



SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE DEPARTMENT

ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE DIVISION

WATERFRONT ADAPTATION PLAN

BEACON – July 17, 2026

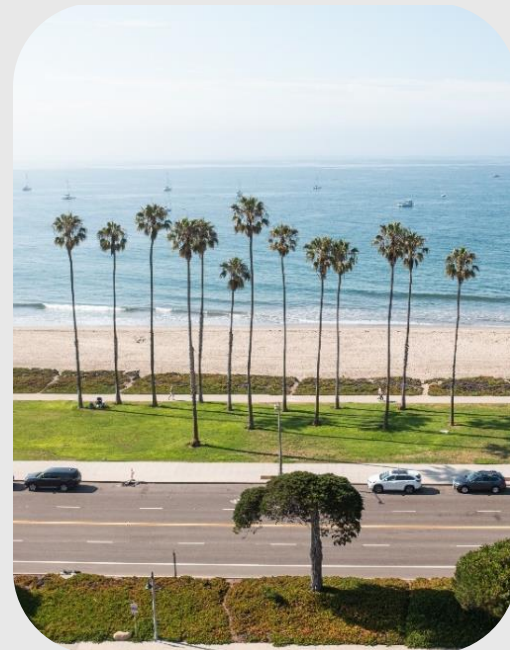


CALIFORNIA
COASTAL
COMMISSION



Today's Presentation Topics

- City's Program to Address Hazards
- Waterfront Adaptation Plan Overview
- Community Outreach Overview & Key Feedback Themes
- Discussion



ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE PROGRAM

Program Purpose

Help our community **prepare for current and future** climate-related hazards like sea level rise, flooding, erosion, and wildfires.



Active Major Projects

- Regional Coastal Adaptation Monitoring Program
- Wastewater & Water Systems Climate Adaptation Plan
- Laguna Flood Resilience Study
- Airport Climate Adaptation Plan
- Waterfront Adaptation Plan



CALIFORNIA
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COMMISSION



Coastal
Conservancy

WATERFRONT ADAPTATION PLAN OVERVIEW



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Waterfront Adaptation Plan Vision

Develop practical solutions to address coastal flooding and erosion for the next 30 years, **while enhancing beach access, recreation, boating, and habitat.**

Project Schedule

2024

2025

2026

2027



Today

Project Area

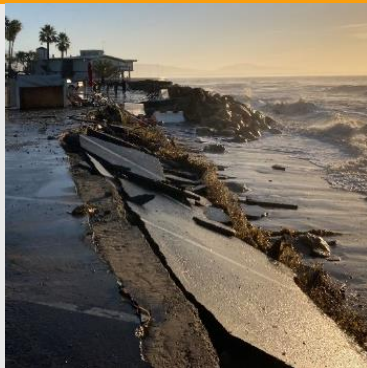


CHALLENGES TODAY & IN THE FUTURE

Beach erosion, flooding, and sea level rise

Today's Damages from the Ocean

Erosion from waves



Flooding from ocean



Storms today are causing damages and disruption: \$3M for 2023 storm alone

Today's Erosion at East Beach

Over the last
20 years, East
beach
**eroded
significantly**
(5 ft/yr in
some areas)

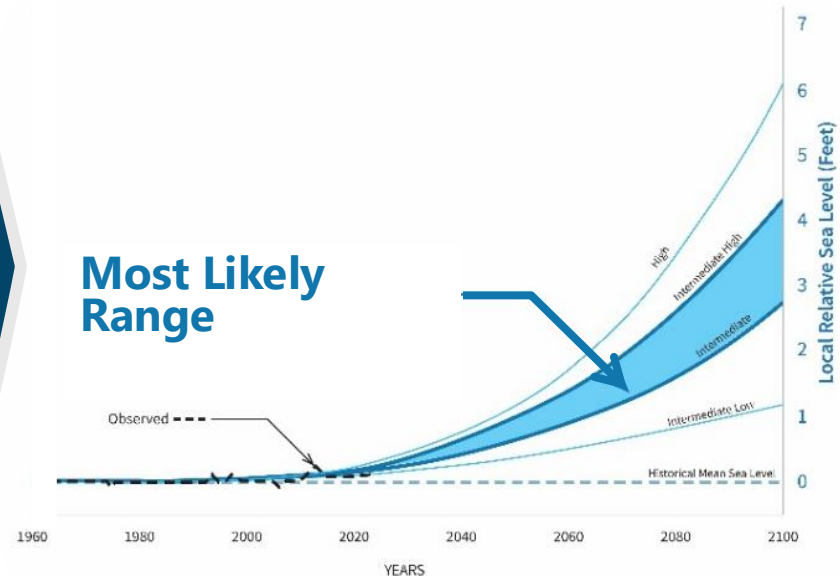
November 2025



Increased
erosion causes
**more inland
flooding risk**

Sea Level Rise & Tomorrow's Shoreline

- Today, El Niño and big waves are biggest threat
- Sea level rise will increase storm damage and erosion
- 3-4" of sea level rise since 2000
- Will accelerate in coming years



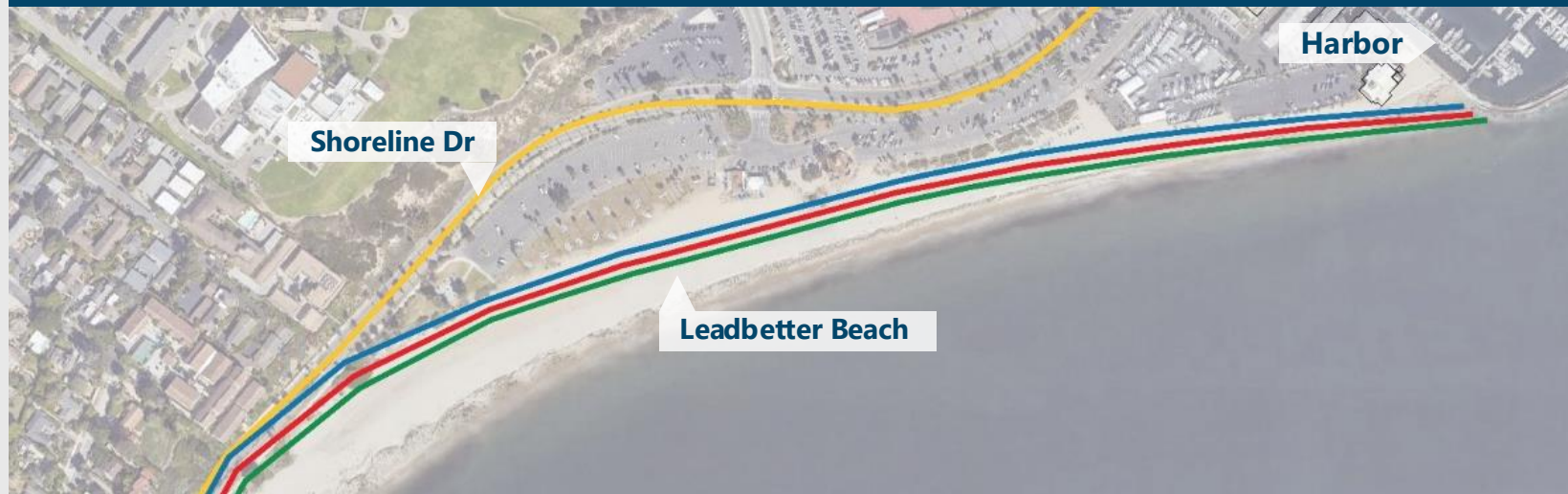
Tomorrow's Bluff Areas



Access to beaches with bluffs will become limited,
making **Waterfront beaches even more important**

Tomorrow's Leadbetter Beach (no action)

Leadbetter Beach narrows



0.8' SLR ~2050

1.6' SLR ~2065

2.5' SLR ~2075

Waterfront "Hold the Line" Position

Tomorrow's West Beach (no action)

West Beach remains wide



0.8' SLR ~2050

1.6' SLR ~2065

2.5' SLR ~2075

Waterfront "Hold the Line" Position

Tomorrow's East Beach (no action)

East Beach narrows fast



0.8' SLR ~2050

1.6' SLR ~2065

2.5' SLR ~2075

Waterfront "Hold the Line" Position

We Need a Backstop for Ocean Flooding



High tide today

Future High tide

1-year storm

20-year storm

100-year storm

THE TOOLBOX OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

It's not all doom and gloom; there's a toolbox

The Toolbox of Potential Solutions



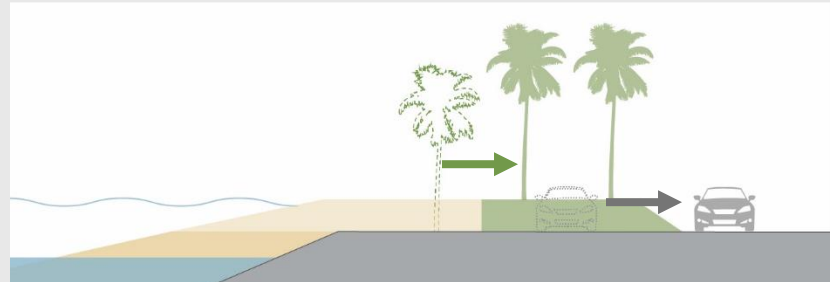
Sea Walls & Revetments



Beach Nourishment, Sand Berms, & Dunes



Groins, Headlands, & Artificial Reefs



Relocation or Removal of Development

Opportunities to Improve the Experience



Add walking & biking paths



Reimagine West Beach



Improve views & entries



Add facilities



Enhance economic vitality



Expand recreation

Opportunity for Multi-benefit Solutions

Opportunity:
**New separated
walk & bike path**



Opportunity:
**Address
hazard risk**



Multi-benefit Solution:
**Elevated & separated
walk & bike path**



PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Preliminary List of Options for Further Evaluation

Waterfront-Wide Goals & Priorities

**Save the
sandy beach
and enhance
recreation**

**Protect the
working
harbor**

**Protect
inland areas
from ocean
flooding**

**Provide
continuous
walk, roll, and
bike paths**



Project Categories

30-Year Plan Timeline

Quick Wins
(\$)

Core Measures
(\$\$\$)

Future Options
(\$\$\$\$\$)



LEAD BETTER BEACH OPTIONS

A sandy beach &
recreation
destination



Leadbetter Potential Core Measures:

Keep sandy beach by moving things back

1



Move parks, paths, & assets inland to keep sandy beach

2



Raise path to limit flooding

3



Relocate when replacement facilities available or flood & erosion risk reach set limits



4



Relocate parking to new parking garages at existing surface lot

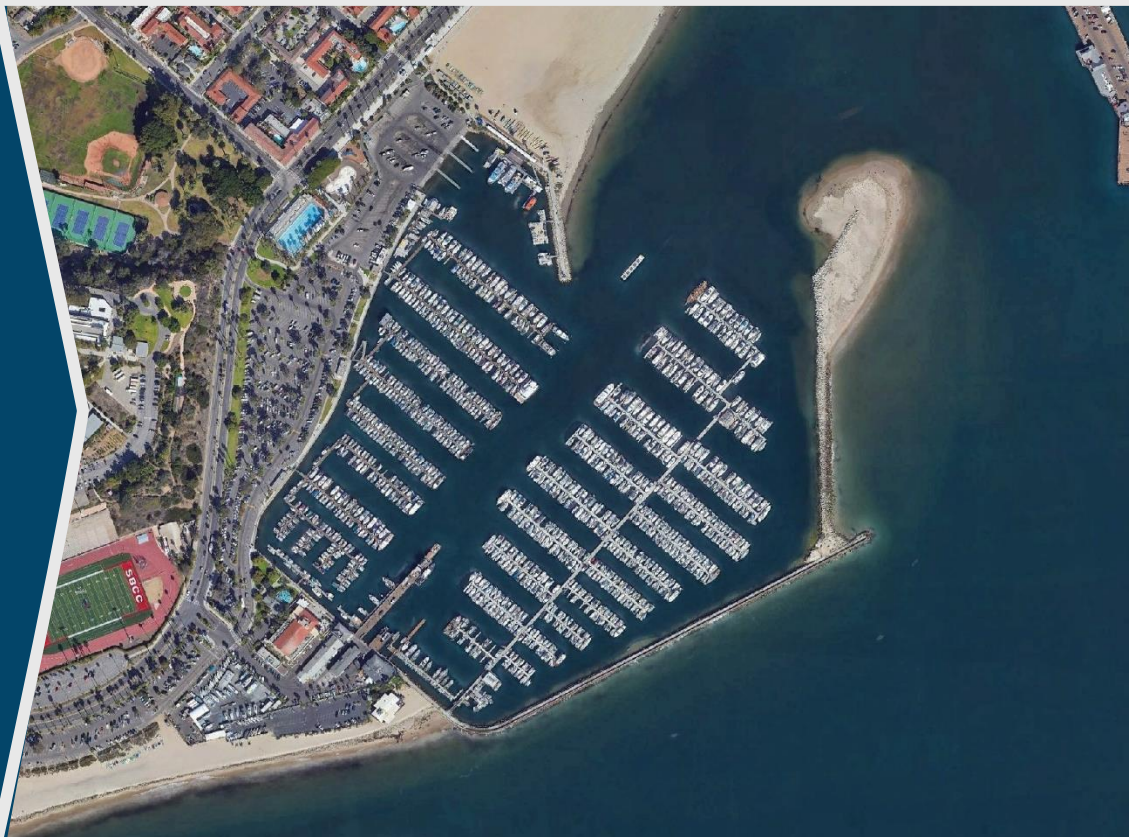
5



Improve stormwater drainage

HARBOR OPTIONS

A commercial
fishing,
recreation, &
public access
destination



Harbor Potential Core Measures:

Flood protection, prioritize public access & boating



1

Pedestrian promenade on raised revetment for flood protection & better access



2

Protect & improve Harbor Commercial area for better public access & boating



3

Enhance & raise paths for better access & flood protection

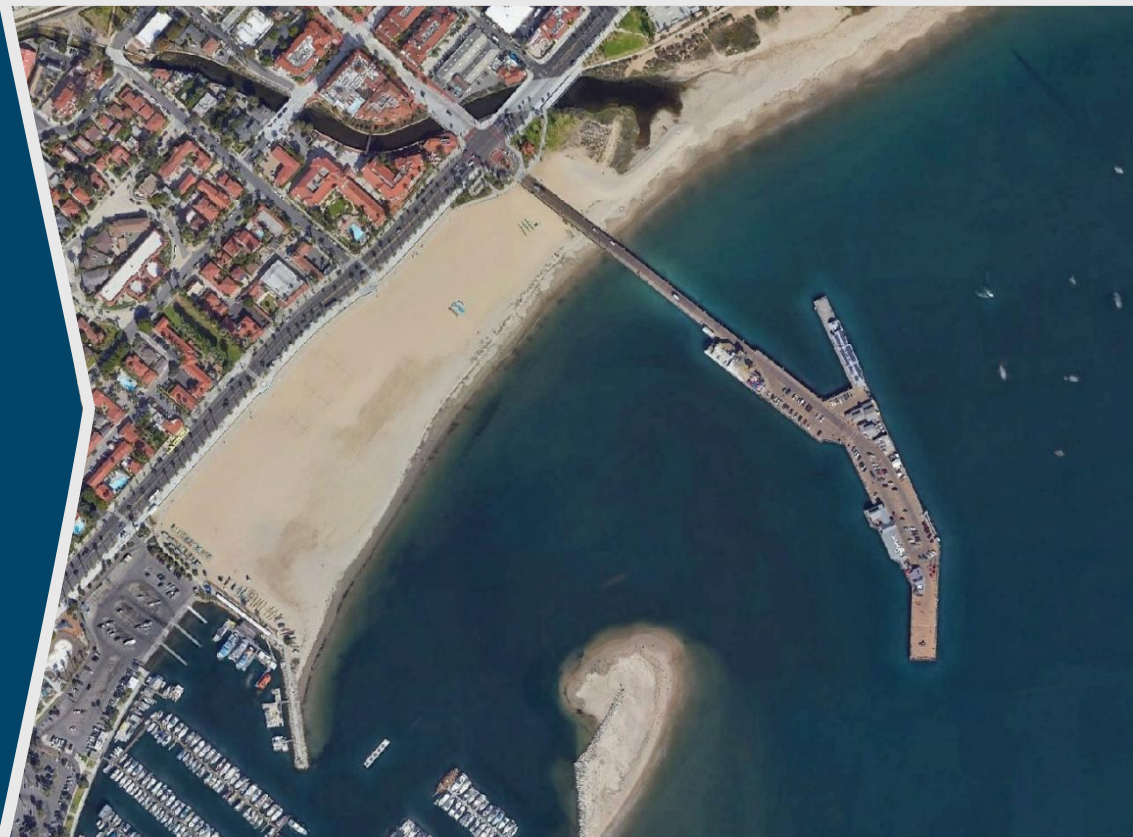


4

Explore converting some parking for economic development

WEST BEACH OPTIONS

A premier
sandy beach
destination



West Beach Potential Core Measures:

Premier sandy beach experience



- 1 Relocate storm drain to improve sand quality



- 2 Add restrooms, showers, café, beach concessions



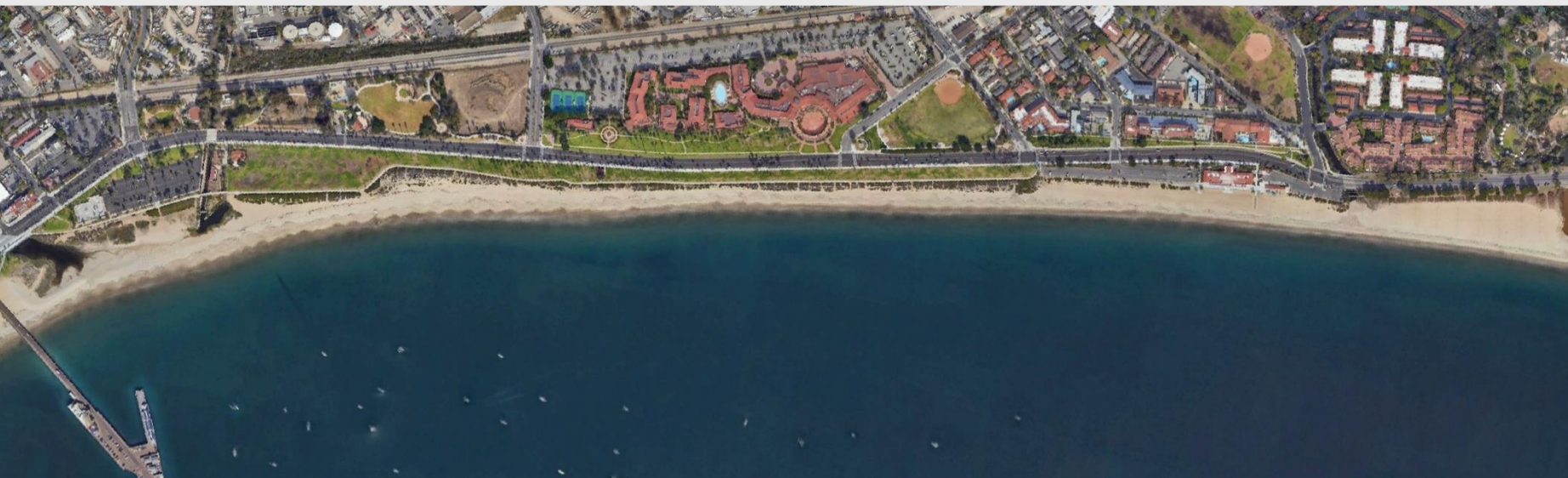
- 3 Raise walking & biking path with new park



- 4 Retain space for small boats, outriggers, & tomols

EAST BEACH OPTIONS

A sandy beach & recreation destination



East Beach Potential Core Measures:

Preserve as much sandy beach as possible & protect critical infrastructure



Keep sandy beach and park for as long as possible by moving parks, paths, & facilities inland



Raise & locate walking & biking path to protect Cabrillo Pavilion & inland areas



Future Shoreline 1.6' ~ 2065

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OVERVIEW

Outreach Purpose: Early Input

1. Headed in the right direction?
2. What'd we miss?
3. Key questions to answer?
4. Thoughts on timing?



Spreading the Word

30 Digital Blasts

> 1,300 Mailers

City News in Brief - April 27, 2026

City of Santa Barbara <communication@citysb.org>
To: Timmy Bolton

If there are any problems with how this message is displayed, click



Waterfront Adaptation Plan Open Houses

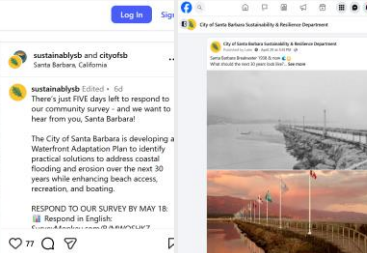
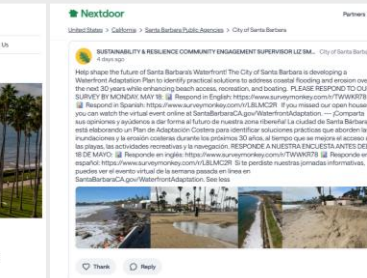
Attend one of the open houses starting this week, with in-person events on April 29 and April 30 and a virtual option on May 6. Your input will help guide the Draft Waterfront Adaptation Plan, which aims to address coastal flooding and erosion over the next 30 years while enhancing beach access, recreation, boating, and habitat.

[Read more... En español](#)



City of Santa Barbara
Evaluating Options to Protect
and Enhance the Waterfront

Instagram



Help shape the future of
Santa Barbara's Waterfront
*Ayúdanos a dar forma al futuro de la
zona costera de Santa Bárbara*



Respond to our
survey in English



Responde a nuestra
encuesta en español.

Learn more / Más información
SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterfrontAdaptation

Input Needed!
Help shape the future
of Santa Barbara's Waterfront

The City of Santa Barbara is developing a **Waterfront Adaptation Plan** to address coastal flooding and erosion over the next 30 years, focusing on protecting and enhancing the waterfront, and **we want to hear from you!**



The Waterfront faces beach erosion, flooding, and rising sea levels, narrowing our beaches and disrupting recreation.

The City is considering adaptation options to prioritize sandy beaches, prevent flooding, create safe walking and biking paths, and improve the overall experience.

Help guide the planning process by completing a brief survey by **Monday, May 18** at SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterfrontSurvey or scan the QR Code here.

To learn more and to sign up for news, visit SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterfrontAdaptation or contact Timmy Bolton at (805) 738-0836 or TBolton@SantaBarbaraCA.gov.

City of Santa Barbara
SUSTAINABILITY
& RESILIENCE

The City of Santa Barbara is preparing a **Waterfront Adaptation Plan** that will address coastal flooding and erosion for the next 30 years.



SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterfrontAdaptation

City of Santa Barbara
Sustainability & Resilience
100 E. Main Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

For more information regarding the **Waterfront Adaptation Plan** visit SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterfrontAdaptation or contact Timmy Bolton at (805) 738-0836 or TBolton@SantaBarbaraCA.gov.

Join us at a community open house, open to all, **online surveying**

Wednesday, April 29, 10am - 12pm
Thursday, April 30, 10am - 12pm
Friday, May 1, 10am - 12pm
Saturday, May 2, 10am - 12pm
Sunday, May 3, 10am - 12pm

The City of Santa Barbara is holding a **Community Open House** to gather input from the community on the **Waterfront Adaptation Plan**. The open house will be held at the **City of Santa Barbara** and is open to all. The open house will be held at the **City of Santa Barbara** and is open to all. The open house will be held at the **City of Santa Barbara** and is open to all.

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Reaching People Where They Are

10 Community Events



12+ A Frames



Reaching Targeted Audiences

**12 City Advisory Body
Meetings**



**28 Stakeholder Meetings
+ Spanish Outreach**



Getting Structured Input

3 Open Houses



1,404 Survey Responses



City of Santa Barbara
**SUSTAINABILITY
& RESILIENCE**

City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Adaptation Plan

[Responde a esta encuesta en español](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OUR WATERFRONT?

Santa Barbara's Waterfront - from Leadbetter Beach to East Beach - is facing increasing coastal erosion and flooding that is disrupting recreation, impacting businesses, and costing millions in repairs.

If we do nothing, these impacts will worsen as sea levels continue to rise.



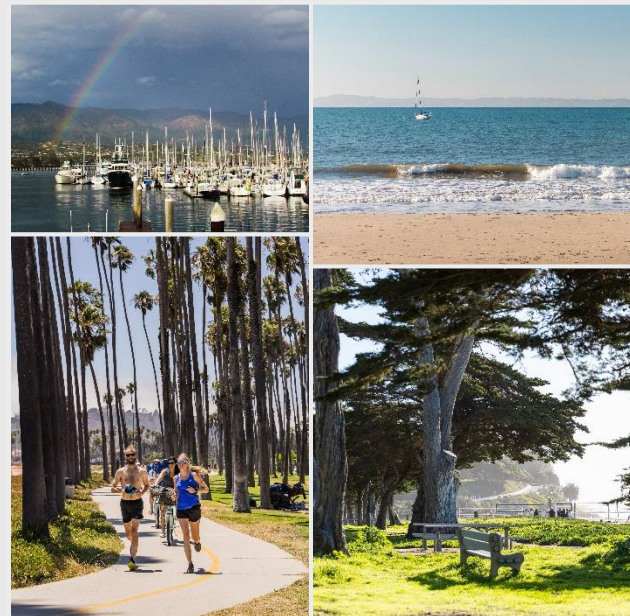
About This Survey

The City is developing a [Waterfront Adaptation Plan](#) to identify practical solutions to address coastal flooding and erosion for the next 30 years while enhancing beach access, recreation, boating, and habitat.

KEY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK THEMES

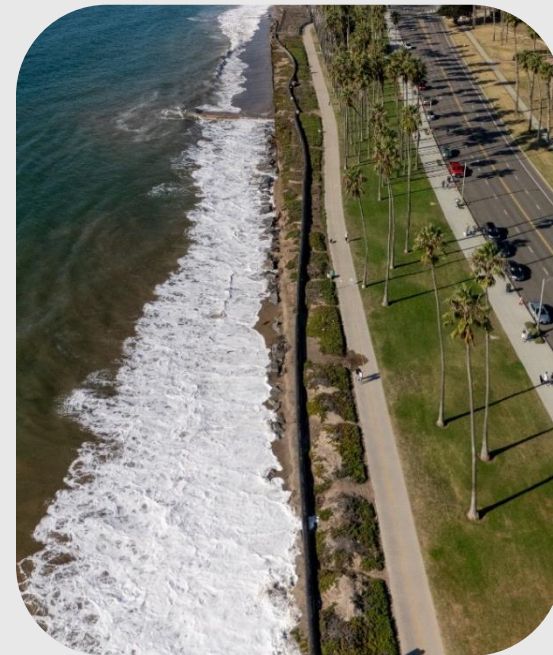
People Cherish the Waterfront Today

- Desire to preserve character, views, and access
- Support for modest amenity improvements and resident-serving uses



There is Awareness & Acknowledgement

- Awareness of East Beach erosion and storm impacts
- Acknowledgement that sea level rise must be addressed
- Appreciation that the City is advancing planning efforts



Most Support Project Direction

Most thought:

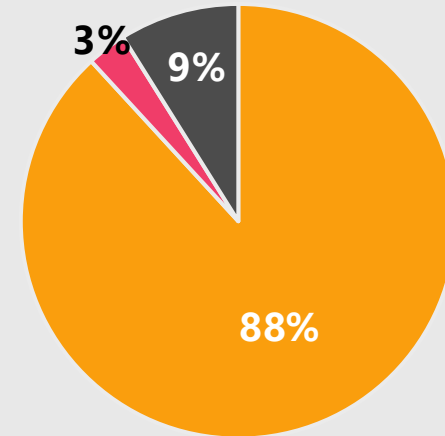
- Project generally headed in the right direction
- Potential options should continue to be evaluated



Most Support Nature-Based Solutions

- Overwhelming support for reef, kelp, habitat, & dune restoration
- Emphasized ecological, recreational, tourism, and "blue economy"

Should the City continue to consider nature-based solutions?



■ Yes. ■ No. ■ Maybe.

Most Support Transportation Safety

- Support to separate users, improve connections, and close network gaps
- Interest in transit and the Waterfront Shuttle
- Support for ADA and all-ages-and-abilities improvements

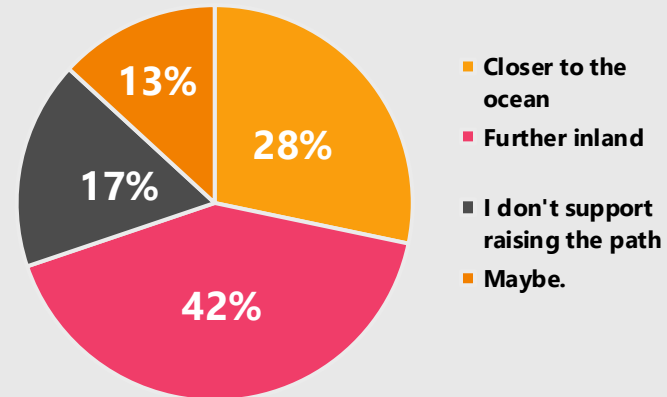


Most Support Elevated Path Option

- General support to improve safety and reduce flooding
- Mixed thoughts on location



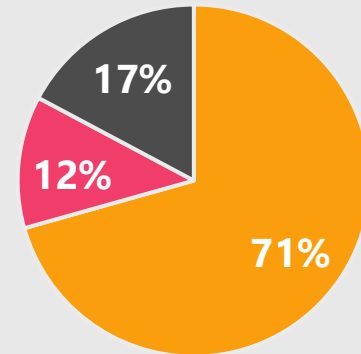
Where should the path be located?



Most Support Leadbetter Beach Options

- Broad support to move things back to save sandy beach
- Mixed feedback on new parking structures
- Top priorities: sandy beach, walking/biking paths, habitat areas, park space, and restrooms

Should the City continue to consider these options?

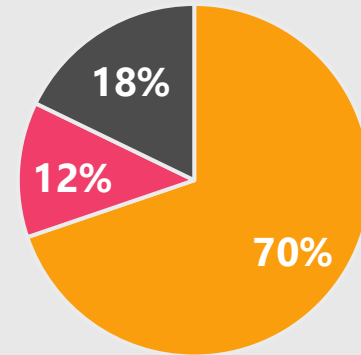


■ Yes. ■ No. ■ Maybe.

Most Support Harbor Area Options

- General support to protect area, improve boating & access
- Strong support (74%) for rock revetment with promenade
- Top priorities: Walking/biking paths, boating facilities, food/bev, parking, sandy beach

Should the City continue to consider these options?

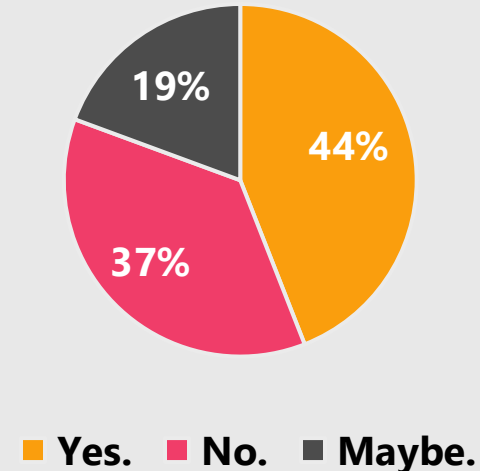


■ Yes. ■ No. ■ Maybe.

Mixed Feedback on Economic Development

- Mixed feedback on converting some Harbor Main parking to other uses
- Ongoing concern about parking availability and affordability
- Likely moved to later phase

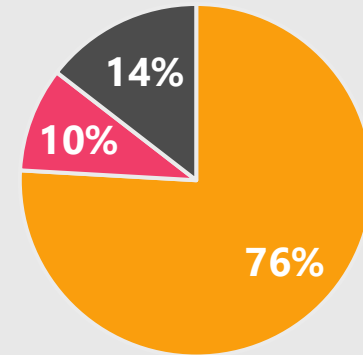
Should the City continue to consider this option?



Most Support West Beach Options

- Strong support to reimagine area as premiere destination
- Concerns about water quality, Harbor proximity, and parking
- Top priorities: sandy beach, walking/biking paths, habitat areas, volleyball courts, and restrooms

Should the City continue to consider these options?

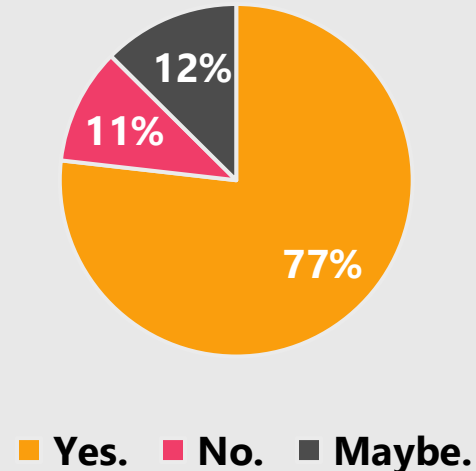


■ Yes. ■ No. ■ Maybe.

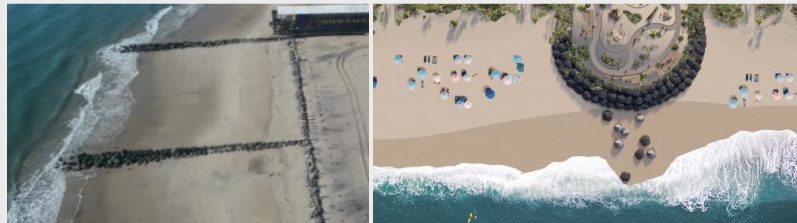
Most Support East Beach Options

- Strong support to move things back to save sandy beach
- Top priorities: sandy beach, walking/biking paths, habitat areas, volleyball courts, and park space

Should the City continue to consider these options?

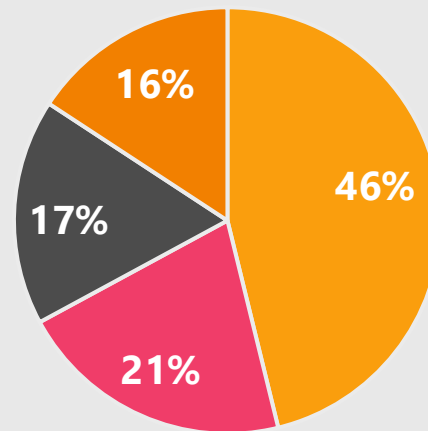


Most Support Groins & Headlands



- Support for methods to address erosion and widen beaches
- More prefer waiting until necessary for hazard protection

Should the City continue to consider this option?



- Yes, when required for hazard protection
- Yes, build sooner to widen beaches
- No.
- Maybe.

NEXT STEPS

Next Milestone Steps



Get Involved & Learn More

➤ Visit the Website for Email List & More Info

- SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterfrontAdaptation

➤ Contact & Submit Comments

- Timmy Bolton, Senior Climate Adaptation Analyst
(805) 730-0836 or TBolton@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

QUESTIONS?
