

**Meeting notes from August 18, 2010 San Diego Unified  
Port District's public meeting on plans For the North  
Embarcadero Visionary Plan phase 1 project**

About 100 people showed up at the B St. Pier cruise ship terminal for the first of four meetings.

We were welcomed by a consultant from Katz & Associates who acted as meeting facilitator. He used a technique where after the Port staff and consultants gave presentations, he circulated among the audience taking questions and comments. He noted that no decisions would be made at the evening, that Port staff was there to present ideas to the public and get their feedback.

Irene McCormick, Port Assistant VP over public relations, communications and land use planning started of the presentations. She noted that downtown waterfront plans have been put forward for over 100 years, and that the North Embarcadero Visionary Plan (NEVP) has been in development for more than 12 years.

She noted that CCDC has \$28 million in its current budget to help pay for NEVP phase 1, which will remain available through June of 2011. She talked about potentially widening the proposed esplanade west of Harbor Drive from 103' to 135' by narrowing Harbor Drive.

She noted that the Port is holding these meetings because the California Coastal Commission (CCC) has twice rejected an earlier NEVP phase 1 proposal put forward earlier by the Port. She said the Port wants the publics help developing a new NEVP phase 1 plan that will be more acceptable to the CCC. She noted that CCC appellants have called for more work to be done on the NEVP phase 1 plan to restore public parkland promised for the foot of Broadway.

She listed near term and longer term issues Port staff is currently working on:

**Short term:**

- Tweak the proposed Broadway/Harbor Drive intersection design,
- Demolish the existing building on Navy Pier to make way to park development on the pier,
- Fund a new waterfront shuttle service,
- Amend the scope of the Port Master Plan Amendment (PMPA) process to consider the development of a new setback park along the east side of Harbor Drive.

**Longer term:**

- Design and develop low cost visitor accommodations along the waterfront,
- Design and build a new parking garage on the block east of Harbor Drive between Hawthorne and Grape St.
- Identify and build 2.5 acres of new park space along the North Embarcadero
- Consider construction of a 150' wide linear park east of Harbor Drive. (Later in the process, the Port's real estate director noted that the new linear park would be as wide as the distance from Harbor Drive to the center of the west wall of the existing County Administration Center [CAC] building, not just 150').
- Look at narrowing Harbor Drive to 2-3 lanes to create more waterside public space,
- Look at closing portions of Harbor Drive along the north embarcadero,
- Look at closing Broadway between Pacific Highway and Harbor Drive to create more public space.

She said that the Port's consultants would discuss potential change in the phase 1 plan, then there would be a separate discussion of the idea of a new public park on the west side of the Lane Field project.

Mark Johnson of the Civitas consulting firm then discussed an overhead photo of the north embarcadero showing what a 150' setback park would look like stretching from the CAC to Broadway and what Harbor Drive might look like if it were narrowed to 2-3 lanes. His presentation also included renderings of new structures along the embarcadero. he said that Port staff and its consultants have heard that the public wants less paving and more public green space along the embarcadero.

Johnson said that one option being considered would be to remove some of the proposed trees around the intersection of Broadway and Harbor Drive to open up views, and adding some patches of lawn to the esplanade on either side of the intersection. He said another option being discussed included adding public fountains back into the NEVP phase 1 plan, which had been removed earlier in the design process. He noted that if Harbor Drive were narrowed to 3 lanes, they could widen the bayside esplanade by 24', to about 135' overall.

### **Audience Questions and Responses**

Jim Frost asked if the public could see an overhead photo or drawings showing the 100 yard wide security zones around each ship docked at the Broadway and B St Piers required by federal homeland security regulations. McCormick and Johnson said that no such photos or drawings were available, but noted that there will be fencing and gates that will prevent pedestrians from accessing the

Broadway Pier when ships are docked there. McCormick noted that the new cruise ship terminal is located 400' from Harbor Drive on Broadway Pier.

One audience member asked about the proposal to create new public park space on the west end of the Lane Field hotels project site, and asked how that would affect the intersection of Broadway and Harbor drive, and was told that that concept would be discussed later in the program.

An audience member asked about the ugly utility equipment located just off Harbor Drive on the Broadway Pier. Would that be removed later? She was told no, that that equipment, along with new electrical equipment needed for the port's shore powering project to serve cruise ships on the B St. pier, would remain.

The Port's real estate director said that pedestrians will be allowed to walk up and down the esplanade along the bulkhead while ships are tied up at the two piers.

When asked again about the landside exclusionary zones required under federal homeland security rules, McCormick indicated that since the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has not required the Port to enforce those security zones around the B St. cruise ship terminal in the past, Port staff doesn't expect that it will be required to enforce the rules around ships docking at the Broadway Pier. She said that the Port has not negotiated a new port security plan with DHS yet and said that such plans are typically tailored to the needs of each individual port.

When asked if the Port expects the CCC to approve the minor modifications outlined by Johnson in his presentation, McCormick said yes, as long as the port promises to identify another 2.5 acres of new park space along the north embarcadero in phase 2 of the NEVP planning process.

When asked if the Port expects to meet the deadline to get CCDC funding, she said that they believed they could as long as any new NEVP phase 1 plan Coastal Development Permit (CDP) is not appealed to the CCC.

She noted that narrowing Harbor Drive to 3 lanes along the north embarcadero could create an additional .5 acres of new public space west of the road. Mark Johnson said that narrowing or closing Harbor Drive will require a new traffic and parking study to be conducted.

In response to another question, Johnson said that they have not looked at what closing or narrowing the road would mean for the embarcadero to the north or south of the phase 1 study area. He said that a narrower Harbor Drive might be one way or two ways. He said that accommodating cruise ships may require a stacking lane to be kept on the west side of Harbor Drive.

One audience member noted that what Johnson had described in his presentation were 3 minor variations on the existing phase 1 plan, not new plans. He asked that the Port staff bring back more real plans for the public to review and comment on.

One audience member asked if a new bandstand for the Symphony Pops could be built along the embarcadero. McCormick noted that the Pops has played in the past on Navy Pier, and that alternative locations for a new bandstand would be looked at in the planning process.

She said that additional public meetings on NEVP phase 1 will be held after the new traffic study has been completed.

One audience member asked if the B St. Pier cruise ship terminal was going to be remodeled? She said yes, that would be looked at as part of the NEVP phase 2 planning process. She noted that currently, traffic doesn't move well while cruise ships are in port, and that new traffic patterns would need to be developed as part of that effort.

An audience member asked if the Port has canceled the proposed Broadway Landing Park? He said that the Port Master Plan calls for more than 20 acres of public space along the north embarcadero, and now Port staff is offering only 2.5 acres of new park space.

Irene McCormick denied knowing anything about any proposed Broadway Landing Park, saying she didn't know what that term referred to.

Port planning manager John Helmer then claimed that the Broadway Landing Park, also known as the oval park, was just a preliminary concept which had been considered then dropped by the port, and claimed that the Broadway Landing Park (and the rest of the original NEVP plan) was not part of the Port Master Plan (**Note: This bogus claim was refuted before the Coastal Commission in February and April**). He said he is unaware of any 20 acre park space requirements in the PMP.

One audience member asked if the Port would consider using trees along the esplanade other than Jacaranda, noting their invasive root systems. Mark Johnson told her no, that the Jacaranda is the city's official tree.

One audience member asked why the CCDC money goes away in June of next year. McCormick noted that the state has been raiding local redevelopment agency funds, and that those funds may also be at risk.

One audience member asked where the public will be able to park along the north embarcadero when all the work has been done? Another asked how the

Port proposes to deal with the homeless along the waterfront? Another suggested creating separate bike and pedestrian lanes along the esplanade.

One audience member suggested adding more water features along the bayfront, while another suggested that new fountains use salt water instead of potable water.

Another said that he was in favor of making the esplanade as wide as possible, but that Port staff has to stop looking at each section of the north embarcadero piecemeal and take a holistic view of the whole project instead.

One audience member asked how the Port plans to replace the Broadway Landing Park? He said that the Port has blocked the foot of Broadway with an ugly, temporary looking new cruise ship terminal structure on the Broadway Pier. He said you can't replace a promised grand park at the foot of Broadway with a few small patches of grass sprinkled along the bayfront. He said the Port has to revisit the idea of placing a cruise ship terminal on Broadway Pier and put the Broadway Landing Park required by the PMP back into the NEVP phase 1 plan. He said that the NEVP calls for three public piers (Broadway, Navy Pier Park and the new curvilinear park north of the CAC), with new public parks running along the embarcadero.

Another audience member seconded those concerns, saying the Port should adhere to the original NEVP plan and the existing PMP. She said the Port is turning the foot of Broadway into an intersection to accommodate a not very attractive building on Broadway Pier. She said she supports the narrowing of Harbor Drive to 3 lanes, saying it is called for in the original NEVP and the PMP. She said that the proposed esplanade buildings and kiosks should be located further off the water than is currently envisioned. She asked that Port staff present the proposal to create new park space on the Lane Field site instead of putting it off, since what happens on that site will affect what happens on the rest of the north embarcadero.

An audience member suggested that the Port look closely at the alternative of moving the cruise ships off the north embarcadero and instead berthing them at the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal (TAMT) site. He said that moving the cruise ships could create up to 12 acres of public space on the existing Broadway and B St. Piers, and that moving the new terminal to TAMT would allow it to accommodate up to three large cruise ships there, instead of one small one at the Broadway Pier. He noted that moving the cruise ships might help resolve existing lawsuits the Port is facing.

Several other audience members supported the idea of narrowing Harbor Drive to create more public space along the esplanade.

One called for the creation of more performing art venues and restaurants along the north embarcadero.

One asked if the Port planned to make the NEVP a green project and asked if the Port had consulted with the US Green Building Council about the project.

Another audience member said the Port is creating a future traffic and parking nightmare along the north embarcadero.

One audience member said that the original NEVP calls for a very large public space west of the CAC, which should be retained.

**Port Staff then discussed the proposal to create new park space on the Lane Field site.**

The Port's real estate director said that the Lane Field Park proposal was in addition to the tweaks outlined by Civitas. She said that the Lane Field Developer has offered to redesign their existing project design to free up space on the west half of the site for public space. She outlined the existing project design, noting that the project has already been approved by the CCC. She said that it was up to Lane Field, not the port, if it wants to make any changes to its designs.

**Q & A**

An audience member asked how tall the hotels on Lane Field will be? The port planning manager said 175' and 235' tall. He said that LF project parking would not be used to accommodate cruise ship passengers, since the Port is planning on having them park in a more remote location.

One member asked if the NEVP Joint Powers Authority Board was going to be given a chance to review and comment on plans the Port is putting forward for the north embarcadero. He was told that Port staff may give the JPA board an update at its September meeting, and will take the updated plan back to the JPA board for approval after the Port Board has approved a new phase 1 CDP.

One audience member said that if Lane Field can't obtain financing for new hotels, why not turn the whole site into a new public park?

One member asked if the Lane Field Park concept involves the Port buying back the lease for the 1220 Pacific Highway parcel from the Navy. A port staff member said yes, that is included in the concept.

An audience member asked if comments received at this meeting would be posted to the Port's website? McCormick said yes.

Another member asked if further public meetings will be held by the port after the Lane Field project redesign and the new traffic study have been completed? McCormick said yes, they would be.

An audience member asked about the new Citizens' Advisory Committee. McCormick said that the new CAC would support the Port's NEVP phase 2 planning effort. She said details haven't been worked out yet on the composition, size and role of the new group.

The meeting let out around 8 pm.

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