

Coastal Currents

• Issues and Information from the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council •

Coastal Currents
Winter 2008
Vol. 5, No. 1

The Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council —

Neighborhood councils were established as a means for individuals to come together and discuss their mutual concerns and communicate their needs to city government. We are empowered by the Los Angeles city charter to advise Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Councilwoman Janice Hahn and her colleagues about what the people of the coastal San Pedro area want. We meet every month on the third Monday, except in January and February, when we meet on the fourth Monday because of federal holidays. Our next meetings are scheduled for March 17, April 21, May 19, and June 16. Visit us on the web at coastalsanpedro.org.

CSPNC Position on Proposed Cruise Ship Berths in the Outer Harbor

We oppose construction of new cruise ship berths in the outer harbor because it:

- causes more pollution and traffic;
- has the same impact on views as construction of large buildings;
- disrupts recreational uses of the beach and marinas, including sport fishing and boating;
- creates substantial Homeland Security-mandated security zones that will severely limit public access to significant portions of the San Pedro Waterfront;
- harms downtown businesses by attracting visitor-serving development away from downtown, while expansion and improvement of cruise facilities at the current downtown location, Berths 93-95, could have a positive effect;
- consumes too much ocean-view property with parking lots and structures.

Excerpts from a California State Lands Commission Position Paper on the State Tidelands Trust Doctrine

“But to what common uses may tide and submerged lands be put? Traditionally, public trust uses were limited to water-related commerce, navigation, and fishing. In more recent years, however, the California Supreme Court has said that the public trust embraces the right of the public to use the navigable waters of the state for bathing, swimming, boating, and general recreational purposes. It is sufficiently flexible to encompass changing public needs, such as the preservation of the lands in their natural state for scientific study, as open space and as wildlife habitat. The administrator of the public trust ‘is not burdened with an outmoded classification favoring one mode of utilization over another.’”



BEFORE AND AFTER—The view from the inner beach at Cabrillo with and without the Queen Mary 2 as it would appear docked at the site proposed for a new cruise ship terminal. The photo at right is an accurately-scaled digital simulation illustrating the visual impact of a 1,132-foot-long vessel parked at Berth 46. From waterline to the top of its funnel, the Queen Mary 2 is about 203 feet. Harbor department plans call for accommodating two ships of this size or larger in this area.

Are The Cruise Ships Coming to Cabrillo Beach? **Port Has Plan to Bring Cruise Ship Industry to Outer Harbor Area;** **Up to 150 Bus Trips Daily Would Bring Passengers to Outpost at Kaiser Point**

By Peter Warren, Chair, Port and Environment Committee

Go out to Cabrillo Beach and take a walk out toward the pier. Stop opposite the lifeguard building and look northeast. Picture the largest cruise ships in the world—some of them higher than a 22-story building and more than 1,000 feet long—docked at Kaiser Point, the finger of land maybe 700 yards away.

When they come and go—as cruise ships currently do on most Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday mornings and afternoons—the area will be closed to navigation for security reasons.

Traffic in and out of the Cabrillo Marina would stop, and small boat and other recreation on the waters in the Outer Harbor recreation area would halt. When a ship is at berth, the Coast Guard would enforce a 100-meter security zone around it. Up to 150 bus trips daily would bring passengers to the Kaiser Point boarding terminal from the main terminal and parking facilities near downtown.

These are a few of the elements of the Port of Los Angeles’ plan to relocate much of the cruise-ship industry from downtown to the Cabrillo Beach recreation area, according to public state-

ments by Port officials and staff. The plans, which are being finalized by the Port, include building a passenger terminal at Kaiser Point, with berths for additional cruise ships, one at Kaiser Point facing Cabrillo Beach and possibly one or two cruise ships in the adjacent East Channel.

Details of the cruise-ship expansion will not be available until this spring when the Port will release a draft environmental impact report (DEIR) on the Bridge-to-Breakwater project.

Port Executive Director Geraldine Knatz told a special meeting of the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council (CSPNC) this fall that a variety of alternatives are being considered for berthing ships in the Outer Harbor and downtown. This mix could create various configurations—perhaps one berth at Kaiser Point and one in the East Channel—with up to three berths downtown.

By law, the Port is also required to present a no-change alternative in the DEIR, thus keeping the cruise ship industry away from the Outer Harbor recreation area. The Port apparently favors a Kaiser Point berth and would add a second berth in the East Channel, if necessary.

More recently, Port Environmental Official Jan Green Rebstock, who is in charge of the project, told a public meeting that the Port is NOT considering an Outer Harbor berthing alternative that would minimize impacts on the Cabrillo Beach recreation area. This plan, favored by some area residents, would place the cruise ship expansion along the Main Channel, where the Westways facility is to be demolished.

During the October CSPNC meeting, Port officials heard a strong critique of their expansion plan and conceded under questioning from the audience that they had not considered the traffic and pollution impacts of the approximately 150 bus trips necessary to bring between 4,000 and 6,000 cruise passengers from the main downtown terminal to the distant cruise berths south of 22nd Street. The Port is now considering a surface parking lot and a 1,500-car underground parking facility at Kaiser Point as a possible answer to the busing problem.

Port officials and Director Knatz have argued for the Outer Harbor berths, saying that the next generation of mega-cruise ships cannot fit under the Vincent Thomas Bridge to access the turnaround basin. They argue that the industry will leave if their ships have to back down the Main Channel. But that maneuver is already safely used by regular cruise ship visitors to L.A. harbor, CSPNC members pointed out.

Recently, cranes for the TraPac terminal passed under the bridge, which has a clearance of 219 feet, according to a *Daily Breeze* story. Other reports have the bridge height at 185 feet. The Cunard Lines newest ship, *Queen Victoria*, would glide under that lower height limitation, as would the two largest Disney ships, which are 171.5 feet high.

Port officials have also argued that the Port must accommodate the industry’s desire to service LA with the next generation of mega-cruisers, far larger than the 2500-passenger ships we see now.

However, the Port’s own analysis shows that competing ports San Diego and Long Beach are at full capacity with no plans to add new cruise berths. Would the cruise-ship industry abandon the Southern California market just because it could not dock in the Outer Harbor?

CSPNC officials asked Knatz to consider whether these market factors give the Port leverage with the industry. They argued the Port would be just as well positioned if it built modern facilities downtown for three or four large, but not super sized, cruise ships.

This approach would have the added benefit of increasing foot traffic to local businesses, hotels and restaurants, as well as allowing Kaiser Point to be developed as a boating and waterfront recreation area.

Knatz, however, stuck to her preference for expanding the cruise industry to the Outer Harbor, saying arguments against it should be made to the Harbor Commission. The commissioners will decide whether the cruise ship industry moves from downtown San Pedro to the Cabrillo Beach recreation area, a space traditionally reserved for recreation, windsurfing and boating.

Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council
1536 West 25th Street #223
San Pedro CA 90732

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 192
San Pedro, CA

ECR-WSS

Attn: POSTAL PATRON