

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: **Pier 70 Waterfront Site Mixed-Use Development; Second Pre-Application Review, Joint Review with Port of San Francisco Waterfront Design Advisory Committee**
(For Design Review Board consideration February 26, 2018)

Project Summary

Project Proponents & Property Owners. Forest City and Port of San Francisco (“Port,” Property Owner)

Project Representatives. David Beaupre, Port of San Francisco (Property Owner); Kelly Pretzer, Jack Sylvan, Bronson Johnson, Nicholas Cranmer, and Elliot Smith, Forest City (Developer); Richard Kennedy, James Corner Field Operations (Landscape Architect); Laura Crescimano, SITELAB Urban Studio (Urban Designer); Dilip Trivedi, Moffatt Nichol (Coastal Engineer); and Justin Seminon, WRA (Regulatory Guidance).

Project Site. The approximately 28-acre project site (the “Waterfront Site”) is located within the Port-owned Pier 70 property in the City and County of San Francisco. The project site is bound by Illinois Street to the west, a shipyard to the north, the Bay to the east, and the former Potrero Power Plant to the south. The site is within the Union Iron Works National Register Historic District, and is part of the the 67-acre area considered in the Port of San Francisco’s Pier 70 Master Plan,¹ endorsed in 2010 to guide redevelopment of the historic shipyard (Exhibit 2).

Existing Conditions. The project site contains industrial structures from the time of its operation as a ship repair facility. These include several historic buildings (Buildings No. 2, 12, and 21) that contribute to the historic district. The site is generally closed to the public, however parts of it open for occasional events such as specialty markets, parties, and art exhibitions (Exhibit 5).

A mix of active and formerly industrial areas surround the project site. The tenant of the Port-owned shipyard to the north of the project site ceased operations in May 2017, and the Port is seeking a new tenant to resume active use of the site for a ship repair business. In addition to the subject site and the shipyard, the Pier 70 Master Plan area includes the future Crane Cove Park, and six historic buildings located northwest of the subject site (the “Historic Core” site) leased by Orton Development, Inc. and proposed for adaptive reuse. The 21-acre former Potrero Power Plant site directly south of the project site, outside of the Pier 70 Master Plan area, is also proposed for redevelopment as a mixed-use development by California Barrel Company, LLC.

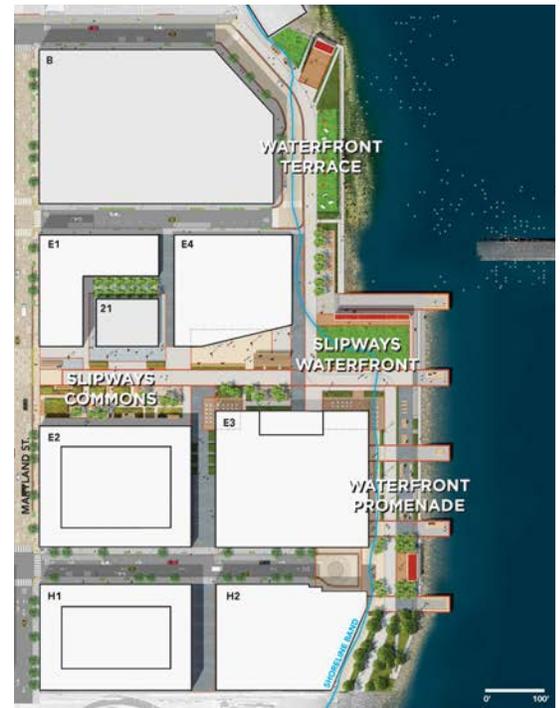
¹ <http://sfport.com/pier-70-area-preferred-master-plan>

Proposed Project. The project presented in this report does not illustrate a specific design, but rather a conceptual one along with design controls to be used as a framework for the design of the project site.² The staff highlights the following project elements:

Mixed-Use Development. The Waterfront Site would include residential, office, retail, park, art and cultural, and light industrial/PDR (Production, Distribution, and Repair) uses. At full buildout, the project proponents estimate that there would be between 2,500 and 4,900 new residents and 5,400 and 8,700 new employees at the project site. Access to the project site would be primarily from 20th and 22nd Streets, while Maryland Street would be extended to provide the primary north-south street within the project site. All streets would have sidewalks, and Class II (bicycle lane) or Class III (shared roadway) bicycle facilities (Exhibits 2 and 6).

Water Access. No portion of the proposed project falls within the Bay. The project proponents have not proposed water access facilities citing concerns related to water quality, strong wave and tidal action, and the potential for conflicts with the adjacent ship repair facility. The physical Pier 70 is a dilapidated structure that is proposed to be cut off from the landward side of the project, and remain in the Bay along with a field of piles and other marine debris structures.

Public Access Facilities. The proposed design includes approximately nine acres of parks and open space, approximately three acres of which would be located within the Commission’s 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction. The project proponents describe three distinct waterfront areas in terms of character and design (from north to south): (1) a “Waterfront Terrace,” (2) a “Slipways Waterfront,” and (3) a “Waterfront Promenade” (Exhibit 7).



1. **Waterfront Terrace.** The Waterfront Terrace runs along the northern 503-foot-long section of the project site’s shoreline, and consists of a 4,926-square-foot public lawn, a 1,971-square-foot picnic and seating area which would contain space for commercial food and beverage vendors (“Picnic Grove”), a deck and viewing pavilion oriented to the ship repair dry-dock, a 6-foot-wide shoreline path, and the 16- to 20-foot-wide Bay Trail (Exhibits 15-17).

Since the Board’s last review, the project proponents have refined the design of the viewing pavilion, including raising its elevation to 15.3 feet.³ The area adjacent to Building 6 (located outside the project area) has been redesigned to include a sloping lawn and walkway leading to a cobble “bench” (i.e. a perched cobble beach-like area set above the Bay), which terminates at the bank top of a rock riprap revetment. A sloped walkway has been added between the shoreline path and Picnic Grove, and additional trees have been proposed within the Picnic Grove.

² See “Pier 70 SUD Design for Development,” October 24, 2017.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/fl1ooznnt26mn3l/P70_D4D_Book_171024_lowres.pdf?dl=0

³ All elevations are NAVD88.

2. **Slipways Waterfront.** The Slipways Waterfront runs along the central 278-foot-long section of the project site’s shoreline. The Slipways Waterfront is part of the larger “Slipways Commons” open space area which begins at the shoreline and continues west—beyond the 100-foot shoreline band—to Maryland Street. An east-west walkway (“Craneway Promenade”) runs from Maryland Street to one of the historic craneway piers at the shoreline. The Slipways Waterfront and Commons include a 8,467-square-foot lawn (“Central Lawn”), hardscaped gathering and event spaces, art installations, a viewing pavilion (“Craneway Pavilion”), and the 16- to 20-foot-wide Bay Trail (Exhibits 13 and 14).

Since the Board’s last review, the Central Lawn has been enlarged and the Bay Trail has been rerouted behind, or landward, of the lawn. The Craneway Pavilion on the craneway pier has been enlarged (120-foot-long by 26-foot-tall by 10-foot-wide) with eight swings proposed to be suspended at either end of the pavilion.

3. **Waterfront Promenade.** The Waterfront Promenade runs along the southern 516-foot-long section of the project site’s shoreline, and consists of a café terrace with areas reserved for both public and commercial (private) use, picnic and seating areas (“Chaise and Picnic Lounges”), historic craneway structures that provide opportunities for fishing, gathering and Bay viewing, a deck and viewing pavillion (the “22nd Street Pavillion”) an 8-foot-wide path running parallel to a riprap revetment, and the 16- to 20-foot-wide Bay Trail. A drop-off area for vehicles is provided at the terminus of 22nd Street between Buildings E3 and H2 (Exhibits 18-20).

Since the Board’s last review, a sloped walkway has been added to provide access down to the shoreline pathway at the eastern end of the Craneway Promenade (a sloped walkway connecting to the shoreline pathway was already proposed at the southern end of the project site). Large-scale furnishings (i.e., wood bleacher seating and chaise seating) are now proposed at each of the craneway piers. Planting areas to achieve stormwater control requirements have been proposed along the Bay Trail, and plantings are also proposed on the sloped area leading down to the shoreline path. The 22nd Street Pavillion (50-foot-long by 18-foot-tall by 15-foot-wide) has been enlarged to frame views from farther down on 22nd Street.

At various locations within the project open space, including the the shoreline open space, the project proponents intend to host large public and restricted-access events, such as art exhibitions, theater performances, cultural events, outdoor fairs, festivals and markets, outdoor film screenings, evening night markets, food events, street fairs, and lecture services. Fewer than 100 events per years are anticipated for the entire open space area and would likely included approximately 25 mid size events attracting between 500 to 750 people and four larger size events attracting up to 5,000 people.

Phasing. The shoreline open spaces would be constructed concurrently with the most immediate adjacent buildings. The Slipway Commons and Slipway Waterfront would be constructed as part of Phase 1 of the proposed project. The Waterfront Terrace and roughly half the area of the Waterfront Promenade would be constructed as part of Phase 2. The remainder of the Waterfront Promenade would be constructed in Phase 3, the final phase of the project (Exhibit 2).

Operations & Maintenance. During design phases, Forest City and Consultants will prepare an Operations and Maintenance Plan that will define all maintenance procedures for the Open Spaces of the project and help assure that the space performs as intended. The O&M of the open space and shoreline area will be funded by a special tax applied to all Pier 70 leased property and condo property called a Community Facilities District “CFD”. The tax is sized to accommodate a budget for the O&M of this open space and shoreline design.

Resilience and Adaptation to Rising Sea Level. The buildings and street grid of the proposed mixed-use development, the Bay Trail, and most of the public access facilities adjacent to the Bay Trail would be constructed at an elevation that is not anticipated to require flood protection through mid-century. The lowest lying buildings within the development and the Bay Trail would be built at an elevation of approximately 15.5 feet. These areas would thus not be inundated during a 100-year flood event at 2050, assuming 12 to 24 inches of sea level rise. At the end of the century, these areas would be susceptible to occasional inundation assuming a higher sea level rise projection of 66 inches (with total water levels at 17.5 feet during a 100-year storm event). At a lower projection of 36 inches (with total water levels at 15.0 feet during a 100-year storm event), these areas would not be inundated but may be exposed to wind and wave action (Exhibit 9).

The lower pedestrian path, at an elevation of approximately 11.4 feet, would be subject to inundation and storm action within the life of the project. The 100-year flood event at 2050, assuming 24 inches of sea level rise, is 11.8 feet. The project proponent indicates that the path would be designed to provide safe public access to the water over the next approximately 25 to 30 years, and that it would later serve as an area within which shoreline protective works or other adaptive management techniques could be implemented. If inundated or converted to a shoreline protection device, as much as 19,453 square feet of the public access area provided as part of the project would be removed over time (Exhibit 9).

Prior DRB Review. The Board reviewed the project at its October 17, 2016 meeting. Board members asked the project proponents for additional information and clarification about the following: (1) how the hardscaped and plaza areas would be used; (2) how the public access areas will be operated and maintained; (3) what the experience is like in public access areas where they intersect with the ground floor of buildings; (4) whether the site will feel permeable and accessible for members of the public as they approach from the north, west, and south; (5) what the shade and shadow conditions are like at public access areas; and (6) how dogs and children have been considered in the design.

Several board members expressed concern about how well the proposed design would provide a clear public connection to the Bay and its shoreline. Chair Alschuler commented that the broken street grid is a good contrast to other areas of the city, but more work was needed to guide people west toward the water. Mr. Thomson stated that while the public could easily navigate along the shoreline from the north and south of the site, obvious connections through the site from west to east were unclear except at 20th and 22nd Streets. Chair Alschuler suggested including historical artifacts to help tell the story of the project site as a major Bay-related industrial site.

Board members reacted mostly positively to the proposed viewing pavilion structures. Ms. Barton commented that framing views could provide an operatic effect, and felt the structures would be terrific for staging various types of performances or displaying art. Mr. Thompson found the distribution of the pavilions throughout the project site to be appropriate. Mr. Pellegrini liked the concept, but expressed skepticism that the structures ultimately built would achieve the beautiful, subtle profile shown in the renderings. He asked the project proponents to think about the overall public art strategy for the site, and whether the pavilions might be part of a program that changed over time.

Project proponents responded with the following descriptions for the approach to public art, interpretive elements, wayfinding and signage strategy:

Public Art Plan / Approach. The open spaces and waterfront propose to integrate opportunities for public art, both permanent and temporary, as well as for the installation of large-scale “artifacts” or large-scale “found” elements from the Pier 70 Area or other appropriate industrial waterfront features that might showcase the impressive history of the site as a place of industrial and maritime production. Art is also encouraged as part of the architectural design in the form of interior and exterior installations.

Types of art and artifacts may include, but are not limited to:

- Large-scale and small-scale sculptures;
- Industrial artifacts;
- Sculptural façade and building treatments;
- Murals and graphic projects;
- Hanging sculpture;
- Environmental art and demonstration pieces related to sun, wind, water, and ecology;
- Sidewalk art and pavement painting, imprinting, engraving;
- Video or light-based art installations;
- Viewing pavilions; and,
- Interactive art for public engagement.

Wayfinding / Signage Strategy. The signage design will be fully coordinated and compliant with the Streetscape Masterplans, as well as the D4D (Disposition for Development) document. Open Space Signage consists of a family of sign typologies that will help visitors orient and navigate to public spaces within the District, with an emphasis on directing people to the waterfront.

Interpretive Strategy. Forest City and Consultants are preparing an Interpretive Masterplan for the full Pier 70 SUD (Special Use District). The Pier 70 SUD and open spaces will utilize a program of coordinated interpretive exhibits in public areas and open spaces in order to promote an understanding of Pier 70 SUD’s history, significance and function. The Interpretive Masterplan defines potential interpretive experiences and elements throughout the Pier 70 SUD, whereby visitors will encounter a hierarchy of stories spread across the site and told where geographically appropriate.

Some of the interpretive experiences and elements will be extracted from the National Register nomination and restructured to be appropriate for a public interpretive experience. The final culmination of stories and the techniques which will be used to tell them will be guided by the Interpretive Masterplan.

Project Proponents responded to the concern for shading of waterfront open spaces with the following information:

The D4D sets parameters around building massing near the shoreline. For parcel E3, the waterfront facade shall require a courtyard or upper level setback. For parcel B and H2, there is the option for ground floor or upper level setbacks. The goal with these parameters is to create a comfortable environment along the waterfront.

Project proponents have further elaborated on Board comments concerning accommodations for dogs and children along the waterfront:

The open spaces are designed to flexibly accommodate a wide variety of uses, activities and programming events, from recreation and play, to food markets and festivals, to concerts and performances, while at the same time offering settings and features that are welcoming and appealing to a broad spectrum of the public on ordinary, unprogrammed days. The open spaces are designed to invite use by people of all ages, including children, through a number of informal means: large-scale seating features that are climbable; large-scale swings; informal arrangements of boulders and artifacts throughout the site; open lawn areas; and an expanded cobble beach area for scavenging at the Bay edge. While there are not designated off-leash areas within the waterfront open spaces, leashed dogs will be allowed throughout the SUD and mutt-mitt stations will be provided along the Bay Trail.

Commission Findings, Policies & Guidelines

Physical and Visual Access. The San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) policies Public Access state, in part, that “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...” Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views state, in part: “All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay...” The Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part: “View opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site’s inherent public access opportunities.” The guidelines also state that viewing the Bay is the “most widely enjoyed ‘use’ and projects should be designed to “enhance and dramatize views of the Bay.”

The proposed project would create approximately 9 acres of parks and open space (approximately 3 acres of which would be located within the Commission’s 100-foot shoreline band) on a 28-acre site. The development is anticipated to bring 2,500 to 4,900 new residents and 5,400 and 8,700 new employees to the Waterfront Site. Physical public access is provided through a new segment of the Bay Trail, landscaped and hardscape public access areas on the shoreline, and other amenities as discussed above.

Among the elements proposed by the project proponents are large “viewing pavilion” public art pieces that frame key views of the Bay and opposite shoreline. By their nature, they also block at least a portion of the uninterrupted view of the Bay that would otherwise be provided from the shoreline. Looking west to the Bay from the nearest existing public road (Illinois Street), views of the Bay at 20th Street would be obscured by the historic Building 6 (located outside the project area) and a slight jog in the road. Along 22nd Street, which terminates at the waterfront at a pavilion structure, the Bay would be visible in the distance, although the grade of 22nd Street at Illinois Street is higher than it would be at the shoreline.

Sense of Place and Historic Interpretation. The Bay Plan policies on Recreation state: “Interpretive information describing the natural, historical, and cultural resources should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible.” The Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that public access spaces should create a “sense of place.”

The proposed project would repurpose the craneway structures at the site to allow for fishing and Bay viewing out over the water. The proposed design would also feature site furnishings designed with materials and at a scale to suggest the industrial heritage of the site. The project would also retain and repurpose the historic Buildings 2, 12 and 21.

Accessibility and User Comfort. The Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that public access should be designed “so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user’s appreciation diminished by large nearby building masses....” Furthermore, “public access improvements should be designed for a wide range of users,” should “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,” and should be designed for the weather of the site.

No buildings associated with the mixed-use development are proposed within 100 feet of the shoreline, however ground floor activities such as restaurant seating, which would be private in nature, extend within the 100 foot shoreline band at the narrowest areas of the Waterfront Promenade. Portions of the shoreline open space area would likely be in shade cast by the adjacent development during parts of the day. The lower shoreline path is accessible via stairs in at least six locations across the site, or ramps and sloped walkways at four locations distributed throughout the site.

Circulation. The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part that “[i]mprovements should be designed and built to encourage...movement to and along the shoreline...” and that “[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...” The Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that a shoreline development should “...provide a clear and continuous transition to adjacent developments,” “use local public street networks to inform shoreline site design and to extend the public realm to the Bay,” and “provide connections perpendicular to the shoreline.”

The nearest public street parallel to the Bay shoreline outside the project site is Illinois Street. The existing 20th Street and proposed 22nd Street extension would provide a more-or-less direct connection between Illinois Street and the shoreline open space area. The proposed 21st Street extension also would connect to the Bay, but a jog in the street at Building 2 is required given the

layout of the historic structures on the site. As part of the proposed project, 20th Street would turn the corner at the waterfront and connect back to 21st Street. On-street public parking would be provided along all public streets in the proposed development, and a formal drop off would be located at the waterfront terminus of 22nd street. Bicycle parking would be located throughout the development and along the waterfront at key intersections with public rights of way. Several proposed shuttle bus routes are proposed throughout the development, within two blocks of the waterfront.

Water Access. The Bay Plan policies on Recreation state that “[w]here practical be, access facilities for non-motorized small boats should be incorporated into waterfront parks...especially near popular waterfront destinations,” and also that such access points “should not interfere with commercial navigation, or security and exclusion zones or pose a danger to recreational boaters from commercial shipping operations....”

The project proponents have designed the project to limit direct public access to the water, citing environmental, wave-action, and tidal constraints, as well as the potential for conflicts between human-powered boats and activities from the adjacent ship repair facility. A cobble “bench” is provided at the northern end of the site, which while simulating a cobble beach, would not provide direct water access because it is not within the intertidal zone and is fronted by a riprap revetment. In the slipways, the proposed shoreline path and stepped edge would enable people to get closer to the water, but would still be separated from the water by a wide riprap area.

Sea Level Rise. The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part, that “...public access should be sited, designed, managed, and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding,” and that “[a]ny 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.”

As discussed above, lower-lying public access areas, including the shoreline path, are subject to inundation within the life of the project and are anticipated to be converted at least in part into an area used for adaptation measures or shoreline protection.

Board Questions

The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the design of the proposed public access:

Physical and Visual Access:

1. The project proposes a series of public rooms along the water. Does this concept provide an engaging mix of uses and flexibility along the waterfront? Is the proposed public access—in terms of area and the amenities provided—sufficient to accommodate the expected level of use from new residents, employees, and visitors to this segment of the shoreline?
2. Does the design of the public space take advantage of the Bay setting, and does it provide for adequate opportunities to get close to and experience the water?
3. Do proposed project elements—including the viewing pavillions and rows of trees at the project’s southern end—provide for adequate visual transparency such that they enhance and dramatize, rather than detract from views to the Bay?

4. Is the experience of the Bay Trail in each section of the waterfront adequately designed and connected to the other sections and nearby public rights of way? Does the waterfront promenade along the southern end feel inviting to the public?

Sense of Place and Historical Interpretation:

5. Does the design take advantage of the unique historical features in its design of the Bay and its shoreline? Are there additional opportunities to enhance the public's understanding of the site and its relationship to the Bay?

Accessibility and User Comfort:

6. Are the proposed project elements, including the ramps and sloped walkways connecting the Bay Trail to lower-lying shoreline path and craneway piers, sufficient to provide for equivalent access among users of different physical abilities?
7. Is the proposed public access of an adequate scale to provide for users' sense of comfort given the mass of the nearby buildings?
8. Does the design provide for user comfort given the microclimate conditions at the site, in terms of sunlight and shadow, wind, etc.?

Circulation:

9. Does the proposed project provide clear connections to the Bay from west to east and take advantage of local street networks to inform the shoreline site design?
10. Does the design minimize the potential for conflicts among pedestrians and cyclists within the shoreline open space area, particularly at locations where pedestrian movement across the Bay Trail will be significant?

Sea Level Rise:

11. Will the amount and types of physical public access facilities be sufficient to support the anticipated level of demand at such future time as the rising sea levels require the lower-lying access areas to be closed or removed?
12. Are there alternative or preferable future adaptation responses to sea level rise that should be considered for this site?