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MEMORANDUM

SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

To: File 86.505E Mission Bay Plan

From: Barbara W. Sahm, Environmental Review Officer *BWS*

Re: Revision to Findings of Significant Impact in Certification Motion

The City Planning Commission certified the Mission Bay Final EIR on August 23, 1990. This certification action included a list of significant environmental impacts. The proposed Findings attached to the Commission Resolution adopting the Mission Bay Special Area Plan include changes to this list of significant impacts. The changes add several impacts as being significant unmitigated impacts resulting from the Project, and revise one of the impacts listed in the August 23 certification motion.

The Final EIR states "All Alternatives would commit the Project Area to more intense urban uses, compared to existing vacant railroad, industrial, warehousing, and transportation uses, and vacant land." (Page X.1.) This statement, abbreviated, has been included in the Findings attached to Commission Resolutions approving the Project to replace finding 11) 1) in Motion No. 12006.

This first significant impact in Motion No. 12006, as approved on August 23, suggests that the new land uses in the Project, including housing, office, retail, light industrial, community services and open space uses would be significant impacts. This is not an appropriate suggestion, in light of the Overriding Considerations findings that note that the new proposed uses, such as housing and open space and commercial uses, are beneficial aspects of the project. The intent of the finding in the EIR Certification Motion had been to indicate that the intensification of land uses compared to the existing rail and industrial uses and vacant land is a significant environmental impact, as provided for in the EIR on page X.1. Therefore, the findings attached to the Commission's formal Project approval actions have modified the first significant impact item to clarify its intent.



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September 6, 1990

MEMORANDUM

TO: File 86.505E Mission Bay Final Environmental Impact Report

FROM: Barbara W. Sahm, Environmental Review Officer
Diane Oshima, Mission Bay EIR Coordinator

BWS

RE: Proposed Revisions to the Mission Bay Project - Rail Freight Access

Development scenarios for the area known as Mission Bay were evaluated in detail in the Mission Bay EIR, certified by the City Planning Commission on August 23, 1990. The Mission Bay Project, defined in the Special Area Plan and Development Agreement presently under review by the City Planning Commission, is most similar to Alternative A, with revisions described and analysed in Variant 12, and other modifications discussed in Variants 8, 9, 10 and 11 in the Final EIR. A change has been proposed in the Project that is not fully described in Variant 12 or any of the other variants or alternatives analysed in the EIR. Rail freight access from the Southern Pacific main line to the San Francisco Port's North Container Terminal at Pier 80, was described in Variant 12. That proposal has been modified.

The present plan for providing rail freight access would continue to replace the lead tracks in the Mission Bay area with a rail bridge over Islais Creek from Pier 92-94 to Pier 80, but the interim replacement for the 16th Street lead described on p. XV.P.40-41 would involve new use of tracks in China Basin Street north of 16th Street. As described for Variant 12, freight trains would proceed north on the SP mainline to about 7th and Channel streets, then return south via the interim track in 16th Street to the southbound portion of track in China Basin Street. As modified, from the 16th Street lead track the train would turn north on China Basin Street before heading south on the China Basin Street to the existing Illinois Street track and on to Pier 80. The northern portion of track in China Basin Street would include a "run around" track to permit the switch engine to reach the "new front" of the train at the south end before proceeding south on China Basin and Illinois Streets. The modification is proposed in order to provide for the proper radius curve at 16th and China Basin Streets; the turn directly south at this intersection would have required acquisition of the property that presently contains Esprit's employee cafe.

The new use of the northern portion of China Basin Street, from 16th Street to about Pier 50, was described in the Mission Bay EIR in the analyses of Alternatives A and B (pp. VI.E.154 - 156 and VI.E.182 - 183b, see also pp. XV.E.59-60), but included only a single track and was expected to be used only by the Belt Line for access further north to the Piers north of the Channel. The present proposal would require a second track as a run around track for part of the length of China Basin Street and would involve use of the street by more trains than the expected once-per-week Belt Line train.

The proposed turn north from 16th Street into China Basin Street would require use of a portion of the park space proposed on the north west corner of this intersection. As that park is presently planned for active recreational uses such as a baseball diamond, the proposed new rail use would not prevent this use with proper safety precautions such as fencing adjacent to the rails.

The present proposal would completely close a portion of China Basin Street to vehicular traffic for the duration of the switching action (estimated to be one hour or less). If rail activity continues at present levels of about one train per day, generally being transported in nighttime hours, the new impact would be low, similar to that explained for Alternatives A and B (see p. XV.E.59-60 and VI.E.183b). The Port is attempting to attract more shipping activity at the North Terminal. If this were to occur, and if the interim tracks in 16th and China Basin Streets were still in use, then further disruptions would occur; it is not possible at this time to reasonably determine how many additional trains would use the track nor what their frequency or duration would be.

The proposed use of China Basin Street for freight rail service would not preclude implementation of the main proposal to provide rail access to the North Container Terminal via a rail bridge over Islais Creek. The Project Sponsor has agreed to contribute over \$1,000,000 to acquisition and construction of such a bridge. The bridge could be constructed before it becomes necessary to use tracks in China Basin Street, but if this is not accomplished, interim use of China Basin Street could be discontinued at any time and the surplus tracks removed when the bridge is completed.

San Francisco Administrative Code Section 31.35(d)1 calls for reevaluating modified projects for which an EIR has already been certified to determine the environmental effects of the revisions. As the above discussion suggests, in reevaluating the Project in relation to the Alternatives and Variants analysed in the Mission Bay EIR, the Department has determined that there could be no substantial change in the environmental effects of the project as a result of the proposed modification.