

Huntington OKs proposal for plaza at rebuilt pier

2.1-acre addition could include amphitheater, surfing museum

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The Register

C.C. Register - 9-19-87
HUNTINGTON BEACH — The City Council, torn between its vision and its fiscal conservatism, gave in to the former Monday night, approving a proposal for a 2.1-acre plaza at the foot of a new municipal pier.

The council also gave the go-ahead to a private developer's proposal to build a \$60 million commercial and residential project directly across the street, at the corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Main Street.

The plaza, proposed by Corona del Mar architect Ron Yeo and a pier design committee, would span

150 yards at the foot of the pier.

Although the final design will evolve from planning sessions to be held later, a tentative two-level design by Yeo would accommodate an amphitheater, a long-planned surfing museum, room for sculpture or other public art, and several areas where visitors can sit and enjoy the view.

An entryway like the one to the existing pier, which is not much wider than the pier itself, was considered by many as too spartan for a city that soon will be trying to draw international attention to a

rebuilt waterfront and downtown.

The cost of the new pier is estimated at \$10.5 million, and the city has been able to secure commitments for less than half that amount.

The City Council did not set a price tag for the pier plaza, although estimates ranged from \$2 million to \$7 million.

Recognizing the funding problem, City Administrator Paul Cook said the city probably will separate plaza funding from that of the pier. Money for the plaza could come directly from the city's general

fund over a two-year period if pier-funding sources cannot absorb the addition, he said.

Through legislation last week, the city got a promise of \$1.5 million for the pier. Over the summer the city lost \$1.5 million in pier funds when Gov. George Deukmejian vetoed a bill that had been all but considered a lock. The city came up short again when the Federal Emergency Management Agency promised only \$750,000 when the city had been hoping for several times that amount.

The city itself has earmarked \$3

million for building a new pier. The existing 75-year-old structure was deemed structurally unsound and closed to the public in July 1988.

City officials still are pursuing more federal, state and private funds, but have received no assurances that they will be able to obtain the money from those sources alone. The notion of a bond issue is being raised more frequently as the scheduled start of the project approaches.

Construction on the pier is scheduled to begin in nine months and it

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