



Administrative Report

L.2., File # HC25-1390

Meeting Date: 10/13/2025

TO: HARBOR COMMISSION

FROM: GREG KAPOVICH, WATERFRONT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON A RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL TO AUTHORIZE STAFF TO APPLY FOR A GRANT FROM THE CALIFORNIA DIVISION OF BOATING & WATERWAYS TO FUND A NEW PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH AND TO IDENTIFY A RECOMMENDED PREFERRED LOCATION FOR THE NEW PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH ON MOLE D AS A PART OF THE GRANT APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Staff seeks authorization from City Council to apply for a grant from the State of California's Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) to cover the costs of constructing a public boat launch on Mole D. Staff is seeking a recommendation from the Harbor Commission advising City Council to authorize staff to apply for the grant. The application is due to DBW by February 2, 2026 and the submittal package requires an identified preferred location. City Staff is also seeking a recommendation from the Harbor Commission on a preferred location for the boat launch, which will be included as a part of the grant application.

In 2024, the City entered into a contract with Moffatt & Nichol, an Engineering firm with experience in designing boat launches nationwide. The first phase of the contract is underway and requires the consultant to conduct necessary technical studies such as traffic, parking, wave attenuation, and overall demand, identify location options along Mole D that adhere to the completed studies and are large enough to conceptually accommodate minimum boat launch design standards, and assist with the submittal of a grant application to DBW. If the City is awarded funding for the boat launch project, the consultant would further refine designs within the preferred location to accommodate exact sizing and placement of other elements of the boat launch such as a boat wash-down area, pay station, open space, relocated commercial structures, etc. For purposes of the grant application, the preferred location need only be detailed enough to illustrate that the area can meet minimum standards.

The consultants have identified several locations on Mole D for the placement of the boat launch. Supporting studies completed to date indicate that a two-lane ramp meets regional demand. The identified locations for a two-lane boat launch can be accommodated within the Mole D area and adhere to minimum parking/circulation requirements. On September 23, 2025, the City hosted a public workshop to review the three locations and to gather the public's feedback. Staff is now

approaching Harbor Commission to discuss and consider making a recommendation to proceed with the grant application to DBW and identify a preferred location to accompany the grant application submittal.

BACKGROUND

Unlike many regional harbors, King Harbor has historically been without a public boat launch, instead relying on boat hoists. Since 1959 the City has examined over 20 potential locations across Moles A, B, C, and D to build a public boat launch in accordance with direction from the Coastal Commission and to satisfy the requirements of Measure C. Measure C was a voter initiative that places emphasis on improvements to the King Harbor Marina that are recreational in nature, inclusive of a public boat launch. Measure C not only requires that a boat launch be constructed but it stipulates that the ramp must include two lanes, 60 trailer parking spaces, be located a safe distance from the hand launch, not reduce the number of boat slips in the marina, operate in normal surge conditions, avoid locations where waves overtop the break wall, and is designed to meet minimum DBW design standards for boat launch ramps.

The most recent locations considered were along Mole C in 2015 and on Mole B in 2017. The Mole C location was not of sufficient size to meet minimum Measure C parking requirements. In addition, the general public cited concerns with ingress/egress to the site. There were two options considered for Mole B. Neither option could accommodate the parking requirements outlined by Measure C. In addition, option 1 along Mole B resulted in a net loss of slips as well as a narrow channel between the end of the boat ramp and existing slips to the north. Option 2 on Mole B required the proposed boat launch to extend west from Mole B and due to the elevation change between Mole B and the water required the boat launch to over-extend into the main channel, which was not supported by the public.

In 2022, City Council approved the Public Amenities Plan which identified Mole D as the location for the public boat launch ramp within King Harbor. Mole D was favored by the general public, Harbor Commission, and City Council citing its proximity to the open water, as well as its size which can accommodate necessary parking and circulation.

The next step in the boat launch schedule is applying for a Boat Launching Facilities (BLF) grant from the State of California's Division of Boating & Waterways (DBW) which would fund the permitting and construction of the public boat launch. The grant will not fund "pre-planning" phases, which includes preparation of a grant application, entitlement approval, or CEQA review. City Council appropriated approximately \$650,000 in the FY 2025-26 budget to cover the pre-planning phases. City staff and the consultant are currently working on the grant application. Should the City receive a grant funding award from DBW, staff would advance the City funded portion of the project to the entitlement phase, which includes more community outreach to design the specific preferred location, perform a CEQA environmental analysis, and obtain Harbor Commission and Coastal Commission approvals. Once complete, the awarded grant funding from DBW would cover preparation of plans and specifications for building permit submittal, building permits, and construction.

The consultant created six location alternatives along Mole D that could be designed to accommodate the results of the technical studies, meet minimum DBW design standards, and

minimum Measure C requirements. Staff and the consultant narrowed the alternatives down to three, referred to as alternative A, B, and C. The three other designs that were eliminated from consideration were variations of Option C whereby the boat ramp faced west and had similar advantages/disadvantages; including the need for a 10-15-foot-tall sheet pile wall to eliminate wave uprush into the Mole D parking lot (more details to follow).

Grant Program Considerations

The Division of Boating & Waterways Boat Launching Facilities grant program provides 100% funding for the building permit process and construction of public launch infrastructure. City funding will cover conceptual plans, grant application submittal process, environmental (CEQA) review, and entitlements. The grant program would cap the boat launch usage and parking fee to \$13 per launch for the first year with subsequent annual adjustments tied to the consumer price index. To qualify for the 2026/2027 application cycle for this grant, City Council must choose a preferred option and prepare a resolution to be included with the application package due by February 2, 2026. The City's work to date, including the demand study, conceptual layouts, environmental and coastal hazard reconnaissance, traffic and parking analysis, and public outreach aligns with submittal expectations. DBW emphasizes equitable access, limited impact on the environment, and year-round ramp functionality as desirable criteria in selecting which boat launch applications to fund.

Technical Study Findings

The Boat Launch Demand Study is a required study for the DBW grant. It assists in identifying how many boaters are expected to utilize the new boat launch, which in turn helps designers determine the appropriate number of lanes to accommodate demand. Through this study, the consultants calculated that approximately 54 new vehicle trips would occur on Mole D with the construction of a boat launch. The consultant and study determined that a two-lane ramp would cover the demand. Each of the location alternatives under consideration by the Harbor Commission and City Council include two-lanes.

The Transportation Impact and Parking Study evaluated whether or not the proposed boat launch would have adverse impacts to traffic or parking on Mole D. As concluded in the demand study, the boat launch ramp on Mole D is anticipated to add 54 vehicle trips to Mole D. The Transportation Study evaluated the level of service at the existing intersections along Harbor Drive at Herondo Street, Yacht Club Way, and Beryl Street. It also evaluated the intersections at Herondo Street & Francisca and Catalina Avenue & Beryl Street. The study concluded that the addition of 57 vehicle trips per day does not reduce the levels of service at any of the aforementioned intersections.

The City Traffic Engineer recommends slight modifications to the existing ingress/egress driveway accessed off of Harbor Drive. Currently, the driveway is wide enough to accommodate three lanes of vehicles (one inbound and two outbound). The City Traffic Engineer recommends a slight reduction in driveway width to eliminate the third lane while maintaining adequate width for the turning radius of large vehicles with trailers. Existing medians within the driveway would be removed and the sidewalk would be reconfigured to the adequate width. The new design could also accommodate additional pedestrian/bicycle alert signals or ground material changes to further reduce conflict between

pedestrians and users of the bike lane. Design criteria to be considered after the City is awarded grant money during the entitlement process, which will include additional community input. In addition to the physical driveway improvements, the City Traffic Engineer will also prohibit vehicles with trailers from turning right (south) onto Harbor Drive when leaving the Mole D surface parking lot. The intersection at Pacific Avenue and Catalina Avenue does not accommodate the necessary turning radius of a vehicle with a trailer. All vehicles with trailers will be required to turn left (north) onto Harbor Drive and can utilize either Beryl Street or Herondo Street to leave the area.

The Parking Study found that the two existing surface lots on Mole D provide 719 spaces in total; 382 in the north lot (Seaside Lagoon and CA Surf Club side) and 337 in the south lot (Cantina, R10 side). The placement of a new boat launch on Mole D will result in a net loss of existing parking stalls to accommodate circulation, the boat launch itself, and the inclusion of trailer parking as required by Measure C.

Reconfiguration of the north and south lots yields a compliant supply of regular, ADA, vehicle-plus-trailer, and RV-plus-trailer spaces to serve all existing tenants and the new proposed ramp. This would allow for the boat launch to accommodate the required parking indicated by the Demand & Parking study in addition to what is required under Measure C.

With the boat launch, both lots are reconfigured to a combined 525 spaces: 465 regular (including ADA), 54 vehicle-plus-trailer (including ADA), and 6 RV-plus-trailer. This results in a net reduction of 194 regular spaces but an increase of 6 trailer spaces plus 6 new RV-plus-trailer spaces. The 525 total parking spaces are sufficient to meet the parking requirements for all existing buildings and uses on Mole D, inclusive of the new proposed boat launch.

The Coastal Criteria and Hazards Analysis is a required report to apply for a Coastal Development Permit from the California Coastal Commission. The study demonstrates that the City is addressing future sea level rise to explore the impact on the locations. Modeling and short-term wave measurements inside the harbor show that operational wave heights at proposed sites are generally low under typical conditions, with storm periods generating more significant swells. The studies also looked at a worst-case-scenario in the form of the impact of a once-in-100-year storm surge. Sea-level rise should be accommodated over the service life of the boat launch and can be planned for via freeboard, grading, and adaptable features in design. The technical data indicated that the wave attenuation would have the most impact on Option C, thus requiring a 10-15-foot-tall sheet pile wall situated 50 feet from the toe of the boat launch to mitigate wave attenuation run-up and parking lot flooding. The study identified the least amount of sea level rise impact on Option A with more of an impact on Option B, but not enough to require a sheet pile wall.

Location Options

Attachment 1 includes each of the three proposed location options presented to the community during the community workshop and are under consideration for the grant application.

Option A - Option A locates the ramp near the southern tip of Mole D and provides the most efficient land side design for queuing and circulation of vehicles. It provides minimal disruption of the

pedestrian promenade and does not present a scenario in which vehicles with trailers are reversing across a pedestrian walkway. The ramp itself is the shortest of the three options due to the existing grade of this particular area of Mole D and it has the lowest expected wave run-up due to its protected location closest to the Basin III marina. For these reasons it is also likely to be the least expensive option. A portion of the existing dock infrastructure would need to be removed to accommodate the ramp opening but the option includes construction of new dock area to the west of the ramp to accommodate a vessel queuing area on the water.

The drawback of option A is that the ramp reduces the channel width to 130 feet. Pursuant to DBW requirements, at least 50 feet of channel width measured from the toe of the ramp is required to accommodate boats utilizing the ramp. In addition to boats utilizing the new boat launch, there are existing commercial and recreational boats located within 58 slips and 4 dock areas in Basin III. Therefore, additional channel width must be accommodated for two-way vessel traffic. According to DBW standards, the required width for each vessel lane is 30 feet, or 60 feet for two-way traffic. In total, DBW requirements stipulate a channel width of 110 feet is required to accommodate boat launch users and Basin III vessel traffic where Option A provides 130 feet. It is also important to note that Basin III contains commercial vessel operators that rent stand up paddleboards, pedal boats, and duffy boats for use by the general public. All three examples are small, slow-moving and are often utilized by inexperienced operators. DBW standards base channel lane width requirements on the slip that can accommodate the largest vessel operating within Basin III. A stand-up paddleboard, pedal boat, and duffy boat are all smaller than said largest vessel and as such the DBW requirement that 30-foot-wide vessel lanes be provided will accommodate those users. However, there is concern that the inexperienced user of pedal boats/paddleboards/duffy boats will attempt to traverse the narrow channel width while two larger vessels already occupy the travel lanes.

Option B - Option B is similar to Option A in that the ramp faces south. However, the ramp has been moved further west, within the footprint of the existing Cantina restaurant. Vehicle circulation and queuing on landside must also shift west reducing the landside vehicle efficiency and causing vehicles with trailers to make sharper turns when approaching or leaving the launch ramp. The overall grade at the top of the ramp would increase two feet in height when compared to Option A to accommodate slightly higher grade elevations at this point on Mole D as well as slightly higher wave uprush. Wave uprush is expected to be higher in Option B due to its location closer west where wave attenuation is higher. That said, a sheet pile wall to protect against wave uprush is not needed. Due to the higher overall grade at the top of ramp, the ramp itself has a greater overall length than Option A and is therefore projected to be more expensive. Where landside vehicle circulation efficiency is reduced, waterside navigability is gained. By shifting the south facing ramp further west the design takes advantage of the angle of the existing south breakwater wall, which results in a widened channel. Option B results in a channel width of approximately 170 feet, or 40 feet wider than Option A.

Option C - Option C completely changes the angle of the proposed boat ramp to face west. It is in close proximity to the hand launch and is located adjacent to the primary parking lot drive aisle connecting to Harbor Drive. It would also result in the most waterside navigability clearance and is not limited in width by the south breakwater wall.

Drawbacks of option C include a major wave uprush concern. As shown in Attachment 2, there were several other west facing ramps explored for Mole D and all west facing options resulted in significant wave uprush issues in which the marina parking lot would be subject to periodic flooding. To mitigate against the wave uprush issue the west facing option would require the construction of a 10-15-foot-tall sheet pile wall. In addition to the sheet pile wall, the overall grade at the top of ramp would need to be four feet higher than Option B grade and six feet higher than Option A, resulting in the lengthiest ramp of all the options. Due to the overall length, the fact that the ramp projects further west and into the ocean floor and the need for a sheet pile wall, Option C represents the largest footprint, highest cost, and most environmental impact to the ocean floor. It is important to note that when Coastal Commission reviews our final entitlement plans at a future phase of the project, options with minimal environmental impact will be favored. For this reason, staff and the consultant have identified Option C as the most difficult to receive permits. Other drawbacks include a severed pedestrian promenade in which vehicles with trailers will be required to reverse across a pedestrian heavy environment, and minimal vehicle queuing on the landside.

Public Outreach

On September 23, 2025, SWA moderated an in-person community workshop to present the technical studies, three location options, answer questions, and gather public input. The workshop was held at the Redondo Beach Public Library from 5:30 to 7:00 pm, with nearly 40 community members in attendance. The meeting was live-streamed on YouTube via the City's official channel for remote participants. During the meeting, the City and project consultant team (SWA and Moffatt & Nichol) introduced the project goals and reviewed past studies and planning efforts related to the boat launch. The project team discussed the analysis of existing conditions at the Mole D site, followed by a presentation of three boat launch location options currently under consideration. An in-depth analysis was provided for each option, outlining the benefits and drawbacks. A live interactive survey was incorporated into the presentation to encourage public participation. The workshop concluded with a Q&A session, during which participants submitted written comments and questions on cards for the project team to address.

SWA moderated and conducted an interactive live survey during the meeting to collect community input and feedback. Seven survey questions were developed in collaboration with the project consultant team and the City. The first three questions focused on getting to know who was in the audience. attendee demographics, frequency of visits to King Harbor, and primary reasons for those visits. When asked about which group best described you, nearly 33% of the audience identified as local residents, 27% were boat owners with slips, 15% were yacht club members, and 12% were business owners. Approximately 34% of respondents reported visiting the harbor daily, while 36% visit multiple times per week. Of the seven response categories, the primary reasons for visiting King Harbor were identified as: boating (27%), dining (19%), walking the pier/biking (15%), visiting a yacht club (13%), attending harbor/pier events (11%), paddle boarding/kayaking (11%), and going to work (4%).

The remaining questions addressed the importance of various elements of the boat launch, the likelihood of participants using the facility, and their preferred option among those presented. *Boater traffic safety* was considered the most important factor by the majority of respondents (average score

4.5). The second and third most important factors were *wave protection* (3.0) and *minimizing conflicts between pedestrians/bikes and vehicles* (2.8). Nearly half of the respondents indicated they are likely (from “likely” to “very likely”) to use the boat launch. About 31% reported that the question was not applicable because they do not launch boats, while 25% indicated they are unlikely to use the facility. Among the three boat launch locations, Option C was the most favored by respondents (42%), followed by Option A (35%). Option B was the least favored (23%).

A Q&A session was held after the presentation. Participants wrote their questions and comments on cards for the project team and the City to address. A total of 14 comment cards were collected, covering a range of questions. Several addressed operational aspects of the boat launch, such as hours of operation and regulated parking times. Boat traffic considerations were raised multiple times, and questions related to the sheet pile wall in Option C were also highlighted and discussed. One card provided a new location for the boat launch, an “Option D”, which located the launch near the existing boat hoist and R10. Option D has been included as Attachment 3 and the consultant team looked at this location, before the Harbor Commission meeting. However, the option would require removing existing Basin III slips, which is prohibited by Measure C, so this site was not looked at in further detail. The final question on the preferred boat launch option was asked again after the Q&A session with the project team; Option C remained the most popular choice (46%), while Options A and B received similar levels of support, each at approximately 27%.

Option E - At the conclusion of the community outreach workshop, staff and the consultant explored another option with the premise of improving upon the drawbacks of Option A (narrow channel) and Option B (tight landside vehicle turns). The consultant began by taking a south facing ramp as shown in Option A and B as a starting point and rotated the angle of the ramp to the west. The proposal has been included as Attachment 4. The idea is to rotate the ramp as far west as possible before wave uprush becomes a concern. By rotating the ramp west, we can maximize a wider channel width by taking advantage of the south breakwater wall angle but stop the rotation when a sheet pile wall would be necessary to avoid wave uprush. In this case, the channel width in Option E is approximately 160 feet, or 30 feet wider than Option A, but ten feet narrower than Option B. In addition, if the ramp is rotating west towards the expanded channel width, then the vehicle turn-around circle located atop the boat ramp would rotate east thus improving the vehicle circulation challenges in Option B by eliminating the sharp turns as vehicles traverse the surface parking lot and approach the turn-around circle.

Staff Recommendation

Preserving navigable waters and ensuring clearances and predictable traffic patterns for Basin III tenants, visiting boaters, and human-powered craft is an important consideration. Moffatt & Nichol took the minimum clearances required from the DBW boat launch guidelines and ensured that locations A, B, C, and E all meet and exceed the minimum requirements for safety. They accounted for the size and quantity of the vessels that have slips in Basin 3 and measured for the largest-sized boats, so two of the large boats could pass next to each other and someone could be launching a boat simultaneously. Option A has the least clearance space with 130 feet, while Option E provides more navigable width at 160 feet, and Option B has an even greater width at 170 feet. The sheet pile wall for Option C would extend the required 50 feet beyond the bottom of the ramp to give the

minimum clearance for ramp ingress/egress. Beyond the 50-foot requirement, Option C provides the most navigable waters beyond the sheet pile wall with no other limitations.

While Option C provides the most navigable water, minimizing new over-water shading and soft-bottom impacts reduces the impact of the boat launch on the existing harbor ecosystem and lowers mitigation costs and streamlines approvals during the permitting process. Locations that avoid the construction of new offshore wave protection structures, including sheet pile walls, are generally less complex to permit. Where in-water work is necessary, eelgrass and benthic surveys and a mitigation strategy may be required to secure approval from relevant permitting agencies. The additional sheet pile breakwater, possible rock mound, and length of ramp would impact more soft bottom habitat as opposed to Option A, B, or E where most of the ramp is being constructed on land side and only the bottom of the ramp is protruding into the existing coastline. Options A, B, and E would therefore be viewed as more favorable by the CCC and other regulatory agencies because they are less impactful. The CCC and other regulatory agencies will require the submittal of an alternatives analysis. If Option C is submitted as the City's preferred option to the CCC for approval, they will see the other alternatives as less impactful to the coastline, and reject Option C and direct the City to pursue one of the other options.

Staff recommends Option E, which improves upon the deficiencies of both Options A and B. The channel width of Option E is approximately 30 feet wider than Option A, thus providing more channel width to accommodate human powered vessels and other slow-moving vessels. Option E also results in a vehicle turn around circle further east and more in-line with the existing parking lot drive-aisles thus eliminating the need for sharp turns before vehicles with trailers approach the turn-around circle. The channel width of Option B remains approximately 10 feet wider than Option E, however the landside circulation for both vehicles and pedestrians is significantly improved over Option B.

Staff seeks a recommendation from the Harbor Commission to the City Council directing staff to apply for the grant and to identify a preferred location alternative for preparation of the grant application. Staff is preparing a City Council agenda item for November 4, 2025 for City Council to authorize Staff to submit the DBW BLF application based on the preferred location selection.

ATTACHMENTS

Conceptual plans: Alternatives A, B, C

Additional Conceptual Plans

Community Member Option D

New Option E

Boat Launch Demand Study

Coastal Criteria and Hazards Analysis

Transportation Impact and Parking Study