

Downtown Main Street Seat Wall Improvements

The City of Huntington Beach, in partnership with Visit Huntington Beach, proposes enhancements to approximately 15 seat walls along Main Street (Blocks 1–4, between PCH and 6th Street). The project is intended to refresh the streetscape, improve the pedestrian experience, and create a more cohesive, contemporary visitor environment.

Existing Conditions

The existing seat walls are primarily brick, with in-ground planters containing strawberry trees and landscaping. While functional, the current design reflects an older aesthetic and lacks the cohesive, coastal character envisioned for Main Street.

- 15 total seat walls (4 brick, 1 concrete, 10 brick with in-ground planters)
- Existing trees, landscaping, and irrigation will remain protected
- No electrical connections currently exist (tree uplighting not feasible)
- Skate deterrents are already in place
- Structural walls behind the brick veneer are assumed to be concrete and will remain
- Seatwall heights range from approximately 18" to 23"

Proposed Improvements

The proposed design lightens the existing brick with a coastal limewash blue finish to better reflect Huntington Beach's ocean-oriented identity. This shift to a softer coastal palette improves visual cohesion with surrounding elements and enhances the character of Main Street.

Paired with sand-toned caps, the updated palette introduces a lighter, more contemporary aesthetic that feels open, inviting, and aligned with a beach environment, replacing the heavier, more traditional brick look.

To maximize cost-effectiveness and durability, the project retains the existing brick base, applies a breathable limewash finish, and introduces precast concrete caps. This approach preserves existing structures and landscaping while delivering a clean, cohesive upgrade.

Key Features

- Seatwalls to feature a coastal limewash blue finish applied to existing brick, allowing the natural texture to remain visible while creating a softer, beach-oriented aesthetic

- Decorative precast concrete caps in a sand-colored finish, with options including standard sand, sand with shell aggregate, or sand with seaglass accents; all caps sealed with a heavy-duty protective coating
- HB logo inserts incorporated at select locations using durable, integrated materials to provide subtle branding and reinforce downtown identity
- Bench back walls raised approximately 6 inches above seat height, with adjustments around existing trees as needed
- Raised concrete seat dividers with integrated skateboard deterrents to discourage grinding and extend the life of seating surfaces
- Selective height increases along portions of the seat wall to create a stronger streetscape rhythm while minimizing visual mass
- Light refresh of adjacent planting areas, with all existing trees preserved
- Future electrical connections to be evaluated; if added, access could be achieved by removing adjacent pavers and trenching beneath the wall into the tree wells

Stakeholder Coordination

Design concepts have been presented to key stakeholders, including the Visit Huntington Beach Executive Committee, the Downtown Huntington Beach Business Improvement District Board, the Downtown & Beachfront Ad Hoc Council Committee, and the Economic Development Committee for input and feedback.

Based on coordination with Public Works and consideration of long-term maintenance in a high-traffic environment, the recommended approach retains the existing brick base while introducing durable finishes and materials. This strategy balances cost-effectiveness, durability, and design quality while achieving a cohesive and updated streetscape.