

RECIRCULATED  
PARTIAL DRAFT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan  
[SCH NO: 2016032038]



**City of Santa Cruz**  
**Economic Development Department**  
April 2023



RECIRCULATED PARTIAL DRAFT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
SANTA CRUZ WHARF MASTER PLAN  
SCH NO. 2016032038

**PREPARED FOR**  
**CITY OF SANTA CRUZ**  
Economic Development Department

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Santa Cruz, California

April 2023

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 BACKGROUND

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared by the City of Santa Cruz (City) for the proposed Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan (Project). The Project consists of the following:

- ❑ Adoption and implementation of the Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan, and
- ❑ Construction of the two following development projects recommended in the Master Plan within 2 to 5 years: Entry Gate Relocation and the East Promenade. Possible expansion of the existing Lifeguard Station may also occur within the next several years.

The Wharf Master Plan includes policies and recommendations; an overview of the Project is included in Section 1.2.

A Draft EIR was prepared for the Project and was published and circulated for public review period from March 30, 2020 through May 27, 2020. The City extended the required 45-day public review period by two weeks for a total of 59 days. After the close of the public review period, a Final EIR consisting of responses to comments and changes to the Draft EIR was completed and was released to the public on September 10, 2020.

In addition to updates provided to advisory commissions throughout the development of the Wharf Master Plan, the Project was presented to the City Parks and Recreation Commission as an informational item on September 14, 2020, and was heard by the Historic Preservation Commission on October 14, 2020 and by the Planning Commission on October 15, 2020. The Historical Preservation Commission hearing on October 14, 2020 recommended approval of the Wharf Master Plan and certification of the EIR, subject to additional recommendations including related to Wharf projects that require a Historic Alteration Permit, incorporation of historical interpretive elements, and building heights. The Planning Commission recommended certification of the EIR and Project approval to the Santa Cruz City Council, subject to additional recommendations related to clarifying the prohibition of ocean-liner style cruise ships, adding interpretive historic displays, and revising the exhibit for entry signage.

The City Council held public hearings on November 10, 2020 and on November 24, 2020, at which time the Council certified the EIR and approved the Project with nine modifications to the Wharf Master Plan that are summarized below.

- 1) A new paragraph was added to Policy 1 on page 11 relating to the intent of and restoring the characteristics that distinguish the Wharf as a unique physical and cultural landmark during its period of historic significance, including development of the three new cultural buildings and entrance signage with early consultation with the Historic

Preservation Commission to establish objective Project goals and to ensure the buildings align with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of historic resources such as the Wharf structure.

- 2) Policy 3 on page 11 was revised to indicate that the landing for docking of larger vessels would be for science, education, research, sports fishing, and whale watching and that neither the Wharf nor its landings shall be used to land, harbor, or berth ocean-liner type cruise ships nor shuttles for such vessels.
- 3) A new paragraph was added to Policy 4 on pages 11-12 relating to the Wharf's cultural resources and establishment of a concerted Wharf history program on the Wharf.
- 4) The last sentence of paragraph four (4) on page 23 of the Wharf Master Plan relating to the South Landing, was amended to indicate that the South Landing is not intended serve as a terminus for ocean liner type cruise ships of any tonnage, nor to provide moorings of extended periods of time, nor to provide shuttle access for overnight or long-haul ocean-going cruise ships of any size.
- 5) The second, third, and fourth sentence of the last paragraph of page 35, relating to The Arrival Experience was replaced in its entirety to read as:

“A 6 to 8 foot high, seventy foot long centrally located sign announcing the “SANTA CRUZ WHARF” is proposed so that it will be legible from a distance. The letters will be supported by a light framework structure that would allow them to float above the beam. These letters could also be outlined to create a more vivid and arresting visual quality in the daytime as well as in the evening. Below it, the words “Gateway to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary” would be inscribed in approximately 2-foot tall relief letters on the 4 to 4-1/2 foot face of the beam.”

“An attractive entrance sign will be centrally located atop the parking gates and will be designed to be visible from a distance, while keeping with the character of the Wharf, as determined through additional community engagement. The letters could be supported by a light framework structure that would allow them to float above the beam. These letters could also be outlined to create a more vivid and arresting visual quality in the daytime as well as in the evening. Below it, the words “Gateway to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary” might be inscribed in relief letters of up to 2-foot tall on the 4 to 4-1/2 foot face of the beam.”

- 6) The Entrance Gate exhibit on page 36 was revised to more clearly depict the image as an optional design, by removing dimensions, adding verbiage, and additional inspirational imagery. The graphic is also revised to reference itself as examples of potential signage, rather than a finished proposal.
- 7) The sixth sentence of the third paragraph on page 29 was revised to read as follows: “It should be approximately 40 to 45 up to 40 feet in height with a high-bay internal volume,



an exposed wood truss roof and clerestory windows that recommended to create a dramatic lighting effect within the space that conveys an airy open feel both inside and outside of the space.”

- 8) The Building Height Section of the Design Standards on page 49 was revised to indicate that second floor uses and roof top dining are encouraged within a maximum building height of 35 feet for commercial in-line buildings and 40 feet for the three proposed buildings, not including special appurtenances such as flag poles and architectural projections, consistent with the existing zoning.
- 9) Where appropriate in the Wharf Master Plan, language would be inserted that states, in effect, the following commitment for any potential future development at the end of the Wharf: “Any potential development at the end of the Wharf, shall preserve to the greatest extent possible, or relocate to a place of greater access and viewing quality, the popular “sea lion viewing” and “fishing” holes at the end of the Wharf. Any redesign of these features must be in keeping with the intimate experience of the current viewing holes and consistent with the character of the Wharf, as established through community engagement.”

Subsequent to the certification of the EIR and approval of the Project by the City Council, a lawsuit was filed by an unincorporated association called Don’t Morph the Wharf challenging the adequacy of the EIR and its certification. On February 18, 2022, the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Santa Cruz (hereinafter “Court”) ruled that the City’s finding that the Project would not result in significant environmental impacts related to “recreation activities on the Wharf” was not supported by substantial evidence and that the table regarding Project consistency with applicable land use policies did not provide a sufficient analysis of the “evidence of the Project’s impacts on land use”. The Court further held that the City’s CEQA findings regarding the feasibility of Alternative 2 were not adequately supported by substantial evidence in the record.

## 1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

As previously mentioned, the proposed Project consists of the following:

- Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan, and
- Construction of the two following projects recommended in the Master Plan within 2 to 5 years: Entry Gate Relocation and the East Promenade. Possible expansion of the existing Lifeguard Station may also occur within the next several years.

The Wharf Master Plan includes the following elements and recommendations.

1. *Policies and Actions*
2. *Recommendations for Expansion, New Construction and Improvements*

- *Wharf Expansion and New Facilities:* The Master Plan recommends the following new facilities: expansion of the Wharf to create a new promenade on the east side of the Wharf (East Promenade) for public pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency access; a new walkway on the west side of the Wharf (Westside Walkway); three new public use buildings, totaling approximately 15,000 square feet; and two new accessible boat landings. The Master Plan also considers remodeling and intensified use of existing structures, including potential expansion of existing commercial buildings totaling approximately 22,000 square feet and redevelopment of the existing lifeguard station.
  - *Structural Wharf Improvements:* Recommended improvements include installation of new and replacement Wharf support piles, lateral bracing, and roadway and utility improvements, including improvements to the Wharf’s pavement, drainage system, and trash collection system.
3. *Circulation/Parking.* Improvements are proposed to more efficiently utilize the existing circulation area, encourage alternative transportation, and relocate the Wharf entrance gates further south onto the Wharf. Other improvements include restriping of existing parking areas that would result in approximately 45-65 additional parking spaces, widening existing sidewalks for improved pedestrian access, and provision for up to 150 bicycle parking spaces.
  4. *Design Standards* are included in the Master Plan that address building design elements, including height, materials, design, windows, roofs and displays.

As indicated, there are two near-term projects that could be implemented. One is the proposed relocation of the Wharf entrance gate that would move the entrance approximately 540 feet farther south from its current location. An entrance gate would be constructed with six steel piles that span the Wharf’s width with roll-down transparent gates. The East Promenade would result in an 1.5-acre expansion of the Wharf on the east, retaining the same linear form as currently exists. The expansion would result in a pedestrian facility with a hardwood deck supported by approximately 525 new 12- to 16-inch timber piles.

## 1.3 REVISIONS TO DRAFT EIR

This document adds minor revisions to Section 3, Project Description, which describes proposed changes and clarifying statements to the Wharf Master Plan as a result of public hearings conducted on the Plan in 2020, and adds a new analytical section to the Draft EIR: 4.8, Parks and Recreation, in accordance with the Court judgment. All other sections of the Draft EIR, dated March 2020 and Final EIR, dated September 2020 remain unchanged. The new analytical section also addresses potential Project conflicts with adopted plans and policies related to recreation, in accordance with the Court judgment.

The minor revisions to Section 3, Project Description, don't change any of conclusions regarding impact significance that would require revisions to any other EIR section. Nor are any of the Project Description changes considered mitigation measures for significant environmental impacts.

## 1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

### 1.4.1 Recirculation of an EIR

State CEQA Guidelines section 15088.5 requires a lead agency to recirculate an EIR when significant new information is included. As used in this section of the CEQA Guidelines, the term "information" can include changes in the project or environmental setting as well as additional data or other information. New information added to an EIR is not "significant" unless the EIR is changed in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment upon a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project or a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect. "Significant new information" requiring recirculation includes, for example, a disclosure showing that:

- (1) A new significant environmental impact would result from the project or from a new mitigation measure proposed to be implemented.
- (2) A substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact would result unless mitigation measures are adopted that reduce the impact to a level of insignificance.
- (3) A feasible project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed would clearly lessen the environmental impacts of the project, but the project's proponents decline to adopt it.
- (4) The draft EIR was so fundamentally and basically inadequate and conclusory in nature that meaningful public review and comment were precluded.

In the present case, a Court judgment and writ have been issued, which necessitate further evaluation of impacts to recreation and related discussion of potential conflicts with adopted land use plans. There have been no changes to the proposed Project, other than the changes to the Wharf Master Plan previously adopted by the City Council. No other changes or conditions would warrant revisions to other sections of the EIR.

Section 15088.5 also allows the lead agency to recirculate only the chapters or portions of the Draft EIR that have been revised. The lead agency may request that reviewers limit their comments to the revised sections, and the agency need only respond to comments received during the recirculation period that relate to the revised Draft EIR sections. The City of Santa Cruz used this approach for recirculation for new EIR section and Summary of Impacts as related to recreation and land use.

### 1.4.2 Public Review of the Recirculated Partial Draft EIR

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines, this document will be available for public review for 45 days from April 17, 2023 through May 31, 2023. During this period, reviewers may submit written comments on the Recirculated Partial Draft EIR related only to the revised EIR sections included in this document. All other sections of the Draft EIR, dated March 2020 and Final EIR, dated September 2022, remain unchanged and are not subject to recirculation or additional public comment.

When an EIR is revised only in part and the lead agency is recirculating only the revised chapters or portions of the EIR, the lead agency may request that reviewers limit their comments to the revised chapters or portions of the recirculated EIR. The lead agency need only respond to (i) comments received during the initial circulation period that relate to chapters or portions of the document that were not revised and recirculated, and (ii) comments received during the recirculation period that relate to the chapters or portions of the earlier EIR that were revised and recirculated. Therefore, the City of Santa Cruz, as the lead agency, requests that reviewers limit the scope of their comments to the new section included in this document. The City will only respond to comments provided on information presented in the Recirculated Partial Draft EIR.

### 1.4.3 Final EIR / Project Approval

Upon completion of the public review period for the Recirculated Partial Draft EIR, a second volume to the Final EIR document will be completed that includes responses to comments received on the recirculated sections of the EIR. The Final EIR, Part II, will include written responses to any significant environmental issues raised in comments received during the public review period of the recirculated EIR sections in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines section 15088. The Final EIR also will include any text changes and additions to the Recirculated Partial EIR that are determined to be necessary after the lead agency's consideration of public comments.

Thus, the Project EIR includes four volumes:

- 1) Draft EIR (March 2020);
- 2) Recirculated Partial Draft EIR (April 2023);
- 3) Final EIR (September 2020); and
- 4) Final EIR, Part II (Date To Be Determined), with responses to comments on the recirculated EIR sections.

The revised EIR will be presented to the City Parks and Recreation and Planning Commissions, and ultimately to the City Council for independent review and consideration of certification. The City Council must ultimately certify that it has reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, that the EIR has been completed in conformity with the requirements of CEQA, and that the document

reflects the City’s independent judgment. Changes to the proposed Project may be required to be referred to the Planning Commission for recommendation.

Pursuant to sections 21002, 21002.1, and 21081 of CEQA and sections 15091 and 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines, no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects unless both of the following occur:

- (a) The public agency makes one or more of the following findings with respect to each significant effect:
  - 1) Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects on the environment.
  - 2) Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by such other agency.
  - 3) Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.
- (b) With respect to significant effects which were subject to a finding under paragraph (3) of subdivision (a), the public agency finds that specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the project outweigh the significant effects on the environment.

Although these determinations (especially regarding feasibility) are made by the public agency’s final decision-making body based on the entirety of the agency’s administrative record as it exists after completion of a final EIR, the draft EIR must provide information regarding the significant effects of the proposed project and must identify the potentially feasible mitigation measures and alternatives to be considered by that decision-making body.

#### **1.4.4 Adoption of Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program**

CEQA requires that a program to monitor and report on mitigation measures be adopted by a lead agency as part of the project approval process. CEQA requires that such a program be adopted at the time the agency approves a project or determines to carry out a project for which an EIR has been prepared to ensure that mitigation measures identified in the EIR are implemented. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will be included in the Final EIR, although it is not required to be included in the EIR.

## 1.5 ORGANIZATION OF RECIRCULATED PARTIAL DRAFT EIR

This Recirculated Partial Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters:

- **Section 1, Introduction**, provides background and history of the Project; explains the CEQA process regarding recirculation or partial recirculation of a Draft EIR; describes the scope and purpose of the Recirculated Partial Draft EIR; provides information on the environmental review and approval process for the Project; and outlines the organization of this document.
- **Section 2, Summary**, adds new text regarding impacts identified in the new Parks and Recreation section.
- **Section 3, Project Description**, presents proposed changes to the Wharf Master Plan directed to be made by the City Council in public hearings conducted on the Plan in 2020.
- **Section 4.8, Parks and Recreation**, presents a new Draft EIR section regarding Recreation that includes the following subsections: Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures, Cumulative Impacts, and References

# CHAPTER 2

## SUMMARY

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This Recirculated Partial Draft EIR (RPDEIR) adds a new section, 4.8-Parks and Recreation, to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the Santa Cruz County Superior Court judgment. As a result, only impacts evaluated in the new Section 4.8 in this RPDEIR, are shown in this chapter.

### 2.5 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This summary groups impacts of similar ranking together, beginning with significant unavoidable impacts, followed by significant impacts that can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, followed by impacts not found to be significant.

#### 2.5.1 Significant Unavoidable Impacts

No significant unavoidable impacts were identified as a result of the impact analyses.

#### 2.5.2 Significant Impacts

The following impacts were found to be potentially significant, but could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of identified mitigation measures should the City's decision-makers decide to readopt the previously approved mitigation measures on the project at the time of final action on the project.

**Impact REC-1: Result in Substantial Physical Impacts.** The proposed Project would not require expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment. However, the Project supports new and expanded facilities that would enhance recreational uses on the Wharf and which could result in adverse physical effects on the environment.

##### **Mitigation Measures**

Potential indirect impacts resulting from future expansion of the Wharf and other structural improvements would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1a-1, BIO-1a-2, BIO-1a-3, BIO-4, and HYD-2a.

For reader convenience, these mitigation measures are presented below, but have not been revised from the versions presented in the 2020 Final EIR and previously approved by City Council, which were unaffected by the Superior Court's judgment.

**MITIGATION BIO-1a-1** Prepare and implement a hydroacoustic, fish and marine mammal monitoring plan that implements measures to avoid exposure of marine mammals to high sound levels that could result in Level B harassment. Measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ♦ Establishment of an underwater “exclusion zone”—defined as the distance where underwater sound levels exceed 180 dB SEL<sub>cum</sub> if whales are present, and 185 dB SEL<sub>cum</sub> dB if seals and sea lions are present—will be established. This will be refined based on hydroacoustic measurements in the field and in consultation with NOAA Fisheries.
- ♦ Pre-construction monitoring by a qualified biologist to update information on the animals’ occurrence in and near the project area, their movement patterns, and their use of any haul-out sites.
- ♦ Pre-construction training for construction crews prior to in-water construction regarding the status and sensitivity of the target species in the area and the actions to be taken to avoid or minimize impacts in the event of a target species entering the in-water work area.
- ♦ Marine mammal monitoring of the exclusion zone will be conducted prior to commencement of pile driving and underwater excavation activities.
- ♦ Pile-driving activities will not commence until marine mammals are not sighted in the exclusion zone for 15 minutes. This will avoid exposing marine mammals to sound levels in excess of the Level A criteria.
- ♦ Underwater noise will be measured with a hydrophone during pile-driving to verify sound levels and adjust the size of the exclusion zone as necessary. This measurement may be conducted once and the results applied to subsequent pile installations to determine the exclusion zone.
- ♦ In-water biological monitoring to search for target marine mammal species and halt project construction activities that could result in injury or mortality to these species.
- ♦ Prohibit disturbance or noise to encourage the movement of the target species from the work area. The City will contact USFWS and NOAA Fisheries to determine the best approach for exclusion of the target species from the in-water work area.
- ♦ Data collected during the hydroacoustic, fish and marine mammal monitoring will be reported to NOAA Fisheries in a post-construction monitoring report (usually required to be



completed between 60 and 90 days after construction is complete). Observations and data will be reported more frequently, if required by NOAA Fisheries.

**MITIGATION BIO-1a-2** A soft-start procedure will be used for impact pile driving at the beginning of each day's in-water pile driving or any time pile driving has ceased for more than 1 hour. The following soft-start procedures will be conducted:

- ♦ If a bubble curtain is used for impact pile driving, the contractor will start the bubble curtain prior to the initiation of impact pile driving to flush fish from the zone near the pile where sound pressure levels are highest.
- ♦ If an impact hammer is used, the soft start requires an initial set of three strikes from the impact hammer at 40 percent energy, followed by a one minute waiting period, then two subsequent 3 strike sets. The reduced energy of an individual hammer cannot be quantified because they vary by individual drivers. Also, the number of strikes will vary at reduced energy because raising the hammer at less than full power and then releasing it results in the hammer "bouncing" as it strikes the pile resulting in multiple "strikes".

**MITIGATION BIO-1a-3** A cushion block will be used between the pile cap and the impact hammer. Layers of heavy plywood or baywood soaked in water on top of the pile cap served to dampen the sound of the hammer striking the wood as well as to dissipate friction; plywood not soaked in water was pounded to charred splinters that became very thin and had little value in attenuating sound.

**MITIGATION BIO-4** Conduct a pre-construction survey for any construction that would occur during the nesting season. No more than seven days prior to initiation of construction activities, including pile-driving, scheduled to begin during the nesting season for pigeon guillemot, western gull, or other species potentially nesting on the Wharf (April 15 through August 30, or as determined by a qualified biologist), the City shall have a nesting bird survey conducted by a qualified biologist to determine if active nests of bird species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or the California Fish and Game Code are present in the disturbance zone or within 150 feet of the disturbance zone.

Pre-construction surveys for pigeon guillemots and pelagic cormorants shall include inspection of areas underneath the Wharf

for indications of nesting (by kayak or other method adequate for examining remote crevices and pilings). Because pigeon guillemot are difficult to detect, adequate surveys will require surveyors to observe for multiple hours before forming conclusions about occupancy.

If active nests for pigeon guillemots or pelagic cormorants are found, establish a buffer zone of 150 feet between each nest and construction activities under the wharf deck that could disturb nesting birds, especially pile driving. Construction activities likely to disturb nesting western gull can be resumed when the nest is vacated and young have fledged, as determined by the biologist, and if there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

If active nests for western gull or other species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or the California Fish and Game Code are found, establish a buffer of 100 feet between each nest and construction activities that could disturb nesting birds. Examples of such activities include pile-driving, use of power tools, and above-deck construction activities identified by a qualified biologist as likely to disturb the nesting western gulls. Construction activities likely to disturb nesting western gull can be resumed when the nest is vacated and young have fledged, as determined by the biologist, and if there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

The nesting disturbance buffer for any species may be reduced if a qualified biologist, in consultation with CDFW, determines that the proposed construction is unlikely to disturb the nesting birds, considering factors including, but not limited to, level of existing ongoing disturbance, the temporary level of disturbance from construction, and visual and sound obstructions between the birds and the disturbance, such as rows of piles or existing buildings.

- MITIGATION HYD-2a** Implement the following measures during construction of the Wharf substructure (piles, beams and decking):
- ◆ Install a floating boom that can be placed in the water to encompass the work area. Any timber that inadvertently falls into the water will float and be captured by the boom. Any metal (hand tools or bolts) that falls into the water can be retrieved by magnet or diver if necessary.
  - ◆ The crane that installs the piles and beams may have the hydraulic system fit with vegetable oil so that in the event of a

hose failure, no petroleum based substance will contact the water, but rather food grade vegetable oil.

- ♦ Any fueling operations of the equipment is conducted on a containment area utilizing plastic sheeting and absorbent pad containment to contain any spills during fueling over the water.

**MITIGATION HYD-2a** If visual evidence of contamination is observed (e.g., oily sheen) during in-water construction, all work shall stop and appropriate containment measures shall be used to identify the source of the contamination (e.g., buried creosote piles), contain, and/or remove the material; regulatory agencies with authority over the area shall be notified, i.e., the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Services or Department of Toxic Substances Control. Any hazardous materials needing to be removed shall be handled and disposed of in accordance with the requirements of federal and state regulations.

### 2.5.3 Less-Than-Significant Impacts

The following impacts were found to be less-than-significant. Mitigation measures are not required.

**Impact REC-2: Increased Use of Recreational Facilities.** The proposed Project would potentially result in increased use of the Santa Cruz Wharf, which is considered a recreational facility, but not to the extent that such use would result in substantial accelerated physical deterioration of the facility.

**Impact REC-3: Conflict with Existing Recreational Facility Uses and Policies.** The proposed Project would not conflict with and/or eliminate established recreational, educational, or scientific uses at the Santa Cruz Wharf or conflict with policies protecting or encouraging recreational uses of the area.

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# CHAPTER 3

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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**NOTE:** Some minor changes and clarifying statements have been made to the Wharf Master Plan, and revisions have been made to this Project Description to reflect those Master Plan changes as directed to be made by the City Council in public hearings conducted on the Plan in 2020. Revisions are shown in underline text for additions and ~~strikeout~~ text for deletions. These revisions do not change any conclusions regarding impact significance that would require revisions to any other EIR section. Nor are any of the Project Description changes considered mitigation measures for significant impacts. These revisions are provided only in order to conform the EIR project description to the Council’s prior direction regarding the details of the Wharf Master Plan.

### 3.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Santa Cruz Wharf is situated at the southern end of Pacific Avenue at Beach Street within the Beach Area of the City of Santa Cruz. Figure 1<sup>1</sup> shows the Wharf location in relation to the Beach and Downtown areas of Santa Cruz. The Wharf extends into Monterey Bay for a distance of approximately 2,700 feet; the initial 200± feet span the City’s Main Beach. From shallow waters at the shore, the Wharf extends to water depths of 35 feet at its far end and stands approximately 23 feet MLLW<sup>2</sup> level. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and the City’s Main Beach are located to the east, and Cowell Beach and the Dream Inn are located to the west. A mix of visitor-serving and commercial uses is located along Beach Street to the north of the Wharf. The Wharf is entirely sited within the Santa Cruz Harbor, as conveyed by the California State Lands Commission (Chapter 1291, Statutes of 1969).

Monterey Bay was designated a national marine sanctuary by the federal government in 1992. The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) extends from Cambria on the south to Marin County on the north, encompassing 276 miles of shoreline. It extends seaward an average of 30 miles from shore—covering more than 5,000 square miles of ocean. The Sanctuary, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), was established to promote resource protection, research, education, and public use. It boasts one of the most diverse marine ecosystems in the world, including the nation’s largest kelp forest and one of North America’s largest underwater canyons. The Santa Cruz Wharf and associated Beach Area are located within the MBNMS boundaries.

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<sup>1</sup> All figures are included in Chapter 7 at the end of the document for ease of reference as some figures are referenced in multiple sections.

<sup>2</sup> MLLW is a tidal datum that refers to Mean Lower Low Water.

The Wharf is approximately 55 feet wide at the entrance and increases in width to about 80 feet at the first parking area, and approximately 130-250 feet in the area of the east parking lot and structural development. The Wharf is supported by 4,445 12 to 16-inch diameter Douglas fir timber piles<sup>3</sup>. On average, piles are driven approximately 20 feet (or to the point of refusal) into the sand seafloor in rows (bents) at approximately 15-foot centers and spaced along the row. The bents are spanned by 6 x 12 inch and 4 x 12 inch beams (“stringers”). At the south end of the Wharf, horizontal members (ledgers) were installed at elevation 9 ft. MLLW (12 feet below top of pile) to provide lateral bracing to the piles, which are longer due to water depth at the end. The photo above shows a representative view of the Wharf pile and bent components. On average, 10 to 30 piles are replaced each year. Two inches of asphalt paving overlays the Wharf deck on roads and walkways.



The Wharf currently is approximately 7.5 acres in size, 67% of which is used for vehicular circulation, parking and commercial development; approximately 50% of the Wharf is used for vehicular circulation and parking. There are 433 vehicle and 16 motorcycle public parking spaces on the Wharf, some of which have been leased or used for Wharf operations. The parking areas also include large enclosures for trash collection, Wharf equipment, rental boats and a variety of other appurtenances.

The Wharf is one of a number of destination attractions in the City’s Beach Area; the beach area is an important visitor attraction during the summer months and on weekends during the off season when the Boardwalk is open. The Wharf currently has approximately 60,000 square feet of commercial building space, which is occupied by tenants with a variety of short- and long-term ground leases, building leases and licenses from the City. Of this total, approximately 40,000 square feet is leased to restaurants and 20,000 square feet to retail uses, almost all of which are located along 1,300 feet of frontage on the west side of the Wharf. Other buildings on the Wharf include a building for Wharf maintenance and operations and a lifeguard building.

The Wharf provides opportunities for pier fishing, as well as kayak and small fishing boat rentals. There are five active landings presently on the Wharf for boat access. Two are available to the public, two for boat and kayak rentals, and a landing is used by Wharf Staff. These landings are all functional, but they are subject to seasonal wave damage (Moffatt & Nichol, October 2014). There also are remnants of a landing that was formerly used by the party fishing boat operated by

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<sup>3</sup> It is noted that the Wharf Master Plan Engineering Report references existing 12-inch piles. The piles average 12 inches in diameter with a 14-inch nominal butt (top end of the pile) diameter. However, because some of that butt diameter reaches 16 inches, this is the measurement that is typically used by regulatory agencies, and which is used in this EIR to describe existing piles.

Stagnaro family, located at Bent 103. The fixed landing is still in place, but the dock was removed and is not accessible (Ibid.). The existing landings include:

- ❑ *Kayak Access* (Bent 52): This landing is used by the kayak rental business on the Wharf. There is a small floating dock accessed by a ladder from the fixed landing and storage shelves beneath the Wharf for kayaks and equipment. The dock is used only by patrons of the kayak rental and has a locked gate at the top of the stair when the business is closed.
- ❑ *Boat Rental Landing* (Bent 68): There is a small landing used by the fishing boat rental concessionaire. Directly above the landing is a crane used to lower the wooden rental boats into the water. This facility is used solely by patrons of the boat rental concessionaire.
- ❑ *Public Landing 1* (Bent 72): A landing with a floating dock the length of the landing is available for public use for short-term loading and off-loading to Santa Cruz Wharf.
- ❑ *Wharf Staff Landing* (Bent 80): This landing is used by the Wharf staff to launch their boats for access to the underside of the Wharf for maintenance and repair work. There is a 3-ton jib crane installed above to launch their boat and other municipal boats for emergencies.
- ❑ *Public Landing 2* (Bent 150): This is the second public and most southerly landing available to the public for short-term loading and offloading to Santa Cruz Wharf. There is no floating dock and access is by a ladder that is used at all water levels.

The Wharf also supports demonstration and/or research projects. In 2011, the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) in collaboration with the City of Santa Cruz undertook a study to evaluate solar and wind renewable energy technologies at the Wharf. With approval from the California Coastal Commission, the project included the temporary installation of a solar panel, a small-scale vertical axis wind turbine, and sensors on a platform on the roof of the Wharf Headquarters building. During the summer of 2015, a sun-powered streetlight was installed to test new solar technology.

## 3.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Santa Cruz Wharf extends into the Monterey Bay between Cowell and Main Beaches for a distance of approximately a half a mile and is owned and operated by the City of Santa Cruz. It is a major visitor attraction featuring restaurants, fishing areas, fish markets, gift shops and other businesses. A brief history of the Wharf is provided below, which is summarized from information provided in the *Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan*.

### 3.2.1 Wharf History

The Santa Cruz Wharf is the last remaining of six piers constructed along the Santa Cruz shoreline. It was built in 1914 as a City-owned and operated facility, primarily for shipment of materials. The

Wharf is a timber pier, entirely constructed of wood and supported by approximately 4,445 Douglas fir piles. The Wharf is the longest timber pile-supported pier structure in the United States and one of the longest in the world. Called a wharf because of its early function in off-loading cargo, the Santa Cruz Wharf is actually a pier structure that extends to deep water, historically facilitating the mooring of large vessels, unlike a wharf which typically runs parallel to the shore. The Santa Cruz Wharf originally was envisioned as a commercial enterprise built with public funds to further the economic development of the City. A public bond for construction of the original commercial Wharf was approved by 97.8% of Santa Cruz voters in December ~~1913~~<sup>2013</sup>. Soon after its construction, the Wharf became an attractive facility for the mooring and off-loading of commercial fishing vessels including seafaring passenger vessels along the Pacific coast.

Since its construction in 1914, the Wharf has expanded several times, from approximately 4.2 acres to 7.5 acres today. The Wharf increased by 3.3 acres between the 1950s and the 1980s for commercial uses and parking. Figure 2 illustrates the expansion of the Wharf over time.

Over the years, the Wharf has evolved in role, function and identity. From its initial role as a cargo handling and shipping pier to its later adaptation to serve the commercial fishing industry, the early decades of the Wharf were closely tied to the resources of Monterey Bay. After World War II and beginning in the 1950s, the Wharf was significantly expanded for commercial uses and parking. The commercial uses were initially a direct outgrowth of the commercial fishing industry, incorporating fish sales and featuring prepared seafood dishes in an open air setting in close conjunction with off-loading and handling of the daily catch.

The Wharf no longer serves the commercial fishing industry. Currently, the Wharf is one of a number of destination attractions in the Beach Area of the City. The City estimates that approximately 2.5 million visitors currently come to the Wharf annually. Although the Wharf provides opportunities for pier fishing, kayak and small fishing boat rentals, the Wharf's current identity is primarily related to the commercial uses along its length.

### 3.2.2 City Plans Regarding Wharf Studies

The need for a comprehensive study of the Wharf is identified in several City plans. The City's existing Local Coastal Plan (LCP) includes policies that call for: updating the design guidelines for the Wharf area, addressing the area's importance as both a center of tourism and residential area (LU 2.2.1); developing and implementing a promotion and management plan aimed at attracting local residents and enhancing recreational and economic opportunities and promoting visitor use (ED 2.4.3, ED 5.5.3); and analyzing parking for and access to the Wharf (CIR 6.4.2.7, PR 1.7.1.2, PR 1.7.1.3). The Wharf is also one of nine access components described in the LCP "Access Plan".

The Beach/South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan (B/SOL Plan), adopted by the City Council in 1998, recommends that a comprehensive analysis of the Wharf be conducted. In 2002, the California Coastal Commission approved a LCP Amendment that replaced the former Beach Area



Plan policies with new policies that were developed from recommendations and provisions in the B/SOL Plan. Specifically, policy LU 2.7 calls for completion of a comprehensive analysis of the Wharf to include study of its two fundamental and interrelated aspects: maritime and retail uses. Additionally, the policy indicates that the study should examine the feasibility of expanding maritime activity, visitor amenities, and expanding local resident marketing. The policy indicates that elements of this study should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Physical inventory;
- Access, circulation and parking;
- Additional maritime potential;
- Marine sanctuary potential;
- Design and architectural character;
- Signature physical features or programs;
- Retail mix and performance; market niche; and
- A cost/benefit analysis of recommendations stemming from analysis.

The City's *General Plan 2030*, adopted in June 2012, also addresses the Wharf to include linking Downtown and the Wharf (LU3.5) and fostering improved recreational and economic opportunities at the Wharf (LU3.5.3).

### 3.2.3 Current Wharf Master Plan Effort

In July 2013, the City embarked on preparation of the Santa Cruz Wharf Plan, which was prepared with federal funds through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). An extensive early public engagement process was conducted through a series of meetings with Wharf tenants, neighbors, businesses, civic groups, educational and scientific organizations, recreational and marine oriented interests and other stakeholders in the community as well as the Coastal Commission staff and city departments. The Wharf Master Plan was completed in October 2014. As part of the Master Plan effort, an engineering review was conducted to assess the condition of the piles, the overall integrity of the structure and the paving and substrate of roadways, parking areas and sidewalks. In October 2014, the City Council accepted the Wharf Master Plan and Engineering Report and directed staff to proceed with environmental review and authorized the City Manager to execute all documents and take any other administrative actions necessary to complete the environmental review.

## 3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Section 15124 of the State CEQA Guidelines indicates that the EIR Project Description shall include a statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project. A clearly written statement of

objectives will help the lead agency develop a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in the EIR and will aid the decision makers in preparing findings or a statement of overriding considerations, if necessary. The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project. The following are the project objectives provided by the project Applicant.

The Wharf Master Plan recognizes that the Wharf serves different roles within the City, and the Plan addresses a number of study objectives established by the City related to economic development, design and development standards, re-visioning of public spaces, enhancement of recreational use and public access, integration of educational and scientific resources and assets, and public safety. The project objectives<sup>4</sup> that were articulated during the development of the Wharf Master Plan and/or emerged or were reinforced during the community outreach and planning process include:

1. Enhance opportunities for recreational use and public access.
2. Expand and enhance maritime activities.
3. Integrate education and research initiatives.
4. Promote sustainable development and sound green building practices.
5. Enhance the pedestrian environment and provide improved bicycle facilities.
6. Prepare design approaches that will provide guidance and elevate the quality of buildings and public spaces.
7. Improve parking control systems and create a more inviting arrival experience.
8. Improve service and maintenance operations.
9. Enhance public safety.
10. Improve business and economic development opportunities
11. Increase the effectiveness of leasing, marketing and regulatory practices.

The Plan presents the following three strategies to address these objectives:

- 1) *Engage the Bay and Expand Public Access, Recreation and Boating.* The first strategy calls for the physical expansion of the perimeter of the Wharf for public access, recreation, fishing and boating. Planned improvements include a wide promenade on the east side of the Wharf, two new boat landings, overlooks, and the completion of a walkway on the west side of the Wharf.

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<sup>4</sup> In its comments on the EIR Notice of Preparation, California Coastal Commission staff suggested that Coastal Act section 30251 regarding protection of scenic views and visually compatible development be included as a project objective. However, protection of scenic views to and along the coastline, as well as, requirements for compatible development are existing Local Coastal Plan (LCP) policies (CD 2.1.2 and CD 2.20). See section 4.7, Land Use, of this EIR for further discussion.

- 2) *Enhance Existing Public Space and Activities, Circulation and Parking.* The second strategy is aimed at enhancing the existing public areas on the Wharf, including the area devoted to vehicular circulation and parking and three underutilized public spaces: 1) where the deck widens to accommodate commercial uses; 2) where the direction of the line of commercial buildings changes (“The Commons”); and 3) at the southern end of the Wharf. This strategy includes the reorganization of existing parking areas for greater efficiency, to reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, and to create a more attractive entrance. For the key underutilized public spaces, the strategy is aimed at expanding opportunities for publicly-oriented activities and creating a built form that gives orientation to the visitor experience and adds diversity to the Wharf’s venues.
- 3) *Improve Commercial Vitality and Building Design.* The third strategy calls for expanding the number, mix and attractiveness of commercial uses on the Wharf within the existing footprint devoted to these purposes with preparation of a marketing plan to guide City efforts for outreach to potential tenants.

## 3.4 PROJECT COMPONENTS

The proposed project that is evaluated in this Draft EIR consists of:

- A. Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan; and
- B. Construction of the two following projects recommended in the Master Plan within 2 to 5 years: Entry Gate Relocation and the East Promenade. Possible expansion of the existing Lifeguard Station may also occur within the next several years.

This EIR considers the impacts of both the implementation of the Wharf Master Plan, as well as construction of the first two projects to be implemented pursuant to the Plan—the Entry Gate Relocation and the East Promenade. All elements of the Master Plan are considered in the impact analyses, although some elements, such as policies and design standards, might serve to avoid or mitigate potential impacts. Specific recommended improvements and buildings also are evaluated to the degree that the improvements are described in the Master Plan. Further description is provided below.

### 3.4.1 Wharf Master Plan Description

#### Overview of Master Plan Elements and Recommendations

The Wharf Master Plan includes the following elements and recommendations, which are further described in the following subsections.

1. *Policies and Actions*
2. *Recommendations for Expansion, New Construction and Improvements*

- ❑ *Wharf Expansion and New Facilities:* The following new facilities are proposed: a new promenade on the east side of the Wharf; a new walkway on the west side of the Wharf; three new public use buildings; and two new Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible boat landings. The Master Plan also considers remodeling, infill, and intensified use of existing structures. Figure 3-1 shows the Master Plan conceptual layout and location of new and expanded facilities.
  - ❑ *Structural Wharf Improvements:* Recommended improvements include installation of new and replacement Wharf support piles, lateral bracing, and roadway and utility improvements, including improvements to the Wharf’s pavement, drainage system, and trash collection system.
3. *Circulation/Parking Circulation/Parking.* Improvements are proposed to more efficiently utilize the existing circulation area, encourage alternative transportation, and relocate the Wharf entrance gates further south onto the Wharf. Other improvements include restriping of existing parking areas that would result in approximately 45-65 additional parking spaces, widening existing sidewalks for improved pedestrian access, and provision for up to 150 bicycle parking spaces.
  4. *Design Standards* are included in the Master Plan that address building design elements, including height, materials, design, windows, roofs and displays.

### ***Development Overview***

The proposed improvements would expand the Wharf by approximately 2.5 acres, and as a result, sections of the Wharf devoted to public access, recreation and open space would increase from 26% to 60%. These improvements include the East Promenade, Westside Walkway and two boat facilities; the locations are conceptually shown on Figure 3-2. Three new buildings would result in approximately 15,000 square feet of new building space for public-oriented uses. A series of three-dimensional model renderings of proposed structural improvements is shown on Figure 3-3. The Master Plan also identifies two specific locations for potential infill of existing commercial space that could result in construction of approximately 4,000 square feet and provides a preliminary estimate of additional potential expansion of existing buildings. The existing building footprint, as well as the area for vehicular circulation and parking, would be maintained, but reconfiguration of existing parking areas is proposed, which could provide a 10-15% increase in the number of spaces within the existing parking footprint (approximately 45-65 spaces).

### ***Visitor Use***

Overall visitor use at the Wharf could increase, although there are no projections of future visitor use at the Wharf. The City estimates that approximately 2.5 million visitors currently come to the Wharf annually. Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan could result in some increase in visitors to the Wharf due to: 1) enhancement of existing public spaces, including expansion and increased public and private events at the Wharf; 2) expansion of opportunities for boat tours, fishing and

research vessels, and small craft launches; and 3) potential increase in commercial uses and parking within the existing development footprint. A specific level of increased use cannot be accurately estimated. The environmental analyses in this EIR consider potential increases in visitor use of the Wharf in relevant sections based on the range and characteristics of improvements proposed in the Master Plan.

### ***Demonstration Projects***

One of the Master Plan “Actions” is to provide opportunities for research and demonstration projects, including but not limited to the marine environment, energy, water use, and recycling. Specific types of projects are not identified, but based on existing demonstration projects underway at the Wharf (wind research, photovoltaic energy), such projects are anticipated to be related to scientific research and in some cases could involve temporary installations or uses. The Master Plan Actions also call for the City to foster and participate in mutually cooperative relationships and ventures with science and educational entities such as the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center, the Seymour Marine Discovery Center, the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, and the University of California at Santa Cruz.

## **Policies and Actions**

The Wharf Master Plan includes ten policies and supporting actions that address the preservation, restoration, improvement, and management of the Wharf over time. According to the Master Plan, the policies and actions “recognize the importance of the Wharf as a visual and historic landmark, its potential as a more significant recreational and open space resource within the unique environmental setting of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and its potential for becoming a more attractive commercial recreational destination that contributes to the quality of life and economic vitality of the Beach Area, the City and the region as a whole.” Table 3-1 summarizes the Master Plan’s policies and supporting actions.

**Table 3-1. Summary of Wharf Master Plan Policies & Actions**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Action [SEE MASTER PLAN FOR FULL TEXT]</b>
1. Maintain and restore the characteristics that distinguish the Wharf as a unique physical and cultural landmark during its period of historic significance, when its role was closely related to the bay and maritime and commercial fishing activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain timber piles and wood sub-structure construction.</li> <li>▪ Maintain linear form of the Wharf with an open leeward side and buildings clustered on the windward edge.</li> <li>▪ Construct a new Landmark Building at the bayward end of the Wharf.</li> <li>▪ Utilize renewable hardwood or <u>hardwood-inspired</u> decking in pedestrian areas.</li> <li>▪ <u>Design new buildings to help restore Wharf’s historical character; develop three new buildings and signage in consultation with City Historic Preservation Commission.</u></li> </ul>
2. Strengthen the Wharf and increase its resiliency to extreme weather conditions, seismic events and sea level rise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue maintenance and ongoing replacement of piles and decking.</li> <li>▪ Provide continuity of stringers and caps and additional bolts.</li> <li>▪ Increase vertical piles along width of Wharf.</li> <li>▪ Provide outriggers in the deeper water area.</li> <li>▪ Limit truck traffic to minimize damage to Wharf paving and substrate.</li> </ul>

Table 3-1. Summary of Wharf Master Plan Policies &amp; Actions

Policy	Action [SEE MASTER PLAN FOR FULL TEXT]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Install guard piles and lateral supports as part of Westside Walkway to protect piles beneath Wharf buildings.</u></li> </ul>
<p>3. Provide for the expansion of the perimeter of the Wharf to create more significant opportunities for public access, fishing, open water swimming, boating and linear recreational activities that will orient the visitor to the Bay and engage the waterfront environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construct a wide promenade along the eastern edge.</li> <li>▪ Construct a walkway on the western side.</li> <li>▪ Design the access improvements to add to structural resilience.</li> <li>▪ Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities/ connections to trail systems.</li> <li>▪ Provide new accessible boating and landing facilities.</li> <li>▪ Construct a South Landing facility on the east side adjacent to the East Promenade for kayak, paddleboat and fishing boat rentals.</li> <li>▪ Construct a landing facility for larger vessels at the eastern bayward end for science, education, research, sports fishing and whale watching. <u>Neither the Wharf nor its landings shall be used to land, harbor or berth ocean liner cruise ships or shuttles for such vessels.</u></li> <li>▪ Construct a new gangway, float and ladder adjacent to the Westside Walkway and near the Gateway Building for open water swimming and <u>water sports.</u></li> <li>▪ Utilize the new recreation, public access and open space improvements to enhance the identity and market appeal of Wharf.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Provide public oriented activities and a built form that gives structure and orientation to the visitor experience, expresses the unique characteristics of the Wharf and provides a more diverse and varied dimension to its venues and offerings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heighten the visual, historic and environmental characteristics of three underutilized locations.</li> <li>▪ Construct a Landmark Building.</li> <li>▪ Provide a stepped edge along the eastern bayward end adjacent to the Landmark Building.</li> <li>▪ Create a stepped overlook that extends out into the bay.</li> <li>▪ Consider relocation of the Marcella to a more prominent location and consider expanding the collection of historic vessels.</li> <li>▪ Construct a multi-sided, <u>all-season</u> Events Pavilion.</li> <li>▪ Construct a Gateway Building at the beginning of the Wharf.</li> <li>▪ Consider locating changing rooms, restrooms and a sauna and a gathering space of limited size in a portion of the Gateway Building.</li> <li>▪ Design the Landmark Building, Events Pavilion and Gateway Building to heighten their prominence and architectural distinction.</li> <li>▪ Develop programming for public-oriented activities for Landmark Building.</li> <li>▪ <u>Develop Wharf Interpretive Resources Plan to identify opportunities and strategies for conveying Wharf historic, cultural and environmental education through historic materials, interpretive elements and public art. Consider locations to develop a museum dedication to the Wharf and Beach area.</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Future development at the end of the Wharf shall preserve or relocate to a place of greater access and viewing quality, the popular “sea lion viewing” and “fishing” holes at the end of the Wharf.</u></li> </ul>
<p>5. Provide for an increase in the number, diversity, seasonality and appeal of events and make the educational, scientific, historic, environmental and cultural dimensions of the Wharf an integral and meaningful part of the visitor experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <del>Develop plan</del> <u>Ensure that the Wharf Interpretive Resources Plan</u> for interpretative elements and events is updated on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>▪ Designate an Events Curator to implement the <u>Wharf Interpretive Resources</u> Plan and to manage and promote year-round events and interpretative programs.</li> <li>▪ Provide integration of scientific and educational initiatives and nonprofit and for-profit activities within the Gateway Building.</li> <li>▪ Provide interpretative elements.</li> <li>▪ Encourage mobile exhibits, docents and dynamic messaging.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for research and demonstration projects including but not limited to the marine environment, energy, water use and recycling; foster and participate in mutually cooperative relationships and ventures with science and educational entities such as the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center, the Seymour Marine Discovery Center, the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, <u>Monterey Bay</u></li> </ul>

Table 3-1. Summary of Wharf Master Plan Policies &amp; Actions

Policy	Action [SEE MASTER PLAN FOR FULL TEXT]
	<p><u>Aquarium Research Institution (MBARI), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the University of California at Santa Cruz.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify an appropriate location for the Surfing Museum.</li> <li>▪ Consider use of the Events Pavilion for community celebrations.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Do not expand the Wharf for vehicular circulation and parking but utilize the existing footprint more efficiently and effectively for these functions and to improve the arrival experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eliminate visual clutter and physical obstructions within the parking area.</li> <li>▪ When the East Promenade is constructed, restripe the parking lot to provide for perpendicular spaces and a widened sidewalk.</li> <li>▪ <u>With parking restriping, consider a variety of parking space sizes to accommodate diversity of vehicle sizes.</u></li> <li>▪ Relocate the parking control booths southward.</li> <li>▪ Improve parking management systems.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the use of validation and demand pricing systems.</li> <li>▪ Improve alternative modes of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit and shuttles.</li> <li>▪ Provide a row of efficient high quality light fixtures on the east side of the parking spine and remove the light fixtures on the west side. Incorporate lighting onto the building frontages and storefronts for the sidewalk area. <u>Reduce light pollution when feasible.</u></li> <li>▪ Improve the paving and substrate of the vehicular access and parking areas.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Do not expand the Wharf footprint for commercial uses but within the existing footprint, increase the amount, intensity, diversity, and appeal of the commercial venues on the Wharf.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the number and continuity of business and create a mix of shops, take-out, and eating and drinking establishments.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for establishments of different sizes, offering a variety of products and menus, and a mix of businesses.</li> <li>▪ Encourage small food and retail carts at selected locations.</li> <li>▪ Select Wharf businesses and activities that reflect the unique culinary, artisanal and environmental attributes of the region.</li> <li>▪ Allow and encourage the use of upper floors to free up the ground floor spaces for active, publicly-oriented uses.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the use of wind-protected rooftop terraces for outdoor dining.</li> <li>▪ <u>Consider pop-ups, events, short-term commercial uses, and temporary recreational facilities to activate underutilized Wharf areas.</u></li> </ul>
<p>8. Improve the appearance of the commercial buildings, the attractiveness of the storefronts and adjacent sidewalk and the quality of the pedestrian experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design storefronts to create a positive relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces and encourage commercial uses that open to the sidewalk.</li> <li>▪ Provide for transparency in the commercial storefronts, encouraging views through to the west as well as to the making of goods and products.</li> <li>▪ Discourage and limit blank walls, indented entrances and angular building facades. Utilize shallow liner uses along the sidewalk to encourage pedestrian engagement.</li> <li>▪ Encourage sloped roofs with clerestory windows and enclose mechanical equipment within the roof volume.</li> <li>▪ Promote a continuous permanent canopy over the sidewalk with integrated lighting and signage.</li> <li>▪ Reduce impediments to pedestrian movement along the sidewalk and maintain the finished floor of storefronts at sidewalk grade.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Improve public services and facilities and enhance a sense of safety, security, comfort and convenience on the Wharf.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide efficient and effective way of collecting trash and refuse.</li> <li>▪ Increase the presence of police and security.</li> <li>▪ Improve and enlarge public restrooms in three locations at the end of the Wharf, adjacent to Wharf Headquarters and at the Events Pavilion.</li> <li>▪ Expand the lifeguard station.</li> <li>▪ Design Wharf entrance so Wharf can be fully closed for both vehicles and pedestrians in after hours in an attractive and unobtrusive way.</li> <li>▪ Limit anchorages on the windward west side of the Wharf and implement the west walkway not only to provide public access.</li> </ul>

Table 3-1. Summary of Wharf Master Plan Policies &amp; Actions

Policy	Action [SEE MASTER PLAN FOR FULL TEXT]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a coordinated plan for rapid response, evacuation and protocols to be followed in the event of an emergency.</li> <li>▪ Evacuate the Wharf during periods of predicted extreme waves.</li> </ul>
10. Implement proactive management, leasing and marketing for the Wharf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop marketing plan and actively solicit innovative, desirable and sustainable new enterprises.</li> <li>▪ Pursue a proactive approach to tenant selection and utilize a competitive bid process for tenants.</li> <li>▪ Pursue coordinated advertising and promotional efforts.</li> <li>▪ Prepare implementation program that identifies potential funding for improvements and for on-going maintenance and management.</li> <li>▪ Augment staff resources to better achieve market, promotional, and tenancing opportunities as well as for the design of projects.</li> </ul>

## Proposed New Facilities and Development

### *East Promenade and Walkways*

A new promenade along the eastern side of the Wharf and a new walkway on the western side of the Wharf are proposed. According to the Master Plan, the East Promenade will provide the backbone for a series of other improvements, including the Small Boat Landing, the South Landing, and a Terrace Overlook that are all intended to enhance public access along the entire length of the Wharf and add to the recreational, educational, and scenic dimensions of the Wharf. The location of these proposed improvements is shown on Figure 3-2, and a model rendering of the improvement in relation to other proposed Wharf improvements is shown on Figure 3-3.

- The “**East Promenade**” would be created through an extension of the Wharf on the east side, generally beginning at the point where the Wharf widens to accommodate parking and extending to the end of the Wharf. This expansion will result in the addition of approximately 1.5 acres to the Wharf. The expanded area is proposed for enhanced public access. No parking or new structures are proposed within the East Promenade. The majority of the East Promenade will be constructed at a slightly higher elevation than the existing Wharf with a lower section at the eastern edge that will be at approximately the same elevation as the existing Wharf. Figure 3-4 shows a cross section of the East Promenade. Additionally, the East Promenade is designed for use by emergency vehicles to avoid delays due to traffic on the Wharf roadway. The East Promenade is one of the two specific projects proposed for near-term implementation. Conceptual plans have been developed, and project details are provided in subsection 3.4.2.
- A “**Terrace Overlook**” is proposed at the southernmost tip of the Wharf, extending from the East Promenade. The Overlook will descend further than the edge of the East Promenade and would include three amphitheater steps leading to a 7-foot wide area where the guardrail would be located. See conceptual model on Figure 3-3.



- A new “**Westside Walkway**” is proposed on the west side of the existing commercial buildings to provide public access and to complete a full one-mile circuit of pedestrian access around the entire perimeter of the Wharf. The walkway will be 10 to 12 feet wide and totals approximately 10,440 square feet. It will be built approximately eight feet below the existing Wharf deck level to allow for undisturbed visual access from the existing restaurants and commercial spaces along that edge. The Westside Walkway would be constructed of permeable decking above a series of piles that would serve to protect the Wharf’s piles. The Walkway would be designed to disrupt the force of waves and intercept seaborne debris to help prevent impacts and damage to piles beneath the buildings that are hard to replace. A cross section is shown on Figure 3-4. A 160-foot slope transition zone at each end will provide access from the Wharf deck to the new walkway and an open water swimming access float attached to the Westside Walkway via an 85-foot gangway. Lockable gates would be installed at the top to control access after dark, ~~and~~ during inclement weather, and seasonally, as needed.

### **Boat Landings**

The Master Plan recommends the construction of two new boat landings for expanded and ADA accessible marine-related activities along the East Promenade. The “Small Boat Landing” will provide expanded facilities for smaller recreational vessels and for Wharf operations. The “South Landing” would provide for the temporary mooring of larger vessels for whale watching, bay tours, sports fishing, and mooring of educational and scientific research vessels. Figure 3-2 shows the location of these facilities.

- The **Small Boat Landing** will provide expanded and accessible docking facilities for kayak, paddleboard, and fishing boat rentals as well as Wharf Operations and rescue craft/fireboat mooring. It also will provide expanded and improved support and storage space for the boating facilities as well as public use for temporary tie-in of small vessels. The new facility will be 315 feet long and will be located generally across from the Wharf Headquarters between Bents 68 and 89. It will have an 8,500 square foot upper deck level at the same elevation as the East Promenade at +25 MLLW, and a slightly smaller lower platform level at +13 MLLW. The two levels will be interconnected by stairs and ADA compliant accessible ramps, which would also connect to an 85-foot long gangway and a 540-square foot float. Two kiosks will be located on the upper deck for kayak and fishing boat rentals and the relocated bait and tackle shop. The deck level also provides storage for rental fishing boats, ~~a~~ davit(s) to lower the boats into the water, and storage of kayaks. The upper deck will be built in a similar way as the East Promenade so that it can support pedestrians as well as truckloads and will have hardwood decking and guardrails except where openings are needed for davits to lower the vessels. The lower platform may also include an outdoor shower and a changing room for swimmers, fishermen, kayakers, and Wharf Operations staff. From the platform level, four lowered landings at approximately +9 MLLW will be provided to facilitate direct service access by ladder to the vessels and to

the float. Figure 3-4 shows a cross section, and Figure 3-5A shows conceptual plans for the Small Boat Landing levels.

- ❑ **South Landing** is a larger vessel landing facility that is proposed at the deep water end of the Wharf in the location originally configured for the berthing of vessels. It includes a 20-foot wide, 75-foot long fixed platform and an approximately 200-foot long, 12-foot wide access ramp. The landing will be designed to provide for the transient mooring of vessels up to 200 tons and approximately 120 feet in length. A model of the facility is shown on Figure 3-3, and a concept plan is shown in Figure 3-5B. It is anticipated that this landing will provide temporary mooring for research and visitor-serving vessels, such as whale watching, bay cruises, ~~sports~~ fishing, and educational and scientific research vessels, including those of the National Marine Sanctuary, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and UCSC. The facility also could provide landings for public use and emergency evacuation if required. However, as part of the revised policies, it is indicated that this facility ~~is~~ will not ~~serve intended~~ as a terminus for cruise ships of any tonnage, to provide moorings for extended periods of time, or to provide shuttle access for any type of large vessel.

### ***New Buildings and Infill/Expansion of Existing Buildings***

Three new buildings are proposed on the Wharf: a Gateway Building at Wharf entrance (3,000 square feet), the Landmark Building at the end of the Wharf (6,000 square feet), and an Events Pavilion (6,000 square feet) for a total of 15,000 square feet. The general location of each building is shown on Figure 3-1. A model depicting the new structures is present on Figure 3-3. The buildings would likely support public and cultural uses rather than commercial uses, such as visitor center and museum. These buildings are further described below.

- ❑ The **Gateway Building** is proposed where the existing row of commercial buildings begin within an approximate 5,000 square foot area where the Wharf widens. The historic fishing vessel, the Marcella, is currently displayed in this area. An existing small boat rental building would be moved or removed, and the existing boat rental business in this location would be relocated to the new boat rental kiosk at the planned Small Boat Landing. This building will be approximately 3,000 square feet in size and is planned for public uses that could support a mix of cultural, educational, scientific and recreational activities. The larger portion of the building (approximately 2,000 square feet) is envisioned as a visitor center.

While final tenancy remains uncertain, approximately 1,000 square feet of the new Gateway Building may be devoted to a non-profit Open Water Swim Club, which could include restrooms, changing rooms, a sauna, and meeting space. The Open Water Swim Club would have direct access to the Westside Walkway and would be connected to the bay by an 85-foot long gangway and float. Access would be provided seasonally; during the winter months, the float would be removed and secured to a pair of piles specifically designed for that purpose. In addition, a permanent ladder will be provided for emergency purposes.

- ❑ The **Events Pavilion** is a 6,000 square foot building proposed in the approximate 10,500 square foot open area where the Wharf changes direction to the southwest, sometimes called the South Commons. The area is used for occasional outdoor public events, and the proposed new facility would provide a weather-protected space that could be used regularly and to a greater degree than current use. It is envisioned that the facility could provide for a wider range of uses, including educational and environmental programs, lectures, performances and festivals as well as private events such as parties and weddings. In the gap area between the adjacent buildings on the sidewalk, up to four small retail spaces totaling approximately 1,100 square feet are proposed, and an additional 1,800 square feet of existing building expansion is identified for potential intensification. A conceptual site plan is shown on Figure 3-5C. Additionally, existing restroom facilities will be improved and expanded.

The building is envisioned as a pavilion-like form incorporating the existing stairways and elevator to the existing upper floor uses and would be fairly transparent with 12-foot high fully operable glass doors that completely open up to create an indoor/outdoor relationship when weather permits. On the waterside, the building would adjoin an outdoor waterfront space that ranges in width from 15 to 35 feet, which connects directly to the sidewalk.

- ❑ The **Landmark Building** is proposed at the bayward end of the Wharf adjacent to an existing building (the Dolphin Restaurant) within an approximate 13,000 square foot area that is intended to re-create the “Municipal Wharf” warehouse (Freight Building) that formerly occupied this space until sometime in the mid-1960s. The 6,000 square foot building is envisioned at a height of up to 40 to 45 feet, which is taller than other commercial buildings on the Wharf, although slightly taller than the original freight building. The prominent location of the Landmark Building would allow for the integration of indoor and outdoor experiences and is anticipated to be a “major attraction and draw to visitors”. Uses could include a combination of cultural, educational and commercial uses as well as the possibility of a café and small conference and lecture facilities. The Santa Cruz Surfing Museum has expressed its interest in using a portion of this structure.

An approximate 4,000 square foot area will remain between the Landmark Building and the end of the Wharf. It is anticipated that this area would primarily be used for fishing, but it would also provide an area for viewing the bay. The Master Plan identifies this area for the potential relocation of the historic fishing vessel Marcella that is currently located at the landward end of the Wharf.

The Wharf Master Plan revisions include a new action under Policy 4 that states that any potential development at the end of the Wharf shall preserve to the greatest extent possible, or relocate to a place of greater access and viewing quality, the popular “sea lion viewing” and “fishing” holes at the end of the Wharf. Any redesign of these features must seek to preserve the intimate experience of the current viewing holes and be consistent with the character of the Wharf, as determined through community engagement. Several alternative possible layouts are

included in the Wharf Master Plan as part of the Master Plan revisions and are shown on Figure 4.8-8 in Section 4.8 of this document.

The Master Plan also identifies two areas for potential infill and expansion of existing buildings, which could result in construction of approximately 4,000 square feet of new commercial building space. One location is the area of the Events Pavilion, and the other is at the landward end of the commercial uses on the Wharf. The Master Plan indicates that expansion of the buildings directly to the south of the Events Pavilion could result in addition about 1,800 square feet of commercial space, and four small spaces adjacent to the Events Pavilion have been identified for potential retail expansion of approximately 1,100 square feet. Figure 3-5C shows these locations. Both ground and second floor improvements are envisioned. On the landward end of the Wharf, the Master Plan also proposes remodeling and infill that would add approximately 1,230 square feet of commercial ground floor space within the existing footprint of the Wharf.

The Master Plan encourages the development of second floors for uses such as rooftop dining within existing developed structures. The Plan provides a preliminary estimate that potential remodels and intensification within the existing commercial building footprint could result in a 20-30% increase in building space separate from the three new buildings. This would be approximately 12,000-18,000 square feet based on the existing total approximate 60,000 square of buildings on the Wharf, including the above specific infill locations. The Master Plan does not propose specific locations for potential intensification other than the two locations identified above, nor is it known when such expansion and intensification may occur. Additionally, the revised Master Plan considers the possibility of interim and temporary uses, which may include commercial uses on planned infill or redevelopment sites.

Policy 9 of the Wharf Master Plan calls for improvement of public services and facilities to enhance safety, security, comfort and convenience on the Wharf. One Action under this policy calls for expansion of the lifeguard station "to better accommodate service needs and accessibility requirements." Specific site plans have not yet been developed, but City staff has indicated that the expansion would involve either a single-story remodel or remodel with a second floor addition. New triangular deck sections would be added to the existing structure on the north and south sides to provide critically needed lateral stability for the Lifeguard Headquarter structure as the existing building extends from the west side of the Wharf and is subjected to wave action. These decks would be uncovered spaces used for bike storage, parking/staging of rescue equipment, and other similar uses. Initial design elements for the two-story remodel include the following:

- Two story structure with lifeguard tower with a 360-degree view within the Master Plan height limit of 35 feet.
- Inclusion of the following elements on the second floor: office, meeting room, computer room, kitchen, and sleeping area.
- New entry and ADA-accessible bathrooms and showers on the first floor.

- Storage for equipment and vehicles on the first floor or supporting fireboat/rescue craft operations from new landing(s).

It is estimated that the added deck surface (both sides) will be approximately 1,300 square feet in size and will require a total of approximately 15 additional piles. Therefore, the potential expansion of the Lifeguard Headquarters would be within the overall estimated infill/expansion described above.

For the purpose of impact evaluation, this EIR assumes that the implementation of the Master Plan could result in development of approximately 19,000 square feet of new building space. This includes 15,000 square feet of primarily public uses within the three new proposed buildings and 4,000 square of expanded building space for retail and commercial uses in the two areas specified in the Master Plan. As indicated above, the Master Plan provides a preliminary estimate that potential remodels and intensification within the existing commercial building footprint could result in a 20-30% increase in building space separate from the three new buildings, which would be approximately 12,000-18,000 square feet based on the existing total square feet of buildings on the Wharf. The Master Plan does not propose specific locations for potential intensification other than the two locations identified above. Potential expansion of existing structures could occur under existing conditions and City regulations with or without implementation of the Master Plan. Nonetheless, this EIR considers potential intensification of existing buildings up to 18,000 square feet as part of the impact analyses. Thus, the EIR considers potential development of approximately 15,000 square of public use space in three new buildings and 22,000 square feet of commercial use as part of infill and expansion of existing buildings.

## Design Standards

The Master Plan establishes design development standards for the evolution of buildings over time. These standards are aimed at improving the curb appeal of the businesses and the quality of the pedestrian experience. The Design Standards seek to develop a collective identity, a high standard of quality and sustainable design while allowing for individual expression that compliments the historical character of the Wharf. The standards require all businesses to have a finished floor at sidewalk grade. In addition, a continuous canopy with lighting that extends from the storefronts over the sidewalk is proposed to provide weather protection for pedestrians. The Design Standards address:

- Building form and height
- Building materials and color
- Green building design
- Windows and visual access
- Roofs
- Signage and storefront displays.

The Master Plan Design Standards are included in Appendix B.

### 3.4.3 Master Plan Proposed Improvements

#### Structural Wharf Improvements

The proposed new facilities would require installation of approximately 810 new timber piles as summarized below in order to support new improvements and/or to increase the lateral stability of the Wharf. Additionally, approximately 225 existing piles will require replacement over time as part of routine Wharf maintenance. New and replacement piles are expected to be 12- to 16-inch diameter timber piles and may vary based upon project specifications and the availability of suitable timber piles.

New piles have been identified for the following proposed facilities as described below and summarized in Table 3-2.

**Table 3-2. Summary of Approximate New Wharf Piles By Facility**

Facility	Number of New Piles	Pile Size/Type
East Promenade	525	12 to 16-inch timber piles
Westside Walkway	112	12 to 16-inch timber piles
South Landing & Ramp/Platform	52	12 to 16-inch timber piles
Small Boat Landing & Docks	74	12 to 16-inch timber piles
Relocated Entry	24	12 to 16-inch timber piles
	6	14 to 16-inch steel piles
Lifeguard Headquarters Expansion	15	12 to 16-inch timber piles
<b>Total</b>	<b>808</b>	

- ❑ The *East Promenade* will be supported by approximately 525 new timber piles and will be built as an extension of the Wharf and aligned with the existing Wharf bents. The timber bents (or beams) will be 12 inches by 12 inches in size.
- ❑ The *Westside Walkway* will require approximately 112 new piles. Two 6-inch by 12-inch dimensional lumber beams at each bent line will be provided and bolted to the two new piles and connected to the first existing pile on the Wharf for improved lateral stability.
- ❑ The 1,500 square foot fixed landing of the proposed *South Landing* will be supported by six bents with three piles each for a total of 18 piles, and the upper platform and ramp will require an additional 34 piles. Two 6-inch by 12-inch dimensional lumber beams will be provided at each bent line and will be bolted to both sides of the piles supporting the landing. The beams will also extend to tie in to the first pile of the adjacent East Promenade for stability.
- ❑ From the lower platform level of the *Small Boat Landing*, four lowered landings will be provided to facilitate direct access by ladder to the vessels and to the float. The landing

deck will be supported by 66 piles, and the floating docks will be supported by 8 piles. The float will be held in place by four guide piles with detachable connections so that it can be removed during winter months. The gangway will have two piles on either side that will hold it in place when it is raised during the period of time that the float is taken away.

- ❑ The *Relocated Entry* will require approximately 24 new 12-inch timber piles and as well as six 14-inch steel piles to support the entry gate frame and sign.
- ❑ *Lifeguard Headquarters* remodel/expansion would require approximately 15 new piles.

As part of the Master Plan effort, an engineering review was conducted to assess the condition of the piles, the overall integrity of the structure and the paving and substrate of roadways, parking areas and sidewalks. The assessment concluded that the Wharf generally is in good and serviceable condition, but there is a need for pile replacement, although the engineering review indicates that less than 5% of the existing Wharf piles require replacement (approximately 225 piles or less). Pile replacement is part of the ongoing maintenance activities at the Wharf. With continued ongoing maintenance and incremental replacement of the structural elements as needed, the life of the Wharf will be extended well into the future.

The Master Plan also proposes installation of ten outriggers below the stepped edge of the East Promenade, which will extend 25 feet to the east at the elevation and in the same plane of the existing ledgers. The purpose is to provide horizontal bracing, which will increase the stiffness and reduce the sway of the Wharf at its bayward end and provide better resiliency during extreme storms (see conceptual model in Figure 3-3).

There also is a need for a general improvement to the pavement and substrate of the Wharf. The Engineering Report recommends replacement of asphalt paving throughout the road and parking areas. Other recommended improvements include removal of all abandoned piping beneath the Wharf and provision of extended fire sprinkler coverage where needed.

## Circulation and Parking Improvements

The Master Plan recommendations include: relocation of the existing Wharf entrance; reconfiguration of existing parking areas; parking management programs; and improvements to bicycle, pedestrian and other alternate transportation modes. These elements are explained in the next section.

### ***Relocation of Wharf Entrance Gates***

The existing Wharf entrance gates are proposed to be relocated further south where the Wharf widens and the parking begins (see Figure 3-1). The new location is designed to accommodate two entrances and two exit gates. One entrance lane would be configured so that it could be converted to a third exit lane during peak periods when exiting volumes exceed arrivals. The center lane, which most directly aligns with the roadway on either side of the gate, would be wider to

accommodate emergency and construction vehicle access. A concept plan is shown on Figure 3-5D. The Entry Gate Relocation is one of the two specific projects proposed to be implemented in the near term. Conceptual plans have been developed, and project details are described in subsection 3.4.2.

The Master Plan also proposes installation of an attractive new sign centrally located atop the parking gates ~~approximate 6- to 8-foot high sign~~ at the relocated entrance gate that potentially announces the Wharf as the Gateway to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The revisions to the Wharf Master Plan indicate that the sign would be designed in keeping with the character of the Wharf as determined through additional community engagement. The letters could be supported by a light framework structure that would allow them to float above the beam. These letters could also be outlined to create a more vivid and arresting visual quality in the daytime as well as in the evening. Below it, the words “Gateway to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary” might be inscribed in relief letters of up to 2-foot tall on the 4 to 4-1/2 foot face of the beam. ~~Although an example is provided in the Master Plan as shown on Figure 3-6.~~ The Master Plan indicates that mock-ups of the proposed gateway signage, addressing size, shape, color and potential illumination, would be further reviewed before the sign design is finalized.

### ***Parking***

The Master Plan does not propose expansion of the existing parking area, but instead proposes reconfiguration of some parking areas, which could provide a modest increase of up to 10-15% in number of spaces within the existing parking footprint (approximately 45-65 spaces). The Master Plan also proposes use automated pay stations similar to what is used in the Downtown garages that would be evenly distributed in areas determined by the City’s Public Works Parking Division staff along the length of the parking spine. Recommendations for continued parking management include continuation of minimizing employee parking on the Wharf, provision of reserved parking for lifeguards and City employees, and development of a parking pricing strategy.

### ***Bicycle, Pedestrian and Alternative Transportation Modes***

The Master Plan recommendations also include improvements for pedestrian and bicycle access, increasing the supply of bicycle parking, and encouraging a shuttle system. The Master Plan proposes that bicycle parking (64 spaces) be provided along the western edge of the East Promenade in the transition area between the vehicular parking and the promenade. The Plan indicates that 64 spaces could be initially provided with up to 150 bicycle parking spaces ultimately anticipated as demand warrants. The improvement program for the existing sidewalk area calls for widening from 13 to 15 feet and for the entire area to be repaved in concrete with a concrete curb. The Plan addresses potential shuttle service from the Downtown and other remote parking areas to the Wharf and Beach Area.



## Utilities

### ***Stormwater Drainage Improvements***

The Wharf currently drains through the cracked pavement into the ocean. The Engineering Report prepared in conjunction with the Master Plan provides a series of recommendations to collect and treat runoff for water quality control. Repaving of the Wharf will be designed to collect the water into inlets that can treat the runoff through media (carbon filtration) before discharge into the bay water. A conceptual design is presented in the Engineering Report. Stormwater quality treatment is a consideration for roadways due to accumulation of sediments, oils, and grease from vehicles. Water quality treatment is not required for paved pedestrian-only areas or existing building roof areas. For new buildings, the Engineering Report recommends that roof downspouts direct roof runoff onto vegetated areas or into cisterns/rain barrels for reuse. New walkways constructed with decking boards and gaps to allow for drainage would not require treatment since the surface would be pervious.

### ***Alternate Garbage Collection System***

The Master Plan recommends improvements to the existing trash collection system for the Wharf to eliminate the use of centralized garbage and reliance on large garbage trucks that are currently the greatest source of damage and incur the greatest amount of maintenance costs to the City. The Master Plan suggests that consideration be given to the use of an automated vacuum collection system that has been used extensively in Scandinavian countries and more recently been adopted for use in some areas in the United States. Collection of trash and recyclables could occur directly from individual businesses and staff-loaded stations on the Wharf with horizontal transport in a 20-inch stainless steel pipe under the Wharf to an off-site collection center that has not yet been identified. Alternative approaches include the use of smaller collection trucks and more frequent pick-ups combined with smaller refuse and recycling compactor locations on the Wharf or with a close-by offsite collection center to which refuse and recyclables can be delivered by electric or other alternatively powered vehicles. At this time, there is no proposal to install such a system, nor are there any details regarding system design and off-site collection locations. If this system is proposed in the future, additional project-level environmental review would be required.

## **3.4.2 Near-Term Projects**

### **Entry Gate Relocation**

The existing entry gate to the Wharf is proposed to be relocated approximately 540 feet further south on the Wharf from its current location. The existing and proposed entry locations are shown on Figure 3-6. The City anticipates that this project will be the first project to be implemented

under the new Master Plan within the next two to three years. Construction is expected to take approximately six months to complete.

The new entry gate is designed to provide two inbound lanes and two outbound lanes with staffed kiosks at the entrance gate. The site plan is shown on Figure 3-7A. The entrance gate will be framed with a roll down, transparent gate so that the Wharf can be closed when not in operation. The gate structure would be approximately 18 feet in height and would span the width the Wharf. Figures 3-7B and 3-7C show plan cross section and elevation of the entry gate and sign structure.

The Wharf entrance gate relocation will include a new timber deck extension on the east side of the Wharf with a truss frame and new guardrails. The deck extension totals approximately 800 square feet to accommodate more efficient pedestrian movement. Installation of 24 new 12-inch timber piles is proposed as shown on Figure 3-7B. The piles would be installed to a depth of approximately 15 feet below the seafloor surface as is typical with the existing piles. Additionally, six 14-inch steel piles will be installed to support the entry gate frame and sign. The project includes removal of existing asphalt, decking and stringers in the location of new piles and minor utility relocation.

A sign at the top of the entry gate is recommended in the Master Plan, but a sign is not included in the current project proposal. As previously indicated, the Master Plan proposes installation of a 6 to 8-foot tall, 70-foot long sign at the relocated entrance gate, subject to further review and design. The City intends to develop a future entry gate sign design through a public process, and a specific design is not included in this project.

### East Promenade

The proposed East Promenade will result in expansion of the Wharf on the east side by 26-30 feet, except for widening by approximately 65 feet at the southern end of the Wharf for a total expansion of approximately 63,800 square feet (1.5 acres); see location on Figures 3-1 and 3-2. A conceptual site plan is presented on Figure 3-8A. The City anticipates that this project will be implemented under the new Master Plan within the next three to five years, and construction is expected to take approximately 12-16 months to complete.

The facility will consist of a hardwood deck supported by 12 to 16-inch timber piles. The expanded area will be constructed at a slightly higher elevation than the existing Wharf with a step-down section at the eastern edge that will be approximately the same level as the existing Wharf elevation. Figure 3-8B shows the site plan and cross sections for the first segment, which is representative of the other segments. The existing lower landing and stairway for boat access will be retained; an existing dock will be relocated to the end of the landing with a walkway constructed between the existing steps and dock. Existing parking spaces will be restriped, which will provide approximately 60 new parking spaces. The East Promenade will extend through the East Parking Lot, and the expansion of the Wharf by approximately 26 feet is proposed to retain existing parking spaces.

An approximate 18-inch tall seat wall is located on the western edge along the parking side of the East Promenade to provide additional separation from the adjacent parked vehicles and an informal resting place. A seating bench is also proposed on the east side of the proposed promenade. According to the Master Plan, the stepdown along the eastern edge will provide a place for sitting, fishing and viewing without interrupting visual access from the main deck level for those who are walking, strolling, jogging or bicycling. According to the Master Plan, new light fixtures and leaning rails that also serve as bike racks will be placed in line with the seat wall on the west side of the Promenade. Additional site furnishings, which may include benches, seating, fish cleaning, and refuse receptacles, among others, will likely be considered as plans are finalized.

The East Promenade will be supported by approximately 525 new timber (Douglas fir) piles. The piles are driven approximately 15 feet into the seafloor (Moffatt & Nichol, October 2014). The underlying structure will be similar to, and integrated with, the existing Wharf and will be integrated with it. It will be built as an extension of the Wharf and aligned with the existing Wharf bents. The extended timber bents (beams) will be 12 inches by 12 inches in size and will be supported by new piles and stringers (joists).

### 3.5 PROJECT APPROVALS AND INTENDED USE OF EIR

As indicated in Chapter 1, Introduction, the EIR is an informational document for decision makers, and this EIR is a “program” EIR under CEQA definitions that could be used for review of future development projects implemented pursuant to the Plan. In accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code section 21093) and State CEQA Guidelines section 15152, “tiering” refers to using the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR (such as one prepared for a general plan) with later EIRs and negative declarations on narrower projects; incorporating by reference the general discussions from the broader EIR; and concentrating the later EIR or negative declaration solely on the issues specific to the later project. Agencies are encouraged to tier the environmental analyses for separate but related projects including general plans, which can eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues. Tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from an EIR prepared for a general plan, policy, or program to an EIR or negative declaration for another plan, policy, or program of lesser scope, or to a site-specific EIR or negative declaration. The EIR or Negative Declaration on a later project can limit the analysis to the later project effects which: 1) were not examined as significant effects on the environment in the prior EIR; or (2) are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by the choice of specific revisions in the project, by the imposition of conditions, or other means. Tiering is also limited to situations where the project is consistent with the general plan and zoning of the city or county in which the project is located.

The City of Santa Cruz is the lead agency and responsible for approving the Wharf Master Plan. CEQA requires that decision makers review and consider the EIR in their consideration of this project. No other state or federal agencies would be required to approve the Wharf Master Plan.

However, future development projects identified in the Master Plan may require permits from other agencies. Other state public agencies that have review or approval authority over future development projects identified in the Wharf Master Plan include:

- ❑ California Coastal Commission: Approval of Wharf Master Plan as Public Works Plan.

The Santa Cruz Wharf is located within the coastal zone within an area where the California Coastal Commission (CCC) retains coastal permitting jurisdiction. While approval of the Wharf Master Plan does not require CCC approval, any future development would require approval of a coastal development permit by the CCC in which the standard of review would be consistency with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

Coastal Commission staff has suggested that the Wharf Master Plan be submitted to the Coastal Commission for approval as a Public Works Plan. Pursuant to section 30605 of the California Coastal Act, a Public Works Plan may be approved similar to a Local Coastal Plan (LCP) for a local jurisdiction, in order to promote greater efficiency for the planning of public works development projects and as an alternative to project-by-project review. The Commission can approve a Public Works Plan if it finds, after full consultation with the affected local governments, that the proposed plan is in conformity with the certified LCP in the jurisdiction affected by the proposed public works. Prior to commencement of any development pursuant to a certified Public Works Plan, the City would need to notify the Commission of the project and show that it is consistent with the certified plan. Any subsequent review by the Commission of a specific project contained in the certified public works plan is limited to imposing conditions consistent with Coastal Act.

- ❑ California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Approval of an Incidental Take Permit for any incidental take of a state-listed species.
- ❑ California State Lands Commission: As established in the State grant of land rights for the Santa Cruz Harbor (Lighthouse Point to the West Jetty), the State Lands Commission must approve of any major work on the Wharf or associated submerged and tidal lands.

Some of the proposed expansion and development projects could require federal environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Agencies that may have permit or other regulatory authority over specific future projects include the following agencies.

- ❑ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE): Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit and/or a Letter of Permission pursuant to Section 10 of the federal Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 for some future projects implemented pursuant to the Wharf Master Plan that are located within the waters of Monterey Bay, including installation of new piles as part of the proposed near-term entry gate relocation and East Promenade projects, as well as future installation of new boat landings.
- ❑ California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB): Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification for some future projects implemented pursuant to the Wharf Master Plan that are located within the waters of Monterey Bay, including installation of new piles as part of the proposed near-term entry gate relocation and East Promenade

projects, as well as future installation of new boat landings.

- ❑ NOAA Fisheries: Approval of Incidental Harassment Authorization or Letter of Authorization for project that include installation of piles, such as the East Promenade due to potential disturbance to marine mammals during construction.
- ❑ Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS): None known at this time.

According to information provided by the MBNMS to the City, the MBNMS prohibits disturbance of submerged lands with the exception of construction and rehabilitation of docks and piers. Thus, sanctuary authorization is not required for that aspect of future projects. However, the following MBNMS prohibitions apply to projects for which there are no exceptions for construction and rehabilitation of docks and piers.

1. Discharge or deposit of any matter within or into MBNMS.
2. Discharge or deposit from beyond MBNMS of any matters that enters and injures sanctuary resources or qualities.
3. Take of any marine mammal, sea turtle, or bird.

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## 4.8 RECREATION

This section analyzes potential impacts related to recreational facilities and uses, potentially resulting from implementation of the proposed Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan and two near-term development projects (Project), including consistency with plans and cumulative recreational impacts. This section is based on a review of existing City plans, studies, and environmental documents prepared under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), including, but not limited to, the City's *Parks Master Plan 2030*, Local Coastal Program (LCP), *General Plan 2030*, and the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), as well as numerous City staff and consultant site visits to the Wharf.

Public and agency comments related to parks and recreation were received during the public scoping period in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP). Issues raised in these comments include:

- ❑ California Coastal Commission (CCC) staff indicated that the Wharf and proposed improvements are located on public trust land, and the Coastal Act requires that new development maximize public access and recreational opportunities (sections 30210 through 30224). Therefore, maximization of public access and recreational opportunities should be considered key project objectives.
- ❑ CCC staff stated that the Coastal Act limits the placement of new structural pilings to public recreational piers that provide public access and recreational opportunities (section 30233). For this project, maximization of public access and recreation means that any additional coverage of public trust land is minimized and used for public access and recreational purposes and related improvements only.
- ❑ The CCC also commented that it retains regulatory coastal permit jurisdiction on the Wharf, and any new development on the Wharf must be consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act and will require review and approval by the CCC.
- ❑ CCC staff indicated that one of the most significant impediments to access and recreation along the Wharf is the high cost of parking on the Wharf and in the immediate vicinity and that the current Wharf parking rates have not been properly authorized by a Coastal Development Permit (CDP). The CCC requested that the issue of parking rates and fees be considered through the Wharf Master Plan environmental review process.
- ❑ The viewing of the sea lions is a major part of the attraction of the Wharf to locals and visitors. The recreational value of the current sea lion viewing holes should be evaluated via surveys of visitors. The potential coverage of the viewing holes by the largest of the three proposed buildings should be assessed from a visitor's perspective.
- ❑ The Wharf allows those who fish to do so from the trunk of their vehicles, which is a popular pastime. The reconfigured wharf makes this impossible, and this impact should be evaluated.

- ❑ Kayakers and paddle boarders can, and have for years, entered the water from the beach or stairs at Cowell's Beach. They will not "pay-to-park" on the wharf while they enjoy their sport on the bay.
- ❑ The Welcome Center will have a "swim facility." Our beaches have provided miles of swim facility for eons.

To the extent that issues identified in public comments involve recognizable potentially significant effects on the environment under CEQA and/or are raised by responsible agencies, they are identified and addressed within this EIR. Public comments received during the public scoping period are included in Appendix A of the Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan Draft EIR volume dated March 2020, and can be accessed on the City's website at:

<https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/economic-development/development-projects/santa-cruz-wharf-master-plan>.

## 4.8.1 Environmental Setting

### Definition of Recreation

Assessment of potential impacts to recreation requires a clear definition of recreation and what is considered a recreational facility. The terms "recreation" and "recreational facility" are not defined by CEQA. The City's *General Plan 2030* provides the following definitions of recreation:

- *Recreation, Active:* A type of recreation or activity that requires the use of organized play areas including, but not limited to, softball, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts and various forms of children's play equipment.
- *Recreation, Passive:* Type of recreation or activity that does not require the use of organized play areas.

The City's LCP uses the same definition of active recreation as in the General Plan, but defines passive recreation as: type of recreation or activity that does not require the use of organized play areas, but may including hiking, bicycling, and horse trails.

The Santa Cruz Wharf is a unique, multiple-use commercial and recreational facility that offers a diverse array of recreational and cultural opportunities, which don't fit within typical definitions of outdoor activity, play, and sports, although some activities do fall within the broad category of passive recreation. There are few stand-alone public facilities like the Wharf, which offers a broad array of recreational opportunities. Therefore, the City has selected the broadest definition of the terms recreation and recreational facilities that are found in California Public Resources Code (PRC) section 5780.1 as the basis for the recreational impact analysis in this EIR. While the definition is part of a state law that provides the authority for the organization and powers of recreation and park districts, the definitions capture the entire range of activities found in parks and recreation districts throughout all of California.



- ❑ *“Recreation”* means any voluntary activity which contributes to the education, entertainment, or cultural, mental, moral, or physical development of the individual, group, or community that attends, observes, or participates. “Recreation” includes, but is not limited to, any activity in the fields of art, athletics, drama, habitat conservation, handicrafts, literature, music, nature study, open-space conservation, science, sports, and any formal or informal play that includes these activities.
- ❑ *“Recreation facility”* means an area, place, structure, or other facility under the jurisdiction of a public agency that is used either permanently or temporarily for community recreation, even though it may be used for other purposes. “Recreation facility” includes, but is not limited to, an arts and crafts room, auditorium, beach, camp, community center, golf course, gymnasium, lake, meeting place, open space, park, parkway, playground, playing court, playing field, recreational reservoir, river, and swimming pool. A recreation facility may be owned or operated jointly by a district and other public agencies.

### Regulatory Setting

The City of Santa Cruz *General Plan 2030*, the LCP, and Title 24 (Zoning) of the Municipal Code govern land use and development within City limits. There are a number of state laws and local regulations governing the provision of specified services, including parks and recreational facilities, primarily related to development fees and park dedication required of development projects, which are not applicable to the adoption or implementation of the Wharf Master Plan.

There are few pertinent regulations governing recreational uses that occur on the Santa Cruz Wharf or recreational facilities included in the Wharf Master Plan. There are state regulations regarding sport fishing, and potential requirements of other regulatory agencies with future implementation of facilities on the Wharf, which are both summarized below.

#### ***Recreational / Sport Fishing Regulations***

Ocean sport fishing regulations are established in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14, which include requirements for obtaining fishing licenses from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). These regulations (CDFW 2023a) establish requirements for recreational sport fishing within California ocean waters regarding fish size, seasonal limitations and other factors; compliance with these regulations would be required of Wharf tenant vendors and operators that conduct fishing tours. However, recreational fishing from a "public pier" in ocean or bay waters, does not require a fishing license issued by CDFW. Public piers have a specific definition in section 1.88 of Title 14 of the CCR: they must be connected to the shoreline, allow for free, unrestricted public access, and have been built or currently function for the primary purpose of fishing. The Santa Cruz Wharf is identified as a “public pier” on CDFW’s website (CDFW 2023b). Even though a fishing license is not required on a public pier, all other regulations (including minimum size, bag limits, report cards, and seasons) apply while fishing from a public pier. Additionally, only two rods and lines, handlines, or nets, traps, or other appliances used to

take crabs may be used per person on a public pier (CCR Title 14, section 28.65(b)) (CDFW 2023b). CDFW also conducts regular fish counts and quota checks among those fishing from the Wharf to enforce regulations.

### ***Other Regulatory Agency Requirements***

There are no federal, state, or local regulations applicable to the adoption and implementation of the proposed Wharf Master Plan, although future development projects identified in the Master Plan may require permits from other agencies in addition to the CCC, including but not limited to, CDFW, California Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), California State Lands Commission (CSLC), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries. See Section 3.5 of the Project Description for further details.

**California Coastal Act.** The project site is located within the coastal zone. The California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code section 30000 et seq) is intended to “protect, maintain, and, where feasible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and artificial resources.” The CCC is guided in implementation of their mandate through the California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan. The Coastal Act requires preparation of a LCP for areas of cities and counties within the coastal zone, which must be certified by the CCC. The City’s LCP was certified by the CCC in 1985, and has been amended over time. The LCP requires approval of a coastal permit for projects in the coastal zone. However, the Santa Cruz Wharf is located in an area of the coastal zone where the CCC has retained coastal permitting jurisdiction, and any new development on the Wharf would require a coastal development permit approval from the CCC and must be found consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the California Coastal Act. The Wharf Master Plan itself is not subject to a coastal development permit and its approval does not require an amendment to the City’s certified LCP, although CCC staff have suggested that the Wharf Master Plan be submitted to the CCC for approval as a Public Works Plan (PWP). Pursuant to section 30605 of the California Coastal Act, a Public Works Plan may be approved similar to a LCP for a local jurisdiction, in order to promote greater efficiency for the planning of public works development projects and as an alternative to project-by-project review by the CCC.

**California State Lands Commission.** The Santa Cruz Wharf lies atop tidelands and submerged property overseen by the California State Lands Commission (SLC). The SLC and state legislature have granted certain authorities and title for those lands to the City of Santa Cruz for various commercial and recreational uses including the “construction and maintenance of wharves,” boating, cafes, and fishing facilities, among other activities and improvements. The granting statutes also reserve certain rights to the State and public related to uses of the land, development approval, and preservation of fishing access in perpetuity. The SLC also retains the right to reclaim the land at SLC discretion for certain uses, or upon finding the “city has failed to improve the lands as herein required.”

The CLSC has exclusive jurisdiction to lease and manage most public trust lands, and it must ensure that any such leases are consistent with, or at least do not significantly impair, public trust resources, uses, and needs. The Santa Cruz Wharf is located on tidelands granted to the City by the CSLC. Those lands, commonly referred to as “granted lands,” are sovereign in character remain impressed with the public trust, are managed by the public agency holding the grant, and are subject to the residual review authority of the State Lands Commission. Implementation of major development projects at the Santa Cruz Wharf Master will require review and approval by the CSLC.

## Parks, Recreational, and Cultural Facilities In City of Santa Cruz

There is a wide range of existing parks and recreational and cultural facilities in the City and region, which are managed by the City and other public agencies, as well as private businesses and non-profit organizations. A summary of these facilities is provided below.

### *City Parks and Recreational Facilities*

**Overview.** The City of Santa Cruz offers residents and visitors a wide range of park and recreational opportunities. The City manages, maintains, and operates more than 1,700 acres of parks and open space lands, including various community/recreational facilities (City of Santa Cruz 2020). The park system is comprised of neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, open spaces, beaches, and recreational facilities. Many recreational facilities are located within individual parks and open space lands and some stand alone. Existing City parks, open spaces, beaches, and recreational facilities include:

- 32 Neighborhood Parks (49 acres);
- 6 Community Parks (181 acres);
- 1 Regional Park – DeLaveaga Golf Course;
- 7 Open Space Areas (1,315 acres);
- 4 Beaches (33 acres); and
- 18 Community, Recreational and Cultural Facilities

**Trails and Beaches.** The City also provides nearly 35 miles of trails throughout the City, which not only allow for a variety of forms of recreation, but also serve as important active transportation and recreational links between parks, recreation facilities, and diverse natural and urban habitats. The existing trail system allows for hiking, biking, dog walking, and in some locations, horseback riding. Many trails provide access through designated open spaces or along the coastline, and others provide linkages across the City. According to the City’s Parks Master Plan 2030, significant trails in the City include the Santa Cruz Riverwalk, an important north-south connector along the San Lorenzo River and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST), which will provide a multi-use trail through the City and ultimately connect Davenport to Monterey (City of Santa Cruz

2020). It is noted that the Santa Cruz Wharf is listed as a trail link in the Parks Master Plan and will connect with MBSST segments 7 & 8 near the entrance to the Wharf, once they are completed, which is discussed further below.

Santa Cruz is known for surfing and beach recreation given its location on the northern end of the Monterey Bay. Designated in 1992, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) is a federally protected marine area off of the California Central Coast. The shoreline length of 276 miles spans from Marin County to the north to Cambria in San Luis Obispo County to the south, and covers more than 6,094 square statute miles (4,601 square nautical miles) of ocean. Monterey Bay is very popular for kayaking, paddle boarding, surfing, boating, fishing, wildlife viewing, and other ocean-oriented recreational activities (City of Santa Cruz 2020).

**Community, Recreational, and Cultural Facilities.** The City manages 18 community, recreational, and cultural facilities, which include the Santa Cruz Wharf and buildings and other larger facilities that serve specific recreational needs and interests (City of Santa Cruz 2020). In addition to the Wharf, community, recreational and cultural facilities managed by the City include:

- ❑ **Community Centers:** The operates two community centers - Beach Flats and London Nelson. The Beach Flats community center has a community room, computer lab, classroom, and kitchen and is operated by the non-profit organization, Community Bridges The London Nelson Community Center is approximately 20,000 square feet and is located approximately one half mile from the Wharf entrance. The facility hosts senior and teen programs and services, recreation classes and programming, rentable rooms, and an auditorium with theater seating and a stage. Programs and classes also make use of the adjacent Laurel Park. The center also offers a wide selection of spaces available for rent, including a dance studio, meeting rooms, a banquet room, a kitchen, and an auditorium with a stage and retractable seating.
- ❑ **Carmelita Cottages,** which includes a public park with buildings used as a traveler and youth hostel.
- ❑ **Civic Auditorium:** Opening in 1940 and located less than one mile from the Wharf entrance, the Civic Auditorium is a multi-purpose auditorium with a stage and seating capacity of 2,021. The facility hosts numerous concerts, sporting programs, expos, theatrical performances, movie screenings, conferences, and receptions. Additionally, it is the City's primary emergency shelter. The auditorium is located at 307 Center Street, less than a mile away from the Wharf entrance.
- ❑ **Museums:** The operates two museums in the City – Museum of Natural History and Surfing Museum. Established in 1904, the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History is located near Seabright Beach and offers events, classes, and tours to all ages focused on all variety of local flora, fauna, and natural processes. The Santa Cruz Surfing Museum is located at the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse and documents over 100 years of Santa Cruz surfing history with photographs, surfboards, artifacts, and other books and surfing related items.

- DeLaveaga Park Facilities:** Audrey Stanley Grove amphitheater, archery range, golf course, and disc golf course.
- Depot Park Freight Building,** which serves as a community room.
- Harvey West Facilities:** Pool, Clubhouse, Kids Kottage, and Wagner Cottage.
- Pogonip Clubhouse,** which is currently closed.
- San Lorenzo Park Lawn Bowling.**
- Senior Citizen Opportunity** – senior center.

### ***Other Cultural and Educational Facilities***

There are a number of museums, educational, and cultural institutions operated by entities other than the City of Santa Cruz that are located throughout the City and Santa Cruz region. These facilities and organizations are primarily programmatic in nature and provide cultural or educational experiences that also would be considered recreational activities. Notable institutions often associated with the activities and/or programs at the Wharf include the following:

- University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC):** UCSC is one of 10 campuses in the University of California (UC) system. UCSC's current enrollment is approximately 19,000 students. UCSC includes the main campus, the Coastal Science Campus, and the Westside Research Park. UCSC has partnered with the City on several efforts at the Wharf including GreenWharf projects exploring sustainability for the Wharf. UCSC maintains historical archives including extensive local imagery and access to news articles documenting Wharf history, among others. UCSC also operates the Long Marine Lab and The Seymour Marine Discovery Center at its Coastal Science Campus near Natural Bridges State Park. The Seymour Marine Discovery Center is the public education and visitor component of the Joseph M. Long Marine Laboratory and Coastal Science Campus.
- MBNMS Exploration Center:** Described below.
- Santa Cruz Museum of Arts and History (MAH):** The Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) offers a full slate of art and history exhibitions, visual and performing artworks, public festivals, education and outreach programs, and cultural celebrations in collaboration with many government and non-profit partners. The MAH has held several exhibits celebrating Santa Cruz history including surfing, the beach, and local culture. The MAH participated as an affiliate partner to the Santa Cruz Wharf Outreach Network during development of the Wharf Master Plan.
- Public, Private, and Charter Schools:** Local schools serving the Santa Cruz community include a variety of public, private, and charter schools. Within neighborhoods near the Wharf, schools included Bay View Elementary, Mission Middle School, and Santa Cruz High School. Alternative and charter schools include Branciforte, Pacific Collegiate School, Waldorf and Montessori schools, and parochial schools like Holy Cross School, among other. Students from many of these schools visit the Wharf for a variety of educational

experiences supported by the City and its partners, such as NOAA, Save the Waves, and Community Bridges.

### ***Other Recreational Activities and Events***

- ❑ **Public Art:** Santa Cruz City Arts programs are managed by the City’s Economic Development Department in consultation with the City’s Arts Commission. City Arts enhances infrastructure and education efforts and includes innovative programs like the Santa Cruz Recycled Art Program (SCRAP) at the City’s Resource Recovery Facility and other our ongoing programs include sculpTOUR, Graphic Traffic, and the Mural Matching Grant program. Notable projects or plans that relate to the Wharf include the Rail Trail Arts Master Plan, the Citywide Arts Master Plan, and public art installations like the bronze whale tail at the MBNMS Exploration center, stone arch at Cowells’ Beach, and a the temporary mural installed by Gilda’s on the Wharf as part of the Seawalls Santa Cruz exhibition. City Arts often works in partnership with local organizations such as Arts Council Santa Cruz County, the Downtown Association, the Art League, the Museum of Art and History.
- ❑ **Ocean Stewardship and Conservation:** The Wharf is located within the MBNMS, one of the nation’s largest national marine sanctuaries, that supports biologically diverse marine ecosystems. These ecosystems and the species they support are dependent on stewardship of this natural environment. Recreational conservation activities in the MBNMS include beach cleanup, environmental testing and monitoring, upland habitat and stream restoration, and educational tours and events.
- ❑ **Performance, Sports, and Entertainment Venues:** Santa Cruz has a rich tradition of live music, arts, theater, and entertainment. Since 2012, the City has been home to the Santa Cruz Warriors, an NBA G-League team affiliated with the Golden State Warriors. The Kaiser Permanente Arena, home to the Santa Cruz Warriors in partnership with the City of Santa Cruz, is located approximately one-half mile from the entrance to the Wharf and, also hosts concerts and community events. Other popular local concert and event venues include public facilities like the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium and the Quarry Amphitheater at UCSC, as well as private venues like the Catalyst Club, the Rio Theater, and Kuumbwa Jazz Center, and performances hosted near the Wharf at the Boardwalk and Dream Inn. Theaters supporting live performances include the Colligan Theater, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, and facilities at both UCSC and Cabrillo College.

### **Parks and Recreational Facilities in the Vicinity of Santa Cruz Wharf**

The Santa Cruz Wharf provides a range of recreational opportunities as fully described in the next section. In addition to the Wharf, there are numerous parks and recreational facilities in the vicinity of the Wharf. These include beaches, parks, trails, museums, and other community and cultural facilities as summarized below:

### *Beaches and Ocean Recreation*

- ❑ **Main Beach and Cowell Beach:** The Santa Cruz Wharf is located between Main and Cowell Beaches and total 31 acres. Both beaches are popular local and tourist destinations attracting more than 2 million visitors per year. The proximity to the Wharf and the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, which is further described below, creates a wide range of public and private recreational activities for visitors to explore. The large sandy beaches of Cowell and Main Beaches are popular for sunbathing, swimming, beach volleyball, and other beach activities. These beaches host a variety of public and private programs and events such as the Junior Lifeguard Program, volleyball tournaments, and concert performances hosted by the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. Two volleyball courts are located on Cowell Beach, and 16 public volleyball courts are located on Main Beach. The Santa Cruz Seaside Company also maintains two volleyball courts on Main Beach. The Main Beach volleyball courts allow for both pick-up games and tournaments (City of Santa Cruz 2020).
- ❑ **Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve:** On December 14, 2010, the City adopted Resolution NS-28,310 supporting adoption of the Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve, which was formally dedicated on April 28, 2012. The Reserve spans approximately seven miles of coastline and promotes environmental and cultural stewardship supporting surfing in the Reserve. Prominent surf breaks in close proximity to the Santa Cruz Wharf include Steamers Lane, Cowells, and the San Lorenzo River mouth, where the first documented incidence of surfing on the U.S. Mainland was recorded in 1885. These surfing areas are mainly accessed from Main or Cowell’s Beach, stairways along West Cliff Drive, or via Seabright Beach.

### *Parks and Recreational Trails*

- ❑ **Depot Park, Bicycle Trip Bike Park, & Scott Kennedy Fields:** This 9-acre community park is located at the roundabout on Pacific Street, approximately 1,300 feet north of the Wharf entrance. The park includes an adult soccer field and practice area that can be used as two practice or youth fields. The Depot Freight Building hosts recreational programming, classes, and events, and also contains restrooms that are open to park visitors. The park contains the only ramped bicycle park in the area. A pathway connects the southern end of the park to Beach Street towards Cowell Beach. The park includes the MBNMS Exploration Center, described below, and adjacent parking area (City of Santa Cruz 2020).
- ❑ **Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST):** The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), in association with other regional agencies, is in the process of implementing the MBSST, which will extend between Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. The MBSST Network will be a multi-use system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In Santa Cruz County, trails will be located within the Beach Street right-of-way or the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line corridor owned by the SCCRTC. The City of Santa Cruz includes Segments 7-8 and the western portion of Segment 9 of the planned trail. Segment 7 runs from Antonelli Pond to the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Beach Street, connecting to the MBNMS Exploration Center and the Wharf entrance. Phase 1 (Natural

Bridges Drive to California Avenue) was completed in December 2020. Phase 2 (California Avenue to Pacific Avenue at the Wharf) is under construction. Segment 8 extends from the Pacific Avenue/Beach Street intersection to the San Lorenzo Rail Bridge Crossing, and a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the San Lorenzo River has been installed as part of this segment. The EIR Segments 8 and 9 was certified by the City Council on March 20, 2023, and initial funding for further trail design work was approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) shortly thereafter.

- ❑ **West Cliff Drive Pathway:** The West Cliff Pathway is a multi-use path located on a coastal bluff along West Cliff Drive west of the Wharf, and extends approximately 2.7 miles from Swanton Boulevard near Natural Bridges State Park on the west to the Santa Cruz Wharf. The path and adjacent coastal bluffs attract residents and visitors with coastal views (including of the Wharf) and a variety of coastal recreational activities, including walking, running, bicycling, ocean and wildlife viewing, and rock fishing. Several notable overlooks include commemorative names, public art, placards, and garden spaces. Stairs provide access to popular surfing breaks and beaches. The adjacent Monterey Bay is a popular surfing location, and areas also are used for swimming and kayaking. Surf contests are held at Steamer Lane and running and cycling events are held along the pathway. The park at Lighthouse Point has benches, landscape accents, coastal overlook/viewing areas, artwork, and one turf field. The Surfing Museum is located at Lighthouse Point, which offers an un-paralleled viewing opportunity of surfing (City of Santa Cruz 2020).
- ❑ **Santa Cruz Riverwalk:** The Santa Cruz Riverwalk is a multi-use pathway and levee maintenance road running along both sides of the San Lorenzo River atop flood control levees built C. 1960. The Riverwalk can be accessed at several points within about one-half to three-quarters of a mile from the Wharf, most notably via the existing Beach Street cycle-track (MBSST Segment 8). The Riverwalk is popular for cycling and wildlife viewing.
- ❑ **Neary Lagoon Wildlife Refuge and Park:** The 37-acre Neary Lagoon Wildlife Refuge, located northwest of the Wharf and west of Depot Park, offers a boardwalk loop trail where visitors can bird watch and explore a variety of natural habitats. Access is provided at Neary Lagoon Park, a neighborhood park, at Chestnut Street north of Depot Park.
- ❑ **La Barranca Park:** Located approximately one mile from the Wharf along Bay Street, this approximately one-half mile-long linear park has historically connected west side neighborhoods to the West Cliff Pathway and the Beach Area. The park lies uphill from the future MBSST Segment 7 Phase 2, and will continue to provide viewshed opportunities of Neary Lagoon as well as walking and passive recreation.
- ❑ **California State Parks:** Though not in the immediate vicinity of the Santa Cruz Wharf, there are two state parks located along the West Cliff Drive Pathway: Lighthouse Field State Park and Natural Bridges State Park at the western end of the path; both are managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (California State Parks). Lighthouse Field State Park is located across the street from Lighthouse Point and provides the only public restroom facilities along West Cliff Drive. Natural Bridges State Park includes beach areas,



trails, and is an exceptional location to view large populations of Monarch butterflies overwintering during the fall (City of Santa Cruz 2020).

Seabright State Beach is also operated by California State Parks and extends from the San Lorenzo River mouth to the Walton Lighthouse Jetty near the Santa Cruz Harbor. Twin Lakes State Beach fronts the ocean across the City’s southern limit just south the Harbor. Additional state parks lie just outside city limits along the coast and inland to the Santa Cruz Mountains, each providing distinct recreational opportunities.

### ***Community, Recreational, and Cultural Facilities***

- ❑ **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk:** The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, a private recreational facility owned by the Santa Cruz Seaside Company, is located to the east of the Wharf along the northern edge of Main Beach. This amusement park features rides and games including the historic wooden Giant Dipper roller coaster (City of Santa Cruz 2020), hosts beach movies and concerts, and is a major visitor attraction/destination.
- ❑ **MBNMS Exploration Center:** The City partnered with NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuary for construction of this facility, which is located on Beach Street opposite the Wharf entrance. NOAA leased City land for the construction of the 12,000-square-foot MBNMS Exploration Center. One of the goals of the center is to educate visitors about the unique and fascinating coastal and marine environment (City of Santa Cruz 2020). Visitors can explore the Center’s interpretive collections or take part in events, classes, and presentations. The City continues to work with NOAA staff on development of interpretive materials and educational programs throughout the Wharf and Beach area.
- ❑ **Neighborhood and Community Facilities:** There are also several neighborhood and community facilities in proximity to the Santa Cruz Wharf. The Lottie Sly Park and Carmelita Cottages contain a public heritage garden and hostel on Beach Hill. Comprising several historic cottages dating to the late 1800’s, Carmelita Cottages providing low-cost overnight accommodation, while the publicly accessible Lottie Sly Park includes historically inspired gardens and seating areas. The Beach Flats Park, Poets Park, and Beach Flats Community Garden provide a variety of play areas, public art, picnic areas, and a small performance stage. Beach Flats Community Garden is operated under a lease with the Santa Cruz Seaside Company. The Nueva Vista Community Center is located within an affordable housing project on Leibrandt Ave and provides a variety of community and educational services, including food distribution, adult education, and after-school homework programs.

### **Santa Cruz Wharf Recreational Facilities and Uses**

The Santa Cruz Wharf is situated at the southern end of Pacific Avenue at Beach Street within the Beach Area of the City of Santa Cruz. The Wharf extends into Monterey Bay for a distance of approximately one-half mile; the initial 200± feet covers a section of the City’s Main Beach. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and the City’s Main Beach are located to the east, and Cowell Beach

and the Dream Inn are located to the west. A mix of visitor-serving and commercial uses is located along Beach Street to the north of the Wharf. As previously indicated, the Wharf is located within the MBNMS.

### ***Overview of Wharf Development and Uses***

The Santa Cruz Wharf is the last remaining of six piers constructed along the Santa Cruz shoreline. It was built in 1914 as a City-owned and operated facility, primarily for shipment of materials. The Wharf is the longest timber pile-supported ocean pier structure in the United States and one of the longest in the world (ROMA Design Group 2014).

The Santa Cruz Wharf originally was envisioned as a commercial enterprise built with public funds to further the economic development of the City. Over the years, the Wharf has evolved in role, function, and identity. From its initial role as a cargo handling, passenger, and shipping pier to its later adaptation serving the commercial fishing industry, the early decades of the Wharf were closely tied to the resources of Monterey Bay. After World War II and beginning in the 1950s, the Wharf was significantly expanded for commercial uses and parking. The commercial uses were initially a direct outgrowth of the commercial fishing industry, incorporating fish sales and featuring prepared seafood dishes in an open air setting in close conjunction with off-loading and handling of the daily catch. The Wharf no longer serves the commercial fishing industry, apart from its lone remaining fish market, and currently is one of a number of destination attractions in the Beach Area of the City (ROMA Design Group 2014).

Since its construction in 1914, the Wharf has expanded several times, from approximately 4.2 acres to 7.5 acres today. The Wharf increased by 3.3 acres between the 1950s and the 1980s for commercial uses and parking. Although the Wharf provides recreational opportunities as described below, the Wharf's current identity is primarily related to the commercial uses along its length (ROMA Design Group 2014). The Wharf currently has approximately 60,000 square feet of commercial and retail building space, which is occupied by tenants with a variety of short- and long-term ground leases, building leases and licenses from the City; approximately two-thirds of existing uses on the Wharf are restaurants. Commercial uses are located along 1,300 feet of frontage on the west side of the Wharf. Other buildings on the Wharf include a building for Wharf maintenance and operations and a Lifeguard Headquarters (HQ) building. Approximately 50% of the Wharf is used for vehicular circulation and parking. About 17% of the Wharf area is dedicated to commercial uses, leaving about one-third of the Wharf split between public access areas and safety and operations. There are 433 vehicle and 16 motorcycle existing public parking spaces on the Wharf.

### ***Recreational Uses at the Santa Cruz Wharf***

The Wharf is one of several important visitor attractions in the City's Beach Area, especially during the summer months and when the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is open. The City estimates that approximately 2.5 million visitors currently come to the Wharf annually. The Wharf currently

provides diverse opportunities for multiple recreational uses and activities, with the most common identified below.

- Walking, Biking, and Active Transportation
- Nature and Wildlife Viewing
- Recreational Fishing
- Small Craft Boating
- Open Water Sports
- Education and Science
- Cultural Activities, Events, and Entertainment
- Dining and Shopping
- Temporary “Pop-up” Recreation

**Walking, Biking, and Active Transportation.** Active Transportation refers to non-motorized forms of transportation, in particular walking and bicycling. Existing pedestrian access at the Wharf is provided by existing sidewalks and walkways that vary in location and width, and are constructed of asphalt, concrete, or a mixture of the two. The widest walkways are at the beginning of the Wharf from the entrance. The west side averages 16 feet in width and has an asphalt surface, and the east side is about 13 feet wide with a stamped concrete surface. The eastern walkway narrows to six feet in width going south, while the western walkway narrows to 13 feet and continues in front of the Wharf buildings (Moffatt & Nichol 2014). Representative photos of pedestrian activity on the Wharf are shown on Figure 4.8-1.

The Wharf provides pedestrian access approximately one-half mile (about 2,700 feet) into the MBNMS. The southern area of the Wharf is closed to vehicles, providing refuge from vehicle traffic and enhanced opportunities for viewing the natural environment of the Monterey Bay as further discussed below.

While there is some bicycling activity on the Wharf, existing bicycle parking facilities are limited and bicycles must share traffic lanes with motor vehicles. This presents safety concerns as well as reduces the efficiency of vehicle parking to turnover, limiting overall public access.

Due to the arrangement and location of existing commercial buildings, Wharf facilities, and parking, pedestrian access to and along the perimeter of the Wharf is not continuous. Access on the narrow east side is often disrupted and/or at times obstructed by parked vehicles, storage facilities, fishing, and several existing boat landings, creating conflicting use zones. This often results in pedestrians walking at the edge or within vehicle travel lanes. The narrow pathway is also often partially obstructed from the ends of cars extending over the parking stops or from fishers’ gear. Pedestrian access to most of the western perimeter of the Wharf is currently limited as there is only a small maintenance walkway along most of the western side of the Wharf, except for a portion of the Wharf on the southern end. Overall, the existing walkways along the main

portion of the Wharf are less able to accommodate pedestrians than on the northern (shore) and southern (seaward) ends.

**Nature and Wildlife Viewing.** The open, panoramic views of the Monterey Bay that extend to Lighthouse Point to the west and beyond San Lorenzo Point to the east make the Wharf popular for wildlife and bird watching and photography. Views of the Santa Cruz waterfront and Boardwalk are prominent from the east side of the Wharf, while views of Lighthouse Point and legendary surf breaks like Steamer’s Lane are prominently visible from areas along the west side of the Wharf not obstructed by buildings.. The southern end of the Wharf offers open bay views that also include recreational boaters and kayakers, which all make the Santa Cruz Wharf a singular destination for nature views from nearly every vantage point. Benches are provided at various locations along existing walkways, primarily on the northwestern, southwestern, and southern portions of the Wharf, which offer enhanced opportunities for viewing the Monterey Bay and general wildlife and bird watching. In addition, there is an approximate 10,500-square-foot open area between buildings in the southern portion of the site, known as the “Commons<sup>1</sup>” that provides open views at the western perimeter of the Wharf. There are also coin-operated telescopes along the Wharf for distant viewing. Representative photos of nature and wildlife viewing activity on the Wharf are shown on Figure 4.8-2.

Wildlife viewing is recognized as a popular recreational pastime on the Wharf. Numerous species of birds and marine mammals, in addition to sea lions, are commonly seen from the Wharf, including dolphins, sea otters, and occasionally whales or rarely-seen birds.

A variety of bird species use the Wharf and surrounding waters for nesting, roosting, and feeding, creating unique opportunities for bird watching. Nesting species are limited to a few species that may nest on human-made structures. Local organizations, such as the Santa Cruz Bird Club, chapters of the Audubon Society, and Monterey Sea Birds include the Wharf in their literature, studies, tours, and social events. Species that frequent the Wharf and surrounding waters include the pelagic cormorant, California brown pelican, pigeon guillemot, rock pigeon, and western gull can be found on or around the Wharf. Abundant fish stocks, including massive schools of sardines and anchovies also attract interest.

*Sea Lion Viewing/Fishing Holes.* The southern portion of the Wharf includes five “fishing holes” that were first cut through the Wharf structure in the early 1970s to expand fishing opportunities; these have been relocated or modified at least once since then. Although originally designed for fishing, these holes have become popular with visitors who can view sea lions that haul out on the ledger beams spanning pilings beneath the Wharf. This is recognized as a popular recreational pastime on the Wharf, and these areas are highly appreciated by members of the public. Sea lions using areas under the Wharf can also be viewed from public boat landings, private or rental

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<sup>1</sup> The open area on the west side of the Wharf where the Wharf changes direction to the southwest, is sometimes called the “Commons”.

boat/kayak landings, or certain areas along the Wharf perimeter like the east parking lot or the “Commons.”

**Recreational Fishing.** Fishing is one of the popular recreational activities at the Wharf. There are a variety of options and experiences that range from pier fishing to shore casting, as well as small boat fishing and rental craft. For most of the Wharf’s history, commercial fish landings, recreational fishing charters, and group tours landed or launched at the Wharf. Deteriorated landings and the absence of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant water access have led to the decline of both commercial fishing and recreational fishing charter boat activities.

As previously indicated, fishing from public piers in California does not require a fishing license, allowing fishing opportunities for both experienced and novice fishers. Fishing equipment can be rented from Wharf vendors. The Wharf supports commercial kayak and small fishing boat rentals that allow active small craft boating and fishing within Monterey Bay.

Popular pier fishing locations identified by local residents include parking areas along the east side of the Wharf where people have close access to their vehicles as further discussed below. Other locations include the Agora<sup>2</sup>, former boat landings on the east side of the Wharf, and at the end of the Wharf. Fishing is currently only restricted along much of the west side of the Wharf behind buildings, near landings, and areas reserved for Wharf and lifeguard operations. The Santa Cruz Wharf currently has approximately 6,100 linear feet (LF) of perimeter with 4,700 LF available for fishing. Of this available fishing area, approximately, 1,615 LF are narrow sidewalks where fishing and particularly tailgate fishing conflicts with pedestrian access, forcing pedestrians around cars and often into the vehicle lanes to pass (“conflict zones”). Representative photos of fishing activity on the Wharf are shown on Figure 4.8-3.

The Wharf offers several distinct fishing experiences as follows:

- ❑ *Shore-Casting Zone:* Spanning the area from the foot of the Wharf to approximately 125 feet from the observable mean low tide line, this area changes with the weather, tides, seasons, and climatic conditions. It represents the shallowest areas where the ocean meets the beach as it changes over time. The area attracts fish to food sources released by the churning waves and is typified by turbulent, sandy conditions with limited visibility and shallow depths. Barred perch and striped bass are most commonly caught in this region.
- ❑ *Near-Shore Zone:* This zone spans from the seaward edge of the Shore-Casting Zone to the east parking lot and entails deeper yet largely sheltered waters in between the turbulent shore break and open ocean. This area provided more mature food sources like shellfish along the Wharf piles, which also provide defensive habitat for many species of fish. Along the side of the Wharf predator species are often found in the more open waters seeking

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<sup>2</sup> The Agora is the open space area behind the current Boat Rentals building where the *Marcella* is currently located.

prey in the transition zones between the Wharf and shore, where waters remain relatively shallow and visibility is somewhat greater than sheltered areas under the Wharf. Near shore catches include barred perch, rubber lip, rainbow, walleye, black and pile perch as well as striped bass, halibut, mackerel, jack smelt and salmon and steelhead on occasion.

- ❑ *Open Ocean Zones:* Along the east parking lot and wrapping around the end of the Wharf all the way to the “Commons,” deeper waters (of up to approximately 30 feet) are home to larger fish species as well as major marine predators like sea lions. These areas are often clearer and calmer at depth, and large schools of bait fish like sardines and anchovies are common. Nearby kelp forests provide additional refuge and food sources in this area. Open ocean offers more challenging fishing for larger game species, but rockfishes, cabezon, and ling cod are common.
- ❑ *Reef Fishing Zones:* Sheltered waters beneath the Wharf protect abundant stocks of rock fish, ling cod, and crustaceans among piles. Fishing in this area is currently only accessible from the fishing holes at the seaward end of the Wharf or by small boat, fishing is restricted from landings to maintain public access.
- ❑ *Boat Fishing:* Fishing boats have long been associated with the Wharf for both commerce and recreation. Today, limited access to or from the Wharf for private small watercraft fishing is available from Public Landing #1, although, most boat angling occurs from rental motorboats or kayaks available on the Wharf. Commercial fishing landings on the Wharf represent a strong cultural influence on the Wharf, but have not occurred in many years due to inadequate facilities. Similarly, recreational fishing tours and charters, which were long a part of the historical Wharf experience, are not currently operating due to a lack of ADA-compliant water access.

The Wharf has always provided visitors with unique experiences of the ocean. Among fishers, the opportunity to back their cars to the edge of the Wharf and cast almost directly from the car (“Tailgate Fishing”) remains a popular “past-time that dates to the original 1914 Wharf. Over time this experience has changed and has been reduced as the Wharf has expanded, pedestrian sidewalks added, and safety regulations requiring installation of improvements, such as railings and wheel stops. Currently, the narrow sidewalk on the east side of the Wharf for pedestrian access is also used along much of the Wharf for fishing areas. In many areas, these two types of users come into conflict, however, as cars and fishing gear encroach on the path, blocking pedestrian and wheelchair access. Current areas where tailgate fishing is allowed are depicted in Figure 4.8-4, including “Conflict Zones” that are often too narrow to accommodate ADA-compliant access or alternate passage while tailgate fishing is occurring.

**Small Craft Boating.** There are five active landings presently on the Wharf for boat and water access. Two are available to the public, two for boat and kayak rentals, and one landing is used by Wharf Staff. Four of these landings are functional, but all are subject to seasonal wave damage (Moffatt & Nichol 2014) and closure. The majority of craft accessing the Wharf via the public

landings are local craft launched from nearby beaches or the Santa Cruz Harbor. The existing landings include the following; representative photos are shown on Figure 4.8-5:

- ❑ *Kayak Access* (Bent [Row] 52): This landing is used by the kayak rental business on the Wharf. There is a small floating dock accessed by a ladder from the fixed landing and storage shelves beneath the Wharf for kayaks and equipment. The dock is used only by patrons of the kayak rental and has a locked gate at the top of the stair when the business is closed. Kayak classes and tours also are currently offered by the existing kayak rental business on the Wharf.
- ❑ *Boat Rental Landing* (Bent [Row] 68): There is a small landing used by the fishing boat rental concessionaire. Directly above the landing is a crane used to lower the wooden rental boats into the water. This facility is used solely by patrons of the boat rental concessionaire.
- ❑ *Public Landing 1* (Bent [Row] 72): A landing with a floating dock the length of the landing is available for public use for short-term loading and off-loading to Santa Cruz Wharf.
- ❑ *Wharf Staff Landing* (Bent [Row] 80): This landing is used by the Wharf staff to launch their boats for access to the underside of the Wharf for maintenance and repair work. There is a 3-ton jib crane installed above to launch their boat and other municipal boats for emergencies.
- ❑ *Public Landing 2* (Bent [Row] 150): This is the second public and most southerly landing available to the public for short-term loading and off-loading to Santa Cruz Wharf, but has been closed since the 2011 tsunami due to constrained access and need for major infrastructure improvements. There is no floating dock, and access is provided by a ladder that is used at all water levels.

**Open Water Sports.** Open water swimming and body surfing, board sports, and diving are other popular recreational activities around the Wharf. Restrooms and cold-water showers are available at Cowell and Main Beaches near the entrance to the Wharf. Watersport access for swimming, as well as surfing, kayaking, and paddleboarding is currently only available from landings on the east side of the Wharf or adjacent beaches. Access to waters along the west side of the Wharf is only possible by paddling through the pilings or around the Wharf from West Cliff Drive or from the beach. Water conditions around the Wharf vary and can sometimes create hazardous conditions around the pilings and landings restricting access.

The Wharf Crew and Lifeguards occasionally host opportunities for leaping or high-diving from the Wharf or Lifeguard HQ building. These events typically occur as “rites of passage” for participants of the Junior Guards program or for City Councilmembers, and the commemoration of historic events like the Wharf opening on December 5, 1914. Jumping from the Wharf is otherwise restricted outside of managed events when public safety staff is monitoring on site. Adjacent bay areas, including nearby kelp forests, provide unique scuba, snorkeling, and free diving opportunities.

Board sports, including surfing and paddleboarding, also are popular recreational activities in the waters surrounding the Wharf. The first documented surfing on the U.S. mainland was recorded at the San Lorenzo River mouth by the Santa Cruz Daily Surf on July 20, 1885. Surfing continues to thrive in Santa Cruz with popular surf breaks Steamer’s Lane and Cowells along the west side of the Wharf and at the River mouth approximately one-third mile to the east. These surf breaks are typically accessed from stairs along West Cliff Drive or from the beach, although surfers occasionally launch from boat landings on the east side of the Wharf.

Paddleboarding has grown in popularity over the past decade, and paddleboards may be rented from Wharf vendors. Sheltered waters around the Wharf, as well as nearby surf breaks and the intricate network of pilings, provide a variety of paddleboarding experiences. Other board sports like skim boarding, body boarding, kite surfing, and hydro-boarding can be seen around the Wharf.

**Education and Science.** Numerous educational opportunities can be found on the Wharf. The most common themes are around environmental topics including geophysical processes in the Monterey Bay, animals and habitat, or historical interpretation. Partnerships with organizations like such as NOAA, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation, and UCSC have provided a variety of educational signage, interpretive exhibits, and in-situ science experiments, which are sometimes available for public recreational learning and research. Historical interpretive materials were largely developed and installed by local historians as part of the Wharf Centennial celebration in 2014, but additional unique historical artifacts can be found in many long-established Wharf businesses, particularly restaurants who have operated nearly continuously on the Wharf over 50 years.

The Wharf is also a popular destination for educational experiences by local school and community groups who visit for a variety of educational experiences. Groups tours are often guided by docents from local educational and research organizations like the UCSC Seymour Center.

**Cultural Activities, Events, and Entertainment.** The Santa Cruz Wharf is host to, or supports, a wide variety of cultural activities, events, and entertainment. The unique history, setting, and features of the Wharf often attract such diverse activities as car shows, triathlons and foot races, outrigger races and regatta, musical festivals, and art exhibitions to the Wharf and Beach Area. Whether serving as the primary location or a support facility, the Wharf enhances cultural activities through activity and gathering space, parking, public restrooms, and an unparalleled natural setting. A centrally-located stage at the Wharf “Commons” also provides a focal point for organized activities such as live music and spoken word, as well as a dancing and other gatherings, such as the Wharf’s Thirteen Days of Halloween celebration. Live music, poetry, and comedy events have also been held within Wharf businesses, providing more regularly programmed entertainment in some instances. Popular events held at the Wharf include Woodies on the Wharf, Aloha Polynesian Festival, Outrigger Races, and Jazz on the Wharf. Representative photos of events and other recreational activities at the Wharf are shown on Figure 4.8-6.



Public Art can regularly be found on and around the Wharf, whether as temporary “Artivism” exhibitions like Sea Walls Santa Cruz, interpretive murals, or more permanent installations like “In the Tides of Time” located by the Wharf entrance at Cowells Beach. Recreational artists, including photographers, plein air painters, and many others can also be found frequenting the edges the of Wharf as they capture timeless imagery of the Wharf and its surroundings.

**Dining & Shopping.** For many visitors, dining and shopping are the primary leisure activities and entertainment attracting them to the Wharf. Although a non-traditional form of recreation, through these activities Wharf visitors enjoy distinct cultural experiences at more than 20 Wharf businesses. Restaurants on the wharf serve unique foods, indicative of historical, regional, and cross-cultural influences like those of the Wharf’s family-run restaurants, while retailers create unique displays and often exhibit goods made or designed locally.

**Temporary Prototyping & “Pop-up” Recreation, or Licensed Uses.** Just as the Wharf has changed over time, recreational facilities at the Wharf can change with community desires and needs. To evaluate how new facilities and programs will be received by the public and function, the City often explores new trends and recreational improvements through temporary and low-cost prototypes or “pop-up” installations. Examples of temporary recreation facilities include the Bocce Court at the “Commons,” curb cafes or parklets, planned pop-ups or interim uses of vacant sites like the former Miramar restaurant, and supportive installations for events like Winter on the Wharf or Thirteen Days of Halloween. Similarly, short-term license agreements with outside organizations and commercial vendors to manage street vending on the Wharf or to provide certain services or activities around the Wharf. Common licensed vendors include hot dog stands and food trucks, kite and beach equipment vendors, communications services and surf cams, and kayak rentals.

## Relevant Plans Related to Parks and Recreation

### *City of Santa Cruz General Plan 2030*

The Santa Cruz Wharf is designated Regional Visitor Commercial (RVC) in the City’s existing *General Plan 2030*. This designation applies to areas that emphasize a variety of commercial uses that serve Santa Cruz residents as well as visitors. The Wharf is one of 12 structures/locations that is identified as a “Landmark” in the General Plan, which is defined in the General Plan as: 1) a building, site, object, structure, or significant tree, having historical, architectural, social, or cultural significance and marked for preservation by the local, state, or federal government or 2) a visually prominent or outstanding structure or natural feature that functions as a point of orientation or identification.

### *Local Coastal Program*

As previously indicated, the Wharf is located within the coastal zone, and the City has a certified LCP as required by the California Coastal Act. The LCP consists of a land use plan, implementing

ordinances, and maps, which are applicable to the coastal zone portions of the City. The LCP applies to private and public projects located within the coastal zone. The City is in the process of updating and revising the LCP Land Use Plan as a separate document from the General Plan; a public review draft was released in November 2021 and is expected to be considered by the CCC in early 2023.

The Santa Cruz Wharf is identified as a coastal recreation area in the LCP (Table LCP-5). The Wharf also is one of nine access components described in the LCP “Access Plan” and is identified as a major tourist attraction featuring restaurants, fishing areas, fish markets, gift and curio shops, and other businesses. The LCP indicates that access is provided for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and boats, and that transit service is provided in the Beach Area.

### ***Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan***

The B/SOL Plan was adopted by the City Council in October 1998. The Santa Cruz Wharf is located in the “Beach Commercial” subarea of the B/SOL Plan that also includes the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk amusement park, motels, bed and breakfast inns, and commercial uses. The B/SOL Plan recommends that the City carry out a comprehensive analysis of the Wharf to include two fundamental and interrelated aspects: maritime and commercial. As indicated above, this recommendation was included as a LCP policy.

### ***City of Santa Cruz Parks Master Plan 2030***

The Parks Master Plan 2030, adopted in October 2020, classifies the Wharf as a “Community, Recreational, and Cultural Facility.” The Wharf is also listed as a “walkway” as part of the trails located throughout the City. The Plan also references the Wharf Santa Cruz Wharf as the Gateway to the MBNMS and its location across the street from NOAA’s MBNMS Exploration Center. The Parks Master Plan acknowledges the proposed Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan as a guide to the future restoration and expansion of the facility, and notes that among the many recommendations, the proposed Wharf Master Plan includes an events pavilion, a gateway entrance, a welcome center, a small boat landing area, and pedestrian and bicycle access along the western side. The Parks Master Plan recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department work with the Planning and Community Development and Economic Development Departments to implement the Wharf Master Plan.

### ***Santa Cruz Active Transportation Plan***

Active Transportation refers to non-motorized forms of transportation, in particular walking and bicycling. The City’s Active Transportation Plan (ATP) identifies an integrated network of walkways and bikeways that connect the City of Santa Cruz neighborhoods and communities to employment, education, commercial, recreational and tourist destinations. The ATP prioritizes a set of connected projects that, when fully implemented, will increase active transportation opportunities and make it safer and more convenient for people to walk, bike and use active

modes in the City of Santa Cruz. The ATP calls for implementation of the promenade in the Wharf Master Plan for better bike/pedestrian access to the ocean for users of all ages and abilities.

### ***Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan***

The Santa Cruz Wharf lies within the MBNMS, which is managed by NOAA. The MBNMS Management Plan, which was updated in 2021, the Management Plan includes 13 action plans to guide NOAA’s understanding and protection of the coastal and marine resources and environments comprising the Sanctuary, which include issue-based and program-based action plans. The issue-based action plan themes include climate change; coastal erosion and sediment management; Davidson Seamount management zone and Sur Ridge; introduced species; marine debris; water quality; wildlife disturbance; and emerging issues. The program-based action plan themes include education, outreach, and communication; maritime heritage; operations and administration; research and monitoring; and resource protection.

## **4.8.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

### **Thresholds of Significance**

In accordance with CEQA; State CEQA Guidelines (including Appendix G); City of Santa Cruz plans, policies and/or guidelines, including City CEQA Guidelines and Procedures; and agency and professional standards, for this EIR, the project’s recreation-related impact would be considered significant if the project would:

- REC-1 Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.
- REC-2 Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- REC-3 Conflict with established recreational, educational, cultural, or scientific uses or policies protecting or encouraging recreational uses of the area.

### **Analytical Method**

Site visits of the Wharf and project vicinity were conducted to ascertain and observe recreational uses and activities. Relevant City and other applicable plans were reviewed with regards to parks and recreational facility policies with which the Project might result in potential conflicts.

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## Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The following impact analyses address impacts of new/expanded recreational facilities (REC-1), increased use of the Wharf (REC-2), and potential conflicts with established recreational uses or policies protecting or encouraging recreational uses (REC-3).

**Impact REC-1: Result in Substantial Physical Impacts.** The proposed Project would not require expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse effect on the environment. However, the Project supports new and expanded facilities that would enhance recreational uses on the Wharf and which could result in adverse physical effects on the environment (PR-1). This is considered a *significant impact*.

### ***Wharf Master Plan and Near-Term Projects***

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would support future improvements to the Wharf, resulting in physical alterations to the wharf structure, including two near-term planned development projects – relocation of the Entry Gate and construction of the East Promenade. The Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan Draft EIR identified significant impacts to biological resources and marine water quality resulting from future development accommodated by the Wharf Master Plan. Some of the future new structural development would require installation of timber piles into marine waters, including construction of the two near-term planned projects.

Identified significant impacts resulting from construction of improvements recommended in the Wharf Master Plan, including the near-term development projects, include: potential impacts to fish and marine mammals, including special status species, if present at the time of pile installation required for wharf expansion or structural improvements (Impact BIO-1a), disturbance to nesting birds if any are present at the time of construction (Impact BIO-4), and potential impacts to marine water quality due to inadvertent discharge of construction debris (HYD-2). All of these indirect potentially significant impacts related to biological resources and water quality would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with implementation of mitigation measures included in the previously circulated Draft and Final EIR volumes. Therefore, potential indirect impacts resulting from development of new and expanded recreational facilities are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Potential indirect impacts resulting from future expansion of the Wharf and other structural improvements would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1a-1, BIO-1a-2, BIO-1a-3, BIO-4, and HYD-2a. For reader convenience, these mitigation measures are presented below, but have not been revised from the versions presented in the 2020 Final EIR and previously approved by City Council, which were unaffected by the Superior Court's judgment.

**MITIGATION BIO-1a-1** Prepare and implement a hydroacoustic, fish and marine mammal monitoring plan that implements measures to avoid exposure of marine mammals to high sound levels that could result in Level B harassment. Measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establishment of an underwater “exclusion zone”—defined as the distance where underwater sound levels exceed 180 dB SEL<sub>cum</sub> if whales are present, and 185 dB SEL<sub>cum</sub> dB if seals and sea lions are present—will be established. This will be refined based on hydroacoustic measurements in the field and in consultation with NOAA Fisheries.
- Pre-construction monitoring by a qualified biologist to update information on the animals’ occurrence in and near the project area, their movement patterns, and their use of any haul-out sites.
- Pre-construction training for construction crews prior to in-water construction regarding the status and sensitivity of the target species in the area and the actions to be taken to avoid or minimize impacts in the event of a target species entering the in-water work area.
- Marine mammal monitoring of the exclusion zone will be conducted prior to commencement of pile driving and underwater excavation activities.
- Pile-driving activities will not commence until marine mammals are not sighted in the exclusion zone for 15 minutes. This will avoid exposing marine mammals to sound levels in excess of the Level A criteria.
- Underwater noise will be measured with a hydrophone during pile-driving to verify sound levels and adjust the size of the exclusion zone as necessary. This measurement may be conducted once and the results applied to subsequent pile installations to determine the exclusion zone.
- In-water biological monitoring to search for target marine mammal species and halt project construction activities that could result in injury or mortality to these species.
- Prohibit disturbance or noise to encourage the movement of the target species from the work area. The City will contact USFWS and NOAA Fisheries to determine the best approach for exclusion of the target species from the in-water work area.
- Data collected during the hydroacoustic, fish and marine mammal monitoring will be reported to NOAA Fisheries in a post-construction monitoring report (usually required to be completed between 60 and 90 days after construction is complete). Observations and data will be reported more frequently, if required by NOAA Fisheries.

**MITIGATION BIO-1a-2** A soft-start procedure will be used for impact pile driving at the beginning of each day's in-water pile driving or any time pile driving has ceased for more than 1 hour. The following soft-start procedures will be conducted:

- If a bubble curtain is used for impact pile driving, the contractor will start the bubble curtain prior to the initiation of impact pile driving to flush fish from the zone near the pile where sound pressure levels are highest.
- If an impact hammer is used, the soft start requires an initial set of three strikes from the impact hammer at 40 percent energy, followed by a one minute waiting period, then two subsequent 3 strike sets. The reduced energy of an individual hammer cannot be quantified because they vary by individual drivers. Also, the number of strikes will vary at reduced energy because raising the hammer at less than full power and then releasing it results in the hammer "bouncing" as it strikes the pile resulting in multiple "strikes".

**MITIGATION BIO-1a-3** A cushion block will be used between the pile cap and the impact hammer. Layers of heavy plywood or baywood soaked in water on top of the pile cap served to dampen the sound of the hammer striking the wood as well as to dissipate friction; plywood not soaked in water was pounded to charred splinters that became very thin and had little value in attenuating sound.

**MITIGATION BIO-4** Conduct a pre-construction survey for any construction that would occur during the nesting season. No more than seven days prior to initiation of construction activities, including pile-driving, scheduled to begin during the nesting season for pigeon guillemot, western gull, or other species potentially nesting on the Wharf (April 15 through August 30, or as determined by a qualified biologist), the City shall have a nesting bird survey conducted by a qualified biologist to determine if active nests of bird species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or the California Fish and Game Code are present in the disturbance zone or within 150 feet of the disturbance zone.

Pre-construction surveys for pigeon guillemots and pelagic cormorants shall include inspection of areas underneath the Wharf for indications of nesting (by kayak or other method adequate for examining remote crevices and pilings). Because pigeon guillemot are difficult to detect, adequate surveys will require surveyors to observe for multiple hours before forming conclusions about occupancy.

If active nests for pigeon guillemots or pelagic cormorants are found, establish a buffer zone of 150 feet between each nest and construction

activities under the wharf deck that could disturb nesting birds, especially pile driving. Construction activities likely to disturb nesting western gull can be resumed when the nest is vacated and young have fledged, as determined by the biologist, and if there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

If active nests for western gull or other species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or the California Fish and Game Code are found, establish a buffer of 100 feet between each nest and construction activities that could disturb nesting birds. Examples of such activities include pile-driving, use of power tools, and above-deck construction activities identified by a qualified biologist as likely to disturb the nesting western gulls. Construction activities likely to disturb nesting western gull can be resumed when the nest is vacated and young have fledged, as determined by the biologist, and if there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

The nesting disturbance buffer for any species may be reduced if a qualified biologist, in consultation with CDFW, determines that the proposed construction is unlikely to disturb the nesting birds, considering factors including, but not limited to, level of existing ongoing disturbance, the temporary level of disturbance from construction, and visual and sound obstructions between the birds and the disturbance, such as rows of piles or existing buildings.

**MITIGATION HYD-2a** Implement the following measures during construction of the Wharf substructure (piles, beams and decking):

- ◆ Install a floating boom that can be placed in the water to encompass the work area. Any timber that inadvertently falls into the water will float and be captured by the boom. Any metal (hand tools or bolts) that falls into the water can be retrieved by magnet or diver if necessary.
- ◆ The crane that installs the piles and beams may have the hydraulic system fit with vegetable oil so that in the event of a hose failure, no petroleum based substance will contact the water, but rather food grade vegetable oil.
- ◆ Any fueling operations of the equipment is conducted on a containment area utilizing plastic sheeting and absorbent pad containment to contain any spills during fueling over the water.

**MITIGATION HYD-2a** If visual evidence of contamination is observed (e.g., oily sheen) during in-water construction, all work shall stop and appropriate containment measures shall be used to identify the source of the contamination (e.g., buried creosote piles), contain, and/or remove the material; regulatory agencies with authority over the area shall be notified, i.e., the Santa

Cruz County Environmental Health Services or Department of Toxic Substances Control. Any hazardous materials needing to be removed shall be handled and disposed of in accordance with the requirements of federal and state regulations.

**Impact REC-2: Increased Use of Recreational Facilities.** The proposed Project would potentially result in increased use of the Santa Cruz Wharf, which is considered a recreational facility, but not to the extent that such use would result in substantial accelerated physical deterioration of the facility (PR-2). This is considered a *less-than-significant impact*.

### ***Wharf Master Plan***

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would support future improvements to the Wharf, which in part are proposed to enhance public access and recreational opportunities at the Wharf. The Wharf Master Plan includes enhancement of recreation and public access as key objectives. Expansion of the Wharf envisioned in the Master Plan consists of construction of the East Promenade and Westside Walkway and construction of new and expanded boat landings, as well as new buildings that would expand public visitor recreational and educational opportunities.

As result of implementation of the proposed Wharf Master Plan, overall visitor use at the Wharf could increase, although there are no specific projections of future visitor use at the Wharf. Specifically, implementation of the Wharf Master Plan could result in some increase in visitors to the Wharf due to: 1) enhancement of existing public spaces, including expansion and increased public and private events at the Wharf; 2) expansion of opportunities for boat tours, fishing and research vessels, and small craft launches; and 3) potential increase in commercial uses and parking within the existing development footprint. The Wharf Master Plan recognizes that enhancing the Wharf for recreational and open space purposes and creating new opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle use, coastal viewing, fishing, boating, and open water swimming and boating could further broaden its appeal to a larger segment of the population and increase year-round visitation (ROMA 2014). Additionally, enhancing the appeal of the Wharf to visitors interested in gaining a better understanding of the ecology and marine life of the MBNMS and the research and scientific endeavors that are being undertaken would also strengthen the visitor diversity and market appeal of the Wharf. The associated improvements and activities would create more reasons for visitors to come to the Wharf and could increase the number of times and seasons of the year that they choose to visit (ROMA 2014).

As previously indicated, the City estimates that approximately 2.5 million visitors currently come to the Wharf annually. Overall, it is expected that visitation would grow commensurate with regional, state, and national economic trends. However, a specific level of potential increased use arising from implementation of the Wharf Master Plan cannot be accurately estimated. The Santa Cruz Wharf is located in an area with numerous parks and public and private recreational facilities, all of which combine to make the Beach Area, in general, a prominent destination for visitors, as



well as residents. None of the proposed uses in the Master Plan would result in a new facility that would be considered a regional draw capable of generating substantially increased visitation to the Wharf, over what might otherwise would occur with local residents and visitors already visiting the area. Although, as indicated above, implementation of the proposed Wharf Master Plan improvements could attract visitors more frequently throughout the year and expand capacity of the Wharf to handle peak summer crowds. There would also be an increased number of days with peak attendance with the addition of the proposed Events Pavilion that would enable public and private events to occur throughout the year. The recommendations in the Wharf Master Plan could increase the attractiveness of the Wharf and enhance recreation and public access, which are consistent with among the key goals of Wharf Master Plan.

The improvements and facilities recommended in the Wharf Master Plan would also structurally improve the Wharf to enhance its resilience and improve the Wharf's capacity to safely manage increased visitation and recreational use. There are no entrance fees to visit the Wharf, but as a mixed-use, commercial and recreational facility, a significant amount of visitation results in commerce and parking revenues that directly fund Wharf maintenance. As a result, increased use of recreational facilities does not directly correlate with potential deterioration of facilities, and would lead to increased revenues for maintenance and improvements to prevent and address future deterioration. Active, year-round Wharf maintenance, funded with visitor revenues and benefitting from increased visitation significantly offsets any deterioration of the facilities that results from increased public use.

Adoption of the Proposed Wharf Master Plan would also help the City attract additional investment and outside grant funding that would fund implementation and support overall sustainability, maintenance, and resilience of the Wharf. In addition, both the proposed Wharf Master Plan and its accompanying Wharf Master Plan Engineering Report provide recommendations regarding maintenance and structural improvements to accommodate future uses and users to prevent deterioration of facilities. Thus, continued and future potential increased use of the Wharf would not lead to a level of use that would result in a substantial physical deterioration of the Wharf, resulting in a *less-than-significant impact*.

### ***Near-Term Projects***

**Entry Gate Relocation.** The proposed relocation of the Wharf entrance gate would move the entrance approximately 540 feet further south from its current location. An entrance gate would be constructed with six steel piles that span the Wharf's width with roll-down transparent gates. This near-term project would result in improved vehicular circulation to the Wharf, but in and of itself, would not result in a new facility that would induce greater visitation to the Wharf. The entrance gates would allow more secure closure of the Wharf for emergencies or non-operating hours, however, no policies are proposed in the Wharf Master Plan that would restrict recreational access through use of the gates. Deck expansion for the gates would also slightly increase public access, recreational use, and increase the lateral resilience of the Wharf in the wave crash zone.

Therefore, this near-term project would have *no impact* on future use and potential deterioration of the Santa Cruz Wharf.

**East Promenade.** Construction of the East Promenade would result in physical expansion of the Wharf by approximately 1.5 acres. The expansion safely would accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and continued fishing access, along an off-street promenade. The East Promenade would allow more people to visit the Wharf via low-impact walking, biking, and human powered transportation. The East Promenade is considered a key part of the overall implementation of the Wharf Master Plan discussed above, and any potential increased use at the Wharf would not result in deterioration of facilities as explained above, resulting in a *less-than-significant impact*.

### Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required as a significant impact has not been identified.

**Impact REC-3: Conflict with Existing Recreational Facility Uses and Policies.** The proposed Project would not conflict with and/or eliminate established recreational, educational, or scientific uses at the Santa Cruz Wharf or conflict with policies protecting or encouraging recreational uses of the area (PR-3). This is considered a *less-than-significant* impact.

### Wharf Master Plan

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and future construction of improvements recommended in the Master Plan would provide new and enhanced public access and recreational facilities and opportunities at an existing public coastal recreational and commercial facility. The proposed Wharf Master Plan includes strategies, policies and actions, and recommendations for specific improvements, all of which would result in new and enhanced recreational facilities as further described and discussed below.

**Wharf Master Plan Strategies, Policies, and Recommended Improvements.** The proposed Wharf Master Plan indicates that three complementary and inter-related strategies were developed to address sustainability of the Wharf, including economic development potential, and other community objectives for the enhancement and preservation of the Wharf. The first strategy calls for the physical expansion of the perimeter of the Wharf for public access, recreation, fishing, and boating. Planned improvements include a wide promenade on the east side of the Wharf, as well as new boat landings, overlooks, and the Westside Walkway; the piles to support the Westside Walkway would also provide protection to the Wharf from winter storms. According to the Wharf Master Plan, these improvements will strengthen the relationship of the Wharf to Monterey Bay and the scenic and environmental qualities it offers. In addition, the improvements will also create a new platform for science, cultural, and educational programming, which can extend the experiences offered at the nearby MBNMS Exploration Center and complement other educational endeavors (ROMA 2014).

The Wharf Master Plan includes policies and actions for the preservation, restoration, improvement, and management of the Wharf, some of which recognize the Wharf’s potential as a more significant recreational resource within the unique environmental setting of the MBNMS. The potential for the Wharf becoming a more attractive commercial and recreational destination also would serve to improve the quality of recreational activities and experiences at the Wharf. The Wharf Master Plan policies and actions regarding enhanced recreational and public access opportunities are summarized on Table 4.8-1.

**Table 4.8-1. Summary of Wharf Master Plan Policies & Actions Regarding Recreation**

Policy	Action [SEE MASTER PLAN FOR FULL TEXT]
<p>3. Provide for the expansion of the perimeter of the Wharf to create more significant opportunities for public access, fishing, open water swimming, boating and linear recreational activities that will orient the visitor to the Bay and engage the waterfront environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construct a wide promenade along the eastern edge.</li> <li>▪ Construct a walkway on the western side.</li> <li>▪ Design the access improvements to add to structural resilience.</li> <li>▪ Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities/ connections to trail systems.</li> <li>▪ Provide new accessible boating and landing facilities that will enhance water-oriented recreational, scientific and educational opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Construct a small boat landing facility on the east side adjacent to the East Promenade for kayak, paddleboat and fishing boat rentals.</li> <li>▪ Construct a landing facility for larger vessels at the eastern bayward end for science, education, research, sports fishing and whale watching.</li> <li>▪ Construct a new gangway, float and ladder adjacent to the Westside Walkway and near the Gateway Building to provide access for open water swimming and water sports.</li> <li>▪ Utilize the new recreation, public access and open space improvements to enhance the identity and market appeal of Wharf.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Provide public oriented activities and a built form that gives structure and orientation to the visitor experience, expresses the unique characteristics of the Wharf and provides a more diverse and varied dimension to its venues and offerings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a stepped edge along the eastern bayward end of the Wharf that enhances viewing opportunities to marine life, boating and fishing activities</li> <li>▪ Construct a multi-sided, all-season Events Pavilion.</li> <li>▪ Construct a Gateway Building at the beginning of the Wharf.</li> <li>▪ Consider locating changing rooms, restrooms and a sauna and a gathering space of limited size in a portion of the Gateway Building.</li> <li>▪ Develop programming for public-oriented activities in new buildings and coordinate these with other educational, scientific and cultural venues and events on the Wharf.</li> <li>▪ Develop Wharf Interpretive Resources Plan to identify opportunities and strategies for conveying Wharf historic, cultural and environmental education through historic materials,</li> </ul>

Table 4.8-1. Summary of Wharf Master Plan Policies &amp; Actions Regarding Recreation

Policy	Action [SEE MASTER PLAN FOR FULL TEXT]
	<p>interpretive elements and public art. Consider locations to develop a museum dedication to the Wharf and Beach area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Future development at end of Wharf shall preserve or relocate to place of greater access and viewing quality, the popular “sea lion viewing” and “fishing” holes at the end of the Wharf.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Provide for an increase in the number, diversity, seasonality and appeal of events and make the educational, scientific, historic, environmental and cultural dimensions of the Wharf an integral and meaningful part of the visitor experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop plan for interpretative elements and events that is updated on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>▪ Designate an Events Curator to implement the plan and to manage and promote year-round events and interpretative programs.</li> <li>▪ Provide integration of scientific and educational initiatives and nonprofit and for-profit activities within the Gateway Building.</li> <li>▪ Provide interpretative elements.</li> <li>▪ Encourage mobile exhibits, docents and dynamic messaging.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for research and demonstration projects.</li> <li>▪ Identify an appropriate location for the Surfing Museum.</li> <li>▪ Consider use of the Events Pavilion for community celebrations.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Do not expand the Wharf footprint for commercial uses but within the existing footprint, increase the amount, intensity, diversity, and appeal of the commercial venues on the Wharf.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider pop-ups, events, short-term commercial uses, and temporary recreational facilities to activate underutilized Wharf areas.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Improve the appearance of the commercial buildings, the attractiveness of the storefronts and adjacent sidewalk and the quality of the pedestrian experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discourage and limit blank walls, indented entrances and angular building facades. Utilize shallow liner uses along the sidewalk to encourage pedestrian engagement.</li> <li>▪ Reduce impediments to pedestrian movement along the sidewalk and maintain the finished floor of storefronts at sidewalk grade.</li> </ul>

The proposed Wharf Master Plan includes a range of recommendations for new facilities and improvements that would expand, improve, and enhance existing recreational facilities and uses at the Wharf. In addition, some of these recommendations would also serve to enhance cultural, educational, and scientific research opportunities. Specific recommended improvements in the proposed Wharf Master Plan that would expand existing recreational opportunities are summarized below. The key improvements are conceptually depicted on Figure 3-2 in the Project Description .

- ❑ **East Promenade:** This facility would result in expansion of the Wharf on the east side, which would be dedicated to pedestrians, bicyclists, and continued fishing. According to the Master Plan, the East Promenade would provide the backbone for a series of other

improvements, including the Small Boat Landing, the South Landing, and a Terrace Overlook that are all intended to enhance public access along the entire length of the Wharf and add to the recreational, educational, and scenic dimensions of the Wharf that already exist.

- ❑ **Westside Walkway:** A new 10-12-foot wide, pedestrian walkway, supported on new piles, is proposed along the western perimeter of the Wharf that would provide new pedestrian access to this area of the Wharf and complete a full one-mile circuit of pedestrian access around the Wharf. It would be built approximately eight feet below the existing Wharf deck level to allow for undisturbed visual access from the existing restaurants and commercial spaces along the western edge of the Wharf. Constructed from permeable materials to disrupt the force of waves, the Westside Walkway and supporting piles would also serve to protect existing Wharf piles beneath buildings from seaborne debris and damage during storms.
- ❑ **Terrace Overlook:** An overlook with amphitheater-like steps is proposed at the southernmost tip of the Wharf extending from the East Promenade. The Terrace Overlook would descend further than the edge of the East Promenade with three amphitheater steps leading to a 7-foot wide area where the guardrail would be located. This area would provide seating opportunities for viewing the Monterey Bay and watching wildlife off the end of the Wharf. An approximate 4,000-square-foot area would remain at the end of the Wharf that would continue to be used for fishing and viewing the bay and wildlife, including from the new Overlook.
- ❑ **Boat Landings:** Two new accessible boat landings are proposed to accommodate a variety of water sports and provide universal access to the ocean. Both landings would be ADA-compliant, allowing those with mobility challenges, children, and aging visitors, safe and equitable access to boating on the Monterey Bay.
  - The “Small Boat Landing” would support smaller recreational vessels and Wharf operations, with the following: accessible docking facilities for kayak, paddleboard, and fishing boat rentals as well as Wharf Operations; expanded and improved support and storage space for the boating facilities; and public use for temporary tie-in of small vessels or for water craft launches from the Wharf. The Small Boat Landing would consolidate four existing small boat landings, none of which meet ADA standards and only one open to the public, to support and expand small boat and human powered watercraft uses from a centralized ADA accessible landing.
  - The “South Landing” is a larger vessel landing facility proposed at the deepwater end of the Wharf in the location originally configured for the berthing of oceangoing vessels and home to what remains of Public Landing #2. Temporary mooring for visitor-serving vessels, such as whale watching, bay tours, sports fishing, dinner cruises, and educational and scientific research vessels, including those of the MBNMS, the Monterey Bay Aquarium/Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI), and UCSC would be provided by the South Landing. This facility also could provide landings for public use and emergency evacuation or resupply in the event of disasters

impacting highway access. The Wharf Master Plan, with revisions approved by the City Council in 2020, prohibits consideration of the Wharf as a terminus for cruise ships of any tonnage, to provide moorings for extended periods of time, or to provide shuttle access for any type of large ocean-going passenger vessel.

- ❑ **Swim Club Support Facilities:** One of the three proposed new public-use buildings, the Gateway Building at the new entrance, is envisioned with potential space for a non-profit Open Water Swim Club, which could include restrooms, changing rooms, a sauna, and meeting space. The Open Water Swim Club would have direct access to the Westside Walkway, which would be connected to the bay by an 85-foot-long gangway and float, providing new ADA-accessible direct access to open water ocean swimming, paddling, and surfing at Cowell Beach. Access would be provided seasonally; during the winter months, the float would be removed and secured to a pair of piles specifically designed for that purpose.
- ❑ **Visitor and Educational Uses**
  - The Gateway Building is proposed where the existing row of commercial buildings begins where the existing Wharf widens, and the approximate 3,000-square-foot building is planned for public uses that could support a mix of cultural, educational, scientific and recreational activities, including visitor center, and as discussed above, support facilities for open ocean swimmers.
  - The Events Pavilion is an approximately 6,000-square-foot building proposed in the “Commons,” an open space area, where the Wharf changes direction to the southwest. The “Commons” is currently used in warmer months for occasional outdoor public events and concerts atop a small outdoor stage. The new facility proposed would provide a weather-protected space capable of supporting a wider range of year-round uses, including educational and environmental programs, lectures, performances and festivals, as well as private events such as parties and weddings. Existing restroom facilities serving the “Commons” would be improved and expanded to increase capacity, security, and meet ADA requirements. The building is envisioned in a pavilion-like form incorporating glass doors that completely open up to create an indoor/outdoor relationship when weather permits.
  - The Landmark Building is proposed at the bayward end of the Wharf adjacent to an existing building (the Dolphin Restaurant). Uses could include a combination of cultural, educational, and commercial uses as well as the possibility of a café and small conference and lecture facilities. The Santa Cruz Surfing Museum has expressed its interest in using a portion of this structure.
  - The Master Plan also considers remodeling, infill, and intensified use of existing structures, including upper floor outdoor dining opportunities and small pocket retail spaces by the proposed Events Pavilion.

### ☐ Support Facilities

- Lifeguard HQ: Expansion or replacement of the existing lifeguard station is proposed to improve response times, expand capacity, and better accommodate service and accessibility requirements for lifeguard functions at the Wharf, Main and Cowell Beaches. An expanded Lifeguard HQ is envisioned to potentially include support facilities for programs like Junior Guards, storage of response vehicles and equipment, potential seasonal mooring of a fire boat at the small boat landing, communications equipment, and other resilience and public safety features.
- Bicycle Facilities: The Master Plan proposes new bicycle parking for 64 to 150 bicycles.

In addition to these recreational facilities and improvements, the Wharf Master Plan supports educational and scientific endeavors at the Wharf. One of the proposed Actions seeks to provide integration of scientific and educational initiatives and non-profit and for-project activities. Another Action seeks to provide opportunities for research and demonstration projects, including but not limited to the marine environment, energy, water use, and recycling. Specific types of projects are not identified, but based on existing demonstration projects underway at the Wharf (wind research, photovoltaic energy, water quality), such projects are anticipated to be related to scientific research and in some cases could involve temporary installations or uses. The Master Plan Actions also call for the City to foster and participate in mutually cooperative relationships and ventures with science and educational entities such as the MBNMS Exploration Center, the Seymour Marine Discovery Center, the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, and the University of California at Santa Cruz.

**Impacts of Wharf Master Plan on Recreation:** Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan would result in improvements that would expand recreational facilities and enhance existing recreational, cultural, educational, and scientific research uses and opportunities at the Wharf. Generally, construction of facilities recommended in the Wharf Master Plan would expand safe access for all recreational users, further enhance existing recreational features at the Wharf, diversify recreational opportunities with ADA-compliant accessible water access, and provide new public buildings to support cultural and other activities and projects, as further explained below. Specifically, pedestrian and bicycle access would be expanded with construction of the East Promenade and Westside Walkway, which would increase access to the perimeter of the Wharf and also create a continuous walkway circuit of over one mile. Preliminary concepts for the East Promenade depict seating areas along the eastern edge of the Wharf that would support fishing, gathering, wildlife viewing, and sight-seeing uses. Two new boat landings and the open water swim access float would provide ADA-compliant water access that is not currently available and expand existing kayak and rental boating opportunities, as well as provide access for paddleboarding and surfing. The South Landing would expand opportunities for recreational watercraft access and potential activities like whale watching and bay tours, fishing charters, research and educational tours.

**Walking, Biking, and Active Transportation.** Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan improvements would result in an 11% increase in the Wharf perimeter (approximately 677 LF), nearly all of which would be accessible for walking, biking, and/or other active transportation. The creation of the East Promenade would result in the addition of approximately 1.5 acres to the Wharf that would provide expanded and enhanced public access and create an approximately 2,200-foot-long bike and pedestrian accessway that would be separated from vehicular travel. The East Promenade would reduce or eliminate conflicts between recreational uses, such as pedestrian walks and fishing along the Wharf edge by providing separated seating areas for fishing, gathering, and sightseeing activities, separated from the flow of pedestrians and bicyclists along the Promenade. The East Promenade also would create a multi-modal destination spur, connecting to the planned MBSST segment along Beach Street.

A significant part of the Wharf perimeter expansion is provided by the Westside Walkway, which would create a lowered walkway, ramps, and an open water swimming access float along the west side of the wharf. The Westside Walkway would provide seasonal access along approximately 815 feet of Wharf along the west side that is not currently walkable, thus creating a pedestrian circuit totaling over one mile around the Wharf, enhancing access for recreational walking and fitness .

**Nature and Wildlife Viewing.** Completion of the Master Plan improvements would significantly expand opportunities for nature and wildlife viewing and sight-seeing through the substantial expansion of the Wharf and its perimeter with enhanced access as described above. The expansion of edge seating along the East Promenade and Overlook Terrace, as well as the provision of new viewing angles beneath the Wharf along the Westside Walkway (as shown on Figure 4.8-7) and on three new ADA-accessible boat landings would increase the diversity of wildlife and nature viewing opportunities and experiences. The Westside Walkway would also complete a full one-mile pedestrian circuit around the Wharf, providing new opportunities for views of the bay and wildlife viewing. Permeable materials comprising the Westside Walkway would also create a unique new visual experience of walking over the water below.

Expanded seating areas along the Wharf edge and the Overlook Terrace would offer more comfort to bird watchers and expand opportunities for bird watching and overall nature viewing. This would be an improvement over current conditions where many walkways, particularly along the east side of the Wharf, do not have sufficient width to include ocean-facing seating and still allow for ADA-compliant pedestrian access. Below deck access via new landings and the Westside Walkway would also create new opportunities to for viewing wildlife e.

Second-floor commercial infill, including potential rooftop outdoor dining, further expands sight-seeing for those engaged in recreational dining or shopping. The Landmark Building, Events Pavilion, and Gateway Building could similarly include publicly accessible viewing areas such as balconies, upper floors and mezzanines, or roof tops vistas, if desired at the time these facilities are designed. Wi-fi or cellular infrastructure needed for enhanced public safety response, communications, and interpretive features envisioned in the Wharf Master Plan would also enable



the potential installation of web-cams expanding wildlife viewing opportunities to nature enthusiasts around the world.

*Sea Lion Viewing / Fishing Holes.* There are five holes at the end of the Wharf, varying in width/length from 8.5 to 13 feet, and totaling about 240 feet in perimeter that were installed as fishing areas in the early 1970s. Although these holes are now only occasionally used for fishing, they are more commonly used to view sea lions basking on ledger boards beneath the Wharf, and are considered one of the most popular recreational activities at the Wharf.

The proposed Landmark Building at the end of the Wharf could result in removal or relocation of these holes, depending on the ultimate siting and size of the building. As part of the previously approved Wharf Master Plan, the City Council included a condition of approval that states:

“Any potential development at the end of the Wharf, shall preserve to the greatest extent possible, or relocate to a place of greater access and viewing quality, the popular “sea lion viewing” and “fishing” holes at the end of the Wharf. Any redesign of these features must be in keeping with the intimate experience of the current viewing holes and consistent with the character of the Wharf, as established through community engagement.”

Although approval of the Wharf Master Plan was rescinded pursuant to Santa Cruz County Superior Court order, pending completion of additional environmental review, this condition represents the City’s commitment to preserving or relocating these features and is included in the currently proposed revisions to the Wharf Master Plan and thus, is part of the proposed Project; revisions to the Wharf Master Plan are summarized in Section 3, Project Description. While the layout and design of the Landmark Building and other improvements at the end of the Wharf are not proposed at this time, conceptual design examples were developed to depict how the sea lion viewing/fishing holes could be maintained or relocated, while allowing for construction of the Landmark Building. These examples, which are depicted on Figure 4.8-8, are not the only options for maintaining the holes as recreational facilities, but they illustrate a few of many potentially feasible alternatives; these would be considered at greater detail when a project that would impact the holes in their current location is proposed and prior to any relocation to ensure that it would result in equal or greater viewing access as required by the Council’s prior direction. A public process for this analysis and site selection is anticipated to be included in the future when a development project is proposed at the end of the Wharf. It is also noted that these fishing/viewing holes have been successfully redesigned and relocated at times in the past. There is no information available at this time indicating that it would be infeasible to retain or relocate the viewing holes with the future design of the Landmark Building or other redevelopment at the end of the Wharf.

Previous public comments have indicated that the removal of sea lion viewing portals, which is a major public attraction, would be a loss to the community and would impact the Wharf’s

recreational uses. However, with the preservation or relocation as included in revised Wharf Master Plan, these features would not be eliminated, and thus would not result in an impact due to conflicts with established recreational uses.

**Recreational Fishing.** Fishing from the Wharf would remain available free of charge, and with implementation of improvements recommended in the Wharf Master Plan, allowable fishing space would expand by approximately 21% (nearly 1,000 LF) as result of Wharf expansions including the new East Promenade, lateral strengthening at the end of Wharf, and the Westside Walkway. A comparison of fishing opportunities under existing conditions and with implementation of the Wharf Master Plan is provided in Figure 4.8-4. Expansion of fishing opportunities would occur across each of the distinct fishing experiences or zones described in the “Recreational Uses at the Santa Cruz Wharf” section above, but could be most pronounced for reef fishing, as the Westside Walkway and Terrace Overlook would enable up to about 800 LF of fishing among pilings and sheltered waters, approximately 430% of what is currently available within the sea lion viewing/fishing holes alone.

As previously indicated, “tailgate fishing” is popular past-time. Implementation of Master Plan improvements would reduce the overall area from which fishing could take place adjacent to one’s vehicle. This reduction would primarily occur in areas where existing sidewalks do not have enough width to accommodate both tailgate fishing and ADA-compliant pedestrian access (see representative photos of fishing “conflict zones” on Figure 4.8-3). Under current conditions, fishing from vehicles conflicts with a variety of other recreational activities, such as walking, bird watching, and sight-seeing, and often causes pedestrians to walk amongst traffic in the roadway. Although tailgate fishing would be limited by proposed improvements in comparison to how visitors currently freely park vehicles and fish from the Wharf, existing conflicts with other Wharf visitors would be virtually eliminated while fishing opportunities in close proximity to parking would still be maintained as explained below.

Tailgate fishing would largely be maintained in areas where the pathways have sufficient width to accommodate both fishing and ADA access, as well as in the East Parking Lot where the expanded East Promenade would provide a new pedestrian access separated from traffic. In areas where tailgate fishing would be eliminated, approximately 1,000 feet would be provided as dedicated fishing and seating areas that would be separate from the flow of pedestrians along the Promenade. Fishers would only have to walk across the East Promenade (approximately 20 feet) to newly constructed fishing areas with bench seating; ramps and access steps are projected in conceptual plans proposed at regular spacing 150 to 200 feet and breaks are anticipated more frequently along seat walls. A cross section of the East Promenade provided in Figure 3.4 in Section 3, Project Description, depicts proposed seating areas along the eastern edge of the Wharf that would also support fishing in proximity to parked vehicles.

Public comments suggest that much of the current eastern side of the Wharf would be occupied in future by large vessels, outriggers, lowered south platform and other features, thus blocking access to what is currently open fishing areas in proximity of cars. In total, tailgate fishing could

be reduced by approximately 1,705 LF, with 822 LF or roughly 80-100 parking spaces remaining for tailgate fishing in both zones currently allowing tailgate fishing, the Near-Shore and Open Ocean zones. However, as depicted in Figure 4.8-9, implementation of the Wharf Master Plan improvements, including construction of new boat landings and structural improvements, would not result in net reduction of fishing opportunities. This remains true across any of the fishing experiences/zones studied, with the exception of tailgate fishing which cannot reasonably be preserved in certain areas while complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Proposed public access improvements would also increase the overall accessible perimeter of the Wharf by approximately 11% (over 670 LF), which is expected to reduce restricted and no-access areas by approximately 22% or over 320 LF.

The overall opportunities for fishing at the Wharf would not substantially change, and would actually slightly increase, and therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with or eliminate an established recreational fishing use. Although the method of accessing fishing opportunities would change to a short walk from one's vehicle for some users. This would not result in elimination or substantial change of an existing recreational use or result in a significant adverse change to the physical environment, and therefore would not be considered significant. Furthermore, the new Small Boat Landing and South Landing would provide enhanced boating opportunities for fishing at sea.

**Small Craft Boating.** The Wharf Master Plan would consolidate boating operations along the eastern side of the Wharf into a single ADA-compliant Small Boat Landing. This includes Wharf operations, as well as water access currently provided via kayak and fishing boat rentals and Public Landing No. 1, none of which currently meet ADA accessibility standards. The Small Boat Landing is expected to provide greater storage capacity for rental kayaks and fishing boats, as well as opportunities for launching of paddleboards, kayaks, and small boats and short-term mooring for visiting vessels. ADA-compliant water access provided by the Small Boat Landing would provide recreational boating access to visitors with impaired mobility, which is currently not available.

New modern davits and service equipment, installed with the landings would allow a broader variety of maritime services from the Wharf, including restocking of research vessels and equipment loading, sport fishing and commercial fish landings to restore the "ocean-to-table" culinary culture at the Wharf, fire boat mooring, and similar services for recreational watercraft, some of which may draft too deeply for the Santa Cruz Harbor and be currently unavailable locally.

**Open Water Sports.** The proposed boat landings and the open water swimming access float would provide universal access for open water swimmers, bathers, and potentially divers. There is currently only limited, non-ADA compliant, water access from Public Landing #1 (approximately 1,100 feet from shore on the east side), and no water access is available along the west side facing Cowell Beach. Construction of the proposed Small Boat Landing, South Landing, and open water swimming access float from the Westside Walkway would expand and diversify options for open water swimming access. Enhanced lifeguard facilities proposed in the Wharf Master Plan would

improve safety and response times to recreational swimmers originating from the Wharf and nearby beaches.

The two new boat landings also would allow recreational scuba tours from the Wharf, while any of the landings could support scuba divers launching directly into Wharf waters. High diving or jumping from the Wharf could also be considered during the design of future landings and the Gateway Building, provided appropriate safety measures are available.

Installation of the two new ADA-compliant boat ramps and the open water swimming access float also would access for several other open water activities, including board sports such as paddleboarding, surfing, e-foils, and possibly windsurfing. This could increase the diversity of participants in these sports and enable surfers and paddlers for whom beach launch or stairway access along West Cliff Drive is difficult. Pedestrian and bicycle access from the Monterey Bay Scenic Trail to the Wharf and East Promenade, as well as ample parking, would promote the Wharf as an alternative launch location to nearby surf breaks. Therefore, the Wharf Master Plan would not adversely impact access to open water recreational activities.

***Education and Science.*** Three new public facilities are proposed at the Gateway Building, Events Pavilion, and Landmark Building. These structures are intended to support a variety of public or quasi-public cultural, educational, scientific and recreational activities including potential museums, scientific lectures, and educational tours, as well as a welcome center for visitors. The Interpretive Plan envisioned in the Master Plan would integrate diverse historical, environmental, and other educational narratives appropriate for the Wharf into a mixed media network of cultural and educational experiences for visitors to the Wharf, which might include everything from kiosks and signage, to public art, digital, and augmented reality experiences. The South Landing would provide new port access for educational and scientific vessels, allowing for research vessels like those of MBARI or UCSC to visit or launch from the Wharf, while also providing for potential regional collaboratives between Santa Cruz and regional institutions. Ongoing partnerships with the Seymour Marine Discovery Center, the MBNMS, and Coast Snap are anticipated to support additional citizen science opportunities and interpretive installations. The improvements proposed in the Wharf Master Plan would expand educational and scientific opportunities at the Wharf.

***Cultural Activities, Events, and Entertainment.*** The proposed new buildings (Gateway, Events Pavilion, and Landmark) would support cultural activities, events, and entertainment. This would be most significant with the Events Pavilion, which would replace the existing outdoor stage with a sheltered pavilion structure allowing events and gatherings year-round. The Events Pavilion could be opened and closed to the outdoors as needed according to weather conditions and use, thus resulting in potential expansion of cultural special events and entertainment on the Wharf. Events and Entertainment could also occur at the Landmark building, depending on programming of the space and final design.

Implementation of an Interpretive Plan could also expand cultural activities. The presence of public art is expected to expand as one potential medium employed by the future Wharf Interpretive Plan. Thus, improvements proposed in the Wharf Master Plan would not result in significant impacts to cultural activities, events, or entertainment recreation on the Wharf.

**Dining & Shopping.** Commercial infill and second floor additions are expected to diversify the dining and shopping options available at the Wharf. As indicated in Section 3, Project Description, it is estimated that approximately 22,000 square feet of commercial uses may be constructed in the future as part of infill and expansion of existing buildings. Additional commercial and ancillary uses might also be designed into future public buildings, such as event facilities and café spaces, museum gift shops, or other complementary commercial uses. This potential expansion of commercial activity could expand opportunities for recreational or leisure dining and shopping on the Wharf and would not detrimentally impact existing dining or shopping recreation.

**Temporary “Pop-up” Recreation.** Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan presents diverse opportunities for temporary “pop-up” recreation as sites are redeveloped and public space is expanded. Vacant sites pending reconstruction would present infrequent opportunities to prototype redevelopment plans or program event series like temporary beer gardens and pop-up commercial ventures, as well as public access and event spaces. Within these spaces or on larger open deck expansions a broad variety of recreational facilities can be imagined, which might encompass anything from children’s play areas to public art, dining areas, science exhibits, or even sports courts. Although existing temporary recreation installations, like the Bocce Court or Sea Walls art mural at Gilda’s, would likely be removed, relocated, or change over time, the intent of such temporary recreational features is to keep the Wharf dynamic and to explore and adapt recreational facilities to attract and meet visitor interests as they change over time.

### **Near-Term Projects**

**Entry Gate Relocation.** The proposed relocation of the Wharf entrance gate would move the entrance approximately 540 feet further south from its current location. Construction of this facility would reduce tailgate fishing in a non-conflict zone, by approximately 65 feet or 6-8 parking spaces, but the use would be maintained with between 28 and 33 spaces anticipated immediately adjacent. Therefore, the Wharf Master Plan would have *no significant impact* on existing recreational uses at the Wharf.

**East Promenade.** As indicated above, this project would expand the Wharf, resulting in a new pedestrian facility, that would expand access for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as maintain and enhance opportunities for fishing, sight-seeing, and wildlife viewing; the latter of which, would enjoy new enhanced seating opportunities and uninterrupted, conflict-free access to the Wharf edge. While the method of accessing fishing opportunities would change in many areas with construction of the East Promenade to a short walk from one’s vehicle (about 20 feet) instead of parking and fishing adjacent to one’s vehicle, this would not result in elimination of an existing recreational use or result in a significant adverse change to the physical environment. Tailgate

fishing would be preserved along the East Parking Lot, where the East Promenade would provide alternate pedestrian/bicycle access to minimize conflicts. Construction of the East Promenade is not located in proximity to the existing fishing/sea lion viewing holes and would not affect these features. Temporary landing and boat launch facilities are proposed in conceptual plans for the East Promenade to maintain water access prior to construction of the Master Plan landings. Therefore, construction of the East Promenade would not substantially conflict with existing fishing uses, while expanding pedestrian and bicyclist access, resulting in a *less-than-significant* impact to existing recreational uses.

### ***Consistency and Potential Conflicts with Adopted Plans and Policies Pertaining to Recreation***

The following discussion provides an overview of consistency with local plans and policies and potential conflicts with policies or regulations related to recreational uses.

**General Plan 2030:** General Plan goals and policies related to recreational and/or visitor-serving uses at the Santa Cruz Wharf are as follows:

- ❑ LU3.5: Encourage a mix of uses, including public facilities, along Lower Pacific Avenue, linking Downtown with the Wharf.
  - LU3.53 Foster improved recreational and economic opportunities at the Municipal Wharf.
- ❑ PR3.3: Protect, maintain, and enhance publicly accessible coastal and open space areas.
  - PR3.3.4: Maximize public access and enjoyment of recreation areas along the coastline.

Adoption and implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and subsequent construction of recommended structures and improvements, including the near-term development projects, are consistent with General Plan policies to encourage a mix of uses at the Wharf (LU3.5) and provide improved recreational and economic opportunities at the Wharf (LU3.53), which constitute the primary strategies of the Wharf Master Plan and its recommended improvements. The Wharf Master Plan’s policies, actions, and improvements would maximize public access and enjoyment of coastal recreational areas, consistent with Policy PR3.3.4.

**Local Coastal Program:** Existing LCP policies regarding recreation at the Wharf or in the Beach Area are as follows:

- ❑ CD 3.5: Protect coastal recreational areas, maintain all existing coastal access points open to the public, and enhance public access, open space quality, and recreational enjoyment in a manner that is consistent with the California Coastal Act.
- ❑ ED 2.4.3: Develop and implement a promotion and management plan for the Municipal Wharf aimed at attracting local residents and enhancing recreational and economic opportunities while protecting the Monterey Bay.

- ❑ ED 5.5.3: Identify ways to enhance and promote the identity of existing and potential visitor areas in the City such as Downtown, Beach Area, San Lorenzo River, Yacht Harbor, UCSC, West Cliff and East Cliff Drives, and the Wharf.
- ❑ LU 2.2.1: Update land use and design guidelines for the Beach and Wharf area addressing the area's importance as both a center of tourism and residential area.
- ❑ PR 1.7.1.3: Maintain free bicycle and pedestrian access to the Wharf.
- ❑ PR 1.7.9: Fishing access on the Municipal Wharf shall not be reduced.
- ❑ PR 1.7.11: Establish a Recreation/Waterfront Zone encompassing the portion of the Monterey Bay from the mouth of the San Lorenzo River to Steamer's Lane, from the shore to the kelp line, and provide for management of Municipal Wharf, beach, water activities, parking and recreational activities in a manner that promotes access and protects the Bay.
- ❑ PR 3.0.1 Establish a center for Beach Area activities and events that provides space for event assembly, visitor information, public event security, film-making support and other visitor support activities. (See policy L 2.2.1)
- ❑ The 1980 Beach Area Plan was included in the City's certified LCP. When the CCC considered an amendment to the LCP related to the Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan (B/SOL Plan), the 1980 Beach Area Plan policies/programs were replaced with a new set LCP policies based on the recommendations in the B/SOL Plan. The following policies apply to the Wharf:
  - LU 2.7: Complete a comprehensive analysis of the wharf to include study of its two fundamental and interrelated aspects: its maritime aspect and its retail aspect. Elements of this study should include, but not be limited to:
    - › Physical inventory
    - › Access, circulation and parking,
    - › Additional maritime potential,
    - › Marine sanctuary potential,
    - › Design and architectural character,
    - › Signature physical features or programs,
    - › Retail mix and performance,
    - › Market niche, and
    - › A cost/benefit analysis of recommendations stemming from analysis.

The study should examine the feasibility of expanding maritime activity, expanding visitor amenities, and expanding local resident marketing.

The proposed Project would not conflict with policies related to recreation or coastal access in the City's certified LCP. The proposed Wharf Master Plan is consistent with and fulfills LCP directives for the Wharf, including development and implementation of a promotion and management plan for the Municipal Wharf aimed at attracting local residents and enhancing recreational and economic opportunities while protecting the Monterey Bay (ED 2.4.3) and ways to enhance and promote the

identity of the Wharf (ED 5.5.3). The proposed Wharf Master also fulfills the B/SOL LCP policies that require completion of a comprehensive analysis of the Wharf, including examining the feasibility of expanding maritime activity and visitor amenities.

Implementation of the Wharf Master Plan and expansion of the Wharf would provide enhanced public access with increased pedestrian access at the East Promenade and Westside Walkway, consistent with LCP Policy CD 3.5 to protect coastal recreational areas, and maintain all existing coastal access points open to the public. The proposed Wharf Master Plan also is consistent with LCP policies that require maintaining free bicycle and pedestrian access to the Wharf (PR 1.7.1.3) as there is no charge to these users to enter the Wharf. LCP Policy PR 1.7.9 states that fishing access on the Municipal Wharf shall not be reduced. As explained above, fishing opportunities at the Wharf would not be reduced, and would actually slightly increase overall, although the means of accessing the perimeter of the Wharf to fish would change slightly to accommodate both recreational fishing and pedestrians in the same areas, rather than prioritizing vehicle access as it currently exists.

The LCP also contains Wharf Design Criteria in Table ASP-6, which includes four primary goals with policies and actions/criteria, some of which relate to recreation and access. The Wharf Master Plan is consistent with applicable goals, policies, and actions/criteria set forth in this table as summarized below.

- ❑ *Goal 2: The Wharf as a Community Resource.* The proposed East Promenade and Westside Walkway are consistent with the specific underlying goal - “Increase and diverse pedestrian activity” and with the underlying actions/criteria to introduce more pedestrian amenities (walkways, lighting, benches, auto-free common spaces) and to separate and articulate vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems.
- ❑ *Goal 3: The Wharf as a Regional Attraction.* The pedestrian access improvements proposed in the Wharf Master Plan also are consistent with the underlying policy to “Develop wharf as an attractive pedestrian environment with a coastal setting” with the inclusion of pedestrian walkways and amenities as indicated above.
- ❑ *Goal 4: The Wharf as Marine Resource.* The proposed new boat landings, Terrace Overlook, and other benches and seating areas are consistent with underlying policies to encourage additional fishing and increased boating. These proposed improvements also are consistent with the underlying actions and criteria that seek to: build additional deck space at the end of the Wharf for fishing; add lowered fishing deck space alongside the existing fishing pier at the end of the Wharf; build additional public landing space below the Wharf deck; and provide access to water with expansion of uses.

**California Coastal Act:** As previously indicated, the Santa Cruz Wharf is located in an area where the CCC retains coastal permitting authority and any new development on the Wharf must receive a coastal development permit (CDP) directly from the CCC and such development must be consistent with the Coastal Act policies in Chapter 3. Article 2 and Article 3 of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act address coastal public access and recreation, respectively.



The proposed Wharf Master Plan is not subject to approval by the CCC, and the proposed Wharf Master Plan does not currently include an amendment to the LCP. However, the two proposed near-term projects – the Entry Gate Relocation and East Promenade – would be subject to approval of a CDP by the CCC. Further review of consistency of these projects with Coastal Act policies is provided below, although it is noted that the CCC retains ultimate responsibility for issuing coastal development permits for future improvements and projects, either individually or as part of a Public Works Plan as discussed in the Regulatory Setting section above. It is also noted that in its letter on the Santa Cruz Wharf Master Plan Draft EIR, CCC staff indicated that they generally support the Master Plan’s overall goals to expand public access and recreational opportunities, strengthen the Wharf’s underlying infrastructure, and improve the Wharf’s viability as a lasting and economically sound component of Santa Cruz and California’s historic coastal heritage and generally support the specific ways in which the Master Plan proposes to implement these improvements, but offered some comments<sup>3</sup> with regards to the resource protection policies of the Coastal Act, which are not the subject of review in this section.

- ❑ *Coastal Public Access:* Article 2 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act addresses public access to the coast to provide maximum access and recreational opportunities. Article 2 addresses provision of the public’s right to access to the coast, provision of public access as part of coastal developments, and distribution of public facilities. The article also indicates that lower cost visitor and recreational facilities are to be protected and encouraged, where feasible, which is addressed in the following subsection. The two near-term projects provide for maximum public access (30210) in that the entry gate relocation would provide for better vehicular access, and the East Promenade provides expanded pedestrian and bicyclist access, while maintaining existing fishing opportunities from the east side of the Wharf. As a result, these projects would not interfere with public’s right to access to sea (30211) and do not change public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast (30212). The East Promenade provides expanded and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access, consistent with Coastal Act policy directives to maintain and enhance public access to coast, including non-auto alternatives (30252). Additionally, the Westside Walkway and lateral strengthening it would provide to the Wharf, would further expand public access and help maintain the Wharf’s safety and integrity into the future, and would not interfere with the public’s right to access.
- ❑ *Recreation and Visitor-Serving Uses:* Article 3 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act addresses recreation and visitor-serving uses with policies to protect coastal areas suited for water-oriented activities and oceanfront land suitable for recreational use, as well as upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses. Priority is given to the visitor-serving commercial recreational facilities uses designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation over all other land uses except agriculture and coastal-dependent industry. Increased recreational boating use of coastal waters is encouraged by developing support facilities, such as dry storage areas, public launch facilities, and additional boat

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<sup>3</sup> Responses to those comments were previously provided in the Final EIR, dated September 2020.

berths. The proposed Entry Gate Relocation would improve vehicular access to the Wharf and beach area in support of existing and future recreational uses, but otherwise would not affect recreational uses. The proposed East Promenade would provide maximum recreational opportunities (30210) with provision of a new area dedicated to pedestrians and bicyclist use along with continued fishing opportunities. The Santa Cruz Wharf provides free access to pedestrian and bicyclists and does not charge entrance fees, but does charge for vehicle parking in order to help offset the cost of Wharf maintenance and operations. Overall, the Wharf provides lower cost visitor and recreational facilities, consistent with Coastal Act Policy 30213.

- ❑ *Marine Environment:* Article 4 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act addresses the marine environment. Section 30233 addresses situations in which diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, are permitted. In open coastal water, subsection (3) permits new or expanded boating facilities and the placement of structural pilings for public recreational piers that provide public access and recreational opportunities. The new piles required for the Entry Gate Relocation and East Promenade, as well as construction of future boat landings, deck expansions, and the Westside Walkway, would be consistent with this requirement. It is also noted that section 30233 permits a range of other port, coastal-dependent, aquaculture, mineral extraction, and restoration uses.

**Parks Master Plan 2030:** Goal VI, Policy B of the Parks Master Plan seeks to protect, maintain, and enhance publicly accessible coastal, riverfront, and open space areas and provide recreational and educational experiences that reflect the unique sense of place and identity of Santa Cruz. Implementation of the proposed Wharf Master Plan and near-term projects would protect, maintain, enhance, and expand recreational, educational, and scientific uses at the Santa Cruz Wharf, consistent with this policy. As previously indicated, the Parks Master Plan recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department work with the Planning and Community Development and Economic Development Departments to implement the Wharf Master Plan.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, implementation of the Wharf Master Plan, including two near-term projects, would not conflict with and/or eliminate established recreational, educational, or scientific uses at the Santa Cruz Wharf. There would be no reduction of recreational opportunities, and many existing opportunities would be expanded and/or enhanced, such as improved pedestrian and bicycle access, improved pedestrian paths around the entire Wharf, overall increased fishing access, improved boating opportunities for both private charters and individual small boats, recreational and educational boat tours, and support for cultural, educational, and scientific-research projects and experiences.

Future development at the southern end of the Wharf could result in relocation of fishing holes that are popular sea lion viewing locations and recreational pastime. However, the Wharf Master Plan has been revised to require preservation or relocation of these features in order to maintain

this recreational activity, and preliminary conceptual designs demonstrate it is feasible to do so. Thus, there is no impact associated with the relocation of the fishing/sea lion viewing holes.

Although the popular “tailgate” fishing from parked vehicles would be reduced by proposed improvements in comparison to current conditions, existing conflicts with other Wharf visitors would be eliminated, while fishing opportunities would still be maintained a short distance from the parking area. Furthermore, implementation of new boat landings would not result in a reduction in fishing opportunities as public access to other areas of the Wharf would be opened up. The overall opportunities for fishing at the Wharf would not substantially change, and therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with or eliminate an established recreational fishing use. While the method of accessing many fishing opportunities would change to require a short walk from one’s vehicle, similar to what currently exists at the end of the Wharf, this would not result in elimination or substantial change of an existing recreational use or result in a significant adverse change to the physical environment, and therefore would not be considered significant. Furthermore, the new Small Boat Landing and South Landing would provide enhanced boating opportunities for fishing at sea. No other potential impacts to recreation or recreational facilities have been identified.

Therefore, neither the Wharf Master Plan nor the two near-term projects would result in significant conflicts with established recreational, educational, cultural, or scientific uses at the Wharf or policies protecting or encouraging recreational uses and facilities, and public access and recreational uses, facilities, and opportunities would be expanded and/or enhanced with implementation of the Wharf Master Plan.

### 4.8.3 Cumulative Impacts

The proposed Project is located within the “Beach Area” neighborhood area that was identified in the General Plan 2030 EIR for the purposes of evaluating impacts of potential growth. There several development projects that have been approved or are under construction in the Beach Area, including the La Bahia Hotel on Beach Street (under construction), “Catalyst” at 130 Center Street, and a mixed-use residential-commercial project at 190 West Cliff Drive west of the Santa Cruz Wharf. None of these projects include public recreational facilities, and thus would not combine with the proposed Project to create significant cumulative impacts to recreational uses or facilities.

It is also noted that the General Plan 2030 EIR evaluated potential impacts to parks and recreational facilities based on the estimated growth that could be accommodated by the General Plan and concluded that the estimated growth would not increase use of parks or recreational facilities such that a substantial physical deterioration would occur, and with implementation of the *General Plan 2030* goals, policies and actions aimed at avoiding and minimizing adverse impacts on parks and recreational facilities, indirect impacts on parks and recreational facilities resulting from growth in the City would be considered less-than-significant.

As indicated in Section 4.8.1, the SCCRTC, in association with other regional agencies, is in the process of implementing a new multi-use trail in the rail corridor, the MBSST. The second phase of construction of Segment 7 is under construction now, and would extend to Beach Street and the Wharf entrance. Additional phases of the MBSST are funded and in design now, and would extend to Davenport in the north and Aptos to the south, with construction expected to begin by 2025. Any additional use of the Wharf resulting from pedestrians and bicyclists using the MBSST would be accommodated by the improvements recommended in the Wharf Master Plan. The MBSST usage would not result in substantially increased visitation to the Wharf than already considered in the Impact REC-2.

There are no other currently known cumulative projects that would affect recreational facilities or recreational uses.

#### 4.8.4 References

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