

# Marina rebuilding project in jeopardy

**LONG BEACH:** City auditor isn't convinced city can carry \$96 million tab.

**By Paul Eakins Staff Writer**

**LONG BEACH** — A long-planned rebuild of the aging Alamitos Bay Marina has been put on hold as an audit going to the City Council tonight questions Long Beach's ability to pay for the project.

"The original plan was for a total rebuild, and there's definitely not marina funds available for a total rebuild," City Manager Pat West said last week. "That's definitely not a project that's going forward today."

The audit, which was commissioned by City Auditor Laura Doud, questions whether the \$90 million in debt that the city would take on for the marina upgrade can be fully funded by the Marine Bureau. If that

forward on the project, Doud recommends.

She also criticizes the bureau for requesting a single design and project cost from bidders, rather than a range of options and price tags.

The state Department of Boating and Waterways has already appropriated about \$21 million in loans for the project, which is expected to cost \$96 million, the audit says. A total of \$40 million in these loans had been planned for the project, plus \$50 million in municipal revenue bonds.

"All we're saying is please don't continue to incur debt until you can show us how you'll pay it back," Doud said last week.

West said that he still intends to move the project forward in phases as funds become available and hopes to start with upgrades to Basin 4 by the Long Beach Yacht Club, including making the basin deeper and renovating the marina's wooden docks. He

said there may be some funding restrictions that need to be considered before that piece begins.

It isn't clear when exactly the project was scaped back or what the plans were before the audit was completed in March, as city officials gave conflicting statements last week and have taken conflicting action.

"We haven't been looking at a full marina rebuild for about a year," West said. "Whatever goes forward is going to be staggered or phased."

However, Marine Bureau Manager Mark Sandoval reported in this month's "Marina Reader" newsletter that the rebuild "is continuing to move forward." Sandoval declined to comment on the project last week.

In January, under Sandoval's leadership, the city sought and received approval for the entire project. That coastal development permit has a caveat that the rebuild must be completed within two years, after which the permit will expire.

Doud said that when she discussed the pending audit with officials from the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine in October, she got no indication that the project was off the table.

"No, they were moving forward with it," Doud said. "They're continuing to solicit debt, and that was our concern."

The city auditor credits her audit for slowing down that work.

"I think since we issued the audit, they put the brakes on it," Doud said.

The fate of the marina rebuild appears at best uncertain, and even Long Beach's top city officials appear a little confused about the next steps.

"The audit is reviewing a project that isn't going forward," West said. Then he clarified: "The project is going forward, but it will be downsized."

**Staff Writer Joe Segura contributed to this report.**  
paul.eakins@presstelegram.com, 562-499-1278

## Want to go?

**What:** Long Beach City Council meeting

**When:** 5 p.m. today

**Where:** Council Chamber, City Hall, 333 W. Ocean Blvd.

**Watch:** The meeting can be viewed live on Charter Communications Channel 3, Verizon FiOS channel 21 and online at [www.longbeach.gov](http://www.longbeach.gov).

isn't possible, then the city would have to draw on Long Beach's general fund or tidelands fund, both of which are already strapped for cash, Doud says in her report to the council.

Until it is clear that the Marine Bureau can cover the costs with revenues such as slip fees, the council and city management should wait to move