

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: Richmond Ferry Terminal Project; Second Review
(For Board consideration on September 14, 2015)

Project Summary

Project Sponsors. The Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA); City of Richmond.

Project Representatives. Chad Mason (WETA); Chadrick Smalley (City of Richmond); Kent Royle (Marcy Wong Donn Logan Architects); and Heather Dunbar (GLS Landscape Architecture).

Project Site. The proposed ferry terminal would be located directly south of the terminus of Harbour Way South, adjacent to the Ford Assembly Building and the Craneway Pavilion wharf, in the City of Richmond. The site is bound by the Port of Richmond to the north, the Ford Assembly Building and wharf to the east, the Ford Channel to the south, and the Santa Fe Channel to the west (Exhibits, pp. 1-2). The project area includes an existing gangway and passenger float, parking lots to the west of the Ford Assembly Building, and Sheridan Point Park to the south of the parking lots. An existing public kayak launch ramp that does not provide universal access is located east of the existing gangway and float. Currently, the Bay Trail runs along the eastern perimeter of the Ford Peninsula, through Lucretia Edwards Park, and then along the southern perimeter of the Peninsula (Exhibits, p. 2). Beyond the wharf, the Bay trail continues in a north/south direction along Harbour Way South. A existing public walkway continues along the southern shoreline of the parking lots and ends at an existing vista point in Sheridan Point Park.

Proposed Project. The proposed project involves the removal of an existing gangway, float, ramp and piles, and construction of a new ferry terminal, including a queuing area, an entry gate with information signage, a 660-square-foot covered walkway (10 feet wide, 66 feet long and 12 feet high), a 704-square-foot gangway (8 feet wide by 88 feet long) and a 1,953-square-foot passenger ferry float (80 feet long by 24.5 feet wide) (Exhibit, p. 13). The entry to the terminal would be located at the existing plaza, a dedicated public access area. The proposed queuing area would be located along the existing plaza guardrail. The new covered walkway and gangway to the float would be ADA-compliant. The float would accommodate one ferry vessel at a time. Vessels would make two to three trips in the morning and afternoon peak hours and would be docked approximately 5-7

minutes. Ferry passengers would park in the parking lots west of the Ford Assembly building. The parking lot would have 370 parking spaces, including 17 public access parking spaces that are already required by existing BCDC permits (Exhibit, p. 32). Twenty-four bicycle storage lockers and racks would also be provided at the southern end of the parking lot. In addition, the project includes the demolition of the existing kayak launch ramp, and construction of a new universally-accessible public kayak launch ramp in Marina Bay Yacht Harbor, east of the ferry terminal site. The new kayak launch would consist of an 80-foot-long by 4.5-foot-wide ADA-accessible gangway and an approximately 40-foot-long by 16-foot-wide pile-supported low freeboard kayak float (Exhibit, p. 32). The proposed kayak launch would be located adjacent to an existing boat launching ramp. A kayak staging area would be provided at the landing on the shore and would be separated from the adjacent Bay Trail with striping and signage. The project would also involve extension of a walkway east of the parking lot and other public access improvements, described below (Exhibit, p. 8).

Public Access. The proposed public access improvements for this project include:

1. Construction of a new universally-accessible public kayak launch consisting of an 80-foot-long by 4.5-foot-wide ADA-accessible gangway and an approximately 40-foot-long by 16-foot-wide pile-supported low freeboard kayak float.
2. Improvements to the existing walkway to Sheridan Point Park, including paving with concrete to provide a fully accessible 12-foot-wide pathway, three new benches, guardrail repair, cleaning of the Sheridan Point deck and replacement of existing benches at the overlook deck with a new bench.
3. Extension of the trail spur in a north/south direction to the end of the parking area. The 8-foot-wide, approximately 557-foot-long path would consist of decomposed granite and would include two seating areas and one picnic area. The trail, seating and picnic areas would provide a total of approximately 6,480 square feet of public access area.
4. Construction of a new connection from the south end of the parking lot to the trail spur and addition of an ADA-accessible route from the parking lot to the public art project (proposed by the City of Richmond) and the plaza.
5. Improving the existing sidewalk on the west side of Harbour Way South by widening the sidewalk to eight feet and extending the pedestrian pathway south to the plaza.
6. Two east-west pedestrian aisles within the parking lots, connecting the trail extension and the improved sidewalk on the west side of Harbour Way South.
7. Landscaping enhancements, including a planting border along the trail extension, Eucalyptus trees at the terminus of the trail extension, trees and drought-tolerant plants in the parking lot.

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies. The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) **Public Access** policies state that access should “be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline,” be designed—using the Commission’s *Public Access Design Guidelines*—“to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline,” be conveniently located near parking and public transit, “permit barrier free access for persons with disabilities to the maximum feasible extent...and include an ongoing maintenance program.” These policies state in

part that “public access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife,” and that, “whenever public access to the Bay is provided as a condition of development, on fill or in the shoreline, the access should be permanently guaranteed.” These policies further state that, “Any public access provided as a condition of development should either be required to remain viable in the event of future sea level rise or flooding, or equivalent access consistent with the project should be provided nearby.”

The Bay Plan **Appearance, Design and Scenic Views** policies state, in part, that, “all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay” and that “maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, from the Bay itself, and from the opposite shore.” These policies also state, in part, that “[s]horeline developments should be built in clusters, leaving open area around them to permit more frequent views of the Bay.”

The Bay Plan **Transportation** policies state in part that, “ferry terminals should be sited at locations that are near navigable channels...” and, wherever possible, “near higher density, mixed-use development served by public transit.” In addition, these policies state that shoreline projects and bridges over the Bay “should include pedestrian and bicycle paths that will either be a part of the Bay Trail or connect the Bay Trail with other regional and community trails.” The Bay Plan **Recreation** policies state, in part, that, “ferry terminal configuration and operation should not disrupt continuous shoreline access.”

The *Public Access Design Guidelines* state that public access should feel public, be designed so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user’s appreciation diminished by structures, or incompatible uses and that there should be visual cues that public access is available for the public’s use by using site furnishings, such as benches, trash containers and lighting. The *Public Access Design Guidelines* further state that public access areas should be designed for a wide range of users, should maximize user comfort by designing for weather and day and night use and that each site’s historical, cultural and natural attributes provide opportunities for creating projects with a “sense of place” and a unique identity.

First Board Review. At their first pre-application review of the project on July 13, 2015, the Board requested that the project applicant consider three comments, as stated in the draft minutes from that meeting. A summary of the applicant’s responses to these comments is provided below each of the Board’s three comments.

1. **The Board asked that the project applicants work closely with one another to create one cohesively-designed shoreline space.** The applicants have stated that the concrete paving at the plaza would be expanded to the west and the north of the plaza, and the “geometry of the lawns and walkways of the Harbour Way Turnaround will be mirrored.” The applicants state that this will unify the plaza and will frame the public art while guiding circulation from the parking lot towards the ferry entrance to create a more rich public realm that leverages views of the Bay (Exhibits, pp. 9-10). Following the Board’s first review, representatives from WETA and the City of Richmond have met on site and with BCDC staff to refine the design as requested.

2. **Some Board members expressed a desire for a shelter to be included in the project and encouraged the applicants to explore this addition to their project.** The applicant considered five potential locations for a shelter, with consideration of view and public access impacts, proximity to the vessel, and wind and rain direction. The proposed shelter would be an inclined, rectangular shape and would be comprised of an entry gate facing east to the Ford Assembly building, a solid roof for rain protection, a glass windscreen on the west side for wind protection, and a sculpted metal screen on the north and east sides (Exhibits, pp. 14-15).
3. **The Board recommended that the proposed landscaping along the northern edge of the western shoreline follow the more natural pattern of the existing Eucalyptus grove rather than a new rectilinear row of trees along the parking lot edge.** The applicants state that proposed Eucalyptus trees at the northern edge of the western shoreline would follow current informal arrangement of the existing Eucalyptus trees on the western shoreline (Exhibits, p. 32).

Public Access Issues. The staff would like the Board's feedback on the following questions:

1. **Would the revised project provide a cohesively-designed shoreline space that creates a sense of place?** Do the geometries and the material choices of the ferry terminal project and the public art project work together and unify the proposed shoreline landscape?
2. **Would the proposed shelter location and its proposed design minimize view impacts to the Bay, and allow adequate connections to and through the public access areas?** Does the design of the metal sculpted screens minimize view impacts? Does the design of the east-facing entryway have the potential to create conflicts with the Bay Trail and does it accommodate the path of passengers coming from the parking lot and the queuing area to the east?