



Agenda Item #: \_\_\_\_\_

# Staff Report

## City of Manhattan Beach

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Montgomery and Members of the City Council

**THROUGH:** David N. Carmany, City Manager

**FROM:** Richard Gill, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Eve Kelso, Recreation Services Manager

**DATE:** April 19, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of a Citizen Request to Purchase and Install an Accessible Walkway on the Beach from the Bike Path to the Shoreline for People with Limited Mobility

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction regarding the citizen request (Attachment A) to install an accessible walkway on the beach from the bike path to the shoreline for people with limited mobility.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATION:**

If approved, the initial capital costs for the purchase and installation of a Mobi-Mat are:

- South of 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 400 feet: \$32,042
- North of the pier, 400 feet: \$32,042
- El Porto area, 300 feet: \$24,144

Annual costs for daily installation and pick up of the Mobi-Mat:

- City staff: \$82,655-\$109,500 (depending if overtime is needed)
- Landscape contractor: \$29,200-\$54,750 (depending if overtime or supervisor is needed)

The costs of an alternative to Mobi-Mat (permanent, cement walkway), including labor, are:

- South of 6<sup>th</sup> Street: \$140,000- \$180,000
- North of the pier: \$140,000- \$180,000
- El Porto area: \$130,000- \$170,000

Other costs to consider with a cement walkway are potential annual repair costs due to the possibility of damage from County trucks or erosion from high surf. Daily sweeping may also be needed. The County is amenable to discussing sharing the cost of a permanent cement walkway. A Coastal Development permit would likely be required.

Currently in the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) fund, there is no money available. In February, 2011, all CIP funds were allocated to various projects over the next five years.

**BACKGROUND:**

Several years ago, resident, Ms. Evelyn Frey, wrote the attached letter (Attachment A) requesting the installation of a Mobi-Mat on the beach, to allow people with limited mobility and families with strollers, to get down to the shoreline. In her letter, Ms. Frey indicated that she was starting a campaign to make our beach accessible to the less physically able. She discussed the difficulty for seniors to walk through the deep sand and get close to the ocean. Ms. Frey researched many options and believed that Mobi-Mat was a cost-effective and appropriate solution. Ms. Frey suggested the location just south of 6<sup>th</sup> Street for the placement of a Mobi-Mat because it is less crowded than other areas of the beach, had a level crossing area on the Strand and was a location that residents, and non residents alike, could enjoy. In Ms. Frey's request, she did not intend to have the mat placed near El Porto or the Pier and did not necessarily suggest that the mat meet ADA guidelines.

The City Council placed this request on their 2008-09 Work Plan. Research was presented at the City Council meeting on September 2, 2008 about the Mobi-Mat and its uses around the country. When this issue was presented to City Council in September of 2008, the County who owns the beach would only permit the walkway to extend 50% of the way to the shoreline. Because of this, staff recommended not moving forward with the purchase and installation of the portable mat. Staff was concerned that installing the mat half way to the shoreline would not accomplish the goal of allowing seniors and those physically challenged to reach the shoreline. At the September 2, 2008 meeting, Councilmember Aldinger indicated that the City should try and continue to work this out with the County Supervisor's office. Mayor Mitch Ward sent a letter asking the County for suggestions of how to accomplish the goal of providing seniors and individuals with physical challenges with access to the shoreline (Attachment B). In response to Mayor Ward's letter, Supervisor Don Knabe sent a letter (Attachment C) to Evelyn Frey stating that the Department of Beaches and Harbors would meet with City officials to work out the final details for placing the mat with minimal restrictions.

Following the City Council meeting, the County agreed to meet with City staff to see if concerns of the County could be met.

**DISCUSSION:**

City staff and County officials met several times, with one of the meetings being a demonstration of the Mobi-Mat on the beach. The meetings were held to better understand the logistics of the installation and de-installation of the Mobi-Mat.

The following concerns were discussed by the County, and are included in the attached letter (Attachment D). In the letter from the Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, it is stated that the County will support an accessible walkway, but would expect the City to take responsibility for the purchase, daily upkeep and management. The letter specifically states that the City would be responsible for:

- Purchase of the Mobi-Mat
- Placement on the beach of the Mobi-Mat every morning after 9 am and removal each night
- Liability and indemnity coverage of the County against third parties' bodily harm and /or

- property damage; and
- Maintenance and replacement of a damaged Mobi-Mat

Staff is concerned with the County Department of Beaches and Harbors' requirement to install and pick up the Mobi-Mat each day due to high costs. As stated in the Fiscal Implications section of this report, if City of Manhattan Beach employees complete this daily task, it will cost approximately \$82,665/year, or if overtime is needed, the cost could be up to \$109,500/year. If a landscape contractor is used for this daily project, the annual cost would start at \$29,200 and if a supervisor or overtime costs were incurred, the cost could be up to \$54,750/year.

Even though the initial request for a portable walkway was suggested for people with limited mobility, the City's and County's responsibility is to consider all persons with disabilities when considering the purchase of a walkway. City and County staff believe that if a walkway is installed, it should comply with ADA and be located near one of the beach parking lots that is ADA compliant and accessible.

The requested location is a concern to staff. Ms. Frey recommends that the walkway be installed south of 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Since there are no parking lots near 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and since the slope of the sand is greater in this area, staff believes there are two more suitable locations. One of those locations is just north of the Pier, off of the north lower beach parking lot, and the other is the El Porto area near the El Porto parking lot. Both of these areas have established disabled parking spaces, and they either have an existing disabled accessible ramp or the degree of slope on the beach complies with ADA standards.

Additionally, City staff and County officials discussed the possibility of a more permanent solution for accessibility to the shoreline. The possible solution is a concrete pathway that would take the daily abuse of the County's maintenance trucks. If this option is decided upon, staff recommends a 10-12 foot wide concrete pathway. The downside of the permanent solution is the high cost estimated at \$130,000- \$180,000.

It should also be noted that currently the County has a beach wheelchair program that allows people with disabilities to access the beach. The County owns two balloon tire wheelchairs located on Manhattan Beach, which can be checked out free of charge, seven days a week by contacting any ocean lifeguard. The lifeguard will deliver the balloon tire wheelchair to the location requested.

Staff also believes there is a need for a citywide assessment and plan that addresses all of the ADA needs in the city, prior to making a commitment to the installation of a beach accessible walkway. Other than a few specific studies, the City has not looked at a comprehensive ADA accessibility plan for all of its public right-of-ways and facilities that prioritizes projects.

If approved, the City Council would need to identify a funding source, and indicate the project in the City's CIP.

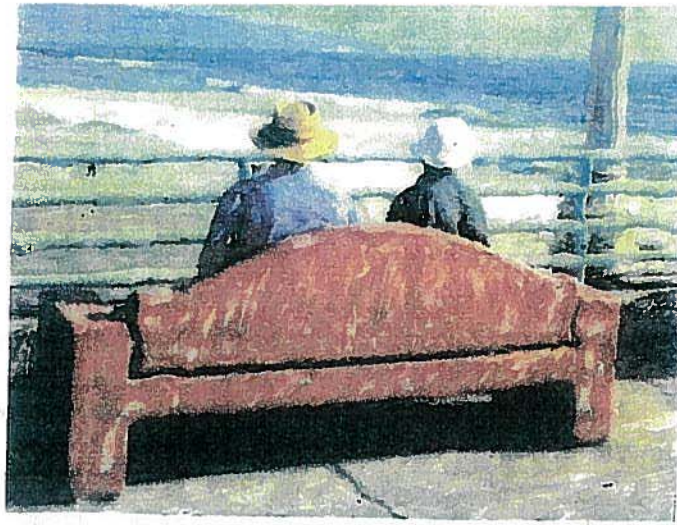
**CONCLUSION:**

Staff is concerned with the County's mandate that the Mobi-Mat would have to be installed and picked up each day, as the costs for this operation are very high. However, if City Council wishes to approve this with the daily installation and pick-up, then two issues will need to be addressed.

What is the best location (staff recommends north of the Pier, off of the north lower beach parking lot or the El Porto area)? And, should it comply with ADA or be approved with the intent of the original request for people with limited mobility? Additionally, should the accessible walkway be portable or permanent?

Attachments:

- A. Letter from Evelyn Frey (not dated) and other materials from Evelyn Frey
- B. Letter, dated June 8, 2010, from Mayor Ward to County Supervisor Don Knabe
- C. Letter, dated August 11, 2010, from County Supervisor Don Knabe to Ms. Evelyn Frey
- D. Letter, dated August 26, 2010, from Santos H. Kreimann, Director of L.A. County Beaches and Harbors



**To my Manhattan Beach friends and neighbors:**

**Let me tell you of my new project. I have started a campaign to make our beach accessible to the less physically able.**

**I am contacting other coastal cities that provide beach access and researching materials that are used. These materials provide a safe pathway to the firm sand at the water's edge. All those who love our beach but have been restricted by inability to make their way through the deep sand can again be reunited with their ocean. They will smell the salt spray - hear the sound of the surf - and the bird calls.**

**Also, families with small children, baby strollers, etc. would gratefully use these pathways.**

**I hope you agree that the pictures showing walk-mats installed at other beaches are pleasing to the eye, safe to walk on and have been proven to be comfortable and durable.**

**“See you at the beach”.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Evelyn".

**Evelyn Frey  
eaf228@gmail.com**

# The Best Surface Choice For Beach Use

While seeking to improve access to your beach, trying to find the best solution – taking into account end users, installation time, maintenance requirements and durability – is not an easy task. To arrive at YOUR best solution to beach access, you need to ask several questions that will help you in your search.



## **What are the mobility functions for this surface?**

Mobi-Mat is manufactured with a three dimensional structure that gives the access pathway the firmness and stability required to create a very comfortable and stable pathway over sand and other unstable surfaces. The three-dimensional structure, covered with strips, enables wheelchair users to maintain control and gives ease of movement when crossing the pathway. In addition at 60 inches wide and meeting ADA requirements, it is the perfect width to turn around easily. Mobi-Mat products present no openings or gaps so that wheels or casters of mobility devices will not get caught in the spaces. In comparison, wooden boardwalks have gaps between each board, so walking sticks or wheelchair casters may become stuck or result in a tripping hazard.

## **What are the maintenance requirements?**

Sand, wind and water can all cause erosion. Mobi-Mat, made of a polyester material, is resistant to all outdoor elements and won't be damaged by salt water, chemicals, UV, sand or wind. In terms of maintenance, the Mobi-Mat RecPath type A2X requires little to no maintenance. Basically, the sand sifts through – thanks to its design – in the majority of applications. If debris such as shells accumulate, they can be quickly clear by one person with a blower or a broom in less than 20 minutes.

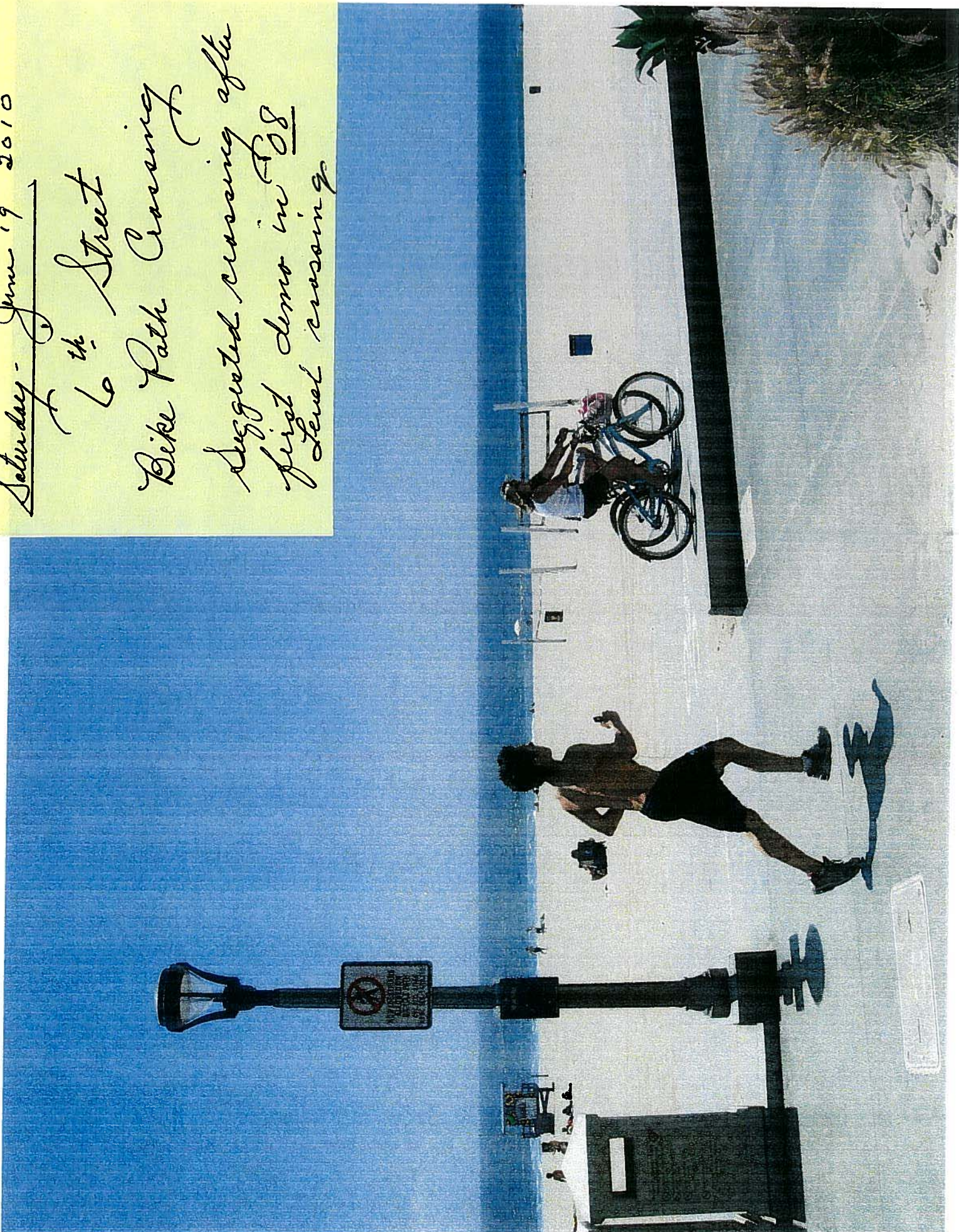
Conversely the maintenance of a wooden boardwalk, in addition to the time needed to clear sand and debris, generally requires maintenance staff to repair or replace costly damaged slats – and unattended damages can result in unnecessary liability!

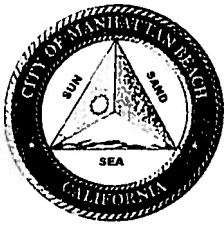
Saturday - June 19 2010

7<sup>th</sup> Street

Dike Path Crossing

Suggested crossing after  
first demo in 08  
level crossing





**THE CITY OF  
MANHATTAN BEACH**

June 8, 2010

**Mitch Ward**  
Mayor

**Richard Montgomery**  
Mayor Pro Tem

**Nicholas Tell, Jr.**  
Councilmember

**Wayne Powell**  
Councilmember

**Portia Cohen**  
Councilmember

**Tim Lilligren**  
City Treasurer

**City Hall**  
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Manhattan Beach  
California, 90266  
310-802-5053  
310-802-5051 (fax)  
www.citymb.info

Honorable Don Knabe  
County of Los Angeles  
500 West Temple Street  
Hall of Administration #822  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisor Knabe;

On behalf of the City of Manhattan Beach I would like to express the City's full support for the request to place a Mobi-Mat or equivalent walking mat to assist persons with limited mobility in accessing the beach. The City will stand by its offer to purchase the Mobi-Mat or similar product and work with County officials to address the issues of location, maintenance and liability.

We look forward to working with your staff to implement accessibility to the beach via the Mobi-Mat or a comparable walking mat which is sure to enhance the lives of many individuals.

Sincerely,

Mitch Ward  
Mayor

cc: Steve Napolitano, Deputy, Supervisor Knabe  
City Council Members  
Richard Thompson, Interim City Manager  
Evelyn Frey



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

822 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
Telephone (213) 974-4444 / FAX (213) 626-6941

DON KNABE  
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT

August 11, 2010

Ms. Evelyn Frey  
228 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Manhattan Beach, California 90266

Dear Ms. Frey:

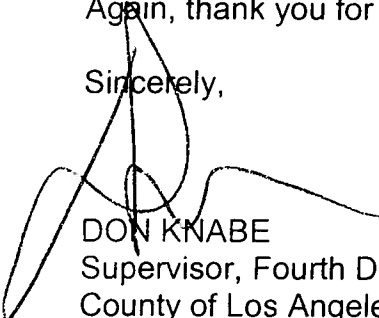
Thank you for your recent letter regarding the status of talks regarding the implementation of a Mobi-Mat walkway on the County owned beach in Manhattan Beach, which we first discussed during your attendance at the Older Americans Recognition Day I hosted at my downtown office.

Since receiving your letter, I have asked the Department of Beaches and Harbors to reconsider this matter with minimal restrictions. While I appreciate the Department's concerns regarding their ability to maintain the beach to the highest of standards with the Mobi-Mat in place, like you, I am confident a compromise can be reached that allows the City's placement of a Mobi-Mat to move forward.

While the final details will still need to be worked out, it remains my understanding that the City will purchase and be responsible for the Mobi-Mat, including indemnifying the County from any claims associated with its use. If this is still the case, I'm confident the County will be able to work through the final details with minimal other conditions so that you will soon see a Mobi-Mat on the sands of Manhattan Beach.

Again, thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Sincerely,



DON KNABE  
Supervisor, Fourth District  
County of Los Angeles

DK:ha

c: The Honorable Mitch Ward, Mayor, Manhattan Beach  
Mr. Santos Kreimann, Director, Department of Beaches and Harbors



*To enrich lives through effective and caring service*



August 26, 2010

**Santos H. Kreiman**  
Director

**Kerry Silverstrom**  
Chief Deputy

Mr. Richard Thompson, Interim City Manager  
Manhattan Beach City Hall  
1400 Highland Ave  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Dear Mr. Thompson:

### **CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH'S PURSUIT OF MOBI-MATS**

In follow-up to your meeting last month with my staff to discuss your City Council's interest in placement of a Mobi-Mat on the beach for improved access for senior citizens, my staff indicated they would summarize the concerns they raised during the meeting with respect to pursuing this option. In sum, although we share your desire to provide better access to the beach for those more physically challenged, we are not able to take on responsibility for the daily upkeep and management of the Mobi-Mat for the following reasons:

- Although Mobi-Mats have proven to be quite effective in certain locations, the nature of sand varies significantly between beaches on the Pacific Ocean coastline. The Los Angeles beach sand is grainy, moves easily, and is far from compact, which would likely cause the Mobi-Mat to slump in the middle and/or become uneven. This situation would render the Mobi-Mat less stable and, thus, unsafe for persons who are less mobile. The sand under the Mobi-Mat, therefore, would need to be leveled daily to properly support the intended foot traffic, which would, in turn, require the removal and replacement of the Mobi-Mat daily.
- From a beach maintenance standpoint, a Mobi-Mat is viewed as a semi-fixed, vertical obstacle to the daily cleaning and sanitizing function, in which large sand sanitizing equipment combs the entire coastline. A Mobi-Mat would have to be removed and replaced daily, so that it would not become dislodged or damaged by the beach-cleaning equipment running over it and, conversely, would not itself damage the equipment.
- Vandalism has been a recurring problem at our beaches and has most recently escalated at Manhattan Beach. Indeed, all of the penal ware (sinks and toilets) were sledge-hammered at the 45th Avenue restroom in July and the walls, both interior and exterior, were spray-painted with graffiti. Because the Mobi-Mat would be a likely candidate for vandalism, e.g., to be lit on fire, cut, spray painted, pulled up, or stolen, it would similarly need to be removed and replaced each day.

Richard Thompson  
August 26, 2010  
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Having raised these concerns does not mean that my answer would be "no" if your City wanted to take responsibility for the Mobi-Mat on the beach. In such an instance, we would require the City to be responsible, at a minimum, for the following:

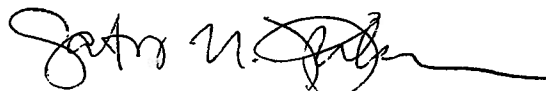
- Purchase of the Mobi-Mat;
- Placement on the beach of the Mobi-Mat every morning after 9:00 a.m., after our beach cleaning operations are complete, and removal each night;
- Liability and indemnity coverage of the County against third parties' bodily harm and/or property damage; and
- Maintenance and replacement of a damaged Mobi-Mat.

Alternatively, you raised the idea of instead constructing a concrete walkway to a view pad further out onto the beach. We believe this is an attractive option we would be more than willing to further discuss with you. Location of the walkway and pad, who will manage the construction, who will handle the maintenance, the requirements for such a walkway and pad (e.g., the strength required to withstand the weight of our beach cleaning equipment) and funding are a few factors that immediately come to mind, about which we can dialogue at your convenience.

Another option already available for improved access is our beach wheelchair program, pursuant to which my Department has two "balloon" tire wheelchairs located on Manhattan Beach, which can be checked out seven days a week by contacting an ocean lifeguard.

As Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, I am always interested in improvements to the condition and accessibility of the beaches we operate along the Los Angeles County coastline. Similarly, I am equally committed to making it possible for beach cities to institute local solutions when it is feasible for me to allow it and the cities are ready to shoulder responsibilities I am unable to manage. Accordingly, I commit to the City that we will be happy to cooperate in whatever approach your local officials choose and stand ready if and when the City is able and wants to proceed. We are willing to commence discussions immediately toward consensus on how best to provide improved access to Manhattan Beach and how to tackle the issues attendant thereto.

Very truly yours



Santos H. Kreimann, Director

SHK:KS:ng

c: Honorable Mayor  
Honorable City Council Members  
Steve Napolitano, Deputy Fourth Supervisorial District  
Richard Gill, Manhattan Beach City Recreation Director