



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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**DATE:** April 29, 2014  
**TO:** Case File No. 2007.0903E  
**FROM:** Rick Cooper, Senior Environmental Planner  
**CC:** Robert Beck, Director, Treasure Island Development Authority  
Eric Brooks, Campaign Coordinator, Our City San Francisco  
Anthony F. Gantner, Chief Counsel, Our City San Francisco  
**Re:** Recent Information Regarding Radiological Analysis of Soil  
Samples on Treasure Island and Recent Communications  
Regarding Tsunami Issues

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## INTRODUCTION

Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island have been part of Naval Station Treasure Island since 1941. The Naval Station was formally closed under the Base Closure and Realignment Act in 1997, and the United States Navy ("Navy") and City and County of San Francisco ("the City") have been working together on transfer of the property to the City. The Treasure Island Development Authority ("TIDA"), a City agency, and Treasure Island Community Development ("TICD"), a private development group, prepared a detailed plan to redevelop Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island following transfer. An Environmental Impact Report was certified by the San Francisco Planning Commission and TIDA for the Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island Redevelopment Project in April 2011 ("the Final EIR"). Certification was upheld on appeal at the Board of Supervisors on June 7, 2011.

Two issues have been raised recently regarding information and conclusions in the Final EIR: updated information from the California Department of Public Health regarding hazardous materials in the soil of Treasure Island, and information from a member of the public regarding tsunami effects in San Francisco Bay and their impact on Treasure Island. Both are discussed below. In both cases the Environmental Planning staff conclude that no supplemental or subsequent EIR is required because there are no substantial changes in the project analyzed in the EIR, no changes in circumstances under which the project is being undertaken, and the information presented in the documents provided does not provide new information indicating that new significant impacts would occur or that impacts identified in the Final EIR as significant impacts would be substantially more severe.

### Results of Surveys for Radiological Material in Treasure Island Soil

During the Navy's use of the property, Treasure Island was the site of many industrial activities that resulted in the presence of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes in the soil and in buildings in multiple locations on the island. As part of base closure and pursuant to several federal laws and regulations, the Navy has been performing studies, identifying contamination, and remediating the sites where chemicals of concern were found. This program follows Department of Defense procedures based on the requirements of two main federal statutes: the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act ("CERCLA") and the Resource Conservation and Remediation Act ("RCRA"). As of the date of EIR publication, several contaminated sites

had been remediated by the Navy and closed pursuant to the requirements of CERCLA, and others were still open and in the process of being remediated. The studies and remediation activities related to potential contaminants of concern on Treasure Island are discussed in the Final EIR in Section IV.P, Hazards and Hazardous Materials on pp. IV.P.1 – IV.P.27. The Final EIR stated that, at the sites that had not been closed, the Navy's investigation and remediation activities were ongoing. (See Final EIR, p. IV.P.17.) As noted on Final EIR p. IV.P.3, the Navy's remediation activities are not part of TIDA's proposal to redevelop Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island. As discussed below, however, such remediation was always contemplated as a necessary precondition to the redevelopment. Further, the Final EIR explained that "TIDA cannot accept any property with known radiological contamination. If radiological materials are subsequently discovered during construction activities, the Navy would be responsible and required to perform any necessary remedial activities to obtain a "free release" of the subject property." (Final EIR, p. IV.P.15-16.)

One of the studies performed by the Navy and discussed in the EIR was a base-wide Historical Radiological Assessment, prepared in 2006 ("2006 HRA"). The 2006 HRA identified five locations where radiological contamination might be found on Treasure Island. The Final EIR summarizes these findings on pp. IV.P.15-IV.P.16. The Final EIR refers to one of these sites as "Site 12."

The Navy has continued to study radiological contamination on Treasure Island since certification of the Final EIR. In 2013, the Radiological Health Branch of the California Department of Public Health assisted with survey efforts by collecting and testing samples at five locations within Site 12 on Treasure Island. The Radiological Assessment Unit of the Radiologic Health Branch reported the results of these tests in a memorandum dated June 26, 2013, updated September 23, 2013 (the "RAU Soil Sampling Report").<sup>1</sup> The conclusions in the RAU Soil Sampling Report are that there is radium (Ra-226) in the soil at the five locations sampled, and that Cesium-137 concentrations for 9 of the 11 samples tested were below the minimum detectable activity values (MDA) and for the remaining 2 were at ambient background levels. Additional sampling to establish the extent of radium contamination, and remediation, were recommended. Further testing continues, with additional samples taken by a contractor to the Navy in September and October 2013, and cleanup actions planned in 2014.

Investigation, characterization, and where necessary remediation by the Navy of radiological contamination is already discussed in the Final EIR on pp. IV.P.15 – IV.P.16. These activities are part of the existing and ongoing clean up of Naval facilities in the base closure program and were accounted for in the Final EIR. The potential that there may be some additional contaminated sites on Treasure Island does not substantially change the discussion or the conclusions in the Final EIR, which explains that transfer of

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<sup>1</sup> Roger K. Lupo, Chief, Radiological Assessment Unit, and Victoria Brandt, Associate Health Physicist, "RAU Staff Soil Sampling, Treasure island, Site 12, March 20-21, 2013," Memorandum to Jerry Hensley, Chief, Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Section, dated June 26, 2013, Updated September 23, 2013. A copy of this memorandum is available for public review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, as part of Case File no. 2007.0903E. The memorandum is also available on the Department of Toxic Substances Control website at: [www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/regulators/deliverable\\_documents/7569792032/2013-0321\\_TI\\_RHB\\_Survey\\_Site\\_12-Soil\\_Sample](http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/regulators/deliverable_documents/7569792032/2013-0321_TI_RHB_Survey_Site_12-Soil_Sample), accessed November 27, 2013.

radiologically contaminated sites to TIDA will not occur until remediation by the Navy has been accomplished. No further environmental analysis is required to address the additional nine potentially contaminated sites. As explained in the EIR, if, based on further investigations, the Navy determines that additional radiological contamination is present at a site, then the Navy must fully remediate the radiological contamination before the site is transferred; thus, the clean-up at a site must be completed before development of that site can proceed.

Circumstances under which the proposed project will be undertaken have not changed substantially. The recent reports on radiological contamination at Treasure Island do not raise new issues and do not identify potential new significant impacts that were not discussed in the EIR. The significant effects identified in the EIR would not be substantially more severe, and therefore would not result in the need for new mitigation measures not identified in the EIR (note that no mitigation measures related to reducing impacts from hazardous materials were found to be infeasible as part of the approval actions on the proposed project). No subsequent or supplemental EIR is necessary.

### **Tsunami Issues**

A letter discussing tsunami issues was sent to the Environmental Review Officer in October 2013. The letter identifies a United States Geological Survey (USGS) study of potential tsunami effects. The letter purports to summarize the USGS study and states that the study shows that an earthquake in Alaska could result in inundation on Treasure Island, that sea level rise will result in similar inundation, and that this is new information requiring a Supplemental EIR.<sup>2</sup>

These issues are the same as those raised regarding tsunami impacts during the public hearings on certification of the Final EIR by the San Francisco Planning Commission in April 2011 (pp. 36-37) and on the appeal of EIR certification at the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in June 2011 (pp 16-17), as well as at other hearings on the proposed Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Redevelopment Project. The Final EIR addresses the potential for impacts due to tsunamis in Section IV.O, Hydrology and Water Quality, specifically on pp. IV.O.5-IV.O.7, IV.O.30-IV.O.35, and IV.O.48-IV.O.50. As explained there, the proposed project includes an adaptive management strategy for addressing sea level rise in combination with other flooding risks, including tsunamis. The EIR discussions are based on a Coastal Flooding Study prepared for the project site by the experts at Moffatt & Nichol Engineers.

The USGS study summary enclosed with the letter to the ERO discusses a “hypothetical but plausible” tsunami scenario that is theoretically possible from a major earthquake in Alaska.<sup>3</sup> As noted in the summary report, the frequency of the tsunami scenario studied “would occur, on average, on the order of hundreds of years.” The resulting wave

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Brooks, Campaign Coordinator for Our City San Francisco, and Anthony Gantner, Chief Counsel for Our City San Francisco, letter to Sarah B. Jones, Environmental Review Officer, October 7, 2013. A copy of this document is available for public review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, as part of Case File No. 2007.0903E.

<sup>3</sup> USGS, “The SAFRR Tsunami Scenario – Improving Resilience for California,” Fact Sheet 2013-3081, August 2013. While not an author of the paper attached to Mr. Brooks’ letter, David Dykstra of Moffatt and Nichol Engineers participated in the series of studies for the Tsunami Scenario report and authored a portion of the main report.

heights in San Francisco Bay are not identified in the summary report, but are summarized in Chapter E of The SAFRR Tsunami Scenario – Physical Damage in California.<sup>4</sup> As stated there, in the hypothetical event analyzed, there could be wave heights in excess of six feet at the Golden Gate, and flooding could occur along The Embarcadero of between three and six feet. Wave heights and inundation are not estimated for Treasure Island, but flow depths at Port of Oakland facilities are estimated at less than two feet, considerably less than the heights estimated at the Golden Gate. That is, the wave height at the entrance to the Bay would be higher than wave heights inside the Bay, as explained on EIR p. IV.O.7. There is no indication in this report that Treasure Island would be completely inundated, unlike the statements in the letter from Mr. Brooks.

The EIR discusses tsunami effects in Impact HY-11 on p. IV.O.48. As explained there, flooding from run-up conditions accounting for combined tides, surge, waves, and tsunami was estimated at from 10 to 16 feet, similar to the information in the USGS report. The Development Plan includes strengthening and raising the protective berms around Treasure Island to prevent flooding effects, including from tsunamis. An adaptive management strategy to address flooding from sea level rise would also contribute to protection from tsunami wave action. Improvements in the Treasure Island Development Plan include raising the perimeter berm for up to 16 inches of sea level rise, and raising the ground elevation of building pads to between three and three-and-one-half feet above the current 100-year high-tide elevation to accommodate up to three feet of sea level rise. In addition, no development other than open space facilities is proposed to be located within 200-300 feet of the western shoreline (except the proposed ferry dock and terminal). An on-going monitoring program will regularly review sea level rise data as new information becomes available. A decision-making framework for future improvements will be established with multiple opportunities to implement further adaptive strategies, such as increasing the height or changing the shape of the perimeter berm or constructing sea walls. In addition, a funding mechanism will be established to pay for any adaptive strategies that are determined to be necessary in the future.<sup>5</sup>

The information from the USGS SAFRR Tsunami Scenario does not present new information compared with that used in developing the proposed level of flood protection or new information identifying any new significant impacts of the environment on the proposed development of Treasure Island that were not identified in the EIR. No new mitigation measures have been identified that would reduce otherwise significant impacts discussed in the EIR, and no changes in circumstances have occurred that would result in new significant impacts not identified in the EIR.

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<sup>4</sup> Porter, Keith, William Byers, David Dykstra, Amy Lim, Patrick Lynett, Jamie Ratliff, Chyarles Scawthorn, Anne Wein, and Rick Wilson, *The SAFRR Tsunami Scenario – Physical Damage in California*, Chapter E in *The SAFRR Tsunami Scenario*, S.L. Ross and L.M. Jones, eds, USGS Open-File Report 2013-1170-E, California Geological Survey Special Report 229, pp. 57-64. Available on line at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2013/1170/3/0df/of2013-1170e.pdf>. Accessed 12/4/13.

<sup>5</sup> See also Moffatt and Nichol Engineers, “Proactively Addressing Sea Level Rise for the Treasure Island Redevelopment Project,” April 2010. This document was included in the administrative record for the Final EIR, and is available for review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400 as part of Case File No. 2007.0903E.

In view of the above, the Department has determined that no subsequent or supplemental EIR is required.