

"Welcome Park" Is Not So Welcoming

Current Plans for Gaffey Gateway Don't Match the Promise

by Peter M. Warren

The Harbor Freeway entrance to San Pedro; some call it ugly, others a turn off.

Many business people blame it for San Pedro's failure to challenge Pasadena, Santa Monica, Belmont Shore or Marina Del Rey for the weekend entertainment and shopping dollars of LA's upwardly mobile.

After years of talk, there is a fix floating around, though it is far from the grand vision talked about for years, which proposed beautifying both sides of Gaffey Street for hundreds of yards leading to and from the Harbor Freeway.

The current plan is being labeled the "Welcome Park," but it won't be a park at all—not for people anyway. In its initial phase it calls for the clean up and landscaping of four small lots with 153 feet of frontage on Gaffey Street.

The plan calls for the Port of LA, which owns the four lots along the west side of Gaffey, to swap the four-tenths of an acre there with the city for the 17 acres of Cabrillo Beach. The plan has caused a stir and some oppose the swap.

Without discussing the merits of giving the beach to the Port or swapping one property for the other, here are the parameters of the current plan.

COASTAL SAN PEDRO NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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The Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council consists of stakeholders in the southernmost area of the City of Los Angeles. In addition to 28,000 residents, it includes those who work and own property in the area, as well as others involved in, and concerned with, the civic life of our neighborhoods.

The Council meets on the third Monday of each month at the Cabrillo Beach Bathhouse. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.

The Governing Board is bound by the rules of the state's open meeting law (Brown Act). Agendas are posted at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. The public is always welcome to attend meetings and comment on agenda items. There is also a public comment time for items not on the agenda.

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The Port owns the lots at 351, 403, 407 and 415 Gaffey Street. They are the four lots beginning just south of the pedestrian bridge over Gaffey. The proposal does not include the two parcels at the corner of Sepulveda, which once held a gas station. The Port acquired the land using mitigation funds that were part of the China Shipping settlement, but it has not acquired the gas station because of contaminated soils, according to Port officials.

The current beautification plan calls for removing the blighted buildings on the lots and using greenery and some signage to mark the entrance to San Pedro. The development will not include either a visitors' booth or a parking area. In fact, the site itself will be designed in a fashion so that it is not visitor-serving at all. There will be no place for people to sit, picnic or for any recreation, according to the office of City Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

The goal is beautifying the entrance to San Pedro with better signage and to establish the identification of San Pedro, said the councilwoman's office

Eventually, the city hopes to acquire the former gas station as well, and incorporate it in the plan. There are also initial talks with Regency signs about removing the billboard that dominates the view of drivers who arrive at the end of the Harbor Freeway. The property that the Regency billboard overlooks is actually what most people see when they come to the end of the Harbor Freeway. It is not currently for sale.

There are no existing plans for changing the look, land use or zoning of the rest of Gaffey Street, which is a potpourri of architecture and rambunctious signage. The commercial strip beyond Sepulveda and Gaffey will remain dominated by fast food drive-ins, liquor stores, gas stations, mini-malls and discount retailers.

If the land swap moves ahead rapidly, the councilwoman's office said, work on the remake could begin in the spring.

Some in San Pedro oppose the swap, saying it lacks equity to give up the beach for a few urban lots, or that the entire deal is unnecessary because the Port should simply give the land to the city as mitigation for pollution and other impacts on San Pedro. Still others question whether the Port, with its checkered environmental record and desire to commercialize



Aerial view of the four parcels to be developed
Photo courtesy of the Port of Los Angeles

control over a beach that has unique environmental and recreational charms.

Regardless, the swap has a momentum of its own. The Port has been ordered by the State Lands Commission to give up the properties, saying the Gaffey land is too far removed from the Port mission to spend its funds on state tidelands. And the councilwoman's office is eager to obtain the Gaffey property by swapping it for Cabrillo Beach.

One impediment to the process could come from the Harbor Commission, which must decide whether to challenge the lands commission order about the Gaffey Street lots. Interestingly, Councilwoman Hahn separately supports pressuring the lands commission to permit the Port to provide mitigation outside the boundaries of the Port. But that desire hasn't cooled her interest in going ahead with the swap.

For more information or to discuss the issue with local officials, call Elise Swanson with Councilwoman Hahn's office at **732-4515**; Lonnie Tang with the Port of LA at **732-3503**; or Peter Warren with the Coastal SPNC at **519-1585**.

Be Prepared

Getting Ready For The Next Big One

by John Stinson

In light of this year's string of hurricanes that devastated the South, you can almost bet that when the next disaster comes, whether it's man made or mother nature, immediate emergency help may be some time in coming. As the recent FEMA fiasco after Hurricane Katrina glaringly points out, government services may be overwhelmed or under prepared to deal with the situation.

For that reason, to help insure you have a chance of surviving, it's best to take matters into your own hands and follow that Boy Scout motto of "Be Prepared". The following is a list of things you can do to help you and your family through whatever disaster or emergency lies ahead.

There are six items you should stock in your home in case of emergency: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies and special items for medical conditions. Keep these items in an easy to carry emergency kit in case of an evacuation.

Food and Water – store at least a three-day supply of both for all family members. Select nonperishable foods that don't require refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. Pack a can of sterno for foods that must be heated. Avoid bulky and heavy items. Include ready to eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables, canned juices, staples such as salt, pepper and spices, high energy foods, vitamins, infant food (if applicable) and comfort or stress foods.

First Aid Kit – Put together a kit for home and each car. Items to include are an assortment of Band-aids and bandages, germicidal hand wipes, two pair of medical grade non-latex gloves, anti-bacterial ointment, a cold pack, small scissors and tweezers. Also have prescription and these non-prescription drugs packed as well: Aspirin or other non-aspirin pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids and syrup of Ipecac (to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center.)

Clothing and Bedding – Have a change of clothing for each household member as well as a bedroll or sleeping bag.

Toolkit and Emergency Supplies – At the very least you will need a toolkit plus a radio and flashlight and extra batteries for each. Better yet, there are versions of each that wind up and/or use solar power to operate. Also include mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic eating utensils, a can opener and utility knife, small ADC fire extinguisher, tube tent, duct tape, matches in a

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