



# Santa Monica Pier Access and Use Study

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Prepared for the City of Santa Monica and the Santa Monica Pier Corporation by ROMA Design Group with Economic & Planning Systems

DECEMBER 2015



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*Financial Analysis Appendix (bound separately)*



*Overview of the pier in the context of the city, looking northwest from the Civic Center and Tongva Park*

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Santa Monica Pier is a unique coastal resource that is critical to the identity of Santa Monica and has provided the city with a low cost, accessible place for recreation, amusement, fishing, special events and public access. The evolution of the city over time along with the completion of the Expo Line and Colorado Esplanade and the new bridge replacement project will enhance its regional draw and increase visitation significantly. However, additional improvements are needed to make the pier more universally accessible and an integral part of the community.

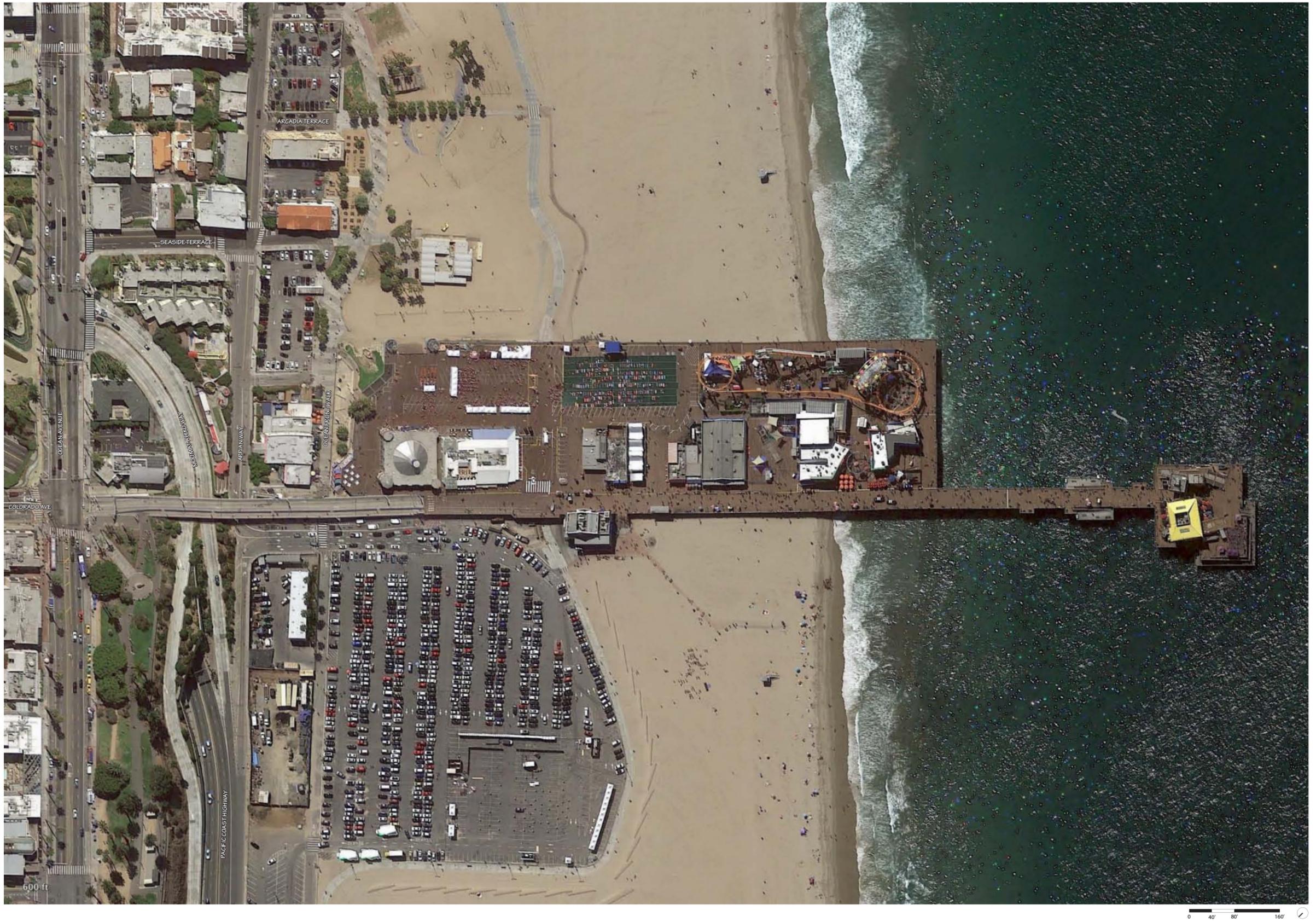
As a waterfront structure, the pier requires a high level of maintenance and repair especially as it is subjected to additional stresses caused by climate change and sea level rise. It also requires a great deal of commitment to continue to maintain its role in the community as a recreation and open space resource that appeal to the broadest segment of the population. The approach to managing the pier has evolved over time and today, a partnership between the City and the Pier Corporation has created a unique and focused structure that will continue to serve the pier well into the future.

There are today unrealized potentials that can help improve the quality, flow and diversity of activities. These potentials can also contribute to revenues that are needed to help off-set the capital improvement, management and maintenance costs which will not only continue but will increase with expanded visitation and to withstand the forces of nature over time. Consideration should be given to both enhancing revenues and managing financial resources in a manner that will create a consistent and reliable basis for implementation and for the long-term viability of the pier.

## 1. IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY

- 1.1 Continue to work with the City to ensure that, with the replacement bridge improvements, the crossover vehicular traffic to the existing parking is eliminated.
- 1.2 Design the replacement bridge improvements to graciously and conveniently provide universal access for pedestrians from Colorado Avenue to the head of the pier and to the historic Carousel. Consider the potential use of an elevator, three escalators and a stair to best achieve accessibility for all.
- 1.3 Extend bicycle access from the Colorado Esplanade and the replacement bridge to the Beach Bike Path and provide additional bicycle parking in the 1550 Lot.
- 1.4 Provide universal pedestrian access both from the east and west ends of the 1550 Lot to the head (or beginning) and the middle of the pier.
- 1.5 Provide universal pedestrian and bicycle access from Ocean Front Walk to a new pathway along the southern edge of the pier and enhance opportunities along it for “staying activities” with benches, high chairs and picnic tables. Create new bicycle parking on Ocean Front Walk at the entrance to the new pathway as well as in the parking area on the pier.
- 1.6 Maintain the distinctive wood decking on the Pier Walk but introduce a smooth surface accessible path within it.





## 2. UNREALIZED POTENTIALS

- 2.1 Reorganize and improve the area currently devoted to parking on the south side of the pier so that it becomes an attractive gateway that serves more positively the adjacent uses and a multiplicity of functions, including events as well as convenient drop-off and parking, with improved pedestrian access along the business frontages.
- 2.2 Restructure the head of the pier adjacent to Ocean Front Walk so that it better complements the historic Carousel and the educational activities in the Aquarium and creates a distinctive area with a combination of indoor and outdoor activities oriented to young children and families.
- 2.3 When crossover traffic is eliminated, reclaim the central area of the pier for new pedestrian-oriented activities that help to diversify the range of attractions, providing activities that add to the quality of the experience and strengthen north/south walkways. Above the porous and permeable ground level, provide an upper level, high bay enclosed space that can be used for a range of year-round community events and special gatherings, recalling the activities that were once accommodated in the La Monica Ballroom.
- 2.4 Consideration should also be given to realizing the unmet potential of other areas on the pier, including the current location of the Trapeze School and the west end of the parking lot adjacent to Pacific Park as well as the potential for additional carts along the Pier Walk.

## 3. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 Steward the valuable resource of the pier and protect it for the enjoyment of future generations, particularly in consideration of the dynamic nature of the waterfront setting and the implications of climate change and sea level rise.
- 3.2 Develop a pier-focused sustainability strategy and invest in programs on the pier that address water management, waste management and power generation to achieve better sustainability outcomes than are present today.
- 3.3 Participate in district-wide sustainability initiatives, demonstrating exemplary leadership in the efficient use, conservation and management of resources.

## 4. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 Pursue multiple sources of new revenue, including events and new leaseholds, to help off-set future capital improvements, maintenance and operating costs.
- 3.2 Establish a revenue sharing approach that creates a consistent and reliable basis for implementation and the long-term viability of the pier.





PROJECTS UNDERWAY OR RECENTLY COMPLETED IN THE PIER AREA

# BACKGROUND

Over the years, as the Santa Monica Pier has changed, so has the City and its role in the region. As the center of gravity in the Los Angeles region has shifted westward, Santa Monica has become increasingly attractive as a place to live and visit. The pier has established itself as a very significant regional destination, attracting over 7 million visitors every year. The City is reaping the benefit of, not only its amenable coastal setting and location within the region, but also its long-standing commitment to and investment in its public spaces and recreational activities.

A number of improvements that have taken place or are about to be completed in the vicinity of the pier will further change the context of the pier and the potential for increasing the number of visitors each year. The soon to open Exposition Line is expected to bring 10,000 more people each day to the Colorado Avenue terminus station in Santa Monica, only a few blocks away from the pier. The improvements currently underway along the Colorado Esplanade will create strong connections to the pier and will draw pedestrians from the Expo Line to the downtown and pier, further expanding its role as a regional destination.

Perhaps the most significant change that is currently taking shape, however, is the construction of a new bridge that will connect the pier over the intervening freeway and highway connections to the bluff at the foot of downtown. While the need to replace the Colorado Avenue Bridge has come into being due to structural deficiencies, it provides the opportunity to build not only a safer, but also better bridge that engages the entire length of the Pier; emphasizes the bicycle/pedestrian connections; reduces the backside/frontside dichotomy that has long afflicted the

Newcomb Pier; eliminates the major source of pedestrian/vehicular conflict; and creates a much more accessible destination for everyone. Options for the bridge have been developed for environmental evaluation, with the City's preferred alternative being the two-bridge solution.

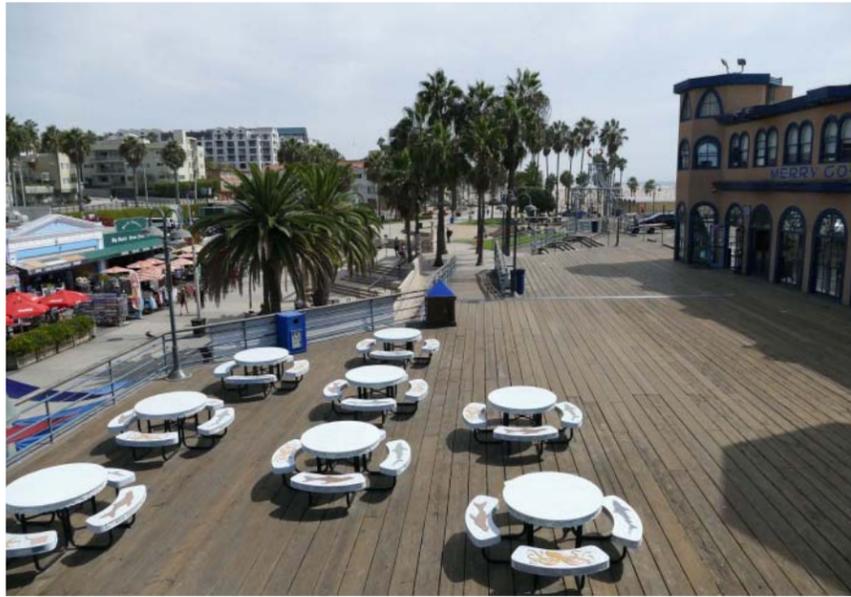
## STUDY PROCESS AND COMMUNITY INPUT

In spring 2015, the City of Santa Monica and the Santa Monica Pier Corporation (SMPC) embarked upon a Pier Use and Access Study for Santa Monica Pier. The purpose of this study was to prepare a focused update to the 1988 "A New Era Pier Plan" which provided the original parameters for the restoration and revitalization of the pier. The study is not intended to be a Master Plan, nor an "end-state" plan, but a framework to help guide future decision-making for short-term and long-term enhancement and reinvestment. It is intended to build upon the vision and guiding principles established by the City. It is at the leading edge of planning and design and creates the basis for a series of future implementing actions.

At the outset of the study process, stakeholder interviews were conducted in a series of individual and small group sessions over an intensive two-day period. These meetings included a number of different tenants and Pier Corporation and City staff and a larger group get-together. Additional follow-up meetings were held with stakeholders throughout the process to gain a better understanding of specific site conditions and the perspectives of those whose lives have been directly and profoundly intertwined with the pier.



*The current bridge bypasses much of the historic Carousel Building.*



*Elevated deck is underutilized*



*Pedestrian activity could be more evenly distributed along the pier*



*A more positive relationship is needed to Ocean Front Walk*



*Aquarium needs greater presence and visibility*



*Pedestrian movement area needed on south side of businesses*



*Greater structure and pedestrian improvements are needed*

Three well-attended public workshops were hosted by the Pier Board at critical points in the process to elicit broad community input and specific feedback on concepts and recommendations as they were evolving. Each of these meetings was attended by approximately 50 members of the public.

In addition, a smaller Working Group of the Board was constituted to work in collaboration with the consultants and City staff to review findings and develop concepts that would meet the expectations for how the pier could be further enhanced for public benefit and, at the same time, be financially and environmentally sustainable into the future.

Comments and input generated from those sessions and workshops related to such considerations as providing for universal access to the pier; expanding accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists and eliminating conflicts with vehicles; de-emphasizing parking on the pier; strengthening educational and family programming; providing venues that appeal to the Santa Monica resident as well as the regional, national and international visitor; and identifying additional revenue sources that can augment and enrich the programming of public events and activities that currently take place on the pier.

This study presents the findings, concepts and recommendations that emerged from the public process and technical analysis and has been prepared by ROMA Design Group, working with Economic and Planning Systems and with input and guidance from the City of Santa Monica and the SMPC Board.

## FINDINGS

The preliminary findings from this assessment are that the pier seems to be doing well and it appears to be on an upward trend, in terms of general physical and financial conditions. At the same time, a number of issues and challenges have been identified, primarily having to do with the need to improve accessibility and connectivity of the pier to surrounding areas, the conflicts that exist, primarily between pedestrians and vehicles, in particular at the entry to the parking lot, the continuity and balanced distribution of old and new activities along the pier, the need to support community programming, and the continuing need to maintain the physical condition of the pier.

Furthermore, although the numbers of people that visit the pier will continue to grow and expand, the importance of attracting a diversity of people has become increasingly important, not only so that it more fully fulfills its role as a public place and major recreational asset within the city and region, but also so that it builds the patronage that will even out peaks in usage and support it throughout the year. Finally, as the pier ages, its value as a historic asset needs to be recognized and celebrated, but at the same time, it will need to continue to reinvent itself and gain ground as a leader in those values that Santa Monica holds dear: sustainability, responsible growth, art and culture and community.

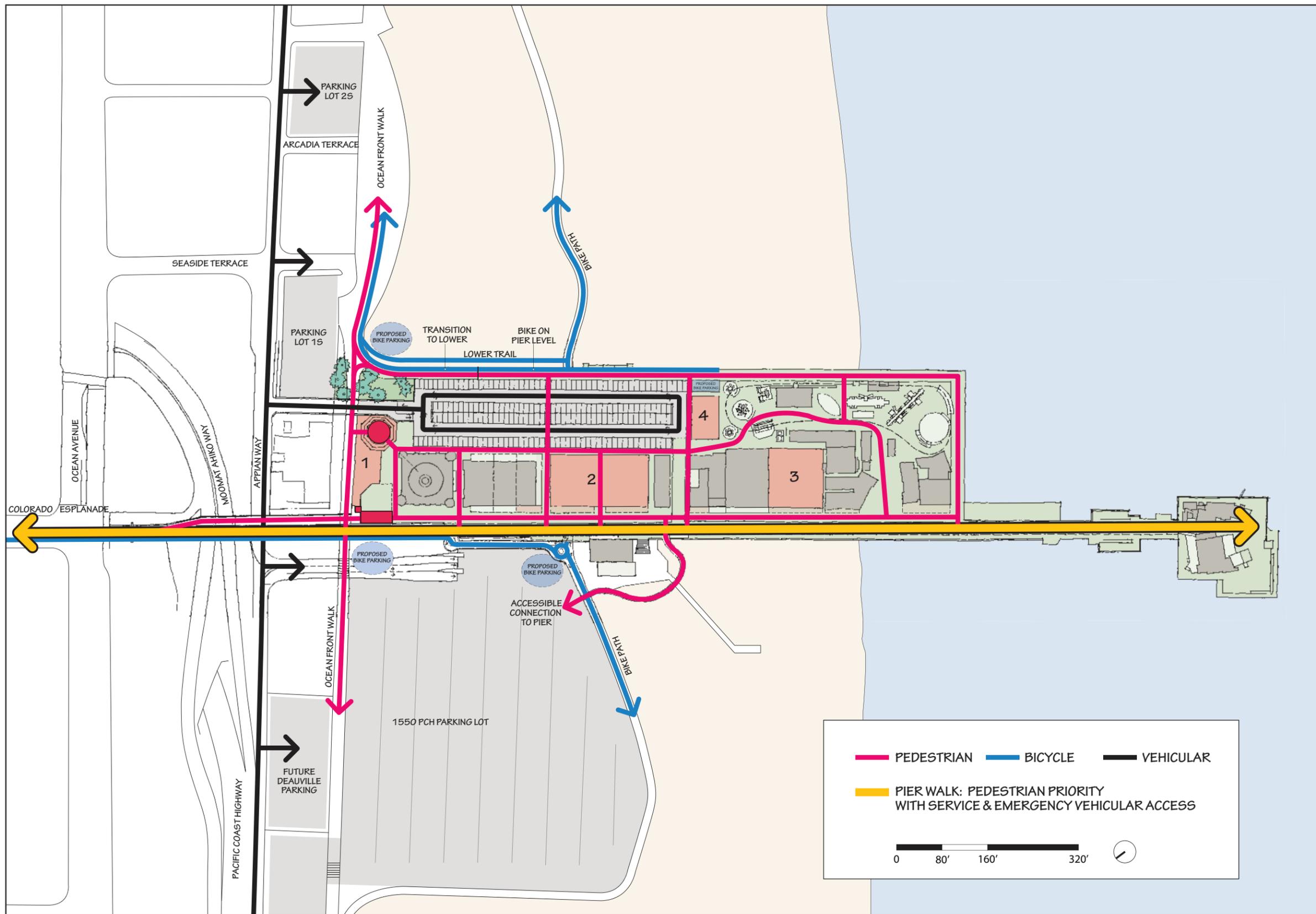
A major challenge today has to do with expanding sources of revenue that can be strategically deployed for maximum public benefit – not only to maintain the physical condition of the pier and to manage the activities appropriately, but also to improve accessibility and enhance its role as a recreational resource. By continuing to invest in physical improvements, maintenance and management and by expanding its appeal to a broad and diverse cross-section of the community, the pier will become a more meaningful place and a more prominent and significant icon within the city and region.



*Need for a visible and accessible entry to the pier from the 1550 Lot*



*Direct bicycle access to the Beach Bike Path is desired*



# STUDY CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## ACCESSIBILITY, LINKAGE AND MOVEMENT

To achieve the goals for the pier, it is necessary to address the movement systems in a new way. Fortunately, Caltrans has identified the need, due to seismic conditions, for the rebuilding the Colorado Avenue Bridge to the pier. The City, in turn, should be commended for its initiative in pursuing a two-bridge approach to these improvements that will eliminate the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles and create a separate entrance to the parking area. This is a very critical aspect of achieving the potential of the pier and meeting its new context.

Further steps can also be taken to realize how the bridge improvements can benefit the pier. A reorganization of the pier is proposed so that, as many other parts of the City, it becomes more bicycle and pedestrian friendly rather than be oriented to the automobile. The purpose is not to eliminate automobile access, but rather to elevate the importance of the other modes and to give priority to the pedestrian, reflecting the importance of the experience and creating a greater sense of comfort particularly for the family with small kids, the elderly that are experiencing more difficulty getting around as well as those that are mobility-impaired.

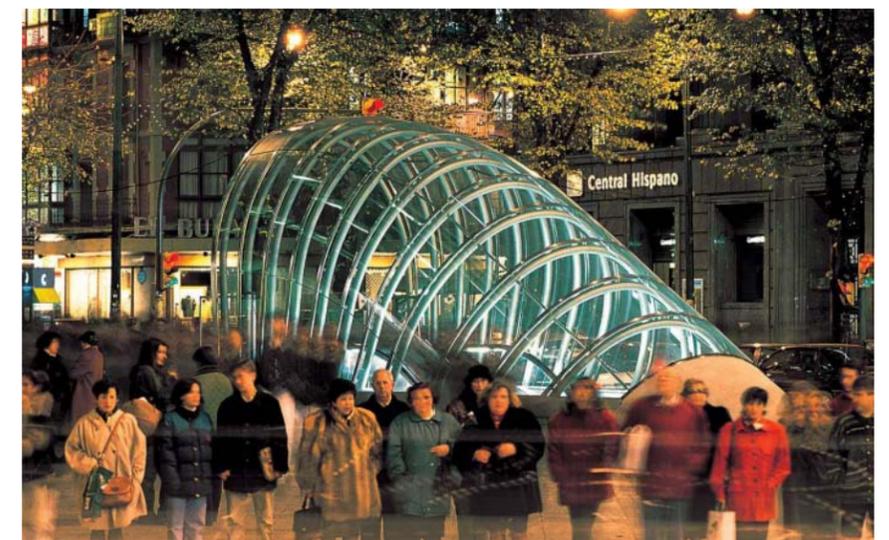
The pier is very long and access areas are fairly lengthy and they have to be comfortable and accessible and provide enough interest to create a punctuated series of experiences along the route. The movement experience has to be enhanced so that it doesn't just meet the functional requirements.

The proposal for improved accessibility is addressed directly in the alternatives under consideration by the City as part of the bridge improvements and the City has responded very favorably to that aspect. A split access bridge, with a portion at 10% slope

and with pedestrian access at 5% connected to escalators, stairs and elevators, now incorporated as the preferred alternative under environmental study.

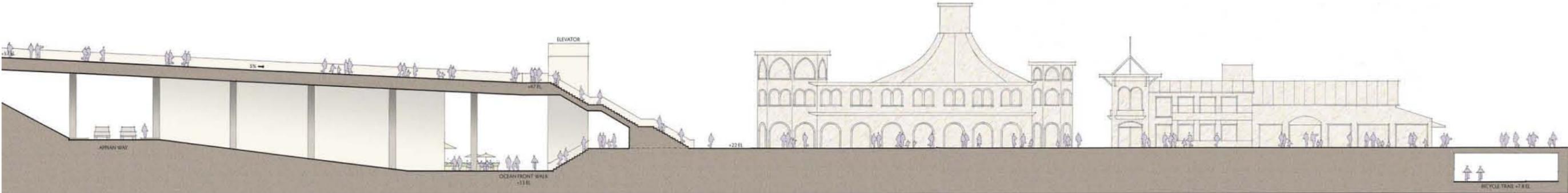
These improvements and the entire pedestrian movement experience should be designed to energize the recreational, commercial and entertainment experiences of the pier and reinforce its integrity, from beginning to end. The concept would be that pedestrians would enter the pier right at the Carousel, rather than bypassing it as they do today either at the bottom of the ramp or at the drop-off area into the parking lot. Walking would be focused within a pedestrian priority movement area adjacent to the pier uses, rather than on the opposite side of the street, to engage more fully with the activities on the pier.

It is important to keep in mind that the stairs, elevator and escalator would all work together to provide for the greatest degree of accessibility to the pier. The escalators, in particular, would provide a more favorable way of accessing the pier without the need for everyone to rely upon an elevator or the stairs. Each of these three forms of access would be sized in consideration of each other. It is anticipated that the escalators will become the preferred way to get to the pier – they will be fast, efficient, and will allow visitors to focus on the view out to the beach and the bay, rather than on where they are walking. They will also accommodate a number of people who are somewhat mobility impaired and, for whatever reason, might have difficulty negotiating the stairs but do not need to take the elevator. Thus, the escalators reduce the need for a much larger elevator. Two escalators – operating in either direction – will provide for large volumes of people to easily access the pier and the addition of a third that is reversible at peak times should be pursued to further operational flexibility and capacity.

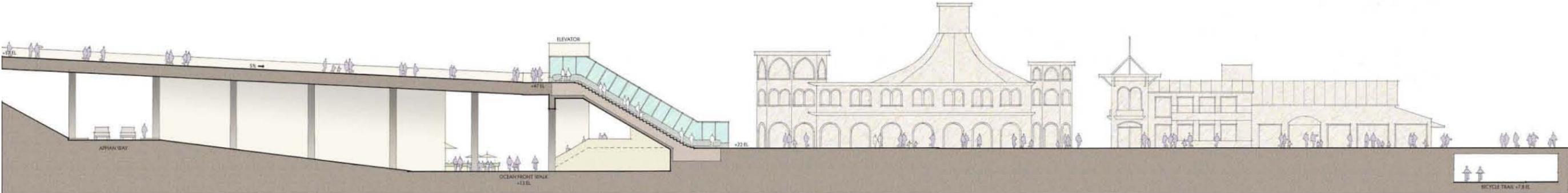


*Examples of covered outdoor escalators in Bilbao Spain*

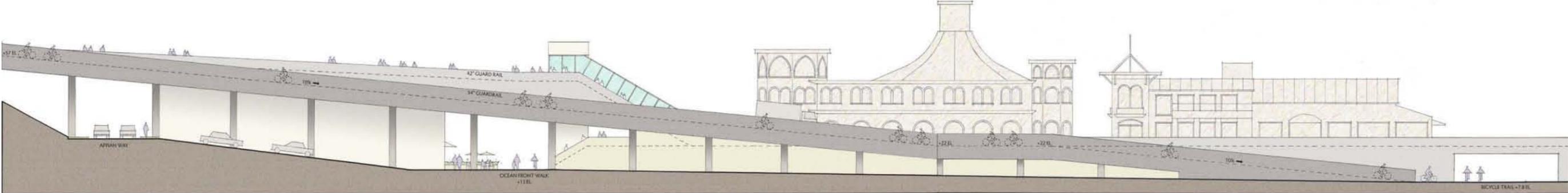
SECTION THROUGH PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AND STAIRWAY



SECTION THROUGH PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AND ESCALATOR



ELEVATION OF VEHICULAR/BICYCLE BRIDGE



PROPOSED COLORADO AVENUE BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

Bicycle and pedestrian linkages are proposed to be created to existing pathways including the Oceanfront Walk and the Bike Path, as well as improving pedestrian linkages and pedestrian paths from the 1550 lot to the front of the pier. The bikeway is proposed to be extended so that it directly connects the Colorado Avenue Esplanade to the Bike Path. This may need to be a separate project from what Caltrans is funding, but it is essential in integrating recreational destinations on the beach with the city.

In addition, a new accessible pedestrian entry to the pier is proposed from the 1550 lot. Currently, accessible access is provided from an elevator within the Bubba Gump's that is in need of repair and improvement. Most people come up to the pier from a stairway that is behind the Bubba Gumps building and not very visible. A new path and elevated connection, at a 5% grade or less, is proposed that will contribute greatly to the role of this entry and create a direct linkage for everyone from that major parking area to the pier.

An accessible path is also recommended to be created from Ocean Front Walk to the pier that allows pedestrians and bicyclists to flow very naturally onto the south side perimeter of the pier and to provide for greater connectivity and direct linkage into the activity stream of the beach. In making the improvements that transition visitors to the pier, the relationship to the bottom of the pier, where pilings meet the beach, needs to be reconsidered as well, so that these edges are positively integrated with the areas around them. In particular, consideration should be given to improvements such as innovative lighting that can be incorporated into under pier areas to help make these areas and the beach level edges of the pier appear more safe and welcoming.

These infrastructure improvements involve changes in grade (ranging from twelve feet up to the pier from the beach to nearly thirty feet down to the pier from the pier bridge) and need to be seen as more than a functional requirement that must be met



*Artistically negotiating change in grade - Chicago Millenium Park*



*Beach Bike Path and the importance of linkage to it*

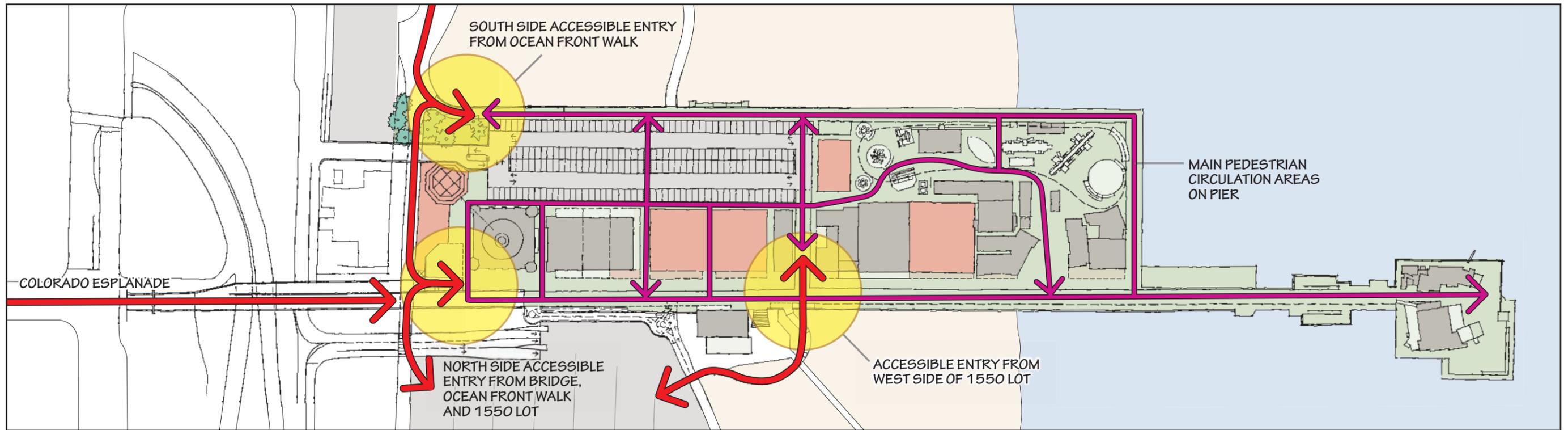
but envisioned as artful expressions that can heighten the sense of movement and the experience of transitioning in elevation and contribute to orientation and understanding of place. Stairs, bridges, elevated extensions, canopied escalators are opportunities to unleash the creative imagination and make a statement about threshold-making and the gracious act of welcoming all visitors to a very unique one-of-a-kind place. These modern-day



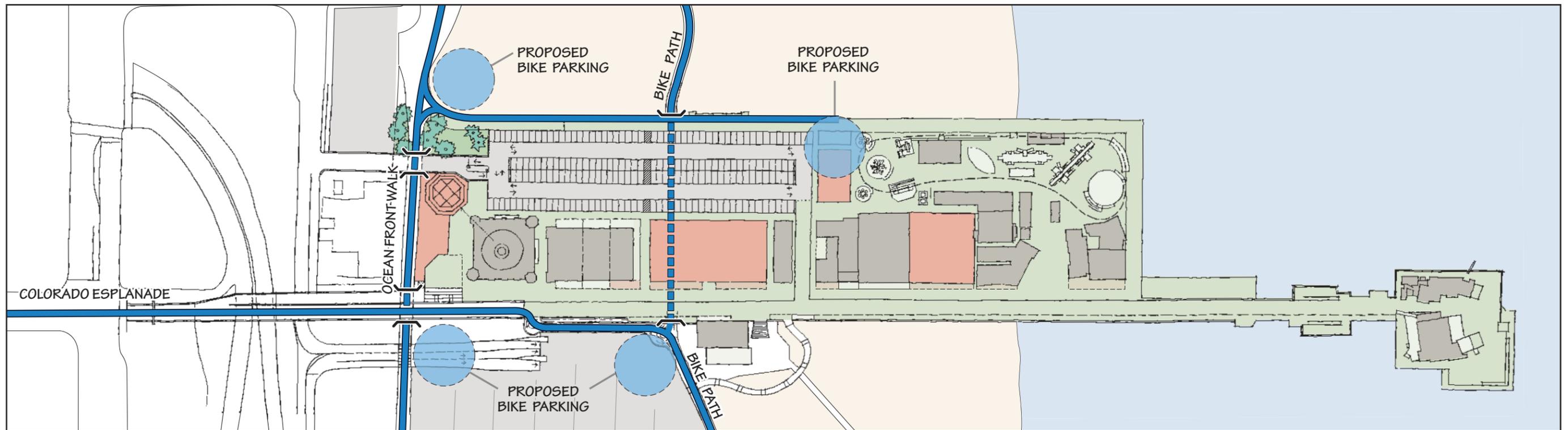
*An attractive outdoor elevator at the San Francisco Academy of Sciences*

contributions to the built form of the pier can in the future be what the Santa Monica sign and the Carousel building have been for visitors in the past – reference points that are full of meaning, value and local pride.

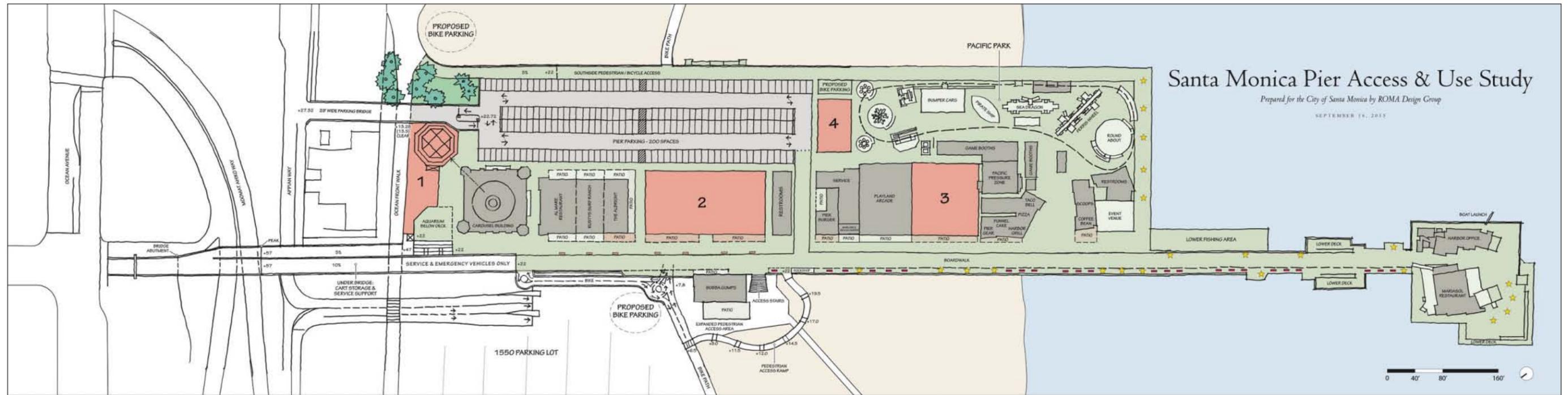
The identity of the pier comes, to a great extent, from its role as a fanciful place of pleasure - a place where the everyday



PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND CIRCULATION



BICYCLE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION



and ordinary working world is put on hold. In the early days, buildings were designed with an imaginative eclecticism that evoked a sense of fantasy and the fun of being at the seaside. The opportunity to restore such elements as the onion domes on the Carousel or recreate the original pier lighting, should be pursued, but further, future projects should be encouraged to express the same exuberance and creative spirit that characterized Santa Monica Pier since its earliest days.

## POTENTIAL ACTIVITY AREAS

When it was built in 1909, the municipal pier was a narrow, open space that extended 1,600 feet into Santa Monica Bay and became a popular destination for walking, viewing, and fishing. A few years later, the Loeff Amusement Pier, now known as the Newcomb Pier, was built alongside it to the south, creating an approximate 6-acre deck structure that supported a large roller coaster and other amusement activities. Over time, a number of changes in the use, pattern and orientation of buildings have taken place. Whereas activities that were once oriented to

Ocean Front Walk and clustered continuously along the south side of the pier, today these relationships have been diminished and a more fragmented pattern exists. Furthermore, the extent and intensity of use have also generally decreased from the early years of the 1900's up through World War II, when the amusement park was in full swing and the La Monica Ballroom provided a 15,000 square foot hardwood floor for 5,000 dancers.

Looking forward to the future, it is important that the pier not become the exclusive domain of a single interest group, that seasonal variation in visitation even out and that the pier become more attractive throughout all times of the year. By placing a greater emphasis on the diversity and continuity of visitation, an underlying additional benefit will be the creation of a more self-regulating place. An added benefit of a greater diversity of interest groups at all times of the year in the public domain with increased "eyes on the street" will diminish, but not necessarily eliminate, the need for police security or ambassadors that give a sense of increased security and provide information. The opportunity created by the need to rebuild the Colorado Avenue

bridge and to pursue the two-bridge approach currently being evaluated is key to the future use and activities of the pier. A significant amount of additional space will be created for new activities and a great deal more public access for pedestrians. This is an essential consideration in making the pier more attractive in the future.

This study identifies a number of potential opportunity areas for activities that can achieve the overall goals and objectives of the City and Pier Corporation. It does not propose a final square footage total that would be permitted, but instead identifies footprints within which new uses could occur, within the guidelines that have already been established. Whether, in fact, these areas could be developed would depend upon their potential to create additional public benefits, appeal to all segments of the population, provide for a more balanced seasonal visitation and the potential for additional revenues that can offset capital costs as well as maintenance, management and operations, thus creating a more sustainable and self-regulating place. Please see attached diagram for the location of each of these activity areas.



Area 1: Educational / Children's Activity Areas

## Area 1: Educational / Children's Activity Areas

Currently, the open space in this area does not create a positive relationship to the pier, nor contribute to what Ocean Front Walk can be. The concept for this area therefore calls for a cluster of uses that can create an active more vibrant place, diminishing what is now a back and a front side to the pier. At ground level, this opportunity area is directly adjacent to Ocean Front Walk and the activities and uses across the way and adjacent to the Aquarium. At deck level, this area is most closely associated with the historic Carousel, and this relationship makes it well suited for new activities that broaden the attractiveness of the area as a destination for families and children.

The area occupies a footprint of approximately 7,500 square feet where new activities could include those at ground level along Ocean Front Walk a two story portion that could create a stronger entry to the Aquarium, enhance accessibility to deck level and better respond to issues related to future sea level rise. At deck level, future uses would be configured so as not to obstruct views and visibility to the landmark Carousel building. The Carousel building, further, could be restored along with the iconic onion domes which once embellished its roof. Deck level activities in adjacent outdoor areas also include exhibits and sculptural elements that could make it more attractive for informal children's play, such as, for example, the use of castings of sea lions or dolphins, which would contribute to the educational and interpretive experience of the pier.

Consideration should be given to the formation of a Business Improvement District for this part of the pier, together with businesses on Ocean Front Walk, that can help fund maintenance and improvements of benefit to the larger area.



*Precedents of Potential Science, Education, Discovery and Children's Activities, Area 1*



Area 2: Market Place / Event Activity Area

## Area 2: Market Place / Event Activity Area

A large area will be created once the bridge improvements are in place and crossover traffic is removed between the parking area and the Colorado Avenue Bridge. Currently, this area interrupts the continuity of activities along the pier and is the site of conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Reuse of this site will help to mend a major gap in the continuity of pedestrian activities along the pier. Furthermore, the footprint of this site is of sufficient scale and appropriately located to provide for large gathering places for the community that oriented to the coast that have not been seen within the area since the La Monica Ballroom occupied this portion of the pier.

This area has an approximate 16,000 to 18,000 square foot footprint with the potential for an additional 16,000 square feet in upper floor uses. It is assumed that high-bay two-story structure would be appropriate within the existing 35-foot height limit. The ground floor is envisioned as a highly transparent space with views through the building and that opens up fully to the outdoors and to adjacent patio space. It would provide an excellent location for a market hall or unique kind of food service establishment that offers fare which can be consumed outside in the public spaces and café extension areas as well as sit-down dining. This would be a revenue-generating use that would help to diversify the commercial activities on the pier today and provide a source of funds to help offset the costs of public benefit uses. This space would be provided with accessible vertical circulation, restroom facilities and back-of-the-house functions that would help to support upper floor uses. In addition, the establishment would follow current pier leasing guidelines for sustainable and high quality dining.



*The La Monica Ballroom, 1924 - 1963*

An upper floor would offer the potential to provide a new enclosed events space which would have excellent 180-degree views up and down the coast as well as out to Santa Monica Bay. The events space would provide an opportunity for staging year-round events, including a combination of private and community events, including private wedding receptions, bar or bat mitzvas, quinceaneras, birthday celebrations as well as educational or community events that are free of charge and open to the general public. Guidelines could be developed that address the identity and pedestrian scale of this project and which establish the balance of paid private events and free or discounted public events.



*Precedents of Potential Market Hall, Indoor Special Events and Activities: Area 2*

### Area 3: Recreation and Amusement Activity Area

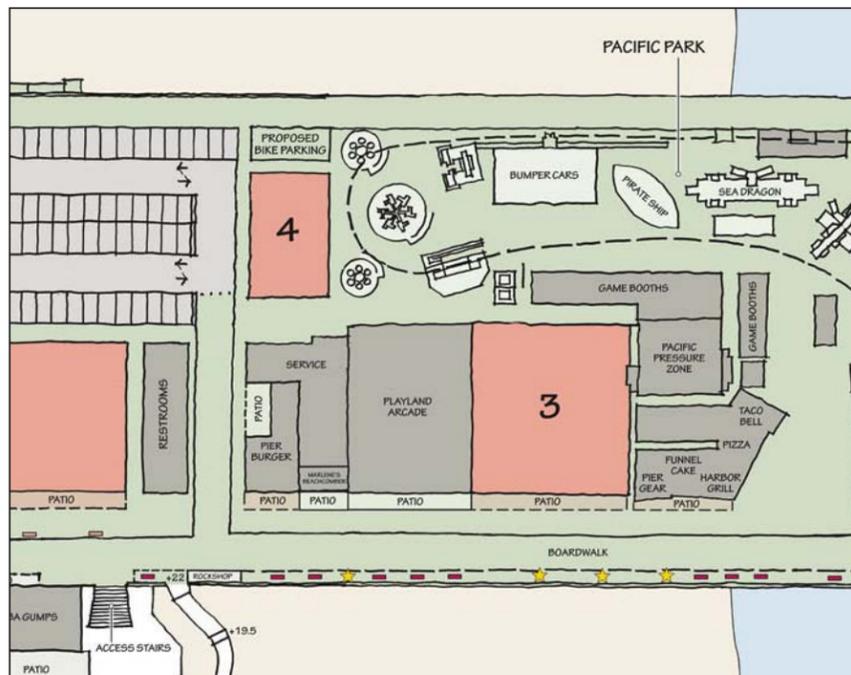
This area includes the site for the existing trapeze school comprising a footprint of approximately 10,000 square feet. This site has been in a temporary use originally intended to be in place for a short time, but which has extended for several years. A permanent recreational/amusement/spectator use of a similar extroverted and engaging nature could be located here that complements existing and adjacent uses and is capable of improving their efficiency and visitation potential.



Area 3: Recreation and Amusement Activity Area

## Area 4: Flexible Open Space Activity Area

The parking area on the south side of the Newcomb Pier would be reconfigured as a flexible multiple use space that accommodates parking and becomes more of a mixed use public space with active and engaged uses around its edges. The reconfiguration of this space and the programming of uses within it would make it no longer feel like the back side service area but a place with spatial integrity capable of providing for drop-off and convenient parking that can be also removed for outdoor events staged throughout the year. Improvements within this area include a 20-foot area for pedestrian access and emergency vehicles along the entire perimeter as well as a new outdoor recreational area comprising 4,000 square foot area with adjacent parking for at least 25 bicycles on the west end immediately adjacent to the Pacific Park. Reconfiguration of the parking area would also be necessary to accommodate the new pier bridge that would be flanked on one side by new activities for children and families and gateway landscaping on Ocean Front Walk, creating a strong and inviting entry to the pier. An accessible path



on the south side of the pier will provide for direct pedestrian and bicycle access up on to the pier from Ocean Front Walk.

On the north side of the parking lot, a 12-foot area would be reserved for pedestrian movement along the entire length, providing for a 15-foot patio in front of the existing restaurants. With the additional perimeter public access and pedestrian circulation area, the uses and activities on the Newcomb Pier would be able to further open up to the south, capturing some of the best solar access and the potential for comfortable outdoor seating. Midway through the parking lot, the area would be striped to accommodate ease of pedestrian movement through the area and aligned with a 15-foot access between the existing restaurants to the east and Area 2 to the west.

These improvements would reduce the size of the parking lot to 200 cars. The parking lot would continue to be used for special outdoor events as part of the programming undertaken by the Pier Corporation. It could also continue to serve service support and emergency access needs and be used for conveying trash and carts to storage areas created as part of construction of the new pier bridge.



*Opportunity for continuous public access with benches and seating on south side of pier*



### Area 5: Pier Walk - Carts and Outdoor Dining Areas

The reconfiguration of the circulation system will significantly enhance the public pedestrian movement areas on the north side of the pier by eliminating automobile movement when the pier is most active. The Pier Walk will extend approximately 1,400 feet from the stairs, escalators, and elevator at the foot of the pier adjacent to the Carousel all the way to the platform at the western end of the pier. It will vary in width from 30 feet adjacent to the Carousel to between 55 and 60 feet for much of the remaining length to the western edge of the Newcomb Pier, at which point it will narrow to 35 feet extending to the west to the platform upon which the Harbor Offices and Mariscal Restaurant are currently located.

On the north side of the Pier Walk, an 8-foot zone could be maintained within which vending and educational carts could be located. Currently nine carts occupy approximately 1,000 feet of pier length, and it is estimated that this number could easily double. These carts could be strategically located in clusters of 3-4, maintaining appropriate distances and breaks between them.

Immediately to the south, a minimum 20-foot corridor would be reserved for emergency vehicle access and for service delivery vehicles during the hours of 5 AM and 10 AM. During most of the day, pedestrians would flow freely within this area as they do today for a portion of that length, to the west of the parking access area.



The last component of the pedestrian Pier Walk extends between the service and vehicular access area to the building frontages. This area ranges in dimension, but for most of its length is generally 30 feet wide. Adjacent to the buildings, café extension areas could be permitted within a 12-foot area, as long as a minimum 12-foot clear pedestrian promenade adjacent to these café extension areas can be maintained. It is assumed that these would not extend for more than 80% of the frontages, for a total of approximately 6,000 square feet of additional space. In addition, carts could be located in front of each business, if associated with them. The expansion of the cart program and the café extension zones can create a more attractive and lively pedestrian experience along the length of the Pier Walk.



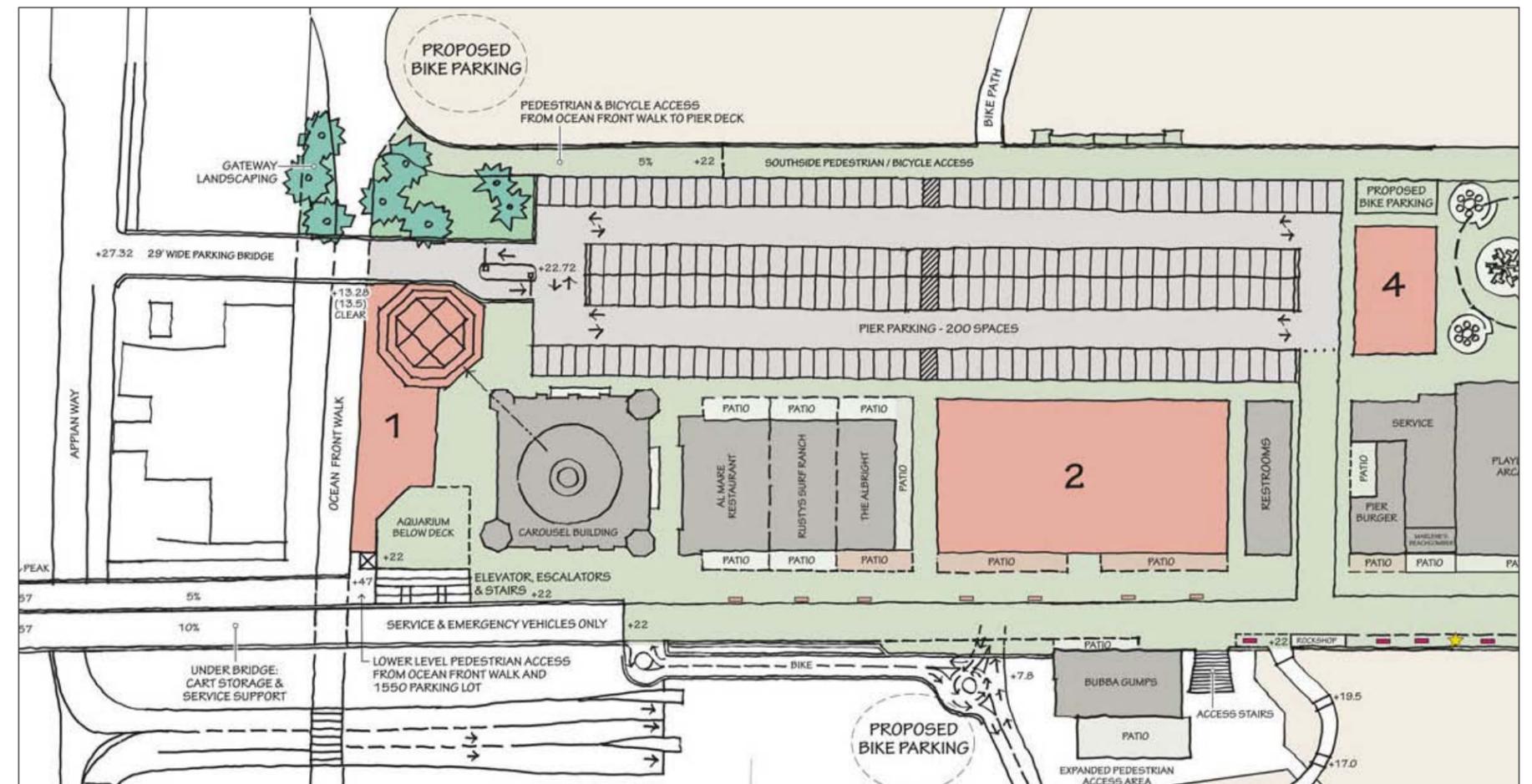
## Parking Area

Currently, a large open space, comprising about 1-1/2 acres of the Newcomb Pier is used for surface parking, accommodating approximately 270 spaces. The current layout jams as many cars as possible into the area, creates an awkward experience that is not very understandable to those that are parking and doesn't benefit the commercial uses nor public access. In addition, the access to the parking area from the pier bridge currently not only bifurcates the continuity of activity and devotes a significant portion of the pier to vehicle use, but also creates significant conflicts between pedestrians and cars.

The opportunity to rebuild the pier bridge allows for a restructuring of the pier experience, placing a much greater emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle access and connections along the new Colorado Avenue Esplanade to the Exposition Line station. The preferred alternative for a two-bridge solution also allows the opportunity to eliminate the existing pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, reclaim a large area that is currently devoted to vehicle use and reknit the pier uses back together, and provide for greater continuity and integrity to the pedestrian experience. The pier bridge project also provides for the reorganization of the existing parking lot so that it reinforces uses and activities, more readily serves drop-off functions, integrates pedestrian and public access and provides for a more understandable, convenient and attractive parking area.

Instead of a back service/support area, this study proposes that the parking area be redesigned as a flexible area that has integrity as an open space and can become a focus of activity. It would be redesigned so that it "reads" as a place where parking is allowed to take place, but that also encourages other public gatherings and special events that cannot take place elsewhere on the pier. More specifically, this space would be redefined so that it will not occupy the entire area to the south edge of the

Newcomb Pier, as it does today, but rather will set back 20 feet from the edge, to allow for a continuous pedestrian circuit all the way around the entire pier. The public access area on the south side of the pier would provide for pedestrian and bicycle access as well as benches, new chairs, railing with countertop and lighting and with a direct accessible connection to Ocean Front Walk. On the north, space would be provided for pedestrian movement and outdoor seating adjacent to existing businesses where they can take greater advantage of sun and exposure. Ample space is provided at the east and west ends for pedestrian movement and a cross-axis midway through the parking lot would provide for pedestrian movement and access from north to south. Bicycle parking is included at key points around the





*The parking lot should be seen as a flexible open space that supports drop-off, parking and service needs as well as a variety of other activities*

periphery of the pier and 25 bicycle spaces are accommodated within the pier itself adjacent to the public access area at the west end of the parking lot.

The parking reconfiguration would result in a reduction of approximately 70 spaces, for a total of about 200 spaces on the pier. This loss of parking could be replaced on the existing City property at the nearby Deauville Beach Club site to the north. In addition, it is recommended that a parking management system be put in place for all of the parking facilities in the vicinity of the pier adjacent to the beach. This system would offer real time electronic signage along Ocean and Appian Way that directs traffic, announces parking rates and indicates availability and direction of nearby parking facilities.

While the amount of square footage on the pier is expected to increase as infill occurs in underutilized areas and to accommodate new publicly-oriented uses that attract a greater diversity of the population, the need for parking is also expected to decline with improved access by transit from the Exposition Line and the investments that the City is making into improved pedestrian and bicycle linkages. All of these initiatives indicate that, in the future, the majority of visitors will arrive not by car, but by light rail and other forms of transit. With the improvements and investments in transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure underway, Santa Monica Pier can demonstrate how coastal resources can be sustainably repositioned and accessibility enhanced when regional transit connections are created and pedestrian and bicycle linkages are made.

The decision to reduce the amount of parking, particularly as activities are added to the pier, will not only be up to the City of Santa Monica, but will require Coastal Commission approval as well. The current 1992 Coastal Land Use Plan that governs use and development of the Santa Monica Pier allows for parking to be provided off the pier if in close proximity or in remote lots if a shuttle system is in place. At the same time, however, the intensity of use cannot be increased beyond the amount that can be supported by 471 parking spaces, which was the supply available that pre-dated the 1983 storms during the time when the Newcomb Pier supported a narrow band of activity and before Pacific Park had opened. The change in the plan for Santa Monica Pier will require recognition of the changing landscape of regional mobility, acknowledgement of the increasing importance of transit in providing access and confirmation of the greater value of the pier for coastal recreation. On this basis, an update of Local Coastal Plan in favor of a more vibrant recreational and commercial pier with the parking lot reconceived as a multiple use, flexible open space is warranted.

## Other Areas

The proposed opportunity areas would not affect the existing double-decked fishing areas nor the uses at the end of the pier. In the long-term future, however, there may be additional opportunities to reinvigorate the end of the pier and build upon its views and its water relationship.

In general, while the parking lot provides a site for the programming of events and activities, this portion of the pier could be improved so that it is more fully engaged in the day to day public life of the pier, strengthening its role and relationship to the beach and ocean as well as to Ocean Front Walk, which has also transformed from the front door entry to, with the parking lot, a backside that pier users turn away from.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

More and more today, concerns have begun to focus around the issues of climate change and sea level rise and how the pier will need to appropriately adapt in response to these challenges over time. While the implications of sea level rise are not fully known, what has been learned through past experience is that the coastal setting is a dynamic one, and its demands may shift, but they never end. The history of the building and rebuilding of the pier underscores the need to generate and reserve significant funds for reinvestment into the pier, to properly steward this valuable resource and protect it for the enjoyment of future generations.

It is important to maintain the integrity of a structure that extends far out over water and protect it from severe damage and/or destruction. But beyond these considerations, the pier also presents unique opportunities to express the environmental values of Santa Monica and its leadership in sustainable design. As a highly visible element in the city and region, as a city-owned public resource, and as a structure that straddles land and water and bridges urban and natural worlds, the pier is well-positioned to demonstrate leadership and explore innovative approaches to greater environmental quality and resource



conservation. The pier achieved acclaim in the 1990's as the site of the first and only solar-powered Ferris Wheel in the world and it continues to offer possibilities for pursuing other exemplary environmental projects related to water management, waste management and power generation. The pier's participation in the City's pilot programs should be accelerated, including grey water use in public restrooms, new recycling and bio waste digester programs, and encouraging multi-occupancy vehicle trips and prioritizing access via transit, walking and bicycling. In addition to these, innovative programs and technologies that address environmental sustainability and, at the same time help to address specific issues and conditions on the pier, should be pursued. For example, the pier presents a good opportunity for the implementation of innovative waste disposal systems, such as the use of an automated pneumatic trash disposal system that moves waste in pipes in the same way most other utilities are handled within the city. Pneumatic systems for waste collection and disposal have been in use for more than fifty years in Europe and in particular, in Scandinavian countries, where they are often combined with energy recovery systems. In the United States, they have increasingly been utilized in planning of medical complexes, university campuses and other locations involving large assemblies of land, complex trash disposal needs and where appearance, sanitation, energy conservation and efficiency are priorities. A pier is well-suited to such a system because it can be relatively easy to implement with a pipe below deck rather than extended in the ground. An off-site location for trash storage would need to be identified, but such a system would liberate portions of the pier that are now used for that purpose. This system could also significantly reduce or eliminate altogether, the need for trash collection vehicles and the impacts that they have on the pier structure and its activities. Furthermore, such a system could be combined with energy recovery programs that could not only help pay for the cost of the system but also generate power for the pier and potentially for the adjacent district as well.

Another example of innovation could come from the use of wave and tidal energy as an alternative source for the production of power. Significant advances are being made in tidal energy in coastal countries like South Korea where alternative sources of energy are sought through the use of tidal lagoons, tidal reefs, tidal fences and tidal barrages. Wave energy is another resource that has been explored for its potential as an alternative form of energy and which could potentially be implemented adjacent to or under the pier as well. Like solar power, the potential for capturing and converting tidal and wave energy needs to be carefully studied in consideration of local conditions and in terms of reliability, cost and efficiency as well as overall environmental benefits.

Finally, storm water quality has long been of great interest to Santa Monica, not only because of the importance of this issue but also because of the city's location at the edge of Santa Monica Bay and at the receiving end of waters flowing from a large upland watershed to the east. For the pier, storm water quality can be improved as parking improvements are made that, rather than conveying storm water to centralized areas for cleanup, it is filtered close to the source through natural means, such as bio-retention plantings. In this way, runoff is slowed down and pollutant volumes and discharge are reduced before entering the bay. All of these are approaches that have been utilized successfully in other areas of the City, such as the Public Library, and should be encouraged for implementation on the pier as well.

There are a multiplicity of potential approaches that could help to achieve greater environmental quality and resource conservation at Santa Monica Pier. All of these, in turn, can add to the educational experience for families, children and visitors to the pier through interpretative exhibits, public art interventions and special events that tie science, environment and education in a more direct and powerful way to recreation, culture and place.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial sustainability is essential to ensuring that the pier remains a prized public amenity for all Santa Monica residents for years to come. While the objectives of the pier improvements are not primarily financial, the pier's ability to generate additional revenues is critical to continuing diverse and vibrant community programming and the need to fund capital improvements and ongoing maintenance needs of a 100 year old structure continually subjected to the harsh ocean elements. An economically sustainable, and in the long-term, self-sustaining pier is crucial to achieving the goals as referenced in this study.

Economic & Planning Systems assessed the existing fiscal conditions of both the Pier Fund and the Pier Corporation in order to establish the current "baseline" fiscal condition of both entities and EPS worked with ROMA Design Group, City staff, and the Pier Corporation Board to identify potential improvements to the pier, then assessed the fiscal implications of the proposed program.

As a waterfront structure, the pier requires a high level of maintenance and repair especially as it is subjected to the additional stresses caused by climate change and sea level rise. It also requires a great deal of management and care to continue to maintain its role in the community as a recreation and open space resource and its diversity of appeal to the broadest segment of the population.

There are today unrealized potentials that can help improve the quality, flow and diversity of activities. These potentials can also contribute to revenues that are needed to help off-set the capital improvement, management and maintenance costs which will not only continue but will increase with expanded visitation and to withstand the forces of nature over time. Consideration should be given to both enhancing revenues and managing financial resources in a manner that will create a consistent and reliable basis for implementation and for the long-term viability of the pier.

## Baseline Fiscal Conditions

EPS found that Pier Fund operating revenues and operating expenses are approximately equal year over year, so that on an operating basis the fund is running at a break even basis. The Pier Fund's major revenue sources have been increasing over the past five years. However, Pier Fund capital improvement costs are significant and vary year to year, causing budget deficits in the millions of dollars since 2013. These necessary capital improvements have been covered by transfers from the City's General Fund.

To improve its operating revenues from existing uses, the Pier Fund has opportunities to augment its leases to market rate over time and increase common area maintenance (CAM) fees to correlate with the addition of new uses. Capital improvement costs associated with improvements on the pier will need to be financed by private entities through normal debt and equity sources, from private donors, or from the General Fund or other public revenues where private financing is not viable.

Pier Corporation revenues and programming have nearly doubled over the past five years. The Pier Corporation has opportunities to continue to increase its programming through long-term sponsorships and increased event revenue to the extent capacity exists to support it. There has been some concern expressed by the Pier Corporation Board that City restrictions on advertising may limit the Pier Corporation's ability to increase its revenues from sponsorships.

More detail on the baseline budgets and budget trends for both the Pier Fund and the Pier Corporation are presented in the Appendices of this report.

## Financial Evaluation of Proposed Activity Areas

The proposed activities areas, in addition to the access improvements brought about by the new bridges, and improved pedestrian and bicycling access, could offer multiple sources of new revenue, including events and new leaseholds, to help off-set future capital improvements, maintenance and operating costs.

Activity Area 1 could be strengthened to provide activities along Ocean Front Walk and create more space for the Aquarium and/or other educational and cultural uses, adding to the pier's offerings that appeal to children and young adults. About 10,000 square feet could be provided for such uses in this area. It is likely that these activities will not generate rents for the Pier Fund or revenues for the Pier Corporation, and would benefit from allocation of revenues generated elsewhere on the pier.

Activity Area 2 offers a unique opportunity to replace the current parking entry with a new building incorporating restaurant/retail activities and a year round events venue. This change would reduce pedestrian/automobile conflicts on the pier, and generate substantial revenue to support maintenance, operations and cultural offerings. A new building in this space could add about 17,000 square feet of restaurant/market space on the ground floor, and a second floor event space of about the same size. It is estimated that the ground floor commercial uses could generate about \$600,000 in annual lease and CAM revenue for the Pier Fund, and the event space could generate an additional \$400,000 per year for the Pier Corporation, in addition to providing event space for community and cultural uses at no or low cost. The Pier Corporation would require additional staff and supporting resources to manage and market the event space, which could add about \$90,000 per year to the cost of Pier Corporation operations.

Activity Areas 3 is currently rented by a short-term licensee, the Trapeze School. This area offers an opportunity for a permanent recreational/amusement/spectator use. It could be incorporated into Pacific Park to improve circulation within Pacific Park and on the pier as a whole or leased to another compatible use.

Activity Area 4, on the west side of the parking lot, could be used as a flexible open space and create an improved gateway to the amusement activities. Repurposing Area 4 would result in a loss of parking, which along with other proposed improvements to the parking lot, could result in a reduction of approximately 77 spaces. However, if these spaces were replaced in the Deauville lot, there could be a small net surplus in annual parking revenues.

Activity Area 5, which comprises outdoor space along the north side of the pier - the Pier Walk - has capacity for additional vendor carts and outdoor dining areas, and would produce new rent revenues to the Pier Fund. An additional 19 carts could be accommodated in this area, generating approximately \$350,000 in annual revenue for the Pier Fund. Expansion of outdoor dining areas for existing restaurants could potentially add additional revenue as well.

Table 1 summarizes the assumptions regarding the size and character of uses that could be accommodated on the pier. Table 2 summarizes the estimated net revenues that could be generated by each of the potential changes in use. The table summarizes both potential additional revenues and costs associated with the potential changes identified in the study. In addition to the costs to the Pier Corporation discussed above, additional annual operating costs for the new elevator and escalator are estimated to be approximately \$50,000 per year.

**Table 1: Additional Program Capacity on the Pier**

Land Use	Additional Square Feet
Commercial / Amusement	31,000
Aquarium / Educational	10,000
Event Space	17,000
Outdoor Dining	6,000
Vendor Carts (19)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,000</b>

Sources: ROMA; Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

EPS found that the proposed program would result in an operating surplus for both the Pier Fund and for the Pier Corporation. Under current provisions for revenue sharing, the Pier Access and Use Study's vision would result in an annual operating surplus of approximately \$1.6 million for the Pier Fund and \$100,000 for the Pier Corporation. Operating revenues created through pier improvements could allow for enhanced services, support for community events, and additional educational uses on the pier. Given the amount of additional revenue potential, and the additional responsibilities and costs to be incurred by the Pier Corporation, it may be appropriate to revisit the revenue sharing arrangements to ensure resources are allocated to optimize pier operations and maintenance over the long term.

**Table 2: Estimated Net Revenues for Proposed Program**

Area	Land Use	Units	Rent per Unit	Total Rent	CAM fees <sup>1</sup>	Total Revenue/(Cost)
<b>Areas</b>						
1	Aquarium/Educational	10,000 sq.ft.	\$1	\$1	--	\$1
2	Food Market/Restaurant	17,000 sq.ft.	\$27	\$467,428	\$130,050	\$597,478
	Events Space	75 events	--	\$398,438	--	\$398,438
3	Entertainment	10,000 sq.ft.	\$26	\$259,768	\$76,500	\$336,268
4	Outdoor Entertainment	4,000 sq.ft.	\$16	\$62,784	\$30,600	\$93,384
5	Carts	19 carts	\$18,354	\$348,732	--	\$348,732
<b>Parking</b>						
	Pier Parking Loss	(77) spaces	\$4,100	(\$315,734)	--	(\$315,734)
	Future Deauville Garage Parking	100 spaces	\$4,100	\$410,045	--	\$410,045
	Net Parking Revenue	23 spaces	--	\$94,310	--	\$94,310
<b>Other</b>						
	Elevator/escalator operation					(\$50,000)
	SMPC additional events - staff cost					(\$75,000)
	SMPC additional events - other cost					(\$20,000)
<b>Total Net Revenues</b>				<b>\$1,631,460</b>	<b>\$237,150</b>	<b>\$1,723,610</b>
Total Net Revenue to Pier Fund <sup>2</sup>				\$1,432,242	\$237,150	\$1,619,392
Total Net Revenue to SMPC <sup>3</sup>				\$199,219	--	\$104,219

(1) Assumes CAM fees at \$7.65 per square foot according to Pier Leasing Guidelines  
(2) Includes commercial rents, cart revenues, CAM fees, half of event revenues, net parking revenue, and elevator/escalator operation cost.  
(3) Includes half of event rental revenues and SMPC additional staff and other costs.

Sources: City of Santa Monica; Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.; ROMA Design Group



# NEXT STEPS

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To the greatest extent, the future of the pier depends upon restructuring access and circulation in a way that will enhance the general quality of the pier and open up opportunities for new activities and uses over the long term.

Many of the next steps for implementation are integrally tied to the Pier Bridge replacement project and related infrastructure improvements, such as the bicycle connection to the beach and the under-bridge storage areas.

From a physical standpoint, however, there are a number of improvements that are not necessarily linked to the Pier Bridge project and do not need to await its completion and can be pursued right away. One is to create an accessible, visible and attractive pedestrian connection from the 1550 Lot up to the pier in the vicinity of where the stairs to the beach exist today. Another important physical improvement would be to reconfigure the existing parking in a manner that would create a more attractive southern front to the pier with an area reserved for public access with benches and seating and more engaging activity edges with the restaurants and café seating areas on the north. Changes to the amount of parking will require coordination with the Coastal Commission and with other beach parking and the development of a management approach that would improve the efficiency of existing parking through re-striping and electronic signage that gives real time information on availability and location. In addition, new parking areas could be added on the Deauville lot.

The following is a list of next steps that are envisioned, however, when and how long they take and where the effort is placed will depend upon the results of strategic thinking about the pier Bridge replacement project and the costs, complexity, political will and timing required for implementation.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- Establish a list of specific actions and next steps and generate funds for implementation.
- Provide for opportunistic and emergency improvements while at the same time planning for short, medium and long-term implementation.
- Give priority to those actions that will help to improve the livability, affordability and equitable opportunity of the Pier for everyone.
- Create a program of self-sustaining improvement and management that will not result in a burden on the General Fund nor result in significant public costs.

## INFORMATION AND PLANNING STUDIES

- Survey the pier, provide vertical and horizontal information, showing features and locating leasehold limits.
- Update City's pile inspection survey to determine condition of pilings.

- Undertake a parking utilization/management study, including all of the parking resources in the vicinity of the pier to determine how to most efficiently utilize them and to determine the appropriate parking requirements given the regional light rail system and other planned transit improvements.
- Finalize development envelope for the pier, in consideration of improved transit and parking allocations.
- Initiate meetings with the Coastal Commission staff and update Local Coastal Plan.
- Continue to review development proposals for the bridge, including the incorporation of escalator, elevator and stair, under bridge storage areas, and bicycle access to the beach. Monitor the environmental review process.

## ACTION PLAN

### Early Actions

1. Make improvements to southern edge of the Newcomb Pier that includes a 20-foot wide public access way with benches, high-top chairs and new countertop railing and a directly accessible means of access to the pier from Ocean Front Walk for pedestrians and bicycles.
2. Provide for a 12-foot walkway adjacent to businesses on the north side of the pier parking lot to create a more viable and attractive setting for café seating.

3. Restripe the parking lot and create a more positive relationship to uses along its northern edge, encouraging outdoor cafe seating.
4. Provide bicycle parking on the pier at the western end of the parking lot and adjacent to the public access area and adjacent to the pier at each entry.
5. Provide a surface on the wood decking of the pier that provides for an accessible path of travel
6. Coordinate with the Aquarium (Heal the Bay) to initiate programming, design and fundraising for its expansion and develop a funding and financing approach to give the Aquarium more space, make it more prominent and visible and connected to the Ocean Front Walk frontage of the Pier to create a more attractive and engaging environment. Although the project can be initiated, implementation may be a mid-term or even long-term effort, depending upon funding and the timing of the Pier Bridge project.
7. Design future landscape and open space improvements, including the potential for adding children's play sculpture at the deck level between the Carousel building and the expanded Aquarium.
8. Provide a new accessible linkage from the 1550 Lot to the Pier and refurbish stairway connections.
9. Develop required modifications to the 1988 Pier Plan and update the Local Coastal Land Use Plan.
10. Refine programming efforts toward events and activities that can take place in the "shoulder season" and will attract people of all backgrounds, interests, and incomes to the Pier throughout the year.

11. Revisit City's restrictions on outdoor advertising on the pier to support sponsorship opportunities that would offset costs of community-oriented events produced by the SMPC.
12. Continue pursuing a program of mobile carts that will bring activities and continuity to pedestrian movement along the length of the Pier.
13. Undertake a design competition for future public art interventions and illumination of under-pier areas.
14. Establish a business improvement district to fund ambassadors and higher levels of maintenance and events management.

### Mid-Term Actions

1. Prepare solicitation documents that provide for the creation of an events center and market hall and/or ground floor eating establishment in the area made available.
2. Reduce parking when possible and improve the Deauville Lot to accommodate relocated parking.
3. Institute pedestrian way-finding signage and interpretative signage that reveals the history and environment of the Pier and engages the visitor in it.
4. Undertake historic restoration of the Carousel Building, including the restoration of its iconic onion domes, which will add to its visibility and prominence at the entrance to the pier.
5. Consider the installation of light fixtures that emulate the decorative pedestrian fixtures that originally illuminated the length of the pier.

6. Install a parking management system for the lots within the vicinity of the Pier that includes real time information on location of available parking in proximity to the pier.

### Long-Term Actions

1. Complete Colorado Avenue Bridge to the pier, with accessible and attractive pedestrian improvements.
2. Complete construction of the bicycle bridge from the new Colorado Avenue Bridge to the bike path along the beach.
3. Complete the construction of the new events center and ground level market hall on ground floor and undertake events programming for it.
4. Undertake additional events planning for the parking lot and pursue events opportunities between the Aquarium and the Carousel.



*Pier Board meeting, November 2015*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Acknowledgement is also extended to the community members that shared their thoughts at the Public Workshops*

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