

Santa Monica Daily Press

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STUDY: PCH, TOURISM, WATER SYSTEMS VULNERABLE TO SEA

LEVEL RISE

By [David Mark Simpson](http://smdp.com/author/dave) (<http://smdp.com/author/dave>) on January 7, 2014 in [News](http://smdp.com/category/news) (<http://smdp.com/category/news>)

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FILE PHOTO

SM BAY — Problems caused by sea-level rise are expected to impact key infrastructure like drinking water systems and roads in areas surrounding Santa Monica over the next century, according to a USC study.

The Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Study for the city of Los Angeles, presented at the Annenberg Community Beach House on Tuesday, highlighted potential dangers to neighborhoods adjacent to the city by the sea.

To the north, Pacific Coast Highway is threatened by the sea-level rise.

"The main problem for (Pacific Palisades) and for the infrastructure is how are we going to maintain Highway 1," said Dr. Reinhard Flick, of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. "It's very difficult to see how you would move it, for example."

Waters are expected to rise by 1.4 meters over the next century according to the report. But mean sea-level rise on its own is not the primary issue.

"Mean sea-level doesn't actually run over anybody's doorstep," Flick said. "It doesn't actually erode the beach. That's not the process. The processes are the big waves, especially during high tides that cause the damage, the erosion, the flooding."

The report recommends issuing warnings for PCH drivers days in advance as the water rises and storms approach.

Along with roads, water systems are mentioned by the report as one of L.A.'s most vulnerable assets. This includes wastewater, stormwater, and potable water that could be impacted by sea-level rise and associated storm surges.

Down in Venice, and across the L.A. coastal region, the iconic beaches will likely be chipped away, causing problems by the mid-century. L.A.'s beaches, like Santa Monica's, are human-made and sand is not being replenished at the rate that it was 50 years ago, the report said.

Santa Monica, known for its beach, generates more than \$1.5 billion in tourism annually, according to the Convention & Visitors Bureau.

And the beaches throughout the county represent more than just a vacation spot.

"Our first defense are these beaches," said Phyllis Grifman associate director of the USC Sea Grant Program. "But beach nourishment is expensive and everything that you

do on a beach affects the beaches down the coast."

For this reason, and a host of others, all of the municipalities in the county need to look at sea-level rise together, she said.

Santa Monica was not included in the report, which looked at coastal L.A. neighborhoods, but a similar study using some upgraded measures will look at all of the coastline in L.A. County later this year. The Local Coastal Planning Grant, which was accepted by Santa Monica last year, will pay for that study.

Shannon Parry, deputy sustainability officer for the Office of Sustainability and the Environment at City Hall was at Tuesday's event and although it didn't directly address Santa Monica she called it "exciting."

The countywide study will answer many of the same questions, and more, for Santa Monica, she said. The high level analyses will contribute directly to City Hall's policy decisions.

"What happens with the PCH? What happens with (the Santa Monica Urban Runoff Recycling Facility)? What happens with the beaches?" she said. "We're going to get answers to a lot of that."

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By Daily Press Staff

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Steve Case

Someone should check the Santa Monica Tide Gauge record: <http://www.psmal.org/data/obtaining/stations/377.php>
The current rate (30 year average) is less than 2 mm/yr. The story claims that sea level will go up 1.4 meters over the next century. That would require an annual rate of sea level rise of 14 mm/yr. One has to wonder when this seven fold acceleration in the rate is going to happen

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