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Comments on the Sports Complex item, 4.2

Chula Vista City Council meeting on August 4, 2025

The J Street Marsh is one of the most environmentally important areas of San Diego Bay. It is immediately West of the proposed development. The J St. Marsh has a unique combination of Bay Water, seasonal fresh water, and seasonal nutrient and soil inputs. As a result it supports a large number and diversity of wetland wildlife.

The Gaylord Hotel and Conference Center project faced significant delays and additional costs because the initial proposed location was far too damaging environmentally. The Hotel planning was finally moved to its current and very suitable location. It would be very appropriate to acknowledge that this location for the Pangaea project is probably even more inappropriate and will probably have a similar regulatory problems with unnecessary costs and delays.

The wildlife of the site is vulnerable to severe risks, especially from Sea Level Rise, disturbance, and escaped lighting from nearby development. Any development on this site needs to include several important environmental measures to protect the wildlife and water quality of the Bay. This current proposal package expresses no acknowledgement, understanding, or interest in protecting these values. Perhaps the company would come back with a smaller, more knowledgeable proposal for this unique site, or a much less environmentally sensitive site in the Bayfront could be found.

An area along the west side of the site should be preserved and graded to allow Shoreline Retreat to offset the loss of intertidal wetlands that is occurring due to Sea Level

Rise. Those very valuable wetlands are being reduced each decade. This site is probably the most important place in the whole Bay to extend their incredible wildlife support, water quality, and carbon sequestration values.

The project needs to include a broad natural habitat buffer between the development and the J Street Marsh to support and protect the adjacent wildlife from the disturbance of the activity from the development. A portion of that buffer could accommodate a nature oriented pathway, as is done in other areas of the Bayfront.

The major Stadium needs to be eliminated or at least moved to a much less sensitive site in the Bayfront.to reduce the noise impact on the wildlife in the adjacent Saltworks, that are managed for the protection of many at-risk, threatened, and endangered species.

The lighting from the athletic fields, parking lots, etc. will also escape into the habitat areas providing an unacceptable advantage for nocturnal predators and will thereby reduce the wildlife support value of those areas.

The project area should leave room for expansion of wetlands and other water quality measures to improve water from the J Street, L Street, and Telegraph Canyon drainages that enter the Bay through the site, to protect the water quality of the Bay. Facilities to remove litter from these input waters, especially plastic, are especially important for the Bay, its wildlife, and its fisheries. Unfortunately, the project intends to underground some of the drainages instead which will tend to make the problem worse.

The project needs to incorporate a water quality basin to remove fertilizers and chemicals from the irrigation runoff from the project's own extensive landscaping, so it does not degrade the water quality of the Bay. These water quality improvement measures can be designed to also have significant scenic, recreational, and wildlife viewing value.

In conclusion, a smaller more benign sports-oriented facility could be designed to include, accommodate, and feature the environmental protections needed for this unique site. But the current Pangaea proposal totally ignores the environmental value of the site and the potential that featuring its value could increase the value of their facilities. The City should not support this project until the proposal is significantly improved to show respect for and knowledge about the intrinsic environmental and ecotourism value of this unique site. There are plenty of other less environmentally sensitive sites in the Bayfront for a large project such as this one.

James Peugh

Conservation Co-Chair

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