

SFGate.com

S.F. set to redo western Marina yacht harbor

Marisa Lagos, Chronicle Staff Writer

Tuesday, August 12, 2008



San Francisco is poised to move forward with a long-awaited renovation of one of its dilapidated harbors in the Marina, a project that's been more than a decade in the making.

The city-operated Marina yacht harbor on San Francisco's northern waterfront is made up of two harbors that hug the Marina Green's eastern and western sides.

Both harbors sorely need renovation, but after years of delays, the city has decided to move forward with a \$25.8 million project to rebuild the west harbor. Work on the eastern harbor is postponed because it required the removal of toxins in the soil.

The west harbor project, which could be complete by spring 2011, will be funded by a loan from the state's Department of Boating and Waterways. The loan will be repaid by annual increases in berthing fees, which began several years ago and will increase significantly once the project is complete.

San Francisco's Recreation and Park Department, which operates the harbors, will hold a public meeting on the proposal in the coming weeks, and hopes its commission will approve the loan and berthing fee increases in September so the Board of Supervisors can decide the matter by October.

Bruce Stone, president of the SF Marina Harbor Association, a nonprofit that represents about half of the nearly 700 people leasing slips in the harbors, said the renovation will "contribute to the city's economy and image."

"I'm very pleased (about the renovation). It's probably the worst harbor on the entire West Coast, and I'm including Mexico. It's a Third World harbor in a First World city," he said.

The west harbor is falling apart, according to a report issued by the state in June, with degraded timber docks, pilings severely damaged by a worm infestation, old and outmoded utilities, unsafe gangways and an insufficient breakwater.

Fireboats can't access the harbor because it needs dredging, said Stone. The east harbor is in a similar state of disrepair.

The plan is to demolish most of the west harbor's berths and reconstruct them in a new layout that

will eliminate most slips for boats 30 feet and under and add several 30- to 50-foot slips for larger watercraft. The harbormaster's office will be moved to an old building on the Marina Green, and more public restrooms will be added to the office's former location. The city will also dredge the harbor, construct two new breakwaters, upgrade water and electrical systems, and add new gangways.

Many of the proposed changes don't sit well with some neighbors of the harbor.

"Our main concern is the reconfiguration of the outer west harbor, where they are enlarging the surface area of the harbor tremendously and building big new breakwaters," said Joan Giradot, of the Marina Civic Improvement and Property Owners Association.

"They're doing this because they want to berth 60-foot yachts in that area. Currently, when you walk along the promenade along the seawall at the Marina Green, you have views out to Alcatraz - those views will be sacrificed by this plan."

Stone disagreed, saying the city isn't enlarging the harbor, just replacing slips that have washed away over the years during storms. Stone and city officials said the larger slips are necessary because people have bigger boats than they had in the 1930s, when the west harbor was built.

The design process, which will include public meetings, will get under way after the loan has been approved by the city and probably will go into the spring, said Mary Hobson, a project director with Recreation and Park Department's capital planning division.

How to get involved:

Go to parks.sfgov.org for information on public hearings and when they are scheduled. E-mail the Recreation and Park Commission at recpark.commission@sfgov.org or write to: San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission, 501 Stanyan St., San Francisco, CA 94117

About the yacht harbor

326 - Berths now: 155 are less than 30 feet; 24 are 35 feet; 75 are 40 feet and 72 are 45 to 90 feet

325 - Berths after renovation: 42 are less than 30 feet; 46 are 35 feet; 108 are 40 feet; and 129 are 45 to 90 feet

Source: San Francisco Recreation and Park Department

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/08/12/BAOR126BHG.DTL>

This article appeared on page **B - 1** of the San Francisco Chronicle