



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** July 14, 2015

**TO:** Ordinance Committee

**FROM:** Operations Division, Waterfront Department

**SUBJECT:** Proposal To Designate Fishing Areas On Stearns Wharf

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Ordinance Committee review designated fishing areas on Stearns Wharf and forward to Council for introduction An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Amending the Municipal Code by Adding Section 17.13.060.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 1973, Stearns Wharf sustained one of the many fires that have marked its history, forcing closure of the Wharf until 1981. When it reopened, informally designated fishing areas were established on the Wharf's seaward finger ("Plank Park") and its shoreward finger, with fish-cleaning stations installed at each. By the mid-1980s, however, Waterfront staff noticed that fishing was taking place well outside those areas, including behind buildings, at the Passenger Loading Ramp, at the Harbor Restaurant's valet parking lot, at the Wye between the main roadway and the shoreward finger and along the pedestrian right-of-way adjacent to the main roadway.

As fishing proliferated beyond the informally designated areas, staff initiated a signage program, painting "no fishing" notices in areas throughout the Wharf (mostly on railings and on old piles used for sitting benches), to help ensure the safety of fishermen, pedestrians and vehicles.

### **DISCUSSION:**

While the "no fishing" signs have been generally effective in educating the public about where and where not to fish from Stearns Wharf, Waterfront staff occasionally has difficulty redirecting fishermen who choose to disregard the signs because the Santa Barbara Municipal Code is silent on this issue. This matter has come into sharp focus in recent months, as a few fishermen have refused to vacate (informally designated) "no fishing" areas, stating there is no law designating such no-fishing areas. Harbor Patrol, in turn, has no authority to issue citations in these areas.

Staff has created a map that designates proposed “Designated Fishing Areas” on Stearns Wharf. The map reflects traditional fishing areas on the seaward and shoreward fingers, and would serve as a reference exhibit for a proposed Ordinance that codifies currently informal designations.

The proposed Ordinance includes discretionary language allowing the Waterfront Director to alter the fishing areas as needed. This would likely only be used during special events, but staff believes this authority is essential to providing flexibility, should it be needed. In case of such special events, staff will post notices of such events at visible locations on Stearns Wharf.

Staff has contacted Frank Drew, operator of Stearns Wharf Bait and Tackle, who supports the recommended Ordinance. Harbor Commission voted unanimously on April 16, 2015 to forward this matter to Council for consideration and approval.

## **CONCLUSION**

With one million pedestrians and 250,000 vehicles visiting Stearns Wharf every year, staff believes it important to help enhance the safety of fishermen and the public by designating permitted “Designated Fishing Areas” on Stearns Wharf, areas traditionally used for this purpose. The proposed Ordinance will also help Harbor Patrol enforce these designations.

**ATTACHMENT:** Draft Ordinance

**PREPARED BY:** Mick Kronman, Harbor Operations Manager

**SUBMITTED BY:** Scott Riedman, Waterfront Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office