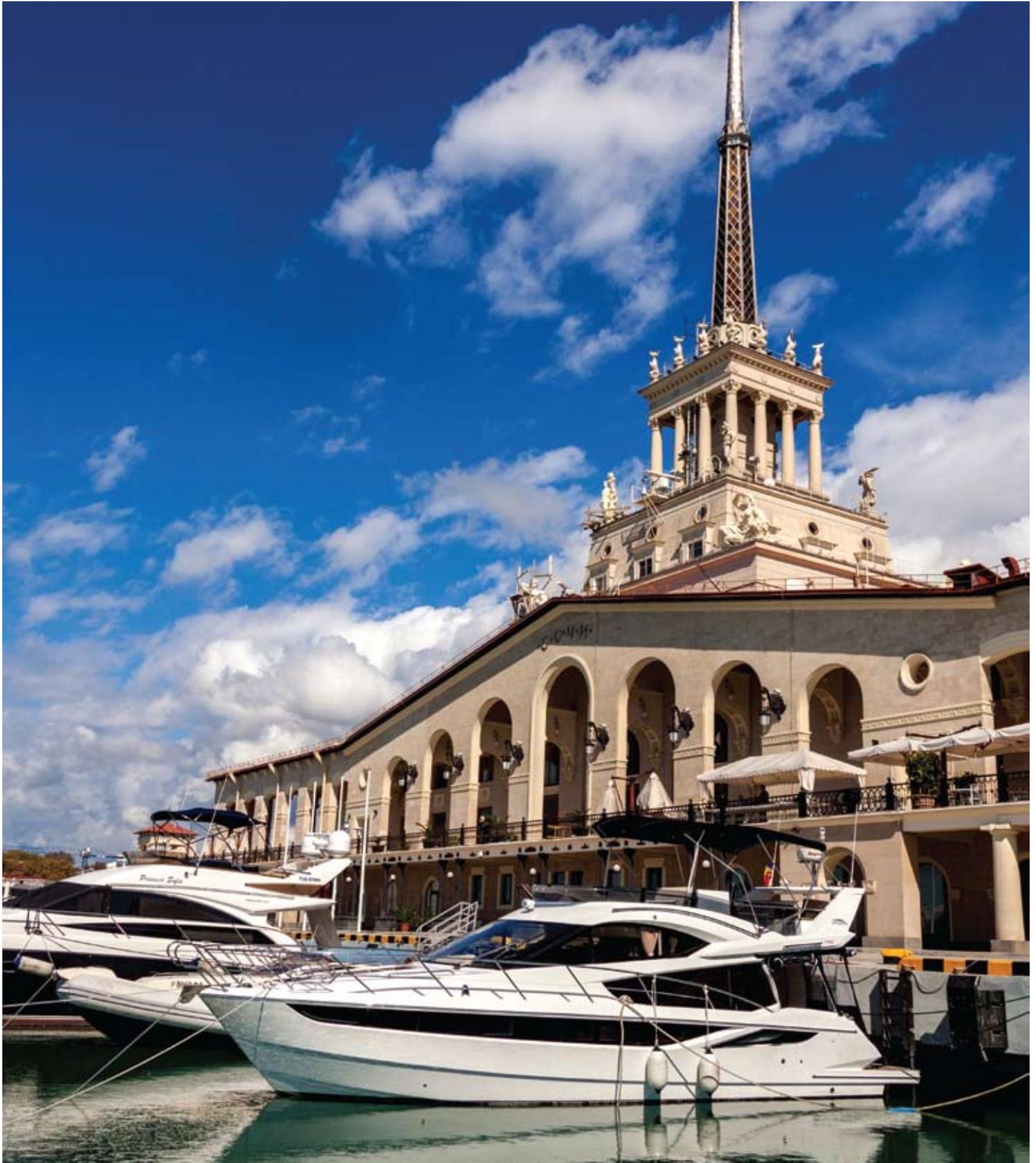


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Essential reading for marina and waterfront developers, planners and operators

Multi-year phasing plan regenerates Santa Barbara Marina

by Robert Wilkes



Ryan Pennell

Looking down the marginal walkway or 'spine' of Santa Barbara Marina.

bid packages (for phases 2 through 4 and for phases 5 through 8, respectively) were also awarded to Bellingham Marine, this time as prime contractor. Bellingham Marine's Unifloat floating concrete pontoons are installed throughout Marina One to maintain a consistent appearance and to simplify operations and maintenance. The docks are manufactured in Bellingham's Dixon, CA, facility.

An escalation clause

Each of the three bid packages was awarded through a low-bidder selection process. Because some phases spanned four years, city managers included an escalation clause in the bid package that set aside money to be paid to the contractors to account for inflation. The amounts were calculated using the Construction Cost Index published annually in Engineering News-Record (ENR).

The ENR Index is a trusted measure of inflation in labour and materials and is specified by region. The escalation clause relieved uncertainty for the bidder and allowed Santa Barbara to receive true low bids not adjusted upward by estimates for inflation. In the actual event, a downturn in the California economy kept inflation low and the city did not use all the funds set aside in the escalation clause.

Large rebuilding projects are usually done in phases, but Santa Barbara's Marina One Replacement Project takes this simple concept to an all new level. The \$14 million rebuild was originally planned in ten phases over 20 years, but as financial and operational goals were met, city managers were able to consolidate the project into eight phases over nine years.

An incremental approach

Marina One encompasses over 500 of the 1,139 slips in Santa Barbara Marina. Karl Treiberg, waterfront facilities manager for the City of Santa Barbara, explained why the decade-long approach. "If we borrowed \$14 million all at once," he said, "the debt service would have required large slip-rate increases. The incremental approach allowed the city to hold rates in line with minimal annual increases in slip fees."

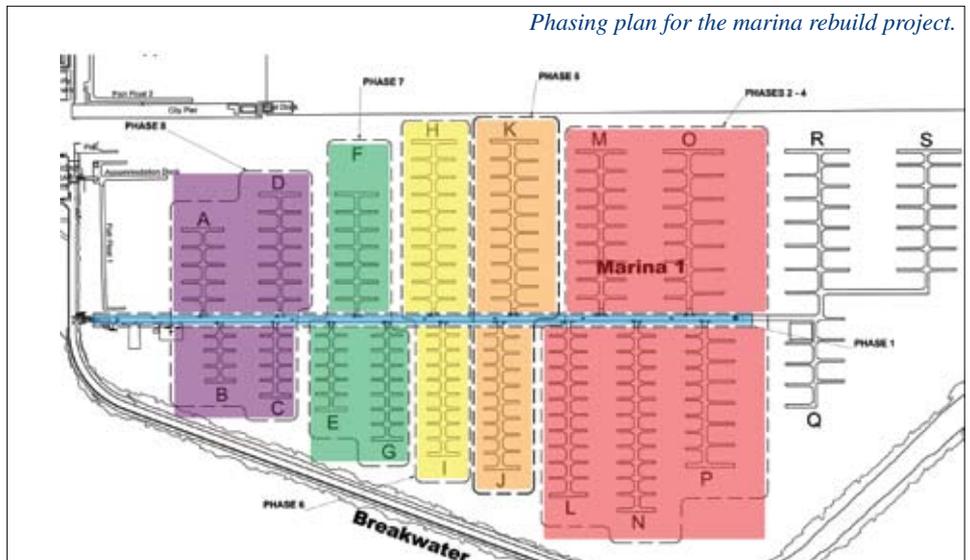
To finance the project, Santa Barbara secured a series of loans from California's Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund administered by the State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways. The City of Santa Barbara funded the design and created a "shovel ready" project which helped expedite the loan application process and secure funds. The state committed the funds and the city drew from the funds as needed. "It was similar to a home equity line of credit," said Treiberg. "We only serviced the debt on

funds borrowed for each individual phase of the project. The savings were significant. The city will construct Phase 7 this fall and complete the project with Phase 8 this winter."

Contractor selection

Bellingham Marine was selected to manufacture and install docks in the first bid package, including Phase 1, the marginal walk. The second and third

Phasing plan for the marina rebuild project.



MARINA PLANNING & DESIGN



Ryan Pennell

A unique system of slip transfers

Santa Barbara Marina, with slips from 20ft to 125ft (6m to 40m), thrives in one of California's most desirable places to live. The marina is always 100% full, and there is a long waiting list. The tenants regard themselves as owners, not renters, of slips, and they have a homeowner's pride of place and interest in the operation of the marina.

When Marina One opened in 1975, Santa Barbara Marina issued transferable permits to vessel owners. The permit holders pay rental fees as in any other marina. The terms of the permit allow them to transfer not just a boat but also the slip upon sale of their vessel. Holders possess the permit for as long as they want and can transfer it whenever they want to. This anomalous system has created a unique situation.

Slip permits are transferable and valuable. They can sell for \$30,000 to \$100,000 or more depending on slip size and slip market conditions. The harbour administration charges a transfer fee generating much needed revenue for harbour operations. Despite the fees, slip transfers are common while vacancies are normally zero. Late payment of rental fees is rare; lease holders would not jeopardise their valuable asset.

But not everyone is happy. Waiting lists for slips are long and move slowly. The city council has had objections about families passing the slips down to their children, perpetuating family

Docks on the main walkway are wide and uncluttered.

ownership. The council has decided a spouse can inherit but not children.

Knowing that their tenants view their slip much as homeowners view their homes, city managers are especially considerate of their needs.

The marina backbone

Imagine a spinal transplant while the patient is awake. "Phase 1 was the backbone of the marina," said Eric Noegel, manager of project development, Southwest Division of Bellingham Marine. "We installed a new land-side electrical service, a new gangway, and then began the replacement of the 1,180ft (360m) marginal walk. The owner wanted virtually no disruption of the tenants and wanted the utilities to remain in service to the greatest extent possible. It was challenging work and the most

Karl Treiberg, waterfront facilities manager for City of Santa Barbara, has been instrumental in organising the eight-phase rebuild plan.

complex phasing I've ever been involved in."

The city team had a general plan for replacing the marginal walk, or "spine," and asked Bellingham Marine to figure out how to do it. The solution involved building the new dock alongside the old. New dock modules extended out from the gangway until they intersected a main walk, then workers removed a section of the main walkway to make a space for the new marginal walk to pass through. Temporary steel ramps were installed to bridge the structures.

John Wratten, Bellingham Marine's project manager, explained: "We had to maintain customer access 100% of the time. The sewer could not be down at all. It served two floating restrooms in the marina. The most impressive part of the job was the one-day shift from the old marginal walk to the new in 14 hours. One by one, we peeled out a module of the old dock and slid in a new one. Then we connected all utilities. Tenants could walk out to the boats while this was going on. At no time were marina operations shut down."

All utilities were installed in the new marginal walk and transformers were placed in readiness for later installation on main walkways. Following the installation of the marginal walk, work to complete the rebuild was done in short phases. "Rather than displace large numbers of boats at the same time," said Treiberg, "we phased the project so



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only 30 to 60 boats were affected. The next nearest marina is 24 miles (39km) from here, so we couldn't send them elsewhere. We scheduled the work in the middle of winter when ample transient moorage was available."

With the completion of each section, electrical transformer stations that had been in readiness on the marginal walk were moved to their final locations on the main walks. Bellingham Marine's Electrical Division provided temporary jumper connections so electric utilities could be quickly reconnected as the project gradually unfolded.

The rebuild was "like for like." Existing slip sizes were considered appropriate for Santa Barbara's unique market, and city planners wanted to avoid complex environmental permitting. No new piling was needed, with the exception of four piles driven for the addition of four slips during Phase 2.

Three generations of marina technology

"Here in our marina you can see dock design evolution for the last 40 years," said Treiberg. "Marina One was completed in 1975 with external

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Located in one of the most desirable places to live in California, Santa Barbara Marina is always at full occupancy and there is a long waiting list for slips.

utilities exposed to salt and weather. Our 1998 extension had utilities in the docks. Access was difficult and we were unable to detect leaks. Our new docks feature electrical utility runs under the decks with access panels, and domestic water, fire water and sewer on the side where we access them and detect leaks." Santa Barbara's phasing plan surely required foresight

and patience, but it accomplished the city's objectives. "We realised significant savings," added Treiberg, "and our tenants are extremely pleased with the way the project was managed and executed."

Robert Wilkes writes about the marina industry from Bellevue, Washington, USA.

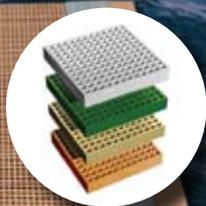
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