

**STAFF REPORT
C63**

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S 34

12/03/18
PRC 8036.1
K. Connor

GENERAL LEASE – RECREATIONAL USE

APPLICANT:

Michael R. Van Voorhis and Denise L. Van Voorhis, Trustees of The Van Voorhis Family Trust, dated October 31, 2001

PROPOSED LEASE:

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in the Midway Channel of Huntington Harbour, adjacent to 16923 Park Avenue, Sunset Beach, Orange County.

AUTHORIZED USE:

Use and maintenance of an existing boat dock and access ramp.

LEASE TERM:

10 years, beginning March 1, 2018 and ending February 29, 2028.

CONSIDERATION:

Rent in the amount of \$1,234 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

Authority:

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6501.1, 6503, and 6503.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

Public Trust and State's Best Interests Analysis:

On June 23, 2011, the Commission authorized a Recreational Pier Lease for the continued use and maintenance of an existing boat dock and access ramp to Michael R. Van Voorhis and Denise L. Van Voorhis, Trustees of the Van Voorhis Family Trust, dated October 31, 2001 ([Item C24, June 23, 2011](#)). That lease expired on February 28, 2018. The Applicant is now applying for a new General Lease – Recreational Use for the continued use and maintenance of the existing boat dock and access ramp.

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The subject facilities, consisting of a boat dock and access ramp, are privately owned and maintained and located within the Midway Channel of Huntington Harbour. The boat dock and access ramp are used for recreational boating. Recreational boating is water-dependent and is generally consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine. The California Legislature has identified private recreational boating facilities as an authorized use of Public Trust lands (Pub. Resources Code, § 6503.5)

The Midway Channel in Huntington Harbour was created in the early 1960s and the adjacent upland parcel is privately owned and developed with a residence. There is no public access at this upland property because the private upland property directly abuts the concrete bulkhead that defines the limits of the channel. The boat dock extends to the pierhead line, which is 30 feet into the 200-foot-wide channel, leaving the majority of the Midway Channel available for navigation and public recreation.

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 10-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and reserves an easement to the public for Public Trust-consistent uses. Upon termination of the lease, the lessee may be required to remove all improvements from State land.

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. The lease also requires the payment of annual rent to compensate the people of the State for the occupation of the public land involved.

Climate Change:

Climate change impacts, including sea-level rise, increased wave activity, storm events, and flooding are not limited to the open coast. The existing structures subject to the proposed lease are located within the Huntington Harbour development, along an inland, navigable, tidally influenced channel, and may be vulnerable to the impacts of sea-level rise.

Huntington Harbour is built near sea-level elevation, and as a result is vulnerable to flooding and storm surge events. Huntington Harbour is adjacent to two wetlands, Bolsa Chica and the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge, which could act as natural buffers to storm surges and lessen flood risks.

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The California Ocean Protection Council updated the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance in 2018 to provide a synthesis of the best available science on sea-level rise projections and rates. Commission staff evaluated the “high emissions,” “medium-high risk aversion” scenario to apply a conservative approach based on both current emission trajectories and the lease location and structures. 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	Projection (feet)
2030	0.7
2040	1.2
2050	1.8
2100	6.7

Source: Table 28, State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance: 2018 Update

Note: Projections are with respect to a 1991 to 2009 baseline.

As stated in *Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update* (California Natural Resources Agency 2018), climate change is projected to increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters related to flooding, drought, and storms (especially when coupled with sea-level rise). The combination of these conditions will likely result in increased wave run up, storm surge, and flooding in coastal and near coastal areas. In tidally influenced waterways, more frequent and powerful storms can result in increased flooding conditions and damage from storm-created debris. Climate change and sea-level rise will further influence coastal and riverine areas by changing erosion and sedimentation rates. Beaches, coastal landscapes, and near-coastal riverine areas will be exposed to increased wave force and run up, potentially resulting in greater beach or bank erosion than previously experienced.

This increase in sea level combined with more frequent and stronger storm events will likely expose the lease area structures to higher flood risks, comprised of greater total water levels for longer periods of time. The lease area contains fixed features, including a boat dock and access ramp. Flooding conditions could cause structures to be damaged or dislodged, presenting hazards to public safety as well as dangers for navigation within the channel. The floating nature of the movable features will allow them to rise and fall with tides and waves, increasing their resiliency to some sea-level rise impacts. The fixed features may need to be raised or reinforced to withstand future conditions. Although the

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bulkhead near the pier is not under the Commission's jurisdiction, any sea-level rise impacts to the bulkhead could also affect the structures under the Commission's jurisdiction because it serves to stabilize the bank. Therefore, any loss or degradation of the bulkhead would result in property damage and public safety concerns within the lease area and the surrounding waterways.

More locally based knowledge of sea-level rise impacts and adaptation strategies will be available to Huntington Harbour residents as a result of the ongoing efforts to update the City of Huntington Beach's Local Coastal Program and General Plan, and through the city's Coastal Resiliency Task Force. Regular maintenance, as required by the terms of the lease, will reduce the likelihood of severe structural degradation or dislodgement. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Applicant acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland are in an area that may be subject to the effects of climate change, including sea-level rise.

Conclusion:

For all the reasons above, staff believes the issuance of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the proposed lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. On February 27, 1998, the Commission authorized a Compromise Title Settlement Agreement (AD 340), which was subsequently amended by Commission action on June 19, 1998 ([Item C100, June 19, 1998](#)). AD 340 involved the lease premises and settled certain title disputes between the State of California and two parties, one of which was the Applicant.
2. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.1 of the Commission's Strategic Plan to deliver the highest levels of public health and safety in the protection, preservation, and responsible economic use of the lands and resources under the Commission's jurisdiction.
3. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

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Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15300 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Land Description
- B. Site and Location Map

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

Find that the issuance of this lease is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; will not substantially interfere with the Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the proposed lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning March 1, 2018, and ending on February 29, 2028, for the use and maintenance of an existing boat dock and access ramp, as described in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B (for reference purposes only) attached and by this reference made a part hereof; annual rent in the amount of \$1,234, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

EXHIBIT A

PRC 8036.1

LAND DESCRIPTION

A parcel of submerged land situate in fractional Section 19, Township 5 South, Range 11 West, in Sunset Beach, Orange County, California, described as follows:

BEGINNING at the most westerly corner of that parcel described in Corporation Quitclaim Deed recorded in Book 9788 at Page 658 Official Records of said County; thence northeasterly along the northwesterly line of said parcel to the most northerly corner of said parcel, said corner also being the most westerly corner of that parcel described in Exhibit F of that Compromise Title Settlement Agreement recorded June 28, 1999 as Document Number 19990478750 in Official Records of said County; thence continuing northeasterly along the northwesterly line of said parcel described in Exhibit F to the most northerly corner of said parcel described in Exhibit F; thence N 20°23'02" E 30.00 feet; thence S 69°23'40" W 115.14; thence S 43°31'15" E 34.12 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

END OF DESCRIPTION

Prepared September 25, 2018 by the California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit.



NO SCALE

SITE

State of California Channel

HUNTINGTON BEACH
CITY OF
ORANGE COUNTY

EXISTING
PIER & GANGWAY

LEASE AREA

115.14'

30.00'

38.38

APN 178-651-35

31.69'

34.12'

63.38

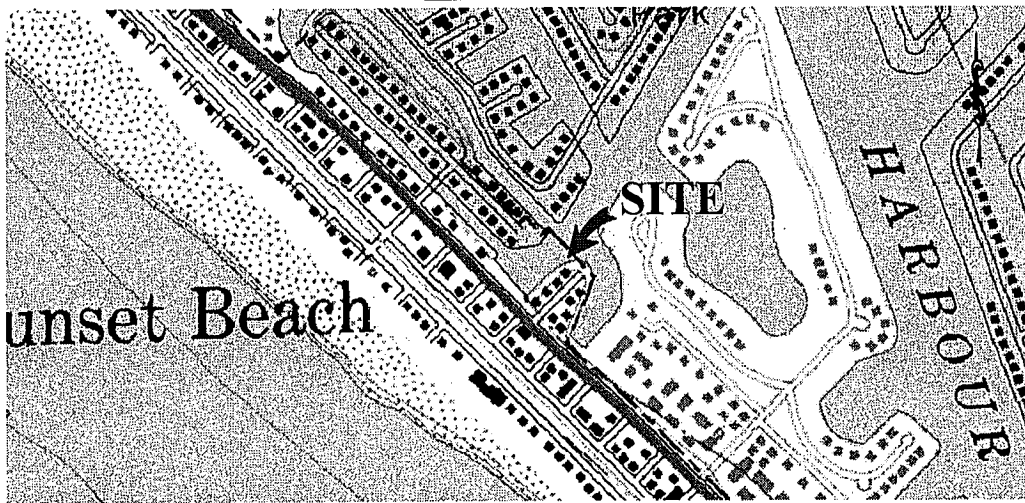
APN 178-532-44

16923 PARK AVENUE, SUNSET BEACH



NO SCALE

LOCATION



MAP SOURCE: USGS QUAD

Exhibit B

PRC 8036.1
VAN VOORHIS FAMILY TRUST
APN 178-532-44 &
APN 178-651-35
GENERAL LEASE -
RECREATIONAL USE
ORANGE COUNTY



This Exhibit is solely for purposes of generally defining the lease premises, is based on unverified information provided by the Lessee or other parties and is not intended to be, nor shall it be construed as, a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

MJJ 9/24/18