



CITIZENS COORDINATE FOR CENTURY 3

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July 13, 2016

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San Diego Unified Port District
3165 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

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Dear Mr. Merrifield:

Nick Marinovich

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Ken Seaton-Msemaji

Deanna Spehn

Artemis Spyridonidis

For over 50 years Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (C-3) has been a prominent and active organization of planning, academic and design professionals advocating for equitable and exemplary planning, design, and governance in the San Diego region. Our Board of Directors and its Advocacy Committee has made a detailed review of the recent proposals for Seaport Village Development and the Request for Proposals (RFP 16-04ME) "World Class Waterfront Development Opportunity."

Mike Stepner

Diego Velasco

Jean Walcher

In summary, our Board believes the approach and method undertaken by the Port of San Diego for Seaport Village Development is shortsighted and likely will not result in the World Class Waterfront Development our region, its residents and visitors deserve. This is the last remaining piece of waterfront property that presents a tremendous opportunity to make a lasting legacy for how we embraced our Waterfront.

Our specific comments and concerns are as follows:

1) Before there is any development of the Seaport Village Property, the Port should complete and adopt the Comprehensive Master Plan Update for its properties. The proposed development is yet another example of piecemeal development which must be discouraged. As we have stated before from an overall public policy perspective piecemeal planning is bad planning.

There are several statements in the key Port reference document used to guide developers (*San Diego Port Master Plan Update Assessment Report Vision Statement and Guiding Principles-August 2014*) emphasizing this concern over piecemeal development. For example, this report's Executive Summary states:

"Just about everyone agrees that the current Port Master Plan needs to be updated. Over the past decades there has been concern that the Master Plan process has morphed into a "piecemeal planning process" where each proposed project became a mini-master plan requiring a Port Master Plan Amendment (PMPA). These concerns arose from a process wherein amendments became the rule and not the exception. The current Master Plan has become reactive rather than a forward-looking proactive document."

The Port should follow its own document's guidance. While there may be some instances when much smaller projects could proceed without the Master Plan Update, anything major such as the Seaport Village Proposals, should be put on hold pending completion of the Master Plan Update.

2) Before the Port decides on how to develop this property, there needs to be a robust public and community dialogue on how to increase the connections between this site and the rest of Downtown San Diego, its residents as well as the Region. By 2030 Downtown San Diego could have near 75,000 residents. Seaport Village must become a destination point for locals who desire to view and explore the waterfront. Several of the proposals are predominately tourist and/or theme park oriented, which is not local serving especially in a critical bayfront area of downtown. Increasing local connections to this site is the key urban planning challenge facing any proposed redevelopment.

3) The Port has the opportunity to make development of this site "Climate Change" friendly. A comprehensive Port Master Plan Update could review in a global way the appropriate locations for public parking and increasing non-vehicular travel in Downtown San Diego. We need to rethink how San Diegans best access our waterfront and what we want to do once we get there.

4) The Port is taking a less than inclusive approach to public involvement. It should not be up to developers to determine what is best for the communities of San Diego. The Developers are put in a position of guessing what would be acceptable and viable without having real public input in advance. The Community for this Public Land deserves a real opportunity to work with project developers.

5) The Seaport Village area must be a destination for the public to enjoy the Waterfront Experience and not be overburdened by bulky development or tourist oriented attractions. The bay waterfront is a totally inappropriate area to consider siting a sports arena. Local residents and, in fact tourists, should be presented opportunities to just enjoy the waterfront, experience and learn from examples of natural bayfront ecology, and feel the water around their feet. The County Waterfront Park and its success is a living example of how the right mix of public amenities results in people enjoying the Bay experience.

6) Several of the proposals do have some positive elements which should be considered in the development of the Port Master Plan Update. The Protea Proposal integrates downtown with the South Embarcadero Park area creating districts within the context of the historic street grid. The Oliver McMillian Project has made attempts at unique uses (e.g. Scripps Institution of Oceanography Learning Center) that would be an attraction for local residents and tourists alike. Another reference would be designer Renzo Piano who is known to create the types of world class development deemed appropriate for this site.

7) The redevelopment of Seaport Village should strike a balance between economic returns and public access and amenities. C-3 is not against new or varied commercial development on this site. However, maximizing economic returns from this prime property with access to the Bay should **not** be the primary motive. We need to remind ourselves this is public property for the public good.

In closing, the future of this site and your decisions will leave a lasting legacy on this region. **Historically the best planning decisions in this region are ones that are done in a comprehensive rather than piecemeal approach.** We urge you take a step back and incorporate more directly the citizens of San Diego in the future design of this iconic part of our downtown waterfront.

We expect as the process moves forward plans developed will go through further iterations that will likely incorporate positive components from the various proposals you now have before you. We stand ready to take part in a concerted effort to produce a world class waterfront for the benefit of all San Diegans and our visiting friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roger Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R" and a dot over the "i" in "Lewis".

Roger Lewis, President
Citizens Coordinate for Century 3