

September 4, 2025

Distribution of Funds – City of Encinitas’ Public Recreational Beach Impact Mitigation Fund

Overview

In May 2007, the California Coastal Commission (Commission) and San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) establishing a process for the administration of the Public Recreational Beach Impact Mitigation (PRBIM) Fund. The PRBIM Fund consists of fees collected by the Commission to mitigate the adverse impacts on public recreational use of the beaches within the region resulting from construction of shoreline protective structures, or other forms of development that have adverse effects on the beach or shoreline. Mitigation fees are deposited into individual, interest-bearing accounts held by SANDAG on behalf of each coastal city until that jurisdiction requests funding for an eligible project.

The funds held in the PRBIM account can only be used for projects that provide public recreational improvement, such as public beach accessways, blufftop access, viewing areas, public restrooms, public beach parking, and public trail. Prior to disbursement of any funds, the request must be approved by the SANDAG Regional Planning Committee and submitted to the Executive Director of the Commission for authorization. The City of Encinitas (City) is requesting funding from their account to fund their Swami’s Beach Access Staircase Project (Project).

Action: Recommend

The Shoreline Preservation Working Group is asked to recommend that the Regional Planning Committee approve the release of funds from the City of Encinitas’ Public Recreational Beach Impact Mitigation account to the City of Encinitas.

Fiscal Impact:

If approved by the California Coastal Commission Executive Director, San Diego Association of Governments will release \$104,140 from the City of Encinitas’ Public Recreational Beach Impact Mitigation account.

Schedule/Scope Impact:

None.

Key Considerations

- The City is requesting to utilize the entirety of their PRBIM Fund available (\$104,140). This amount will fund the design and construction costs of staircase rehabilitation at Swami’s Beach. The City owns and maintains four unique timber staircases that provide beach access down the coastal bluff along the coast. City staff conduct regular inspections to ensure long-term public access to coastal resources. After examination, the Swami’s Beach staircase, originally constructed in 1990, has been determined to be nearing end-of-life condition, warranting rehabilitation.
- The existing beach accessway at Swami’s Beach consists of four primary segments: an at-grade concrete stairway, a timber beam bridge, a three-flight timber stair tower, and a lower concrete staircase with an integrated shower. The proposed project will replace the structural timber elements in accordance with current Building Code and Coastal Commission Standards, replace portions of the concrete, upgrade the galvanized steel hardware with duplex stainless steel, and identify accessibility improvements.

- The total estimated cost for the project is \$904,140. The City has committed \$800,000 from its Fiscal Year budget toward the rehabilitation. The release of \$104,140 from the PRBIM Fund would complete the full funding of the project.
- These uses are consistent with the SANDAG Shoreline Preservation Strategy objectives, policies, and recommendations that relate to beach access. Furthermore, the project meets the eligibility criteria included in the MOA with the Commission.

The Shoreline Preservation Working Group is asked to recommend that the Regional Planning Committee approve the release of the funds from the Public Recreational Beach Impact Mitigation Fund to the City of Encinitas.

Next Steps

The Regional Planning Committee is scheduled to review this proposal and the Working Group's recommendations at its October 3, 2025, meeting. If the City's proposal is approved by the SANDAG Regional Planning Committee, SANDAG staff will submit the proposal to the Executive Director of the Commission for review and approval.

Antoinette Meier, Senior Director of Regional Planning

Attachment: 1. City of Encinitas Resolution No. 2025-78