

City of San Clemente Master Plan for Beach Restrooms

Maintenance and Upgrade Strategy



CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE

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Authored by: Beaches, Parks and Recreation Department, Appendix by Community Development, Engineering



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Introduction

Public restrooms are often a measure people use to determine their perception of a city. The impression one gains entering a well designed, well maintained, bright and clean facility, rather than a dark and unappealing one, is significant. With over two million visitors to our beaches each year, our six beach/pier restroom facilities are well worn and showing signs of deterioration. The City Council requested staff prepare a Master Plan for the beach restroom facilities during the June 1, 2010 meeting. This Plan identifies both long and short term maintenance upgrades, including ways to move toward compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and provides better aesthetics for our civic buildings.

Existing Conditions

The six existing restrooms are referred to by their location and include: North Beach Restroom, Linda Lane Restroom, Pier Base Restroom, End of Pier Restroom, "T" Street Restroom, and Boca Del Canon Restroom. These restrooms were originally designed to serve Beach use only; however, with the success of the Beach Trail, these are now serving a whole new user group, shifting from primarily summer use to year-round use. With the exception of North Beach and End of Pier Restrooms, each facility is constructed of "slump block" concrete units with wood framing and composite roofs. The color has evolved from light beige with brown trim to a darker sienna color with dark brown trim. A specific architectural style is difficult to categorize. North Beach Restroom is a contemporary Spanish style while the End of Pier is a wood-sided cottage style to its construction, with white siding and blue trim. It should be noted that the restroom architecture in the Architectural Overlay Areas, (Pier and North Beach) do not follow the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The interiors are quite utilitarian and have unfinished concrete floors, beige painted walls, some stalls have doors and some do not. Fixtures are penal type stainless steel, some with seats and some without. This style is typical of older facilities that were designed for maximum durability and ease of maintenance. Most of the facilities are designed with an interior shower (of which only one location had working plumbing), and a large changing area. The shower/changing areas appear to be little used. Most restrooms have been modified to have showers located outdoors, and the indoor shower fixtures have been abandoned.



Since the facilities were constructed, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) has new requirements. City Building Division staff conducted an “Accessibility Compliance Assessment” of the existing restrooms and identified a number of retrofits and improvements that are required to be compliant with current standards. Copies of these assessments are provided as attachments to this report. In general, the report identifies that many existing fixtures need to be relocated to provide appropriate heights for use and clearances; grab bars should be added; some areas do not have sufficient width between walls to provide access for wheelchairs; and, often, not enough space is provided for handicap access if doors are installed; signage is missing, and trashcans have been placed in locations that impede access.

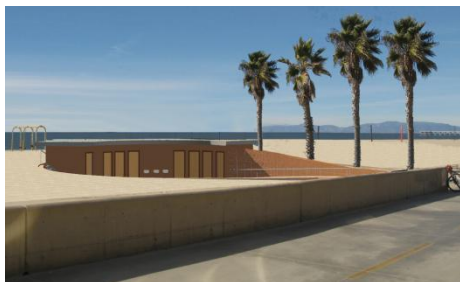
In addition to the ADA retrofits, there are signs of structural deterioration. The wood members of the overheads and roof supports show signs of deterioration and dry rot, and there is cracking along the joint of the concrete blocks causing heaving of portions of the walls. The foundations appear to be intact with little significant cracking, however, the movement of sand does create challenges in maintaining access to stairs and entries. Although a minor cost of approximately \$9,000 per year, the service to provide Sanitizing and Deodorizing has been cut due to budget constraints. This reduction may become more apparent as the summer heat increases and will be monitored by staff. It should be noted that the replacement of this service would assist in providing better restroom conditions.

As each of these buildings is located on the beach, work may require review and permitting by the Coastal Commission. One of the largest issues staff may have to deal with is the potential that the Coastal Commission requirements may limit our options for building any new facilities, and may restrict retrofitting and improving existing facilities.

Trends

Some cities such as Huntington Beach and Redondo Beach have built new facilities that are a group of small single person rooms rather than a shared room with many stalls. These are intended to reduce issues related to lack of privacy, use for sleeping, and walking in on inappropriate activity in restrooms. In addition, the single stall restrooms allow for no significant down time for cleaning. Currently, the entire restroom building is closed during cleaning, requiring patrons to walk to another site. With the single person rooms, others remain open while one is being cleaned so that the entire building is not shut down at one time. The use of family restrooms has become popular as well. These are larger stalls that allow for Moms or Dads and kids to access one stall at the same time. Most new facilities are also installing baby changing tables as part of the typical furnishings. These fold out tables are installed in both Men’s and Women’s restrooms to allow babies to be changed in a clean environment.

Some larger cities have begun to provide coin operated pay toilets that are only accessible with payment. This type of approach is often used to deal with persons who use the public toilets as places to sleep, and limiting access is a way of deterring that use. These issues are challenges for many cities, but luckily have not been significant here in San Clemente.



Hermosa Beach single person style



Coin operated restroom

The use of restroom style and color is also used in some cities as a way of identifying one's location in the city. The City of San Antonio Texas has been successful in using attractive colored tiles and murals on both the interior and exteriors of their restrooms to relate to the different areas of the historic River Walk. City of Los Angeles has used a different band of colored tile to tie public restroom design into the corresponding light rail stop it is near. Each of these uses of color contribute to "Way finding", as it assists users in knowing what section of town they are in. In addition, there is thought that this differentiation also provides for better emergency response, as persons in distress can identify their location as, "near the blue bathrooms" or, "by the River mural" since these facilities are often not addressed. Interestingly, restroom design and user experience has become the topic of some discussion on internet blogs and websites. At present, there are websites noting the best restrooms in certain cities, and even a site to cast your vote for the best restroom the in United States.

Recommendations

Given the deteriorated condition of wood members, the need to retrofit existing plumbing fixtures to meet current ADA requirements, and the lack of remarkable architectural style, demolition and reconstruction may be the most desirable solution for some of our restrooms. However, the location on the beach adds significant constraints that must be considered. New requirements from the Coastal Commission may not allow the reconstruction of new buildings even if at the same location. The potential of losing the ability to provide restrooms at these beach locations would be a significant loss for the City. City staff will be meeting with Coastal Commission staff in the near future and will discuss the potential risk of non-replacement should buildings be demolished. In addition, if new buildings were allowed to be constructed, they may also be required to be built on piers rather than the concrete foundations our existing building sit on. If this is the case, it may potentially double the cost of building a new restroom.

Staff will pursue the option of potential replacement with a newly built or prefabricated restroom with the Coastal Commission. However, not all of the six restrooms are in need of extensive structural retrofit. The restrooms at Base of Pier and North Beach appear to be in the best condition, and staff would recommend that the Base of Pier restroom be prioritized first for upgrade due to the high use and visibility. Focusing upgrades to this restroom will serve the greatest users and provide more attractive facilities in the Pier Bowl area. This would allow improvements to go forward while staff researches Coastal Commission requirements for those buildings with larger structural issues to address.

General Recommendations for all facilities

In addition to the phased recommendations, there are a number of general recommendations that apply to all of the facilities as discussed below:

Maintenance - While the current levels of daily maintenance for cleaning is prioritized for funding, it appears there has not been a regular cycle for maintaining the structure itself, and protecting the public investment in the facilities. There are signs of deterioration at each of the facilities, including rust, water damage, wood rot, missing overhead members, etc. Staff recommends that a policy of, "Only minor visible signs of deterioration permitted," be adopted for our facilities. This would require a higher funding of facility repairs; however, this on-going replacement of broken or damaged items, scheduled painting, reroofing, and maintenance would reduce the potential of long-term replacement costs and protect the public investment of civic facilities. Unfortunately, instead of doing minor repairs each year and spreading the costs out, staff is now looking at the need for major upgrades to all of our restrooms which would be best done at this time; however, funding to that magnitude is most likely not available, and items of

work will need to be prioritized for a multi-year approach. Once the restrooms are brought up to acceptable conditions, it will be important to maintain those upgrades by funding on-going repairs as they become needed rather than allow the deterioration that we have now. A funding level of approximately \$50,000 per year should be allocated for maintenance of the Beach facilities. This will be part of a larger maintenance strategy city-wide for all facilities; however, for purposes of this report, a funding level of \$50,000 per year should be considered as part of Phase Three for these facilities. The current standards established for maintenance is a level “C” in an “A” through “F” criteria. While the daily maintenance does meet this, staff believes the long-term maintenance with the visible signs of deterioration is below a “C” average standard.

Fixtures – Currently, the fixtures are of the most utilitarian design and are not considered attractive, In addition, their age and condition make them even less appealing. However, stainless steel is the best material available for public uses as they do not break or crack like porcelain can, and it withstands the marine elements well. Staff recommends that the use of stainless steel be continued due to its longevity. The placement of seats on toilets would at least provide a higher level of comfort and reduce the appearance of a jail cell. In addition, a policy of replacement of fixtures showing significant signs of deterioration should be adopted, as well as the placement of a baby changing station in each location.

Materials and Finishes – The existing color is a dark beige or sienna with brown trim. This color combination has apparently evolved from the previous light beige or white with red tile. Staff have relayed that these colors have been used to hide dirt and is potentially favored by the Coastal Commission as it tends to blend in with the surrounding bluffs. The City Lifeguard towers also use the color combination. Unfortunately, the color gives the appearance of being dirty and does not allow for easy reference and locating, as they do tend to blend in with the surrounding hills. Staff recommends the gradual shifting toward a lighter beige to provide a cleaner appearance, and the use of white with red tile roofs in the Architectural Overlay Zones. In addition, the use of color could add an attractive quality, assist with way finding, and reinforce the Spanish influences. A vocabulary of tile signage has already been established for the Beach Trail, and the use of similar type styles and design could add to the architectural interest of the restroom buildings. Spanish murals or images could be used at the Pier Bowl and North Beach, and simple colors could be used elsewhere, such as an orange color tile band at “T” Street to coordinate with the tile on the overpass.

The bare concrete floors are clean; however, when wet, it is difficult to tell if the restroom has just been cleaned, or if it is in need of cleaning. Coating the floors with an industrial quality textured finish in a light color would contribute to a more polished look and appearance of cleanliness. City of Hermosa Beach has coated their new restrooms with a light colored textured-non skid, urethane which appears to be holding up well to use and provides an attractive finish.

Phase One:

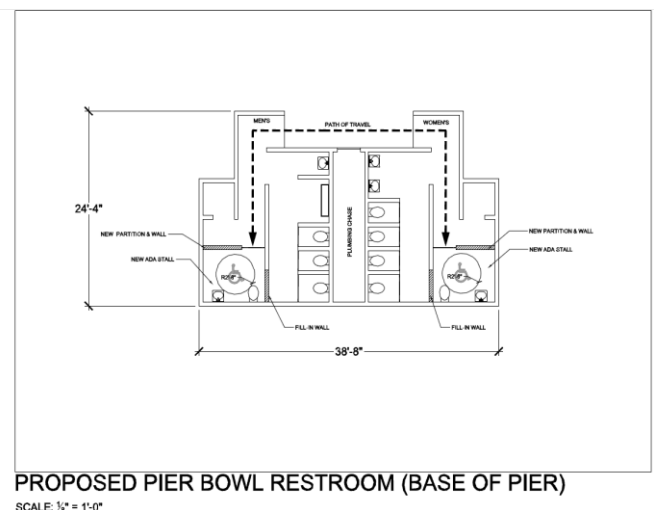
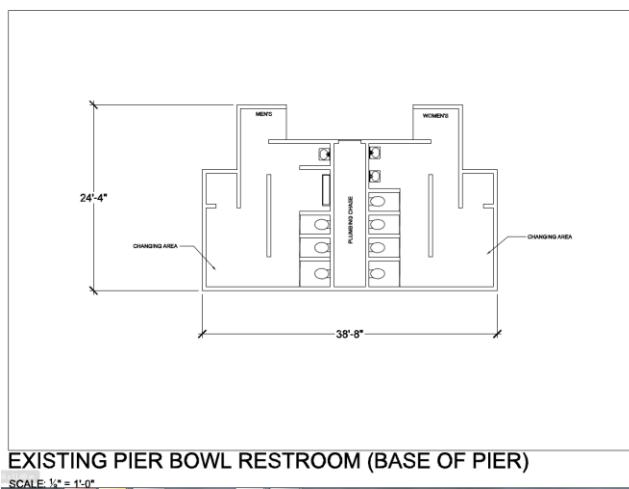
Base of Pier restroom as noted previously is not reflective of the Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture as noted in the Architectural Overlay Zone. In addition, there may have been previous planning work done to identify a wood siding, “Nautical Style” for areas west of the railroad tracks. The restroom meets neither. Nor is the use of wood siding consistent west of the railroad tracks, as the underpass is a white stucco wall with red tile cap, and will be further reinforced with Spanish styling with the addition of the Pier Bowl lighting upgrades. Research of old photos show that in 1972, the restroom building was a light color with what appears to be a tile roof. In 1979, the trash enclosure addition was added with what appears to be a wood shake roof.



Given that the restroom building is of masonry construction and is civic in nature, it could be retrofitted in a Spanish Colonial Revival style. The existing masonry walls could be covered with smooth stucco, the low pitch roof could be replaced with red tile, the use of colorful tiles to note the location (Pier Bowl), and signage could meet the Spanish design guidelines for the Pier Bowl District.

The interior would need to be retrofitted to adjust fixtures to meet current ADA requirements. Since this restroom has the highest use and is potentially the best access for those in wheelchairs, it is appropriate to focus efforts and funding here first to make diligent efforts toward providing accessible facilities at the beach. One of the biggest constraints for this (and other) building(s) is that the interior walls of the restrooms do not meet width requirements for wheelchair access with the existing door setup. Some of the restrooms have the iron entry doors in place, and others have had them removed due to damage or rot. Moving of the interior walls would be cost prohibitive, and some are load bearing carrying the overhead or roof. Instead, an option would be to remove the iron entry doors, either replace them at the wing wall opening rather than the door ways, which would then meet ADA requirements, or determine if they are actually needed as used, as they may be able to be removed completely. Staff typically leaves the doors open and unlocked, and only closes them when a storm event happens. If the doors are needed for security during storm events, attractive iron gates could be built to fit in the immediate opening of the wing walls rather than in the existing location of the door way. This would then remove the ADA compliance issue with the interior wall widths.

In addition, the restrooms need to provide an accessible stall for wheelchair use. The existing handicap stalls do not meet current standards. New standards require more space than the current stall wing walls permit. Options include redesigning two of the existing stalls into one Accessible stall, or using part of the dressing area to create a new Accessible stall. Given the high use of this restroom, staff would recommend sacrificing part of the dressing area for an additional stall rather than losing one fixture. The dressing room area could be reduced approximately 50%, and a new handicap stall installed meeting dimensional requirements. New connections to water and sewer would need to be run to the new locations, which is approximately ten feet from the existing lines.



Summary of Phase One recommendations (Pier Bowl Restroom)

- Review and recommendations by Architect and Structural Engineer.
- Stucco masonry block with smooth stucco, replace existing rotted wood overhead and roof members as needed.
- Remodel interior for Handicap accessibility: new handicap stall location, adjust fixtures for proper heights and clearances, replace stall doors.
- Add tile signage and detail similar to tile type and font as used on the Beach Trail.
- Add new decorative iron gates at wing walls if needed.
- Repair and replace doors, seats, missing slats on overheads, and paint other restrooms – no structural work at this time, maintenance of existing only.



Phase Two:

Before proceeding the work on the other restrooms, Staff will need to get direction from the Coastal Commission on: 1) The ability of the City to demolish and then rebuild restrooms at the same locations, and 2) If we can rebuild, will the Commission require the structure to be built on piers or other more expensive construction type. The answers to these two questions will dictate the approach to restoration of T Street, Linda Lane, and Boca Del Canon restrooms. North Beach structure is in relatively good condition and does not appear to need structural work; however, the access ramp to the facility does not meet current ADA standards and will need reconstruction to make a path of travel available to the restroom, in addition to the interior repairs needed. Depending on the outcome to the research, there could be two scenarios for Phase Two:

Scenario A: If Coastal Commission will allow the demolition of the existing restroom building and replacement of a similar size building in the same location, an Architect will need to be retained to provide cost evaluations to determine what would be the most cost effective; making the repairs to the existing block walls, adjusting fixtures, and replacing the roofs/overheads; building a new structure; or purchasing and placing a prefabricated building, or building a new structure. In addition, staff will need to know if Coastal Commission will require new buildings to be built on piers which would most likely increase costs significantly. If new buildings are possible, then the City may wish to consider the new style of several single room restrooms which do not require closing of all to clean one, thus maintaining more use for the public, as well as address privacy issues better.

Scenario B: If Coastal Commission will not allow the replacement of the existing buildings, then it will be necessary to repair the buildings we have. If this is the case, an Architect and Structural Engineer will be retained to determine the extent of structural and architectural redesign.

Potential costs

This report provides only conceptual ideas for improvements and specific costs would be determined through a bidding process

Phase One – estimate of probable construction costs

Pier Bowl Restroom (Highest Priority)

Structural Engineering	allow \$15,000
Replace existing wood supports/overhead	allow \$50,000
Replace wood roof with tile	allow \$10,000
Adjust and/or replace fixtures as necessary	allow \$15,000
Replace existing partition doors	allow \$6,000
Float smooth plaster surface and stucco	allow \$15,000
Add accent tiles and signs	allow \$5,000
Plumbing/Utilities for new Accessible stall	allow \$10,000
Install new iron entry doors if necessary	allow \$7,000
Contingency	allow \$26,600
Total estimated costs at Pier Bowl	\$159,600

Other restrooms

Paint interiors	allow \$50,000
Repair fixtures as needed (in place)	allow \$10,000
Repair/Replace missing overhead slats	allow \$10,000
Install toilet seats and changing stations	allow \$3,000
Replace missing signage	allow \$1,500
Contingency	allow \$15,000
Total estimated costs for other buildings	\$89,500

TOTAL TO COMPLETE ALL PHASE ONE IMPROVEMENTS \$ 249,100

Phase Two – estimate of probable construction costs will be determined after consultation with Coastal Commission to determine building requirements.

Funding options

City Council considered using \$230,000 of street improvement funds for a one-time diversion to fund restroom improvements for the beach and pier. Discussion centered on the current good condition of roads, and the need for improvements to the restrooms given their high use and visibility in the City. The outcome of this discussion was the request for this plan, and direction to return to City Council for further consideration.

In addition to considering a one-time use of street improvement funds, the City Council may wish to consider creating a long-term funding source for beach maintenance and enhancements. There are many needs that this type of funding could be allocated toward including a long-term maintenance regime for restrooms, pier, sand replenishment, site furnishings, infrastructure, and any future facility needs. Potential funding could be gained from increasing the hours when parking fees are collected. An increase of one to two hours both in the morning and evening at the same rate could be substantial. In addition, the City could consider adding parking meters in new locations including the access areas to Trestles Surf Beach. This area has a high degree of use, and, if the funding was used specifically for beach improvements and enhancements, it may be better received by this user-group.

Appendix: Accessibility Compliance Assessments prepared by Community Development Department, Engineering Division.

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