



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

Project: Tree Removal and Replacement by San Diego Unified Port District on Harbor Island
Location: 3202 N Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101
Parcel No.: 007-030
Project No.: 2026-095
Applicant: Kurt Brickley, Forestry Services and Open Spaces Manager, San Diego Unified Port District, 3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101, 619-686-6378
Date Approved: 8/3/2026

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would involve the removal and replacement of a tree by San Diego Unified Port District (District) in the city of San Diego, California. The removed tree would be replaced at a minimum ratio of 1:1, with a drought-tolerant and/or water wise, non-invasive tree. The tree locations and activities are as follows:

Approximately one (1) Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) tree in the planter area along the pathway along North Harbor Drive adjacent to the current Hertz Corporation leasehold in East Harbor Island (Exhibit A) has died and requires removal. The tree would be removed and replaced in approximately late-2026 with a minimum of one (1) drought-tolerant and/or water wise, non-invasive tree to be planted in Harbor Island. This would take approximately two (2) days of work for removal and one (1) day for replacement planting.

The District and/or the District's landscape service providers would remove and replace the tree using a truck, chainsaw, chipper, stump grinder, hand tools and associated equipment. Tree replacement and planting would include ongoing maintenance as needed, including replacement of the tree within the first five (5) years of planting if it fails. Work hours for the proposed project would be from approximately 7:00am-3:30pm Monday-Friday. Since the tree removal location is adjacent to a pathway, a work crew would safely redirect pedestrians around the tree removal site during work.

A breeding and nesting bird survey would be conducted prior to tree removal activities. If an active nest is located, all work within 500 feet of raptor nests and 300 feet of other nests, or a distance determined to be appropriate by a qualified biologist, would be postponed until such nest is vacated and the juveniles have fledged and when there is no attempt of a second nesting.

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 District 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 15301 (Class 1)/District Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA Section 3.a: Existing Facilities and CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4)/District Guidelines for Compliance with CEQA Section 3.d: Minor Alterations to Land

- 3.a. Existing Facilities: Includes operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that previously existing, including but not limited to:
- (12) Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs.

AND/OR

3.d. Minor Alterations to Land (SG § 15304) (Class 4): Includes minor alterations in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation not involving removal of mature, scenic trees, including, but not limited to:

(5) New gardening or landscaping.

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 would consist of the removal and replacement of a tree and the associated tree maintenance that would involve negligible expansion of use beyond that previously existing, would not result in a significant cumulative impact due to the continuation of the existing use, would not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees and would result in no permanent effects on the environment.

The proposed tree is not considered a mature, scenic tree for the following reasons. While the District does not have a tree ordinance or policy, the City of San Diego Council Policy 900-19 for Public Tree Protection¹ provides for the protection of designated trees under the following categories: Landmark, Heritage, Parkway Resource and Preservation Grove. The tree proposed for removal would not qualify as a Landmark, Heritage or Preservation Grove tree. While the proposed tree would potentially qualify as a Parkway Resource tree, the removal of the dead, not fully mature tree would not significantly affect the look of the whole row of trees because a consistent spread of canopy would remain throughout this area due to existing mature trees.

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: 2 - Harbor Island/Lindbergh Field (Precise Plan Figure 9)

Land Use Designations: Open Space

The proposed project conforms to the certified Port Master Plan because it would involve the removal and replacement of a tree and the associated tree maintenance consistent with the existing certified Land Use designation(s). 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.a: Existing Facilities and Section 8.d: Minor Alterations to Land

8.a. Existing Facilities: The operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that previously existing, including but not limited to:

(8) Maintenance and control of existing vegetation

AND/OR

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:

(2) New gardening or landscaping

The proposed project is determined to be Categorically Excluded pursuant to the Section(s) of the District's *Coastal Development Permit Regulations* as identified above because it would consist of the removal and replacement of a tree and associated tree maintenance that would involve negligible expansion of use beyond that previously existing and 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.

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:

Justin Huitema
Planner I
Development Services

Signature: _____
Date: _____
8/3/2026

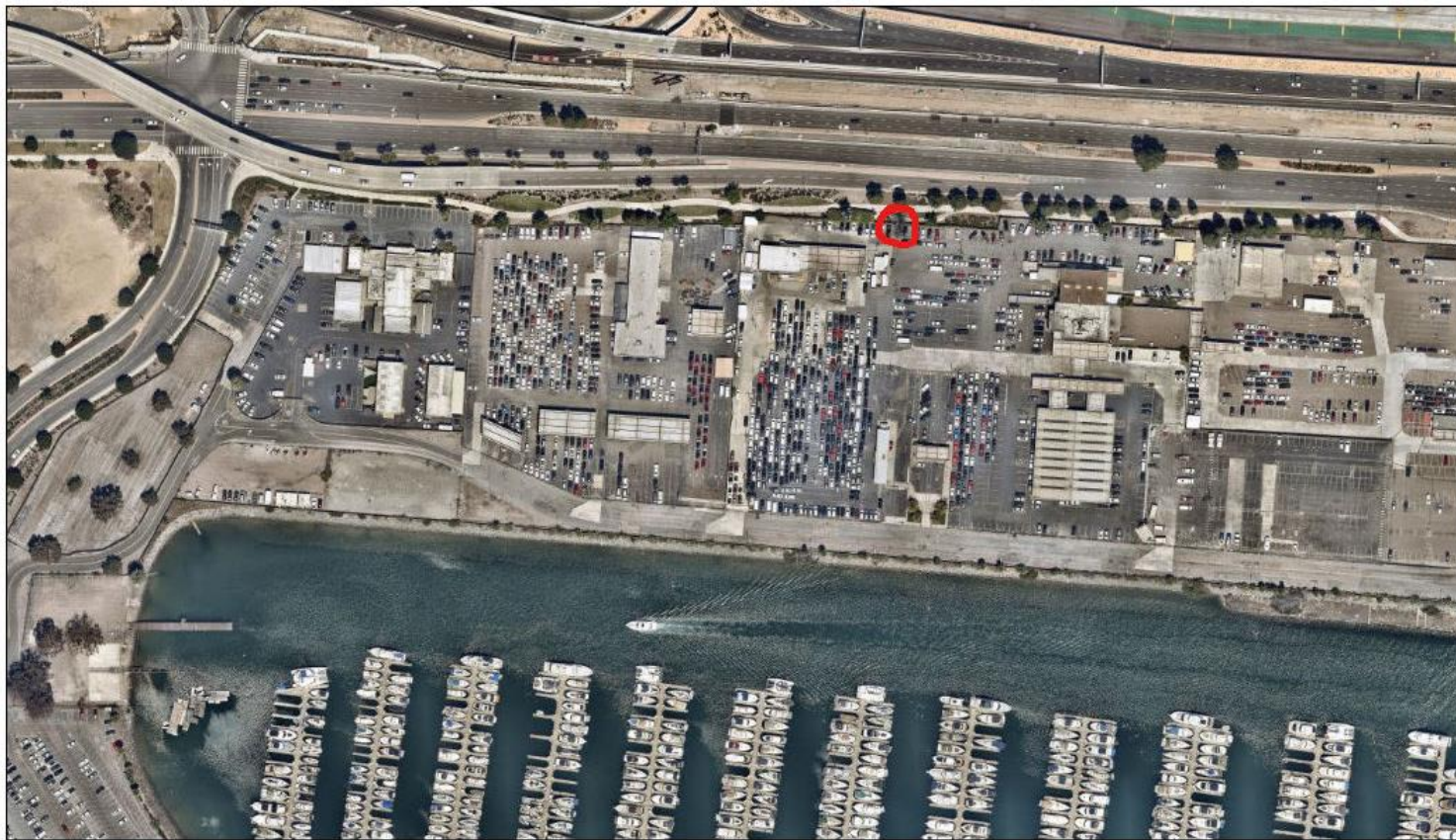
Assistant/Deputy General Counsel

Signature: _____
Date: _____
8/3/2026

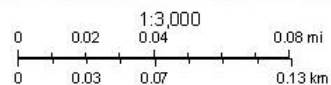
Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Tree Location

Exhibit 1 – Tree Location



7/10/2026, 12:23:07 PM



SanGIS is using data provided by local law enforcement agencies and ARJIS. Law Beat information is provided by each coded jurisdiction within the County of San Diego Sheriff's Department. | SDUPD GIS | Guest Services, GIS Branch | SanGIS is using legally recorded data provided by the County of San Diego. | Port of San Diego