



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: July 9, 2026 REPORT NO. PC-26-023

HEARING DATE: July 16, 2026

SUBJECT: 2020 SeaWorld Master Plan Update

PROJECT NUMBER: [PRJ-0646353](#)

REFERENCE: 2002 SeaWorld Master Plan Update:
[City Council Report No. 01-134](#), dated July 3, 2001.
[2002 SeaWorld Master Plan](#)
[2001 Master Plan Resolution](#). Resolution No. R-295139, dated July 10, 2001.
[2002 Master Plan Resolution](#). Resolution No. R-296786, dated July 9, 2002.
[2001 Environmental Impact Report Resolution](#). Resolution No. R-295138, dated July 10, 2001.
2020 SeaWorld Master Plan/Mission Bay Park Master Plan Amendment Initiation:
[Planning Commission Report No. PC-19-073](#), dated July 25, 2019.

OWNER/APPLICANT: *City of San Diego/SeaWorld LLC d/b/a SeaWorld San Diego*

SUMMARY

Issue: Should the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of the 2020 SeaWorld Master Plan (2020 Master Plan) and amendments to the General Plan and the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program and Land Use Plan?

Proposed Actions:

1. RECOMMEND that the City Council APPROVE a resolution adopting Addendum No. 646353/SCHs No. 1984030708/2019060003 and adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
2. RECOMMEND that the City Council APPROVE the 2020 Master Plan and amendments to the General Plan and the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan;

Fiscal Considerations: None with this action. All costs are recovered through a deposit account funded by the applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact: None.

Housing Impact Statement: The project is an update to the 2002 SeaWorld Master Plan (2002 Master Plan) within the Mission Bay Regional Park. The project site is located within city-owned parklands and is designated for commercial-oriented recreation in the [Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan](#). No housing is planned or anticipated for this site.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: The project is located in the Mission Bay Park Community Planning Area. The [Mission Bay Park Committee](#) is the designated community planning organization for this area. See the Other Recommendations section for relevant voting information.

Other Recommendations: On November 1, 2022, the Mission Bay Park Committee recommended approval of the SeaWorld 2020 Master Plan Update project to the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation by a vote of 7-0-1 ([Attachment 1](#)). On November 17, 2022, the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Board recommended approval of the project to the Planning Commission by a vote of 9-0-1 ([Attachment 2](#)).

Environmental Impact: [Addendum No. 646353](#) to Environmental Impact Report SCHs No. 1984030708/2019060003 was prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Statute and Guidelines consistent with Section 15164 since only minor technical changes and additions were necessary. No substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and there is no new information of substantial importance to the project. A Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program for Air Quality, Biological Resources, Energy, Geology/Soils, Neighborhood Character/Aesthetics, Noise, and Water Conservation will be implemented. ([Attachment 3](#)).

BACKGROUND

The area of the 2020 SeaWorld Master Plan Update project is located at [500 Sea World Drive, San Diego, CA 92109](#); APN 435-480-1700, within Mission Bay Regional Park. SeaWorld is located on a 189.4-acre commercial leasehold within Mission Bay Park, which is owned by the City of San Diego (Attachment 4).

SeaWorld is located along the south perimeter of Mission Bay Park in a commercial-oriented recreation area, as set forth in the [Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan](#) (MBPMP) (Attachment 5). The south and west boundaries are defined by Sea World Drive, Perez Cove Way, and Ingraham Street. To the south beyond Sea World Drive is the West Mission Bay Drive/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard/Sea World Drive interchange system and the San Diego River. To the east of West Mission Bay Drive is the Quivira Basin commercial recreation area. The eastern boundary of the SeaWorld site extends to South Shores Park Road, which provides access to a boat launch. The northern boundary of the SeaWorld leasehold generally conforms to the shoreline, except on the west side of the park where 17 acres of open water area for the SeaWorld Marina, Waterfront Stadium, and Bayside Skyride are included in the leasehold. To the north lies Fiesta Island, which forms the northern boundary of the South Pacific Passage, and the open waters of Mission Bay Park. The residential neighborhoods closest to SeaWorld are located to the south in the West Point Loma Boulevard/Sports Arena Boulevard

area, the Crown Point neighborhood of Pacific Beach to the north and the South Mission Beach neighborhood to the west.

In the late 1940s, the City embarked on the creation of a regional aquatic-oriented park, Mission Bay Park. The idea for an aquarium/oceanarium or marine zoo within Mission Bay Park dates back to at least 1939 and appears in all subsequent plans for Mission Bay Park. The 1958 Mission Bay Master Plan, which provided leasehold recommendations for the new aquatic park, envisioned a marine theme park devoted to entertainment, recreation, and education. In 1961, the City leased the existing site for development of the marine park, and in 1964, SeaWorld was opened. SeaWorld is a nationally known tourist attraction and during its 61-year history, SeaWorld has continued to expand its animal, education, research, and conservation emphasis.

General Plan and Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan

The MBPMP serves as both the Community Plan, which is part of the General Plan, and the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan for Mission Bay Park. The Sea World Master Plan is incorporated by reference into the MBPMP. Updates to the Sea World Master Plan require amendments to the General Plan and the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and the Local Coastal Program.

2002 SeaWorld Master Plan/SeaWorld Height Initiative

The Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone (CHLOZ) in San Diego, also known as Proposition D, was established in 1972. This law restricts building heights to 30 feet in the coastal area west of Interstate 5, with a few exceptions in Downtown, Barrio Logan, and parts of Mission Bay. In November 1998, the voters of the City approved the SeaWorld Initiative, which amended the City's CHLOZ to allow development up to a maximum height of 160 feet on the SeaWorld leasehold area in Mission Bay Park. Following voter approval, SeaWorld updated the master plan to articulate how the additional height would be used in the coming years. Additionally, SeaWorld requested an amendment to the MBPMP from the City Planning Commission to integrate the height limit change into the MBPMP. This process culminated in City Council and California Coastal Commission approval of the 2002 Master Plan. The City determines whether a proposed project is consistent with the Master Plan and the Lease between SeaWorld and the City. The California Coastal Commission (CCC) retains the original jurisdictional authority over coastal development in Mission Bay Park and will review projects for consistency with the Coastal Act, the MBPMP, and the Master Plan and issues of the required Coastal Development Permit.

DISCUSSION

Project Description

In 2019, SeaWorld began an update to its 2002 Master Plan to reflect current buildout conditions and prepare to resume buildout of remaining projects. The 2020 Master Plan (Attachment 6) sets forth a long-range conceptual development program, development parameters, and project review procedures for the future renovation of the entire leasehold area for SeaWorld over the next 20 to 25 years. The 2020 Master Plan contains land use and development criteria for the entire leasehold. The plan also retains the five planning areas that were established in the 2002 Master Plan. An important goal of the

2020 Master Plan is to transition from a “site-specific” development paradigm to an “area-specific” development paradigm that better aligns with SeaWorld’s future renovation needs. In meeting this goal, the objectives are:

- (1) to maintain the same level of environmental and coastal resource protection provided under the 2002 Master Plan; and
- (2) to ensure that the concerns identified in the community outreach process continue to be addressed; and
- (3) to ensure that environmental concerns identified in the Addendum to the 2002 Master Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) continue to be addressed.

The 2020 Master Plan is intended to guide development, redevelopment, and expansion throughout the SeaWorld leasehold area. Accordingly, the 2020 Master Plan includes land use and development criteria for the entire leasehold and retains the five planning areas established in the 2002 SeaWorld Master Plan.

Area	Land Area (acres)	Water Area (acres)	Total Land and Water Area (acres)
Area 1: SeaWorld Theme Park	97.2	7.0	104.2
Area 2: Guest Parking	56.0	--	56.0
Area 3: Administration and Support	6.8	--	6.8
Area 4: SeaWorld Marina	1.0	10.0	11.0
Area 5: Perez Cove Shoreline	11.4	--	11.4
Total	172.4	17.0	189.4

2020 Master Plan

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Introduction provides the purpose, background, history and context to the SeaWorld Master Plan.

Chapter 2 - Development Plan

Chapter 2 provides the Land Use and Development Criteria, which contains an area-by-area description of existing land uses; allowed uses; general development criteria; and, where appropriate, project-specific

development criteria for all future development within the SeaWorld leasehold area. This Chapter also contains information on setback requirements for the shoreline and park perimeter, renovations and structural replacements, the firework and drone displays, and lighting. This Chapter discusses the project types and park area improvements below in further detail.

The 2020 Master Plan establishes two specific project categories:

2002 Special Projects carried over from the 2002 Master Plan

These projects, which are referred to as “2002 Special Projects”, are conceptual development proposals that were included in the 2002 Master Plan and are carried over into this 2020 Master Plan; however, they are not anticipated to be built for many years. The 2002 Special Projects include: the Special Events Center (Area 1), Future Parking Garage Site (Area 2), Future Marina Expansion Site (Area 4) and Future Hotel Site (Area 5); each planning area has distinct development criteria. Project height may exceed the area height limit where specified in the project design criteria. The 2002 Special Projects are conceptual and would require further design and review by the City and CCC.

General Leasehold Development

This project category includes all future projects not otherwise identified that may be proposed over the life of the 2020 Master Plan. Such projects may be located anywhere within the SeaWorld leasehold area in accordance with the area’s development requirements, shoreline and perimeter setbacks, and limitations for attractions exceeding 100 feet in height. All projects in this category are subject to a “determination of consistency” by the City and a Coastal Development Permit by the CCC, as described in Chapter 4 (Regulatory Framework) of the 2020 Master Plan (Attachment 6). As with the 2002 Master Plan, the 2020 Master Plan requires all SeaWorld proposed development projects be reviewed by the City and the CCC.

The five planning areas are described in Chapter 2 (Development Plan) of the 2020 Master Plan and are summarized in the sections below (Attachment 6, Figure 2-1):

Area 1: SeaWorld Theme Park

The SeaWorld Theme Park Area 1 (Area 1) consists of 97.2 acres of land area bounded by the South Pacific Passage channel of Mission Bay to the north, the Administration and Support area to the west, the South Shores area of Mission Bay Park to the east, and the Guest Parking area to the south. An additional 7 acres of open water area is used for water shows at Waterfront Stadium.

The SeaWorld Theme Park area is developed with a variety of marine-related attractions and support facilities. SeaWorld Tower, at 320 feet tall, is a prominent landmark and focal point for all of Mission Bay Park and beyond. Within the SeaWorld Theme Park, existing facilities reflect the marine animal, education, and conservation themes set forth in SeaWorld’s vision statement.

Area 1 provides opportunities for development, redevelopment, renovation, and expansion. Submittals for individual developments will be made as needed, pursuant to the 2020 Master Plan. A variety of attractions will be considered for development. Consistent with the 2020 Master Plan, no single attraction type will predominate. Future development and redevelopment will be subject to

the use and development criteria identified under Area 1 and subject to the regulatory process in Chapter 4.

Special Events Center (2002 Special Project)

A Special Events Center is a 2002 Special Project carried over from the 2002 Master Plan that is planned in the northeast corner of Area 1. The Center would provide capacity for approximately 1,000 people and may have structural elements exceeding 30 feet in height.

Area 2: Guest Parking

The Guest Parking Area 2 comprises 56 acres along the south side of the leasehold area between the SeaWorld Theme Park and Sea World Drive. There are approximately 6,134 paved parking spaces currently available within the area; the number varies depending on how the parking lot is striped and managed. The main vehicular entryway to the SeaWorld site is located in the southwest corner of the Guest Parking area. The main exit is located near the middle of the area at a signalized intersection with Sea World Drive. Bus, taxi, and ridesharing services are also available within the area.

Parking Garage (2002 Special Project)

As provided in the previous 2002 Master Plan, a four-level parking garage is proposed within the existing parking lot. The parking garage will not be needed until SeaWorld attendance justifies the additional parking. Half of the first level will be below grade.

Transit Station (2002 Special Project)

As provided in the previous 2002 Master Plan, SeaWorld is committed to working with San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) to accommodate a transit station within the Area 2 parking lot, if and when the opportunity arises.

Area 3: Administration and Support

Administration and Support Area 3 consists of 6.8 acres of land immediately to the west of Area 1. This area contains many of the support facilities needed for SeaWorld's operation, including administrative offices, security, water treatment, storage, and other facilities. A reserved parking lot is also located in the south portion of the area.

Area 4: SeaWorld Marina

The SeaWorld Marina Area 4 contains a small shoreline land area of 1 acre and an open water area of 10 acres. The water area contains a 200-slip marina operated by SeaWorld. Restroom, shower, and lounge facilities are provided for marina guests. On the east side of the marina is the water intake platform, one of two intake areas that provide sea water for SeaWorld's marine animals.

Marina Expansion (2002 Special Project)

As provided in the previous 2002 Master Plan, the 2020 Master Plan proposes a future expansion of the existing marina by extending the three existing docks and adding a fourth dock to the west. The

marina expansion would add 115 water berths for a total of 315 berths. This 2002 Special Project has been carried forward in the 2020 Master Plan as a future conceptual development. This concept would require further discretionary review and permitting by the CCC and the City of San Diego.

Area 5: Perez Cove Shoreline

The Perez Cove Shoreline Area 5 consists of 11.4 acres of land between the Perez Cove shoreline on the east and Perez Cove Way on the west. The northern portion of the area contains the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute and parking lot. Additional asphalt parking areas and landscaping cover the remaining area. The parking area serves marina guests and is an auxiliary lot for SeaWorld employees.

Hotel (2002 Special Project)

As provided in the 2002 Master Plan, the 2020 Master Plan includes a future 300-room hotel. On the north side of the site, additional access from the shoreline to the marina docks will be provided. Future plans would require additional discretionary review and permitting and include an economic feasibility analysis assessing the need for another hotel in Mission Bay Park.

Chapter 3 - Design Guidelines

The 2020 Master Plan includes Design Guidelines. The design guidelines for the 2020 Master Plan are intended as standards to be used throughout the entire SeaWorld leasehold area by SeaWorld designers of buildings, landscaping, signage, and lighting, as well as by maintenance personnel. The City of San Diego will use the design guidelines as a standard for the evaluation of proposed new projects or for modifications to existing development. These guidelines ensure that SeaWorld will continue to maintain consistent standards of design.

Chapter 4 - Regulatory Framework

The Regulatory Framework outlines the policies, regulations, implementation procedures, and amendment processes for the 2020 Master Plan. For all future projects (excluding renovations or replacements of an existing structure), the chapter outlines how a “determination of consistency” is made and what channels of review and approval will be needed.

Chapter 5 - Sustainability

The Sustainability chapter explores how SeaWorld advances San Diego’s sustainability and climate change goals in the areas of energy, water, waste, transportation, climate change adaptation and resilience, marine life conservation, and education.

Permits Required

No permits are required at this time. All future leasehold development is subject to discretionary review and the established project review process described in Chapter 4 of the 2020 Master Plan.

Community Plan Analysis

The MBPMP serves as both the Community Plan which is part of the General Plan and the Local Coastal Program (LCP)/Land Use Plan (LUP) for Mission Bay Park. The plan contains a comprehensive set of recommendations and design guidelines for development within SeaWorld. The City requires that all development in Mission Bay be consistent with the MBPMP and LCP/LUP.

As stated in the MBPMP, the diversity and quality of recreation in Mission Bay Park depends on the balanced provision of public recreation, the sustainable management of environmental resources, and the operation of economically successful commercial leisure enterprises. The SeaWorld site is identified as a Special Study Area. Specific criteria governing development in SeaWorld is governed by the Coastal Act and SeaWorld Master Plan, which is incorporated by reference into the MBPMP and LCP/LUP.

The SeaWorld site is unique in both the type and frequency of development projects within the leasehold. Each year, SeaWorld processes projects to upgrade park facilities. SeaWorld regularly undertakes renovations of its larger attractions, rides, education/presentation/entertainment venues, or exhibits. Most projects will not be highly visible from outside the leasehold. Through a "determination of consistency" process, the City reviews these projects and determines whether a proposed project is consistent with the 2020 Master Plan and the Lease between SeaWorld and the City. The City also determines whether proposed project environmental impacts are addressed in the 2002 Master Plan EIR and the Addendum.

The CCC, which retains original jurisdiction over Mission Bay Park, will review the project for consistency with the Coastal Act, the MBPMP, and the 2020 Master Plan and issue the required Coastal Development Permit.

The 2020 Master Plan includes review procedures to accommodate the added design flexibility envisioned in the MBPMP and enabled by the SeaWorld Height Initiative as discussed above. The 2020 Master Plan design guidelines support the goal of the MBPMP "to guide the continuing development of Mission Bay Park as it further matures into a unique, world-class water-oriented recreation area." These design guidelines support the MBPMP objectives and are intended to supplement the MBPMP Design Guidelines and/or City ordinances, such as the Landscape Ordinance and Noise Ordinance. In the event of any conflict between the 2020 Master Plan Design Guidelines and the MBPMP Design Guidelines, the 2020 Master Plan Design Guidelines shall control. Throughout the 2020 Master Plan, there are multiple references to the MBPMP Design Guidelines. For site design considerations such as landscape design, lighting, signs, and building design, as examples, the 2020 Master Plan explicitly references the MBPMP design guidelines.

Environmental Analysis

Staff reviewed the proposed project and determined that the project is within the scope of the 2002 SeaWorld Master Plan EIR (LDR No. 99-0618; [SCH No. 1984030708](#)) certified by City Council on July 10, 2001, per Resolution No. R-295138. The project also relies on the Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices EIR ([SCH No. 2019060003](#)) for traffic/transportation issues and was certified on November 17, 2020, per Resolution R-313279. Based upon a review of the current project, none of the conditions described in Sections 15162 and 15164 of the State CEQA Guidelines apply. No

changes in circumstances have occurred, and no new information of substantial importance has manifested that would result in new significant or substantially increased adverse impacts as a result of the project. Therefore, an Addendum and Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program has been prepared in accordance with Section 15164 of the CEQA State Guidelines. The Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program contains mitigation for Air Quality, Biological Resources, Energy, Geology/Soils, Neighborhood Character/Aesthetics, Noise, and Water Conservation.

Project-Related Issues

Community outreach has occurred throughout the master plan project process. SeaWorld hosted a community outreach event to kick off the master planning effort. The applicant also conducted tours with the Coastal Commission and City staff and conducted additional outreach specific to nighttime entertainment, including meeting with the San Diego Humane Society and the San Diego Bird Alliance (formerly Audubon). The applicant also met with industry leaders CAPA (California Attractions and Parks Association).

Throughout the plan development process, City planning staff have worked with various departments and presented multiple times to the Mission Bay Park Committee, Parks and Recreation Board, and Planning Commission. Additionally, the applicant has coordinated with CCC staff to offer a preliminary review of the proposed plan, seeking input and addressing issues early in the process. Comments have ranged from a need to address building height within the planning area, nighttime entertainment and public access. The following issues were raised and addressed through the master plan development and environmental review process:

Height of Structures and Public Views

An examination of the major “gateway” approaches into Mission Bay Park in the vicinity of SeaWorld (including Sunset Cliffs Boulevard, West Mission Bay Drive, and Sea World Drive) reveals that expansive views of Mission Bay are generally precluded by a combination of existing development on the SeaWorld leasehold, mature trees, berming (especially along Sea World Drive), and to a significant extent the low lying bluffs along the south shoreline of Fiesta Island.

Because the SeaWorld site is located on the southern edge of Mission Bay Park, it generally serves as a backdrop to the view. This means that from almost any other location in Mission Bay Park, the traditional quality elements of the view, such as a blue water view of Mission Bay, or an open expanse of parkland, will always be in the foreground. Development within the SeaWorld Park will tend to be in the background of the viewshed or the far middle ground if viewed from an elevated hillside area. An existing canopy of tall trees effectively screens most of the park on the north and west sides, making it difficult to distinguish most of the theme park’s individual structures, except for the SeaWorld Skytower, Journey to Atlantis, Electric Eel and the Skyride.

Height limits within the 2020 Master Plan are established by each planning area and are governed by the development criteria. The 2020 Master Plan includes review procedures to accommodate the added design flexibility envisioned in the MBPMP and enabled by the SeaWorld Height Initiative as provided in the 2002 Master Plan. As with the 2002 Master Plan, the 2020 Master Plan requires all SeaWorld

development projects be reviewed by the City and the California Coastal Commission. The height for new development will be analyzed during the Coastal Development Permit process for any particular development, taking into consideration visibility from outside the leasehold, including major coastal access routes and vantage points, and the character and scale of development in the surrounding public parkland.

Transportation/Traffic

A Local Mobility Analysis report and a Vehicle Miles Traveled report were prepared for the project. Under the previous 2002 Master Plan, SeaWorld had projected an annual growth rate of 1.3 percent, resulting in 4.4 million annual attendees by the Year 2020, and a Year 2020 projection of 23,000 average daily trip (ADT) with a maximum traffic generation envelope of 30,300 ADT. The reports analyzing the 2020 Master Plan concluded that an additional 6,295 ADT at 2040 buildout is anticipated with the proposed 2020 Master Plan and would be substantially less than those assessed in the previous 2002 Master Plan EIR (15,300 ADT by 2020 buildout). The analysis in the reports demonstrates that no new significant level of service-based transportation impacts would result from revisions to the previously adopted 2002 Master Plan, and no additional mitigation measures are required.

In addition, several network improvements have been completed in the study area to reduce congestion or improve traffic conditions off-site, many of which are consistent with mitigation measures recommended in the previous 2002 Master Plan EIR, such as the W. Mission Bay Drive bridge. The Vehicle Miles Traveled report also identified additional project design features such as pedestrian network improvements, bike and micromobility improvements, transit system improvements, commuter trip reduction measures and off-site active transportation measures that Sea World will provide.

Nighttime Entertainment

As part of a general package of nighttime entertainment, SeaWorld hosts festivals, concerts, light shows, fireworks, musical acts, and other entertainment offerings after dark.

Fireworks

SeaWorld's fireworks displays are monitored and regulated by the City of San Diego, CCC and the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. SeaWorld regularly obtains permits for fireworks displays, including single-event permits from the City Fire Department, pre-display and post-display reports from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire), and July 4th permits from the City Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, SeaWorld is regulated by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (R9-2011-0022) per Order R9-2011-0032.

SeaWorld is regulated by City Council Policy 500-06, Regulation of Fireworks Displays, which does not permit fireworks displays after 10 p.m. on evenings prior to a workday, or after 11 p.m. on evenings prior to a weekend day or holiday.

Drone Displays

SeaWorld may conduct drone displays within and over water areas immediately adjacent to the

leasehold. Drone displays will be oriented toward SeaWorld in a manner that provides limited visibility from surrounding areas and does not adversely impact nearby sensitive resource or habitat areas. Sound levels at the source will not exceed 65 decibels. The maximum height of a drone display will be approximately 400 feet, subject to Federal Aviation Administration approval. Drone display perimeters shall be at least 1,000 feet from the Stony Point California least tern nesting area. Nighttime drone displays with LED lighting will require coastal development permit(s).

Light Exhibitions

LED light exhibitions, including light sculptures and generative art, may be integrated into the traditional strings of light suspended from the SeaWorld tower. Computer-generated animations keep with the thematic and seasonal character of Mission Bay Park and do not include any commercial messages or logos. LED ground level displays that cannot be seen outside the SeaWorld leasehold are consistent with the City of San Diego Municipal Code Light Pollution Law general requirements and methods of lighting, and permitted in accordance with Section 3, B Lighting of the 2020 Master Plan which regulates off-site light pollution.

Sea Level Rise

While coastal environments regularly experience erosion, flooding during storms, and inundation from tides, sea level rise caused by climate change may exacerbate these natural forces. SeaWorld is located along the southern edge of Mission Bay Park and includes areas of shoreline and open water. Sea level rise science involves both global and local physical processes. Models are created based on science's best understanding of these processes from the global to local scales; therefore, they are dynamic and periodically updated to reflect new research. While the amount and timing of sea level rise is uncertain, it is likely that areas of the park will experience tidal inundation during non-storm conditions and flooding during storm conditions, even with low levels of sea level rise. A *SeaWorld San Diego Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment*, prepared by Moffat and Nichol, dated February 2020 (and included as Appendix B to the 2020 Master Plan) discusses the vulnerability of SeaWorld facilities to coastal hazards associated with future sea level rise and includes recommendations for potential adaptation strategies that can be implemented when and if sea level rise has reached the triggers established. Adaptation strategies for near-term flooding include, but are not limited to, portable barriers (e.g. sandbags, water-inflated or water-filled barriers, temporary cofferdams), raising areas above projected water levels, installation of check valves on outfalls to prevent backflow, and implementation of pumping systems; refer to *SeaWorld San Diego Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment* for further details (Attachment 7). Coordination and collaboration with the City, neighboring leaseholds and other jurisdictions can help to align adaptation efforts, thereby maximizing benefits and minimizing costs.

Public Access

In 1993, SeaWorld began construction of a 10-foot-wide bicycle path along the south and west boundaries of the leasehold to provide a continuous link to the system of paths within Mission Bay Park. The approximately 5,000-foot curvilinear pathway was required by the City of San Diego as mitigation for the 1985 SeaWorld Master Plan because of the lack of a waterfront pathway through the leasehold. Prior to the construction of the pathway, the adjacent links of the area-wide bike circulation were discontinuous.

As additional mitigation for the lack of a waterfront pathway through the leasehold, enhancement to the 1993 bicycle/pedestrian pathway was completed in 2005 pursuant to the 2002 Master Plan. Improvements included increasing the pathway width, where feasible, to 17 feet: 9 feet dedicated for bicycles and skaters (and service emergency vehicles) and 8 feet for pedestrians; inclusion of a 4- to 10-foot-wide landscaped median to separate the two sections; functional markings for each pathway type; and directional signage at key junctions with other pathways.

As additional mitigation for lack of a waterfront pathway in the leasehold and in response to the California Coastal Commission's suggested modifications incorporated in the 2002 Master Plan/LCP Land Use Plan Amendment, SeaWorld has constructed two major improvements to enhance public access to the shoreline. These improvements, which are designed to provide continuous shoreline access from SeaWorld's leasehold to Fiesta Island (a distance of approximately 4,700 feet) are depicted in Figure A-3, Shoreline Access Improvements, of the 2020 Master Plan.

The 2002 Master Plan also called for efforts to take greater advantage of SeaWorld's shoreline location to enhance the visitor experience. The goal of enhancing waterfront orientation for SeaWorld visitors and reducing the visual impact of development from public views continues to be supported by the shoreline and bulk plane setback policies of the 2020 Master Plan.

However, to resolve difficulties in interpreting concepts such as "public use zone" and "variable" setback for commercial leaseholds as described in Appendix G, Design Guidelines of the MBPMP, the 2020 Master Plan shoreline setbacks are intended to implement the MBPMP setback guidance within the SeaWorld theme park (Area 1).

Noise

Noise generated within 200 feet of the leasehold boundary by any new SeaWorld activity, including mechanical sounds or amplified sound, shall comply with the City's Noise Ordinance, Chapter 5, Article 9.5 of the Municipal Code. Firework displays shall be consistent with City Council Policy 500-6 (Regulation of Firework Displays) and with City Fire Department permit regulations. Pursuant to the 2002 Master Plan EIR, prior to issuance of a coastal development permit, a project-specific noise study prepared by a qualified acoustician would be required for any new ride attraction or performance show.

Conclusion

City staff has reviewed the project and concluded that all issues identified through the review process have been resolved in conformance with adopted City Council policies and regulations of the General Plan, Mission Bay Park Master Plan, and the Land Development Code. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council adoption of the 2020 Master Plan and amendments to the General Plan and the MBPMP and LCP/LUP. Should the City Council adopt the 2020 Master Plan, the applicant will work with the California Coastal Commission in a timely manner to advance and authorize a Local Coastal Program/Land Use Plan Amendment.

ALTERNATIVES

1. RECOMMEND that the City Council APPROVE a resolution adopting Addendum No. 646353/SCHs No. 1984030708/2019060003 and adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program;

APPROVE the 2020 Master Plan and amendments to the General Plan and the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, with modifications.

2. DO NOT RECOMMEND that the City Council APPROVE a resolution adopting Addendum No. 646353/SCHs No. 1984030708/2019060003 and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; APPROVE the 2020 Master Plan and amendments to the General Plan and the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

1. [Mission Bay Park Committee Minutes](#)
2. [Parks and Recreation Board Minutes](#)
3. [Addendum No. 646535](#)
4. Location Map
5. [Mission Bay Park Master Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan](#)
6. Draft 2020 SeaWorld Master Plan
7. SeaWorld San Diego Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment
8. Resolution for CEQA Addendum and Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program
9. Resolution for 2020 SeaWorld Master Plan, General Plan and Mission Bay Park Master Plan
10. Ownership Disclosure Statement