



CEQA and COASTAL DETERMINATIONS and NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Project: TMA BlueTech Demonstration Day
Location: National City Aquatic Center, 3300 Pepper Park Place, National City, CA 91950
Parcel No.: Various
Project No.: 2025-125
Applicant: Matt Classen, Executive Director, TMA Blue Tech, 325 W. Washington Street, Suite 2362, San Diego, CA 92103; (541) 654-7265
Date Approved: 10/30/2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is the TMA BlueTech Demonstration Day in the city of National City, California. BlueTech Month is a month-long, multi-location, multi-partner initiative that brings together stakeholders to highlight the role of maritime innovation in shaping economic resilience, national security, and environmental sustainability. As part of BlueTech Month, one event would be hosted at the National City Aquatic Center and focus on testing operational solutions to address gaps in coastal security, autonomy, and real-time maritime domain awareness. The event is developed in collaboration with the U.S. Department of War Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) to explore low-cost, rapidly deployable technologies that can be scaled globally to address the needs of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and general law enforcement.

The proposed event, including set-up and breakdown, has a duration of approximately one-day and would take place in November. The event features live demonstrations of maritime technology developed by innovators across defense, industry, and academia. There would be eight (8) companies performing in-water demonstrations near the National City Aquatic Center. Demonstrations would range from live trials of autonomous and artificial intelligence (AI) powered systems to integrated energy, propulsion, and sensing solutions. The companies showcasing their technology at the event are listed below:

Havoc AI – Demonstration would test an AI-enabled situational awareness system using computer vision and onboard analytics on a small electric surface vessel, showcasing real-time target detection and decision-support capabilities within a controlled operating zone.

Tideman Marine – Demonstration would feature a recyclable, high-density polyethylene (HDPE) workboat hull designed for port operations and sustainability. The vessel would perform short, controlled maneuvers to highlight stability, safety, and low-noise operations.

Maritime Robotics – The Otter is a compact, autonomous surface vehicle designed for coastal and inland waters, offering efficient, high-precision data collection for hydrographic surveying, environmental monitoring, and research applications.

SubSeaSail – Demonstration would feature a small, lightweight (30 pounds) wind- and solar-powered autonomous vessel for long-duration ocean observation. The technology is a limited, slow-speed operation to demonstrate sail-powered propulsion and control systems.

SRS Fusion – Demonstration would feature a compact multi-sensor remotely operated vehicle (ROV) platform integrating sonar, radar, and optical imaging for coastal domain awareness. Operations are dock-based and short-range only.

Seasats – Demonstration would feature an electric, solar-powered unmanned surface vehicle (USV) designed for persistent maritime sensing. Demonstration includes short, pre-programmed routes and data transmission to shore interface.

Splash 9 – Demonstration would feature battery-powered, autonomous mini-drones for surface environmental data collection. Technology would operate within a limited test zone to display real-time telemetry and station-keeping.

Hydrographic Solutions (GRAVA Hydro) – Demonstration would feature a Hydrographic survey system mounted on a small electric vessel. The technology conducts shallow-water mapping and water-quality sampling.

Demonstrations would utilize the National City Boat Launch Ramp to deploy and test the various blue technologies. It is anticipated that approximately 3-5 people would be present on the eastern dock of the National City Boat Launch at one time to assist with each demonstration. However, for safety purposes, no personnel would be authorized to be in-water to operate the technology during demonstrations. Prior to the demonstrations, a demonstration zone would be designated by the event safety coordinator and onsite District staff. This designated demonstration zone would avoid any known eelgrass resources, and would not conflict with navigation in the channel. All vessels are electric or battery-powered and would remain inside the designated demonstration zone as to not disturb vessel traffic within the navigation corridor. The boat launch ramp would remain open and unobstructed for continued public use during the event. Trailers and equipment would be staged in the parking lot and would require the temporary use of approximately 4 parking spaces. The event attendance is anticipated to be approximately 100 people. During the event, event attendees would watch demonstrations along the promenade near the aquatic center. The promenade shall remain open and available for public use should a member of the public want to watch the demonstrations. No event staging shall be permitted along the promenade.

Additionally, the event would offer attendees approximately 1-hour tours of San Diego Bay. Pick-up and drop-off for tours would occur at the public floating dock connected to the National City Aquatic Center, which would remain open for public use during the event. Aside from pick-up and drop-off for the tours, event attendees would not be permitted to watch demonstrations from the public floating dock.

Due to its temporary nature and limited scope, the proposed event 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.

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; CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 (Class 6)/District Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA Section 3.f: Information Collection; 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

3.f. Information Collection: Includes basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which has not yet been approved, adopted or funded.

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 Categorical Exempt pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines and the Sections of the District's *Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA* as identified above. These are appropriate for the proposed project because it is for a temporary event that would result in no permanent effects on the environment, would not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees, is for the purpose of basic data collection/research activities which would not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource, 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: 5 - National City Bayfront (Precise Plan Figure 15)

Land and Water Use Designations: Park/Plaza and Ship Navigation Corridor

The proposed project conforms to the certified Port Master Plan because it would involve a temporary event for the purpose of showcasing various blue technologies consistent with the existing certified Land and Water 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 Exclusions: Section 8.d: Minor Alterations to Land; and Section 8.e: Information Collection

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

AND/OR

8.e. Information Collection: Basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major significant disturbance to an environmental resource.

The proposed project is determined to be Categorical Excluded pursuant to the Sections of the District's *Coastal Development Permit Regulations* as identified above. These are appropriate for the proposed project because it is a temporary event that would not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees and would not result in a serious or major significant disturbance to an environmental resource.

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.

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.

SCOTT CHADWICK
President/CEO

Determination by:

Lillian Mattes
Associate Planner
Planning

Deputy/Assistant General Counsel

Signature: Lillian Mattes

Date: 10/30/2025

Signature: Shiraz Tangri

Date: 10/30/2025