

Imperial Beach Sea Level Rise & Coastal Flooding Study

Classic Coastal California

The southwestern-most city in the continental United States, Imperial Beach is a unique recreational and cultural treasure in San Diego County. The City provides unparalleled access to the ocean and the outdoors with numerous beaches as well as hiking, horse, and biking trails. As a top ecotourism destination, IB is adjacent to one of the largest contiguous wetland systems in Southern California – the Tijuana River Estuary – which attracts outdoor enthusiasts from around the world and provides habitat for several threatened and endangered bird species.



Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve adjacent to Imperial Beach.
(Photo Credit: USFWS)



Debris left behind following flooding at the end of Palm Ave.
(Photo Credit: Serge Dedina, 2014)

Living with the Water

Imperial Beach is bound on three sides by bodies of water, including San Diego Bay and the Otay River (north), the Pacific Ocean (west), and the Tijuana River and Estuary (south). Such close proximity to multiple sources of water results in low-lying areas being flooded during extreme high tides and storm events. Looking to the future, coastal flooding will be exacerbated as sea levels rise.



U.S. Open Sandcastle Competition brings enjoyment to thousands of beachgoers annually.
(Photo Credit: UT San Diego, Brett Alan Photography)

Building a Resilient Future

In light of current and future conditions, the City has committed through this project to strengthening its understanding of existing and future vulnerabilities along its Pacific shoreline. Additionally, this effort will identify a suite of potential strategies to help the City prepare for a changing climate, specifically addressing sea level rise and coastal storms, promoting a resilient community into the future.

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