

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)
Ellen Miramontes, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; ellenm@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of June 10, 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 Karen Alschuler, Gary Strang, and Stefan Pellegrini. BCDC staff in attendance included Bob Batha, Ellen Miramontes, Erik Buehmann, and Alex Hirsig. The Port's Waterfront Design Advisory Committee members in attendance included Boris Dramov, Dan Hodapp, Kathrin Moore, David Alumbaugh, and Marsha Maytum.

2. **Approval of Draft Minutes for April 8, 2013 Meeting.** The Board approved the April 8, 2013 meeting minutes as written with no changes.

3. **Crane Cove Park Project, Port of San Francisco Pier 70, City and County of San Francisco (Second Pre-Application Review)** The Board conducted its second pre-application review of the Port of San Francisco's proposal to construct an approximately nine-acre public park at Pier 70. The proposal includes the construction of a multi-use park within an area historically used for shipbuilding and repair operations. Within the Commission's Bay and 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction, the proposal includes open lawn areas, gardens, seating and picnic areas, playgrounds, non-motorized small boat facilities, public art, preservation of historic site elements, and a small portion of one development site.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Erik Buehmann introduced the project and stated the twelve comments raised at the Board's first review of the project conducted on January 7, 2013.

(1) **In response to prior Board comment to develop an overall site concept:** Ms. DuSolier began by describing the five "zones" of the project concept, their general organization, and relationship to project phasing. The zones are identified as: Slipway 4 (Keel Park), Open Green, Building 109 Forecourt, Maritime Fields, and Waterfront Edge. The zones are expressed figuratively by transitioning southeasterly from New Port to Historic Port to Working Port and literally by transitioning from more manicured to minimal intervention. Likewise, the Maritime Fields zone would transition in use bayward, from a gravel patio area to a constructed marsh. The zones collectively promote diverse functions and use. Ms. DuSolier described the overall concept as the "marriage of historic resources" with desired program elements for the park.

(2) **In response to prior Board comment that the industrial feeling of the site should be maintained.** Ms. DuSolier further explained the project team's goal of marrying the site's historic resources and former programmatic uses, with future planned and anticipated use. While large-scale features such as Slipway 4 (Keel Park) would remain a Bay access point and



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be repurposed as a kayak launch and lookout, smaller elements such as the keel blocks of Slipway 4 would be visually retained and re-interpreted. The tower cranes would remain a prominent sculptural element in the new park design.

(3) **In response to prior Board comment to reconsider the uses and design of Zone 4 (Maritime Fields).** Ms. DuSolier described how the revised landscape proposed on Slipways 2 and 3 would transition from a hardscape event patio to useable no-mow grass to tidal marsh vegetation. Anticipated uses reflect this transition from group event space, to open play area, to viewing and learning. An elevated overlook was added at the end of Slipway 4 across the tidally exposed and marsh-vegetated ends of Slipways 2 and 3. An artificial turf dog park was introduced at Slipway 1 nearest the active shipyard.

(4) **In response to prior Board comment that treatment of the Bay edge should be further refined and a clear and continuous path closer to the shoreline edge should be provided.** Ms. DuSolier explained that pedestrian circulation is made continuous along and near the shoreline and intersecting path connections inland are regularly provided. A continuous bike path connects through the park and to paths beyond. The Waterfront Edge shoreline design transitions gradually from rip-rap for protection of structures to gravel at a 1 to 6 slope for beach recreation and non-motorized small boat launching purposes and then back to rip-rap.

(5) **In response to prior Board comment that sea level rise should be carefully considered and with this exploration, more detailed cross sections provided.** Ms. DuSolier presented the predicted site conditions under mean higher high water in a year 2100 sea level rise scenario. The Blue Greenway would be elevated so as to remain useable in such condition. Assuming projected sea level rise and a 100-year flood event, the entire site would be inundated, it was noted that the Port understands this risk and the maintenance and repair that may be required in such event.

(5) **In response to prior Board comment that stormwater treatment should be carefully considered.** Ms. DuSolier explained how soils are characterized across the site in coordination with the design concepts to appropriately balance permeable and non-permeable landscape surfaces for stormwater management purposes.

(6) **In response to prior Board request to provide more information on the proposed boating facilities and how they would function.** Ms. DuSolier explained that a vehicular boat drop-off area is proposed at Building 49 from which kayakers would access a series of terraced gravel boxes to accommodate launching during various tide conditions at the end of Slipway 4. Buildings 30 and 109 adjacent to Slipway 4 would function as small boat storage. A photo collage highlighted the scale difference between a kayak and typical ship in the area and the proposal to place a warning buoy to indicate when nearby ships would be moving.

(7) **In response to prior Board comment that there should be a common understanding of what the future development sites might contain including proposed uses and heights.** Mr. Beaupré explained that detailed information of the future development sites remains to be determined, although it is intended the building heights and massing respect the scale of the existing neighborhood and not exceed the 65-foot building height present along the western side of Illinois Street across from the park. The uses may include residential and commercial, however this remains to be determined. The sites are not anticipated for industrial uses. The parcels have been consolidated in order to improve access and use of the park. The designers acknowledged that an appropriate buffer between the future buildings and the park is needed for park users to be comfortable.

(8) **In response to prior Board request for more information on the project's phasing.**

Mr. Beaupré shared a diagram delineating the area of project development into three phases, which also included estimated cost per phase. Phase 1 including the Open Green and Slipway 4 would be developed first. Phase 2 and 3 would be developed following and could be switched in order. Income from the development parcels would be necessary to fund these later phases.

(9) **In response to prior Board comment to consider public safety.**

Ms. DuSolier explained the planned relocation of the historic fence along Illinois Street and addition of a gate at the southwest corner of the park provides the opportunity for the park operator to close the park at night. Depending on how the park is initially used and how future neighborhood development changes its use over time, nighttime closure may not be necessary in the future.

(10) **In response to prior Board comment to provide an opportunity to be elevated in order to provide views down.** Ms. DuSolier described their investigation of making the tower cranes accessible and the conclusion that accessibility requirements, which would require ramps or an elevator on the towers, would compromise their historic nature and architectural aesthetic as well as be cost-prohibitive for the project. It was suggested that the towers' height and position could be expressed through other technological means such as a laser light display.

b. **Board Questions.** Board and Committee members asked the following questions:

(1) Ms. Alschuler asked for more information regarding the aquatic center and its operations. Mr. Beaupré responded that the site would focus on non-motorized small boating and that a particular operator had not been identified for the aquatic center, although a few have expressed interest. The park site may include boat storage similar to what is found at Islais Creek.

(2) Mr. Alumbaugh asked about the connection from 18th Street into the park and expressed concern whether an appropriate buffer between the private future development and park is being provided.

(3) Mr. Strang asked for more information on the proposed pebble beach, particularly how it would function and how it would be kept clean. Ms. DuSolier responded that the grades were chosen in response to the materials: while rip-rap allows for a steeper grade, a lesser 1 to 6 grade is proposed for the pebble beach, as recommended by the project engineers for stability. Mr. Beaupré elaborated on the trade-off between angled more stable aggregate, which can damage boat hulls, and rounded less stable aggregate which is more amenable for boat launching.

(4) Ms. Maytum asked about the pedestrian experience along Illinois Street and the opportunity for visual and physical connection to the park. Mr. Beaupré explained that the relocated historic fence would be very transparent. Ms. DuSolier noted that there is a change in grade along Illinois Street and that access points are proposed at the Open Green and Building 49.

(5) Ms. Maytum asked for more information on the Maritime Fields, which were described as "gardens." Ms. DuSolier responded that the landscape would be composed of different materials affording various intensities of use ranging from playing to viewing.

(6) Ms. Moore asked whether coastal engineers had considered the impact of the proposed design, in particular the reshaping of the shoreline cove, on tidal action and currents in the area. Ms. DuSolier responded that engineers had not yet looked at this but it would be included in future investigation. Mr. Beaupré stated that it was unlikely there would be any effects.

(7) Mr. Kriken asked why the proposed boat usage was focused on kayaks and did not include opportunities such as piers for sailboats. Mr. Beaupré explained that the vision for the park broadly includes human-powered boats, such as kayaks and small dinghies, but intentionally did not include larger sailboats due to general incompatibilities of shared use with kayaks, as well as careful consideration not to encourage an intensity of recreational boating that would conflict with the existing commercial shipyard. Mr. Kriken also asked whether the proposed ferry landing at the terminus of 16th Street would create wake problems for the proposed small recreational human-powered boats.

(8) Mr. Strang asked if there would be mid-block access into the park along Illinois Street given the grade changes. Mr. Beaupré explained that a mid-block access is proposed at the Open Green.

(9) Mr. Hodapp asked what crossings are provided over Illinois Street. Ms. DuSolier responded that crossings are currently shown at 18th and 19th Streets but not in between.

(10) Mr. Alumbaugh asked if there would be any connection to the Muni 3rd street turnaround. Mr. Beaupré responded that there could be possibility of including a Muni stop at the mid-block park opening on Illinois Street.

(11) Ms. Alschuler asked about the overall size of the park. Ms. DuSolier responded that the park would total approximately 9 acres.

c. Public Comment

(1) A member of the public, who stated she is a property owner at Mariposa and Illinois and has lived there for 13 years, asked where visitors are anticipated to park and whether the proposed parking would be sufficient. Mr. Beaupré responded that Building 109 would include 15-20 parking spaces and on-street parking would otherwise be available. The individual also expressed concern that the proposed development sites are too tall and could block views and access to the new beach park in addition to shading the beach. Mr. Beaupré responded that the developments would be similar in scale to the existing buildings across Illinois Street. The individual expressed concern that the kayak launches were too distant from parking to be conveniently accessed by all users. Ms. DuSolier noted that the development sites have been consolidated since the previous proposal in order to reduce barriers to the park. Ms. DuSolier further added that a vehicular drop-off area for boating access purposes was proposed at Building 49. The commenter concluded that it is very difficult to design a park without information regarding the adjacent proposed development.

(2) Beau Barnes, an area wind-surfer and kayaker, added support for the proposed project and usability of the current design. He noted that carts are often used to bring kayaks over similar distances to launching points. He also noted that this area is mostly protected from severe currents.

(3) Jennifer Capinelli, representing the Dogpatch Homeowners Association, shared concerns regarding the future development sites. She believes allowing a 65-foot height similar to existing properties on Illinois Street is too high for the waterfront and that the height should be closer to 40 feet in keeping with the scale of the existing Kneass building. She recommended additional consideration be given to supporting larger water craft at the park, such as a water taxi and "Duck Boat" landing, which could serve to bring additional visitors to the park.

(4) A member of the public asked what type of use the future development sites would include. Mr. Beaupré responded that the development sites would likely be residential and/or commercial and were not anticipated serving for industrial use.

(5) Ann Buell, representing the State Coastal Conservancy, stated that she was pleased to see more potential for non-motorized small boat launching being proposed. She also acknowledged the challenges of providing boating access for persons with disabilities and was interested in better understanding how this would be accommodated in the park design.

(6) Ted Choi, representing City Kayak, provided his support for increasing kayaking opportunities for the public. He noted that additional access points along the shoreline provide desirable shorter trips as well as emergency access points. He recommended moving the proposed development sites to the Maritime Fields area near the active wharf in order to open up the narrow beachfront and park connection with Illinois Street.

(7) A member of the public stated she is in favor of new parks although was concerned whether adequate resources had been identified to maintain the park and keep it safe.

d. Board Discussion

(1) Ms. Moore raised concerns that the height, bulk, and location of the development sites could have negative environmental consequences on the park, such as undesirable shading or wind patterns, and needs to be investigated. She recommended there be “a conceptual disclosure” regarding the development sites.

(2) Mr. Kriken asked Mr. Alumbaugh how land use for development sites in this area is typically determined. Mr. Alumbaugh stated that the building uses should activate the park and connect to it.

(3) Ms. Moore expressed concern that having the development site fund the park would lead to inherent conflict between the desire to increase building height and scale to secure necessary park funds and the quality of the park degraded by increasing the building height and scale.

(4) Mr. Kriken noted that office use, similar to that found in Mission Bay, could impact the park poorly.

(5) Ms. Maytum asked who determines the development site’s use and bulk. Mr. Beaupré explained that it is determined in the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan and is currently zoned for 65 feet.

(6) Ms. Alschuler noted a building’s use is often less impactful than the design quality of the building itself. She further emphasized the need for a suitable buffer between the buildings and public path in the design and noted that, as currently proposed, this buffer appeared too “slim.”

(7) Mr. Kriken shared concern with the lack of shore to water and water to shore activities promoted in the design. He believes this is “one of the most exciting boating places in the Bay.” He noted that the proposed plan appears very “somber” and he believes the plan should include more uses that “mirror” activity that happens now by including activities such as recreational boat building as seen at Hyde St. Pier.

(8) Several members shared sentiment that the park design remains composed of separate pieces and lacks an overall concept. There was concern that “zoning or parcelization” of the design can break down the overall concept into a collection of smaller separate parks. Mr. Strang noted that a “unifying strategy would go a long way.”

(9) Mr. Dramov stated a desire to see the design make a stronger land-water connection by “pulling the land out and bringing the Bay in.” Toward this goal, the new overlook at the end of Slipways 2 and 3 “ties off the Bay,” rather than supporting their extension into it. It was further noted that providing public access to the Bay should not be interpreted as building a continuous path around the Bay, but one should look for opportunities to directly engage with the Bay. He further noted that too many of the site activities appear “speculative,” and suggested the design respond more to immediate opportunity. Mr. Dramov believes that positive aspects of the design include the cranes, the Open Green and the beach concept.

(10) Several members agreed the proposed relocation of the cranes on axis with 18th and 19th Streets is an effective move in establishing the park’s presence and character within the urban neighborhood.

(11) Mr. Kriken observed that the proposed wetlands area diminishes the powerful industrial feeling being simultaneously encouraged. Ms. Maytum also noted a conflict between providing a gardenesque character while at the same time preserving the industrial character and maritime scale. She further suggested the design team consider the material language most appropriate to maintaining the industrial feel.

(12) Ms. Maytum noted that Slipway 4 is dramatic although its preservation inherently divides the park and that the design “does not currently add up to the same power on either side.”

(13) Several board members agreed that a three-dimensional representation of the project is essential for design analysis and needs to be included in future design presentations. Ms. Maytum noted that the powerful three-dimensional nature of the cranes bear an important relationship to the ground plane.

(14) Mr. Kriken noted that the individual landscape strategies presented are interesting but not connected to the activities and suggested that providing a “frame around each area,” such as at the wetlands, may not be the right design approach for this site.

(15) Mr. Pellegrini and Mr. Dramov both encouraged utilization of Slipway 1 for general public access rather than exclusive use as a dog park, noting this working waterfront is at a scale the public is not accustomed to seeing up close and would become a key point of interest.

(16) Mr. Pellegrini provided the following concerns regarding future development sites: the park should inform the footprint of the development sites; the rectilinear parcel lines are at odds with the organic park design; and the effect of the proposed large-scale development on visual and physical access to the Bay needs to be better understood.

(17) Ms. Alschuler believes that the park will be a major destination for the area and shared the following comments: the Open Green would be desirable for neighborhood families; including a water taxi landing is a great idea; the eastern side of the park should be left flexible to see what is desired for this area in the future; and as mentioned at the previous review, it is important there be a clear and continuous path along the water’s edge.

(18) Mr. Beaupré acknowledged the conflicts between preserving the current commercial working waterfront activities and significantly encouraging recreational boating in the immediate area. Mr. Kriken noted the U.S. Coast Guard success in balancing conflict between commercial maritime uses and recreational boating in the Oakland Estuary.

e. **Applicant Response.** Mr. Beaupré stated that the Port and their design team would review the comments discussed and subsequently move into schematic design.

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

(1) The Board continues to be concerned that the project design is fragmented and encourages the design team to simplify the current scheme and develop a unifying overall design concept.

(2) Slipway 4 is an essential historic resource of the site that must be restored, and is a natural nexus of the site design. The zones around Slipway 4 should be simplified and reduced, allowing the park to be mostly defined by Slipway 4 and the shipyard beyond.

(3) Maritime use should be a driving force in the design and made stronger through greater emphasis and opportunity for land-water connections.

(4) The Board remains concerned with the lack of definition in the development parcels and the ability to adequately foresee and respond to their impact on the park design. A firm understanding of parcel height, massing and use is needed to establish an appropriate and successful relationship to the park. There was particular concern whether the buffer between the development and park is adequate.

(5) It is important that three-dimensional representations of the proposed park design are included in future presentations.

4. **Adjournment.** Mr. Kriken adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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