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**City of Santa Barbara  
Waterfront Department**

**WEST BEACH PLANNING STUDY**



**Prepared by:  
Pat Saley & Associates and  
Janice Thomson**

**Funding provided by the City's Redevelopment Agency**



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## I. Introduction

The West Beach Planning Study is a focused study of the area known as West Beach in the City of Santa Barbara's Waterfront (see photo below). West Beach was originally studied as part of the City's Local Coastal Plan (LCP) in the early 1980s and the Harbor Master Plan (HMP) that was approved in 1996. The HMP included several recommendations for the West Beach area, the most important of which was to allow dredging to provide a Small Boat Quiet Water Area and to replenish downcoast beaches with sand. Both the LCP and HMP recognize that West Beach is a unique coastal resource in an urban area and of great importance and value to residents of Santa Barbara and visitors to our area.

In 2005, the City initiated a design process for the West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project (WBPIP) for the area adjacent to the beach along West Cabrillo Boulevard (discussed later in this study). During that process, interest was expressed in studying the adjacent West Beach area. Many people spoke about the need to improve West Beach. Concerns were raised about the appearance of the Seashell "condos" and the dredge storage yard, the informal spread of outrigger canoe storage near the Rock Groin, graffiti, homeless presence, all of which contribute to an "industrial" and haphazard look to West Beach.

Now that the WBPIP is complete, the City's Redevelopment Agency agreed to fund a study of uses on West Beach. The goal of the study is to look at existing uses and to consider adding public uses and/or structures on or near West Beach to enhance those uses, encourage more use of the area as well as to improve its overall appearance and ambience.



**Photo 1 – Aerial View of the West Beach Area**

**West Beach Planning Study Process**

The West Beach Planning Study process began with a kick-off community meeting on April 15, 2009. Stakeholders in the area were invited and approximately 20 people participated in that process (see Appendices B-1 and B-2). Comments were recorded and were followed up on during “needs assessment” meetings with individual stakeholders held in summer and early fall 2009. Over 50 people were interviewed and their comments were considered in developing the early recommendations (see Appendices B-3 and B-4). A second community meeting was held on August 19, 2009 during which time three options were presented for discussion. Based on analysis of issues and comments received (see Appendix B-5), the three options were synthesized into the two alternatives presented in the draft study released in November 2009.

The Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the draft report on November 12<sup>th</sup> followed by Harbor Commission review on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Their comments are provided in Appendices D-2 and D-3 and are discussed in this final report. City Council review of the final report is scheduled for August 24, 2010.

## II. Background

### **History of West Beach**

The 24 acres that are now West Beach have changed dramatically over time. West Beach was “created” when the Santa Barbara Harbor Breakwater was constructed and extended in the 1920s. Dredging and storm activity has modified its width. The short concrete wall adjacent to the sidewalk on Cabrillo Boulevard was originally constructed as a seawall. It has been reported that waves used to crash against the wall indicating that at times the beach was non-existent.

West Beach has historically served an important role in storing accreted sand that would otherwise fill the navigation channel and the remainder of the Harbor. West Beach was dredged back to half its previous width in the 1980s. Since then, the beach has been dredged periodically to create the Small Boat Quiet Water Area and to replenish downcoast beaches as recommended in the Harbor Master Plan. Additional dredging is scheduled for 2011.

The boat launch ramp was built in 1961 with four launching lanes and two floating docks. It is the only coastal public small boat launching ramp between Ventura and Morro Bay. In 1991 the City rehabilitated the ramp and corrected the sharp drop off into deep water, making the ramp easier to use and maintain. Small boats, sailboats and outriggers are stored on the sand on the west side of West Beach through a permitting system administered by the Waterfront Department.

The Rock Groin is located south of the launch ramp. It houses Sea Landing, a commercial recreational charter business, UC Santa Barbara’s sailing facility, and the Marine Mammal Center.

Los Baños Pool, located at the intersection of Cabrillo Boulevard and Castillo Street, dates back to the early days of the Harbor when it was known as the “Plunge.” It was designated a Historic Landmark Structure in 1992 by the City Council. The wading pool next to Los Baños is open from 10 to 12 weeks of the year, depending on funding, and both pools are administered by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Figure 1 depicts West Beach today.

### **Planning Policies relating to West Beach (see Appendix A)**

There are many Coastal Act, Local Coastal Plan (LCP), Harbor Master Plan (HMP) policies and City Ordinances that give policy guidance relevant to the West Beach area. The Harbor Master Plan was adopted by the City Council and Coastal Commission as an appendix to the LCP, so any change to that plan also would require an amendment to the LCP. The HMP and LCP policies, as well as certain City ordinances, strive to protect and enhance the beach for active and passive recreation. The policies also strive to have City beaches be maintained in their natural state or with the addition of improvements to enhance their natural state, to enable the better enjoyment by the public.

Any proposed public or quasi-public amenities, structures or other facilities would need to be weighed by the City Council (and possibly Coastal Commission) for their benefit to the public’s health, safety or welfare. The specific project design, including how the sand at West Beach might be affected or covered, would have to be weighed against the policies and actions listed below. It is likely that LCP and HMP Amendments would have to be pursued, as well as Coastal Development Permits for the specific projects.

**Coastal Act Policies**

- Policy 30210 – 13 – Provide and protect public access to and along the coast
- 30221 – Protect coast for recreation uses
- 30235 – Allow protection devices under limited circumstances
- 30240 and 44 – Protect sensitive habitats
- 30251 – Protect views
- 30253 – Minimize risks to life and property
- 30255 – Coastal-dependent developments have priority; coastal-related within reasonable proximity to coastal-dependent they support

**Local Coastal Plan (LCP) Policies**

- Policy 4.3 – Provide lower cost visitor-serving experiences in planning new public amenities
- 6.1 – Protect sensitive habitat resources
- 6.7 – Avoid future protective devices except public health and safety structures
- 9.1 – Protect coastal views

**Harbor Master Plan (HMP) Policies**

- Policy FIS- 2 – Promote non-profit opportunities with cash cost recovery
- DEP- 3 c, d, – Lease priorities passive recreation; non-profit marine oriented groups
- DEP-1.1 – Dredge for Small Boat Quiet Area
- REC-1.1 – Provide volleyball courts on West Beach
- REC-1.2 – Consider native dune landscaping between bike path and wall
- REC-1.4 – In reconfiguring the Rock Groin, provide an observation deck
- REC-1.6 – Encourage public activities
- ACC-1 – Enhance public access
- ACC-2 – Public access from nearest public roadway
- ACC-2.3 – Landscape along Cabrillo; consider view corridors
- VISIT – Visitor serving uses subordinate to ocean dependent, but provide for visitors to the area
- VISIT-1.1 – Give priority to lower cost visitor serving uses
- VIS-1 – Protect , preserve, enhance coastal scenic visual qualities
- VIS-1.1 – Screen all parking facilities while considering view corridors
- MAR-1 – Maintain, enhance and restore marine resources
- MAR-1.7 – Provide an interpretive sign program to protect and interpret natural and historical features
- MAR-2 – Consider alternatives to construction of shoreline protective structures and dredging
- MAR-2.1 – Continue to dredge Harbor and replenish downcoast beaches
- MAR-2.2 – Pursue dredge purchase
- MAR-2.3 – Continue to provide dredged sand to replenish downcoast beaches
- MAR-4 – Protect western snowy plover and other sensitive species
- MAR-4.2 – Minimize impacts to sensitive species from dredging and other projects
- MAR-4.3 – Provide enhancement of snowy plover habitat where feasible

## **Coastal Commission Recent Actions and Input**

Since the passage of the Coastal Act in 1976 and establishment of the Coastal Commission, there are very few precedents for siting small structures on the sand in coastal California. Recently, lifeguard structures have been enlarged and improved at Pacific Beach, in the City of Coronado and at Bolsa Chica/ Huntington Beach. The City of San Diego has received approval of Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) for long-term widening of the entire length of their public boardwalk in both Mission Beach and Pacific Beach. The widened boardwalk will accommodate larger beach crowds and provide more public access opportunities.

Recent Staff Reports for Coastal Commission applications were reviewed for two lifeguard towers. The first project was in South Mission Beach in the City of San Diego. This project included construction of a bulkhead seawall for protection of the lifeguard tower. The lifeguard tower was located to minimize encroachment on the beach and was not considered to have adverse impacts to public access and recreation. The applicant had to agree to never extend the shoreline protection device in a seaward direction. The project was designed to preserve public views from the west. During the review of the project, there was discussion about buildings interfering with public access by occupying beach area that would otherwise be available for public use, adverse impacts on sand supply and loss of sandy beach.

The second project on the sandy beach is a Lifeguard Tower and public restroom at Silver Strand Beach in Ventura County. The project proposes construction of a 1,700 sq. ft. lifeguard tower and public restroom building to replace a previous tower and restroom. This project has had a substantial number of appeals. There are many issues involved with this including: the County would need to ensure that no future shoreline protection device would be constructed for this structure, flood hazards concerns, potential public view impacts from the nearby jetty, and encroachment on the sandy beach.

While not located on the sandy beach, another project of interest is located at Nicholas Canyon County Park in Malibu where a living Chumash demonstration village has been created at an ancient Chumash site. This project was created by the Wishtoyo Foundation, a non-profit organization, in partnership with the property owner, the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors. According to the Wishtoyo Foundation's website (<http://www.wishtoyo.org/projects-educational-demonstration-village.html>), "this Chumash Village is a unique and authentic re-creation of a working Native American village on a four-acre historical site at Nicholas Canyon County Beach in Malibu. The only living Chumash cultural village of its kind in Southern California, the village property occupies a historical cultural habitat - where ocean and stream meet, offering a rich and diverse wildlife and plant habitat....the coastal bluff is a living, pristine reminder of an ancient culture that thrived for thousands of years. The Chumash Village now hosts schools and community groups for cultural presentations, ceremonies and gatherings."

## **Informal Coastal Commission Input**

Early in the West Beach Planning Study process, the consultants met with Shana Gray and Steve Hudson of the Coastal Commission's South Coast Regional office in Ventura to get their initial input. After the release of the Draft West Beach Study, in January 2010 the consultants met with Steve Hudson and James Johnson from the Ventura office to review the various alternatives included in the draft study. Coastal Commission staff members were clear that they thought that West Beach is unique in that it is a wide sandy beach in an urban area. If new structures were located on the beach, they would need to, at a minimum:

- Maintain public access, including existing parking
- Include public education, especially for children
- Address public safety
- Give priority to beneficial public uses
- Cluster buildings or structures
- Avoid covering the sandy beach with structures, particularly enclosed structures that are not for public use.

The types of studies typically required for a structure or new use on the beach could include:

- Geologic and shoreline hazard studies
- Wave run up study
- Flood potential study
- Biological studies
- No future revetments

### **City Ordinances**

The City's Harbor area is zoned Harbor Commercial which includes all the water and marinas, the Harbor commercial area and Stearns Wharf. Most of West Beach and the beach area to the east of Stearns Wharf are zoned Parks and Recreation with a Coastal Overlay (PR/S-D-3). These zones, policy documents and City ordinances that apply to West Beach are described below. All are from the Santa Barbara Municipal Code except where noted.

**General Plan Land Use Element and Coastal Plan** – The General Plan designates West Beach as “beach” as does the Coastal Plan. Policies relating to West Beach are discussed below under “Planning Policies.”

**Coastal Overlay Zone (S-D-3)** – The Coastal Overlay Zone, S-D-3 Zone Designation (Chapter 28.44) is established for the purpose of implementing the Coastal Act of 1976. It insures that all public and private development in the Coastal Zone is consistent with the City's LCP. The Coastal Overlay Zone requires a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for any development in the coastal zone.

**Parks and Recreation Ordinance (28.37.030)** – The Park and Recreation Zone (PR) defines “Beach” as the areas that provide access to the ocean and sand for passive and active recreation. The PR Zone is established to protect and preserve publicly owned park and beach lands for the benefit of residents and visitors. This zone allows trails, minor buildings, picnic areas, lighting, memorials and artwork.

**Section 15.16.110 - Parks and Recreation** – This ordinance prohibits any structures on the beach except restrooms and lifeguard towers.

**Harbor Commercial Zone (H-C)** – The Harbor Commercial area to the west of West Beach and the marinas is zoned Harbor Commercial or H-C (as well as Coastal Overlay Zone or S-D-3). This zone allows ocean related uses as deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission. Projects that provide access improvements to the Harbor and beach areas are consistent with the H-C Zone. The H-C Zone allows “museums and other cultural displays relating to the ocean.”

**Harbor Lease Policies** – In 1984, the City Council adopted policies which relate to Harbor leases, including:

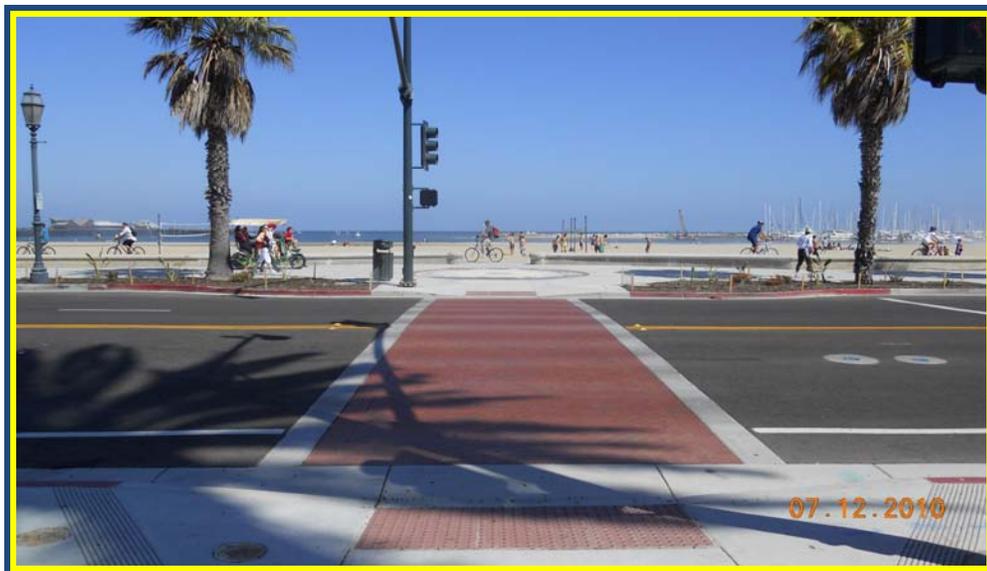
“The third goal shall be to provide passive recreational opportunities and an aesthetic waterfront for the enjoyment of the general public. The fourth goal shall be to provide an opportunity for nonprofit marine oriented individuals, groups and associations to benefit from the physical plant of the Harbor as long as they pay the incremental cash cost of their operation, or the same rental as would be gained if the facilities devoted to their operation were leased to a higher priority goal function; and a negative goal is the preclusion of any lease to an activity which provides supplies or services tending towards a carnival atmosphere, non-marine sports, non-marine oriented business offices, or public services which can equally be served outside of the Tidelands Area.”

**Waterfront Fee Resolution** – This resolution regulates outrigger, sailboat and rowing dory permits for West Beach. The permit regulates the size of boats allowed at West Beach. Applications are made through the Harbormaster and permits must be displayed on the vessel along with their current California registration number.

**West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project (WBPIP)**

One of the many options considered in the 1996 Harbor Master Plan (HMP) process was the construction of a boardwalk across West Beach to encourage residents and visitors to stroll along the waterline between the Harbor and Stearns Wharf. This recommendation was not included in the HMP for a variety of reasons but interest in connecting the Wharf and Harbor continued.

In 2004, the Harbor Merchants Association requested funding from the City’s Redevelopment Agency to improve the linkage between Stearns Wharf and the Harbor, leading to the West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project (WBPIP). A public outreach program took place and resulted in an improvement plan that began construction in June 2009 and was completed in summer 2010. The WBPIP provides an improved physical connection between the Harbor and Stearns Wharf with an attractive sidewalk that leads pedestrians along Cabrillo to the wading pool and into the Harbor area. The plan included improved crosswalks with ADA ramps, curb extensions, pedestrian activated traffic signals, lighting, resurfacing, flags, landscaping, etc., at Chapala Street, Ambassador Park, Los Baños wading pool, Bath Street/Sea Landing, and Castillo Street to Marina 4.



**Photo 2 – New Pedestrian Crosswalk at Ambassador Park**

The project also has a public art component with sculpture pads for public art, viewing plazas and historical and interpretive signage. An additional component is a freestanding outdoor public shower along the path to Sea Landing.



**Photo 3 – Story Circle - West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project**

### **2007 Grant Requests**

In March of 2007, the City's Redevelopment Agency (RDA) received several requests for funding. The Barbareño Chumash Council requested \$70,000 to construct a 20' x 30' Tomol House to facilitate and promote the Chumash maritime culture. In addition to this request, the RDA received a request from local youth sailing interests (SB Youth Foundation, SB Sailing Club, SB Seashell Association, and SB Area High School Sailing Teams) for \$260,000 to construct a West Beach Small Boat Center (e.g., fresh water supply, secure boat storage area, shaded meeting area, reconstructed condos, sail folding area, etc.). Both of these projects were not recommended for funding in 2007 because both projects were considered to have extensive planning and permitting issues. The projects needed more definition and needed to be part of a larger planning process which contributed to the initiation of the West Beach Planning Study.

### III. West Beach Today

#### Existing Conditions and Facilities

West Beach today is a vibrant area with a variety of active and passive activities that serve residents and visitors. While the beach has always been popular, the addition of volleyball courts and the continued dredging to reduce the size of the beach, provide sand for downcoast beaches and create the Small Boat Quiet Water Area has helped to breathe more life into the area. Some of the activities and amenities on West Beach are:

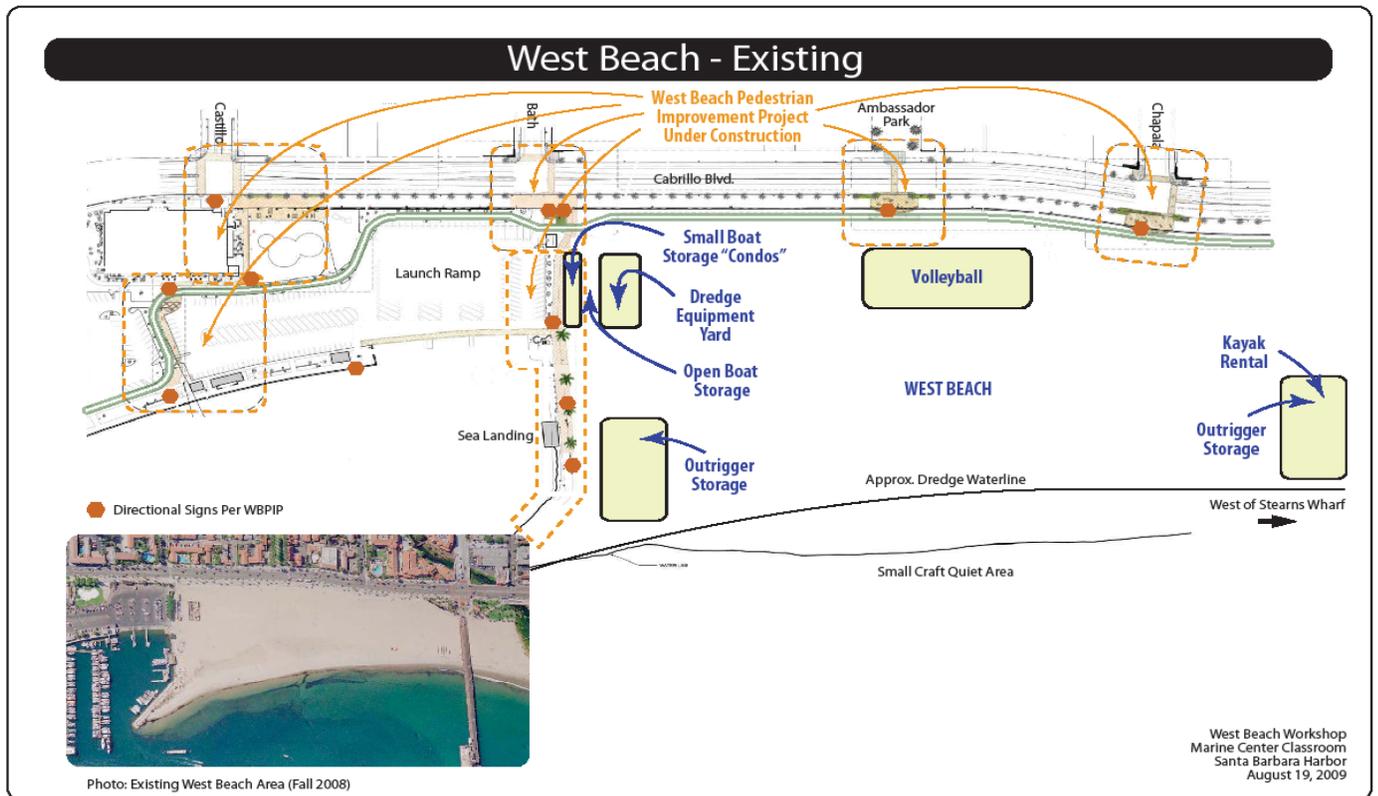


Figure 1 – West Beach – Existing Setting

#### Boating Activities

The Small Craft Quiet Water Area (see Figure 1) is a setting for many boating activities for: outriggers, sailboats, Chumash tomols (canoes), and rowing dories. This quiet-water area keeps small, non-motorized craft a safe distance from the federal navigation channel, where everything from whale-watching charter boats to fishing trawlers enter and exit the Harbor. West Beach is easily accessible and family-friendly.



Photo 4 – Summer at West Beach

Besides boating, there is formal and informal volleyball, weddings, sunbathing, strolling, sand soccer, picnics, etc. The following are organized groups who use West Beach:



**Photo 5 – Santa Barbara Seashell Association Sailboat Storage “Condos”**

**Santa Barbara Seashell Association (SBSSA)**

This club is a family-oriented organization teaching kids ages 8 to 15 to sail by racing their own boats. The group typically has 50 to 60 families. The small wooden (seashells) or fiberglass boats (sabots) are stored in eight small structures, known as the Seashell “condos,” with six boats per condo (see Photo 5). They operate from May through October on Sunday afternoons (see Photo 6). To the east of the condos, 20 permits have been issued to owners of small sailboats with masts (e.g., lasers). Many of these belong to families with kids who have graduated from the Seashell program.



**Photo 6 – Seashell Sailboats**



**Photo 7 – Outrigger Canoe Storage Area Sign**

## Outrigger Clubs

There are many outrigger clubs in Santa Barbara, most of which use and store their outriggers at West Beach. These clubs participate in local, state, national and international outrigger canoe competitions and generate public interest and support for the history of outrigger canoes. Most clubs offer their members opportunities to race at many different levels, ages or physical ability. The public is encouraged to participate and is sometimes offered instruction before deciding to join a club. A few of the clubs interviewed as part of the study process are:

- Santa Barbara Outrigger Canoe Club (SBOCC)
- Paddling Athletes Defying Disabilities, Limitations, Enjoying Recreational Support (PADDLERS)
- Ka Nai'a Outrigger Canoe Club
- U'hane Outrigger Canoe Club
- Kaizoku Outrigger Club
- Ocean Outrigger Club
- Holopuni
- Wahine



**Photo 8 – Typical West Beach Activities**

## Sports, Music and Other Activities

- The Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) held volleyball tournaments in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2008 either in spring or fall. Other volleyball associations had tournaments in 2007 and 2008. Santa Barbara City College conducts volleyball classes at West Beach. Volleyball courts are available on a first-come-first-served basis year round. Other events at West Beach include soccer in the sand, beach tennis, over-the-line, sun bathing and beachcombing.
- Navy League of Santa Barbara: the USS Ronald Reagan visited in August 2005 and January 2008. Passengers disembark and embark at Sea Landing with a Hospitality area set up at West Beach.
- Cruise Ship Visits: As with the USS Ronald Reagan, passengers disembark and embark at Sea Landing. Visits have taken place since 2002 (see Photo 9).
- The annual Fourth of July Celebration, co-sponsored by SPARKLE and the City, includes food, music and fireworks.



**Photo 9 – Cruise Ship and Shorebirds**

- Arlington West is set up on certain Sundays by the Veterans For Peace on the beach adjacent to Stearns Wharf. Arlington West consists of a small white cross for every soldier killed in Iraq (see Photo 10).
- There has been a West Beach Music Festival in 2007, 2008 and 2009 during the months of September or October. The Festival draws large crowds. In June 2010, the City Council determined that West Beach was not an appropriate venue for this type of large scale music event with up to 13,000 people attending.



**Photo 10 – Arlington West and aircraft carrier**

**Natural Resources**

There is little native vegetation at West Beach, thus habitat is generally around man-made structures and landscaping. There is limited area of some native, salt-tolerant vegetation at the end of the Rock Groin near the area where outrigger canoes are stored. According to bird surveys conducted by SAIC for several projects within the Harbor area, birds such as gulls, cormorants, herons, and brown pelicans, perch or rest in areas around the Harbor and West Beach<sup>1</sup>. Shorebirds, such as willets, black-bellied plovers, and marbled godwits, have been seen throughout the year. The sandy beach of the sandspit is a foraging and resting area for shorebirds, such as western and least sandpipers, sanderling, whimbrel, and long-billed curlews. Threatened, endangered, and special concern species that use the Harbor at least seasonally include: western snowy plover, California brown pelican, California least tern, California sea lion, and harbor seal.

The western snowy plover, a California Species of Special Concern, has been of special interest to the Santa Barbara Audubon Society for projects proposed at or near West Beach. They have been a regular winter visitor to the sandspit as well as East and West Beaches for over 10 years based on surveys for a number of Harbor projects. There are non-native Myoporum trees lining the sidewalk across from the Seashell condos which are used by black-crowned night herons for resting and nesting (see Photo 11). Other birds observed at West Beach include: great blue herons, willets, surf scoters, ring-billed gulls, western and heermann’s gulls, rock doves, double-crested cormorants, a peregrine falcon, American coots, black-bellied plovers, whimbrels, a marbled godwit, a western grebe, clark’s grebes, a snowy egret, and an eared grebe. On March 24, 2009, a SAIC Biologist observed one Western snowy plover on West Beach.



**Photo 11 - Black-crowned Night Heron**



**Photo 12 - Western Snowy Plover** FWS photo

<sup>1</sup> SAIC, Western Snowy Plover Monitoring at Leadbetter, West and East Beaches, Jan. 16, Feb. 6, Feb. 27, Mar. 13, Mar. 27, Apr. 10, Apr. 24, May 7, and May 21, 2009.

## **Beach Maintenance**

The City's Parks and Recreation Department has a program mission to clean, grade, and groom beaches to maintain clean and safe beaches for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Parks and Recreation grooms beach sand on Leadbetter, West and East Beaches ten times between May and October and they rake the beach sand six times between November and April. The Parks Staff works closely with SAIC for bird monitoring before any grooming and raking takes place.

## **Parking**

The City of Santa Barbara has several parking lots along the City's Waterfront. The Harbor Parking Lot is accessed off Harbor Way across from Santa Barbara City College and is in constant use. This lot offers paid spaces for vehicles and boat trailers. This is an important aspect for West Beach as this is the only boat launch in Santa Barbara County. Parking at the Harbor has been studied extensively. Parking and circulation improvements recommended in the HMP have been implemented to offset the heavy demand for parking.

## **Dredge Yard**

As discussed in other sections of this study, dredging is critical to the small boat groups using West Beach and to replenish downcoast beaches, however it is a very expensive undertaking. The dredge yard storage area at West Beach was mentioned by many stakeholders as a source of concern for aesthetic reasons given its industrial appearance. The yard is 102' x 52' and runs parallel to the sidewalk leading to Sea Landing and behind the Seashell condos. It is fenced and shielded with sand colored fabric that is a regular target for graffiti. The yard remains as storage during summer months dredging does not occur because it would be expensive to dismantle the equipment and store it elsewhere. The City prefers to put that money into more dredging. Discussions with the dredge contractor have indicated that the yard could be relocated within the West Beach area without impacting their operations as long as they are near the water and boat launch ramp vehicle access.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredges the Federal Channel in the Santa Barbara Harbor twice a year; once in the fall and once in the spring. The Corps lets a three-year contract, the most recent of which was completed in April of 2010. At the conclusion of the three-year contract the dredging contractor is required to remove everything, including the dredge yard. The next three-year contract is about to go out to bid with the prospective dredge contractor to begin mobilization in October 2010, including re-establishment of the dredge yard in the same general location near the Sea Shell condos.

Dredged sand is typically pumped south of Stearns Wharf, including down to East Beach. During spring 2010 approximately 41,000 cubic yards of sand was trucked/barged to Goleta Beach to replenish that eroding beach. West Beach has been used as a source for Goleta beach nourishment projects several times in the past eight years with some of the material trucked and some barged.

Surveys for sensitive species are conducted for any dredging project (Corps or West Beach/Goleta Beach) depending on the time of year. Surveys were conducted for Western snowy plovers (in addition to any other sensitive species that may be present) for the West Beach/Goleta Beach project because it occurred in the spring. The Corps conducts surveys at the disposal site at East Beach but not necessarily on West Beach because the dredging contractor buries pipe on West Beach at the beginning of the three-year contract and there are typically no more impacts to that beach after that.

### **Scenic Values**

Policies of the Local Coastal Plan (9.1) and HMP (VIS-1) strive to protect, preserve and enhance coastal and scenic visual qualities. The Harbor and Stearns Wharf are among the most beautiful areas of the City. Most tourists visiting Santa Barbara spend time in this area, with over half visiting Stearns Wharf. The 24 acres of West Beach are in between and offer an open expanse of sand with many types of passive and active recreation opportunities. It is considered unique to have an open expanse of beach in an urban setting. The HMP states that the open space nature of West Beach should be carefully considered in future planning. The importance of this wide open beach in the urban core of the City was also expressed by the Coastal Commission staff.

### **Visitor-serving Facilities**

The Coastal Act (Sections 30213 and 30250) and LCP (Policy 4.3) seek to provide and protect public amenities and low cost visitor serving activities. The volleyball courts at West Beach are a good example of these policies. The West Beach volleyball courts are easy for visitors and locals to have “pick up” games that are not always conducive to the East Beach courts. The hotel owners along Cabrillo often send their guests over to West Beach for volleyball, sunbathing, swimming, or just to watch the sailboats and outriggers. In addition, visitors are encouraged to try out the charter boat excursions, rent sailboats, kayaks, paddle boards, visit the Sea Center on Stearns Wharf and the Maritime Museum at the Harbor, and eat at all the various restaurants in the Waterfront. The HMP (Policy VISIT-1) states that “Visitor serving uses shall be subordinate to ocean dependent uses but shall be provided in adequate amounts to serve visitors to the area.” The corresponding action (Action VISIT-1.1) states “Modest expansion of visitor serving uses shall be provided, with priority given to lower cost visitor serving uses.”

## IV. Needs Assessment

On April 15, 2009, the Waterfront Department hosted a Community Meeting at the Marine Center Classroom. There were 20 people in attendance. A presentation was given outlining the history of West Beach, relevant Coastal Act, LCP, Harbor Master Plan, Parks and Recreation and other City policies and ordinances. Also included was the status of the West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project and how people could get involved in the current West Beach planning effort. Interviews were offered to all the various stakeholders interested in West Beach. A summary of the types of questions asked at this first meeting is presented in Appendix B along with meeting notes. In general, stakeholders were interested in more amenities at West Beach, improving the appearance of the area including the City Park at Castillo/Cabrillo Streets (Plaza Del Mar), additional dredging, making the multi-modal path safer, adding cultural and educational opportunities about the activities taking place there, as well as adding more festivals and tournaments. In recent months, there has been concern expressed about large festivals or events at West Beach. Careful consideration would need to be given to any proposal in terms of the type, size, and scope of such events to ensure that traffic, parking and/or neighborhood impacts would be addressed.

Parks and Recreation Department staff expressed concern about increased administrative and/or maintenance responsibilities that the City might need to shoulder if new structures or landscaping were added to the beach. They were also concerned about privately managed structures on the public beach, even if they would be available for public use.

From April through August 2009 the consultants interviewed over 50 people in small meetings. The stakeholders interviewed included: City Councilmembers, Parks and Recreation Staff, Waterfront Staff, Planning Staff, Coastal Commission Staff, the dredge contractor, the Audubon Society, Chumash representatives, Harbor Merchants, Hotel and Restaurant Operators, Outrigger Canoe Groups, and Sailing Groups. Summaries of these interviews are presented in Appendix B-4. The following bullets list the types of things the stakeholders wished to discuss and the ideas considered in this study.

### **What works at West Beach:**

- West Beach is a unique setting and should be kept open for all interest groups
- Visitors and locals all desire high quality projects and activities
- Easy parking and access to the water is desirable
- The Quiet Water Area is safe for sailing, kayaking, outrigger canoes, swimming, etc. Sailboats, Kayaks and Outrigger Canoes are attractive to watch and draw people to West Beach
- The Volleyball courts are used by many people, locals and tourists alike
- The West Beach Hotel and Restaurant owners and Harbor merchants commented that festivals and tournaments are generally good for business and they would like to see more.

### **How could it be better (not in priority order):**

#### **West Beach (sandy area)**

- **Boating (and educational) activities**
  - Continue an aggressive dredging operation to maintain and possibly enlarge the Small Boat Quiet Water Area
  - Consider design of a Chumash Tomol House for education about Tomol canoes and an Outrigger Canoe Hale with an open view corridor to the water
  - Provide a water hookup for boat rinsing

- Design attractive and consistent racks and storage boxes for outrigger groups at reasonable cost
- Remove weeds from around outrigger racks and grade sand up to sidewalk
- **Activities on the beach**
  - Encourage more beach and water related activities at West Beach – Beach Tennis, Over the Line Softball, Sand Soccer, etc.
  - Consider designing a small covered space for non-profit sailing and other boating groups to use as meeting space
  - Consider a “First Something Concept” for West Beach similar to “First Thursdays” in the Downtown - key into a farmers and fresh fish market idea
  - Create a limited commercial area near Sea Landing with small vendors renting beach chairs, umbrellas, boogie boards, kayaks and/or selling limited food items – open this up to bidding by existing Harbor Merchants first
- **Aesthetics**
  - Improve the appearance of the Seashell storage condos
  - Improve the attractiveness of West Beach for swimming – add a lifeguard tower, increase regular beach cleaning, post signs to indicate the water quality is good, install more technologically improved types of clean out stations throughout the Harbor to capture more oil byproducts
  - Relocate and/or improve the appearance of the dredge storage yard as it looks industrial
  - Confine potential projects to the area adjacent to the sidewalk leading to Sea Landing
- **Habitats**
  - Install native dune vegetation between the multi-modal path and the wall along Cabrillo to soften the look of the area
  - Consider Western snowy plover habitat needs in planning for future activities and facilities
- **Educational and interpretive opportunities**
  - Instill in visitors an understanding of the colorful history of the Harbor, dredging activities, commercial fishing, etc.
  - Create signage depicting the history of Outrigger canoeing, kayaking, sailing, etc., in the area
  - Create signage depicting the history of Chumash use of the area including launching of Tomols
  - Educate visitors and locals about the natural resources including Western snowy plovers
  - Streamline permitting procedures and lower fees for non-profit groups to hold events at West Beach
- **Safety and public services**
  - Increase Police and Harbor Patrol presence throughout the entire West Beach area
  - Install motion sensor lighting and/or cameras to discourage vandalism and transient use
  - Expand the multi-modal path toward the wall along Cabrillo to make it safer for all users of the path, fix cracks in the path and institute regular sand removal
  - Consider adding restrooms to the area
  - Improve the safety of the boat launch area

**Boat launch, rock groin, parking and pool areas** – Note: Immediately adjacent to study area

- Study the wading pool area – redesign to be a splash park, improve lighting, install benches with arms, connect it with improvements to Plaza del Mar and Los Baños
- Add benches, picnic tables and other amenities to the rock groin to make it more attractive

### **Cabrillo Boulevard and adjacent areas – Note: Outside study area**

- Extend or expand the Arts and Crafts Show to include the sidewalk along West Beach
- Regenerate interest in Plaza del Mar Park – trim trees to warm it up, install more lighting, rejuvenate the area with summer concerts and wine tasting/local vendor food booths for locals and visitors
- Encourage visitation to the Carriage Museum with signage directing visitors to that part of the park
- Study parking in the entire Waterfront – create consistent time limits and limits on overnight campers
- Prepare a master plan that covers all the City’s beaches in the Waterfront including habitats, public use, maintenance of beaches, etc.
- Improve marketing of Santa Barbara as a city of sailing, commercial fishing, outrigger canoeing, etc.

### **Early Options Considered for West Beach**

On August 19, 2009 the Waterfront Department hosted a second Community Meeting at the Marine Center Classroom. There were 25 people in attendance. The purpose of this meeting was to review the findings of the stakeholder interview process. The consultants presented graphics showing the existing setting for West Beach and three Options (see Appendix B-5) for possible improvements:

1. **Dredge storage yard** – All stakeholders understand and appreciate the importance of dredging West Beach for the sake of recreation and to replenish downcoast beaches. However, universally people commented that the storage yard’s appearance was “industrial.” The study looked at options with it remaining in place and moved closer to the ocean. In all cases, boats, outriggers or other watercraft were assumed to be located adjacent to the yard’s fence to screen the storage yard from view.
2. **Small boat storage “condos”** – While everyone supports the Seashell program that introduces children 8 through 15 to sailing, the appearance of the storage “condos” was a concern for some. The possibility of retaining the small storage sheds or condos in their present location and moving them closer to the Myoporum tree line to the west was also studied. The latter was proposed assuming the sidewalk in that area would be relocated to the east with two different configurations.
3. **Outrigger storage and/or Hale Structure** – There is a recognized need to improve the outrigger storage area. One option is to provide standardized racks and storage boxes for all groups and individual owners. Grading to improve the interface between the sidewalk and the sand is needed. The City has existing permits for “ideal beach configuration” that can be used to accomplish this. There is support for providing water and possibly electricity next to Sea Landing, but also for the Ka Nai’a outrigger club east of Stearns Wharf. Landscaping and additional seating would be beneficial along the Rock Groin. Figures 3 and 4 in the next section depict outrigger storage hales.
4. **New Tomol House or Ap** – A house to store Chumash tomols (canoes) was discussed at stakeholder and community meetings. A Tomol House was depicted in the northern part of the study area as discussed in more detail in the next section and shown in Figures 5 and 6. An Opp, or ceremonial building with tule sides, was also discussed but dropped from further consideration as not as high a priority for the Chumash representatives as a Tomol House.

5. **New educational elements** – Additional educational and interpretive signage throughout the West Beach area.
  
6. **New landscaping** – Plant native coastal dune types of grasses between the multi-modal path and the Cabrillo Seawall (Note: this is a concern for Parks and Recreation Staff as it would likely increase their maintenance responsibilities.)

The meeting notes from the second Community Meeting are summarized in Appendix B-6. The attendees reacted to all three options and gave very good input. After this meeting, the options were refined from three to two and renamed Alternative A and B (see Appendix D-1). Additional input was gathered from Planning, RDA, Waterfront and Parks and Recreation Staff. It was decided that relocating the sidewalk to the east, even with no net loss of usable sand area, was problematic for pedestrian safety and moving the Seashell condos under the Myoporum tree line was also problematic. It was clarified that a Chumash Ap or dome-shaped structure made of willows and tules was not as desirable as a Tomol House at West Beach. Representatives from the Chumash and Outriggers provided more detailed drawings of a Tomol House and a Hale (see Section VI).

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## V. West Beach Planning Study Draft Alternatives (Nov. 2009)

One of the goals of the West Beach Planning Study is to maintain a balance of appropriate uses for residents, visitors and the stakeholder groups in the limited area that is West Beach. Public input has been valuable to determine what might be appropriate at West Beach given the policy directives of the City and Coastal Commission. Two alternatives were presented in the West Beach Planning Study in November 2009 for comment and consideration prior to formulating a recommendation for review by the City Council and possibly the Coastal Commission in 2010 (see Section VI).

### **Alternative A (see Appendix D-1)**

This alternative would keep the dredge yard in its usual location and the small boat storage condos would be reconfigured around the dredge yard to help shield it. Masted boats would be stored on the north and east side of the yard. If the condos could not easily be moved, the dredge yard could be moved into the space behind the condos (where the masted boats are stored at present). The fencing would need to be shortened from 102' in length to about 90' to fit behind the current condo configuration.

Under this alternative the outrigger storage area would be upgraded with a standardized rack and storage box design, regrading the sand to fix the drop off to the "ideal beach configuration" per existing City permits, installing water and/or electrical lines (including lines for the outrigger area closer to Stearns Wharf), landscaping and additional seating along Rock Groin, etc.

Educational elements would be added to the West Beach area. These elements would describe things such as: the City's maritime history, the importance of commercial fishing to the Harbor, the history of outrigger canoeing, the 60-year history of the Seashells, the maritime culture of the Chumash, the safety of the water quality for swimming at West Beach, and the natural resources of the area, especially the habitat of the Western snowy plover.

### **Implementation of Alternative A**

1. **Upgrade of the outrigger storage area** – This action would require the development of guidelines showing the desired appearance of the outrigger storage boxes and racks. Depending on whether the City were to provide the racks and boxes or the permittees would provide them to the City's specifications, the current permit fee might have to be revised.
2. **Relocation of dredge storage yard and condos** – Coastal Development Permits would likely be required to relocate the dredge storage yard and Seashell condos, if proposed, as well as to upgrade the outrigger storage areas. The Coastal Commission may retain original permit jurisdiction over some of this geographic area (e.g., the outrigger storage area) and may have to approve the proposals.
3. **Signage** - The educational and interpretive signage program would require City approval.

This alternative would be relatively inexpensive and easy to implement.

## **Alternative B (see Appendix D-1)**

This Alternative would relocate the dredge south of its current location, such that its northern end would be even with the boat launch. Open boat storage of sailboats, kayaks, and/or outriggers would be located to the east and west of the yard to shield it. The Seashell condos would remain at their current location with open boat storage on their east side. The appearance of the condos would be upgraded. Motion sensor lighting could be considered with small solar panels placed on the condo roofs. If the three condos closest to Cabrillo Boulevard could be moved behind the other five condos, this look would consolidate the area, one of the concerns mentioned by the Coastal Commission Staff. The condo doors would open to the east. This would open up the view corridor from that corner area along Cabrillo/Bath Streets looking south and east towards the ocean.

The major new design elements of Alternative B would include an open-sided outrigger Hale and/or a Chumash Tomol House located near the corner area, but on the sand by Cabrillo/Bath Streets. These elements are described below:

- **Outrigger storage or Hale** – There is a definite interest in improving outrigger storage including providing covered storage and some shade for meetings and gatherings. A “Hale”, as shown in Photo 13 and Figures 4 and 5 in the next section, is often used by outrigger clubs to provide shade and store outriggers as well as for meeting space. These structures have a roof and support columns but no walls. The open-sided structure would house up to six outriggers and would have small paddle storage box(es). This structure would allow outrigger clubs to have a year-round program, including being able to hold meetings in the Hale.
- **Tomol House or Ap** (see Figures 5 - 7 in the next section) - A tomol (canoe) house at West Beach, near the Cabrillo seawall and sidewalk leading to the Rock Groin, would provide an authentic maritime structure for viewing at all times and would allow for community interaction when the Chumash were there. The design of the structure would be similar to an upside down tomol. Its size is estimated to be 30 feet x 79 feet and would house up to three tomols. The tomol house would have redwood or Red cedar sides and translucent panels in the ceiling to allow light to penetrate into the open-sided structure. The intent is that the structure would provide opportunities for many cultures to visit Santa Barbara and would tie into the 20’ diameter story circle tile mosaic on the new sidewalk as part of the WBPIP (see Photo 3). The Chumash would hold educational programs year-round, offer a “living museum” for Tomol construction, harbor launching of tomols and channel crossings.

Alternative B also included planting of native types of coastal grasses between the multi-modal path and the Cabrillo seawall. Once established, this vegetation would help to keep sand off of the multi-modal path and reduce maintenance for the Parks and Recreation Department. This was a popular idea amongst the stakeholders and a suggestion from the Coastal Commission Staff, but is not desirable for Parks and Recreation Department budgeting issues.

Finally, Alternative B would also include the upgraded outrigger storage area, relocation of boats and canoes to shield the dredge storage yard and educational components as described in Alternative A.

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### **Comments received on West Beach Planning Study Draft Alternatives A and B (November 2009)**

There was a Joint Session of the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission on November 12, 2009 (see Appendix D-2) followed by the Harbor Commission on November 19, 2009 (see Appendix D-3).

The Planning and Parks and Recreation Commissioners offered the following comments:

- Alternative A has a softer touch and would not involve an LCP Amendment
- Concealing the dredge with the Seashell condos would help conceal the industrial look of the area
- If cost was not a concern, some liked Alternative B
- A phased approach was supported by many
- Others felt any new structures on the beach would not be appropriate and the City should not take on any new maintenance costs
- Some felt any new structures should be open at all times
- Putting up story poles would help people visualize the potential impacts to the views
- There was general support for improving access to other facilities in the study area and beyond
- In general, comments were split 3 for Alternative A; 4 for Alternative B; 1 for no new project

The Harbor Commissioners offered the following comments:

- Some concern that a Hale would look artificially transplanted
- Serious concerns over potential costs to the Harbor Department's budget, but more people in the area could lead to more revenue
- Dredge storage yard could be hidden with the Seashell condos, but it is an important part of a working harbor
- Signage is very important, especially to educate people about the birds in this area and the maritime culture
- Some consider this to be an opportunity to improve the aesthetics of the area and attract more people
- Concern raised about potential for flooding up to the seawall
- Concern about blocking views with additional structures
- Native plantings could be more than just grass and could be an educational tool
- In general, comments were split 2 for Alternative A; 3 for Alternative B

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## VI. Phased Implementation Plan

After the Harbor, Planning and Parks and Recreation Commissions reviewed the draft study in November 2009, additional meetings were held with City Staff from the Waterfront, Redevelopment, Planning, and Parks and Recreation Departments. In addition, three key stakeholder groups continued an active dialogue with the consultants including representatives of the Santa Barbara Outrigger Canoe Club (SBOCC), local Chumash representatives, and the Santa Barbara Seashell Association (SBSSA)<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of these meetings was to reflect on the comments received and revise the alternatives accordingly, as well as to explore the pros and cons of each prior to inclusion in the *Final West Beach Study*.

After meeting with City Staff and these stakeholders, it is recommended that a Phased Implementation Plan be considered as shown in Figure 2. Phase I includes relocation and upgrading of existing uses and facilities. Phase II includes one or two new open-sided structures for primary use by local non-profit organizations who already have a presence at the beach. Note that this study is not recommending one phase over the other but is intended to address public and City Commission comments on two phased options that could be pursued in the future.

### **Phase I Proposal**

This phase would keep the dredge yard in the location where it was previously located (near the Rock Groin and Boat Launch Ramp) and where it is expected to be positioned when the new dredge contract is approved and implemented this fall. The small boat storage condos may stay in their current location or they could be reconfigured around the dredge yard to help shield it. Regardless, masted boats would be stored on the north and east side of the yard to shield the dredge yard from Cabrillo Boulevard and Stearns Wharf. This proposal is very similar to Alternative A discussed in the previous section.

If the condos could not easily be moved, the dredge yard could be moved into the space behind the condos (where the masted boats are stored at present). The fencing would need to be shortened from 100 foot in length to about 90 feet to fit behind the current condo configuration. The intent is to provide access to the dredge yard gate while concealing the other three sides of the yard from public view as much as possible.

The outrigger storage area would be upgraded with a standardized rack and storage box design, regrading the sand to fix the drop off to the "ideal beach configuration" per existing permits, landscaping and additional seating along Rock Groin and, if possible, installing water and/or electrical lines (including lines for the outrigger area closer to Stearns Wharf).

Educational elements would be added to the West Beach area. These elements would describe things such as: the City's maritime history, the importance of commercial fishing to the Harbor, the history of outrigger canoeing, the 60-year history of the Seashells, the maritime culture of the Chumash, the safety of the water quality for swimming at West Beach, and the natural resources of the area, especially the habitat of the Western snowy plover.

### **Implementation of Phase I Proposal:**

The Phase I proposal is shown in Figure 2 and described below.

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<sup>2</sup> During winter/spring 2010, Seashell Association volunteers have made improvements to the appearance of the Seashell condos. They have been repaired with new doors and painted a consistent shade of green (see Photo 5 in Section III). The area has been weeded and storage racks built for some of the masted boats stored behind the condos.

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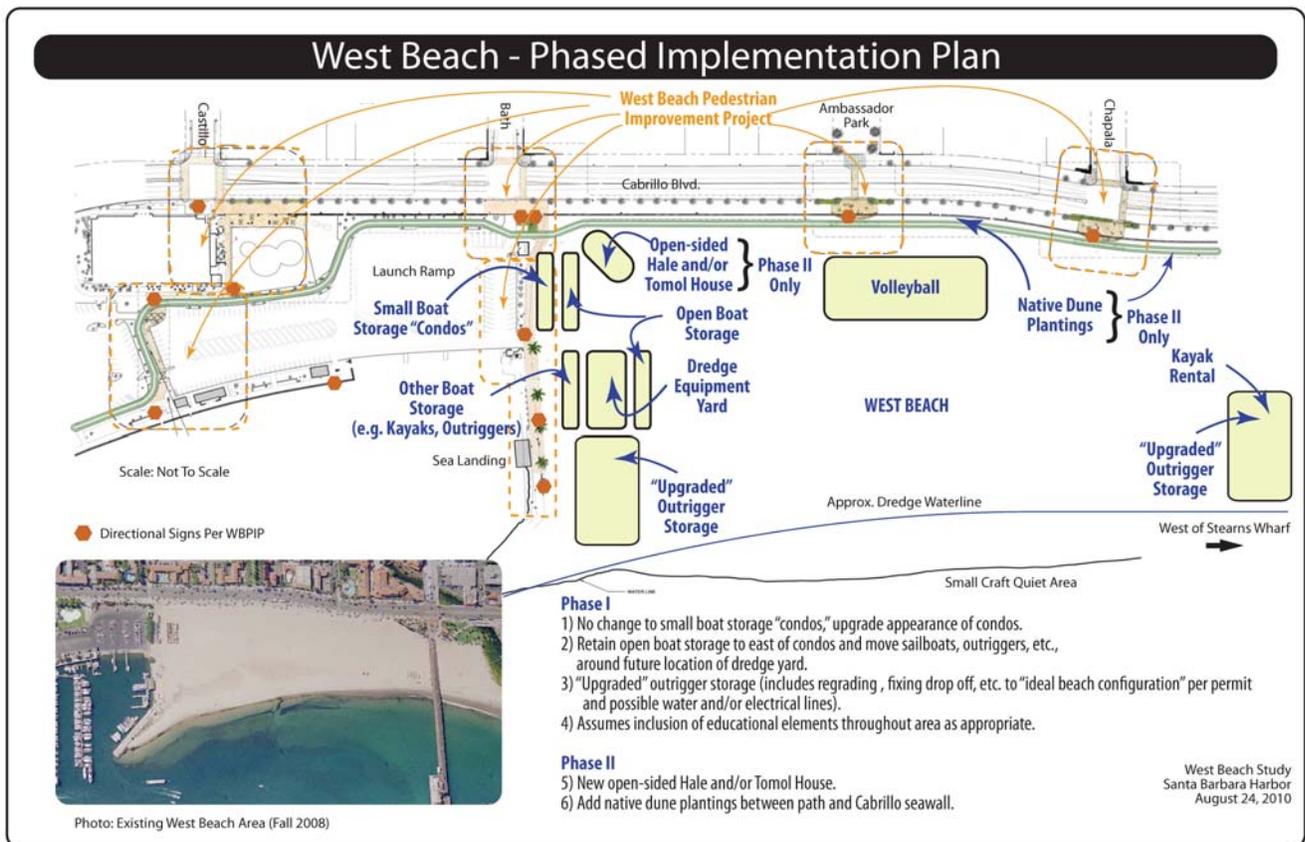


Figure 2 - Phased Implementation Plan

1. **Outrigger storage area** - Improvements to the outrigger storage area including standardized rack design with Waterfront control over the location of racks and the number of canoes per rack, standardized storage box design, improved sand grade next to the sidewalk leading out to the Rock Groin and a metered water line with a fee system.
2. **Rock Groin** - Landscaping and seating improvements in this area.
3. **Improved security** - Installation of motion sensor lighting in the dredge storage yard/Seashell condo area to discourage vandalism and transient use
4. **Increased coordination** - Consideration of a cross-marketing Arts and Crafts Show effort between the Hotel and Restaurant Association and the Arts and Crafts Show Board
5. **Establishment of an Ad Hoc West Beach Advisory Committee** – Interested stakeholders (e.g., SBOCC, Chumash, SBSSA, etc.) could work together on West Beach issues and report to the Harbor and Parks and Recreation Commissions who would each have a liaison on the committee. Depending on the issue under discussion and budgetary constraints, City staff from the Waterfront, Parks and Recreation or other departments may be participants.
6. **Seasonal rentals** - Seasonal rental contract for beach amenities, e.g., chairs, boogie boards, kayaks, refreshments, etc. that comes and goes on a trailer.
7. **Dredge storage area** - Consider a nicer dredge storage yard fence, similar to the wood on the Seashell condos. Shift some small boat storage to the area adjacent to the dredge yard fence to further conceal the yard from view from Stearns Wharf, Cabrillo Boulevard and West Beach.

### Pros

- Consistent with Coastal Act, LCP and HMP policies
- Low budget
- Relatively easy to implement from a process standpoint

### Cons

- New landscaping along the Rock Groin could be periodically wiped out by powerful southeastern storms
- Motion sensors for beach lighting to discourage vandalism and transient use could cause bird habitat to be compromised
- While the appearance of the area would be improved, these changes are probably not significant enough to meet initial goals of this study which is to improve the appearance of West Beach and entice more people into the area.

## **Phase II Proposal**

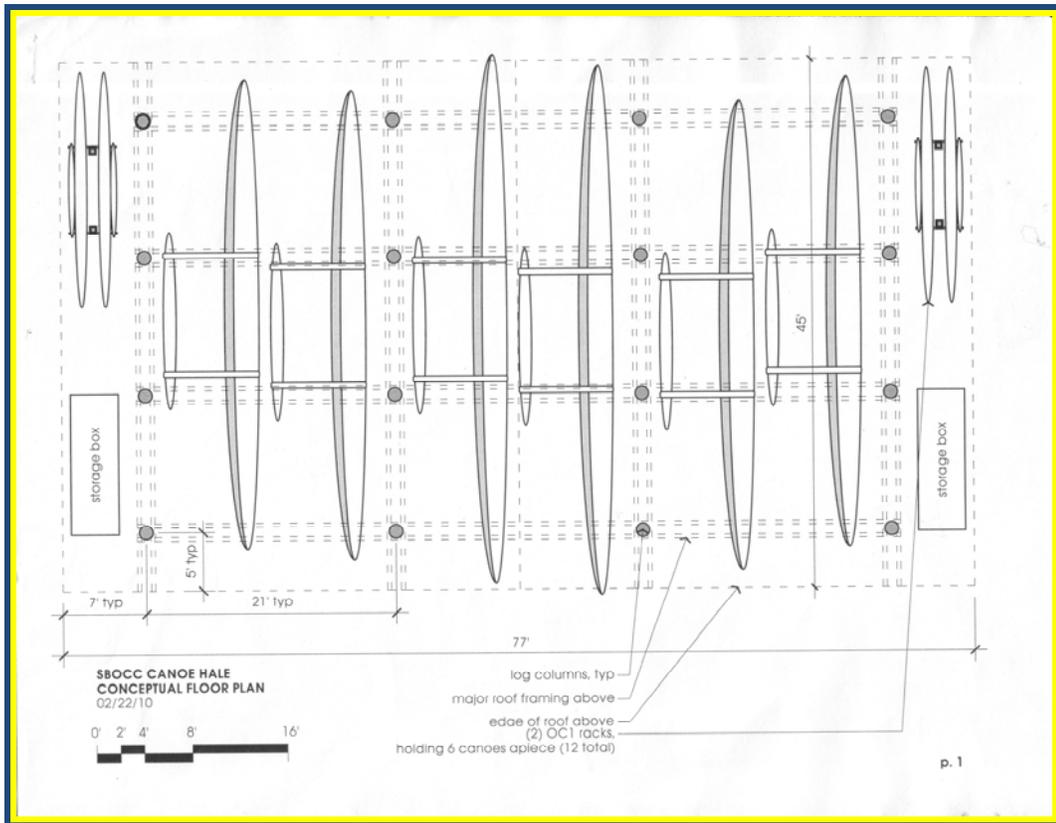
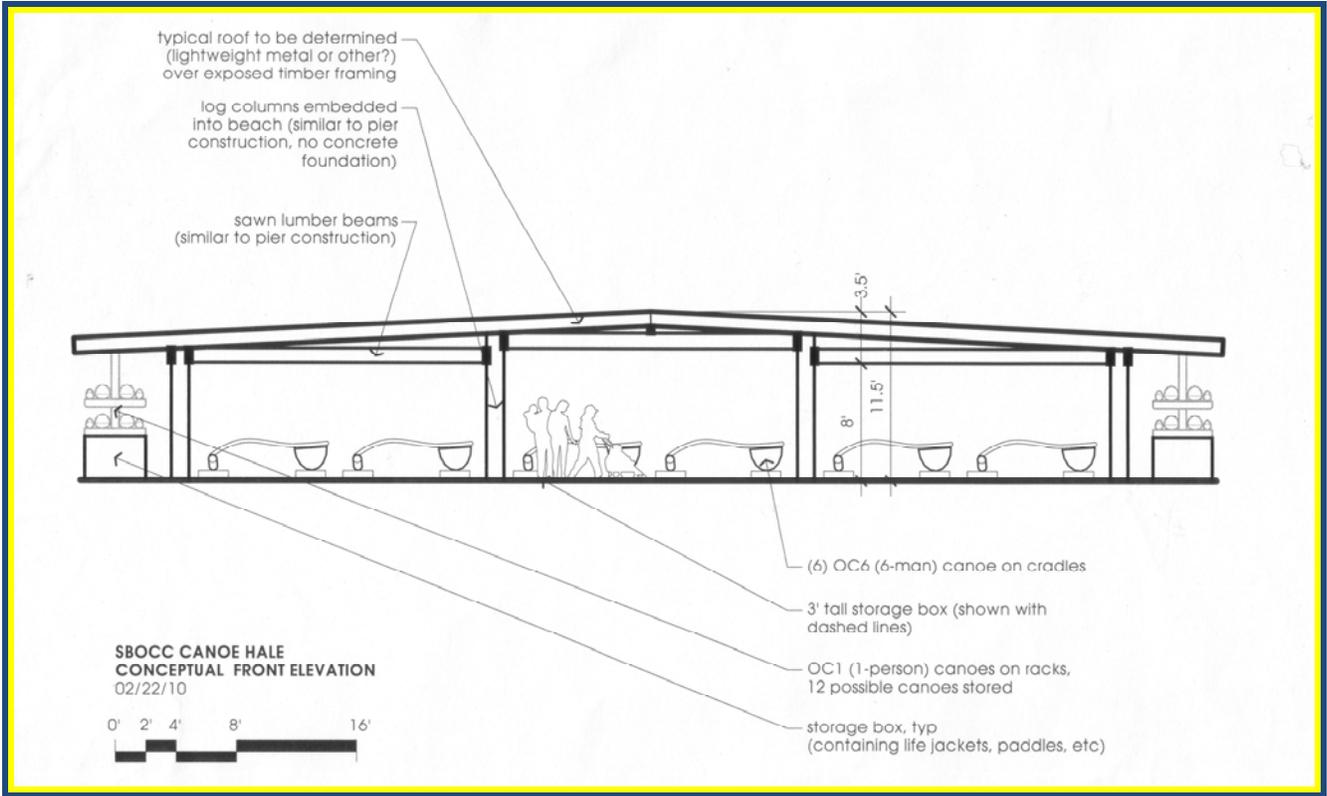
Phase II builds on Phase I and includes one or two new open-sided structures as described below. The proposal is very similar to Alternative B described in the previous section:

- **Outrigger storage or Hale** – There is a definite interest in improving outrigger storage including providing covered storage and some shade for meetings and gatherings. A “Hale”, as shown in Photo 13 and Figures 3 and 4 below, is often used by outrigger clubs to provide shade and store outriggers as well as for meeting space. These structures have a roof and support columns but no walls or floor. A Hale would be open beam construction approximately 75’ x 50’ and would house six outrigger canoes. There could be a small solar panel option to provide low light security at night. This idea would essentially be a one for one trade of some of the Santa Barbara Outrigger Canoe Club canoes located on the sand further down the beach. The Hale would also have two paddle storage boxes. The Hale structure would protect their equipment from the elements and would enable them to offer a year-round program rather than needing to trailer their canoes to a storage facility from November to February. Photo 13 and Figures 4 and 5 illustrate a typical outrigger hale configuration and appearance.

Appendix E-1 includes a more detailed description of the Santa Barbara Outrigger Canoe Club’s proposal described in this study.



**Photo 13 - Outrigger Canoe Hale – Maui, Hawaii**



Figures 3 and 4 - SBOCC Canoe Hale Section and Conceptual Floor Plan

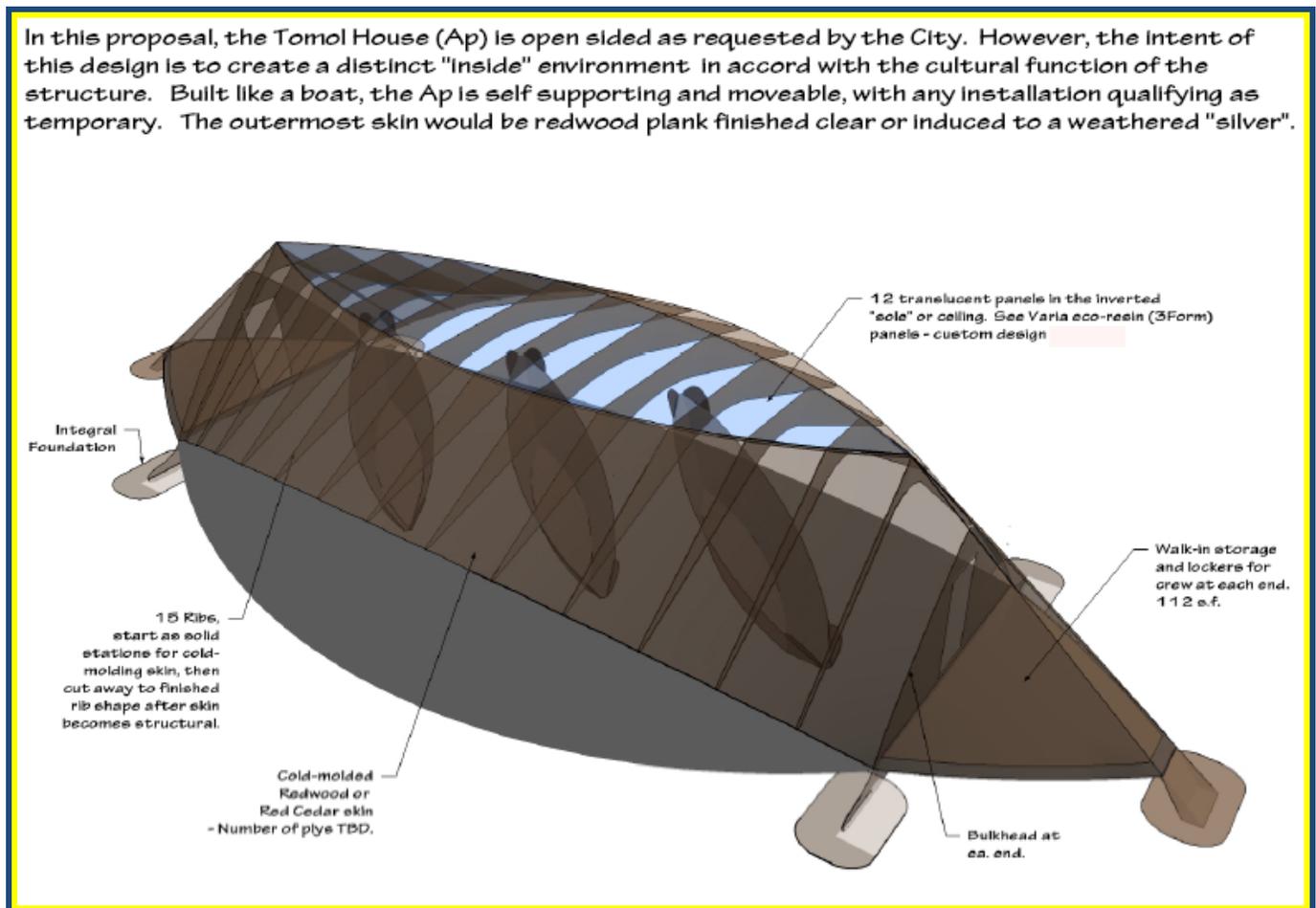
- **Tomol House or Ap** - A tomol (canoe) house at West Beach, near the Cabrillo seawall and sidewalk leading to the Rock Groin, would provide an authentic maritime structure for viewing at all times and would allow for community interaction when the Chumash were there. The design of the structure would be similar to an upside down tomol. Its size is estimated to be 30 feet x 79 feet and would house up to three tomols. The tomol house would have redwood or Red cedar sides and translucent panels in the ceiling to allow light to penetrate into the open-sided structure. The intent is that the structure would provide opportunities for many cultures to visit Santa Barbara and would tie into the 20' diameter story circle tile mosaic on the new sidewalk as part of the WBPIP (see Photo 3). The Chumash would hold educational programs year-round, offer a "living museum" for Tomol construction, harbor of tomols and channel crossings.

Appendix E-2 includes additional drawings of the Ap.



**Photo 14 – Tomol at Nicholas Canyon in Malibu**

Photo Courtesy of Bryan Thomson



**Figure 5 - Descriptive View of Tomol House Concept**

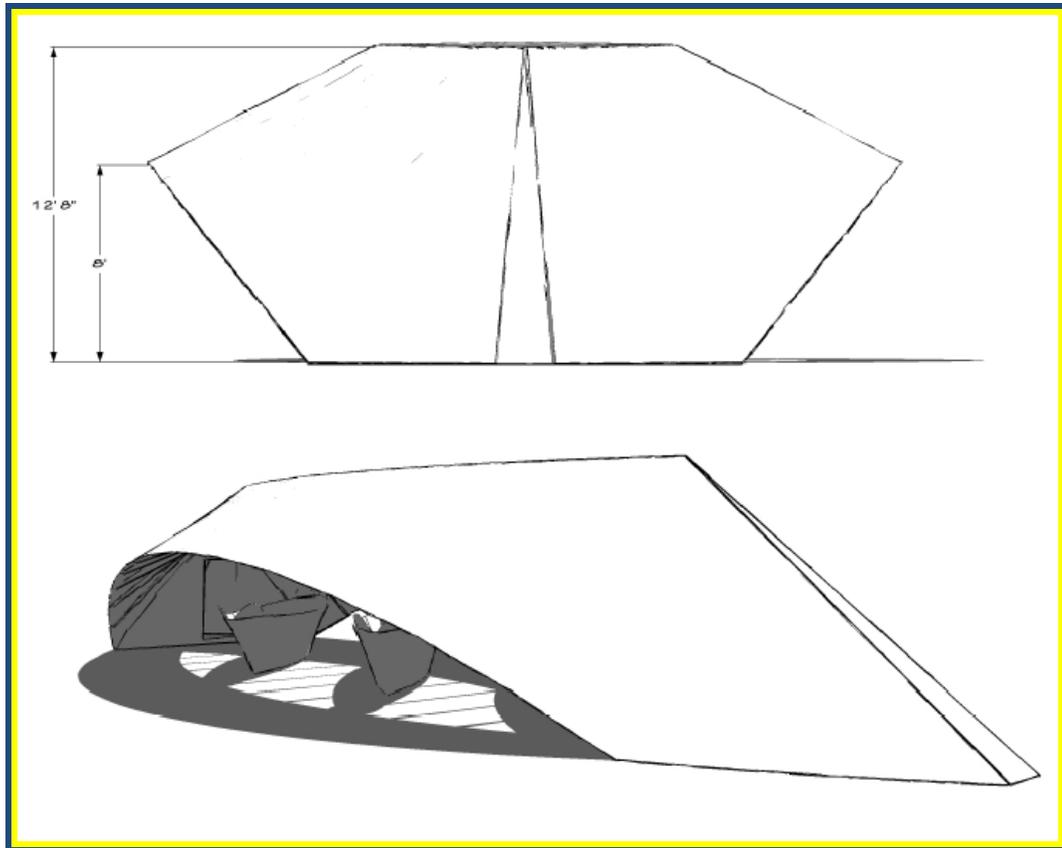


Figure 6 – End View of Ap or Tomol House

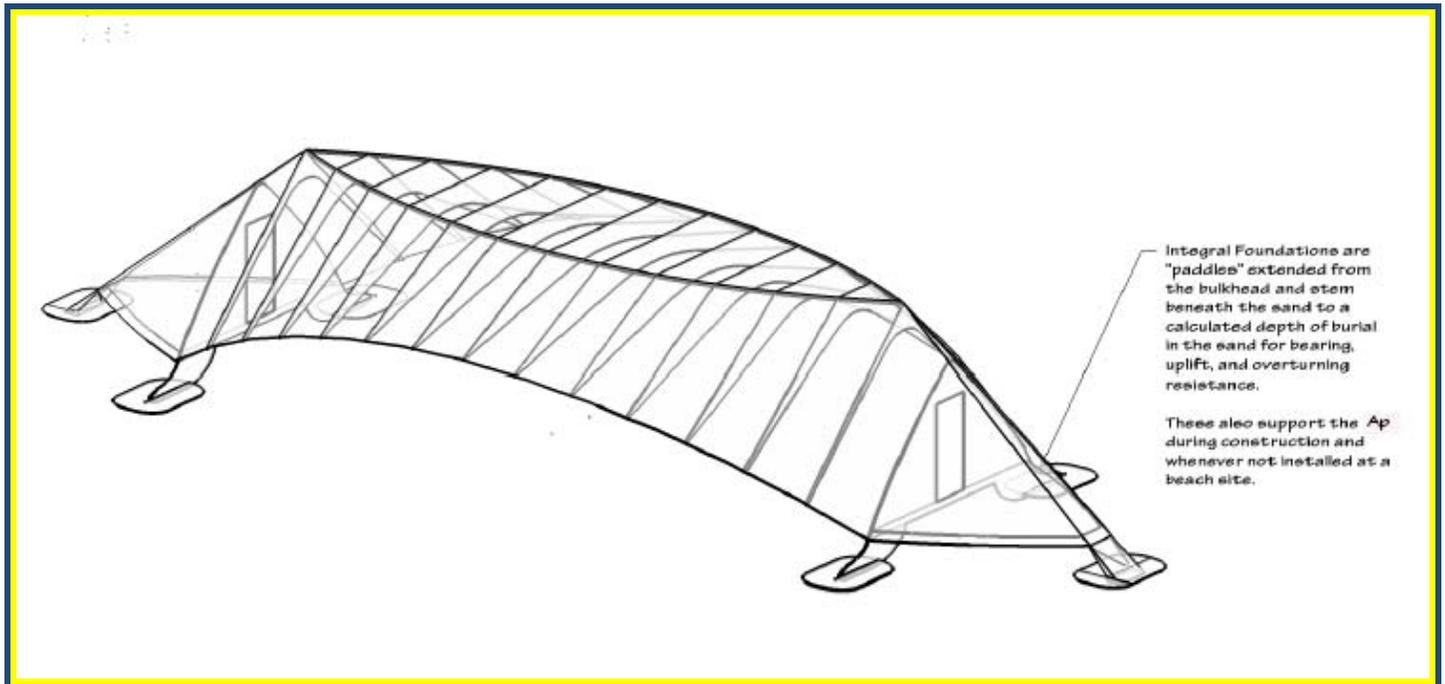


Figure 7 – Foundation Proposal for Temporary Structure

Phase II would also include planting of native types of coastal grasses between the multi-modal path and the Cabrillo seawall. Once established, this vegetation would help to keep sand off of the multi-modal path and reduce maintenance for the Parks and Recreation Department. This was a popular idea among the stakeholders and a suggestion from the Coastal Commission Staff, but is potentially problematic for Parks and Recreation staff due to budgeting issues.

The **Phase II Implementation Plan** would include:

- **Phase I improvements** - All the elements described in Phase I
- **New open-sided structures between Seashell Condos and Cabrillo Boulevard** – Approval and construction of an outrigger Hale and/or a Tomol House for use by those groups as well as the public. The new structures would include educational interpretive elements
- **Seashell condos** – Upgrade and/or rebuilding of the Seashell condos to improve their appearance
- **Native dune grasses and plants** - Native dune grasses or other plants in sandy area between the multi-modal path and the seawall along Cabrillo Boulevard

## Pros

New Hale structure:

- Hale structure poles would be similar to installing fence posts without a concrete pad. “Floor” of structures would be sand
- SBOCC would be responsible for construction and maintenance with a long-term City lease and/or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) <sup>3</sup>
- A differential permit fee system could be developed for canoes stored in the Hale versus those stored on the beach to help defray costs
- Hale could be rented for other types of events through a SBOCC (or other participating non-profit group) administered reservation system (limited to a City approved number of days and events per year; e.g., July 4, weddings, regattas, etc.) which could result in revenue for the City
- SBOCC proposes to have at-risk youth help with construction of the Hale (Labor Code with regard to volunteer labor would need to be researched by City Attorney)
- Minimal fencing could be installed around the Hale and be painted a sand color
- Educational signage describing the history and culture of outrigger canoes could be designed into the Hale
- Moving the existing outriggers stored on the beach would allow for more boat storage near the Rock Groin (Note – some also see this as a negative)

New Tomol House structure:

- Tomol House could demonstrate paddle making, tomol construction with traditional tools (no power tools), etc.
- Chumash could take people out in the tomols and sponsor a summer camp(s)

<sup>3</sup> Examples include the SB Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center which is leased from the Waterfront Department for a nominal percentage rent. The Chamber is responsible for all maintenance. The adjacent public restrooms were a gift from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Waterfront Department in 2009 and are now the Waterfront’s responsibility to maintain. Other examples of City leases in the Waterfront area include: Ty Warner Sea Center, SB Yacht Club, SB Youth Foundation docks, CUDA docks, etc.

New native landscaping and improvements to Seashell condos:

- New landscaping along multi-modal path and upgrades to the Seashell condos would improve the aesthetics of West Beach.

## Cons

New Hale and/or Tomol House structure(s):

- If SBOCC canoes were moved into a Hale, other canoes may want to take the space they occupy now, resulting in a net increase of canoes and activity in the area (Note – some see this as a positive attribute)
- Other City leased facilities have not always worked out as planned with non-profit groups, i.e., while the intent has been to have the non-profit shoulder all the responsibility, maintenance, construction costs, administration, etc., that has not always been the case and the City, with very limited resources, has had to take over these responsibilities
- Concerns about conflict with Coastal Act and LCP policies relative to private versus public use of a public beach
- Given the Coastal Commission's concern about loss of the sandy beach, the approval process for one or two new structures would be difficult
- In addition to requiring Coastal Commission approval of new structures, there are City ordinances that would likely need to be amended to allow new structures (see below)
- The current location of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks show requires a 300' clear zone and that may conflict with the possible location of the structure(s).

New native landscaping and improvements to Seashell condos:

- New landscaping along multi-modal path would create maintenance/budgetary issues for Parks and Recreation Department. If this landscaping were approved and installed, long-term funding would also need to be provided to cover maintenance costs.

## Required planning process to approve new structures on the beach (Phase II only):

Current City ordinances and policies restrict the types of structures that can be located on the sandy beach. Several of these would require amendments to accommodate the outrigger Hale and Tomol House included in Phase II. In addition to requiring approval of ordinance and policy amendments by a supermajority of City Council members (5 of 7 members), the California Coastal Commission would need to approve most of these amendments. The Coastal Commission would also need to approve the Coastal Development Permit as they retain permanent jurisdiction over the sandy beach in Santa Barbara. The quasi-public nature of the two structures may be an issue in the approval process. The amendments and approval would likely include the following:

- 1. Parks and Recreation ordinance amendments** – There is at least one section of the Parks and Recreation ordinance (described in Section II) that may need to be amended if new structures are proposed on the beach. Section 15.16.110 prohibits structures except restrooms and lifeguard towers on the beach. The PR Zone defines "Beach" as areas that provide access to the ocean and sand for passive and active recreation. A determination may need to be made whether new outrigger hale and/or tomol structures would meet that definition or whether an amendment might be necessary.
- 2. Coastal Development Permits** – CDPs would likely be required for any new structures (e.g., new outrigger Hale and/or Tomol House), for the relocation of the storage yard and Seashell condos, if proposed, as well as to upgrade the outrigger storage areas. The use of story

poles to delineate the size and location of any proposed structures has been suggested as part of the approval process. The Coastal Commission may retain original permit jurisdiction over some of this geographic area (e.g., the outrigger storage area) and may have to approve the proposals.

3. **Possible Harbor Master Plan and Local Coastal Plan amendments** – Depending on the scope and specifics of the proposal(s), the placement of one or two new structures could require amendments to both the HMP and LCP. The educational and ocean-dependent recreational aspects of these structures would need to be weighed against policies relating to visual and natural resources, recreation, access to the shoreline, exposure to risk from wave run up, etc.
4. **Historic Landmarks Commission** – HLC approval would likely be required for most of these improvements.
5. **Signage** - The educational and interpretive signage program would require approval by the Sign Committee.

Depending on the scope of the proposal(s), review of proposed policy and ordinance amendments and Coastal Development Permits may also be required by the following boards, commissions and committees:

- Architectural Board of Review
- California Coastal Commission
- City Council
- Harbor Commission
- Historic Landmarks Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Staff Policy Review Committee

Environmental review would also be required and would be expected to include review of technical studies as required.

### **Additional Implementation Recommendations (programmatic types of changes where more study is needed)**

In the many stakeholder meetings held to discuss West Beach, additional ideas were presented that are presented here for future consideration:

- **Public restrooms** - Expand restroom options in the West Beach vicinity
- **Beach-related rentals** - Create a limited commercial area in the vicinity of Sea Landing with vendor(s) who rents beach chairs, umbrellas, boogie boards, paddle boards, kayaks, etc. and sells limited food and beverages for beach goers.
- **Boat launch ramp** - Improve the safety of the boat launch area for pedestrians.

#### **Outside of immediate West Beach area:**

- **Provide additional public programs to draw people to area**
  - Develop a “First Something” Program (similar to the First Thursdays Program in the City’s Downtown) for the West Beach and Harbor area in conjunction with the Harbor Merchants

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- Association and the West Beach Hotel and Restaurant Owners Association.
  - Coordinate new public programs with a farmer's market and fresh fish market concept
  - Extend or expand the arts and crafts show to include West Beach on a more regular basis
  - **Plaza del Mar** - Regenerate interest in the City's Plaza del Mar Park at Cabrillo and Castillo Streets – consider summer concerts, dancing in the park, local restaurant booths to attract locals and visitors
  - **Improved signage** - Consider expanding the signage program to include linkages between West Beach, Rock Groin, Plaza Del Mar Park, Pershing Park and the Carriage Museum
  - **Wading pool area** - Study the wading pool area to better serve residents and visitors as it is open only a few weeks a year; consider the idea of a "splash park" concept which Parks and Recreation supports as it would likely allow the facility to be used year-round for drop-in, non-supervised use.

## **Conclusion**

Over the years many people have expressed interest, support and concern about the future of West Beach. Comments made during the development of the Local Coastal Plan in the early 1980s, the Harbor Master Plan in the 1990s and during the West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project process in 2005 and 2006 are consistent with the comments made during this planning study process about West Beach. The Phased Implementation Plan, along with the additional recommendations mentioned above, appear to be generally consistent with coastal plans and policies, although the process to garner approval of any new structures on the sandy beach is a daunting one.

City staff and public members are interested in hearing City Council feedback on the two phases discussed in this study. If Council is interested in pursuing one or both phases, additional studies and coordination would be required.

One suggestion was that the City Council could approve the Phase I Implementation Plan in concept for the purposes of preparing an application package for local and Coastal Commission review. As noted in this study, these improvements are inexpensive and would be fairly easy to achieve.

After the Phase I improvements have been implemented, possibly in conjunction with programmatic changes that would increase use of the West Beach area, then consideration could be given to studying the Phase II improvements. The process to implement Phase II is expected to be somewhat lengthy and more costly than the implementation of Phase I. Careful consideration of new quasi-public structure(s) on the beach would need to be done including the technical studies and agreements relating to construction, administration and maintenance of the structures for the benefit of the public.

Ultimately, implementation of some or all of these improvements is expected to invigorate West Beach and increase public use of the area as originally intended when this study began. The Phase I improvements would be fairly easy to achieve but would not be expected to increase use of the area to a significant degree. The Phase II improvements would definitely increase use and interest in the area, but would also be more difficult and expensive to achieve.