

Staff Report 48

APPLICANT:

Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors

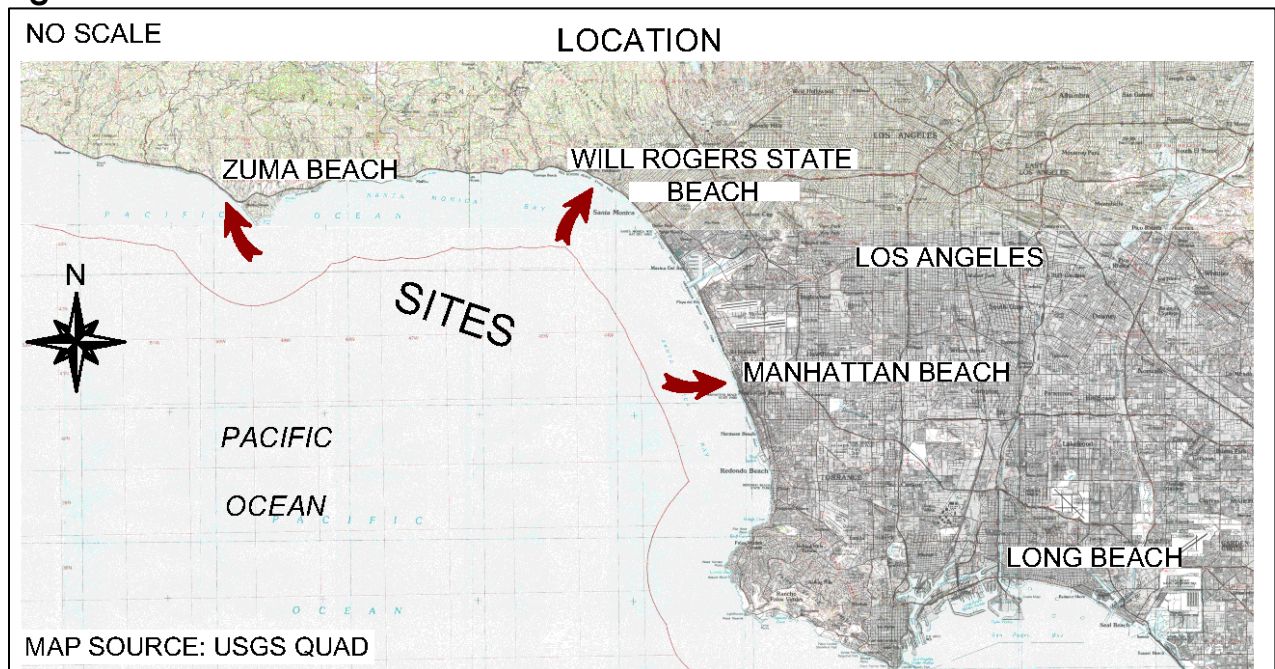
PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use.

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in the Pacific Ocean, adjacent to Zuma Beach, Will Rogers State Beach, Manhattan Beach, located in the cities of Malibu, Los Angeles, and Manhattan Beach, respectively, Los Angeles County (as shown in Figure 1).

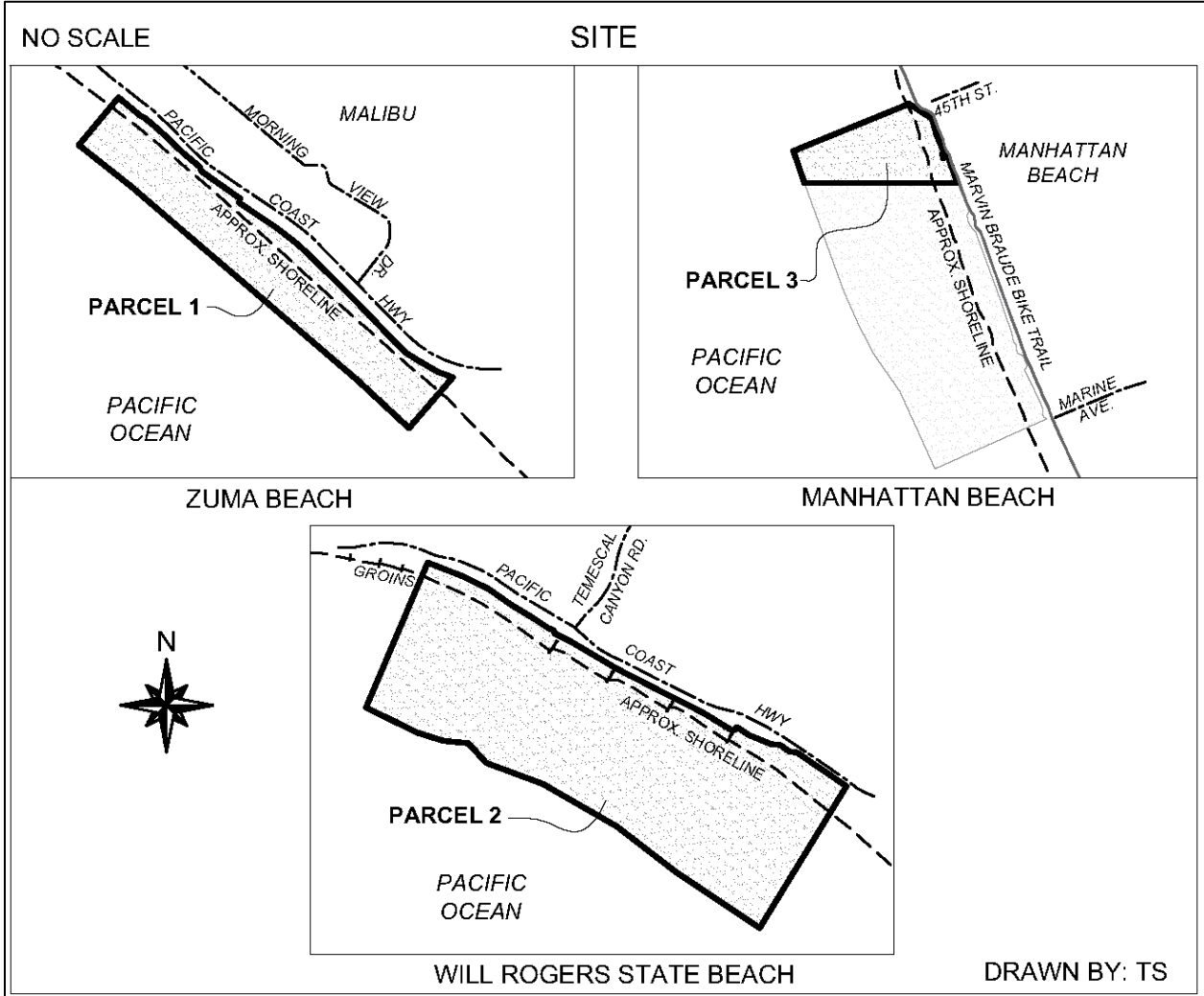
Figure 1. Location



AUTHORIZED USE:

Deposition of a maximum of 150,000 cubic yards (cy) of material annually at Zuma Beach, 150,000 cy of material annually at Will Rogers State Beach, and 150,000 cy of material annually at Manhattan Beach, under the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors Sand Compatibility and Opportunistic Use Program (Program) (as shown in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Site Map



NOTE: This depiction of the lease premises is based on unverified information provided by the Applicant or other parties and is not a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

TERM:

20 years, beginning April 7, 2026.

CONSIDERATION:

Public use and benefit, with the State reserving the right at any time to set a monetary rent if the Commission finds such action to be in the State's best interests.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- Prior to each beach replenishment event, if no event has occurred at the receiver site within the last three years, Lessee shall provide Lessor with a mean high tide line survey of the receiver site.
- Prior to the start of each beach replenishment event as described within the lease, Lessee shall provide Lessor with the name, address, telephone number, and contractor's license number(s) of the contractor(s) selected to implement the beach replenishment program.
- Lessee agrees to be bound by and fully carry out, implement, and comply with all mitigation measures and reporting obligations as set forth in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, or as modified by Lessor or Lessor's staff as permitted by law and as agreed to by Lessee.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

AUTHORITY:

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6303, 6501.1, and 6503; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

Over the past six to eight decades, beaches along the Los Angeles County coastline have narrowed due to declining natural sand supply attributable to urban development, especially from dams that block the natural flow of sediment from upland streams and rivers to the ocean. By implementing its [Sand Compatibility and Opportunistic Use Program](#) (SCOUP or Program), Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors (Applicant) will be attempting to restore sediment supply to its coast through direct sand placement. Sand placement is proposed on the beach to reduce impacts from storms, enhance recreational use for both residents and tourists, and restore beach habitat for shorebirds and grunion. Source materials come from local upland construction, development, or dredging projects.

The Applicant's Program is consistent with the guidelines specified in the [March 2006 Sand Compatibility and Opportunistic Use Program \(SCOUP\) plan](#) adopted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and the Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW), as well as recommendations provided in Los Angeles County's Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment. The SCOUP was prepared to assist in streamlining the permitting and regulatory approval process for beach replenishment projects using opportunistic materials in volumes less than 150,000 cy per replenishment event (each location constitutes an independent replenishment event). Streamlining the approval process can prevent otherwise suitable beach fill materials from being lost due to the timing and cost associated with obtaining individual permits for each project.

As part of the Applicant's Program, the Applicant is seeking Commission authorization to place a maximum of 150,000 cubic yards (cy) of material annually at Zuma Beach, 150,000 cy of material annually at Will Rogers State Beach, and 150,000 cy of material annually at Manhattan Beach, opportunistically based on available resources.

The Applicant's project proposes to also place suitable opportunistic beach materials at Dockweiler State Beach and Redondo Beach. However, these locations are within legislative grants to the City of Los Angeles and the City of Redondo Beach, respectively, and not subject to the Commission's leasing jurisdiction, so are not included in this action. Additionally, only a portion of the Manhattan Beach receiver site falls within the Commission's jurisdiction; the remainder is in a legislative grant to the City of Manhattan Beach and is shown in Figure 2 but is not part of this action.

The Program is designed to reduce impacts from storms, improve and widen the beaches to enhance recreational use for both residents and tourists, and restore beach habitat for shorebirds and grunion. The timing of beach nourishment activities is intended to replicate natural sediment delivery, which occurs during the wet season (fall and winter). As such, beach nourishment activities typically occur between September and March.

Under the Program, the Applicant identifies potential beach fill material, which is then tested according to regulatory requirements to confirm suitability for placement. Prior to the start of each beach replenishment event, a Project Notification Report detailing findings such as percentage of fines, grain size, possible toxicities, and confirmation that the material conforms to the receiver site specifications, will be submitted to each agency with approval authority.

Some potential environmental Project impacts exist, consisting of minor short-term impacts to fish and wildlife during placement activities and temporary increases in ambient noise levels and turbidity during sand placement. Grunion, California least tern, and Western snowy plover may be present at the receiver sites, especially during their respective spawning and breeding seasons between late February and early September. Biological monitoring will occur at the placement sites to ensure that the species are not present during sediment placement events. Construction activities will halt if any grunion are present, and will be redirected if California least tern or Western snowy plover are present.

Materials would be delivered via truck or pipeline, depending on the material source. Materials from inland sources, such as development or flood control maintenance, would be delivered via truck and spread along the beach using traditional earthmoving equipment. Dredged materials method of delivery would be based on the proximity to the receiver site. Sand hauling and placement would comply with each city's permitted hours of construction.

Applications for the required permits and authorizations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Coastal Commission, and State Water Resources Control Board have been submitted and are pending approval. The Applicant must have all necessary permits in order to proceed with the Project.

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 20-year term and does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises. The proposed lease requires the lessee to insure the lease premises and indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

INTRODUCTION:

The climate crisis and rising sea levels are impacting coastal California now. As underscored in the [State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance](#) (Ocean Protection Council, 2024), the combination of extreme weather events and the persistent and accelerating rise in sea levels will lead to increased coastal hazards, such as wave runup, storm surges, flooding, and erosion. Shorelines will move inland due to rising seas, exposing more of the natural and human-built environment to coastal hazards. The resulting damage will occur repeatedly and incrementally over years and, in extreme cases, over the span of a few large winter storms. These impacts

may affect the subject beaches throughout Los Angeles County within the lease area. Opportunistic placement of beach sand subject to the proposed lease, located on five public beaches within Los Angeles County, can partially mitigate the effects of sea level rise and erosion. However, the Program itself can be vulnerable to sea level rise and extreme storms, which can decrease the effectiveness of the Program by washing away the sand after it is placed.

DATA & PROJECTIONS:

Sea levels along most of the California coast rose four to eight inches during the last century, and this trend will accelerate throughout this century. The current rate of sea level rise is triple the rate during the last century. There is growing confidence that by 2050 sea levels will be approximately ten inches higher than they were in 2000. The severity of sea level rise beyond 2050 is contingent on future levels of greenhouse gas emissions. The California Ocean Protection Council updated the State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance in 2024 to provide a synthesis of the best available science on sea level rise projections and rates for multiple emissions scenarios. To apply a precautionary approach, Commission staff evaluated the “intermediate-high” and “high” scenarios due to the vulnerability and exposure of the lease location and the continued global reliance on fossil fuels. The Los Angeles tide gauge was used for the projected sea level rise scenario for the lease area, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Projected Sea Level Rise for Los Angeles

Year	Intermediate-High (feet)	High (feet)
2040	0.6	0.7
2060	1.4	1.8
2080	2.8	3.8
2100	4.5	6.3

Source: Table 12, State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Update

Note: Projections are with respect to a 2000 baseline.

ANALYSIS:

Commission staff used the online sea level rise mapping tool, [Our Coast Our Future](#), to evaluate risks to the lease premises and structures from sea level rise. At present sea levels, the lease premises are already regularly flooded and subjected to wave impacts and erosion. Episodic or short-term events, such as extreme storms, very high or King tides, and El Niño events, alone or in combination, will increase the

vulnerability of the lease premises and expose it to higher water levels and stronger wave runup, overtopping, and erosion.

In the meantime, the beach nourishment Program will provide short- to mid-term hazard mitigation against sea level rise, flooding, erosion, and strong storms by widening the beach to provide a wider buffer between the upland development and the ocean. In addition to hazard mitigation, beach nourishment can provide other social and economic benefits by providing more beach space to be used by the public for Public Trust uses, such as recreation and fishing. Beach nourishment is a “soft” or “nature-based” protection strategy that can protect upland development from coastal hazards without armoring the beach with hard structures, such as seawalls and rock revetments. The beach nourishment Program is consistent with and implements many of the recommendations of the Commission's 2023 report, [Shoreline Adaptation and the Public Trust: Protecting California's Public Trust Resources from Sea Level Rise](#), including recommendations for monitoring of potential impacts or benefits to biological resources and recreation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer to Section Four of the Commission's 2023 Shoreline Adaptation and the Public Trust report for more information about various shoreline adaptation strategies and their advantages and disadvantages for mitigating coastal hazards and protecting Public Trust resources. Any future construction or activities on State land would require a separate authorization from the Commission.

Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Lessee acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland (not within the lease area) are located in an area that may be subject to the effects of climate change, including sea level rise.

CONCLUSION:

For the reasons stated above, including that the Program is designed to reduce impacts from storms, improve and widen the beaches to enhance recreational use for both residents and tourists, and restore beach habitat for shorebirds and grunion, staff believes the issuance of the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation, fishing, or other Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the term of the lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Approval or denial of the application is a discretionary action by the Commission. Each time the Commission approves or rejects a use of sovereign land, it exercises legislatively delegated authority and responsibility as trustee of the State's Public Trust lands as authorized by law.
2. This action is consistent with the "Leading Climate Activism", "Committing to Collaborative Leadership", and "Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs" Strategic Focus Areas of the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
3. The purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is to "avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible." (CEQA Guidelines section 15021).

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), State Clearinghouse No. 2025040385, and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) were prepared by the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors (County) and adopted on July 8, 2025, for this project. Staff reviewed these documents and determined that the MND adequately analyzes and mitigates all potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that fall within the Commission's jurisdiction.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15096, subdivision (g)(1), and 15097, subdivision (a), and in conjunction with approval of this Project, staff recommends that the Commission adopt [the County's MMRP](#) (provided for reference, as linked (Attachment B)) for the portions of the Project located on State lands, and delegate reporting and monitoring responsibilities to the County, as the CEQA lead agency, per CEQA Guidelines section 15097. The County will remain responsible for enforcing the MMRP, unless otherwise delegated by such agency or until the Project is completed per CEQA Guidelines section 15097.

4. This activity involves lands identified as possessing significant environmental values pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq., but the activity will not affect those significant lands. Based upon participation from the agency nominating such lands through the CEQA review and permitting process, it is staff's opinion that the project, as proposed, is consistent with its use classification.

APPROVALS REQUIRED:

- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- California Coastal Commission
- State Water Resources Control Board

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that a Mitigated Negative Declaration, State Clearinghouse No. 2025040385, and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) were prepared by the County and adopted on July 8, 2025, for this Project and that the Commission has reviewed and considered the information contained therein; that in the Commission's independent judgment, the scope of activities to be carried out under the lease to be issued by this authorization have been adequately analyzed; that none of the events specified in Public Resources Code section 21166 or CEQA Guidelines section 15162 resulting in any new or substantially more severe significant impact has occurred; and, therefore no additional CEQA analysis is required.

Adopt the County's MMRP, without change, mentioned above.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

Find that issuance of the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with the Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the term of the lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

SIGNIFICANT LANDS INVENTORY FINDING:

Find that this activity is consistent with the use classification designated by the Commission for the land pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use to the Applicant beginning April 7, 2026, for a term of 20 years, for the deposition of a maximum of

150,000 cubic yards (cy) of material annually at Zuma Beach, 150,000 cy of material annually at Will Rogers State Beach, and 150,000 cy of material annually at Manhattan Beach, under the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors Opportunistic Use Program; consideration is public use and benefit, with the State reserving the right at any time to set a monetary rent if the Commission finds such action to be in the State's best interest.