

To: IB Area Chamber of Commerce
From: Roger Benham roger@Pond20forUs.com

SUBJECT: Pond 20 - Is it too late to save for Economic Development? Not if you Love the IB Area

Dear Members:

Last July 16th, an email was sent to the IB Chamber of Commerce membership with the nondescript subject line "Pond 20 action" by the South County Economic Development Council. To me, this email was a very misleading announcement of the Port District's action of reversing their promise to the people of the IB Area for the economic development of Pond 20.

Now the situation has changed for the worse. On October 7th, the Port District posted a RFP on their webpage for the "mitigation" of 84 of the 95 acres of Pond 20. The RFP requires that any questions must be submitted no later than October 19th, and the proposals must be received by November 4th. We should be very concerned about why the Port District is putting this on such a fast track.

The loss of Pond 20 to mitigation is a serious blow to the communities of the IB Area. In the end, the IB Area gets all the imbalanced burdens of land mitigation (see Imbalanced Mitigation-Figure 1 below), while the North gets all the benefits of economic growth (see Liberty Station-Figure 2). In other words, the residents and the children of the IB Area get comparative impoverishment, while the North gets richer.

I have heard Port District personnel, and members of special interest groups, claim that mitigation (Land Banking) "is" economic development. As pittance to the IB Area, they are offering "2 small sites" and unspecified "net funds" to serve as a payoff, or hush money, while they reap the real long term value of Pond 20 for prosperity to the North. This is a farce – how can you compare something like Liberty Station to a park bench and a couple nature trails (note: true economic development like Liberty Station has provided \$billions in economic and public amenities, in addition to a lot of benches and trails).

Who Represents the IB Area's Interests? – Other Examples

Back when I was a boy, the Silver Strand was part of San Diego County. All of a sudden, it was annexed into the City of Coronado. Where were our City Leaders, and why didn't Imperial Beach get part of the Silver Strand? Think about it, wouldn't the IB Area have had a greater need for the economic benefits of the Coronado Cays, Lowe's Hotel, and Silver Strand State Park? Especially considering that Coronado already had the Hotels, Glorrieta Bay Marina, the Shores, an 18 hole publically funded golf course, and rich developments to no end.

A quick reality check for all ----- the same thing is happening with Pond 20 that occurred with the Silver Strand. A few elite groups are pursuing their own self-serving agenda, and selling off the future prosperity of the local IB Area population.

When was the last time a 95 acre Bay-Front parcel was available for economic development in the IB Area? Reflecting on this question should help you understand the significance of what we are about to lose.

With minimal public input, the Port District is claiming that nobody is interested in the economic development of Pond 20's 95 acre Bay-front property. Imagine that? Are they claiming that they could only come up with two (2) interested parties for development of Pond 20, the PCH Dinner Show, and a Gallic Sports Park? Or, is it likely that they never wanted to offer economic prosperity to the IB Area in the first place, favored the development interests to the North, and fully intended to use it for mitigation purposes, despite their promises?

Remember the 9th and Palm Miracle Shopping Center and NIFCU fiasco? When did you find out about the giveaway to Suddbery for \$1 dollar? Maybe you experienced the same shock that I experienced when Jim Janney said "You are too late". He said this after I attended every public workshop, diligently sent information to all parties, and conducted years of effort to encourage a coalition for a Downtown IB. Not one shred of public input was considered. Everything appeared to be done in the backroom.

They (Jim Janney, Jerry Selby, Greg Wade & the rest) fast-tracked the giveaway of the shopping center at 9th & Palm, then we were stuck with State of California having to fix the mess. Boy did they fix it, handing over the title for a pittance \$240K, all based on a fabricated "drainage" issue.

Please, let's not act in the same manner as the prior examples, quietly sitting back while our immediate and future prosperity is being traded away.

We need to have more public input and consider more options for Pond 20, and not cave-in to the self-serving lobbyists and development interests to the North. Do you agree?

Provided as Figure 3 is an example of what was presented to the Port District on November 20, 2014, by a highly prestigious architecture firm at the 50 Year Master Plan meeting (paid for by the Port). This information was never provided to the citizens of the IB Area as an option for Pond 20. Why?

We should have been presented many options. For example, have you seen the recently open Florida Polytechnic? This project cost \$60 million and is probably what we will end up paying for the restoration associated with mitigation. Why can't we, as a part of the sixth largest city of the richest country in the world, immediately invite Carlos Calatrava to offer his services for Pond 20? Please see:

<http://www.designboom.com/architecture/santiago-calatrava-florida-polytechnic-university-08-13-2014/>

Please respond. It's not too late if you act now.

Sincerely,
Roger Benham, P.E.
roger@Pond20forUs.com



Figure 1 – Imbalanced Burdon of Mitigation. The 95 acre Pond 20 is perfectly situated to benefit the communities of the IB Area, and is the rarest opportunity for prosperity we have ever been given. Pond 20 is now being taken away by special interest groups seeking to use Pond 20 for “mitigation”, instead of the “economic development” promised by the Port District. The Port District has neglected public input and ignored specific needs of the IB Area.

Fact 1- Since the 1998 giveaway of Western Salt land to “mitigate” projects to the North, only portions along the “scenic route” to Coronado and Chula Vista Marina have had attempted restoration.

Fact 2 - A majority of the Western Salt mitigation land already given away has not been restored. Since there are large amounts of unrestored land, why is the Port District giving away a majority of Pond 20 for additional mitigation banking? Reversing on their promise and offering only “two small sites”, is wrong, considering that the IB Area needs economic help more than neighboring communities.

Fact 3&4 - Only about 2% of Pond 20 is classified as “wetland” and the remaining has been deemed suitable for Development. Advanced economic development can accommodate foreseen sea level rise, and coexist with natural environment.

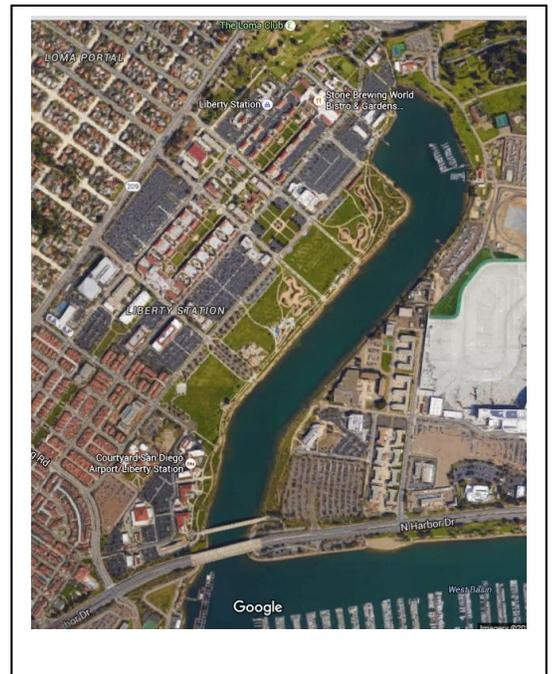
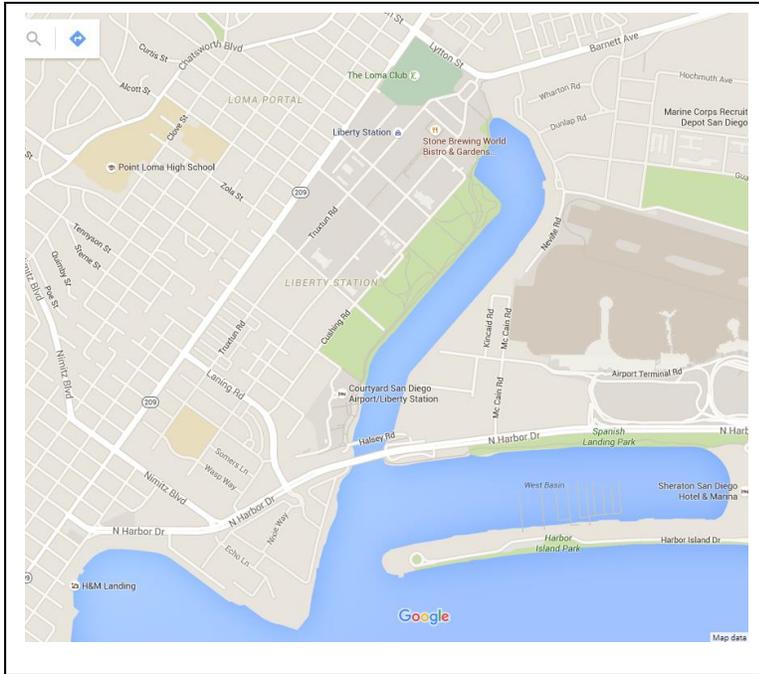


Figure 2 – Liberty Station was made possible by a generous gift from the IB Area around 1998 when a majority of the Western Salt property was used to “mitigate” for the multi \$billion economic and public amenities for the people of the Point Loma Area. When you visit Liberty Station you will see a mile long bay front access with parks, public amenities, multitudes of groups and families picnicking, children playing, sporting activities, people fishing from the shore line, businesses thriving, swimmers and sailboats, paddle boarders, outdoor events, etc, etc, and yes,..... a beautiful “view corridor”.

Around 1998, when the Western Salt Works was used the “mitigate” for Liberty Station, the last remaining 10% of Western Salt land, the 95 acre Pond 20, was “set aside for economic development” by the Port District for the benefit of the IB Area. Now, they are reversing their promise and offering Pond 20 for mitigation. This is a tragedy for the communities in the IB Area.

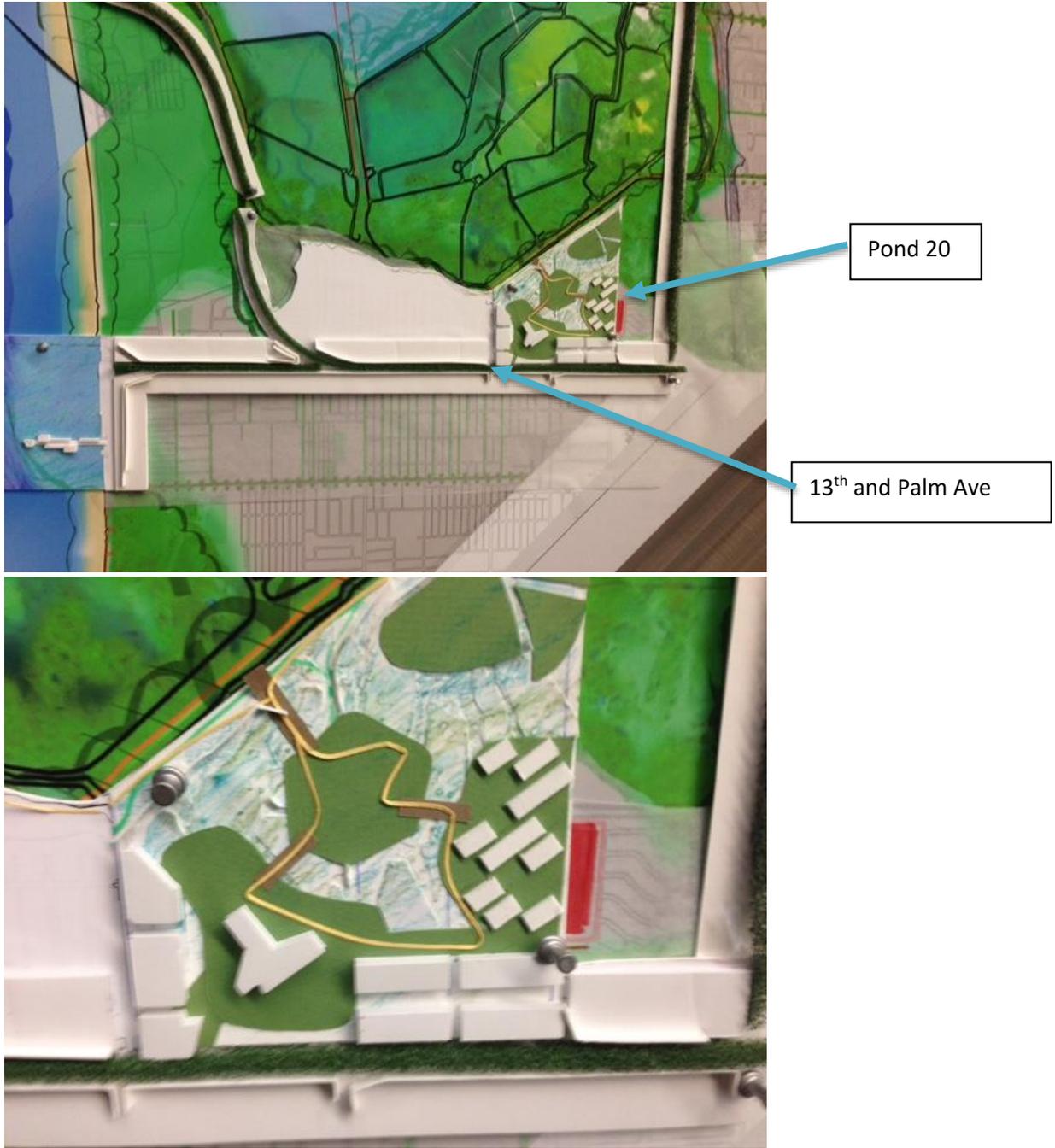


Figure 3 - These pictures from a Nov 20, 2014, presentation by a high profile architecture firm hired by Port District show “Liberty Station style” (Point Loma) economic and public amenities at Pond 20. Why was this rejected? Why did the Port District deny the local public the opportunity to provide input and comments? Why is the Port District renegeing on their promise and denying economic development for the IB Area, and fast-tracking the “mitigation” of Pond 20. Sadly, local nonprofit groups (SWIA and Wildcoast) and developer interests to the North, have persuaded to Port to “mitigate” Pond 20 for their own self-serving agendas. Instead of economic and public amenities.