

July 22, 2022

Port Commissioners
Port of San Diego
3165 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: **1HWY1 Latest Seaport Village Proposal – Public Comment**

Dear Commissioners:

I have taken the time to review the Port's original RFP, 1HWY1's 2016 proposal, the February 2018 modifications, the November 2018 reiteration, the 174 page "re-do" from 2021, and now the July 2022 deck and quite frankly couldn't be more appalled at the egregious takeover of not only the majority of the land project area for the use of hotels and event spaces, but the gall to double the size of the dock slip spaces, which leaves residents and visitors alike with nothing but views of masts and mega yachts if they walk along the promenade or actually take in a meal **80 feet from the waters edge**. I had to look at quotes on greed to find one appropriate for this transformation from the original proposal which had a lot more charm. What I found was "Leadership is a privilege to better the lives of others. It is not an opportunity to satisfy personal greed."

In the original 1HWY1 proposal, there were many elements that were appropriate in scope and style for the Seaport Village space. The idea of a Beer and Food Hall and market (like a Pike Place Market), the 2-3 story buildings made with many different materials for the retail and restaurants (stone fascia, brick, metal, wood and glass), the floating swimming pool, the overhaul of Marina Park into the various areas – kids playground, a "base camp" for yoga, other types of wellness activities, and the beach setting, while maintaining a grassy area for general picnicking and kite-flying, and a wave rider attraction with a food establishment for viewing, were all pleasing. These were all in addition to the aquarium which had an interesting shape (despite the fact that I found it reminded me of the Sports Arena architecture which most abhor, its rooftop grass, and the Spire which was to have ground floor spaces with gift shop (free access), and an observation tower and a restaurant (accessible to all) at the top, and an exterior ride.

Of all the things mentioned above, what we are left with in the final iteration is the overhaul of Marina Park, a non-descript aquarium (as far as I could tell from the deck and which I question the need for since we already have a top notch aquarium in town), and a spire without a ride, without ground floor exhibition and gift shop space or a restaurant at the top, but which does now include a hotel and a yacht club. Except for the shape, I must question the need for a spire at all. On page 64, it shows that the spire is only 13 feet higher than the first Hyatt Regency building that has a bar on the top floor with views on all sides (and it's free to go up and "observe"). It has photos inside about the changes to San Diego, etc. And frankly, having been up there, our "skyline" isn't really worth an observation tower. Cowles Mountain and Mission Trails Regional Park can be seen, but most behind a haze of smog, same as the overdeveloped hillsides of Tijuana, etc. There is no Mount Rainier here. Also there is a SkyTower at SeaWorld.

Perhaps the spire is really needed so we can have that yacht club to accommodate the yachts we are developing slips for, the yachts which will take away all the natural views of the water from land. For pedestrians to get true bay views, they'll need to go out on the piers which offer no seating to "enjoy"

the view, or out on Marina Park. No more walking along the Promenade with unobstructed views to Coronado. Further, most piers supporting private boats are locked from public access, so I wonder how long the alleged public access will last. (At a recent trip to the Rady Shell I heard there is talk of closing the area around the shell during performances – which if it happens is just another bait and switch on public access).

As for the idea of water views from the “grandstand” between the promenade and the retail spaces (which are just the base of every hotel the developers could think of to put on this site) they won’t be high enough to see over the boats and masts now planned for the central embarcadero area (Corner Marina). Even the writer had to acknowledge that “beyond 80 feet, the feeling of being along the water diminishes”. So, to be clear, only the person at the very edge of the upper deck at a restaurant will feel like they are along the water. The next table in is more than 80 feet. And frankly, the 80 feet doesn’t include the pier and the obstructions being placed between the visitor and the water. The photo on page 51 should show us what that view will look like with all of the slips filled, and boats properly, proportionally sized for the photo. And speaking of piers and views, I love the photo on pages 45 and 46 of the latest rendition that shows people standing on the edge of a pier with no railings – to try and “wow” you with the view.

In regards to retail shopping, which is in and of itself a form of entertainment (and can be free) by both locals and visitors, walking in stores at the base of a hotel doesn’t really give you a shopping experience. I’ve walked through the stores at the Hotel del Coronado, and there aren’t many shoppers and it just doesn’t give you the leisure experience that Seaport Village provides today. The first iteration seemed like it would be maintaining some of the feel by having smaller buildings, but that is gone.

Additionally, while the retail spaces in the first iteration had some modern charm, 2-3 story buildings with stone fascia, woods and metals, the last “deck” does not provide the types of materials, but based on the renderings it will be all glass and metal/concrete; simply more of the same as is found on nearly every city block, and which does not meet the RFP requirements for buildings “distinct in architectural design”. Ten buildings, and only the spire has any architectural interest. Is that what the Port had in mind?

I do like the usage planned of the G Street Mole, which is accommodating fisherman, and then proposing a second story for a walkway and restaurant/retail. I do have some concerns about the smell that might actually create in terms of being off-putting if one is directly above it. Just a thought.

The Vision statement indicates that the Port is already 66 percent convention center and hotels, so five more hotels on this public space seems like the last thing the county residents need on their waterfront. The page 62 graphic that shows the view of the area if you are on Coronado says it all – massive hotel buildings, blocking everything behind them, big box buildings of glass; nothing of architectural interest in these massive structures.

As for the water takeover, I must point out a couple of things. First, page 88 of the Vision statement says that most residents rarely spend time on the water. So question who is benefiting from this water takeover. Also, with the revamp of the Broadway Pier area, which is quite nice, I don’t see the need for more excursion and dinner boats that 1HWY1 is proposing be added to the bayside mix. I’m sure the boats currently offering excursions and dinners aren’t sold out, so adding more boats may only cause existing businesses to suffer – more businesses limping along instead of thriving, and also, more boats with less people on each is the wrong direction for fuel usage (climate issues).

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I must also say that I am very concerned about the introduction of more slips (and more importantly any tour boats or water taxis being placed in this newly created marina because this area is across from the Navy's secure area. As someone who has been a passenger on a sailboat, the need to get out of the channel when large vessels are coming through means the bay users need to be able to pull to the side when needed, and that can't always be the west side. If I am looking at the depiction correctly, there is about 164 feet between the end of the new proposed marina and the channel. We are not highly experienced sailors (and the more boats that can be rented, the more that will be the case) so leaving such a small area to navigate on one side of the channel seems dangerous. The San Diego Harbor Safety Plan had this to say "Considering the vicinity of the marinas to the main shipping channel (*and this would be before 1HWY1's reach out into the bay*), recreational boaters present a hazard to navigation to larger commercial traffic restricted in their maneuverability. There have been numerous complaints from both the Navy and the San Diego Pilots about Inland Navigational Rule 9 violations in which recreational boaters impede the safe passage of larger vessels confined to a narrow channel. The HSC has recommended and implemented boater education materials to improve boater safety. These are discussed in more detail on the following page under "Boater Education." So again, more boats in this area may not be a safe option. I would also note that the Framework apparently anticipates that 700 slips may be built in the "lagoon" at some point, so question whether this marina is truly needed.

In regards to the dock and dine aspect, which I believe the Port had a specific interest in, I would be interested to know if any numbers have been analyzed from the Brigantine's space which is new and provides this opportunity. I don't know how many owned boats there are on the bay, but that is the maximum number of possible "dockers". I don't think there would be too many boaters from Mexico or Dana Point or farther reaches who come down just to dock and dine. No one who rents a boat would pay by the hour to have it sit at the dock while they go to a restaurant. Question whether any outreach has been done to this very finite group to see the level of interest in comparison to the costs associated with creating an additional pier. Using the space over by the Midway for a few dock and dine spaces, as well as using that space for the water taxi would be better than the creating of the Corner Marina.

In sum, I believe the Port must consider either reining in the egregious hotel takeover and water takeover and mandate the many things in the first proposal which I hope is what led the Port to select 1HW1 in the first place, as well as demand an "attraction" or else find that this last proposal is non-responsive to the RFP and remove this group from consideration as a developer for this project. Seaport Village today, with the new leaseholds and redevelopment has been a joy, and every part of it is for the people. That would no longer be the case under the new proposal.

Thank you for taking the time to read these comments.

Sincerely,

Deborah Cushman
1871 Hacienda Drive
El Cajon, CA 92020