

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY

Engineering and Operations Committee

February 5, 2025



Consideration to Authorize the General Manager to Relinquish Water Facilities to the San Diego Unified Port District

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Governing Board authorize the General Manager to relinquish to the San Diego Unified Port District: 75 linear feet of 16-inch and 700 linear feet of 8-inch asbestos cement water mains, including one fire hydrant, located on Lagoon Drive in the City of Chula Vista.

OVERVIEW

As part of the Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan approved by the California Coastal Commission in August 2012, the San Diego Unified Port District (Port of San Diego) is developing its land to include habitat protection, commercial and recreational spaces, and improved access to the San Diego Bayfront. Sweetwater Park, to be located in Chula Vista within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Port of San Diego, is designed to be a recreational open space that emphasizes natural habitats, including: meadows, specialty gardens, and mounded grasslands. The park will feature nature playgrounds, various seating and picnic areas, pedestrian and bicycle paths, sand dunes, and overlooks for bayfront viewing. Additionally, it will incorporate Kumeyaay signage, public art, restroom facilities, and will provide 216 parking spaces. The project is aimed to be completed in 2025. See Attachment 1 for proposed location.

As depicted on Attachment 1, Sweetwater Park construction requires vacating certain rights-of-way and partially abandoning the Authority's existing water facilities. In addition, in February 2020, the Board approved a Remote Service to supply water to the Sweetwater Bicycle Path and Corridor, which crosses several Port of San Diego parcels and rights-of-way. See Attachment 1 for remote service location and Attachment 2 for more detailed information.

Following a formal request from the Port of San Diego in August 2021, for single water services at multiple parcels of Sweetwater Park, which were conditionally approved with modification by Authority Management in September 2021 (Attachment 3), significant improvements of water services for Sweetwater Park were initiated. These improvements include relinquishing a portion of the existing water main and fire hydrant, in accordance with the 2012 Chula Vista Bayfront Master Plan, to establish a private fire system for the park. After the submission of the Park Water Facilities Improvements Plans, the Authority approved these plans showing the relinquishment of water facilities and provided a Fee and Deposit Letter on October 1, 2024. By December 12, 2024, the Authority received \$805,573, covering installations, capacity fees, and engineering fees.

The Authority's water facilities proposed to be relinquished are located at the westerly end of Lagoon Drive and include approximately 700 linear feet of 8-inch water main, 75 linear feet of 16-inch water main, and a single fire hydrant (Attachment 1). To privatize the water facilities, an 8-foot segment of the existing 16-inch AC pipe will be cut, and replaced with a new 8-inch fire service and backflow preventer assembly as a branch piping connection, isolating the relinquished system from the Authority's distribution system. The City of Chula Vista will be vacating the public Right-of-Way where the section of main will be isolated and the new 8-inch fire service will be installed where public Right-of-Way on Lagoon Drive will remain. A backflow preventer will be positioned on private property, to ensure continued fire protection for the Port of San Diego's Sweetwater Park – Bayfront. See Attachment 4 for details.

Originally acquired in 1972 by the Authority's predecessor, Cal-American Water, these facilities have not generated revenue since service accounts on the western portion of Lagoon Drive were discontinued in the mid-1980s. The water system, including 8-inch and 16-inch pipes, were improved as part of a development project in 1992 and subsequently dedicated to the Authority in 1993 at no cost to the Authority. However, the dead-end water main, which has not seen an increase in usage, requires routine flushing to eliminate stagnated water in the water mains, thereby incurring ongoing maintenance costs for the Authority. Relinquishing these facilities supports the development of Sweetwater Park by adapting the infrastructure to current and future needs, eliminating continuous costs, and resolving issues with underused water mains. This move aligns with broader community and environmental benefits, ensuring that both fire safety and recreational enhancements proceed without delay.

If the Board approves staff's recommendation, staff would draft an agreement for the Port of San Diego to accept the water facilities "as-is", without any warranty of its condition, and requiring the installation of the aforementioned 8-inch fire service with backflow preventer.

FISCAL IMPACT

All costs associated with the Request will be the responsibility of the Port of San Diego, including the process of the relinquishment of Authority facilities and installation of an 8-inch fire service that would be owned and maintained by the Authority.

The 8-inch fire service would generate revenue to the Authority, estimated at \$1,631.76 per year (\$135.98 per month for separate private fire protection lateral in accordance with the Authority's Supplement to the Rates and Rules). In addition, the avoidance of future maintenance costs for the relinquished 775 linear feet of water main and one fire hydrant outweighs any future maintenance costs for the approximate 11 linear feet of 8-inch fire service and associated appurtenances that would be owned by the Authority.

OPTIONS

1. Authorize the General Manager to relinquish to the San Diego Unified Port District: 75 linear feet of 16-inch and 700 linear feet of 8-inch asbestos cement water mains, including one fire hydrant, located on Lagoon Drive in the City of Chula Vista.
2. Reject the San Diego Unified Port District's request to relinquish water facilities and continue to own and maintain the existing water facilities located on Lagoon Drive in Chula Vista.
3. Other direction as determined by the Governing Board.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Attachments

1. Port of San Diego Relinquishment Map
2. Board Action Request for Remote Service_02212020
3. Port District Request for Single Service and SWA Response
4. Staff's Presentation

Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Goal 2: System and Water Supply Reliability (SR) – Achieve an uninterrupted, long-term water supply through investment, maintenance, innovation and developing local water resources.

- Objective SR7: Proactively engage and coordinate with the land use agencies, development community, residents, and businesses on public water infrastructure requirements to ensure proposed public facilities meet Authority standards, and to expedite review process.

Past Board Action

February 14, 2020 The Board approved the Port of San Diego's request for remote service to serve the Sweetwater Bicycle Path and Promenade corridor.