

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; lgoldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
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SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of April 8, 2013 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 6:30 p.m. Other Design Review Board members in attendance included Cheryl Barton, Roger Leventhal, Jacinta McCann, and Gary Strang. BCDC staff in attendance included Bob Batha, Ellie Knecht, and Adrienne Klein.

2. **Approval of Draft Minutes for February 11, 2013 Meeting.** The Board approved these minutes as written with no changes.

3. **Presentation on the San Francisco Bay Trail Project** Laura Thompson and Lee Huo from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) provided a presentation covering the following: a history and overview of the trail; a description of trail goals; the process for completing the trail; the Commission's and the Design Review Board's role with the trail; a description of who the trail serves; and design considerations for the trail.

a. **Board Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Mr. Strang asked when the Bay Trail project was initiated and how many miles of trail have been constructed. Ms. Thompson explained that the concept of the trail started in 1989 with the adoption of the Bay Trail Plan. At that time 100 miles had already been constructed and today over 300 miles of trail have been constructed.

(2) Mr. Kriken commented on an issue the DRB is often confronted with relating to a lack in trail diversity. Very few project proponents come to the DRB with concepts of public destinations, or diverse trail designs. Ms. Thompson acknowledged this challenge and conveyed that the Bay Trail project does seek consistency in trail design. She suggested looking to popular Bay Trail destinations as a way of highlighting and generating more interest in successful designs. Mr. Huo commented that trail design often originates at the city planning level and can exceed the role of the Bay Trail project. Mr. Leventhal commented that it appears some developers have come to think standard, consistent designs are needed to gain project support through the regulatory process. Board members agreed that there is an opportunity to highlight successful areas and create more opportunities for diverse trail experiences.

(3) Mr. Strang asked for clarification about the Bay Trail project's preference for lighting. Mr. Huo stated there are some segments of Bay Trail where lighting may be appropriate and other areas where lighting is not appropriate. Maintenance, theft, and environmental impacts should be taken into consideration when considering whether to provide lighting.

b. **Public Comment.** There were no public comments.



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4. Breuner Marsh Restoration and Public Access Project, East Bay Regional Park District (First Pre-Application Review) The Board conducted its first pre-application review of the East Bay Regional Park District's (EBRPD) proposal to restore marsh habitat and provide public access over 150 acres at Bruener Marsh in the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County. The public access proposed with the project would provide a new 1 ½-mile-long connection in the Bay Trail, a ¼-mile-long spur trail, and amenities including a parking area, picnic site, and multiple benches and interpretive points. In its review, the Board mainly focused on the overall design of the public access areas, measures to prevent adverse human and wildlife interactions, and how the project would withstand impacts from sea level rise.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Ellie Knecht introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report.

b. **Project Presentation.** Patrick Miller, with 2M Associates, introduced Brad Olsen with the East Bay Regional Park District and Jeff Peters with Questa Engineering. He then described the goals of the project and provided an overview of the public access features.

c. **Public Comment.**

(1) Mr. Huo remarked that the Bay Trail project provided funding for an initial project feasibility analysis and they are pleased to see the direction the project has developed.

d. **Board Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Mr. Strang asked about the Carr property and its relationship to the project. Mr. Miller and Mr. Olsen explained that the Carr property, which is currently undeveloped, was not part of the EBRPD acquisition. The site plan includes an access agreement to the Carr property.

(2) Ms. McCann asked about previous uses of the site. Mr. Miller replied that the site previously hosted a model airplane runway and facility. Today everything except for the runway has been removed. There is no value in incorporating elements of this previous use into the site design.

(3) Mr. Leventhal asked why there is no proposed connection with Rheem Creek. Mr. Peters responded that this was not feasible for a number of reasons, among them the property underlying Rheem Creek is not owned by EBRPD. Furthermore, Rheem Creek is a federal flood control channel that would require an act of congress to remove Creek levees.

(4) Mr. Leventhal asked if the habitat fencing would be intended to restrict human or animal movement. Mr. Miller responded that the fencing is designed to keep people out, not animals.

(5) Ms. Barton asked if dogs would be permitted on the trails. Mr. Miller responded that dogs on leash would be permitted.

(6) Mr. Leventhal asked why no transitional habitat areas would be constructed near the railroad. Mr. Miller explained that Giant Marsh extends almost all the way to the railroad and the creation of transitional habitat would require filling of Giant Marsh.

(7) Mr. Kriken commented that seasonal wetlands could serve to buffer public access areas from sensitive resources. Mr. Miller agreed. Mr. Kriken asked if the train would likely impact wildlife. Mr. Miller responded that many animals have adapted to living in an urban environment.

(8) Ms. Barton asked about the choice of planting willows and if other plantings would be native and/or adaptive species. Mr. Miller responded that because willows self-propagate and can spread rapidly, they would only be planted at select locations. Mr. Olsen added that while not all plantings would be native to the site, all plantings would be native to California. Some native species would be included that would self-seed into upland areas.

(9) Mr. Leventhal, Ms. Barton, and Mr. Strang asked for more information about the concrete boardwalk. Mr. Peters described that the boardwalk elements would be pre-cast and only the surface of the boardwalk would be poured onsite. Concrete was selected because it is the most durable, cost-effective, and easy to maintain.

(10) Ms. Kriken asked which sea level rise scenario was considered for 2100. Mr. Miller responded that an increase of 55 inches was considered.

(11) Mr. Leventhal made several comments about the restoration design. He described some of the special features of the surrounding area, such as a coarse-grained beach, salt pannes, shallow eelgrass beds, and riparian thickets. There may be opportunities to incorporate these historical elements into the restoration design. He also expressed the importance of designing with drainage and providing an adequate transition zone.

e. **Board Conclusion.** Mr. Kriken stated that the Board supports the project and it could serve as a good model for other, similar projects.

5. **Adjournment.** Mr. Kriken adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.