

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 17, 2014
To: Harbor Commission
From: Scott Riedman, Waterfront Director
Subject: East Harbor Improvements

Recommendation:

That Harbor Commission receive a report on East Harbor Improvements.

Discussion:

The Waterfront completed several capital improvements along the east harbor since 2012 improving coastal access and the general aesthetics of the area. From the launch ramp out to the tip of the rock groin, over \$1.2 million dollars of improvements have been made, mostly with grant funds. Prior to these improvements, the majority of the launch ramp was severely deteriorated and closed to the public, a row of diseased trees and weeds lined the walkway along Sea Landing, the busiest section of the walkway adjacent to the harbor had no handrail, and portions of the wooden handrail along the rock groin were so rotten they were falling off. Once deemed the, "Forgotten Corner" of the harbor, this area has been revived to the benefit of the tenants as well as local residents and visitors. Four specific projects were developed to improve the area and a brief description of each follows:

Boating Trails Launch Ramp Project: Located at the eastern limits of the launch ramp, this area was identified as a likely candidate for a \$450,000 grant from the California Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) Boating Trails Program. The Boating Trails Program was established to provide grant funds for capital improvements designed specifically to cater to non-powered watercraft. The concrete portion of the launch ramp was completed in mid-May 2012 and was opened to the public at that time. A low-freeboard dock made of fiberglass was installed a few months later facilitating the launching of non-powered vessels such as kayaks, SUPs, small outrigger canoes, and sailing dinghies. The difference between the granted funds and the total cost of the project, \$43,000, was paid for out of the Waterfront's Harbor Preservation Fund (Capital Reserves Fund), for a total project cost of \$493,000. The project serves the non-powered boating public and helps separate them from power boats significantly reducing congestion on busy days.

Boat Launching Facility Project: The western portion of the launch ramp had also deteriorated severely and was closed to the public. DBW administers the Public Assistance Program, a grant program dedicated to funding public boat launching facilities that is used extensively throughout the state. Staff applied for and received a

\$350,000 grant to replace the concrete with two launching lanes and a wash down area. The project was completed in June 2013 and opened to the public at that time. The contractor also removed accumulated sediment adjacent to the Santa Barbara Sailing Center allowing them to berth more vessels and load and offload larger vessels at their facility without the risk of going aground. The cost of construction was \$336,000 with an additional \$45,000 in design, inspection and construction management services, for a total project cost of \$381,000. The project completed the replacement of the entire launch ramp with construction in 2002, 2012, and 2013. All construction was primarily paid for with DBW grant funds, including the 2002 project. DBW never granted all the funds necessary to construct each section of the ramp but the funds provided greatly reduced the potential cost of the overall project. With all construction now complete, the launch ramp will serve the boating public for decades to come.

Sea Landing Pedestrian Walkway: The Sea Landing is the most highly used visitor serving facility in the east harbor. Approximately 100,000 people pass through this area every year. Many participate in the activities offered at the location such as whale watching, sport diving and sport fishing. Sea Landing also serves as the secure facility for passengers disembarking from cruise ships. With the recent increase in cruise ship visits, the number of people passing through the Sea Landing area has increased significantly. The operator of the Sea Landing expressed concerns about the condition of the surrounding area and the public's perception of it. In the spring of 2013, Staff contracted with Arcadia Landscaping to design landscape and hardscape improvements with the goal of making the area safer and more aesthetically appealing.

The landscaping was separated from the rest of the improvements and completed during the summer of 2013. The contractor removed the diseased myoporum opposite the Sea Shell sheds and installed landscaping along the sidewalk. Fourteen palms were planted to line the walkway from Cabrillo Boulevard to Sea Landing. Ground cover consisting of a variety of plants was added to complement the palms. A new irrigation system was installed throughout the area. The landscaping made a significant improvement to the aesthetics of the area. Santa Barbara Beautiful recognized the importance of the project and awarded a \$6,000 grant to the Waterfront towards the funding of the landscaping component of the project.

Hardscape improvements including replacement of the damaged sidewalk, adding an inlaid tile mosaic of the City seal and installing a much needed handrail between the sidewalk and the harbor, was constructed as a separate project from the landscaping. Most of the improvements were completed prior to the arrival of the first cruise ships of the spring season. The handrail was recently installed completing the entire project. The combined cost of project design, landscape improvements, and hardscape improvements was approximately \$320,000 which exceeded the original cost estimate and budget of \$250,000. Improvements were designed to facilitate set up for the approved secure facility required for cruise ship visits. The overall project has been very well received by the public.

Rock Groin Handrail: The final project scheduled to complete the east harbor improvements involves replacing the handrail along the harbor side of the rock groin. The 300' long wood rail was installed in 1987 and is showing its age. Staff redesigned the handrail to meet current building code requirements. The project is out to bid and expected to be installed by the end of the fiscal year. The cost estimate for the project is \$40,000 which was included in the Waterfront's CIP as part the ongoing ADA Sidewalk and Handrail project.

Future Improvements: The improvements completed to date were all the responsibility of the Waterfront. The Sea Landing tenant is responsible for the building and docks. Nevertheless, Waterfront staff has worked with the tenant to consider some conceptual designs for adding an ADA compliant gangway to the Sea Landing facility. The tenant has made several improvements to the docks, including a new gangway, but it is not ADA compliant. The preferred location for an additional gangway is along the south side of the building. This could facilitate loading and offloading passengers as well as separating cruise ship visitors from the public as required by the Facilities Security Plan. A new gangway would require engineering design and full review by the California Coastal Commission. Waterfront staff will work with Sea Landing to consider this potential improvement and determine if, and when, the project could move forward.

Prepared by: Karl Treiberg, Waterfront Facilities Manager