

BAYSIDE

BEAT

DOWNTOWN SANTA MONICA &
THIRD STREET PROMENADE

Walking the Beat

It was a Friday evening, and darkness had just fallen on the Third Street Promenade. For police officers Steve Perez and Koby Arnold, it had been a typical day patrolling one of the nation's busiest outdoor shopping strips.

They had cruised the surrounding streets in their squad car and walked the three-block-long beat, issuing a half dozen citations and as many warnings and dropping in on merchants to touch base.

"There's been a lot of people out here, but it hasn't been too busy," said Perez, who's in charge of the Third Street bicycle unit.

Then, just before their shift ended at 8 p.m., a group of young men strolled by.

"That guy's crazy," one of the men told the officers.

"The guy following us is crazy," another repeated as he passed by.

Perez and Arnold went into action. They quickly spotted the homeless man in question stumbling among the growing crowd, put on rubber gloves and handcuffed him. The elderly black man could barely stand. He was slurring, incoherent.

"We're citing him for being intoxicated in public," Perez said. "He's a chronic inebriate. Sometimes, he becomes violent. He can't care for his safety or the safety of others."

The man, whose name is Frank, was escorted to a squad car the officers had

continued on page 6

Petition Drive Moves Ahead

A petition drive calling for elections to determine the fate of a new property-based assessment district (PBAD) and management plan for the Downtown is finally hitting the streets after getting an enthusiastic thumbs up from the City Council last month.

The council not only unanimously blessed the petition drive on March 25, it directed the City Manager to sign on for the City, which represents 10 percent of the property owners, who will have a proportional vote based on the assessed value of their parcels. The support of 40 percent is needed to hold an election.

If enough signatures are gathered during the seven-week drive, the owners of Downtown's 360 property parcels will decide whether to pay \$3.6 million in new assessments. The money would boost maintenance by \$1.3 million, create a \$1.23 million "ambassador program" to inform visitors and help keep the streets safe and add \$400,000 to the Bayside's marketing efforts.

Given the approval of property owners, the council would then decide whether to give the final go-ahead to a plan that marks the first major change in two decades in how the Downtown and its thriving Third Street Promenade are run.

"We have consensus," Bayside Board member Bill Tucker, who owns property on the Promenade, told the council. "We've really reached a win-win. It's a win-win for the community, a win-win for the district itself."

continued on page 3



FROM LEFT: OFFICERS STEVE PEREZ
AND KOBY ARNOLD CHECK IN WITH
A PROMENADE STORE MANAGER.

Filling the Blanks



A year ago, a stretch on the north side of Broadway from Second Street west was lined with empty storefronts. Today, those spaces are filling up.

That dramatic change reflects the continued strong demand for retail space in Downtown Santa Monica.

Many new stores and eating places are opening as momentum continues from strong leasing in the second half of last year. But the pace of activity may slow down as the impact of a weakening economy, financial uncertainties and scaled back expansion plans by retailers take hold.

“Over the last year it has been a strong leasing market,” said Robert O. York, a consultant to the Bayside District Corp. “There is a lot of very positive momentum.”

But, York said, the market may cool down a bit because “a lot of retailers are starting to turn more cautious.”

For now, however, the market is solid.

Vincent C. Muselli of Muselli Commercial Realtors said the market is as strong as a year ago, and he hasn't seen a downturn. But he is a bit concerned that slowing retail sales could eventually hurt.

No signs of a slowdown are evident if you look at what has happened over the past few months along Broadway. A string of retail spaces from Second Street west have been leased in recent months.

Among them: Citrus Valley Yogurt & Ice Cream opened recently at 123 Broadway and spaces immediately to the east have been leased to Xooro (which sells baked goods), Evergreen Tea House and, on the corner of Broadway and Second, Oxbow (a surf apparel and active wear store).

The latter three should open within three or four months after major improvements by tenants, said Arthur Peter, a broker with PAR Commercial Brokerage who handled the leasing with Greg Eckhardt.

Peter hopes these and other new arrivals will “breathe some good life” into that area of Downtown.

Nearby, Buddha's Belly restaurant recently opened at 205 Broadway and Joe's Pizza opened at 111 Broadway.

“Downtown is moving,” Peter said. “It is doing real well.”

The area continues to attract retailers with an international flavor.

Peter noted that Oxbow, which will also take a portion of the second floor for its West Coast headquarters, is part of a French company, while Evergreen is Korean.

On the Third Street Promenade, H & M, a Swedish fashion apparel store, will open on the 1400 block, York said.

Numerous foreign-owned companies have already opened stores Downtown.

Although the market is strong, there's still room for improvement. “We need to concentrate on getting good retail up and down Second Street,” Peter said.

One big recent addition to Second Street is the Kensington luggage store, which took the space formerly occupied by Wild About Music. Kensington moved from Santa Monica Place, which is closed for a major remodeling.

Rents have been holding up well. Typical rates on the Third Street Promenade range from \$18 to \$25 a square foot depending on location and size, Muselli said. There are very few transactions, however, because of limited supply and turnover.

York said ground floor space on the Promenade typically rents in the upper teens, while second floor space is much less.

A block or so off the Promenade, rents are half or less, and rents scale down further away from the Promenade, York said.

Downtown is getting a mix of tenants.

“We get a bunch of calls from entrepreneurs and chain brokers,” Muselli said. “Chains focus on the Promenade.”


“We're still getting the big guys, and entrepreneurs are showing up on the periphery,” York said.

Many of the chain stores in Downtown, including the new Forever 21 on the Promenade, have been positioned as flagship stores, with broader selections and more exciting environments, York said.

Some successful stores are expanding by relocating. York noted the planned doubling of space for Sephora in its anticipated move from the 1300 to the 1200 block of the Promenade.

Some of the first wave of retailers on the Promenade are starting to look at their rents, and some may decide to move around the corner, York said.

Meanwhile, Santa Monica Place has embarked on major construction that could affect retail activity Downtown over the next year or two. How construction and traffic flow are handled will be important.

“They have to make sure it is well lit and attractive,” York said. 

“THERE IS A LOT OF VERY POSITIVE MOMENTUM.”

ROBERT O. YORK

continued from page 1

Fellow board member Kelley Wallace, who owns Above the Fold newsstand on the Promenade, called it “the best possible plan to ensure the success (Downtown) Santa Monica has had continues into the future” as it faces growing competition from other venues.

Council members praised the year-and-a-half process that led to the nearly unanimous approval of the Bayside Board in February and last month’s unanimous council vote, saying it had brought closer together key stakeholders – landlords, merchants and residents – who have not always seen eye-to-eye.

“I think this is really good,” said Council member Ken Genser. “There was so much distrust among different groups. There’s general consensus now. We’re clearly moving forward on this.”

“I’m impressed about how the Downtown community has come together,” said Council member Kevin McKeown.

As part of its action, the council reviewed and accepted the recommendations hammered out by a special PBAD working group. They include replacing the existing 11-member Bayside Board currently appointed by the council with a 13-member board, six of whose members would be appointed by the council, six by the property owners and one by the City Manager.

Although the board’s makeup would not be prescribed, the members would come from the three proposed zones in the district, which stretches from the east side of Ocean Avenue to the east side of 7th Street and from the north side of Wilshire Boulevard to the 10 Freeway.

Under the plan, the proposed assessment district would have a 20-year limit, with property owners voting after ten years to determine if it should continue.

The working group also recommended that the City Bus Yards be exempt and that the rate charged to the 20 Downtown non-profits – which include churches, the Salvation Army, Step Up on Second and the YMCA – be reduced.

The plan has garnered a “pretty impressive” list of supporters, said Brad Segal, the consultant who helped Bayside officials put together the new plan.

“WE’VE REALLY REACHED A WIN-WIN.”

BILL TUCKER

The plan also seems to have overwhelming public support, with 90 percent of those who responded to an on-line survey saying the proposed services “would improve Downtown,” while 80 percent of the Downtown landlords, business owners and residents polled said the plan “would directly benefit them,” Segal said.

While the council embraced the plan, several members aired concerns about how the maintenance and ambassador programs would be run.

Genser said the services agreement between the Bayside and the City would need to specify that the maintenance “needs to be done subject to the regulations of the City.” The agreement also would deal with such issues as indemnity.

Council member Kevin McKeown, who has expressed concerns that the ambassadors would be given too much of a policing function, worried about how homeless issues would be addressed under the program.


Former mayor Judy Abdo expressed similar concerns.

“You need to follow this very, very closely to make sure the homeless are not swept from Downtown,” she told the council, adding that the plan “is not perfect, but it’s a pretty good plan.”

The proposed district – divided into a zone comprised by Third Street Promenade; a zone along 2nd and 4th streets and Ocean Avenue and one between 5th and 7th streets – includes restaurants, hotels, offices and, most likely, apartment buildings.

Under the proposed plan, assessments would be based on the property’s size, location and type of use.

A property on the Promenade would pay the most at 76¢ a square foot, properties on neighboring 2nd and 4th streets and Ocean Avenue would pay 38¢, while those on 5th to 7th streets would pay 19¢.

To pave the way for the assessment district, the council also approved an ordinance adopting local modifications to the method of levying assessments under a 1994 local law. 

Expo Line on Track to Downtown

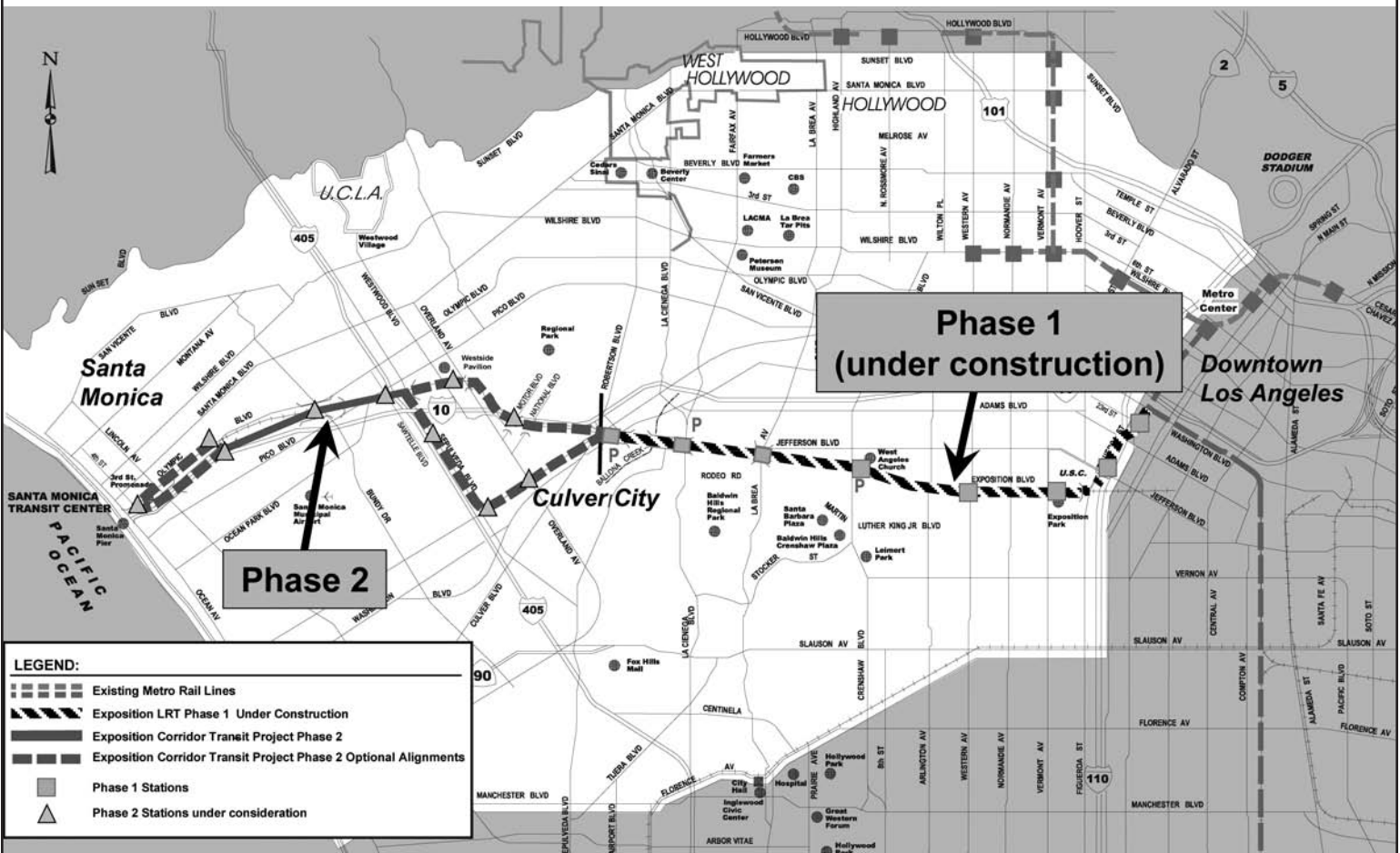
The Expo Line to Downtown Santa Monica is becoming more clearly visible on the horizon, as transit officials finish hammering out an environmental impact report (EIR) and the public discusses alternative routes and stations that will soon take a more concrete form.

Two alternative routes are being considered – one bringing the second phase of the project from Culver City directly into Santa Monica on the Exposition right-of-way, the other bypassing Cheviot Hills and taking Venice Boulevard to Sepulveda.

“If we can stay on pace, the Santa Monica phase could begin as early as 2014,” said Council member Pam O’Connor, who chairs the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board in charge of the regional transit system. “But that’s the best case.

“Who knows under current economic conditions,” O’Connor added. “We can’t predict.”

The estimated cost of bringing light rail from Culver City – where the phase from Downtown LA will be completed in 2010 – has mushroomed from some \$800 million a year ago to between \$1.1 billion for a direct route and \$1.6 billion if the line is diverted along Venice Boulevard.



Courtesy of Expo.

▲ Phase 2 Station locations currently under consideration

“THE GREATEST ISSUE IS THE ISSUE OF CONGESTION.”

EILEEN FOGARTY

But no matter the route, the destination will be Santa Monica, where two routes and three potential stations are being studied, according to City officials.

One route would run on the Olympic Boulevard median. The City has requested that MTA officials study straddling the tree-lined median and placing one-way rail lines along the sides, said Ellen Gelbard, assistant director of Planning.

The second option, which City officials have asked the MTA to study, would take the line at grade along Colorado, eliminating the need to lift the rail as high as 30 feet off the ground to scale the 10 Freeway, Gelbard said.

The MTA also is exploring where the stations in Santa Monica will go. In addition to a terminal Downtown and another at Bergamot Station near Cloverfield Boulevard, the City has asked the MTA to study adding a station around 17th Street to service Santa Monica College and the hospitals, City officials said.

The MTA's initial plan calls for a final stop on the rail line to Santa Monica at Fourth Street and Colorado Avenue at the Sears Automotive building the City bought two years ago just four blocks east of the pier entrance.

But an alternative plan is being considered that would place the final station on Colorado Boulevard in front of Santa Monica Place.

When the train finally arrives, the 20-year-old indoor mall, which is undergoing a major remodel scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2009, will have a new look.

Not only will an open-air court connect directly to the Third Street Promenade, the mall's parking structures will get a makeover that includes adding stores and parking attendants, under a plan approved by the City Council last month.

The plan also adds 100 spaces for bicycles and solar panels on the roofs of the structures, which are owned by the City's Redevelopment Agency and currently operated by Macerich Company, which owns the 30-year-old mall.

The council on March 11 also greenlighted retail on the ground floor of the structure facing Broadway, which could accommodate “small kiosk-type commercial operations” such as a coffee stand, newsstand or florist.

Under the plan, the 1,968 spaces in Structures 7 and 8 would be managed by the City, which currently runs the six other public structures Downtown. Macerich would continue to be responsible for maintenance and security, and the two parties would continue to split the revenues evenly.

Installing the proposed parking improvements will cost \$2 million and result in the loss of 41 spaces, which will be offset at the Civic Center lot that opened a year ago next to City Hall, staff said.

Under the plan, Macerich will continue to provide valet parking service in the daytime on weekdays when the mall reopens.

The proposed façade improvements, which will cost \$4.5 million, will “enhance the pedestrian experience by creating a more dynamic public space with improved connections between the mall and other downtown destinations,” staff wrote.

Under the proposed façade improvement concept, the Frank Gehry-designed chain link curtain on the south-facing side of Structure 8, which spells out Santa Monica Place, will be retained and restored, according to staff.


The façade improvements will be bankrolled with agency funds allocated for structure improvements, as well as the \$1.4 million payment from Macerich for removing part of Structure 7. Macy's will be open during the mall's remodel.

City officials hope that when the light rail line is completed, visitors will be hopping aboard, helping to meet the goals of a Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) update that will direct development in Santa Monica for the next 20 years.

Under the update presented to the council February 26 and the Planning Commission last month, the plan would try to achieve “no new net car trips” by “proactively managing congestion” and “establishing citywide transportation and parking districts,” said Planning Director Eileen Fogarty.

The plan concentrates new mixed-use and residential development in the industrial lands around Bergamot Station, the proposed site of a light rail station; the area around 14th and Wilshire Boulevard near the hospitals and along Lincoln Boulevard.

In these areas, buildings would be taller than currently allowed by code and the development would be linked to affordable housing and public transit, helping to create neighborhood centers, City officials said.

“The greatest issue is the issue of congestion,” said Fogarty, echoing the concerns of the hundreds of residents who have attended workshops over the past three years. “How can we gain control of our streets? That's the main thing we hear.” 

continued from page 1

summoned and driven to jail, where he would spend the rest of the weekend until a court date Monday, when the City would seek a restraining order barring him from the Promenade area.

Perez and Arnold are part of a team of four sworn officers who patrol the area bordered by the alley east of Ocean Avenue, the alley between 4th and 5th streets, Wilshire Boulevard and Broadway.

Another eight officers cover the larger Downtown area bounded by Palisades Park, Lincoln Avenue, California Avenue and the 10 Freeway. The two Downtown details are backed by ten community service officers, who can't carry guns or make arrests.

The officers are part of a new neighborhood policing plan instituted by Police Chief Tim Jackman that boosts the number of sworn officers patrolling the Bayside District from eight to 12 and helps put a face on those who cover the beat, often on foot and bicycles.

The officers are assigned to at least six consecutive months, assuring they will become a familiar face on the street – getting to know the merchants and their needs and concerns and building bridges with homeless service providers and those, like Frank, they try to help.

“They really get to know all the ins and outs of what’s going on,” said Sgt. Ken Semko, who is in charge of Downtown patrols.

“We can build relationships with everybody,” said Jeffrey Glaser, who as the area’s Neighborhood Resources Officer serves as the “quarterback” who coordinates the efforts needed to address a problem. “Everybody is going to get to know everybody, like a small town sheriff.”

From a hive of bees nesting in the rafters of a Promenade building to a frightened worker walking to a parking structure during a power blackout, the beat officers say they are there to call Vector Control or escort motorists to their cars.

They’re also there to serve as a liaison for residents and businesses, helping connect them to the proper service no matter how small the problem may seem.

“NOTHING IS TOO INSIGNIFICANT TO REPORT.”

SGT. KEN SEMKO

“Nothing is too insignificant to report,” said Semko, who began patrolling the area as a rookie cop in 1991. “Anything law enforcement can help with, we’ll help – from maintenance issues to noise, we can steer them to the services they need.

“We tell merchants and residents, ‘If you see something going on, call us,’” he added. “People will say, ‘I’m having a problem with a tree. The leaves are falling off.’ We get beehive calls. We’re really an information source.”

When not busy providing answers to problems, the beat officers are out enforcing a myriad of Santa Monica laws – from noise levels for street performers to the City’s smoking ban. Friday was a typical day on the beat.

In addition to arresting Frank for being drunk in public, Perez and Arnold cited a homeless man for drinking and littering in Palisades Park, another for sitting on the sidewalk and smoking and a third for digging recyclables out of a bin. (The last two were repeat offenders.)

And it wasn’t only the homeless who kept the officers busy. They caught a teenager who had shoplifted clothing, glasses and a key chain from two Promenade stores, recovered the goods and turned her over to her mother. (Police said shoplifting on the Promenade seems to be on the rise since Santa Monica Place shut down for a major remodel.)

They also caught a motorist illegally occupying a handicap space. (The man worked on the Promenade and was bringing friends to spend the evening on the strip).

And they responded to a call from an “airship” that a suspicious person was photographing buildings from the top of a parking structure. (The man, who was shooting panoramic views of the city, was advised to leave.)

The officers also issued numerous warnings. They stopped a Japanese tourist with dreadlocks from pulling a cigarette from his pack and lighting up, informing him that smoking was banned on the Promenade and directing him to the designated smoking zone.

In addition, they stopped two kids who zoomed by on razor scooters in defiance of a city ordinance banning skating and bicycling on the crowded Promenade.

These are the kinds of warnings that can be issued by a team of ambassadors the Bayside District would hire if a new assessment plan is approved by merchants, said Capt. Wendell Shirley, who as head of the Office of Operations is in charge.

The \$1.2-million-a-year program would put uniformed ambassadors on the streets and in public restrooms 15 hours a day, seven days a week to provide a “concierge” service for visitors and “assist police to discourage nuisance crimes,” according to the plan.

“EVERYBODY IS GOING TO GET TO KNOW EVERYBODY, LIKE A SMALL TOWN SHERIFF.”

JEFFREY GLASER

“We support the program,” said Shirley. “It gives us an extra pair of eyes and ears out there helping to report issues . . . They would have no more power than a regular citizen would have, but they can inform (the public) about the laws.”

The department has offered to train the ambassadors, who would not use police radios, but would route their calls, like the public does, through police dispatch, Shirley said. Like the beat officers, the ambassadors would become familiar faces.

“When they know a name and a face,” he said, “it goes a long way towards working together.”

The neighborhood policing plan has been working, the beat officers said. Take the homeless problem that has consistently topped the list of concerns in resident and merchant polls alike.

By being there day in and day out and connecting directly with merchants and homeless agencies, police have made progress addressing the problem, Semko said.

“The cooperation with a lot of businesses Downtown is helping with tools that enable us to enforce laws and get (the homeless) into services,” Semko said. “It’s not an overnight solution, but we’re starting to see some tangible results we haven’t gotten in the past.”

“We’re getting cooperation with all the parties involved,” he said. “We’re starting to meld together. We sat around the table and realized we had a common goal.”

The beat officers have also reached out to the homeless. “The people we commonly run into, our folks know very well,” Semko said. “We know them by name. We know the things they’re going through.”

The officers have learned the social patterns of the homeless and realized that they often congregate around those who have been living on the streets the longest.

“The word transient is kind of funny,” said Semko. “Transients get very territorial. They like the same spot. They know the others out there, the law enforcement, where they need to go to take care of themselves.”

The City’s efforts to target and house the “chronic homeless” who have been on the streets the longest and are most at risk of dying is working, police said.

“In the last few months, we’ve had people that have been out here for ten years that you don’t see anymore,”



JEFFREY GLASER, DOWNTOWN
NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE OFFICER

Semko said. “When people out here for years start to disappear (from the streets), a lot of people will leave as well. It’s a domino effect.”

Perez added, “When you see somebody being successful with a program, they think they can get help as well.”


The officers also have worked directly with business and property owners to enforce an ordinance that bans sleeping in Downtown doorways. The owners must file no-trespassing letters every month giving police the go-ahead to enforce the law.

“The vast majority is cooperating,” Semko said. “It’s something that’s helping everybody, not just the businesses.”

Soon, the new officers will begin enforcing an ordinance approved by the City Council on first reading that bans panhandling from Promenade benches. “The homeless use the benches as a place of operation,” said Glaser. “It’s a problem because of the limited seating.”

With as many as 10,000 visitors streaming through each block of the Promenade every hour on busy nights, Semko and his team keep busy. But it’s a beat he wouldn’t trade.

“I love interacting with people in the area,” Semko said. “You get a sense of pride in your area. You have an emotional tie to the area you work in.”

To File No Trespassing letters for your downtown business or property please contact Bayside District Corporation at 310-393-8355 or go online to the For Merchant section of downtownsm.com 

For more about Downtown...

downtownsm.com

For more news ... surfsantamonica.com



BAYSIDE BEAT

1351 Third Street Promenade, Suite 201
Santa Monica, CA 90401

APRIL
2008

On Patrol1

Signing On1

For Lease2

Getting There4

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

BAYSIDE ANNOUNCEMENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Martin, *Board Chair*
 Rob Rader, *Secretary/Treasurer*
 Patricia Hoffman, *Vice Chair*
 Jennifer Ann Hranilovich, *Vice Chair*
 Bill Tucker, *Vice Chair*
 Randy Brant, *Board Member*
 Barbara Bryan, *Board Member*
 Todd Flora, *Board Member*
 Johannes Van Tilburg, *Board Member*
 Kelley Wallace, *Board Member*
 John Warfel, *Board Member*

BAYSIDE STAFF

Kathleen Rawson, *Executive Director*
 Stephen Bradford, *Venue Manager*
 Andrew S. Thomas, *Operations Manager*
 Debbie Lee, *Director of Marketing & Communications*
 Linn Wile, *Executive Assistant*
 Nicole Nez, *Marketing & Special Events Coordinator*

BAYSIDE BEAT

Jorge Casuso, *Editor/Writer*
 Ann K. Williams, *Writer*
 Design by www.robinocconnell.com
 Printing by KSOM Printing

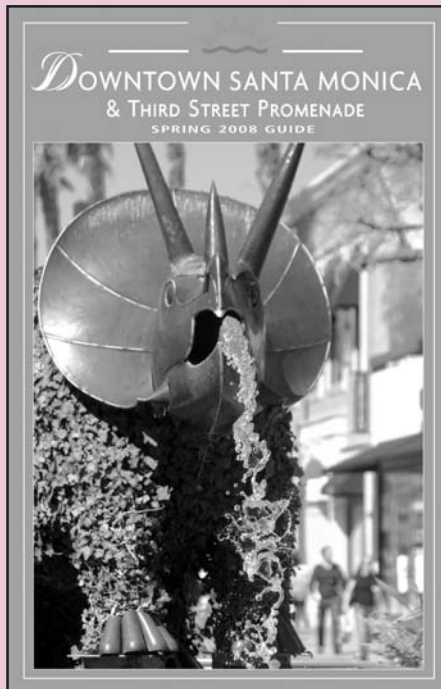
BAYSIDE DISTRICT CORP.

MISSION STATEMENT

On behalf of the City of Santa Monica, to promote economic stability, growth and community life within the Bayside District through responsible planning, development, management, and coordination of programs, projects and services designed to benefit the community as a whole; which includes the District's businesses, property owners, visitors and residents.

1351 Third Street Promenade, Suite 201
 Santa Monica, CA 90401
 Phone: 310.393.8355 Fax: 310.458.3921
 Email: info@downtownsm.com
 Web site: www.downtownsm.com

© 2008 Bayside District Corporation. All Rights Reserved.



Downtown Guide to Santa Monica & Third Street Promenade

Join the growing number of businesses that are reaching 50,000 potential customers each quarter in Bayside's downtown directory guide. With a comprehensive calendar of events and full listing of downtown businesses, our pocket guide is a handy resource.

For more information on how you can highlight your business, contact us at (310) 393-8355 or email marketing@baysidedistrict.org.