies nationwide.

As an NEP, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project (SMBRP) is charged with assessing the Bay's pollution problems, and with producing the Bay Restoration Plan to serve as the blueprint for the Bay's long-term recovery. In 1995, the Bay Plan was approved by the State of California and the US EPA. The Bay Plan includes 250 actions, including specific actions focused on habitat conservation, enhancement and restoration, pollution prevention and treatment control, and assessment, education and monitoring.

The Bay Plan includes several goals, including: (1) reducing pollutant loadings to and prevent degradation of the waters of Santa Monica Bay; (2) reducing human health risks associated with swimming in or harvesting seafood from the Bay; and (3) restoring, rehabilitating and protecting the marine ecosystem, living resources and biodiversity of the Bay and its watersheds. Specifically, the Bay Plan has identified the protection, restoration, and creation of wetlands within the Bay as a major goal of the project.

The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000 (Proposition 12) earmarked \$25,000,000 to the Coastal Conservancy for restoration of Santa Monica Bay in accordance with the goals and priorities of the Bay Plan. The Coastal Conservancy approved the Bay Plan on August 2, 2001.

Proposition 12 requires the Bay Watershed Council, the stakeholder board of the Restoration Project, to determine project eligibility and grant priorities. Working with Conservancy staff, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project staff has solicited project proposals that would achieve the goals of the Bay Restoration Plan and address its water quality and natural resource protection objectives. The Wilshire Drain project was selected as a high priority project from open grant round administered by the SMBRC in 2002. The project being recommended for funding here was approved for funding by the Bay Watershed Council and SMBRC (Exhibit 3).

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$500,000
Clean Beach Initiative (Proposition 40)	\$980,000
City of Santa Monica	<u>\$220,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$1,700,000

The source of Conservancy funds is an appropriation to the Conservancy from Proposition 12, the "Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000," for projects to implement the Bay Plan.

Los Angeles County contributed \$500,000 in-kind for the design work and the City of Santa Monica also contributed \$100,000 for consultants to complete the design.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project would be undertaken pursuant to Chapters 5.5 and 6 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31251-31270 and 31220), regarding the enhancement of coastal resources and the protection of integrated coastal and marine resources. This project will reduce contamination within the coastal zone and marine waters and will help implement the Bay Plan. As required by Section 31220(a), Conservancy staff has consulted with the State Water Resources Control Board in the development of this project in order to ensure consistency with the Clean Beaches Program under Chapter 3 of Division 20.4 of the Public Resources Code.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective B**, the proposed project will improve water quality to benefit coastal resources.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, adopted on January 24, 2001:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** These projects will be funded with monies appropriated to the Conservancy from Proposition 12 for implementing the Bay Plan. The proposed project is consistent with the Bay Plan and this project has been approved by the SMBRC (Exhibit 3).
3. **Support from the public:** Implementation of the Bay Plan has widespread public and agency support. The Santa Monica Bay Watershed Council includes members from private industry, the general public, community environmental organizations, as well as local, regional, state and federal agencies. This project is supported by many agencies and organizations, including Heal the Bay, the City and County of Los Angeles, the State Water Resources Control Board and the member agencies of the Clean Beaches Task Force.
4. **Location:** This project will be located in the City of Santa Monica, on the bluff above Pacific Coast Highway and the Santa Monica Beach. (Exhibits 1 & 2)
5. **Need:** Urban runoff pollution is a significant problem affecting the beaches of southern California. This project is expected to reduce the days that the beach is posted for water quality impairment and to help the City achieve the TMDL standards.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The beach at Santa Monica is a major tourist destination, receiving an estimated 4,500,000 visitors every year. This project will directly benefit these visitors by improving water quality at that beach. In addition, this project is a model project to reduce the impacts of polluted stormwater and may serve as a demonstration project for other cities.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** The proposed grant will significantly aid current efforts to protect natural resources at risk from various encroachments and threats, including non-point source pollution.
8. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above. Additional funds are being provided by the Clean Beaches Task Force and the City of Santa Monica.
9. **Innovation:** This project is an innovative design that will be a model for future projects throughout the City and will serve as a demonstration for other cities.
10. **Readiness:** The City currently plans to complete construction during the fall of 2007.
11. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** The Coastal Conservancy has been involved in resource protection, enhancement and restoration projects within the Santa Monica Bay

watershed for more than a decade, including projects focused on improving coastal water quality and coastal nearshore resources within the Bay. The Conservancy has supported a number of projects to reduce the impacts of urban stormwater in Santa Monica Bay, including the City's retrofit of the Centinella storm drain.

12. **Cooperation:** The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project is a cooperative venture involving a broad range of interested and affected stakeholders including private industry, citizens, environmental groups, and local, regional, state and federal agencies. The City of Santa Monica has worked with a number of public agencies and organizations to develop and implement this project, including the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board, the City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, and the California Coastal Commission. The nonprofit organization Heal the Bay was consulted on developing the project monitoring program.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The project is consistent with the policies of the City of Santa Monica's Local Coastal Program, specifically Policy #43, Environmental Quality which states that the City shall "seek ways to eliminate the pooling of drain water on the beach and seek remedies to public health problems associated with the drain water".

**CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN/
STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:**

The project will help meet the goal of protecting and restoring beneficial uses of the receiving waters as outlined in the Los Angeles Regional Board's Basin Plan for the Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The project aims to protect the water quality of surface waters to comply with various regulations, including the Non Point Source Discharge Elimination System and the Total Maximum Daily Loads.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

This project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 because it involves minor alteration to existing publicly-owned infrastructure. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.