

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: West Gateway Public Access Area; Third Review
(For Board consideration on May 8, 2017)

Project Summary

Project Sponsors. California Capital Investment Group; City of Oakland.

Project Representatives. Phil Tagami (California Capital Investment Group Oakland Global), John Monetta (City of Oakland).

Project Site. The site for the West Gateway Public Access Area is located at the Oakland Touchdown of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (Bay Bridge), at the terminus of Burma Road (currently under construction) and west of Wharf 7 in the West Gateway area of the former Oakland Army Base, in the City of Oakland, Alameda County. The site is also located adjacent to the future Gateway Park, and south of the Bay Bridge bicycle path. Directly east of the subject site, a bulk and oversized terminal is planned, but not yet permitted by BCDC.

Background. The public access project is proposed pursuant to a requirement of BCDC Permit No. M2013.013.01, issued to California Capital Investment Group Oakland Global and the City of Oakland, and is expected to be open with the completion of the Burma Road project by the end of 2017. The permittees are required to provide an approximately 91,476-square-foot West Gateway public access area with improvements including:

“approximately 80 to 100 parking spaces, drive aisles, walkways, landscaping, an adequate amount of site furnishings, such as seating and trash receptacles, lighting, an improved viewing area at the south end of the public access area, and other improvements to be determined by the BCDC Design Review Board process. Cost and safety, among other factors may be taken into consideration when determining what specific improvements are appropriate for the West Gateway public access area.”

Special conditions in the BCDC permit require that the design and improvements of this area be reviewed by the Design Review Board. Other special conditions, regarding continuity with the future Gateway Park and resilience of the improvements to sea level rise and flooding, also apply.

As further described in the permit Findings and Declarations, the permittees have “agreed to construct the public access improvements required [by the permit] because they intend to rely on the public access improvements...as some, if not all, of the public access improvements necessary to find that the future development of the Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal...provides the maximum feasible public access consistent with the project.” However, this terminal has not yet been fully designed nor has it been authorized by the Commission.

Proposed Project. At the Board’s second review of the project on March 6, 2017, a revised design of the public access area was presented, that included a reduced number of parking spaces, and a widened pedestrian and bicycle connection from the Burma Road cul-de-sac to the wharf. Following the March 6th meeting, the proposed project has been further modified and consists of the following:

1. As in the previous design at the Board’s second review, the parking lot would have 57 parking spaces; a 42-inch-tall guardrail would be installed along the edge of the wharf and along a portion of the western edge of the parking lot; an 8-foot-tall chain-link fence with razor wire would be installed along the eastern edge of the wharf and parking lot, in order to separate the parking lot from the terminal site; and an existing eight-foot-tall chain-link fence would remain on the west side of the parking lot until it is removed when the future Gateway Park is developed and the site remediation has been completed.
2. The sidewalk transition from the Burma Road cul-de-sac to the pedestrian/bicycle pathway on the western edge of the site has been widened, and the monument sign has been re-located to the parking entrance.
3. The pedestrian/bicycle pathway along the parking lot on the western edge of the site has been modified from a 26-foot-wide pathway, consisting of a 10-foot-wide boardwalk, 4-foot-wide boardwalk “furnishing zone,” and a 12-foot-wide asphalt pedestrian and bicycle pathway, to a 21-foot-wide pathway area (elevated 6 inches above the parking lot), that includes a 10-foot-wide white concrete path that would undulate within a standard concrete paving area. The white concrete path would weave behind benches and trash receptacles that would be installed along the pathway. The white concrete path would terminate on the wharf in a large compass shape painted on the raised pedestrian area. The pole lights and string lights have been removed from the pedestrian area along the parking lot’s western edge. The pole lights have been located on the eastern edge of the parking lot in the planting area along the chain link fence.
4. A seven-foot-wide landscaped area would be installed on the western edge of the site between the existing eight-foot-tall chain-link fence and the 21-foot-wide pedestrian pathway.
5. The pedestrian area around the wharf turnaround would be raised 6 inches above the driving surface. A white concrete paving area would form a 10-foot-wide path elevated around the turnaround. The radius of the turnaround has been reduced from approximately 75 feet to 62.5 feet, and a four-foot-tall traffic circle with a flagpole monument in the center has been added to the turnaround. The amenities at the wharf turnaround area would include bike racks, portable toilets, and an electrical outlet adjacent to the portable toilet area.

6. The 6-inch elevated pedestrian area around the turnaround would transition down to the southern wharf area, where a food truck zone and water tank would be located. The food truck zone would be defined by checkered pattern concrete paving and circular planters with seating elements on the edge, and four picnic tables.
7. At the southern wharf area, a twelve-inch-tall recycled wood stage would be installed in the corner that extends out into the bay, with two rows of benches facing the stage and views out towards the Bay. Stage lighting would be located at the corners of the stage. Additional benches and garbage bins would be located adjacent to the perimeter security fencing.
8. The project would provide a total of 17 benches (nine along the pedestrian/bicycle pathway and eight at the southern wharf adjacent to the perimeter fencing), four circular seating elements by the food truck area, four picnic tables two rows of benches by the stage, nine trash receptacles (along the pedestrian/bicycle pathway only), sixteen bike racks and four portable toilets. The originally-proposed string lighting along the wharf edge has been removed from the project. The perimeter security fence lighting remains a part of the project.

Second Board Review. At its first review of the project on October 17, 2016, the Board made the following comments. Modifications to the proposed project related to their comments are summarized below.

1. **The Board members recommended using a uniform and coherent palette, simplifying the furnishing, lighting and landscaping, and using durable design materials that can withstand the harsh site conditions.** Multiple seating types would be installed – benches, row benches and circular planters seating, and picnic tables. Lighting would consist of pole lights, security fence perimeter lighting, and stage lights. Planting has been added to the western edge of the pedestrian/bicycle pathway. The boardwalk has been removed from the project, while a wood stage has been added.
2. **The Board members suggested creating a transition/bike corral area between the end of the parking lot and the wharf, where bicyclists could leave their bicycles.** The paving material would be continuous from the end of the pathway to the wharf turnaround area. Sixteen bike racks would be provided at the transition area.
3. **One of the Board members suggested providing more seating where the view is the best for individuals to gather and to imagine different programs for the space.** A stage would be located on a corner of the southern wharf area, and a food truck zone with a water tank would be located adjacent to the wharf turnaround. Portable toilets and a four-plex weather-proof outlet would be provided near the entrance to the turnaround. Seating would be provided along the pedestrian/bicycle pathway west of the parking lot, adjacent to the food truck area, around the stage and on one edge of the southern wharf area.
4. **One of the Board members suggested reducing the radius of the turnaround.** The radius of the turnaround has been reduced from approximately 75 feet to 62.5 feet. A four-foot-tall traffic circle with a flagpole monument in the center has been added to the turnaround.

Public Access and Design Issues. The Board’s advice and comments are sought on the following issues relative to the applicable BCDC policies and guidelines and the requirements of the BCDC permit:

1. Design of Public Access

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

- “A proposed fill project should increase public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible....”
- “...maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline....”
- “The improvements 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.”

BCDC’s Public Access Design Guidelines include, in part:

- Public access should be designed to create a “sense of place” and “in a manner that ‘feels public.’”
- Project design should delineate “between public areas and private development – use fences, planting, elevation and signs where private or conflicting uses are proposed...”
- Use “site furnishings...to provide visual cues that the shoreline space is available for public use.”
- “Provide basic public amenities such as trails, benches, play opportunities, trash containers, drinking fountains, lighting and restrooms that are designed for different ages, interests and physical abilities.”

Further, BCDC Permit No. M2013.013.01 requires:

- “...the permittees shall make the approximately 91,476-square-foot (2.1-acre) West Gateway public access area...available to the public and shall construct improvements within this area that include approximately 80 to 100 parking spaces, drive aisles, walkways, landscaping, an adequate amount of site furnishings, such as seating and trash receptacles, lighting, an improved viewing area at the south end of the public access area, and other improvements to be determined by the BCDC Design Review Board process. Cost and safety, among other factors may be taken into consideration when determining what specific improvements are appropriate for the West Gateway public access area.”

- “The West Gateway public access area...shall be designed in coordination with the Gateway Park stakeholders. Prior to any construction of the west Gateway public access area..., the design and public access improvements shall be reviewed and approved by the Commission’s Design Review Board.”¹

2. Public Access Connections

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

- “Access 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....”

Further, BCDC Permit No. M2013.013.01 requires:

- “The permittees shall create safe, seamless, and continuous connections with adjacent public access trails and the future Gateway Park, including using similar public access furniture, landscaping palette, fencing, trail surfaces, etc. Prior to the opening of Gateway Park west of the West Gateway public access area, any fencing along the western boundary of the West Gateway public access area shall be removed and all grading shall be completed to provide a seamless connection between the West Gateway public access area and the park.”

Nearby public access includes: Class II bicycle lanes on the north and south sides of Burma Road; a sidewalk along the south side of Burma Road and around the Burma Road terminus; the Bay Bridge trail and an associated parking lot; and the future Gateway Park. In addition, a special condition of the permit requires that the permittees (i.e. the project proponents) coordinate with Caltrans to plan and implement a safe and direct pedestrian and bicycle crossing from the West Gateway public access area to the Bay Bridge trail.

3. Public Views

The Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views include, in part:

- “All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay. Maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve view of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas....”

The public views towards the Bay are to the west and southwest of the site. The view down the drive aisle is towards the corner of the public access area at the south end of the wharf.

¹ The Design Review Board should provide design recommendations.

Board Questions

The Board's advice and recommendations are sought on the following considerations regarding the design of the public access, connections, and public views:

1. Does the revised proposal address your previous comments to provide an attractive, well-used public access area that encourages diverse activities?
2. Does the access through the site, from the Burma Road cul-de-sac to the southern wharf area provide a logical and intuitive flow for pedestrians and cyclists?
3. Does the modified pathway allow for a safe, seamless and continuous connection to the Burma Road sidewalk and crossing to the north?
4. Is the public access area designed to enhance and take advantage of the views of the Bay and shoreline?