

REASONS TO SUPPORT THE FISHERMAN'S WHARF PROJECT

History

Fisherman's Wharf was once a thriving retail village. The Fisherman's Wharf development was completed in the late-1970s and early-1980s. It was built by Martin "Bud" Smith, who developed much of the Harbor, including apartments, a hotel and restaurants. It was a development that took the form of an east coast cape cod village, similar to developments in a number of harbors on the California coast. It contained a mixture of restaurants and other visitor-serving commercial and retail.

When Fisherman's Wharf was developed, it was the only waterfront retail center in the Channel Islands Harbor. Fisherman's Wharf started experiencing business decline in the mid-1990s, as the structures aged and the attraction of the "village" experience started to wane.

In 2004, the County issued a Request for Qualifications seeking a developer to re-develop the site, and began working with EMC Development, who proposed a mixed-use development with 800 apartments and 85,000 square feet of commercial/retail. In 2008, EMC Development decided not to pursue the development, due primarily to the recession.

In 2012, the County issued a second Request for Qualifications, and began working with Upside Investments, who was proposing 500 apartments and 40,000 square feet of commercial/retail. In 2014, due to the cost of the project and the local opposition to the project, Upside decided to cease pursuing the development.

In 2016, the County began working with Channel Islands Harbor Properties LLC (CIHP) to develop 390 apartments and 36,000 square feet of commercial/retail. The project as envisioned will transform the current deteriorated site into a new vibrant seaside village to include restaurants, cafes, artisan food & beverage uses, retail shops, new boardwalks with alfresco dining and outdoor seating, a nautical themed public park, boat rental kiosk and public docks and 390 apartment units. The revitalized project upon completion will transform the site into a dining, retail, multi-family residential and waterside oriented recreational and leisure destination serving not only residents of Oxnard and Ventura County but visitors from throughout California and beyond. It will become the gateway to the Channel Islands Harbor.

Need for Apartments as a Financial Anchor

There is some public sentiment that the center survived as a successful retail/commercial village at one time, and should be able to do so again. The fact is that Bud Smith had an extensive development portfolio in the Harbor, and the apartments and hotel were financially successful so he could subsidize the retail components of his portfolio. When

Bud Smith's portfolio was sold and divided, each component of the portfolio needed to stand on its own financially, and Fisherman's Wharf could not do so.

It is apparent that no developer is willing at this point to re-develop the site without a financial anchor as part of the development, for the following reasons:

- There is currently a surplus of commercial/retail space in the vicinity of the Harbor with substantial existing vacancy.
- On-line shopping has severely impacted the demand for physical retail space.
- The local demographics are too weak from a retail perspective and the parcel is too small for a major tenant, such as a big-box store or an A-list restaurant.
- There is not the demand for a third hotel in the Harbor or for any other commercial use.
- Development of the commercial center and the adjacent docks would cost at least \$25 million. The optimistic annual revenue to the developer from the commercial center is \$2 million. There is no developer who would be willing to develop just the commercial/retail center without a financial anchor, which can only be residential for the reasons stated above.

Counter To Arguments Against Apartments at the Site

There are a number of arguments which opponents are making to halt the proposed development. While development is usually opposed by residents adjacent to the proposed development, particularly on the waterfront, many of these arguments are made to ensure that the vicinity around their waterfront homes will not change, even if it is beneficial for the region as a whole. Those arguments are discussed below.

Argument That There Will be a "View Loss" by the Apartments

An argument against apartments at the site is the massing/loss of water view if the apartments are built. The facts are:

- The view from Channel Islands Boulevard will stay the same. The configuration and size of the commercial buildings along Channel Islands Boulevard will be virtually the same.
- There will be no loss of current view from Victoria Avenue, because there is currently no view from Victoria Avenue at the parcel. Starting south from the 101 Freeway, a person cannot tell that he/she is adjacent to water until they are adjacent to the launch ramp, which is south of the apartment site. In addition, the

development parcel sits on elevated land, and therefore there is no loss of view from Victoria Avenue.

- The Navy Base Ventura County is east of Victoria Avenue, and the western part of the base is essentially open space, so there is no one east of the apartments for whom a view is lost.
- The view from the Paz Mar Apartments will definitely change, but it will change for the better. The water view will be maintained, and the Paz Mar residents will be able to view a new, vibrant mixed-use development instead of the decaying buildings and unused parking lot they currently view.

Argument That Apartments Are Too Large for the Harbor

An argument against apartments at the site is the “mass” of the apartment structure. The apartments will be 55-feet tall and 683-feet long (in total). There are currently buildings in the Harbor, or approved to be developed in the Harbor, which are larger. Specifically:

- Channel Islands Waterside Condos (north building) which is 250-feet long and 55-feet tall.
- Channel Islands Waterside Condos (south building) which is 250-feet long and 55-feet tall.
- Hampton Inn Hotel, which is 270-feet long and 50-feet tall.
- Approved Hyatt House Hotel Development, which will be 794-feet long and 55-feet tall.
- Paz Mar Apartments, which are 2,446 feet long and over 40-feet tall.
- Bahia Apartments, which are 350-feet long (combined) and 35-feet tall.

The planned apartment structures are consistent with other structures already in the Harbor, and will be located at a part of the Harbor which is at the outer perimeter of the Harbor, across the street from an industrial/military facility, not in the middle of the Harbor as are other similar structures.

Argument That There Are Sufficient Apartments in the Harbor

An argument against additional apartments in the Harbor is that there is a sufficient number of apartments in the Harbor. The Oxnard General Plan includes a recommended maximum number of apartments of 1,400. There are currently under 600 apartments in the Harbor, including:

- Paz Mar Apartments: 471
- Bahia Apartments: 90
- Total: 561

The development includes 390 apartments, which would result in a total of 951 for the Harbor.

It should be noted that there is a significant housing shortage in the City of Oxnard, in Ventura County and in the State as a whole. The City of Oxnard's Housing Element in its General Plan supports the need for thousands of new housing units in the City. While these apartments will not be affordable to low-income individuals, it will add to the region's housing inventory, and work to hold rents down in the region.

Argument That Traffic From the Development Will Result in a Negative Impact

Two traffic studies were provided by a professional Traffic Engineering consultant, Stantec. The traffic studies found that the currently unsignalized Victoria Avenue/Monaco Drive intersection is expected to operate in the low level of service D range under existing conditions. The full traffic study showed that the level of service D operations apply to eight vehicles on the eastbound approach only, and all other approaches would operate in the level of service A and level of service B ranges. This intersection is scheduled to be signalized as part of the City of Port Hueneme's *Victoria Mixed-Use Development*, approved on the east side of the intersection. Once signalized, the Victoria/Monaco intersection will operate at a level of service A. Also, the Victoria Avenue/Doris Avenue intersection would operate in the level of service D range during the AM peak hour. This is the only D range location in the report for impacts from cumulative projects. The proposed Fisherman's Wharf project would add V/C 0.013, which would not exceed the City's significant impact threshold of V/C 0.02.

In summary, there will be additional traffic, but for the most part it does not exceed acceptable standards, particularly in the area immediately adjacent to the proposed development. The times during the weekday when employees at the Navy Base Ventura County (NBVC) are coming to work (7 a.m. to 8 a.m.), going to lunch or leaving work (4 p.m. to 5 p.m.) will be noticeable. It already is and that will not change. Victoria Avenue is already configured so that the traffic effect from the Base is minimized.

At the very peak, traffic from the proposed development is estimated to add 2-3 cars per minute. That means that there will be 4-6 additional cars at each signal cycle at Channel Islands Boulevard and Victoria Avenue. That signal is very efficient, and that intersection normally clears each cycle.

One issue which has been raised is the need to either control (via a signal) or eliminate all left turns from the development onto northbound Victoria Avenue. We believe, and our belief is strongly supported by the traffic engineer who prepared the traffic studies, that such measures are unwarranted. The left-turn from the commercial complex onto Victoria Avenue has existed without an issue from the time the commercial center was initially developed, including times of significant utilization of the retail businesses. In addition, a new signal close to Channel Islands Boulevard would likely create more traffic issues at the Victoria Avenue/Channel Islands Boulevard intersection.

Argument That There is Insufficient Parking In the Development

There is a belief that the project does not contain sufficient parking. There are three categories of parking in the project: residential, residential guests and commercial/retail. The table below illustrates the required parking for each category, per the respective codes and based on the number of residential units and commercial square footage.

Parking Requirements	County Code	City Code
Apartment Residents	641	645
Apartment Guests	98	210
Commercial/Retail	221	208
Total	960	1,063

As you can see, for resident parking the County requires 641 spaces and the City requires 645 spaces, for guest parking for the apartments the County requires 98 spaces and the City requires 210 spaces, and for commercial/retail parking the County requires 221 spaces and the City requires 208 spaces. In total, the County code requires 960 spaces, the City code requires 1,063 spaces. The project as designed includes 974 spaces.

The key differential relates to visitors to the apartments, where there is a significant difference in the codes of the two agencies. The “visitor need” for the 390 apartment units is 98 spaces per the County code and 210 spaces per the City code. While we cannot determine how the two codes were developed, it seems more reasonable that at any one point in time, 25% of the units will have a visitor (County Code) rather than 53% of the residents having a visitor at any one point in time (City Code).

As an alternative, the parking requirements under the two codes can be more aligned if the commercial space was redefined. The parking needs for the City Code were developed using an estimate for the square footage for restaurant space. If the calculation were altered to all retail (i.e., no restaurant), recognizing that at this point it is unknown what space will be restaurant and what space will be retail, the retail/commercial parking needed under the City Code would drop from 208 to 131. As a result, the total parking need under the City Code would drop to 986, or 12 more than the number currently included in the proposed development, a minimal parking shortage which can be more easily addressed.

This is a reasonable accommodation as the parking in the development for residential guests and retail/commercial will be shared. If the commercial space is re-defined as all commercial, and it is recognized that the commercial/retail space and apartment guest space will be shared, then the City Code will require 341 spaces for retail/commercial/residential guests and the development plan has 333 spaces for retail/commercial/residential guests.

These summaries contemplate the fact that tandem parking will be allowed for residential use, in which tandem parking will be assigned for residential units requiring more than one assigned parking space.

Argument That the Development Will Eliminate Valuable Park Space

There is a perception that there will be a loss of park space with the development. Currently, there is an undeveloped natural open area which includes two picnic tables. The development would include a one-acre developed park, with interactive components for children. On the Fourth of July, there were no visitors using the undeveloped “park” site, as all were squeezing on the turf areas. While there may be an “environmental benefit” for the undeveloped open “park” area, it would be much more visitor accommodating as a developed, active park area with turf, which is part of the proposed development.

Argument That the Development Will Eliminate Valuable Open Space, Including RV Parking

There is currently a significant area which is an asphalt parking area. The County allows RVs to park there overnight for a fee, although it was never designed for this purpose and with the exception of two large events on the Harbor, it is virtually unused.

Argument That the Development Will Negatively Impact Commercial Fishing

There is currently a loading/off-loading wharf with a hoist located at Fisherman’s Wharf. The commercial fishing industry believes that wharf will be removed and not replaced. It is true that wharf will be removed, but it will be rebuilt to meet the industry’s specifications at the end of Curlew Way, funded by the developer.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is a tenet which underscores the fact that the waterfront must be developed for the good of all people, not just those that can afford to live at the waterfront. The current state of the Fisherman’s Wharf is the epitome of environmental injustice, in that there is a valuable parcel on the waterfront that is decaying and of little desire to visit.

While the development includes apartments which will be market priced, and therefore not everyone will be able to afford them, the apartments will enable the developer to totally re-develop Fisherman’s Wharf into a vibrant commercial/retail center, which will be very inviting to residents and visitors from all economic demographics. There will be enhanced

walkways and park space, retail establishments which will be inviting and exciting for families, and on-water recreational opportunities for all ages. The only way to enhance environmental justice in this area of the Harbor is to include apartments, which will help fund the retail/commercial portion of the development for the benefit of the entire City of Oxnard and larger Ventura County.

Summary

In summary, the Fisherman's Wharf proposed project needs to move forward. It has been a decaying embarrassment for far too long. The reasons to proceed are many, including:

- Three potential developers have agreed that the only way to develop the retail/commercial development is to have a financial anchor.
- Given the size of the parcel and demographics of the area, the financial anchor must be apartments.
- There are no negative view impacts.
- There are buildings in the harbor as large as this proposed development.
- There will be a slight increase in traffic, but will be overshadowed significantly by the benefit of a new retail development.
- The apartments will add to the housing inventory in the region, which is in dire need for more housing.
- The development will improve commercial fishing in the Harbor.
- The development will enhance environmental justice by replacing a waterfront area which is currently un-inviting with a vibrant, active waterfront area which is inviting to all residents of the City of Oxnard and Ventura County.