

CAPITOLA —  
WHARF 1990-1999

# Capitola weighing the future of its wharf

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CAPITOLA — Whenever a big storm hits, many village locals look at the Capitola Wharf and hold their breath.

For years wharf projects were placed on the back burner as the city staff spent much of its energy straightening out the city's financial problems. Now that those problems are largely under control, the city and several residents have turned their attention to protecting Capitola's main landmark.

"We have to make a decision if we are going to replace it or just maintain it," said newly elected council member Tony Gualtieri, who campaigned on a platform of protecting the city's historic resources such as the wharf, Rispin Mansion and the Village.

The city has established a Wharf Committee that meets once a month and has presented the council with a variety of restoration options and priorities. The wharf working group, composed of two council members, City manager Susan Westman, Public Works director Fred Braun and two business owners, has decided to spend

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\$38,000 immediately on wharf repairs. The money will be taken from the wharf fund, which currently has about \$297,000 in its coffers.

The \$38,000 will be spent on new signs, painting the buildings that belong to the city, replacement planking and bathroom work. The \$8,000 that will be spent on signs will come back before the council, which will review the placement and design of the signs.

But the larger issue will be to decide if the wharf should undergo a massive overhaul or if the city should build a new one. Both options have been examined in a study by Moffat & Nichol Engineers.

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ing to the engineers. The other option would be a two-phase maintenance and repair approach that would cost approximately \$1 million.

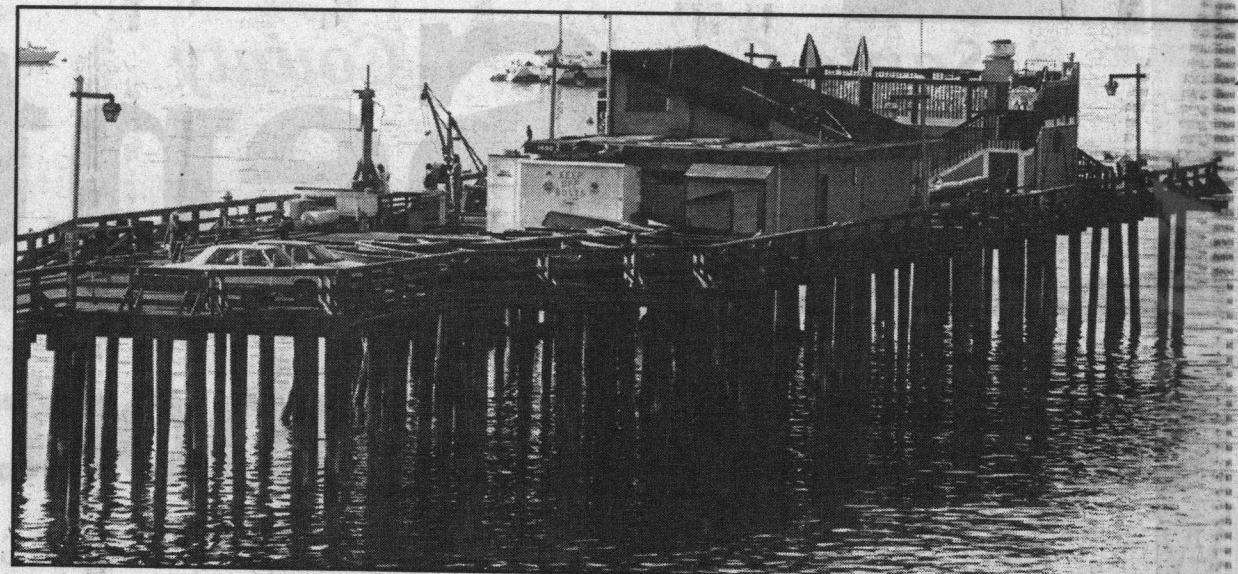
There are several questions involved with the wharf restoration that city officials hope residents will help them answer:

- What kind of wharf restoration would locals like to see, the overhaul or a brand new wharf?
- What is most cost-effective, and what should the wharf look like if it were to be rebuilt?

• How would the project be paid for?

- Does the wharf need to be replaced or could it be repaired cheaply and effectively?

Council members discussed these issues Thursday night and hope to find a mechanism to get the public's opinion on them.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Repairing the old wharf could cost \$1 million; replacing it could cost twice that.

One option for financing the wharf restoration may be a special tax or assessment expressly for that purpose. The council quickly noted that a tax is just one option at the city's disposal after the community decides what is the best course of action.

Carin Hanna of the Craft Gallery and Tony Salciccia of Tony and Alba's Pizza and Pasta have begun an informal group of merchants and locals to hash out these issues. At Thursday's meeting, Hanna told the council that the wharf restoration ranked high on a survey con-

ducted by the city two years ago. Gualtieri and other council members noted that the wharf is as much a part of Capitola's identity as anything and is important to most locals. Hanna said she believes the wharf is still a high priority.

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