

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 19, 2009
To: Harbor Commission
From: John N. Bridley, Waterfront Director
Subject: **Facilities Management Report**

Stearns Wharf Deck Fires

Around 3:00 a.m. on October 29th, several deck fires erupted on Stearns Wharf, causing isolated but significant damage in two locations. The fires were first spotted by passing Highway Patrol officers, who were immediately reinforced by City Fire and Harbor Patrol. Numerous fires extending from a ticket kiosk at the base of the Wharf past the Harbor Restaurant and the Wharf maintenance shed to Moby Dick's restaurant were quickly extinguished. Investigators concluded that arson was the cause. Despite the number of fires and damage, the majority of Wharf businesses remained open.

Most of the fires were contained in trash cans and did not spread to the surrounding wharf structure with the exception of two. Trash cans set ablaze adjacent to the southwest corner of the Harbor Restaurant caused considerable damage to siding and the banquet room windows. A bench was charred and seven deck boards were severely burned and were replaced by the maintenance staff the following day.

Much more significant damage occurred at the enclosure located just north of the maintenance shed. Approximately half the enclosure burned as well as the backside of the janitorial locker. Two telecommunications cabinets were damaged requiring new fiber optic and telephone feeds from below the deck. A bench and 19 deck boards burned and were replaced. The heat from the fire was so intense it blistered the paint on the south side of the 221 building (Madame Rusinka's). The cost to repair all the damage was approximately \$24,250.

One of three Southern California Edison (SCE) transformers is located in the enclosure and was severely burned. SCE crews responded immediately and determined the transformer needed replacement. By 9:00 a.m. SCE had a new transformer on site with several crews prepared to remove the damaged transformer and install a new one. Waterfront staff cut away the burned enclosure allowing SCE access to the site. A new transformer was installed in approximately four hours, a very quick operation for a project of this nature. All of the electrical system was inspected and determined to be safe and reliable with no other damage noted.

Stearns Wharf has been the scene of several historic blazes. The original Harbor Restaurant burned in 1973 and the Sea Center was the scene of a major fire in 1986. Most recently a catastrophic fire in 1998 resulted in the loss of several businesses, most

notably the Moby Dick's Restaurant. Staff continues to inspect and test fire prevention systems to ensure reliability. Harbor Patrol and the Fire Department will continue joint training exercises in an effort to continue providing prompt responses to future fires.

Passenger Loading Ramp

The Passenger Loading Ramp (PLR) allows access to and from Stearns Wharf from a variety of vessels, most notably the Water Taxi and Captain Don's whale watching and harbor cruises. On October 31 during routine operations, Water Taxi staff attempted to lower the PLR when the main gear shaft broke allowing the cable drum to freewheel and the ramp to lower itself uncontrolled into the water. Vessels that use the PLR are instructed to raise and lower the ramp prior to maneuvering alongside so fortunately no one was injured and no vessels were damaged. Nevertheless, this condition is unacceptable and required investigation as to the cause and upgrading the mechanism to avoid future failures.

Waterfront staff managed to raise the PLR with a boom truck and secure it at deck level for repairs. Cushman Contracting Corporation installed the PLR in 2002 and repaired the damage putting the PLR back in service five days after the failure. A small screw securing the main gear to a shaft appeared to have back out allowing the gear to partially slide off the 1" hardened steel shaft putting extreme loads on the shaft causing it to shear. The lifting mechanism was upgraded with a more secure attachment for the main gear hopefully eliminating the potential for a similar failure. In addition, staff will inspect the entire lifting mechanism more frequently focusing on the components that failed.

Marina 1 Replacement Project – Phase 1

AIS Construction Company is tentatively scheduled to begin construction upgrading the shoreside electrical system for the Marina 1 Replacement Project by the end of November. The work includes construction of a new electrical shed and switchgear behind the 132 building, trenching and installation of electrical conduit in Harbor Way, and installation of submarine electrical cable from the vicinity of the travel lift pier to a new distribution panel at the base of the Marina 1 gangway. This work will be completed prior to installation of a new transformer in January.

Bellingham Marine Industries (BMI) is the subcontractor providing the concrete docking system. BMI is currently preparing submittal drawings for the new docks with fabrication scheduled to begin in February. Installation of the main headwalk is tentatively scheduled to occur in five 1-week phases beginning immediately after the first docks have been fabricated with completion of the project in April 2010. Staff will develop a Vessel Displacement Plan once BMI finalizes the schedule and convene several meetings with the harbor community immediately prior to and during construction to inform them of potential construction related impacts and the project schedule.

West Beach Sand Management

The Santa Barbara County Parks Department (County Parks) secured FEMA funds to conduct beach nourishment operations at Goleta Beach. A potential source of sand for Goleta Beach nourishment is West Beach. The joint powers agency, Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment (BEACON), conducted a similar operation in 2003 using a hopper dredge to move approximately 60,000 c.y. as well as trucking an additional 18,000 c.y. of sand to replenish the eroding beach. County Parks and BEACON have proposed a similar project for this winter.

Pre-frontal southeasterly wind and waves reverse the typical west to east nearshore currents transporting sand "upcoast" and depositing it at West Beach within the wave shadow of the harbor. Once sand is deposited at West Beach, there is no natural process for eroding the beach and transporting the sand back downcoast towards Montecito and Carpinteria. Coastal scientists have estimated as much as 7% of the total volume of sand dredged by the Corps of Engineers (Corps) has been deposited at West Beach. The Corps only dredges sand from the Federal Channel and any sand deposited on West Beach must be removed mechanically by other funding sources.

The Waterfront developed a Sediment Management Plan (SMP) for the City's beaches from Leadbetter Point to the Clark Estate in 1999. The SMP identified preferred beach contours for West Beach emphasizing the need to maintain a quiet water area just outside the harbor to accommodate junior sailing programs as well as other boating activities preferring protected waters.

Parks has hired Penfield and Smith Engineers, Inc. (P&S) to determine the potential for using West Beach sand for Goleta Beach nourishment. The Waterfront recently conducted topographic and hydrographic surveys of the West Beach area. P&S will generate volume calculations comparing current conditions with the SMP's preferred beach contours to identify preferred areas for dredging/excavation and transportation of sand via dredging or trucking to Goleta Beach. Waterfront staff will work with County Parks and P&S to develop the project, conduct required pre-project sediment sampling, and obtain regulatory agency approval. Dredging West Beach is identified in the CIP for FY2012 for a cost of \$350,000 but the proposed Goleta Beach nourishment project may achieve the same objectives and obviate the need to conduct West Beach dredging with CIP funds.

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