SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
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TO: All Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: Oracle Educational Facility; First Pre-Application Review
(For Board consideration on December 7, 2015)

Project Summary

Project Proponents. Oracle (Property Owner), Oracle Education Foundation, and Design Tech High School

Project Representatives. DES Architects + Engineers and BKF Engineers/Surveyors/Planners

Existing Site Conditions and Public Access. The 4.28-acre project site ("Parcel 3") is located on Oracle Parkway (a public road), in the City of Redwood City, San Mateo County (Figure 1). Approximately 2.5-acre area of the project site is located within the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction. Additionally, the site is located adjacent to Belmont Slough, which is a wildlife refuge priority use area designated in the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's ("Commission" or "BCDC") *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan). Currently, the site contains an Oracle employee parking lot, landscaping, exercise stations ("nodes"), utilities including a transmission tower, and a public walkway system with entry points at Oracle Parkway and is connecting to paths at adjoining properties. The site also contains dedicated public access required pursuant to San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission ("Commission" or "BCDC") permits including an approximately 1,200-foot-long, 10-foot-wide trail adjacent to Belmont Slough (part of the San Francisco Bay Trail) with entry points and connecting paths at Oracle Parkway, undeveloped open space, and a 14-vehicle required public parking turnout (Figure 2).

Proposed School, Proposed Public Access, and Public Views. The project involves construction of a 64,000-square-foot, two-story building with a typical parapet height of 32 feet and rooftop features and extensions up to 38.5 feet high. Building construction materials include glass, metal, and wood. The main building entrance would be located at Oracle Parkway. The school is designed to serve approximately 550 students and 30 employees. Several patios would be constructed on the bay side of the proposed building, a 34-vehicle parking lot (with electric vehicle charging stations) for school employees and student drop-off would be constructed west of the building.

Existing dedicated public areas required in BCDC permits would be improved and remain largely intact except two sidewalk areas at Oracle Parkway whose location would shift east to conform to the project design. The BCDC-required 14-vehicle public parking turnout would be relocated east of the project site and immediately adjacent to "Lot 8." The project would add an approximately 25,900-square-foot permanently dedicated public area at the site's western boundary, adjacent to the proposed parking lot and patio areas. Additionally, the proposed patios and parking lot would be available to the general public outside of regular school hours. An additional approximately 43,900-square-foot area open to the public during non school hours (Figure 3b). Consequently, the project would result in a combination of access improvements: the enhancement of existing dedicated (per BCDC permit requirements) access, and the creation of permanently dedicated new access and new additional public area which, although not dedicated, would be open to the public when school is out of session. Maintenance of the proposed public areas would be the responsibility of Oracle.

Proposed amenities to serve the general public include: landscaped areas; a multi-use turf area; "nodes" focused on exercise, picnicking, contemplation, and education; drinking fountains; seating; pathways and sidewalks, including an improved 12-foot-wide Bay Trail (including a 10-foot-wide asphalt section and a two-foot-wide decomposed granite shoulder on one side), a "plaza" area; signage; and two Bay Trail entry points—with bike racks—at Oracle Parkway. Public facilities would comply with Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") requirements (Figures 3a, 6, 7, 8).

The proposed dimensions of public areas would vary throughout the site. Figures 3a, 4 and 5 illustrate that the public area would be more constrained in the center portion of the proposed building while being more open at either end. Along Oracle Parkway and in front of the school and its main entry, a sidewalk would provide access to the public and include vehicle bulb-outs to serve the school (Figure 9). On the north side of the proposed building along the shoreline, the proposed trail improvements and other public amenities would accommodate various uses including walking, running, sitting and viewing the Bay (Figure 10).

The project site—largely undeveloped in its existing condition—and school building would be seen by those traveling in the east and west along Oracle Parkway and also from the opposite side of Belmont Slough from the Bay Trail that runs parallel to Timberhead Lane in Foster City (Figures 12, 13 and 14). Due to existing elevations of Oracle Parkway and the project site, public views of the shoreline and Bay are limited.

Sea Level Rise and Flooding. The project's proposed life is 50 years or through around 2070. According to the project proponent, "the site is underlain by bay mud that compresses as water is drawn from it or as weight is placed upon it." Site preparation for the project would include raising existing elevations to meet Oracle Parkway, comply with ADA requirements, and address a sea level rise of 36 inches by 2070. The project would be built to an elevation of 14 feet NAVD88 (Figures 4, 5, and 6). According to the project representatives, this proposed elevation accommodates the 100-year flood elevation, a one-foot rise for FEMA requirements, and a projected 36-inch sea level rise.

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies. The Bay Plan **Public Access** policies state, in part: (1) "maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront…should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline;" (2) "[p]ublic access improvements…should be consistent with the project and the physical environment, including protection of Bay natural resources….[and] should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline, should permit barrier free access for persons with disabilities to the maximum feasible extent, should include an ongoing maintenance program, and should be identified with appropriate signs;" (3) "[a]ccess to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available. Diverse and interesting public access experiences should be provided which would encourage users to remain in the designated access areas to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat;" (4) "[p]ublic access should be sited, designed, managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding;" and (5) "[t]he Public Access Design Guidelines ["Guidelines"] should be used as a guide to siting and designing public access consistent with a proposed project." The Public Access Guidelines provide, in part, that access should feel public, be designed so as not to intimidate visitors, and include visual cues to the public that make the area appear welcoming by incorporating seating, trash containers, and lighting.

The Bay Plan **Appearance, Design and Scenic Views** policies state, in part: (1) "[a]ll bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay;" (2) "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;" (3) [s]horeline developments should be built in clusters, leaving open area around them to permit more frequent views of the Bay;" and (4) "structures near…the Bay should be designed as landmarks that suggest the location of the waterfront when it is not visible, especially in flat areas."

Public Access Issues. The Commission staff seeks the Design Review Board's advice on the following questions:

1. **Would the proposed public access area and amenities, as designed, be adequate to accommodate anticipated use of the site and to facilitate diverse Bay-related activities?** The proposed building would accommodate approximately 580 people during regular school hours. General public use of the site, including by Oracle employees, is likely to continue. Students and teachers will also use adjoining public access facilities. Is the size and design of the access area and its amenities adequate to meet anticipated demand? Should additional amenities or improvements be included to encourage additional activities besides walking, resting, running, cycling, and picnicking.
2. **Is the proposed public access area, particularly where located next to Belmont Slough, designed to minimize wildlife impacts?** As proposed, the Bay Trail is located directly adjacent to a vegetated area sloping to tidal marsh. Should the proposed design include measures to enhance protection of marsh wildlife, e.g., barriers, landscaping signage, etc.?
3. **Would the proposed design of the parking lot and exterior patios facilitate maximum public use during non school hours?** Given that the parking area and patios would serve the school when it is in session and the general public outside of regular school hours, does the proposed design of these areas allow for maximum flexibility to achieve these different purposes or are modifications and/or amenities necessary?

4. **Are the public access areas designed and sited to avoid adverse impacts of sea level rise and flooding?** The proposed life of the project is 50 years and the public access trail is proposed at an elevation of 14 feet (NAVD88), which according to the project proponent, would accommodate a sea level rise of 36 inches by 2070. Based on the information provided to date, has the public access been designed and sited to avoid impacts from future flooding?
5. **Does the proposed project affect public views from Oracle Parkway to the shoreline?** The school building is designed as a single structure with open area at the eastern and western ends and along the shoreline. As recommended by Bay Plan policies on appearance and design, should the proposed development be broken into clusters to allow potential viewing of the shoreline area? Would the proposed development design be a "landmark" suggesting its waterfront location or should it be modified?