

NORTHWEST HARBOR BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

China Shipping Community Mitigation Funds Proposal

INTRODUCTION

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council is proposing that China Shipping Community Aesthetic Mitigation Funds be used to beautify, landscape, and create open space in two adjacent areas in the Northwest Harbor area of the Port of Los Angeles (Exhibit A):

- Area A: John Gibson Boulevard, North Pacific Avenue, Front Street, Harbor Boulevard,
- Area B: North Gaffey Street.

The proposal contains several elements designed to beautify the boundaries of Port operations in these areas which are near or adjacent to the Yang Ming/China Shipping Terminal in the West Basin of the Port of Los Angeles (Area A) and along the Port of Los Angeles railroad right-of-way along North Gaffey Street (Area B).

The two areas proposed for improvements are adjacent to or near the China Shipping Facility that was the basis for the creation of the mitigation fund. The area includes two gateways to the Port: the area adjacent to the Channel Street on and off ramps from the 110 and 47 Freeways, and the Harbor Blvd on and off ramps from the 47 Freeway (Exhibit A and B). Both of these gateways are heavily used by port related traffic, community traffic and regional travelers on the 110 and 47 Freeways. In addition, the John S. Gibson Boulevard is designated in the City Transportation Plan as a Scenic Highway for its views of a working Port and views of the Vincent Thomas Bridge. As shown on Exhibit B, much of the proposed project is on Port property. The remaining portions would be acquired with mitigation funds as part of this initiative.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Beautification Plan

Gibson, Channel, North Gaffey, North Pacific, Front, and Harbor Blvd. converge at various points. For this reason, an overall plan should be developed for this area in coordination with other planning activities in the area including the Port Beautification Project prior to initiating work on any sizeable aspect. The plan should start where the “Bridge to the Breakwater” Plan stops and should take into consideration landscaping, open areas, bicycle paths, views of the port, and public art.

Area A: John Gibson, North Pacific, Front Street, Harbor Blvd.

Gibson, North Pacific, Front and Harbor Blvd connect in a curve to hug the waterfront adjacent to the Yang Ming/China Shipping Terminal (Exhibit A). At the North end of the area, Gibson is bordered on the West by the 110 Freeway. As it turns into Pacific Avenue, it is bordered on the West by various businesses including a bait shop, electronics store, and paint and body shops. Residences are present at the top of the bluff overlooking Pacific Avenue. Where Pacific approaches Knoll Hill, Front Street branches off and is bordered on one side by the Proposed China Shipping Terminal and on the other by Knoll Hill (Exhibit A and B). As part of the China Shipping Terminal, Front Street may be realigned behind (to the Southwest of) Knoll Hill (see Exhibit B). Funds would be used in Area A for the following purposes:

1. Underground all aerial utilities.

While the utilities along the Harbor Blvd. to the south of the Vincent Thomas Bridge are underground, they are above ground from where Harbor Blvd. turns in to Front Street and along Pacific Avenue. The utility lines in this area are exceptionally numerous due to the increased Port development along these streets. (see Exhibit C). The utility lines interfere dramatically with views of the Port and make the area along Pacific appear blighted. We would recommend that the Port and Council Office ask the Department of Water and Power to assist in the cost of placing these utilities underground.

2. Property acquisition, demolition, and creation of open space.

The west side of North Pacific Avenue is lined with blighted structures, abandoned buildings, large billboards, and irregular-sized weed choked lots. (Exhibit C). There is also a structure on the east side which is now being used for storage of large trash dumpsters. The proposed project includes acquiring and demolishing many of these structures. This area would then be turned into open space and a bike path as part of the buffer between the port and the community and to provide an area that could be aesthetically improved.

3. Landscaping and Beautification

Both sides of John Gibson Blvd, North Pacific Avenue, Front Street, and Harbor Blvd from the San Pedro/Wilmington border to Swinford Avenue (Exhibit C) will be landscaped in accordance with the overall plan discussed above. Included in this plan should be some public art, particularly at the intersections of Channel and John Gibson/Pacific and the off ramp of the 47 Freeway onto Harbor Blvd – the gateway to the cruise terminal. In addition to improving the aesthetic impacts along the margins of the Port, the landscaping would reduce fugitive dust emissions by covering areas that are presently bare ground.

Area B: North Gaffey

The beautification of North Gaffey is one of the priorities of the Northwest Neighborhood Council. We are working with the Council Office and the City's Department of Public Works to obtain funding from MTA for sidewalks and related improvements not on Port property. If we are successful, we should obtain those funds in 2007. This proposal relates specifically to the port property on the east side of the street, adjacent to the rail line (Exhibit E). This property, which is owned jointly by the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach, borders the railroad track. The area along the east side of North Gaffey is for the most part bare ground with bill boards and weedy vegetation. Trucks and vehicles that park in these areas make dust and during rainy periods, track mud onto Gaffey Street where it is pulverized and turned into fugitive dust.

The proposal being submitted herein is for the planting of trees or shrubs to screen the tracks from view while absorbing some of the noise from the trains. If feasible, funds may also be used for the development of a bicycle path that would connect under the harbor freeway on the North side of Channel to the bicycle path discussed above.

COST ESTIMATE

Preliminary cost estimates for the various components of this project are still under development and we anticipate will be available before the proposal is returned from review by the State Lands Commission. It is possible that a portion of the costs will be shared by other parties, such as the MTA and the Department of Water and Power.

The funds requested should not be used for related initiatives already planned by the Port at part of its Port Beautification Project or other existing programs. We anticipate that the requested amount, \$5 million is insufficient to complete all of the items proposed herein. However we do not know to what extent part funds have already been set aside for some of this work and to what extent other public funds may be available for portions of it, e.g. the City's set aside for the arts.

NEXUS TO THE TIDELANDS TRUST

We believe that expenditure of Harbor Revenue Funds on the proposed project is consistent with the Tidelands Trust for the following reasons:

1. The project is located on, and immediately adjacent to, Port property.
2. The proposed improvements relate directly to the impacts of Port operations, particularly the Yang Ming/China Shipping Terminal, for example, the aerial utility lines serve the terminals.
3. The proposed improvements are in immediate proximity to major roadways, and would improve visual resources to local, regional, state and interstate travelers.

4. The proposed improvements would improve the image of the Port area and would enhance marine commerce by providing a more attractive approach to existing and planned commercial and recreational activities in the area designated as the “bridge to the breakwater.”

CONCLUSION

The Northwest Neighborhood Council realizes that the Port may already be committed to some of the components of our request such as the Port Beautification Project. We want to ensure that there is an overall plan for the beautification of this area and request that Mitigation Funds be used for remaining components.

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council is putting this proposal forward and would like to be involved in its implementation. We are desirous of working with whomever the appropriate parties are to bring this to fruition.