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Jason H. Giffen, Assistant Vice President
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San Diego Unified Port District
3165 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

February 20, 2019

RE: REVIEW OF CIVITAS WORK FOR THE PORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE | NORTH EMBARCADERO

Dear Jason and Lesley,

In response to your request, I have reviewed the work being prepared by Civitas related to the PMPU for the North Embarcadero. My work process included an introductory background phone call with Scott Jordan, reviews of the current material, background material from my files, two iterations of written comments to Mr. Jordan, and this letter. Please note that some of my comments are editorial in regard to the overall effort to plan and design the North Embarcadero.

As you know, substantial planning efforts for this most important place in San Diego have been underway for decades. I find that Civitas has managed to sort through the vast amount of previous work and bring coherence to a story about how to make the San Diego North Embarcadero a great place for people, while supporting a working waterfront. The work carefully illustrates the various alternatives that have been proposed to date and how the Port and Civitas have reached out to the community to gain insight and direction. Civitas has taken that material and synthesized it into a series of well-conceived recommendations.

I am most impressed to see a reorientation of priorities from vehicular space to recreation open space. The base assumption for design of the North Embarcadero has always been world class quality yet finding additional quantity of open space has been elusive. The focus on Mobility Hubs to provide parking within a 5-10 minute walk to the water rather than along Harbor Drive is a game changer. In this age of ever improving transit modes and awareness of the health benefits of walking, it makes no sense to give away precious waterfront land to vehicular space. An expanded waterfront esplanade for people is to be applauded and supported.

The draft policy concepts are the most important part of this work. Civitas has succinctly outlined the concepts and diagrams, while also showing clear, easy to comprehend visualizations of what might be. Given the public's predilection to suspect that design work is presented with forgone conclusions, I was apprehensive at first when shown the single visualizations of Navy Pier and the County waterfront. I encouraged Civitas to prepare additional visualizations of alternatives to show a range of possibilities. The presentation now has a series of alternative imaginations so as to offer inspiration not solutions. Time for that will follow.

In closing, I determined the best process for me was to give my comments directly to Civitas and assess the response against my background knowledge. These comments were some factual corrections, organization of the presentation, and clarity of message. I found Civitas to be very receptive to my comments. On balance, Civitas' work was well done. I think the policies are sound and in keeping with the thrust of planning efforts over the past 20 years. I believe this work will go a long way to demonstrate your determination to inspire and build momentum to complete this very special project.

Thank you for this opportunity and please do not hesitate to contact if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Marty Poirier, FASLA