

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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April 27, 2018

TO: Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: Burlingame Hotel at 1499 Old Bayshore Highway; First Pre-Application Review
(For Design Review Board consideration on May 7, 2018)

Project Summary

Project Proponents & Property Owner. EKN Development Group LLC (“EKN,” Developer) and 1499 Bayshore LLC (Property Owner)

Project Representatives. Andrew Davies (EKN, Developer); HKS Architects, Inc.; N Consulting Engineers, Inc.; SWA Group

Project Site. The project site is located at 1499 Old Bayshore Highway, in the City of Burlingame, San Mateo County. The site is bounded by Old Bayshore Highway to the east, Mahler Road to the north, industrial buildings to the west, and the tidally-influenced Mills Creek to the south. The City of Burlingame Shorebird Sanctuary and San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail) are located opposite Old Bayshore Highway from the project site.

Existing Conditions. The 2.19-acre project site is currently developed with two 2-story office buildings, totaling approximately 44,000 square feet, with accompanying utilities, paving, parking spaces, and planting areas. There are no BCDC permits or existing public access requirements associated with the site. The Bay Trail, located opposite Old Bayshore Highway from the project site, provides nearby public access to the shoreline. There is currently no public trail or other public access improvements along Mills Creek at the project site or at any other property west(?) of Old Bayshore Highway.

Proposed Project. The proposed project would demolish the two office buildings, a parking lot, 10 trees, and all other features at the project site. A 268,515-square-foot, 12-story hotel would be constructed, containing 404 guestrooms, along with a 2,929-square-foot free-standing restaurant, and a 145,000-square-foot above-grade, 4-level parking structure for 360 vehicles.

Within the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction, the proposed project includes the following:

1. **Hotel (Exhibits 4-9, 11, 14-15).** A 268,515-square-foot, 12-story (approximately 154-foot-tall), L-shaped hotel would be constructed on the eastern and northern portions of the site. An approximately 50,610-square-foot portion of the structure would be located within the 100-foot shoreline band. The hotel would be dual-branded, and would contain 404 guestrooms, in a combination of both standard room and extended-stay suite formats. The hotel would also include kitchen, laundry, storage, security, maintenance, and office facilities. Approximately 550 guests and 15 to 35 employees are expected to use the site at any given time. Within the 100-foot shoreline band, the hotel also includes planting and hardscape areas and a 790-square-foot open outdoor patio (not intended for public use).
2. **Parking Structure (Exhibits 4-10).** A 145,000-square-foot (175-foot by 185-foot), 4-story parking structure would be constructed immediately adjacent to the hotel. An approximately 52,800-square-foot portion of the garage would be located within the 100-foot shoreline band. The parking structure would contain spaces for 360 vehicles and would also include a fire water tank and pump room, elevators, stairs, a vehicle ramp, and an emergency generator. Self-park vehicle access to the structure would be located on Mahler Road, outside of BCDC's jurisdiction. A hotel valet service would operate from a 13-foot-wide, 210-foot-long one-way drive aisle on the southern side of the hotel and parking structure within BCDC's jurisdiction, including 115 linear feet (1,500 square feet) along Mills Creek. Bicycle racks are proposed inside the parking structure.
3. **Restaurant (Exhibits 4-9, 11).** A one-story, 2,929-square-foot restaurant would be constructed at the northeast corner of the site, near the intersection of Mahler Road and Old Bayshore Highway. Approximately 1,015 square feet of the structure would be located within the 100-foot shoreline band. A 650-square-foot outdoor dining area with a wood deck and café seating would be constructed in association with the restaurant, including 475 square feet within the 100-foot shoreline band.
4. **Mills Creek Open Space (Exhibits 4-5, 10, 12, 14).** The proposed project would preserve an approximately 24-foot-wide, 6,700-square-foot open space corridor (for future public access) between Mills Creek and the hotel and parking structure. The corridor would contain the valet drive aisle, as noted above, as well as a grasscrete emergency vehicle access road along Mills Creek that continues around the west side of the parking structure to connect with Mahler Road to the north. Bollards would prohibit vehicle access to the grasscrete along the west side of the parking structure. Several trees would be removed from the open space area with the intent to preserve future connections along Mills Creek in the event of future development. Per City requirements, a view corridor would also be established adjacent to, and along Mills Creek.
5. **Mills Creek Public Seating Area (Exhibits 5, 10, 14).** The first-floor corner of the hotel adjacent to Mills Creek would be set back by approximately 15 feet to create an 825-square-foot (15-foot by 55-foot) covered public seating area, with café tables, chairs, and trash receptacles. A food and beverage area is proposed for the ground floor use adjacent to the seating area.

6. **Offsite Public Access Improvements.** Immediately adjacent to the property, per City requirements, the sidewalk would be widened from 4-feet to 8-feet along Mahler Road and Old Bayshore Highway. Improvements would also be made to the crosswalk on Old Bayshore Highway at Mahler Road, which connects the project site with the Bay Trail. Signage would be installed to highlight access to the Bay Trail. Trash receptacles would be located near the crosswalk.

Project Approvals and Proposed Construction Timeline: Based on city zoning, the project proponents have requested a Conditional Use Permit to exceed the density of 65 hotel rooms per acre (the proposed hotel would have 184 rooms per acre), additional height exceeding 35 feet (the proposed hotel would have a height of 152 feet), an incidental food service building exceeding 1,500 square feet, and the operation of a restaurant that sells alcoholic beverages. The project has received approval from the Federal Aviation Administration to construct the proposed building heights but has not yet received other regulatory approvals. The City of Burlingame is in the process of preparing an Initial Study under the California Environmental Quality Act, and local approval processes will likely take place in summer 2018. The proposed construction timeline would begin in early 2019 and be completed in approximately 18 months, pending regulatory approvals.

Operations and Maintenance: EKN will develop the hotel, parking garage and other hotel features, and public access improvements, and has entered into a 99-year lease with the property owner, 1499 Bayshore LLC.

Resilience and Adaptation to Rising Sea Level. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”), current 100-year base flood elevation (BFE) for the project site is +10.0’ NAVD88. As proposed, the project site, including buildings and parking garage, will be raised by approximately 1 foot to an elevation of +11.0’ NAVD88. The proposed public access open space and seating area along Mills Creek would be graded between +10.63’ NAVD88 and +11.0’ NAVD88 (Exhibit 10). For planning purposes, the project proponents have estimated 1.08 feet (13 inches) of sea level rise by 2050 and 1.75 feet (21 inches) of sea level rise by 2100 (BFE+1.75’SLR = +11.75’ NAVD88).

The hotel and parking structure have a design life of 50 years, to 2070. They would not be inundated daily by 2050, but they would be inundated during a 100-year flood event in 2050 (+11.08’ NAVD88). The open space and public access features along Mills Creek also have a design life of 50 years and would likewise be inundated by a 100-year flood event at 2050. No adaptation plan has been provided for the public areas.

Commission Findings, Policies & Guidelines

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies. The Bay Plan **Public Access** policies 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...” Further, these policies state, in part: “[a]ccess to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare...” Additionally, “... 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.” The Public Access policies further state that roads near the edge of the water “...should maintain and enhance visual access for the traveler, discourage through traffic, and provide for safe, separated, and improved physical access to and along the shore.” The Public Access policy findings also state that San Francisco Bay “...provides an environment for numerous forms of public enjoyment including viewing, photography, wildlife observation, nature study, fishing, wading, walking, bicycling, jogging, or just sitting beside the water,” and that public access is an integral component of development.

The proposed project would provide open space and a public seating area along Mills Creek, and improvements at the crosswalk that connects the project site to the Bay Trail.

Bay Plan Public Access policies, as they relate to wildlife, state that “[p]ublic access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife,” and that “[p]ublic access improvements provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project and the physical environment, including protection of Bay natural resources, such as aquatic life, wildlife and plant communities...”

Bay Plan Public Access policies, as they relate to sea level rise, state that “[p]ublic 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.”

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 “[m]aximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas...” Furthermore, “[s]tructures and facilities that do not take advantage or complement the Bay should be located and designed so as not to impact visually on the and shoreline. In particular, parking areas should be located away from the shoreline.” In addition, these policies state, in part: “Developments along the shores of tributary waterways should be Bay-related and should be designed to preserve and enhance views along the waterway, so as to provide maximum visual contact with the Bay.”

The project would include a view corridor along Mills Creek, a tributary waterway to the Bay.

The Commission’s **Public Access Design Guidelines** state partly 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. 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.”

Board Questions

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

1. Given the proposed intensity of use of the site and anticipated increase in demand for public access, does the proposed project design provide sufficient opportunities for public access on the site?
2. Would the proposed design for the Mills Creek open space and public seating area provide waterfront activities for a wide variety of users, and create a “sense of place,” which would be unique and enjoyable?
3. Are the public access areas designed in a manner that “feels public” and makes the shoreline enjoyable to the greatest number of people?
4. Does the proposed Mills Creek open space and public seating area provide the best opportunity to enhance shoreline public access and enhance views of the Bay and Mills Creek in the vicinity of the project site? Are there additions and/or alternative improvements and locations that should be considered?
5. Is the design of the Mills Creek open space and public seating area compatible with a creekside public access corridor should one be developed in the future?
6. Have the project and its public access improvements been designed to minimize adverse impacts to wildlife, including along Mills Creek and at the bird sanctuary opposite Old Bayshore Highway?

The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the design of the proposed physical and visual connections:

7. Does the project provide safe and convenient pedestrian access across Old Bayshore Highway between the project site and the Bay Trail? Would an additional pedestrian crosswalk on Old Bayshore Highway at Mills Creek improve access to and along the shoreline of the Bay and the Creek?
8. Are the connections between the various public areas (Mills Creek open space, public seating area, sidewalks and crosswalk to Bay Trail, etc.) designed appropriately to connect people to and along the shoreline?
9. Are the valet drive aisle and emergency vehicle lane compatible with the Mills Creek open space and public seating area, or could the experience be improved?
10. Have the hotel and parking structure been sited and designed to minimize potential view impacts from the shoreline? Are the proposed drive aisles, public seating area, and landscape features designed to maximize views to and along the Bay and Mills Creek?

The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding sea level rise:

11. Are the public areas appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise?