

DRAFT MASTER  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

(UPD #83356-EIR-351; SCH #99031037)

for the proposed

NORTH EMBARCADERO  
ALLIANCE VISIONARY PLAN

**Lead Agency**

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED PORT DISTRICT  
3165 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92112

**in conjunction with**

CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
CENTRE CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
U.S. NAVY

**Environmental Consultant**

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December 1999



# Port of San Diego

and Lindbergh Field Air Terminal

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December 10, 1999

**SUBJECT:** Transmittal of Draft Master EIR for Public Review

**PROJECT TITLE:** "NORTH EMBARCADERO VISIONARY PLAN"  
City of San Diego, California (UPD #83356-EIR-351; SCH #99031037)

**PUBLIC REVIEW BEGINS:** December 13, 1999

**PUBLIC REVIEW ENDS:** January 26, 2000

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Should you need additional information, please contact the District's Environmental Review Department at (619) 686-6283.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Mailander".

MELISSA A. MAILANDER  
Environmental Review Coordinator

Enc: Draft Negative Declaration(s)

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- Appendix I      Noise Impact Analysis  
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- Appendix J      Midway Geotechnical Evaluation  
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# 1 Executive Summary

This Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) has been prepared to evaluate environmental impacts associated with implementing the North Embarcadero Alliance Visionary Plan. In 1997, a multiple-jurisdiction alliance consisting of the San Diego Unified Port District, the City of San Diego, Centre City Development Corporation, the County of San Diego and the United States Navy, was formed to create a unified vision for future development in North Embarcadero. The culmination of that effort resulted in the North Embarcadero Alliance Visionary Plan, which was endorsed by the five-Alliance members in December 1998. This MEIR evaluates, on a programmatic level, impacts associated with implementation of the Visionary Plan, as well as providing project-specific analysis for subsequent projects currently proposed under the Visionary Plan.

At the most general level, the purpose of this MEIR is to fully disclose information on a wide variety of technical issues to describe the environmental impacts of the proposed project, and opportunities to minimize significant impacts through mitigation measures and reasonable alternatives, according to the technical mandates of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The MEIR provides this information for the public and policy makers, so they may make informed policy decisions. On a more specific level, a MEIR is a type of first-tier EIR that is used to streamline the CEQA process for subsequent projects that are proposed under a larger programmatic action, in this case the Visionary Plan. To the extent that the subsequent projects are within the scope of the MEIR and the MEIR sets forth adequate mitigation for each subsequent project in accordance with the project-specific requirements of CEQA, future environmental review may be substantially reduced.

This MEIR is lengthy, given the large amount of information on potential impacts, mitigation measures and alternatives for the complex program of development and public improvements under consideration. We have, therefore, worked diligently to make this Executive Summary brief and readable. The text of this summary is followed by a table that summarizes impacts, mitigation measures and alternatives for the proposed Visionary Plan and the four related subsequent projects.

We welcome your comments and look forward to your participation at the community workshops and at the Board of Port Commissioners MEIR Certification hearings that will be held by the Alliance member agencies. If you received this EIR through the mail, notices of these events will be mailed to you. Otherwise, please contact the Port of San Diego to have your name added to the mailing list. Notices of these meetings will also be published in the local newspaper.

## 1.1 PROJECT AREA AND HISTORY

Historically, the project area has undergone various stages of growth and development since the late 1880s. Residential use of the northern portion of the Plan area in the 1880s preceded active commercial development, which did not begin until after 1900. Residential use continued to increase as the central business district developed and fishing activities along the waterfront gained importance.

The area west of Pacific Highway was not fully developed until 1916 and had been created through dredge and fill activities. A number of canneries and related wharves were constructed along the bayshore in the early part of this century in the area west of Pacific Highway between Laurel Street and Hawthorn Street, in the northern part of the Plan area, and remained in operation until approximately 1914. In 1921, there were several steel and machinery warehouses and a furniture manufacturing plant. In the late 1930s, the tidelands south of Laurel Street and west of Pacific Highway were filled to create additional land area.

Today, Solar Turbines, Inc., occupies this fill area. Fill and a pier replaced the area formerly devoted to canneries and the pier became a major location for the San Diego based commercial fishing fleet. Prior to the 1950s, this northern portion of the Plan area included several gas stations, a health center, and the County Administration building with the associated parking lots.

In the 1950's, the southern portion of the Plan area contained a municipal warehouse and dock, which was located at the foot of Broadway. The Spreckels commercial dock and coal bunker operated at the foot of F Street. The presence of a Navy landing, water taxi depot, and a baseball field on Lane Field represent major recreational uses within the southern portion of the Plan area during the mid- to late 1950s. By 1962, land uses in this area included a warehouse used by Ryan Aeronautical Company; San Diego Harbor Department facilities, including a truck and equipment yard; a municipal warehouse used for storing cotton; and, several blocks occupied by the U.S. Naval Reserve. Numerous spur tracks extended from the main railroad track to bayshore facilities, which included the Broadway Pier and warehouse, the B Street Pier, and a U.S. Navy pier.

The nature of land uses in the north end of the Plan area has changed in recent years to include the introduction of several office buildings, hotels, and an increase in the number of parking lots, and automobile sales and rental sites. The area still contains numerous, small retail and commercial buildings, restaurants, and a number of older residential units. Land uses in the southern portion of the Plan area has changed with the presence of hotels, restaurants, the floating Maritime Museum vessels, parking lots, and harbor excursion facilities. The U.S. Navy continues to occupy a large portion of land used by the 11<sup>th</sup> Naval District Headquarters Commander Naval Base, San Diego, which includes a pier and a major supply depot.