

Janet Graham

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**From:** Ted Godshalk <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 9, 2022 10:51 AM  
**To:** PublicRecords  
**Cc:** Anna Buzaitis  
**Subject:** Attn: District Clerk-- PMPA- Public Comment from Mr. Ted Godshalk and Mrs. Margaret Avalos Godshalk  
**Attachments:** Bayfront EIR final letter.odt

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Public Comment for October 11, 2022 from Mr. Ted Godshalk and Mrs. Margaret Avalos Godshalk

To: San Diego Unified Port Commissioners and Staff.

After reviewing the Draft EIR and the PMPA for the National City Bayfront Projects and the Balanced Plan in National City, it is our conclusion that Alternative 4 provides the best economic development while carefully protecting existing environmental and traffic- related needs, all in a feasible manner. This project is not “**Balanced**,” as far as the public is concerned. It is heavily weighted in favor of large port tenants. We believe this project, as conceived in the full development alternative, is a “**20<sup>th</sup> Century Plan**,” belatedly processed and does little to bring National City residents the community and cultural amenities they need.

With that as our premise, we have a few concerns and suggestions directly about the report's proposal for Alternative 4 and a comment related to better future planning.

**Transportation-related Issues:**

With a project of full development, the Level of Service analysis of the closure of Tidelands Avenue and 24<sup>th</sup> Street, the narrowing of portions of Marina Way, the impact of 463 Hotel rooms, 135 RV Camping sites, 60 modular cabins, and up to 808 parking spaces (excluding Pepper Park) would cause **significant impacts** on traffic patterns. Impacts on traffic patterns are really a degradation of quality of the daily life for people. This includes auto and truck drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. This analysis has determined that to rely on voluntary employee commute programs and to operate in light of no plan by the MTS to serve the area does not adequately mitigate the impacts.

These impacts, also addressed in CALTRANS' analysis, are felt as far away as Harbor Drive to the north and at the I-5/ BayMarina Drive freeway intersections. The impacts cited in this EIR's

discussion of full development, are seen over and over again as “significant and unavoidable with mitigations deemed infeasible.” Simply put, the closure of streets and the increase of almost 10,000 daily weekday trips and 463 hotel rooms is bad planning and the area cannot withstand it.

Next, we understand that the closure of Tidelands Avenue is for the benefit of PASHA to expand its operations in the public realm, (*see Figure 2*). We believe that Tidelands Avenue should be left open for public access to the Pepper Park area. In the case of an emergency with a required evacuation, the limited roadway entrance (*see Fig. 4*) with one path out on Marina Way would be dangerous and unacceptable. First responders trying to enter the Pepper Park Area would encounter speed bumps, narrow access, and many vehicles hurriedly exiting. Tidelands Avenue currently provides an easy way in and out of the Pepper Park area without crowding the already constricted Marina Way.

In addition, bike path planning for this project has been done in a haphazard manner, mostly at the lead of the City of National City. Please do not endorse the idea of a bike path on McKinley Avenue. We understand this is outside of the Port District, but the Bayshore Bikeway components must connect safely and thoughtfully. The reduction in parking spaces for employees in the McKinley Avenue area will have a ripple effect throughout the entire Marina District; the Westside of National City. Please support the use of Cleveland Avenue to connect Harbor Drive to Bay Marina Drive and the Bayshore Bikepath. This is the street currently favored by bicyclists, both commuter and recreational.

Once the bike path crosses Bay Marina Drive, we think the BNSF company should be required to negotiate the abandonment of their easternmost rail line along the road and give National City and the public the space required for both a dedicated bike path and a pedestrian path with the two current lanes of traffic. The railroad company should not get their requested changes in this project and in the upcoming LOSAN plan without helping to fix the problems associated with the narrow Marina Way. You must not forget that those problems were left for us to work out when the original Harbor District Specific Plan was created in the 1990s and this is an opportunity to correct them now.

#### **Environmental and Aesthetic Issues:**

First, in Alternative 2, the recommendation of no Waterside Development in the Sweetwater Channel is made. We believe that there should be no aquaculture operations in the channel due to the impacts on eelgrass habitat and species of wildlife that rely on it. We also are against the addition of new boat docks along the outside of the jetty that surrounds the marina. Any expansion of the marina commerce should be done within its current footprint.

Second, even with the addition of two acres, Granger Hall should not be moved to Pepper Park for two important reasons. First, the public deserves more “open” park space than is called out in this project. Second, to partner with the City of National City on a civic building, one that the city has

been remiss in maintaining, is a risky endeavor. There may be other more appropriate locations outside the Port District.

Third, the building of 60 modular cabins along the jetty will block the views of the public to essential waterfront vistas.

The EIR reports that there is currently only one view line to the bay from the Bayshore Bike path at the east corner of the Marina property. This view will be obstructed by the cabin development. When we look at Chula Vista's Bayfront, there are many more viewpoints than we see in National City. Don't take one away to build modular cabins on the jetty. The jetty was never intended for that purpose. It was supposed to be a walking path to the bay. This looks like an unnecessary attempt at commercial maximization on public lands by GB Capital. The cabins are not essential to the economic success of the National City Bayfront, the City of National City, nor the San Diego Unified Port.

#### **Conclusion:**

The residents of National City have long been denied a true access point to the San Diego Bay. The Sweetwater Channel is not an acceptable trade-off. Talk about equity... and then walk it. This is where we see the need for a **"21<sup>st</sup> Century Bayfront Plan."**

We call on the Port Commission to start planning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and open up the Bayfront from 24th Street to the Sweetwater Channel for focused, specific public- oriented development. The San Diego Unified Port District must accept equal responsibility and help the city and region solve the critical housing shortage. We call on San Diego Unified Port District commissioners to begin a plan to relocate PASHA and other businesses currently south of 24th Street and west of Tidelands Avenue to the north side of 24th St. and request that discussions begin with the United States Navy, through our Democratic Congressman, to relocate the Navy north of 19th St. The empty lots in the area must be made productive.

The Regional and National City housing shortage is severe and the city budget is constrained. The Bayfront south of 24<sup>th</sup> Street should be developed into 5 or 6 high rise housing towers for "all-income levels" of families. A vision for the future must be developed that builds Harbor Drive from Downtown San Diego to National City and Chula Vista in the image of Chicago's Lakeshore Drive and unites the new residential area to the rest of the region with high quality last-mile public transit. With the housing in place, commercial development will follow. PASHA, the Port District, and the U.S. Navy are "land-banking" property when there is a severe need to build housing. Our community deserves good housing, large parks, better transit options, open space, and work opportunities along the Bayfront. The importation of automobiles, lumber, and other products can be accommodated north of 24<sup>th</sup> Street and be a key part of this **21<sup>st</sup> Century Bayfront Plan.**

National city residents and visitors should be able to walk to the southwestern most point of land on the Bayfront and look north to see the skyline of San Diego and the Coronado bridge and south along the coast of Mexico. We should have opportunity to house our families in homes that allows for the building of personal wealth. The Port District should take some responsibility to help with the housing shortage and increase the fair and level playing field that is owed National City residents.

Thank you,

Ted Godshalk and Margaret Avalos Godshalk

National City