

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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October 25, 2012

TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653 lgoldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Ellen Miramontes, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643 ellenm@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of October 8, 2012 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Attendance.** The Design Review Board's Chair, John Kriken, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 p.m. Other Design Review Board members in attendance included Karen Alschuler, Ephraim Hirsch and Roger Leventhal. BCDC staff in attendance included Jaime Michaels, Brad McCrea, Bob Batha, Erik Buehmann and Ellen Miramontes.

2. **Burlingame Point, City of Burlingame, San Mateo County. (Second Pre-Application Review).** The Board conducted a second review of a proposal to construct a campus with six buildings (including a parking structure), a realigned road, publicly-accessible shoreline areas, shoreline protection improvements, and a bicycle/pedestrian path at an existing bridge, at an approximately 20-acre site, located at 300-333 Airport Boulevard, in the City of Burlingame, San Mateo County. The activities proposed within the Commission's Bay and 100-foot shoreline band jurisdictions include construction of the public access areas, portions of outdoor dining areas, a portion of the realigned roadway, and shoreline protection. The proposed buildings and the majority of the realigned road would occur outside of the Commission's jurisdiction.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Jaime Michaels introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report. Ms. Michaels also shared a letter written to the Board regarding the project from Bay Trail Project Manager, Laura Thompson. Ms. Thompson recommended that bike lanes be included along the realigned Airport Boulevard and also that there be clear connections to Fisherman's Park to the north and Coyote Point Park to the south. She also provided strong support for the 14-foot wide bicycle and pedestrian bridge proposed to cross over Sanchez Channel adjacent to the vehicular crossing.

b. **Project Presentation.** Mark Farrar with The Vanmark Group briefly reviewed the status of the project by explaining that the project EIR had been completed, all local approvals had been received and that the project had received unanimous support at the local level. Tom Gilman with DES Architects and Engineers then provided a powerpoint presentation to show the Board how the project had been revised based on the feedback they had provided at their first review of the project on July 11, 2011. Specifically, Mr. Gilman noted the following changes and additional information: various wind protection designs in the public access areas; an added Bay Trail connection trail along the northern edge of the property; more details regarding the Bay overlook areas; wind protection measures proposed for the outdoor dining areas; placement of the proposed thirty public access parking spaces; relocation of the Amenities Center twenty-eight feet to the east in order to provide a twenty-five foot wide connection southwards; and a description of the stormwater collection and bio-filtration system.



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c. **Reviewer Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Ephraim Hirsch asked whether there would be dedicated bike lanes on Airport Boulevard. The project sponsors explained that there would not be dedicated bike lanes. They have designed the road to curve through the site in order to slow traffic and create a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly roadway. The street would have one travel lane in each direction with alternating parking and widened sidewalk adjacent. At the parking lot intersections, the roadway would raise up in the form of "speed tables" in order to further slow traffic.

(2) John Kriken asked how a connection to the parcel north of the project would be provided in the future. Mr. Farrar explained that they have been in communication with the property owners of this parcel and have designed the project so that a direct connection from the northern segment of the roadway could be constructed in the future.

(3) Mr. Hirsch asked when the project was projected to be under water due to sea level rise. The project sponsors explained that the proposed below-ground parking would be provided at existing grade level and the project elevations would raise up around this with the road elevation proposed at 14.5 feet elevation in order to withstand a projected sea level rise of 55 inches by 2100.

(4) Karen Alschuler asked what uses are proposed within the Amenities Center. The project sponsors explained that this would be operated by Sports Club L.A. and there would be a gym, other recreational uses, a café and some other retail uses.

(5) Mr. Hirsch asked whether there was any plan to allow direct water access along the eastern edge of the project. Mr. Farrar explained that they had worked with the windsurfing community regarding impacts that the proposed project would have on wind across the Bay in this area. They have developed plans to make improvements at Coyote Point instead of making improvements on the project site itself since the proposed buildings would cause a wind shadow effect and therefore it would not be desirable to launch a windsurf board from the eastern edge.

(6) Mr. Kriken asked for the proposed width of Airport Boulevard. The project sponsors described that there would be one travel lane (14' wide) and one parking lane (11' wide) in each direction so the total width would be 50 feet wide.

(7) Roger Leventhal asked whether it would be possible for public access users to cross Airport Boulevard in the middle of the site. The project sponsors explained that one would be able to safely cross at the "speed table" intersections. Mr. Leventhal also asked for more information about the nature of the shoreline and whether there would be rip rap placed along the entire edge. Mr. Farrar explained that the area was primarily comprised of rubble from the demolition of the old San Mateo Bridge.

(8) Ms. Alschuler asked where the private areas would be located within the 100-foot shoreline band area. Mr. Gilman explained that the oval shapes adjacent to the building represented outdoor dining areas and that while the building occupants would be using these areas associated with indoor dining facilities, these areas would also be available for public use.

(9) Ms. Michaels of BCDC staff asked about the proposed bridge crossing Sanchez Channel. The project sponsors explained that it would be 14 feet wide and would be physically separated from the existing roadway bridge.

(10) Ms. Alschuler asked further about the potential to include bike lanes on Airport Boulevard. The project sponsors explained that they had chosen not to include striped bike lanes due the way the road necks down at the southern end and they felt that the road design and ample lane widths would be suitable for bike use in conjunction with the shoreline path options that will also be available on the western and eastern sides of the project.

d. **Public Comment.** No public comments were made.

e. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** Overall, the Board was pleased with the revisions that the project sponsors had made. They stated that the amount of rip rap used for shoreline protection should be minimized and that the project sponsors should explore using cellular material with planting wherever possible. They also stated that the project should be careful not to include any invasive plant materials. Finally, they concluded that the project did not need to return to the Board for further review.

3. **Bay Ship and Yacht Dry Dock and Public Access Improvements, City and County of Alameda. (First Review)** The Board next reviewed a proposal to moor, operate and maintain an additional dry dock at their Alameda facility and create approximately 970 linear feet of new Bay Trail and two acres of open space, along the northwest edge of the City of Alameda's shoreline, west of the Alameda Point ferry terminal. The public access improvements would include a new eight-foot-wide multi-use public access trail paralleling the shoreline, six overlook areas with landscaping, and interpretive elements salvaged from the shipyard to provide unique seating opportunities and gateways.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Ellen Miramontes introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report. Ms. Miramontes also shared a letter written to the Board regarding the project from Lee Huo of the San Francisco Bay Trail. In his letter, Mr. Huo expressed concern about the loss of views to the Bay from the existing Bay Trail segment due the proposed placement of the dry dock and asked that the size of the dry dock be made smaller. He asked that the proposed new trail be wider (14-16' instead of 8' as proposed), a better connection be made in front of the ferry terminal between the existing and proposed trail segments and also that the existing Bay Trail segment be widened and improved.

b. **Project Presentation.** Christine Boudreau, an environmental consultant to Bay Ship and Yacht, presented the proposed project on their behalf. Matthew Gaber, the project's landscape architect, joined the meeting via a speaker phone placed in front of the Board members.

c. **Reviewer Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Mr. Kriken asked what Pier 5 had been used for in the past. Ms. Boudreau explained that it had to be moved back when the Port of Oakland's turning basin project was implemented. She explained that no renovations would be needed for the pier as the dry dock would be tied in place with mooring lines and would remain completely movable. She further explained that the view from the existing public access would be lost and described this existing Bay Trail segment and the dog park area.

(2) Mr. Kriken asked who owns the property where the new shoreline trail is proposed. Ms. Boudreau stated that the City of Alameda owns it.

(3) Matthew Gaber, via speaker phone, then explained that the project is "very much about views" and presents an opportunity to maximize views of the Bay along with "fascinating views of maritime operations." He explained that the proposed overlooks had been placed perpendicular to the shore and that the landscape would primarily include low maintenance grasses.

(4) Mr. Leventhal asked why the path was proposed as eight feet wide. Mr. Gaber explained that the path had been proposed as eight feet wide for a sense of scale in this landscape and he was concerned that a wider trail may feel like a road. He pointed out that the existing trail to the east is eight feet wide and that this width seemed in keeping for this type of low use trail.

(5) Mr. Hirsch asked about improving the area in front of the ferry terminal. The project sponsor explained that that area was not under their control and they would not be able to address it in their project.

(6) Ms. Alschuler asked to see a photo of the view as it exists today from the existing public access area. The project sponsor did not have a photo available.

(7) Mr. Leventhal asked about the “great lawn” area and whether the path should be moved to one side in this area. He also asked if any grading would be occurring to create the overlooks. Mr. Gaber responded that the trail had been located in this location to create a “sense of refuge” and he had intentionally not placed the trail right along the shoreline edge in order to provide a variety of experiences for the trail user. He further explained that the shoreline varies significantly in this area and that there is a lot of “detritus” along the shoreline rather than a uniform length of rip rap.

(8) Ms. Alschuler asked what the dark green bands on the drawing represented and whether these were proposed as “windrows.” Mr. Gaber explained that these bands of vegetation would be low three-foot high shrubs which would help to visually draw people to the overlooks.

(9) Mr. Leventhal enquired about the proposed use of industrial artifacts and whether these would all be placed in one particular area. Mr. Gaber explained that I-beams, planks and other maritime artifacts would be carefully selected to ensure they would be safe for trail users and then placed intermittently through the site, mostly around the overlook areas.

(10) Ms. Alschuler asked who would maintain the improvements and Ms. Boudreau explained that Bay Ship and Yacht would.

(11) Mr. Kriken asked if the Board should be evaluating this trail in the context of what would occur to the west of the site all the way out to “land’s end” at the far western end of Alameda Point. Ms. Alschuler emphasized the importance of this area in Alameda which is poised for great change in the future. Ms. Miramontes briefly described the context of what is currently proposed for Alameda Point via Google Earth images.

(12) Mr. Hirsch questioned why the lawn area was being divided into two and indicated his desire for the path “to swing in and out” along the shoreline.

d. **Public Comment.** No public comments were made.

e. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board concluded its review with the following comments:

(1) The shoreline path should be placed in a more graceful manner and a wider width for the path should be considered.

(2) Public safety should be carefully considered and dense shrubbery should not be used in order to ensure clear visibility of the area from Main Street.

(3) The artifact placement should be carefully considered and interpretive signage should be placed near these elements to describe the artifact pieces as well as the turning basin and the dry dock.

(4) The Board warned that it is very difficult to establish native grasslands and there will need to be careful management of this in order for establishment to be successful.

4. Central Marin Ferry Connection Multi-Use Pathway Project, City of Larkspur, Marin County. (First Review) Lastly, the Board reviewed the proposed construction of a new multi-use pathway from the existing Cal Park Hill Tunnel Pathway and future Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) Larkspur station (to be located east of Highway 101 and north of East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard) to the existing multi-use pathway located south of East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard along the north bank of the Corte Madera Creek. The proposed pathway would consist of: (1) an at-grade pathway from the existing Cal Park Tunnel Pathway to East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard; (2) a ramp with retaining walls that connects the pathway to the north side of East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard; (3) an approximately 12-foot-wide Warren Truss Pedestrian bridge over East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard; and (4) an approximately 273-foot-long elevated access ramp structure connecting the bridge to the south side of East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard that would wrap around and through the existing wood trestle and provide an approximately 1,100-square-foot viewing platform overlooking Corte Madera Creek and the San Francisco Bay beyond.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Ellen Miramontes introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report. Ms. Miramontes also shared a letter written to the Board regarding the project from Maureen Gaffney of the San Francisco Bay Trail. In her letter, Ms. Gaffney expressed strong support for the project stating that it will provide a much needed pedestrian and bicycle connection facility in this area. She did not express any particular concerns regarding the project.

b. **Project Presentation.** Bill Whitney, Project Manager with the Transportation Authority of Marin, presented the intended purpose of the proposed bridge and pathway project as well as describing the community process that the project had gone through. Mahvash Harms, Principal with the structural engineering firm Biggs Cardosa Associates, described the structural aspects of the project. Architect Donald MacDonald, the bridge designer, then explained that the bridge is designed to reflect the vocabulary of the Larkspur ferry terminal structure and also that the bridge will serve as an important gateway feature. He further described the various lighting options in addition to alternative methods of integrating mesh into the bridge structure to provide the needed safety requirements for enclosure. He also described that the bridge would either be painted white to match the Larkspur ferry terminal or a "buff brown" color to work with the colors of the existing railroad trestle.

c. **Reviewer Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Mr. Hirsch asked about the location of the future SMART rail line in relation to the proposed bridge. Ms. Harms described that while both would cross over Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in this vicinity, the SMART rail line would be separated from the proposed bridge, slightly higher, and the alignment would be further to the west. Mr. Hirsch also asked why the pathway took a series of 90-degree turns at the northern end. Mr. Whitney explained that an existing roadway provides access to a parking lot in this area and the proposed path alignment allows for a perpendicular crossing of the roadway in order to create a safer crossing condition for the bicyclists and pedestrians.

(2) Mr. Kriken asked whether this "dog leg" in the path would help slow bicycle traffic. Mr. Whitney said that it would also function as a "traffic calming" feature in the path.

(3) Mr. Hirsch asked whether the trestle structure has historic status. The project sponsor explained that it did not and further mentioned that the United States Coast Guard would like to see the lift bridge removed from the creek channel.

(4) Mr. Leventhal asked what the "green splotches" shown on page 13 of the exhibits represented and the project sponsor explained that these were just to indicate existing vegetation in the area. He also asked whether there was any proposed fill in the Bay jurisdiction. The project sponsor stated that there would be Bay fill and that these impacts to the existing marsh area would be mitigated.

(5) Ms. Alschuler asked for further description on the two alternatives for using the mesh fabric. Mr. MacDonald explained that one option would be to wrap the bridge with the mesh around the exterior of the structural elements and the other option would be to place the mesh on the internal side of the steel structure. He also further described the lighting options for both the bridge itself as well as along the ramp.

(6) In response to the proposed color choices (brown versus white) for the bridge, Mr. Kriken commented that he believes the white would be more successful as it would cause the trestle to stand out in relation to the new bridge rather than to attempt for the two structures to blend together.

d. **Public Comment.** Two public comments were made.

(1) Jean Severinghaus, a local resident who lives across the creek, made several comments. Ms. Severinghaus shared that she has been involved in many community meetings concerning the proposed bridge and also the future SMART rail line. She stated that the connectivity this project will provide is very important. She also mentioned that as a participant through much of the public process,

she recalls that the white color of the bridge was a very important part of this particular bridge design that the community selected. She said that she had not seen the mesh options previously and she was concerned that the mesh be the minimum height necessary. She also stated that she would not like to see the mesh wrapping around the whole bridge structure.

(2) Andy Peri with the Marin County Bicycle Coalition stated that he believes the likelihood of the SMART rail line continuing south of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard is “very close to zero.” He noted that both the north-south and east-west connections this project provides are extremely important in the area. He further noted that there had not been any problems with bicycles speeding through the tunnel north of the project so he did not believe that bicycle speeding would be an issue on this project.

e. Board and Committee Discussion

(1) Mr. Hirsch commented that in considering the bridge design, he would like to see the bottom part of the truss structure be a tubular shape. Ms. Harms explained that the bottom element is steel embedded in concrete.

(2) Mr. Kriken commented that he felt it would be beneficial for there to be a handrail integrated into the bridge structure. Mr. MacDonald responded that although by code a handrail would not be required, there could be a rail placed at a 48-inch height. Mr. Kriken stated that a handrail would be helpful to hold onto as one crosses the bridge.

(3) Mr. Hirsch asked why it would be desirable to have mesh wrapping around the bottom of the bridge. Mr. MacDonald explained that it would be for the purpose of creating a “lamp shade” effect for the lighting that would be placed on the underside of the bridge. Mr. Hirsch stated that he felt wrapping the entire bridge with mesh would be considered as “architectural conceit” and he would prefer that a more practical approach be taken.

(4) Ms. Alschuler asked if there were any other places to sit on the structure besides the southern overlook area and the applicant responded that the overlook is the only area with seating.

f. Board Summary and Conclusions. The Board concluded its review with the following comments:

(1) The Board prefers the white color for the bridge and believes that white will help to set off the “landmark quality” of the trestle structure.

(2) The Board recommends incorporating a handrail and intermittent fold-down seats along the bridge.

(3) The Board prefers that the mesh be placed on the interior side of the bridge structure.

(4) The Chair believes that the southern overlook portion of the structure should be “squared off” in order to reduce the “racetrack” feeling of this turn in the pathway and to better balance the use of the bridge for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

(5) The Board further stated that the project did not need to return for further review.

5. **Adjournment.** Mr. Kriken adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN MIRAMONTES
Bay Design Analyst