

# DAILY BREEZE

## San Pedro's waterfront development: Developers promise originality, individuality and fun

*Donna Littlejohn | July 20, 2022 | Daily Breeze*



*The Urban Land Institute Los Angeles and top redevelopment leaders Sinead Finnerty-Pyne, Eric Johnson, Milan Ratkovich, Arley Baker, Alan Pullman, and Wayne Ratkovich, present their plans for West Harbor, a new dining and entertainment destination emerging at the LA Waterfront in San Pedro, during a "live case study event" on Tuesday, July 19, 2022. (Photo by Axel Koester, Contributing Photographer)*

Unique, authentic and fun.

San Pedro's new waterfront development will have to be all those things to succeed, said Eric Johnson, principal of Jerico Development in San Pedro, said Tuesday, July 19, at an outdoor presentation for the West Harbor project on the water's edge. He and other developers vowed that the seaside attraction that will replace the longtime Ports O' Call complex will be all that — and more.

But there was much more to talk about at an update of West Harbor plans this week.

The outdoor box lunch event, attended by some 100 people under a canopy on what will be the town's new waterfront development, featured informal presentations by Johnson, Wayne Ratkovich, founder and chairman of The Ratkovich Company, the lead developer; Milan Ratkovich, executive vice president of The Ratkovich Company, Alan Pullman, founding principal of Studio One Eleven; Sinead Finnerty-Pyne, marketing director of Studio One Eleven; and Arley Baker, senior communications director for the Port of Los Angeles.

The focus of the event was combined with the mission of the Urban Land Institute, which has visited San Pedro in the past with its planning advisory panels.

Groundbreaking for the project is planned for late summer when construction will also begin with a grand opening set for 2024.

The project, which has been in the planning stages for more than a decade, has taken longer than expected but now is largely leased with the waterside promenade mostly completed and open to the public.

And an added tenant is close to being announced, developers said.

“We have a lease out for signature for a dog park that has a social club aspect to it,” Milan Ratkovich said.

A 6,200-seat amphitheater is also part of the plan and is undergoing an environmental review for final approvals.

The 42-acre development has drawn its share of frustration through the years as the public-private partnership with the port has taken much longer than many had hoped.



Described as a “festival-retail’ venue, West Harbor will focus on “food, drinks, entertainment and joy,” Wayne Ratkovich said.

Large open spaces, restaurants with indoor and outdoor dining, and water features including harbor cruises, whale watch and sport fishing excursions and a 1,200-foot dock for private boats to tie up are among the plans. Sea plane rides and floating barges are other possibilities as is a vertical “sky bar,” pending environmental review and approvals.



Included in the development will be more than 150,000 square feet of retail, restaurant and entertainment along with four acres of outdoor park and recreation space. The industrial shed-like buildings — now adorned with designs added in for mezzanines, openings to the water and an expansive use of glass to enhance views — are created for tenant flexibility and are viewed as characteristic of today’s portside architecture.

The development replaces the former Ports O’ Call Village.

That development, said Milan Ratkovich, allowed “no space for people on the water.”

West Harbor flips that footprint to put open space and the promenade along the mile-long waterfront where the “living theater” of L.A.’s working port is in full view while the buildings are set back along the property.

The water, developers said, is and will be the main attraction at West Harbor.

No national chains so far are part of the tenant mix, Johnson said, but he did allow that there may be a chain coffee outlet in one of the food court buildings.

“I’m wondering,” said Realtor Lee Williams during questions from the audience, “if it’s possible to make it 100% non-chain all the way across the board, with all the tenants?”

“That’s possible,” Johnson replied.

Developers said they’re confident that West Harbor will be a world-class waterside attraction, noting that the city of Los Angeles has remarkable few waterfronts within its boundaries.

For some in the community, it’s still a wait-and-see attitude.

But while there remains some skepticism about how it will all turn out — and whether

there will yet be further delays — responses at the lunch signaled a growing enthusiasm for the project.

“We’re excited about this moving forward,” said Yolanda Regalado who owns Sirens Java & Tea in downtown San Pedro and also heads up the downtown Business Improvement District. “We can feel it, we’re on board.”

“Just for the record,” said Rock Ashfield of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council, “I hear a little hesitation in voices.”

But the crowds, he said, will come out for the new development.

“In 2013 we had the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln in and people came,” he said. “They came down for the tall ships. We had the yellow duck, and people came for that. They came down for Fleet Week. They will come.”