

## Redondo Pier begins revitalization

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Michael Zislis displays a rendering of the expected Shade Hotel outside of the expected building site.

History will soon come full circle to the Redondo Beach pier after council members and waterfront stakeholders announced Tuesday morning that the new, vintage-inspired waterfront revitalization plan will soon be implemented.

“The Redondo Beach Waterfront is a priceless asset that must be carefully nurtured,” said Mayor Mike Gin in a press release from Paolucci communications. “Together, the City and Waterfront stakeholders will create a destination that is an attractive and renewed source of pride for residents and a significant generator of tourism based economic activity.”



The Waterfront Revitalization will involve three main projects including improvements to city-owned buildings and public spaces, a historic remodel of the 31,000-square-foot Redondo Landing building and an addition of a new hotel on Harbor Drive.

According to a release, the first facilities to be renovated will include the pier streetscape including new paving, lighting, streetscape and furnishings; a new Harbor Patrol facility and an upgrade and vintage architectural makeover for the Seaside Lagoon building. The plan will also include a passageway from the pier directly to the ocean. Various vintage makeover projects are already underway.

The new look is inspired by the original Loeff Hippodrome, the carousel building built on the pier in the 1920s. Also included in the plan are various historical and nautically-themed murals, including one featuring a history of the city featuring a timeline of fires, storms and also celebrations and community landmarks. Various upgrades, including pier furniture, will be made of salvaged building materials whenever possible.

“Today we set sail for the future,” said Councilman Steve Aspel, reading a speech — in lieu of words by Mayor Mike Gin — at the Pier Revitalization press conference. “This plan represents many years of hard work.”

The plan to revitalize the pier was moved forward by former councilmember Chris Cagle, who spearheaded Measure G and successfully halted the plan for the Heart of the City, an ambitious plan proposed by the city that would have zoned for as many as 2998 residential units and 1.6 million square feet of commercial development in the harbor.

“I can never really get used to how long it takes the government to do things,” said Cagle. “Eventually things happen and sometimes it’s better that it took longer instead of [being] fast. When it takes longer you get better ideas that come out of it. I’m happy that even though it took a long time, it did come together. As long as everybody is motivated to make it happen things can get done.”

“We’ve been talking about this pier [revitalization] for 100 years,” Aspel said.

According to numbers in the city’s capital improvement budget, the city has committed about \$2 million in funding towards the project.

“I couldn’t be more excited that a landing is coming back to the Redondo Pier,” said Michael Zislis, the owner of the Zislis group and one of the main stakeholders in the project and the planner of the new Shade Hotel. “This pier has seen decades of change and continues to be the heart of the city.”

The new Shade Hotel, that will be located at 655 N. Harbor Drive, will be a \$20-million, eco-friendly building, featuring 40 rooms that all face the waterfront. Zislis plans a laid-back eatery that will be a “great breakfast place that you can just roll up to with your bicycle.” He hopes to open in mid-2014.

The city plans to work with leaseholders to consolidate leases and to work with various leaseholders that will be a value to the boardwalk and increase shopping and tourism traffic.

“The government doesn’t do the most effective job at managing lease-holders,” said Cagle. “It’s too political. They don’t make decisions in a business like manner. So the idea is to get the government out of the business of managing the specific individual leases and just have one major leaseholder who sub-leases to sub-tenets and then he manages it. They want to piece together all the different lease holds individually that the city currently owns and try to find one major sophisticated type investor that could manage all that and come up with some sort of development idea or vision for the whole area that would be acceptable to the community”

During a tour of the harbor to explain the changes in the plan and give a brief history of the harbor, councilmember Pat Aust commented that the government is in the business of service, not business.

The pier has undergone many changes, including repairs from storms and almost a complete rebuild after a fire in the late 1980s. The new plan, incorporating a new hotel, a new look and more bicycle accessibility, in cooperation with Vitality City and the South Bay Master Bike Plan, will be a new chapter for Redondo Beach.

“The Redondo Pier is really the last unpolished gem in the South Bay,” said Zislis. “It just needs a little polishing.” ER