

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: China Basin Park Component of the “Mission Rock” Mixed-Use Development;
Post-Permit Issuance Review**
(For Design Review Board consideration November 18, 2019)

Project Summary

Project Proponents

Mission Rock Partners, a Joint Venture between the San Francisco Giants and Tishman Speyer (Project Developer) and the Port of San Francisco (Property Owner).

Project Representatives

Jack Bair, Heather Tazalla, and Julian Pancoast, Mission Rock Partners (Project Developer); Ryan Wassum, Port of San Francisco (Property Owner); John Donnelly and Will DiBernardo, Scape Landscape Architecture (Landscape Architect – Mission Rock Park); Jeff Miller, Miller Company Landscape Architects (Associate Landscape Architect – China Basin Park); Willet Moss and Justin Aff, CMG Landscape Architecture (Landscape Architect – Paseos and Streets); Dilip Trivedi, Moffat & Nichol (Coastal Engineer); Justin Simeon, WRA (Regulatory Guidance).

Project Location

China Basin Park is an existing waterfront park, which is planned to be redeveloped and expanded as part of the redevelopment of the Port of San Francisco-owned Seawall Lot 337, in the Mission Bay neighborhood, in the City and County of San Francisco. China Basin Park is currently bound by: Mission Creek to the north; Piers 48 and 50 to the east; Terry Francois Boulevard and a parking lot (“Lot A”) to the south; and Third Street to the west. Pier 48 and Lot A are used for parking and occasional special events. Pier 50 is used for marine industrial activities, including vessel dry docking.

Project Site

Existing Conditions

The existing China Basin Park consists of a lawn, a multi-use path, a rip-rapped edge, and a “Junior Giants” baseball diamond. The approximately 2-acre park is primarily located within BCDC’s 100-foot shoreline band and was originally constructed as a required public access area pursuant to BCDC Permit No. 1997.010, which authorized the construction of the Giants Major League Baseball ballpark.



Permitted Project

BCDC Permit No. 2017.004.00, originally issued on June 29, 2018, authorized the “Mission Rock” project, a 21-acre mixed-use development with residential, office, commercial, and open space improvements.

As part of the project, China Basin Park would be redeveloped and roughly doubled in size (from 2.1 to 4.4 acres). Approximately 3.85 acres of the Park would be reserved for public access and planted areas, and the rest would be utilized for retail, cafes, shoreline protection, and other non-public access areas. The existing park elements would be retained yet redesigned, which include a shoreline promenade, passive lawn, active recreation facilities, picnic facilities, seating, and a Bay overlook at the knuckle wharf. Additional authorized program elements include public plazas, a public dock, planted areas, a public restroom, permanent or temporary public art installations, and public programming and special events.

In addition to the redevelopment of China Basin Park, the Mission Rock project would also include several other major public access areas. A second major park, the 1-acre Mission Rock Square, would be developed several blocks south of China Basin Park. A new approximately 6,700-square-foot public access plaza would be developed on a portion of the Pier 48 ½ marginal wharf. Finally, an approximately 1,180-foot-long segment of Terry Francois Boulevard would be redeveloped as a “shared street” with a separated Bay Trail and various other public access improvements.

Proposed Project

Permitted and Proposed Project Comparison

The Commission issued a permit authorizing the Mission Rock project in 2018. In the proposal before the Board, the permittees have further developed the design of China Basin Park. As the updates to the park’s design differ from the 2018 design approved by the Commission, review by the Board is required. The revised design reconfigures aspects of the park design and proposes to include adaptive and accessible shoreline improvements that were not originally considered by the Commission. The permitted concept design is shown on Exhibit page 8, while the proposed plan is shown on Exhibit page 9. The Plan Area Comparisons Exhibit (Exhibit page 29) shows the 2018 plan areas and the proposed design side-by-side. The following table provides a short summary of the elements of the China Basin Park as they were permitted in 2018 versus the proposal before the Board.

Amenity	Permitted Project	Proposed Project
<p>Gateway Plaza has been redesigned as Handshake Plaza.</p>	<p>Gateway Plaza was conceived as an approximately 20,020-square-foot area including paths, open paved areas, seating, bicycle parking, public art, and wayfinding.</p>	<p>The redesigned plaza, called Handshake Plaza, remains approximately the same size and at the same location, but now transitions into the Lifted Grove which sits approximately 6 feet higher than the plaza. (Exhibit pages 15, 22)</p>
<p>The Bay Trail would be widened to 20 feet wide with new alignment.</p>	<p>The design included a trail system that connected to overlook area(s) and pedestrian circulation areas throughout the Park. This system included a minimum 16-foot-wide clear paved segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail. It also included a network of secondary minimum 6-foot-wide multi-use trails. Along the southern edge of the Park ran a minimum 12-foot-clear Pedestrian Promenade.</p>	<p>The Bay Trail would be widened to 20 feet in width, and the path through the Park would be modified to adjust to the Park program’s redesign. A secondary bike path will no longer align with Bridgeview Street, and cyclist circulation through the Park has been changed. The Pedestrian Promenade dimensions have been retained in the updated design. (Exhibit pages 3, 6, 10)</p>
<p>The Picnic Area would increase in size and be accompanied by up to two kiosks.</p>	<p>This approximately 5,022-square-foot area at the Pier 28 “knuckle wharf,” included picnic tables, site furnishings, benches, and trash and recycling receptacles.</p>	<p>The wharf area would increase by approximately 3,000 square feet. The wharf would continue to be connected to the public dock and kayak launch. The proposed project shifts the construction of the knuckle wharf to phase two of the Park construction. (Exhibit pages 24, 27)</p>
<p>The Active Recreation areas would decrease in size and a dog run and beach are proposed instead of a junior baseball diamond.</p>	<p>This approximately 30,836-square-foot active recreation area required a lawn area, pathways, seating, recreational facilities, seating and other site furnishings, and planted areas.</p>	<p>The areas for Active Recreation have been re-distributed throughout the site, including an approximately 4,000-square-foot proposed beach area, an adjacent 3,000-square-foot play area, a 13,000-square-foot family play at the Lifted Grove, and a 2,000-square-foot enclosed dog run. Total area for active recreation would decrease by approximately 9,000 square feet, however the Great Lawn has been designed to include an approximately 18,000-square-foot flexible area that can be used for active recreation. (Exhibit pages 20 – 25)</p>

Amenity	Permitted Project	Proposed Project
The Great Lawn would change in shape and elevation.	The approximately 42,310-square-foot lawn area required a passive lawn with trees and planted areas.	The size of the Great Lawn would increase in surface area by approximately 2,000 square feet. The proposed lawn would gently slope to form a bowl-like area, to create a natural amphitheater with the highest point oriented toward the Bay. (Exhibit pages 16, 17, 24, 25)
One public restroom is proposed.	At least one public restroom facility was required to be located within a café or another structure.	One restroom would be included in the Food and Beverage Pavilion, centrally located in the Central Plaza. The restroom on the knuckle wharf has been removed from the proposal. (Exhibit pages 11, 24)
The Stormwater Treatment Planters would decrease in size and would be moved to the southeastern corner of the Park.	Approximately 18,261 square feet of Stormwater Treatment Planters were required with plantings to provide flood resilience and ecological benefit.	The relocated area would have elevated walkways running through it to connect to the Great Lawn. The area would decrease by approximately 7,000 square feet due to adjacency to the lawn area. (Exhibit pages 11, 12, 24)
Furnishings are described in further detail in the Mission Rock Design Controls.	A suitable number and type of site furnishings were required, including seating, trash receptacles, lighting, railings, Bay Trail and Public Shore signs, and drinking fountains.	The proposed furnishings would generally be consistent with what was authorized in the permit, in updated locations. Refer to the Schematic Design Package on the Port of San Francisco’s website for additional information on locations and details.
Public Dock	An approximately 1,500-square-foot public access dock was required for the launching of small non-motorized watercraft.	The proposed Public Dock would occupy the same footprint as permitted. The dock would include a kayak launch and would connect to the Picnic Area on the knuckle wharf. (Exhibit page 24)
The riprap revetment area would significantly decrease.	The permit required the maintenance of approximately 13,402 square feet of rock riprap shoreline protection.	The northern waterfront of the Park has been redesigned to include tidal shelves into the water, a beach, coastal scrub garden, and a cove access walkway, which will result the removal of about 15% of the riprap. (Exhibit pages 13, 18-21)

Amenity	Permitted Project	Proposed Project
<p>Kiosks, Food & Beverage Pavilion</p>	<p>The permit authorized retail kiosks within the Park that were incidental to the Park use.</p>	<p>Three kiosks would be included in the new design. One would be located at the western entrance of the Park, and the other two on the eastern edge, adjacent to the Picnic Area on the knuckle wharf. (Exhibit pages 9, 11, 20, 24). An approximately 2,000-square-foot two-story Food and Beverage Pavilion is proposed for the center of the Park. The Pavilion will include a small, casual walk-up food & beverage provider, a public restroom, and a rooftop deck with seating, accessible to the edge of the Great Lawn with views of the Bay. (Exhibit page 24) Refer to the Schematic Design Package on the Port of San Francisco’s website for additional information.</p>

New Park Elements

In addition to the changes noted above, the following new elements are proposed for the redesigned China Basin Park:

1. **Beach and Tidal Shelves.** An approximately 8,000-square-foot area on the northern waterfront edge of the Park would be constructed to include a series of sculpted Tidal Shelves, seating, and connection to a small perched beach (Exhibit pages 13-21). Much of this area would be subject to regular tidal inundation and the propagation of appropriate plant and animal species would be encouraged. The 4,500-square-foot perched beach would serve as a recreation area.
2. **Cove Access Walkway.** An approximately 8-foot-wide, sloping Cove Access Walkway would extend northward of the Tidal Shelves into the water. The Walkway may serve as water access for users of small non-motorized watercraft. (Exhibit pages 10, 13, 20)
3. **Coastal Scrub Garden.** An approximately 13,000-square-foot Coastal Scrub Garden along the northern shoreline with walking pathways to both the western entrance of the Park and the Bay Trail. The Garden would be planted with native plants. The Coastal Garden will enclose a family play area upland from the beach along the northern shoreline of the park. (Exhibit pages 15, 20-22)
4. **Dog Run.** An approximately 2,000-square-foot enclosed dog run would be surrounded by the stormwater treatment area in the southeast corner of the Park and would serve as one of several active recreation areas at the Park. (Exhibit page 24)



5. **Overlook Pier.** An approximately 3,000-square-foot Overlook Pier would extend off the Bay Trail. The Pier would include public art and act as a viewing platform with unobstructed views of the Bay. (Exhibit page 24)

Design Controls

The project's Design Controls guide the development of the open spaces, streets, and buildings at Mission Rock, ensuring that the site will be developed in a way that is consistent with the project's vision. There are standards and guidelines for review around circulation, program and use areas, resiliency and sea level rise, and ecology, habitat and management for China Basin Park, for which BCDC staff will incorporate into the evaluation of the project. There are nearly 300 individual controls listed in the project's compliance checklist. The items outlined below are a few examples of the Design Controls that should be considered in the Board's review of the project:

1. The Park shall be consistent with the Public Trust;
2. The Waterfront Promenade shall clearly connect to the bicycle facilities on Bridgeview and Exposition Street and to the multi-use trail extension of the Bay Trail; and
3. Finish grade elevations of the Park will be based on 2100 sea level rise projections.

Phasing

The overall project phasing has changed since permit issuance. Building F was added to Phase 1, and Building K was removed so that the applicants can deliver more housing and create a complete intersection at the Shared Public Way and Exposition Street, which they believe will enhance the feeling of a more completed neighborhood in Phase 1. The Port Commission has approved this phasing change. The Park will still be completed adjacent to Building K, and the Building will be infilled in a later phase. The knuckle wharf has been moved to Phase 2 of the Park along with the kayak dock.

Special Events

The permit allows for regular special events within China Basin Park. Special events would include daily "small" events, covering less than 10,000 square feet and up to 100 "medium to large" events each year, covering no more than 30 percent of the Park's total area. Medium to large events are to be held on no more than four weekend days per month. Most events are to be free and open to the public, however the permit established that a limited number of events each year could require tickets or be held as private (i.e., invitation-only) events. All events are required to stay outside of circulation routes for pedestrian and bicycles, including the Bay Trail, the Promenade, and other areas. Annual reporting and a time-limited authorization of 10 years is required to ensure the events are not creating impediments to the public's use and enjoyment of the Park. For a side-by-side comparison of the permitted and proposed events circulation, see Exhibit page 26.

Resilience and Adaptation to Rising Sea Level

The permitted concept design for China Basin Park is anticipated to experience coastal flooding in its lifetime as sea levels rise. Therefore, the permit issued by the Commission requires a Sea Level Rise Risk Assessment to be submitted to the Commission every five years to monitor conditions and likelihood of flooding impacts to China Basin Park and the other public access areas required for the project. The permit also requires permittees to develop an adaptation strategy in advance of the time that regular flooding of China Basin Park is anticipated. The permit requires the initiation of Phase 1 adaptation with 8 inches of sea level rise, and the initiation of Phase 2 with 36 inches of sea level rise, at which time the trail and sea wall barriers on the permitted park would likely need to be raised.

The new design of China Basin Park will reconfigure elements on the shoreline, thus requiring that the project be re-evaluated for its resiliency and long-term adaptability to flooding. New project elements include the Tidal Shelves, Coastal Scrub Garden, Beach, and Cove Access Walkway, which will sit at a lower elevation than the rest of the park (Exhibit page 7). The permit was originally issued prior to the release of the State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance 2018 Update, and therefore, used the 2016 Guidance. The proposed project will be evaluated according to the 2018 State Guidance, rather than the 2016 guidance. (Exhibit pages 7, 15-18)

The proposed project includes adaptation responses such as raising the ground elevation of the interior of China Basin Park to avoid inundation in the event of 66 inches of sea level rise, and constructing a ramp and tidal bench area that would be resilient to inundation, but are proposed to be built at an elevation below the current 100-year flood elevation (9.7 ft. NAVD88). Under the 2018 State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance, the Bay Trail would be inundated by a 100-year storm just after 2070, or by a 25-year storm in 2080. The permittees have not yet identified sea level rise adaptation strategies that would be employed for the redesigned China Basin Park.

Prior DRB Reviews

The project was reviewed by the Design Review Board at two meetings prior to the permit issuance on December 5, 2016, and November 6, 2017. At its last review, the Board concluded that the facilities were appropriate, but some members questioned if there would be adequate space for circulation during big events, and whether spaces would be durable enough to withstand influx of visitors from large gatherings. The Board expressed general support for the types of facilities included, and considered the complexities involved in future sea level rise adaptation of an urban infill site.

Project Approvals and Proposed Construction Timeline

The public access improvements for the Mission Rock project will be constructed in phases over an anticipated period of 10 years. According to the Disposition and Development Agreement pursuant to City and County of San Francisco Ordinance No. 33-18, the Port will lease the land upon which these improvements are to be constructed to Seawall Lot 337 Associates, LLC, the project developer, until such time as the construction of the public access areas is complete. Upon final completion of construction of each public access area, the Port will terminate that portion of the lease, and the Port and City and County of San Francisco will record documents to accept the public access areas as public facilities.

Applicable Policies, Findings, and Design Guidelines

The new components of the redesigned Park and those that are found to be inconsistent with what was permitted, will be assessed for their consistency with the policies noted below. The reconfigured areas of the proposed plan that are not new elements will be reviewed for consistency with the permit and the Design Controls.

San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan (SAP)* policies on **Public Access** state that “maximum feasible public access should be provided in conjunction with any development in the area.”

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) Public Access policies state in part that access should 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.”

On the subject of **Climate Change**, the Public Access policies state 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’s **Climate Change** policies state, in part, that “[w]herever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged.”

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...” 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 majority of the open space in the proposed project is provided along the shoreline or along view corridors to the shoreline.

The Bay Plan **Recreation** policies state in part, that “recreational facilities, such as waterfront parks, trails, marinas, live-aboard boats, non-motorized small boat access, fishing piers, launching lanes, and beaches, should be encouraged and allowed by the Commission, provided they are located, improved and managed,” following certain standards. As they relate to non-motorized small boats, the Recreation policies state, in part, that “where practicable, access facilities for non-motorized small boats should be incorporated into waterfront parks, marinas, launching ramps and beaches, especially near popular waterfront destinations,” that “access points should be located, improved and managed to avoid significant adverse affects on wildlife and their habitats, should not interfere with commercial navigation,” that “site improvements, such as landing and launching facilities, restrooms, rigging areas, equipment storage and concessions, and educational programs that address navigational safety,

security, and wildlife compatibility and disturbance should be provided, consistent with use of the site,” that “facilities for boating organizations that provide training and stewardship, operate concessions, provide storage or boathouses should be allowed in recreational facilities where appropriate,” and that “launching facilities should be accessible and designed to ensure that boaters can easily launch their watercraft. Facilities should be durable to minimize maintenance and replacement cost.”

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, lighting and signage. 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.

Board Questions

The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the revised design proposal of the required public access area.

1. **Does the revised design provide adequate, usable, and attractive public access that maximizes public use and enjoyment of the area?**
 - a. Would the proposed design for the Park encourage diverse activities and create a “sense of place,” which is unique and enjoyable, and inviting to the public?
 - b. Do the proposed public access improvements create diverse recreational opportunities for people of all races, cultures, ages, abilities, and income levels?
2. **Are the proposed public access amenities sited and designed to maximize public use?**
 - a. Are the Beach, Cove Access Walkway, and Tidal Shelves an appropriate enhancement to the Park? Are there any additional considerations to making this an inviting space for the public to enjoy?
 - b. Are there adequate micro-climate considerations for all users, such as access to shade?
 - c. Is the proposed width of the elevated walkways through the stormwater gardens adequate for the projected number and type of users of the space?
3. **Does the arrangement of the various facilities proposed within the Park, including trails, stormwater plantings, proposed public art and other amenities result in the best possible configuration in terms of circulation, views, enjoyment, and safety?**
 - a. Does the design and alignment of the Bay Trail, Park Promenade, and the secondary pathways through the park provide for adequate circulation through the park for a variety of users?

- b. Does the Board anticipate conflicts or congestion at points within the Park, and what measures could be taken to avoid or minimize such conflicts?
 - c. Does the proposed design preserve and enhance important views to the Bay? Does the Board have concerns related to the proposed siting of structures such as the waterfront café and kiosks, trees, or other project elements in terms of their effect on views?
 - d. Does the entry to the Park at Terry Francois Boulevard provide a sense of arrival and guide visitors to the Bay or other points of interest?
 - e. What considerations should be made for special event programming considering the addition of program areas between the Bay Trail and the waterfront?
4. **Are the public areas and amenities appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise?**