

The Right Waterfront Plan for San Pedro

Contributed by Peter M. Warren
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Now is the time to save the Port from itself and join a coalition of business people and community members from around San Pedro that is backing responsible development along the waterfront.

The plan has the backing of the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce, and the Central and Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Councils (NC). Members of those groups have put together a petition to urge the Port and the Board of Harbor Commissioners to do the right thing and support the community-backed plan for developing the San Pedro waterfront, offering an alternative to the latest in-house plans drawn by the staff at the Port of Los Angeles.

The alternative proposal would place a new cruise ship terminal near downtown and focus commercial development, including a small convention center, around downtown and the existing Ports of Call area, including a continuous pedestrian promenade all along the waterfront. It would include shared parking and put a stop to the highway by the sea. That's the new Port-planned highway to carry cruise passengers from the freeway and parking lots near the Vincent Thomas Bridge to the cruise terminal at Kaiser Point (700 yards north of Cabrillo Beach).

Tell the Port you don't like their plan, and that you back the alternative that was put together by the Chamber and your Neighborhood Councils. Time is wasting. The Port staff is working on a final environmental impact (EIR) report to be released in June or July. Then, the Harbor Commissioners will vote.

The current EIR still doesn't include a full evaluation of the Chamber and NC plan. By law, the Port must evaluate reasonable alternatives. This plan has been before the Port staff for more almost three years, and was worked out in detail last fall, before the Port released its draft EIR.

The Chamber of Commerce & Neighborhood Council plans include:

- A promenade all along the waterfront with no highway by the sea.
- A modern cruise terminal next to downtown with berths for three large cruise ships.
- Ports of Call rebuilt and expanded with a convention center in partnership with downtown.
- Links between the waterfront and downtown via Red Car, walkways, bikeways & shuttles.

The alternative would dedicate the Cabrillo Beach/Kaiser Point area as a recreational, educational, research and environmental space for the use of the millions of people who live within a short drive of the waterfront area. The plan includes adding pedestrian, bike and public transit paths from bridge to breakwater, as well as a marine research center.

It is based on a waterfront plan approved by the Board of Harbor Commissioners in 2006 but shelved when the new administration took over running the Port. This updated version was presented in July 2008 to top Port officials as a community-backed alternative to be included in the draft EIR, but it was ignored. More recently, the Chamber and Neighborhood Councils have endorsed this plan.

The proposal would build the long-promised, European-style promenade all along the waterfront and have new berthing

and a terminal for three cruise ships between downtown and the Gateway Fountain at Swinford Street. It would expand commercial development at Ports of Call; create pedestrian and transit links between the waterfront and the downtown business district; relocate long-term cruise tourist parking away from the waterfront.

The Port instead would place a major cruise ship terminal near Cabrillo Beach, which would require up to 600 bus trips a day to carry cruise passengers between parking areas at the Vincent Thomas Bridge and Outer Harbor terminal. The Port waterfront plan gives Kaiser Point to the cruise industry and adds more waterfront parking, plus two cruise ship berths and a mega-terminal by the beach.

It will:

- Hurt San Pedro business by directing cruise passengers away from downtown.
- Change forever the character of Cabrillo Beach & the Outer Harbor recreation area.
- Block access to the promenade with a highway all along the waterfront.
- Create 600 bus trips a day between the Outer Harbor terminal and parking at the bridge.
- Obstruct the West Channel and the Outer Harbor with security zones for cruise ships.

Support your Chamber of Commerce and your neighborhood councils by signing the petition and turning it into them. The petition is available from members of your neighborhood council and [here](#).

Peter M. Warren is the chair of the Port and Environment Committee on the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council.