

INSPECTION AND ANALYSIS  
FOR THE  
ROMAR TOWER  
CONDOMINIUM

Orange Beach, Alabama



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Prepared By:  
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## ***Introduction***

After our on-site inspections, Cornerstone Facilities Engineering, Inc. wishes to document our analysis on the condition of your building and the systems of the common elements that must be maintained. For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the Owners Association is beginning with no money in any of the accounts for capital reserve and replacement as of January 1, 2008. This allows you to judge where you are now versus our recommendations.

The overall condition of the Romar Tower's main building and associated elements is good. We find that the structural systems and building components are capable of being properly maintained. At the time of this submittal, Cornerstone Facilities Engineering concludes the points noted in the listing of immediate concern do not jeopardize the proper operations and maintainability of the building.

Without undertaking destructive testing, but based on our visual inspection of the building, our conclusion is that the basic design and construction of the building provides for adequate structural capacity. There were some items that will require periodic maintenance but this is to be expected. The required maintenance tasks will be discussed in the report. Based on our observations, the original construction followed the Standard Building Code in terms of structural, mechanical and electrical systems. Cornerstone Facilities Engineering Inc. does not recommend any major structural repair or reinforcement projects at this point.

The main concerns in maintaining the common elements at a property such as yours are as follows:

- Waterproofing Integrity
- Mechanical Systems
- Common Electrical Systems
- Architectural Items

**‘Waterproofing Integrity’** includes keeping the roof and exterior walls in proper condition to withstand the challenging conditions that exist for buildings on the Gulf Coast. Experience on structures in this area show that exterior wall coatings need maintenance every 7 to 10 years in order to assure sealants and other features are in good repair. Roofs are subject to severe challenge and need to be maintained and/or replaced as they age and weather.

**‘Mechanical Systems’** include elevators, common area heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC), swimming pool and equipment, plumbing and water booster pumps. This category of items is essential to the use of the building and proper maintenance is preferable to repair of failed items since failed items lead to generally serious disruptions to Owners and guests.

**‘Common Electrical Systems’** for the building involve the primary electric power distribution equipment, fire alarms and exterior lighting. Such systems generally have long useful lives. However, it has been shown that as such equipment reaches the end of its useful operating life; the passage of time has caused technology changes to the extent that often spare parts are not available and/or direct replacement is not permitted because of changes beyond the control of the Owners (Code changes, different operating configurations, etc.) It is often necessary then to replace entire components instead of repairing a single part for such systems.

**‘Architectural Items’** involve furnishings, floor coverings, common area doors, interior painting and finishes of common areas and specific features such as the dune walkovers. The exterior of the building is also an appearance function but this is usually addressed when the waterproofing element is addressed. The care and budgeting of the appearance items usually receives ample attention and is the one area that most Owners’ Associations can find suitable common agreement on and plan accordingly. Therefore, this report will only address items where periodic maintenance is anticipated, and will not address items such office equipment, furniture and landscaping.

Based on the conditions found at the Romar Tower Condominium, Cornerstone Facilities Engineering has compiled a draft, Capital Reserve and Replacement spreadsheet to identify suggested funding levels for major items. The basis of the data presented contains the following assumptions:

- The Capital Reserve and Replacement fund begins with a zero balance starting January 1, 2008. Of course we are aware that you have some level of funding but we feel that by starting with a zero funding level, it is easier to compare your current situation to the recommendations presented.
- The condition of the buildings and common elements at the time of the inspection and the information available from visual inspection and analysis of records, and discussions with the manager and the maintenance staff.
- The Owners Association desires to keep the building and grounds properly maintained.
- The Owners Association desires to avoid special assessments.
- Regular maintenance items (landscape maintenance, cleaning of the interior, pool cleaning and chemicals, etc.) are not included in the budgeting of the Capital Reserve and Replacement fund.

## ***Immediate Concerns***

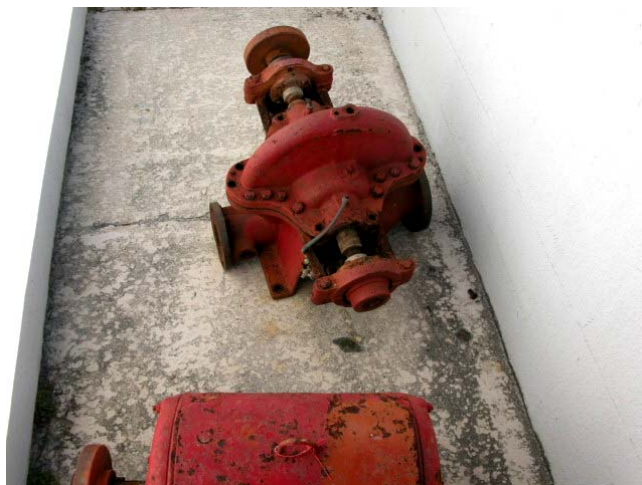
There were two items that Cornerstone Facilities Engineering wishes to bring to the Owners attention.

### Abandoned Fire Pump Items

It was noted that a new fire pump had recently been installed. While the new installation complies with the needs of the facility and seems properly installed, the old system was left abandoned around the gate house – pump building. The photographs below show the condition found on the date of the inspections.



Old fire pump controller.



Old fire pump and motor.

These items constitute a safety hazard especially for children who may get cut and/or crushed in attempting to play with these large metal objects. They should be removed as soon as possible.

### Domestic Water Pump

This unit was supplying adequate pressure to the building on the day of the inspections. However, an unusual noise was being emitted from the casing. This may indicate a worn impellor on the pump. This cavitation may be the warning for an impellor failure in the near future. Cornerstone Facilities Engineering suggests that a pump service company inspect the pump's impellor in case it needs to be replaced. Doing so now may prevent an emergency call if the failure occurs during the peak rental season.

## ***Remarks on Major Items***

The following remarks are in the order of items shown on the attached spreadsheet. The recommendations for budgets include the expenditure of funds on projects in future years. These expenditures are discussed to provide a schedule based on the conditions found during the inspection. The timing and extent of some of these projects are subject to modifications, if the Board so desires. However, the initial presentation here is based on maintaining an attractive and fully functional building and systems and avoiding special assessments. Cornerstone Engineering believes there is nothing inherently wrong with using special assessments to generate funds for large projects. However, we feel that by predicting the magnitude of funding required to keep an adequate capital reserve budget in the view of the Board of Directors and the Owners, everyone can be knowledgeable on the likely costs over time. This is how we find that most of our industrial clients forecast for their production facilities, and we suggest it as a means of reflection for all condominium associations also.

### Notes on Understanding the Spreadsheet

The information on the attached spreadsheet is based on the maintenance required to keep the Romar Tower Condominium operational. You will note that there are no columns reading "Expected Useful Life" or terms that would construe some item is going to expire at a particular date. Rather, the listing shows funds that our engineering experience predicts will be needed so that the required capital maintenance can be done when needed without having to call for a special assessment from the Owners. The column "Maximum Reserves" suggests the amount of money that is considered ample to address the needs of the item in that row.

Money will flow into and out of these accounts. For example in five years a pump for the pool filter system may fail. The account row "Pool Equipment" would be

## Capital Reserve and Replacement Fund Romar Tower Condominium

RESERVE CATEGORY	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Maximum Reserves	Remarks
<b>SITE WORK</b>							
Stormwater System & Erosion Control	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 3,200	1
Paving	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$24,000	2
<b>WEATHERPROOFING</b>							
Exterior Sealing & Painting	\$ 31,200	\$ 31,200	\$ 31,200	\$ 15,580	\$ 15,580	\$ 93,500	3
Roofing, Main - Repair and Replacement	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600	\$ 75,000	4
Roofing, Metal - Repair and Replacement	\$ 4,600	\$ 4,600	\$ 4,600	\$ 4,600	\$ 4,600	\$ 23,000	4
<b>ARCHITECTURAL</b>							
Balcony & Common Area Concrete	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 7,000	5
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>							
Plumbing Piping & Equipment	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 6,000	6
Electrical Distribution Equipment	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 30,000	7
Exterior Lighting	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 8,000	8
Pool & Equipment	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250	\$ 9,000	9
Elevator	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 40,000	10
Beach Access Structure & Gazebo	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 4,000	11
Emergency Systems	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 12,000	12
Common Area Doors	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 3,000	13
<b>TOTALS</b>	\$ 52,650	\$ 52,650	\$ 52,650	\$ 37,030	\$ 37,030	\$ 337,700	

the source to repair this unit. Similarly, if the potable water back flow preventer needs rebuilding in 2010, and reserves are accrued in the “Plumbing Piping & Equipment” fund, then the money required to rebuild this essential device will be on-hand.

This method is used by Cornerstone Engineering because so many things at condominiums simply do not fail completely, and then has to be completely replaced. Rather, the real-world scenario is that these systems must be regularly maintained, and if they are, then their life can be extended for many years. The remarks below describe the requirements for each category of item noted on the spreadsheet.

1. **Stormwater System** – The original design of the stormwater system is sound. We note that the system will need to be cleaned of debris and sand cleared, and therefore, money should be accumulated to perform this function when required. Towards this end, a minor, \$200 per year reserve to address drainage and erosion issues should they occur. The maximum reserve recommended for this account is \$3,200.
  
2. **Paving** – The current drives and parking paving in general are in good to fair condition. The spreadsheet provides for funding of a project in the future to upgrade asphalt paving conditions and to correct minor, distressed areas and to reseal the asphalt to protect it from oils and water intrusion and eventually provide for an overlay of the asphalt. The slopes and breaks in the paving appear to be adequate for moving stormwater away from pedestrian ways.



Asphalt paving in parking area.

- 3. Exterior Sealing & Painting** – The exterior of the Romar Tower Condominium is all stucco application over concrete and sheathing. The system on the building's exterior walls and other surfaces are in relatively good condition. The building was last recoated in approximately 1998 with elastomeric products. The coatings have held up very well but will need to be refreshed in a few years in order to continue to provide adequate weather protection for the structure. It is suggested that recaulking and coating (painting) the building be planned for the year 2010. The spreadsheet is based on the year 2010 project plan and a total project budget of \$93,500. After that project, the building's exterior should be resealed every seven to ten years. This type of program will also result in providing an attractive appearance that is an important part in maintaining the value of the property.

The project planned for 2010 would have the following tasks associated with it:

- Pressure washing each building's exterior to remove salt and dirt that has accumulated in the stucco exterior.

- Inspect the caulk at the perimeter of the sliding glass doors and remove damaged sections. Install new caulk around the doors' perimeters as required.
- Priming the exterior walls with a base coat for adhesion purposes and then applying a 12-mil coating of elastomeric paint to all exterior walls.
- Apply one coat of acrylic latex paint to balcony ceilings, walkway ceilings and other surfaces that do not need waterproofing in terms of keeping the water out of the interior of the condominiums.
- Paint doors and trim as required.

The above program would provide the Owners with a 7-year to 10-year warranty (depending on the specification selected) on the integrity of the exterior waterproofing system. The budget noted above will provide for all materials and labor required based on costs of similar projects completed in the area in the past few years. After the above-recommended waterproofing program has been completed, then the buildings will need to be recoated with elastomeric paint approximately every seven to ten years.

4. **Roofing** – Main Roof: The single-ply, PVC roofing is in good condition. It was installed in 2005. It is our estimate, that the existing roof will provide 15 to 20 years of service before the system requires attention. The allocation of reserve funds to the roofing account has been based on beginning to accumulate funds for the roof repairs when they become necessary. The parapet details of the buildings, as well as the through roof details, appear to be of good quality and correctly installed. The suggested reserves will allow for accumulation of funds to address roof replacement when it becomes needed.

Metal Roofing at Entry: The metal roofing here is not in as good of a condition as the main roof. The photographs below show some of the distress.



Corrosion damage at roof corner.



Corrosion of fastener that holds metal panel in-place.

It is suggested a fund be started to fund the replacement of the roofing. Based on the size of the roof this project will likely cost \$23,000. The current roof can be expected to last approximately another five years. The funding shown provides for the cost of this future project.

- 6. Walks, Balcony and Upper Walkway Concrete** – The concrete for the balconies and walkways are in good structural condition. There are signs that the reinforcement has been impacted by water intrusion over the years. Water

intrusion carries sodium chloride (salt) into the concrete and this in turn corrodes the reinforcing bars (rebar) that are in the concrete. The photograph below shows one area where this has occurred.



**Rust spot forming on the concrete of a balcony.**

The cost to correct those items has been estimated and shown on the spreadsheet. It is suggested the work be done in conjunction with the 2013 exterior coating and waterproofing project.

7. **Plumbing Piping** – There are usually only minor repairs to be performed on plumbing piping. This reserve however, also covers repairs that will be required for the domestic water booster pump system that serves the building. The pump and its motor will require some repair as they age.
8. **Electrical Distribution Equipment** – The electrical distribution system meets the requirements of the National Electrical Code and no repairs are needed at the time of the inspection. The major concern of electrical switches and breakers in this region is corrosion. This report recommends that a reserve budget be established for rebuilding/cleaning panels that may require rebuilding/cleaning in the future to remove corrosion deposits.
9. **Exterior Lighting** – While the property has sufficient light fixtures to illuminate walkways, parking areas and other pedestrian spaces, there will be

maintenance requirements as fixtures need rebuilding and/or conductor wiring needs repair. The report recommends a budget for addressing these needs as they occur.

- 10. Pool and Spa Area and Equipment** - The pool was recently installed and is in very good condition. All mechanical systems are of first quality and should be capable of being maintained with normal maintenance. The budget shown should accumulate funds for upkeep of the pool and its related equipment. This fund will also be the source for refinishing the interior of the pool which will be required about every 10 years.



Pool and deck area.

- 11. Elevator** – While the elevator is in relatively good repair, and relatively recently refurbished (year 2000) a fund should be considered for the next renovation of the system . The spreadsheet presumes that the current system will operate normally. The costs shown are for revising the interior of the cab every ten years, and then replacing the drive years. These funds are in excess of the costs to provide the on-going maintenance agreement with the elevator vendor. It was noted that during the time of the inspection the floor of the elevator cab was in the process of being replaced.

**12. Beach Access Structure & Gazebo** – The beach access structure is in good condition and has no current problems. A fund for regular repair of the structure should be considered to keep the walk in good repair and safe for use. Also this fund is to be used for maintenance of the gazebo.



**Beach Access & Gazebo**

**13. Emergency Systems** – The standpipes, fire alarm, and emergency electrical systems were found to be in generally good condition. The funds shown are to provide regular, preventive maintenance and to accrue funds for the eventual replacement of the fire alarm system, maintenance to the fire sprinkler controls and replacement of emergency light fixtures.

**14. Common Area Doors, Walks, and other Maintenance Items** – There are numerous doors that are maintained by the Association. The stairwell doors, maintenance areas and similar items also need repair on an on-going basis. The funding shown provides for the repair of these areas as needed. The funds shown provide for on-going maintenance for the steel doors and other high maintenance exterior items. The Owners may elect to replace these doors in high corrosion areas with fiberglass doors.

## **Summary**

On the attached spreadsheet, the report calculates the “maximum reserve” total to be \$337,700. This definition of this category is the amount in the account at which point no added contributions need to be made in order to assure the correct continued maintenance for the property. Again, for the purpose of discussion this report presumes there to be no money in any reserve accounts as of January 1, 2008. Cornerstone Facilities Engineering, based on the current status of the Romar Tower Condominium, would recommend an annual contribution to the capital maintenance fund of \$52,650 per year for the next three years (2008, 2009 and 2010) as being adequate to fully fund the capital reserves for the building. This amount will provide sufficient funding of all probable work required including recoating (repainting) the building in year 2010. After that project the amount for having fully funded reserves would then reduce to \$37,030 per year. It is important to note that this recommendation is based on two assumptions that are not necessarily true:

- The capital reserve fund has zero dollars in it on January 1, 2008
- That it is the intent of the Owners to avoid special assessments for large projects.

The use of special assessments can obviously reduce the goal for capital repair fund accumulation. In the real world, money is flowing both into and out of accounts, so most Owner Associations never reach their maximum reserve amounts. The purpose of establishing a “snap-shot” such as this report provides is so that Owners can have information from the Board of Directors that states the anticipated level of capital maintenance required to keep the property in sound and usable condition. For the Romar Tower Condominium, based on the current status of the property, Cornerstone Facilities Engineering finds that the forecasts noted herein provides for a capital reserve that will adequately address the needs of the property.

Cornerstone Facilities Engineering finds the Romar Towers Condominium to be a structurally sound property with solid mechanical and electrical systems. There are some items that need to be addressed in the upcoming years, and this report attempts to define those items and estimate a budget for them. It is recommended the Board review the current Capital Reserve and Replacement Fund, and compare that to the suggested funding noted on the attached spreadsheet. Remember the spreadsheet prepared by Cornerstone Facilities Engineering does not address items such as furniture or new project work that the Board may wish consider.

Cornerstone Engineering, Inc. appreciates this opportunity to serve the Owners of the Romar Towers Condominium with this inspection and overview. We would be pleased to answer any questions or investigate any other specific matters the Board desires. As time passes, we would hope to be of service in the specifying and bidding of future, major repairs at your property. Again, we hope the information in this report is of value to the Board in developing a long-term strategy for maintaining the value of the property.