



**CEQA and COASTAL DETERMINATIONS  
and  
NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

Project: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade & 5K Walk/Run  
Location: North Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101  
Parcel No.: Various  
Project No.: 2023-167a  
Applicant: Brian Samuels, Vice President, San Diego Alpha Foundation; (309) 287-0215  
Date Approved: 12/27/2024

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project is the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Parade, an annual event, in the city of San Diego, California. The parade is expected to begin at the corner of West Grape Street and North Harbor Drive. The route will travel south, along North Harbor Drive, then head east onto West Broadway and continue south onto Pacific Highway and disband near Seaport Village. This will be a one (1) day event that would occur in January.

In addition to the parade, the proposed project involves a 5K Walk/Run that is expected to begin at the corner of West Grape Street and North Harbor Drive. Like the parade route, the 5K Walk/Run will travel south, along North Harbor Drive, head east onto West Broadway and continue south onto Pacific Highway. The participants will then cross at Harbor Drive, continue south along the Embarcadero promenade until reaching Embarcadero Marina Park South (EMPS), complete a loop of the park, return north along the Embarcadero promenade and finish by disbanding at Ruocco Park.

Both the parade and 5K Walk/Run are expected to conclude by approximately 1:00 p.m. At least one lane on Harbor Drive will remain open and managed by Special Events Traffic Control until one (1) hour before the event when the street will be fully closed. The parade is expected to start at approximately 10:00 a.m., and the 5K Walk/Run is expected to begin at 9:30 a.m. A rolling reopen will be implemented at this event such that the parade route will reopen to traffic as the parade fully passes each section of the route. All affected streets shall be reopened at approximately 1:00 p.m. Following completion of the moving events, the event participants will be invited to celebrate at Ruocco Park with a stage and live music. The celebration is anticipated to conclude at approximately 5:00 p.m. Staging for this event will take place along North Harbor Drive from West Grape Street to West Ash Street. Set up will begin at approximately 7:00 a.m. and breakdown for the celebration will be complete by approximately 6:00 p.m.

The District would provide sponsorship in the form of District funding and services for this event. The parade would feature marching floats, music and dance by upwards of 100 organizations. It would involve temporary installation of bleacher seating and a raised platform for announcements and entertainment along portions of the parade route on North Harbor Drive. Set up and tear down of all temporary installations would occur on the same day of the parade. The event required the temporary use of two (2) public parking lots at Ruocco Park which would be unavailable for public use from approximately 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Parking would be available at nearby public parking facilities and on nearby surface lots and streets. Attendees will be encouraged to utilize public transportation, carpools, and ride-sharing services for this event.

A Coastal Act Categorical Determination of Exclusion (Project No. 2023-167) was issued previously on December 26, 2023. The event described in Project No. 2023-167 is one possible parade route and 5K walk/run route, and location for the celebration following the moving events when held on District Tidelands. The newly proposed project is amended to include an alternative parade route and 5K walk/run route. While the newly proposed project's celebration following the moving events will take place outside of District Tidelands, the proposed project, as amended, would allow for future flexibility in the moving event routes and celebration to be held similarly to previous years on District Tidelands.

**Alternative Parade and 5K route**

The alternative parade route would begin at the corner of West Grape Street and North Harbor Drive, travel south along North Harbor Drive to West Harbor Drive, then turn north onto Pacific Highway and

disband near the Embassy Suites by Hilton San Diego Bay Downtown. The alternative 5K Walk/Run route would be an out and back route beginning at the corner of West Ash Street and North Harbor Drive and would travel south along the Embarcadero promenade to the San Diego Hilton Bayfront in South Embarcadero, where participants would turn around and return north along the promenade and North Harbor Drive to finish back at West Ash Street. The 5K Walk/Run is expected to begin at approximately 9:00 a.m. and finish prior to the parade, which is expected to start at approximately 11:00 a.m. North Harbor Drive would be closed between West Grape Street and West Ash Street at approximately 6:00 a.m. to set up staging for both events, and between West Grape Street and Pacific Highway at approximately 9:00 a.m., for the duration of both events. Both the parade and 5K Walk/Run are expected to conclude by approximately 1:00 p.m. Street closure along North Harbor Drive would reopen to traffic on a rolling basis as the parade passes each section of the route and deemed safe to do so, and is expected to be fully reopened at approximately 1:30 p.m. Following the completion of the moving events, participants would be invited to celebrate at Waterfront Park outside of District Tidelands.

The portion of the proposed project located on District Tidelands is limited to the Parade and 5K Walk/Run along North Harbor Drive and the Embarcadero Promenade, with an anticipated total attendance of approximately 15,000. Parade staging for the event would require the temporary use of one (1) public parking lot across North Harbor Drive from the San Diego County Administration Center, which would be unavailable for public use during the events and would reopen as the parade fully passes that section of the route, or at approximately 1:30 p.m., whichever occurs first. If the alternative parade route and 5K walk/run route are selected, it would still be a one (1) day event and related set-up, breakdown, and parking options would remain the same as the original project (2023-167).

Due to its nature and limited scope, construction of the proposed project would generate a minor amount of vehicle trips and would require limited use of equipment. Therefore, impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and transportation and traffic are not anticipated to occur. Furthermore, the Applicant would be responsible for complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding construction demolition debris, hazards and hazardous materials, and stormwater.

The following categorical determinations are based on the project submittal and all project information known to the District as of the date of this determination.

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**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

***CATEGORICAL DETERMINATION***

Categorical Exemptions: CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4)/District Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA Section 3.d: Minor Alterations to Land and CEQA Guidelines Section 15323 (Class 23): Normal Operations of Facilities for Public Gatherings

3.d. Minor Alterations to Land: Includes minor alterations in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation not involving removal of mature, scenic trees, including, but not limited to:

- (6) Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment;

AND/OR

Normal Operations of Facilities for Public Gatherings:

Consists of the normal operations of existing facilities for public gatherings for which the facilities were designed, where there is a past history of the facility being used for the same or similar kind of purpose. For the purposes of this section, “past history” shall mean that the same or similar kind of activity has been occurring for at least three years and that there is a reasonable expectation that the future occurrence of the activity would not represent a change in the operation of the facility. Facilities included within this exemption include, but are not limited to, racetracks, stadiums, convention centers, auditoriums, amphitheaters, planetariums, swimming pools, and amusement parks.

The proposed project is determined to be Categorically Exempt pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines and the Sections of the District’s *Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA* as identified above because it is a

temporary event that would not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees, and would not have any permanent effects on the environment, and would consist of the normal operation of existing facilities for public gatherings. The District has determined none of the six exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply to this project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2).

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15062, a 35-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply from the date a Notice of Exemption is posted with the San Diego County Clerk, or a 180-day statute of limitations for this CEQA exemption shall apply if no Notice of Exemption is filed.

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT**

*PORT MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY*

Planning District: 3 - Centre City Embarcadero (Precise Plan Figure 11)

Land Use Designation: Park/Plaza; Streets; and Promenade

The portion of the proposed project located within the Coastal Development Permit (CDP) and Coastal Act exclusion authority of the District conforms to the certified Port Master Plan because it would involve a temporary event consistent with the existing certified Land Use designations. The proposed project would not change the use of the site nor would it interrupt or expand the existing conforming uses of the site.

*CATEGORICAL DETERMINATION*

Categorical Exclusion: Section 8.d: Minor Alterations to Land

8.d. Minor Alterations to Land: Minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees, including but not limited to:

- (5) Minor temporary uses of land and water having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, including festivals, boating activities, parades, and running or bicycling events.

The portion of the proposed project located within the CDP and Coastal Act exclusion authority of the District is determined to be Categorically Excluded pursuant to the Section of the District's *Coastal Development Permit Regulations* as identified above because it is a temporary event that would not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees.

Pursuant to California Coastal Act Section 30717, there is a 10-working-day period to appeal this "Coastal Act Categorical Determination of Exclusion" to the California Coastal Commission.


For the portion of the proposed project located outside of the District's Coastal Act approval authority, additional approvals may be required from other agencies.

**CALIFORNIA PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE**

The proposed project complies with Section 87.(a)(5) of the Port Act, which allows for the construction, reconstruction, repair, maintenance, and operation of public buildings, public assembly and meeting places, convention centers, parks, playgrounds, bathhouses and bathing facilities, recreation and fishing piers, public recreation facilities, including, but not limited to, public golf courses, and for all works, buildings, facilities, utilities, structures, and appliances incidental, necessary, or convenient for the promotion and accommodation of any of those uses. The Port Act was enacted by the California Legislature and is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine. Consequently, the proposed project is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine.


RANDA CONIGLIO  
Acting President/CEO

Determination by:  
Davin Cox  
Assistant Planner

Signature:   
Date: 12/27/2024

Development Services

Assistant/Deputy General Counsel

Signature:   
Date: 12/27/2024